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# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Journal of Professional Adventurers

NOVEMBER 1987

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**COVER:** Mujahideen antiaircraft gunner fires Chinese 12.7mm HMG at Soviet aircraft near Paghman. Having learned little from history, the Soviets continue to fight the war in Afghanistan in conventional communist style — by destroying hearts and minds. Check out the full story on Soviet “pacification” beginning on page 38. Photo: Philip Edwards  
**COVER INSET:** Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North made SOF an offer we couldn’t — and didn’t — refuse. Page 62 brings you the scoop. Photo: AP/Wide World

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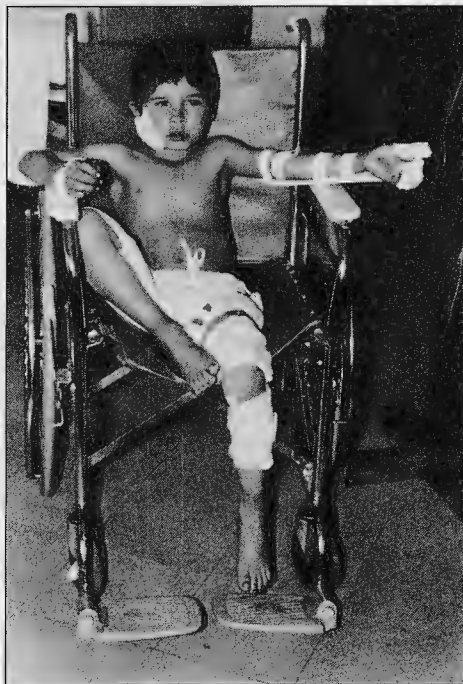


# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## THANKS, NICARAGUA

I've just returned from El Salvador. These two kids are victims of land mines planted by Nicaragua's surrogate — the FMLN communist terrorist guerrillas operating inside El Salvador. Thanks, Ortega, for scarring these and hundreds of other children for life. ☒



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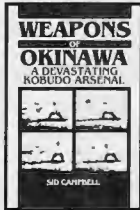
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## THIS COUP'S FOR YOU...

Nigeria's leaders are painfully aware that the usual way Nigeria gets a new government is by a military coup.

So it is perhaps unsurprising that the present Nigerian government would cast about for ways to stop the whole tiresome game of new-juntas-for-old.

Among the most innovative is a decision to establish a special training body within the armed forces to instruct military men on why they shouldn't plan a coup.

The course was announced by Maj. Gen. Domkat Bali, the Nigerian defense minister, as he prepared to leave the country (but of course).

Presumably all references to Swiss bank accounts and Mercedes limos will be struck from the curriculum.

## HONOR ROLL...

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## PSYWAR, SOVIET STYLE...

Eight-year-old Abdul-Khaliq knows Soviet brutality all too well. While playing in his small Afghan village in Kunduz Province, hundreds of brightly colored "toys" fell from the sky as Soviet planes flew overhead. Abdul ran to the field and grabbed his new prize. It exploded, severing his right arm and causing irreparable nerve damage to his left.

This "toy" bomb looked like a fountain pen. Others were shaped like small trucks, butterflies and keepsake boxes. But their purpose is the same — to draw Afghan children out from the safety of their homes and permanently maim, but not kill, their victims.



"The goal," explains interpreter A. Mommandi (pictured here), "is to destroy the ranks of the mujahideen freedom fighters. Soviet military strategists learned that Afghan family ties are very strong. When a child is injured, the entire extended family stays home to comfort him. A number of potential mujahideen are thus permanently taken out of the fighting. And since it is almost impossible to tell a child not to pick up a toy, especially one that falls dramatically from the sky, this hideous strategy can't be countered."

Next time you hear Comrade Gorbachev preaching about Soviet openness to new ideas, remember the "new idea" the Soviets used to disfigure Abdul-Khaliq and thousands of other Afghan children.

The Colorado Committee for a Free Afghanistan brought Abdul-Khaliq to Denver, where medical volunteers will fit him with a prosthesis and perform micro-neurological surgery on his left arm. For more information, call (303) 869-3033.

## MONEY TALKS...

Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) is trying a little old-fashioned capitalism to put some zip in its troops, who are trying to eject the Vietnamese army occupying Cambodia.

The front is going to start paying performance bonuses. Units will receive 2,000 Thai *bhat* — roughly \$80 — for each Vietnamese soldier they kill and 5,000 *bhat* for each one they capture. A Viet truck is worth 5,000 *bhat*, a tank 10,000 *bhat*, and blowing a bridge 20,000 *bhat*. Units escorting supply columns into Cambodia will get 10,000 *bhat* upon completion of the mission.

Assuming \$80 a head will have Cambodian warriors competing for the right to detach some from Viet bodies, it should be possible to liquidate the entire Vietnamese order of battle for something less than \$100 million. Now that's cost effective.

Amazing, isn't it, how long it takes some folks to figure out something mercs have known for centuries.

## TRUE GRIT...

Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North's testimony before the congressional committee investigating the Iran-Contra affair may have had a pivotal role in generating public support for the contras by (for the first time) getting the truth about the war to free Nicaragua to the public without it first being filtered through several layers of liberal defeatists.

Now the colonel's slide show — which anti-contra committee members kept from the public — has been turned into a video.

The International Freedom Foundation combined material from North's slides with footage they obtained from other sources to produce a 30-minute tape telling the same story.

"Our final video will use material from Colonel North's testimony to the committee, as well as other materials which have not previously been made public, to present Colonel North's message about the situation in Nicaragua," said IFF Chairman Jack Abramoff.

According to the IFF, Adolfo

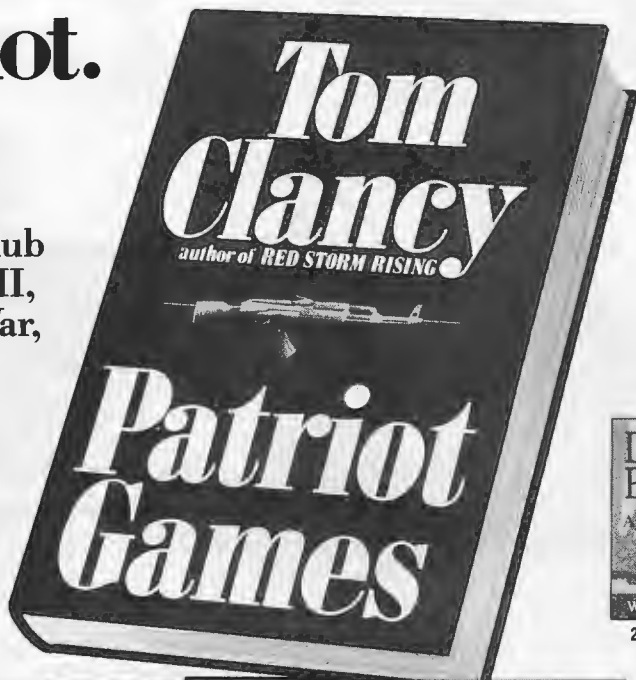


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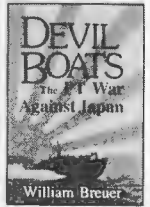
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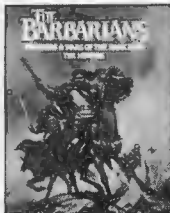
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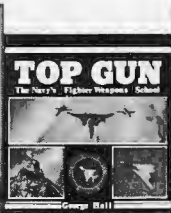
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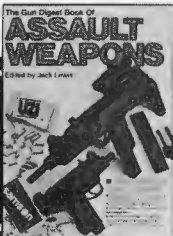
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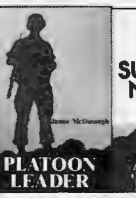
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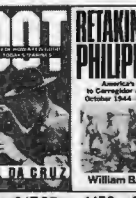
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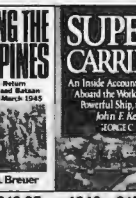
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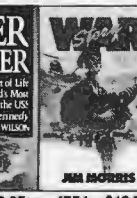
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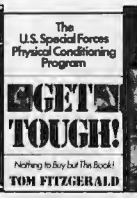
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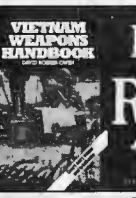
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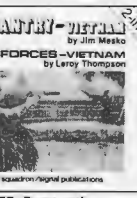
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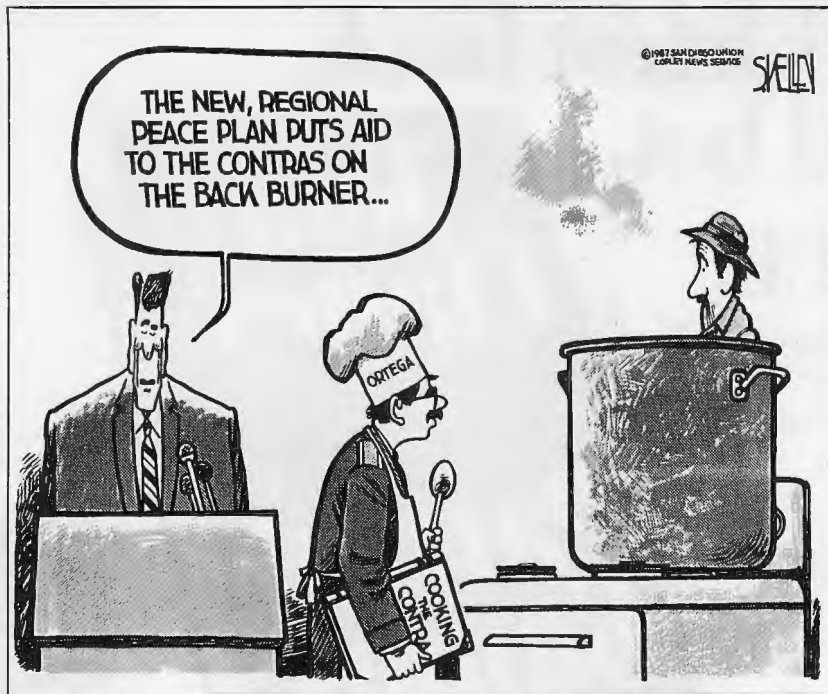
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Calero, director of the Nicaraguan Resistance, will narrate the tape, which was scheduled for release to the public in late August. Projected cost is under \$10. For more information, contact the IFF at 200 G St., NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002, or call 1-800-533-0433.

## KILL-A-COP ETIQUETTE...

Sometimes you have to wonder if members of the anti-gun lobby are actually part of life as we know it.

Consider the case of columnist Ann Landers, who advised the wife of a policeman to take the bullets out of her husband's service revolver and put them in a gravy boat (out of reach of the baby).

After gun owners in all 50 states and three foreign countries wrote in to point out that a police officer's wife who unloads his weapon without his knowledge has an excellent chance of becoming a police officer's widow, Ms. Landers conceded that it sounded like a good answer when she shot it off (so to speak), but that, well, maybe it wasn't such a great idea after all.

That didn't stop her, however, from making a fund-raising pitch in the same column for Handgun Control, the anti-gun lobbying group upon whose board of directors she sits.

The fact is Ms. Landers gave a woman advice which if acted upon

could have resulted in her husband's death or injury, or the death or injury of citizens he might be trying to protect. That advice stemmed from an abysmal ignorance not merely of firearms, but of realities of law enforcement and the use of force to keep the peace.

Anti-gun nitwits have had their mouths on full auto for years. Maybe they ought to shut up before they get someone killed.

## KEMP TAKES THE SECOND...

On the flip side, Congressman Jack Kemp and Senators Jim McClure, Orrin Hatch and Steve Symms have shown there *is* sanity in this world when it comes to our Second Amendment rights. In a recent mailing, Kemp et al are sponsoring a fund-raising drive to support the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. As Kemp writes: "They don't pull any punches when it comes to the gun issue. As I do, they believe the Constitution very clearly says we have a right to own and use firearms." So do we. We urge you to write the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, Dept. SOF, Liberty Park, 12500 NE Tenth Place, Bellevue, WA 98005, for more information. Donations will help, too.

## MAKE MY DAY, MUAMMAR...

Libya was an Italian colony until after World War II, and interestingly it looks like its armed forces are steeped in the finest military traditions of Il Duce.

As if it weren't humiliating enough for Khadafi last March when the armed forces of dirt-poor (and flint-tough) Chad swept down on his Soviet armed and (sort of) trained invasion force and took names and kicked ass, the Chadians did it again in August — and with a panache that must do their French Foreign Legion instructors proud.

The March campaign unceremoniously booted the Libyans out of the northern part of Chad — which they had occupied for years — killing, wounding and capturing several thousand in the process. The August attacks ejected them from Aozou village, a key base in a 100-mile-wide disputed zone between the two countries, which Libya occupied in 1973.

In the attack, which saw Chadian fast-moving Toyota pickup trucks armed with antitank missiles and machine guns take on and defeat Libyan T-55s, the Chadians ambushed and annihilated a Libyan column 50 kilometers south of the city and then drove hell-for-leather through little-known mountain passes and dry-washes to attack the city from the north and east, in what Western diplomats described as a motorized camel charge in the tradition of their forefathers.

Some 650 Libyans did in fact get in their way, and are now presumably receiving the help of the Almighty. A total of 147 others, including 44 officers, surrendered.

Uncharacteristically, the Libyans tried a counterattack. After pounding the Aozou oasis with napalm and bombs for five days — jets prudently remaining above 15,000 feet and out of SAM range — they launched an overland attack from positions 50 miles to the north.

The result was another 150 Libyan dead and 48 prisoners.

Typical Chadian tactics in these engagements were for two Toyota trucks to charge a single T-55 from opposite sides, each firing a missile. T-55s can't rotate their turrets fast enough to track one truck, let alone two.

Brilliant. Rommel would love it. Mussolini would not.

*Continued on page 112*

# HOT PRICES ON

# COLD STEEL™



## Trail Master Bowie

We are proud to introduce this brand new Cold Steel Bowie knife designed by Lynn C. Thompson. The massive clip point blade is flat ground out of 5/16" stock and sports a beautiful satin finish. The steel used in the construction is an exclusive high carbon steel rolled to Cold Steel's exact specifications. Great care has been taken in heat

treating and tempering to assure the utmost in strength, sharpness and edge retention. Every knife features a fully sharpened false edge (unsharpened at extra cost) and Cold Steel's famous Pachmayr®-type handle (stag handle also available). Finally, each knife comes with a rugged leather belt sheath.

**100% MADE IN AMERICA**

Retail \$175.00

**Call today for our low price!!**

## Shinobu Folders

This brand new series of lockbacks designed by Lynn C. Thompson offers 3 important advances in design and materials. First, every blade reflects Lynn's original reinforced point design which offers maximum resistance to chipping, bending or breaking. Second, each blade is ground out of costly San Mai III™ steel, a brand new stainless steel laminate consisting of a hard core enveloped by spring steel sides, forge welded into one inseparable piece. Third, every knife offers a true non-slip, shock absorbing Pachmayr®-type grip made of deeply checkered Thermorun™.

### Medium Shinobu Tanto

Retail \$59.95  
#CSMDS  
Our Price  
**\$47.50**

### Small Shinobu Tanto

Retail \$24.95  
#CSSMS  
Our Price  
**\$19.95**



**Large Shinobu Tanto**  
Retail \$79.95  
#CSLGS  
Our Price  
**\$63.50**

Specifications	Small	Medium	Large
Overall length .....	3-7/8"	6-1/16"	8-1/16"
Blade length .....	1-5/8"	2-1/2"	3-1/2"
Blade thickness .....	3/32"	4/32"	5/32"
Weight .....	1.8 oz.	2.1 oz.	4.5 oz.
Sheath .....	None	Nylon	Nylon

## Master Tanto

The key to the Master Tanto's phenomenal strength is its San Mai III™ laminated stainless steel blade. This lamination is created during the forging process where a hard stainless core is wrapped with spring steel "skins". These three pieces are then hammer forged into one inseparable piece of steel. Due to the difficulty of this welding process, over 20% of all blades must be rejected. However, the remaining 80% are so tough that they can withstand inhuman abuse and remain fully functional.

The Master Tanto is 11" overall with blade length of 5-3/4", blade thickness of 3/16".

It comes with Cold Steel's Pachmayr® -type Kraton® rubber handle, brass guard and pommel, and rugged leather sheath.

Retail \$189.95  
#CSMGT

Our Price .... **\$149.95**



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**A. G. Russell  
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Commemorative  
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SOG FIGHTER**

Modernized version of the SOG Knife carried by the 5th Special Forces and other elite soldiers throughout Southeast Asia. Each blade is cut from extremely thick stock (.280"), completely ground by hand, and hardened to a Rockwell 57-58. The 6 1/4" high-carbon steel blade is then blued for rust inhibition and stealth. Hollow-ground blade with false back edge. Resin-impregnated brown sole-leather handle with blued steel crossguard. Leather wrist strap, black leather scabbard and sharpening stone are included. Built by the manufacturers of the original knives!

Retail \$199.00

#SSSF  
Our Price ...

**\$169.00**



**EK S/F  
Commando Knife**

6 5/8" blade 12 1/2" overall. Rockwell 57-59 full tang. Includes high quality olive drab lined nylon sheath. Handle wrapped with 18" parachute cord.

Retail \$99.00

#EKSF ..... Our Price **\$79.50**

**NEW**

**Mark II CS**

Here's Cutlery Shoppe exclusive—an "angled blade" Gerber Mark II that you can afford to own and use. We made special arrangements with Gerber to make up a special series of Mark II's with the original 5° canted blade for comfortable wear and handling, 440-A stainless blade, Cordura™ sheath and the special "Cat's Tongue" non-slip handle.



A Cutlery Shoppe Exclusive

#GB5710

Our Price ..... **\$79.95**



**Para Battle Knife**

Actual issue to British forces. 7" heavy blade, 12 1/4" overall. Proof marked with the ministry of defense number and broad arrow in wood handle fastened by copper rivets. This is a BIG UGLY HEAVY DUTY knife that has seen action in air, land and sea. Impregnated riveted leather sheath included.

Retail Price \$59.95

#JSM4 ..... Our Price **\$39.95**



**EK M-3**

Black micarta grips, X-head fasteners, excellent black leather sheath. Full tang, rockwell 57-59 6 5/8" blade, 12 1/2" overall. 1 1/2" of sharp edges.

Retail \$149.00

#EKM3 ..... Our Price **\$119.50**

M-4 Also available but not shown. Double edge version of the M-3.

Retail \$149.00

#EKM4 ..... Our Price **\$119.50**

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# Spiderco Clipits™

These Clipit™ knives are the fastest opening folders we've ever seen. The unique design allows you to retrieve the knife from your pocket, open it, use it and close it so fast (with only one hand) that onlookers will wonder where the knife came from.

Their cutting ability is unbelievable. We highly recommend the models with serrations. Only the finest stainless steel is used throughout these lockbacks. G-2 Chrome-Moly stainless steel is used in all models except the standard which uses 6-A stainless.

All 6 models are offered for right or left handed use, serrated or straight edge (please specify when ordering).



**Police** 3 7/8" modified clip point blade.  
Retail \$69.95  
#SP1007 ..... Our Price **\$55.95**

**Mariner** 3 1/2" sheepsfoot blade.  
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**Hunter** 2 5/8" drop point blade.  
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#SP1003 ..... Our Price **\$39.95**

**Standard** 2 5/8" skinning blade.  
Retail \$34.95  
#SP1005 ..... Our Price **\$27.95**

**Worker** 2 5/8" clip point double edged blade.  
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#SP1001 ..... Our Price **\$39.95**

**Executive** 2 1/8" drop point blade.  
Retail \$45.95  
#SP1004 ..... Our Price **\$36.95**

# Chris Reeve

These knives have been tested in action. Handmade by Chris Reeve of South Africa. Custom West German steel similar to D-2. Incredible one-piece construction starts with a solid piece of steel that is milled, ground and turned. "Kalgard" grey/black finish. Handle is bored, threaded and then sealed with an "O" ring equipped aluminum buttcap for water-tight storage. There is a lanyard hole in the buttcap. All blades are hollow ground and Rockwell at 55-57. Serial numbered and issued with a lifetime warranty. Each knife includes a hand-stitched black leather sheath.



**Jereboam I**  
Metal cutting sawteeth, 8 3/4" blade, 13 3/4" overall, 9/32" blade thickness.  
Retail \$285.00  
#CRJ1 ..... Our Price **\$209.95**



**Jereboam II**  
A true Bowie, 8 3/4" blade, 13 3/4" overall, 9/32" blade thickness.  
Retail \$285.00  
#CRJ2 ..... Our Price **\$209.95**



**Shadow I**  
8 3/4" blade, 13 3/4" overall, 9/32" blade thickness.  
Retail \$285.00  
#CRS1 ..... Our Price **\$209.95**



**Aviator**  
Compact, well suited for rescue and survival kits; 4" blade, 8" overall, 3/16" blade thickness.  
Retail \$170.00  
#CRAV ..... Our Price **\$129.95**



**Mountaineer**  
Deep hollow ground blade allows for very sharp field edge; 4" blade, 8" overall, 3/16" blade thickness.  
Retail \$160.00  
#CRMT ..... Our Price **\$119.95**

# Gerber Parabellum™

4 1/4" drop-point blade. Rockwell hardness 57-59. Length open, 9 1/2"; closed, 5 1/4". Blade thickness, .175". Blackie Collins design Cordura swivel sheath included.

Retail \$70.00  
#GB7028  
Our Price ..... **\$52.95**



Swivel sheath to carry knife in open position.

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## An Awesome Knife!

Built to Cutlery Shoppe specifications for strength and easy handling. We started with the proven BMF design, including DuPont Hypalon handle and high carbon stainless steel blade (Rockwell 54-55). Then we lengthened the blade to a 9 inch bowie design, recontoured the handle and revised the top guard to allow a straight thumb hold (complete with thumb grooves) for maximum control and hold options. Overall balance is superb, and construction quality is just what you'd expect from Gerber. The Predator CS™ includes a BMF style Cordura jump sheath with Bianchi military spec belt fastener and diamond sharpening stone.

#GB5930 - A Cutlery Shoppe Exclusive ..... **\$149.95**

## Gerber BMF The Hottest Knife of 1986

13 1/4" overall, 8" long 1/4" thick blade  
DuPont Hypalon™ handle, jeweled compass  
Cordura™ jump sheath, diamond stone  
Available with or without sawteeth

#GB5910 With Sawteeth  
Retail \$160.00 - Our Price **\$119.95**

#GB5920 W/O Sawteeth  
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**NEW**  **VICTORINOX  
SwissChamp®**



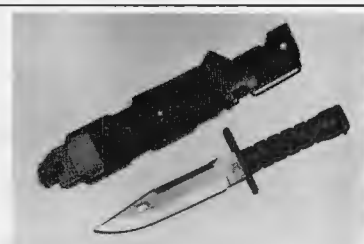
The Ultimate Collection of the most needed implements ever assembled on a folding pocketknife. Starting with all the implements on the Champion, plus a wood chisel, ballpoint pen, pliers, wire cutter and a mini screwdriver in the corkscrew — 29 tools in all! Choice of red or black. **A 'Must Have' Item!**

#SA5069 RED, #SA5070 BLACK,  
#SA5071 WHITE  
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Designed by Phobis III and manufactured by Buck Knives, this is the new Official U. S. Army Bayonet. The Army made a good choice in the M9—it's a sturdy bayonet and also a great field knife. Forged steel 7 1/8" blade, 12 1/4" overall, with a sawtooth back edge, on-sheath wire-cutter and a built-in bottle opener. Includes a high quality DuPont plastic sheath with new Bianchi belt fastener and sharpening stone.

#BK188CB  
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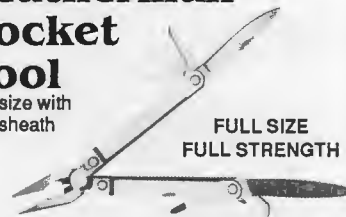
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## Leatherman® Pocket Tool

Full size with  
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FULL STRENGTH

#LT101  
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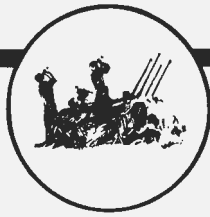
## FREE ADVERTISING FOR VIETNAMESE COMMIES?...

Sirs:

I have been reading SOF since the first issue and consider it to be one of the best. However, in your August Bulletin Board, "Vietnam on \$5 a Day," you advertised free for the Vietnamese communists. The phone number of the company running the trips is from Massachusetts, which is known to Vietnamese in America as a haven for Hanoi's lackeys and sympathizers. It is widely known among Vietnamese communities abroad that Hanoi's regime only allows certain elements to go home, mainly sympathizers or ignorant people. It does this for two main reasons: The tourists bring in dollars to help the failing economy, and these tourists are to report nothing but the best for Hanoi once they return to the States.

Hiep Le Pham  
Gaithersburg,  
Maryland

*Reading that Bulletin Board item again, we saw how it could have been misconstrued to read as if we were promoting travel to communist Vietnam, which certainly was not our intent. We felt that the tone of the piece was sarcastic enough to indicate that we were condemning the notion of Americans spending tourist dollars in Vietnam. We regret that this misunderstanding took place, as SOF is not in the business of promoting any activity that might benefit that particular economy.*



# FLAK



## PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS...

Sirs:

Thought you might like to read the letter I recently sent to Senator Daniel Inouye. Violating the Boland Amendment feels so good, I think I'll do it again. Check enclosed.

Dear Senator Inouye,

I have been following your committee's investigation into attempts by Lt. Col. Oliver North to provide funds to the anti-communist Nicaraguan resistance. I wish to aid you in your search to ferret out anyone who has violated congressional sanctions against opposing communism.

I declare myself an unindicted co-conspirator of Col. North, and am furnishing you with material evidence. I sent a check to the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund in May 1985. I fully intended that the money be used for providing military support to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

Am I in violation of the Boland Amendment or other statutes forbidding opposition to Leninist coups d'etat? And if I am in violation of congressional intent, or anything else, what do you intend to do about it? Thousands of others like me have done everything in their power to assist Col. North, so it is not fair that he be singled out. I await your response.

George M. Mellinger  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## GUNS AND POLITICS BEHIND THE GREAT WALL...

Sirs:

Congratulations on your stunning journalistic advance, the first Westerners invited to the PRC small arms R&D labs, incredible even more so because it was SOF and not one of the biggies. I doubt the U.S. government would have even been offered the privilege.

The new Chinese small arms design achievements are indeed impressive. The Type 81 rifle and its folding-stock brother are a nice update on the classic AK-47/AKM model. The rifle's flash hider is visually similar to the old Beretta BM59 series "tri-compensator" and similar to the muzzle end of the military select-fire version of the Beretta AR70 series.

The Type 74 LMG is even more impressive; it's quite an update over the old RPD and a gigantic advance over the Soviet RPK. It bears an internal resemblance to the old RPD in its use of a gas-operated tilting bolt mechanism. The Type 74 ought to have at least as long a production run as the RPD.

I am looking forward to future articles in this series.

Brian P. Dumas  
Easton, Connecticut

Regarding the publisher's note to the September '87 "Guns Behind the Great Wall": The communist Chinese government is interested in one thing — using us to get our credit, trade and technology.

Communists have used the trick of pretending to be our friends many times in the past. We jump to sell them the rope they use to hang us — for example, we are upgrading the electronics on the Red Chinese F8 aircraft.

Don't you read history? We recognized the Soviet Union and extended them credit in 1933. Some friends they turned out to be. Wake up, SOF. Buddy-buddying with Red China only plays into their hands to get us to let our guard down. You should know better.

John F. Mueller  
Toledo, Ohio

*"The enemy of my enemy is my friend." That's Middle Eastern but appropriate in this case. The Chinese are funding and supplying democratic anti-Vietnamese forces in Southeast Asia and playing a major role in supplying the mujahideen in Afghanistan. For that reason our old*



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**THE CLASSIC AUTOMATIC STILETTO.**  
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**SILENT SENTINEL.** Lightweight but  
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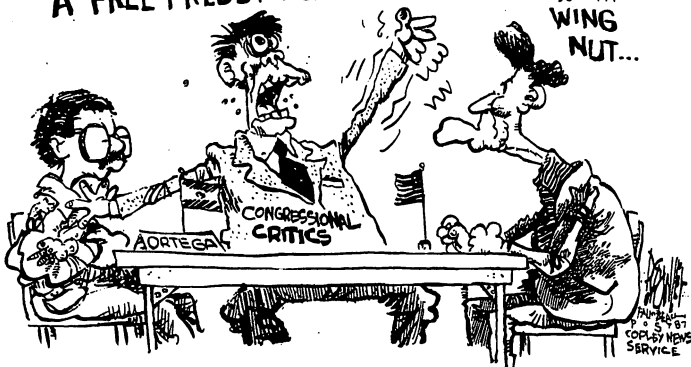
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*enemies have become our new friends. Are we being duped? Perhaps, but as long as China is moving toward the Western world and providing a significant counter to Soviet expansionism in China's sphere of influence, we should maintain relations.*

## COUNSEL FROM THE CONSUL...

Sirs:

I want to respond to the FLAK letter "Soldiers of Misfortune Part 4" [SOF, August '87] from the person who had a problem in Ecuador. I am a U.S. Consul in Ecuador and feel that I can speak with some credibility on this matter. A few hard facts: When you go into a foreign country, you are subject to the laws of that country. If you disobey those laws, you must be prepared for the possible consequences. In most of the Third World, justice depends heavily on who your friends and enemies are and how much money you are willing to spend. It is usually possible to purchase your way through this justice system if the offense is relatively minor and there are no local VIPs wanting your ass in jail for any reason. In the case of major crimes — terrorism, drugs — the laws are usually strictly enforced.

Most Third World countries have ongoing insurgencies and/or terrorist problems and are also becoming more involved in the fight to stem the narcotics traffic. Ecuador is kept free of major terrorist and insurgent activity partly because the police and military are extremely alert to the presence of strangers in the countryside and unusual movements of people. Anyone roaming the Ecuadorian bush armed and in cammies is courting serious trouble.

Let me address the writer's comments about the consular assistance he was (or wasn't) given. He is right in one very important sense: The U.S. Consulate cannot bust you out of jail. We can and do, whenever possible, use our local influence to ease matters for Americans in trouble and we are often successful in getting charges dropped and the gringo out of the country. However, we too are subject to Ecuador's laws and have no special clout just because we're the U.S. Consulate.

The writer's allegations about consular visits and support are exaggerated. Other officers and I make monthly visits to the federal pen here to bring care packages to two Americans who have been imprisoned for trafficking. I also speak with them frequently on the phone and communicate with their families in the States. We do not in any way neglect these men, but . . . we cannot bust them out of jail.

In conclusion, when you go abroad, watch your ass! Your consulates can and do help Americans in trouble, but we can't work miracles.

Donald M. Miller  
Consulate General of the  
United States of America  
Guayaquil, Ecuador

## MORE TV NEWS FROM LEFT FIELD...

Sirs:

Why does the American media reek with liberals? I watched the Larry King Show last night and it made me sick! Some nut from Handgun Control Inc., who wore lipstick, and a guy from the NRA were on the show to talk about gun

control. The NRA man couldn't get a word in edgewise, and every question put to him was loaded. Almost every pro-gun telephone caller on the show was cut off by King before they could finish what they had to say.

PBS has a crazy show that teaches one world government and pacifism as the right way to go! The slob hosting the show calls freedom-loving Americans "primitive nationalists." According to him, it's a sin to fight communism.

NBC, CBS and ABC news programs are usually slanted to the left. Why is this?

Clint Bailey  
Suwanee, Georgia

*Our news media are slanted to the left because not enough Americans have written to the chairman of the board of NBC, CBS, ABC and the other news networks or, better yet, to the CEOs of the various corporations which advertise during news programs to complain about biased coverage.*

## SUPERFLUOUS SUBGUN...

Sirs:

In your June '87 issue I found the Full Auto story "Superfluous Subgun" rather noticeable. In the Summer '76 issue there is an article called "M76 Submachine Gun" by J. David Truby. Mr. Truby speaks in a complimentary fashion about the weapon. However, I consider Peter Kokalis an authority on automatic weaponry in every sense of the word, so I concur with him about the S&W Model 76.

However, no one can say you don't allow differences of opinion, even if the articles are 11 years apart.

SSG Richard Sherman  
Pipe Creek, Texas

## 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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D.R.

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S.C.

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P.S., USN Spec. Warfare Group

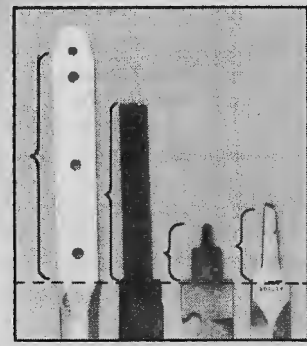


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**I**F you can afford to own and shoot but one belt-fed machine gun, it should be a Browning (BMG). Still in service throughout the free world, these 70-year-old brutes have much to offer both the shooter and collector.

Tremendously robust, incredibly reliable and so easy to maintain, there are still mountains of readily available spare parts and accessories stacked in warehouses from New Jersey to California. But the knowledge you need to keep your Browning cranking will not be found in the U.S. Army Field Manuals (FM). What follows, then, is a compendium of information compiled over the quarter century I have sweated, groaned and strained with this great classic, in all its forms, from blazing deserts to steaming jungles. You will find this data *nowhere else*.

Our frame of reference will be the most commonly encountered species: M2 HB .50 caliber and the .30-caliber series, including the M1917/A1 (water-cooled), M1919A4, M1919A6, M37 (Tank) and AN-M2 (aircraft). You should, of course, also obtain copies of U.S. Army FM23-55 (.30-caliber BMGs) and/or FM23-65 (Ma Deuce).

First, let's discuss a few hints you'll need to reassemble your BMG without sliding up to anxiety level 10. Always reassemble the breech lock into the barrel extension with the beveled edge up (toward the feed cover) and to the front (toward the muzzle). If not, you won't be able to insert the barrel extension and bolt group fully forward into the receiver.

When reassembling .30-caliber Brownings, do not screw the barrel all the way into the barrel extension or, again, this entire group cannot be inserted completely into the receiver. If you place a witness mark with a starter punch on the barrel notch opposite the barrel locking spring (on the left side of the barrel extension) after you have correctly adjusted the headspace, you can immediately return to this position every time you reassemble the weapon.

You must carefully remove all of the aluminum oxide grit out of reparkerized BMGs before firing them. After shooting, they must be thoroughly cleaned once more to avoid stoppages and excessive wear on the reciprocating parts and receiver.

Water-cooled Brownings need special treatment during reassembly. Before reinsertion, the barrels should be coated with a fairly thick layer of Koppers (formerly "PARR") All-Weather Weapons Lube (Koppers Company Inc., Dept. SOF, 5151 Denison Ave., Cleveland, OH 44102; phone 216-651-2010). Discard the asbestos packing string and use four #113 O-rings at the muzzle end and two of same at the



## Browning Machine Guns — A Definitive FM



**U.S. Army Special Forces captain mans Browning M1919A6 aboard air boat in Vietnam Delta region in December 1965. Photo: DoD**

breech end, liberally coated with Koppers. Attach and tighten the muzzle gland securely to the water jacket with the Browning M6 combo tool after the barrel and O-rings are in place. Use a mixture of antifreeze (ethylene glycol) and water for the most efficient cooling and to inhibit rusting. Drain the jacket thoroughly after use and leave both the filler and drain caps open to permit the free circulation of air through the water jacket.

While the weapon is disassembled and also after reassembly we need to inspect some critical components for excessive wear and proper operation. There is a sharply cut notch in the brass trunnion of the M1917/A1 just to the left of the barrel's entrance hole. If necessary, round the corners on this notch or it may cut the rear O-rings, which can result in a stoppage.

Recoil springs on .30-caliber Brownings should be carefully inspected, as they are commonly encountered with coils removed or replaced with improper substitutes. If the spring strength is insufficient, the bolt group will fail to close completely. The free length should be exactly 15 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches with 103 coils and a wire diameter of .045 inches.

Check the left feed pawl spring. If it looks weak or distorted, replace it. Check the feed lever for wear by cycling the weapon to see if the cartridge is pulled all the way over to the T-slot. If the cartridge stays to the left of the

T-slot, you may get a stoppage, so replace the feed lever. Also, make sure the buffer nut is good and tight on both .50- and .30-caliber BMGs.

Timing and headspace must be checked prior to firing any BMG. Headspace and timing gages for Ma Deuce are a dime a dozen, but gages for .30-caliber BMGs are difficult to locate and, in any event, the .30-caliber timing gages apply only to the AN-M2 aircraft gun, as no feeler gages were ever issued for timing the .30-caliber ground guns. For headspacing any .30-caliber Browning you need a feeler gage that measures .125 inches in thickness for "GO" and another .130 inches in thickness for "NO GO." The "NO FIRE" timing gage for .30-caliber BMGs should be .120 inches in thickness (.074 inches for the AN-M2) and .030 inches for the "FIRE" gage (.020 inches for the AN-M2).

If the firing pin releases when the "NO FIRE" gage is inserted between the barrel extension and the trunnion block and the trigger is depressed (Ma Deuce) or pulled (M1917/A1, M1919A4/A6 or M37), the gun is timed to fire too early. Firing should always take place just before the recoiling parts are in battery (fully forward). This is easy enough to correct with the timing adjustment nut inside the .50-caliber M2 HB's receiver. But there is no such provision on any of the .30-caliber BMGs. How do you adjust their timing?

First, remove the trigger from the lock frame. Place it sideways in a vise (with brass or leather jaws) with a large machine bolt in place so that when you close the vise you can bend the front



**DANIEL ORTEGA**



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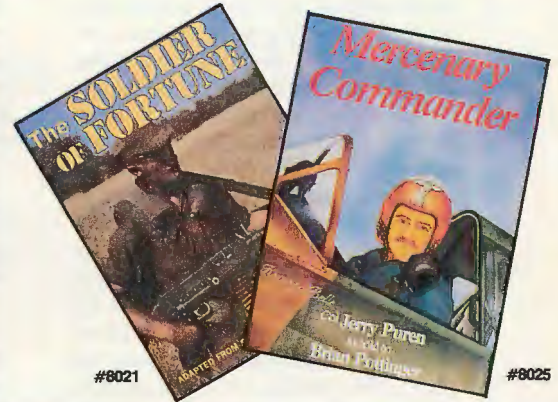
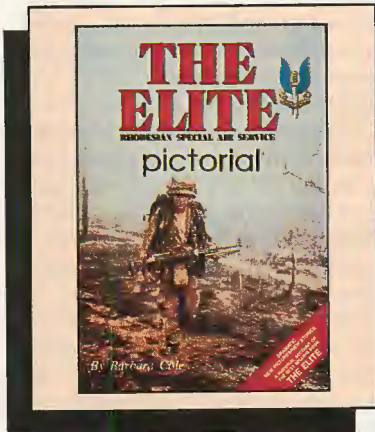
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end of the trigger bar either up or down. If, after inserting the "NO FIRE" gage and pulling the trigger the firing pin releases, you need to bend the front end of the trigger upward. Do so, a little at a time, then reinstall the trigger and check the timing once more. Some triggers are more ductile than others due to variable heat treatment. You'll just have to experiment. After bending the front end of the trigger upward, you may also have to bend the rear end of the trigger downward so that it does not impinge against the top of its slot in the backplate when pulled.

Let's discuss some quirks about .30-caliber BMG parts interchangeability. Unless its diameter is reduced at the muzzle end, you can't put an A4 barrel into the M1919A6 and, of course, the M1917/A1 barrels cannot be used in either the A4 or A6. But some people are fond of slipping the lighter A6 barrel into their A4, since this raises the cyclic rate about 100 rpm. I cannot recommend this practice, as the A6 barrel is unsupported by the A4's front barrel bearing for about the last 1/8 inch of the recoil momentum.

There is a great deal of confusion about the interchangeability of extractors. The skeletonized AN-M2 extractor is not wide enough to be used in any of the other models. But M1919A4/A6 and M1917/A1 extractors (marked with drawing no. D44087) are all interchangeable. M37 extractors (marked on either the top or bottom with no. 7188709), although quite different because of this weapon's ability to feed from either the right or left side, have improved ejector springs and can be used providing you make certain the ejector hook has been installed on the right side (for left-hand feed). It's good procedure to periodically examine the ejector hook for wear.

By the way, the spring-loaded plunger on the left side of the extractor will hold the bolt group to the rear if inserted into a hole on the left receiver wall, unfortunately not encountered on most aftermarket receivers.

More recent M1919A4/A6 charging handles have a small tip on the bolt end that can be inserted in the hole on the right receiver wall when removing the lock frame. They can be used in any .30-caliber BMG.

There is an unusual skeletonized bolt, rarely encountered, that will raise the cyclic rate up to about 800 rpm. Apparently a remnant from the unsuccessful experiments to convert the Browning to 7.62x51mm NATO, it should not be confused with the bolt contained in the .22 LR subcaliber kit. These .22 LR kits are far more trouble than they're worth. After ejection of the empty inserts and cases, you must

load all the subcaliber inserts back into the belt, punch out the empty .22 cases and laboriously reload the inserts.

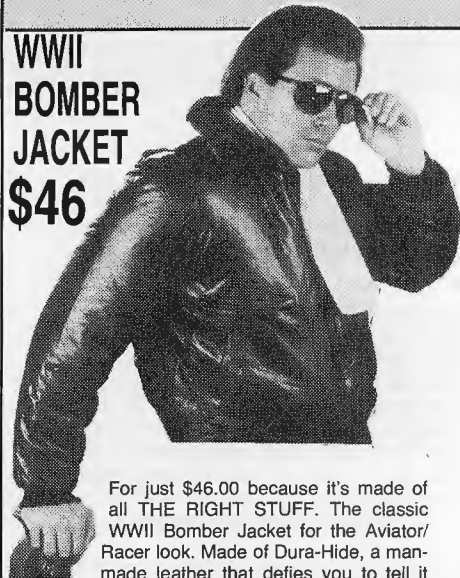
We're almost ready to start shooting. But first, your Browning must be mounted on the tripod. Although the lightweight M2 tripod was specifically designed for the M1919A4/A6, I prefer to shoot these machine guns from the heavier, but more stable, M1917/A1 tripod to increase the accuracy potential. This tripod was designed during a transition period when many machine-gun tripods still held a seat for the gunner on a single rear leg. While certainly comfortable, this is an excellent way to get shot by your opponents. Whenever possible, these weapons should be fired from the prone position, behind cover and concealment. To maximize stability, the M1917/A1's "rear" leg has a shoe designed to be floated on a small board set into a trench in the ground. Forget about this and place the single leg to the front and the other two legs to the rear so you can position yourself between them in the prone position. To increase the long-range accuracy potential, place one or two sandbags under the pintle and over each leg.

Now we can lock and load. Reloads will do, if the overall length is correct and you use a heavy crimp. Any of the progressive reloaders manufactured by Dillon Precision Products, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 7442 East Butherus Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85260; phone 1-800-421-7632) are best for this purpose. You must neck-trim once-fired .30-06 cases before reloading. Dillon's RT1200 Electric Case Trimmer is the most efficient tool I have ever used for the simultaneous sizing and trimming of rifle cases. Reloads are fine for Ma Deuce as well, as long as they come from someone who really knows what he's doing. Contact Lamont's Precision Bullets (Dept. SOF, 4236 West 700 South, Poneto, IN 46781; phone 219-694-6792). Kent Lamont can provide .50-caliber ammunition for every purpose from blasting to precision long-range sniping.

Use only cloth belts in the M1917/A1. Metal links will abrade and scratch the brass feed block. If nothing but metallic disintegrating links are available, fabricate a shield for the feed block out of steel shim stock. Make sure the belts do not touch either the front (if present) or rear cartridge stops on the feed block. Metallic links will not damage the M1919A4/A6's steel feed block.

This should get you started. There are no finer rattle-guns than any of John Browning's ubiquitous models. Most of their components are good for 50,000 to 100,000 rounds. They will never fail if you tend to them properly. ✕

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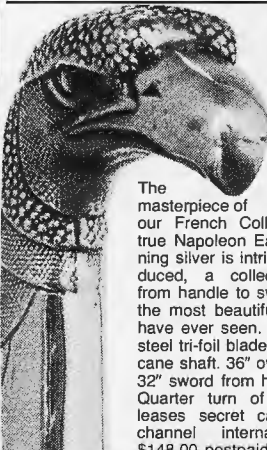
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The most sophisticated yet developed. Made for professional hunters to hear approaching animals at a great distance, the VanSleek has now been discovered by the security industry. On city terrain, sounds leap across blocks and streets. Guards are using VanSleek in prison yards to listen to convicts. The range of uses of the VanSleek Farfoon is astonishing and satisfaction is over-whelming. Receptivity plus. VanSleek is superior to direct receiver products. . . utilizes a built-in 3 1/2" parabolic dish for Sound Mirror effect previously only found on larger, more expensive units. Convenient size, small enough for use in tight places. Weighs about 2-lbs. Solid-state circuitry. Powered by 6 pen-light batteries for increased amplitude. \$148.00 postpaid and worth it!

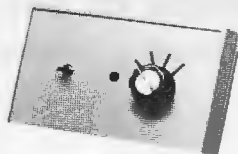
## SECRET EAR

Long Distance  
Surveillance  
via your  
telephone.

**\$169.00** POSTPAID

Tele-Monitor  
2000 lets you  
discreetly

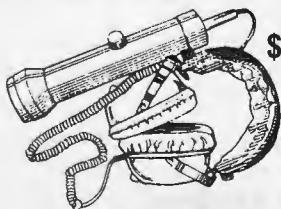
listen in on unusual activities on any premises via the telephone. This small device (5 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 1") plugs into any modular jack. Does not require beeper/pager. All it takes is a touch tone phone. Simply call the number Tele-Monitor is attached to, then access by pushing the correct touch-tone buttons. Once activated, Tele-Monitor's super sensitive mike picks up the most minute of sounds: a door or window opening, muffled sounds of burglars at work, cries for help, a smoke alarm — any unusual sound. Compatible with any American phone exchange. Up to four units can be attached to one phone line, so you can monitor from room to room. Normal phone operation is not affected. American-made, state-of-the-art and priced right for just \$169.00 postpaid (two for \$318.00 and four for \$556.00).



## BIONIC EAR

**OUR PRICE**  
**\$68 POSTPAID.**

Sound shut-off  
circuit and  
tape jack  
standard.



Optional booster increases pickup 37%,  
**\$39 postpaid. SAVE, buy the Combo Pak for**  
**\$98 postpaid.**

## INCREDIBLE NIGHT VISION

- Used by U.S. forces in Viet Nam and refined by the Israeli Army for desert warfare and counter-terrorist campaigns. Our Israeli contact secured a number of these AN/PAS-5's. They come direct from Israeli storerooms, are in excellent condition and are operation-ready.
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But They Can't See You



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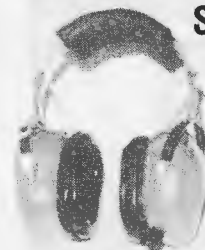
- Infrared systems can cost \$thousands. Here is your chance for just \$398.00 postpaid to own a sophisticated infrared system COMPLETE with everything you need for operation — goggles, light source, filters, and more! Sorry, at these prices NO credit card or COD's. Money orders and bank checks ONLY for this item.

## PENalyzer CS Tear Gas \$8.95



Looks like an ordinary ball point pen, complete with pocket clip. But pull off the cap and you've got a potent punch of CS Tear GAS at your disposal. Wear PENalyzer in your shirt pocket and have unobtrusive security no matter where you are. 8g aerosol shoots disabling blast 6 to 8 feet. PENalyzer is filled in France by one of the world's oldest and largest manufacturers of chemicals and equipment for police/military applications. Special Dutchman price of \$8.95 each or six for \$29.00 postpaid. Hurry, supplies are limited on this very unique product.

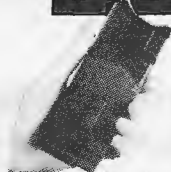
## SOUNDBUSTERS SHOOTER'S EAR™



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**NOVA XR5000**  
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**50,000 VOLTS!**

The Nova XR5000 Stun Gun can protect you from attackers.

STUN GUN will instantly "scramble" attacker's nervous system causing immediate (temporary) paralysis! By simply touching your attacker anywhere, he will drop helpless even through many layers of clothing. STUN GUN is not lethal and is safe to user. Cannot transmit shock back to you. Requires a 9 volt nicad battery and charger \$16.00. The Nova is sold with a leather holster for \$63.00 postpaid. This is the authentic American made product. Put 50,000 volts in the palm of your hand, order today.

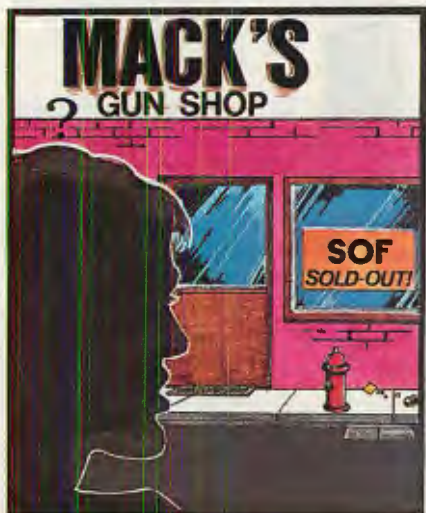
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# WANTED



## DANIEL ORTEGA

*Dictator of Nicaragua*

### For:

**BANK ROBBERY:** Ortega's career in crime began in his teens with a string of bank robberies. In one incident, a bank guard was killed.

**ELECTION FRAUD:** Ortega stole the November 4, 1984 Presidential election. The opposition candidate, Arturo Cruz, fled Nicaragua when he was physically assaulted by Sandinista-directed mobs and denied access to the media. Ortega's brother Humberto said it best: "Keep firmly in your minds that these elections are to consolidate revolutionary power, not to place it at stake."

**MURDER & TORTURE:** Ortega's jails contain over 11,000 political prisoners compared to 600 under the dictator Somoza. Executions are commonplace. Use of torture is widespread and systematic. It includes: placement in hot boxes, placement in neck-deep sewage pits, attacks by trained dogs, multiple rape, electrical shock to genitalia, and psychological torture.

**CORRUPTION:** Ortega has become fantastically rich since becoming dictator. He lives in a \$350,000 home with a half million dollar art collection. According to Jack Anderson (*Washington Post*, September 20, 1985), "The three commandantes who dominate the Sandinista junta, Daniel Ortega, Humberto Ortega and Tomas Borge, have divvied up the country's import market through two monopoly companies." During a 1985 trip to New York City, Ortega and his common-law wife spent \$3,500 on designer eyewear, placing the bill on a Diners Club card.

**GENOCIDE:** Ortega's government has destroyed 139 of the 256 Miskito Indian communities existing in 1979, including 73 churches. Murder, rape, and arrest of Miskito Indians is widespread and arbitrary. Thousands of Miskitos have fled to Honduras and Costa Rica. Thousands more remain confined to Sandinista forced-labor camps.

For more information on Ortega's crimes, contact: Citizens for Reagan, 412 First St., SE, Washington, DC 20003 202-479-1105



**GREEN BERETS, SEALs & SPETSNAZ: U.S. & Soviet Special Military Operations.** By John M. Collins. Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Dept. SOF, Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523. 1987. 174 pages. Softcover. \$15.95. Review by G.B. Crouse.



**J**OHAN M. Collins, drawing on his 30-year Army career, which included service with Special Operations Task Force Europe and 15 years as a senior specialist in national defense at the Library of Congress, has produced the first and only unclassified assessment of Soviet and American special operations capabilities.

Collins, author of the highly acclaimed **U.S.-Soviet Military Balance**, has broadened the information available on the balance of forces by addressing the area of special operations.

**Green Berets, SEALs & Spetsnaz** is designed to give policymakers and planners in Congress and the defense establishment a standard reference, one that examines and explains the doctrine of special operations and the capabilities of the forces tasked with performing counterinsurgency, resistance, counter-terrorism and related missions.

This book is valuable for experts as well as laymen. The glossary (written by the author rather than simply lifted from other sources) provides working definitions for terms that are often vague or ill-defined even within the special operations community. Source notes list hundreds of documents, books and articles for anyone who wants to examine more closely different aspects of special operations.

Comprehensive and concise, **Green Berets, SEALs & Spetsnaz** is the only single source for all the facts, figures and hard-to-find information regarding the increasingly important field of special operations.

**THE NAVY CROSS — VIETNAM.** Edited by Paul Drew Stevens. Sharp & Dunnigan, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 60, 15522 Nopel Ave., Forest Ranch, CA 95942. 1987. Hardcover. 372 pages. \$19.50

## IN REVIEW

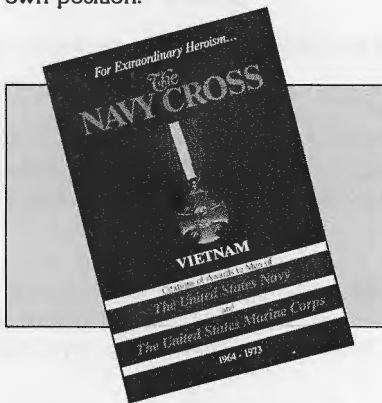


plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Review by Tom Slizewski.

**I**N the course of the Vietnam War, 362 Marines, 121 Navy personnel, a U.S. Army lieutenant and one Vietnamese navy petty officer received the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism.

**The Navy Cross — Vietnam** is a compilation of the 485 citations for Navy Crosses awarded from 1964 through 1973. Each citation is a vignette of the great service one man performed for his country. One such man was Lieutenant Thomas E. Noel, USMC, who charged through a mortar barrage to throw grenades into two bunkers, killing the NVA occupants. Another, Petty Officer Norman Stayton, USN, dove from his helicopter into a canal which had been set afire when a river patrol boat carrying jet fuel hit a mine, and rescued a drowning sailor.

For many of the men in this book, their heroic deeds were also their last — 176 of the medals were awarded posthumously. Lieutenant William Fitzgerald, USN, was killed when VC forces overran his base. He ordered his men to evacuate while he alone acted as rear guard, calling artillery on his own position.



The criteria for the Navy Cross require that the courageous act be so heroic as to set the sailor or Marine apart from his contemporaries. After reading the citations it's clear that these men did that and more. In a war that seemed to produce few heroes, **The Navy Cross — Vietnam** makes it clear that the heroes were there — America just didn't care to notice. But Americans are noticing now, and **The Navy Cross — Vietnam** is a fitting tribute to 485 brave men whose acts of extraordinary heroism under fire

earned them the Naval Service's second highest decoration for bravery.

**TIMEFIGHTER: A Marine in Vietnam.** By Gary D. Murtha. GDM Publications, Dept. SOF, 8813 McLeroy, Kansas City, MO 64134. 1986. 96 pages. \$9.95. Review by Bill Brooks.



**F**IELDS of Fire or A Rumor of War this is not. There is nothing profound or of great literary merit to be found in **Timefighter**. The experience of reading this book is not so much informative or entertaining as it is a visit with the author. Sort of like spending an evening looking through Murtha's photo album while recalling shared experiences from the war in Vietnam.

Gary Murtha was a 19-year-old Marine rifleman when he arrived in Vietnam in January 1967. Assigned to Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, Murtha served in Northern I Corps until February 1968. **Timefighter** is his war story, a grunt's-eye view of what Vietnam looked, sounded, smelled and felt like for one combat Marine.

**Timefighter** encompasses all of Murtha's experiences in Vietnam, from his arrival in-country to his long-awaited rotation back to the States. The change in the author during the course of his 13 months at war is clear. The youthful expectations seen in his letters home give way to photos of himself after eight months in-country, photos that reveal all the emotions of an extreme existence.

**Timefighter** serves as a personal introduction to the author, giving Americans a unique opportunity to get to know one Vietnam veteran, person to person, something most Americans seem to have avoided for the last 20 years. ✕

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## USAF Flight Jacket-

These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for Intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20° to 55°F). Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible; outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sewn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend.

### Specify:

- Sage Green or Blue Shell - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL ..... \$53.95/each.
- Black (nylon shell) or Camouflage (50% cotton/50% nylon shell) - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL ..... \$53.95/each.

## Special Forces Green Beret -

Jaunty and daring and classy - like the professional's who wear them. These are official regulation berets of 100% vat dyed wool and meeting all military specs. Made expressly for us by the prime government contractor. Also available Official headgear for Airborne Qualified (Maroon), Ranger Commandos (Black), Artillery & Guardian Angels (Red), Commando Dress (Camouflage). Sizes - 6 7/8 to 7 3/4

(Not sure of head size? Tell us how many inches around your head where you wear your hat. We'll send the right one.) \$13.75/each

## Angle Head Flashlite-

This is the heavy duty plastic flashlight issued to all military units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation, operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box.

- Choose: Olive Drab (OD) green or black ..... \$6.50/each.

**Black Commando Dog Tag Set** - (A Kaufman's Exclusive): 2 GI stainless steel tags specially treated to be non-glare flat black plus 2 black (4" and 24") ball chains ..... \$6.00/set

**Regulation GI Dog Tags** - (GENUINE GI) set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") ..... \$4.00/set.

Want us to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANY THING up to 6 lines and 15 spaces per line. Printing only \$1.50 per tag (\$3.00/set).

PLEASE, NO DOG TAG IMPRINTING ORDERS BY TELEPHONE.

**Dog Tag Silencers** - black, non-glare rubber bumpers for tags ..... \$1.25/pair.

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When it comes to winter clothing, the 3 main concerns of the military are quality, functionality and WARMTH. After this they think about price.

The US military wants its troops to keep warm in the winter in clothes that will last a bunch of winters. They know quality costs more.

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

Most of the items in this ad are current military issue, brand new and unconditionally guaranteed to satisfy you or your money back. And when you consider the quality, do the prices seem high at all?

## Field Jacket - Type M65

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

The field jacket is designed for 3 season wear. In winter you can button in the liner (see below) or wear a vest or heavy sweater under it.

- Lightweight Hood
- Concealed in Collar
- Epaulets
- Gusseted Back for Freedom of Movement
- 4 Huge Outside Pockets
- Outershell of 50% Cotton/50% Nylon - Water & Wind Repellent
- Adjustable Cuffs
- Drawstring Waistband

**M65 Liner** - designed to be buttoned into the M65 Field Jacket. These liners are lightweight, polyester-fiberfilled, and very warm. Order same size as your field jacket. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL ..... \$19.00/each.

## Ranger Combat Cap-Woodland Camouflage-latest Army issue.

This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tucked into the hat when the weather's balmy. Sizes run small. Also available in Olive Drab (OD) Green. Sizes: 7, 7-1/4, 7-1/2, 7-3/4 ..... \$8.50/each.

## Drill Instructor/Smokey the Bear Hat

Formally called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt headpiece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or hear abuses, pursue flammers or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wishful self be heard. Commercially manufactured to exacting specs. Sizes 6-7 8 to 7-3/4

- Genuine Leather Chin Strap ..... \$19.75/each.
- Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) ..... \$2.00/each.
- Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) ..... \$7.75/each. (Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue)

## IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT

### SHIPPING COSTS

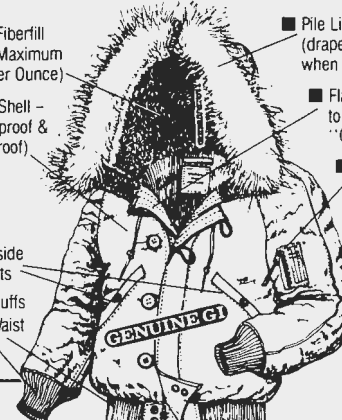
Please include appropriate shipping costs from chart below with each order. Amounts shown include costs of postage, packaging insurance and handling.

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Orders from \$10.01 to 20.00	3.75
Orders from \$20.01 to 35.00	4.50
Orders from \$35.01 to 50.00	5.25
Orders from \$50.01 to 70.00	6.25
Orders from \$70.01 to 90.00	7.25
Orders over \$90.00	8.00

Canadian Orders-Send Double Amount Indicated.

## USAF Heavyweight Flight Jacket-Type N2B DESIGNED FOR TEMPERATURES OF -10° TO 32° F.

- Polyester Fiberfill Lining - (Maximum Warmth Per Ounce)
  - Nylon Shell - (Waterproof & Windproof)
  - 2 Outside Pockets
  - Knit Cuffs and Waist
  - Pile Line Hood - (drapes over shoulder when not needed)
  - Flap Under Zipper to Prevent "Cold Spots"
  - Zippered Sleeve Pocket with Pencil Holder
- Choose: Black or Sage Green Outer Shell Color.  
Sizes: S, M, L and XL.  
\$94.25/each.



## Watch Cap - 100% Wool -

- Tight Ribbed Weave
  - Roll Down to Cover Ears When Desired
  - One Size Fits All
- Choose Color - Black or Olive Drab (OD) Green  
\$6.00/each.



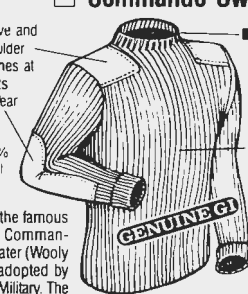
Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL (Send us your chest size for proper fit) Long Length (for person over 6 ft tall) Choose: Olive Drab (OD) Green or Woodland Camouflage (Also Black or Tan Commercial Mkt. to GI Specs. - Reg. Length Only) Reg Length \$55.00 Long Length \$60.50 Extra Large/Long \$85.00

## MILITARY GOODS CATALOG

1987 edition. 84 pages, loaded with genuine military clothing, gear and equipment. \$2.00/each. Free with order.

## Commando Sweater -

- Sleeve and Shoulder Patches at Points of Wear
  - 100% Wool
  - Crew Neck Design
  - Tight Weave Makes Sweater Wind & Water Repellent
  - Extra long body and sleeve (can be rolled up)
- This is the famous British Commando Sweater (Woolly Pulley) adopted by the US Military. The natural 100% wool fibre content makes the sweater super warm. Specify size: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46 ..... \$44.75/each. Sizes 48, 50 ..... add \$5.00/each.
- Choose:  Olive Drab (OD) Green Crewneck (USMC approved);  Black V-Neck with epaulets and name plate area on breast (US Army approved);  Black Crewneck (no epaulets or nameplate area);  Camouflage Crewneck;  Tan Crewneck;  Maroon Crewneck.



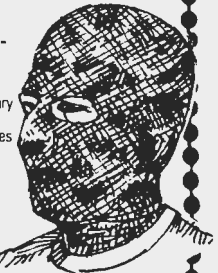
## Commando Sweater - Commercially made

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

## CAMOUFLAGE

### Commando Camouflage Headnet - Spandoflage -

Expandable camouflage mesh fits comfortably on any size head. Cool in summer, warm in winter, this revolutionary new mesh material can be cut (but will not unravel) to form eye-holes for the comfort of eyeglass wearers. Choose: Woodland Camouflage, Desert Camouflage or Solid Black ..... \$6.00/each; 2 for \$11.00.



### Camouflage Face Paint -

Each metal tube contains 2 colors of facepaint which can be easily removed with soap and water. Current military issue. Choose: Woodland Camo (green & loam); desert camo (light green & sand); snow camo (white & loam) ..... \$2.75/tube; 2 tubes for \$5.00

**I**NTELLIGENTLY selecting a defensive handgun can be extremely difficult. Trying to make your way through all the mythology is no easy task — but choosing the right cartridge and handgun combination is essential to ensure survival in a lethal confrontation.

Although most handgun calibers are capable of generating some controversy, none seems to match that created by the .45 ACP. Handgunners tend to view it as either the greatest pistol cartridge ever created or as an antiquated, overrated round that is overshadowed by a wide variety of more modern offerings.

The obvious question is, whom do you believe? Both the Relative Stopping Power (RSP) gang (pro-.45) and the Relative Incapacitation Index (RII) followers (anti-.45) quote impressive statistics and “facts” that prove their arguments. Given the opportunity they will bury you in evidence to prove their point of view.

The RSP people want us to believe that bullet diameter and weight are more important than velocity. They feel that big bore, moderate velocity rounds like .45 hardball are superior stoppers and that the lightweight, small bore, high velocity offerings are dismal failures in the real world.

Conversely, the RII devotees want us to believe that the large temporary wound cavities created in gelatin blocks by high velocity hollowpoints are accurate indicators of stopping power potential.

Who’s right and who’s wrong? They both are — sort of. The problem is that we really don’t know that much about stopping power and probably never will. Handgun rounds in both categories have produced both superb and inadequate results.

The key to stopping power is bullet placement. The most “inadequate” round in the spine will stop a fight, while the “best” load in the stomach probably won’t. Of course, bullets (like hollowpoints) that offer increased shocking power can be of real value. But we need to avoid the temptations of “super bullets.” All too often people buy what they consider as “the load” and assume they no longer need to worry about basics like marksmanship.

I began my law enforcement career 18 years ago as a member of a police department that issued the .38 Special but allowed its personnel the option of carrying a privately owned revolver of larger caliber. I looked around at what was available and opted for the Smith & Wesson Model 58 .41 Magnum. No, there wasn’t any empirical data to back up my decision. Instead my choice was based on intuition and personal bias. Bigger just seemed better.

Five years later I started my career as a



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

## Killer Calibers for Handguns

by Evan Marshall



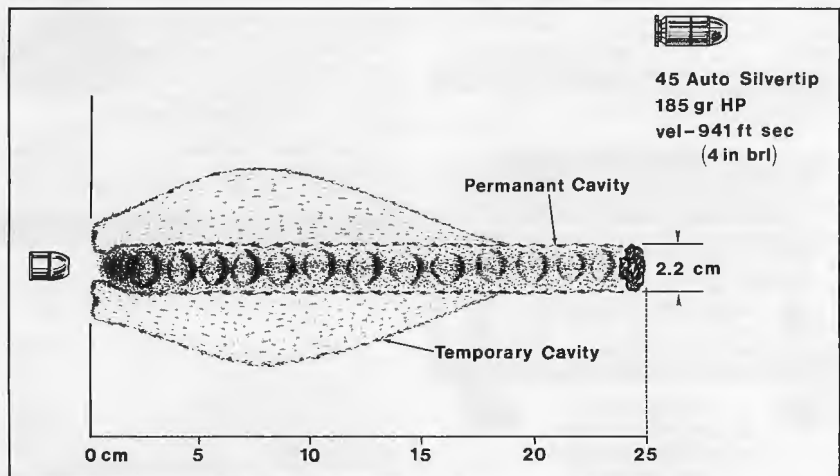
**This .45 round was one of five removed from the chest of a police officer. The wounded policeman drew his service .38 and killed his attackers. Photo: Evan Marshall**

**One of 11 .38 rounds that failed to stop a suspect — eight of these rounds passed completely through him. Photo: Evan Marshall**



**Shotgun-wielding rapist had his criminal career ended with this .45 ACP round. Photo: Evan Marshall**

**Wound profile showing temporary and permanent wound cavities created by a 185-grain .45 ACP Silvertip round. Chart: Dr. Martin Fackler**



gun writer. As I traveled around the country on magazine assignments, I would talk to other cops about carry weapons, ammo and officer-involved shootings. Eventually, I began to get serious about collecting data on handgun-involved shootings. Whenever possible I attended autopsies, interviewed involved officers, examined and photographed bullets, obtained copies of crime scene and homicide reports, talked to emergency room surgeons and picked the brains of forensic pathologists all across the country.

This turned out to be a slow process, as it proved quite difficult to get sufficient data in many cases to make any intelligent conclusions. It took over a decade to accumulate enough data on the various handgun calibers to report with even some degree of certainty what the popular handgun loads were doing in actual shootings.

The result, then, is not some com-

*Continued on page 100*

### AMMO AUTHORITY

Evan Marshall, *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine’s contributing editor for law enforcement, is a sergeant with a large Midwestern police department, where he is assigned as a full-time SWAT trainer. He has a master’s degree in criminal justice and is an authority on police weaponry, ammunition and tactics.





**I**N mid-1969, I was commanding A Company, 1/61 Infantry, in northern I Corps. We were working company-sized AOs along the coast, mostly ambush and patrol work.

One night, about half an hour after dusk, I got a call. One of our ambushes had captured a child while moving into position. I headed out with the company reaction force and linked up with them. Sure enough, they had a skinny, scared kid, who backed away from me when I approached him. I reached out and grabbed him by the belt — a plastic belt with a square metal buckle with an embossed star on it.

We threw a poncho over the prisoner and examined him with a flashlight. His sallow complexion and leech scars on his legs told the whole story. He'd obviously been living in bunkers in the jungle for a long time.

A marathon questioning session developed under the poncho. With the advantage of a pocket notebook, I could shoot rapid-fire questions at the prisoner, jot down the answers and trip him up whenever he stumbled.

I assigned him to a platoon and he led them to some old, fallen-in bunkers. The platoon leader explained that those weren't exactly the bunkers he had in mind. He then led them to a couple more, this time in better condition.

"No, I'm afraid you still haven't got the idea."

For three days we roamed the area, uncovering bunker after bunker. Slowly but surely we cleaned up every bunker the prisoner knew. We captured rice, ammo and other supplies — not much, but it was all the prisoner's platoon had stashed for a rainy day.

The next night an ambush party surprised the VC platoon. The VC dropped their packs and di-di'ed. My troops brought in the packs and I checked them against the growing mass of data in my pocket notebook. Each pack had its owner's name in it — and they tallied with what the prisoner had told me. That platoon was in serious trouble now; we had their packs and all their spare food and ammo.

The next night we made contact again. We hit one of them as they were coming out of the same village, and the rest fled back to the edge of the village. I called the reaction force out again and linked up with the platoon that had made contact. By now, there was a brisk firefight going on, with our elements on one side of a big, plowed vegetable garden and the VC on the other side. The platoon leader called for continuous illumination, and the drifting illum rounds gave the whole scene a spooky appearance.

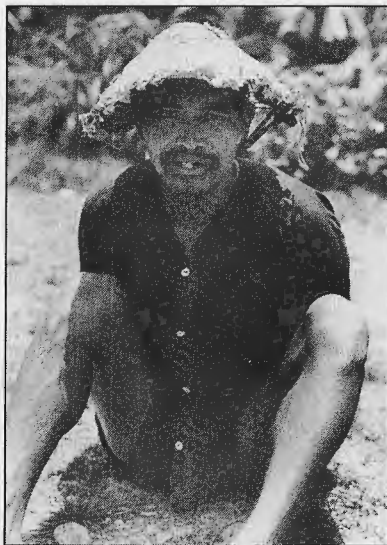
We didn't seem to be getting anywhere this way, so I turned off the illum, formed a skirmish line and went



# I WAS THERE

by Vernon Humphrey

## Kickin' Ass and Taking Names



**Capturing one VC willing to talk could be the key to clearing an entire AO. Photo: DoD**

into the village. Moving through the vegetable garden, I stepped over a row of plants and noticed a bundle of rags lying on the ground. A moment later I heard a scream, "Waaaa! He's alive!"

I spun around to see the "bundle of rags" doing the boogaloo while one of my boys pumped a full mag of 5.56mm into him. The bastard had tried to shoot me in the back. We pushed on and drove the VC out the other side of the village, where another ambush had a crack at them.

In the days following, we continued to make contact, sometimes with results, sometimes with just a smell of the enemy. Slowly but surely, I was crossing off names in my pocket notebook as we accounted for the platoon members, one at a time.

They were getting desperate, so I decided to change tactics and set ambushes around another village, one located inside a resettlement zone. Normally, the VC would think long and hard about entering a resettlement zone, but you never knew.

The first night we popped an ambush on an old man. His family

threw a fit, claiming that he had just been going out to get some water from the rice paddy. But why would he do that when the village had a perfectly good well? And the rice paddy was on the other side of the village from the ambush site. We confronted them with this and they broke down. The old man was the local VC tax collector and he was going out to lead in the starving survivors of the platoon.

We were having some success, but I was getting pressure from Military Intelligence. Every day they complained that the prisoner should be sent back to them for interrogation. I finally ran out of excuses, so I wrote an account of the capture and summarized the results of our actions to date, then copied everything in my pocket notebook. It filled 20 sheets of legal-sized paper. I sent that in with the prisoner and called battalion later to confirm that both prisoner and paperwork had arrived.

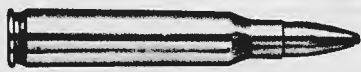
When we rotated out of that AO, we had accounted for all but one of the members of the platoon — all killed, except for the original prisoner. And we'd killed a VC tax collector on top of that. As we handed over the AO, I briefed the incoming company commander and passed the pocket notebook to him. It was filled to overflowing now.

A couple of days later, we got a call from battalion — a man had appeared at a MEDCAP for treatment, claiming a buffalo had bitten his hand. When the medics found a claymore pellet under his skin, they got suspicious and turned him over to the Ruff-Puffs. He turned out to be the missing member of the platoon.

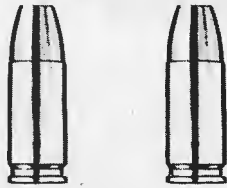
A week later the intelligence summary came out. It reported that A Company, 1/61 Infantry, had captured a prisoner and gave the coordinates and date-time group. Then it went on to say, "The prisoner was a rice carrier and had no information of any tactical value." ✖







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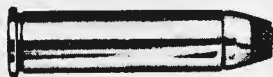


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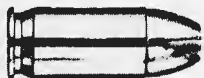


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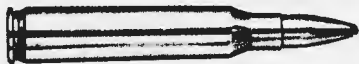


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# BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

## Utility Blades and Combat Steel



**I**T'S a fact that there are many knives made today that do not work well, and the men who make them are actually and honestly unaware that their knives are inefficient. There are literally hundreds of knife salesmen in sporting goods stores in large cities who have never skinned a deer, made a fuzz stick for starting a fire or built a shelter with a knife; yet they will tell you with a straight face that this or that knife is what you need.

Many of these inefficient knives being pushed by salesmen have, among other things, incorrect blade lengths. You see, blade length determines, to a large extent, how a specific knife can be used.

This was brought home to me a few years ago. It came to my attention that in Texas it's legal to carry a fixed-blade knife anywhere other than a liquor store as long as it's single edged, does not have a double cross guard, and has a blade that is less than 5½ inches long. As soon as I discovered this, I made several utility knives with 5½-inch blades.

My friends and I carried them for one summer and into the fall hunting season. We enjoy primitive camping and practice survival techniques by going on hunting and camping trips lasting upwards of two weeks. We limit

**Small knives have their place in the scheme of things, but they won't make the big cuts and chops required of a survival tool such as a battle blade. Photo: Tom Slizewski**

ourselves to gear used prior to 1840. We often allow ourselves only what we can carry, and we always carry a Bowie knife and at least one smaller knife. Our smaller knives had always been fixed-blade, single-edged affairs with 4- to 4½-inch blades. We carried these small knives for everyday use, even when not hunting or camping.

As soon as we started using the longer 5½-inch blades for skinning, peeling potatoes, spreading honey and such, we discovered that these longer knives, even though they had the same blade shape, didn't work as well for the little things as did the smaller blades. We immediately went back to the smaller knives and have been using them ever since.

I've been accused of harboring a prejudice for large blades, and it's true that I prefer a Bowie with a 9⅞-inch blade if I can have only one knife. A battle blade should be a knife with the strength and size to make any cut survival may require. If I'm allowed the luxury of a second blade, it will be a small, fixed-blade knife with a single edge and a blade between 4 and 4½





## SPACE-AGE STOCK

Though unorthodox in appearance, the Barracuda stock, available for UZI submachine guns and semiautomatic carbines, exhibits superb human engineering and significantly reduces muzzle climb and perceived recoil, especially with the .45 ACP conversion kit employed.

Distributed by Armscorp of America and manufactured in Israel, the Barracuda is fabricated from tough, impact-resistant black polycarbonate and is reportedly in service with special units of the Israel Defense Forces. Installation is simple, requiring only removal of the UZI's handguards, grip panels and stock. With a suggested retail of \$139.95, this futuristic marvel is both practical and affordable. Write Armscorp of America, Dept. SOF, 9162 Brookville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910.



## CLIPITS MULTIPLY

Spyderco's line of Clipit folding knives has received wide acclaim and enjoys continued success in the cutthroat knife market. Rather than argue with success, Spyderco is expanding on its proven design by adding two new configurations to the lineup.

Co-Pilot is the newest and smallest Clipit, with an overall blade length of only 2 inches. You can stash it literally anywhere, and it incorporates the trademark thumb hole for easy one-handed opening. Retail price is \$41.95.



# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by Tom Slizewski



Taking a more specialized tack is the Harpy Clipit. The talon-shaped blade was designed with the seiner (net fisherman) in mind and is extremely efficient at cutting line. Also, the grasping action of the curved blade allows for easy one-handed cutting. Suggested retail is \$54.95.

Clipits are available with straight or serrated blades and offer a lifetime of knife utility. Contact Spyderco Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 800, Golden, CO 80402 or call toll-free 1-800-525-7770.

## TRAVEL IS HELL

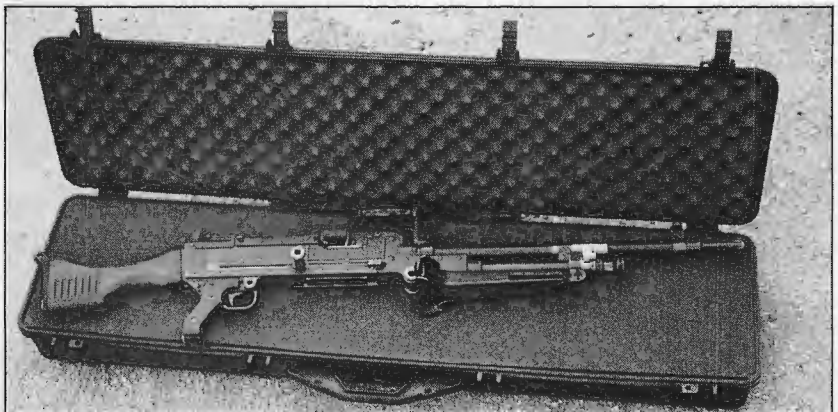
Traveling is hell on cameras, optical equipment and, yes, even firearms. This type of gear needs some degree of pampering or it won't work when you're counting on it. Manufacturers have therefore come up with a plethora of bags, cases and carry sacks to protect

fragile equipment — Pelican Protector Cases leave them all in the dust.

Watertight, airtight, crush proof, dent proof, rust proof and buoyant even when fully loaded, nothing else comes close to Pelican cases when you're looking for uncompromised protection. With easily customized structural foam interior and ABS resin shell, Pelican cases take the worry out of getting from point A to point B with gear intact.

Case sizes range from the 5 1/4-inch long, 1 5/8-inch wide, 6 7/8-inch deep Pelican Long Case (pictured), to the small Pelicase (measuring only 13 1/2 inches by 12 7/8 inches by 6 inches).

Prices range from \$54.95 for the Pelicase to \$139.95 for the Long Case. For details and ordering information, contact Pelican Products Inc., Dept. SOF, 2255 Jefferson St., Torrance, CA 90501; phone (213) 328-9910.





## MINI-PLINKER

Feather Industries' AT-22 rapidly established itself as a great .22 after it was introduced in 1985. This year a variant is available based on this tried and true "plinker," the Mini-AT.

Similarities between the two models are many. What primarily sets the Mini-AT apart from its bigger brother are a shorter barrel/receiver and lack of a sliding stock.

Like the AT-22, the Mini-AT is lightweight, semiautomatic, has a removable barrel and fully adjustable rear sight, and is fed by a 20-round magazine.

If you're in the market for a .22, either AT model will serve you well. Price on the Mini-AT is \$219.95.

Contact Feather Industries Inc., Dept. SOF, 2300 Central Ave. #K, Boulder, CO 80301; phone (303) 442-7021.

## TOP GUN HOLSTER

Chances are you've already seen Cattle Baron's Dirty Harry shoulder holster in action. This is the one that held the .44 Magnum that, more often than not, made Clint's day. But film fantasy aside, the Dirty Harry shoulder holster is a serious, well-made piece of equipment that's currently in use by military and police units on six continents.

Originally available exclusively for the .44 Magnum, you can now get a Dirty Harry holster to fit any handgun. Constructed of top-grain cowhide, hard tempered for strength, finished with natural oils and featuring Cattle Baron's original "Y" strap harness, the Dirty Harry holster is among the most comfortable big-bore shoulder holster rigs you can own.

Available only in rich-russet (golden tan) and black (called the Marauder), the Dirty Harry retails for between \$89.95 and \$119.95 depending on barrel length desired.



A color catalog describing Cattle Baron's full line of products is available for \$3 from Cattle Baron Leather Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 100724, San Antonio, TX 78201; phone (512) 697-8900.




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- It has cost American taxpayers over 11 billion dollars, but the Army's high-tech Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle has some serious technical flaws and as yet the Army's not quite sure how they're going to use it in combat. A former mech infantry officer takes a long hard look at the Bradley and how the Army plans to use it.
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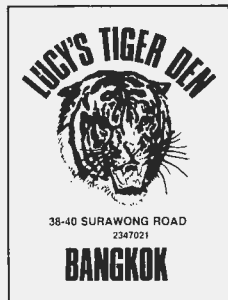




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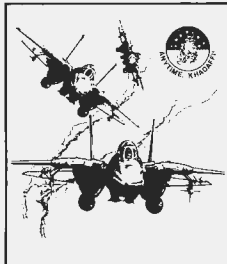
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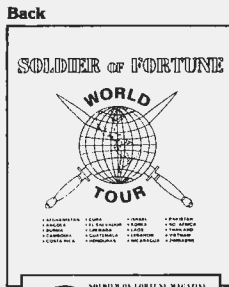
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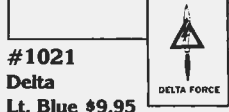
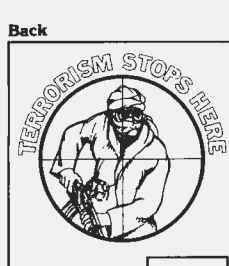
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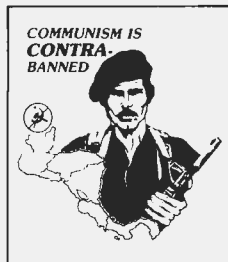
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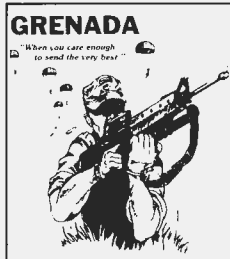
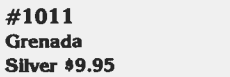
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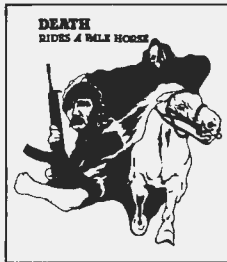
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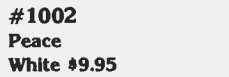
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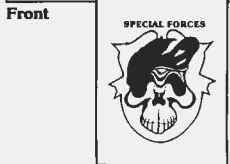
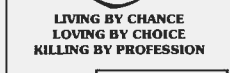
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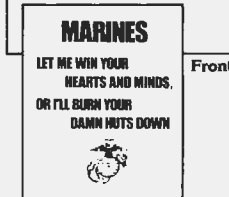
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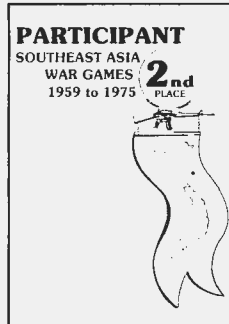
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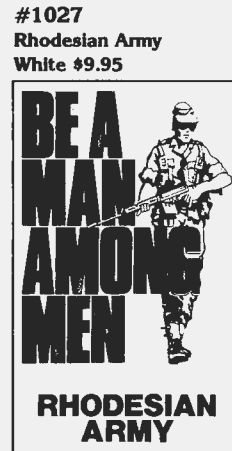
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# GUNS BEHIND THE GREAT WALL PART 3



Firing suppressed Type 85 submachine gun. At only 5.5 pounds and with a cyclic rate of 800 rpm, it's a substantial improvement over older Type 64.

## China's Low-Signature SMGs

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

*SOF's intel coup behind the Bamboo Curtain continues as our T&E team — Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis and Contributing Editor Bob Jordan — examines People's Liberation Army submachine guns and the "mysterious" subsonic ammunition developed by PLA weapons designers. This third part of an in-depth eight-part series documents their field test at the PLA Small Weapons Research Institute north of Beijing — a weapons facility previously off limits to foreigners. Again, SOF wishes to thank the People's Republic of China government for its gracious invitation to our*

*staff members to freely examine, on location and unhindered, that country's military hardware, much of which had never been seen by Western intelligence sources.*

**PRC Type 85 (top) and Type 64 (bottom) sound-suppressed submachine guns were designed specifically for clandestine operations.**

**S**UBMACHINE guns — by definition selective-fire, shoulder-held weapons chambered for pistol ammunition — are moribund. The development of lightweight, short-barreled assault rifles has signaled their death knell. While 20 million submachine guns of one sort or another were fielded during World War II, their short effective range of rarely more than 100 meters, limited accuracy due to their open-bolt operation, and relatively low power lend serious doubt about their military future. Millions still reside in dead storage and no major military service has adopted an SMG in more than a quarter century. There

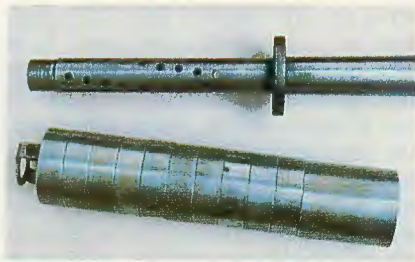
remains but one highly specialized application for these relics of the past. When their barrels are shrouded by a sound suppressor, submachine guns can be effectively deployed by elite units engaged in clandestine operations including, but not limited to, ambush, assassination, prisoner recovery and reconnaissance.

If the submachine gun will live on only in this form, why not design one specifically for this role? The People's Liberation Army did just that 23 years ago. Two years ago the People's Republic of China introduced another unique suppressed SMG that, until SOF's team tested and evaluated the entire series of weapons developed at the Small

**Firing Type 64 sound-suppressed submachine gun.**







Close-up of the Type 85's ported barrel and sound suppressor's baffle stack.

Rotating dust cover for retracting handle's slot also serves as transport safety to prevent bolt from moving rearward after it has been closed on an empty chamber.



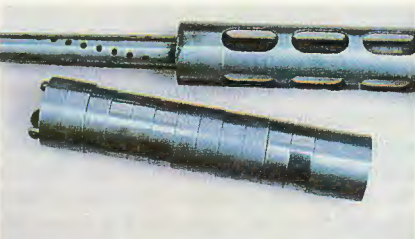
Arms Research Institute outside Beijing, had never been exposed to anyone beyond the Great Wall of China. Both the Type 64 and new Type 85 suppressed submachine guns will be described here in detail hitherto unpublished.

#### Type 64 SMG

There are few accounts of the Type 64 SMG in Western sources and all contain errors of one degree or another. Firing from the open-bolt position, the Type 64 SMG is operated by means of unlocked, pure blow-back. It weighs 7.5 pounds, empty. The overall length is 33.8 inches with the stock extended and 25.5 inches after the stock has been folded. The barrel length is 9.8 inches. Except for the bolt and suppressor assemblies, all components have been salt blued.

Type 64 receivers are milled forgings, very similar in configuration to that of the AK-47, even to the extent of the characteristic lightening grooves above the magazine-well. The receiver cover is a half-cylinder, sheet-metal pressing with slots cut on the right side for the ejection port and bolt's retracting handle.

Type 64 bolts are cylindrical in shape and unfinished. Extractors consist of two components, the claw and a flat spring. Firing



Close-up of Type 64's ported barrel and sound suppressor's baffle stack and expansion chamber.

pins are press-fit into the bolt face. A small-diameter single coil wrapped around a two-piece guide rod serves as the driving spring. There is a red fiber buffer at the end of the receiver, similar to the one found on the

Soviet PPSH 41 SMG.

A folding stock, taken directly from the PRC Type 56-1 assault rifle, has been attached to the receiver in the Kalashnikov manner with a spring-loaded catch button

## MYSTERIOUS SUBSONIC AMMO

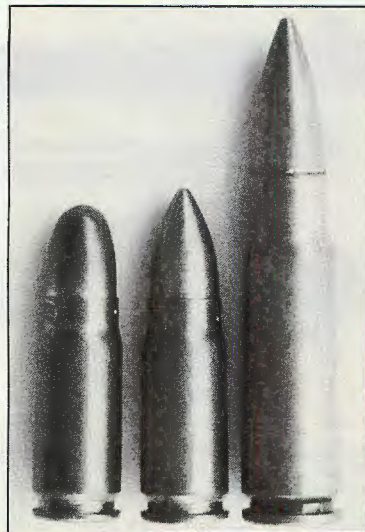
The ammunition developed for the PRC Type 64 and Type 85 submachine guns is at least as intriguing as the weapons themselves.

Both of these submachine guns are chambered for the ComBloc 7.62x25mm rimless bottleneck cartridge and can, in fact, fire standard ball ammunition (with its 85-grain Full Metal Jacket round-nose bullet) in this caliber. Unfortunately, for the purposes of sound suppression, this is one hot little number. Soviet ammunition steps out of my PPS 43 SMG with an average velocity of 1,750 fps and Czech ammo will average 1,900 fps (which duplicates the velocity of the locked-breech .30 M1 Carbine's 112-grain projectile!).

PRC designers could have milled enough holes into the barrel to drop the velocity below the speed of sound (1,087 fps at 32 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level) and eliminate the projectile's downrange supersonic "crack," but the tradeoff would have been unacceptable. Dropping the small 85-grain bullet's velocity to subsonic levels would lower the stopping power (already marginal) and effective range to objectionable levels and most likely have degraded functional reliability.

A far superior alternative is to employ subsonic ammunition with heavy bullets that will yield the same stopping power as standard ball ammunition at velocities below the speed of sound, and port the barrel only enough for effective sound suppression. Experiments to this end commenced in World War II when the Germans tested 9mm Parabellum ammunition with heavy bullets. The concept was picked up by the British during the 1950s and further expanded during the Vietnam War when U.S. Navy SEAL teams were provided with subsonic 9mm ammunition manufactured by Super Vel for Smith & Wesson Model 39 pistols fitted with sound suppressors known as "Hush Puppies."

This was also the course of action chosen by PRC designers in 1964. Type 64 7.62x25mm subsonic ammunition is loaded into the standard copper-washed steel case (Berdan primed) common to most PRC ammunition and in this caliber actually only 24.7mm in length. But the bullet itself is quite unorthodox for a pistol cartridge. This 121-grain FMJ projectile has the boat-tail configuration usually associated with high-power rifle ammunition. The jacket material is



Left to right — 7.62x25mm standard ball, 7.62x25mm Type 64 subsonic ammunition, and 7.62x39mm standard ball (the latter used in the Kalashnikov, not Type 64 or Type 85 SMGs).

brass-washed steel with a red case-mouth sealant. The bullet is 25.9mm in length and 7.85mm (.314 inches) in diameter. With regard to this latter dimension, keep in mind that, while the maximum bore diameter (groove-to-groove) of so-called "7.62mm" caliber weapons in NATO countries is nominally .308 inches, it is usually .311 inches in ComBloc firearms. A bullet only .003 inches larger than .311 inches will have negligible effect on the chamber pressure. The propellant charge is 3.5 grains of a cut-sheet flake, similar in appearance to Hercules Bullseye. This is about 1.5 grains less than provided in standard ball ammunition for this caliber. Overall length of the cartridge is 36.8mm (2.1mm longer than standard 7.62x25mm ball). Cited specifications indicate this subsonic 7.62x25mm ammunition produces a maximum chamber pressure of 2,400kg/cm<sup>2</sup> with muzzle velocities from 935 to 1,000 fps and a claimed effective range of 400 meters.

All of the subsonic ammunition fired in SOF's test of the Type 64 and Type 85 submachine guns was headstamped either "11 67" or "11 82." Factory 11 is located at Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province in northern China. It is interesting to note that the only specimen observed previously was manufactured in 1966. That this ammunition was still being produced in 1982 indicates a steady and consistent demand.



on the left side. The rear sling swivel has been fitted to this catch button. The front sling swivel is mounted halfway up the sup-

pressor tube on the left side.

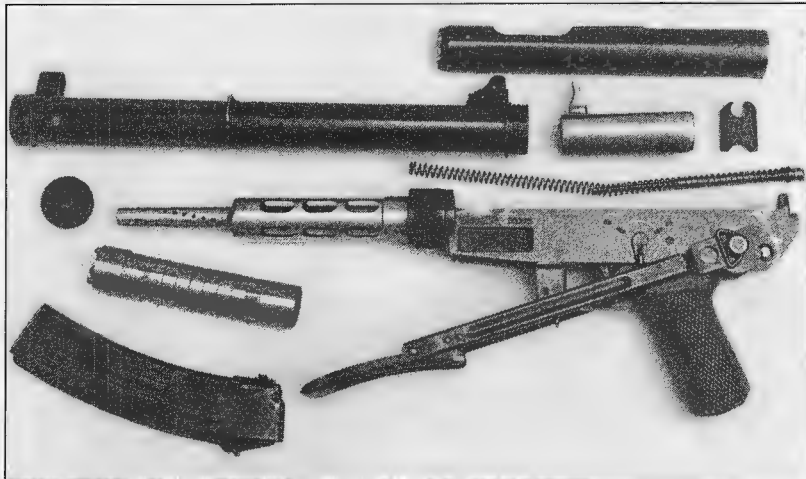
The trigger mechanism is patterned after that of the Czech ZB 26 and British Bren

series of light machine guns. A tripping lever projects through a "window" in the sear. In semiautomatic fire, the head of the tripping lever is depressed by the moving bolt to release the sear, which then engages the bolt's bent (notch) and holds the bolt to the rear. Releasing the trigger pivots the tripping lever upward. Pulling the trigger will repeat the process. In the full-auto mode, both the tripping lever and sear are pulled down and clear of the bolt.

A lever on the left side of the receiver controls the firing modes. When rotated to the forward notch, the weapon fires semi-automatically. Full-auto fire is obtained when the lever is rotated to the rear notch. A manual safety on the right side, in back of the trigger, can be pivoted downward to block the trigger mechanism. A pivoting, sheet-metal dust cover for the retracting handle slot acts as a transport safety. When the bolt is forward on an empty chamber, this cover, which looks very much like the selector bar on a Kalashnikov, can be rotated upward to block the bolt's rearward movement. Pistol grips, interchangeable with those of the Kalashnikov, are either checkered wood (early) or plastic with longitudinal grooves (late). A "flapper" magazine catch/release assembly of the Kalashnikov type has been riveted to the receiver body in front of the trigger guard.

All very interesting, but the heart of this weapon is its integral suppressor system. The four-groove barrel has a right-hand twist with three flutes in the chamber, each .1mm wide, .075mm deep and 10mm in length. These flutes ease extraction and theoretically assist in velocity reduction. Four rows of nine holes, each 3mm in diameter, follow the spirals of the rifling grooves. As these 36 ports have been milled at the muzzle end of the barrel, they can have no effect on the bullet's velocity, which has almost reached maximum by the time it has traveled that far down the barrel. Barrels must be ported at least 2 inches from the chamber mouth for significant velocity reduction to occur. These ports are an obvious attempt to dump gas and nothing more. The escaping gas is supposed to bleed into an expansion chamber covering the rear half of the barrel. Four rows of three large oval ports surround this expansion chamber in an attempt to create turbulence and dissipate thermal energy. Between the muzzle and the suppressor tube's front cap is a stack of 12 dished baffles held together by two rods with a pivoting handle. All of the suppressor components and both the exterior and interior surfaces of the barrel have been hard-chrome plated. The forward end of the suppressor tube has four longitudinal depressions designed to secure the baffle stack. The unit is entirely user maintainable and no screens or porous fillers are used in the expansion chamber. Increased back pressure from the suppressor has driven the weapon's cyclic rate to 1,000 rpm.

Both sights are mounted to the suppressor tube. The hooded front post is adjustable for windage and elevation zero in the Kalash-



PRC Type 64 submachine gun, fieldstripped.

### TYPE 64 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** ..... 7.62x25mm; subsonic ammunition or standard ball.
- Operation:** ..... Unlocked blowback. Fire from the open-bolt position by means of advanced primer ignition. Selector provides semiautomatic and full-auto modes.
- Cyclic rate:** ..... 1,000 rpm.
- Feed:** ..... Detachable, 30-round, two-position-feed, staggered-column box magazine. Type 64 and 85 magazines are not interchangeable.
- Weight, empty:** ..... 7.5 pounds.
- Length, overall**  
**stock extended:** ..... 33.8 inches.  
**stock folded:** ..... 25.5 inches.
- Barrel:** ..... Four-groove with a right-hand twist. Chrome-plated chamber, bore and exterior. Four rows of nine holes, each 3mm in diameter, spiral with the rifling grooves around the front end of the barrel. Barrel cannot be removed.
- Barrel length:** ..... 9.8 inches.
- Sound suppressor:** ..... 12 dished baffles stacked in front of muzzle with expansion chamber at rear end of barrel. No screens or porous filler employed. Suppressor tube enclosing system and entire barrel is threaded to front end of receiver. User maintainable.
- Sights:** ..... Hooded, round front post; adjustable for windage and elevation zero. Protected, flip-type rear with 100- and 200-meter apertures.
- Finish:** ..... Metal surfaces salt blued, except for unfinished bolt; chrome-plated barrel and sound-suppressor internal parts.
- Furniture:** ..... Pistol grip: checkered wood or longitudinally grooved plastic.
- Accessories:** ..... Sling, spare magazines and parts.
- Status:** ..... In service with People's Liberation Army, but no longer in production.
- Manufacturer:** ..... PRC government arsenals.
- Exporter:** ..... Poly Technologies, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5/F, Citic Building, 19, Jian Guo Men Wai Street, Beijing, People's Republic of China.
- T&E summary:** ..... Effective, user-maintainable sound suppression. Needs asbestos cover over suppressor tube. Cost-effective and reliable. Hit probability and accuracy potential are acceptable for intended applications.

nikov manner. The flip-type rear sight has protective ears and peep apertures for 100 and 200 meters.

Curved, 30-round, two-position-feed, staggered-column box magazines were designed for this weapon and they can be used in no other. They are, of course, slightly wider than usual for this caliber to accept the longer Type 64 subsonic cartridge. They are well-built, substantial and reliable.

Disassembly procedures parallel the simplicity encountered with most ComBloc weaponry. Remove the magazine and clear the weapon, returning the bolt to its forward position under control. Rotate the suppressor tube's front cap and remove it. Grasp the suppressor stack's handle and withdraw this assembly from the tube. Depress the spring-loaded locking lever in back of the rear sight and twist the suppressor tube in either direction to separate its interrupted threads from the end cap. Pull the tube forward and off the barrel assembly. Lift the end of the recoil spring's guide rod out of its retaining notch at the rear of the receiver. Push it forward and lift off the receiver cover. Withdraw the recoil spring, guide rod, buffer and bolt. No further disassembly is required of the operator. Reassemble in the reverse order.

Approximately 500 rounds were fired through the Type 64 presented to SOF for test and evaluation. Although the cyclic rate is quite high, there were no failures to feed, extract or eject, no double feeds or failures of the bolt to close into battery. The ammunition appears to be well-balanced with the suppressor and there were no run-aways. It was difficult to fire less than four-shot bursts in the full-auto mode. Both the accuracy potential and hit probability were adequate for the intended applications. There was no muzzle flash and the sound suppression was effective, but inferior to the Type 85. Bolt clatter was only moderate and there was, of course, no downrange supersonic crack. The suppressor tube became quite hot as the test proceeded and a protective soft cover would be well-advised. There was no gas leakage into the operator's face. Altogether, this is a cost-effective, easily maintained and reasonably effective low-signature device. Although still in service with the PLA, it is no longer in production, as the Chinese were anxious to move forward with superior technology.

#### Type 85 SMG

The juxtaposition is clear-cut. Twenty years of advanced technology have resulted in a noticeable improvement. While the Type 85's overall length with the stock unfolded is, at 34.8 inches, an inch longer than the Type 64, when the stock is folded, the length (25.2 inches) is slightly shorter. Most dramatic is a weight reduction of 2 pounds, as the Type 85 tips the scales at only 5.5 pounds, empty.

The method of operation remains the same and thus the Type 85 suppressed sub-machine gun fires from the open-bolt position by means of unlocked blowback. As the firing pin is fixed, the cartridge is detonated

by advanced primer ignition. Except for the bolt and barrel group, the entire weapon has been fabricated from seamless steel tubing with stamped sheet-metal components riveted, welded or pinned to the main body. All the steel parts, with the exception of the

hard-chromed barrel/suppressor group and the phosphated bolt, have been salt blued.

Cylindrical seamless steel tubing, to which has been welded a threaded front

*Continued on page 88*



PRC Type 85 submachine gun, fieldstripped.

### TYPE 85 SPECIFICATIONS

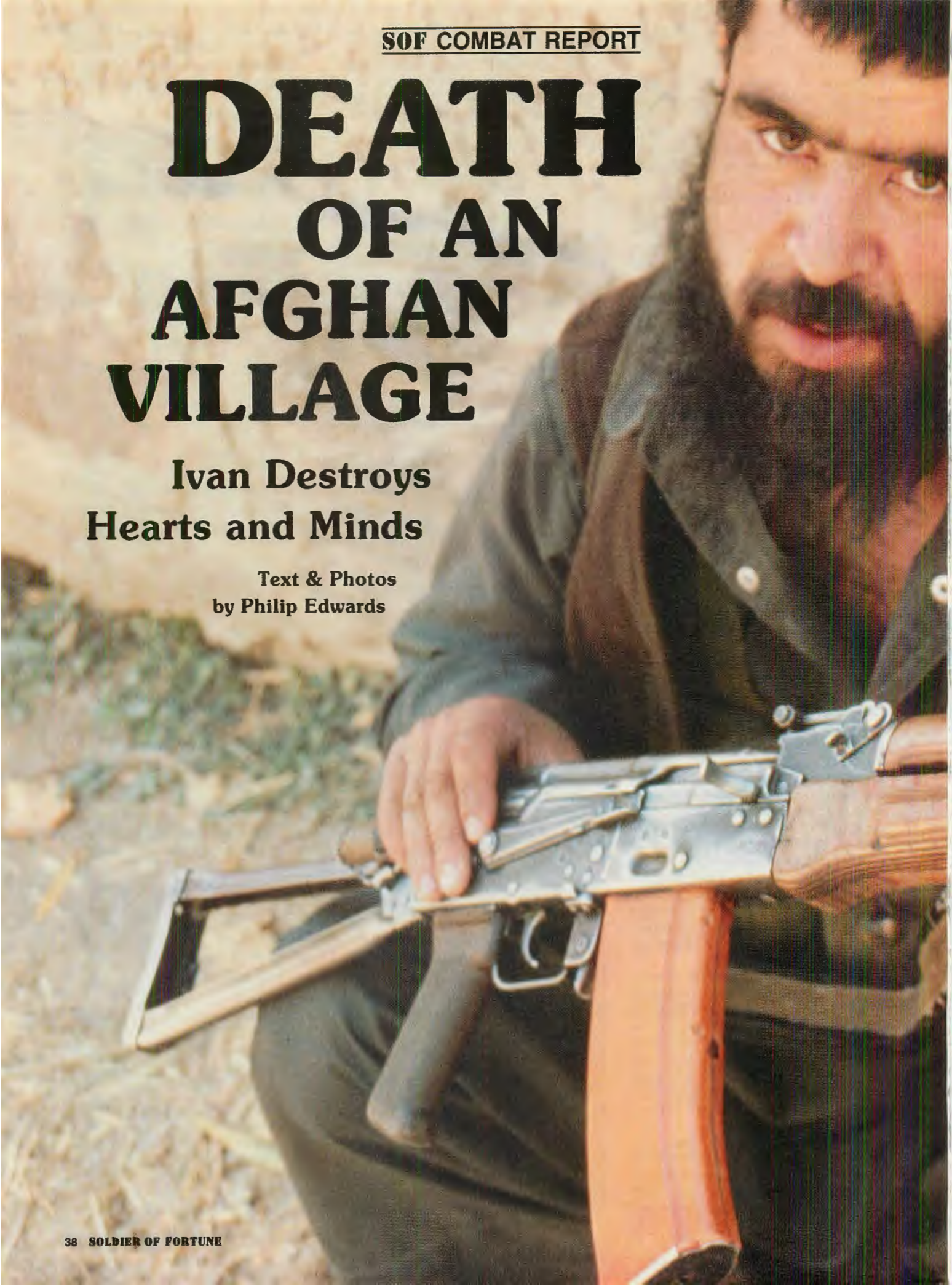
- Caliber:** ..... 7.62x25mm; subsonic ammunition or standard ball.
- Operation:** ..... Unlocked blowback. Fire from open-bolt position by means of advanced primer ignition. Selector provides semiautomatic and full-auto modes.
- Cyclic rate:** ..... 800 rpm.
- Feed:** ..... Detachable, 30-round, two-position-feed, staggered-column box magazine. Type 64 and 85 magazines are not interchangeable.
- Weight, empty:** ..... 5.5 pounds.
- Length, overall**  
**stock extended:** ..... 34.8 inches.  
**stock folded:** ..... 25.2 inches.
- Barrel:** ..... Four-groove with a right-hand twist. Chrome-plated chamber, bore and exterior. Four rows of nine holes, each 3mm in diameter, spiral with the rifling grooves around the front end of the barrel. Barrel can be removed.
- Barrel length:** ..... 9.8 inches.
- Sound suppressor:** ..... 11 dished baffles stacked in front of muzzle with expansion chamber at rear end of barrel. No screens or porous filler employed. Suppressor tube enclosing system and entire barrel is threaded to front end of receiver. User maintainable.
- Sights:** ..... Hooded, round front post; adjustable for windage and elevation zero. Protected, flip-type rear with 100- and 200-meter apertures.
- Finish:** ..... Metal surfaces salt blued, except for phosphated bolt; chrome-plated barrel and sound suppressor internal parts.
- Furniture:** ..... Pistol grip: reddish brown phenolic.
- Accessories:** ..... Sling, spare magazines and parts.
- Status:** ..... In service with People's Liberation Army.
- Manufacturer:** ..... PRC government arsenals.
- Exporter:** ..... Poly Technologies, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5/F, Citic Building, 19, Jian Guo Men Wai Street, Beijing, People's Republic of China.
- T&E summary:** ..... Effective, user-maintainable sound suppression. Needs asbestos cover over suppressor tube. Cost-effective and reliable. Hit probability and accuracy potential are acceptable for the intended applications. By virtue of its lighter weight and lower cyclic rate than the Type 64, Type 85 must receive superior rating.




# **DEATH OF AN AFGHAN VILLAGE**

**Ivan Destroys  
Hearts and Minds**

**Text & Photos  
by Philip Edwards**







**I**N a typical war, the enemy's troops, communications and transportation lines are an invader's major targets — not rural villages and the people who live there. But the vicious war in Afghanistan is anything but typical, and rural villages have found themselves at the vortex of the Soviet war-storm. This is about one Afghan village, its freedom fighters, its courage and the battering I watched it receive at the hands of Afghanistan's northern neighbor. This is the story of Paghman.

Paghman seemed a good destination for my second trip to photograph the Afghan war. Less than 10 miles of open ground separate it from the Soviet-held capital of Kabul, but the freedom fighters (mujahideen) have courageously kept Ivan at bay since the Soviet invasion in December 1979, despite ferocious attacks by the Russians.

Paghman is not alone in suffering at the hands of the Soviets. I could have found this brutal war by visiting any of thousands of other villages scattered across this Texas-sized country. Every one of the dozens of Afghan villages I've seen during my two visits has been bombed or gassed or

**Afghan mujahid with a rare prize, a captured Soviet 5.45mm AKS-74.**

## **SECOND TIME BEHIND THE LINES**

“Death of an Afghan Village” chronicles author Philip Edwards’ second journey into Afghanistan (for the first, see “Daylight Raid,” SOF, October ’85). Edwards combines a career as a freelance photojournalist with professional training in ornithology. He has particular expertise in birds of prey, which might explain his interest in the Soviets.



napalmed or smashed by tanks. Why has the Kremlin placed the village in the center ring of its high-tech death show in Afghanistan?

There are several reasons. First, the Soviets and their Afghan communist quislings have long since given up any hope of winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. They were never even in the contest. The fiercely independent, religious Afghans want absolutely no part of an atheistic communist government.

Therefore, reason the men in Moscow, it is best to eliminate as many Afghans as possible by killing them or driving them from their country. That would pave the way for a Soviet-indoctrinated generation of Afghans of whom Lenin himself would be proud.

Wiping out the civilians also removes the support base of the mujahideen. Freedom fighters are supplied with food, shelter and information by their countrymen in the villages.

As Mao said, civilians are the water through which the fish — the guerrillas — must swim. To strand the fish in Afghanistan, the Soviets apparently plan to drain the whole lake. They have killed half a million Afghans. Another five million — about one third of the population — have fled the country. Refugees continue to pour into Iran and Pakistan, leaving behind villages bombed to rubble, fields scorched to ash, and parents, brothers, sisters and children buried in the ground. At the same time, the Soviets send 7,000 Afghan children to Russia each year for long-term socialist education and indoctrination.

Finally, Afghan villages have incurred the Soviets' wrath with their fierce efforts to free themselves from Moscow's yoke. Opposition to the Soviet invaders is so widespread that the distinction between guerrilla and civilian blurs. Villagers are the freedom fighters; their simple homes are their fortresses. One Afghan expressed it well when he said: "The Russians will only defeat Afghanistan when there are no more Afghans."

Pakistan is now a sad journey's end for most of the Afghan refugees, but it was my trip's beginning. In Peshawar, I met my contact in the *Jamiat-i-Islami* resistance organization. He arranged for me to join four *Jamiat* guerrillas leaving for Paghman.

From Peshawar, my four guides and I traveled six hours by bus to Teramangal, and after four days joined a larger group of mujahideen headed toward Paghman with 75 packhorses. The horses were heavily laden with mortars, machine guns, recoilless guns, rocket launchers and antitank mines.

We left Teramangal late in the afternoon and hiked into the broad expanse of Afghanistan. We traveled over mountains and across desert for the next three long nights, shielded by the dark from the ravages of Soviet helicopter gunships. By day, the mujahideen hid our horses under groves of trees or in mountain defiles. We grabbed rest and food in small teahouses strung

along the trail.

On the fourth night, after 10 hours of hiking across hopelessly barren desert and struggling up bare, rocky slopes, our tired legs greeted level ground on the far side of the mountains. I was surprised by what straddled our path there — a thin, neat ribbon of blacktop. The mujahideen told me it was the highway connecting Kabul with Kandahar, a major city to the southwest.

Our spirits were lifted by a glow where

## FLARES OVER AFGHANISTAN

Soviet aircraft in Afghanistan, especially helicopters, have had to adopt a wide range of infrared countermeasures as a result of use by mujahideen resistance of heat-seeking missiles such as the Soviet-designed SA-7 Grail and U.S. Stingers.

These countermeasures include the fitting of active infrared jammers on the dorsal spine of choppers and behind the nacelles of transport aircraft. This produces infrared radiation to jam the seeker head of a heat-seeking missile.

Some Soviet Hind and Hip helicopters have suppressors fitted over their exhaust to reduce the heat signature that makes them vulnerable to heat-seeking missiles.

The most widespread Soviet countermeasure is the use of decoy flares which are automatically ejected from Soviet aircraft in a combat area at 2.5-second intervals to lure away the missile. The Soviets introduced the flare dispensers in 1983 after the resistance became more adept at using SA-7s, but the real challenge to Soviet countermeasures came in 1986 with the first arrival of Stingers. Despite the fact that the Stinger is not a new weapon but representative of 1970s technology, and despite the fact that the Soviets knew well in advance that they would be used in Afghanistan, the range of Soviet infrared countermeasures has proven inadequate to deal with Stingers.

U.S. government sources report that 68 percent of all Stinger firings yield destroyed Soviet aircraft, with an average of 1.2 Soviet craft being lost each day. Even if the kill percentage turns out to be exaggerated by a factor of two or three, it is still a spectacular level of performance. In addition, the Stinger threat has forced Soviet aircraft either to attack from very high altitudes where their bombs are less accurate or, in the case of Hind attack helicopters, to attack from very low altitudes where several have been lost to resistance machine guns. By mid-1987 Soviet infrared countermeasures had proven inadequate to deter the Stingers.

— David C. Isby

the road stretched to the right — Kabul. Paghman was 10 miles this side of the besieged capital, so we felt assured of reaching it by dawn.

We lingered only a few minutes and pushed on. Across the highway we came to the first of the many outlying villages that surround Kabul. We tightened into a single-file column, stepped up the pace and streamed quietly through the dark, still streets. Many were lined by the adobe rubble of houses. Here and there village men, wrapped in the ubiquitous Afghan blanket, or *pattu*, stood by watching our convoy.

I soon picked up whispered discussions in the ranks about "dushman," Dari for enemy. I suspected that villagers were warning the column about Soviet activity in Paghman.

At 0400 we halted at Argandi, a village a few miles short of Paghman. My suspicions were right. Villagers there told us that Soviet jets and helicopters had hit Paghman the last three days in a row, and more were expected. Our convoy leaders decided to stay in Argandi until the heat lifted. Under a stand of mulberry trees, the mujahideen unloaded our steaming horses, tethered them and posted sentries. The rest of us curled up in the dust with our *pattus*. Sleep came easily.

The comings and goings of the locals roused us at sunrise. Within minutes, the Soviets made good on the intelligence the villagers had supplied.

A low mountain hid Paghman from our sight. We had a clear view, however, of a menacing line of five Su-25 Frogfoot jets which streaked on Paghman from the northeast. This aircraft is the Soviet Union's newest ground-attack fighter. Each one turned in a silent counterclockwise circle that brought it first over Argandi, then Paghman. Above Paghman, each jet plummeted and unleashed a pair of rockets before disappearing behind the mountain, trailed by the roar of its twin Tumansky turbojets. The drum of rockets pounding home followed.

In 10 minutes, the jets finished and left. A trio of Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships immediately replaced them. In stark contrast to the Su-25s, the choppers wheeled slowly over Paghman, like vultures. Their job was to pick off anyone fleeing the wholesale wreckage wrought by the Su-25s. Mi-24s carry tools that are suited to the deadly task — 57mm rockets (128 of them) and a four-barreled 12.7mm machine gun or twin-barreled 23mm cannon.

The choppers mopped up in five minutes and slowly banked away. Soviet pilots repeated the tandem jet/helicopter attacks five more times that day, three more the next. That made five consecutive days of attacks on Paghman. I wondered what would be left if we ever got there.

Our third morning in Argandi, my guides abruptly left the mosque where we had been staying and led me off to Paghman. I managed to understand from them (none spoke English) that no attacks were expected that



day. We parted from the pack train, as it would be pushing past Paghman that night.

Less than an hour from Argandi, we reached the crest of the low slope that had hidden Paghman. We now saw our destination below us, a mile or two east.

I was struck by Paghman's size. It was far bigger than I had expected. Its expanse was clearly defined by many trees. Green, interspersed with adobe rooftops, spread at least a few miles in diameter. Except for Kabul, it was far and away the largest Afghan community I had seen.

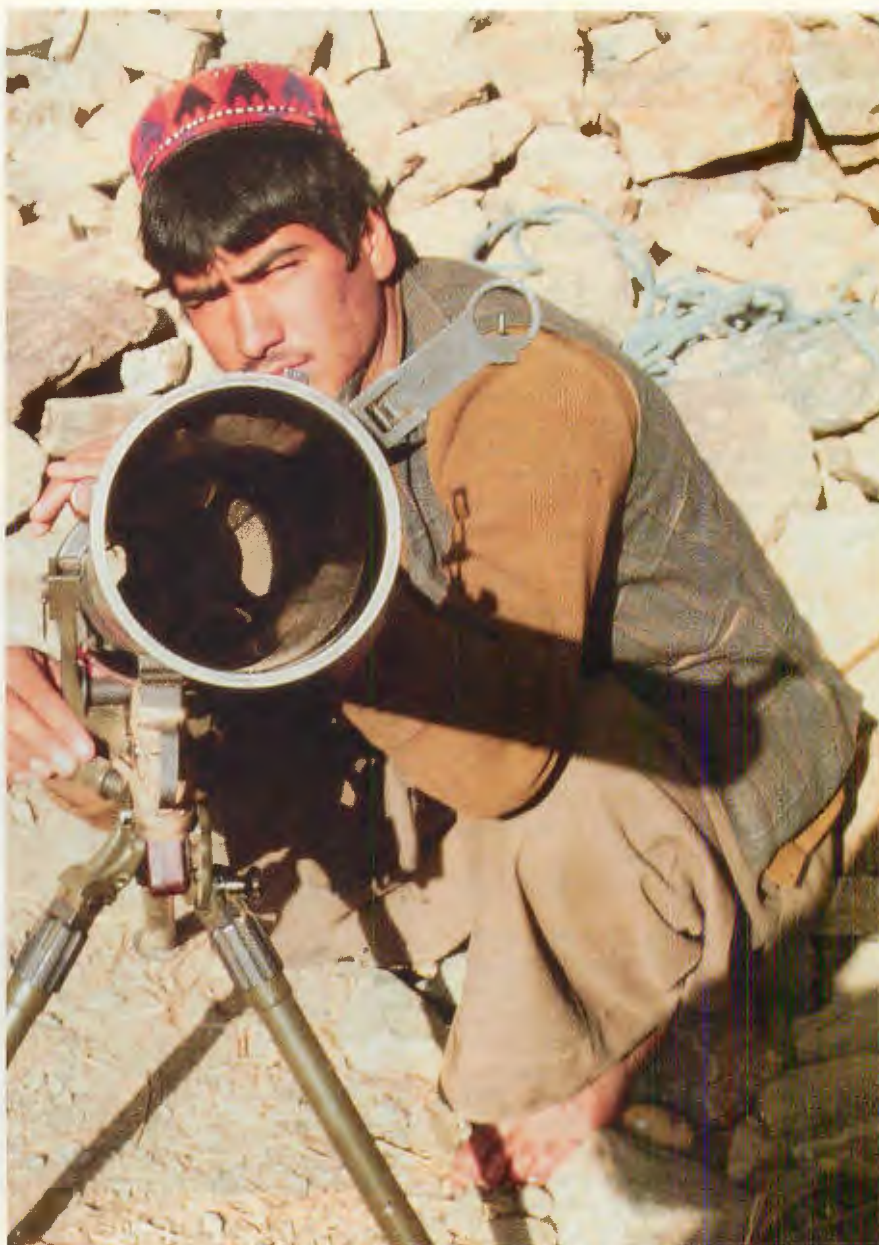
In back of Paghman, a band of mountains ran roughly east to west. Beyond, to the southeast, a dusty haze marked Kabul, the Soviets' surest foothold here.

We came first to the remains of a small mosque on the edge of town. Its roof was caved in and its adobe walls charred. The smell of burnt beams hung in the air. Boys told us the mosque had been bombed yesterday. True to the resilience of the Afghans, a rebuilding operation was already underway. Workers gave us directions to Palowon Shomz Allah's house, commander of a *Jamiat-i-Islami* unit in Paghman. He would be my host.

Along the shaded streets we saw more evidence of the recent Soviet "fraternal assistance." Craters ruptured the streets, and trees stood as just shattered stumps. Shattered too were several of the adobe houses. Nonetheless, as I walked through Paghman, two things were clear, regardless of the brutal power of the Hinds and Frog-foots.

One is that, despite Soviet attacks on Paghman recently and over the last several years, and despite the fact that the town sits just 10 open miles from Kabul, the Soviets are not masters here. We walked freely down the streets, passing villagers and other mujahideen.

Second, Paghman is too large to be badly crippled by five days of small air strikes.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Afghan mujahid with Chinese recoilless rifle.

**RIGHT:** Twenty-four-year-old guerrilla commander Ismat Allah is mourned by his men. He was killed the night before by 12.7mm heavy machine-gun fire during a surprise communist attack on Paghman.

**BELOW:** This guerrilla's rifle is tipped with what might be a muzzle compensator. He said the device was of Chinese manufacture.





Damage was done, to be sure, but many houses stood untouched. Ivan would need more than a few bombing raids to remove this large thorn from his side.

Outside Shomz Allah's mud-brick house, a boy watered sheep at a well. With a bucket, he filled two makeshift troughs — the tails of Soviet 500-kilogram bombs. Yes, I thought, the sons of Lenin were in for a long fight against these people.

Our knock was answered by Shomz Allah's teenage nephew. He showed us to an upstairs room where we seated ourselves on woven rugs and floor cushions.

Palowon Shomz Allah entered a few minutes later. He was a stocky, solid man of early middle age, with a dense dark beard. My guides had told me that "Palowon" is a nickname meaning wrestler. Before the war, he had wrestled for the team at Kabul University.

We rose out of proper respect. Shomz Allah knew my guides and greeted them like a father, bear-hugging each in the custom of Afghan relatives and close friends. He welcomed me with warm enthusiasm and directed us to sit down again. He laid his Soviet AKM at his left and bade me to sit at his right, the place of honor.

He jovially inquired after my health and about the trip from Teramangal. Out of necessity, our conversation was simple; Shomz Allah knew no English and I spoke only fragmentary Dari.

Over tea, he exchanged news with my guides. They talked of Pakistan and mujahideen there. He elaborated on the recent rash of air attacks. Seven Paghmanis had been killed — three mujahideen from another group and four civilians. The day before we arrived, mujahideen had shot down a MiG-21. They hit it over Paghman with cannon fire and it crashed near Kabul.

Although he was obviously proud to report the kill, Shomz Allah acknowledged that one is not enough in five days of raids. "But how much can we do," he asked, "without the right weapons?" He added, with a good-natured smile, "We need anti-aircraft rockets, like your American Stingers."

The next morning, Shomz Allah took me on a walking tour of Paghman, his birthplace. Again, I saw evidence everywhere of its bitter struggle against the Soviet invaders. A whole section of houses lay smashed, unexploded bombs stuck here and there in the ground, a boy with his foot blown away limped past on makeshift crutches. On a hillside cemetery, flags of Islamic green flapped over the graves of Paghman's KIAs — the *shahids*, or martyrs.

Shomz Allah took me to a paved road that connected Paghman with Kabul. He said his guerrillas' ambushes had rendered the road unusable by the Soviets or their Afghan Marxist marionettes.

In a ditch lay the stripped hulk of an armored personnel carrier, victim of an ambush. A bit down the road sat a tank that had met the same fate. Its whole turret was blown off onto the ground, jamming the



broken barrel in the dust.

Our next tour stop was an old vacation home of Zahir Shah, Afghanistan's last monarch. Paghman has long been used as a summer retreat for Afghan heads of state. Zahir was overthrown by his nephew Daoud in a bloodless 1973 coup. The former king now lives in Italy.

Some walls of the Western-style house were splintered and burned. Shomz Allah explained that it was used briefly as an Afghan communist outpost, but his men overran it two years ago.

Shomz Allah led me past a huge, dry swimming pool and down a wooded slope. Fifty yards below the main grounds was the royal greenhouse. At the edge of the trees, he stooped and sprinted into the greenhouse. With curiosity, I did the same.

Shomz Allah crouched beside a broken window and pointed to a bald hill overlooking Paghman. We were about three quarters of a mile away, but I instantly saw the reason for his caution. On the hill stood a small building, an entrenched tank and a red flag. "Posta," he said to me. We were looking at a sentry station of a regime army

post. The hill hid the main garrison.

I focused my telephoto lens on the hilltop. As I did, a soldier in the tan uniform of the Afghan army stepped out of the sentry house. I snapped his picture as Shomz Allah talked.

I understood from bits and pieces of his explanation that he planned to attack the post in about three weeks. He only waited for surface-to-surface rockets to arrive from Pakistan.

It sounded good to me, as I came here to photograph action. But I wondered if his plans were prudent. I knew the Soviets and Afghan communists had many such outposts, thickly protected by minefields, throughout Afghanistan. But the garrisons are essentially prisons for their own soldiers. Troop operations in the surrounding hostile countryside are out of the question. Most of the posts have to be resupplied by helicopter. This one probably posed little threat to Paghman.

As if sensing my doubts, Shomz Allah told me the post was the only toehold of the enemy in Paghman. It was probably their first step toward establishing a ring of posts





around the town as a security belt. The Soviets have tried to subdue other Afghan cities with the same tactic. "Even now, the post often shells us," he said. He was determined to eliminate it.

As we watched the communist soldier check something on the tank, I mused on how sickly distorted is the role of Afghanistan's army posts.

Historically, a country built garrisons near its communities to protect them, to shield them from attack. The absurd opposite is true in present-day Afghanistan. Here, the role of a post is not to protect a town, but to strangle it.

The soldier returned to the sentry house, and we crawled back to the trees and left.

The next day Shomz sent me to an outlying guerrilla camp. Here, about a two-hour trek into the mountains behind Paghman, lived twelve of his mujahideen. My new hosts honored my foremost request for a bath and took me to a narrow, picture-postcard waterfall just up the valley from camp. Clear water tumbled a hundred feet into a nicely accommodating knee-deep pool. I stripped off my foul clothes, scrubbed quickly in the frigid mountain water and then sat on a rock to dry and relax under the August sun.

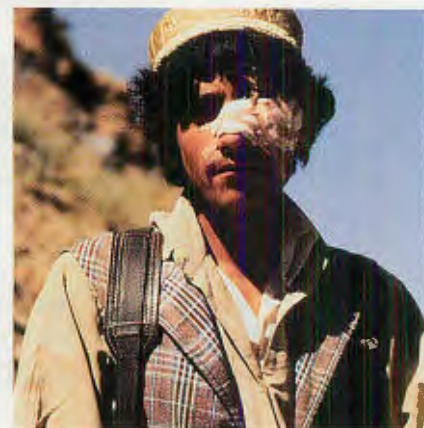
For the mujahideen it was class time. Men were gathered around a newly arrived Chinese 60mm mortar. Instructing them in its use was 22-year-old Mohammed Jan. I had already gotten to know him and thought his intelligent, unassuming attitude marked him as the best of the group. I knew his military training had come by a difficult route.

Mohammed Jan was 16 and living with his family in Kabul when the Soviets invaded to make Afghanistan safe for Marxism. He stayed in school and tenuously

**ABOVE LEFT:** Mujahid fires his group's only anti-aircraft weapon, a Chinese 12.7mm heavy machine gun fitted with an anti-aircraft sight.

**LEFT:** Teenage guerrillas admire posters of their heroes, famous mujahideen martyred in the war against the Soviet invaders.

**BELOW:** Teenager wounded in fighting near Kabul is a committed guerrilla, willing to die for his country.







avoided conscription into the Afghan army. Fiercely devoted to freeing his country, he formed an urban guerrilla group with several of his classmates. With pistols hidden under their clothes, they did their own bit of soldiering in the ancient capital's twisting bazaars. His group racked up five assassinations of Afghan communists.

A friend operating with mujahideen in the countryside smuggled a time bomb to Mohammed Jan from Pakistan. After dark, he placed it under the Kabul residence of a Soviet army officer and set the timer. "One hour later," he told me with a smile, "boom! No more house, no more Russian."

Mohammed Jan knew the risks of his active patriotism. Inevitably, he was betrayed, arrested and tossed into Kabul's notorious Pul-i-Charki prison. For two years, the communists tortured him to confess and reveal the identities of his cohorts. His wrists and ankles still bear burn scars where he repeatedly received electric shock. He was also starved, soaked in ice water and continually beaten. He told me his torture was always directed by a Russian and administered by Afghan bootlickers.

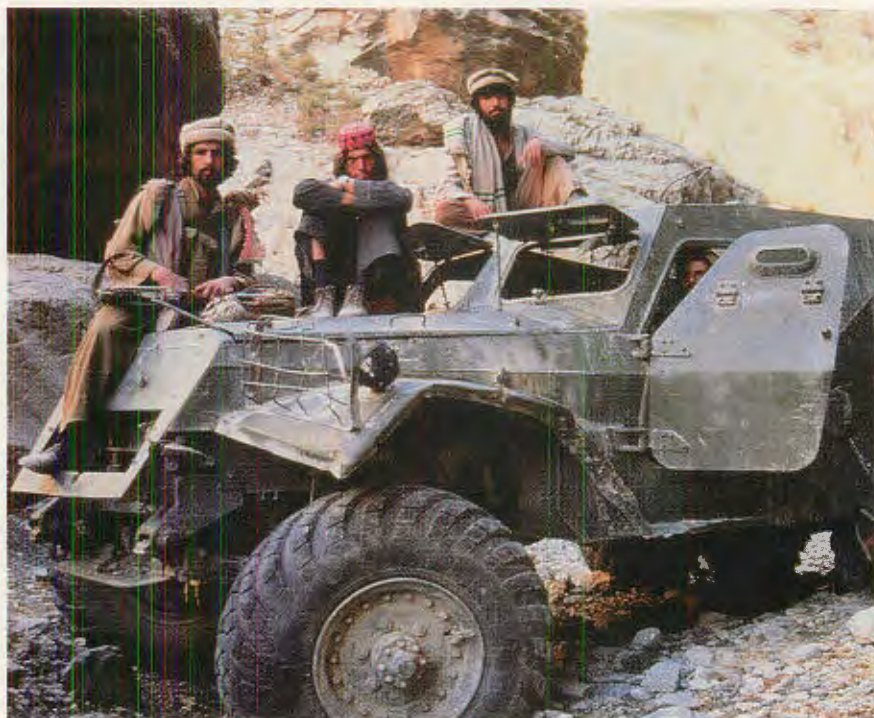
Mohammed Jan never talked. After two years, his torturers gave up and, incredibly, put him in the Afghan army. After some short basic, where he got his mortar training, he was sent to fight mujahideen in the strategic Panjsher Valley. He secretly funneled weapons to the guerrillas for three months, then went AWOL. He fled to Pakistan and joined *Jamiat-i-Islami*.

One of Mohammed Jan's two brothers died in Pul-i-Charki, the other is there today under a 17-year sentence of regular torture. But Mohammed Jan confided to me that he doesn't expect his brother to survive the regime's brutality that long.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Afghan freedom fighter keeps watch over a mountain guerrilla camp just 10 miles from the Soviet-held capital of Kabul. He is armed with a Chinese Type 56-1 assault rifle.

**LEFT:** Mujahideen sit atop captured Soviet-made BTR-152 armored personnel carrier.

**BELOW:** A mujahid of tomorrow is taught to fire a Chinese Type 56-1 assault rifle by two guerrillas. His 16-year-old brother is already a seasoned warrior.



Mohammed Jan ended his mortar instruction with a demonstration. A round shot from the tube and, after a few expectant seconds, it burst on target high on the opposite slope. The class cheered, "Allah Akhbar!" — God is great. Great too, I thought, looking at Mohammed Jan, is the suffering of this nation.

The group's camp was small and simple, with good reason. A day rarely passed that a Soviet Antonov recon plane didn't overfly Paghman and the mountains.

At the heart of camp was a one-room stone cabin hunkered against one of the valley's steep slopes. The slopes rose 2,000 feet above the valley floor, a curling, stony ribbon barely 200 feet wide. It would be hard for an Antonov to spot the camp, harder still for jets to bomb it.

A rudimentary antiaircraft weapon provided added defense. Lacking SAMs, the group relied on a Chinese Type 54 12.7mm machine gun called a "Dashika" — a copy of the Soviet 12.7mm Degtyrev Model 38/46. They'd dug the gun into the bare mountainside a couple hundred yards above camp. A stone hut next to it allowed two mujahideen to man the gun around the clock. One was needed to fire, the other to keep the feed clear and help spot incoming targets.

Days in camp soon grew slow, as we had little to do but wait for the attack on the post. It gave me a chance to get to know the rest of Shomz Allah's unit. Most were in their 20s but, like Mohammed Jan, they had suffered enough for a lifetime.

Nyamat Allah, the good-natured comedian who, oddly, was the spitting image of Charles Manson, spent three years in Pul-i-Charki about the same time as Mohammed Jan. The Soviets' "internationalist duty," as they call their occupation, included pulling out all of his toenails.

Umaiyon, a slight, leprechaunish sort, was the best cook in camp. His 5-year-old daughter lives with his mother in Kabul. In 1984 his wife and young son were killed during a Soviet attack. And so it went through the group, each man with his own simmering pain, all with the same hatred of the Soviets. They were eager fighters.

A week after I arrived I spent a night up at the machine gun. Early in the morning I planned to photograph the setup and Jalil and Alyos, the two on antiaircraft duty. Just after dawn, however, another photo opportunity presented itself.

The three of us had just poured tea when we heard the terrible roar of jets. We sent glasses flying and threw ourselves out of the hut.

Five Su-25s had just passed overhead. Their bellies glistened silver, lit from below by the rising sun. Jalil and Alyos exchanged shouts and scrambled frantically behind the big gun. One after another the jets plunged out of the pewter sky and slashed rockets into a camp a mile from our own. Explosions burst in yellow on the mountainside.

They circled to dive again. As they banked they spat pairs of antimissile decoys — balls of glowing magnesium. Their circle brought them back overhead and Jalil roared

away with the Dashika.

But the attack was quickly over. The Su-25s left, unscathed, and the machine gun fell silent. Jalil and Alyos chastised themselves for striking out. A mile away, columns of dust and smoke burgeoned slowly, quietly.

Throughout the following week the frequency and variety of enemy attacks on the Paghman area increased. Two nights in a row we listened in camp to the rumble of multiple rocket fire hitting the town. Nyamat Allah had to take cover from bombing sorties three times during the day he took the group's packhorse to Paghman for supplies. He learned that soldiers from the garrison had ambushed and killed three mujahideen in Paghman. Although the mujahideen managed to kill two of the communists before they died, the attack was unusually bold, maybe a sign that the Soviets and their puppets were growing determined to break the freedom fighters on Paghman.

## FROGFOOT

Ivan's Su-25 Frogfoot is the single most hated airplane in Afghanistan. Mujahideen and civilians know it by the distinctive sound of its two engines. Twelve preproduction service test aircraft were issued to the 200th Guards Independent Attack Squadron early in the war, probably 1981. Although they were first seen by Western reconnaissance satellites near Moscow in the late 1970s, Afghanistan was their first entry into squadron service. They have become steadily more prevalent since 1984, and there are probably two full squadrons stationed in Afghanistan, with others conducting operations from bases within the Soviet Union.

They are particularly hated for their ability to deliver bombs and rockets with great accuracy due to an improved weapons delivery system that includes a heads-up display for the pilot. The Frogfoot also has superior endurance and can loiter for a long time over a target, increasing its deadliness.

Frogfoot aircraft are now used in Soviet units in eastern Europe and by the Czechoslovakian air force.

— David C. Isby

I found myself back in town on the first of September. Palowon Shomz Allah had sent for me because he knew I was keen to shoot some more film and thought the recent warming trend would provide opportunities.

I didn't have long to wait. From a rooftop the day after I arrived, I watched the heaviest air attack I'd seen yet. Eight Su-25s and four Mi-24s battered the north edge of Paghman for 20 minutes.

It was inevitable that the recent Soviet pressure on Paghman would touch Shomz Allah and his men, and that afternoon I accompanied him to the funeral of one of his subcommanders.

Twenty-four-year-old Ismat Allah was killed the night before, cut down by a heavy machine gun round in the belly. His men had properly brought his body to his parents' home. It lay on a low wicker bed in the center of a courtyard. Mujahideen who had come to bid goodbye to their Islamic brother crowded around three deep. Some stood mutely while others, including Shomz Allah, wept.

A brilliant variety of flower petals was sprinkled over the body, covering it to the chin. Ismat Allah's mother and several other women crouched on their heels along a wall, just outside the circle of men. Again and again she cried her son's name and beseeched Allah to have mercy on him.

The men were ushered out to the narrow street to allow the women some time alone with the body. A few minutes later the bed and body were brought into the street. By now 100 mujahideen had gathered, nervously, to pay their respects. One well-trajected mortar round from the post would make for a dozen more funerals. Mindful of the danger, six guerrillas quickly shouldered the bed and trotted down the street toward the burial site. The crowd of armed men hurried behind.

At dusk, after a short group prayer and two emotional eulogies, Ismat Allah's men buried him on a hillside among the graves of other *shahids*. The 100 mujahideen quietly dispersed into the dark, some to nearby homes, others into the mountains.

I went with Shomz Allah and some of his men to his house. When we were 100 yards from his door, a large mortar round fired from the post blasted into a potato plot beside us. We flattened and waited, my ears ringing from the percussion. But oddly, no more rounds followed, so we got up and sprinted to the house.

About midnight a resounding "WHUMP" jolted me awake. I listened tensely and heard two more explosions. I realized then it was just more mortar fire from the post, not an attack. The half-dozen mujahideen bedded around the room did not even stir. Years of war had accustomed them to sleep through routine shelling.

But I noticed Shomz Allah sitting at a low window, moonlight on his face, looking out to where the mortar rounds still hit. I wondered why, unlike his men, he couldn't sleep. Was he thinking about Ismat Allah, or did he see something in this mortar attack that disturbed him? He said something to himself I didn't understand, but the worry in his voice unsettled me. I lay back and slept uneasily.

In the morning Shomz Allah and his men went to a religious ceremony for Ismat Allah. They didn't take me, I assumed, because I wasn't a Muslim. Before they left I asked Shomz Allah if, in the afternoon, I could videotape an overall view of Paghman from a hill on the edge of town. He promised to send someone to guide me.

Late in the day Nur, one of the guerrillas I

*Continued on page 86*



# SHOWDOWN AT

## Largest SWAT Op Curbs AIM Anarchists

by Jack Lane



**I**T was the kind of call that made you wish you'd gone into accounting instead of law enforcement. The dispatcher was warning all units to "be on the lookout for a late-model Ford van from U-Haul with possible explosives and automatic weapons." We were to report in if we spotted the vehicle.

Militants associated with the American Indian Movement (AIM) had occupied the community of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on the nearby Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The occupation began the evening of 27 February 1973 and ended on 8 May of that year. For the usually quiet communities of western South Dakota and Nebraska, it was like something out of the movie "Red Dawn."

I continued to patrol, thinking about the global attention the occupation had attracted. The line between law and anarchy was stretched to the limit by the occupation, the caravans of AIM supporters and the very real possibility of widespread vigilante activity. The situation had reached the point where you couldn't find a hardware store that still had any ammo left.

There it was! I caught a glimpse of a Ford U-Haul van turning west off Main and radioed my location as I turned the squad car onto a parallel street. I got close enough to read the numbers on the plate and then dropped back and maintained contact.

### FREELANCE CHIEF

Author Jack Lane is former chief of police in a community near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. He served in the Army from 1964-65 and then worked for a civilian intelligence agency from 1965-71, gathering information on the anti-war movement. He is now a freelance writer living in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

AIM member holding AK-47 during occupation of Wounded Knee during 1973. "Where'd they get the AKs?" was one of the questions most asked those days. Later revelations of AIM's connections to Khadaffi and other terrorist groups provided a possible answer to the question. Photo: AP/Wide World

# WOUNDED KNEE



Angela Davis, well-known communist activist from California, talks to AIM supporter Oren Lyons, an Onondaga chief from New York. Lyons was in Wounded Knee to learn about AIM takeover and to report to the Six Nations Iroquois Federation. Photo: AP/ Wide World

It was a quiet night in the middle of the week and there wasn't much assistance available. I had a 12-gauge sawed-off shotgun and a .30-06 in the cruiser. Like a lot of rural officers, we considered rifles a routine piece of equipment.

The driver of the van spotted me and returned to the highway, leaving my area. I breathed a sigh of relief. I'd been briefed, along with other law enforcement personnel, that AIM had access to AK-47s, M14s, M16s and even Beretta BM-59s. I still have a mental picture of the U-Haul's rear door. I expected it would swing open any minute and I'd find myself dodging AK fire.

It didn't happen, but I made it a point to drop back far enough to be out of easy range. The .30-06 would have been effective at several hundred yards if they missed me with their first burst.

"Where'd they get the AKs?" was one of the questions most asked in those days. Look-alike semiautomatic versions weren't available until a decade later, and Vietnam vets, many of whom were police officers, knew damned well that AK-47s couldn't be brought back legally as war trophies either. "AK? No way!" was the Army's policy.

For the most part, M14s and M16s had been stolen from arsenals on the West Coast. The AK, of course, is a Soviet-bloc weapon, but what about the BM-59?

It was Italian and, we discovered, had been the service arm of Libya. Milt, a tall, slightly balding man in his early 50s, told us that.

Milt worked with the U.S. Marshal's Service Special Operations Group (SOG), which had primary responsibility for containing the occupation at Wounded Knee. Our department was known to have quite a bit of information about the local situation and we were asked to cooperate with Milt.

A number of individuals suspected of



Many police officers are tribal members. These four Indian officers were all commended for their tactical service during the early months of 1973. All are veterans; two are Vietnam vets. Some observers commented that there seemed to be more Indians among police officers than in AIM. Photo: Helen Clausen, *Eagle Butte News*



cooperating with the authorities against AIM turned up dead in those early months of 1973, and care had to be taken to avoid retaliations. Local newspapers, for example, concentrated on weather reports. If they printed anything which could be construed as critical of AIM, they risked being burned out by the militants. If they were sympathetic, they risked being burned out by the increasingly aggressive vigilantes, who were motivated by the fear that higher government authorities had abandoned them.

For instance, Dick Wilson, chairman of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council, complained long and loud about the occupation-

by-force of an entire community on his reservation. If that had happened in New York or Massachusetts, Wilson noted, half the Army would have been there in 10 minutes.

Wilson asked for assistance from the South Dakota National Guard but was turned down by Governor Richard Kneip. The New Town decision in 1972 had blurred jurisdictional lines; it was unclear whether the state had any authority to send in National Guard personnel. (Ironically, many of the guardsmen were tribal members themselves.)

Although no National Guard troops were sent, the state did loan armored personnel

carriers (APCs) and other equipment to SOG. I met Bill Janklow, then South Dakota's State Attorney, at a meeting in Pierre. The word was that nobody wanted to risk a confrontation between AIM and the military because of the symbolic location. Wounded Knee had been the scene of a tragic encounter between troopers of the 7th Cavalry and Ghost Dancers from the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in December 1890. Dee Brown's book about it, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, was a best-seller. AIM might want a violent confrontation, but neither the state nor the federal government did. No military forces would be sent to

## WOUNDED KNEE 1890

On the morning of 29 December 1890, Wounded Knee Creek was the scene of a tragedy that cost the lives of at least 97 Lakota men, women and children in a fight nobody wanted. The Army sustained 64 killed or wounded.

The Lakota were members of Big Foot's band who had fled the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation to the northeast during the widespread panic among Lakota people which followed the death of Sitting Bull.

Big Foot himself was not a war leader and was not a supporter of the "Ghost Dance" which swept the Plains after Jack Wilson (a Paiute medicine man also known as Wovoka) proclaimed himself the Indian messiah in about 1870. Big Foot's band, however, included followers of the new savior who had purchased "ghost shirts" from Wilson after he demonstrated that they turned away the enemy's bullets, making the wearer invulnerable to injury.

Wilson staged a number of these demonstrations for delegates from the Plains tribes. One involved his palming some buckshot and then donning a ghost shirt, which stopped an apparently loaded blackpowder shotgun fired (by one of Wilson's assistants) at close range. Wilson doubled up as the shotgun was fired and then straightened up, dropping the buckshot while concealed by the cloud of smoke, miraculously unharmed. He followed this up by tying a light muslin ghost shirt to a line between two tree limbs and shooting at it with a collection of old blackpowder firearms. The heavy, slow-moving projectiles flipped the shirt up and produced another miracle. No holes in the shirt!

The Lakota were easy prey for this kind of trickery. Their old religion involved no sleight-of-hand, and religious leaders were expected to live a life of austere poverty. They could not imagine a messiah who would lie to them for profit. Wilson the wily Paiute would have fit right in with modern TV evangelists (at least the more corrupt of them).



Field at Wounded Knee after a blizzard swept the area after the battle, delaying burial of the dead. The figure frozen in foreground is Yellow Bird beside a level-action Winchester. Yellow Bird was medicine man who advocated the Ghost Dance. Photo: U.S. Bureau of Ethnology

Wilson's bulletproof shirts failed miserably on the morning of the 29th at Wounded Knee Creek. Big Foot's people had agreed to come into the agency at Pine Ridge and were escorted by Oglala scouts (the Oglala are the band of Lakota at Pine Ridge) and elements of the 7th Cavalry, Custer's old outfit.

Although nobody expected a fight, efforts to disarm Big Foot's Lakotas raised tensions. Colonel James W. Forsyth had been given no authority to make decisions; General Nelson A. Miles exercised overall command and was already trying to court-martial Col. Edwin V. Sumner for failing to disarm and dismount the Sioux in their camp on the west end of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

Forsyth tried to intimidate the Lakotas, and did manage to collect some of their weapons. One unstable young man, Black Coyote, raised his Winches-

ter over his head and demanded (in Lakota) to be paid for it. He was a hunter and he'd paid good money for it.

Two troopers wrestled the Winchester away from him and it went off accidentally. The first shot, in other words, was an accidental discharge which seemed to miss everybody.

A number of tense young warriors threw back their blankets and fired into the crowded soldiers at point-blank range. The troopers returned fire and the area disappeared under a cloud of blackpowder and dust until surviving soldiers and Lakotas managed to extricate themselves.

As they sought cover, a battery of four 1.65-inch Hotchkiss breech-loading Mountain Rifles opened fire. The fighting spread to the Lakota campsite and the ravine south of the hill where the Hotchkiss guns were emplaced (now dubbed "Cemetery Hill").

It was a fight no one had wanted. Colonel Forsyth's Oglala scouts had warned him not to press Big Foot's people too hard. Forsyth had no choice, however, and Big Foot was seriously ill and unable to restrain the more zealous followers of the false prophet from inciting his young men to fight.

## Wounded Knee.

The National Guard would assist local law enforcement outside the reservation, however. Rioting had destroyed the Chamber of Commerce and other buildings in Custer, South Dakota, before Wounded Knee was occupied. Other communities had been threatened and the Guard might be needed to protect them or to control the spreading vigilantism.

"They had armed men on every building," said one officer of South Dakota's tactical team. The same militants who'd rioted in Custer moved toward Hot Springs and were turned back by a large group of armed residents intent on defending their town. "It could have been a blood bath," he warned.

A subsequent meeting with Milt indicated that some of AIM's leaders might have attended what he described as a "worldwide terrorist convention" held at Baddawi, Libya, a couple of years earlier. The term "terror network" hadn't come into use then, but it looked like the occupation of Wounded Knee might be part of a larger plan involving organized international terrorism.

Libya was known to be phasing out some of its BM-59s in favor of more modern Soviet-bloc weapons. Perhaps what we were seeing at Wounded Knee was what George Habash (leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—PFLP), the organizer of the conference, had described as "the organic supports between Palestinians and revolutionaries all over the world."

Incidences of global terrorism seemed to increase after 1971, and the occupation of Wounded Knee could have been part of a much bigger, dirtier picture. "It would sure explain where all that hardware came from," Milt noted.

A SOG officer reported monitoring some very strange radio traffic from AIM's stronghold inside Wounded Knee. A military veteran with quite a bit of experience in communications, he speculated that it could be linked to Moscow. That seemed far-fetched until Khadaffi declared in 1981 that "American Indians have cried for assistance from me . . . [and] the majority of American Indians are of Libyan origin." By 1983, Dace Means (the brother of AIM leader Russell Means) and Ward Churchill, a Denver activist, were issuing press releases about their meetings with Khadaffi in Tripoli and Benghazi.

Most Indian people, recalling Libya's links with international terrorism, including its involvement in sending a "hit team" to the United States late in 1981, condemned the whole Khadaffi connection.

AIM's leadership and its centers of power were urban for the most part. Its association with the Black Panthers, the anti-war movement and the radical Left, which developed during the late 1960s, did not endear it to reservation communities, which had sent many of their best young men to Vietnam.

Many police officers facing AIM were



## WOUNDED KNEE 1973

The occupation of Wounded Knee the evening of 27 February 1973 was not an isolated incident. It was the last, and the most famous, effort of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and its many white supporters to manipulate the media through "guerrilla theater." It was no accident that a camera crew accompanied the militants into Wounded Knee the evening of the occupation.

Key events leading up to the occupation of Wounded Knee were:

- 28 July 1968: AIM is founded by Dennis J. Banks, George Mitchell and Clyde Bellecourt in Minneapolis. This was a period of widespread urban rioting and campus violence because of Vietnam and racial tensions.
- 20 November 1969: Alcatraz Island occupied by supporters of Indians of all tribes. Most militants abandon the island and it is reoccupied by U.S. Marshals on 11 June 1971.
- Fall 1972: AIM organizes caravans of protestors for the "Trail of Broken Treaties" to the headquarters of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in Washington, DC. Russell Means (an Oglala Sioux from Cleveland, Ohio) and Dennis Banks (a Chippewa from Minneapolis-St. Paul) emerge as the central leaders. BIA offices are trashed by AIM's "warriors" and the media has a field day while the BIA pays bus and carfare for the protestors.
- Fall 1972: Buoyed by the success of the "Trail of Broken Treaties," AIM tries to establish some sort of support on Indian reservations in the Dakotas, without much success. It moves from the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation to the Black Hills, where riots are staged at Sturgis and Custer. There is considerable damage in Custer, where the Cham-

ber of Commerce building is burned and some police cars torched. AIM members at altar of occupied church where 11 hostages were held at the beginning of the occupation. Indians held mock services in church and used cross from church for target practice during the occupation. This kind of activity made it difficult for AIM to get support from real Indians. Reservation communities are religious, and people were shocked by destructiveness AIM directed against churches. Photo: AP/ Wide World

ber of Commerce building is burned and some police cars torched.

Residents of nearby Hot Springs arm themselves and confront AIM and its supporters. AIM does a brief, polite war dance and leaves town.

● Early 1973: Media attention on Vietnam has shifted the spotlight from AIM. Its two biggest chapters at this time are at the University of Colorado (Boulder) and the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis-St. Paul). Agitation in western Nebraska and South Dakota over the death of an elderly Oglala (Raymond Yellow-Thunder) in Gordon, Nebraska, helps draw AIM and its supporters back to the Pine Ridge area.

● 27 February 1973: Wounded Knee is occupied by AIM and its supporters. Tribal chairman Dick Wilson demands assistance, and the Special Operations Group of the U.S. Marshal's Service is sent in to keep militants under "house arrest." The story is picked up by news services all over the world.

● 8 May 1973: The National Council of Churches (NCC) negotiates an end to the occupation. Returning residents find the historic church and trading post destroyed. Means runs for office against Wilson and loses. Media attention has become critical of AIM and the effectiveness of its "guerrilla theater" is diminished. U. S. withdrawal from Vietnam ends campus protests and urban violence along racial lines declines.





U.S. flag flies upside down at church which stands on site of Wounded Knee massacre of 1890. Photo: AP/Wide World

tribal members and Vietnam vets who regarded it as nothing better than a band of traitors and hippies. It is significant that over half the militants indicted in federal court for the occupation were not Indian people at all, let alone Oglala Sioux. Most were whites who'd been active in the anti-war protests and the campus riots of the early 1970s. Like most of AIM's leaders, they were "city kids" who were well-acquainted with the media and how to use it to their advantage. In fact, according to most reports, a camera crew from KUTV in Salt Lake City was with the militants who seized Wounded Knee the night of 27

February.

For the 230 lawmen who surrounded the occupied village of Wounded Knee, the situation was dangerous and unstable from the start. During the first 10 days of the occupation, it was unclear whether some residents of the community were being held hostage or not, even though the militants maintained telephone and radio contact with authorities (and the media) on the outside.

The possible hostages were mostly elderly people involved in running the Wounded Knee trading post and museum, or were in church work. All were over 60, except for a 46-year-old priest and a 12-year-old girl.

## WOUNDED KNEE TODAY

Wounded Knee has always been viewed by outsiders as a flashpoint in the conflict between red and white. The reality is more subtle.

Neither the first nor the second Wounded Knee incident was a race war. In 1890, the Ghost Dance played a major role in turning traditional Lakotas and Christian Lakotas against followers of the new messiah. Big Foot was too sick to exercise the type of leadership which might have averted a tragedy, and Forsyth had no discretion in the matter. Operational control rested with General Miles, who was en route from his headquarters in Chicago to take control in the field himself. Nobody listened to the Oglala scouts' warnings about pressing Big Foot's people too hard.

Nobody really listens to the people of Wounded Knee today, either. Like the residents of other reservation communities, they face a grim struggle to survive in a region devastated by a widespread, implacable crisis in agriculture.

Most people have to drive to Pine Ridge or farther to get regular employment. The trading post was never rebuilt and the historic cemetery lies untended for the most part.

Visitors find a collection of small, weathered crosses made of lath. Many are no longer readable. Faded plastic flowers decorate many of the graves. Others are overgrown.

It's the kind of thing you expect to see in Third World countries, but not this close to Denver, Colorado. There are other stones, neat white ones erected for vets, including some of the Oglala scouts who witnessed the tragedy of 1890.

They're decorated with small American flags. The American Legion is a major institution on the reservation. Some reservations even have two Legion posts.

Two monuments stand out. One, the obelisk erected to the men, women and children buried in the mass grave underneath in January 1891; the other, a beautiful contemporary marker that looks like it belongs in some rich suburb. It marks the

None had resisted when as many as 50 carloads of militants originally occupied the village, but all were terrified when AIM's leaders announced that they were "political prisoners and hostages." AIM leader Russell Means even went so far as to describe them as "prisoners of war."

Initial occupation was conducted by an estimated 100-125 men (plus 80 women and children) armed with about 50 rifles of various calibers, 20 shotguns and 35-40 handguns. The presence of so many women, children and hostages left the authorities with no real alternative but containment.

Media attention, which the militants sought and manipulated as extensively as possible, imposed restraints on the authorities, too. Their 10 "prisoners of war" attracted too much public sympathy and attention. Subsequent statements indicated that the 10 hostages were "free to go anytime they pleased," and all were released (minus their worldly possessions) within the first 10 days.

By the time they were released, federal authorities had concentrated a force of 230 officers on a 17-mile perimeter around Wounded Knee. One hundred of them were U.S. Marshals with specialized training and (in most cases) extensive combat experience in Vietnam and elsewhere. An experienced lawman and former San Diego chief of police, Wayne Colburn, was the senior U.S. Marshal in command during the containment operations.

The FBI provided 116 hand-picked agents under the command of Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Joseph Trimbach, who had just been promoted to the SAC slot in the volatile Minneapolis region (which included the Dakotas and Wounded Knee)

burial of one of the militants killed during the occupation in 1973 and is the biggest marker in the cemetery.

Wounded Knee is not a happy place. People don't like to be interviewed or give their names. One Oglala editor had his windows shot out in 1982 for running a story perceived by some as critical of AIM.

Critics of AIM are still called "Apples" — red on the outside, white on the inside. AIM's critics refer to them as "Assholes in Moccasins" and describe them as "Guardians of the Oglala Nation," or GOONS.

Whites (there are a number of whites who live on the reservation and consider it home) are still fearful. The turmoil of the last couple of decades has left them defensive and sullen.

Ironically, Indians and whites who live together on the reservation tend to be individualists (rather than racists) and often get along well. They face the same economic crisis and they've lived through the same tragedies. Nobody here wants a Wounded Knee III.

two weeks before the occupation began.

Twenty to 30 officers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) police also assisted in maintaining the perimeter. They faced a formidable set of fortifications which had been started the night of the occupation and which were situated on high ground to control the surrounding area.

New housing had been planned for Wounded Knee and substantial quantities of concrete blocks and other supplies moved into the area by R & S Construction Company in preparation for construction in the spring. Militants constructed a series of nine bunkers and strongpoints with names like "Little California," "Little Big Horn," "Hawk Eye," "Last Stand" and so on, all linked by citizens' band radios and manned around the clock.

Federal officers erected eight roadblocks, each of which was beefed up by at least one of the 17 APCs for defense against AIM's rifles. AIM's perimeter was about three miles long compared to about 17 for the SOG. It was impossible to patrol the whole 17 miles with the men available. This meant that Wounded Knee could not be completely cut off; a number of back trails through draws remained open throughout the 71-day siege.

Colburn and the other officers on the scene were unable to do much about this problem because operational control was reserved for Washington, DC. SOG's orders were to control the situation without hurting anybody or creating any incidents.

In addition to the gaps in the SOG's perimeter, power and other essential "humanitarian" services were kept on for the convenience of the militants and their guests from the national and international media. This outraged a number of elected officials, including tribal chairman Dick Wilson, who erected his own roadblocks beyond the SOG's.

Colburn refused to allow his officers to be sitting ducks for AIM snipers, however, and they fired back when fired upon. The siege entered a deadly routine. Days were usually pretty quiet. AIM riflemen would take potshots (occasionally) and attract return fire, but the big firefights (some involving exchanges of 5,000-6,000 rounds) usually took place at night.

Typically, a militant would take a potshot at one of the spotlights on the APCs and the SOG men would attempt to pinpoint the source and return fire. The militants would routinely return fire and the show could continue for an hour or two. Both sides were dug-in well enough that few casualties were sustained.

During the siege, the militants sustained two killed and seven wounded; federal officers, two wounded.

One of the federal officers wounded was agent Curtis Fitzgerald of Chicago. Fitzgerald was trying to return fire when his M16 jammed and he sustained serious hand wounds and an injury to his wrist. He was able to fire six rounds from his .38 revolver, but was too seriously injured to reload.



**Indians are taken into custody by U.S. Marshals after storming of courthouse and burning of Chamber of Commerce building in Custer, South Dakota. Photo: AP/ Wide World**



**Armed AIM member keeps watch from church bell tower during occupation, which lasted from 27 February to 8 May 1973. Photo: AP/ Wide World**

**Armed AIM member stands guard on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. For usually quiet communities of western South Dakota, the occupation and SWAT operation were like something out of "Red Dawn." Photo: AP/ Wide World**



In another firefight, Marshal Lloyd Grimm sustained a wound which left him paralyzed from the waist down. He was hit from a range of about 300 yards.

AIM's first "warrior" to die was Frank J. Clear. Although described by AIM as "Clearwater" and identified as an "Indian," FBI records indicated that he was non-Indian, a native of Virginia who had been dishonorably discharged from the Army.

Oglala tribal authorities later refused to permit Clear to be buried at Wounded Knee because of his complete lack of tribal affiliation.

AIM's embarrassing martyr was forgotten when Lawrence Dean "Buddy" Lamont, 32, was mortally wounded in a firefight late in April. Lamont was an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. His niece, Darlene Nichols, 18, was AIM leader Dennis Banks' wife (under the name "Kamook"). Lamont is buried at Wounded Knee in the historic cemetery.

The SOG never had to storm AIM's bunkers. Nine weeks after the occupation began it was finally resolved by negotiations that were upstaged by the Watergate scandal.

Wounded Knee has been described as resembling a rape victim since its occupation in 1973. The outsiders/rapists had their way and left in search of bigger and better issues. The community/victim was left with fear, hatred and permanent psychological scars.

In spite of contradictory orders (control things, but don't hurt anybody) and a confused situation (three layers of roadblocks and evidence of increasingly serious vigilante activity), the SOG was able to contain the violence at Wounded Knee and end the confrontation with a minimum loss of life.

Given the emotional intensity of those years and the potential for widespread violence, that is a remarkable accomplishment. Wounded Knee was not a clash between Indians and whites, nor was it a military operation; it remained a police operation from start to finish. The biggest SWAT operation in history was a success because of the dedication and courage of the individual officers who went in harm's way at Wounded Knee during the occupation of 1973. ❧



# EMERALD TRIANGLE

## Booby-Trapped Pot Crops and Dopers' Cash Draw G-Men and "Treasure-Hunting" Freelancers

by Walt James

**T**O an unfamiliar visitor, it is a magnificently beautiful country of rugged 6,000-foot mountains and gentle green valleys, abundant with towering redwoods, pines, cedars, spruce, and Douglas firs, interlaced with swift and clear streams and rivers full of rainbow trout, steelhead and salmon. The lush, tangled green forests abound with deer, bear, squirrel, fox, bobcat and an occasional mountain lion.

Numerous old mining and logging towns, once bustling with activity, appear sleepy and picturesque in their retirement, ideal havens for vacationers and tourists, convenient way stations for hunters and fishermen, a place to really relax and enjoy some of America's most beautiful national forest.

Not anymore. Now the three counties that encompass most of this beauty and abundance of northern California — Trinity, Humboldt and Mendocino counties — have become known as the "Emerald Triangle."

Today, unseen and perhaps unnoticed by outsiders, there is a foreboding presence, both sinister and dangerous — that of the marijuana cultivators. There is a war going on here now. Armed men roam these woods, plant and grow the much prized and potent strain of marijuana known as Afghani-Kush Purple in them, strew them with deadly booby traps, confront and threaten the tourists and sportsmen who enter their domain. People are getting injured and killed.

Unfortunately, and much to the chagrin of the United States Forest Service (USFS), the violence and paranoia which the multi-billion dollar enterprise of marijuana cultivation (#1 cash crop in California at \$2.5 billion in '84; cotton #2 at less than \$1 billion) has injected into this part of northern California have all but terminated the

### BUDDING WRITER

Author Walt James is a disabled Marine Vietnam veteran who lives in the Emerald Triangle. We welcome his first contribution to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. We'd also like to note that Walt has donated a portion of his author payment to the Afghan and Nicaraguan freedom fighters, and we express our appreciation on their behalf.



Author Walt James near Cam Lo in I Corps, Republic of Vietnam, with 2nd Battalion (attached from 1st Recon Battalion), 1st Marine Division, in 1966. Photo: Walt James

flow of tourists and vacationers seeking the relaxation and enjoyment of some of our country's grandest natural beauty.

From March to November — the pot growing season — officers of the USFS are besieged with complaints and fear from vacationers and sportsmen who tell of terrifying encounters with armed and masked growers issuing threats of violence and retaliation or, even worse, of setting off one of the many types of booby traps that litter the forests, often with deadly results.

In the fall of 1986, several elderly ladies of the area garden club ventured into the forest in search of one of the many varieties of forest floral decor and encountered several live, booby-trapped M26 fragmentation hand grenades when they stumbled into a pot patch. Fortunately, they did not trip any and were not injured.

In October of 1986, four deer hunters unknowingly walked into a pot patch near Mad River and immediately came under automatic weapons fire from an unknown number of growers wearing camouflage fatigues. A 15-minute firefight ensued, but miraculously no one was wounded or killed. Authorities were contacted, and within an hour SWAT teams were helo-lifted into the area. The growers had vanished, melted into the bush (sound familiar, Vietnam vets?), leaving the lucrative crop behind. It was hacked down and helo-lifted out for burning elsewhere.

In 1984, near the tiny town of Hyampom, a hotbed of growers and incidents of intimidation and violence, a local man, his wife and children were confronted in the night in their own home, held prisoner and roughed up for three days by seven armed men who mistakenly accused them of ripping off their pot patch. This despite the fact



**CAMP officer demonstrates height of 15-foot Afghani-Kush marijuana plants confiscated during CAMP raid in Shasta-Trinity National Forest, 1986. One well-tended female plant averages two pounds of buds at harvest. With pot selling for about \$3,500 per pound, the attraction is obvious. Photo: U.S. Forest Service**



that most of the town was aware of what was happening; they were either afraid to help or just didn't care. Finally, a local USFS officer got wind of what was happening and quickly accompanied county sheriff's deputies to the isolated mountain ranch. The intruders scattered and ran. Most were later brought to justice and imprisoned on kidnapping and assault charges. The man and his family received death threats during the trials and have permanently left the area.

In the same area a few years earlier, the headless body of a young man was discovered floating in the south fork of the Trinity River, which winds through Hyampom. And then another body, that of a 17-year-old boy with shotgun wounds and his hands chopped off, was found in the river. Both crimes are believed to have been related to marijuana growing and are unsolved to date.

Numerous incidents of arson, threats of arson, threats of murder, and other intimidation are commonplace in the Emerald Triangle. As a result of this steadily worsening situation, a federal task force was established in 1983. Known as the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP), it is a combined nationwide effort of several federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and the USFS to eradicate marijuana growing and its attendant problems. The effort was funded under the Department of Agriculture to the tune of \$20 million in 1983, and funding has steadily increased. In California, federal funding for 1985 amounted to \$2.9 million. Pot grown in California is believed to account for at least one-fifth of the nation's total crop.

Personnel involved in CAMP come from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USFS and, in California, from the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement (BNE), all local county sheriff's departments and many city SWAT teams across the state. The California Highway Patrol (CHP), FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) assist in manpower and intelligence investigations since many illegal weapons are confiscated, and the FBI has indicated some evidence that both organized crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs have become involved in the past few years. In special instances, even U.S. Army, California National Guard and U.S. Air Force resources and manpower have been tapped.

Until a couple of years ago, the USFS was not really involved in law enforcement or in actively hunting marijuana cultivators and their crops. That has turned around 180 degrees, because it became clear that only USFS personnel, who live and work in these forests, know them well enough to locate







much of the isolated area used by the growers. This turned out to be a very effective move, because the terrain was totally unfamiliar to law enforcement officers.

One incident in particular that helped the powers-that-be realize the need for the USFS to arm themselves and get involved happened in August 1983. A BLM employee, a biologist named Mary Coburn, parked her lime-green government truck with USFS emblem on the side near a mountain stream to do a routine survey on it.

**LEFT: Local in cammies and bush hat stands amidst pot plants in Mendocino County, armed with MAC-10 9mm SMG with suppressor and frag grenade. Despite 5th Special Forces flash on suppressor, this guy is not an Army or Vietnam vet. Photo: Walt James**

## DEJA VU

During a recent spring, I was cruising some seldom-used back roads and U.S. Forest Service fire trails with a local USFS officer, assisting in locating some cattle lost the previous winter during unusually heavy snows in the area. This was in Trinity County of the Emerald Triangle, where *some* people still work for a living, and each recovered steer or cow is money to the rancher who owned them.

As we slowly rolled down a back road, scanning for hoof prints and any signs of the cattle, something caught my eye that gave me goosebumps.

"Stop the truck!" I hollered to the USFS Ranger.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I dunno. Just a minute — let me get out and take a look."

It's funny how you never forget some things you learn — even if it were 18 years ago, in a war in a faraway place. Maybe you don't even consciously remember, but then something triggers your memory and you feel that old, familiar feeling of danger.

What had caught my eye in a mini-flashback to 'Nam were three long, pretty straight poles, dead trees lying on the upward sloped bank of the road. They were all lying perpendicular to each other, evenly spaced about 2 feet apart. Even though they had been rained on earlier and didn't look out of place, it just wasn't *natural*.

And the reason it wasn't was that in Vietnam three small sticks so arranged on the ground meant a VC camp in the direction they pointed. I called that from my memory automatically — just as if it were yesterday.

I explained this to the Ranger. He looked at me kind of funny and asked what that had to do with cows? Nothing, I told him, but I wanted to check the area

down from the poles. I just *knew* someone (another veteran of the bush in 'Nam?) had to have placed those poles that way.

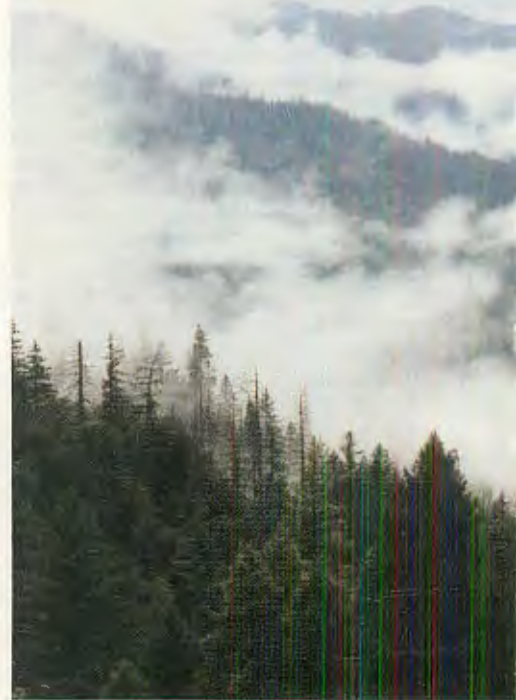
The Ranger walked down off the other side of the road with me into some fir trees and heavy bush. Some distance through the trees we could see the sunlight on a meadow that opened up ahead.

Then the Ranger said: "I'll be damned — look at this." Concealed under some cut brush and leaves was a large crumpled piece of black plastic tarp, maybe 12x15 feet, with something obviously under it.

We pulled the brush aside and lifted the corners of the plastic carefully. There, neatly stacked on top of more plastic, was a damned grocery store. Cases and cases of canned tuna fish, pizza kits, powdered milk and orange juice, 100-pound sacks of beans, rice and lentils, boil-bag dinners of all kinds, skillets, pots and pans, jugs of water and cases of soda pop. It was one hell of a stash of goods — enough for several people to spend many months out there without ever having to leave the area.

There were also shovels, thousands of paper drinking cups (the most common container used by growers to sprout plants), bags of potting soil, fertilizer, deer repellent and about 1,000 feet of black plastic hose. We had obviously stumbled upon the supply stash of growers planning to move in and stay in — one tactic used by growers to eliminate any chance of being discovered out in a remote area like this.

Well, hate to have ruined your day, growers, whoever you are, but after a short discussion of just what we'd found, we decided to load it all up and do the area a service. The food provided good eating for a very needy family for almost four months and no doubt disrupted the plans of some enterprising growers for running their crops that year — in that area, at least.



**ABOVE: Clouds and mist in mountains of Emerald Triangle are reminiscent of Vietnam's I Corps. So are booby traps and weapons used by the growers. Photo: Walt James**

Unknown to her, she was perilously close to a large marijuana patch.

"I hadn't gone 50 feet when a bullet ricocheted off a rock about five feet from me," she recalls. Other shots sailed over her head as she desperately scrambled back to her truck, where she found herself so wobbly from fear that her left leg could at first not depress the truck's clutch. Then two bullets ripped through the cab's door. "Somehow," she said, "my leg stiffened and I got out of there." Federal agents later determined that one of the two hollow-point bullets had passed within inches of her heart and lungs.

Although most growers seem to accept the maxim that shooting at any officer is a no-no because it will bring down on you, quickly, a swarm of more of them, there still have been many shots fired at officers and USFS employees, and one USFS Ranger has been shot. And several years ago, the USFS substation near Denny, another hotbed of particularly militant and violent growers, was burned to the ground. The California National Guard moved into the area, cut off all roads and gave the place a thorough going-over. While they were there, they had some Viet Cong-style shots fired at them — enemy unseen.

Today, USFS officers are armed with





**RIGHT:** Grower's items confiscated in CAMP raid in Trinity County include oscilloscopes used with TVs to detect movement near pot patch; stolen sheriff deputy's cap with badge; .45-caliber Ruger revolver in holster; 12-gauge shotgun, .22-caliber automatic rifle and sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun. Photo: U.S. Forest Service



CAR-15 rifles and .357 Magnum revolvers, and participate in some dozen CAMP pot patrols in 38 different California counties where growers are fighting for control of 1.5 million acres of public land. USFS personnel in the Law Enforcement Division are sent to a DEA school in Georgia for "marijuana familiarization." There, the DEA has its own pot patches, concealed and booby trapped like the growers' patches. USFS officers are given aerial spotting training from fixed-wing craft and helicopters, and learn other pot patrol techniques. USFS law enforcement personnel now have "Title 21" authority — the power to make arrests under existing narcotics laws.

A USFS officer recently explained to me how the term "Emerald Triangle" was coined. Aside from the obvious take-off from the infamous "Golden Triangle" of Asian opium warlords, he explained that, "From the air, the marijuana plants sparkle bright green against the duller greens of the natural forest vegetation due to the cannabis resins in the leaves and buds of the pot plants. They look just like emeralds sparkling against a dull green carpet."



In its 1986 reports on the ongoing war, CAMP expressed some optimism that it was having an impact on the growers. However, most local citizens in the know doubt that. CAMP reports in 1986 it seized and destroyed 117,277 sinsemilla (seedless) marijuana plants and 1,426 pounds of processed buds — their combined wholesale value set at \$403 million.

CAMP also claims that, because of its seizures and arrests of 91 persons, the price of one pound of the potent weed has risen from around \$2,000 in 1985 to \$3,500 in 1987. Investigation in all three counties of the Emerald Triangle does, in fact, support this claim, although CAMP's estimate may be a few hundred dollars too high, according to many growers.

Perhaps the most effective tool handed to CAMP by the legislators was the authority to seize all lands and properties connected with the cultivation of marijuana. CAMP reports that in 1986 it seized 41 properties in the Triangle area. This law has caused nearly all growers to move their crops onto federal (USFS or BLM) public land, which has made it easier for CAMP to concentrate its surveillance. Confiscations have also provided \$4 million in funds.

Although CAMP's report for 1986 states that there is little evidence of any mass exodus of growers from the Triangle, there is evidence that growers are moving their crops into even more remote areas, using enhanced camouflage techniques and moving their crops indoors under halide lamps — all to avoid detection by helicopter and fixed-wing crews of CAMP. They also report some indications that cultivation in southern California is increasing. And on-the-scene investigation reveals that, for the first time in years, there are houses for rent in the tiny towns submerged in the Triangle.

Penalties have also stiffened for cultivation in California. A person caught on private land cultivating marijuana is subject to two years in prison, with five years probation and /or a \$2,000 fine under State of California penal codes, and three years in prison (first offense) and up to \$10,000 fine under federal codes, in addition to seizure and confiscation of all properties and cash.

Despite the complaints of some of the citizenry (most of them growers) about the distinctly militaristic flavor of CAMP tactics (choppers, armed patrols in cammies and bush hats that look like they belong in a Vietnam War scene) and despite the few lawsuits against CAMP for "harassment" and one injunction limiting the fly-over altitude for choppers to 500 feet, the war goes on with increased vigilance on the part of CAMP. More helicopters (three per county in the Triangle), more foot patrols, more surveillance with sophisticated gear developed during Vietnam (including the latest version of the starlight scope), long-

**LEFT:** CAMP officer exits chopper drawing his weapon, as he is about to arrest growers who have already surrendered. Photo: U.S. Forest Service



## PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH PURPLE POT PATCHES

I remember the first time I ever saw a large marijuana patch and had a first-hand encounter with the deadly devices they have spawned all over the Emerald Triangle.

I was accompanying a retired U.S. Forest Service officer who is also one of the best trackers (of man or beast) who ever walked the Triangle forests.

"Larry" has driven and humped almost every nook and cranny of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest for over 20 years with the USFS. He already had a good idea where a large patch might be, because the odor of the Afghani-Kush marijuana plant is very strong and pungent, much like that of a skunk (whence the tag "skunk weed" on some varieties), and he had caught the odor near a particular fire trail (roads that are barely roads, deep in the mountains and used only by USFS fire crews in times of forest fires).

"The wind will carry the stink of this stuff for over a mile if everything is just right," he told me.

Sure enough, as we pulled his truck under the shade of a big madrone tree, I caught the smell myself. Easy enough to figure where to head to find it — upwind in the slightest of breezes that was barely moving leaves on the trees.

"They always plant it on a southern exposure, if they know what they're doing," Larry explained. "That is the only way to get all the sunlight they need during the spring and fall months."

He added, "And the smell is one thing they can't get away from . . . they all want to grow the purple buds [Afghani-Kush strain], and it's always gonna smell like a skunk."

"The next thing you look for is a water source," Larry continued, "and they've learned to stay away from the natural streams, because CAMP is onto them like flies."

Larry went on to explain that the mountains of the Triangle are dotted with small springs that may appear and then disappear below ground in only a few feet. "Those are what the growers look for," he told me, as we quietly and carefully crept through bush and vines, the smell of pot growing stronger and stronger.

Both realizing that we were getting close to a pot patch, we said nothing from this point on, using only hand and arm signals. We also were aware that we could both be in immediate danger and, as a Vietnam veteran of a lot of bush-humping with the 1st Marines, I couldn't help but nervously eye every inch of brush for trip wires.

Suddenly, a deer bolted from some



Items confiscated from growers in pot bust. Clockwise from top: dynamite sticks with caps and fuse; case of dynamite; block of C-4 with radio-controlled detonating device; lime-colored det cord; commercial two-way transceivers; U.S. military "screw-in" detonators; U.S. military trip (push-pull) booby trap devices; "mouse traps"; Mark II pineapple frag grenades (live); M33 baseball frag grenades (live); electric blasting caps; 1-pound block of U.S. military TNT; fuse blasting caps in white styrofoam holder; and commercial dynamite fuse. Photo: Walt James

manzanita brush about 20 feet away, giving us both mild heart attacks. After only a few more meters of snooping and pooping we both saw it at the same time: dark green leaves fluttering in the breeze, an 8-foot Kush plant, buds 2-10 inches long, glistening with cannabis resin in the sunlight. We both froze. After about a minute of nothing but looking and listening, we crept ahead on hands and knees. Another plant, then two more, and more and more down a slight slope amidst 10-foot-high manzanita brush.

"Hear the little 'spurt, spurt' of the water emitters?" Larry asked me.

"Yeah," I answered as quietly as I could whisper.

"They make that sound when tiny

particles get into them — another dead giveaway," Larry whispered.

He was silent for some minutes, making reasonably sure that no one was around guarding the patch. Then we crept up to a plant to examine it more closely.

This was a professionally done patch. All the tubing and water hose were buried and it was planted on a southern exposure. The ground around the plant base showed that a hole of at least a 2-foot diameter and probably that deep had been dug for each plant, a must to allow the pot plant's root structures to expand and develop properly, Larry explained.

"These people know what they're doing. Watch yourself [for booby traps]," Larry whispered. No problem. I was already on a pretty good pucker factor.

"I'm a little concerned that no one is around," he said. "That's when you find booby traps." (This was in October, near harvest and, with the umbrella of choppers CAMP throws up, a lot of growers feel it's better to leave the guarding to devices rather than risk arrest.)

Then, as I was eyeballing the size of one plant from ground level up the stalk, I saw something that boosted my pucker factor from about a seven to a 10. Running up the side of this 8-inch-diameter





stalk from the ground was what looked like a small rope or cord taped to the stalk. Then I noticed it was a lime-green color, with black stripes spiraling around it — DET CORD!

I reached over and tapped Larry on the shoulder and pointed. He saw and agreed. Det cord — a variety commonly used up here by loggers. We both sweated a little more, looked, strained to see a trip wire or anything that would tell us anything about what would detonate it. Several minutes passed. Nothing. Just this almost invisible det cord running up the stalk. We took a look at two more plants. One had the same arrangement.

Not wanting to move around at all until we figured out if we were about to get blown away, we kept eyeing the det cord on the stalk. Then Larry carefully brushed a little soil and pine needles away from the base of the stalk with two fingers.

There it was. Just a tiny glimmer of silver — a blasting cap. More puckering. Still, no wires, nothing that seemed to activate anything. Then we both saw it, loosely arranged on the other side of the stalk: a tiny, barely visible fishing line filament. It ran from the top of the plant down into the ground near the stalk.

Carefully brushing away soil and needles after warning me to get back first (no way, my macho ego said), Larry

uncovered the top of what turned out to be a wooden cigar box.

"I've seen this setup before," Larry whispered. "No sweat." I sweated anyway. I remembered some good Marines who were blown away in 'Nam trying to do this kind of shit.

Soon enough, Larry had the whole lid of the cigar box uncovered. Both the fishing filament and the det cord's cap entered it through neatly drilled holes. Larry carefully raised the lid. "It takes some sharp, jerking actions, like hacking or pulling on the plant, to detonate this setup," he assured me.

There, inside the box, was a simple electric detonating switch, homemade and activated by any movement of the fishing line filament. In other words, anyone who was unfortunate enough to take hold of the plant and try to hack it or even pull it very much would find their hands, and maybe more, missing. The sorry bastards, I thought to myself, despising the worthless assholes who would leave this in the forest.

Larry carefully replaced the lid, soil and pine needles as they were, turned and motioned for us to make tracks out of there. As soon as we were some distance from the patch, I did the old Vietnam "Catholic Cross" — spectacles, testicles, wallet and watch — and began to breathe normally again.

"Spooky. Just like 'Nam in there," I said to Larry.

"Yeah, and just as deadly," he answered.

The next day the patch came under surveillance by CAMP. I can't imagine how that happened. Strangely, no growers ever showed up at that patch for the next two weeks. Perhaps we were being watched when we went in there. Who knows? Even though both Larry and I went in there heavily armed, maybe we were lucky we didn't get sniped off, if we were seen.

At any rate, CAMP eventually went in on foot, took a look, then had its EOD people (usually U.S. Army or National Guard EOD) go in and disarm the 21 booby-trapped plants. All were disarmed without incident, cut down and burned elsewhere. No growers apprehended, unfortunately, but a total of 118 pot plants were destroyed, and maybe some innocent hiker or hunter was saved from being seriously injured or killed.

"That's why the policy now is to sit and watch any patch we find, especially one with booby traps. We want to put these idiots away," a USFS officer told me later.

It was one more example of the way some pot growers in the Emerald Triangle are perfectly willing to indiscriminately injure, maim or kill people, even innocent ones, to protect their prized crop.



**Deadly homemade booby trap found in pot patch in Trinity National Forest by CAMP officers uses 12-gauge shell and mousetrap to detonate primer when trip wire is activated. This trap was tripped and fired, narrowly missing CAMP officers raiding the patch. Photo: U.S. Forest Service**

range listening devices, and dogs and gadgetry able to smell pot are all in use.

In July 1986, two sheriff's deputies flying surveillance in a light fixed-wing aircraft near the California-Oregon border area north of the Triangle were hit by ground fire, crashed and died. Local FBI offices have had reports that several stolen .50-caliber machine guns may have been obtained by growers for use against CAMP choppers and aircraft.

Because of the increased use of booby traps, many locals were quick to assume that the growers must be Vietnam veterans. This has been found to be patently *untrue*. In fact, on the contrary, the helo crews, pot patrols on foot in the bush and police SWAT teams are where Vietnam veterans are found in this war. One USFS CAMP member tells me that he has yet to see any of the many suspect growers arrested turn out to be a Vietnam veteran.

The variety of booby traps found in and around pot patches in the Triangle does remind one of Viet Cong ingenuity and deadliness — everything from fishhooks hanging at eye level to fragmentation hand grenades to C-4 high explosive has been encountered. One favorite seems to be 12-gauge buckshot shells rigged with mouse-trap firing devices. Some marijuana buds

*Continued on page 95*







**SOF CENTRAL AMERICA**

# CONTRA AIRDROP



Airdropped supplies for Nicaraguan freedom fighters settling into drop zone inside Nicaragua.

## Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters Gear Up for Battle

Text & Photos by Michael Schafer

**M**Y waking thoughts are ones of gratitude for the cool breeze blowing gently across my face. The intense jungle heat of yesterday had left me wrung out like a sponge. Mixed with the rejuvenating air is the sweet smell of fresh coffee. Suddenly I realize that the contras have already begun preparing for another day on the Nicaraguan border. I roll out of the hammock, splash water from the canteen in my sleepy eyes, quickly change socks and join the group around the morning fire.

There is unmistakable excitement among the men as they hand me a palm leaf covered with hot rice and beans. I can tell they are politely waiting for their journalist friend to get with the program. As I quickly finish the last few remains and the strong black coffee, they are already strapping on packs and web gear. There is just enough time for me to grab my camera bag and load a fresh roll of film as they head into the dimly lit, gray-green jungle.

The point man sets a brisk pace as they effortlessly climb over the rugged jungle mountains. The initial excitement has evolved into a seriousness of mission with everyone alert, checking both sides of the trail for lurking problems. This area is considered the property of the freedom fighters, but they haven't yet forgotten the surprise attack by Sandinista Hinds a few months back.

Everyone stops suddenly, crouching down next to an open spot of land next to a slow-moving stream. After reconning the area in the early sunrise, security teams move to take their positions on all sides of the field. Moments later, a Motorola-type handheld radio crackles with instructions in Spanish. Eyes look out over the field, searching for a glimpse of the plane that belongs to the voice heard on the radio. There is no smoke to mark the DZ, but the pilot knows this hidden clearing and has made the pass often since the U.S. Congress finally agreed to resume funding the growing band of freedom fighters.

Inconsistent U.S. policies during the past several years have had disastrous effects on these brave soldiers. They have recently been able to take back much of the territory that was theirs just two years ago. This small clearing is one of the properties the contras have had to pay for twice.

A few moments later, the sound of the DC-3 is heard over the mountaintops. Senses heighten as everyone realizes that any unwelcome Sandinista patrols will be watching the skies as well. Our wait is kept to a minimum as the plane is sighted approaching the basking field, now in full

### SHOOTING STILLS

Michael Schafer has been a freelance television news cameraman for three years. Before beginning to work the field in Central America, he spent six months in Beirut.





**ABOVE:** New equipment for Nicaraguan freedom fighter, including Romanian AKM.

**BELOW:** Contras training with new-issue Romanian AKMs.



**BELOW:** Veteran contras coming in from the field, carrying bolt-action rifles.



sunlight. As the plane roars overhead, its engines silencing the jungle heartbeat, half a dozen mushrooming clouds of light fabric appear in its wake. At first glance, judging the very small clearing and the height and speed of the plane, it looks like some of the chutes will drift into the double-canopy jungle, making recovery slow and difficult. But these are heavy cargo drops and, unlike a T-10 supporting a 180-pound man, they descend quickly and almost straight down, all falling inside the cleared area.

While the security teams remain in position, the rest of the force rushes into the open to recover the precious cargo. One pallet contains new boots, always in demand since a pair will only last about three months in the high-moisture jungle environment. Other crates contain ammunition, clothing and a few new light machine guns.

In just a few minutes, all the equipment is unpacked and loaded up for the trip back to the base camp. The strong young soldiers pick their way carefully along the mountain trails under the heavy loads. Nothing goes to waste. Even the chutes and wooden crates are carried back to the base camp.

The best chutes are repacked and eventually sent back to supply bases for reuse. Some worn or damaged chutes are cut into hammocks for use in the field and others are given to civilian refugees to be made into clothing for small children and women.



Everyday meal for a freedom fighter: hot rice and beans, and sometimes a corn tortilla.

Tables are made from the wooden crates and shipping pallets. The rigging hardware is made into improvised "D" rings to aid in deep-water river crossings. Parachute shroud line has numerous uses, and one of the most often seen is replacing worn or broken bootlaces.

These dedicated freedom fighters are making the most of the support they get from the free countries of the world. ✂

## TO TELL THE REAL STORY

As the Nicaraguan freedom fighters leave their base camps to go back deep inside their homeland to continue their fight against the Sandinistas, the news media will find it difficult to report their successes. There are no easy helicopters here to whisk the press in and out as during the Vietnam War.

To cover the freedom fighters in Nicaragua will mean up to six weeks walking in to where the action is and another possible six weeks to get the story out. Reporters attempting to cover these troops will have to be in excellent physical condition just to get to where the action is, and they will have to be willing to face the extreme danger involved.

The reporters will find it much easier to sit at the bar in Managua and rewrite Sandinista press releases. But that will not tell the story, the real story, of the action in the field.

Some of us will be out there in the field, with the contras inside Nicaragua, humping to bring you the story from where the action really is.

— Michael Schafer

## NEW WEAPONS, NEW TRAINING

Beneath the burning tropical sun, a line of troops clad in new camo fatigues and boonie hats kneels in the dirt of an open field near the Honduras/Nicaragua border. They are excited, training for combat with new weapons, Romanian copies of the Soviet AKM assault rifle.

One young man gets too excited. He hoses off a burst of rounds down range, firing full auto. The DI calls a halt to the action on the line. He holds up a single bullet and explains a fundamental law of operations and logistics for the war the troops prepare for.

"You would never waste the blood of your brother," the DI states. "In the field, you will soon be using the bullets captured from the *piris*," — the yapping dogs, meaning the enemy Sandinistas — "bullets paid for by contra blood. You should not waste them."

There is beginning to be a new image for the Nicaraguan freedom fighters. The ragged, ill-equipped look of the past is being replaced with the appearance of fully trained, modernly equipped soldiers, thanks to financial support from the United States for these refugees torn from their homes by the communist-backed Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. Proof of this new image was recently

seen gathered at several training camps on the Honduras/Nicaragua border.

The contra freedom fighters call themselves "commandos" now because, they say, "[we] now are too large in number to be considered guerrillas, yet too few to be called an army; therefore we are 'contra commandos!'"

Along with the new equipment recently received, they have emerged with a new confidence and a higher self-image. This new-found morale comes from enduring hardships in the past few years, fighting with primitive or worn-out captured weapons, yet often defeating a much larger and better-equipped foe.

They have survived lack of proper clothing, shelter and medical supplies. While the United States has seemed to have an on-again, off-again love affair with these freedom fighters, they have continued the daily fight knowing in their hearts, like their North American friends, that there is a price to pay to live in a free country. They fight not for glory or power, but simply to return one day to their farms and homes to live in peace once again.

During the past few months, they have trekked across hostile territory to base camps established for "R&R, contra-style." For these battle-scarred troops, R&R translates into "retrain and resupply," with only a short time to rest and relax. After a couple good meals and a day or so of rest, they begin early each

morning, training in modern fighting techniques and completing rigid physical conditioning programs. It's back to basics as they march, run and hit the obstacle course for hours at a time.

The renewed enthusiasm of these combat-experienced troops is enough to soften the hardest DI heart. Their reward for such hard work comes after this grueling routine as they are issued new camo jungle fatigues, new weapons, new ALICE backpacks and web gear. The favorite item seems to be the Panama-soled boots; most have been fighting for months in rubber galoshes or bare feet.

The training now changes from the physical to learning to maintain and fire the new Romanian-made weapons issued them. They also practice small-unit operations, river crossing, night movement, communication techniques and ambush/counterambush routines. They are taught the many uses of the new-issue camo ponchos and hammocks. They are taught how to set up and secure camps without being detected by enemy patrols in the area. They are taught how to use the newly acquired mine-detection equipment and disarmament techniques. They are taught how to clear, mark and secure a small drop-zone area for future resupply.

These Nicaraguan freedom fighters realize that the showdown is drawing nigh, and they are ready.



# NORTH LIKED BOULDER PUBLISHER'S IDEA

## Knight-Ridder Newspapers

As a secret network of covert military units was being formed, Lt. Col. Oliver North displayed an impressive measure of independence within the White House.

For example, early in 1985 Robert K. Brown, publisher of the Boulder-based *Soldier of Fortune* magazine and a droll, tobacco-chewing former covert operator and showman, suggested a way to deal with the devastating effects of the Sandinistas' Soviet-built HIND helicopter gunships.

Brown proposed in a meeting with North to offer a \$100,000 reward to any HIND pilot willing to defect with his chopper, said Ralph Bicknell, an associate of Brown.

"We didn't figure they'd defect," Bicknell said in a recent interview. The hope, he explained, was to inhibit use of the HINDs near Nicaragua's borders where most

Contras were operating.

"Ollie thought it was a neat idea," Bicknell said.

"But he added something. He said, 'Make the reward a million.'"

Brown, embarrassed, confessed that he couldn't raise \$1 million cash, Bicknell recalled.

"'Don't worry,' Ollie told us, 'I'll handle that.'"

Brown and Bicknell never knew where the money would come from and no HIND pilot ever defected, but in the summer of 1985, *Soldier of Fortune's* reward notices, printed in Spanish, English and Russian, circulated widely inside Nicaragua. They said the \$1 million reward would be paid by "publisher Bob Brown and several other loyal Americans."

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## North and Brown Ground Sandinista Hinds

by G.B. Crouse

THE headline of the Knight-Ridder story, "North Liked Boulder Publisher's Idea" (26 July 1987) was fairly straightforward. North, of course, is Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, USMC, former member of the National Security Council staff. The Boulder publisher is Robert K. Brown, editor/publisher of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*. The idea? A reward for the first pilot or crewman to defect to a neutral country with an intact Soviet Mi-24 "Hind" attack helicopter. The meetings between North and Brown had not previously been reported in SOF or anywhere else. But since Knight-Ridder has published its story, SOF decided that now is the time to tell our

side of the story of how SOF and Oliver North came to offer \$1,000,000 for a Hind helicopter.

SOF readers first learned of the "idea" in February 1985, when the magazine announced a \$100,000 reward for the first defecting pilot or aircrewman to bring out his helicopter. The concept was nothing new. Call them rewards, bribes, incentives or whatever, offering money to defectors has routinely produced results. During the Korean conflict, U.S. military intelligence offered \$50,000 to any North Korean pilot to defect with his aircraft. An additional \$50,000 would be paid to the first defector. Some months after the reward was

announced, the first North Korean MiG-15 landed in South Korea. The offer was extended to any communist pilot to defect anywhere. Two Polish MiG pilots delivered their aircraft to the West later that year.

Buying Soviet airplanes for technical intelligence gathering is only part of the program. Information provided by the defectors themselves is also a valuable contribution to Western intelligence agencies. More important perhaps is the propaganda value. But the bottom line isn't intelligence or propaganda — it's interfering with communist air operations.

Uncertain about the political reliability of their pilots, the Soviets and other commu-

nist countries have had to go to extraordinary lengths to screen their squadrons for those who might be inclined to switch sides. In wartime, that means aircraft sitting in their revetments instead of strafing friendlies. In Korea, enemy air strikes declined while the communist brass tried to find ways to keep their pilots from flying one-way missions south of the 38th parallel.

Would the same concept work in Nicaragua? Soviet-manufactured Mi-24s were playing hell with the freedom fighters, who found themselves fighting the Sandinistas without any effective antiaircraft defenses. Brown decided it was worth a try, saying he "hoped a pilot would defect." But more likely he hoped this would cause the Sandinistas and their communist advisers uncertainty regarding the loyalty of their Mi-24 pilots and crews, resulting in grounding of the Mi-24s for a period of time while the crews were vetted.

Brown, meeting with North at the White House on unrelated matters, raised the question of the helicopter reward. An enthusiastic North suggested raising the ante to \$1,000,000. Where would the money come from? North said he would arrange that. And so, in the late summer of that year, the reward was raised to an even \$1,000,000.

What effect did the reward have on San-

# WANTED

**SOVIET Mi-24 "Hind D"  
ATTACK HELICOPTER  
INTACT AND FUNCTIONAL**

— Reward —

## \$1,000,000 U.S.

Offered by **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Magazine**  
with Anonymous Private Sector Sources



**SITREP**

Soviet captured Mi-24 "Hind" attack helicopters are currently being flown by Sandinista pilots and crews against Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters. The constant risk of unrestrained and overnight destruction to the struggle for freedom in this hemisphere.

Someone's got to do something before these deadly aircraft are used to assault innocent Nicaraguan and Nicaraguan sources. That's why we're offering ONE MILLION DOLLARS to the pilot or groundcrew who covers an Mi-24 into sanctuary in any of the hostile countries bordering Nicaragua.

Reward money will be paid in specified increments to either the pilot or groundcrew or an officer in command of an entire squadron since the Mi-24 has been a symbol of support for the Cuban and Nicaraguans who recognize and resist the tyranny of the Sandinista regime. Delivery of a Soviet captured Hind Helicopter from the hands of the captors will be a symbol of solidarity to all the freedom-loving people of Central America.

—Robert K. Brown  
Publisher, SOF

dinista air ops? Sources in the media and the Department of Defense reported that the trained and ready-to-fly Sandinista crews were quickly grounded while they were

evaluated for their loyalty. Those found suspect were removed from the program. Where were the Hinds during this time? According to a high-ranking source in the Department of the Air Force, the gunships were immediately grounded for the first week while additional crews were flown in from Cuba.

The reward offer resulted in the highly aggressive Sandinista pilots being grounded while Cuban crews, who were mostly interested in putting in their time and getting home, did the flying. It was four and a half months before U.S. intelligence sources again reported hearing radio transmissions in Nicaraguan Spanish from the gunships, providing the contras a brief respite from Sandinista air attacks.

Although no pilots defected, one high-ranking member of the Sandinista government did inquire if the reward was only for pilots, hoping to collect the reward himself. SOF's efforts to encourage defections and buy time for the contras worked as well as we could have hoped. The reward offer has since been canceled, but Managua now has a new reason for keeping its Hinds out of the air — the air defense capability of the contras has improved dramatically, resulting in an increasing number of downed Sandinista aircraft. ✂

# SOF AT PAN AM GAMES

**SATURDAY, 8 August 1987, Indianapolis, Indiana.** The first of some 10,000 leaflets offering \$25,000 in gold to the first Cuban or Nicaraguan security operative or intelligence agent who defects during the 10th Pan American Games hits the streets.

Monday, 10 August. The first news stories about the leaflet appear, naming *Soldier of Fortune Magazine's* Freedom Now Committee and Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown as the source of the flier and gold.

SOF's office is swamped by calls from the media: CBS, ABC, CNN, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Sports Illustrated*, National Public Radio, Associated Press, United Press International and a host of other local and national news outlets want to know what's going on.

Why are we offering the money? What's our purpose? And on and on. A few of the reporters are sharp; they ask intelligent and concise questions. Most aren't, and don't.

Follow-up calls. Has anyone defected yet? Sure. Hundreds. *What?*

But wait. We're getting ahead of ourselves here. Why *did* *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* offer \$25,000 in gold for an intelligence or security defector? How did we pull the op together? Indeed, has anyone defected?

It all started, as they say, when Bob

Brown and a staffer were out jogging in late July.

"What are we doing about the Cubans and Nicaraguans coming to the Pan Am Games?" Brown asked.

"To my knowledge, nothing, boss," came the reply.

"Not good enough," Brown growled, and the planning session was underway.

With a timetable centered around the opening of the Games, barely 10 days away, gallons of spare midnight oil and quantities of Skoal were laid in. Brown stalked the office, a man with a mission. Editors with reams of articles to be worked for the next issue became sallow-eyed and haunted. Pan Am Games staff conferences became our calling.

What was our mission? In Brown's words: "We're gonna let people know those commie bastards come here to spy on the United States." The concept of the operation was about as simple as that. Execution, though, was a bit more difficult.

Our first major planning-cum-idea-throwing session took place on Monday, 3 August — less than a week prior to opening day. Problem: How to most effectively get the word out that Cuban and Nicaraguan security and intelligence personnel would be accompanying their athletic delegations to the Games.

We knew they'd be there, of course. It's common knowledge within the intelligence community. Whenever any contingent travels to the United States from a commu-

# REWARD

## \$25,000


Twenty-five thousand dollars in gold will be paid to the first Cuban or Nicaraguan security/intelligence agent who defects to the United States during the Pan American Games. Defector must be an intelligence/security agent (including the DGI, DSE, Americas Department, military personnel and athletes who are members of these organizations) and must be a member of the Cuban or Nicaraguan Pan American Games delegation.

**How to defect:**  
Report to any United States government official.

**How to collect reward:**  
Defector must phone or write:  
Freedom Now Committee  
c/o *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*  
P.O. Box 694  
Boulder, Colorado 80306  
(303) 449-3750

Defection must be authorized by the U.S. government before reward is paid.

Robert K. Brown  
Editor/Publisher  
*Soldier of Fortune Magazine*



*Continued on page 112*





## SOF AFRICA

# RHODESIA'S FIREFORCE COMMANDOS

Sweep Lines, Stop Groups  
and Flying K-Cars

Text & Photos by William Norris

“ONE-NINE, One-Nine.... One-Two.”

“One-Nine.... Go.”

“Roger, One-Nine.... I've got a contact in the reentrant to my front.... Four, maybe more.... Confirmed, one RPD.... Can you give clearing fire?... Over.”

“Affirmative, One-Two.... Give me a mark with the phos.... Over.”

“Roger, One-Nine.... Marking.”

“One-Two, I see your mark.... One-

### CANADIAN COMMANDO

William Norris is the *nom de plume* of a Canadian who served with the Rhodesian Light Infantry from 1978-79, later passing the SAS selection course and eventually serving with 6 Recce in the South African Defence Force. His first article for SOF, “Mad Jim,” appeared in the January 1985 issue.



Seven Squadron, Rhodesian Air Force, Alouette chopper sets down on a rocky kopje (hillock). Alouettes formed the backbone of fireforce deployment and acted as the airborne control station for the fireforce commander.

Nine firing."

P A - B A - B U M . . . C R A C K -  
CRACK... PA-BUM... PA-BUM...

" THIS IS ONE-NINE... WHOSE  
DAY-GLO IS THAT ON THE WEST  
SIDE OF THE REENTRANT?"

"One-Four... It's mine... Over."

"One-Four... I could have pulled you,  
damn it!"

"Say again, One-Nine... My ears are  
ringing."

"Not funny, One-Four... Look, stay  
where you are... I'll bring Stop Two for-  
ward and you can sweep the target  
together... Copy?"

"One-Four... Copy."

"One-Two... Copy."

Fireforce: a game of chess for keeps. Rhodesian Light Infantry commandos prowled the earth in stop groups and sweep lines, assisted from above by lethal helicopter gunships — Alpha-cars, G-cars, the pivotal command ship K-car with its HE-spitting 20mm cannon. In the fireforce chess game, K-car was Queen — and King — able to strike anywhere with greatest force, able to command all the powers of the pieces. And even in arms-starved Rhodesia, the pieces were not insubstantial — the prop-driven Lynx, Hunter and Vampire jets, heavy-payload Canberra bombers, para- or chopper-deployed commandos. K-car said when, where and how many.

In K-car's armor-plated belly, riding like a Norse god of battle, sat the Officer Commanding. Call sign One-Nine for One Commando, Two-Nine for Two Commando, etc., the OC directed his 20mm finger of death and played the chess game through his headset: "Knight to Queen's Rook Three... Knight takes Rook... Bang, bang, you're dead." Anyone with access to a radio knew that for him there was no greater game.

On the ground, the presence of concealed danger enhanced the quality of play tenfold. Sweep lines moved steadily over ridgeline and ravine, open ground and cover. Bush skills and instinct kept men alive. Here was the new kind of war, the guerrilla-style war. Contacts occurred at unnervingly close quarters, murderous engagements within smelling distance of the enemy's sweat. Few kills occurred at distances greater than 20 feet.

And fireforce call outs could come two, three times a day...

In Rhodesia from 1977 to 1980, the commando on fireforce duty was an endangered species. He was also living testament to the effects of life lived too long on the edge.

"Get that thing out of my face, Hunter, or I'll feed it to you with hot sauce."

"C'mon, Sarge, don't you want to shake hands with 'Herbert'?"

"Hunter, you're fucked up. Anybody who'd bring back a gook arm is sick. Anybody who'd bring one in the tent is begging for extra guard. You don't know where that thing's been. QUIT PICKING YOUR NOSE WITH IT! OUT, HUNTER! OUT!"

"Aw, Sarge, 'Herbert' just wants to make friends. He's lonely without his old friends, 'Mr. Foot' and 'Mr. Ballbag.'"

"Double guard tonight, Hunter, and all week. Goodbye, sicko. Enjoy your guard."

"Say goodnight to 'Herbert,' everyone."

"OUT! OUT!"

Black humor, of course. Hard laughs for the hard guys. After a time, nothing was sacred. If Mom could only see what her little boy was playing with now.

Or what they were paying him to do...

A typical day at an RLI fireforce base began, mildly enough, with musters.

"FALL IN! FALL IN! ONE COMMANDO, MOVE IT! LET'S GO!"

During which the commando sergeant-major delivered his morning speech to the troops.

"So this is how you laundry hamper arrive for my parade. I fill my pants. The very sight of your sloppy bodies makes my bowels move. Your mummies must have had no trouble staying regular.

"Now, I admit, teaching this mob to dress military in the bush would be like asking circus animals to crap quiche, so I won't expect miracles. I do, however, think we would all look and feel a great deal more like soldiers if we at least fell in for musters wearing our berets.

"So, tomorrow morning, gentlemen, One Commando will fall in dressed in the beret of the Rhodesian Light Infantry. If you don't remember what it looks like, ask a senior NCO. And if you don't remember what a senior NCO looks like, check down the front of your pants.

"AFTER I dismiss the parade, Hoskins!"

One Commando's most military personality, Commando Sergeant Major Edwards, was the tyrannical monarch of a desperate kingdom. He was stocky and aggressive, and ruled with an uncanny skill for promoting discipline without resentment. This he accomplished largely through the use of understated humor. In return, his personal stock with the masses was probably exceeded only by beer.

The good sergeant major was also a crack parachute dispatcher who loved to emplane with his lads and enjoyed, even more, sending them on their way, sweating and terrified, out the door. Although this did not, in fact, enhance his popularity, it did reinforce the conviction that he was prepared to be there with his men through all facets of their military experience.

Edwards was probably the only person aboard the aircraft — including the pilot — who made any pretense at all of wanting to be there. As the Dakota bobbed and weaved through low-level turbulence, he sat or stood by the open door, an intense little troll, concentrating on the voices in his headset. The "vomit comet" would drop, lurch starboard, lunge and drop. Hurricane wind and engine noise screamed through the cabin.

News of the chopper sticks, already deployed, would arrive over the headset. Edwards would blink at the interesting parts, nod and pass back information through sign language, while his audience sat like thawed wieners, stirring only occasionally to make doggy noises into brown paper bags. Grenades and cocking handles would dig into ribs. The Dakota would circle and circle, sometimes buffeting about over the target area for hours, waiting for the call.

"HELMETS ON!"

"Omigod, can't we go 'round again?"

"STAND UP! HOOK UP! CHECK





EQUIPMENT!"

"Helmet, reserve, quick-release box...."

"ACTION STATIONS!"

Desert-dry mouths and unpredictable knees as the aircraft plunged to operational jump altitude of 500 feet, red light on.

"STAND IN THE DOOR!"

Unbelievable noise, wind, numbness.... Seconds now.... Green light!

"GO! AND GO! AND GO!"

The fact that the paras had jumped meant contact: "Hey! Someone's shooting at us!" From this point on, a full-scale fireforce action would be instituted.

To understand the basic principle of fireforce, imagine a giant sandwich filled with bad Spam, two layers of fresh bread clamped as tightly as possible over a dark and contagious rot. K-car masterminded the building of the sandwich and saw to it that none of the rotten goo at the center leaked out to contaminate the rest of the lunchbox.

The first step was to seal off the terrors' likely avenues of escape by having those sticks (four-man teams) not directly engaged with the enemy repositioned to form stop groups. Although procedure called for the automatic ambushing of reentrants (ravines) and known paths, an experienced K-car commander often made use of his

sixth sense and added the unexpected. In other words, he played chess....

This gave him the bottom layer of the sandwich.

The top layer arrived from the sky. The paras, immediately upon landing, regrouped themselves into extended line and, on K-car's order, advanced toward the contact. This was the sweep line, the most deadly element — for both hunter and quarry — of fireforce. The commandos had the advantage of air support, but the enemy was usually well-concealed and frightened. In a sweep line, you met each obstacle one on one.

The first hint of danger was often a glistening eyeball.

In theory, a well-constructed fireforce action offered no avenues of escape. Certainly it worked well enough on paper at the School of Infantry. The classroom is so tidy, though, and war is such hell. Nasty details arise in the field, details that would hardly be worth half-points in a theoretical exam. Details like boulder-strewn hillsides, caves, thickets as dense as cold porridge....

The first problem was usually the parachute DZ.

"Holy mother, did you see the size of those rocks I almost landed on? Whoo.... Why do you smell so bad?"

"Um.... I dropped in the community shithole."

"For Chrissake, go stand next to someone else!"

"Where are we, anyhow?"

"I dunno. We must be a long way out — I can't even hear the K-car.... Look, if we need uplift, you're gonna ride on the outside of the chopper, okay?"

Often the nearest remotely serviceable DZ was miles from the contact area. This meant that the para sticks would need redeployment by helicopter to a position nearer the scene. During this time, the enemy's natural inclination to snivel away from danger was sending them outward in every direction, like rats from a grass fire. K-car could terminate them if it spotted them from the air. But without the necessary manpower the area could not be sealed off, and too many horrid little creatures were gaining valuable experience in dealing with fireforce. Better no one should live to talk about it....

Once the sweep line was established, the real problems were often only beginning.

"Why is it, every goddamn time I get in a sweep line, it's me that ends up with the cave right smack in front?"

"Shit, that's a bugger, huh? Well, I'll cover you, mate."



**Fireforce was a nerve-wracking, high-risk occupation. Face-to-face shoot-outs with terrorist forces were the rule rather than the exception.**

"I want K-car to pump it first."

"Mate, if K-car has to hold the line for us one more time, I guarantee he'll pump us himself."

"All right then, clear it with the gun, will you? And keep it going while I move up. Man, I hate this. . . ."

TA-DA-DA . . . TUH-TA . . . TUH-TA . . .

"ONE-NINE, ONE-NINE . . . THIS IS ONE-THREE . . . I'VE GOT A CONTACT AND A MAN DOWN . . . OVER."

No one liked caves. No one liked the way so many guys got shot in front of them.

No one liked mango trees, with their dense canopy of dark green leaves. Clearing a mango grove meant dashing from trunk to trunk, peering stupidly up into the highest-quality natural concealment on the African continent.

No one liked reentrants. A walk single-file down a narrow reentrant was like a 3-D afternoon at a horror movie.

No one liked female terrors. They were the ugliest, meanest, most seriously belligerent

ball-busting bitches in the southern hemisphere. They looked better dead than alive.

No one liked windowless huts. Anything could be lurking in those darkened rafters, and often was.

No one liked *mujibas*, the little kids, usually male, five to 10 years old, used as couriers, spies or early warning for the terrors. They were impossible to detect and disturbingly effective in their pint-sized dedication to their "heroes of the revolution."

No one liked dragging out gook bodies for uplift and identification by Special Branch ghouls. (This fell away later in the war, when escalating body counts rendered the study of individual remains impractical.)

No one liked checking a buddy for a pulse.

No one liked corned beef.

No one liked to hear that they were losing the war.

Everyone knew losing was impossible, anyway, because, according to the lyrics of a popular song of the period, "Rhodesians never die. . . ."

An indicator of (or perhaps the cause of) this unflagging optimism was the enormous sense of patriotism displayed by all Rhodesians everywhere. Conscientious objectors and even lukewarm disapprovers either kept their opinions to themselves or simply did not exist. The truth, of course, was that Rhodesia was a war fought on home soil. It would have proven difficult to endorse "Hanoi Jane" opinions to a community whose homes, families and livelihoods were openly threatened by a near and visible enemy.

Circumstances bonded them. There was "The Cause" and there was ostracism by the rest of the world. The communists, of course, were supplying their enemies with arms, but the Western powers also condemned them through sanctions, embargoes and general political hostility. If they felt isolated, they had every reason, and it caused people to look to each other for support. The result was a national pride unprecedented in this cynical age.

Rhodesian flags and "Rhodesia Is Super" T-shirts were everywhere. A soldier was the only thing anybody's kid wanted to be. The war was immortalized in hardcover editions of photographs, sketches and poetry. Commemorative songs were penned by the ammo-box load and zoomed to the top of the local charts. Troopies would actually appear, like Frankie Avalon in camo gear, guitar in hand, lilted away some tearful wartime ballad among the sandbags. Clem Tholet, the neo-Rhodesian troubadour, was more popular on Rhodesian TV's video hits than Meatloaf.

If it all sounds soppy as hell, it was, in fact, weirdly moving. If need be, Rhodesians would go down fighting — and singing.

The men of fireforce weren't perfect, of course. The guy with the silver halo stuck to the top of his beret, although well-trained, well-motivated and mindful of his elders,

sometimes forgot to wash behind his ears. Or under his blood-caked fingernails.

A number of contributing factors were at work here, not the least of which was the basic nature of the job. The flying circus of choppers, Dakotas and airborne heroes was primarily a standby force, on hand to provide a quick reaction should anyone, anywhere, request its presence. The commandos did not patrol, execute planned raids (unless stood down from fireforce) or try to compete with other units in the performance of special tasks such as garden guarding or horse riding. Indeed, about the only thing a fireforce commando was required to provide on a daily basis was a clean, serviceable weapon and a similarly turned-out body. Anything else he might be asked to do that day was purely in the hands of fate.

Occasionally, nothing happened. Particularly when the rains came, filling out vegetation and rendering area observation posts less effective.

The periods of inactivity allowed the troops time to settle back and lick accumulated wounds. A glassy-eyed commando, who may have been answering call out after call out seven days a week for as long as he could remember, would find himself with time to do more than clean his rifle and shit before the next job. There were leaks above cots to be mended, fresh baking from the kitchen, leisurely retraining, and at night a few extra brown bottles in the commando pub.

Even in Rhodesia, where sanctions meant you had to walk more than a mile for a Camel, you could still get fully blown on the poison of your choice.

They may not have applauded the way he went about it, but certainly no reasonably informed Rhodesian would have denied a fireforce commando his right to relax. Parachutes and helicopters, eight-minute standby — he was the most mobile soldier yet invented. He saw more combat, probably 20 times more combat, than any member of any other unit. A one-year veteran of fireforce during the last three years of the war must have terminated, on separate occasions and from a distance no greater than the width of the average living room, at least 15, probably 25, armed communist insurgents, insurgents waiting in hiding for him. Armed insurgents hiding, while he advanced toward them, usually straight and slow, with his balls retracted up into his rib cage.

He was, by any odds, goddamn lucky to be alive. Much of his luck, of course, he owed to the nature of the game. It was airborne, loud and utterly terrifying to an unsophisticated enemy. No one could question his courage or his skill in dealing with an unrelentingly belligerent situation. He was the warrior, the champion of the cause.

And he would live longer than the eight minutes it took to put the machines into the air. He was much luckier than the other one, the terr who would soon be staring into his cold eyes from a very short distance. The one who was about to die — of fireforce. ✕



# SOLID SHIELD '87

## SOF Survives DoD Beach Party

by G.B. Crouse      Photos by Bill Foley

**T**HIRTY meters off the coast of North Carolina, the first M60A1 tank went off the front of the landing craft — and all but disappeared beneath a huge wave. Not a good sign. Fred LaChance, the craftmaster for LCU (landing craft utility) 1662, decided he should take his boat in closer. Crouched in the back seat of a Hummer (the vehicle selected by the Marines to replace the jeep), which sits considerably closer to the ground than a tank, I was inclined to agree. Fred took us closer to the beach and the second tank went down the ramp. It was still deep, but I figured if we took it nice and slow we'd be all right. Our driver obviously didn't agree with my assessment. He mumbled something about maybe getting wet and took off as if in pursuit of a new land-speed record. I could hear Fred yelling, "Slow down, slow down — you're going too fast." But if anything, we seemed to be gaining speed.

We shot down the ramp and hit the water. Looking through the front windshield was like pressing your face against a fish tank. There just wasn't anything there but murky green water. Our top hatch was open and water was pouring in. For a brief second, we just sort of sat there in the surf, waiting to sink. But then the front tires grabbed hold of the sand and we raced toward the beach.

Finally, after 24 hours spent on ship, in the air and circling in a small boat off the coast, I was once again on dry land.

The Department of Defense biannually observes a rite of spring peculiar unto itself. This spring was once again time for that rite, best known by its official title, Solid Shield '87. More than 40,000 men and women representing all branches of the armed forces took part, which makes Solid Shield the largest recurring exercise held in the United States (although this year a second phase was added which involved amphibious landings in Honduras).

Why it requires 40,000 troops to invade a small patch of swampy coastal North Carolina is something of a mystery. It would seem to beg the question: "How many men would be required to invade somewhere big, like northern Europe?" The answer lies not in the defense capability of the imaginary enemy, but in the continuing effort by DoD to keep everybody gainfully employed.

Operation Solid Shield is described as a "joint-service, combined operation," which is to say that, no matter what the operational requirements of the exercise, a mission is found for all the services. Sort of like writing a part into a movie-of-the-week script for the producer's red-headed stepchild. Why would anyone make something more difficult and complicated than it needs to be? The answer, according to the Defense Department, is that Solid Shield is an "opportunity

to employ and evaluate the joint interoperability of participating military units from all the services." Hard to argue with that, harder even still to figure out what the hell it means. The explanation sounds more like an attempt to explain the presence of all those people than a good reason for having them all there. In fact, except for the public affairs people and a few senior commanders, no one seemed to know that "joint interoperability" was a central point of the exercise.

Marines, soldiers, sailors, airmen and coast guardsmen doing the real work didn't seem too concerned with concepts like "interoperability." For them this was another week on the job and, other than an opportunity to see small parts of the other services at work and to be polite to visiting journalists, Solid Shield wasn't anything terribly different from what they've done countless times before.

Faced with a choice between observing the brass "interoperate" or going out with the troops, a decision wasn't difficult to make. I decided to get with the grunts. This presented me with two options. I could either wait for them to land on the beach, or fly to the USS *Saipan* and make the landing with them. I figured that most of the press would be gathered on the beach hoping for a "photo opportunity." Getting a good story usually means getting as far away from the rest of the press as possible. In addition to that, I've been to some of the world's better beaches, and Onslow is not one of them. I opted for the *Saipan*.

Not that fellow members of the press can't make an assignment more tolerable, even enjoyable. Generally speaking, they drink to excess, tell funny stories and don't smell too bad. Take Bill Foley, a photographer for *Time* Magazine, for instance. Bill had taken Pulitzer Prize-winning photos in Beirut and had probably seen more combat than any of the Marines in the exercise. His quick wit and feigned amazement at the incompetence of the "professionals" running the show were a source of continual amusement during the exercise.

Another photographer, Greg Mathieson, also provided nonstop laughs. Armed only with searing sarcasm, Greg was constantly seeking, and finding, confrontation with the public affairs (PAO) personnel. He was so obnoxious that the PAO folks remembered him from past exercises (so did the waitress at Fred's Fish House). Greg knew the system so well that he could create problems for the PAO folks just by walking into the room. This tendency of his did nothing to endear him to the PAO, but it quickly established him as a favorite with the rest of the press.

Sadly, not all the journalists were great guys. Take Tracy Gray, a reporter for a local TV station, for instance. Gray, in



USS *Saipan*, LHA-2, steaming off the coast of North Carolina the day before the assault on Onslow Beach.

the words of one Marine officer, was “truly clueless.” For the other journalists, Gray’s antics resulted in everything from raised eyebrows to hysterical laughter. For the Marines, however, Gray was anything but amusing. Whenever the press stepped off toward another “media event,” the rear of the column was invariably brought up by Tracy Gray and Lieutenant Scott Jack, a PAO officer, carrying Gray’s gear. Gray, who obviously thought that covering Solid Shield was not unlike reporting from a church social, brought enough video and sound equipment to reshoot “Gone With the Wind” — but he didn’t bring anyone along to carry it. In the interest of maintaining good media relations, Lt. Jack humped Gray’s trash. With a stiff upper lip and the patience of a seasoned swineherd, Jack kept Gray moving. I don’t think that performing coolie work for the press was what Lt. Jack had in mind when he took his commission in the Marine Corps. But nonetheless he did it with a lot of patience and, I suspect, more than a few unchristian thoughts about Mr. Gray.

The decision having been made to board the *Saipan*, all that was left to do was wait until 1300 for the choppers. Since I was carrying equipment, it would have been easiest to drive my rental car to the LZ. However, this was not permitted because “there wouldn’t be any place to park.” As it turned out, the LZ practically was a parking lot and there were enough parking spaces to accommodate a Miami Dolphins play-off game. Oh well, score another one for the PAO.

Thirteen hundred came and went but the choppers didn’t. It was nice to see that some things, of which Marine Corps aviation is apparently one, do not change. I don’t think anyone who had ever done something like this before really expected the choppers to appear on schedule, but what made things frustrating was that, in true military fashion, we had been asked to assemble at no later than 1100, so that we could board the helos at 1300 and arrive onboard *Saipan* some 45 minutes later. I chose not to ask why it was necessary to muster two hours prior to launch, figuring the answer probably wouldn’t have much to do with the question. PAO people could be clever that way. Sometime around 1430 the familiar sound of incoming CH-46s reached the assembled reporters, photographers and Marines. Everyone, groggy from the heat and humidity, got to their feet, tried to remember which helo team they were assigned to and got ready to board the rapidly approaching birds. The helos made a fast approach and flew away at the same speed — without having landed. Everyone dropped their gear, mumbled some vague obscenities about helicopters, pilots and whoever made up the schedule at HQ, and sat back down.

Everyone, that is, except two enlisted Marines with a video

camera who were going around taking pictures of everyone and everything. They were so thorough about getting everyone’s face on tape that I began to think this was one of those films they were going to show on the five o’clock news as they were describing the terrible helicopter crash at Camp Lejeune.

Whenever the president boards Air Force One, it is said that he always turns and waves to the crowd, even if there isn’t one, just so they will have the “last pictures” of the poor man just before he died. It is a pity that the commander-in-chief doesn’t have more faith in his Air Force than that. Thinking that if the goons with the camera didn’t get my picture I somehow couldn’t be one of the victims, I pulled my hat low over my eyes, turned up my Walkman and tried to stay out of their view until the choppers came.

Which, mercifully, they did, a short time later. We repeated the drill of mounting up, formed into two helo teams, which divided nicely into the number of helicopters, and moved out to board. Damned if the movie crew didn’t chase us all the way to the birds, camera rolling all the way. I considered turning and waving at them in my best presidential manner, but thinking that that might be tempting fate, I went on into the chopper.

A CH-46 will accommodate 13 combat-loaded grunts, or seven journalists, one Marine and Tracy Gray and his gear. After everyone was settled and strapped in, the pilot pulled up his collective and we were off. After a 45-minute flight we arrived on LHA-2, better known as the USS *Saipan*.



ABOVE: Landing craft approaching the open stern gate of USS *Saipan*.

BELOW: An AAV7A1, or amtrac, capable of carrying 25 combat-loaded Marines, nears the beach.





I'd served onboard the *Saipan* before. But I had been a grunt then, and this trip was to be a little different. Our first stop was the officers' wardroom and "lounge," a compartment I hadn't visited as a corporal. In those days I lived in the bowels of the ship and somehow I always had the impression that the Navy found it entirely appropriate that Marines should live in the "bowels" of the ship. But the Navy was considerably more hospitable this time around and I soon found myself reclining in the lounge having a cool drink (of water: Navy ships are still dry) and chatting with a captain (O-6 in the Navy) and a lieutenant commander or two. They were calling me Mr. Crouse and I was calling them Bill and Steve and Harry or whatever and getting along just famously. If, as an enlisted Marine, anyone had told me this would one day be happening, I would have had trouble stopping my laughter long enough to bet the farm that they were wrong.

First on the agenda was a tour of the ship. From past experiences I was as familiar with the ship as I deemed necessary, so I passed on the tour and continued to lounge around the lounge. I reckoned that, for those who hadn't seen the *Saipan* before, the tour would be an impressive display, for the *Saipan* is an impressive ship.

LHA-2 was the second ship of the Tarawa class and the second ship to bear the name *Saipan*, sight of the Marines' victory in the Pacific in 1944. They broke the bottle on *Saipan* in 1974, and she has been busy ever since. The ship has participated in everything from Fourth of July celebrations in New York City to assisting in the rescue of Cuban refugees off the coast of Florida. Although most of the ship's long deployments take her to the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic, she has also served in the Caribbean, steaming off the coast of Nicaragua during the fall of Somoza, ready to rescue American citizens if necessary. *Saipan* also participated in *Urgent Fury*, the liberation of Grenada.

*Saipan's* primary mission is to launch a Marine Corps' landing force in helicopters. Toward that end, she can carry up to 35 helos in addition to eight Marine AV-8B Harrier jets. Also onboard are 400,000 gallons of jet fuel. There is never any doubt while onboard *Saipan* that the helos are everyone's principal concern. Their operation and maintenance take precedence over all other activities. They launch and land from dawn until dusk (and occasionally during hours of darkness), going God knows where and doing God knows what.

The emphasis on aviation manifests itself in ways that are not

Tides and beach gradient don't always permit dry landings. Here, Marines wade through the surf after disembarking from an LCM.



Hasty defensive position. Marine on left carries new 9mm Beretta 92F service pistol.





always appreciated by everyone onboard ship. Chow lines, which for the crew and embarked Marines can be rather long, are frequently made longer by Marines from the air wing jumping to the front. They are on duty and I suppose it is important that they return to work, but going to the front of the line doesn't win them any fans among the grunts, who are not kindly disposed toward the Marines who "swing with the wing," as it is.

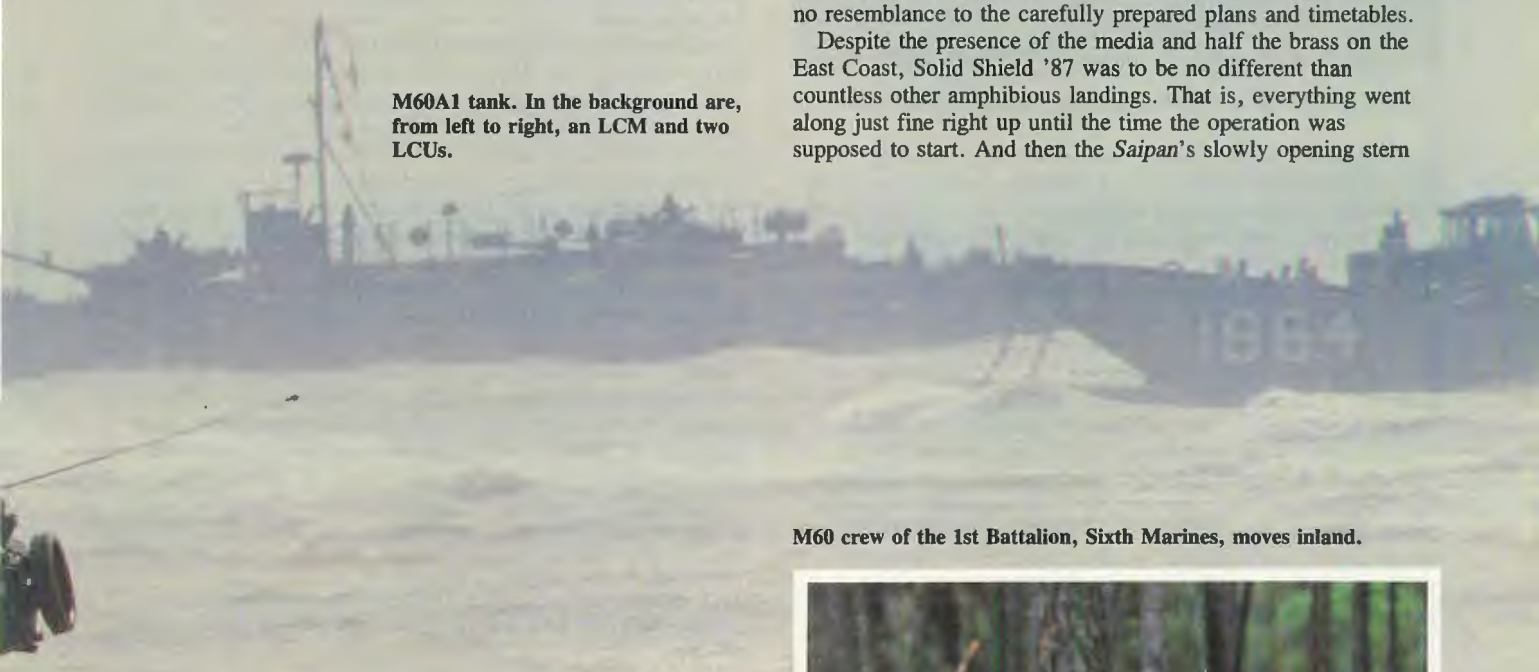
While most of the infantry in an assault will go ashore in helicopters and LVTP-7s (amphibious tractors, or amtracs), as much as one third of the grunts and the majority of support personnel still go ashore by landing craft. *Saipan's* well deck (the part of the ship that opens to the sea to allow boat traffic to

enter, load supplies and depart) can carry about seven landing craft, depending on type. Also below is space for up to 200 vehicles, including tanks and artillery pieces. I was informed that I would be leaving the ship at 0400 the next morning via the well deck, in an LCU.

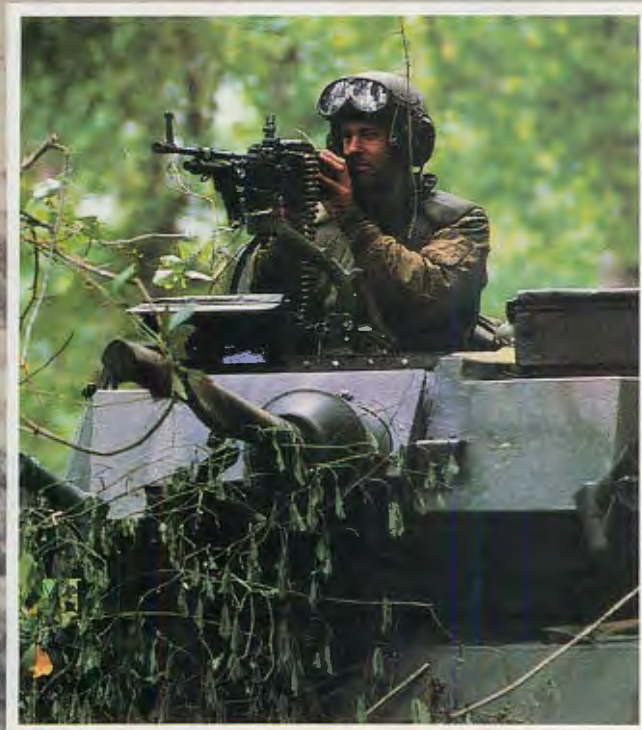
The balance of my short time on the *Saipan* was spent in briefings, interviews and dinner in the wardroom. The briefings consisted of explanations from the Marine air and ground commanders on the objectives of their respective commands. It all looked pretty good on the maps and charts and diagrams. If I didn't pay real close attention during the briefings it was because I'd been there before. Amphibious landings are the most difficult of military undertakings and, despite all the planning and preparation, once a landing begins it often bears no resemblance to the carefully prepared plans and timetables.

Despite the presence of the media and half the brass on the East Coast, Solid Shield '87 was to be no different than countless other amphibious landings. That is, everything went along just fine right up until the time the operation was supposed to start. And then the *Saipan's* slowly opening stern

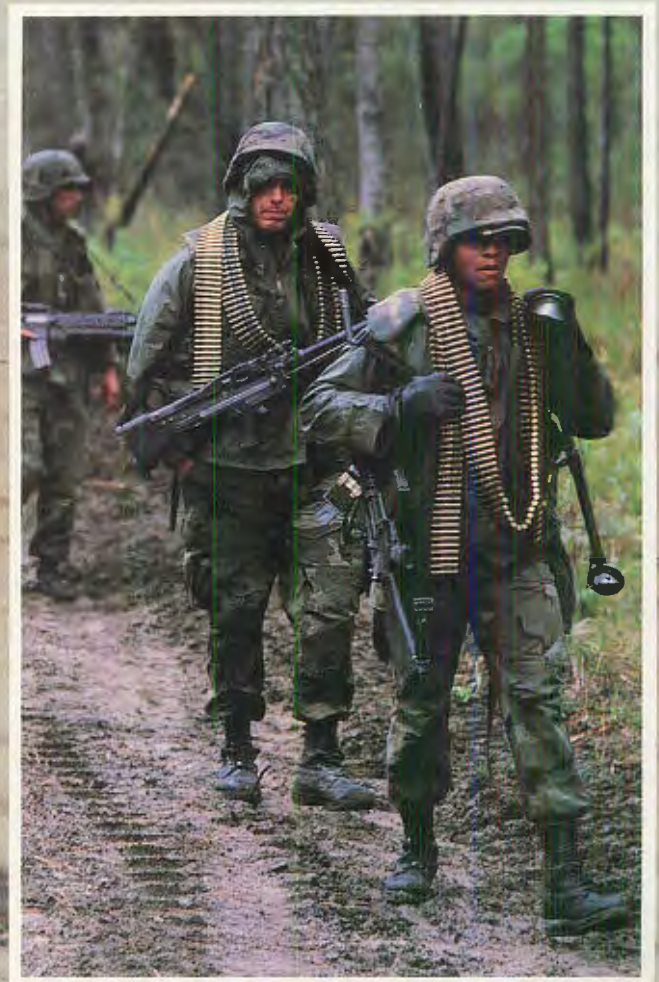
**M60A1 tank. In the background are, from left to right, an LCM and two LCUs.**



Marines' new Light Armored Vehicle (LAV). The Corps will eventually field three LAV battalions, with various configurations for antitank (TOW), mortar, logistics, command and control, and maintenance/recovery.



**M60 crew of the 1st Battalion, Sixth Marines, moves inland.**







**M109A2 SP 155mm howitzer of the 10th Marines hits the beach.**

gate revealed fog. Not your garden variety fog, but really thick fog. Thick enough in fact that it looked like we could have left the landing craft in *Saipan's* well deck and walked to the beach.

The morning began with reveille at 0300. Personnel going ashore would need to be in the well deck and on their boats by 0330. Launch from the *Saipan* was scheduled for 0430, putting us on the beach sometime shortly after 0630. But, if fog was a major problem for the boats, it was an impossible obstacle for the helicopters. So the stern gate was closed, and we sat back to wait.

Generally speaking, the best part of being on a landing craft is getting off the damned thing. Aside from vulnerability to enemy fire, they pitch and roll, water splashes over the gun'ls, and Marines and sailors get very wet while moving toward the beach at 12 knots. There wouldn't be any enemy fire today, but all the other unpleasantness, combined with the boredom of waiting, would ordinarily have made for a very long morning. But LCU 1662 was no ordinary boat.

I should have known that when I went aboard and saw the words from a George Thorogood song, "Bad to the Bone," painted in billboard-sized letters on the front of the pilot house. But that was at 0330 and it's probably safe to say that I wasn't really awake yet. After the delay was announced, I found a comfortable corner of the boat and — in true Marine fashion — went to sleep. In the meantime, Lieutenant Scott Simmons, an officer of Assault Craft Unit Two, had found out there was someone from *Soldier of Fortune* on the boat. He obviously didn't think that sleeping was part of my job — a sentiment Bob Brown would probably agree with — and informed me that what I *should* be doing was getting to know something about the boat and its crew. He introduced me to 1662's boss, Fred G. LaChance.

Frankly I was more interested in catching up on my sleep than I was in a guided tour of a 135-foot hunk of gray steel, and I took a rather dim view of officers waking me up. But that changed. Fred, a Vietnam veteran with 16 years in the Navy, is sort of a good old boy, and the first thing he suggested was that he have his cook fix me some breakfast. That got my attention fast. Behind Fred's good old boy demeanor there was a shrewd mind at work. The PAO staff could learn something about handling the press from Fred.

LCUs are self-contained. Their crews eat, sleep and work onboard the boat, unlike the smaller landing craft, whose crews live on the ship. LCUs guard their independence jealously, and after eating breakfast I understood why. This wasn't institutional food prepared for a couple of thousand people, this was real food. It tasted more like Mom's than Uncle Sam's. After eating I was more than agreeable to a tour of this fine boat. And after the tour it probably wouldn't have taken more than a couple of beers to convince me to join the Navy — if I could serve with Fred and his gang.

LCUs are the largest of the Navy's landing craft, and the only craft in the Navy commanded by enlisted men. Assault waves go ashore in amtracs, the second and third waves in the

smaller craft, and then the LCUs start bringing in the heavy equipment and supplies, or up to 400 combat-loaded Marines. With waves theoretically hitting the beach a mere eight minutes apart, there are no guarantees that the beach will be free of enemy weapons or that the boat's approach will be unopposed. Accordingly, LCUs carry two .50-caliber machine guns and M16s for each crew member.

The crew of 1662 reminded me more of McHale's Navy than they did of the Navy's "it's an adventure" recruiting ads. They certainly cared a great deal about their boat and their mission, but that wasn't going to keep them from having a good time. As Fred gave me the guided tour, which included videotapes of drunken crew members returning from liberty, and introduced me to the crew (including the engineer, Leonard Stokes, who has been known to eat live cockroaches), I realized that it would probably be impossible to find any powered vessel in the Navy with better morale or more camaraderie than they have on 1662. One indication of the crew's attitude came in the wake of a recent fire they had onboard. Rather than miss this deployment because of the time needed for a civilian contractor to make repairs, the crew had undertaken the job themselves. Not only had they saved the taxpayers some \$15,000, the crew finished the work 15 days ahead of schedule, allowing them to participate in Solid Shield.

During their first trip to the beach for Solid Shield, 1662 was carrying three tanks and their crews, a couple of Hummers and me. When the fog finally cleared, we backed out of the *Saipan's* well deck and began circling with the other boats. As we waited for our turn to head for the beach, helos ferried in loads of grunts and the Harriers made their high-speed passes overhead. At last we pointed the bow toward the beach and picked up speed.

Leaving 1662 in the back seat of a Hummer being driven by a lunatic lance corporal, I began to feel sort of ambiguous about

**LAV crossing shallow stream. Unlike its Army counterpart, the Bradley AFV, the LAV can enter the water at high speeds without sinking.**



being on the beach. Of course that was the point of the exercise, but life had been pretty good on Fred's boat. For the first time, even though I had been a Marine, I wondered if maybe the people who stayed in the landing craft when the Marines got out weren't just a little smarter than their passengers.

At last, well-fed, a little wet from the drive through the surf and several hours behind schedule, there I was on the beach. After a brief delay while the engineers took care of some unexploded ordnance, we were on our way to the front. Riding in the back of a "six-by" with a couple of other journalists and a crazed gunnery sergeant, I figured that finally I could get down to serious business. I was wrong.

Understandably, delays caused by the fog had seriously disrupted the timetable for the operation. Being in the right place at the right time for the major events of the day now required guesswork rather than simply consulting the schedule. For my escort, Marine Lt. Bill Taylor (who was recently selected for promotion to captain), the first step was to add the number of hours of delay to the time of a particular event and be there at the adjusted time. But this formula didn't seem to be working, and we found ourselves driving from one location to another, always arriving to find out that we were too late, too early or that the event had been canceled. The action seemed to be going on all around us, but seldom where we happened to be standing.

An opposed helicopter assault looked to be a good place to see some of the grunts at work. But the "aggressors" (ridiculously dressed in half-desert and half-jungle camouflage) decided we were compromising their positions and demanded that we leave. After much arguing we did. I spent the rest of the day happy knowing that, since they were the bad guys, they would certainly be overrun by the attacking Marines. Earlier we had arrived at the scene of the big battle for a ditch, but the battle by that time had moved some clicks inland. I decided the only reasonable option left for the morning was to head inland ourselves — for lunch.

We met up with several other reporters and headed for the deli. Over lunch the other journalists and I traded horror stories about how screwed up things were. I was happy to find that I wasn't the only one who seemed to be missing the action. Others were having the same problem. The main problem seemed to be the man in charge, an Air Force lieutenant colonel named Tom, who was running PAO for Solid Shield. He established silly procedures such as escorts for all journalists or groups of journalists, failed to properly brief journalists, which led to situations like that of Tracy Gray, and misled reporters. In one case the question regarded the presence of Navy SEALs. The colonel denied their presence, but then positioned the photographers for the landing next to the SEALs' harbor site on the beach. When photographers began taking pictures of the nonexistent SEALs, Tom became very distressed.

Fred Francais of NBC later recounted a conversation he had had with the colonel. Fred and his crew were on the beach waiting for the landing when it became obvious that the assault was too far away from the presses' position for good photos. When Fred suggested that they move down the beach, he was told that wasn't possible. As an alternative the colonel said he would call the fleet and have the ships move closer to the reporters. Needless to say, the ships didn't move. Fred and Tom had clashed earlier when the good colonel informed Fred and his crew that they would need to meet at the PAO building at 0400 in order to be on the beach (a 20-minute drive) for the landing at 0600. Fred, who knows how the game is played, refused and suggested they call a certain admiral at fleet headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia. The colonel, who also knows how the game is played, backed down.

After lunch things began to sort themselves out. Moving through the backwoods of Camp Lejeune, we were able to observe the grunts aggressively pursuing their objectives. Perhaps the most striking feature of the operation was the equipment and vehicles the Marines had at their disposal.

Hummers were everywhere. Some were equipped with the new 40mm Mark 19 Mod 3 automatic grenade launchers, others with TOWs. There wasn't a jeep in sight; in fact, if you even mentioned jeeps, the younger Marines looked at you as if you'd served in the horse cavalry. A mention of Mules, small vehicles used by mortar and antitank platoons in my day, would have them thinking you'd served during the dark ages.

From just a few years before, the uniforms, helmets, boots, flak jackets and service rifles were all different. Squad automatic weapons, gone since the days of the Browning Automatic Rifle, were everywhere. Not only are the Marines sporting a lot of new gear, they seem to have it in abundance. The days of doing virtually "anything, with nothing, forever" seemed long gone as I watched columns of heavily loaded grunts go by, armed with equipment I'd only seen on the pages of the *Marine Corps Gazette* during my service.

But even with all the new equipment, some things were still missing from the rifle companies — bodies. First Battalion, Sixth Marines, was at 87 percent of its authorized strength. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Green, was rather proud of that. In fact he told me that was roughly the same number of troops 1/6 had taken on its last deployment to the Mediterranean. But some of the rifle squads were operating with as few as six to eight men, rather than the 13 called for by the table of organization. And this was happening in a Marine Corps that has all the personnel Congress will allow. The Marines seem to

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## “Photographers began taking pictures of the nonexistent SEALs.”

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fill every billet in the Corps before finally giving people to the grunts.

But the shortages didn't seem to deter the battalion from accomplishing its mission, which called for a helicopter assault some six miles inland from the beach, attacking enemy positions and seizing strategic crossing points on the New River. The opposite shore was taken by Charlie Company, which crossed the river in rubber boats later that night. Its mission was to secure the shore and have a look around for enemy positions. That way, when the balance of the battalion came across, there wouldn't be any surprises awaiting them. A difficult evolution, but something they had practiced many times before.

The only difficulties encountered were the boats themselves. Unlike everything else in the battalion, they were rather old. In addition, they were rather overloaded. Two lost their bottoms on the way across and the Marines had to put onto a sandbar and walk ashore. Sort of embarrassing. That took time, and when the remaining boats finally made the opposite shore, the amtracs ferrying the rest of the battalion were already arriving.

While BLT 1/6 was taking ground and seizing its objectives, First Battalion, Eighth Marines (BLT 1/8), was crossing the beach in amtracs and quickly moving inland. Marines from other battalions at Lejeune were in positions behind the beaches and scattered around the landing zones (LZ) in the operational area, playing the role of "aggressors." That's an odd thing to call them, since their mission seemed to consist of sitting around waiting to be attacked and overrun by the "good guys." The most serious obstacle the advance encountered was a Soviet-style complex barrier consisting of mine fields, concertina wire, log post fences and a huge ditch. To no one's surprise, and with the help of combat engineers, the Marines were able to take this and all their other objectives.

By late afternoon, the first day's objectives had been taken and the grunts were settling into their night defensive positions.

*Continued on page 92*



“MAYDAY, Mayday, Mayday!” It was January 1945. Over the western section of New York state an airman was unknowingly about to make history. Finding himself in an aircraft that suddenly did not want to fly, the pilot declared an emergency, gave his position and bailed out. Seriously injured and badly shaken from the emergency and parachute ride, he sought refuge in a snowbound farmhouse. An experimental version of the Bell Model 47 helicopter was located. A physician was loaded into the helicopter and flown to the farmhouse to provide care until a ground ambulance, led by a snowplow, could gain access to the patient. Thus was born the use of the helicopter as a rapid emergency medical transport system.

In pre-twentieth century warfare, the recipient of even a minor wound had little chance of surviving. If the wound wasn't severe enough to kill him outright, infection would probably claim him within days.

The last 100 years have seen remarkable advances in all technologies. Anesthesia was discovered, thus enabling surgery to be performed painlessly. The process of infection was explored and steps developed to prevent it. Later, antibiotics were developed to fight infections that had not been prevented. The medical community began to realize the importance of blood and the significance of its loss. An understanding of shock, the inadequate profusion of vital organs, was gained.

During World War II the services realized that a medic in the field could not only apply dressings to stem the flow of blood, but could also administer plasma intravenously to help replace some of the blood that had been lost. If a patient could be moved to a field hospital quickly, surgeons could repair or remove a damaged limb. They could stabilize the patient further and ship him to a larger hospital where more advanced treatment could be rendered.

In Europe, there was a sufficient number of roads intact and ample vehicles to transport the wounded from the front lines to medical facilities in the rear. Only rarely did a unit find itself cut off from adequate means of transporting its wounded to a hospital. Similarly, in the Pacific, wounded were shuttled from islands to ships moored offshore. There the wounded received prompt attention in well-equipped sick bays. Then came Korea.

In many respects the Korean War was different from anything in which the United States had previously been involved. Extremely rugged terrain, severe climate and the less-than-total involvement of U.S. resources contributed to many small-unit actions that were relatively isolated from large bodies of troops. These units, of course, had medics, but once the patient was given emergency field treatment, transport could not be arranged as easily as it had been in past conflicts.

To help overcome this critical situation, MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital)



## SOF AVIATION

# DUSTOFF

## Heliborne Medevac from Korea to Grenada

by Todd M. Stanford







**ABOVE:** A casualty is placed aboard a Bell Model 47 during the Korean War, birthplace of the heliborne medevac unit. Photo: Bell Helicopter

### PARAMEDIC PENMAN

Todd Stanford served in the U.S. Army from 1972-78, pulling duty with the 82nd Airborne and 7th Special Forces Group. He currently works as a fire fighter/paramedic in West Virginia and answers muster in the 19th SF Group.

units were developed. These field hospitals, complete with surgeries, operated out of tents and could be moved from place to place as requirements demanded. With this development, evacuation distance was reduced, but the patient still had to be transported to the MASH complex.

The medical branch was not the only one encountering problems due to terrain. Eventually commanders realized that forward observers for artillery units could do a much better job if their mobility were increased

**LEFT:** Wounded GI is hustled toward waiting dustoff bird. Photo: DoD



and their perspective changed.

Enter the helicopter. Bell's Model 47 came into its own over the hostile Korean countryside. This little two-passenger "whirlybird" was used essentially as a truck. Summer mud and winter ice didn't stop it. Narrow, poor-quality roads didn't slow it down. It carried supplies, messages and reconnaissance specialists, and provided an airborne radio relay station when needed.

Pilots forced to eject over the desolate countryside had a long walk back to friendly lines. Evasion by Occidentals in a land of Orientals was particularly difficult. What was needed was a way to pick up a pilot shortly after he touched the ground. Again the Model 47 was called upon to fill the bill. Since it didn't need an airstrip to land, the helicopter was the ideal choice. It could zip in and extract a downed airman often before ground forces could even be mobilized to search for him. It soon followed that, equipped with a litter rack on each skid, the helicopter was the ideal means of transporting seriously wounded soldiers to MASH units.

During the Korean conflict, more than 22,000 wounded were evacuated by this means. At the end of the war there were six detachments of six helicopters each used

**BELOW:** A wounded soldier is hurriedly placed aboard a Blackhawk. Since its inception during the Korean War, heliborne medical evacuation has become part-and-parcel of the casevac chain. Photo: Sikorsky



exclusively for medevac. It was a tremendous boost to morale knowing that if you were wounded, you could be in a hospital in a very short time, usually about 30 minutes. According to Bell Helicopter, 80 percent of all front-line evacuations during the war were performed by a variant of the Model 47.

But the helicopter's medevac role didn't end with Korea. . . .

"Dust Off, Dust Off, this is Black Bear, Black Bear, over."

"Black Bear, this is Dust Off. Go ahead."

"Dust Off, Black Bear. We have three wounded at LZ Baker. Will pop smoke on your signal. The LZ is hot, repeat, the LZ is hot, over."

"Black Bear, Dust Off. Roger that. Smoke on my signal, three wounded, the LZ is hot. I'm about 10 minutes out."

Vietnam — another war in another Southeast Asian country. Twenty years after Korea, Americans were still fighting and dying to protect others from communist tyranny, this time in jungles rather than mountains. This time there were little more than trails rather than poor roads. Vietnam — truly the "helicopter war." Lessons learned in Korea had taught the American military how invaluable the helicopter was in this type of situation.

After 27 years of production, the Model 47 had been replaced. In June 1959, the first HU-1A (Helicopter, Utility — Model 1A) went into service. Officially the Army named this type the Iroquois, after an Indian tribe, following the policy of giving all its aircraft Indian names. The real Army — the grunts — however, took one look at its model designation and the HU-1A Iroquois quickly became the HU-1A Huey. Even after the army changed the series designation to UH-1, the GIs couldn't be fooled — it was still the Huey.

The original Huey was designed to carry 800 pounds of men and/or equipment. It had a mission radius of 100 nautical miles. One important design specification was that it be constructed to allow field maintenance. Another was that it had to be transportable by cargo plane. Later model variants included hinged rotors, which increased maneuverability, a myriad of armaments, and more powerful engines. The "E" Model came equipped with a hoist. This was used for sling-loading equipment and extracting personnel when a landing was impractical. The "D" Model was physically larger than its predecessors. It could carry more and carry it farther. The substitution of a more powerful engine resulted in the UH-1D being redesignated the UH-1H.

In April 1962, the first air ambulance unit deployed to Vietnam. Its radio call sign was "Dust Off." Just as "Huey" replaced "Iroquois," "Dust Off" became synonymous with "medevac." Initially, medevacs carried a pilot, copilot and two crewmen. They could transport two litter patients and one ambulatory patient. As the payload ca-



## RHODESIAN DUSTOFF

It was October 1977. Guerrillas from communist-backed Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe's forces were flooding into embattled Rhodesia.

We called them "terrs," and it was our job to stop them.

Three Commando, 1st Battalion, Rhodesian Light Infantry, was pulling fireforce duties out of Mtoko in the rugged northeastern countryside. Our day-to-day mission was to react to terrorist sightings, hop out to the area via Alouette III choppers or our ParaDak and, in the words of another southern Africa fighter of some years past, "Find, fix and finish the enemy."

One hellishly hot afternoon a Police Reserve Air Wing pilot spotted what looked like a terr base camp. We responded. After tromping around the AO, we came up blank. Neither we on the ground nor the Alouettes in the air had spotted anything.

We were wrapping up the scene and awaiting chopper pickup when a burst of AK fire sent us diving for dirt. One of my corporals had been gunned by a terr hiding in thick scrub running alongside a nearby streambed.

I quickly organized a sweep line and cautiously moved back into the area.

Within minutes I hit the edge of a small clearing adjoining the stream. I caught movement out of the corner of my eye; seconds later, I was spreadeagled on the ground, blood pouring out of five AK-47 bullet holes in my neck, arm and chest.

The rest of 11 Troop finally sorted out that terr, as well as two others. My condition, though, was quickly going critical from blood loss and shock. Our

Alouette from 7 Squadron, Rhodesian Air Force, takes African child wounded by terrorist gunfire onboard. All pilots of 7 Squadron were expected to — and did — pick up casualties whenever and wherever they were called.

medic, American John Buff, did what he could, but without immediate evacuation, my tour in Rhodesia would reach an abrupt end before nightfall.

Thick brush and boulder-covered hillsides made LZ preparation nearly impossible; our two machetes just couldn't handle the task.

Up above, Squadron Leader Taylor was circling in his Alouette. He looked at the terrain, looked at the time, then carefully started a direct descent. His three metal-tipped rotor blades bit into trees and shrub, chopping like a lawnmower, until the wheels touched ground. I was loaded onboard; Taylor went vertical, blades hitting branches he'd missed on the way down.

We made it out and, within a few hours, I was on the operating table in Salisbury's Andrew Fleming Hospital.

Taylor stood to lose his own life and that of his crew chief, Adrian Rosenberg, in making that pickup. During my years in Rhodesia, I watched the chopper pilots of 7 Squadron, Rhodesian Air Force, go in under heavy fire and the worst conditions time and again to pull out wounded troops.

"It was part of the job," an American chopper pilot who flew in Vietnam and Rhodesia told me a while back. "You just never thought about *not* going in."

We called them casevacs in Rhodesia and medevacs in Vietnam. I think the term "lifesaver" fits them both.

— John Coleman

pabilities of the Huey grew, so did the number of patients the dustoff could carry. The UH-1D, which became operative in May '63, could carry six litter patients or nine ambulatory patients in addition to its four crewmen. It had a payload of 4,000 pounds.

Crewmen of these air ambulances were probably the most universally respected group to have been engaged in that conflict. Whether the landing zone was secure or "hot," they would make the pickup. A brother-in-arms was dying, and they considered it their personal responsibility to get him out alive.

Vietnam saw an increase in the use of "bush hats," or no hats, as opposed to the steel pot worn by previous generations of fighting men. As a consequence, there was a drastic increase in the percentage of head wounds. Head wounds, whether in the civilian or military environment, are always considered a serious injury until proven otherwise.

Additionally, the terrain was ideally suited for mechanical ambushes, one of Charlie's favorite techniques. Skillfully used, booby traps could achieve much more than an equal number of infantrymen, thus greatly increasing the ground troops' frustration. They forced all movement to be slow and deliberate. The most common articles, even in one's own compound, had to be checked. Psychologically, the effects were tremendous. More often than not, the person tripping the booby trap would end up seriously injured rather than killed. This would slow his unit down even more, for now they had a wounded comrade to treat. It is for this same purpose that point men were wounded rather than killed outright during small ambushes. The bad guys knew a medic would crawl out to care for the injured man, and they could pick off the medic. This would leave a small unit with one wounded man and no medic. Demoralized, overcautious, and with at least one asset converted to a liability, the unit's usefulness was greatly compromised.

Warriors in the past accomplished objectives by killing their opponents and taking ground. This was not the case in Vietnam. Objectives and the value of a particular piece of real estate changed almost weekly. Here, Charlie's objective was to make a very determined opponent give up the fight and withdraw. The psychological as well as physical effects of wounding were obviously more productive than killing the enemy outright.

Dustoff provided the best counter imaginable to this type of warfare. Virtual supremacy in the air, coupled with the Huey's capability to operate in almost any weather conditions, essentially guaranteed that a wounded man stood a good chance of surviving. No conventional-unit ground pounder was more than 35 minutes away from a medical facility equipped to provide definitive, lifesaving care.

Airborne triage became a routine practice.



Medevac leaves the Binh Dinh Valley after picking up wounded troops during Operation Masher in January 1966.

Photo: DoD

## BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Every grunt who humped a ruck in Vietnam knew the term "Dust Off." It was a standard call sign for medical evacuation helicopters whether you were a river rat in the Delta or an LRRP on the DMZ.

And that's what made the Dust Off call sign unique. Other Army Aviation call signs tended to change from unit to unit. A gunship might go by the handle "Cobra" in one aviation company, while the same-type aircraft in another unit might fly under "Stingray."

Dust Off, however, became synonymous with medevac.

It's generally accepted that Dust Off originated as an aviation radio call sign, but how it was chosen and why it stuck are where accounts tend to vary.

*Dust Off — Army Aeromedical Evacuation in Vietnam* by Peter Dorland and James Nanney provides what may be the definitive accounting of call sign Dust Off's origin. According to the authors, it came into being shortly after the first air ambulance unit, the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) arrived in Vietnam in April 1962.

"For the past year [1962-63]," Dorland and Nanney write, "the 57th had worked without a tactical call sign, simply using 'Army' and the tail number of the aircraft. . . . Major Spencer [Maj. Lloyd E. Spencer, who assumed command of the 57th in February 1963] decided that this slapdash system had to go. In Saigon he visited Navy Support Activity, which controlled all the call words in South Vietnam. He received a Signal Operations Instructions book that listed all the unused call words. Most . . . were more suitable for assault units than for medical evacuation units. But one entry, 'Dust Off,' epitomized the 57th's medical evacuation missions. Since the countryside then was dry and dusty, helicopter pickups in the field often blew dust, dirt, blankets and shelter halves all over the men on the ground. By adopting 'Dust Off,' Spencer found for Army aeromedical evacuation in Vietnam a name that lasted the rest of the war."

The Dustoff Association, an organization of helicopter pilots who flew medevacs in Vietnam, concurs.

"The association derives its name — 'Dustoff' — from the radio call sign that was given to the first aeromedical helicopter unit in Vietnam," states its membership booklet. "Though call signs regularly changed, both the ground and aviation units refused to refer to these evacuation helicopters by any other call sign. Throughout Vietnam all evacuation helicopters assumed the call sign 'Dustoff' followed by a numerical designation, and no one ever attempted to change this through the remainder of the conflict."

(According to a number of pilots who flew with the 1st Cavalry Division [Airmobile] in Vietnam, however, their call sign for medical evacuation standardized as "Medevac" rather than Dust Off, although another source believes that Dust Off became prevalent in the Cav during the post-1967 period.)

British Army Lieutenant Colonel David Miller, in *The Vietnam War — The Illustrated History of the Conflict in Southeast Asia*, writes: "'Dust-Off' Bell UH-1Hs — named from the radio call sign of Major Charles Kelly, a famed pilot killed in action in 1964," apparently attributing Dust Off to Kelly. (Major Kelly commanded the 57th Med. Det. from 11 January 1964 until his death in action on 1 July.)

According to a senior aviation source at Fort Rucker, Alabama, who confirms Maj. Spencer as the implementor of call sign Dust Off, its use up until Maj. Kelly's death was only spotty. Afterward, because of Kelly's gallantry and dedication to the helicopter medical evacuation concept, Dust Off gained wider recognition and acceptance, becoming something of a fixed call sign by 1967.

Perhaps one reason for the widespread use of the Dust Off call sign centered around radio frequencies — specifically, emergency frequencies. Although sometimes varying between major commands, certain VHF, UHF and FM freqs standardized as emergency channels. It's possible that call sign "Dust Off" was heard on these freqs and spread to other aviation units involved in medevac ops, then integrated into ground force terminology, eventually becoming SOP theater-wide.

As a generic term, Dorland and Nanney probably hit the nail on the head when they described dustoff in terms of the effects of rotor prop wash. Medevacs landed anywhere and everywhere, blowing everyone and everything not tied down to the four corners of an LZ.

For grunts on the receiving end, the word "dust" in Dust Off, at least, was manifestly self-evident.

— John Coleman

Continued on page 90



**M**AY 1st. May Day. A time for workers of the world to unite in socialist brotherhood and Marxist harmony; the day when leftist comrades crawled out onto the earthquake-torn streets of San Salvador, damned the “Yankee imperialists,” then oozed away to report another job well done to their masters.

SOF correspondent Steve Salisbury and I were lucky enough, if luck’s the right word for it, to land in El Salvador in time to catch the May Day festivities in the capital. During the 30-minute ride from the airport to San Salvador, we asked our cabbie what kind of action we could expect in town.

“Oh, maybe a riot. Or a bomb or two. We might even get stopped by the guerrillas on our way in.”

I pulled all of my SOF and military press IDs out of my wallet and stashed them in my boot, just in case. We passed three government checkpoints on the way, but I guess the Gs decided that low profile — at least on May Day — was the better part of valor.

After a quick swing by the Ramada Inn to stash our bags, we headed down *Paseo Gral. Escalón* and caught up with the tail end of the demonstration. Just a few years ago, under the government’s old martial law program, the 3,000 or so disaffected toiling their way toward the *Plaza de la Libertad* under Salvador’s crispy noonday sun would have found themselves at the pointy end of army bayonets. That Friday, though, there was nary a soldier to be seen. Just a few bored-looking cops stationed in the remains of earthquake-shattered buildings and an army light observation chopper circling overhead with a cameraman hanging out the door. Low key was the order of the day.

Salisbury and I weaved in and out of the masked, costumed and hooded marchers, snapping photos and wilting fast in hazy, humid San Salvador. Those demonstrators with a more artistic bent took to spray painting one-liners on every spare inch of wall, thought-provoking stuff like “Duarte’s a Murderer” and the ever favorite “Yankis Out of El Salvador.” We kept out of the way of their enforcers, masked hoods brandishing clubs studded with nails, as did the few hundreds of apathetic bystanders lining the streets. They were goons itching to try out their backhand on somebody given half a chance, and two short-haired gringos would make ideal targets.

I was about ready to give it all up as a bad joke when a banner caught my eye. “U.S.A. Postal Workers for Peace,” it read. “U.S. Hands Off Central America.” I mean, come on now. *Postal workers?* I asked them to pose with their banner. Without a photo, no one back in the office would believe me.

Then came a more generic “North Amer-

**ABOVE RIGHT:** It’s high time to pull out of Central America when postal workers join the fray.

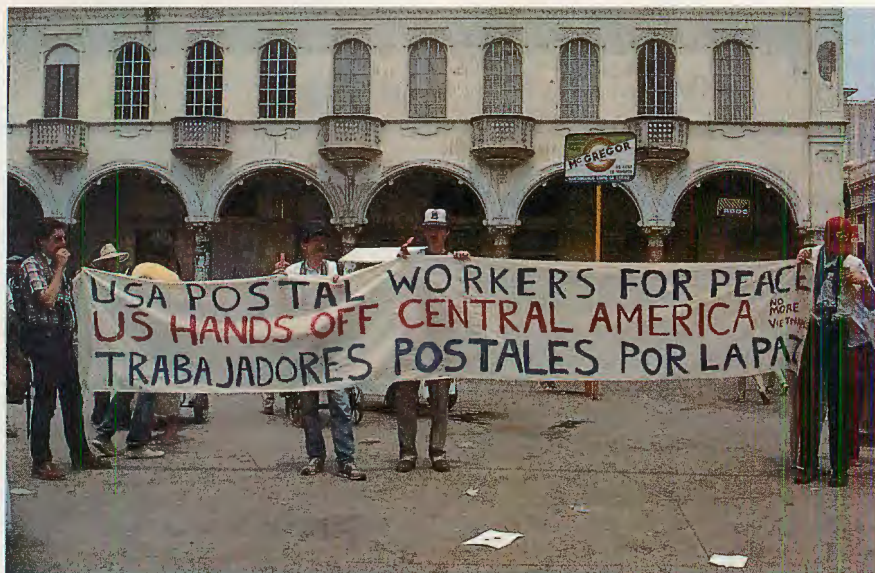
**RIGHT:** Four useful idiots in the cause of socialist brotherhood and Marxist harmony.

**SOF EL SALVADOR**

# MARCHING FOR MARX

## Useful Idiots and Bored Bystanders

Text & Photos by John Coleman





icans Against U.S.A. Intervention." All four of them. What did Lenin say about useful idiots? It was enough to topple any government.

May Day was becoming a bit more interesting, so Salisbury and I decided to stick around for the grand finale of Salvador's version of Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

We didn't have long to wait. A couple thousand restless marchers milled around Liberty Plaza, swilling capitalist Cokes and sucking icies, while a score of hardcores hung banners and spray painted everything in sight. I snapped photos and Steve interviewed a couple of teenaged masked marvels ("We don't care about politics," they said. "We just don't want to get conscripted into the army.") No doubt they'd been studying U.S. film clips from the '60s.).

Up on a pedestal in the center of the plaza, the organizers had set up a sound system of the type found only in heavy-

metal road shows, guaranteed to shatter windows for miles around. Just when the crowd was ready to break for siesta, a comrade sister took up position behind the mike, kicked on the switch and screamed "Down with Duarte!" in her best downtrodden *campesino* wail.

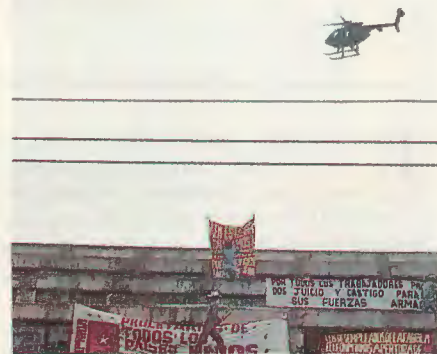
Unfortunately for the press corps clustered around her and the speakers, the system was amping roughly a billion decibels of pure noise. In a split-second, eardrum-saving decision, the press stampeded to the rear quicker than you could shout "Beer call!"

Fortunately, Salisbury and I were out of danger close, but we'd had enough. We left screaming sister to her "Down with Duarte," trying futilely to build some enthusiasm into a rapidly thinning crowd — without much luck. Heat, humidity — and boredom — had once again won out over politics. ✕



ABOVE: FMLN communist propaganda in San Salvador is simplistic in concept but effective in its anti-government theme.

BELOW: Salvadoran army LOH keeps tabs on banner-hanging demonstrators in the capital. Military presence was so low key as to be almost nonexistent.



LEFT: Would you buy a used revolution from this man?

BELOW LEFT: Echoing their U.S. counterparts of the 1960s, these teenaged Salvadoran students were afraid of army conscription. Shades of "Hell no, we won't go," anyone?

BELOW: Defacing religious statuary is much more fun than fighting for his country's survival.





# BATS OUT OF HELL

## United States Trains Incendiary Rodents

by Jack Lewis

Illustration by Ralph Butler

**I**N nearly every war since the building of the Trojan horse, there have been secret experiments and clandestine projects conducted with the idea of getting one up on the enemy. World War II's atomic bomb might be considered in that light; at least, it ended that war.

But down through the ages there have been many less-publicized efforts, some of them conducted in total seriousness and involving a great deal of dedicated effort by our scientists and military thinkers. And then there are those projects that, in the retrospect tempered by time, boggle the mind at the ludicrous thinking that could concoct such schemes.

Operation X-Ray has to fit into the latter category. At the time, it was considered innovative and imaginative, and some apparently thought it would drive the Japanese to an early surrender. In retrospect, one wonders whether grown men could really have been serious about it.

This top-secret operation began roughly a month after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and crippled our Pacific Fleet. Those were panicky days. Enemy submarines were reported in the Los Angeles River — which happened to be nearly dry at the time; hordes of loyal Japanese-Americans were being herded into relocation camps; forest rangers were reporting incendiary-carrying balloons landing in the Oregon forests, supposedly an enemy effort to burn our timber lands and thus deprive us of the raw materials for war production.

Amid this practiced paranoia one Dr. Lytle S. Adams, a Pennsylvania dental surgeon, arrived in our nation's capital with what was to become one of the most fantastic and unlikely schemes in the history of military operations.

Adams had conceived his plan following a visit to the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. The date was 7 December 1941, and he

was driving along one of the state's highways when news of the Pearl Harbor attack was broadcast over his car radio.

In that moment, it seems, Dr. Adams had a flash of sheer inspiration: If millions of bats, found in American caves, could be fitted with tiny incendiary devices, they could be dropped on Japan's home islands from our aircraft. The bats would seek sanctuary in Japanese buildings and the incendiaries, ignited by preset fuses, would destroy the flimsily constructed cities. In those days the average citizen had seen or read *Madame Butterfly*, and perhaps was convinced that all structures in Japan had walls made of rice paper.

Thus inspired, Adams had turned his car around and driven several hundred miles back to the Carlsbad Caverns, where he captured several bats for his initial test. Reaching home, the dentist ransacked libraries for all he could absorb about bats, incendiary devices and Japanese architecture. By January 1942, he had forwarded his proposal to the White House.

With the feeling of desperation experienced in those first weeks of the war —

Pacific Fleet immobilized and our island outposts falling — there were those willing to listen to almost any proposal. The truth is buried in time, but it is probable that Dr. Adams' research was brought to the attention of Harry L. Hopkins, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's closest wartime adviser. Whatever the routing, the documents reached the desk of the president, who was swept up in the imaginative possibilities of the scheme.

Under the plan outlined by Dr. Adams, large containers of bats would be parachuted out of high-altitude bombers flying over the Japanese home islands. Dropping to an altitude of only 1,000 feet, the containers would open automatically to release the horde of bats.

The suggestion became a project in short order. It was classified top secret and code named Operation X-Ray.

Dr. Adams and the U.S. Army went to work. Surrounded by a staff of scientifically oriented assistants, the dental surgeon began traveling thousands upon thousands of miles to explore the nation's caves.

In that era, the Carlsbad Caverns had an estimated population of more than nine million bats. But it was in the Ney Caverns of Texas that Adams found what might well be termed his Vampire Valhalla. Acknowledged as the largest bat colony in the nation, it held an estimated 30 million bats.

In the meantime, the Army's Chemical Warfare Service, in conjunction with the National Defense Research Committee, had begun development of a specialized incendiary device that would be small enough and sufficiently light in weight for a bat to carry it in flight. By early 1943, this task force had come up with an oblong nitro-cellulose case that was filled with napalm and carried a time-delay ignition mechanism. Through an endless succession of experiments, Dr. Adams and his staff of scien-

### LITERATE LEATHERNECK

"Bats Out of Hell" is Jack Lewis' first article for *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, but Jack is no stranger to the literary trade. His credits include five novels, 23 works of nonfiction, some 2,000 magazine and newspaper articles, and scripts for 21 television programs. As an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, he served during World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Jack has spent the last 28 years as publisher of *Gun World* Magazine.



tists had found that the Mexican free-tail bat offered the best potential as a fire-bomb carrier.

To make handling and shipping more simple, the winged rodents were cooled to the point that a state of forced hibernation was induced in each of them. This aided the logistical problems of feeding which, in itself, had become a mammoth undertaking. With thousands of bats in captivity, the scientific community soon learned that the flying creatures consumed several times their own weight in insects each day. As a result, the entire task force devoted much of its time to collecting gnats, houseflies, grasshoppers and anything else that qualified as bat fodder.

According to a horde of yellowing documents, now declassified, the cooling process necessary to induce a state of hibernation in Mexican bats was accomplished with ordinary ice cube trays. The bats were arranged in the trays and the temperature held at 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Though the bats did hibernate in that temperature range, artificial cooling of this sort was a bit on the tricky side. In the earliest attempts to reproduce the needed state of near suspended animation, most of the bats simply did not wake up. Eventually, the problem was overcome by raising the temperature a degree or two.

With the so-called bat-bomb designed and several of them fabricated for experimental use, the first planeload of Mexican free-tail bats was taken aloft at an auxiliary airfield near Carlsbad, New Mexico, to be dropped through the aircraft's bomb bay. According to plan, as the bat-filled containers descended into the warmer altitudes, the bats were supposed to awaken from their induced naps, escape from the container and carry out their primary fire mission.

Antiaircraft fire dictated that the aircraft delivering the bats would have to fly at rather high altitudes. It had been pointed

out, of course, that were the bats carried to such altitudes the rodents probably would freeze to death before they regained enough of their senses to launch into flight.

The scientific answer to this was that the pilots simply would have to fly at lower elevations and ignore the antiaircraft fire. This thinking created a more than minor degree of friction. Pilots took a dim view of becoming inviting low-level targets, while the scientists tended to express interest only in proving the validity of their work. How the pilots and the aircraft crews went about keeping from being shot out of the skies over the Land of the Rising Sun was strictly a military problem.

In that first experimental bat drop over the desert sands of southern New Mexico, the container opened as it was meant to, allowing the bats to escape. Most, however, either were dead or failed to recover from their cold-induced lethargy. The majority plummeted to the desert floor to provide excellent forage for the vultures, hawks and coyotes. The few that survived simply flew away.

Involved scientists held their collective breath, hoping the incendiary-outfitted creatures would not choose the nearby town of Carlsbad as the place in which to hang themselves from rafters until the fire bombs exploded. It would be impossible to explain why the town had burned down, since the entire project was top secret.

However, the bats were cooperative in that particular regard. There were no reported fires in the business or residential communities, and it was assumed the bats simply perished somewhere in the desert when the device each carried became a fiery torch.

The assigned scientific brigade did not give up at so slight a hitch. Dr. Adams and his followers collected another batch of bats, more incendiaries were manufactured

and, the next time, the bats were dropped from aircraft flying at still lower levels. On this occasion, the winged creatures performed as expected, but only to a point.

Since there was no Japanese city closer than 8,000 miles to set aflame, some bats set up sleeping quarters in an aircraft hangar at the auxiliary airfield from which the experimental flights were launched. They burned it down. Several more of the incendiary-laden rodents chose the staff car of a visiting general as a likely place to nap through a warm afternoon. The general was horrified when his prized vehicle burst into flames, then exploded to become a mass of molten metal.

In spite of President Roosevelt's announced interest in the project, the Army suddenly washed its hands of Operation X-Ray and took the easy way out. It turned the project over to the United States Navy.

After probable consideration of career implications, Navy brass hurriedly turned the project over to the Marine Corps. Operation X-Ray was transferred to the Marine Corps Air Station at El Centro, California.

The Marines, in conjunction with the still-tenacious civilian scientists, conducted their initial tests on 13 December 1943. The results were less than spectacular in spite of the fact that 30-odd fires were started. Twenty-two of the fires went out in a matter of minutes, four more were of no consequence, and only the last four required firemen to extinguish them.

After lengthy conference, it was back to the drawing board. The need was for a more powerful incendiary that still would be sufficiently lightweight and compact enough to be carried by a flying bat.

Several months later, the Leathernecks were ready for a new try. This time, only 25 bats were taken aloft by Marine pilots. It

*Continued on page 112*



# T&E SHOOTING IN THE SHADOWS

## Modifying Ruger's M77/22

Text & Photo by Peter G. Kokalis



**H**IRAM Maxim's famous Model 1910 sound suppressor was not designed for assassins, gangsters or military snipers. His original concept was no more exotic than to reduce the irritating sound level of a firearm.

Until the advent of World War II, the U.S. military, lagging at least a decade behind Al Capone, envisioned little application for such devices. Now imbued with a sinister mythology at the U.S. civilian level, sound suppressors are mostly employed by those who disdain earplugs and, in fact, no registered "silencer" has ever been connected to criminal activity since the inception of the National Firearms Act in 1934.

As no amount of baffling or porting can reduce the sound of the reciprocating components, bolt-action rifles represent the best starting point for an effective sound-suppressed system. Furthermore, selection of subsonic calibers, such as the .22 LR, totally eliminates the downrange "crack" associated with bullets traveling faster than the speed of sound (1,087.5 fps at 32 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level). I can think of no better choice around which to design an efficient, modern sound suppressor than Bill Ruger's slick-looking M77/22 turnbolt.

Introduced in 1984, Ruger's M77/22 competes at every level with classic .22 LR sporters selling for two to three times as much. As expected, the receiver is a steel investment casting, mill-finished with CNC (Computer Numeric Control) machinery.

The 20-inch barrel has six grooves with a

**Ruger M77/22 fitted with Jonathan Ciener's sound suppressor and topped with Trijicon self-luminous scope makes an intriguing combination for shooting in the shadows.**

right-hand twist of one turn in 16 inches. Overall length is 39.25 inches and weight is 5 pounds, 13 ounces (empty and without scope or suppressor system). Except for the front portion of the bolt, all steel parts have been salt blued.

The bolt group separates into three major subassemblies. The rear portion consists of a bolt shroud, cocking piece and two-piece firing pin with coil spring. The center section contains the cocking handle and two large locking lugs. The non-rotating forward body has dual extractors. A tenon on the front end extends into the center section and is joined to it with a pin. The bolt can be removed by depressing a flush-mounted bolt stop on the left side of the receiver. The cocking piece is retracted and engages the sear when the bolt handle is raised.

The trigger mechanism is of the propped sear design with a single coil spring for sear recovery and trigger return. While the lock time is fast, the trigger on our test model released at 8 pounds with objectionable creep. Before the commencement of SOF's test and evaluation, this was reduced to a clean-breaking 2.5 pounds by one of the nation's premier combat gunsmiths, Robert A. Barkman (The Robar Companies, Inc., Dept. SOF, 21438 N. 7th Ave., Suite B, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone 602-581-2648).

There is a steel trigger guard, which is a pleasant departure from the plastic or alloy junk usually encountered.

A vertical cylinder and wing lever, pivoting on the right side of the receiver tang behind the bolt handle, serve as a three-position thumb safety. When pulled to the rear, the bolt, sear and trigger are all locked. In the center position, the bolt may be rotated for loading or unloading, but the sear and trigger remain blocked. When pushed fully forward, the rifle can be fired.

Ruger M77/22 stocks are machined from flat-sawn, straight-grained American walnut with a high, straight comb and no cheek piece and are finished with a matte urethane. Checkering on the forearm and grip areas is modest but well-done at 20 lines per inch. The black plastic buttplate and grip cap both carry the Ruger escutcheon. Steel sling swivel studs are provided at the front and rear of the stock.

Although slightly shorter, the 10-round rotary magazine duplicates that of the Ruger 10/22 semiautomatic rifle. While 10/22 magazines can be used, they will protrude somewhat beyond the stock.

To this sleek-appearing rig, Jonathan Arthur Ciener (Dept. SOF, 6850 Riveredge Drive, Titusville, FL 32780; phone 305-268-1921) has added an effective sound suppressor which preserves the M77/22's esthetics and alters its outward appearance to little more than a rather graceful, bull-barrel target rifle.

After porting the barrel with 96 holes (four rows with 12 inches of holes every 1/2 inch), the chamber surrounding the barrel is filled with a porous material and nine aircraft-grade aluminum baffles are added to the muzzle end. The outer tubing has been handsomely polished and salt blued. Ciener's M77/22 suppressor is permanently assembled and cannot be rebuilt by the user. However, if the bore is cleaned with only a dry brush and dry patches — never solvents or lubricants — Ciener contends his unit will last as long as the rifle.

As .22 LR ammunition fouls notoriously, I remain somewhat skeptical, since some of the burnt carbon particles will surely enter the suppressor's chamber and eventually degrade the level of sound suppression. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that oil poured into a sound suppressor and then drained will flush enough debris to enhance performance by as much as 5 decibels.

Ciener's suppressed Ruger M77/22 retails for only \$552.50. Since the Ruger M77/22 itself carries a \$364.50 price tag, at \$188 Ciener's unit is as inexpensive as you will find state-of-the-art sound suppression. With an overall length of 41.25 inches, Ciener has managed to hold his suppressed system to within 2 inches of the M77/22's original length.

Rifles that whisper deserve optics that permit stealth in the dark. Armson, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2130, Farmington Hills, MI 48333; phone 313-553-4960) dis-

*Continued on page 93*

# SOF WANTS YOU!

## I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. If you buy SOF on the newsstand, how long have you been reading SOF \_\_\_\_\_ and how many issues have you bought in the last six months? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you a: veteran \_\_\_\_\_, active duty military \_\_\_\_\_, reservist \_\_\_\_\_, law enforcement officer \_\_\_\_\_, other (describe)? \_\_\_\_\_

## II. READER SURVEY

1. If you are a subscriber, go to question 2. If you bought this issue at a newsstand, what influence did the cover have on your purchasing decision? Please rate on a scale from 1 (excellent — influenced you to buy this issue) to 5 (poor — bought this issue in spite of the cover). \_\_\_\_\_
2. SOF is interested in what its readers think about the subjects of the articles in the November 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
Guns Behind the Great Wall Part 3 .....	1	2	3
Death of an Afghan Village .....	1	2	3
Showdown at Wounded Knee .....	1	2	3
Emerald Triangle .....	1	2	3
Contra Airdrop .....	1	2	3
Rhodesia's Fireforce Commandos .....	1	2	3
North Liked Boulder Publisher's Idea .....	1	2	3
SOF at Pan Am Games .....	1	2	3
Solid Shield '87 .....	1	2	3
Dustoff .....	1	2	3
Marching for Marx .....	1	2	3
Bats Out of Hell .....	1	2	3
Shooting in the Shadows .....	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
Guns Behind the Great Wall Part 3 .....	1	2	3
Death of an Afghan Village .....	1	2	3
Showdown at Wounded Knee .....	1	2	3
Emerald Triangle .....	1	2	3
Contra Airdrop .....	1	2	3
Rhodesia's Fireforce Commandos .....	1	2	3
North Liked Boulder Publisher's Idea .....	1	2	3
SOF at Pan Am Games .....	1	2	3
Solid Shield '87 .....	1	2	3
Dustoff .....	1	2	3
Marching for Marx .....	1	2	3
Bats Out of Hell .....	1	2	3
Shooting in the Shadows .....	1	2	3

SECOND FOLD ▶ UP

3. If SOF were to publish a newsletter specializing in coverage of ongoing conflicts around the world, including recent battlefield news, would you be interested?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you answered yes, what would be a fair price for a one-year subscription if the newsletter were eight to 10 pages (8½x11) and published every two weeks? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does SOF run too much, just the right amount or too little on the following topics? Make an "X" under the appropriate heading.

Topic	Too Much	Right Amount	Too Little
Vietnam	_____	_____	_____
Firearms	_____	_____	_____
Combat Reporting	_____	_____	_____
Rifles	_____	_____	_____
Pistols	_____	_____	_____
Mercenary Topics	_____	_____	_____
Terrorism	_____	_____	_____
Military Unit Reports	_____	_____	_____
History (prior to Vietnam)	_____	_____	_____

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE





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

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

7. What would you do to improve SOF? \_\_\_\_\_

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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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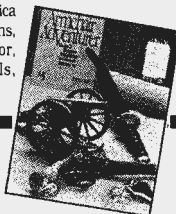


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## AFGHAN VILLAGE

Continued from page 45

knew from the mountain camp, came to collect me. Within an hour I had finished taping and we started back. Halfway to Shomz Allah's house, six Soviet gunships suddenly appeared overhead. Nur shouted and we took off, running for the cover of a cluster of apple trees. I readied the video camera on the run and started shooting when we reached our refuge.

The choppers circled above us, five Mi-24s at an altitude of about 150 meters and one Mi-8 Hip a little higher, probably to direct fire. They plodded along slowly and I remember noting that the chop of their rotors wasn't especially loud. They looked an unthreatening parade.

But the Mi-24 Hinds quickly showed why they are so deadly and feared by the mujahideen. As one came over our heads it let loose with 57mm rockets. In rapid succession they hissed from the stub wings on rails of white smoke. At the same time its nose cannon flashed and burped.

Unlike the jets, the Mi-24s did not attack in a simple wheel formation. They seemed to have more than one target, houses behind and on either side of us. One gunship passed in front of us to the left firing rockets. Then another to the right spraying cannon fire. As they came they rhythmically ejected pairs of incendiary antimissile decoys.

But the precaution was unnecessary. There wasn't a single antiaircraft rocket in all of Paghman. I knew the attack had pinned down several other guerrillas around us, but I didn't even hear any small-arms fire. And wisely so. Even at this low altitude the Hind's heavy armor makes it impervious to small rounds.

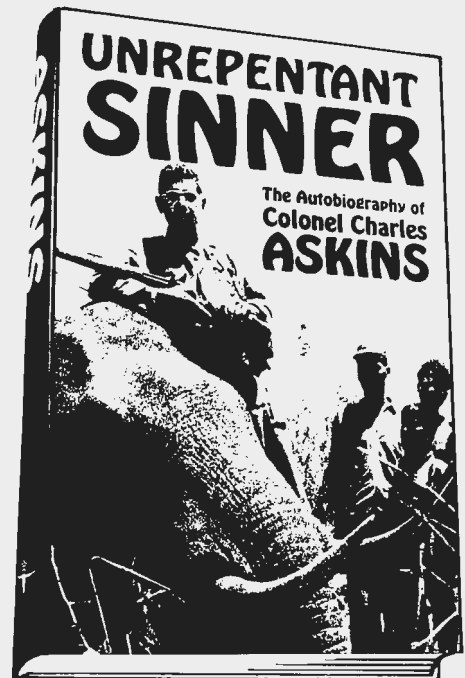
A couple hundred yards out, an Mi-24 was coming straight head-on, low. I crawled quickly to the edge of the trees to catch it on tape. I got it in the viewfinder and started rolling. The chopper kept coming and coming on, looming larger. I expected it to get overhead like the others before firing on the targets beyond the apple grove. But suddenly, too soon, I saw a flash from its nose and slammed myself down as I heard cannon rounds rip into the treetops above me, followed two seconds later by the reports. I was amazed the gunner spotted me, but I wasn't about to give him two shots for his quarter. The chopper passed overhead and tore its next volley into a house behind us.

Nur appeared next to me, lambasting me for almost getting my ass perforated, but grinning all the same. As a precaution we moved to a new piece of cover.

For the next quarter hour we watched the Mi-24s at work. When the cannon and rocket fire ended, we listened as the rotors faded away to silence. The sky was empty again.

Taking no chances, Nur led me on a run the last half mile to Shomz Allah's house. We arrived, panting, to find Shomz Allah on his horse, surrounded by others from camp who had been in Paghman. He was

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leaving for camp unexpectedly and was anxiously waiting for Nur and me to return.

I barely had time to pack away the video gear and we were off. Two nephews of Shomz Allah who had always stayed in Paghman came with us. Also odd was that we left now, with no chance of reaching camp before dark, instead of waiting until morning. I took these as signs that Shomz Allah expected even more attacks.

And he was right. The next day at mid-morning two jets shot low over camp and bombed somewhere beyond our narrow valley. They were past us before the Dashika could fire a round. An hour later a group of Su-25s bombed a mountain ridge next to us. This time I heard the Dashika giving them some heat. The men continued to fire at a pair of Mi-24s that swept up.

When the attack ended, Jalil sent down word that he had hit one of the helicopters. He had popped it in its Achilles' heel, a rocket pod. It left flying, he said, but trailing smoke from the right stub wing.

Su-25s attacked nearby once more that afternoon. We also heard explosions of bombing in the heart of Paghman.

At dusk mujahideen arrived from Paghman with confirmation of Jalil's hit. Unfortunately, the gunship didn't crash, but it was forced to make an emergency landing at the garrison I had seen.

That night before turning in, I packed my camera gear. At first light I planned to climb to the top of the mountain above us. If the Su-25s were coming again I wanted to get them on film.

I was roused in the morning by a reveille of echoing rocket bursts hitting Paghman. Umayyon and Mohammed Jan had started a fire for tea. I didn't wait but explained to them where I was headed and started climbing.

I had just left the valley floor when the first jets showed up and attacked a nearby position. As quickly as they left, another group appeared and did the same. I continued climbing and soon reached the machine gun, manned again by Jalil and Alyos. The first jets had been too far away and they were eager for some to be within range. They invited me to join them, but I wanted to get to the top where I would have a view of Paghman. About 20 minutes later, just as I reached the crest of the ridge, the first helicopters of the day came. Six Mi-24s strafed and rocketed various places on the mountains close to Paghman — probably guerrilla camps like our own.

Nonstop for an hour the choppers turned and wheeled over the mountains, their rockets blasting up narrow columns of smoke and dust. Fortunately they left our corner alone and, when they were gone, the mountains fell silent again. I wondered if that was it for the day and got myself comfortable against a rock to wait and see. Two thousand feet below, I could follow the narrow valley, our route to Paghman. It twisted and descended to the southeast and opened onto the town about 2 miles away as the crow flies. I had a view of Paghman's northwest corner; the opposite valley wall hid the rest from sight.

It was 5 September and a typically perfect Afghan day of cloudless, rich blue skies and warm dry air. A "bluebird day" it's called back home in Minnesota. I leaned back under the morning sun and was soon dozing.

Reverberating explosions snapped me awake. My watch showed noon. Down at the northwest corner of Paghman billowed three broad clouds of dust and smoke. Some sort of heavy shells, but whether tank or field artillery I couldn't tell. Three more orange bursts flashed in the same area. I knew the section being hit very well, as I had passed through it each time I entered or left Paghman. Several potato farmers and their families were the only ones living there.

More shells hit, some up into the valley. I then heard the roar of jets and saw Su-25s dive-bombing a target near town. The helicopters had also returned, at least three groups of six this time. Some circled over the houses in Paghman, others over the surrounding slopes. It was obvious this was the big one; the Soviets had it in for Paghman today.

At about 1400 multiple rocket fire started again. The volleys were fearsome to see — 10 rockets bursting within a second in a 30-foot circle. Shells and rocket volleys were now hitting together and there was a continual rumble in the mountains. I heard the chilling "zwing" of incoming and hit the dirt as a shell burst 100 yards away. I soon saw why the Soviets were sending stuff my way.

Far below me, a long file of mujahideen wound up the valley from Paghman. The Soviets knew their overwhelming firepower had made Paghman too hot for the guerrillas to stay. Now they were pounding away at the escape routes. The exodus of freedom fighters swelled as the long afternoon wore on.

Since my abrupt awakening at noon, the skies over Paghman had never been without Soviet aircraft. Six gunships now wheeled low over the corner of town in my view, probably strafing mujahideen fleeing to the valley. The choppers flew through a sickening brown haze of smoke and dust that by now had completely usurped the blue sky.

The shelling, rocketing and bombing continued through the afternoon. Around 1600 I heard the first exchange of small-arms fire in Paghman. After softening the place up all day, the Soviets had probably now moved in ground troops. That and a few more close-hitting shells convinced me to pack it up and return to camp. I reached the Dashika and found Jalil and Alyos feverishly dismantling it. Jalil quickly explained that large numbers of tanks and troops were in Paghman and so Shomz Allah had given the order to pull up stakes. I couldn't fault his decision.

At the bottom I found the men milling around, packing a few last things. They had stripped the camp completely bare, down to the last matchstick. Left intact was the cabin, but they had even dismantled the stone foxholes. Whatever couldn't be taken was carefully buried under rocks. The idea was to make the camp look as unused as



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**HUNT**



possible, so if the Russians pushed up the valley and found it, they wouldn't lay booby traps or mark it down as a future Su-25 target.

Shomz Allah was directing the packing of three heavily loaded horses. He was relieved to see me. We would leave as soon as the Dashika was brought down, and so he was about to dispatch Mohammed Jan to look for me. He jovially slapped my back and made some joke about the day's events. But his good humor was forced this time. Paghman was his home and, for the first time since the war had started, he was forced to abandon it. That his decision was the right one made it no less difficult.

As darkness fell we began our trek up the valley and over the mountains. Two days later we reached a village where Shomz Allah's brother lived and took refuge in the mosque. Three times in the next month Shomz Allah received reports that the Soviets had left Paghman. Three times he tried to take his men back, only to be thwarted each time when the Soviets reasserted their presence.

October came and with it the need for me to return to Pakistan before my visa expired. Shomz Allah told me he was still determined to return to Paghman to attack the post, and with a smile said he was sorry I would miss it.

"And if the Soviets and their tanks stay in Paghman?" I asked.

"Then," he replied quietly, "I will have

to take my men to Pakistan for the winter."

He assigned Nur to guide me back. I bid a difficult farewell to the others.

A week before 4 July 1986 I received an unusual phone call at my apartment in Duluth. It was an Afghan doctor, now practicing in Pittsburgh, who said he had someone at his house who wanted to say hello. It was Gulam Sadiq, a friend of Shomz Allah's whom I had met several times in Paghman. Through an aid organization he had been brought temporarily to Pittsburgh for surgery on his wounds. He'd caught shrapnel when his house blew up during the 5 September attack. His wife and baby had been killed in the explosion.

For some reason I had given Shomz Allah my phone number and told him, "If you ever get to the U.S. . . .," knowing full well there was no possibility of ever hearing from him again. He had told Gulam Sadiq to call and say hello when he arrived in the States.

The doctor translated as I asked about Shomz Allah and the men. Gulam Sadiq reported that all were well. They had spent the winter in Pakistan but might now be in Paghman.

"Things are not the same there," he said. "After the Soviets' attack they built several new posts around Paghman. It is now very difficult and very dangerous for the mujahideen to be there."

A week later, we Americans patted

ourselves on our backs for the freedom we enjoy. Fireworks of every color burst over the Statue of Liberty. And at the same time, half a world away, flags of red fluttered over the village of Paghman. ✕

## CHINA'S SMGs

*Continued from page 37*

collar/socket to accept both the suppressor tube and barrel and a rear collar for the buttstock and trigger assembly, has been used for the receiver body. Slots for the ejection port, cocking handle and magazine-well are cut in the appropriate places.

A massive bolt has been employed to reduce the cyclic rate to a more sensible 800 rpm. A large-diameter, single-coil driving spring rides partially over a rear projection on the bolt in a manner reminiscent of the British Sten, eliminating the need for a guide rod. The spring-loaded retracting handle must be withdrawn from the bolt body before the bolt can be removed from the tubular receiver.

The stock is formed from a single oval-shaped steel tube riveted to the folding latch mechanism, and to which has been welded a simple sheet-metal buttplate. The stock folds to the right. Its latch mechanism is attached to the receiver's end cap, which is held in place by a single pin. The rear sling swivel is fitted to the end of this pin and also

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serves as a handle to grasp the pin during disassembly. The front sling swivel has been mounted halfway up the suppressor tube on the left side.

The trigger mechanism has been greatly simplified and now rests in a separate sub-assembly. Located on the left side of the sheet-metal trigger housing, the three-position selector lever provides for semi-automatic fire at the upper position (marked "1"). Rotating the lever to the center position (marked "2") places the weapon into the full-auto mode. The lowest, or "safe," position (marked "0") blocks all sear and trigger movement. This arrangement needs to be reversed, as the more natural sequence is to move downward from safe to semiautomatic and finally to full auto. A reddish brown phenolic pistol grip has been attached to the trigger housing at the proper grip-to-frame angle.

A stamped sheet-metal magazine-well with flapper-type catch/release is riveted to the receiver tube. The curved, 30-round, two-position-feed magazines resemble those of the Type 64 but cannot be interchanged.

The sound suppressor on the new Type 85 SMG has been altered extensively. Although the four-groove barrel with its right-hand twist remains 9.8 inches in length, it can now be removed from the receiver by the operator. The expansion chamber over the rear half of the Type 64's barrel has been eliminated, but the four spi-

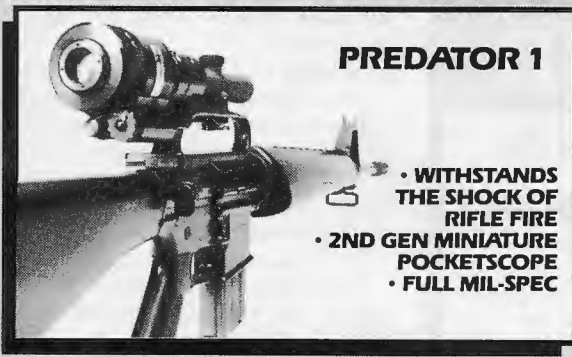
ral rows of nine ports each at the front end of the barrel remain. A ported collar has been attached to the barrel at midpoint. It serves as the front end of an expansion chamber formed by the suppressor tube and a non-ported collar at the chamber end of the barrel. This front barrel collar also prevents the barrel from sliding forward once the suppressor tube is locked in place. There are now only 11 dished baffles in the stack, still held together by two rods. A knurled surface surrounding the suppressor tube in back of the front sling swivel acts as a gripping point to unscrew the tube from the receiver. As before, both the exterior and interior surfaces of the barrel and the baffle stack have been hard-chrome plated. Both sights remain on the suppressor tube and are identical to those of the Type 64.

As a consequence of the new design, disassembly procedures have been further simplified. Withdraw the magazine, clear the weapon and move the bolt forward under control. Unscrew the suppressor tube's front cap and withdraw the baffle stack. Depress the spring-loaded locking stud on top of the receiver above the barrel socket and unscrew the suppressor tube. Pull it forward and away from the barrel. Pull the barrel away from the receiver body. Push the trigger housing's retaining pin from the right and remove it. Swing the trigger housing down and away from its front locking pin. Pull out the end cap's retaining pin and remove the stock group.

Withdraw the recoil spring from the receiver's rear opening. Draw the bolt to the rear and pull out the retracting handle and its spring. Tip up the front of the receiver tube and the bolt will slide out the rear. Nothing more is necessary. Reassemble in the reverse order.

There were no stoppages of any kind during SOF's 500-round test and evaluation of the Type 85 SMG. Because of its lower cyclic rate, experienced operators will have little difficulty firing consistent two- or three-shot bursts. Although the Type 85's buttstock looks insubstantial, it proved to be an adequate firing platform, and both the accuracy potential and hit probability paralleled the Type 64's performance. Bolt clatter remained the same, but the sound suppression appeared to be qualitatively superior. I cannot explain this, as the suppressor seems to have been redesigned with an eye toward increased simplicity rather than enhanced efficiency. Once more, during burst-fire sequences the suppressor tube overheated. I strongly recommend adoption of an asbestos cover.

Both these weapons indicate the PLA's awareness of the submachine gun's limited role on the battlefield, both currently and in the future. SMGs will continue to exist only with their barrels surrounded by baffles and cans. They will continue to find favor only with elite units trained for highly specialized operations. Stressing design simplicity, long life and operator maintainability, PRC's Type 85 SMG



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demonstrates sufficient ingenuity to warrant consideration by any group whose mission essential need statement includes low-signature devices. ✖

## DUSTOFF

*Continued from page 77*

Skilled medics onboard the chopper determined the nature and extent of patients' injuries. Through constant update on patient load at various facilities, they could literally deliver patients to the door of the facility which would be best able to treat them with a minimum of delay. The destination facility would be advised of the number and nature of wounds to expect. Updates on patients' conditions were radioed to the receiving hospital so triage and preparations could begin while the aircraft was inbound. Using this system, the patient was not always taken to the nearest facility, but to the facility where he would receive optimum care.

Medevacs were also used to transport patients to hospital ships when appropriate. Thus the unique capabilities of the helicopter surfaced to enable ships to be included in the list of potential destination facilities.

More than 320,000 casualties were evacuated by helicopter during Vietnam. As a testimonial to the effectiveness of this form of patient transport in wartime, it's estimated that between 80 and 85 percent of these casualties were returned to military duty in Vietnam or the United States following treatment and eventual discharge from the hospital.

Vietnam enabled us to fully realize the multi-role potential of the helicopter. While Korea let us experiment with using the helicopter at various tasks, Vietnam helped us to perfect the machines and the techniques. Dustoff was as permanent a part of the soldier's vocabulary as "jeep."

Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 1977. Corregidor Courts housing area lies between Simon's Army Air Field and Womack Army Hospital and the drop zones beyond. The residents of Corregidor Courts are greeted almost daily with the deep-throated "whump, whump, whump" of a Huey with red crosses painted on the sides and nose; flying nose down, all out, balls to the wall, heading for another part of post to transport a seriously injured soldier or civilian to Womack. A mass tactical jump by one of the 82nd's battalions has turned into a mass casualty exercise for the medics. A skydiver at one of Bragg's sport parachute clubs has malfunctioned in. A dependent child has been pulled, unconscious, from one of Bragg's many lakes. Two carloads of teenagers on Raeford Road decided to play "chicken" — and both lost.

Whatever the mission, whether active duty, dependents or strictly civilians were involved, Ft. Bragg's medevac unit was ready to respond. Through a program called MAST (Military Assistance to Safety and

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Traffic), a medevac unit could respond, at the request of civilian emergency personnel, to an emergency anywhere within the range of their Hueys. Patients were transported to a civilian or military hospital, wherever the appropriate level of care could be obtained. As civilian agencies and companies began to provide air ambulance service to a given geographical area, the MAST program responsible for that area was phased out. At those posts, medevac units responded primarily to requests originating from the military, for the military.

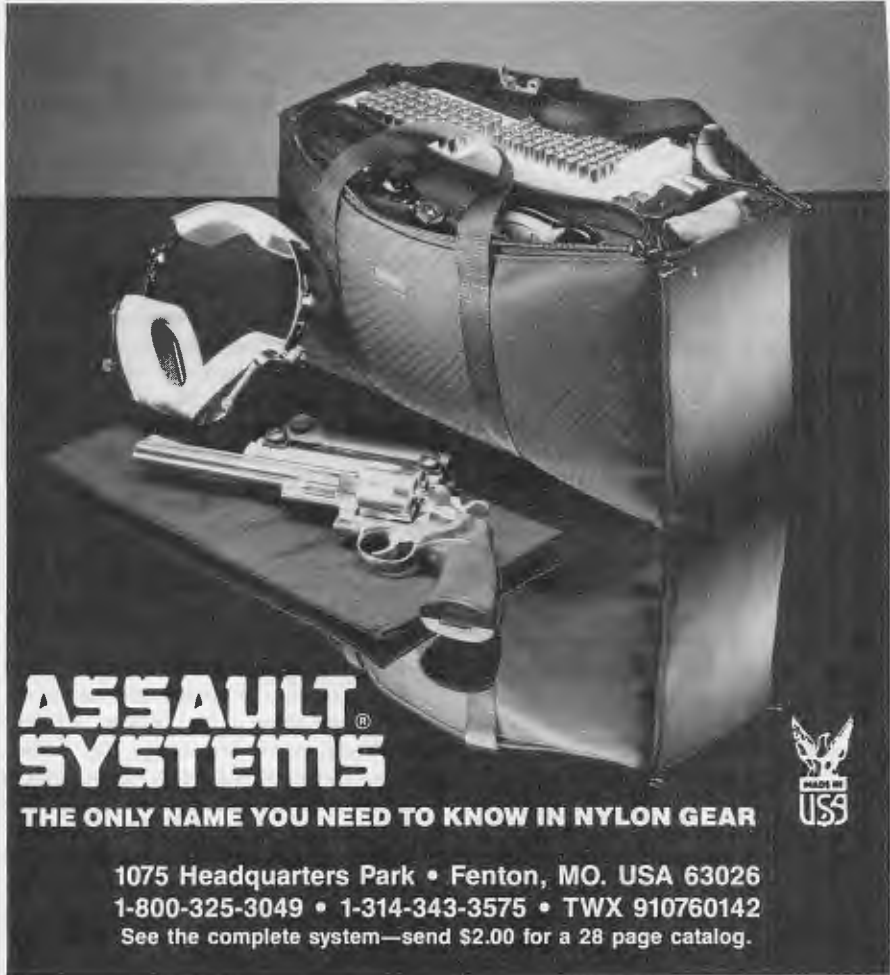
In April 1981 the first of a new breed of helicopter was delivered to the Army. Army design specifications called for a helicopter that could carry a three-man crew and 11 combat troops at 10,400 feet for 2.3 hours flight time on a hot (95 degree) day, after making a vertical ascent of 450 feet per minute. Sikorsky Aircraft met those specifications with the UH-60A Blackhawk.

The Blackhawk is a multi-role aircraft. Fitted with external pylons, it can carry extra fuel, in external tanks, for longer missions. A very wide range of ordnance can be mounted on the removable pylons. It can carry 8,000 pounds in a sling-load configuration. In addition to its three-man crew, it will carry 14 fully equipped combat troops — three above spec requirements. In a medevac configuration, the aircraft can carry up to four litter patients and 10 ambulatory patients. Designed to normally fly at 16,250 pounds gross weight, it can be flown, if necessary, at a gross weight of 20,250 pounds with little loss in performance. It cruises at 145 knots (about 167 mph) and has a maximum speed of 193 knots (222 mph).

Once an aircraft is shot down, it and its cargo are no longer useful to the mission. To this end, the Blackhawk was designed with survivability in mind. It has a reduced noise level, emits no visible smoke or flame, and has a reduced radar cross section. The crew seats are armor plated. It uses ballistic tolerant rotor systems made of titanium and fiberglass. Its fuel system is self-sealing, even to tracer fire. It has double control systems and triple electric and hydraulic systems. Though having twin turbine engines, it can fly safely on only one. Like larger, fixed-wing jet aircraft, the Blackhawk has a de-icing system and engine and auxiliary fire detection and extinguisher systems.

The airframe is more than 50 feet long, over 7½ feet wide and almost 17 feet high. Its main rotor cuts a 53⅓-foot diameter hole in the air. Its tail rotor is 11 feet in diameter. The most descriptive word for this aircraft and its design capabilities is "impressive."


The name Blackhawk comes not from an Indian tribe, or even an Indian chief, but an Indian warrior. *Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiah*, or "Black Sparrow Hawk" (Blackhawk), was a member of the Sauk tribe in what is now Illinois. He became a warrior at age 15 and is said to have led war parties against the Osage and Cherokee tribes shortly thereafter. He was highly respected



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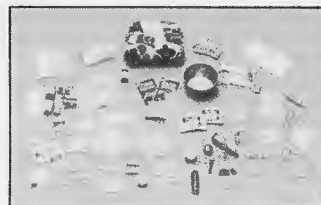


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by his tribe and was asked to sit on the council of chiefs. Asked who he was, that he should sit on these councils, he is said to have replied, "I will tell you who I am. I am a Sauk — my father was a Sauk. I am a warrior, and so was my father. Ask those young men who have followed me to battle and they will tell you who Blackhawk is!" Given the attitude of its namesake, there could be no more fitting name for an aircraft such as this.

Although the Huey will remain part of the Army's TO&E well into the 21st century (it will not be replaced one-for-one by the Blackhawk), its days are numbered. The Army has bought all the Hueys it had planned to purchase; the Blackhawk will now be bought until a helicopter superior to it is needed, designed and built. As everyone knows, most things sold to the military sound good on paper, but the true test of a system such as this is how it actually performs when the shooting's for real. Can it deliver men and equipment on a battlefield? Can it carry the wounded to safety?

In the pre-dawn hours of Tuesday, 25 October 1983, the test came. Several weeks earlier, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop of Grenada, along with much of his cabinet, was arrested and executed. This would ordinarily be of little concern to most Americans. Grenada is a small Caribbean island. Small Caribbean islands are frequently the site of attempted coups. Grenada was slight-

ly different. It is the location of the St. George's University School of Medicine, catering to Americans. As a consequence, approximately 1,200 Americans resided on the island.

Prior to the takeover, intelligence agencies had noted the build-up of Cubans on the island. It was later learned that Cuban troops, as well as their Soviet advisers, were behind the coup. On 21 October, a 10-ship convoy carrying some 1,900 U.S. Marines was diverted from its intended destination with orders to steam for Grenada. The airport had been closed and the Americans were unable to leave the country. Fearing that the Americans on Grenada would suffer the same fate as those who were in Iran when the Shah was deposed, President Reagan ordered the Marines, along with Army Rangers and airborne troops, to intercede on behalf of the students and their families. The rescue mission made use of nine UH-1 Hueys and 32 UH-60 Blackhawks.

Functioning in each of its roles, the Blackhawk performed as claimed and then some. During one phase of the operation, a Blackhawk received massive damage. Later 45 bullet holes were counted, including some in both the main and tail rotors and the fuel tank. The flight controls were completely shot away. With the pilot mortally wounded, the crippled chopper went on to complete its mission and subsequently crashed. Everyone onboard, other than the pilot, walked away. In the tradi-

tion of its namesake, Blackhawk had passed the true test.

There was a time when being wounded meant almost certain death, either from exsanguination or infection. That time has passed. Modern medicine and high-quality medics in the field have contrived to drastically reduce the number of wounds that result in a soldier's death. The helicopter has strengthened the one weak link in the chain of battlefield medicine — transportation of the wounded.

Vikings believed that at the end of a battle, beautiful maidens riding pure white steeds would swoop down upon the battlefield, select the warriors who had distinguished themselves and carry them to Valhalla. In more recent times, soldiers felt that if they had fought bravely and for a just cause, angels would sweep them off the field of battle to a place of honor in heaven. In a recent interview, an Afghan soldier related the same belief by his comrades and himself.

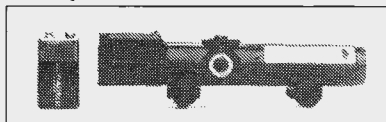
Today's warrior may lie bleeding on the field of battle and believe he hears the wings of approaching angels, but in reality it will be the beat of the dustoff's rotors. ✖

## SOLID SHIELD

Continued from page 73

Brief exchanges of fire between the now firmly entrenched landing force and the

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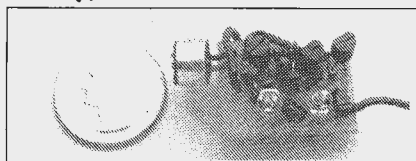
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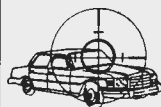
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aggressors could still be heard. So Lieutenants Jack and Taylor and myself, along with Bill Foley, a photographer from *Time Magazine*, decided to drive around and see what we could find. Climbing into a Hummer, we set out to find the division command post (CP). We didn't really know where it was, so we stopped from time to time and asked small groups of grunts for directions. That got us a different answer each time we asked.

After several hours of driving, we were no closer to finding the CP than when we started out. By nightfall we had visited several of the line companies from both sides, had nearly been run over by amtracs and twice had driven through ambushes as they were occurring (during which the driver had a tendency to hit the gas; probably not a bad instinct, but it didn't afford us much of an opportunity to observe the action). We were, in a word, lost. Our driver had a great deal of trouble finding much of anything, except accidentally, until we decided to head back to the base. Then he had no trouble determining the correct route and proceeded with great haste.

Sometime after 2200 we decided to secure for the day. It had been some 21 hours without sleep, most of it spent in either the LCU or riding around in some kind of truck. An 0630 departure the next morning left only eight and a half hours to return to the hotel, get cleaned up, have a tall scotch and soda, and sleep for a couple of hours before

departing for the airport.

I sort of felt bad about leaving while the grunts were still in the field. But then, I'd been there too, and whatever regrets I had vanished when I thought about a shower and some real food.

Besides, I knew that I could go to sleep secure in the knowledge that, despite whatever occurred during the course of Solid Shield, the exercise would be a success. They always are. The carefully written press releases from the Joint Information Bureau would proclaim it to be.

And all in all, I'd have to agree. Despite the complexity of the operation, the delays the weather seemed to cause and the presence of troublesome press, the mission was accomplished. Solid Shield '87, for all its warts, was a success. Even the grunts I talked with said they thought things had gone pretty well, and that's the telling point in any military exercise.

Reporters' opinions, of course, were another story, but who listens to them anyway? ✕

## SHOOTING IN SHADOWS

*Continued from page 82*

tributes the Trijicon line of self-luminous day/night rifle scopes that are ideal for pok-

ing through the shadows.

Most manufacturers of illuminated scopes etch a V-groove reticle on a thin piece of glass and then edge-light it. This is optically inefficient and usually requires a bright illumination color, such as green, which is too intense for all but the darkest night. Armonson's reticle is placed on a chrome mirror in a 45-degree prism and this permits use of a red tritium lamp inside the eyepiece housing, which is set at 90 degrees to the scope's optical axis. Red provides superior reticle imagery, without impairing vision, under a wider range of conditions, from subdued light to pitch black. It can be used in the Trijicon scopes only because there are no light-dissipating ground glass surfaces.

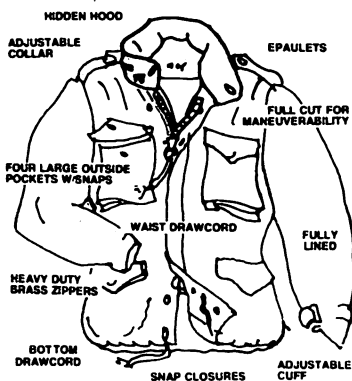
Trijicon self-luminous scopes were tested last year at Aberdeen Proving Ground in conjunction with the Advanced Combat Rifle program and are currently employed by numerous law enforcement agencies. We chose the fixed power 4x40mm Trijicon, which retails for \$199, for SOF's test and evaluation. The reticle pattern on this scope (which shows up black in the daylight) and the other fixed power (6x56mm) consists of a single horizontal line interrupted by a center dot. Reticle patterns on the three variable-power Trijicon scopes (1.5x-5x32mm, 2x-7x40mm and 3x-9x56mm) consist of a thick horizontal bar interrupted by fine center crosshairs. Compact versions for assault rifles and sub-

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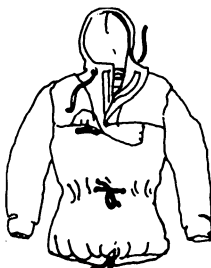
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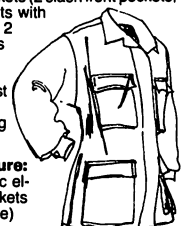
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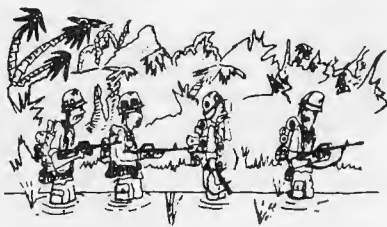
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machine guns will be available soon, as well as a new model featuring multiple colors (green, red and amber).

So equipped, it was off to the desert to punch some paper. As no acoustic measuring devices were available, our assessment of the Ciener sound suppressor is no more than qualitative. Nevertheless, this "can" is quiet and makes no more sound at the muzzle than your Daisy Red Ryder BB gun. Since we fired only standard-velocity ammunition, there was no downrange "crack," and when targeted against rocks or water, the sound of the impact, normally completely masked, was every bit as loud as an unsuppressed .22's muzzle blast.

With 96 ports, we still lost only 150 fps of velocity (10 feet from the muzzle), as our average was about 1,000 fps with Eley Match, Eley Tenex and Remington 22 Target ammunition.

Although the standard deviation dropped when all three lots of ammunition were fired through the suppressed M77/22, the group size increased when compared to our control rifle, a Savage/Anschütz Model 54 Sporter with a 23-inch barrel. At 50 yards, Eley match ammunition will shoot consistent .6-inch groups, off the bench, through either the Savage/Anschütz Model 54 or an unaltered Ruger M77/22. Our best five-shot group through the suppressed M77/22 measured 1.3 inches. Why?

No cartridge is more sensitive to inclusions in the bore or improper crowning than the .22 rimfire with its tiny 40-grain lead projectile. Although I must confess to nit-picking, as the accuracy of Ciener's rifle is more than adequate for the intended purpose, there were numerous burrs in the bore around some of the port holes.

Is there a solution? Unfortunately, electro discharge machining (EDM), as exemplified by the Mag-na-port process, would be far too expensive. However, while drills will often push metal forward to cause burrs such as these in the bore, four-fluted high-speed carbide end mills, when driven at speeds up to 7,000 rpm by a high-speed spindle on the Bridgeport milling machine, will cut without pushing metal forward.

Our Trijicon scope performed as expected: superbly. Target acquisition with the center dot and two sidebars is extremely rapid, and yet the reticle pattern remains more than adequate for precision shooting. Both target and reticle imagery under subdued light are outstanding. If there was ever an all-purpose scope, this is it, and its sporting, police and military applications are without equal.

In summary, Ruger's classic M77/22 fitted with Jonathan Ciener's economical sound suppressor and topped with the excellent Trijicon scope forms an intriguing introduction into the world of quiet shooting in the shadows. ✕

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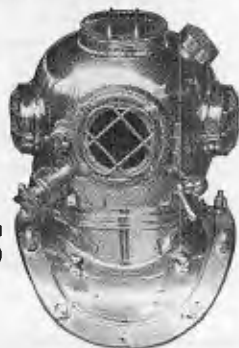


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## EMERALD TRIANGLE

Continued from page 57

have been found with razor blades embedded in them, thus discouraging anyone from grabbing them off of a plant. Even deadfall-type spike traps and punji traps have been found. (These have brought the most suspicion upon Vietnam vets.)

Frank Packwood, USFS officer working the area, remembers one patch so full of high explosives that, had it detonated, it would have killed everyone in the patch. Many of the HE devices found have been wired with batteries, electric blasting caps and trip wires of almost invisible fishing line filament.

Every conceivable kind and caliber of weapon has been encountered and confiscated. "We started out armed with only our pistols and a few AR-15, .223-caliber semi-automatic rifles," explains another USFS/CAMP officer working in Trinity County of the Triangle, "but after the stuff we began to confiscate, and getting machine gunned a few times, we changed that."

The USFS still has the AR-15s in its inventory, but now also has full-auto CAR-15s and 12-gauge semiauto shotguns in addition to its .357 Magnum revolvers (mostly Smith & Wesson). CAMP also reportedly has M60 machine guns for the choppers (no comment from CAMP) and M79 grenade launchers if needed in serious situations (again, no comment from CAMP officials).

"One thing's for sure today," said one CAMP officer I talked with, "if they [growers] want to get into a firefight, they are going to find themselves on the business end of one hell of a lot of firepower and ordinance."

He continued, "Whereas in years past we went after the pot more than the growers, that has all changed to the opposite . . . a lot of good men out here doing a difficult, dangerous job for too little pay are getting damn fed up with these people."

"We want to put these people behind bars, and if the courts and judges will do their part [many have been criticized for too-lenient sentences for pot growers], we'll clean these people and their drugs out of here so that the woods are safe for people to enjoy again."

"Hell," he went on, "this easy big-time money has corrupted the morality of people up here so bad that you've got legitimate new 4x4-truck dealerships complaining that we should 'lay off' the growers and quit wasting money!"

"That's how it's like Vietnam — we barely have the support of a lot of the people up here. When one pot plant [one pound of processed buds] can bring in \$3,000, it gets to people's judgment."

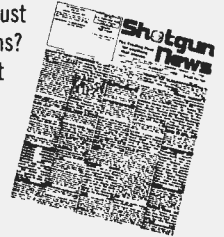
Indicative of some of the anti-CAMP, pro-grower attitudes present in the Triangle is a local radio station located in Redway, Humboldt County. Much to the ire of CAMP and local law enforcement working with CAMP, this station has made a practice

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in past years of alerting growers to impending CAMP activity, sites where choppers are seen flying and so forth, as a "service to the growers." The station also supports a citizens' watchdog group representing growers' interests under the guise of reporting civil rights violations by CAMP, and carries reports of such violations (such as choppers frightening children) over the air in daily broadcasts.

An unofficial survey of over a hundred locals in the Triangle by this author indicates, however, that most people — over 80 percent — want the growing stopped, not because they object to marijuana as much as to the violence and perhaps small percentage of growers who resort to booby traps and shooting at anyone who wanders too close to their patches. They say they don't mind the drone of aircraft and choppers, squads of CAR-15-toting men in cammies jumping out to grab growers and often roaring up through the woods on three-wheel ATVs and dirt bikes — if it will get these undesirable growers out of the Triangle.

The profile of the growers seems to break down into three distinct categories. First, and the most troublesome, are the professionals who grow big crops (hundreds or thousands of plants), booby trap them and defend them with weapons — the ones who confront and terrorize hikers, hunters and vacationers. Second, you have the more gentle old hippie types, many of whom moved to the woods more for the natural lifestyle and perhaps to escape the fading, deteriorated '60s- and '70s-generation enclaves like Berkeley, Boulder and Madison, and who generally grow only enough to smoke and subsidize their work or welfare checks. Last, you have the older, retired folk — ex-loggers or even miners out of work from an almost vanished industry — all of whom know better but see the easy bucks and perhaps are shown the ropes and encouraged by younger, more serious growers who offer them cash on the spot for their bud-laden plants at harvest.

From my own personal knowledge, I would feel safe in saying that over half of the population found in rural areas of the Emerald Triangle is growing pot to one extent or another, and that is being conservative.

There are a lot of Vietnam veterans living in the backwoods of the Triangle. Most have simply sought out and found this part of California because of its otherwise peaceful and natural secluded beauty. Argue if you will whether many are involved in growing pot. I strongly believe not.

Nonetheless, it can be a mind-boggling flashback to Vietnam for those of us who witness this pot war. Besides the obvious similarities — choppers, cammies on almost everyone, weapons everywhere you look and booby traps in the bush — the terrain, vegetation and climate add even more realism to old memories. Much of the year, mist and clouds hang motionless among the mountain peaks and valleys, very reminiscent of northern I Corps in Vietnam. The temperature can climb into

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the hundreds in the valleys, and California has its own versions of "wait-a-minute vines," mosquitoes, snakes and impenetrable tangled brush and thorns. The armed-camp mentality that permeates this area during "season" does not help one to relax, either.

Any outsider to the area will find the grocery and hardware stores in the Triangle stocked full of weird and alien gadgets and devices they have probably never seen before. The pot industry has turned sleepy, barely surviving establishments into thriving warehouses carrying plastic hose in 500- and 1,000-foot rolls; miles of 1/4-inch tubing; the entire world and spectrum of PVC pipe and fittings; timers to turn water off and on; mixer-proportioners to mix soluble high-tech pot fertilizers with water and distribute them to plants; all manner and fashion of grow-bags, pots and buckets; emitters and drippers; water-pressure control valves; ceiling-high stacks of fertilizers that are specially designed for pot; soil pH-control solutions; termite killer; deer repellent; and on and on and on. It's all part of a multimillion-dollar industry that exists and thrives because of the pot industry. It would take another long article to catalog and explain the literally thousands of products that have been developed and are sold to feed the hunger of the growers. Law enforcement would like to do something about all these made-for-pot-growing products but, just as paraphernalia for using drugs is legal in most cases, so are all the materials the growers use. And besides, the whole marijuana industry pumps so much money into the economies of the Triangle villages and cities, there is little local support to ban such products.

If one looks at the pot war from the perspective of the growers, it is a real chamber of horrors. Many growers have started crops only to abandon them because of extreme paranoia and nervousness. And growing marijuana is hard work, if it is done properly, using state-of-the-art materials and tending the plants so as to get a yield of both quality and quantity.

Growers face the possibility of a bust every day, from the first day their tiny plants sprout to the time they have harvested and sold it eight months later. From about late August to late October, the harvest season, they also face the daily possibility of countless rip-off artists, "pot pirates" who flood into the area from all over hell to grab the quick and sometimes easy money a stolen crop will bring them.

More recently there has blossomed yet another worry for the growers, one which most of them are not even aware of: the existence of organized, professional "pot mercs." I personally know of three different such groups, and they differ greatly from the hodgepodge of rip-off pirates who often prey on a fellow grower's crop with a hasty five-minute hack with machetes in the night.

The pot mercenaries, on the other hand, use the same equipment and skills that

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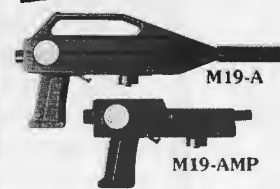
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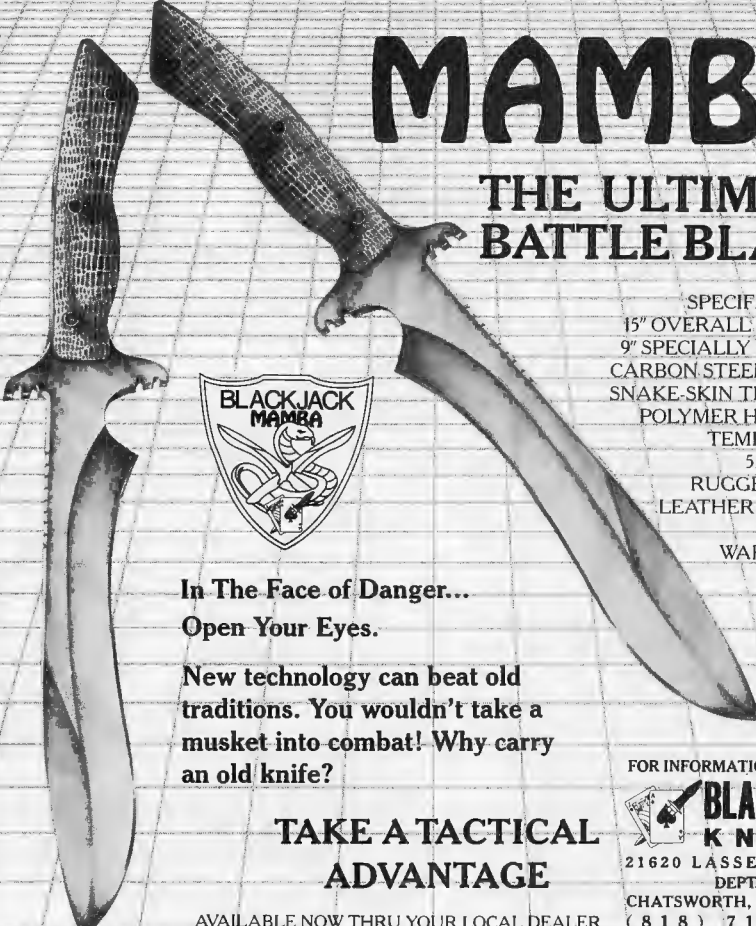
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CAMP does. They are mostly Vietnam veterans (who are veterans of *another* bush war) and they use the same techniques to take down a pot patch as they did to eliminate a VC camp in Vietnam. Reconnaissance patrols to locate and check for booby traps are mounted first, then a detailed and well-coordinated plan is formulated, rehearsed and finally carried out. These people are better armed than CAMP or most growers, and they will blow your ass away.

Motivation for such pot mercs is usually the seizure of the crop and/or cash on hand from a buyer, thus most of them operate at or after harvest. However, one such team of pot mercs that I personally know of does its thing more out of dislike of pot growers than anything else. This particular team consists of eight Vietnam veterans, with a sprinkling of ex-Force Recon Marines, Green Berets and Navy SEALs among them. They are all Vietnam combat veterans and they all have jobs and businesses scattered across the country. They come together to take down pot growers — under the guise of being deer hunters — in the Emerald Triangle each harvest time. I talked with two of them recently. "Jack" is a 23-year veteran of the Marine Corps, much of that time spent in Force Recon and Division Recon, including three tours in Vietnam. He has his own private investigation business in another state.

"I don't like the bastards," he told me (meaning the pot growers). "They live off welfare, screw up the forests for everyone and most of them are either leftists or out-right commies!"

"They've hurt some people," he continued, "and CAMP hasn't got a chance in hell of stopping them because, as soon as it busts them, the courts spank their hands and they're back growing again in a week."

Jack said they "took down" a large patch last year (2,000-plus plants) that had about six growers guarding it and was booby trapped with crude pipe bombs.

"We moved to within about 30 yards of them on two sides, pitched eight stun grenades and emptied 300 rounds of tracer from eight CAR-15s on full auto," Jack said. "You should've seen those assholes run!"

"We didn't hit any of them, but we started two or three small fires with the tracer ammo, put them out and then started going through a small cabin nearby where they were living," said "Tripwire," another of the pot mercs of this team.

"In the cabin was a suitcase with \$62,000 cash in it, with airline tags from airports in Boston, New York and San Francisco. We hit them while one of their buyers was there," Jack went on.

"We also confiscated about 40 pounds of manicured pot buds that were not yet dry," he said, "and the rest of the pot we cut down and left for CAMP, who we called later."

"And just to show you what kind of fuckers these growers are," Tripwire told me, "they had a goddamn VC flag on the wall and some old posters announcing an anti-

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imperialist 'U.S. Aggressors, Get Out of Central America' rally in Berkeley, California, a year earlier."

"When I saw that shit, I wished we'd have wasted the SOBs," Jack snarled.

I asked them if they had ever found any more evidence that growers fall into the leftist/commie-sympathizer bag.

"Yeah," Jack answered. "We were up in Oregon two years ago and took down a patch that had a certificate from Cuba that was for service in the Venceremos Brigade [the group of U.S. students and others who went to harvest sugarcane for Castro in the late '60s and '70s].

"Man, this Emerald Triangle is one big can of worms," Tripwire said. "And it's a shame that CAMP won't utilize people like us to help get rid of these scumbags . . . we've approached CAMP and the DEA before, and they won't even talk about it . . . fine, we'll take care of business ourselves."

This group of pot mercs calls itself "MSG" (after Maritime Studies Group, a SOG-related activity that worked out of Da Nang during the Vietnam War, and one in which several of the pot mercs served). They told me they will be back "deer hunting" in the Triangle again this year.

"At least now, if we can recon and locate some patches on private land, we can openly apply for reward money (any confiscated cash or properties) from CAMP and just turn them in," Jack said, "but it's a hell of a lot more fun to just take them down and, in a couple of cases, a lot more profitable."

In fact, it is true that now anyone who turns in a pot crop is eligible for a portion of cash or money from sale of any property confiscated as a result. This author was unable to locate any persons who have received such reward money, mainly because it is done anonymously for the protection of the informant. CAMP has indicated, however, that it has been done in a few cases already.

In one local case, a man who had a jewelry business in Eureka, California, hired two other men to grow pot on some mountain land he had in the Triangle. The crop was busted by CAMP, the two men talked and the Eureka man lost not only his land in the mountains where the pot was grown, but also his jewelry business. Rumor has it that someone collected quite a bundle for the tip-off.

So, the growers now have to worry about one hell of a lot of things going bad for them — CAMP and the USFS with bush patrols and helicopters, rip-off artists of endless variety, real deer hunters and fishermen, hikers and vacationers, and pot mercs equipped with automatic weapons, state-of-the-art communications gear, grenades, night-vision scopes and the skill of tours of combat in Vietnam.

And despite the official CAMP attitude that frowns upon pot mercs, a lot of things go on in the Emerald Triangle that are ignored implicitly by the authorities. And what can a grower do after being confronted and robbed? Call in a report to the police?

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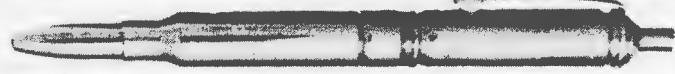


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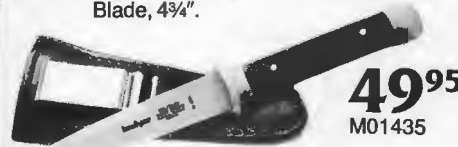


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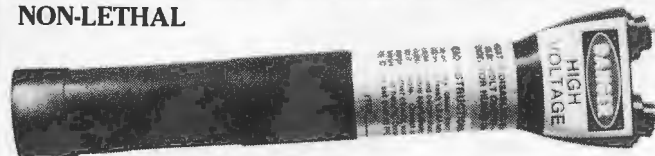
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No way, although it *has* happened before, usually resulting in the arrest of the ripped-off grower, with the robbers long gone and not being pursued very hard by the authorities, either.

Also noticed by the pot mercs I talked with are increasing numbers of FBI "Wanted" posters in local post offices for — are you ready, Vietnam vets? — Vietnamese criminals and Cubans suspected of being in this area, perhaps to join the ranks of pot growers. This area of tangled brush and deep forested mountains has long been a haven of sorts for outlaws and rugged individualists, too, but the pot war here now has overloaded it with the former.

Meanwhile, at this very moment literally millions of dark green, wide-leafed marijuana plants are thriving in their hidden lairs, slowly producing the potent purple cannabis buds, sticky with resin, infamous for the instant devastation to the psyche from one hit when smoked, which in the Emerald Triangle is referred to as "The Kind." Soon it will again become the #1 cash crop of California, as it was last year, and be on its way to the lungs of America's youth. Along with it grows the attendant violence, fear and death that are evident in northern California — a direct result of the marijuana crops.

It is not a pretty picture. And for all those misguided yahoos out there who are thinking about growing marijuana to get rich quick — my advice to you is to think again if you're considering northern California's Emerald Triangle. ☒



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Campaign Against Marijuana Planting  
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**COMBAT  
WEAPONCRAFT**

*Continued from page 24*

plex mathematical formula or detailed instructions on how to measure cracks in ballistic gelatin and what those cracks really mean. What we have instead is the ratio of one-shot stops by handgun rounds used against people.

How does the .45 ACP fare in the real world? Is it the ultimate manstopper? Does it really stop fights 19 times out of 20 with one shot? Do they all

really fall to hardball?

Actually, hardball doesn't do that badly, producing one-shot stops approximately 65 percent of the time (based on 35 incidents) when employed against human targets. The obvious problem is that, the other 35 percent of the time, people shot with hardball go on to commit various antisocial acts. Before .45 fans get too angry or depressed, they should realize that our very best fight stopper (Winchester .41 Magnum Silvertip) only does it 80 percent of the time (based on five incidents) with one shot.

While real world results are substantially below RSP predictions, they are also substantially higher than RII forecasts. Frankly, I think the whole RII scale ought to be thrown in the trash. As a full-time homicide investigator I attended autopsies on a regular basis and I never saw any evidence of the hydrostatic shock (shock created by the movement of fluids in the body) that high velocity handgun rounds are supposed to produce. Even more significant is the fact that I interviewed a number of shooting survivors who had taken rounds that the RII scale considers "death rays" in the chest cavity without suffering any degree of incapacitation.

While the very best .45 ACP hollow-point load (Winchester Silvertip) raises the success ratio only slightly above hardball, I carry STs in my .45s. Why? Because in actual shootings, hardball has a tendency to overpenetrate on torso shots.

Again, we need to understand that the key is bullet placement. No handgun, regardless of caliber, is a decisive fight stopper. We carry them because other options are either unavailable or illogical. Remember, intelligent men and women do not take handguns to a gunfight with any degree of enthusiasm.

When it comes to selecting a handgun for defensive purposes, we should choose a weapon that meets the following criteria: reliability, accuracy, comfort, concealability, moderate recoil, and chambered for a cartridge that offers reasonable stopping power. The .45 auto loaded with hardball, of course, meets this description. As a full-time Special Weapons and Tactics trainer, I carry a high capacity 9mm pistol. If, however, they took it away and gave me a .45 I would go about my duties with the same sense of confidence. ✕

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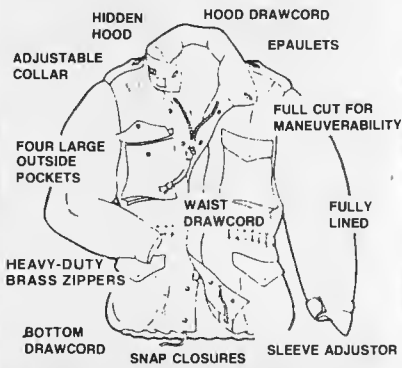


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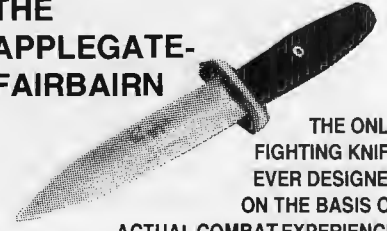
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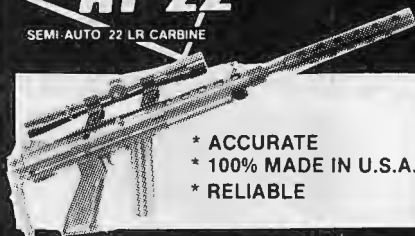
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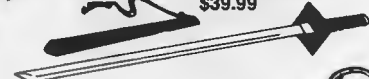
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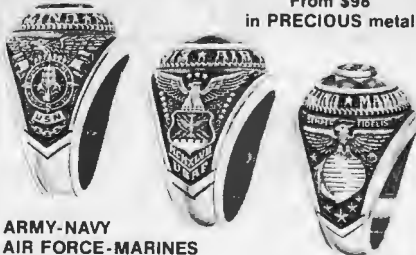
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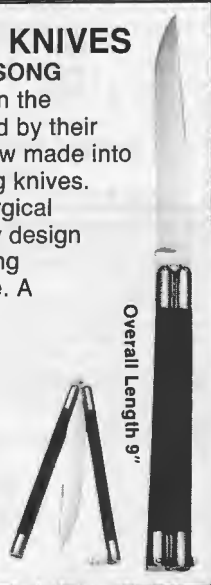
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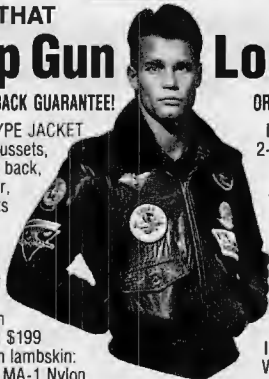
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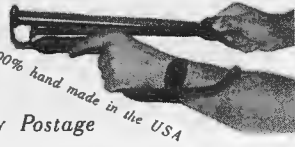
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## BATS OUT OF HELL

Continued from page 81

was opined that this smaller number would be easier to observe than was the case when 1,000 or more bats were dropped.

The bats were launched from the Marine aircraft as planned. Fifteen of them reportedly spun into the California desert without so much as waving a wing. The weight of the new incendiary device was too great to be supported by the delicate wing structure of the bats.

Five of the bats simply flew away and were never seen again. One dropped his fire bomb in the desert and winged onward, while three of the rodents managed to fly for a minute or so. Then, seemingly exhausted, they joined the 14 that had crashed into the desert sand. Only one bat was able to glide to earth in the manner sought by the scientists.

Building their entire campaign around the single bat that had made it to the ground without mishap, the Marines and their scientific partners began preparing for further experiments. New fire bombs in two sizes were attached in accordance with the physical size of the bat. The larger model was capable of burning for about six minutes, while the smaller would blaze for about four. By this time, several million dollars had been spent on the project.

The new devices would be attached to the loose skin on the chest of the bat, using a surgical clip and a piece of ordinary grocery market string. The theory was that, after landing in an enemy building, the bat would chew through the string, then fly away, leaving the incendiary behind.

But before the Marines could try this new device, an unforeseen problem reared its head — sex! When female bats become pregnant, the males refuse to eat, simply moping about with disinterest. As pregnancy in bats is seasonal, rather than emotional, this meant that their use as flying vehicles for the fire bombs was limited to five months per year.

Accepting this new knowledge, full-scale tests were planned for August 1944. A report bringing the plan up to date was sent to the Chief of Naval Operations.

However, in March 1944, after being told that the bat project couldn't possibly be ready to launch against the Japanese home islands in less than 15 months, the Navy canceled Operation X-Ray "solely on the basis of military considerations."

Slightly more than a year later, those who had been involved in Operation X-Ray came to realize that another group of scientists had been working on a much broader project at another base in New Mexico — White Sands. This also had to do with a fire bomb, one that involved the problem of splitting the atom — and ended the war. ✕

## PAN AM GAMES

Continued from page 63

nist country, the heavies invariably come along. Their job? To provide security for their people, for one. But on a more insidious basis — as any defector will tell you — they come to prevent defections to the United States. And they come to spy.

Someone brought up the point a few unseasoned reporters would no doubt query: What intelligence value could *Indianapolis* offer Havana or Managua? Another staffer with a long intel background summed it up.

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"It all adds up," he continued. "Ten or 20 agents report back; their information is analyzed, processed and transformed into an intelligence picture."

He jammed his cigarette out in an ashtray. "Next time an agent comes through, he or she has a good working knowledge about what to expect. Kind of like seeing the test before the exam."

Ideas for "getting the word out" bounced around like ping-pong balls. How about radio spots? We could rent a billboard . . . take out a full-page newspaper ad . . . skydive over the stadium and dump leaflets. . . .

Leaflets. That's the answer. English on one side, Spanish on the other. Pass 'em out at the Games. That'll get the message across.

With the concept finalized, the office became bedlam. Who would we send back East? Could we print the leaflets in time and get them out there? How would we distribute once on-station?

By Saturday, 8 August, the answers had sorted themselves out. A staffer with connects in Indianapolis organized a distribution team. The leaflets themselves were rush-printed and sent overnight express. Brown's scheduled trip to Central America went off as planned; he didn't even miss his flight.

And that brings us back to the question of whether or not we accomplished our mission. Undeniably, yes. Word of our \$25,000 offer spread like wildfire. Even the Cuban delegation to the Games lodged an official protest.

Did anyone defect? We won't know that for some time. Uncle Sam — and certainly the Cubans — would be closemouthed about a defector for as long as it suits them. But if someone did defect, we'll pay. Twenty-five thousand dollars can go a long way toward lining that hazardous road to freedom. ✕

— SOF Staff

## BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 6

### CHUTZPAH

Guts-of-the-Month award goes to Los Angeles KNBC-TV consumer reporter David Horowitz. During a live newscast on 19 August, a man holding a pistol walked up behind Horowitz, stuck the weapon in his back and demanded he read a statement on the air. While those around him sat stupified, Horowitz kept his cool, calmly asked the man's name, put on his glasses and proceeded to read the message. Station chiefs yanked the broadcast off the air, and it turns out the uninvited walk-on was armed with only a pellet pistol. Regardless, we applaud Horowitz's gallantry under the gun. No doubt the anti-gun lobby will be after your Daisy air rifle next.

### SAVIMBI STRIKES . . .

Angolan rebels with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) report that they killed 108 government soldiers and four Cubans in the course of thrashing the Marxist government's 95th Army Brigade last spring.

UNITA units then launched a major counteroffensive of their own in northeastern Angola at the beginning of June, with 67 individual attacks taking place in the first week alone. High point seems to have come on 4 July, when UNITA forces ambushed a 300-vehicle convoy and destroyed 23 vehicles, including two T-55s.

Cuban morale in Angola is said to be so bad that Jose Eduardo dos Santos, head of the Angolan communist government, is reportedly pleading with Kim Il Sung to replace the Cuban troops in Angola with North Koreans.

Today there are at least five Marxist governments that are trying to put down major anti-communist insurrections: Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Nicaragua.

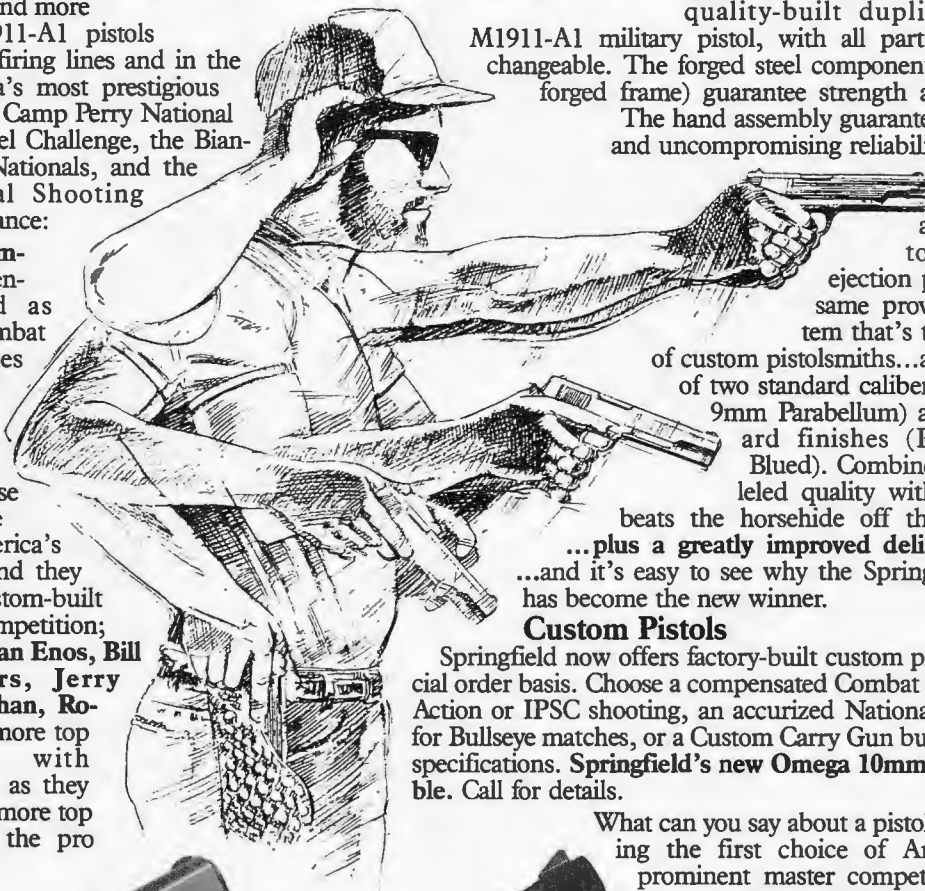
Funny how that fact hardly ever gets mentioned by the "let's be pals with the Reds" crowd. ✕

# SPRINGFIELD 1911-A1 WINNERS' CHOICE

Professional competitors and gun builders, whose livelihoods depend on reliable performance, choose their equipment carefully. That's why more and more Springfield Armory 1911-A1 pistols are showing up on the firing lines and in the final results of America's most prestigious shooting events, like the Camp Perry National Championships, the Steel Challenge, the Bianchi Cup, the USPSA Nationals, and the Masters International Shooting Championship. For instance:

**Two time world champion Rob Leatham**, generally acknowledged as America's reigning combat "Top Gun", competes with a Springfield pistol;

**Master pistolsmiths J. Michael Plaxco and Richard Heinie** both use Springfield pistols as the basis for some of America's finest custom pistols, and they both shoot their own custom-built Springfield pistols in competition; **Master competitors Brian Enos, Bill and Christie Rogers, Jerry Barnhart, Scott Carnahan, Roberta Geer**, and many more top shooters compete with Springfield pistols, too, as they continue to capture still more top honors and prizes on the pro shooting circuit;



**MSGT Thomas Wood**, a top U.S. Army bullseye shooter both uses and endorses the Springfield 1911-A1.

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