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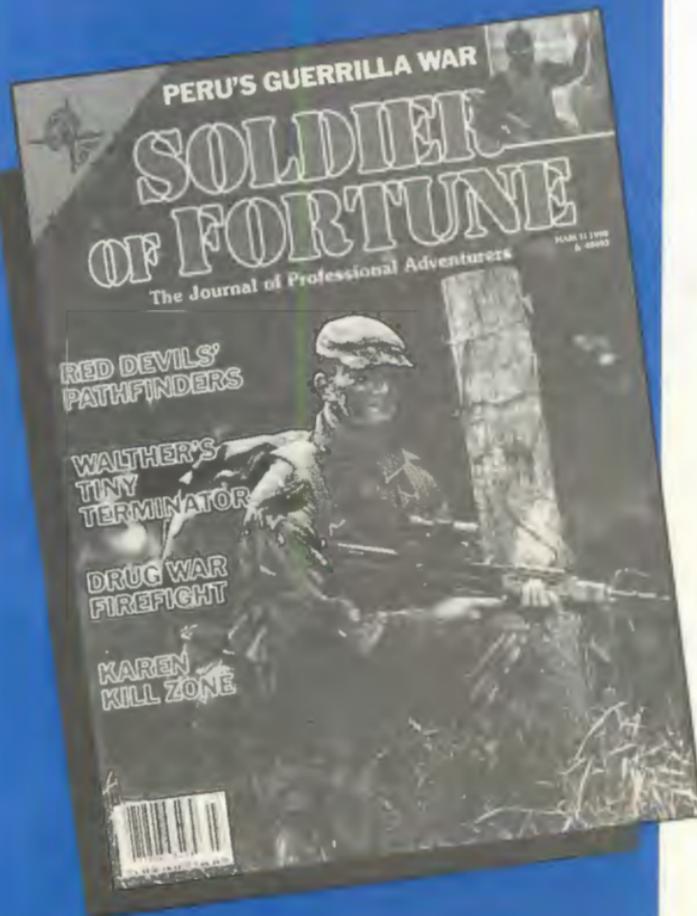
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## COVER

**COVER:** Soldiers of Major Sa'ad Haddad's pro-Israeli militia and Israelis on the advance in wake of Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Beaufort Castle, scene of the war's toughest battle, pitted elite Israeli commandos against PLO defenders in a battle for control of this strategic fortress. Beginning on page 40, an IDF officer who fought in the battle recounts the fierce fighting. Photo: Sygma  
**INSET:** Mujahideen fire all 12 barrels of Chinese-made Type 63 107mm rocket launcher (nicknamed "BM-12") in rapid sequence. See David Isby's Afghanistan update starting on page 30. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe



# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## Buy 'em — Don't Fight 'em

**T**HE communist government in Angola, Chester Crocker of the State Department, and Fidel Castro (with the complicity of the South African government, which should know better) have come up with a "plan" to get the Cuban mercenaries out of Angola.

The gist of this U.S.-mediated plan is that South Africa will pull its forces out of Angola (thereby effectively cutting off South African aid to Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA anti-communist freedom fighters inside Angola), and then turn South West Africa/Namibia over to the communist-dominated SWAPO terrorists, all in exchange for a promise by Fidel Castro to begin withdrawing at least some of his troops — at least the ones who haven't been dubbed pro-tem Angolans — from Angola sometime in the future. And just how is this so-called withdrawal of mercenary troops to be monitored? Well, according to an interview with Brazilian General Pericles Ferreira Gomes, who heads up the United Nations' team in Angola which is supposed to keep an eye on the pullout, it's simple. "The two countries [Angola and Cuba] are allies — there is no reason to mistrust them," this featherhead said. "When they tell us there are no more troops, we will tell the United Nations that they have all gone."

Masterful. In short, it is another typical State Department sellout of pro-American, anti-communist freedom fighters in another Third World country. And all without consultation with Dr. Savimbi. Of course.

We have a much better plan to get the Cubans out of Angola. All it would take is a few thousand "green cards" and a few million dollars, which is peanuts against a trillion-dollar Federal budget. We would simply announce that any Cuban who came in and gave a satisfactory de-brief to us, the South Africans or Dr. Savimbi's people would receive a green card and a one-way airline ticket to Miami. (You would have to limit the plan to Cubans, or at least non-Angolans, else you'd have half the country on the south Florida welfare rolls in about two months, which could get expensive.) There would be a regular scale of payment in greenbacks for items brought in: say \$750.00 for an AK, \$30.00 for AK magazines, 50¢ a piece for cartridges, and so on.

If nothing else, this should be a cost-effective way to build up the Company's (read CIA) inventory of noisy toys, but it has other attractions. It wouldn't take more than five or 10 percent of the Cubans coming across to put the Cuban command in Angola into a state of significant paranoia over the loyalty of its troops. It's the same effect we got with the million-dollar reward we put up a few years ago for an Mi-24 out of Nicaragua. The Cuban command would institute all sorts of draconian security measures and general leaguering-up, which would render the troops who decided to remain loyal to Castro and Gorbachev's colonial fantasies quite ineffective. It could also hasten Havana's decision to withdraw ALL their troops before any more of them deserted.

As they used to say in the class on handling of prisoners of war, it's cheaper to feed 'em than to fight 'em.

And it's cheaper still to turn 'em into taxpayers. ☒

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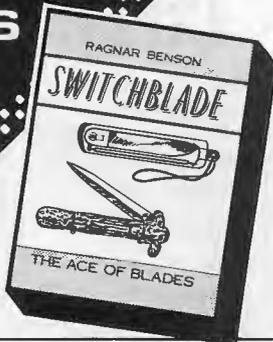


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# SWITCHBLADE

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by Ragnar Benson

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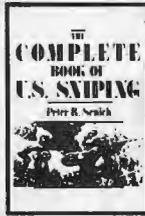


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# FLAK

## AFRICAN MiGs...

Sirs:

We need help locating photographs of MiG fighters — MiG-15 through MiG-29 — for an upcoming Squadron/Signal book. I would like to hear from pilots, crew chiefs, maintenance personnel etc. . . . who may have worked on or flown MiGs in Africa, Asia or the Middle East. Dependent on quality and the country covered I am willing to purchase good photos. Write: Nicholas J. Waters III 5509 Darby Lane The Colony, TX 75056

## Khalkhin- Gol...

Sirs:

Enjoyed your story "Tigers of a Different Stripe" (SOF January 1989). What few people realize is that the Japanese had good reason not to attack Russia in support of Germany. They'd previously lost 18,000 soldiers to Marshal Zhukov's Russians at the battle of Khalkhin-Gol in easternmost Mongolia in August 1939. That forced the Japanese to turn their attention towards the Pacific.

Edward Flores  
Oakland,  
California

## STENCH OF FILTH...

Sirs:

I've never read your Stench Of Filth (SOF) magazine but reluctantly picked it up at a newsstand recently. Now I wonder why I had to spend almost four bucks for this fucking newspeak of terror, Nazism and racism. Pure instinct led me to Al J. Venter's "Beaucoup Coups" (SOF, December '88) — a hare-brained and rueful praise to Bob Denard, the bloodiest mercenary the African continent has ever harbored.

Venter thinks "It is impossible not to respect and like this old warrior." Either he doesn't know Denard or he's the kind of man who would praise a mass-murderer or mafia don. I do know Denard, Al. I just want to prune the lies Venter so skillfully and casually presented as "facts:"

1. In 1975 Denard was — and still is — wanted in Zaire as a dangerous criminal after massacres he perpetrated in Kisangani during his foolish attempt to implement white rule over the country in 1967. It is unlikely that President Mobutu Sese Seko wa Zabanga (whose very name means warrior of might and lasting grudge) would have sought the services of a man who so blatantly defied him a few years earlier. Furthermore, by that time, the joint forces of the FNLA and the Zairian army were still sweeping triumphantly over Angola and Cabinda. The fact is, Mobutu never dealt with Denard.

2. Venter translates the French word *les Affreux* that Zairians gave to Denard's killers as "tough guys." I'd advise him to buy an English-French dictionary and see that the English equivalents for this word are "dreadful, horrible, abominable, atrocious, evil, etc. . . ." If this is what Venter considers to be features of a "tough guy" then one should find a consistency with his "respect" for the bastard who opened with a commando dagger the womb of a Zairian pregnant woman and emasculated a rebel prisoner. *Juste pour voir!*

Shiloh Okole Elanca  
Boston, Massachusetts

*Glad you enjoy our magazine so much, but Al does not define les Affreux as "tough guys," but rather as "The Terrible Ones," a term originally tagged to mercenaries who served in the Congo during the early '60s.*

*Since you blew that one, we tend to doubt your other allegations concerning Denard — especially the bit about the commando knife. However, send us some proof and we'll be glad to publish it.*

## KOKALIS CONTRADICTIONS...

Sirs:

While I regard Peter Kokalis as the world's foremost authority on selective fire weapons, some of his statements and assertions in his "Killing Effect" article (SOF, December '88) are so contradictory as to cause him to lose credibility.

He rightly blasts the use of Duxseal, pine board, wet phone books, etc. . . . as a suitable flesh simulant and then proceeds to rely on Ordnance Gelatin for his test results. While OG may be better than the previously mentioned products, the only real flesh simulant is flesh. Thus, his results will no doubt meet the same result as other test mediums.

It's wrong to shrug off the value of kinetic energy. Kokalis writes: "A thrust with a dagger, which may kill in a few minutes, will deliver far less energy than a blow from the fist." No shit, but I would much rather have the guy OK and on the ground than to have delivered a fatal stab but have the assailant still up and about. Kokalis harps on the high velocity myth but fails to point out that Hydro-shock does not occur unless bullet velocity reaches 2,000 fps. Thus, with commercially available ammunition, the only factors which can be considered are blunt shock trauma and the temporary and permanent wound cavities produced by the ammo. With this in mind, you cannot logically leave the ability of ammo to inflict blunt shock trauma out of the performance equation. Kokalis continues by referring to the Winchester and Remington 185-grain HPs as "anemic" but calls the 158-grain LHP adequate. Hmmmm.

Finally, we have Kokalis' statement that overpenetration is "every police chief's misguided nightmare." The NRA makes available to its law enforcement firearms instructors information about damage awards in officer-involved shootings. Municipalities have incurred judgements up to \$10.2 million. Overpenetration is indeed a valid concern.

Michael B. Shields  
Florida

*Peter Kokalis replies: Mr. Shields would be well advised to read the article again slowly and thoroughly.*



Others have not had the same difficulty in understanding it.

We use 250A Ordnance Gelatin in 10-percent solution at four degrees celsius because it reproduces the penetration depth measured in living swine leg muscle. Furthermore, comparison shots fired into living flesh demonstrate that it duplicates both bullet deformation and spatial distribution of bullet fragments as well.

I stand by my statements concerning kinetic energy. Proof of its relevance to wound ballistics rests upon those who wish to employ it. In any event, properly concentrating wound ballistics research upon tissue disruption essentially turns the momentum versus kinetic energy argument into a non sequitur.

Mr. Shields refers to "Hydro-shock" but I can only guess what he means. Whatever it is, I'm sure it depends upon other criteria besides just velocity.

With regard to Shields' "Hmmm" sarcasm, the Winchester and Remington 185-grain .45 ACP JHP bullets are "anemic" because they over-expand and under-penetrate. The .45 ACP Silvertip penetrates only 10.4 inches of soft tissue, while the 158-grain .38 Special LHP will penetrate 12.5.

The information provided by the NRA to its law enforcement firearms instructors was obtained from the "Liability Reporter," a publication of "Americans For Effective Law Enforcement Inc." Their survey of only 16 police departments was conducted more than a decade ago, long before expanding handgun ammunition became prevalent

among law enforcement agencies. Their data is no longer relevant.

## FUZZY-HEADED COMMAND GUIDANCE...

Sirs:

Hate to say it, but we Americans can be very fuzzy-headed about foreign affairs. Your "Command Guidance" ("Sanctions Promote Apartheid," December '88) was a prime example. To say that sanctions are hurting black South Africans has some legitimacy, but they have hurt white South Africans even more. Just how much sanctions have hurt blacks was made known to me just the other day by a black South African during a discussion. When I asked him how he felt about sanctions he laughed and said, "I'm black; I've been sanctioned all my life." I have yet to meet a black South African who is against sanctions. After all, what would you rather have, a democratic society or a job making toothpaste for scut wages?

We will not "create a starving, homeless segment of South Africa and deprive if of hope" as you so dramatically put it. You can't deprive someone of hope if they don't have it in the first place. It would appear that you drew your conclusions about apartheid based only on the slanted newspaper and television accounts. This issue is much more complicated than is presented in the media.

The government of South Africa has no intentions of eradicating apartheid. Believe me, I'm down here. From my window I watch as the

South African Defense Force cordons off entire blocks and searches everyone and everything in them.

I can't say I hold any sympathy for the South African government. After all, we sow what we reap. We all have to fight to be free so it's just a matter of time until blacks do so. You say terrorism will swell on a bloody wave. If apartheid isn't terrorism then what is? Please gentlemen, before you give us any more command guidance on this subject, come down here and experience it yourself.

Sgt. J.J. Chinal, USMC  
Pretoria, South Africa

*Violence begets violence, Sergeant Chinal, and South Africa's moderates — black, white and mixed race — already face enough problems without outsiders advocating armed revolution by any part of the population.*

Indeed, many forms of injustice still prevail in South Africa — as they do in Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique and most other African countries. Yet South Africa has in place political and economic systems that hold the potential for peaceful transition (intransigence on the extreme Left and Right notwithstanding) which the others rarely experience.

"Solutions" to South Africa's myriad problems number in the hundreds, none by themselves the final answer. However, in our view expanded U.S. business interests in South Africa will result in more jobs for blacks, training and educational programs, opportunities for advancement to middle- and upper level management positions, better family health care — and the economic clout necessary to make black South Africans clearly heard by government. Of all the "solutions" we've heard, we think it's the most pragmatic.

And incidentally, we don't rely on distorted media accounts for our source material either: Bob Brown has made eight trips to South Africa since 1974, and SOF staffers another 30-plus.

## LETTERS

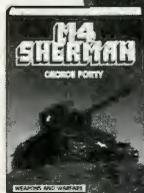
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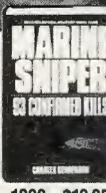
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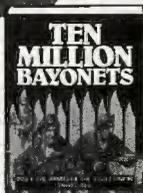
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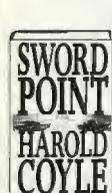
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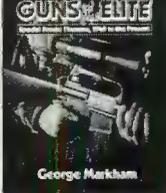
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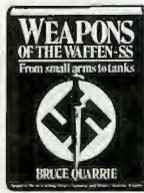
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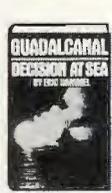
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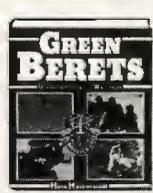
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# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Mike Sparks

## A Brighter Idea

FIGURE 1

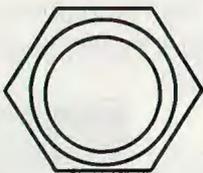


FIGURE 2

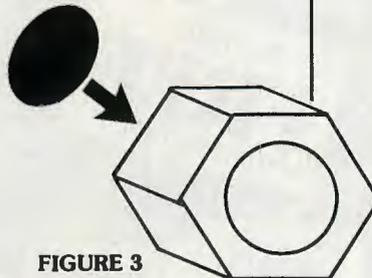
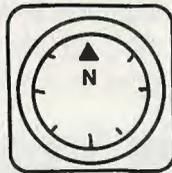


FIGURE 3

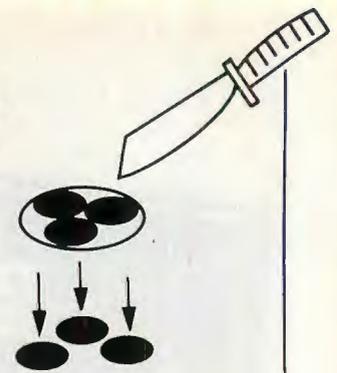


FIGURE 5

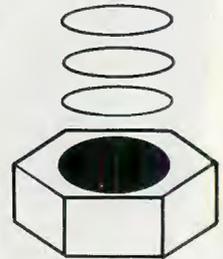


FIGURE 4

**M**ANY of us in the military have replaced the large and clumsy GI anglehead flashlight with smaller, more compact Mini-Mag® type flashlights. Colored lens kits are available so this flashlight can also be used with a subdued beam in tactical situations. The problem with all of this is that there is *no storage space to hold these extra lenses*, so you must carry them in your wallet, where they are likely to fall out and get lost or be left behind. As colored lenses are important for military signaling, they must be readily available. Aside from a redesign of the flashlight's lens cap (I have written to two mini light companies on this but have gotten no response), the simplest option is to return to the cumbersome GI anglehead flashlight.

Fortunately, a simple field-expedient technique can turn the Mini-Mag flashlight into a suitable replacement for the anglehead light. The rubber external lens cap holder (Figure 1) can be combined with a small "wristwatch" compass (Figure 2) and modified to store extra lenses when not in use. The optional lens that is most likely to be used should be snapped into the lens cap

holder ring — this will usually be the red lens (Figure 3). The remaining lenses are placed on top of this lens, inside the cap holder (Figure 4).

The spare lens kits available on the market do not have subdued, green, blue-green or spoked-pattern clear lenses for military signaling purposes as does the GI anglehead flashlight. This can be solved by using the Mini-Mag colored lens as a template to cut lenses from a GI lens (Figure 5). Three or four Mini-Mag colored lenses can be made from each GI anglehead lens used. Just find a GI flashlight with its switch broken (there are plenty of them around) and salvage the lenses instead of deep-sixing the entire flashlight. The lenses for the GI flashlight can also be obtained separately through commercial sources.

Whatever lenses you have, they are now sitting loose inside the rubber lens cap holder. This is where the wristwatch compass comes in. They are available from many sources; I got mine from Brigade Quartermaster, Dept. SOF, 1025 Cobb Blvd., Kennesaw, GA 30144, for \$4.95. To modify it for our purpose here, simply cut off

the band on the bottom used to strap the compass to your wristwatch (believe me, the way it sticks out from your wrist it'll soon break off anyway) and file the square corners off to make the compass round. It then can be pressed inside the rubber lens cap holder to retain the extra lenses. Now your Mini-Mag flashlight has a built-in compass in addition to a selection of readily accessible but safely stored optional lenses (Figures 6 & 7).

One last problem to solve, since the rubber lens cap holder is a separate piece, is how do you keep it handy? The answer is to attach the entire lens cap holder, compass, spare lenses and all, to the Mini-Mag lanyard. There is no integral eyelet on the lens cap hol-

Continued on page 83

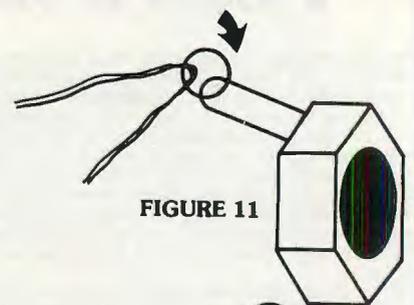


FIGURE 11



FIGURE 6

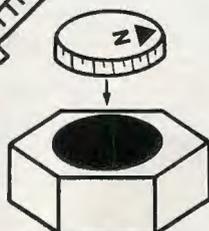


FIGURE 7

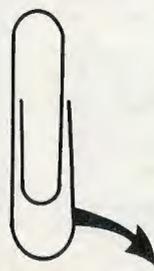


FIGURE 8



FIGURE 9

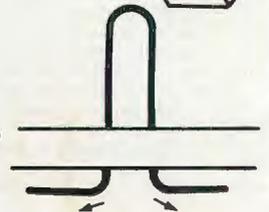


FIGURE 10

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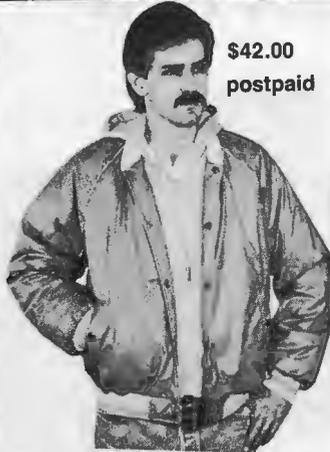
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**A FEW GOOD MEN.** By William Overgard. St. Martin's Press, Dept. SOF, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010. 1989. 356 pages. \$18.95. Review by G.B. Crouse

**I**N the 1930s, newspaperman and social critic H.L. Mencken is supposed to have said that "Americans will do anything for Central America except read about it." If Mencken had had an opportunity to read **A Few Good Men** by William Overgard, he might have changed his mind. Legendary Marines, Latin American revolutionaries, a left-wing journalist and the ever-present United Fruit Company all come together in this novel about a wild chase across Nicaragua in 1931.

When Nicaraguan rebel leader Augusto Cesar Sandino inadvertently kidnaps the daughter of the American consul in Bluefields, he quickly finds himself being pursued by General Smedley Butler and a hastily assem-

bled band of Marines.

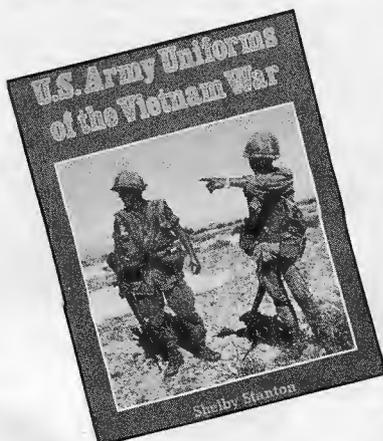
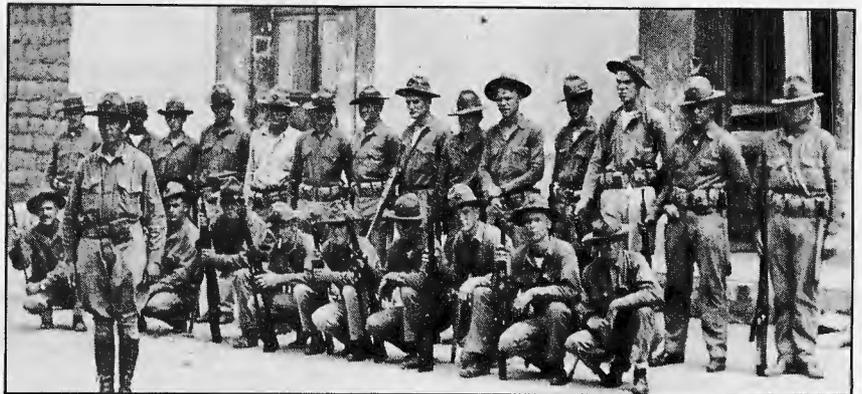
With "techno-thrillers" all the rage these days, it is refreshing to read something in which the characters aren't overshadowed by technological wonders, or the reader inundated with pointless descriptions of complex weapon systems. Not that **A Few Good Men** lacks detail. It doesn't by any means. Overgard's descriptions of everything from the Nicaraguan jungle to the decks of the *USS Cleveland* to the weapons, uniforms and equipment of the Marines are accurate and colorful.

Going to battle was a far simpler affair in 1931, but even today's modern weapons can't upstage the likes of characters such as the legendary Marines Smedley Butler, recipient of two Congressional Medals of Honor, or Chesty Puller, a captain in the novel,

**Marines in Nicaragua.** Many of the Marine Corps' heroes and future leaders got their start fighting the Banana Wars of the '20s and '30s. Photo: DoD

then wearing just the first of his five Navy Crosses.

*Shanghai Tango*, Overgard's previous novel, focused on Marines in China in the '30s and combined a plausible plot, accurate historical information, salty military vernacular, abundant humor and appropriate reverence for the U.S. Marines to produce a thoroughly enjoyable book. Using the same formula, **A Few Good Men** may be the only thing anybody has written about Central America in a long time that you will actually enjoy reading.



**U.S. ARMY UNIFORMS OF THE VIETNAM WAR.** By Shelby Stanton. Stackpole Books, Dept. SOF, Cameron and Kelker Streets, Harrisburg, PA 17105. 1989. 244 pages. \$24.95. Review by William L. Brooks



**General William Westmoreland visits troops of the newly arrived 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) in August 1965. General Westmoreland wears the first pattern tropical uniform or "jungle fatigues" which was characterized by exposed buttons on the pockets, epaulettes and side tabs. Jungle fatigues were the primary field uniform in Vietnam after 1963 and the regulation duty uniform after 27 October 1967. 101st Airborne officers in foreground wear first pattern pre-1964 utility uniforms. Photo: DoD**

**U.S. Army Uniforms of the Vietnam War** is the first comprehensive survey to depict the clothing and equipment used by the American soldier throughout the Vietnam conflict. Stanton uses more than 400 photographs with detailed descriptions. This is a superb book.

You'll have a complete look at regulation uniforms, including Army Green, Blue, Tan, Khaki, White, Utility, Tropical Combat, Green Cord, Hot Weather Field, and Hospital Duty, as well as the MACV and USARV regulations concerning duty and field attire in Vietnam. Descriptions contain backup from appropriate orders and explanations of uniform deviations that conflict with official regulations.

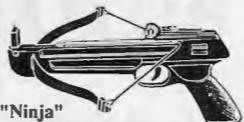
In 11 fully illustrated chapters, Stanton shows and describes all the types of

*Continued on page 85*

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**S**INCE World War II, there has been no more successful a sub-machine gun (SMG) than the UZI.

Originally produced only by Israel Military Industries (IMI) in Tel Aviv, *Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre* in Liege, Belgium, also manufactured many thousands under license. It eventually became the most widely distributed submachine gun in the Western World. (For a technical critique of this excellent weapon, see "SOF Tests the UZI," SOF, September '81, page 42.) Almost four decades have passed since the UZI's inception, however, and pistol-caliber sub-machine guns have just about seen their last days in the smoke and haze of the battlefield.

In an effort to re-energize interest within the United States, where the UZI is still widely employed by law enforcement agencies and where the semiautomatic carbine versions account for untold numbers of dead beer cans each year, Action Arms Ltd., (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 9573, Philadelphia, PA 19124; phone 215-744-0100) has recently fielded an array of intriguing caliber conversions for all of the many versions of the UZI, including semiauto-only and selective-fire types.

Because its barrel and bolt are easily removable, changing the UZI's caliber presents no problem for the operator. Be advised, however, that shorter UZI submachine gun barrels of any caliber cannot be installed in the semiauto-only variants. These barrels must be turned on a lathe to fit most registered UZI carbine full-auto conversions. Furthermore, Action Arms Ltd., does not sell selective-fire, caliber-conversion kits to anyone except legitimate government agencies and Class 3 dealers known to them.

To me, the most interesting of these caliber-conversion kits is the one chambered for that great war horse, the .45 ACP. This kit includes a bolt, SMG or carbine barrel (10.2 inches or 16.1 inches, respectively), one 16-round magazine, magazine loader, instruction pamphlet and black plastic factory case. The semiauto kit also contains a set of nested recoil springs and a firing pin carrier. Suggested retail is \$215 for the semiauto kit or \$235 for the comparable full-auto components. By the time you read this a 28-round, caliber .45 ACP drum should also be available. Projected price is \$80 to \$100. A 50-round drum is already available for caliber 9mm Parabellum UZIs.

To avoid the problem of maintaining proper stripping pressure, the UZI drum incorporates a so-called "constant velocity spring," which is nothing more than a clock-type rolled flat spring, as found on the successful PPS41 and Thompson submachine gun drums.



Text & Photo by Peter G. Kokalis

## UZI Caliber Conversions



**.45 ACP cases fly from UZI submachine gun fitted with Dutch-contract long wooden buttstock — hand checkered and presented to author by Israel Galili. An excellent mating of two famous war-horses, faulted only by a meager 16-round magazine. A 28-round drum, now available, should increase the appeal of this conversion kit.**

Avoid generic brands of .45 ACP ammunition (such as "white box" Federal, Remington or Winchester). They may function correctly in a pistol, but they're not hot enough to cycle the UZI's heavy bolt. SOF tested the .45 ACP UZI kit with 230-grain Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) Black Hills ammunition (Black Hills Shooters Supply, Dept. SOF, 3401 South Highway 79, Rapid City, SD 57701; phone 605-348-5150). There were no stoppages of any kind during our 500-round firing sequence, but the cyclic rate bounced up and down a bit.

For control, we first fired a batch of 115-grain FMJ 9mm Parabellum Black Hills ammunition through our unaltered UZI. Average velocity through the UZI's 10.2-inch barrel was 1,258 fps with a match-grade standard deviation of only 8 fps. All velocity testing was conducted with the superb new Oehler Model 35P Proof Chronograph. Ambient temperature was 74 degrees F.

Most bizarre of the UZI caliber-conversion kits is the one chambered for the peculiar 9x21mm cartridge. It's only a silly 2 millimeters longer than the 9x19mm Parabellum cartridge and offers no ballistic improvement of any kind. Loaded with the NATO-standard, 124-grain FMJ 9mm projectile, IMI's Samson ammunition in this caliber steps forward with an average velocity of 1,350 fps and a standard deviation of 30 fps. Nothing special here and only a barrel with the chamber reamed an additional two millimeters is required to effect the conversion, as the standard 9mm Parabellum bolt and magazines will suffice. So, why bother?

It seems this odd duck owes its existence to international political buffoonery. The Italian government does not permit anyone outside of its own police and armed forces to possess a firearm chambered for what it considers to be a "military" cartridge, such as 9mm Parabellum. United States Naval Intelligence units stationed in Italy desired to issue UZIs to their operatives. Creating a new "non-military" cartridge appeared to satisfy everyone. Our Naval Intelligence personnel would have their UZIs by merely changing the barrels and the Italian government could rest easy, assured that no one was stalking the vineyards armed with "military" ammunition. Alas, after IMI tooled up and produced both ammunition and barrels, Italian au-

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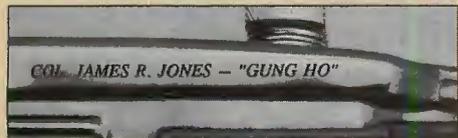
The American Armed Forces Commemorative is unlike any other Uzi ever made...

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- Patriotic American symbols and inscriptions are emblazoned in 24-Karat Gold across the receiver and top plate, further declaring this to be a special Uzi.

- For years the factory has fitted only folding metal stocks to Uzis. But, this Uzi is fitted with a furniture-



To personalize your Uzi your name and/or motto can be engraved on the reverse of the receiver.

finished wooden butt stock, like on rare, early military-issued Uzis.

- The pistol grip and horizontal foregrip shine with a special, black, heavily-textured finish—symbolic of unconventional, often-mysterious operations associated with the Uzi. This further sets this Uzi apart from any

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like the because play barrel. But ute and without quickly replace length firing bar-

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earmarks of being one of the great collectibles in this field.

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thorities decided the 9x21mm cartridge was uncomfortably close to the terrifying 9mm Parabellum round and forbade its issuance.

If you'd like to be the only kid on the block with an UZI SMG or carbine chambered for this cocktail party conversation piece, a barrel will set you back only \$90. Samson ammunition in this caliber carries a suggested retail price of \$15 for a box of 50.

Moving on to a matter of greater substance, we have .41 Action Express caliber-conversion kits. To convert a 9mm Parabellum UZI SMG or carbine/pistol or Micro-UZI SMG to this caliber, you need only a barrel and 20-round magazine, which costs \$135 including a magazine loader.

Named for Action Arms, Ltd., the .41 Action Express (AE) is manufactured by IMI, who refer to it as the .41x22mm — an incongruous mixture of an English caliber designation and metric case length; .41 caliber translates to 10.4mm. There are any number of European historical antecedents in that nominal caliber. Most of them are rimmed revolver cartridges, and the numerical connection is undoubtedly no more than coincidental as the .41 AE has a rebated case. Which is to say that the extractor flange is distinctly smaller in diameter than the case body. Its base is, in fact, exactly the same diameter as that of the 9mm

Parabellum round, allowing use of the original slide or bolt from any 9mm Parabellum pistol or SMG/carbine we wish to rechamber for the .41 AE cartridge. Case capacity of the .41 AE is 70 percent greater than 9mm Parabellum and only 15 percent less than .45 ACP.

Ammunition provided to SOF featured a 200-grain, truncated-cone FMJ bullet. Muzzle velocity out of a 7.9-inch (only 7 inches of which is rifled) Mini-UZI barrel averaged 916 fps with a standard deviation of only 18 fps. All UZIs are unlocked, blowback operated, and this is almost 100 fps less velocity than some have reported out of locked-breech, 5-inch pistol barrels. This 200-grain FMJ projectile should exhibit sufficient penetration in soft tissue. However, it does not deform or expand, and a 170-grain Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) bullet is under development. Let's hope they don't go velocity crazy and push it to the point where it over-expands and under-penetrates. If provided with mushrooming bullets, propelled at modest velocities, this cartridge holds great promise for effective performance. By the addition of nothing more than a new barrel and magazine, conversion to .41 AE could bring your nine mike-mike almost up to the level of a point-four-five.

The magazine loader provided with

all of the UZI caliber conversion kits is a simple sheet-metal frame with finger loops on each side. Slip the loader over the magazine and pull downward on the finger loops. This will depress the follower and the cartridges stacked above it and permit you to insert a round under the feed lips.

Confusion still reigns about the original 9mm UZI magazine loader, as instructions were never provided. It holds five loose rounds and does not accept a stripper clip. To save your thumb, just take another magazine — fully loaded if you have one — rotate it 90 degrees and with its feed lips press down on the five cartridges in the loader. It's not as complex as the MP5's Teutonic marvel, but it works every bit as well. A projection on the bottom of the UZI 9mm loader can be used to unload magazines: Hold the magazine with the bullets facing down. Press against the side (never the rear — you might ignite the primer) of the second cartridge in the magazine with this projection to compress the follower spring. This will release the cartridge above from its pressure against the feed lips and it will drop by gravity out of the magazine. Just repeat until the magazine is empty. You can also use the nose of a rifle cartridge for the same purpose with any magazine of any caliber.

*Continued on page 76*

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Rates: \$52.00/night S/D (plus 7% tax) before June 17, 1989. After June 17, 1989 rates are \$56.00/night (plus 7% tax). Cutoff date for room reservation is August 17, 1989. Sahara Hotel Room Reservation # is 1-800-634-6666. Be sure to tell them you are an SOF Conventioneer!

### SOF Convention Registration

Preregistration fee is \$135.00 if received by September 10, 1989. After that date registration fee is \$150.00. Early Bird registration deadline date is July 4, 1989. All Early Birds receive a special **10th Anniversary Commemorative Badge** — which will be given out at the Convention. No cancellation refunds will be given after August 31, 1989.

### SOF Expo

September 22-24, 1989  
Over 200 dealers and retailers displaying and selling top-of-the-line and state-of-the-art military and police guns and gear. Open to the public. (Children age 13 and under not admitted) \$5.00 admission. For exhibitor information write: SOF 1989 Expo, POB 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

**10th Annual  
SOF  
Convention  
& Expo**  
**Sept. 20-24, 1989**  
**Sahara Hotel**  
**Las Vegas, Nevada**

... but there's just one piece missing! **YOU!**  
Help us complete the puzzle by sending in your registration form. Today? Thank you!

#### 10th ANNUAL SOF CONVENTION REGISTRATION

YES! I want to be a part of the SOF 1989 Convention **and** receive my special Early Bird 10th Anniversary Commemorative Badge (to be given out at the convention).

I understand my Early Bird registration must be received by July 4, 1989 to qualify for my Badge.

- Payment enclosed — payable to SOF Convention '89  
 MasterCard     VISA

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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No cancellation refunds will be given after August 31, 1989.

Circle T-shirt Size:    Mail to: **SOF 1989 Convention & Expo**  
S    M    L    P.O. Box 693  
XL    XXL    Boulder, CO 80306

## AFGHAN PULLOUT...

Reports out of Kabul as we went to press indicated the Soviets had begun to pull out of Afghanistan in a big way.

SovComs were leaving by the hundreds in daily airlifts by mid-January, and diplomatic sources said large convoys of trucks, tankers and armor were seen heading north toward the Soviet border along the Salang highway. Other convoys were seen heading south along the same road, presumably carrying food, fuel and ammo to the Kabul regime, which is holed up in its increasingly isolated capital.

Most experts give the Kabul regime about 60 to 90 days after the Soviet pullout, which is supposed to be completed by 15 February. It may last a bit longer, according to SOF Editor and Publisher Robert K. Brown, who spent several weeks inside Afghanistan at the end of last year. Brown expects the mujahideen to police up Moscow's remaining rodents in good order, but he also thinks the latter will fight like cornered rats.

Throughout the war there has always been a steady flow of Kabul regime deserters coming over to the muj, but these have generally been conscripts who the communists

press-ganged into their army. The last battles will be fought by true believers who know they are marked men and may well fight with the desperation of the damned, Brown says.

There's no doubt the muj will win, RKB believes, but it will be no cakewalk, and they could lose a lot of brave men in the process.

# BULLETIN BOARD



**SOF ski detachment turned out in fur headgear liberated from the Red army in Afghanistan. From left to right: Alan Brown, Dennis Herbel, SOF Editor and Publisher Robert K. Brown, Mike Williams. SOF will hold a "bachelor" ski weekend in April, date to be determined. For further info, write Ski Weekend c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.**



**A challenge from the local post of the American Legion resulted in a hastily organized trap shoot between SOF staffers and some members of the Legion post. The Legion team (kneeling front) outshot SOF by a wide margin. Representing SOF (sort of) were, from left to right, Jeff Bergeon, Terry Miller, Derry Gallagher, Becky Miller and G.B. Crouse.**

## REUNIONS AND EVENTS...

The 46th Naval Construction Battalion will hold its 1989 Reunion 27-29 April at the Ramada Inn, Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

Run for the Wall, Inc., of San Diego, California will sponsor a cross-country motorcycle run from San Diego to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. Riders will leave San Diego 19 May. Those wishing to participate who cannot make the whole trip are invited to join the run for part of the distance. For further information contact Run for the Wall, Inc., P.O. Box 65, MCRD, San Diego, CA 92140; (619) 283-9879.

## PEACE REPORTS EXAGGERATED...

So many people are saying peace is breaking out that SOF staffers are being asked if we'll have anything left to write about.

Not to worry. While it's true that the Iranians and Iraqis seem to be taking a little R&R (as in rearming and regrouping), the Soviets are slithering out of Afghanistan, and the Cubans may or may not be leaving Angola, the world is still far from being a kinder, gentler place.

In fact, according to William Eckhardt of the Lentz Peace Research Lab in St. Louis, there were 22 wars in the world last year (in which 416,000 were killed) and that's only counting conflicts in which there are at least 1,000 dead and one of the belligerents is a government. (According to that standard, it's not clear whether something like last January's all-Shi'ite intramural in Lebanon, which had accounted for only a couple of hundred KIAs as of this writing, qualifies as a war.)

Somehow we think we'll manage to keep busy.

## YOU WANT 'EM, I'LL FIND 'EM...

Firm supporters of free enterprise that we are, we're delighted to announce that Derry Gallagher, who has been serving as Expo Director at the SOF convention, has started his own business.

Gallagher's new company is called Insearch, Ltd., and it will provide investigative research services to attorneys, private investigators and other interested parties. Among its offered services are the locating of missing persons, witnesses and defendants, and hidden assets; as well as pre-employment checks, department of motor vehicle checks, credit checks, and corporate histories. (For more information, and a fee schedule, send \$3 to Insearch, Ltd., P.O. Box 17072, Boulder, CO 80308.) Needless to say, Derry has our unqualified recommendation and we wish him all the best.

Gallagher's duties as Expo Director have been assumed by SOF Convention Director Bill Brooks. SOF's Advertising Director, John Bressemer, will serve as Exhibit Hall Manager.

# Our sons...our brothers...our friends.

Their lives touched us all. Because, above all else, they were Americans. And now, in honor of their spirit and their sacrifice, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund presents the official reproduction of our nation's most visited monumental sculpture. Created in the proud tradition of monumental bronzes under supervision of Frederick E. Hart, the artist who sculpted the original.

The Official Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bronze. Individually hand-cast in cold-cast bronze, a special sculptor's blend of powdered bronze and resins to capture every dramatic detail. Hand-finished to a rich patina to emphasize the character of the sculpture. Priced at \$295.

Shown smaller than actual size of 9 1/2" in height. Hardwood base included.

Sculpture © F. E. Hart and V.V.M.F. 1984.



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Please enter my order for The Official Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bronze. Bill me for a deposit of \$59.\* when my sculpture is ready to be sent and for four monthly installments of \$59.\* each after shipment. The handsome hardwood base is included at no additional charge.

\*Plus my state sales tax and a total of \$3. for shipping and handling.



Please mail by April 30, 1989.

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## THE OFFICIAL VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL BRONZE



"Look! A Libyan pharmaceutical shipment!"

## SAME OLD SHIT DEPARTMENT...

Last fall Libya's Muammar Khadafi seemed to have swallowed his pride and decided to restore diplomatic relations with Chad, whose army turned his ass every way but loose the previous year, and settle his remaining differences with the Chadians peacefully.

That seemed out of character at the time, and now it's beginning to look like it was. Chadian authorities are now reporting that their troops killed 122 members of the Sudanese Islamic Legion in a series of clashes last December. The Sudan, you may recall, is presently ruled by pro-Khadafi officers who seized power in a coup a couple of years ago. We'll bet you all the camels in Khartoum that the Sudanese Islamic Legion is bankrolled by Khadafi.

Then there is the case of Yasir Arafat, who last fall told the world that he had decided to stop being a terrorist and (although he nearly choked saying it) that Israel had the right to exist. That led the State Department to declare that it would begin a dialogue with the PLO.

That led Elias Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem, to suggest a UN-sponsored truce which would end the *intifada*, the Palestinian rioting on the West Bank.

So what did the born-again moderate Arafat have to say about that? According to a translation of an Arafat speech in Saudi Arabia prepared by the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh (which has a tape) Arafat said (and we quote): "Whoever thinks of stopping the *intifada* before it achieves its goals, I will give him 10 bullets in the chest."

The difference, presumably, is that

the old, radical Arafat would have emptied the entire magazine of his AK into his honor's balls. (Mayor Freij prudently withdrew his proposal.)

## HONOR ROLL...

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund contributors:

"The Reverend" from Chesterfield, MO; Lohr E. Miller; Timothy D. Conner; Raymond C. Fischer — In memory of all who have worn the "Screaming Eagle" patch; John A. Kutz.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund contributors:

In memory of John W. Stevens, Dr. J.E. Gervay.

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

The Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, which SOF administers, has been in operation since shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. During that time, SOF readers have donated more than \$100,000.

All of the money has been channeled directly to leaders of selected Afghan anti-Soviet resistance groups, for their use and discretion in buying weapons, ammunition and supplies. No funds have been spent for our costs in administering the fund. Due to legal and customs hassles here and in Pakistan, donations of weapons and equipment instead of money have been out of the question.

Since we have not yet convinced the IRS that killing communists is an "educational or charitable" activity, donations are not tax deductible.

The Afghan War is not over yet. If you want to help win it send your contribution to Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

## OUT OF AFRICA...

Robert MacKenzie, a decorated veteran of three armies and director of the international conservative organization Freedom, Inc. (and a SOF contributing editor), recently helped obtain the release of a British TV journalist who was held for 18 months by the RENAMO guerrillas who are trying to topple the Marxist government of Mozambique.

Nicholas della Casa was captured while filming a documentary on the fighting in Mozambique in June 1987. RENAMO took him prisoner on charges he was a spy and held him for 18 months.

He was released to MacKenzie shortly before Christmas, after a group — including retired U.S. Army General Jack Singlaub, Bruce Anderson of the *London Sunday Telegraph*, Monica Germane of *Die Welt*, Sibyl Cline of the Washington-based U.S. Global Strategy Council, and Tom Schaff of the Mozambique Research Center in Washington — treked into Mozambique to get him. The trek was necessary because RENAMO stipulated that della Casa could not leave the country via Maputo, capital of the communist regime.

That proved a bit exciting; hostile Malawian tribesmen tried to block their passage before they linked up with RENAMO regulars.

The release of della Casa came after months of secret negotiations between MacKenzie, acting on behalf of the journalist's mother, and RENAMO. MacKenzie's previously established friendship with RENAMO President Alfonso Dhlakama didn't hurt matters.

Della Casa seemed to have emerged from his captivity none the worse for wear. He came out praising his captors and their cause and reported even gaining weight.

## THAT'S AN ORDER — OR IS IT?...

There's been a lot of reaction to SOF's exclusive report on FDR's secret plan for pre-emptive strikes against Japan (see "Tigers of a

*Continued on page 96*

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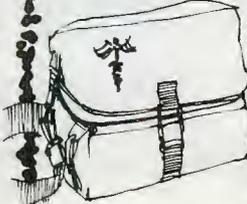


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styled like the ones used in Vietnam. Nylon with 3 zippered compartments that fold open. New.  
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indestructible plastic; waterproof, non-glare, clips onto belt. Uses 2 standard D cell batteries (not included) and comes complete with spare bulb and extra lenses.  
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**All In-Stock Items Shipped Within 24 Hours.**

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 \$11.95/each; 2 for 22.00. Choose:  
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 **U.S. Navy** (Tune: Anchor's Aweigh), Item #H-405



**Camouflage T-Shirt -**

Top quality, 50% cotton, 50% polyester. Choose:

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Item #T-510... \$6.95.
- Desert Camo**  
Item #T-511... \$8.95.
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- Urban Camo**  
Item #T-565... \$8.95.
- Big Folks Woodland Camo**  
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XXL..... \$9.95.  
XXXL..... \$12.95.



**Jogging Shorts -**

50% cotton, 50% polyester. Sizes XS-XL (tell us your waist size when ordering). Choose:

- Woodland Camo.**
- Urban Camo.**
- Olive Drab (OD) Green.**
- Item #C-240... \$6.75.



- Brass Screened Eyelets**
- Chin Strap**



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These "boonie hats" are the real thing!! Each in 100% cotton ripstop. Sizes: S(7); M(7 1/2); L(7 3/4). Choose:

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- Solid Black**..... Item #H-235
- Khaki**..... Item #H-240
- Choose Anyone..... \$12.95.

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  - Tiger Stripe Camo**
  - Black**

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Regulation GI dog tags set of 2 tags and 2 chains (one 4", one 24"). Choose:

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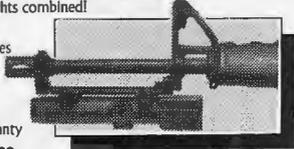


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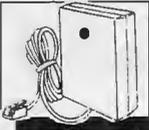
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The size of a quarter, it is so sensitive it can pick up sounds 20' away and transmit them to any FM radio receiver (even the one in your car) up to several blocks away! Ultra II uses a four stage circuit and quality components to achieve maximum

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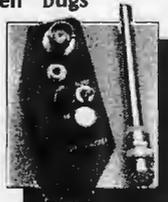
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### New microprocessor checks for phone taps



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

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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, toll

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

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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).

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**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

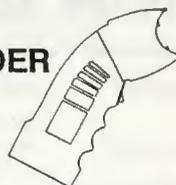
## LIGHTNING ZAPPER STUN GUN



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.

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#WC1.....\$54.95

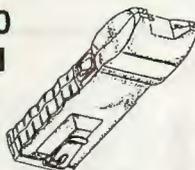
## MINI ZAPPER STUN GUN



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.

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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!

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**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.

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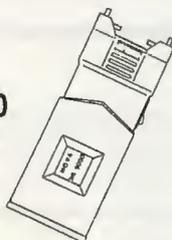


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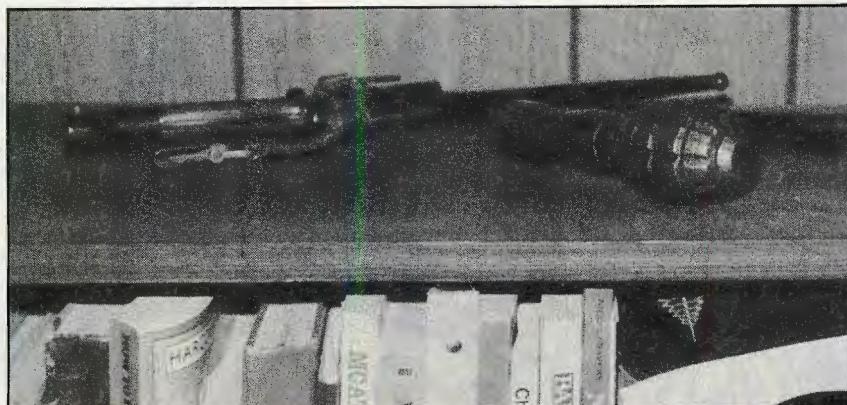
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# I WAS THERE

by Gus Moreno

## Things That Go Thump in the Night



**R**ETURNING from a daylight reconnaissance patrol, I could see our gunny (gunnery sergeant) waiting by the wire. His eyes were locked on mine, as his crooked grin lifted the cigar that always hung from his mouth. I knew I had perimeter guard, ambush patrol or listening post (LP) that night. Without waiting for him to speak, I asked, "Which one is it gunny?" I could tell I must have spoiled his surprise — in a half growl he hissed, "LP!"

After chow we set up our LP on the bank of a large bomb crater, trying to keep from sliding into a pool of water that had formed at the bottom. Shortly after we set up, the rain slowed and we heard footsteps all around us. With the volume turned down all the way we clicked the mike to alert our base.

We heard a squishy "thump;" something had landed at our feet. Thinking it was a grenade, we waited for the blast. Nothing happened. Then another "thump," and nothing. This went on several more times until we heard the final "thump" and the sound of someone running in the mud. Charlie was "reconning by rock." He was hoping that we'd make a sudden move and give our position away. Luckily, we were both too scared to move and Charlie's plan failed.

Although pucker factor was quite high for the rest of the night, we saw the sunrise without further problems. As we began gathering our gear to link up with the rest of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, I spotted an odd-looking

**What once caused a brush with death becomes a harmless war trophy relegated to a dusty shelf in the den.**

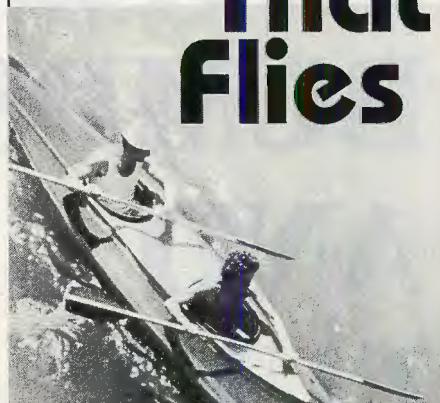
piece of bamboo sticking out of the mud about a yard from where our feet had been. For some reason I reached down and pulled it out — dumb move I know! — and felt a chill run up my spine. At the other end of the "stick" was a ChiCom grenade!

Charlie figured that if rocks wouldn't flush us out, a grenade might. The last "thump" we heard must have been this grenade. Thankfully, Charlie's grenades were not as reliable as ours, or I wouldn't be around to tell of this narrow escape.

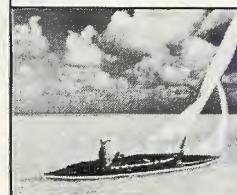
After our debriefing I felt that it had all been worthwhile. Gunnery wasn't too happy and was muttering about how tired he was after being awake all night on alert. You see, we forgot to call the base camp after we decided it was all clear and had kept the volume turned all the way down on our radio. One thing is for certain, I wouldn't be pulling LP the next night — instead I opted for a "safer" night ambush.

I removed all explosive material from the grenade and brought it back home as a war trophy. It now sits in my basement on some cluttered shelf with other forgotten memorabilia. But, sometimes when it rains, that fateful night comes back to me, and the time I first saw that grenade seems like only yesterday. ☒

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# STUMPS, BUMPS AND FUEL DUMPS

## Itchin' and Bitchin' in Mozambique

by John Coleman

Illustration by Ralph Butler

*Senior Editor John Coleman was a colour sergeant/acting commando sergeant major in the RLI when the following incident took place. He still itches when he thinks about it.*

**R**HODESIAN Light Infantry troops, being the highly motivated killers they were, loved to go on external operations. It was a chance to hit the terrorists where they lived, to lay waste to their training camps and resupply bases inside the "safe" havens of Mozambique and Zambia.

Rhodesian external ops were planned and based upon information gathered from a variety of intel sources; tactically, that usually meant deep-penetration Selous Scout or SAS teams eyeballing the target area, with aerial photographs and interpretation provided by the air force.

Sometimes, though, it just didn't work

out that way.

It was September 1978 and 3 Commando, 1 RLI, was on R&R after six weeks of fire-forcing the bush up around Mtoko. In normal form, the commando traded FNs and MAGs for bottles of potent, cane sugar-based firewater, and dispersed throughout the greater Salisbury area and beyond.

Late one afternoon I got a call from our boss, Major Bruce Snelgar. "Colour? I need you to round up 20 of the lads ASAP and get them down to the commando block." He gave me names of NCOs and specific troopers he wanted included.

"Okay, sir. What's the drill?"

"Have 'em bring their bush kit," was all he'd say, and I knew it meant an external operation was afoot.

I hooked a cab and hit all the known hangouts, from the four-star Monomatapa Hotel to the little dives frequented only by hoods, whores and RLI troopers. I didn't fool anyone when I said, "Need a few

blokes back at the commando for a work detail, and you're it." Commandos on R&R were never denied their seven days off between six-week bush trips — unless something major was in the wind.

By 1900 that evening, some 70-odd 3 Commando officers, NCOs and troopers — nearly everyone in the Salisbury area — were milling around, waiting for some word. Major Snelgar, who had only recently taken command, was not impressed.

"Godammit, Colour. I said 20, not the whole bloody commando! This is supposed to be a hush-hush op."

"Sir, you tell one bloke and everyone gets the word. Just the way it works, and they all want to go."

He lightened up a bit. In command terms, it is better one's troops are overenthusiastic than unavailable. He gave me a list of names, about a dozen in all. "I want these people along," he said. "You pick the rest."

I immediately added my own gunner and





two riflemen, thought about it for a minute, and then filled the remainder with solid, experienced troopers from the commando. When names were called, the chosen few made their way upstairs to the commando classroom. The rest just stared at me.

"Enjoy your R&R, buggers," I told them, and beat a hasty retreat upstairs. Half those guys would almost kill to jump on an external operation.

Major Snelgar gave us an abbreviated ops order. All four RLI commandos — 1, 2, 3 and Support — and most of the air force were going to bounce into northern Mozambique, shoot up a large ZANLA terr training and supply camp, secure a stretch of road for an air force Islander to land, and haul out captured prisoners, equipment and documents. Our job was to set up the forward admin base inside Mozambique from which the Alouettes of 7 Squadron would operate in support of the other commandos.

Silence greeted this. In essence, we would

be hauling petrol drums around for the choppers and running radio-relay links. Not quite what we had in mind, but there it was.

We gathered around aerial photographs taken of our target drop zone. We, and a slew of 55-gallon drums of aviation fuel, would be dropped in via DC-7. It looked to be all right, but then the photos were taken by a Canberra bomber at a height of several thousands of feet so as not to give the game away. It was kind of a football-field shaped area whacked out of the bush, with a small stream running down the middle.

"What's on the ground, major?" one of the NCOs asked. Snelgar shook his head and shrugged. "No recce for some reason, though the photo-interpret wallahs say it's a clean area — good place to jump." I think a few of the chaps wondered what qualified as a "clean area" in the eyes of the photograph interpretation section. I certainly did.

We spent the night on Nkomo Barracks' airfield. This was home for the Selous Scouts, and its security was a lot tighter than what might be expected around New Sarum air force base in Salisbury. Hundreds of combat-loaded troopers gathering around aircraft in Rhodesia screamed "external," and there were unfriendly eyes about who would be quick to report it.

Oh-dark-thirty the next morning and we were on our way. I sat by the open port-side door to catch some air and watched mile upon mile of virgin Rhodesian *bushveldt* slide by. Then we were over lake Cabora Bassa in Mozambique, still heading northward.

We finally went into a lazy circle, then lined up for the first fuel drop. Drums flew out the door, followed by our own equipment pallet. Then: "Action stations!"

Major Snelgar was first out the door a moment later, and nine troops managed to jump before we ran out of DZ. We circled back, and the rest of us went on our way. I watched Rhodesian aircraft off in the short distance, everything from Lynxs and Hunters blasting the countryside to Alouettes and Dakotas dumping out stop groups and paras from the other commandos. Everything seemed calm below me, except...

Three-quarters of the fuel drums had missed the DZ and hung up in trees. So did Major Snelgar's first batch of jumpers. So, in fact, did most of the second group. I got lucky. I landed in a pile of rocks.

It wasn't the pilot's fault. He couldn't know there was a nifty little 12-knot wind gusting along the ground, sending drums and troops into the treeline. An advance recce team, however just might have noticed unstable wind conditions around that time of day.

It was fortunate, actually, that we didn't land in our intended drop zone. Photo interpretation or not, someone failed to notice that the reason that the cleared area was clear was that locals had chopped down all the trees — leaving three-foot stumps stud-ding the field. A ground reconnaissance would have told us that and taken that forsaken little patch of impalers off the books of potential DZs.

We only took two casualties — surprising considering the circumstances. One had landed on the edge of the DZ and snapped his ankle on a tree stump, and the other landed on a fuel drum and knocked himself silly. We got them both out by Alouette, and set to work cutting drums out of trees and manhandling them over to the most open patches on the DZ-cum-chopper landing zone.

Problem number two. There exists across southern Africa a little bit of flora we called buffalo bean. Buff bean is about the size of a thin Pinto bean, and has scores of cilia, or hairs, growing from each bean. And you won't find just a couple of buff beans growing here and there; those suckers grow in groups of thousands. And those little hairs, when they jump off a buff bean and dig into your skin, itch. Not your normal, everyday little itch, but a skin-ripping, drive-you-fuckin'-crazy itch. The LZ was one big patch of buff bean. Too bad someone hadn't noticed that little fact before we jumped.

Thank God for the little muddy stream. The only way to get rid of buff bean is to pack your skin with mud, let it dry then pull it off, and out comes those hundreds of tiny, maddening hairs.

If it hadn't been such a pathetic scene it would have been funny, watching hard-core fire force commandos manhandling 55-gallon drums of Avgas over tree stumps, pushing through patches of buff bean while sweating like pigs in the 100-plus degree heat that aggravated the buff bean itch, then drop everything and run like hell to roll in the mud. On top of it all, gas-hungry Alouettes were swooping all over the place, looking for a few feet of open ground between the stumps, and in the process blowing buff bean hairs into ears, noses and mouths. No one was immune from the attack of the hair balls, and by nightfall we all looked like little mud men let out to play.

To finally break our backs, the whole operation turned out to be pretty much a lemon. Few gooks, and damned little of anything else. Somehow, the terrs had known we were coming. It wasn't the first or last time that would happen.

Some three or four days later we choppered back to Rhodesia, stopping enroute at a convenient little gas station set up by the air force on a rock in the middle of Cabora Bassa. We'd already christened our little foray "The Great Bullshit and Buffalo Bean Raid," but Major Snelgar was a bit more formal in his after-action report.

"In this instance, aerial photography was a liability rather than an asset," he wrote. "In planning future cross-border operations, particular consideration should be given to first-hand, on-site ground reconnaissance of intended parachute drop and/or aircraft landing sites. If security considerations preclude such a recce, then Officer Commanding, Photo Interpretation Section, should be on-call to accompany inbound operational troops and personally inspect DZs/LZs selected by his section."

I doubt if that ever happened, but it was a damned good idea anyway. ✕



Springfield Armory's Omega rears back in recoil (inset), 170-grain JHP belches from Colt's Delta Elite during SOF's T&E of 10mm Auto cartridge and two pistols chambered for this new round.

# IMPERFECT

**T**HERE is nothing new about caliber 10mm handguns. In 1901, a 10mm cartridge, called either the *Hirst* or *Hohlegeschoss*, of undetermined German or central European origin, was adapted to one of the early Roth pistols. Nothing much came of it. In 1911, Colt demonstrated throughout the *Balkans* a version of the Model 1910 pistol chambered for a 9.8mm round. It fizzled. In 1924, a Joplin, Missouri, gunsmith developed a handgun cartridge that he called, without modesty, the .40 Eimer Colt Special. It was made from .401 Winchester Self-Loading Rifle cartridge cases cut back to a length of 1¼ inches. It remained a wildcat, and interest quickly waned.

In 1972, a similar, but rimless, wildcat appeared. Called the .40 G&A, it was made from cut-down .30 Remington brass and featured the 180-grain Jacketed Soft Point (JSP) bullet developed for the .38-40 bottleneck rifle/handgun cartridge (introduced

## '10s'

### SOF T&Es Two 10mm Autos

Text & Photos by  
Peter G. Kokalis

in 1874 as a black-powder round). Nobody but its promoters got enthusiastic until Jeff Cooper and Tom Dornaus mated an almost identical cartridge to a copy of the Czech CZ75 and convinced Norma FFV of Sweden to rev up production of this 10mm dreamboat. As everyone by now should know, the so-called "Bren Ten" pistol failed in the marketplace, Dornaus & Dixon went belly up and Norma was left with a mountain of unusable brass.

Colt (Colt Industries — Firearms Division, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06101; phone 203-236-6311) rescued Norma in 1987 when it introduced the Delta Elite pistol chambered for the 10mm Auto cartridge. In appearance, there is nothing startling about the Delta Elite. With some important differences, it is but another version of the illustrious M1911A1.

The Delta Elite remains locked-breech, short-recoil operated. Cosmetic external

differences between the Delta Elite and Government Model .45 ACP pistol include high-profile, fixed front and rear sights with three white dots (of no value in stress scenarios), Colt Commander-style ring hammer, a long-tang grip safety in the manner of the Officer's ACP, a long and ungrooved steel trigger and neoprene wraparound grips made by Mustang-Supreme and carrying sinister-looking red enameled "Delta" escutcheons. As with all current Colt M1911 pistols, it sports a mainspring housing fabricated from plastic. I find that to be aesthetically infuriating — especially so on a pistol that carries a suggested retail price of \$657.50. We substituted a Pachmayr (Dept. SOF, 1875 S. Mountain Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016; phone 818-357-7771) flat-type, checkered neoprene and aluminum mainspring housing for only \$14.95.

With chamber pressures averaging 37,000 psi and approaching a maximum of 44,000 psi, some serious, but subtle, internal alterations were required. While the detested firing-pin safety remains, the even more despised collet bushing has been replaced by a short, solid bushing of the Commander type (note: SOF's test specimen was, for unknown reasons, provided with a collet bushing).

The barrel is of larger diameter at the muzzle end, its locking lugs are unchambered to provide a greater bearing surface and the chamber area has been strengthened. Double, nested recoil springs, with the shorter one having a reverse coil, slip over a synthetic Delrin® recoil spring guide rod reinforced with two steel shims. Potential "stress risers" on the frame were rounded wherever possible. After years of pounding, M1911A1 frames will often crack above the slide stop's cutout. Although usually benign, these hairline cracks are unsightly. To preclude their occurrence on the Delta Elite frame, Colt removed the bridge across the slide rail above the cutout. Contrary to early rumors that the slide was heavier, no weight was added, and at 39 ounces, empty, the Delta Elite is no greater a burden than the .45 ACP Government Model. The magazine well is beveled.

However, even with these modifications, as it comes out of the box the Delta Elite just won't do if you intend to carry it in harm's way. Once again we turned to Robbie Barrkman (The Robar Companies, Inc., Dept. SOF, Suite B, 21438 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone 602-581-2648) for the modifications we felt were required to maximize functional reliability, enhance the inherent accuracy potential and increase the speed with which the weapon can be employed to incapacitate an opponent.

First, we deactivated the grip safety by pinning. It was obsolete the day Browning designed it. No modern pistols use this device. Barrkman's trigger work included installation of a grooved, lightweight aluminum trigger with the stop removed. Reducing overtravel with a stop is great for shooting gongs, but if the stop works loose and binds up the trigger on the street, you're dead meat. Ham-



**Springfield Armory's Omega (foreground) and Colt Delta Elite — both chambered for 10mm Auto cartridge. Both proved reliable, but Omega appears to have an edge on durability.**

mer and sear engagement surfaces were stoned to obtain a crisp 3½-pound trigger pull. The sear was then heat treated to resist wear. All other bearing surfaces in the trigger mechanism were polished and inspected for correct engagement.

M1911A1 front sights will usually sail down range after just a few hundred rounds. Barrkman's serrated-ramp front sight is installed by first machining a groove .700 inch long and .045 inch to .050 inch deep in the slide. The sight itself is silver soldered into position with high-temperature solder. It is then profiled with a milling machine to ensure uniformity and perfect vertical alignment. The ramp's serrations are cut last.

Because of the numerous bullet weights that will eventually be offered for the 10mm Auto cartridge and the fact that most shooters will experiment with reloads, fully adjustable rear sights are an absolute necessity on pistols chambered for this caliber. There is none better than the Bo-Mar, and no one does a slicker job of installing it into the slide's factory dovetail, Barrkman mills out the rear of the slide and neatly silver solders the sight base into position. The result is a more secure installation with a lower profile and improved appearance.

The slide's ejection port was opened and relieved at the rear. This is a standard procedure designed to improve ejection reliability and prevent dents on the empty cases. The latter is an important consideration for reloaders.

The barrel was throated (polished around the chamber mouth) and its feed ramp polished. Barrel bushing and slide-to-frame tolerances were not altered, as reliability is more important than any marginal improvement in accuracy potential.

Every sharp corner and radius line on the frame, slide and rear sight was rounded and subdued by polishing. There is nothing on this pistol that will snag on the holster or clothing or interfere with a "tap, rack, bang" maneuver.

Finally, most of the components were finished with a new process, recently developed by Robar, called "Black NP3." Black NP3 is a surface treatment for steel that provides the appearance of black chrome by combining sub-micron particles of PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene, that is, Teflon®) with autocatalytically applied nickel/phosphorus. Previously available only as a satin-nickel finish, the addition of another step in the process now produces a nonglare, black surface that is dry lubricated, low friction and extremely resistant to wear. As the PTFE is evenly distributed and locked into the nickel/phosphorus matrix, when wear occurs, fresh particles of PTFE are exposed to keep the surface lubricated. No lubricants of any kind are required, and powder residue and carbon fouling can be easily removed with a dry cloth.

These modifications cost approximately \$600, with a full one-year warranty. That approximates the original cost of the pistol. If your intended targets are beer cans, that's too expensive. As a professional tool, only you and your family can decide how much your life is worth.

There is another option. Springfield Armory's (Dept. SOF, 420 West Main Street, Geneseo, IL 61254; phone 309-944-5631) Omega series is no mere clone of the M1911A1. The frame itself (manufactured at *Fábrica de Armas de Itajubá*, Minas Gerais, Brazil), however, is exactly that of the .45 ACP M1911A1, with the single exception of a 9mm Parabellum ejector. And yes, thank God, the arched mainspring housing has been fabricated from steel, not plastic. The hammer configuration is of the original spur type. Its Mustang-Supreme rubber wraparound grips are identical to the Delta Elite's except for their lack of the

enameled Delta escutcheons. The trigger-pull weight on SOF's test specimen was a horrendous eight pounds. I find nothing else to whine about in the Omega's frame group. Early magazines (identified by their "forked" followers) often induced feeding failures, but they have been replaced by a magazine designed specifically for the 10mm cartridge. Its rounded follower has eliminated all of the feeding problems.

When we move up to the slide group, some significant innovations become immediately obvious. Design of the Omega pistol was a joint effort between Springfield Armory, Inc. and Peters Stahl of West Germany, where the entire slide assembly, in-

cluding the barrel, is manufactured. Both the barrel and slide are ported on either side at the muzzle end to reduce muzzle climb. These ports were cut by the EDM (Electro Discharge Machining) process. Those who do not desire this option can so specify, as the Omega pistol in a single caliber carries a suggested retail price of \$849 with either a 5- or 6-inch barrel, ported or unported. Three calibers are available: .45 ACP, 10mm and .38 Super. Hammer forged, the 10mm Auto barrel has six grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 16 inches. To provide a better gas seal and enhance the accuracy potential, Omega barrels are rifled using a polygonal system with rounded



ABOVE: 10mm Auto 170-grain Jacketed Hollow Point bullets recovered from tests in 10-percent ordnance gelatin. Note fragments, which did not move far from the wound track. Norma bullets at left exhibit symmetrical expansion when driven at 1,280 fps, but quality control was abominable. PMC bullets on the right yielded more ragged mushrooming because of their serrated jacket and deeper interior cavity. In each instance, expansion was approximately one and a half times the original diameter, with adequate penetration to about 15 inches.



Colt Delta Elite 10mm Auto pistol fieldstripped.

### DELTA ELITE SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber: ..... 10mm Auto.
- Operation: ..... Locked breech, short recoil. Semiautomatic. Single-action.
- Feed: ..... Seven-round, detachable, single-column, box-type magazine.
- Weight, empty: ..... 39 ounces.
- Length, overall: ..... 8.5 inches.
- Height: ..... 5.3 inches.
- Thickness: ..... 1.3 inches.
- Barrel: ..... Six-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 16 inches.
- Barrel length: ..... 5 inches.
- Sights: ..... Fixed, front and rear; blade-type, serrated-ramp front with single white dot; open square-notch rear with two white dots; high profile.
- Finish: ..... Blued.
- Furniture: ..... Wraparound neoprene grip panels with red "Delta" enamel escutcheons.
- Price: ..... \$657.50.
- Manufacturer: ..... Colt Industries — Firearms Division, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06101; phone (203) 236-6311.
- T&E Summary: ..... Requires extensive modifications for reliable street applications. A design of unquestioned reliability for three quarters of a century. 10mm Auto cartridge exhibits effective performance, but no better than pre-existing rounds.

lands and grooves. Although more massive in appearance, the Omega slide weighs but an ounce more than that of the Delta Elite.

Because of its multi-caliber capability, the slide has what appears to be two spring-loaded extractors. Only the one on the right serves as such. The left-hand claw is a positioner that centers any of the three optional calibers against the bolt face. Originally, these double "extractors" were retained by European Torx®-head screws on the underside of the slide. Even though they were peened, they exhibited a tendency to back out, which resulted in failures to extract. Currently, retention of these components is by means of a solid steel pin through the top of the slide (as seen on all Browning Hi-Power pistols manufactured since 1960). The firing pin is retained by a vertical pin under the rear sight assembly.

The barrel is locked to the slide by a single top lug which recesses into the large, open-topped ejection port in the manner of the SIG-Sauer and Glock series. There is no front barrel bushing as the muzzle mates with a hole in the slide (a milled forging). The barrel diameter has been stepped down on a lathe by about .004 inch for its entire length to the rear of the muzzle ports. This assures reliable operation after fouling has accumulated on the barrel and slide. All of this is, by now, rather commonplace.

The underside of the Omega's locking system, however, is anything but conventional. It was determined that, because of the high pressures generated by the 10mm cartridge, a Colt-type pivoting link would unlock the barrel and slide before the bullet left the muzzle. A unique method was developed to both retard unlocking and reduce



the slide's rearward momentum. A substantial lug on the barrel's underside has been cut with a forward and upward sloping cam-way. As the barrel and slide travel rearward in recoil, this "barrel nose" strikes a mating cam at the end of the full-length, recoil-spring guide rod. The guide rod, in turn, is held rigidly to the frame by the slide stop's axis pin. No modification of the M1911A1 frame was thus required. After the barrel nose hooks on to the guide rod's cam, the barrel is drawn downward, unlocks from the slide and terminates its rearward travel while the slide continues back in recoil.

Press fit to the guide rod is a half-moon-shaped steel buffer bushing that absorbs most of the slide's recoil momentum. This small component can be easily replaced — which is certainly more economical than replacing a cracked slide or frame. This system provides five times more surface area for locking than a swinging link. Over the long haul, all of this should yield increased durability and reduction in wear to both the reciprocating components and those bearing the full impact of the recoiling and counterrecoiling forces. A single-coil mainspring is sufficient. Both it and its end plug are held to the guide rod by a 3mm allen-head screw, which I would remove and store in a coffee can in case it might fit something else where it is *needed*.

Fully adjustable sights are standard on all of the Omega pistols. Turning the lateral adjustment screw on the open square-notch rear sight in a clockwise direction will move the sight and the point of impact to the right. A witness mark on the blade and index marks on the sight base give some indication of the sight's movement for windage zero. Turning the elevation adjustment screw clockwise will lower the point of impact. The rear sight assembly is retained in its slot in the slide by a single Torx®-head screw. The fixed blade-type front sight is held in place by a 1.5mm allen-head screw. It should be easy to replace. At least I hope so, since I do not care for the hooked target sight provided on our test specimen as it will surely snag on both holsters and clothing. A serrated, ramp-type is superior. Gratefully, there are no colored dots, squares or bars on the front or rear sights.

Except for cleaning up the trigger pull, there isn't much here that required the atten-

tion of a custom pistolsmith. Were I to pack this piece, I would deactivate the grip safety, replace the hammer with a ring-type to reduce hammer bite when firing from a strong Weaver hold, de-horn the sharp corners and refinish with black NP3.

But, would I carry this or any pistol chambered for the 10mm Auto cartridge? Midst all the hoopla and reams of admiring puffery published in the popular gun press, has anyone examined the actual wound ballistics of this round? One writer shot into plywood boards and redwood studs. Quite a few have calculated the "muzzle energy." That's

about it. What is this round's true performance potential against human targets?

To date, two bullets have been offered in 10mm Auto factory ammunition — a 200-grain Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) and a 170-grain Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP). We can disregard the 200-grain FMJ as it will penetrate deeply but will not mushroom to enlarge the wound track (permanent cavity).

Using methods developed at the U.S. Army's Wound Ballistics Lab (See "Killing Effect," SOF, December '88, page 60),

*Continued on page 73*



Springfield Armory's Omega 10mm Auto pistol fieldstripped.

**OMEGA SPECIFICATIONS**

- Caliber:** ..... 10mm Auto, .38 Super or .45 ACP.
- Operation:** ..... Locked breech, short recoil. Semiautomatic. Single-action.
- Feed:** ..... Seven-round, detachable, single-column, box-type magazine.
- Weight, empty:** ..... 42.9 ounces (5-inch barrel and slide).
- Length, overall:** ..... 8.5 inches (5-inch barrel and slide).
- Height:** ..... 5.5 inches.
- Thickness:** ..... 1.3 inches.
- Barrel:** ..... Six-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 16 inches (10mm Auto); hammer forged, polygonal rifling. Available ported or unported.
- Barrel length:** ..... 5 or 6 inches.
- Sights:** ..... Removable, hooked target-type front. Fully adjustable, open square-notch rear.
- Finish:** ..... Blued.
- Furniture:** ..... Wraparound neoprene grip panels.
- Price:** ..... \$849, one caliber; additional calibers: \$336 *with factory installed barrel*.
- U.S. Distributor:** ..... Springfield Armory, Inc., Dept. SOF, 420 West Main Street, Geneseo, IL 61254; phone (309) 944-5631.
- T&E Summary:** ..... Ported barrel and slide *appear to moderate muzzle whip. Needs serrated ramp-type front sight for street carry. Locking system provides five times the surface area of Colt's swinging link and should substantially increase durability. Changing only barrel and magazine extends potential to three calibers.*

# WINNING THE PEACE

## Mujahideen, Soviets and Quislings Jockey for Power in Afghanistan

by David Isby

**I**T was the ruins of a beaten army. At the head of the column was a command armored car, the white flag of surrender hanging limply from its radio mast. The rest of the column was pushed off to the roadside. Papers and litter blew freely, drifting around the wheels of what had once been two batteries of artillery, now a derelict collection of howitzers, field guns and trucks. At the sight of a camera, the victors mounted knocked-out tanks, brandishing rifles and captured helmets. Beyond were the prisoners, already past the shock and fear of capture, trying to smile weakly and appear ingratiating and inoffensive. Trash was everywhere; papers blown by the wind, wrecked equipment, strewn explosive ordnance treated with disregard to the procedures hammered into those who do business in combat boots and fatigues. When a modern army is beaten, it does not decompose gracefully. In an instant its equipment becomes junk, its one-time soldiers social rather than *military problems*. A battlefield after the shooting stops is a more *dangerous* version of a city dump.

It could have been France in 1940 or South Vietnam in 1975. The weapons and the prisoners had been, not long before, the 914th and 925th battalions of the army of the quisling Republic of Afghanistan and their allies, the Achakzai tribal militia. Their firebases and strongholds, impregnable throughout the war, were — through a judicious mixture of firepower and negotiation — in the hands of their enemies, the Afghan resistance.

By mid-October 1988, communist forces in Kandahar Province had been forced back to perimeters of the outposts around the city and air base. The last outpost on the road to Kandahar, Takht-e-Pul, was held by militia and subjected to repeated rocket and mortar bombardments by a resistance that was now better armed than the communists. Trucks full of



Victors ham it up for the camera: mujahideen enjoy fruits of victory on knocked-out T-55 tank. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe

Chinese-made 107mm rockets, dully metallic and businesslike in their olive drab wooden shipping boxes, saw to that. Trucks belonging to the resistance drove at night, with their lights on, and dumped their loads of rockets in the open, near the firing positions.

Helicopters that once owned the skies of Kandahar Province were now wary, and self-preservation limited their operations when they flew at all. Soviet advisers in charge of maintenance at Kandahar air base had turned over their tools and manuals to their Afghan charges and wished them good luck. (Two crashes — a MiG-21 fighter bomber and an Antonov transport — resulting from engine failure promptly ensued.) The 12-barreled 107mm Type 63 multiple rocket launchers (MRLs) around Takht-e-Pul did not move but stayed ranged in on target, waiting for each truckload of the People's Republic of China's favorite export, for the communist forces could do little in response. One weekend in October, after a particularly intense barrage, the militia at Takht-e-Pul loaded up its surviving trucks and bugged out to Kandahar. It was certainly a different war.

The men who fired the rockets were different, too. Even the Kandahar resistance, always brave but seldom a well-oiled machine, was now an effective fighting force. In 1987, it had made its first crack in the Kabul regime's military. Now it aimed to be in on its crumbling. Part of the transformation was due to its weapons.

The Stinger surface-to-air missile (SAM) was the first really significant weapon delivered to the resistance and was most important. The hunched ugliness of the Hind attack helicopter in flight is becoming a memory in Afghanistan. Survivors used to say the ground shook when the Hind's 57mm rockets struck home, but now *resistance* rockets are striking home. Around Kandahar in October 1988 were five of the four-tube, Egyptian-made Sakr MRLs; their big, long-ranged round, though heavy to load, packs much more of a punch than the Soviet-style 122mm rocket that had been the long reach of the resistance. A Sakr rocket sounds like a big airliner taking off



**ABOVE:** Kabul regime forces around Spin Baldak had one battery each of D-30 122mm howitzers and ZiS-3 76.2mm field guns. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe

when one is fired. It is best not to be in earshot when it detonates. The first two MILAN antitank guided missile teams also made their way to the Kandahar resistance in mid-October, and much good was expected from the weapon that had proven so effective in the Kunar Valley and in Nangarhar and Kabul provinces that summer.

But the weapons were only part of the story. Throughout Afghanistan, the resistance is doing well because many units have finally been able to merge the requirements of a modern

## THE GENEVA ACCORDS

In 1988, for the first time, a diplomatic event was more important in shaping the war in Afghanistan than results on the battlefield. The Geneva Accords came about after an intense emphasis at the start of the year on the Geneva negotiation process.

United Nations-sponsored indirect talks between Pakistan and the Kabul regime started back in June 1982. Neither the Afghan resistance nor the Soviet Union were parties, although the Soviets were part of Kabul's delegation and the Pakistanis kept the resistance leadership informed. The talks were "indirect" because the Pakistanis refused to recognize the Kabul government and so would not sit at the same table. Iran, though invited, would not participate without resistance representation. Throughout the process, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Diego Cordovez, shuttled between delegations in Geneva, or, when there was no session there, between capitals.

From 1982 to 1985, the Geneva process was seen, largely, as a cynical ballet, a pretext for the Soviets to claim that they were trying to negotiate an end to the war while inflicting brutal punishment on Afghanistan. Meanwhile, they could use the Geneva talks to deflect international condemnation by nations that did not want to seem to be undercutting a valid peace process. It is not surprising that, pre-Gorbachev, there was little movement.

The first signs of serious movement in Geneva came before the Soviets decided to abandon their quest for a military victory. In December 1985, the communists first discussed a timetable for a Soviet withdrawal. At first they presented an impossibly long time frame, but Gorbachev's statement to the Party Congress in February 1986 that he looked toward withdrawal "in the near future" gave the first, faint cause for optimism. But all of this would probably have remained mere rhetoric — the Soviets had been promising to withdraw from Afghanistan since soon after the initial invasion — were it not for resistance battlefield successes and the continued political failure of the Kabul regime.

Nothing more came of the Geneva process until the failure of

Kabul's last-ditch attempt to revitalize its policy of "national reconciliation" that would leave it in power. Kabul's unilateral ceasefire called in January 1987 only resulted in even more battlefield reverses for communist forces throughout 1987, rather than rallying Afghans to the cause of national reconciliation as it was intended.

Moscow therefore gave the orders: Cut a deal in Geneva. By mid-1987, the diplomatic offensive was gearing up. The Soviet foreign minister stated in January 1988 that the Soviets desired withdrawal within a year. This was followed by a well-publicized Soviet announcement in February that if an agreement were reached by 15 March, the withdrawal would begin 60 days after that. The document finally signed on 14 April 1988 provided:

- mutual "non-interference and non-intervention" between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which mandated a cutoff in the supply of arms for the resistance without mandating a cutoff in Soviet support for the Kabul regime.
- encouragement of voluntary return of Afghan refugees.
- withdrawal of all Soviet troops within nine months.
- the USSR and United States to guarantee the terms.

Afghanistan's resistance had no standing in the agreement and were mentioned only as "mercenaries" that Pakistan agreed not to support. Because the asymmetry of the terms proved unacceptable to the U.S. Congress, there was a private understanding between the Soviets and Americans that if the Soviets kept supporting the Kabul regime the United States would continue to supply arms to the resistance.

Despite this, there was considerable opposition to the Accords not only, understandably, from the resistance but also from some members of Congress. Senator Gordon Humphrey (R-NH), called it a "slow-motion sellout" and pointed out that continued U.S. aid to the resistance, while permitted under the separate Soviet agreement, would violate the main agreements. The Soviets stated that the 60-day delay in implementation was to give the Pakistanis time to dismantle resistance facilities in their country. The Kabul regime also reserved the right to retain Soviet "advisers" (numbers unspecified), under provisions of a 1921 treaty.



Author inspecting Afghan small arms. There is nothing more fun than roaming around the Frontier in the company of heavily armed Pathans. Photo: David C. Isby

## EXPERT AUTHOR

David Isby, renowned expert on Soviet weapons and tactics, has kept a close eye on events in Afghanistan for SOF over the past years although, as he recently put it, pinning down the rapidly changing situation there is "like trying to spear a rolling doughnut."

in every Backfire between Kabul and Kharkov to form a conga line from bomb storage dumps to the Afghan countryside, and they cannot secure one today.

Rather, the Soviets are going to try to maintain their position in Afghanistan the old-fashioned way. In the words of Anthony Arnold, a veteran observer of both the Soviet Union and Afghanistan (and one who perceived that the Soviets were eventually going to withdraw their military presence even as I was arguing that they were settling in for the long haul):

"The Soviets, having moved progressively from economic to political, to ideological to military investments in Afghanistan, are now running the film in reverse. They are abandoning the military and ideological; making great bleats about the political (but knowing that, too, is doomed) and are counting only on retaining the economic (to be used eventually as a platform, of course, for renewed politico-economic pressure) via the northern tier of provinces, as well as other policy gimmicks."

### Soviet Policy: New Methods, Same Goals

The basic nature of the Afghanistan war is changing. Obviously, changes are evident on the battlefield. In previous years, multiple battalion forces of the Kabul regime's army did not go into the bag, and resistance trucks did not drive with their lights on. Nor were resistance forces pressing hard against major cities or actually sitting (as of December 1988) in seven provincial capitals (which they are running quite well, without large-scale, inter-Afghan violence). But the major change is that the war has moved from a primarily military to a primarily political and diplomatic struggle as a result of the signing of the Geneva Accords in April 1988 (see page 31).

Do the Soviets really intend to carry out the Geneva Accords and withdraw? Despite repeated threats and the escalation of the war, despite the introduction of new aircraft and SAMs deployed from the Soviet Union in November, the withdrawal is likely to continue, although it may be stretched out. The Soviets, if they were to renege, would find that the momentum for withdrawal has built, both domestically and internationally. Few Soviet soldiers seem keen on winning the last posthumous medal of a war they have been told is winding down. In the fighting around Paghman in the summer of 1988, even paratroopers of the 103rd Guards Airborne Division showed a great reluctance to go into the attack. The introduction of Tu-26 Backfire bombers, the recent arrival of 30 fresh Soviet MiG-27 Flogger attack aircraft at Shindand airfield in Afghanistan in late October and the use of SS-1 SCUD-B SAMs in November, while a significant escalation, were also notable in that they did not involve lots of close ground fighting.

Afghan leaders in Peshawar, tasting victory, think there will be a complete withdrawal by spring 1989. While Afghans are no more immune to wishful thinking than any other group, this



ABOVE: Map shows current status of military and political power in Afghan provinces.

war of national liberation with Islamic and Afghan realities.

But despite conceding the battlefield to the resistance, the Soviets are not yet through with Afghanistan. In November and December 1988, large-scale air strikes removed any chance of Kandahar quickly falling. Tu-26 Backfire bombers, based in the Soviet Union, turned their attention to the rocket positions around Kandahar. Many of the Afghans who had become so confident in their invulnerability to air attacks found themselves hit by bombs delivered in large quantities from far above Stinger range. MiG-27 Flogger attack aircraft joined in the strikes. Even SCUD surface-to-surface missiles, designed to deliver nuclear or chemical weapons against NATO, were used with conventional payloads against villages captured by the resistance in Nangarhar Province.

But the Floggers, Backfires and SCUDs will not change the course of the war — all the Kremlin's horses and all the Kremlin's men cannot put Najibullah's regime together again. The Soviets could not secure a military victory in 1986 when they had the upper hand on the battlefield and could have called

BELOW: Another knocked-out tank, another war. This Renault FT-17 six-ton tank, by former Kabul regime stronghold of Bala Hisar (high fort) at Spin Baldak, represents how far British tanks penetrated in the 1919 Anglo-Afghan War before being destroyed by Afghans. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe



is likely to reflect their broad and deep contacts with the Kabul regime, most of whose members are now seeking to arrange their futures.

There's also a consensus in Peshawar, the city in Pakistan where the major resistance groups are headquartered, that a Soviet-controlled security zone in the north will not come to pass. There have been rumors of this since the opening years of the war. Such a zone would have its capital at Mazar-e-Sharif and its perimeter either on the crest of the Hindu Kush or on the northernmost ring of its foothills. This would ensure continued Soviet control of Afghanistan's natural gas and most of its other resources. The security zone might eventually even be directly annexed to the Soviet Union. But such a zone would have to be maintained and defended either by Soviet or communist Afghan ground forces backed by Soviet air power, which would mean a continuing war.

There is no confirmed evidence of large numbers of stay-behind Soviet forces in the north. While some Soviet central Asians, civil and religious as well as military, have been inserted in Afghan institutions up north, these appear to number in the dozens rather than in the hundreds and, without the Soviet army between them and the resistance, they should not count on sticking around long enough to collect their pensions.

The Soviets, having by 1987 come to the realization that they were not going to win the war in Afghanistan on the battlefield, are now seeking to achieve their goals through other means. If war is indeed, as Clausewitz said, diplomacy carried out by other means, then the Soviets are out to prove the reverse of the statement true as well. In agreeing to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan, the Soviets did not agree to lose the war. Rather, they have decided that military force is of minimal or even negative utility in carrying out Soviet policy goals, not only in Afghanistan but also in the regions it borders: Pakistan and the sub-continent (where Russian interest dates to the 19th century) and Iran and the Persian Gulf (Russia has invaded or occupied parts of Persia 11 times). These long-standing foreign policy interests are likely to survive both the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and Gorbachev's domestic internal changes.

The Soviets are also looking to reduce their costs. Not just in rubles spent or helicopters shot down, but in terms of hurt relations with the United States, the West and the Third World. Turning the war into a political and diplomatic struggle will minimize these costs.

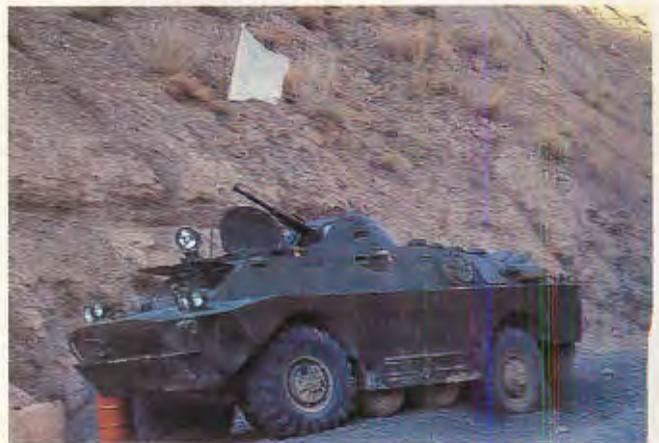
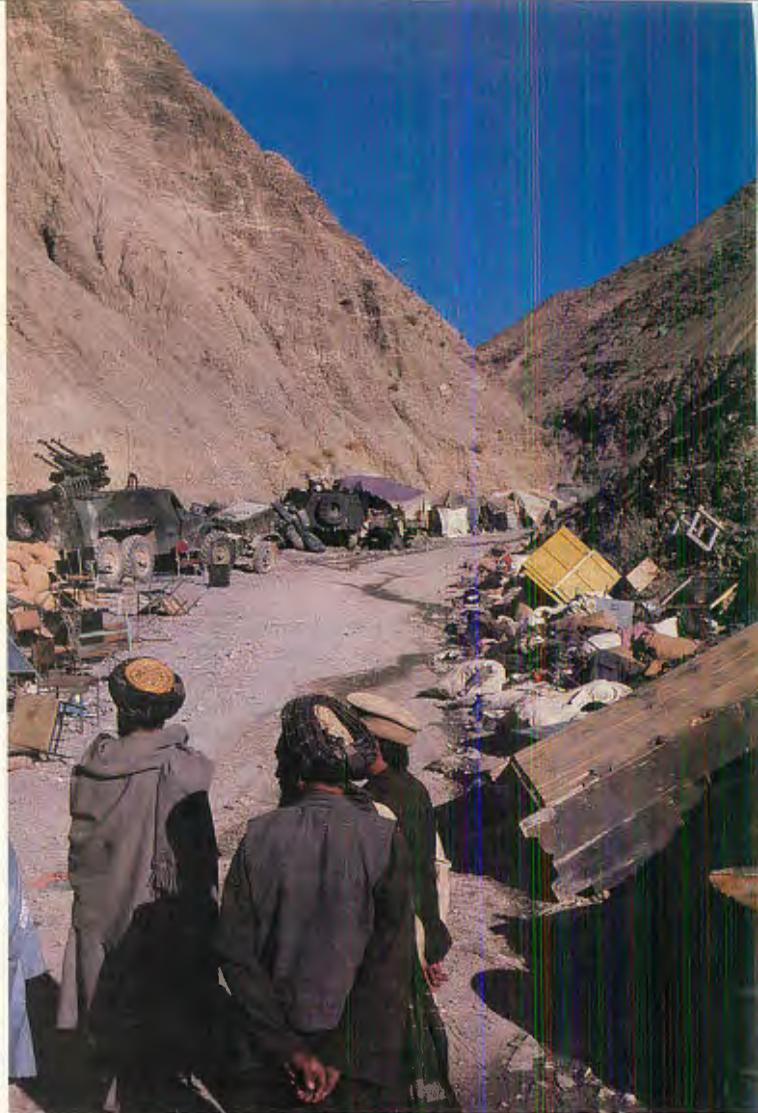
Why do these costs matter more now than in previous years? In 1985-86 the Soviets appeared willing to invest many years in fighting a war of attrition to achieve their goals. Now, they have seemingly reassessed and modified their objectives.

Perhaps they have come to recognize the emergence of governments in Tehran and Islamabad that are more acceptable to Moscow than the current regimes is more important in deciding victory or defeat than seeing the red flag flying over Kabul. If it would have taken the Soviets, at best, a decade of warfare to achieve their goals in Afghanistan, then it may have seemed just as effective to rely upon political, diplomatic and economic pressure, combined with internal penetration, to bring them to the same place in the same time frame.

More important, a real strategic victory would not be an Afghanistan turned into an impoverished satellite nation, or even pliable governments in Iran or Pakistan. Rather, it remains getting access to the West's resources and decoupling the United States from its allies, with both rendered impotent. With this as the most desired strategic end, it must have seemed that the military struggle in Afghanistan was not bringing this jubilee closer.

#### Afghan Resistance — Trying Not To Undercut Success

Afghanistan's resistance groups are having difficulty adapting to the new war. Militarily formidable, they remain political and diplomatic weaklings, although the well-known Afghan ability to improvise is starting to assert itself, and there is some improvement. Their battlefield success, made possible in large part by the supply of U.S. Stinger SAMs, led to the Soviet



TOP: Ruins of a beaten army and the downfall of communist power in southern Afghanistan: Ganjisoh, Kandahar Province. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe

ABOVE: There are few more inspiring sights in the world than communist armored vehicles flying the white flag of surrender. This standard BRDM-2 Soviet-made scout car was a battalion commander's vehicle, at the head of the column as he surrendered. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe

decision to de-emphasize the military option. But Gorbachev has been willing to change policies to maintain larger goals and, too often, the resistance has not changed with him.

The Afghan resistance's Peshawar-based political leadership has moved to adapt to the new war, but they are out of their



**Pakistani Baluchistan.** Stone cairns by roadside are “cursings.” When a Baluch gets really angry, he builds one of these, with all his friends and relatives bringing a stone. The curse — and feud — last as long as the cairn stands. Photo: David C. Isby

depth and know it. That Afghan political power has shifted away from Peshawar and into Afghanistan has been shown by trips inside by many of the seven major Peshawar-based party leaders in 1988: Khalis, Hekmatyar, and Rabbani have made extensive trips into Afghanistan, and Gailani and Mojaddidi — whose trips to Afghanistan during the war have usually been of short duration — have also been inside. All these men are seeing much of their power shifting more to the field commanders and, secondarily, to tribal leadership. They are trying to reinforce their links to the men with the Kalashnikovs who, in the end, will decide the future of Afghanistan.

Many mujahideen field commanders have little patience with Peshawar and what they see as its frequently divisive and self-serving politics directed toward partisan ends. They have seen how the Peshawar leadership was cut out of the Geneva process and is now not responding to the evolving political situation, further reducing their stature and utility. Field commanders put more of a value on competence and cooperation between groups than does Peshawar, which contributes to the friction. The recent Pakistani practice of supplying covert aid directly to selected commanders is being used, largely, to strengthen Pakistani control and does not get aid to those with the best fighting record. It has also had the effect of cutting out of the allocation process Peshawar leaders who used military aid as their main way of maintaining control over field commanders. But party allegiances of field commanders have not become irrelevant. They use their party loyalties as a way to forge larger cooperative efforts, as well as to play politics on their own. Party loyalty also frequently reflects underlying religious, local, or ethnic ties that remain vital and, indeed, are likely to increase in importance.

Revival of the importance of tribal links in the Pathan country of eastern Afghanistan suggests that traditional Afghan ways of conflict resolution still work, more evidence that Afghanistan is unlikely to become another Lebanon in the near future. In the south, the resistance finally broke open the approaches to Kandahar by persuading the Noorzai tribe to defeat their traditional rivals, the Achakzai tribe, which provided most of the communist militia in that area. Captain Halim, the battalion commander who owned the BRDM-2 armored car flying the white flag, also used traditional links to deal with the resistance.

At Asmar in the Kunar Valley, in October, the local militia, made up of Hill Mohmands, wanted to switch sides. They contacted Mohmand tribal elders in Pakistan, who in turn put them in touch with Mohmand resistance commanders who arranged the turn-over of Asmar. In September, before the former communist governor of Kandahar was seized by the WAD (Kabul’s KGB-trained secret police), he was negotiating with fellow Barakzai Pathan Hadji Abdul Latif, the “Lion of Kandahar,” who is one of the leaders of the local resistance to turn over that city.



**Chinese-made Type 75 14.5mm heavy machine gun — “Ziqroiat” to the resistance — opens fire. Both sides make extensive use of heavy machine guns: 20 were captured at Spin Baldak.** Photo: David C. Isby

Peshawar has been in a heavy-duty conspiracy mode throughout 1988. Negotiation is flourishing within parties, between parties and other power sources, and with the Pakistanis, whose policy toward the resistance has been in a state of flux since the death of Zia and the November 1988 elections (although the underlying commitment has certainly not been called into question). There is much talking with contacts inside Kabul and even with the Soviets, the most significant being meetings between mid-level resistance leaders and Soviet representatives in Islamabad in November, and that between the Soviet ambassador to Kabul and Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov and resistance leaders in Saudi Arabia in December.

Despite meeting with the Soviets and trying to propose a successor government in 1988, none of what the resistance is doing has created either a climate or a mechanism for its effective assumption of governmental power in Afghanistan. Currently, the Interim Government under Engineer Ahmad Shah, formed during the Geneva process, is the Rodney Dangerfield of Peshawar: It gets no respect. Undercut by the emigration of three of its cabinet ministers and largely ignored, it still has support among some Islamists; politically and ethnically it remains limited, with the perception being that it is weighted too heavily in favor of Islamists and eastern Pathans to be a truly national government. The seven-party Peshawar Unity remains weakened by its reversion to the three-month rotation of its leadership, ending hopes that emerged when Khalis accepted a two-year term as *rais* (leader) in 1987.

Throughout 1988, there remained further divisions in Peshawar concerning their attitude toward the Cordovez plan. Proposed by the special representative of the U.N. Secretary General (who continued to work the Afghanistan issue despite being recalled to his native Ecuador as foreign minister and despite being distrusted by much of the resistance leadership) it called for an interim government of Afghans who were with neither the resistance nor the Kabul regime. Most of the traditionalist party leadership in Peshawar would accept the plan, some because they think it would mean a return of the king. Islamists will not generally accept the plan, although none have slammed the door on it. They see it as an attempt to impose a government for which the Afghan people neither fought nor voted.

But to a large extent, these arguments are academic as long as the Soviets remain in Kabul. It is also uncertain whether

field commanders would accept the Cordovez plan; no one is going to give up their Kalashnikovs. Indeed, it is uncertain whether anyone can get the impartial Afghans envisioned by the Cordovez plan. In Peshawar, there also remains a division as to whether a *jirga* (the traditional decision-making body of Afghans, an approach supported by the traditionalist parties, naturally enough, as well as Pathans who see it as a way to cut other ethnic groups out of power) or an election should be called to decide the form of a post-war government. The 3 January announcement of the composition of an interim

assembly to be implemented post-war is an attempt to reach a compromise acceptable to all parties and is further evidence that the resistance is finally starting to amount to something politically, just as the meetings with the Soviets show its increasing diplomatic importance. Whether it will work is, of course, unknown.

There is an increasing tendency for Afghans to throw up their hands and say simply, "The people will decide." This is true. If Kabul is entered, it will be by fighting men, many of whom have been cooperating or at least coexisting for years. The

## POSTWAR PERIL: SOVIET MINEFIELDS

Reconstruction of post-war Afghanistan is likely to be a long and difficult process. It will take at least three to four years for the refugee population in Pakistan to move home if disaster is to be avoided, so thorough has been the destruction of much of Afghan agriculture. But the clearance of mines and other explosive ordnance from Afghanistan is probably the most important single item on the reconstruction agenda. Estimates on the number of mines in Afghanistan in 1988 range from three to 16 million. The scope of the problem is such that without effective mine clearance, reconstruction of Afghanistan may fail; large, uncleared areas will be unusable for productive agriculture which will cause people to stay where they can be provided with food, either in camps in Pakistan or towns in Afghanistan.

In the Panjshir Valley, free of communist troops since mid-1988, minefields are strangling the return of agriculture. Around towns such as Rokha, already desolated by years of intense fighting and Soviet occupation, no one could go get a straying calf without risking their life.

Throughout the war, the Soviets used offensive minefields to apply firepower throughout the country without risking manpower. Offensive minefields were inserted by helicopters, fighter-bombers, rocket artillery or manually, often by special operations forces. The PFM-1 "butterfly" antipersonnel mine was the mine most often used in these fields. A copy of the U.S.-designed BLU-43 "Dragontooth," it is effective but cheap enough to be used in massive quantities. The TVLT (a gray, triangular weapon) and other airdropped systems are also in evidence in these fields.

Intended to block resistance movement, these mines will also block the return of refugees or relief supplies. Many of these mines, especially PFM-1s, are intended to self-destruct after a limited life (a PFM-1 can be deadly after eight months), but a U.S. State Department official has stated, "A large number of the antipersonnel mines used by the Afghan government and by the Soviets do not destroy themselves. These mines will be with us for decades." The poor level of Soviet ordnance quality control guarantees that many mines will not detonate.

Extensive defensive minefields around communist outposts and other permanent and temporary positions were barriers designed to keep often unenthusiastic garrisons of regime troops in, by preventing desertions, as well as keeping the mujahideen out. This is one of the reasons why the location of these minefields was often kept secret. Many of the posts defended by these minefields were in valleys, near towns, or at crossroads or choke points. This means that defensive minefields were often in the best agricultural land, or blocking areas needed for commerce.

Perhaps the most common single mine in Afghanistan is the circular plastic PMN. Usually buried, it cannot be easily defused and is resistant to standard mine detectors. The POMZ-2 stake mine is also widely used, usually triggered by a trip wire. Also found in these fields are OMZ-3 bounding mines — based on the wartime German "bouncing betty" — which shoot a grenade to chest height before exploding. There is also an improved all-plastic version of the OMZ-3. Other types of mines include the shoebox-shaped wooden PMD-7, although its metal fuse can be

picked up by a skillfully used mine detector, and a broad range of antitank mines.

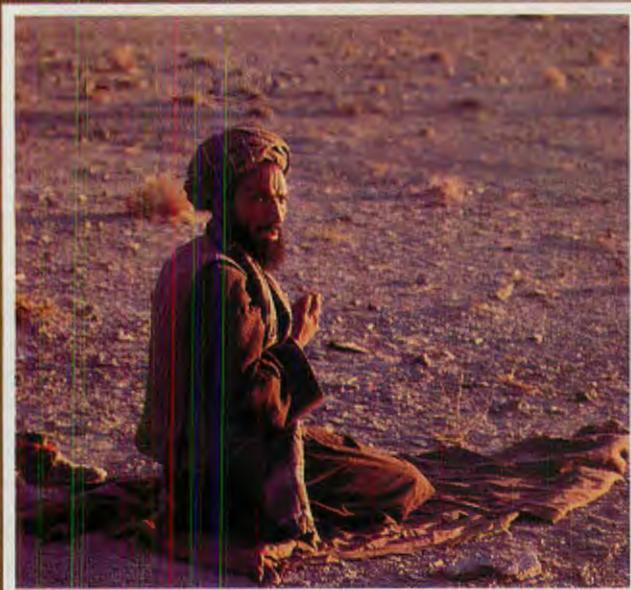
The Soviets claim to be clearing minefields as they withdraw, as they are required to do under international law; they say they have cleared three quarters of the 2,131 minefields they put down. In reality, when they have abandoned positions, they have left minefields in place so as not to alert the mujahideen — or local regime forces — to their imminent departure. Afghans have thus suffered terrible casualties following withdrawals. In the days following abandonment of the fort at Chamkani, in Paktia, the Freedom Medicine surgical hospital at Thal in Pakistan received more than 50 mine casualties. Many more never made it to the hospital. Similar losses have been reported elsewhere in Afghanistan, even though the people involved are largely mujahideen, usually experienced in dealing with mines. Overall minefield casualties in Afghanistan are estimated by the United Nations at 30 to 50 a week. Losses that would be inflicted on refugees returning from the camps have the potential of being even more tragic.

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who is coordinating resettlement and reconstruction efforts for the United Nations, has a French engineer lieutenant colonel seconded to his staff for mine-clearing advice. The prince realizes that Afghanistan is the largest mine-clearing task the world has ever faced. After asking for international help, British, Turkish, French and U.S. delegations have gone to gather information in Pakistan and prepare advice and recommendations for the United Nations. Other nations have also volunteered their support.

Programs for training Afghans to identify and remove mines have been discussed. Both the United Nations and supporting governments, including the United States, have been developing them. Ideally, each post-war Afghan village will need its mine-clearing teams as much as it will need a blacksmith or other specialists.

But the mine problem is such that in addition to pressuring the Soviets to perform their obligations under international law, the United Nations and friendly nations need to look toward organizing an international ordnance-clearing effort in post-war Afghanistan. This would be similar to those that were carried out in the Suez Canal area after the 1973 Middle East War and in Dacca harbor and elsewhere in Bangladesh after the 1971 India-Pakistan War. Such an international effort would first have to survey and locate the concentrations of not only mines but other unexploded ordnance. They could then commence clearing the more concentrated fields, leaving the cleanup and the smaller fields to trained Afghans.

One reason why an international effort, calling on the mine clearance abilities of a number of different nations, is likely to be required is the difficulties inherent in clearing modern mines, especially when their position has not been well mapped or mapped at all. The recent mine-clearing experience in the Falklands suggests that the Afghan situation is likely to require a tremendous effort indeed. In the Falklands, British armed forces, probably the best in the world in countermining warfare, deployed professional Royal Engineers and multi-service ordnance disposal teams over a relatively limited area. Yet, in the end, much of the Falklands is still off-limits because of mines and is likely to remain so. Afghanistan, trying to recover from the impact of a decade of war, cannot afford the same result.



ABOVE: Mujahideen at sunset prayers. Islam continues to unify the resistance even as political pressures raise the threat of divisions.  
Photo: David C. Isby

Afghan resistance has done a credible job in the 85 percent of their country that was outside Soviet control when the withdrawal began. Certainly success can strain alliances. This was seen near Kandahar, when groups that worked together in battle started to squabble over the spoils of victory. It all may come right in the end, but it also is no way to implement policy.

#### **New Administrations, New Challenges**

The changing nature of the war presents problems for the incoming U.S. administration's Afghanistan policy. The widespread perception of the Afghanistan war as essentially being history was terribly counterproductive throughout 1988. The situation, now becoming more dynamic, is unlikely to wait for the new U.S. and Pakistani governments to evolve new policies. Covert aid is still required in Afghanistan, but U.S. support cannot be limited to Stingers. There is a need to let the Soviets know that renegeing on the withdrawal would greatly hurt overall U.S.-Soviet relations. There is also a need to help the Afghans adapt to the new war, although it is difficult to conceptualize and implement an aid program that will do as much for the Afghan resistance politically or diplomatically as the covert aid program did militarily.

#### **Foreign Intrigue**

Afghan resistance attempts to come to grips with the changing nature of the struggle has led to an increase in attempts by their foreign supporters to influence their decision

making. Pakistan has always been the most important outside influence. Pakistani policy is unlikely to change dramatically in the period between the selection of Benazir Bhutto as prime minister and the expiration of the timetable for the Soviet withdrawal. Yet it appears that, at the highest level, the post-Zia Pakistani government does not see Gulbuddin Hekmatyar as the "chosen instrument" to shape resistance policy as did Zia, especially after April 1988.

This has been favorably received by other resistance parties, but the shift to a more evenhanded approach toward the various resistance organizations was, before the November 1988 elections, not always evident in the field. Many field-level officers of the Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence service (ISI) were still pro-Hekmatyar, and through 1988 made sure that a preponderance of resources such as developmental aid intended to include road- and bridge-building money and provision of tractors given out to the resistance alliance have ended up in the hands of Hekmatyar. The rest of Peshawar does not know why U.S. policy continues to allow the Pakistanis to do this, considering U.S. leverage with Islamabad and given that the amount of U.S. aid flowing into Pakistan is hardly insignificant.

After being fully loaded, the 12 barrels of this Chinese-made type 63 107mm rocket launcher (nicknamed "BM-12" by the mujahideen) are fired electrically in rapid sequence. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe

While Pakistanis are committed to a resistance victory in Afghanistan, they realize that even this potential endgame is full of hazards. Hence, before the completion of the Soviet withdrawal, Pakistan does not want to see large-scale resistance victories — such as taking major cities or ambushing withdrawal convoys — that would allow Soviets to abrogate the Geneva Accords and keep an unending military presence. Pakistanis believe — and much of the resistance agrees — that there is little sense in suffering casualties and expending ammunition to capture cities or cut roads that cannot be held in the face of continued Soviet air power. Rather, the time is seen as ripe to prepare for the moment when, *inshallah* (God willing), the Soviets finally do leave and the downfall of Kabul can begin.

Pakistanis are not the only outside force seeking to influence the resistance. Arabs — especially Saudi Arabian-based adherents of Wahabi Islam — provide substantial money to the resistance. Sayeff, long friendly with the Arabs, has made Arab money more available to the other Islamist parties, especially *Jamiat*, with which Sayeff has been working more closely in recent years. But the Wahabi practice of paying Afghans to convert to their brand of Islam has stirred widespread resentment. In the final analysis, no foreign aid or action, be it by the Pakistanis, Arabs, or even the United States, is likely to yield either long-term influence or control in a post-war Afghanistan.





Resistance RPG-7 gunner with improved Chinese-made round loaded. Photo: David C. Isby

### Inside Kabul

In Kabul, Najibullah has wagered the city can be held and that the resistance will choke in the new war that is coming up. He is not willing to compromise either diplomatically (he's still holding out for a coalition in which the army and WAD would remain) or on the battlefield (he has not pulled back troops to defend Kabul but rather has tried to hold as much as he can). Internationally, those skeptical of the resistance's capabilities remember the war in North Yemen in the late 1960s, when the regime in Sana, universally expected to fall to Saudi-backed rebels as soon as their Egyptian supporters withdrew militarily in the wake of their own defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, used its air power and the loyal elements of its military to prevail.

It is unlikely that the North Yemen model will be realized and that Najibullah will have his way, however. The increasing divisions in the PDPA (Afghan Communist Party) suggest that even the threat of a Soviet withdrawal is not likely to make the regime hang together. Rather, it will probably fracture, with all except the hard-liners looking to make a deal with the resistance. A coup by non-communist soldiers seeking the same goal is also possible.

Replacement of Najibullah has been rumored throughout

## 1988 — THE YEAR IN AFGHANISTAN

The year 1988 was marked by a number of events, both political and military, that would shape the future of Afghanistan.

Despite progress in Geneva, there was also, at first, substantial resistance to the settlement proposals. Pakistan, fearful of a continuing war that would block the return of refugees, held firm until practically the last moment to the demand for a transition government to take over from the Kabul regime. Pressure from Washington, the difficulties the resistance had in organizing itself and a realization that once the Soviet army left, the Afghans would sort things out for themselves within a year, led to the Pakistanis changing their mind. The Pakistanis also made concessions on the timetable of the withdrawal. A meeting between Gorbachev and Najibullah in Tashkent on 7 April put the seal on Moscow's efforts to deliver Kabul regime compliance with Soviet policies.

The Soviets have never seen negotiation as precluding other forms of state policy. The Soviets' terror campaign in Pakistan, continued. (Although the 10 April explosion in an ammunition dump near Rawalpindi that destroyed much of a pre-agreement supply surge may have been an accident, the losses were significant: Spanish-made 120mm mortars, man-portable, line-charge projectors for minefield clearing and many Stinger SAMs were lost.)

The Afghan resistance, pressured by the fast pace of diplomatic events, was prodded to respond by the Pakistanis and its other foreign supporters, including the United States and Saudi Arabia. One result was the creation of a Peshawar-based Interim Government in February, with Engineer Ahmad Shah, Sayeff's number two, as nominal chief. Answering Kabul's attempted outreach to the resistance and its supporters in the form of a new constitution in 1987 that supposedly made the regime "democratic," the new government left seats open for those aligned with the Kabul regime — especially non-PDPA and army members — who might wish to join. Provincial councils would provide decentralized government. This flowed from Pakistan's January 1988 agreement that former Kabul regime members could participate in a successor government. Khalis, elected as leader for two years the previous October, resigned and was replaced first by Hekmatyar, in June by Gailani and in September by Rabbani, who led the resistance delegation to the United Nations, United States and Saudi Arabia in November 1988.

On the battlefield, the impact of the relief of Khost — accomplished with much fanfare by Soviet paratroopers on 30 Decem-

ber 1987 — lasted but a few weeks. The resistance soon reoccupied most of their old positions throughout Paktia Province. In March another smaller offensive was launched that relieved the fort at Urgun, also in Paktia Province.

In the north, Ahmad Shah Massoud continued assaulting regime outposts, taking Burqua in January and starting down the Panjshir in April, taking government garrisons. Before the Soviet withdrawal started, reinforcements arrived to cover the retreat, and in April a mechanized column pushed down the main road from Kandahar to Ghazni to keep the road open.

Even before the first Soviet withdrawal, however, the operational mosaic that the communists had so painstakingly maintained since 1980 started to crumble. Barikot was abandoned on 22 April, followed by other posts in the upper Kunar and in Paktia (Ali Khel, Chowni, and Chamkani). In April-June, the siege of Khost resumed after two transport aircraft fell to Stingers in March, again cutting off daylight airlifts. In the south, garrisons were pulled back toward Kandahar. As early as March, the Kandahar resistance had gone over to the offensive, taking the district capital at Panjuai west of Kandahar on the main road to Herat, with Darwazgui, Athgul in Zabol Province and Maruf, near Kandahar, falling within days.

The Soviets left Qalat, the provincial capital of Zabol, on 18 April, but Kabul troops held out until 18 June when it became the first provincial capital to be entered by the resistance since 1979. In the west the Soviets pulled their troops toward the airfields at Herat and Shindand, the government garrison at Khak-e-Safid near Shindand falling on 4 April.

In May, the first major Soviet unit, the 66th Motorized Rifle Brigade, left Jalalabad (starting, as promised, on the 15th) for the Soviet border. While it encountered only light resistance, other Soviet troop movements were not as fortunate. In mid-June, Afghan resistance even succeeded in blocking the road between Ghazni and Kabul, forcing withdrawing Soviet forces at Ghazni to take a longer route. But, on the whole, the Afghans have not been trying to destroy withdrawing Soviets.

Najibullah, taunting that, "Nobody has taken Kabul in the past and nobody will take it in the future," was not giving up without a fight, not only on the battlefield but politically and diplomatically as well. He brought non-PDPA members into the government, including the prime minister, and made diplomatic overtures to India (warmly received) and the West (rebuffed). Other changes were seen in the north, suggesting that this might be his "national redoubt." Kabul defenses were indeed formidable but vulnerable to interdiction. However, while the regime

1988, but by the end of the year it was uncertain whether it would take place. Najibullah at least has some tribal influence among the Pathans, while going with a non-tribal Kabul intellectual who is, on paper, not a member of the PDPA, is

*Continued on page 75*

**BELOW:** Captured Soviet-made BTR-60PB APC of Republic of Afghanistan army. These have replaced many regime BTR-152s as they were lost, or broke down. Photo: David Isby



**ABOVE:** "Quad-fifty" is always a favorite weapon in low-intensity conflicts. This communist version consists of four Soviet-made 12.7mm DShKM heavy machine guns on a Czechoslovakian-made mount in back of BTR-152 Soviet-made APC, now in the hands of the resistance. Photo: Elizabeth T. Ashe

seemed doomed, as late as November-December the Soviets seemed to believe a diplomatic solution could be achieved. This would require a cutoff in covert aid to resistance organizations and external pressure (especially by the new U.S. and Pakistani governments) on them to accept a coalition with the current Kabul government as the mature and meaningful compromise. This compromise, however, would leave the army and WAD, the tools of state power, intact and controlled, in the final analysis, by the Soviets. But even if the Peshawar leadership could be persuaded to support such a plan — an almost impossible task — the fighting men inside Afghanistan certainly would not. They would not consider coalitions with Kabul even in 1986, when the military situation for the resistance looked bad indeed. They are certainly not likely to do so with victory apparently in their grasp.

The first provincial capitals taken in June were later abandoned in the face of superior firepower, as was the city of Kunduz, first handed over to the resistance and then abandoned by it after a counterattack preceded by heavy air attacks in August and September. This led to the resistance suspending large-scale attacks on cities, although by October seven provincial capitals had been abandoned to it. Throughout the summer, the Soviet withdrawal continued, reaching the halfway point in August, by which time even Soviet generals were publicly stating that the Kabul government was unlikely to long survive the Soviet withdrawal in its present form, although other Soviet sources soon contradicted them. The Panjshir and, by October, the Kunar valleys were abandoned to the resistance. Both these valleys, once fertile, were desolated by the Soviets.

In August, President Zia of Pakistan, the most significant foreign supporter of the resistance, was killed in a plane crash along with the U.S. ambassador and most of the Pakistani high command. The cause — sabotage by Pakistani radicals or WAD was suspected — remained uncertain. Zia's death, however, came too late to affect Pakistani support for the resistance in 1988, but it meant that Hekmatyar would no longer receive backing as a chosen instrument of political power. The months between the signing of the Geneva Accords and Zia's death were probably the high-water mark of the Pakistan-Hekmatyar relationship. But it is unlikely that Pakistanis thought that funneling him much of the incoming aid, both developmental and covert, would buy them lasting influence in Afghanistan.

The communist hold deteriorated most rapidly in the south. Approaches to Kandahar were cleared by calling in the Noorzai tribe to defeat their traditional rivals, the Achakzai, who fought

for Kabul. By October, after Spin Baldak on the Pakistani border fell, Kabul troops were pressed back to the gates of Kandahar as the Soviets withdrew.

In Kabul, to reduce the danger of a Khalq coup, their leadership was sent abroad or eased away from power. Army leadership was reshuffled. Najibullah was expected to be dropped from the payroll, but no obvious successor was likely to fare better. A new high-caliber Soviet ambassador, Yuli Vorontsov, was sent to Kabul in order to help reach a political solution where General Mikhail Mitrofanish Zaitsev, the hard-charging commander in chief, Southern Theater of Strategic Military Action (TVD), had failed in achieving a military one since he took command in 1985.

The resistance did not try to destroy withdrawing Soviet forces or mount pitched assaults on cities, preparing to wait until the Soviet withdrawal finished, although barrages of 107mm Chinese-made and 122mm Soviet-, Chinese- and Egyptian-made rockets continued. Kabul and Jalalabad were hit throughout the spring and summer. Attacks on Kabul resulted in considerable civilian casualties, although many of these were from communist fire. Resistance rockets destroyed a massive munitions dump at Kalgay in August, resulting in heavy casualties. In response, terrorist incidents in Pakistan continued and cross-border air attacks increased, with the Pakistanis shooting down several intruders.

In early November the Soviets escalated, while appealing to the United Nations to help bring about a coalition that would be acceptable to Moscow. How the United Nations would force the Afghan resistance to accept a government they did not think legitimate when all the power, military and diplomatic, of the Soviet Union could not do the same thing remains obscure. The Soviet withdrawal was halted; 30 MiG-27 Flogger-D fighter-bombers and batteries of SS-1 SCUD-B SAMs arrived in Afghanistan and were used in combat, as were Tu-26 Backfire strategic bombers flying from the Soviet Union. *Kabul forces* counterattacked eastward from Jalalabad, retaking the border post of Torkham, which had fallen to the resistance some weeks earlier, before abandoning it again at the end of November after resistance MILAN antitank guided missiles had weakened regime tank forces.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Shah Massoud, who had been using his central forces as the cadre for a 13,000-man army intended to liberate seven provinces and, if needed, cut off Kabul after the Soviet withdrawal, moved to interdict the Salang Pass in response to the Soviet November escalations.

# **BRAVERY AT BEAUFORT CASTLE**

## **Israeli Elite Storms PLO Fortress**

by Rami Carmel

**S**PRING of 1982 was hot in the Middle East, and in more ways than one. To any discerning observer, it was clear that Israel was on the brink of yet another war. Despite the year-old de facto truce between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in southern Lebanon, the border zone had been the scene of a continuous series of "incidents." When a young Israeli artillery officer was killed by a PLO mine in late April 1982, tensions reached a point where the slightest provocation could plunge the region into open conflict. Ironically, the fatal incident which finally sparked open hostilities occurred far away from the Israel-Lebanon border.

On the night of 4 June, outside the Dorchester Hotel in London, Shlomo Argov, Israeli Ambassador to Great Britain, was shot and critically wounded by a terrorist. Like the July 1914 assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo that set off World War I, this attempted assassination was the catalyst for war — the Israeli invasion of Lebanon called Operation Peace

**LEFT:** Militia advances during the first days of Operation Peace for Galilee.  
Photo: Sygma



## ISRAELI CRUSADER

Author Rami Carmel participated in the events described in this article. An American by birth, Carmel served seven years in the IDF regular army, concluding service with the rank of captain, and is also a graduate of the Sayeret course. Today he is studying at Tel Aviv University.

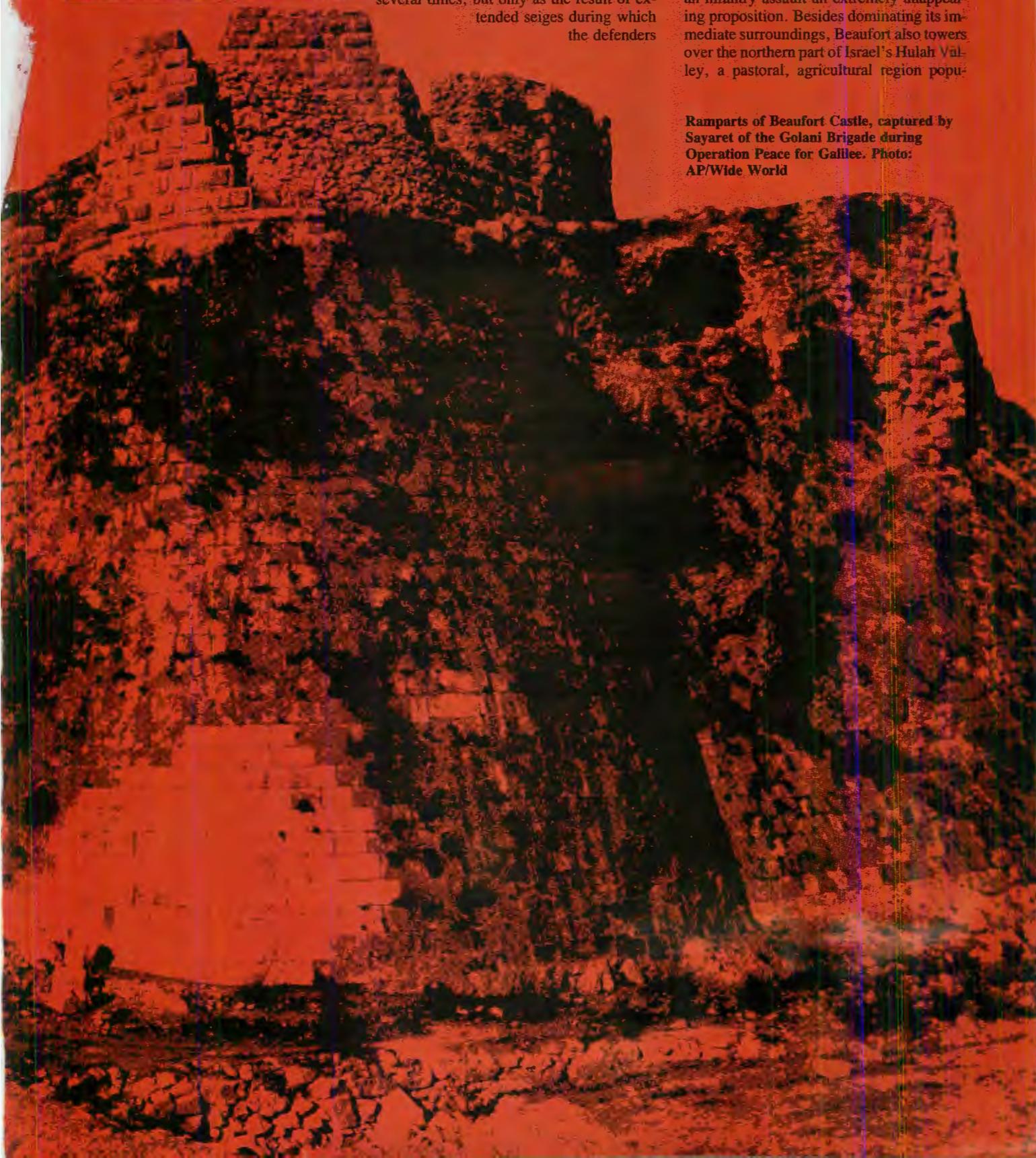
for Galilee.

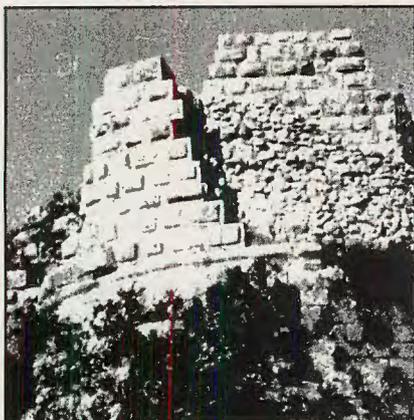
Among the many bitter and hard fought battles in that war, the most striking was the assault by soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces' Golani Brigade on Beaufort Castle.

Beaufort Castle was built by the Crusaders on the foundations of an existing Arab fortress during the first part of the 12th century. It had the distinction of being the only Crusader castle never to have been taken by storm. The castle changed hands several times, but only as the result of extended sieges during which the defenders

were starved into submission. The strength of the castle's fortifications stem to a great extent from its topographical position. Built on Mount Shakif, six miles southeast of the Lebanese town of Nabitiye, Beaufort is perched on the edge of a 1,200-foot cliff overlooking the Litani River on its southern and eastern sides. The northern and western approaches to the castle ridge consist of a steep slope some 200-300 feet high, which is totally impassible to vehicles and makes an infantry assault an extremely unappealing proposition. Besides dominating its immediate surroundings, Beaufort also towers over the northern part of Israel's Hulah Valley, a pastoral, agricultural region popu-

**Ramparts of Beaufort Castle, captured by Sayeret of the Golani Brigade during Operation Peace for Galilee. Photo: AP/Wide World**





## BEAUFORT

lated by kibbutz farming settlements. Kibbutz tractors plowing the rich fields of the Hulah were in clear view of the castle that loomed 1,500 feet above them.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, PLO terrorists had turned Beaufort's topographical dominance to their advantage by positioning an observation post there to direct artillery shells they periodically fired against the Huleh kibbutzim. This periodic shelling transformed daily life into a grim ordeal reminiscent of the London blitz. Come nightfall, the entire population of northern Israel was forced underground. Kibbutz children were forced to spend their nights in bomb shelters, sometimes for months at a time. In response to PLO artillery attacks, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched a series of commando-type raids against terrorist targets throughout southern Lebanon. The raids were designed to keep the terrorists as insecure and off balance as possible. Capturing Beaufort Castle, however, was never seriously considered because of the inordinate number of casualties it was estimated such an operation would cost.

In June 1982, the situation came to a head. For a period of three weeks, most towns and farms throughout northern Israel were subjected to an intensive bombardment from more than 50 of the PLO's Soviet-made Katyusha rocket launchers and artillery pieces. Fire continued until the IDF was able to pinpoint and destroy the Katyushas and 130mm guns which had been dispersed and camouflaged among the ubiquitous orange groves of southern Lebanon. With their artillery destroyed, the PLO hastened to agree to an American proposal for a cease fire. On both sides of the border the respective forces settled into a regimen of recouping their losses and preparing for the next round. From intercepted radio traffic, it was clear to the IDF that Beaufort Castle had played a major part in directing Palestinian fire. The Israelis had no intention of allowing such a situation to recur — and they decided they must find a way to capture the castle.



**Militia forces under command of Major Sa'ad Haddad, a staunch ally of Israel, advancing in the wake of the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982.**

Photo: Sygma

The unit designated for the task was the Golani Brigade's reconnaissance unit, *Sayeret Golani*, one of the few elite, special warfare units of the Israeli army. At any given time Sayeret teams are scattered all over the country doing field exercises, attending courses or on operational duty.

When news of the shooting in London reached Tel-Aviv, Israeli Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Rafael Eitan, on his own initiative, issued orders to begin concentrating IDF regular units along the Lebanese frontier. The object of this move was to shorten the army's preparation time in case the Israeli government ordered a large-scale retaliatory military operation. Sayeret Golani teams were recalled to their home base in order to receive an additional equipment issue prior to joining the remainder of the brigade in its assembly area by the Lebanese border.

On 5 June 1982 the cabinet met in Jerusalem to determine Israel's response to the assassination attempt. At 1100 a flight of eight F-4 Phantoms hit terrorist targets in and around Beirut. Among the targets bombed were the Beirut sports stadium, the stands of which had been used by the PLO as an ammunition dump. The PLO responded with a series of bombardments by more than 100 artillery pieces and rocket launchers of towns and farms throughout northern Israel. At a second cabinet meeting that afternoon, Prime Minister Menachem Begin decided that the time had come to put an end to the PLO artillery threat once and for all. Orders were issued to the IDF general staff to mobilize reserve units and imple-

ment the plan for the invasion of Lebanon. H-hour for the operation was designated as 1200 on 6 June, when the first Israeli units would cross the Lebanese frontier.

At 1100 that morning, the Golani Brigade began to move from its assembly area near Kibbutz Yiftah. Shortly before moving, Sayeret Golani received a three-tank platoon of Centurions as reinforcement for the Beaufort operation. The Sayeret's orders were to proceed north independent of the brigade's main body to secure the Akiya bridge over the Litani River. Since the Akiya was the sole bridge over the Litani in the central sector of operations and an entire armored division was due to pass over it en route to Beirut, the bridge's capture intact was vital to the Israeli plan of operations. Once the bridge was secure, the Sayeret was to climb north out of the narrow, precipitous valley on a steep, paved road leading to the village of Ka'akait el-Jisr which overlooked the river. From there the unit was to drive east to approach the castle from its much more accessible western side.

The attack plan called for the positioning of a combined tank/mortar firebase on a ridge 1,400 yards northwest of the castle. While this position provided covering fire, Sayeret infantry would then conduct their assault. The natural obstacle presented by the castle ridge had been enhanced by the Palestinian defenders. They had laid a mixed antitank/antipersonnel minefield that effectively blocked all approaches to the castle ridge except the main access road. This was a narrow paved road leading up to the castle from the village of Arnoun, one kilometer to the north. Using both suppressive fire provided by the firebase and the element of surprise, Sayeret troopers would storm through the mines and up the access road while still mounted on their M-113 armored personnel carriers (APCs). When

they were 200 yards from the castle fortifications, the infantry would dismount and continue the assault on foot.

The 50 or so Palestinians defending Beaufort had elected to make their main defensive effort outside the walls of the castle itself. The area around the helipad situated 150 yards south of the castle was converted into a fortified complex of cement-reinforced trenches and bunkers.

These fortifications commanded the northern and western approaches to the castle ridge, including the access road. The southern and southwestern slopes were covered by a trench and minefield system laid out around an old, shot-up, radio-telephone antenna situated 650 yards south of the castle. The Palestinians were extremely well-armed for a force their size. In addition to the ubiquitous Kalashnikov assault rifles, they were

equipped with four DShK 12.7mm heavy machine guns, two B-11 107mm recoilless rifles, three 82mm mortars, and a number of RPG-7 antitank launchers and PKS general purpose machine guns.

Soon after crossing the frontier, Sayeret Golani began to lag behind its timetable. The hilly terrain of southern Lebanon contains few roads, and on that Sunday morning in June they were crammed with Israeli

## TO BE A SAYERET TROOPER

Candidates for Sayeret are chosen from among the most promising soldiers finishing their three months of "Stage A" basic training at the Golani training facility at Bezek. The first step for those wishing to volunteer is a strenuous three-day selection exercise called a *Gibush*. On average, 70 percent of the volunteers fail the *Gibush*. These soldiers are returned to Bezek, where they undergo an additional three months of "Stage B" basic training prior to their being posted to one of Golani's line battalions. The one third who pass are accepted into the Sayeret on trainee status. Before they will be able to qualify as full-fledged Sayeret troopers, these trainees will have to survive a grueling 18-month course which is characterized by a very high attrition rate.

The initial stage in the course is a four-month period called "Unit Basic" training. Unit Basic serves a dual purpose. First, it is an additional training period during which the trainees hone still further conventional infantry skills. In addition, this period serves as an advanced selection process whose object is to weed out those trainees deemed unsuitable for the expense and trouble of more advanced training. By any standards, Unit Basic is very rigorous. More than anything else, the prime factor determining an individual's chance of success is his ability to stand up under extreme physical stress.

The daily training schedule during Unit Basic runs from 0500 until after midnight, with three 15-minute breaks for meals. The entire day is usually spent in the field doing live-fire exercises and field navigation problems. A trainee must redeem himself for even the slightest mishap during the day's training by doing a *Bustan*. The *Bustan* is a punishment run done with full equipment over a four-mile course. It is carried out at the end of the day's regular training schedule, usually after midnight. Thus the trainee, already exhausted from a full day's training, faces this ordeal at a time when his more fortunate buddies are going to snatch what little sleep they can between stints of guard duty. A *Bustan* is done independently, and is supervised by the instructors only periodically. This lack

of supervision is deliberate. The instructors wish to create an environment where the temptation to cheat is tremendous. Of course anyone caught is immediately expelled from the unit. Throughout the Unit Basic, the instructors are constantly encouraging the trainees to quit. A man has only to speak out once, and the next day he will be on his way to one of Golani's line battalions.

The most demanding part of Unit Basic comes toward the end of the four months. Two marches in particular constitute the most difficult of all varied ordeals which are encountered during Unit Basic. The "Seventy" is a 70-kilometer (44 mile) non-stop march during which the men are divided up into five-man teams. Each team carries a stretcher loaded with a full weight human dummy. The stretcher is carried for two reasons. First, it transforms the march into a supremely difficult test of physical endurance and pain. No less important, however, is the practical emphasis such a march places on the IDF code that no matter how difficult the circumstances, a wounded man is never left behind. The last obstacle standing between the trainee and the end of Unit Basic is the "One-Twenty." This is a 120-kilometer (77 mile) march with full field equipment which must be completed in 24 hours or less. The Sayeret record is 19 hours, 54 minutes. After the completion of the "One-Twenty," the trainees are given a week-long furlough before they begin the advanced stage of their training. Four long months of such a regimen constitutes one of the most brutal selection processes of any military unit in the world. Only 25-35 percent of those who began the course survive this stage. They still have another 15 months of advanced training to go before they will be eligible to wear the Sayeret insignia.

The first stage of the advanced training segment consists of a very intensive land navigation course lasting between two and three months. This is followed by a two-month demolition course, the one-month IDF parachute course and an anti-terror/hostage rescue course lasting nine weeks. Interspersed between these formal courses is training in advanced infiltration/camouflage techniques and the basic principles of tracking. Sayeret trainees must prove their proficiency in these subjects in an exercise in which

they penetrate a heavily guarded Israeli airbase and plant fake explosive charges in aircraft and other sensitive installations. During the advanced stage of training, the trainees are regarded as semi-operational. As such they play auxiliary roles in many of the Sayeret's special operations. A three-month NCO/squad leader course rounds out the advanced training segment. The course culminates in a two-week individual exercise during which the trainee is required to implement everything learned during the entire 18 months of training.

Although trainee attrition continues during the advanced training segment, most of it is due to medical reasons. On an average, between 20-25 percent of those who began the course 18 months before, ultimately earn the right to wear the "flying lion cub." This insignia, which signifies a fully-qualified Sayeret trooper, is one of the most coveted in the IDF. It consists of the depiction of a winged lion cub and is worn on the left chest beneath the IDF parachute wings.

Sayeret Golani is organized in a manner completely different from a conventional infantry unit. Instead of squads and platoons, it is composed of a number of 12- to 16-man teams, each commanded by a lieutenant. The team's armament is flexible. Each team member is fully trained to operate all the unit's weapons. The usual equipment for a conventional patrol would consist of Galil assault rifles, two or more RPD light machine guns, one or two RPG antitank weapons and an Eliraz 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle. One of the Galilis will usually be fitted with the M-203 40mm grenade launcher and an additional rifleman will be equipped with 12 rifle grenades. At least one team member receives training as a medic.

Except in time of war, the Sayeret always keeps a hostage rescue team on 15-minute alert. The remainder of the unit is usually scattered throughout the country on operations or undergoing training. Without exception, all teams can be assembled and ready for action within six hours. Together with a handful of other Israeli special forces units, Sayeret Golani maintains constant vigilance and truly represents the finely honed cutting edge of the Israeli Defense Forces.



## BEAUFORT

tanks and APCs. Each Israeli force commander naturally wished to advance as swiftly as possible toward his unit's objective. The result of this aggressiveness was a series of traffic jams that developed at several key road junctions along the route of advance. In addition, vehicles with mechanical problems also held up the advance until they could be bulldozed into the ditch and the narrow road cleared.

After passing through the village of Taybe, the Sayeret's commander found an entire 35-vehicle tank battalion preceding him on the road ahead. The 26-year-old major was known to his troops by his nickname "Kaplan." As morning advanced into noon, Kaplan became more and more frustrated by his slow progress. Then suddenly prospects for reaching Beaufort on schedule worsened still further.

Armored personnel carriers of Major Sa'ad Haddad's forces on the move near the border between Israel and Lebanon, June 1982. Photo: Sygma



At 1300 hours, Kaplan heard on the divisional radio net that an armored brigade had secured the Akiya bridge ahead of him. Kaplan realized that traffic at the bridge would only exacerbate his already critical timetable problems. He radioed brigade HQ requesting permission to bypass the bridge by crossing the Litani River some four kilometers to its west. Lieutenant Colonel Bagi, brigade XO, gave his immediate consent. However, this did little to solve Kaplan's problem. A distance of eight kilometers still separated Sayeret Golani's lead vehicle from the dirt track leading to the ford. At the snail's pace at which they had been moving up until then, this distance represented more than an hour's travel. The afternoon continued to slip by while progress remained exasperatingly slow.

Throughout their advance, the castle could be seen looming above all else in the distance, its menacing edifice totally dominating the skyline. However, the sight of almost constant Israeli artillery fire landing on the castle ridge did much to hearten the young Israeli troopers, most of whom had yet to be blooded in combat.

At about 1530, the 10 M-113s and three tanks which made up the Sayeret column finally turned off from the main road onto the dirt track leading to the ford. Time was running short and Kaplan realized that he was in a race against the rapidly approaching evening. Sayeret Golani had rehearsed the assault until every man in the unit was thoroughly familiar with the assault plan. Two full-dress rehearsals were carried out on a similar castle inside Israel itself. However, if the unit did not succeed in reaching the castle with enough daylight remaining to launch the assault as planned, the attack would be even further delayed because of the necessity of properly briefing the troops on the change. A potentially more serious disadvantage to a hasty night attack was the full moon due to appear before midnight in the summer sky. The full moon would render the attacking Israelis fully



visible to Beaufort's defenders at close range. There would not be sufficient light, however, for the firebase tanks to give supporting fire for fear of hitting friendly troops in the darkness.

The Litani River itself was forded without incident. However, as the column climbed the steep serpentine track leading out of the river valley, two of the three accompanying tanks threw their tracks and had to be left behind. Once out of the valley and on the Nabitiye Plateau, things began to improve. The entire unit became imbued with a sense of urgency. Each vehicle commander urged his driver on to greater speed. The Sayeret's rapid rate of advance eastward toward Beaufort was momentarily interrupted by an ambush laid in a shallow wadi by 10 or so RPG-armed Palestinians. The Palestinians made the elementary mistake of stationing themselves too far forward on the slopes of the wadi. When they tried to make good their escape after springing the ambush, they were all mowed down by Sayeret machine guns before they could escape beyond the crest of the ridge. Despite several near misses, none of the Israeli vehicles were hit and the column continued at full speed toward Beaufort.

The Israelis reached the assault jump-off positions with less than two hours of daylight remaining. Kaplan issued orders to mount the attack with no delay. The single remaining Centurion tank and two M113s



mortar-equipped APCs of the firebase force took position on a low ridge 1,400 yards northwest of the castle. Simultaneously, the assault force began a northwesterly flanking movement toward the village of Arnoun. When the column approached to within 500 yards from the village, it came under heavy automatic weapons and RPG fire from the outlying houses. At this stage the PLO on the castle ridge began picking off the Israeli vehicles with a pair of B-11 recoilless rifles. Within less than 10 minutes, three Israeli APCs had been hit and reduced to smoldering hulks. Kaplan was hit by a burst of machine-gun fire, taking two bullets in the chest. Within the first few minutes of the battle, Sayeret Golani was out its commander. Lieutenant Motri, the ranking officer, immediately assumed command. He directed the firebase to silence the recoilless rifles while he led Sayeret infantry against the Palestinians in Arnoun. Until this point, the Israelis still had a reasonable chance of reaching the castle with enough daylight remaining to attack as planned. However, the unexpected house-clearing operation in Arnoun used up what little daylight there was left. The assault on the castle ridge would take place at night.

Brigade was informed that Kaplan was 'hors de combat' due to strong resistance encountered in Arnoun. Major Guni Hamik was riding in the brigade XO's M-113 when the news came in. The 27-year-old officer

Beanfort Castle, 3½ miles north of the Israeli border. This castle served as a Palestinian observation post, directing artillery and rocket fire onto Israeli settlements in the Galilee. Photo: AP/Wide World

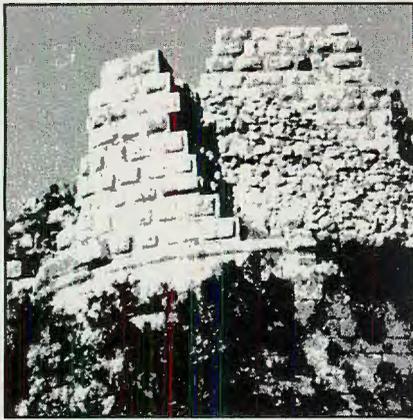
had been Sayeret commander during the preceding two years. He had completed his tour of duty and had been relieved by Kaplan only two weeks previously. Having been in command during the period when the Sayeret had trained on the Israeli castle, he was intimately acquainted with both objective and attack plan. Guni was due to have been discharged from the regular army on the day war broke out. He intended to spend a year traveling around the world prior to attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The outbreak of war, however, caused all other considerations to be postponed. When news of the assassination attempt reached Israel, Guni was home on discharge leave. He immediately returned to the Sayeret quartermaster's store to be reissued his equipment and rushed to brigade HQ in search of something useful to do. Now his hour had come.

Lieutenant Colonel Gabi directed Guni to move up and assume command of the attack. He immediately commandeered the nearest M-113 and began a wild drive toward Arnoun, some two miles to the south. Suddenly in the midst of the battle for

Arnoun, the Sayeret radio net came alive with an old, familiar voice. "Tirosh, this is Revenge Commander. Hold on, I am on my way." Like wildfire, the news swept through the Sayeret down to the youngest trooper: "Guni is on his way. Now, everything will be all right."

Night had since fallen. While traveling at full speed, the driver of Guni's APC failed in the darkness to see a roadside ditch and the vehicle overturned. No one was hurt, but the Israelis began to come under small arms fire from several houses some 100 yards away. Guni quickly organized the vehicle's crew and they set off at a trot to cover the remaining half mile separating them from the main force.

By the time Guni arrived, the Sayeret had cleared Arnoun of all remaining opposition, killing 16 terrorists at a cost of only four wounded. Now the Israelis were poised to attack the castle ridge itself. Wasting no time, Guni assembled his officers and NCOs for a quick planning and orders group where he laid down the new plan of attack. Mines laid along the ridge limited access to the castle area to the approach road leading up from Arnoun. Despite the lack of surprise that such an assault route would entail, Guni preferred it to the dangers of crossing an uncleared minefield. After he had finished explaining the new plan, Guni dismissed his officers so they could deliver a similar briefing to their men.



## BEAUFORT

These young lieutenants who commanded Sayeret teams were on average 21 years of age. Their qualifications and experience, however, belied their youth. Each of them had successfully been through the arduous 18-month Sayeret course and had been hand-picked for officers' school. All of them had gained a wealth of combat experience in Israeli raiding operations in Lebanon during the previous two years.

Yuval was a strapping blond kibbutznik from Ein Harod, a farming settlement in the Jezreel Valley in Galilee. His elder brother had been killed in the fighting on the Golan Heights in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. As a member of a bereaved family, Yuval had needed the consent of his parents to serve in a combat unit. Upon his induction into the army three years earlier, he had pleaded with his father to sign the official IDF release form. His father had signed, but unknown to Yuval, the outbreak of war was causing him to have second thoughts.

Erez and his team's mission was to lead the column up the approach road and attack and clear the trench and bunker system around the antenna. Erez was a tall, slender 21 year old from the northern port city of Haifa. After completing the extra year of service required of IDF officers, Erez hoped to study law at one of Israel's universities.

The most difficult objective was reserved for the oldest team in the Sayeret. Aside from a few of the unit's officers, Sayeret Golani had no long-service professional cadre. Combat teams are comprised of youngsters doing their three-year mandatory military service. Within the unit, however, there is a certain hierarchy based on length of service. The oldest team receives the coveted appellation *Vatika*, or "Old Timers." *Vatika* receives the best equipment and conditions; it also receives the toughest missions. *Vatika*'s objective at Beaufort was the key to the entire assault. The team was to attack and clear the trench and bunker system located by the helipad. These trenches completely commanded both the approach road and the entrance to the castle itself. Until they were taken, the



**Militia forces are warmly greeted by villagers as they advance with the invading Israeli forces. Photo: Sygma**

Sayeret on Beaufort ridge would be cut off from the outside. The lieutenant commanding *Vatika* was another kibbutznik named Avikam. Burly Avikam had another four months of service remaining before he was due to be discharged from the regular army. He planned to return to his kibbutz and become a wheat farmer.

Guni decided that his tactical command team would remain at the hairpin turn in the access road so it would be centrally positioned to react to events. The youngest team in the Sayeret had just completed its basic training prior to the outbreak of the war. Guni designated it as tactical reserve and put it on call by the casualty-clearing station at the base of the ridge. Once the outlying defenses had been captured, Guni planned to wait for morning to attack the castle itself. The wait would enable him to bring up the tank from the firebase position to deliver close-range cannon fire in support of the attacking infantry.

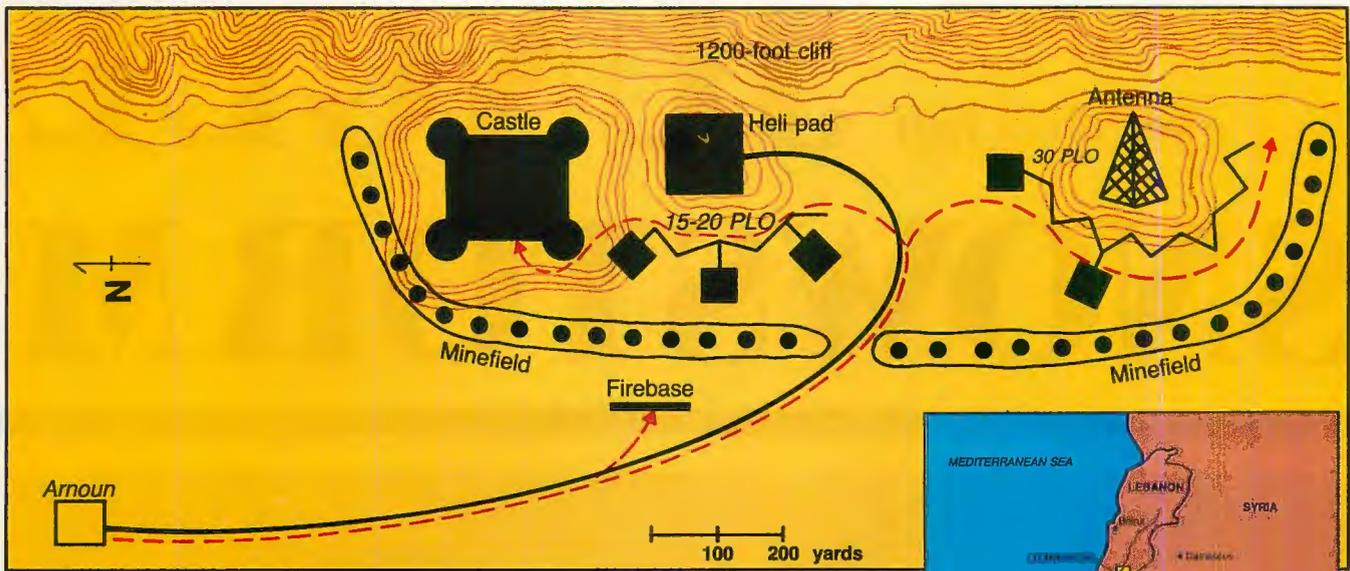
The attack was scheduled to jump off at 2000 hours. During the last few minutes remaining prior to the assault, the Sayeret troopers made final adjustments to their weapons and equipment. The young Israelis also tried to prepare themselves mentally for what was, for most of them, their first major battle. The prevailing feeling was one of cautious optimism. The short firefight in Arnoun had served to reinforce their quiet sense of self confidence. The Israelis had no doubts that the superior quality of their personnel and training would bring them victory in the coming battle. The only question in their minds was, what would be the cost?

At 2000 exactly, Yuval and his team moved quietly toward their positions. Simultaneously, Erez led the main formation through the darkness up the road leading to the castle above. Since the destruction of the two recoilless rifles 90 minutes earlier, the castle ridge had been totally silent.

This caused some of the keyed up young Israelis to venture the hope that the ridge positions had been abandoned by their Palestinian defenders. "Perhaps they all bugged out," said one trooper to his buddy in a tone of half-question/half-statement. In a few moments, however, such wishful thinking would be shattered by the sharp crackle of machine-gun fire. The 19- and 20-year-old Israelis would soon find themselves fighting for their lives in a savage, close-range firefight.

The paved access road climbs up the ridge from Arnoun, passing directly beneath Beaufort to a point some 500 yards south of the castle. There, the road doubles back in a hairpin turn to the north and leads directly to Beaufort's southern entrance. As Erez came abreast of the turn, the stillness of the summer night was shattered by the cacophonous stutter of automatic weapons' fire. The darkness suddenly took on a 4th-of-July quality as the night sky was crisscrossed by glowing worms of green tracers. Now that the firefight had ended any vestige of surprise, Arie, the Sayeret artillery liaison officer, radioed a request for illumination. Within seconds, the throaty whistle of incoming artillery was heard and the entire castle ridge was suddenly bathed in a pale yellow, shimmering light. The light cast by illumination flares swinging slowly beneath their parachutes transformed the advancing Israeli infantrymen into marionettes moving jerkily as if at the end of a puppeteer's string.

From the initial burst of Palestinian fire, the air was full of that strange, low, buzzing sound peculiar to bullets passing overhead. The Israelis instantly went to ground and tried to identify the source of the enemy fire. This turned out to be easy enough. An unending stream of green, iridescent tracer was issuing from the antenna area. Like strange species of firefly, beautiful but lethal to the touch, glowing tracers whipped back and forth across the Israeli positions, destroying everything they came in contact with. Within the first few seconds two Israelis were killed and another two wound-



ed, all from the Vatika. As medics dragged the wounded behind cover to begin treatment, the Israelis began to return fire. After several minutes, Erez realized that the enemy was too far away for his fire to have any real effect. He would have to work his way much closer. "Team, advance by element bounds," the young officer shouted over the noise of the firing. Then, he and his troopers were up and moving forward. Two elements of the team remained under cover to provide suppressive fire, while the third maneuver element sprinted forward to the next line of cover.

Most of the enemy fire was coming from a solidly built bunker situated on a small hillock at the cliff's edge. Nicknamed *Nikba* by the Israelis during pre-mission planning, the bunker was one of the main defensive strongholds in the antenna area. The PLO defenders had sited a DShK heavy machine gun in the bunker and were using it to deadly effect. As Sayeret troopers worked their way forward, the Palestinian machine gun began to take its toll. By the time the Israelis were approaching the *Nikba*, Erez, his team NCO and two of his men had been wounded. Another trooper was dead. Under extremely heavy machine-gun and assault rifle fire, the attack on the bunker stalled. The seven remaining unhurt team members took cover, returned enemy fire and began to treat their wounded.

When the command team received word of the fate of Erez and his team, Guni decided to dispatch help. He had no available troops, but could send an officer to assume command of the *Nikba* attack. "T", the Sayeret intelligence officer, immediately volunteered. T was an American-born former Sayeret trooper who had since gone to officers' school. The outbreak of war had caught him between assignments, and not wishing to miss the war he naturally returned to his old unit. The slot of Sayeret intelligence officer was vacant, so T nominated himself for the job. He similarly nominated himself to take command of the remnants of Erez's team pinned down before the *Nikba*.

It took T several minutes to travel the 300

#### First successful assault on Beaufort Castle — June 1982.

yards separating the command group and Erez's beleaguered troops. In the meantime, the team medic had been killed, leaving the wounded without any source of medical treatment. Once he had linked up with the team T wasted little time. Quickly assessing the situation, he left two troopers with the team's RPD machine guns as a firebase element. (Israeli special operations units use the Soviet RPD light machine gun as their squad automatic weapon. The weapon is coveted due to its light weight and superb reliability. The squad machine gun in use by regular line infantry units is the FN MAG.) He led the remaining four unwounded soldiers in a deep left flanking maneuver along the cliff edge. Leading the

#### Israeli flag flies over Beaufort Castle after Israeli forces successfully stormed its defenses on 6 June 1982. Photo: Sygma



way along the 1,200-foot precipice, T destroyed a mortar pit with a well-placed grenade. Under intense covering fire from the pair of RPDs, T and his intrepid little band climbed the 20-foot-high hillock toward the blindside of the bunker located at its summit. Upon reaching the bunker, T threw several grenades through the firing port and the door. When these failed to silence the machine gun inside, he resorted to the use of a "Gur charge" which collapsed the bunker on top of its occupants. A Gur charge is a demolition charge consisting of five kilograms of high explosive, encased in a hard plastic outer covering. The covering contains a handle so the result is similar in shape to a large rectangular flashlight. The handle enables the charge to be easily thrown, and it is especially useful in house-clearing operations.

Although the initial burst of fire had killed or wounded a third of the Vatika, Avikam showed no hesitation in leading his men toward their objective 200 yards to the north. Vatika troopers advanced quickly and reached the helipad fortifications without further incident. The *Palestinians* in the helipad trenches and bunkers were fully occupied exchanging fire with Yuval's fire team group below. The terrorists were completely unaware of the imminent threat to their rear. However, when Avikam reached the end of the main trench, he discovered to his chagrin that Northern Command Intelligence had made a serious blunder. The air-photo analysts had failed to detect that the cement walled trenches were too narrow to allow a man to move along them while wearing webbing equipment. The surprised Sayeret troopers had no choice but to clear

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**SOF DRUG WAR**

# JUNGLE SNOWSTORM



# SOF on the Ground in Peru's Cocaine Valley

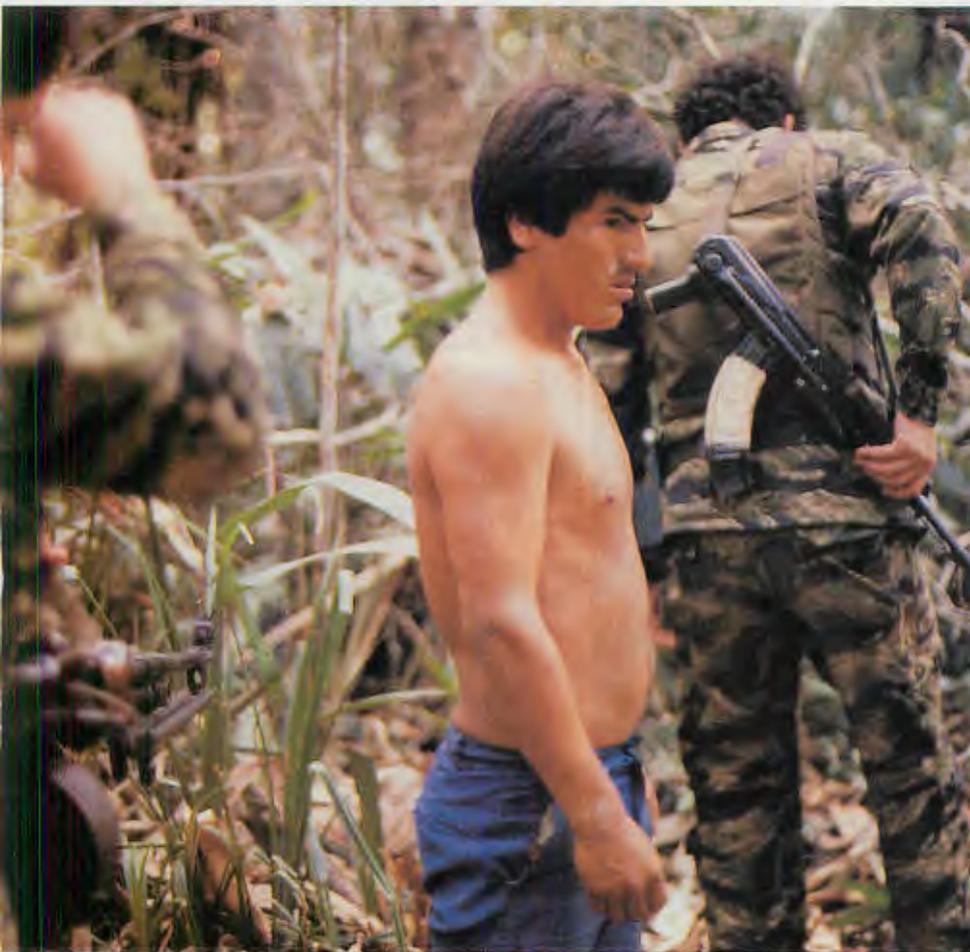
by G.B. Crouse & Gene Scroft



A barren saddle between two heavily wooded hills was the only practical LZ (landing zone) I could see from the air. As we made our descent, a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent seated next to me indicated that as soon as the helicopter neared the ground I should jump out. Since

**LEFT:** Brown with pilot of State Department C-123. Pilot nonchalantly smoked a cigar standing under fuel tank while aircraft was being fueled. Photo: G.B. Crouse

**BELOW:** Suspect apprehended by Peruvian anti-drug police near site of destroyed coca lab. Photo: Robert K. Brown



**LEFT:** Upper Huallaga Valley. All of the fields are coca. Photo: G.B. Crouse

he was armed and wearing a flak jacket, as were the troops from the Peruvian anti-drug police riding in the DEA Huey, I asked if he was going too. He shook his head no.

Just wonderful, I thought, watching the ground coming up fast. I'm about to be the first one to jump out of the chopper with a bunch of drug police into a potentially hot LZ and the only person I could communicate with, the DEA agent, wasn't getting off the bird.

It wasn't the first detail about this flight into the jungle that had struck me as odd. The first warning sign came when our escort from the Ministry of the Interior, who was to accompany us to the jungle, was suspiciously called back to Lima "for an emergency."

Fernando, chief of press relations for the Interior Ministry, had been promising a trip into the upper Huallaga Valley for days. After numerous delays, we didn't have much hope of it happening, but sure enough Fernando showed up at our Lima apartment dressed for the interior. Wearing more tiger stripes than the Cincinnati Bengals' offensive line and carrying a pistol, submachine gun and night vision device, he was a sight to behold.

Our interest in the upper Huallaga stemmed from the coca production there and American and Peruvian governments' efforts to stop it. Somewhere between \$3 and \$5 billion is generated by the cocaine trade and roughly 75 percent of the raw product is produced in Peru. Ninety percent of that comes from the Huallaga.

Located on the eastern slopes of the Andes, its tropical climate and extensive river system make it one of the most fertile regions in the country. Foodstuffs, however, do not represent the major source of income in the valley. In the Huallaga, coca is king.

The reasons for this are *economic*. Roads over the Andes that link the valley with the coastal markets and Lima (where one third of Peru's 20 million people live) are unpaved and barely passable even in the best weather conditions. This lack of good roads, along with chronic — some would say criminal — mismanagement of the economy by successive governments has made it impossible for the Huallaga's farmers to make a decent living on traditional crops.



Peru's crumbling economy and the massive demand for cocaine in the United States have made coca production an all-encompassing industry in the upper Huallaga. Out-of-work youth, fortune hunters, and ne'er-do-wells of all sorts have flocked

Farm near Tingo Maria. Plants surrounding buildings are coca; harvested leaves are drying in sun. Photo: G.B. Crouse

to the valley and transformed its once sleepy villages into boom towns of gold-rush proportions. In Tingo Maria, the major city in the valley, the local car dealership specializes in expensive Japanese-made, four-wheel drive pickup trucks. Banana growers don't often buy those types of vehicles.

Our drive to the airport to catch our flight to the Huallaga was filled with ominous warnings from Fernando about dangers of the jungle. Having been in the Peruvian

## PERU'S GUERRILLAS

In addition to the narcotics problem, Peru is faced with two major insurgencies: the radically Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Marxist Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA).

Sendero Luminoso (SL) took its name from a 1960's student group called the Revolutionary Student Front for the Shining Path of Mariatequil (Mariatequil was a revolutionary writer in the 1920s). SL's undisputed leader is Abimael Guzman (Gonzolo) Rynoso, who is called the "fourth sword of communism" by his followers (after Marx, Lenin and Stalin). He surfaced as a revolutionary while serving as a philosophy professor in the University of San Cristobal de Huamango in Ayacucho in 1962. Originally a member of the pro-Castro National Liberation Front, he broke with that organization in 1965 over the issue of creating "Foquista" guerrilla bands to openly wage war against the government. Guzman felt that the establishment of a firm base of support was necessary before engaging in armed conflict and that the Foquista groups were premature. The quick destruction of the ill-trained bands by the Peruvian army vindicated Guzman's position.

In 1970, after trying for five years to work with other radical groups, Guzman created Sendero Luminoso. For seven years he devoted his efforts to recruiting a dedicated and ideologically "pure" cadre largely from students of Indian descent. Initially, in order to make the SL a true Indian movement, all members had to be able to speak Quechua, the principal Indian dialect. This policy was later changed in order to attract more people to the movement. From 1977-1980 the SL absorbed other revolutionary groups that claimed to represent the aspirations of the Indian population. By the end of 1980 the SL could claim to be the only major movement that represented the impoverished and bitter Indians. Although they comprise some 45 percent of Peru's population, the Indians have never been fully incorporated into Peruvian society. Add to this neglect the historic hatred between the native

population and the Spanish "invaders" and you have a revolution waiting to happen.

The SL opened its active campaign against the government in 1980 when it buried ballot boxes in Ayacucho and hung dogs in the streets of Lima to protest national elections and, strangely enough, the rise of "moderate" Deng Xio Peng in China. Guzman's boys are so radical that they believe Albania is a revisionist state. From this rather feeble start the SL has grown to a force of 5,000 armed guerrillas. It is important to realize that these figures are estimates. The SL doesn't publish membership lists. Its activities have led to more than 12,000 deaths, caused more than \$1 billion worth of damage and forced the government to place large sections of the country under martial law.

Guzman has planned for a protracted struggle to evolve roughly in three stages, much like the theory of guerrilla war developed by Mao Zedong in the 1930s:

- **Stage One** is a period of "agitation and propaganda." The purpose of this stage is to mobilize a base of support in

the countryside, establish a dedicated cadre and the first rudiments of a guerrilla army and lay the groundwork for an expanded armed struggle.

- **Stage Two** involves the creation of selected "liberated zones." These will serve as both strongholds and symbols of achievement. This according to a document released by Sendero in March 1982, "Let's Advance the Guerrilla War!"

Note: The movement has entered this period. Sendero's actions in this stage are expected to develop slowly, as the movement works to polarize society, continues to widen its area of rural control, and make its first move to bring the war to the cities by establishing a network of urban supporters.

- **Stage Three** involves a general uprising in the countryside, the collapse of urban society, and the destruction of the Lima regime. This is to be accomplished by gradually surrounding and besieging the cities and finally striking from within the urban network.

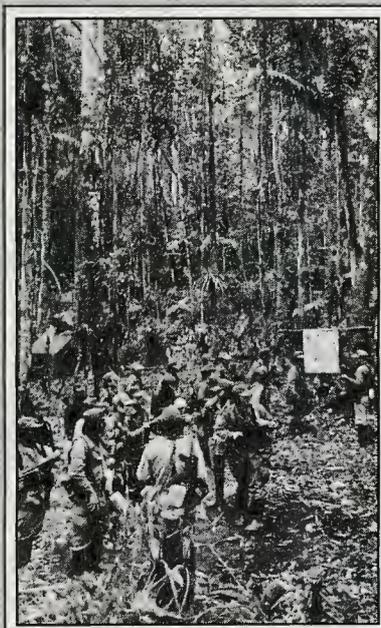
The SL uses terror as an instrument to enforce revolutionary order in areas that have fallen under their control. An eyewitness gave this account of revolutionary justice in 1984:

"They stood the boy in the plaza, calling him a traitor and a coward. Then, in front of everyone, they cut off his head with a knife. There was nothing that we could do to save him. Five minutes later one of them yelled 'whoever does the same thing will receive the same punishment!' Then they left, shouting allegiances to comrade Gonzolo."

The violent policies of Sendero have cost them some support among the people, but some have been intimidated and now support them out of fear. Hatred of the government and promises of a better life in the future allows the SL to maintain a strong hold over some Peruvians, especially the young campesinos.

The other major guerrilla group that operates in Peru is the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA-Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement). This group first appeared in 1983 and takes its name from Tupac Amaru II (Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui), leader of the last great Indian revolt against Spanish rule in 1780-82. MRTA is a Marxist

MRTA camp near Janjui. Note quality of uniforms, weapons and equipment. Photo: Caritas Magazine



jungle before, I was tempted to discount much of what he had to say, but nonetheless I found myself paying attention to his dire warnings. After all, it was his country and he was better acquainted with potential hazards than I.

Once at the airport we met the crew of a U.S. State Department C-123 that would take us to Tingo Maria, about 200 miles over the Andes from Lima. Piloted by a former Air America pilot, the airplane was

the last C-123 in government service (although there were plans to acquire two more for use in Peru). Naturally, nothing occurred on time, giving us an opportunity to chat with the pilot and crew and ask questions about the security situation at our destination. The pilot showed us bullet holes — recent bullet holes — in his airplane, which sort of answered most of our questions.

The flight to Tingo was uneventful, save for the magnificent view of the 23,000-foot

Andes mountains, which at times were higher than the aircraft. Our cargo consisted of supplies for the State Department's Narcotics Assistance Unit, operating in the valley, and workers in State's coca eradication program.

Our landing was greeted by Americans in tiger stripes with assault rifles, one of whom asked if I was the guy from Evergreen (once a CIA proprietary, now a privately held aviation company with State Department

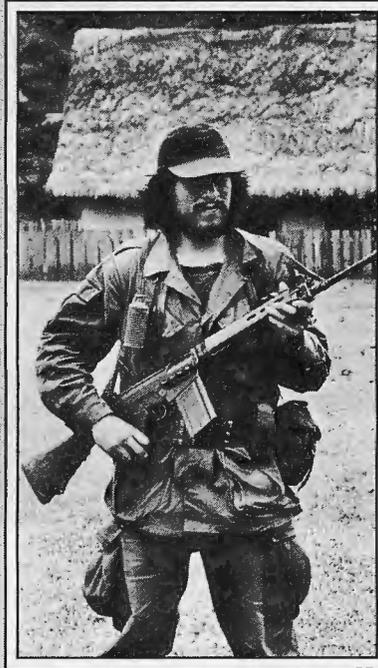
guerrilla group of 300-500 (again, numbers are imprecise) professing ideological alignment with the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments, the Salvadoran FMLN, and has close contacts with Colombia's M-19. It has no links with the Sendero Luminoso.

MRTA's first significant action took place in June 1984 when it occupied a radio station and broadcast a message denouncing the International Monetary Fund. Later that same month it conducted simultaneous attacks against Lima and Cusco.

Originally thought of as only an urban terrorist group, the MRTA has increasingly conducted attacks in the countryside. In the town of Juanjui in November 1987 a well-disciplined MRTA force of 120 defeated a 90-man police force. The MRTA guerrillas were equipped with load-bearing equipment and uniforms and were well-armed with AKs, FALs and even an M16. These men were well-trained and hardened field troops, not just a bunch of college kids. The film also showed that they had broad support within Juanjui. They were warmly greeted by the inhabitants and small children proudly carried the guerrillas' weapons. It was clear that the reaction wasn't forced.

Unlike the SL the MRTA is skillful at the propaganda game. Police captured at Juanjui were condemned to death by the residents. It is unclear if this reaction was forced by the situation, but knowing the way most Peruvians feel about the abusive police their condemnation was likely genuine. But the MRTA released them to the town priest. It was a propaganda masterstroke. Mercy to a vanquished foe and support for religious traditions. Though not a large group, MRTA's pragmatic line will attract many of the people who are dissatisfied with the government (which is practically everyone) but frightened by Sendero radicalism. MRTA is definitely a threat to watch for the future.

Presently there doesn't seem to be any outside material support for either guerrilla group. The SL doesn't want it for fear that it might dilute the "purity" of their revolution and the MRTA hasn't been able to find many backers in international communism. Though not pro-



**MRTA guerrilla photographed shortly after rebel attack on police garrison at Janjui. Photo: Caritas Magazine**

viding direct aid to the groups, communist governments are not ignoring the situation in Peru. The Soviet Embassy in Lima is one of the largest in Latin America though at present the Soviets seem to be emphasizing co-opting of the country's legal leftist parties rather than supporting the insurgents.

Forces aligned against the insurgents, the police and the army, are in a sorry state. These armed forces are hampered by a traditional garrison mentality, a lack of confidence caused by inadequate training, and feeble support from the government. The 1988 budget gives the army only about enough money to pay salaries, nothing more. With troops making only \$15 and full colonels only \$200 per month, it's no wonder that corruption is rampant.

The armed forces' only solution to the insurgency seems to be to act more terrible than the terrorists. Since guerrilla bands are seldom pursued by government forces the war amounts to little more than reprisals against villages that support the communists. While I agree

that violence must be used against the guerrillas and their supporters and that there is little room for peacetime "human rights" in a civil war, force should be combined with programs that prove the legitimacy of the government by providing for the people's basic needs. As it stands now the Peruvian forces ignore the carrot and rely only on the stick.

In 1984 a native Queche speaker, General Adria Huaman Centeno, was put in command of the Ayacucho emergency zone, the birthplace of Sendero Luminoso. He told the newspaper *La Republica* that:

"The solution for Ayacucho is not military, because if it were, if the issue were to kill everyone in Ayacucho, I could solve it in half an hour. . . . We are talking about human beings, about people who have been making demands for 160 years without getting anyone's attention, and we are now reaping the results."

General Huaman was quickly replaced.

President Garcia has no idea how to run the war or the economy and has almost two years left in office. Garcia, head of APRA or *Accion Popular Revolucionaria Americana*, was elected with a huge mandate in 1985 but his regime is now tottering toward a coup. Charismatic, Garcia preaches a popular anti-imperialist (read anti-American) and nationalistic line. His policies of discouraging foreign investment to induce self sufficiency, limiting international debt payments to only 10 percent of Peru's miniscule gross national product (thus drying up development loans) and subsidization of agriculture to keep food prices low for the urban masses (a popular program until the treasury ran out of money and began paying farmers with worthless IOUs) has created an inflation rate of 2,000 percent per year and dropped Garcia's popularity rating to four percent among the masses.

The country suffers from gross mismanagement, hyperinflation, guerrilla violence and abusive armed forces. Without leadership that has the intelligence and strength to correct these deficiencies — and that leadership is nowhere in sight — Peru's future looks very dark indeed. — *Gene Scroft*

Robert K. Brown and G.B. Crouse with Peruvian anti-drug police on airfield in Tingo Maria. Photo: Jack Thompson

and other government contracts.) I told him no, but added that if the pay was good I would be willing to listen to a reasonable offer. He looked annoyed, shrugged and walked away. Eventually we were met by an officer from the anti-drug police who escorted us to headquarters.

After a briefing from the CO we retired to the local hotel for lunch. Some of the DEA folks dropped by to tell us their expected take-off time and discuss some ground rules about photos, the use of their names and so on. A few minutes later we were off to the airfield.

Fernando had made the flight to Tingo and participated in the briefing and lunch, and then just before we were to launch, he received an urgent message. Jack Thompson and I, riding to the airfield with the escort, SOF Editor/Publisher Bob Brown and some troops, decided the message was probably something like: "All chickenshits return to Lima at once."

As it turned out, there was a near coup in the capital and the message was very genuine and very urgent, but we didn't know that at the time. Arriving at the airfield, sans Fernando, I noticed another anomaly. Everyone going on the mission was wearing body armor, but no one offered a vest to Brown, Thompson or me. And then, I suppose because I was a visiting journalist and loaded with camera gear, they gave me the port-side doorgunner's seat, the most exposed place in the helicopter. I was thrilled.

After a short discussion about what the drill would be once we were airborne, we lifted off.

I'd seen the jungle north of Tingo from the air and on the ground before, but the coca cultivation was even more intense below us than it had been up north. It would be impossible to estimate the number of large and small plots of land with coca growing on them; it would be easier to count corn fields in Iowa. They stretched literally as far as the eye could see.

Before leaving Lima, we'd been told about a visit from a representative of an aerospace manufacturing firm that built remotely piloted vehicles for military reconnaissance. This clueless fool had arrived in Peru with a proposal to use RPVs for overflights of the Huallaga Valley to "find" coca fields.

Locating coca is the least of anybody's problems; a blind man could find coca fields



in the Huallaga. No effort is made to conceal growth of the crop. Seeing the extent of coca production from the air, you begin to get an idea of the size of the problem. In the Huallaga three coca crops are grown per year and estimates place the total amount of land under coca cultivation at from 140,000 hectares to 200,000 hectares (345,000-494,000 acres). The economy of the upper Huallaga Valley, and much of Peru, is coca driven.

Rather than ruining the local economy and the ability of small-scale farmers to feed their families, the DEA concentrates on trying to destroy the labs. By the time the plants are in the hands of the labs, the peasants have already been paid by the traffickers.

After drying the leaf for a day or two (after four days the leaves began to rot) farmers pack them into 11.5 kilogram sacks called *arobas*, worth about \$40-50 to the wholesalers.

Wholesalers turn the leaves into paste in their labs by a complicated chemical process. After soaking the leaves in sulfuric acid for about 12 hours the leaves are discarded and the liquid is mixed with kerosene. Solids that form in the mixture are removed and the new liquid is mixed with lye (often in the form of concrete mix). The lye solution is mixed in a churn and then combined with small amounts of limestone chalk until it turns white. When this solution is squeezed through a cloth the substance remaining on the cloth is coca paste. Paste sells for about \$640 per kilo. Since paste is

worth so much more than leaves, farmers are increasingly making paste before selling to the wholesaler.

Paste is then washed by mixing it with a solution of ammonia and bicarbonate. The resulting solid is called "washed paste" or "base" and sells for about \$3,500 a kilo. This process — making the "base" — was usually performed in Columbia, but is now becoming a big business in Peru. Cocaine, basically baked base, is then shipped to the United States and Western Europe.

Thus big, big money rides on control of the Huallaga.

Not far from Tingo Maria we began to see communist propaganda painted on the road and buildings, something I hadn't seen up north. One building even had a hammer and sickle flag flying over it. But leftist insurgents weren't the target today. The anti-drug police concentrate on drugs and leave the rebels to the army. Cooperation between the two organizations is almost unheard of. In a recent incident a DEA helicopter was grounded by gunfire and its crew, including an American, were on the ground and under fire. The army, which could have dispatched helicopters and a reaction force didn't, saying all the oil in their helicopters had been "contaminated." *Sure it had.*

In fact there has been cooperation between the army and the drug traffickers. During a state of emergency in 1984-85, the Peruvian military received information about guerrilla activities from the narcos in the Huallaga Valley.

There has been much discussion about



... a blind man could find coca fields in the Huallaga.



cooperation between Marxist and Maoist guerrilla groups in Peru and the drug trade. Straight answers are hard to come by; everyone has their own ax to grind, and when asked about cooperation between the two groups the answer tends to be more parochial than straightforward. The best information available would suggest that there have been links at times — but there is no permanent alliance nor shared agenda. They are unlikely allies as the narcos are interested only in profit while the guerrillas are dedicated to creating a new order that would make it impossible for the narcos to exist, or so they say.

But even more than politics, money changes everything. There are times when the narcos cooperate with the police and with the guerrillas. Cooperation is actually a misnomer; it is actually more of a protection racket. The local police are usually paid \$5,000 not to notice planes taking off for Columbia, the guerrillas (they have guns, too) are paid another \$5,000, and to keep the masses happy an additional \$5,000 may go to the local community.

Everybody is happy that way. Everybody but the DEA, and we were with the DEA.

After flying over the jungle at what I considered entirely too low an altitude (we were dodging trees), the DEA agent seated next to me indicated that we were going to land. Poising myself on the edge, I waited until the ground was five or six feet away and jumped. I'd been told by the CO back at headquarters that when the choppers landed I should get out and away as quickly as

possible. Apparently he hadn't given his own troops the same advice. After hitting the ground I moved quickly away from the bird and dashed to the nearest cover, some 10 meters away. I dropped to one knee and turned to the soldier behind to see what his next move was going to be.

Nobody was there.

Well that's just fine, I thought. I'm dashing around the jungle in shorts and running shoes, carrying a camera, and the guys with the guns and flak jackets aren't even off the helicopter yet.

They finally did get off, trotted in my direction and paused just long enough to look at me as if I was a bit of an idiot before pushing on into the jungle. I followed and watched them set up something of a defensive perimeter on the narrow ridge while the first helo took off and the second one, with

Brown aboard, approached.

After the second helo off-loaded its troops we retraced our steps to the LZ, cautiously looking for mines and booby-traps, and formed a column. Our objective was a drug lab the DEA had destroyed a few days ago. They wanted to see if any of the former proprietors of the place had returned. There were several young men in the area who explained they *had* come to gather wood and other building materials from the wreckage. That seemed to satisfy the boss, but further down the trail, nearer the actual lab, they encountered a poor slob who hadn't the good sense to leave the area when the helicopters landed. When he was approached he had the proverbial hand-in-the-cookie-jar look on his face. He was quickly policed up and taken away to be "interviewed."

Police station under fire in Ayacucho. Local residents seem less than concerned about the attack. Photo: Caritas Magazine

After inspecting the wreckage of the former lab and interrogating the suspect we returned to the LZ. As the choppers landed, the suspect was bundled into the first bird. He'd probably never even ridden in a four-door sedan before and from the less-than-eager look on his face, he wasn't thrilled at the prospect of his first helicopter ride.

We turned north after lifting off as the DEA agents wanted to show us the scene of a recent battle between a prominent local narco called Machis and the Sendero Luminoso (SL), a Maoist guerrilla group. The SL had gained control in the area and were forcing the workers — Machis' workers — to attend political indoctrination sessions, sometimes at 0400. Machis sought to organize local resistance so Sendero attacked his compound in the village of Paraiso. What ensued was a fierce battle between the narco's hired gunmen and the guerrillas. After taking it in the shorts for a couple of days, the narco used white bed sheets to spell out SOS in 10-foot letters in the courtyard of his compound, hoping the army, the police, the DEA or anybody who could read would come to his assistance. The DEA seemed to find this vastly amusing.

They'd nonetheless gone to his rescue. Machis is now in a Peruvian jail. The wreckage below attested to the ferocity of the battle. Burned and bullet-damaged buildings stood vacant, illustrating the effectiveness of the guerrillas when they assemble in strength.

But the narcos don't always lose. Soon after the Machis incident, in Uchiza (definitely not a Club Med kind of place), a local narco called "Barbrito" (Little Beard) discovered on his return from a business trip to Colombia that Sendero Luminoso had taken over his operation, killing his wife and brother in the process. Barbrito hired hoods and killed enough guerrillas to drive the SL out. But not for long. Barbrito learned the SL was headed back to Uchiza with a 100-man column. He cut a deal with the police. If they would ignore all the shooting, he would ambush the SL and then let the police take credit for the body count. Such a good deal the police could not resist.

We didn't find that good a deal — or any action — throughout the balance of the afternoon. We flew about, frequently swooping low to examine suspected drug lab sites, but returned to the airfield at Tingo with little to show for the day.

The patrol had lasted only an afternoon,



but it seemed longer. For the DEA agents assigned to Tingo it was only one of hundreds they would make in their tour of duty there. Extra pay and an exotic setting seem less than adequate compensation for the agents who volunteer for duty in Peru. Most of them, like those we'd accompanied, spent their tours in the Huallaga, going out daily to locate labs and gather intelligence about narco activities in the valley.

After the flight several of them joined Brown, Thompson and me in the hotel bar for a drink (or two), where Jack and I humiliated them at darts, evidence of our misspent youth. The most lively topic of discussion was, of course, how to tackle the cocaine problem. All the agents seemed amused and at the same time disdainful of stateside politicians' proposed "solutions" to the cocaine problem.

The United States actually has two approaches to the cocaine problem in Peru: eradication and interdiction. And as governments are wont to do it has assigned the task to two agencies: the Justice Department's DEA and the State Department's Narcotics Assistance Unit (NAU). Generally speaking

the NAU handles eradication and the DEA interdiction. The NAU goes after the plants; the DEA takes over once the plants are processed.

Eradication through the use of herbicides (principally tebuthiuron, known as "Spike") is difficult to implement. Spike's manufacturer, the Eli Lilly Company, has refused to sell the product to the State Department because of concerns about potential misuse. There is also a possible problem with long-term effects. Environmental groups — Greenpeace sent a man into the Huallaga to argue against use of chemicals — cite laboratory tests of Spike which caused liver damage in rats. In addition, Spike is basically a nerve agent that kills wood plants by being absorbed by the roots. Now coca is an extremely hardy plant that will grow almost everywhere. Its only natural enemy seems to be a worm that quickly dies of narcotic overdose after eating the leaf. A chemical that kills this plant would have to be some pretty powerful stuff. And since most farmers grow their coca side-by-side with other woody crops (citrus, papaya, etc.) these plants would also likely



## “All chickenshits return to Lima at once.”

ble of shutting down the valley through strikes, roadblocks and other means.

To make matters worse, the Huallaga Valley is increasingly tied to Colombia. Colombian narcos have recently begun buying directly from Peruvian producers and less from middlemen. Economically, the Huallaga's most important ties are with Colombians rather than with their own country.

Colombian drug lords have intervened directly in the affairs of the valley, at one point dispatching 300 armed men to help protect labs and supply routes. Their reach extends to Lima as well. Several members of an Italian organized crime syndicate visiting Lima to look into getting involved in the cocaine trade were murdered shortly after their arrival. A hapless Italian tourist who arrived shortly after the murder of his countrymen, and who had no ties to organized crime, was killed within hours of his arrival, mistaken by the Colombians for another mafioso.

Although much of the money generated by the cocaine trade is banked, or invested overseas, an estimated \$600-700 million returns to Peru yearly. That money plays an important role in the overall economy. Everything from banks to businesses in the service industry would be damaged if it were stopped.

While our efforts to stop coca cultivation and processing may well contribute to the destabilization of Peru, they do not seem likely to reduce the production of coca in Peru. It is difficult to foresee the current eradication-interdiction efforts of the DEA and NAU having an impact on the core of the coca industry in Peru. The agents, officials and pilots we met were hard working and dedicated to a man, but their efforts and resources are at least inadequate, and quite possibly inappropriate as well. What's worse is that some of them may be killed carrying out their duties, a tragedy in itself which would be compounded by the fact that their efforts are unlikely to have much impact on America's cocaine problem.

Some experts would disagree of course, but after seeing the breadth of coca production on the ground it's difficult to view the cocaine problem as being other than demand driven. Sooner or later America is going to have to face up to the fact that the cocaine problem has to be solved in the streets of America — not in the jungles of Peru's Huallaga Valley. ✎

be affected by Spike.

Official claims to the contrary ring of desperation to produce results and environmentalists aren't buying. What they fail to factor in is that the coca industry is also ravaging the countryside. Paste labs dump huge amounts of kerosine and sulfuric acid into the Huallaga River and its tributaries. Local fishermen in the valley complain that many of their favorite rivers no longer have fish. Farmers are also burning down thousands of hectares of jungle to grow coca. During the dry season much of the valley lies under a thick layer of smoke from these fires.

Peru has used Spike on an experimental basis but there are no plans to begin widespread use.

Buying the fields from the farmers is also being tried, but for every hectare removed through purchase, four to five more are being planted. In addition there are reports of farmers using the money they receive to finance new production in other fields.

The NAU eradication program is also of dubious effect. State employs 450 farmers to pluck the coca plants by hand. The latest twist is a power cutter, a weed eater utilizing a rotating steel blade instead of a plastic cord. The NAU agent who proudly showed the photo of the “coca eater” proudly claimed that the new machine would significantly increase the program's effectiveness. An agent from State however, admitted that if there were no new land placed in cultivation it would take until the year 2070 to destroy the coca now being grown in the Huallaga. As one wit said: “It's like emptying a lake with a teacup.”

The DEA's effort is directed at busting up labs and stopping the flights. Drug labs destroyed in the morning can be rebuilt hours later a mile away. The Peruvian landscape is covered with unmapped runways, and with

**Communist propaganda and roadblocks on road north from Tingo Maria, symbols of protest left by locals unhappy with American-supported Peruvian coca eradication campaign. Photo: G.B. Crouse**

money, machetes and sweat, cratered runways can be replaced by new ones within days.

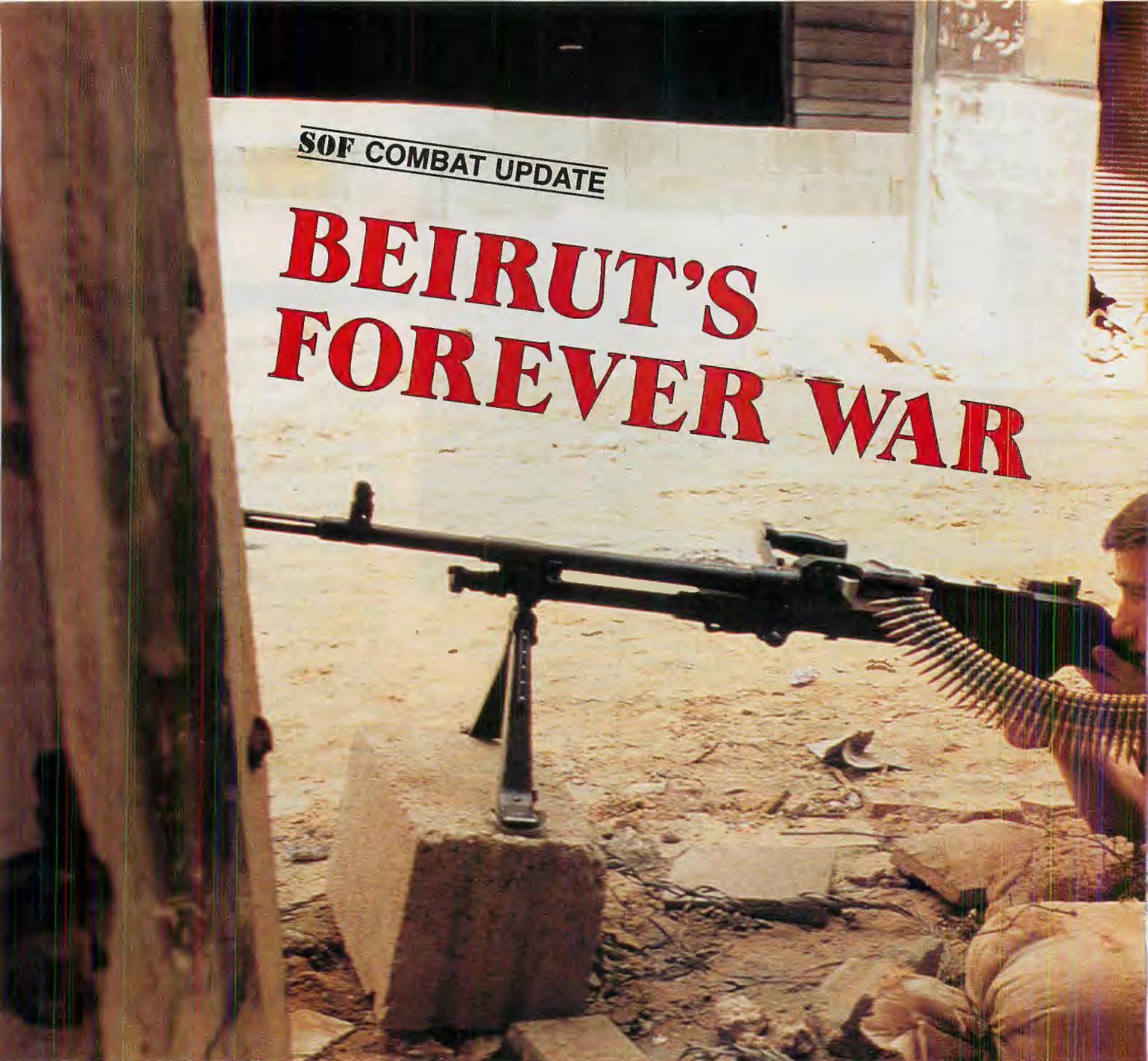
A high ranking DEA official told SOF they were anxiously awaiting the arrival of some helicopters, including two gunship birds. He didn't specify what, exactly, they would shoot up with the gunships. Heavily armed helicopters blasting away at drug labs might be satisfying at a gut level but it won't put the labs out of business and might create a lot of guerrillas. People get upset when someone starts leveling houses and killing everything that moves.

All of the proposed solutions would impose great economic damage on Peru. More than 90 percent of the agricultural production of the Huallaga Valley is coca and the peasants don't spend their days in the fields cultivating coca to improve their tan. There is a tremendous market for their product and little viable agricultural alternative. Widespread unemployment and increased poverty would result if farmers are stopped from growing coca. Growing other crops would result in their incomes being slashed by some 75 percent. It would also undoubtedly push many of the farmers into the fold of the active insurgency in Peru, destabilizing the government.

Not that the farmers aren't political now — they are. Many farmers are organized into self-defense fronts, with ties to leftist political parties in Peru. Known as FEDIPs, the groups lobby against American eradication efforts in the valley and push for legalization of coca production. They are capa-

**SOF COMBAT UPDATE**

# BEIRUT'S FOREVER WAR



**I**N Lebanon, life might be cheap, but the tools for ending it are not.

It's a reality of economic life in the eastern Mediterranean that conflict has become expensive, especially in the last two or three years. Five years ago the PG-7 warhead of the RPG-7 rocket system cost about U.S. \$100, or 350 Lebanese pounds. Now it still costs U.S. \$100, but in Lebanese money the price has risen — because of the devaluation of the Lebanese pound — to £35,000. The same is true of ammunition for small arms, artillery, rocket shells and other projectiles. All parties involved in Lebanon, from the Right to the Left, are feeling the economic pinch.

Syria, the main supplier of arms to many of the more radical movements operating in Lebanon, is badly strapped for cash. Iran, normally one of Syrian President Assad's main providers of financial aid, has until

## Hard Look at Hard Lines, Hard Times in Lebanon

Text & Photos by Al Venter

recently been engaged in a war of its own against Iraq. Nor are oil revenues what they once were, a fact of life that affects Tehran, Damascus and Baghdad as severely as it does the Libyans and, ultimately, those fighting in Lebanon.

Late in 1988, traveling along the Green Line in Beirut or toward Christian positions near the Shouff Mountains or along the northern Christian "frontier" facing the

Lebanese city of Tripoli, I found that there were few contacts between opposing forces. Battles, when they occurred, were waged with automatic rifle fire rather than with artillery or rocket barrages.

Sniping has become a part of life on both sides of ragged separation lines, with all forces favoring highly accurate single-shot fire from sophisticated, Steyr-Mannlicher hunting rifles with high-powered telescopic



**Shots ring out and Lebanese Force Command (LFC) soldiers take up defensive positions along Green Line.**

sights rather than automatic fire from the ubiquitous AK.

The last time I visited Lebanon, in 1983, I was able to move freely on both sides of the Green Line and went often to the southern cities of Sidon and Tyre. At that time a single rocket into an enemy position would often provoke a day-long response. On one occasion I watched a Lebanese Force Command (LFC) soldier fire an RPG-7 rocket into a Syrian army position on the second floor of what was once an apartment block in Beirut. He must have caused damage, because an hour later the front erupted along its entire eight-mile length.

The Christian side was bombarded for the next 24 hours by a fury of high explosives that kept the night sky lit until dawn. We were pounded by the full range of mortars — 82mm, 120mm and 160mm — salvos of 122mm rockets from dozens of well-positioned BM-21s lining the perimeter of the city, and RPGs by the score. Regular bursts from four-barreled ZSU-23/24s arched across the sky in 50-meter wide swathes northward toward the mountains and the town of Juniyah.

The scene was awesome. We watched it from the top of a half-finished, 24-story building that was being used as a mortar spotting post by the Christian soldiers. My own military escort, a young Sorbonne-educated LFC officer, was killed after being sideswiped by an RPG-7 rocket that threw him down the building's elevator shaft. To this writer it was a personal tragedy. Had I not been there, the young man would still be alive.

No one in Beirut today will dispute that this kind of scene is unlikely to happen again. A visit to this once great city straddling seven hills presents a different picture from five years ago.

In the first place, no Western correspondent would dare to associate himself with any radical Moslem force for fear of being kidnapped. Those reports that do come out, consequently, are mostly filed from the Christian-held enclave of the Lebanese Force Command.

Also, the activities of all foreign correspondents are strictly monitored. It is possible to visit the Green Line, but for most these excursions are brief and cursory and under strict escort.

I spent several days in Christian positions and found that conditions had changed markedly from my earlier visits. As in the past, most of the effort directed toward the enemy takes place at night. During the day the lines are lightly manned, although excellent intelligence on the part of the LFC intelligence organization (it calls itself *Al Istkhbarat* and seems to be nominally in control of much of the Christian "sector") appears to have given several small-scale conventional attacks short shrift in recent months.

There actually appears to be little incen-

## GUERRILLA WARFARE WRITER

Al Venter, a Contributing Editor to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, has studied guerrilla warfare around the world for many years, authoring books such as *The Terror Fighters*, *Africa at War*, *The Zambezi Salient* and *Africa Today*. He has also made a documentary film on AIDS, entitled "AIDS: The Strategic Implications for Africa." This article is the result of a half-dozen trips to the Middle East.

Author Venter with flak jacket and M16 in Beirut.





**ABOVE:** Face of Christian fighting man in streets of embattled Beirut.

tive for either side to take new ground, as they did in the past, although Christian forces did gain some additional streets in the central sector after a concerted attack supported by the Syrian army 18 months ago. In reality, additional terrain would mean a new defense structure with supplementary ramparts and incumbent security problems. Because money is short, that is simply not practicable. Hostile Moslem positions — Syrian, Amal and *Hezbollah* (Party of God) — surround the “perimeter” of all Christian Beirut, south, north and east.

Almost all the disputed territory between opposing forces, especially toward the south, the Shouff Mountains and the airport, lies along a ragged, ramparted line that includes such defenses as abandoned containers, derelict army trucks, sandbags, collapsed walls and anything else behind which a man or a vehicle might be able to take cover from enemy fire.

In numbers of men, Christian forces appear to be thin on the ground during daylight hours, though they are apparently sup-

**BELOW:** RPG-7s are mainstay of light infantry weapons on both sides of Green Line. This LFC soldier swears by it.



**ABOVE:** Christian woman maintains communications between strung-out Christian defenses.

plemented after dark. A good amount of heat-sensitive and infrared equipment was seen to be employed, apparently by both sides. Extensive use of some incredibly ingenious booby traps prevents surprise attacks. These include trip wires attached to explosives, heat sensors, claymores and man traps.

An average “control post” might consist of a half-dozen LFC soldiers in olive-drab uniforms (which are remarkably similar to Israeli army issue), usually playing the Arab version of scrabble, draughts or the ever-popular backgammon. These forces are lightly armed with Kalashnikovs and a few RPG-7s.

Radio communications with a nearby base are constant and, from what I was able to observe, heavier backup is available on short notice in the form of captured Russian B-10 recoilless guns, American 106s and even the occasional Syrian T-54/55 battle tank. These were not on display, it was hinted, because of fairly elaborate Israeli innovations that had been added, including laser sights and anti-rocket cladding. In the southern region, north of the Israeli border, the World War II

M-4 Sherman tank is still occasionally in evidence among Christian positions with the South Lebanese Army (SLA).

The role of the Syrian army surrounding Christian Beirut is unclear. The head of the Syrian army in Lebanon is General Said Bairak Dar, and Syrian intelligence in the country is under the control of General Ghazi Kanaan. According to a spokesman of Al Istkhbarat, the 30,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon (there are also about 3,000 Syrian intelligence agents) have regularly pounded Christian positions in the past, usually at night so as not to betray the source of fire.

When complaints are raised about shelling, the local Syrian commander invariably blames one or another of the Moslem factions arrayed against the Christians. He has not been able to explain the presence of several Syrian soldiers taken captive during a night attack on Christian soldiers in early 1988, nor has he been able to shed any light on the fact that at least a dozen larger weapons systems captured by the LFC in January 1988 had Syrian army markings on them.

Clearly, the war along the fringes of the Christian quarter of Beirut remains at a very low level. One observer remarked that in the fall of 1988 there was a good deal more shouting of insults between opposing forces than actual firing. But that, he said, was because neither side was eager to waste ammunition.

Still, conflict goes on. The million-odd Christians in Lebanon have, in recent years, been faced with a manpower problem. Consequently, a system of conscription has been introduced for all children leaving school. They serve 12 months. Both Christian and Arab school-leavers are affected, and Christian girls are obliged to play their part in LFC uniform as well.

Many more Moslem civilians have been entering the Christian areas of late, largely to avoid contact with radical Islamic factions such as the *Hezbollah*, who regard anyone but hardliners as enemies. These people are more or less accepted as residents within the Christian community, although they are required to make their contribution to society — hence conscription.

In the past year, uncertain conditions in Moslem west Beirut have also caused a variety of strange bedfellows to congregate in the Christian area. After the departure of the U.S. Embassy from west Beirut, the Soviets and the Libyans also moved to the areas controlled by the Christian LFC.

At first some were unsure whether this was a correct (or at least a wise) move, since Christian areas have in the past been afflicted by numerous car-bomb explosions. These wreaked terrible havoc, killing hundreds and maiming many more.

Although the Christians retaliated with their own car bombs in the Moslem areas, the exchange was only stopped when the LFC intelligence organization, Al Istkhbarat, rounded up several cells of agents who had been planting them. Among those captured were Syrian, Amal and, surprisingly, Christian agents, all of them in the pay of

## SUMMARY OF LEBANESE POLITICAL FACTIONS

### HEZBOLLAH

Certainly the most radical of all the Moslem political or religious movements active in Lebanon. It is directly linked to Iranian fundamentalist interests and responsible for much recent Middle East hijacking and hostage taking. There are substantial numbers of Iranians within Hezbollah ranks in Lebanon. Organization is sympathetic to Arafat PLO interests in south Lebanon; PLO forces have aided Hezbollah elements in the past during conflict with Amal. Hezbollah is anti-Syrian at present as a result of the number of Hezbollah cadres who were killed when Syrian forces entered Beirut again during 1987. (Syrian forces came to Amal's aid against Palestinian camps at the time). Passionately opposed to Christian Lebanese Force command.

### AMAL

The largest Islamic political and military grouping in Lebanon today and the biggest anti-Christian adversary. Headed by Nabih Berri, Amal is strongly allied to the Syrian presence in Lebanon at present. This movement is strictly Shi'ite and has been heavily involved militarily against Lebanese Force Command. Has recently fought a succession of battles against Hezbollah.

### SUNNI MOSLEM

Centered mainly around the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, which has always been a Sunni stronghold to the exclusion of most Shi'ite elements. Strong Arafat allies and common interests with Hezbollah but not allied to Hezbollah. Passionately opposed to Syrian presence in Lebanon. Sunnis are fighting Syrian army as well as the Alawite Syrian sect which is pro-Assad and also the Christians (Lebanese Force Command).

### DRUZE

In the past, a powerful contender for military authority in the Lebanese political quagmire. Sometimes allied to the Israelis and the Syrians, though for obviously different reasons. Druze are eager to carve out their own "independent" enclave. They are led by Walid Jumblat, who is known to have executed orders from both Damascus and Jerusalem in the past. Jumblat is often irrational in his actions and pronouncements, which some say is the result of drug abuse.

### SYRIAN ARMY

Some 30,000 Syrian soldiers and an estimated 3,000 Syrian intelligence officers



A small bag of bones is all that remains of Druze combatant handed over in exchange for Christian prisoners.

are reported inside Lebanon, headed by Syrian General Said Bairak Dar, in charge of the Syrian army, and General Ghazi Kanaan, who coordinates Syrian military and political intelligence. They are supposed to be controlling mainly Moslem west Beirut, but there are large areas south of the airport and dominated by Hezbollah elements where they do not enter.

### AMIN GEMAYEL

Head of a Christian Phalangist political movement. He was elected President of Lebanon after the 1982 assassination of his charismatic brother Bashir who is still revered by the majority of Christians in the country. He doesn't have a very distinguished track record. Lebanese pound fell from 3.5 to the U.S. dollar when he took power five years ago to about 360 to the U.S. dollar today. He was due to stand for new elections last summer, but the elections were aborted because of Syrian interference. Traditionally the Lebanese president is always Christian. This is being disputed by the more numerous and radical Moslem Lebanese. Amin Gemayel's biggest problem is that he tries to be "all things to all men." He is a lackluster performer who has been accused of being more of a playboy than a politician.

### SULEIMAN FRANJEI

Elder statesman of Lebanese Christian politics but radically pro-Syrian and virulently anti-Lebanese Force Command. He has sworn to avenge the death of his son Tony, who he believes was killed by rival Christians. Lives in Moslem area north of Beirut's Christian enclave (which in itself is a very good reason for being anti-Lebanese Force Command).

### LEBANESE FORCE COMMAND

Certainly the most vital and progressive of all Lebanese political and military organizations. It is exclusively Christian

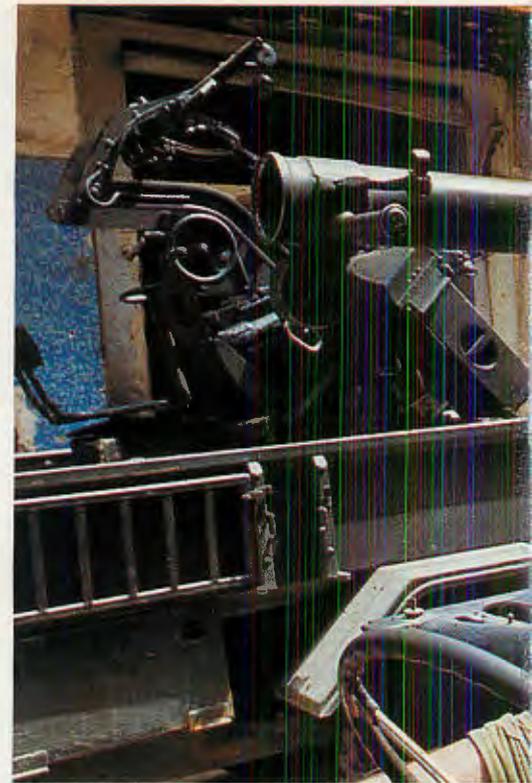
but appears to be attracting more Moslems who seek the ordered protection of Christian east Beirut. Headed by the ascetic Dr. Samir Geagea, a graduate of Beirut's American University, who is also chief of staff of the movement. Geagea took over power during a palace coup in January 1986, when the then chief of staff Elié Hobeika, who was exposed as being in the pay of the Syrians, was ousted. Hobeika and his followers now live in the Syrian-controlled Christian enclave of Zahle, east of Beirut. The Lebanese Force Command is the effective controlling force (government) in Christian east Beirut and dominates an area of about 1,200 of the 10,400 square kilometer country. Closely allied to the Israeli-dominated South Lebanese Army on Israel's northern border.

### THE LEBANESE ARMY

This originally Christian force (and the official army of Lebanon) is still technically commanded by a Christian. Until the election rumpus of the summer of 1988 it was constituted in a ratio of about 60:40 in favor of Islamic Lebanese. It was active throughout much of Christian and Moslem Beirut but was regarded with suspicion by most Christians, since the 6th Brigade was found to be giving some of its weapons to Amal (including recently arrived U.S. tanks) and the 11th Brigade some of its heavier war materials to Walid Jumblat's Druze forces. Most observers in Lebanon in the past have predicted the imminent demise of the Lebanese army. This, in fact, has not happened because most Christian officers and men have fled to the sanctuary of Christian areas and they have been assimilated by the Lebanese Force Command.

### THE SOUTH LEBANESE ARMY (SLA)

A creation by Israeli interests in a bid to secure Israel's northern flank from attack by radical Moslem elements, it was formed in the middle '70s by an Israeli reserve officer, Lt. Col. Yoran Hamizrachi, who "created" the new force out of largely ex-Lebanese army elements headed by a former LA career officer, Sa'ad Haddad (deceased). Since then the SLA, centered around the southern Lebanese town of Marj'Uyun, has become an efficient, professional military force which has taken part in several operations with Israeli forces in South Lebanon. It is strongly opposed to the presence of United Nations peacekeepers because of the latter's inefficacy. The SLA contains a good sprinkling of Moslem soldiers, mostly Shi'ite, but is opposed to the radical tenets of both Hezbollah and Amal. The South Lebanese Army is headed by a former Lebanese regular officer, Major General Antoine Lahad.



Israeli army patrol on the move with elements of South Lebanese Army (SLA) near Marj'Uyun.

Syrian interests.

It was explained that the original motive for planting car bombs had been to destabilize the Christian sector, and, ultimately, to make it ungovernable. It is interesting that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) has mapped out exactly the same strategy for radical Arabs in Israel.

Lebanese Force Command representatives make no comment on what has happened to the car bombers. Other sources indicate that all have been summarily put to death after being tortured. In this country of extraordinary contrasts, little quarter is sought or given.

Ultimately, however, the greatest problem for the Christians in Lebanon is political (in contrast to the Moslems, who are plagued with the even worse problem of fanatical religious groups). Between July and September 1988 the country attempted to elect a new president. Syrian interests put forward their own candidate, but this was rejected by the Christians, with the result that Lebanon today has no formal government. The outgoing president, Amin Gemayel, proved universally unpopular — with the Moslems because he is a Christian and among his fellow Christians because it was during his period in office that the Lebanese pound collapsed, falling from 3.5 pounds to the U.S. dollar to 360 in five years.

There are other problems. Amin Gemayel succeeded to the presidency on the death of his brother, Bashir, a man revered in Christian Lebanese circles as a charismatic and powerful leader who refused to deal with the Syrians or any other hostile forces. Bashir Gemayel was killed in a bomb explosion that destroyed one of his offices. It was subsequently discovered that the bomb had

been laid by agents in the pay of Damascus.

One of the criticisms of Amin Gemayel is that he is a playboy, not a leader. While he has no truck with the Syrians (he refused to sign an accord with Damascus that would, in effect, have made all Lebanon a Syrian colony), there has been much muttering about his lack of control over affairs of state. He is also accused of putting the interests of his own Phalangist Party ahead of the national interests of Lebanon.

There is also resentment of the manner of his control, which is regarded as autocratic. His two children, for instance, have been involved in a number of incidents in which people have been killed. On 12 March last year, two officers of the LFC were fatally shot in the streets of the Zouk District of Christian Beirut by the bodyguards of the president's 18-year-old son Pierre, apparently for no other reason than that they objected to their car being pounded by the bodyguards who were attempting to make way for their charge, who was caught in a traffic jam of his own making. Another ugly incident was caused by Nicole, President Gemayel's daughter. Accompanied by her bodyguards, she demanded entry to a play at the George V Theater in Adonis, Beirut. When no one would give up a seat for her, the bodyguards sprayed the theater with gunfire. One person was killed by a ricocheting bullet. A report in the *Middle East Times* (Vol VI: No 14) notes that this was the fifteenth time that someone had been killed by the bodyguards of the Gemayel family. There are many who would like to see the last of the Gemayels.

What is worrying many Christians is that the killing of the LFC officers George Chaouh and Ziad Habshi by Pierre Gemayel's bodyguards could set off a Mafia-style gang vendetta involving the militias of the president's Phalangist Party and the LFC.

But perhaps the most serious blow to the

Christian Forces in recent years was the defection of their former chief of staff, Elie Hobeika, to the Syrians. Although no one is certain quite to what extent Hobeika was involved with Damascus, it is known that he was prepared to sign the accord with Syria in January 1986 that would have given President Assad control over all Lebanese affairs, both Christian and Moslem.

It is important to recognize what the Syrian-Lebanese Accord would have meant if it had been signed by the Christians:

- 1) There would have been no distinction between Syrian, Amal (Moslem) and Christian interests;
- 2) Syria would have had the right to dictate the movements and operations of all military forces in Lebanon, including those of the Christian-oriented LFC. Syria would have taken over the training and appointment of Lebanese officers;
- 3) While the Christian religion would not be affected, the *official* religion of Lebanon would be Islam;
- 4) The Lebanese pound would have been linked to the Syrian pound, though, in truth, that could only mean an improvement of the debased Lebanese currency;
- 5) The Lebanese market would have become part of the Syrian market with commercial and trade policy dictated by Damascus;
- 6) Politically, Lebanon would no longer have had its own external diplomatic relations. They would all have fallen within the ambit of the Syrian ministry of foreign affairs.

The palace coup of 15 January 1986 that got rid of the LFC chief of staff, Elie Hobeika, thwarted Syrian schemes for the region. The Syrian response was to launch a series of artillery attacks on the Christian



LFC soldier with captured B-10 recoilless gun taken a few months ago from Syrian soldiers who tried to make incursion into Christian territory.

sector, followed by the car-bomb attacks.

Elie Hobeika, meanwhile, was allowed to leave the country with some of his followers. His argument in a subsequent interview was that the accord would at least have brought some measure of peace to his country, which had been wracked by conflict since 1972. Hobeika now lives in the Syrian-controlled Christian enclave of Zahle, near the Syrian border. Damascus backed this man (who is by no means a spent force) as a candidate for Lebanese elective office; there are indications that he would win a seat in the multinational Lebanese parliament if the election were ever to take place. Few members of the LFC with whom I discussed the matter were prepared to give Hobeika an even chance of staying alive very long if he returns to Beirut, even as a member of parliament.

The role of the Lebanese army, as opposed to the LFC, remains unclear in the long term. With the collapse of the election accord, most Christians in the regular army fled to the LFC. The army had been very well supplied by the Americans, but on several occasions some of the hardware has found its way to radical Moslem movements. The 6th Brigade was found to be giving some of its weapons to Amal, including recently arrived U.S. heavy tanks, and the 11th Brigade "donated" a good quantity of their heavier war materials to Walid Jumblat's Druze force.

The man to watch in Lebanon in the future is Christian LFC Chief of Staff Samir

Geagea. It was he who toppled Elie Hobeika and who subsequently put up a powerful stand against Syrian military and intelligence efforts to destabilize the Christian enclave. An austere, ascetic-looking intellectual who remains unmarried and devotes at least 18 hours a day — Sundays included — to ensuring Christian survival in a hostile Moslem environment, Dr. Geagea is a graduate of Beirut's once-exclusive American University. He also has vast practical military experience in a succession of Lebanon's wars and insurrections.

The fact that there have been several attempts on Dr. Geagea's life in the past 18 months (according to Al Istkhbarat

Dangerous moments in trying to detect source of sniper fire in downtown Beirut.



sources), almost all of them sponsored by Syrian interests, is indicative of the strength he is able to muster among Christians living in Lebanon. It is also maintained in certain quarters that there is a likelihood that Dr. Geagea might ultimately succeed Amin Gemayel as president of Lebanon. In this writer's opinion, that is improbable, since with the obtrusive presence of the Syrians in the country this position is largely that of a figurehead with no effective command or power over any of the opposing factions, Christians included. Ultimately, it must be the Syrian influence in Lebanon that will decide the course of Lebanese politics for the foreseeable future. However, strong as it is, Syrian power in Lebanon is not unlimited. Without Christian support, the Syrian presence in Beirut is confined to the Moslem parts of the city, but even there, in south Beirut where the Hezbollah is most active the Syrian army will not go. Much of the fighting that has taken place in Beirut between Amal and Hezbollah in 1988 and the first months of this year appears to be rooted in an attempt by Syria to reassert its influence in these areas.

That Syria is trying hard to bring all of Lebanon to heel, there is little doubt. And that the Syrians will continue to attempt to influence the forthcoming Lebanese elections is also certain. What remains unsure is to what extent President Assad will bring his military forces in the country to bear on those of the LFC.

The head of Al Istkhbarat, who asked not to be named since he is also a prominent Syrian target, told me that Damascus was expected to make serious efforts at destabilizing Christian areas during the next year. He expected that the area south of Juniyah, all the way into Christian east Beirut, will be heavily shelled. There is also likely to be an increase in the number of car bombs that the Syrians will attempt to send into the enclave; already several car bombs have exploded near the Christian port of Juniyah. Whatever the outcome, the Christian "pocket" is likely to survive intact.

The LFC has fought for more than a decade to retain its status and its hegemony. Its military wing has proved efficient in more than a dozen onslaughts launched by Syria, Amal, the Palestinians and Hezbollah in the past three or four years. Its links with Israel remain intact in spite of an earlier flirtation with PLO elements who were thought useful to the LFC to counter Amal intrusions. Economically, despite all odds, the Christian area is thriving: Business booms, irrespective of inflation, and scores of new buildings are going up all the way from Juniyah to east Beirut. On the ground, the man in the street reflects an optimism I have not seen in Lebanon for 15 years. Problems are real, but conditions could be — and have been — worse.

Whatever the outcome, it is the LFC that arguably holds the key for a stable and new Lebanon, although no one can ignore the presence of a growing radical Moslem presence in the rest of the country. ✕

# FRANCE ON 21 BEERS A DAY

**S**ADLY, I would have to remain in Paris an extra seven days.

Damn!

Of course, one of the hazards of foreign reporting is that you often have to spend time in unpleasant places waiting for everything to come together.

I was stuck in Paris because I had underestimated the amount of time needed to get briefed by French officers and officials prior to my catching the only direct Air Afrique flight to Chad on Saturday. I'd originally planned to arrive in Paris early in the week, but I didn't arrive until Thursday morning, which didn't leave enough time for the meetings.

I decided to try and make the best of it.

As it happened, Camerone Day, the French Foreign Legion's annual commemoration of their 1863 battle with Mexican cavalry, was that very weekend. Commemoration probably isn't the best way to describe Camerone Day. In years past it was a drunken brawl, and although the Legion has tried to moderate that sort of behavior,

## SOF Staffer Risks Life and Liver with French Foreign Legion

by G. B. Crouse

the celebration still bears more resemblance to St. Patrick's Day than to Easter. I decided to try and link up with a Legion unit to celebrate.

Every year on 30 April the Legion commemorates Camerone, their most celebrated battle. Fought in Mexico in 1863 the battle is a story of determination against tremendous odds, courage in the face of certain death and a willingness to die before

surrendering. Legionnaires are told of the battle while in basic training and shown the wooden hand of Captian Danjou, the Legion's most sacred relic.

A small column of 62 legionnaires were attacked by nearly 2,000 Mexican cavalry and infantry near the abandoned hamlet of Camerone in Mexico. After beating back the initial charge, the legionnaires retreated to the ruins of Camerone. Captian Danjou, the detachment commander, was killed early in the battle but asked the remainder of his force to fight to the death rather than surrender. They promised to do so.

After several hours of fighting, and refusing two offers to surrender, only five men remained standing. After firing their last round, they charged the Mexicans. One was killed instantly, another critically wounded. The others were saved from certain death by the intervention of a Mexican colonel, who called on the remaining three to surrender. They agreed to do so, but only if they could keep their weapons and were promised treatment for their wounded. The Mexican officer agreed.

All Legion units carry the name of Camerone on their regimental colors, and all serving and former legionnaires celebrate the battle each year.

A long-time associate of the magazine, Paul Fanshaw, had served 13 years in the Foreign Legion, raising to the rank of sergeant chef. Before I left for Chad he'd given me the names of several friends still serving and suggested I contact them if I had the opportunity. One of them, an American, was serving with the 6th Foreign Engineer Regiment near Avignon. I called the camp and after a confused conversation with a legionnaire whose French was only marginally better than my own, I got Sergeant Corcoran on the line. I casually dropped Fanshaw's name and mentioned that I had served in the Marine Corps (I knew Corcoran had also) and now worked for *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. Corcoran extended an

### THE LEGION GETS ITS MAN'S GOAT

*Soldier of Fortune's* "Man In Paris" — G.B. Crouse — had reason to be distrustful and know exactly what he was signing when he checked into the Legion post. The Legion, like the United States Marine Corps, is always looking for "a few good men" and has not always been particular about who they were or how it got them.

Intrigued by stories told by former Legionnaire Paul Fanshaw at SOF social gatherings in my home in Washington, a young congressional aide came closer to being shanghaied into the Legion than he wanted to just a few years ago.

Our young aide was on a tour through France after finishing six months of Reserve service in the U.S. Army in 1986.

Told by Phil that one could find a Legion recruiter in any major French city, he popped into a municipal building in Nice just to meet a serving Legionnaire. After locating the Legion office, he marched up to the squared away sergeant chef sitting behind his desk and then stumped for something to say, foolishly said: "I would like to talk to you about joining the Legion."

The sergeant chef looked up, looked down, looked up, saw a blond-haired, blue-eyed American with ears, eyes, arms, hands, legs and feet (two each), but presumably recognized that he had a joker on his hands and said: "You're in."

Our shocked young hero, grasping the seriousness of his situation — he swore there was no sign of humor whatsoever in chef's expression — began casting for a way out. He said, "Wait a minute. Isn't there a physical?" "Yes," re-

sponded the chef. "You just passed it."

Certain then that two burly Legionnaires were about to leap from a closet and drag him kicking and screaming off to the Legion's boot camp, he suddenly remembered Fanshaw's stories that the Legion preferred recruits with documents. Our young hero said, "But I can't go now. I have to return to my hotel to get my passport."

"We'll just get the car and drive you," the sergeant chef responded.

As the chef pulled out his keys, our young hero's expression went from serious concern to serious horror. To this day our young hero claims his heart just stopped — until a devilish grin spread across the chef's face and he broke out laughing. He was still laughing uproariously as our young hero slunk off down the hall. — *Jim Graves*

Members of DINOPS, author's hosts on Camerone Day. At front left is the "Mad Canadian," front right is Sergeant Corcoran. Photo: Corporal Andy Lofts

invitation to visit the Regiment and drink myself into oblivion. I quickly accepted.

I jumped on a train at the Gare du Nord in Paris and headed south. I was the first one off the train when we finally rolled into Avignon. I asked a cab driver to take me to the *genie* (engineer) camp in nearby L'Ardoise. Apparently there are two and he asked which one I wanted. I didn't have the slightest idea, but when I mentioned *Legion Etranger* he looked askance and nodded. After a brief negotiating session with the driver, in which I probably offered to pay more than he had intended to charge, we set off for L'Ardoise. Some 150 francs later we arrived at the front gate.

The driver wasted no time driving off after I got out of the car. Apparently there weren't many return fares from the camp. As I approached the gate a legionnaire in dress uniform replete with red epaulettes and armed with a FA MAS asked me to halt. I explained I was here to visit Sergeant Corcoran, stressing the sergeant part, hoping that would carry some weight. He made a call while I signed a logbook — after first checking to see that the word *d'engagement* (enlistment) did not appear on the page — and a few minutes later a legionnaire arrived to escort me to the orderly room where Corcoran was on duty. Walking through the camp it became apparent that whoever lived here took very good care of the place. Nothing was out of order, the legionnaires were smartly turned out and salutes were crisply given and returned.

Sergeant Corcoran was waiting in the orderly room. Quiet and unassuming, Corcoran bore little resemblance to the *Beau Geste* stereotype of a legionnaire. He'd already served nearly 10 years in the Legion. He had been a varsity swimmer at Yale and a Marine Corps officer before coming to France in 1978. He'd known Fanshaw when the two had served together in the 2nd Foreign Parachute Regiment (2nd REP). He apologized for not being able to escort me through the celebration as he was on duty for the rest of the week. Nonetheless, he was free to show me around the base and introduce me to the men in his unit. Since he was required to stay in duty quarters for the weekend, he also gave me his room in the NCO quarters and offered me the use of his car.

Vic, as he insisted I call him, was a friendly guy, but I was soon to discover it was Fanshaw's name that guaranteed a warm reception. As we toured the base, which comprises only a few acres and was home to just the one regiment, we stopped frequently to meet people. Vic always mentioned that I was a friend of Fanshaw's. This was invariably greeted with a look of awe and an offer to buy me a drink. I quickly had more free drink promises than I could con-



ABOVE: Captain Cattaneo, carrying the hand of Captain Danjou, is escorted by pioneers of the 1st Regiment Etranger. Photo: Jim Shortt

LEFT: Wooden hand of Captain Danjou, commander of the Legion detachment at the battle of Camerone. The hand is the Legion's most sacred relic. Photo: Jim Shortt

sume in a weekend.

The tour ended up in the *sous officiers popote*, the NCO's club as it were. Inside the club was a picture of General Paul Rollet, the most famous of Legion officers, for whom the camp was named. The *popote* had its own particular protocol. Upon entering, a salute is rendered to no one in particular. You then salute and shake hands with everyone who outranks you, unless you've already done so that day. Your rank determines where you stand around the traditional "L" shaped bar. The senior NCOs stand nearest the door while the sergeants stand at the other end, with the others — in order of



**ABOVE: Troops of the Premier Regiment Legion Etranger (1 RE) on parade for Camerone Day. Photo: Jim Shortt**

precedence — in the middle. The bartenders are legionnaires. No money changes hands, as the bartenders know each NCO by name and mark the purchases on their mess bills, which are paid at the end of the month.

It was in the mess that the magic of Fanshaw's name became apparent. Some of the NCOs we'd met walking around camp were there, and they were quickly joined by others. They all came to say hello and buy me a bottle of Kronenbourg beer, which is fondly known in the Legion as "vitamin K." At the mention of Fanshaw's name they would launch into rapid, excited French which I hadn't a prayer of following. The only word I recognized was Fanshaw, the stories always ended with laughter and the shaking of heads. Everyone seemed to know Fanshaw, and there was nothing they wouldn't do for one of his friends.

I soon discovered an amazing thing. My French is just good enough to get by, but the more we drank the more I understood. By midnight I could hardly remember how to speak English, but I was babbling away in French like a native. Whether or not anyone could understand me I don't know.

After a half-dozen beers, we went to meet the men in Vic's unit, known as DINOPS (a detachment of divers attached to the engineers, whose mission is to clear rivers ahead of an armored advance). All were parachute qualified and many of them had served in 2nd REP. Vic's friends, who were to be my escorts for the weekend, included Sergeant Chef Moge, who had served as Fanshaw's antitank gunner in Zaire; Andy Lofts, an Englishman who served with 2nd REP in Chad; and the "Mad Canadian," who'd also served in the REP. Their unit boasted its own bar, known as the SAF, to which we quickly retired. The Kronenbourg once again began flowing. As we talked about Fanshaw and the Legion, the gifts started. Everyone wanted to give me something for having come to visit. By the time I left I'd acquired a Legion track suit, two



**Legion's Memorial to the Dead. At left is Captain Cattaneo, with the hand of Captain Danjou. At right is General Roue, commandant of the Foreign Legion. Photo: Jim Shortt**

sets of fatigues, rank insignia, para and commando badges, a lighter, Legion decals, a pair of French *pattagas* (canvas boots) and a set of red epaulettes. It was all I could do to carry it all back to Paris. I tried to return the favor with copies of SOF, knives and SOF patches and decals.

Dinner with Sergeant Corcoran in the mess was another memorable event. Legionnaires brought the food to the table and asked if we preferred red, white or rose wine. We decided on rose, and sure enough, when the first bottle was gone the "wine steward" was standing by with another. The table was cleared and coffee, which I was sorely in need of by this time, was delivered by another legionnaire. The folks at Marine Corps' "dining facilities" could learn a great deal from the Legion.

The 1st Foreign Cavalry Regiment (1st REC) is headquartered in nearby Orange. It was decided that since they were a larger regiment and would throw a bigger party I should go and see it. Chef Moge and I took Vic's car and drove off to Orange. We arrived to find hundreds of people milling about drinking, a live band and a conga line weaving its way around the area. The chef

introduced me around and once again everyone knew Fanshaw and they all wanted to buy me a beer.

It was all going well until I stepped on the poodle. It was rather small and I was quite drunk and didn't really think much of it. But the dog's owner, an Englishman who'd served with the 1st REP in Algeria, seemed to take offense. I apologized. Realizing I was an American, the Brit asked if I had served in the Legion. I said no. He muttered something unprintable and turned to his date, an attractive girl who couldn't have been half his age. Naturally I responded to his unkind comment. He probably would have let it go if I hadn't referred to his girl friend as his daughter. But he heard that and the fight was on. We were eventually pulled apart. I gave as good as I got, but my neck, which he'd done his best to try and separate from the rest of my body, hurt for days.

You'll have to excuse a break in the narrative, but I honestly have no recollection of what occurred between the last brawl in Orange and noon the next day. Somehow the chef had driven us the 15 or so miles back to L'Ardoise and gotten me to the my room in the NCO quarters. How, being nearly as intoxicated as I was, he managed to accomplish this I have no idea. Sergeant Corcoran and Cpl. Lofts woke me up around 1100 hours on Sunday. Once I managed to focus my eyes we took off for the SAF. Vitamin K seemed the only remedy for my condition and so I quickly began therapy. Remarkably, it wasn't long before I was feeling much the same as I had 24 hours before.

Sunday was spent eating and drinking with the legionnaires and talking to the guys in the SAF. I managed to avoid any more fights.

Leaving for Paris Monday morning was disappointing. Paris, especially in the spring, is a very nice place to be. But nothing could compare to drinking with the Legion. As we left the SAF, I could see the camp had changed. It was no longer a party, with everyone laughing and drinking. The legionnaires were back in their battle dress. Working parties were hard at it, and platoons ran by with packs and rifles headed for the hills surrounding the camp. The front gates were locked shut. It was a very foreboding place. Camerone Day was over. Strangers were not welcome.

After saying goodbye to the divers, I grabbed my rucksack and jumped into a Renault sedan with Cpl. Lofts, who was going on leave. A sergeant chef from DINOPS drove us to the train station. We had one last beer and boarded our separate trains.

On the train back to Paris I couldn't help but think how fortunate I was to have spent the weekend with the Legion. I'd met a remarkable group of soldiers, made a few good friends and attended an affair that made a college frat party seem like a church picnic. Whatever else happened on the trip — in Chad, France or back in the United States — the best memories (or lack of them) of the assignment would always be those of Camerone Day with DINOPS. ✕

# ONE FLEW OVER THE AMMO DUMP

## Putting the Big Bang on Charlie's 'Hospital'

by Richard P. Wagner

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Part I — "Each aircraft loaded to the maximum with crew, rockets and all the fuel the tanks would hold was ready to taxi . . . then a screeching, 'INCOMING!' . . . followed by a bracket of rocket fire. . ."

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**N**O ONE has asked me what it was like to fly as an air artillery observer in Vietnam, but so what. This is written in case somebody is ever polite enough to ask.

Home on leave, just before shipping out to Vietnam, I went to the airport and saw the old World War II-era aviators who'd taught me to fly when I was a high school kid. I told them that I was coming up as a brand new captain in the Army. They asked if the Army had sent me to its flight school, and I told them that they had already taught me enough and I didn't need to learn again. Five minutes later they had \$20 of mine and we were preflighting a shiny new Cessna 150. After an hour of bumps and grinds my flight proficiency was partially restored.

Soon I left the beautiful golden hills of California for 'Nam. Shortly after arriving at Americal Division Artillery Headquarters, the adjutant asked if there were any of us who could pass a flight physical. Affirming my flight experience, I immediately became an artillery air observer. My job was to work in the divisional artillery intelligence section flying reconnaissance missions.

Several days later I visited the reconnaissance airplane company and there they were — a few old relics out of some other past. The tail-dragging O1 Bird Dogs were definitely more dog than bird, looking like old civilian Cessna 180s, with yellowing plexiglass and flaking olive-drab paint. They were underpowered, overloaded and crammed full of radios and equipment that those who'd designed them as pleasure aircraft never intended. Additional weight and drag hung below each wing in the form of four paltry 3.5-inch "Willie Peter" rockets. The look of these airplanes left no room for doubt that among birds and aviators this was definitely the very bottom of the pecking order.

On my first mission we were up about 1,500 feet and the pilot said, "I hear you're a civilian pilot. Unstrap the auxiliary stick and put it in the socket between your feet so



**Bird Dogs carried the designation L19 until September 1962 when DoD standardized aircraft designations and renamed it O1. Photo: Al Adcock**

you can fly the plane."

When it was in place, I told him I was ready. The feel of the stick was heavy and sluggish and not like the quick response of a spirited little Cessna 150.

About a minute later the captain in the seat in front of me said, "Now do an emergency landing," and pulled back the throttle.

With its flow of fuel constricted, the little Continental engine gave a "pop-pop" as sparks coughed out of its exhaust, and the staccato growl of 100 or so horsepower became a ringing whine of idled power and the aircraft went down. Without power but with

definite and continuous corrections, the aircraft made its way to the long stretch of grassy turf chosen as its ad hoc landing strip. As tires began to brush the tops of the blades of very green grass, the captain pushed ahead on the throttle and the engine pulled the aircraft slowly back into the sky. "Not bad. You can fly an airplane. That's nice to know," he said.

Working with me in the division CP was one Marine second lieutenant. He was the naval gunfire liaison officer. His job was to call in fire from the battleship *New Jersey*, which never fired into our area of operation, and from a ship called the *USS Francis Rivers*, which fired rockets into our area about once a month. This Marine had been an officer for three years. He apparently had been given to the Army to serve out his non-career. Although interesting and excit-

ing work, being an intelligence officer in the field artillery was strongly rumored not to be on the career track. My contemporaries and I, for whatever reason, seemed not to be among the elite.

As weeks passed, a spot on my intelligence map became interesting. We were getting readings from our electronic surveillance equipment that indicated some type of activity in a valley to the north of us. An agent report came from a traveling trader saying there was a hospital in this area. Strangely, the report gave a very accurate description of its exact location, including eight-place grid coordinates. Its location was far inland, almost in Laos, so we decided to fly a reconnaissance mission with two planes. One was to fly close to the ground to look and the other was to fly high to keep radio communications and navigate.

In the briefing shack, two pilots, the Marine second lieutenant and I decided what we would do. The Marine was to fly in the low ship and the high ship was to be mine.

As the July morning became hotter, two Bird Dogs taxied out to the arming point. Grounding cables were connected to the aircraft, firing electrodes turned down into each rocket motor and safety pins removed. Each aircraft, loaded to the maximum with crew, rockets, and all the fuel the tanks could hold, was ready to taxi into position and take off.

Over on an adjacent airfield used by the big birds, a pair of sleek, high-performance fighters carrying tons of bombs under their proud wings could be seen taxiing through the shimmering heat.

The low ship slowly took off ahead of us. Then we heard the monotone voice of the



tower controller in our helmet earphones say, "Huebird Three Six, you are cleared for takeoff."

Our small tail wheel started thumping over the holes in the pierced steel planking runway with increasing frequency as the aircraft ever-so-slowly lumbered down the strip. Over the sound of the engine droning

away like a fat bee came a slightly audible yell: "Incoming," then "INCOMING," and then a screeching "INCOMING!" Slowly and deliberately the racket of the rear wheel stopped as the tail of the aircraft came up and the second Bird Dog ascended after the first.

The two fighter aircraft lay stopped at random angles to the edge of their taxiway. Their crews had had to instantly dismount and run from their explosive-laden aircraft, trapped within a bracket of rocket fire. Less fortunate than us, they could not take off away from the rockets as we just barely were able to do.

Little red balls of fire followed by puffs of black smoke appeared where the incoming rockets exploded. Then a pillar of red flame and billowing clouds of black smoke appeared behind us as we climbed higher.

My aircraft's pilot called back and asked if we should divert to the rocket pocket, but we were told to proceed as planned. Each of us confronted this situation in our own minds and flew on.

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Part II — "Four more trees began to fall. Vapor rose from the green canopy, and the top of the jungle began to boil..."

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The low ship circled LZ Stinson at 2,000 feet while it waited for us to climb to 4,000 feet and catch up. When the low ship was in sight, I radioed, "Huebird Three Four, proceed west. We have you in sight."

After we were west of LZ Cindy, we were over total Charlie country. Below us were

**OVER 'NAM THE TINY O-1 SPOTTER PILOTS CARRIED ON THEIR OWN LITTLE WAR—**

**THERE! I FEEL BETTER ABOUT THE WHOLE THING!**



Courtesy Air Force Magazine/Bob Stevens



**ABOVE:** Bird Dogs spotted for artillery throughout the Vietnam war. Here an O1D waits on the runway at Tay Ninh while H21 Shawnees fly into action. Photo: USAF via Wayne Mutza

**RIGHT:** Pilot examines white phosphorous rockets on his O1 Bird Dog. Four "Willie Petes," used for marking targets, hung below each wing. Photo: USAF via R. Pickett



mountains and valleys covered by triple canopy jungle. Very tall trees stuck out 30 feet above the dense, solid green foliage that was 100 feet deep.

At the fork in the river below us was a village. The pilot in the low ship decided to shoot his rockets at it. They landed near the village, but nothing moved. White phosphorous rounds made nice puffs of white smoke and nothing more. "Willie Petes" were only for marking the kill, not making the kill. Once fired to mark a target, the fighters and gunships have a reference point from which to place their fire.

I radioed for the low ship to go back down the valley. We got Bravo Battery, 3/18 Field Artillery at LZ Cindy on the radio and gave them proper grid coordinates of the location.

Soon rounds began exploding on target. The Marine radioed up, "Hey, there's nothing here. This can't be it." My reply was, "OK, let's try the next valley north."

The valley 1,000 meters north also had a stream that ran east. Along this next stream, now below us, were bridges and a trail that contrasted muddy brown against the jungle's deep green. This heavily worn muddy trail told us there was more down there than

a hospital. The trail became covered by the thick canopy jungle exactly 1,000 meters north of where we had fired our first two rounds to confirm our grid.

The call for fire was given: "From your last target, north 1,000 meters, two rounds." The Fire Direction Officer (FDO) called back saying, "We don't have a lot of rounds to play with. Are you sure of your target?" He reluctantly let us have another round that hit the trunk of a tree sticking out of the top of the jungle canopy and burst into a red ball. A few seconds later we heard the loud "kerwhump" of the 8-inch round.

"Fuze delay, one round repeat," was our subsequent call.

A minute later came, "Shot, over." Then 30 seconds later, "Splash, over."

We flew in continuous circles through the hot tropical air and strained to see where the round landed. I wondered if maybe it was a dud.

Then, beneath us, where the prior round hit a tree, four more trees began to fall. Vapor rose from the green canopy, and the top of the jungle began to boil.

"Two Niner-err! Are you all right down there?" I called.

Then the sound reached us: "WHUMP

— WHUMP — WHUMP — DA — DADA — DA — WHUMP — WHUMP — WHUMP — WHUMP."

The Marine's voice in my helmet ear-phones crackled, "Wow! Look what we found, One Eight."

The FDO's voice queried, "One Eight! What's happening?"

My reply: "Multiple secondaries. Add five zero. Repeat."

"Hey! I'll give you my other fat tube."

Each of Bravo's two 8-inch guns methodically continued to pound the ammunition dump with two rounds per correction. The first round would penetrate about halfway down into the jungle before exploding. The corresponding second round fired by the same very accurate howitzer would go deeper down into the hole made by the first round and cause the jungle to again boil with secondary explosions.

The FDO, frustrated by the slowness of his two 8-inch guns, called, "Observe long tube rounds on your target."

The 175mm round slammed down out of the stratosphere at twice the speed of sound, roaring more like a high performance fighter

*Continued on page 81*

# OOPS OPS

## Building a Better Mantrap

by Munremur MacGerrcinn  
Illustrations by Ralph Butler

**“IF** it wasn’t the best, the U.S. Army wouldn’t issue it!” How many times have you heard someone say *that*? And it’s true. We have always been blessed with councils of experts who sit around and ask themselves, “What do soldiers *really* need to win the war?”

Back in the 1860s, for example, what the soldier *really* needed was a good cup of coffee. The Army then issued raw coffee beans, and the soldier was expected to take it from there. Soldiers being what they are, the usual solution was to split a canteen in half along the seam to make an improvised frying pan for roasting the beans, then pulverize them with the haft of a bayonet. So the boys in Ordnance put their heads together, and the result was a Sharps carbine with a coffee grinder built into the butt stock. Juan Valdez would have been pleased.

By the 1870s, with the coffee problem solved, the designers turned their thoughts to more serious problems. Soldiers have to

### MILITARY SPECIALIST

Munremur MacGerrcinn served with the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in I Corps, RVN, spent four years as cadre in the Infantry School at Ft. Benning and did a tour as Deputy G-3 in the 2nd Infantry Division. He is a frequent contributor to *SOF*, *Military Review* and *Infantry* magazines, and has authored a novel for *SOF*'s action adventure series. He currently works as a military specialist developing training programs in the Washington, D.C. area, keeping an analytical and sometimes skeptical eye on military developments.

dig in, right? So the experts designed a combination bayonet and entrenching tool. Just fix bayonets, and you’ve got yourself a dandy shovel. Of course, once you finished

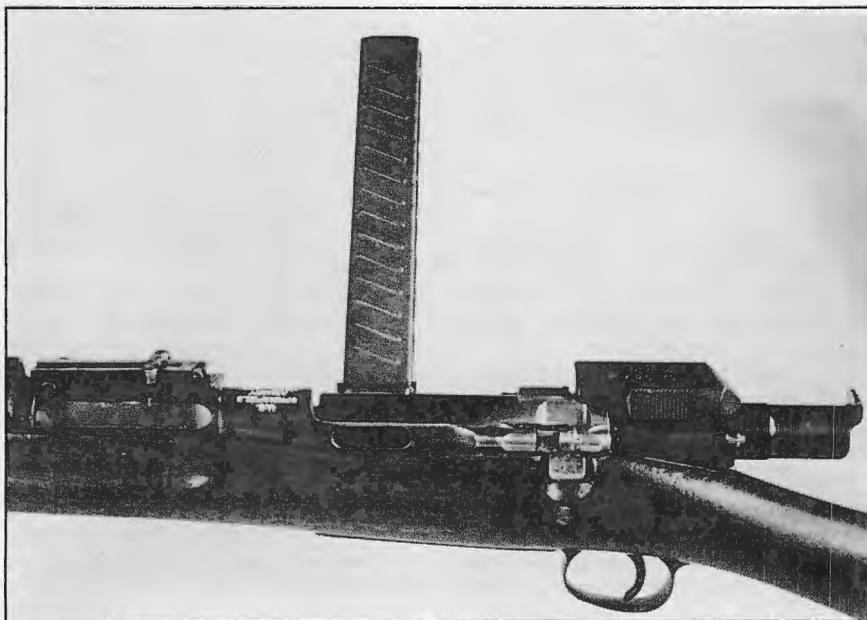
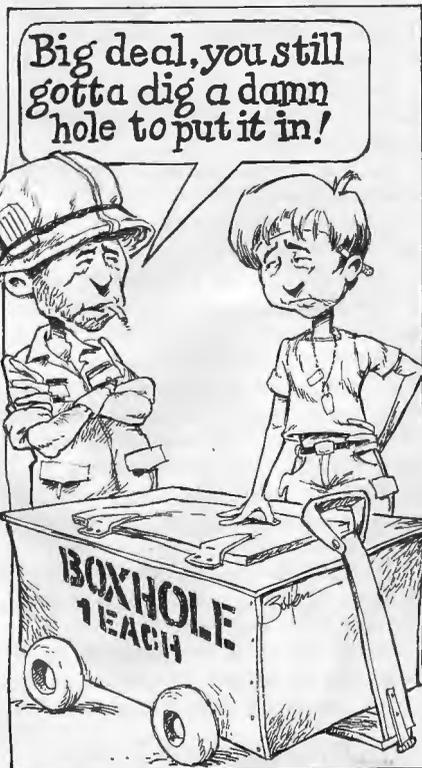
digging, you’d probably want to check to see if maybe, just maybe, you got a little mud in the bore of your Trapdoor Springfield. Legend has it that a trooper hit some hard digging and thus invented the “shoot around the corner rifle.”

But 100 years later, men still needed holes to hide in. In Vietnam we tested the “instant” foxhole, a kit which was simply a small plastic bottle of hydrazine mononitrate and a blasting cap. The soldier was to stab his bayonet into the ground, pour the hydrazine in the hole, attach the detonator, step back, and blasto— instant foxhole. We also tried pouring hydrazine mononitrate into tunnels, and when it had reached the end of the tunnel, detonating tunnel, Charlie and all. It worked OK until somebody remembered that hydrazine mononitrate is highly toxic, and using it thus might violate chemical warfare protocols.

But, dammit, our boys still need holes to hide in. More recent innovations included the “boxhole,” which was a trailer-like device that infantrymen would pull behind themselves. When he got to where he was going the infantryman was to bury his boxhole, and crawl inside to all the comforts of home. In practice, of course, this inanity didn’t work any better than the iron “turtle shell” the Japanese tried to carry on their backs in World War II.

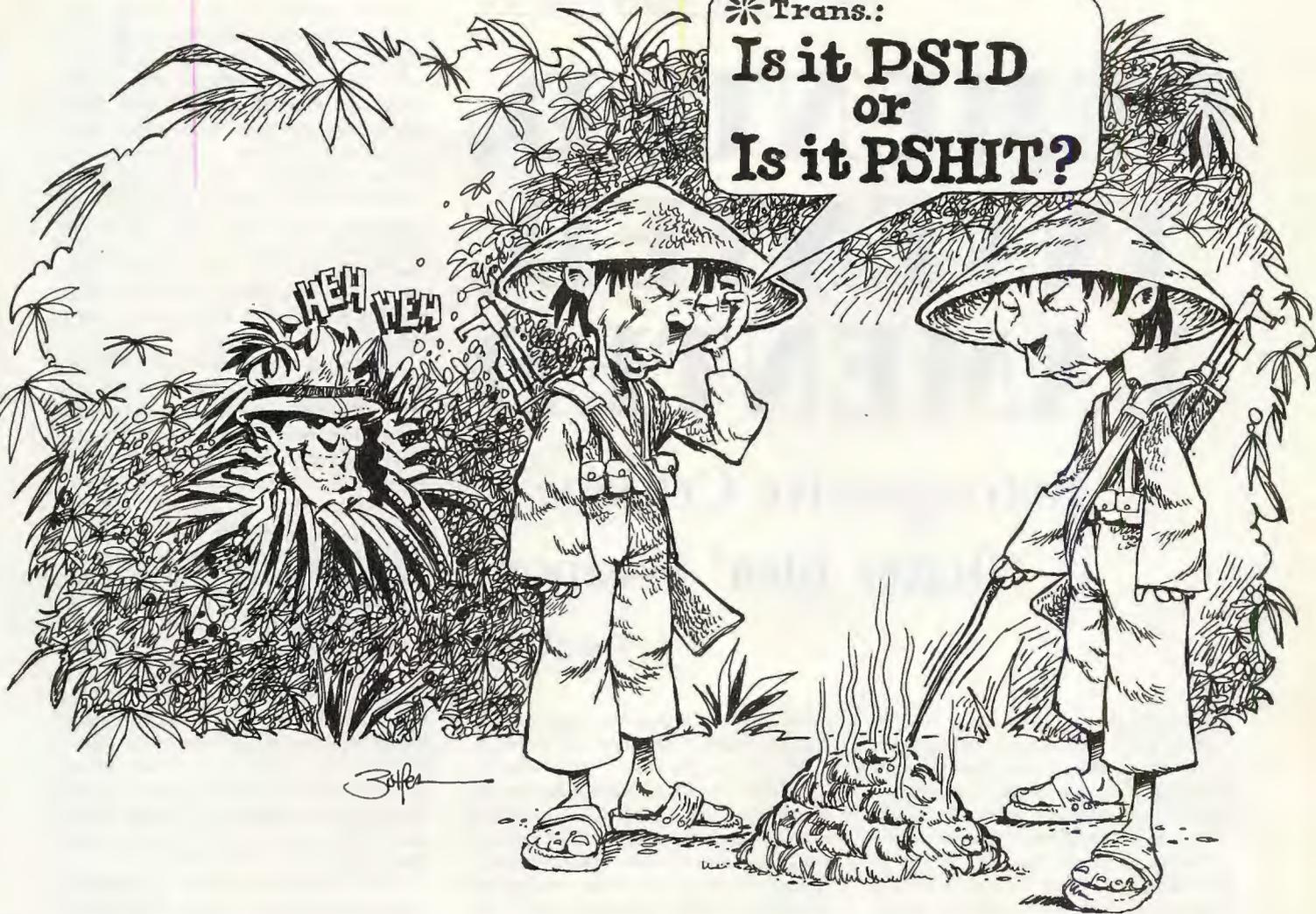
During World War I, when both sides were already uncomfortably dug in and stayed that way for months on end, Ordnance boffos developed the “M1918 Pistol” or Pederson device. Despite its name, the M1918 was actually a strange cross between a bolt-action rifle and a submachine gun. A special bolt (which was actually a complete action in its own right) was issued to replace the bolt in a modified M1903 Springfield rifle. In combat, the rifle was to be used with the regular bolt until assault units neared German trenches. Then the soldier removed the regular bolt, installed the M1918 device, loaded a 40-round magazine of special, pistol-type .30 caliber cartridges

The Pederson Device, or “Pistol, .30, M1918” converted an M1903 Springfield rifle to fire pistol-type ammunition from a 40-round box magazine. They were never issued. Photo: courtesy Bill Brophy



\* Trans.:

Is it PSID  
or  
Is it PSHIT?



(the magazine loaded into the action from the right, and ejected the empties through a port cut in the left side of the receiver), and he was all ready for close-in action in the trenches — or would have been, if the war hadn't ended before the top secret M1918 Pistol could be issued.

Marines in the Pacific in World War II encountered a devilish weapon in the form of a small 50mm Japanese mortar. Lighter and more suited to jungle warfare than anything in the U.S. inventory, this little mortar had a small, curved baseplate designed to fit a rock or log in order to provide firing stability. Because of its size — in firing position, it was about knee high — it was called the "knee mortar." It turned out that one of the most dangerous things about the knee mortar was its nickname. Some Marines took that name literally, and tried to fire captured knee mortars by bracing what appeared to be an ergonomically curved baseplate against their thighs. This resulted in a knee that bent in both directions.

In an attempt to produce an American light-weight mortar, the Marines simply threw away the bipod and baseplate of the 60mm mortar. In use, the gunner would turn his steel helmet upside down, fill it with gravel or dirt, and shove the spherical base projection of the mortar into the helmet.

This worked fairly well, and the Marines called this arrangement the "ball mortar."

"Unfortunately," as one grizzled veteran put it, "the Japanese weren't so easily fooled by terminology."

During the Spanish-American War, the U.S. Army was already on the leading edge of technology, this time with aerial observation. As U.S. troops advanced through the Cuban jungle, they towed an observation balloon along with them. It worked great — for the Spanish artillery, who used the balloon as an aiming point.

The Vietnam War brought its own share of better ideas. In the early days, someone in the State Department designed a nifty little solid-state radio for use by Vietnamese units. Because the designer was concerned that these radios might fall into the wrong hands, each radio had a self-destruct button. When faced with capture, the radio operator was supposed to push the button, sending a surge of power through the radio and burning out its circuits.

This feature was a real pain in the neck for Army advisers who had to train the radio operators. As they began to explain the self-destruct feature, the students — who automatically assumed that the self-destruct feature also applied to the operator — would make a mad dash for safety. Sometimes it

would take half a day to coax them back in.

And every now and then, you'd run into someone whose curiosity was greater than his fear.

"... and this is the self destruct button."

"Ah, sooo? *This* button?" ZZZAP!

Later on, in the late 1960s, "McNamara's Wall" was constructed across northern I Corps, just below the Demilitarized Zone. The idea was to put in a band of sensors, which would pick up infiltrating NVA units, who could then be attacked by artillery and air. A good part of this "electronic fence" was put in by the Air Force, which had some real winning ideas. To enhance the effective range of seismic intrusion detectors (which picked up the ground vibrations of passing men and vehicles) someone decided that small explosive charges, something like the old railroad "torpedo," could be used. The result was a triangular fabric device filled with a friction agent and an explosive. When stepped on or squeezed, these would go off with about the power of an M80 firecracker.

These devices were produced in camouflage colors and packed in air-dispensed canisters. The canisters were filled with a volatile liquid, such as acetone, which rendered the

*Continued on page 83*

# DEMENTED, INVENTED, LAMENTED

## Retrospective Critique of 'Better Idea' Weapons

by Don McLean

**O**FTEN, the more specific a mission, the more specialized is the hardware required to complete it. Nowhere and at no time has this axiom been played out to more logical (and illogical) extremes than in "Wild Bill" Donovan's World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS) — dauntless precursor of today's CIA. Charged not only with gathering intelligence but with carrying out risky covert operations, organizing resistance and generally raising hell behind enemy lines, OSS personnel, in comparison to their conventional military counterparts, were a no-holds-barred imaginative lot. Consequently, support organizations chartered to keep pace with this fast and loose menagerie of unconventional warriors, and to supply

them with the appropriate toys of their peculiar trades, were given the incentive, license and budgets to wax equally creative.

Division 19 of the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC), an agency of the Office of Emergency Management (which was directly under FDR), was largely responsible for envisioning, creating and procuring "special" ordnance and devices for men operating behind enemy lines, especially the OSS. Division 19 had assembled a considerable brain trust, and they produced dozens of remarkable items — many of which are still in use — and did so on a budget which would break hearts among the defense contractors of today. In the pressure of wartime, they also nurtured some "better ideas" which resulted not in a birth but a whelping. While gratefully acknowledging their considerable contribution to the war effort, now is our chance to peek into their kennel and consider some of the hounds which also ran.

When partisan resistance groups organized or supplied by the OSS actually engaged the enemy, it was on a hit-and-run basis. Always outnumbered, they would quickly do their thing and melt away. Thus they needed a grenade which would detonate on impact. There had long existed a similar requirement within the legitimate services; nobody wants the enemy to throw a grenade back at him, and troops would often lose count when "cooking" one off. And they wanted one which had the shape and weight of a baseball, 'cause every red-blooded 'merican boy knows how to put a baseball where he wants it.

In a mutual effort between Division 19, British SOE (Special Operations, Executive — British counterpart to the OSS) and Army Ordnance a series of experimental grenades based upon the British "all-ways" impact fuze were produced, tinkered and tested. Once they had a model with the dimensions of a baseball which would arm itself when it left the hand and detonate when dropped 6 inches onto sponge rubber, thousands were made and sent to various theaters and depots for trial.

Many testers and observers were killed, and dozens more were injured. Aside from the fact it was a little overly sensitive, troops had a hard time bearing in mind its peculiar sequence of arming and detonation. As an upshot of the numerous casualties we inflicted on ourselves with the Beano, General Stilwell, then commander of ground forces, quashed the project and they were not issued operationally during World War II.

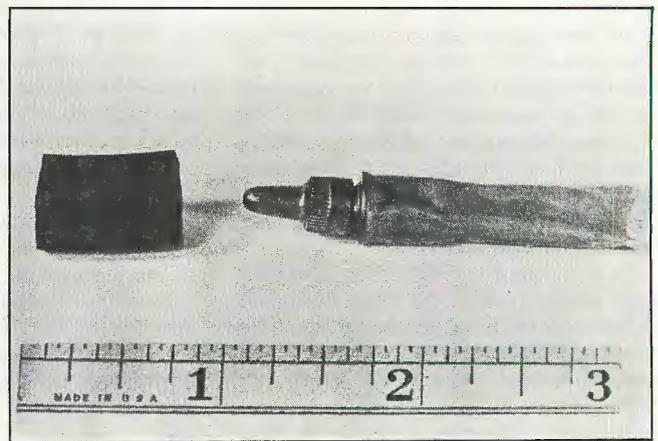
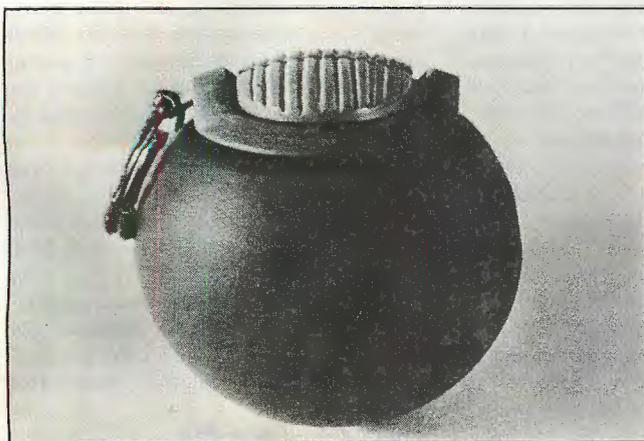
One incident was typical. A field-grade officer stood before a group of spectators, explaining the workings of this new "baseball" grenade which would help us win the war. Behind him was a lieutenant in spit-shined boots holding the grenade. Any lieutenant in spit-shined boots, of course, is a red-blooded 'merican. Hand a baseball to any red-blooded 'merican boy, of course, and he will throw it up (arm it), and catch it (detonate it). Oops!

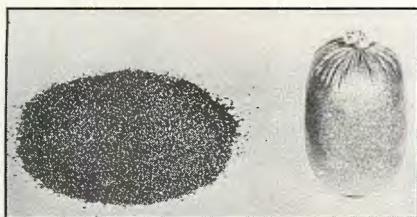
### WHO? ME?

Demoralizing enemy occupation troops,

Who? Me? Dummy planes to be targets, phoney signals to confuse . . . but synthetic filth? Photo: Vortex Archives

The Beano "baseball" impact grenade sprang from knowledge that any American boy can throw a baseball — but it turned out to be one of the best weapons the enemy had. Photo: Vortex Archives





This "ounce of prevention" accounted for thousands of enemy vehicles during World War II. Photo: Vortex Archives

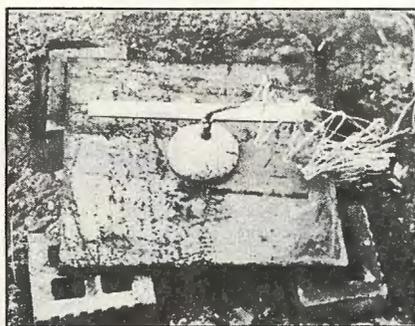
especially in a fashion that will raise the morale of those occupied, is a legitimate mission as it can help raise the spirit of resistance. In atypical, un-British fashion, SOE had been issuing artificial feces to street urchins in the subjugated low countries. They would then use the stuff to soil the britches of strutting Nazi subjugators, which embarrassed the Nazis and in turn made the subjugatees feel better. Now *that's* putting dirt in your bag of dirty tricks.

The thought of the Brits having all the fun was too much for the OSS, which submitted to Division 19 a requirement for "a small container holding a liquid which, squirted in very small amounts on invading troops as in a crowd, would produce very strong evidence of personal uncleanness." With supreme efficiency, just such a compound was formulated. There were only two small problems: one was *packaging* such a mixture (no leaks could be tolerated), and the other was keeping such a compound secure *from unauthorized OSS personnel*. Being an inherently imaginative lot, OSS operatives could envision too many uses for it, some of them — heh, heh — in-house. Fortunately, it was found that a lead tube with an ophthalmic tip would work as a container/applicator. And, mercifully, records reflect that only 600 of these had actually been procured by the time the war was winding down in Europe.

#### CACCOLUBE "TURTLE EGGS"

When can a condom become a war drum? When you consider that one of the first functions of guerrillas and saboteurs is to interrupt enemy traffic and transportation. In World War II the Nazis had such great success in glomming other nations' real estate that they found themselves at the end of a very long — and thus vulnerable — transportation net. A great deal of routine maintenance on German vehicles was performed by slave labor, easily recruited by the OSS for contrary purposes.

Thus was invented by Division 19 the "turtle egg," which was simply a generic latex condom containing a carefully formulated abrasive mixture, some 35,000 of which were issued for clandestine insertion into the fuel and lubricating systems of enemy vehicles. Petroleum products dissolved the condom, releasing the abrasive to put a quick 100,000-miles of wear on the engine. We should note here that this was an idea that only *sounded* hokey — it worked very well indeed in practice.



Aunt Jemima exploding flour being tested against a steel plate. It could also be baked and eaten with no ill effect. Photo: Vortex Archives

#### BELCHER

It was assumed that the Japanese had laid sneaky, wiley, oriental plans to poison American water supplies. So it was decided that "work of an entirely defensive nature should be performed on compounds which in traces or parts per million or less would render drinking water unpalatable although not poisonous."

So in a collaborative effort between Divisions 9 (chemical warfare) and 19 of the NDRC, the University of Illinois, and the Sanitary Corps of the Chemical Warfare Service at Edgewood Arsenal, suitably terrible-tasting but non-toxic "water denial" agents were compounded. Ah, were they *vile!* Absolutely disgusting to the American palate. But how to test them? On the enemy, of course! Japanese POWs who had just performed arduous labor and were very thirsty were given, without comment, some of the specially treated water. To the surprise of all, the Japanese received the water with relish, apparently unaware of the added chemicals. This discouraging outcome ended the project. But could these Japanese have really been secret agents, planted to sabotage this plan (*which might have by itself changed the tide of the war*) by pretending to like the water? Alas, we will never know.

#### AUNT JEMIMA

Another National Defense Research Committee project was initiated to disguise explosives in order to facilitate their being smuggled into enemy territory. One odd project resulted in the manufacture of some 15 tons of exploding flour (not by Pillsbury, but by DuPont), code named "Aunt Jemima." The flour was edible, non-toxic (a requirement imposed by the OSS, as flour of any sort in occupied countries during World War II could be a tempting target for pilferage by friendlies), and highly explosive. It could be mixed, baked, roasted, eaten . . . and detonated. And speaking of flour, Division 19 also developed a special detonator that could be inserted into an ordinary sack of kitchen flour to create a dust explosion which would part the seams of a ship like a sardine can. Sound corny? Well, why do you think grain elevators blow up now and then? Yes, history records



"Hedy" created panic to cover an agent's escape. Photo: Vortex Archives

that Nobel made a lot of money in the explosives business, but it was DuPont who made all the real dough.

#### SCARE 'EM TO DEATH

Division 19 was asked to develop a device which would "create the maximum panic over the largest possible area" by methods which would not contravene the Geneva Convention. Fire, odor, and color were all suggested in a research program coded "Hedy" (after actress Hedy Lamar, who created disturbances in a crowd).

The device was wanted, of course, as a throw-down to facilitate the escape of an agent who had accomplished his act of sabotage and needed a turmoil which would hide his E&E. The upshot of this program was a device produced by the National Fireworks Company, which was much like the modern artillery simulator. More than 6,000 were produced.

Not produced, however, was the device code named "Fantasia." Psychologists within the OSS claimed that the Japanese would be terrified by an apparition appearing in the night sky over the battlefield which looked like a glowing, barking fox. The problem was submitted through Division 19 to the National Fireworks Company, MIT, and others, including firms that manufactured meteorological balloons. The only person who did not politely decline this request for proposal was a Mr. Bufano, who made a living specializing in large-scale theatrical displays. Since there appeared to be no viable takers, the project was terminated with the note, "I trust that this will serve as a critique to us in the field of pure reason." Well, I should hope!

#### BRIMSTONE — TALES OF BATS, RATS AND CATS

The usefulness of fire to a saboteur needs no elaboration. The "critique in the field of pure reason" noted above, however, seemed to break down in part of the project code named "Brimstone." Brimstone bore many suitable fruits, from an arson manual to spiffy pocket incendiaries to hand-sized incendiaries so *hot they* would ignite an oil slick on the high seas. Less wonderful, however, was the Bat Bomb.

In 1942 Dr. Lytle S. Adams, a Los Angeles dentist, submitted an idea to the National Inventor's Council for an attack on Japan by bat-born incendiaries (see "Bats Out of Hell," SOF, November '87). He believed it would be possible to trap bats in Carlsbad Caverns, load them with tiny



Bats in the belfry led to plan for bats in the arsenal, which would carry this micro-incendiary into Japanese buildings. Photo: Vortex Archives

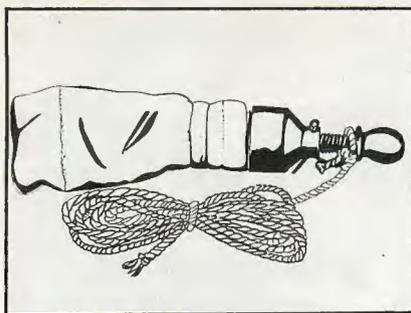
timed incendiaries, and release them off the coast of Japan, where they would then seek refuge in Japanese buildings. That this plan received serious attention from the NDRC was due to a personal relationship between Dr. Lytle and the family in the White House at the time. I don't know, but I suspect he was Eleanor's orthodontist.

Some of the more obvious problems had been carefully thought out. For instance, one of the socially redeeming aspects of a bat is that he has a terrific metabolic rate, and as a result must eat a lot of bugs. Thus, if you are going to transport a boatload of little bats to Japanese waters from here, you must follow it with another boatload of little bugs for the bats to eat en route. So it was decided to refrigerate the bats, which would put them into a hibernative state. So far, so good. The "Adams Plan" eventually involved the Army and Bureau of Naval Ordnance, and became a top secret project coded "X-Ray."

Tests indicated that a bomber load of conventional M69 incendiary bombs could be expected to produce from 167 to 400 fires in typical Japanese buildings, but the same bomber loaded with incendiary bats would produce somewhere between 3,625 and 4,748 fires. But there were insurmountable problems. Such things as when you drop a wee little bat from an airplane, the slipstream blows his gossamer wings off. And it proved impractical to release them from nearby ships because, they found out the hard way, a bat will orient to his new abode and "home" back just like a pigeon.

Some time before Division 19's involvement in the Adams Plan/X-Ray project, a Dr. Griffin of the Fatigue Laboratory at Harvard had been consulted regarding what sort of payload a bat might be expected to carry. Before the end of the original Adams Plan, Griffin came forward with a suggestion that Norway rats be used instead of bats, delineating how he could attach 75 grams of incendiary near the base of the tail in such a fashion that it could not be removed by the rat. The OSS rejected the idea of using rats as impractical (and not sponsored from the White House).

Indeed, proper sponsorship led to trials of other zany ideas from Dr. Doolittle-type inventors. One idiot, who happened to have



Dog Drag, shown in drawing from OSS catalog of special devices, was supposed to confuse Gestapo bloodhounds. Drawing: courtesy Vortex Archives

a friend on a congressional appropriations committee, spawned the idea that a cat could guide a bomb to a ship, based on the "fact" that a cat hates water and always lands on its feet. During the first trials the idea — and the hapless cat — died.

#### SERGEANT McGRUFF ON COCAINE?

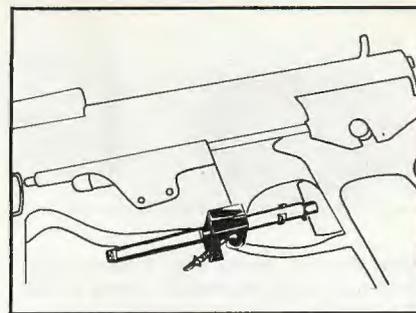
British SO,E agents were supplied with a device known as Dog Drag that was to be used in the event they were pursued by Gestapo bloodhounds. Consisting of a crushable glass ampule of strong-smelling chemicals in a cloth bag, it was to be dragged behind the agent on a string while he executed complicated and confusing maneuvers. It appeared to work satisfactorily in British hands. The OSS received the formula from SO,E and trial lots were tested jointly by the OSS and Quartermaster Corps, which had a similar requirement for paratroopers and downed aviators.

Unfortunately, the Army's dogs were not baffled at all and the test was a complete failure. The OSS then submitted a request to the men in the skunk works at Division 19 for "development of a suitable means of preventing dogs from following a man." Consulting the foremost experts on odors, eight types were formulated and tested: chemicals paralyzing the sense of smell (cocaine), nose-tiring chemicals, pain-causing chemicals, chemicals arousing fear, chemicals arousing emotions other than fear (as in a female in heat), distracting odors of other animals, repulsive odors, and pleasurable odors.

The tests were a complete failure as no properly trained dogs were deceived or confused. In the end, they opted to use the British formula unchanged, wear special paper overshoes, and pay particular attention to the technique used in applying Dog Drag.

#### NEMO

Although there seemed no practical likelihood of being able to carry out sabotage against enemy submarines, the OSS nevertheless submitted the problem in hopes that if some startling discovery were made, they could put it to good use. As subs of that era used wet cell batteries when running submerged, those batteries seemed to be the most vulnerable point. And, in-



The Bushmaster was to fire random shots after the agent had left the area, confusing pursuers. Drawing: courtesy Vortex Archives

deed, Dr. Linus Pauling came up with a compound, a pound and a half of which could ruin the batteries of an entire submarine.

But as is often the case, the simplest and least sophisticated attack can be the most effective if applied in the most subtle manner. SO,E agents in Norway learned a particular cannery was producing sardines for stores of German U-Boats which operated on extended patrols in the North Atlantic from bases in occupied Norway. The immediate thought, of course, was to poison the sardines. But the occupied Norwegians suggested a more appropriate tack: they thoroughly dosed the entire cannery run with croton oil. Croton oil, you may recall, is one of the most violent laxatives known to medicine.

#### PNEUMONIA

The OSS requested the study, evaluation and recommendation of chemical compounds that would cause death in humans and which would in case of an autopsy reveal only a natural death.

Although poison and bacteria have been used with telling effect to inflict casualties throughout the history of warfare, such insidious and non-selective weapons have been viewed with repugnance by virtually all conventions whereat civilized men sat down to set forth the rules whereby they might honorably kill one another. Thus the NDRC trod only very lightly around the perimeter of this subject. A couple OSS failures in this arena are worth a chuckle, however.

The OSS developed a tiny wafer containing botulin, to be sneaked into the food of selected Japanese general officers in China. As the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) was currently covering that theater, the compound was sent to them. ONI personnel couldn't believe such a tiny speck could actually kill a general, and probably would barely sicken a colonel, although it might have telling effect on a private. Deciding a test was in order before they went to the trouble to smuggle it into some general's lunch, they administered it to a local burro. The plan was thus never carried out, as a burro has a total natural immunity to botulism poisoning.

Aiming at the king instead of a pawn was also tried on Hitler, using the glandular

approach. As those in the OSS think tank were of the opinion Hitler was a borderline case as regards gender anyway, female hormones were to be injected into Hitler's private vegetable patch, the reasoning being that the German people would not follow a leader who walked like Jack Benny and talked like Mary Livingstone. His private gardener was paid off and issued the necessary hormones, but there was no observable change in the Nazi leader. C'est la guerre.

### A FISTFUL OF PROTECTION

The ONI Fist Gun, a plunger-fired device riveted to a glove to be fired by pressing against the opponent, has always fascinated arms historians. Many special-purpose weapons are odd, as they are designed to suit a very particular purpose. But *this*? It is odd and suits *no conceivable* purpose. Not only were some actually manufactured, but the design was even patented. Science, but perhaps not reason, marches on.

### THE BUSHMASTER

While we are firing odd guns, let's examine the World War II version of a remotely fired gun. This spiffy device was designed for — and actually issued to — OSS agents to help cover their escapes. It was simply a single-shot gun with a wire clip to attach to a tree, activated by a time-delay pencil. A random shot now and then was supposed to impede progress by those in pursuit. Another version would attach to the trigger of a conventional weapon, such as an M3 "greasegun," and when the activation device went off, it would fire a whole magazine. Now *that* will keep their heads down!

One ingenious OSS operative in Burma had a Japanese patrol about an hour behind him. As he crossed over a swinging rope bridge he conceived a clever delay plan: He lashed his .30 carbine to a tree at the far end of the bridge and rigged a cord to the trigger, attaching the other end to the rope bridge. When anyone stepped on the end of the bridge, the supporting rope tightened and pulled the trigger. When they scrambled off, the trigger was released. He heard shots from his carbine answered by sustained volleys from the Japanese until he laughed himself out of earshot, two watersheds away.

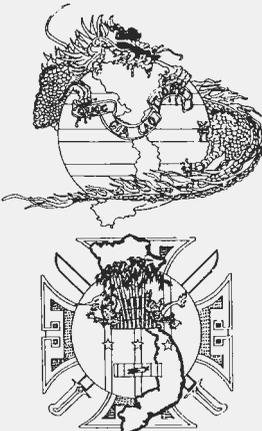
### RAZOR BLADE GUN

While we are in the trees, here is a final Device-In-Spite-of-Which-We-Won-The-War. The Japanese were pretty adept at bushcraft, in particular climbing up a palm tree to hide among the fronds and snipe. Well now, we can't have that! So the order went out to Army Ordnance to develop a shinnying denial device. The result was, I kid you not, the Hammer, Blade Driving T1 and the Hammer, Blade Driving T2. What did they do? Why of course they stuck special razor blades in the stalks of palm trees so Japanese snipers couldn't shinny up! ☒

## IMPERFECT '10s'

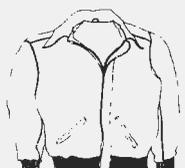
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Vernon, CA 90058; phone 1-800-289-2666) and Norma (Federal Cartridge Company, Dept. SOF, 900 Ehlen Drive, Anoka, MN 55303; phone 612-422-2840) 170-grain JHP ammunition.

Both the PMC and Norma bullets have a truncated cone shape. Cavity depth on the PMC bullet is .155 inch and there are six serrations around the mouth of the jacket. Cavity depth on the Norma projectile is only .128 inch, and the jacket is not serrated.

Velocity measurements were conducted with an Oehler Model 35P chronograph. Ambient temperature at the time of testing was 56 degrees F. Ten feet from the muzzle, the PMC ammunition clocked 1,205 fps with a standard deviation of only 12 fps out of the Colt Delta Elite's 5-inch barrel. There was an insignificant 20 fps drop in velocity when this ammunition was fired from the Omega's 5-inch polygonal-rifled and ported barrel.

The Norma ammunition was dreadful. Twenty-round sequences were clocked from each of the two pistols. Velocities ranged from 718 fps to 1,327 fps. Standard deviation was almost 200 fps, and any figure given for an average velocity would be without interpretive meaning. At the lower velocities, not enough energy was generated to drive the slide group fully rearward, and these cases failed to eject. We paid more than 70 cents a round for this ammunition. That's outrageous and no excuse can justify placing such shabby quality control on the dealers' shelves. We understand that

fresh lots are supposedly more consistent, but that does little to placate those who stocked up on this erratic junk.

When fired into soft tissue, the PMC bullet expanded to approximately .63 caliber and penetrated somewhat over 15 inches in total depth. Expansion was ragged with long trailing shards of the copper alloy jacket clinging to the mushroomed mass. Fragmentation was erratic and varied from four to 13 percent. All of the fragments were found near the wound track, where they would have little effect on enlarging the permanent cavity. The temporary cavity was approximately 3.5 inches in diameter.

Norma ammunition performed in a similar manner, whenever its capricious velocities approached 1,280 fps. With a shallower interior cavity, this bullet expanded to an average diameter of only .58 caliber. Penetration varied from 14½ to 15½ inches. Mushrooming was completely symmetrical. Fragmentation was more consistent at about 12 percent. Again, the fragments were found near the wound track. At these slightly higher velocities, a temporary cavity of approximately 4.5 inches in diameter was produced.

This 170-grain JHP 10mm Auto ammunition would provide effective performance against human targets. It's not spectacular by any means, but it will do. Expansion is about one and a half times the original diameter. This isn't excessive and does not degrade penetration. About 20 inches of

penetration in soft tissue is ideal and 12 inches about minimum. So, penetration is within the acceptable range. Does this justify the introduction of a new caliber and handguns to accommodate it? I don't think so. If provided with bullets of the proper design and driven at moderate velocities, there are handgun calibers which date back to the first decades of this century that will do as well and, in some instances, outperform the 10mm Auto.

Accuracy potential of both the Colt Delta Elite and Springfield Armory Omega was approximately the same with the PMC 170-grain JHP ammunition. Firing from a strong Weaver position at 21 feet will produce 2- to 3-inch groups. These are not target pistols. Although you can stuff eight rounds into both the Omega and Delta Elite magazines, if you do so, you won't be able to seat the magazine completely into the magazine-well. Ejection patterns were to the right, nine to 15 feet from the weapon. There were no stoppages, other than the failures to eject produced by the Norma ammunition. Latrine rumors have been circulated by those disgruntled with Colt for one reason or another to the effect that the Delta Elite will self-destruct after 5,000 rounds. I doubt that, but durability was not one of our test parameters as we would have required a budget of \$7,000 to fire 5,000 factory rounds through each of these pistols.

Every author who has written about the 10mm Auto cartridge has offered his opin-



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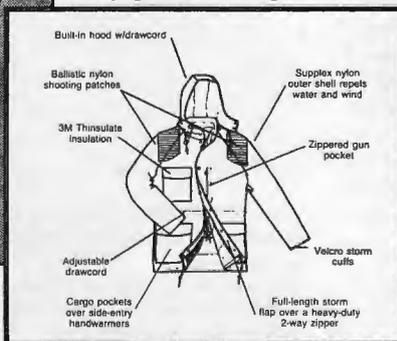
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ion concerning the perceived recoil and muzzle climb that it generates in a handgun. Some believe it delivers no greater felt recoil than a .45 ACP pistol. Others have insisted that the muzzle whip is so severe as to seriously degrade the weapon's potential as a defensive arm. All of these impressions are no more or less than qualitative assessments. No doubt about it, the 10mm Auto cartridge in either bullet weight seems to whip the muzzle up and rearward somewhat more than the .45 ACP round. And, the Omega's ported barrel and slide appears to moderate this a bit. But to what extent does this effect recovery time and target reacquisition after the first shot has been fired? Is this a specialist's instrument for use only by the most highly trained?

In an effort to quantify some useful information about the handling characteristics of these 10mm pistols, we resorted to a well-known drill called "El Presidente," for which performance standards have been established over a long period of time. Although it has no relevance to the real world, El Presidente is a useful training tool and provides a means for measuring progress in some of the basic skills required of a pistolero.

Three combat-type targets with approximately 8x12-inch scoring areas in the upper torso (center of mass) are required. The drill is usually shot from 10 meters. The shooter commences with his back to the targets. On command he pivots, draws and fires two

shots into each of the three targets, then reloads and fires two more shots into each of the three targets. The clock stops after the twelfth round has been fired. Using an Iso-celes stance and firing weak-sister loads, the very best IPSC shooters can clean this exercise in seven seconds. Drawing from concealed carry and firing full-house .45 ACP loads through a Light Weight Commander from a strong Weaver position, those practicing for the asphalt jungle can expect, at best, a nine- to 10-second string with all 12 shots in the scoring zone. Times with the Delta Elite averaged slightly more than 10 seconds.

It does not appear that those who have graduated from Jeff Cooper's API or received equivalent training would have difficulty defending themselves with a 10mm Auto pistol. However, there seems to be no increase in effective performance when we examine the wound ballistics of this cartridge. Some will be attracted for no other reason than it is a new cartridge that appears on paper (no pun intended) to be more powerful than those previously available. When loaded down, it will be popular with the IPSC gong shooters. For the rest of us it offers no justification for flushing our 230-grain .45 caliber pumpkins down the drain.

If pressed to decide between the Colt Delta Elite and the Springfield Armory Omega, I would choose the Omega. That, so I could slip in a .45 ACP barrel and magazine when no one else was looking. ☒

## WINNING PEACE

Continued from page 39

likely to find approval in Moscow and New Delhi but cut no ice in Afghanistan.

In October-November 1988, there were reports of a purge of hard-liners from the PDPA government. One former minister, appointed ambassador to Moscow, was escorted to the plane under armed guard lest he try to make a break for it. Kabul is going along with the Soviet plan. While hard-liners may want to chance a purely military solution, the Soviets apparently still favor stressing U.N. negotiations and links to traditionalist resistance groups to try to set up a coalition government that would leave the current armed forces and WAD intact.

But this is unlikely to happen. Still, the war cannot end until Kabul changes hands. Abdul Haq, Kabul Province resistance leader, has developed his own scenario for the fall of Kabul. Once the Soviets leave, he sees a chance for a rising within the city, with strikes and demonstrations hopefully paralyzing a government weakened by the call-up, supposedly, of all PDPA members for military service. This would be combined with intense resistance pressure, including rocket attacks on military targets. This, according to Abdul Haq's plan, should collapse the whole rotten edifice. But there are factors working against this taking place, including the assumed wil-

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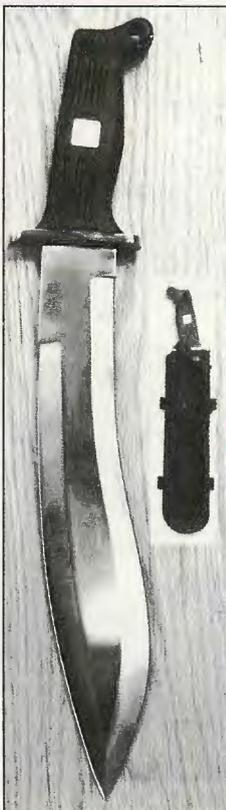
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lingness of the Kabul regime to use intense and brutal force against any demonstrations or anti-government moves.

While his attention is fixed on the north, Ahmad Shah Massoud also views Kabul as vital. His goal — organization of a 13,000-strong army by the time of the Soviet withdrawal — is not to be limited to the north of Afghanistan in its impact. Jamiat is wary of counting on an easy fall of Kabul, or assuming that the Abdul Haq scenario will come to pass. Its leadership is aware that throughout the war Pathans, who make up most of the resistance south of the Hindu Kush, have never taken a defended fort, let alone a major city.

There are fears that Kabul could hang on for a number of months past February. This could be made more likely if the Soviets leave large numbers of advisers with the Kabul regime's armed forces, which they have the right to do under the Geneva Accords. Soviet air strikes could still take place, using aircraft with Kabul government markings spray-painted over the red stars, their aircrews now "advisers." It would still be, on paper, a Soviet withdrawal. The Soviets would then redouble their diplomatic and political offensive. The West and the Pakistanis would be pressured to cut off aid to the resistance in what would be portrayed as a civil war.

But in the end the regime, which has had since 1978 to become a legitimate, viable government and has failed miserably, is not likely to pull itself together at literally the last minute. Militarily, Kabul can be defended indefinitely, but the roads which must supply it cannot. It is likely that 1989 will see the Kabul regime as constituted since 1978 finally receiving its long-overdue death blow. ✕

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*Continued from page 14*

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tion should increase the cyclic rate. In any event, a change of only 50 rpm can result from different lots of ammunition, changes in atmospheric conditions, fouling or any number of other uncontrolled parameters.

All of these bits and pieces should provide enough variety and excitement to keep the justifiably famous UZI series chugging along well into the next millennium. ✕

## BEAUFORT CASTLE

*Continued from page 47*

the trench in the most dangerous manner imaginable: They began moving, upright and unprotected, along the trench's edge, firing and throwing grenades as they went.

In the Israeli army, there is no such thing as a point man. The main pillar of IDF leadership doctrine is the theme of personal example. From their first day of basic training, young Israeli soldiers are taught that a commander's place is to lead from the front. An NCO or officer must pull his troops forward, not push them. The motto of the IDF officers' school is "After Me." Thus, it is not surprising to find that the leading Sayeret trooper advancing along the edge of the trench was Avikam.

Avikam got no more than 100 yards along the trench, when both he and Razi, his radio-man, were cut down and killed by a burst of automatic rifle fire which wounded another Israeli trooper as well. Now that the Palestinians were obviously aware of the Israeli presence in their rear, things became much more difficult. Once more Motti was forced to assume command of a unit during the middle of a firefight. Motti took the lead and slowly and methodically began to work his way along the 250 remaining yards of trench. The Palestinian defenders put up a fierce resistance. With 100 yards of trench left to clear, Motti discovered that he had only one loaded magazine left for his Galil assault rifle. He backtracked a few meters to the last terrorist he had killed and found beside the body an AK with five full magazines. Using the Soviet-made assault rifle, Motti proceeded to clear the remainder of the trench.

The toughest nut to crack was yet to come. Some 50 yards to the north of the trench system, the Palestinians had built a large, reinforced concrete bunker. As Sayeret troopers warily approached, the bunker's occupants opened fire with assault rifles and machine guns, pinning down Motti and the remnants of the Vatika. Motti summoned the team's RPG man to try to knock out the bunker. The RPG man fired rocket after rocket into the bunker's walls, but they exploded with no visible effect on the Palestinians inside.

Leaving a pair of RPDs as a firebase element, Motti led four men in an attempt to approach the bunker by a right flanking movement. However, the full moon had

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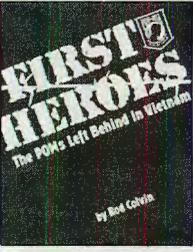


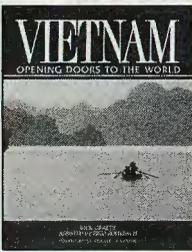
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since risen and its light betrayed the Israelis. The advancing Sayeret troopers were spotted almost immediately and three of the Israelis were wounded by Palestinian fire. This final blow finished the Vatika as a combat-worthy team. Of the 14 troopers who had started the castle ridge ascent two hours earlier, six were now wounded and four, including the team commander, were dead. The four surviving members of the Vatika were emotionally drained by the experience of seeing most of their friends killed or wounded. They hunkered down in their positions before the bunker and returned the enemy fire. They would need some assistance before an assault on the final bunker could be launched.

That aid was on its way in the form of Guni and his 10-man command team. From reports that Guni had been receiving at the hairpin turn, it was clear that aside from Motti and the Vatika, elsewhere the battle was developing satisfactorily. T and his troopers had taken the Nikba position and were in the process of clearing the remainder of the antenna fortifications. In order to renew the impetus of Motti's advance, he would reinforce the depleted Vatika team pinned down in front of the bunker with the members of his command team. True to the precepts of the IDF, Guni came forward to lead his men in the assault.

During all this time, Yuval and his team were doing yeoman service as a firebase element. They managed to lay down an effective curtain of suppressive fire on the helipad fortifications directly above them. However, the Israelis did not operate without cost to themselves. The Palestinians in the trenches and bunkers did not remain idle. They used their height advantage to lay down a constant stream of automatic weapons fire on the Sayeret troopers below. One by one, the Israelis were picked off until little more than half the team remained unscathed. Yuval and his men, however, remained in their positions, giving Motti and the Vatika the vital covering fire they needed to take the helipad fortifications from above.

When Guni linked up with Motti, he proceeded to reorganize the composite little force. He left the two RPDs and RPG as a firebase element and formed an assault element from the remaining troopers. To neutralize the effects of the full moon and cover the assault element's approach, Guni threw four smoke grenades upwind of the bunker. As the smoke began to spread, the machine guns and RPG of the firebase opened fire. One by one, the assault team squirmed from cover to cover until they reached the blind side of the bunker. Guni threw a grenade into the nearest firing port, but was rewarded with only the briefest of halts in the firing of the bunker's Palestinian occupants. Several more grenades quickly followed, but with no more success than the first. Guni then realized that the bunker was internally partitioned into two or more rooms. When a grenade was thrown into one room, the terrorists scuttled, post haste, into an adjoining

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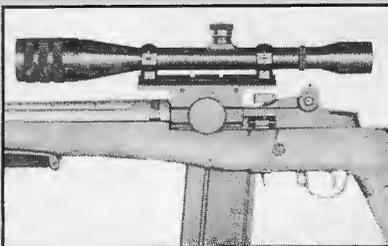
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room and resumed firing.

The solution to the problem was simple. Climbing on to the bunker's roof, Guni arranged his men until each was posted beside a firing port or a door. Upon his signal, all the troopers were to simultaneously throw a grenade. By this tactic, the persistent Palestinians would certainly be put out of business for good. As his men stood ready, Guni yelled "One, two, three — throw!" However, as Guni leaned over to throw his own grenade, he inadvertently exposed himself to one of the Palestinians inside.

The terrorist fired a single round, hitting the Sayeret commander in the chest. Guni collapsed with a groan at the feet of his radioman. Suddenly, that mournful, battlefield cry which never fails to send shivers down the spine of all those who hear it, reverberated through the night. "Medic, medic," Guni's radioman cried as he knelt beside his fallen commander. "Guni's down!" The Vatika's team medic arrived within seconds and began to treat the wounded officer, but Guni was mortally stricken. Despite the medic's ministrations, within a quarter of an hour he was dead.

Guni's multiple grenade tactic had effectively silenced the bunker, but Motti was in a rage at seeing his commander and friend killed. He proceeded to throw a Gur charge through one of the bunker's firing ports, destroying it completely.

With the destruction of the bunker at 0100, all of Beaufort's external fortifications had been captured and their Palestinian defenders killed. Motti, who had inherited command of Sayeret Golani for the second time in six hours, decided to adhere to Guni's battle plan and delayed the assault on Beaufort itself until daylight. In the meantime, Sayeret troopers replenished their ammunition, ate something and even got a little sleep. As his soldiers got themselves organized, Motti radioed the firebase force to make its way to the Beaufort ridge in time to take part in the upcoming assault.

The Centurion tank from the firebase arrived at the castle ridge a little before 0500, and hour prior to the scheduled attack time. The final minutes before assault Motti spent briefing his troops. The tank and three APCs he positioned on a hillock directly opposite the castle's southern entrance. From this vantage point they could follow the advancing Sayeret infantry and provide support fire as needed. When the attack jumped off at 0600 exactly, Yuval and his team led the advance. They reached the castle entrance with no incident.

Once inside, the Israelis began to clear it floor by floor, utilizing the standard IDF house-clearing technique. Upon reaching the doorway, the #1 man in the three-man team opens the door with either a kick, or by applying a small explosive "leech charge" above the lock. The leech charge is an explosive charge developed expressly for house-clearing operations. It consists of 150 grams of plastic explosive, encased in a plastic shell. The shell has a magnet on one side and four nails sticking out on the other.

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Thus, the charge is equally effective against both wooden and metal doors.

Once the door is open, #1 throws in a fragmentation grenade into the room. Directly after the grenade explosives, the #1 and #2 men enter, firing semi-auto from the hip. The #3 man then proceeds to crouch in the doorway to cover the remainder of the uncleared hall or street, while all the time shouting "clear, clear" to prevent one of the following teams from trying to clear the same room a second time by mistake.

However, the ammunition expended by the Sayeret that morning was for naught. The castle was deserted. The sole reminder of Beaufort's previous tenants were the PLO propaganda posters adorning the walls. The Sayeret spent the remainder of the morning collecting large amounts of Soviet-Bloc weapons and ammunition left behind by the departed Palestinians. The ridge was also combed for any possible PLO stragglers. No one, however, was found.

At around noon, Sayeret troopers were graded by a visit from Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who arrived at Beaufort by helicopter. Afterward, Sayeret Golani mounted its APCs and drove northward to participate in the capture of Nabitye. The Israelis left behind them the bodies of 37 dead PLO terrorists, one of whom was strangely blond haired and fair complexioned. Sayeret suffered casualties of eight killed and 21 wounded, out of an attacking

force of about 80.

The Sayeret continued to lead the Golani Brigade in its drive northward for the remainder of the war. It fought Syrian commando units both at Jezzín and Ein Zahlate near the Beirut-Damascus highway. However, no battle was as hard, or as famous, as the one that took place on the Beaufort Castle ridge during the first night of the war. But what of the young men, hardly out of their teens, who had gone forth from Israel's kibbutzim and towns to rid their country of threat to its northern border?

On the second day of the war, Yuval's father rescinded the consent he had given for his son to serve in a combat unit. By the time the word reached the Sayeret, Yuval had commanded his team through a bitter series of battles all the way north to Beirut. Yuval was reassigned to the Infantry Corps Doctrine Development Command near Tel Aviv, where he unhappily spent the remainder of his regular service. He is now studying chemical engineering at the Technion Institute in Haifa.

Kaplan recovered from his wound and returned to command Sayeret Golani. After completing his tour of command, Kaplan spent a year at Fort Benning attending the U.S. Army's Advanced Infantry Officer's Course. He later returned to the Golani Brigade where he commanded a line battalion and is now attached to the IDF general staff. During the fighting on the outskirts of

Beirut, Motti was badly wounded by Syrian artillery. He was invalided out of the army and now lives quietly on his cooperative farm. For the valor and initiative that he displayed during the Beaufort battle, Motti was awarded Israel's second highest decoration for military bravery. Erez recovered quickly from the bullet wound in the arm and went to study law at Tel Aviv University. After finishing his degree, he decided that he didn't wish to be a lawyer after all and returned to regular service in the army. He presently is in command of Sayeret Golani. In 1984, T was wounded in Lebanon and later became an intelligence officer for real. He has since been discharged and is currently studying at Tel Aviv University. Upon completing his degree, he plans to return to the United States to pursue a law degree.

The battle for Beaufort Castle is by far the most well-known battle of Israel's Lebanon war. More important than its military significance was the salutary effect that its capture had on the civilian population along Israel's northern border. For the first time in years, inhabitants of the Galilee's kibbutzim and towns could go about their daily affairs freely, not under the malevolent gaze of PLO observers perched on the mountain above. The feeling of liberation brought about by the castle's capture was perhaps best expressed by Prime Minister Menachem Begin on the day following the

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battle. In a speech before the Israeli Parliament, Begin made the following statement: "We can all thank from the bottom of our souls, the brave soldiers of Sayeret Golani for removing the nightmare of the Beaufort from the consciousness of our citizens." ✖

## BIRD DOGS

Continued from page 67

aircraft than an artillery shell, and landed so far away we could barely spot it. "Drop one thousand. Forget it," was our correction.

"Hey, let's get our friendly Air Force Forward Air Controller (FAC) to give us some bombs. This is too slow," I said.

The pilot hurriedly went through his Signal Operating Instructions (SOI) to find the Air Force frequency and call sign. The Air Force FAC had obviously been eavesdropping on us, for less than a minute later an OV-10 Bronco came barrel rolling in on location like the star dog in a dog and pony show.

"Hey, Helix. Watch our next splash," we called over as more secondaries impacted. We further asked, "Can you give us any bombs?"

Helix replied, "I don't have any. The fighters are still stuck on the ground at Chu Lai." There was a pause and then a long drawn out, "Dammmn!" Helix quickly climbed away.

The next thing we saw was Helix's sleek OV-10 diving at the ammunition dump

with, it must have been, 30 or more rockets blazing away in a rage of frustrated anger. The white phosphorous rockets made harmless puffs of white smoke to mark the kill that he could not make. With no goodbyes, the OV-10 left the prey to two lowly Bird Dogs.

A wry Marine voice mocked, "Don't get your blue scarf caught around the ejection seat handle," just before Helix faded in with the green horizon.

In the meantime, the two 8-inch guns that were effective and within range continued to pound away.

In the wet-hot tropical air three Army men and a Marine circled endlessly in their two little aircraft, heads in helmets and torsos wrapped in flak vests and soggy wet parachute packs. We were concentrating totally on the kill we'd tried in vain to share with Helix.

The concentration on the kill was broken by Huebird Three Four saying, "Hey, we don't have much time to make it back to the barn."

---

Section III — "The needles on the fuel indicators stood still on 'E' ... The little aircraft plummeted..."

---

The last rounds fell unobserved as our two aircraft stopped their endless circling

and headed east for Chu Lai. Now our bodies got the attention they needed. Hours had gone by since we had water. My legs were cramping and longed for a place to stretch in the small cockpit. The earphones in my helmet clamped on my swollen head like a vice.

Thermal currents boiled up from the jungle below and slammed our underpowered little aircraft, causing airspeed to suddenly drop and then slowly advance, as if a giant hand were reaching out and grabbing us and continually retarding our already slow trip home. With most of the fuel's weight now gone, the little airplanes darted through the turbulence like hummingbirds on a spring day.

The low ship was two miles ahead as our aircraft bucked its way over the rice paddies south of Chu Lai. We could see a big black pillar of smoke in the distance ahead.

The needles on the two fuel indicators stood still on "E," not wiggling as they usually did when the plane bounced. Power was reduced to allow our plane to descend to the proper altitude for the landing pattern.

The low ship had made its left turn from the downwind leg parallel to the runway and was about to touch down. Our throttle was pushed forward to maintain level flight as we entered the downwind leg of the landing pattern. It was nice to be almost home. My pilot was stretching his left arm before he would reach down and pull the throttle back.

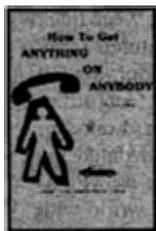
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"Pop-Pop. Sputter. Pow," went the engine as showers of sparks flew out of the exhaust, streaking red past our right side. There was no whine of idle power, only the churning sound of a slowly windmilling propeller as the engine without fuel ignored the command of the throttle.

Our little aircraft plummeted down and around steeply, trying desperately to catch the last few hundred feet of the PSP runway.

First the flare out. Then the rapid thrumming of the tiny tail wheel over holes in the PSP. Next the shrilling of brake pads clamping to stop the plane from overshooting the rapidly approaching end of the runway.

Too much pressure on the brakes caused the thrumming of the tail wheel to stop as the plane's tail rotated above its nose level. The pilot instantly released both brakes and slammed down the tail wheel. Barely enough runway remained.

Coming around the corner of the runway and onto the short taxiway that led directly to the refuel point was one relieved O1 pilot with a broad, sly smile of chagrin. The plane rolled to a rest about 75 feet from the aviation gas storage tanks.

Relays clicked open as the master switch was turned off. The whir of gyros and fan motors slowly faded in lowering pitches. This time there was no gurgle and slosh of fuel coming to rest in the fuel tanks.

As the pilot stepped out I looked to see if anyone was watching and turned the magnet to switch from "Both" to "Off." The Spec Four crew chief said to the pilot, "Sir, you know my hose isn't that long," and the pilot replied, "Mine is. I step on it all the time."

"It's a good thing you don't wear track shoes, sir," ended the good-natured foray of words in favor of the Spec Four. We all helped push the Bird Dog a few feet further so the hose would reach and erase our sin.

Four still armed rockets confronted the 6,000-gallon aviation fuel tank as we excitedly walked off to dazzle the world with our new war story.

Back in the division command post the story continued. Around 1600 an Air Force captain by the name of Lew, who later became a good war buddy, took hold of both my arms, shook me, and gleefully shouted, "We got eight more secondaries!"

Lew, who turned out to be good old "Mr. Helix," had gone back to Chu Lai, landed, refueled, rearmed his OV-10 from his rumored unlimited supplies, ate a sandwich, and took off again to rendezvous with some Navy tactical air from Danang.

Fortunately it was Friday, which was division artillery party night, and Lew, two Huebirds, the Marine and I were stars that evening as we briefed and rebriefed from our bar stools.

Next month an agent report came in telling us that more than 125 of the enemy had perished in the artillery and bomb strikes of that day. ☒

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## COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 8

der to do this, so you add one by using a non-magnetic wire (Figure 8) and pliers to form a metal eyelet. Poke this eyelet through the wall of the lens cap holder (Figure 9) about a half inch from the cap end but above the face of the inserted compass. The pliers are then used to flatten out the inside ends of the paper-clip piece (Figure 10) so the compass/lenses can be removed and the cap still slid on to the flashlight itself. At this point you simply attach the lanyard to the eyelet outside, directly or through use of a small key ring (Figure 11).

Now your Mini-Mag flashlight can be used with all of its spare lenses at hand. Since the compass is on the cap holder which is connected by the lanyard, it can be read far enough from the body of the Mini-Mag flashlight to avoid magnetic/electrical disturbances.

The regular light beam is used until a colored beam is needed. Then the compass can be popped out with your finger and the colored lens you need removed. The unused lenses and compass can then be placed in your pocket until you need to return to a normal light beam. While this arrangement is not ideal, it is far better than losing your lenses or not having them at hand when you need them.

The ideal storage option would be a small compartment on the outside of the lens cap holder, but this would mean a redesign by the manufacturers. Until this happens, I believe the above field expedient will prove useful. ✕

## OOPS OPS

Continued from page 69

devices inert. Once scattered through the jungle, the acetone would evaporate, activating the devices. After a few days, they would absorb enough water from the atmosphere to become inactive again, and a new batch would have to be dropped.

Of course, nobody bothered to tell the infantry about this. I was in the Tactical Operations Center when one of our company commanders called in to report finding something "really strange."

"What does it look like?"

"Well, sort of like shoulder pads for ladies' dresses."

There was a long silence from our end. "How long have you been out in the jungle?"

There was an even longer silence from

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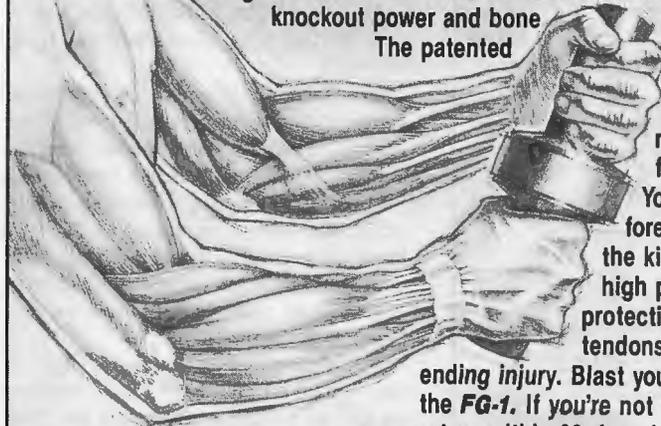
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the other end. "I'm not kiddin'. When you step on them they go bang! And they make your feet feel funny . . . Holy shit! Get me a medevac, fast!"

The TOC team scrambled frantically, alerting artillery, air support, gunships, and directing a nearby company to move to the pick-up zone, ready to be lifted into supporting positions. The battalion commander pushed the operations NCO out of the way and grabbed the mike. "What happened? How many casualties?"

The reply was much calmer, almost sheepish. "Just one . . . my interpreter picked up one of these things and squeezed it — and blew off three of his fingers!" The PSID (Personnel Seismic Intrusion Device) was subsequently fabricated to imitate indigenous animal feces, in hopes that although Charlie was used to stepping on unavoidable biological waste in the jungle, no GI is going to pick up a turd and play with it. Well, probably not.

There's something about jungle warfare that seems to stimulate better ideas. Apparently a lot of people back in the lab were racking their brains to come up with some way the infantryman could locate enemy in the jungle. What they came up with was a marvel: a cylinder about 2 inches in diameter and about 6 inches long that could be attached to an M16 rifle like a bayonet.

A little battery-powered fan drew air through a screen in the front of the cylinder. Air then passed over a cage full of bedbugs (I am *not* making this up), and if there was the slightest hint of human presence in the air, the bedbugs sounded an alarm through the soldier's headphones.

It seems that bedbugs only feed on human blood, and when a hungry bedbug smells a man, it goes bananas.

Supposedly, it worked fairly well — until feeding time. Guess how you feed a bedbug?

Yes, locating the enemy is an important consideration. During the Vietnam war, sensitive airborne instruments were developed which could detect urine in the jungle. Once the instruments detected urine, the flyboys would come back and bomb the piss out of the area. It worked OK until Charlie caught on and started leaving large pots of water buffalo urine for us to target in the empty jungle.

If it's important for you know where the enemy is, it follows that it is also important for him to *not* know where you are. Units like LRRPs in particular didn't want to leave evidence of their passing. So they were issued a normal jungle boot with a raised sole having the design of a bare foot. The few LRRPs who tried the "barefoot boot" laughingly recall that it left a print that looked exactly like a G.I. boot with a footprint design on the sole.

Helicopters are fruitful areas for the development and application of better ideas. One of the characteristics of a helicopter is that most of them can't be flown "hands off." In fact, it takes both hands and both

feet to fly the typical helicopter. As a result, a great deal of thought is put into designing controls so the pilot doesn't have to take his hands off the controls while performing some important task not directly related to flying the helicopter.

Now, one of the things a pilot does frequently is to talk to the crew. So on the CH-46 helicopter, the intercom switch was put on the stick so the pilot could communicate with the crew with a flick of the thumb. The CH-46 was used as a general cargo and troop helicopter, and frequently had to carry heavy sling loads of such things as ammunition, howitzers, and so on. When a helicopter is carrying a sling load and gets in trouble, the first thing to do is jettison the sling. This is done with a control called a "pickle," a separate switch on a cable.

When the CH-53 was designed, somebody remembered problems the CH-46 had in dropping sling loads, and came up with a better idea. Why not put the pickle switch on the stick — right where the intercom switch had been on the CH-46? Of course, lots of CH-46 pilots were transitioned into the CH-53. Guess what happened the first time they tried to use the intercom? (We lose more howitzers that way!)

Better ideas didn't end with the Vietnam war. For quite a while now, the Infantry School has been looking for ways of dealing with Soviet tanks. One of the solutions apparently is the "Eagle Cocktail," an improvised weapon which the infantryman is supposed to make on the spot. The directions are found in FM 21-75, *Combat Skills of the Soldier* (August, 1984):

" . . . fill the bag [a waterproof or plastic bag] with the gas and oil mixture . . . attach the thermite and smoke grenades to the bag using tape, string, or communications wire . . . tie a piece of string or cord to the safety pins of the grenades. Before throwing the eagle cocktail, pull the safety pins in both grenades."

Let me see if I've got this right . . . a waterproof bag would hold a couple of gallons of gas — say 15 pounds or so. Add two grenades and we're up to about 18 pounds. And smoke and thermite grenades don't have delay fuses; as soon as you pull those pins, you're going to get a jet of flame out of the base of each grenade . . . HMMMMM. You throw the eagle cocktail, and I'll stand back here and watch through binoculars.

Antitank weapons are all candidates for better ideas. The current standard man-packed antitank weapon, the M47 Dragon, is a shoulder-fired, wire-guided missile. The soldier sits or kneels with the rear of the launch tube on his shoulder and the front of the tube supported by a monopod. He puts the cross hairs of the sight on the target and fires. A computer in the sight keeps the missile flying along the line of sight, so all the soldier has to do is keep those cross hairs on the target until the missile gets there. What could be more simple?

Except that the average soldier can't hit anything with the Dragon. Tests showed that after firing a few missiles, the hit prob-

ability rose dramatically. But, the Dragon is so expensive that the average soldier won't get to fire even one missile during his entire term of service.

So the obvious answer was to develop training devices. The first was a simple bracket that allowed a videotape camera to be attached to the weapon. An instructor could watch the gunner's tracking through the monitor, and the gunner could review his mistakes after firing.

It didn't work. So they tried again. The simulators got more and more expensive. And none of them worked.

The problem was the weight of the missile. When the gunner fires a live missile, the launcher suddenly becomes about 25 pounds lighter as the missile leaves the tube. The back end of the launcher has a tendency to rise, which causes the sight to go down. And the missile flies down the line of sight right into the ground. Attempts were made to design a simulator that could duplicate the sudden weight loss coupled with all the smoke and noise of an actual launch. They were unsuccessful.

But some soldiers did very well on their first attempt at firing a live round. The Army attempted to find out why. And they found a lot of these successful gunners were trained by the same sergeant. So they asked him how he did it.

"Wal," he said, "I just have 'em practice. We use the video camera, just like everybody else."

"But you must be doing something different," said the scientists.

He scratched his head. "I can't think of anything . . . 'cept that I stand behind 'em, an' a little to one side. An' when they fire, I wang 'em between the shoulder blades with my helmet."

Now if we could just design a multi-million dollar simulator that would wang 'em between the shoulder blades with a helmet . . . ✕

## IN REVIEW

Continued from page 10

ancillary gear used by U.S. Army forces in Vietnam, including such items as helicopter crewman armored plates and light-weight chaplain accessories. He also covers dog attack training ensembles, indigenous camouflage uniforms, and Special Forces berets, as well as the placement of name tapes and other uniform items. This book also features a specially prepared Army uniform map of Vietnam.

The only drawback to this work is the lack of color photographs when describing camouflage clothing, especially those worn by U.S. advisers. As a Vietnam clothing collector, I noticed he left a few items out, such as Thai

Continued on page 96

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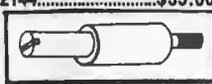
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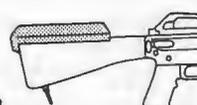
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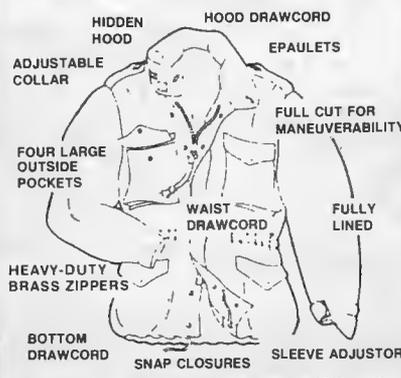
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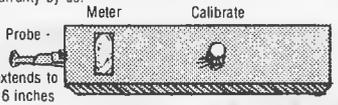
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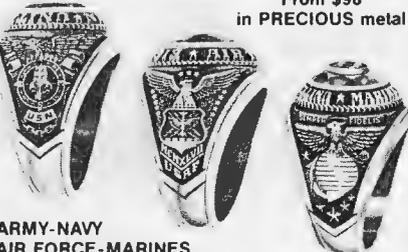
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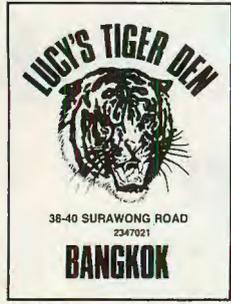
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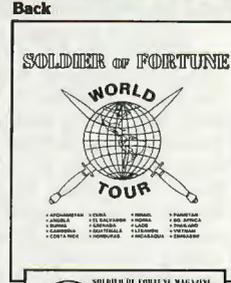
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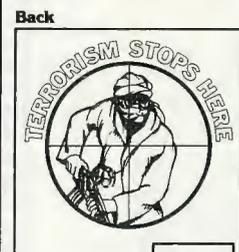
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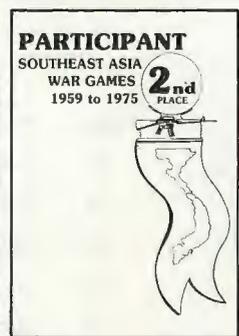
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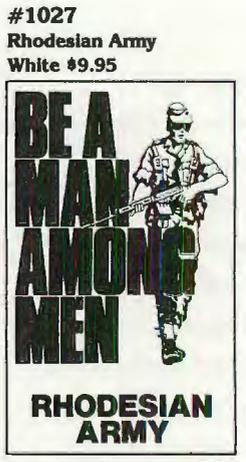
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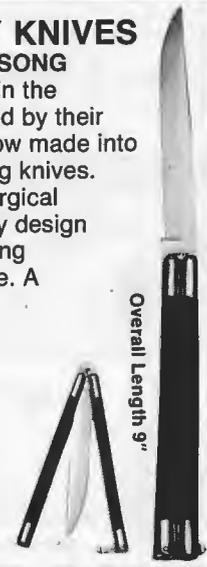
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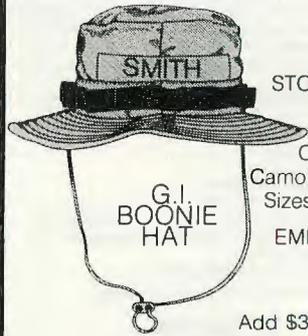
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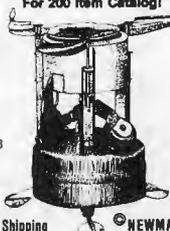
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Continued from page 85

camouflage, the horizontal tiger stripe uniform, and the French and British patterns left over from the first Indochina War. However, as the focus is on U.S. Army uniforms, it's only a minor omission.

**U.S. Army Uniforms of the Vietnam War** covers all uniforms — standard and experimental equipment ranging from headgear to footwear — from those of privates to generals.

Shelby Stanton, one of the leading military historians of the modern U.S. Army (and incidentally, one whose superb works on the war are the standard and well-thumbed Vietnam reference texts in the SOF library), has created a work consistent with his reputation. If you are a military enthusiast, a veteran, historian or collector, this book is a must. ✕

## BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 18

Different Stripe," SOF, January '89), including a great deal of coverage in the regular press. We even got a call from one of the aviators who was slated to go on these aborted missions and who now lives in SOF's hometown of Boulder, Colorado.

One of the more interesting letters we got was from one of the Flying Tigers who came to the American Volunteer Group, or AVG, from the Navy and who was one of the few men in the AVG to be captured by the Japanese and held as a POW (he returned to Naval service after the war and subsequently retired as a captain). Seems he has applied for the recently approved POW medal, and the Navy legal beagles — although sympathetic and quite intrigued by the whole thing — are presently of the opinion (although willing to be persuaded otherwise) that he was *not* a member of the U.S. armed forces when he was captured and thus, regrettably, is not qualified to receive the medal.

The good captain gave the Navy lawyers SOF's article as evidence that the Flying Tigers were authorized by the U.S. government and that American servicemen who served with them were authorized to do so by the commander-in-chief, and they were suitably impressed, but . . . The whole matter seems to hinge on the "Executive Order of 15 April 1941," with which FDR authorized U.S. fighting men to join the AVG without running afoul of our neutrality laws.

Although this document has been cited uncounted times by numerous



authors, SOF was unable to lay hands on the original. Joint Board Paper 355, which authorized the second phase of Chennault's operations — the bomber forces and their use against targets in Japan — makes reference to the "recent executive action" authorizing the First AVG (Flying Tigers). Archivists at the FDR Library in Hyde Park, New York are of the opinion it may not have been an "Executive Order" by FDR in his role as president, but an "Executive Command" by FDR in his role as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

If any readers can locate or lead us to a copy of this document, a deserving veteran who volunteered to fight the Japanese against overwhelming odds in the Flying Tigers will get his POW medal. If you have any information, contact Associate Editor Don McLean here at SOF.

Incidentally, this sort of misplacing of historic documents isn't unique. Toward the end of the Vietnam war, a U.S. senator asked to see the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which was the authorization for U.S. participation in the Southeast Asia War Games. It couldn't be found.

## MAN BITES DOG...

We couldn't have been more surprised if Jack The Ripper had come out against vivisection.

Representative Barney Frank, the no-apologies gay Democrat who represents the district south of

Boston (and who has one of the most liberal voting records in the Congress) has lately been telling his fellow libs what they have to do if they want to start winning elections:

- 1) Give up on gun control.
- 2) Support the 65 mile-per-hour speed limit.
- 3) Be tougher on criminals.
- 4) Be anti-communist and proud of it.
- 5) Support free enterprise.

"Liberals are beginning to sound like scolds," Frank said. "Don't drive too fast, don't play with a gun, don't smoke here, don't drink this, don't eat that."

Every "don't," in short, except "Don't tread on me."

What Frank is really saying is that if you want to hold political office in the United States you have to put liberty ahead of safety. That strikes us as a truth that's self-evident, but over on the Left it apparently comes as something of a revelation.

## UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR...

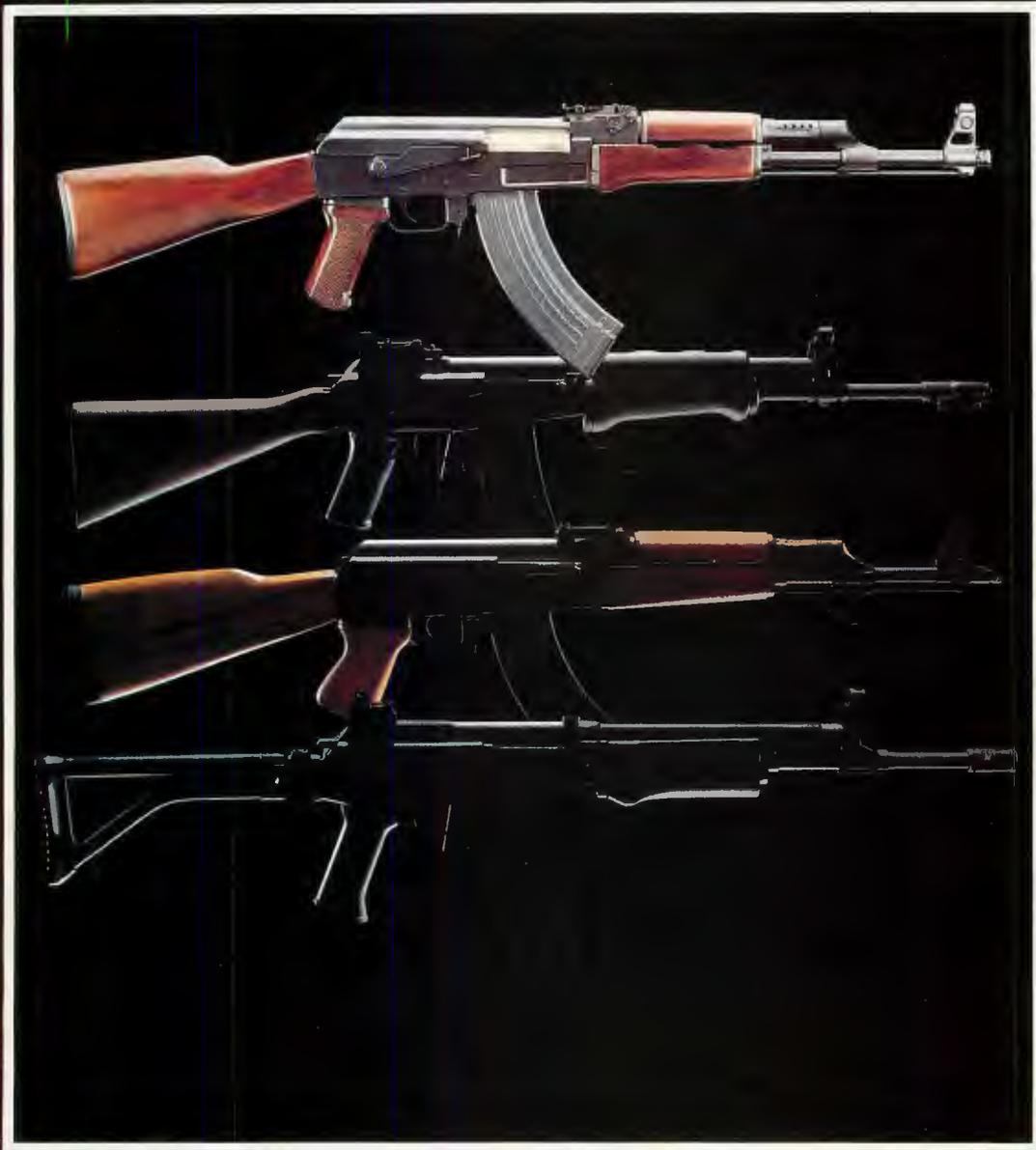
Headline on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*, on 12 January (barely a month before the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was due to conclude):

People of Kabul Await  
A Soviet Withdrawal  
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Well, yes, sort of like:

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