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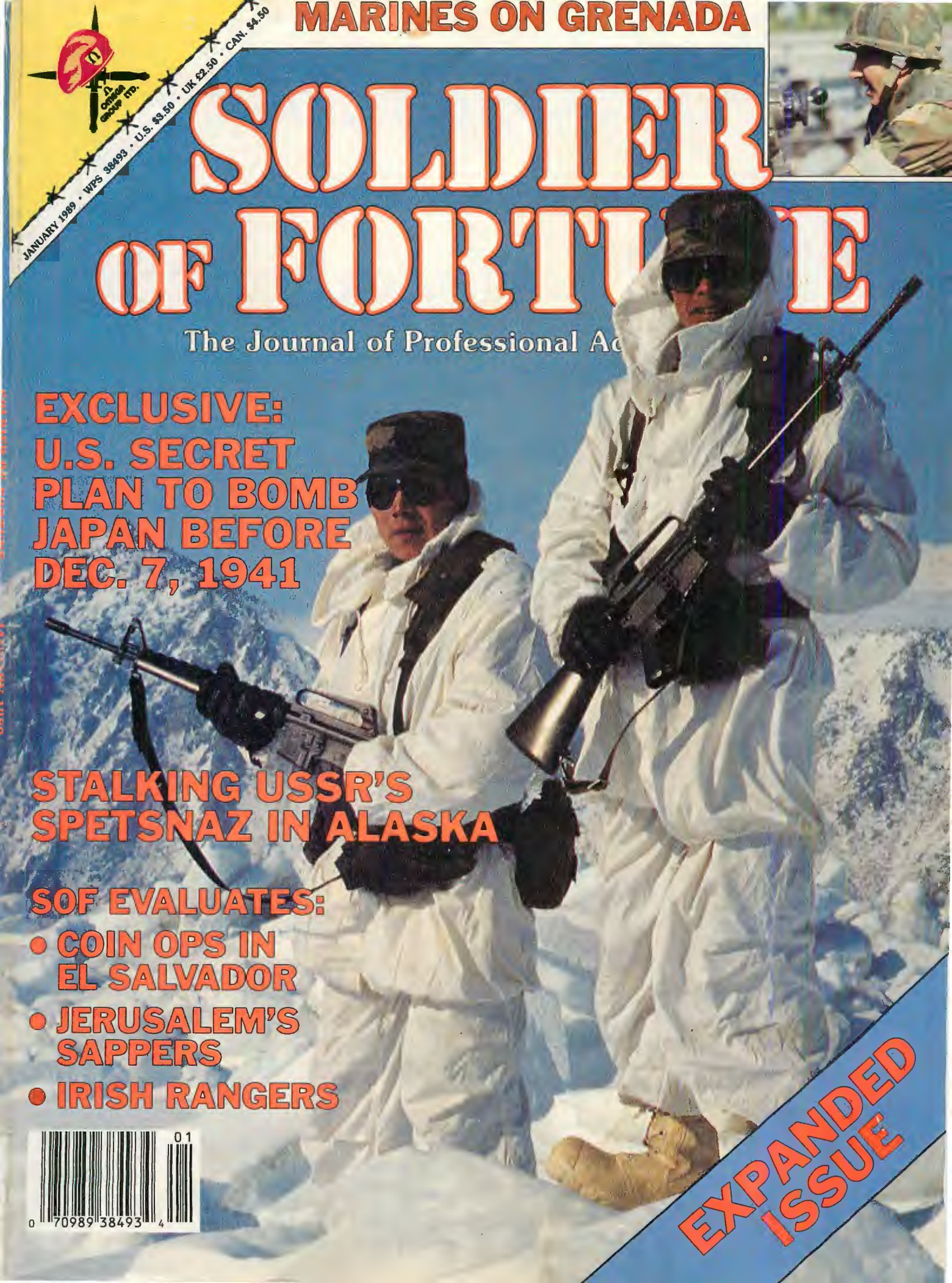
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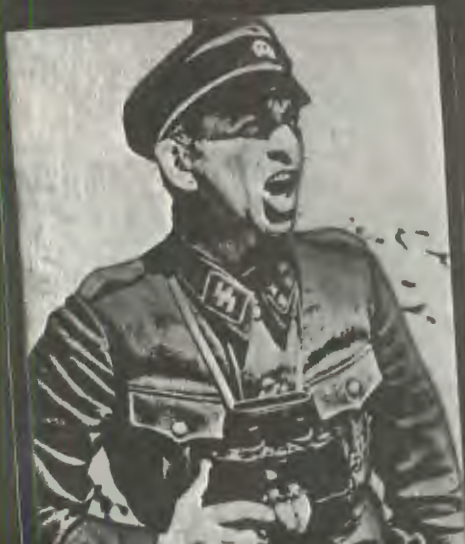


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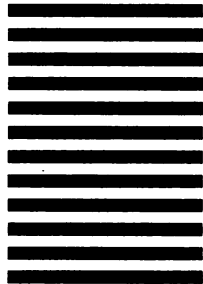
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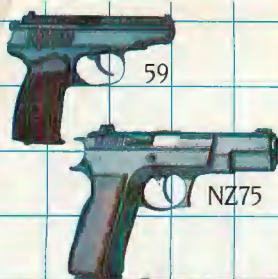
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LEATHERNECKS' URGENT FURY

Mark Adkin

Marine amphibious and heliborne assault took northern Grenada by storm. The final chapter in SOF's in-depth Grenada series **30**



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COVER

COVER: Eskimo Scouts from Little Diomedes, Alaska, pause on frozen sea ice in Bering Strait during patrol of U.S.-Soviet border. Blue cliffs of Big Diomedes, home to a contingent of Soviet military personnel, loom in the background just one mile away. SOF staffer Tom Bates joined the Scouts in Alaska's arctic periphery to investigate reports of Soviet Spetsnaz commando incursions into our last frontier. His SOF exclusive, "Red Rumors Rising," page 50, explores the tangled web of fact and fantasy regarding these alleged intrusions and reveals information that is sure to stir the pot in Washington and Moscow. Photo: Tom Bates
INSET: Marine manning jeep-mounted TOW during Operation Urgent Fury. Catch the final chapter in SOF's comprehensive Grenada series beginning on page 30. Photo: Compix/Alan Oxley



COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Thank You, Mr. President

ON 20 JANUARY 1989, President Ronald Reagan will stand down as commander-in-chief. How has his command fared in the eight years of his watch?

Without question, Reagan's greatest accomplishment as commander-in-chief was to restore respect for the armed forces and make the profession of arms an honorable and honored calling once again.

When Reagan took command, the armed forces were still feeling the effects of the Vietnam war — or more accurately, the anti-military sentiment whipped up by the war's opponents. In eight years he restored discipline, raised morale, raised pay and rearmed.

These accomplishments are supremely important, because no nation in history, no matter how advanced it supposedly was, has long denigrated its fighting men and survived to tell of it. When Reagan took office, denigrating its fighting men was precisely what America was doing. Reagan ended the rot.

There is more.

He has built up the Navy to within striking distance of a 600-ship fleet, provided the Air Force with planes far superior to anything the Soviets have been able to put in the air, and equipped the Army with the most advanced armor, attack helicopters, and rocket systems available.

Thanks to Reagan, America and her allies have at their disposal the most advanced arms in the world, and the implications of that have proved to be enormous.

Brave men fought the Soviet Union to a standstill in Afghanistan, but the thing that led the Soviets to conclude they had to withdraw was the introduction of U.S. Stinger missiles.

Terrorist states such as Libya and Iran discovered there were limits to what America would tolerate, and that when we chose to punish their aggression, there was precious little they could do about it.

From Lebanon to Angola, in battles large and small, the folly of challenging American arms with Soviet ones has been luridly demonstrated over the past eight years, repeatedly casting doubt on the value of the Soviet Union as a military patron.

If *these things* were lost on Reagan's critics, they were not lost on Mikhail Gorbachev. The Soviets embarked on *perestroika* (restructuring) not out of boredom with Socialism but out of a cold-eyed recognition that they could no longer compete militarily. By rearming, Reagan didn't just force the Soviet Union to end some foreign adventures; he forced it to begin restructuring its society. For a generation, we have had to settle for a policy of containing communism. Under Reagan the process of rolling it back has begun.

Thank you, Mr. President. And godspeed. ✕

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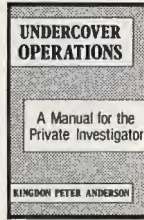
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by Peter R. Senich

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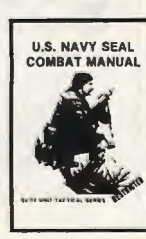
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Hayduke's Best Revenge Techniques for the Punks in Your Life
by George Hayduke
Hayduke is back and meaner than ever with this all-new bag of bully-busting tricks. Hundreds of ideas from readers who rallied to George's stirring cry ("Do unto others before they get unto you") fill this antic anthology that will amaze and amuse you. **Make My Day!** is intended for entertainment purposes only. 5½ x 8½, hardcover, 224 pp. **\$16.95**



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In an apparent setback to Colt Industries, Firearms Division, FN Manufacturing, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 104, Columbia, SC 29202) was awarded a \$112 million U.S. Government contract for the manufacture of 266,961 M16A2 rifles. Unit price of the rifles is \$420, which was \$57.50 lower than the Colt bid.

FNMI also received a contract to manufacture 30,106 M249 SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) units. The latest version of the M249 will include a heat shield over the barrel, folding barrel-removal handle, non-adjustable gas system with a nominal cyclic rate of 750 rpm, M16A2 muzzle device, and a hydraulic buffer housed within a solid plastic buttstock.

ANNIVERSARY FOR THE GRAND PRIX...

Good news. Lucy's Tiger Den may be no more, but we just received word that The Grand Prix on Patipong Road in Bangkok is alive and well and, what is more, has announced plans for a three-day gala celebration February 4, 5 and 6 to mark its 20th anniversary.

Founded and still operated by Rick Menard and F. Murray Boyle, it is the hangout for ex-spooks, Air America pilots, mercs, adventurers, and journalists, replacing Lucy's as the favorite watering hole for American expatriates. You get a full shot for your money and lots of LBFM's.

BULLETIN BOARD



Darn! Why can't I ever find the right ammo to go with my outfit? Photo: Christopher Springmann

SOF BANNED IN CABINDA...

Over the years we've taken shots at Chevron-Gulf oil operations in the small Angolan exclave of Cabinda, primarily because CG funds the Marxist Angolan government (and its Cuban mercenaries) in its fight against pro-Western UNITA forces led by Dr. Jonas Savimbi.

Well, we've finally gotten under CG's skin.

Among a host of items *not* allowed in-country: "No counter revolutionary material. Magazines such as *Soldiers of Fortune [sic]*, *The Independence Wars in Africa*, subversive literature, subversive videos."

It gives us that warm, fuzzy feeling to know that we've been singled out as "subversive" by the Marxist Angolans. We're obviously doing it right.

SOF STAFFER DOES IT AGAIN...

The December 1988 offering of the SOF Adventure Book Series published by Tor Books is SOF Staffer Alex McColl's MACCAT. It's based (more or less) on his adventures in 1968 in OP-35 of MACVSOG, and gets Major Charlie Hamilton, whom you met in his first book, VALLEY OF PERIL, into a whole new series of adventures.

PEACE CREEP GROUNDED...

The Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant, which is about 10 miles south of SOF's offices, attracts peace demonstrators the way Knotts Berry Farm attracts fruit flies.

Most of the time they content themselves with picketing, holding hands, and passing out flowers and propaganda, but occasionally they try to block the gates.

When that happens, the police arrest them, book them, and release them in an endless cycle reminiscent of George Bush's revolving door crime commercial during the presidential campaign.

Which is why we were particularly pleased to see that when protestor Catherine Hunziker managed to get herself arrested twice at the same demonstration — by returning to it and getting rearrested after being booked and released the first time — Jefferson County Judge Robert Morris came up with a punishment that uniquely fit the crime.

Morris sentenced Hunziker to wear an "electronic shackle," a monitoring device which keeps track of her whereabouts. If she strays further than a couple hundred feet from her house, a monitor attached to her telephone automatically notifies the police. She also is required to pay the costs associated with the monitoring device, which works out to about \$2,500.

Peace protestors have always had a lot in common with spoiled children, and it is hard to think of a more appropriate way of dealing with them than sending them to their rooms. Our only reservation is that cooping someone up with their kids for six months seems to verge on cruel and unusual punishment.

NOW YOU SEE IT NOW YOU DON'T...

By the time you read these words, the Air Force may have finally taken the wraps off the stealth fighter and given the taxpayers a look at exactly what they're getting for their defense dollars.

The service came within an inch of showing off the ship — whose existence has been rumored for years but never officially acknowledged — in early October, but at the last minute changed its mind, apparently in deference to a gentlemen's agreement between

Continued on page 8

COLD? REALLY! WHY?

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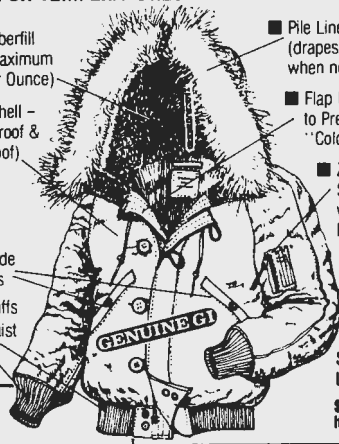
The US military wants its troops to keep warm in the winter in clothes that will last a bunch of winters. They know quality costs more.

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

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

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 DESIGNED FOR TEMPERATURES OF -10° TO 32° F.

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Choose: Black or Sage Green Outer Shell Color.
 Sizes: S, M, L and XL.
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USAF Flight Jacket.



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

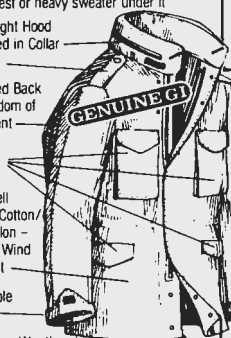
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Field Jacket - Type M65

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

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

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Watch Cap - 100% Wool -

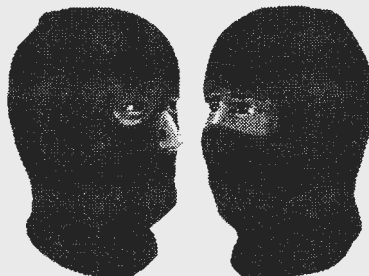
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- One Size Fits All
- Choose Color - Black or Olive Drab (OD) Green
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- Knit Face Mask**
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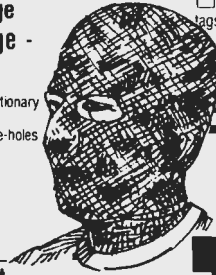


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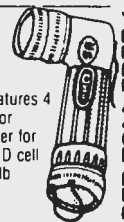


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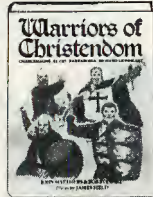
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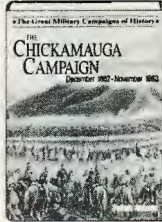
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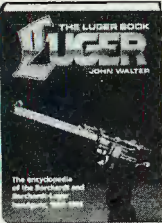
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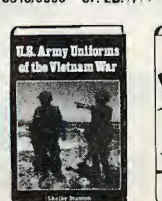
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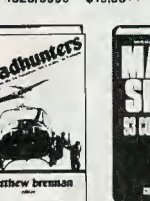
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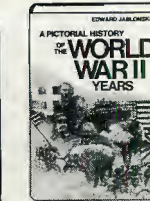
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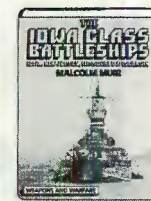
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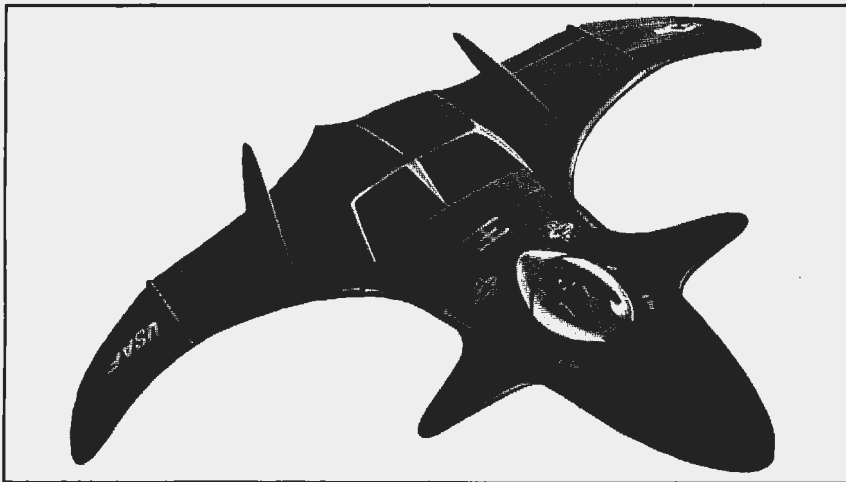
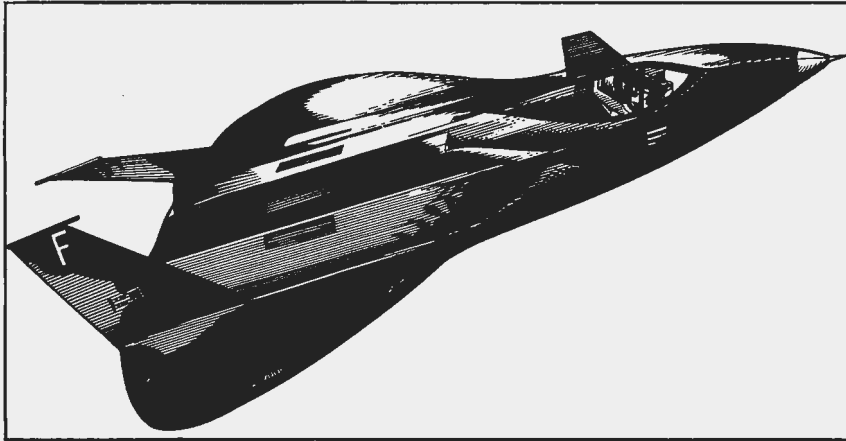
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After the Pentagon announced it would use 'disinformation' to protect 'black' projects, the Testors company brought out a model of the stealth fighter (top). Monogram model (bottom) which appeared this year is more angular and probably closer to what leaked reports say is reality. Then again...

Republicans and Democrats in Congress not to unveil any glitzy new weapons systems before the election.

Even so, a couple of tantalizing details seem to have slipped out, evidently because the Air Force circulated a draft press release about the plane prior to the non-announcement. The most interesting of these is that the configuration of the stealth fighter is "boxy and angular," rather than smooth and rounded as has been widely reported for years.

What makes this detail particularly intriguing is that five or six years ago Pentagon brass announced they were going to use disinformation — lie, to put it plainly — in order to protect the security of "black" defense projects. Nobody paid much attention to the announcement at the time, but about a year later a model company brought out a stealth fighter kit — featuring a smooth and rounded airframe.

Since the aircraft design in the Soviet Union consists largely of

plagiarizing the latest in U.S. fighters — witness the MiG 29 that looks like a cross between the F-15 and F-18 — we suspect this news will not be received well at the MiG and Sukhoi design bureaus. (Sorry, chaps, but they should have taught you in school that it's wrong to copy your neighbor's homework.)

Another detail that leaked is that the official designation of the stealth fighter is the F-117, not the F-19 as has also been reported for years. Which means that Air Force briefing officers were telling the truth all these years when they denied the existence of the F-19.

SOF was told earlier this year that the crews who fly the stealth fighter out of Nellis call it the 'Wobbly Goblin.' That might not be true either, but if it ain't it ought to be.

POLITICAL WAR GAMES...

Did last fall's debates between the presidential candidates leave you

underwhelmed? Israel's former defense minister Ariel Sharon — of all people — may have found a way to put a little zip into such proceedings.

During Israel's recent elections, a group calling itself the Israeli Council for Peace and Security, consisting of some 200 senior reserve officers including a clutch of generals, issued a statement asserting that Israel could withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza strip without unacceptable risks to its security.

Sharon, a former general who, among other things, led the Israeli thrust across the Suez Canal that ended the Yom Kippur War, violently disagrees with that contention, and he proposed a unique debate to settle the issue: A nationally televised war game in which the two sides could test each other's theories for a peace settlement in the Middle East.

After some hesitation, the Israeli Council for Peace and Security, turned down the challenge, but the concept intrigues us.

Imagine a similar contest to test the defense philosophies of Michael Dukakis and George Bush, instead of last fall's tedious debates.

War games, after all, both in the form of simulations and actual maneuvers, have long been accepted as legitimate means of testing new strategies and tactics. We think it would have been fascinating to see how the candidates' theories on defending Western Europe, for example, stood up to such a test — and, for that matter, how the candidates performed in the role of commander-in-chief.

It would certainly be more informative than watching Michael Dukakis parade around in a tank that was about four sizes too big for him.

HONOR ROLL...

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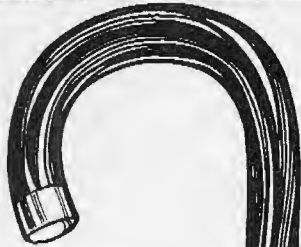
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Our heartfelt thanks go out to these people and the numerous other donors who requested their names not be printed. ✕

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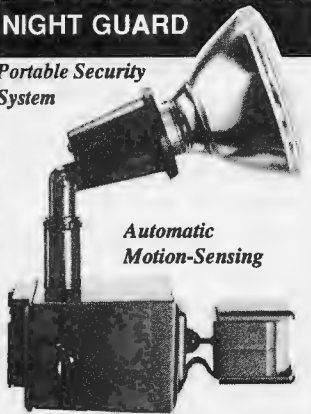


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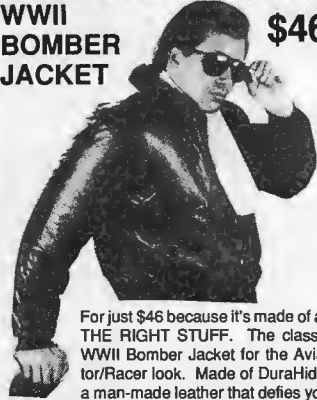


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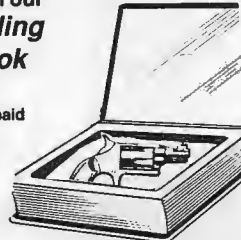
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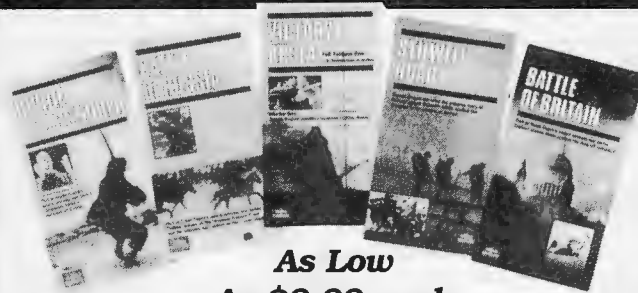
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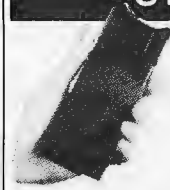
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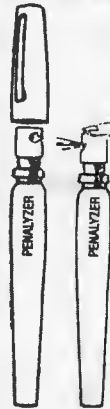


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SOVIETS AS SOURCES...

Sirs:

I am disgusted at how gullible the U.S. news media is. Today the evening news showed scenes from an Afghan mujahideen attack on a Soviet air base in Kabul. According to the "news reporter," nine people were killed. The press accepted a Soviet report that five of the dead were children. Now what would children be doing in a Soviet air force base, unless they are pilots? Which they may just be.

Alex Mendez
Calexico,
California

RANGER RANK WRONG...

Sirs:

Your story "Operation Urgent Fury" (SOF Nov. '88) by Mark Adkin was very informative.

On page 90 of the article, my brother Mark Rademacher is listed as a private. Mark, however, was a sergeant in the Rangers at this time. He was a proud American, and I'm sure he was honored to make the ultimate sacrifice. Could you print the correction?

Peter
Rademacher
Attica, New York

We took great care to get our facts straight on the Urgent Fury series, but inevitably, errors slip through. Consider the matter corrected and please accept our apology for the oversight.



FLAK

WHEN WE REALLY FELT ALIVE...

Sirs:

Wish to tell you that the Parting Shot in SOF November 1988 by R. B. Anderson was just great.

Anderson's comments about his service in Vietnam are exactly the same as I have of combat service in World War II and Korea. It was a time when we were really alive. You Vietnam vets have nothing to be ashamed of. They wouldn't let you fight to win. You are just as good as we who went into WW II and Korea and deserved better from our country.

Russell E. Jones (SFC Ret.)
Loogootee, Indiana



START CONSERVATIVE ACTIVISTS MOVEMENT?...

Sirs:

In your October 1988 issue you mentioned both General Dozier's candidacy for Congress and B. Dalton's decision to cease carrying SOF, and encouraged readers to support the former and oppose the later. I have, in fact, done both by sending a small contribution to General Dozier's campaign and writing a letter of complaint to B. Dalton's.

I want to thank you for bringing up these issues in SOF. Conservatives all too often feel that there is little they can do to change matters. While grumbling and cursing have a certain emotional satisfaction, it is far more useful to actually do something. We have to divorce the word "activist" from the left; a conservative activist movement has to be developed. A buck or two here, a few letters there, times the half-million SOF readers can make a difference. Please continue to provide the leadership you have shown over the years.

Bryan R. Johnson
Blacksburg, Virginia

AUSSIES WERE GOOD ALLIES...

Sirs:

It was with great pleasure that I saw your article on Australians in Vietnam ("Deadly Day for Diggers," SOF July 1988). It is rare to have the U.S. recognize its allies' efforts. As Lyndon Johnson said in 1962, "The Korean War was a 90 percent American effort and therefore all American." Thus when other people read the U.S. interpretation of world history, it tends to make them cautious, even wary, of so-called "allied" efforts. The lack of mention of one's allies, or at best as a footnote of history, tends to deter any future aid by friendly governments.

It is strange then that you ended a good article on a typically uneventful Aussie patrol in 'Nam by stating that it suffered several KIA and WIA, and then comparing the overall Australian effort to the U.S. debacle.

This requires a quantum leap in logic. It is also wrong. Unlike the U.S., Australian troops were not hamstrung by gutless politicians nor a hostile press at home. Although we used conscripts, they were closely selected so that only one in 20 of those in the set age group (20 to 24 years old) were sent. Their greater age than U.S. conscripts mitigated in favor of greater stability due to greater "life experience" per individual. Our army also had long-term experience in jungle warfare, having prior to Vietnam fought in Malaysia. In 'Nam we were given Phouc Tuy, and we held it.

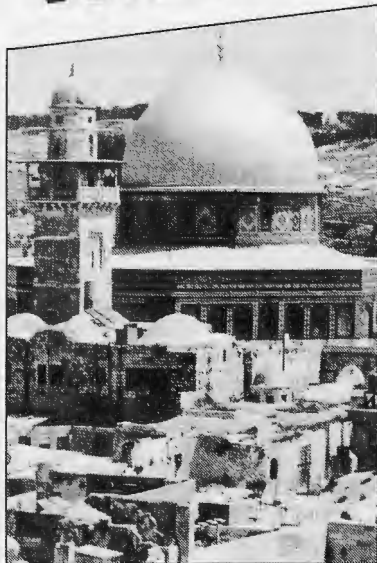
So please in the future try not to denigrate your "allies" just because their armies aren't as large or their buttons as shiny. They too can read.

Steve G. Purtil
Queensland, Australia

SOF did not read the author's comment about Australian effectiveness against the VC/NVA as denigrating. Daryl Henry, the author, is a Canadian who wrote for the Canadian and Australian press during the war. He was simply saying that SEATO troops had as difficult a time with the enemy as did American units. Incidentally, most American troops in Vietnam were not draftees, over 74 percent were volunteers.



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- An Israeli army military briefing on the Middle East situation.

- Banquets with army veterans and airborne staff.
- Official wreath-laying ceremonies at the Israeli Paratroopers Memorial.
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CHRISTIC TROUBLES...

Sirs:

Apparently the recent editorial in SOF was correct, payback really hurts. The legal expenses incurred by the Christic Institute in their lawsuit were apparently sufficient to cause them to close down their L.A. office. While this is a good thing, General Singlaub and his advisors must go on the offensive to prevent them from regrouping. If there is a defense fund in existence to raise funds for a lawsuit against the Christic Institute, please inform your readers.

Roy C. Hofschneider
Upland, California

Yes, there is a defense fund (Gen. John K. Singlaub Defense Fund, c/o Friends of John K. Singlaub, 801 Brickell Ave., Suite 1901, Miami, FL 33131). Those SOF readers who can't contribute funds can still strike a solid blow against the left by writing their congressmen and encouraging them to contact Representative Robert Doman (R-Calif.) to support his call for the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of the Christic Institute on the grounds that they are engaging in political activity and propaganda efforts on behalf of the left.

SUPPORTING THE USA WITH ZEAL...

Sirs:

I was shocked to read in Flak (SOF July 1988) that the U.S. Navy Motion Picture Service would screen a Jane Fonda film aboard a U.S.

warship. Is this a case of someone's morbid sense of humor? What's next, Communist Party speeches? I totally support the letter writer in his stand.

I remember during the Vietnam war those long-haired commie peace freaks spitting on our soldiers when they returned home, and it made me damn angry. And I'm just as angry, like the rest of patriotic New Zealanders, about our country's nuclear free Pacific policy.

Our pinko leaders, who are controlled by the Greenpeace idiots, don't seem to realize that they are helping the advance of communism, or do they?

Americans have the support of loyal New Zealanders everywhere and the admiration of those who fought alongside you in World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. God bless you and your country.

D. Kiwi
Tauranga, New Zealand

Several readers wrote letters to the Navy Motion Picture Service trying to get Jane Fonda films off U.S. Navy ships. What they got for their trouble is a stock "it's a free country and we don't mind putting defense dollars into the pocket of traitorous bitches" letter. Rumor has it that Navy brass in charge of motion picture acquisition want to christen our next CV "Tokyo Rose." This is an entirely unsubstantiated rumor and probably not true.

A GIFT FROM MURDERERS...

Sirs:

I'm not sure if this has made

national news, but the citizens of Boulder, Colorado, have just been bequeathed a teahouse from one of our Marxist "sister cities," Dushanbe, USSR. For those of you not following the war in Afghanistan, Dushanbe is the staging area for Soviet bombers flying air strikes against targets in Afghanistan. These targets are primarily civilian, as military ones don't exist, except perhaps in Pakistan (whose air space they violate on a daily basis).

Boulder's Sister City program has linked our town with such other notable locations as Lhasa, Tibet, and Jalapa, Nicaragua, and I'm sick to death of local governments fashioning their own foreign policy initiatives. They should represent their electorates' views, not their own. Look at the facts:

- The Soviet Union is waging a campaign of genocide against the Afghan people.
- Afghanistan has, by conservative estimates, suffered one million casualties directly attributable to the Soviet invasion.
- Children by the thousands have been killed and maimed by the Russians' indiscriminate bombing, mining and executions.
- Communism as practiced by the Soviet Union has resulted in a ruthlessly brutal regime that has killed more of its own people than any other in recorded history, including the Nazis.

Should any city government in America be associated with these murderers? Much less should it have a brother/sister relationship with them, and should we allow them to buy our friendship with blood-stained gifts? Soon we'll have city councilpersons accepting gifts from war criminals. Ovens from Auschwitz, anyone?

T. M. M.
Boulder, Colorado

We understand your outrage — and are right behind you. It's curious to us that so many sister city programs around the country form their "meaningful relationships" with towns under totalitarian, Marxist regimes.

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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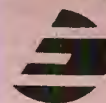
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WHEN my sons asked me, "What did you do in the big war, Daddy?" I answered truthfully: "I spent World War II flying Corsairs and yelling, 'Red One, you're clear!' and 'Red One, break right!' or 'Red One, break left!'" Red One was Captain Kenneth A. Walsh, Congressional Medal of Honor winner and killer of 21 Japanese Zero fighter planes.

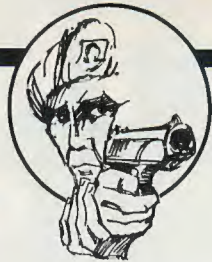
Even in wartime, we Marines practiced tactics. And I could whip Walsh 10 for 10 in a practice dogfight, so naturally I asked why I couldn't shoot down just one or two. After all, I was a 20-year-old second lieutenant (know it all), and he was an "ancient" 32-year-old captain with an inch or two of fat hanging over his belt.

His answer was always the same: "We Marines have to keep our name in the headlines back in the States for recruiting purposes." His real mission, though, with tacit approval of higher headquarters, was to catch Army Air Corps pilot Richard I. Bong, who had 40 kills. Marine ace Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, before his string ended with his being shot down and captured, had 28 kills. Marine Joe Foss was stateside, probably forced to go on a War Bond-selling tour; he had 26 kills. And so it was up to Ken Walsh, on his second tour of duty, to keep the Marines' banner flying high.

Bong was in the Pacific with us, so we were familiar with his P-38 Lightning exploits. David S. McCampbell, U.S. Navy, was also in the Pacific and had 34 kills, but we weren't chasing him. Maybe because he was a fellow Naval aviator. If communications were better, we might have been chasing Army Air Corps pilot Francis S. Bagreski, who had *only* 31 kills with his P-47 Thunderbolt. But he was in Europe, so we didn't hear much about him.

In retrospect, I should have realized that "recruiting" was a weak excuse for building up the kills of an already genuine war hero. After all, Congressional Medal of Honor winners returning for a second tour weren't exactly a dime-a-dozen. Keeping morale up in the combat zone and on the home front would have been a more rational and honest reason. Recruiting was no problem at home. Choice billets such as aviator were over-subscribed. I had to wait two months after passing all tests and being accepted before I was called to active duty in 1942.

Every family with sons was extremely proud when they joined up. Those whose sons were 4-F and exempt from service actually acted ashamed and embarrassed. Fathers wondered if they had defective genes to have sired physically unqualified sons who had to suffer the disgrace of rejection. We bought War Bonds, not savings bonds. We had



I WAS THERE

by Steve Furimsky, Jr.

Of Aces and Wingmen



Members of VMF-222 (author kneeling on left) enjoy a photo opportunity with members of a USO tour including, among others, Irving Berlin (second from right). F4U Corsair can be seen in background. Photo: Courtesy Steve Furimsky, Jr.

a War Department, not a Defense Department. Anyone caught defecting to Sweden to avoid fighting would have been lynched. People accepted rationing of food and gas and even a 35 mph speed limit to save rubber. They saved their tin cans, which were sent to Detroit to build tanks, trucks and jeeps on former automobile assembly lines. Every serviceman was a hero; those not in service told us, "If I were just a few years younger, I'd be in there right beside you." No, recruiting was not a problem. Volunteering and patriotism were in.

I think Captain Walsh did a job on the generals and colonels at Wing headquarters. Consequently, he had permission to act independently of our squadron, to the profound consternation of our CO, Major Hal Harwood. We flew several two-plane missions from Okinawa to Japan specifically to look for the training fields of Kamikazi pilots, who didn't have much flying experience, where kills could be built up in a hurry. We took off with three full auxiliary fuel tanks and jettisoned them as they emptied. That allowed us to arrive over Japan with full internal tanks, permitting us to engage in high-performance dogfights and still have enough fuel to return to base.

Still, we never found a training field that afforded us a turkey shoot. In fact,

our only kill ended up as Walsh's 21st. We were coming home when just north of the northern tip of Okinawa we saw a Zero flying at wavetop, bracketed by two Corsairs at about a thousand feet. All three were going balls-out. When that Zero reached the mainland he would have to turn. Either way he went would put him under one Corsair which would simply have to nose over to gain speed, close and splash him.

We were at about 12,000 feet and Walsh said to me, "You're always bitching about not getting to shoot, so go down there and splash that Zeke." I had to beg off. I was down to about 15 or 20 gallons of gas and counting on fumes to get me home. He sent me off alone as he went down and splashed that Zero, literally from under the noses of those two Corsairs. Those pilots were so pissed it took three days for them to confirm his kill. I heard they did it then only under duress.

Meanwhile, I made an idle descent, called the tower and asked for landing instructions. Tower said our airfield was under attack, and they were broadcasting from their bunker, but if the strip wasn't potholed, I was on my own to land. I lowered gear and flaps, and — with the airstrip in sight — I got jumped by two Zeros. One settled on my ass and started dinging me with short bursts. I was looking into my rear view mirror, watching blue-red flashes spitting out of his guns, when out of nowhere came Bob Rouse in his Corsair and turned him into an orange fireball.

Another zero moved into my six o'clock and let off a burst. Then he saw Bob completing a high wing-over and head for him at about a three-quarter/head-on angle. He broke off to the left, and Bob had him smoking almost immediately, when another Corsair that I never saw blew him out of the sky. I massaged my heart from my throat back down to its normal position, landed, turned into a grass patch, shut down before I ran dry, got out and laid in a ditch, and watched one hell of a dogfight above the strip and over the ships in the harbor. Those ships were

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putting up some heavy flak, but I thanked God that our guys were flying through it to get at those Zeros.

When it was over and planes started landing and taxiing into revetment areas, I walked back to our ready room. Ken Walsh was in and had already told them what happened at the north end of the island. Since I had not returned, they assumed the worst. When I got to the ready room, I was asked where the hell I came from, as they thought I was dead. I said, "Not hardly." John Wayne borrowed that phrase from me and later used it in one of his movies. Honest, I heard him say it in *Big Jake*.

After Charles A. Lindbergh died, it was reported that he flew combat mis-

sions with Marines in World War II, even though he was a civilian. Over the next few months, letters-to-the-editor columns in newspapers blossomed with names of about 200 guys who claimed they flew with him on those hops. Here, to the best of my recollection, is the real story. Around April 1945, VMF-222 was flying out of Samar, Philippines. One day we were called together in the ready room and told that Charles Lindbergh was to come in and fly with us. Although a civilian, he wanted to fly a bombing hop in a Corsair, as he was a special consultant to Chance-Vought, the airplane's builder, and wanted to report on the plane's characteristics as a dive-bomber. This hop was to be consid-

ered top secret hush-hush, as it was against somebody's laws for civilians to fly in combat (CIA types must get a chuckle out of that). If by sheer bad luck we lost Lindbergh, it would be considered a national catastrophe. After much ado as to who would fly with him, it was decided that it would be an eight-plane hop with Ken Walsh as leader. Lindbergh was to fly in my wingman slot, and I was to fly tail-end Charlie.

Lindbergh, however, would have nothing to do with that arrangement. He insisted that he fly as tail-end Charlie, the better to observe our formations and tactics. Everyone knew that the last plane in a run stood more chance of being hit than the first. The brass were very uncomfortable with this arrangement, but Lindbergh's view prevailed. Our mission was to bomb a known enemy daytime bivouac area at bottom of a deep gully, whose position had been transmitted to us by the Filipino Guerilla Radio Network on Negros Island. The hop was uneventful, except that I had a hung bomb. I made a second pass and dropped it, bomb rack and all, and we returned to base. We were all sworn to secrecy again; Mr. Lindbergh thanked us all and called us "real professionals" and left after that one hop.

Our mail was heavily censored for some time to assure that none of us bragged to mom and pop about flying with the famous Lone Eagle. Time dims memory, and I don't recall exactly who all was on this hop or in what position they flew, other than Walsh, Lindbergh and myself, but the names Frank Stratton, Bobby Welsh, Red Lindner, Howard Scheue, and Hugh Winnell come to mind. At the time, the only Marine aviation units with Corsairs were at Samar and Zamboanga, Mindanao, so unless Lindbergh went down to Mindanao and flew missions with 190 or so other guys, that's all there was to it!

I have reminisced unashamedly about the good old days when great aviators, often against great odds, just bored in, flew right up the enemy's butt, killed him, and then dodged the debris: Bong (Army), McCampbell (Navy), Boyington, Foss and Walsh (Marines). I name only those, knowing there were others, mostly because they were ones we discussed daily in our ready room bull sessions. No slight to other great fighter pilots is intended.

But let's also hear it for the unsung wingmen of these great top-gun fighter jocks. Their dedication, ability, fortitude and just plain guts were no less than those who got headlines and credit. To paraphrase a golden-oldie: "They also serve who stand on the rudder pedals and yell, 'Red One, break left!'" ✕



Shown with optional threaded barrel.

And it's affordable.

One look tells you the new TEC-22 Scorpion is hot. Dramatic. Innovative. But its best feature may be the one you don't see.

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"... (Intratec) makes a gun that doesn't cost an arm and a leg, yet functions with impeccable reliability."

—Jerry Ahern,
Petersen's Handguns

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BUILDING A BECKER KNIFE

As knife connoisseurs everywhere will testify, you can never have too many knives. This is a good thing, since so-called "new" and "revolutionary" knives cross my desk every week. Considering that blades have been with us in one form or another since the stone age, one might think little innovation is possible in knife design. Machax designer Ethan Becker begs to differ. His blade, while not revolutionary, is certainly evolutionary, incorporating aspects of several legendary blades to create a new classic.

Since the demise of Blackjack Knives, their Mamba (Adventure Quartermaster, SOF October '87) has become unavailable. This opens the door for Machax, which is a virtual look-alike of both the Mamba and the Gurkha's famed kukri, though an improved version.

Made of American 4140 chrome moly steel and featuring a Zytel (a virtually unbreakable plastic compound) handle, Machax was designed with versatility foremost in mind. Hand-in-hand with versatility comes compromise, however, and Machax has certainly made some. It's too short in its machete role, a bit light as a hand axe, and too large and bulky for casual carry.

On the plus side, Machax is all but unbreakable and comes with a lifetime guarantee against breaking. It's a black finish 9 1/2-inch full-tang design, treated with graphite enhanced phosphate to resist corrosion and discoloration. It chops, pries and hammers adequately and gets top marks for all-around use, which is what it was designed for. The nylon sheath is a well thought out marvel that's functional without being gimmicky.

Machax rates five stars and even at \$129.00 (including sheath) is worth the money. A one-ounce

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



lighter version called Warrior Machax is also available. Contact Becker Knife & Tool, Dept. SOF, PO Box 44179, Cincinnati, OH 45244; phone (513) 231-9446.

SWIFT KILL SILENT KILL

First time I fired Break Free's new Linear Bow I put an arrow clear through an unopened 80-pound sack of concrete mix on which my intended target was stacked. While less than impressed with my marksmanship, the speed with which the arrow passed through the hard-packed gray powder left onlookers stunned. A bow that achieves this kind of penetration with an ordinary target arrow deserves a look.

Crossbow hunting, and to a greater extent, bow hunting generally enjoy a substantial following worldwide. Linear Bow could well revolutionize this popular sport. It incorporates advantages of both bow and crossbow and sacrifices little in the process. In appearance it resembles a crossbow, but instead of firing short bolts it fires regular-sized arrows. This gives Linear Bow the speed advantage offered by crossbow bolts, up to 275 feet per second, and the accuracy/stability inherent in longer projectiles.



Linear Bow Model 220 weighs 7 1/2 pounds, is 36 inches long and 8 inches wide, features an adjustable buttstock that can be configured to fit almost anyone comfortably and costs \$295.00. A smaller Model 200 is available for \$255.00.

Both versions can be equipped with accessories ranging from attachable quivers to scope mounts and various strength power bands. Linear Bow's applications for special operations use should not be

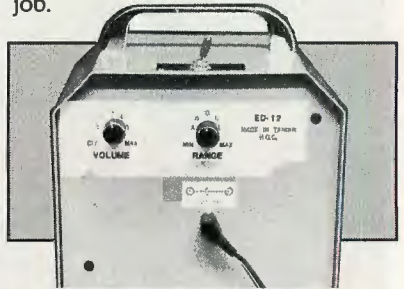
by Tom Slizewski

overlooked. Armed with hunting-tip arrows, Linear Bow becomes a deadly, and silent, weapon.

Contact Break Free for further details at: Dept. SOF, 1035 South Linwood Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705-4396; phone (714) 953-1900.

BOX THAT BARKS

It's halfway between bedtime and alarm time when you hear the mad barking of what sounds to be a rabid German Shepherd in your house — and you don't own a dog. You panic for an instant, but soon realize it's Radar Watchdog tirelessly on the job.



Radar Watchdog is a novel new home security item from RAM products; think of it as the home equivalent to a field listening post. In a nutshell, Radar Watchdog is a radar device that emits a barking sound when movement is detected within a pre-set range, which varies from 2 to 10 feet to its front. All electronics necessary to bring Radar Watchdog to life are contained in a 7 1/2-inch high by 6-inch wide metal box. Watchdog is user-friendly and requires little of you: just set the activation range and volume and plug it in. Since it's activated by radar, most walls and obstacles don't hinder its effectiveness. Just face it in the direction you want it to watch and, *voilà*, instant security.

Granted, Radar Watchdog won't provide companionship or fetch ducks, but it won't leave little surprises in your yard either. Retail price is \$179.00, but Adventure Quartermaster readers who act now pay only \$135.00.

Contact RAM, Dept. SOF, 8306 Wilshire Blvd. #10, Beverly Hills, CA 90211; phone (213) 559-1988. ☒

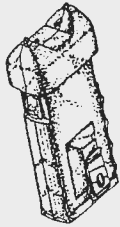
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ZAPPER STUN GUN

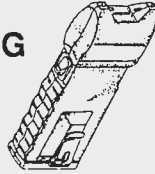


50,000 volts of power!

This quality stun gun 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. Operates on a regular 9-volt battery. Measures 6 x 2 x 3/4 inches.

#A007.....\$49.95

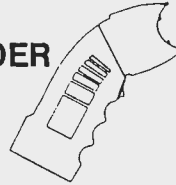
LIGHTNING ZAPPER STUN GUN



This unique stun gun is similar to our regular Zapper in a most enlightening way. In addition to the stopping power, it also delivers a burst of high intensity light directly into the attacker's eyes. Chances are that his optic nerve will be so overdosed with excess light energy that he will not be able to see you let alone continue the attack. If he does, the "Lightning Zapper" delivers its painful bite, leaving him dazed and confused. 7 inches long.

#A008.....\$59.95

DEFENDER STUN GUN



This is one of our most popular models. It features a unique curved handgrip. This design protects you from being attacked from behind. It has a full 50,000 volts of power. The state-of-the-art micro-chip technology assures you against activator switch burn out and loss of voltage. The "Defender" is powered by a normal 9-volt alkaline battery or a rechargeable 9-volt. Comes with a handling strap. The "Defender" measures 6.5 x 2 x 3/4 inches.

#WC1.....\$54.95

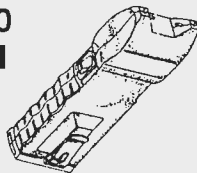
MINI ZAPPER STUN GUN



The smallest, lightest stun gun available. This gun weighs only a few ounces and measures less than 4 inches, but it packs a full 50,000 volts of biting, stunning power. New space age technology has enabled us to produce this full-strength stun gun in a small package about the size of a normal beeper. Comes with a handy belt clip. Uses a 9-volt battery. Measures 4 x 2.3 x 1.3.

#SH1.....\$59.95

X8000 STUN GUN



80,000 volts of power from a 9-volt battery! This gun is the height of hi-tech know-how. Just touching an assailant for one second will cause a loss of balance, loss of muscle control and a dazed condition. A 2 second jolt will have him on the ground completely immobilized. Measures 6.9 x 2.4 x 1.7 inches. Real awesome power!

#SH23.....\$79.95

WHAT IS A STUN GUN? A legal electrical self-defense device. It gives you greater sense of self-security.

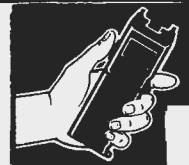
HOW DOES IT WORK? It puts out a high voltage shock. Touch it to a person - goes through clothing.

WHAT EFFECT DOES IT HAVE? Short circuits the muscle system. It immobilizes for several minutes. Will not cause permanent harm.

HOW IS IT LEGAL? No license or permit required. It can be used as reasonable force to resist attack. You can carry it concealed or not. Some State & local laws may vary.

WHERE CAN I KEEP IT? Clips to a belt; Fits in a purse; Keep one in your car; One in your house; Carry in a holster.

"FX" STUN GUN



The advanced personal protector. The FX includes a loud, piercing personal alarm siren, a high intensity strobe light AND 50,000 volts of non-lethal stopping power. It is powered by one alkaline 9-volt battery or a rechargeable battery. The FX measures 7.5 inches long by 2.5 inches wide. Protect yourself against rape, murder, or assault with the new space-age "FX" stun gun.

BT1.....\$79.95

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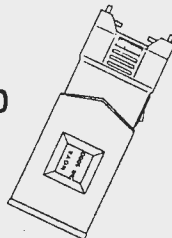


100,000 volts of stunning and immobilizing power! This non-lethal Stun Device is visually intimidating with its high intensity discharge affective up to 20 feet on most attackers. This unit is designed for law enforcement, guards, watchmen or anybody exposed to potentially hostile situations. This "Super Stun Gun" measures 12 x 1.5 inches. It uses 8 AA cell batteries with a recharge jack built in. A membrane switch is recessed for safety considerations. This one is awesome!

#AC1.....\$119.95

Dealer Inquiries Invited!

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2024 HOURS

Inside the depths of the Nicaraguan jungle, a small printer silently rolls out a series of coded letters and symbols. Seconds later, a radio telephone operator (RTO) removes a pocket-sized code book from its protective plastic bag and translates the incoming message. Within minutes, 300 contra freedom fighters are moving base camp Lema, located on the muddy banks of the Rio Coco, up into the safety of the multiple-canopied mountains nearby.

The urgent message warned of a Soviet-made AN-26 bomber being dispatched from its runway near Managua. Destination: the contra base camp. Armed with 500-pound bombs, its mission is obvious to the freedom fighters who, thanks to the radio warning, have ample time for a bug out.

The sudden relocation of Camp Lema reminds me of a well-rehearsed grade school fire drill. No one panics as food and munitions are quickly packed by a designated team. Hand-held ICOM radios crackle with instructions as other teams are made responsible for moving the sick and wounded. Another team coordinates movement of civilian refugees who have come to Camp Lema searching for food and protection from local Sandinista patrols.

2310 HOURS

Already the camp has taken on the appearance of a Western ghost town. A few chickens scurrying among the empty banana leaf hooches are all that remain. Security teams are positioned in place on the outer perimeter, armed with shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles. Each team has one of the ICOM units that keeps everyone left behind in touch — and help, in a small way to dispel the loneliness of the jungle night.

2348 HOURS

During several weeks with the contras, I have been impressed with the ICOM 144 MHz radios that now link the Redeye missile teams together in their vigilant watch for Sandinista aircraft. The ICOM units offer hundreds of operating frequencies with the touch of a button on the built-in keyboard. Communication integrity is maintained with the daily changing of operating channels and the plus or minus 600 KHZ cross-talk capability built into each unit.

The radios all come to life as one team hears the faint drone of the AN-26 engines. Almost two minutes go by before I am able to pick out the low-pitched sounds above the many night noises of the jungle. My city living has dulled the senses that can mean life or death for those around me. For the next 20 minutes, the engine's sounds fade in and out as the Sandinista/Cuban pilot attempts to locate our position. The former camp will be



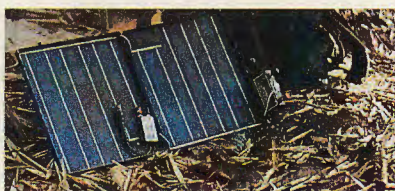
COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Text & Photos by W. L. Srawed

Contra Commo



Contra recon patrol leader with ICOM radio protected by a used plastic IV bag. Off-the-shelf equipment and such battlefield ingenuity have provided the contras with an effective commo net.



With average sunlight, five or six hours on this solar panel will recharge the Nicad batteries of an SC130, making the panel worth carrying on extended patrols.



Base camp radio shack with Loral SC130 crypto keyboard and silent printer. Secure commo, silent when necessary, can be critical to saving lives and completing missions.

nearly impossible to spot visually due to the pilot's high altitude. After the United States Congress approved sale of the Redeyes to contra forces, the Sandinistas learned the hard way about the reliability of U.S.-made, heat-seeking missiles. It soon becomes apparent that the pilot is not keen on dropping within Redeye range to get a

better look.

0130 HOURS

As the *piri* AN-26 returns its bomb load to Managua, ICOMs crackle with orders to stand down. Radios in hand, the contras climb silently up into the dark protection of the mountainside jungle.

Much of the freedom fighters' success can be attributed to having adequate supplies and excellent communication equipment in the field. All major AOs (Area of Operations) are now equipped at the base camp level with modern radios to direct the dozens of smaller 20- to 30-man teams assigned to each camp. The communications challenge for the contras has been a major headache due to the extremes in both terrain and climatic conditions. Jungle places tremendous demands on any type of equipment, but it is an especially harsh proving ground for anything with dials, meters, chips, and diodes.

The Loral Terracom SC130 has proven to be a reliable unit for use in most contra base camps. These portable radios appear to be ruggedly built and provide a general frequency range of from 2-12 MHz. This particular range of bands allows the use of both ground and skywave transmissions, and thus is more flexible than the U.S. military PRC 77 which is limited to line-of-sight communications. The SC130 has enjoyed world-wide use since the 1970s and has proven itself a workhorse. Power is normally supplied by built-in nickel-cadmium 12-volt batteries. Most base camps and AOs have Honda 300 kilowatt generators, which can be used to recharge the

Nicad batteries. I observed a few lead-acid batteries being used at camps deemed more "secure," which means not likely to be moved or relocated in a hurry. The usual antenna is a simple dipole type strung among jungle canopies. Power output of the SC130 is variable between 5 and 20 watts.

Often seen at base camps was a modern crypto keyboard and printer that interfaced with the SC130 to provide secure lines of communications with other base camps scattered throughout Nicaragua. This basic, no-frills system is what keeps the contras in touch with their HQ for planning clandestine missions, ordering supplies, passing on intel, and requesting evacuation of wounded.

The SC130 weighs about 16 pounds and frequently sees action with long-range recon patrols and special commando forces. Under field conditions, a center-load whip antenna is mounted to the SC130. If the patrol expects to stay in the field for more than a few days, the RTO carries a compact, folding solar panel that is used to recharge the radio's batteries. Attached to the panel is an amp meter that aids the RTO in aligning the panel for maximum solar intake. Most RTOs reported that it normally takes an average of five or six hours to recharge the battery, depending on how drained the battery is and the amount of available sunshine.

Security teams positioned around the outskirts of base camps stay in close touch using the programmable ICOM units. Of primary concern to the contras are surprise attacks by Soviet-made Hind D helicopters, known as "flying tanks" because of the large amount of ordnance they carry. To counter the Hind, Redeye missile teams are deployed in a circular fashion some 5-6 miles outside the camp. If one of the teams identifies a group of Hinds approaching, they immediately use their ICOMs to radio alerts to the other teams. With the instant communications now available, chances are the Hind will either take a Redeye up its exhaust on the way into camp, or the second and third teams will send it a heat-seeking greeting card on the way out. Any evasive tactics on the Hind's part are immediately radioed to other teams not directly observing the maneuver — making escape for the Soviet helo very difficult at best. These little radios have been a great equalizer, as evidenced during a recent firefight when Sandinista troops were calling for air support from nearby Hind Ds. The pilots refused to come to the aid of their comrades due to the chance of being spotted by a contra with an ICOM and/or a

Continued on page 25



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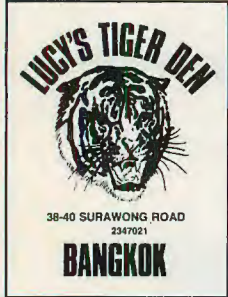


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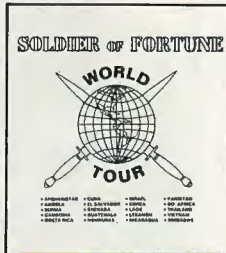
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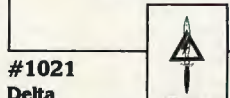
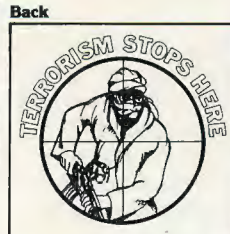
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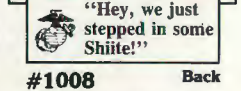
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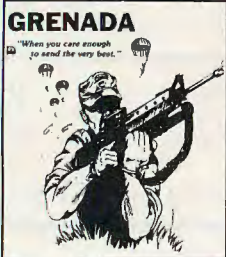


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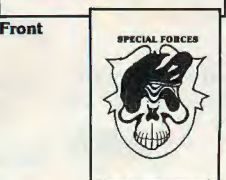
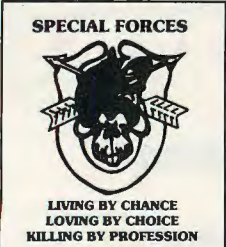


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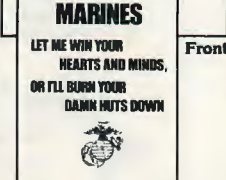
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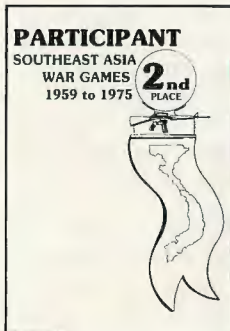


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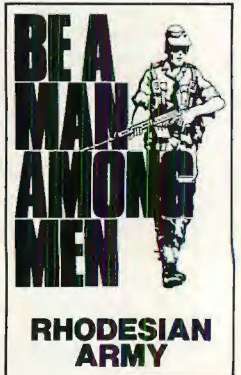


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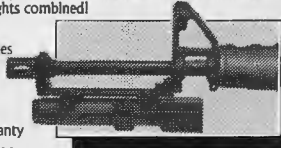
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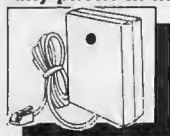
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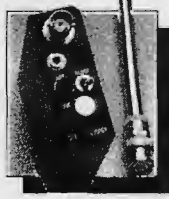
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Transtec fits into your pocket and silently vibrates when it detects an R.F. transmitter (bug) in your presence, from up to 20' away! It warns you but doesn't tip off anyone else! When it gives a warning signal, Transtec can now be used with its special antenna attachment to verify that an actual "bug" is present (not an innocent signal) and then can be used to "sweep" and locate it. Transtec **\$695.**



EVALUATOR

New microprocessor checks for phone taps



Evaluator is based on new technology, never before available. Other "tap detectors" are only simple voltage meters, and they just won't pick up real taps. The Evaluator takes a fingerprint of the voltage, resistance and capacitance

of your individual phone line, stores it in memory, and then performs a check every minute, 24 hours a day and warns you with a flashing LED readout if conditions change.

Easy to use, sets up in minutes and monitors your line for "taps" or any other abnormal changes. **\$695.**

Must be installed on a "clean" line. See our CM-3 complete countermeasure package **\$2,495.**

Note: California, along with most other states, has expanded its wiretapping laws to allow local and state agencies to tap phones. This may compromise your privacy!

TELEPHONE SCRAMBLERS



Fits over any phone. Secure conversations between two or more persons (each needs a scrambler). With over 13,000 access codes, all an eavesdropper will hear is "garbage." Quick and easy to use. Works on cellular, too!

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Defeats room bugs!

Produces pseudo-random noise that will defeat all microphone-based eavesdropping devices.

Difficult to filter out and if properly used, all an eavesdropper will hear is a loud hiss.

Audio Jammer (pocket size) Reg. \$195.
Sale \$129. (Ship \$5.50)

Audio Jammer II high-power unit available—call!

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This remarkable, rechargeable flashlight is also an electric stun gun. Carry

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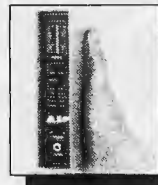


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BUG DETECTOR



Professional quality hand held transmitter ("BUG") detector uses state of the art L.E.D. readout to indicate the presence of an R.F. signal and will lead you to the source.

Also enables you to quickly determine if the signal is an actual bug by listening through the headphones (included).

Will detect room bugs, telephone transmitters, bumper beepers, etc. Instructions included. High quality!

DL-1000 Hand Held Detector **\$695.**

(Ship/Insur. \$10.)

WARNING

NOT TO BE USED FOR SURREPTITIOUS INTERCEPTION OF ORAL COMMUNICATIONS. ALL EQUIPMENT IS SOLD SUBJECT TO PUBLIC LAW 90-351, TITLE III, 18 U.S.C., SECTION 2511, ALL LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL ORDINANCES, RULES, REGULATIONS, ETC. IT IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BUYER (NOT THE SELLER) TO CONSULT LEGAL COUNSEL FOR INTERPRETATION OF ANY LAWS APPLICABLE TO THE AREA OF INTENDED USE.

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• Complete countermeasures system. Enables you to professionally check for phone taps, room bugs, carrier bugs, laser listening devices, and more! Detailed instruction manual included; comes in fitted briefcase. **\$2,495.** (Ship/Insur. \$24.50)

• IBM PC Computer Security. Data encryption. Call!

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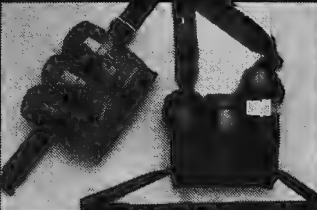
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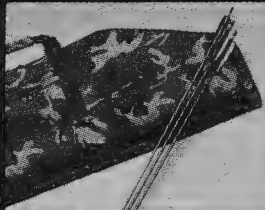
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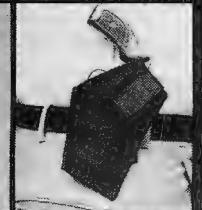
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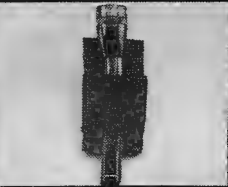
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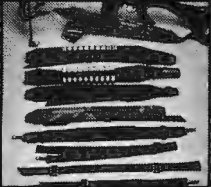
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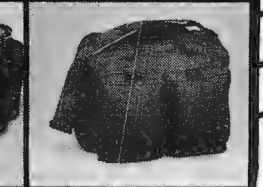
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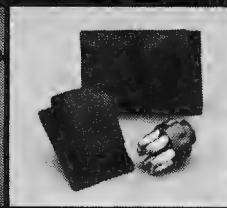
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ICOM units seem to hold up well against the constant use and abuse they receive. For added protection from the moist jungle environment, the contras use expended 1,000ml IV solution bags to cover the units. Control dials and antenna are first removed, then the heavy plastic bag is slipped over the top of the radio. Knobs are replaced and now the radio has a weatherproof covering. This is a good example of the "use what you bring" adaptability of a modern freedom fighter.

ICOM units are also used for contacting friendly aircraft in their approach to a landing or drop zone. From several miles out, the inbound aircraft contact the camp's RTO on a prearranged frequency. If the ground control gives the "green light," supplies are then dropped or further landing instructions are transmitted.

Artillery commanders are using Radio Shack scanners to make adjustments while laying down barrages. A forward observer (FO) is sent out to physically view the rounds impacting the target area. Using his ICOM unit, he then relays back to the fire commander any adjustments that are required. The fire commander hears these instructions on a Realistic Pro 32 programmable scanner. Since there is no need to have two-way traffic during these types of operations, the Pro 32 provides an economical solution. Again, these consumer-type units are holding up well in the field under conditions probably never thought of by the research and development department at Radio Shack.

The contras have proven that it is possible to sustain a dependable and secure communications network with basic over-the-counter type equipment under adverse conditions. Overall investment is minimal compared to standard military radios, and these consumer units often out-perform their expensive milspec counterparts. Field maintenance is limited to daily cleaning, and battery replacement as necessary. The equipment has proven so dependable that a lack of repair technicians and equipment has not hampered the contra communication network in any significant way. When problems do occur, the radios are sent back to HQ, from where they are then sent out-of-country for repairs. An adventurous entrepreneur interested in setting up a sales and service office in one of the democratic countries in Central America, such as Honduras or Costa Rica, would probably be very successful. Numerous clients and governments needing both advice and equipment could well keep him busy. ✕

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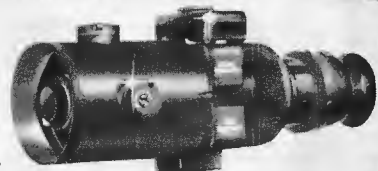
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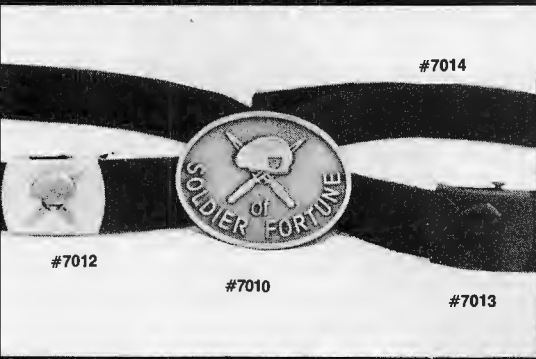


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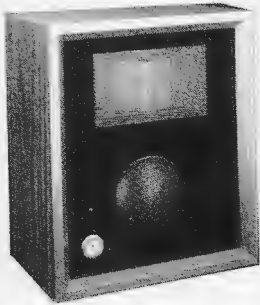
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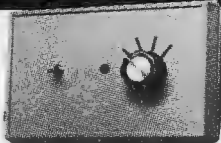
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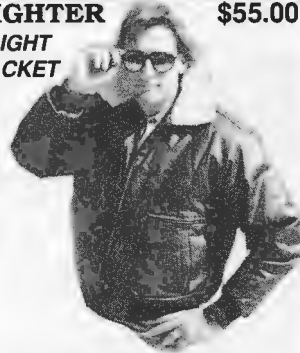
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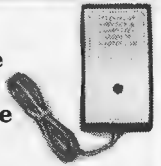
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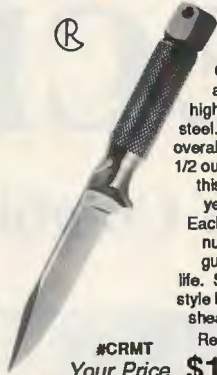
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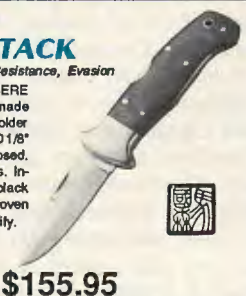
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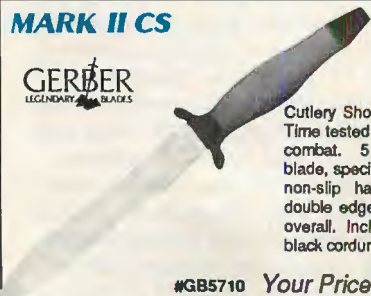
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LEATHERNECK

U.S. Marines Combined

by Mark Adkin

In this final part of SOF's series on Operation Urgent Fury, Major Mark Adkin examines the Marine landings on D-day. The 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), en route to relieve the shattered Marine contingent to the Multi-National Force in Lebanon, was diverted to Grenada. Although the commander of the Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic had dispatched elements of Battalion Landing Team 2/6, then serving as the Air Alert Force, to Beirut, the arrival of the 22nd MAU was eagerly awaited by the Marines in Lebanon. But instead of steaming across the mid-Atlantic, the morning of 25 October found the Marines of the 22nd MAU poised off the northern shore of Grenada.

INITIALY the planners of Urgent Fury had considered using only the Navy and Marine forces of Task Force 124 for operations in Grenada. The self-contained, hard-hitting force of just under 2,000 Marines was readily available, at sea, and capable of putting troops ashore by helicopter and over the beach. The amphibious assault ship *USS Guam*, with its sophisticated communications and medical facilities, was the ideal ship from which to control such an operation.

Originally, the Marines had anticipated landing on the southwest peninsula, but the arrival of a message on 22 October from the operation commander, Admiral Metcalf, telling them the Army would conduct an airborne attack on the island changed that.

This must have been a frustrating time for the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit and its commander, Colonel James Faulker, for if there was fighting to be done they were the obvious choice to take the brunt of it, or so they thought. There were just over 800 Marines of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, which combined with attachments to form Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/8. They carried formidable firepower, having recently been restructured into a new organization with more heavy weapons. A total of 134 grenade launchers were carried, together with 32 Dragon antitank guided missile launchers, eight .50-caliber heavy machine guns and eight 81mm mortars. To enhance mobility, the battalion had no few-

GRENADA VETERAN

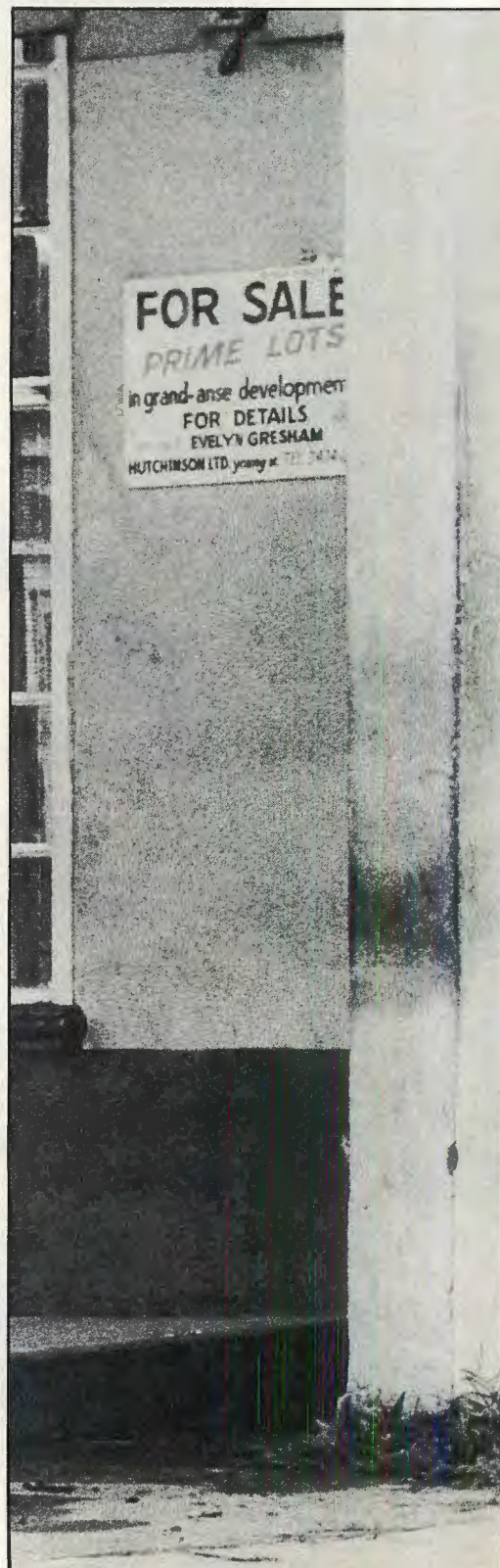
As a staff officer for the Barbados Defence Force during Operation Urgent Fury, Major Mark Adkin, late of the British Army, was in a unique position to observe the intervention. Upon returning to England from Barbados in 1987, Major Adkin began work on his book, *Urgent Fury*, to be published by Lexington Books next spring, from which this series is extracted. Major Adkin is now retired, after more than 30 years in the service of the Crown.

er than 52 jeeps under its direct control, with some 24 more available from other units.

The Marine battalion had three rifle companies — E, F, and G — a weapons company and a headquarters and supply (H&S) company for control and logistics. Each rifle company had three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon with three 60mm light mortars and M60 machine guns. For Urgent Fury, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Smith commanded BLT 2/8. Captain Henry Donigan commanded Company E, Captain Michael Dick had F, and Captain Robert Dobson Company G. The weapons company was under Captain Chris Gunther.

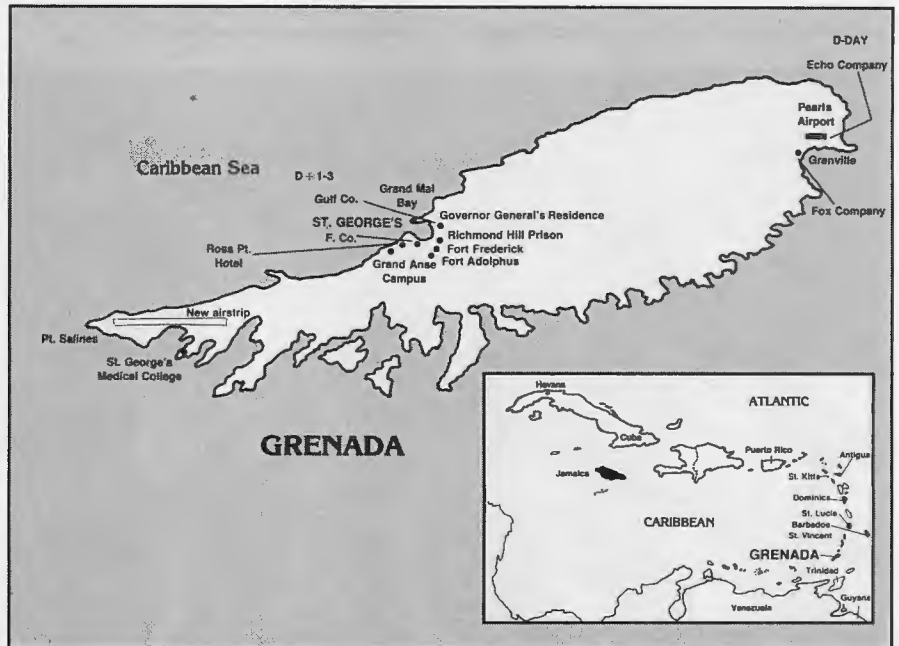
Smith had a lot more apart from the battalion. There was H Battery of the 3rd Battalion, 10th Marines, under Captain Bradley Gates, which had eight 155mm towed howitzers with a range of 22,000 meters. Armored support was available from the five M60 tanks of 3rd Platoon, A Company, 2nd Tank Battalion, while 14 amphibious assault vehicles of 4th Platoon, A Company, 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion were available to land the Marines through the surf. Finally BLT 2/8 had its own reconnaissance platoon from the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, an engineer platoon, plus a section of jeep-mounted TOW antitank missiles.

The helicopter lift capability was provided by the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 (HMM 261) under Lieutenant Colonel Granville "Granny" Amos. This squadron normally consisted of 12 CH-46E Sea Knights, with a troop-lifting capacity of 25 combat-loaded Marines each. However, it had been reinforced for the



S' URGENT FURY

Ops Victory on Grenada



ABOVE: Marines on Grenada. After taking Pearls and Grenville, elements re-embarked for landings at Grand Mal Bay.

LEFT: Marine from Company F, BLT 2/8, crouches next to building in Grenville. Photo: AP/Wideworld

deployment to include four CH-53D Sea Stallions for heavy resupply loads or carrying a slung howitzer, four AH-1T Cobra gunships for fire support, and two UH-1N Hueys for command or liaison duties. Amos' command also included several logistical, maintenance, and support detachments.

To sustain these two combat units was the task of the composite Marine Service Support Group 22 (MSSG 22). Its commanding officer was Major Albert Shively. Here were to be found a mixture of detachments concerned with keeping the BLT and HMM in action. Landing support, maintenance, medical, dental, supply, engineer, motor transport, explosive ordnance disposal, and military police were all represented.

All of these units combined to form the 22nd MAU. Faulkner, along with the commander of the task force, were headquartered on the USS *Guam*. In addition to MAU headquarters, the *Guam* also carried

Companies E and F and HMM 261. Both rifle companies could be airlifted if need be by the CH-46s. Sailing on USS *Trenton* was Smith with his HQ, plus weapons company and the headquarters elements and shore party of MSSG 22. USS *Fort Snelling* carried the tanks, the reconnaissance platoon and TOW section, along with a detachment of Navy SEALs. Company G, earmarked for possible beach landings, was on board the USS *Manitowac* with the amtracs, while her sister ship, the USS *Barnstable County*, carried the howitzer battery and engineers.

The 22nd MAU was a formidable force with substantial mobility, great versatility, and the ability to act independently over a considerable period of time.

The arrival on board the *Guam* of the liaison officers from Atlantic Command at 2000 hours on the 23rd, carrying a draft operation order for Urgent Fury, caused somewhat of a stir. Smith and Amos were summoned to the briefing, arriving late. However, they quickly learned they had barely 30 hours in which to plan their new mission. This was to seize Pearl's airfield and Grenville town, and neutralize any opposition in the area. They had the north; the south, including St. George's, belonged to the Army. The USS *Independence*, along

with her carrier battle group, would provide support as required. Around midnight on the 23rd, both officers sat down together to decide exactly how to achieve their objectives.

Like the Army, they wanted to arrive in Grenada while it was still dark. A daylight landing by sea or air made little tactical sense. However, they had both been told that no landings could be made before 0400 hours on the 25th. This did not give them any leeway for delays or the unexpected. Both officers agreed that H-hour for heliborne troops and L-hour for troops landing over the beach should be simultaneous, at 0400 hours. The Marines were carefully briefed on the rules of engagement. Heavy weapons could not be used indiscriminate-

ly, but only if they were essential to accomplish the mission. The object was to liberate, not attack, Grenadians.

Intelligence was still vague. Officers were lucky to get naval charts of the island, without grids. The Marines were warned that heavy surf and high winds along the east coast could make an amphibious landing impossible. Before a beach landing could be confirmed, a detailed reconnaissance was essential. The detachment from SEAL Team 4 had this mission. Meanwhile, the 22nd MAU's plan envisaged a heliborne landing by a rifle company each at Pearls and

Marine armor on Grenada. M60A1 tank from 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Tank Battalion Photo: Alan Oxley

Grenville, with the remaining company following up with a surface landing.

On the 24th, the bad news was the time change of H-hour to 0500. The most they could expect was half an hour of rapidly evaporating darkness. At about 2000 hours that night, two Seafox boats, each with a small group of SEALs plus a crew from Special Boat Unit 20, left the security of the USS *Fort Snelling* for a 15-kilometer ride in rough seas. The Seafoxes succeeded in reaching the beach area east of Pearls around midnight, after a most uncomfortable journey. There followed several hours of careful probing of the airport perimeter and close examination of the beaches, reef, and surf conditions along that section of the coast. Some Grenadian militia were seen and heard around the terminal buildings, but there was nothing to indicate strong defenses. At 0400 hours they sent the message, "Walking Track Shoes," by radio. This meant tracked amphibians would find a landing extremely hazardous, while other landing craft would find it impossible. The proposed amphibious follow-up landing was cancelled. The initial assault would be entirely heliborne; the amtracs would only be used if daylight revealed a more suitable beach.

Smith and Amos got little sleep that night as they revised their plan yet again. They had several problems. Launching the aircraft would take place in darkness; there were high winds with frequent rain squalls; the *Guam* had to be headed into the wind for takeoff, and radio silence was imposed. All this meant that embarking the Marines and liftoff would be a slow process. Helicopters would take off singly, which meant a subsequent rendezvous would be difficult, time consuming, and fuel expensive. There was no possibility of a simultaneous assault by the two companies, so Grenville would have to wait as Pearls was considered the more important objective. If H-hour for Pearls was 0500 hours, the assault at Grenville would be in full daylight with no possibility of surprise.

Although the ships would be only 10 miles from land and the CH-46s had a range of over 100 miles, prolonged waiting by the leading helicopters at an airborne rendezvous would consume excessive fuel. Amos could not guarantee putting the entire assault company down at the same time; some aircraft might have to refuel. It required careful calculations of time and distance, plus an element of luck. As it turned out, the leading company landed without its commander, Donigan, whose helicopter was refuelling at the time. Like their Army comrades in the south, the Marines' planning had been hasty and hindered by factors outside their control.

Pouring over naval charts and aerial photographs, Smith and Amos endeavored to select suitable landing zones near their objectives. Originally, the idea was to come down on the runway itself, but Amos did not like it. A 275-foot hill covered with scrub was located just north of the runway, domi-





Marine searching and then guarding Grenadian prisoner. In Grenville, local citizens gleefully pointed out members of government and militia — and loaned their cars to Marines for hauling away captured weapons. Photos: Alan Oxley



their flight. Visibility was low, and although all the helicopters carried night vision goggles, not all the pilots had been trained in their use. Once airborne, all radio contact between aircraft or the ship was forbidden. It was far from an easy flight.

By the time the first helicopters crossed the coastline, the rain had stopped and there was just sufficient light for the pilots coming in low to make out some terrain features. The first thing they noticed was that the LZ, far from resembling a racecourse, had palm trees and tall bushes growing all over it. This was highly disconcerting, although as yet they had not been fired on. Amos, who accompanied the lead flight, searched the ground for an alternative. There seemed to be fewer trees in the northwest corner, so he went in, followed by the others, for a successful touch down. The only mishap occurred during attempts to unload the Sea Stallion. Two TOW jeeps became jammed together, defying all efforts to free them. Marines struggled unsuccessfully for 30 minutes to disentangle them before tipping one jeep out of the rear door. The cost was one Marine with a broken leg, another with a broken arm, and one wrecked TOW launcher.

It was not until the next flight of helicopters approached the LZ, when visibility had improved, that the Grenadian militia anti-aircraft gunners, who were on top of the hill to the north of the runway that had worried Amos, opened up. The total opposition around Pearls did not amount to more than

nating it completely. Amos feared this could be occupied by antiaircraft guns or other troops, so he persuaded the MAU HQ to move the LZ south. He selected what appeared to be a disused racecourse some 700 meters south of the airport. It was code named "LZ Buzzard," and from the photographs it appeared to be covered with low bushes. This would be the spot for Company E to land under Donigan; from there, they would move to secure the airport. The LZ site chosen for Company F under Dick, who was to follow the leading company but seize Grenville, was also an apparently disused racecourse further south, some 800 meters northeast of the town.

Amos was responsible for delivering the assaulting Marines to their LZs on time. What appeared to be ample time had been

allowed for launching the aircraft, with the first takeoff scheduled for 0300 hours, giving two hours to H-hour. However, slow launching and poor weather delayed the first helicopter's liftoff from the *Guam's* flight deck until 0315 hours. Consequently, E Company elements arrived at LZ Buzzard at 0520, just as it was getting light.

For the Marines, it was a sleepless night. Briefings and equipment preparation occupied much of their time. Some snatched a few minutes' rest, others watched the John Wayne film, "Sands of Iwo Jima" — thought to be an appropriate movie for the occasion. Reveille sounded at 0100 hours for all sailors and embarked Marines. A hurried meal was eaten and live ammunition drawn, and then the Marines formed into their helo teams and settled down to await

an under-strength platoon, mostly dressed in T-shirts and jeans, with only a handful in uniforms. One of the gunners on the hill was a woman. Her aim was poor, so the erratic bursts from the two 12.7mm guns caused no damage. They did, however, attract the attention of the Cobras, which fired 20mm cannon and 2.75-inch rockets at the site. This ended the militia's efforts to engage the incoming helicopters.

Meanwhile on the ground, Donigan detailed a platoon to protect the LZ while he advanced with the remaining two platoons toward the airfield, preceded by the Cobras overhead. As the Marines neared the terminal, several short bursts of automatic weapons fire were directed at them. Fire was returned, and the Marines saw a group of Grenadians fleeing toward the western end of the runway. Nobody was hit on either side. By 0730 hours Pearls was secure, with the unexpected capture of two Cuban aircraft and their 12 crew members — the first prisoners of the intervention.

Smith had by now taken charge on the ground. He told Donigan to seize the hill from which the guns had fired, as it appeared to still be occupied. The Marines, heavily encumbered with packs, weapons, and flak jackets, slowly labored up the steep slope, expecting to draw heavy fire at any moment. There was none. As they neared the top, the members of the militia detachment dropped their weapons and fled down the rear slope. Some Marines tried to follow, but they had no chance of catching the Grenadians. The two 12.7mm guns, small arms and a stock of ammunition were secured.

Antitank weapons were deployed, while Donigan was instructed to regroup his company preparatory to advancing westward.

His platoons were scattered, so it was not until mid-morning that he was ready to move out. At that moment, the militia fired a mortar from a position in the hills immediately west of the runway. Its targets were the terminal area, where three rounds landed, and LZ Buzzard, which received five rounds. A round then misfired in the tube, and rather than risk dealing with this, the militiamen abandoned the mortar. No casualties were incurred.

It was not until 0630 hours that Company F approached their LZ. Daylight revealed the same problem as had faced Company E — palm trees. This time Amos, who was still airborne, spotted a playing field free of obstructions just east of the road running north from Grenville to the village of Paradise. Eminently suitable for helicopters, it was, however, surrounded by a high wall. If the enemy occupied the wall, life on the field would be short for deplaning Marines. With no other options available, Amos decided to land, hoping that the feeble opposition at LZ Buzzard and the people in Grenville who appeared to be waving in welcome were favorable signs. They were; nobody fired on them as they landed, nor when they advanced cautiously into the town. The citizens of Grenville had in fact been waving in welcome, and they busied themselves identifying militia personnel and arms caches, even loaning their vehicles to the Marines to carry the captured weapons. Dick spent the morning setting up roadblocks and conducting searches around the town.

After the difficult days of planning, with the constant changes, the poor intelligence, and the miserable weather which compelled

a piecemeal insertion almost one helicopter at a time, the Marines deserved their share of luck. Opposition was negligible, so by mid-morning they had secured both objectives at a cost of two accidental injuries. At the airport, they were to erect a sign above the terminal entrance that read "Marine Corps Air Station Douglas" (MCAS DOUGLAS) in honor of a former comrade, Sergeant Major Douglas, who was killed in Lebanon. It is now in the Corps museum.

By noon, Admiral Metcalf was none too happy with progress thus far. Resistance to the Army in the south had been unexpectedly prolonged; the Cubans were still fighting, and it looked as though there could be more enemy units uncommitted. Intelligence staffs were guessing; raising estimates of opposition strength, which at the time — judging by the results of the first six hours — they were justified in doing. As Metcalf knew, the PRA (People's Revolutionary Army) could still grab American hostages at the Grand Anse campus at any time, and the Rangers were no nearer to taking Caligny. In the south, there were only two weak Ranger battalions and 300 Caribbean soldiers and policemen. The 82nd Airborne could not start arriving until late afternoon.

As if all this were not enough, there was the crucial problem of the governor general trapped inside his house with a handful of SEALs. Of all the special operations, this was the most critical from a political standpoint. The restoration of constitutional authority depended on securing Sir Paul Scoon. If he was killed or taken hostage, there would be a lot of explaining to do. Metcalf could ensure air-to-ground fire support from the Spectres, or possibly the Cobras, but what was needed were strong reinforcements actually on the ground at Gov-

Marine TOW jeeps on Grenada. Photo: Alan Oxley



ernment House. The only solution was to use the Marines, still fresh and unbloodied in the north. Somehow they must get into St. George's to sort out the mess; and it must be on the 25th.

How best to move the Marines quickly, and where to put them? Those were the urgent questions confronting Metcalf. The obvious answer as to method was by helicopter. There were enough CH-46s to lift two companies, and two companies were ashore near suitable LZs. However, it was not as simple as that. Pearls airport could not be abandoned, and neither could Company G come ashore to relieve Company E, as an amphibious landing on that part of the coast was still too risky. In fact, it was intended that Company G be helilifted off the *Manitowac* to Pearls. Grenville, however, was friendly. Company F could be sent immediately, while Company G was dispatched by sea to land over a suitable beach on the sheltered west coast.

But where to land? The planners on the *Guam* picked Grand Mal Bay, because the town center, which was 1,500 meters to the north, could be reached quickly on foot if necessary. It was ideal for amtracs, but an LZ for the helicopters would be problematic.

So without the knowledge of its commanding officer, who was at Pearls and not in radio contact with the *Guam*, BLT 2/8 was scattered on a new mission. The *Manitowac* was ordered to take Company G with 13 amtracs around the north of the island; the *Guam*, together with the *Fort Snelling* carrying the tanks and TOWs and the *Barnstable County* with the howitzer battery, went south, also making for the west coast. The *Trenton* was to remain off the northeast of the island. Ashore, Company E would remain guarding Pearls, while Company F was earmarked for a heliborne insertion at Grand Mal. H-hour was to be 1630 hours for both the sea and air landings; the aim being to press on into St. George's to relieve the SEALs at Government House that evening. The operation envisaged the tanks and howitzers going ashore after the rifle companies so that, apart from Company E, all of TF 124 would be operating in the south, in or around St. George's.

For Lt. Col. Smith, the changes put in motion around 1300 hours heralded the start of what surely must have been his most frustrating time in the Marines. His command had been sent into battle without him, and it was to be nine hours before he finally caught up with his leading companies at Grand Mal. Company G, followed later by Company F, was on its own, without contact with its battalion HQ during the potentially critical period following its insertion close to St. George's. Luck was to smile on it again. The landings were to be unopposed, although Smith and his company commanders had no way of knowing that. To them, they were being thrown piecemeal into a battle without proper orders or communications, with no on-scene headquarters to provide guidance (as the BLT's alternative command group was committed to



Marine in the streets of Grenville, Grenada, 25 October 1983. Photo: AP/Wideworld

Pearls), and while Smith flew backwards and forwards desperately trying to rejoin his unit.

For Smith, it all started about 1500 hours, while he was still controlling operations at Pearls and Grenville and anticipating the remainder of his command coming ashore that afternoon. Although he had heard before leaving the *Guam* of the possibility of a landing elsewhere, he received no further signals on the subject. This was because the radio link was giving trouble, even over the water. On the *Guam* the change of plan was going ahead without Smith or his executive officer, while a reconnaissance platoon commander was standing high up on the weather deck of the *Fort Snelling* with a hand-held radio trying to contact his commanding officer. Around 1500 he succeeded. The platoon leader told Smith that

an assault on the west coast was to be made; in fact the *Manitowac* had already left, steaming northward, while the others (except for the *Trenton*) were going south. The young officer asked what was happening.

Smith's comments are not recorded, but leaving his XO in charge, he boarded a resupply helicopter for the *Guam*. There he had a quick briefing from the operations officer. The new operation involved Company G landing over the beach at Grand Mal and Company F joining them by helicopter. The final objective was the Governor General's residence. Nothing much was known about the enemy, except the rumors of a Cuban battalion north of the town. H-hour was only some 45 minutes away. Smith's only consolation was that he had grabbed a proper map of the island captured at Pearls airport, so he had some idea of where he was going. This was of little use, however, while he was separated from his companies.

Smith's first reaction was to rush to the flag plot compartment and forcefully explain that a landing at 1630 hours was an impossibility. If H-hour was not postponed, Company G would land on its own without any possibility of coordinating in time with Company F. It was agreed to delay H-hour to 1830 hours. This message reached the *Manitowac* after she had lowered her ramps, launched her safety boats, and Company G was ready in its amphibious assault vehicles.

Smith now needed to return to Pearls, rejoin his command group, tell his XO what was happening, get Company F organized for its heliborne assault, and then fly to the *Manitowac* before H-hour. It was then nearly 1700 hours; there was sufficient time. His temper was not improved when it took him 30 minutes to find a helicopter to take him to Pearls — or so he thought. The problem was that the helicopter pilot had been instructed to fly to Salines, not Pearls. By the time Smith, now thoroughly enraged, discovered this error, more precious time had been wasted. He finally touched down at Pearls just 20 minutes before the scheduled Grand Mal H-hour. It would take at least that much time to reach the *Manitowac* — if they could find it in the dark.

Dashing around, Smith collected his command group, rushed back to the same helicopter ordering the pilot to find the *Manitowac*, or if that was impossible the *Guam*. They took off in darkness. Then the unfortunate pilot was unable to make radio contact with anybody except the *Trenton*, which had remained to the northeast of the island. Round and round they flew frantically peering into the black night, using up fuel and finding nothing. After an hour, with fuel low, there was nothing to be done but land on the *Trenton*. More delay followed while Smith tried to get a flight to the *Guam*. By this time he was, as he himself described it, "so frustrated I could barely see." It was then about 2300 hours. He was back on the *Guam* where he had started six hours earlier; it was eight hours since he had first received confirmation of the Grand Mal operation, and it was to be another hour before he finally got there.

Company G and the five tanks which started coming ashore just after 1900 hours had to wait another nine hours before Company F began arriving by helicopter. This lengthy delay was due to a combination of adverse factors. First, proper command and control by Smith had been impossible due to both his being unable to rejoin his command and the persistently bad radio communications between units. Then there was the necessity of having to ferry Company F from Pearls across the island with helicopters from the *Guam*, which was now off the west coast, making the journey longer, with more frequent refuelling required. It was also a pitch black night, with the LZ at Grand Mal actually on the narrow beach, so that only two helicopters could land at a time. It had been decidedly quicker and simpler by sea.

Not that G Company had been spared its share of frustration; far from it. The day had started for Dobson with his company sitting in the amtracs at 0345 hours ready to land at 0430. Hourly postponements came for landings at 0530, 0630, and 0730, followed by cancellation.

Shortly after midday, Dobson was told that the amtracs would go in empty while his Marines were helilifted ashore. At 1330 hours, with the company waiting on the flight deck, Dobson was called to the bridge and informed that he was now to land on the northwest coast, possibly in the Victoria area. No mention was made of Grand Mal. With the *Manitowac* now sailing around the north of the island, Dobson's men hurriedly reembarked in the amtracs. They passed Victoria with no orders to land. The next signal received by the ship indicated Gouyave was the likely objective. Another false alarm. By now it was getting dark, and his men had had more than enough of sitting cramped all day inside the amtracs. At 1750 Dobson summoned his platoon commanders, explaining that as he had received no orders from battalion HQ, it now seemed unlikely that a landing would be made that day, so they should leave all their equipment on the vehicles while the Marines stood down for some sleep.

Inevitably, no sooner had he given these instructions than he was summoned back to the bridge, this time to definitely land at Grand Mal at 1830 hours. The LZ was code named "Fuel" as the narrow, restricted strip of land between the shore and the hills had a small fuel tank farm at the northern end. Still not knowing what he was expected to do, still out of touch with his commanding officer, Dobson got his men back aboard the amtracs, and Company G was launched on time. The 13 amtracs made for the beach in pitch blackness. The first one crawled ashore at 1901 hours. Later, the utility landing craft (LCUs) began bringing in tanks, along with jeeps armed with .50 caliber machine guns and TOWs. It was getting decidedly crowded at LZ Fuel.

Dobson secured his position by posting a platoon to the north and south of the LZ across the road and dispatched a reconnaissance patrol to the south. He went about consolidating his position while awaiting further orders. It was not until 2300 that a helicopter was heard overhead. There was no sign of the enemy, so red lights were put out to indicate an LZ. A UH-1N carrying the MAU air liaison officer, Major William Sublette, touched down. Sublette told Dobson that there was apparently a strong enemy force between them and St. George's, but he could expect Company F to reinforce them by helicopter sometime after midnight. Dobson asked Sublette to make contact with Smith on his return for further instructions.

Sublette's return virtually coincided with Smith's arrival on the *Guam*, so he immediately offered to guide Smith back to LZ Fuel. The Huey, followed by Smith in a CH-46, touched down around midnight.

The Sea Knight was too large for the LZ, so its rear wheels were in the water when Smith with his Alpha group disembarked. After the long hours of exasperating delay, Smith's humor had returned. As he waded ashore, he reflected that it was a novel experience: "A heliborne ship-to-shore movement where you still had to wade through the surf."

While the the commanders of Urgent Fury, were less than pleased with progress on D-day, they perhaps did not appreciate that they had had a very lucky day. Many things had gone very wrong, but they had secured Salines and Pearls and had suffered negligible casualties. And now the Marines were poised to rescue the governor general early on the 26th. Good fortune had done much to ensure the success of the first day's operations. At the end of D-day, things could easily have been much worse.

In the early hours of the 26th, Smith started his move on St George's. He was a



mere two kilometers north of the town, but there was only one road south, which hugged the shoreline and was completely dominated by steep slopes to the east. Smith, who thought there might be a strong Cuban force between himself and his objective, had really no option but to advance in single file along the road. With the recon platoon on foot in front, followed by two platoons in amtracs, backed up by five M60 tanks, Dobson's Company G snaked its way slowly through the darkness toward St. George's. Back at the LZ, a rear guard platoon awaited the arrival of Company F.

Opposition was so light that G Company was told to push on to Government House. Dobson and his men dismounted and advanced cautiously up the steep incline toward the governor general's house. At 0730 they linked up with the SEALs.

Meanwhile, Smith, with Company F, had arrived to the rear. Smith instructed Company G to seize Fort Frederick. Dobson

approached the fort carefully, detaching some men with machine guns to cover his final approach from some high ground about 300 meters north of the Fort. However, as the Marines neared the walls, they observed parties of men climbing down the back side, apparently abandoning the position. Company G was able to walk in unopposed. A large haul of weapons and ammunition was captured, including three 82mm mortars.

Company G's next task was to capture Richmond Hill prison. Just prior to their arriving, the Marines received some welcome news — the prison was undefended. A platoon was sent immediately, and the prison was secured by 0800 hours.

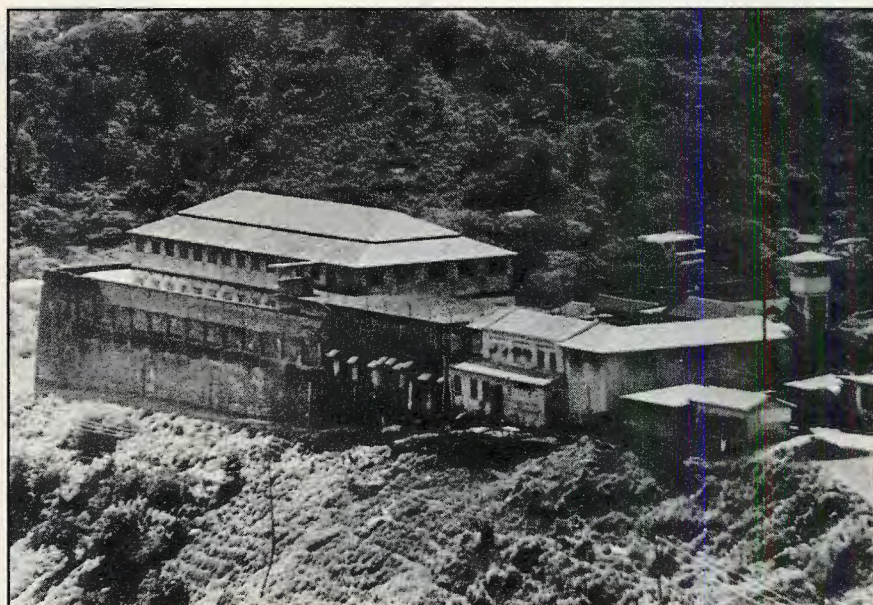
G company now began to advance along the road that followed the spine of Matne Jaloux ridge southward. They cautiously approached their next objective — Fort Adolphus. The troops could see it was occupied and was flying a flag that nobody rec-

we'll blow the hell out of it." Company G's approach revealed the building to be the home of the Venezuelan Embassy.

Company F moved up to clear St. George's. It was a silent city, with nobody on the streets, no vehicles about and no sign of any enemy forces.

Smith was now overextended. Company E was still based at Pearls, while the other two were fully committed in the town or on the surrounding ridges. He decided to form a temporary rifle company out of his artillery battery. So H Battery came ashore, leaving its artillery pieces on the ship. This freed Companies F and G for further operations.

Admiral Metcalf, pleased with the progress of the Marines, ordered them to continue south. The Marines linked up with forward elements of the 82nd Airborne Division on 28 October and continued mopping up operations until 31 October, when they returned to their ships to prepare for an



ABOVE: Richmond Hill prison, near St. George's, was secured by Marines from Company G on third day of intervention. Photo: Mark Adkin

LEFT: Soviet-made armored personnel carrier on its way to Fort Rupert. Attack led to murder of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and directly to U.S. intervention. Photo: AP/Wideworld

ognized. It looked as though a major assault might be needed to secure it. Smith obtained permission to use air support and naval gunfire to soften the defenses, and he also discussed with Dobson the deployment of TOW missiles and heavy machine guns. Nevertheless they used none of these heavy weapons; something stopped them. Smith later recalled, "The only thing that stopped us from going in and prepping it is that we had been so successful without shooting that I recall consciously making a decision: It's working. Let's keep doing it the way we're doing it." He then told Dobson, "Just scout it out. If you take any fire back off, and

assault on the nearby island of Carriacou.

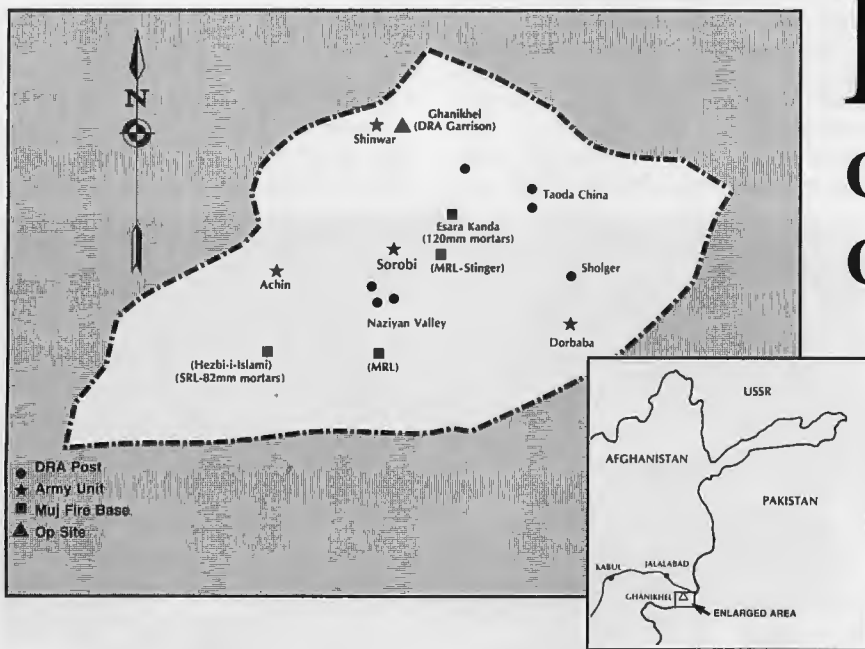
After the uncontested landing on Carriacou, Urgent Fury was over for the Marines. Although plagued from the start by unrealistic timings, piecemeal landings, overburdened infantry, command snarl-ups, unbelievably poor radio communications and lack of tactical intelligence, all of which were aggravated by having to operate on land with naval charts or tourist maps, the Marines had accomplished their initial mission, rapidly redeployed and again secured all their assigned objectives. Only two Marines, a pilot and co-pilot from one of HMM-261's Cobra gunships, were lost to enemy action.

By 3 November all ground combat elements of the 22nd MAU had backloaded to the ships of Amphibious Squadron 4 for transport to Lebanon. The shattered 24th MAU was relieved in place on 18 November. Taking up positions in Beirut, the 22nd MAU was the last Marine contingent to the Multi-National Force, suffering 13 killed before withdrawing in November 1984. ✕

...AND ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD

Ghanikhel Garrison Falls to Muj Mortars

Text & Photos
by
Masood Farivar



Map shows Ghanikhel garrison, secondary targets and enemy army and militia units, as well as locations of mujahideen firebases.

Editor's note: This is the first article written for SOF by an Afghan journalist. We found Farivar's dispatches refreshing, with an immediacy possible only for a reporter who really knows the language and the strength and determination of the people of Afghanistan.

COMMANDER Shafiq exchanges shouts on the radio with his five young spotters as the first round from a 120mm mortar flashes out of the barrel. It lands 200 meters from its target — the garrison of the 67th Regiment of the Afghan army, 7.5 kilometers away.

"Drop 100 meters!" the spotter radios. It takes less than two minutes to change the elevation. A second mortar, mounted 8 meters away, is also readied to fire its first round. Unlike their previous operations with the less noisy Chinese mortars, the crew put their fingers in their ears as two men sheltering behind a low rocky wall yank the cord which fires the round. Six of them are lucky enough to wear sound-suppressor earmuffs.

The spotter observes a dense puff of smoke next to the target and shouts for a

change in the elevation. But the exact impact point can't be seen through the rising dust.

Only two weeks earlier Commander Khalid of *Hezbi-i-Islami* (Islamic Party of Younis Khalis) had discussed the offensive with two of his counterparts in Nangarhar Province — Maulavi Sawabgul from *Hezbi-i-Islami* (Islamic Party of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) and Hafizul Haq from *Ittehad-i-Islami* (Islamic Alliance). Khalid, whose left foot was blown off three years ago in a land mine explosion, had informed the two commanders of the plan given to him by party authorities, saying they would use the new U.S.-supplied 120mm mortars. Hafizul Haq and Sawabgul, who had cooperated with Khalid in the past, agreed with the idea. The time was fixed, and each of the three commanders promised to provide a part of the military power.

As midnight arrives on 2 April, 30 mules carry two Spanish 120mm mortars and 110 rounds through the darkness toward the operation area in Esara Kanda. About 40 mujahideen march through the rocky terrain.

Walking through the night, the young

AFGHAN JOURNALIST

Masood Farivar is an Afghan journalist who has been a refugee in Pakistan for the last five years. Farivar studied journalism and English at the Afghan Media Resource Center in Peshawar, Pakistan. When he received a letter from a U.S. contact, SOF associate David Isby, asking him to get a story about the new mortar supplied by the United States to the resistance, he took matters into his own hands and arranged to travel into Afghanistan to get the story himself.

This is his first article published in the United States. We welcome our new Afghan colleague, and hope to have more stories from Masood Farivar in the future.

mujahideen armed with AKs talk about the operation ahead of them. Along the way, they stop at each village to drink water. They also give water to the mules. Each of the mules, which they say were supplied by Pakistan, carries six mortar rounds.

At 0400 hours the men and mules arrive in a desolate glen. They follow a narrow path leading into the valley. The area looks barren, but some fresh footprints indicate that someone has lately preceded them along this path. The boys head toward a spring, about 200 meters away, to make



ABOVE: Mujahid signaling to spotters to make sure the target has been correctly sighted.

BELOW: Awalgul (left) and one of the two assistant commanders use their binoculars to spot third explosion at Afghan army garrison.



will attack them.”

By 1100 hours the mortar crew is ready. Most of the ammunition has already been carried down for the two mortars. The crew consists of one commander, two assistant commanders who also adjust the level of the mortars, two men to alter the elevation and deflection, two gunners who actually fire the weapon, two loaders and five spotters. In addition, five young men are assigned to carry water from the spring in the casings of

wuzu (ablution) and say morning prayers. “This is a fantastic position,” says Awalgul with delight. “We are safe from enemy rockets, and we have supply approach ways open. And water is handy.”

Armed with binoculars, he and his four-man team scramble up to the top of the hill for range and direction finding. The others dig in the weapons.

Men from the other two parties arrive simultaneously and dig positions in the appointed places. Hafizul Haq’s men are stationed about 1.5 kilometers to the rear, a position used by the mujahideen many times in attacks against the army garrison. As promised in their first meeting with Commander Khalid, they have brought a Stinger anti-aircraft missile, along with four extra mortar rounds. A few meters away, a BM-12 MRL (Multiple Rocket Launcher) is mounted and sighted at the Afghan army garrison at Ghanikhel.

Another group of 50 men from this party, armed with three 82mm mortars, a 75mm recoilless rifle and RPG-7s, is positioned in the Siah Chob area to attack three posts near the garrison.

A *Hezbi-i-Islami* BM-1 SBRL (Single Barrel Rocket Launcher) is mounted in the Naziyan Valley to attack a militia unit at Achin, a 400-man-strong force that is one of two probable sources of reinforcements for the Afghan army garrison that is the primary target.

The primary target, an army garrison and the headquarters of Shinwar District, lies 7.5-8.2 kilometers from the mujahideen

launch site. The basic objective is to wipe out the garrison, dealing a tremendous blow to the shaky Afghan army troops.

For years, the garrison housed an estimated 1,000 men and was a major offensive unit of the communist army in Nangarhar Province, in the east of the country. But, according to one army deserter, it was partially evacuated and the soldiers sent to Kandahar. He said there were now only 300-400 soldiers at the garrison.

Secondary targets include three newly established posts in the Naziyan area, which harass mujahideen travel to Dowah Kholey. In addition, three small outposts in the Taoda China area are manned by local militias, who allow Pakistani tribesmen to transport weapons across the border. The two army and militia units in the Achin and Sorobi areas will be forced to cower under constant MRL and mortar fire, preventing them from sending reinforcements to Ghanikhel and other posts during the offensive.

While radioing to all commanders, operation commander Khalid stations an MRL crew of his own men in the Naziyan Valley. Their purpose is to keep enemy reinforcement and supply routes closed until the operation is over. There are about 40 men with him.

Limping about, he surveys the whole area and gives orders. Three small-arms groups from the different parties are also deployed to surround three 15-man outposts nearby.

“They are positioned only 500 meters from the posts,” Khalid says. “After we fire mortars and rockets at the posts, they

spent shells.

Awalgul, the head spotter, and his four men are on the hilltop. They are about 150 meters from the mortar position. He talks to Commander Shafiq and Operation Commander Khalid from time to time on his two-way radio.

The sun now burns in the clear sky and the mujahideen have already started to perspire, frequently drinking water. A cool breeze blows. They consider this an omen

Seeking cover behind rocks, Osman pulls the trigger. Another mujahid puts his fingers in his ears as the mortar makes a deafening sound.



of victory.

"This is an unusual operation," says Karimullah, 30, a mujahid who has come with the mortar crew from Pakistan. "Its significance is that the mujahideen can attack conventional enemy targets in the middle of the day."

Awalgul has two good reasons for the choice of a daytime attack: First, at night the bright flash of the mortar gives away their position, and second, it's difficult to spot the target at night. "Although there is some risk of aerial bombing in the daytime, we chose it, relying on the Stinger," he reasons.

It is now 1100 hours, and the operation starts with a round from an 82mm mortar in the Naziyan area. The gunner fires several rounds against the three government posts in the Naziyan Valley. Orders are radioed by Commander Khalid, who is controlling the operation.

Within minutes a volley of BM-12 rounds also falls near the army garrison in Sorobi. Security posts and the two military units respond but are apparently taken by surprise and unprepared to react seriously. With their constant-fire tactics, the mujahideen pin down the other posts. An exchange of rocket fire erupts. Afghan government mortars whistle overhead, exploding in the distance.

Seconds later, spotters report the result. Only single enemy rockets explode hundreds of meters to the left or right of the glen. Though some rockets explode nearby, Commander Shafiq maintains his position for more than 20 minutes. While rockets whoosh and mortars whistle overhead, the

men in the glen are talking and laughing and carrying more shells to the mortars.

Commander Shafiq looks at his watch and orders fire. Mortars are loaded. Lalagha and Osman grab hold of the 8-foot-long nylon rope. Four other members of the crew are wearing their earmuffs. The others put their fingers in their ears, sheltering behind rocks. Four strong hands are now gripping the trigger rope.

"Allah hu Akbar! [God is great]," the mujahideen cry out as the two men pull the rope. The mortars make a deafening sound. The smell of gunpowder drifts up. The 17-kilogram warhead travels toward the target so swiftly that it can't be seen in mid air.

Awalgul reports each explosion and estimates the distance to the target. Now he tells the commander to change the elevation by 100 meters.

"Kabul, Khyber! Kabul, Khyber!" Commander Shafiq radios.

"Kabul, Khyber! Ready! Ready!" the reply comes.

"What happened to the first round?"

"There is an explosion near the target. Drop 100 meters!"

With the aid of a protractor, the two men near the mortars make some adjustments. Two more rounds are fired, exploding beyond the target, this time closer — only 100 meters off. The base plate of the second mortar, about three feet in diameter, jerks out of position, but is fixed instantly by the crew.

"The recoil brings 120 tons of force on the ground," says Commander Shafiq with some exaggeration. "The first time we used this mortar [in Kunar Province] it made such

GUIDED BY ALLAH

Courageous Afghans firing Israeli bombs out of Spanish mortars were the combination of forces and technologies that reduced the communist garrison at Ghanikhel to dust.

The combination was made possible by American dollars, albeit somewhat late in the game.

From the beginning, the Afghans begged the United States for the military wherewithal to fight the Soviets on even terms, but career bureaucrats in Washington limited U.S. support both in terms of quantity and quality.

Through the early years of the war, 1979-1985, the bureaucrats argued successfully that:

1) We should not supply the Afghans with sophisticated weapons, because they were too complex for the Afghans to employ;

2) Provision of sophisticated weapons traceable to the West might upset the Soviets and provoke Soviet destabilization in Pakistan or escalation of conflicts among the various guerrilla clients of Moscow;

3) It was a waste, because the Afghans would lose in the long run anyway, and anything we provided them would merely prolong the war and the suffering.

As a consequence, until 1986 the Afghans received only Chinese and Egyptian copies of basic Soviet arms (AKs, RPGs, RPKs, DShKs) and a mixed lot of mines, explosives and mortars.

It was only prodding by Congress that pushed the CIA into escalating levels of support, and, finally, an improvement in the quality of the weapons.

Oerlikon 20mm cannons — for air defense of border depots and staging camps — were sent in 1986, highly effective Stinger surface-to-air missiles in late 1986, and the long-range 120mm Spanish mortars in late 1987. The Afghans gleefully unwrapped the goodies and went to work, smashing the naysayers' three arguments, along with numerous Soviet jets, helicopters and bases. The cost of Afghanistan in men and materiel climbed higher than the Soviets were willing to pay, and they ran up the white flag in 1988.

The Spanish Model M-84 mortar that smashed Ghanikhel was picked over

other 120mm models available in the west because the Spanish came up with improved technology to lighten the M-84 to less than its standard 85 kilogram weight. The bombs came from Israel. Called "WRAP rounds," they too represent an improvement over older ammunition for the 120mm.

Initially, only six mortars and a small quantity of shells were sent to the Afghans. Field deployment was delayed due to a regrettable accident in Pakistan in which a tube exploded when a Pakistani trainer double shotted. The M-84 tube can be transported with a shell in the tube and fired with a lanyard. The Pakistani forgot and dropped in a second round on top of one already in the tube.

The Afghans didn't make that mistake. Outside Kabul, at Bagram Air Base, the Afghans' first combat deployment of the Spanish 120mm produced great joy among the freedom fighters and fear in Moscow when one of the first rounds hit an ammunition truck. The subsequent secondaries destroyed 11 aircraft (mostly helicopters) and killed 60 Soviets.

It was truly a shot guided by Allah.

— Jim Graves

a deep bowl in the ground that no one believed it was done by the mortar."

Happy with his estimate and at being safe from enemy fire, Awalgul glances into his binoculars and talks to his friends. "This time we will hit it, *Inshallah* [God willing]," he murmurs.

Another 100-meter drop in elevation is radioed by the spotter. Gul Agha makes adjustments, and the mortars are reloaded. Commander Shafiq again orders fire.

Mortars boom, and the terrifying sound courses through every mujahid. As the rounds blast off, heading toward the target, the gunners shelter in a shallow "protective" position of about 2 square meters dug out behind each mortar. This is for fear of the mortar itself.

Although the possibility of the 120mm exploding is said to be out of the question, last year in Chaghasarai one of these weapons blew up in action, killing two mujahideen.

"A blast of the shell inside the barrel is usually caused by lack of proper care, keeping the ammunition in a hot barrel for too long, and up-side-down or double loading," Commander Shafiq warns his men.

Thirty minutes pass. More mortar rounds explode on the target. Spotters cheer at the sight of the explosions.

"The tank is blown up!" one of them shouts. He points at a cloud of black smoke mixed with rising dust. High explosive warheads blast near a T-62 tank which was spotted earlier, producing two loud reports.

Many mujahideen hurry to the top to see the explosion. A crowd throngs the flat area where the spotters are based. They exchange binoculars with one another, sighting the cloud of smoke rising over the explosion site.

With the crowd unheeding, suddenly a volley of ZPU (Soviet 14.5mm heavy machine gun) rounds strafes the area. Fortunately, everyone is safe. "Scatter! Run! Down! We've been spotted by the troops!" Awalgul shouts at the crew.

The crew and the mujahideen crawl down briskly to prepare for the next firing. For them it was an unusually fast aiming. With 60mm and 82mm mortars, mujahideen say they have to fire at least five rounds to spot and hit the target.

The barrage produced excellent results. Enemy rockets from the garrison are no longer posing a threat to the mujahideen. The MRL crew continues to fire at the garrison.

Loading resumes. Two mujahideen move more rounds to the mortars. Commander Shafiq orders the first mortar to fire some 10-15 rounds at the same target. Having fired only five rounds, the second mortar halts.

The high explosive ammunition causes great destruction. Structures over the top of the hillocks where the garrison is located collapse after a series of explosions. Now trees, which were hidden behind a tower and the buildings, can be seen. Single retaliatory shots still impact here and there, apparently coming from other militia posts

that are still resisting.

Suddenly, rockets roar over the glen and land near Hafizul Haq's position. Mujahideen say this position is known to the enemy.

"They are mistaking their position for ours. That is an old position. So we are lucky," Gul Agha says.

Troops backed by tanks and two MRLs might turn into a headache. Commander Shafiq exchanges shouts with Awalgul on his radio. Awalgul spots the new enemy MRL position at Yuawulasuma Wala — a small village near the district headquarters. Commander Shafiq orders two rounds to be fired against the area where, apparently, Soviet reinforcements have arrived.

"Two successful hits," Awalgul reports. Minutes pass, and there is no more fire from that direction. "The Russians have retreated," Gul Agha cheers.

The quota for the first mortar runs out, and Commander Shafiq asks Awalgul to spot the second target, headquarters of Shinwar District, 8.2 kilometers away — the maximum range of the mortar. The barrel is cleaned. "Turn 800 meters to the left!" Awalgul radios. He spots six security posts near a dense cluster of trees and bushes near the garrison.

Commander Shafiq orders the mujahideen to bring up the incendiary shells that have been used only intermittently so far. There are 25 left. The second mortar is prepared to fire the first incendiary round. As the first projectile heads toward the target, an arrow of luminous fire flows out of the barrel. The bright flash extends up to 3 feet from the muzzle.

"This flash can illuminate an area of 2 square kilometers at night. This is the bad point in this mortar, because the enemy locates you very easily," Awalgul says.

The action continues. Twenty-five rounds are fired. But this is no speedy firing. Commander Shafiq says there are two ways to fire. On automatic, up to 12 rounds can be fired. "But mujahideen don't fire on automatic — loading and firing — because of safety," he says.

Two mujahideen wearing white asbestos gloves clean the barrel with the aid of a steel brush. The inner part of the barrel is also



ABOVE: Firing 120mm mortar round at Afghan army garrison at Ghanikhel. Karimullah (in dug-in position) grimaces from powerful sound.

BELOW: Commander Shafiq standing beside one of the mortars before giving order to fire.



thoroughly cleaned and smoke stains are rubbed off. This is done after every 15-20 rounds.

The sound of explosions, amid dense smoke and fire, is heard constantly. Trees have already started to burn. Wild, rising flames engulf the six posts, and firing from that direction dies down. Now the flames appear through thick smoke.

By 1400 hours, the ammunition is depleted and the mortars halt. The other groups are apparently engaged with some of the posts. There is no need for the mortar crew to stay any longer in the glen. The barrage of enemy rockets and mortars that had stopped temporarily erupts again. Operation Commander Khalid is informed of the situation. He tells Shafiq the operation is almost over and that the crew must leave.

As the crew prepares to leave, new rounds of enemy rockets and mortars start to stream down. Rockets whoosh, exploding at a distance from the glen. The MRL crew at the back of the glen responds with a volley. Down in the glen, the mujahideen move briskly, loading mules with the two mortars and other equipment.

Cheering and singing, the caravan of

Continued on page 101

ATLACATL RECON

SOF Staffer on COIN Ops in Salvador

Text & Photos by Gene Scroft



WHEN this operation started, I thought it was going to be just another simple insertion. But then our 2.75-inch rockets and 7.62mm miniguns began to blast the Salvadoran hillside, and I knew we were going in hot. The Atlacatl's 12-man recon team, with yours truly in tow, came in on two UH-1 helicopters. Anxious to unass the huge, hovering targets as quickly as possible, we jumped off the skids while the birds were still 5 feet off the deck and immediately headed for higher ground. I appreciated the fact that a chopper hovered over us to support our move, but the artificial hailstorm created by his expended minigun brass made the going slightly uncomfortable (ever have hot brass go down your shirt?).

We took up positions at the top of a heavily wooded draw that the insurgents were using as an escape route off the mountain. There was a fierce exchange of gunfire further down the draw where the fleeing communists had run into our other fire team. My section wasn't firing at all — we couldn't even see the bad guys. Every time I heard an M203 fire in the distance, my heart sank. Damn, I was missing some great photographs!

The Gs were doing their best to reach the sanctuary of the Honduran border, which was marked by the Sumpil River, less than a kilometer away. Our NCO section leader got on the horn and expertly directed chopper fire into the path of the fleeing guerrillas. (To preserve their security, I won't name the members of the recon team.) After about 20 minutes, the lack of return fire indicated that the Gs were long gone, or dead. The birds were called off, and we began to search the area. At first I couldn't figure out why the soldiers preferred to fight their way through the tall grass rather than use the many trails that crisscrossed the area, but then I remembered that since 1985 more than 4,000 men have been injured by insurgent antipersonnel mines. I quickly got off the trail.

It didn't take us long to find a cache of food and eating utensils hastily hidden in the grass. We must have caught them while they were having chow. I was impressed by the professional manner in which the team approached the cache. They knew that such sites are often booby-trapped, so they care-

Trooper armed with M60 GPMG takes up a security position in a church bell tower along the Honduran border.

SCROFT ON CENTRAL AMERICA

SOF's Gene Scroft recently returned from several months combat reporting in Central America. In last month's "Peace Through Superior Firepower," he reported on the current situation in Guatemala. Here, Scroft presents his analysis of the military situation in El Salvador.

fully inspected each item for pull wires before handling it. A detailed list was then made of the items that were found: one sack of rice, one sack of sugar cane, eight plastic bowls, four large cooking pots with utensils and three large boxes of D-type batteries for radios. Calculating two tortillas for each G, we determined that there were about 15 communists on that hill when we landed — more personnel than we had in our entire team!

After taking what we wanted from the cache (I latched on to a spoon and some sugar cane), the food was scattered and the utensils destroyed with knives. No fire or explosives were used to destroy the supplies, because we wanted the insurgents to think that we had been extracted by the helicopters.

The Atlacatl battalion is considered one of the elite units of the Salvadoran army, and the commando (recon) section is the best of this elite group. Trained in the battalion commando school, these men conduct missions dressed as guerrillas so that they can infiltrate enemy areas. To enhance the deception, team members are allowed to wear their hair long and grow beards. Their mission is to gather intelligence on the enemy and fix his location, enabling a larger force to come in and do the killing. They, like all recon elements, are supposed to avoid direct firefights with the enemy, but night ambushes along infiltration routes and attacks against targets of opportunity are SOP for Atlacatl's commandos.

As soon as the cache was destroyed, the team changed into well-worn civilian clothes and baseball hats. The recon commander donned a red beret, determined to be marked as the commander no matter what army he was supposed to represent. They still wore their rucksacks and LBE (Load Bearing Equipment), but since enemy forces carry similar equipment this was considered acceptable. I put on a civilian T-shirt and donned a baseball cap that I had found in the cache. If asked, I was to be a journalist accompanying a G unit in the field, which was, now that I think of it, pretty close to the truth. The transformation was amazing. You would be hard put to find a better looking group of insurgents anywhere.

Shortly after we started down the draw, we stumbled onto an intelligence jackpot; a guerrilla radio code book with a complete list of frequencies was just lying on the trail. This was no fly-by-night notepad. It was a typewritten, bound book of about 30 pages. The FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) are no slouches when it comes to communications. At first we couldn't understand how they could be so careless as to drop this important information on the trail, but upon closer examination we discovered that the book had a 5.56 bullet hole shot clean through it. Blood on the surrounding foliage indicated that the round hit more than just the book. One of the soldiers said that a guerrilla had gone



Lt. Col. Julio Grijalua, commander of the Atlacatl Battalion, armed with M60 machine gun and CAR-15 in his lap, inspects the perimeter around La Laguna in Chalatenango Province.

down during the firefight, and his comrades threw him on a horse and took off down the mountain. He must have been the G holding the book. Christ, I would have dropped it too.

We spent the daylight hours in concealed positions, silently observing the surrounding roads and villages. More than one of our hides was marked by the initials FMLN carved on trees and scratched into rocks, telling us that the bad guys had been there before us.

To avoid detection, we moved only at night, and this team conducted some of the best night movements that I have ever seen. One night was so dark that you literally couldn't see your hand in front of your face. It was raining sheets of water, and if it weren't for the intermittent flashes of lightning, I would have had no idea where I was. Only one man in the group had Ranger Eyes (strips of fluorescent tape on the back of his cap), so I prudently placed myself right behind him in the column. Even with the eyes I had to grab his ruck during halts to make sure that he didn't move on without me. During most night movements it isn't difficult to maintain contact, because you can hear the man in front of you breaking brush, but in a heavy jungle downpour you can't hear anything. I don't know what sixth sense kept these men together, but the group managed to maintain contact during the entire movement.

Our task earlier that day had been to observe a village that was considered an insurgent strong point. I was under the impression that we were to bypass the village during the night and set up an ambush on one of its access roads. You can imagine my surprise later that night when a flash of

lightning showed that we were in the middle of the town. The patrol leader had decided to take a short cut through town to get to the ambush site. It was a risky decision, but the weather was so bad and the movement conducted so professionally that we passed unobserved. The dogs didn't even bark at us.

Our ambush position that night was located behind a stone wall overlooking the main road into the village. Two farmers walked through the kill zone at about 2100 hours. They were talking about the American who was traveling with the guerrillas, oblivious to the fact that a Claymore mine and 12 M16s were pointed right at them. Our snickers almost gave away our position.

On the fourth day of the patrol we prepared for extraction. Dressed as we were, some trigger-happy fly-boy would probably mistake us for the other side, so we changed back into fatigues. After a small LZ was cleared, the men began applying camouflage paint to their faces. This was odd, because we had conducted the entire operation without facial camouflage (the Gs don't wear face paint), and it seemed to me to be unnecessary to cammie up for a ride back to HQ. Seeing my confusion, the troops explained that it is an Atlacatl tradition to be camouflaged on insertion and extraction, even if the mission was conducted without it. This is definitely a war-paint mentality, but it fostered a sense of aggression within the unit. It's foolish to complain about it — you can't argue with success.

Everyone was in good humor on the ride back. I think that the team realized that even though no enemy were encountered the mission had been a job well-done, and Atlacatl's commandos had lived up to their reputation for excellence.

The Atlacatl wasn't my first experience with the Salvadoran armed forces. When I first arrived in El Salvador, I jumped with their battalion of *paracaidistas* (airborne). The *paracaidistas* are part of Salvador's air force, as are all of their helicopters. Unlike most units, the paras are not assigned to any specific area but are used as a strike force at the national level. The training jump was conducted from a C-123 into a large field along the coast. The jumpmaster was the unit commander, Major Rene Hurtado. The lift consisted of basic static line jumpers equipped with T-10 and MC-1 parachutes, who would jump first, and jumpers who would static jump some square rigs at a higher altitude.

The first thing I noticed about the operation was its informality. Compared to an American military jump it was a party. It always amazed me how the U.S. military can turn an enjoyable thing like a parachute jump into absolute drudgery. Safety has to be maintained, of course, but jumps should be conducted the way the Salvadorans do it, with humor and camaraderie. Chuting up was relaxed, with the jumpmasters joking with the soldiers. Once on board, the jumpmasters gripped bayonets in their teeth and growled, while the troops responded with shouts of "paracaidista." Everyone was

having too good a time to worry about the thousand and one things that can kill you when you exit a perfectly good airplane at 1,500 feet. Once everyone was under canopy and the soldiers realized that they weren't going to die on the ol' drop zone, cries of "paracaidista" once more filled the sky. These men shared the camaraderie and morale of airborne soldiers the world over, and it was obvious why they are considered

one of the elite units in the Salvadoran armed forces.

I wasn't there, however, solely to be a member of a fun jump. I was there to see these men in combat. When I asked Maj. Hurtado about it, he didn't hesitate for a moment.

"You want to go with us in combat? Good! Be here tomorrow with all your gear." The major is not a man to screw

around.

Our mission was to patrol an area in the department of Cabanas that is considered heavily infiltrated by the communists. Our major area of concern was the returnee camp of Santa Marta. Santa Marta is one of the many camps that have recently sprung up in El Salvador for refugees who are returning from Honduras. These camps are usually located near the border and are the

FIVE GUERRILLA FACTIONS OF THE FARABUNDO MARTI NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

POPULAR LIBERATION FORCES (FPL)

The Popular Liberation Forces was founded by Salvador Cayetano Carpio, known as "Marcel," in 1970. It has been led by Leonel Gonzalez since Cayetano Carpio's suicide following an internal dispute in which his second-in-command, Melida Anaya Montes, known as "Ana Maria," was assassinated in Managua in 1983. The FPL once won the largest guerrilla faction, but now its 1,500-2,000-man combatant force lags behind the People's Liberation Army (ERP). Its Central Command is made up of more than 25 commanders. Troops are organized in elite "vanguard" units, less skilled rural "guerrilla columns," and "urban front" command groups. An urban front commander took responsibility for the first killing of an American official on 25 May 1983.

Montes, second-in-command of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), was murdered in Managua, Nicaragua, on 6 April 1983. She was stabbed with an ice pick dozens of times, and her throat was slit. Her murderers were lieutenants of her boss, Carpio, then the most important leader of the FMLN and the father of the revolution in El Salvador. When Carpio, who was in Libya soliciting assistance from Muammar Khadaffi, returned and discovered who was responsible for her death, he reportedly committed suicide. Carpio was buried in Nicaragua, but the violent revolution in El Salvador continued despite the death of its principal advocate.

Leonel Gonzalez became head of the FPL after Carpio's death in 1983. Little is known about his background, but he is a committed Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary. In an interview with Western journalists in late 1985, he stated the insurgents' intention to form a single Marxist-Leninist party to lead the revolution. He defended guerrilla terrorism as a part of their "prolonged popular war" strategy, defended the killing of U.S. Embassy Marine security guards, and said that embassy personnel were

legitimate targets for assassination.

PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP)

The People's Revolutionary Army, which was formed in 1972 as a university-based organization made up largely of Marxist student radicals, has the greatest military strength of the guerrilla factions, with approximately 2,000 armed combatants. Its leader, Joaquin Villalobos, is considered the insurgents' most able and ruthless tactician. In 1985 the ERP was responsible for many mayoral kidnappings that stripped much of the eastern region — where it maintains a stronghold — of its democratically elected officials.

Unlike the Popular Liberation Forces, the ERP traditionally has eschewed "political" work (organizing and influencing groups of people) in favor of military operations as a means of toppling the government. Consequently, the ERP does not have a base of popular support and is only marginally involved in the operations of FMLN labor, student, and human rights front groups in San Salvador. The ERP operates Radio Venceremos, one of two clandestine stations broadcasting insurgent propaganda.

In 1975, the Salvadoran ERP underwent a bitter factional power struggle. The climax came on 10 May 1975, when Roque Dalton — poet, committed revolutionary, and leader of the losing faction — was executed. His murderer was Villalobos, according to an interview with Ernesto Jovel in the Mexican newspaper *Proceso*, 6 October 1980.

Joaquin Villalobos, was born on 27 June 1951, in San Salvador. As a university student, in 1971, he became a member of the executive council of the General Association of Salvadoran University Students (AGEUS). A number of FMLN members formerly belonged to AGEUS, which continues to be a leading instrument for FMLN destabilization actions against the government.

Villalobos was an early member of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), founded in 1972 by radical university students. After the murder of Dalton in 1975, Villalobos, the unchallenged ERP leader, planned and participated in dozens of kidnappings, murders, robberies, bombings and other acts of terror.

He was the principal architect of the

guerrillas' strategy of repudiating the civilian/military junta, formed after the coup against President Romero in October 1979. Villalobos saw that fundamental political, economic, and social reforms enacted by the junta endangered the revolutionary movement. Therefore, he directed ERP urban cadres to promote violence in order to provoke repression by the government. It was a strategy that, although very costly in terms of lives, contributed to the destruction of the junta, casting doubt on the possibility of non-violent reform and bringing thousands of new recruits into the guerrilla movement. In a very real sense, Villalobos is personally responsible for the destruction of the political center in El Salvador in the early 1980s and the resulting unrestrained violence from both the far right and far left.

With the suicide of Salvador Cayetano Carpio in 1983, Villalobos assumed the mantle of the supreme leader of the FMLN. He remains the most powerful guerrilla leader and is the alliance's principal strategist and spokesman.

ARMED FORCES OF NATIONAL RESISTANCE (FARN)

The Armed Forces of National Resistance, founded in 1975 by dissident ERP members after the murder of poet and revolutionary Roque Dalton by the ERP leadership, is one of the most politically sophisticated factions. Today, Jose Eduardo Sancho Castaneda, known as "Fernan Cienfuegos," commands the FARN and its political wing, the National Resistance (RN). The FARN has 1,000 combatants, but its strength is in infiltrating and controlling labor, student, human rights, and other civic organizations.

Fernan Cienfuegos was born on 6 March 1947. An early advocate of violent revolution, he spent his student years organizing clandestine student, worker and peasant revolutionary cells in San Vicente, El Salvador's fourth largest city. In 1971, he became a director of "The Group," an early revolutionary organization that obtained arms, vehicles and money for the revolutionary cause.

During the mid-1970s, he worked with FARN leader Ernesto Jovel to build the FARN's military and political organization. He assumed the mantle of

product of civilian organizations like the Christian Committee of the Displaced in El Salvador, which has been identified as an FMLN front by high-ranking communist defector Miguel Castellanos. Documents captured by the army in 1987 detailed an FMLN project called the Cacho Plan. The plan envisions the use of these returnee camps as a source of recruitment and support for the FMLN, which amounts to an

admission that they have lost popular support within the country.

Our platoon was inserted near Santa Marta by helicopters. The area had been controlled by the guerrillas for many years, so I expected that the locals would be thoroughly indoctrinated with FMLN propaganda and hostile to our presence. I was way off the mark. The people in the established villages along the route to the returnee camp

FARN leadership in 1980, following the death of Jovel under mysterious circumstances.

CENTRAL AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' PARTY (PRTC)

The Central American Revolutionary Workers' Party began as a regional movement in Costa Rica in 1976. The Salvadoran branch has been the most active. Francisco Jovel Urquilla, known as "Roberto Roca," has been the only leader of the PRTC, the smallest of the guerrilla groups with an estimated 500 or fewer combatants in its armed wing, the Armed Forces of Revolutionary Popular Liberation (FARLP). The PRTC does not appear to be an effective military force, but it has a high profile because of its terrorist activities. On 19 June 1985 urban cadres of the PRTC murdered 13 people at a sidewalk cafe in San Salvador, including two private U.S. citizens and four U.S. Marine security guards from the U.S. Embassy. In 1985, the PRTC's third-ranking leader, Nidia Diaz, was captured but later freed as part of the exchange for the kidnapped daughter of President Duarte.

Urquilla was born in 14 February 1948 in Usulután, El Salvador. Like many of his fellow FMLN leaders, he became involved in the radical movement while attending the National University, eventually becoming a vice president of the General Association of Salvadoran University Students (AGEUS).

Throughout the early 1970s, he worked to form the nucleus of what later became the Salvadoran chapter of the PRTC. He has been the PRTC's leader since 1976.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF EL SALVADOR (PCES)

The Communist Party of El Salvador and its military wing, the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL), is one of the most important guerrilla factions because of its close ties to the Soviet Union and Cuba. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the Communist Party did not advocate revolutionary violence, but changed its policy in 1979 at the urging of Cuban and Soviet advisers. Its chief, Shafik Handal, is the oldest insurgent leader, a political spokesman for the

FMLN in communist countries, and apparently a key strategist on political matters.

The FAL has only some 500 combatants, but it is active, assuming responsibility for the late 1985 kidnappings of President Duarte's daughter, Ines, and Civil Aviation Director Colonel Omar Napoleon Avalos. Handal was a leading figure in procuring arms for the failed January 1981 "final offensive."

Handal is the long-time General Secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCES). He also is the unchallenged leader of the PCES's military wing, the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL). Handal was born in Usulután, El Salvador, on 13 October 1930. In 1950 he joined the PCES, eventually becoming General Secretary in 1970.

Handal follows the line laid down by the Soviet Union in its relations with the international communist movement. For example, throughout most of the 1970s, Handal espoused non-revolutionary change and communist participation in diverse political systems. During this time, although the PCES was outlawed in El Salvador, it participated in electoral politics through its front, the National Democratic Union (UDN).

In 1979, Handal and Soviet leaders realized that, with revolutionary political activity increasing in El Salvador and the armed guerrilla/terrorist movement gaining momentum, the PCES was in danger of being rendered politically irrelevant. The decision was made to form the Armed Forces of Liberation, and the PCES entered the armed struggle against the government.

Although the FAL remains one of the weakest of the insurgent armies, the PCES/FAL is one of the most influential factions because of Handal's — and the party's — close contacts with the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc. It was Handal who, in the early 1980s, succeeded in acquiring significant amounts of arms and ammunition from communist states such as Vietnam and terrorist movements around the world.

Today, Handal is probably the second most influential leader in the FMLN. He is unquestionably now irrevocably committed to the violent overthrow of the government of El Salvador.



After weeks in the field, this Atlacatl soldier is in no mood for guerrilla high jinks.

treated us as liberators, not intruders. During a lunch break, I paid a woman for the use of her mud stove. While I ate my chow, the woman's daughter came up and gave me back the money. The soldiers didn't know that I had given it to her, so she couldn't have been afraid of their reaction; she just didn't mind our using her home. We were amigos. This personal incident erased all my doubts about the people's loyalty.

The situation changed dramatically when we entered Santa Marta. At the edge of town we received some sporadic sniper fire from the village. Luckily, no one was hit, and the platoon quickly fanned out to try to locate the insurgents. I was impressed by the fact that the troops didn't fire into the village. They had every right to do so, since that's where the shots came from, but they didn't overreact. From my point of view, this was a dramatic demonstration that the army understood the importance of popular support in this type of conflict and a clear rebuke to those who claim that the Salvadoran army consists of ill-disciplined murderers.

The villagers' hatred was palpable. This was clearly a Cacho village. The platoon leader, Lieutenant Jose Alvarenga, greeted one old woman with a polite "Buenos días," only to be answered with a rude, "What type of question is that to ask." The lieutenant then asked one woman where her husband was. She told us that she didn't have one. One look at the extended family of old people and rug-rats scurrying about in her house told us that she was lying. Her husband was undoubtedly in the hills with the guerrillas. I have to give the lieutenant credit. No matter how rude or uncooperative the villagers were, he kept his cool. Hell, if I were in charge, I would have probably arrested the whole bunch and set the pacification program back five years.



I wondered if all of this tact and patience wasn't just a show for my benefit. After all, the army's reputation was quite different from what I was seeing. To try to find out, I hid inside a storage shed and watched the army interact with the people through my telephoto lens. There wasn't any difference. The troops didn't bother anyone and were extremely polite — more so than I would have been under the circumstances.

On our walk through the village we ran into an American. He said that he lived there and represented the church organization that sponsored the village. Since these so-called religious groups were often fronts for the FMLN, we didn't trust him further than we

Sgt. Jose Baltazar points out a terrain feature from a hill overlooking the Honduran border.

could spit. He should have been detained for further questions at headquarters, but the government's rules did not allow it. With these types of constraints, it's no wonder that the war has dragged on for so long.

When we moved to our overnight positions, we discovered a camouflaged tunnel next to the road. I accompanied the unit's tunnel rat down the hole, but it was empty except for about 50 bats. One thing was certain, though. The tunnel meant that the enemy were somewhere near. Our over-

night positions were located on a series of small hills surrounding the village. The lieutenant was using good tactics. By surrounding the village rather than staying in it, he could interdict any enemy traffic without exposing his troops to the odd grenade that might find its way into their village huts.

About dusk, it began to rain like crazy. The lieutenant sent out a two-man recon patrol to check a slightly higher hill to the north. The team was gone for only a couple of minutes when it flushed out a couple of Gs who made a beeline toward the road. The rain made it impossible to see much beyond a few feet to the front, but the guerrillas' white shirts gave us something to shoot at.

The lieutenant managed to fire only one round from his M16 before it blew up, sending the ejection-port dustcover into the face of a soldier standing next to him. (I hate to mention this fact, because it will only give sustenance to all of the M16-haters out there. I happen to like the system, as do most of the active soldiers and guerrillas I meet, but the weapon did malfunction on this occasion.) We didn't know how effective our fire was, but none of them dropped, so I doubt if we hit any of them.

For some reason the lieutenant decided not to pursue. I think this was a bad decision. The only complaint I have with the way the Salvadorans run their war is that they don't pursue the enemy as aggressively as they should. Every effort is made to find and destroy the main body of the insurgents, but small fleeing groups are seldom followed. At this stage in the war the guerrillas only have about 6,000 combatants and can ill-afford any casualties. The army should

IDENTITY PROBLEMS

El Salvador is a country with an identity problem. From 1931 to 1979 the country was ruled by military dictators noted for their brutal suppression of dissent. The current president of the country, Jose Napoleon Duarte, understands the violence of his country's political history from firsthand experience. In 1972, after he was deprived of an election victory by fraud, a coup attempt was made on his behalf. The attempt failed, and Duarte was tortured by the military and forced into exile. He returned in 1979 after a civilian-military junta overthrew the then-ruling dictator, and in 1984 was elected as the first civilian president in 50 years. With such a background, it's not surprising that the Duarte administration is extremely sensitive to charges of human rights violations.

This is where El Salvador's problem lies. A country with a reactionary past is now trying to be the model of liberal democracy in the midst of a civil war. Something has to give.

Examples of El Salvador's liberal democracy vs. nation-at-war dilemma abound. The Revolutionary Democratic

Front (FDR) is the political front for the FMLN guerrillas and is allowed to function legally in El Salvador. This is amazing, considering the fact that the FDR formally allied itself with the FMLN in 1981. No matter how much the government of El Salvador wishes to be a free and open democracy, allowing an organization dedicated to the destruction of democracy to operate in the country is suicidal. Could you imagine the U.S. government during World War II allowing a Nazi party openly allied with Adolf Hitler to operate freely in the United States? Fat chance.

The industrial revolution created the popular myth that unrestrained labor unions are somehow synonymous with freedom. This myth is alive and well in El Salvador. The UNTS (National Unity of Salvadoran Workers) is the FMLN's labor union. While it represents only a very small percentage of the total labor force, it is extremely vocal. It often abuses the government's leniency and stages violent anti-government protests, in which cars are burned and people are attacked. Little is done by the authorities, because the right to demonstrate is considered sacred in a democracy. What

the democratically inexperienced Salvadoran government has forgotten, however, is that it is the right to peacefully demonstrate that is sacrosanct. Violence is criminal in every society.

Judicially, they are just as naive. In reaction to the days when people would merely disappear when they ran afoul of the authorities, the administration has mandated that every detained person, including suspected guerrillas, must be presented in court with all of the evidence against him. Obviously it is impossible for a military commander in the field to comply without spending all of his time in court, so many suspected guerrillas are simply released. Even Britain, an established and respected democracy, found it necessary to hold suspects without trial in the Malayan emergency. And if I recall correctly, they won that one.

The government of El Salvador has refused to recognize the seriousness of its situation. No one wants to see the return of El Salvador's bloody past, but the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. El Salvador is at war, and the country cannot be run as if it were at peace.

conduct its operations as if they were big game hunts, expending every effort to achieve even one kill. Like trophy game, guerrillas aren't encountered all that often. When they are, it's a shame not to bag at least one.

About midnight, we heard a motorcycle leaving Santa Marta. The only man in the village who owned a motorcycle was the American. He was probably helping the insurgents get out of Dodge, but there was no way to prove it. Damn these restrictions! If the government doesn't reconcile its concept of human rights with the need to survive as a free nation, it could lose the whole shebang.

A few days later, the lieutenant decided to move back to Santa Marta from his base in the town of Victoria. We conducted a night movement in order to surround Santa Marta at dawn. We hoped to trap a few insurgents in the village before they had a chance to escape. All access to the village was cut at about an hour before dawn. We entered the village at first light, but didn't find any armed men. Again, the men displayed the same extreme courtesy to the civilians that they had shown before, this time after an all-night march! Outstanding discipline.

After five days of patrolling without contact, it was clear that the enemy had left the area, but someone at higher headquarters wanted us to stay three more days. What this meant was that everyone would sit around the Victoria headquarters and vegetate. This was just fine with the Salvadorans, but it drove me crazy. It just so happened that Victoria had a beat-up old bus that provided service to San Salvador, and I decided to take it. The lieutenant, however, wasn't crazy about the idea. He said that the insurgents often stopped buses, and since my safety was his responsibility, I couldn't leave. The lieutenant is a great guy, but I wasn't about to spend three days in a hammock looking at flies on the wall. I politely but firmly explained that I was a civilian, and I could do exactly as I pleased — one of the benefits of being an independent operator. Only half joking I told him that he would have to arrest me or shoot me in the back if he wanted to keep me there. Luckily for me, he didn't use either of those options.

I had another slight problem to overcome. Both sides have a tendency to shoot people in camouflage fatigues riding alone on buses, and I didn't have any civilian clothes with me. I ended up traveling shoeless — jungle boots don't go over well with the combatants either — and wearing a pair of running shorts with a brown military T-shirt. I stuffed my ruck and LBE in a sack and shoved it under my seat. If the Gs stopped the bus, I would pull the harmless traveling student routine and pray that they wouldn't find the gear.

About 20 kilometers down the road we

Trooper pulls security duty while awaiting his liftout on an LZ high above the village of La Laguna.





sional NCO corps. He joined the army when the war broke out eight years ago, so all of his military experience has been in a wartime army. He has never learned the bad habits of a bureaucratic peacetime army. He moved his unit quickly and never by the roads. On halts he, and every leader that I observed in El Salvador, immediately sent out security. A professional NCO corps is not part of the military history of the region, but the Salvadorans have created a very good one in a remarkably short period of time. Though our week-long patrol didn't turn up any guerrillas, it wasn't for lack of trying. Soon after the patrol returned, a commando-recon team was sent out to try to scare up some bad guys. That little adventure is described in the opening paragraphs of this story.

The Atlacatl's field headquarters was in the town of La Laguna, a town that had been controlled by the Gs for years. I was again impressed by the friendliness of the general population toward the military. The longer the government has control of an area, the better its relationship seems to be with the people. Definitely a good sign. Away from



were stopped, but not by the Gs — it was an army checkpoint. Hell, I didn't even have my passport! Always expect the unexpected in Central America. I didn't know these troops, and I realized that they would mark me as a gringo FMLN supporter. When cornered, the best thing to do is to take the offensive, so I jumped off the bus and started pumping the team leader's hand. I introduced myself as a *Soldier of Fortune* reporter, but it was my luck to be talking to the only Salvadoran soldier who had never heard of the magazine. Having failed to impress him with my journalistic credentials, I immediately took on an air of confident authority and began dropping the names of commanders that I knew, and some that I didn't. This didn't seem to change his attitude in the least. I saw that my chances were rapidly disappearing, so I took a big gamble and told him to call his boss on the radio if he didn't believe me. The bluff worked. No military subordinate wants to get his superior involved if it's not absolutely necessary, and I was allowed to get back on the bus. The soldiers became

Yeah, the FMLN was here, but the government troops in the foreground make it clear who is in control now.

pretty concerned when they found my gear, but they shied away from confronting me again, because I seemed to be sure that I had the authority to be there. Satisfied, they let the bus continue. I laughed all the way back to San Salvador.

Within a week, I was in the field again, this time with the Atlacatl Battalion. They were conducting operations along the Honduran border, in the department of Chalatenango. Their tactical expertise was the best I've seen in Central America. I traveled with Lieutenant Jaime Guerreo's platoon, which was responsible for the ground along the border with Honduras, while another platoon patrolled the top of the ridgeline. The plan was to trap the guerrillas between the two forces. It was a good plan and was forcefully executed.

The lead element of our platoon was commanded by Sergeant Jose Baltazar. Sergeant Baltazar explodes the myth that the Salvadoran army doesn't have a profes-

the troops, I talked to an old man who had lived his entire life in the town. He told me that everyone was happy to have the army there. La Laguna hadn't had telephone service since the FMLN had destroyed the office in 1981, but now that the army was there, the system was being rebuilt, and service would be restored within the year. He explained that with the guerrillas gone the school, health clinic and town government were operating again. He told me that no one wanted the insurgents back. His attitude was reflected in the smiles of the townfolk whenever the soldiers walked past. I wondered if the people of Santa Marta would react the same once the army had an opportunity to establish a presence there. Given time, my bet is that they would.

El Salvador's situation surprised me. I was prepared to expect the worst when I first arrived. If you listen to civilians in San Salvador, you get the impression that the military isn't aggressively fighting the war, because it wants to continue to receive American bucks. This simply is not true.

Unfortunately, the press lives in San Salvador, and what's said in that city is what is

printed. This reporting technique is about as accurate as a foreign journalist trying to determine what's going on in the United States by following the Washington cocktail circuit. For one thing, American military aid is given not in cash but in equipment. Contrary to popular belief, Salvadoran generals do not receive million-dollar checks to do with what they please. Corruption exists (this is Central America, after all), but its extent is exaggerated by the rumor mongers.

The most important evidence of the military's approach to the war can be found in the field. I was with those troops, and I can assure you that they and their leaders, men like Maj. Hurtado and Colonel Grijalva, are not trying to avoid combat. On the contrary, they are doing everything possible to make contact with and destroy the enemy. They also fully understand and carry out the civil action programs necessary to win a war like this one.

The other popular myth, propagated by

**Atlatl sniper sights in his
Leatherwood-scoped G-3 across a corn field.**

motion pictures such as *Salvador*, is that the government consists of nothing but right-wing death squads. Anyone who takes the time to learn the history of President Duarte, a man who was himself tortured by reactionaries, knows the falsehood of this belief. In fact, efforts to create an instant liberal democracy have caused the government to allow freedoms that even the industrialized democracies would shudder to contemplate in a civil war environment.

Salvador's military is too professional and well-equipped to be overrun by the guerrillas, and the government is well on its way to securing the entire country. However, political ill-discipline in San Salvador, a rise in reactionary terror or the termination of U.S. support could all still destroy the progress that has been made in this beautiful land. For the sake of freedom in all of the Americas, we as Americans must not allow this to happen. Many tears have been shed, and much blood has been spilled to create and preserve a free and democratic El Salvador. To turn our backs on this country now would be to curse the memory of those who have fallen and doom our future. ✕

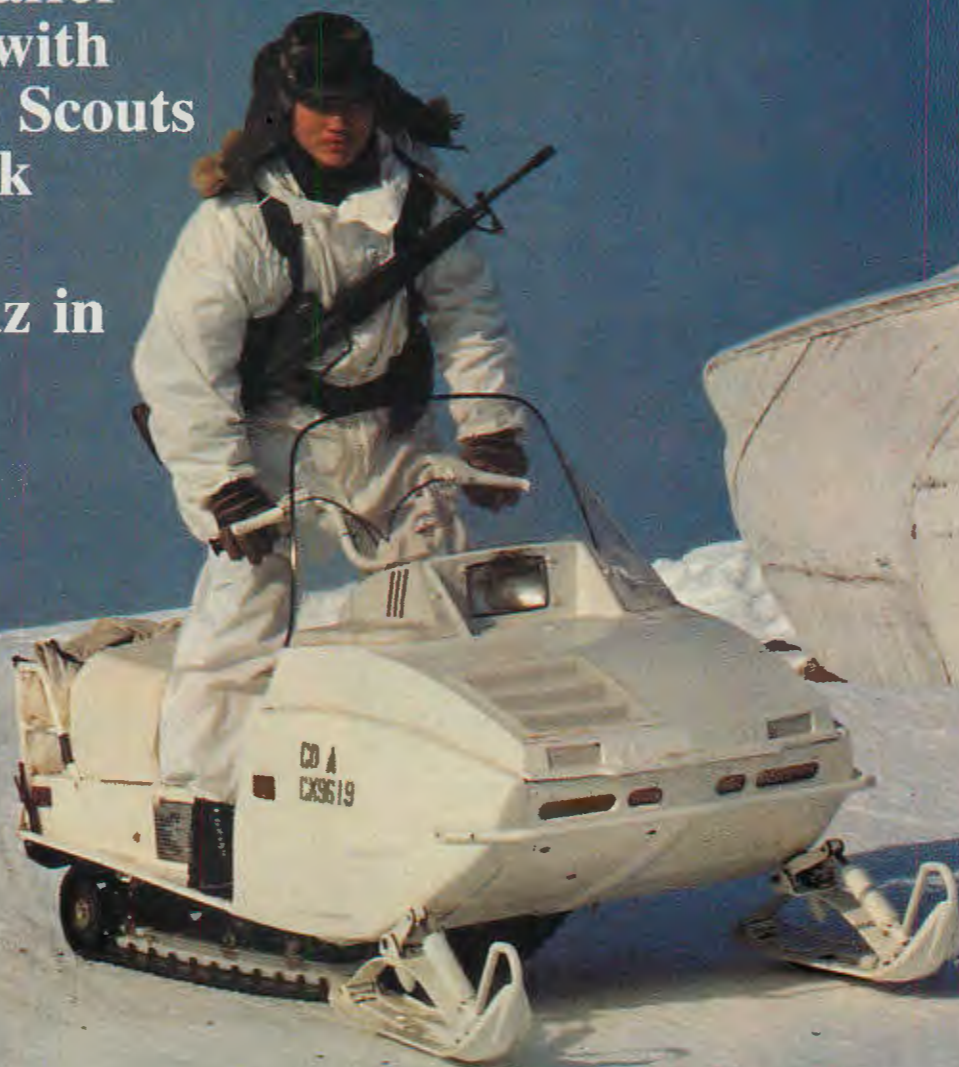


SOF EXCLUSIVE

RED RUMORS RISING

SOF Staffer
Teams with
Eskimo Scouts
to Track
Soviet
Spetsnaz in
Alaska

by Tom Bates



Author's note — I would like to thank Adjutant General John Schaeffer and Lieutenant Michael L. Hallett of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in Anchorage, Alaska, for their time and assistance in arranging my visits to the Eskimo Scout facilities on St. Lawrence Island and Little Diomed. Major Fred Haynes and Sergeant First Class Renard Nichols of the 1st Eskimo Scout Battalion in Nome were also of great assistance to me. Most importantly, I wish to thank the many native Eskimos whom I met in northwest Alaska for their generosity and help during my stay. They are without a doubt the most friendly and patriotic people I have ever met. They value personal freedom and understand that without it nothing else makes any difference. — Tom Bates

Snowmachines increase Scout mobility on roadless winter terrain. All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are used in brief summer months. Photo: Tom Bates

I believe in the future, he who holds Alaska will hold the world, and I think it is the most important strategic place in the world. — General William "Billy" Mitchell, Congressional testimony, 1935

SAVOONGA, April 1988 — As I yanked stalactites of ice off my beard while trudging back toward the Alaska Air Guard C-130 parked on the frozen runway, I turned my head and took what I thought was a last glance at Savoonga. Half buried in

the white arctic cement the Eskimos euphemistically call "snow," this centuries-old whaling settlement clings desperately to the wind-swept northwestern shore of St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea (see map) — a region more resistant to human beings than any I've ever seen.

But unforgiving terrain, gale-force winds, and sub-zero weather that on a good day can turn exposed flesh to ice in seconds aren't the only threats with which the Eskimos here have to contend. Just 35 miles to the west lies the equally bleak Siberian coast of the Soviet Union, whose military establishment has an unrelenting interest in America's last frontier.

But what possible interest could Soviet military strategists have with this barren sliver of an island of 650 Eskimos that stands between Siberia and the Alaskan mainland? I was about to find out.

A reception line of Alaska Scout officers were standing by the steps of the C-130, eager to take me back to Nome. I was one of several news media personnel they were escorting to the two Scout headquarters on St. Lawrence Island for briefings. Unknown to me, my scheduled departure was about to be abruptly delayed.

A few feet from the steps of the C-130, I was quickly diverted from my path by an Eskimo elder, Winny James. I had met him earlier that morning when visiting the Scout headquarters at Gambell, the only other settlement on the island, located northwest of Savoonga on the Northwest Cape. As the mayor of Gambell and member of the original Alaska Territorial Guard in World War II, Winny took an interest in my investigation of reports about alleged Soviet Spetsnaz activity in Alaska. Without warning, he suddenly broke off his conversation with the officers, whipped around, and said to me in a forced whisper, "Kenny's waiting for you. Go!"

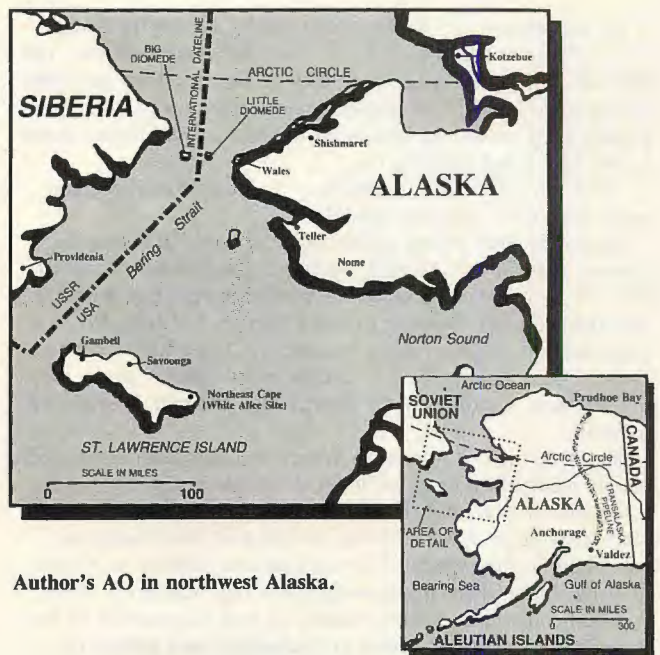
With this, someone from behind grabbed my forearm, pulled me onto a snowmachine ("snowmobile," to us non-natives), and took off at full throttle back toward Savoonga. Winny had set up this "pick-and-roll" perfectly. Positioning himself between me and my military escorts, with the snowmachine driver racing up behind me at the last second before I was supposed to board the plane, anyone trying to prevent my sudden departure would have had to climb over the stocky Eskimo mayor to do it.

My snowmachine driver, obviously following orders from Winny to get me from point A to point B, ASAP!, never so much as flinched as I desperately put a hammer lock around his throat in my panicked attempt to keep from flying off the snowmachine as we bounced from one giant mogul to another. There are no roads up here in winter; just a maze of snowmachine tracks weaving between eight-foot snow drifts, *umiaks* (walrus-skin whaling boats), and the huddle of wooden structures that make up Savoonga. As I regained my balance after dodging a polar bear skin that hung from a drying rack we'd just driven under, the snowmachine came to an abrupt halt, nearly catapulting me over the windshield and decapitating my driver.

"He's in there," grunted the driver, pointing to a small hut to my right on the banks of the icy sea. I followed him through the cloud of ice crystals kicked up by our frantic skid and on into the hut. We entered the front vestibule area designed to keep the arctic blast from the living quarters, pulled back the seal skin that served as a second front door, and walked into the main room.

The smell of seal oil was heavy in the air, which was warmed by a propane stove in the far corner. Various models and vintage of seal hunting rifles were piled in a gun rack on the wall facing me. Seated at a table beneath this cluster of big-bore rifles was Kenny, a VPSO (Village Public Safety Officer) for Savoonga. He was busy fiddling with the tuner on a portable short-wave radio. Without looking up, he said to me aloofly, "So, Winny sent you here. You're with those other reporters, aren't you?"

"Yeah, well, not exactly," I replied, stalling for time to let



Author's AO in northwest Alaska.

my lower jaw thaw out. "I was talking with your uncle in Nome yesterday, and with Winny. They both said you'd be able to help me."

Kenny slowly got up off his chair, kneeled down on the floor, and started to roll up the short-wave radio in a sleeping bag that lay between me and him. Still without looking up, he said, "Whaling season's about to start, you know? I'll be going out tomorrow . . . What sort of questions you got?"

"I work for a magazine, *Soldier of Fortune*, in Colorado," I said. "We've heard a lot of reports about Spetsnaz, or Soviet special forces, being spotted up here. Nothing confirmed, though. I came up here to check it out. The Eskimo Scouts have been showing me around St. Lawrence at Gambell and Savoonga. But all the evidence they've shown me is pretty circumstantial, mostly stuff washed ashore from Soviet fishing boats and a few sightings of strangers on the island. They say any people seen on the island who aren't natives *could* be Soviets, but they could also be fishermen coming ashore illegally, oil company people, poachers, and so on. Just no hard evidence one way or the other. Are they giving me the whole story?"

Kenny stopped rolling up his sleeping bag, put his hands on his thighs, cocked his head toward me, looking me straight in the eye for the first time, and said with a wide grin, "Nope." He got up and walked over to a topo map of St. Lawrence that was nailed to the wall of his hut. "They come mostly at night, in late summer and fall, when we start getting *into the dark* season. We hear the dogs barking. Sometimes it's probably a polar bear or some other animal walking through the village. But not always. Then we hear footsteps. I know they're checking us out. They're pretty smart."

"Your uncle in Nome says you have a name for *them*," I said. In my best Eskimo, I tried to say the word I'd learned a few days earlier. "*Yookhluk*, right? You sure that doesn't translate into something more like 'Big Foot' or the 'Abominable Snowman?'"

"You can believe whatever you want," said Kenny, his grin now gone. "I know what I know. The Soviets come here a lot, to recon the island, to keep us on our toes, to scare us maybe. I don't know what else they'd be after. In the summer, they're in wet suits. In winter, they're dressed in white. I've seen their submarines surface just off shore, at night, probably picking up their guys."

"Have you personally seen *Yookhluk*, one of these alleged Soviets?" I asked.

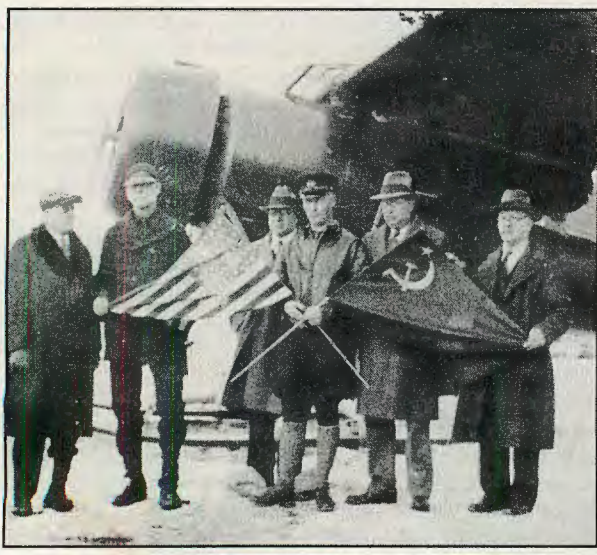
Kenny paused. "I've never seen much . . . they're always too far away to identify. But you never see more than one, and they take off pretty quick when they're sighted. They got those spring-soled boots." He paused again, turned away from me, headed back toward the middle of the room, and knelt down by his half-rolled sleeping bag.

"I've got a few more questions," I said as Kenny walked away from me. "Do you mind?"

Kenny finished rolling up his sleeping bag. "It's whaling season, you know?" he said, staring at the ground in front of him. "I'm leaving tomorrow." I walked toward him with an outstretched hand, wanting to thank him for his time. No response. He was busy tying his sleeping bag with a frayed piece of parachute cord. The Eskimo who'd driven me to the hut was now standing by the door. I took the hint. It was time to leave.

Sitting in the C-130 next to Winny as I and other news media people were flown back to Nome, I thought about my discussion with Kenny. It was the first real indication I'd had since arriving in Alaska 10 days before that there might be something to the reports of Soviet Spetsnaz activity in Alaska after all. Up to then, my meetings with representatives of the Alaska Scouts in northwest Alaska, as well as members of the Army's 6th Infantry Division in Anchorage, had led me to believe I was tracking UFOs. They said there was plenty of wild speculation in the media and rumors circulating among native Alaskans about Spetsnaz in their state, but no evidence to

Soviet and American officials on St. Lawrence Island inaugurating World War II Lend-Lease program in which American planes were ferried from Alaska to Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union. Photo: courtesy Foster Aviation



ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND: A HISTORY OF SOVIET PRESENCE

As told to the author by native Eskimo Allen Alowa, a former resident of Savoonga.

"For many hundreds of years, the St. Lawrence Island people have been in constant contact with the Siberians. Eskimos of St. Lawrence used to barter with Chukchi and asiatic Eskimos from Siberia. The American Eskimos received reindeer skins and fur clothing from the Chukchi reindeer breeders in exchange for whale-blubber oil and skins from walrus and bearded seal, as well as leather straps.

"In 1948, the visits stopped. The Cold War was on, and Stalin stopped folks from visiting. There was a fear the Russian Eskimos would remain on St. Lawrence with their relatives. These

substantiate it. But Kenny's story, and the curious way I was "introduced" to him, suggested otherwise, though the part about spring-soled boots had me wondering whether he might in fact be pulling this big gringo's leg.

Just as I started wondering how or whether to pursue this further, Winny leaned over to me, pulled the foam ear protector from my ear and shouted over the drone of the turbo-prop engines, "They're watching you pretty close, aren't they?" "They" referred to my military escorts. "So how long you say you been working for Uncle Sam?"

Odd question, I thought. "I don't work for the government," I shouted back. "Soldier of Fortune Magazine, remember?"

"Riiiiiight," he replied, nodding. "After I was with the old Alaska Guard, I worked a while in military intelligence. Still got my GI buzz," he said with a big smile as he pulled off his orange stocking cap. "We'll get together tonight in Nome. You bring Kenny's uncle along, the one you met yesterday. We'll talk."

That settled it. I had finally reached the point in my investigation that some information and contacts made over the past few days were starting to dovetail. "See you in Nome," I shouted to him, almost as a reflex. The decision practically made itself. I was eager to settle this Spetsnaz thing, to see for myself whether their trail did indeed lead into Alaska, or back to the rumor mill.

The idea for this adventure was hatched nearly a year earlier, in the summer of 1987, when a U.S. Coast Guard reservist from Anchorage, Alaska, stopped by unannounced at our editorial offices in Boulder. In a lengthy private meeting with SOF's Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, he presented a long list of evidence suggesting that Soviet Spetsnaz commando/espionage teams were operating on the islands of Alaska's perimeter (Little Diomedes, St. Lawrence and the Aleutians), that they had penetrated the mainland, that an Eskimo Scout had been killed by a Spetsnaz recon team near Little Diomedes, and that the Pentagon was covering the whole thing up.

Believe me, in the 14 years we've been in business we've had plenty of screwballs and con men come by our offices

people were anti-communist and were being harassed by the Russian regime. Stalin moved all Siberians off the coastal areas of Siberia, breaking up many families with ties to people on St. Lawrence. Many of us have relatives living in the Siberian village of Providenia.

"During World War II, the Soviets came to St. Lawrence to ferry planes from Alaska to Russia as part of the Lend-Lease Act. When I was a small boy, I remember being picked up by Russian soldiers in long overcoats and fur hats. They would play with me. We were allies then.

"In 1947, a Russian naval officer, a first lieutenant, escaped with his young son, Mininko, to St. Lawrence. The son now lives in Dallas, Texas.

"I don't remember the officer's name. He and his son stayed hidden with the Siberian Yupiks at Chaplino on the Siberian coast. They helped him build a small skin boat. Since he was an engineer, he built his own 5-horsepower engine to get the boat from Siberia to St. Lawrence.

"He and his son landed 15 miles east of Savoonga. They came into the village. My dad greeted them. The Russian man cried and hugged my dad real hard.

"The Soviets came to look for them, but we hid them. They stayed with us. I got mad at Mininko because he drank my milk.

"They were there two or three days and then taken to Gambell in a boat by the CAA [Civil Aeronautics Administration]. Russian navy men came into every house in Gambell. They walked in looking for them. However, the school teacher hid them real well in the basement of the school.

trying to sell us every conceivable conspiracy/invasion theory. This man was neither. Besides an impressive resume, which we checked out, he cited sources ranging from FBI agents, FAA officials and Alaska State Troopers to members of the Alaska National Guard and newspaper publishers who might, or might not, help corroborate his allegations. And he never asked us for up-front expenses so he could write the story or to be our personal salaried guide in the Alaskan boonies. He didn't ask for anything. He only challenged us to "Go up and see for yourself."

Brown was definitely interested. But with the Iran-Contra hearings in full swing and combat reports from Central America and Afghanistan breaking around our ears, this lone call from Alaska had to be back-burnered until circumstances warranted devoting valuable staff time to investigate the story.

Interest was resurrected a few months later, when an 8 September 1987 *Defense Week* article, "... Eskimo Scouts Search for Clues of Soviet Plans to Invade Alaska," appeared, followed by a fusillade of articles in other national publications stating how circumstantial evidence suggested that Soviet Spetsnaz teams had infiltrated St. Lawrence Island and were probably on the mainland.

Finally, an article in our January 1988 issue by two internationally known and respected intelligence analysts, M.K. Pilgrim and Neil C. Livingstone, entitled "Spetsnaz Invades America: USG Ignores Special Troops Inside Our Borders," brought the issue to a head. In it, the authors made reference to "a persistent story, denied by the Pentagon but confirmed by Alaskan sources," that an Eskimo Scout had been killed on Little Diomedede "after stumbling upon a Spetsnaz reconnaissance unit." According to our research when editing the article, the autopsy "revealed that he had been killed by a dum-dum bullet of a type known to be favored by Spetsnaz teams." Our Managing Editor, Jim Graves, also wrote a sidebar to that article stating that according to an intelligence source in Washington, D.C., the body of a Spetsnaz team member known as "the swimmer" had been recovered by an Eskimo Scout near Kotzebue, Alaska.

After this Spetsnaz article hit the newsstands, we were

"After that, my dad always said, 'You watch. They will come over here again. They won't come near you, and they won't hurt you. You study their language and culture. It'll be important in the future.'

"He was right. During the Vietnam War, the Russians used to broadcast a radio program several nights a week directed to us on St. Lawrence [SOF has access to some cassette recordings of these broadcasts]. They would play native Eskimo music. Then, in our Eskimo dialect, they would start their propaganda. They said that American CIA agents were going from door to door down in the lower 48, forcing people to give them money to pay for the war. The Russians wanted to subvert our loyalty to the United States. That's very important to them — to weaken America any way they can. I still don't trust them.

"In February 1974, a Russian spy plane landed at Gambell. One fellow was walking in the village and saw it come in. He thought it was a C-124 at first. Then he looked again and decided it looked a bit strange. Then he saw the big red star on its tail. He quickly turned back to the village and alerted the National Guard and the whole village.

"The plane landed at Gambell because it was low on fuel. Two pilots got out. We wouldn't let them back on. We confiscated the plane. People from Elmendorff Air Force Base and the State Department came over. The plane had a crew of 11. They remained for 24 hours until they were authorized to leave. The Air Force refueled them.

"For the past 20 years or so we've found dead Russian soldiers on the island. Russian flags, rations, garbage, papers,

flooded with letters and calls from Alaskans and other interested parties around the country who claimed the information about Alaska was just the tip of the iceberg. A former FBI agent who had worked in Alaska, asking to remain anonymous, called and said he had heard of "the swimmer" story before and was amazed to see it in the magazine. Another reader, who had served at Ft. Greeley, Alaska, and who also requested anonymity, stated in a letter that "there is quite a bit of highly classified Soviet activity in Alaska . . . Ft. Greeley, the pipeline and Air Force bases, especially at Ft. Richardson, appeared to be targeted . . . [and] at least one Soviet commando has been found on the Alaskan mainland." The similarity among events mentioned in our article, reader responses, and reports from the Alaska Coast Guard reservist made them appear all the more credible.

On the other hand, the article generated scathing criticism from the U.S. Army, Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council, all of whom stated that these references to Alaska were totally unfounded. One especially articulate critic was Captain William H. Burgess III, a U.S. Army Special Forces Branch Officer on assignment to Ft. Richardson, Alaska. In a letter challenging us to produce the sources for the article's allegations, he said he had been "researching alleged incursions onto U.S. territory attributed to Soviet military activities," and that he had never heard of the incidents mentioned by us concerning Alaska. We immediately called our contributing editor on Soviet Affairs, who confirmed that Capt. Burgess was indeed very highly regarded as a veritable "Spetsnaz chaser" in Alaska, and that Burgess was

Soviet Antonov An-24 Coke twin turbo-prop aircraft made emergency landing at Gambell, 28 February 1974, after running out of fuel. Emblem on fuselage designates it as polar aviation research plane. Long sensing pod under wing suggests electronic intelligence (ELINT) capability. After State Department officials examined plane, it was refueled and allowed to leave. Photo: John Elmore, Alaska State Trooper



dugouts, fox holes, and personal belongings.

"Just about every week someone hears shots fired from the mountains. Maybe the shots are indications they have killed birds or reindeer. Black planes with no lights land frequently. Strange submarines land off shore. We have seen these people at the old White Alice site at the Northeast Cape.

"This year, as part of *glasnost* I suppose, Alaska Air flights are planned from Nome to Providenia to reunite some of the Eskimo families on St. Lawrence with their Siberian relatives who were relocated during the Cold War. Winny James is scheduled to go over. So is TW. I'm sure the Soviet military 'visits' out on the Northeast Cape will tail off for a while during these goodwill gestures.

"I think this exchange with Providenia is a great thing. We need to see our family members there. But I still don't trust the Soviets. They're real interested in St. Lawrence. I'm not sure why. I feel uncomfortable when I'm alone at camp. They might hurt me. I really don't know."

about to complete an excellent book about Spetsnaz entitled *Soviet Special Operations: A Critical Assessment*. Therefore, he intimated, if Capt. Burgess says these Spetsnaz reports are baloney, you might want to bet on it.

There we were. Caught in the crossfire of controversy. That's usually a pretty familiar place for us, so that wasn't the issue. What was disturbing about the situation was that we had noted authorities on both sides of the aisle claiming our account of Spetsnaz in Alaska was either: 1) right on the mark, or 2) a candidate for this decade's yellow journalism award.

Brown was predictably cerebral in handling this dilemma: "Eee-fucking-nuff!" he growled in an editorial meeting. He'd had his fill of being jerked around by "experts." It was time to send one of our own staffers up to Alaska and get the facts with which to sort out this mess. If we had scratched an iceberg, then he wanted a large chunk of that damned iceberg brought back to him as proof. If we'd been sold a bill of goods, as Capt. Burgess and others claimed, then we would own up to it — publicly. Our readers deserved at least that much.

After hitting the side of his spittoon with a blob of Skoal juice he launched from halfway across the room — which is a sure sign that Brown's fuse has been lit and he's ready to declare war — he punched the intercom button on his desk and shouted to his secretary, "We're sending Bates to Alaska. NOW!" My traveling orders were simple: "Come back when you're done."

Within days, I found myself on a plane heading for Anchorage. I had made arrangements to meet with Eskimo Scout representatives in Northwest Alaska. As the reputed "eyes and ears" of the north, these Alaska National Guardsmen should be a source of facts or fantasy about Soviet Spetsnaz activity in the state. However, before heading to that region, I

scheduled a meeting with Capt. Bill Burgess and his associate, Lieutenant Ronald D. Kolenda, a contributor to Burgess' book about Spetsnaz. Both men serve with the Army's 6th Infantry Division at Ft. Richardson.

Two hours after my arrival in Anchorage, I met with both Capt. Burgess and Lt. Kolenda for an informal briefing. "As I told you over the phone, Tom," Capt. Burgess said, "the Spetsnaz story in SOF was cut from whole cloth. It surprised me. Your magazine does provide a vital service by reliably covering matters of interest to military intelligence. But the terminal effect of this particular article was that it further contaminated an already fouled data base regarding Soviet special operations forces. And as far as there being any sort of cover-up by the Pentagon or anyone else about reports of Spetsnaz in Alaska, it just isn't the case. Believe me, with the current budget cuts up here, it would be to the military's advantage to magnify the issue of Spetsnaz, or any other Soviet-type incursions into Alaska, in order to get a larger share of a shrinking pie.

"That's not to say that something like this couldn't happen," he continued, "but there's no hard evidence to back it up. When you track down these Spetsnaz reports, you'll find that the leads evaporate . . . this whole Spetsnaz theory collapses under investigation. I'm afraid the Spetsnaz scare of the 1980s is analogous to the UFO mania of the 1950s and '60s."

"What specifically is demonstrably false in our Spetsnaz article concerning Alaska?" I asked.

"For one thing," replied Capt. Burgess, "the sidebar about the swimmer raised a red flag right away. It said that the alleged Soviet corpse had blue eyes. Nonsense. Anytime there's an animal corpse on the shore, the sea gulls or other scavengers peck out the eyes immediately.

PRIDE OF THE GUARD

Excerpts from an interview with Major General John Schaeffer

Chosen by Eskimo elders to head the Alaska National Guard, Major General John Schaeffer is the first native Eskimo to attain this position. A 31-year veteran of the Guard, former businessman and community leader, Maj. Gen. Schaeffer is devoted to enlarging opportunities within the Guard for native Eskimos and to making it more responsive to the needs of young Eskimo adults, who are often torn between maintaining their traditional arctic survival skills and broadening their experiences in the modern urban world.

SOF: After Army basic training, do Scouts receive any rudimentary training in military intelligence?

Schaeffer: Yes, absolutely. The Army conducts intelligence training courses for the Scouts . . . they get periodic briefings. We try to do that on an annual basis.

Sometimes we don't reach all the Scouts, because many of those briefings are classified; you need a secret security clearance to sit in on them.

We're trying to arrange it so that all Scouts will have to have a security clearance. This would allow them get in on these secret briefings. Also, those people who already have secret clearances, such as the intelligence officers and sergeants at the battalion level, and in some cases the training NCOs in special units, should have top secret and higher clearances. We have operations going on that are highly classified intelligence operations. Right now, these people are involved with these operations but don't know what they are doing because they can't be told.

SOF: Do you also think that some of the Scouts at the point of collection should have more sophisticated intel training for handling spot reports before they are passed on to their respective battalion headquarters?

Schaeffer: Right now, we don't think so. Primarily because

we are not officially in the intelligence network. Our job is strictly arctic surveillance and reconnaissance . . . with training similar to Army Ranger and long-range patrol units. Also, these guys are part-time Guardsmen; they are really not of federal status. They are under state control. I think we should leave it to the regular Army and Air Force intelligence people to make those kinds of assessments.

Again, our biggest problem is once that assessment is made, who can we tell? Until we get enough people with high enough clearances out there on the periphery, we can't even back-brief them. Right now, the Army will make an assessment of what has been happening on St. Lawrence Island, then they classify it, so I can't talk about it with the Scouts or their commanders. This has to be changed.

SOF: What precisely is the information flow for the Scout spot reports after they are received by the respective battalion headquarters?

Schaeffer: From the various battalion headquarters, the reports are passed on to 207th Group here in Anchorage. It's the parent group of the 6th Infantry Division in Anchorage. Actually, the priority is to the 6th ID.

From there, the information goes on to Washington, D.C., probably to DIA, but I'm not sure. They also go to both Alaska Air Command and Joint Task Force Alaska, which would be 6th ID's parent headquarters if the balloon goes up. Then from AAC or Joint Task Force Alaska, it goes directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So the information is funneled back to Washington two ways.

SOF: And finally to the National Security Council?

Schaeffer: I'm not sure that that channel to NSC isn't a direct one. Or at least one of the agencies that works for NSC.

SOF: How conscientious are the intel agencies in Washington, D.C., about completing the information loop? I heard a lot of complaints from Scouts out on the periphery that they don't get much if any feedback on what sort of job their doing.

Schaeffer: They have been very good at it up to where they

"That wasn't a major issue, though. What really made me laugh was the story about the Alaska Scout who was supposedly murdered by a Spetsnaz recon team near Little Diomedede and the 'missing' autopsy report indicating he had been killed by, let me see, how was that worded, oh yeah, 'by a dum-dum bullet known to be favored by Spetsnaz teams.'

"First of all," Capt. Burgess said with a tone of mock seriousness, "can you tell me exactly what sort of dum-dum bullet is favored by Spetsnaz?" I shook my head, no. "Neither can I," he said, with a chuckle. "I have no idea what would constitute a Spetsnaz dum-dum bullet. And as far as an Eskimo Scout being murdered by Spetsnaz, that's pure *Bravo Sierra*. As you'll find out when you go up there, the Eskimos out on the periphery are all closely related. Even if the Pentagon tried to cover up a murder of a Scout, which they wouldn't, there's no way to keep something like that a secret. You can't keep people in small communities from talking, especially when they're related . . . there are no secrets up there. I've been up in those areas many times, as has Lt. Kolenda, and we've never heard any talk of a Scout being murdered, by anyone. That sort of news would be too hot to hide.

"Now, some native Eskimos do get killed. Little Diomedede, St. Lawrence, Point Hope, and so on are desolate, dangerous areas, even for the natives. Some Eskimos occasionally fall through or get stranded on the sea ice, or die of exposure when

BELOW: Head of Alaska National Guard, Adjutant General John Schaeffer, is first native Eskimo to hold this position. One of his goals is to promote more Eskimos to top Guard positions. Photo: courtesy Alaska National Guard



inform the active duty units, in this case the 6th Infantry Division. But when it comes to doing that with the Scouts, it is part of this problem again of people not being properly cleared for access to that information.

At one time they didn't even bother. Even the Army here would just pass the information forward and not even get an assessment themselves. But they have the capability now, and they are doing it. We just have to figure out how to get that assessment back down to the user so that these guys on the periphery get a feel for how they fit into the intel network and how important they are to the entire system.

SOF: Have the Scouts ever recovered any Soviet weapons caches?

Schaeffer: To my knowledge, they have never found caches of any kind. Period.

out hunting, or maybe get shot by some drunk who wants to settle an old family score. In all likelihood, these accidental deaths are probably the real-world source of these supposed Spetsnaz-related killings."

Eskimo Scouts Edward Soolook and Raleigh Ahkvaluk patrol along international border on frozen sea ice in Bering Strait between islands of Big and Little Diomedede. Blue cliffs of Big Diomedede, Soviet territory, loom less than a mile away in background. Soviet garrison on Big Diomedede has contingent of 45-65 military personnel, two helicopter pads, 57mm radar-controlled anti-aircraft gun, radar station and aircraft radar jamming device. Scout observation post on Little Diomedede provides around-the-clock surveillance of Soviet activity on Big Diomedede. Photo: Tom Bates



SOF: Have any bodies of Soviets been found on St. Lawrence or anywhere else on the periphery? Or any Scouts suspected of being killed by Soviets?

Schaeffer: I don't know of any. It's rough country up there. Our own people [native Eskimos] are always drowning or getting wet and dying or freezing to death, and even disappearing. They get out on the ice and the ice blows away. I know of people that have had to go through Moscow and Tokyo to get back home. But that happens all the time up there, so I suppose that somebody could come to the conclusion that there was something funny going on, but as far as I know, that all is some speculation. There is nothing that we have reported that would ever indicate that there was any foul play. We have never had that problem.

SOF: If a Soviet body were found, how would that be handled. Would the Air Force pick it up, or civilian resources be called in to pick it up?

Schaeffer: Yes, civilian resources, when we are not at war. We have had cases where we have had people defect, and we turn them over to the state police. [Soviets, usually from Big Diomedede to U.S. territory on Little Diomedede. Also, Americans John Weymoth in 1986 and Lorenzo Castro in 1987 "defected" to Big Diomedede and were promptly returned by the Soviets.] We also report it through military channels.

SOF: Did you happen to read the article that appeared in *SOF* about Spetsnaz in Alaska and elsewhere in the United States? If so, what was your reaction to it?

Schaeffer: My reaction was that somebody took some liberties to come to some conclusions, that we do not have the information to back up. And in fact I don't know where they got the idea that we had ever found a body that might have been a Soviet, because I don't know if that ever happened. We also have not had a Guardsman killed out there, that I know of. Otherwise, I thought the rest of the article was quite good. I enjoyed it.

I turned to my list of allegations made by the news media and some of our readers claiming there is evidence of covert Soviet military activity in Alaska.

"I know," I said, "that with the south-to-north prevailing currents in the Bering Straits, St. Lawrence Island is a natural collection point for flotsam and jetsam to accumulate. So it's no surprise to find objects of Soviet origin on its shores that could have been washed overboard from fishing boats, intelligence ships, or whatever. But what about the Soviet NBC decontamination kit found near Little Diomede?"

"Never happened," he replied. "No such equipment was ever found."

"And the Soviet transmitter battery found inland? Since batteries don't float, how do you suppose it got there?" I asked.

"The 'mysterious' Soviet transmitter was nothing more than a sonobuoy battery," explained Burgess. [Sonobuoys are homing devices used to keep track of fishing nets.] "It was found near an inland runway. Sonobuoys can break loose from their moorings and wash ashore. Someone probably found one of these, broke it open, and took out the battery that operates the transmitter, hoping they could use it in their snowmachine or something like that. When the battery wore out or a use couldn't be found for it, the person discarded it."

What about the sightings of Soviets on St. Lawrence and Little Diomede? How do you explain those?

"There are any number of reasonable explanations for those sightings," said Burgess. "Fishing boats always carry wet suits for divers to go down and check nets, traps, and make boat repairs. Invariably, some of these guys come on shore on St. Lawrence. Also, oil company people — geologists — go on the island, though they'll never admit it. These people aren't supposed to be there. Non-natives need a permit to go out to St. Lawrence. So of course these people run when they're spotted. They don't want any hassles."

Lieutenant Kolenda added, "You'll notice that with all these reported sightings, there is always *one* stranger sighted. If there



America's "eyes and ears of the north," famed Eskimo Scouts of Alaska National Guard, provide on-the-ground surveillance and intelligence gathering in western Alaska. Characteristic white snowmachines and white shell clothing of these Scouts at Savoonga, just miles from Siberia, help keep them concealed during winter patrols of Alaskan periphery. SOF Associate Editor Tom Bates joined Eskimo Scouts on St. Lawrence Island and Little Diomede in the Bering Sea to investigate reports of Soviet Spetsnaz incursions into U.S. territory. Photo: Russ Weston

were some sort of Soviet recon team out there, it would stand to reason that more than one person would be spotted, but there never is. It's like with UFOs — they're always reported in some unpopulated, backwater area, and never in some place like Times Square, where the story could be corroborated by witnesses. There is also a problem with ivory poachers out combing the shoreline for walrus tusks. It's illegal for non-natives to deal in uncarved ivory. These guys really don't want to get caught."

"We've also heard reports of Spetsnaz personnel monitoring U.S. training exercises out on the Aleutians," I said. "Any basis to these reports?"

"None," both men replied.

"How about the numerous missing persons reports attributed to people coming across Spetsnaz teams in the back country and being killed by them?"

"That's a new one on me," replied Lt. Kolenda.

According to these two men, no Soviet military personnel of any type, alive or dead, have ever been caught anywhere in Alaska. Neither have Soviet weapons/ration caches been found.



Author, Tom Bates, with Eskimo Scout at Gambell, on Northwest Cape of St. Lawrence Island. Coast of Siberia lies just 37 miles to the west, across the Bering Sea.



nor items of equipment been discovered that couldn't be attributed to flotsam or jetsam from Soviet vessels in the Bering Sea region.

Captain Burgess concluded our discussion by suggesting that a possible cause of these exaggerated rumors about Spetsnaz in Alaska is what he refers to as a "brittleness" in the Eskimo Scouts' reporting system. "The Scouts aren't making up these stories," he said. "The problem is that the HUMINT [human intelligence] aspect of the intelligence system is weak. The Scouts, who are at the point of collection, are a good group but aren't sufficiently trained in intelligence gathering. There is no one out on the periphery to give the Scouts' spot reports a good intelligence scrub before they are passed on to Scout battalion headquarters in Nome or Kotzebue, and then on to the MI people at 6th ID in Anchorage. If the Guard were staffed with intel people at the point of collection, it would help to stiffen the mix, so to speak, so rumors wouldn't have a chance to get started."

With plenty of potential holes blown in the "Spetsnaz threat to Alaska" story, I went back to my hotel room and, keeping the remarks of these gentlemen in mind, prepared some questions for my meeting the following day with Alaska Congressman Don Young.

When I arrived at the Captain Cook Hotel lobby in downtown Anchorage the next morning, Rep. Young's special assistant Bill Sharrow was there to greet me. A retired brigadier general with 16 years' service in Alaska's National Guard, Mr. Sharrow was well aware of the reports I was investigating. Both he and Rep. Young were of the same opinion as Capt. Burgess. "We've heard these reports off and on for years," said the Congressman. "Show me a body, then I'll believe them."

Mr. Sharrow noted that from a military operational point of view, it wouldn't make sense for the Soviets to try to infiltrate Spetsnaz recon teams into the mainland. "It's a big state with fierce terrain and climate up north," he said. If they [the Soviets] were trying to target the pipeline, they'd have to cross hundreds of miles of inhospitable territory to do it. The cost is too great for that objective. There are easier ways to hit the pipeline . . . with aircraft, for instance."

"I'll be the first one to admit that the pipeline is not secure," Rep. Young said. "It would be a likely target in wartime . . . it accounts for 22 percent of domestic oil production. But the pipeline's service road is wide open all year. So why not just drive up to the darn thing and blow it up? It's been attempted before, and it only failed because the fool didn't know how to plant the explosive charge correctly. Or even better," he said, with his tongue firmly embedded in his cheek, "they could get some liberal in this state to do the job for them — for free!"

The conversation ended with both men commenting about how sightings of Soviet Bear bombers near Alaska were way up



Aerial view of Big Diomedé (left, Soviet territory) and Little Diomedé (right, U.S. territory) in Bering Strait. Islands are only 2½ miles apart, with international dateline running in between. Photo: courtesy Foster Aviation

this year, and that fact did have officials concerned. But as far as Soviet recon teams being spotted around the periphery or evidence of espionage around U.S. military facilities, they knew of no confirmed incidents. Bill Sharrow closed by echoing a comment made by Capt. Burgess about what a valuable service the Eskimo Scouts perform as part of Alaska's early warning system: "They're a priceless asset. They know how to live in a brutal environment. They're good people. If we did ever have to commit regular troops out there in an emergency, they'd be lost without the Scouts."

By now I was more than ready to head out to the Alaskan periphery to meet with the Scouts myself. They, and their families, were obviously the linchpin in this investigation. If they were as incredulous about these reports as the officials I'd spoken with in Anchorage, then the information loop would be all but complete.

The next day, I flew from Anchorage to Kotzebue, a small Eskimo town above the Arctic Circle on the coast of the Bering Sea. It is also the home of the 3rd Eskimo Scout Battalion and is the alleged site where the Soviet "swimmer" was recovered

A matter of perspective. Pentagon graphic (below) characterizing Soviet threat as being to our east, thousands of miles across the Atlantic, ignoring the more immediate threat to Alaska (bottom) where U.S. territory is just a few miles from Siberia. Photos: courtesy Alaska National Guard



THE 49th STATE: AMERICA'S LAST FRONTIER

For those of us who grew up with Mercator projection maps in grade school, Alaska's exact size and location have always been somewhat of a mystery. Since the state won't fit on a conventional map of the continental United States, it is usually relegated to a lower corner, along with Hawaii — the rest is left up to

in 1981. I had been told by many natives that Anchorage is the last stop before entering Alaska, but it wasn't until stepping off the plane in Kotzebue that I felt the real impact of that statement. My lungs spasmed and my eyelids froze at half mast when a gale-force icy wind hit me square in the face. "Not bad," said the elderly Eskimo woman next to me. "Only 23 below. Maybe I walk home from here."

Before she bounded off into the arctic tundra, I tried clumsily to untangle my camera strap and snap her picture. That's when I learned how drastically and quickly life changes in this kind of balls-to-the-wall cold. My half-frozen fingers suddenly lost hold of the lens cap and I watched it disappear toward Siberia on the tail of a 40 mph wind. Pressing the camera up to my now anesthetized cheek, I exhaled before releasing the shutter. Bad idea. The entire camera, viewfinder and lens were immediately covered with a boiler-plate-like frost from my condensed breath. Undaunted, I still tried to get off a shot. Another bad idea. My upper lip promptly welded itself to the frosty camera body. Then the light meter died as the batteries froze up . . . then the film inside shattered into a million pieces when I hit the film advance . . . then a large chunk of my iced-up mustache broke off and dropped inside my coat as I peeled my lip from the back of the frost-covered camera.

Ah yes, *this* must be Alaska!

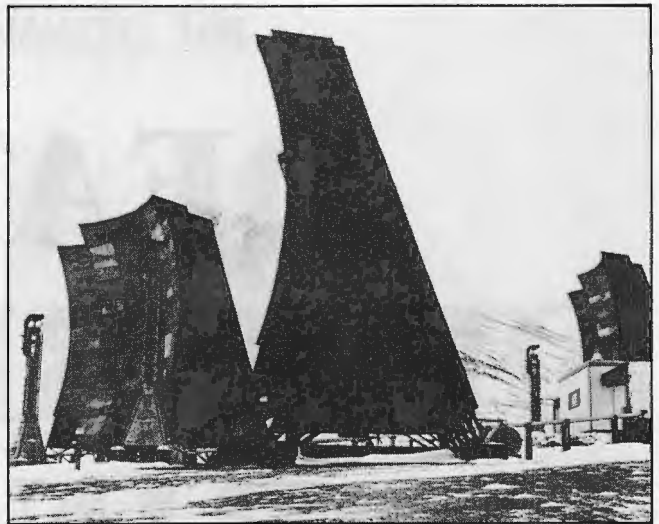
It was Easter Sunday when I arrived, a dogsled race had just ended, and it seemed like most people in this town of 3,600 were road-testing their snowmachines on the maze of trails that wove between buildings.

I hitched a ride on one snowmachine driven by a Kotzebue native, who immediately gave me the grand tour of town. He finally dropped me off in front of the National Guard armory, where I hoped to find a guardsman who'd be willing to talk. The building looked deserted when I walked around it, but the front door was unlocked, so I walked in. Seated on a cot in the gymnasium was an Eskimo Scout in his BDUs thumbing through a professional wrestling magazine. I struck up a conversation with him and in the next hour or so learned quite a bit about how closely intertwined the National Guard is with the native Eskimo population. He confirmed what I had been told in Anchorage — that service in the Scouts is almost a rite of passage for many Eskimos. It was a long-standing tradition in his family. He showed me a picture of his father, who had just retired after 30 years in the Guard, that hung on the wall of the armory. "I bet you're proud of him," I said.

"You got that right," he replied. "I just finished basic training at Ft. Bragg in January. I'm waitin' here for a military hop back to Point Hope, where I live."

"You miss anything about the lower 48?" I asked.

"Yeah. Trees! And other green things. Where I come from,



White Alice Communication System (WACS) site on Northeast Cape of St. Lawrence Island. Antennae now dismantled, this area is where most sightings of Soviet commandos are made. Photo: courtesy Alaska Air Command

there's not much color . . . except for white."

Our conversation was very amicable until I asked something I obviously shouldn't have. "You know, down in the lower 48, we've been hearing a lot about Spetsnaz, those Soviet commandos or whatever, maybe being up here . . ."

"I don't know nothing about it," he said tersely, cutting my sentence short. End of conversation. He picked up his pro wrestling magazine and never said another word. Either he'd had enough of my inane chatter and turned to something more stimulating or I'd struck a nerve. Whatever the case, I decided it was a good time to cultivate some other contacts in town.

When I got outside, the sun had gone down, and the wind had picked up — and the temperature was cold enough to freeze my spit before it hit the ground. Now I knew why the guys at G.I. Joe's Military Supply in Anchorage had given me a handful of pencils for note taking up here — it'd be August before the ink in my pens would flow again.

With everything in Kotzebue locked tight until Monday, I headed toward the only light I saw burning. It was the broadcast facility for KOTZ, the local radio station. After rapping loudly on the door a few times and getting no response, I poked my head in the front door and saw the female disc

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the imagination.

For the uninitiated, here are some incredible facts about our 49th state:

— It is the largest state in the union (586,200 square miles) and is one fifth the size of the continental United States.

— Its coastline, from point to point, is 6,640 miles, with 47,300 miles of tidal shoreline.

— There are 1.1 square miles for each person in Alaska. In contrast, New York state has .003 square miles per person.

— Because of its sparse population, Alaska has only one congressman.

— A typical Alaskan, according to 1985 census figures, is a 27-year-old male. Alaska has the highest proportion of males in its population of any state, 53 percent.

— On a per capita basis, Alaska's population of 70,000 veterans is the largest of any state.

— Depending on how you look at it, Alaska has the *easternmost* and *westernmost* points in the country. The 180th meridian, the dividing line between east and west, passes through Alaska in the Aleutian Island chain. The *westernmost* point is Amatignak Island, and the *easternmost* is Pohnoi Point.

— At Little Diomedede Island, the United States is only 2½ miles from Soviet territory on Big Diomedede. St. Lawrence Island is only 37 miles from the Siberian coast.

— There are 1,800 named islands in the state. Several thousand are still unnamed.

— Of the 20 highest mountains in the United States, Alaska claims 17. Mt. McKinley, at 20,320 feet, is the highest in North America.

— The entire state has just 15,315 miles of roads, of which more than one fourth are unpaved. In comparison, Austria, a country one eighteenth the size of Alaska, has twice as many miles of paved public roads.

DEATH OF A RED PRINCE

SOG Spike Team's Lucky Strike in Laos

by Isaac Staats

Illustration by Ralph Butler

Editor's Note: Due to the unique events in this operation, names of the actual MACV/SOG (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam/Studies and Observation Group) Command and Control North (CCN) recon team from Da Nang and that of the team itself have been changed.

SOF correspondent Issac W. Staats first heard about this mission from CCN team leader Gunther Wald, a few months before the latter was KIA running a MACV/SOG mission in Laos during November 1969. Other reliable MACV/SOG sources contributed to this report.

SPIKE team leaders Pete and Jake had barely finished their debriefing by S-2 (intelligence) at Forward Operating Base #2 in Kontum when they were ordered to fly to Saigon. ASAP.

This was strange. Usually after a harrowing mission, such as the one from which they had just barely escaped alive, they and their indigenous troops would celebrate late into the night.

As soon as their C-130 touched down at Tan Son Nhut in Saigon, a black, unmarked jeep whisked them to one of the MACV/SOG safe houses in Saigon.

MACV/SOG brass had ordered them to Saigon so quickly that their bodies hadn't had time to recover from the trial by ordeal that had been their mission. They were still wracked by intense dehydration and fatigue, the result of running for hours through triple-canopy jungle crawling with NVA regulars trying to kill them. Their ears still rang from full-auto bursts from their CAR-15s and Charlie's AKs, from Claymore mine detonations, from A-1E Skyraider strafing and bombing, and from the gunshot runs which in the end saved their hides.

VITAL STAATS

Isaac Staats served two tours with the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam. His first tour was at FOB #1 in Phu Bai and SOG's CCN in Da Nang, the second at CCN in Da Nang. He now lives and writes in San Diego. His articles have appeared in SOF on numerous occasions, the most recent being "Spectres Over Laos" in our May '88 issue.

They hadn't even had time to pay their final respects to the three indig mercenaries on their team who did not make it to the LZ and were assumed to be killed in action.

It was summer, 1968.

Without any greetings or pretense of social amenities, Pete and Jake were spirited into an old French provincial mansion and taken to a large room on the second floor. It was filled with cold-eyed, tight-lipped MACV/SOG, CIA, DIA and CID personnel, most of whom were dressed in civilian trash.

Within minutes, the interrogation began.

Pete and Jake's last mission had taken them "across the fence" into the tri-border area, where Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam meet. The region was a major staging area and launch site for big NVA and Viet Cong military thrusts into South Vietnam.

For Special Forces teams running missions into the area at the time, the fact that the U.S. State Department pretended that Laos and Cambodia were "neutral" was a bitter and grotesque joke. Charlie often

massed more than 100,000 troops in those countries.

There was nothing funny about the intense interrogation Pete and Jake had to endure, however.

No one seemed to care that they had barely gotten out of a man-made hell alive. And, much to their disbelief, they were being grilled as though they were common criminals.

The debriefing/interrogation stretched into a second day. Some admirals and generals sat in. There were no peons in on this one.

All of the photographs Pete had taken with his standard-issue 35mm Pentax were developed, blown up and exhaustively examined by experts from the CIA Laotian office, as well as by Pete and





Jake's interrogators. An artist drew pictures of a man carried on a litter borne by eight orientals. He had been carried into the kill zone of the spike team's ambush and died there.

At one point, during the second day, Jake pulled one of the plainclothes CIA types aside and asked him, "Just what the hell is going on here?"

The spook responded, "This is a real predicament. That was a Laotian prince your team killed. It's created a problem. If push comes to shove, you guys are history."

Pete and Jake looked at each other incredulously.

"What the fuck was the prince doing with all those NVA and Pathet Lao soldiers?" Pete said. "He deserves to be history."

His quip didn't take the edge off their nervousness.

At the end of the day, another CIA type confided to Pete and Jake, "We're either going to give you a medal or charge you with killing the prince. They haven't made up their minds."

"Hey, we were just doing our jobs," blurted Pete.

The CIA spook ignored his comment.

That night, Pete and Jake remembered that if they had been captured alive on that mission, all of the interrogators — the admirals, generals, and CIA/DIA/CID types — would have ardently disavowed any knowledge of their existence.

They remembered why they ran missions in sterile fatigues, why they never carried any identification, and why any maps they

carried were meticulously trimmed so that nothing remained on the charts that might reveal their origin.

They knew that the same State Department that pretended Laos and Cambodia were neutral would, if Pete and Jake or any other Green Beret were captured in Laos, deny even that they were Americans.

It was all a part of the "deniability" built into the MACV/SOG program by the same politicians and the State Department scum who set the absurd political agenda that forced U.S. combat troops to fight the war in Vietnam with their hands tied behind their backs.

Throughout the war, Presidents Johnson and Nixon denied that any American troops

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IRISH RANGERS



Emerald Isle's Elite Strike Force

Text & Photos by Jim Shortt

THE Army Ranger Wing (ARW) of the Irish Defence Forces is probably the youngest special forces unit of the European armed forces. Indeed, the Irish Defence Forces only came into being on 1 October 1924 and as such is a babe among its European peers. But Irish soldiers have fought in foreign armies under Irish banners throughout the centuries: for the Poles, French, Russians, Austrians, Spanish, Swedes, and especially the British, who still maintain a number of Irish cavalry and infantry regiments.

Formed in the spring of 1980, the ARW is headquartered amid the Victorian buildings of the Curragh Camp in County Kildare. Curragh, home of the Irish Army, is what you would expect to find in any British garrison town, having served as British Army headquarters in Ireland until 1922.

To establish the Ranger program within the Irish Army, selected members of the Irish Defence Forces or "óglaigh na h-éireann," attended the U.S. Army's Ranger School at Fort Benning between 1968 and 1971. From this core of Ranger-trained personnel, mostly officers and senior non-commissioned officers, the Irish Defence

Forces initiated its own program at the Curragh Camp. The course was open to personnel from all units in order to encourage better military skills within conventional units. Those who passed the course qualified as "fianóglach," which the Irish Army translates as Ranger. This term is derived from Irish mythology and refers to a legendary band of elite warriors known as "na fianna" led by the giant warrior, "finn

ma cúl." The "fianna" are to Irish history what the Knights of the Round Table are to British history.

On completion of the course, the newly qualified Ranger received a black and yellow shoulder tab similar to the American Ranger tab, but with the word "fianóglach" embroidered on it. The only permanent Ranger establishment then was the staff of the training wing.

Irish Defence Forces are composed of an all volunteer Permanent Force (PDF) and the Reserve Forces (RDF) at first and second echelon. First echelon reservists are all former members of the PDF, including ex-Rangers who have served a minimum of three years and have been discharged honorably. The second echelon of the RFD are part-time volunteers who make up the Army's "an forsa cosanta aitiuil," the FCA or local defense forces, and "an slua muiiri," the FCA's maritime equivalent. Total strength of the Defence Forces is just over 35,000 personnel.

The majority of Ireland's Defence Forces are in the Army, which is made up of four territorial commands: Eastern, Southern, Western and the Curragh. The Army is

SPEC OPS SPECIALIST

Englishman Jim Shortt, a frequent contributor to *Soldier of Fortune*, writes most often about special operations forces in Europe. Shortt recently ventured across the Irish Sea for the first ever public glimpse of the secretive Irish Army Ranger Wing. Shortt's previous articles for SOF have featured the Austrian *Jagdkommando* ("Snake Eaters" Sept. '87), 22 SAS ("Seven Years for Eleven Minutes" Dec. '87), and the Swedish Rangers, ("Rebuffing the Bear" Dec. '87).



ABOVE: ARW divers are dropped onto the bridge by low-flying helicopters of the Irish Army Air Corps and after securing and clearing the bridge leap into the lake.

LEFT: Lieutenant Bracken of the Irish Ranger Wing receives the Military Medal for Gallantry for bravery under fire while serving with the Irish contingent to the United Nations forces in Lebanon. He is only the second man to be awarded the medal.

composed of the following corps and units: Infantry, Artillery, Cavalry, Engineers, Supply & Transport, Military Police, Medical, Observer, Coast Defense Artillery, Army Ranger Wing and Army Air Corps.

Like the Naval Service, the Army Air Corps is administered separately from the Army. The Air Corps provides logistical support to both the ARW and the newly formed parachute courses of the Irish Defence Forces. The small Naval Service of just over 1,000 officers and men is mainly deployed on fishery protection duties, and like the Army, it aids the civil powers (police) by intercepting arms shipments destined for the Irish Republican Army. The Naval Service provides initial diver training for the ARW and assists with small-boat operations.

Irish Defence Forces often find themselves unfairly trapped by an awkward political system that has advanced little since Irish independence in 1921. The Defence Forces were born out of a brutal civil war between two opposing factions of the nationalist army referred to as the "old" IRA (Irish Republican Army) by veterans of the conflict to distance themselves from the terrorist organizations of today that are conducting a terrorist war against the govern-



ARW divers in camouflaged wetsuits storm ashore.

ments of Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom), England and the Irish Republic.

This "old" IRA was the creation of the brilliant guerrilla leader, General Michael Collins, who forced the British administration to a negotiated settlement following the war of independence, which was fought from 1919 to 1921. The settlement made provision for a temporary partition of Ireland to be followed a short time later by a national referendum on both sides of the border. Collins and the majority accepted the treaty as a steppingstone toward independence. Another faction, led by the American-born Eamonn de Valera, rejected it. A civil war followed between Collins' regular forces of the Irish Free State and de Valera's irregulars. Atrocities were committed in the fighting by both sides, and

between them the two groups of nationalists killed more Republicans between 1921 and 1923 than the British had managed to kill during the War of Independence. An ambush by de Valera's supporters claimed the life of Collins, who is considered the founder of Ireland's Army, early in the war.

Successive Irish governments have been dominated either by the Fianna Fail party founded by de Valera, with its roots in the irregular forces, or by the Fine Gael, with its roots in the pro-treaty forces of Collins. Irish politics revolve around these old wounds, and the Defence Forces exist under the stigma of having been formed as pro-treaty forces. There is an ongoing fear of military involvement in Irish political affairs, and fear that this would lead to another civil war between the national Defence Forces and illegal leftist military groups, such as the Provisional IRA, Official IRA and the INLA (Irish National Liberation Army).



Members of the ARW small-boat team race across Blessington Lake in an Avon rigid-hulled inflatable during an exercise.

The stated missions of the Defence Forces are the defense of the Irish State against external aggression; to aid the civil powers (police or "garda siochana") against internal threats from terrorist groups; civil defense; duties with the United Nations peacekeeping forces; fishery and coastal protection; and to provide relief in the event of emergency or disaster.

With the resurgence of IRA activity in 1969, Defence Forces have been called upon to assist the police in coping with the increase in terrorist activity. When the state needed a specialist unit to respond to terrorism on an "eyeball-to-eyeball" basis, there was great political reluctance to create it within the Army. Instead, a special paramilitary unit — the Special Task Force (STF) — was created within the police Special Branch, likewise a police Special Surveillance Unit was formed rather than place the job with the Army.

However, under the Irish Criminal Law Act of 1976, Defence Forces, and more particularly the Army, have taken on six internal security tasks in response to rising terrorist operations within the Republic:

- **BORDER OPERATIONS** — The deployment of three infantry battalions and one cavalry squadron to patrol the border with Northern Ireland, man joint police-military checkpoints and jointly patrol the area, mount cordon and search operations, and participate in bomb disposal operations.
- **CASH ESCORTS** — To deter terrorist raids on armored cash-carrying vehicles, joint police and army escorts are mounted during large cash-in-transit movements



Army Ranger Wing assault group hitting the beach.

- between banks and distribution centers.
- **EXPLOSIVES SECURITY** — The police with the Army provide escorts during the movement of all explosives within the Republic and during their use.
- **VIP PROTECTION** — Though normally carried out by the police, in certain circumstances the Army is involved.
- **PRISON GUARDS** — The Defence Forces provide armed guards at certain civilian prisons where terrorists are being held and escort any movement of terrorist prisoners. Also, certain military prisons and sites are occasionally used to hold terrorist prisoners detained under the Offences Against the State Act.

Terrorists have mounted a specific anti-special forces propaganda campaign within Ireland to vilify units such as the British Special Air Service (SAS) and attached intelligence personnel. The SAS first deployed to Northern Ireland in December 1969, but in 1970 they were pulled out for Operation Storm, the covert deployment of the regiment to Oman. It wasn't until the Oman war's successful conclusion in 1976 that they redeployed to Northern Ireland. In the intervening period, a number of small, covert antiterrorist units were formed within the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), units such as the Bessbrook Support Unit and subsequently the District Support Units — which the terrorists often confused with the SAS in their "black propaganda" bulletins.

It was against this backdrop that the Irish Army formed the Army Ranger Wing. Civil servants in the Defence Department resisted the establishment of a special operations unit. Terrorists, deprived of funds by Irish Army asset-protection operations, turned to kidnapping. After one target, Dutch businessman Dr. Tiede Herrema, was rescued, members of the Irish Army Ranger training program were sent to cross train with the Dutch Marine Corps, which had scored successes against South Molluccan terrorists. Following a review of international hostage extraction teams, it was decided to form a special operations unit of between 100 and 150 men, all of whom would have to be Army Ranger qualified. The unit, though translated as Army Ranger Wing, is in fact "sciathán fhiannógláigh an airm." The ARW has been tasked with three roles under the Defence Act of 1954 and Criminal Law Act of 1976:

1. The execution of specialist military tasks in a conventional warfare scenario, as in defense of the state against external aggressors. Quoted examples of such a role are special operations such as intelligence gathering and sabotage behind enemy lines, securing vital objectives and long range patrolling.
2. To contribute to the improvement of military standards and military-related skills within the Defence Forces by conducting training courses and by returning former ARW personnel to operational and administrative units with their ARW skills.
3. To aid the civil powers when requested to do so by the police or Ministry of Justice or Internal Affairs, such tasks being VIP protection, specific roles in search & cordon operations, coping with aircraft hijackings and related scenarios.

The commanding officer of the ARW reports directly to the Irish Army chief of staff at Army HQ instead of to the commanding officer of the territorial command in which the ARW are based or operating.

Army Ranger Wing recruits its members from serving members of the Irish Defence Forces who volunteer for ARW selection. Entry requirements accent a very high level of physical fitness, and candidates must have the recommendation of their commanding officer. Initial selection training concentrates on physical endurance, individual marksmanship and teamwork. Once accepted in to the ARW, the newly qualified Ranger undergoes further training in advanced weapons handling, marksmanship, survival and small unit tactics.

Once through this phase, the Ranger then qualifies in a variety of specialist skills, such as small boat handling, diving, mountaineering and parachuting. The Irish Army parachute course is staged regularly at Gormanstown Air Station, with No. 2 Support Wing of the Irish Army Air Corps. The course is open to all members of the Irish Defence Forces, including the Naval Service. The diving course, including underwater explosives expert qualification and

Army Ranger Wing

Would You Like To Be A Ranger?

Your training would involve:

- Attaining a high level of fitness, endurance and stamina
- Advanced weapons handling
- Mountaineering
- Combat survival training
- Parachute training
- Driving and underwater skills
- Small boat handling
- Marksmanship
- Air - Sea confidence training

SELECTION COURSE 1986
 Selection Course UNIFORM will commence on February 28th, 1986. This will be the only opportunity in 1986 for you to join this specialist unit. Read the conditions for candidates and if the conditions appeal to you apply to undergo the Selection Course. Army Ranger Wing personnel will not be recalled to the Defence Forces from full duty to attend February 1986. A list of the opportunities in the Defence Forces of the Wing with those personnel to whom you will apply to be accepted for training will be sent to you by the 15th FEBRUARY 1986.

Training for applications to EFN
 (February 1986) February 1986
 Instructors: Officers, Warrant, 22
 Feb 1986 (Over Rank) Wednesday
 21 Feb 1986



**THIS COULD
BE YOU!**

Are YOU INTERESTED?

CONDITIONS FOR CANDIDATES

1. Volunteers from any Corps or Service in the PDF.
2. Of a rank NOT less than 3 Star or equivalent.
3. In good physical condition.
4. Medical category A1, with good medical record.
5. In possession of an acceptable Conduct Sheet.
6. Prepared to reside within an approved radius of the Curragh Camp (if married).
7. Prepared to give a minimum of 18 months commitment to the Unit.
8. Recommended by his Commanding Officer.

Recruiting advertisement for the ARW from *An Cosantoir*, the Irish Defence Forces Magazine.

small boat work, is also undertaken with the Naval Service. The ARW also conducts its own instructors' courses in some of the skills it uses for personnel from other units, and it also regularly rotates ARW personnel through other units to increase proficiency and individual military skills.

Army Ranger Wing uses the normal armaments of the Defence Forces, including the FN HP 9mm Browning SA pistol, FN FAL 7.62x51mm rifle, and FN MAG 58 7.62x51mm GPMG. Standard submachine gun is the Carl Gustav KPist 45 9mm. In addition, the ARW has Smith & Wesson .38 caliber Model 10s for VIP protection and uses both the H&K 53 and 33A2 5.56mm assault rifles and the H&K 9mm MP5 series.

The Irish Department of Defence acknowledges that ARW personnel participated in Operation Santa Claus in December 1983 against the Provisional IRA. The IRA had kidnapped businessman Don Tiede and was holding him hostage for ransom; the Irish police and Army were deployed along with the paramilitary Special Task Force (nicknamed the "Uzi carriers" because of their preference for that weapon). The search was narrowed down to a small forest in Ballinamore, County Leitrim. A cordon and search was initiated with the ARW serving as a quick reaction force in the event of hostile contact. On the morning of 16 December, a mixed police and Army search unit, not including either the STF or ARW, came across a shelter. They were approached by men in camouflage uniforms who threw a stun grenade and then opened fire, killing one soldier and one police officer. Tiede was rescued, but the killers made their escape.

The Irish government has denied newspaper allegations that the ARW were involved in the ambush of IRA terrorists who were trying to kidnap County Wicklow mil-

lionaire Galen Weston in August 1983; the STF was credited with that very successful operation. Also denied was the story that ARW members rappelled from helicopters onto the roof of the British Embassy in Dublin at the height of the hunger strikes by terrorist prisoners in Northern Ireland to prevent a hostile pro-terrorist mob from burning the embassy, as one had done in 1972.

In fact, until winter 1984, the Irish government and its Department of Defence denied strenuously the existence of the ARW. On 23 October 1984, the chief of staff called upon the ARW to put on a demonstration of its skills and capabilities for members of the Dáil (parliament) and the media. At the time, the Department of Defence was at great pains to point out that while the ARW had trained with the French paramilitary GIGN (*Group d'Intervention Gendarmerie Nationale*), the ARW had no links with NATO special forces and especially the British 22 SAS.

Over 18-19 October 1986, the Irish security forces held a major anti-terrorist exercise at Shannon Airport. The scenario was that a plane from a European capital had been hijacked by terrorists and landed at the international airport. Special Branch and Special Task Force were called in and eventually tried to storm the plane. Those involved in the exercise were given six hours notice of their involvement. The STF failed to storm the aircraft, and it was judged that the terrorists had started to "kill" the "hostages." At this point the ARW was called in and succeeded in gaining entry to the aircraft. The exercise, however, was regarded as having been a failure, according to authorities. This is perhaps one of the clearest indications of the burden placed on Irish specialist units by a politically imposed neutrality which forbids them drawing on the vastly superior experience of units such as the British SAS and the U.S. Army's Delta Force.

However, a note of success was sounded for the Rangers was when one of their officers, Lieutenant Tony Bracken, was awarded Ireland's highest military decoration, the Military Medal for Gallantry. Before Lt. Bracken, only one other soldier had received the award. While he was serving with the Irish contingent in Lebanon, a Land Rover patrol under Bracken's command was ambushed. Both his driver and radio operator were wounded, the driver in both legs by fire from Kalashnikovs. Bracken extracted those members of the patrol who were capable of movement, directed fire at the hostiles, and moved back into the ambush area to carry out his wounded driver while still firing his weapon at the ambushers.

With ever-increasing peacekeeping duties abroad with the United Nations and the ever present threat of terrorism at home, training provided to the Irish Defence Forces by the Army Ranger Wing is an important — perhaps even critical — element in Ireland's military capability. ✖



SOF EXPOSE

TIGERS OF A DIFFERENT STRIPE

FDR's Secret Plan

to Torch Japan Before Pearl Harbor

by Don McLean



WHITE HOUSE BLIND-SIDES CONGRESS ... OPERATES HUNDREDS OF SECRET U.S. MERCENARIES ON BOGUS PASSPORTS ... U.S. MILITARY FLYERS UNDER FOREIGN FLAG PART OF PLOT FOR 150-PLANE PREEMPTIVE FIRST STRIKE ON NON-BELLIGERENT ... FEDERAL LAWS IGNORED ... DOCUMENTS, INTERVIEWS REVEAL SECRET ARMS DEALS, INFLUENCE PEDDLING, PROFITEERING AMONG INSIDERS OF OVAL OFFICE ... U.S. MERCS RECRUITED AT MANY TIMES NORMAL PAY, PLUS EXPENSES ...

IN light of the 1987 revelations of the Iran-Contra affair, such headlines probably wouldn't raise an eyebrow these days. But they certainly would have before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, had they been aimed at the covert foreign policy initiatives of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his Democratic, and supposedly isolationist, administration. In fact, had it not been

Chennault's Flying Tigers on the prowl near Paoshan, China, in P-40 Tomahawks, Spring of 1942. Taken by one of Tigers' top aces, this photo shows the only planes Chennault ever got — the P-40s with which he held the Japanese at bay in China for nearly a year. Photo and copyright: R.T. Smith

for delays during the summer of 1941¹ in getting U.S. bombers delivered to our covert "Flying Tiger" bases in China, history would have seen Emperor Hirohito delivering FDR's famous "Day of infamy" speech to the Japanese in Tokyo,² and the above headlines blazing from U.S. tabloids.

Even more startling than the fact of FDR and his secret inner circle planning, recruiting and outfitting a mercenary bomber force of U.S. pilots under a foreign flag for the purpose of preemptive air strikes against Japan (which would have plunged the United States into World War II as an aggressor nation), is the astonishing point that this was all done without the consultation, consent or approval of Congress,³ was in direct contradiction of FDR's own proclamations of neutrality in the China-Japan war, and was in circumvention of Title 18, U.S. Code

(the "Neutrality Act"), the Reserves Act of 1940, and the Selective Service Act of 1940.

Americans are familiar with the story of Claire Chennault and the heroic Flying Tigers, one of the most cost-effective, combat-effective air units ever assembled. With never more than 70 trained pilots or more than 49 planes ready for combat,⁴ they just about single-handedly held the Japanese at bay in China while the Allies armed to repulse — and eventually defeat — the forces of Imperial Japan. The First American Volunteer Group under Chennault is immortalized in American history and military lore.

What is generally *not* known is that there was a *Second*⁵ (and even a *Third*)⁶ American Volunteer Group under Chennault, whose mission was to fly preemptive first strike bombing raids against Osaka, Kobe and Kyoto, plus Tokyo, Nagasaki and Yokohama,⁷ long before the attack on Pearl Harbor.⁸

In fact, a secret memorandum from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations dated 17 January 1940 reveals the Roosevelt administration was contemplating war on the Japanese with mercenaries — "an effi-



cient guerrilla corps" — two years before the attack on Pearl Harbor. A subsequent memorandum addressed to Roosevelt as "Commander in Chief" under signature of Admiral Thomas C. Hart (Commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet) began "*The concept of a war with Japan is believed to be sound,*" and it went on to note that "bombers are the Associated Powers' most potent weapon, and their possibilities should be exploited ... for bombing land and air bases," because "*one of Japan's greatest fears rests upon the bombing of the homeland.*"¹⁰ (The "Associated Powers" became "The Allies" once the battle lines were drawn for WWII.)

The early 1940 memorandum was based upon an extensive interview with Lieutenant Commander Bruce G. Leighton, USNR, who at that time was a vice president of Intercontinent Corporation. Owned by aviation entrepreneur William D. Pawley, Intercontinent had offices world wide, including aircraft factories in China. Leighton carried a proposal from Intercontinent to provide planes, men and facilities for launching preemptive air strikes on Japan — from China and under a Chinese flag, but with U.S. planes and crews. Citing this proposal of Intercontinent Corporation as one which "appears to offer the possibil-

Major General Claire Chennault, upon his retirement on 14 July 1945. Father of modern fighter tactics, he wanted a 500-plane air corps which he promised would stop Japanese aggression in China and halt Japanese navy and war industry with preemptive strikes on Japanese homeland from his Chinese bases. Photo: AP/Wide World

ity of immediately so strengthening Chinese resistance to Japan at relatively little cost to the United States, as to eventually cause Japan to abandon her policy of armed aggression ..." the naval memorandum considered that "it is then in the interests of the United States to give immediate support to China, with the objective of denying to Japan and retaining in friendly Chinese hands, the military and naval bases and economic resources which Japan, if successful in China, would undoubtedly use for further aggression in the Pacific." The memorandum noted that to implement this plan "there are among the U.S. Army and Navy reserve pilots adequate numbers who would welcome an opportunity to engage in such a venture, provided they were not discouraged from doing so by the U.S. Government."¹¹

The heart of the battle plan outlined in the memorandum was, plain and simple, to hire

U.S. military pilots and ground crews as mercenaries to fight for pay from Intercontinent Corporation "under commercial contracts with the Chinese Government, without any direct participation by the U.S. Government." It was emphasized that "Japan would have no ground to object to this procedure," and only three things would be required from Uncle Sam: (1) "influence the Import-Export Bank to Guarantee Loans by private banks up to U.S. \$25,000,000"; (2) "The United States Government should interpose no objection to the hiring by the Intercontinent Corporation of competent American Army, Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Flyers"; and (3) "The United States should make it easy for China to obtain the required number of planes and fuel for their operation."

The memorandum from the Office of Chief of Naval Operations concluded by pointing out that "the Intercontinent Corporation has personnel who have been all over China and are experts in all fields having to do with aviation. They have moved their plant clear across China and have been getting supplies over the roads of the Southwest. Thus the groundwork of an efficient guerrilla air corps is already laid and could be made an actuality simply by adding to the present personnel of the Intercontinent Corporation. Once this corps came into being ... it could be maintained at a cost of about U.S. \$5,000,000 per month. It would not require more than fifty United States pilots ..."¹² *This was written two years before Pearl Harbor!*¹³

The subsequent memorandum from Admiral Hart (entitled "Certain Strategical Considerations in Connection with an Orange War — Rainbow No. 3") noted that, in reference to establishing bomber bases in southern China, "It is believed that further development of these ideas offers the greatest feasible method of waging offensive warfare against Japan available to the Associated Powers particularly during the early stages of a war ..." Further, "... many sites are available and suitable ... the Chungking government would be more than willing to furnish assistance in turning them into air fields. This procedure would offer a progressive advancement of air fields past Formosa towards Japan as more planes become available."¹⁴ The above documents, startling as they may be, comprised only Enclosure (B) to an even more startling document, "Joint Army-Navy Board Paper No. 355," which we shall shortly examine in more detail, as we see President Roosevelt decide to purchase a pre-packaged, off-the-shelf mercenary war against Japan.

At a time when some in the U.S. Congress and other foes of the Reagan Doctrine seem determined to undercut the Administration's efforts to support anti-communist resistance groups in Central America and elsewhere by crying "foul" when someone chooses to fight under a foreign flag for a just cause; when anything smacking of covert activity has congressmen scrambling

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, FDR, Churchill and Madame Chiang at famous Cairo Conference in December 1943 at which leaders met to plan strategy against the Japanese in Southeast Asia. Photo: AP/Wide World

for the moral high ground; and when an independent counsel is added to the government payroll to find criminal intent among those who carried out the current administration's foreign policies, FDR's own provocative entry in the logbook of American history invites critical examination.

Neither the justness of the cause nor the eventuality of our involvement in World War II can be seriously questioned. Imperial Japan's brutal conquest of China had already cast the die in which the war would be formed in the Far East. The U.S. Navy had already been secretly engaging Nazi U-Boats in the Atlantic,¹⁵ in flagrant violation of the Neutrality Act and without the knowledge of the American people. The State Department was turning a blind eye toward Americans who enlisted in the RAF and RCAF. More than 700 Polish-Americans from the Chicago area were enlisted to fight with the Free Polish Army. In violation of express congressional limitations on sending troops outside the western hemisphere (Reserves Act of 1940, Selective Service Act of 1940), Roosevelt sent troops to occupy Greenland and Iceland when the Nazis invaded Denmark, and to occupy Dutch Guiana when the Netherlands fell to the Nazis. In retrospect, FDR's assumption seemed to be that war was inevitable, but it would be to our advantage to make our eventual entry on our own terms. A sucker punch, in other words, would be an auspicious way to enter a fight which he saw as unavoidable.

The organization, recruiting and deployment of the First American Volunteer Group under Chennault, later nicknamed the "Flying Tigers," was planned as just such a blind punch. This secret was short-lived, however. By the time the first pilots and crews had started shipping to Asia, the press was running stories of the "tall, bronzed Americans" who were going to help the Chinese defend the Burma Road.¹⁶ Although they were almost to a man U.S. military personnel and were flying U.S.-supplied and manufactured aircraft, the administration assumed that by having them fly under the Chinese flag and be on contract to CAMCO (Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company, a subsidiary of Pawley's Inter-Continent Corporation),¹⁷ which was under contract to Chaing Kai-Shek (who was paying with money loaned from the U.S. Treasury),¹⁸ this would be sufficient vicegeral cover that the Japanese would not regard the Tigers' activity in China as directly hostile actions by the U.S. government. Direct retaliation against the U.S. would thus be avoided,¹⁹ at least until we could deal the Japanese a first blow that would cripple the effectiveness of any retaliation.

The *Second* American Volunteer Group — whose mission of preemptive first strikes



Repair work under the trees in Rangoon, Burma. Plans for the preemptive bombing of Japan were aborted by the attack on Pearl Harbor. The AVG never got its bomber force, was continually short on spares and cannibalized the P-40s to keep them flying. Photo: courtesy John Rossi

against the Japanese homeland represented an open and hostile confrontation with Japan — was a more closely guarded secret in the planning and deployment stages. We were loathe to signal our intentions to Japan before these first strikes, as they had the tactical objective of "... raids on Japanese Industrial establishments in Japan" and the strategic objective of "Destruction of Japanese factories in order to cripple production of munitions and essential articles for maintenance of economic structure in Japan."²⁰

Unavoidable delays in procuring suitable bombers, at a time when we were straining to crank up the American war machine and simultaneously arm England, pushed delivery dates months past schedule...²¹ past the fateful date of 7 December 1941... thus allowing Japan to beat us to the punch with her attack on Pearl Harbor. On December 7th the initial shipment of Lockheed A-28

Hudson bombers (a transport plane which had been modified to bomber configuration for the British)²² was sitting at the Lockheed facility in Burbank awaiting transport to China.²³ *Forty-nine ground crewmen had already left California via ship for Chennault's secret bases on 21 November.*²⁴ Bomber pilots were scheduled to leave Los Angeles on 11 December.²⁵

Just as those who *received special dispensation* to resign their Army, Navy or Marine Corps positions and sign contracts to become mercenaries under a surrogate Chinese flag did so for such divergent reasons as adventure, altruism or monetary gain,²⁶ those within FDR's inner circle who initiated or became part of this secret plan to bomb Japanese industrial and governmental centers before Japan attacked us, also did so for varying motives. Patriotism, mutual self-interest, profit, or access to government secrets on behalf of our Soviet "allies"²⁷ all were involved. For reasons of security and control (or perhaps in some cases involving foreign personalities, to keep the money in the family) the circle of planners never grew large. Those involved

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THE CURIOUS CASE OF COMRADE CURRIE

The seeds which grow to war are often sown by uncompromising zealots. But once the obligatory posturing is over and the potential combatants arm themselves, pragmatism comes to the fore and alliances are created of convenience and necessity. One can often cast his lot with the lesser of his enemies in order to defeat the greatest. Sometimes it is not necessary to form an actual alliance to accomplish the desired effect — it will often suffice to arm or otherwise assist a third party who is a potential enemy of your potential enemy. Once the greater enemy is defeated, one can attend to the lesser enemy (the temporary ally) later. If your temporary ally is wounded, the better for you.

Japan and Russia had been traditional enemies since the time that suitable transportation made it possible to have an enemy who was not one's immediate neighbor. In the mid-1930s, the Japanese were working under the assumption that by the year 1952 their industrialization would have reached such proportions that they could attack the U.S.S.R. and win. They did not, however, wish to come into direct conflict with the Soviets until that time. For this reason, before World War II Japan and the U.S.S.R. signed a non-aggression pact, rather like the pact signed by the U.S.S.R. and Nazi Germany — one that probably wouldn't work but which might provide maneuvering space and couldn't hurt.¹¹³ The Soviet Union, for its part, was working on the assumption that it would eventually come into direct conflict with Japan over Manchuria, but hoped to win effective control over China through its Sovietization. When World War II loomed as a reality, the U.S.S.R. contributed a great deal to the defense of China. Stalin was no admirer of anti-communist Chiang Kai-shek, but since Chiang and Mao had established an uneasy marriage of convenience to fight the Japanese, and since a strong Chinese defense would probably keep the Japanese from attacking Soviet territory, Stalin sent help until pressure from Nazi Germany in the west made sending more help impossible.¹¹²

Always masters of the Byzantine, of convoluted planning and at having their moles in place long before they might be needed, the Soviets had worked Dr. Richard Sorge into position as secretary to the German military attache in Tokyo in the mid-1930s. Born in Russia of a German father and Russian mother, Sorge was a Bohemian-style communist who had enlisted in the Nazi party as cover for his eventual role as head of the Red Army spy ring ("Sword") in the Far

East. It took him two years to set up his organization in Manchuria and Japan, where he was not only secretary to the German military attache, but also unofficial correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He would routinely file his reports with the German Foreign Ministry and send a copy to the Red Army's Fourth Bureau (Intelligence).¹¹³

When the shouting had stopped over the "2/26" (1936) Generals' Rebellion in Japan, Sorge was able to relay the news to Moscow that Japan was going into an active expansionist mode, and that Manchuria and points north would be the first order of business. Thus, there was no doubt among the Soviets that it would be in their interest to make sure *somebody* armed the Chinese so they could keep the Japanese contained on the U.S.S.R.'s southeastern border.

The United States had made vociferous condemnations of Japan for her incursions into China, but we had also officially stated that we would remain neutral in the Sino-Japanese conflicts. Thus it appeared there would be no U.S. aid to the Chinese that would help protect Soviet interests in Asia from the advancing Japanese. So in 1938 the U.S.S.R. extended some \$20 million in credit to China. In addition, the U.S.S.R. became directly involved by sending an armored division and six regular squadrons from the Soviet air force. They built flying and artillery schools for Chinese troops and opened a new overland supply route from Soviet Turkestan — a road which eventually carried more tonnage of war materiel to China than the famous Burma Road.¹¹⁴

But by the end of 1939, Soviet aid to China had decreased substantially — dramatic gains by the Japanese notwithstanding — because the Soviet Union was forced to choose between protecting from Nazi Germany the territory it *already had*, as opposed to protecting from Japan that which it *hoped* to gain. Since the U.S.S.R. was no longer able to aid China due to her problems in the west, what Stalin needed was an ally who would do it for him. More specifically, what he needed was a mole in the White House who could promote to Roosevelt the idea that the United States should take the Soviets' place in training and arming the Chinese to keep the Japanese busy. There was, after all, a mutuality of interest in aiding the Chinese, because the busier the Japanese were in China, the less attention they could give to other territories of the Associated Powers (who later became the Allies).

Enter Dr. Lauchlin Bernard Currie. Born in Nova Scotia and naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1935, Dr. Currie served FDR as a White House aide from 1939 to 1945. Bright, articulate and energetic, in

the spring of 1941 Dr. Currie was appointed as special envoy to China,¹¹⁵ and in 1942 was Roosevelt's personal representative to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek at Chungking. He also headed several delegations to international conferences. It was Currie who quickly revived the aborted plans to bomb Japan and re-authored them as JB Paper 355 in the spring of 1941.¹¹⁷ In a penned notation to Lieutenant Colonel W. P. Scobey (Secretary of the Joint Army-Navy Board), enclosed with his endorsement of JB Paper 355, Rear Admiral R. K. Turner (member of the Joint Planning Committee, part of the Joint Board) wrote in reference to Currie: "I sign this paper [JB 355] with pleasure. Its author has a fine command of ideas, language, and expression. I congratulate him — and if he is out of a job, I would like to have him work for the Navy for awhile in order to express the thoughts that we are so dumb about. I am sure this paper will receive the approval of the Joint Board. [signed] Turner."¹¹⁸

Alas, Admiral, Dr. Currie was already employed full time by the Democratic administration as White House aide, and as subsequent developments would indicate, was moonlighting for Moscow.

Accused on several occasions after World War II of being part of a Soviet spy ring, Dr. Currie repeatedly denied the charges under oath. He was named by the FBI as a source, witting or unwitting, of information passed to a Soviet spy ring. Ms. Elizabeth Bentley, former courier for a communist espionage network, testified that it was Currie's mission as a spy to steal White House secrets for Moscow. Most of the secrets, Bentley testified, were related to U.S. Far Eastern affairs. In another instance, she alleged that Currie passed word to Moscow that the United States was about to break a Soviet code. Under oath (people under oath never fib) Currie stated he knew nothing about any code, and left the United States for South America.

After he had remained out of the United States for more than five years, in August 1955 the State Department revoked his U.S. citizenship, invoking a provision which applied only to naturalized citizens. On 27 March 1956, the charges that Currie was a communist spy were renewed by a Senate Judiciary subcommittee.

Safely in Colombia in 1950, Currie worked as an advisor to the Colombian government, married there and engaged in farming and cattle ranching.¹¹⁹ Was Currie actually a Soviet spy? Or was he merely a fellow-traveler who had served his purpose and was thrown to the wolves by a *real* spy with her feet in the fire? Or was he innocent and merely loose enough of mouth to have been

used? Considering how intelligent and articulate was Dr. Currie, it seems unlikely he would be careless with state secrets. He had full access to secret documents, correspondence and conferences relating to the Far East, authoring many secret documents himself. Once inside the White House, he was the prime mover in convincing FDR we must launch preemptive strikes against Japan to save China (and, coincidentally, future Soviet interests in the Far East, as well as her existing territory along the Siberian coastline and west of Manchuria).¹²⁰

It was not until the fall of 1941, well after FDR had approved and taken steps to implement our preemptive strikes on Japan and the bolstering of China's defenses, but before the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, that communist spy Richard Sorge of the German Military Attache's office in Tokyo was able to inform Moscow the Japanese had decided to move south, not further into Manchuria or into Siberia in violation of the Japanese-Russian pact. This message of 3 October was one of the last Sorge was able to send to Moscow, as a member of his "Sword" spy ring had been picked up in Manchuria and, after a failed attempt at suicide, had told all to the Japanese.¹²¹

Colonel Osaki of Japanese Intelligence had known for some time that there was a secret transmitter in Japan sending messages to the U.S.S.R.; he had suspected Sorge but also many others. Now he had reason to target Sorge, and introduced him to the female Japanese agent who was his downfall. In the middle of October, Sorge received his last intelligence, and that night he and the Japanese agent went to his beachside chalet, near where Sorge had been sending radio messages from a small boat. Enroute to the chalet, the agent saw Sorge throw the message from the car, torn in small pieces. She managed to telephone Col. Osaki with the location, and while Sorge and his agent lover proceeded to the chalet, the message was retrieved by Osaki's men and pasted together. Upon reaching the chalet, Sorge proceeded to the boat and prepared a message for his associate to transmit to Moscow — along with the word that "Sword" had probably been compromised. The message read in English: "Japanese carrier air force attacking United States Navy at Pearl Harbor probably dawn November six Stop Source reliable Stop Joe." How thoughtful it would have been of our Soviet "ally" to have relayed the timely information of this message to Washington! Armed with the pasted-together message, Col. Osaki arrested Sorge at his chalet on 15 October.¹²²

The events of the first weeks of Octo-



Currie (left), with Felix Frankfurter, leaving for China, 1942. In 1945 FBI informed Truman that Currie was a Soviet spy. In 1948, House Committee on Un-American Activities witness put him in Silvermaster Communist cell of government officials. In 1950 he moved to Colombia. In 1951 Senate Internal Security Subcommittee received corroborative testimony from several former Communists. Photo AP/Wide World

ber 1941 were pivotal for World War II. On 3 October the Germans raised the Nazi swastika over the *Pravda* building on the outskirts of Moscow. They optimistically scheduled their occupation of Moscow for the next few days. Soviet opposition was expected to be weak.¹²³ After a successful "Operation Typhoon,"¹²⁴ the Germans would winter there, and their spring offensive should see them sweep to the east into Siberia, where some 2,000,000 Soviet troops waited for the Japanese invasion.

On 4 October, Sorge's message that there would be no Japanese invasion reached Moscow. On 5 October, the Germans began their attempted sweep into Moscow, only to be met with an avalanche of Soviet troops, including elements from the Siberian Red Army. According to Hans-Otto Meissner, by nightfall the fate of the German armies in the east was sealed. Perhaps this is a little overstated in light of the hard-fought battles the following year at Stalingrad, but it would be correct to characterize the spirited defense of Moscow as the point where the Nazi flood of Europe reached its crest.¹²⁵

In his book about Sorge, *The Man With Three Faces*, Meissner (who was a German armored officer in Russia before he was assigned to Tokyo where he met Sorge) wrote, "I cannot say how long it took the Russians to act on this vital information [Sorge's transmission of 3 October 1941]. It must have been almost immediately. For the transport of nearly two million men across the vast spaces of the Soviet Union in so short a time was nothing short of a miracle of improvisation and mass energy. I speak with conviction. I was a tank commander in Russia during the early days of the invasion, and I know how difficult the terrain was and how we Germans suffered through lack of transport."¹²⁶

If Sorge had sent on his message on 3 October that there would be no Japanese advance into Siberia, and the Germans 60 miles from Moscow ran into the crack 32nd Siberian Rifle Division from far eastern Siberia (Vladivostok) only 10 days later,¹²⁷ there must indeed have been a miracle involved. Or, more obviously, the surprise appearance of Siberian troops would strongly suggest the Soviets had been able to begin a much earlier troop redeployment based on an earlier judgement that the Japanese would be unable to strike north into eastern Soviet territory. In referring to the situation at Moscow on 7 October 1941, General Georgi Zhukov mentioned that the transfer of troops from Siberia had been delayed.¹²⁸ To have a delay as Zhukov noted on the 7th, there must have been a plan in motion before Sorge sent his message on the 3rd. The judgement which permitted this plan to move Siberian troops to the defense of the west would logically have been predicated upon inside information that, despite our pronouncements of neutrality, the United States planned a massive bolstering of China against the Japanese, including preemptive strikes against the Japanese homeland, for the fall of 1941. Armed with this information, the Soviets were able to correctly make one of the pivotal decisions of the war.

Was the source of this inside intelligence accused Soviet spy Lauchlin Currie, the author of JB Paper 355 and the confidant who finally sold the idea of attacking Japan to FDR? Was Currie a mole planted to encourage U.S. strikes against Japan to take the heat off the Soviets? Or a Soviet spy planted to glean whatever he could from the Oval Office, who subsequently worked his way into a position to be privy to and help formulate U.S. plans and actions in the Far East? Or was he merely an innocently accused, hard-working diplomat who honestly sought to save the Chinese from Japanese aggression?

We will probably never know. Stalin credited Sorge for having provided the intelligence which allowed him to move Siberian troops to the defense of Moscow, but the troops would appear to have been in motion well before Sorge's message was sent. Additional influxes of Siberian troops played a major role in the massive Soviet counterattack four weeks later.¹²⁹

The allegations of Lauchlin Currie's work as a Soviet spy were never refuted in court. He did not stand trial. One can hardly be surprised at a person skipping to South America to avoid the scatological shotgun attacks of the McCarthy era, but even a timid man with a clear conscience probably would have stayed to clear his name. If Currie were a Soviet agent within FDR's administration, how would he have acted differently?

often played more than one role in a drama which spun a web with an almost incestuous interlocking of relationships, duties and motives.²⁸

When the events at Pearl Harbor made their surprise bombing of Japan no longer feasible, the Second American Volunteer Group was immediately and quietly disbanded.²⁹ FDR did not want to mollify the fighting indignation of Americans over the "day of infamy" at Pearl Harbor. The men and materiel involved were quickly reabsorbed into the conventional military establishment and became part of the Allied war machine.³⁰ Most of the men in the famous "Flying Tigers," the First American Volunteer Group, were never aware why the "First" was dropped from their title after Pearl Harbor.³¹ Most never knew that there was a Second AVG on its way,³² and that its mission had been to bomb Japan. What follows is the astonishing story of how such an aggressive, covert plan came to be approved and implemented.

The secret plan (ultimately published as Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, under the innocuous title "Aircraft Requirements of the Chinese Government"), which in its final form authorized the sneak attacks on Japan, was approved by FDR some five months before Pearl Harbor, on 23 July 1941.³³ The secret Executive Order which authorized U.S. servicemen to sign contracts to fly under the Chinese flag as employees of CAMCO, and granted them leaves of absence with no loss of rank upon return, had been signed by FDR on 15 April.³⁴ But this was merely the fruition of seeds which had been sown much earlier by megabucks Chinese industrialist Tse-ven Soong (Chinese Ambassador to the U.S.),³⁵ and Claire Chennault, who had been in the employ of Chiang since 1937.³⁶ Harvard-educated T.V. Soong was one of the wealthiest men in the world, brother-in-law and financial backer of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, and the unofficial but very capable head of the China lobby, which had carefully cultivated contacts in virtually every executive agency of FDR's administration.³⁷ Soong also organized "CDS" (China Defense Supplies) to handle the more than \$100 million in American aid to China authorized before the war.³⁸

Claire Chennault, the maverick U.S. Air Corps captain whose new ideas were the leading edge of tactical fighter doctrine, had been in the employ of Chiang Kai-Shek since 1937. Having resigned his U.S. Army commission, Chennault contracted to Chiang Kai-Shek to help China build a viable air force to stem Japanese advances.³⁹ Enroute to China, Chennault had toured Japan, taking pictures of potential targets and sizing up what he knew would soon be his enemy.⁴⁰ Under Chennault's direction, the Chinese soon had a fledgling air force. It was small, ill-equipped and only moderately well trained by Western standards, but it was a viable force nonetheless. But the attrition of continual combat began to take its toll. In the fall of 1940, Chennault flew back



to Washington. His mission: sell FDR the idea of saving China from the Japanese with American air power;⁴¹ American fighters, American bombers — and American pilots — flying surprise attacks against targets in the Japanese homeland.

Approval of the concept of using U.S. mercenaries was expressed in JB Paper 355, which noted "To deny China a means to ensure the efficient manning of these aircraft would be to invite a waste of material" and that "United States policy, to be effective, must include provisions for advisory assistance by trained military aviators . . . plus initial operation by volunteer United States crews . . ." ⁴² Delineating a policy of "effective action against Japanese military and naval forces operating in China and in neighboring countries and waters," ⁴³ it was stated this policy would be effected by a plan "to provide a cadre of volunteer American instructor-pilots . . . aided by such volunteer technical personnel and equipment as may be necessary . . ." and that "This instructor cadre should provide advisory assistance in the maintenance and employment of all training and combat aircraft . . ." "The cadre should be commanded by a qualified United States aviator employed by the Chinese Government, and

ABOVE: Maj. Gen. Charles Bond (then lieutenant) was assigned to USAAC Ferrying Command, delivering Hudsons from Lockheed (above) to the Brits in Montreal, when he joined the AVG. Pilots who were to fly these on missions over Japan were scheduled to leave on 11 Dec. Ground crews were already enroute on Pearl Harbor Day. They were redirected to Australia, paid off by CAMCO, and drafted. Photo: AP/Wide World

RIGHT: RAF Hudsons in flight. Photo: courtesy Photri, Inc.

should be recruited in the United States."⁴⁴

There was, of course, only one *qualified United States aviator employed by the Chinese Government* . . . Captain Claire Lee Chennault. A memorandum dated 29 May 1941 for the Chief of Staff from the War Department General Staff's War Plans Division noted that "one hundred P-40's have been shipped. Personnel are being voluntarily raised in the United States. The effort is directly under the Generalissimo. The American main-spring appears to be Major Chennault [sic], a former Air Corps officer. Chennault [sic] is competent, but lacks personnel . . ."⁴⁵

The Chinese had first considered using



WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS
WASHINGTON

SECRET

JUL 18 1941

SECRET

The President;
The White House.

Dear Mr. President:

At the request of Mr. Lauchlin Currie, Administrative Assistant to The President, The Joint Board has made recommendations for furnishing aircraft to the Chinese Government under the Lend-Lease Act. These recommendations are contained in the Joint Planning Committee report of July 9, 1941, J.B. No. 355 (Serial 691), which The Joint Board approved, and which is transmitted herewith for your consideration.

In connection with this matter, may we point out that the accomplishment of The Joint Board's proposals to furnish aircraft equipment to China in accordance with Mr. Currie's Short Term Requirements for China, requires the collaboration of Great Britain in diversions of allocations already made to them; however, it is our belief that the suggested diversions present no insurmountable difficulty nor occasion any great handicap.

We have approved this report and in forwarding it to you, recommend your approval.

July 23, 1941
military mission
various methods
attached
 1 Incl.

Acting Secretary of War
Secretary of the Navy

COPY

July 22
 telegram received from Washington. #8101

SECRET

SRGAC

I am very happy to be able to report that today the President directed that sixty-six bombers be made available to China this year with twenty-four to be delivered immediately. He also approved a Chinese pilot training program here. Details through normal channel. Swam Hegarhs.

Currie.



TOP: The Joint Army-Navy Board approved Currie's plan, and on 23 July 1941 FDR gave it his endorsement. The die was cast, but the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor before Chennault's bombers could strike. Courtesy National Archives

ABOVE: Secret telegram from Currie as received by Chennault in Rangoon, where the First American Volunteer Group was training and staging. Courtesy National Archives

mercenary fighter pilots when the Japanese invaded Manchuria in 1932.⁴⁶ Now Chennault carried a proposal for a Special Air Unit, with 500 planes provided, maintained and piloted by Americans. He reckoned this force could effectively defeat the Japanese army in China, knock out the Japanese navy, and destroy Tokyo and other Japanese industrial and governmental centers — thus summarily stopping Japanese aggression in the far east.⁴⁷ At first Chennault had little

success in promoting this idea within the U.S. military establishment. Most attention was already focused on the Nazi sweep of Europe,⁴⁸ and in any case, Chennault was largely regarded as a maverick and mercenary, and as generally vexatious to many in the military hierarchy.⁴⁹ On 25 November 1940, Chennault, Soong and Major General Mao Pang-Tzo presented the idea to the President's Liaison Committee, a civilian agency coordinating foreign arms purchases

in the United States, but *U.S. military leaders* turned down Chiang's appeals for help.⁵⁰

Ambassador T.V. Soong, however, had spent years entrenching himself close to sympathetic ears. At Roosevelt's direction, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau had just expedited (in less than 48 hours) the \$100 million emergency loan to China, and it was to him that Soong carried Chennault's remarkable plan on 30 November 1940.⁵¹ Morgenthau received the plan favorably. He had long supported aiding the Chinese against Japan, because as long as the Japanese were fully occupied in China it was thought they would not be able to tangle with the Americans and British. The Americans and British, it was assumed, would soon have their hands full with the war in Europe. But if the Chinese fell, Japan would

be free to pursue adventures that would require the Associated Powers to divert attention, troops and materiel badly needed in Europe.⁵²

Within days, Morgenthau had contacted British Ambassador Lord Lothian, and Cordell Hull, U.S. Secretary of State, for reactions.⁵³ Perhaps because of the articulate groundwork already laid by the China lobby,⁵⁴ the idea of bombing Japan immediately appealed to them and others in the inner circle of FDR's administration. Lord Lothian noted that "it might change everything,"⁵⁵ and Hull said he would like to see 500 American planes "start from the Aleutians and fly over Japan just once," and even better, "if we could only find some way to have them drop some bombs on Tokyo."⁵⁶ Shortly before Christmas, on 19 December 1940, nearly a year before Pearl Harbor, the idea of hitting Japan first was formally presented to FDR and the full cabinet.⁵⁷ According to Dr. Duane Schultz in his well-researched book, *Maverick War*, FDR's response was to exclaim, "Wonderful!" On the spot, Roosevelt instructed Secretaries Morgenthau (Treasury), Hull (State), Stimson (War) and Knox (Navy) to stay over and start working out the battle plan. Soong showed the men a map with Chennault's secret airfields, already constructed, within 650 miles of Japan; from there the prime targets of Osaka, Kobe,

Kyoto, Nagasaki, Yokohama and Tokyo were within reach.⁵⁸

The next day Morgenthau met with Chennault, who pleaded for B-17s instead of the Lockheed Hudsons that were more readily available, and for some 200 fighters to protect the Chinese airfields. Chennault and Morgenthau agreed the bomber crews would be Americans.⁵⁹ Morgenthau suggested the bombers be flown from the West Coast to Clarke Field in the Philippines and then on to China.⁶⁰ He assumed the Army Air Corps would release personnel as required, and he suggested they be paid \$1,000 per month, a princely sum in 1940.⁶¹ Chennault further suggested they be paid five cents a mile for delivering the bombers to China.⁶²

The plan looked so good on paper, especially with the tempting thought that it would work, that there was little if any moral opposition,⁶³ and the idea snowballed. This is the point in any wild scheme where it is appropriate for mature voices to cry "Wait a minute, what are we about to do?" before it gains unstoppable momentum. In this case the voices were those of Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall. Stimson had misgivings from the beginning, and General Marshall was very concerned on two counts. It was Marshall's opinion that, first, we couldn't afford the

planes, and second, the cute trick of bombing Japan under a Chinese flag with American planes and American military personnel wouldn't *really* fool anybody, but would launch us into war with Japan at a time when we were woefully unprepared.⁶⁴

After talking to Stimson and Marshall, Morgenthau changed his mind about the bombing plan and relayed Marshall's views to FDR, and the plan was dropped . . . for the time being. Everyone, including General Marshall, realized that *something* must be done to aid the Chinese before the Japanese cut the Burma Road — the one remaining lifeline to China. Without supplies, China would fall quickly, freeing the Japanese to strike Allied territories and colonies in Asia.⁶⁵

Thus a scaled-down plan was adopted, wherein Chennault would get 100 P-40B fighters, which had been earmarked for the British, plus American military pilots, American mechanics and ground personnel.⁶⁶ They would fly under the Chinese flag, on contract to CAMCO of Loiwing, China.⁶⁷ Funds for personnel and hardware were funneled from the U.S. Treasury through a loan to China and "China Defense Supplies,"⁶⁸ which in turn contracted to CAMCO to provide "advanced trainer" aircraft and training personnel who would "operate, service and manufacture aircraft in China."⁶⁹

RECOMMENDED READING

The historic and heroic American Volunteer Group — the "Flying Tigers" — was one of the most successful and colorful fighting units ever assembled. As a result, it has also been one of the most thoroughly chronicled units of all time. Dozens of books have lionized its daring exploits, and its colorful leader Claire Chennault. Of those currently in print, we believe the following to be especially worthwhile; three for the insight afforded by authors who were part of the AVG, and one for its tenacious research.

THE MAVERICK WAR: CHENNAULT AND THE FLYING TIGERS. By Dr. Duane Schultz. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1987. 355 pp. \$18.95.

There are five points to a good news story — who, what, when, where, and why. Of the dozens of books written from WWII to the present about the AVG, only the first four points had been covered until Dr. Schultz published this masterfully researched work. A very readable history — suitable for those who prefer novels of intrigue rather than academic history — this volume is particularly recommended for the perspective it lends to its subject, as it tightly weaves the AVG into the tapestry of its times and digs deeply into the why be-

hind its formation.

TALE OF A TIGER. By Robert T. Smith. Van Nuys, California 91405: Tiger Originals, Box 4575. 1986. 362 pp. \$18.95 plus \$2 shipping.

R.T. Smith was one of the AVG's top aces, being credited with nine kills, and before the war ended he was a Lieutenant Colonel with a chest full of medals. This volume is an actual reproduction, with extensive notes and illustrations, of the diary Smith kept during his tour with the AVG. Highly readable, much like perusing a stack of old letters from your favorite uncle as you relive his wartime adventures. Remarkable insight into the minds of the men who were the "Flying Tigers."

WITH CHENNAULT IN CHINA: A FLYING TIGER'S DIARY. By Robert M. Smith. Blue Ridge Summit, Pa: Tab Books. 1984. 151 pp. \$12.50.

Robert M. Smith was a radio operator for the AVG, and these excerpts from the diary he kept reflect the thoughts and observations of a man who was fascinated not only by the adventure of his mission, but by the strange people and culture around him as he shared their fight, their sorrows, and their triumphs. Good historical preface. Very well illustrated, with appendices.

A FLYING TIGER'S DIARY. By Maj. Gen Charles H. Bond USAF (Ret.). College Station, Texas: A&M University Press. 1984. 248 pp. \$18.95.

Charles Bond was another Flying Tiger volunteer who kept a diary during his service with the AVG during its one-year effort to stem the Japanese advances in China, and who continued in the conventional military until he retired in 1968 as a major general. This volume is notable not only for its wealth of data and illustrations of the aircraft used by both sides in China, but for its excellent blending of personal insight and a global historical perspective. Well illustrated, well researched, well written. Appendices.

GENERAL CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT: A GUIDE TO HIS PAPERS IN THE HOOVER INSTITUTION ARCHIVES. By Robert Hessen (Ed.). Stanford: Hoover Institution Press. 1983. 29 pp. \$6.95.

Inasmuch as the American Volunteer Group was not an *official* US military unit — indeed its very existence had a somewhat tenuous relationship with the law — there is no single depository for its unit documents. The serious researcher will find the collection of papers and documents held at the Archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University to be an excellent primary source. This volume is a concise directory through the some 14 boxes of Chennault papers donated to the Institution by Chennault's widow.

These "training personnel" were issued passports which showed a genuine flair for creativity.

Claire Chennault was a "farmer"⁷⁰ on his passport, but held the title of "Advisor to the Central Bank of China," to avoid running afry of the Neutrality Act.⁷¹ Charles Bond (later Major General Bond), who was ferrying Hudson bombers from Lockheed in Burbank to the British in Montreal⁷² when recruited, was a "clerk."⁷³ R.T. Smith, author of *Tale of a Tiger*, was shown on his passport as a "plantation manager." When questioned by British Customs in Singapore as to the sort of plantation he would be managing, he replied "Rubber." "Odd," responded the agent, "last I heard, there were no rubber trees in Burma."⁷⁴ Robert M. Smith, author of *With Chennault in China*, was a "radio announcer,"⁷⁵ and others filtering over to China via Burma on commercial Dutch vessels⁷⁶ were given passports proclaiming them to be students, vaudeville artists, teachers, musicians, salesmen, bank employees, acrobats, and more realistically — an undertaker.⁷⁷

Although this mild subterfuge seemed in a light vein, when operational secrecy and heavy money became involved, the plot thickened considerably. CAMCO (a Delaware corporation with offices in New York, Hong Kong, and Rangoon and a plant in Loiwing, China)⁷⁸ was operated as a subsidiary of Pawley's Intercontinent Corporation, a Washington, D.C., corporation. CAMCO was jointly owned by William Pawley, who had been selling aircraft to the Chinese for years, and H.H. Kung, who was China's minister of finance, and brother-in-law of Madame Chiang. Pawley also worked for China Defense Supplies, which provided all of CAMCO's operating funds, and he received a 10 percent commission on planes sold to China.⁷⁹ Organized by Ambassador/financier T.V. Soong, CDS employed Tommy "The Cork" Corcoran, Esq. as legal counsel.

Then employed as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill, Corcoran had been a speech writer, confidant and New Deal architect during FDR's first two terms in office.⁸⁰ Corcoran's brother David was CDS' corporate president.⁸¹ FDR's uncle Fred Delano was a director.⁸² Corporate secretary was Whiting Willauer, subsequently a lend-lease official in China, and who was Chennault's partner in establishing "China Air Transport" after World War II.⁸³ Willauer later was U.S. Ambassador to Honduras and one of the master planners of the Bay of Pigs invasion.⁸⁴ Chennault and Willauer started CAT with funds provided by Fiorello La Guardia, when he was director of the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, to haul relief supplies to China.⁸⁵ When Chennault died, Willauer sold CAT to the CIA, and it became known as "Air America," which was active in covert operations and in transporting men and materiel throughout Southeast Asia during the Vietnam war.⁸⁶

Chennault, who was on the payroll of both CDS and CAMCO, recalled that "Dr.



FDR and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau smile on the eve of the 1940 election. Early plans for the bombing of Japan had already been favorably received by Morgenthau, but they were put aside until Lauchlin Currie revived them and pushed them to completion. Photo: AP/Wide World

Soong gave me *carte blanche* on supplies. 'Buy what you need and send me the bills,' were his only orders."⁸⁷ Chennault and the First American Volunteer Group were on their way. FDR's secret executive order of 15 April made it legal for U.S. citizens to bear arms under a foreign flag. Military commanders were under presidential order not to interfere with CAMCO recruiters who proselytized their best men.⁸⁸ The State Department, which a few years earlier had pulled passports and prosecuted U.S. citizens who fought for the Republicans in Spain, was now readily supplying bogus passports as needed.⁸⁹ The machinery was in motion. We were going to fight Japan under a surrogate flag, and the plan for sneak attacks on the Japanese homeland was not dead — only sleeping.

While Chennault and his team were busy planning, organizing, recruiting, procuring, transporting and training the First American Volunteer Group, Dr. Lauchlin B. Currie, a native of Nova Scotia who became a naturalized citizen in 1935,⁹⁰ was appointed as special envoy to China. Currie was an economist and former White House aide (see sidebar), and when he went to China in the spring of 1941 he appeared to become enamored with the Chinese cause,

pressing FDR for dramatic escalation of military aid to the Chinese.⁹¹

As special envoy to China, Currie gave full consideration to opinions and ideas emanating from Chiang, Soong, and the China lobby. Currie in turn had Roosevelt's ear on the subject of China. Soong, Chiang and Chennault convinced Currie that preemptive strikes against Japanese governmental and industrial centers were the most effective and timely way to stop Imperial Japan's incursions in China before they spread throughout the whole Pacific region and eventually to the U.S. West Coast.⁹² Convinced that Chennault's idea was workable, on 28 May Currie submitted to the Joint Army-Navy Board a specific plan which would give Chennault 66 Lockheed Hudson and Douglas DB-7 bombers,⁹³ with a full complement of pilots, bombardiers and ground crew, and hundreds of pursuit planes to fly cover — the Second American Volunteer Group.⁹⁴ *Their specific mission would be the preemptive bombing of Japan.*⁹⁵

The "Short Term Aircraft Program" analysis (Section III of JB Paper 355) contemplated "that aircraft allocated to China be flown out by American pilots and be maintained by American technicians and mechanics. After arrival, the aircraft and personnel would pass to the command of an American reserve officer, Captain Chennault, responsible directly to Chiang Kai-Shek." The Joint Board, however, noted it would be better to fly the bombers to a

Continued on page 88

A BRIGHT SHINING LIE. John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam. By Neil Sheehan. Random House Inc., Dept. SOF, 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 20008. 1988. 861 pages. Hardcover. \$19.95. Reviewed by G. B. Crouse

IN 1972, a state funeral at Arlington National Cemetery, America's most hallowed ground, for a fallen hero attracted a very disparate group of mourners. Among those present were the Secretaries of State and Defense, Generals Westmoreland, Stilwell and DePuy, and William Colby of the CIA. Also present were indicted anti-war activist Daniel Ellsberg and Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy, a vocal critic of the war that finally claimed the life of the man they had all come to honor. Soldiers from the Army's Old Guard escorted the casket from chapel to grave as the Army band, "Pershing's Own," played "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" a Pete Seeger song made popular by the anti-war movement.

The object of the mourners' sorrow was John Paul Vann, the quintessential soldier of the war in Vietnam. From an extremely humble upbringing in Norfolk, Virginia, Vann had risen to lieutenant colonel in the Army before retiring and later held a major general's command in Vietnam — as a civilian. Relentless energy and talent, along with guile and manipulation, were the keys to his success.

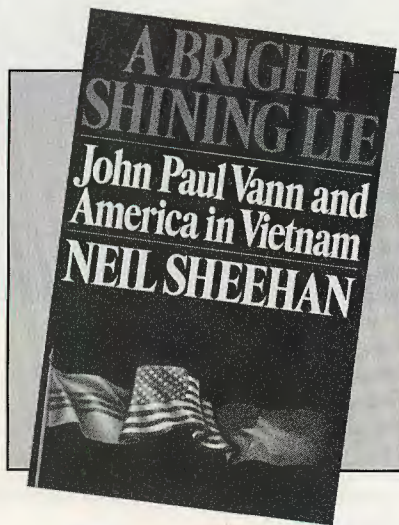
Vann was the embodiment of post-World War II America's extreme self-confidence. He believed, as most Americans did, that ingenuity, intelligence and American technology, properly applied, could solve the world's problems. Vann refused to believe that the era of American prominence that had begun with the signing of the instrument of surrender on board the *USS Missouri* could end in the rice paddies of Vietnam.

Vann befriended many reporters during his time in Vietnam, and after the funeral one of them, Neil Sheehan, decided to write about Vann. The end result, *A Bright Shining Lie*, would take the next 16 years to complete.

A Bright Shining Lie is a compelling biography of a fascinating man, but it goes far beyond telling one soldier's story. Sheehan delves into the formation of the Viet Minh, the origins of the American involvement, the corrupt and murderous regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, battles between the press and the American military commanders in Saigon, and the self-delusion and ignorance that Sheehan believes preordained the defeat of South Vietnam.

After a promising career in the Army, Vann had retired in 1963,

ostensibly as a protest over the way the war in Vietnam was being conducted. The real reason was a sexual indiscretion from Vann's past. Knowing that he would not be promoted to general, Vann chose to leave the Army. Two years later he was back in Vietnam, as a civilian employee of the Agency for International Development.



To reporters, Vann was something of a mentor, briefing and teaching them and, when it suited his purposes, using them. While serving as an advisor to the 7th ARVN division in 1962, Vann was convinced by the public statements and private reports of General Paul Harkins and his staff in Saigon that the Americans directing the war effort didn't know what was going on in the countryside or what to do about it. Increasingly frustrated by his inability to communicate the realities of the war to anyone in a position of authority, Vann turned to the press, letting them tell the public and officials in Washington what he couldn't tell them himself.

Journalists such as David Halberstam and Malcolm Browne, along with Sheehan, came to rely on Vann. Their reporting of the discrepancies between what General Harkins was saying in Saigon and what Vann was showing them in the Delta led to much of the later antagonism between the press and the military. As the war progressed, Vann grew bolder in his statements to the press. Although they were not attributed to him, there was little

doubt about the source of the critical quotes showing up in the *New York Times* and elsewhere.

Vann's manipulation went beyond the press. Another target was his Vietnamese counterparts. Early in the war, Vann learned what was required to prod the less-than-eager ARVN commanders into action. Through praise, generating positive publicity and always giving credit for victories to his counterpart, Vann hoped to instill the will to fight and win in the Vietnamese officer corps. He was less than successful.

Vann arranged a transfer to the II CTZ, because a Vietnamese general he had been successfully manipulating was transferred to the senior command there. Vann's machinations resulted not only in his transfer, but in his being given command of all American forces in the zone and in de facto control of the Vietnamese forces through his puppet.

It was in the II CTZ that Vann finally achieved his goal of total control of the military and pacification efforts in an entire region. II Corps was also the scene of Vann's biggest, and last, battle — the defense of Kontum.

Three days before Easter, 1972, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong launched a nationwide offensive. Although limited in scope, early gains presented the North with an opportunity to end the war before summer. It all might well have ended then. The defense of Kontum was to be Vann's greatest opportunity to demonstrate the energy and drive, the personal bravery and the skill at arms that had made him a legend. It did not start out well.

Vann had publicly committed himself to the successful defense of Tan Canh, the only strongpoint between the NVA and Kontum. Rather than choosing the more prudent course of a defense in depth, Vann decided to risk it all at Tan Canh. Although his staff advised against it, Vann did not wish to contradict his earlier statements. It was a foolish gamble. If he fought there and lost, the forces needed for defending Kontum, the key to the Central Highlands, would be gone.

Tan Canh lay some 20 miles to the north of Kontum. Garrisoned by some of Saigon's better troops, the ARVN had the means to withstand the impending NVA attack. What they lacked was the resolve to do so. Given their fear of

IN REVIEW



the skill of the NVA and their tendency to panic at the first sign of defeat, Vann was trusting a great deal to the South Vietnamese soldiers defending Tan Canh. He felt that with their backs against the wall the troops would at last stand and fight. He was wrong.

North Vietnamese armored forces had been used in both I and III Corps, but had only been reported in II Corps. Vann chose not to believe those reports. When NVA T-55 main battle tanks attacked the garrison at Tan Canh, it was all over but the panicked evacuation. Local Montagnards referred to the fleeing ARVN as "rabbit soldiers." The road to Kontum lay open, with little to stand in the way. In choosing his ego over a more practical course, Vann had exposed the Saigon regime to impending defeat.

But the NVA was unable to rapidly exploit its success; the ARVN was simply losing faster than the NVA could win. The NVA, shaped by wars with the French, South Vietnamese and Americans had developed a particular style. Attacks weren't spur-of-the-moment affairs, but rather required meticulous

preparation and planning. Dashing hell-for-leather on the heels of the fleeing ARVN was simply not in the NVA's character. It would be 20 days before the NVA launched its attack on Kontum — a respite which gave John Paul Vann the time he needed.

His less-than-sound decisions aside, Vann's personal heroism during the battle was remarkable. He repeatedly piloted his helicopter into the combat zone and retrieved American advisors from under the enemy guns. It was the sort of risk Vann had been taking since his days as a lieutenant in the Korean War. "The odds," Vann liked to say "did not apply to him."

With so much at stake, Vann assumed command of the defense of Kontum personally. He told Colonel R. M. Rhotenberry, his senior military advisor, "the troop disposition at Tan Canh was mine. I said we could defend there . . . and they didn't. Now my career is at stake because I've said we can defend Kontum. If you don't hold it, I no longer have any credibility or career."

As the NVA massed for the attack,

they became vulnerable to air strikes — B-52 strikes in particular. Plans were made to make maximum use of the B-52s, controlling them so that their strikes could be directed at the most imminent threat. To neutralize the armor threat, antitank teams were brought to full readiness, and the Pentagon dispatched two Hueys with the then-experimental helicopter-mounted TOW missile system.

From 14 May until the end of the battle in the last week of June, Vann directed nearly 300 B-52 strikes against the enemy. Flying in flights of three, the bombers dropped their loads within 700 yards of friendly positions. The Hueys, which had been flown in on C-141s direct from the proving ground in Arizona, went to work on the tanks.

Dazed and battered by the air strikes, the NVA nonetheless managed to break into Kontum on the 25th of May. As the NVA attacked the bunkers, the ARVN finally stood fast. Eventually they were able to counterattack

Continued on page 112



Vietnam 1968. SOF publisher Robert K. Brown, then serving as an S-2 officer with the 1st Infantry Division.

UNIQUE PHOTOS, UNIQUE WEAPONS, UNIQUE MEN

I shot these photos during a weapons demonstration I organized at the ARVN Infantry School in South Vietnam in the fall of 1968. The demo was put on by Mitchell Livingston WerBell III, a former OSS operative and long-time adventurer. Also in attendance was John Paul Vann, along with high-ranking ARVN officers, U.S. military personnel and representatives from the CIA.

At the time, WerBell was an executive with the Military Armament Corporation, which developed and manufactured the well-known MAC 10 and 11 submachine guns, as well as a wide variety of exotic weaponry and suppressors. I first met WerBell when he was involved in an abortive plot to



John Paul Vann, examining a MAC SMG as Mitch WerBell looks on.

overthrow the regime of "Papa Doc" Duvalier of Haiti. WerBell was part of a bizarre cast of characters in this Keystone Cops revolutionary comedy that included CBS executives and production personnel, Haitian exiles, anti-Castro Cubans and a dozen odd American soldiers of fortune.

I had met Vann after he retired from the Army and was working for Martin Marietta in Littleton, Colorado.

I linked up with both Vann and WerBell in Vietnam by chance while serving as S-2 for 2/18, 3rd Bde, 1st Infantry Division. One day at our TOC I saw a CBS cameraman who had been filming the aborted Haitian invasion. He told me that WerBell was in Saigon promoting his goodies and was headquartered in the Astor Hotel on Tu Do Street.

I quickly grabbed a jeep, mumbled something about important intelligence business in Saigon, and linked



John Paul Vann observing a Special Forces soldier firing an M16 with Sionics suppressor.

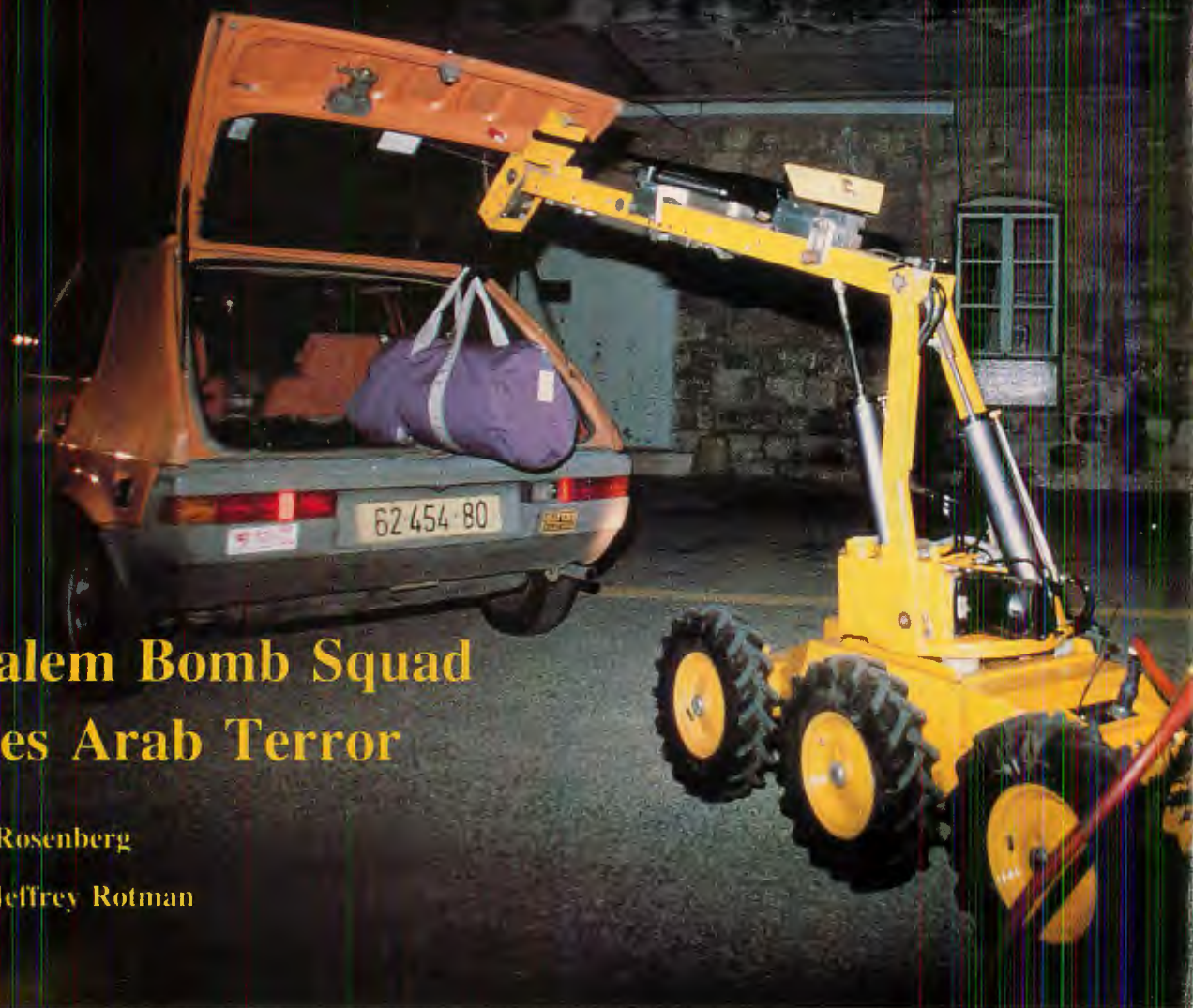
up with the old rogue. WerBell, always gregarious and a showman par excellence, was as generous with his scotch as he was with his bullshit. I suggested that I might be able to organize a demo for his weapons and, not surprisingly, he agreed.

I'd heard Vann was in Bien Hoa, and I jumped at the opportunity to renew our acquaintance. I figured he would find the demo interesting, and besides, I had a favor to ask. I wanted an in-country transfer back into Special Forces. Vann's influence in-country was sufficient to arrange those kinds of things. Vann subsequently wrote Colonel Aaron, commander of the 5th Special Forces Group and got me my transfer.

Anyhow, I set up the demo. Vann flew in on his chopper. He spent an hour with us busting caps and left in his helicopter. I never saw him again.

— Robert K. Brown, Editor/Publisher

HOLY CITY SAPPERS



Jerusalem Bomb Squad Defuses Arab Terror

by Robert Rosenberg

Photos by Jeffrey Rotman

"There are only two mistakes a person can make in this business. The first mistake is when you get into it. The second mistake is when you're out of it for good."

— Uri, 30, commander of the Jerusalem bomb squad.

TWENTY-TWO years ago, Jerusalem's reunification in the 1967 Six Day War made it the top target for Arab terrorism

against Israel. Since then, some 75 people have died and 10 times that many have been wounded by bombs exploding in the Holy City. But hundreds, if not thousands, more would have been killed or wounded if not for the work of the Jerusalem bomb squad, a special police unit on patrol in the city 24 hours a day.

Over the years bomb squad experts, called sappers, have defused, neutralized, dismantled and destroyed hundreds of bombs re-

ported by alert citizens who saw something wrong with an object and called the police. Two sappers have been killed and a half-dozen wounded by bombs they were trying to neutralize.

In the terror-conscious Israeli capital, it is the potential victims of terrorism — the residents — who keep the bomb squad busy. On quiet days, the squad answers upwards of 25 calls to examine, and if necessary neutralize, what Israelis call



ABOVE AND RIGHT: A loaf of bread, apparently dropped by accident, can hide a grenade set to go off when someone picks up the bread.

BELOW RIGHT: Sapper David Ivgy holds reconstruction of booby-trapped sacharin bottle that blew up and took off half his hand.

LEFT: After protective clothing, the second most important piece of equipment is the robot. Bomb Squad uses several different types, but all work on same principle. A video camera mounted on robot is connected to a monitor in the van. Here remote controlled robots remove suspicious objects from an abandoned car.



that maybe the closed cardboard box in front of a kiosk or the abandoned briefcase beneath a table in a sidewalk cafe, is a bomb.

A loaf of bread, apparently dropped by accident, can hide a grenade set to go off when somebody picks up the bread. A crate of eggs forgotten in the open market could be booby-trapped. A suitcase innocently forgotten in the central bus station could contain enough explosive to kill hundreds of people on a Friday afternoon, when thousands of travelers move through the main terminal.

An old refrigerator on a street corner always draws attention. In the mid-1970s, 13 people were killed when a refrigerator full of explosives blew up in downtown Jerusalem.

Since 1979, a bicycle left too long in a crowded place is likely to be checked by the sappers. In the early fall of 1979, just before the Jewish New Year when Jerusalem is crowded with Jewish pilgrims, a bicycle, its tubular frame packed with plastique, blew up in the middle of a popular sidewalk cafe on the Ben Yehuda street outdoor pedestrian mall in the heart of the downtown shopping district. One person was killed, and 36 were wounded.

Car bombs are one of the greatest dangers. The trunk, back seat or undercarriage of a vehicle can be loaded with enough explosive to destroy a building and kill hundreds. A car stolen in the morning can be rigged at night and the next morning turn into a flaming explosion in the middle of a downtown parking lot.

A battered jalopy parked too long or in the wrong place, a driver behaving in a bizarre fashion when he gets out of his car, a strange truck parked in a residential area — all might draw the attention of an old lady with nothing better to do than notice strangers in her neighborhood.

A car with the blue license plates of the Arab West Bank or Gaza parked on a residential street is enough to raise the hue and cry — a telephone call to the emergency police number 100 — especially if the car is illegally parked.

A small truck packed with a ton of explosives and driven by a suicidal Shi'ite Moslem completely destroyed the Beirut headquarters of the U.S. Marines, *killing more than 200 U.S. soldiers* and sounding the death knell for the Reagan administration's Lebanon policy. That bomb was driven into its target, something almost impossible to prevent unless every potential target is ringed with clumsy concrete mazes that require a driver to slow down or stop before proceeding.

A parked car bomb can at least be treated — if somebody recognizes it in time as a car bomb.

Since 1967 there have been a half dozen car bombs in Jerusalem. But so far, only the first one, parked in the open air Mahane Yehuda fruit and vegetable shuk (market) in the spring of 1968, exploded. Twenty-two people were killed. More than 100 were wounded.

"suspicious objects." And when there has been an explosion, or the media reports a bomb has been found, the natural state of alert in the city goes up, and sappers get as many as 60 or 70 calls in a 24-hour cycle. Each run is called "an incident," and it begins with somebody — a civilian, a policeman, a sapper — noticing something wrong.

For a Jerusalemite, the phrase "*Shel mi zeh?*" — "Whose is this?" — is a warning

TERRORISM EXPERT

Robert Rosenberg has covered terrorism in Israel for eight years as a staff writer for the *Jerusalem Post*. He has written for *U.S. News and World Report*, *Playboy* and *Life* magazines. His last article for SOF, "Controlled Violence," appeared in our December 1987 issue.



All the other car bombs in Jerusalem were discovered in time.

Car bombs generally are put together in such a manner that the only tools the sapper can use to neutralize them are his bare hands. Remote controlled robots can remove a tank of cooking gas or a suitcase full of nails, placed in the car for added shrapnel and explosive effect, but eventually the sapper has to get into the car by himself, find the detonator and with bare — and steady — hands solve what the sappers call “the problem.”

For a Jerusalemite — Arab or Jew — suspicious objects are a fact of life. Other cities have their perils, but it's not the same as for a New Yorker, fearful of being mugged, avoiding certain neighborhoods at certain times of the night. Subconsciously aware, a Jerusalemite plunges into the crowded Mahane Yehuda open fruit and vegetable market, which has often been targeted by Arab terrorists. Israel's entire anti-terrorism policy is based on not allowing terrorism to disrupt normal life.

An abandoned shopping basket never lasts long on the pavement. “*Shel mi zeh?*” somebody cries out, and quickly a patrol of civil guardsmen or soldiers shows up and clears the street until one of the sappers arrives to check the package. For two or three blocks, the market is cleared of shoppers and vendors, who are kept at a safe distance behind police lines. Not until the sapper has raised his hand to give the all-clear sign does the bustle of the market resume.

Alone on an emptied city street, a sapper is on center stage in the most dramatic theater of all — a theater of life and death. While he works, the watching crowd goes silent, seemingly holding its collective breath.

And when it's over, whether the suspicious object is a bomb defused or just another false alarm, the crowd applauds.

Some, like fans outside a stage door, approach the white and blue van while the sapper removes his protective gear and puts away the equipment. They want to wish him well with a handshake or a backslap, an

Bomb squad checks out suspicious car.

Since 1967 there have been a half-dozen car bombs in Jerusalem, but so far only one has exploded, killing 22 people and wounding more than 100. All the others were discovered in time.

expression of admiration and gratitude for working to keep the city safe.

The sappers handle about 10,000 calls a year. On each one of those 10,000 calls, Uri, Amos, Sammy or any other sapper on duty that shift has to assume it's for real, that the plastic bag or broken TV set could turn out to be a bomb. Usually it's a false alarm. But since 1967, on an average of about 75 times a year, the alarm is real.

“We're only as good as the people of the city,” says Amos, a seven-year veteran of the squad. “If we can get to the bomb, we can prevent an explosion. But it's up to the people of the city to let us know about the bombs.”

The combination of its extensive experience, its tactics, and the active cooperation of the citizenry has given the squad a reputation as the best in the profession. The Holy City's peace and quiet depends on them, and so far, says Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, “they haven't let us down.”

Kollek points out that Jerusalem Arabs “were responsible for only some five percent” of the terrorist incidents that have taken place in Jerusalem since 1967. “Jerusalem is safer than almost any American city. Terrorist incidents do take place, but rather infrequently. It is those incidents that interest the international press, not the stories of peaceful coexistence that is truly the guiding spirit of our city.”

Or as Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev put it, “Israel averages 16 murders, whether because of crime or terrorism, per million residents. In France the average is 45 murders per million and in New York, some 200 per million. Israel is by far the safer country.”

Nevertheless, that safety is in large part due to the citizenry's alertness and the sappers' skills.

Seeing the white and blue bomb squad van jogs a Jerusalemite's memory. It's like a constant reminder to pay attention, to report suspicious objects. Public service advertisements on television, school visits by children to the sappers' offices or by the sappers to a school, teach youngsters in the city to be careful and to report anything suspicious. Newspapers carry advertisements reminding readers to “Watch out for suspicious objects.”

It all keeps the squad busy. “But that's okay,” says Uri. “The busier we are, the safer the city.”

Like most of the squad, Uri was trained in demolitions in the Israel Defense Forces, and when he finished his three years of national service, he wanted to continue using the skills he learned in the army. He's worked as a sapper in Tel Aviv and Haifa and on the West Bank, but for Israeli sappers Jerusalem is the big league, the front line of the war against terrorism. Two years ago, Uri was posted in Jerusalem, and 18 months ago, he got the command. Being commander of the squad adds some \$60 a month to his \$600 a month salary for the life-and-death job. Soft spoken, his long-fingered violinist's hands busy with a bent paper clip on his desk, he explains that “nobody does this for the money.”

Amos, a father of two, recalls when he decided to join the squad. He was a successful jewelry manufacturer working in Bet Shemesh, a small town in central Israel, when one day, while in Haifa, he saw a sapper at work on a suspicious object.

“I saw him doing the job, and I realized that's what I wanted to do,” he says. The same day he told his wife about his ambition. That was more than eight years ago. “There was something about being involved in protecting the public from this crazy business of bombs that attracted me.”

He seems embarrassed to talk about what he calls his “belief that people should contribute to society, do what they can to make life better.” But when pressed, he admits that and more. “There was a challenge, and the job promised an excitement that was missing from my life before.”

Not that any of the sappers are foolhardy daredevils. They are psychologically tested when they first apply for the four-month training course. A national police source says that “the police psychologist is looking for even-tempered people, not cowboys.” Only half of the annual average of 200 applicants for the training course are accepted.

Like any tight knit group of people in a dangerous job, they seem to share a secret inaccessible to anybody who hasn't lived through the same fearful moments.

Their secret seems to be that the political rhetoric politicians lay on them along with thick saccharine-sweet dollops of hero worship all mean very little. Patriotism, nationalism — these are terms that only embarrass sappers.

They deal with equal professionalism with devices aimed at both Jews and Arabs. Indeed, their attitude seems to be single-

mindedly *pacifist*.

"I don't care who set the bomb or why," says Sammy, the oldest sapper. "All I care about is how — and to prevent it from exploding."

While Uri is the commander of the squad, Sammy is the inspiration. He has more gray in his sideburns than anybody else in the squad, where 25-year-olds go grayer than their fathers.

He never wanted to be the officer in charge; not in the army, where, like most of the sappers, he received his first training as an expert in demolition, nor in the police. He didn't want to wrestle with the paperwork, or worse, with the responsibility.

And even after getting his promotion from policeman to inspector, on all his paperwork he still writes "policeman" where he could write the higher rank.

"Call it luck if you want," he tells new drivers who ask why he doesn't advertise his rank. "As long as I've been in the business I've written 'policeman,' and nothing's happened to me yet. Why should I change things?"

The superstitions include no photographs. Two sappers allowed their photographs to be taken and were killed within a few weeks of the photo session. In any case, the military censor forbids publication of their names or photographs, which might make them identifiable to terrorists.

Superstition means never make a casual comment about how "things have been quiet lately." Mentioning a period of quiet, the sappers believe, can break the spell.

And never call it a bomb. Call it a "device." They always refer to the object as a device, making it technical and professional. To call it a bomb would be a kind of admission that the thing could explode.

Luck, of course, is part of their lives. On Monday nights they fill out national lottery tickets. Wednesday nights they gather in their office to make their football league pool guesses.

The luckiest of them all was also the unluckiest. Noah, a pudgy soft-spoken sapper, once had "50 grams of TNT get past his ugly face," as Sammy describes it.

He had been working on a small device in which a matchbox had been packed with plastique and connected to a small ladies' watch. The bomb exploded in his face, but somehow he emerged from the cloud of smoke and dust with not even a scratch. To this day, six years later, the granite-faced pillar against which the bomb had been placed is scarred.

Ever since then, Noah's had this strange, slightly ironic and narrow lipped smile that never lets go. Even when his eyes go cold with concentration as he works on a device, the thin-lipped smile remains. When he overhears Sammy telling the story, the smile is on his face, and when he shows off how he can take a landmine apart with his eyes closed, the smile is still there.

Most leave within five years. Some go to the sappers' training base halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to teach their skills



to the next generation of sappers.

Others move to the police labs, where found devices and the remnants of bombs that have exploded are analyzed to learn about the latest level of ingenuity reached by terrorists.

Some go to work for construction companies that need demolition experts able to create holes accurately in the granite and limestone rock on which Jerusalem is built.

Most eventually move on to other units of the police force, as detectives or operations officers.

Many get offers from the criminal underworld, but none are known to have taken up the opportunity, despite the obvious material benefits to be gained.

And some, like David "Dudu" Ivgy, leave after what Uri calls "the second mistake."

After Ivgy lost half his hand, he was reassigned as a patrol car dispatcher, and lately he's been put in charge of the Civil Guard in Bet Shemesh, a small town about 20 kilometers from Jerusalem. Sulemeim Hirbawe, blinded by a bomb, now works as a police switchboard operator.

The squad's equipment ranges from high tech to jury-rigged.

The most important equipment is protective clothing — flak jackets and leggings that almost every year are improved. But after only a few minutes of wearing 15 kilograms of unwieldy leggings and vests, the hot Judean mountain sun takes its toll. Sweat begins coursing down their backs. While the helmet with its shrapnel-proof visor may offer protection, it's also heavy and hot.

On their first approach to what they call "a suspicious object," they may not put on the gear. But if they have any doubts, the driver is ready with the protective clothing.

And the sweating begins. "I knew what it was before we got there. Look at this!" Sammy will shout, showing off a darkened T-shirt as he removes his flak vest, after finishing a job on a device.

"If you don't sweat when you're doing it,

Destroyed bus shows what an undetected bomb can do.

you're doing something wrong," says squad commander Uri.

The second most important piece of equipment is the robot.

All bomb disposal robots work on the same principle. A video camera is mounted on the robot and is connected to a monitor in the van. The squad had been using a British-made robot called "the hobo" since 1979, but in the last two years a local firm has been producing a robot called "Bambi," which is lightweight and has the advantage of being radio rather than wire controlled.

The robots travel on six or eight wheels and are able to climb up and down stairs, turn corners and, with the help of powerful lamps, work at night. They have long flapper arms that can maneuver explosive packages into more convenient locations for what the sappers call "treatment."

Fixed just below the video camera is a shotgun, which is aimed via the TV monitor. The shotgun fires a cartridge of tiny pellets into the explosive material and detonator.

That disperses the explosive material faster than it can ignite, so the shotgun destroys the bomb before it can explode. The "chisel," a small, hand-carried device that looks like a small cannon, works on the same principle. Thus, an Israeli sapper never blows up a device, he destroys it.

Recently, the Israeli Police acquired a small, portable X-ray machine, with which packages suspected of being booby-trapped can be examined without taking the risk of testing them.

And in addition to the high technology, they have simple tools.

Sometimes, a sapper will hook a long cord to a suspicious object, and after taking cover, give it a yank. Often, that's enough to spill open an innocent suitcase — or disconnect one of the detonation wires.

They've perfected the art of breaking into a car with a coat hanger-like device they

worked out with the help of a tinsmith.

But no matter how much equipment they have, they still eventually have to face the device alone, hoping that they'll be able to add it to their collection.

There are dozens of the objects on the gray metal shelves: a carton of eggs, a doll, a loaf of bread, a high school yearbook, an old black and white television, an attache case, a flower pot — they've all been bombs.

Each one is neatly labeled. Some are trophies, found and neutralized before they could explode. The Katyusha rocket leaning casually against the wall was found by a Bedouin shepherd on a slope of the Mount of Olives just after dawn. It was aimed at the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Others are like scars in the memory, reconstructions of bombs that took a toll in the city. The white plastic saccharine bottle is a reconstruction of the one that destroyed half of former sapper Dudu Ivgy's hand.

The crate of eggs turns out to be hollow, booby-trapped so that if somebody lifts the crate, it will explode.

A traveler's alarm clock, packed with plastique, was found in a hotel closet.

And then there are the grenades. Dozens of different kinds of hand grenades, from small, 100-year-old Turkish grenades found deep in the dirt of construction sites, to new Czech-made grenades from terrorist arms caches found in caves in the barren wadis outside Jerusalem.

On a wall above the exhibit of past bombs are the photographs of the two dead sappers. One photo shows a young, sharp-featured blonde man with a wry smile, staring calmly at the camera. That's Steve Hilmes, a former American who survived four years in Vietnam, only to be killed in 1979, when an Arab's bomb tore apart his chest.

The other picture shows dark-skinned Albert Levy, mournful eyes staring over the shoulder of the photographer. In the tilt of Albert's head you can see pride. The picture was taken at a ceremony when the police minister pinned the commander's oak leaf on Albert's shoulders, giving him the job that Uri now holds. Albert was killed in 1976 by a device that also claimed a patrolman's life.

The two men are now buried on Mt. Herzl in a special plot set aside for policemen who died while in service. On both the graves the inscription reads, "He fell in the line of duty."

On the locker room bulletin board, alongside stenciled memorandums from national headquarters, and above the week's schedule, is a greying white postcard with the inscription, "Fear of failure is the key to success." It is written in Gothic print, like a motto on a coffee cup.

They don't talk much about the politics of terrorism, because, as Uri says, "I only care about how the device is put together, not about who put it there, or why."

Uri says that "you have to think like a terrorist in order to beat the terrorist." He quickly adds that he can't understand the



ABOVE: Members of Jerusalem Bomb Squad hold four devices found and defused: a crate of eggs, a jacket left at a bus stop, a book and a fire extinguisher.



LEFT: Over the years Jerusalem bomb squad experts have defused, neutralized, dismantled and destroyed hundreds of bombs reported to the police by alert citizens. Here sapper holds booby-trapped book bomb.

BELOW: Sulemeir Hirbawe, blinded by a bomb, now works as a police switchboard operator.



RIGHT: Suspicious bicycles have been checked by sappers since 1979, when a bicycle whose frame was packed with plastique blew up in the middle of a popular sidewalk cafe on the outdoor Ben Yehuda street pedestrian mall in the heart of the downtown shopping district.

reason for putting a bomb anywhere where innocent people can be hurt. "If they attacked soldiers — well, that's war. But kids?"

But Uri's thinking like a terrorist is technical. Why did he use this kind of explosive? Park the car next to this building? Use this kind of detonator?

And finally, "How would I do it?"

How a sapper would set a bomb is a question that went unanswered until June 1980, when a Jewish terrorist organization,

eventually broken up four years later, began operating as a vigilante group against Arabs.

A former Israel Defense Force demolition officer was one of the leaders of the vigilante group, which aimed its terrorism against Arabs they suspected of fomenting anti-Jewish terrorism.

It took four years for the Israeli secret service to finally arrest the participants in the conspiracy, a group of 25 Jewish settlers from the West Bank. One of the victims was



unintended — Sulemein Hirbawe.

The vigilantes confessed to bombings that crippled two West Bank mayors and blinded Hirbawe, who was trying to dismantle a bomb at a third mayor's house.

They confessed to plotting to blow up a Moslem holy site on the Temple Mount which is also holy to Jews. They assaulted an Arab religious college with automatic weapons fire and hand grenades, killing three and wounding 36. They were caught

when they hid large time bombs on each of the under carriages of five Arab-owned buses.

Amos, Sammy and Noah were called to dismantle those devices. They encountered what Noah called "the finest handiwork" he had ever seen, handiwork that was sickeningly familiar to some of them. For, as Uri sometimes says, "The truth of the matter is that the Arabs just aren't very good at making bombs." Graduates of Israel Defense Forces commando and engineering

courses are much better.

When Noah said he had never seen such "quality handiwork," Sammy said *he* had — in the army and police courses he had taken to learn how to become a sapper.

Amos listened to the argument. "It doesn't matter where you've seen that kind of handiwork," he said, "and it doesn't matter who set the devices. All that matters is that the devices were neutralized in time. All that matters is that we get the job done." ✎

KILLING EFFECT II

Rifleman's Guide to Wound Ballistics

by Peter G. Kokalis

NO WEAPON in the infantryman's inventory takes on such significance, imagined or real, as his rifle. It always has, and always will into the foreseeable future. In his mind's eye at least, it is most often all that stands between him and the enemy, between life and death.

Infantry rifles are an intensely personal item of issue. Their characteristics and effectiveness are of the highest consequence to the lowly boonie rat and to those who champion his cause. No small wonder then that the service rifle and its caliber have always generated great controversy. Even more so in the United States, whose military has stressed the importance of individual rifle marksmanship since George Washing-

ton assumed command of the Continental Army in 1775.

The latest chapter in this sometimes tedious conundrum revolves around those who advocate the .30-caliber bore (specifically the 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge) and rifles of "substance" in opposition to those who argue in favor of the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge and the M16. Although now more than 25 years old, the dispute continues unabated. The opposing sides are well-entrenched, and no end to this angry conflict appears on the horizon.

The 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge is an

outgrowth of the U.S. Army's marksmanship tradition. In 1904, the *Infantry Journal* stated that every soldier "... should be at home with his rifle at 800, 1,000, or even 1,200 yards." During the Light Rifle trials of the early 1950s, this mentality prevailed, and Colonel Rene R. Studler, then chief of the Army's Small Arms Development Branch, rejected British proposals for a 7mm intermediate-sized assault rifle cartridge, because it did not equal the ballistic performance of the U.S. .30-06 service cartridge. NATO standardized Uncle Sugar's T65E3 cartridge — essentially a case-shortened .30-06 — in 1954.

During this same time frame, studies were conducted that indicated small-caliber, high-velocity (SCHV) cartridges resulted in greater hit probability at the important battle ranges of 300 yards and less. SCHV proponents had to wait little more than a decade before they were called to bat in the jungles of Vietnam. To the eternal disfavor of the "full power" camp, by the mid-1960s the M14's clouded history ended and the "mouse gun" and its "pip-squeak" cartridge became standard issue.

Midst all of the charges and counter-charges what do most of us really know about the wound ballistics of these two cartridges? Very little, besides anecdotal information in the form of battlefield reminiscences of untrained observers with no background in scientific methodology.

While we have previously noted his research on handgun bullet performance (see SOF, December 1988, page 60), Dr. Martin L. Fackler, Director of the Wound Ballistics Laboratory at the Letterman Army Institute of Research in San Francisco, is principally concerned with the wound ballistics of the commonly-issued modern infantry rifle cartridges. Before we examine the results of these studies, we need to briefly reiterate the mechanisms of wounding, with special emphasis on those phenomena more frequently observed with rifle projectiles.

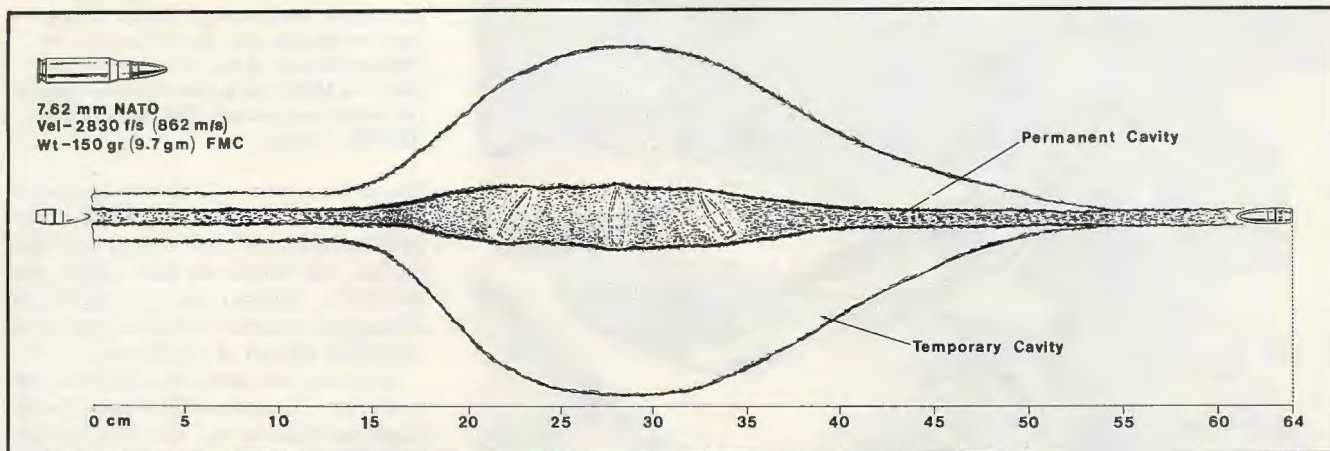
As a bullet travels through the human body, it crushes and cuts through tissue and blood vessels and may break bones. This wound track, or permanent cavity, is the principal mechanism of wounding.

Three factors influence the size of the wound track.

First, if the bullet yaws and its long axis makes a greater angle with the path of travel, a wider area of tissue comes into contact with the bullet and is crushed. Many have confused the observed yaw of bullets in the body with so-called tumbling in flight. Bullets of proper aerodynamic design, when fired from barrels with the twist required to stabilize their flight, will yaw no more than one to three degrees as they move

U.S. Marines landing at Da Nang, South Vietnam, on 8 March 1965, fielded caliber 7.62x51mm NATO M14 rifles. M14 production had already ceased and was shortly to be replaced on the battlefield by the "pip-squeak" M16. Big-bore boomers still grieve its demise. Photo: AP/Wide World





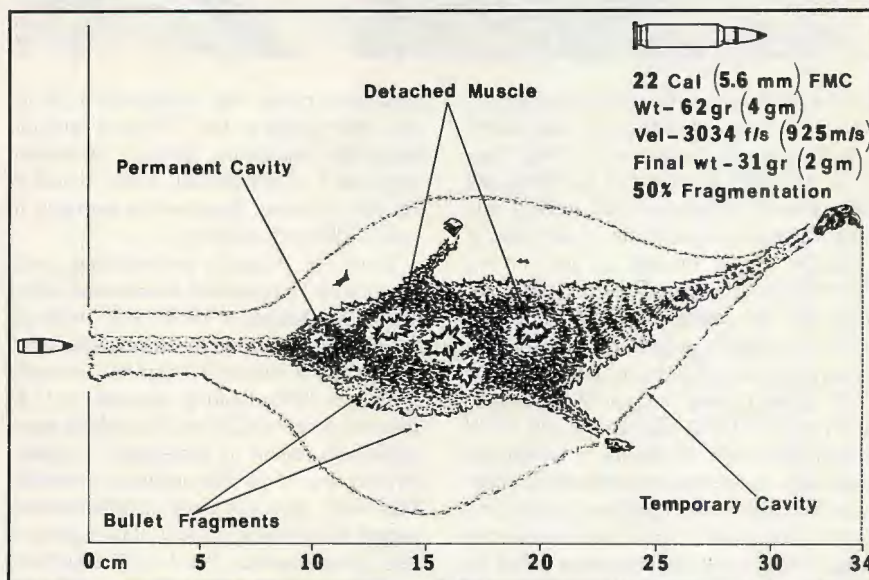
ABOVE: Wound profile of the U.S. M80 7.62x51mm ball bullet is characteristic of most non-deforming FMJ military projectiles. After traveling point-forward for the first 6-7 inches of penetration in living tissue, the bullet yaws 180 degrees, after which it passes through the body base-forward with total penetration of about 25 inches. Courtesy Martin L. Fackler

to the target. What happens when they strike a body is another matter, however, as the projectile's configuration and the location of its center of mass then outweigh the rotational velocity in importance. All non-expanding, pointed bullets (and some round-nosed ones) that do not deform, yaw up to 180 degrees during their passage through tissue, ending their path traveling base-forward.

Second, expanding (or mushrooming) projectiles damage more tissue. However, Article 23 of the annex to Hague Convention No. IV of 18 October 1907 proscribes the use of bullets without full metal jackets (FMJ). Both NATO and the ComBloc nations conform to this prohibition and do not employ expanding bullets.

Third, fragments from the bullet can detach and disrupt tissue outside the primary wound track, and, as we shall see, this is an important factor in the effectiveness of some military small-arms projectiles.

In addition, a temporary cavity may be formed as tissue is stretched or accelerated away from the bullet's path. In general, the higher the bullet's impact velocity, the heavier the bullet and the less aerodynamic its shape, the greater will be the temporary cavity stretch. With the exception of the liver, most tissue stretched by the temporary cavitation caused by handgun bullets survives with little damage. However, as we move up the scale to rifle cartridges, the disruptive effect of temporary cavitation increases, especially with projectiles of .30 caliber and larger. It was originally thought that the increased tissue disruption caused by the M193 5.56x45mm NATO bullet was a result of high velocity and a large temporary cavity. Yet the M193 projectile travels a mere seven percent faster than the 7.62x51mm M80 ball round, and medical data from Vietnam illustrates that damage in the majority of torso and extremity wounds



The large permanent cavity produced by the 5.56x45mm cartridge's 55-grain boat-tailed M193 bullet is primarily a consequence of bullet fragmentation. After slightly more than 4 inches of penetration, the M193 bullet will yaw to 90 degrees, flatten and break apart at the cannellure. Unfortunately, this occurs only at ranges under 200 yards. Courtesy Martin L. Fackler

was principally caused by the permanent cavity alone.

Using a 10-percent solution of ordnance gelatin (Type 250 A) at 39°F, which closely simulates living tissue, tests have been conducted at the U.S. Army's Wound Ballistics Lab, Presidio of San Francisco, to determine the effectiveness of military small arms cartridges such as 7.62x51mm M80 ball, 5.56x45mm M193 and M855 ball, 7.62x39mm ComBloc (both boat-tail and flat-base ball) and 5.45x39mm ComBloc ball.

From measurements of the penetration depth and diameter of the temporary cavity in the gelatin blocks, together with X-rays of the projectile track, including fragmentation patterns (if any), plus observations of animal and human wounds, a wound profile is prepared which permits an approximation of the wound characteristics in living tissue. The results of this research have exposed new, and in some cases surprising, informa-

tion on the performance characteristics of modern military small-arms cartridges.

A great deal of misinformation has been published about the reasons for the M193 5.56x45mm cartridge's effectiveness. It has been determined at the U.S. Army's Wound Ballistics Lab that the large permanent cavity produced by the 55-grain boat-tailed M193 bullet is primarily a consequence of bullet fragmentation. As long as this FMJ bullet travels point forward, its wound track remains small and there is little tissue damage. However, after slightly more than 4 inches of penetration, the M193 projectile will yaw to 90 degrees, flatten and break apart at the cannellure (crimping groove). The bullet point remains as a flattened triangular section, retaining about 60 percent of the original bullet weight and penetrating about 13 inches in soft tissue. That portion to the rear of the cannellure breaks into numerous fragments that penetrate up to 3 inches radially away from the main wound track. These multiple fragments perforate and weaken tissue. Tissue between two perforations is often completely detached when subsequently subjected to the sudden stretch of temporary cavitation. Weakened tissue may be split by stretch that would otherwise be absorbed by the tissue's elasticity.

There is a direct correlation between the



U.S. Army boonie rat points his "mouse gun" at the entrance of a VC bunker 20 clicks northwest of Tuy Hoa on 30 June 1966. Its M193 ball bullet will more than do the job at ranges under 200 yards. Photo: AP/Wide World

bullet's velocity and the fragmentation pattern. At a range of 100 yards, the M193 projectile generally breaks into two large fragments. At ranges of more than 200 yards, the bullet flattens somewhat and only a few small fragments squeeze out of the base. If this bullet passes through an arm or leg without striking bone and before it yaws and fragments, the damage might be minimal.

There has been a great deal of speculation concerning the effectiveness of the new M855 (similar to the Belgian SS109) round used in the M16A2 rifle and M249 SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon). It weighs 62 grains and contains a hardened-steel penetrator frontal core and lead base encased in a copper alloy jacket. Critics have stated that lethality was reduced, because a faster rifling twist of one turn in seven inches (1:7") was required to stabilize the M856 tracer round with its much longer Belgian L110 projectile. This same argument was presented when the M16's original barrel twist of 1:14" was changed to 1:12". Once again, there is confusion between stability in flight and yawing in living tissue. One does not necessarily follow as a consequence of the other. In fact, at ranges of up to 200 yards and somewhat beyond, the M855 bullet's performance in the human body *essentially* duplicates that of the older M193 round and actually produces slightly increased fragmentation. It is true that inadvertently firing M855 ammunition in M16 rifles with a barrel twist of 1:12" will result in severe yawing (or "key-holing") *in flight* — to such an extent that at even very close ranges the weapon's accuracy potential is reduced to unacceptable levels.

The performance of U.S. M80 7.62x51mm ball ammunition is characteristic of most non-deforming FMJ military projectiles. For the first 6-7 inches of travel through living tissue, the bullet remains point-forward, and the wound track is no larger than .30 caliber. At 8-14 inches of penetration, the bullet yaws 180 degrees, after which it passes through the body base-forward with total penetration of about 25 inches. Where the bullet yaw is at its maximum, 60 to 120 degrees, a large temporary cavity is produced, and the height of the

permanent cavity will increase to 1.16 inches (the length of the 150-grain boat-tail projectile) maximum. Nothing surprising here, but 7.62x51mm ball ammo issued to the West German *Bundeswehr* performs in quite a different manner.

Using Dr. Fackler's methodology, SOF tested West German ball ammunition in this caliber headstamped 'TWK 19-65' with the NATO cross-in-circle. It was manufactured by *Industrie Werke Karlsruhe* (formerly DWM) in 1965. Readily available to U.S. shooters for several years, it's held in especially high regard by high-power competitors because of its fine accuracy potential. The M80's jacket is made of rather ductile copper alloy which is about .032-inch thick near the cannelure. The NATO STANAG covering this cartridge does not specify the jacket material or thickness. West German 7.62x51mm NATO ball has a copper-clad steel jacket only about .020-inch thick near the cannelure. Steel is more brittle than copper, and after penetration of about 3 inches in living tissue the West German bullet yaws and breaks apart at the cannelure with far greater tissue disruption capability than the 5.56x45mm M193 bullet. Any West German or other European versions of 7.62x51mm NATO ball with brittle steel jackets might be expected to produce the same results, regardless of headstamp.

Both the M80 7.62x51mm and M193/855 5.56x45mm cartridges are effective military small arms rounds, albeit for different reasons. We must look beyond bullet performance at other criteria to properly assess these calibers and their rifles.

For all practical purposes, the selective-fire option is lost if we opt for a 7.62x51mm battle rifle. Even at 50 yards, the second shot in a full-auto burst from an AR10, FN FAL, G3 or M14 will be well above the target. Although the greatest hit probability occurs when troops employ carefully aimed semiautomatic fire, there are occasions when the burst-fire option is useful. Still, there's no doubt that the 7.62x51mm cartridge is superior for long-range sniping.

Over the years, the soldier's equipment load has increased tremendously. Attempts to reduce his load always seem to be a step

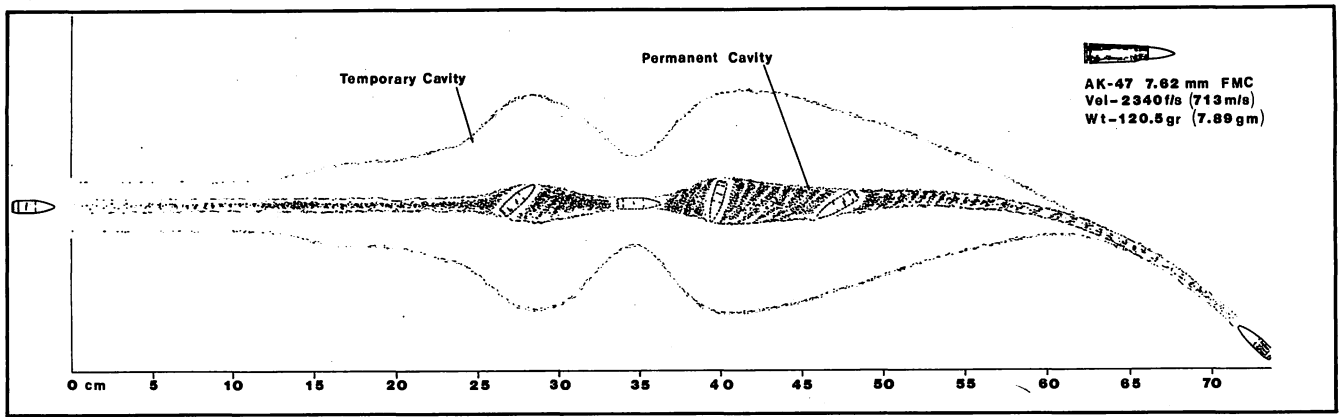
behind the addition of some new geegaw to his LBE. Nevertheless, this is a matter of no small concern, and the M16, as originally fielded, was almost one-third lighter than the M14. Furthermore, 5.56x45mm ammunition weighs only half as much as the equivalent amount of 7.62x51mm.

Assuming we have not drastically reduced the rifleman's effectiveness at the ranges at which he will most likely engage the enemy (usually under 200 yards and most commonly between 25 and 100 yards), weight reduction and selective-fire capability are desirable characteristics and the obvious reasons for the ever-increasing adoption of small-caliber cartridges, such as 5.56x45mm and 5.45x39mm, by all of the world's armies on both sides of the firing line.

What about our presumed enemies? What kinds of sticks and stones are they prepared to cast in our direction? There is no more ubiquitous rifle than the Kalashnikov. Attributed to designers N.M. Elizarov and B.V. Semin, Soviet historians contend that work on its M43 (Model 1943) 7.62x39mm cartridge began in 1939. Others have stated that it was derived from the German 7.92x33mm *Kurz Patrone* (short cartridge) developed for the world's first true assault rifle, the WWII MP43/44 (StG44). This latter scenario appears unlikely, as the Soviets would have required specimens of 7.92x33mm *Kurz* ammunition at least a year or two prior to their adoption of the 7.62x39mm round in 1943 — well before the MP43 was fielded on the Eastern front. Whatever the case, the Soviet M43 cartridge is a true intermediate-size assault rifle round.

More than two dozen countries have manufactured ammunition in this caliber. In addition to ball ammunition, it has been produced with tracer, API (Armor-Piercing Incendiary), and IT (Incendiary Tracer) projectiles. Special purpose loads include subsonic ball, practice blanks, short-range loads and drill rounds. Ball ammunition will be encountered in two configurations. Most prevalent is a 123-grain boat-tail bullet, which usually consists of a copper-washed steel jacket, lead and antimony sleeve and a mild steel core (Soviet Type PS). Yugoslavia's M67 ball ammunition in this caliber, as well as that of several other countries, uses a flat-based bullet of approximately the same weight with a copper alloy jacket and lead core. Muzzle velocity of both types is between 2,330 and 2,400 fps.

In its boat-tail configuration, the 7.62x39mm bullet travels point-forward about 10 inches in soft tissue before significant yaw occurs. At that point the bullet will yaw to less than 90 degrees, then come back down to a point-forward position and finally yaw 180 degrees and end its travel in a base forward position. Bi-lobed yaw cycles of

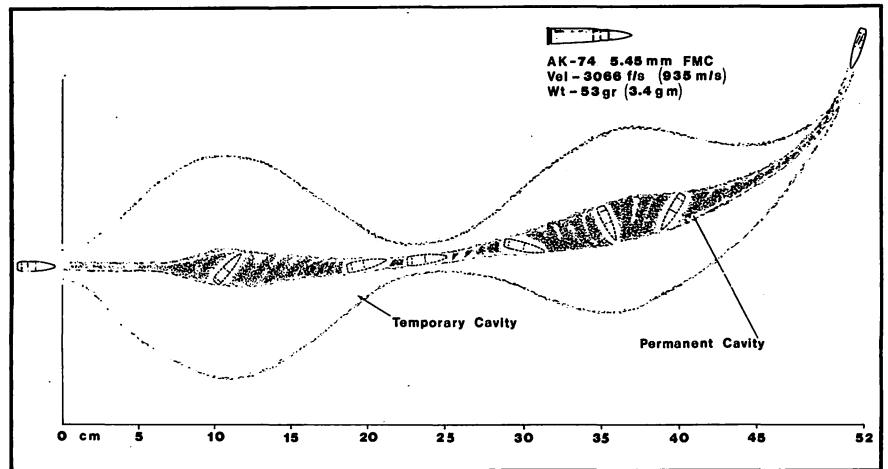


ABOVE: Wound profile of the ComBloc 7.62x39mm boat-tail bullet exhibits the bi-lobed yaw cycle commonly observed with pointed, non-deforming bullets. Total penetration in living tissue is almost 29 inches. Abdominal shots usually exhibit no greater tissue disruption than that produced by a .38 Special pistol bullet. The lead-cored, flat-based bullet in this caliber is considerably more effective. Courtesy Martin L. Fackler

this type are commonly observed with pointed, non-deforming bullets. Total penetration in living tissue is almost 29 inches. Abdominal shots usually exhibit no greater tissue disruption than that produced by a .38 Special pistol bullet since, after 10 inches of travel with minimal yaw, the bullet has generally passed through the abdominal cavity. Of course, this round is capable of inflicting such damage at far greater ranges than a handgun.

SOF tested the lead-cored, flat-based bullet and found it to be considerably more effective. It commences its yaw cycle after only 3-4 inches of penetration. Once again, the yaw cycle is generally bi-lobed. The bullet reaches its maximum penetration of 23-26 inches traveling base-forward, somewhat flattened and retaining almost all of its original weight (two or three small fragments are shed in the area of maximum cavitation). Although the flat-based Kalashnikov bullet is shorter (0.930") than the more common boat-tail projectile (1.040"), it can be expected to cause more damage to the abdominal contents, liver, spleen, intestines or pancreas, because the bullet passes through these organs at a large yaw angle. Remember, if we have neither mushrooming nor fragmentation, yawing is all that remains to maximize tissue disruption and enhance the bullet's performance — always provided we do not sacrifice adequate penetration.

ComBloc nations appear to be in the process of gradually changing over to Kalashnikovs chambered for the 5.45x39mm cartridge. In addition to Soviet arsenals, East German factory code '05' (possibly the old MWS facility in Schonebeck) has recently appeared on the headstamps of ammunition in this caliber. When the AK-74 rifle and its cartridge first surfaced in Afghanistan, rumors were widely circulated that its muzzle velocity exceeded 4,000 fps and that it



Except for its peculiar curvature in path of travel, the AK-74's 5.45mm bullet exhibits no more, or less, than the usual performance characteristics expected from a non-deforming FMJ military bullet. Yaw commences after only 3 inches of penetration in living tissue and this represents an improvement over its 7.62mm ComBloc predecessor. Courtesy Martin L. Fackler

produced massive tissue damage. The first large quantities of this ammunition were provided by SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and turned over to the U.S. Army and the National Rifle Association.

In truth, the muzzle velocity is not much more than 3,000 fps. The 56-grain boat-tail projectile has a gilding-metal-clad steel jacket. The unhardened flat-tip steel core is covered by a lead sleeve that does not fill the entire interior of the jacket, leaving a hollow cavity inside the nose — the focal point of the imbrogio over its wounding potential.

Large steel cores, such as the hardened penetrator of the U.S. .50 caliber AP round, can be screw-turned to a pointed tip without too much trouble. It would be difficult to screw-turn, or even swage, a pointed tip on the 5.45x39mm bullet's small steel core. I believe it was simply more cost-effective to fabricate a flat-tipped core and leave an air pocket under the jacket's tip, insofar that it did not affect the projectile's aerodynamic qualities. The fact that it might enhance the bullet's wounding potential was, in this instance, merely coincidental. There is nothing new about this type of construction. During World War I, the British .303 inch,

Mark VII bullet contained an aluminum (and sometimes fiber, wood, pottery or compressed paper) filler in front of its lead and antimony core and directly under the jacket's tip. This was principally an attempt to reduce the bullet's weight, thereby increasing its velocity.

With one peculiar exception, the 5.45mm bullet exhibits no more, or less, than the usual performance characteristics expected from a non-deforming FMJ military bullet. There is no deformation or fragmentation. There is a rather typical bi-lobed yaw cycle, with the bullet ending its travel base-forward, after about 20 inches of total penetration. Yaw commences after only about 3 inches of penetration in living tissue, however, and this will increase the tissue disruption, even in many extremity hits on the arms or legs. Curvature at the end of a boat-tail FMJ bullet's path is not uncommon, but always sporadic and generally no more than 45 degrees. In all tests performed, the angle of this bullet's long axis after it came to rest in the tissue simulant showed a change in direction of between 80 and 90 degrees. X-rays taken at the Wound Ballistics Lab of recovered 5.45mm ComBloc bullets showed that the lead sleeve flowed asymmetrically forward into the jacket tip after rapid deceleration upon striking tissue, to unbalance the projectile and possibly initiate its right-angle turn. Curious, but the results are less than awesome.

What conclusions can be drawn from this brief examination of the wound ballistics of

Continued on page 112

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Continued from page 75

seaport and ship them by cargo vessel, and that the bombers "should be accompanied by technicians for maintenance, and by American pilots for final delivery and probably for initial operation. In fact this is the method being currently used for the delivery to China of 100 P-40 planes. There is also in China a number of American pilots. Recently a request was made by the Chinese government to recruit an additional 150 pilots in the United States. So in fact, there is in China today, or soon will be, a cadre of American pilots available . . . Their number need only be increased and their quality possibly improved to meet the demand for training, advisory assistance and initial operation."⁹⁶

The Joint Board recommended that, among other planes, Chennault be supplied with "33 Lockheed Hudson, Medium Bombardment A-28, from stocks or production now allocated to the British" and "33 DB-7, Light Bombardment A-20, from stocks or production now allocated to the British."⁹⁷ In an 11 June memorandum regarding the status of planes being sent to Chennault, General H.H. "Hap" Arnold, Deputy Chief of Staff (Air), noted that by 1 July the 100 P-40s would be in Rangoon, and by 1 August so would their pilots. Regarding the bombers, "The Lockheed Hudsons have ample range to perform missions against targets in Japan. It is their desire to use incendiary bombs on the Lockheed Hudsons. Advance bases are available in Eastern China. It is 1,300 miles from these advance bases to industrial Japan."⁹⁸

Currie's plan, as finally incorporated into JB Paper 355, called for the force of 500 planes to be assembled and deployed in three stages. Stage one was "when the 100 P-40s now on the water reach China and the pilots and ground crews now volunteering for service are already in the field." Stage two would be "a force ready to operate in September and composed of 200 pursuits and 100 bombers." The third stage would be "by the first of November a full force of 500 craft." Currie envisioned that "The gradual development of operations would by then permit the full force to attack all the objectives at the end of the rainy season."⁹⁹

Comments of the Joint Board were that if this plan were implemented, it would not only tie up the Japanese on the Asian continent, but would make possible the "incendiary bombing of Japan."¹⁰⁰ As to who would really fly these "trainer" aircraft, the Board stated, "Ships comprised in the above program would all be flown by American reserve officers and maintained by American technicians and mechanics. They would be under the command of an American reserve officer, Captain Chennault, directly under Chiang Kai-Shek . . ." and observed "the opportunity for our men to acquire actual combat experience appears to be a factor that should be given some

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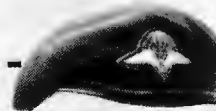
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weight."¹⁰¹ This, of course, in a document entitled "Aircraft Requirements of the Chinese Government"¹⁰²

The Japanese diplomatic code having been broken, on 4 July we learned of Japan's true intentions for the Pacific. War now not only appeared desirable, it was inevitable. On 23 July, FDR signed the proposal to bomb Japan with American mercenaries in its final form,¹⁰³ with the notation, "OK, but restudy Military Mission versus the Attache method. F.D.R."¹⁰⁴ Two days later FDR declared a trade embargo with Japan, knowing full well this by itself would mean war.¹⁰⁵ The die was cast. The plan which was started years earlier had finally found its point in history. We would attack Japan with a mercenary air force on the strength of secret executive orders, before the end of the year.

But the Japanese had their own timetable. On 7 December, they launched attacks on Pearl Harbor. On 11 December, Soong cabled Chennault, "PENDING CLARIFICATION FUTURE POLICY OF USA ARMY AND NAVY AIR FORCE ALL RECRUITMENT FOR AVG SUSPENDED," further informing him that the bomber pilots scheduled to leave Los Angeles for China on 11 December had been released for reinduction into the regular military.¹⁰⁶ The ship carrying ground crewmen was diverted to Australia, where the men were paid off by CAMCO¹⁰⁷ and drafted. Japan had beaten us to the punch, and the plan of JB Paper 355 was no longer workable. We were now at war with Japan, on her terms.

That such a plan had been conceived and implemented without consulting the elected representatives on Congressional Hill is astounding. Or is it?

The use of the military in the protection or pursuit of national interests or in effecting foreign policy is a responsibility which, constitutionally and historically, falls to the discretion of the president as chief executive and commander-in-chief. Article II, Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the U.S. Constitution spell out the president's role in foreign affairs, vesting in him all the "executive power" of the nation, making him "commander in chief" and granting him authority to execute the laws of the land.

Painfully aware of the problems created when it became necessary to defend the colonies under the Articles of Confederation, which relegated most foreign policy matters to the Congress and created an unworkable "leadership by committee" situation, Alexander Hamilton noted in the *Federalist Papers* that "decision, secrecy and dispatch are incompatible with the genius of a body so variable and so numerous." Each time the constitutional authority of a president to be the sole figure representing the nation in external relations has been challenged, the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of his authority. In the case *U.S. vs. Curtiss-Wright Export Company* (1936), the Supreme Court ruled in favor of FDR's power to ban the sale of weapons to warring

factions in South America, citing the "exclusive power of the president as the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations."¹⁰⁸

But does this give the president the power to commit U.S. resources or military might, covertly or overtly, to effect the foreign policy he may establish? Can he act unilaterally to defend what he perceives to be the national interest without the consent and authorization of Congress? History would indicate that this is the case.

In a tabulation published in the 15 January 1987 *Wall Street Journal*, L. Cordon Crovitz cites some 116 cases from 1798 to just before World War II where the president sent troops or transferred weapons or war materiel overseas without congressional authorization. In fact, as of 1970, the president had sent troops or arms abroad nearly 200 times without Congress declaring war. In 62 of these cases Congress acquiesced by providing funds, which means that two-thirds of the time it did not, yet no action was (or could have been) taken to constrain the president. As a historical footnote to our case in point, five of those incidents cited were ones in which U.S. forces either fired upon Japanese vessels, or occupied the Japanese mainland to effect U.S. policy or protect U.S. interests.¹⁰⁹ Unilaterally. Without consulting Congress.

How does this historical vignette relate to

current affairs? If nothing else, it illustrates the need for the executive branch to vigorously defend its constitutional power not only to author, but also to effect foreign policy by the appropriate overt or covert use of military assets. To effect foreign policy is the chief executive's constitutional duty, and the means to that end are his constitutional prerogative—the current tendency of the legislative branch toward the trendy criminalization of the means he may select notwithstanding.

The founding fathers had excellent perspective when they separated the powers of the executive, legislative and judicial branches; these constitutional powers and constraints were wisely devised to prevent any one branch from doing too much harm. In light of contemporary bickering between the legislative and executive branches, the specific constraints preventing the executive from dastardly deeds, and the legislative from galloping too far amuck, bring to mind the words of Napoleon I: "rascallity has limits; stupidity has none."

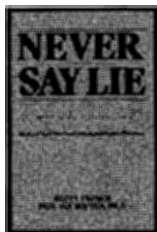
As columnist David Bar-Ilan observed, there are, after all, only three major avenues for conducting foreign policy — diplomacy, covert action and war. With fiercely hostile regimes, diplomacy is often useless; and hobbling the president's discretion in covert operations would so limit his options

that he might feel reduced to a choice between war and surrender.¹¹⁰

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Memorandum for Admiral Turner by Lt. Col. W.P. Scobey, Secretary, Joint Army-Navy Board, 28 August 1941; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 1
- ²Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691
- ³phoncon, SOF with Dr. Duane Schultz
- ⁴*A Flying Tiger's Diary*, Maj. Gen. Charles Bond, Pg. 214
- ⁵letter, R.M. Smith; letter, Thomas G. Trumble; letter, R.B. Keeton; letter, Stephen Kustay; Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Pg. 8
- ⁶*With Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 1; Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Pg. 8
- ⁷*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 5; Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Pg. 6, 9
- ⁸*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 11; Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Page 9
- ⁹Navy memorandum Op-16-F-2 17 January 1940, by W.S. Anderson, Pg. 4
- ¹⁰Navy memorandum 01/gwt 13 May 1941, by Capt. W.R. Purnell, USN, Chief of Staff U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Pg. 2
- ¹¹Navy memorandum Op-16-F-2 17 January 1940, by W.S. Anderson, Pg. 2, 3
- ¹²Ibid, Pg. 4
- ¹³Ibid, Pg. 4
- ¹⁴Navy memorandum 01/gwt 13 May 1941, by Capt. W.R. Purnell, USN, Chief of Staff U.S. Asiatic Fleet, Pg. 7
- ¹⁵*With Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 17
- ¹⁶Time, 23 June 1941
- ¹⁷Letter, Thomas G. Trumble; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 7, 8; *With Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 6, 9; *Tale of a Tiger*, R.T. Smith, Pg. 19

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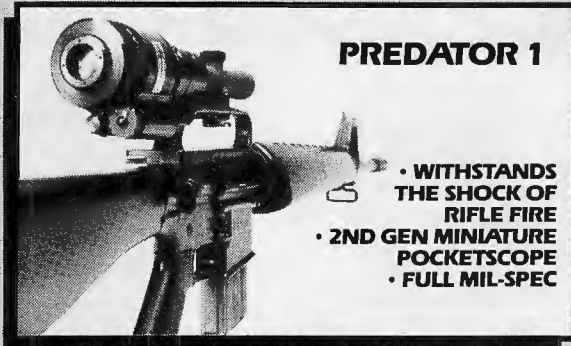
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- ¹⁹With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 5; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 4; Navy memorandum OP-16-F-2 17 January 1940, by W.S. Anderson, Pg. 2
- ²⁰Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Pg. 9
- ²¹*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 15; *Memorandum for Admiral Turner* by Lt. Col. W.P. Scobey, Secretary, Joint Army-Navy Board, 28 August 1941
- ²²*A Flying Tiger's Diary*, Maj. Gen. Charles Bond, Pg. 224
- ²³*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 15
- ²⁴*Ibid*, Pg. 19; letter, Thomas G. Trumble
- ²⁵*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 132
- ²⁶With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 17
- ²⁷*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 8; *New York Times*, 27 March 1956
- ²⁸*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 8
- ²⁹Letter, Thomas G. Trumble; letter, R.M. Smith; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 15, 132
- ³⁰Letter, Thomas G. Trumble; letter, R.M. Smith; letter, R.B. Keeton; letter, Stephen Kustay; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 15; Diary of Olga Greenlaw via letter from Chuck Baisden
- ³¹With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 1
- ³²Letter, R.T. Smith
- ³³*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 2; Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Pg. 9
- ³⁴*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 10
- ³⁵With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 5
- ³⁶*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 51
- ³⁷*Ibid*, Pg. 8
- ³⁸*Ibid*, Pg. 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 204; With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 5
- ³⁹*Ibid*, Pg. 4, 5; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 2
- ⁴⁰*Ibid*, Pg. 50
- ⁴¹*Ibid*, Pg. 2
- ⁴²Joint Army-Navy Board Paper 355, Serial 691, Pg. 3
- ⁴³*Ibid*
- ⁴⁴*Ibid*, Pg. 4
- ⁴⁵War Plans Department Memo WPD 4389-3 29 May 1941
- ⁴⁶With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 4
- ⁴⁷*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 3
- ⁴⁸*Ibid*
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- ⁵⁰With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 5
- ⁵¹*Ibid*; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 3
- ⁵²*Ibid*, Pg. 5; With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 5
- ⁵³*Ibid*, Pg. 5; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 5
- ⁵⁴*Ibid*, Pg. 3
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- ⁵⁶*Ibid*, Pg. 5; *Morgenthau Diaries*, memo of conversation with Cordell Hull 12 December 1940
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- ⁶²*Ibid*, Pg. 14
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- ⁶⁵*Ibid*, Pg. 6
- ⁶⁶*Ibid*, Pg. 7
- ⁶⁷Letter, Thomas G. Trumble; With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 9
- ⁶⁸*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 13
- ⁶⁹With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 9; *A Flying Tiger's Diary*, Maj. Gen. Charles Bond, Pg. 12, 18
- ⁷⁰*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 13
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- ⁷⁸*A Flying Tiger's Diary*, Maj. Gen. Charles Bond, Pg. 12
- ⁷⁹*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 9
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- ⁸¹*Ibid*
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- ⁸⁵*Ibid*, Pg. 309, 310
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- ⁸⁸*Ibid*, Pg. 10; With *Chennault in China A Flying Tiger's Diary*, R.M. Smith, Pg. 6
- ⁸⁹*Ibid*, Pg. 9; *Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 10; *A Flying Tiger's Diary*, Maj. Gen. Charles Bond, Pg. 21; *Tale of a Tiger*, R.T. Smith, Pg. 34
- ⁹⁰*New York Times*, 27 March 1956
- ⁹¹*Maverick War*, Dr. Duane Schultz, Pg. 11
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- ⁹⁸Memorandum for Mr. Lovett, by H.A. Arnold Maj. Gen. USA, Deputy Chief of Staff (Air), 11 June 1941
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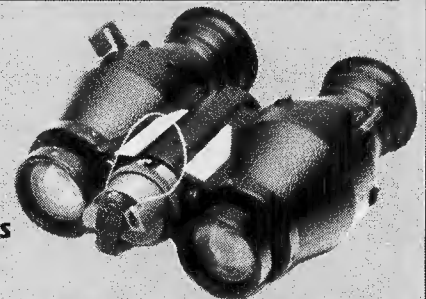
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128Marshal Zhukov's Greatest Battles, Georgi K. Zhukov, Pg. 34

129Russia Besieged, Nicholas Bethel, Pg. 194

SPETSNAZ IN ALASKA

Continued from page 59

jockey, who was busy jotting down listener requests over the telephone. She motioned me into the broadcast booth.

"Wanna popsicle?" she asked as she dropped a Motown forty-five on the turntable. My mind immediately flashed on a scene from the movie *American Graffiti*, when Wolfman Jack made the same offer to a bewildered Richard Dreyfuss. Now I knew I'd come to the right place. "They're complaining about too much Rock 'n Roll, so I'm givin' 'em Motown. You like Motown?"

"Yes ma'am," I said as I pulled off my coat. "and I love Motown."

As the Platters, Rondells, Drifters and Supremes played on in the background, this delightful Kotzebue native provided me with a number of insights into the region, and into Eskimo culture as well. "I suppose that, since these settlements are pretty small and made up of extended families," I said, "it must be like living in a fishbowl, no way to keep a secret."

"That depends on what you're trying to hide," was her reply. "For instance, it's no secret about who's sleeping with who. No way you can hide that! But then, my girlfriend who's engaged to this white guy from the states [lower 48], they've been together for years, and he still doesn't know about her sister that committed suicide. It's a family thing . . . they'll never let on. Other Eskimos in town know it, too, but they'd never tell anybody. He's not from here, so they figure it's not his place to know. He'll never find out, because they don't want him to find out."

"There's one big problem up here," she continued. "Drugs and alcohol, mostly alcohol. You probably noticed there's no bar in Kotzebue. It's dry. So are most Eskimo towns. They voted it themselves, things got so bad. People get bored, especially younger guys. They don't feel like they have good job opportunities . . . to become professionals at something. They get frustrated, depressed, angry, you name it, so lots of them drink . . . like fish. Lots of people get shot in fights, or shoot themselves. And in some areas there's lots of bootlegging and smuggling. Guys fly the stuff in to the dry towns in auxiliary tanks on their bush planes."

"Has this problem spread to the Scouts?"

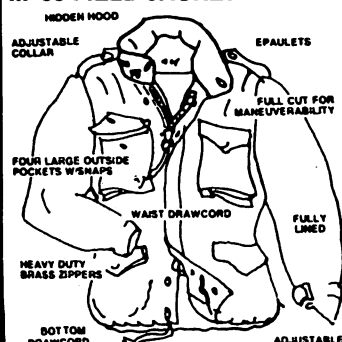
"Not that I know of. It's still a real respected thing being a Scout. It's like a family tradition. They're a good group. Real

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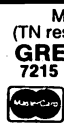
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tight group, too."

"I'd like to meet some of the guys, if I could. I've heard a lot about them."

"No problem. Why don't you come by here tomorrow. I'll call over there to one of my friends and set something up."

It was three in the morning. Time to let her get back to work, and for me to crash. "Thanks a lot for the invite tomorrow, and for the popsicles," I told her.

"Thanks for the company. See you in the morning."

When I arrived back at the radio station by 1000, my friend was not there, but she'd already made arrangements for me to go over and see either "Woofy" or Capt. Dennis at the Guard armory. But what had seemed to be a straightforward approach for talking with some Scouts turned out to be an awkward, bull-in-the-beehive experience.

Upon entering the armory, even before I could shake hands with the man I was scheduled to meet, several Guard officers appeared out of nowhere and read me the riot act. Their brisk who-what-where-why-how interrogation ended with me being escorted to the exit. Without clearance from their PAO in Anchorage, they said, they weren't talking to anyone. That was that. This avenue of investigation was permanently closed.

So far, none of the other locals I'd talked to gave any indication that they knew of the alleged Spetsnaz who'd washed up on their shore some years ago, or of the Scout who was supposedly murdered. The bush pilot who'd agreed to take me back to Nome via several other towns out on Seward Peninsula was taking off in about an hour, so I began hoofing it to the airstrip.

On the way, I decided to stop in one last time at the city hall to make sure I'd spoken with all the employees there. It was a chance decision that paid off.

"Hell yes, come on back in my office," boomed a voice from an behind the reception counter. The gentleman shouting from his office turned out to be a city employee who was once chief of staff for an Alaska state senator. Before I sat down, he continued: "There's plenty going on with the Sovs that the military isn't letting on about. When I was chief of staff for the senator, I tried to follow up on reports received from FAA people, state patrolmen, former Guardsmen, you name it. Bear bomber sightings near the pipeline in spring 1983, a Soviet plane that crashed near Kivalena, evidence of military personnel seen inland and around St. Lawrence and Little Diomed. The military, the National Guard, stiffed me every time I tried to confirm this stuff."

With just minutes to spare before my plane was to take off, this fellow wrote down a list of names to contact — most of them Eskimo leaders on the islands I was to visit that week — and wished me luck. "Can I call you again, or use your name in my article?" I asked while leaving. "Never seen you before in my life," he said laughing. "If you print my name, I'll deny



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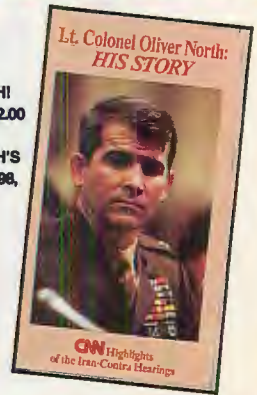
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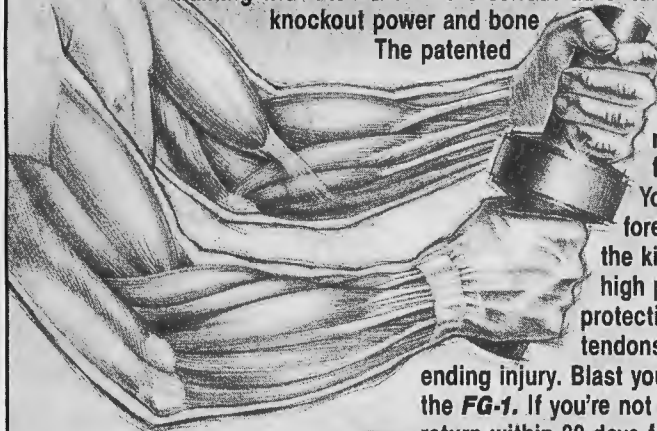
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every word of it."

My bush pilot friend got me to Nome a day before my scheduled two-day tour of Eskimo Scout bases at Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island and Little Diomedea — plenty of time to phone those people out on the islands who I'd been told of in Kotzebue and to arrange some private meetings with them. Since Gambell would be my first stop, Winfred (Winnie) James, the mayor of Gambell, was the first one I called. He was eager to meet with me.

Digging up new leads in Nome was my next priority. The most fertile place for this turned out to be in the editorial offices of the *Nome Nugget*, the local newspaper. The owner, Nancy McQuire, was kind enough to let me look over the back issues for the past 10 years or so. From talking with her it was obvious she had feelers out all through the Seward Peninsula region and out on the islands. She said she'd heard all about the reports I was investigating, but stopped short of giving me more than a few stale details; she wasn't about to divulge hard-won sources or let herself be out-scooped by some flatfoot from Colorado.

While paging through the back issues, an article entitled, "Russians Thought to Roam St. Lawrence Island" caught my eye. It was written in 1983 by an Eskimo who had grown up on the island during World War II. He was also a veteran of the U.S. Army and the Eskimo Scouts. I set out to find him right away. Luckily, he happened to be in Nome at that time, living at his sister's house while recuperating from a mining accident up north. Within a few hours I had arranged a meeting and was eating dinner with him. After doing my best to convince him I really was just an editor for SOF and had no affiliation with the U.S. government, he began to open up, but without saying much more than he'd already written in his article. Because he requested that his name not be used (and since he bears a striking resemblance to the comedian Jonathan Winters) I'll refer to him as "JW."

"I think I did the right thing by writing that article," said JW. "At first I wasn't sure I should make something like that public. But after I wrote it, a lot of people out on St. Lawrence, or who used to live on St. Lawrence, and former Scouts told me they were glad I wrote it. This information should be known. It's a free country. People have a right to know what's going on."

"They [the Soviets] are taking advantage of us out on St. Lawrence. Their military people have been coming on the island for years, ever since the Cold War, and we never stop them. The Scouts have no legal authority to apprehend them. In the '50s, when the Army had a signal base 15 to 20 miles southeast of Gambell, there were lots of sightings near that area. Now the sightings are most common out on the Northeast Cape, where the old White Alice radar site used to be. The facility was closed down in the early '70s, when we switched from troposcatter, land-based systems to

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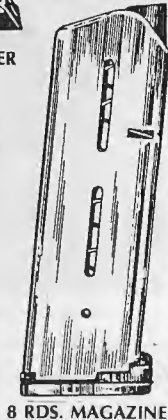
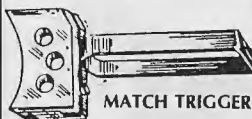
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satellites. But the power station, dormitory and recreation facilities are still there, and so is the airstrip that serviced it.

"The island is a strategic piece of real estate. During the lend-lease program in the Second World War, it was a stop-off place for planes we delivered from Nome to Siberia. That sort of thing can work in reverse if there's another war. Controlling the Bering Straits is important, and that's why I think St. Lawrence is so important to them. Among other things, it has three modern airstrips. Maybe they're training their people to put communications and guidance systems on the island. I think they're also testing us to see how effectively and efficiently the Scouts report suspicious activity and sightings ... or whether we report at all. That way they manage a consistent, up-to-date intel picture about the island."

"What is the prescribed information chain for Scout spot reports?" I asked.

"The spot reports first go to their respective battalion headquarters. For St. Lawrence, that would be here in Nome. Then on to the military intel people at 6th ID in Anchorage, then to DIA in Washington, D.C. and, I assume, the CIA and ultimately to the National Security Council."

"Have you personally seen these strangers on the island?"

"No, but I know people who have."

"I'd like to talk with these people," I said. "I need some hard evidence to nail this stuff down, to prove that it's not poachers, bootleggers, etc., that people are seeing. You know, everyone on the outside claims this is all a big hoax."

"I want to help," JW said resolutely. "It's important that that people know about this."

I then showed him some names of people out on St. Lawrence and Little Diomedé I had been given by the city employee in Kotzebue. JW nodded his head approvingly.

"That's my uncle," he said, pointing to one name. "And that's my nephew ... that's my cousin ... and I know him real good too. I'll call all these people tonight and let them know you're coming. Let me go around town and get some other people who'll talk to you. We'll get together again after you take your little 'tour' of the islands with the military."

JW's story certainly sounded convincing, but still, as Rep. Young remarked earlier, "Show me a body, then I'll believe it." So far, I still hadn't gotten beyond the rumor barrier. But it looked like that might change very soon.

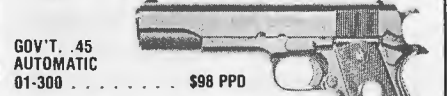
"Bullshit!" roared Sergeant First Class Renard (Nard) Reynolds of the 1st Scout Battalion in Nome. "That story about the Scout being killed by Spetsnaz was pure bullshit. I used to trust SOF, now I'm not gonna read another issue. You guys let yourselves get snookered." Such was my greeting early the next morning when I arrived at the National Guard Armory for my trip out to St. Lawrence. Other news media

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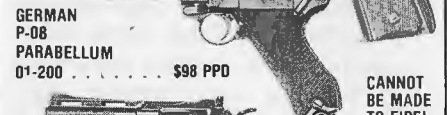
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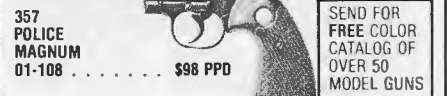
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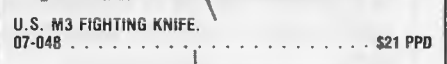
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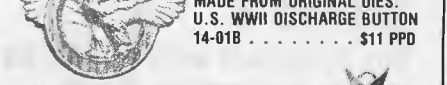
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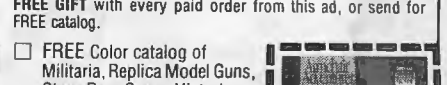
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people, who were gathered in the armory's gymnasium for a pre-departure briefing, cranked their heads to see who was getting the dressing down.

"That's what I'm here to check out," I replied. Nard wasn't impressed. He was busy pointing out to the reporters various items of Soviet flotsam (bug spray cans and plastic bottles with Cyrillic writing on them) that were laid out on a table under a bright spotlight. Camera shutters clicked wildly and video cams rolled as if on cue. "This look like Spetsnaz kit to you?" said another Guard officer jokingly to me. I wasn't impressed. I saved my film and boarded the bus out for the airport. Obviously our Spetsnaz article had struck yet another nerve.

First stop was Gambell, population 450, out on the Northwest Cape. When we piled out of the C-130, Scouts decked out in their white oversuits and driving their characteristic white snowmachines promptly ferried us to the local armory for our briefing. Straightforward in content, the briefing outlined the Scout's role of providing year-round air, land and sea surveillance for the island. They stressed that their job is not to apprehend suspicious visitors on the periphery, nor even to interpret the intelligence they gathered while on patrol. Their responsibility is to report accurate and timely information to their battalion headquarters.

Scout patrols of the island are carried out in conjunction with their subsistence hunting and fishing activities. Civilians are also part of this HUMINT network — they are encouraged to report sightings of unfamiliar aircraft, submarines or strangers directly to Scout personnel, who then prepare a detailed spot report for headquarters.

Sergeant First Class Mike Apataki of Gambell went so far as to conjecture that he thinks the Soviets are using the island for cold weather training purposes, but that he also had no proof of this. "We spot strangers," he said, "but they're so far away that by the time we get to the place they were seen, they're gone. So we can't say for sure if they're foreign soldiers."

Following this briefing, I was targeted with more good-natured chiding from Guard officers: "How many Spetsnaz infiltrators you think are in this room, Mr. Bates? . . . We're sure glad you're here to save us from Spetsnaz, Mr. Bates . . . Find any Spetsnaz decoder rings yet? . . ." It was at least flattering to know that a lot of people read our magazine up there. Had I been ignored, I probably would have gone home early without a story. No such luck.

Scouts on snowmachines then ferried us to the western shore of Gambell, away from town, to photograph *umiaks* and who knows what else. Enroute, I told my driver that I had an appointment in town with Winfred James, the mayor. "So you're the guy," he shouted, and promptly pulled a U-turn and delivered me to a prearranged point in the village. JW had come through on his promise. Winny was expecting me. We talked for an hour or so, and he offered to accompany

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me to Savoonga.

The Scout briefing in Savoonga was much the same as the one at Gambell. Soviet submarines had been sighted, a Soviet gas mask had washed ashore in 1982, but still no proof of a Soviet military presence on the island. Even my visit with Kenny did not provide that. It wasn't until later that night after returning to Nome that the pieces started to fall in place.

"Hey Sammy," someone yelled as I walked through a back street in Nome. The voice was familiar, but I couldn't locate it. "Come on, Sammy. Yeah you. Up here." I looked up to the second-story window of an old house, and there was Winny's smiling face. "Sammy" — short for "Uncle Sam," i.e. gumshoe from D.C. — was how Winny, and my other new Eskimo friends, were to refer to me for the rest of my stay. "Come on up, Sammy," he said. "It's Miller time!"

When I went in the house, there was Winny, JW and another large Eskimo man wearing glasses and a maroon Mark Air baseball cap. A 33-year veteran of the Eskimo Scouts, he was accompanied by his wife, who listened intently to our conversation. Since he, too, requested that his name not be used in the article, I'll refer to him as "the tundra walker," or "TW." He was the one who would provide the missing link in my investigation.

"Who reads this magazine of yours, Sammy?" asked TW.

"It's an international publication," I said.

"Any of the intelligence agencies get copies?"

"All of them."

"By 'all of them,' do you include *theirs* as well?"

"I'm afraid so."

With that, the three men began conversing quietly among themselves in Eskimo. "If you wanted to talk to us somewhere else," asked Winny, "like in San Francisco, Seattle, or some other place outside Alaska, would we be able to do that?"

"I doubt it," I replied. "I'm on a budget. It would take one hell of a sales job back at the magazine to get that approved."

"Let's continue this conversation over dinner," I offered. "It's on me." With that, we drove out to the Road House for dinner, Nome's culinary claim to fame. While shelling a platter of the largest steamed shrimp I've ever seen, TW dominated the conversation for the rest of the night.

"I won't go too deeply into my military background," said TW. "Wouldn't want our Soviet friends to know more than they already do. I started with the Alaska Territorial Guard during the war, then joined the Scouts in 1949. General John Schaeffer is an old friend of mine . . . used to be neighbors. We used to walk the tundra together out at Savoonga . . . chasing boogey-men. You ever heard of him?"

"I'm interviewing Gen. Schaeffer next week in Anchorage," I said. "What 'boogey-men'?"

"The ones out at the Northeast Cape, near the old White Alice site. Soviet submarines and their scuba people are everywhere out there. In winter, too, dressed in white."

"What are they doing there?" I asked.

"Intel gathering. We've found their buried rafts and caches of rations . . . no weapons caches, though."

"Are you sure they're Soviet?"

"Sure. We sometimes find bodies washed up on the rocks. Probably miss their pickup and die of exposure. It's a rough place out there."

"Can you give me a date on one of those findings?" This question led to more discussion in Eskimo among the three men.

Finally, after several minutes, TW replied, "Summer, I think it was August 1983. He was Soviet military all right, in an exposure suit. The body was pretty badly decomposed. I found him myself."

"I've checked with civilian authorities, state troopers, coroners' reports," I said, "but I've never found any record of this or other bodies found on the islands."

"You won't find any record. When we're sure the body is Soviet military, the civilian authorities don't handle it. The Air Force is called in to retrieve the body, and military intel people handle it from there. There's no civilian paper trail."

"What type of plane picked it up?"

"I don't know. I wasn't there for the actual pickup."

"What about a report I've heard from some sources in Ketchikan that a live Soviet commando was found by the Scouts in summer 1985, up north of here near Shishmaref. He was hypothermic. He also had some kind of large box with him. They say the Air Force picked him up real quick. Ever heard of that?" I asked.

"You've got enough," he said, pushing his chair away from the table. "You want to know more about me and the Scouts, get a copy of *Men of the Tundra* by Muktuk Marston. I'll give you my copy from home if I can find it. I'm mentioned in there. Let's go get some more shrimp."

The next morning, before departing for Little Diomed, I called the magistrate of Savoonga, who also happens to be the coroner there, to confirm TW's story. He's the one who would have signed the death certificate of the Soviet commando TW spoke of. "You talked with TW?" he asked. "O.K. This is pretty sensitive stuff, you know . . . Yeah, we call the Air Force to pick 'em up when we're sure the body is Soviet. Civilian authorities aren't notified. I don't even think the autopsy's done in Alaska. That's the last we hear of it. Military intelligence takes over from there."

"Ever recovered a live Soviet?" I asked.

"Not that I know of . . . I gotta go." Click.

I then called a retired FBI agent I'd met up north who now works for ARCO security. He reluctantly confirmed the report I'd been given by TW, but declined further comment.

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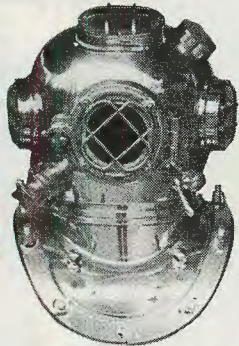
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There it was: Firsthand reports, not hearsay, of Soviet military presence on St. Lawrence confirmed by three sources, and a clear indication that this presence is known at certain levels in U.S. intelligence circles. A mechanism for handling this situation without arousing a "Red Scare" panic is and has apparently been in place for years. It is so well-honed as to be almost imperceptible.

Upon my return home, further investigation revealed that reports of the Soviet "swimmer" found dead near Kotzebue have some merit. A former officer from Ft. Richardson who served with USARAL (United States Army Alaska) from 1968 to 1970 checked with his military sources in Anchorage and informed me that on 5 May 1981, a Department of Defense (DoD) Form 523 (request for autopsy) was authorized to conduct an autopsy on a corpse brought to Elmendorf Air Force Base hospital from Kotzebue. The Form 523 was signed by the commanding general of ALASCOM.

After a preliminary autopsy at Elmendorf, the body was then shipped to McChord Air Force Base in Washington state, and on to Ft. Lewis for further evaluation. As our earlier story had stated, the corpse was found half buried under a rubber raft near Kotzebue, 3 kilometers inland on the Kobuk River. Its fingers and toes had been cut off, its jaws and teeth deliberately smashed, apparently to preclude positive ID in the event the body was ever recovered. As of this printing, I have been unable to get a copy of the autopsy report to confirm this information, but I'm still trying.

True, I have been unable to substantiate all of the events portrayed in our article on Spetsnaz, or those alleged by many of our readers. But it is not because the "leads evaporate," as Capt. Burgess and others had suggested. Rather, the leads dead end. For, according to a staffer at Alaska Senator Murkowski's Washington, D.C., office, all limited confirmed information on Spetsnaz activity in Alaska and elsewhere is now classified, and, consequently, off limits to public scrutiny.

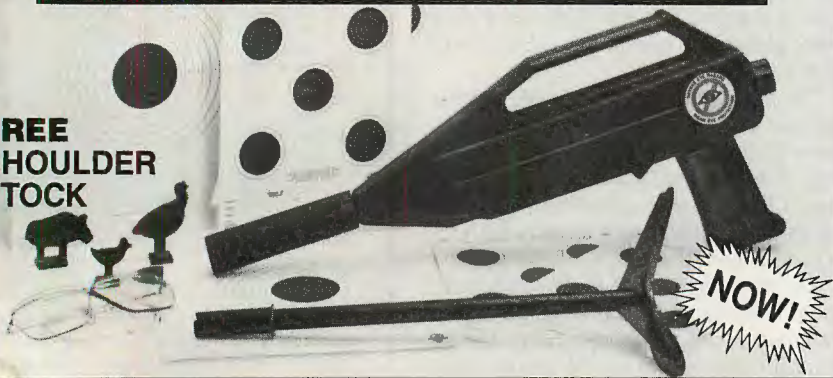
Examining where these leads converge and what they indicate about our national security interests are beyond the scope of this article. What is clear, however, is that the Pentagon's official position on the matter, as stated by its chief spokesman Dan Howard on 11 February 1988 — "There is no convincing evidence that the Soviets have landed on St. Lawrence Island; no conclusive evidence . . ." — is no longer tenable.

EPILOGUE

It should come as no surprise that the Soviets have a vested interest in Alaska. For one thing, they used to own it. They sold it to us in 1867 for a piddling \$7.2 million (about 2 cents an acre). Though referred to pejoratively at the time as "Seward's Folly," we can all be thankful for the strategic foresight of Abraham Lincoln's Secretary

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of State, William Seward, whose idea it was to bargain it away from the currency-starved Russian regime.

Though the state remains virtually unknown to many Americans in the continental United States, the Soviets have never forgiven themselves for making this embarrassing blunder. During my stay in the Soviet Union as a high school student in the 1970s, rarely a conversation would end without an old Russian leaning toward me and saying in his best vodka-slurred speech, "Alyeska. We'll get it back!"

The state's more than 47,000 miles of unguarded shoreline provide a veritable open door to North America. And with a Soviet garrison on Big Diomedede only 2½ miles from U.S. territory on Little Diomedede, an independent motorized rifle brigade at Providenia only 70 miles from Gambell, and 75 percent of their Pacific fleet submarines home ported at Petropavlovsk on the Kamchataka Peninsula 1,300 miles from St. Lawrence and less than 600 miles from Attu at the tip of the Aleutian Island chain, they clearly possess the staging areas from which to probe the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean regions.

Probing our peripheral on-the-ground defenses in Alaska is clearly in the Soviets' strategic interest; it provides an up-to-date HUMINT picture of the quality and breadth of those defenses, noting patterns of weakness and strength. A former operations officer for USARAL specifically told me that St. Lawrence Island has been used by the Soviets as a low-temperature training site for midget submarine units of the GRU's Spetsnaz northern operations forces since 1965. Given the close proximity of St. Lawrence to the Siberian mainland, they apparently use this remote island to train their special operations forces on how to successfully infiltrate enemy territory without undue risk of causing an international incident.

As Neil Livingstone remarked in the April 1988 edition of *Conservative Digest*: "We make similar penetrations of the Soviet Union. The U.S. special operations forces do that. It would be foolish on our part, with open borders, to think they aren't doing the same thing here. We just don't hear more about it, frankly, [because] it's an embarrassing issue . . . our people working under similar circumstances are from time to time interdicted by Soviets." He goes on to conjecture that there is probably an unwritten understanding between the superpowers that such apprehended special operations commandos are interrogated and then traded or released.

Reciprocal visits? Sounds harmless enough when discussing the issue as a detached observer, preferably in the safety and comfort of a university classroom, government think-tank, or in a magazine's editorial office in Boulder, Colorado. But when I recall what one Eskimo out on St. Lawrence said when I asked his motivation for coming forward with evidence of Soviet incursions, I am much less forgiving. "It's my home,

Tom," he said earnestly. "They [Soviets] got no business being here. I want my home defended. I want to feel secure in my home." Congressman Young's assistant, Bill Sharrow, made a similar observation, saying, "It's American territory and should be regarded with no less importance than Washington, D.C., or anywhere else in the country."

I couldn't agree more. Helping maintain the integrity of our northernmost border is the responsibility of the Eskimo Scouts. From what I saw, they take their job seriously, and have since World War II. These guys have no illusions about the threat that exists just a few miles from their homes. They have the courage to face that threat head on and make the personal sacrifices necessary to counter it.

The evidence now indicates that the Soviets have penetrated Alaska and have been doing so for some time now. It's time the rest of us in the lower 48 take heed of Billy Mitchell's remark and recognize how potentially vulnerable we are there, and what an invaluable service the Scouts perform for our national defense. As our "eyes and ears of the north," we owe them much admiration and respect. ✕

MUJ MORTAR

Continued from page 41

young mujahideen sets out. Though scared by his first experience with the weapon late last year, Gul Agha looks very satisfied. He was trained for 20 days, along with 27 party fellows, to fire the weapon. Along the way, talking to his friends, he uses a number of technical terms he has mastered. "There was no misfire, hangfire or deadfire," he says of the operation.

After a 30-minute walk, the caravan stops near a water spring. It is time to say afternoon prayers. While enemy firing continues, the mujahideen scatter throughout the valley to perform ablution and prepare for prayers. They assemble and pray.

Commander Shafiq gets in touch with Khalid on his walkie-talkie and asks him for orders. "Head toward Dorbaba where all the mujahideen will gather by nightfall," the reply comes.

To celebrate the victory, Commander Khalid slaughters a sheep for the men in the Dorbaba area near his *markaz* (base). As the sky reddens on the horizon and the sun declines, the caravan arrives at Dorbaba. Dinner is awaiting these boys. Squatting on a rug and enjoying the food, they talk of the operation with Commander Khalid.

Next day a soldier, who fled the garrison after the operation, surrenders to Khalid. He informs the mujahideen that 110 troops were killed and dozens of others injured. Frightened by the terrifying mortar explosions, the conscript tells them how all the surviving soldiers escaped after some

Continued on page 106

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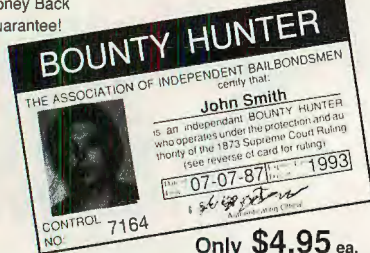
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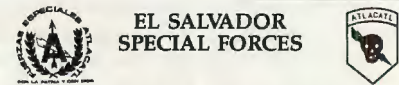
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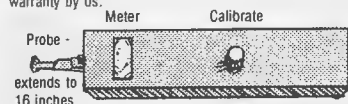
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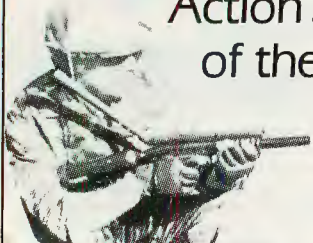
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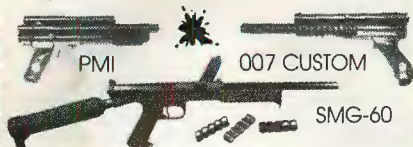
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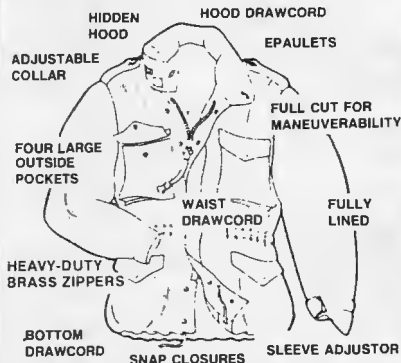
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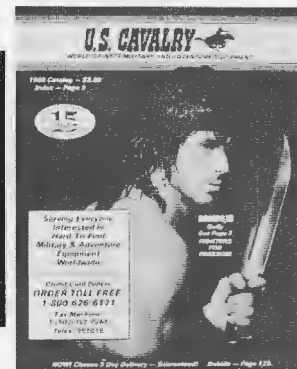
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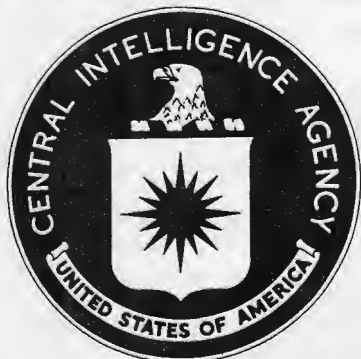
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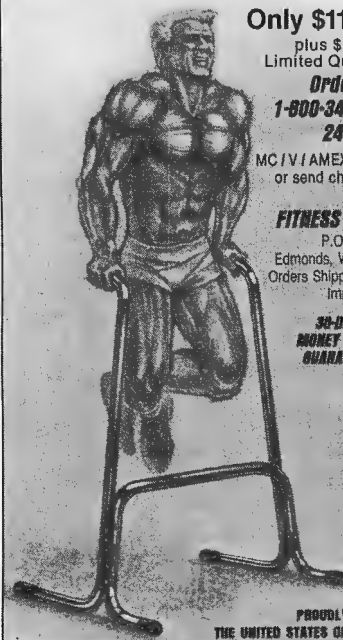
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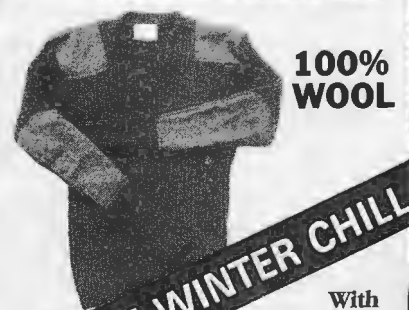
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rounds landed in the garrison.

"After the third round exploded nearby, me and a roommate rushed into a cave to seek shelter," he says. "The others then escaped. The booming was so loud that we put our fingers in our ears. We thought the roof would collapse. We thought this has to be something damned strong, something new!" ✖

RED PRINCE

Continued from page 61

were stationed in Cambodia or Laos. That was true. We commuted to the war there by helicopter. (The CIA operatives we saw in Laos must have been figments of our imaginations.)

A lot of good Americans died or disappeared in the State Department's "neutral countries" where no Americans were stationed.

"Hell, if they captured us and tortured us into admitting that we were Americans, the commies in the State Department would simply say we deserted. Such bureaucratic bullshit," Jake told Pete.

Finally, halfway through the third day of interrogation, an airborne colonel stood up and echoed Pete's sentiments.

"They were just doing their job," he said. "Why are we treating them as war criminals or something when we should be giving them medals?"

A few hours later, the grilling ended. Pete and Jake returned to Kontum. Three days later, they returned to the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam.

The mission which had led to their grilling in Saigon was one of the more noteworthy in MACV/SOG annals.

During the summer of 1968, MACV/SOG recon teams running missions into Laos and Cambodia from FOB #2 in Kontum and FOB #6 in Ho Ngoc Tao outside of Saigon, were suffering extreme WIA, MIA and KIA statistics. Their ranks were dwindling quickly.

At least two teams from FOB #1 in Phu Bai and several FOB #4 teams in Da Nang, which later became CCN, were sent to alleviate the critical manpower shortages in FOB #2 and FOB #6.

Pete and Jake's team of Chinese Nungs was flown to Kontum during the summer of 1968. Pete and Jake were the only Americans on the team. They liked to run their missions with four indigenous troops, the fierce and fearless Nungs.

The mission which led to the grilling in Saigon was to locate and photograph a massive NVA base camp in the tri-border area. The NVA had been continually operating and expanding the complex, both above and underground, since early 1964 — at a time when Viet Cong propagandists were telling the world (and the media was dutifully reporting) — that they were fighting a

"nationalist" war by themselves, without the assistance of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops. (By 1968, that lie was believed only by the media, which kept repeating it, and by idiots in the State Department.)

Green Berets and CIA operatives had documented massive North Vietnamese troop and supply movement in the tri-border area, and MACV/SOG brass wanted to learn more about this particular staging area.

The mission started ordinarily enough. Vietnamese-piloted H-34 helicopters (Kingbees) inserted the Spike Team atop a knoll in elephant grass 12-15 feet tall. The terrain was rough with steep mountains.

For three days, the ST humped cautiously through the jungle, heading toward the base camp. Jake later reported, "This was some of the toughest and most physically arduous terrain our team had ever moved through. By the end of the third day, we were beat. We were hurtin' for certain. Because we stayed away from the trails, the jungle was killing us."

Also, the team started getting a little edgy when it heard noises it couldn't identify in the distance.

Shortly before sunset, the team crossed a minor footpath and set up a RON (rest over night) spot in the thickest jungle it could find. The site was located on the side of a mountain, which meant the men had to tie themselves to the trees to keep from rolling down the slope while sleeping.

In the morning, the ST moved out at first light and quickly encountered a major branch of the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex. About 20 yards back from the trail was a ditch that ran parallel to it, a perfect site for an ambush. Pete radioed for permission to abandon the primary mission in favor of the secondary one, which was to capture an NVA POW. His request was approved quickly by the brass.

The team swiftly but meticulously prepared the ambush. It planted sticks of C-4 in the middle of the kill zone, about 6 feet back from the trail. The purpose of these was not to kill but to knock one or two NVA soldiers unconscious. Deadly Claymore mines were then positioned approximately 25 feet on either side of the C-4, with the mines set at angles to ensure that upon detonation the lethal arcs of ball bearings would cross in such a fashion that only the person in the center of the zone would not be shredded.

Another set of Claymores were set up, further extending the kill zone. A third pair was placed on the flanks, and a fourth pair was set to secure the rear. A final Claymore was planted in the center of the team, to be detonated during the escape-and-evasion phase.

At about 1100 hours the ST saw VC moving south on the trail. The unit consisted of 25-30 troops. Pete photographed them.

Then the first uniformed NVA soldiers moved through the kill zone.

"We could hear them talking as we took their pictures. Then the total started to mount," Jake told debriefers later. "Hell,

before we knew it more than a hundred NVA had marched through our kill zone.

"Needless to say, our collective pucker factor was minus zero. All of a sudden, the seriousness of our situation dawned on us. It wasn't a game anymore. And this division or regiment was simply too damned big for us to mess with."

There were more surprises to come. Within minutes, some Pathet Lao and more NVA troops were passing through the kill zone. And then the ST members rubbed their collective eyes, as Pete found himself photographing a man being carried on an ornate chair which rested on two poles. He was borne on the shoulders of eight soldiers.

"We could see the guy in the chair. He was dressed real fancy like, and he had two oriental women with him. Two beautiful women, dressed like the class women in Saigon. They weren't dressed like your ordinary Saigon hooker," Jake said.

The dude in the chair was surrounded by a contingent of military men wearing fancy uniforms and spit-shined boots, "like they were ready for an inspection or something."

Then the procession stopped right in the middle of the kill zone.

The fancy-looking dude got down from his chair, and several of the soldiers started moving into the jungle to relieve themselves.

Several NVA soldiers moved to within a few feet of ST members.

One of the NVA's urine landed next to one of the ST's Nungs.

"They were getting too close, so Pete said 'Fuck it!' and gave the signal to blow the ambush," Jake said later. "So we blew it!

"Many of the guys relieving themselves were relieved of their lives, as we blew them back into eternity.

"Instantly, the guy in the chair was history.

"They were having some sort of meeting, when we blew it . . . We heard 'em scream. We did a lot of damage. We killed a lot of people."

Tragically, one of the Nungs jumped up too soon, apparently because one NVA was about to urinate on him, and the Claymore backblast killed both of them.

Pete blew the flank security Claymores as the NVA reacted with a sudden and fierce response which caught the ST by surprise.

The ST began its E&E after blowing its final Claymore.

Pilots would later report that there were at least 100 dead soldiers visible from the air in the kill zone.

As the team members withdrew, they emptied their CAR-15s. Finally, Pete and Jake decided to run for it.

As Jake turned to run, two AK rounds ripped into the PRC-25 radio he was carrying inside the indigenous rucksack on his back and slammed him to the ground, in the process eliminating their primary means of

Continued on page 112

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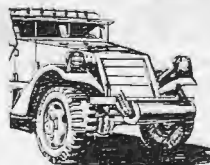


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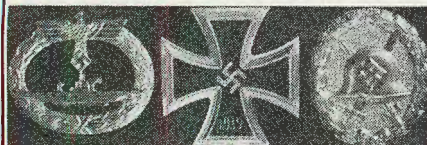
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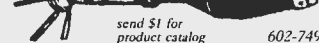
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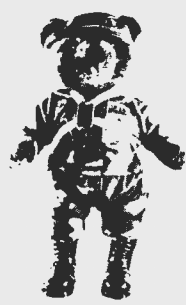
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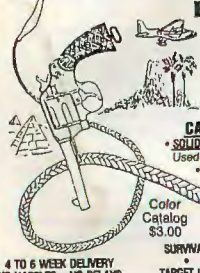
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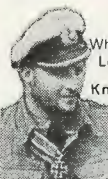


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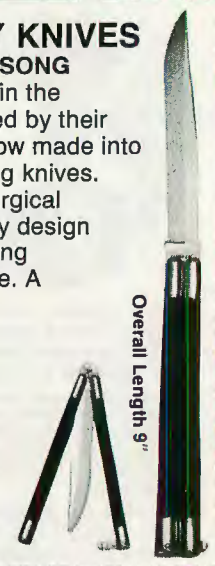
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communication.

Pete and the interpreter threw M-26 fragmentation grenades to slow down the NVA, while a shaken Jake ignited a thermite grenade to destroy the worthless PRC-25 that had saved his life.

RPGs were exploding in the trees and hundreds of AK rounds shredded the foliage as Pete, Jake and the interpreter beat their retreat. In the confusion, the two Americans inadvertently broke away from the interpreter, who went his separate way. The two remaining Nungs, who were laying down intense cover fire, were apparently overrun by the NVA.

"We ran in three hours what it had taken us three days to cover," Jake reported later. "We ran like hell, because we knew they'd kill us for killing their precious little VIP."

When they crossed the little trail they had passed over without incident earlier, there were several NVA on it. But the khaki-clad communist troops were running so fast toward the ambush site they passed Pete and Jake without realizing who they were — and never fired a shot.

The pair's luck held out a little bit longer. They ran into and through a village which was part of the base camp that had been the target of their original mission. No soldiers were in the camp; they were responding to the ambush. They stopped only long enough for Pete to take photographs of the camp hospital, houses, and the command headquarters.

Meanwhile, Jake finally made contact with Covey (their airborne controller) using his URC-10 ultra-high frequency emergency radio. By now, Pete and Jake were exhausted from running so hard. Jake had the dry heaves. Both were dizzy, thirsty and generally out of it.

Neither had witnessed such carnage before, or killed so many people, or had so many people hunting them down.

Within minutes, Covey spotted them in the elephant grass. He told them not to move, because there were dozens of NVA and VC hunting for them in the grass.

Pete and Jake sat back to back, as quietly as they could, listening to the enemy combing the tall grass for them.

They didn't move. They couldn't move. "That was the *weirdest game* of hide-and-seek I ever played in my life. I was trying to keep my dry heaves quiet. They walked within inches of us. We could smell 'em," Jake said.

Covey started working the air assets around the knoll they were on. When extra assets arrived, the pilots worked down the knoll further and started hitting the base camp.

Time and again, Pete and Jake heard NVA troops talking, hunting for them in the elephant grass.

With only a few magazines of ammo left and three frag grenades between them, the two had little ordnance with which to defend themselves.

Silence was their biggest ally, as Uncle

Sam's Air Force ripped into the communist troops around them. Each privately thought about how they would use their last hand grenade, knowing they would rather die by their own hand.

Finally, Covey told Pete and Jake that the extraction helicopters were enroute. Jake asked Covey if he had received any other URC-10 transmissions from the area, because the interpreter carried one. Covey replied, "negative."

Seconds before the slicks arrived, Covey had the gunships make a final run on the knoll to pave the way for the extraction birds.

Just as the first slick roared in to pick up Pete and Jake, Covey picked up another URC-10 transmission and miraculously spotted the interpreter, who was on the other side of the knoll.

The slick picked him up too, and then hovered briefly looking for the two remaining Nungs. Covey stayed over the target until darkness forced cancellation of all search efforts.

Covey gave a conservative body count of 160 dead troops, including one commie prince.

[Epilogue: Jake later received a Bronze Star, without the V device for valor, for that mission. The commendation read, for "service in Vietnam." The government even lied on the award inscriptions, due to pressure from the State Department.] ✖

WOUND BALLISTICS

Continued from page 87

modern military rifle cartridges? The almost magical properties attributed to high velocity have again been exaggerated. Bullet configuration and construction are the significant parameters. All of these military bullets produce significant penetration. Limited by convention to fully jacketed projectiles, we lose the effectiveness of expanding bullets and must depend upon yawing and/or fragmentation to increase the wound track. ComBloc cartridges generally are adequate but nothing special. Those energized by the endless .30 caliber/SCHV controversy will find no final victory statement in this research. Both the 7.62x51mm and 5.56x45mm cartridges are effective, with limitations, although for different reasons. Neither exhibits an overwhelming superiority over the other. Big bore boomers will find little solace in the ugly wound profile of the fragmenting M193/855 bullets. The mouse gun's devotees have little to gloat over either. After 200 yards, their bullet stops fragmenting and performance is unremarkable. But, armies will continue the switch to micro-calibers for the reasons previously stated.

What about the rest of us? Do we have any legitimate basis for selection based upon these test results? Yes, with qualifications. If someone thrusts an AKM into your hands, make sure it's stuffed with Yugoslav

M67 ball. If you don't expect to be humping about much and hope to take them out before they get close enough to see the whites of their eyes, then by all means grab a FAL and a couple magazines of that devastating Bundeswehr ball. Those who anticipate crashing through the bush with 100 pounds strapped to their LBE will be wise to select a weapon in the M16 series and need have little fear that it will prove inadequate. Ever since World War II the average combat range has remained less than 200 yards, and it will continue to be so until we start hurling laser beams at our enemies.

For those without the means to prepare and refrigerate properly calibrated gelatin, there is a simple way to obtain a rule-of-thumb guide to the effectiveness of your favorite loads and bullets. Just fire into a column of water-filled square, waxed-cardboard, ½-gallon juice or milk cartons. As pistol bullets can usually be recovered and their depth of penetration easily determined, this method offers a means of assessing both penetration and expansion, if any. However, this will yield only an approximation of the depth of penetration in living tissue. Bullets will penetrate approximately 1.6 to 2 times as far in water as in 10 percent gelatin or soft tissue, so adjust your results accordingly. Remember also that handgun bullet expansion to just under twice the original diameter is ideal. Over-expansion will result in under-penetration, and we want a penetration depth of no less than 12 inches and preferably up to 20 inches in soft tissue. Finally, due to their yaw cycles and curvature in path of travel, non-deforming military rifle bullets may be difficult to recover, as they will commonly pass out the sides of the milk cartons. A larger container is required for testing bullets of this type. ✖

IN REVIEW

Continued from page 77

and drive the NVA out of the city. Kontum, South Vietnam and John Paul Vann's career were saved.

Two days later, while returning to Kontum from Saigon, Vann was killed in a helicopter crash resulting from pilot error. The time Vann gained for South Vietnam was used to negotiate the Paris Peace Accords of 1973. The next time the NVA launched an offensive, there would be no B-52 strikes, no John Paul Vann, and no last-ditch defense as there had been at Kontum. South Vietnam fell in 55 days.

John Paul Vann was seen by most at his funeral as the best America had to give, or as Daniel Ellsberg thought, to throw away. Without question, he brought more devotion, intellect and bravery to the war than any of his contemporaries, but as Sheehan points out, his talents and devotion were never sufficient to affect the ultimate outcome of a doomed enterprise. ✖

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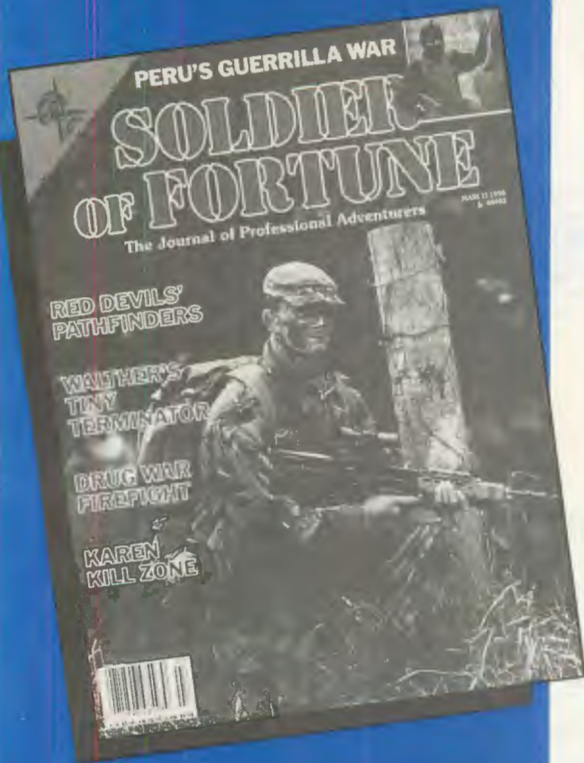
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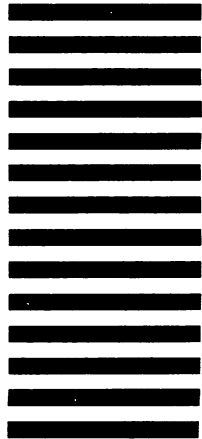
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