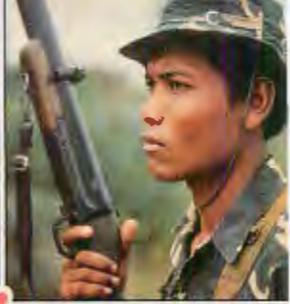


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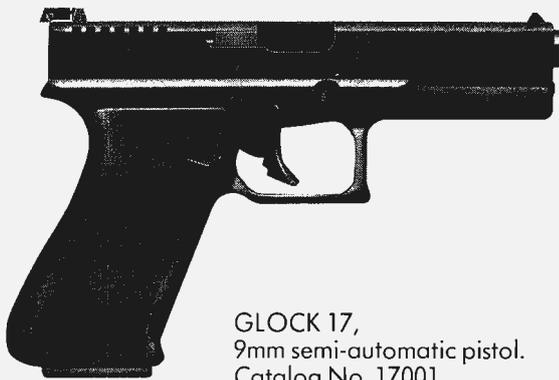
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COVER: Members of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division fly the colors after completion of operations on Grenada. Though the 82nd is the Army's only division-sized front-line airborne unit, they didn't jump into Grenada but were airlanded instead. Is "hitting the silk" a thing of the past? SOF presents two very different viewpoints, beginning on page 30. Photo: Jim Graves

COVER INSET: SOF correspondents Peter Douglas and Robert Karniol recently humped the bush with ANS, KPRLF and Khmer Rouge patrols in Cambodia. Follow them through two ambushes, a running firefight and some equally hazardous meals. Pick up the action starting on page 48. Photo: Peter Douglas

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown



Reagan's Place in History

In December 1987 Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev signed the INF treaty, which calls for elimination of intermediate-range missiles in Europe. Despite the euphoria over the treaty, there remains the question of what are we going to do when the Soviets violate the treaty.

The question is properly one of when, not if. History has demonstrated that convincingly. The Soviets are currently violating the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. Their noncompliance extends beyond the arms arena, as they daily violate the Helsinki Accords and the U.N. Covenant on Human Rights. For the Soviets to do other than violate the INF treaty would be a drastic change in character, something that, despite the theatrical gestures of *glasnost*, they've never done.

Proponents of arms control find it difficult to provide examples of countries whose security has been enhanced by entering into disarmament agreements with their enemies. In the nearly 20 years of our own arms control process, we have yet to produce a treaty that the Soviets haven't violated with impunity. We continue to enter into agreements which enhance the Soviets' strengths and negate our ability to deter their aggressions. The treaties often place us at a disadvantage, and what's worse is that that disadvantage is multiplied by Soviet noncompliance.

Senator Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., and others have suggested that steps be taken requiring future presidents to respond with some-

thing more than strongly worded complaints when the Soviets violate treaties. He has also suggested that perhaps the Soviets ought to comply with their other treaty obligations before this one goes into effect. The administration is not very enthused about Mr. Wallop's ideas. But this is the same administration that in a 1986 report to Congress said, "compliance with past arms-control commitments is an essential prerequisite for future arms-control agreements." What happened? Is it possible that some other, more important objective was established? Something such as public relations or the president's place in history? The answer, sadly enough, would seem to be yes.

It's obvious now that the object of the exercise isn't the enhancement of our security but rather a display designed for domestic political consumption. It would be easy enough for Mr. Reagan to demonstrate that this is not the case. He could adopt the recommendations of Mr. Wallop. The odds of that happening are as remote as the odds of the West developing the will to challenge the Soviets when they violate the treaty.

This treaty has succeeded as a public relations exercise and will in all likelihood provide Mr. Reagan with his much-coveted place in history. However, it is not the place Nancy has in mind. When scholars make lists of great statesmen, the politicians who attended the Munich Conference in 1938 and proclaimed "peace in our time" are not on the list. Another name that will not make the list is Ronald Reagan. ✕

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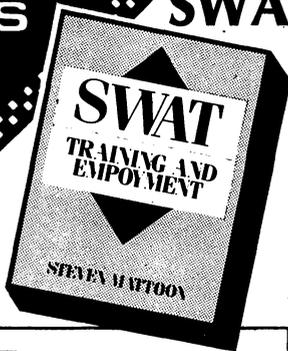
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SWAT TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

by Steven Mattoon



The gunman has hostages and is in control. But, your SWAT team is the best in the land, right? Able to handle any task without error? The SWAT teams of the law-enforcement community were born from the need to protect the citizens from domestic terrorism. When the U.S. Army wanted to get into the action in 1974, it formed the Special Operations Units. Steven Mattoon, involved with the army's program since its inception, had discovered that most civilian and military tactical units need to improve their tactical and technical skills. Every SWAT team should have a clean record. With this manual, any unit can perfect its mission to serve and protect. From personnel selection and construction of training facilities to methods of forced entry, concealment, multistory-building operations, communications, hostage rescue, leadership and much more, this manual has it all. 8½ x 11, softcover, 74 illus., 152 pp. **\$14.00**

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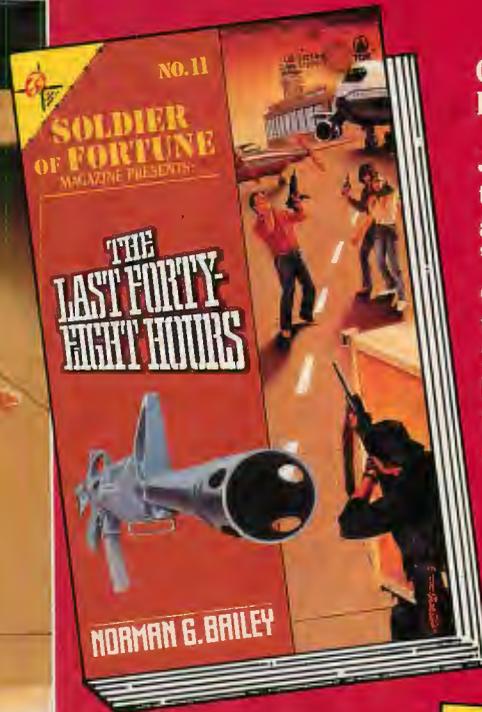
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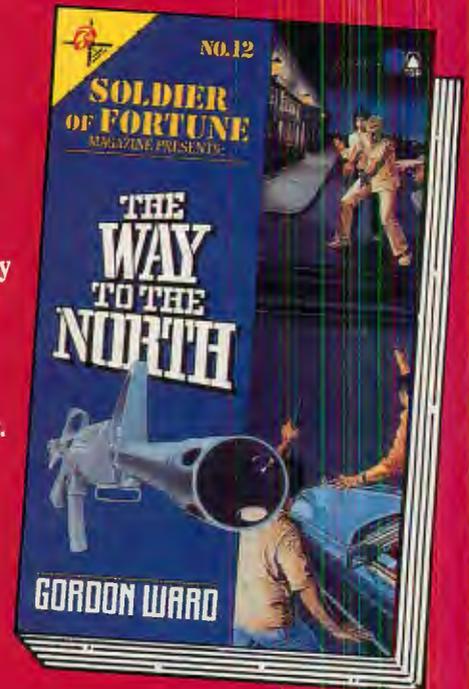
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WHICH CANDIDATES SUPPORT FREEDOM FIGHTERS?...

Sirs:

I've been listening to the news lately and a question has been raised in my mind that I feel you may be able to answer. Most of the major presidential candidates have been sidestepping an issue that I feel is important. This issue is whether they will continue aid to soldiers fighting communist insurgents. Recent administrations have vacillated between supporting these courageous individuals and leaving them to the iron fist of communism. I want to know which candidate professes that he will not cave in to the bleeding-heart liberals when they apply pressure to stop the aid.

In my opinion your magazine is one of the few magazines that will cover a controversial issue such as this. This is a quality associated with your magazine which I value greatly.

Chuck Flynn

On the Republican side, George Bush and Bob Dole have both consistently supported anti-communist freedom fighters. On the Democratic side, the freedom fighters have few, if any, friends. None of the Democrats have taken a public position in favor of freedom fighters and some, in particular Jesse Jackson, have actively supported communist regimes.



FLAK



SOF OF SUBSCRIBERS ON FBI LIST?...

Sirs:

I have been informed that anyone having a subscription to SOF is put on some type of FBI list. If so, isn't this against our constitutional rights? Or do they just want to know who to call on for professional help?

David Winterfeld
South Sioux City, Nebraska

We don't know how the rumor got started that the FBI is interested in SOF's list of subscribers, but it is not true. Probably the best proof of that is the Justice Department's reply to Rep. Pat Schroeder back in 1979 when "Peppermint Patty" (called that by Washington wits for her pro-Soviet/leftist positions) demanded to know if-SOF had ever been investigated. The answer was no. The only way the FBI could legally obtain the subscribers' list would be with a court order, and one has never been requested.

BOYCOTT STATES THAT BAN GUNS...

Sirs:

I read with anger about the Jimmy Carter appointee who's now the pathetic governor of Idaho and the fascist gun grabbers in New Jersey [see Command Guidance, SOF, December '87 and January '88]. These peoples' philosophy is more in line with the little man with the black mustache than the constitution of the United States.

However, there's a simple method of dealing with these folks — hit them where it hurts, in the pocketbook. Avoid spending money in these states; boycott mail-order businesses located in them; don't take vacations, trips, hunt or fish there. Even avoid passing through them and paying their fuel tax. Don't put silver in their poisoned coffers!

Brian P. Dumas
Easton, Connecticut

FOR A GOOD TIME CALL ON LUCY'S...

Sirs:

I finally got a chance to visit Bangkok and while I was there I made it a point to check out Lucy's Tiger Den. At first I didn't know what to expect, but after downing a couple beers and talking to Tiger, I decided to hang out. That night I got treated to dinner, talked to people I'd only read about in books and learned more about the Vietnam War in one night than I've ever known.

Tiger tells me he's closing up and moving to Manila. Even though I've only been to Lucy's a couple times since, I feel sad. The only thing left to say is "Hear, hear..." to the best time in Bangkok — Lucy's Tiger Den.

Tim Walker
U.S. Navy

As we reported in last month's Bulletin Board, Lucy's Tiger Den is indeed closing up shop and moving to Manila. It will be missed. We'll keep you posted as soon as we know its new location.

MORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIES...

Sirs:

Your response to Mr. Fierstine in the September '87 FLAK was most inadequate. While Rep. Dellums, D-Calif., is one of the ones who thinks Gorby is great, he is not the oldest in Congress.

The oldest by age are Rep. George Crockett, D-Mich., and Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio. Both of these men's association with communist causes go back to the mid-1940s.

Metzenbaum's association includes membership in many Communist Party activities such as the Ohio School of Social Science, a communist training school.

Crockett's record in defense of communist causes is probably unequalled in the present Congress.

I know the list is lengthy of members of Congress who think

Gorby is great, but try to do a better job than just naming two next time.
Irving W. Newton
Denver, Colorado

We're well aware of the past activities and proclivities of Crockett and Metzenbaum, as well as half a dozen others. Unfortunately, space constraints limit the amount of detail we can provide in our FLAK responses, so we picked Pat Schroeder and Ron Dellums as "perhaps the two most notorious" so we could list specific reasons why we consider them suspect.

THANKS, SOF READERS...

Sirs:

As you're all well aware, General Singlaub and the United States Council for World Freedom (USCWF) have had a very difficult year. We faced lawsuits designed to stop us and a two-year IRS audit caused by 27 liberal congressmen, and we spent a lot of time and money answering questions during the Iran/Contra hearings.

It has often felt pretty lonely here, and many days our struggle to keep the doors open seemed hopeless. But the November and December '87 issues of SOF again proved to be the ray of sunshine and hope we needed to stay in this battle.

Because you ran the full-page ad for us those two months, there is a new awareness of the problems General Singlaub and the USCWF have been facing. The generosity of your readers both in terms of dollars and moral support has made a loud statement to us.

We thank you and your readers for their kind words and the checks they have sent. We could have no better friends and are very proud to be associated with SOF.

Joyce E. Downey
Executive Director, USCWF

SOF readers who want to contribute to Maj. Gen. Singlaub's defense fund should mail checks to: The Friends of General Singlaub, 220 7th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003.



SOF ON SPETSNAZ...

Sirs:

After reading "Spetsnaz Invades America" [SOF, January '88], I find you've done it again. Here's a story no other publication would dare touch for fear of disturbing U.S.-Soviet relations. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the truth of our relationship with the Soviets. To think that our government has known about these Spetsnaz for so long and told the American people nothing of their activities; it's appalling. One wonders what our elected officials in Washington are thinking. When I see how they vote down aid to anti-communist operations everywhere in the world, it becomes more clear to me — they must support communist expansion.

Well, perhaps SOF's Spetsnaz story will wake up our people in Washington, and action will be taken to deal with this insidious Soviet threat on our shores. Thanks for the great eye-opening story, and I eagerly look forward to further intel updates.

Allison Caldwell
Pembroke, New Hampshire

In "Spetsnaz Invades America," I was shocked to learn that these Soviet commandos are operating within our borders. What the hell is going on here? Where are the FBI, CIA and our military counterespionage forces?

If the government can't stop these assassins, what can an ordinary citizen do to stop these bastards? This situation is absolutely unbelievable.

Jim Ball
Cockeysville, Maryland

One of our readers shot in a newspaper clip worth sharing in light of our Spetsnaz article. It seems the Canadian Rangers, a 1,350-man force that patrols Canada's 3,200-mile arctic border from the Yukon to Newfoundland, have discovered caches of ammunition, food, medical supplies, etc. of Soviet origin in their area of operations.

BROWNING'S REMEMBERED...

Sirs:

I found Harry Clafin's article on the Browning water- and air-cooled machine guns ["Blast From the Past," SOF, January '88] very interesting, having been associated with both as a platoon sergeant.

The water-cooled Browning's tripod in the photos is the old pre-WWII one, with the large elevating hand dial. At the time, there was no traversing dial. Traversing was done by slightly loosening the traverse clamp and taping the gun's receiver with the fist. The newer tripod with cradle had both an elevating and traversing hand dial.

The water-cooled .30 was faulted because of its weight, mainly the heavy tripod (51 pounds). I assure you that a good machine-gun crew can take the water-cooled anyplace that a rifle can be taken, in any type of terrain, and not slow anyone up.

Joseph H. Miller

LETTERS

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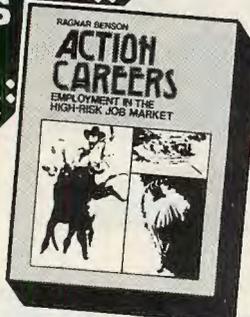
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by Ragnar Benson

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THE HIGH COST OF WAR...

Peter Douglas, who wrote "Cambodian Killing Ground" in the July '87 SOF and "A Tale of Two Ambushes" in this issue, just found out how expensive and frustrating covering a war in the Middle East can be for an infidel.

In Baghdad, Iraq, on assignment with a TV crew, Douglas learned that, while the official line was that they would have access to the fighting around Basara, in fact they were tightly controlled by local officials. Such sophisticated items as barbed wire, sandbagged bunkers and trenches were defined as military secrets and therefore unphotographable. Hotel phones were tapped, of course, and even in Baghdad the crew was openly shadowed everywhere by a coterie of intel types.

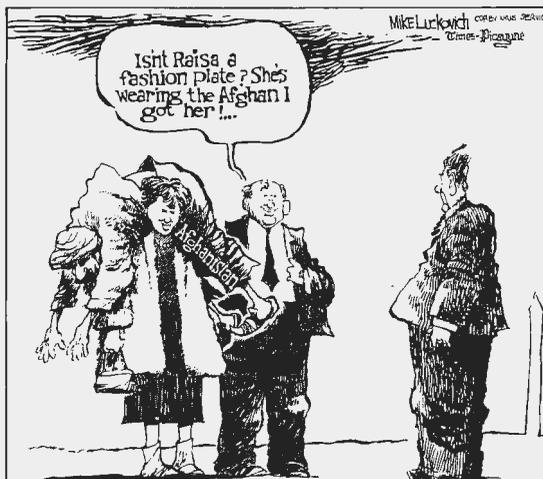
Douglas confirmed the rumored high cost of covering the Iran-Iraq war. "The trick is," he said, "that they do not allow you to bring *dinars*, the Iraqi currency, into the country. In Baghdad the exchange rate is set at \$3 to the *dinar*, but you can buy buckets of *dinars* for a dollar in the West." At the official rate, rental of a car and driver for one day worked out to \$300.

POLICE TOUR TO CHINA...

SOF readers who are police officers might want to check in with Mick Doyle, a freelance writer frequently published in SOF, whose International Police Travel, Ltd. (1259 Simcoe Street South, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada L1H 4M1) is putting together an 11-day tour to the Republic of China, 16 to 26 April 1988.

Officers will be hosted by the ROC National Police for SWAT demonstrations, range visits, review of the Police Academy, Highway Patrol demonstrations, formal banquets, etc. The cost (including air) for the 11-day trip is \$1,995. Time and vacancies are real short, so send your \$250 deposit by courier. For further information call (416) 434-2329.

BULLETIN BOARD



PHANTOMS TO JUMP IN GUATEMALA...

We know all you old (and young) airborne types are just chomping at the d-ring to fling yourselves out of perfectly good aircraft, hang in midair with only a bit of silk between you and oblivion, then feet-butt-head yourselves back to Mother Earth. Come on, admit it: Jumping gets into your blood (SOF staffers screech "Airborne!" every time something with wings flies over the office).

Well, here's your chance to jump again without going TDY to the 82nd Airborne. The Phantom Division is offering a Spring Friendship Jump with the Guatemalan *Paracaidistas* (airborne, for you gringos) from 2-6 May 1988. Your \$995 (\$950 for PD members) fee gets you round-trip airfare from New Orleans to Guatemala, three nights at a first-class hotel and two nights billeting at the airborne base, in-country transportation, most meals, refresher training, equipment, two static-line blasts (plus one free-fall for qualified skydivers), and Guatemalan jump wings, tab and certificate upon completion of training. Needless to say, there might also be a quiet party or two.

This jump is limited to the first 100 participants, so it's stand-in-the-door time: A preregistration fee of \$200 will slot you on the manifest. For more information, contact the Phantom Division, c/o Phantom Jump '88, PO Box 22595, Memphis, TN 38122, or call (901) 853-7146.

ONE AFGHAN WHO LIKES BOULDER...

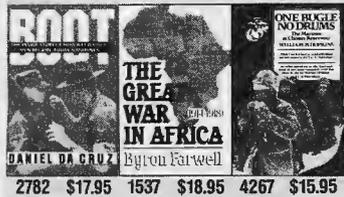
During a recent visit to the Denver area sponsored by the Committee for a Free Afghanistan, Brigadier General Rahmatullah Safi of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, one of the seven major Afghan resistance groups, learned that nearby Boulder, Colorado, had been matched with Dushanbe, Tadjhikistan, USSR in the leftist "Sister Cities" project. Safi, shall we say, was not amused. Dushanbe, you see, is *the* major staging area for Soviet operations directed against Afghanistan. Soviet tactical aircraft fly missions out of Dushanbe against mujahideen troops and civilian villages in northern Afghanistan.

During a CFA dinner event in Denver, Safi was asked if he hated Boulder. "No," he said, "because not all people in Boulder are bad people. The first walkie-talkies in Afghanistan came from Boulder. The first American to cover the war came from Boulder. The first American medical supplies to reach Afghanistan came from Boulder. The first mine detectors to reach Afghanistan came from Boulder. These and many other things we desperately needed have come from Bob Brown of *Soldier of Fortune*, so I'm really grateful to Boulder."

Shortly after returning to Afghanistan, Safi was commanding the northwest front of a multi-party, 10,000-



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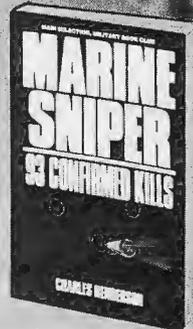
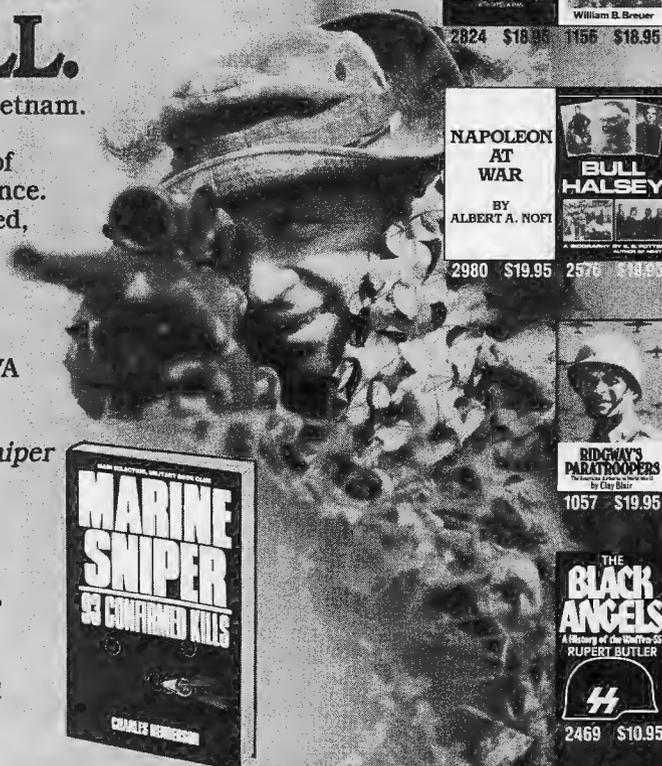
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ONE MAN. ONE SHOT. ONE KILL.

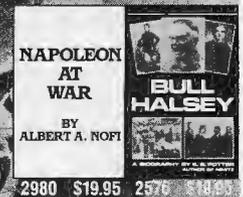
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fighter operation in Afghanistan's Kunar Province. Safi's forces cut the Jalalabad-Chaghaserai highway on 11 November, destroying two tanks and several vehicles, and had the Soviet post at Shahazi under siege.

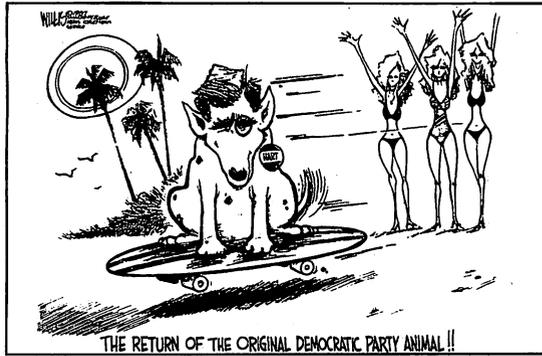
PUT YOUR OLD FATIGUES TO WORK...

We understand that OD rip-stop jungle fatigues are being phased out of active military, Reserve and National Guard units, and will soon become non-regulation items of dress. Well, that regulation doesn't apply to the Nicaraguan freedom fighters striving to liberate their country from the Soviet-dominated Sandinista government.

Our El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund is on the lookout for serviceable OD jungle fatigues — in small and medium sizes — that we can forward down south. Nicaraguan freedom fighters can also use combat and jungle boots, boot socks, fatigue/utility hats, caps and covers, web gear, compasses and canteens.

Donors of more than \$100 estimated value receive a certificate making them Honorary Commandos; \$500 and we'll make you an Honorary Colonel.

Your non-tax-deductible donations (no firearms, ammunition or explosives) should be sent to El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, c/o SOF Warehouse, 5735 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80303.



AFGHAN FUNDS FOR CLINIC...

In July 1987, at the direction of SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, our Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund (AFFF) donated \$1,000 to the Portland, Oregon-based American Aid for Afghans, the purpose being to help fund a clinic in Peshawar, Pakistan, which assists wives, children and other family members of Afghan freedom fighters. We've subsequently received numerous thank-you letters, reports and photographs stemming from this transaction, and we're happy to have played our small part in making life a bit easier for those on freedom's front lines.

The basic mission of SOF's AFFF is to help and support the Afghan resistance in areas that are either not otherwise funded or where a short-fuse requirement will not permit trafficking through "normal" bureaucratic channels. Since this sometimes includes the acquisition of items such as tactical radios and metal detectors, your donation is — unfortunately — not tax-deductible in Uncle Sam's eyes. Help us keep this vital effort moving by sending donations made payable to Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, PO Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

NRA'S ILA ORGANIZING BERNIE GOETZ CAMPAIGN...

The NRA's Institute for Legislative Action (PO Box 1730, Washington, DC 20077-4621) has opened a fund drive to secure a pardon for Bernie Goetz on the basis that "Every day Bernie Goetz spends in jail is a travesty to the Bill of Rights and common law principles of self-defense that have been accepted for centuries." ILA is providing preaddressed cards to New York Governor Mario Cuomo seeking a pardon for Goetz.

HONOR ROLL...

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund contributors:
Jack E. Jenkins, Conservative Caucus of Lower Delaware, Roger Elwell, C.W. DeSpain & Associates, Donald A. Giles.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund contributors:
Roger Elwell — in memory of Dan Turi Jr.; Loren K. Roberts; Donald A. Giles; in memory of John Stevens.
Refugee Relief International, Inc. contributors:
Charles & Nobuko DeSpain.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to these people and the numerous other donors who requested their names not be printed.

BROWN RUNNING FOR NRA DIRECTORS SLOT...

It is one thing to be interested and involved in affairs around the world — Afghanistan, Nicaragua, the Middle and Far East — but you must still pay attention and be involved in issues on the home front. Therefore the time has come to re-elect Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown to the National Rifle Association Board of Directors.

Brown's current term expires at the 1988 Annual Meeting of Members, set for 23 April 1988 in Orlando, Florida. All NRA members will receive ballots in the February issue of the official journal, either *American Rifleman* or *American Hunter*, whichever the member has chosen to receive.

Brown has been fighting Second Amendment battles both outside and within the ranks of the NRA for many years, and he is now taking a leading role in the fight to regain and maintain the public's right of access to public lands. You'll be hearing more about this issue in the future.

Only NRA life members or annual members with five or more years of continuous membership are eligible to vote. The ballot, properly executed, must be returned by the date indicated on the ballot.

A FEW GOOD CAUSES...

John Poindexter Defense Fund, c/o Adm. Mark Hill, Dept. SOF, 1322 Merry Ridge Road, McLean, VA 22101.

Oliver North Legal Assistance Fund, Dept. SOF, PO Box 50096, Washington, DC 20004.

Nicaraguan Resistance Fund, Dept. SOF, 2623 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008.

Donations of money and non-lethal military equipment can also be sent to our own El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund and our Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, c/o SOF, PO Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306; or call us at (303) 449-3750 for more information. ✕

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IT'S no great revelation that there are different types of blade edges and that some types are better suited for specific jobs than others. For example, the very fine, keen edge that shaves hair off your face isn't the best for hacking your way through a sapling or tough piece of plastic composite webbing. Conversely, you don't shave hair off your face with an ax.

It may, however, come as a surprise to some that there are different types of sharpness. Simply stated, field duty and barbershop duty don't necessarily require different kinds of edges, but they do require different types of sharpness.

Examine a sharpened weapon or tool edge under a microscope and you'll be surprised at what you see. You'll notice that the smooth, keen edge on a barber's razor actually looks like a miniature saw, as the edge is a row of small, fine teeth. The finer the teeth, the better the razor shaves hair from your face. Such an edge is necessary for shaving hair and will also cut flesh, but because the teeth are so fine, they are extremely delicate. One good whack on a piece of wood or a single pass through nylon cargo webbing will bend and distort these teeth to the point where they'll no longer function. And because they are so fine, they will wear off and break much more quickly than coarser teeth.

You may have noticed that some knives will shave hair from your arm but won't shave hair from your face. This is a classic example of needing different types of edges to make different cuts. Beard hair is of a different texture than arm or leg hair. An edge that is keen enough to raise hair from the extremities is often not fine enough to shave facial hair.

A good, sharp carbon steel blade that's been sharpened on an Arkansas stone or on a medium-grit synthetic ceramic stone will have teeth that are larger and coarser than those found on a razor. If you look at an edge that has been sharpened on an India stone, the microscope will show teeth that are coarser still, and a carborundum stone will yield teeth that are so large that you probably will not believe what you're seeing. If you use a mill bastard file to sharpen a machete, you can actually see the teeth with the naked eye.

So we have different-sized teeth, but how do we use them?

Basically, the finer teeth are used for shaving and accurate cutting, such as surgery. A surgeon needs a precise, smooth cut and is not concerned with edge holding. When the fine edge on his scalpel dulls, the surgeon simply asks for a new one. Fine teeth give fine cuts but have a short life span and do not hold up to severe use. Coarser teeth last longer



BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

Sharpness Is All



An edge is an edge is an edge...? Not necessarily. The razor-sharp blade used by a barber is *not* what you want on a multipurpose battle blade. Photo: Tom Slizewski

because they are bigger and stronger and have the added benefit of being quicker and easier to apply.

If you've been around men who are long-time machete users or folks in rural areas who use a hoe and shovel a great deal, you'll find that they prefer a file to sharpen these tools. A machete does a lot of hacking and chopping and the rough, quick edge given by a file serves adequately and lasts. Axes and hatchets are another area where the use of a file is a preferred means of sharpening.

A choice of an edge, then, is largely dictated by the type of cutting you do. Finer cutting jobs require an edge with finer teeth, and heavy cutting chores are best served by an edge with heavy, coarse teeth. Nylon webbing is not particularly difficult to cut, but polypropylene rope can be the very devil to get through. A rougher edge definitely

works better on polypropylene and, if this type of rope is what you cut most often, you need to think about a specialized — serrated — edge.

There are a number of knives on the market with serrated edges. In some areas this edge gives superior cutting performance, but in my opinion it has somewhat limited application. I don't favor its use on an all-purpose knife because a serrated edge will not perform three common and important cutting functions that a knife is likely to be used for.

For starters, you can't whittle a stick or board with a serrated edge. You can't scrape a surface smooth with one, nor can you shave hair. All these jobs are important functions of a knife. The serrated edge also poses a unique set of sharpening problems, since conventional sharpening stones and files won't work on this type of edge. While the serrated edge is absolute dynamite for some cutting applications, I prefer a conventional edge on my knife.

When you select an edge and sharpening method for your own use,

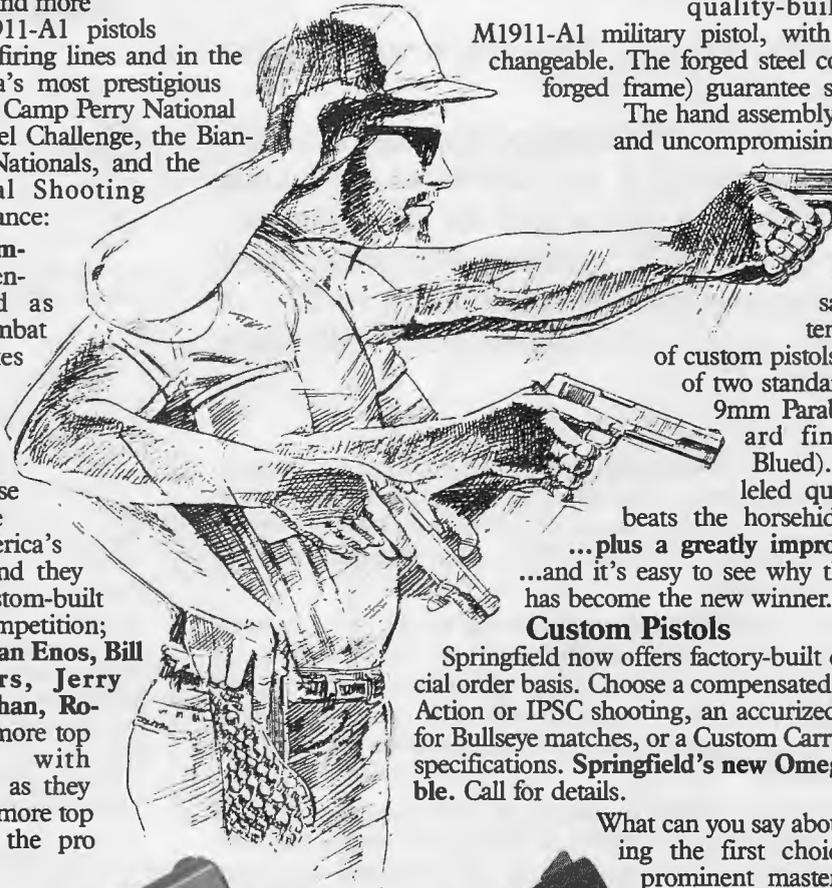
Continued on page 79

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.

Springfield 1911-A1 pistols are exact, quality-built duplicates of the M1911-A1 military pistol, with all parts 100% interchangeable. The forged steel components (including a forged frame) guarantee strength and durability.

The hand assembly guarantees a perfect fit and uncompromising reliability. Springfield pistols even come standard with a factory lowered ejection port...with the same proven safety system that's the first choice of custom pistolsmiths...and in a choice

of two standard calibers (.45 ACP or 9mm Parabellum) and two standard finishes (Parkerized or Blued). Combine that unparalleled quality with a price that

beats the horsehide off the competition...plus a greatly improved delivery schedule...and it's easy to see why the Springfield 1911-A1 has become the new winner.

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Springfield now offers factory-built custom pistols on a special order basis. Choose a compensated Combat or Pin Gun for Action or IPSC shooting, an accurized National Match Pistol for Bullseye matches, or a Custom Carry Gun built to your own specifications. Springfield's new Omega 10mm is also available. Call for details.

What can you say about a pistol that's becoming the first choice of America's most prominent master competitors and custom pistolsmiths? You could say: "It's a winner!"

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But the fun, fast game pace, comradery, largest prize money ever (\$75,000 CASH), unique fields and weapons designs, PX, new dining and sleeping facilities, members health spa, uniformed and armed Wolf's Lair personnel and more surprises are making this America's fastest growing game and sport attracting over 5,000 people a week.

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I WAS THERE

by James Joachim

Technicolor Yawn

ONE of my more memorable tours of duty during my 24 years in the Navy was aboard the naval transport ship USNS *Upshur* (TAP 198). I spent 13 months on the *Upshur* and have more "sea stories" to tell from that duty station than from the rest of my service combined.

The *Upshur*, a Navy troop transport under the Military Sealift Command, was being used in 1971 to transport Korean troops to and from Vietnam. A civilian crew manned the *Upshur*, but 15 U.S. sailors were aboard to act as liaisons with the Koreans.

We were homeported in Pusan, Korea, but every few months we sailed across the Tsushima Strait for some rest and relaxation in Sasebo, Japan. Though Sasebo was a liberty port, this did not preclude us from having our first and, for reasons that will soon become clear, our last dress inspection there.

Thirteen enlisted men were lined up waiting for the commanding officer and executive officer to inspect. I was standing in the center of the file next to our yeoman, Joe.

The night before the inspection Joe had tried, unsuccessfully, to relieve Sasebo of all its beer and sake. Standing at attention, Joe whispered to me that he felt sick and wanted to sneak out. Since his uniform looked like the laundry truck had tipped over on the way to the ship, I figured he was just looking for an excuse to get out of this inspection. But because he'd be in more trouble if he left, I advised him to stay.

Our lieutenant XO was formality and military procedure all the way, inspecting each one of us closely. Finally he stood in front of Joe. They stared at each other for a moment, then Joe chose to relieve himself of last night's beer and sake, along with eight tacos he'd had at a local Japanese-Mexican restaurant.

Fortunately the XO was 6' 5" and took the full force of the tacos and beer

Continued on page 75



Take a camera tour of hell.

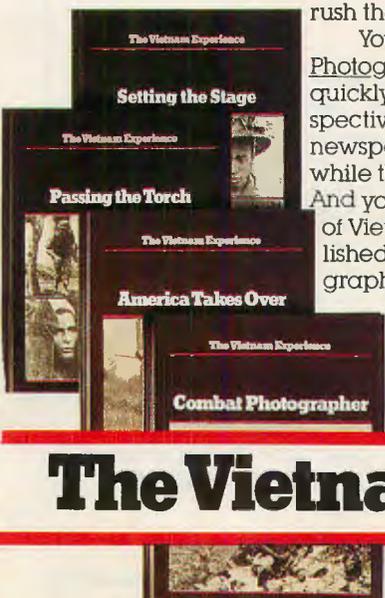
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SOF staffers and correspondents never head out to the field without an array of cameras, lenses and photographic doodads. Humping this equipment through the desert, jungle or even on and off a never-ending series of commercial planes is rough on the equipment as well as the person. That's why we're glad to see the Lowe Pro Photo Trekker, a camera bag and backpack all in one.

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ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



by Tom Slizewski



STEINER BINOCULARS

Steiner binoculars aren't news. Steiner Optik, based in Bayreuth, West Germany, has been producing great binoculars for over 40 years. What is news is Steiner's victory in a hard-fought battle with other German, as well as Asian, manufacturers for the U.S. Army's binocular contract (no binoculars are currently being produced in the United States in commercial quantities).

The U.S. Army has ordered 72,000 Steiner M-22s, and these same binoculars, minus the classified

laser filter, are available for civilian purchase. The civilian version of M-22 is designated 7x50G Military/Marine. They feature tough slip-proof rubber armor, super bright multi-coated lenses and are water- and shock-fought-proof. A built-in illuminated compass and rangefinder are available on some models. Suggested retail is \$499.

Contact Steiner in care of Pioneer Marketing and Research, Inc., Dept. SOF, 216 Haddon Ave., Westmont, NJ 08108; phone toll-free (800) 257-7742.

SEMPER FI

Quick, who was the first woman Marine in Vietnam? How many articles in the uniform code of military justice? Who owned Tun Tavern in 1775? If you couldn't rattle these answers off at the cyclic rate of an M16, you're going to find Semper Fi, a game from Big Ben Games, quite a challenge. I've seen long-time USMC vets stumped by some of these questions.

Big Ben Games spared little expense in producing Semper Fi, which comes with a full color mounted map, 150 color-coded



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Playing and mastering Semper Fi could prove valuable to anyone planning on attending camp in Lejeune anytime soon. Long-time vets should also enjoy it. You can likely guess the manufacturers' slogan — they're "looking for a few good players." It's worth the \$24.95 asking price. Contact Big Ben Games, Dept. SOF, 86 Essex Street, Haverhill, MA 01830; phone (617) 521-1377. ✉

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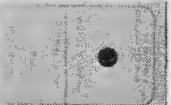
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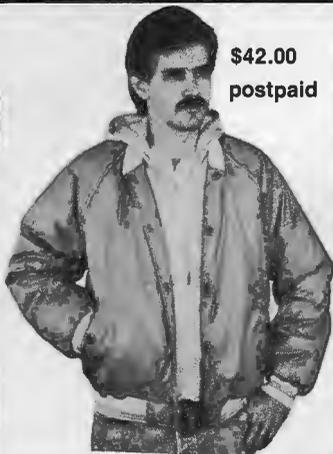
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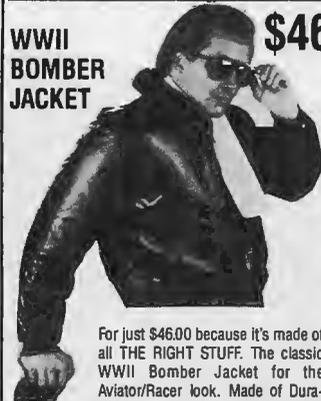
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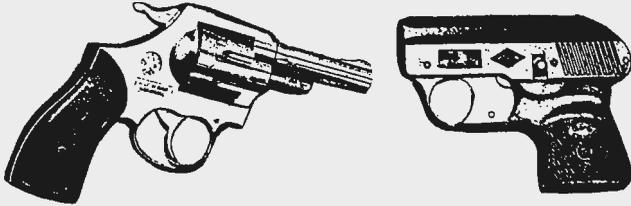
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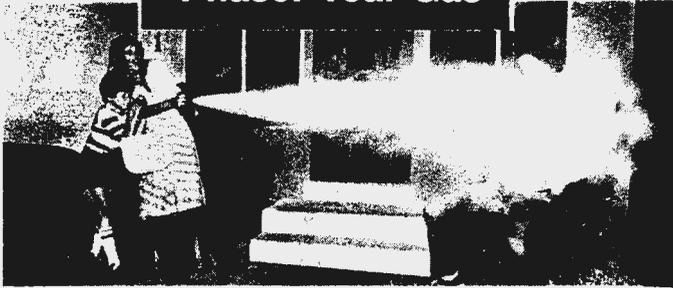
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Knuckles



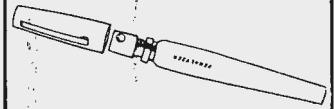
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NO matter how much advanced training, technical support and experience you have, in certain life and death situations sometimes the only thing that saves you is plain, dumb luck. Either that or occasionally God decides to protect the unworthy and incompetent for His own mysterious reasons. That's the only way I can explain what happened to me in Vietnam in 1967.

I was executive officer of Special Forces A-Team A-104 in I Corps, Quang Ngai Province, Ha Thanh District. I was a young, muscular, Airborne, Ranger, Jungle Expert, Green Beret, Infantry first lieutenant and I considered myself a deadly fellow — all technique, training and esprit. I didn't need luck. I

was proud of my special training and my special unit, and I was at least as sincere a believer in our cause (killing the communists) as the communists were believers in their cause (enslaving Southeast Asia).

One night at the beginning of the monsoon season, just before first light, I took one of my typical two-platoon Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG — rhymes with "fridge") patrols to recon an area for targets of opportunity for ambushes. By chance, around mid-morning of the following day, we happened across a lone VC whom we took prisoner. He was a scared, skinny, teenaged boy who said he had been recruited by force and had just deserted.

Like most Vietnamese and Montagnard peasants, all he really wanted was to go back home to his village and be left alone.

Our CIDG commander threw him to his knees, put a knife to his throat and threatened to cut his head off if he didn't immediately agree to show us exactly where his supply and infiltration routes were. The CIDG would not have actually cut his throat, at least not with me standing there, but the kid didn't know that, so he eagerly complied. We then fed and reassured him, for which he appeared to be most grateful.

The area where he proposed to take us was way out on the edge of our normal area of operations, an area where our patrols

SOF VIETNAM

SECRET WEAPON

Luck Strikes at Lunchtime

Text & Photos by James D. McLeroy



rarely went because it was so far from the relative safety of our camp. It made sense, though, that if we really wanted to find the VC's supply routes, we would have to go looking for them in areas where they didn't expect us to look. I finally managed to persuade the CIDG commander to go. When we got there we carefully set up several area ambushes based on our prisoner's first-hand information.

Late the next afternoon, from my vantage point in the center of our area-ambushes along the VC infiltration trails, I heard several long bursts of automatic weapons fire — all ours. I soon learned that two of our CIDG units had almost simultaneously ambushed two small VC supply columns. In their enthusiasm to win points for our body count bonuses, which were based solely on confirmed kills, my little CIDG allies proudly presented me with some fresh VC ears. We were, as the saying went in those days, "heavily into" body count. A Special Forces colonel from I Corps headquarters had recently flown out to our camp to present us with an actual trophy, sort of like a little bowling trophy, for having achieved more enemy KIAs than any other camp in I Corps for the quarter.

My CIDG explained that some of the VC supply carriers whom they had just ambushed had had no weapons, which we usually demanded as proof of kills, but the CIDG had wanted to be sure that they got credit for their body count bonuses. Thus the ears. Trying not to appear shocked, I simultaneously congratulated them and gently admonished them from any further ear-taking. I suppose our strategy on that patrol could have been called "winning hearts and minds and ears."

CIDG in other camps may have been valiant irregular civilian-soldier patriots, but most of our CIDG were thieving outcasts and draft-dodging, cowardly mercenaries, only

marginally better than the Luc-Luong Dac-Biet (LLDB), the corrupt Vietnamese special forces that commanded them. Our CIDG mob was about an even match for small groups of the ragtag local VC, but that was not saying much for either side.

Since both the CIDG and the LLDB were our allies, it was considered critical to our mission as "advisers" to maintain at least a superficial facade of what was called in those days "good rapport with our counterparts." Counterparts or not, the CIDG did not behave like real combat soldiers, and we all knew that it wouldn't do for us to have to depend on them in any serious hostile confrontation with real soldiers.

Unfortunately, the main force VC companies, led by their NVA advisers, were real soldiers. To know them at close range was usually to regret it. Most especially, as in our case, if you did so with no air or artillery support and a few of the local VC's ears in your pockets.

Next day, by unlucky chance, the sacred lunch hour of the CIDG just happened to catch us in an indefensible position. Lunch could really be described as sacred for the CIDG because it was literally more important to them than saving their own lives. As usual, we had to stop dead in our tracks right where we happened to be, precisely at lunchtime, and begin our daily CIDG picnic. I protested in vain.

Although the low jungle growth on the ridge provided us with a modicum of concealment, it gave us virtually no effective cover and no avenues of escape. It was high enough to be conspicuous but not high enough to be defensible, and it was isolated and surrounded by higher ground on several sides. On the other hand, it seemed to be just

perfect for gobbling down rice, which was clearly the only point of our being there. Since we were hopelessly stuck there for the ritual noon rice gobbling, I decided to make a routine radio check with our camp.

It alarmed me to hear that our normally calm intelligence NCO was clearly worried. Several of his local intelligence agents had informed him that a main force VC company with NVA advisers, the likes of which we had fortunately never before encountered in our area, was at that very moment aggressively searching for my patrol. He had checked the report with the intelligence section of Special Forces I Corps headquarters in Da Nang for possible corroboration. Their reports independently confirmed the presence of a VC main force company passing through the area of my patrol. Headquarters had also recommended we be unusually vigilant and cautious. I took their advice to be an example of profound wisdom.

Local VC leaders had apparently been informed of our two successful ambushes — and the missing VC ears — and they were not pleased. Dead VC with missing ears were demoralizing to the rank and file conscripts of the guerrillas, and therefore had to be very quickly and conspicuously corrected with an appropriate response. It seemed that the local VC had asked a main force company passing through the area on its way to more significant targets near the coast to find and make an example of us. This was considered necessary in order to maintain morale in the lower ranks of the VC's local soldiers. We had, in effect, started a sort of rural gang war by flagrantly violating one of the most basic unwritten rules of the territory.

The excessive zeal of a few of our CIDG,

LEFT: Members of Special Forces A-Detachment 104, 1967. Author appears center front. Team CO, Captain Hugh Shelton, rear, third from right, supervised the critical aiming of the four-deuce. Team intelligence NCO, Sergeant First Class Harold Stanley, left rear, coordinated its firing and later received report on results.

RIGHT: CIDG sacred rice ceremony, observed religiously every day at noon, regardless of circumstances or danger to participants.

CIDG SUBALTERN

James D. McLeroy completed Infantry, Airborne, Jumpmaster, Ranger, Special Forces and Jungle Warfare training. He served an extended combat tour in 1967-68 as a Special Forces first lieutenant in both the 5th Special Forces Group in I Corps and in MACV-SOG. We welcome McLeroy's first contribution to *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*.



motivated by their desire to collect another body-count bonus, had apparently upset the balance of power which usually allowed both the VC and the LLDB to prey on the helpless villagers in the area. Obviously, I was a new boy who had to be taught a lesson.

I was suddenly seized with a powerful desire to move my hips off that ridge. We urgently needed to hide, at least until the weather cleared enough to permit air support. Before I could even begin to discuss the possibility of violating the sacred CIDG picnic hour by simply dropping the rice and grabbing the rifles and rucksacks, I heard one of our Browning Automatic Rifles open fire down the little trail that wandered through the middle of the ridge, immediately followed by a burst of AK-47 fire.

I had routinely put out hasty ambushes along both ends of the trail, and as a matter of routine had given the guards my usual instructions *not* to shoot any point man who might accidentally stumble by. Instead, they were supposed to radio us of the point man's approach and then either *di di* back to us or wait for the main body to appear. As usual, the CIDG guards had decided that if they did exactly the *opposite* of what I told them to do, it would be an act of profound wisdom. They wanted to be sure that the rest of any VC column that happened to be following the unfortunate point man would quickly and prudently run away, which they

usually did, thus avoiding an unpleasant firefight for everyone. By shooting or warning the point peons, the CIDG actually tried to keep VC casualties, and thus future VC retaliation, to a bare minimum, while still appearing to do their job for us.

Unfortunately, however, their little trick didn't work that day. A few minutes after our guard had so cleverly shot off the top of the head of the VC point man, I appeared on the scene. That immediate answering burst of AK fire made me fear that we had fallen into a trap. With every passing second I sensed that we were being surrounded. Anyone who has ever fought the NVA or main force VC on the ground knows how quickly and fearlessly they can maneuver through even the roughest terrain and dense vegetation. I had heard about it, but this was the first time I had experienced it.

Most American infantry units usually did not even try to maneuver effectively after making enemy contact, preferring simply to call in the ever-present artillery or air strikes and let *them* do the work. This was standard Army practice at the time. Since the NVA and main force VC had none of that kind of fire support, however, they had to be able to move their feet quickly and at the same time use their weapons, which they did as well as anyone could possibly have done in that terrain. Compared to our CIDG, they looked 10 feet tall — and there were twice as many of them.

Sure enough, we soon began to receive heavy bursts of probing AK-47 fire, first from one side, then another, and yet another. The amazing thing to me was how effectively they were surrounding us in that heavy vegetation. I heard the screams of some CIDG being hit. The CIDG usually manifested one of only two possible demeanors on patrol: lethargy or panic. I knew that we were entering a period of very rapid transition from the former to the latter. I saw the man standing right next to me jerk and turn pale as the stock of his carbine was shattered in his hands by AK rounds. We stared at each other mutely for a few shocked seconds, while he half-smiled at me like an idiot. Maintaining our precious rapport even under fire, I idiotically half-smiled back at him. Just then I felt the whistling of AK rounds ripping over and next to my head, then bits of leaves and branches cut by the bursts fluttered down into my face.

I thought about all this for one more nano-second and then hit the ground in a hyper-ventilating heap, my PRC-25 radio handset pressed to my head, frantically yelling back to the camp our adjusted situation report. The camp informed me that there was, unfortunately, simply nothing that they could do for us. Because of the rainy, overcast weather, any kind of air support was out of the question, and we had no artillery anywhere near. In desperation, I ordered the



team sergeant to fire our big 4.2-inch heavy mortar to support us. His response was something of a shock — not only negative, but almost insubordinate.

"Sir, we can't do that! You're at max range for the four-deuce!"

"So what," I screamed back. "Just fire the damn thing anywhere you can about 100 meters around my position!" I quickly spelled out my map coordinates for him, using our standard reference-point code.

"No, sir, you don't understand," came back the strained, urgent voice of my NCO through the squelch. "We can't support you at your range, no way! At max range, we've got a margin of error of at least a hundred yards."

That was true, but not the worst of it. We didn't even have a real aiming device for the mortar, just some marks on the wall of the mortar pit. It might just as easily kill us as them. In fact, it had never been fired in direct support of a patrol, only for camp defense and occasional harassment and interdiction fire.

"Fire it!" I yelled again. I was, after all, an officer (although a rather junior version of one), and he was an NCO, so I finally ordered him to just fire the mortar in our direction — period. Reluctantly, he decided to "read my transmission."

When the four-deuce was finally ready, he radioed back: "For God's sake, sir, y'all get your heads down now, ya hear, 'cause here it comes, and God knows where it's gonna land!"

"Fire the son of a bitch and we'll take our chances!" I roared again. I decided I'd rather be killed by the mortar than be killed or captured by those bastards, which was exactly what was going to happen in a minute if we couldn't distract them long enough to break contact.

"Go ahead — fire it," I repeated.

So ahead he went — max charge, max range, Hail Mary, devil take the hindmost, Katy bar the door! Meanwhile, AK-47 fire was steadily intensifying from all sides, as was the shouting and screaming of my now almost hysterical CIDG, who had finally realized that they were hopelessly trapped on their cozy little lunchtime picnic ridge.

The M30 4.2-inch mortar tube, although rifled, causes a mortar shell fired at maximum range, unlike an artillery shell, to drop almost like a large falling rock, making very little sound as it falls. The shell for the Army's largest mortar weighs more than 27 pounds and is packed with enough high explosive to virtually pulverize any human being above ground in an area of 40-by-20 meters around the point of impact. The tremendous concussion and shrapnel can also spoil someone's day considerably farther away than that. At better than 5,000 meters from camp and behind several intervening jungle mountain spurs, we could not hear any sound of firing when it left the tube.

LEFT: Ha Thanh's CIDG on payday parade at camp A-104.

As the VC scout squads around us were probing closer and closer with their fire, and the main body of the company was apparently getting ready for a coordinated assault, the huge mortar round from our camp completed its long journey and landed. Without any warning whatsoever, it suddenly exploded in the low jungle growth about 100 meters below our position, just as requested, with a crashing roar.

The frantic voice of my NCO back in the camp came through the radio static. "Sir, are y'all still there? Over."

"Outstanding!" I yelled. "Fire it again!"

"We can't take another chance like that, sir! There's just no telling where the next one might land! Can't y'all break out of there?" He was, in effect, being forced to play Russian roulette with our lives, and he really didn't want to play anymore. I understood, but I didn't care.

"To hell with it!" I screamed. "Just fire that son of a bitch. I don't care where it lands!" I was not exaggerating, and he knew it.

His voice sounded agonized and distinctly mournful. "OK, sir, but y'all get way down now, ya hear?"

We were already as flat on the ground as we could physically be, of course. I knew it would take him longer to get the next shot off because of the intense consultations that were going on down in the mortar pit regarding the critical matter of aiming. We had practically stopped firing back by then because we could not actually see the main body of the VC through the dense foliage, and we knew we were going to need all our ammunition very soon when we would see them. There were moans and cries from the wounded and terrified CIDG.

We knew that those maneuvering VC squads who were effectively reconning us by fire from all sides were trying to get us to return fire blindly so they could locate our key weapons positions. Then they would concentrate their mortar and machine-gun fire on those positions prior to the assault. Their 82mm mortars alone could tear us to pieces, and I suspected they were getting them ready at that very moment. I clung desperately to the radio, trying to derive some reassurance from its continued friendly static, and waited hopefully for our next big mortar shot.

I knew that virtually no amount of casualties would stop a fanatical main force, NVA-led VC company in the middle of an attack. I also realized that I was surrounded by mostly cowardly and incompetent irregulars who were themselves surrounded by a superior number of well-armed, battle-tested enemy soldiers. For the first time since I had arrived in Vietnam, I knew what real fear felt like.

Suddenly, I saw the excited face of my interpreter trying to tell me something: The enemy's firing probes seemed to have recently stopped in one of the sectors of our perimeter, and our Montagnard scouts had found no sign of the VC there. The CIDG

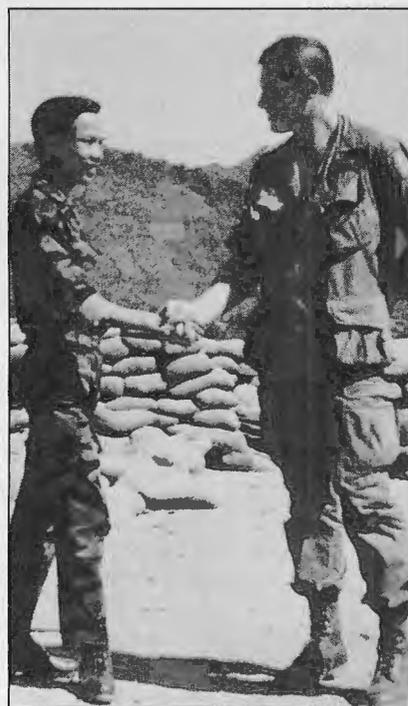
commander thought that, for whatever reason, the VC might possibly have left us a temporary escape route, and he wanted us to try to break out as quickly and stealthily as possible through that opening. I also noticed that the VC firing had apparently started to diminish, but I strongly suspected that it was a trap to try to channel us into a killing zone. The VC company was so superior to our own CIDG, however, in both quantity and quality, that I figured it simply didn't matter anymore.

I knew, just as the VC knew, that if we tried to retreat our CIDG would simply panic and run rather than staying together and fighting an orderly withdrawal. I also knew that we would never be able to form any effective defensive perimeter once we got strung out in that thick vegetation. We would either get separated or else all get bunched up together. Either way, we would lose what little semblance of a military unit we had, and most of us would soon be slaughtered. On the other hand, if we remained where we were, their mortars would probably kill us before dark anyway. In the dense scrub jungle below the ridge, we might possibly have some chance of escape. The CIDG could really move very silently when they were scared enough to be properly motivated, and we were all extremely motivated at that moment.

I quickly radioed back to camp for them to hold up on the second mortar shot because we were going to try to move out. We grabbed our gear and our wounded, both walking and stretcher cases, and with uncharacteristic discipline and stealth began to silently make our way through the dripping

Continued on page 71

Author maintaining rapport with his valiant LLDB counterpart.



THE GREAT SCROUNGER

Little Larry Dring at Luong Son

by Vincent P. Gaston



IN March 1966 I was running my team (A-213) through pre-mission training at Bragg, wondering when and who I was going to be saddled with for team officers. Those were the days when every young officer with Airborne Ranger training was scrambling for a quickie tour with Special Forces (SF). Second Johns, complete with Randall knife, Rolex watch, driving gloves and tightly tailored fatigues, seemed to spring out of the woodwork on the hill. Many left rapidly.

The team leader was a very pleasant surprise. René "Whitey" Affeurtit, boyish-looking with hair that was almost white,

A bouncy little second lieutenant with sparks in his eyes and a grin a mile wide, Larry Dring was the best scrounger in Special Forces. Photo: Larry Dring Collection

JOIN THE ARMY, SEE THE WORLD

Vincent P. Gaston grew up in the Army. He enlisted at age 15; celebrated his 16th birthday during 12-week airborne/glider/air transport training in 1947 at Fort Benning; spent several years in Japan and Korea; lived in Iran, training Iranian SAVAK troops on line crossing operations on the Iranian-Russian border and advising troops in the southern desert in Iran; and trained Eskimo National Guard in Special Forces jump training at Nome and Point Barrow, Alaska. He also did two tours in Vietnam, as an original member of B Company, 5th Special Forces when it was organized in 1961, and in Luong Son and Pleiku in 1966-67. He now lives in Costa Rica and spends his time farming, painting, sailing and as a volunteer adviser to the *Fuerza Reserva Publica*.



appeared one afternoon and invited me to his BOQ to talk. There he produced a bottle of booze and we got acquainted over drinks. He had made both first lieutenant and captain on the outstanding lists but claimed little practical field experience. As he put it bluntly, "Top, I am entirely in your hands and counting on you to keep me straight and keep the team alive." What more could an A-Team sergeant ask for? He left Vietnam a year later as a major, with a Legion of Merit among his awards. But that's another story.

A few days later a bouncy little second lieutenant with sparks in his eyes and a grin a mile wide approached me saying, "Hi, Top. I'm Larry Dring. Just came over from Oki and blasted my way through OCS. Let's go to 'Nam." I heaved a sigh of relief and gave him a bear hug. I'd heard about "Little Larry Dring" from friends on Okinawa, where he had been a Spec-4 demo man. Rumor had it that he had shipped a "misplaced" jeep back to the States piece by piece. When I asked him about it, he laughed and said, "That ain't all, Top, that ain't all." The "that ain't all" proved to be a weapons collection that lined the walls of his room at home — everything from an old MAT 49 to an M60.

Larry was the best scrounger in SF. Even Marv Compton didn't compare. It only required mentioning, "Larry, we need . . .," and he was on his way and wouldn't be back until he had it.

We arrived in Vietnam with orders to build a new camp at Luong Son in Binh Thuan Province, restore the town (once famous as a ceramics center) and lure the populace back. We relieved A-237, TDY from Oki, which had secured the site in January with a company of "Yard" (Montagnard) strike force from Ban Me Thuot. Man, were they glad to leave. My first reaction was a trip back to 5th SF headquarters to request that we move the site a few clicks south, away from the town, which was less than 500 meters from the northern perime-

When asked about the rumor that he had shipped a "misplaced" jeep back to the States piece by piece, Larry (right) said, "That ain't all, Top, that ain't all." His "that ain't all" reply referred to a veritable arsenal of captured weapons lining the walls of his room stateside. Photo: Larry Dring Collection

ter. After some heated protesting and a near court-martial for insubordination, I was given a direct order not to move the site. "That's where MACV wants it, that's where it goes." Flat, open ground, dominated by the town to the north, and low hills within 60mm mortar range to the east and southwest dictated strong observation posts (OPs) and everything in the camp at least partially below ground and resistant to heavy mortar fire. A-237 had thrown up a wire perimeter and dug a few trenches, living in sandbagged tents and relying on heavy patrolling for protection. They were exhausted and in such a rush to leave that I only have a vague memory of them.

No building materials were available locally, so while the team set to, digging in and scratching out a 1,000-foot strip, Larry set out with a long list in hand for Nha Trang, Da Nang and Saigon. Airdrops of cement and wire soon started arriving, much of which was scattered to the four winds on low pallet drops. An Air Force inspection team declared our strip 55 feet too short of safe for landings, and diverted supplies to Phan Thiet airfield. There everything was looted before we could get there with company-sized patrols and scrounge trucks from the local Military Assistance Group unit. George Gaspard shipped lumber to us from Ban Me Thuot and it, too, disappeared in Phan Thiet. The province chief was a slick bandit who later sold the cement back to us when we were desperate.

Larry had been gone about 10 days when an Aussie CV-2 buzzed the strip, announced "It looks good enough to me,

mate," and promptly landed. Larry popped out with a grin a mile wide and started handing out *Playboy* magazines, candy bars and other goodies while we offloaded a 10-kilowatt generator, a large refrigerator and freezer and 12 bunks with mattresses.

Larry managed to acquire everything from individual electric fans to fancy mahogany plywood for a plush console in the commo bunker. You name it, he'd get it. We even had a fancy rolling barbeque with chromed steel base I always suspected had once been a surgical table. He claimed our Aussie pilot buddies had "located" it for him. He always thought of the team first and brought 12 of everything: Zippo lighters individualized with engravings, engraved Bush Pilot wings, any gimmick he ran across that he thought the team might enjoy. And *always* cases of eggs, steaks, tubs of ice cream, boxes of fresh vegetables and other good edibles. He must have known every Air Force and Navy mess and supply sergeant in Vietnam as well as the merchant marine. Many an unsuspecting mariner went home happy with a "VC" flag, not knowing that the flag had been made in Luong Son by a Chinese seamstress, bore holes from Larry's M16 and had been bloodied by a chicken or goat. Larry knew no limitations.

Larry was also a nut for innovative patrols and was always coming up with weird ideas. At times I'd try to hold him back, but he'd always come up with a feasible way to do what he wanted. Most of the time it was, "Top, what-a-ya think about . . ." and away we'd go. We had an excellent Vietnamese Special Forces Luc-Luong Dac-Biet (LLDB) captain who would agree to anything. He had lost all his family in the North Vietnam purges and lived a pure vendetta. With three companies of Saigon cowboys and our own hired Nung recon platoon (Chinese mercenaries who protected our backs in and out of camp), we ran constant saturation patrols, mostly at night because of the open terrain surrounding us. Our area of operations stretched to the coast, where Charlie had tunneled a support center into the low ridges, complete with hospital and ammo-producing factories.

Larry always slept with his .45 next to his head, round in chamber and half-cocked. No one trusted our Vietnamese strike force completely and I had assigned a Nung shadow to every team member. No one moved or slept without his shadow covering him, but Larry wasn't taking any chances. His nemesis came in the form of a large mongoose. A gift to me from a local villager, it promptly proved its worth by eliminating all the giant rats that plagued our stores and sleep. It was christened "the Animal" and ate everything that moved within the inner perimeter. Unfortunately, Larry had an overwhelming desire for a pet of his own. He acquired a wide variety of small animals, but one after the other they disappeared, victims of the Animal; even a small puppy dog Larry

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SOVIET PHOTO-SNIPER

KGB Tool Surfaces in Fiji

Text & Photos by Gerald Ellis

WHILE on a recent research assignment in the South Pacific I came across an interesting and relatively unknown Soviet camera that has been synonymous with espionage since it was first produced some 20 years ago. In the 1960s the Soviet Union produced a unique camera system for both espionage and "conventional" photography. That system is the now highly prized Photo-Sniper, which consists of a camera, long telephoto lens and an ingenious mounting unit composed of a pistol grip and shoulder stock that make this combination look like a gun.

Bringing this little beauty back through customs provided an entertaining moment or two. I was carrying the camera in a small hiking pack over my shoulder, so I unslung the bag and unzipped it for the customs inspector. I withdrew the first piece I touched — the assembled stock. As the buttstock came out of the bag, the inspector's eyes grew large and his face froze in a worried mask. I'm sure that for a moment his thoughts were "terrorist," "airport massacre" and "oh shit!" Once the complete, and harmless, skeleton stock was out of the bag, his face melted into a smile, finally.

The Photo-Sniper is an amalgamation of the Zenit-ES 35mm single-lens reflex (SLR) camera and the monstrous Tair-3-PhS f4.5 300mm telephoto lens. The combination is so ungainly that the Soviets designed an unusual pistol grip and shoulder stock assembly to hold the whole package. The stock assembly is of aluminum alloy construction and made to take a beating. The lens is finished in a light gray color and is built like a T-62 tank! It might be fashionable to belittle Soviet manufacturing quality, but if this camera system is typical

of the excellence they put into the things they feel are important, then it's time to stop laughing and take serious notice.

The Zenit-ES is a robust camera with a built-in selenium light meter that reads externally rather than through the lens like the current cadmium types. The shutter settings go from 1/30 second to 1/500 second and there is a standard B setting. The Tair lens has f-stops from 4.5 to 22. The shutter is stopped down automatically, but there is a manual preview knob on the lens that allows you to check the composition and focus before taking the photograph.

The camera has a screw-type lens mount which makes for a secure fitting. The camera and telephoto lens assembly rests on the shoulder stock and secures at two points. The camera sets in a small socket above the pistol grip and secures with a finger screw. The long lens fits on the front of the stock assembly and secures underneath with a large knurled screw.

Focusing is controlled by a screw mounted at the end of the lens. The lens is capped off by a long multibaffle rubber lens shade. The whole assembly weighs about seven pounds, which means the camera system was generally *not* used for clandestine urban photography unless the photographer were in a vehicle or shooting from a lair in a building. Instead, the Photo-Sniper system is used as a long-range intelligence camera in the field and on ships.

This camera system was, reportedly, supplied to some guerrilla bands infiltrating into Rhodesia on special intelligence-gathering missions; it is known that the system was carried on Soviet ships for long-range intelligence photography of shipping, ports and

ENCORE FROM HAWAII

Gerald Ellis served on active duty with the U.S. Air Force in security work and currently is with the Army Reserve. A specialist in remote sensing and cartography, he is completing a master's degree in geography at the University of Hawaii. Ellis has written for *Far Eastern Economic Review* and *Military Review* magazines. This is his second contribution to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine (see "Groupement de Fusiliers Marins Commandos," August '86).

harbors, and other coastal installations. In 1982 the Soviet Union agreed to supply 10 Zenit-E and 10 Zenit-TTL cameras to the army of Grenada as part of their military assistance program. The cameras were to be supplied in 1982 and 1983, respectively. These cameras, included as part of a "military aid" package, indicate that they were intended for intelligence and, probably, espionage purposes just as the Zenit-ES camera systems had been supplied to earlier clients for that purpose.

The camera system in my possession was obtained from an obscure pawnshop on the back streets of Suva, Fiji. It was supposedly hocked by a Russian sailor from one of the Soviet freighters that used to stop regularly at Suva Harbor before the government put an end to those port calls.

It is interesting to speculate how the Soviet military intelligence agent explained the loss of his Photo-Sniper system to the political officer or his spy boss. Perhaps he pawned it and bought a Nikon! ✕



ABOVE: Left side of Soviet Photo-Sniper unit showing the assembled camera, lens, lens shade, pistol grip and buttstock. Note that name plate above pistol grip is in English. This is typical of Soviet equipment intended for export, since outside the Soviet Union more people are familiar with English than with Russian.

LEFT: Left side of system showing buttstock detached from pistol grip and both below camera and lens.



ABOVE: Right side of the assembled Photo-Sniper system.



LEFT: Rear of camera and lens while mounted on stock. Visible on left is camera serial number and above that the manufacturer's logo of a prism with a light beam refracting through. On the right, just below film rewind lever tab, is "Made in USSR."



ABOVE: Close-up of front of lens showing rubber multibaffle lens shade, telescoping portion of lens, focus screw and how it fits into slot of the stock. On the right is thumb screw that secures lens to stock. Note sling swivel on far left end of stock.



LEFT: Close-up of central camera, lens and pistol grip area showing Photo-Sniper name plate, f-stop ring, lens/stock securing screw and portion of the shoulder stock. Red arrow on lens points to preview knob that allows photographer to open shutter to check focus and composition before taking photograph. Note that just above the word "Photo" is company logo of a prism with light beam refracting through.

DOES AMERICA NEED

America Needs Devils in Baggy Pants

by Major R.B. Anderson

TO those of us who have had the privilege of serving on jump status, the need for airborne forces is obvious. For those who have yet to put their "knees in the breeze," allow me to explain. Since its introduction, the airborne has played a decisive role in warfare. In this era of brushfire wars, the airborne's role is even more decisive. Airborne forces can be deployed quickly to anyplace in the world. The speed at which an airborne unit can execute a deep penetration gives it the ability to achieve strategic surprise. That alone is often decisive. Grenada is the most recent example. The unremitting flow of American airborne firepower and commitment had tremendous psychological impact on friend and foe alike.

No serious military expert can doubt the need for special operations forces to be airborne. On many occasions, parachuting is the only means of infiltration. In addition, modern techniques have greatly enhanced the Special Forces' ability to infiltrate undetected. Maneuverable parachutes also enable grouping in the air, so that teams can land together, ready to fight as a unit.

There are those who doubt the wisdom of maintaining large conventional airborne units. There are many reasons why these forces are a vital part

Machine gunner of the 101st Airborne Division, under the direction of his squad leader, opens fire on a Viet Cong bunker. Photo: DoD

of America's arsenal. Foremost is the requirement to be able to assault targets that might otherwise be invulnerable. Other supposedly mobile forces, such as the Marines and the airmobile divisions, are limited to the range of their launch platforms. Airborne forces are the only forces that are capable of worldwide penetrations. There are many places in the world where the outbreak of war would leave us with the choice of sending airborne forces — or sending nothing at all.

Airborne divisions certainly have their limitations. They are necessarily limited to what can be carried and dropped from aircraft, and they are much lighter than conventional divisions. However, it would be more than foolish to deny American contingency planners this potential for "forced entry" to deliver a rapid first blow. More than ever, modern airborne units have the ability to stay and fight. The 82nd Airborne Division now possesses

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Editor's note: Soldier of Fortune Magazine is no stranger to controversy. We encourage it when important questions and issues demand public scrutiny, and we act as a forum to air differing viewpoints. Thus we begin with this first of what will be a number of "pro and con" articles focusing, in the main, on military-related issues that have been — and still are — ferociously argued. They are, of course, matters of opinion, and we



GO AIRBORNE!

Major R.B. Anderson is no novice to airborne operations. He completed jump school in 1967, is jumpmaster qualified and has served with Army airborne in Panama. He also served as an enlisted man with Charlie Company, 75th Rangers, during the first of his two tours in Vietnam. He is currently an executive officer with a Special Forces battalion stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

AIRBORNE FORCES?

know you have yours on the subject. We welcome your responses, pro or con, and we'll publish the best in an upcoming issue. Letters should be 150-200 words and sent to AIRBORNE FLAK, c/o SOF, PO Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Your name and address (and phone number for purposes of verification, not publication) must be included, although we will withhold your name upon request.



NO AIRBORNE!

Andrew Funk is the *nom de guerre* of a senior officer currently serving with XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He has held a variety of command and staff positions and has had a long association with Fort Bragg's airborne.

Airborne Forces Aren't Practical

by Andrew Funk

FIRST let me put the record straight. I'm not here to argue that paratroopers aren't good fighters. I won't argue the fact that we need a few highly trained paratroopers to perform special missions. I'll even agree that we need a Ranger battalion or two to do airfield seizures such as Grenada.

I am here to argue that, in this era of tight budgets, we can't afford the luxury of maintaining conventional airborne forces. The limited success of airborne units in the past doesn't justify their expense. This is especially true because with modern weapons, any potential enemy can conduct a much more hostile reception than any of our airborne planners are willing to admit. The money that goes down the airborne drain for jump pay, jump paraphernalia and Air Force taxis could buy bread-and-butter items like effective antitank weapons, more ammunition and better training for all our units.

We also need to look at the waste of life. The short history of airborne operations is filled with disasters. Even "successful" missions like Normandy had alarming casualty rates. The pioneers of paratroop employment, the Germans, essentially abandoned airborne operations after Crete in 1942. The German high command decided it could not afford any more airborne Pyrrhic victories. The United States has not

conducted a full-scale combat airborne operation since World War II. And for good reason: We are afraid of the consequences.

The proponents of airborne are quick to point to the Grenada liberation as proof of a continuing need for an airborne division. But the 82nd Airborne Division did not jump in Grenada, it was airlanded after the airfield had been seized by a Ranger battalion. And the Rangers, who did jump in, nearly met with disaster. Had it not been for an arbitrary choice by the battalion commander to jump at 600 feet, they would have come in high enough to be chewed up by the 23mm antiaircraft guns that were positioned to defend the airfield.

I admire paratroopers and their fighting spirit, but fighting spirit just isn't enough. The problems inherent in division-sized airborne operations are just too great to be solved. First, there is the problem of getting the division to its objective. Slow-moving troop carriers like the C-141 are extremely vulnerable to fast-moving interceptors, ground-to-air missiles and antiaircraft guns. Today, even third-rate countries have in their possession sophisticated radar and surface-to-air missiles.

Another problem is that the Air Force has a tradition of dropping troops in the wrong place at the wrong

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A mass drop by the 82nd Airborne Division at dawn. Photo: 82nd Airborne Division

PRO

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more firepower than all the airborne forces employed in World War II combined. This arsenal contains tanks, artillery, mounted antitank guided missiles and attack helicopters. In addition, every trooper carries an M72 Light Antitank Weapon (LAW).

Many detractors of airborne forces argue that the inherent limitations of aerial resupply doom any force that must depend on an aerial link for its lifeline. But with today's Air Force support, an airborne division can be sustained on location indefinitely. A single C-141 normally drops up to 28 2,000-pound containers of supplies and ammunition. During World War II, weather was a major factor governing the reliability of aerial resupply, but modern navigational technology permits pilots to fly to any drop zone, regardless of fog, rain, snow, haze or clouds. This same technology permits pilots to fly low level to avoid detection by enemy antiaircraft systems.

An important but often overlooked airborne advantage is that, once on the ground, the paratrooper is not just another soldier. He is the embodiment of the airborne fighting spirit that makes airborne forces elite the world over. Paratroopers are the risk takers. The airborne attracts soldiers who thirst after danger. Every paratrooper is a volunteer who goes through a rigorous rite of passage. Military jumping is hazardous, and paratroopers regularly face that hazard. It

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A paratrooper from the 82nd. One point is not in question: the skill, determination and will to win of airborne troopers. Photo: 82nd Airborne Division





Members of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne, landing in drop zone near Phan Rang, Vietnam. Photo: DoD

CON

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time. Jumpin' Jim Gavin knew this from bitter experience, and because he remembered how badly his troops had been scattered at Normandy, at the start of Operation Market Garden he pleaded with the Air Force to "put us down in Holland, or put us down in hell, but put us down together!" The Air Force was 30 minutes late at Grenada, and the Marines were already ashore when the Rangers made their jump run. Against a first-class enemy, this 30-minute advance warning might well have resulted in the Rangers being shot out of the air before the first man could jump.

Even peacetime training takes its toll on airborne forces. Most combat assaults take place at night, and my airborne friends tell me that even in the event that all the jumpers hit the drop zone, some injuries will be sustained because the jumpers are loaded down, the drop is unmarked and some obstacles will be encountered on landing, such as bodies of water, high tension wires, fences and so on.

Once on the ground, there is the problem of assembly. History shows that the "fog of war" sets in as soon as the jumpers land. The troopers usually find themselves alone in a strange place at night, in danger, unorganized and unsure of the location of the rest of their unit. Unit leaders in training often find themselves unable to muster more than half of their forces before moving off the drop zone, and can only

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Airborne trooper prepares to defend his position. Photo: 82nd Airborne Division

Troopers of the 82nd Airborne Division boarding C-130 for a training jump. Photo: 82nd Airborne Division

PRO

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takes guts to make a night jump with a full combat load into a postage stamp-sized drop zone. The shared experiences of these volunteers binds them into a fraternity of fighters without peer. The statement "I'm the 82nd Airborne and the bastards stop here!" is just as true today as it was at the Battle of the Bulge.

The Army has tried to develop this same spirit "on the cheap" in its light divisions. This effort has failed because no other rite of passage offers the challenge of jumping. No other macho morale builder is as effective as the command "Stand in the door!"

The Russians obviously see a place on the modern battlefield for the airborne division: They have seven of them! Unfortunately, the nay sayers in the United States Army have succeeded in whittling our airborne down to the point where we do not have the forces we need for a protracted war. The solution is to put the scream back into the 101st's Screaming Eagles by putting them back on jump status.

America needs airborne forces. America needs an honor guard that is capable of rapid deployment and is ready to meet any contingency. America needs the airborne's ability to assault worldwide objectives with overwhelming surprise and firepower. Most of all, America needs soldiers with the will to jump, the will to fight and the will to go "All the Way!" ✖

82nd troopers train in the Middle East. Photo: 82nd Airborne Division





Soviet paras ford a stream during a training exercise. Photo: courtesy David C. Isby

MOSCOW'S LONG REACH

Soviet army paratroops performed the world's first combat jump — in 1929, during the war in Central Asia — and to this day, the Soviets maintain an extensive airborne force.

The Soviet army's airborne forces are a semiautonomous service, reporting directly to the minister of defense. They include seven full airborne divisions (including one with a training mission in peacetime) and many non-divisional units. Airborne forces have been extensively committed to action in Afghanistan. One division and one independent regiment are permanently deployed in Afghanistan, and regiments from another division are rotated in when required for major operations.

Airborne forces play a valuable role at all levels of Soviet military thinking — strategic, operational and tactical. And that is one reason why, despite the rise of heliborne forces, paratroopers are still seen as vitally important. Soviet paratroopers play a strategic role by moving to new theaters of operations, even those away from the borders of the Soviet Union. This was seen in the 1973 Middle East War, when Soviet airborne forces started to move for possible deployment to the Middle East. At the operational level, Soviet paratroopers can function as the spearhead of combined-arms invasions, linking up with agents in place and Spetsnaz forces. This is how they were used to secure Prague in 1968 and Kabul in 1979. Tactically, they are tough, fit infantrymen, able to undertake operations by parachute, from helicopters or in the BMD airborne infantry fighting vehicles; each squad has one of these well-armed little vehicles. The employment of paratroopers in Afghanistan since the invasion is an example of their tactical mission.

The Soviets maintain a large airborne force — the combined airlift resources of the Soviet air force and Aeroflot, the state airline, could lift less than half of it at one time — because they want units in place that are capable of these types of missions. Around their borders and within the Soviet sphere of influence, paratroopers play a vital part.

Even with the extensive use of helicopters for both battlefield mobility and firepower, the Soviets recognize that helicopters not only remain vulnerable, but also cannot match airborne forces' long-range, quick-reaction deployment capability, even if the heliborne troopers can share the relatively high morale and effective cohesion that Soviet paratroopers apparently share with their worldwide counterparts.

— David C. Isby

CON

Continued from page 33

hope the rest come straggling in the next day.

A counterattack at this point is fatal, and conventional forces regard an airborne landing as the one time when it is permissible to attack piecemeal, because airborne forces on the drop zone are so vulnerable that even a single tank or armored personnel carrier can do extraordinary damage. And even if the troopers are able to assemble and take their objectives, they are so lightly armed that they have no hope of holding their positions against an armor assault. It is true that the

or they wither and die. It's all very well to point out that a C-141 can drop 28 tons of ammunition and supplies, but put that in perspective. A *single* howitzer can theoretically shoot up that much ammunition in *one* day of combat! Simply to keep the 82nd Airborne Division alive after the third day would take *all* the cargo aircraft in the entire U.S. Air Force!

Considering the threats we face, and considering the meager forces we have to meet those threats, I don't think that we can afford the high cost and risk that airborne operations entail. Even if we have men who

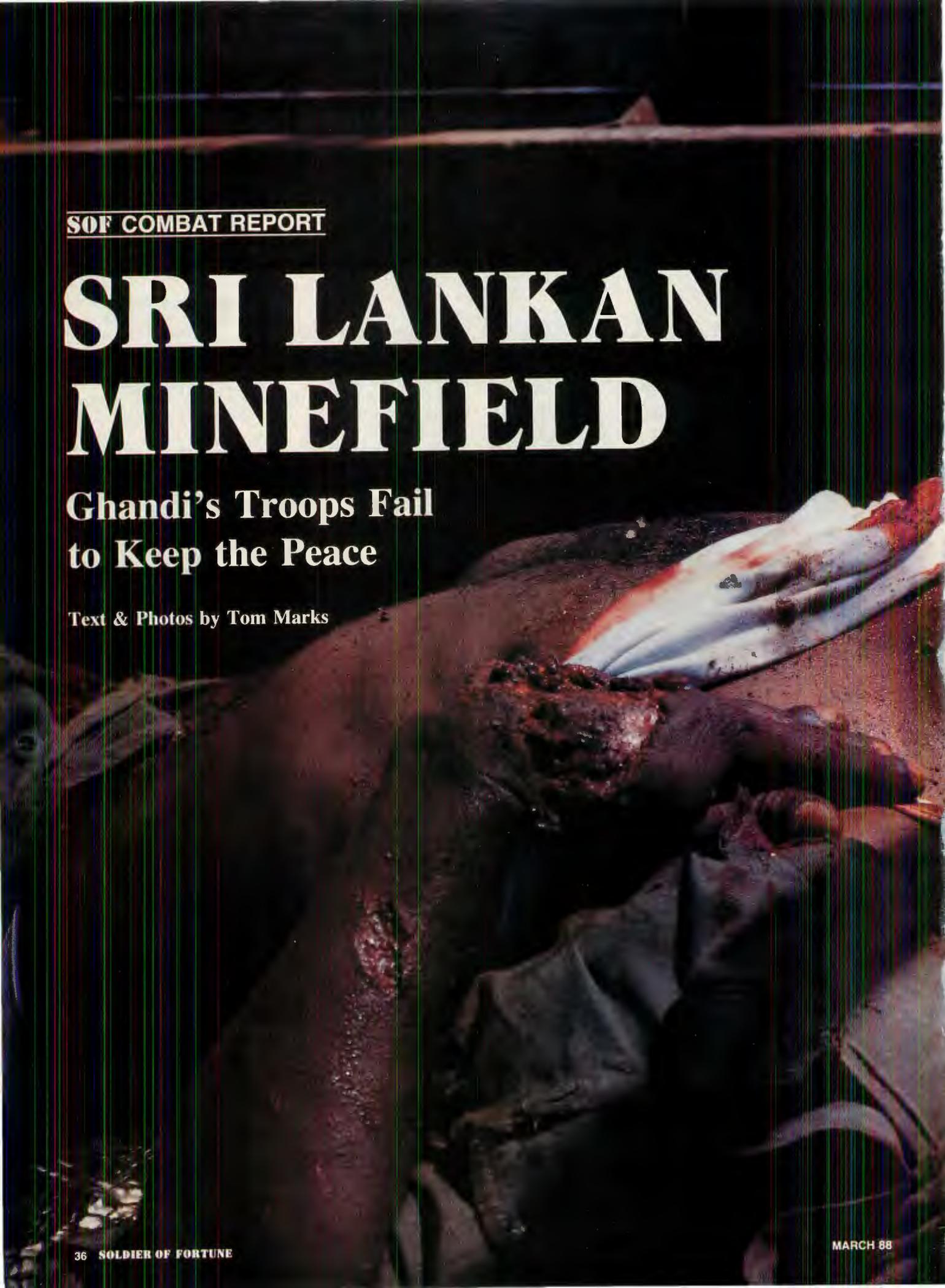


Trooper from 173rd Airborne Brigade armed with M16 on patrol in Vietnam. Photo: DoD

firepower available to the airborne forces has increased since World War II, but the firepower available to the armored and mechanized forces has increased even more dramatically, and the balance is in their favor.

The next problem is resupply. Airborne forces must link up with heavy ground-gaining forces within a couple of days of landing

are willing to make the sacrifices that airborne operations have traditionally demanded, we can't afford to throw them away. We must husband our resources. The catch phrase for the U.S. Army is "Fight outnumbered and win." We can't do that by throwing away a division. Like the Germans before us, we cannot afford even successful airborne missions. The airborne division just isn't practical. ✕



SOF COMBAT REPORT

SRI LANKAN MINEFIELD

**Ghandi's Troops Fail
to Keep the Peace**

Text & Photos by Tom Marks

AS we approached the next house in the tightly packed row, we talked about families, about home — all the usual things soldiers talk about when in the field. We were about the same age, the major and I, and our backgrounds had enough in common to prompt easy conversation.

“I was born here, you know,” commented Major Dulip Singh, gesturing at

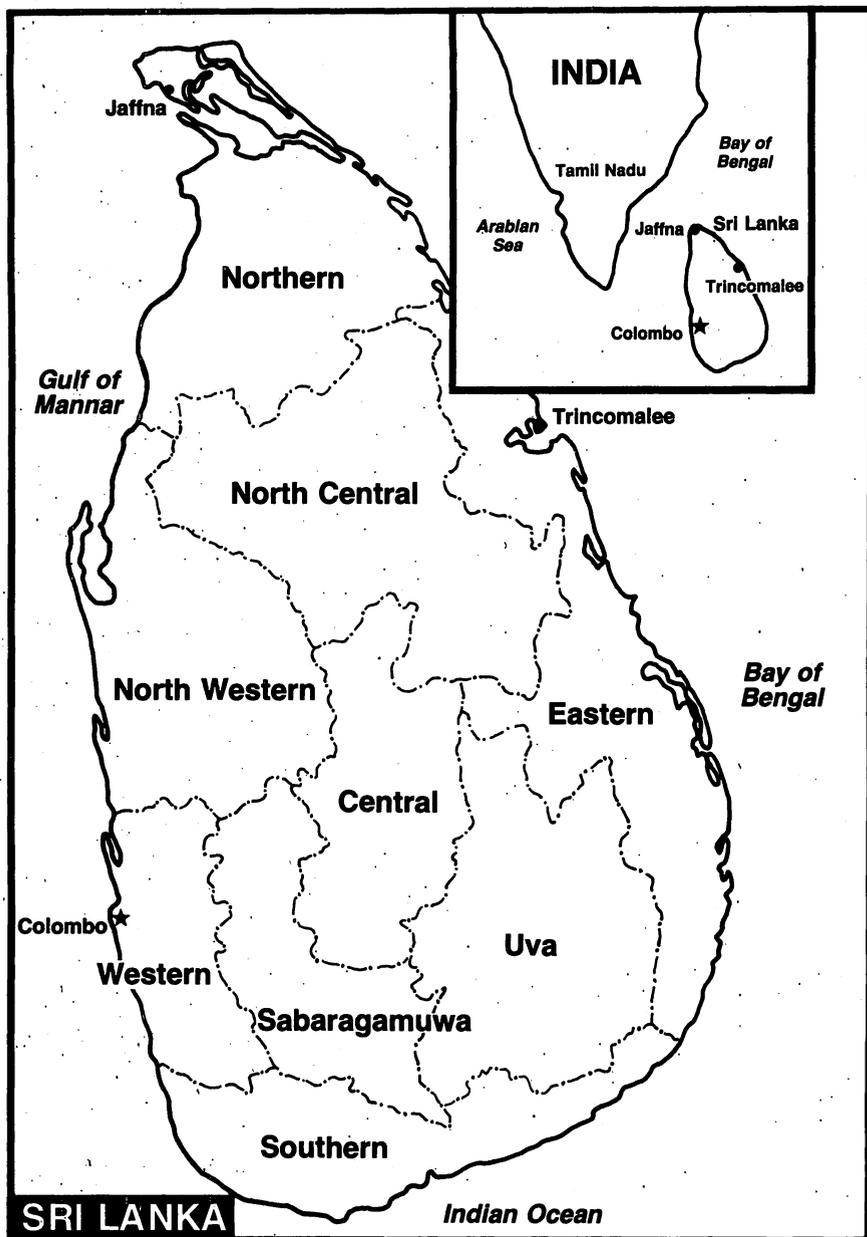
his surroundings, the city of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka. I must have looked surprised, for he continued, “Many Tamil families from India come here to use the hospital. It had excellent equipment. It still does.” He meant no irony, but it was there. After all, Jaffna had been at war for more than four years. Yet it remained a wonderland of good public services and comfortable living com-

pared to the lot enjoyed by the average Indian soldier.

Major Singh had returned to the place of his birth as the commander of an engineer battalion attached to the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF), which had deployed to Sri Lanka after the 29 July 1987 signing of an unexpected peace agreement between New Delhi and Colombo. For years India had

Wounded Indian soldier in Sri Lanka is loaded into commandeered vehicle for trip to hospital.





clandestinely supported the Marxist Tamil guerrillas who waged a bloody struggle for *eelam* (independence) for the Tamil-majority north and east. Jaffna had been the main guerrilla stronghold. Now, in a dramatic turn-about, the giant of South Asia, bitterly resented by Sri Lanka for its behind-the-scenes maneuvers, had seemingly switched sides. In exchange for a Sri Lankan commitment to accede to many rebel demands, India agreed to end its support of them and to "guarantee" the accord with armed might.

Of course, the Indian move wasn't intended as a simple double cross of its erstwhile Tamil allies, only as geopolitics at its finest. But more about that later. For the Indian soldiers of the 52nd Infantry Division (Airmobile) — the "airmobile" in the Indian lexicon means air-transportable — it was a tough job. They were to "keep the peace." This meant separating the guerrillas and the government security forces, as well as supervising the turn-in of insurgent weapons and facilitating efforts to return areas of conflict to normal life.

Sri Lanka. Eastern and Northern provinces contain highest concentrations of Tamils and have been scenes of heaviest fighting. Inset: Southern India, home to many of India's 50 million Tamils.

It was this final mission which most concerned Maj. Singh and his men that day. For he and his unit were charged with clearing the mines and booby traps that littered the city. In an effort to ward off government offensives, the guerrillas had turned the entire Jaffna peninsula, in particular the city, into a death trap. Explosives and trip-wires were everywhere, planted without proper maps or markings, their creators frequently dead.

The Sri Lankan military had already lost half a dozen men some weeks earlier attempting the same task. The casualties were all experienced personnel who had been at the chore for years. Still, with the overconfidence they were to display repeatedly in their early days of deployment, the Indian upper echelons assured the world that the first team had now arrived and so the

job would be taken care of promptly.

Such bravado was not shared by the engineers. We had spent the morning surveying the area to be cleared that day, and it was clear we had quite a chore at hand. A few homemade booby traps had already been unearthed and dismantled. They were tricky and murderous in construction, often filled with the usual weapons of the poor — rusty nails, bolts and the lot. The actual removal and disarming of the devices had been handled by Maj. Singh and his small command group. "We have more experience than the boys," the major noted. "They will learn. For the moment we must teach them by example."

At times the seriousness of the task would overwhelm the atmosphere. Yet spirits were generally high, the populace we encountered friendly. On city streets, life had exploded back to normal. "Exploded" was the only word for it. Whole buildings were going up in days; the streets bustled with population; shops reopened, bulging with goods; and every bus arriving from the south was crammed with returning refugees. "The war is over," went the refrain. So great was the rush to return to normal life that there was no holding back the populace. At each spot where we went to clear mines, we found civilians there ahead of us. Officials at the Jaffna hospital stated that more than 50 eager returnees had become mine blast casualties in the previous several days.

We had already warned off a dozen civilians that morning. Even as we prepared to enter the next house selected for clearing, the long-displaced owners appeared bearing offerings. These joined ours as we went through a *pooja* ceremony. Gifts were placed on a makeshift altar. As the sacred flames flickered, each man captured some smoke from the air and applied it to his forehead. Even the equipment to be used was placed before the altar to assure that the gods would guide its functioning.

"Though I am a Christian," observed Maj. Singh, "I believe in these gods. My unit always does this before an operation. It is for our safety." He bathed himself in the smoke, then rubbed ashes on his forehead. It seemed a good idea to do likewise.

As we entered the gate, he had one more question: "Are you getting your pictures developed here?" His intent was clear. I answered, "No, in Hong Kong, but I'll be

ASIA ANALYST

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sure you get copies for your unit files." He smiled and thanked me. We proceeded single file.

Accompanying us were two guerrillas of the principal insurgent group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), known simply as "the Tigers." One had helped to place the booby traps and mines. His memory had grown fuzzy, but he had done well thus far. This time was no exception, as he soon found a trip-wire in the overgrown garden behind the house. The vegetation had become lush and thick; debris was everywhere.

At that moment there were six of us: the guerrilla in front carefully following the wire, the Indian command group of four and myself. As we inched forward, I was distracted by the arrival of Dieter Ludwig, a *SIPA* photographer. Though we had never met, I was sure it was he, for there appeared to be only two of us foreign journalists remaining in Jaffna at the time. I had been looking for Dieter to compare notes. A quick whispered exchange confirmed our identities. As it turned out, he was looking for "The *Soldier of Fortune* man." The Tigers, he said, had told him I was in town.

Nothing like being known. A Jaffna paper put out by a guerrilla sympathizer had once taken the trouble to publish a front-page article about some reporting I had done during an earlier government offensive in Jaffna. The gist of the commentary was that I was full of it. When Dieter arrived I hadn't even had time to arrange for interviews, but already the guerrillas knew I was there. Their intelligence, as always, was superb.

Dieter and I spoke for what must have been 30 seconds. He expressed his unease: "There are thousands of mines scattered all over this place. It won't be long before someone sets one of them off." I made to nod, only to have the gesture interrupted by a tremendous blast from the garden. Having taken the steps away from the command group, I had my back to the officers, my body shielded by a corner of the house.

My initial thought was something on the order of, "You assholes, yell 'fire in the hole' before you blow those things in place." Then suddenly there was a deathly stillness, the sort when even your breathing seems to have ceased, the sort when you know something terribly wrong has happened. Simultaneously, Dieter and I mouthed, "Shiiiiit," and erupted into action. He was without his camera and sprinted for it. I went forward.

As I raced through the garden, scrambled thoughts took on a life of their own, their rapidity jumbling the syntax. The gist, though, was clear: "Don't, don't let there be another mine." Logic fought an instantaneous battle with fear. "If there was another one, the first blast would have set off a secondary explosion. You'll be okay. Move, legs, move!"

It took half a dozen driving strides to reach the crumpled group of figures by the banana trees. That awful stillness was still there. I hadn't the faintest idea who was



ABOVE: Major General Harkirat accepts surrender of EROS arms from delegation led by one of three members of EROS Politburo, Rajee Shanker (in gray shirt).



LEFT: LTTE posters. Poster on right shows Commander Miller, who drove a "land torpedo" into the Jaffna telecommunications center, thus becoming a martyr for the cause.

BELOW: Insignia of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), premier guerrilla group.



among the twisted figures before me. Flesh and blood were everywhere, on everything. Frantically, I began to tear my shirt for bandages, then realized there was nothing I could do. The wounds were simply too massive for the materials at hand.

Low moans ended the silence. One figure was in a sitting position, his back against a tree. His eyes were open but he obviously could not see. I grabbed his shoulder and mouthed platitudes. "Hold on, you'll be all right. Help's coming."

I made for the next man. Like a figure in a B-grade movie, I yelled for a medic. Nothing. Again I yelled, then again, "Medic, medic." The mind kept speeding along. "Get in here, you SOB's, I can't do anything with a torn shirt!"

The second guerrilla guide was the first to appear. Unlike the Indian officers, he spoke no English at all. In the background, though, I could see the soldiers milling about. Leaderless, their command group down, having never been in combat, they were at a loss. I tried another tactic, a scream of "Doctor." That registered. Troops poured into the garden.

There was much confusion and a quick discussion, apparently over whether to try to apply dressings on the spot. As the seconds ticked by, blood poured from the gaping wounds. A decision was made, and



six to eight soldiers grabbed each of the broken figures. Racing out the narrow lane to the main street, the bearers commandeered passing vehicles and tore off for the Jaffna hospital.

I was still unclear as to precisely how badly hurt the officers were or precisely what had happened. My abortive efforts at first aid, though, had revealed the probable sequence of events. Following the wire, the first guerrilla guide had gone ahead. Behind him, one of the command group had detonated a pressure mine laid for just such an eventuality. The blast had caught all four and shredded their lower bodies. The only saving feature of the episode was that the mine had been pure charge, no shrapnel. Hence the wounds, though horrible, were clean.

Unable to establish commo with the engineers' parent unit, I too sped to the hospital. It was so close that the wounded were being treated within what, at most, was 15 minutes. Still, their wounds were so massive that the medical staff waged an uphill battle. Only as they cleaned the soldiers for surgery could I pick out personalities.

Major Singh was in the most critical con-

Having returned to their barracks, Sri Lankan soldiers fill their days with military training.

dition — and his men knew it. Personable and well-liked, he had risen through the ranks. He was a father figure to his troops, regarded by them as competent and caring. Testimony to that was in the corridor outside the room where the five were being worked on. The core of the unit huddled, stunned, tears streaking their dusty faces. Inside, the NCOs clustered about the beds doing what they could to assist the staff.

It was not enough. From Maj. Singh's chest came that awful rattle which accompanies the departure of life. Frantically, a doctor pounded on his chest. At the head of the bed an NCO shrieked and fell forward, wailing. The doctor called for the materials to inject the heart directly. Outside the door, the troops sat or wandered about, stunned, as if shell-shocked. The injection elicited no response — and Maj. Dulip Singh, married with a wife and two small girls, the last only just born, became the first member of the Indian peacekeeping contingent to die in Sri Lanka.

At the other beds the fight for life continued. Surgery was performed. Indian military specialists were rushed in. It was to no avail. Two of the officers died in the days that followed. The third survived, missing limbs and an eye. Only the guerrilla was able to escape relatively intact, with a bandaged wound on the back of his head but otherwise unscathed. He had been blown forward from behind, but it was the officers who had taken the full explosion.

Windup of a War?

In the days that followed Maj. Singh's death, I heard Sri Lankan officers comment half a dozen times to their Indian counterparts, "Those were *your* explosives which killed your men." The Indians took the digs in stride, but it was clear the truth struck home. For the Indian army was, indeed, in a stew its own policymakers had done much to concoct.

The insurgency in Sri Lanka had been a small, sporadic affair until the beginning of the 1980s. Then discrimination by the Sinhalese majority against the Tamil minority had provided existing Tamil Marxist guerrilla groups with the recruiting oppor-



50-million-strong Tamil population — to stimulate a much broader Indian covert campaign after July 1983. When it became clear that Colombo intended to seek victory in its fight against the guerrillas — and to do so with whatever foreign assistance it could obtain — New Delhi responded with a dual-track approach.

One effort increased covert involvement with the guerrillas. It used operatives of the secret services, particularly the Indian equivalent of the CIA, the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW), to arm and train the Tamils. The second effort began the large-scale training of Tamil personnel who could accompany an Indian invasion force should such direct intervention prove necessary. Training concerned with the first effort was carried out at numerous guerrilla camps allowed to exist in Tamil Nadu, the Tamil-majority state located just across the Palk Strait from Sri Lanka. Second-effort training was generally conducted in the Indian north at regular military and paramilitary establishments.

Eventually the plans for an outright invasion were shelved, but the support of the guerrillas continued, the logic being that such pressure was the best way to bring Colombo around to New Delhi's way of thinking. Though India consistently denied the existence of the camps or the presence of the guerrillas on its soil, Tamil activities rapidly became an open secret. Numerous journalists, for instance, visited them and subsequently made the journey across the strait to the battle areas of Sri Lanka. During such activities, the easy relations between the guerrillas and their Indian mentors were readily visible. Such details were corroborated by hundreds of interrogation reports compiled by the Sri Lankan intelligence services during prisoner interviews.

Ultimately, there was not much that was unknown. Precise details of India's invasion plans, for instance, were sold to several foreign governments by a group of clerks charged with duplicating the most sensitive cabinet and security council minutes. They

simply upped their salaries by making a few extra copies and peddling them to the highest bidder. Similarly, the RAW agent who for several years was in charge of the covert Sri Lankan operations was actually on the CIA payroll and only apprehended shortly before the 29 July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord was signed. Journalists, with their own official sources and experience on the ground, would simply disregard Indian official denials and write their copy. Still, there was an embarrassing plenitude of caveats such as "camps which Sri Lankan officials claim to be located in Tamil Nadu."

In the Sri Lankan corridors of power there was a greater tendency to call a spade a spade. Yet even there, reaction to the continuing Indian campaign was mixed. A split within the government itself prevented outrage from boiling over and hindered an effective response. One group, which until recently had the ear of the 81-year-old president, Junius Jayewardene, favored increasing ties with the West as the best way to resist Indian pressure. In contrast, an opposing group came out strongly in support of a position which said "recognition" of India's security concerns and "accommodation" of them were the only course realistically open to a small country such as Sri Lanka.

In the years that followed July 1983, the war at first went very badly for the Sri Lankans, then gradually turned around. Colombo never did frame a viable socio-economic-political solution which would have cut the Marxist hardcore off from its "grievance guerrillas," the overwhelming majority of its manpower, and from its mass base, the generally conservative Tamil populace. Yet the security forces improved substantially and in late 1986 finally began to gain the upper hand in the conflict.

tunity needed to increase their strength. Not surprisingly, as communal relations between the Tamils and the Sinhalese (three-quarters of the 16 million population) worsened, the guerrilla position solidified. When widespread anti-Tamil rioting erupted in July 1983 in response to a guerrilla ambush which left 13 soldiers dead, the Tamil refugees looked to "the boys," as the guerrillas were called, for protection. Thousands of young people enlisted as combatants.

For their part, the guerrillas already had their own behind-the-scenes protector — India. Indian covert involvement in guerrilla activities predated July 1983, but New Delhi's prior effort had been relatively small and directed toward gathering intelligence on events inside Sri Lanka. In particular, India was concerned about the growing relations between Sri Lanka and the West. These were seen as a security threat because they brought Western influence into the Indian backyard.

This geopolitical concern combined with domestic political factors — fear of a refugee wave and pressure from India's own

Major Singh (left), engineer battalion CO and a former guerrilla who served as guide for mine-clearing operations (right).





vide aid and succor to the guerrillas, India had effectively lost control of them. The guerrillas willingly accepted arms and training, then went back to Sri Lanka and did as they pleased. At times, in fits of pique, India would deport or lock up a few particularly troublesome guerrilla leaders or seize an arms shipment or two. But in the main, New Delhi seemed at a loss as to how to control the creature it had spawned. Control was necessary because India did not support the guerrillas' goal of *eelam*, having already squelched its own Tamil separatist movement only two decades earlier.

The guerrillas, then, were only of value as pieces in the geopolitical chess game if they could be used to pressure the Sri Lankan government into a recognition of India's paramount position in the region. If they refused to play their role, they would become expendable.

Likewise, the geopolitical effort would come to naught if, as appeared increasingly likely in the early months of 1987, Sri Lanka proved capable of taking the match by a knockout. A victorious Sri Lanka, particularly one which had achieved the win

Troops struggle to evacuate wounded members of command group.

despite the extensive Indian covert operation, would be in no mood to pay homage to Indian concerns.

Even as Indian diplomats deprecated the capabilities of the Sri Lankan military, that rebuilt force moved to wreck the Indian geopolitical framework. Though they did not put together the necessary campaign plan for ending the insurgency, the Sri Lankans did finally come up with an approach for the military domination of insurgent-affected areas. After first securing the lower half of the Eastern Province in early 1986, the military next drove the guerrillas from the strategic Trincomalee port area by the end of the year. In February 1987 the Mannar area, on Sri Lanka's western coast, was tackled. The critical action involved the seizure of the principal guerrilla base camp by forces under the command of Major Gabriel Mohan Rockwood (see "Counterinsurgency in Sri Lanka," SOF, February '87).

Recapturing the Mannar region allowed a vise to be applied to the central districts between it and Trincomalee. These were pacified, leaving only Jaffna peninsula itself as a location of major insurgent concentrations. As a built-up area, its seizure was bound to be costly.

The green light came when a rash of guerrilla outrages occurred in April 1987, including bombings in Colombo and the massacre of Buddhist monks in the east. President Jayewardene responded by ordering the all-out Liberation I offensive in May. By this time internecine fighting within the guerrilla movement had left the Tigers as the dominant group. More militarily oriented than their rivals and drawing inspiration from the suicide tactics of Middle Eastern terrorists, the Tigers wore cyanide capsules around their necks and fought tenaciously in defense of what they termed their "sacred soil." Security force casualties were heavy, with nearly 100 men going down the first day alone.

Nevertheless, the plan of attack was well thought out. A feint convinced the guerrillas that a *coup de main* would be attempted against Jaffna city itself, so the Tigers concentrated their forces there. Thus, they were unprepared for the two-brigade thrust which went instead to secure the remainder of the Jaffna peninsula. The security force offensive was successful, and Jaffna city dangled like a ripe fruit. Liberation II was set to follow in June. Its goal was to surround the city, placing the guerrillas in a stranglehold.

At this point India could take no more. New Delhi first threatened Colombo in an effort to curtail security force operations, then took the dramatic step of airdropping "relief supplies" to the purportedly beleaguered population of Jaffna. That Sri Lanka could mount no effective response to a direct Indian intervention seems to have brought home to Colombo its difficult position. When Western diplomats informed the Sri Lankan government that no direct help would be forthcoming, the pro-Western group in Colombo was overshadowed by the position of the pro-Indian cabal. In the weeks that followed, intensive discussions were held with the Indian high commission in the Sri Lankan capital and, for the first time, Indian observers were allowed to venture into the Tamil regions to ascertain the situation for themselves.

Ultimately, a bargain was struck. To defuse Tamil demands for *eelam*, Colombo agreed to grant autonomy to a de facto Tamil state created by linking the Northern and Eastern provinces. In return, the Indians agreed to end their support to the guerrillas and to police the accord. Most important to India, though, as spelled out explicitly in the annex and exchange of letters accompanying the main body of the treaty, was Colombo's agreement to recognize that on certain actions it must consult with New Delhi. Among these were the use of Trincomalee by foreign warships (a provision inserted because New Delhi has long claimed that Colombo was planning to give the

Americans base rights there) and the construction of a Voice of America station north of Colombo (which New Delhi fears is to be a signals intelligence site).

Consequently, India's own version of the Monroe Doctrine, referred to by area scholars as the "Indira Doctrine," after the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, seemingly had a victory. Within hours Indian troops began to land in Jaffna as Sri Lankan forces were confined to barracks. Around the world the accord was hailed as a bold move by two statesmen bent on bringing peace to their region.

On the Ground

Many motives may have been involved, but a desire for "peace" was certainly not a premier one. The accord grew out of power politics. Hence, from the beginning, its implementation was troubled. There were simply too many conflicts regarding the meaning of the treaty's provisions.

For the Indian military, the ambiguity extended to its role. The 52nd Infantry Division deployed its three brigades in combat array, complete with Soviet-made BMP-1 armored fighting vehicles. Yet after a few tense confrontations, positions were taken up uneventfully and bivouacs reverted to a virtual peacetime posture. Most of the action was confined to closed-door meetings between Indian liaison officers and guerrilla leaders. Reporters who had flown in specially for the anticipated show were able to get some good photos, then drifted back to their regular beats.

They missed an interesting show. Indian arrogance was overwhelming. When not strutting, they were obsessed with fears that they might look incompetent. After the mine blast, the principal concern of the Indian command seemed to be that the world would think they were lacking in professional competence. And when they discovered that I was the journalist involved, the high commission in Colombo went to some lengths to get me thrown out of Jaffna. They already knew me due to my earlier work on Sri Lanka, especially a series that exposed the framework and extent of their covert relations with the guerrillas. No doubt they expected I would have harsh words to say about their military performance.

Actually, I was more interested in watching than speaking. It was clear that it was but a matter of time before the pot boiled. With several notable exceptions, the Indian officer corps simply did not appreciate the realities of the conflict. The universal attitude was one of contempt for the Sri Lankan security forces, resulting from the fact that the conflict had dragged on as long as it had against "lightweight" guerrilla opposition. More observant commanders demurred, though always privately. They had noted, they said, the fitness of Sri Lankan troops, their excellent equipment and good training. Clearly, they were a capable force. It followed that their opponents must be substantial fighters. More ominous, they observed, was the obvious extent of the guerrilla arsenal. "Have any of those chaps [the

THREAT IN THE SOUTH

As the Indians attempted to deal with the guerrillas, the Sri Lankans were forced to move troops south. There the agreement, along with the deployment of Indian forces, had prompted rioting and violence, culminating in the attempted assassination on 18 August 1987 of President Jayewardene. Hailed by the world for his bold stroke in signing the peace accord, the Sri Lankan leader found himself fighting for his political life.

The assassination attempt was only the tip of what appeared to be a very large iceberg of discontent and anger directed at the ruling United National Party for its authoritarian drift and abuse of power. The presence of Indian troops on Sri Lankan soil had served as a catalyst which provided the rallying point for the otherwise fragmented and lackluster opposition. Even Buddhist monks joined in anti-government riots. A number of clergymen were arrested with stolen semiautomatic rifles in their possession.

While the initial explosion of opposition was contained, sporadic episodes continued in Sinhalese areas throughout my stay. In the south, events assumed a startling parallel to the genesis of the Tamil rebellion. Discontented citizens unable to express themselves through legitimate channels either took to the streets or went underground. Clumsy repression added to the ranks of the opposition.

Principal beneficiary of this process has been the outlawed Sinhalese radical Marxist group, the *Janata Vimukthi Peramuna* (JVP, or People's Liberation Front), which in 1971 spearheaded a

bloody rebellion suppressed only at great cost. Recognizing the opportunity at hand, the JVP, which had been working steadily to recoup from its earlier beating, took up the "Sinhalese cause," claiming that the accord with the Tamils was a sellout designed to deprive the Sinhalese of their sacred homeland. Quickly recruiting new members, the JVP was able to mount numerous small-scale attacks on government facilities throughout the south. It also claimed credit for the assassination attempt on President Jayewardene.

The government responded with reinforcements and security sweeps. Yet most of the anger in the south was neither JVP-inspired nor JVP-controlled. It was simply outraged people attempting to express themselves in a democratic system which had increasingly taken on the trappings of a one-party state. Consequently, security force operations were counterproductive. They aroused resentment and provided valuable publicity for the Sinhalese radicals. Allowed to take on a life of their own, widespread security operations — which at times rounded up hundreds of "suspects" — could actually create the very threat they were intended to counter.

Estimates of actual JVP armed strength run in the neighborhood of 500. Thousands more are sympathizers but are unlikely to engage in illegal activities unless goaded into self-defense. This will happen if legitimate dissent is confused with rebellion. The disturbances in August certainly highlighted the fact that there was widespread unrest concerning government actions, but there was little evidence that a general uprising loomed on the horizon.

brass] looked at the weapons they [the guerrillas] carry in their hands?" one Indian officer asked me rhetorically. "We are looking at an army."

That they were — and the Indians were not quite sure what to do about it. The Sri Lankan security forces promptly kept up their end of the deal by releasing the first batches of prisoners they held and by returning to their camps. Soon they were deploying to the south, where opposition to the accord erupted into widespread violence (see the accompanying "Threat in the South"). But the guerrillas were unwilling to comply with the treaty provision that stipulated that all their weapons were to be surrendered within 72 hours. The guerrilla leaders had acquiesced in the agreement only under duress and the certainty that India would move against them if they did not. Still, they did not trust the Sri Lankans and they certainly did not trust each other. The Tigers, in particular, had ample grounds to fear for their physical security once disarmed, since they had regularly slaughtered their rivals throughout the conflict.

As the days wore on, though, and several much-publicized "handovers" produced only a fraction of the known arsenals of the various groups, heated discussions occurred. The Tigers, as the dominant group, were the key, but they were the least willing to compromise. They behaved as though they had won a victory of sorts and increased their demands daily. Yet the linchpin of the accord, if it were to work at all, was compromise. Everyone had to give up something he could not: The Tamils had to opt for "autonomy" rather than independence, for participation in parliamentary democracy rather than a "socialist" state; the government had to accept the same autonomy it had often sworn never to allow and to face the wrath of its own people for its alleged "sellout"; and the Indians had to accept that they could not gain their geopolitical goals in the face of determined Sri Lankan opposition. They recognized that, while they could surely seize Sri Lanka, they could not hold it any more than the British had been able to hold Ireland.

Groups other than the Tigers were far



more prepared to adjust to the new circumstances. This was because, though all were Marxist and had developed Leninist infrastructures of sorts, the Tiger organization was the most militarily oriented. That is, the other groups followed the doctrinal approach of forming political movements which commanded armed forces. Therefore, shelving military plans for a time did not rob their liberation campaigns of their vitality. They merely prepared to revert to political organizing.

The Tigers, in contrast, saw all things as coming from the barrel of a gun. Their political movement was decidedly secondary to armed struggle — and their manpower showed it. Drawn principally from young, low-caste youths of limited education, the Tiger formations reveled in machismo. Video cassette recorders showed “Rambo” nonstop and eager youths talked endlessly of guns. For them, weapons had become their route to upward social mobility. They were hesitant to give them up, for they stood to lose the most from peace and a return to the normal selection procedures of Sri Lankan society.

“I feel naked without my rifle,” com-

Major Dulip Singh, first soldier of the IPKF to die in Sri Lanka.

mented the Tigers’ Jaffna Commander Kumarappa one day as I accompanied him on a motorcycle ride through Jaffna streets enroute to a meeting. He was clearly a troubled man. A former marine engineer who had worked for a time in Berlin, he had, my sources told me, taken to killing like a duck to water. Now he was floundering. On more than one occasion I was to see him confront Indian officers concerning alleged Sri Lankan government perfidy, only to be politely but firmly turned aside. He would fume. Without a weapon he had become but another demanding Jaffna constituent, albeit a very important one.

At one such meeting, an impressive Indian colonel who had grown to know him confronted Kumarappa directly about the future. “I see what you’re doing. Every time you come into a Sri Lankan camp you case the place, planning your next attack. Why do you do that? Can’t you understand that it’s over? We will not allow you to carry weapons anymore. It’s over!” There was a

pause. The colonel knew what was in the man’s mind. “Oh, I know what you’re thinking — you can take us. Fine, we have a division here today. If you want, we will have two or three here tomorrow. Try to get it through your head, it’s over.”

Kumarappa went off, looking troubled. He may have lost that battle, but he was more concerned with winning the war. He never stopped planning. After I left Jaffna, he and 16 other Tigers were apprehended by the Sri Lankan navy in a boat stacked with arms and ammunition they were transporting. This episode was ultimately to offer Kumarappa a way out of his anguish.

While the Tigers sought to circumvent the agreement, the other guerrilla groups watched uneasily. Allied with the Tigers in wary partnership was the Eelam Revolutionary Organization (EROS). Opposed to this alliance was the Three Star Group: the People’s Liberation Organization of Tamileelam (PLOT), the Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO). All had once been part of a unified guerrilla movement. The concern of the Three Star Group — and even of EROS



The Island of Colombo, for instance, in which I stated that peace was not at hand, had been censored in its entirety.) Visits by the Indian defense minister and chief of army staff quickly followed, as did subsequent orders to take whatever actions were necessary to carry out the provisions of the accord.

When the Tigers refused to give up their arms, the Indians attacked. They quickly learned what their more observant officers and the Sri Lankan security forces had already noted — the guerrillas were a tough lot. Faced with determined resistance, New Delhi was forced to rapidly increase its on-island strength from an estimated 10,000 to close to 30,000. Elite units such as the Gurkhas and the Parachute Regiment were thrown into the battle. In bloody fighting through October it was tough going. At one point the Indians attempted a flanking movement using a paratroop drop in the vicinity of Jaffna University near Tiger headquarters, only to have their men cut to ribbons. An entire platoon was wiped out before urgently requested assistance from the Sri Lankan air force allowed survivors to fight their way to a linkup force. Other

BELOW: Soviet-made BMP-1s belonging to Indian infantry units.

BOTTOM: Author with Indian military personnel awaiting release of Tamil prisoners.

engagements were equally intense.

By the time November began, the Indians claimed they had secured all of Jaffna. By their own admission their casualties numbered more than 200 killed, though it was difficult to ascertain the true situation. So absurd were the daily briefings at the Indian high commission that reporters took to calling them “The Five O’Clock Follies,” in remembrance of the same dog and pony show conducted in South Vietnam by the American command. Reporters who did manage to get to the vicinity of the battlefield on brief staged tours stated afterward that talk of victory was premature. Not only did the guerrillas still control large areas of the city, but their key formations had faded into the countryside.

Ironically, my censored article warned of such an eventuality. Its words are as applicable to a description of what happened in October as they are to what the future will hold:

“On the other hand, the historical agreement . . . is necessary. The military dimension of the government counterinsurgency effort has proceeded as far as possible in the absence of an overall, comprehensive political solution. With the accord, a return to normalcy may now be framed within an approach which can be used to cut the guerrillas off from their far more conservative mass base. That is, the de facto creation of

Continued on page 74

— was that they would be tarred by whatever fallout was sure to follow from Tiger intransigence. Like true Marxists, they saw opportunity in what one guerrilla leader called “the new realities of our situation”; in the Tiger approach they sensed disaster.

The Balloon Pops

I was elsewhere for SOF when the chickens came home to roost. Increasingly brazen in their defiance of the accord, the Tigers decided to force the issue. Tension turned to violence when Kumarappa and his comrades swallowed their suicide capsules as they were being prepared for transport to Colombo, where they were to stand trial for violating the agreement. Their deaths prompted an orgy of bloodletting. As Indian peacekeeping forces stood by, the Tigers massacred more than 200 Sinhalese villagers in the east.

An outraged Jayewardene penned off a quick note which instructed the Indians either to serve their role as peacekeepers or depart the country. To insure that the point was made, the order was leaked to the Sri Lankan press, which has been heavily censored since the accord to insure that nothing “disruptive” is said. (A piece I wrote for





COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

CRATER READING

Detecting an Unseen Enemy

Text & Photos by Major C.E. Parks

IT was a cool evening in the autumn of 1972. A desultory volleyball game was in progress involving nearly all the members of the artillery battery on the Sultan of Oman's airfield at Salalah when, over the Tannoy loudspeaker, came the familiar cry of "Hostile-Hostile-Hostile," followed closely by the pigeon-winged flutter of incoming mortar rounds.

We threw ourselves headlong into the nearest gun pit, one valiant soul taking the time to collect the ball, which was, after all, the only one in a thousand miles. A line of seven bombs walked across the gun position, the last landing fairly and squarely on the command post roof. A long pause followed . . . silence. The *adoo* (Arabic for "enemy") had used their usual tactic of firing a few rounds, kicking sand over the baseplate and running for the hills carrying the tube with them.

A few minutes later a small group of soldiers could be seen standing around the

craters poking at the ground with a selection of bamboo rods. Hours later the same group slipped through the perimeter wire, returning, later still, the same way.

The next evening the volleyball was again interrupted when a deep explosion a few kilometers away tore the evening apart, followed by a delighted cheer from the players. Scratch one 82mm mortar and crew. A Mark 7 antitank mine under a mortar baseplate can do wonders for morale.

For some time before this incident we had been deviled by this particular *adoo* group. Well aware that we had a Green Archer mortar-locating radar on the airfield, they had developed a drill to avoid the attentions of our guns. They would set up the mortar during the afternoon, fairly near the airfield but outside the outer wire and, at last light, fire seven or eight rounds at maximum rate over a stick or similar aiming point at a previously calculated elevation. They would then unhook the tube and run, being

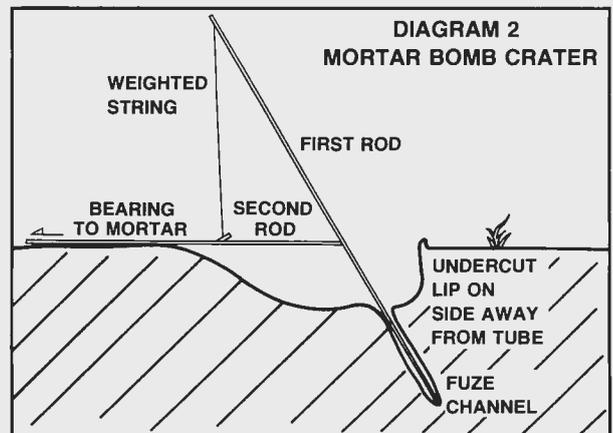
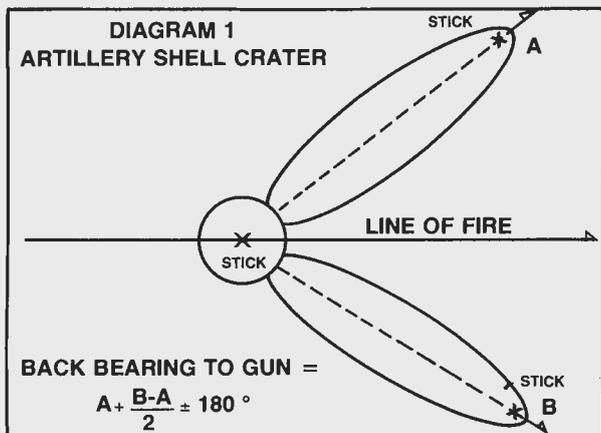
well on their way before the first round landed.

Even if the radar did manage to locate the tube, the crew would have perhaps a minute to get clear before our artillery, a 25-pounder battery, could fire its first rounds on them. The baseplate would survive anyway and could be collected at leisure. If the artillery did not fire they would often reuse the same position the next night, correcting their aim if necessary.

This procedure not unnaturally caused a degree of resentment on the airfield. The pilots didn't like to have their evening drinks disturbed, and they were beginning to be rather rude about the artillery's inability to pin down the mortarmen. As a result, my survey sergeant and I borrowed a Mark 7 land mine, complete with an anti-handling device, from the nearby Sultan's engineers and hatched our own plot. This particular Mark 7, incidentally, had started life in the British Army, been abandoned in Aden and was then issued by the Yemenis to the *adoo* and recovered by the Sultan's sappers from the road outside Salalah. A much-travelled mine.

The plot depended on an archaic and nearly lost art called "crater analysis." This enables you to determine the bearing of the line of fire from an examination of both shell and mortar craters. In the days before radars and sound ranging, it was an essential part of the armory of all gunner officers. In today's political climate, when Western troops are likely to find themselves detailed off as "duty target" around the world, it is a useful technique to have up one's sleeve. It works particularly well in the desert but can be applied anywhere.

The two types of crater need different techniques. The simpler to deal with is a crater left by an artillery round. This throws forward two quite distinct "wings" of discolored earth when it lands (Diagram 1). To determine the line of fire, push a stick into the middle of the crater and another on the tip of each wing. Take a bearing down each wing, subtract one from the other, divide by two and add the result to the smaller bearing



OMANI ADVISER

Major C.E. Parks, a former officer in the Royal Horse Artillery, twice served in Oman, first during the communist insurgency and later on secondment from the British Army. A previous article by Parks about Oman, "Dawn Assault in Dhofar," appeared in *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine in September '87.

to give the line of fire. Adding or subtracting 180 degrees (or 3,200 mils) will give you the back-azimuth to the gun. Obviously, the more craters you can do this with, the more accurate your answer will be.

If you now take a shovel and dig down at the edge of the crater farthest from the gun, you will usually find the fuze, fairly intact, a little way below the surface. That should enable you to determine the type of gun the enemy is using, which will in turn give you a fair idea of the possible range to the position.

Plot the bearing to the gun on your map, having corrected for magnetic variation, and read back along the line until you can mark off the likely gun positions. As a gun may have a very long range, you can finish up with a lot of possibilities. A mortar, with its restricted range, is likely to be easier to fix.

The crater of a mortar bomb is rather harder to read but not impossible. In the center of the crater you will usually find the bomb's tail fins, often standing up as if there were a live bomb embedded in the ground under them (check that there isn't one before going farther). Below the fins you will usually find a narrow tunnel bored by the fuze.

Take a thin rod or stick (a radio aerial is ideal) and work it down the hole until it stands firm (Diagram 2). Tie a length of string to the top and attach a small stone to the end, forming a plumb bob. A further rod is laid on the ground with one end against the bottom of the first and aligned with the stone. A bearing can now be taken along the line of the second rod. There is no need to dig for the fuze, since the tail fins themselves can tell you all you need to know.

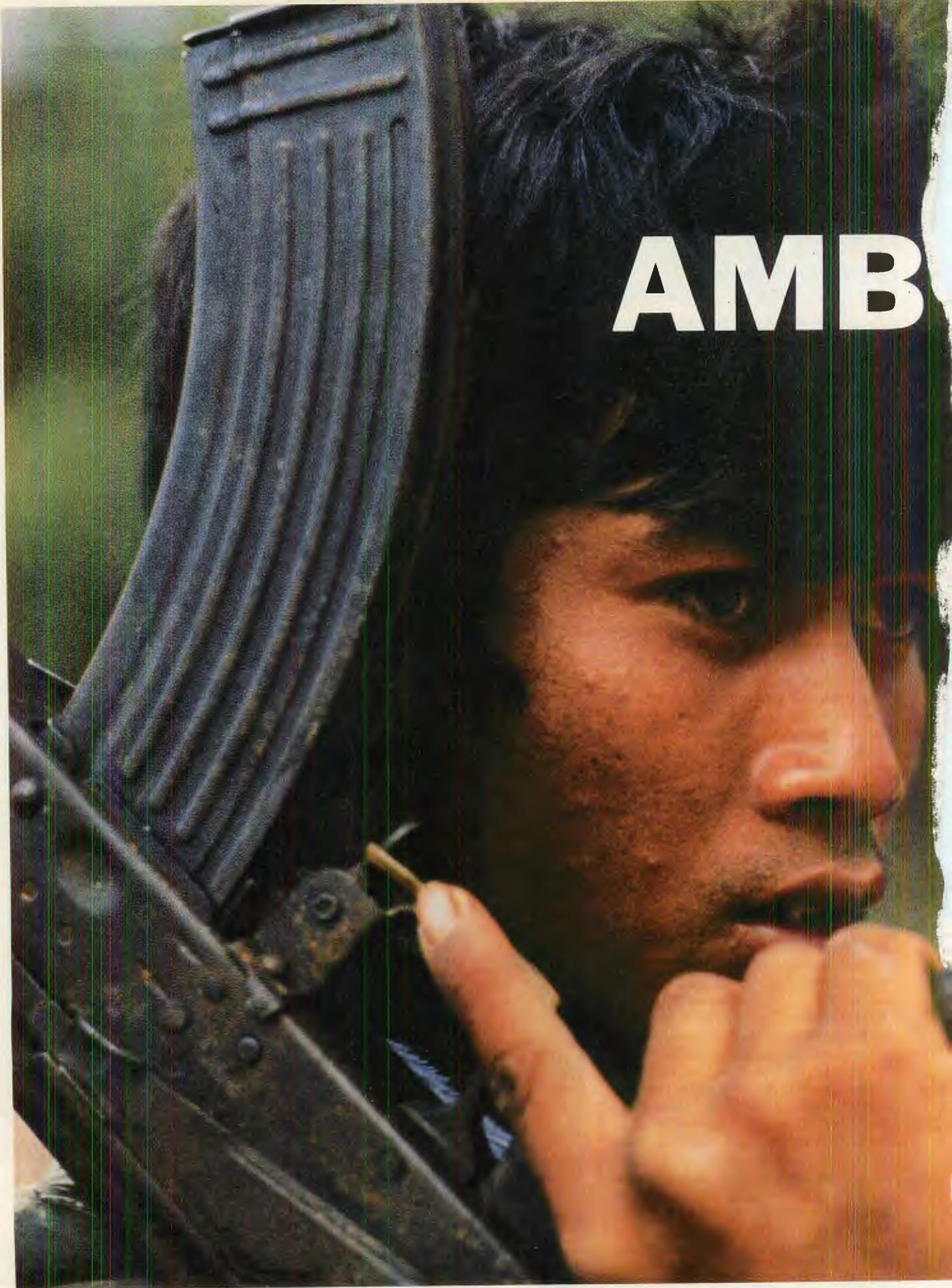
And that is exactly what we did, except that I burned my fingers on the first tail fin I picked up. Even a brief glance at the map showed only one possible place for the mortar line and, by looking for the line of fire marker, we were able to locate the baseplate quickly, even in the dark. We lifted it with a long rope in case the *adoo* had left us a present themselves, and then placed the Mark 7 in its hole with its anti-handling device underneath. The baseplate went gently back on top, followed by more sand. Ten minutes later we were on our way back to camp.

Sometimes, even in this computer age, the old ways work just as well as they ever did. ☒

Tail fins of Chinese-made 82mm high-explosive mortar round recovered by the author on Salalah airfield, Oman, during the incident described in the story.



Fuze from Chinese-made 75mm high-explosive shell fired onto the author's gun position on Salalah airfield. Designation of the fuze is still clearly legible, if you read Chinese.



AMB

A TALE OF TWO USHES

SOF Joins Cambodian Patrol

Text & Photos by Peter Douglas

SOF SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE column began fragmenting to the sound of whispered commands. Groups moved off in different directions to be lost in impenetrable pools of inky blackness beneath the trees. This was it. The ambush site. Laid in a linear fashion with a few kinks to take in local features.

It was a predawn of pale blues, purples and hazy grays before the sun came up with a vengeance. The men began to cam out in earnest, using any foliage at hand. Soon it was hard to spot anybody even though you knew where they were.

At 0730 somebody close by laughed loudly and voices chattered as the wheels of a bullock cart creaked past. Whoever it was had been very close. Those around me remained glued to the earth and seemed to stop breathing. I did the same.

Once the voices had drifted away into silence, Commander Saleoun crept up and asked if I had filmed the enemy patrol that had just walked through the ambush site less than 40 feet away from me. He was surprised I hadn't and I was alarmed that an enemy patrol had been so close without my interpreter being able to tell me because his command of English was so poor. Just how poor was beginning to sink in very quickly. This was not a good position to be in.

The sun crept higher into the sky, depriving us of what little shade there was. As the leaves and grass we wore for camouflage wilted, we added fresh leaves, scattering the used material around. Nothing seemed to happen other than the heat scrambling our brains. With heads at ground level we watched myriads of ants scurry about. The terrain was flat and open. Among the scattered trees we could only find cover by hugging the earth.

At 0825 one of the men off to our right made a slow hand signal. My interpreter whispered, "Film, film, enemy." He pointed to our front. That was all the information he could relay. I knew it was a bad idea to move without a clear idea of just where the enemy was and which direction they were moving in. The only way I was going to find out was to rise above the grass.

Very cautiously I raised myself up, video camera running. Kneeling upright with that awful cold tightness in the pit of my stomach, I raised the camera and peered through the viewfinder, keeping the other eye open for side vision.

There, 20 meters ahead and walking away from me were four soldiers dressed in the light green uniform of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN). A fraction of a second after spotting them I caught movement with my left eye, off to my left flank. Four more PAVN soldiers, only these four were walking toward me.

I froze, knowing that to move suddenly would be to have my body blown to bits by a fusillade of shots. My head buzzed loudly as adrenaline and blood pumped through, almost feeling

Armée Nationale Sihanoukiste (ANS) soldier armed with AKM enters village. All troops are on alert as they suspect that People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) troops are in the area.

CAMBODIA WATCHER

Photojournalist Peter Douglas is an experienced combat correspondent who has covered wars in Afghanistan and Lebanon as well as Cambodia. Douglas, a former Royal Marine Commando and arctic warfare specialist, has spent enough time in the jungles of Southeast Asia to qualify as an expert in tropical warfare as well. This is his second article for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* (see "Cambodian Killing Ground," July '87).



LEFT: Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) soldier carries RPG-7. Pink tubes are propellant charges which must be screwed on before rockets can be used. It is possible to gauge the level of threat a unit is exposed to at any one time by seeing whether or not propellant charges are attached to the rockets.

the impact of rounds. Nothing happened. It just went on endlessly, unbearably. Down, down, slowly melting to earth. Cascades of sweat rolling down my face. My stomach clasped by steel bands. Holding my breath. Down till the grass was eye level, down farther. All the time waiting for the first hits. Elbows contacted the ground. I felt like strangling my interpreter and kicking my own ass for being so stupid. Those seconds took hours to pass.

Then the whole world exploded in a continuous shattering roar as dozens of rocket-propelled grenade (RPG-2) rockets blasted out of launchers and detonated a couple dozen meters in front. Kalashnikov assault rifles barked and chattered. Belt-fed RPDs ripped away. Orange balls of light flashed all around as incoming rockets exploded. Fist-sized balls arced and exploded. Grenades. The noise was a solid, ear-shattering roar. Two more grenades exploded only feet away. Lumps of shrapnel hummed and zinged, shredding leaves about us. Twigs and bits of bark rained down as rounds chewed up the trees they clipped through.

Clouds of dust mixed with the smoke and shrouded us in a world of pale bluish-white fog. Shouts and screams mingled with the rattle of small arms. Shaking, I tried to crawl forward to film something other than the leaves in front of my face. A lull, more shouting voices. Crouch, crab crawl a few feet. The world exploded again. Flat, slithering forward. The acid sting of cordite was in my nostrils.

Figures darted forward through the smoke and I dashed forward a couple of meters. Men with me pointed away to the right. I got up and ran with three others. We sprang in bounds, heading toward whatever cover we could see. The volume of firepower died away but never actually stopped.

Coming through the trees was paramedic Wuthy Kong, half carrying, half dragging a wounded man. The wounded man was a young PAVN soldier soaked in blood from the waist down. He looked at me with a glazed, vacant stare. He was dying. We rushed on through the trees, over a sandy tire-marked track and across open ground. Ahead two men closed in on a third who was lying on the ground. As we got closer the lead man emptied a magazine into the man on the ground, now discernible as another PAVN soldier. He jerked with each impacting round. More firing broke out. Stop. Try to film. The firing picked up in tempo. Somebody did a quick search of the dead PAVN soldier. We turned back as everybody bolted for the cover of the tree line again.

Distant shooting heralded another PAVN patrol homing in on the sound of the contact. They were sweeping the way ahead of them with firepower as they approached. As we raced back into the trees Cmdr. Saleoun was leaving the main killing ground and realized I had been led in the wrong direction to film the bulk of the PAVN patrol that was taken out.

We tried to head back, but Cmdr. Saleoun had already cleared the area of most of his men. Other PAVN patrols could now also be heard firing as they closed in. Partially behind an anthill lay another PAVN soldier. He was already unconscious or dead, but Cmdr. Saleoun took no chances, snap shooting half a dozen shots at close range. A man darted forward and grabbed a backpack beside the dead soldier. It wasn't possible to go any farther forward, so we beat a hasty retreat, trying to catch up with the lead elements who had already left the scene.

ABOVE LEFT: Civilian women volunteer to carry supplies for an ANS column. This particular column was over 600 in strength.

LEFT: Four Soviet-made wooden box mines (right) and POMZ-2 metal fragmentation stake mines (left). Wooden box mines are buried and are capable of blowing off both legs; POMZ-2s are surface trip-wire detonated.



RPGs ACROSS CAMBODIA

Both sides in the war seem to favor a heavy ratio of rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers, using them in a direct fire support role. In that capacity they seem to be a very effective weapon for suppressing the opposition.

RPG-2s are preferred to the more powerful RPG-7s. There are complaints that in the rainy season RPG-7 rockets sometimes fail to detonate when the soil is wet and soft, needing to strike on something more solid to detonate.

The communist Khmer Rouge now has the new Chinese RPG-62s. While there is prestige in carrying this latest and more powerful launcher, its electronic trigger system has been prone to short circuits when wet.

U.S.-made M79 grenade launchers are still used but in limited numbers, one suspects because of supply problems.

Like the communist Khmer Rouge, the non-communist resistance factions must also rely on China for arms. They complain that they are kept in short supply, unlike the more favored Khmer Rouge.

There also seems to be a serious lack of RPD light machine guns in the non-communist factions, whereas these weapons are seen in abundance with the Khmer Rouge.

Distant booms warned of incoming mortar rounds on their way. Our pace became a fast jog. Breath came in lung-tearing gasps. The first incoming rounds rushed in and everyone threw themselves flat. The explosion was unseen, a hundred meters off. The PAVN must have had a contact report or we were passing through a predesignated defensive fire zone.

The approach to target had been at a fast pace; withdrawal from contact was even faster. With sporadic mortar rounds impacting in the area, we had every incentive to leave. In case we were in any doubt, the PAVN artillery firebase at Ampil began to lob 122mm shells at us. In some ways the shelling was comforting, as it was a fair indication that there were no patrols already in the vicinity waiting for us.

A knot of men stood in the shade of trees ahead as Wuthy Kong, the paramedic, attended to a wounded Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) soldier. Working quickly and skillfully, he changed the dressing he had already applied at the scene of the contact. An intravenous drip was hooked up to counter shock. The wound was slight, caused by a fragmentation (frag) from an RPG rocket. A stretcher was rigged up using a hammock slung under a stout pole. This enabled two people to carry the wounded man at the same pace as the rest of the column, avoiding what could be a lethal delay.

The ambush had been typical of contacts in Cambodia — close-quarters, sudden, short and deadly. The original target was a small dirt road where the PAVN had, unusually for them, fallen into the bad habit of sending a resupply truck at the same time each morning to one of its bases close to the Thailand-Cambodia border. A fatal mistake in an unforgiving war.

Khoun Saleoun, commander of 212 Battalion of the KPNLF, was tasked with laying an ambush to take out the truck and escort. On the day itself, the on-site situation called for an instant revision of the plan. The truck was late. One PAVN foot patrol was allowed to pass through the ambush site in the hope that the truck would still materialize. When a second, larger PAVN foot patrol walked down the track into the ambush site, it was engaged. Of the 30 PAVN soldiers who walked into it, 17 never came out.

We moved all day through open forest at a steady pace. The speed of movement made everyone uneasy. The monotony of the forest terrain, together with the blistering humid heat, made every step an effort. Knowing that the PAVN may be holding you in their sights at any time keeps you going, anxious not to be left behind.

Mile after sweat-soaked mile the column advanced.

Occasionally it stopped so Cmdr. Saleoun could confer with the lead trackers. Moments such as these were seized by the men to collapse into any available shade. Despite the apparently rich forest foliage, the trees gave surprisingly little shade. The burning orb of the sun seemed to hover only a few feet above the trees, sucking the moisture out of every living thing. You could almost hear it being sucked out of the ground.

More often breaks in the relentless pace were prompted by the trackers' fast hand signals, which sent a quart of adrenaline pumping straight to the heart. Was it contact? Everybody froze, slowly sank to earth and scanned the terrain with their noses buried in the sandy soil. Were the PAVN there? Had they seen us? Was there better cover at hand? Then a fast 360-degree check to try to sense where the incoming would erupt from.

We studied the trackers' every motion as they crouched ahead of us behind a clump of grass. One spider shuffled quickly toward Cmdr. Saleoun, never standing erect, keeping four points of contact with the ground at all times; AK always pointing up the trail. He reached Cmdr. Saleoun. Hurried whispers carried in the still, fetid air. Heart pounding in your ears drowning out other sounds as you strained to listen to any sound not made by the men around you.

Some of the men were quickly camming out, grabbing small branches, clumps of grass, green creepers, anything to weave into their webbing or stuff in cam straps on hats. The lead tracker was up and moving quickly ahead. Hand signals from the men in front and everybody was up, quickly striding forward in haste to leave what might have been a place they would never leave.

All day these stops and starts. Some only for a few seconds. Others that went on for torturous minutes. None of them afforded a chance to relax for a second. Each sudden stop completely drained you.

The sun began to slide toward the horizon. The afternoon shadows grew long and lazy, the only relaxed thing in sight. The light grew richer in tones of burnished gold. Up ahead a murmuring hubbub of voices as a cluster of men gathered around something hidden in the ground. Water. After an endless day without finding any, there it was. A small stagnant puddle of gray-green liquid.

The rains were late this year, which meant most of the water points had long since dried up. The few that remained offered a hot, tepid broth of mud and tadpoles. The repugnant smell and bitter taste helped water conservation, as nobody was keen to drink any more than he absolutely had to.

A quick security cordon had been thrown around the water point because PAVN patrols monitor all known water points for signs of the resistance forces. They set large ambushes close to them and lay mines around the water points themselves. Resistance forces also claim that the PAVN poison the water, so they look for dead insects or tadpoles before drinking any.

In the dry season men who become separated and lost after one of the frequent clashes can soon die of thirst. Looking at the surrounding green world it was hard to believe that water shortage could be such a problem. But the water table is very low, sometimes more than 60 feet down.

No time was wasted; once water bottles were topped off, we moved on. The afternoon became night as suddenly as if somebody had flicked a switch. Not the still, quiet night of northern climes, but night filled with the shrill whine of millions of insects. Those not screeching were too busy crawling or flying. Even these seemed to screech as they moved, until the night was literally alive with them. Big, fat mysterious things flew into your face and tangled in your hair, madly beating their multiple wings to escape. They flew in your ears, up your nose, smacked your eyes, disappeared down your shirt collar and drowned in sweat. When you sat down, the ground was alive with ants which tramped all over you and arbitrarily bit you.

Worst of all were the mosquitoes which mercilessly assaulted you whether you were walking, standing, sitting or lying down. They even tried to choke you when you breathed them in.



Two photos taken during KPNLF ambush of PAVN. Below, barely visible through smoke from RPG rocket, a KPNLF man, second from right, points out a target to other men; just visible on extreme left is a PAVN soldier. Bottom, KPNLF soldier retrieves Kalashnikov from dead PAVN soldier.





Others wedged in your ears, where they shrilly whined demented tunes to drive you crazy.

With the night the column continued its punishing pace. Foliage clawed at your clothes or whiplashed back at you from the passage of those in front. There was nothing pleasant or easy about night moves in Cambodia. Always the threat of contact. Them and us. If you were a "them" you tried to kill an "us," and vice versa. In the hide-and-seek world of the forest, there was no room for mistakes.

Soft soil underfoot gave way to hard-baked mud. Fields long abandoned by man. The column edged its way around a clearing, probably one of the abandoned fields. The moon began to rise and Cmdr. Saleoun called a halt.

All around me the shadowy forms of armed men, too tired to talk, sat down and vanished in tall grass. We were to hold up for a few hours: No fires to cook rice, no hammocks to rest in. The mosquitoes multiplied until they hovered above our heads in dark clouds like a distant storm. Cold rice or packets of dehydrated noodles were eaten silently. Sentries posted in a wide perimeter meant we could snatch a few hours' sleep.

Hats drawn down over the face and collars turned up to try to ward off the mosquitoes. It was no protection. Wrists, neck, face, hands, all began to break out in lumps and bumps. Despite this, exhaustion took over and we slipped into a light sleep.

My eyes were no sooner closed than somebody was shaking me. Time to go. Two hours had vanished. Everybody else was standing up ready to move off. I made a quick feel over the ground to check that nothing was left in the dark shadows of the earth. Pack up and move off. The same fast pace. The trackers must have had searchlights for eyes; how did they find their way?

Ditches, must be really close to habitation, but no dogs. Abandoned. We connected with an old track. Ruts left by carts were set solid. No cart had passed this way for many years.

LEFT: ANS soldier armed with AK-47 advances with others after contact with PAVN.

BELOW: Khmer Rouge soldier armed with RPD LMG. This much-sought-after weapon is only available in large numbers to the Khmer Rouge.



CAMBODIA'S K5 PLAN

Cambodia has been devastated by almost every disaster that can befall a nation — war, famine, foreign occupation and invasion. As if that weren't enough suffering, Vietnam and the government it installed after the 1978 invasion, the Heng Samrin government, have a plan for Cambodia.

It is called *TOV Kap Prey* (Clearing Plan), also known as the "K5 plan." The goal of the plan is to completely seal the Thailand-Cambodia border. This is to be achieved in four ways:

1. The building of a physical barrier. This can be either a chain-link or bamboo fence. In other areas, where the terrain is suitable, an additional wide canal is to be constructed.
2. By laying mines. As many as four million mines may have already been laid.
3. Heavy concentrations of Vietnamese soldiers in a free-fire zone running along this entire border.
4. Large-scale deforestation projects to deprive the resistance of forest sanctuaries.

The plan was started in 1983, with deforestation work beginning in 1985. In order to achieve these aims, civilian labor is forcibly conscripted to work on the K5 plan. Everyone between the ages of 16 and 45 is eligible for conscription. It is estimated that as many as 120,000 civilians are engaged in this work at any one time. Guards are posted to prevent escape.

Conditions for the work force are primitive. In many areas of heavy malarial forest, no accommodation is provided for the work force. As a result, up to 80% are affected with malaria. The food ration is poor, and food is only distributed to those who work. Being sick is no reason not to work.

The work is often in contested regions, which means there are many antipersonnel mines. The method of clearing the mines is to walk the civilians through several times and then slash and burn the forest. The result of all this is heavy casualties among the civilian labor force. As many as 100,000 civilians have died so far as a direct result of the K5 plan. That is almost 100 civilian deaths per day.

If you survive two three-month work periods on the K5 plan, you are rewarded with a K5 travel document. This entitles you to travel without further written permission. If you make a journey without a travel document, you are liable to instant arrest.

Unbelievably, the pace became even faster. After two more hours we stopped, drenched with sweat. Little globules of sweat ran down your face and dripped off eyebrows, nose, chin or raced in muddy rivulets down your neck. Hot, pungent odors wafted up from your stinking frame.

Sand pasted to your clothes gave them a rough, sandpaper texture. At the sharp end of war you are filthy dirty all the time. Dirt cloaks you. It clings to your clothes, it sticks in your matted hair, it fills your boots. It oozes out of every pore in your body. It's in everything you eat and drink. Every fiber in your body screams out for a hot shower, clean sheets. I was eternally grateful not to have fleas.

The war in Cambodia is one of those events that attracts very little media attention. Most independent reports come out of Phnom Penh from journalists who are strictly controlled to ensure they see and report only what the Heng Samrin government wants reported. The continued presence of 180,000 Vietnamese soldiers seems to be overlooked.

Vietnam is also allowing thousands of its own people to settle in Cambodia. Current estimates of the number of Vietnamese settlers go as high as 350,000. They are exempt from service in the Cambodian military or work on the K5 plan (see the accompanying "Cambodia's K5 Plan").

The Khmers fear a Vietnamization of Cambodia in which Vietnam will eradicate the Cambodian culture, finally achieving a long-sought pacification and conquest of Cambodia. As a counter to these charges, the Vietnamese point out that they are allowing Indian archaeologists to renovate the ancient capital of the Khmer empire, Angkor Wat.

Angkor Wat is of symbolic importance to all Khmers because it was the capital city and hub of the once-vast Khmer empire. To ensure it lies in Vietnamese hands, a very strong military cordon is placed around it, a wide defensive belt that extends over five kilometers from the ruins themselves.

Not much farther north lie rolling hills from which the resistance can look down on the pillars of Angkor Wat and wonder how many more years they will have to fight before they can visit their most important national monument in peace.

There is no question that the current success story from the resistance point of view is that of the *Armée Nationale Sihanoukiste* (ANS). They are the Royalist forces of His Royal Highness (HRH) Norodom Sihanouk, onetime king of Cambodia until he abdicated in 1955. Now he is the head of the coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea, which is the government in exile recognized by the United Nations.

The rise in fortunes of the ANS is largely due personally to HRH Norodom Ranaridd, one of HRH Sihanouk's sons and military commander of the ANS. Rewarded this year with a promotion to lieutenant colonel, Prince Ranaridd has substantially reorganized the ANS and instilled in it a tremendous sense of purpose. His military plans rely on both penetrating to the heartland of central Cambodia and maintaining the majority of his forces deep inside.

Since 1985 when ANS forces penetrated to the Tonle Sap, the great lake in central Cambodia, they have consolidated their gains and expanded their sphere of operations. This has required careful planning of logistic support. A continuous hard effort by Prince Ranaridd's men to carry out orders has enabled the ANS to realize plans for a truly mobile guerrilla force battling the PAVN on ground of the ANS's choosing.

It has also brought rewards in the form of internal recruitment and training of volunteers. The ANS now has a full-time training team inside Cambodia, led by Captain Sambat Hov and Captain Te Kow. Both these young officers exude a calm confidence in the successes of the difficult task they face.

They conduct a one-month training program which requires new recruits to undergo training in basic fieldcraft such as camouflage and concealment, elementary tactics, how to cache and recover arms and food supplies, intelligence gathering and small arms skills. As the training must be conducted in the field, classes are kept to about 30 men. The training facility must be totally mobile, as the PAVN conducts periodic sweeps

to find and destroy it.

This year has also seen the ANS deploy its first mobile surgical field hospital, staffed by qualified surgeons capable of conducting major surgery in the field. The main casualty flow is from victims of malaria and mines, the latter nearly always requiring amputation.

As far as the ANS is concerned, gone are the days of limited operations close to the Thailand border where they could be contained by superior numbers of PAVN troops much better equipped than their own men. Now that they have not only penetrated to the heartland but also firmly established themselves there, the problems facing the PAVN in dislodging them will take a quantum leap.

The scale of the war should be kept in perspective. It is still a low-intensity conflict. The resistance has a long way to go before it poses a serious military threat to the continued presence of the PAVN. After all, the PAVN is still arguably the best light infantry in the world — it has had a lot of practice. But in past conflicts it was the indigenous force. Now it is an occupying army, tied to all the responsibilities of a conventional army in securing control of the hostile local population. A large portion of PAVN is kept tied down protecting basic lines of communication, in the rear with the gear.

According to Major Hang Yuth, one of the very capable

ANS soldier wears lucky charms called *katha* around his neck. Colored tube is full of *katha*, usually made of carved ivory with religious sayings inscribed on them.



up-and-coming young ANS commanders, PAVN sweeps to clear areas of resistance forces tend to become large and unwieldy, allowing the resistance to move out of harm's way, to surface after the sweep has passed by.

If at this stage the resistance cannot hope to defeat the PAVN militarily, they have the heartening knowledge that they will continue to grow in strength, whereas it is doubtful that Vietnam is able or willing to commit any more troops to the field. But the PAVN must maintain a large superiority of numbers in the field if they hope to contain the expanding opposition.

The Soviet Union underwrites both the Vietnam economy and the cost of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, assessed at between \$1 and \$2 billion annually. In return, the Soviets use the naval and air facilities at Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang.

It is in the area of open support that the ANS is being sadly let down. All three of the aligned resistance factions rely on arms from China, but China reserves the lion's share of its military support for the communist Khmer Rouge.

So far the Western powers have dragged their heels over supporting the non-communist resistance. While generous in comparison to other Western countries, America's total annual commitment to the non-communist resistance in Cambodia is only \$3.5 million.

As a result, for the men in the field doing the fighting and dying, there remain grave shortfalls of even basic items of equipment. Boots, backpacks, water bottles, belts, hammocks, ponchos, all the normal support paraphernalia remain in short supply. The cost of maintaining one ANS soldier in the field is put at 1.5 Thai *baht* per day — approximately 4 U.S. cents.

When traveling with the ANS inside Cambodia, you can't help but be impressed by their professionalism. Nothing puts all the training and experience to the test like contact.

We sat talking to Commander Son Kiri and his Adjutant Major Hang Yuth. They were leading a special force of 150 soldiers on an operation. A hundred meters from where we sat, surrounded by other thirsty and weary ANS soldiers, was a small water point. It was because of this water point we were able to enjoy a few minutes of rest, as stragglers caught up and water bottles were filled.

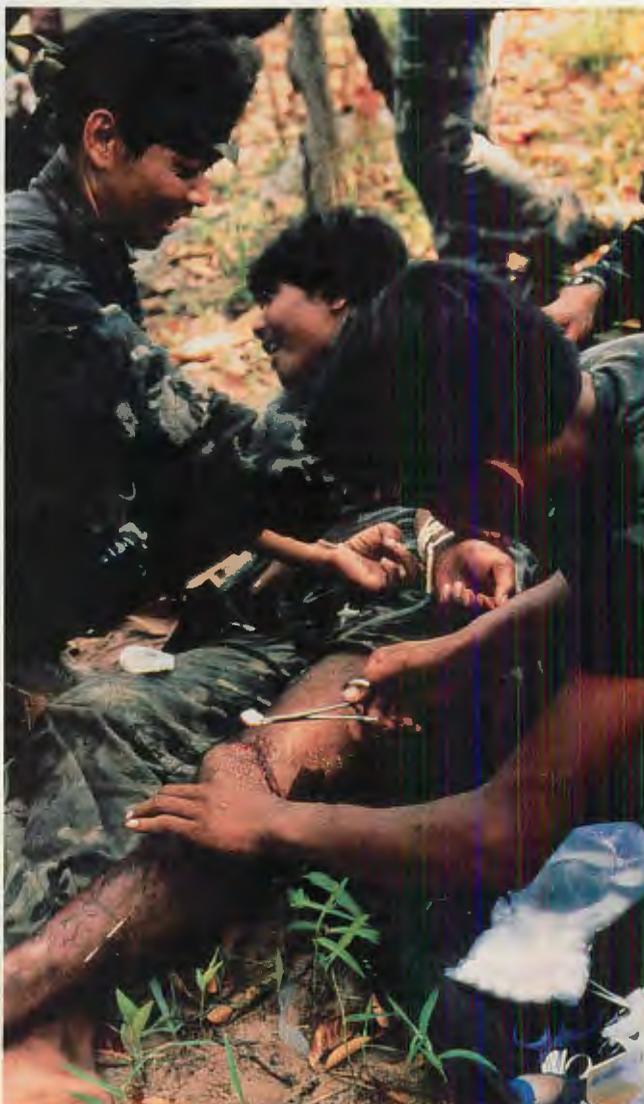
After two weeks with a unit of the ANS deep inside Cambodia, we were looking forward to showers, clean sheets and safety. As we chatted, the column began to move off and we tagged along, about 30 or 40 men from the head of the column.

The lead scouts were forging ahead to put a decent gap between themselves and the rest of the column. Only because we were so close to safety had the column begun to move off as soon as the scouts moved. Usually the scouts would have been much farther forward.

The clearing was about 120 meters across. About 30 meters in, the column concertinaed to a stop. Something had gone very much astray. No one stops so soon after a rest, and certainly never out in the blistering heat of the midday sun. Colonel Ueung Bountay was immediately on the radio net to check it out.

At the time of the old Lon Nol government he had taken a course in Austin, Texas, and his fluency in the language made a huge difference, allowing a constant flow of information.

There were two loud reports, like outgoing shots. Major Hang Yuth moved forward while calling up a gun group and men with RPGs. As he called them forward he cast a glance



Continued on page 75

Paramedic Wuthy Kong attends wounded KPNLF soldier.

FORGET combat. Forget the mosquitoes, flooding, mud and the steaming jungle. Ignore the weariness and boredom, the soreness and the celibacy. Each of these and more may assume critical importance for a time. But each is simply a distraction from that single concern which most preoccupies soldiers in the field — food.

This correspondent recently spent three weeks with anti-Vietnamese guerrillas in Cambodia's northwest province of Batdambang. Self-supplied operational gear included 200 water purification tablets, six packages of cigarettes and emergency rations comprising three dehydrated full-course meals in waterproof pouches. Those with a scatological tendency would also have noticed a roll of toilet paper.

Everything else consumed during the course of our mission was gathered in the wild, purchased from villagers or hauled in from Thailand on the back of some soldier. Together these sources provided surprisingly varied fare, given the circumstances. The occasional yearning for a peanut-butter sandwich or a breakfast at one of Bangkok's finer hotels bore no reflection on the resourcefulness and generosity of our hosts, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge).

Food gathered in the wild ranged from the mundane to the exotic. Several days spent at one campsite saw our staple diet dominated by bamboo shoots, usually served in a broth. Another location yielded "potatoes" — two or three varieties of fleshy root that grow elbow-deep in the ground and are eaten raw or boiled. Once the Khmer Rouge served us sweet pumpkin soup, a delicacy that appeared to have come from a small garden at the mobile headquarters of its 450th Division.

As it was the rainy season, the most common resource was water. We filled our canteens in ponds and streams and rice paddies, the two Westerners in our party always adding a chlorine-based purification tablet. For sweeter and clearer water we bottled the rain that streamed off the canopies covering our hammocks.

Soldiers on the march would sometimes scoop up yellow buds whose name was translated as "snow flowers." These are munched raw as a salad or they may be boiled in a soup. Also fairly prevalent were small mud crabs most often found in paddy fields and rather tasty when roasted. A couple of times we came across wild fruit trees, though of precisely what sort was uncertain. One fruit suggested pomegranates, another hinted of lime.

Some soldiers supplemented their basic diet with small birds and squirrels, both taken with slingshots. Snakes and lizards sometimes found their way into the stew pot. One evening a grinning Khmer Rouge guerrilla presented us with a two-foot fish. "How did you catch it?" I asked through an interpreter. With his rifle, he said. "You shot it?" I asked incredulously. No, he said, he bashed it over the head with a rifle butt as

SOF SOUTHEAST ASIA

GUERRILLA GOURMET

Chow Time in Cambodia

Text & Photos by Robert Karniol



ABOVE: Preparing rice at Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) base camp.

GALLOPING GUERRILLA GOURMET

Robert Karniol is the Hong Kong correspondent for *Jane's Defence Weekly* and a freelance writer specializing in military affairs. He has also written extensively for *Far Eastern Military Review*. We welcome Mr. Karniol's first contribution to *Soldier of Fortune*.

it swam by.

Another day and another rifle butt brought us a pangolin — an armadillo-like creature nearly three feet long from tip to tail — that was chopped up and boiled for breakfast. Mainly gristle and bone, it was served with rice-and-"potato" gruel and proved just passably edible. Considerably better was a small deer, this time shot. Served in bite-sized roasted chunks with soya sauce and steamed rice on the side, it was a delicious treat.

Most of our food was purchased from villagers. In Batdambang Province at least, Thai currency is freely accepted at exchange



ABOVE: Food supplies purchased from village skirted on march with KPNLF.

LEFT: KPNLF guerrilla returns to camp with food supplies purchased from nearby village.

RIGHT: Preparing bamboo shoots at KPNLF base camp.

BELOW: Woman at mobile Khmer Rouge headquarters, 450 Division, prepares chicken for lunch.



rates that vary between four and five Cambodian *riels* to one Thai *baht*.

Rice was, of course, the basic staple, loosely rationed at about a half-pound per man per day. It was transported in bulk in waterproof nylon tubes slung over the shoulder. Most often the rice was accompanied by salted dry fish. Villagers also provided rather good pork sausages, live chickens and ducks, oranges, coconuts and a few prepared dishes, among them a cooked rice concoction wrapped in leaves.

Several types of cake were equally available, some obviously homemade (pasty stuff wrapped in leaves) and some that appeared to be commercially prepared (biscuits shaped like pistols and cars). There were different types of candy, too. Other treats included rice wine in moderate amounts and Khmer sugar, which is reminiscent of molasses.

The villages were also our source for smokes. I bought *Liberation* and *National* brand cigarettes at 100 Thai *baht* for 10 packages. The KPNLF and Khmer Rouge bought tobacco in bulk for rationed distribution to their troops, who roll them into cigarettes using notepaper or leaves.

Supplies transported into the field from Thailand included tinned sardines and a bit of dried beef, both of which lasted for just the first few days. Instant noodle soup served to revitalize the wet and weary on the march, and condiments like dried chili peppers, salt and soya sauce help enliven bland meals. Of course, we set out with supplies of rice, dried fish and tobacco as well.

At the KPNLF base camp where we spent about a week, we found a single jar of instant coffee, together with a pouch of whitener and another of sugar. There was also a bottle of whiskey, which was portioned out to officers and guests on special occasions. The Khmer Rouge's big treat, meanwhile, comprised several tins of sweetened condensed milk. I had never before tasted this and it proved to be an ambrosia when mixed generously with hot water.

All this talk of food suggests it might also be worthwhile mentioning that each soldier appeared to have a toothbrush and toothpaste. The Khmer Rouge division commander, Sok Pheap, with whom we stayed one night, used Close-Up toothpaste made in Thailand.

The KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge were indulgent with their Western guests, showering us with delicacies and always urging that we take more. The KPNLF depends mainly on villagers for its food in the field, paying in cash. The Khmer Rouge, larger in number and with better-organized transport units, seems to import as much as it acquires locally. In fact, one aim of Vietnam's recently introduced strategic-hamlet policy is to cut off the guerrillas from their village food supplies.

The day after returning home to Hong Kong, this correspondent went shopping for groceries. Leading off my shopping was a tin of sweetened condensed milk. Somehow it doesn't taste as good now. ✕

IN 1977 Jean-Bedel Bokassa gained world attention when he crowned himself emperor of the poverty-stricken Central African Republic, which he christened the Central African Empire (CAE). Bokassa's multimillion-dollar coronation spectacle demonstrated an unbounded megalomania which was matched only by his random, senseless brutality. Bokassa's French supporters tolerated his antics until finally, on the night of 20-21 September 1979, they could stand no more.

The Central African Republic is the former French colony of Oubangi-Chari; and Bokassa was formerly Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa, and before that an NCO in the French army. The French still held great political and economic leverage in Africa. French firms kept the CAE's economy afloat. Of course, most of the CAE's share of the proceeds went straight into Bokassa's coffers. So, from 1966, when he first seized power, until 1979, Bokassa and the French advanced together, if not with clasped hands, then at least with hands in each other's pockets.

Bokassa was a lifelong Francophile. As a soldier in France's colonial army he fought well in World War II, and he later survived the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina in 1954. He eventually rose to the rank of captain, a significant achievement for an African in the French army. It was his fascination with Napoleon that led to his crowning himself emperor, as Napoleon had done 173 years before. Bokassa attended the funeral of Charles DeGaulle and was so bereaved that he had to be helped from the grave site as he sobbed, "Papa, Papa." His first words upon assuming power, "Vive la France," were a tribute to the country which would one day send its troops to remove him from office.

Bokassa was, in a sense, a religious and family man. His religious orientation changed frequently, usually from Christian to Muslim and back again. During a visit from Libya's Colonel Khadaffi, Bokassa announced his conversion to Islam and pledged devotion to the religion. Bokassa had converted back to Christianity by the time Khadaffi's plane was in the air on its return to Libya.

In March 1977, on the occasion of the birth of his 30th child, Bokassa declared a national holiday. Among the congratulatory greetings he received was one from Idi Amin of Uganda, himself the father of 32 children. Bokassa's respect for women led him to release all women from prison in celebration of Mother's Day in 1971. As an additional gesture he ordered the immediate execution of any person imprisoned for having killed his mother. Two men were put to death.

Among his other acts to curb crime, in 1972 he started a policy of cutting off the ear of a convicted thief for each of his first two offenses and a hand for the third. When that failed to stop crime, Bokassa personally took part in public beating of imprisoned thieves. Three of the thieves died, 46 were maimed for life and the survivors were put

SOF AFRICA END OF EMPIRE



French Marines Depose Emperor Bokassa I

by David C. Isby

RIGHT: Central African Republic, formerly Central African Empire under Emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa I.



on display for six hours under the hot African sun.

Bokassa's cruelties weren't reserved for those accused of crimes but took in many of his countrymen and foreigners as well. Associated Press reporter Michael Goldsmith, reporting from the capital city of Bangui, once filed a story that included unkind remarks about Bokassa. He had been unable to raise Paris and so the story had been sent to South Africa over commercial telex lines for retransmission to Paris. In the process the report was garbled and,

LEFT: Bokassa's fascination with Napoleon led to his crowning himself emperor in December 1977, as Napoleon had done 173 years before. Photo: Sygma

MULTITALENTED WRITER

Author David C. Isby is well known to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine readers as an expert on Afghanistan and Soviet affairs. He spent 10 years as editor of *Strategy & Tactics* magazine in New York, was a congressional staffer on Capitol Hill, authored *Jane's Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army* and has published over 100 articles in various military and foreign affairs publications. When David isn't traveling, writing and researching, he practices law and is a consultant on international affairs in Washington, DC.

when a copy reached Bokassa, he assumed that Goldsmith was an agent of the South Africans. He ordered Goldsmith brought to his palace (one of nine Bokassa maintained). After warmly greeting the reporter he struck him in the head with a large club. Bokassa's bodyguards continued the beating and Goldsmith was interned in a local prison. Negotiations freed the battered reporter a month later. Prior to his departure Bokassa again summoned Goldsmith to his palace and bade him good-bye, kissing Goldsmith on both cheeks.

By 1979, the love affair between Bokassa and the French had begun to turn sour. Bokassa's brutalities had been getting out of hand. A number of opposition groups sprang up, some around the exiled President David Dacko, who had been president until then-Colonel

THE TRIALS OF BOKASSA

The problems of the Central African Republic (CAR) did not end when Bokassa went into exile on the Ivory Coast and in France, where he spent his time having someone write his memoirs, plotting revenge and dreaming of past glories. Cocaine has nothing on revenge when it comes to addictive thrills.

In the CAR, David Dacko was finding out that the country, brutally poor at the best of times, had been bankrupted by Bokassa's greed. Many of the very few educated people in the CAR had been driven into exile by Bokassa. Bilateral aid from the United States, suspended under Bokassa, was not resumed under Dacko. Political opposition became increasingly vocal. A drought pushed the economy beyond insolvency and into meltdown.

Dacko, ruling by decree, put up a fight. In best Third World style, he bribed the opposition by creating more useless government jobs. To provide employment for the masses, he started a road building campaign. Still no money. Looking at external enemies, he suspended diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (remembering the Soviet-Libyan relationship) and in 1980 held a full-scale trial *in absentia* for Bokassa, sentencing the old boy to death. All of this was not good enough, and in 1981 Dacko was overthrown by General Andre Kolingba, chief of staff, in a bloodless coup.

Into the morass of governmental and economic failure stepped — Bokassa! A legend in his own mind, he probably pictured himself being acclaimed as a national savior when he stepped off the plane from the Ivory Coast on 23 October 1986. But to his surprise, and no one else's, he was instead dropped into prison and put on trial.

In a six-month trial Bokassa, defended by French lawyers, behaved with



Smiling ex-emperor Bokassa waves as he sits under guard in Bangui court awaiting the opening of his trial for murder and cannibalism. Photo: Wide World

surprising strength and dignity, more befitting a French soldier than an imitation Idi Amin. But the facts were relentless. The list of charges started at page one of the catalog of human crime and ran through the book: cannibalism, 20 murders, complicity to murder, arrest and torture of children, illegal arrest and imprisonment, embezzlement of \$15 million, poisoning his grandson, and secret dealings with Libya. Through the efforts of his attorneys and the CAR's desire to appear fair, Bokassa beat the cannibalism rap, along with some of the complicity to murder charges and the murder of

his grandson. For the rest, however, on 12 June 1987, Bokassa was found guilty as sin.

A hush fell over the capital city of Bangui. CAR policemen and troops went on alert, along with the French forces (which have remained in the CAR to support the French commitment to Chad) which stayed in barracks to back them up if necessary. But even the members of Bokassa's Mbaka tribe — 10 percent of the capital's population — did not rise. All that appeared on the streets was a horde of termites that swept into town like a carpet.

Bokassa still has a number of appeals left, and it is considered likely that Andre Kolingba will commute his sentence to life in prison, even though if Bokassa paid for his crimes with his life, he would be getting away cheaply.



LEFT: French paratroopers move out from a C-160 Transall transport plane during Operation Barracuda. Photo: ECP Armées

Bokassa's coup in 1966. Dacko himself had gained the presidency through an election where he gained 99.4 percent of the vote through a procedure that would have made North Korea look democratic.

Also disconcerting, from the French point of view, were two left-wing groups whose existence was a potential threat not just to the Bokassa regime but to the French economic investment as well. While the *Organization de Liberation du Centrafrique* (OLC) and the *Mouvement de Liberation du*

BELOW: Emperor Bokassa on two-ton gold-plated throne he had built for his coronation as emperor of the cruelly poor Central African Republic. Photo: Sygma





LEFT: Bokassa's coronation was a multimillion-dollar spectacle which caught the eye of the world because of the abject poverty of his "empire." Photo: Sygma

Peuple Centrafricaine (MPLC) were not a great threat by 1979, the French could not have relished another Chad-style conflict, especially one that would link them in the world's eye with the hideous Bokassa.

Bokassa had not been idle himself. As well as maintaining links — often financial — with the French, he had also been strengthening his ties with other like-minded rulers, giving him a backup if he were to lose, despite his largess, the continued goodwill of his French supporters. Bokassa gained the friendship and support of Libya's Colonel Khadafi, a man always willing to shake a bloody hand. The colonel

Continued on page 77

TROUPES DE MARINE

The French marine units which overthrew Bokassa and which still make up much of the French military presence in Africa and the Third World are not marines in the Anglo-American sense. The French navy's amphibious commando force is *Les Fusiliers Marine*. The *Troupes de Marine* are the old colonial units of the French regular army, euphemistically renamed in the 1950s when "colonial" became a dirty word. The French marine units make up, along with the professional elements of the Parachute Division and the French Foreign Legion, France's out-of-Europe garrison and force projection capability.

The paratroopers of the *Troupes de Marine* who took part in Operation Barracuda are close to what the French novelist and former soldier Jean Larteguy described as "composed entirely of young enthusiasts in camouflage uniforms, who would not be put on display but from whom impossible efforts would be demanded and to whom all sorts of tricks would be taught. That's the army in which I should like to fight."

The French *Troupes de Marine* is a force of all arms — airborne, infantry, armor, artillery. It consists largely of professional soldiers and volunteers, unlike French army units — including paratroops — which are largely made up of draftees. This is an important distinction, since French draftees cannot be compelled to serve overseas. The draftees from metropolitan France assigned to marine units either agree to serve overseas or are sent to one of the battalion-sized regiments, mostly mechanized infantry or artillery, serving in France or West Germany.

Marine units include the *Force d'Action Rapide* 9th Marine Division, headquartered in Nantes. Battalion-sized



French paratroopers of the *Troupes de Marine* — the men who carried out Operation Barracuda to oust Emperor Bokassa from the Central African Empire (now the Central African Republic). They have provided much of the French strength in Chad since Libya escalated the war in that country in 1983. Photo: ECP Armées

marine combat teams serve in Gabon, the Antilles, Guiana, Senegal, Ivory Coast, New Caledonia and Tahiti. Three marine paratroop regiments are part of the 11th Airborne Division, another *Force d'Action Rapide* unit. The marine units that took part in Operation Barracuda were among these. An additional

marine mechanized regiment in the 6th Light Armored Division is earmarked for overseas deployment, while the 1st Marine Parachute Infantry Regiment (1ere RPIMa) is considered the cream of the French airborne. Its missions include acting as pathfinders, long range reconnaissance patrols and other special missions. It is under the direct command of the Ministry of Defense.

While the Foreign Legion may retain the glories of the past, it is the *Troupes de Marine* that provide much of the French military capability overseas. Future crises anywhere in the world where French interests are at stake may see the appearance of these tough troops in camouflage units.

LIGHTWEIGHT CONTENDER

China's Revolutionary Auto Grenade Launcher

by Peter G. Kokalis Photos Courtesy NORINCO

FIRST fielded by the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, automatic grenade launchers have added a significant new dimension to modern warfare. They provide an effective countermeasure to both enemy personnel and infantry fighting vehicles at ranges close to two kilometers.

Recently adopted by the USMC, the MK 19 MOD 3 and its M430 40x53mm High Explosive Dual Purpose (HEDP) round can easily destroy a Soviet BMP at its maximum effective range of 1,600 meters. However, it weighs 75.6 pounds, empty. Mounting this weapon on Ma Deuce's M3 tripod adds another 44 pounds. Furthermore, changing its method of operation from the original advanced primer ignition to straight blowback has caused numerous operational failures and, to date, Maremont has not been successful in initiating series production.

Although adopted by the Soviet army in 1975, the blowback-operated, 30mm AGS-17 (*Avtomatischeskiy Granatnyot Stan-koviy* = tripod-mounted automatic grenade launcher) did not reach notoriety until the war in Afghanistan (see "Raiders of the Lost Grenade Launcher," SOF, February '83). Weighing close to 90 pounds, complete with its tripod and belt carrier containing 29 rounds, the effective range is 800 meters, with a maximum range of 1,730 meters. Called the *Plamya* (flame), this weapon is also mounted on Mi-8 Hip-E attack helicopters and the BMD reconnaissance vehicles.

Though effective when mounted in helicopters, armored fighting vehicles or river boats, both of these weapons, in my opinion, are too heavy for ground use. Modern infantry strike forces need lightweight, man-portable weapons that maximize their ability to hit the enemy hard and move swiftly.

Recognizing this, the People's Republic of China has introduced a new ultralightweight automatic grenade launcher that should influence future designs in this area

for decades. Work on this project commenced in 1980 by a team under the direction of Professor Lu Jia Peng of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the East China Institute of Technology in Nanjing. The result is nothing short of revolutionary, as the Type W-87 automatic grenade launcher weighs only 26.5 pounds, empty, complete with its bipod. This is only slightly more than most General Purpose Machine Guns. When mounted on its optional tripod, the total weight is only 44.2 pounds. Both the MK 19 MOD 3 and AGS-17 must be employed from a tripod, pedestal or turret, while the W-87 is completely self-contained, with its integral bipod mounted at the chamber end of the barrel. Overall length is a compact 40 inches.

Also unique for a weapon of this type is the method of operation, which is roller-locked, delayed blowback. A selective-fire bar on the left side of the trigger mechanism permits either semiautomatic or full-auto fire. Semiautomatic fire is obtained when the selector is fully forward. The middle position blocks the sear and prevents firing the weapon. Full-auto fire will result when the selector is pulled to its rear position. The cyclic rate is approximately 400 rpm, which is 25 rpm faster than the MK 19 MOD 3 and almost 100 rpm faster than the AGS-17. Feed is by means of either a 6-round box magazine or 9-round drum. Are these capacities inadequate? I don't think so. Armed with enough magazines, the L4 Bren Light Machine Gun can give any belt-fed GPMG a run for the money.

Equally new is the Type W-87's munition system. The 35mm round is available in either a dual-purpose shaped charge or High Explosive (HE) configuration. Both are set-back armed for bore safety after 12 meters and spin armed at approximately 30 meters. Each cartridge weighs approximately 8.75 ounces. Maximum range is 1,500 meters and the effective range is 600 meters. The shaped charge will penetrate 80mm of

armor plate. The HE round has a casualty radius of 10 meters. Muzzle velocity of this round is 560 fps, which is considerably less than the 1,200 fps generated by the U.S. M430 40x53mm round. (Note: This ammunition cannot be employed in the M79 or M203 grenade launchers.)

Fabricated from a lightweight alloy, Type W-87 barrels are fluted to improve cooling and further reduce the weight. An unusual flared muzzle brake with four cross-cuts on top significantly reduces muzzle climb. Professor Peng indicated to me that the weapon's recoil impulse is equivalent to the Soviet caliber 7.62x54R SG43 Goryunov medium machine gun. Somewhat astounding, if true, as the Type W-87 35mm round has more than twice the muzzle velocity of the 40x46mm semi-rimmed cartridge fired from the M79 grenade launcher.

All the metal exterior surfaces have been blued or black anodized. The buttstock (hooked on the bottom for the support hand), pistol grip and carrying handle grip panels have been fabricated from Manchurian Chu wood with an oiled finish.

A quick-detachable, low-power optical sight has been mounted to a rail on the receiver's right side. Equipped with a rubber eye cup, the optical sight has a small battery assembly, similar to that found on the PRC Type 69 (RPG-7) rocket launcher's optical unit, for night illumination. Iron sights, attached to the receiver and chamber-end of the barrel, are provided for emergency use.

Field tested and adopted, the Type W-87 has not yet entered series production. Brilliantly conceived, only time will tell if it is as brilliantly executed during its production phase. Government agencies desiring further information concerning the Type W-87 35mm automatic grenade launcher should contact its overseas representatives, NORINCO (China North Industries Corp.), Dept. SOF, 7A Yue Tan Nan Jie, P.O. Box 2137, Beijing, People's Republic of China. ✕



ABOVE: Firing the Type W-87 35mm automatic grenade launcher with 9-round drum from the prone position off its integral bipod. Weight in this configuration is an amazing 26.5 pounds, empty.

RIGHT: Firing the Type W-87 with 6-round box magazine from the tripod. Right-side view clearly shows the optical sight unit.



BELOW: Firing the Type W-87 with 9-round drum from its tripod, which weighs only 17.7 pounds. Note flared muzzle device with four cross-cuts on top. Recoil impulse of the W-87 is reputed to be no greater than that of the Goryunov medium machine gun.



GUNS BEHIND THE GREAT WALL

PART 6

Setting the Record Straight on the Type 63

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



ABOVE: SOF contributing author Bob Jordan fires the PRC Type 63 rifle, which proved to be uncontrollable in full auto.

LEFT: Type 63's 20-round magazine can be charged by means of clip guide in the bolt carrier using 10-round SKS stripper clips.



ABOVE: Close-up of the PRC Type 63 rifle's selector, which is set to "2," the full-auto position.

LEFT: PRC Type 63 sheet-metal receiver cover with the dust shield for the retracting-handle slot pulled to the rear.

In this sixth installment of our exclusive series on Chinese weaponry, *SOF T&Es* the Type 63 rifle, the first indigenous modern assault rifle produced by People's Republic of China (PRC) arsenals. This is a weapon that has been reported in the Western press — although never accurately. Here, for the first time, *SOF* presents the facts.

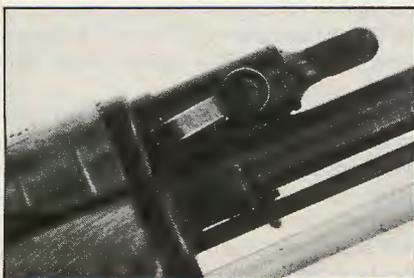
SOF thanks the PRC government for opening the People's Liberation Army Small Arms Research Institute to our Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis and contributing author Bob Jordan, and for allowing them to be the first Westerners to freely examine PRC military hardware in-country.

PRODUCTION of the U.S. M14 rifle ceased in 1963. Only 1,376,031 were delivered by the three contractors and Springfield Armory. In that same year the People's Republic of China adopted its first modern assault rifle of more or less indigenous design. Close to 6,000,000 were eventually produced. Every Western authority refers to this rifle as the Type 68, yet the Chinese call it the Type 63. They should know, it's their rifle. At one time more than 100 factories were involved in the production of the Type 63 and SKS (PRC Type 56) rifles. Most are closed today, as are many of the PRC's small arms munitions factories. Series production of the Type 63 rifle commenced in 1969. Today it is found only in the hands of the People's Militia, which serves as the manpower reserve. It will soon be replaced by the Type 81 rifle (see "Guns Behind the Great Wall," *SOF*, September '87). To my knowledge, the Type 63 rifle was never exported, at least not in any significant quantity. Errors and misconceptions about the Type 63 abound in Western small arms literature. *SOF*'s test and evaluation of this unusual rifle were the first ever granted to Westerners.

I found the Type 63 to be an odd blend of old and new, combining features of the Kalashnikov and SKS with some native innovations. It incorporates the two most salient characteristics of the modern assault rifle, as it is chambered for an intermediate-sized cartridge, the 7.62x39mm, and is capable of selective fire.

Overall length is 41.2 inches. The four-groove barrel has a right-hand twist with

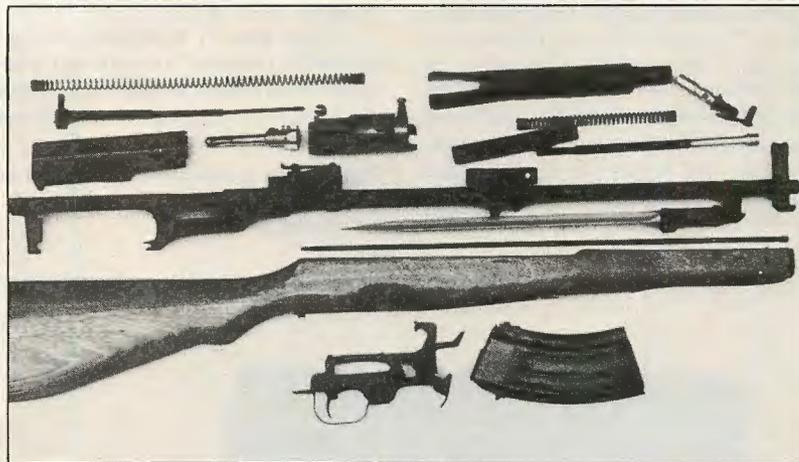
Close-up of the PRC Type 63 rifle's two-position gas regulator.



one turn in 9.6 inches. Total length of the barrel is 20.8 inches. Chambers and bores are chrome-plated. There is no muzzle device on the barrel and no grenade-launching capability. Somewhat heavy by today's standards, the weight, empty, is 8.6

pounds. Gas operated and firing from the closed-bolt position, the cyclic rate in full-auto fire is either 680 rpm or 725 rpm, depending upon the gas regulator position chosen.

Three major variants can be encountered.



PRC Type 63 rifle, fieldstripped.

TYPE 63 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** 7.62x39mm.
- Operation:** Gas operated with adjustable two-position regulator; piston not attached to the bolt carrier. Locking by means of rotary two-lug bolt. Fire from the closed-bolt position.
- Cyclic rate:** Varies with gas regulator setting: 680 rpm with regulator set to normal position, 725 rpm at adverse position.
- Feed:** Detachable 20-round staggered box-type magazine with hold-open.
- Weight, empty:** 8.6 pounds.
- Length, overall:** 41.2 inches.
- Barrel:** Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches. Chrome-plated chamber and bore.
- Barrel length:** 20.8 inches.
- Sights:** Hooded, round front post; adjustable for windage and elevation zero. Open, U-notch rear, sliding tangent type; adjustable for elevation from 100 to 800 meters in 100-meter increments; 300-meter battlesight setting marked "III."
- Finish:** Metal components salt-blued, except for unfinished bolt and carrier and hard-chromed gas regulator and piston head.
- Furniture:** Manchurian Chu wood or plastic buttstock; plastic upper handguard.
- Accessories:** Integral cruciform-type folding bayonet, sling, cleaning kit, plastic oil bottle, cleaning rod and spare parts and magazines.
- Status:** Adopted for service in the People's Liberation Army in 1963. Series production commenced in 1969. No longer in production. Currently in service with People's Militia only.
- 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:** Sturdy and reliable, with features of an indigenous nature combined with those of the Kalashnikov and SKS. Somewhat heavy by today's standards. Acceptable accuracy potential with high hit probability in the semiauto mode only. Lack of a muzzle brake and pistol grip degrades capability in the full-auto mode.

Some specimens have receivers fabricated from milled forgings. Others have pinned and riveted, stamped sheet-metal receivers but with two distinctly different bolt and bolt carrier configurations. Type 63 receivers consist of little more than a set of rails for the reciprocating parts, locking recesses for the bolt and a magazine-well. There are also three different types of recoil springs, guide rods, sheet-metal receiver covers and locking pins. The receiver covers protect only that portion of the receiver to the rear of the bolt carrier and have a sliding dust shield for the retracting-handle slot. Two different selector mechanisms were used at one time or another. And finally, both plastic and wood stocks were manufactured for the Type 63. Sounds confusing, and it is,

although understandable with 100 arsenals cranking out the same rifle.

With the exception of the bolt and bolt carrier (left "in the white"), piston head and gas regulator (hard-chromed), the steel components have been salt blued.

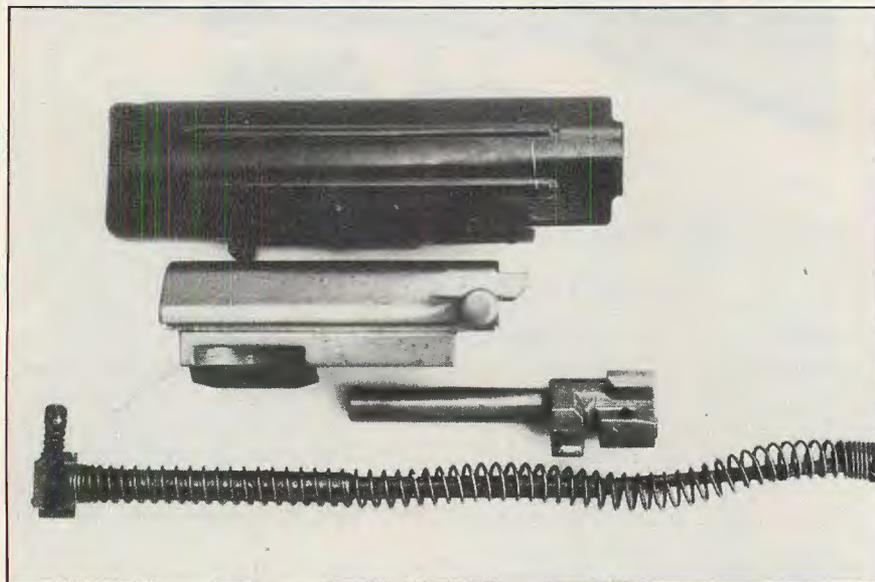
Both a cleaning rod and folding, cruciform-shaped bayonet of the PRC Type 56 (AK-47 and SKS) configuration are mounted under the barrel.

A front sight of the round post-type is attached to the barrel's muzzle end, directly above the bayonet's locking stud. Its protective hood necessitates a tool for adjustment

Type 63 bolt group, showing the sheet-metal receiver cover, bolt carrier, bolt, recoil spring and guide rod.

of elevation zero. Drifting the sight base to the right or left, after loosening its retaining screw, permits alteration of the windage zero. An open, U-notch rear sight of the conventional sliding tangent-type has been attached over the chamber to the barrel and receiver. Adjustable for elevation only, in 100-meter increments from 100 to 800 meters, a battlesight setting marked "III" is used for all ranges at 300 meters and below. The sight radius is 19 inches.

There is some confusion among Western authorities concerning the Type 63's magazine. Of all-steel construction, these detachable, staggered column, box magazines hold 20 rounds, not 15 as previously reported. The magazine follower is raised on the right side to operate a spring-loaded hold-open device in the magazine-well after the last round has been fired. When the magazine is removed or a loaded magazine inserted, retracting the bolt carrier to the rear slightly and then releasing it smartly will permit the bolt group to travel forward and chamber a round. Type 63 magazines can be loaded in the conventional manner after removal from the rifle or, when left in the rifle, with either single rounds or from 10-round SKS stripper clips using the clip



TYPE 63 RIFLE: METHOD OF OPERATION

When the trigger is pulled and the hammer strikes the firing pin (which is not spring-loaded) to ignite the primer, gas passes through a port in the gas block and into the gas cylinder housed in the upper handguard (protected by a sheet-metal heat shield). The piston, which has its own return spring and is not attached to the bolt carrier, is forced rearward to impinge upon the bolt carrier (in appearance similar to that of the SKS). The rotary bolt duplicates that of the Kalashnikov. After free travel of about 1/4 inch, a cam cut in the bolt carrier contacts the bolt's operating lug. Rotation of the bolt provides primary extraction. As the bolt moves rearward, the empty case is held to the bolt face by the spring-loaded extractor until it strikes the fixed ejector to be expelled out to the right. Ejection is violent and cases are frequently propelled as far as 40 feet. After the bolt carrier hits the rear wall of

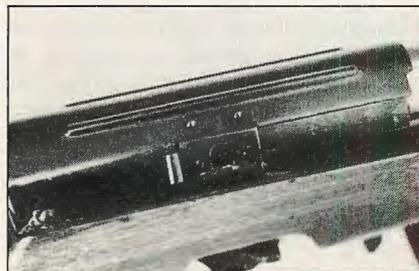
the receiver it is driven forward by the compressed recoil spring to strip and chamber another round from the magazine. After the bolt comes to rest, the carrier continues forward and its cam rotates the bolt into the locked position in the barrel extension. When the bolt is completely locked, the carrier trips the auto safety sear, permitting the hammer to roll forward once more.

The gas regulator functions as follows. For normal operation the small hole in the regulator should face the gas block's port. To position the larger hole over the barrel's gas vent and inject more gas into the system when adverse conditions prevail, press in the retaining pin's flat spring and pivot it downward away from its slot in the upper handguard. Withdraw the retaining pin. Using its serrated tip, rotate the gas regulator 180 degrees (be careful, it gets quite hot) and replace the retaining pin, rotating it until the flat spring enters the slot in the handguard. This gas regulator has been used without modification on the Type 74 squad machine gun (see "Guns Behind the Great Wall," SOF, September '87).



ABOVE: Type 63 trigger mechanism is another copy of the M1 Garand's. This left-side view shows the disassembly lever.

BELOW: PRC Type 63 sheet-metal receiver cover with the dust shield for the retracting-handle slot in place.



guide on the bolt carrier. Magazines are inserted with the same rocking motion employed in the Kalashnikov series. A flapper-type magazine catch is attached to the front of the trigger housing.

The trigger mechanism is another variant of the much-copied system designed for the M1 Garand. There are three sears. The auto safety sear, which prevents premature ignition, is located in front of the hammer on the left side of the receiver and is actuated by the bolt carrier only after locking is com-



LEFT: Firing the Type 63. SOF's test and evaluation of this unusual rifle were the first ever granted to Westerners.

BELOW LEFT: Type 63 buttplate swung aside to reveal compartments for oil bottle and cleaning kit.



pleted. When the selector lever (located on the right side of the trigger mechanism) is rotated downward to "1" (semiautomatic) and the trigger is pulled, the primary sear releases the hammer. A shot is fired and the recoiling bolt carrier rolls the hammer rearward. The auxiliary sear catches the hammer and prevents it from rotating forward until the trigger is released (at which time the auxiliary sear moves back and the hammer starts to fall forward until it is caught once more by the primary sear) and then pulled again. When the selector is rotated forward to "2" (full auto), the auxiliary



ABOVE: Right side of Type 63 trigger mechanism, showing the selector lever.



ABOVE: Type 63 gas system, showing gas regulator, regulator retaining pin, piston spring, piston, gas cylinder and upper handguard.

FIELDSTRIPPING THE TYPE 63 RIFLE

Remove the magazine, clear the weapon and allow the bolt group to move forward into battery, under control. Rotate the disassembly lever, located on the left side of the trigger housing at the rear, downward 90 degrees. Withdraw the trigger housing. Separate the stock from the barreled action. Depress the spring-loaded button on the left side of the receiver cover and pull the cover rearward and off the receiver. Push the recoil spring and guide rod forward and lift them out of the receiver. Retract the bolt carrier to the rear, tilt it to the right and separate it from the receiver. Rotate the bolt and pull it away from the carrier. Remove the gas regulator in the manner described elsewhere. Pull the upper handguard away from the gas block. Remove the gas cylinder, piston and piston spring. Re-assemble in the reverse order.

sear is held back and firing will continue until the trigger is released and the hammer is engaged by the primary sear. If the selector is rotated fully rearward to "0" (safe), the selector lever's shaft prohibits any movement of the primary sear.

Our test specimens had stocks fabricated from Manchurian Chu wood, although I examined a plastic-stock version at the PLA's Small Weapons Research Institute. The stock's configuration is essentially that of the SKS. The brown plastic upper handguard was molded with stippling on its top surface and vertical ribs on each side. The rear sling swivel is attached to the left side of the buttstock. The front sling swivel is attached to the gas block on the left side, just forward of the stock. Swinging aside the ribbed buttplate reveals two spring-loaded compartments in the buttcap and stock, which contain an oil bottle and the standard AK/SKS cleaning kit.

For our test and evaluation of the Type 63, SOF staffer Bob Jordan and I were transported to a People's Militia compound approximately 50 clicks north of Beijing. Three brand-new specimens, dripping with cosmoline, were selected at random, removed from their packing crates and degreased by the PLA troops assisting us. Serial numbers were in the 1.5-million range. After photographing the components, we broke for lunch and shared a meal of the saltiest noodles I've ever tasted with the PLA soldiers. At the range we were observed by an assemblage of unidentified local party cadres who remained inscrutable throughout the entire proceedings.

Handling characteristics of the Type 63 rifle approximate those of the SKS, as long as it is fired in the semiautomatic mode only. When firing three-shot bursts at the slow rate (680 rpm) and engaging targets at 100 meters, you

can expect the second and third rounds to impact 10 meters high and to the right. Why? There is no muzzle brake and no pistol grip, two essential ingredients of controllable full-auto fire with a rifle weighing less than 10 pounds. In the semiautomatic mode, the Type 63's hit probability is quite high, as the recoil impulse is low and the accuracy potential is within 3 to 4 MOA (good enough to match its effective range of no more than 400 meters). Full-auto fire with this weapon should be reserved for emergency use at 50 meters or less.

We fired hundreds of rounds and there were no stoppages of any kind. The two-position regulator is a useful feature, as is the ability to charge an empty magazine from stripper clips while it remains in the rifle. This is a simple and reliable rifle — an admirable design effort for the time frame during which it was developed. But the People's Liberation Army has surged forward into the mainstream of current small arms technology with systems like the Type 81. Anyone wishing to equip a 6 million-man army with infantry rifles at extremely reasonable cost should contact Poly Technologies, Inc. for further information. ☒

GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND

Still in the Fight

by Tom Bates Photos Courtesy of DoD



William C. Westmoreland, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, chose to serve in the artillery after poor eyesight kept him from a career as a pilot. A captain when America entered World War II, Westmoreland fought in the European theater. By war's end he was a colonel, serving as chief of staff of the 9th Infantry Division. During Korea, Westmoreland held airborne commands. Later, Westmoreland taught at the Army War College and the Command and General Staff College and, in 1960, returned to the USMA as superintendent. A brigadier general at age 38 and the Army's youngest major general at age 42, Westmoreland assumed command of all U.S. forces in Vietnam in 1964, a post he held until 1968, when he became Army chief of staff. He retired in 1972.

SOF: Could you explain or define for our readers the policy of flexible response during the Vietnam War?

WESTMORELAND: Militarily, flexible response means you have the flexibility of increasing or decreasing pressure on the enemy, which we did. But the excuses for decreasing that pressure were based primarily on the political situation and very much associated with the anti-war movement.

"I felt terrible about the way the Vietnam veterans were being treated and I decided that was going to be the number-one priority of mine — to do what I could to support that Vietnam veteran and try to explain to the American public that it was not he who lost the war. He did what his country asked him to do and he did it admirably."

Our strategy did not necessarily follow the dictates of von Clausewitz because Vietnam was a new type of experience. If our national policy had been to unify the two Vietnams through the use of force, then the von Clausewitz doctrine of total war would have applied and we would have marshaled a big invasion force and probably not gone into South Vietnam but gone into North Vietnam. But that was not the national objective. The national objective was confined to keeping South Vietnam from being overtaken by the communist movement from the North. At the time, the degree to which our strategy of flexible response was influenced by domestic political problems was a surprise to everyone, most certainly to me.

SOF: So were you and are you still satisfied with that strategy?

WESTMORELAND: Unless the terrain

was essential to be secured, you couldn't afford to tie the troops down by holding ground, because pretty soon you would have no reserves — you would have no flexibility.

Now let me make this other point. This is the first war we ever fought with the helicopter. We could have never done what we did without that helicopter. We exploited it to the point where it gave us mobility, so although we had the 800-mile front and a number of Special Forces outposts, when the enemy came over in strength, we were able to respond by virtue of the mobility given us by the helicopter. If we hadn't had the helicopter we would have had to use those roads that were few and far between going through the jungle and which the enemy was very adept at ambushing. Without the helicopter, we'd have found ourselves buttoned up in a lot of little enclaves where the enemy controlled the hinterland and we were trapped in enclaves with no mobility.

The helicopter also saved many lives because of the evacuation capability. We exploited the helicopter very skillfully. In the next century, when the history of the Vietnam War is written, the helicopter will be seen as playing a big role in allowing us to do what we did with relatively few troops.

The American soldier also adapted himself beautifully. Essentially the Vietnam War was a war of attrition. There was no other answer. You were trying to increase the casualties of the enemy to the point where he would realize that he couldn't win. There was no other strategy. If we'd buttoned up in enclaves, pretty soon the enemy would have had the run of the land and we'd have found ourselves under siege. I'd never let that happen. We were never under siege. Except at Khe Sanh, and I wanted to be under siege there.

My strategy at Khe Sanh was to hold that area and make the enemy concentrate his troops to take it, and then kill him with firepower. We didn't have to worry about the rules of engagement there, where we

had to check artillery and air strikes with the province chief and the district chiefs so we wouldn't kill civilians. The few civilians who were there we evacuated and put them in a nice camp out of danger.

So we were able to use our artillery. I had seven batteries of 175mm guns at Camp Carroll and we were able to use our tactical air — the Vietnamese air force, U.S. Air Force and Marines. We were able to use B-52s and we destroyed two enemy divisions with relatively few U.S. casualties. But you'd never know it from the press reports at the time. Khe Sanh was reported as an American defeat. Nobody would believe that now. The press simply had a cynical attitude during the war.

And what is news? News is not good news. News is bad news. Anything that is offbeat is news. So that is the pattern of reporting which we had in Vietnam. But if we had not held Khe Sanh, those two enemy divisions would have gone down to the coast and then nothing would have stopped them. They would have moved on and gotten among the people in the lowlands where the breadbasket was. It would have been tied in to their attacks across the DMZ. It would have tied in to their infiltration into Hue and we would have found that they were controlling the two northern provinces. And to get those two divisions weeded out from the surrounding population would have taken us probably six to eight months, with tremendous casualties on our part, tremendous civilian casualties, tremendous destruction of property, civilian property.

As it was, we destroyed the enemy with air power. I told the Marines not to patrol outside of a limited area. They would organize their positions, be prepared to fend off attacks from the ground. I wanted to use the Marines as a magnet to draw in the enemy troops and then kill them with air power, which we did. Now the reason I told them not to send patrols along certain lines was because I didn't want the patrol to get shot up and have some wounded men out there, which would not permit us to use our firepower in that area. That would have nullified using our firepower because we did not want to put artillery, attack air or B-52s on our own troops. If there was a lost patrol out there, you're not going to do it.

There's another reason I wanted to hold Khe Sanh. I was thinking in terms of getting permission in due time to go into Laos. I wanted eventually to upgrade the airfield at Khe Sanh and make it C-130-capable for two purposes: to be prepared to use that airfield to get into Laos and, at the same time, to be prepared to supply and reinforce the troops that would be deployed to hold that terrain.

The allegation by critics that at Khe Sanh the enemy successfully held down great numbers of our troops which should have been deployed more effectively in other parts of the country has no validity at all. At Khe Sanh we're only talking about fewer than six U.S. battalions. Now that's just a drop in the bucket compared to the total

number of battalions that we had. That theory is asinine.

SOF: Many of the ground troops fighting in Vietnam were often of the opinion that our policies or military strategies were crafted by people at a safe distance from the realities of battle. The result was that the average infantryman didn't really understand what our strategy was, what the goal of a particular mission was.



“I've commanded soldiers in the field in three wars, and the Vietnam veteran was the best. As a matter of fact, he was younger than other veterans — 19 years old on average, as compared to 26 years old in World War II. And he fought as best he could, but he was carrying a terrible burden of recognition that he did not have the wholehearted public support of Americans at home as the troops in World War II and in Korea did.”

How do you respond to this?

WESTMORELAND: I think this comes to the heart of one point that is misunderstood, and it's pretty simple to explain. You see, everyone analyzing this war looked at Vietnam under the lens of World War II. In World War II you could see you had to attack, and once you grabbed the land, you kept the land and you kept moving. In Vietnam, we only had a handful of troops to protect a 700- or 800-mile front — a piece of real estate as big as California and half as wide. We would have a battle, we would defeat the enemy, but we couldn't afford to tie those troops down where they'd be useless thereafter on that piece of land.

We did secure the ports and the airfields and the population centers and the rice-producing areas, but other than that we went to fight the enemy where he was, but we did not occupy that land after the battle was over because we couldn't afford to. Had we done so, pretty soon we'd have had no flexibility. All the troops would have been tied down, and this is what is so often misunderstood.

SOF: After the 1968 Tet Offensive,

when we had essentially broken the back of the Viet Cong infrastructure, could we have won the Vietnam War militarily from this point?

WESTMORELAND: I think to answer that question you and your readership should understand what the national strategy was, as approved by the president and his national security council. Our strategy was to gain security for the people of South Vietnam. It was not our national policy to unify North and South Vietnam any more than it was our policy in Korea to unify North and South Korea. Instead, by using our air power we were going to put pressure on the North Vietnamese regime, hoping and expecting that they would see the handwriting on the wall and be forced to negotiate a settlement similar to what we had in Korea.

I don't believe that the military objected to this strategy. The military realized that our political commitment to the South Vietnamese people had started with the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and continued on with Eisenhower's policy of containment. This was associated with the mutual assured destruction strategy of using our nuclear power on which, at the time, we basically had a monopoly. Then, finally, the emotional tone was given to this national commitment in the speech by our new president, Mr. Kennedy, where, in short, he said the United States will pay any price, bear any burden, support any friend for the survival and success of liberty. That was his message. That was his policy. We in the military were also cognizant of the debate President Kennedy had with Mr. Khrushchev in Moscow, where Khrushchev pushed our president around a bit and Mr. Kennedy came back and told Scotty Reston of the *New York Times* that it looks like we're going to have to make our power credible to Mr. Khrushchev and it looks like Vietnam is the place.

It was almost inevitable, then, that we were going to get militarily committed in Vietnam because we were politically committed. We deployed American forces there on a timely basis over a period of the next several years, and we got the initiative in South Vietnam. Otherwise, the North Vietnamese would have taken over, because the situation, which included the morale of the military and political leadership in South Vietnam, was crumbling rapidly.

Then the Tet Offensive hit, which was a very risky operation by the North Vietnamese. Frankly, we knew the Tet Offensive was coming. We knew 48 hours in advance when they were going to attack and we knew a number of places where we thought they would attack, but we didn't know them all because we were having to defend almost an 800-mile front on a wide-open flank along Laos and Cambodia. That's the longest front American forces have had since the Civil War. So that was an unprecedented front. Policymakers had assumed that the Geneva Accords of 1954, the Geneva agreement over Laos, would protect that flank. We adhered to the letter

and spirit of that agreement for many years, but the North Vietnamese never did. They attacked en masse [during the 1968 Tet Offensive] and, as you well know, as everybody knows, it was a catastrophic defeat of the communists, both of their local units and the North Vietnamese units.

So our political leadership had their eye on bringing the enemy to the conference table. The big mistake that was made was not using our air power efficiently. The British consul in Hanoi in 1966 and 1967 wrote in the *Washington Quarterly* about three or four years ago a very thoughtful article where he said that in 1967 he was in daily contact with much of the leadership in Hanoi and he was of the opinion that they were about to capitulate because of the effectiveness of the bombing.

The bombing, however, was not as effective as it might have been, but it was effective. We worked primarily on destroying the lines of communication, and that was giving the enemy fits. We'd bomb a bridge, they'd work two weeks to open the bridge to traffic, the next day we would know it was open and bomb it again, forcing them to start rebuilding it again. This strategy was wearing on their political and military leadership. It was decided that we would not bomb close to the Chinese border and we would not close Haiphong harbor, because there were international ships in that harbor, even the British.

It was basic to our political thought at the time that we would not do anything to encourage the Chinese to come in, because fresh on the minds of our policymakers was General MacArthur's mistaken prediction during the Korean War about the Chinese communists not coming into Korea, but they did, en masse, and we found ourselves pushed back to the 38th parallel. Therefore, President Johnson's early announcement was that he would not broaden the war geographically; he did not want the war to spread to the seas. He would try to contain the magnitude of the war and those involved.

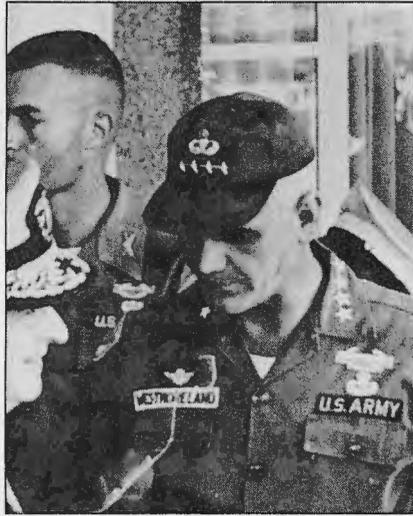
The Tet Offensive was a tremendous blow to Hanoi and its leadership. In my opinion, President Johnson made a big mistake at that time by not unleashing and removing the restraint that had been imposed on the use of our air power. I firmly believe that, if he had used the air power in 1968 after the feeble Tet Offensive the way Mr. Nixon used air power in the latter part of 1972 and early 1973, the North Vietnamese would have begged us to come to the conference table and we would have been able to negotiate from a position of strength.

But at that time, the anti-war elements in this country were so strong that the president didn't think he had the political clout to do that. But of course another thing that you have to realize is that Vietnam is the longest war we've ever fought, I think longer than our war of revolution, and longer than the Civil War. Why? Because this was a limited war fought with limited resources, and that inevitably brought about limited public sup-

port. The longer it went on, the less the public supported it.

When the policy was originally initiated by Mr. Johnson's administration, the public support factor was not given the consideration it should have been. I told Mr. McNamara in the spring of 1964 that this was going to be a long war. I said that this was a tremendous task that we had ahead of us. And I said the thing that worried me was whether the public was going to stay with us. I thought that the administration should think in terms of trying to get the American people emotionally involved, some people-to-people program. I said, I'm no expert in this, I don't know how it should be done. All I was saying was that the administration had to study this and try to do something to maintain the long-term public support.

That, in essence, was the message I gave



"In the next century, when the history of the Vietnam War is written, the helicopter will be seen as playing a big role in allowing us to do what we did with relatively few troops."

Mr. McNamara, but I guess all those things had been considered and the decision was made that politically the administration did not want to rock the boat. They wanted to be low-key, and in retrospect that's the worst thing that could have happened.

SOF: Were there any attempts by you or others to dissuade the administration from maintaining its low-profile public approach to the war?

WESTMORELAND: The JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] was in constant contact with the president, but they knew that politically there were limitations. They were able to read the attitude of the powers that be, and the thought of escalation was totally out of favor in the political administration. General Wheeler would tell me from time to time when I was trying to force another strategy, he'd say, "Now I've got so much on my head, I can only take one thing at a time." And the message I got was that they [the

JCS] knew what their limitations were and they knew that if they'd proposed escalation that the reaction was going to be so violent that it would have been injurious to the military operation.

However, the time when we should have escalated was after the Tet Offensive. One of the first cables I wrote was that the enemy had changed his strategy and we should change ours. They knew exactly what I meant in Washington: a more aggressive strategy. In the context of that, General Wheeler came over to talk to me about a new strategy which I wanted and which he wanted. We had to have the troops to implement it, but he had run out of troops. He was also worried about our military posture worldwide because of the Pueblo incident. And the Russians were rattling their saber in Berlin.

So he came to me and said that, if we were to implement this new strategy, the quickest way of increasing manpower was for the president to call up the reserves. Now remember, this was a private, top-secret, hypothetical discussion in the context of implementing a new strategy.

Well, a few months later I got word that the *New York Times* had said that I requested an emergency lift of 260,000 troops! One of the news commentators got on the air and said, "Westmoreland's panicked. He's requested a reinforcement of 260,000 troops." They didn't report the whole story, that this was all a contingency plan in the context of the new strategy of calling up the reserves. The whole thing was blown totally out of perspective by virtue of somebody leaking the information. Then it was a vicious thing to the press.

This was a tremendous blow, this alleged request that I made of what appeared to be an immediate reinforcement of 260,000 troops, which was translated into, "Westmoreland said things were good and rosy at the embassy as we expected, but now he's asking for 260,000 troops." No consideration at all was made concerning the context surrounding this request. That shows how things can get so out of kilter in our open, free society when our news media doesn't uphold its responsibility to report the whole story accurately.

SOF: During your tenure in Vietnam, what relationship did you, the State Department, the U.S. Embassy, Henry Kissinger and the CIA have with one another? It often appeared to observers that U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker in Saigon was trying to run things.

WESTMORELAND: Ambassador Bunker was my boss on the scene. He had full authority over me. He could have ordered me to discontinue an operation, he could have ordered me to have done anything in the military field. He never did, because we had a good relationship, he had confidence in my judgment, and at no time did he exercise his theoretical authority in influencing my actions, because he agreed

Continued on page 79

SECRET WEAPON

Continued from page 25

foliage down that hill, not far from the area where I thought the big mortar round had landed. Somehow, we managed to creep right through the mysteriously convenient opening in the VC lines without ever seeing a sign of anyone or having a single shot fired directly at us. Nor did we ever hear the expected mortar barrage behind us up on the ridge. I kept waiting for the sound of pursuit or ambush or mortars or heavy machine guns, but the VC's firing had by then virtually stopped on all sides, and we were simply sneaking away from what had appeared only a few minutes before to be a certain death trap.

Several tense hours later we found ourselves out of serious danger and routinely headed back to camp. I kept trying to figure out what had actually happened, but I couldn't. Somehow, it just didn't seem possible. We already knew the identity of that VC company, its components, its tactics and its specific objective from various intelligence reports. Even if we hadn't known, I thought as I walked along in a daze, they had already given us their unmistakable signature by means of their fast, coordinated reconnaissance of our positions by AK-47 fire and their typically efficient encirclement of our perimeter so soon after we had shot their point man.

Our local VC irregulars simply never, ever did that. They didn't have the necessary leadership, training, weapons or confidence to do it. Their only combat responsibility was to snipe, ambush, mine and then break contact so they could do it all again another day.

Yet, when they obviously had us surrounded and outnumbered, with no air support possible, it was almost as if some unseen "movie director" had suddenly ordered the main force VC "actors" to simply move off the set so that we could shoot the next scene, which was to be entitled: "CIDG limping safely back to camp with their wounded." Just like that? We had been as good as dead meat up there and the VC knew it, yet here we were. I kept turning it over and over in my mind, but it still didn't make any sense.

The cumulative tension and stress were finally getting to be too much for me. Although I didn't realize it at first because my voice was still relatively calm, I was literally shaking inside with built-up tension and fear when we finally got back to camp. Even the customary shower and double shot of bourbon couldn't calm me down that night or the next day.

Finally, by chance, our intelligence NCO came upon the explanation for what had occurred. Late in the afternoon of the day following our return, he received a report from one of his chief agents, a prominent Vietnamese civilian in the nearby village. This man had no specific knowledge of our patrol or of the little drama of the mortar back in camp. He reported that the latest

IN VIETNAM

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"hot word" in local VC circles was that a terrible disaster had befallen a main force VC company which had been passing through our Tactical Area of Responsibility the previous day. Moreover, this completely unexpected and unexplained disaster had seriously demoralized all the local VC supporters and sympathizers there because of its peculiarly ominous circumstances.

The "word," as he reported in the meeting with our intelligence NCO, was that a main force VC company had been in the process of attacking an outnumbered CIDG patrol which they had trapped a long way from any camp's normal area of operations. The VC company commander, his NVA advisers and most of his headquarters staff and platoon leaders had been assembled around the VC company commander to receive their instructions for the assault when they had somehow just suddenly been wiped out — simply disintegrated — in one huge explosion, right out of nowhere.

Seventeen of the key people in that company had just miraculously blown up, without any warning, in one explosion out in the jungle, with no airplanes or helicopters anywhere near the place. This sudden disaster had been so confusing and demoralizing to the remaining VC soldiers that they had been forced to disengage immediately and disperse as quickly as possible.

What had all the other VC in the area so worried now was their conclusion that the

Americans had apparently introduced some new weapon, something like a small, tactical version of the dreaded "arc-light" (B-52) bombings. This conclusion seemed inescapable in view of the fact that the VC had never seen, or even heard of, anything remotely comparable to that much concentrated and accurate firepower coming from any type of conventional weapons carried by any CIDG patrol before.

Their conclusion, therefore, was that the unfortunate main force VC company had probably been suckered into surrounding that particular CIDG patrol so that the American Special Forces advisers with the CIDG could have an opportunity to use their new secret weapon to annihilate the infrastructure of one of the VC's better units. The implications of this weapon for the local VC's combat future were clearly awesome.

This agent had uncharacteristically decided to risk his own cover security in order to personally inform our intelligence NCO that, whatever our new secret weapon was, it was working unbelievably well and that we should, by all means, keep up the good work. The first tremendous hit already had the local VC staggered, he urged, and just one more number like that would put them right on the ropes.

Our intelligence NCO managed to appear appropriately grave and noncommittal until he could get back to camp to share the story with me. When we both finished laughing, I

finally started to relax a little.

I only hope I never again have to be quite that lucky. "Secret weapons" as good as that one are damned hard to come by. ✕

LARRY DRING

Continued from page 27

named Nguyen that was three times the size of the Animal.

Returning from patrol one day wearing a triumphant grin, Larry displayed a huge hawk with a bandaged broken wing and talons the size of his little finger. He exclaimed, "Now I've got that goddamn Animal — he'll never eat this one." He placed the bird on top of the two-meter-high smooth concrete wall separating the kitchen from the mess in our team house. No way could the mongoose climb that wall. There the bird stayed for four days, growing increasingly nervous and irritable each day, despite plenty of raw meat and water to nourish it. The fifth morning when we arrived for coffee at dawn, there was no bird to be seen. At the base of the wall remained a pile of feathers and grisly bones. The Animal had apparently kept that bird awake and alert to attack until it finally fell from its perch in exhaustion to where a lightning-quick attack awaited it below. Larry had to be physically restrained from hunting down

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the Animal with his .45. He never mentioned pets afterward, but every time he caught a glimpse of the Animal the sparkle in his eyes would change to a murderous gleam.

Larry's best operation took the form of a two-company-sized raid on the VC support center that was guarded by a battalion of hardcore. Recon had disclosed that when Charlie destroyed Luong Son he had relocated the roof tile ceramic factory to the center and had a going business running tile down the coast to Phan Thiet and larger cities as a source of funding. Larry wanted to go in and get the tile, *with trucks*. I told him he had flipped out, but when we sat down and worked it over it seemed feasible, if and when we could get the trucks. I was at Pleiku when Larry produced the trucks. He sent in small ambush patrols at dark to block all approaches, followed up with a company-sized raiding party and a support company on 2½-ton trucks tagging along behind. He caught Charlie flatfooted and unaware, actually loaded the trucks with tile, blew the tile factory and everything else in sight, then hauled ass with only minor casualties. What damages Charlie suffered could only be estimated, but they were heavy and the loss of face could never be made up for.

Larry was more or less the cause of a reprimand I received from 5th Group commanding officer, Colonel Kelly; the result of a complaint from our bandit province chief to MACV that I had stolen the rail-

road. Larry had been stymied trying to locate rebar for reinforcement of the bunker roofs when he "found" a huge pile of rails, some of which had obviously been recently removed from the rail line to Phan Thiet, out of commission for a number of years thanks to Charlie. I immediately sent Bob "Bear" Eggar, our senior demo man, with a couple of trucks and two platoons and they brought back all they could find. My response to the reprimand was, "My apologies to the province chief. He may recover his rails at his leisure." Of course, by the time I had received the reprimand the rails had been incorporated in eight inches of concrete topping the command and commo bunkers. Part of the cement in those bunkers had been bought back from the bandit province chief after he'd stolen it from us at the Phan Thiet airstrip. I figured we broke even, more or less. The province chief most likely had a deal going to sell the rails and lost much face in the process, because it became a standing joke to ask him when he was coming to pick up his rails.

Colonel Kelly was quick with his reprimands. Larry and I both provoked one after a sudden surprise visit from Mrs. Tree, then United Nations ambassador to Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, who was accompanied by some wimp major (who wore a steel helmet and flak jacket) fawning over her like some high-priced gigolo. Larry and I were in cammies, me without headgear, and some of the team had to scramble to put

on pants when the lady dropped out of the sky. The lady was fascinated with both the camp and the reconstructed town, as well as a little 4.2 demonstration. The wimp, however, complained to Col. Kelly about the barbaric, bare-chested reception for "her ambassadorship." The reprimand was accompanied by a new directive on proper uniform in camp and dictating dress for VIP visits. Who the hell was Kelly kidding?

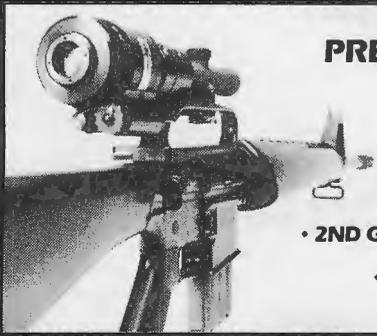
Larry was about the greatest A-Team member any man could ask for. The news of his death was a great loss to me, as I'm sure it was to all who ever served with him. Larry Dring lived not knowing any limitations and never stood still. ✖

SRI LANKA

Continued from page 45

eelam . . . through the creation of a Tamil-majority province should satisfy the generally moderate aspirations of the Tamil masses.

"On the other hand, a political solution alone will not be sufficient to guarantee a return to normalcy. To the contrary, because the ultimate roots of the Tamil revolt are to be found in fundamental socioeconomic inequalities, the struggle will not simply peter out now that Indian peacekeeping forces are in position. Rather, as Tamil insurgent leaders made clear in several interviews, 'the presence of the representa-



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tives of the Indian bourgeoisie,' as one called the Indian forces, will only change for a time the parameters of the fight... The insurgents will participate in the parliamentary arrangements being planned for the north and east, but principally through front organizations. Yet they will do so only as long as such tactical measures satisfy their strategic designs."

Obviously, what was not anticipated was that no tactical concessions would prove capable of satisfying the Tigers' strategic designs. In not making greater use of the opportunity afforded them by the Indian presence, they blundered badly. Their people certainly paid the price.

The recent fighting has been far more destructive than would have been the case had the Sri Lankans been allowed to carry out Liberation II. After long years of fighting, Colombo's security forces had adjusted to the realities of combat and had proved able to keep civilian casualties within acceptable limits in their Jaffna push. In contrast, the Indians were new at the game. As a result, Jaffna is now a virtual ghost town, a status it never achieved during the previous four years of conflict. Perhaps that is the cost Sri Lanka must pay for existing in the backyard of a larger neighbor which fancies itself an imperial power.

Still, whatever may be thought of the tactics used, a push against the Tigers, whether by the Sri Lankans or the Indians, was necessary if only because their move-

ment had gone so far astray. It had become enmeshed in a cult of violence, violence divorced from its political goal — the "liberation of the Tamil people."

In the months that immediately preceded the 29 July accord, ominous events demonstrated that the LTTE was about to move wholesale into imitation of the suicide tactics favored by radical Islamic movements. A "land torpedo," for instance, a truck packed with explosives, had been used to demolish the main Jaffna telecommunication center. Its atomized driver, Commander Miller, had joined the growing pantheon of immortals, those who were martyrs for the cause. Posters of his bearded likeness, beret etched in on the negative, were everywhere in Jaffna, exhorting the people to greater sacrifice. A "Black Tigers" suicide commando had even been formed to carry out further one-way attacks.

In the end, like Hitler, Tiger logic claimed that it was better to perish in a great *Götterdämmerung* than to compromise. Tragically, the Tamil people had little say in the framing of this nihilistic strategy. They were taken along strictly for the ride; so to speak.

Bitterness, reports say, is the order of the day in the Tamil regions of Sri Lanka. It is likely to remain so for years to come. Meanwhile, the security forces are preparing to move out again into the bush, for it is obvious that the war is far from over. ✘

I WAS THERE

Continued from page 16

in the chest. It doesn't take a Rhodes scholar to figure out where our 5' 6" CO would have taken the "cookies."

The rest of us were getting stomach cramps trying to hold back the laughter; the awestruck XO didn't move. Joe was now on his knees, still going strong and trying hard to remove the XO's shoe polish. Finally, with taco sauce dripping off his ribbons, the XO relieved us of our suffering and attempts to contain our laughter with the classic statement, "Well, Joe, I think it permissible for you and me to be excused from the rest of this inspection." ✘

CAMBODIAN AMBUSH

Continued from page 55

toward the dense brush off the track to the left. My heart skipped a beat when I saw his expression. His face betrayed his thoughts: He was sure the PAVN were close, very close. Perhaps lying only a few meters away in the thick brush.

There was a tremendous explosion ahead. Major Hang Yuth immediately directed a section of men to advance into the brush to our left. Just as they stepped off the



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track, a burst of small arms fire went off, the rounds going high overhead. Everybody ducked low. Major Hang Yuth shouted commands and his men reacted instantly.

Commander Chansovanarith sped past, heading up the track leading his own 10-man tracker team. Then hundreds of incoming rounds cracked and smacked around us. Ambush front! The tall grass seemed to be alive with men running for the tree line to the rear and slightly to the right. Explosions followed in rapid succession as RPG rockets went out and others came in. The noise from the incoming rounds was horrendous. A heavy contact was developing with a PAVN ambush party in the tree line to our front. Muzzle flashes from the PAVN were visible in the dark shadows under the trees. I ran for the cover of the tree line behind us. Somebody screamed. Bits of twigs and branches were cascading out of the trees. The tree line never seemed to come any closer.

Commander Chansovanarith and his 10-man team swung off to the right and came back at the PAVN troops farther down the track, where they became engaged in a separate firefight. Meanwhile Maj. Hang Yuth's men could not penetrate the thick brush more than a few yards. Nevertheless, on spotting a second group of PAVN moving in to gain a position to enfilade us, they initiated contact. This was the third point of contact.

Those just leaving the water point took a more direct line of retreat. As they did so they clashed with a five-man PAVN observation post (OP) position which had been observing the water point. One of the ANS soldiers claimed a kill with his RPG rocket, which hit a PAVN soldier cleanly in the chest, the blast bowling over a second. The ANS swept through the OP position and continued its withdrawal.

There had now been four points of contact, leaving open only one direction to withdraw. Despite fears that this area would have been sewn with mines, Cmdr. Son Kiri led the column away from the contact, confident that his deputy commanders would hold off the PAVN as he carried out this maneuver.

Commander Chansovanarith and his men were also stopped by dense brush. They had closed in on the original PAVN ambush position and assessed their strength while remaining in contact. Once the majority of the column was away, sub-unit commanders were given commands to break contact. Withdrawal from contact went smoothly. The ANS were keen to leave the area, as they were expecting artillery from local firebases.

What had sounded like the first two shots of the contact had in fact been the dets of two claymore-type mines going off but failing to detonate the mines themselves. Two more claymores were successfully detonated by the PAVN during the remainder of the contact. Thankfully, the ANS were by then clear of the kill area.

In the face of a potentially lethal ambush, the ANS had acquitted themselves well. Not

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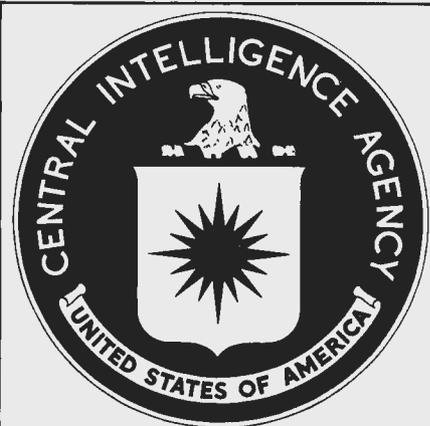
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only had they detected the ambush before it could be effectively sprung, but they conducted a difficult withdrawal from contact in a disciplined and orderly fashion, suffering only two men slightly wounded by frag from RPG rockets. It was a performance that Prince Ranaridd could be proud of.

When Prince Ranaridd was asked what he thought of the Vietnamese invasion, he said, "In 1983 General Vo Nguyen Giap, winner of Dien Bien Phu, told his colleagues and high party officials in Vietnam that the invasion of Cambodia was a big mistake, and you can trust Vo Nguyen Giap. He is a real expert on guerrilla warfare. If he says it was a mistake, it was a mistake." ✕

END OF EMPIRE

Continued from page 61

agreed to supply a military advisory mission and arms — both hitherto exclusively French areas of influence. As the airlifts from Libya to the CAE increased, French confidence in Bokassa as the man to protect their interests decreased.

There were even rumors of a Zairian military mission to the CAE. Two Zaire air force C-130s had visited Bangui airport in the CAE early in 1979 and received a warm and elaborate welcome. But none of these incidents alone moved the French to action.

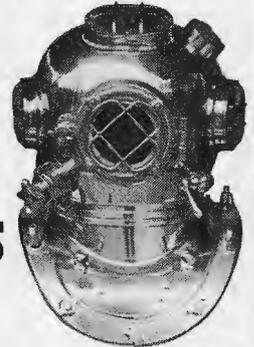
The final split in the French relations with Bokassa occurred when Bokassa climaxed his internal reign of terror with the murder of 80 schoolchildren after they protested the mandatory wearing of school uniforms — uniforms that could only be purchased at an extortionate price from one of Bokassa's relatives. After the resultant scandal, an independent commission of African jurists managed to visit the CAE to determine responsibility. Their report, released on 16 August 1979 in Dakar, found that Bokassa had "almost certainly" been involved in the murders; they could not substantiate the claims of anti-Bokassa forces that he had personally joined in the torture of the children — although this would have been very much in character. In Paris, this report made military action inevitable. Operation Barracuda was born.

According to French Cooperation Minister Robert Galley, well-placed Centraficans had been informing France for some time that the situation under Bokassa was intolerable. These statements increased during early September 1979. The timing of the overthrow of Bokassa is a matter of some conjecture. Galley stated that "France was not involved itself in the coup or the preparation of the Bokassa affair" and that it was not until the Centraficans openly opposed the ex-emperor that the French actively intervened.

Regardless of what was in process internally, on the night of 20-21 September the French launched Operation Barracuda. One company of the 8th Parachute Marine Reg-

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iment (8 RPIMa) emplaned in French air force Transall C-160 transports at their base in Chad, where they had been deployed as part of the ongoing French commitment to the government of Chad against the Libyan-backed rebel forces in the north of that country. The usual strength of the French forces in Chad was two companies. An additional company of 8 RPIMa and one company of the 3rd RPIMa had been flown in directly from France, staging through West African nations who also knew Bokassa had to go, before taking part in Operation Barracuda.

Under cover of darkness, *les paras* were brought in by aircraft to the airfields at Berengo and Bangui. David Dacko, who arrived with the French troops after two months in exile, proclaimed himself president while French troops stood guard. Moving directly to their objectives in commandeered CAE army vehicles, the French paratroopers seized the telephone exchange, the government buildings and the army's command headquarters without a shot being fired. One of the most important objectives was to stop the Libyan presence. Bokassa had been receiving military aid, although on a very limited scale, from Libya. The danger was that the Libyans could send in reinforcements or try to rally pro-Bokassa elements. Therefore, when the French arrived, the Libyan advisory mission was a prime target. The paratroopers

captured 37 Libyans, all armed, and a stockpile of weapons, including several thousand rifles supplied by Libya. Meanwhile, the French also consolidated their position at the two airports. Dawn saw unshaven but determined Frenchmen standing guard over the key locations in the ex-empire.

Emperor Bokassa was out of the country at the time of the coup, and soon took up residence in exile. The French pulled one of the companies of 8 RPIMa out of Bangui and back to France in January, but two companies remained until mid-1985 as a training mission to the *Centrafricaine* army. In 1985 renewed Libyan activity forced the French to deploy new forces to the area.

Public condemnation of the French role in the affair was voiced in the strongest terms by Libya and Chad. Chad's complaint, as voiced by then-President Goukouni Weddeye, was that the use of troops based in Chad (presumably a company of 8 RPIMa) to support the new CAR government was "an intolerable attack" on Chadian national sovereignty, as the Chadian authorities had not been told of the deployment. But because of the continued dependence of the Chad government on French support, these statements seem to have been made mainly for external consumption.

Further complaints came from several opposition groups that had been opposed to

Emperor Bokassa but were left out when President Dacko took over. Anti-French rhetoric was repeated by the OLC. However, most of the people of the Central African Republic were grateful to the French for delivering them from Bokassa. While the extent of Bokassa's influence would later prove an embarrassment in France, the CAR's many problems now no longer included a would-be emperor.

Operation Barracuda was the best sort of military victory, decisive but without any casualties. It is hard to excuse the French for tolerating Bokassa for so long, but this reflects the reluctance of Western democracies today to take decisive action, especially action involving military force. Those on the left, in denying the utility or the legitimacy of military force, conveniently forget that military force can also prevent bloodshed. The French certainly did this in Operation Barracuda. With the lessons of the 1930s — and the consequences of democracies failing to confront dictatorships — fading into history, Operation Barracuda, like U.S. intervention in Grenada, proves that the West is not condemned to being a helpless bystander.

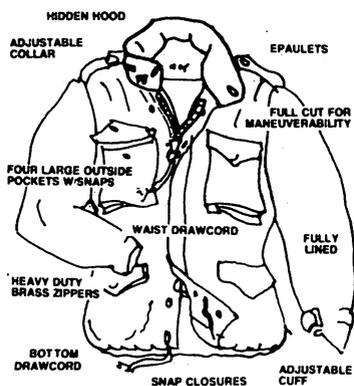
Operation Barracuda was also a tribute to the skill and professionalism of the French paratroopers. It showed that a small force, acting swiftly and with determination, can achieve victories that might be long and

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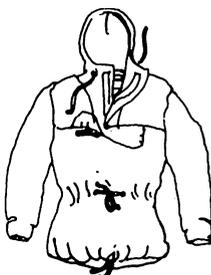
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costly for a larger, but more cautiously led, force. In the final analysis, it was to the men in the red berets that the people owed their liberation from Bokassa. ✘

BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 14

remember that there are different ways of approaching the problems of cutting. I have always felt that the middle ground is the safest, and my preference for an all-around edge on a knife is one given by a medium-grit stone stropped to the point where it will shave hair from my arm, but not my face, and coarse enough that it will bite the flesh of my thumb when it is run carefully down the edge.

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WESTMORELAND

Continued from page 70

with everything I did. And at no time did he ask me to clear anything with him before I did it, because there was mutual confidence between us.

I routinely kept him informed, as I did the man who was in charge of the aid program and the CIA official on the staff. I kept them all informed through the medium of one policy council meeting every week. Now, militarily I reported to the CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific]. He didn't bother with my ground operations. But he had the air campaign to the North. I had control over the tactical aircraft in South Vietnam and then the extended battle area, which I insisted on. But the strategic bombing of the North was not under my authority. That was under the CINCPAC, who exercised that by going through his Air Force component and his Navy component. I have said in my book that it would have been better if we had had a single unified command. This is a lesson to be learned. However, having said that, Admiral Sharp and I got along very well. We had very few disagreements and what disagreements we did have were not resolved in a way that I thought my prerogatives had been trespassed upon.

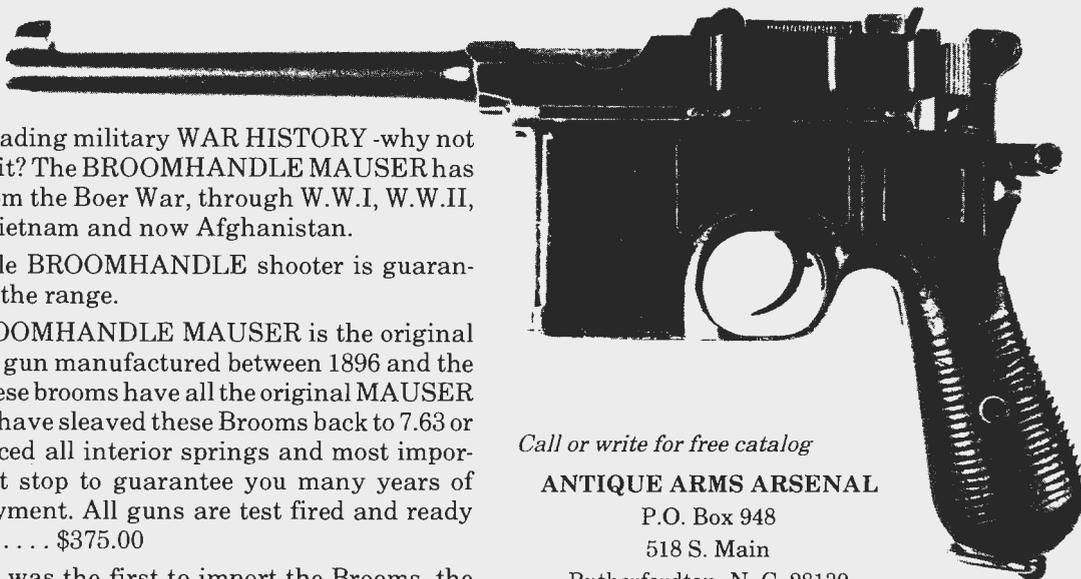
SOF: In the January 1988 issue of *Sol-*

dier of Fortune Magazine is an article written by former CIA analyst Ed Besch, who worked at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon during the war. He states that he proposed an invasion in 1972 during the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive, when the North Vietnamese Army was committed to action in the South. He recommended launching an amphibious assault on the North Vietnamese at Vinh. He claims this would have won the war. Does this theory sound plausible to you?

WESTMORELAND: Well, that would have been a major change in policy and, yes, when I was in command we looked into that possibility. To have carried it out we would have had to marshal an amphibious force of, I would say, 200,000 men, and I doubt that we had the amphibious capability, or the troops, or the logistical support to carry it out. I don't know where our logistics would have been based; perhaps the closest place would have been the Philippines. But to have done that it would have taken probably a year to marshal our resources.

Now, a CIA analyst wouldn't understand things like this. He's a theoretician when it comes to tactics. You don't mount invasions like that unless you plan them well in advance. You have to decide whether you have enough transports for the troops, enough assault landing crafts, enough amphibious tanks and troops who are

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trained for this kind of attack. You don't do something like this overnight. Just go back to the invasion of Normandy — we planned that over a period of two years.

SOF: Are you personally aware of any evidence of American POW/MIAs still held against their will in Southeast Asia?

WESTMORELAND: I think it's quite likely that there are American soldiers being held against their will in Southeast Asia, probably in Laos, though I have no personal knowledge beyond what has already been alleged in the media. I don't think the numbers are great. I would put the numbers at not more than 200, probably considerably less than that, but nevertheless it is important to do all possible to smoke this out and get the facts and get these people back to their homeland.

But the other part of the question is the remains of those who were killed on foreign soil. From the humanitarian standpoint, the Vietnamese have a responsibility to locate and exhume those remains and have them flown to Hawaii, hopefully identified, and in any case buried with dignity and honor in their homeland.

SOF: Do you think the U.S. government is doing all it can to bring this issue to a satisfactory conclusion?

WESTMORELAND: Yes, I do. I wasn't always of this opinion, but now I am.

SOF: What motivation would the Vietnamese have for holding these Americans?

WESTMORELAND: All we can do is fall back on the experience of the French. The Vietnamese held French prisoners and they have been bargaining them off and selling them ever since, in effect using them for diplomatic leverage. I would forecast that this will be the policy of the new regime in Hanoi.

SOF: So you apparently think there is tangible hope of this problem being resolved. What evidence do you have for this hope?

WESTMORELAND: I would not say that I'm overly optimistic, but I have hope that something will evolve, particularly in view of the fact that there is now a new regime in Hanoi. That country has terrible problems. Their per capita income is one of the lowest in the world. They don't have any friends except the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union tolerates them only because of Cam Ranh Bay and the port facilities at Da Nang. Their economy is a shambles. Nobody wants to go there anymore, everybody wants to leave. Re-education camps are still in existence. Refugees are still flowing into Hong Kong, Australia and Thailand. The refugee camps are full and there is a tremendous problem of resettling these people. So it's a terrible situation that the new regime has got to resolve if they are to survive.

The Vietnamese are intelligent people, although sometimes their fanaticism overwhelms their intelligence. The new head of

their Politburo, a man named Linh, former mayor of Saigon, looks like he knows it's time to clean house and try to establish a more enlightened regime. I wouldn't be sanguine about how fast any reforms will take shape — change comes slowly in that part of the world. But changes are going to have to be made and Linh might just be the person to instigate them.

SOF: With the experiences of Vietnam behind us, how do you assess the current U.S. handling of low-intensity conflicts in the Third World? How should we handle these conflicts in the future? Will it involve a unified military command?

WESTMORELAND: Certainly I think that low-intensity conflicts are here to stay and I think the communists realize these conflicts are very difficult for a democracy like ours to deal with. I think the communists understand the local politics on the ground in places like Nicaragua and I'm sure they understand what I call the "Vietnam psychosis" in the United States as well. By "Vietnam psychosis" I mean, anytime someone even thinks about committing American troops somewhere in the world, the Vietnam psychosis takes over, which warns: "Another Vietnam, another Vietnam." This is a severe liability. And it is not rational, because we should commit U.S. forces anytime we feel our national interest is threatened, and we should use those military forces to protect our short- and long-range national interests.



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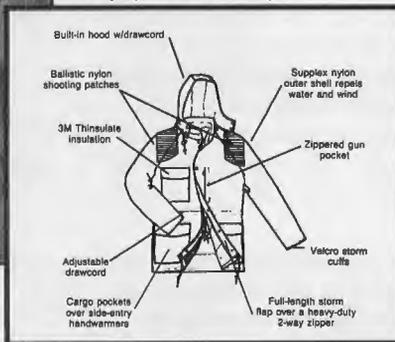
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Specifically, our southern flank in the Caribbean and Central America is far more important to us strategically than Southeast Asia. If we have to commit our forces in that part of the world, *then we've got to do it*. The old hue and cry of "another Vietnam" is a liability that must be overcome.

Now you ask what kind of troops should be committed. Certainly Special Forces are involved. I would hope that all of the light divisions which the Army has created would be used. I think this light division concept is a very good approach, and more troops should be schooled in this type of tactic.

SOF: What parallels, if any, do you see between the current situation in the Philippines under President Corazon Aquino in her battle against the New People's Army communist insurgency, and South Vietnam under Ngo Dinh Diem?

WESTMORELAND: There is one big difference between the present-day Philippines and South Vietnam in the early 1960s: I have seen no evidence that the insurgency in the Philippines is being supported by an outside power, as was the case in South Vietnam. I think the insurgency in the Philippines is more akin to the insurgency the British faced in Malaysia.

I would hope that the Philippine government is studying the British experience in Malaysia and organizing itself along the lines that the British did, where at each province and district level there was a committee that was headed by the governor of

that particular province. And on that committee he had a psyops man, a political man and a military man. There was a cohesive, coordinated effort.

However, there was one thing that favored the British that does not favor this pattern in the Philippines: The insurgents [in Malaysia] were ethnic Chinese; in the Philippines they are ethnic Filipino. That is a problem. I don't think Aquino and General Ramos have as good a grip on this situation as they should. But the [Philippine] problem is not insoluble. It will take an awful lot of wisdom, it's going to take a concerted effort, it's going to take a political unity among the Filipinos which, sadly, does not seem to be forthcoming at this time.

SOF: Again, concerning U.S. handling of low-intensity conflicts, what do you think of our current strategy of aiding Jonas Savimbi in Angola? Is fighting such wars by proxy, as we are doing in Angola, a strategy you'd also recommend?

WESTMORELAND: If you have a base like we have in Angola, I think it's an intelligent way to go. [In the case of] Nicaragua and the contras, I'm not sure that this freedom-fighter organization has a leader who is as charismatic, visible and politically acceptable as Savimbi is in Angola. Still, I don't understand why politically we don't support the contra effort. If we've got dissident people opposed to the communist regime in Managua, it doesn't make any sense

to me not to support that effort, since the alternative is to commit U.S. troops.

It seems to me that we've got a lot of irrational people in this country, in our government. We would never have to commit a great number of troops. We've done pretty well with advisers in El Salvador, and that suggests to me that we could get the job done in Nicaragua by providing the support, short of providing American troops, to the contra rebels. The fact that some people in this country don't want to give that solution a chance I think plays into the hands of the communists and enhances the prospect of our having to commit U.S. troops to the region.

SOF: What do you think of the Arias Peace Plan for Central America?

WESTMORELAND: Quite frankly, I haven't studied it in great detail. Offhand, I agree with President Reagan's diagnosis of it as being fatally flawed; it has some loopholes in it. In my opinion the prospect of it being successful is not great because I don't think any incentive is there to change the color of what we see in Nicaragua.

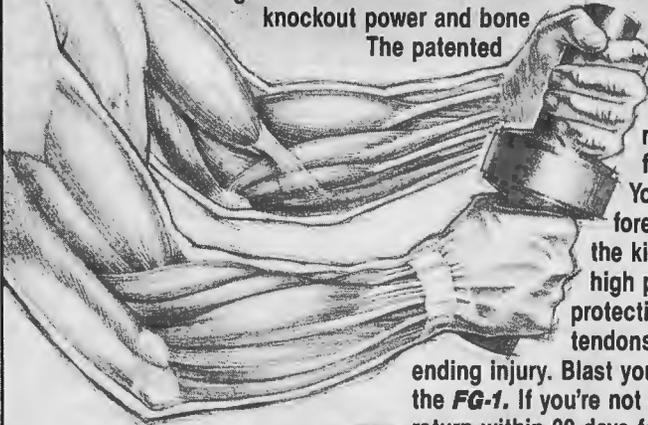
SOF: Tell me about your libel suit against CBS. Were you fairly treated in the media during the suit?

WESTMORELAND: If I had to do it again, I'd do it as I did it. I was not the loser in that case. You've seen what has happened to CBS since then. By virtue of the trial, we were able to show the public how these so-called "news documentaries" are put

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together: The people behind the scenes cut and paste and make the documentary portray anything they want to portray. They can brain-wash witnesses, they can put a witness on the stand and have him present any demeanor they want. They're masters at it.

So I think that, as a result of the exposure from the trial, people learned that these documentaries are often productions which follow a preordained script or plan designed to glorify or discredit a particular person or subject matter. And I think CBS is now trying to clean up its act. I'm in no position to judge to what extent they are, but they are certainly far more careful than they were. In the past they were extremely reckless. If I had not called their hand, they would have gotten progressively more reckless. Somebody had to stand up and say, "Enough is enough."

Still, from the beginning I knew my chances of winning the case were small. It is very difficult, probably impossible, for a public figure to prove that a news agency like CBS showed a *malicious* disregard for the truth. The law was biased against me because I was a public figure. The law, in my opinion, is an inequitable law. I don't object to the First Amendment. I think it's obviously a very important right. But the Sullivan Ruling is bad law. [In the *New York Times vs. Sullivan*, 1964, the Supreme Court ruled that a public official cannot recover damages for a report related to his official duties unless he proves actual malice.] It is so biased and favorable to the media that it is virtually impossible for a public figure to win a libel suit.

I also discovered that you cannot reconstruct history or portray a battlefield scenario in the courtroom because of the legalities and all the rules of evidence, the permissibility of that evidence and the legalisms that are involved in the courtroom. I wrote an op ed piece after the court settlement for the *New York Times* and then spoke before the National Press Club, where I pointed all these things out. I said that in the national interest we ought to resurrect the National News Council. We had it at one time. CBS and the *New York Times* wouldn't support it. It died. It should be resurrected.

The British have used it to the benefit of the whole society. I had a long talk with a British journalist some months ago about such a mechanism which allows an individual who has been unfairly abused by a news journalist to present his case before a group of peers of the journalist who is charged with libel. They then pass judgment condemning or vindicating the particular journalist. Now this National News Council concept is based on a very important principle in our legal system which we inherited from the British and the British inherited from Roman law. It states that for every right there is a duty; for every right of citizenship there is a duty of citizenship; for every right of an institution, and our society consists of multiple institutions, there's a counter-responsibility of those institutions to act responsibly. I think the media has

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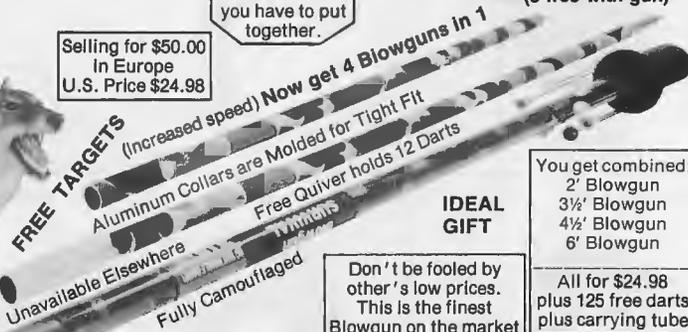
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gotten out of hand by not fulfilling its social responsibility of accurate reporting. A mechanism has not been set up to keep the media honest. We can't have a true democracy unless the press is given considerable freedom, but that doesn't mean that they should be allowed to be irresponsible. So with regard to making the news media shape up and be more responsible, a lot of good came out of my case against CBS.

SOF: If you had had more resources, do you think you could have won the suit?

WESTMORELAND: The financial aspect of the case is important. I'd run out of money, and even if I had won the case, and I think I would have won the case on truth, CBS would have appealed, appealed and appealed and I would have had to pay lawyers to keep abreast of it. So financially there was no way that I could wash my hands of the case. Time meant nothing to CBS, money meant nothing to them, they were covered by insurance. I had no source of income like that. Thankfully the veterans came to my rescue, because they saw that I was being abused.

I think my reputation with the veterans was such that they knew I would not do anything unlawful. I would not lie to the president, I would not lie to the Congress. During the Vietnam War I made my judgments in the context not only of the laws and regulations of our land, but with respect to international law, the Geneva Conventions, from which were derived the rules of warfare. The decisions I made could have been overturned by the CINCPAC or the joint chiefs of staff. They could have been overturned by the CIA, by U.S. Ambassador Bunker. And there was some discussion about change. There was especially a difference in point of view between the CIA and the soldiers fighting in the field, but it was all brought out into the open, it was all discussed and, in the final analysis, they all philosophically decided with me. But the decisions were not mine alone. I made a proposal which they modified in a more favorable way than I wanted.

Favorable in making good what I wanted to do, which was to sort out the order of battle. I wanted the order of battle to identify those people they wanted our soldiers to kill. To put civilians in there was contrary to the Geneva Conventions. We were doing everything we could to avoid civilian casualties. Now there were fellow travelers, there were old men and women who were putting in *punji* sticks. Sure, if we could count them, fine, but they were pretty difficult to count. We put them outside the order of battle. The decision was made that you couldn't count them. I didn't make that decision. That was made by the CIA. So the whole thing was a farce, an absolute farce.

SOF: For our military readership, what sort of qualities do you look for in a subordinate?

WESTMORELAND: First, he's got to be a well-trained professional to do the job. He has got to have gone through the necessary schools or the practical training. Academic



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training is no substitute for practical training — the two are companion pieces. It so happened that all my military education was on the job. I never went to a service school. I did it all on the job during World War II and later in Korea. So either practical training or academic training is essential, because you don't have wars to train soldiers. When you have wars, you hope you have soldiers who have been trained academically and in the field and at training centers.

SOF: Are you satisfied with the current level of training in the U.S. Army?

WESTMORELAND: I'm very enthusiastic about what's happening in the Army now. I think they have strong leadership, I think they make sound decisions, I think they're thinking in terms of tactics under varied and assorted situations. They have the flexibility of heavy divisions or light divisions. So I feel good about the Army. They're getting fine quality troops, the highest percentage of high school graduates they've ever seen. A good soldier doesn't have to be a high school graduate. But the prospect of a high school graduate being a good soldier is better than a non-high school graduate.

Now let me make my final comment. I'm damn proud of those Vietnam veterans. When I retired I had the choice of going back to "the farm" and lowering my golf handicap, or devoting my energies to more constructive things. I felt terrible about the way the Vietnam veterans were being treated and I decided that was going to be the number-one priority of mine — to do what I could to support that Vietnam veteran and try to explain to the American public that it was not he who lost the war. He did what his country asked him to do and he did it admirably. Yes, there were some bad actors, there are in every war, in every society, in every town and in every organization. But the percentage was very small. Unfortunately, the bad apples were given and continue to be given inordinate visibility in movies and news media.

I've commanded soldiers in the field in three wars, and the Vietnam veteran was the best. As a matter of fact, he was younger than other veterans — 19 years old on average, as compared to 26 years old in World War II. And he fought as best he could, but he was carrying a terrible burden of recognition that he did not have the wholehearted public support of Americans at home as the troops in World War II and in Korea did.

Now let me say that, if the Korean War had dragged on as long as Vietnam, you'd have had the same problem of maintaining public support for Korea. In fact, there is evidence that public support was about to wane when they came to an agreement for the armistice, and that was only after three years of fighting. Remember, there's no peace treaty in Korea. We still have 40,000 troops over there maintaining armistice, so that war's really not over.

I've done everything I could and I will continue to do what I can to speak out on behalf of that Vietnam veteran.

SOF: Many Vietnam veterans still feel that their sacrifices might have been in vain. What do you say to these people?

WESTMORELAND: They were not in vain. We didn't accomplish as a nation what we set out to do, but the war wasn't lost on the battlefield. The war was lost by the Case/Church Amendment to the fiscal 1974 appropriations act. I'm very leery of these writers of appropriations acts. It's an insidious way to make law. And there ought to be a law against it. Now, if the president could get his line-item veto, it could be done. But the war was lost by the Case/Church Amendment to the 1974 appropriations act. We had promised the South Vietnamese we'd give them full logistical support, and that was cut arbitrarily in half in 1974. So we did not make good our commitment, but that was not the fault of the military. The military did their job and I think they did it well.

Now there's another facet to this that is vitally important for all Americans to know. I was asked to speak at an international conference in New Delhi, India, several years ago and there were representatives of most, if not all, of the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations: Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand] countries. All those countries except Thailand had been colonies of the West, of the Americans or British or French.

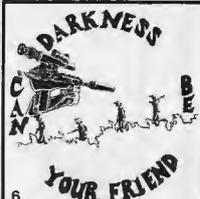
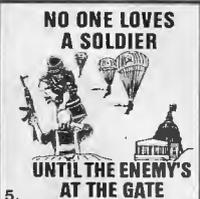
At this conference they made known to me their sentiments, which were as follows: You Americans do not understand that, from our standpoint, *you won* in Vietnam. You won by holding the line against the dynamics of communism by coming to the aid of the South Vietnamese and by holding the line against the advance of communism into our part of the world. They pointed out that in 1966 the Russians were well established in Indonesia. We made a commitment and they threw the Russians out. They would never have thrown them out if we had not made that commitment.

By holding the line for 10 years, they say the Americans gave them 10 years to mature, develop self-confidence in running their own affairs, to improve their infrastructure and improve their economies. It took 10 years to do it, but those were valuable 10 years to them. They now have more confidence in running their own affairs, and their economies are in better shape than any Third World country's. They are grateful to America. They say, "You saved us."

If we had not drawn the line, we could find the communists controlling all of that part of the world, including the straits of Malacca and the waterways through the islands of Indonesia, and that would mean ships would have to go all the way around the straits to get to the Indian Ocean. If you look at that in consideration of the Persian Gulf now, it becomes even more important.

This is a strategic facet of the whole Vietnam episode that few people understand. I mention it in my speeches frequently and many audiences have never been told this fact before. But it is a fact. ✕

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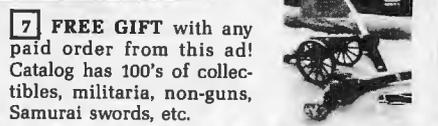
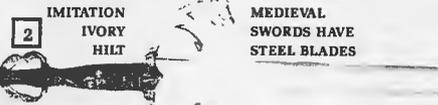
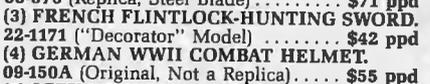
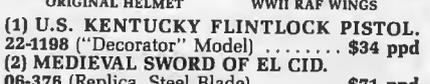
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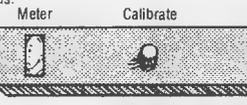
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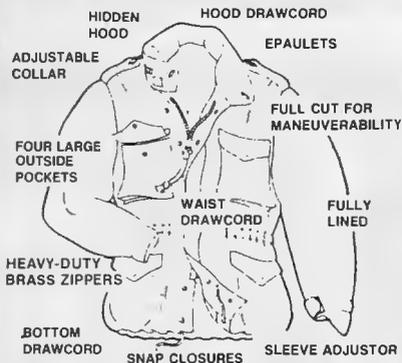
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PARTING SHOT

AMERICAN law has long operated on the principle that one has the right to face one's accusers. One can be accused and charged by the authorities on the basis of testimony from unknown witnesses, but eventually the hood of secrecy has to come off and the witnesses must make their accusation out in the open.

After some considerable effort, they've started pulling the hoods off the "witnesses" who accused Major General Jack Singlaub of being involved in assassinations and drug smuggling and, surprise, not one of them has a shred of evidence implicating Singlaub in anything illegal.

It has taken Singlaub's attorney almost 18 months to get the accusers out in the open and on record. It began in June 1986 when Daniel Sheehan, the attorney for a Washington-based organization known as the Christic Institute, filed a civil complaint in Florida under Title IX of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 (more often called RICO for Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations), accusing Singlaub of being part of a criminal conspiracy which attempted to kill contra commander Eden Pastora with a bomb during a 1984 press conference at La Penca, Nicaragua. The plaintiffs in the case are two American journalists based in Costa Rica — Tony Avirgan, who was at La Penca and slightly wounded, and his significant other, Martha Honey.

Those familiar with La Penca initially dismissed the suit as merely a rehash of a book called *Report on La Penca*, authored by Honey/Avirgan in 1985 and ignored by publishers and journalists alike as ludicrous.

While there was an initial round of articles and TV news items triggered by the filing of the suit in June 1986, it was not until Sheehan filed an affidavit with the court in December 1986 and then launched a nationwide public relations campaign that the press coverage took off.

Sheehan's affidavit, based on whispers from "Source #24," etc. and almost no hard facts, is a remarkable document in that it alleges Singlaub and other defendants in the La Penca case are members of a "secret team" involved in smuggling drugs into the United States to provide the funds for military/political operations around the world. Sheehan's "secret team" conspiracy is so outrageous and preposterous that when we first read it we assumed the only people who would fall for it would be some old John Birchers frustrated by their organization's comparative reasonableness.

What we didn't take into account was the fact that, unlike the courts, the press does not require its secret sources to take off their hoods, and the yearning desperation the American Left has for a Cause in the 1980s and its willingness to throw in dollars once a cause is found.

As Sheehan or his minions crisscrossed the country speaking before leftist/liberal

audiences, money began to flow into the coffers of the Christic Institute. As the money rolled in — \$200,000 over eight months from Los Angeles alone, according to the *LA Times* — the Christic staff went from 15 to 30 to today's 45. The road trips by Sheehan also resulted in hundreds of articles or TV/radio shows done by journalists too lazy and too busy (or just disinclined) to check on the accuracy of the charges. Nor have the hacks bothered to check into the background of the accusers.

As it turns out, Sheehan, Honey, Avirgan, the Christic Institute and others associated with the suit are not disinterested in the politics of the affair. One by one the hoods of respectability they've tried to don for this case are being pulled off and it is becoming clear that, other than the profit motive, what drives the case is that they are interested in cutting off private aid support to anticommunist resistance forces.



"In fact, Plaintiff's Counsel has been informed by Source #24 that Defendant Singlaub and Robert K. Brown directly provided John Harper to Defendant Amac Galil who helped Defendant Galil construct the very C-4 bomb which Galil used to blow up the May 1984 Eden Pastora press conference."

Sheehan is a leftist lawyer who likes to refer to himself as the attorney who won the Karen Silkwood case. This should come as a surprise to Gerry Spence, the lawyer who actually tried the case in court. Sheehan was involved in the case, along with a bunch of other legal eagles, but watched the trial from the free seats as essentially a spectator.

But even some notable liberal writers, like Jonathan Kwitny of the *Wall Street Journal*, have had trouble swallowing Sheehan's tale. After fruitlessly trying for many months to get Sheehan to provide a credible witness or some checkable facts, Kwitny broke with his ideological colleagues and slammed Sheehan in an article published in, of all places, *The Nation*, a rag ideologically just to the right of *Pravda*. Kwitny wrote: "Sheehan, who has ignored the errors in his filings pointed out by others, argues that if 80 percent of his allegations are correct, he'll be satisfied. I really believe his zeal is genuine and that he doesn't realize that

80 percent accuracy in character assassination is not commendable."

The Christic Institute turns out to be a spin-off of the Quixote Center in Maryland, which started the "Quest for Peace" (send money to communist-controlled Nicaragua so they can fight for peace) and was instrumental in starting the "Sister City" program.

Honey and Avirgan are a couple of dedicated lefties left over from the 1960s who pursue their political goals while hacking away as journalists. Honey (*The Sunday Times* of London, National Public Radio and *The Washington Post*) cut her ideological teeth with the "Friends Peace Committee" and eventually became an anti-Vietnam War organizer. Honey is so blatantly inaccurate and supportive of the Sandinistas in her coverage that former U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Curtin Windsor said, "one has to wonder if she is an asset in place for the Sandinistas in Costa Rica."

If possible, Avirgan's background is worse. Avirgan (ABC News and the BBC) was politicized while serving on the steering committee of the Draft Task Force of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. In 1970 Avirgan was in Hanoi — he got there on Aeroflot from Moscow — where he penned "From Hanoi With Love" for *WIN*, a radical leftist magazine. In 1972 Avirgan's name appeared on a "Statement of Responsibility" issued by a group called the "Citizens Commission to Interdict War Material." The Citizens had sabotaged three C130s at the Willow, Pennsylvania, Naval Air Station.

Word has been creeping out for some time about the backgrounds of Sheehan, Avirgan and Honey, but the key blow to the case came in December, when the U.S. Court of Appeals in Atlanta ruled that the Christic Institute had to reveal immediately the sources of the alleged evidence against Singlaub. The Christics asked the Supreme Court for a stay and it was denied. The Institute eventually produced a list of its "sources" — although some are still described as an anonymous or unknown friend of so-and-so (we expect the courts to hammer them on that) — but you have to put the word sources in quotation marks. As a group they tend to be leftists or known fabricators.

Sheehan once described the Christic Institute's role as that of a "People's Justice Department." There are countries in this world that have "People's Justice Departments," and the most notable feature about them is that justice does not exist in them. "People's Justice Departments" value propaganda more highly than truth and facts; they conduct secret trials with rigged evidence and hooded witnesses; the outcomes are predetermined and the sentences usually carried out in a basement.

American law doesn't work that way.

— Jim Graves ✎



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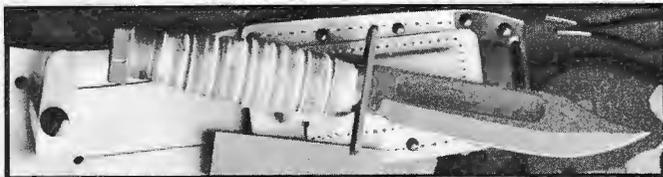
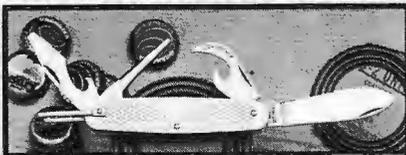
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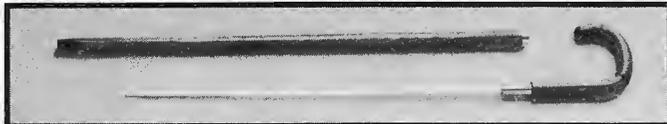
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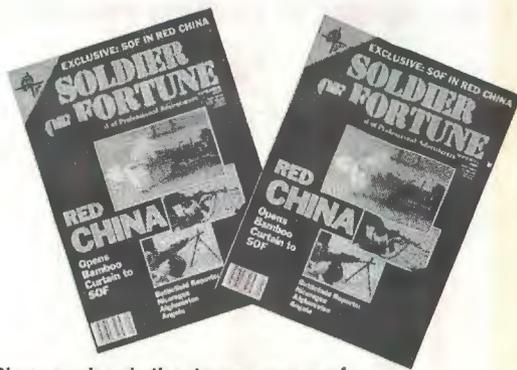
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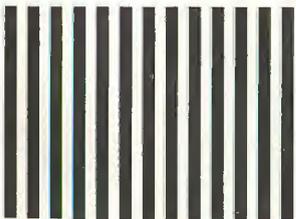
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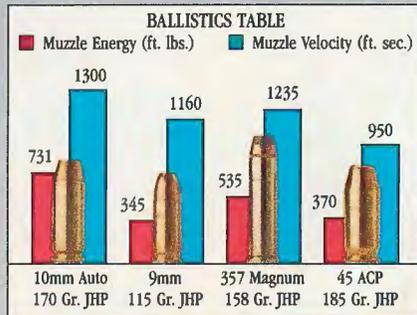
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You can count the reasons for owning a Colt 10mm Auto on both hands.

After a year of redesigning and extensive testing, Colt has modified the slide and receiver system of the world renowned Government Model to accommodate the powerful new 10mm auto round. The Colt Delta Elite™ is an impressive semi-auto pistol, chambered for an equally impressive cartridge.

The 10mm auto is a hot cartridge, pure and simple. The 170 grain hollow point round leaves the muzzle at an awesome 1300 ft/sec, almost 150 ft/sec faster than the conventional 9mm. Muzzle energy is almost twice that of the 45 ACP. Impressive ballistics, in anyone's book.

Combine these statistics with the fact that this round is chambered in a pistol with a mechanism second to none, and you've got yourself a lot of pistol.



Ballistics are nominal and have been obtained from test barrels. Individual firearms may vary from these specifications.

Whether in the field, on the range or with law enforcement agencies, this is one pistol that will deliver, when it counts.

Ten reasons to own the new Colt Delta Elite. Boil it down further and you get dependability, speed and power. Those ingredients spell Colt, and shooters have been relying on this name for quite some time.



Hartford, CT 06101

Design and mechanism styled after Colt's famous Government Model.

10mm translates into 40 cal. Big, fast, flat shooting and hard hitting.

Wraparound neoprene grips for secure hold.

High profile 3-dot sighting system for faster sight alignment.

Incorporates all of the safety features found in Series 80 Colt pistols.

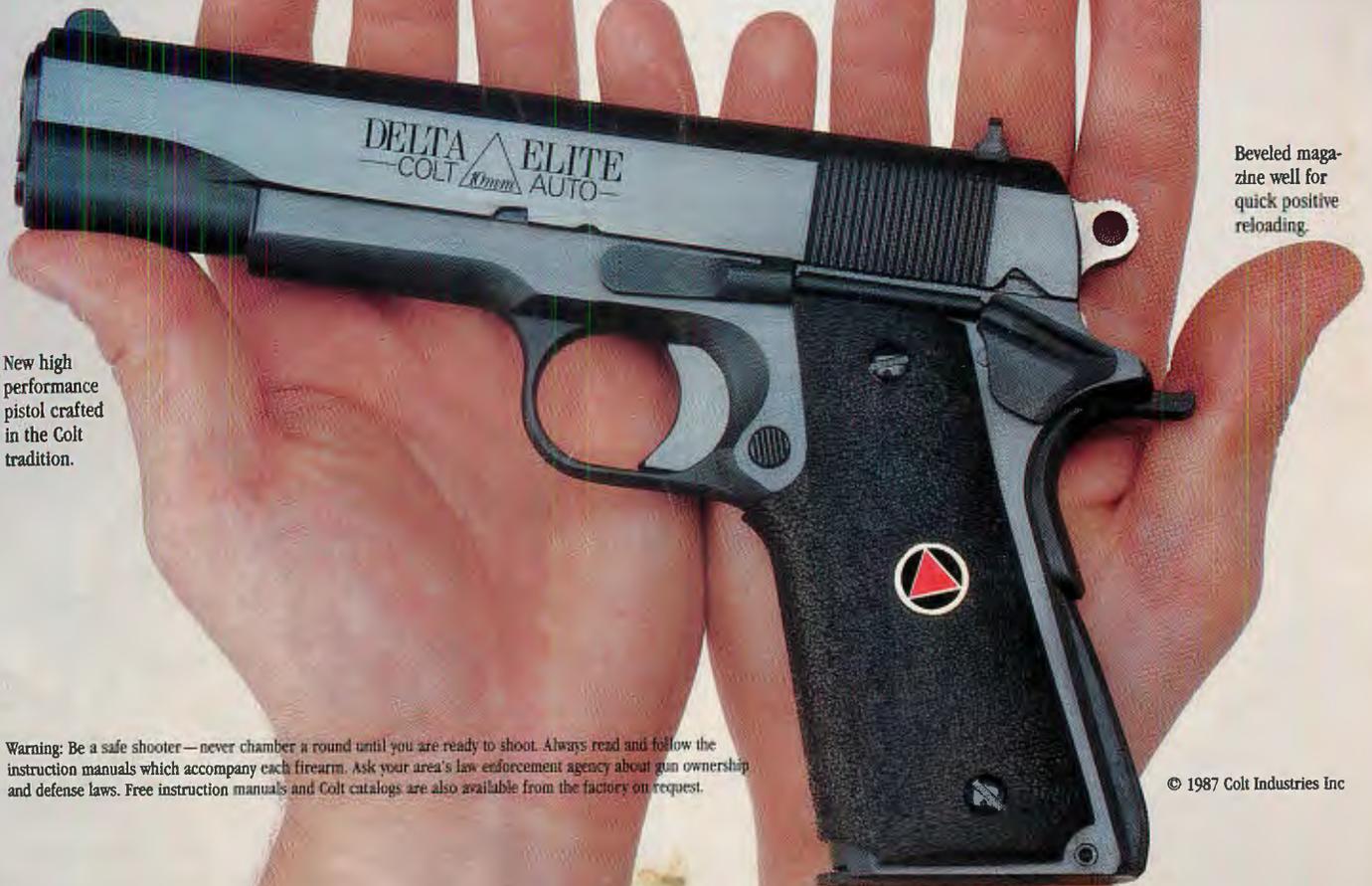
Extensive endurance and function testing to ensure consistent performances.

Sleek, well balanced and familiar size.

Minimum of perceived recoil.

Beveled magazine well for quick positive reloading.

New high performance pistol crafted in the Colt tradition.



Warning: Be a safe shooter — never chamber a round until you are ready to shoot. Always read and follow the instruction manuals which accompany each firearm. Ask your area's law enforcement agency about gun ownership and defense laws. Free instruction manuals and Colt catalogs are also available from the factory on request.

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