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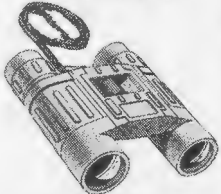
The Journal of Professional Adventurers

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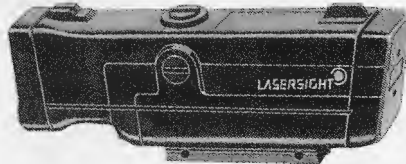
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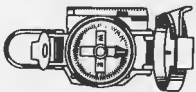
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Afghanistan — Page 30

COVER: The outlook for a mujahideen victory in Afghanistan has never been better. Even conventional set-piece battles are being won in increasing numbers by the Afghan resistance. This has forced the Soviets to seriously consider taking their 115,000-strong traveling butcher show back home. Currently, Gorby's gang wants the United States to cut all aid for the mujahideen before they will agree to withdraw. Perhaps the Afghan freedom fighters need to fill another several thousand Russian body bags before the Soviets decide to pull out unconditionally. Only time will tell. Related stories on pages 22, 30 and 38. Photo: Hunter Penn

COVER INSET: Ewen Southby-Tailyour was one of the few Royal Marines to serve extensively with Omani troops in the Dhofar war. His AO was a deadly stretch of desert nicknamed Ambush Corner. His story begins on page 48. Photo: courtesy of the author

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown



Russian Retreat

AT 1915 hours on 27 January 1979, three battalions of Soviet troops launched an attack on the Dar-ul-Aman Palace in Kabul, Afghanistan. Inside were 125 Afghans, including the president, Hafizullah Amin. It took five hours for the Soviets to take the palace, at a cost of 25 Russians killed and 225 wounded. This came as something of a shock to the boys in Moscow. It was the first indication that this invasion business might be a mistake and that they ought to leave.

That thought has never been far from the Soviets' minds, if their public statements are to be believed. All along, though, the Soviets have raised two issues that must be resolved before their withdrawal: first, a continuation of a pro-Soviet communist regime after they leave and, second, an end of foreign assistance to the mujahideen.

Things have been going poorly for the Soviets as of late and they have now dropped their first requirement. It always was sort of impractical. As Soviet analyst David Isby has said, if the Soviets want to ensure the safety of their communist puppets when they withdraw, then they had best take all the telephone poles and trees with them or else the communists will be found hanging from them the next day. So the Soviets have said they will leave their erstwhile allies to their own devices. Afghan President Najibullah had better either get in touch with a reputable Moscow real estate firm or get his affairs in order.

As for the second issue, foreign support for the resistance, the

Soviets want that stopped. Surprise, surprise. It is that assistance, along with the mujahideen's perseverance and Pakistan's surprising resolve in the face of Soviet pressure, that have created such a disaster for the Soviets. What is surprising is not that the Soviets expect this as a condition of withdrawal, but the U.S. government's eagerness to grant their wishes. In a United Nations draft proposal, the administration agreed to halt aid to the rebels at the *beginning* of the Soviet withdrawal.

The problem, of course, with ending aid to the rebels at the beginning of the Soviet withdrawal is that it would be much easier for the Soviets to reverse their withdrawal than for the U.S. government to resume aid, which could leave the rebels at a severe disadvantage.

The Soviet Union got itself into this mess and now the State Department wants to reward them for the horrors they have inflicted on the Afghan population by granting them concessions as a condition of their withdrawal. The mind boggles. It would seem the Soviets have more friends in Foggy Bottom than in Kabul.

For the sake of the people of Afghanistan, we can only hope that the Soviets' statements about their intention to leave Afghanistan this year are sincere. But we should do more than hope. We can continue doing the things that have brought the Soviets to this juncture. That will do more to ensure their departure than emasculating the resistance fighters who have battled the Red Army for eight years and, for the first time, defeated Soviet adventurism in the Third World. ✂

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (ISSN 0145-6784/USPS 120-510) is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Magazine, Inc., Boulder, Colorado. Second Class Postage Paid at Boulder, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 348, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. U.S. subscription rates for twelve monthly issues: \$26.00. Canada, Mexico and all other countries: \$33.00. Special domestic and foreign rates on request. U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single-Issue Price — U.S., \$3.00; United Kingdom, £2.50; Canada, \$3.95.

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SABERTOOTH: THE RIP-ROARING ADVENTURES OF A LEGENDARY GAME WARDEN

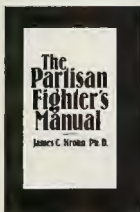
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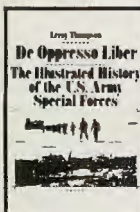
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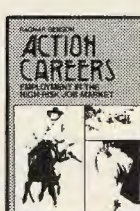
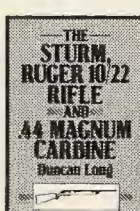
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INVADING VIETNAM...

Sirs:

Edwin W. Besch ["Blueprint for Victory," SOF, January '88] is 110% correct with his assessment that we could have ended that damned mess in short order by chopping the North in two around Vinh. Only we wouldn't have had to wait until 1972. It was my impression that we could have done it anytime while I was in-country ('65-'67, also with intelligence). It would have only been a matter of months and we would've suffered 10% of the casualties we ultimately took by dragging it out.

The one lesson that's been relearned and forgotten countless times applies here: The best defense is a good offense!

We also didn't have a single leader. Kissinger and Co. and everybody with stars on their shoulders should have had to squirm into field packs and go hump the boonies on a two-week ratfuck with the grunts before they were allowed to make a decision any more important than whether or not to have peanuts with their beer. I'd gladly roll the clock back 23 years and try it again — if there was someone in charge with the balls of a barracks rat.

Carl Lucker
Thompson Falls,
Montana



FLAK

JUST SAY THE WORD...

Sirs:

We of D Company, 3/36 Infantry (Mech.) read SOF every chance we get. Our magazines are about two months behind, so we just got the Ortega target issue. We'd like to say we definitely agree with you and we're ready to go!



Left to right, kneeling: Spec.4 Michael Schwenk, Spec.4 Peter Valdez. Standing: Cpl. Mark Butsch, PFC Lance Gillespie, Spec.4 Frank Seubold, Spec.4 Scott Stevens. The track: The Four Horsemen.

We of "The Rock" are hardcore and would like to see ourselves in the pages of the ultimate military magazine — SOF!

Spec.4 Michael Schwenk
D Co., 3/36 Inf. (Mech.)
West Germany

At the risk of setting a dangerous precedent, here's your photo. We receive this type of photo frequently. Please realize that we're usually pressed for space and can't print reader photos.



FURIOUS FINNS...

Sirs:

What the hell? Finland is not Russia's friend as stated in your article "Rebuffing the Bear" [SOF, December '87]. Our country is the only little state to keep its independence after World War II. What were the Swedes doing during the war? Nothing. Germany was the only one who, along with ourselves, was fighting against the Soviet Union and communism.

Almost everyone here in Finland likes America very much. We really are not Russia's friend like you said. God bless America and Finland.

Antti Vaaja
Helsinki, Finland

The article contained the statement: "One Russian leader predicted that one day Sweden would be Russia's friend in the same way as Finland," implying, of course, a forced "friendship." Finland is no more Russia's friend than Afghanistan is.

WEST GERMAN WIMPS...

Sirs:

According to your Bulletin Board item "Banning in Bavaria" [SOF, February '88], the Bavarian authorities don't want their youth to grow up with the characteristics of "hardness, strength of nerve, aggressiveness, unwillingness to compromise."

By implication, the opposite characteristics of softness, weakness of nerve; shyness and indecisive wishy-washiness are preferred. Apparently, they desire to raise a generation of thoroughly wimpish Germans. God help us all!

Gene L. Downing
Florissant, Missouri

West Germany is increasingly becoming an example of the effect of too much government. Thousands of bureaucrats waste their days doing little more than drawing up new laws to hound the citizenry. Unfortunately SOF fell victim to one of these ridiculous exercises in over-regulation. SOF readers are a stout lot and we remain confident they'll latch onto their favorite rag, law or no law.

NEVER GIVE CBS AN EVEN BREAK...

Sirs:

I think your Parting Shot written by Karl Phaler in the January issue was far too forgiving of CBS. Their prime-time news programs, "60 Minutes" and "West 57th," consistently denounce American foreign policy and freedom fighters around the world. The contras in Nicaragua, UNITA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique are only a few examples.

Even the mujahideen aren't safe. On 20 December 1987, "West 57th" complained that the plan to train Afghans to use video equipment to report on Russian atrocities was not journalism but propaganda. They didn't mention Russian propaganda or the endless thousands of people they've killed. Is this unbiased reporting?

Steven Litel
Fulton, Missouri

Parting Shot's intention is to offer SOF readers a chance to voice their opinions or bring attention to an area of mutual interest. Numerous readers didn't share Mr. Phaler's opinion of "Tour of Duty" or CBS. That's an inherent quality of opinions — not everyone shares them. We here at SOF are in agreement with you about the political slant of CBS's so-called news documentaries.

FIRING AT THE SA80 REPLY...

Sirs:

Your response to Mr. Whittum's letter [FLAK, SOF, December '87] stinks. Does Mr. Kokalis have so little to write about that you would generate future articles by printing a bogus story — namely "Firing the SA80"?

Your conscience may be clear by admitting the misdeed, but that doesn't make it OK. Please, in the future continue to give us honest, well-grounded articles by your more than capable all-star staff.

A U.S. Marine
3rd Bn., 4th Marines

SOF never has nor will print a "bogus story." Rest assured that Peter K. doesn't suffer from a shortage of topics. The answer is this simple: Our surveys showed that many of you weren't reading the weapons articles. We thought the jazzed-up graphic look of "Firing the SA80" could change that.

SOVIET SUBTERFUGE...

Sirs:

I'm writing in regard to Mikhail Gorbachev's appointment as man of the year in *Time* magazine. Does *Time* actually believe that he's, as they said, "The hope for a new Soviet Union"? Those of us who are more educated about Soviet ideas and goals know better.



Gorbachev is trying to make the Soviet Union look more attractive to the United States, as though a compromise between communism and capitalism has taken place. Ultimately this will help them achieve their final goal. There is no new Soviet Union and there never will be. Mr. Gorbachev is doing a good job fooling some capitalists into believing there is. This capitalist isn't fooled!

Kevin M. Conner
Umatilla, Florida

Neither are we. However, Gorbachev's election as man of the year comes as no surprise. After all, Time chose Adolf Hitler as man of the year in 1938, so Gorby may well be in appropriate company. We can only hope Mr. Supreme Soviet won't follow in Herr Hitler's footsteps. In the meantime let's lock and load and keep both eyes open.



MAKE SALES NOT WAR...

Sirs:

Having served in the Army during Vietnam and now observing the events in Latin America, I can only wonder who won the war in Southeast Asia and who's now winning in Latin America.

While the French and Americans deployed troops during the period from WWII until the early 1970s, the Japanese deployed sales forces. The French and Americans saw many Japanese trucks and cars during their tours of duty. In Latin America our armies are again seeing Japanese cars and trucks while American influence dwindles so close to home.

We have become the nation of mercenaries because our surplus of unemployed is due to our military reactions to economic situations. The Japanese have deployed sales forces while we have deployed soldiers. We need to wage war on poverty, not on our potential markets. By investing in the infrastructures of these countries, we will have the foothold we need to market our goods. Prosperity is the real ally of capitalism and democracy.

Paul McCarthy
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

As long as the United States is willing to pay for Japan's defense, they'll take the spare money and use it to invest around the world. Our problem is that we dictated laws following the war limiting Japanese military force levels and in return offered to provide for the majority of the cost of Japan's defense. A better solution would be to force Japan to pay the United States for their defense and force them to contribute to the costs we're incurring in protecting their mercantile supply lines, specifically the Persian Gulf oil routes. We believe in prudent investment into the infrastructure abroad — but you also have to be prepared to protect those infrastructures.

LETTERS

Your input has made FLAK one of SOF's most popular columns. Write and tell us your opinion of SOF or any subject you consider worth our readers' attention. We reserve the right to edit for content and brevity. Send letters to FLAK, c/o SOF, PO Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. ✉

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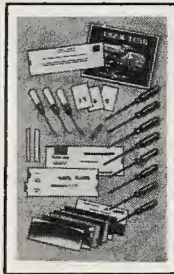
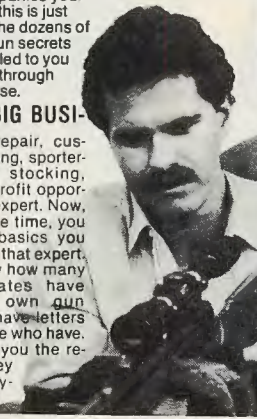
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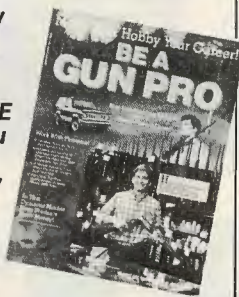
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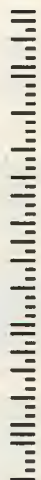
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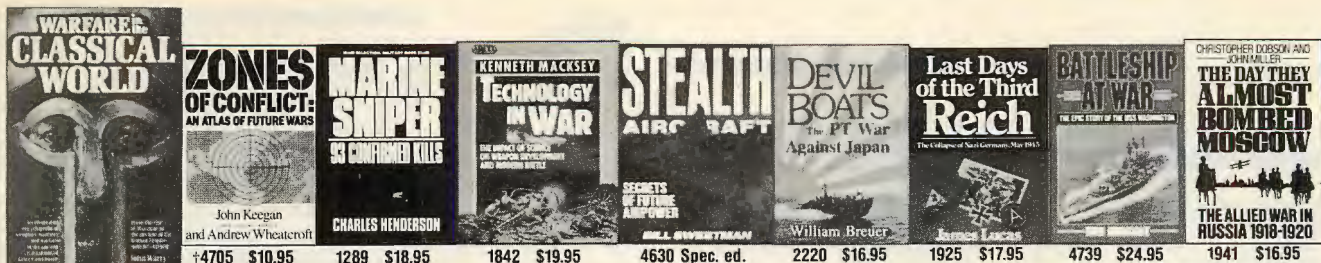


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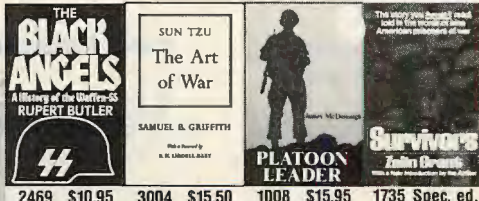
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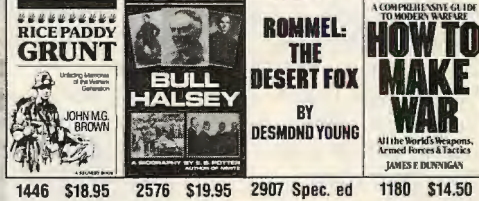


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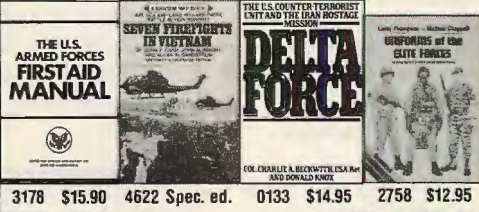


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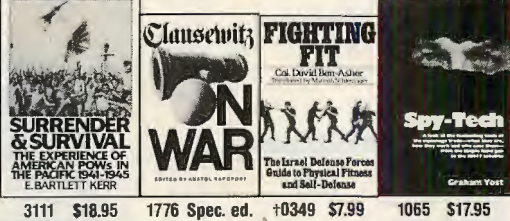


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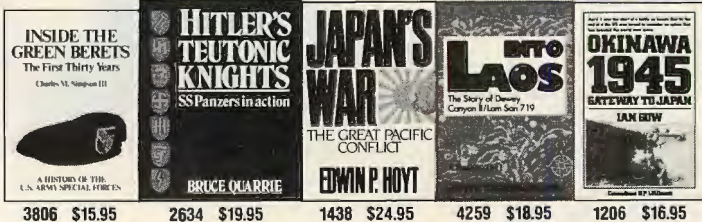


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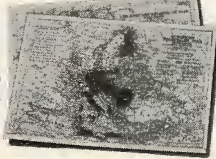
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REUNIONS

Strike Force Association

This organization for former and present members of the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, will hold its annual reunion from 3 to 7 June 1988 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Write: Tom Russell, 321 Summerfield Drive, Baden, PA 15005 or call (412) 869-1160.

First Battalion, 4th Marines (Vietnam era)

This reunion is being organized for Veterans Day 1988 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. Write: L.A. Dos Santos or John Daniels, PO Box 322, Jamesport, NY 11447.

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

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WHAT HAVE WE HERE?...

Mujahideen who knocked off an Afghan courier — one who worked for the Soviet secret police, the KGB, not the Afghan version, the *Khad* — on the road between Kabul and Peshawar, Pakistan, found documents in his possession which set Peshawar abuzz.

The documents — in both Russian and Farsi — were sequentially numbered and were to be delivered to Afghan KGB operatives working in Pakistan. The documents and maps provided instructions for the operatives on where to go in Kabul for immediate evacuation.

Are the Soviets preparing their deep-cover agents for a rapid exit from Pakistan-Afghanistan? Or was the whole thing a disinformation ploy?



XMAS TOYS FOR MUJAHIDEEN BOYS...

SOF correspondent Peter Douglas' letter announcing his safe exit from Afghanistan is worth sharing. It reads, in part:
Hiya Jim,

Just back after my recent Afghan travel. I was last there in the winter of January '86 — pre-Stinger. Christ, what a difference that little toy has made for the muj. In early '86 there were no ifs or buts about it, they were on the run, morale was rock bottom and the Mi-24s and Su-25s ruled the skies. We scurried about like frightened insects every time one or the other or even both appeared overhead. But then the Stinger came in. In the words of Massoud Khalili [spokesman for Jamiat-i-Islami and a guest speaker at the 1987 Soldier of Fortune Convention], "For nine years the dragon has ruled the skies. Now the dragon is dead."

NEWS FROM THE FRONTS IN AFGHANISTAN...

Our crystal ball was working well this fall, so SOF flooded Afghanistan with reporters. The articles start this issue with Dave Isby's "Four Battles in Afghanistan" and Harry Bateson's "Assignment Afghanistan." Others should be flowing in over the next few months from:

• Peter Douglas ("Cambodian Killing Ground," July '87 and "A Tale of Two Ambushes," March '88) and John Jameson ("Eritrea's Femmes Fatales," February '88), who went with a mujahideen strike force of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan to the Kabul area in December.

• Jake Border (author of several articles on Burma and Afghanistan), who wintered over in Afghanistan at SOF's behest and made several operations in the eastern portion of the country.

• Mike Winchester, one of the most experienced Afghan hands, who traveled far and wide into the northern provinces — Badakhshan (where the big mountains are), Kunar and Laghman, where he and a companion blazed a horse route over mountain trails that had been crossed only by men on foot until then, in winter, we might add.

Winchester was with *Jamiat-i-Islami* commander Ahmad Shah Massoud when he attacked and captured the regime garrison at Kiran-O-Mounjan in Badakhshan Province on 29 October. Massoud took 266 prisoners and killed 29 regime troops at the cost of 14 mujahideen. Massoud policed up six 82mm mortars, two 76mm cannons, three 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns, two 120mm mortars, 350 small arms (AKs and pistols), five radio sets, 3,000 rounds of mortar or artillery ammunition and roughly 1,000,000 rounds of small arms ammo. The Soviets got a relief force back into Kiran-O-Mounjan days after the fighting but did not reoccupy the post. Without a regime post there, Massoud's resupply caravans will be able to cut their travel time to the interior substantially.

On his way out, Winchester and a companion were captured and held briefly by *Hezb-i-Islami* forces. While they were out of action an Italian journalist who had also been at Kiran-O-Mounjan was captured by regime forces and taken to Kabul. His fate remains unknown.

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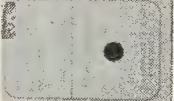
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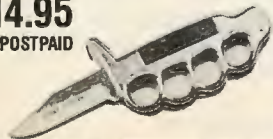
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But They Can't See You
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Infrared systems can cost \$thousands. Here is your chance for just \$398.00 to own a sophisticated IR system complete with everything you need for operation — goggles, light source, filter and more. Sorry, at these prices NO credit cards or COD; money orders and cashiers checks ONLY for this item.



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STUN GUN

NOVA XR5000

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The Nova XR5000 Stun Gun can protect you from attackers.

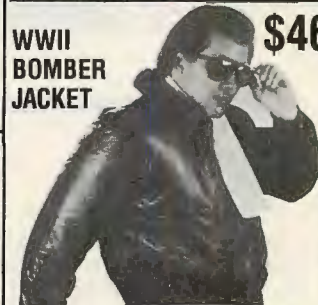
STUN GUN will instantly "scramble" attacker's nervous system causing immediate (temporary) paralysis! By simply touching your attacker anywhere, he will drop helpless even through many layers of clothing. STUN GUN is not lethal and is safe to use. Cannot transmit shock back to you. Requires a 9 volt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



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WWII
BOMBER
JACKET

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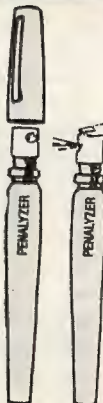


For just \$46.00 because it's made of all THE RIGHT STUFF. The classic WWII Bomber Jacket for the Aviator/Racer look. Made of Dura-Hide, a man-made leather that defies you to tell it from the real thing.

This is your chance to pick up the hottest look today at a very reasonable price. Check out these features: heavy duty Brass zippers; horizontal (zippered) and vertical front pockets; zippered left sleeve utility pocket; heavy duty knit cuffs and waistband; heavy weight pile collar; stylish epaulettes on each shoulder; inside storm flap for wind resistance; 100% nylon lining; 8-ounces polyester body fill for warmth that doesn't weigh you down. This is a jacket taking America by Storm... don't miss out. Order yours today for just \$46.00 plus \$3.00 shipping. Specify XS (30-32), S (34-36), M (38-40), L (42-44), XL (46) and XXL (48-50) and be sure to tell us BLACK or BROWN.

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

MACE®

Don't mistake MACE with lesser tear gas aerosols. Chemical MACE delivers a potent punch of highly purified CN tear gas to incapacitate an assailant allowing you plenty of time to get away. MK-VI unit comes in individual gun-like case with real trigger action. Unique pistol grip allows quick hand orientation and sure action; attach to key-ring, purse or belt. Fires about 25 half-second bursts. Order one for \$14.50 and SAVE by ordering six for \$60.00.



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& Surveillance
Via Your
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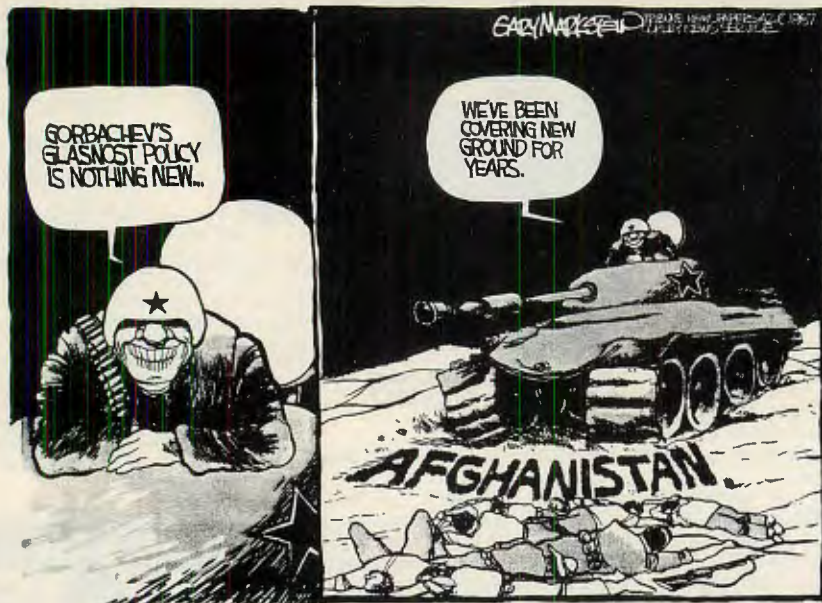
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MORE ON U.S. STINGERS...

In Peshawar, we are told, the Afghans have been sending back a piece from every aircraft nailed by the U.S.-supplied Stingers. The trophies are stored in a small building in a mujahideen compound there and a Western visitor says Afghan visitors to the museum treat it as a sacred site.

But the best trophy of all went to U.S. Congressman Charley Wilson, D-Texas, who has mounted to a plaque above the door to his office the expended tube from the first Stinger used against a Soviet aircraft in Afghanistan. Wilson got the gawgaw because he was instrumental in breaking down the official barriers in Washington against delivery of the Stingers to the Afghans.

We're jealous!

ALL THE NEWS NOT FIT TO PRINT...

The *New York Times* is America's newspaper of record, which means it prides itself on being the most accurate newspaper of the day. That's not the same as saying that the *New York Times* is willing to admit when the "record" it has established is called into question.

A Ukrainian weekly newspaper published in the United States asked the *Times'* Executive Editor Max Frankel to comment on the revelation by Dr. James E. Mace

that the *Times* had an agreement with the Soviet authorities to suppress news during the time of the deliberately induced Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 (7,000,000 died so that Joseph Stalin could suppress dissent and convince the peasants that collective farming was the way of the future).

Mace's accusation is based on recently declassified U.S. State Department documents which mention the agreement between the Soviet Union and the *New York Times*. The *Times'* man in Moscow, Walter Duranty, told a U.S. official that his reporting on the famine "always reflected the official opinion of the Soviet regime and not his own" in accordance with the agreement between the *Times* and Soviet authorities. Duranty received a Pulitzer in 1932 for "dispassionate interpretative reporting of the news from Russia."

After receiving a copy of Mace's accusation and the declassified State Department report, Frankel's secretary called the Ukrainian paper to pass on that Frankel had said: "This doesn't seem to qualify as news. It is really history, and belongs in history books."

So, too, does the *Times'* reputation.

SOFers NEED NOT APPLY...

We received a number of queries from SOF readers regarding service in the South-West Africa Territory Force (SWATF) and the South

African Defence Force (SADF).

Senior Editor John Coleman was on assignment in Windhoek, the capital of South-West Africa, and checked out the status of potential foreign volunteers to SWATF and SADF.

Sorry, fellas. According to Major McDonald, Chief Recruiting Officer for the SWATF in Windhoek, they not only have more local help than they can use, but "no matter how highly qualified you are, you *must* be a South African citizen before you can apply."

That entails five years' residence in South Africa, says Maj. McDonald, after which they'll consider your application.

MEANWHILE IN ANGOLA...

While the world was watching Afghanistan, down in Angola the local puppet forces and Cuban advisers took a pounding from Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces, supported by South African troops.

In the last offensive, Angolan government losses ran to 3,178 killed or wounded; 10 Cubans killed or wounded; three Soviets killed or wounded; 61 T-54/55 tanks, 87 APCs, 20 BM-21 rocket launchers, one BM-14 rocket launcher, six TMM mobile bridges, five D30 122mm cannons, 301 logistical vehicles, 13 23mm antiaircraft guns, three radars, 36 SAMs, seven helicopters, two fighters and four transport planes destroyed, captured or shot down.

Savimbi's UNITA is probably still the most likely anti-communist army to score a victory in the short term.

NO WAY WE COULD MAKE THIS ONE UP...

Way down deep in the Sudan, in a place on the map where they used to write "Here there be monsters," Colonel John Garang, military commander of a black Christian guerrilla force known as the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, which is locked in a war with the Moslem- and Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, put the war on the back burner to listen on the radio as his beloved Minnesota Twins defeated the St. Louis Cardinals four games to three in the World Series.

Continued on page 85

Presenting

THE WORLD'S FIRST COMMEMORATIVE M16

Firing, hand-engraved, 24-karat gold-plated semiautomatic M16, in a limited edition of only 1,500 in honor of the Vietnam War.



"A beautiful memorial in itself to our Vietnam Veterans."

Jan Scruggs, Founder
Vietnam Veterans Memorial

In the hands of American troops it patrolled the Central Highlands with Special Forces . . . guarded against sappers at Bien Hoa . . . searched for VC in the Delta in PBRs . . . and humped the boonies in I Corps. The VC, who feared its high velocity round, called it the "Black Gun".

Two years in the making, The Vietnam War Commemorative M16 is the ultimate M16. It had to be—it honors our Vietnam Veterans. No time, trouble or expense has been spared.

Only 1500 Will Be Made

This is the first limited-edition, collector-grade M16 ever issued. Only 1500 will be made, and each is individually serially numbered between 0001 and 1500, with the prefix "V", for Vietnam. The serial number and the owner's name will be inscribed on the Certificate of Authenticity. Serial No. 1 is being presented to General William Westmoreland and No. 2 to Jan Scruggs.

24-Karat Gold on Gleaming Black

The finish gleams like the black granite of "the Wall", the Vietnam Memorial. It is highly polished by hand, then given a special, high temperature oxidizing process that transforms the outer surface of the forged alloy receiver to an ultra-hard, high-gloss black that is next to a diamond in hardness. The barrel is mirror polished and blued to match.

Hand Engraved

The commemorative inscriptions are all hand engraved and gold-gilt inlaid . . . the dragon—symbolic of war and of protection; the years of the war; "Lest We Forget"; and the proud name of this commemorative, in an engraved bamboo border. Hand engraving is far more expensive and time consuming than other means, but hand-engraved weapons are always worth more—and it's a military tradition for special presentation pieces.

As you hold this M16, your line of sight moves across the mirror polished carrying handle and barrel to the 24-karat gold plated flash suppressor. 24-karat gold-plating gleams across the trigger, selector

lever, bolt catch, rear sight windage knob, forward bolt assist and the take-down pins.

Even the front and rear sling swivels are polished and 24-karat gold-plated and—as you'd expect with a firearm of this quality—mounted with a deluxe, black leather, adjustable, military sling.

Special, Textured Stocks

The ventilated Vietnam-era style handguard, pistol grip and butt stock shine with a special, black, heavily-textured finish, which further sets this apart from any other M16 ever made.

The pistol grip and butt stock are fitted with gold and black commemorative cloisonne medallions.

Not Just A Showpiece

But this is not just a showpiece. This is a firing Commemorative, the same size, configuration and specifications of the military-issue M16A1 rifle. A 20-round magazine and firing instructions are provided. As an advantage to arms collectors and veterans, it fires only in the semi-automatic mode (not full-automatic). *Anyone who can own a standard hunting rifle can own one.*



Free bipod

Each fires the 5.56mm (.223) ammunition used in Vietnam and readily available in gun shops. Because this M16 is functional, it could be called upon to defend your home and family.

The Vietnam War M16 is being custom built by gunsmiths who build M16s for our armed forces, our FBI, our CIA, our police SWAT teams and the governments of England, France, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand and a half dozen other countries. They are the engineers and armorers of BFI, in Portland, Maine.

First Ever

As the first commemorative M16 ever issued, this is in the "first ever" class of distinction. This category has seen well-documented, significant price increases. From the standpoint of future investment value, only 1500 will be made—placing it among the rarest of the rare. The hand engraving

further enhances this distinction.

An optional solid-walnut cabinet with Vietnam-era camouflage cloth, acrylic glass lid and three solid brass locks, protects your investment from dust and unauthorized handling.

Satisfaction Guaranteed

This is available exclusively through The American Historical Foundation. To reserve, call toll free, write or visit. Satisfaction is guaranteed, or you may return for a full refund anytime within one month. If you do not have a firearms license we will coordinate delivery with you through your local firearms dealer, after your reservation is received here. If you do have a license, send a signed copy, and the M16 will be delivered directly to you.

With your reservation, you will also be made a Member of the Foundation and receive interesting information concerning military history and the care, display and collecting of military arms.

The phrase, "Lest We Forget", hand engraved on your M16, will show that you have not forgotten, or will ever forget, the Americans who fought for liberty and freedom in the Vietnam War.

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Yes, I wish to reserve the firing, hand-engraved, 24-karat gold-plated Vietnam War Commemorative M16. Only 1,500 will be made. I will also receive the free bipod and membership in the Foundation. Satisfaction guaranteed.

My deposit (or credit card authorization) of \$95 is enclosed. Please charge or invoice the balance due . . .

in ten equal payments of \$190. in full.

Please also send the walnut display case, at \$225.

My payment in full is enclosed (\$1,995 per M16; display case, add \$225).

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For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, please send account number, expiration date and signature. Virginia residents add tax.

STREAKING through the air, the sharp, narrow red beam strikes the Soviet T-72 MBT (Main Battle Tank), penetrating the hull and instantly incinerating the entire crew. Everyone knows what a laser beam looks like, but few know how it's generated. The word "laser" is an acronym for "light amplification by simulated emission of radiation," and a laser is a device for creating electromagnetic radiation at considerably higher radiant energy than normal light.

A laser generator is an optically active medium (either gas, solid or liquid) held within an optical cavity between two reflecting surfaces. The simplest method of producing laser radiation is to fill an electric discharge tube with a mixture of helium and neon and to apply a high voltage across the tube to ionize the gas mixture. To obtain laser radiation from the tube, the ends of the tube are provided with mirrors facing each other. As the light reflects back and forth between the mirrors, it becomes amplified. During the light's oscillation back and forth from one mirror to another, the light quanta, or photons, collide with the electrons of the gaseous atoms and transfer photonic energy to the electrons, causing them to radiate with the same frequency and wavelength as the photons. As this action increases the number of photons in the tube, the intensity of the oscillating light is further amplified. To permit projection of the laser radiation to the outside, one of the mirrors is made 40 to 50 percent transmissive. The accumulated photon radiation within the tube projects through this output mirror in a pencil beam of a diameter equal to the optical aperture of the tube.

During the past decade numerous small laser units of relatively low power (usually less than 2 milliwatts) have been introduced for use as sights on firearms. Usually encased in plastic housings, these flimsy and insubstantial laser sights have never warranted a test and evaluation by SOF staff. Laser Products (Dept. SOF, 18285 Mt. Baldy Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708; phone 714-962-7728) has recently introduced a laser sight of milspec quality.

Fabricated from aluminum and stainless steel, the helium-neon Model 36 laser sight has the strength, resistance to recoil, durability and thermal and mechanical stability to survive field environments. Weighing 1.9 pounds with alkaline batteries, the Model 36 measures 10.4 inches in length, 2.6 inches in width and 1.75 inches in thickness. While larger than some of its competitors, the Model 36 has three to four times more output power (1.5 to 2.0 milliwatts). It costs \$595 with an



FULL AUTO

Text & Photo by Peter G. Kokalis

Star Wars for Small Arms



Model 36 laser sight mounted on Heckler & Koch MP5A2 submachine gun is of milspec quality, but SOF's technical editor feels this device has limited applications on firearms.

alkaline battery module, power switch assembly, optics cleaning kit and installation tools.

Three types of battery operation are available. Alkaline batteries should be employed if the unit is seldom used, as they are inexpensive and have a reasonably long shelf life. Two 9-volt non-rechargeable transistor batteries are required to power the Model 36. An optional lithium battery module is available for \$48. Lithium batteries provide enhanced performance under every conceivable operating condition and have an excellent shelf life (up to 10 years with almost two hours of con-

tinuous laser operation). If the unit is subjected to frequent use, rechargeable nickel-cadmium batteries provide the most cost-effective means of operation. The nicad battery module costs \$68. Add another \$39 for the charger.

We chose to mount our Model 36 test unit on a Heckler & Koch MP5A2 submachine gun. Firing from the closed-bolt position, the H&K MP5 provides greater accuracy potential in the semiautomatic mode than open-bolt SMGs and permits a true assessment of any sighting device attached to its receiver. The Model 36 will accept either NATO STANAG or Weaver-type scope mounts. There is no better mount for the entire H&K system than the Swan G-3 scope mount produced by A.R.M.S., Inc. (Dept. SOF, 230 West Center St., West Bridgewater,

GUARDIAN

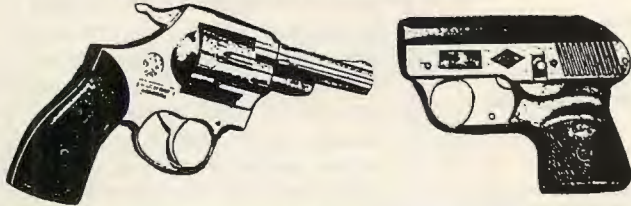
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At last! A tear gas unit that really works! The Phaser is the latest development of non-lethal self-defense technology. No other tear gas unit on the market today can even come close to the Phaser's range and power. It will shoot a wide, highly powerful blast of CN tear gas up to 20 feet! It completely eliminates the need for accurate aim. It uses an exclusive Halon valve similar to those in fire extinguishers. This valve insures that the tear gas mist flows in the direction intended and releases the gas in a much wider dispersion than any other tear gas device available. Two convenient sizes available: a 90-gram pocket model and the 150-gram Police model.

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Stun Guns



50,000 VOLTS OF POWER!
Defend yourself against muggers, dopers, rapists or any attacker without deadly force. Our Stun Guns will instantly "scramble" any assailant's nervous system causing immediate, but temporary paralysis! By simply touching your attacker anywhere, he will drop to the ground a helpless blob of "jelly".



Effective even through many layers of clothing. Our Stun Guns are not lethal and are safe to the user. They cannot transmit shock back to you. Operate on a regular 9-volt battery. Two models available: Our normal 50,000 volt Stun Gun and our exclusive "Lightening" Stun Gun which features a built-in high-intensity strobe light that will disorient your assailant allowing you plenty of time to "zap" him or get away from the confrontation.

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A new low price on one of the most popular self-defense knives available. This knife is chrome and steel with a safety lock and thumb flick opener. 5" closed. Comes complete with sheath.

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This amazing device looks just like a "Cross" pen. It can be your best friend when you're in a tight spot. The cover slips off to reveal a hardened steel spike. An unexpected surprise for any would-be mugger.

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Our copyrighted pattern has been proven highly effective due to its superior ability in breaking up your body silhouette at distances of 35 meters or more. This avoids the "blobbing" effect known to happen with most other camouflage.

Both the jacket and pants, patterned after the original style, are cut to fit like an issue B.D.U. All garments are assembled by government contractors to exacting military specs. and are made from pre-shrunk 100% cotton to keep you cool, comfortable and quiet.

#GTJH - JUNGLE HAT - \$14.95 ea. Includes two inch brim, screen vents and a chin string with leather draw tab.

#GTPH - PATROL HAT - \$12.95 ea. Includes a hidden pocket in crown top.

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HAT SIZES: S(7) M(7 ¼) L(7 ½) XL(7 ¾)

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CHEST: XS(29-33) S(33-37) M(37-41) L(41-45) XL(45-59)

#GTP - PANTS - \$34.95 ea. Six pocket design with one acc. leg pocket, button fly and waist adjusting tabs. All sizes have a 35" inseam except XS which has a 33" inseam.

WAIST: XS(23-27) S(27-31) M(31-35) L(35-39) XL(39-43)



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MA 02379; phone 617-584-7816). Available with NATO STANAG or Weaver rail fastenings, the Swan G-3 mount does not obscure the weapon's iron sights.

Once attached to the MP5, whose iron sights had been previously zeroed, we adjusted the red laser dot so that it rested on top of the front sight post at 50 yards. The laser optic adjustment screws are located under a protective cover on both the top and bottom of the laser unit. Either set can be used for zero adjustments, but neither set is marked for function or direction of movement. Trial-and-error with a screwdriver is required, as the poorly written instruction manual, devoid of illustrations, is of no assistance. Nevertheless, the entire zeroing process takes only a few minutes and we found that, using the top set of adjustment screws, turning the front screw clockwise would lower the beam and turning the rear screw clockwise would move the beam to the left.

The size of the laser dot increases in diameter as the target range increases. Doubling the range will double the size of the dot. At 50 yards the dot is approximately 3 inches in diameter; at 100 yards it increases to 6 inches. In my opinion, 200 yards is the maximum useful range of this device.

Laser sights on firearms are severely compromised by the prevailing lighting conditions. They can be used only indoors, at heavy dusk and at night. The laser beam cannot be seen in hazy or bright sunlight, and this limits their potential. At night, you must be able to identify your target by some other means before firing. Furthermore, enemy personnel, even on the far flanks, can easily detect the laser beam's source, so use of the beam must be intermittent. The Model 36 is provided with a pressure switch connected by a cable to the power source which parallels the laser tube on the right side. We mounted the velcro-backed switch on the left side of the MP5's "tropical" handguard, where it was operated by the palm and thumb of the support hand.

Mounted directly over and forward of the ejection port, the Model 36 did not adversely affect the MP5's superb handling characteristics, and the addition of almost 2 pounds to the weapon's overall weight was hardly noticed during the firing sequences.

If the system has been properly zeroed, when the laser dot is placed on the target, hit probability is quite high. The usual trade-off, however, is not acceptable. Operators invariably seek out the dot and instinctively react to place it on the target with no regard for the proper shooting stance or training which has mandated that they bring the weapon up to the shoulder and

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quickly apply a "flash" sight picture to the target. Under stress, we do what we were trained to do. If we shoot correctly in daylight but become accustomed to sloppy techniques that will result in hits when a laser sight is employed, when the shit hits the fan our brain will be forced to decide between two alternate firing techniques. That's bad. There simply isn't time for decision-making like this in a combat environment. We must practice only one combat-proven presentation with the handgun, shotgun, submachine gun or assault rifle.

There are no military applications for laser sights on firearms. Although they cost 10 times as much, second-generation night vision scopes such as the AN/PVS-4 provide superior target discrimination and greater tactical potential than laser sights. Even optical sights with tritium-illuminated reticle patterns are preferable, as the operator must maintain an orthodox shooting position to utilize them.

There are, to be sure, useful military applications for lasers. Bombs, shells and other munitions can be directed to targets by means of a laser designator, a device which projects a laser beam onto the target to be reflected and received by an airborne homing system. Laser weapons that can cut through armor plate are just around the corner. Lasers have already been successfully employed for security surveillance systems, marksmanship training and rangefinding with accuracy of ± 5 meters at distances up to 10 kilometers.

There may be a few limited law enforcement applications for laser sights on firearms. Some indoor SWAT scenarios might benefit from the enhanced ability to engage targets quickly at close range and in cramped quarters where normal shooting stances might be inappropriate. Prison guards could make effective use of the laser's intimidating red dot to quell rioters, but there are few situations where a street cop would be better served by the addition of a laser sight.

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THIS is a story about three soldiers — Moe, Larry and Curly. Curly was a professional shooting champ and was unbeatable at the rifle range. Larry was a high school cross-country star who could hump the bush longer than any five recruits. Moe, having grown up in the hills of Tennessee, knew how to observe and move in the woods like a deer. As a team, these three troops thought they would be unstoppable in combat.

One day they got into a firefight. A big one. Curly, the great shooter, was 20 pounds overweight and, after 200 meters of fire and movement, collapsed in exhaustion. Larry didn't know how to use cover effectively and was shot dead before he ever had a chance to show off his endurance. Moe, the good ol' country boy, couldn't hit a barn if he was inside it with a rifle. Consequently, he didn't contribute effective fire.

Why did these "three stooges" perform so poorly in battle? Each had a major deficiency in an essential skill for soldiering — and paid big time for it. To be an effective combat soldier you must have proficiency in at least three skill areas: shooting, fieldcraft and physical fitness. These core skills are the "Three Rs" of the military and, without the necessary skill level in each, you can't claim the title of soldier.

Now that we've determined what the core skills are, let's look at each one in more detail.

Shooting — A soldier must be able to deliver daytime effective fire out to 300 meters and nighttime effective fire to 150 meters *upon demand*. By "effective fire upon demand" I mean directing potentially casualty-producing fire on man-sized targets without the benefit of warm-up or practice shooting. But accuracy alone doesn't fill this bill. The soldier must also master weapons handling and maintenance to arrive at what the British call "skill at arms." This includes loading and unloading, magazine filling, reducing stoppages, fieldstripping, and assembling and cleaning the weapon in all kinds of terrain, light and weather conditions.

Fieldcraft — Even skill at arms becomes useless in combat without proficiency in fieldcraft, the largest category. The essential skills to be learned here are observation, camouflage and concealment, tracking and antitracking, tactical movement and range estimation. A closer examination of these will show why they are vital for survival on the battlefield.

Observation is the ability to defeat the enemy's camouflage and concealment. To do this the soldier has to learn how to look *through* cover rather than



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Jack Thompson

Core Skills for Combat



Caught in a firefight? Mastery of all three combat core skills — fieldcraft, marksmanship and physical fitness — will help determine whether you end up a survivor or a statistic. SOF's Jack Thompson shows you what you need to really answer the call of soldiering. Photo: DoD

at it. For example, when you're patrolling in a forest, look between the trees, not at them, since this is where people are likely to be. Likewise, in arid, treeless terrain, avoid focusing on large rocks and dense bushes and train your eyes on those open areas between obstructions. This advice might sound

simplicistic, but the eye of the unskilled observer tends to key on large, solid objects in the visual field rather than on open, unobstructed spaces. A good soldier must unlearn this natural tendency.

Conversely, to defeat the enemy's ground and aerial observation efforts, the soldier should be familiar with effective techniques of camouflage and concealment. Blending in with your surroundings so you don't stand out and draw the enemy's attention requires eliminating sharp contrasts between you and the immediate terrain. Obviously, this involves using color schemes and textures that match indigenous plantlife and terrain features so that the objects being camouflaged are indistinguishable from their background. Dulling shiny or reflective surfaces with paint or mud as well as breaking up the regular outlines of you and your equipment with netting, pieces of cloth or foliage also serve to blur the contrasts between you and your surroundings. Finally, when using fresh-cut branches for concealment, change the cut foliage regularly to insure that it maintains a living appearance, and remember to alter your camouflage as you change locations.

Tracking and antitracking techniques are further extensions of observation and concealment. When patrolling, watch for any signs of

COMBAT TRAINER

Jack Thompson has shared his extensive knowledge of soldiering and shooting with *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine readers for nearly a decade. Currently a personal security consultant and small arms expert, his combat experience spans the globe. Jack first served in the USMC in Vietnam for five years, battled terrorists in Rhodesia with both the SAS and Selous Scouts for six years and has trained freedom fighters in Central America while providing bodyguard services for diplomatic personnel.

Continued on page 82

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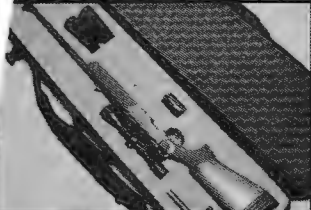
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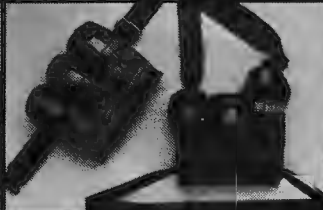
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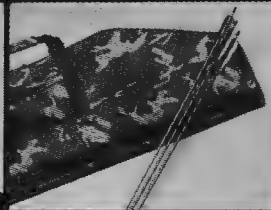
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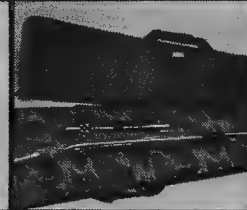
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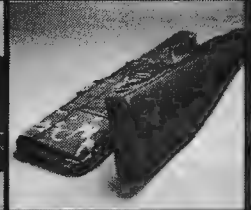
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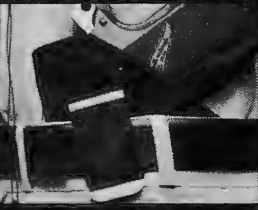
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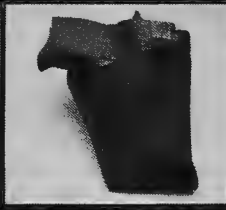
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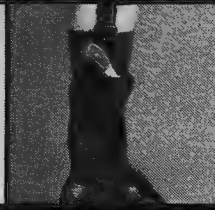
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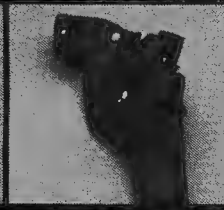
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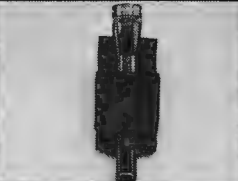
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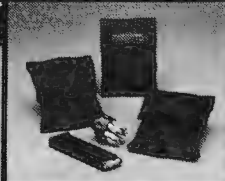
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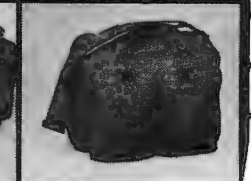
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I WAS THERE

by Vern Humphrey

Enlightening Charlie



LZ Pedro was about 20 klicks southwest of Quang Tri in Northern I Corps, in the transition zone between the flat, sandy coastal strip and the rugged jungle-covered hills that extend into Laos.

When Alpha Company, 1/61 Infantry, arrived there in 1969, the idea was rest and refit. There wasn't any evidence of NVA or VC activity in the area. How could there be, in this wide-open terrain?

We occupied the old abandoned fire base, drew in the perimeter, strung new wire, dug a few straddle trenches and settled down to pull some serious maintenance and conduct some much-needed training. The catch was that we had to take on a tank platoon. We didn't need it, but somebody else needed a mechanized infantry platoon, so we swapped out.

The M48A3s came rumbling up, all of them under their own power, which was unusual enough to provoke comment, and the platoon leader reported to the CP. I had had a few hours to ponder the problem of how to use tanks in this AO, and the devil had suggested a plan. Remembering the special attention VC RPG gunners had paid to the xenon searchlights (which they obviously thought were some kind of secret weapon) mounted on the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's tanks, I had an idea how to attract Charlie to our AO.

"How do your searchlights work, lieutenant?" I asked.

Roadbound M48A2s on a search-and-destroy mission during Operation Makaha. This story describes a more creative approach to using armor in the jungle. Photo: DoD

He was fresh out of Fort Knox and full of beans. "They work fine, captain!"

"Hmmm. All your infrared in working condition?"

"Yes, sir! Everything we got works."

I put a fatherly arm around his shoulders. "Tell you what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna give you four infantrymen for each tank."

He looked at me like I was crazy. I went on. "I want you to put tanks here, here, here," I said, indicating several points forming a line about eight klicks long on the map.

He was sure I was crazy now. "I want you to move out at about dusk. Man the turrets of each tank with two men. With the rest of the crew and infantrymen, set up an ambush near each tank, so that if anyone tries to slip up on you, you can grease them."

He was trying to say something now, but couldn't seem to get it out. I went on. "Have the guys in the turret do a 360-degree sweep with the searchlight every so often. Do a sweep with the infrared now and then, too."

It took a while to convince him I was serious, and he went away shaking his head. But when dusk came, he pulled

out, four infantrymen riding on each tank. When he got them into position, the tanks formed a long line, one on every other hilltop. All night long, the ghostly fingers of the searchlights roamed and probed the hills.

A hasty profile of the area would have revealed that there were areas that the searchlights *didn't* cover. Plotted on the acetate cover of my map, they formed bands of darkness in the gullies between the tank-outposted hilltops. Each of those bands was ambushed by a four-man "killer team," Alpha Company's trademark.

Contact came at about two in the morning. The reaction force went roaring out of Pedro, and there was the sudden clatter of a .50 cal. as one of the APCs encountered a band of NVA attempting to withdraw from their encounter with a killer team.

It wasn't much, as far as contacts go. We only got one. He laid there with a huge .50-caliber crater in his chest. We searched the body for papers then went back to Pedro. When the sun came up, we pulled in the ambushes and sent out a couple of mounted patrols.

The sudden clatter of fire was a total surprise. We came out of bunkers and out from under poncho liners, scrambling for weapons. A check on the radio indicated that one of the patrols had run into a group of NVA near the site of last night's ambush.

"I know this sounds crazy, but I think they were trying to drag off the body."

It *did* look like the body had been moved a few meters, but you couldn't really be sure. We left a team there to watch, and went back to Pedro.

That night we had contact again, but the surprise came the next morning. A daylight patrol made contact again, and this time they were definitely carrying the body. By now, there were several bodies scattered around the AO, but this one seemed to have a special attraction.

That night we ambushed a group of NVA within meters of the body. The next day they came again, dragging the body 50 meters or so, then bugging out when a mounted patrol appeared.

For a week, we fought little actions around that body, and by week's end there really wasn't much left to fight over anymore. We continued to make contact in the dark gullies between the tank positions, however, and LZ Pedro proved good hunting ground — until the tank battalion commander found out how we were doing it.

I've had my ass chewed a lot of times, and I know craftsmanship when I hear it. I'll always remember his last sentences. Jabbing a finger in my chest, he shouted, "Don't you ever do that again. It's a complete violation of armor doctrine!"

ASSIGNMENT

Major U.S. Media Fail Miserably

by Harry Bateson

"I warn you, and through you all your journalistic colleagues: Stop trying to penetrate Afghanistan with the so-called *mujahideen* from now on. The bandits and the so-called journalists accompanying them will be killed and our units in Afghanistan will help the Afghan forces to do it." — Soviet Ambassador to Pakistan Vitaly Smirnov, in a speech to French journalists in Islamabad, Pakistan, 5 October 1984.

CLEARLY, the Soviets do not want widespread and accurate news coverage of their war in Afghanistan, and so far, unfortunately, they have gotten what they wanted, for the most part. The death of a million and a half civilians, the destruction of hundreds of villages, the torture and mass execution of prisoners, the use of booby-trapped toys and chemical weapons have all been covered poorly, sparsely or not at all in popular Western news media.

All too often, Western news stories portray the Soviets as reasonable, decent creatures trapped in a war they never really wanted, anxious to find a just solution and avoid further bloodshed. The Afghan resistance forces, on the other hand, are often depicted as religious fanatics and blood-thirsty savages who somehow pose a threat to their gigantic neighbor to the north. The facts of the conflict are turned upside-down and inside-out, in a triumph of Orwellian Newspeak.

Why has Western coverage of the Afghan war been so unsatisfactory? For one thing, the Soviets have carried out a deliberate and blatant campaign of terror and harassment against war correspondents working in Afghanistan. In the winter of 1984-85, this reporter was personally threatened in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, by a Soviet diplomat later identified by Western diplomats as a KGB officer. "We know who you are and what you are doing," this character snarled. "You had better watch out." Two weeks later, while traveling by bus through the tribal area of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province after a brief sojourn in the war zone, the two buses ahead of mine were hit, one by a

INSIDE STORY

Harry Bateson is an experienced Afghan correspondent who has spent much time inside the country, unlike many of the mainstream "journalists" who are covering Afghanistan for the American media.

rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fired from ambush, the other by a suitcase bomb; several passengers were killed or injured.

Coincidence? Perhaps, but probably not. Several other Western journalists have had their film and notes stolen by KGB and *Khad* (the Afghan communist surrogate of the KGB) in Pakistan after trips inside with the *mujahideen*. Two years ago, *Arizona Republic* reporter Charles Thornton was killed in a Soviet ambush south of Kandahar, an ambush many believe was deliberately aimed at him, an ambush designed to kill a journalist. Two other American journalists, filmmakers Lee Shapiro and Jim Lindeloff, were killed in another ambush near Kabul in October 1987. Many observers believe that this ambush, too, was specifically targeted against journalists. According to *mujahideen* sources, the valley where the ambush took place was secure, guerrilla-held territory; the ambush must have been a special, high-priority operation. A French correspondent was captured in northern Afghanistan the same week Shapiro and Lindeloff died, and is now being tried for "espionage." If this isn't an organized campaign against the press, it certainly seems like one.

Obviously, this kind of explicit threat to journalists, along with the hardships of working in a war zone where there are no solid front lines, no secure rear areas, no medical care, no comfortable accommodations, has discouraged a lot of mainstream journalists from covering the conflict. Most of the people who cover the Afghan war are freelancers, stringers, semiprofessionals operating on a shoestring. The media "pack," which flocks *en masse* to cover more comfortable, convenient stories like



On the road to Jegdaleg, British correspondent Peter Douglas, who writes for *SOF*, blends in with *mujahideen*. He's standing in center rear with hat and scarf. Photo: Ed Grazda

El Salvador and Nicaragua, has never made it to Afghanistan.

What of the coverage that *has* appeared in print and on television? Unfortunately, most of it has been twisted and tainted by political bias and stubborn unwillingness to admit the existence of Soviet atrocities, war crimes and genocide. Some of the coverage is so politically prejudiced that it verges on outright falsehood.

The 11 June 1984 issue of *Newsweek*, for instance, carried a story by staff reporter

AFGHANISTAN



Patricia Sethi, who visited the Kabul area as a "guest" of the Soviets and the Afghan communist regime. The overall message of Ms. Sethi's story seemed to be that the Soviets were about to win the war, and that perhaps that wasn't such a bad thing. Sethi described the resistance forces disparagingly as "mullahs, merchants and tribesmen," ignoring the fact that the mujahideen movement draws on every level and facet of Afghan society, everyone from truck drivers, farmers, herdsmen and housewives to college professors, poets, village schoolteachers and members of the Afghan Olympic team.

"Thousands of young Afghans are being trained in the Soviet Union, and at home thousands more are being imbued with the spirit of socialism," Sethi wrote without a

hint of irony; no mention of the hundreds of thousands of war dead, of the hundreds of bombed-out villages, of the five million Afghans, nearly one-third of the country's prewar population, living in exile in Pakistan and Iran. She continued, "In the village of Bagram last week, a 15-year-old girl named Khalida brandished a Kalashnikov rifle and recited the virtues of the revolution. For young militawomen like her it means 'an education, freedom from the veil, freedom from feudalists who want to keep us down,' she said. 'We do not want to become the fourth wife of a 60-year-old man, existing solely for his whim and pleasure.'"

All of this sounds very moving, very convincing, except that Bagram just happens to be the site of the largest Soviet military base

in Afghanistan, a fact Sethi somehow failed to mention. Khalida, in other words, was living in the camp of a foreign army of occupation: hardly a representative Afghan woman, one would think. And Sethi/Khalida's vision of young peasant girls being shanghaied into harems is nothing more than a ludicrous fantasy. Before the Soviet invasion in 1979, areas like Bagram, near urban centers, were modernizing rapidly; girls from peasant families were going to college in increasing numbers and becoming nurses, teachers, secretaries and government clerks, not languishing in rich men's seraglios. What a load of rot!

Sethi's whole article was permeated with this kind of misleading misinformation as well as omissions. She wrote mockingly of Afghan resistance leader Ahmad Shah Mas-

"JOURNALISTIC OBJECTIVITY" FOR FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Objectivity — action uninfluenced by emotion, surmise or personal prejudice — is in theory the goal journalists pursue in their writing. The wires (AP, UPI and Reuters) and other mainstream media make much in public of their objective approach to reporting.

Internal communications tell another story.

On 22 June 1986, the UPI bureau in Dallas, Texas, filed a 288-word story on the national wire reporting that 25 wounded Afghan rebels and four children had arrived in Texas for medical treatment under the sponsorship of Representative Charles Wilson, D-Texas. In one paragraph the 25 wounded mujahideen were referred to as "freedom fighters."

When that article reached UPI's Foreign Desk in Washington, DC, UPI's foreign editor took a look at it and fired back a bullet (wire slang for a message correcting the Dallas Bureau for a mistake). The bullet, which we have a copy of, read:

DALLAS-DESK-RE AFGHAN STY FROM GRAPEVINE, TEXAS. FYI, FOREIGN DESK (AT LEAST) POLICY IS NOT TO USE 'FREEDOM FIGHTERS' BUT STED USE REBELS, RESISTANCE FIGHTERS OR SOME OTHER WORD TT DOES NOT SUGGEST REPRESSIVE GOVERN-

MENTS. THX AND RGDS. FUHRMAN-WAFORN

UPI 06-22-86 05:17 PCD

UPI, on the verge of bankruptcy for years, is the weak sister of the wires, so it is not much of a surprise that the Washington foreign editor doesn't really have a working knowledge of English and doesn't understand the meaning of resistance fighters. Resistance (an underground organization engaged in a struggle for national liberation in a country under military or totalitarian occupation) is close enough to what's happening in Afghanistan that the mujahideen (which means holy warriors) wouldn't object.

But the fact that UPI has made a judgment and deliberately looks for language to imply that the Soviets' puppet regime is not repressive I'm sure would upset the Afghans, as it does me. Not repressive? The regime in Kabul has allowed the occupation of the country by 135,000 Soviet troops and has participated in a widespread terror campaign against its own people, killing approximately one and a half million and driving nearly five million across the border into Iran and Pakistan. The Kabul regime's repressiveness has only been matched in recent times by that of the Khmer Rouge, which killed about three million of its own people in Cambodia.

One wonders if UPI works that hard to be objective when writing about South Africa and El Salvador.

Somehow I don't think so.

— Jim Graves



ABOVE: American woman journalist just crossed into Afghanistan from Teramangal, Pakistan. The post marks the border — Afghanistan in the foreground, Pakistan in the background. Photo: Ed Grazda

soud: "By late last year, the Soviets apparently became concerned that Massoud, 28, was getting too big for his Afghan pantaloons" and described with seeming approval the Soviet assault on Massoud's Panjsher Valley stronghold in the summer of 1985. Nowhere does she mention the catastrophic effects of Soviet military operations on the Panjsher's civilian population: Attacks like the one in 1985 eventually forced the valley's 80,000 inhabitants into exile; several thousand men, women and children died in bombing attacks and ground fighting; and hundreds more starved to death or died of exposure. The French volunteer medics of *Aide Médicale Internationale* built several hospitals and clinics in the guerrilla-held parts of the Panjsher to treat the war-wounded: All were destroyed, deliberately, by Soviet air strikes. Not a word about any of this from Ms. Sethi.

One of the lynchpins of Soviet disinformation on the war has been to assert how ineffectual the mujahideen are, how light Soviet losses have been. Sethi's *Newsweek* piece contains the following statement: "About 4,000 Soviet fighting men have been killed since 1979.... According to authoritative sources in the region, the

financial cost of the war adds up to about \$1.5 million a day — not a prohibitive amount." One wonders just who those "authoritative sources" are, as they seem to have been far, far off the mark. Soviet losses are now known to have been much higher than those Sethi claimed, and they are increasing steadily, although reporting of them still lags.

Many recent Afghan news stories are just as bad as, or worse than, the Sethi piece. In the 17 August 1987 *New Republic*, *New York Times* Delhi Bureau Chief Steven R. Weisman had a story titled "The Great Game: The Afghan War as Seen from Kabul," based, like Sethi's, on a brief junket to Soviet-controlled areas of eastern Afghanistan. Weisman's article was full of errors and untruths, reflecting either an abysmal ignorance of the subject or deliberate disinformation, designed to mislead.

"Efforts to find a peaceful settlement must take into account the fact that the main guerrilla leaders are zealous fundamentalists who want to fight until the last Russian is driven out and Afghanistan becomes an Islamic republic similar to that of neighboring Iran," Weisman wrote, as if the Afghan resistance's desire to rid their country of an

invading army was somehow irrational, unreasonable. More important, the moderate, tolerant, instinctively democratic Hannafi brand of Sunni Islam espoused by 90% of all Afghans bears absolutely no resemblance to the fierce, autocratic version of Shia Islam practiced in Khomeini's Iran: Any undergraduate student in Middle Eastern Studies could have told Mr. Weisman that.

He went on to dredge up another "revolutionary Afghan woman," this one a 19-year-old Kabul student named Jamila Takhari, who said, "These people [the mujahideen] don't want women to have a role in society. But that time is past, when women were kept in their homes." Before the communists came, Afghan women went to school, went shopping, held jobs, ran for public office. A few resistance leaders are religious conservatives, wary of "women's liberation," but they are a minority; besides, can they be half as bad as the Soviet soldiers and secret policemen who regularly



ABOVE: Correspondent Rob Schultheis takes a moment to record his thoughts in Nangarhar, Afghanistan. Hardships of working in a war zone have discouraged many mainstream journalists from covering the conflict at all. Photo: Ed Grazda

BELOW: Journalists meet at Lala's Grill in Green's Hotel, Peshawar, Pakistan. At right, famous Japanese karate instructor to the mujahideen — Tanaka. Photo: Ed Grazda



rape, torture and murder Afghan women, according to sources ranging from UNESCO to Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch and the French medical volunteers of *Médecins Sans Frontières* and *Aide Médicale Internationale*? I think not.

Selig Harrison, ex-*Washington Post* correspondent and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace fellow, is a long-time apologist for the Soviet Union's Afghanist policies. In an op-ed piece in the 13 May 1984 *Washington Post*, he wrote a piece whose very title, "The Soviets Are Winning in Afghanistan," has turned out to be embarrassingly false. He described the war as "an intensifying military and political struggle in which most villages are trapped between increasingly efficient Soviet-cum-Afghan forces and increasingly well-equipped resistance fighters. If a village helps one side in the fighting, the other punishes it, and the issue for most Afghans is how to survive."

This description is, of course, pure balderdash, and it is difficult to believe that Harrison didn't know better. There are cases of mujahideen attacking Soviet-occupied or communist militia-controlled villages and towns, but they are exceedingly



Australian John Montfreis, who was wounded 13 August 1987 north of Kabul. Montfreis lost lots of flesh in his left arm, the radial nerve was severed and the humerus broken. Everyone else hit in the blast was killed or severely injured. Photo: Carew-Reid

rare; 95% of the military attacks on villages in Afghanistan are carried out by Soviet troops and aircraft with the Afghan army in a supporting role. Harrison was indulging in the worst kind of intellectual dishonesty, slyly attempting to suggest that a popular national resistance movement is no better than an occupying army and a quisling regime, and that both sides in the Afghan war are terrorizing civilians. One wonders how Harrison would describe the struggle between the French resistance and the Vichy French and Nazis during World War II: as a meaningless battle between moral equals, with French civilian populace "trapped" in the middle?

Now that American-made Stinger anti-aircraft missiles are radically shifting the battlefield advantage inside Afghanistan to the mujahideen, stories are beginning to crop up in the world press whose sole purpose seems to be to influence American public opinion against continuing the Stinger supply program. When Iranian troops captured 17 Stingers from mujahideen on the Iran-Afghanistan border recently, the 20 September 1987 issue of *The London Times* ran a story titled "Afghans Sell U.S. Stingers to Khomeini." Written by a neophyte

ANDY SKRZYPKOWIAK (1951-1987)

Andy didn't beat the clock.

Andy Skrzypkowiak was a man who would always go a little farther, either as a member of Britain's Special Air Service (SAS) or as one of the small band of journalists who have gained the respect of the Afghan resistance while covering their long fight for freedom.

Andy's preparation for Afghanistan was serving in the SAS. He was the perfect SAS type — incredibly tough and fit, with a keen analytic intelligence and eye for terrain; he shunned self-marketing. When the Falklands War broke out in 1982, he immediately flew back to London, at great personal expense, convinced that Britain would never get the islands back without his 21st Special Air Service Regiment (V) — which they did!

Andy first saw combat as a journalist in Afghanistan, starting off working with still photography and moving into video. He usually traveled across the Hindu Kush into the north of Afghanistan, where he covered Ahmad Shah Massoud's progress from the Panjshir Valley to creating a regional organization.

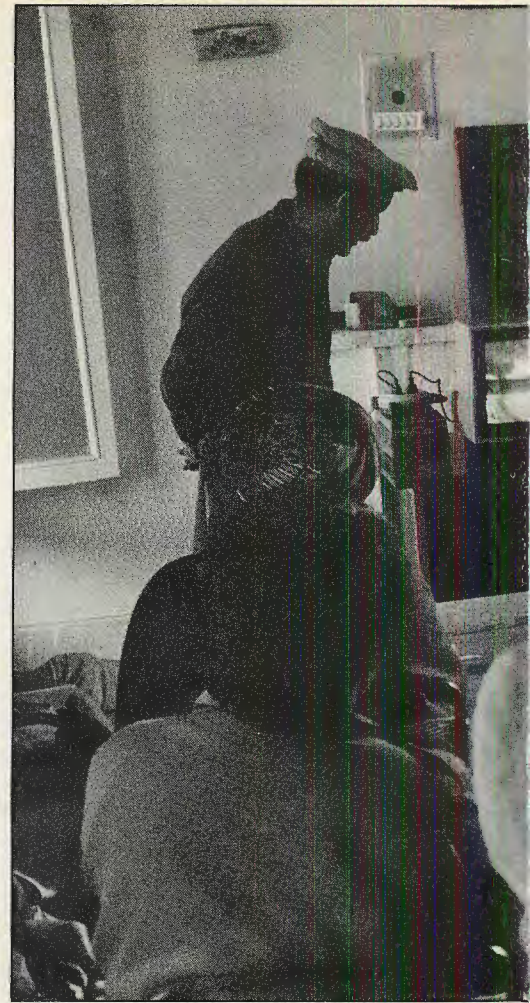
In between trips, he married Chris Gregory, another journalist, and together they covered one of the most

spectacular Afghan victories of the war: the destruction of a Soviet fuel convoy by Massoud's forces on the Salang Pass highway in 1984.

Andy was killed in October 1987 in the Kantiwa area of Nuristan, while on his way to rejoin Massoud. He was caught in the fighting between Massoud and another resistance party — the *Hezb-i-Islami* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar — which in 1987 regarded Massoud's success in the north as a greater threat than the Soviets. In 1987, Gulbuddin's commanders in the north were grabbing journalists covering Massoud. By December, word finally was brought back that Andy had been killed by *Hezb*.

To the SAS, to "beat the clock" is to live; the names of the fallen of the British Special Air Service are inscribed on the memorial clock at its headquarters in Stirling Lines, Hereford. The clock, with its names from Ulster, the Falklands, Borneo and elsewhere, is portable, as befits the memory of the fallen of an organization to whom the static and earthbound is anathema. Andy's name will also be remembered in a portable memorial, carried in the hearts of the Afghans with whom he shared so much, the journalists and writers who respected his courage and skill, and all those who value human freedom.

— David C. Isby



Video class for Afghans so they can learn to cover the war. This class was run by the *Jamiat-i-Islami* Party in Peshawar, Pakistan, 1986. Photo: Ed Grazda

would-be journalist named Sara Shah, reportedly with the assistance of some shadowy Peshawar hangers-on with dubious political allegiances, the story was one long string of falsehoods and untruths.

"The United States has cut off supplies of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to an Afghan guerrilla group after discovering that at least 16 of the weapons were sold by the resistance to Iran," the article began. Not true: The U.S. government investigated the incident and found that the Iranians seized the missiles from the mujahideen by force; supplies of Stingers were never interrupted at all. The article goes on to say, "The [guerrilla] group [that lost the Stingers] is the most fundamentalist faction among the Afghan resistance and maintains representation in Tehran." Wrong again: The group, *Hezb-i-Islami*/Yunis Khalis, is extremely unfriendly to the Khomeini regime and has no representatives or offices anywhere in Iran. The fact that *Hezb-i-Islami* officials in Peshawar denied selling the Stingers to Iran is buried deep in the text, 46 lines down: dishonest journalism indeed.

Newsweek did its share to spread disinformation on the Stingers in a 26 October 1987 piece. That week the magazine ran a short, unattributed piece based on "semi-official Pentagon sources" (whatever those are) implying the mujahideen sold the Stingers to Iran. Inaccuracy followed inaccuracy. *Newsweek* claimed, "The in-

termediary [for the sale] apparently was Ismael Khan." Wrong: Khan is the *Jamiat-i-Islami* commander in Herat, and the Stingers were highjacked by the Iranians from the *Hezb-i-Islami* commander in Farah, far south of Herat. *Newsweek* described Khan's "Islamic Party" as having "close ties to Iran." Wrong again: *Jamiat* is hardly an "Islamic Party" if by that one means fundamentalist in the Iranian sense, as *Jamiat* is primarily made up of Sunnis and, like most mujahideen groups, has very strained relations with Iran. Recent Western visitors to eastern Iran described wounded *Jamiat* mujahideen dying after being denied treatment in Iranian hospitals, of others being forcibly drafted against their will into the Iranian army. In many areas of Afghanistan, Iranian-backed guerrillas have fought against *Jamiat* and other mainstream mujahideen groups, disastrously weakening the anti-Soviet resistance.

About the same time *The London Times* piece came out, the usually reliable *Far Eastern Economic Review* ran a story by a cohort of Ms. Shah's named Elaine Parnell which made the rather astonishing claim that the Stinger was not an effective weapons system, since the Soviets can simply avoid the surface-to-air missiles by not sending their jets and helicopters into areas where Stingers are deployed! As Soviet military tactics in Afghanistan are absolutely dependent on close air support, it

would seem that a weapons system whose very presence removed that air support from the field of battle was a pretty damned potent weapons system, but that fact never seems to have occurred to Ms. Parnell. Amazing.

A good bit of the misinformation out of Afghanistan is simply the innocent product of inept reporting; what is really disturbing is the deliberate disinformation, the stories squelched, censored, suppressed, twisted and falsified to mislead the public.

It seems to happen a lot. A veteran Canadian woman reporter tells of an interview she did with an Afghan woman who had been tortured by Soviet and Afghan communist secret police in a Kabul prison and had survived to become a resistance leader in Pakistan. The Canadian reporter gave the story to an editor at the *Toronto Globe-Mail*; to her surprise and outrage the editor refused to run the story. "It's well-written, but you are too close to the story emotionally," the editor said. The same editor also rejected a series of photographs of bombed-out Afghan villages, on the same general grounds: too "emotional." The photographer, Joe Gaal, was appalled: "It wasn't as if I could have faked the photos," he says.



ABOVE: Green's Hotel, Peshawar, Pakistan, frequented by journalists from all over the world on their way into and out of Afghanistan. Photo: Ed Grazda

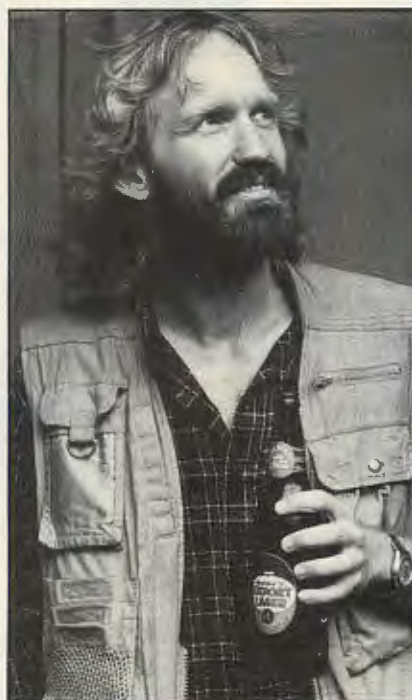
BELOW: Rob Schultheis soaks up some sun with mujahideen companions in Tirah, Pakistan. Photo: Ed Grazda



"You can pose people, but how do you pose rubble?"

An American journalist shot videotape of fighting around Jalalabad, Afghanistan's fifth largest city, and offered it over the phone to CNN. CNN executive Genee Van Essen told him that the self-styled "news network" wasn't even interested in looking at his tapes. "We get Afghan war footage all the time," she said, ignoring the fact that CNN goes weeks, even months, without running any coverage of the war at all. Does CNN's lack of interest in Afghanistan have anything to do with the fact that network prez Ted Turner has publicly stated that the Soviets didn't really invade Afghanistan, they were "invited" in? Your guess is as good as mine.

In 1985 journalist Rob Schultheis managed to persuade the leftist/liberal monthly *Mother Jones* to send him to Afghanistan to report on the war. The story he brought back contained an extensive documentation of Soviet atrocities and an open denunciation of Soviet policy in Afghanistan. Reportedly, the article triggered a huge uproar among MJ's editors, some of whom wanted to run it, insisting that it would be dishonest not to, while others wanted to "kill" the piece. In the end the magazine compromised and ran the story with all of the strongest passages about Soviet war crimes carefully removed. In a complete reversal of their usual editorial policy, the editors never provided the



Jim Lindeloff with correspondents' favorite, Murree's Export Lager, better known as Murree Piss. This was last time the author saw him. He was a 6'4" paramedic-trained redhead who was killed near Kabul in October 1987, in an ambush many believe was deliberately aimed at journalists. Photo: Carew-Reid

author with galleys of his edited story before publication, so he had no opportunity to protest the mishandling of his original text. To add insult to injury, the magazine's art department completely ignored the author's suggestions for accompanying photos. He wanted pictures of Afghan civilians, families, women and children, the innocent victims of the war; instead, the art department ran what seemed to be the ugliest, drabest photographs of mujahideen they could find. "The lead photo was a weird close-up of some ancient tribesman with a dyed red beard," Schultheis said later. "I don't even know if he was an Afghan or not. He looked like a Martian. It was like running a picture of a tattooed biker and representing him as a typical American." So much for journalistic integrity, New Left style.

A freelancer went to one of the network news departments in New York and told them he was going to Afghanistan: Were they interested in a story or two? "It all depends," he was told. "We're tired of all these stories about the big bad Russians killing Afghan civilians. But if you can get us any stories about corruption in the CIA arms supply network or the mujahideen trafficking in narcotics, we would really be interested." Unbelievable but true.

In a similar vein, another veteran Afghan journalist received a phone call from a tele-

Continued on page 78



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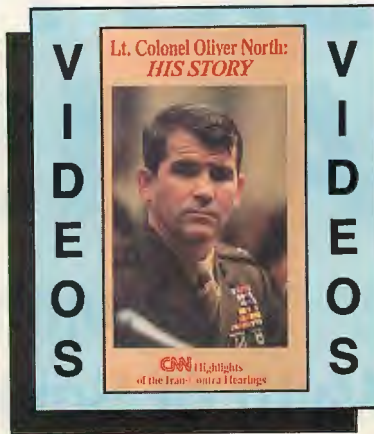
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FOUR BATTLES IN AFGHANISTAN

Mujahideen Destroy Myth of Soviet Invincibility

by David C. Isby

THE war in Afghanistan is no longer a war of a few heroic men armed with antiquated weapons against the mechanized might of the Soviet army. The Afghan resistance has made great progress in moving from its origins as a spontaneous national rising to a modern national liberation movement, a process that effectively started in 1983-84. The maturation of the Afghan resistance is the result of the harsh Darwinism of war — those who fail to change usually fail to survive. The maturation process has been greatly accelerated by the supply of limited numbers of U.S.-made Stinger and British-made Blowpipe man-portable surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) which went into action in late 1986, but the changes are not solely a result of these weapons.

How both the Soviets and Afghans react to and deal with the changes in the war may decide the ultimate question: Will the Soviets withdraw in the next few years, accepting the fact that their puppet government cannot endure without Soviet troops, or will they stay for the long haul while looking to undercut Afghanistan's neighbors as well as continuing the war in-country? Washington is more optimistic than Peshawar, but that there is any debate at all after eight years of war is a tribute to the ability of the Afghan resistance to not only endure but to adapt.

The changes in the war in Afghanistan in 1987 can be seen in four of the most significant battles of that year: Arghandab, Jadji, Operation Avalanche and Kalafghan. Each showed different elements of the changing battlefield situation and each holds different implications for the future.

ARGHANDAB: Defeat for the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA)

The battle of Arghandab was significant because it demonstrated that resistance forces could fight together effectively even when they were from many different parties and were not dominated by any single leader. The resistance showed that they could stand and fight against communist forces without suffering the usual fate of guerrilla forces in conventional battles: heavy losses to air and artillery for no real gain. At Arghandab, however, the result was crumbling DRA morale, marked by large-scale combat refusals and desertions.



Kandahar has been bandit country to the Soviets since 1 January 1980, when the locals showed their appreciation of Soviet efforts at fraternal support by cutting into little pieces the first two jeeploads of Soviets to leave their defensive perimeter around the airport. There have been repeated battles in Kandahar since then. Despite the relatively flat terrain, the resistance has not been defeated by numerous Soviet offensives, even though they have laid waste much of the once-fertile agricultural

The most critical element of resistance success on the battlefield in 1987 was improved air defense weaponry. While overshadowed by Stingers and Blowpipes, larger numbers of Soviet-designed SA-7 Grail surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) were also available, like this one shown in action during the Jadji offensive of spring 1987. Photo: Afghan Media Resource Center

land around the city.

The Kandahar resistance, under leaders such as Lala Malang and Abdul Latif, and

AFGHAN ANALYST AND ALLY

David C. Isby has spent considerable time in the field with the mujahideen as a correspondent for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* (see SOF, April '81, August '83, March '84, February '85). His highly informative book, *Russia's War in Afghanistan*, has been praised by mujahideen representatives for its insight into the freedom fighters' motivations for going toe-to-toe against their Soviet invaders.

Currently a Washington, DC-based lawyer specializing in international affairs, Isby is also well-known for his knowledge of Soviet military tactics and weaponry. Originally the editor of *Strategy and Tactics Magazine* in New York, he is the author of *Jane's Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army*, *Armies of NATO's Central Front* and well over 100 articles in numerous military and foreign affairs publications.



Brave, resolute, inspired and brimming with enthusiasm for his fact-finding mission, author David Isby is about to enjoy bread and tea with Afghan friends. Photo: David C. Isby

the DRA carry the border of the offensive. Most of the 6,000 troops committed to the offensive were Afghan, with the Soviet 70th Motorized Rifle Brigade backing them up. The DRA government sent its minister of defense and minister of interior to the scene to give an Afghan flavor to the action. This offensive by a DRA force may possibly have been intended to follow up on the Zhawar and Herat offensives of 1986, to show the resistance, and the world, that the DRA military could fight its own battles and was going to last.

Following the intense bombardments, the offensive jumped off on 22 May but soon ran into fierce opposition. The resistance had built many shelters around Arghandab and the artillery had not disrupted the de-

BELOW: The wreck of a Soviet Mi-17 Hip-H helicopter shot down on 15 June 1987 in the Jadji offensive. This aircraft, leaving a landing zone after landing Soviet air assault troops, was flying at low altitude trying to avoid Stinger fire when it was hit by an RPG-7 antitank rocket launcher. Photo: Afghan Media Resource Center



with a rotating leadership between parties, increased their attacks in May 1987. They were strong, forceful men, better at battle than in the skillful organization and institution building that often constitutes 90 percent of the task of a guerrilla force. But with the cooperation of other leaders, by 1987 they were mounting attacks that were much better organized than ever before.

The Soviet positions at Peshmul and Has-sangay and the Kandahar city *Khad* (DRA secret police) headquarters were among the

targets of this new offensive. But the Soviet response had already been planned. In the last week of May, the Soviets launched an offensive against resistance strongholds in the Arghandab district, 10 kilometers outside Kandahar.

In typical Soviet operational style, the offensive was preceded by massive air and artillery strikes, more suitable if the defenders were an opposing army rather than elusive guerrillas. Wanting to minimize their own casualties, the Soviets wanted to have

fense. The relatively few resistance Stingers in the area soon started to take their toll on Soviet and DRA helicopters, so close air support was soon limited.

The offensive failed to produce the quick, newsworthy victory Kabul had hoped for. Rather, DRA forces were committed to intense, close-range fighting against well-armed, competent resistance forces. For the communist troops, shaky at the best of times, this was too much, especially once it became apparent that the Soviet helicopter

gunships they had come to depend on for so much of their firepower were not being committed to battle. DRA morale started to crack. Large numbers of DRA troops refused to attack resistance positions. According to reliable but unconfirmed sources, 200 were summarily executed. Over 1,200 DRA troops went over to the resistance, many with their arms. By the end of June, the offensive had fizzled into failure. Communist losses included five to 16 aircraft (different estimates), over 30 tanks and armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) and 500 troops killed and wounded. Resistance losses were much less but included Lala Malang, killed in action while leading the defense. If the Soviets had any plans that this offensive would deal the resistance in the Kandahar area a powerful blow, they must have been sorely disappointed.

Arghandab showed that the Soviet attempt to create an independent DRA operational capability and to use DRA forces to carry out offensive operations backed up by Soviet airpower, as they did in 1986 at Zhawar and Herat, was not going to work in 1987. Soviet airpower, unwilling to take losses to inflict losses on the resistance, was no longer there to make it costly for the resistance to fight it out with DRA forces who cracked under the pressure of fighting.

The Kandahar resistance was never known for its Prussian efficiency in organizing or fighting, but it proved equal to the task. Even though there was no one well-known central figure in command, the different groups stayed united and fought well.

JADJI: The Soviet Army Fails on the Battlefield

The most significant battle of 1987 — and perhaps of the entire war — was the defeat of the Soviet offensive in the Jadji region of Paktia Province. The Paktia offensive, unlike Arghandab, had Soviet troops as its cutting edge. These included a high percentage of Soviet special operations forces — airborne, air assault, Spetsnaz — their tactics sharpened by years of combat experience. While road-bound motorized rifle units still made up the bulk of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, the Jadji offensive, building on years of experience, would emphasize the Soviet troops most suited to the dismounted and airmobile small-unit tactics of counterinsurgency warfare. Committed to the Jadji offensive along with the Soviets were DRA regulars and tribal militia. The militia, armed and equipped like the resistance and with good local knowledge of the territory, can be tough fighters if they are inspired by large amounts of Moscow gold.

Like most Soviet offensives into Paktia, this one started with the relief of a besieged garrison, the one at Ali Sher in Jadji, but it expanded into an attempt to block the major resistance routes into Afghanistan and to put observation posts on some of the major heights.

The offensive opened on 20 May. As with most Soviet offensives in Afghanistan, it was not a surprise, and the resistance was

already moving to defeat it before the troops left the line of departure. The resistance brought in forces from throughout the border areas and from the refugee camps in Pakistan, resulting in one of the largest Afghan concentrations of the war. The numbers stretched the resistance supply system — checkpoints eventually had to be set up to limit the numbers of Afghans coming into the battle. Jalluladin Haqani, one of the foremost resistance commanders in the border area, came north from his base at Zhawar with many of his mujahideen to join in the fighting. Mohammed Anwar, who oper-

ated for many years in the Jegdaleg area of Kabul Province, was also in the thick of the action — his mujahideen included some skilled SAM gunners. But the commanders and fighting men involved read like a Who's Who of the Afghan resistance, coming from all seven major Peshawar-based parties.

Launching an offensive into Paktia Province means accepting heavy fighting for uncertain gain. In 1985, a major Soviet offensive in Paktia was forced back by the resistance. Since then, the resistance has gotten stronger, and by the spring of 1987 there were significant numbers of Stingers and Blowpipes in Paktia. The Soviets had to limit their use of air strikes, relying instead on massed artillery fire, including the use of 220mm BM-27 multiple rocket launchers. Helicopters operated at low altitude, trying to get under the Stingers' effective envelope. This forced them down into the fire

1987 was a good year for resistance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, seen here inspecting a captured AKS-74 with an underbarrel 40mm BG-15 grenade launcher. Photo: Mohammed Shuaib, *Jamiat-i-Islami*



of heavy machine guns and even rocket-propelled grenades (RPG-7s), which resulted in more losses. The Soviet special operations forces were thus limited in their use of helicopters for tactical mobility. They had to fight the Afghans for the high ground on the route of advance. The resistance put dense mine fields on all the major avenues of approach and also covered these approach routes with heavy weapons.

Usually, for a light irregular force like the mujahideen to stand and fight against a force like the Soviet army is somewhere

Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) infantry squad that has joined the resistance. Crumbling of DRA capability and morale in 1987 after an attempted resurgence in 1986 was one of the most significant events of the year. Photo: Mohammed Shualb, *Jamiat-i-Islami*



between counterproductive and self-destructive. But this time, knowing that the Soviets would be sensitive to losses and that the SAMs could hold their air power at bay, the resistance held firm. This time it was the Soviets who broke — and 24 days after the offensive opened, the Soviets retreated.

Jadji underlined the increasing capabilities and effectiveness of the resistance. Even without the chance for extensive pre-planning, the different parties all worked well together. The shifting of forces from elsewhere in eastern Afghanistan showed that few significant commanders would sit out an offensive that was within striking range. The ability to concentrate forces on a regional basis is an advance seen in recent years.

Improved weaponry contributed to the victory in Jadji — not just the SAMs, but increased numbers of Chinese-made

LEFT: Ahmad Shah Massoud, mujahideen combat commander who has led nine offensives in the Panjsher Valley since 1980, overtook the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) garrison at Kalafghan in July 1987 using a coalition force of 300 resistance fighters. Photo: Mike Winchester

107mm and some 122mm rocket launchers. While the practice of indirect fire still eludes even some of the better Afghan commanders, these weapons were effectively used in Jadji. Single-barrel launchers with simple optical sights, called BM-1s by the Afghans, have become widespread. In addition, there are more RPG-7s (although ammunition supply remains a problem) and antitank mines.

The effect of better resistance training was also seen at Jadji. While the individual Afghan — and his commander — are still not well-trained by Western standards, those with more courage than sense are largely dead, those without courage or endurance are largely in exile and those who remain are reaping the rewards of training

and discipline on the battlefield.

Jadji also has larger implications for the Soviets. It shows that the operational approach they have evolved since 1984 — emphasizing firepower, especially air-delivered; the use of special operations forces; and the use of helicopters for close air support, tactical mobility and resupply — is no longer valid. The Soviets are going to have to find another way to fight the war in Afghanistan.

Jadji called into question the continuing viability of the border forts, like Ali Sher, that have held out since the start of the war. These forts, with their Kabul regime garrisons, have been key elements of the Soviet operations in eastern Afghanistan. They block supply routes, provide communist presence and target acquisition capability, act as communications centers for both the military and the *Khad's* extensive human intelligence nets and also have functioned as a magnet for resistance activity, absorbing efforts that would otherwise have been applied closer to Soviet-occupied positions. Resistance attacks on such positions also concentrated their own forces, making them, in the past, a better target for Soviet air and artillery, although the new SAMs in action in 1987 greatly reduced Soviet air capabilities. Because they were manned by the DRA, with only Soviet advisers, they represented a low level of investment for the Soviets.

But many of these forts have become dependent on air resupply. Improved mujahideen air defense threatens to make such resupply flights too costly to be sustained. In 1987, the Soviets pulled their own forces out of a number of more isolated positions in the interior, leaving the DRA behind. The DRA border forts have been holding on in large part because of their extensive mine fields, which keep both the resistance out and their garrisons in. The resistance's lack of mine-field breaching equipment and training kept any of these border forts from falling in 1987. This led to an urgent need for equipment and training for the resistance to deal with the mine fields.

The defeat of the Soviet helicopter force at Jadji, as well as the fighting in Maidon, west of Kabul, and in many other battles had probably the most significant tactical impact of the 1987 fighting. This certainly must have been disconcerting in Moscow. The large, sophisticated and expensive Soviet helicopter force was beaten by a few hundred cheap and relatively unsophisticated Stingers in the hands of irregulars. It must raise questions as to the survivability of the Soviet helicopter force in a potential war in Europe, where air defenses would be much more intense. How the Soviets answer these questions will have an impact beyond Afghanistan.

The defeat of Soviet special operations forces at Jadji also raises questions as to just how successful Soviet adaptation to counterinsurgency warfare has been. This will also require the Soviets to further adapt, but the old, slow processes of trial and error that

have guided Soviet tactical evolution in Afghanistan in the past will not suffice in the new, more deadly 1987 tactical environment. The Soviets are going to have to get a lot better a lot faster than they have in the past, find a new way to fight the war, or end the war.

OPERATION AVALANCHE: The Interdiction Battle

Resistance offensive action in 1987 was targeted against Soviet supply routes, the DRA, and Soviet forts and garrisons. The resistance must have a sustainable and repeatable impact on all three if their military action is to be effective. The resistance interdiction efforts were not as well-directed or sustained as they might have been, especially considering that the Stingers reduced the effectiveness of the attack helicopters on convoy escort duty. Ahmad Shah Massoud, for example, devoted his resources to the classic guerrilla mission of building potential infrastructure for a protracted struggle rather than using them to try to disrupt the Salang Pass route between the Soviet Union and Kabul.

Operation Avalanche's significance — more than the damage done — was what it demonstrated. It was, to a large extent, a battle designed to have an impact beyond the battlefield, to reach Western media and show outside supporters in Pakistan and elsewhere that the Afghan resistance in general, and this party in particular, are deserving of aid. This demonstrated a greater degree of political sophistication than many resistance groups have shown in the past.

Unlike the other three battles, Avalanche was not a coalition effort. Rather, it was staged by a single resistance group — the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) of Pir Sayid Ahmad Gailani. A single-party operation is not uncommon in Afghanistan and in this case there were both military and political reasons for not forming a coalition. Militarily, it was to decrease the risk of plans leaking out and to facilitate rapid command response. Politically, it was to demonstrate NIFA's battlefield capability. In 1986 the first Stingers had gone in to the two *Hezb-i-Islami* (Islamic Party) parties, those of Yunis Khalis and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. While NIFA had its own Stingers by the time of Avalanche, they wanted to show that they would put any future hardware to good use. The competition between the different resistance groups can sometimes have beneficial effects.

NIFA's senior military commander, Abdul Rahim Wardak, a former Afghan army colonel and a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, intended more than just an ambush on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway. He was aware that such an ambush could have been carried out by 40 well-armed handpicked men, but he had in mind a more elaborate plan which would both make the political point and have battlefield impact. Wardak prepared an ambitious plan with four task forces — Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta — operating in

mutual support over a 65-kilometer front. They would also hit communist outposts along the highway and at the Sarobi power station. Unlike an ambush, with its hit-and-run tactics, this plan intended that the highway would be kept closed for several days.

The NIFA forces involved in Operation Avalanche came from a wide geographical area. This illustrates a trend seen in combat in recent years: resistance commanders and fighting men conducting operations outside of their home area. Again, Ahmad Shah Massoud has been one of the prime examples, traveling throughout northern Afghanistan and dispatching mobile strike forces,

Ahmad Shah Massoud, the "Lion of the Panjshir," whose consolidation of resistance positions throughout northern Afghanistan showed a new spirit of cooperation among the Afghan resistance. Photo: Mohammed Shuaib, *Jamiat-i-Islami*

but he is by no means the only Afghan using these tactics. Commanders, moving with either a few men or a "strike force," link up with local forces or a coalition of forces from a wider area or may strike independently.

This trend toward a more regional concentration of fighting men and commanders for specific operations allows greater striking power. Commanders who have gained a good reputation for fighting elsewhere in the region will usually be welcomed by other Afghans. By melding groups of guerrillas either from one or several parties for a single operation, commanders can use large forces. Many successful commanders are from areas without a large Soviet presence, so they lack targets. Commanders who operate in areas that have lost their civilian population through the Soviet campaign against the rural agricultural infrastructure also benefit from the regional cooperation to





Mujahideen commander Massoud (right) watches a Soviet-made M1942 (ZIS-3) 76mm Divisional Gun captured at Kalafghan be dragged away for future use by the resistance. Photo: Abdul Hafiz

assure food supplies. Striking away from the local area with combined forces also makes it harder for the Soviets to target reprisals.

Getting such a large force into position along the Kabul-Jalalabad highway before Operation Avalanche was difficult, especially because the element of surprise was crucial. That it was carried out successfully demonstrates both skillful planning and the greater capability of the resistance to carry out battlefield tasks.

Avalanche opened early on 6 July 1987 with a surprise ambush of a supply convoy. When a relief column arrived (Stingers prevented the helicopter response that would have doubtlessly resulted a year earlier), it was ambushed by a resistance blocking force. Other forces attacked outposts and the Sarobi plant.

The losses in Avalanche have proven difficult to confirm. Original resistance claims included over 900 personnel, 50 AFVs, 83 trucks, 19 outposts, four fighter-bombers and one helicopter. The Afghans involved took special care to ascertain these losses, which they believed to be primarily Soviet troops, and their figures were supported by the reports of an American journalist who was with the resistance during Avalanche. A U.S. Department of Defense source was quoted as reporting these figures were "in the ballpark." However, other Afghan sources believe that fewer than 10 AFVs were destroyed, along with a similar number of trucks, two outposts and one fighter-bomber, and that the forces were primarily DRA. These figures, too, have received non-Afghan backing. Certainly, such divergence in evaluation is not unknown in the Afghan war, or any other, but the key lesson of Avalanche was not the number of casualties inflicted but the message it sent to the resistance's friends and enemies.

KALAFGHAN: The Resistance on the Offensive in the North

Ahmad Shah Massoud's taking of the DRA garrison at Kalafghan in Takhar Province in northern Afghanistan on 14 July 1987 was an example of a successful resistance attack on a communist fort. These forts, with garrisons ranging from about 300 DRA troops, as at Kalafghan, to full 5,000-man divisions, as at Khost and the surrounding outposts, are often resupplied only by air. They are usually behind dense mine fields, intended as much to keep the garrison from deserting as to keep the resistance outside the perimeter.

Communist forts have proven remarkably survivable. In eastern Afghanistan some have survived being surrounded by the resistance since 1979. However, in 1986-87, as part of his campaign to consolidate the resistance position in Afghanistan north of the Hindu Kush, Massoud took a



SOVIET EXPLOSIVE PEN

This weapon, illustrated here for the first time in the West, is a Soviet explosive pen, captured in Afghanistan.

Reports of these weapons date back to World War II. One version was loaded by putting two fire-producing and corrosive chemicals inside the steel pen tube, separated by a copper disc. As the chemicals ate through the copper, they would mix and ignite. The time delay could be varied by the thickness of the disc. Another version had a mechanical friction time-delay detonator set by twisting one half of the pen.

These pens were supplied to the Soviet partisans and special-operations forces operating in the German rear areas during World War II. Along with a broad spectrum of Soviet explosive devices, they contributed greatly to the "front in the enemy rear" that greatly hindered German logistics and communication. Such behind-the-lines offensive action would be a key element of future Soviet invasions.

The explosive pen has become part of the overall Soviet operational approach

to the war in Afghanistan. Since 1987, the Soviet Union, acting through the Afghan communist secret police, the *Khad*, has been waging an unprecedented campaign of state-supported terrorism against Pakistan. Bombs planted by *Khad* agents inserted across the border or recruited in the refugee camps have been going off in Pakistan on a daily basis. The obvious purpose of the terror campaign is to pressure Pakistan to cut its support for the Afghan resistance. Bomb blasts have spread beyond Peshawar and North-West Frontier Province to the Punjab and Scinde. By doing this, the Soviets are hoping that the backlash from these bombings will lead to a public outcry that will force the Pakistani government's hand.

In a real sense, the Soviets are trying to counter the success of the U.S.-made Stinger missile (supplied to the resistance through Pakistan since 1986) with the pen-bomb.

to the war in Afghanistan. Since 1987, the Soviet Union, acting through the Afghan communist secret police, the *Khad*, has been waging an unprecedented campaign of state-supported terrorism against Pakistan. Bombs planted by *Khad* agents inserted across the border or recruited in the refugee camps have been going off in Pakistan on a daily basis. The obvious purpose of the terror campaign is to pressure Pakistan to cut its support for the Afghan resistance. Bomb blasts have spread beyond Peshawar and North-West Frontier Province to the Punjab and Scinde. By doing this, the Soviets are hoping that the backlash from these bombings will lead to a public outcry that will force the Pakistani government's hand.

Guerrilla with Chinese-made RPG-7 antitank rocket launcher. In 1987, helicopters flying under Stinger fire were hit by RPG-7s on several occasions. Photo: David C. Isby

series of posts: Nahrin, Fakhar, Kalafghan and, in October 1987, Newon.

Massoud's offensive has represented a measured pace of military action. Massoud certainly has the capability to mount an interdiction campaign against the Salang highway or to disrupt Soviet air operations from Bagram air base; he has instead chosen to concentrate on building a resistance organization that he believes will last as long as the Soviet presence. Massoud is not aiming for a quick victory but rather the long haul of protracted guerrilla warfare. This is Massoud's greatest strength as a leader and organizer, although he has proven his skill as a combat commander in nine Panjsher Valley offensives since 1980 and, in the last two years, in his attacks throughout the north.

Kalafghan demonstrated that forts can be taken by resistance forces in a well-planned, determined assault. Massoud even lacked specialized mine-clearing equipment and training. The resistance needs both of these badly (the equipment is reportedly in the pipeline to them), but good planning and effective improvisation can substitute. Kalafghan was an effective coalition battle. Massoud worked with fighting men from different parties. The battle was also an integral part of Massoud's political strategy. As well as consolidating his military position, he is creating an alternative to the discredited Kabul government in the best manner of a war of national liberation.

Kalafghan had to go. Massoud does not attack without a reason and Kalafghan blocked the communications routes between two valleys where he had organized the resistance and, leading beyond, to Pakistan. It would also help lower DRA morale throughout the north if it were taken.

The first phase in the Kalafghan attack was reconnaissance, which went on until just before the assault. This included extensive debriefings of DRA deserters from the garrison. The locations of all weapons and mine fields were plotted on a sand-table model which was then used by Massoud for planning. Resistance scout teams with handheld video cameras brought back updated film.

Meanwhile, the political work for the attack was considered even more important than the military preparations. Massoud wanted to involve the local commander, who was of the *Harakat-i-Inqilabi-i-Islami* (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) party rather than *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society) like Massoud. Therefore, extensive political work was required to win over the locals to work with Massoud.

This required a great deal of tact and diplomacy. Afghanistan is a highly fragmented society. Before the war, people really did not know much, nor care much,



about the people who lived over the next hill. The war has not only strengthened the deep Islamic faith that united the people of Afghanistan before the war but has also helped create a spirit of nationalism that was previously weak. But if Massoud is to use this spirit, he must defeat suspicion that cooperation will bring Soviet retaliation or that he cared only for the Panjsher Valley and the Panjsheris.

The third stage, the military preparations, lasted 15 days before the assault. The

BELOW: Mujahideen planting antitank mine. Soviet army has great difficulty detecting these all-plastic mines. They will sometimes lead columns with tanks mounting mine rollers on dozer blades. To counter this, mujahideen often fuze the mines to dud 250-kilogram bombs, so that both will be detonated by the roller.



attackers would include 200 men of Massoud's central forces — about 25 percent of them Panjsheris — plus 100 of the local forces. The central force's troops were concentrated in a remote assembly area 40 kilometers from Kalafghan to avoid alerting the defenders. A day before the attack, 15 trucks picked up the central force troops and some of the locals and carried them to within a one- or two-hour march from the line of departure. There they were met by the rest of the local forces and over 100 donkeys to carry forward the ammunition and heavy weapons, including many Chinese-made single-barrel 107mm rocket launchers. This created a security problem, not only with the noise and braying of the donkeys, but the area was also cordoned off to prevent civilians seeing the movement forward. The troops spent the day before the attack resting in the villages near the line of departure

while the firing positions for the heavy weapons were set up. Massoud himself made a two-hour command reconnaissance and tested his radio net before the attack.

The Kalafghan garrison had received warnings of an attack, but they had received no less than 70 attack warnings that year and thought that, at worst, it would be some of the usual harassment from the local resistance. They had no idea that Massoud was in the area and had targeted them.

The assault went in at 1700 hours, preceded by an intense but brief barrage by 107mm rockets. Because the rocket launcher firing positions were set up within 1,000 meters of the perimeter, most of the rounds were on target. Overwhelmed, the DRA

BELOW: Mujahideen fire 107mm rocket on Soviet positions near Khost. Photo: Mujahideen source



LEFT: Mujahideen fighter sporting Soviet officer's jacket and cap taken in ambush. Photo: Mujahideen source



heavy weapons were able to fire only three mortar rounds. Moving swiftly through the gaps in the mine field plotted in the reconnaissance phase, resistance troops were through the perimeter and took all five communist strong points in 45 minutes. Only one communist officer escaped; the rest of the garrison were killed or captured. Resistance losses were extremely light.

Kalafghan had depended for its defense on final protective fire from a battery of howitzers positioned at a Soviet army fire base. But Massoud had positioned a battery of mortars within striking range of the fire base. At precisely 1700 hours they fired an intense bombardment, suppressing the Soviet guns, which could not answer the frantic radio calls from their communist DRA allies at Kalafghan. Finally getting into action, the Soviets then tried to engage the mortars. The Afghans, however, having fired off all their ammunition, had then dis-

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ENDGAME IN AFGHANISTAN

Soviets Looking for Peace With Honor

by Louis Dupree

IN the late 1950s the Soviet Union stepped up its economic and military assistance to Afghanistan, which became the "economic Korea," a zone of competition between the East and West. Pessimists moaned about Afghanistan "going communist." At that time, I made two predictions: 1) Afghanistan would never go communist unless conquered by force; 2) If you want to destroy the Soviet Union, give it Afghanistan. I also predicted the Soviets would not invade Afghanistan.

The Soviets ignored my predictions, and they are paying the price.

On Christmas Eve 1979, while shepherds watched over their flocks in the Hindu Kush mountains of Afghanistan, the Soviet army invaded. Little known to the outside world, landlocked Afghanistan is the size of Texas and sits approximately in the same latitude as North Carolina. Mountains and deserts weave contrapuntally to make perfect guerrilla landscape, with sanctuaries across the borders in neighboring Pakistan and Iran.

The Afghan invasion was the first direct Soviet military intervention in an independent, nonaligned state since World War II. And about one-third of the prewar Afghan population of 15 or so million has fled the country: more than three million to Pakistan (the world's largest single refugee population) and about two million to Iran. Also, a million Afghans have died in the conflict and the casualties and refugee figures continue to mount.

I have always believed the Soviets would eventually leave Afghanistan. Contrary to much conventional wisdom ("once the Soviets occupy a place, they will never leave") I think that time is on the side of the Afghans if those nations now assisting the mujahideen continue to do so. The Afghans, like most peasant-tribal peoples in the Third World, can be destroyed, but not defeated.

After almost nine years and 20,000 dead (estimates vary), the Soviets have been making noises about withdrawing from Af-

ghanistan. The beginning of the current Soviet peace offensive can be traced to a speech made by Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok on 28 July 1986, when he referred to Afghanistan as a "bleeding wound." He has also stated that the "Afghan war is not my war," laying the blame on the coffins of his predecessors.

Even given the apparent initial successes of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring), we must remember that these terms have a different meaning to us than to the Soviets. The pious hope of some in the West that the Soviet Union is on its way to "our" type of democracy is just that — a pious hope. For that matter, there is no such thing as "democracy." There is American democracy, which is very different from British democracy, which is at great variance from the French brand, which certainly varies from the proportional representation of West Germany. And the Italians have such a flexible democracy that it can change governments every other week and survive. But all these democracies have

one theme in common (and I unashamedly plagiarize): They have governments of, for and by the people.

Nor is communism monolithic: Mao broke with Stalin, and the countries of Eastern Europe are increasingly less than lapdogs of the Kremlin.

So don't expect the Soviet Union to move toward the patterns of Western democratic states. However, we are probably witnessing either the beginning of the Second Russian Revolution or the beginning of the end of Comrade Gorbachev, depending on how much power he can accumulate.

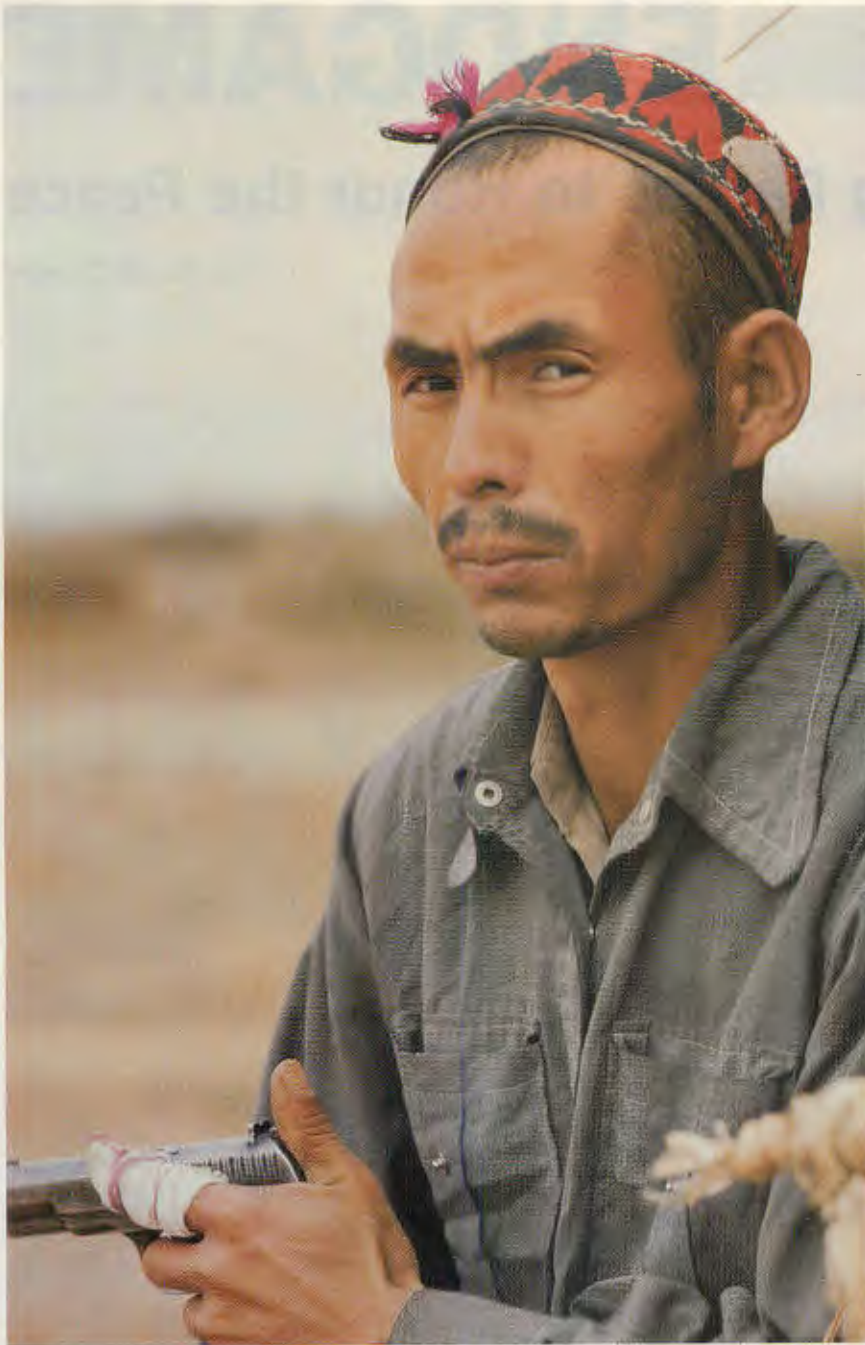
One problem in the West is that many of us look at the Soviet Union through Stalinist-tinted glasses. I do not wish to give the impression that the Soviet Union is a worker's paradise, but major changes have occurred since 1953. Thousands of Western tourists annually crawl all over the USSR. Hundreds of teacher and student exchanges occur. Soviet workers with merit points make world cruises, hitting such ports as Singapore and Hong Kong, buying up all the technological goodies they can find. I have seen them. The transistor radio has made a revolution in communications.

In addition, I used to say that given the current state of political affairs in the Soviet Union I could not imagine the mothers of Leningrad demonstrating to "bring our boys home from Afghanistan," nor could I imagine hundreds of Soviet draft dodgers condemning the war from Stockholm. *But*, on 26 December 1987, Soviet antiwar demonstrations *did* take place in Moscow and Leningrad. Only a few people were involved, and the demonstrators in Moscow were beaten up by the police, but the tip of the iceberg was exposed.

In addition, at least 500,000 Soviet veterans of the Afghan war have returned home. They have not brought back glorious accounts of performing their "international socialist duty." Rather, they tell of the horrors of war. Soviet news accounts describe efforts of the veterans to be recognized for

AFGHANISTAN CHRONICLER

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Courage and tenacity of Afghan mujahideen might force Soviet pullout. Photo: Mike Winchester

their services.

Soviet media now are reporting the war much more accurately, and Soviet scholars, including some friends of mine, openly declare the Soviet invasion to have been a mistake and publish articles on this theme.

I have always believed that the Soviets would leave Afghanistan *if* their occupation became militarily untenable and politically contrary to their national interests.

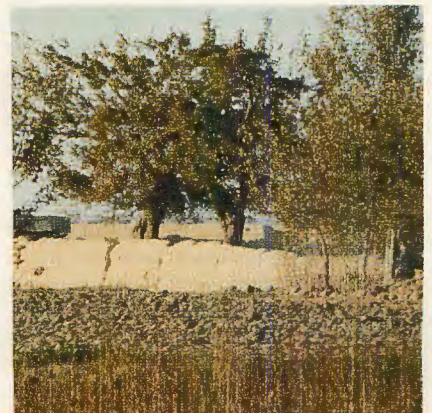
Diplomatic pressures have remained constant over the past eight years in the United Nations General Assembly, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Conference, NATO, ASEAN and so on. Also, individual nations, including several in the East European Bloc, have condemned the invasion with varying degrees of intensity. A number of Communist Parties (Italian, Spanish, British, Japanese) have at least obliquely expressed displeasure over the Soviet invasion. The French and American Communist Parties supported the intervention, but lately the French Communist Party has been lukewarm because of the treatment of captured French journalists and doctors.

In order to implement his internal economic programs, Gorbachev must also tackle two foreign policy problems: 1) achieving meaningful arms control agreements with the West; 2) solving the Afghan problem, which means "peace with honor." Nations no longer win wars but negotiate peace treaties, so that both sides can claim victory. Therefore, the Soviets must be permitted to leave Afghanistan stating that they have successfully performed their "international socialist duty" and are leaving behind a government which truly represents the wishes of the Afghans, and let the chips fall as they may — just as the Americans did in Vietnam.

Since Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech,

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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Soviet truck moves into the kill zone. Afghans open up with small arms as grenade burst raises dust cloud. Mujahideen break out of ambush positions. Photos: Mike Winchester



ENDGAME

Getting Parties to Honor the Peace

by David C. Isby

EVERY war must end, but wars are often much easier to start than stop. This has been the case especially since 1945, as unconditional defeats in "brushfire" wars and insurgencies have been rare indeed. Fighting the war in Afghanistan has been a long, frustrating struggle for Ivan. Ending it may be just as difficult.

The Soviets have always stated they want to leave Afghanistan. Starting as early as 1980, they have always been willing to dangle before the world the possibility of a withdrawal. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's statement that 1988 will be the last year Soviet troops will be in Afghanistan if an acceptable agreement for ending the war can be found must be interpreted as one of a series of these offers rather than something new and different.

Coming on the heels of a number of Soviet diplomatic initiatives to end the war in Afghanistan, this statement caused widespread hope that the Soviets are indeed serious and that they *will* reach an agreement to withdraw their forces and end their part in the war.

Washington has decided that the Soviets are now in an "endgame": the last stages in their military incursion in Afghanistan. However, this is not necessarily the case. In reality, there is perhaps only a 30- to 40-percent chance that the Soviets are looking to withdraw in 1988, and a 60- to 70-percent chance that they will decide to settle in for the long haul.

The Soviets do want to leave Afghanistan. The question is whether they have really abandoned their goal of winning before they leave. In fact, one view of the peace negotiations is that the Soviets are not looking for a face-saving way out of Afghanistan, rather that they may be giving the West a face-saving chance to get out now. The Soviets must be aware that the United States would like nothing better than to see an agreement. They are certainly aware that American support for Third World anti-communist groups cannot be considered permanent. An agreement now, on Soviet terms, could let the United States claim that the cause of peace is advanced. The alternative, the Soviets could point out, would be that they would rely on attrition and pressure against Pakistan to give them victory in the long run.



The year 1988 is Gorbachev's moment of truth: He must either take steps to end war soon or commit more troops and materiel to

Tadjik tribesmen in northern Afghanistan prepare a DShK 12.7mm heavy machine gun defending a route into the Panjsher Valley. Gun is late-model DShK 38/46, with smooth barrel and changing handle, as now manufactured in People's Republic of China for export as the Type 54 (see "Guns Behind the Great Wall Part 2," SOF, October '87). Photo: Mike Winchester

staying for the long haul. While there has been a great deal of rhetoric about withdrawal, there is on the battlefield no evidence of commitment to either course of action.

The Soviets stood by while the Kabul regime passed a new constitution in December 1987. This constitution didn't give much hope for an effective post-war government. It made all offices other than the presidency irrelevant and showed no indication that the Afghan communists would be willing to relinquish their monopoly of



ABOVE: Three young mujahideen in Nangarhar Province armed with PRC-supplied Type 56-1 AKs. Afghans use a wide variety of rifles, ranging from .303 British Lee Enfields to Kalashnikovs. Photo: Ed Grazda



power and its tools, even if they did allow others to participate in the process for international window dressing.

Concurrent with the Afghan "peace offensive," the Soviets launched one of the largest military offensives of the war to relieve the besieged Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) garrison at Khost. They have been working to improve and expand a number of airfields inside Afghanistan, including, most recently, that at Jalalabad.

There is a limit to what concessions the Soviets can make. The bottom line remains that, if the Soviet army leaves soon, they lose the war. A successor government is simply not going to have the control the December 1987 constitution would like it to have. Why? Because the Afghan resistance, which constitutes the great majority of the Afghan people and controls over 80 percent of the territory of Afghanistan, won't allow it to. The anti-communist forces in Afghanistan in 1988 are not like those in Eastern Europe after World War II. They are strong, cohesive, well-armed and willing to fight as long as necessary to get their country back. Therefore, if the Soviets withdraw, a Marxist-Leninist state will, in effect, fall to a popular revolution of its own people: more specifically, to its own *Islamic* people. How this will seem to the Soviet ideologues in the Politburo and how inspiring it might be to the Moslem populations of Soviet Central Asia is uncertain.

Can Gorbachev accept what will inevitably look like a defeat? Will his more ideo-

logically oriented colleagues on the Politburo accept what may be, to an orthodox Marxist-Leninist, an admission that water can run uphill, that the "iron laws of history" can be reversed?

There are pragmatic reasons why Gorbachev may accept an end to the war within the next few years. The war in Afghanistan is unpopular in the Soviet Union. Pulling out will not cost him the next election but may prove an impediment to his consolidation of power and agenda of economic reform. More important, the war is a barrier to better relations with the United States, Europe, China and the Third World — espe-

cially the Islamic Third World. The 1987 United Nations General Assembly vote on Afghanistan went more overwhelmingly against the Soviets than any previous vote on the issue.

To the Soviets, Afghanistan has always been, and remains, a peripheral issue. For long-term Soviet goals, a major success

Mujahideen control of the heights has proven key to success in Afghanistan. Here a mujahid poses with RPG-7 and PG-7 HEAT rocket. Note bipods on PRC-supplied RPG-7. Photo: Ed Grazda



would not be a subdued Afghanistan turned into a reasonable facsimile of Mongolia, but rather a development such as a reconciliation with China, a neutralized Europe or a globally impotent United States. If giving up their war in Afghanistan will help them attain these, it could be seen, even by the ideologues in the Politburo, as a small price to pay.

The Soviets cannot have any illusion that the Afghan Communist Party — the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) — will survive the departure of Soviet troops or that its members would play any significant role in the post-war government. The PDPA has had almost 10 years, with the help of Soviet resources, to consolidate its position in power in Afghanistan and it has failed miserably.

Under President Mohammed Najibullah, the factionalism between Afghanistan's two communist parties has increased. The different ploys to broaden the base of the Kabul regime's support — "National Reconciliation," the calling of a *Loya Jirga* (great assembly) — have not altered the minimal perceived legitimacy of the Kabul regime. Unlike pro-communist forces elsewhere in the Third World, its supporters are a small, divided and relatively poorly organized minority. Their numbers would be even less after Soviet withdrawal. Indeed, once the word spreads in the DRA military that the Soviets are going home within eight months, it would probably collapse, with whole units joining the resistance. In the end the best option for most Afghan communists would be to take the last bus to Dushanbe with the Soviet army.

The United States has supported Pakistan in insisting that a Soviet withdrawal be logistics-based. The determining factor should be how fast the Soviets can get their troops out, not how much time they will need to install a viable puppet regime in Kabul or to quash the resistance. Pakistan has, as a concession, pushed the logistics-based limit to eight months, but any longer would run the risk of undermining the entire process. An eight-month withdrawal could work if there were a verifiable timetable and if it were front-end loaded, meaning that Soviet offensive forces go home first.

Any agreement must not include a commitment to the Soviets on the nature of the successor government in Kabul. The Soviets must know that if the army leaves, their puppet government could not endure anyway. If the Soviets are willing to forego specifying a role for the PDPA or maintaining a controlling interest for the PDPA in a successor government, it would suggest that they may be serious about withdrawal.

It's encouraging to think that a February round of United Nations indirect talks might be the final round, but these talks have not been fruitful in the past. While Diego Cordovez, who is conducting the talks, is optimistic and points out that only the timetable

stands in the way of concluding an agreement, there is no cause for such optimism about the Geneva process. In fact, there is a negative side to the Geneva talks. Over the years, it has given the Soviets a cover, if you will, for their actions in Afghanistan. The war has continued while the Geneva process has gone on. It is unproven that the Soviets are serious about a withdrawal before they have won militarily and politically by installing and consolidating support for a Kabul government acceptable to Moscow.

While the Geneva talks may indeed serve as a vehicle for withdrawal, they do have very real limits. For one, in a war between the Soviet Union and the people of Afghanistan, the indirect talks are between Pakistan and the Kabul regime. Mr. Cordovez, as the representative of the Secretary General, is empowered to deal between nation-states. This does not fit the realities of a war where a foreign invader and its illegitimate surrogate government are waging a war against the vast majority of the population of a country. While Mr. Cordovez has tried to keep the Afghan resistance's political leadership informed, it should be remembered that any agreement not acceptable to the Afghan resistance themselves is not going to work.

A "coalition government" including both the resistance and the PDPA is simply not going to work. It is not a mature attempt at compromise. It is a fantasy. Even if the Peshawar leadership could be prevailed upon to accept such an arrangement, which is unlikely, the resistance itself — the men with the Kalashnikovs who today control 80 percent of Afghanistan — would not. Ask them. I have. This whole tragic war is proof that you cannot force the Afghans to have a government they do not want. Queen Victoria could not do that at the height of the British Empire and the Soviet army cannot do it today.

What might work is a short (two-year maximum) interim government made up of individuals who were neither part of the resistance nor of the PDPA. This is where the former king may have a potential role. Subsequently, there would have to be elections or a *Loya Jirga* to establish a more permanent government. But an interim return of the monarchy is not necessarily the answer. The Soviets may hope that, if the king came back, some resistance groups would rally to the side of a government in Kabul which includes the king, while others would remain in arms against it. This raises the possibility of a serious split in the resistance; something that has never happened since the war began. Therefore, all Soviet peace initiatives must be examined for ways in which they might hide mechanisms which could lead to a Soviet political advantage.

Pakistan is the key to Afghanistan. The United States must support Pakistan in its part of the negotiations in spite of critics of Pakistan in the media and Congress.



Single-tube Chinese-made 107mm rocket launcher — called BM-1 by the resistance — being deployed during a mujahideen offensive. Firepower from these weapons has enabled the resistance not only to fight Soviet ground forces but also to subject Soviet artillery to counter-battery fire. Photo: Afghan Media Resource Center

Charges that Pakistan is cynically prolonging the war to gain U.S. aid simply do not reflect the reality of Pakistan's internal political situation. The pressure of the refugee population and the Soviet terror campaign inside Pakistan — certainly the biggest arena of state-supported terrorism in the world today — far outweigh the benefits to Pakistan in American hardware and aid money.

Charges that the current government has not moved quickly enough toward democracy (the next national elections are to be in 1990) ignore the real progress Pakistan has made. The December 1987 local elections were seen as fair and democratic by foreign observers, although they were subject to the violence endemic to the subcontinent. Significantly, the People's Party of Pakistan, which is the main opposition to the current government, did very poorly in these elections. Other, smaller opposition groups that were specifically anti-Afghan or called for direct negotiations with Kabul did even worse.

While there has been concern over reports that the Pakistanis have been developing the "Bomb," the Pakistanis have repeatedly offered to renounce nuclear weapons, sign the non-proliferation treaty and open their facilities to international in-

spection if only India will do the same.

The United States is not in a good position for engaging in forceful realpolitik over Afghanistan. There is a desire to have something to sign at the 1988 summit in Moscow. The view that agreements with the Soviets constitute an end of foreign policy rather than a tool to implement it has resurfaced. The burden of making sure that the United States does not throw away the victories the Afghan resistance has won on the battlefield is going to lie primarily with the Congress. It has been the Congress, not the Reagan administration, that has been the strongest supporter of the Afghans throughout the war.

Congress should demand effective and verifiable front-end loading of any Soviet withdrawal. This does not mean vague guidelines like half of the troops withdrawn in half the time allowed. High-value offensive weapons such as Hind attack helicopters and BM-27 220mm multiple rocket launchers must leave at the start of the withdrawal. If, for example, 90 percent of the Hinds had to fly back to the Soviet Union within 10 days, a cutoff of Stinger supplies would have less of a potential to be disastrous. Congress must insist that any cutoff of aid be limited to lethal munitions and that it be preceded by a surge in Stinger supplies, even if this means draining American stockpiles of Stingers as we did in the 1973 resupply of Israel.

Congress must insist that withdrawal have an orderly hand-over of power from Soviet to local resistance forces. It is not acceptable for the Soviets simply to withdraw from an area in the hope that they will

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SOF MILITARY AFFAIRS

NEW “OLD RELIABLES”

SOF Takes Another Look at 9th Infantry Division

Text & Photos by John Coleman



In the January 1988 issue of Soldier of Fortune, we ran an article (“9th Infantry Division — Troops Sort Out High-Tech Test Bed”) written by a former U.S. Army officer still involved with military affairs. It was a rather pointed piece which took the Army — and by implication the 9th Infantry Division (Motorized) based at Fort Lewis, Washington — to task for testing such ideas as the “boxhole” (a portable foxhole) and for failing to properly integrate equipment with tactical doctrine.

During our work-up of that article, we dealt with the 9th’s Public Affairs Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ron Grubb, and we eventually sent him a copy for comment. Instead, he came back with an offer for SOF to come out to Fort Lewis and see what the 9th was doing now, rather than what it had been doing then.

We took him up on it.

I’D been stationed with the 9th back in the mid-1970s. It was a turbulent time for the Army then, feeling its way out of the morass of Vietnam, and serious problems — drugs, alcohol, racism and cutbacks, to name just a few — were taking their toll on morale and efficiency at every level. Good officers, NCOs and troops were leaving the service in droves — and leaving a sort of gutted shell of what the Army *should* be in their wake. It was, to say the least, a depressing time to be a soldier.

When I arrived at Yakima Firing Center (the 9th’s major training area in eastern

Washington state) in November 1987 to link up with its 3rd Brigade, I had no idea what to expect. I’d been away for roughly 13 years and a lot — good or bad — could’ve happened during that time. I’d wait and see.

Colonel Frank S. Adams, 3rd Brigade commander, grabbed me soon after I walked into the 9th ID’s forward HQ at Yakima, sat me down and, with members of his staff, gave me a thorough briefing on what the 3rd Brigade was, is and does.

Basically, 3rd Brigade was *the* High-Tech Test Bed for the 9th, and it bore the brunt of working up tactical doctrine for the motorized infantry concept. Motorized was a new concept for the Army, and the brigade’s testing proved that it was indeed viable — given the right equipment. Dune buggies, for example, were tested as the primary mode of combat transportation, but there were just too many problems inherent in that system.

“Your division performed in a manner of which your officers and men should be justly proud. The Old Reli-ables of your command have again proved there is no substitute for a battle-hardened and experienced combat division.” — From a letter to the 9th Infantry Division commander from V Corps commander Major General Huebner during World War II, from which the 9th adopted the nickname — which it continues to bear — of the “Old Reli-ables.”

2-1 Infantry TOW gunner sends one downrange at the Yakima Firing Center. It was a dead-center hit.

Then came the HMMWV (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle — pronounced Humm-Vee).

“The HMMWV was a dramatic improvement in our capability,” Col. Adams, a three-tour Vietnam veteran and soft-spoken bear of a man, assured me. “I’ve been in 28 years, and the HMMWV is the greatest vehicle the Army’s ever had. It goes places it shouldn’t.”

I was to personally experience that fact during the next week.

Melding of the TOW (Tube-launched, optically-sighted, wire-guided) missile with the HMMWV seemed to provide the answer the Army was looking for. Testing operations such as Border Star at Fort Bliss, Texas, and Laser Strike at Yakima had proved that motorized could, and did indeed, work.

As Col. Adams and others pointed out, however, the motorized concept is still being refined as new equipment hits the inventory. One major problem? “There’s one special ingredient not there yet,” Col. Adams told me in the briefing room, “and that’s the assault gun. Doctrine and tactics for an assault gun will have to be retooled and refined; the assault gun will give us a capability we now don’t have.”

But did that mean his brigade wasn’t ready to go fight?

That’s the sort of question one just



RIGHT: Technicians field drone mock-ups of Soviet aircraft for aerial gunnery practice by troops of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-23 Infantry. A SAW gunner blew one out of the air.

BELOW RIGHT: UH-60 Blackhawk from 268th Assault Helicopter Battalion. The 268th flew in support of numerous 3rd Brigade tactical exercises at Yakima, adding a vertical dimension to training.

doesn't ask an infantry brigade commander, but he was kind enough not to have me shot for it.

"I'd be very comfortable taking the brigade to fight the Russians anywhere in the world," he answered. "We're more mobile and agile than the Soviets are. It's a matter of ability; having the guts; and being innovative, imaginative and aggressive enough to swing around that flank and take it."

The key to the brigade, he continued, is the fact that "we're not a hit-'em-in-the-nose force. We're closer to cavalry. This brigade is designed to operate over 100 kilometers, and the more ground we've got, the better we'll be.

"We're designed to go into the enemy's rear and attack targets. We'll harass you and beat you up in the rear. We'll eat up that [Soviet] iron fist."

I got the point. From brigade's point of view, brigade was ready. But what did the troops think? Could they go and win on the battlefield?

"You come back after a week and tell me," Col. Adams said — no, actually



TOP: TOW simulator pops smoke as the MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Equipment System) sends its beam downrange to the target.

ABOVE: HMMWV (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle). This one ran 12 miles on a flat without problems; changing the tire is an organizational maintenance responsibility.

ordered me. "I already know the answer."

My five-day itinerary at Yakima had been carefully planned but wasn't, I was glad to see, restricted in any way. In fact, it was a "go see everything and talk with everybody" type of visit, although I was told that some of my questions, if they touched on certain sensitive areas, might be met with frozen stares. (As it turned out, they did and were.)

First stop down the road, after choking on Yakima's oceans of dust, which I remembered well from my tours there, was a fire coordination exercise run by Lieutenant Colonel Peter Herrly, commanding the brigade's 2-60 Infantry. As the name implies, the mission was to coordinate Army ground and air assets, and Air Force and Navy air, into a slick fire team that would pound hell out of an advancing Soviet force. Icy wind (which didn't stop for five days) whipped across the barren ridgeline while LTC Herrly and a slew of supporting officers and NCOs — air and artillery liaison — huddled over maps and radios in front of four well-camouflaged HMMWVs, their 12



antennas pulling in information out of the ozone.

Across the wide valley was another stretch of equally barren and windswept ridges. Somewhere over there, according to the exercise, was a large Soviet advance force streaming our way. RTOs inside the HMMWVs were shouting out grids and information.

“Regimental command headquarters grid 1583, headed south!” from the bowels of a HMMWV. “Twenty BMDs headed south!” from another. **BLAM!** I almost hit the deck. A battery of 155s on our reverse slope cut loose, pounding grids across the valley. Chatter on half a dozen radios while LTC Herry tried to tie the strike forces together. Apparently Navy air was late. “C’mon, Navy! Shit!” someone yelled out, and the Navy liaison looked pained.

We eventually wrapped it up, the phantom Soviet force blown to scrap metal after intensive air and artillery bombardment. In this day and age, battalion COs don’t just lead battalions; they’re managers of dozens of supporting inter-service assets.

It was heading toward late afternoon and I wanted to drop by the arty battery that had almost sent me scuffling in the grass. It was getting dark and my visit was quick, but I

TOP: M249 Squad Automatic Weapon cuts loose against OPFOR armored vehicles passing by its position. This exercise called for protective masks — not the easiest way to fight a battle.

ABOVE: MK 19 Mod 1 40x53mm grenade launcher stands by in the foxhole mode during an OPFOR attack.

did get a chance to look over one gun and talk with its crew. Enthusiastic? You bet! Did they know their jobs? Once we broke the ice (SOF or no, troops are always skittish around the press), they couldn’t tell me enough. They’d recently done very well on their ABQT (Army Based Qualification Test), and their pride in that fact was evident. It was a good introduction to the troops of the 9th.

We took off; night was falling, time to find me a home. We pushed off in our HMMWV to find 2-60’s TOC (Tactical Operations Center) and, as these things do happen, became “disoriented.” One of the problems (for us) was the incredible camouflaging employed by 3rd Brigade units. Camo nets, combined with the local scrub, made finding anything by day a chore — and by night a nightmare.

With the driver and my escort officer wearing PVS5 NODs (Night Observation Devices), we just tore over the countryside in our HMMWV, up and down heavy-duty ridges and in and out of jeep-killing ravines, searching for 2-60. Unnerving experience for one who sits in the back, literally in the dark, *without* a NOD.

No luck, although we did find some concertina wire which wrapped itself rather tightly around the front right tire and axle. I mention this incident not as an embarrassment, but for the fact that it took about an hour to cut it all away with a regular wire cutter, and even then it was difficult. From my knowledge of the new M9 bayonet system and its supposed wire-cutting capability, I know I’d still be sitting in that HMMWV if the M9 were all we had.

While we were hung up, I asked the driver what he thought about the 9th and the Army in general. Spec Fours usually have good answers to those kinds of questions. He’d been in a year and basically enjoyed it, especially the field work. He even had his packet in for Officer Candidate School, although he was checking out Special Forces as a re-enlistment option. OCS and SF? I figured this guy had to be a plant for my benefit. But of course he wasn’t. He was just a soldier who liked the Army enough to want to do more. In 1973 he’d have been a rarity; I was learning that in 1987 he was the rule rather than the exception.

We finally cut ourselves loose and, since I was to work with them the next day anyway, we linked up with 1st Brigade’s 2-23, Infantry, attached to 3rd Brigade for part of the exercise. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Mikolashek, 2-23’s CO, was kind enough to offer his hospitality, and we talked a bit about motorized infantry and his troops while ice-cold rain started falling on our GP Small tent. He echoed Col. Adams’ views that motorized infantry could, and did, work well if — and it was an “if” I heard at every level — it were employed properly by higher commands. Because motorized infantry was a new concept, it hadn’t become institutionalized Army knowledge; senior commanders just weren’t used to the capabilities motorized infantry offered.

To compress an evening’s worth of conversation, LTC Mikolashek was proud of his troops and their abilities. They were, he told me, the best and most intelligent soldiers he’d ever worked with. Were there still problems such as drugs, drink and race? Sure, he said, but we’re beating them. This Army is good and getting better all the time. There’s always going to be that 10 percent who cause trouble, but that other 90 percent — who like what they are and what they do — aren’t going to stand for it.

Later, while I was over in the TOC writing up my notes, I heard a crusty operations NCO respond to a distress call from a lost lieutenant. “Whoever came up with the rank of lieutenant should be shot,” he growled to all of us. Some things, at least, never change.

First light and Yakima was cold, wet,



gray, misty and altogether unfriendly — perfect Army training weather. We hopped into my favorite all-terrain taxi, the HMMWV, and headed out to join with 2-23's A Company, which would be acting as opposition force (OPFOR) against the rest of 2-23. Engagement Area (EA — channeling enemy forces (us) into what is basically a large-scale area ambush (them)) was the order of the day. And when you're talking TOW missiles (44 in a Combined Arms Battalion (Heavy)) that can range to 3,750 meters, you're talking about wide-open spaces.

Yakima, unfortunately, isn't built like that. We had to run the gauntlet down what's called the "bowling alley," a flat, narrow, empty-of-any-useable-cover valley flanked by steeply rising ridges with great TOW defensive positions.

A Company's CO, Captain Greg Holtkamp, however, wasn't going to be eaten alive, bowling alley or no. I rode back-seat in his HMMWV and listened to him maneuver his company into the attack, stomping suspected enemy positions with (simulated) artillery and smoke, and alternately finessing, then driving his platoons forward.

We edged into the end of the bowling alley and halted while Capt. Holtkamp positioned his platoons for the final assault: one on the high ground to the left, one on the high ground to the right, one in reserve — and one to hey-diddle-diddle, straight-up-the-middle with us right behind.

He jumped to the defender's internal radio net. "We're coming to get you, comrade." "Bullshit," came the reply. A case of beer was bet that at least half the attackers would get through without getting hit by MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Equipment System, whereby you can fire your weapon, a laser beam shoots out and is detected by a receiving system that records a



TOP: Simulated disabled HMMWV forces three-man crew to dismount, assemble their TOW for ground firing, and engage targets during TOW Table V at Yakima Firing Center.

ABOVE: 2-1 Infantry's mortars live-fire off the top of one of Yakima's many ridgelines. The cold was numbing, but these mortarmen kept hanging them on-target anyway.

LEFT: Camouflaged HMMWV.

hit or near miss.) "Make it a case of Henry's," from the defenders. "Make it a case of Fosters," from OPFOR.

It still looked like Custer's Little Big Horn to me.

We hit the pedal and sent it into battle. Captain Holtkamp pulled a trick I've used, too: jam the "enemy's" battalion radio net. It worked; the code word "Seahawk" eventually came across, directing the battalion to the alternate freq.

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SOF MIDDLE EAST

DHOFAR'S AMBUSH CORNER

A Royal Marine in the Desert

Text & Photos by Ewen Southby-Tailyour

LBRI, Northern Oman. Now, there was soldiering as one had dreamt it: 13,000 square miles of sand, gravel plains and foothills, 150 Arab soldiers and, in the end, only one British officer, myself, a 26-year-old Royal Marine captain.

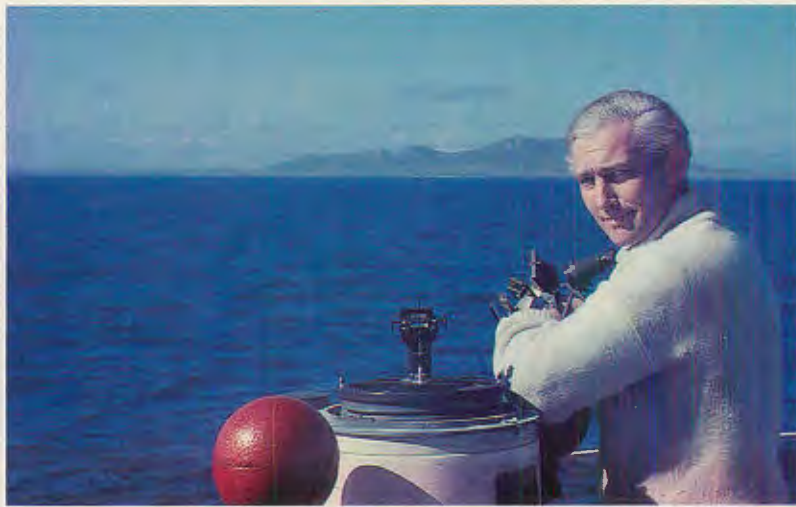
No one can live among the nomadic tribes of Oman and come away unmoved; no man can lead these fierce and independent men in battle for their freedom and remain unconvinced of their cause, and no man can endure this unforgiving and harsh land without falling under its spell. The need to return is compelling, for the call of the desert is as powerful as the call of the sea — and as romantic.

Lawrence of Arabia wrote in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: "Bedouin ways are hard even for those brought up in them, and for strangers terrible: a death in life." Fifty years later a younger generation of Britons was to discover that nothing had changed since Lawrence mobilized General Allenby's desert flank in the approach to Damascus. The Dhofar war, fought over the "moon country" of southern Oman, was a bitterly contested campaign of tribesman versus tribesman. The enemy, backed by Chinese communists, matched the drama of the climate with his own equally cavalier treatment of his opponents. The Omani friendly forces were led and supported by British, Baluchi, Iranian and Jordanian officers and men. These mercenary and regular troops fought at the beginning with little more than their ingenuity and professionalism.

In 1966 the Royal Marines were asked for the first time by the British Army to help supply volunteer officers for loan service with the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF). To begin with, it was to have been on a short-term basis, perhaps lasting only one or two tours, while the Army sorted out its affairs. By coincidence, at that time I was a lieutenant serving in 43 Commando Royal Marines in Plymouth, while my father was the Commandant General of the Royal Marines in London. For my part, here was an ideal opportunity to leave the corps for a short period in order to avoid embarrassment on either side and at the same time to experience some real soldiering. I had served twice before in the Middle East and had a rudimentary knowledge of Arabic, so I applied for loan service. I was accepted with almost suspicious haste. Two courses were considered necessary, a three-month course at the Royal Naval College Greenwich and a further three months at the Command Arabic Language School in Aden.

Aden was hot and smelly. The British were leaving and the final "troubles" had started some time before in an attempt to hasten their departure. It was a relief to leave the heat, humidity and grenade attacks of the colony for Oman. After passing

Lieutenant Ewen Southby-Tailyour, Royal Marines. Seconded to Sultan of Oman's army, he served through early days of Dhofar insurgency.



MAJOR EWEN SOUTHBY-TAILYOUR, RM, OBE

Before serving in Oman, then-Lieutenant Ewen Southby-Tailyour was directed to attend the Royal Naval College Greenwich. After three months, the director of the Staff College wrote of Southby-Tailyour: "This officer prefers fighting to writing and is not recommended for further training at this establishment." Whichever may be his preference, Southby-Tailyour has proven rather adept at both.

The son of a commandant general of the Royal Marines (General Sir Norman Tailyour), Southby-Tailyour was commissioned into the Royal Marines in 1960. After commando training he qualified as a landing-craft officer and later served as a troop and company commander with 45 Commando, troop commander with 43 Commando and as operations officer with 42 Commando.

Southby-Tailyour's postings included training with French commandos and the French Foreign Legion. He has served aboard four of Her Majesty's ships, a French submarine and the U.S. amphibious assault ships USS *Guadalcanal* and *Mount Whitney*. His overseas duty included service in Aden, the Persian Gulf, India, South Yemen, Oman (where he was awarded the Sultan's Bravery Medal for Gallantry), Kuwait, North Africa, Cyprus, West Indies and Northern Ireland, where he participated in seaborne anti-IRA patrols. Oil-rig protection duties in the North Sea and 12 winters in northern Norway have given him the experience to develop techniques for small-craft navigation and operations in the Arctic in support of commando operations.

For all of that, Southby-Tailyour really came into his own during the Falklands conflict. A lifelong yachtsman of international renown, he had sailed some 60,000 miles before entering the Marines. A few years previous to the Argentine invasion, he commanded Naval Party 8901, the Royal Marine detachment in the Islands. Southby-Tailyour spent much of his time there charting the Islands and the waters around them. He later wrote a book on navigating around the Islands entitled *Falkland Island Shores*. When the task force to recover the Islands was formed, Southby-Tailyour was the obvious choice to serve as navigational adviser. He later served

Major Ewen Southby-Tailyour onboard MV *Forrest*, with Falkland coastline in background.

as commander of the Task Force Landing Craft Squadron.

British military historian Max Hastings referred to Southby-Tailyour as the "adventurer who found his moment." General Julian Thompson, commander of 3 Commando Brigade in the Falklands, referred to Southby-Tailyour as the "Falklands expert" and wrote that if "he had lived 400 years ago he might have sailed with Drake or Hawkins." Major General Nick Vaux, whose first commanding officer in the Royal Marines had been Ewen's father, served as commanding officer of 42 Commando during the war and later described Southby-Tailyour as an "elegant, witty, swashbuckling figure ... a suave, gregarious bon viveur. Behind the relaxed banter lay unique experience in amphibious techniques gained from nearly 20 years of operating Royal Marine landing craft all over the world." Southby-Tailyour's efforts in the Falklands earned him an Order of the British Empire (OBE).

Aside from his military endeavors, Southby-Tailyour has now sailed over 100,000 miles, 10,000 of them single-handedly. He is a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron and the Royal Cruising Club and was named "Yachtsman of the Year" by the Association of Yachting Journalists in 1982. He is also a Fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Institute of Navigation. He has served as navigator on expeditions searching for historical wrecks. His articles on sailing and navigation, the Falklands and book reviews have appeared in *Yachting Monthly*, *Elite* and the *Western Morning News*.

Following the war, Southby-Tailyour was instrumental in raising a unit (539 Assault Squadron) which could provide landing craft to work in hostile conditions in forward areas without repair facilities. Of special concern was the squadron's ability to operate in Norway, on NATO's left flank, a principal area of responsibility for the Royal Marines. Southby-Tailyour currently serves as Officer Commanding, 539 Assault Squadron.



Author's command, A Company, near Empty Quarter. Southby-Tailour is standing, front row center.

through the SAF headquarters at Bait al Falaj (outside Muscat town) to be briefed and issued my uniform, I joined the Northern Frontier Regiment (NFR) stationed in Nizwa, the old capital of the interior.

Among the 60 British officers in Oman in the 1960s, there were several "types." The bulk of these officers were on lengthy contracts after retiring from the army, police or some other military organization such as the Sudan Camel Corps and the Hadramaut Bedouin Legion. These officers tended to be older than the others and were employed in quartermastering duties, training and administration tasks. The British Army also seconded officers from various regiments and arms, depending on what skills at command level were needed at the time.

I was appointed second-in-command of A Company and was lucky enough to join just before the periodic change-round of locations. Thus I had an interesting first few months with the reserve company at battalion headquarters before taking my company to Ibri as its commander.

There were many incidents in this northern command, mostly related to gun running, gold smuggling and the flexing of the occasional muscle by the leftovers from the Imam's abortive attempt to impose his rule on the interior (see the accompanying "Dhofar War: Victory for the West"). However, it was the escalating war in the south that drew most of our attention. The ambition of every company commander was to lead his personally trained men into battle against the rising threat of communism.

My regiment was due to take over from the Desert Regiment (DR) in the spring of 1968, but in late 1967 it was decided that the western border needed strengthening and, as it was not possible to take any of the DR companies away for this task, A Company NFR was ordered south.

On 4 November 1967 we left our home base, the mud-hutted camp on the outskirts of Ibri's date plantations, for the 550-mile drive across some of the most barren coun-

try in that barren land, the *Rub al Khali*, or Empty Quarter. It had been traversed many times before, of course, but that was no reason to take the arduous journey lightly. We traveled in overloaded Bedford four-ton lorries and short and long wheel-based Land Rovers; there were no recovery vehicles. We took food and water for twice the journey's length: live goats, sacks of spices, dried fish, lentils, flour, salt and firewood. We towed a number of one-ton waterbow-sers to refill the canvas "chuggles" slung on the dusty sides of the Land Rovers in an attempt to keep the water cool.

By the standards of those days, it was a reasonably trouble-free journey, with only two night stops in the desert. We started each day as early as 0300 hours in order to get the best "trafficability" from dew on the sand. It also meant a good distance could be covered before the vehicles and their passengers had to rest from the heat — 140 degrees Fahrenheit was the highest daytime temperature; 120 was about normal. We would put on woolen pullovers in the cool of the evening, when the temperature dropped to a pleasant 90 degrees, and sit cross-legged in the sand playing a game as ancient as time, with donkey or camel droppings placed in scoops in the sand: the aim being, as always, to capture as many of your opponent's pieces as possible.

It was a dry, dusty, bone-jarring ride and, although we entered the war zone at Midway (see the accompanying map), we were glad of the mountain coolness after the burning heat of the Empty Quarter. I pitied any enemy that dared get between us and the cold showers and beer that waited to the south of the *jebel* (mountains). We were met by a DR patrol which escorted us across the rough track that was then the only pass through the Qara mountains and which was frequently ambushed throughout its 50-mile length. At that time, the resident battalion could barely keep the road open, let alone fight any encounter battle with an enemy who chose when and where to attack.

After two glorious nights at Salalah, we mounted our long-suffering Bedfords and Land Rovers for the difficult journey north to Midway and then west through the foothills before turning south along the border

DHOFAR WAR: VICTORY FOR THE WEST

To understand the 1965-1975 Dhofar war, it is helpful to appreciate Oman's political and social background.

Oman only entered the 20th century in 1970, when it jumped 2,000 years of development. It is still a country of tribesmen: over 250 separate tribes at last count, with a significant number of them nomadic Bedouin roaming the edges of the Empty Quarter, or *Rub al Khali*, known by the Bedouin simply as "The Sands." This desert is the desert of imagination and fable; a million square miles of sand, gravel and scrub. It is a seemingly endless sea of majestic yellow dunes marching from the fertile "Green Mountain" of the east coast to the dry and barren hills of the Yemen in the west. Since biblical times this comparatively small and simple country has been a vital trading route, and more recently its geographical, political and strategic positions have given it further prominence.

British political relations with the Oman (known as Muscat and Oman until 1970) date back to 1798, when Britain was at war with France. It was expected that France would seize Muscat, the capital, in order to attack British and Indian shipping and perhaps to invade India from this safe haven. A treaty of friendship was therefore concluded between Muscat and Oman and Britain that has existed ever since. This friendship has manifested itself a number of times over the years with practical and political support.

There was the Buraimi Oasis crisis involving Saudi Arabia between 1952 and 1955 and a revolt led by the religious ruler of the interior in 1957. In this later incident, Saudi Arabia and Egypt lent arms while giving refuge and training facilities in their own countries. The aim was to re-establish an imamate (region governed by a religious leader) of Oman which in fact would have been a Saudi puppet government. It was a long and rough struggle for the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) against well-motivated and trained fanatics. When the Omani forces, helped by the British, finally routed the Imam's supporters, a delicate peace reigned, broken by sporadic mining and sniping. Rebels continued to be recruited and trained abroad, although the training camps had moved from Saudi to Iraq.

Apart from the long-standing treaty of friendship, there were underlying reasons why Britain was so keen to oppose the Saudi occupation of Buraimi and the Oman interior. An American company held the oil concessions in Saudi Arabia and believed that if the Oman could be deemed Saudi territory, it would ensure further riches. For the British and the Sultan of Oman it was vital to prove that, despite the Treaty of Sib signed in 1913, the Sultan did rule the interior and not the Imam. Through this treaty the Sultan agreed not to interfere with the internal affairs of Oman. Some argued that this meant the establishment of two states, with the Sultan only having jurisdiction over the coastal region. At that time the British agreed with that interpretation and, had it not been for oil, 40 years on, this lack of concern by the British would probably have remained.

The Sultan granted oil rights to a British company, and both the British and Omani governments determined that these should be exploited to their mutual benefit. An added attraction of the Omani oil was that it could be piped directly to an oil terminal on the Indian Ocean coast, thereby bypassing the problems associated with the Persian Gulf.

Britain's Omani partner in these matters was Sultan Said bin Taimur, who succeeded to the throne in 1932. Sultan Said was an articulate, educated man who viewed with distaste the effects of oil money on his neighboring states. Before the present ruler, Sultan Qaboos, came to power in 1970, there was little money spent on essentials for the community, let alone the armed forces. Sultan Said believed that doctors, teachers and scientists were all subversive and should have no place among the traditions of his country.

Sultan Said wanted change, but he wanted it to be natural and unhurried. There were many aspects of life under Said that were admirable and must be seen in the context of an old and proud country and not judged against Western standards. There was no crime of any significant nature and there was a real fear that the rural way of life, once gone, would never be replaced. The adherence to religion was absolute. For these aspects alone, one must respect the Sultan's stance.

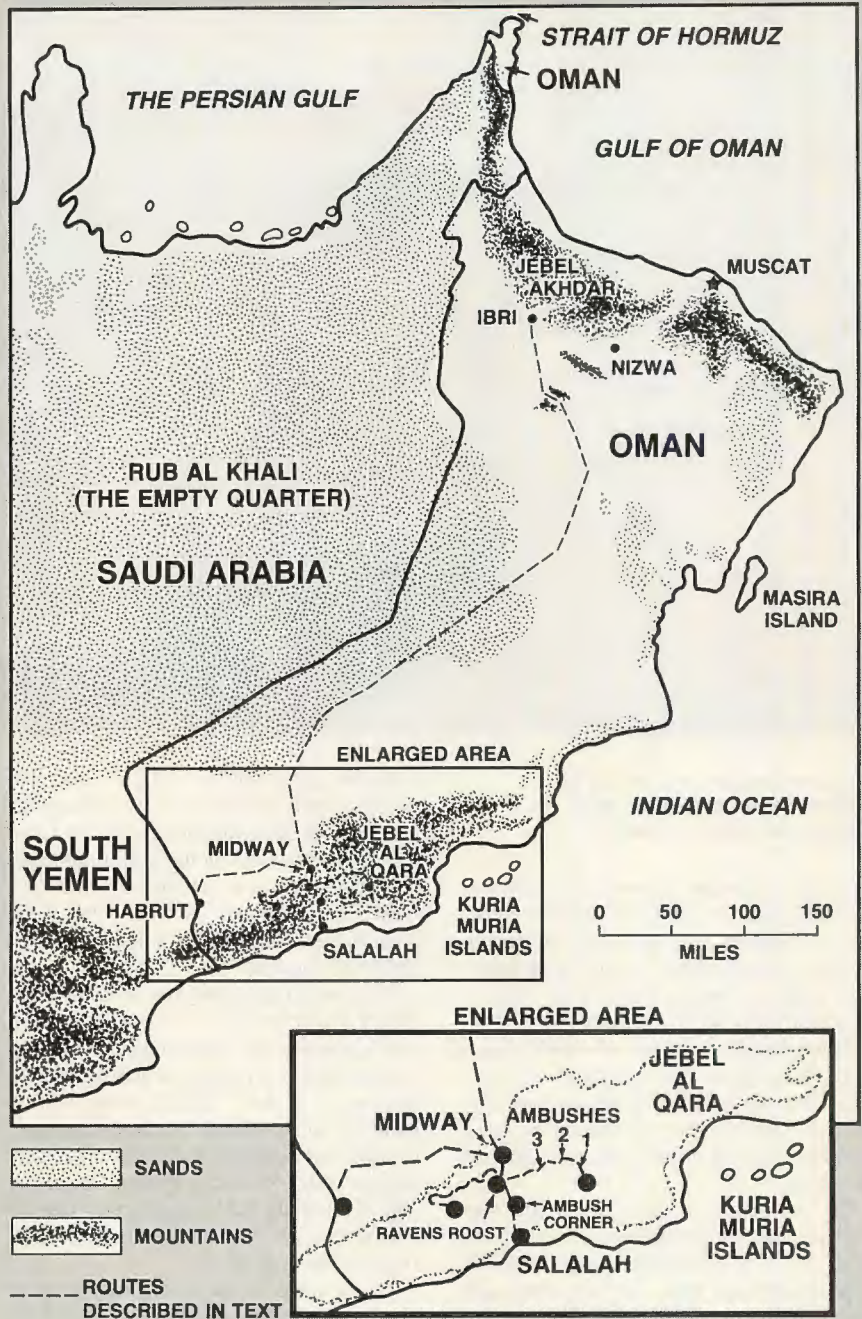
For all the "old" Sultan's faults, his small and backward country held sway in a political theater renowned for turmoil, and for 10 years his insular country stood against sophisticated infiltrations from a revolutionary movement backed by a vast arsenal.

The Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) was formed on 9 June 1965. Its aims were not, to begin with, the destruction of the Omani government but, in very simple terms, the achievement of some autonomy with recognition of Dhofar as a viable province. Of course, a slice of any oil revenue and the right to determine their own affairs formed a large part of these demands. The DLF had its first headquarters across the border from Salalah astride an important trade route at Hauf. Britain was due to leave Aden in November 1967, thus allowing the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen (PDRSY) to become established. The PDRSY was only too happy to give succor to the emerging "liberation" movement beyond its eastern border.

Here was ideal breeding ground for communism, and PDRSY strategists were quick to realize that, although the domination of the Oman with its oil revenues would be a difficult task, East Bloc involvement would make the whole project most attractive and possible.

Allowing East Bloc countries an entree was also expected to produce a further spinoff in technical and military aid in recognition of the part played in helping to secure communist control over the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Britain leaving Aden had paved the way for this closer attention and practical influence.

The revolution, for that is what it fast became, had all the hallmarks of the perfect communist-backed insurrection. A textbook example indeed, except perhaps for one vital aspect that the communists overlooked. The Omani is a deeply religious person, and the replacing of his Islamic faith by a secular



Oman, located on southeast Arabian peninsula and bounded by the Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, South Yemen and Saudi Arabia, is where author served as Royal Marine alongside Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF).

communist doctrine was doomed to failure.

The turning point came on 23 July 1970. An all but bloodless coup brought the Sultan's son Qaboos to power. His timely arrival presented the country with a man prepared to lead from the front and be seen to guide his country. His use of oil revenues for the military and the civil sectors changed the face of the country forever.

In the end, it was the "new" Sultan, insisting on a pragmatic approach to modernization and the sensible use of oil revenues for the benefit of all, along with the Omanis' deep

religious faith, which brought about an end to the war in our favor. For the military it was a classic hearts-and-minds campaign, much like Borneo and Malaya, with the army carefully manipulating captured or surrendered enemy.

We must make no mistake: If the Oman had lost her long struggle against communism, the entrance to the Persian Gulf would have become dominated by those who do not hold the interests of the Western world closest to their hearts. If that had been the case, oil would not have flowed to where we would have preferred it to flow, and a confrontation would have taken place dwarfing the present conflict.

It is as simple as that, and yet few know of the war that, in hindsight, was crucial to the West.



Bedouin tribesman near Ibri. This gentleman came from Duru tribe, one of 250 separate tribes in Oman.

wadi that divided the Sultanate of Oman and the Hadramaut, or Eastern Aden Protectorate. November was actually the month chosen by the British to complete the hand-over of the colony to the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen (PDRSY) and therefore the deadline for establishing a border fort. Up to 1967 this physical marking of the border had not been necessary, but with the impending departure of a friendly neighbor it was now an urgent requirement.

On the Hadramaut side of the border was a traditional white-painted, Beau Geste-style fort on the edge of the low escarpment forming the wadi edge. On the Oman side there was nothing but the unmarked frontier running down the center of the wadi. The task for A Company was to guard civilian Arab workmen under the command of a British civil engineer while they built a border fort of mud and stone that had to be just that little bit higher, wider, taller and whiter than the one on the other side of the border. Time was short, as PDRSY troops in support of the terrorists were expected at any moment. Priorities were set. Wells were dug not only for drinking water but also for mixing the mud and locally produced cement; an airstrip on our side of the wadi center was cleared and the whole area was staked out and picketed with all-round defensive positions. Although we were on the border, all the fighting up to that time had taken place to our rear.

Wadi Habrut was a wide, gravel-floored, dried-up water course running from the Empty Quarter to the Qara hills in the south.

It was an ideal convoy route for arms and supplies from Yemen by way of the desert, for although there were no tracks, the small stones and boulders on the wadi floor made it good going for camels, donkeys and four-wheel-drive vehicles. Not only was it the legal border, it was a main supply route that had to be blocked.

This was a fascinating period for a young officer in command of a sensitive and very lonely outpost. We came under fire regularly, patrolled every day in an attempt to keep the enemy at arm's length, lived under a palm tree for an officers' mess and ate locally shot sand grouse and duck. The only surface water for ducks was on the enemy side of the wadi, but I'm glad to say this did not put me off waiting for the dusk duck flights with a shotgun!

An example of the incongruity of it all was the method by which we ranged-in the three-inch mortars. After dark, our Arab mortar sergeant paced out the distance from the baseplates to the walls of the enemy fort and returned to dial 440 yards on the sights. Life was as simple as that.

Those three months of total isolation were an amazing period of tension coupled with long lazy days, ignoring the considerable threat to my small force by gazelle hunting, changing for dinner beneath my palm tree and even building a bathroom, with bath, in the reeds by the wells. Food was mostly fresh game baked in an ammunition tin over a smoldering fire in the sand, supplemented with tinned smoked oysters and whiskey.

We left Habrut in January 1968 feeling that the fort, then occupied by a company of the DR, was a fine testimony to our staunch defense of the project. Sadly, for it had become a very personal project, it was razed

to the ground in a vicious and successful attack by the enemy a few months later.

Before my company was due back to Ibri at the end of our fort-building days at Habrut, orders were received for the move of the NFR to the Dhofar war. A Company would take over from C Company DR at the notorious "Ambush Corner" on the Midway road. As an expedient, and as I was already in the south, I asked to be lent for a fortnight to that company in order to get to know the tasks and country that lay ahead of us. To insure that I would take my company to the war I had applied to the Royal Marines for a further nine month extension of my tour. This had been accepted by the corps and the commander of the SAF. I was thrilled.

On 3 January 1968 I left Habrut in a small convoy of vehicles for C Company's position. I knew the importance of this position — without it, the road could not be kept open. In the sitreps sent to the north every week from Dhofar, Ambush Corner featured in some way. I felt honored that my company was to be given the most difficult, and possibly the most dangerous, position in the growing war. My men had earned this privilege through sheer hard work in training before acquitting themselves equally well on the border.

I stopped for the night with the convoy at Midway's deserted oil-rig camp in the vastness of the gravel plain, having a comparatively luxurious night in an abandoned caravan. It was a strange place. Stores were still on the racks in the sheds; food, rotting away, was still in the kitchens; oil drums, drilling bits and pipes lay in neat lines, ready for use. The only thing absent was any form of transport, for when the camp was closed, the oil-rig workers had, with little notice, driven their wagons to the international-sized airstrip and left them facing into the desert with weights on the accelerators. For miles around the camp there were abandoned vehicles that had run out of fuel in their driverless journeys.

I joined C Company and met the company commander, a seconded officer from the Queen's Own Highlanders (QOH). We had much in common, especially as I had one favorite uncle in the Seaforth Highlanders and another in the Cameron Highlanders before those two Scottish regiments amalgamated into the QOH. However, there was not much time for reminiscing, as my first night was spent moving into a dawn cordon-and-search position around a village to the west and some distance into the mountains. We achieved our aim but found no known terrorists. The second night we moved into a position even farther west and in the heartland of the enemy. The aim was to conduct a night approach through the wild moon country to a village on the edge of a steep valley which, in the space of a few vertical feet, changed from barren, dusty moonscape into lush, almost impassable, jungle.

The enemy knew this country backward and forward — for the army to move undetected, even in the dark, was nigh impossi-

Author Southby-Tailyour drinking from "chussle," the canvas water bag carried on side of lorries and Land Rovers.





Wadi Habrut. Omani soldiers prepare mortar position near enemy fort (in background) just across Yemen border.

ble. The opposition moved in small groups, had the population in his grasp and could attack on ground and at times of his own choosing; we seldom, if ever, made contact unless it was on his terms. This was classical Mao Tse-tung teaching. There was, therefore, a great deal of "coat trailing" (moving through enemy territory, waiting to be ambushed) by the SAF. Our greatest training efforts in those days went into anti-ambush drills. It was dangerous stuff, but it was the only way to force the enemy into a battle of our own choosing; it didn't always work to our advantage.

My duty for this patrol was to bring up the rear with one of the two ex-enemy we had taken with us as guides. Before we had covered a mile it was clear that we had missed the next man ahead in the stealthy crocodile of soldiers. Maps were almost nonexistent and those that did exist were very vague on topographical features. I had a rough idea of the contours that had been outlined on a blackboard during the briefing, but it was clear that following the wrong spur would mean an error of some magnitude. By dawn there would be a deep enemy-held valley between us and the remainder of the company. It was not a happy prospect, but I trusted in my navigation, a subject I had studied (admittedly at sea) since before I could read or write, and so I decided, much to the horror of my two Arab companions, that we would continue with the aim of making the dawn rendezvous. The ex-enemy was, if anything, more apprehensive than I, and the SAF soldier (a Baluchi) even more so than either of us.

At one stage in the night we came across a water hole and decided to set up an impromptu ambush more in self-defense than with a sense of aggression, for we would undoubtedly have been outgunned and outnumbered. An enemy patrol did slide past us in the dark and no more than a few feet away, but we wisely decided to let them continue.

Dawn did not come as a relief, as we were

open to observation, but it did make navigation easier. It was therefore with great satisfaction, and rather by luck than fortune, that we saw the rest of the company on a spur a mile or two ahead. They, too, had seen us and took up fire positions, believing us to be the enemy. At that moment a leopard appeared between us, causing a brief clash of priorities in my tired mind: "Do I shoot the leopard in self-defense and risk missing, allowing the round to hit our patrol beyond, thereby confirming their opinion that we were enemy, or do I allow the leopard to do the damage instead?" I decided to shoot the leopard, which our own men could not see from their distant positions. Luckily, at the last moment, he lolloped off into the undergrowth. The three of us breathed deeply and, risking the real enemy, stood in the open to identify ourselves to the distant company commander.

The search was a partial success: One man was identified as a rebel and the other, the one we actually wanted, escaped. We eventually returned to Ambush Corner without incident, only to be told by our desert intelligence officer that there had been considerable enemy interest in our patrol and that we had walked through two perfect ambush positions, but they had apparently chosen not to spring them. I believe that my unplanned diversion had confused them into thinking we had more men in the area than we actually had.

We were more successful a few days later on 11 January, when we were ambushed three times in one afternoon. C Company was ordered to patrol to the east of the Midway road and carry out a series of hasty cordon and searches in order to keep the enemy on the move or, with any luck, catch him at rest. It was to have been very much a coat-trailing operation on the return journey, although the way out was conducted as covertly as possible.

The approach to the Jebel Darbat area was begun from Ravens Roost, a position on the Midway road alongside a rough airstrip cleared out of the scrub and bush. From this point east there was no track, but our convoy of three Bedford lorries and two Land Rovers made good going for about 15

miles. We laagered them up in a wadi bottom with good all-round defense from pickets on the higher ground before moving off in tactical bounds for the first of the suspect villages.

The houses in these villages were low, round dwellings made of mud and stone with, suspiciously, not one man present. That night we lay in ambush outside our second set of targets but detected no movement to or from them. It was clear that something was amiss, and we prayed that it meant an encounter battle. On the morning of the 11th, our searching again produced no young men but did include a cup of thick, black, sour — but welcomed — coffee with the Sultan's brother-in-law — ironically, the only male we met.

As we had been on foot for 24 hours, our supply of water was running low (men can consume four gallons a day in the desert), and it was necessary to rejoin the transport. For my part all I carried were three water bottles, two days' worth of sandwiches, a Walther P-38 and the issued No. 5 .303 rifle as issued to the British Army during World War II. The No. 5 rifle differed slightly from the more common No. 4 rifle carried by the men, being shorter barreled with a conical muzzle-flash hider. For shelter I carried in a thigh pocket a space blanket, silver on one side and bright red on the other; it occasionally doubled as air panel. Medical evacuation was usually on the back of a donkey, with only a faint chance of survival. The company's medical support was in the form of one Baluchi lance-corporal whose medical knowledge relied heavily on enthusiasm rather than a deep knowledge of *Gray's Anatomy*!

At 1630 hours a burst of machine-gun fire halted the leading vehicle-borne troops; they debussed into their antiambush positions. In accordance with normal procedures, the heights had been picketed with a rolling system that allowed the main body to keep moving along the wadi bottom. As we passed a picketed height, the men would descend as others in the front moved ahead to new positions. It was a well-practiced routine which allowed slow but steady progress for the main body; it also relied heavily on superb mountain fitness from the infantrymen.

I was driving the rear vehicle, a Land Rover, and was responsible for bringing in the pickets and ensuring that we left no one behind. The company sergeant-major was in the passenger seat and two soldiers were in the rear. They all jumped out and ran to the crest 200 yards to our right front, while I threw the vehicle into a convenient acacia bush. This probably saved my life, for a further burst of automatic fire swept the crest seconds before I reached it; this burst came from our rear and, among other casualties, removed the right side of the sergeant-major's neck. It was clear he would not survive, but I administered morphine while shouting for a sitrep from those troops farther forward.

The company commander was ahead and

beyond the crest preparing the counterattack against the enemy positions to the right, unaware that we had been engaged from all quarters. By ambushing us in the position they did, the enemy had divided the company into two separate killing zones. To communicate between them we had to run a gauntlet along the dividing crest. This could have been an advantage to us if the enemy had only opened fire from one flank or

ahead or behind, but by dominating both halves of the company and covering us with fire from 360 degrees, they showed a remarkable sophistication. Although this made us suspicious at the time, little did we realize the full consequences of this 45-minute battle. It was to change the Sultan and his army's perception of the war forever.

It was immediately clear that this was a battle of a size then unknown to SAF and was being conducted in a manner with which we were not familiar. For instance,

the enemy had prepared false sangers below the hilltops and then dug themselves into real fire positions. Our pickets had discovered the false fire trenches as they moved into position, but as they were empty they assumed that any enemy had left. The false positions drew our fire before we realized that we were wasting ammunition.

The sergeant major died quickly. There was nothing any of us could have done except make his passing as painless as possible. On the track ahead of the Land Rover, as it crested the rise dividing the company, a lone signaler had set up his

Continued on page 79



Land Rover from A Company crossing sands on journey from Ibr to Dhofar.



S&F's exclusive examination of the weapons of the People's Republic of China continues with T&Es of the pistols produced by PRC arsenals over the last 35 years. Included is the first complete description of the Type 64 pistol to appear in a publication.

S&F 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, who became the first Westerners to examine PRC military hardware in-country.

S&F Editor/Publisher Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown fires the Type 59 pistol.

S&F EXCLUSIVE

GUNS BEHIND THE GREAT WALL PART 7

**PRC Pistols:
From
Hot
to Puny**

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

PISTOLS are a matter of small consequence to the military. Everywhere, that is, except in the United States. As big-bore blasters rant and rave over replacement of the .45 ACP cartridge with the 9mm Parabellum, and political intrigue over adoption of the M9 service pistol accelerates into a confused crescendo, the rest of the world observes from the sidelines in total bewilderment. Little more than insignia of rank and placebos, pistols and the caliber for which they are chambered are of little relevance on the field of battle to anyone, with the possible exception of tunnel rats.



Model 54 Tokarev pistol, caliber 7.62x25mm, with manual safety as required by BATF.

Known in this country as little more than a war trophy, the Tokarev pistol has several interesting features. Chambered for the 7.62x25mm cartridge, the Type 51/54 is essentially a much modified Colt-Browning design. With the exception of the magazine, springs and grip panels, all the components are milled forgings. All the steel compo-



Model 54 Tokarev pistol, fieldstripped.

TYPE 54 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** 7.62x25mm.
- Operation:** Locked-breech, short-recoil. Semiautomatic. Single-action.
- Feed:** Eight-round detachable, single-column box-type magazine; no feed lips.
- Weight, empty:** 29 ounces.
- Length, overall:** 7.77 inches.
- Height:** 5 inches.
- Thickness:** 1.175 inches.
- Barrel:** Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.45 inches; chrome-plated bore and chamber.
- Barrel length:** 4.57 inches.
- Sights:** Fixed, front and rear; blade-type front and open U-notch rear; high profile.
- Finish:** Blued.
- Furniture:** Black plastic grip panels.
- Manufacturer:** Arsenal Number 66 in Mukden, Manchuria.
- Exporter:** NORINCO (China North Industries Corp.), Dept. SOF, 7A Yue Tan Nan Jie, PO Box 2137, Beijing, People's Republic of China.
- Importer:** Pacific International Merchandising Corp., Dept. SOF, 2215 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95816.
- T&E summary:** Excellent and cost effective modification of Browning design. Robust and reliable, with feed lips built into the hammer and sear mechanism. Manual safety found only on imported version. Without an inertia-type firing pin; should be carried without a chambered round.

PRC Type 54 Pistol

The first pistol fielded by the People's Liberation Army, and still standard issue, was the Russian Tokarev TT-33. First Chinese copies of this design included a slot on the backstrap to accept a detachable shoulder stock/holster. Few were produced in this configuration. Production was established in Mukden, Manchuria, in 1951 at Arsenal Number 66. Both Russian and Chinese components were utilized, and these pistols were marked "Type 51." In 1954, after approximately 250,000 were manufactured, the nomenclature was changed to Type 54. By that time all parts were of Chinese origin. A sanitized version of the Type 54, devoid of all Chinese markings and the five-pointed star on the grip panels, was encountered in Vietnam with an enigmatic "M20" marked on the slide.

nents have been salt blued. With an empty weight of 29 ounces, the overall length is 7.77 inches, almost an inch less than the M1911A1. The method of operation is locked-breech, short recoil. After the cartridge has been fired, the barrel and slide travel rearward, locked together by two ribs on the barrel which engage two corresponding recesses inside the slide. After chamber pressures have dropped to a safe level, the swinging link on the bottom of the barrel, which is fastened to the slide stop pin, draws the barrel away from the slide. The barrel stops when it strikes a stop machined into the frame.

As the slide continues rearward, it com-

Firing the Type 59 pistol, caliber 9x18mm, an almost exact duplicate of the Soviet Makarov.



presses the recoil spring over its guide rod. The extractor, pinned to the right side of the slide, pulls the empty case out of the chamber and carries it back to hit against the ejector, mounted to the unique hammer and sear subassembly, propelling the case out the slide's ejection port. The compressed recoil spring drives the slide forward to strip another round from the magazine and chamber it.

All modifications to John Browning's original design were intended to simplify manufacture and enhance reliability. Type 51/54 barrels are 4.57 inches in length with chrome-plated bores and chambers. Retention of a 7.62mm bore permitted the Soviets and Chinese to use existing machinery for boring, reaming and rifling. These four-groove barrels have a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.45 inches, which duplicates that of all other Soviet 7.62mm caliber small arms. In addition, the barrel's two locking ribs are machined around the entire circumference of the barrel, which permits turning these ribs on a lathe and much simplifies this operation.

The Browning-type slide is machined to accept a heavy, forged bushing through which the barrel protrudes and to which is seated the recoil spring's plug. Type 54 slides have the 24 closely spaced serrations found on postwar Russian Tokarevs. The fixed, high-profile front and rear sights attached to the slide are surprisingly excellent for a military sidearm. The large, open U-notch rear sight can be aligned quickly with the front blade.

Most innovative of all is the hammer and sear subassembly, which drops into the frame. Machined and drilled to accommodate the hammer, sear and disconnector, this single block of steel has two arms of unequal length that rest on top of the frame's guide rails. The lower surfaces of these arms serve as cartridge guides to facilitate feeding into the chamber. Machining feed guides into a substantial steel surface instead of depending upon the lips of an easily deformed sheet-metal magazine eliminates the majority of the stoppages associated with semiautomatic pistols. The longer left arm of the subassembly acts also as the ejector. A hole in the hammer's body holds the coil hammer spring. The "burr"-type hammer is somewhat difficult to cock.

Type 51/54 trigger mechanisms are also of the Colt-Browning type, although simpler. Trigger pull weights are heavy and all that I have measured range from 7 to 9 pounds. A stirrup-shaped trigger controls the sear, to which is attached the disconnector. When the slide recoils rearward, it rides over the hammer and rolls it back so the tip of the sear can catch the hammer's full-cock notch and hold it as the slide goes forward. The slide also forces the lower end of the disconnector below the lever of the trigger's stirrup and thus another shot cannot be fired until pressure on the trigger is released. There is no manual safety or inertia-type firing pin. Although the hammer has a half-cock position, I would not carry this pistol



Type 59 pistol, fieldstripped.

TYPE 59 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** 9x18mm (Makarov).
- Operation:** Unlocked blowback. Semiautomatic. Double-action.
- Feed:** Eight-round detachable, single-column box-type magazine.
- Weight, empty:** 25.8 ounces.
- Length, overall:** 6.4 inches.
- Height:** 4.7 inches.
- Thickness:** 1.125 inches.
- Barrel:** Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.45 inches; chrome-plated chamber and bore.
- Barrel length:** 3.74 inches.
- Sights:** Fixed, front and rear; blade-type front and square-notch rear.
- Finish:** Blued.
- Furniture:** One-piece red plastic grips.
- Manufacturer:** Arsenal Number 66 in Mukden, Manchuria.
- Exporter:** Poly Technologies, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5/F, Citic Building, 19, Jian Guo Men Wai Street, Beijing, People's Republic of China.
- Importer:** Keng's Firearms Specialty, Inc., Dept. SOF, Suite 222, 6030 Georgia Highway 85, Riverdale, GA 30274.
- T&E summary:** Robust and reliable; extensive modification of Walther PP. Midway between the .380 ACP and 9mm Parabellum, the 9x18mm Makarov cartridge is at the power limit for unlocked blowback operation.

PRC PISTOL AMMUNITION

PRC pistols are chambered for any one of three cartridges, two of Soviet origin and one of more or less indigenous design. All PRC pistol ammunition is two-holed, Berdan primed.

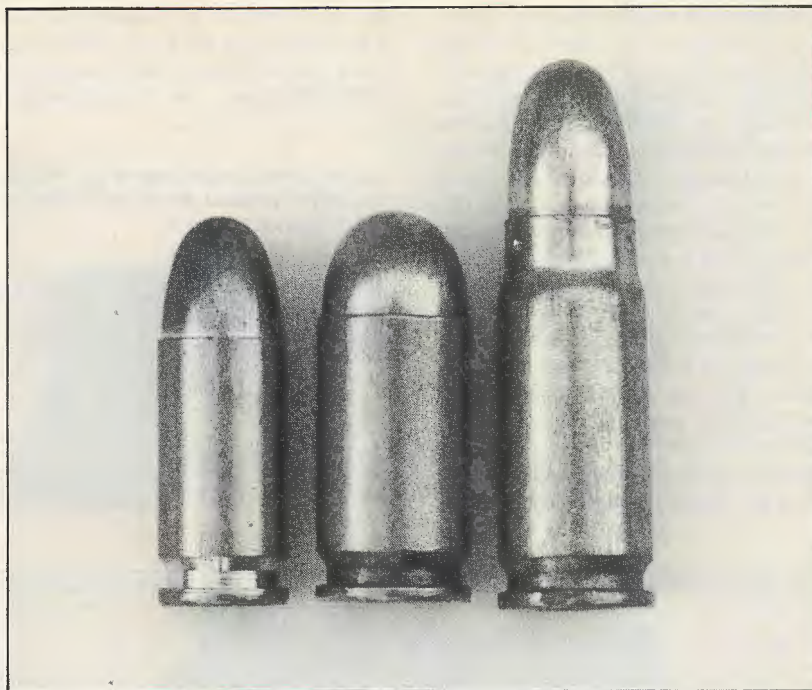
7.62x25mm

The Russians, as well as the Chinese, were very much enamored of the Mauser Model 1896 (C96) "Broomhandle" pistol. In fact, most experts believe that the small-framed version of the Broomhandle is referred to as a "Bolo" because of its popularity with the Bolsheviks. Although some Broomhandles were chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge, the majority will be encountered in caliber 7.63mm Mauser (.30 Mauser), a more powerful adaptation of the 7.65mm Borchardt round for which original Model 1896 prototypes were chambered. Until the advent of the .357 Magnum, the 7.63mm Mauser cartridge was the world's highest velocity pistol round, stepping out of the barrel at 1,410 fps. When the Soviets adopted the Tokarev pistol, they chambered it for the 7.62x25mm cartridge, which is dimensionally similar to the 7.63mm Mauser round and, in some weapons, interchangeable.

PRC production of this rimless, bottle-necked cartridge features a copper-plated steel case filled with 8.5 grains of an IMR-type extruded tubular kernal powder. Weighing 86 grains, the Round Nose (RN), Full Metal (steel) Jacket (FMJ) bullet is also copper-plated with a lead core. Both case-mouth sealant and primer annulus are light red in color.

Ammunition in this caliber has been difficult to obtain in the United States. Those with Tokarev pistols or PPS41 SMGs have been forced to consume either Czech (headstamped "bxn") or Soviet (headstamped "539 48") ammo. Both are aging, hot and erratic — a recipe for disaster, as I can testify after shearing the receiver hinge pin on my PPS43 SMG with this garbage. Keng's Firearms Specialty, Inc. (Dept. SOF, Suite 222, 6030 Georgia Highway 85, Riverdale, GA 30274; phone 404-996-2079) currently imports PRC 7.62x25mm ammunition of recent vintage and excellent quality. Headstamped "11 84," it was manufactured in 1984 at factory 11, which is located at Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province in northern China. It zips out of the Tokarev's 4.46-inch barrel with an average velocity of 1,455 fps and an astounding standard deviation of only 8 fps.

Don't sell the 7.62x25mm cartridge short. While it will never satisfy the big boomers, it has counted final coup on tens of thousands of the revolution's enemies.



PRC pistol cartridges. Left to right, the rimless 7.62x17mm is somewhat more powerful than the .32 ACP; the 9x18mm Makarov round lies between the .380 ACP and 9mm Parabellum; and the high velocity 7.62x25mm has also seen extensive use in submachine guns.

9mm Makarov

In 1959 the People's Liberation Army adopted another Soviet pistol, the Makarov, and its somewhat enigmatic 9mm cartridge. Still the standard pistol cartridge of the Warsaw Pact armies, the 9mm Makarov cartridge is thought to be derived from a 1936 German project, the 9mm Ultra. Neither should be confused with the post-WWII German 9mm Ultra. There are subtle dimensional differences among all three and they are not interchangeable.

Another pipsqueak by U.S. standards, the 9mm Makarov lies midway between the .380 ACP and 9mm Parabellum in both size and power. At 17,000 psi, chamber pressures are low enough to permit unlocked blowback operation (note: a few unlocked blowback-operated pistols, such as the Spanish Astra 400/600 series, have been chambered for more powerful cartridges — in this instance the 9mm Bayard Long and 9mm Parabellum, respectively).

The rimless, straight-sided case is 18.05mm in overall length. PRC production of the Type 59 cartridge features a copper-plated steel case loaded with 3.5 grains of a short, extruded tubular kernal powder. The squat, RN Full Metal (steel) Jacket bullet has a lead core and weighs 95 grains with a diameter of 9.27mm and a length of only 11.4mm.

Muzzle velocities range from 951 to 1,033 fps.

The Polish Wz63 and Russian Stechkin machine pistols are also chambered for this cartridge. Both the Type 59 (Makarov) pistol and its ammunition are imported by Keng's Firearms Specialty, Inc. Keng's ammunition (headstamped "81 83") was manufactured at the unidentified factory 81 in 1983.

Type 64: 7.62x17mm

Type 64 and Type 77 pistols and both the Type 64 and Type 67 suppressed pistols fire the unusual Type 64 7.62x17mm cartridge, about which Western authorities knew little until SOF jumped over the Great Wall.

It appears to be derived from the 7.65mm Browning (.32 ACP) cartridge. However, although the case lengths are identical (17mm), the .32 ACP case is semirimmed, while the Type 64 case is rimless. Bullet weights are similar. Type 64 RN FMJ projectiles weigh 74 grains. Maximum weight for .32 ACP bullets is 75 grains. Muzzle velocities in 7.62x17mm vary from 1,000 to 1,050 fps. With chamber pressures hovering between 17,000 and 20,000 psi, locked breech designs are not required.

All of the ammunition fired in this caliber at the PLA Small Arms Research Institute had brass cases (somewhat unusual for PRC small arms ammo) and were headstamped "301 83" (indicating manufacture at unidentified factory 301 in 1983). By any standards this is an underpowered cartridge with marginal performance at best, yet it has been estimated that more than 65 percent of all semiautomatic pistols manufactured since 1900 have been chambered for its performance equivalent, the .32 ACP.

with a chambered round.

To meet BATF regulations, a version of the Type 54 called the Model 54, which incorporates a frame-mounted manual safety, is imported by Pacific International Merchandising Corp. By drilling a hole in the frame and machining a cut-out on the left side of the hammer subassembly, the safety lever's axis pin reaches and blocks the disconnecter when the lever is rotated forward. A retaining screw on the frame and to the rear of the safety lever prevents the lever from rotating past the "fire" position and must be removed during disassembly. The lever's sense of direction is ergonomically incorrect. Pushing forward on the lever should place the mechanism in the "fire" position, not "safe."

Tokarev magazines are excellent. These eight-round single-column box magazines

have a removable floorplate and no feed lips. The sides of the magazine are rolled slightly inward at the top to retain the follower and cartridges. Configured in the M1911A1 manner, the lower arm of the

Type 64 pistol, a close copy of the Walther PPK but chambered for the PRC's unique 7.62x17mm cartridge.



follower pushes up the slide-stop after the last cartridge has been fired, to hold the slide rearward. The magazine catch-release is positioned to the rear of the trigger on the left side. That's the correct location, but the button is too small and difficult to depress.

Disassembly presents no problems. Remove the magazine and clear the weapon. With a plastic-tipped punch or the point of a bullet, drive the retaining clip to the rear and off the end of the slide-stop. Remove the slide-stop. Push the slide forward and separate it from the frame. Withdraw the recoil spring, plug and guide rod. Rotate the barrel bushing 180 degrees and separate it from the slide. Rotate the link downward and pull the barrel forward and out of the slide. The extractor and spring-loaded firing pin are pinned to the slide and should be removed only by an armorer. Withdraw the hammer and sear subassembly. Reach inside the magazine-well with the point of a bullet and rotate the retaining clip on the left plastic grip panel to the rear until it's free of the frame. After removing the left grip panel, rotate the right panel's retaining clip until it can be lifted off the frame. Although the trigger and magazine catch-release can be removed and the hammer and sear assembly completely disassembled, this is not normally required. Reassemble in the reverse order.

In general, the handling characteristics of this pistol are more than adequate. Perceived recoil is sharp, but not at all unbearable. Muzzle whip is moderate and has little effect on recovery time for those who fire from the Weaver position. Accuracy potential is no better or worse than any other unmodified military pistol of this type. Hit probability parallels the shooter's skill level. Robust and reliable if fed quality ammunition, stoppages will be few and far between. Trigger pull weights can be lightened by a competent pistolsmith; if you can depress the magazine catch-release, the magazines fall cleanly away and the fixed lanyard ring, attached to the left side of the frame at the heel, does not interfere with rapid magazine changes like that of the M1911.

PRC Type 59 Pistol

Apparently deciding that even the 7.62x25mm cartridge was too high up on the power scale for the pistol's limited applications in warfare, by 1951 the Soviets abandoned the Tokarev and adopted a pistol of lesser power. Once more, a previously successful design, this time the Walther PP, was extensively modified. The PM (*Pistolet Makarova*), or Makarov, was adopted by the People's Liberation Army in 1959 as the Type 59. Chinese versions of the Makarov differ only in minor cosmetics (i.e., the width of the slide's sight rail and configuration of the safety lever) and markings. PRC Type 59 pistols are marked on the frame with the serial number, arsenal ("66" in triangle for the factory at Mukden, Manchuria) and "59SHI" (*Shi* = Type). Soviet Makarovs carry a single star in a circle on the grip panels; PRC versions have five smaller stars within a shield. The only other



Type 64 pistol, fieldstripped.

TYPE 64 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber: 7.62x17mm.
- Operation: Unlocked blowback. Semiautomatic. Double-action.
- Feed: Seven-round detachable, single-column box-type magazine.
- Weight, empty: 19.68 ounces.
- Length, overall: 6.2 inches.
- Height: 4.12 inches.
- Thickness: 1 inch.
- Barrel: Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches; chrome-plated chamber and bore.
- Barrel length: 3.46 inches.
- Sights: Fixed, front and rear; blade-type front and open square-notch rear.
- Finish: Blued.
- Furniture: Two-piece red plastic grip panels.
- Manufacturer: Arsenal Number 66 in Mukden, Manchuria.
- 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: Reliable clone of the Walther PPK chambered for a marginal cartridge.

country known to manufacture this pistol is East Germany. In addition to the frame, Type 59 pistols carry serial numbers on the slide, magazine, safety lever and sear. Most of the components are milled forgings and all the metal parts have been salt blued. Type 59 pistols are imported by Keng's Firearms Specialty, Inc.

An unusual variant of the Type 59 has recently surfaced. With a "ZZ" prefix, the serial numbers only appear on the left side of the frame and slide (with the last three digits on the sear). There are no arsenal or type markings of any kind. Even more peculiar are the grip panels, which are those of the Russian Makarov (a single star in a circle). Could this be the clandestine equivalent of the M20?

Although externally a scaled-up Walther PP, the Type 59 is but 6.4 inches in overall length, with a total height of 4.7 inches. Weight, empty, is 25.8 ounces.

Its relatively low-power 9x18mm cartridge permits operation by unlocked blowback. Like the Walther series, it has a double-action trigger mechanism.

The four-groove, chrome-plated 3.74-inch barrel, with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.45 inches, is pinned to the frame—conventional for blowback-operated handguns.

The Makarov's firing mechanism is unusual and differs considerably from that of the Walther PP/PPK series. When fired double-action, a sustained pull on the trigger pushes the sheet-metal trigger bar, to which it is attached, forward. Forward movement of the trigger bar causes the cocking lever, connected to its rear end, to pivot upward, engage a notch in the hammer and rotate it back. When the cocking lever slips out of this notch, it lifts the sear up, freeing the rebounding-type hammer to roll forward and strike the firing pin.

A cam slot in the recoiling slide forces the cocking lever to the right, clear of the sear. This permits the spring-loaded sear to engage its notch in the hammer and hold it back in the cocked position as the slide moves forward to strip and chamber another round. Subsequent rounds are fired single-action. When the trigger is released, the cocking lever moves back under the sear, ready to pull it away from the hammer after the trigger has been pulled once more. Trigger pull weights are typically on the heavy side—about 7 pounds in single-action and usually 14 pounds or more in double-action.

There are numerous other differences between the Makarov and Walther PP/PPK pistols. The Makarov has no loaded-chamber indicator. Walther pistols have a coil hammer spring, while the Makarov uses a leaf-type hammer spring. Makarov slide-stops have an external button on the left side of the frame which is pushed downward to release the slide. Walther slides must be retracted slightly by hand and then released. The rear end of the Makarov's sheet-metal slide-stop serves as the ejector. The two-piece, spring-loaded extractor is mounted on the slide to the rear of the ejection

port in the Walther manner. The Makarov's slide-mounted manual safety must be pushed up for "safe" and pulled down for "fire." These positions are re-

versed on the Walther pistols. Engaging the Makarov safety lever drops the hammer if it's cocked, moves a bar between the hammer and firing pin and locks both the slide and hammer.

Walther magazine catch-release buttons are located on the left side of the frame to the rear of the trigger. Makarov magazine catch-releases are found at the heel of the frame in the European manner. Type 59 magazines are of the single-column type and hold eight rounds. The floorplate can be removed for disassembly and cleaning. Large cuts on each side of the magazine body clearly indicate the number of loaded cartridges remaining.

Disassembly procedures follow those of the Walther PP/PPK. Remove the magazine

Type 77 pistol, caliber 7.62x17mm, a reincarnation of the 1920s German *Lignose Einhand*, uses the trigger guard to cock and load.



Continued on page 74



Type 77 pistol, fieldstripped.

TYPE 77 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	7.62x17mm.
Operation:	Unlocked blowback. Hammerless. Trigger guard used to cock and load.
Feed:	Seven-round detachable, single-column box-type magazine.
Weight, empty:	17.6 ounces.
Length, overall:	5.9 inches.
Barrel:	Four-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches; chrome-plated chamber and bore.
Barrel length:	3.46 inches.
Sights:	Fixed, front and rear; blade-type front with forward taper and open square-notch rear.
Finish:	Blued.
Furniture:	One-piece black plastic grips.
Manufacturer:	Arsenal Number 316, unknown location.
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:	Reincarnation of 1920s German <i>Lignose Einhand</i> . Reliable, lightweight and concealable. Chambered for a marginal cartridge.

DESERT CANYON SHOOT-OUT

SOF Three-Gun Match

Text & Photos by Michael Horne



THE eighth annual *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun Match was held from 26 through 28 August 1987 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Few range facilities can match the Desert Sportsman's Rifle and Pistol Club for size and diversity, which allowed the match to be presented in an expanded six-stage format. One hundred forty-three competitors from California to Cape Cod, plus shooters from Canada and South Africa, braved Las Vegas' blistering August heat, as well as the rugged desert terrain, to compete in this grueling event. Despite the fact that the Desert Sportsman's Range has several fine graded range areas, much of the match was designed and constructed in the intervening canyons. The use of rugged, natural terrain is unique to the SOF Match and fits in well with the magazine's practical approach to combat competition.

The SOF Match is decidedly oriented to practical shooting, as evidenced in the military and police scenarios adapted for use as the individual stages of fire, the restriction of firearms to practical weapons and the requirement for full-power ammo. The philosophy of the match staff and of the magazine is that the SOF Match resemble reality as closely as possible. Steven Hall, a Mas-

Stage one of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine's Three-Gun Match, the Beirut Sniper, was a simulated hostage rescue mission requiring the shooter to engage close-in and long-range targets exclusively with a rifle. Canadian Richard Karst, armed with an FN FAL, leaves the mortar pit firing position in this five-station continuous assault.

sachusetts police firearms instructor, says that it's the one competition that he attends every year without fail. Hall states, "I tell my boss that I either get the time off or I quit." Obviously, something is being done right to instill that much loyalty.

Shooters attend the SOF Match for many reasons, but they all seem to agree that it is an experience unequalled by other competitive events. Many participants currently with the military or law enforcement agencies have told us that the SOF Match constitutes the most realistic expression of combat competition anywhere; plus, they add, it is always fun, challenging and well organized.

This year's match used the same expanded six-stage format as the past two years in order to give the competitors as much shooting and as many different challenges as possible. Additionally, shooters

found themselves facing a new aspect of the SOF Match. For the first time in its history, two of the stages were combinations where the contestant needed to use both his rifle and pistol. It has always been an integral part of the match that the shooters were required to wear their pistol during their entire participation in the events, but now they were also given good cause to need it. One of the rifle stages was initiated with the pistol and, conversely, one of the pistol stages began by using the rifle. This tested a smooth and positive transition from one weapon to the other.

Stage one of the match was a rifle problem requiring that the shooter make a mental transition from firing at close targets to firing at a target of considerably greater range. This stage was called Beirut Sniper and simulated a situation where the shooter's mission was to assault a building and rescue a person being held inside. The stage was a five-station continuous assault in which the contestant shot targets in and around the building that were visible from his firing position and then, before proceeding to the next firing position, he fired two rounds at a target located about 275 yards away.

This target represented an enemy sniper who was opposing his advance and needed to be suppressed. The shooter moved from cover to cover, taking out targets clustered about the building and firing two rounds at the sniper before moving on. Once inside the building, the sniper was no longer visible and thus no longer part of the problem. Then the shooter only had to take out the rest of the enemy inside the building while avoiding hitting the no-shoot target he was sent to rescue.

His score on the long-range target became an important factor in his overall score in that it was directly subtracted from the time it took him to successfully complete the mission. This intentionally made the long-range target important, as the sniper in this scenario represented the biggest single threat to the success of the mission. The better scores on this stage had almost as



ABOVE: SOF 1987 Three-Gun Match winner Rob Leatham (front row, center) shakes hands with *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown during convention banquet opening ceremonies in Las Vegas, Nevada. Match participants placing 15th through second stand in back row. They are, in ascending order (left to right): Matt Smith, Allen Hall, Eddie Rhodes, Chris Hammer (Lew Gosnell, not pictured), Jerry Barnhart, Jimmy Clark, Jake Kempton, Paul Miller, Bob Salter, Doug Boykin, Joe Hamilton, Lee Souter and second overall finisher Brian Enos. Corporate sponsor representatives kneeling in front row are (left to right): Walter Sych (Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc.), Norman Dee (Taurus International Firearms), Dr. Florian Deltgen (president, Heckler and Koch), Tom Boyle (Sigarms, Inc.) and Tom Reese (Springfield Armory).

much score on the target as the time taken, which gave them a very low time.

It was interesting to note that the very first shooter on the first day of competition, Jerry Barnhart, did very well on this stage. His scores stood for the week to give him second place on this stage and first place overall in rifle competition. This should dispel the theory that you have to see other shooters perform a stage if you are to have any chance of shooting it well. He later stated that since he had not seen anyone else shoot the Beirut Sniper, he simply concentrated on a smooth run, which probably allowed him to focus on each shooting problem as it came up, rather than thinking ahead. Louis Awerbuck was the Chief Range Officer for this stage.

Stage two was the first one of the two-weapon combo stages and was administered by Clint Smith. Called Camp Defense, this scenario simulated a situation where the

shooter was standing down in camp and his rifle was out of immediate reach. The shooter was surprised by an attack on his camp and had to respond, at first with his sidearm. Having taken down the first four innermost attackers, he made his way to his rifle, loaded it and proceeded to the next shooting area. From there he engaged the next four attackers and then proceeded on to two more areas, each with four targets. Upon reaching the final shoot area, he dispatched the final four targets and hit the stop plate.

BELOW: The next two stages, Camp Defense and Lang Vei Relief, were challenging pistol/rifle combination scenarios. Lang Vei Relief was a mission-oriented simulation of the relief attack on the overrun U.S. position at Lang Vei, South Vietnam, and utilized numerous props, including mortar emplacements, armored vehicles, ammo crates and uniformed mannequins. Here, U.S. Marine Steve Allen, armed with a Colt Government Model .45 and an AR-15, begins the pistol portion of this third stage.





ABOVE: SOF 1987 Three-Gun Match special-award winners and sponsors (left to right): Steve Damon (A.R.M.S., Top Law Enforcement Award sponsor), Cindy Wong (Armcorp of America, Inc., Tyro Award sponsor), Lee Souter (Top Law Enforcement Award winner), Doug Boykin (Tyro Award winner), SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown (Top Military Award sponsor), Sharon Kimbrel (Top Woman's Award winner), Al Mar (Al Mar Knives, Top Woman's Award sponsor), J.R. Able (Top Military Award winner), Dr. Florian Deltgen (president, Heckler and Koch).

The shooter was expected to use cover from each firing position and his intent was to complete his mission of clearing his camp area of invaders as quickly as possible. His final score was simply the time it took him to accomplish this mission. Again, Jerry

BELOW: Sharon Kimbrel, woman's overall champion, attacks the window at one of the three firing stations in Cover Up with her Colt Government Model .45. Lyle Wyatt, designer and administrator of this fourth competitive phase, looks on.

Barnhart proved shooting first was not necessarily a bane to doing well, as he proceeded to turn in a performance that stood up for the balance of the competition as number one.

It was interesting to note during the rifle portion of the competition that most of the shooters were not using classic rifle techniques. Only a few competitors were using sling-braced supported positions even on the stages that offered a freestyle start, and they could well have benefited from the extra support. One exception was Mike Dal-



ton, who sported a CW sling system on his M1A. Mike explained that he had first learned about the CW sling from Jeff Cooper and immediately recognized the advantages of the system. While not quite as secure as the standard military loop sling, Mike said it is fast and has great application to combat shooting.

Another shooter, Andy Stanford, did not use a sling but found that his weapon's peculiar ergonomics allowed him to adapt the braced positions without the need of a sling. Ordinarily, the use of a sling adds about 30 percent to the steadiness of a braced position, but Andy contended that it just isn't necessary with the Steyr AUG he was using. For prone shooting he said he simply rests the vertical forward pistol grip on his left hand and the rearward-located magazine on the ground; this forms a steady but longitudinally oriented bipod effect. When sitting he puts the oversized winter trigger guard in the crook of his left elbow, clasps his right elbow with his left hand and rests both elbows on his knees in an open-legged, braced sitting position, which he claims is every bit as steady as sling-braced sitting and faster to assume. The fact that his rifle shooting was good enough for sixth

overall in the rifle portion, right behind Rob Leatham, as well as the second best rifle performance by 5.56mm in this year's match, gives some authority to his statements.

Stage three was the first of the pistol stages and was initiated with five rounds of fire from the contestant's rifle before completing the balance of the course with his pistol. Stage three, named Lang Vei Relief, was designed and administered by Dave Vining, who has developed quite a reputation for realism in his stages of the SOF Match. His liberal use of props such as machine-gun simulations, mortar emplacements, recoilless rifle prop, armored vehicle simulations, ammo crates, spent mags and uniformed dummies added color and did much to bring the stage to life for the shooter.

This stage was mission-oriented and was a hypothetical relief attack on the overrun U.S. position at Lang Vei, South Vietnam. In this scenario the shooter was assumed to have already spent a good deal of his rifle ammo supply and was down to only five rounds. The stage opened up with the shooter having five targets visible to him at approximately 125 yards. He proceeded to engage these targets from a reasonably secure and steady position before moving on through the rest of the assault stage. These five targets proved to be fairly critical, since any not hit from this position needed to be shot later with the contestant's pistol at the end of the assault run. This was not as simple as it sounds, since the shooter was usually quite winded by this time and the shot was still a fairly long one. Many of the shooters, in a hurry to get moving, missed one or more of these targets and later regretted it when they proved very hard to finish off at the end of the course.

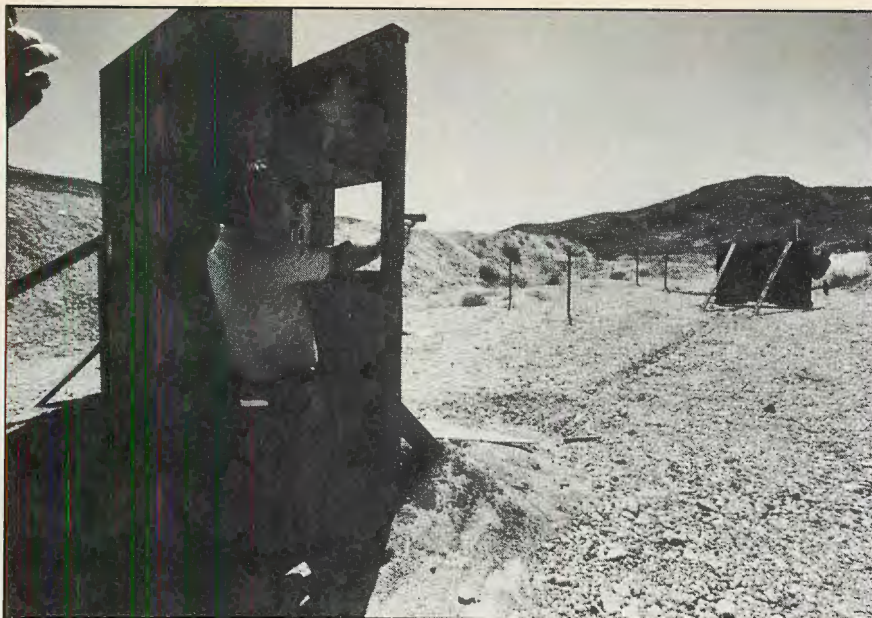
Upon firing the five rifle rounds, the competitor slung his rifle, drew the pistol and proceeded up canyon. As he moved through the assault course he would come into view of additional steel targets and knock them down before proceeding. When he finally reached the end of the course, he had just one more target, the stop plate, to hit and thus stop his time unless he still had some rifle plates standing that needed to be disposed of before hitting the stop plate.

Stage four, called Cover Up, was a pistol-only event that was deceptively simple in appearance. Designed and administered by Lyle Wyatt, Cover Up consisted of only three firing stations and 11 targets total and, as with all stages in the SOF Match, the shooter was expected to use cover whenever it was available.

Upon signal to commence, the shooter moved to a barricade wall and fired from the right side of the wall at four knockdown targets, then proceeded downrange and to his left to another wall and engaged four targets from the left side of the wall. The shooter then moved to his right to a hatch cover which he had to lift toward him and hold open to fire through the opening. Opening the hatch tripped a pair of target

SOF THREE-GUN MATCH

Name	Rifle	Pistol	Shotgun	Place	Overall				
Leatham, Rob	5	1	1	1	Dominguez, Salim	52	84	66	71
Enos, Brian	2	3	6	2	Fernandez, Geoffrey	74	60	68	72
Souter, Lee	10	2	2	3	Fawcett, Jim	9	89	105	73
Hamilton, J. Joe	7	16	5	4	Hall, Steven A.	70	56	79	74
Boykin, Doug	14	5	9	5	Johnson, William R.	67	112	32	75
Salter, Bob	8	6	22	6	Dhalliwal, Scott S.	76	64	81	76
Miller, Paul	15	7	15	7	Meblin, Andrew	49	79	98	77
Kempton, Jake	27	8	10	8	Kimbril, Sharon	66	101	62	78
Clark Jr., James E.	4	23	21	9	Bruegger, Dave	81	75	76	79
Barnhart, Jerry C.	1	4	50	10	Vaughan, Eric S.	35	119	84	80
Gosnell, Lew	17	19	20	11	Askeland, Tore	56	140	42	81
Hammer, Chris	19	32	7	12	Brossia, Robert J.	80	92	69	82
Rhodes, Eddie	23	25	11	13	Silk, John P.	77	108	61	83
Hall, Allen	20	29	19	14	Trapp, Cory	110	47	90	84
Smith, Matt	12	13	45	15	Doiron, Richard J.	102	91	57	85
Lonsdale, Mark	21	34	18	16	Duckett, Larry	96	63	94	86
Miculek, Jerry	3	17	58	17	Joyce, James	68	117	73	87
Gaines, Garth	40	14	26	18	Reed Jr., Henry	112	70	77	88
Stanford, Andy	6	62	16	19	Macias, David	61	127	72	89
Able, J.R.	41	28	17	20	Edwards, Ken	103	66	92	90
Furbee, Daniel R.	18	22	49	21	Karst, Rick	73	90	99	91
Ryckman, Robert G.	34	12	44	22	Heffington, Robert B.	92	85	89	92
Gaines, Joe	28	15	48	23	Solheim, John	116	87	64	93
Allen, Steve	24	33	35	24	Van Bront, B. John	104	46	118	94
Palazzolo, Bill	44	21	27	25	Paxon, James E.	82	81	106	95
Marcelli, Ed	32	24	40	26	Brokaw, David	83	72	114	96
Dalton, Mike	31	42	31	27	Dodson, Mike C.	86	107	78	97
Carnahan, Scott	54	10	47	28	Laisure, Philip A.	108	111	52	98
Devine Jr., Roy G.	37	54	34	29	Griggs, Michelle	120	40	112	99
Reed, Paul	50	20	55	30	Cooper, Richard	101	93	82	100
Burkett, Ken E.	85	27	14	31	Lamb, Diane	123	71	85	101
Looker, Bob	87	36	3	32	Burris Jr., William Earl	84	83	117	102
Terblanche, L.A.	11	11	107	33	Dunn, Scott	109	104	74	103
Griggs, Jim	38	58	33	34	Hagler, Glen	97	102	101	104
Smith, Daniel E.	25	69	36	35	Hotsko, James	119	95	87	105
Gill, Robert	79	26	25	36	Nassif, Joseph M.	107	88	108	106
Slater, Patrick B.	22	97	13	37	Allen, Eugene R.	95	100	109	107
Boruck, Alan A.	60	49	23	38	Valldejuli, Kenneth E.	100	106	102	108
Fillinger, Ronald	55	41	37	39	Lenchan, Ralph	111	73	124	109
Van Sickle, Rob	64	39	30	40	Lose, Timothy	59	137	116	110
Christiansen, Ned	30	43	63	41	Keith, Michael Lee	63	126	129	111
Luper, Bill	53	59	24	42	Skeeter, Andre	125	99	97	112
Zitta, Allan	26	57	56	43	Smith, Robert E.	126	109	93	113
Putman, Charles	94	44	4	44	Looker, Lynn	105	110	115	114
Erickson, Jim	16	67	60	45	Dempa, C. Charles	134	77	120	115
Cross, Terry	69	9	65	46	Fisher, Stan	115	98	122	116
Jason, Alec	33	74	38	47	Hampe, Tom	118	86	132	117
Keegstra, Neil	39	18	88	48	Pfleger, Jeff	124	105	111	118
Vaughan, Samuel E.	90	48	12	49	Baugues II, Sammy	113	131	103	119
Albright, Jim	42	78	39	50	Hersey, Fred	121	115	113	120
Wilson, Stewart	62	96	8	51	Koloscha, Michael J.	138	116	100	121
Chmiel, Joseph W.	65	50	51	52	Shattock, Thomas	91	130	135	122
Braddock, Randy	13	51	104	53	Redding, David L.	137	133	86	123
Schoening, Lynn	48	38	83	54	Barkley, Robert W.	106	129	126	124
McMurtrey, Joel	36	55	80	55	Vaughan, Beverly J.	114	125	125	125
Atkins, Dale	51	68	53	56	Toler, Charles	140	103	123	126
Anderson, Scott E.	43	61	70	57	Blampied, Jack E.	98	135	134	127
Crossman, Doug	57	45	75	58	Martinez, Ralph	99	128	140	128
Carpenter, Andrew B.	46	65	67	59	Mock, Ken	136	113	119	129
Johnston, John B.	29	94	59	60	Tobias, Jim	122	120	133	130
Kostelic, John T.	93	35	54	61	Gwozdek, Richard	128	118	131	131
Grimshaw, Dave	58	31	96	62	Nance, Chet A.	129	138	110	132
Christofides, Hercules	75	82	28	63	Lew, Stephen	130	122	127	133
White, Willard	88	53	46	64	Mar, Al	132	124	139	134
Taflinger, Joseph W.	45	114	29	65	Brokaw, Jim	117	139	142	135
Kimbril, Roy A.	72	76	41	66	Comer, Laura Tulloch	139	121	138	136
Comer, Chris L.	47	52	95	67	Groseclos, James	131	132	137	137
Wadsworth III, William S.	71	80	43	68	Cupples, Paula	133	142	128	138
Vollmer, Walter	89	37	71	69	Graf, Carl	143	141	121	139
Burns, David	78	30	91	70	Lange, Robert B.	127	136	143	140
					O'Sullivan, Edward	142	123	141	141
					Pontsler, John R.	135	143	130	142
					Turner, Perry E.	141	134	136	143



LEFT: Top foreign shooter (33rd overall) Colonel L.A. Terblanche of South Africa takes aim on wig-wag targets with his Colt Government Model .45 during Cover Up stage.



mechanisms designed and constructed by Lyle. These devices, which he calls wig-wags, are simple but rugged counterweighted machines that swing a target (one each) in an arc. This action alternately exposes and conceals the targets from behind cover, thus simulating an enemy coming out from behind cover to take a shot and then taking cover again. This action continues, but friction begins to take effect, exposing less and less target as time passes. As soon as the shooter had satisfied himself that he had hit both targets, he then engaged and knocked down the stop plate to stop his time.

Since time was such an important factor in the shooter's score, many of the contestants were tempted to fire only one round at each of the wig-wag targets. Sometimes the gamble paid off and sometimes it didn't. Many shooters found that there simply was no hit on one or more of these targets and their score suffered accordingly.

The biggest problem that most shooters

ABOVE: The fifth stage of the competition was called Entry and utilized gun three of this Three-Gun Match — the shotgun. Another hostage rescue scenario, Entry consisted of a building structure with an outside door and several interior doors and hallways leading to five hostile targets, two of which flanked the hostage. Armed with a Remington Model 870, Andy Stanford, who placed 19th overall, prepares to enter the mock structure.

had with this stage was simply worrying too much about what was ahead of them rather than what they were shooting at the moment. For instance, Sharon Kimbrel almost lost her lead in the women's category when she lost concentration on her front sight and started missing the early knockdown plates. She later said that she was thinking too much about the window and the wig-wags when she should have been concentrating on the problem at hand. Fortunately, she

regained her composure and finished the balance of the stage well, retaining her position to eventually emerge as the women's winner.

Entry was the fifth stage of fire and was a shotgun event designed and administered by Russ Showers. Here the contestant's mission could be construed as military, police or civilian in nature because his primary purpose was to rescue a hostage being held inside. The scenario consisted of a building structure with an outward-opening door and some interior doorways and walls. There were five hostile targets in total, with the hostage target immediately flanked by two of them.

Upon entering the structure, the contestant made his way to the first shoot area, which revealed the hostage and two bad-guy combos. After having dispatched the first two targets, the shooter continued through the structure to each successive shoot exposure until all the enemy targets were engaged. The contestant had to run through this course, his total time constituting his score.

The final stage, Managua Maze, was a shotgun stage using both slug loads and buckshot. Al Newell designed and ran this event as a combination defensive position followed by an assault problem. The shooter was occupying a defensive bunker position and had five rounds of slug available which he fired through the firing slit of his fortified position at any of three knockdown slug targets located downrange.

With his first shot, a pair of wig-wag targets were tripped on his right flank. With only five rounds of slug at his disposal, the shooter was able to fire only one round at each target. Any of these five targets not hit would count against his score. Once the five rounds of slug were expended, the defensive position was considered to be untenable and the shooter was to make his escape via a preplanned route. The shooter left his bunker while reloading his shotgun with buckshot and fired on targets that occurred along his route. Upon reaching the end of the course, the shooter stopped his time by hitting a stop plate.

This stage tested a wide range of shotgun skills, including careful slug marksmanship, quick reloading and rapid engagement of targets. There were nine buckshot targets along the trail for a total of 14 overall. Two of these buckshot targets were to be taken from behind the cover of a left-side barricade wall. Shooter after shooter had difficulty keeping their shotgun stoked up with ammo, and many had their operating handle foul against the barricade edge, causing the auto shotgun to malfunction and not feed the next round. Some of these malfunctions proved very difficult to clear and get the shotgun into operation again. These



consistent problems pointed out the need for a true combat shotgun to be developed. At this time little thought is going into combat shotgun development, with most being adaptations of sporting shotguns.

By Friday morning some of the competitive races were beginning to shape up. As mentioned earlier, Sharon Kimbrel managed to recover from a bad beginning in her pistol stages to hang onto her lead and win the women's division. Lee Souter finished third overall — this was good enough by 10 places to win the police award. J.R. Able, a Marine from Yuma, Arizona, who has won the top military honors at least three times before, had some tough competition from Steve Allen, a Marine from 29 Palms. Doug Boykin was the top tyro (first time entered in the SOF Match), with an impressive fifth place overall finish. Top foreign shooter was Colonel L.A. Terblanche from South Africa, who was also a speaker in the SOF Convention seminar program.

For first overall in the match, Jerry Barnhart, who had shot the rifle stages so well, had a narrow lead over Rob Leatham at the beginning of the final day of competition. On this day, Rob was scheduled to shoot the pistol stages and Jerry was slated to fire the shotgun. Jerry needed to do well in the shotgun to hold on to his lead and Rob needed to do very well in the pistol in hopes of catching Barnhart.

The final stage, Managua Maze, was also a shotgun phase, requiring both slug and buckshot loads. A combination defensive and assault scenario, the shooter fired through the firing slit of a defensive bunker at five downrange targets, then left the bunker, reloaded with buckshot and fired on targets occurring along a preplanned route. Laura Comer, firing a Remington Model 1100, is seen here during this assault course.

Rob's performance in the pistol was splendid. With precise shooting and quick action, he turned in scores on the two stages which were to emerge as number one in each stage. This obviously put the pressure on Barnhart. Then, on Jerry's first run in Entry, disaster struck. With his very first shotgun round he hit and knocked down the no-shoot (hostage) target, effectively ending his quest for first overall. As the balance of the stages were rationalized together, it was clear that Rob Leatham had won the match, with Brian Enos close behind. Jerry's misfortune dropped him to 10th overall.

On Saturday morning the main part of the SOF Three-Gun Match was over, but 16 of the contestants still had more shooting to do. As a new item in the traditional firepower demo on the final day of the convention, there was to be a man-against-man, sudden-death, double-elimination shoot-off with

the top 16 finishers in the pistol stages competing. A modification of the "Flying M" using reactive metal targets was set up and the 16 shooters squared off to see who would emerge victorious.

Many of the conventioners did not see any of the competition during the week, as other convention activities took up their available time. On Saturday, however, they were witness to some very fine shooting, as these top pistol competitors did their best to outshoot each other. Rob Leatham, not content simply to win the main match, shot brilliantly during the course of the elimination and won that as well. Jerry Barnhart came in second and Lee Souter was third.

The competitors finished the week very pleased with the match and vowed to return next year. Terry Cross commented, "Great match; don't see how it can get any better. Whatever you did this year, do it again next."

The 1988 Match will be held 14 through 16 September and will add team competition to the award categories. In addition, those who register before 4 July 1988 will receive a FREE SUBSCRIPTION to *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*. For an application and info sheet, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Match Director Michael Horne, 408 East Harding, Bakersfield, CA 93308.

See ya there! ✖

FIRESTORM

Peter Kokalis' Video Debut

by Don McLean



YOU may have seen the rash of mindless "machine-gun videos" that dish out a bilgy froth of bikinis, boobs and burp guns — neither instruction nor entertainment, evidently marketed to exploit a rather narrow spectrum of psychoses which hopes to see pendulous mammillae caught in a closing breach. While these video bikinis might have satisfied the Freudian hostilities of a disturbed few, there has been a need for legitimate orientation-instruction machine-gun videos for those who properly regard these weapons as indispensable tools of respectable trades. Delta Productions has answered this call with "Firestorm."

Obviously, one video flick can neither include every machine gun nor answer "everything you always wanted to know about a given weapon but couldn't ask above the roar," and Delta wisely does not attempt to do so in their first machine-gun video. Merrily seasoned with campy and fun outtakes from vintage gangster and war movies, this professionally produced and highly informative overview is not merely a cataloging of types but is a well-rounded fire-for-familiarization instructional video which covers burp guns, assault rifles, light machine guns, plus medium and heavy machine guns, using live fire from representative weapons of each category.

Featuring the intrepid and semi-photogenic full-auto weapons guru Peter Kokalis, the video starts with movie cuts and some editorial speculation on why red-blooded 'mericans like machine guns. Sub-machine guns are introduced first, with a little history and an outline of what consti-

Soldier of Fortune Magazine Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis takes top billing in Delta Productions' new instructional live-fire machine-gun video called "Firestorm." Here, Kokalis discusses features of West German MP5. Troop in background cradles older-model Thompson. Photo: Delta Productions

tutes a submachine gun and where it logically would be employed. Burps selected as historically significant are the Mauser 712 machine pistol, Schmeisser MP 28/2 and M1921 Thompson. Following these forged and milled classics, the World War II MP 40, Uzi and Heckler & Koch MP5 are fired to illustrate weapons that use more modern design and fabrication techniques. I missed not seeing any shots of the all-time classic in

WELCOME BACK!

Don McLean, long-time friend and fellow brainstormer of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, has rejoined our editorial staff. On the masthead of the first issues of SOF as associate editor, McLean left the publishing field to pursue interests in the marine salvage and gold mining arenas. He spent 15 years in writing and publishing, during which time he published over 150 volumes in the fields of weaponry and military and police science. He has also authored dozens of books and articles in these fields.

beer-can armament, the Sten, but maybe it'll get some coverage in a future flick dealing specifically with SMGs.

I have to take issue, though, with Pete's canon that submachine guns are not too relevant in modern warfare. There are many tactical situations, especially in urban settings, where pistol-caliber ammo is more appropriate than an assault round but a conventional pistol just can't provide the necessary firepower and accuracy.

Assault-type automatic rifles are cranked off with coverage of the MP 44 (grandpappy of them all, unless you want to consider the Federov automat or quibble about the MKb42(W)), followed by the ubiquitous ComBloc AK-47, American M16 and Czech Vz 58. The AK-47 and M16 need no apologies. The Vz 58 is righteous iron, too, and I admit to a prejudice in favor of the many excellent Czech arms designs, from the ZB 30 to the Cz 75, but in the context of this overview Pete could have opted to include in its place one of the new bullpups from France, Austria or England. I'm not particularly a fan of bullpups, not being into muzzle blast for one thing, but they are an important part of what's happening now in the evolution of assault rifles and might have merited mention here.

The light machine gun coverage is especially rich, starting off with the BAR, FN Minimi (M249 in U.S. service adaptation), the venerable Bren (Czech ZB 30 made for and later by the Brits in .303), RPK, M60, German MG 34 and MG 42 (now the MG 1) and the Lewis gun. A good *Schutzenfest*, even if footage is used to fatmouth the M60 which could have been better spent covering one of the Degtyarev light machine guns, the widely distributed FN MAG, or even a Browning A6. Favorite gun writers, like favorite uncles, are more interesting when they are opinionated and controversial, but it seems inappropriate in this overview film to rail the M60 as the worst machine gun the Army ever adopted because poorly trained troops can put it together wrong. This is hardly a problem unique to the M60. Consider the mess a dummy can cause in a Browning when he doesn't set the head-space properly, or what happened in the mud 'n the blood 'n the darkness when troops tried to feed the U.S. Hotchkiss strips upside down, or the problems with the U.S. Navy's Hudson 1.1-inch anti-aircraft machine gun, which were purely with training and not mechanical. . . .

Typecast in the role of medium and heavy machine guns are the classic watercooled M1917A1 Browning and the indefatigable .50-caliber M2 HB. The watercooled Browning still holds the world's record for continuous fire without a malfunction, and the .50 BMG, well, there's just something about Browning .50s and brass-jacketed Maxims that will live forever.

If this well-done video overview was intended as a teaser, I'm teased, and would like to see more of the same. However, to

Continued on page 84

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September 14-18, 1988

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RICHTER'S 200TH MISSION

Final Flight Over Thud Ridge

by Hank Brandli



IN an opening scene from the movie "Platoon," a group of fresh-scrubbed Army troops are getting off a plane in South Vietnam. At the same time, a group of disheveled, dirty, tired, battle-weary troops are leaving. The departing troops, in a kind of unison, yell mockingly to the green soldiers, "Only 364 days to go!"

Counting the days left in-country was very common in Vietnam, and GIs concocted several humorous and suspenseful ways of counting them down. (I've often wondered why we had to serve only one year. I don't know who decided this — Secretary of Defense McNamara, maybe Presidents Kennedy or Johnson. I think if we'd had to be there for the duration, the war might have ended a lot sooner. We would have had an incentive to speed things along and go home.) When I got to South-east Asia as a meteorologist, a young captain with only six years service, my friends all had their FIGMO (Finally, or Fuck!, I Got My Orders) charts. These were drawings that hung over a bed or desk. There were 90-day charts, 60-day charts, 10-day charts. Most common were the "30 days and a wake-up" charts. You blocked or colored the number of days you had left. Usually some clever artist had drawn an obscene sexual pose of a woman. Her most intimate body parts stood for the last three days. Sometimes there were men and women together in sexual drawings. Of course, the last day on these drawings referred to that part of the male anatomy that best signifies the number "one."

Shortly after I arrived in Saigon in 1966, I was sent to Thailand. At that time the American public wasn't aware that the bombing of North Vietnam was taking place from Thailand, not South Vietnam. The bombers took off from four Air Force bases in Thailand: Khorat, Ubon, Udorn and Tahkli. The refueling was done by SAC (Strategic Air Command) out of Satahib Air Force Base south of Bangkok. My job was weather forecasting for the 377th Bomb Wing missions that bombed North Vietnam, Laos and northern South Vietnam. I was only there for 60 days and met some very unusual characters in that short time.

But this story is not about them. It's about a fresh-scrubbed Air Force Academy grad by the name of Lieutenant Karl Richter. He was the "coolest" pilot I'd ever met, and I mean cool, calm and collected. We had to go through an intelligence debriefing with all of the bombing pilot returnees. My job was to compile weather observation charts. This was not an easy job for me or the pilots. They were getting shot at by SAM (Surface-to-Air Missiles) and other MiG aircraft, and we had to make time for a weather report! Most guys were so bleary-eyed and bombed out, they couldn't even remember how they

Lieutenant Karl Richter, the coolest bomber pilot the author ever met, volunteered for an extra 100 missions, most of them flying right into the bowels of North Vietnam.
Photo: U.S. Air Force Academy

AN OFFICER AND A WEATHERMAN

Hank Brandli retired from the U.S. Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in 1976, after 16 years service. Hank attended Tufts University, the Air War College and has two master's degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one in meteorology and the other in aeronautics and astronautics. He has written three books and over 150 technical articles, is the writer/expert on military satellites for McGraw-Hill's *Encyclopedia of Science*, satellite editor for the *National Weather Digest* and a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society.

got back safely, never mind what the weather was like. But Karl was different. I loved debriefing Karl. He provided me with the meteorological intelligence I needed to get to the weather central in Saigon. He would give me weather reports that were absolutely impressive in their detail and almost always accurate when compared with weather satellite photos.

Unlike the ground troops, who were over there for a year, bomber pilots had a different FIGMO chart routine. They had to complete 100 bombing missions, mostly over North Vietnam, then they would go home. When they got up to 90 missions, the powers-that-be tried to make the remaining missions easier. The OPS officer would schedule a pilot to fly easier bombing missions — if there were such things — to reduce the chances of getting killed, shot down or taken prisoner. The last 10, therefore, were in fairly "safe" areas.

The plane I was most familiar with (there were a variety of bombing-, fighting-, strafing-type jets or prop planes) was the F-105, built by Republic Aircraft in New York state. I don't know how many of these particular fighter-bomber planes they made. I do know most of them are probably scattered around in the soil somewhere in Southeast Asia. The F-105 was designed as a tactical nuclear fighter-bomber, which means it should have been armed with nuclear gravity bombs. In Southeast Asia and in the Vietnam War, the F-105 was not used for that. It carried all kinds of conventional armament that reconfigured the aircraft design, enabling the pilots to get the job done.

I remember the first time I saw an F-105 on the runway when I landed at Khorat Air Force Base. It was the biggest fighter-bomber I had ever seen, other than a B-52. For some reason it was called the "Thud." I don't know where the name came from. Perhaps it was the distinctive noise it made when the air brakes were applied. Anyway, the pilots loved it. It was a good machine.

I had become familiar with the name Thud because just northwest of Hanoi on one of the bombing runs was a narrow tree-

covered mountain that was easily seen on weather satellite photos and could be used to pinpoint the weather in the Hanoi/North Vietnam bombing area. (At that time, visual flight rules were the name of the game.) Pilots called this area "Thud Ridge." This paragraph from Colonel Jack Broughton's book *Thud Ridge* describes the area:

Starting inland from the Gulf of Tonkin side of the buffer zone, the truest outline of the hot area runs past the MiG air base at Kep, thence past Thai Nguyen and back to Yen Bai. The long mountain ridge that originates about halfway between Thai Nguyen and Yen Bai and stretches out like a finger pointed to the southeast and aimed at Hanoi is Thud Ridge. Thud Ridge because so many of our trusty mounts have flown their last into its side? Thud Ridge because it pretty well split the delta and pointed to Hanoi? Thud Ridge because it stood out clearly in the hostile land where high-speed, low-level fighter pilots needed an anchor, and where that corner of the war was reserved almost exclusively for the Thud driver? Take your choice. I am sure the North Vietnamese have their name for it, but Thud Ridge it shall ever be in the annals of the fighter pilots.

According to some pilots with World War II and Korean War experience, Thud Ridge was the most heavily defended area ever put together by man. Anti-air missiles, radar-controlled guns, fighter planes and random firing from ground troops; it was indeed a nightmare for bomber pilots. Many times I heard the confusion, yelling noise over the intercom as a pilot talked to another on that dreaded trip from Khorat to be refueled before heading into North Vietnam.

"He was actually going to volunteer for another 100 missions!"

The designated area of North Vietnam to be bombed was called Route Pack 6-A and 6-B. When there were targets in Route Pack 6, you knew it was not going to be an easy day. As the chief weather officer, I was in charge of a group of young forecasters. I used to instruct them never to say that the weather was going to be great in North Vietnam, because the pilots would not sleep well. I figured the least we owed them was a decent night's sleep.

One night in the Khorat officer's club, a real luxury place with one of the longest bars in Southeast Asia, I was having a couple of drinks with Karl. He was coming up close to the end of his first 100 missions. "You know," he said, "I love to fly, I love this place and this whole mission. It doesn't scare me at all. I'm single, a lieutenant, an



FIGMO (Finally I Got My Orders) charts were a favorite way of counting down days left in-country. Here is author's own "90 days and a wake-up" chart.

Air Force Academy grad." He told me that if he volunteered for another 100 missions he could have his career made, maybe all the way up to making general. To this I replied, "Karl, you're crazy." He said he wasn't. Rather pleadingly, I asked, "Is it worth the risk?" He said it was. He was actually going to volunteer for another 100 missions! I couldn't believe it. Even though the last 10 of the first 100 were easy, this meant he had another 90 to go, plus another 10. And flying most of them right into the bowels of North Vietnam.

When my temporary duty assignment in Khorat, Thailand, was over, I was reassigned back to Saigon to the weather central as a weather satellite analyst. I, like many people in Southeast Asia, followed Karl Richter's adventures. Karl's FIGMO chart wasn't a day chart, it was a "mission counter" — 120, 130, 140, etc. We all kept track of him. Not so that it detracted from our FIGMO charts, but every once in a while someone would ask how Karl was doing. He was having no problems! He was up to 190 missions; only 10 "easy" ones remained. The operations people were now going to really try to give Karl the safest targets. Of course, one has to remember that Karl was used to flying the toughest missions in the world. Maybe "easier" was anathema to him. Maybe Karl should have been given only hard targets.

I was working one morning in the base weather station in Saigon with my weather satellite pictures when a voice announced over the loudspeaker that Karl's aircraft had received ground fire over Laos and he had to bail out. This also happened to be mission number 200 for him — his very last flight. He had already made preparations to return home to his family after this extended service in Vietnam.

Continued on page 77

“OLD RELIABLES”

Continued from page 47

It started getting hot as units made contact. I could see puffs of white smoke from TOW simulators coming from both sides of the valley. Our radio was jammed with sit-reps and other chatter. “Ran into a close-range ambush we couldn’t handle,” one unit reported, “then they flanked us. They’re pushing us into the valley.”

“Indian 28 — what are you doing?” Holtkamp demanded.

“Working on an antitank platoon to my rear,” came the harried response.

Platoons were now engaged in TOW-versus-TOW fights all across the ridgelines and in the valley. We slowly worked our way forward through the EA, then dropped into a deep and wide gully running up the valley. We knew it had to be covered, but...

Puff of white smoke — a Dragon emplacement on the lip of the gully had us dead to rights. A SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) cut loose around the next bend if we weren’t already dead enough. Well, it was only a training exercise — fortunately. (And I never did find out who won that case of beer.)

Later that evening, while the sun was setting, the wind howling and the temperature dropping (perfect time to get the worst answers from a group of grunts), I sounded

out an infantry squad about their life in the Army. Did they like it? Except for garrison duty, yes. They came in for a variety of reasons: to defend their country, a chance to gain some “grow-up” experience, to take advantage of the GI bill. How’d they like the motorized infantry concept? “Oh man! Much better to ride, then dismount and walk a couple of Ks.” (Troops are always adept at cutting to the heart of any doctrine.) How about their officers? Rated 7-8 out of 10: “Most are real good but a few are jerks.” (Same response you’d get about managers in a civvy corporation.) Are they more interested in you or the tactical mission? “Hey, the tactical mission! That’s what they’re supposed to do!” (So much for the “me first” 1980s generation.) Can you go to war and beat the Russians? “Are you kidding? We’ll kick their ass!” (Fight out-numbered and win is the concept today, and it’s that attitude that’ll do it.)

Except for the normal bitching you hear from all field soldiers in Uncle Sam’s Army, so far I’d heard nothing but upbeat from every officer, NCO and soldier I’d met. These guys, it seemed, really liked the Army and their units and, from my observations, were bloody good at what they did.

After quick visits with the 268th Assault Helicopter Battalion (from the Division’s Air Cav Brigade) and the 99th Forward Support Battalion, I linked up with Lieutenant Colonel Greg Camp’s 2-1 Infantry, where I spent most of the remainder of my visit.

At that time 2-1 was undergoing TOW Table V, a culmination of TOW crew training similar to the tank gunnery qualification course, this after recently coming off of an intensive six-day exercise evaluation run by 3rd Brigade in which the battalion was, in effect, run through wartime missions — mostly at night — for a straight 144 hours. Lieutenant Colonel Camp and his troops were proud of what they had accomplished and learned about themselves during those nearly sleepless six days, as was their boss, Col. Adams.

I followed 2-1 three-man TOW crews through Table V as they engaged nine targets from six firing points. It was all MILES, and MILES was not infallible. Crews were dead certain of some hits, yet targets failed to respond and controllers recorded misses. After some extensive testing and troubleshooting (which included simply wiping Yakima dust off target sensors), the hit ratio rose, as did gunners’ morale.

We eventually shifted over to the TOW live-fire range, where five lucky gunners would have a chance to send a practice (non-warhead) TOW downrange. Because of cost restrictions, TOW gunners, I was told, were lucky to fire one practice TOW a year, if that. The two I watched fire were two direct-center hits; the gunners’ excitement was probably exceeded by LTC Camp’s, although everyone kept that typical Army low-key attitude when something really good happens.

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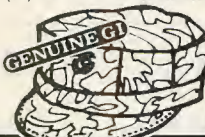
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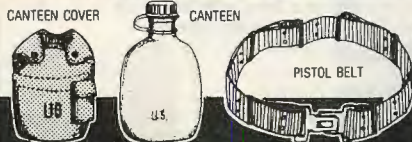
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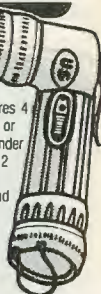


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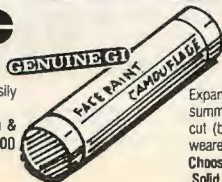
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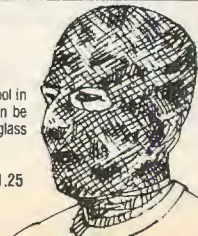
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As I'd done throughout my stay, I spent hours talking with anyone who would talk back. Results were the same: a little bitching here and there (something would really be wrong if I hadn't heard any of that), but upbeat and, to borrow from the Marines, as gung ho as any line units I'd ever seen.

In the evenings, LTC Camp and I had some long chats about what the Army was like back in the Vietnam era (we'd both pulled our tours at roughly the same time) and what it was now. "Night and day," he said. "Troops are more intelligent, they're coming in for different reasons; and if you look after them, let them know what the mission is and give them the leeway to carry it out, they'll give you 100 percent — and more." I hoped the Army had a lot of battalion COs like that one.

I checked out with Col. Adams on my last morning with 3rd Brigade. Yakima's ever-present, bone-chilling wind cut through me as we stood near a battalion after-action review, and he asked if I had found the answer to my questions of the first day we'd met: "Could his troops fight — and win — on the battlefield?"

Based upon my four years of combat and 10-plus in the military, I believe my answer had a good foundation: "Yes, colonel," I told him. "I think they can."

Special thanks to 1LT R.C. Brewer, 9th ID (Mtz) Public Affairs, for his help — and patience — in compiling this article. ✕

PRC PISTOLS

Continued from page 61

and clear the pistol. Set the safety lever to "fire." Pull down on the front of the trigger guard and press to the side. Pull the slide fully rearward and lift the rear end off the frame. Ease the slide forward and off the barrel. Separate the recoil spring from the barrel. To remove the one-piece red plastic grip assembly, just unscrew the single retaining screw on the backstrap and slide the grip rearward. No further disassembly is usually required. Reassemble in the reverse order. Install the recoil spring with the smaller diameter end toward the chamber.

Handling characteristics are about what one would expect for a large "pocket" pistol. As pistols go down in size, so, most often and unfortunately, do their sights. A fixed blade front sight and open square-notch rear (adjustable for windage zero only by drifting in its dovetail slot on the slide) are no more than adequate for the close-range capabilities of this pistol. A checkered and slightly raised rib between the sights serves no practical purpose.

Grip-to-frame angle is ergonomically correct and does not impede target acquisition. The frame is large enough to accommodate a normal-sized hand. Perceived recoil is hardly a consideration when we drop to these energy levels. At 7 meters or less, both hit probability and accuracy potential match those of other pistols in this

class. In stopping power this cartridge should fall somewhere between the .380 ACP and the 9mm Parabellum, although performance is diminished by its Full Metal Jacket projectile. Reliability is high. If cleaned and maintained properly, there will be no stoppages attributable to the pistol.

PRC Type 64 Pistol

Even in an army without recognized rank, someone must lead the charge up the hill. As cavalry sabers are no longer in vogue, pistols will suffice to identify those in control. If they serve no other function, then the smaller they are, the better. Could there be any other reason for the PLA's adoption in 1964 of the Type 64 pistol and its truly pipsqueak 7.62x17mm cartridge? I can't think of any.

The Type 64 pistol is a plain and simple copy of the Walther PPK. It should not be confused with the more well-known Type 64 suppressed pistol, which, although chambered for the same cartridge, can be fired single shot from a locked breech or semiautomatic by unlocked blowback. Manufactured at arsenal Number 66 in Mukden, Manchuria, with the exception of the magazine, springs, plastic grip panels and some internal parts, the Type 64's components are all fabricated from milled forgings. All the steel parts have been salt blued.

Blowback-operated with a double-action trigger mechanism, the Type 64 pistol is 6.2 inches in overall length, with a total height of 4.12 inches and a maximum thickness of only 1 inch. The 3.46-inch pinned barrel has a chrome-plated bore and chamber with four grooves and a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches. Total weight, empty, is 19.68 ounces.

In addition to the caliber and dimensions, there are a few differences between the Type 64 and the Walther PPK. The slide-stop/ejector, although identical in operation, has a different configuration. The Type 64's hammer is not ringed. The trigger mechanism has been somewhat simplified. The Type 64's red plastic grip panels are more rounded at the heel and embellished with a Chinese character (signifying 1 August 1927 — birthdate of the PLA) inside a five-pointed star and a scroll pattern at the bottom. The slide-mounted manual safety's "fire" and "safe" positions are those of the Type 59 (Makarov). There is no loaded-chamber indicator.

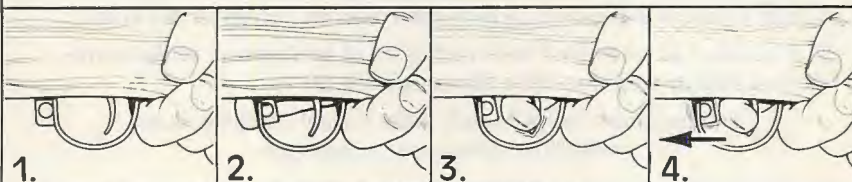
The fixed-blade front sight and open square-notch rear sight (adjustable for windage zero only by drifting in its slotted dovetail on the slide) are of the conventional type. The sight radius is 4.7 inches.

Trigger pull weights range from 3 to 6 pounds in single-action to about 14 pounds in double-action. Trigger movement prior to hammer release is 0.24 inches in single-action and twice that in double-action.

There is nothing imaginative about the Type 64 pistol, with one exception. The chamber is fluted with four helical grooves of the same twist as the bore. Why? Certainly not to ease extraction, as is the intent of the longitudinal flutes in the chambers of the

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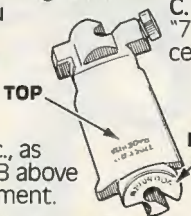
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Heckler & Koch series of weapons. Operating within a modest chamber pressure range of 17,000 to 20,000 pounds per square inch (psi), the 7.62x17mm cartridge is nevertheless almost 150 fps faster out of the muzzle than the .32 ACP round. Furthermore, the Type 64's slide has slightly less mass than that of the Walther PPK. Together, this is just enough to cause premature blowback. When the case expands into the chamber's helical flutes, the increase in the coefficient of friction is enough to retard extraction until pressures have dropped to a safe level. A clever solution which requires no increase in the pistol's weight.

By anyone's standards this cartridge has to be marginal for self-defense. Unless placed between the eyes, it may only serve to infuriate your opponent. Hit probability and accuracy potential with the Type 64 are both acceptable at the close ranges for which this pistol was designed. Perceived recoil and muzzle whip are, again, of little consequence. Rugged and dependable, there were no stoppages of any kind throughout the course of SOF's test and evaluation. All in all, rather humdrum, but the PRC's most recent handgun proved to be a more intriguing affair.

PRC Type 77 Pistol

In 1977 the PLA adopted another lilliputian sidearm in caliber 7.62x17mm, although the design was not finalized until 1978 and the final tooling study did not end until 1981. Currently in series production, the Type 77 pistol weighs only 17.6 ounces, empty, and has a total length of 5.9 inches. At seven rounds, the magazine capacity is identical to the Type 64. Type 77 magazines appear to be scaled-down versions of the Czech Vz 52 magazine. Method of operation remains unlocked blowback. The majority of the components are salt blued, milled steel forgings. The one-piece wrap-around black plastic grips are marked with a single five-pointed star in a circle on each side. There is decorative scrollwork molded into the bottom of the grips, which are retained by a single screw. A small lanyard ring has been attached to the heel of the frame.

The pinned barrel is also a duplicate of the Type 64's: 3.46 inches in length, chrome-plated chamber and bore, four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.6 inches. The four helical chamber flutes remain as well.

The magazine catch-release is located on the left side of the frame behind the trigger. Although the fixed-blade front sight has a forward taper, the open square-notch rear sight is that of the Type 64.

However, at this point the similarities end. Type 77 pistols are hammerless. A projection on the firing pin engages the sear directly. Pulling the trigger drops the sear, which releases the spring-loaded firing pin to strike the primer. Trigger pull weight on the test specimen was 6 pounds. The manual safety, mounted on the left side of the frame, blocks the sear and also serves as a disassembly lever (after the lever has been

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rotated downward, the disassembly procedures follow those of the Types 59/64). The ejector is permanently attached to the left side of the frame. There is no slide stop or hold-open device.

The Type 77's most unique feature is the two-piece trigger guard, the upper portion of which can be used to retract the slide and charge the pistol. When the trigger finger is placed on the outside of the trigger guard and pressed rearward, the trigger guard engages a spring-loaded hook on the slide. This pushes the slide back to open the breech and cock the firing mechanism. As the slide reaches the end of its rearward travel, the hook hits a lug on the frame (directly under the barrel), separating the slide from the trigger guard, freeing it to fly forward, propelled by its recoil spring, and chamber a round.

We must go back more than 80 years to find the origins of this concept. One-hand cocking and loading was first used in the prototype White-Merrill pistol entered in the U.S. trials of 1907. It is practical, however, only if the caliber is small and the recoil spring is thus easily compressed. It was adapted in 1913 by a Swiss, Chylewski, for a caliber 6.35mm (.25 ACP) pocket pistol. Marketed initially by Bergmann, it was placed into series production in Germany during the 1920s as the *Lignose Einhand*.

Very little remains to be invented when it comes to firearms. Modern small arms, from the Galil rifle to the FN Minimi (M249 SAW), are usually the more or less successful combination of previous designs.

There were no stoppages of any kind during SOF's test and evaluation of the diminutive Type 77 pistol. Accurate and reliable, it's every bit as well executed as the other weapons SOF tested at the PLA Small Arms Research Institute. Lightweight, compact and very concealable, the Type 77 should find great favor with the high-ranking officers and Public Security personnel for whom it was obviously designed. As for me, I'll continue to pack a .45. ☒

200TH MISSION

Continued from page 71

Karl's wingman had seen the chute! Air rescue was alerted and sent in the "Jolly Green Giants" to pick him up. Everyone was glued to the loudspeakers. It was a routine mission. I think Karl had bailed out once before and had been picked up safely. Many pilots had found themselves in that situation. The air rescue teams were excellent. These guys were the cream of the crop, dedicated to saving each and every pilot. General McGoff, the base OPS officer, was very concerned and followed the search mission minute by minute. We all stood and waited for the report. There was silence — then a voice shattered the silence — Karl had been picked up . . . but he was dead!

His parachute had landed in a tree in such a way that Karl's neck had been broken. He

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never finished the tour. His trip home to his family in the Midwest was in an aluminum casket, a reusable casket that carried corpses back to the States with a stop in a hangar at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. Later, I heard that the Air Force Academy had named a hall after Karl — Richter Lounge, they call it. I think of him every once in a while, especially when I see a movie on Vietnam.

Karl was a great, all-American kid, a superb pilot and a very brave soldier. He would have been a general by now, no doubt about it. Maybe even an astronaut. He could have been on the *Challenger*. Who knows? ✕

PRESS IN AFGHANISTAN

Continued from page 27

vision network news researcher asking him if he would help with a documentary special on mujahideen involvement in the international narcotics business. The wary journalist asked what documentary evidence the network had so far and was told that the *pièce de résistance* was a photograph of a chunk of hashish with something like "Alliance of Afghan Mujahideen" stamped in English on the top. The journalist asked if the network had considered the possibility that the evidence might be a piece of KGB

disinformation. "Why," he asked, "would the mujahideen stamp their name in English on a block of hashish, photograph it and then send the picture to an American television network news department?" To their credit, the network ended up dropping the "story."

The *Washington Post* once had a bad reputation as far as Afghanistan was concerned. It was said, rightly or wrongly, that Karen de Young, who held a key position in the *Post's* foreign news department, actively discouraged coverage of the war, spiking every Afghanistan story that came in. The *Post's* New Delhi bureau chief at that time also had an "anti-Afghan" reputation: Not only did he never go into the war zone during his tenure in Delhi (his journalistic responsibilities included India, Pakistan and Afghanistan), he also refused to cooperate with freelancers passing through Delhi on their way to Afghanistan. "Afghanistan is my turf," he shouted at one amazed stringer, "and anytime Karen de Young tells me to go up into those refugee camps, I'll go!" Of course you can't cover a war in Afghanistan by going to refugee camps in Pakistan and, according to Afghan refugee sources in Pakistan, whenever the *Post* bureau chief did visit the Afghan exile community there, he was so antagonistic and openly hostile that no one trusted his objectivity.

[*Editor's Note: The Post's Karen de Young was a major player in that paper's*

foreign coverage until her transfer to London in 1985. De Young made her reputation reporting from Nicaragua (pro-Sandinista) and the Caribbean. Documents recovered by Soldier of Fortune Magazine when Grenada was liberated revealed that de Young had on at least one occasion acted as a courier delivering a document from an "intelligence source" in the United States to the communist leader of Grenada, Maurice Bishop (see "The Grenada Papers," SOF, February '84). Since de Young's departure to London and Jim Rupert's assignment as the Post's man in Delhi, the coverage has improved tremendously.]

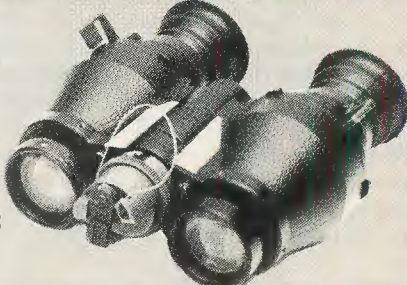
This reporter interviewed the survivors of a series of massacres carried out by Soviet troops in the Laghman Valley in 1985. The massacres were far, far worse than My Lai or Sabra and Shattila or any of the recent atrocities reported out of Central America. At least a thousand civilians were killed in cold blood. Hundreds of children, the youngest a two-day-old baby boy, were burned alive. Pregnant women were stabbed to death, young girls hung upside down and bayoneted. Worst of all, the massacres were obviously carefully and deliberately planned in advance. Eight to 10 thousand Soviet troops, armed with everything from BM-41 rocket launchers to artillery and backed by 800 armored vehicles and crack airborne units, were involved in the operation; the killing went on for eight days, in several different villages. This was, quite



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simply, an operation in the nightmare tradition of the Holocaust: subhuman crimes carried out boldly, efficiently, mechanically.

The author brought his video and audio tapes and transcripts documenting the Laghman horrors back to the United States. He was sure that the story would make the headlines and the network news, that it would blast away the indifference most people seemed to feel toward Afghanistan. He took the videotaped interviews with massacre survivors to NBC; they promptly lost the tapes (the tapes were never found). He sent written transcripts of the interviews to *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times* and *The New York Times*. Days went by, and no one acknowledged receiving the transcripts. He phoned the editors he'd sent the transcripts to; secretaries took messages, editors promised to call back when they had the time, but nothing happened, nobody cared.

Finally, two weeks after his return to the States, the author managed to get onto National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" for 15 minutes to talk about what happened in Laghman. It took another two weeks for the interview transcripts to appear in print, in Denver's *Rocky Mountain News*. A few days after that, the Scripps-Howard syndication network picked up the story and ran it coast-to-coast, in dozens of small- and medium-sized newspapers. But the big-time media, the "important" newspapers and the television networks, never

did cover the story. For them, the burned children, the grieving parents, the dead women, none of them existed: The Laghman massacres never really happened at all.

"Why?" the author asked himself over and over again. "If a dozen blacks are gunned down in South Africa, that makes the news, and rightly so. If Central American peasants die, or Ethiopians, Ugandans, Lebanese, that makes the news. If a bus tumbles into a river in Zanzibar and 14 passengers are eaten by crocodiles, everyone knows about it the next day. Then why, how, can over a thousand innocent Afghans die, die horribly, in terror and agony, and die virtually unknown, unmourned, as if they were never really there at all?" The author still asks himself the same question, and he still hasn't come up with a satisfactory answer.

Something is obviously wrong: too many radical chic, politically biased people in the media; too many just-plain-incompetent reporters who barely know where Afghanistan is, let alone what it means; too many pack journalists who follow the same stories around the world like lemmings; too many vaporheads who so desperately want to believe in *glasnost* and the "New Russia" that they turn their backs on the slaughter in Afghanistan and do nothing to stop it. . . . And in the shadows, a few KGB ghostwriters, whispering lies, planting rumors, erasing history and manufacturing ignorance to take its place, making the guilty seem inno-





cent, the innocent guilty. . . . Dirty business, while an innocent nation bleeds to death in the darkness, without a sound. ☒

AMBUSH CORNER

Continued from page 55

high-frequency set and was even then laying out a dipole antenna in full view of the enemy on all sides. By the time I reached him he was already establishing contact with battalion headquarters in Salalah. I wrote a "flash" signal asking for immediate air support and ran back to the sergeant major's position, which by then was in the middle of the rear defensive position. The corporal in charge was directing covering fire for what he hoped was the leading platoon's attack and, on seeing me, shouted: "Left blanket or right blanket, *sahib*?"

It took me some time to recognize that he was anxious to know whether it was to be a left-flanking or right-flanking attack that he was to support. One of his Bren gunners stood on the crest and continued to fire the gun from the hip, again in full view of the enemy. This attracted much return machine-gun fire, but the Baluchi soldier insisted on flicking his fingers for replacement magazines until he had to be stopped. Although it was probably demoralizing for the enemy to be treated with such disdain, it was actually a waste of precious ammuni-

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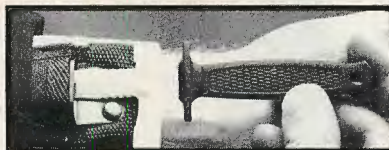
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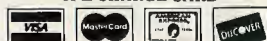
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tion. Another of the soldiers, a young man shortly out of training, lay beside his empty rifle with his forearm in the air. This was the signal on the training ranges that he had expended one magazine and was awaiting orders to "change magazines." He received the order and continued to engage the enemy. Such was the state of the art of the Omani army in those days. An increasingly sophisticated enemy with Kalashnikovs, foreign training, 61mm mortars and on ground of their own choosing was attacking an army that could boast of little except immense reserves of enthusiasm and courage.

Within 11 minutes, a single piston-engined Provost aircraft appeared above, demanding a target over the Sea, Air Rescue Beacon (SARBE) set that we used for air-to-ground communications. Conversations were conducted over the emergency bleeping! Time was short if we were to hit the enemy. I had received no orders from the company commander; indeed, I had no idea of where he was or what he was doing, but assumed from the lie of the ground in front of me and a vague idea of some of the enemy positions that he would be attacking in a certain direction. Identifying myself by waving a red-spotted pocket handkerchief, the following conversation took place:

"Top cover, this is Sand Hat. I'm standing by a four-tonner and waving a red handkerchief. Line of my arm. Two fifty yards. Enemy position. Rockets please. Beware of advancing own troops, over."

"Top cover, Roger out."

This method of forward air controlling was conducted for 10 minutes or so, by which time the aircraft had almost expended its load of one 250-pound fragmentation bomb, rockets and machine-gun ammunition. The last dive had to be aborted while the aircraft was in the final stage of a machine-gunning run. I had spotted the sand-colored *shamarghs* (a form of Arab headdress) of the DR arriving on the enemy position. Luckily the pilot pulled up and out in time.

As the enemy was pushed back into the scrub, which fell away into the wadi bottoms of near jungle, the battle faded to a halt. For 45 minutes there had been nonstop fire from all directions and varying ranges by both sides. I lit a cigarette (I didn't normally smoke, but there was no beer in my Land Rover) and ordered the regrouping. The company commander joined me from the right flank and sent orders for the sergeant major to join him for a discussion of the ammunition and casualty reports. I told him the sad news.

Ignoring the risk of further attacks, it was decided to send one Land Rover ahead before dark with the four wounded to the rough airstrip at Ravens Roost. The enemy had never attacked twice in one day before, and any delay might have been even more perilous for the casualties.

After the company commander had left, ammunition was redistributed, new orders were issued and, after allowing the wounded to get well clear, we set off with the

ANOTHER PEACETIME CASUALTY.

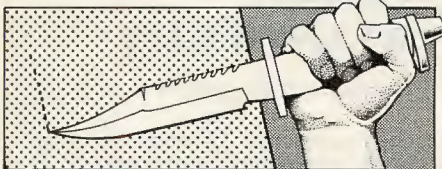
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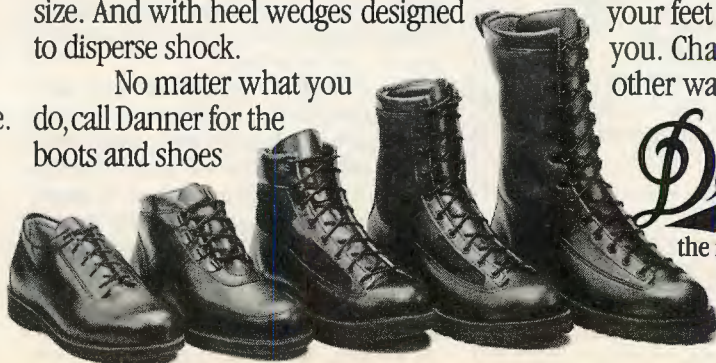
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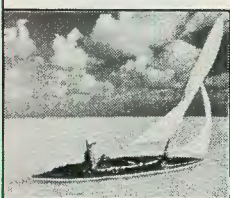
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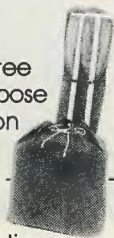
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pickets rebriefed on the likelihood of enemy positions. The refueled and armed Provost flew top cover, outside small-arms range. I was now traveling in the back of the four-tonner with the assaulting troops in our revamped antiambush drills. After only two miles of rough track we came under fierce fire from the right. The driver of the vehicle I was in was killed instantly and we debussed straight into an assaulting posture, with bayonets fixed. The enemy ran off into the scrub and was chased by the provost, dropping everything as he went; this time without guidance from me and my red handkerchief!

Realizing that this was the way to get to grips with the enemy, we embussed and continued, believing that they would probably not attack us if we were on foot. We kept a strong element of guides and patrols scouting out to the front and flanks. Sure enough, at dusk and almost immediately after the aircraft had left us (having completed a total of 12 air strikes), we were again attacked: this time from the left. The leading vehicle was hit several times but without casualties. We engaged the enemy instantly with two-inch mortars. We used this weapon as a superb antiambush reply. What it lacked in accuracy it made up for with morale-sapping explosions in the general area seconds after the springing of an ambush.

As it was then dark, we continued the rest of our journey on foot, reconning likely enemy positions by fire. We were anxious not to have to fight a full-scale battle again, as ammunition was quite low. Suddenly, in a long, low line of bushes ahead, a white light blinked from the center of the Bren gun's beaten zone. The Morse message was unmistakably English. We ceased firing and the company commander's distinctive voice demanded to know what all the fuss was about. I went forward and told him of the two later ambushes. It was clear that he had been allowed to pass through the killing grounds by the wily enemy who were waiting for the bigger target. We reached Ambush Corner with one further shooting incident not worthy of the accolade "ambush" after a tiring, trying, but satisfying 24-mile journey.

We had suffered two dead and only four wounded; remarkably light losses considering the weight of enemy fire and the reported fact that they had just taken on 120mm mortars. It spoke volumes for the fieldcraft and determination of the young Omani and Baluchi soldiers. We were immensely proud of them.

The following morning I took the dead down to Salalah and debriefed the battalion command team. Reports were already coming in confirming what we feared. The first ambush had been laid by between 40 and 60 enemy and the second and third by 15 to 20 each. This made a total of anything between 70 and 100 enemy prepared to take on a company-strength patrol in an advance-to-contact role. This was unusual and frightening enough, but the last piece of news was

astounding: The enemy had lost six dead and 10 wounded, with the expectation that this was only half the figure. Among the dead were Chinese. We knew then that the war would never be the same again. Something had taken place that was altogether different and more sinister.

From this day on, the SAF faced a new threat which brought its internal battle into international eyes, not only for the fact that foreign nationals were actively involved, but because the communists were prepared to back openly the intended revolution of this most crucial of Gulf nations.

I returned to Ibri with my company in order to prepare for our tour at Ambush Corner, but my sojourn back in the north was short-lived, as amoebic hepatitis had taken its toll as surely as enemy action. I was destined to spend the next nine months in hospital. For a brief period I thought I was better and attempted to take over my command again, but a relapse finally convinced me that the doctors were correct. I was evacuated to England. I have never returned. ✕

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 18

enemy presence. These can be as obvious as footprints and debris or as subtle as muddied portions of a clear stream and bent or broken vegetation. Then, as you and your men patrol an area, be conscious of any signs you might inadvertently leave behind which could mark your presence.

Tactical movement goes hand-in-hand with observation and concealment, too. Therefore, keep all movements slow and measured so as not to catch the eye of the casual observer, but fast enough to cover the necessary ground for a tactical situation. Look ahead of you while moving from one point of cover to another so that you can initiate fire to react to enemy fire at any time. While on the move, it's a good idea to continually ask yourself, "If I come under fire, where will I go and what will I do when I get there?"

Finally, range estimation is the complement to tactical movement, since once you've spotted a target, if you misjudge the range, even good shot production will result in a miss.

A good rule of thumb when studying fieldcraft is that the ultimate goal is to see without being seen and to kill without being killed.

Physical Fitness — This is the last but not the least important of the three core skills. A reliable minimum fitness standard for soldiering is to be able to move five kilometers over hilly terrain, attack a position with 300 meters of fire and movement followed by a 100-

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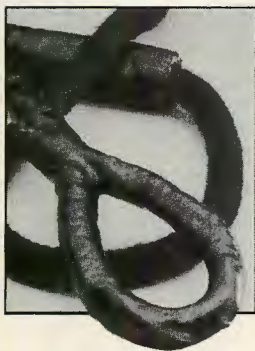


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meter assault, then repel a counterattack — all while wearing a full 30-pound pack, rifle and web gear. This kind of exercise is likely to leave you sucking-for-air-heart-pounding dizzy, cotton mouthed and thinking of another line of work. Proper soldiering makes the most rigorous football practice seem like a picnic.

Now for the bad news: The best way to get into shape for humping the bush is simply to hump the bush, fully equipped, in all kinds of weather. There's just no alternative. Bicycle riding, swimming, aerobics, weight lifting and so on have limited value because they don't prepare you for carrying a load over varied terrain. So take a tip from the French Foreign Legionnaires, who are famous for their daily 10-mile forced marches. Put on your pack and walk with it, day and night, rain or shine, as often and for as long as you can. A firefight is no time to get into shape. You have to be fit before combat operations or you'll be a liability to the mission, your buddies and yourself.

A soldier can't afford to be deficient in any of these three core skills. A balance of all three is required. Think of them as the three legs of a stool — cut off one of them and you fall flat on your ass; the other two can never make up the difference. This is what happened to Moe, Larry and Curly in combat. It is precisely these core skills that separate the stooges from the real soldiers. ☒

FOUR AFGHAN BATTLES

Continued from page 37

placed. To further reduce the chance of support reaching Kalafghan, the night before the assault the road between the Soviet fire base and Kalafghan had been heavily mined. Massoud positioned an ambush force along the road to wait for a possible relief column.

As soon as night fell, the resistance started policing up the battlefield. Massoud called up 25 trucks he had held in readiness to pull his forces, the prisoners and all the captured weapons and supplies out before dawn. The last truck to leave saw six Soviet helicopters approach, but they did not attack.

The Soviets did not return to Kalafghan until two or three days later. A mixed force of Soviet and DRA troops assembled at the Soviet fire base. Moving along the road to Kalafghan, they found Massoud's land mines and the stay-behind ambush force. Finally, fighting their way through, the Soviets arrived at a totally destroyed and stripped Kalafghan. They did not try to re-establish the post but headed back to the fire base and into another ambush. Because it

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was the Soviet part of the column that was ambushed each time, there was much Soviet suspicion that DRA forces had been cooperating with the resistance.

Meanwhile, the division of the spoils from Kalafghan had been predetermined to avoid bickering. Massoud made sure all the local groups received some captured weapons as proof that cooperation does pay off. The local *Hezb-i-Islami* (Hekmatyar) commander, however, had proven uncooperative throughout the campaign and some of Massoud's forces had to be detailed to watch him. Throughout 1987, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces in the north had proven a decided exception to the overall improved cooperation between resistance groups. They had mounted a campaign against Massoud's efforts, including hijacking convoys of medical supplies and kidnapping French doctors working with Massoud.

Kalafghan showed that, in the winter of 1987-88, battlefield initiative had passed to the resistance. The new SAMs have given them the opportunity for effective offensive action. It remains to be seen whether the resistance will be able to take advantage of it. Taking DRA garrisons, especially those that have held out for years, could cause DRA morale to collapse, with whole units switching sides or deserting. Repeated highway interdiction campaigns or air-base attacks would bring home to the Soviets that

the cost of the war has risen and is going to stay high.

The time to do this is now. By September 1988 it will have probably become apparent whether Gorbachev is going to commit himself to the long haul or instead aim for a short-term solution that will include a Soviet withdrawal. If the Soviets are going to withdraw, it will require not just the resistance but the United States as well to demonstrate to the Soviets that the cost of leaving will be less than the cost of fighting.

The last battle of 1987, fought in the last weeks of December and the first weeks of January 1988, was one of the biggest of the war, but it did not indicate what the future of the war would be. The DRA garrison at Khost, which had been supplied primarily by air for years, was under attack by resistance forces. Unlike the attempt to take Khost in the summer of 1985, this time the resistance could use the Stingers to reduce the effect of Soviet airpower. The situation was apparently enough for the Soviets to put together a force of 20,000 troops, most of them Soviet, and commit them to fighting their way through to Khost. Unlike previous Soviet offensives, this one received extensive press coverage in Moscow while in progress.

The Khost fighting was intense. The last time the Soviets sent a relief column toward Khost, in 1985, it turned back due to heavy

losses. The Soviets, making extensive use of massed heavy artillery, managed to overcome the resistance mine fields and Stingers and, by early January, had managed to get some supplies, carried in armored personnel carriers rather than trucks, through to the garrison.

Those who believe that the Soviets are about to leave Afghanistan — a substantial number in Washington, but almost none of those actually doing the fighting — think that the well-publicized Khost fighting may be intended to allow the Soviet army to go out on a victory and to hopefully buy some more strength for the Afghan communists in the negotiations that might lead to a post-war government.

If, on the other hand, the Soviets are still in Afghanistan for the long haul, then Khost may be an attempt to reverse the lessons of the Jadji fighting of 1987, to show that the Soviet army can still go wherever it wants to go in Afghanistan. ✕

FIRESTORM

Continued from page 68

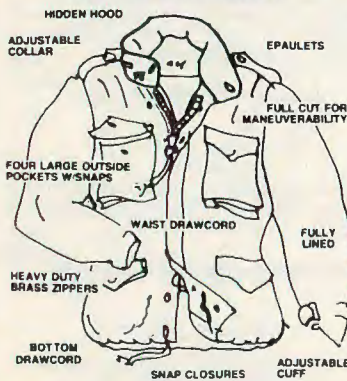
avoid accusations of writing a puff piece about what I honestly do regard as the very good work of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine's* technical editor, I have to ask where

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the crew chief said he was going to stuff the muzzle of Pete's weapon in the final scene, where all hands clamber aboard a chopper and ride off into the sunset.

Lots of smoke, fire, noise and sound instruction, pretty well presented and edited. An interesting and meaty presentation, it's a quantum leap above offerings of full-autoeroticism and "Debbie Does the Paris Arms Show" pap. Brief coverage of the theory of automatic fire and fire discipline might be inserted to balance (or replace!) a couple of leonine ambushes of an uninhabited, unarmed and uninteresting mudhole, however. Waterspray is no more germane to the real world than 50-round bursts, but I suspect this John Wayneing was the idea of some theatrical adviser and not the technical staff.

Faults, if any, are of flavor and not substance. Our overview of their overview is that "Firestorm" makes a well-balanced orientation film on automatic weapons, or a fun flick suitable for kids and mixed company — no individual viewing booths are necessary. I enjoyed it and recommend it.

Here's hoping they grind out a whole library.

"Firestorm" has a running time of 48 minutes and is available in VHS format only for \$69.95 plus \$3.00 shipping from Delta Group, Future Vision, PO Box 801, Tulsa, OK 74101. For VISA, MasterCard and American Express orders, call toll-free 1-800-433-3947. ✕

BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 12

Garang, who was sent in 1983 by the government to suppress the rebellion but took it over instead, spent nine years in the United States. He worked on farms in Iowa and Minnesota, has a bachelor of science degree from Grinnell College in Iowa and a doctorate in agricultural economics from Iowa State University, and went through the infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia.

This has convinced SOF that, if we can make contact, Garang is a guy who should be in the magazine.

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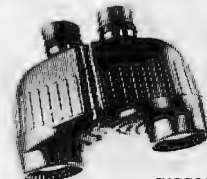
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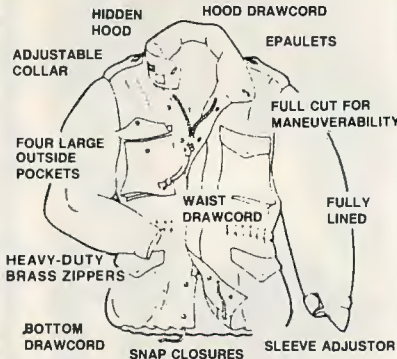
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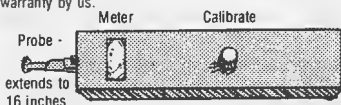
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PEACE WITH HONOR

Continued from page 39

the war has escalated in several directions. The introduction of Stingers and Blowpipe missiles has changed the tactical complexion of the war, and several major Soviet offensives have failed. The recent fighting in the Khost area near the Pakistan border illustrates this. Although the Soviets and their puppet government (now renamed Republic of Afghanistan instead of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) claim to have reopened the road from Gardez to Khost, I simply do not believe it. I have traveled the Gardez-Khost road several times in winter and know of the difficulties involved even without being fired on by mujahideen. The Soviets may have ramrodded a convoy or two through, but with information I have received from Peshawar, I doubt it.

In any event, I do not believe the Soviets have made their most recent peace offers from a position of strength but rather have taken the first step toward possible disengagement. The leadership wishes to prepare the world, especially their friends, allies and their own people, for a potential future withdrawal. The latest offers were published in *Pravda* in early January. *If*—and it is a big if—the upcoming Geneva Conference agrees on a peace treaty by 1 March 1988, the Soviets stated they would begin withdrawal of their troops on 1 May, providing the Americans (and others) cease sending weapons to the mujahideen.

And Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze has indicated that the interim government need not be dominated by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA, a local Communist Party). This is a major, and almost unbelievable, concession.

The Soviets will leave Afghanistan. I am still convinced of that. But I am also convinced that the process will take much longer than optimists predict. Shevardnadze said the troop withdrawal would possibly be achieved by the end of the year. However, too many complications lie ahead. The Soviets insist that those Afghans who supported them not be punished or harmed in any way; an impossible condition, for too much blood has been shed for the mujahideen to let bygones be bygones. (I recently told a Soviet scholar: "The solution to this problem is simple: Take your 10 friends and go!")

Another major obstacle is the monitoring process. Who will monitor the Soviet withdrawal and who will monitor the cessation of the arms flow to the Afghan resistance fighters? A few helicopters and a United Nations observation team will not be effective. A major military force, possibly from Islamic nations and sponsored by the United Nations, might be the answer, but which Islamic nations would want to be involved in such a can of worms?

Some in Washington want to cease sending weapons now as a signal to the Soviets

of our peaceful intentions. This, in my opinion, would be the wrong signal. We should follow the example of the Soviets in the Vietnam War. In 1968, when the Americans first sat down at the peace table in Paris, the Soviets escalated the war by increasing the supply of ground-to-air missiles to the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. American air losses increased correspondingly.

No matter what happens in the short term, the actual implementation of a peace treaty may take several years, as each side tests the commitments of the other. Therefore, those nations interested in a free Afghanistan should cooperate in the following:

- 1) Continue to send weapons in quantity and quality to the mujahideen as a signal that those concerned will support the guerrillas until a negotiated peace becomes a reality.

- 2) Support Pakistan with economic and military assistance. The Afghan issue can never be discussed without referring to Pakistan and its interests.

- 3) Continue humanitarian aid to the refugees, both internal and external.

- 4) Increase efforts to help design a political solution acceptable to most of the parties concerned.

But what will happen if Afghanistan is deserted by those who are now helping and the country does finally become a Soviet satellite? Quite possibly, if the Soviet Union is not back across the border into Soviet Central Asia by the year 2000, and given the current instability in the region, the Soviet Union could become the dominant foreign economic and political influence in South and Southwest Asia.

That would definitely not be in the interest of the United States and the Free World. ✕

HONORING THE PEACE

Continued from page 43

create a power vacuum that will provoke resistance groups to feud among themselves as they try to fill it.

Congress must insist that the United States maintain an interest in Afghanistan even after the Soviets leave. It is the same interest we have in Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Philippines and South Korea: to help create and secure freedom. The United States must continue aid and direction to help the Afghans evolve a modern democratic government.

Congress must insist that the United States not pressure the Pakistanis to sign any agreement, especially if that would mean further increase in the eight-month limit that the Pakistanis have already proposed.

Of these concerns, verification is all-important. The administration and Congress must be satisfied with verification in any agreement to which the United States is

to be guarantor—and the United States has already agreed to be a guarantor to any agreement that comes out of the Geneva talks. Congress must subject such an agreement, even though the Senate does not ratify it, to the same scrutiny it will apply to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty signed in December 1987. Provisions for any withdrawal and aid suspension will have an impact on the Afghanistan resistance far greater than any other party. The United States has no direct stake. To the Soviets it is a limited war. But to the Afghan resistance it is a matter of life or death.

The problems of verifying a Soviet pull-out make those of verifying the INF treaty pale in comparison. The Soviets are only going home, which is literally next door, and cross-border operations from the Soviet Union have been commonplace for years. There is the danger that both equipment and men could be left behind, with the Soviets claiming that they were really part of the DRA military. There is a need that any agreement be effective in preventing offensive operations and "protective reaction" strikes. If the Soviets use the eight or however many months they have to withdraw their troops to go on a massive offensive to clear out the resistance while they have had their Stingers and other arms aid cut off, the United States will have dealt the resistance a crucial, if not decisive, blow. Congress must insist that, if verification shows the Soviets are failing to carry out their end of the agreement, a surge in Stingers and other arms will be the response. The Soviets must be informed of this at the start of the process, which would make cheating less likely.

Washington is today much more optimistic than Peshawar. The Soviets obviously want to leave but still may want to win first. The idea that it is an endgame is possible but is still unproven. Moscow may still decide to settle in for the long haul or make only a partial withdrawal and partition Afghanistan along the lines of the Hindu Kush. The two key issues of a successor government and the timetable for a Soviet withdrawal have the potential to choke any 1988 development if the Soviets are not already convinced they really do want to get out.

The bottom line remains that any government acceptable in the long run to Moscow is unlikely to be acceptable to a majority of Afghans. If the Soviets really want to leave, they must accept that. They must also accept that the Afghans already control 80 percent of their own country and that if the Soviet army pulls out, the DRA military will probably disintegrate within one year. Unless there is an international peacekeeping force, the PDPA leadership will have to leave with the Soviets, even if the Peshawar leadership agrees to have them stay. Those inside Afghanistan will settle scores with them.

If the Soviet army leaves, all of Afghanistan will again belong to Afghans. But even if this happens, it will not be the end of Afghanistan's fight for freedom. ✕

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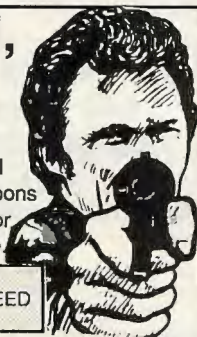
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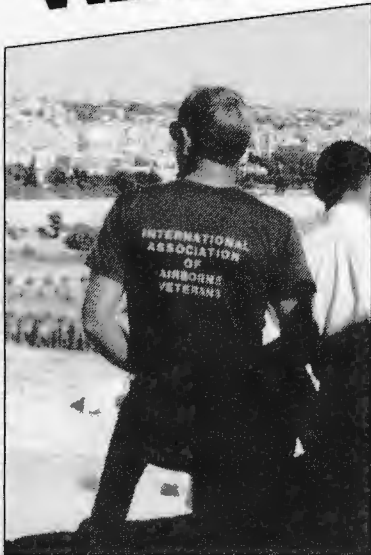


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