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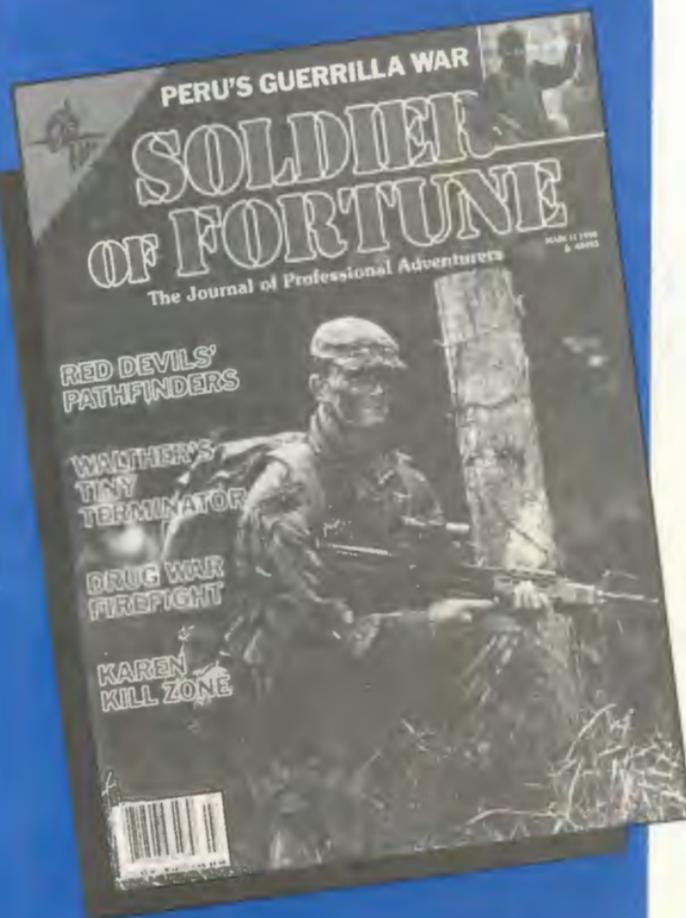
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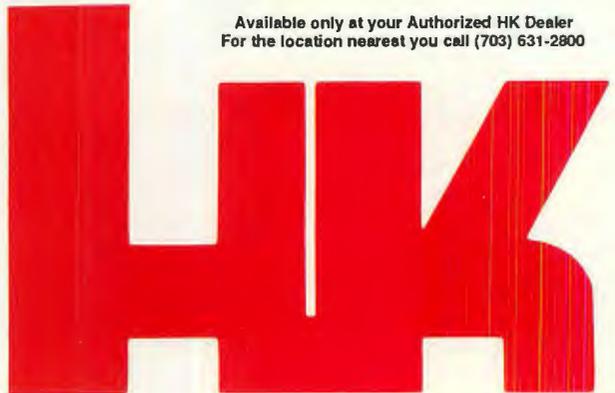
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Chuck Fremont

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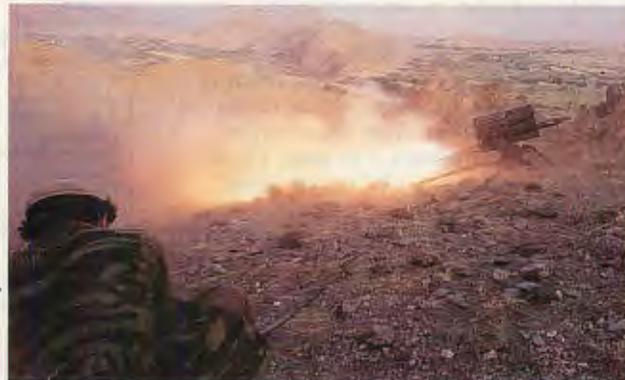
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COVER

COVER: Warring drug gangs, fighting and dying for the crystalized cocaine known as crack, have turned sections of Los Angeles into deadly free-fire zones. Two SOF correspondents put on their flak vests and headed to the "City of the Angels" to bring us a domestic combat report that will astound you. Story starts on page 40. Photos: David Bjorkman
INSET: Colonel Mike Hoare, the 20th century's most illustrious mercenary leader, returns to the pages of SOF with his story "Congo Mercs' Masterpiece," beginning on page 70.



COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Gun Grab '89

ONCE you get beyond the smokescreen of shrill hysteria cloaking the great gun grab of 1989, you find something else: lies.

Gun control advocates have always played fast and loose with the facts, but the present attack on gun ownership rests on a framework of deceit, distortion, and outright falsehood that is unprecedented. Consider:

- Gun control advocates say their quarrel is only with military-style assault rifles. That is a lie on its face. The truth is that the legislation they have introduced — and in some cases passed — would ban all semiautomatic rifles with detachable magazines, between 20 and 30 million firearms. On page 12 of this issue is a list of some 270 different types of firearms that would be either confiscated outright or whose future sale would be banned under bills introduced in the Congress by Representative Howard Berman (D-Calif.) and Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio). Regardless of what gun grabbers may say, the actual laws they are sponsoring would deny Americans the right to own modern arms.

- Gun control advocates say the only purpose of military-style assault rifles is to kill people. That too is a bald-faced lie, as demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of millions of Americans who own military-style semiautomatic rifles use them for hunting or sporting purposes. It is certainly true that firearms such as the AK and the AR-15, to say nothing of the M1 Carbine, were originally designed as weapons of war, but that is true of many if not most other firearms. If military origins make a firearm illegitimate, the gun grab of 1989 will soon extend to the tens of millions of bolt-action hunting rifles that trace their origin to the German Mauser and British Lee Enfield and automatic pistols whose lineage includes the M1911A1 .45.

- Gun control advocates claim that military-style assault rifles should be banned because they are the preferred weapon of criminals. In point of fact that is untrue — the vast majority of violent crimes are still committed with handguns — but it is also beside the point. The truth is that the vast majority of people who own the weapons gun grabbers would outlaw are neither psychopaths nor criminals and to intimate otherwise — as gun control advocates are doing — is no less than group libel.

- Gun control advocates claim that the right to keep and bear arms embodied in the Second Amendment is in reality a collective right, one that can legitimately be exercised only through **membership** in an official military force. That is most emphatically not the view of the founders of the republic, nor, self-evidently, of the tens of millions of Americans who own firearms. Ironically, when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Firearms Act of 1934, which banned the ownership of sawed-off shotguns, it did so on the grounds (which happened to be factually incorrect) that there were no military uses for them. The implication of the decision is that firearms that do have legitimate military uses are constitutionally protected. If military-style assault rifles don't meet that test, what does?

Americans were given the right to keep and bear arms because the founders of the country did not believe government should have a monopoly on the instruments of coercive force. Those who would ban guns rob Americans of the liberty as surely as if they banned free speech. And that is the truth. ✕

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DEEP COVER

Police Intelligence Operations

by Burt Rapp

The undercover police officer moves in a shadowy world of informers, crime lords, drug traffickers, corrupt officials and petty hoodlums. The fragmentation of American policing has given criminals unprecedented opportunities to pursue their activities undetected or unpunished. Undercover police agents provide effective countermeasures by patching together a network of sources and tips that assist officers throughout the force. This up-to-date guide covers staffing and securing an intelligence unit; record keeping; civil rights issues; informers, informants and other sources; building trust; and occupational hazards such as officer exposure, corruption and political manipulation. Learn all about one of the least understood — and most important — aspects of modern police work. 5½ x 8½, softcover, 136 pp. **\$14.00**

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FAST BOLT...

Gun control advocates have whipped themselves into such a froth lately that we hate to say anything that might make them more hysterical. But since the poor wretches are so adamant about banning semi-autos with detachable magazines we thought we ought to pass along some data that recently came our way on the kind of performance you can get out of a humble bolt-action rifle.

According to a book published 39 years ago by a British officer, Major C.H.B. Pridham, who was an officer-instructor at the army's School of Musketry, at the time of the outbreak of World War I British infantrymen armed with Lee Enfields were expected to be able to sustain a rate of aimed fire (the operative word here is *aimed*) of 15 rounds a minute for a timed 60 seconds. That was the minimum. Many men regularly fired 20 or more aimed rounds. The school's *Sergeant-Instructor* Snoxall set the world's record for a hand-loaded rifle in 1914 when he fired 38 rounds in one minute, at 300 yards, with all his shots in the inner ring of the target.

His Majesty's grunts were able to achieve such high rates of fire because of the Lee Enfield's fast action and the ability to reload its 10-round magazine with two five-round stripper clips that could be slammed home through an opening in the top of the receiver.

BULLETIN BOARD



Advance Scouts from the Alaska National Guard 5th Battalion, 297th Division in Anchorage brave arctic temps of 50 below during Brim Frost '89 cold weather training exercise. Associate Editor Tom Bates returned to Alaska during one of its coldest winters on record to further investigate Soviet Spetsnaz incursions into the mainland. Look for this exciting report in an upcoming issue of SOF. Photo: Jim Lavrakus

TELL BUSH YOUR FEELINGS ON GUN GRAB...

Now that you've sent your letter to President Bush asking him to be fair and open-minded during the hysterical anti-semi-auto assault rifle feeding frenzy, you can follow it up with a phone call to the White House.

By calling (202) 456-7639, you'll reach the Executive Office of the President comment line, where you can state your opinions on the gun ban, your support of the contras and a strong defense budget, or anything else you'd like to get off your chest.

According to the pleasant lady with whom we spoke, the information they receive is tallied each day and then passed along, presumably reaching the president somewhere along the line.

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Be to the point.

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HABITUAL CRIMINALS...

For the record, Patrick Purdy, the psychotic responsible for the Stockton schoolyard massacre — and in whose name the great gun grab of '89 is being perpetrated — ran up the following record before he ended his life:

In 1979, he was arrested for extortion and possession of dangerous weapons. In 1980 he was arrested for drug crimes. In 1982 he was arrested for possession of drugs. In 1983 he was arrested on dangerous weapons charges and receiving stolen property. In 1984 he was arrested for attempted robbery and conspiracy. In 1987 he was arrested on weapons charges and resisting arrest. Each time the charges were either dropped outright or plea bargained down to misdemeanors from felonies. Purdy spent a total of 80 days in jail.

The question is not whether Purdy is a habitual criminal but whether the people who regularly declined to incarcerate him are habitual criminals.

ARIZONAN'S ANSWER TO GUN CONTROL...

With anti-gun hysteria on the rise, it was nice to see that the Arizona legislature was looking at a different approach to regulating firearms. A bill introduced by Rep. Dave Carsons, a Prescott Republican, would authorize the State Department of Public Safety to issue concealed weapons permits to anyone — except some convicted felons and the mentally ill — who completes a firearms training course. A concealed weapon, for the purposes of the bill, is a handgun, electronic weapon or device, tear gas gun, knife or billy club.

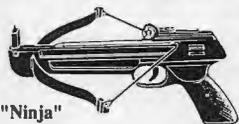
Carson's rationale for introducing the bill, which initially had the support of 60 of the state's 90 lawmakers, was "to catch the criminal off guard, because he won't be able to immediately identify an easy victim."

The dreary truth is most violent offenders get away with it most of the time, which is why the streets are so dangerous. We like the idea of introducing a note of uncertainty into the business of street crime — a trade whose practitioners usually don't bother applying for concealed weapons permits anyway.

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LAST SOVIET SOLDIERS LEAVE AFGHANISTAN AFTER 9 YEARS, 15,000 DEAD AND GREAT COST



New York Times front page story, 16 February '89.

CIVIL WAR GOES ON

A General Walks Across the Border to Relief and Recrimination

By BILL KELLER
Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Feb. 15 — The last Soviet soldier came home from Afghanistan this morning, the Soviet Union announced, leaving behind a war that has become a domestic burden and an international embarrassment for Moscow.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is a declining power. In April, the Soviet Union announced that it would withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

ALLAH IS AKHBAR

TRAITOR JANE EXPELLED FROM CLASS...

When a teacher at the El Dorado High School in Kansas decided to use Jane Fonda exercise tapes as part of the school's physical education program, which meant students were required to exercise to the cadence of a traitor, the local veterans' organizations got hopping mad and raised holy hell.

The result, according to Vic Auer, incoming commander of American Legion Post 81, was a huge public outcry resulting in a decision on the part of the instructor to suspend use of the tape.

We should hope. Voluntarily patronizing Fonda is offensive; requiring students to use her tapes is roughly like hiring a North Vietnamese prison camp guard to teach them phys ed.

Said Auer of the public reaction: "It brought out something called patriotism, which some of us thought was dead for years."

SEALS NOT ENDANGERED SPECIES...

Budget constraints notwithstanding, one place where the U.S. Navy does want to beef up its

capabilities is in the special operations areas. The service is reported wanting to increase the number of its SEAL platoons from 37 to 60.

It seems someone in the Pentagon figured out that the most likely threats in the next decade are going to come in the form of low intensity conflicts, and those sorts of situations are best handled by special operations forces.

It's nice to know someone is thinking ahead. It would be even nicer if someone in government would decide to recognize actions like the blowing up of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland for what they are — acts of war against the United States — and use the special operations assets we have to at the very least hunt down the leaders of the countries who perpetrate them and cut their throats.

OUR MISTAKE AND REGRETS...

Due to our error, the names of the photographers whose work accompanied "Bloody Beaufort" (SOF, April '89) were omitted. The photo on the bottom left of page 44 was taken by J. Pavlovsky. The cover photo and all other photos were taken by A. Keler. Please accept belated acknowledgment and our apologies.

AFGHAN ANTAGONISTS NUMERICALLY BALANCED...

Now that the war in Afghanistan is once again an intramural, how do the opposing forces stack up numerically?

Almost equally, surprisingly enough. The Afghan government's regular army fields about 35,000, a number it has sustained throughout most of the war by conscription, but when various militia forces and WAD state police units are added in, total Afghan communist strength comes to about 127,000.

In contrast, the mujahideen field about 126,000 men, some 40,000 of whom belong to no organized group. The three largest muj groups, incidentally, are *Jamiat-i-Islami*, with approximately 24,000 men, followed by Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami* with 16,000, and Khalis' *Hezb-i-Islami* with 10,000 men.

The crucial difference, of course, is the muj have no lack of willing volunteers, while the government's ability to press-gang people into service diminishes with its control of the countryside. And then there is a matter of defections. Two weeks after the Soviets pulled out, according to muj sources, 11,000 government troops had switched sides.

REUNIONS...

173rd Airborne Brigade, 30 June to 5 July, El Rancho Tropicana Hotel, Santa Rosa, California. Events will include parachute jumps, equipment displays, picnics, banquets, wine tastings, and an outdoor memorial service. General William Westmoreland has accepted an invitation to attend and will be honored guest. For information contact Ken Gaudet, 3377 Solano Ave., Suite 437, Napa, CA 94558; phone (707) 252-6732.

DON'T TREAD ON ME...

In the mood to generate a little controversy when you walk down the street? See SOF's answer to the latest anti-gun hysteria — our new "Assault Rifle" T-shirt — on page 26.

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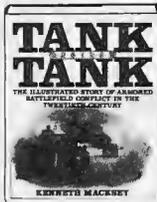
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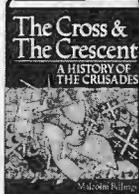
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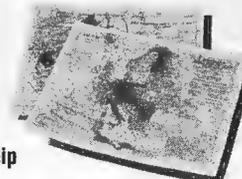
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Bac Thi Eaton was a teenage Vietnamese girl living in An Long, on the north bank of the Mekong River five miles from the Cambodian border, during the Vietnam War. Her childhood memories of the war are being compiled into a book. We thought it would be interesting to share one of her stories.



I WAS THERE

by Bac Thi Eaton
as told to Sam Eaton

Dishonor Before Death

SWEET smell of harvest blended with the sight of white and purple blossomed water spinach plants as the sun set over the rice field covered with evenly cut stalks. I was wishing my dream guy would come and rescue me from one of the worst fates that can befall a 15-year-old girl — being preached to death. I watched the cooking fire, made tea and roasted peanuts for our new communist preacher.

Since Tien, who was young and kind of cute for a VC preacher, got transferred, Hoi had taken his place. Hoi was harder, much more boring and looked infinitely more willing to kill an unsympathetic listener than Tien. But I had to smile, try hard to cover my frustration and watch the money, hard-earned money made by working all day in the fields, go to feed him tea and grilled peanuts. I wished this VC toad would leave me alone.

After toad breath drank all my tea and ate all my peanuts, he started preaching with a strong well-fed voice. "Tonight we study about honorable Uncle Ho Chi Minh and about life and death. The old people said that dying in glory is better than living in shame. Bac, have you ever heard that before?"

"Yes, sir, I have."

"Good, Good. Where did you hear that?" Hoi asked.

"From my grandmother, when she told me about smooth-talking men and how they lie and cheat, sir. And if I was stupid enough to fall for them, and lose my virginity, then I should die. I can't live to bring the shame and embarrassment to my family," I answered, thinking about my friend Ly walking around with a big belly from Tien, the previous VC preacher.

"That is for a grandmother to teach a granddaughter. But for Uncle Ho, it is not like that. It is about dignity, courage, and honor. We will always put our country and its honor above our lives," Hoi said in his wise-man voice.

"If you say so, sir," I answered.

"I am one of Uncle Ho's heroes. Look at the courage I display, going from camp to camp, spreading Uncle Ho's word. You would do well to mold yourself on my brave model."

"Yes, sir."

"Bac, what is the meaning of life and death in our glorious new world?"



Author describes true face of communism as seen through the eyes of young South Vietnamese villager who was targeted by one of Uncle Ho's preachers. Photo: DoD

"I guess it means that Ho's true children would give their lives to protect the lives of others, the true brave children will die to protect others from danger, sir."

"Very good! You are learning Bac. Learn from my example and you will be a true child of Uncle Ho Chi Minh."

A few days later the sky was clear, and two farmers and I were sitting at the edge of a pond with some children, watching the pond's owner catch fish, when we saw an old single-engined American reconnaissance plane fly overhead. I saw that damned fool Hoi take his AK-47 and shoot at the airplane. He missed, and I silently cheered as the airplane pulled up un-

harmed.

A few hours later, while we were down at the pond also trying to catch fish, we heard a louder airplane noise. This time there were two airplanes, flying low. They were bigger and had two engines. My stomach turned cold and I felt sick.

The airplanes thundered back and forth hunting the fool who had shot at their friend. One farmer ran to his wagon, got out the red and yellow South Vietnamese flag, made sure that the red, gold and blue VC flag was well hidden, and then started frantically waving the yellow- and red-striped South Vietnamese flag. Then Hoi and his stupid AK-47 started shooting at the airplanes again from a nearby creek.

"That stupid asshole is going to kill us all," the flag-waving farmer cursed as the creek 50 yards away exploded. The airplanes' machine guns roared. "No matter what happens, don't run. Everybody sit still, don't move. Stay by the flag. That way they won't shoot at us," a second farmer ordered.

The airplanes screamed back, again and again. The water boiled. Rockets hit. The ground shook.

"We're going to die! We're all going to die!" a panicked child cried. Every time the planes flew by, the farmers frantically waved the flag. The pilot would give a friendly wiggle of his wings back to us. Suddenly I heard the noise of legs frantically bashing aside rice stalks. I looked up and saw Hoi. His rifle was gone, his black shirt was gone, and in his hand was a yellow- and red-striped South Vietnamese flag, furiously waving, as he ran toward us.

I was really scared now. That damn coward was going to draw the American fire on us, just to save his own miserable life. I thought of the ancient Vietnamese saying, "The coward dies many times before his death." Right now I'd settle for seeing Hoi skip a lot of cowards' deaths and die for real.

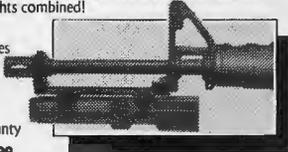
Brave, true, child of Uncle Ho indeed. I would've asked him if that was how brave the Ho children are. But, Hoi still had the power to kill me. Instead, I just watched the brave soldier of communism hiding behind the Saigon flag. It was enough. ✕

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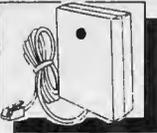
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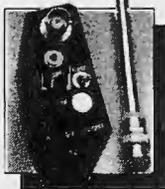
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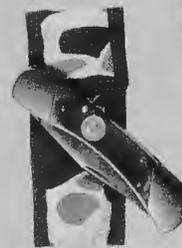


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SAY goodbye to your firearms. All of them.

The list below, comprising more than 270 different guns, is just the beginning. Handgun (?) Control Inc. spokesman Gregg Risch has declared this is "only the first step." It's time to recognize, once and for all, that the ultimate goal of these gun prohibitionists is the complete removal of every firearm of every type and caliber from our society.

It can't happen here, you say. Sorry, but it is happening here — right now. The recent suspension of the importation of semi-automatic rifles demonstrates the extent to which they intend to gut the 2nd Amendment. Furthermore, Berman's bill, which would confiscate every firearm on his list, makes no mention of compensation for this seizure of your chattel property. This is an unacceptable outrage and millions of Americans would, with all certainty, refuse to surrender lawfully obtained property in this manner, no matter what the consequences.

Metzenbaum's list is even larger, and although you would presumably be permitted to gaze upon them as they hang on the wall collecting dust, his proposed legislation is even more foolish as it would require their registration with the BATF. In 1988, BATF's NFA Branch processed 45,000 Forms 3 and 4 (applications to transfer a Title II firearms) with delays of up to four months. It has been conservatively estimated that there are 23 million firearms of the proscribed type in private ownership. Based upon their current processing rate, it would take the BATF more than 500 years to register these firearms!

Passage of Congressman Berman's House Bill, H.R. 669, would prohibit the private possession or transfer of the following firearms:

Pistol caliber firearms: AP-9 Assault Pistol, Auto-Ordnance Model 27A-1 Thompson, Auto-Ordnance 1927-A5 Pistol, Auto-Ordnance Thompson M-1, Cobray M-11, Colt AR-15 9mm Carbine, Commando Arms Carbine, Demro TAC-1 Carbine, Demro XF-7 Carbine, Encom Mk IV, Feather AT-9 Carbine, Federal XP900 and XP450 Pistols, Goncz High-Tech Long Pistol, Goncz High-Tech Carbine, Holmes MP-83, Heckler & Koch 94, Intratec TEC-9, Iver Johnson Enforcer Model 3000 Auto, MAC-10 Semi Auto, MAC-11 Semi Auto, Marlin Model 9 Camp Carbine, Micro Uzi Pistol, Mini Uzi Pistol, Norinco Officer's Nine Carbine, Partisan Avenger, Scarab Skorpion Pistol, Spectre DA Pistol, Spectre Carbine, Sterling Carbine, Uzi Pistol, Uzi Carbine, Weaver Arms Nighthawk, Wilkinson "Linda" Pistol, Wilkinson "Terry" Carbine.

Rifle caliber firearms: American Arms AKY39 and AKF39 Rifles, AR-10 Semi-auto Rifle, Argentine FALs, Armalite AR-180 Sporter Carbine, Armscorp M-14 Semiauto Rifle, Australian Automatic Arms SAR, Australian Automatic Arms SAC, Australian Automatic Arms SAP, Australian Automatic Arms SP & SP-20

SOF GUN GRAB '89

GUNS YOU STAND TO LOSE

Assault Rifle Ban Would Outlaw 270 Different Types of Firearms

hunting rifles, Australian G series FAL, Bushmaster Auto Rifle, Beretta AR-70 Sporter, Bushmaster Rifle, Bushmaster Auto Pistol, CETME Rifle, Clayco AKS Rifle, Colt AR-15, Colt AR-15A2 Sporter II, Colt AR-15A2 Carbine, Colt AR-15A2 H-BAR, Colt AR-15A2-Delta H-BAR, Daewoo AR110C, Daewoo AR100, Egyptian Maadi AKM, rigid stock and folding stock models, FAMAS Semiauto Rifle, Fed Ord M-14 Rifle, FN-LAR Competition Auto, FN-LAR Heavy Barrel .308 Match, FN-LAR Paratrooper Model 50-64, FN-LAR Model 50-63, FN-FNC, Galil AR, Galil ARM, Galil Sniper Rifle, Heckler & Koch PSG-1 Marksman Rifle, Heckler & Koch 91, Heckler & Koch 93, Israeli FALs, Iver Johnson PM30HB Carbine, Kassnar SA 85M AKM, Michel AK-47, Mitchell Heavy Barrel AK-47, Norinco Type 84S AKs, Norinco Type 81S Rifle, Norinco Type 81MGS Rifle, Norinco SKS Rifle with AK magazine, Norinco Type 86S "Bullpup" AK Rifle, Norinco Type 88SB Rifle, Norinco Type 86S-7 Rifle, Poly Tech AK-47/S, Poly Tech AKS-762, Poly Tech AKS-762 Down Folder, Poly Tech AKS-762 Side Folder, Poly Tech M-14/S, any SKS rifle with a 20 round extended magazine installed, RPKS-74 Assault Rifle, Ruger Mini-14, Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle, Ruger Mini-Thirty, SIG AMT, SIG PE-57, SIG SG 550-2 SP Rifle, SIG SG 550-2 SP Carbine, Smith Enterprises M-14 Semiauto Rifle, Springfield Armory SAR-48 Standard, Springfield Armory SAR-48 Bush Rifle, Springfield Armory SAR-48 Heavy Barrel, Springfield Armory SAR-48 Para, Springfield Armory M1A, Springfield Armory M1A Super Match, Springfield Armory M1A-A1, Springfield Armory BM-59 Italian Model, Springfield Armory BM-59 Alpine Model, Springfield Armory

BM-59 Alpine Paratrooper Model, Springfield Armory BM-59 Nigerian MK IV Model, Springfield Armory M-21 Sniper Rifle, Steyr AUG SA, Universal 100 Carbine, Valmet M-62/S Rifle, Valmet M-71/S Rifle, Valmet M-76 Standard Rifle, Valmet M-78 Rifle, Valmet M-82 Rifle, Valmet M-82 Bullpup Rifle, Valmet Hunter Rifle.

Shotguns: Franchi SPAS-12, Hi-Standard Model 10A, Street Sweeper, Striker 12 Special Purpose, USAS-12 Auto.

In addition to all of the above, passage of Senator Metzenbaum's Senate Bill, S. 386, would prohibit the transfer, importation, shipment, receipt or possession of the following (If you lawfully possessed any of the above or the following before the effective date of the legislation, you would be permitted to retain them, although presumably you would not be permitted to transport them out of your house — i.e., in essence you could not shoot them). Finally, they would all have to be registered with the BATF via a procedure similar to that employed with machine guns.

Rifles: .30 M1 Carbine, Barrett Light-Fifty.

Any semiautomatic hunting rifle (such as the Remington Model 4, 7400, Sportsman 74, 742, & Winchester Model 100) which can accept an aftermarket magazine with a capacity greater than ten rounds of ammunition.

Semiautomatic Handguns: Action Arms AT-84, Action Arms AT-88, Astra A-60, Astra A-80, Astra A-90, Beretta Model 84, Beretta Model 85, Beretta Models 92, 92S, 92SB and 92F, Bernardelli Model P018 Combat Pistol, Bersa Model 225, Bren Ten, Brno CZ-75 and CZ-83, Browning BDA-380, Browning Hi-Power, Colt M1911 series and all clones that will accept extended magazines and/or drums,

F.I.E. TZ-75, F.I.E. Super Titan, Glock 17 and 19, Heckler & Koch VP70Z, Heckler & Koch P7M13, Heckler & Koch P9S, Holmes MP-22, Kassnar PJK-9HP, Korth Pistol, Llana Omni, Llana M-82, Luger P.08 with 32-round snail gun, Norinco Type NZ75 and Mini-NZ75, Ruger P-85, SIG-Sauer P-226, Smith & Wesson Models 39, 59, 439, 639, 459, 659, 469, 669 and 3900 series, S.P.A. Gamba Mauser HSc 80 G.15 and Model SAB "G" 90, Star Models 30, 30M and PK, Steyr GB, Steel City "War Eagle", Targa GT 380XE and GT 32XE, Targa Gt22T Target Auto, Tauarmi TA90 and Baby TA90, Taurus PT-99, PT-99AF and PT-58, Victory MC5, Walther P-88.

.22 Long Rifle Caliber Semiautomatic Rifles: American 180, Anschutz Deluxe Model 520/61, Armscor Models 20P and 1600, Armscor AK-22, AMT Lightening 25/22, Auto-Ordnance Mod 1927A-3, Browning Auto-22, Calico-100, Century Squibman Rifle, Charter Arms AR-7 Explorer, Daisy Mod 2213, EMF AP-74, Erma Model M22, Feather AT-22 and Mini-AT, Federal Model XC-220, F.I.E./Franchi Para Carbine, F.I.E. GR-8 Black Beauty, Franchi Centennial Rifle, Gevarm E1 Rifle and A3 Auto Sporter, Hi-Standard Sport-King Deluxe Rifle and Carbine, Illinois Arms Co. Model 180, Interarms Model 22 ATD, Intratec Scorpion, Iver Johnson 3112, Kassnar Concorde Model M-16 and Model 20 P/S Rifles, Marlin Models 49 DL, 70 HC, 99C, 99M1, 989 M2, 990, 995 and 70P Papoose, Marlin Glenfield 60, Mitchell AK-22, MAS-22, M-16/22 and Galil/22, Mossberg Models 350K, 351K, 351C, 352K, 430, 432, 380, 353, and 377 Plinkster, Noble Model 885, Remington Nylon 66 and Nylon 77, Remington 552 DBL, Ruger 10/22, Savage Models 60 and 90, Savage Stevens Model 88, Stevens Model 987 T, Sears Model 3T, Sears Ted Williams 3T, Tradewinds Model 260-A, Voere Model 2115, Weatherby Mark XXII Clip Model, Westernfield Models 846, 850 and 982, Winchester Mod 190 Rifle and Carbine and Mod 290 Rifle.

Shotguns: Cosmi Automatic, Remington Model 11, any semiautomatic shotgun (such as the Remington 1100, 11-87 and 11-87 Trap) with an extended magazine giving a capacity greater than six rounds of ammunition.

In addition, passage of S. 386 would make it illegal to transfer, ship, receive, or possess a magazine, box, belt, drum, strip, or any other container, which holds more than ten rounds of ammunition to be fed continuously into a semiautomatic firearm.

There are, undoubtedly, even more firearms that would be prohibited if either of these two bills were passed into law. However, definitions of so-called assault weapons are ambiguous in both pieces of legislation, and clearly indicate their authors know nothing more about firearms other than that they hate them blindly.

Compiled by Michael J. Pastika, Jr. & Peter G. Kokalis. ✎

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Sirs:

I have been reading your esteemed magazine for the past year and a half. During this time, there have been a lot of articles on Vietnam. I would like to bring to the attention of your readers that there was an organization in Britain that fully supported the gallant fight of the Americans in Vietnam. This organization was formed by myself in 1963, and was called the Democratic Alliance. It started with four members and ended in 1975 with over 1,000. Our numbers included 26 members of parliament and six members of the House of Lords, including one earl.

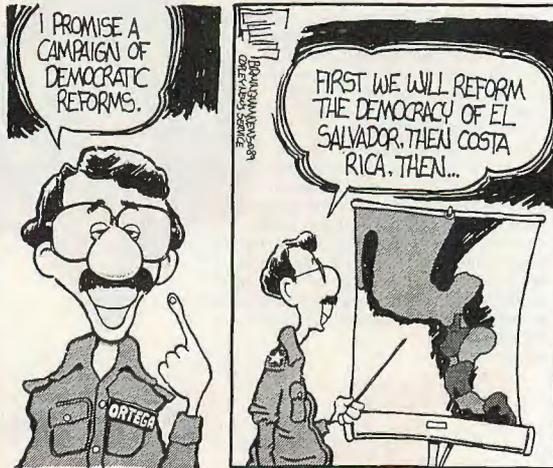
During these 12 years our organization distributed over one million items such as leaflets, posters, badges, etc. . . . A number of our members visited Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. A few of us actually took part in the fighting. I would just like to point out that America and its allies were not entirely alone; some of us passionately supported Vietnamese and American troops.

We are going to reform the committee in order to bring the MIA issue to the attention of the British public. If any of your readers would like further information on the above subject please contact us at: 126 Burstallars, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs, U.K.

L. Wooler
Cambs, United Kingdom



FLAK



A DEMOCRACY IS A DEMOCRACY IS A DEMOCRACY...

Sirs:

I'm responding to the letter from Mr. Lee Knopper (Flak, SOF, March '89) where he berates SOF correspondent Gene Scroft, a West Point graduate, for referring to the government of the United States as a democracy rather than a "federal, constitutional republic."

Lighten up a little, Mr. Knopper, not everyone has a degree in political science. Besides, Mr. Scroft's description is perfectly acceptable and technically accurate. Literally, in its original Greek and Latin usage, democracy meant the people rule directly, not through elected representatives. But this quickly became impractical if not impossible in growing city-states and nations, so government by the people, or democracy, came to include government by the elected representatives of the people or "representative democracy." Check the dictionary or any decent civics or introductory political science textbook. Today any nation with a freely elected government may correctly and accurately be described as a democracy.

Sadly, all too few people in the world know the privilege of living in a democracy by any name, form or description. SOF is to be commended for reminding us of this fact and for encouraging us to do something about it. We may not all be able to join a special operations unit in Latin America or Africa, but we can all stay abreast of our own national and international affairs and make sure our own representatives and leaders pursue policies to defend and expand freedom and democracy everywhere in the world.

Joseph Marshall
Memphis, Tennessee

SNIPER SNIPET...

Sirs:

I'm writing in regard to your recent articles concerning the "new" M24 sniper weapons system (SOF, July '88 and March '89). The article Mr. Kokalis wrote comparing the M24 to the Parker Hale M-85 was excellent. Side-by-side the Parker Hale would have been my choice.

The more recent article, "Sniper SNAFU," was also excellent and leads me to believe that the M24's interchangeable calibers resulted in the Army's choosing it. I am curious though; wouldn't it be cheaper to buy two quality sniper rifles, one in .308 and one in .300 Winchester Magnum, than the M24 SWS?

I've been involved in NRA/Military Highpower rifle match competitions for several years now and shoot M14s out to 600 yards with iron sights. However, at 1,000 yards my favorite is the McMillan .300 Winchester Magnum. I look forward to reading more on sniper rifles in your magazine. Thanks for the good work.

Mark Pieruccini
Groton, Connecticut

NAVY SNIPERS?...

Sirs:

I read your article on the Army's M24 sniper rifle (SOF, March '89) with interest. In 1969 I went through Navy sniper training. Someone had the strange idea that we could shoot people from off the deck of a PBR (Patrol Boat, River).

The Navy's weapon of choice was a national match grade M14 with a Redfield 3x9 Accurange scope and Sionics suppressor. These were excellent rifles that were capable of fine accuracy. Most of us were able to shoot consistent three-shot clover leaves. In fact, two of my classmates could get hits on a cut down silhouette at 1,000 meters. We trained on standard silhouettes that had two inches cut off all the way around to simulate the size of a VC.

I found the weapon to be very reliable and accurate. Once when I spotted my classmate's first round and raised the target again, his second round shattered the spindle of the spotter disk. I pulled the target, put another spotter in and

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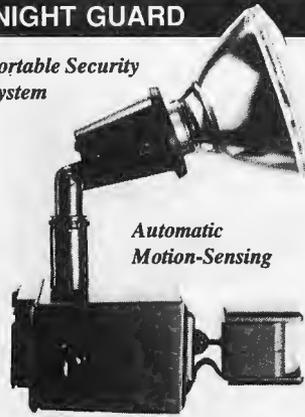


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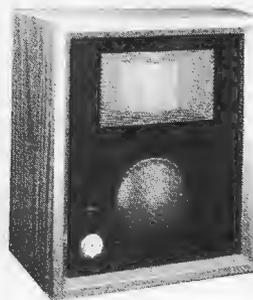
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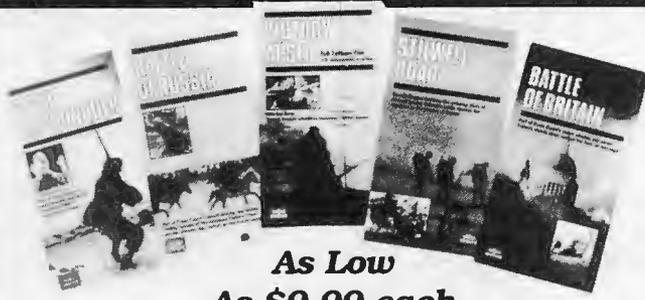
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raised it again, only to have him shoot out the spindle again. That's three shots in one hole at 100 meters with iron sights.

It appears that our illustrious Uncle Sam has once again solved a nonexistent problem by throwing vast quantities of taxpayer money at it.

Michael D. Sharp
Ponca City, Oklahoma

Specialized military weapon systems will always be points of controversy to developers, users and evaluators. In essence, you ain't gonna please everybody. The M21 SWS — the upgraded M14 — has proven its worth for more than 25 years and will probably remain in service for some time to come. The jury's still out on the M24.

It's our learned opinion that the only really good pieces of military equipment ever developed were the P38 can opener, camouflage poncho liner, and jungle sleeping shirt. . .

NO STENCH HERE. . .

Sirs:

I'm writing in response to the letter by Mr. Shiloh Okole Elanca (Flak, SOF, April '89).

Please note that there are a lot of



people who do not think that SOF is stench of filth. The editorial coverage is not Nazi oriented, nor is it racist. I've been a subscriber for about 10 years and assure you that many races of people have graced the cover and been written about at length. Also please note that the editors disagree with the U.S. Government almost all the time! I ask you Mr. Elanca, where else on this planet is this possible?

I have a graduate degree in international business, travel frequently, and have gained an excellent perspective on the world. My parents and I are direct victims of communism and socialist bliss.

P.J.
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

LINDBERGH'S CLOSE CALL. . .

Sirs:

I read Mr. Steve Furimsky, Jr.'s article (SOF, January '89) with great interest. I was particularly interested in the comments concerning Charles Lindbergh flying with the Marines.

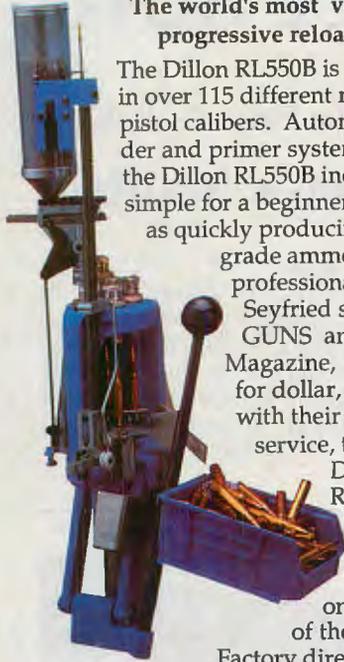
It should be noted that Lindbergh also flew P-38 Lightnings with the U.S. Army Air Corp's 475th Fighter Squadron based in New Guinea. During this period Lindbergh was able to shoot down several Japanese planes, which weren't recorded because he was a civilian technical adviser. What also wasn't recorded was the fact that Lindbergh was

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almost shot down on one of these missions. Lindbergh was attacked while flying an air superiority mission over Peleliu Island.

Lindbergh's wartime missions are described in *The Last Hero: Charles Lindbergh* by Walter S. Ross. Lindbergh also described these missions in his book, *The Wartime Journals of Charles Lindbergh*.

Keep up the good work with the magazine. I've been a subscriber for almost 10 years. I particularly like David Isby's articles as I knew him when he was designing wargames.

Rolfe L. Hillman III
Arlington, Virginia

SOF IGNORED BY MASS MEDIA...

Sirs:

One night last February I happened to tune in to a cable station on TV and watched a discussion concerning the lack of good press coverage on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. They really blasted each other for lack of coverage in that 10-year war. They commented on why no one cared enough about Afghanistan or even mentioned the atrocities committed there. Not one of the panelists even

mentioned SOF's coverage.

SOF should make its part known to these people.

Donald Martinez
Bellflower, California

They know, but to acknowledge SOF's role in covering the war in Afghanistan would be embarrassing. The reason the mainstream media did such a lousy job on Afghanistan is because the mountains are tall and the guerrillas almost always walk. It's usually intolerably hot and dusty, or viciously cold. The Afghans are reckless and frustrating to work with. It takes a long time to go from point A to point B. There are no press conferences around the hotel bar. There are in fact no bars or hotels. Traveling inside Afghanistan one had to be prepared for thirst, hunger and disease, especially dysentery. Finally, the communist policy of shooting or throwing journalists in prison did not make Afghanistan a sought after assignment. Of those who ventured inside, most went once. The Afghans even have a joke about it; they say, "There are those who have been to Afghanistan and there are those who come again."

SOF did not get the first reporter inside Afghanistan, but since Spring

1980 we've been there more often, with more people, and gone farther inside for longer periods of time than any magazine, newspaper or broadcast media in the Western world. In November 1987 SOF had six reporters separately humping Afghanistan's mountains. If conditions allow, when Kabul falls we hope to get a team shot of "the Gang" in front of the Afghan Ministry of Defense. If they all manage to rendezvous we could have up to eight reporters on hand for the festivities. Every one of them will be from the "those who came again" class.

LETTERS

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

FBI CONSIDERS 10MM

I understand the FBI is taking a long, hard look at the 10mm Auto pistol cartridge. What is the current status of this project?

Mike Pastika
Phoenix, AZ

The FBI has just submitted an RFP (Request For Proposal) to Smith & Wesson for 9,500 units based upon the M4506.45 ACP pistol and chambered for either the 10mm Auto as now produced or a version with a somewhat shortened case. In its final form, the pistol will feature a 10- to 12-round staggered-column magazine and Wayne Novak's high-visibility, non-slag, fixed sights. However, the S&W design places the barrel's axis relatively high above the hand and thus exaggerates any tendency for muzzle jump. SOF has already tested the FBI 10mm load. It consists of Sierra's Power Jacket 180-grain JHP bullet propelled by five and two-tenths grains of Bullseye. Although the FBI tests were conducted with a 6-inch test barrel, we fired this ammunition through a Colt Delta Elite with a 5-inch barrel. The average velocity, 10 feet from the muzzle, was 965 fps. Penetration in soft tissue was an adequate 13.6 to 15 inches, with full expansion of the bullet to .654 caliber.

MP40 BARREL REST



While I agree for the most part with your FULL AUTO column on the MP40 sub-machine gun in the September '87 issue of SOF, I must take exception to your comments on the barrel rest. As you can see from the enclosed German manual on this weapon, the "widerlager" was indeed designed as an armored-vehicle firing-port rest.

Warren W. Odegard
Northridge, CA

I must bow to the expertise of Warren Odegard, a highly respected authority on German World War II small arms and the several other readers who wrote to dispute my rather flippant dismissal of this theory. A rather loose translation of the pertinent portion of the manual reads as follows: "The widerlager (abutment) reduces the jumping back (recoil) of the MP during shooting out of the panzerwagen and the like. The schiene (rib or support rail) serves to protect the barrel during shooting out of a panzershorten (armored car)."

DANISH GRENADE

Enclosed is a drawing of a grenade I have been unable to identify. Someone



FULL AUTO

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

More Mr. Machine Gun's Mailbag



suggested that it is a World War II German "egg" grenade. Is this true or not?

Tom Foster
Los Angeles, CA

Source material on older hand grenades is hard to come by. Many thousands of inert specimens of this grenade were imported to the United States about 20 years ago. It is, in fact, the Danish Model 1923 offensive grenade. It has a heavy steel body, which was normally painted gray, brass fuse fitting, peculiar copper wire pull-safety and is most commonly stenciled with the number "23" on the side of the body.

WOOD & LEATHER PRESERVATIVES

You have mentioned G96 Gun Treatment, PARR All Weather Weapons Lube and Shooter's Choice bore cleaner on many occasions, but what do you use to preserve wood furniture and leather slings on your firearms?

Bill Brooks
Montgomery, AL

I treat oiled gunstocks with a mixture of equal parts linseed oil, turpentine and white vinegar. After this has dried, I apply Renaissance Micro-Crystalline Wax, which is available from Conservation Materials, Ltd. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2884, Sparks, NV 89431; phone 702-331-0582). For leather slings and accoutrements, I use Pecard Leather Dressing exclusively. A six-ounce container can be purchased for \$5.50, postpaid, from R. Stephen Dorsey (Dept. SOF, P.O.

Box 263, Eugene, OR 97440; phone 503-937-3348). Finally, to remove light rust from metal surfaces without damaging the bluing, try Frontier Metal Cleaner, which is manufactured by the Big 45 Frontier Gun Shop (Dept. SOF, 515 Cliff Avenue, Valley Springs, SD 57068; phone 605-757-6248).

GALIL ASSAULT RIFLE



Almost six years have passed since you evaluated the Galil assault rifle in the July '83 issue of SOF. Has continued exposure to this system resulted in any significant change in your original high opinion of Israel's version of the Kalashnikov?

Jim Caras
Glenview, IL

As long as the Galil is employed as no more than an infantry rifle, that is, primarily in the semiauto mode with occasional bursts of full-auto fire, its useful life span will match any of its competitors. Unfortunately, the IDF has insisted on using the Galil as a SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon), all too often subjecting it to long bursts of sustained fire. Its heavy, forged receiver was supposed to serve as an adequate heat sink for this purpose. However, it does not have a quick-change barrel, and over-heating has sometimes wreaked havoc with this rifle. One of my most reliable sources has recently examined several thousand well-worn Galils in Israel, offered for sale at about \$15 each. In almost every instance, the dovetails at the rear of the gas tube, used to attach this component to the receiver, were sheared off. In addition, all of the receivers were cracked on their right side in front of the selector lever, both on the interior guide rail and the exterior. Both types of failure are sure indications of heat absorption beyond the system's capacity to relieve it. Infantry rifles simply cannot

serve as SAWs without costly penalty over the long haul. Not to worry, as those with semiautomatic-only Galils will never be able to subject them to this kind of abuse, and my overall opinion of the Galil remains as high as previously.

HK THREE-SHOT BURST MECHANISM



I have been told that the three-shot burst mechanism available in the Heckler & Koch series of weapons is fragile and easily damaged. Furthermore, it's rumored that U.S. Navy Seal Team 6 had a serious accident several years ago because of this device, and that it caused them to switch to an ambidextrous trigger-pack without this feature. Is there any substance to this?

O. Bender
Hartford, CT

Your information is only partially correct. The Seals did experience a problem in one of their fun houses that resulted in an injury when someone was stitched with eight or 10 rounds by an MP5 set to three-shot burst. Shortly thereafter, they did adopt a trigger group without three-shot burst capability. However, in my opinion, the accident was caused by improper disassembly and reassembly of the trigger mechanism. Unless the proper procedure is employed, the three-shot burst trigger mechanism will invariably be damaged to the extent that repair will be required at H&K's Oberndorf facility.

However, the trigger mechanism must be removed occasionally from its plastic housing as brass shavings and other debris accumulate in this area. Unfortunately, this information is not provided in the H&K manuals. To avoid problems proceed as follows. Work from the left side of the trigger housing. During the entire procedure the selector will be rotated 360 degrees counter-clockwise only. Start with the hammer forward (uncocked) and the selector set to "Safe." Push the bent release-lever inside the mechanism and next to the ejector down with a tool, and at the same time rotate the selector counter-clockwise until its tail (not the white line) rests at the 12 o'clock position. Remove the right-side selector lever. Remove the left-side selector assembly, taking care to maintain the spring-loaded shaft on the right side of the trigger mechanism on its stud. Grasp the hammer between the thumb and index finger and withdraw the trigger mechanism from its housing. Clean



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and lightly lubricate the trigger mechanism and its housing.

Reinstall the trigger mechanism into the housing. Make sure the top of the trigger mechanism is parallel to the top of the housing and that the spring-loaded shaft mentioned above remains in place on its stud. Insert the left-side selector assembly with the tail of the lever set at 12 o'clock. The selector assembly will not fit flush against the housing at this point in the reassembly. Depress the bent release-lever inside the trigger mechanism and press the left-side selector assembly in place, flush against the housing. Replace the right-side selector lever. With the thumb and second finger, squeeze the two selector levers together so that they remain flush and tight against the housing and turn freely when you continue the counter-clockwise rotation. Rotating only counter-clockwise, turn the levers to "full auto" and then down to "safe." Follow these instructions exactly and you should never have any problems with the H&K three-shot burst trigger pack. To my knowledge, this information has never before appeared in print.

JUNK AMMO

I recently obtained some 7.62x51mm NATO AP ammunition of Israeli origin at a local gun show. It's headstamped with the Hebrew characters "sadhe" (s) and "taw" (t, th). Sadhe most closely resembles a capital 'K' rotated 90 degrees onto its side and the Greek symbol for the letter pi. Headstamped two-digit dates indicate manufacture in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It appears to have been rained on or immersed in water and also subjected to excessive storage temperatures. Some of the cases are both corroded and rust-stained on the outside. The rust stains are in the shape of machine gun links. The bullets are sealed at the case mouth with what appears to be asphalt. The sealant has become so hardened that I lifted one end of my 200-pound loading bench off the floor while attempting to pull the bullets out of the cases! Upon removal of the bullets a strong acidic odor was evident. Examination of the case interiors also revealed severe corrosion. It doesn't take a genius to imagine the probable results of firing this kind of ammunition.

Harvey J. Wilson
Boulder Creek, CA

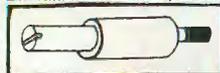
Reader Wilson's information and warning are well advised. Spending hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars for a rare military rifle or machine gun and then pumping the cheapest surplus trash one can locate down its bore, is the epitome of stupidity. Not only will the accuracy be far below the weapon's potential, but the recipe for destruction of the firearm and possible serious injury to the shooter is premixed. Ammunition of this quality is worth no more than the value of the pulled bullets. ☒

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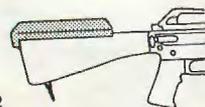
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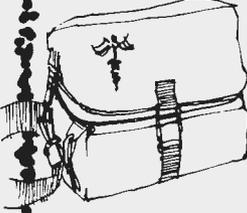


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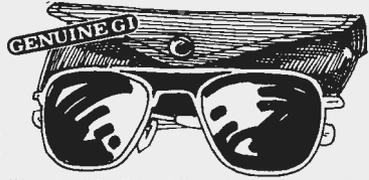
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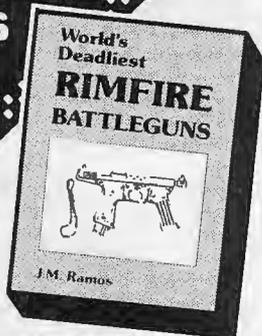
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TODAY'S spy aircraft, satellite systems and manned space platforms pose a formidable threat to battlefield survival for the individual footslogger. Modern remote sensing systems may detect your body heat or nighttime movements despite every reasonable precaution and without your even knowing it. Knowledge of the limitations and capabilities of modern observation methods and reconnaissance systems are the combat soldier's shield against these spies in the sky.

Imaging Systems

First let's look at modern imaging systems. "Imaging" is the intelligence community's buzz word for any technology that results in a photograph-like picture. Included are conventional aerial and satellite photography systems, Side Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR), infrared (IR) scanners, enhanced-image night observation systems, other hyperoptical and multi-band remote sensors, and television.

Imaging systems are classified as "active" or "passive" depending on whether creating the image requires transmission of a signal by the platform, as with SLAR, or whether they simply record an image using radiation originating from the target or reflected by it. IR imagery, photography, and television are passive sensors.

Reconnaissance Platforms

Reconnaissance, or "recce," platforms are classed as "air breathers" or "orbiters" and include manned and unmanned systems. Unmanned recce drones are basically large radio-controlled aircraft, though they may be guided by a computer. They're smaller than manned aircraft, they're quieter, and they may be capable of sharper evasive maneuvers than a piloted aircraft. Drones are often equipped with television, so that even if they are shot down, the information they have gathered up to that point is delivered. Airborne television cameras make excellent artillery forward observers.

Manned recce aircraft range from the venerable O-1 Bird Dog through the high-flying, supersonic, SR-71 Blackbird and the Soviet Backfire reconnaissance variant. Rotary wing aircraft are also being used in increasingly sophisticated reconnaissance roles.

Piloted aircraft are still the biggest threat to the combat soldier. The variety of sensors they may carry, the possibility of immediate detection by a pilot or observer, and the flexibility of response possible only with a pilot in the aircraft all favor continued reliance on manned aircraft as primary battlefield reconnaissance platforms. A manned recce plane is often armed as well, particularly models derived from interceptor and close air support aircraft. Target detection and interdiction can be accomplished simultaneously — bad news if you're the target.

Defeating Airborne Observers

Beating these modern reconnaissance systems is tough, but it can be accomplished by being skilled in all aspects of traditional camouflage techniques and having the knowledge to use those skills efficiently.

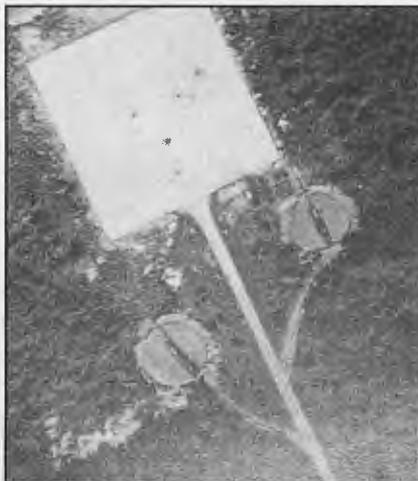
WAR IN THE SHADOWS

Grunt's Guide to Eluding Aerial Recon

Text & Photos by Chuck Fremont



ABOVE: Coastal defense site photographed with conventional black and white film. Camouflage paint scheme proves effective.



Same coastal defense site shot with camouflage detection film. Firing battery is clearly visible. Nets would have been more effective than camo paint.

"Efficiently" is a key word here. There's a time for hiding and a time for fighting. Don't become so preoccupied with the former that you die in place as the enemy thunders over you, never even knowing you were huddled in your fighting hole. And don't waste time on camouflage actions that are useless against a particular sensor the

SOF'S EYE IN THE SKY

Army Sergeant First Class Chuck Fremont (his SOF nom de guerre) is Operations and Intelligence NCO on his Special Forces "A" Detachment. Chuck is a frequent contributor to SOF and you'll be seeing more of him in these pages. He's well qualified to cover this subject, having had ample experience with remote sensor technology, both in the military and as a civilian geologist.

enemy is known to be using.

Let's consider each of the reconnaissance systems discussed earlier and the nuts-and-bolts of what you, the troop in the field, can do to avoid detection by each of them. Keep in mind that modern recce aircraft generally carry a combination of these systems. Some or all of the intelligence gathered by these aircraft may be viewed on board using video monitors, or instantly transmitted to ground stations.

Camouflage Principles and Methods

Countermeasures must be chosen that will defeat as many sensors as possible. The three basic principles of camouflage — *siting*, *camouflage discipline*, and *construction* — should be carefully considered. Siting, or choice of position, is the fundamental requirement. Your site must blend into the existing terrain and cover. Think tactically, choosing an automatic weapons position, for instance, that offers good fields of fire without having to clear a lot of brush. Avoid landmarks and prominent terrain features, as they are natural points for an observer or imagery analyst to focus on.

Camouflage discipline once a site is occupied is critical to concealment. The same path, discreetly concealed and following existing tracks or paths where tactically possible, should be used for all access to the site. Soil from digging and other debris must be kept to a minimum and removed or concealed. Night discipline includes restricting movement of vehicles and avoiding use of generators, fires,

and other sources of heat.

Construction of additional camouflage should be kept to an absolute minimum. The ideal site will require no such construction, but where necessary, camouflage materials must blend inconspicuously with the natural cover. Natural materials should be freshened frequently and should be obtained from several remote sites. Dispose of old materials discreetly.

The three fundamental methods of achieving camouflage are *blending*, *hiding*, and *deceiving*. Any or all of these methods may be used to successfully conceal a site or activity.

Blending involves breaking up forms and shadows so objects and people "melt" into the terrain and cover. Color is also a factor in blending, though it's not as critical as generally assumed. Improper shadow concealment is the most common cause of failure to blend.

Hiding can be accomplished by siting or screening or a combination of the two. Camouflage nets are commonly used for screening. The Viet Cong were masters of hiding, siting major installations underground.

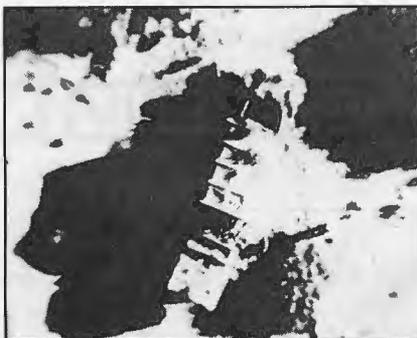
Deception involves disguising the true shape or purpose of an installation or equipment. A military transport plane may be painted in Aeroflot or El Al colors. Shapes may be altered, such as lengthening a tank chassis with cardboard panels so the distinctive two-to-one length-to-width ratio of an armored vehicle is hidden. Imitative disguise may be used to hide the character of an object without hiding it from view. A concrete bunker may be disguised as a stucco country cottage, for instance. Decoys and mock-ups are also forms of deception. With these well-proven principles and methods of camouflage and concealment firmly in mind, we can next apply them to defeating advanced sensors.

Side Looking Airborne Radar

SLAR is effective day or night, though SLAR missions are usually flown at night, and it has near all-weather capability. If the fast-movers can fly, SLAR will generally work. The first good aerial images of the Darien Straits between Panama and Colombia, a perpetually cloud-covered region, were produced by SLAR. The effective range of SLAR is considerable, and the system's side-looking nature allows the aircraft to stand back in safe territory while imaging.

SLAR is especially effective at detecting man-made structures and equipment. Moving vehicles register as moving target indicators (MTIs), or "movers," and are simultaneously visible on the observer's console. SLAR movers may be the first warning of an impending attack.

SLAR does have weaknesses. Since the antenna is aimed obliquely, it is vulnerable to terrain masking in mountainous country, allowing unobserved movement on reverse slopes. SLAR doesn't distinguish effectively between types of vehicles. This presents obvious possibilities for deception. A con-



ABOVE: Prominent shadows reveal both truck and trailer.



Distinctive shadow of windshield identifies vehicle as U.S. M-151 ¼-ton jeep. Folding windshield and parking vehicle on other side of trees would have concealed it. Shadows of individual soldiers and radio whip antenna are also visible.

voy movement might be faked by driving groups of abandoned civilian autos along a route outside your area of operation, thus diverting the enemy's attention and possibly drawing fire away from your AO.

SLAR is vulnerable to electronic countermeasures (ECM) such as jamming, and its signals may be detected by relatively simple radar detectors. Anti-radiation missiles designed to home in on radar transmissions are also a threat.

Radar depends on reflection of signals, so any flat, smooth surface will be more visible on SLAR than a rough-textured surface. Natural materials are poor reflectors, so covering a vehicle with mud or a mud-thatch mix will reduce its visibility to SLAR.

SLAR has trouble distinguishing separate vehicles or equipment parked close together. Specific distances vary, but several large vehicles parked within 50 feet of one another will probably be imaged as one. These same vehicles, moving close together at uniform speed, may also register as only one MTI. This goes against our instinct for dispersion, but is worth considering if you must move several tanks, for instance, at night. The groundpounder doesn't have much to fear from SLAR, but a guy driving a truck in a covert supply convoy does need to worry.

Infrared Scanners

Infrared scanners detect heat — warm engines, generators, recently fired weapons, cooking fires, recently dug-up earth, possibly bodies — and produces a black and white image that looks like a low-resolution photograph.

IR scanning has day/night and near all-weather capability, although rain and extremely dense cloud cover, and particularly weather like the Cra-chin, or "dust-rain," of Vietnam confuses IR scanners. IR is vulnerable to deception, and in a low intensity conflict, mistaken analysis of IR intelligence may lead to targeting of civilian activities.

Like SLAR, IR missions are usually flown at night. Dismounted troops are generally safe as long as their weapons are cool and no fires are used. Truck and generator engines may continue to radiate IR energy several hours after being shut down, so try to make sure these cool off by nightfall. Leaving truck hoods open and watering down radiators while engines are idling will safely lower engine block temperatures.

Modern Aerial Photography

Conventional aerial photography continues to provide most detailed intelligence on military facilities and activities. Television is a significant advance, particularly for command observation of the air-land battlefield of the future.

A typical photo bird carries a camera array in its nose or belly consisting of a vertical framing camera for high-resolution photography of the ground directly below, a long-lens oblique, or side looking, camera that may be aimed from flat horizontal to approximately 45 degrees below horizontal, and a scanning lens camera that takes panoramic photos reaching from horizon to horizon on either side of the flight path.

Night photography is also possible with standard cameras by using high-powered electronic flash (strobe) units or by ejecting flash bombs. The flash bombs usually give better results since the shadow effect is greater.

The oblique and panoramic systems allow the aircraft to photograph areas considerable distances from its flight path. The Soviet Bear recce bombers that now fly routinely from Siberia to Nicaragua can photograph U.S. installations several miles inland from the Pacific coast. Aeroflot planes are also commonly fitted with such cameras. Various films are used for reconnaissance work. Black and white films are most common because they are quick to develop and generally provide better resolution than color film.

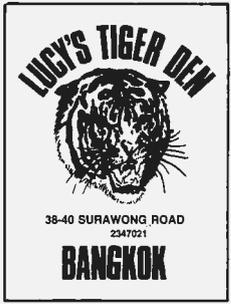
Camouflage detection (CD) film is an IR sensitive color film that is effective in distinguishing between live vegetation and painted camouflage or dead vegetation. CD film is seldom used for routine reconnaissance but rather for gathering intelligence on suspicious areas.

Modern military camouflage paints and

Continued on page 85



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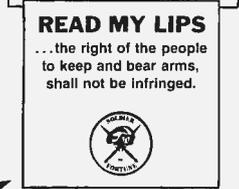
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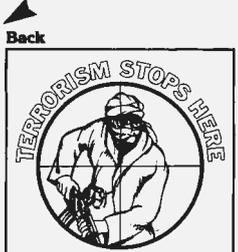
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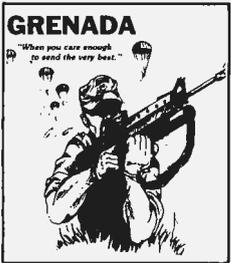
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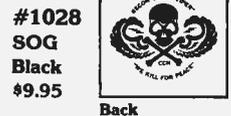
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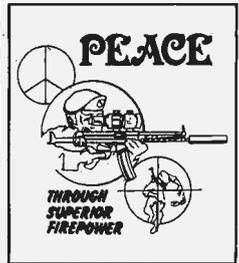
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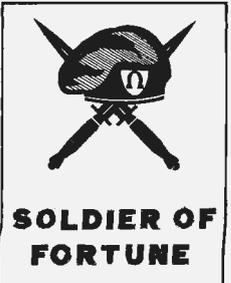
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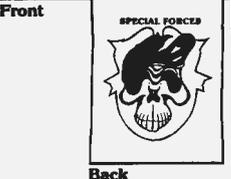
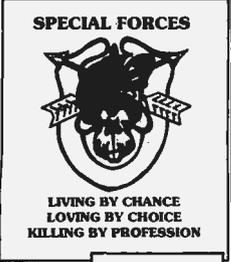
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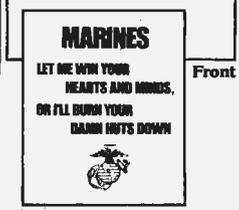
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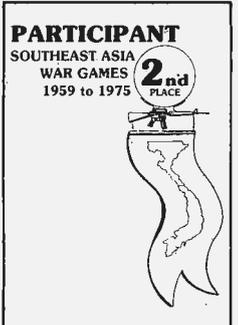
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IN REVIEW



ABOUT FACE. The Odyssey of an American Warrior. By Colonel David H. Hackworth (U.S. Army, ret.) and Julie Sherman. Simon & Schuster, Dept. SOF, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. 1989. Hardcover. 875 pages with 16 pages of photos and maps. \$24.95. Review by John Coleman.

“ID like to have two armies:

“One for display with lovely guns, tanks, little soldiers, staffs, distinguished and doddering generals and dear little regimental officers who would be deeply concerned over their general’s bowel movements or their colonel’s piles, an Army that would be shown for a modest fee on every fair-ground in the country.

“The other would be the real one, composed entirely of young enthusiasts in camouflaged uniforms, who would not be put on display but from whom impossible efforts would be demanded and to whom all sorts of tricks would be taught. That’s the Army in which I should like to fight.” — Jean Larteguy, *The Centurions*

There, in a nutshell, is Colonel David Hackworth’s **About Face**, both an up-the-spout indictment of the worst our U.S. Army had to offer in the last four decades, as well as the story of one soldier’s sometimes passionate, sometimes bitter, relationship with the military machine that turned him into the consummate professional warrior — and then abandoned him for the sin of honesty.

But what gives Hackworth, a mere colonel in the star-studded Army scheme of things, the right to fire-for-effect against a system that raised and nurtured him, and would have eventually put general’s stars on his shoulders?

Combat, that’s what. Combat tours (multiple) in Korea and Vietnam that showed him the sometimes insane and nearly criminal way in which the battlefields of Korea and Vietnam were conducted by many senior commanders who should have known better (but generally didn’t), and worse still, by seniors who *did* know better, but were afraid of losing their next ticket punch up the command ladder if they stepped one paragraph outside the Army-by-the-book method of war fighting.

Therein lies Hackworth’s condemnation: In his eyes, an officer was either a ticket puncher (more interested in unsullied efficiency ratings) or — to use his term — a stud (more interested in winning wars at the least cost), with too many of the former making decisions that left too many of America’s young soldiers dead on our battlefields.

Hackworth — America’s most decorated living soldier — fell into the second category, and with a proven and innovative combat record, did his best to convince the hierarchy that there just *might* be a better way to fight in Vietnam than the traditional Infantry School hey-diddle-diddle, straight-up-the-middle approach to battle.

Unfortunately for Hackworth (and many others of his ilk) that advice went unheeded and Vietnam became a war in which the ticket punchers (enamored with the theory of massed firepower and masses of U.S. troops as the means and enemy bodycounts as the end) were in the ascendant. And unfortunately for us on the ground, those rising stars frequently officered our battles — many times claimed as victories by Saigon but in actuality failures in everything but name — that were ill-conceived, poorly planned, and indecisively commanded melees that achieved no tactical end — except, perhaps, as a move up the promotion ladder.

As Hackworth put it during an interview on the program “Issues and Answers” in 1971 (the interview that got him booted from the Army), “What we have now among the Army is a bunch of shallow dilettantes who run from pillar to post trying to punch their card.”

David Hackworth is not going to find many invitations to star-studded lunches once **About Face** hits the Pentagon book store — it’s too intense and cuts too closely to the Army’s quick — but he should. Once ruffled feathers are soothed and inflamed egos cooled, the brass ought to have a second look at Hackworth and his ideas on how our military *could* win its wars. Anachronism that he may appear to the current crop of Army managers, what he has to say will probably save some lives and win us a few battles the next time around.

More importantly (and more disturbingly) perhaps, to the tens of

thousands of Vietnam fighters, Hackworth hammers home the point that, no, we didn’t win the war, but we didn’t win many of the battles *either* — and that’s one helluva bitter pill for combat troops to swallow.

If you thought your library of contemporary military literature was complete, think again. **About Face** may well become the most important book to come out of the Vietnam generation, and it should certainly become the standard text for those who give a damn about soldiering and soldiers.

THE ROAD TO KALAMATA. A Congo Mercenary’s Personal Memoir. By Mike Hoare. Lexington Books. Hardcover. 1989. 144 pages with 21 photos and two maps. Available through SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306. \$17.95 plus \$1.75 postage and handling. Review by John Coleman.

IT’S been 22 years since Mike Hoare’s book, *Congo Mercenary*, first hit print. That down-in-the-trenches look into the lives and actions of Hoare’s famous Wild Geese of 5 Commando and their 18-month battle to put down insurrection in Moise Tshombe’s strife-torn Congo still stands as the finest work on mercenaries in Africa.

And now Colonel “Mad Mike” Hoare has come up with a worthy successor, a tightly woven, straightforward account of his earlier 4 Commando actions while in the service of Moise Tshombe’s newly created Independent State of Katanga.

Readers looking for a shoot-’em-up in which ill-disciplined, wild-eyed merc-devils mercilessly crush African savages won’t find it here. Rather, Mike Hoare is a thinker, an officer and gentleman from the old school with deep respect for military tradition and discipline — even in the savagery of the Congo. With his firm grasp of the tenets of leadership he molded 4 Commando — a conglomeration of South Africans, Brits, Frenchmen, Portuguese and Rhodesians — into an effective fighting force and would allow no breach of discipline to go unanswered in his command.

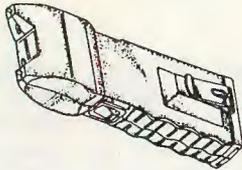
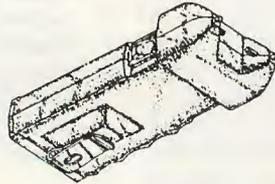
Although a ruthless taskmaster, Hoare’s first priority was the welfare of his troops, and this velvet-glove/iron-fist approach held his force of 120 men together in their embattled treks through savage Baluba country where death came swiftly and painfully to the unwary, and where political and military treachery were the standing orders of the day.

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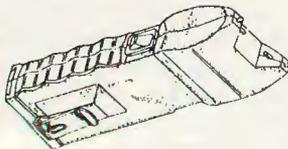
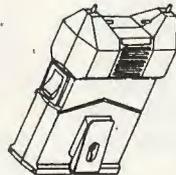
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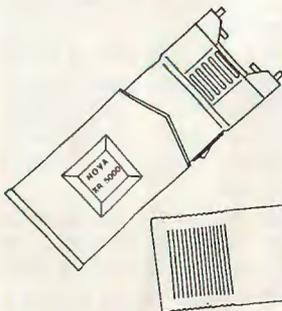
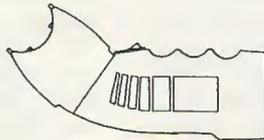
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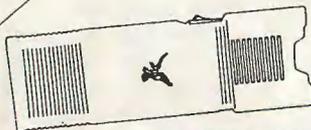


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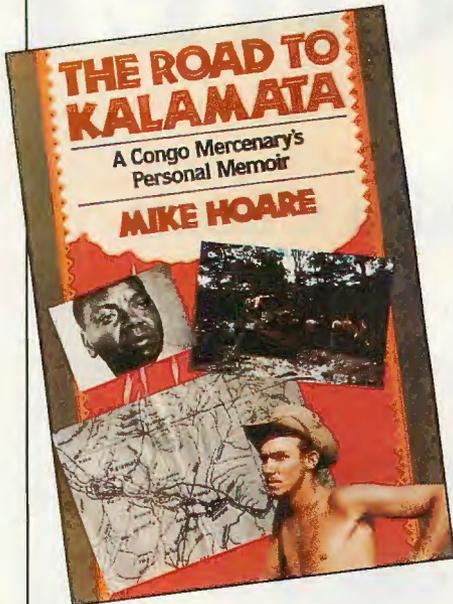
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The Road To Kalamata centers on Hoare's attempts to recover two members of his command, separated when 4 Commando is forced to take to the jungle in the face of imminent arrest by the Malaysian United Nations' contingent. Hoare's not one to leave good men to their fate, and he mounts an all-out effort to locate the two, believed to have accidentally headed for Kalamata — headquarters of the Baluba.



Hoare's search becomes a desperate race against time, because if the men are taken prisoner, their fate would be horribly sealed by the Baluba: "The usual method was to tie the prisoner to a stake and begin by cutting off his arms above the elbow and legs below the knee. A sharpened bamboo stake would be forced up his anus while the witch doctor took out his heart while he was still alive . . ."

As gruesome as life in central Africa can be, there's more to this book than reminiscences of a mercenary leader. It can be read as a primer on leadership, leadership under the harshest of conditions with the toughest of men. It is a classic text on how to lead men into combat and bring them back out again.

Through the years, Hoare has stood steady in his belief that trained and disciplined mercenary forces could be of outstanding benefit to emerging African countries while they solidified their place in the world order. True or not, **The Road To Kalamata** stands as good evidence that with men like Mike Hoare and his 4 Commando, the idea is not ill considered.

Gunfire paced and brimming with the flavor of Africa in the tumultuous '60s, **The Road To Kalamata** reaffirms Mike Hoare's standing as *éminence grise* of Africa's mercs. ✂

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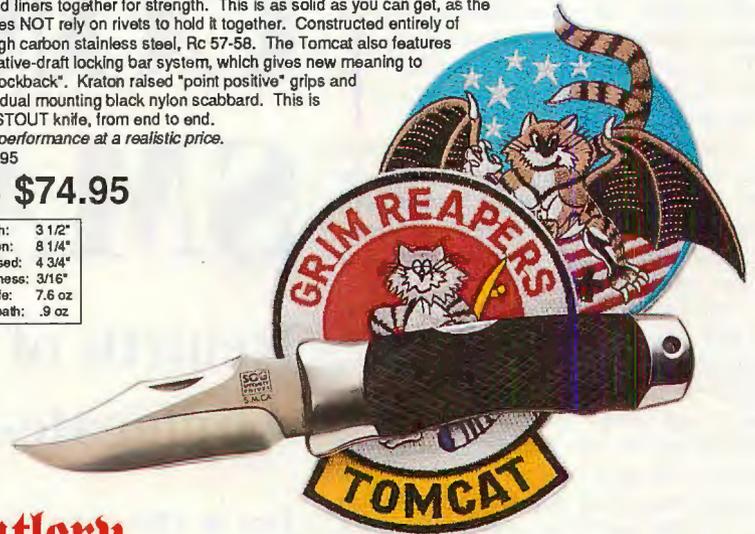
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WHILE it may be sacrilege to suggest this, the Combat Smatchet just might dethrone the Bowie knife as the king of the large combat knives. It's news when we see something different offered to combat knife aficionados, and even more noteworthy when something practical issues forth, but it's almost shout-it-from-the-rooftops time when a *different and practical* combat knife hits the marketplace.

The Applegate-Fairbairn (A-F) Combat Smatchet fits both bills. It combines the forward-weighted balance of a good kukri with the double-edged blade of a dagger, giving it capabilities unavailable in any other large knife.

While the A-F Combat Smatchet is new, it has a long and interesting heritage that probably dates back to Roman occupation of the British Isles. The ancient Welsh were impressed enough by the Roman *gladius*, or short sword, that they designed an improved version for their own use that featured a double-edged, leaf-shaped blade rather than the straight-sided blade of the *gladius*. This ancient Welsh short sword, called the *cledd*, was resurrected and made during World War I for use in trench warfare. One example of this distinctive Welsh short sword with a 17½-inch blade was presented by Lord Howard de Walden to each member of his battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. These were put to particularly bloody and effective use at the battle of Messines Ridge in 1917.

When World War II broke out, the Brits remembered the effectiveness of the Welsh sword in close combat. Thus, a large single-edged combat knife with an 11-inch leaf-shaped blade similar in outline to the Welsh short sword was designed and produced, primarily for use by elite units such as the Commandos. This was the famous British Smatchet. It's not known who was responsible for the smatchet's specifications, and since most were totally unmarked it is difficult to identify the exact manufacturers. It's believed that several Sheffield cutlery manufacturers and subcontractors were involved in the British manufacture. It's also known that some 10,000 were produced in the United States by both Case and Ulster for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services).

Two of the original OSS close-combat instructors were Major W.E. Fairbairn, on detached service from England, and Captain Rex Applegate. This Fairbairn was the same fellow who collaborated with William Sykes to develop the famous Fairbairn-Sykes (F-S) commando knife that saw outstanding service in World War II with Allied commando forces. Fairbairn also authored a number of classic texts on close combat such as *Get Tough!* and *How to Win in Hand-to-Hand Fighting*. The former is still available from Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306.

Aside from his World War II exploits in the OSS and other elite organizations, Applegate will be remembered by SOF readers as both the subject and writer of several articles in SOF. He authored the

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COMBAT SMATCHET

Rebirth of Applegate-Fairbairn Classic

Text & Photos by Chuck Karwan



classic book on close combat, *Kill or Get Killed*, in 1943, plus several standard texts on riot control, scouting and patrolling and other topics. *Kill or Get Killed*, also available from Paladin Press, is in its 28th printing. Applegate was the first American to take the romantic BS out of combat knife use and boil it down to a practical approach.

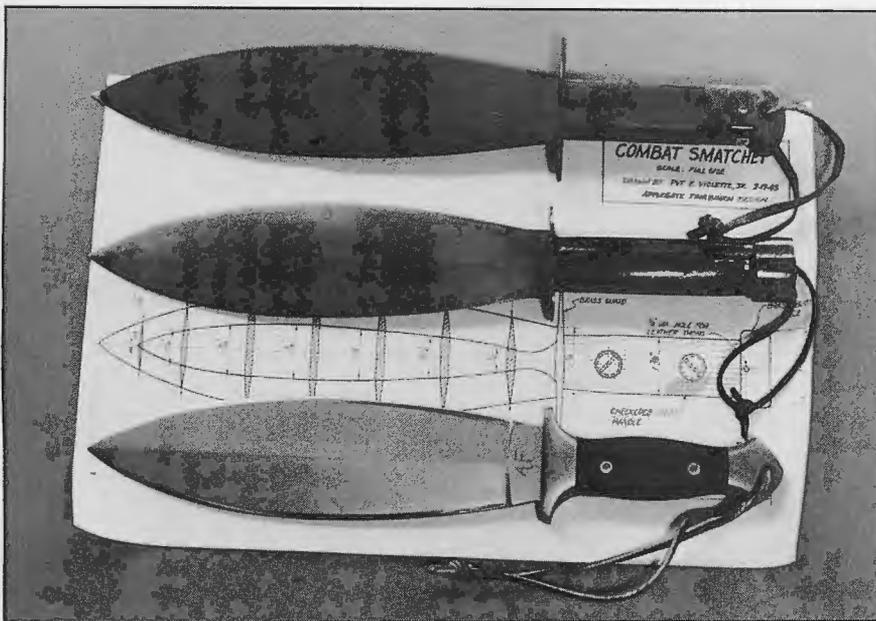
If you shook out a World War II British Commando's kit you'd typically find this original Smatchet, a Mk II Sten, a No. 1 Mk III Enfield converted to No. 1 Mk III*, and an Inglis-made Browning High Power No. 2 Mk 1.

As you can imagine, when these two minds got together in the OSS they were able to come up with some good ideas. One of these was an improved version of the F-S commando knife. Unfortunately, that did not see the light of day until about 1980, when the design was further improved and put into production for Applegate by custom knifemaker T.J. Yancy. As a quick update, I should mention that a further-improved custom version is currently being produced for Applegate by custom knifemaker Bill Harsey, and a production version is being offered by Al Mar Knives.

The story of the A-F Combat Smatchet

TO THE POINT

Well known to SOF readers for his many insightful articles on tools of the trade, Chuck Karwan has published more than 100 features in various military and weapons magazines. Karwan, a West Pointer, served with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), and the 10th and 5th Special Forces Groups.



ABOVE: Lineage of the Applegate-Fairbairn Combat Smatchet, top to bottom: original Smatchet as issued by Brits and OSS, World War II prototype improved model from OSS machine shop, and the Applegate-Fairbairn Combat Smatchet, lying on machinist's drawing of improved model.

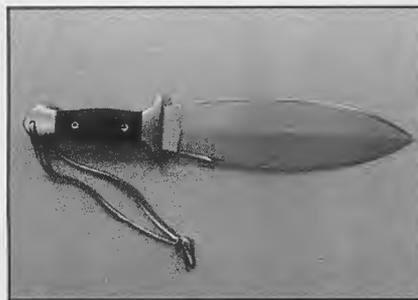
parallels that of the A-F Fighting Knife. Fairbairn was a strong proponent of the smatchet as a close-combat weapon. However, as was the case with the F-S knife, both Fairbairn and Applegate felt that the design of the issue smatchet could be improved. First, the blade was a bit too light, not having the efficient weight-forward balance of the original Welsh cledd or the Gurkha kukri. Secondly, they thought that the smatchet would be far more effective as a weapon if it were to have a fully double-edged blade. They also wanted to improve the shape of the handle and make other minor improvements. As was the case with the A-F knife, prototypes were made in the OSS machine shop and blueprints were drawn up. Unfortunately, as with the A-F knife, the improved smatchet never saw wartime production because of its low priority and the fact that the earlier model was already available.

However, it was an idea that was too good to just die. During late 1987 Colonel Applegate was giving one of my long-term Special Forces pals, Sergeant Major John Larsen, and myself a tour of his outstanding arms collection. John noticed the World War II prototype smatchet and pointed it out to me. We asked Col. Applegate the story behind it and he explained his collaboration with Fairbairn in developing an improved smatchet. I suggested that he consider bringing out an Applegate-Fairbairn smatchet, as he did with the A-F knife. He was noncommittal but said he would think about it.

I had completely forgotten the incident when I got a call from Col. Applegate some weeks later. With a very pleased ring to his



The Applegate-Fairbairn Combat Smatchet, a pound and three-quarters of artfully formed fighting steel.



voice he said that he had dug through his files and found the original 1943 blueprints for the improved smatchet. He also said that he had given a copy of the blueprint to Bill Harsey and that they were working together to refine and update the design so that Bill could make a new prototype. Needless to say, I expressed my interest at seeing the results. When Bill called to say that the Applegate-Fairbairn Combat Smatchet No. 001 was completed, Col. Applegate invited me to accompany him out to Bill's shop to pick it up, which I gladly did.

The result of Harsey's effort was truly a marriage of art and technology — an object of beauty which still looked intimidatingly lethal. When I picked it up I was reminded of Fairbairn's words on the original smatchet in *Get Tough!* He wrote, "The psychological reaction of any man, when he first

takes the smatchet in his hand, is full justification for its recommendation as a fighting weapon. He will immediately register all the essential qualities of a good soldier — confidence, determination, and aggressiveness." The original smatchet never quite affected me that way, but the A-F Combat Smatchet certainly did. I am sure the late Maj. Fairbairn would have been as pleased with this new development as were Col. Applegate and myself.

The A-F Combat Smatchet has an overall length of 16 inches with a 10½-inch, leaf-shaped blade. It is of full-tapered tang construction, with the guard and pommel made from brass and the scales made of Micarta. All surfaces are bead-blasted to a matte finish. The blade is made from English saw steel, a medium-high carbon steel with a high nickle content. Properly heat treated, it is one of the toughest steels available. The edge is tempered to a Rockwell C hardness of 55-plus, with the spine of the blade somewhat softer. The result is a blade that can easily take and hold a good edge while at the same time being virtually unbreakable. Weighing 1.75 pounds, without its nylon scabbard, it weighs less than the issue M9 Multi-Purpose Bayonet System. Even with its scabbard it is only a couple ounces heavier. However, neither as a weapon nor as a tool can the M9 bayonet hold a candle to the Combat Smatchet.

One of the refinements to the smatchet that Bill Harsey can take credit for is the edge grind. Having been around the timber industry in Oregon all his life, he knew precisely the best edge shape to give the Combat Smatchet for both edge retention and chopping ability. It is essentially an edge that looks in cross-section like an apple seed. Most often called a rolled edge, it consists of two convex curves intersecting at a sharp point. The advantage of this edge is that it gives maximum structural support to the cutting edge, while permitting a razor-like sharpness.

Using the combat knife categories we mentioned previously in SOF (see "Practically Lethal," SOF, December '88), the A-F Combat Smatchet is clearly a chopper. However, unlike many choppers, it has an awesome stabbing capability. Also unlike most other choppers, it can chop or slash in two directions. Though I did not try it out on anyone (due to a lack of volunteers) there is no question in my mind that the Combat Smatchet is fully capable of lopping off a limb or even a head. The weight-forward balance and curved edge works precisely in the same way as a good kukri by slicing while it cleaves. As a close-quarters emergency weapon in a melee, the Combat Smatchet is without peer. With its point in direct line with the handle, thrusting or stabbing moves are easily accomplished, while still allowing chopping and slashing movements in two directions without repositioning the blade in the hand. In effect, it offers a forehand and backhand stroke without

Continued on page 76



POLITICAL BODY COUNT

Philippine Army Tallies Converts, Not Corpses

Text & Photos by Tom Marks

CORRECT tactics win battles, but it takes a correct strategy to win a war. The United States failed to heed this axiom in Vietnam; the armed forces of the Philippines are determined not to make the same mistake.

So much in the Philippines reminds one of Vietnam. Communist insurgents battle a government struggling with problems of political and economic development. A Maoist strategy seeks to use the countryside to encircle the cities. Government Huey choppers dart overhead to insert patrols amidst villages surrounded by rice paddies and coconut palms. The security forces are directed by officers who are graduates of either the Academy or ROTC, who have gone through the Infantry Officers Basic Course and Command and General Staff College, and who have studied U.S.-

supplied field manuals. Troops similarly go through a career progression which is based on that of the United States. Weapons, uniforms, and equipment are U.S. models.

Yet there is just as much that is different. The most significant difference is that the country, though a former territory of the United States, was given its independence peacefully and became a functioning democracy. With the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos in February 1986, it returned to this tradition after a dictatorial hiatus of nearly 15 years. Key positions in the government and the economy are held by individuals brought up through an indigenous educational system and thoroughly versed in the mechanics of running a nation-state.

The military is likewise manned by individuals trained by the organization and knowledgeable in the art of war. Established as a virtual clone of their U.S. parent, the Philippine armed forces have avoided the pitfalls that made the South Vietnamese military so ineffective. This is particularly true for the army. It is not tied down to geographic concentrations of dependents, and it has an officer corps that is competent and prides itself on its professionalism. Cor-

ruption is the exception rather than the rule: No fire missions here are sold to desperate units in contact.

It is the professionalism of the officer corps that has played a key role in the dramatic reversal of fortunes occurring in Manila's long battle with the insurgency led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Three years after the fall of Marcos, those who refused to sacrifice their professional pride in order to advance their careers are finally having their day in court. As they have been elevated into key positions, they have brought with them a new approach to fighting the insurgency, an approach that recognizes politics as the central element of revolutionary war.

In implementing this new strategy, Vietnam weighs heavily on their minds. "You [the U.S.] should never have been involved in Vietnam," says Brigadier General Rene Cardones, commander of the 301st Brigade (1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division) on the impoverished Visayan island of Negros. "You were fighting a political war, but you attempted to fight it with military means. It is the people who are the target. You had the best army in the world, but you went after

LEFT: Lt. Col. Rolando Cuello inspects overrun company headquarters. Size of Negros and poor communications net requires that brigade have an officer present at provincial capital to take charge of operations in Negros Oriental.

MARKS REMARKS

Tom Marks is a frequent contributor to *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, filing reports from such exotic locales at India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. When he's not working on a story, the West Point graduate and former infantry officer lives and works in Hawaii.

Author interviews "Ibon," 26-year-old member of Negros District 2 Educational Staff who said CPP killings played key role in her disillusionment with the movement.





Unit works on a fire mission. Guns fire an average of one shell a week, so keeping troops occupied and in a high state of readiness/morale is a major problem.

the [enemy] main forces. Here, if our strategy goes as planned, we anticipate no major battles. For a while they [the communists] will try to protect their organized masses with their armed units, but that will only be for a time. Counting regulars is not the way. The way you count the enemy conditions your mind."

Cardones shouts his words over the noise of the rotor blades as our Huey settles down on a makeshift LZ (landing zone) at a village called Owakan in Negros Oriental, the eastern province of the two into which Negros Island is divided (Negros Occidental is the other). During the descent we could already see the results of the earlier battle. The garrison has been totally destroyed; nothing but charred foundations and ashes remains of its compound. Part of the relief force, lifted in earlier, sits in the shade of makeshift shelters. They are to secure the vicinity. The remainder of the force has divided into numerous section (squad)-sized patrols and is in pursuit of the guerrilla force which inflicted the damage.

As frequently happens, reality doesn't quite live up to expectations. I had been interviewing a prisoner at a town hall when the first reports of the developing fight came in. They were startling: a company overrun . . . choppers assembled from several islands to insert a relief force . . . dead and wounded being evacuated by air (itself an unusual occurrence). Yes, I was ultimately to learn, it had all happened — but not quite the way it sounded.

I dropped what I was doing and tried to get into the fight. That posed something of a problem. Negros has become famous to the West through pictures of wide-eyed, filthy children with malnutrition-bloated bellies. The reality is not as grim as the do-gooders

would have us believe, but it is bad enough. Underdevelopment is the order of the day. The transportation network is no exception.

The village concerned is on the other side of Negros and has no roads to it. Further, even with wheels, just to get to the right mapsheet using the "highways" promised to be a 10-hour truck. Out of the question. Yet trying to locate one of the few choppers being scrambled was equally frustrating. Section increments of troops were being lifted from isolated posts and inserted. Each time I roared up to a position, it seemed the choppers had left 15 minutes before. I rumbled back into brigade headquarters as the caskets of casualties were being loaded on a deuce-and-a-half. A crowd clustered outside the main gate of the compound and

Brig. Gen. Cardones and his executive officer inspect ruins of overrun company command post in Negros Oriental. Defenders lost two regulars and two militiamen, as well as one civilian, but real loss was political.



craned for a peek. I linked up with Cardones and flew in with him.

We moved about the ruins. Cardones talked long and hard with the battalion commander, then questioned numerous other officers and men. Simultaneously, his staff officers did the same, putting together an account of what had happened.

What smoldered underfoot was the remains not of a company position but of a 31-man company headquarters. Situated on an easily defensible hilltop, it was supposed to serve as the coordination point for control of an area that had recently rallied to the government side. The compact position had indeed been overrun, but its garrison at the time consisted of just eight soldiers and 12 militiamen, only four of the latter armed. The attacking force was estimated at company-size and thus had an overwhelming numerical edge. Surprised at 0530 by Molotov cocktails thrown from dead space and swept by machine-gun fire from high ground as they attempted to man their positions, the troops nevertheless fought back.

They were awake and armed, because the bulk of the company had earlier departed on patrol. Retreating to the camp's main bunker, the stay-behind force struggled amidst the flames to avoid being overwhelmed. The mortarman got off one shell before being cut down by .30-caliber machine-gun fire. When the sheer volume of incoming lead made their position untenable, the government troops and militiamen took their weapons and withdrew down the rear slope of the position. Unfortunately, in their haste they neglected to take with them two mortars, a 60mm and an 81mm. Three M1 Garand rifles, issued to the militiamen, were also left behind and captured, together with the tubes. The defenders reached a nearby garrison safely. Total losses were two regulars and two militiamen killed, as well as a civilian. The guerrillas burned what was left of the camp.

So the "company" had and had not been overrun. So much for the big story. More important, in any case, was to be present for the aftermath, because Cardones' response said a great deal about the way the Philippine army is fighting the war. There was no talk of body count, though later reports indicated that the attacking force had passed through villages carrying its own casualties. Wins and losses in a revolutionary struggle, the general made clear, are not measured by matching corpses.

"I can accept the loss of the weapons," Cardones said quietly, almost matter-of-factly. "It is regrettable, but we can accept that. The real loss is political. It has taken us a long time to build up our position in this area. Now the enemy has made his point [that we are not strong enough to protect the people]. It will take us a long time to rebuild, but we must do it."

He orders the company commander relieved for failure to follow earlier instructions to improve his position. He reads the battalion commander the riot act and stipulates which officer he wants to assume com-

mand of the position. And he orders that the area be secured, the militia reformed, and normal activity resumed — this time under renewed vigilance and adequate protection.

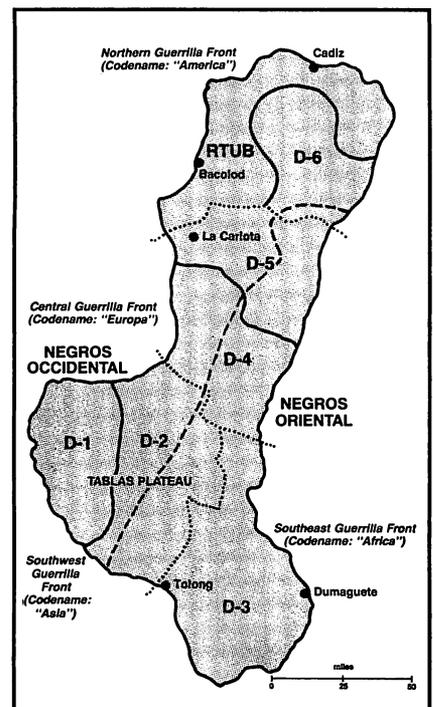
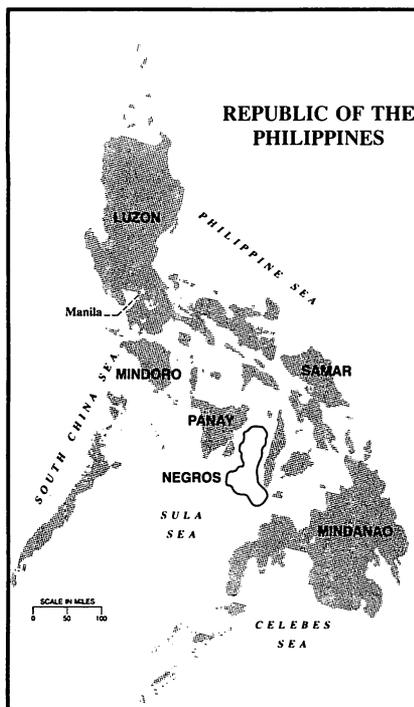
“The damage we have suffered here is not material,” he says again, gazing out over the deforested hills which stretch all about. “It is political and psychological. This is a political war. We are fighting for mens’ minds.”

Then we fly back to headquarters.

If there is any one officer who exemplifies the “new” counterinsurgency strategy of the Philippine army, it is Brig. Gen. Rene Cardones. And if there is one island which is the insurgency in a nutshell, it is Negros.

Long regarded as the most communist-

The island of Negros is composed of West and East Negros (Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental). The Communist Party has further divided it into four geographical fronts (codenames Asia, Africa, Europe, America); six districts (D-1 through D-6) and a regional trade union bureau (RTUB).



CPP LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS

Why has the CPP opted for a strategy which seems sure to backfire on it? Why have those favoring a military push won out? The answers spring from CPP leadership problems.

With the declaration of martial law in 1972, Ferdinand Marcos drove the opposition underground into the waiting arms of the CPP. “These people were our best and our brightest,” theorizes Noel Albano, editor of the Manila daily *Malaya*, once a left-wing standard bearer, now more conventional in its approach. “They were able to revitalize the CPP, which at that point was rather stalled in ideological squabbling.”

That they were able to do this was a result of Philippine geography. That is, when the same process occurred in Thailand in the aftermath of the military assault on Thammasat University in October 1976, the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) disintegrated in ideological turmoil as the old guard and the newcomers disagreed completely over strategy. Yet in the Philippine archipelago, each newcomer could find his own niche by achieving organizational success in the “outer islands.” The decentralized nature of CPP control allowed for experimentation away from the movement’s center of mass in Luzon. Once they were successful, these individuals could return and reinvigorate the center’s strategic thinking.

With the 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, however, a legal opposition of sorts developed abroad and in the Philippines. This, combined with the

oft-documented change in attitudes on the part of the students of the '80s — an emphasis away from activism and toward career concerns (a worldwide phenomenon, just as the student activism of the late 1960s and early 1970s was) — meant that the bulk of the politically motivated young people articulated their political demands in forums other than the CPP.

This trend was solidified by the ouster of Marcos and the regeneration of the Philippine political process, flawed though it may appear to many. Further, disappearance of Marcos robbed the radical movement of its greatest recruiting tool and caused many would-be activists to return to more mundane concerns. “This is clearly visible in the leadership ranks of protests today,” notes Albano, “where the traditional University of the Philippines [UP] dominance has given way to individuals from smaller campuses, individuals who simply do not have the organizational skills and broad outlook which were developed through activist work on the massive UP campuses.”

The result is that for six years the CPP has received little new blood from the most vibrant intellectual sector of Philippine society. Instead, its leaders have come from within the movement itself or from particular sectors, such as the clergy, with their own peculiarities that block a flexible world view. Predictably, intellectual stagnation has set in, the results of which can be seen in the present lack of CPP strategic vision.

In contrast, the government leadership ranks have been revitalized. The changeover within the civilian administra-

tion needs no comment. Within the military, the change has taken longer to sort itself out than many experts predicted. Still, the promotion of professionals who endured years of exile in the field rather than play the political games it took to rise during the Marcos years, has finally brought to the fore individuals who believe military operations must take second place to political solutions.

Thus we have new blood facing old, if the conflict can be seen, at least in part, from such a perspective. What keeps the positive trend from becoming more pronounced is the lack of government unity of effort. It has taken the military three years since the overthrow of Marcos to come to a rough consensus on the nature of the conflict; the government still does not understand.

The bright spot is that Rocky Iletto, the respected former minister of defense and a veteran of both World War II and the battles against the Huks, has been recalled, this time to serve as Mrs. Aquino’s national security adviser. He has long been an advocate of positions in harmony with those of the military’s new blood. A position paper setting in place the mechanisms and philosophy of “unity of effort” has already been put together for Iletto by another active former Huk fighter, Luis Villa-real, once head of NICA (the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency), and several additional associates. It is a sound document and, if accepted and implemented, should help the situation considerably by placing all government assets, civil and military, within a unified framework. This can only complicate further the difficulties faced by the CPP leadership.



Relief force arrives at overrun company headquarters and clusters on charred remains of the main fighting position. Though surprised, greatly outnumbered stay-behind force fought well and withdrew with minimal losses.

infiltrated area in the Philippines, Negros is the fourth largest island of the archipelago. It happens to be almost precisely the size of Connecticut (12,968 square kilometers for the island versus the state's 12,618) and has virtually the same population (an estimated 3,161,021 versus the state's 3,169,670). Much of the island is mountainous except for a western plain in Negros Occidental Province (which has 2,227,974 people living on 7,926.1 square kilometers). Predictably, it is Negros Occidental where the island's economic life is centered. Its people speak Ilongo. The 933,047 inhabitants of Negros Oriental Province speak Cebuano, the language of Cebu Island, to the east. Negros society has traditionally been feudalistic in the extreme, revolving around the sugar industry. The seasonal nature of sugar

cane and the low wages paid by the plantations (less than a dollar a day) meant that even those who had employment lived in poverty. For the bulk of the population, abject poverty would perhaps be an understatement.

Cadre of the CPP had little trouble tapping this rebellion-waiting-to-happen. The movement was already well established, particularly in the southwest portion of the island, when twin blows made a bad situation worse. First, Marcos established a sugar monopoly, run by one of his cronies, to which all planters were required to sell their crops at prices kept artificially low so that the difference could be skimmed off. Second, the world price of sugar collapsed, falling as low as two or three cents per pound. Estimates placed possibly 300,000-400,000 persons out of work. Starvation set in. As social conflict intensified, so did repression at the hands of private armies, corrupt policemen, and army units that at times seemingly took their orders from Marcos cronies. Hundreds flocked to the CPP's banners, and even the Catholic Church sided with the oppressed. At least a half-

dozen priests joined the CPP outright.

To this unpromising environment came then-Colonel Rene Cardones shortly after Marcos' departure. A graduate of the Philippine Military Academy class of 1962, he faced a daunting task. With a force that ultimately numbered just four infantry battalions and nine Philippine Constabulary (PC) companies — all chronically under-strength — Cardones faced an extensively developed CPP infrastructure that had established virtual base areas in the countryside and also infiltrated all segments of society and organized labor in particular.

Following the organizational pattern used throughout the Philippines, the CPP had divided Negros into six districts and a regional trade union bureau whose activities centered on urban organizing (see map on page 35). Each district had its own party chain of command and DGU (district guerrilla unit, approximately platoon size), and fell under one of the four geographical fronts (not to be confused with political fronts, legal or semi-legal organizations infiltrated and partially or completely controlled by the CPP). Each front had its own FGU (front guerrilla unit, about com-



same period was fewer than 900.

It is this division of insurgent fighters into various categories of forces that accounts for the considerable confusion concerning the number of NPA not just on Negros but nationwide. As the case of Westmoreland versus CBS made clear to the American public, a bean count of enemy forces depends completely upon which beans you choose first to be understood that the OG, OC, and PB mentioned above are clandestine bodies which exist within the larger village population. Rural Organizing Groups (OG), for example, are recruited "sectorally": one for peasants (men), one

for women, one for youth, and one for children (in urban areas "sectors" will be different; e.g. teachers or workers). The OG members are grouped into cells to compartmentalize the organization and are indoctrinated by taking designated courses (e.g. "Special Mass Course").

Most militiamen come from peasant background. Human rights activists portray such people as bloodthirsty cultists. Some are, but most are peasants who are seeking to protect themselves.

The best members of each OG cell eventually become members of the higher OCs, which are also sectoral. OC members go through a more advanced series of courses (e.g. "Five Golden Rays," "Revolutionary Guide of Land Reform," "Lessons for Mass Activists," etc.). The best of these OC members are themselves graduated to become candidate Party members and, ultimately, after finishing the required curriculum (e.g. "Basic Party Course"), full-fledged Communist Party members. By this time, the *sitio* (hamlet) concerned is fully co-opted, for at each level armed manpower is fielded, ostensibly for external defense but also for keeping in line those who refuse to join the movement.

What Cardones understood was the point made by revolutionary warfare experts such as Sir Robert Thompson; namely, that everything depends upon the base. All communist manpower is divided — by the CPP itself — into three categories: organized masses, mass activists, and Party members. An individual working at the OG level is considered a member of the organized masses; those promoted to OC level become mass activists and, ultimately, Party members. Similarly, the ranks of the NPA are filled by those recruited from militia formations. These individuals are themselves first members of the organized masses and later mass activists. Most NPA, therefore, will be Party members. This is a fairly rigid progression and only breaks down when circumstances, such as heavy casualties or

pany size). Together, these fronts reported to the Negros Island Regional Party Committee. All of the major levels had available to them the special *Yunit Partisano* (partisan units), or "sparrows," who carried out assassinations.

Sparrows, together with the soldiers of the FGU and DGU (the *Yunit Gerilya*) comprise the regulars of the movement, those classified as members of the New People's Army (NPA), the CPP's official armed forces. Under the districts, though, are numerous sections, which corresponded closely to the government's own municipalities (counties). Sections control the *barangay* (village) operatives. As villages are organized in precise sequence, graduating from the OG (organizing group) to OC (organizing committee) to PB (party branch), they field their own local armed forces, a self-defense corps at the lower end of the spectrum, a full-fledged *unit militia* at the upper end. The extent to which these part-time guerrillas are armed depends upon the weaponry available. In October 1986, for instance, captured CPP documents claimed an armed strength of 5,924 on Negros, but its weapons inventory for the

Militiaman at sitio Tiki.



undue haste, dictate otherwise. Under normal conditions, manpower for higher formations is never picked up off the streets, so to speak. Therefore, to strangle the armed elements and the party branches, they must be cut off from their mass base, the organized masses. This is precisely what Cardones set out to do.

Cutting off the CPP from its mass base, of course, is far more than simply a mechanical exercise in neutralizing the movement's infrastructure. In the absence of reform that eliminates the fundamental grievances that drive individuals to seek redress through armed struggle, new cells will constantly spring up. Traditional civic action — digging wells, providing medical treatment, and so forth — is but a Band-Aid. Root causes must be attacked. The only way this can occur is if there are mechanisms which allow the population a role in their own lives. Democracy is certainly one of the best.

It is the reintroduction of politics into Philippine life that provides the overarching framework within which Cardones' stabil-

ity operations proceed. Elections have been held down through the municipal level, and village elections will have been held by the time this article appears. The result is that there exist mechanisms for the expression of popular will. These are already beginning to shape the socio-economic environment by addressing longstanding development concerns and demands for social justice.

Some take exception to this analysis, because they see the continuing presence of socio-economic inequity as dictating further escalation of the conflict. Simply put, they do not accept that political change can play a key role in shaping other facets of society.

If it were only scholars who engaged in such incorrect analysis, we would have but an academic debate on our hands. Yet the CPP itself has made the same error. About two years ago, the Party decided to push the military aspects of the conflict on the assumption that strategic stalemate was at hand. Captured CPP directives, therefore, call for emphasis upon "regularization" (i.e. creating standardized units), forming

larger units, upping the tempo of military operations, "upgunning" soldiers (i.e. arming them with heavier weapons), increased front activity, greater use of mines and booby traps, and greater use of sparrow squads for assassinations. Further, the CPP wants to hold territory through formation of "fighting villages." This last directive was part of a larger CPP campaign to achieve international recognition and belligerent status for its combatants.

Upping the military tempo would be a mistake in strictly military terms — the NPA formations are nowhere near the point where they can stand and go toe-to-toe with the Philippine military. More fundamentally, however, the achilles heel of such a strategy is that it pushes to the fore military considerations in what is, after all, a political war. The CPP has been successful in the past because it has shown a remarkable flexibility in its strategic approach. It is in subversion that its greatest strengths lie. Its fronts have been quite effective due to the open, *mañana* nature of Philippine society. This is a poor time to switch to a military push.

It could be argued that the military effort is but a tactical diversion intended to relieve pressure on the urban organizational effort by drawing the Philippine security forces into the hinterland. That, however — I base this on interviews with prisoners and captured documents — is not the case. Misguided though it may seem, the CPP strategic shift came only after long and bitter debate, and is now being enforced by liquidations of recalcitrant Party elements throughout the archipelago. The firm commitment to the hard line has led to an increased flow of people surrendering. In interviews with them, I have been struck by their classic "grievance guerrilla" profile. They have given up precisely because the hardline approach contradicts their concern for social justice.

One major labor organizer on Negros, 39-year-old Manual Jurada, also known as "Bunny," a CPP member with District Secretary rank, put this in perspective when he told me of direct, face-to-face orders delivered by the ranking CPP men on Negros (one an ex-priest, Francisco Fernandez) to stop engaging in union activities which would better the lot of the workers. Bunny was admonished that sharpening the contradictions was what he was supposed to be about, not helping the system perpetuate itself through reform. Noted Bunny, "Whenever there is a problem [between the workers and landlords] we're not supposed to talk but to intensify the struggle through strikes, economic sabotage, and so on. If there is an intensification of mass action, it is complemented by armed struggle. That's what the CPP wants to happen. The higher organ wants people to be engaged in mass action so that attention will be directed from the countryside to the urban areas."

Such a CPP line is old hat to students of the movement, but for the organizer it was a revelation of gut-wrenching proportions: If we're not in this for social justice, what are

COUNTING BEANS

There is considerable confusion concerning the number of New People's Army members, not just in Negros but throughout the Philippines. This is because there are a number of different types of Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) armed forces and the number you come up with depends on who you decide to include in the tally.

In hopes of making a confusing situation somewhat less so, here's a thumbnail sketch of the organizational pattern used on Negros (and throughout the Philippines). Also, see the map on page 35 for an outline of CPP divisions on Negros.

The CPP has divided Negros into four geographical fronts. Each front has its own Front Guerrilla Unit (FGU), which is about company size. Together these fronts report to the Negros Island Regional Party Committee.

The CPP has also divided Negros into six districts. Each district falls under one of the four geographical fronts and has its own party chain of command and District Guerrilla Unit (DGU), which is about platoon size.

Soldiers of FGU and DGU together are called the Yunit Gerilya.

Yunit Gerilya have available to them special Yunit Partisano or Sparrows, who carry out assassinations.

Members of Yunit Gerilya and Yunit Partisano are considered to be part of the New People's Army, the CPP's official armed forces.

However, villages also field their own local insurgent armed forces. These range from a full-fledged militia (Yunit Militia) at the upper end of the spectrum and a self-defense corps at the lower. These part-time guerrillas are armed depending on weapons available.

As the case of Westmoreland vs. CBS made clear to the American public, a bean count of enemy forces depends completely upon which beans you choose to include in the tally and those which you don't.

Therefore, guerrilla strength on Negros could be legitimately tallied as anywhere from 500 to 5,000, as is broken down in the table below.

NEGROS ISLAND REGIONAL PARTY COMMITTEE ARMED STRENGTH (OCT 86)

Table I

Formation	Strength	Percent of Total	Combined
Yunit Gerilya	394	6.7%	
Yunit Partisano	105	1.8%	8.5%
Yunit Militia	3,124	52.7%	
Self-Defense Corps	2,301	38.8%	91.5%
TOTAL	5,924	100.0%	100.0%

we in it for? The answer, as we know, is that the CPP is after the communist version of social justice. And that involves doing whatever is necessary *tactically* to gain *strategic* victory, victory defined as communist political power. Old Lenin, to be sure, but new for Bunny. He surrendered.

Ironically, the CPP turn toward increased violence comes even as the government counterinsurgency effort, led by men such as Cardones, has embraced the primacy of political factors. Called the triad strategy, the three-pronged approach was formally adopted a year ago. It gives equal importance to military operations, intelligence, and civic action within an overarching development effort by elected officials. There are plenty of rough edges to be smoothed out in terms of implementation on the ground. It was, for instance, only by a 23 September 1988 directive that the military adopted uniform terminology in referring to various CPP infrastructure components. But the thrust is very visible, both in implementation and promotions. Working through a list of several divisions in the southern Philippines, for instance, I found virtually every key officer on my own personal list of those I considered to be "correctly oriented." Some commanders — again, Cardones is a prime example — have a very sophisticated grasp of communist revolutionary warfare.

These commanders recognize NPA elements as just extensions of the overall organizing effort, the ultimate mass activists. Hence, to root them out, the military goes after the guerrilla foundation, the people. Emphasis is upon holding and clearing territory by rooting out the infrastructure in the hamlets. This allows elected government to function and to address socio-economic concerns.

"Insurgency is a political war," says Cardones, "and we are dealing with political forces. We ran into a lot of problems [with our earlier approach]. Our army was involved in the fighting-cock syndrome. They were an armed forces which wanted to fight an armed forces. This was a mistake."

In other words, if the military focuses its effort upon chasing the CPP's armed units, it misses the target — the population. "That's the mistake you made in Vietnam," Cardones noted one evening. His staff at the dinner table chuckles, as if to say, "How could you have been so taken in?" Even enemy order-of-battle in Negros is accounted for in infrastructure terms. Every sitio is categorized as accurately as possible, and the CPP infrastructure therein delineated and identified. For an area to be declared "cleared," this covert organization must be accounted for name by name.

Most of what we once termed "the VCI" (Viet Cong Infrastructure) is neutralized simply by exposure. It's amazing how little time it actually takes to break a village — precisely because grievance guerrillas are at the heart of the movement and respond to decent treatment. One should not push this



optimism too far, but the shift in popular attitude is palpable. With it has come a decrease in the difficulty government agents have in penetrating the CPP apparatus. The CPP has responded to this last development with bloody purges designed to weed out infiltrators. And this has only driven still more CPP members to surrender.

Cardones is certainly ahead of the pack in his understanding of and technique for dealing with the CPP; as mentioned above, considerable debate continues to rage on precisely *how* to implement the strategic vision. At national level, for instance, the village is still the unit of analysis when determining communist infiltration, even though the communists themselves, Cardones points out, use the hamlet. Yet the army is increasingly absorbing the lessons learned in areas such as Negros. "My beliefs have not changed since I was on staff [he was the Assistant G3 for Plans and Operations at Philippine army headquarters]," says Cardones. "What has changed is that now I have a platform from which to speak. Negros is my platform."

By causing the CPP effort to stall in what is acknowledged as its "Iron Triangle,"

Brig. Gen. Rene Cardones talks with special forces member of militia control team at hamlet called Tiki in Negros Occidental. Tiki is populated by approximately 100 families who fled after communists burned their village. They have now formed village militia to defend the area.



Negros Occidental coastal area being patrolled by "Commando" armored car. All major units now have the "Commando," which is normally used for patrolling or escorting truckloads of troops. In response, communists have made increasing use of homemade mines.

Cardones has forced people to listen to him. His opinions have been reinforced by those of a growing number of like-minded officers who under the Marcos regime found themselves frustrated in their efforts to address the ultimate roots of the CPP insurgency. One needs look no further than the next island over to see further evidence of the trend. On Panay, Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque, the 3rd Division's 2nd Brigade (302 Brigade) commander, has attracted attention by pacifying the former CPP stronghold (see "Victory on Panay," SOF, February '88). His approach shows the same concern as that of Cardones for rooting out CPP infrastructure while political and economic development are pushed. "I've told the local officials," emphasizes Jarque, "this war cannot be won without them."

The result is that it is the *military which* is moving to eliminate the grievances even as the CPP opts for gunslinging. "To ask if we're winning or losing is the wrong question," one major, a Cardones staff officer, told me. "The proper question is: 'Are we making progress?' And the answer to that is yes. I was a fighting cock as a battalion commander. I measured my success by how I did against the armed element: how many bodies, how many weapons recovered. *That* was a waste of time. I know better now."

Words are not the best evidence of the positive trend in the government campaign. That is shown by the increasing numbers of CPP operatives taking "leave" and the growing stream of organized masses who have asked to return to areas of greater government presence. There, they frequently seek to form *Alsa Masa*, the universal term used for village militia (the formal name is

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SOF WAR ON DRUGS

CRACK IN AMERICA

L.A. Drug Gangs Create Depraved New World

by Morgan Tanner

Photos by David Bjorkman

IN south central Los Angeles, near the L.A. airport, the staccato report of automatic gunfire can be heard over traffic. "They're starting early tonight," says Bob Rifkin, a deputy sheriff specialist in street gangs.

It's 1600 hours and in the parking lot of the Lennox station house, sheriff's deputies are beginning their shifts. Millions of people who have never been to Los Angeles know what these officers face. Lennox and nearby Newton provided the realism in the movie *Colors*. This is where actors Sean Penn and Robert Duvall rode with officers to learn about gangs and violence.

"I think they were impressed," said Sergeant John Paige of the LAPD CRASH (Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums) gang unit in "Shootin' Newton," so called because of its violent gang activity.

Outlaws with MAC-10s and UZIs, the senseless murders of innocents, deliberate assaults against law enforcement officers: these are what L.A. deputies and police officers face in the violence that goes hand-in-hand with narcotics. But south central Los Angeles is just one battle zone in a national war, a war that has some striking similarities to the Vietnam War.

It's a war with such a negative image that politicians want to deny it exists in their communities. A war in which the enemy is better armed than the police and knows no rules of fair play. A war in which Bleeding Hearts pity the drug dealers and gang members. A war of frustration and futility for cops who haul offenders off to jail, only to see them back out on the street in less time than it takes to book them. A war that was ignored while it seemed to be a problem of the black and the poor. A war not backed by legislation with teeth. It's a war where the

police, as the soldiers of the streets, aren't given the opportunity to win.

The federal government now has drug czar William Bennett to command various agencies fighting the war against drugs, and the position has been likened to that of General Eisenhower in World War II — a Supreme Commander who will mobilize the forces. But some high-level law enforcement officials privately wonder if narcotics are the time-bomb that will cause the U.S. to self-destruct.

"This can't be another Vietnam where we throw 600,000 law enforcement officers at the problem and try to forget it," Drug Enforcement Administration senior special agent Ronald Hollingshead said. "It has to be a national effort that is supported by enforcement, rehabilitation, education and incarceration."

For Los Angeles, it may already be too late for the present generation.

"We've lost it," one LAPD officer, who asked to remain anonymous, said. "But maybe others can learn a lesson from us."

This is the story of L.A.'s law enforcement struggle against the crack/gang connection.

GROWTH OF GANGS

Crack cocaine has proven to be a very lethal drug in Los Angeles. In 1988 alone, 452 people were killed in gang-related shootings. Two were police. One was an 11-year-old boy, who in December was shot and killed when a 9mm round entered his house and struck him in the chest while he was watching television. Unbeknownst to him, rival gang members were having a shoot-out half a block away, and he was killed by a



stray bullet. Another was actually two deaths, although it counts for only one: a woman nine months pregnant and her unborn child were killed when a 12-gauge solid slug hit the woman in the head. The bullet was meant for a gang member.

According to police, Los Angeles wasn't always a battle zone. "Everyone looks at L.A. like it's a freak," Paige said. "But 10 years ago, we didn't have many black gang members. We could have put them in a car and shipped them out."

Why didn't they address the problem at the time?

"We didn't know what was going to happen," he said.

Now Los Angeles has more than 60,000 gang members, not counting biker, skinhead and oriental gangs. Black supergangs, the Bloods and Crips, have more than 15,000 members, while Hispanic gangs have two times as many members at 30,000.

"The blacks are the most violent at this time, but the Mexicans are a close second," Lieutenant Chuck Brantley of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department told me. "In five years, the Mexicans may be killing more people again."

Until 1981, the *cholos*, or Hispanic gang members, were doing most of the gang-related killing in Los Angeles. Even now, members of Mexican gangs inherit their membership from their fathers and grandfathers, and protect their barrios with their lives from both rival gangs and government agents.

"They're born, raised and die in a neighborhood, and they're very turf conscious," Brantley explained. "They're the 'Soldiers of the Neighborhood.'"

In the barrio of the Hispanic gang called the Sur LOS, or South LOS, every surface is painted with gang graffiti. Concrete posts, telephone poles, the sides of houses, fences — anything wide enough to take a paint brush bears gang names and a roll call of Home Boys: Bandit, Cricket, Gordo, Chino, Flaco.

The placacios of graffiti are used to identify boundaries of a gang's turf. In tall, fat, artistic letters, they write the name of their gang — the Sur LOS gang in this area, in others the Tortilla Flats, Crazy Kats and East Side Playboys.

To prove their allegiance to their gang, they tattoo their gang name or moniker in intricate letters on their forearms and biceps. The blue etchings on their skin are a roster of who is important to them: names of dead Home Boys, a girlfriend, Jesus.

"Mexican gangs are different from the black gangs in that they usually don't fight among themselves," Lt. Brantley said. "They have a code of ethics, *movidas*, and they'll very rarely

After chasing this gang member at 70 miles an hour through neighborhood streets, these officers apprehend the driver of a 1029 Victor, California code for a car reportedly stolen. According to the officer, many cars are stolen from nearby Los Angeles International Airport, because gang members work as lot attendants.

BELOW: Gang rosters of Rolling 60s Crips gang plus the Hoover Hard Crips Gang, as indicated in the big block letters on the left, and the Playboy Style Crips. If other gang names aren't crossed out it could mean they they get along with each other for the time being. Crips will fight with other Crips as often as they will with Bloods.

WAR-TORN LOS ANGELES

Morgan Tanner has 10 years' experience covering international conflicts for National News Service (see "Guatemala's Paracaidistas," SOF, October '87 and "Winning Hearts and Mayans," SOF, November '88). In this article, Tanner reports on a frightening war being waged here on our doorstep.



LEFT: L.A. gangs traditionally haven't been integrated, but this may be changing. Law enforcement reports seeing blacks and Hispanics in some gangs in neighborhoods where ethnic groups overlap. One gang reportedly has black, Hispanic and Samoan members.



CRACK



snitch off a gang member, even from a rival gang."

Traditionally Hispanic gangs have been involved in heroin sales: Mexican Black Tar, Mexican Brown, Persian Beige, heroin from Thailand. Los Angeles is also the PCP capital of the United States and batches of acrid-smelling liquid are mixed up in their garages and stored in plastic milk cartons. But with the huge profit margin in crack, they are now selling it to blacks.

"Dope sales among the Mexican gangs have never been a big thing," Brantley said. "A guy might sell enough to support his (heroin) habit, but it's not the same with the blacks. They are making thousands and thousands of dollars."

While we sat watching some cholos on a street corner, three black men in a BMW drove up to buy crack, followed by an attractive black man and woman who stuck some green out of the car window and got a tiny, ziplock baggie of little gray chunks of crack. While gang drive-by shootings increase during the full moon, crack sales increase on the 1st and 15th of the month, when people get their paychecks.

But it's the black street gangs who have a corner on the crack market. The new breed of black street gangs began in mid-1970 when a few boys at Washington High School in the south L.A.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Bob Rifkin shines his light so this Hispanic gang member can show off tattoos that cover his entire upper torso. Included are letters "LNK" for (Lennox, in south central L.A.) over his left eye. Hispanic tattooing and graffiti is intricate and artistic, unlike black tattoos, which are usually crudely done block letters.

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff Bob Rifkin slides behind the wheel of the unmarked car and begins a shift that will last until midnight. Mike Garcia, his partner for the shift, unlocks the catch on the shotgun. As OSS (Operation Safe Streets) officers in the Lennox neighborhood of south central Los Angeles, Rifkin and Garcia don't answer 911 calls. That's the job of the uniformed deputies in black and whites. Instead they run hot on high-priority and gang-related incidents.

Rifkin drives down under a freeway into a Hispanic neighborhood. An outdoor party is underway. Behind a short, white, picket fence, 20 or 30 kids dance to Michael Jackson's "I'm Bad." A pretty girl in a short, black dress is admitting people through the gate. She flashes a wide, excited smile at the deputies and walks over to the car.

"What's the celebration?" Rifkin asks her.

"My eighteenth birthday."

"Who's your bouncer?" Garcia asks.

"I am," she says. "These are my friends."

Rifkin surveys the crowd, which is a mix of blacks and Hispanics. None of them are openly displaying their "do rags," slang for the colored *bandanas* that identify them as Bloods or Crips. Most of them are dressed in gray and black, the only safe colors. But murder as a rite of initiation into a street gang, or because of poor aim, is common. The yard faces a street with fast traffic — the perfect location for a drive-by shooting.

"Do yourself a favor," Rifkin tells her. "Keep the gangbangers out."

She promises. But a stream of kids pours toward the party.

"There's going to be trouble here," Garcia predicts. "One of these kids could be dead by midnight."

The night is young, and Rifkin parks the car and waits. At age 32, Rifkin has four years as a deputy. He was a paramedic before he became a sheriff. Now, instead of applying CPR to accident victims, he likes to feel he saves lives in a different way. He carries a 9mm Beretta with 46 rounds: one in the chamber, a full magazine, and two more holding 15 each. He has a .38 in an ankle holster and a speed loader for backup. But what he relies on most is his friendly but firm manner of approaching gang members.

Before they get out on the streets, deputies spend several months as jailers in the L.A. County Jail in charge of 200 inmates. As jailers they carry no weapons. All they have are words and, hopefully, a quick wit. That's what they use on the streets, at least until all else fails.

"If we shoot, we shoot to kill," Rifkin said. "If that doesn't work because they are wearing body armor, we go for the head. The main thing is, we're going home at night. There's not an arrest in the world worth losing that. If we don't catch them one night, we'll catch them the next."

As we watch the throng of kids stream into the party, the police radio reports gang activity in another part of Lennox. Rifkin puts his foot to the accelerator. Bouncing this party is not the sheriff's job.

Rifkin speeds to a neighborhood a couple of miles away, then slows when he sees six boys about 16 years old standing in the street. The houses are small, but middle class and neat.

As the car approaches, one boy makes a sudden move.

"Did you see him toss it?" Garcia asks. "I did."

Rifkin stomps on the brakes, and the deputies jump out of the car.

"Kneel down, hands on the car," Rifkin orders.

The boys kneel in the street, and Rifkin and Garcia jam them, patting each one down for guns, knives, glass or aluminum crack pipes, or dope.

They're clean. Rifkin orders them to sit on the curb.

"This your house?" Garcia asks them, pointing at a green stucco behind a chain link fence. A brilliant spotlight makes the yard nearly as bright as day.

They shake their heads no.

"Does a dog live here?" he asks.

No, the boys say. Garcia rattles the fence before he vaults over the fence and searches the grass with his flashlight. At 28, he is agile and quick. He used to compete in track and could probably outrun most teenagers who aren't running for their freedom. Triumphant, he stoops and picks something up.

"I knew they tossed it," he says.

He opens a crumbled square of paper ripped from the *Los Angeles Times*. Inside it lie four dull white little lumps of crack. "Cookie" is one name rock cocaine is known by because after it has been cooked, it looks and feels like dough. These "crumbs," irregular lumps about as big as a thumb nail, go for

town of Lennox became known as Crips. Where the name originated, no one knows, except that it may be short for "Cripple" because early gang members beat their victims of muggings and purse-snatchings with walking canes.

"When people think of gangs, they think of 'West Side Story,'" Deputy Bob Rifkin said. "But these guys don't dance down the street singing 'Maria.'"

From the start, the Crips used the power of the gang to rob, beat and extort money. They were different from other teen street gangs because they terrorized the older people in their neighborhoods as well as other kids, and they established a reputation for ruthlessness. One time, they held a boy up against a wall and carved "Crips" on his chest with a knife.

As their reputation spread, the Crips became the most powerful gang on the street. They affectionately called their members "Cuzz." To catch the glory, other street gangs added the word "Crip" to their neighborhood names. They became the Compton Crips, the Grape Street Crips, the Kitchen Crips.

"But there was no superstructure under which they operated," Wes McBride, a sheriff's deputy with 15-years' experience in gangs and author of *Understanding Street Gangs*, told me.

Non-Crips banded together to protect themselves. In street slang, they became the Bloods or "Pirus," named for the neighborhood around Piru Street. Blood gangs became the Fruit Town Pirus and the Lime Street Pirus. The Bompston Piru Bloods are from the city of Compton, but they hate the Crips so much they won't use the letter "C."

about \$20 on the street. They produce an intense, 20-minute high.

"You gangbanging?" Rifkin asks the boys, using the slang for fighting or shooting for territory in the neighborhood.

The first one says no.

"Right," Rifkin roars. "And you're going to jail. The next person who tells me a lie is going with him. Now who here is banging?"

Four of the boys admit they are members of a well-known group of gangsters. They fit the profile of a gang member: a baseball cap with initials on it, their tennis shoes strung with red laces that show their allegiance to the black supergang, the Bloods. They wear expensive red varsity jackets and stone-bleached Levis. The other two insist they were only hanging around the neighborhood, "chilling out." Rifkin buys their story.

While he talks to the boys, two women hurry toward him, the mother and grandmother of one of the boys. Rifkin wants to prevent a hostile crowd.

"You ladies just take a little walk down the street, or these boys are going downtown," he says. The women retreat and watch from the shadows of the trees.

The deputies don't have a choice on the boys, since neither would be able to testify in court which of them threw the crack. Nevertheless, here is a perfect setup for gaining information and for creating a future payback. Rifkin fills out a contact card on each of the boys, and will add their names, monikers, gang affiliation, and a description of any identifying tattoo information to the GREAT system, a computerized file on known L.A. gang members. He asks the boys how much money they have. Four of them have only a dollar for bus fare. The two whose mother and grandmother are waiting in the wings have nearly \$80 each.

Rifkin calls the mother over.

"Don't I know you?" he says to the attractive, young-looking woman. She shakes her head no.

"Didn't I arrest your boyfriend?" Rifkin insists. He prides himself on remembering people.

Again she shakes her head no.

"Yeah, I remember now," he says, and names the details of an arrest that occurred months earlier.

"That was my brother," the woman admits, "not my

In 1988, L.A. County statistics listed 189 different sets of Crips and 72 sets of Bloods. When we rode with Newton CRASH, we drove down Central Street, which divides the Newton gangs. The east side belongs to the Bloods; the Crips own the west.

"And where East meets West, there's bloodshed," Paige said.

Building walls on Central are a newspaper of black gang activity. Sloppy, skinny letters with dribbles of paint bleeding from them mark the boundary of a gang's domain. Its roll call lists names such as T-Bone, Big Capone, Little Capone, Baby Capone, Trigger. Rival gangs challenge their right to the turf by spray-painting their own logo over the existing one. An "X" over a gang member's name is the kiss of death.

Off their turf, gang members toss signs with their fingers to show their set or challenge a rival gang member. Gang members are drilled with automatic fire for flipping off a rival gang, or for wearing red in a blue territory. To show their loyalty, or "colors," gang members wear bandanas, or "do-rags" on their heads or hanging out of a back pocket. Blue is for Crips, red for Bloods. Or they wear baseball hats with embroidered letters to identify their gang: Kansas City Royals hats (KC) for the Kitchen Crips and purple L.A. Lakers hats for the Grape Street Watts.

"You have to realize the overwhelming need of these kids for identity," Steve Strong, LAPD Gang Activity Section, explained. "These kids started in the housing projects without parental supervision. They gravitate into little gangs to give each other a family bond they don't get at home."

boyfriend."

Rifkin discovers that the woman works for the county as a secretary. The two boys sitting on the curb with nearly \$80 each are her son and her sister's son.

"I'm going to do you a favor this time," Rifkin tells her.

He motions the woman to step out of hearing distance of the boys and hands her his card. He's going to let the boys go, but he expects her cooperation in the future. She stuffs his card in the pocket of her sweater.

Rifkin stands in front of the boys again, and Garcia hands him the four rocks of cocaine. Rifkin tosses them on the ground in front of the boys and grinds them with his heel until they are nothing but white streaks on the asphalt.

"Do me a favor," he says. "My name is Rifkin. Remember me?"

The boys nod, and Rifkin and Garcia get into the car.

"Thank you very much," Rifkin says to no one in particular. It is a phrase he's used several times on the shift, muttering it in a strange monotone.

"What's with 'thank you very much?'" Garcia complains. "Will you cut it out?"

Theirs is an easy rapport, built on a foundation of good-natured trust. In the course of their shift, they place a bet on whether or not a street goes through to the freeway, argue about who starred in the "Rockford Files," and discuss how they handled each incident. The contact with the boys was successful, if routine. They ruined the boys' evening, put a dent in their sales, put a little heat on their mama, and made a few points that might pay off later in a tip. They sweated the gangbangers — a method the sheriff department says works.

To break a gang, deputies pick up known gang members for any legitimate infringement and throw them in jail. Then, by making a few well-analyzed bargains, deputies develop enough information to identify the leaders of a gang. Although gangs seem to have no formal structure, usually 15 percent of a gang are hardcore members, meaning they do the shootings and felony robberies. Another 50 percent are active and commit street robberies and dope sales. Another 35 percent are associate members who hang around the gang for the identity it provides

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"They're into having a rap and being recognized," Gil Jurado, Lennox sheriff's deputy, said. "They fight for identity and shoot for dope. Only so many men can become stars like O.J. Simpson."

While race-oriented prison gangs such as the Black Guerrilla Family are very strong, the Crips and Bloods have even managed to keep their identity in prison.

"In prison, we notice that the Bloods were getting sick a lot, and a lot of them were going to the Pill Tank," Wes McBride said. "We didn't know why, until we figured out that they felt safe there. So we segregated the gangs.

"We never let them wear their do rags. We noticed that a very high number of them were converting to Catholicism in jail. Of course, the priest was very happy. But then we discovered that it was because he was giving them rosaries, and they had their choice of red or blue. So we began letting them wear their rags in Bloods or Crips tanks.

"But then we had to segregate the Crips into groups because they fight as much among themselves as they do with the Bloods."

With their penchant for violence, street gangs hold their neighborhoods hostage. Neighborhoods in housing projects and nice neighborhoods of neat, middle-class homes. ("Tell people how nice our ghettos are," urged one detective.) At twilight, when we patrolled with sheriff's deputies in Lennox, house lights twinkled out over neat lawns, and stately palm trees

Victim of alleged L.A. drug-related, drive-by shooting, was hit in the head by shotgun pellets. Gang experts, within and outside law enforcement circles, say gang violence runs in five-year cycles. In 1987-88 the cycle was escalating.

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and the companionship. They sell a little dope, smoke a little pot, and may give support to the gang, but they usually don't perform the crimes.

"Certain individuals motivate a gang," says Marvin Washington, an OSS deputy in Lynwood, another south central L.A. district. "If you put them in jail, the gang dies out for awhile. It's like cutting the head off an animal."

In another neighborhood, Rifkin and Garcia catch a glimpse of a tall, thin kid suddenly trying to make like a shadow. By the time Rifkin stops the car, he has disappeared into a dark stairwell. Mike Garcia goes after him, his flashlight in his left hand, his right hand holding his 9mm Beretta.

From under the stairs emerge two black men and a Hispanic, all about 20. Garcia orders them to kneel on the ground, hands in the air, and pats them down. The sharp smell of enamel paint stings our nostrils. On the beige wall of the Spanish-style house is a skinny, imperfect figure "9" about a yard tall. Beside it is a half-finished "0." Apparently they were "hitting up," slang for writing graffiti. Garcia rummages under the stairs and pulls out a can of spray enamel called "Red Devil."

"Whose is this?" demands Garcia.

None of them answer.

"Let me see your hands," he orders.

The men obediently hold their palms under his flashlight. The fingers of all three are smudged with red paint.

Suddenly a blue Ford Escort with four teenagers speeds down a side street going in the opposite direction of the patrol car.

"I want that car," Rifkin shouts.

We race toward the patrol car, leaving the three artists surprised, but lucky — painting gang graffiti is a misdemeanor.

"Hang on," Rifkin shouts.

He accelerates backward until he's doing about 25 mph, then jerks the wheel hard to the right. The car screeches into a quick 180, and we're in pursuit.

The Escort has a good head start, but in about a mile, Rifkin overtakes it. When he flashes his lights, it stops. Its license plate is from Wisconsin. The passenger in the back right makes some

sudden, irregular moves.

"He's stuffing," Garcia yells, using the slang for hiding the dope wherever he can.

Garcia and Rifkin jump out and approach the car from opposite sides. They jam the men, then order them to sit on the curb. Garcia slips his fingers behind the seat, feeling for contraband. That's dangerous business; law enforcement live in fear of sticking themselves with an AIDS-infected hypodermic. But the car is clean.

"Nothing," Garcia says.

The car isn't even a Victor, slang for stolen.

"It's like playing poker," says Rifkin. "Sometimes you guess wrong."

Until two years ago, deputies did more intelligence gathering than anything else. They were masters of gab, always talking with a purpose. Their job was to build a rapport with gang members. They didn't wear gun belts, although they usually stashed guns under their shirts. They almost never made an arrest. Instead, they called a B&W to go pick up the suspects they targeted.

Then in 1986, policy changed. Now they play it both ways. Deputies wear jeans and tennis shoes and carry semi-automatic weapons on their gunbelts. They went from spending 100 percent of their time on investigations, to spending at least 40 percent of their time on the street looking for gang-related dope, burglaries-in-progress, stolen cars.

"Now we generate our own work," says Garcia.

Rifkin spots another car he wants, an old green Chevy Nova. He swings around after it, then aborts the move.

"Uh oh," he says, "Woman and kids."

Gang members sometimes use women and kids as mules for their stash, but deputies don't like to deal with searching them.

"You can't search their bra or groin area unless you feel threatened," says Rifkin. "And if kids are involved, you have to wait until someone comes and gets them out. Takes too much time."

On a busy intersection, we hear over the traffic noise, the pitiful yelping of an injured dog. A brown, shepherd-type mutt writhes in pain on the curb.

reached into the sky. But the houses in a couple of blocks on Lohengrin Street bear witness to the violence. Several stucco houses are pock-marked with bullet holes. One house was shot up so bad that the family had to move. One family has five sons in jail. Bystanders are murdered in the street. But most homeowners in troubled neighborhoods can't move away. Their life savings are tied up in their houses, and no one will buy them. If they abandon their property, their homes will be turned overnight into crack houses.

"Families are living in fear in the rear bedroom of their houses," Steve Strong said. "They lie on the floor to watch TV and eat to avoid the stray bullets."



Officers recover from apartment a Smith & Wesson 9mm semi-automatic pistol and a Cobray MAC-11 semi-automatic 9mm machine pistol with ammunition.



LEFT: Some of weapons recovered from gang members in Lennox area of L.A. include a Mossberg pump-action riot shotgun, a modified Mini-14 .223 with pistol grip and folding stock, a semi-auto .45 Thompson carbine, a civilian-market Chinese AK, and a full auto .45 Ingram MAC-10 machine pistol. The sophistication of weaponry recovered has increased dramatically since cocaine appeared on gang scene.

"God, I can't stand it," Rifkin howls.

Garcia covers his ears. "I can take anything but that."

Rifkin takes off after a blue Toyota — the vehicle of choice of a ring of car thieves working the LAX parking lots. He asks dispatch for a make on the plate, but it's clear. By the time we return to the dog, it's gone.

"Maybe someone took him to the vet," Rifkin says hopefully.

Garcia doesn't contradict his fantasy.

Rifkin drives to the sheriff's station house, where deputies are planning to serve a warrant on an apartment in a Grape Street Watts area housing project. In a large, bright room, nearly two dozen deputies get the details of the bust: the line-up in the motorcade, who takes the front door, who takes the back, who handles crowd control. On the wall there's a poster of the backsides of five blondes, California girls in string bikinis.

"Everybody know what to do?" asks the woman who has briefed them.

The deputies gather their gear and head to the parking lot to await "Go." Those who will perform the entry wear vests that cover their necks and groins, plus helmets with clear visors. Everyone laughs a little too much, talks a little too loud as they check each other's gear. The housing project is a tough nut: a warren of places for concealment, rows of second-story windows that offer a clear shot.

"We can't worry about snipers," Rifkin says.

We wear bulletproof vests with steel plates. One deputy warns: "Stay close. You get six feet away from us, these people will stick you."

The word comes, and the deputies enter their cars and take their assigned places in the motorcade. The Black-and-Whites leap ahead, blocking intersections so the cars aren't separated. The location is a closely held secret, but as the string of cars snakes on, people on the street laugh and jeer. They know what's going to happen, if not where.

Knowing that their support is in place, the entry team places the ram on the metal door, and the lock pops like a plastic toy. Inside, the two-bedroom, two-story apartment is clean, but loaded with the paraphernalia of a family with kids. A man who was asleep in an upstairs bedroom is loaded into a patrol car.

While the deputies search for drugs, a hundred or more people gather outside. Some seem to dare the deputies to contact them, and the deputies pat them down.

Rifkin is eager to get back on the street, and we leave the scene early. What makes deputies and police choose this occupation?

"The challenge," says Rifkin. "And the adrenaline. It draws us from one situation to another."

It's nearly 0130 — long past the end of the shift. Rifkin cruises by the girl's birthday party again, and parks in a dead-end. There are so many kids that they're standing in the street. The deputies watch two boys saunter out of the party and then run across the street and disappear between two houses.

"Looks suspicious," Garcia says.

Rifkin steps on the gas and intercepts them on a side street. One of them is puking on the sidewalk.

"What's up?" Rifkin asks.

"Too much vodka," the kid groans.

Rifkin looks at Garcia and drives on. "Thank you very much," he says.

Garcia snarls at him.

Then the call comes. A gang-related drive-by shooting at a party. Two victims. Rifkin races to the location about five miles away. Paramedics are working over two male victims. Apparently, the men were in the party's overflow and were standing on the front lawn. Someone in a car fired into the crowd. Both men were hit in the head. Maybe because of the darkness, or the time of night, or the amount of drugs and alcohol involved, but the men were lucky. Both would recover.

While officers scour the street for evidence, the party goes on. Witnesses tell Garcia that the shooter carried a 9mm handgun. Garcia searches the ground, but finds no spent casings. Only piles of vomit and a rum bottle.

"The gang story's a cover up," Rifkin mutters. "Probably a drug deal."

Rifkin and Garcia head back toward the birthday girl's party. But halfway there, Rifkin abruptly changes direction and drives to the Lennox station house. Both he and Garcia have nearly an hour's drive home, and the shift has been over for nearly two hours.

Rifkin looks at Garcia: "Tomorrow, we'll catch 'em all."

CRACK

In Lynwood, only a few miles from Lennox, one man was threatened when he complained that crack dealers were trampling his lawn. On one corner, the charred remains of two burned houses stand on the block like black eyes. According to deputy Marvin Washington, the two families who lived there were driven out of the neighborhood by gangs.

"The men complained to gang members about traffic all night long from cocaine sales," Washington said. "One member of the gang went to get a shotgun, but the man who complained didn't back down. He got his own shotgun. When the gang member returned, the man shot him. In revenge, the gang shot the house full of holes. Miraculously, the rounds missed everyone inside.

"Then the gang burned their cars. Finally, the families left in a hurry before their houses were hit by molotov cocktails."

CRACK COCAINE

Narcotics — primarily crack cocaine — have changed the face of gang activity since 1986. Turf battles have taken on new viciousness as gang members battle for drug monopolies in their neighborhoods and defend against takeovers. In some areas, three gangs operate within five blocks of each other, and a street corner is worth dying for. Revenge is the law, and the man with the automatic is the executioner.

"You've got 20,000 black gang members and probably 15,000 of them are dealers," Lt. Chuck Brantley told us. "Each of those has maybe 12 customers. That's a lot of hustling."

While not all gangs peddle dope, the gang is a marketer's dream for small-time dope sales: a diversified sales force, plenty of qualified help, and kids who are too young to be prosecuted. Little kids 10 or 12 years old are called "baby gangsters" or "wannabes" and perform low level jobs like yelling "One time" or whistling when the cops are around. The gang uses them to steal money and guns for the gang, or run dope, knowing that if they get caught, they'll be released to their mamas. Older boys specialize in useful skills, such as becoming "shooters" who kill rival gang members in drive-by *shootings*.

"You have to prove yourself by selling dope or beating up a rival gang member," Deputy Rifkin said. "You might have to do a drive-by so they'll accept you."

Crack is the marketing marvel of the 1980s. A little operation is inexpensive to grubstake and yields a high return. Cocaine is easy to crack up, and the rocks can be tossed without too much loss when the police come. Crack comes in sizes everyone can afford. It's the best thing since 19-cent hamburgers.

"It's McCrack," said one deputy.

"Cocaine is on sale, and crack is the way its being marketed," DEA agent Ron Hollingshead explained. "They're going after the kid with \$5 instead of the yuppie with \$125."

In 1979, the price of cocaine was \$1,800 to \$2,100 an ounce. Today, with a better supply system, an ounce sells for as low as \$800 in L.A., depending on its purity. It can be resold for \$2,000 to \$3,000 an ounce. The return is even better in large quantities; a kilo of cocaine sells in Los Angeles for \$13,500 to \$22,000 and broken down into ounces may resell for more than \$70,000. An ounce of cocaine bought at \$800 can net \$6,000, depending on how much it has been cut.

Cocaine shipments into the United States are controlled by a dozen or so major organizations in South America, LAPD Deputy Chief Glenn Levant said. The cocaine is processed in South America and then transshipped across Mexico into California. It arrives in Los Angeles via commercial and private

GANG SLANG

Gang slang serves several important functions. It helps form a gang culture, in which only the members know the language. It makes them feel special. "Their clothes, their language — they say 'I'm somebody,'" says Steve Strong, a gang specialist for the LAPD. It is also a means of hiding information from the police, almost like a secret code. Slang used by black gang members in California has many references to drugs and penal codes.

Some words such as "righteous" have made it into the mainstream; some make it into other states when gang members move; some die unnoticed when a gang set dies out. Slang changes quickly, but here are a few of the words that are now common in south central L.A.

- sidewalk servers — pushers who sell crack to people in cars
- slingers — street pushers
- players — fancy dressers with nice clothes, cars and women
- victor — stolen car, taken from police code 1029 Victor
- g-ride — stolen car
- crabs — derogatory term for Crips
- slobs — derogatory term for Bloods
- buster — a phony who goes from one gang to another
- basehead — a user
- tweaker — a user
- chillin' — just hanging around
- do-rag — blue (Crips) or red (Bloods) bandana that shows gang affiliation
- 187 — California penal code for murder, common in graffiti
- speedball — cocaine and heroin
- buckets — small caliber handguns or a shotgun
- Ooze — any automatic weapon, rarely an UZI. Sometimes a MAC
- cholo — Hispanic gang member
- gang warden — police or sheriff's deputies
- strawberry — a woman who will give sex for drugs
- freak — a woman who will give sex for nothing
- guns — muscles
- flashing — wearing loads of gold jewelry
- gangbanging — fighting to protect or take turf
- happy stick — marijuana cigarette laced with PCP
- roll call — a roster of gang members
- sagging — wearing your jeans two inches lower than your boxers
- stuffing — hiding the dope anywhere you can
- jam — when law enforcement pats you down for weapons
- Jim Jones — marijuana cigarette laced with cocaine and dipped in PCP
- 911 — common warning for cops in the area
- one-time — warning for cops
- 6-pack — six guys in a police line up
- dog-city — "we work for our money"
- hittin' up — painting graffiti
- eight-ball — 1/8 ounce of cocaine
- dime — 1/10 ounce of cocaine

planes, boats, vehicles and body packs.

Of the cocaine that enters Los Angeles, 90 percent stays in L.A. and is transformed into rock cocaine. According to figures cited by L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates, in the summer of 1987, LAPD seized the largest amount of cocaine in California history — 2,135 pounds, valued at more than \$364 million. But that may be only five percent of the cocaine traffic in California, according to commander William Booth. If this is true, then 21 tons of cocaine entered California in that time period valued at over \$7 billion.

"It's not unusual for us to recover 1,000 pounds," Levant said. "We had a seizure of 800 pounds recently, and the press didn't think it was big enough to send someone over."

The "rock" of California is identical to the "crack" of the East. It may have been called rock because the little chunks of cocaine look like gray pebbles. The term crack may have come from the crackling noise it makes when it is smoked.

Chemically, crack is a form of free-base cocaine. Powder cocaine comes in kilograms, 2.2 pounds of compacted white gold that is 50-, 70-, or even 97-percent pure. In processing the kilos into crack, dealers toss big batches into a cement mixer. The recipe calls for baking soda, strychnine, arsenic and water, according to Levant. One variation calls for adding Drano to the cocaine. Or baking soda alone can be added.

The dough made from cocaine and water is then heated. One traveling L.A. drug dealer in Denver was cooking crack on a travel iron in a hotel near Stapleton International Airport. More commonly it is cooked in a pot on the stove or heated in a microwave. When it's done, the dough is broken into hundreds of tiny nuggets that are worth considerably more than their weight in gold — from \$5 to \$20 depending on size.

"When we find nine microwaves in one house, we know they were mass rockin' it," Detective Steve Strong said.

Crack is smoked in a glass pipe bought for \$4.95 in head shops. In an emergency, a four-inch piece of aluminum pipe or an antenna broken off a car will do. Crack doesn't burn by itself, so tweakers apply heat from a butane lighter. The impurities burn off, giving the tweaker a whiff of nearly pure cocaine. Within eight seconds, they're sailing.

"It's faster than an IV," says Levant.

A crack high is so high, according to users, it's euphoria so overwhelming, that it is savagely addicting.

"The addiction is measured in a week, or a couple of days, or even from the first hit," James Walsh of the L.A. Attorney General's Office said.

But gang members usually aren't addicts. Like the kids of a candy store owner, they learn early to keep their hands off the merchandise. They smoke marijuana, but they don't do cocaine.

"Their only motivation is money," Steve Strong said.

"There is a righteous punishment for loss of product."

NEW AGE GANGSTERS

While the tweaker becomes addicted to a cocaine high, the people in its chain of distribution become addicted to the money it makes. For the gang member who sells it, for his kid brother who delivers it on his bike, for the widow who rents out her porch as a lookout, crack makes money. It buys acceptance, and it buys better weapons than the police have.

"Kids from UCLA or USC come down in their Beemers to buy," Steve Strong told us. "These kids (pushers) are making money they could never make any other way."

"Street level crimes are not very profitable and the likelihood of getting caught is high," said Marc Fleischman, LAPD

After frisking suspected Crips gang member wearing blue Crips colors, two deputies from a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department uniformed patrol in the Lynwood-Compton area of south central L.A. check around for hidden or "tossed" crack cocaine.



After frisking a suspected gang member, deputies talk to him to find his street name, gang affiliation, and identifying marks or tattoos. The information is then put into a computer and card system on known gang members. This gang member was stopped because he was wearing colors, unusual in light of high incidence of drive-bys and pressure from law enforcement. He is making a hand sign for the Compton Crips.

Detective Supervisor, Gang Enforcement. "But the chances of getting caught selling cocaine are low. The chances of serving time are even lower. Their role model is the all-American quick buck."

Gang members idolize violent men who've made quick fortunes. Their heroes are men like Al Capone and active gang members call themselves "gangsters." One Blood set calls itself the Crenshaw Mafia Gangsters to touch all bases. Through crack sales, gang members buy a life they could never have flipping burgers — a life that propels them, for however short a time, beyond the dreams of most middle-class Americans. They paste photos of their guns and money in leather-bound photo albums, which the police often confiscate in a raid. The albums are a travelogue of their cocaine deals, marked with provocative women, fistfuls of \$100s and an arsenal of guns.

Gang members are involved in trafficking, not as a gang per se, according to Fleischman, but as a little drug ring. When they've expanded sales beyond their neighborhood, they leave the gang and turf battles behind.

"They develop their own look with expensive clothes and gold," said Strong. "They have VIP status in most casinos in Las Vegas."

One way of telling how successful a dealer is, is by the size and type of his jewelry. If he wears a "Mr. T." starter set around his neck, he's "rich rolling."

"A silver Cadillac means they're not too big," Strong said. "Other emblems are the size of a gold dinner plate."

They have enough money to hang out with major sports figures, according to Strong, and they are tolerated because of the money they drop at parties.

One dealer has a battery-operated suit that flashes like a disco floor. Another was busted four times, and the least the police found on him was \$98,000.

Mid-level dealers pay cash for cars and may own a dozen. One guy had a restored 1957 Chevy convertible with a 14 karat gold nametag on the stereo. In one case, police reportedly found 137 pounds of cocaine and a walk-in vault with \$1 million in \$100 bills.

"We find \$1 million in cash, and when we order a pizza, we have to dig in our pockets to come up with enough money to pay for it," said Strong. "These guys aren't paying taxes. They never worked a day in their lives."

They are Ph.D.s in crime.

Crack houses are fortified with steel doors and iron grills on the inside of the windows. The windows have firing ports. Police have discovered houses with a secret tunnel dug down through a closet and under the house. The tunnels run 25 or 40

CRACK



ABOVE: L.A. County Sheriff's Department deputy frisks Grape Steet Watts gang member for weapons and drugs during raid on Watts area housing project.

yards up into another house to provide escape routes.

"They are so big they serve as a firing range," said Strong.

Dealers have digital scanners in their cars and houses that are turned to police channels. They have white t-shirts made into bulletproof vests, and their first shot is to cops' heads.

"You knock on the door with a .38 and a 16-year-old kid with a MAC 10 opens up," said Strong. "You can only go through a door so many times and be lucky."

On the night we rode in Newton, officers there raided an apartment in the Pueblo del Rio housing project looking for guns that may have been used to shoot at police. When they entered the family apartment — its furniture carefully slipcovered in plastic, they recovered a semi-auto 9mm MAC 11 and a S&W 9mm semi-automatic pistol, with two magazines full of Winchester Silvertips.

"Until crack came along, we saw only .22s and .25s or a *Saturday night special*," Paige said.

Now the list of weapons recovered in L.A. reads like an arms dealer's manifest: .45s, UZIs, .357s, MAC 10s and 11s, AKs, AR15s, a Mossberg shotgun, modified Mini-14s, a Thompson semi-auto carbine. It is rumored that two cases of hand grenades are for sale in Pueblo del Rio.

Police are increasingly the targets of gang violence. Two L.A. law enforcement officers were killed in 1988 in gang-related murders, one with an AR15. County-wide, there were 170 cases of battery to officers.

Nationwide, DEA personnel suffered more assaults in the last two years than in the DEA's 30-year history. Instances of kidnap, assault and torture have increased. Dead DEA agents are rumored to be worth a bounty of \$300,000.

The DEA is in the process of issuing submachine guns to its agents, according to Ronald Hollingshead — designed to shoot at very close range.

The L.A. County Sheriff's Department allows its deputies to carry a 9mm Beretta or S&W. They have gone to hollow point "controlled expansion rounds."

"It used to be a sacred grail that you never took a shot at a cop," said Fleischman. "Now they have more firepower than we do, including rounds that penetrate body armor and a car door."

But beyond the current threat is the bone-chilling fear of L.A. law enforcement that the gangsters of today are spawning a new breed of lawless children. That baby gangsters are growing up



believing its natural to have a machine pistol in the house.

"They have a deep and bitter hatred for any law but their own," said Paige. "We're society's watchdog and if a guy'll kill us, then everyone else is dog meat to him."

DIE YOUNG

If gang members live like gangsters, they also die young in gangland style slayings.

"By the time they're 25, they're either dead, over the hill or in prison," said Deputy Bob Rifkin.

Men who live to 30 are venerated as "O.G.s," Original Gangsters.

At the scene of one gang-style murder, police found eight expended rounds of 7.62x39mm ComBloc ammunition near the riddled body of a known gang member. Apparently, a gold car drove up alongside him and someone in the car shot him once, the police say with a 7.62mm AK assault rifle. When he fell to the ground, the car pulled alongside him and shot him several times in the legs and buttocks. The bullets exited through his abdomen.

In another incident, several gang members knocked on a man's door. They asked him what gang he belonged to. When he told them the answer, they went to the car and got an AK. They busted through his kitchen door shooting.

"Since 1986, the big rise in violence is related to dope," said Lt. Brantley. "I've been working gangs since 1970, and I've yet to see a murder where the gang member wasn't loaded. They always need alcohol or drugs. I've seen a lot of killings in 17 years. From my experience, a sober guy doesn't go out and try to shoot somebody. Even the hardcore gang members who you wouldn't think would care if they killed somebody have to booze up or drug up to get the courage to do it."

"I believe their attitude about life is different than ours," said Steve Strong. "They expect to die young, and so they do what they want while they're here."

"When a gang member dies, he's laid out in a penguin suit, and if he's a Crip, he'll have a blue bow tie and hankie. He'll be in a blue casket. Gang members go into the ground as gangsters. When they go down gangster-style, they're heroes."

UNORGANIZED CRIME

With the street slayings, the sophisticated weapons, and the



Members of Sur LOS, a traditional Hispanic gang in south L.A., throw signs for the camera.

crack that is being supplied to other states from California, there has been speculation that the street gangs may be becoming Organized Crime. For the most part, neither the LAPD nor the L.A. County Sheriff believe this to be true.

For one thing, the profits of street gangs are not being organized for the good of the gang.

"They have too much greed to organize," said Paige. "They are not their brother's helper."

Neither are there identifiable leaders, nor a formal structure of leadership.

"We looked at gangs from a quasi-military standpoint for organization," said Fleischman. "There is none."

"The leader is the one who has the gun," said Brantley.

Leadership lies at a higher level in narcotics distribution. It is a known fact that the Colombians control the cocaine traffic into L.A. and deal with high level dealers who have their own chains of command. The street gangs, according to law enforcement, are far below this level.

"They are being groomed and financed by other types of organized crime," said Strong. "At higher levels, dealers control and supply four or five gangs."

But at that stage, they are defined as dealers rather than gang members.

"They aren't highly organized, thank God," said Fleischman. "They outnumber us on the streets 10 to 1."

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

The solution to the crack/gang connection is no less complex because the gangs aren't organized. Law enforcement plays a part, although the valiant efforts of the individual officer or deputy aren't enough. According to Paige, the battle is being lost by numbers.

"That's where we're failing: manpower," he said. "CRASH began with 40 officers and six detectives when there were 6,000 gang members. Now, citywide, there are 60,000, and we still have 40 officers. We won't see any impact until we have enough people on the street to effectively handle the caseload."

Education is thought to be part of the long-term solution. Los Angeles has the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program where attractive, friendly cops council kids against drugs and gangs in the classroom. But the peer pressure of a gang is intense, especially when a kid is too frightened to walk to school. When the cops ridicule his brother or friends and haul them away. When gang members have nice clothes and cars, and he doesn't.

"Maybe this generation is lost," Brantley said, voicing the opinion of many officers and deputies we talked to.

Legislation passed in the last three years is growing teeth, albeit milk teeth. Police and deputies want tougher laws.

"A record still doesn't mean a thing," one deputy said. "They may get picked up six times before they serve any time. Or they get a drug diversion (sent to a drug treatment program). That's the funny thing. They aren't using, they're selling."

Stopping usage is part of the solution. Statistics show that school-age children are using fewer drugs, while people 18 to 34 are using more. Usage would be stopped by making drugs unavailable. But plugging the holes where cocaine drifts into the United States may be impossible. The number of acres under coca production has increased 600 percent since 1985 and the product is being fired into the United States through every port.

Or turning drug usage into a moral issue, with all those complex ramifications, may offer a solution.

"The American public has tried for 20 years to find a technical response to drug use — to excuse it on the technicality that you're doing your own thing or that drugs are bad for your health," DEA's Ron Hollingshead said. "I think we're turning to the moral issue that drugs are bad not because they are illegal, but they are illegal because they are bad."

Convincing America's white population to sit up and take notice is paramount to finding a solution, says law enforcement. Media coverage of street gangs has increased, but skeptics scoff that it was an election-year ploy. While the Hispanics and blacks killed their own, the murders were largely ignored by everyone but law enforcement until innocent white victims were killed. Crack is still considered a "black" drug, and probably will be until crack houses open in the suburbs.

"Not even my wife can understand," one gang specialist said.

No one quotes statistics yet, but law enforcement say they know that crack is finding increasing acceptability in the white community.

"It's bad news now," Brantley said, "but if it hits the college communities . . ."

White kids come into the area flashing cash," Paige said. "We stop them within two blocks of the buy and make them turn over the dope. They ask us, 'How do you know?'"

"I don't see anything that pleasurable, that cheap, bypassing the white community," Ron Hollingshead said.

While it's hardly a solution, both street gangs and street drugs seem to run in cycles. The Hispanic gangs preceded the blacks, and the new gangs, the gangs of the '90s, may have black, Hispanic and oriental members. Before crack made it big, PCP was the drug of choice. Now LSD is making a comeback under other names. And speed, or methamphetamine, has drug authorities alarmed. It is said to be cheaper than cocaine and produces a longer-lasting high. Just \$175 worth of chemicals can be processed and sold for \$32,000.

But would street gangs be able to market it? That is the question.

"We're shoveling sand against the wind," James Walsh said.

LAPD's Marc Fleischman agrees: "Gang violence is here to stay."

Watch for part two of the crack/gang connection, coming soon. Correspondent Morgan Tanner details how the Los Angeles dope gangs have spread their insidious influence throughout the Midwest, where they've already established a foothold. We'll tell you what to look for in your own community, as well as describe the experiences of a white, middle-class crack user. Don't miss this important follow up — crack may soon be overtaking your neighborhood! ✕

FATAL VISION

JOSE was in a buoyant mood as he and his seven brothers of the glorious revolution worked their way down the trail toward town and a night of celebration. This was their reward for catching the army patrol sleeping by the bridge. What fun they had hanging the puppet soldiers upside down from the bridge and cutting their throats and stuffing their genitals in their mouths. What a sight that was. Yes, the commandanté was very happy with them. They could just imagine the other puppet soldiers of the imperialists hiding in their barracks, afraid to come out, afraid to face the Heroes of the Revolution.

Yes, tonight they would slip into the capital under the very nose of the puppet army of the American pigs and celebrate. Jose was very proud to serve the revolution. It did not matter that he could not see his family anymore. He knew in his heart that his folks would one day be very proud of him, although now it broke his father's heart that he did not go to the Military Academy like his two older brothers and become an air force officer and fly the new helicopters. Well, they would be sorry for the way they had treated him. When the puppet government fell he would be a general in the People's Army and, just maybe for his mother's sake, he would see that his brothers were not shot. But, no matter, he had a *new* family now.

When they first went to the mountains, the commandanté had told them that *he* was their new father and the *revolution* was their *new family*. But all that didn't matter for the moment. Tonight, he and his friends were going to town. As they reached the cane fields at the bottom of Guazapa they could see lights from the small village where they would leave their weapons and catch a ride to the capital. "Hey, amigos, I hear there is a new movie playing at the cinema."

But Jose would not see the new movie or his next birthday. As they stepped onto the main trail going into town, eight shots rang out and eight headless heroes of the revolution fell to the ground. They had not seen the Hatchet Team 50 yards from them, or the IR (infrared) laser beams appear on their heads. For them the war was over. For the small group of camouflaged young paratroopers who were busy stripping the dead Gs of their weapons (eight M16s and one Browning Hi-power), a new phase of the war was just beginning. High technology had come to the anti-guerrilla war in El Salvador.

Anyone who has spent hours sitting in a night ambush site, where he could not see his hand in front of his face, has wished for the



ABOVE: Airborne sniper holds M16A1-mounted IR laser target designator author discusses in article. Wearing IR goggles, sniper need only track laser beam to target. Conventional sighting is not required. Although it *looks* like a scope, it is an IR laser projector. These devices were without any markings — they could be either sterile or prototypes — but author's guess as to manufacturer is Litton.

ABOVE: Snipers trained by author in January-February 1989 were issued A/N PVS-4 second-generation Starlight scopes. Claflin reports they consistently kept within a 12-inch square at 200 yards.



ABOVE: Ambush on Guazapa. A general purpose machine gun such as the M60 is handy for hosing down the kill zone of an ambush site, but for night ambushes, one-round kills with an IR laser night sight are even better.

Taking Back the Night in El Salvador

Text & Photos by Harry Claflin

ability to see what he is trying to shoot, or even better, to know he is going to *hit* what he is ambushing. As the eight Gs found out the hard way, the days of "mad minute" ambushes where everybody dumps one or two full-auto magazines into the kill zone while the M60 tries to hose down the whole site are in the past, thanks to the IR laser rifle sight and night-vision goggles. The IR laser beam cannot be seen by the naked eye even at night, but only through IR goggles. Properly adjusted, the IR laser sight puts a crisp dot of light at the precise point of aim. It's the red dot for sure shot — but its only visible through the goggles.

When I went to El Salvador in 1983 the only night-vision equipment I had really worked with was the Starlight scope we had in Vietnam. I had played around with the IR-reading night-vision goggles but had never used them in combat. As for the IR laser sight, I had never seen one before. Normally in the Salvadoran army the platoon commander is the only one who has night-vision goggles, and most of these are not taken to the field for want of batteries. This has improved over the years, but it is still not what it should be. The IR laser rifle sights spent most of their time in the supply room for the same reason. It would be a story in itself to analyze why their supply system doesn't work.

I first came across the IR laser sights when I was working with the recon platoon of the Airborne Battalion. Once, as we were getting ready to go on a night ambush, I noticed that one of the troopers had a strange looking device mounted on his M16. I asked him if I could look at it.

"Sure, no problem."

"Fine, what is it?" He explained to me it was a laser sight. I turned it on but could not see anything.

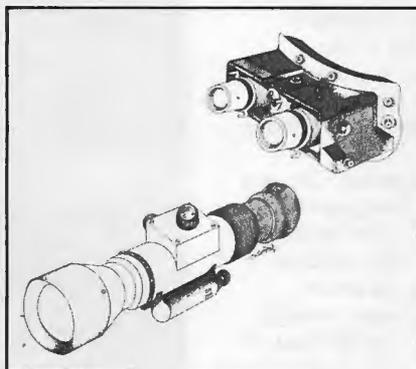
"NO, NO, sargento, we must go outside where it is dark." On the way out he handed me a set of night vision goggles to wear. Outside I put on the goggles and touched the switch tape on the side of the rifle. A beam of light hit the building across the street. Taking off the goggles, I tried it again. I could see nothing. Boy, was this *neat*. With the goggles back on I could see a guard down on the flight line about 200 meters away.

I pointed the rifle at him and hit the switch. The beam shot out and I was about six feet off. After moving the beam to the right and down, I had him. He never knew, but if I had been the enemy he would have been dead. I had been out several times on night operations with the recon platoon and had never seen the laser sights used before. I wondered why. Back inside I asked the lieutenant how many of the laser sights they had. He told me, and I replied, "No shit, how come you don't use them all the time?"

UW SPECIALIST

Writing from nearly 30 years' experience in unconventional warfare, much of it in Central America and all of it fighting communist insurgencies, Harry Claflin is well known to SOF readers. Claflin recently returned from yet another stint training government troops in El Salvador.

A new introduction to the El Salvadoran military is Litton's Night Vision Weapon Sight. Aiming is done through the sight by tracking a red dot on the target, visible through the IR laser goggles. Less than 11-inches long, the unit weighs less than two pounds and can be detached and used as hand-held surveillance device. Drawing by Jim Scofield



"We only have the one that you can hit anything with, and then only at very short range. It is off about a foot at 25 meters." The discussion ended, as it was time to go on patrol.

Sometimes I think rotten weather holds back and waits just for me to go on a night ambush. By the time we left the camp perimeter, a fine mist had settled in and the wind had picked up to about 20 knots. We planned to go about four clicks and set up our ambush sight overlooking a set of railroad tracks which came into town from the north. These tracks led into the poorer part of Ilopango, and were one of the routes the Gs used to get into town. To escape detection the lieutenant had chosen a route that took us down one of the many small creeks which run through town and are used as open sewers.

Over the years the creek had eaten away the soft ground until the banks were 40-100 feet tall, and steep. At a spot the platoon had used before, we slid down into the water. It was one of those fast little creeks that varies from boot-top to about belly-button deep,

with the bottom littered with everything humans have ever thought of throwing away. I had no doubt we would get to our ambush site undetected. No troops in their right minds would wade through this garbage pit to reach their objective. As we moved along the steep bank I kept thinking to myself, "If you slip and fall, there aren't enough antibiotics in the world to save your ass."

The wind had picked up and so had the rain by the time we crawled up out of the sewer. I asked the lieutenant how much farther we had to go, and he told me about 300 meters. Our exit point had taken us past the edge of town, and hopefully past any watchful eyes. I don't think we really had to worry anyway, because you couldn't see six feet in front of you. The only problem was the damned dogs. Everyone in the world knew someone was in the area; they just didn't know who. Sometimes I think a dog can hear a rat fart a half-mile away.

A little before midnight we were in position. The lieutenant had picked a place where the railroad tracks ran through a cut. We placed the claymores along the bottom of the cut, then climbed up on top. By this time everybody was really starting to get cold. There was no cover at all and the wind was cutting into us. We all got our ponchos out and prepared to make the best of it. The weather was beginning to take its toll. As soon as I lay down I started to shake from the cold and wet. This was going to be a long night.

By 0300 I couldn't feel my feet anymore and my legs were going numb. Not even a stray dog had come down the track, and I was starting to develop a very bad attitude. "Screw 'em all," I thought. "I ain't going on no more night ambushes. I'm getting too old for this shit. That dumb-ass lieutenant should have known there wouldn't be anyone out on a night like this. The damn Gs are a hell of a lot smarter than we are; they're not out freezing their asses off sitting in a stupid ambush site."

I had pretty much settled down to just feeling sorry for myself when the lieutenant came over and told me we were going back. Hot damn, about time! I started to get up and fell flat on my ass. The lieutenant helped me up and we slid back down to the tracks. After picking up the claymores we started back down the tracks toward town. It took about 20 minutes for my legs to start working again.

We stopped while the point man went ahead to check things out, and I asked the lieutenant if we were swimming the sewer back to the base. He said no; we were going to slip into town and become just one of the patrols that are in the village at night. We

Continued on page 76

AFGHANISTAN'S

Muj Morale and Mettle Open Road to Kabul

by Rob Schultheis

WE were less than four hours from Jegdeleg. I had just climbed out of a gully. Two mujahideen were 50 yards ahead of me, while the rest of the men and the pack horses were behind, in the floor of the ravine. Suddenly, an unearthly roar, like a Minotaur's cry, rolled down the canyon. I froze and watched as two MiGs, flying less than 70 feet off the ground, appeared, following the same ravine we had been traversing. The pilots saw me and tilted their wings for a better view. It was crazy. I could have hit them easily with a rock, a baseball, a football. If we had been friends, we would have probably been able to recognize each other. The pilots saw a lone Afghan, carrying a pack and wearing baggy native clothes, a Chitrali cap and a blanket. They flew on down the canyon and disappeared — just as the rest of the mujahideen and the horses emerged from the shadows of the gully.

I didn't know what to say. I was petrified, appalled. The muj pointed down the ravine where the planes had disappeared and laughed. "MiG, MiG," they said, mockingly. "Too much MiG Jegdeleg!" They laughed as if the Soviets and their imperial might were the silliest, most ridiculous thing in the entire universe. I was beginning to see the power, the secret strength of the mujahideen and the Afghan people. They are the kind of men you can kill but never, ever, defeat.

We were on a trail in the Safed Koh Mountains. Since the beginning of the Afghan war, the Safed Koh have been the geographic key to the survival and success of the anti-Soviet resistance. Abutting the "parrot's beak" of Pakistan that protrudes into Afghanistan southwest of Peshawar, overlooking the capital city of Kabul and the key towns of Jalalabad, Khost, Gardez and Pol-i-Alam, the Safed Koh range has been the most fiercely contested territory in the entire war. Today, with the Soviets (officially) out of Afghanistan and their Afghan communist allies on the defensive, this mujahideen "iron triangle" has become the staging area for what may turn out to be the climactic battles of the war, the final stages of Afghanistan's liberation.

I first traveled through the Safed Koh area back in the spring of 1984, in the bad old days of the war when the Soviet Union's unopposed air power made the mujahideen, indeed all Afghans, hunted animals in their own country. We crossed the border above Terri Mangal under cover of dusk, and traveled west. Our goal was the bombed-out village of Dobanday, a guerrilla stronghold of the edge of the Logar Valley.

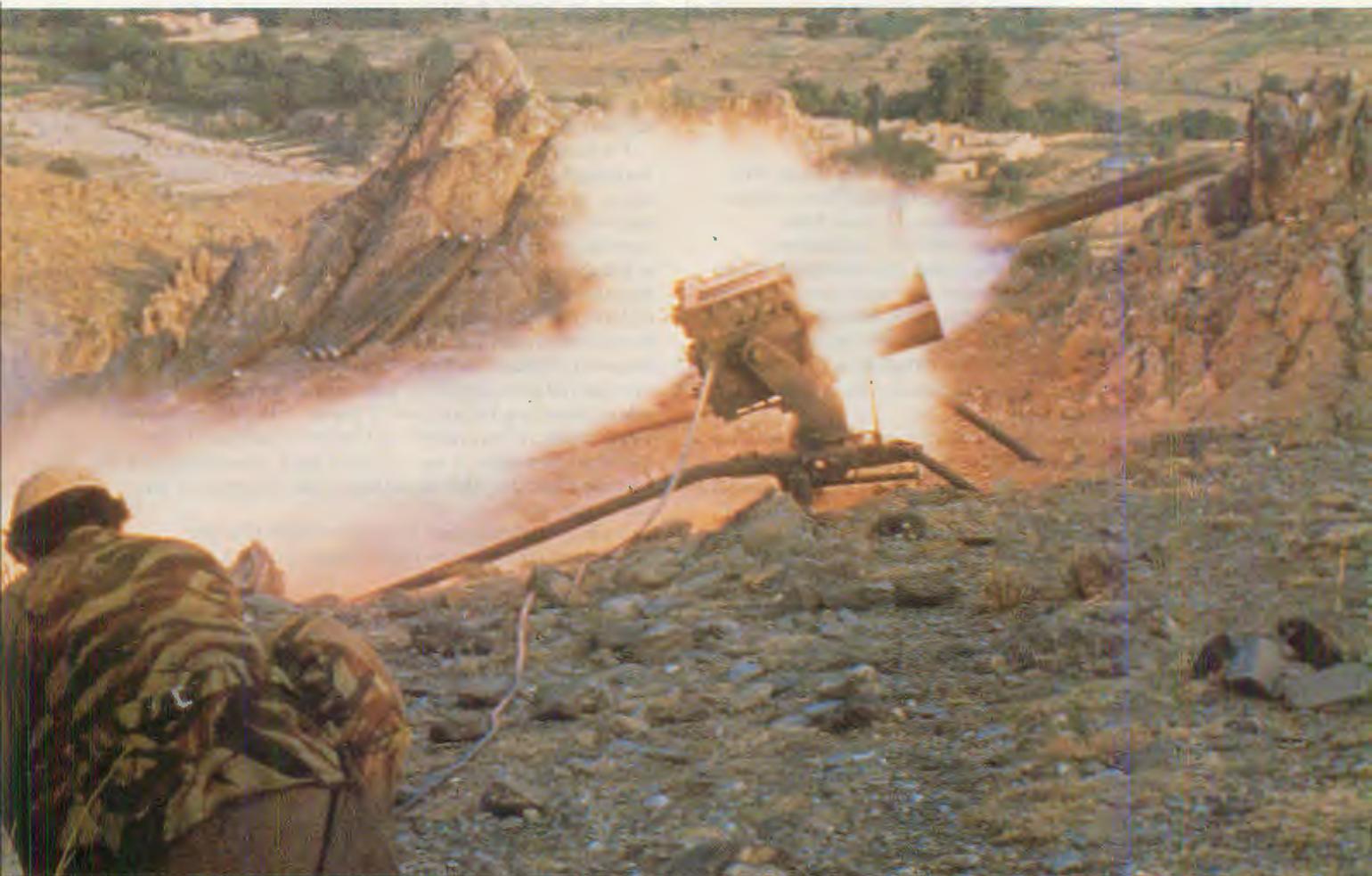
It took us two days to get to Dobanday, and all the way there we saw signs of the Soviet Union's overwhelming military superiority and the Afghan people's just as overwhelming determination not to yield or surrender. Under cover of night, huge guerrilla convoys of 500, 1,000, 2,000 men moved across the mountains toward the interior of the country. There were men lugging AKs, old Enfields, even museum-piece Martinis;



horses loaded with ammo cans, sacks of food, recoilless rifle rounds, RPG-7s; camels top-heavy with DShK "Dashika" 12.7mm and 14.5mm ZGU "Zigroiat" heavy machine guns, the mujahideen's pathetic anti-aircraft arsenal back in 1984. Some of these convoys were bound for the Soviet border, 17 or 18 days away. Teenaged peasant kids from Badakshan, Takhar, Kunduz, who had walked unarmed all the way to Pakistan,



IRON TRIANGLE



begged weapons from the resistance groups based there and were on their way home to fight.

It was a tough time. The big Soviet/Afghan army firebase at Jaji threatened many of the infiltration routes. At night, machine-gun fire, mortar and artillery shells and rockets lashed the valleys and mountainsides. By day, Antonov spotter planes cruised the skies looking for targets. Mi-24 gunships prowled in

Rockets from Chinese-made 107mm BM-12 headed down range. Photo: Mike Winchester

teams of twos and fours, and MiGs roared on their way to bash guerrilla bases, villages and towns. We passed through dozens of bombed-out villages, their fine adobe buildings shattered, their fields cratered, their elaborate canal systems in ruins. The Afghans were hanging on, through sheer will power, but it was a grossly unequal struggle.

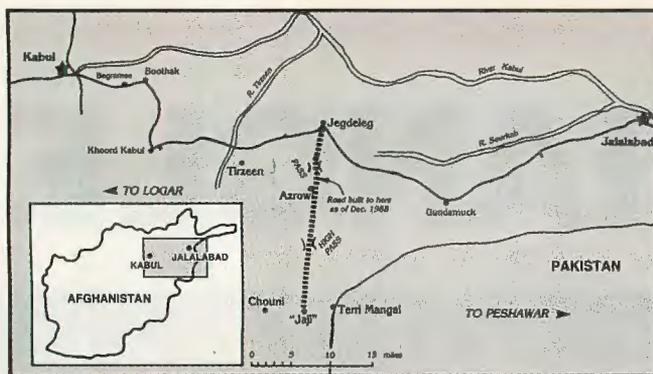
Dobanday was an important resistance center. Located in a deep canyon where the Safed Koh descended to the Logar Valley, it provided shelter for both local guerrillas and muj convoys headed further into Afghanistan. Like the rest of the Safed Koh country, though, it was under constant threat from Soviet and Afghan army attack. Heliborne Soviet commandos made hit-and-run raids on the place regularly and armored convoys attacked the lower reaches of the canyon every few months. The civilian population of Dobanday, which before the war had totalled more than 20,000, fled to Pakistan early in the war. The mujahideen, their wives and children safely in refugee camps in Pakistan, lived in the ruins of their ancestral homes.

Even by 1984 standards they were pitifully underequipped. AKs were rare. Most fighters toted battered old Enfields. There were no boots, no warm clothing, no sleeping bags, no radios

ON THE ROAD IN AFGHANISTAN

A Colorado native, Rob Schultheis is a widely traveled foreign correspondent who has filed reports for such diverse publications as the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Smithsonian* and *Mother Jones*. His first article for *Soldier of Fortune* ("Night Fight at Morro," May 1988) recounted a close brush with Soviet Spetsnaz commandos on one of his many treks through Afghanistan with the mujahideen.

Author, left rear, assists in medevac of wounded muj with 12.7mm slug in his head. In Peshawar, Kuwaiti surgeons extracted the round in a seven-hour operation. Photo: Bob Nickelsberg



Author's area of operations inside Afghanistan.

and no medicine. RPGs were scarce and so were mines. For antitank weapons, they sawed open unexploded Soviet bombs and rockets and used the high explosives to build Rube Goldberg mines or made Molotov cocktails. Anti-aircraft weaponry was even scarcer. I remember the excitement at one *marcaz* (camp) when news came that they were going to receive a double-barreled DShK machine gun from resistance leaders in Pakistan! Meanwhile, Mi-24 gunships cruised the canyon rims, insolently omnipotent. The guerrillas crouched in the shadows, pointing their rifles at the armored monsters above them, their faces tight with helpless rage.

They may have been under-equipped, but the mujahideen on the western edge of the Safed Koh were far from defeated. Along with the guerrillas in the Logar Valley, they still attacked convoys along the main Kabul-Gardez highway. The sides of the road were littered with burned-out shells of tanks, APCs and trucks — junkyard monuments to the dreams of glory of the

Soviet Empire.

Things were tough in the Safed Koh that spring, and they were even worse when I returned to the area the following winter.

This time I decided to go north, to Jegdeleg, where a commander named Mohammed Anwar Khan was causing lots of trouble for the Soviets along the Kabul-Jalalabad-Khyber highway. Jegdeleg was less than 25 miles from Kabul and less than eight miles from the main road. It's the place where 142 years earlier the Afghans massacred Brits in wholesale lots during the latter's disastrous winter retreat from Kabul (see "Afghan Death March," *SOF*, February '89). The Soviets had driven its 25,000 civilians to Pakistan early in the war, with their usual MiG and gunship bombardments. Still, Anwar and his mujahideen were hanging on in Jegdeleg, attacking the highway and the big hydroelectric plant at Soroobi.

I was traveling with a supply caravan this time, a dozen or so muj and maybe 10 horses, loaded with food and ammunition. As on the previous trip, Soviet air power was a constant menace. We crossed the border above Terri Mangal at dusk and traveled several hours in darkness before stopping for the night at a teahouse. It took us two more days to get to Jegdeleg, and we made it through basically by pure luck. The skies were full of Soviet aircraft: Antonovs, MiGs, gunships. At dawn, from Azrow, we watched jets make bombing runs on the *marcaz* of Brigadier Afghani, another famous commander, at Tirzeen, just over the hill from Jegdeleg. The last day's march to Jegdeleg passed through a killing zone of barren, coverless badlands where scores of mujahideen and refugees had been killed, mostly by gunships. It was an awful place. It was here that the encounter with the MiG described at the beginning of this article took place.

Jegdeleg itself gave me even more respect for the mujahideen. The place had been bombed until it looked like the

AFGHANISTAN THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: MARK URBAN

The war in Afghanistan has generated a mountain of pro-Soviet disinformation. After you've covered the war a while you get used to it. But on this last trip through Peshawar, I ran into a new piece of propaganda-disguised-as-journalism so outrageous, so blatantly biased, that it deserves mention. The book is *War in Afghanistan*, written by one Mark Urban and published by MacMillan Press in the United Kingdom in 1988. The author is identified on the back cover as Defence Correspondent of *The Independent*, as ex-subaltern in the 4th Royal Tank Regiment, a graduate of the London School of Economics and a sometime contributor to BBC Television.

Urban pretends to be an unbiased and apolitical military analyst, but he is wrong so often, always in a way favoring the Soviets, that the real purpose of his book is crystal-clear: to defame the Afghan resistance as a bunch of unworthy, incompetent losers, while glossing over Soviet atrocities and war crimes and picturing the Kabul regime as the inevitable future rulers of Afghanistan.

It would take forever to go over all the falsehoods in Urban's book. Here is a sampling:

On page 77, Urban writes of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, "The guerrilla parties entered an unscrupulous competition for recruits among these people. The refugee population is supported by international aid and by the production and traffic of heroin and other narcotics." First of all, as any experienced Afghan War correspondent will tell you, it isn't easy to become a mujahid. The major resistance parties choose their fighters carefully — religious fervor, character, courage, maturity, all are investigated — and

there have always been many more volunteers than there have been openings in the mujahideen "army." Secondly, most narcotics trafficking along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border is controlled by the Kukikhels and other Pakistani tribes who are, in fact, hostile to the mujahideen and who in fact receive arms and money from the Kabul government and the Soviets. Inside Afghanistan, most opium poppy production is in areas controlled by the Soviets and Kabul, like the plains about Jalalabad.

On pages 56-57, Urban mocks allegations of Soviet chemical warfare in Afghanistan and quotes a British journalist who calls such reports "a CIA fabrication." Alas, hundreds of thousands of people have seen the film, shot in the summer of 1980 by Dutch reporter Bernd de Bruin, of a Soviet Mi-24 gunship spraying an Afghan village with a cloud of yellowish smoke and de Bruin's picture of one of the dead victims. Pretty convincing evidence, I'd say.

Urban characterizes the mujahideen as "terrorists" on page 219 and accuses them of having "planted bombs in city streets, killed mullahs, destroyed schools, hospitals and mosques." Nowhere in the book are Soviet atrocities and war crimes honestly dealt with. Reading Urban after you've actually been in wartime Afghanistan is like finding yourself in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, or in Orwell's *1984*, where the truth is turned inside-out. The Soviets have killed over a million Afghan civilians since the war began; they and their Kabul quislings have executed tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of people at Pol-i-Charki Prison alone. Mujahideen violence toward their fellow Afghans is similar to the violence the French Resistance in World War II inflicted on Nazi collaborators, certainly no worse, no more brutal, and equally as justified. Traitors are never popular, especially in an occupied country.

moon, but it was still unconquered. One guerrilla pointed out a bomb crater at the edge of the river that had filled with water and said, "Russian aid project. Swimming pool for Jegdeleg. Thank you, Mister Brezhnev, Mister Andropov, Mister Chernenko!"

The place was under almost constant attack. Four days before, a column of tanks had rolled up the valley — the muj showed me the tracks — and left after losing two of their number to rocket-propelled grenades. Before they departed, the Soviets left booby-trapped toys (in this case bright red model trucks) on the ground — on the off chance there might still be some children in Jegdeleg to pick them up. A 14-year-old shepherd boy did. Luckily the device was defective and only ripped the flesh from part of his thumb and fingers. A young muj medic was cleaning the ugly wound daily, trying to save the hand from infection.

This time Jegdeleg was relatively quiet. The Soviets were bombing Tirzeen, closing in on it with armor and airborne commandos. In 1984, the mujahideen were relatively disunited and fragmented. The guerrillas of Jegdeleg didn't think of sending help to Brig. Afghani's beleaguered marcaz.

On our way back to Pakistan, my guide and I just missed running into the heliborne Soviet commando blocking force south of Tirzeen. The weather saved us. An early blizzard swept down out of the Hindu Kush, cutting visibility to less than a mile, dumping a foot or more of snow. Deprived of effective air support, the Soviets pulled out their commandos and called off their attack on Tirzeen. But a few months later a Soviet force captured Tirzeen, killed Brig. Afghani and scattered his resistance fighters.

Things got worse, much worse, in the Safed Koh before they got better. The period between 1984 and 1986, in fact, marked the nadir of the Afghan resistance as a whole. In August 1985 a combined Soviet/Afghan army force of some 25,000 men attacked the Safed Koh from three directions: the south, west and north. Mujahideen "safe areas" like Zhawar, Azrow and Wageza were overrun and vast supplies of arms and ammunition were destroyed. The Soviets drove all the way to the pass above Terri Mangal, the Pakistani border town from which probably 75 percent of all mujahideen supplies entered Afghanistan. One armored column swept through Jegdeleg from the south. Commander Anwar and his men scattered into the surrounding hills, outmaned and outgunned. The iron triangle of the Safed Koh had been pierced, broken.

The years 1985 and '86 also marked the height of the Soviets' heliborne ambush strategy. Spetsnaz commando squads, averaging from 40 to 60 men, were inserted by helicopter along supply routes, where they ambushed guerrilla columns and supply caravans. Again, Soviet success depended on technological superiority. With night scopes, suppressed assault rifles, radios and helicopters, Soviet commandos could annihilate the best and bravest mujahideen with relative ease. In the Safed Koh, trails like the ones to Dobanday and Jegdeleg became even more dangerous than before. If the bombing didn't get you, the ambushes would. Even the marcazes themselves weren't safe. In one incident, a massive Soviet heliborne force occupied Jegdeleg and then left. One group of Anwar's mujahideen returned to the bombed-out house that was their base and were killed by a commando squad left behind in the house to ambush returning guerrillas.

In retrospect, it is hard to believe that the mujahideen of the Safed Koh and the rest of Afghanistan survived that hopeless time; not only survived, but kept on fighting and attacking.

From his base at Zhawar, at the southern end of the Safed Koh, Commander Hawqani's guerrillas continued their siege of Khost. Between Soviet raids on his Jegdeleg base Anwar still attacked convoys on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway and the enemy base at Soroobi. From Dobanday and surrounding marcazes, mujahideen swept down onto the plains of Logar, knocking off convoys bound for Gardez and Khost, reinforcing the stubborn guerrilla forces of Dr. Faizullah at Baraki-Barak and Baraki-Rajan. And, despite everything the Soviets could



Mujahid at Chaunay garrison, Paktia Province, wearing Soviet helmet, magazine pouches for AK and shouldering 40mm Chinese Type 69 antitank grenade launcher. Photo: Ed Grazda

do, men and supplies continued to flow up the pass from Terri Mangal on the back trails of the Safed Koh and on to the Panjshir Valley, Bamian, Paghoan, and Ghazni, all the way to the borders of the Soviet Union itself.

During the last couple of years, since the mujahideen received Stingers, Blowpipes, BM-1 and BM-12 rockets and other modern arms, there has been a tendency among Afghan watchers to credit the turnaround in the fortunes of the Afghan resistance to technology; once the muj received the weapons they needed, they started winning. This is partly true but also partly false. The mujahideen probably wouldn't be winning the war today without Stingers and the other new weapons, but in a sense they had already won the war when the first of the new "super-weapons" began arriving in 1986-87.

I remember a conversation I had with Dr. Faizullah in Peshawar back in 1984. Faizullah was and is the head of *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society), one of the two most important Afghan resistance groups in Logar Province, just southwest of the communist-controlled capital city of Kabul. Under his leadership, Logar had remained resistance turf throughout the war. The situation could be likened to an enemy power occupying Washington, D.C., but still unable to secure Fairfax County a decade later.

It wasn't only what Dr. Faizullah said, it was his presence, the power of the man. Towering, with a huge coal-black beard and implacable burning eyes, he was a figure out of another age, the kind of man who smashes empires and topples false idols in the dust. If the men in the Kremlin could have heard him talking about the war, they would have started their withdrawal in 1984 instead of waiting until now. "The *shurovee* (Soviets) have many powerful weapons and machines,

but nothing else," Faizullah said. "They believe in nothing. That is why we will defeat them, even if it takes 100 or 500 years." His tone was absolute, as if he could see it all in a crystal ball. Perhaps he could.

Not all wars are won by the good guys, of course, but the Afghans are not only good, they are also a people with an almost supernatural strength, resilience and self-confidence. When they decided to fight the shurovee to the finish, they meant it. When the Stingers and the other new weapons finally did arrive, there was a fierce army of battle-hardened true believers waiting to use them.

I didn't return to the Safed Koh again until February 1988. In the intervening years I had visited Barikot, Asadabad, Jalalabad and other parts of the war zone. Things had changed completely since my last visit. Instead of sneaking across the border above Terri Mangal by night, I crossed in broad daylight in a mujahideen four-wheel drive Japanese pickup. The top of the pass was now a complex of guerrilla base camps and supply dumps dug into the mountainsides and ravines. Anwar now had a marcaz here, where his men gathered on their way to Jegdeleg from the refugee camps inside Pakistan.

The Soviets and Afghan army still had their base in the Chowni District of Jaji, only a few miles away, but it was no longer really a factor in the war. In May 1987, the Soviets, along with a dispirited Afghan army contingent, had mounted what would be their last grand offensive in the Safed Koh. As in previous operations, armored and airborne units, under heavy air cover, attempted to link up with the forces at Chowni and push to the border. This time the shurovee had suffered a crushing defeat. Anwar's Stinger operators and heavy machine gunners knocked the Soviets' helicopter cover from the sky and, without air superiority, the elite Soviet Spetsnaz commandos who spearheaded the operation proved no match for the battle-hardened mujahideen of Anwar, Hawqani and other veteran Safed Koh commanders. It was impossible to put together an accurate estimate of Soviet losses — the muj told of Spetsnaz units chopped to pieces in the night with Khyber knives, of other units breaking and running, fleeing the battlefield — but there were plenty of AK-74s and RPG-16 grenade launchers in evidence, taken from dead shurovee.

Now supplies flowed freely from the border into the country, and the enemy forces at Chowni were holed up like rats in a disused drainpipe, firing only when fired upon. I went along with some of the local muj, allies of Anwar's, on one of their regular hit-and-run harassment operations against Chowni. From a couple of hundred yards out, across a minefield, we blasted away with AKs, RPG-7s and a single faulty BM-1 that jammed after firing one round. It was bitterly cold and snowing hard. The enemy returned fire with several heavy machine guns. Bullets whizzed around us. A dug-in tank, probably a T-72, fired its big gun at us, missing by less than 30 yards. The muj kept on shooting until a young guerrilla named Chinaur went down, just as he fired his RPG. We dragged him into one of the shallow foxholes. It looked like a heavy machine-gun round had grazed his skull just over his right ear. He was semiconscious, seemingly in bad shape. As the other mujahideen began firing again, two guerrillas, photographer Bob Nickelsberg and I carried Chinaur away from the fighting, while someone else ran to get help. It took us nine hours to get Chinaur across the border into Pakistan in a pickup truck. The next day, Kuwaiti surgeons in Peshawar discovered a 12.7mm machine gun slug inside Chinaur's skull and removed it in a seven-hour operation.

That day's action at Chowni was small and inconclusive, but it was the kind of fighting that won the war for the mujahideen. They are relentless, like gravity or time. They are both the irresistible force and the immovable object. They would keep on attacking Chowni, for years, decades, centuries, until it was gone.

By the time I returned to the Safed Koh in November 1988, Chowni had fallen. The mujahideen had driven the enemy from the Safed Koh and all the Logar Valley had been liberated, except for Pol-i-Alam and the copper mine at Ainak. The nearest communist



Victorious mujahideen pose atop abandoned Soviet T-55 tank at Chaunay garrison in Paktia Province. Photo: Ed Grazda

positions were Khost in the south and Soroobi in the north, both under heavy siege.

Chowni had fallen that summer, and its capture was yet another sign the enemy's will was failing. If Chowni's defenders had wanted to, they could have made the base's capture a bloody business, costing hundreds of mujahideen lives. There were 17 separate strongpoints, with bunkers dug 20 feet underground, too deep for the heaviest muj weapons to reach. Fields of literally tens of thousands of mines covered every possible approach. But the Afghan army troops and their Soviet advisers pulled out anyway, inexplicably leaving behind enough intact weaponry to equip a small army: howitzers, scores of tanks, BTRs and BMDs, mountains of cases of small arms ammo. The muj were like kids in a candy store, hot-rodding around the border in APCs, dressing up in captured helmets and jackets ("Hey, look, I'm a shurovee!"). It was really beautiful and funny at the same time.

I spent a few days at Anwar's Jaji marcaz, watching the men and arms flow north toward Jegdeleg. There were still newer weapons now, wire-guided MILAN antitank rockets and big American surface-to-surface missiles the muj called "Secker-Cs." Anwar was using them to cut the Kabul-Jalalabad highway. The road had been totally closed for almost a month now and Soroobi, the last major enemy stronghold between Kabul and Jalalabad, was under serious siege.

It was a completely different war from the one in 1984. Now you could hire a pickup truck-taxi and ride almost all the way to Dobanday! A couple of times a day MiG-27s made desultory



bombing and rocketing runs, but from such high altitude they couldn't hope to hit anything worthwhile. The week before, they had tried coming in lower, and a sharp-eyed muj machine gunner shot one of them down. That seemed to have discouraged other MiG pilots for the time being.

Most impressive and amazing of all, though, was "The Road." Anwar had decided to build a road all the way to Jegdeleg, and by God he was doing it. What it really was, was a road to Kabul. When the muj finished it in the spring it would hit the main highway less than 25 miles from the capital, the "Road to the Final Victory."

Already the road crossed the high pass between Jaji and Azrow, an amazing engineering feat involving dozens of switchbacks whittled out of the steep mountainsides. I remembered hiking that pass back in 1984, slogging up icy snowdrifts past camels loaded with arms and ammo, skidding and falling. Jaji to Azrow was a grueling day, day-and-a-half march then. Now it was a three- or four-hour drive, done dozens of times a day by jeeps and pickups and heavy trucks carrying cargo and men. For 1,000 Pakistani rupees (about \$55), three or four people could rent a truck and driver and go from Terri Mangal all the way to Azrow, or vice versa, nonstop.

Azrow must have been lovely before the war. Sprawled along the confluence of two rivers, mountains on all sides, its tall adobe houses with their intricately carved wooden doors and windows were set among thick groves of trees and patchworks of fields. Now, in November 1988, it was in even worse shape than it was four years ago, the last time I was here. There had been a lot of bombing, and plenty of ground fighting, too — gutted rooms, toppled walls, exposed beams, craters. Total destruction. But life goes on, even here. On a hillside, a family

who had recently returned from the camps in Pakistan was rebuilding its house. The mujahideen were everywhere, of course, living in the depths of what were once their homes. On the mountainside north of Azrow, big bulldozers were at work, pushing the road over the next series of passes to Wageeza. From there it would be comparatively easy to extend it to Jegdeleg.

Anwar had a big operation going in Jegdeleg. More than a thousand mujahideen were gathering there, mostly from Jamiat, Anwar's party, but representing all the major resistance groups. Anwar was now in regular contact with commanders from Younis Khalis' *Hezbi-i-Islami* (Islamic Party), which with Jamiat constitutes probably 90 percent of the effective Afghan resistance movement. Khalis' commanders to the east were besieging Jalalabad, Afghanistan's fifth largest city, and they had already captured Torkham on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Everything east of Kabul was collapsing.

I was supposed to meet Anwar in Jegdeleg, but it wasn't to be, not this time. During the hike from Azrow to Jegdeleg I felt increasingly lightheaded. By the time we were approaching the last range of dry hills, maybe three more hours, I had a raging fever of the seeing-double and thinking-delirium variety. Malaria? Dengue fever? Who knows. I had never gotten sick on nine previous visits to Afghanistan, three before the war and six during, but I sure was now. I felt like hell.

I spent the next four or five days in a marcaz in a little bombed-out village, trying to feel better. The local muj fussed over me, singing me songs, drowning me in tea, offering me ancient, mysterious pills from their pathetic medical supply box. I took every antibiotic I had with me, but nothing helped. I was

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1/9 Cav Chews 'em Up Near Chu Lai



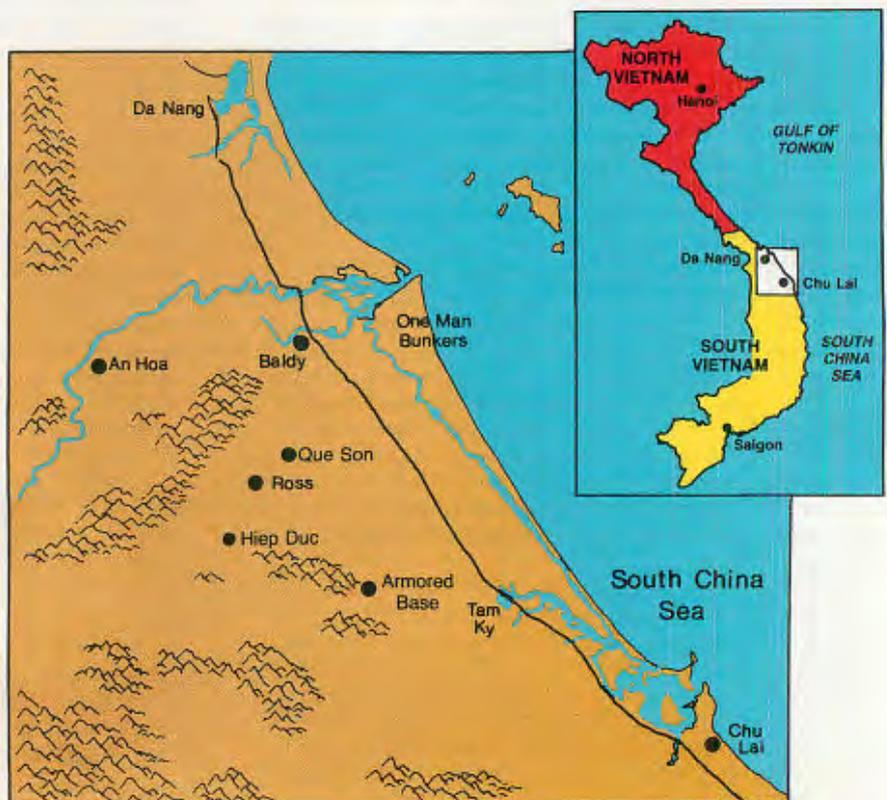
EASY PICKINGS

by Matt Brennan

TURKEY shoots. Our first low-level flights over the "liberated zones" were turkey shoots, as the scouts and gunships caught squads and platoons of North Vietnamese Army troops in the open, day after day. The NVA would stand frozen in their columns, gaping at the low flying choppers until our gunners killed them.

Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry (Aerial Reconnaissance) was the troop usually assigned to conduct reconnaissance for the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The troop's cutting edge was 11 heavily armed UH-1C gunships, 10 H-13 scout ships, four lift ships and an infantry platoon — the Blues — to which I was assigned. Maximum combat strength, if all ships were flying (they never were) was 100 men. They were distributed as 44 gunship crewmen, 20 scout crewmen, 12 lift crewmen and a Blue platoon with an authorized strength of 42 which rarely totalled more than 20 men.

The scouts and gunships flew in teams, with an H-13 on the deck and a gunship covering it from a slightly higher altitude. These were the "pink teams." Battles



Famous photo of Blues in An Lao Valley. Platoon Sergeant Wilkerson is first to jump from skid. Photo: U.S. Army

started by the pink teams were exploited by a landing of the Blues. While a more pure form of scouting (fixing locations and guiding larger units to the contact area) may have been the troop's mission when it arrived in Vietnam in 1965, by 1967 we were more concerned with killing enemy soldiers ourselves. Other units were involved only after it became clear that a fight was just too big for us to handle without some help.

The troop moved north from operations in the An Lao Valley in early October 1967. We were to scout for an Army task force called Oregon that was replacing the Marine infantry in the Hiep Duc-Que Son valleys northwest of the Chu Lai air base. We screened at various times for elements of the 4th Infantry Division, 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, 3rd Brigade of the 1st Cav, and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. As had happened during a similar arrangement in the spring of that year at Duc Pho, the line units took credit for some of the troop's kills and most of the captured weapons. Many of the helicopter sightings in the twin valleys were so large that line companies rather than the Blues were inserted to exploit them. The infantry platoon was kept busy securing downed choppers and engaging small units in relatively open areas, although one of the scout-gunship-Blue operations became the most successful cavalry raid of the Vietnam War.

The Que Son Valley was roughly divided into three zones when we arrived. There was a secure zone along part of the coast, centered around the Chu Lai air base. This was bordered by a contested zone that began just west of Tam Ky and contained a string of fire support bases. Further to the west were "liberated zones" which showed almost no evidence of the war up to that point. While the contested zone held half-destroyed villages and populated areas, the "liberated zones" consisted of green rice fields that were ready for harvest, and neat, populated villages that often supported NVA garrison companies.

The "liberated zones" appeared to be the most prosperous part of the valley for three reasons. First, they had the most fertile soil. Second, the farmers must still have been under the illusion that the communists would allow them to keep their rice fields as family holdings; communization would proceed only after the war was won, and the farmers were still unaware of this. The third

LEFT: Que Son Valley was roughly divided into three zones when Bravo Troop arrived: a secure zone along part of the coast (centered around the Chu Lai air base), a contested zone that began just west of Tam Ky, containing a string of fire support bases, and further to the west "liberated zones" which showed almost no evidence of the war up to that point.

factor concerned Marine operations in the region. The Marines had been occupied with fighting farther north, along the DMZ and west of Da Nang. In much of the Que Son Valley Marine operations consisted of raids, with little capability for prolonged operations near the western mountains. There were more pressing problems further north, so the villages appeared to have been left alone.

So they were unprepared when we first started low-level flights. No NVA unit in the Cav area further south would have dared to cross open rice fields in broad daylight, but this was a totally new form of warfare for these people. They would either stand frozen in their columns or simply lie down flat as the Scouts' gunships attacked them.

The turkey shoots gradually tapered off to individual kills and small fights as the NVA began using camouflage and avoided open areas in daylight hours. An important change came when they began moving 12.7mm machine guns into the valley, and their soldiers started shooting back, rather than staring up and waiting to die. The B/1/9 commander was shot down 13 times and our

Blues at Chu Lai. Note crossed sabers of Bravo Troop chopper. A Cav line troop company captured a directive instructing NVA not to shoot at choppers with crossed sabers on their noses and alert them to NVA presence in the area. Author kneels in lower right hand corner. Photo: Author's collection



NINTH CAV CHRONICLER

Matt Brennan served 39 months in Vietnam, including 26 months with the 9th Cav, the 1st Cav Division's recon squadron. He has published two books about his experiences, *Brennan's War* and *Headhunters*, both available through Presidio Press and Pocket Books. *Headhunters* is a collection of stories by 28 veterans. All royalties from the Presidio Press hardback edition of that book go to scholarships for the children of 9th Cav MIAs and KIAs. Mr. Brennan lives in Kansas, and is currently working on an expanded collection of 9th Cav memoirs.

chopper losses in general were quite heavy. We were operating on the valley floor and most of the downed choppers were recovered for repair. Because of our immediate medevac capability, men who were not killed outright could be flown to a hospital before the effects of shock set in.

Although our troop was supposed to have 25 choppers, we were down to two by 14 November 1967. We had lost 17 helicopters the day before in a fight with an NVA anti-aircraft battalion. The troop was brought back up to strength within a few days with borrowed choppers, and the Que Son Valley slugging match resumed. Probably as an economy measure, some of the reconnaissance flights were redirected to an area along the coast, southeast of a fire support base called Baldy. A hornet's nest was uncovered there in an area we called the "one-man bunkers." Here NVA replacements were brought in from the sea each night and spent the days in individual bunkers. These bunkers proved very good at engaging choppers with anti-aircraft fire. They were hard to locate and destroy, and it seemed to make no difference if they were; there were always more rifles waiting the next morning.

In the last week of November, a Cav line company captured a directive instructing the NVA not to shoot at choppers with crossed sabers on their noses (Bravo Troop's choppers). It was raining more each day, and either the weather or the directive was causing poor hunting in the Que Son Valley. Bravo Troop had killed about 700 NVA in less than two months, and the task force was taking a heavy toll as well. Targets were just not as easy to find as before.

Our best day was 5 December 1967. The platoon of Blues had not even left the armored base where we had waited for a mission since dawn, and all the troop's recon flights had killed only eight NVA. The pink teams were on "last light" missions around the Que Son Valley, and when they returned the troop would fly in formation back to Chu Lai.

Light was just beginning to fade when the platoon sergeant dropped the handset he was monitoring and shouted, "Let's go, Blue! On the double!"

The platoon rolled away from underneath the bellies and tails of the slicks, saddled up and climbed on board. We were airborne within a minute. The door gunner on each slick always briefed his squad on the mission. Ours said, "Somebody shot at the major's gunship in the Que Son Valley. Broke the gunner's arm. Major's mad as hell and wants the gook that did it." He didn't tell us that the major's gunners had already killed four NVA. I assumed that we were after one man. Blues on the other slicks were getting their briefings and may have known more than we did, depending on what their slick gunners had learned.

Our slicks dropped toward the ridges that separated the An Hoa Basin from the Que Son Valley. Gunships were rocketing a grassy knoll while a scout ship hovered over

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TANK BUSTERS



SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown examines MILAN during recent trip to Afghanistan. Brown was first western journalist to report that muj had received the MILAN. Photo: SOF staff

Muj Hammer Communist Armor With Euromissile's MILAN

by David Isby

A Soviet-built T-54 tank of the Kabul regime's army advanced slowly down the road, firing from short halts at mujahideen positions on the bare slopes known as Black Mountain. For years tanks had been powerful and fearsome foes for Afghan resistance fighters, but this time was different. Suddenly an explosion rocked the tank and stopped it dead in its tracks. The newest weapon in the mujahideen arsenal had made a successful debut — enter the MILAN antitank guided missile (ATGM).

The Afghan resistance's successful use of the high-tech Franco-German Euromissile MILAN (an acronym of its French-language description) has, despite the difficult conditions under which it has been used, demonstrated that the mujahideen are capable of effectively using just about every weapon. It has also shown the importance of the ATGM throughout the spectrum of conflict. Most important, it has provided the Afghan resistance with a powerful new capability that has the potential of denying communist tanks the use of the roads of Afghanistan, just as the U.S.-built Stinger man-portable, heat-seeking, surface-to-air

missile denied communist helicopters the use of the skies.

Through the optical sights of an ATGM launcher, a tank almost two kilometers away does not appear bold and distinct as it does in the black-and-white silhouette of a recognition manual. Even through magnifying optics, it looks like a camouflaged beetle, its movements difficult to anticipate, its outlines indistinct and obscured by the dust raised by its tracks. Moreover, tanks usually don't come singly, and those not hit will have their turn to hit back. If tankers see the missile coming, they can dodge or weave, or hit the firing position with high explosive rounds and machine-gun fire; the missile travels 200 meters in a second, the same time as it takes the tank to rotate its turret 17 degrees.

A duel between a tank and an antitank gunner has the same adrenaline overload as a high-noon Dodge City showdown, when each second spent getting metal on-target will determine who will be around to do it again tomorrow.

Once the gunner gets his crosshairs on the tank and is tracking it, he can fire. The

missile will automatically fly to wherever the crosshairs are pointing. The guidance mechanism generates corrections, tracking a flare on the tail of the missile, and automatically sends them down the two thin wires the missile unravels as it flies. Regardless of suppressive fire, the gunner must keep the crosshairs on the tank until the missile strikes home, detonating its shaped-charge warhead.

This sounds, and is, highly complicated, especially if the target is shooting back. But it can also be very effective: ATGMs can achieve a maximum hit potential of more than 90 percent.

The MILAN was first used in action in Afghanistan during June-July 1988, but it appears that the decision to supply MILANs to the Afghans was taken in early 1987. While all MILANs are made in Europe, the Afghans are not sure where the launchers and missiles came from. Probably a friendly Islamic nation provided them from its stocks, and Egypt has been suggested as a likely source. The number of MILANs in the resistance arsenal is not large. The initial batch was about 160 missiles and estimates of launchers range from 15 to 40. More may have been provided since then. In late 1988, MILAN launchers were in action throughout Afghanistan south of the Hindu Kush and, although overall numbers have been limited, the supply of rounds has so far been adequate.

A weapon such as the MILAN requires effective training for its gunners in courses that last several weeks. MILAN training was given to the resistance outside of Afghanistan in a friendly nation — not necessarily the same as the one that provided the missiles. The gunners achieved a high level of proficiency. This was due, in large part, to the fact that most of the gunners for the MILAN were selected from veteran RPG-7 gunners. These men were already used to the fundamentals of antitank warfare, including the noise of firing. Most importantly, they had demonstrated a willingness and an ability to hit tanks and get away with it. Some groups looked to other qualified manpower sources. The National Islamic Front of Afghanistan, one of the Peshawar-based resistance parties, uses ex-army officers to operate its MILANs, because the latter are familiar with modern

weapons.

MILANs first reached in Afghanistan resistance hands in early 1988. There were problems initially because many of the rounds, when tested, proved to be life-expired. However, these problems were detected and ironed out before the missiles went into action.

MILANs were not first given out exclusively to the *Hezb-i-Islami* parties of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Younis Khalis, as were the Stinger SAMs when they first arrived in 1986. Rather, the limited numbers of MILANs available were spread throughout the Peshawar-based parties.

By mid-year, the Afghans were finally ready to take the MILAN into action. MILANs were present, but not fired, when the Kabul-Jalalabad highway was cut in July, in conjunction with heavy rocket attacks against Jalalabad. But once it became apparent that Jalalabad was not going to fall quickly, as some Afghans had believed, the MILAN had to be fit into a new battle plan. The MILAN would supplement other antitank weapons in blocking the roads of eastern Afghanistan, making any communist garrisons east of Jalalabad (including those in the Kunar Valley) untenable, harassing Kabul regime forces as they withdrew, and, finally, cutting the road between Kabul and Jalalabad.

It was in achieving these objectives that the MILAN saw its first use, at Black Mountain in Nangarhar province during July 1988. MILAN teams from *Jamiat-i-Islami* and *Hezb-i-Islami* (Khalis) were both in action and the new weapon was a tremendous success. At about the same time, Engineer Homayni, a *Hezb-i-Islami* (Khalis) Nangarhar Province commander, used the MILAN in action. *Jamiat-i-Islami* MILANs were also introduced to the Kunar Valley. The reported results at first sounded like traditional Afghan exaggeration, but they were soon confirmed. Of the first 23 MILAN rounds fired, the Afghans scored 19 hits, each yielding a destroyed tank, BMP, APC, or five-ton truck. This despite the fact that in Afghanistan the MILAN is so rare that there is almost never more than one available for use at a given point, unlike in Western armies where two MILAN teams are used at a time for mutual support.

Soon, MILAN operations were progressing. In September, another *Hezb-i-Islami* (Khalis) commander, Sahibzada Amanullah, took a MILAN team into action as part of an attack against a regime convoy moving down the Kunar Valley, from Chaga Sarai to Jalalabad. The Afghans claimed three tanks, one APC and four trucks destroyed. MILANs were used by Palawan Mohammed Anwar, a *Jamiat-i-Islami* commander who operates in Kabul Province, in his attacks on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway in October. At least two tanks were knocked out by MILANs. Soon afterwards, National Islamic Front of Afghanistan forces took the MILAN into combat to cut the same stretch of road in an operation led by Rahim Wardak, their senior military man. Askold

Kruskhelnycky, a journalist watching the operation from the high ground, wrote in the London *Sunday Times* of 6 November: "A Soviet-built T-54 tank on the road 2,000 ft. below, about a mile to the east, sent a shell crashing into our position . . . the tank then began firing on the mujahiddin artillery on the peak above, scoring a direct hit on a group manning a mortar . . . It was not until the next day that the tank was knocked out by rocket-propelled grenades and a MILAN . . ."

Despite this, some Afghans remained unconvinced about the MILAN. Hadji Abdul Haq of the *Hezb-i-Islami* (Khalis) and the most important Afghan commander in the area around Kabul, has not used the MILAN but is familiar with it.

"MILAN was used in Black Mountains, in Kunar, on the Kabul-Jalalabad road," he says. He is not impressed with the weapon, "... [it is] . . . not very effective. The MILAN is mainly a flat area weapon, and in Afghanistan there are mountains on both sides of roads. Mostly made for Europe or desert. It could be [due to] training problems."

However other Afghans, including those in Abdul Haq's own party, do not agree.

Mohammed Es Haq, political officer of *Hezb-i-Islami* (Khalis), confirmed his party's use of the MILAN east of Kabul and in Nangarhar, reporting the missiles "have done good work." General Yahya Nawroz, senior military man of the *Harakat-i-Inqilabi* party of Nabi Mohammedi, "has had good reports" on MILAN. The general reports his mujahideen have used it with "excellent effectiveness." But at the end of 1988 there remained few MILAN launchers in Afghanistan: "Only two or three with *Harakat*." To make up for the lack, the general reports that some of his mujahideen make use of British-built Shorts Blowpipe SAMs as ATGMs, using them against armored vehicles since the communists no longer fly within range of them. FaridJan, the *Harakat* commander in the Zadron Valley of Paktia Province, has knocked out three armored vehicles with three Blowpipe rounds.

But the most significant use of the MILAN so far was in the fighting around Torkham during November 1988. At the easternmost edge of Afghanistan, Torkham

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THE MILAN ANTITANK GUIDED MISSILE

Designed and built: FRG, France

Year of adoption: 1972

Missile length: 755mm

Missile diameter: 116mm

Missile weight, with container: 6.7kg

Weight of warhead: 2.98kg

Maximum velocity: 200m/s

Range:

Maximum: 2000m

Minimum: 25m

Armor penetration: 550mm



Euromissile's MILAN antitank guided missile gives Afghan resistance the potential to deny communist tanks the use of roads of Afghanistan, just as U.S.-built Stinger surface-to-air missiles denied communist helicopters use of the skies. Photo: SOF staff

A second-generation ATGM, similar to the U.S.-designed TOW and Dragon, the MILAN missile carries a shaped-charge warhead. Each "bird" also contains booster and sustainer rocket motors, guidance system gear and infrared tracking flare. It is stored in a

launch tube that fits directly onto its man-portable tripod-mounted launcher, on which there is mounted a control panel, sight, ground command guidance gear, and power supply. A two-man crew is required, and extra ammunition carriers are often used.

MILAN is a substantially bigger weapon than the U.S. Dragon, with a corresponding weight penalty. But it has a range twice that of the U.S. weapon and can use the MIRA thermal imaging night sight, although this has not been supplied to the Afghans. The MILAN can also be used with the gunner prone, unlike the Dragon. Its missile is faster in flight, minimizing exposure time. Because the MILAN missile is launched from its tube by a piston, it has less of a backblast to reveal the firing position than the Dragon.

MILAN shares some of the limitations of the Dragon. The designed minimum range has proven hard to attain in service and, in actual use, the minimum range of the MILAN can be as much as 300m. Neither of the shaped charge warheads of the two ATGMs can penetrate the latest Soviet main battle tanks and both are vulnerable to being defeated by reactive armor (not yet used in Afghanistan), although improved warheads are being developed for both missiles.

MILAN's guidance system is semi-automatic, with infrared missile tracking gear and with a wire command link, mounted on the tripod.

MILAN is used by armed forces of France, West Germany, Great Britain, Chad, Belgium, Turkey, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Syria, Egypt, and Somalia.

TRAGIC ERROR OR COVERUP?

Case Anything But Closed On USS *Liberty*

Photos Courtesy USS *Liberty* Veterans Association

Editor's Note: When we first started Parting Shot our concept was to set aside one page in the magazine for articles or long letters that would enable us to bring to the attention of our readers topics which just wouldn't fit within the framework of our regular columns, departments and features. As much as possible we also wanted to reserve Parting Shot as a sort of sound-off section for our readers. We decided that, within reasonable limits, we would allow readers to expound opinions in Parting Shot with which we didn't necessarily agree; and to run Parting Shot commentaries without extensive fact-checking, because when it comes to reader commentary facts are less important than perceptions. We assumed those "contrary" Parting Shots would elicit some controversy and generate reader interest and letters.

Which is like saying it's a bad idea to kick over a hornet's nest.

Although the attack on the Liberty is almost 22 years in our past it still clearly gets the blood boiling. The second Liberty Parting Shot, authored by Thomas Berger, which essentially defended the Israeli "accidental" version of the event, triggered an unmatched Flak response and some of the letters were certainly provocative. Because we received so many letters — all expressing the opinion that the attack was deliberate — we elected to run portions of them in an expanded Flak feature.

The volume of mail also led to our obtaining a copy of James Ennes' Assault On The Liberty. Ennes, an officer aboard the Liberty who was wounded in the attack, is the historian of the USS Liberty Veterans Association (Dept. SOF, Box 169, Cavour, SD 57324). After the attack and especially since his retirement from the Navy in 1978, Ennes has ferreted out enough evidence

from official Navy records, Israeli sources and eye-witness accounts from Liberty survivors to build a very damning case.

Ennes' argument that the Israelis knew exactly what ship they were attacking is convincing.

That in itself is troubling, but Ennes' accusations of failure to support the Liberty during the attack and subsequent coverup by the US Navy and American government are more so. The Navy and government moved at flank speed following the incident to cover up the decision that had placed the Liberty in harm's way, a whole series of communications failures that contributed to the incident, and the Navy's unpardonable failure to come to the defense of the ship during the attack. Jets were launched from American aircraft carriers to go to the defense of the Liberty but they were recalled while the ship was still under attack, probably by then Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, according to Ennes. After the ship limped to Malta the Navy conducted an inquiry of the conduct of the crew during the attack but did not deal with the more important issues of "Was the attack deliberate?" and if so "Why did the Israelis attack the Liberty?"

There was no real investigation then, nor has there been one since.

SOF's opinion is that there should have been one then and even though too much time has passed to probably reach an undisputed finding today, there should still be one.

We should allow no nation to attack American military forces without a full, complete and public investigation into culpability on the part of the attacking forces and incompetence on the part of our military and political leaders.

Sirs:

There has never been a fair and accurate accounting of the USS *Liberty* incident. The so-called "court of inquiry," which was hastily convened, listened only half-heartedly to the testimony. It seemed a determination regarding intent was made prior to convening and the board was simply "going through the required motions." Testimony of key witnesses was totally ignored, and those who were petitioned were well rehearsed in what was to be said.

Robert McNamara told Congress on 26 July 1967, "It was the conclusion of the investigatory body, headed by an Admiral of the Navy, in whom we have great confidence, that the attack was not intentional." The *Liberty* court of inquiry took two days to make a decision. Contrast this to the *Stark* inquiry which lasted eight months.

Speculation regarding the attack can be twofold, and we don't disregard your assumption, Mr. Berger. You deserve your opinion, however wrong it might be. It is the opinion of many learned people, including Dean Rusk [Secretary of State at the time] and former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas Moorer, that the attack was intentional. Intentional to me means premeditated. "The *Liberty* was only 14 miles off the Sinai coast and far from the Sixth Fleet to which it belonged," says Mr. Berger. Berger also says that Mordechai Hod, former Israeli air force chief, stated that no planes were sent on reconnaissance of the ship prior to the attack. The ship was overflown 13 times from 0600 to 1245 local time, according to the ship's log.

During a video-tape interview for Thames Television of Great Britain, in 1986, Pinchas Pinchasy, naval liaison officer with the Israeli air force, reported to naval headquarters in Haifa that a Navy vessel operating in the southern command had been identified as a U.S. intelligence-gathering vessel. This was at 0600 on the morning of 8 June 1967. After consulting with *Jane's Fighting Ships* and using the hull markings, the ship was identified as the USS *Liberty*. The duty officer at naval headquarters, Haifa, Avraham Lunz, states that at 0800, shortly after he took over the watch, he placed a tower on the battle control table which identified *Liberty*. At approximately the same time aboard *Liberty*, the watch was being changed and the oncoming officer of the deck, James Ennes, noted that the 5x7-foot steaming ensign displayed on the gaff was tattered and dirty. He ordered it replaced with a new flag. The ensign was hoisted and now flew proudly, unfurled, in 12 knots of breeze. The appropriate notation was entered into the ship's log. Throughout the morning, as the number of overflights increased, the crew topside found it comforting to see the flag flying. There would be no question regarding the identity of their vessel. These men knew, too, that a fresh coat of paint blanketed *Liberty* and the hull number, GTR-5 painted on the bow, was easily visible to aircraft.

Berger adds insult to injury when he states, "according to testimony of the crew members, in the investigation which R.R. Fraser says never took place, lack of wind before the attack would have made it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize the American flag." First, Fraser never says there was no investigation. He says, "no one inside the Navy would publicly support the *Liberty* survivors' repeated calls for an *in depth inquiry*." Additionally, no crew member of the *Liberty* ever testified that the flag wasn't flying due to lack of wind. I'll gladly submit sworn affidavits from dozens of men who saw the flag flying.

Berger says "the *Liberty's* location, far south (just off the Egyptian-Israeli border) was hardly an optimal or logical position for monitoring activities on the northern border with Syria." Quite the contrary, radio wave propagation, or the method in which radio waves are sent out, differs from radar. Radar is a line-of-sight transmission, where a signal is sent out and an image is returned electronically when the signal interprets a disturbance. Radio waves are continuous, the distance they travel determined only by the power of the transmitter, and they contain intelligence, like music, news broadcasts and dots and dashes. The signals lose power as they travel and the amount of loss is determined by any obstructions they might encounter such as buildings, the ground, etc. Salt water happens to be a great medium for the propagation of radio waves, so they travel great distances. The operational area for *Liberty* was pre-determined because this location would provide optimum listening to a larger radius than would be possible in another location, like say 30 miles outside Haifa.

Berger says, "the idea that Israel 'simply botched' a plan to sink the ship with all hands is ludicrous." After nearly eight hours of reconnaissance, a game plan was established. Israel knew *Liberty* was virtually defenseless. The only thing that disturbed the IDF was the presence of a massive array of antennae, which put *Liberty* within seconds of a worldwide communications network. They never doubted their military capabilities and felt a concentrated attack by certain IDF units would be sufficient to eliminate *Liberty*. Speculation has it that the many overflights were necessary to

One Israeli reconnaissance aircraft which repeatedly overflew *Liberty* during early morning hours of 8 June 1967, prior to attack.



Israeli Mystere jet passes over *Liberty* during bombing and strafing runs. Barely noticeable is 10-inch hole in stack (in shadow, behind railing) from AP rocket — one of 821 such rocket and machine gun holes.

correctly identify each transmitting antenna. By destroying the antennas during the initial attack, the only defense would be gone. *Liberty's* window to the world would be shut.

At approximately 1330 Tel Aviv time on 8 June 1967, jets were dispatched to conduct the low-level destruction of the USS *Liberty*. The aircraft were not diverted from important military targets in Egypt as Mr. Berger suggests. The attack, which began at approximately 1400, lasted for nearly one hour and 15 minutes. The first wave of jets approached from forward of *Liberty* and, as planned, placed a rocket at the base of each of *Liberty's* transmitting antennas. Joe Meadors, signalman, was responsible for the ship's flags and noticed that after the initial attack, the number two starboard halyard that housed the ensign had been blasted away. Along with Russell David, they braved the ferocious assault and successfully raised a 9x13-foot holiday flag up the number four port halyard. The one thing that couldn't be anticipated, nor stopped, was the ingenuity of people who suddenly find themselves targets and are fighting for survival. *Liberty* sailors in the radio room pieced together enough serviceable equipment to send a message that would alert the Navy to the predicament of *Liberty*. An emergency connection patched the one operable transmitter to a hastily repaired antenna. Within a few seconds, an acknowledgment of *Liberty's* mayday was sent by a radio operator aboard the *USS Saratoga*. The Mirage jets continued firing rocket, cannon and machine guns at *Liberty*. They were followed by slower Mystere jets dropping napalm, then motor torpedo boats firing torpedoes. During the entire time the torpedo boats were in attack formation and went into actual torpedo runs. The *Liberty* continuously flashed via lamp "a U.S. Navy ship," but was ignored. After deliver-

ing what they thought was the final blow, the torpedo boats began circling the ship firing machine guns at the life boats which had been dumped over the side when the order "prepare to abandon ship" was given by the captain. This, in essence, ensured no escape for the wounded and remaining crew, and virtually sealed their fate. Finally, helicopters carrying fully armed, combat ready troops arrived. Then, almost as suddenly as they appeared, the helicopters left in the same direction they came from.

To harbor thoughts that this was a case of mistaken identity is naive. It probably ranks as one of the longest, most elaborate and well orchestrated mistakes in the annals of military history. I suggest you re-evaluate your thoughts, Mr. Berger, and gather substantial data before you allow opinion to overwhelm logic. The last thing that Mr. Fraser called for is a full scale investigation by our Congress into the *Liberty* incident. As an American, you should be equally interested in why 34 Americans died for no obvious reason. The wanton loss of life far outweighs the cost of such an investigation.

Robert Casale,
USS *Liberty* Veterans Association
Hicksville, New York

Sirs:

Mr. Berger is intent on either misinforming the general public or has his head up his ass. The reason I say this is Mr. Berger used only statements from the party in question, the Israeli government. That's like asking Hinkley — "Did you want to kill the President?" If he responded "no," then I suppose Mr. Berger would chalk it up to an accident.

I have read every article on the *Liberty* that has crossed my path, and I am convinced that there was definitely a coverup by both countries involved. For what reasons only a certain few know for sure.

I want this response in Loving Memory of: Carl Christian Nygren, CSN, USS *Liberty*, June 8, 1967.

Jon A. Nygren
Andes, New York

Sirs:

The investigation referred to by Berger was the official naval inquiry conducted by Admiral "Ike" Kidd, which only inquired into crew performance during the Israeli attack. Admiral Kidd supports a thorough investigation of the reason why 34 young American sailors were obliged to die and 171 others were obliged to suffer wounds which have lasted until this very day for some victims.

There are many distinguished Americans who believe that the Israeli attack was deliberate and premeditated. They include Dean Rusk, who was Secretary of State at the time of the Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty*, George Ball, Under-Secretary of State in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, Clark Clifford, Admiral Arleigh Burke, General Marshall Carter, Richard Helms, Admiral Thomas Moorer and many others too numerous to include in this limited space.

William Gartland
Rio, Wisconsin

Sirs:

Following is the information that Mr. Berger gives for the events, followed by what really happened.

Israeli forces were advised that there were no U.S. vessels within 100 miles.

FACT: When asked for the location of any U.S. vessels along the coast, the U.S. made no reply.

The *Liberty* resembled the Egyptian ship *El Quseir*.

FACT: The *El Quseir* bore a highly superficial resemblance to the *Liberty*, but looked even more like the majority of ocean-going tramp steamers. There were also several distinct differences between the two. The *El Quseir* was half the length of the *Liberty* and lacked the latter's extensive antenna array. The location of the superstructure island, a primary recognition feature of merchant ships, is widely different than that on the *Liberty*. The *Liberty* also bore distinctive hull markings.

The *El Quseir* was also hardly a candidate for any wartime expeditions. A 38-year-old transport that could carry 400 hundred men for short distances, the ship was in such poor shape that it would soon be sold for scrap.

As *El Quseir* had a known top speed of 14 knots, it is incomprehensible that, when the *Liberty's* speed was first reported to be 30 knots, the ship could have been identified as the *El Quseir*.

Israel had no motive for an attack.

FACT: The *Liberty*, in her position, was capable of receiving transmissions from throughout the war zone, including the invasion sites. Information gained by the *Liberty* could be used to determine the morale, tactics, procedures, discipline and military objectives on both sides. Other information gained could help to forecast other battles at later times.

Also, it was made known to Israel that the

United States would only provide support if she acted in self defense. And thus far, everything that Israel had done was labeled as such by Israel.

With Jordan agreeing to a cease-fire, and Egypt effectively put out of the war, the world was screaming for peace. But Israel still wanted the Syrian heights. Could Israel still make the attack and not be seen as the aggressor? Not as long as the *Liberty* was there, so it had to go.

As the parting note, the caption under the photo gives the wrong date. May 2 was when the *Liberty* left port, and she was attacked on 8 June.

Mike Hagen
Santa Rosa, CA



One of three Israeli motor torpedo boats (behind ladder) prepares to make a run. Six torpedoes were fired during this incident, approximately 35 minutes into attack, which lasted about an hour and 15 minutes. Twenty-five men in research compartments were killed instantly when torpedo struck *Liberty's* starboard side just below water line, leaving a 40-foot hole.

Sirs:

The article was a collection of misstatements, inaccuracies and false "facts." I believe that this article was a slight to the Americans who fought and died on that ship, and it deserves a response.

Berger claimed that no reconnaissance flights were sent over the *Liberty*. Actually, between 0600 and the attack, the *Liberty* log reports overflights by a recon configured C-119 with Israeli markings six times. Israeli Mirage III jets overflew the ship twice hours before the attack — at 1000 the jets radioed back to base that the vessel was American. Berger claims that the aircraft in question were attacking Egyptian targets, but while C-119s have been used as gunships, they don't serve in an attack role in a high-threat environment.

Other facts speak toward the attack being deliberate. It was a coordinated attack with air and naval units. Preprogrammed jamming pods carried by the Mirages were set for U.S. Navy distress frequencies (they could not jam all radio frequencies). Blinker light messages to the torpedo boats were fired at. The Israelis are not prone to making mistakes of this magnitude, and it is unreasonable to assert that they did.

The most unfortunate part of the entire incident was that there was no real investigation. While a court of inquiry was held,

the investigation into the two-hour attack took only four days. By contrast, the attack on the *Stark* took 90 seconds; the investigation, eight months. The deck log was not consulted, and *Liberty* crew members were not interviewed. Hrankowski says that "the investigation was a sham. There were no facts or findings that were legal." No complete investigation has ever been conducted.

There is no memorial to the men of the USS *Liberty*. The incident has been swept under the carpet in Washington. This incident, in which 34 Americans died and the *Liberty's* captain was awarded the Medal of Honor, is still the subject of lies, propaganda, and official insensitivity. The truth deserves to be told — and its source must be the Americans involved in the incident, not the IDF. Our men deserve no less.

Michael W. Pietrucha
USS *Liberty* Veterans Association
Fair Oaks, California

Sirs:

Berger unwisely chose to write his piece from the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee's 1989 edition of "Myths and Facts." SOF should be more careful in printing propaganda instead of truth and facts.

Berger quoted McNamara as saying the Israeli attack was not intentional. If you remember, McNamara was the Secretary of Defense who stated in 1965 or 1966 "We can see light at the end of the tunnel [Vietnam]." I have a letter from then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk which states: "I never believed the Israeli attack on the *Liberty* was other than deliberate and I told the Israelis that." The only trouble with that is he did not tell the American public that until recently.

Gip D. Oldham, Jr.
Dallas, Texas

Sirs:

Mr. Berger implies that a thorough investigation of the attack on the *Liberty*, where 34 men were killed and 171 wounded, was completed by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara between 8 June 1967 and 26 July 1967, a period of 48 days.

The investigation indicated that the attack on the *Liberty*, a comparatively unarmed surveillance ship, was not intentional. Yet a U.S. naval court of inquiry stated that the attack was "probably deliberate."

It is interesting to note that four F-4B Phantom jet fighters from the USS *Saratoga* were sent to aid the *Liberty* but were recalled by special orders of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

Mr. Berger, I am sure, would not believe that the state of Israel would spy on its strongest ally either. [Then perhaps] the Pollard affair and the subsequent promotion of the Israeli colonel who sponsored it was not done intentionally but merely through a case of mistaken identity. After all "in the heat of an all-out war tragic mistakes are not only possible but readily understandable,"

and with the lack of wind it would have been difficult if not impossible to recognize the American flag over our nation's capitol.

Jeffery S. Dissell
Bridgeport, California

Sirs:

One of the questions that was not raised by Thomas J. Berger in his Parting Shot essay that appeared in the March issue of SOF is why were U.S. naval aircraft sent to help the USS *Liberty* during its ordeal of fire and death, courtesy of the State of Israel, suddenly recalled?

If those aircraft had arrived to assist the USS *Liberty* in its moment of agony, at least 25 American lives would undoubtedly have been saved, for 25 young American lives were abruptly ended when an Israeli torpedo fired from an Israeli torpedo boat made a successful hit. Captain Joseph M. Tulley, Jr., U.S.N. (Ret.) is particularly interested in having the question posed above answered, as he was the commanding officer of the USS *Saratoga*, the aircraft carrier from which the would-be rescuing aircraft were sent.

It is my hope that readers of SOF will support a thorough congressional inquiry and not be satisfied with the hopelessly inadequate naval inquiry that was hopelessly restricted in scope. Perhaps we can then really put the entire USS *Liberty* affair to rest.

Robert E. Nordlander
Menasha, Wisconsin

Sirs:

I have been a faithful reader of SOF since your first year of publication and could not possibly consider myself well-informed without it. Which is why, given the expertise of your staff, I was astounded by Parting Shot ("Case Closed On USS *Liberty*" by Thomas J. Berger) in the March 1989 issue.

"Case Closed" is a piece of revisionist disinformation worthy of the pages of *Pravda*. . . except that in *Pravda* they have the decency to prefix their sentences with the words "As is well known" whenever they are about to unload a real stinker.

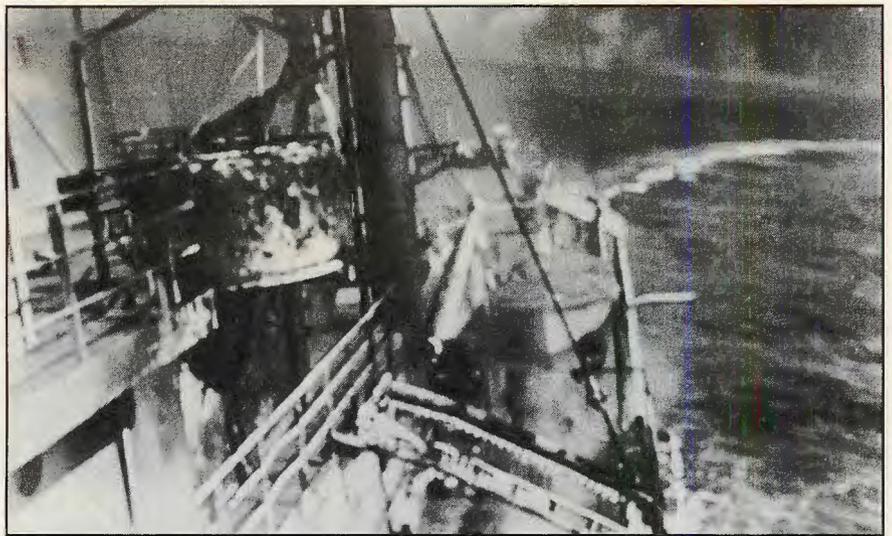
I particularly resent your allowing Berger to impugn Mr. Fraser's intent with the odious accusation of "anti-Israeli motives."

Has it finally come to this: that any criticism of Israeli policies or actions is going to get the critic tarred and feathered with the brush of anti-Semitism? Shame on Mr. Berger, and shame on you for letting him get away with it. I implicitly trust SOF to give me the straight skinny and let the chips fall where they may. Including, of course, editorial comment.

But I also expect such editorializing to be grounded in the facts.

As to my bona-fides: I was a journalist who covered the war at that time. Which proves nothing in itself beyond suggesting that I had trustworthy sources of information not available to the general public.

Now, from here on I am operating on



***Liberty* executes hard turn to port in attempt to avoid Israeli torpedoes. Notice charred superstructure resulting from napalm attack.**

memory alone, and at the range of two decades my memory is fallible by definition, but what follows is to the best of my ability what I know to be true.

Let's begin with the statement that "even our own government did not know where the *Liberty* was. . ."

Bullshit. In the first place, the *Liberty* was on loan to the NSA and was where it was to spy on everybody, not just the Israelis. We knew exactly where *Liberty* was, thanks in part to the fact that she was being shadowed by one of our nuclear submarines; this submarine, incidentally, filmed the entire attack via periscope photography.

Admittedly, once the balloon went up, elements of the Sixth Fleet began steaming all over the map because of contradictory reports about the ship's location.

There has been abundant testimony that Old Glory was in fact waving in the breeze that day. . . the ship was under way, after all.

But let's go on to the statement that "the *Liberty* admittedly bore a resemblance to the Egyptian ship *El Quesir*."

Bullshit, squared. Anyone who claimed that he couldn't tell the one from the other would also confuse a giraffe with a hippopotamus. The markings of U.S. ships are distinctive in the first place, and in the second place, the profiles of the two ships are alike only to the degree that each has a hull and a superstructure.

The fallibility of memory admitted, I nonetheless remember being told at the time that the Israeli attack was cancelled (and the *Liberty* reprieved) only because one of the attacking aircraft was piloted by an American-born-and-raised Israeli who had an attack of conscience and, perhaps, patriotism.

The position of the *Liberty* was entirely extraneous to its secondary mission, which was to serve as an active link for data being transmitted by a U-2 that was even then flying over the battlefield. The U-2's mis-

sion was the pinpointing of nuclear warheads that U.S. intelligence suspected were being deployed at the express command of General Moshe Dayan. And it was Dayan who personally gave the order to attack the *Liberty* with foreknowledge of the ship's identity.

It was Dayan also who ordered the Israeli air force to send a fighter plane to maximum altitude to launch a missile at the U-2, knowing that though the U-2 was well beyond the combined range of fighters and missiles, it would send a message to Lyndon Johnson and DoD.

This particular ploy, I was told at the time, is known in military circles as "shoot and miss" and more often than not has the desired effect.

Mr. Berger concludes that if Israel had in fact done what it is accused of doing, it would be indicted for stupidity and incompetence. Ergo, it never happened.

In point of fact nations great and small have done incredibly stupid and callous things from time to time and then lied about it until the jig was well and truly up. Only God and the Heavenly Host are exempt from this principle.

Israel, surrounded by enemies and virtually in a condition of permanent military alert, is no exception. It is one thing to be guilty, it is quite another to flaunt your guilt and then dare the only friend you've got to do anything about it. The Pollard case is merely the latest example of this attitude, and you can bet the rent money that it won't be the last.

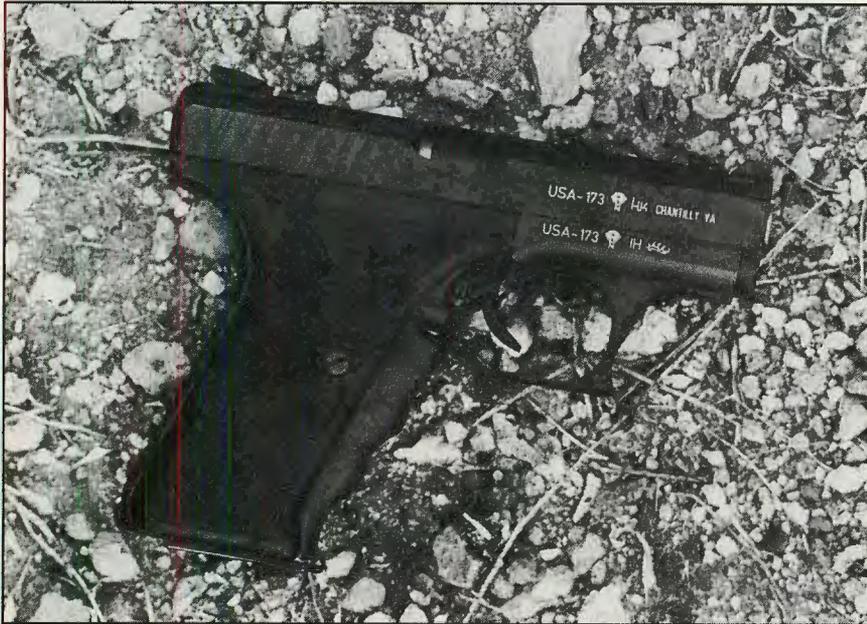
As an American, and as a Christian, I support without reservation the right of Israel to a secure existence guaranteed by defensible borders, and if tomorrow Mossad should slit the throat of the nasty little sodomite who heads the PLO, I will be among the first to cheer.

Beyond that, I endorse our continued military support of the nation of Israel.

But an alliance is a two-way street, and the First Commandment of international comity is "Thou Shalt Not Screw Thy Friends."

Roger Rohn
Rolla, Missouri

H&K P7K3



ABOVE: H&K's new P7K3 has the highest accuracy potential of any pocket pistol and, like the entire P7 series, a faster lock time than any other semiauto handgun.

LEFT: Excellent human engineering, including a bore axis low to the hand, assists the P7K3 in delivering high first-shot hit probability.

The Beemer of Bellyguns

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

THEY'RE called pocket pistols, yet no professional pistolero would carry one in his pocket. Sometimes he'd carry it in an ankle holster, maybe in a shoulder holster, and often enough in a belt holster, but never in his coat or pants pocket to shift about and endlessly alter the angle of presentation during the drawing cycle.

Their salient feature is supposed to be compactness; their greatest defect, a caliber of rather anemic potential. Yet, in spite of this latter shortcoming, it has been estimated by *Jane's* that more than 65 percent of all semiautomatic pistols manufactured since 1900 have been chambered for the supposedly pathetic .32 ACP cartridge. No pistol cartridge, of any caliber, guarantees "instant incapacitation" and we shall, in due course, examine the actual wound ballistics of the .380 ACP.

The 9mm Kurz (9x17mm) round, as the .380 ACP is called in Europe, has always been the most popular pocket pistol caliber within the continental United States. And, it is with this chambering that Heckler & Koch has introduced its new P7K3 (Kaliber 3 — in reference to its three chamberings) pistol, although it can be easily converted to either .22 LR or .32 ACP (7.65x17mm semi-rimmed).

The original, and by now justifiably

famous P7 pistol, chambered for the 9mm Parabellum (9x19mm) cartridge, was nothing if not radical in design. It operates by means of gas-retarded blowback. This operating principle was first employed in the German World War II Volksturm-gewehr (People's Assault Rifle — VG1-5) and in an experimental Swiss pistol developed by Eidgenossische Waffenfabrik, Bern. Much later, it was also used to operate the now almost forgotten Steyr-Daimler-Puch 9mm Parabellum GB pistol.

Most often gas pressure is used to unlock and open a firearm's action. Reversing this principle, H&K designers used a gas-actuated piston to hold the breech closed until chamber pressures dropped to a safe level. After the cartridge is fired, gases are diverted into a cylinder below the barrel. Acting upon a piston attached to the front of the slide, they retard the rearward movement of the slide.

When chambered for weaker cartridges, such as .380 ACP, .32 ACP or .22 LR, a gas delay or locked-breech mechanism is not required and this feature has been omitted from the P7K3. Conventional unlocked blowback is the method of operation. The gas cylinder under the barrel has been replaced by an oil-filled, piston-type buffer assembly which absorbs perceived recoil as

the slide's frontpiece impinges upon this ingenious assembly. No other handgun on the market possesses a recoil-arresting buffer of this kind.

However, the P7's unique hammerless, "squeeze-cocker" trigger mechanism remains in place on the P7K3. When the squeeze-cocker's hinged lever, located on the grip's front strap, is depressed with a force of approximately 15 pounds, the firing pin is cocked rearward by a sheet metal transfer bar attached to this cocking lever. The firing pin's rear end protrudes from the slide and serves as a cocking indicator. Approximately 1¼ pounds of pressure are required to keep the cocking lever depressed. When the trigger is pulled, the transfer bar is drawn downward, permitting the spring-loaded firing pin to move forward and strike the primer with the fastest lock time (the time it takes from completing the trigger pull until the firing pin strikes the primer) of any pistol on the market. After the pistol has been fired, the striker-type firing pin is recoiled automatically as long as the cocking lever remains depressed. The trigger pull weight on SOF's test specimen was a spongy 3½ pounds. Wide, and with eight grooves, the trigger provides an excellent purchase for the finger. When the cocking lever is released, the firing pin moves forward to the uncocked position. Thus, all P7 series pistols may be carried safely with a loaded chamber.

If a round fails to fire, the cocking lever can be released and squeezed again to recock the firing pin. When released, the cocking lever makes a loud clacking sound as it pivots forward. If you wish to uncock



the P7K3 somewhat more silently, you can manually retract the slide about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, then release the lever and let the slide go forward under control.

All of this requires proper training on the part of the operator. Any pistol's ultimate safety is the shooter's trigger finger. To avoid an accidental discharge, the finger must be kept off the trigger until target acquisition is complete. As this is a basic rule, experienced personnel should have no trouble quickly and safely mastering the squeeze-cocker trigger mechanism.

Of all-steel construction, the P7K3's slide and frame are milled forgings. The slide's frontpiece, with a hole through which the fixed barrel passes during the recoil cycle, is integral with the slide forging. The breech-face firing pin housing has been robot-welded to the slide's interior. The total weight, empty, is slightly more than 28 ounces and this is comparable with many alloy-frame pocket pistols. Overall length is 6.4 inches and the height is 5 inches. This also compares favorably with competing designs, such as the SIG-Sauer P-230 and the Walther PPK. Yet, the P7K3 looks chunky and somewhat unwieldy. This is a function, no doubt, of its thickness, which approaches almost 1.2 inches in the grip area. Exterior finish is matte black. Both the rear strap and the cocking lever are lightly stippled. Overall, the craftsmanship displayed in the fabrication of the P7K3 reflects the traditionally superb quality associated with all Heckler & Koch products. All the more surprising to observe prominent milling marks on the trigger guard of our test specimen.

Although there is a lanyard ring at the heel of the magazine well, a rather superfluous feature on a pistol of this category, the P7K3 leaves little to be desired with regard to human engineering. Grip-to-frame angle is an excellent 110 degrees. The trigger guard is squared off and grooved in accordance with the current fetish for such

nonsense. If you employ the proper Weaver hold, you will just ignore this ergonomic nonsequitur.

In spite of its grip-to-frame angle, the eight-round, single-column detachable box magazine is positioned almost vertically to the barrel's axis. This enhances feed reliability, even with bullets of unconventional configuration. The magazine well is slightly beveled to improve the speed of magazine insertion.

The magazine catch/release is located exactly where it belongs — directly to the rear of the trigger. It's also ambidextrous. Empty magazines fall smartly away when released and they are, in fact, actually propelled downward by the catch/release mechanism. After the last shot has been fired, the slide is held to the rear by a spring-loaded, sheet metal slide stop which is pivoted upward by a bent on the plastic magazine follower. After insertion of a loaded magazine, just squeeze the cocking lever and the slide will fly forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it. When the cocking lever is depressed it pivots a bar with a hooked projection against a small sprocket wheel in the frame that, in turn, grabs the slide stop and pivots it downward. If desired, the slide can be pulled manually to the rear and released to fly forward in the normal manner. P7K3 magazines, with sheet metal bodies and floorplates, are easily disassembled, and should be every time the pistol is cleaned.

The black synthetic grip panels are heavily stippled. They provide a secure grip, yet, unlike rubber, the hand can be shifted quickly if the initial grip was incorrect. To gain the points required for import approval by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), the left grip-panel has a thumb rest, which apparently indicates a "target-shooting function" for the firearm. Southpaws need not fret, as an extra left grip-panel without this protrusion is included in the factory box. However, unless

the proper technique is used to remove the grip panels, they will remain forever in place. To remove them, first remove the grip-panel retaining screws. Then, lift the top front corner of the panel away from the frame. Maintaining slight outward pressure, rotate the panel down and forward off the frame. To replace, slide the panel on from the front and snap in place.

Synthetic, adjustable rear sights are another condescension to the BATF's silly import factoring system. This sight must be drifted in its dovetail on the slide for lateral corrections. Turning a plastic pin, slotted at each end, raises or lowers the upper portion of the sight for elevation adjustments. Once more, H&K has provided a more substantial alternative as a steel rear sight, adjustable for windage only, is included. It's easy to pick up the front sight blade as the rear sight's open square is 0.16-inch wide. P7-series sights have three white dots, one on the steel front sight (retained to the slide by a roll pin) and two on the rear sight. They look spiffy under the calm, controlled conditions prevailing on a target range. But, this is not a target pistol and on the street, under stress, when a flash front-sight picture is all that counts, they are meaningless. Fortunately, these white plastic dots can be removed from all P7 steel sights and easily replaced with Trijicon self-luminous sights. I recommend their installation on all P7 series pistols. For further information on Trijicon sights, contact Trijicon, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2130, Farmington Hills, MI 48333; phone 313-553-4960). To reduce glare, the top of the P7K3's slide, between the sights, has a modestly raised rib with eight longitudinal grooves. The sight radius is a generous 5.5 inches.

As is prevalent with most blowback-operated pocket pistols, P7K3 barrels are fixed and do not move during the recoil cycle. All three are 3.8 inches in length with H&K-pioneered polygonal bore cross sections and a twist of the proper rate for each of the respective calibers. Chambers are not fluted. The barrels are retained on their frame housing by a notched spanner nut. A hooked spanner wrench is provided for barrel removal and exchange. To convert from .380 ACP to .32 ACP only another barrel and magazine are required. Conversion to .22 LR requires another slide assembly as well. The .22 LR barrel has a floating recoil chamber reminiscent of that found on the Colt Service Model Ace .22 LR conversion kit. A stop cam on the floating chamber rides in a 0.2-inch notch in the frame. To change barrels, unscrew the locking nut and withdraw the barrel out the rear of its housing. Insert the new barrel from the rear and install and tighten the locking nut. Do not overtighten.

Fieldstripping the P7K3 is even simpler than changing the barrel and approximates the procedures used to disassemble most fixed-barrel, unlocked blowback-operated pistols. Remove the magazine and clear the pistol by retracting the slide. Move the slide forward into battery under control. Depress



P7K3 pistol, fieldstripped.

H&K P7K3 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:**380 ACP, as issued; .32 ACP and .22 LR conversion kits available.
- Operation:** Unlocked blowback with recoil arresting, oil-filled buffer. Semiautomatic. Hammerless, squeeze-cocker trigger mechanism.
- Feed:** Eight-round, detachable, single-column, box-type magazine.
- Weight, empty:** Approximately 28 ounces with magazine.
- Length, overall:** 6.4 inches.
- Height:** 5 inches.
- Thickness:** Approximately 1.2 inches.
- Barrel:** Polygonal bore cross section with a twist of the proper rate for each of the respective calibers.
- Barrel length:** 3.8 inches.
- Sights:** Fixed front blade with a single white dot; open, square-notch (0.16-inch wide) rear with two white dots. Steel rear sight adjustable for windage zero only; synthetic rear sight adjustable for windage zero and elevation — both supplied. White dots can be replaced with Trijicon self-luminous sights.
- Finish:** Matte black.
- Furniture:** Black synthetic grip panels with heavy stippling; both thumb-rest and plain left grip-panels supplied.
- Price:** \$881 with two magazines and spanner wrench; .22 LR conversion kit with slide, barrel, two magazines and reamer, \$428; .32 ACP conversion kit with barrel and two magazines, \$183.89.
- Manufacturer:** Heckler & Koch GMBH, Dept. SOF, 7238 Oberndorf/Neckar, Federal Republic of Germany.
- U.S. Distributor:** Heckler & Koch Inc., Dept. SOF, 21480 Pacific Boulevard, Sterling, VA 22170.
- T&E Summary:** Highest level of reliability; three-caliber potential; feeds any bullet configuration; highest accuracy potential of any pocket pistol; fastest lock time of any semiauto handgun; excellent human engineering overall; high first-shot hit probability; expensive.

the spring-loaded slide-locking button on the left side of the frame, at the rear. Retract the slide and lift the rear end off the frame. Push the slide forward and off the barrel. Remove the recoil spring. To reassemble, place the recoil spring on the barrel with its front end inside the slide's frontpiece. Put the small protrusion on the bottom of the frontpiece into its channel on the frame. Pull the slide back completely. Press the slide downward and let it snap forward onto the frame.

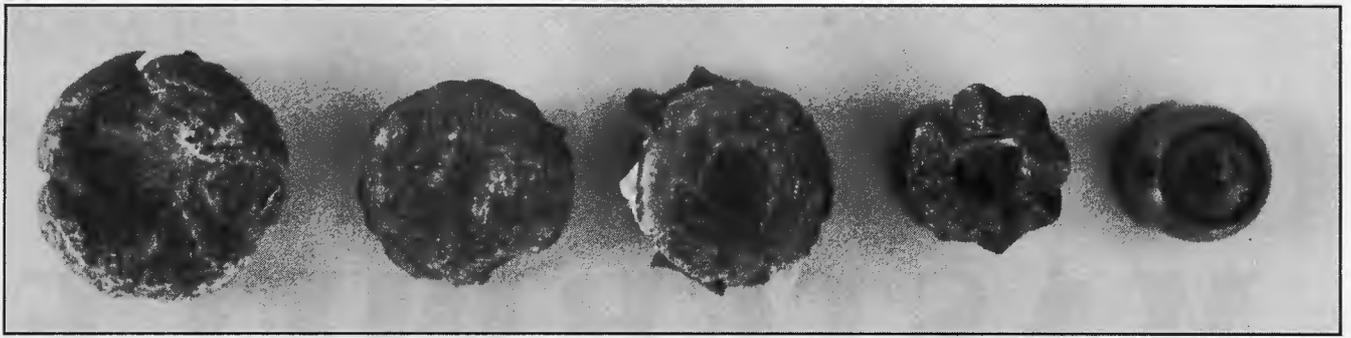
If you want to remove and clean the firing pin assembly, the slide must be attached to the frame. Depress the cocking lever until the end of the firing pin is even with the rear of the slide. Press the firing pin's slotted bushing all the way forward and rotate it 90 degrees to the right. Depress the cocking lever completely and withdraw the firing pin assembly. To reinstall, insert the firing pin assembly into the slide until the bushing is just barely inside the slide. Rotate the bushing 90 degrees to the left until it snaps into place. The rimfire striker is wedge shaped and the centerfire strikers are round. Do not interchange them.

On occasion, the piston protrusion of the oil-filled buffer should be checked. A notch on the end of the barrel nut's spanner wrench serves as a gage for this purpose. When the piston protrusion is less than the step on wrench, the buffer unit should be exchanged.

No small-arms ammunition produces more fouling than .22 LR and the floating chamber in the P7K3's .22 LR conversion kit will often seize in the barrel after no more than 50 rounds. When that happens it's not easy to remove it from the barrel for cleaning. There's no alternative but to work it loose with the spanner wrench and twist and turn until it comes out of the barrel. A reamer is provided to remove fouling from the barrel's chamber guide and the spanner can be used to scrape carbon deposits from the exterior of the floating chamber.

SOF's test and evaluation of the P7K3 was extended over a period of months and included firing thousands of rounds in calibers .380 ACP and .22 LR. Reliability was nothing short of astounding. There were no stoppages of any kind in caliber .380 ACP, no matter how unconventional the projectile configuration. Rimmed .22 caliber cartridges are well known for their feeding unreliability in all small, non-target type pistols. The very first .22 LR cartridge we attempted to chamber in the P7K3 was canted too high at the nose end in the magazine and stubbed against the top of the chamber face. After that, all rounds of this caliber also fed and fired without stoppages throughout the test cycle.

The unique oil-filled buffer reduced the perceived recoil in .380 ACP to that of a cork-shooting popgun. In fact, all the test personnel noted that perceived recoil was somewhat greater in caliber .22 LR, even when firing standard velocity ammunition such as Winchester's T22. For training purposes, that's exactly what we want. The



bore's axis is low and close to the hand. As a consequence, muzzle flip was almost imperceptible. Because of its perfect grip-to-frame angle, the speed of target acquisition leaves nothing to be desired.

As a result of all these attributes, plus the fixed barrel, its 3.8-inch length, polygonal bore cross-section and long sight radius, the P7K3 exhibits the finest accuracy potential of any so-called pocket pistol ever produced. No one appreciated the mushy trigger, but at 15 meters this pistol will consistently dump eight rounds of .380 ACP into a ragged 1-inch hole. A group dispersion of such small size is incredible for a pistol of this type. Let's not forget that most fights with a pistol will take place at less than seven meters.

Furthermore, because of its unique trigger mechanism, the P7K3's first-round trigger-pull weight is no greater than succeeding shots. This enhances the first-shot hit probability and accuracy to a level far superior to the competing double-action designs. Shot placement is an overriding consideration when you don't have the power of a larger caliber. While I still think it's prudent in most cases to aim at the torso's center of mass, in the hands of experienced operators, the P7K3 will deliver accurate head shots when called upon to do so. I would not subject a Walther PPK fired double-action to this task.

But, exactly what is the wounding potential of the .380 ACP cartridge? Is it as marginal as many have insisted? SOF conducted extensive wound ballistics research on this caliber using the methods developed by the U.S. Army's Wound Ballistics Lab at the Presidio of San Francisco (See "Killing Effect," SOF, December '88). Eleven brands of ammunition were used in our test, most currently available, a few obsolete. Six brands of FMJ ball ammunition were tested. All had bullets with copper alloy jackets and lead cores. Five of them (Austrian Hirtenberg, RSA [South African], Musgrave, Western, Peters and the Arms Corporation of the Philippines) had bullet weights of 95 grains. West German Geco FMJ bullets weigh 92 grains. Five brands of JHP ammunition were also tested: Super Vel with an 88-grain truncated-cone bullet, Smith & Wesson with a round-nose 84 grain bullet, Winchester Silvertip with its well-known 85-grain bullet, Remington with an 88-grain bullet in a round-nose configuration and a scalloped jacket at the cavity

SOF's wound ballistics tests on .380 ACP ammunition included the following (from left to right): Winchester Silvertip, which as usual over-expanded and under-penetrated; Super Vel and Remington JHP, both of which expanded but failed to penetrate more than 9½ and under 8 inches, respectively; Pin Grabbers™ which expanded to only .41 caliber, but penetrated to 15 inches; and the obsolete S&W JHP, which failed to expand.

mouth, and Pin Grabbers™ containing a 110-grain bullet with the lead core exposed and eight ominous and prominent teeth-like serrations around the tip. Again, all the JHP projectiles had copper alloy jackets, except the Silvertip (aluminum alloy), and lead cores. No frangible ammunition, such as the Glaser, was tested as it has already been demonstrated that cartridges of this type are ineffective in all pistol calibers.

Let's briefly reiterate what constitutes effective performance in handgun ammunition. Penetration is the most important single parameter. The bullet must cut through tissue and break bones to reach the body's vital structures. Our minimum performance standard is 12 inches of penetration through soft tissue and preferably up to 20 inches. Providing we do not sacrifice penetration, the bullet which produces the largest permanent cavity, or wound track, will do the most damage.

Easy enough to understand, but, all too often, difficult to achieve. With only one exception, the .380 ACP ammunition we tested, exaggerated perhaps by their light bullets, presented us with the usual dilemma. The FMJ bullets, of course, failed to expand or deform, but provided more penetration than we normally require. The hollow point bullets usually expanded but, most frequently, underpenetrated. Let's examine this more closely.

As the velocity of the FMJ bullets increased, so did their penetration. Western and Peters ammunition averaged 860-900 fps, 10 feet from the muzzle. These bullets penetrated approximately 24 inches of soft tissue. Musgrave, Hirtenberg and Geco ball ammunition averaged about 980 fps. Their penetration ranged from 26 to 29 inches of soft tissue. Hottest of all was the Philippine ball which sped downrange at 1,050 fps and penetrated about 34 inches of soft tissue. Thus we can see that if a bullet does not yaw, fragment, expand or otherwise deform, increasing its velocity will usually

increase its penetration.

However, to increase this caliber's effectiveness, we need to increase the size of the permanent cavity, while maintaining the required penetration. Expanding, or mushrooming, bullets would appear to provide the solution—but *caveat emptor*, or let the buyer beware. Smith & Wesson's no longer available 84-grain JHP is a classic example of a bullet that looks good, but fails to perform. Stepping out with a more than adequate average velocity of 1,000 fps, it penetrates about 20 inches of soft tissue, but does not expand at all. As a footnote, we might add that when fired into Duxseal, the S&W bullet expanded to .50 caliber—a clear warning to beware of tests involving non-elastic simulants that do not duplicate living tissue.

How about the famous Super Vel? Here we can clearly see the effect of velocity on a bullet's performance. When fired out of the 2.5-inch barrel of an AMT Backup pistol, the velocity was 900 fps with penetration of 18 inches, but there was no expansion whatever. Fired out of the P7K3's 3.8-inch barrel, the velocity increased by about 175 fps to 1,075 fps. The Super Vel's truncated cone JHP bullets then expanded to about .56 caliber, but the penetration dropped to an unacceptable 9.5 inches. Barrel length, insofar as it affects velocity, can generally increase or decrease an expanding bullet's level of performance. Be careful of arbitrarily extracting test results and applying them to a different set of parameters. Bullets that perform well in a pistol may fail to penetrate adequately when fired in a submachine gun, or even another pistol with a different barrel length.

Performance of the Remington JHP was even more pathetic. With an average velocity of 950 fps, its scalloped jacket most often peels back to the base and separates from the lead core. Expansion of the lead core goes up to .55 caliber, but the penetration is usually less than 8 inches.

Worst of all is the highly touted Winchester Silvertip. With an average velocity of about 1,020 fps, it expands up to .63 caliber, but penetrates less than 7 inches. This just won't do and, unfortunately, overexpansion/underpenetration is characteristic of the Silvertip design in almost every pistol caliber in which it is produced.

That leaves us with the fearsome-looking

Continued on page 96

CONGO MERCS' MASTERPIECE

5 Commando's "Nightwatch"

by Mike Hoare

Illustrations by Ralph Butler

MY unit was consolidating its position in the northeastern corner of the Congo. I had set up my headquarters at a place called Faradje, once an Arab slave trading station on the caravan route from the interior to the Sudan. Wide red-earth streets ran through the town in shaded avenues, their sides lined with mango trees. Most of these had been planted by the Arab slavers and were well over 100 years old, so that now they grew in thick profusion. It was late March and the overripe fruit littered the ground with a sweet sickly smell, attracting swarms of flies, wasps, and bees. Age-old palms dotted the landscape; a multitude of wells testified mutely to the dryness of the

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MAD MIKE HOARE

Author Mike Hoare, probably the most famous mercenary of the 20th century, has turned up regularly in the pages of SOF ever since the very first issue of the magazine. That's because Mad Mike is a legendary character — the kind of guy our magazine is all about.

Born 1919 in colonial India, Thomas Michael Bernard Hoare was raised in Ireland, went to boarding school in England, trained as an accountant, then joined the British Army when World War II broke out. While many of his mates optimistically believed the war would soon be over, Mike says, "That was my greatest fear. The thought of going back to that bloody office was too much for me." Mike had begun his lifelong love affair with the military.

During the war he spent a seven-day liberty in Cape Town and, like many before him, fell under the spell of Africa. As soon as the war ended he moved



his family to Durban, South Africa, and began a life most men only dream about. He motorcycled the length and breadth of the continent, trekked through the mountain kingdom of Lesotho with mules, ran the first safaris across the Kalahari Desert and into the Okavango Swamps, ventured into Nyasaland in search of the giant chimpanzee of the Nkita Plateau, and searched for the Lost City of the Kalahari.

When the Belgian Congo was suddenly granted independence in 1960 and one of its provinces, Katanga, declared itself an independent state, Hoare was one of a number of mercenaries recruited by Katanga's new leader, Moise Tshombe.

Hoare doesn't fit the stereotype of the bloodthirsty mercenary. He is educated, thoughtful and idealistic. While he sees

war as unavoidable, he also has stated unequivocally that "for a mercenary soldier to fight merely on the basis of getting paid when he completes his mission is, in my mind, madness." At the time of the Katanga secession Hoare believed that mercenary soldiers were needed to help stabilize and settle Africa. In an interview with SOF in 1985, Hoare said, "All the little countries were becoming independent; the colonial power was withdrawing, and in some cases they were left naked and undefended. They had their own armies but they were untrained." This is where trained, disciplined mercenary troops could help.

Hoare worked very hard to dissociate himself from the Belgian mercenaries known as *les affreux* (the frightful ones), whom he considered to be a band of

area. In the distance a line of arthritic looking camels plodded patiently toward the Sudan border.

Sometimes as I walked slowly through the town I would close my eyes and breathe deeply — well, perhaps not too deeply — and transport myself back to the evil days of the slave trade. In my mind's eye I could see a mile-long file of black men, women and children, yoked together in sad-eyed groups, dragging themselves desperately

Colonel Mike Hoare (left) hams it up with one of his trusted senior officers, Ian Yule, during 1964 Congo campaign.



unkempt and ill-disciplined ruffians. In his book *Congo Mercenary* he says that one of his only regrets about the Congo years is that "I never quite realized my ambition — to erase the image of *les affreux* and replace it with a standard of discipline and soldierly behavior which would have entitled 5 Commando to be called worthy successors of the noblest mercenary soldiers who ever offered their swords for reward and their hearts for an ideal — the Wild Geese of the 18th century."

Hoare remained loyal to Tshombe, returning to South Africa when Tshombe went into exile in Spain, then returning to the Congo when Tshombe returned as prime minister. When all mercenaries were eventually forced to leave the Congo, Hoare went home to

along these same red roads under the watchful eyes of other black men armed with whips and rifles. Destination: the coast of Zanzibar, or the Upper Nile. Yet for all its history, Faradje wasn't a bad place to be stationed, as such places went in the Congo.

Nothing much was happening on our front at this time, other than a threatened visit from the commander-in-chief of the Congolese National Army, Lieutenant General Joseph-Desire Mobutu, so boredom, the archenemy of all soldiers, began to blossom. And when boredom blossoms among the *mercenariat* can villainy be far behind? Not far, as I am going to show you.

But first let me tell you something about Sergeant Samuel Shoemsmith, my intelligence sergeant. He was fairly typical of mercenary soldiers under my command at this time, but unique in one respect. He was a Yankee and the only American in 5 Commando on this contract. In fact, he was from New York and had his roots in Yonkers. He loved the camaraderie of hard men and the adventure of this type of soldiering where survival depended not so much on rigid routine and formal army training as on the ready acceptance of a necessary discipline observed willingly by all. He was sharp, astute, fun-loving and easy to get along with. Civilian life he had found weary, stale, flat and mostly unprofitable. Even so, Sammy knew quite a lot about the business world. In his time he had served behind a counter, been a bookmaker's runner, sold secondhand cars, and turned an honest and sometimes a doubtful penny wherever sharp wits and business acumen were in demand. Later he had emigrated hurriedly from the United States to the Northern Rhodesian copper belt, where a spell in the mines at Luanshya and Kitwe had given him some specialized knowledge concerning high ex-

platives. This he used to his advantage in the Congo whenever the opportunity presented itself. Very soon he became known in 5 Commando as a *fundi* in the use of gelignite and other rapidly expanding materials, particularly those capable of being used in confined spaces. His expertise in this branch of mining was available to all who had occasion to pursue that lucrative if dangerous occupation — always, of course, for a reasonable consideration.

I had observed on a number of occasions that he was usually the first to be consulted about the validity of bank notes and other negotiable bills of exchange, etc., that the men had liberated from banks and post offices unfortunate enough to lie on our general line of advance. Ask Sammy, they all cried. Sammy's bound to know if anyone does. Superimposed on his mischievous nature was an outrageous sense of humor that made him one of the most popular men in the unit. If you are now picturing Sgt. Shoemsmith as an easy-going, happy-go-lucky buccaneer without a care in the world I have sketched his portrait fairly accurately.

My day usually began at 0600 hours when Sgt. Shoemsmith would bring in the signals received during the night. This morning he arrived looking as though he had been run over by the large wheel of a heavy steam roller.

"What happened, sergeant?"

He found it difficult to reply. His voice was strained and pain ridden.

"Hit by a Congolese truck, sir."

"Badly hurt?"

"Can't say until I've seen the doctor. I think one or two ribs may be broke and my lungs may be punctured. Coughing up a bit of blood, too. Hurts me to laugh."

I made an informed guess as to the nature of the activities which may have led to Sam-

South Africa and resumed his life of adventure.

He traveled to Cambodia and Laos in 1970, for a time settled into the workaday world in Singapore, but then bought a 110-ton trading yacht and sailed the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, writing a book about his experiences entitled *Three Years with Sylvia*. Later, he was military technical adviser for the movie "The Wild Geese," based on the experiences of his own 5 Commando.

In 1981, at age 62, Mad Mike found himself suddenly involved in mercenary affairs again, this time more as matter of human and political principle than in a search for adventure. Over the years he had come to consider communism the most dangerous force in Africa, and when he was approached with a plan that would let him do something about the "Red Tide" he couldn't refuse. He recruited and led a small mercenary force in an attempt to overthrow the Marxist government ruling the Seychelles Islands, located 700 miles northeast of

Madagascar in the western Indian Ocean. For various reasons the coup was unsuccessful and Hoare and all but six of his men escaped to South Africa aboard a commercial aircraft. The South African government sentenced them to prison for hijacking the plane. Hoare claimed this charge was trumped up and that the coup was approved at the highest military levels in South Africa, but nevertheless he was sent to prison.

Three years later, on 6 May 1985, Mike Hoare was again a free man. At 66, a feisty, not very chastened Mike joked with reporters, "It has been a grim experience. Even so, 33 months of imprisonment did something for me. It revitalized my soul, refreshed my liver and regulated my bowels. Beyond that, I cannot recommend it."

Years ago Mike told an SOF interviewer, "Hardship and adventure are inseparable." Clearly a few years in prison didn't phase Mike Hoare; it was just part of the game. — S. Max



Samuel was sitting bolt upright against a wall, immobile, his chest completely encased in plaster of paris from neck to navel.

my's injuries.

"But you don't want to laugh, do you Sammy?"

"No, sir."

"Neither would I if I faced a possible charge of looting government property. Not nice those Congolese jails, Sammy. Twenty-five to a cell, all stinking to high heaven. No mod cons, you know. Not nice. Not nice at all. Let me know what the doctor says, won't you?"

He ignored the scurrilous innuendo and withdrew, agony in every step.

I was intrigued. Injuries of this type were so unlikely for Sammy that they put me on enquiry. An error of this sort, arising from sheer incompetence, was so completely out of character it cried out for investigation. He was, after all, the crown prince of demolition experts. How come this fall from grace? I found out in the end of course, but it was a few months before the true story filtered through to me.

Later that morning, as usual, I visited the casualty ward. There were no beds; the sick lay on blankets spread on the floor, but the little hospital functioned well in spite of that. Samuel was sitting bolt upright against a wall, immobile, his chest completely encased in plaster of paris from neck to navel. The medical orderly explained that the doctor had been called away unexpectedly to one of the outstations to deal with an emergency and that as Sammy was in considerable pain he had diagnosed the trouble himself and done what he could. Actually he said it behooved him to do what he could, which I thought was rather a nice phrase.

Well. OK. What had he diagnosed? Cracked ribs, incipient bronchitis, mal de mer, housemaid's knee, etc. etc. He ran on and on.

"OK, OK," I said, "for Pete's sake stop. I get your drift."

If there was one thing I had learned from medical orderlies, it was that a little knowledge could be a deadly boring thing. So what was his prognosis? Complete recovery in 30 days if the patient was given total rest.

Sounded reasonable.

When the medical officer returned he condoned the treatment given by his orderly but with a disbelieving shake of his head. After further examination of the patient he said it would be a pity to disturb the artwork of his valued assistant, so he intended to leave well enough alone. It seemed obvious to him that the gallant sergeant would be no use to anybody in that condition and he thought, in the circumstances, it might be a good thing if Sgt. Shoesmith was granted one month's sick leave instead of being allowed to lie around here cluttering up his hospital making a damned nuisance of himself. I agreed, so off he went. After Sammy's departure for Leopoldville and New York the true story leaked through to me in dribs and drabs by that process of osmosis that commanding officers do not encourage but frequently benefit by. In every unit somebody always spills the beans. The story unfolded in this manner.

The previous night Sammy and two of his buddies were paying a social visit after dark to an empty house, which had been in better and more settled times the residence of His Grace the Bishop of Faradje, a Roman Catholic dignitary of some pre-eminence. In one of the still well-furnished reception rooms they discovered to their astonishment a small oil painting in an ornate gilt frame, which looked to their discerning eyes agreeably rare and valuable. The consensus was that it was a Dutch scene of the 17th century. On closer examination by the art expert, Sgt. Samuel Shoesmith, none other, it was declared to be a genuine Rembrandt. If he was not very much mistaken, it was "The Night Watch," a reproduction of which had hung in his mother's front parlor when he was a boy. Or something very like it at any rate. But rare and valuable without a doubt. You could take his word for it. The

scene certainly depicted some sort of a guard led by a figure that was, conceivably, an officer doing his rounds in what could very easily be a narrow street in old Amsterdam. If not Amsterdam then some city in Holland certainly. No sooner was this priceless painting positively identified by the knowledgeable three than it was removed from its valuable frame and secreted athwart Samuel's ample belly, to be covered at once by his camouflage jump jacket.

The warriors then took themselves off to a quieter and safer place far from the inquisitive eyes of the garrison police. A quorum being present, a council of war was then convened, presided over by Chairman Sammy. For this purpose he transformed himself in the twinkling of an eye from a harmless intelligence sergeant into a suave and sophisticated Fifth Avenue art dealer. It says something for the strength of Sammy's personality, or the powers of self-deception, that this improbable metamorphosis passed completely unnoticed by the members of the committee, neither of whom were privy to the fact that Sammy's total acquaintance with the world of fine art rested precariously on the strength of one visit he had paid to an art gallery many years before — under the impression, erroneous, that some live models, female, were to be on display in the nude.

Certain things have a present value, as any actuary or stockbroker, or Sammy, could have told them. In fact, Sammy went on to tell them just that, that the present value of an oil painting, no matter how rare and valuable (as this one undoubtedly was), in a place like Faradje and in circumstances like theirs, when converted into Congolese francs, was as near as dammit to a big zero. His expert opinion was that if a willing buyer could be found in Faradje at this moment for that painting the proceeds would not have bought them a small glass of beer apiece, even at the most optimistic estimate. True, a bottle of Johnny Walker had been auctioned by Sammy in a barrack room for a paltry 183 U.S. dollars on the eve of battle some weeks ago, which said something for the economic theory of supply and demand, but an oil painting — now, that was different. That called for an appreciation by the cognoscenti. Any man in his right senses could see at a glance how valuable the thing was and sell it for hundreds of thousands of dollars U.S. in an appreciative market. But here, in this godforsaken spot; he shrugged off the thought. Philistines, ignorant bums, said Mr. Samuel Shoesmith, art dealer, with a sniff of disdain. No, no, that was completely beyond their comprehension. A bitterness foreign to Sammy's sunny disposition began to contaminate his formerly happy little soul.

The committeemen began to deliberate. An hour later the acidity of their blood count began to rise steeply. The gross injustice of their situation permeated their being. It hardly bore thinking about. Here they were, sitting on a gold mine, only to be separated from a willing and lucrative market by about

2,000 miles of assorted African jungle, give or take a hundred miles or so. Just their bleeding luck.

It was then that Sammy produced the palm toddy, the golden elixir from which all inspiration is known to spring in darkest Africa. And spring it did. After copious libations the solution became increasingly obvious. One of them must get back to the flesh pots of New York, New York, pronto with the priceless work of art secreted about his person. But how? Compassionate leave? No good asking the CO, who was known to be a thorough-going bastard and as hard as nails. Their chances in that direction were less than nil. No, the only solution, obvious when they stopped to think about it, was for one of them to get wounded in action and get invalidated out, taking the merchandise with him.

The snag was that there was no action going on at the moment, so a convenient wound was not really a feasible plan. They cogitated. What about a serious injury then? Of course, every bit as good. One of them could get run down by a Congolese ration truck. Just the thing, and how probable. That sort of thing happened every day, didn't it? But no, that solution, good though it was, wouldn't give them the control over the type of injuries they thought their agent should bear. That led them to consider precisely what injuries were most likely to carry conviction.

Sammy suggested breaking an arm or a leg, not his of course, but this idea, rather close to home, seemed to find little favor with the other members of the committee. Then they approached the plan from a different angle. Who was to be their chosen representative; who was to bear the noble stigmata? A majority of two had little difficulty in arriving at a conclusion. The only man with the deep knowledge of art and the sophistication necessary to convince a purchaser of the value of their merchandise was Sammy, so Samuel would have to be a brave little Sammy and go. And if injuries were necessary to convince the MO, then Sammy would have to grin and bear them for the common weal. One of the committeemen had read something somewhere about one suffering for all and was entirely in favor of that idea, providing he wasn't the single sufferer, of course. History, he said, was full of examples like that, wasn't it? It was, but that didn't stop the chairman from casting a dissenting vote.

But with the passage of time and liquor Sammy began to see himself in a dim heroic light, a martyr to the cause. Then happily it occurred to his agile brain that injuries and pain and all that rotten stuff were totally unnecessary. Surely he could kid on a sick parade that he was stricken with some virulent disease? The bloody Congo was full of them. Take your pick. But which one? And how could Sammy convince the medical officer he was mortally ill and in dire need of prolonged sick leave? That was the question. Sammy/Hamlet, racked with indecision and clothed now in a black velvet suit with a thin rapier by his side, began to



Sammy held his breath as visions of race tracks, five star hotels and obliging girls passed rapidly in glorious succession before his eyes.

intone a half-remembered soliloquy, forgot the words, thought better of it, and downed another pint of rotgut instead.

Another hour, another gourd of toddy, and the whole thing became ridiculously simple. A plan gelled. Bring Nobby Clark into the swindle. Nobby was just the man they needed, a reliable villain. Nobby was the MO's orderly. He had a corner in Valium and other controlled substances which he guarded zealously, and he knew how to keep his trap shut. A crafty man of infinite cunning. Nobby must arrange for the doctor to be called away for a visit first thing tomorrow morning before sick parade, so that Nobby would have to take the parade himself. Sammy would pretend he had broken some ribs, had a misplaced sternum and an enlarged if not septic spleen, things they knew about vaguely that occurred somewhere between the neck and the belly button. Nobby would then place the valuable oil painting against Sammy's skin and cover same with plaster of paris. Remove in New York, extract canvas baby and sell for an independent fortune. What a plan! Split the proceeds four ways, or thereabouts, mused Sammy, a little ahead of them in that. Nothing short of genius. This way there would be no trouble with the Congolese customs or the customs at Kennedy Airport either. Brilliant, bloody brilliant. Minds like theirs were wasted in a godforsaken hole like Faradje. They had another calabash of palm wine to celebrate the discovery.

Fortuitously, the night ended in an almighty barney during which the hapless Sammy got himself well and truly worked over by the other two members of the committee, who had become unreasonably argumentative for no apparent reason other than the three gallons of toddy they had consumed. In the ensuing spectacular punch-up damage was done to Sammy's

ribs, two of which appeared to be cracked if not actually broken. It answered all their prayers. If that wasn't the hand of God moving in His mysterious ways, they'd like to know, what was?

Nobby was squared; the MO was given the bogus message, and Sgt. Samuel Shoesmith, the victim of a dastardly hit-and-run accident, perpetrator unknown, got his sick leave.

I only wish I could have been present when the elegant Mr. Shoesmith emerged from his cocoon in the Taft Hotel just off Broadway near Times Square. Truth to tell, the plaster of paris cocoon, now somewhat blackened by usage and a hundred ribald autographs, had been giving him all the tortures of hell. He had a hairy chest, and everything from adventurous bread crumbs to tiny equatorial insects had invaded the warm and inviting darkness between the plaster and his skin, tormenting him beyond all endurance, causing him to prance around from time to time like a whirling dervish. In a flash Sammy had cleaned off his outer casing, resuscitated the oil painting, mounted it suitably in another gilt frame, and trotted round nonchalantly to meet with Mr. Abraham Z. Rubenstein, the famous New York art critic and dealer in Works of Fine Art, Ming China, objects d'art, etc., on Fifth Avenue.

"You say you have a Rembrandt for me to see, Mr. Shoesmith?" began Mr. Rubenstein evenly, without any visible display of emotion, while balancing a gold rimmed pince-nez on the end of his nose. "Most interesting, most interesting. Which one might it be, may I ask? And what of its provenance?"

Sammy sidestepped that one, which was only right and proper, given that he had never heard that word before in his life, never mind understood it.

"I'm pretty certain it's 'The Night Watch,' Mr. Rubenstein," said our hero confidently, who lacked not in poise, even in this arcane field.

"Night Watch, Night Watch, Night Watch," murmured Mr. Rubenstein to him-

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IRON TRIANGLE

Continued from page 57

stuck in the old fever-and-chills syndrome and I felt weaker every day. I would fall asleep at 2000 hours and sleep until 0700, 11 comatose hours, and wake up so weary I had to plan a simple act, such as going outside, like I was building a complicated machine: (1) Flex left calf and extend leg; (2) Put left hand on floor; (3) Take deep breath, etc., etc. It was a good thing a chopper full of Spetsnaz commandos didn't show up. They could have lugged me off to Pol-i-Charki like a sack of groats.

Finally I decided Jegdeleg was not a "Go" this time. With the help of the muj I bought a horse, hired a guide and headed south, back toward Azrow and the border. I wish I could report that the trip out was marvelous, but it wasn't. MiG-27s were bombing the valleys on both sides as we approached the pass to Azrow. They were damned close, too close, so it was hard to relax. Then the guide turned out to be a thief. After unsuccessfully trying to abscond with my tape recorder, he waited until I was a hundred yards ahead of him, on foot, on the trail above Azrow. Seeing his chance, he grabbed the horse and bolted. I wasn't really that mad about the horse — when you buy a horse in Afghanistan it is a kind of rent-a-horse; the guide would have gotten it in Azrow anyway — but I didn't appreciate

having to lug my 40-pound pack, alone, the last two hours. It just wasn't right.

I wonder what happened to the faithless guide. When I got to Azrow, a young muj commander I know asked me why I was traveling alone. I made the mistake of telling him about the guide and the horse. When I left Azrow he had grabbed his AK and was forming an impromptu vigilante group to find the guide and kill him. I kept telling him it wasn't necessary, but he wouldn't listen. "He thief-man," he said. "I shoot." Well, guides shouldn't abandon their clients, horseless, on passes in the Safed Koh.

As I pulled out of Azrow in a pickup truck, heading for Jaji, Terri Mangal and Peshawar, the 'dozers were working on the mountainside above town, carving another set of switchbacks. The Road to Kabul — I'll have to go back in a few months and travel the whole thing. ✕

PHILIPPINES

Continued from page 39

CAFGU [AA], or Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units [Active Auxilliary]). Consequently, the CPP has been forced to launch attacks directly on civilian concentrations surrounding military positions.

For it is the former cadre amongst these

returnee groups who are most dangerous to the CPP, because they have organizational skills which they often turn against the movement. Sometimes this is done directly. Their role in forming village militia is particularly troublesome to the CPP. The actual *Alsa Masa* organization, for instance, was set up by ex-CPP men in Davao, Mindanao. More often, though, the former cadre do the most damage simply by giving hamlets their talents and thereby shaping them into tougher nuts for the proselytizing effort to crack.

Evidence of the degree to which the CPP is feeling the bite of this trend can be seen in its stepped up domestic and international campaign to paint the Philippine government as guilty of widespread human rights violations. Extralegal killings apparently have been carried out by government supporters, but best evidence shows the number of them pales in comparison to the number of deaths attributed to the institutionalized violence of the CPP (the Left's structural violence argument turned on its head). Everywhere I went I talked with refugees, asking why they had come in. I heard two responses: "We can no longer take the [CPP's] taxes. We can no longer take the [CPP's] violence."

Violence can assume many forms. For the security forces it may mean a step-up in CPP assassination attempts or ambushes. But for the populace it generally means one thing — liquidations. According to govern-

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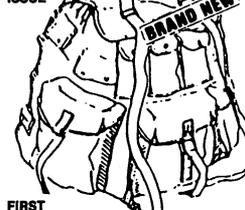
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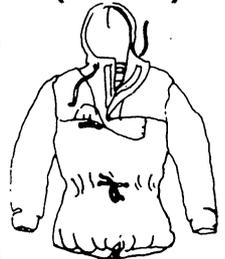
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ment figures, which are drawn from both police reports and captured records, the first half of 1988 alone saw the CPP liquidate 128 persons. Twenty-eight of these were members of the security forces (11 soldiers, five policemen, and 12 militiamen). The other 100 were civilians.

"That is how they attempt to consolidate their strength," observes Cardones. "When they reach the OC level is when they really start the killing."

One hundred murders may not seem a particularly large number for a population of three million. Yet violence must be seen in cultural terms. Honeylee Pama, "Ibon," 26, a member of the Negros District 2 (two of seven) Educational Staff, said the killings over several years had played a key role in her decision to leave the movement. When I asked how many people she knew about who had been liquidated, she said about 10. I protested that 10 people killed in her district sure didn't seem like a lot. She responded, "That's a lot to me!"

Annalyn Salcedo, 23, a former CPP operative (in a Negros hamlet) who now supports the government, puts the message just as succinctly: "We can no longer take it, their [the CPP's] policies, the way they do things. They are always taking our rice and threatening us."

There is the CPP's miscalculation in a nutshell. Its strategy of increased violence ignores the desire for justice which is the

fundamental driving force at the heart of the Philippine insurgency — the force which has allowed a committed communist leadership to recruit non-ideological peasant manpower. It is the return of the political process to the Philippine people which allows justice to be pursued and makes politics the ultimate government weapon.

Cardones has hastened to take advantage of the tide. By concentrating his forces in CPP Districts 4 and 5, he plans to split the island. "Once we do this, we can maneuver at will," he explains. Communist documents reveal the pinch that has resulted as government units have first seized areas, driving all armed communist elements from them, then left behind detachments to organize and train militia to protect the populace and the local officials.

As the militia becomes competent, only control teams remain in the area. By doctrine these should be Special Forces personnel. More often than not, they are control teams drawn from the battalions.

Control is critical to prevent the abuses of the past which figured prominently in frequent criticism of the Marcos-era counterinsurgency. Though most illegal acts were not committed by members of the regular military but instead by ill-trained and unsupervised militia or the PC, the army took the rap. Now it has the tools to exercise authority over its charges, for the CAFGU are both paid a small salary and subject to military

justice.

These militiamen are the communists' ultimate nightmare. Armed and hostile, the population is no longer a sea in which guerrillas freely swim but a net in which to be caught. The only way to prevent this counter-mobilization is to attack it directly. The assault on the company headquarters I visited was one approach. At another site I saw an alternative. There, the communists had attacked the people, firing indiscriminately. I asked one parent how his 5-year-old daughter had lost her leg below the knee. "BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle]. The communists," he replied. When I visited the site again six months later, he was in the uniform of the militia.

So, too, was Pelotio Salcedo, 25, husband of Annalyn, the party operative quoted above. Though not a Party member himself, he had been a mass activist in the same area. Now he commented, "We have decided to fight back — and when you are on the side of the government, there is no way you can lose. People continue to support the CPP, because they are in areas under the NPA and have no choice. If the government moves into the area and helps us to defend ourselves, the people will come back."

Cardones could not have said it better. It is a political war. It must be fought with a political strategy. Give the people a voice in their own lives, and the struggle will be won. ✘

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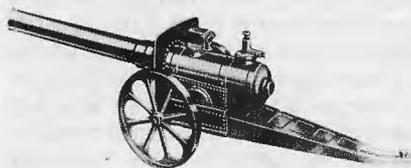
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COMBAT SMATCHET

Continued from page 31

turning the wrist. It's also obvious that practically any wound inflicted by the Combat Smatchet, whether it's a stabbing, chopping, or slashing cut, is going to be rather substantial and likely to render the woundee *hors de combat*.

As a tool, the Combat Smatchet can do virtually anything that can be done with a machete, yet it is a far better weapon. When one edge gets dull the soldier can just flip the knife over and continue working with the other edge. This could be a tremendous advantage when preparing a fighting position under fire or when working in other emergency situations. The blade of the knife is wide enough that it can even serve with reasonable efficiency as an emergency digging tool. About the only limitation of the knife as a tool that has surfaced is that one cannot pound the blade into a log to split it for firewood, as can be done with a chopper which has an unsharpened thick back. While this might be a shortcoming for a knife which serves only as a camp tool, the combat soldier should be more than willing to give up this one capability to realize all the other advantages the double-edged blade offers as a weapon *and* as a tool.

My sole reservation about the blade is the fact that it is made from rustable carbon steel. I can remember only too well how I struggled to keep my carbon-steel Randall knife from rusting during the monsoons of Vietnam. The real disadvantage of rustable steels is not the cosmetics of rust on the blade, but the simple fact that the edge is the thinnest area of the blade and thus is the first thing to rust, which dulls the piece. Hopefully a stainless steel tough enough for the intended uses of the Combat Smatchet will surface.

Colonel Applegate had Harsey make two other prototypes to compare the weight and balance of lighter and of heavier versions. While the lighter version has merit for people with less hand and wrist strength, the heavier version was too heavy and clumsy to be considered for production. Personally, I found the weight and balance of No. 001 to be near perfect. If there is one bit of bad news about the A-F Combat Smatchet, it's the price. With its full-tapered tang, six-piece handle construction, and broad symmetrical flat grinds, it's a difficult and time-consuming knife to make. As a result, it is expensive — \$675 per copy. As a beautiful object with historical significance for a collector, it's an OK investment — but that's really too expensive for a working knife. In spite of that, however, Col. Applegate has been surprised by a steady stream of orders for the "collector grade" Combat Smatchet. He is presently considering a simpler hand-made version that might be less costly. Better still, he is looking for a manufacturer of a production version which would be affordable for those who want a *working* rendition. SOF readers can help in this regard by writing to the Colonel and express-

ing their interest in a production version. Colonel Applegate can be reached through Wells Creek Knife and Gun Works, Dept. SOF, 32956 State Highway 38, Scottsburg, OR 97473. With enough letters of interest in hand he will be better armed to interest a manufacturer in this project.

For myself, I think the Applegate-Fairbairn Combat Smatchet is one of the most interesting and effective combat knives to come along since the Bowie. By the way, don't bother trying to buy Combat Smatchet No. 007, because SOF Editor/Publisher Bob Brown has already beat you to it! ✕

FATAL VISION

Continued from page 51

would follow the tracks until we hit a road, then just peel off on to it like we had been on it all along. The rain had stopped and the sun was just turning the sky red when we hit the base. As we walked through the gate the OD gave us a big grin and asked the lieutenant if we had any luck.

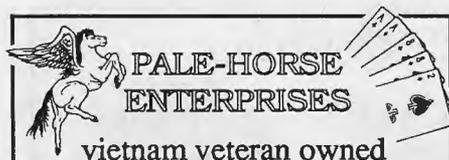
"No, not this time," he replied, "but there is always tonight." I had to grin to myself. That kind of drive-on, airborne-all-the-way talk would make it rain again tonight for sure.

After debriefing from the night patrol, I asked the lieutenant if I could have one of the laser sights and a set of goggles. On the way back to my room I stopped by the MilGp (U.S. Military Group) office and asked if anyone knew where I could get a manual on the laser sight.

"Sure, no problem," I was told. "We can get one from the factory representative who's in-country." I was pretty sure the adjustments were similar to those on a regular optical scope, but I wanted to be certain before I started turning knobs. All I wanted to do right now was go back to my room, take a shower and go to bed. I knew I was smelling pretty bad when I stepped into the office and the little secretary held her nose and left the room. Oh well, she always thought I was a dirty old man anyway.

It was a couple of days before I got around to checking with MilGp on the laser manual, and sure enough, they had a copy for me. After pouring a cup of coffee I sat down and spent the next hour reading about how the sight worked and what it could do. Sure enough, you adjusted it just like a regular rifle scope. I could not believe the range this puppy had. The instructions were not that hard, and it made me wonder why the systems the recon platoon had were not sighted in for use.

After leaving the office I went over to the recon platoon and talked to the lieutenant about it. First, there was a problem of getting batteries. They were good for about eight hours of continual use, which is plenty of time for the average patrol or ambush, but you should have fresh ones in your pocket, and on the shelf back at the supply room. He also told me that the people who had been



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trained on the sights had either gotten out of the military or had been transferred and no one was left who knew anything about them. Damn, I thought, hadn't anyone heard of retraining? I knew this was a big problem for these people, and there is no easy answer for it. Finding time for training of any kind is real hard when you are fighting a war like this one.

"Look, lieutenant," I said, "I think I know how to zero these sights. Let's go down to the range tonight and find out." As soon as it was good and dark we stopped by the recon platoon and picked up five troopers, rifles, infrared goggles, and sights. After clearing it with the Officer of the Day, we were off to the range. The range at Hopango is nothing more than a very large gully, but when that's all you have, you use it. We had mounted the sights on the weapons and made sure they functioned before we left. No use walking almost a mile and then finding out the things didn't work. Sighting the weapons in turned out to be simple, and teaching the kids to use them was no problem. At 100 meters it was no trick to keep all hits in an eight-inch circle. After a short period of the kids playing "Darth Vader" we settled down to see just what could be done with this tool.

By the time we left to go back, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that we had the answer to every grunt's dream — the ability to see and hit what you're aiming at in the dark. Back at battalion I talked with the lieutenant about how we could use these in ambushes. Not just one, but every man in the ambush team wearing goggles and equipped with a laser sight. The lieutenant thought that would be great, but that the battalion CO would never allow him to have that many night vision goggles or laser sights.

"OK, how about a small team that is trained to work by itself?" I asked. "Maybe they would go for that." He still didn't know. I thought what we needed was a demonstration of our new killer-team concept.

The next day I went over to talk to the CO and told him what we would like to do. He was interested and said he would like to see a demonstration. We scheduled a firing demo for that night. Before leaving he asked me if this system really worked as well as I said it did. I told him yes, it did. Back at the lieutenant's office I told him we would be putting on a shooting demonstration tonight for the CO, and if all went well then maybe we would get our team. Things being the way they are in the military, I should have known our little plan was going too smoothly.

Around 1400 the lieutenant sent a runner to get me. As I stepped into his office, I could tell that all was not well. "Harry, what have you done! The battalion commander has informed me we are to put on a full night-ambush demonstration tonight for the general and staff, showing our new technique for night ambushes! Harry, what new techniques are we going to show them?"

"Shit! All I wanted to do was show the battalion CO what you can hit with the damned IR sights, and I talked about putting

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together a Hatchet Team to be used for night ambushes." I called the CO again and asked if there was any way we could postpone this for a few days. I told him I thought it would go off better if we had a few days to practice. He said it would go tonight. He was not going to call the general and tell him the show was off.

As I looked at the lieutenant across the desk I thought to myself, "Well, Claflin, you've really done it this time." We had from then until 2100 to put together a program, practice it and hope to hell it worked. If the general and his staff were impressed, it would look good for the battalion CO — if we loused it up, he could always blame it on the gringo. The rest of the day was spent working out our game plan and laying out the exercise. By 2000 we were ready.

Pleeeeease, Murphy — let everything work for once.

At 2100 the general and his people arrived and were issued night vision goggles, and the show was on. I stayed back with the battalion CO while the lieutenant took his men through the drill. We had placed military silhouettes 50 meters from where the team would come on line for the ambush. Arm and hand signals were used to maneuver the team into position, and as if by magic six beams of light hit the targets in the head, followed by the sound of six shots being fired at once. I could hear some of the remarks being made by the staff. "That is all? That is all there is? I thought we were going to see a firepower demonstration."

By this time the lieutenant and his men had gathered the targets up and were showing them to the general and his entourage. All the targets had a hole in the head (thanks, Murph), but I could tell the staff was wanting to hear some noise and see bullets fly. After talking it over with the lieutenant, he took the team back on line and from the prone position they tore the targets to pieces. Now that was better; the staff liked that! Oh well, the boys knew they had done a good job and now we all could relax. The next day the battalion CO called the lieutenant and myself to his office and thanked us for a good job. The general was very pleased with this new concept and would see that the recon platoon Hatchet Team got the equipment it needed.

As time went on, we found other uses for the IR laser sight. Calling air strikes at night is more often than not a miss situation. But not when you can mark *exactly* where you want them to drop the ordnance, and that is just what you can do with the transmitted beam from a laser sight. It also worked very well for marking PZs (pickup zones) or air drops.

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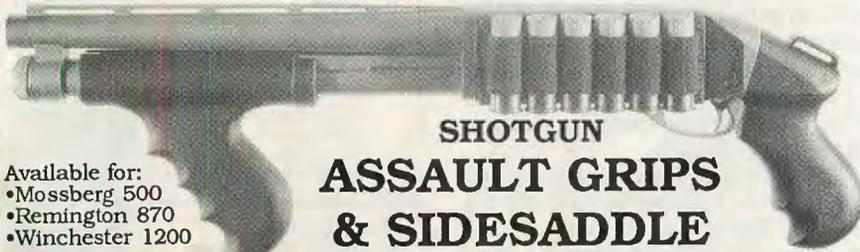
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EASY PICKINGS

Continued from page 59

a twin knoll about 40 meters to the south, pumping tracers into a jumble of huge boulders. We jumped onto the grassy knoll as the last gunship climbed out of its rocket run, and quickly took cover in a ring of old spider holes. Red smoke, marking an enemy location, was floating over the short

trees and boulders on the other knoll.

One squad ran into the saddle between the knolls while a machine gunner fired over their heads at two boulders on the military crest directly above them. When they reached the boulders, the machine gun stopped and platoon headquarters and the other two squads ran to join them. The first squad had already swept past the boulders by the time we arrived. To the left of the boulders were four bodies in American camouflage jungle fatigues, and I thought we were attacking an ARVN [South Vietnamese] recon unit and would land in some deep shit because of it. Then two men in green NVA uniforms jumped up from a bunker underneath the two boulders.

The bunker opening was very narrow and

almost invisible unless you were standing on the edge of it. Two Blues were standing there and nailed two NVA from a distance of about one foot. One of the Blues caught his man as his head reached waist level, and got his helmet and face sprayed with blood and pink brains. He wiped the brains off his face and cursed. The other NVA was a middle-aged man who was wearing bifocals — the first enemy soldier I had seen with glasses of any type.

My main contribution to the battle was almost getting shot. I walked around the right side of the boulders and saw a narrow trench with a man in khaki lying face down in it. When I looked again, he was pointing an SKS rifle at my stomach. Two Blues, a machine gunner named Jim Borsos and a rifleman named Gary DeFries, were walking ahead on either side of the trench. They both shot the man and didn't even bother to look back and see who he was aiming at. Gary DeFries still wears the NVA's leather belt with the star on its buckle. When the two Blues shot the one in the trench, a bush moved just enough to get a spraying. Result — one more NVA killed. He hadn't been camouflaged like a bush, but he was wearing black pajamas and had wrapped himself so closely around the base of the shrub and under its branches that he was almost invisible. They were very good at that trick.

Seven more bodies were strewn on both sides of a path that began beside the trench and extended about 30 meters to the top of the knoll. The scouts had been busy. Each body received another burst, just to be sure. I was always a souvenir collector and this was a bonanza. The path or trail was littered with leather map cases, binoculars, compasses and other equipment. I was interested in the rings the NVA were wearing. They were golden with Vietnamese inscriptions. I assumed that they were wedding rings, although I had never seen the enemy wearing them. They were probably command rings of some sort. I didn't take any of them.

We reached the crest and moved down the other side in a line, firing rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers into the jungle that began at the base of another saddle, again about 40 meters away. Two NVA in khaki ran out of the jungle and charged at us, firing AKs from waist level until they were shot down. More AKs flashed from the jungle below us to the left and in front of us where the two NVA had appeared. We could catch glimpses of thatched roofs in both directions, probably temporary shelters for the conventional security around the knoll. A good idea, but worthless against vertical assaults. Gunships rocketed the jungle below us to the left, then another one hovered over us and blew apart the hootches to our front with rockets and 40mm grenades. One roof was blown straight up into the air about 10 feet above the trees, then burst into flames before falling back. All enemy fire abruptly ceased.

We were ordered to withdraw and walked backward toward the crest, firing to the left and front and grabbing everything we could carry. Some of the Blues had slung their



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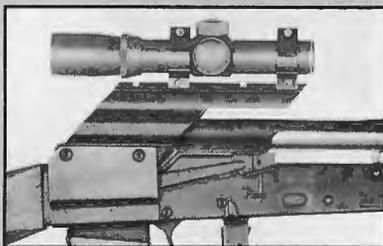
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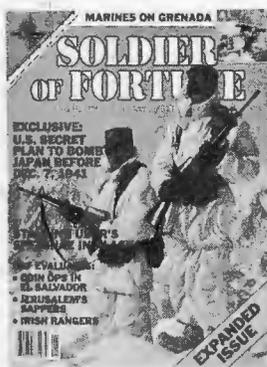
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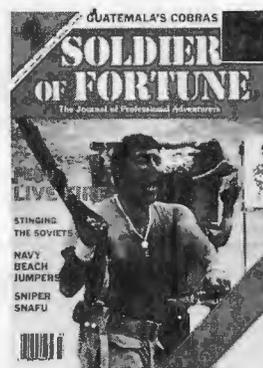
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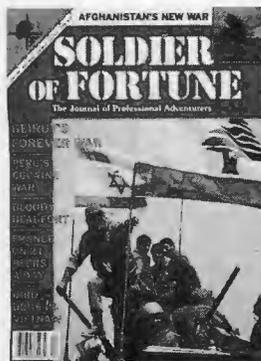


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rifles and were carrying armfuls of weapons, pistol belts and documents. We found an M79 grenade launcher and a map that had been taken from our choppers in the battle on 13 November. The map still had the 9th Cav crossed sabers under the lamination and had been marked with the locations of units on both sides. I noticed that the main NVA units were located in the mountains on the very edge of the Hiep Duc-Que Son valleys.

I found a pair of Chinese binoculars that were identical to our artillery binoculars, except theirs had Chinese characters. I looked down at the American artillery base below us, Landing Zone Ross, and could pick out every bunker and howitzer in the place. I drew a conclusion that was gospel with the platoon for a few days — and was dead wrong. Here, I thought, were a bunch of NVA field officers getting ready to launch a mortar and rocket attack on Ross.

We hid the binoculars, compasses and pistol belts under our shirts as the slicks came in for us at the grassy knoll. Half the platoon looked pregnant by the time we lifted off, probably less than 10 minutes after the initial landing. The platoon stayed awake until early the next morning counting our booty from the "forward observers." We had a U.S. M1911A1 .45 ACP that one joker had been toting on a GI pistol belt, complete with lensatic compass and American olive-drab plastic canteen. There were six Tokarev pistols and two Makarovs with red stars on their handles. We had never seen Makarov pistols and thought that they were Berettas. The pistol belts were leather with stars on their brass buckles, but much better made than the standard NVA belts. Three of the belts from the lower ranks were of wide, light green canvas and had large aluminum buckles with the usual star. These later became more common.

Major Burrow heard about the pistols from helicopter crewmen, who came to us for "hush money" in the form of binoculars, compasses and leather map cases. They had covered our asses on the knoll and we parted with the gear gladly, but someone didn't keep his part of the bargain. We never found out who told the major. The pistols were collected the next morning and we waited several days for their return. Finally, a group of us crossed the flight line one evening to the troop operations center. It was a brave trip for us, because that was the officer side of the flight line, and we weren't sure how our request for return of the pistols would be received. Other souvenirs had been taken and were never seen again.

The major told us that the pistols were needed to confirm some other things and would be returned. They were given back about a week later. Next, the major told us that keeping the pistols and other gear had caused a delay at intelligence in determining just what we had bagged. That delay had prevented the Cav from taking immediate action, like inserting an infantry company on the knoll. I can't offer any good excuse today for what we did. We had turned in all documents, maps and personal papers, and

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the discovery of so much other gear had created quite a stir at division.

Documents and other evidence confirmed that we had killed nine officers and eight enlisted men. The officers included a full colonel (2nd NVA Division commissar), four majors and four senior captains. Among them was the regimental commander of 3rd Regiment, 2nd NVA Division, and the 2nd NVA Division's intelligence and operations officers. The major didn't tell us that a battle plan had been captured for an attack on the morning of 4 January 1968. The only other high-level kill and intelligence coup of this magnitude took place at Khe Sanh on 2 January 1968. There an alert Marine outpost killed six NVA officers, including a regimental commander and his operations and communications officers. Again, ranking officers were personally checking a future battle site.

We landed again on the grassy knoll about four days later in a steady drizzle, and found a miserable place. The bunker beneath the boulders and the narrow trench had been used as graves. The back of one of the bodies in the trench was partially exposed by the rain and swarming with black beetles. One bloated, purple corpse was left in the middle of the trail leading to the top of the knoll. He was lying on his back with wide open eyes staring at the sky. We argued on the spot over whether this was a prisoner who had been executed or the man who had taken the first shot at our commander's gunship. The only good thing that day was that they didn't make us dig up the bodies.

The gunships completed the destruction of the NVA regiment's command post on 11 December 1967. This time it was the common soldiers — the privates and the sergeants — who died. They were found wandering in the rice paddies north of the armored base toward Ross. A company of the 4th Infantry Division swept through the area as our choppers hunted down each cluster of enemy soldiers. Many of them were carrying two or three rifles from men who had been hit in other battles. Most of them hardly bothered to resist. When the fight was over, 99 more NVA were dead. It would be hard to find a parallel in all of the Vietnam War for a single unit being so thoroughly destroyed by another unit, almost as if by vendetta.

The two victories made us media stars for a few weeks. Almost every landing by the Blues was accompanied by a news team. Our greatest honor was when Cathy LeRoy, the brave French photographer (she took the pictures of the Marines at Hill 881 and the NVA inside Hue) stepped off a chopper one day. She had come to the Cav to find some action, and division had sent her to us. She stayed with us for two weeks and later published pictures of the troop in *Look Magazine*. She was able to fly a lot of gunship missions and make some landings with the Blues. I remember one landing in the one-man bunkers. A Chinook with a full load of bodies had been shot down and we had to load them,

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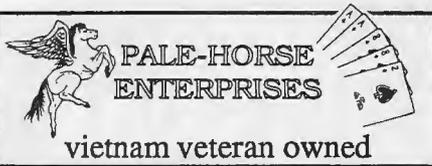
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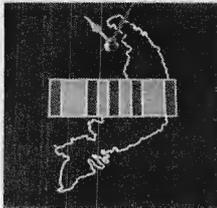
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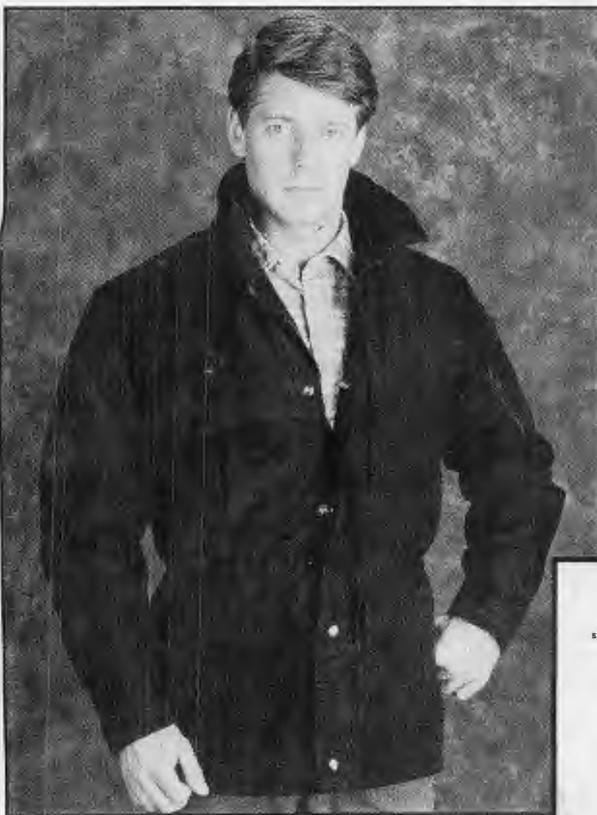
plus the bodies of the Chinook crew, onto a shuttle of Hueys. Cathy helped with the work with one of the saddest expressions I have ever seen. She later said that the Marines were brave like the French Foreign Legion, but the 1st Cav was her favorite unit. They could do anything. I like to think that she was talking about Bravo Troop.

The NVA attack came off as scheduled on 4 January 1968 and was stopped cold. Long Range Recon Patrol teams were inserted into the valley and had watched the enemy units assembling per the original battle plan we had captured. The bases were already on full alert. We were taken to Ross to stand by as our scouts and gunships hunted down stragglers escaping toward the western mountains. As the slicks circled over the knoll where it had begun, then dropped toward Ross, we passed over a staggered line of teenage bodies in green uniforms, faces up, feet pointing toward the perimeter wire about 80 meters away. They all had fresh NVA style haircuts. Machine guns had killed them while they were lining up for the attack. A two-wheeled farm cart, pulled by a water buffalo and filled with more bodies, was traveling down the single dirt road toward Ross. The farmer was taking them to Ross for burial.

The NVA attack had been conducted by the 2nd NVA Division and units from the 3rd NVA Division, which had marched 100 miles north to participate. It had proceeded on schedule, even though they should have

known that we had captured their battle plans. So much for arguments about the flexibility of the communists in that war. The attack had concentrated on three American fire bases and had managed to penetrate the wire of only one, Leslie, on the far western edge of the Que Son Valley. Fire from quad .50 machine guns had saved the day at Leslie. Most of the attack was the usual one-sided slaughter. Things would have been different if a man hadn't gotten nervous on 5 December and fired at Major Burrow's gunship.

Bravo Troop left the twin valleys with a Presidential Unit Citation and 915 enemy dead to its credit. We had captured 305 more, mostly in the early days there. Many of the captives had been young NVA soldiers who were helping the local farmers harvest rice as part of their political education. They were picked up by "hawk flights" (one squad of infantry on a single slick) in areas that the NVA considered safe. Many of them were working in their green uniforms, and the best hunting was on rainy days when the enemy did not expect to encounter helicopters. The captives typically were unarmed. At least the hardware was hidden by the time a slick roared in at rice paddy level to snatch them. Farther to the south, in Binh Dinh Province, we had taken the time to form a line to walk across paddies in search of military equipment. At Chu Lai we couldn't afford that luxury. The nearby villages were often garrisoned by



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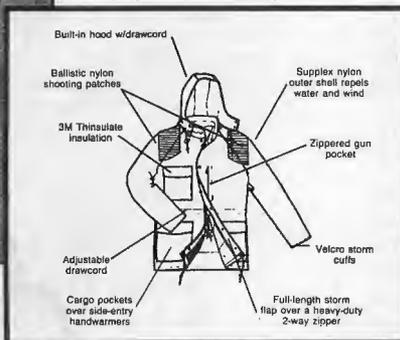
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NVA companies.

If you don't consider the battle damage to so many helicopters, our losses in the three-month operation were slight — one Blues radioman and two scout crewmen killed. I don't know how many were wounded, but there were probably many among the air crews. The important thing about the Troop was that we were not an elite formation, except through experience and "on-the-job" training. The unit was composed of volunteers and draftees, paratroopers and legs. The air crews had a peculiar shortage of pilots on their second or third tours in Vietnam. Veteran pilots knew what flying in the 1/9th was about and didn't ask to be sent there. Most of us were in our late teens or early 20s and didn't think that what we were doing was anything special. The only difference was the mission, our superb equipment, and the strong bond of comradeship that kept us together.

Chu Lai was Bravo Troop's finest hour. ✕

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 25

dyes, such as are used in U.S. and NATO vehicle paint schemes and battle dress uniforms (BDUs), are somewhat effective in deceiving this imagery and possibly other

battlefield sensors.

Signatures of Military Activity

Conventional black and white film is very effective in picking up military activity. Missions are generally flown shortly after daybreak and in the late afternoon before dusk, when light conditions are good but the low solar angle casts the longest shadows of the day. Winter is the ideal season for aerial reconnaissance, since shadows are long all day.

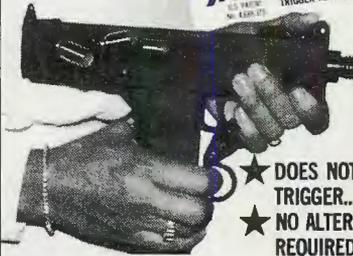
Any military activity leaves prominent signatures on snow. Ski tracks show up like interstate highways, and the long dark shadows of troops in the open are impossible to hide.

Shadow and shape are the two biggest problems for the grunt trying to hide from overhead observation. Camouflage paint does nothing to hide the distinct outlines and angular shadows of vehicles and weapons. Trucks and artillery should be positioned so their shadows blend with natural shadows and cover and moved if necessary to take advantage of shifting shadows. A common mistake is to park a truck in the shadow of a tree, only to have the vehicle cast its own distinctive shadow. Instead, it should be parked so the tree shadow overlies the truck's shadow.

Camouflage nets are good for breaking up outlines, and I've seen some ingenious uses of nets attached semi-permanently to self-propelled artillery so that net and gun can move in tandem. This is a useful capability in a move-and-shoot environment.

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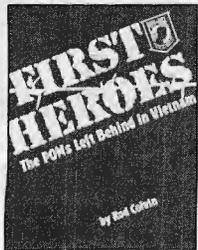
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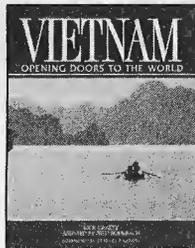
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Cut vegetation tied to the tops of vehicles and extending beyond their sides is also good — anything that will break up distinctive outlines. I've seen a RATT rig (Radio-Teletype) crew carry two sheets of irregularly cut plywood on the roof of the rig. When extended beyond the edge of the RATT box, and lashed down or weighted with a few big rocks, the plywood effectively destroyed the distinctive shadow cast by the unit. This field expedient blending of the unit was extremely effective.

Texture is another giveaway. A camo paint job may match the color of the terrain, but it rarely duplicates the texture. Since you're probably not going to be photographed by color film, texture is the most important consideration. Flat-topped vehicles like communication vans are especially vulnerable. Pile dirt, rumpled canvas, gunny sacks, or whatever is available on top of such equipment. The effect you're striving for is a ghillie suit for a truck, and the uglier, the better.

Track activity is the number one signature of military activity. Tankers are trained not to run on roads because of mine threats, and farmers don't run tracks and trucks across their fields, so the imagery analyst or aerial observer is going to be real interested in tracks cutting cross-country. Try to follow fence lines, natural terrain features, hedgerows, and so forth when possible. Moving in file when tactically possible will disguise the number of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles crossing an open area.

Being well dug-in and camouflaged does little good if fresh tracks lead to your position. One way to disguise your location is to continue past your position to a second logical endpoint, and then carefully back-track. The short stretch of tracks leading into your site can be hidden with a net or brushed out. Brushing is less effective, since damaged ground will show track scars for quite a while.

Movement of any kind, especially running, will grab the attention of an observer faster than anything. A common reaction by troops to a helicopter flying overhead is to spread-eagle on the ground, which just increases visibility to the pilot or door gunner. A better move is to hug a tree or any handy vertical structure so that your shadow blends with the terrain. And if no such opportunity is available, it may be better to freeze in place until the threat has passed. The time to conceal yourself is before the aircraft is overhead.

Antennas are another military signature. A dipole wire that is nearly invisible from the ground may cast a very distinctive shadow on aerial photographs. Fire direction control radars and SATCOM (satellite communications) dishes are also easily recognized. Position them in terrain or tree shadows to break up their outlines.

Satellites and Space Stations

SATCOM brings up the subject of satellites and spaceborne observers. Reconnaissance

Continued on page 96

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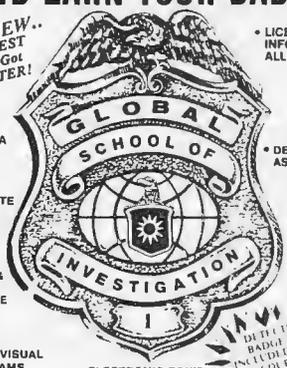
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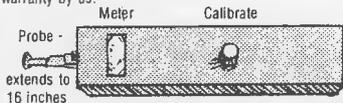
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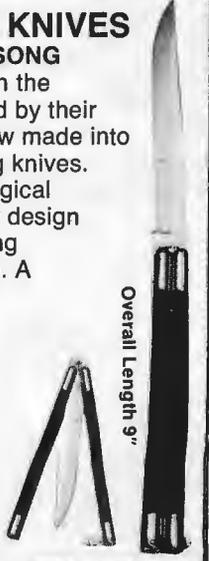
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ance satellites, like recce aircraft, are equipped with a variety of sensors, though conventional photographic systems are the most common. Image quality of advanced systems is excellent, but the big advantage of satellites is presence over denied airspace and relative invulnerability.

Their Achilles' heel is predictability. Activities can be scheduled to prevent observation, such as disassembling the Son Tay mock-up during the planning of that operation to prevent detection by Soviet satellites. This is changing, however, with modern orbiters that shift orbits on command.

The spaceborne human observer is a frightening fact of life for the ground-pounding grunt. The possibility of real-time reporting of one's movements by a cosmonaut safely out of reach of any attack is now a reality. Of course, we have the space shuttle.

I personally find the airborne systems more threatening because of their responsiveness and more immediate connection to weapons. For example, the HIND D can be fitted with SLAR, IR, and camera pods, creating a formidable intelligence system and weapons platform on the same airframe. After all, if the Soviet army is anything like the U.S. Army, it's going to take a long time for the information from that cosmonaut to filter down to the guys with the guns. But if that HIND picks up your scent, you've got a very immediate problem.

In Summary

That's a quick-and-dirty run-through of modern reconnaissance systems. The main points to keep in mind are:

1. The dangers of nighttime observation by SLAR and IR systems.
2. The importance of shadow in revealing equipment and troops.
3. The possibility of observation by aircraft or satellites stationed far beyond your airspace.
4. The increasing use of television and other sensors that allow immediate viewing of reconnaissance imagery.
5. The reduced visibility of light infantry and special operations troops compared to mechanized units.
6. The importance of the proven principles of camouflage — siting, camouflage discipline, and construction — and the three fundamental camouflage methods — blending, hiding, and deceiving.

Knowledge is your best weapon in avoiding detection by high performance reconnaissance systems. You need to keep the threat presented by these systems in mind without letting it paralyze you. Each system has weaknesses and you should plan your movements and actions to take advantage of those vulnerabilities.

Remember, if they can't see you, they won't shoot at you. ✕

TANK BUSTERS

Continued from page 61

is the border post on the main road from Jalalabad into the Khyber Pass. The mujahideen

occupied it after the Kabul regime garrison fled on 2 November, because the resistance, helped by the use of the MILAN, had made road resupply unworkable. But within 10 days, in mid-November, a purely Kabul regime counterattack (without Soviet forces), spearheaded by T-54 and T-55 tanks, was launched from Kabul and Jalalabad and temporarily retook Torkham. The mujahideen, surprised by the move, now swung back into action. They targeted the communist supply line from Jalalabad and again the MILAN proved important. MILANs were used by several Hezb commanders, including Engineer Ghaffur, who had been the first Afghan to use the Stinger SAM in September 1986, as well as NIFA commanders, including Lal Mohammed.

On 18 November, MILANs were used in action on the highway between Jalalabad and Torkham, with the mujahideen claiming four tanks and three other vehicles destroyed. A number of foreign journalists, brought in by the communists to witness their successful counterattack, were injured in the fighting along the highway.

By the end of November, unable to supply their armor, the communists pulled out of Torkham and returned to Jalalabad. During this operation, 11 MILAN rounds were fired and yielded 10 destroyed tanks. This represents tremendous accuracy by anyone's standards. The regime took pains to evacuate knocked-out tanks hit by the MILAN even though at other times in the war knocked-out tanks tended not to be evacuated, but rather rendered inoperable and abandoned (hence the large number of gutted vehicles that litter Afghanistan and provide places for journalists to have their picture taken).

But not all the knocked-out tanks were hauled back. British cameraman (and former paratrooper) Peter Jouvenal inspected one. "It had been hit low on the hull, knocking it out but leaving the gun intact. After it was abandoned, the mujahideen traversed the gun around and fired off the remaining ammunition at the government forces."

The battle for eastern Afghanistan is not the only place where the MILAN has been used. While the flat terrain and good tank territory near Kandahar make it a logical area for MILAN employment, they did not arrive there until October 1988. The first to arrive were one team each from Hezb-i-Islami (Khalis) and one from the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. The Hezb-i-Islami (Khalis) MILAN team had previously been used around Spin Boldak and Ganjiso, near the border with Pakistan. There were also reports at the same time that mullah Nakib Akhund, the foremost Jamiat-i-Islami commander around Kandahar, also received at least one launcher at the same time.

MILANs have started to spread to the west of Afghanistan, and Jamiat-i-Islami resistance forces around Shindand were anticipating their first MILAN deliveries in autumn 1988, the first crew having completed training. But political and geographical limitations in MILAN distribution

are still a problem, and by autumn 1988 no MILANs were reported in action north of the Hindu Kush, even though they could be most useful in trying to close the vital Salang Pass highway between Kabul and the Soviet Union or in the flat areas north of the mountains.

As long as fighting continues in Afghanistan, delivery of more MILANs is important. From May to October seven provincial capitals were taken by the Afghan resistance, but other cities, those that are vulnerable to tank attack (such as Qalat, the capital of Zabul Province) had to be abandoned. More MILANs would counter the ability of tank-led regime counterattacks in the months following the Soviet withdrawal. In addition, if the mujahideen get more and better MILANs it may help persuade the regime's military to cut a deal with the resistance rather than try to rely on their Soviet-made hardware to attempt to prevail on the battlefield. As the Stinger countered communist aircraft, the MILAN can counter their tanks.

David Isby, renowned expert on Soviet tactics and weaponry, is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

H&K P7K3

Continued from page 69

Pin Grabber. Manufactured by Kaswer Custom, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 13 Surrey Drive, Brookfield Center, CT 06805; phone 203-775-0564), this ammunition, produced also in calibers .45 ACP and 9mm Parabellum, was originally designed for competition shooting at bowling pins. It obviously has more serious applications. Velocity of this round varied from 775-850 fps, but the penetration was a consistent 15 inches, although the expansion was only up to .41 caliber. Even though we would like to see a little more expansion and still maintain this penetration depth, this is almost what we're looking for and, at this time, Pin Grabbers™ are the only .380 ACP ammunition SOF can recommend.

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