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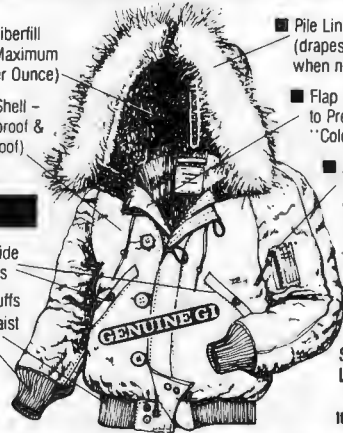
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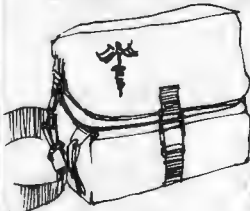
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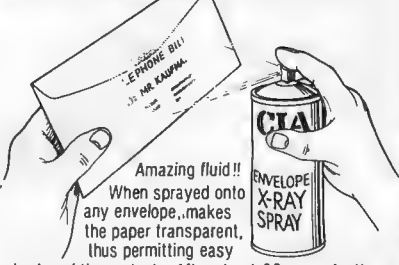
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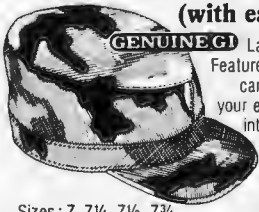
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## GOOD MORNING, CACHINGUES!

David James

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George Jones

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Peter Douglas

En route to the Panjshir Valley, our veteran SOF correspondent encounters Soviet MIAs, captured helicopter gunships, rival mujahideen groups, and a landscape littered with rusting Soviet hardware **40**

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Ron Thomas

Soviet gunships over the



# SOF

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United States? Not quite, but a Florida company *is* building exact Hind replicas for Army missilemen to shoot down. It's good training — but with a hefty price tag **50**

## 21ST CENTURY COMBAT RIFLE

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Neil Livingstone & David Halevy

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## COVER

COVER & INSET: SOF combat correspondent Peter Douglas encounters Soviet MIAs during his trek to the Panjshir Valley in Afghanistan; some of them won't be returning to Mother Russia (story starts on page 40). Photo: Peter Douglas. And veteran SOF'er Tom Marks talks with Sir Robert Thompson, the man who wrote the book on successfully countering insurgencies — which could have included Vietnam (story starts on page 58). Photo: DoD





# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## The Betrayal

**T**HE stink of Jimmy Carter hangs heavy in the air.

The hallmarks of the Carter administration were its willingness to betray its friends, its flip-flops, its insistence on putting symbols before substance, and its seemingly instinctive attraction to half-measures and ineffective programs whenever it was required to produce public policy. In its handling of the gun issue, the Bush administration has displayed them all.

A powerful case can be made for the proposition that American gun owners elected George Bush. The NRA has figures showing that in perhaps a dozen states voters from NRA member households supplied Bush's margin of victory. Had those states gone the other way Michael Dukakis would be in the White House today. Bush had made Dukakis' pathological anti-gun phobia a major campaign theme, along with his own lifetime membership in the NRA, yet just weeks after taking office he endorsed the recommendation of William Bennett, his so-called drug czar, that the importation of most semiautomatic rifles be banned in the name of keeping them out of the hands of drug dealers. The ban, which he subsequently made permanent by forcing the BATF to produce one of the most disgracefully dishonest policy reviews ever undertaken by a federal agency (see page 96), turned what had been the normal anti-gun posturing of liberal cranks into the most serious attack on the Second Amendment in 50 years. It constituted a betrayal by Bush of the heart of his constituency before he had even completed his first 100 days in office. Not even the Carter administration was that deceitful.

Bush's flip-flop on the gun issue is far more troubling than were any of Carter's for what it says about his character. Carter's flip-flops showed him to be weak and vacillating, a man who allowed his mind to be changed by small facts, but he rarely flip-floped on issues involving fundamental values. Bush abandoned his allegedly life-long support of the right to keep and bear arms as casually as if he were cancelling a magazine subscription.

And what is more, it was done for entirely symbolic reasons. Banning guns will do nothing to reduce either drug smuggling or drug use and both Bennett and Bush know it. Bennett obviously instituted the ban to show he was "doing something" about the drug problem. That is profoundly dishonest. Is it a war on drugs, or really a war on liberties some in government have historically found inconvenient?

Finally, there is not a shred of evidence that banning semiautomatic rifles will keep them out of the hands of drug dealers, nor is it even clear that they are often used in drug-related crime. In the best traditions of Jimmy Carter, the entire exercise creates a problem where none existed and then deals with it incompetently.

A few days before the BATF made the import ban permanent, Bush proposed a new constitutional amendment to prohibit desecration of the flag. You have to wonder why he bothered when he has such profound contempt for the existing amendments. ✕

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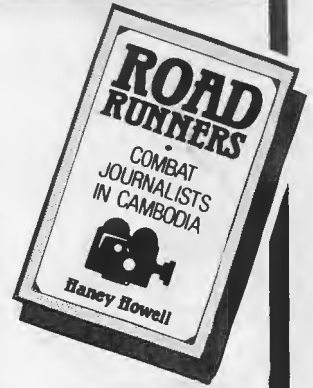
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**ROADRUNNERS**  
 Combat Journalists in Cambodia  
 by Haney Howell

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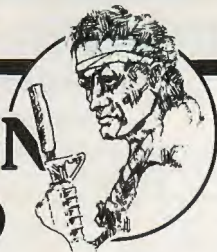
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GOFTEH BANDE (I agree with everything you have ever said or thought in your life).  
AUTO ARRAREGH  
DAVATEMAN MANO  
SEPAHEH-HAST (It is exceptionally kind of you to allow me to travel in the trunk of your car).

FASHAL-EH  
TUPEHMAN NA  
DEGAT MANO  
GOFTAM  
CHESHAYEH  
MOHEMARA  
JEBEHKESHV  
AREHMAN (If you will do me the kindness of not harming my genital appendages I will gladly reciprocate by betraying my country in public).  
KHREL, JEPHEH  
MANEH VA JAYEII  
AMERIKAHAY (I will tell you the names and addresses of many American spies traveling as reporters).

BALLI, BALLI, BALLI!  
(Whatever you say)!  
TIKEH NUNEH BA OB  
KHRELLEH BEZORG  
VA KHRUBE BOYAST  
INO BEGERAM (The water-soaked bread crumbs are delicious, thank you. I must have the recipe).

MATERNIER  
GHERMEZ AHLIEH,  
GHORBAN (The red blindfold would be lovely, excellency).

# BULLETIN BOARD



There are still a lot of Nicaraguan refugees from communism in Honduras. People in Guatemala and El Salvador suffer terror and displacement from communist insurrections, and die from lack of medical attention. Here pallets of medical supplies from Refugee Relief International, Inc. are en route to the Threshold Foundation and their medical project in Guatemala. Medical supplies of most types — except items which must be refrigerated or locked up — are urgently needed. Look at a map, folks: these are our neighbors. Your donations of cash, medical supplies and equipment are tax-deductible. Send items or a check to: Refugee Relief International, Inc. c/o SOF Warehouse, 5735 Arapahoe, Boulder CO 80303. If you want to know more what RRII is all about, see their booth at the SOF convention in Vegas this September.

## FRANTIC F-15s FOLLOW PHANTOM FIGHTER: FREE-FLYING "FLOGGER" FINALLY FLOPS ON FLEMISH FAMILY FOLLOWING FLAMEOUT...

When a Soviet MiG-23 "Flogger" took off from Kolberg, Poland, on 4 July the pilot thought he had lost power, so he bailed out. Plane sans pilot and canopy flew on across Poland, East Germany, West Germany and into Belgium near the French border before it ran out of fuel and dropped on a house, killing the lone occupant. Two U.S. F-15s scrambled from Soesterberg base in the Netherlands as the plane crossed into Western air space, and as it was not armed with offensive weapons, or piloted, they flew escort in hopes it would make the English Channel before it crashed. It almost did. Soviet authorities report the pilot is alive. But will probably have a long enlistment left before he pays off the Flogger.

## LOST AND FOUND NO. 1...

Keith Hine, 188th ORD Co., Vietnam: write Joan Harrington, 11450 Second St., Treasure Island, FL 33706, if you want your Zippo back.

## LOST AND FOUND NO. 2...

Look what Santa Claus left for Salvadoran intel agents, buried in sugar sacks in San Salvador: 343 Soviet AKs with 150 rifle scabbards and over a million rounds of 7.62x39mm ammo (with Cuban headstamps dating manufacture as late as 1988) plus 268 bayonets and 1,394 magazines, three Sov RPD machine guns, 88 Hungarian 9mm pistols with 184 magazines and 43 holsters plus 1,743 rounds of ammo, 25 .45 pistols plus 55 magazines, 30 Sov RPG-18s and RPG-7s and 174 assorted rounds, five U.S. LAWs, three improvised bangalore torpedoes, 50 Sov F-1 frag grenades, 892 pounds of TNT, 197 rolls of Flex-X plastic explosive, 200 meters det cord, 300 meters fuse, 16 travel alarms (modified as time delays), 5,000 blasting caps, and a cartridge in a pear tree.

SOF's sources indicate the goodies came from Nicaragua in air conditioned trucks and were destined for use by FMLN "commandos" in a series of terrorist attacks planned for June. Salvadoran police were led to the cache, the biggest ever found there, by a captured FMLN terrorist.

## LOST AND FOUND NO. 3...

One Hanoi Jane, lost in Sequoia National Park 18-19 June. After losing her way Ms. Fonda reportedly wrapped herself in a blanket (or was it a VC flag) and waited overnight to be rescued.

## TRUTH BE TOLD...

In this world where we rate Mikhail Gorbachev as the best thing since chocolate chips hit cookies, the media tends to overlook the fact that the Soviet machine might *actually* have something to do with





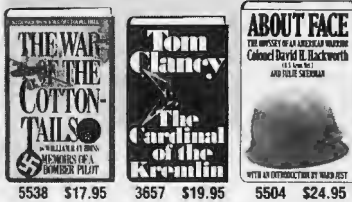
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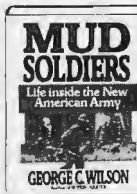
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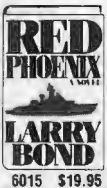
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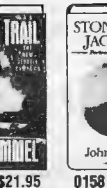
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06





supporting militant revolutionary groups that would like to see everything in Sub-Saharan Africa become a Soviet satellite.

There's one publication, however, that looks at the facts, and isn't afraid to buck the mainstream media trend of putting whitewash on red stars. *The Aida Parker Newsletter — Perspective on Southern Africa* is a hardhitting monthly report that demands reading — if you'd care to hear the *other* side of the story.

It's expensive — \$60 a year — but we think that's a small price to pay for the truth. For more information, or to send your subscription, contact APN, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 91059, Auckland Park 2006, Republic of South Africa.

## SRI LANKA NOW INDIAN COUNTRY...

Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has flatly rejected a Sri Lankan government request that India *withdraw its* 45,000 soldiers from the island. Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa asked India to withdraw its forces, citing their right to do so under the agreement that brought the Indian peacekeeping force to the island in 1987 to disarm Tamil separatists (see "Tamil Tigers of Eelam," SOF, October '88). In making his refusal, Gandhi stated, "India was a joint guarantor of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement and until it is fully completed we are responsible, primarily for the security of Tamils in

Sri Lanka, but also for the unity and integrity of that island." History again finds a people seeking protection from their protectors.

## CRUEL SHOES?...

Over 200 people were reported injured and one killed in predominantly Moslem Bangladesh when Moslems attacked shops owned by the Canadian-based Bata Shoe Company. Protesting Moslems considered a design on certain Bata sandals to be "blasphemous" as it bears a resemblance to the Arabic characters for "Allah." The shoes are manufactured in Bangladesh by Bata, who issued a public apology, saying the design's similarity to the name Allah was unintentional, and that the design was in fact provided to them by a Bangladeshi Moslem. The perceived affront was compounded by the fact that Moslems consider the sole of the foot to be a symbol of disrespect. Five Bata executives were ordered to appear before a magistrate to answer charges. Meanwhile, back in Washington our extreme court has ruled it's OK to burn the flag.

## YELLOW RAIN FOR HANOI JANE?...

From the tacky-if-true department comes scuttlebutt of Viet Vets who have calculated that they — based on median ages — will mostly

outlive Hanoi Jane. Why is this calculation germane? Seems there is a movement afoot among Viet Vets who plan to eventually anoint her final resting place. That will probably require a Vietnamese visa and a six-pack to go. R. I. Pee, Ms. Hanoi.

## POOR MAN'S NUKES...

Speaking of Chem/Bio warfare, Iraq is thought to currently be the world's largest CW producer, churning out 720 tons of mustard gas and 96 tons of nerve gas a year at the State Enterprise for Pesticide Production plant at Samarra. Secret research on even more potent nerve gases is conducted at Salman Pak. Four other facilities capable of gas production have been identified. Libya, North Korea, Burma, Ethiopia and Vietnam are among some 20 Third World nations reportedly producing or stockpiling chemical weapons. In West Germany the former director of a chemical company accused of helping Libya build a chemical weapons plant has been arrested.

## NEW GUINEA, NEW GOLD...

Mt. Kare, Papua New Guinea, is the site of one of the richest gold strikes in recent history, with natives getting as much as two troy ounces *per pan* from an alluvial deposit sloughing off the south side of the mountain. Commercial exploration for lode-type deposits has begun. Traditional shell money is being replaced by ounce 'n bigger nuggets among the natives, who have already recovered an estimated quarter of a million ounces by hand. At 9,000 feet the rush area is cold, wet, inhospitable, and supplied by chopper. Broke promoters, trinket traders not welcome. Try T.C. Welsh, Principal Economic Geologist, Geological Survey of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, for info.

## A 40TH FOR THE 25TH...

Current and former members of 25th Infantry Division will meet for their 40th annual reunion in Washington, D.C. in November. Write 25th Inf. Div. Assoc., Box 5439 Friendship Station, Washington, DC 20016.

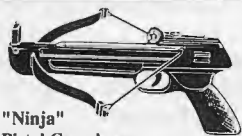
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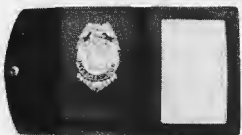


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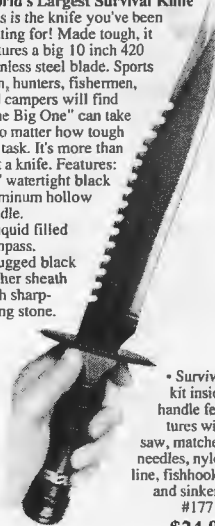
## Wrist Lock Slingshot

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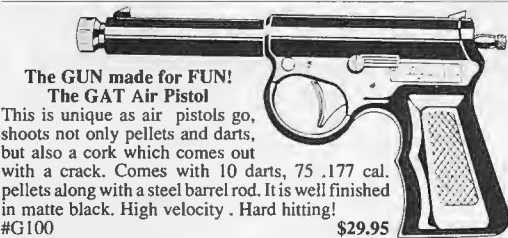
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## PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY IT WAS NOT...

Sirs:

In your August issue, received in early July, the Bulletin Board talks about the People's Liberation Army of Red China perhaps being a real "People's Liberation Army," since at the time of its writing the massacre of the Chinese demonstrators had not yet taken place.

A few years ago I wrote, criticizing SOF for its softening stand on Red China, advertising for Chinese communist firearms, etc. You should be ashamed for falling for the liberals' belief in the "good" communists. The only good communists are those with a bullet or bayonet letting in the fresh air. I hope you have learned the lesson of your Red Chinese glasnost. Next time just go to Disneyland for your fantasy trips.

John F. Mueller  
Toledo, Ohio

*Point well taken. At the time the item was written, the PLA's 38th Army had refused orders to enter Beijing and suppress the demonstrations, which was the reason for the item's optimistic tone. A number of the latter's officers have since reportedly been executed for their mistaken belief that they were the army of the people. We will obviously be more careful in the future about letting hope triumph over reason.*



# FLAK



## THEY WOULDN'T DO THAT...

Sirs:

I'm writing for two reasons.

First, I wish to thank you for a splendid magazine.

Second, one of the Swedish workers at Bai Bang, Vietnam, claimed about a year ago to have seen what must have been American POWs. She was in the news for a short spell, but no one believed her. After all, Sweden would not send aid to a nation that kept POWs so long after the end of the war? (Sarcasm.) Or violated human rights? (Grosser sarcasm.)

C. Carlsson  
Sweden

*Other readers have pointed out that a Japanese monk released by Hanoi in January told of seeing Americans still being held prisoner. Hanoi, of course, denied that any "Americans" were held. In a Wall Street Journal article, reporter Bill Paul pointed out that Hanoi's interpretation of the 1949 Geneva Convention "allows it to strip a POW of his rights — including even his nationality — the moment he is accused of being a war criminal." "War criminal" and "POW" were generally synonymous to Hanoi, and they equate a war criminal to a common criminal. In their minds, they have no obligation to release information on "common criminals." As Paul wrote, "Thus, Hanoi could still be holding hundreds of U.S. soldiers and yet publicly deny holding any American prisoners."*

*We, and countless other organizations and individuals, have been shaking the U.S. government bureaucratic tree for years in a so-far futile attempt to jerk some positive action loose on accountability for our POW/MIA service personnel in Southeast Asia. We'll keep trying.*

## GUN GRAB '89...

Sirs:

Mao Tse Tung once said, "Political power comes from the barrel of a gun." This fact is being well illustrated by on-going events in China. Also well illustrated is what happens to a disarmed populace.

More "gun control" anyone?

Just say no.

Del E. Myers  
Tucson, Arizona

Why hasn't the NRA:

Brought out the fact that it's the handgun control groups yelling the loudest to ban rifles. Pete Shields and Michael Beard have been lying all these years saying that their groups would never want to ban long guns.

Brought out the fact that for years anti-gun groups have been using the "Miller case test" to show cheap handguns are not constitutionally protected because they are not "militia (military) weapons." Today they contend that a gun has to have a "sporting purpose" to be legitimately owned by the public and protected by the Constitution and that military weapons should be banned.

Made the case that the current move to ban semiautomatics is not a result of Patrick Purdy, but started several years ago in California. The Metzenbaum bill was drafted long before the Stockton incident.

Exposed the inconsistency in the purported reason to ban semiautomatics. The public was first told it was to keep these weapons out of the hands of the likes of Purdy. Recently, the story has changed and now semiautos have been linked to drug trafficking. They're now the "weapon of choice among drug dealers and criminals." (The Saturday Night Special has lost that top spot, we suppose.)

Brought up the fact that the Second Amendment doesn't limit itself to only "sporting guns" or "guns that the government determines have a sporting purpose."

Expressed the position of many NRA members that this ban is where the government crosses the line into tyranny.

We could go on, but you should get the point. The sorry state we find ourselves in is a direct result of compromising and appeasing the liberal press by appearing to be "reasonable." The anti-gun rabble, like jackals, look for any signs of weakness. When they find them,



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they attack en masse with incredible viciousness. The NRA has shown weakness with predictable results.

Donald M. Reilly, Annual Member

Donald J. Reilly, Life Member  
Jackson, Mississippi

## PLAYING WITH FIRE...

Sirs:

My only question is, "What in the hell is going on here?" First we see an assault on our right to own and use modern firearms and now the country's highest court tells some flag burning puke that what he did is within his rights? I am sure that I speak for most of America's veterans when I say, "Like hell he is!"

I have a message for anyone who would like to burn the flag in my presence. Try burning a flag in front of me and you'll get a free trip to the hospital to think about the error in your ways! Those of us who would die for that flag are "mad as hell and we're not going to take it anymore!" You can take that to the bank!

Richard L. Fields  
Stanwood, Iowa

Like everyone else, I was annoyed by the Supreme Court's decision on flag burning being a freedom protected by the First Amendment. What is the difference between burning a flag, a cross, or painting swastikas?

All three forms of "expression are

done to antagonize the viewers." If one is to be covered, then the others should be also.

My interpretation of the First Amendment is that I have the freedom to express words and values. I do it in good taste and in ways that conform to society's standards.

The Court decided that the freedom of expression should be protected even if it is in bad taste. The above forms of "expression" are in bad taste and definitely do not conform to society's norm. I guess that is what freedom is all about.

Carmine Pescatore  
Freehold, New Jersey

## THAT WAS NO HIND.....

Sirs:

Re: Soviet Hinds in America (Flak, SOF, July '89), what Mr. Fusselman saw was a Korean War-era Sikorsky H-55 specially converted to resemble the Hind-D/E by liberal use of fiberglass — not the Made in USSR version. . . .

Jack E. Hammond  
Defense Data  
Spiceland, Indiana

Several sharp-eyed readers have pointed out to us that the armed forces are acquiring U.S.-built Hind imitations based on the Sikorsky H-55 for training and R&D purposes. See "Homebrewed Hinds," on page 50 of this issue.

## THE GREEN LIE...

Sirs:

Your comments on "Viet-Vet Impostors" (Bulletin Board, SOF, Aug. '89) were a little on the "Tiananmen Square" side. Please consider this, if you will.

When I joined up in the early 1960s, I had a high school friend who was going to join with me on the "Buddy System" that the services had going then. I was accepted, but he was rejected for astigmatism. Xin loi! But, he wanted to go.

And this is precisely the point I want to make. You all know the many divisions brought about in our society as a result of the war. Now, many people are looking back at the war years and feeling shame for coming down so hard on the soldiers who went voluntarily or by draft to Southeast Asia. I will grant you that there are a lot of "cowboys" out there, but there are also beaucoup people who wanted to go but for one reason or the other could not, and there are even those who disagreed with the war who now feel shamed they did not go.

My buddy is just such a person. Even in my presence he will tell people of "our" exploits in uniform. I personally think that it's a pity, even a tragedy, like so much else that made up the war. Perhaps we to some degree share in this problem, as there has been a recent "glorification" of the war through books, films and the like. Every man wants to be brave, or wishes that he could be, so don't come down so hard on these people. As long as they're not asking for GI benefits or trying for public office, no sweat. Besides, it is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Semper Fi!

Boyce C. Wright  
Florida

*Granted, there are some who did not serve through no fault of their own or for entirely honorable reasons, but we can't sanction saying that you participated in a war when you did not. That is living a lie, and those who do it dishonor both themselves and those who were there. To take it one step further, how many troops actually had bullets thrown their way? To hear it told now, there couldn't have been more than 10 or so logistics types in Vietnam for the number of "There I was up to my neck in VC" stories currently afloat. But, we begrudge those far less than distorting actual service in the war.*



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**T**HE RPG-7 is the most common infantry antitank rocket launcher in the world today. Both the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC) export this weapon in prodigious quantities, and it is made by 10 other countries. Press reports indicate that the RPG-7 and its variants can be found in nearly every Third World country and that they are used by most guerrilla movements. In a future conflict, the likelihood of finding large numbers of unexpended RPG-7 rounds is great. The round itself can be used as an off-route antitank mine using techniques similar to those of the M24 3.5-inch off-route mine kit.

In all probability, the Germans invented the off-route mine by adopting their Panzerfaust antitank rocket for this task. The three advantages of off-route mines are surprise, minimal equipment and greater discretion in hitting desired high-value targets. The United States M66 off-route mine kit has a seismic alert device that senses the vibrations of a vehicle. This arms the mine, and when the vehicle breaks an IR beam, the rocket is fired. Normally, this mine is used for an ambush with troops, or, if left unattended, as a boobytrap. Nearly any antitank rocket can be converted into an off-route mine. The 3.5-inch rocket is the basis for the United States M24/M66 off-route mines.

The RPG-7 (Soviet) or Type 69 (PRC) round is a rocket-assisted grenade weighing 4.6 pounds, with an overall length of 36.62 inches (93 cm). The diameter of the PG-7 sustainer motor and booster is 40mm, however for the booster to ignite properly, the internal diameter of the last half of the RPG-7 launcher is greater than 40mm. When fired from the launcher, this round has a maximum range of 920 meters. The Soviet PG-7 rocket has a self-destruction fuse set for 920 meters, whereas the Chinese PG-7 does not. The round arms at 5 meters and has an initial velocity of 117 meters/second. At 11 meters, the sustainer motor ignites, accelerating the round to 294 meters/second. The HEAT warhead has a point-initiating, base-detonating fuse and can penetrate 13 inches (330mm) of armor at 90 degrees. There are two different Soviet PG-7 antitank rounds, the familiar 85mm warhead, and the newer PG-7V 70mm warhead. Both rounds function in the same manner.

Both the Soviet and PRC PG-7 HEAT rounds are painted drab olive green. Soviet PG-7 rounds are packed six to a crate, but Chinese PG-7 rounds are packaged four to a box. Soviet practice rounds are painted black, whereas the PRC practice rounds most often appear as unpainted natural



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

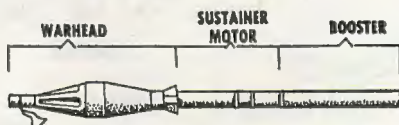
by David W. Szelowski

## Ad Hoc HEAT

steel. The Soviet two-man RPG-7 team will carry five rounds, two with the gunner and three with the assistant gunner. These rounds are carried in an accessory bag that will contain tools for the launcher in addition to the rounds. The grenade is packaged in two parts: the sustainer motor/warhead as one unit, and the booster as the second. The round must be assembled before launching.

Once fired, the RPG-7 round is stabilized by four small fins that deploy upon leaving the launching tube. These fins spin the round in flight, giving the round added accuracy. When firing in a cross wind, the combination of an oversized warhead with small fins causes the round to fly up-wind.

When used as an expedient off-route mine the RPG-7 will have five components: the PG-7 rocket, launching tube, firing pin, trigger, and a trip wire. All of these items can usually be found on the battlefield. With the exception of the PG-7 round, the remaining items are field expedients that are non-standard.



Arrangement of PG-7 round.

### Launcher

A plastic (PVC) pipe with an internal diameter greater than 50mm and a length of about 37.5 inches (950mm) can be used as the launcher. PVC pipe is generally used for electrical conduit and light plumbing and can frequently be found in newer buildings. American PVC pipes come in 1/4-inch increments, and the smallest suitable size is 1.75 inches. A metal pipe, of copper, steel or aluminum, can also be used and should have the same diameter as the PVC pipe.

The pipe must not be warped and an inspection of the interior is necessary to insure the pipe is straight and that no foreign objects obstruct it.

Set the PG-7 round next to the pipe,

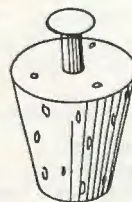
so that the warhead extends beyond the edge of the pipe. Find the percussion cap on the booster of the PG-7, approximately 9 inches (225mm) from the bottom edge of the warhead. Mark that location on the PCV tube, and drill a 1/2 to 3/4-inch hole in the pipe there. If a drill is not available, a heated cleaning rod or screwdriver can be used. This hole will be the firing pin assembly hole. For the metal, if a drill is not available, drive a large nail into the pipe, but be careful not to dent the pipe.

If a plastic pipe cannot be found, an expended M72 LAW launcher can be used. The firing pin hole is easiest to drill on the bottom side of the launcher. The LAW launcher needs to be fully extended.

Use a flexible piece of wood or flexible metal and secure one end to the back-blast end of the tube. It may be necessary to place a small piece of wood on the back-blast end of the tube, to give the striker a greater bend and additional force. This striker should be about 900mm long. Tape, rope or wire can be used to secure the striker to the tube.

### Firing Pin Assembly

A cork stopper, of the type found in wine bottles, should be used. The stopper may require carving so that the assembly will fit into the hole made in the pipe. When placed into the trigger hole, the stopper should just touch the PG-7 round. Once carved properly, drill a small hole in the center of the cork. If a drill is not available, cut the cork lengthwise, and carve a channel. Use tape or wire to put the cork back together. A nail is placed in the drilled hole so that the sharp end is flush with the end of the cork.



Wine bottle cork and nail used as firing pin assembly.



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If a cork stopper is unavailable, the nail can be loosely wrapped in paper, and loosely fitted in the trigger hole. The nail needs to be able to move and strike the percussion cap on the PG-7, but tight enough not to fall out of the firing pin hole.

### Triggers

The striker, when released, will hit the firing pin, firing the rocket. This is done by using a trip wire arrangement, positioned in the same manner as trip wire-activated snares. There are two recommended methods, although numerous variations exist and can be effective.

Attach the trip wire to a small stick about 6 inches long. This trigger is placed so as to keep the striker away from the firing pin until removed by a sharp tug on the trip wire.

A second method is to tie the trip wire to a notched wood trigger. The notched wood must be anchored. A trip wire is attached to the side of the wood trigger. The notched part of the stake is placed at the muzzle end of the striker. Again, when the trip wire is moved, it allows the striker to hit the firing pin, which in turn sets off the mine.



"Safety" set in place to protect firing pin while trigger and trip wire are rigged and set.



PG-7 rocket in improvised tube, improvised firing pin in place, improvised striker being held by trigger and trip wire.

### Preparation of PG-7 round for firing

Remove the PG-7 rocket grenade from the carrying case or shipping container. If the grenade is in the shipping container, remove the plastic wrapper. The A-gunner's carrying case will contain up to three rounds, and these are more likely to be affected by weather as they will have been removed from their protective plastic packaging. Moisture can affect the booster, which is mostly black powder. In either case, close inspection of the rounds is important. If defects, cracked casings or dents are detected, the round should not be used.

Remove the shipping cap from the end of the rocket and grenade assembly. Assemble the booster element to the rocket and grenade assembly by screwing it clockwise until hand tight.

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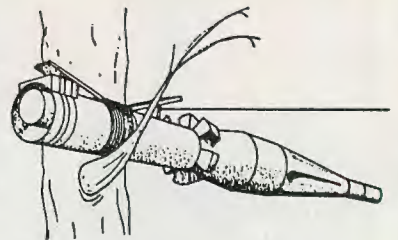
### Final setup of mine

Select the off-route mine site. For best results the mine should set to be fired broadside against an armored target. The firing tube can be placed in an elbow of a tree or bush. If necessary, the tube can be placed on some high ground and supported by rocks or dirt. The PG-7 must be at least 6 inches from the ground so that the fins can deploy.

Set up the trip wire, leaving some slack beside the firing tube. Load the PG-7 round into the tube assembly. Make sure that the firing pin hole is lined up with the percussion cap of the PG-7 round. The diameter of the PG-7 round is 40mm and the pipe used should be larger. Loosely pack into the muzzle scrap paper or cloth, until the forward part of the PG-7 round is flush with the top of the firing tube. Again, remember, the round must leave the pipe easily. Pull off the safety cap from the nose of the PG-7. This is accomplished by pulling the tape attached to it.

Pull back on the striker wood ("cock" it) and support the striker with a solid object (a "safety") taller than the firing pin assembly. Place the firing pin assembly into the firing pin hole. Tie the trip wire onto the trigger. Pull back on the striker and set the trigger, keeping the solid "safety" object in place until the trigger is solidly set. Gently remove the safety block. The mine is now armed.

**WARNING: SUCH IMPROVISED FIRING TUBES ARE LIKELY TO RUPTURE UPON FIRING OF THE WEAPON! REMIND FRIENDLY TROOPS TO BE CLEAR OF THE AREA AT THE TIME OF FIRING.**



PG-7 aimed from crook of tree (lashing not shown); may also be fired from high ground as long as there is 6-inch clearance for tail fins to deploy, should be camouflaged and protected from weather.

### Weapon Considerations

Because the firing tube is non-standard, the range and drop of the round is non-standard. The PG-7, when fired from its intended launcher, will drop nearly 6 meters at 200 meters range. If the booster does not ignite completely, the drop will be greater. Thus the mine should be placed as high as possible, in a tree or cliff top, pointed toward the target. The range should be under 100 meters. At 100



meters, the rocket should drop between 3 and 8 meters. Launching the weapon from 6 meters high will increase the target area by nearly three times. The additional benefit of firing downward is that the thinner armor on the top of the tank can more easily be breached than can the front or sides. Fortunately, the new Soviet reactive armor currently does not protect the top of their tanks.

In setting up the mine, assume that the intended target will be moving. At 30 mph, this equates to 13.5 meters/second. At 100 meters, the flank shot lead should be between 6 and 7 meters ahead of the trip wire.

In setting up the "kill zone" for the weapon, the tube needs to be aligned with the general area to be attacked. Pace off the correct lead, then bore-sight the weapon 6 meters over the intended target area.

**REMINDER: SUCH IMPROVISED FIRING TUBES ARE LIKELY TO RUPTURE UPON FIRING OF THE WEAPON! FRIENDLY TROOPS NEED TO BE REMINDED TO BE CLEAR OF THE AREA AT THE TIME OF FIRING.**

In wet weather, the round must be protected from as much moisture as possible. Plastic can be loosely fitted over the backblast end and a rain "hat" placed over the warhead. Leaves and bushes can be used to keep rain out as well as concealing the mine in natural camouflage.

The shipping cap can be placed on the fuse if there is light brush or if poor weather is expected. The contact fuse is extremely sensitive, and hail or light brush can prematurely set off the warhead.

Any rope, string, or wire can serve as a trip wire. However, fishing line, with a test strength of 10 pounds or greater, works best. Transparent fishing line is the most difficult to detect.

#### Tactical Employment

The PG-7 round travels 100 meters in 0.5 seconds, 200 meters in 0.9 seconds and 300 meters in 1.3 seconds. Care in the positioning of the rocket must be taken as a Soviet tank can travel 13 meters per second. This is fast enough to cause a miss if the mine is incorrectly aimed.

The average height of a man is just under two meters, or about 180 cm. The T-72 and T-80 are 93 inches (239 cm) and 90 inches (230 cm) high, respectively. The BMP-2 is 82.6 inches (210 cm) high. In all cases, the radio antenna extends nearly a meter over all of these AFVs. If a trip wire is used to set off the mine, the wire should be placed no higher than 118 inches or 9 feet 10 inches (300cm) above the target area; 250 to 260 cm is recommended against

Continued on page 74

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## ADVENTURE AND INTRIGUE



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**D**O "assault guns" (whatever they are) serve a "sporting purpose?" As citizens of the United States, our individual right to possess and use firearms is guaranteed by the Second Amendment of the Constitution, no matter what gun prohibitionists may fantasize about its application to only "organized" militias or the National Guard. All of this is rather explicitly expressed and clarified in the ancillary writings of the Founding Fathers. The Second Amendment is in no way concerned with sporting activities.

Why then, must we even address this absurd question? Simply because we gave the enemies that would destroy us this foolish criterion for the importation of firearms in the Gun Control Act of 1968, that's why. And now we must pay the piper for our mistake.

Before we discuss the sporting uses to which such firearms may be put, we should attempt to define this ominous genus so recently uncovered by the media and anti-gun politicians and which they have chosen to paint as "assault guns." By what taxonomic features can they be distinguished from other firearms?

The term "assault gun" is, of course, a media corruption of "assault rifle," which is derived in turn from the German expression "Sturmgewehr" (attack or assault rifle). The German World War II StG 44/45 was the first of its type to be fielded in significant quantities. After half a century of continued development, military small arms authorities are by now in general agreement concerning an assault rifle's essential characteristics.

They are principally threefold. First, and most important, assault rifles are all capable of full-auto fire. This characteristic enables them to deliver an intense blanket of fire during the critical phase of an infantry assault upon an enemy's position. Without this all-important selective-fire capability, a hand-held infantry weapon, by definition, cannot be an assault rifle. Second, they are most commonly chambered for a so-called "intermediate-size" rifle (not pistol) cartridge, such as the original German 7.92x33mm Kurz or the ComBloc 7.62x39mm and U.S. 5.56x45mm. As a corollary, the almost full-size 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge is far too powerful to permit effective full-auto fire in a lightweight rifle, and the U.S. M14 and Belgian FN FAL weapons chambered for *this* round have been traditionally referred to as "battle rifles." A final salient feature of a true assault rifle is that it be lightweight, although there is no agreed upon standard in this area.

The semiautomatic-only versions of



# FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

## Assaulting Rifles



**High-power shooters step up to the firing line during a sanctioned match in full regalia and armed with M1 Garand and Springfield Armory M1As (semiautomatic-only version of the M14). The young lady and her sun bonnet belie Senator Metzenbaum's sinister picture of these firearms and defamatory descriptions of their owners. Photo: courtesy National Rifle Association**

these rifles, almost entirely creatures of the 1968 Gun Control Act, are most emphatically not assault rifles. Importation of these firearms was approved by the BATF only after it determined through inspection and testing that they were not readily convertible to full-auto fire. Numerous import applications were, in fact, denied until specimens were provided that met the inflexible criteria established by the BATF's Technical Services Department.

In method of operation (whether blowback, recoil or gas) these semiautomatic-only firearms cannot be distinguished from rifles, such as the Winchester Model 07, that have been available to American shooters for more than 80 years. If they are not really assault rifles and differ in no way internally from firearms that existed even before the inauspicious birth of Howard Metzenbaum, why then are we involved in this hysterical imbroglio? It's all the more perplexing as

there are 20 to 30 million semiautomatic firearms in the United States, and nationally only four percent of all homicides involve rifles of any type — bolt-action, slide-action, lever-action or semiauto. Less than one-half of one percent of these homicides are committed with military-style semiautos. I find it interesting to note that 35 percent of all homicides involve the use of knives, blunt objects, hands, feet or strangulation (none of which go bang).

It's further alleged that our police have been caught in a deadly crossfire from semiauto Kalashnikovs and AR-15s. Yet, the FBI's 1987 Uniform Crime Reports indicate that police slayings have dropped 22 percent from 1978, a time when military-style semiautos were not commonly available.

We must realize, once and for all, that the ultimate goal of the gun prohibitionists is nothing short of the complete elimination of all privately owned firearms from our society — their self-righteous disclaimers to the contrary.

Semiautomatic-only versions of assault and battle rifles appear externally sinister to the uninitiated. The very real distinctions between them and selective-fire machine guns can be, and have been, easily blurred by the anti-gun goons and their unscrupulous cohorts in the media.

Purdy's act of insanity in Stockton served as a convenient catalyst to launch an attack against semiautomatic firearms that had been in the plan-



ning stages more than a year prior. It was of little consequence to our opponents that the entire incident was a clear example of the dismal failure of the California justice system. It was of little consequence to them that the vast majority of his shots impacted wildly — 18 feet above the ground on the wall of the school building. An experienced shooter could have delivered the same number of rounds in the same period of time with far greater accuracy using a bolt-action hunting rifle. It was of little consequence that police responding to the incident (not their administrative superiors) stated that Purdy could have inflicted much more destruction with a 12 gauge double-barrel shotgun. And of course, gun prohibitionists are not interested in the somewhat anemic wound ballistics of the 7.62x39mm boattail Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) bullet, which is no better than that of the .38 Special, albeit at longer ranges. The President of the United States has been led to believe these pathetic projectiles are "explosive!"

Politicians and police chiefs proposing legislation to ban semiautomatic-only versions of assault rifles say they were designed for one purpose — "killing people" and no other. On the contrary, they were actually designed to conform with the regulations of the 1968 Gun Control Act. Furthermore, the thousands of military airplanes and vehicles that so many collect and operate without media consternation were clearly designed for warfare and no other reason. Although capable of aiding and abetting destruction on a scale much larger than a rifle, no one seems to object to their private possession. In addition, the fact that commonplace devices such as alarm clocks are frequently used by terrorists to construct bombs has not initiated a call for their abolition. If any of these objects are used in a manner that does not adversely affect the rights and lives of others, there can be no justification for their banishment from our midst. When used in an illegal manner, the perpetrator of the act, not the object itself or those in innocent possession of the object, must be punished accordingly.

Others have said that no one "needs" a semiautomatic-only version of an assault rifle. By the same token, no one needs an automobile that can be driven at 150 mph, since no highway in this country permits speeds in excess of 65 mph. If used in a lawful manner, neither item should be prohibited in a free society, as the question of need is not germane. Within reasonable limits, the fact that we want something is justification in itself. But, back to the question now forced upon us: do semiautomatic-only versions of military small arms serve a sporting purpose?

Quite obviously, they do, untold thousands of times every day in the

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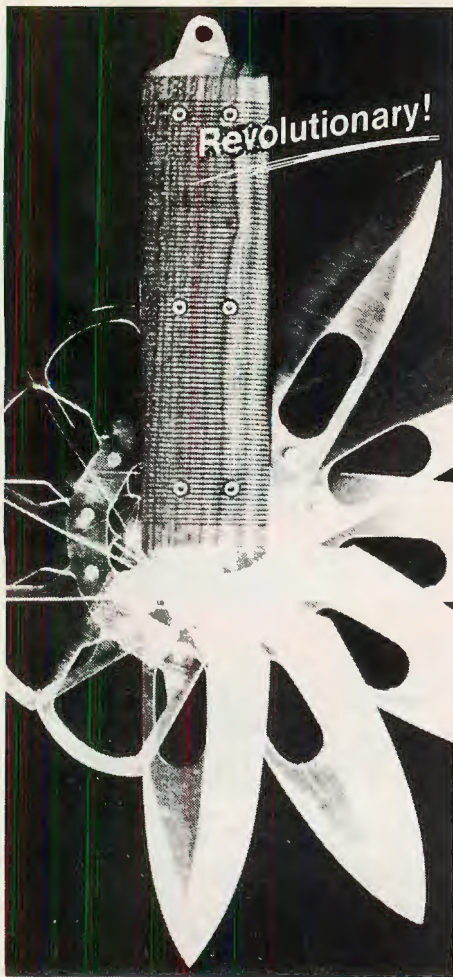
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week. First of all, let's delineate their use in sanctioned competition. The NRA National Match High-Power Rifle Championship held each year at Camp Perry is dominated by the Springfield Armory M1A (the semi-automatic-only version of the M14). It has a 20-round magazine and would be banned by Howard Metzenbaum's S. 386. More recently, Camp Perry shooters have started to employ the Colt AR15-A2 (the semiautomatic-only version of the M16A2), another firearm on Metzenbaum's list.

The Department of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM) program, sponsored by the Department of Defense, conducts thousands of high-power matches each year under the auspices of NRA-affiliated rifle clubs. Semiautomatic service-type rifles predominate. In addition to M1As and AR15s, shooters participating in these matches use the many semiauto versions of the FN FAL and sometimes even the Ruger Mini-14.

SOF's Three-Gun Match exemplifies IPSC-type competition. At the 1988 Soldier of Fortune Match, the following semiautomatic-only, military-style rifles stepped up to the firing line: 89 Colt AR15s, 28 Springfield Armory M1As, 18 Steyr AUGs, 19 HK91s, 13 HK93s, 11 Ruger Mini-14s, nine FN FALs, five Galils, three Daewoos, three M1 Garands, four Kalashnikovs, and one AR180. There are currently 10,000 United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA) members.

Altogether, 100,000 Americans use semiautomatic-only versions of military small arms every month on target ranges throughout this country in formal, sanctioned high-power rifle competition.

However, the overwhelming majority of the semiautomatic-only rifles in private ownership in the United States are used for informal target practice. Millions upon millions of rounds, in calibers 7.62x39mm, 5.56x45mm, 7.62x51mm, .30-06, .30 M1 Carbine and countless others, are expended each year by men, women and children attempting to hit paper bullseye and silhouette targets, steel gongs and dueling trees, and rocks from the size of pebbles up to boulders.

Some of these rifles, principally the Ruger Mini-14, Colt AR15, HK91/93, Springfield Armory M1A and FN FAL series, with their magazines appropriately blocked and loaded with Soft Point ammunition (far more devastating than standard military ball), are used for hunting.

All of this is common knowledge. However the BATF has deliberately chosen to deny it. In its July 1988 report

*Continued on page 87*

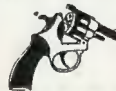
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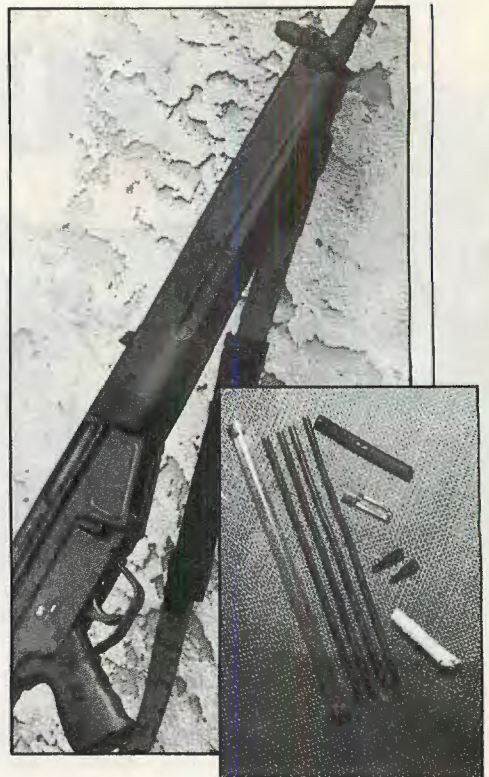
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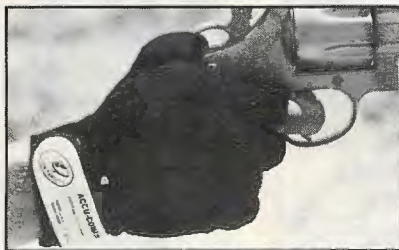
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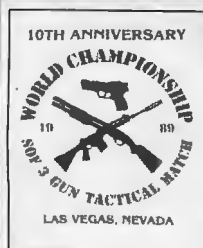


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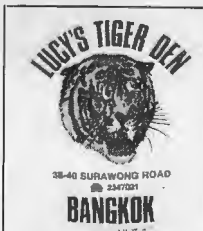
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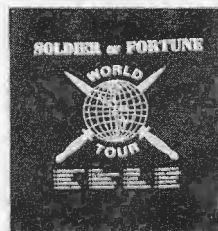
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Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*

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# I WAS THERE

by Al Muick

## Gettin' Down in the Dump

**I**T was a typically miserable, drizzly day at U.S. Army Field Station, Augsburg, Germany (for some reason the field station always seemed to be shrouded in mist). And I, in addition to having again come down with the "Augsburg crud," had been dubiously selected for "classified trash detail." Little did I know that I'd end up with one helluva story to tell for the rest of my life.

Classified trash detail at Field Station Augsburg was quite an experience. Trash used to be simply burned until some genius at NSA or the Pentagon decided that the Russians could take those millions of pieces of burned trash, put them back together, and smear some chemical on them to make everything legible again. I figured by the time they did all that the crap would be outdated anyway, but who listens to a Spec 4? The new grand solution was to mulch everything down with bleach and water, and then dry it until everything came out looking like that valuable piece of paper you so carelessly left in your pocket while doing the laundry. This mess was then packed into big bales about twice the size of a hay bale and was loaded onto a five-ton truck equipped with rollers on the surface of the bed.

Well, on this traditionally lousy spring day in 1983, Sergeant Streeter, Jimmy the eternal PFC, and I set out to accomplish our mission of transporting the bales to the dumping site, about a kilometer away. Sergeant Streeter always rode on the back of the five-ton with the bales, in blatant violation of all military safety codes as well as common sense, and this day was no exception. Jimmy was driving and nursing a hangover and trying to make conversation with me while I was nursing my crud. I eventually had to ask him to be quiet because everything was coming to me through a haze of beery halitosis. We rode most of the slow kilometer in silence.

When we eventually got to the dump site Sgt. Streeter removed the grates that were holding the bales in on the rear of the vehicle. The trick to dumping the damn bales was to slam the vehicle in reverse as fast as you could and then brake like a maniac just

before the truck went over the edge of the dump site and the force of gravity and Newton's Law would make the bales slide off the rollers and into the dump. You didn't want to have to move them manually because they were extremely heavy.

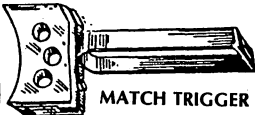
Today we didn't even bother to check if Sgt. Streeter was off the rear of the truck and reversed as fast as we could, hitting the brakes at the appropriate moment. This was followed by a scream of "you aaaassshoooooooles," as Sgt. Streeter sailed, along with the bales, in a none-too-graceful arc into the dumping site. After several moments of abject horror we braved the odds and climbed off the five-ton to gaze over the edge of the pit and see if our good sergeant was still among the living. Now you must realize that this dump was also used to dispose of the chow hall slop and other unmentionable things, and he just seemed to land in the middle of all of it. Fighting his way to the top of the hill through attacking flies, tin cans, and disgusting looking slime, he berated us for being the idiots we were. The genitalia of all of our ancestors came off very badly indeed.

Sergeant Streeter eventually made it to the top and realized he'd be up on charges if he touched us, so pissing and moaning he frantically searched for some inanimate object to vent his frustration on. Spying an old soccer ball lying in the corner of the dump, he ran over and dealt it a kick worthy of an international soccer star. Jimmy and I both scanned the skies, desperately looking for a sign of that ball as it cleared the tree line. Our search was in vain, as we soon heard the sergeant screaming from pain, not anger. As I looked back over at him, I noticed that the soccer ball had only rolled about four inches, and upon further inspection proved to have three holes bored into it in a familiar pattern.

Yes friends and neighbors, it was a bowling ball painted up to look like a soccer ball, and Sgt. Streeter's jump boot was pushed halfway back into his foot. He had broken every toe on his

*Continued on page 85*

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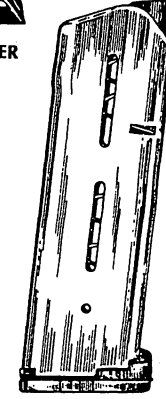
MATCH TRIGGER



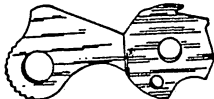
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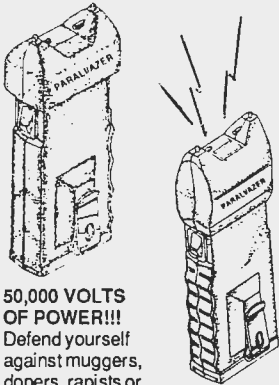
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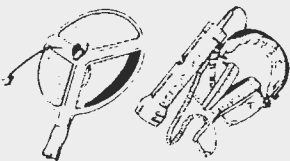
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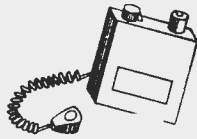
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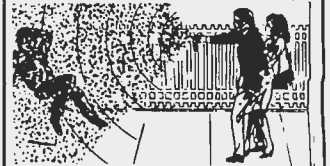


With this device, all of your telephone conversations can be automatically recorded on your tape recorder. Once connected, it will automatically turn your tape recorder on when the phone receiver is lifted off the hook, record both sides of the conversation with crystal clarity and then turn the recorder off and await the next telephone usage. Dead time on the tape is eliminated. It will also record the tones or pulses of the outgoing calls, enabling you to determine the dialed numbers if necessary. Completely silent functioning with no clicks heard on the line. This device is not intended for surreptitious surveillance.

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**THE DEVIL'S PAINTBRUSH — SIR HIRAM MAXIM'S GUN.** By Dolf L. Goldsmith. Collector Grade Publications, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 250, Station E, Toronto M6H 4E2, Canada. 1989. Hardcover. 384 pages with 482 illustrations. \$60. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

**K**AISER Wilhelm II said, "That is the gun — there is no other." During World War I, British troops referred to it as the "Grim Reaper." Hiram S. Maxim's invention was the first machine gun to harness the force of recoil to feed the cartridges into position, close the breech, release the sear, extract the empty case, eject it from the gun, and bring the next loaded round into position. As such, it was the death knell of hand-cranked guns like the Gatling, Nordenfelt, Gardner and Hotchkiss.

There is no one more qualified to write about the Maxim machine gun than Dolf Goldsmith. He has been collecting, shooting and studying them for more than 40 years. It would be enough if his enthralling book covered no more than the Maxim's complex taxonomy and technology. However, we are also treated to an all encompassing treatise that successfully captures the excitement of not only Maxim's life itself, but the grandeur, and oftentimes hypocrisy and horror, of empires in their final throes.

Self-educated, Maxim was a most amazing fellow. In addition to his gun, he invented the electric light, an airplane and a self-powered mousetrap. The story of his genius and methods should be required reading for today's often misguided small-arms designers.

Most of the 19th and early 20th centuries' great heroes and villains march across the pages of Goldsmith's epic account, from the infamous "Merchant of Death," Sir Basil Zaharoff, to Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener of Khartoum.

First combat use of the Maxim was in 1893 during the Matabele Wars in South Africa. An eye-witness reported "The bullets were flying over and under and round us, literally like hail — [the Matabele] never got nearer than 100 yards . . . yelling like fiends and rushing on to certain death . . . I never saw anything like these Maxim guns, nor dreamed that such things could be . . ."

During World War I, the Germans were first to realize its true potential. Initially, the British failed to respond in both equipment and tactics and hundreds of thousands of Allied troops were slaughtered in devastating assaults against German machine-gun positions. In awesome detail, Gold-

## IN REVIEW



**Chinese gun crew with their Type 24 Maxim set up for AA firing. Note the drum magazine, AA extension and ring-type AA sight. Photo: courtesy Robert W. Faris**

smith covers the service use of the Maxim in Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, Finland, Belgium, China, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Scandinavia, the Balkans, Latin America and the United States.

The saga of its adoption by the United States as the model of 1904 clearly establishes a sickening pattern of bureaucratic bungling that is unbroken to this day.

Goldsmith ends his story with an in-

depth look at the gun itself. There are sections on the theory of operation, loading, unloading, disassembly, assembly, ammunition, stoppages, belts and drums, troubleshooting, maintenance and other small, but important, matters — here divulged for the first time by this "King of Maxims."

Throughout, the pages are filled with fascinating archival photos and splendid close-up illustrations. Without doubt, this is the finest gun book to be published in decades. Who could ask for anything more? An absolute must for every collector, shooter, military historian, designer and all those who would emulate the author's effort on other topics of this nature.

**KNIVES OF THE U.S. SPECIAL FORCES.** By Tom Clinton. K&S Militaria, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 9630, Alpine, TX 79831. 1989. Softcover. 44 pages with 83 illustrations. \$12.95 plus \$1.50 p&h. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

**U**NTIL the advent of Clinton's impressive little tome, very little had been published about the combat blades of the U.S. Special Forces. He provides no text, and none is required as the impeccably precise line drawings and their accompanying captions reveal all. Except for the bolos, tomahawk and a few large bowies, which were reduced 75 to 85 percent, all of the illustrations are full size.

Most of the numerous SOG knives are shown: prototype, standard issue,

serial numbered, "sterile" and presentation. In addition, you'll find Special Forces Ka-Bar types and Fairbairns, as well as Western Bowies, the Navy pilot survival S.F. knife and several Gerbers. The sheaths are illustrated also. General Jack Singlaub's (at the time a colonel and chief of MACV/SOG) presentation Bowie is pictured along with such esoterica as a SOG knife presented "TO GREY GHOST FROM WHIP." It's interesting to note how many of these knives were manufactured in Japan and Taiwan.

With a large oversize format of 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x14 inches, Clinton's fascinating book will provide important information to both collectors of Vietnam-era militaria and those who dream of uncovering a priceless treasure at the local flea market. Highly recommended and a great value for its modest price. ✕



# GOOD MORNING, CACHINGUES!

**UNITA Fires Up FAPLA Fort** Text & Photos by David James



Heavy downpour causes UNITA attack force to pause during advance on Cachingues.

---

*It has been 14 years since Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (Portuguese acronym for National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola) movement escaped into the bush of remotest Angola. There, without money, short on arms and pursued relentlessly by Cuban MiGs, helicopter gunships and tanks, UNITA should have died a quick and unremarkable death. But showing a rare tenacity, UNITA not only clung to life, but slowly gathered strength and territory. Today they firmly control a third of the ex-Portuguese colony. On his second trip into Angola in six months, American photojournalist David James accompanied UNITA guerrillas into an area not seen by a Western reporter since 1977.*

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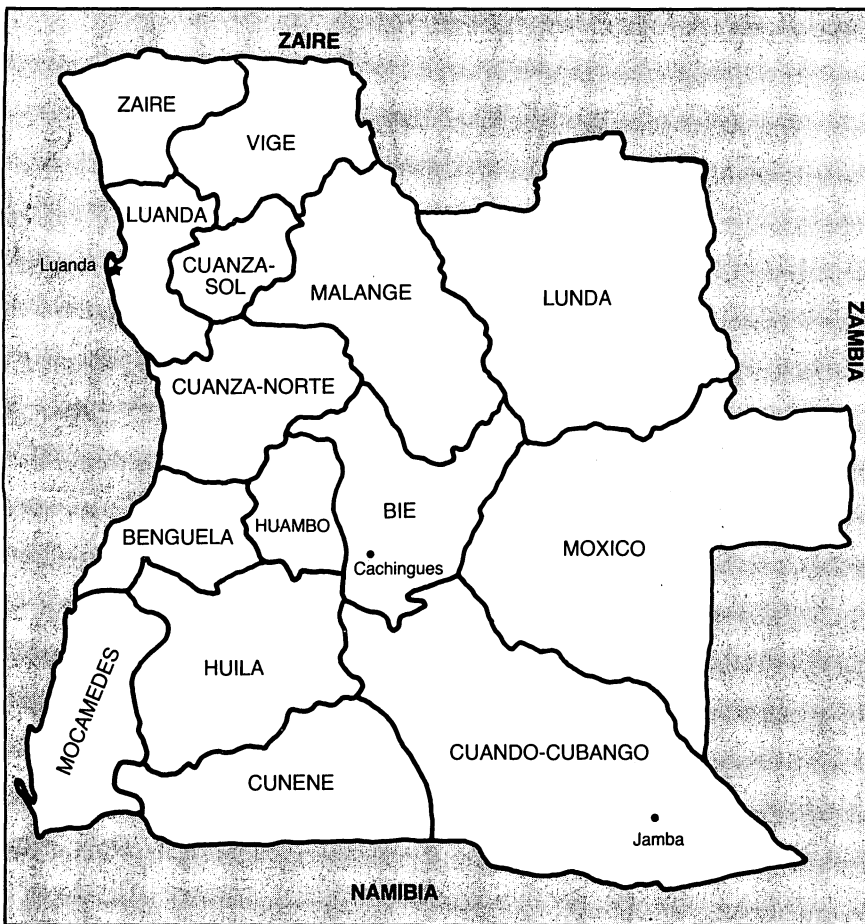
**L**IGHTNING zigzagged across the wet sky. The long column of silent men froze in midstride under the blue-white flash. In the blindness that followed, the image of glistening ponchos over weapons and heavy packs remained. As the image faded, only the steady clump of boots gave away the presence of a thousand pairs of feet as they slipped and stumbled along the rutted road.

Cold rain found its way under my poncho. I shivered and wondered what tomorrow morning would bring. Somewhere ahead the Angolan army (FAPLA) garrison post of Cachingues lay under the same torrential downpour. The rain was our cover; we were invisible, swallowed up by the night as we marched west to battle. And whatever was coming, it would be over in a

## HEART FOR ANGOLA

David James, an American photojournalist living in Great Britain, has recently spent over two years in southern Africa reporting on bush wars and special units. On his latest outing he visited several of Angola's combat zones. This is the second of three James articles covering this war-torn country. His last feature article, "Angola's Forgotten Front," appeared in SOF, August '89. He's also written for *Raids*, *International Defense Review*, *Defense*, *Armed Forces* and *Jane's Defence Weekly*.





Map shows Angola's 15 provinces. Author journeyed from Jamba, UNITA's administrative HQ, to Cachingues.

few hours.

Sitting far from the fighting in UNITA's Jamba headquarters and listening to what seemed like wildly exaggerated claims raised a lot of skepticism. According to UNITA, its guerrilla forces operated with near impunity throughout most of Angola with support from the local population, while FAPLA seldom ventured outside its heavily defended bases without the direct support of their Cuban allies. It all sounded too much like propaganda. So I finally said, if what you're saying is true, then show me. And they did.

From my first trip with UNITA to the Benguela railway line (see "Angola's Forgotten Front," SOF, August '89), I remembered the landmarks and bases as we ground slowly northward for a week: Likuwa, UNITA's main logistics base; Mavinga, the objective of nearly every Cuban/FAPLA offensive; Kombambi and Chilombo — all of it seen from the back of a lorry heavy with supplies and my 15 bodyguards. At Chilombo we turned west to UNITA's administrative and coordination center for Bie Province, where we were greeted by Captain Paulo Saul, our guide to the front headquarters.

A few hours more brought us to the edge of a *shana* — a wide savannah — bordering the Kwanza River. This was the end of UNITA's "consolidated area." We were ferried across the Kwanza on inflatable boats and continued on foot to the Bie front headquarters, where I was welcomed by Lieutenant Colonel Implakavela. Already advised by radio of my coming, he greeted me with the information that a major operation was being planned.

Major Chimuku Etila Liakevela, the operational commander for the attack, explained that reconnaissance units already had two enemy bases under observation. As soon as they radioed their intelligence reports on enemy troop strengths and dispositions, we would begin the march. Three days later we headed west.

With three columns totalling over 1,000 people — at least 200 of whom were members of the local population carrying food and ammunition — I was amazed that we moved during daylight hours. Major Chimuku seemed unworried about possible airstrikes by Angolan fighter-bombers or gunships. When I finally voiced my concern as we were crossing a wide *shana*, he only smiled. "We hope they come," he said. Though I never saw any, I assumed the confidence was due to U.S.-supplied Stinger missiles.

On the fourth day, a halt was called and the officers and senior NCOs gathered around a scale model of the FAPLA garrison post they would be attacking. It was Cachingues, an important garrison post for Cuban and FAPLA supply convoys moving along the tarred road from Huambo to the major base at Menongue. The men who would be leading the special penetration

## PAX ANGOLA

After 14 years of civil war in Angola, the guns may be falling silent.

On 22 July UNITA's President Jonas Savimbi and MPLA Chairman Jose Eduardo Dos Santos — in the presence of 18 other African leaders — met in the small town of Gbadolite in northern Zaire and agreed to a cease-fire. Further, the two leaders agreed to begin direct negotiations aimed at national reconciliation.

This is a major political victory for the pro-Western UNITA organization.

We don't presume Dos Santos & Co. have come to the negotiating table out of the goodness of their hearts: the bulk of the 60,000-man Cuban expeditionary force which formed the backbone of FAPLA is in the process of withdrawing from Angola, leaving plummeting morale and a soaring FAPLA desertion rate as its military legacy.

Either the MPLA has come to realize that it can no longer maintain at least a military stalemate against UNITA, or it has decided — in the best of communist practice — to use a cease-fire as a cover in order to gain time to strengthen and reposition its forces and logistics for a thrust against UNITA before losing major Cuban support.

As we go to press, Savimbi and UNITA appear to hold a strong hand in either case: they have shown that with even limited U.S. military aid (esti-

mated at \$15 million a year, including Stingers), but without massive South African assistance, they can hold and control a sizable part of the Angolan countryside; they are facing a rapidly deteriorating military opponent whose primary backers — the Soviet Union and Cuba — are cutting their losses; the presence of the other African heads of state at Gbadolite confers international political legitimacy on Savimbi and UNITA; and the United States has promised to continue its support for UNITA until there is a national reconciliation.

However, no sooner did the two Angolan leaders finish shaking hands in Gbadolite than problems arose. Zambia's President Kuanda said the agreement included a proviso that Savimbi would go into exile; there were also suggestions that UNITA would be absorbed into the MPLA one-party structure. UNITA has made its position clear on these two points: "UNITA categorically rejects absorption into the MPLA government" (instead opting for a transitional government leading to multiparty national elections) "and rejects suggestions of exile for Dr. Savimbi or any other UNITA leader."

Both sides know reconciliation will not be an easy task, but as OAU Chairman Moussa Traore of Mali said of the agreement, "This handshake represents a great day for Africa."

— John Coleman



**MiG-21 destroyed by U.S.-supplied Stinger missile a few kilometers north of Cachingues.**

unit grinned and punched each other in the arm.

Silence quickly returned as the defenses were explained. A mine field 50 meters deep surrounded the base; defensive trenches containing the 2nd and 3rd battalions of FAPLA's 48th Brigade — some 500 men — lay behind the mines. A battalion of the 75th Territorial Force Brigade — another 250 men — occupied positions inside the ex-Portuguese town. Heavy weapons included 82mm mortars and B-10 recoilless rifles. The only way in would be directly down the old Portuguese dirt road that entered the town from the northeast. Locations of a trip wire and sentry post on the road were noted. Immediately after the briefing a war cry went up among the assembled men as they stamped over the model of Cachingues, symbolically destroying it.

I couldn't tell if their reaction was boyish bravado or genuine enthusiasm. Although I knew I would be in little danger — they wouldn't allow me in until the attack was over — a look at what they had to face was chilling.

It's at moments like this that you begin to question the morality of your job. It was profoundly disturbing that people on both sides were likely to die all for the benefit of the press. You try to rationalize it by saying the attack would take place whether you were present or not, but it is still a terrible responsibility.

At dawn the next morning the assembled force began the last 20 miles to Cachingues. Our march progressed in easy stages to ensure that everyone arrived relatively rested for the attack and immediate withdrawal, especially if the Cubans reacted with reinforcements and we had to run for our lives. Ten miles from the target we stopped to wait for nightfall. With two wide *shanas* to cross, there was no guarantee that FAPLA did not have observation posts.

At midnight we stopped in the middle of the second *shana* as engineers threw a bridge of tree trunks and branches across a rain-swollen river. There was something surrealistic about it at that point. Hidden by high elephant grass, we settled into folding chairs which had been brought for me and Maj. Chimuku, lit damp cigarettes and discussed world politics. I had to constantly remind myself that I was in the center of Angola, surrounded by some 800 UNITA guerrillas and heading for a battle. What was extraordinary was the apparent lack of concern or fear. There was, instead, an aura of absolute confidence that was contagious.

Two hours later we stopped once more as an ox-drawn cart with a captured B-12 107mm multiple rocket launcher was sited on a hillside and trained on Cachingues. The penetration unit was sent ahead while we waited for the final advance. I lay down with the others on the wet, washboard sur-



face of the dirt road and wrapped the poncho around me.

It was 0400 when Maj. Chimuku shook me awake and we began the final push. In less than an hour we were half a mile from Cachingues, hidden behind a small rise. I checked my watch: 0505. If the attack was proceeding according to plan, the penetration unit was already making its move into the town. There was a hiss on the radio and Maj. Chimuku keyed the microphone to acknowledge the whispered report. "They've disarmed the mine on the road and killed the sentry," he said quietly. I raised my eyebrows questioningly and he drew a finger quickly across his throat. Ten minutes later another hiss confirmed that all 250 UNITA guerrilla fighters were now inside the base and silently spreading out behind the defensive trenches. Tense smiles passed between the men around me. Surprise, that most important of guerrilla tactics, had been achieved.

Moments later, a sudden burst of machine-gun fire shattered the dawn and firing erupted throughout Cachingues ahead of us. There was a sharp report from behind and a rocket moaned overhead to explode on the far side of the town. "Good morning, Cachingues," someone murmured as trac-

ers criss-crossed and flares rose over the battle. Dull bangs of grenades and mortars punctuated the firing as shrill, confusing reports began coming in over the radio.

"Be calm, be calm," Maj. Chimuku urged in Portuguese. "Where are our people? What is the disposition of our troops?"

A report came back that they were engaged in hand-to-hand fighting. Quickly changing frequencies, he ordered the mortar and rocket batteries to hold their fire. Until the situation inside Cachingues was clear, he could not risk supporting fire for fear of killing his own men. Needing a clearer view of the situation, he strode toward the fighting with his radioman.

Within minutes it was obvious that the combat was shifting toward the south. "They are retreating," confirmed Captain Walter, listening to our radio. As the overcast morning lightened, another rocket sped overhead, followed by a full salvo. The mournful sound of 107mm rockets ended in rapid thumps among the retreating and confused FAPLA soldiers.

An hour after the first shots had been fired, our group regained the road and moved toward Cachingues, stopping as intense fire broke out toward our left front. Two mortar crews and civilian ammunition





**ABOVE:** Part of advancing force crossing a wide *shana*. Although no one showed concern about possible air attack, an air defense battalion deployed around the columns assured a warm reception to any pilot brave enough to come near.

bearers ran by us in the direction of the fighting.

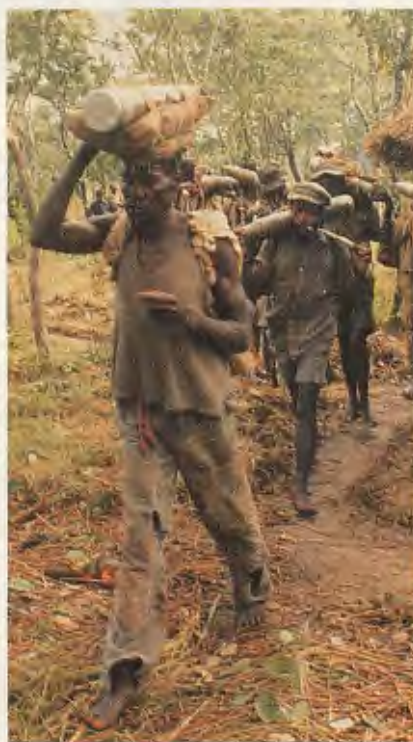
"The enemy are trying to counterattack," said Capt. Sigunda, monitoring the radio. "The major has ordered the mortars forward."

Another salvo of rockets passed overhead to explode somewhere south of town as the crackling of AKs and machine guns reached a crescendo. Over the radio I heard Maj. Chimuku checking with his company commanders. When it was confirmed that the FAPLA troops were in full retreat and a security perimeter had been thrown around the town, he ordered my escort to "bring the journalist in for his photographs."

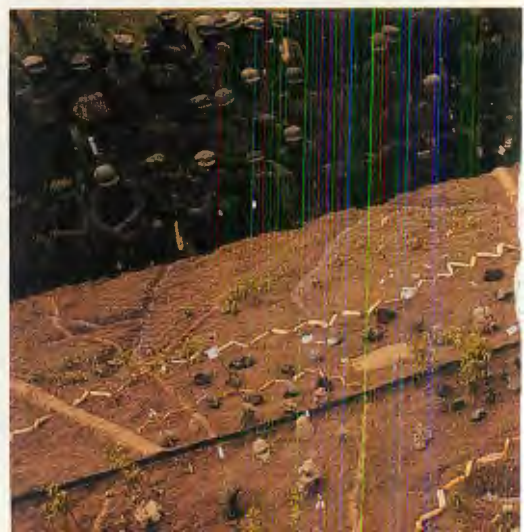
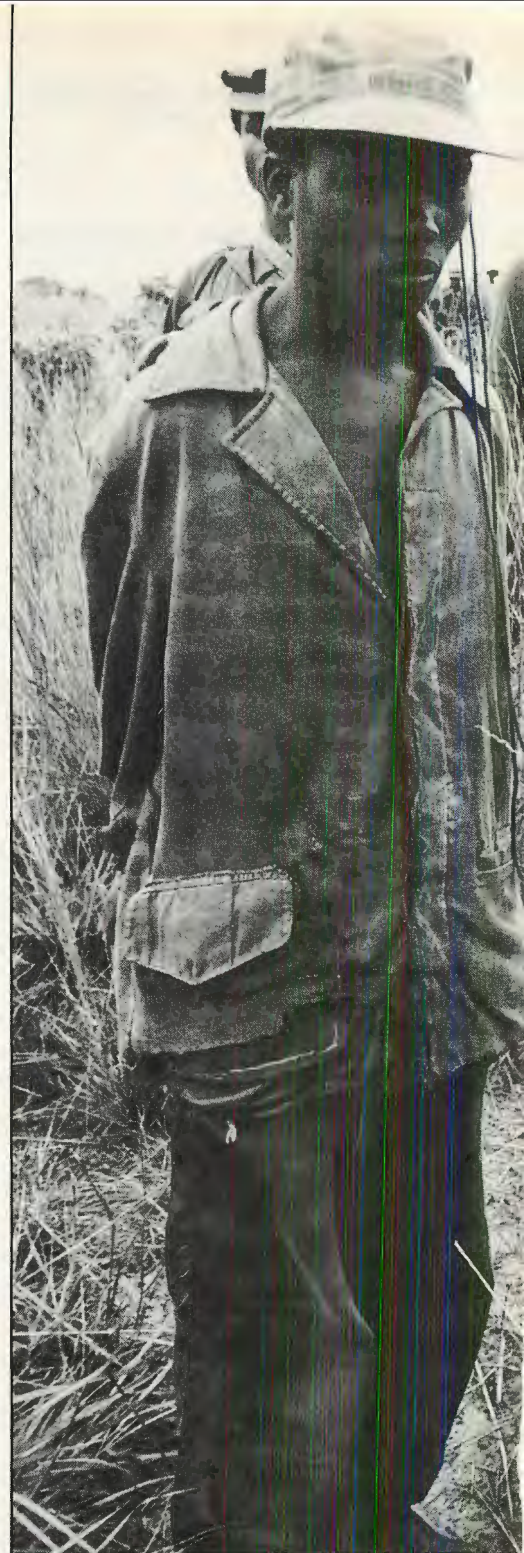
As we entered Cachingues, the guerrillas were already placing explosive charges in the stuccoed buildings. Others were collecting scattered documents, medical supplies, ammunition and food. On the south end of the town, we cut across a maize field to inspect the hastily abandoned defensive positions. As we approached the trenches, a group of 15 men emerged from a maize field 50 meters ahead. Captain Walter jumped protectively in front of me, shouting "FAPLA!" Rounds began cracking the air over our heads as all of us ducked. A tall UNITA officer immediately spun around and fired his M79 grenade launcher before a dozen assault rifles opened up and the surprised enemy turned and ran back into their cover. I hunkered down with Maj. Chimuku as he spoke with UNITA sections to our east and west. From both directions automatic weapons sprayed the area where the FAPLA

**RIGHT:** This 15-year-old Angolan army soldier was one of 16 prisoners taken during the attack. He is wearing a second-hand uniform and was never issued boots.

**BELOW:** Civilian ammunition bearers leave a forward guerrilla base en route to Cachingues carrying 107mm rockets, mortar rounds and anti-tank mines.



**RIGHT:** UNITA intelligence officer briefs attack leaders on defenses at Cachingues. Black stripe represents tarred road running north to south. Dirt road entering from top left of picture is one used by penetration force to infiltrate the garrison.







Author David James and part of his bodyguard crossing the Cuchi River in western Bie Province.

soldiers had disappeared.

As soon as the brief firefight ended we rose and continued our inspection. In the trenches lay four FAPLA soldiers killed during the attack; numerous blood trails led away from the town. A barefoot young boy in a tattered FAPLA uniform, his hands tied, stood next to two bodies. I stopped and tried to talk with him, but he was too frightened to speak. One of the UNITA soldiers, flushed with victory and adrenaline, laughed and joked roughly with him in Portuguese.

"You are just a baby FAPLA who knows nothing. Better we shoot you so we don't have to watch you on the way back."

Private Bernardo Ngulu of the 75th Territorial Force looked down and began to sob. "Please, my brother died last year of disease and now I am the only one my father has, please don't shoot me." The laughing ended and one of the officers put his hand on the boy's shoulder and promised that they didn't shoot prisoners.

At 0900 we walked boldly out of Cachingues on the tarred road. Again I questioned the possibility of air attack. FAPLA must have radioed that they were under attack before they ran.

"Yes," said the major, "but we will show you why their pilots are afraid to fly against us now." Just a mile from the town I saw it. West of the road the tail of a MiG-21 protruded from the ground. "Stinger?" I asked as we turned to examine the three-month old wreckage. "Perhaps," said Maj. Chimuku, declining to confirm or deny that UNITA enjoyed the use of the deadly missile.

A few miles further we left the tank-scarred road to head east. As we moved steadily through the scattered bush, he took the handset from his radioman and spoke to the B-12 crew. "Tell FAPLA goodbye for us," he said. Within seconds there was a ripple of reports from the MRL (multi-barrel rocket launcher). The distinctive

moan of rockets terminated in closely-spaced explosions south of Cachingues.

It was nine hours after the beginning of the attack when we heard the sound of a fighter-bomber passing behind us. I turned and scanned the bottom of the clouds, hoping to catch a glimpse of it, but the pilot remained carefully above the high overcast. "You see why we are not worried about them?" said Capt. Paulo. It would be the only evidence I would hear of Angolan air power.

After a day's rest we turned northwest, recrossing the tarred road far above Cachingues to a spot near the village of Cangote. There, a political rally *had been* organized with over 5,000 members of the local population. The fact that we were within six miles of three FAPLA brigades at Shinguar and not more than 20 minutes by air from a complete FAPLA helicopter regiment at Huambo, was proof that in this area, at least, Jonas Savimbi's guerrillas operated with the impunity they claimed.

If the FAPLA prisoners I interviewed were typical, UNITA's confidence in the field is hardly unwarranted. Private Paulo Jose Chitumba, one of those taken at Cachingues, said the first person to break and run during the attack was his brigade commander, Lieutenant Magalhaes. Both Chitumba and Bernardo Ngulu admitted that FAPLA patrols seldom ventured more than three kilometers from base for fear of being captured "like chickens" by UNITA guerrillas.

Of the 13 prisoners I interviewed both in the bush and in Jamba, all said much the same: morale was low, food and medical facilities poor, discipline almost nonexistent, desertion high and corruption rife among senior officers. They also believed it was only the continued presence of the Cubans which prevented a UNITA victory. Are the Cubans withdrawing? I asked Private Jose Manuel Sambule of the FAPLA 66th Brigade. He said he had seen 1,500 Cubans leave Huambo, but friends later told him that within weeks 1,500 new Cubans — mostly black — arrived to take their place.

As the days passed on our walk back to the Kwanza River, I tried to analyze what I had seen. If my observations held for the rest of Angola, they added up to a number of inescapable conclusions: (1) UNITA controls vast areas of the Angolan countryside within easy striking range of the Angolan army and air force; (2) Large elements of the Angolan military are so completely demoralized and moribund that they have no desire to come to grips with UNITA forces; and (3) Without the continued occupation of strategic points by Cuban troops, Angola would quickly fall to UNITA.

The proof, of course, will come on 1 July 1991 — if Cuba abides by the Brazzaville agreement and withdraws the last of its troops. Unless the present situation changes dramatically between now and then, the ball won't simply be in Savimbi's court. He'll own it.

I'd like to be there when it happens. ✂





# CAMBODIAN BORDER MASSACRE



**American Crosses the Line to  
Save Lives**      Text & Photos by George Jones



I WAS not in a very good mood. I had just been kicked out of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front's (KPNLF) main civilian base camp by the Thai military authorities.

Site Two had been closed to all non-essential personnel, including medical and United Nations workers, for several days as a result of daily Vietnamese shelling but I managed to get in that morning and was waiting with the terrified civilian population for the expected daily dose of big gun intimidation. Around noon the first 107mm rockets landed, killing one man and injuring a workman and a young child. They were probably coming from the former KPNLF military base of San Ro, about two-and-a-half kilometers to the southeast, which had been captured during a previous Vietnamese dry-season offensive. A woman showed me the trajectory of one piece of shrapnel which had gone through 17 bamboo and thatch huts in the densely populated camp, passing within a meter of her sleeping baby.

A "Situation Four" had been called, meaning too late to evacuate — take immediate cover. But the Thai authorities had heard I was there, located me, and escorted me to the perimeter. U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle was scheduled to visit the camp the following week as a show of support to the Non-Communist Resistance, but as I was riding out on my motorcycle, it was clear that the Secret Service folks scheduled to arrive in a few days would be looking for a change of venue. The Quayle visit was subsequently cancelled, moved several hundred kilometers to the civilian encampment of the other non-communist resistance, the Armeé Nationale Sihanoukiste (ANS).

I returned to the Thai border town of

Once stabilized, ambush victims were transported to Red Cross surgical facility via UN vehicle.



**LEFT:** Surviving Cambodian cattle traders, ambushed because they would not pay "taxes" to Vietnamese-controlled Heng Samrin troops, reach Thailand and medical help near Tapraya.

**RIGHT:** Refugee camps along the Thai/Cambodian border, thanks to volunteer medical teams, can provide medical attention. They cannot, however, provide *refuge*, as camps are shelled at will by Vietnamese army units in Cambodia.

## BACK TO BANGKOK

A few months ago, George Jones was a desk jockey in an eastern state bureaucracy with prospects of steady work, good pay, and engaged to be married.

Reconsidering, Jones pulled the pin, went to Southeast Asia with a camera and started covering myriad mini-wars as a free-lance photojournalist. SOF publisher Bob Brown recently met him in Bangkok, and as a result we are able to welcome Jones' first SOF story, about free-lance journalism on the weird and wild Cambodian border.

Tapraya, 30 kilometers to the south of Site Two, not sure how I was going to spend the rest of my day. I stopped by a radio base station operated by a fellow I knew. Prasart was a well-connected former Thai military officer who had a love for electronics — radios in particular. Although he coordinates a complex system of radio field communication for the border relief effort, he has a number of two-way radios he monitors simultaneously, including those of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Thai military, and the Khmer Resistance. He speaks fluent Thai, Khmer and English. If anything is developing in this border region, Prasart is often the first to know.

"George, you always seem to show up when things are interesting," he said with a smile.

"Why, what's going on?" I replied.

"You know there is a Situation Four in Site Two," he said.

"I know, I just came from there."

"Well, I just got word that there are wounded coming out from north of Phnom Chhat," he continued, referring to the Khmer Rouge headquarters of the 59th Battalion located about 10 kilometers to the southeast. "It looks like the casualties are heavy. I just called Papa and Whiskey for permission to send ambulances to a pickup point," he said referring to the Red Cross and United Nations Field Directors. "I think you might want to get down there."

He gave me rough coordinates and I was off. There is no way to properly cover the war in Cambodia without a motorcycle, especially in the rainy season. Many areas are simply not accessible by car, and it can take hours to walk to many of the guerrilla bases once the roads end. This was just such a time, I thought, as I maneuvered through two kilometers of rice paddies toward where the wounded were supposedly coming out.



**Khmer Rouge soldiers from Khao Din military base south of Aranyaprathet, Thailand.**

There was a sense of controlled chaos when I arrived. In a clearing at the edge of a rice paddy, about 50 people were gathered, most of them wounded. There were a few Khmer Rouge soldiers with their familiar Chinese Kalashnikovs and their green uniforms, who seemed to be monitoring the scene. The rest included about a dozen medical workers who, not being able to go to work at Site Two, had received a message over their compulsory hand-held radios that there were wounded in need of attention near Tapraya. There were no Red Cross ambulances yet and no coordination. The relief workers were doing the best they could with limited equipment. Most of them worked in hospital and primary-medical-care facilities in Site Two.

With a population of 174,000, Site Two is the second largest Cambodian city in the world, behind Phnom Penh, despite the fact that it's a refugee camp several kilometers inside Thailand. Like any city, there is a need for an extensive medical infrastructure, and these folks have come from all over the world to volunteer their expertise. It has been said that the population of Site

Two has access to better medical care than any comparable rural population in Southeast Asia. The doctors and nurses there that day were not battlefield medics, however, and for most of them this was a new experience. The most severely wounded were treated first, with IVs attached after vital signs were ascertained. One doctor was squeezing an IV bottle with both hands, attempting to speed the process of replenishing a man who had lost a lot of blood.

I walked among the wounded, taking pictures and asking questions in my broken Cambodian. Apparently a group of more than 100 Cambodians, escorted by about 20 Khmer Rouge soldiers, were ambushed about five kilometers inside Cambodia by Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin troops. The dispute was over control of a lucrative

**"Protective" tattoos worn by former soldier were intended to prevent battlefield injury, and appear to be about 50 per cent effective — trooper lost only one leg when he stepped on a land mine.**







ABOVE: Vice President Dan Quayle presses the flesh at Site B to indicate U.S. support for an independent Cambodia.

RIGHT: People at Site B, loyal to Prince Sihanouk, were addressed by the prince last May.

cattle trading market, and casualties were primarily Cambodian cattle traders who had refused for the fifth (and last) time to pay the local Heng Samrin troops "taxes" to take their cattle through government-controlled territory to markets in Thailand. The traders had come into Thailand in the morning, sold their cattle for between 4,000 and 12,000 baht each (\$160-\$480 U.S.), and were returning for the four-day-and-four-night walk through the jungle to their homes. What they did not know was that as soon as they passed through on their way to the Thai border the Heng Samrin troops had set up an ambush site. With trip-wire activated mines set along the path, a group of about 100 were killed or wounded within a matter of seconds. Those that were not hit by the shrapnel of the mines were ambushed by a platoon-sized group of Heng Samrin soldiers lying in wait with rifles and B-40 rocket propelled grenades. Except for the 20 Khmer Rouge soldiers, the traders were unarmed. The wounded I talked to said that more than five were killed in the initial attack and that many more were wounded. Many of the wounded fled into the jungle, trying to avoid the assault on the survivors. Many of the more seriously wounded were not able to get out, and probably were hiding in the jungle, unaware that medical help awaited them if they could make it to Thailand. Only 35 out of the more than 120 had made it and dusk was approaching.

I walked over to a Khmer Rouge with an AK and started snapping a few pictures.



"No pictures," he immediately barked, as he turned his back.

I followed him and smiled a friendly smile. "Fuck you, asshole. You are in Thai territory and you can't do a thing about it if I take your picture," I said, knowing full well he didn't understand a thing.

There was a satisfaction in telling the Khmer Rouge to go to hell. Many journalists were killed during the fighting in Cambodia in the 1970s, some of them disappearing in Khmer Rouge-held areas, never to be heard from again. They tend to see all Westerners as the enemy, and there had been plenty of times that they had taken my film at gunpoint, accused me of being CIA, and even arrested me. Not to mention that out of the thousands of Cambodians I have met over the years, I have yet to meet one who didn't lose a family member or friend during the three and a half years that the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia. These were clearly some of the most offensive thugs to get together an army and take over a government in my lifetime. Besides, this Khmer Rouge unit had the task of protecting the traders on their return to Cambodia, and they obviously didn't do a heck of a job. So, fuck you, asshole.

As I was interviewing the wounded, there were intermittent arrivals of more, some on makeshift stretchers (a hammock tied to a bamboo pole), some walking, and a few on the back of motorcycles. I went up to a fellow who seemed to be coordinating the retrieval of the wounded to try to get more information. It was getting dark, he said, but there were many more wounded still in the jungle. The problem was that Heng Samrin troops were still in the area and the Khmer Rouge were refusing to send troops in to assist in the retrieval of the severely wounded. No one had been to the massacre site, but there would be an attempt come daybreak.

"Could I come along," I inquired. After a check with his compatriots, he returned and said yes. I was to meet him at dawn.

By the end of the day 38 wounded had emerged from the Cambodian jungle, been delivered to the International Committee of the Red Cross, and taken to the ICRC surgical hospital at the U.N. refugee camp of Khao I Dang 30 kilometers south of Tapraya. But there were many more wounded, and it could only be hoped that a rescue team could get to them before the Heng Samrin troops, or before they died of their injuries. That was the task of those I was to accompany the next morning.

From our meeting point the next morning, I accompanied a group of four or five Thais in a pickup truck several clicks southeast toward the Khmer Rouge military base of Phnom Chhat. I wasn't sure who these Thais were or exactly what they did for a living but you learn not to ask too many questions on the border, and as long as they knew what they were doing I really didn't need to know. We abandoned the pickup several kilometers after we left the last real road, unable to move the vehicle further over the scrub terrain. We got out and started walking through lightly wooded terrain, with elephant grass, brush, and thin trees. It was a strange area, with no huts or cultivated land for several clicks behind us. Minutes into the walk, three people appeared walking toward us from the east. One had shrapnel wounds to the legs, and the other two were assisting him to the Red Cross ambulance on stand-by near Tapraya. After spending the night in the jungle, he had come over the border at daybreak and had run into the other two. There were more wounded across the border, he was sure of it. Since they were over an hour's walk to the ambulance, we sent our driver to accompany them in the truck.

We walked another 45 minutes to a small clearing, passing one body near the path. He had died the night before, I was informed. Coming with a group of several wounded, he had succumbed to his wounds here, and they left him at this spot while the others continued towards medical help.

At the clearing we met up with a ragtag group of six men, bringing our group to a total of 11, including myself. I was happy to see Noi, the fellow I had seen just the night before when he had approved my request to



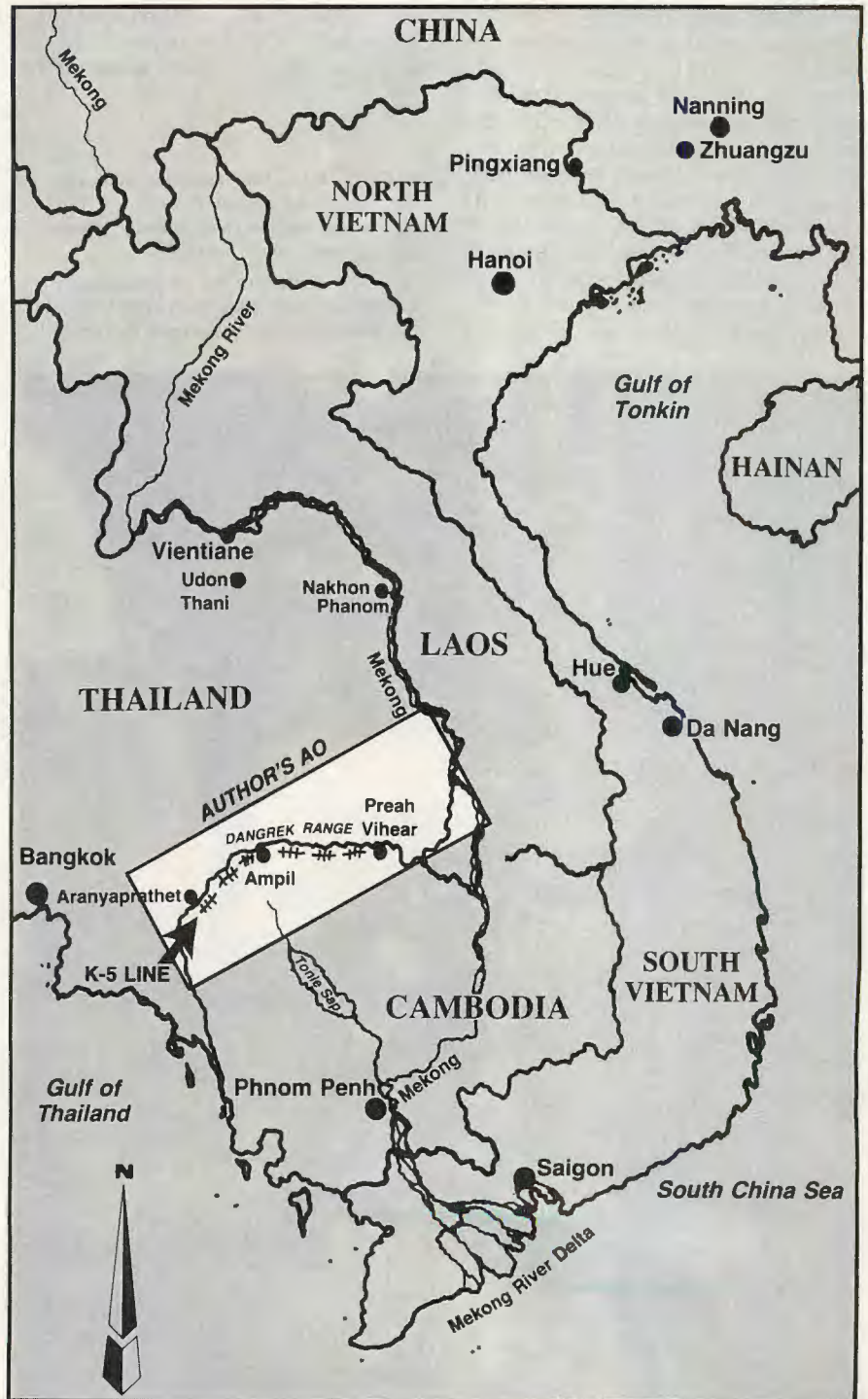
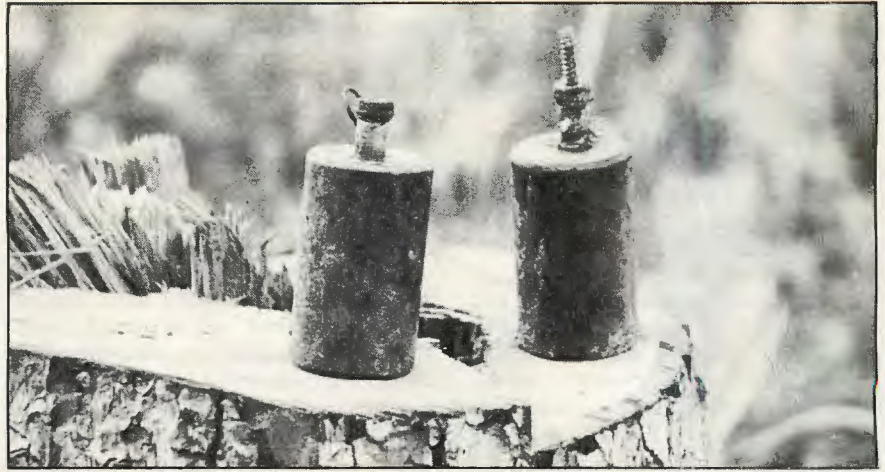
**RIGHT: PRC Type 69 mines as recovered by Khmer Rouge sapper along the trail across K-5 Line into Cambodia**

**BELOW RIGHT: Author's Area of Operations along Thai/Cambodian border.**

accompany them to the massacre site. He was an impressive fellow, exuding quiet confidence, and clearly in charge. Only in his early twenties, I was to find out that Noi was the leader of a three-man Thai ground-intelligence unit, whose job was to monitor the Khmer military situation in this area of the border. He was an intelligence grunt, who passed the information to some office in the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet. He had regular interface with the Khmer Rouge, the KPNLF, and the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin troops of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Given that all three of the groups regularly attack each other, Noi's ability to move among the factions was impressive. He was just the type of guy I like to know in my line of work.

Noi laid out the itinerary: He had sent an emissary to the Khmer Rouge military commander to request troops to accompany us into Cambodia to the massacre site. We were to wait here until they returned. The massacre site was about six kilometers east, and the path was heavily mined. We would have a trained mine expert whose job was to detect the mines, and defuse them or lead us around them but it would be slow moving. The area where we were going was long controlled by Heng Samrin troops. No one had been to the massacre site yet, and we did not know what to expect. Our mission was to retrieve wounded, since more than 60 people were still unaccounted for, and those that were not killed were probably still in the area. If the Heng Samrin troops saw us, they would probably shoot us. Noi promised to do his best to avoid that possibility.

Our group of 11 was a strange and motley one indeed. A mix of Thais, Khmer Rouge, and a few who were fluent in both languages. None were in uniform, some were barefoot, others had Ho Chi Minh sandals. Noi wore a pair of relatively new military-issue combat boots, a white T-shirt and fatigue pants with a canteen attached. All of them had huge knives or sickles. There were a couple of guns and grenades among us. Everyone was quite sullen, some whittling wood with their knives, others rolling cigarettes with newsprint and raw tobacco, and still others eating plain cooked rice from small bags tied to their waist. There were sporadic rockets landing to the south of us, but they didn't seem to merit more than a brief turn of the head from our group. Twice the dull thud of a land mine detonated in the direction we were to go, and a few would get up to assess the situation, walking a few meters to stare intently into the jungle, only to return to squat with the group. No one spoke much. I had little idea of what was going on. I had met a few of these folks briefly the day before, but I had no idea of what exactly any of them were doing in this no man's land about five kilometers from





the nearest cultivated land. Since none of them spoke a word of English, we were communicating in my smattering of Khmer interspersed with a few Thai words.

The emissaries Noi had dispatched to the Khmer Rouge base camp returned in about an hour. We had been refused troops. The Khmer Rouge had said it was "too dangerous," according to Noi, and besides they didn't want to travel with a Westerner.

But we had our human mine detector, and we began the next leg of our journey. In single file, we began to walk. Two scouts were sent ahead about 20 meters, and the Khmer Rouge fellow trained in mine detection was, of course, in front of the group. The jungle quickly became denser. Along the single path, less than two feet wide, visibility was about 10 meters.

We were less than 50 meters into the jungle when a wave from the scouts brought us to a halt. They had discovered the first mines, buried on the path. They marked the spot with a simple X scratched in the dirt with a stick and put a couple sticks on either side, guiding us around it. As I passed by I tried not to ponder the fact that, to me, it looked no different than the rest of the path.

The jungle became progressively thicker, visibility decreasing to a few meters. We walked slowly. I felt a little guilty as I

carefully placed my feet in the footprints of the fellow ahead of me. At one point I passed him, simply walking around him, stepping off the narrow path in the process. A whispered command came from ahead. Noi came back to me. "Stay on the path no matter what," he said firmly as if he was talking to a child. His "you don't get it, do you?" look made me feel foolish.

Hell, I thought, I am a city boy from Massachusetts. We don't have jungles where I come from, and we certainly don't have mines. I wouldn't know the difference between a claymore and half-buried Budweiser can. I have no military training. Hell, I don't even have any photography training. Even if I do manage to get some good shots, I don't know whether anyone will buy them. I have not forgotten the times before that I have photographed wildfires only to be offered 25 bucks apiece for the

**RIGHT:** Dead cattle traders at massacre site, mined and gunned down by Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin "troops" for refusing to pay "taxes."

**BELOW:** As author and his group neared ambush site they followed trail of bodies of the slaughtered and scavenged victims.



best ones. "Good pictures," they say, "But, frankly, a firefight in Cambodia isn't of much interest in Peoria."

We were waved to a halt. More mines, the relayed whisper confirmed. About three meters ahead, our Khmer Rouge human mine detector went to work. Savuth, only 19, had no family and had lived in the Khmer Rouge border bases since the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia in 1979. I was impressed. He was like a coon dog. Wielding only a thin bamboo stick and a determined gaze, he found more than a dozen areas that were mined that day. Some locations had several devices, with trip wires positioned on alternate routes around the mined path. Savuth motioned to me to come to him. "Right here," he pointed to a spot in front of us. I looked intently, but saw nothing. He reached down and gingerly cradled a thin green wire stretched about three inches above the ground in some light brush. He followed the wire gently with his fingers off of the path, poking the ground and digging gently with his stick at suspicious dirt. About a meter off the path the wire led to a spring-detonated Type 69. Savuth untied the wire from the mine and then proceeded to deactivate the spring detonator. He handed the mine to me. "You want it?" he said, "I have plenty."

I am sure he did. The Thai Cambodian border has served as a refuge for more than a generation of guerrilla fighters, starting with the anti-French Khmer Issareks shortly after World War II. During the 1970s, a number of small groups of anti-Khmer Rouge resistance fled to the mountainous sanctuaries of the Dong Rak escarpment. When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia





on Christmas Day 1978, hundreds of thousands fled to the border area, developing an armed resistance that now numbers more than 60,000. The first thing every unit does when they take over a piece of real estate is surround the perimeter with mines. The annual Vietnamese dry season offensive has dislodged scores of camps during the 10-year-old war. But the mines stay behind, and the ritual is repeated as the guerrillas move to new sanctuaries. After so many years, the Cambodian border region has been turned into a series of mined paths that snake through vast areas, long abandoned, where every step is fraught with danger. The refugee camps have thousands of mine victims, and bustling workshops that are devoted strictly to churning out wooden legs. Often one will see a new mine victim helping to carve his own prosthesis in these surreal workshops, which are virtually a cottage industry on the Cambodian border of the 1980s.

We had been walking for almost an hour when the leading scouts again brought us to a halt. I looked ahead and saw 10 meters in front of me what I immediately recognized as the infamous "K-5." K-5 is a barbed-wire barricade that runs more than 100 kilometers in the Cambodia jungle parallel to the Thai border. It is a sophisticated barrier system, surrounded by mines on both sides with wire-activated devices that run through the fencing itself. Shaped like an inverted V, the pinnacle is more than a meter-and-a-half off the ground, with one fence perpendicular to the ground in the middle, with booby-trapped wire fencing coming down from the peak on both sides at a 45 degree angle, reaching the ground about seven feet

apart. After the Vietnamese launched their crushing 1984-85 dry season offensive, routing virtually every resistance base camp, they built this barricade several clicks inside Cambodia, to prevent the resistance from launching attacks from their new sanctuaries in Thailand. It has proven very effective, eliminating many infiltration routes. I heard many soldiers speaking of the disruption that K-5 had caused them in their forays into the Cambodian interior.

Ironically, it also proved a boost to the resistance as well. Thousands of Cambo-

dians were conscripted into forced work brigades by the Vietnamese to build this barrier in the jungle. Thousands of people contracted malaria in these brigades, and hundreds stepped on mines. There was vast resentment by civilians throughout Cambodia, as people returned to their home provinces with horror stories from the west. Hundreds of young men fled to the sanctuary of the resistance camps rather than be subjected to the labor brigades.

K-5 was an impressive structure but the fence had been cut, with a gap of about a meter, in the spot we were. It was in an area that was lightly forested, and the fence disappeared into the trees going in both directions. Savuth showed me two more Type 69s and more trip wires that disappeared into the fencing. He added the deactivated mines to his collection. "Why," I inquired, "exactly are you saving those things?" It seemed Savuth had a broader job description than I realized. Not only was he skilled in detecting and defusing these cylindrical nightmares, but he was charged with re-depositing them under some path elsewhere in the jungle as well. Waste not, want not, I thought, happy that Savuth was able to take a break from the flip side of his job to accompany us that day.

There was sober evidence that we were nearing the massacre site. A man lay dead just off the path, with obvious shrapnel wounds to his legs and arms. He hadn't been dead long, probably unable to continue, succumbing to the wounds suffered in the initial attack. There were also a couple of traditional Cambodian scarves lying on the ground, bloodied and dirty. Several spent B-40 RPGs lay just off the path.

After initial treatment, wounded cattle traders wait their turn for transport to Red Cross surgical facility.







ABOVE: Wounded cattle trader the author's team found at ambush site, as they bring him across border into Thailand.

RIGHT: Thai/Cambodian who accompanied author on search for survivors — one of those whose reason for being in the area remained unknown.

We paused at K-5 for about 30 minutes, while the area was scoured for mines, and two scouts went ahead to assess the area. I could see them walking about 25 meters on the other side of K-5, crouching and listening. Noi squatted next to me. The wounded who came out yesterday said the attack took place about one-and-a-half clicks east of here," he said soberly. "This area is controlled by Heng Samrin. Two wounded who came out this morning said that they were still active in the area. We will try to get to the site to see if there are any wounded. We will stay there *only* long enough to retrieve them. It is very dangerous. If there are any troops, or if there is gunfire, we will come back in this direction."

The scouts came back and we were given the OK to proceed. I noticed that the tension level of the guides had increased markedly. I also noticed that four of our group declined to proceed, opting to wait for our return.

Within a hundred meters, the lead scout motioned for us to get down, and everyone



sank to a crouch, leaving us still clearly visible in the shallow scrub surrounding the path. Although the area was medium forest, the terrain was rolling, offering numerous hidden sanctuaries less than 10 meters from the path. It occurred to me that the platoon that lay in wait for the traders yesterday could easily be within meters of us on either side, with ample concealment. I didn't

dwell on it. We moved slowly, and gradually quickened the pace. It seemed that the guides knew where we were going and were trying to get it over with, calculating that the risk factor was diminished proportionally to the amount of time we spent in the area.

Within a 20 minute span we were twice ordered to hit the ground as someone thought that they heard sounds or saw movement off to the side. There was increased evidence that we were closing in on our objective. Two more bodies lying off the path spoke volumes of the recent chaos. Pieces of clothing, brand-new tape players still in their boxes shattered by shrapnel, packages of dried noodles and other small items lay on the path, obviously dropped by people fleeing the area.

I moved up to the front of the line, staying immediately behind the scout, checking my camera for the proper settings. The scout came to an abrupt halt. Ten meters in front of us the path was strewn with bodies. As I came up to the first one I was overwhelmed by the smell of death. Spitting out the air in my lungs and trying to hold my breath I got off some quick shots, and counted bodies strung in a row on the path. They obviously had been walking single file when the mines went off. It wasn't hard to see what happened. The mines had been placed on either side of the path, parallel to it for about 10 meters. The first person in the line set off the trip wire, detonating all the mines along the path. We were told that they were claymores and Type 69s. The platoon of Heng Samrin was laying in wait, then opened fire as the wounded started running away from the initial explosion. Off the path were several groups of bodies. There was a pile of six only two meters from the path. Another group of about 10 lay a little farther away in the other direction. There were several other clusters of legs and heads and arms. I counted 32 bodies in all, but some of them were piled on top of each other and it was difficult to make an accurate body count. I stood over one body that had a number of shrapnel wounds. Looking closer, I picked up a spent AK cartridge lying next to his head. There was a clean hole near his temple with a ring of burns surrounding the entrance wound. Someone had finished him off while he lay wounded, I thought.

The lead scout next to me suddenly fell to the ground on all fours, looking towards the tree line and an embankment about 15 meters to the north. Everyone silently followed suit. I clearly saw someone move in the clump of trees, and my heart raced. We were totally unprotected, lying in the middle of a minefield. The scout had just told me not to venture closer to the clusters of bodies off the path, because sometimes soldiers booby-trapped the bodies after an incident. I saw someone stick his head up in the tree line and then duck down. I snapped a picture for the hell of it, knowing that it would only show a cluster of trees, and couldn't possibly reflect the tension of the moment. The jungle was silent for what seemed like forever. No one knew quite



what to do. Our scout whistled softly in the direction of the movement. Again a head appeared from behind the trees, and then an arm waved — motioning for us to come over to him. No words were exchanged and the jungle remained silent.

“Who are you?” our scout whispered loudly in Cambodian, “Where are you going?” Jesus Christ, I thought, what the fuck do you mean “where are you going?” We are lying in the jungle in a minefield surrounded by dead bodies. The way I figure it, pal, he is either sitting there bleeding to death or he is about to pop out with about 20 others and waste me. This is hardly the time to inquire about his travel plans. Perhaps I lost something in the translation.

I didn’t understand the response from the figure in the tree line, but our two scouts reacted positively, and they started making their way gingerly off the path toward the figure. There was no way to tell how many people were in the tree line, and whether or not they were friendly. The guides were obviously reluctant, not confident enough to uncautiously proceed forward.

It was one of the traders and he was wounded, the scouts called back to us. They scurried to help him. He was talking rapidly as the two scouts carried him the short distance back to us. The boy, only 19, had avoided any shrapnel wounds, but had been hit twice in the leg by the subsequent AK fire. He had run into the woods and had been hiding since the attack, now about 19 hours before. Heng Samrin troops had come by twice since the initial attack, he said, each time killing any of the wounded they could find. The last time was less than an hour ago, he said, as he pleaded with us to take him to safety. I took the Cambodian scarf off my head and used it to cover his wounds. A hammock materialized, and they tied it to a long pole. This was a very lucky man, I thought, looking at him. The expression on his face was a queer mix of pain, joy and fatigue. He looked like he was trying to laugh, but his injuries were sending other messages, resulting in an incongruous mix of facial expressions.

The boy said that he had seen no one else alive other than those that the soldiers had killed on their return trip. The news that the Heng Samrin forces were in the immediate area made all of us very nervous and the scouts kept grabbing me, telling me to run. I had shot less than two rolls and I was reluctant to go. We had been there less than 10 minutes.

We left the massacre site in a considerably different manner than we arrived. We were trotting along the same path that only minutes before we had inched along. I reminded myself that this was the same path our scouts had relieved of a dozen mines within the last few hours. As well, there were three occasions (or was it four?) where they chose to leave the mines intact, and guide us around them. I briefly reminded myself of these remaining mines as we walked briskly back toward Thailand and hoped that Savuth, our mine detector, de-



Thai troops in APCs patrol refugee camp at Site B during visit of Vice President Dan Quayle last May.

served his reputation for thoroughness.

It seemed to me that our return trip through the jungle was rather reckless, as we moved quickly and in a group. But I just followed the lead of those in charge and tried not to think. I had adopted an attitude in covering the war that a French photographer had impressed upon me a few years back. The two of us were on the front lines with the KPNLF, awaiting an expected Vietnamese assault to overrun a resistance camp. The Vietnamese had already captured half of the village, all 17,000 civilians had been evacuated many weeks before. The opposing front lines were a series of trenches facing each other less than 50 meters apart.

When the expected assault came, it was clear that the Vietnamese intended to own that piece of real estate by the end of the day. They laid a heavy artillery and mortar barrage on our position and were sending in assault teams to dislodge our front lines. Our platoon would have been more than happy to retreat immediately, but the shelling accompanied by dozens of AKs on full-auto left us unable to move. There were three guerrillas in my particular trench. One had taken a round at about his sternum and was breathing heavily with a wet gurgling sound with every breath. The second was in tears, and the other was crouching with his AK held high over his head on full automatic pointed in the general direction of the Vietnamese. I had basically abandoned any serious thoughts of photography and was, in a prone position, reassessing my career objectives. The Frenchman, however, was standing outside of the trench, slightly in front of us, casually focusing the camera and taking our picture. There were numerous AK rounds hitting the dirt around his feet, not to mention the big guns which had bracketed our position. He was wearing bright yellow pants. I knew right away that

this man was simply crazy. We, of course, survived the unpleasantness, and later over dinner safely back in Thailand, I inquired why he seemed to have divorced himself from sanity earlier that day.

“Look,” he said, “I travel all over the world trying to photograph combat situations. Maybe, if I’m lucky, 10 hours per year I will be in a hot situation such as today. I just empty my mind and take pictures. You can’t think about the danger too much or you won’t get any shots. And anyway it doesn’t do any good, since usually there is nothing you can do about it.”

He was, of course, right. He also had good pictures. Every one of mine that day turned out to be out of focus or the victim of camera shake. Most also were at a peculiar angle, with lots of rim shots of the trench taken from below. So not only did I risk my life, but I didn’t even have any saleable pictures to show for it. This job did not make a hell of a lot of sense to begin with, but it made absolutely none if I didn’t have any pictures. I did think, however, that the Frenchman’s dayglow yellow pants were entirely unnecessary.

It took us less than 45 minutes to make it back over the Thai border. Although we were safely past the mined path, it was another 45 minutes to where we had left the truck. Our focus was on getting the wounded boy to a Red Cross team that was stationed back in Tapraya. I said some quick goodbyes to our Khmer Rouge scouts, for whom I had developed a fondness ever since they found the first Type 69 in the path in front of us. They were Cambodians and were not

*Continued on page 75*



**SOF AFGHANISTAN**

# BLOODY PATH TO PANJSHIR

**Road Littered With  
Soviet Hardware  
and Bad  
Intentions**

**Text & Photos  
by Peter Douglas**

## **WITH PEN TO THE PANJSHIR**

Peter Douglas is a former Royal Marine and an experienced combat photojournalist. He's filed previous stories for SOF from Afghanistan and Cambodia.



**O**NCE the Soviets left, many Afghan watchers predicted a fast assault on Kabul and a rapid reversal in the fortunes of the present communist government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

The fact that the anticipated assault has not yet occurred is due to a combination of factors. First, the mujahideen guerrillas themselves did not believe that the Soviet army would abide by the date set at the Geneva accords. As a result they did not anticipate the need to

transform their forces from loose guerrilla units geared for hit and run operations into a more conventional force capable of sustaining an assault on a city. Underlying this however, is the far more serious and fundamental problem of the manner in which the resistance is currently structured. The multi-party system, riven by rivalry and local schisms, cannot be geared to the kind of coordinated assault necessary for the complex task of taking a city by storm.



**ABOVE:** Lala Muhammad, a mujahid with great dash and courage, seen here overlooking the Kabul Salang Highway. He is counting trucks of a passing Afghan army convoy.



All of these problems have been further compounded by the worst winter in 20 years, which rendered the movement of guerrilla supplies through the mountains almost impossible.

With this in mind I set off for Paghman, a small town nestled northeast of the city of Kabul at the foot of the Paghman mountain range. The journey was made to evaluate the capability of the mujahideen to tackle this new phase of the war in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. Like all trips into Afghanistan it began with confusion. Plans laid in Peshawar with the Pakistan-based representatives of the resistance were fluid. Hard and fast deadlines for departure came and went with no activity. When the move finally came it was a sudden call to race to the border and catch up with the men I was to travel with, who had left without me!

Last minute panics taken care of, the journey began, like so many before during the last 10 years, from Teri Mangal. But it differed from all the others in one important respect. It was going to be motorized nearly all the way. In times past, days could be lost in this tiny border town as you waited for problems with the horse traders to be ironed out. But this time it was all going to be in the comfort of a Toyota pickup, although comfort is a misleading word when you cram in 15 Afghan mujahideen and a mountain of stores. The Toyota vanished under the impedimenta of war, and looked for all the world like a life raft full of arms dealers after the ship went down, all trying to hang on to what little dignity they had left. We pitched and yawed along rough tracks, made worse by deep snow, until everyone felt a distinct feeling of seasickness in the midst of this landlocked country.

We drove past the Jaji Plain and the abandoned army post of Chanie; its empty derelict buildings silently witnessed our

passing. Once its rooftops were glimpsed only at the risk of your life from one of the surrounding ridges as you tried to creep past at night.

The feeling of confidence among the mujahideen was high. Just being able to drive and not having to trudge all these footsore miles was a real boost. But to be able to do it in broad daylight and pass tangible evidence of the rise in mujahideen fortunes kept everyone in high spirits.

Through the mountains of Paktia the jeep rumbled and snaked until suddenly thrown out onto the naked Plains of Lowgar. Here caution was still called for and a brief halt was ordered until the sun dipped toward the horizon. But under cover of darkness we raced out of the deep, dark folds of the mountains and onto the plain proper, the truck all the time keeping up an alarming pace over ground rutted with sudden gullies. The driver drove with such unerring accuracy you'd assume he had radar fitted. Other jeeps and pickups loomed out of the darkness and dust to swerve daringly close by, heading the other direction. We, in a convoy of three, fanned out into a V formation and let nothing impede our progress. In cramped discomfort the hours painfully notched up.

By the very early hours we had reached Duranic, a small pit-stop of a place on the Kabul-Kandahar road. Its one street, which is also the highway, was crowded with parked trucks and buses. Most civilian traffic in Afghanistan parks for the night as the roads are not considered safe. This night was bitterly cold, in the region of 20 below, and at this early hour every *chi khana* (tea house) was already jammed full of travellers. With literally not a yard to spare, we were forced to curl up in sleeping bags outside on the concrete-hard, frozen ice. I cast a long envious look at the U.S. arctic-issue sleeping bags into



### A GOOD DEPENDABLE KILLING MACHINE

Unique to Jamiat Islami has been the defection of Afghan air force pilots with their aircraft. Two of the most feared helicopters in Afghanistan defected to join Massoud in his Panjshir Valley stronghold only a few days before the Soviet pull-out.

Mi-35B flown into Panjshir by Captain Abdul Nai. Behind it is an Mi-25 which defected at the same time.

The pilot of one, 24-year-old Afghan air force Captain Abdul Nai, told me that he had been in secret communication with the mujahideen for several years and that his defection was at the command of Massoud, who felt such timing would further



which my fellow Afghan companions slid.

At Duranie we had to transfer to alternate transport. We soon found ourselves riding in huge trucks crammed full of sacks of flour and sleeping bags. At least now the going promised to be warm and soft. Each man climbed into three sleeping bags and huddled down out of the wind as we set off at a torturous pace, following an all but invisible track across a white wasteland littered with the derelict remains of other, less fortunate trucks. Some were being dug out of drifts. Others had tipped over in the river beds and water swirled around them washing away the last of the supplies they were carrying.

Finally the trucks could go no further and supplies had to be transferred to horseback. My own schedule kept me back a few days to film in a muj camp. By the time I set off, a few days later, I was left with a small escort of six muj. We spent our last night before departure in a *mosque jet*, a communal hospitality room set aside for visitors to a village. It was basic but warm, which made the early 0430 introduction to another Afghan winter day seem all the colder.

Our way lay over two mountain passes under observation from Soviet and Afghan army positions. We had to clear the first pass before sunrise. The pace was steadily uphill and beads of sweat soon began to trickle down our straining faces. Once on top of the first pass however, the temptation to stop and rest was soon forgotten as our sweat-soaked clothes began to freeze into a crisp outer layer. With dawn ever closer and all the attendant dangers of our exposed position, we hurried on. Downhill was faster but more treacherous underfoot. Following a gully down we emerged with the first light into a small valley called Argundy. Nothing disturbed the dawn other than the crunching of the iced snow crystals beneath our feet, and the

demoralize the Afghan air force.

On 6 February this year Captain Abdul Nai taxied on to the airstrip of the 1st Squadron, 377th "Hero Wing" base in Kabul to take off on a routine flight. The only difference was that this time he had no intention of returning. When the rotors swept the loose snow into a ferocious storm he was strapped into the pilot's seat of the very latest export version of the legendary Soviet Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunship, the Mi-35B. Together with an Mi-25, piloted by a friend, he was embarking on a daring hijack of two highly prized Afghan air force helicopters.

Nose down they glided across the airfield and rose to the designated altitude. But on the route north to the Soviet controlled Bagram air base on what seemed like a routine flight, they suddenly dove toward the earth, leveling-out only a few feet above the ground to evade Soviet radar, and charted a course for the Panjshir Valley. Contour flying all the way, they desperately tried to remain hidden among the valleys and steep rocky crags of the Hindu Kush from Soviet air patrols trying to intercept and shoot them down for failing to respond to orders to return to base.

When I interviewed Abdul Nai he told me, "It was not easy to reach the Panjshir. It is easy to fly to Khost, to Miram Shah (in Pakistan), it only takes 10 minutes. And from Jalalabad to Peshawar (in Pakistan) is only 20 minutes. It takes much longer from Bagram to Panjshir. Moreover you cannot tell everyone about your intentions. . . . There are many Soviet security posts along the way. The moment they realized what we were doing they tried to shoot us down. Russian jets were flying over us, luckily they did not discover our mission and flight pattern. It is much safer to defect to Pakistan, percentagewise it was 80% more dangerous to fly to the Panjshir. But we accepted the risk. . . . When we entered the Panjshir we were fired upon by mujahideen not in on the secret. We were lucky to get here safely."

While secretly loyal to the mujahideen he has been wounded twice by hostile fire from them. Once shot in the hand in flight he nursed the gunship back to base. On another occasion when an airstrip was under mortar fire he was hit by a fragment and hospitalized again.

occasional heavy artillery shell exploding indiscriminately in the far distance and echoing in the stillness of frozen morning air.

The sky turned a deep crimson-orange and quickly brightened into day. On the other side of the plain, a dark ridge jutted out of the valley floor. On top were several square-shaped buildings which formed an Afghan army observation point. Although still several clicks off, the muj gave it the respect it deserved and hid their AK assault rifles under the blankets which they all wore draped around themselves like thick, warm capes. They repeatedly admonished each other not to create a target by walking in a bunch, but tended to bunch up nonetheless for mutual moral support as we walked out across the exposed valley floor. It made me very nervous.

Up ahead, jutting out of the snow, were two burnt-out Russian BTR 70s, precariously perched at a steep angle against the side of a gully. They were fire-blackened and rusted brown in color, with only a trace of their original olive green camouflage. One still had a plainly visible number 734 on the side in white lettering. Both were peppered with bullet holes. I wondered if the Soviet soldiers who had once sat in them as they drove up the valley had presumed themselves safe, encased in all that metal. Next to the "small arms rash" were occasional violent tears where RPG rockets had found their mark; jagged metal blades buckled back into the fire-scorched interior. The small blister turrets that once housed 14.5mm HMGs were torn aside several meters clear of the body work.

We spent the rest of the day waiting in a small village until it was late enough to make a start for the second pass.

Mid-afternoon we set off; the way snaked up through snow-filled gullies for several hours until we finally reached the saddle of the mountain a few hours later. Here the small knot of

Abdul Nai said that the Soviet withdrawal has adversely affected morale within not only the Afghan air force but the army as well. However those who were interested in defecting, who had not had previous contact with the mujahideen, were uncertain what their reception would be. After all they have been backing the Soviet side in the war for the last 10 years.

Rumors of the brutal summary execution by the mujahideen of Afghan army officers trying to defect were rife, and not entirely without foundation. He felt that as Massoud had a large, and unusually disciplined, force there was a greater chance that he would be able to offer protection to any who surrendered to his men.

That this line of reasoning is obviously one held by many of the currently serving Afghan army troops is evidenced by the fact that the largest defections of the new phase in the war have been to Massoud. In particular, over 2,000 Afghan army soldiers surrendered to Massoud at Talegan in northern Afghanistan this year shortly after the Soviet pullout.

To attempt to defect with a helicopter took great courage and cool nerves. To further decide to fly, not to a safe haven in neighboring Pakistan, but run the gauntlet of Soviet bases and air patrols in an apparently suicidal stab at flying to the Panjshir for a political gesture is deserving of admiration and respect.

Abdul Nai had trained for four years in Soviet Kirghistan at the aviation academy in Frunz, first on Mi-8 Hip helicopters, then on Mi-25 helicopter gunships. Back in Afghanistan he was assigned to a new Mi-35B. Having flown over 1,000 hours in Afghanistan on this type he describes them affectionately as, "A good dependable aircraft. . . . We say in air force terminology that error is death; in these aircraft many of our pilots have made mistakes but still the chopper was able to handle itself properly. So in a way we have died many times but survived due to the fine flying characteristics of these helicopters. . . . The Mi-35 has never proven itself wrong. I have also studied American helicopters. In comparison the Mi-35B is probably the best of its kind. Safer, more sensitive and easy to maneuver. It is a good dependable killing machine."





Afghans squatted close together as a bitterly cold wind snapped at their traditional baggy clothes. They wanted to wait for dark before moving on, as Afghan army observation posts overlooked the descending path on the other side. I also squatted down and waited. The hellish cold sapped at our morale and the leader of our small band decided to make an early move saying that if we set off in twos, well spaced out, the enemy OPs would ignore us. I had my reservations but had no option but to follow the fate of my companions.

The first pair set off boldly and vanished over the crest. The rest of us strained our ears for the burst of fire we all felt certain would follow. Except for the slicing wind, all was silence and the next two set off. A few minutes later, Sabu, a thickset mujahid adorned with a pair of cheap imitation Ray-Ban sunglasses, rose up and beckoned me to follow. With some foreboding about the departure from the original plan to move across this section only under cover of darkness, I dutifully followed, stiff with cold. My unease was not lessened on seeing, immediately on the other side of the ridge, the recent grave of a mujahid with its green martyr's flag fluttering in the icy wind.

The snow and ice packed path dropped precipitously down into a narrow valley created by the mountains on one side and a long spur running down from the ridges further away. Sabu wrapped his Kalashnikov out of sight in the blanket draped over his shoulder. Once down on the valley floor we moved quickly, but with due caution as the area was said to be heavily sown with mines.

We kept up a steady pace but not too fast in case we aroused suspicion. Sabu kept up a constant flow of warnings about the danger from mines, and assurances that the enemy posts never fired at small targets. I wasn't too certain who he was trying to reassure but it was making me nervous.

We had almost reached the tree line when the first shots passed overhead. At first it was just desultory fire and, judging by the subsonic hiss of the rounds coming from one of the posts, at least a thousand meters away. Obviously somebody

**Afghan army post on road from Kabul to Paghman. What looks like a T-54 is seen hull-down next to a mud walled post. Tank crew member is seen walking over the earth rampart. On the roof can be seen second sentry at machine gun post. Photo taken at about 100 meters. Tank number is 512, it belongs to the newly formed "Special Guard," whose responsibility is primarily the defense of Kabul.**

had failed to tell them they weren't meant to shoot at small fry like us. The next salvo of shots were much closer and more in number. We crouched low, but kept going as there was no immediate cover at hand. This churlish refusal on our part to stop made them mad and they let rip with some 12.7s. We threw ourselves down into the snow, our only cover the shallow, six-inch deep rut of the path. An AGS 17 began to lob out grenades with alarming regularity. Thankfully it was peppering the tree line and when an 82mm mortar joined in, it also chose to plaster the tree line. Having vanished from sight the post obviously assumed that we had been able to crawl unseen into the trees. In fact we lay pressed flat into the snow and began to literally freeze to the ground.

Half an hour later, under cover of the gathering darkness, we were able to move on undetected.

The dirt road into Paghman town was deserted and littered with the shattered boughs of trees. Houses stood empty, where they stood at all. The road was a scene of total devastation. With stars burning brightly in the jet-black sky above us, we hurried on. Explosions echoed from sporadic artillery fire. Occasionally multi-barrelled rocket launchers spewed flames into the night, followed shortly after by the thunderous roar of multiple explosions. Spasmodic streams of tracers arched away from government army posts to keep at bay any itinerant mujahideen with ideas of attack.

Later that night we reached the camp we were heading for. It was located in Paghman town only a few kilometers from Kabul, which was clearly visible on the plain slightly below us.





**Asadler, a mujahid in Paghman, on the steps of the deserted police building in what was once downtown.**

Deserted by all the former civilian population, Paghman now looks much like the Green Line in Beirut; every house is pockmarked with small arms fire, many shattered by artillery, some now no more than piles of rubble spilling onto the street.

Living among the ruins were several small groups of mujahideen. The main base for each party is called a *markaz*, which roughly translates as center. Subsidiary to each markaz were smaller bases known as *karagi* (or posts). Each karagi was composed of 20 to 30 men living in a few rooms in one of the less dilapidated buildings. Most of the buildings were badly damaged by shelling and, being mostly made of mud, badly eroded by the weather. The mujahideen kept a low profile during the day and were very wary of showing lights at night, hanging blankets over all windows and doors. A breach of this survival etiquette was much frowned upon as the opposition were quick to respond. Any sign of activity was quickly rewarded with a good dose of tank and shell fire detonating in the neighborhood in a most unsettling fashion.

Paghman was once a town with a population in the region of 72,000. Now it harbored a population of about 500 mujahideen living like troglodytes in the bowels of shattered buildings. Streets were littered with debris and rusting shell splinters.

The mujahideen spent their days concerned with the mundane duties of the base, cooking, collecting firewood and keeping things generally tidy. At this time, just before the Soviet pullout, they had no operational plans. The harsh winter had affected their supply lines and severely inhibited their ability to get more men into the area. Apart from a daily pasting of artillery and tank fire, a general status quo had set in, each side mostly ignoring the other. There was a lot of talk about large numbers of mujahideen expected to arrive which would enable them to increase pressure against Kabul, but during my month-long stay, there was no sign of this.



**TOP: Jamiat Commander Bizmillah and his men. Bizmillah is Massoud's commander in Gulbahar. Muj are all dressed in Soviet uniforms.**



**ABOVE: Afghan army T-54 on ridgeline outside Kabul overlooking Paghman. This one seems to feel secure resting on high ground, devoid of approach cover and out of range of muj antitank weapons. It would be a sitting duck for Milan, which has been issued to the muj but seldom reaches the hands of the most deserving commanders.**

Due to the lack of decisive activity, both in the group I was with, and around the Kabul area itself, I decided to head further north to try and find, and interview, commander Massoud. He is the most capable of all Afghan guerrilla leaders and therefore, at this critical period, the difficult trip to track him down in the mountains of northern Afghanistan seemed worthwhile.

Making the trip to find him in the mountains however, entailed swapping political parties as I would have to travel with mujahideen from Massoud's Jamiat-i-Islami group. Thus resolved I made my way to Mullah Ezat, the local Jamiat representative in Paghman. He was very busy with a constant stream of commanders coming to consult with him, on their way north to see Massoud.

Perhaps because Massoud himself remains permanently in Afghanistan and shares the fortunes of his men, they have great confidence in his ability to formulate a plan for Kabul, and there is an optimistic sense of purpose within Jamiat.

My move further north began on a day of fine, warm sunshine as I set off with my new companions towards a pass over the Paghman mountains. By late afternoon we were nearing the pass, it was heavy going through deep snow, in near whiteout conditions, with wet sleet adding to our miseries.

Finally clearing the pass with difficulty, we descended into the Chakadra region, only to be ominously greeted by salvos of artillery shells working a pattern over the ground we had to



cross. In the month I'd been inside, most of the snow had vanished from the lower ground, which meant that we came off the snow and ice into deep, oozy mud. This stuff was heavy as concrete and stuck to your boots in quantity, but at least the frequent stops to scrape it off gave you something to think about other than the booming explosions from incoming shell fire. The Afghan army artillery bases seemed aware that traffic would be heavy during bad weather, when the visibility would be poor. Normally movement in this area was by night only.

By the time we were winding our way out across the plain in a deep gully, the shell fire had shifted from low ground to high ground, and the visibility was lifting enough to allow us to observe dozens of shells slamming into a cone-shaped ridge with the small dark outline of a building on top. The muj explained that this had once been a government position that had since been abandoned, but as it overlooked another post, it was often shelled to deter the muj from moving in. As we watched the yellow-red flash of exploding shells and the drifting clouds of oily, black smoke, I could fully understand the reluctance of the muj to move in. It looked like it would be expensive real estate. The hillside was soon pockmarked with smudgy, black stains on the snow, like cigarette burns on a bedsheet.

Late that afternoon we reached our destination; we came upon a small karagi, where we would have hospitality for the night. Weary through to our bones we were grateful for the steaming glasses of hot, green tea. At this time of year the staple diet seemed to alter from nan, the flat unleavened bread

of Afghanistan, to rice. Soon large platters of rice were placed before us. Afghans love their food oily. Even the rice has oil added. After a month I was really missing the simple dry nan of the warmer months.

A few days were spent in this area. Here there was some evidence of preparation for future battles. An underground hospital of 45 beds was being dug in. It was spartan by western standards but very impressive by local ones. There were rumors that when the Kabul push began Chakadra would be an area of vital importance. It lies on the main artery of supply for Kabul, close to both Bagram air base, where most of the air-transported supplies come in, and the Salang highway, down which all land convoys must travel.

The local Jamiat commander, Khan Aga, explained that the mujahideen were keeping a low profile at that time but offered to escort me close to the road to prove that they could approach it at will and close it, if ordered to do so.

The next day we set off early, heading for this vital highway. The point that we were heading for turned out to be an abandoned village, much the worse for wear after 10 years of war. Not a house still had a roof and most of the walls were now just piles of mud in the narrow lanes that twisted through the broken ruins.

Holes had been carved through walls to allow hidden movement. We slithered and wormed forward along a shallow shell-scraped trench. It wasn't long before I was coated in mud and looking like just another bit of shattered building. One hundred and fifty meters from the road, another deeper trench

## SOVIET MIAS IN AFGHANISTAN

The term MIA is one Americans are only too painfully familiar with after their own experiences in the Vietnam War. It is a description of men who are lost in the confusion of war, have suffered an unknown fate and are listed as missing. Where they are and what happened to them sadly often remains a secret shared only with the grave.

The Soviets admit to having 313 MIAs in Afghanistan. A large proportion of these are thought to be air crews who went down due to ground-fire or mechanical failure over hostile country and were never heard from again. Some were ground troops who fell in battle and whose bodies were non-recoverable during the heat of combat. A few were captured and subsequently shot by captors who had little sympathy for those who fell into their hands. Some survived their capture, only to die later of wounds or illness in areas where the guerrillas could not offer, even their own wounded or sick, rudimentary medical aid.

Of those MIAs held by the mujahideen, a few voluntarily defected to join the ranks of the guerrillas. These men may have been motivated either by political idealism or, if from central Soviet Asia, possibly a shared Islamic religion with the guerrillas they were sent to fight.

It is possible that as many as one hundred Soviet MIAs are currently still alive and with the Afghan guerrillas. A few by choice, most by force of circumstance. In the Panjshir Valley the mujahideen claim to have 10. During my trip I met three of them. They were fortunate to have been captured in northern Afghanistan, where their chances of surviving capture were greater. Few of those captured by the more volatile tribes in the south were so lucky.

All of the three Soviets I met claim to have converted to Islam and enjoy relative freedom within the confines of the Panjshir Valley. Massoud claims to have offered them the opportunity to be exchanged for guerrilla prisoners being held in the infamous Pol-i-Charki prison in Kabul — an offer they are reputed to have declined.

Those I met all claimed they had defected to the guerrillas by choice. Perhaps true, or perhaps a story to lessen any possible friction with their captors. Certainly all three men admitted to having had problems while with the Soviet army. All three

admitted that at the time of their defection they were in trouble with the military and worried about punishment.

Sergie, who declined to give his last name and is now known by his Islamic name of Ahmadtullah, was from Novosibirsk in Siberia and had been a petrol tanker driver in the Soviet army. He sold petrol to an Afghan and was caught by his sergeant. With his case before the commanding officer, fear of punishment was a major contributing factor in his defection. When I met him he had already spent three years with the guerrillas.

Sergie was fortunate to have Victor, a fellow Russian, as a companion. Victor, from Zhdanov in the Ukraine had adopted the Islamic name of Mohammad Islam and also declined to give a last name. He said that he was afraid of repercussions affecting his family if it was known that he was with the guerrillas. He claimed to have defected when his diary was confiscated and found to contain anti-Soviet remarks condemning the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. The decision to defect was not without great danger as, had he been caught, he could face the firing squad as a deserter.

"During the morning I left my army post and spent the day hidden in a damaged tank. I hid there in the stifling hot metal tank until evening. After dark, I crept out of the tank and cut a way through the barbed wire, past the mines, and out across a field. All the time I was very afraid that they would catch me. When I reached the road I did not know where to go and wandered about for hours until I saw some men who took me to their house.

"They asked me where I wanted to go and I told them I wanted to go with them. In this way I found the mujahideen."

From this point on he would have been listed as MIA. When I met him he had been five years with the Afghans. He had learned to speak, read and write Dari fluently. No particular task had been assigned to him and his days were mostly taken up in visiting his Afghan friends and talking over tea.

Azzizullah refused to give any Russian name but admitted to being from Moldavia. He was studying to be a journalist when he was conscripted into the army and joined an air defense unit after training in the Ukraine. Once posted to Afghanistan he began to think about defecting.

"When I joined the army we were told that there was fighting



was sited behind the debris of what was once the wall of a house. Into this we dropped and began to assess our position. The road dipped in front of us and rose to high ground on either side. Five hundred meters in either direction an Afghan army post was sited.

Our trench was well positioned for a sneak rocket attack on passing traffic but afforded a very narrow field of vision for photographic work. So, somewhat reluctantly, we decided to leave the trench and ease our way cautiously onto slightly higher ground. This meant rolling slowly over exposed walls and crawling, pressed flat into the mud, over even more exposed sections. At last we hunkered down in a house which had collapsed in on itself. Beams of timber jutted out of the deep mud, it felt like being inside the ribcage of a giant skeleton. Here, as we organized ourselves for the long day before us, the low, scudding cloud cover decided to clear and the sun came out. We cursed this setback, as it increased the possibility of chance observation from one of the posts. With my camera wrapped in camouflaged face veils, I sat out the day watching the traffic roll past.

Although mostly civilian trucks and buses, the road was also patrolled at frequent but irregular intervals by the Afghan army; platoons of BRDM-2 scout cars, T-54 tanks and BTR-60 personnel carriers occasionally trundled past.

The Afghan army seemed perfectly relaxed. Often the BTR-60s had men soaking up the sunshine spread over the outer bodywork as they hurried along. The posts stopped and searched civilian traffic in a cursory fashion. Soon the day

became unbearably hot. The top layers of mud dried into dust, an even greater danger to us as any movement stirred this into little clouds.

The sweltering hours of mid-afternoon now stretched uncomfortably before us; suddenly we heard a blaring of horns and over the rise burst a convoy of trucks. It was a huge food convoy travelling overland from the Soviet Union. About 400 trucks passed us, all racing to overtake each other; dozens of petrol tankers were mixed with the juggernauts loaded with food. The whole thing was escorted by one lone BRDM-2. It was a sitting duck to even a lone man with an RPG launcher, but at this time Khan Aga was under orders from Massoud to leave the road open to all food convoys. The mujahideen watched it all roll past and held their fire.

After the convoy had passed we'd seen as much as we wanted to. With mugs of tea much in our thoughts after nine hours in the heat of the day with no water we retreated.

The next few days we spent walking north fairly casually, following the low contours of the mountains at the edge of the Bagram Plain. Most of the time spent in Afghanistan is uneventful. You spend quiet days of walking that lull you into a dangerous sense of false security.

A week after leaving Paghman we were reaching the end of yet another long day's walk with our destination in sight. The village lay a few miles off, set in the middle of fields under plow. We had quickened our pace and were beginning to look forward to a rest and a meal, when we unexpectedly came under small-arms fire from another village over a mile away.

every day with Americans . . . We were told that American pilots were stationed in the Panjshir . . . We thought this might be a good opportunity for us to seek asylum with the Americans. In two or three months we would be heading toward America. We had a large map in our room, we were always watching for American, Iranian, Pakistani and Japanese air attack. It was our duty to destroy them. But in Afghanistan we did not see any of them."

For a serving Soviet soldier defecting was not easy. "Four of my previous attempts were unsuccessful; the first time I tried to join the mujahideen while I was stationed in Bagram airport. Another three times I tried while I was in Jabal Serage. I succeeded on my fifth attempt. During my fourth attempt I was captured by Zarandoy (Afghan police), who brought me back to the Soviets. I was imprisoned for some time, then sent to the Salang. Some proposed that I should be sent back to the Soviet Union, because they were afraid that I was going to try again one day. Finally they decided to send me to the Salang, anticipating that the Soviet positions were surrounded with several rows of mines and I would not dare escape. Furthermore the area was surrounded by large groups of opposition forces, so it would be difficult for me to escape. . . I did not anticipate or think of the Afghan [guerrilla] presence. I was of the opinion that I was surrendering to the Americans or other foreigners so that I would be able to go to a foreign country," Azzizullah said

He's been with the Afghan guerrillas for over five years now. His family does not know that he is alive. His spare time is spent writing a book which he hopes one day to have published in the West. The title of the book is to be, *The Barbarism of the Soviets in Afghanistan*.

Not all the Soviet MIAs survived. On a mountainside, in a small side valley leading off the Panjshir I found another Soviet MIA. He remains where he fell, during some unrecorded clash with the guerrillas. As the years pass, his sun-bleached bones lie alone and undisturbed on a high ridge of the Hindu Kush. But far from the fields of war a family waits for news of him. While they nurse a desperate hope that he will be found among the spared, he is forever a part of the brotherhood of warriors missing in action. A companionship that transgresses all nationality, race or creed. A lost army who sleep in peace beyond the terror and fear of war. An army so large no member can ever be lonely.



Russian MIAs Victor (Mohamad Islam), 23, from Zhdanov in the Ukraine (right) and Sergie (Achmadtullah), 21, from Novosibirsk in Siberia (left).



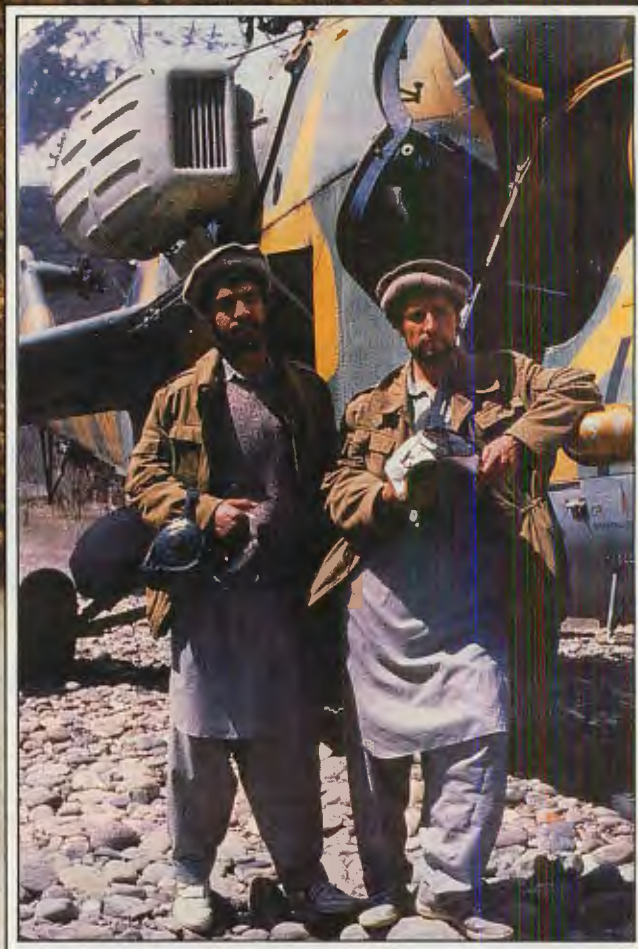


This crater, formerly the site of two houses, was made by one of the new Soviet bombs.



**RIGHT:** Captain Abdul Nai, right, with his flight engineer Captain Muhammadi Amin, left, stand in front of the Mi-35B they flew into Panjshir as a gift for Massoud.

**BELOW:** Afghan army artillery base. Kabul lies immediately behind this ridge. The 122mm guns are all dug in on the right of the ridge.



The rounds were hissing high over us and posed no great danger but this was enough for us to scurry along behind an earth bank until we could drop into a gully and retire further in relative safety. We never knew who was firing at us, or why. Although this was a mujahideen controlled area, the multi-party system and all its divisions means that you are never really safe anywhere in Afghanistan. Even within the same party you can have problems if two commanders fall out.

On this occasion the hostile fire forced us to move further away from the mountains and we promptly stood on somebody else's toes. This became apparent when sporadic mortar fire began to pepper the fields we walked over. Our assumption was that this was from a small Afghan army post keeping us at bay. Luckily for us, there was a dried out canal close at hand and we

clambered into this. Out of sight and feeling more secure, we trudged along the dry canal bed leaving the drifting clouds of smoke and dust from the mortars further and further behind.

The canal we were following led straight into the village at which we planned to spend the night. Up ahead we could see a small knot of men, who periodically poked their heads over a low wall and waved to us. We waved back (nothing like a warm welcome). When the front of the small column drew up level with the wall I was surprised and immediately uneasy when the lead Afghans suddenly bolted out of the canal and disappeared behind the same wall. Afghans never, ever run unless there is a serious problem. The whole group broke into a

*Continued on page 83*





**ABOVE:** Front view of one of the first operational Hind look-alikes. Note details like missile detector pod (lower right) and air data boom (protruding out front).

**UPPER LEFT:** Soviet markings are faithfully reproduced, from the camo pattern down to the "Danger" sign written in Cyrillic by the tail rotor.

**LEFT CENTER:** Hind look-alike on the runway before flight testing.

**LOWER LEFT:** Production is gearing up as the initial contract calls for 15 reproduction Hinds by the summer of 1991.

**BELOW:** Ron Mander, director of flight operations at Orlando Helicopter Airways, gives the main rotor one more inspection prior to a test flight.

**BOTTOM:** Flight testing of one of the first two operational helicopters. Note the five-blade rotor added to make this Sikorsky look just like an actual Hind.





# HOMEBREWED HINDS

## U.S. Army Buys Counterfeit Commie Choppers

Text & Photos by Ron Thomas

*The helicopter turned as it hovered, aiming its bulbous snout and ample armament at the Americans looking up from the ground. The distinctive camouflage pattern indicated the aircraft's origin and the bright red*

*stars on its underbelly and fuselage left no doubt — this was a Soviet Hind-E. It dipped its nose and streaked overhead at 175 mph toward Miami, leaving startled onlookers in its wake.*



**T**HIS is not a scene from *Red Dawn* or some other post-apocalyptic film. Rather, the time is now and the scene is central Florida. Orlando Helicopter Airways, located in the suburb of Sanford, is building a fleet of 15 Hind-E look-alikes for the U.S. Army Missile Command.

The aircraft are remanufactured Sikorsky S-55s and H-19s. The finished product will be shot out of the sky at White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico. The Hind copies will be used to test surface-to-air missile technology, including the Stinger system. Stingers have been used to great effect by the Afghan mujahideen against Soviet gunships during the USSR's occupation of Afghanistan.

Orlando Helicopter is building the Soviet

Either a stray Soviet Hind-E or an Orlando Helicopter Airways replica coming in for landing in south-central Florida.

### HIP ON HINDS

Ron Thomas is an Assistant Professor of communication at Central Florida Community College and frequently lectures on journalism and terrorism topics around the country. He last wrote for SOF back in 1980 (see "IBS Goes to MARS," SOF, December '80). Thomas has also contributed to *Combat Weapons*, *Top Secret* and *Gung Ho* magazines. His first book is due out later this year.

clones often from little more than a Sikorsky fuselage. Much of the cosmetic work such as nose pods, winglets and other structures is built from scratch. This is done to insure as close a radar signature to the original as possible. The camo paint scheme and Soviet markings (including the word "danger" in Cyrillic by the tail rotor) are to assist ground troops with visual recognition. In fact, noise simulators to duplicate the racket of the Soviet engines will be added.

Most of the reworking is required in the engine to give the duplicate aircraft similar performance characteristics and the same heat signature on infrared detection systems. The Sikorsky piston engine generates 800 horsepower while the Hind's twin turbine engines generate 1900 horsepower. The Hind's maximum speed is 200 mph with a cruising speed of 160 mph. The S-55 has a maximum speed of only 112 mph and cruises at 91 mph.

In addition to upgrading the engine capabilities, the three-blade Sikorsky rotor is replaced with a five-blade system to emulate the Soviet aircraft. Rotaire of Fairfield, Connecticut is the sub-contractor for the five-blade system. Sperry Defense Systems is installing radio controls in 13 out of the initial 15 helicopters, giving them a dual capacity as both man-rated or drone operated aircraft. Since the choppers will be facing live fire on the testing range, the only use for live pilots will be in dress rehearsals prior to weapons test exercises.

Ron Mander, director of flight operations for Orlando Helicopter Airways, said that the winglets on the copy aircraft have a bit more incline to them than the ones on actual Hinds. Mander, who has 2,000 hours in fixed wing aircraft and 1,800 hours in rotary, thinks the remanufactured helicopters handle quite well overall.

The Army specifications call for performance characteristics such as a maximum forward rate of climb of 1,700 feet per minute, the ability to maintain a 45-degree bank, and accelerate to exert two Gs of pressure on the pilot.

The initial contract for the first 15 aircraft is valued at less than \$10 million, according to an Army spokesperson. If the project is successful, future orders are expected. In anticipation, *Orlando Helicopter Airways* has located 100 surplus Sikorskys in addition to the 100 or so it already owns.

The project should be completed within two years, with the first aircraft to be delivered in the summer of 1989. Live-fire testing will begin after evaluation at White Sands. ✕





by Peter G. Kokalis

Photos Courtesy  
Department of Defense

**T**HERE is no more important piece of equipment to a groundpounder than his rifle. Despite the century's enormous advances in the technology of death, the infantry remains the "queen of battle," and the infantry's primary objective remains, as always, to meet with and destroy the enemy. And we still expect the infantryman to kill the enemy with his rifle, most of the time.

And that is precisely what happens, most of the time. Consider these facts:

1) From 1965 to 1970 51 percent of all U.S. KIAs in Vietnam were produced by small arms fire, while fragments from grenades, mortars, mines, artillery and bombs combined accounted for the remaining 49 percent.

2) During the same period small arms fire accounted for 16 percent of all WIAs.

3) Some 23 percent of overall casualties were generated by military small arms.

4) In 1966, when our troops were principally involved in search and destroy missions, fully 42 percent of all casualties were from military small arms. In 1970, when our people were principally involved in base defense, only 16 percent of our casualties were from military small arms.

It is therefore apparent that small arms were far more lethal than fragments. It is also clear that this is due to the use of full-auto weapons. The average number of hits on KIAs attributed to small arms was 3.8.

One of these ACR candidates may well end up as, or form the basis for, the M16A2's replacement. How well they, or the technology they represent, will fulfill combat requirements is an open question. Foreground (from left): Heckler & Koch's revolutionary G11 and to the right — AAI's flechette-firing ACR. Background (from left): Steyr's flechette-firing bullpup and to the right — Colt's ACR which employs a duplex-projectile cartridge.

What this means is that the adoption of a new rifle, no matter how satisfactory it may appear at the time, must never herald the end of our quest to develop an even more advanced and superior replacement. It also means that the adoption of a new rifle is no small matter.

For almost a decade, our military forces have been exploring the requirements for the M16A2's eventual replacement. At first a low priority, this effort has recently picked up steam and now seems to be surging forward. Under the auspices of Picatinny Arsenal's Close Combat Armaments Center in New Jersey, tests commenced in August on a special firing range at Fort Benning, Ga., with four prototype weapons in the U.S. Army's Advanced Combat Rifle (ACR) program.

The program's goal is a 100 percent improvement in combat environment hits per trigger pull over the current M16A2 rifle. The key phrase is "combat environment." Mechanically, the M16A2 is capable of 100 percent hits per trigger pull at ranges out to 300 meters and of 80 percent at 600 meters. However, Army statistics indicate that under the stress of combat, hit probability

drops to 20 percent at 100 meters, 10 percent at 300 meters and only about five percent at 600 meters.

The ACR program's stated goal is to determine if new technology, as embodied in the prototype rifles, can appreciably increase hit probability under battlefield conditions. In my opinion, the project should also focus on reducing the soldier's load and increasing the wounding potential of the ammunition employed in the ACR. Unfortunately, there is ample reason to believe that these two concerns and some other equally critical issues are being ignored. The prototypes of all four candidate rifles are significantly heavier than the M16A2. Worse, there is alarming evidence that, with one possible exception, the candidate ammunition types will have less wounding potential than the present 5.56x45mm M16A2 round.


The Fort Benning trials have been divided into two segments, the first running from August to November, 1989, and the second from January to April, 1990. Two groups of 18 participants each, composed of both U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force personnel, will fire all four of the prototypes submitted and the M16A2 for control.

The 600-meter test range has been designed to simulate, as closely as possible, actual battlefield environments. Three different firing positions, ranging from unsupported prone to standing, will be used to engage targets from short range (25 to 75 meters), medium range (75 to 300 meters) and long range (300 to 600 meters). Target exposure times will vary from less than two seconds at short distances to longer duration at more distant ranges. The course will in-



# 21ST CENTURY COMBAT RIFLE

## Is Army Courting Hit Probability at Expense of Killability?



clude both moving and stationary targets located over a wide angular area to further stress the firer. Additionally, the test personnel will not know what target will appear, how many will appear at one time (up to three), or how long they will remain exposed. Moving targets will also operate at two different speeds.

To compound stress even more, the shooters will undergo strenuous physical exercise just prior to firing and their heart rates will be monitored during the firing stages. Peer pressure, team competition, battle-noise and return-fire simulators will also be employed to further stress and motivate the test participants. It's unlikely we could ever come closer than this to portraying a combat environment. However, we must never forget that actual combat will always remain the ultimate test bed of both men and their equipment.

The four weapons entered in the ACR trials were developed by Heckler & Koch, Inc. of West Germany, Steyr-Mannlicher Ges. m.b.H. of Austria, Colt Industries and AAI (Aircraft Armaments, Inc.) Corp. Weapons developed by McDonnell-Douglas (a flechette-firing rifle which proved to have an erratic shot dispersion) and Ares (a rifle using telescoped ammunition that was plagued by light primer hits) were dropped from the trials when they failed to demonstrate sufficient system or ammunition reliability by the required due date.

### Heckler & Koch G11

Heckler & Koch's revolutionary caseless G11 bullpup was first exposed to the public in an exclusive report that appeared in the March, 1982 issue of SOF. Since that time, development has continued and numerous modifications have been made.

The G11 is gas operated with a unique radially reciprocating chamber. The single-column, 45-round magazine is attached to the rifle above the barrel and serves also as a pointing aid for snap shooting. A feed arm pulls each round downward, projectile nose first, directly into the chamber. The chamber then rotates 90 degrees into the horizontal firing position. After ignition of the round, the chamber rotates 90 degrees in the opposite direction to the original feed position. This is somewhat reminiscent of the principle used in the Cookson and Lorenzoni repeating flintlocks.

Initial charging is accomplished with a rotary cocking device on the left side of the weapon. By removing the magazine and rotating the cocking handle, a chambered round is cleared and exits

through a door in the bottom of the stock (under the cocking handle) which opens at an appropriate moment.



Heckler & Koch's G11, right side. A multi-powered scope is built into the carrying handle and provides 1X power for shorter ranges and 3.5X for beyond 300 meters. Overall length of this bullpup is only 29.5 inches, but it weighs 8.6 pounds, empty.

round is cleared and exits through a door in the bottom of the stock under the cocking handle which opens at an appropriate moment. Magazines can be loaded one cartridge at a time, or by means of 15-round clips that are packed in a sealed plastic box. An indicator at the top of the magazine identifies the quantity of ammunition remaining.

A further innovation is the rotary firing pin which pivots around its own axis to expose a spur that digs into the primer to cause ignition.

A multi-powered scope, developed by Swarovski, is built into the carrying handle and provides 1X power for shorter ranges and 3.5X for ranges beyond 300 meters. The weapon is sealed to prevent the intrusion of debris or water and an integral check valve is thus required to relieve propellant gases.

There is a four-position selector switch near the pistol grip on the left side; the positions are safe, semiautomatic, three-shot burst and full-auto. The cyclic rate at full-auto is 450 rpm and approximately 2,000 rpm at three-shot burst. This latter rate insures that the third round in the burst will leave the muzzle prior to significant muzzle climb, thus minimizing the group dispersion. The concept was pioneered by Heckler & Koch in the now almost forgotten VP 70 machine pistol, which had a three-shot burst rate of 2,200 rpm.

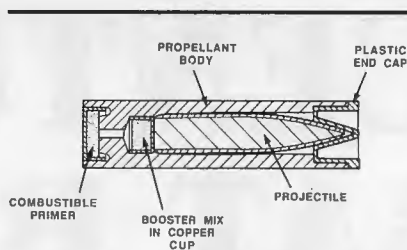
There is, therefore, no need of a muzzle





compensator. Recoil is further dissipated by an internal buffering system that permits the barrel and action to float on an interior rail. The length of the float stroke is dependent upon the firing mode selected. In the three-shot burst mode, the reciprocating components do not float completely rearward until after the third projectile has exited the muzzle. In addition, the barrel's axis passes through the center of the buttstock and this helps to moderate perceived recoil as well.

Its caseless ammunition is arguably the G11's most revolutionary feature. Developed by both Dynamit-Nobel and Heckler & Koch, the original cartridge was caliber 4.7x21mm with the projectile protruding from the end of the 21-millimeter non-cylindrical propellant block. Eventually, it was decided to encapsulate the bullet entire-



**Heckler & Koch's caliber 4.92x34mm caseless cartridge, developed jointly with Dynamit-Nobel, highlights the innovative G11. Bullet weight is 49.2 grains with a lead core and gilding-metal-clad steel jacket. Completely encapsulated within the propellant block, the bullet leaves the muzzle at 3,000 fps. It holds more promise than any of the other ACR entries for effective wound ballistics.**

ly within the propellant block and to increase the caliber. Currently, the caliber is 4.92x34mm (34 millimeters being the length of the propellant block), as the smaller caliber projectile resulted in unacceptable rates of throat and bore erosion.

The bullet weight is 49.2 grains, nominal. Of conventional construction, the bullet has a lead core and gilding-metal-clad steel jacket. A plastic end cap is glued on in front of the bullet. The cap has an ogive-shaped internal match to the bullet nose so as to center the bullet within the propellant body and on the barrel center line. Muzzle velocity is 3,000 fps and the cartridge produces a chamber pressure of 56,000 psi. Both ball and tracer ammunition has been developed. The barrel twist required to stabilize these bullets is an extremely fast one

## TRIJICON'S ADVANCED COMBAT OPTICAL GUNSIGHT

The first reference to telescopic rifle sights appeared in Francesco de Lana's *Magister Naturae et Artis* of 1684. However, it was not until the American Civil War that their effectiveness on the battlefield was clearly demonstrated. Early scopes were frequently several feet in length. They have since shrunk to often less than 6 inches and today the general virtues of optical sights are unquestioned. Only their specifications and particular combat applications can be argued.

Until recently, optical sights have been reserved for dedicated snipers and have been rarely issued for general use. But the British Army has adopted the SUSAT optical sight for their SA80 bullpup service rifle, and all those fielding the Steyr AUG bullpup are provided with an integral optical sight. Furthermore, the Canadians have adopted the Leitz ECLAN scope for their C7A1 rifle and C9 Squad Automatic Weapon (a version of the M249 SAW).

In 1985 the U.S. Army Infantry Board conducted trials on optical sights and concluded that under daylight conditions, scopes offer only modest improvements in hit probability at extended ranges when the soldier fires from a stable position. Subsequently, the U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory (HEL) at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, under the direction of Paul H. Ellis, studied optical sight performance under conditions of subduced light.

HEL's carefully controlled research yielded some important, if not totally surprising, information. All firing took place at dusk when Walsh's rule applied, i.e., at dawn or dusk, the illumination doubles or halves approximately every five minutes.

HEL's more obvious conclusions



were that hit probability decreases with range and degrades more quickly for iron sights than optical sights, as the light level diminishes. In addition, as the light level drops, shooters using iron sights tend to fire more rounds and achieve fewer hits than those with optical sights. It was further determined that optical sights have the potential of extending the combat day by 30 minutes to one hour. Although not stated in its report, it has been my personal observation that most contacts occur between dusk and dawn. Finally, the study postulated that the ideal combat scope for a service rifle should about 4X magnification, with an objective lens diameter of approximately 40mm and an exit pupil diameter (the objective lens diameter divided by the magnification) of about 10mm. Eye relief should be 50 to 75 millimeters (2 to 3 inches) to avoid injury during burst fire.

The two variable-power scopes (1.5-5x32mm and 3-9x56mm) used in this study were manufactured by Trijicon®, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2130, Farmington Hills, MI 48333; phone (313) 553-4960). Trijicon® also manufactures the ACOG™ (Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight) unit attached to AAI's

Of MilSpec quality throughout, the ACOG™ weighs only 10 ounces with a compact overall length of 5.7 inches. It has been successfully tested in all military environments including temperature extremes, salt spray, fog, fungus, humidity, water depth, sand, dust, shock, vibration and free fall drop on a hard surface. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

ACR. This state-of-the-art scope is now commercially available for the entire M16/AR15 series.

Weighing only 10 ounces, the ACOG™ has an overall length of just 5.7 inches. Made entirely in the United States, both halves of the main housing are fabricated from aircraft-quality 7075-T6 aluminum forgings (identical to the metal used in the M16 upper and lower receivers) by drop hammer and then machine finished. A hard-anodized dark gray finish also matches that of the M16. The M16 mount is integrally forged with the main housing. A hole through the mount's base permits use of the iron sights without removal of the scope.

Magnification is 4X and the objective lens diameter is 32mm. The exit pupil





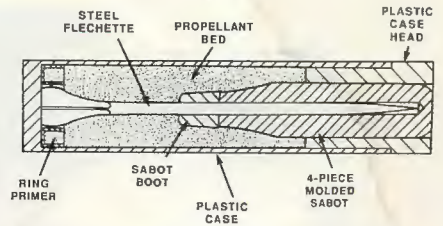
Steyr ACR, right side. Note the prominent shotgun-style rib along the top surface which serves as a carrying handle and pointing device for snap shooting. At 30.1 inches only slightly longer than the G11 bullpup, the Steyr ACR weighs 7.1 pounds, without magazine or sights.

turn in every six inches.

At some point during the sequence of the G11's caseless ammunition development,

the problem of "cook-off," which plagued the project during its early stages was solved. Without a cartridge case to provide a barrier between the propellant and the chamber walls and to serve as a heat reservoir, ignition of the powder charge by spontaneous combustion becomes a serious threat. To circumvent this possibility, a non-nitrocellulose powder was developed with an ignition temperature approximately 180 degrees F higher than that associated with most nitrocellulose-based propellants. One hundred shots can now be fired at high rate prior to the onset of cook-off. (Comparable rates for the M16A2 are not readily available, but the older M14 can take 150 rounds in two minutes before cook-off becomes a problem.)

The powder granules are coated with an



The caliber 5.56x45mm Steyr ACR fires a sabot, subcaliber, carbon-steel, finned flechette approximately 1/16 inch in diameter and 1 1/8 inches long. It weighs only 10.2 grains and flies out of the muzzle at 4,900 fps. Although its flat trajectory will minimize aiming and ranging errors, it will probably overpenetrate and fall well below the minimal required trauma effect.

diameter is thus 8mm. All lens surfaces are multi-layer coated. The eye relief is 1.5 inches with considerable latitude axially and, in my opinion, this is sufficient for the recoil properties of the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge. Light transmission is 90 percent, almost 10 percent above most rifle scopes. The field of view is seven degrees, which is 37 feet at 100 yards. Of MilSpec quality throughout, the ACOG™ has been successfully tested in all military environments including temperature extremes, salt spray, fog, fungus, humidity, water depth, sand, dust, shock, vibration and free fall drop onto a hard surface.

Compactness has been achieved by use of the Zeiss-type roof prism used in many binoculars. There's nothing new about that. However, the ACOG's internal adjustment mechanism is totally unique. Designed by Glyn A.J. Bindon, president of Trijicon®, only the prism assembly inside the main housing moves (in a manner similar to image-moving riflescopes). This feature adds considerable strength to the unit as external blows and shocks are transmitted to the prism assembly only and not to the adjusting mechanism.

Most manufacturers of illuminated scopes etch a V-groove reticle on a thin piece of glass and then edge-light it. This is optically inefficient and usually requires a bright illumination color, such as green, which is too intense for total darkness. Trijicon's ACOG™ reticle is etched on the mirror surface inside the roof prism upon which the objective lens image is focused. A red tritium lamp has been placed directly in back of the mirror. Red provides superior reticle imagery without impairing vision under a wider range of conditions, from subdued light to pitch black. It can be used in the ACOG only because there is no light-dissipating ground glass surface.

The reticle pattern consists of a set of vertical and horizontal crosshairs with a center dot. Superimposed over the cross-



When attached to the M16A2's carrying handle, the Trijicon® ACOG™ sits 1 inch above the peep aperture rear sight. Although not the ideal location, target acquisition potential remained high in both daylight and subdued light. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

hairs are substantial bars to the right, left and bottom. The lower crosshair and bar contains a bullet-drop compensator, calibrated for M855 ammunition, for ranges from 100 to 1,000 meters, with the numbers '2', '4', '6' and '8' at the appropriate marks. In daylight, the reticle pattern appears black. Under subdued light and total darkness, the horizontal line and the center portion of the vertical pattern appear red. Each click of the windage or elevation adjustment knobs will move the point of impact 1/3-inch at 100 yards (one cm at 100 meters).

We attached our ACOG™ test specimen to the carrying handle of a Colt-manufactured M16A2. Although there is no alternative, this is not an ideal location as the scope sits one inch above the peep-aperture rear sight and a proper cheek-weld is not possible. However, almost all of the sniper scopes attached to WWII service rifles, from the Mosin-Nagant to the M1 Garand, rested every bit as high above the iron sights.

As issued, the M16 series carrying handle has a hole for mounting an optical sight to the rifle. For further security,

Trijicon® recommends drilling a second hole, 1.250 inches to the rear of the first. We found this to be unnecessary, as tightening a single allen-head screw with the hex wrench provided draws the scope's base snugly into the carrying handle's sloped notch. There was no failure to repeat zero throughout our test and evaluation.

Black Hills Ammunition Supply (Dept. SOF, 3401 South Highway 79, Rapid City, SD 57701; phone (605) 348-5150) provided a test batch of their 5.56x45mm NATO ammunition designed for rifles with a 1:7-inch twist. Using mixed lots of U.S. military brass filled with 25 grains of a flattened ball-type propellant, a 60-grain Hornady Soft-Point (SP) bullet is driven with an average velocity of 2,928 fps. While more than 100 fps below military M855 ball, the standard deviation was a match-grade 21 fps. With gusting winds and constant heat mirage, SOF test personnel were still able to shoot five-shot groups of 1.5 MOA (minute of angle, of which there are 60 in each degree and which is approximately one inch at 100 yards). This combination of rifle, scope and ammunition is far superior to the accuracy potential of any of the 50 million Kalashnikovs ever manufactured. Most Kalashnikovs are capable of no better than five to six MOA groups.

The target-acquisition potential of the ACOG, both in daylight and subdued light, is excellent. It adds little noticeable weight to the M16 and has no effect on the rifle's handling characteristics. You can slap this rugged combat scope on your M16/AR15 for \$695. It will never be removed from my M16A2. There's no finer piece of glass available for infantry service rifles. It is, in truth, an Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight. Eventually, the ACOG™ should be available for mounting on the M14/M1A, Ruger Mini-14, H&K 91/93 series, FNC, SIG SG 550/551 SP assault rifles and for NATO STANAG bases.





adhesive to bond the grains together during manufacture of the propellant blocks, each of which weighs approximately 30 grains. Subsequent to assembly, a variety of other coatings are applied to provide waterproofing, low friction surfaces and heat resistance. After cutting the blocks to the appropriate length, holes are drilled to accommodate 1) the bullet, 2) a lead-styphnate-based booster mix (which drives the bullet down the bore, before the main charge begins to burn, in order to seal the front end of the chamber from gas leakage) in a copper cup at the base of the projectile, and 3) the combustible primer (composed of nitramine, as is the propellant). The primer mix incorporates finely divided glass to act as micro anvils for primer ignition. Whatever remains of the copper booster cup and plastic end cap is ejected out the muzzle.

The G11's outer housing is fabricated from a synthetic reinforced with carbon fiber. It has been reported that this weapon requires no lubrication as the internal components are chrome plated. (Where have we heard that before?) With an overall length of only 29.5 inches, the G11 still weighs a disappointing 8.6 pounds, empty. Compare this to the 50-year-old M1 Garand's 9.5 pounds and the M16's 6.3 pounds (as originally fielded). We seem to be moving backwards in this regard. Yet, all of its other characteristics are so amazing that the remaining three ACR candidates appear almost mundane in juxtaposition.

#### Steyr-Mannlicher ACR

Just one glance at the Steyr-Mannlicher ACR reveals its ergonomic derivation from the Steyr AUG bullpup assault rifle (now in service with the Austrian, Australian, Moroccan, New Zealand, Omani, Saudi Arabian and Irish armed forces).

A closer look indicates some significant differences, however. The stock is swept downward at the rear. A stock "well" at the muzzle end permits employment of finned rifle grenades. There is a prominent shotgun-style rib along the top surface which serves as a carrying handle and pointing device for *snap* shooting.

The iron, aperture-type rear sight can be removed for installation of an optical sight, also designed by Swarovski. The scope, equipped with a ring reticle, has two magnification settings: 1.5X for shorter ranges and 3.5X for longer ranges. There is no provision for elevation adjustment as the projectile leaves the muzzle at 4,900 fps and

At first glance, the Steyr-Mannlicher ACR looks almost identical to their AUG bullpup. But, the stock is swept downward at the rear and a stock "well" at the muzzle end permits employment of finned rifle grenades. This left side view shows the optical sight attached. There is no provision for elevation adjustment because of the flat trajectory out to 600 meters (only 13 inches of rise at midrange).

there are no significant changes in trajectory out to 600 meters, with only 13 inches of rise at midrange.

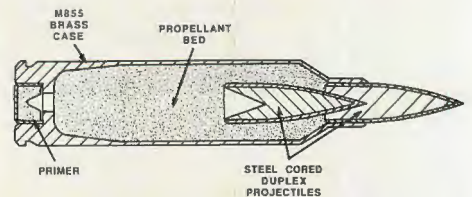
The selector system remains that of the AUG. A plastic cross-bolt above the pistol grip is pushed to the left for safe and all the way to the right for three-shot bursts. When placed in the center position, semiautomatic fire will result when the trigger is pulled. When fired in the three-shot burst mode, the cyclic rate of this weapon is reported to be almost twice that of the M16A2 (600 to 940 rpm). Unlike the M16A2, the Steyr ACR's three-round counter always returns automatically to zero.

Internally, the Steyr ACR bears no resemblance to the AUG. Although also gas operated, it fires from the open bolt position, which will surely degrade its accuracy potential, and its gas system uses the barrel as a stationary piston with a sleeve around the barrel acting as a moving cylinder wall. This method of operation has been clearly derived from the Czech Vz52 rifle (See "Vz52", SOF, May '85), which, in turn, was taken from the Walther WWII MKb42(W), an unsuccessful entrant in the original German assault-rifle (sturmgewehr) sweepstakes.

BELOW: Colt's ACR entry appears to be little more than a souped-up M16. Cosmetic changes in human engineering and duplex ammunition are its only hallmarks. This left side view shows the WILD CAT scope attached; it is manufactured by Ernest Leitz of Canada.

Totally unique, however, are the Steyr ACR's rising chamber mechanism and ring-primer cartridge. The translucent, 24-round, staggered-column magazine rests directly behind the chamber when the latter is in the lower, or feeding, position. As the slide assembly, which is attached to the gas cylinder, commences its forward movement, a round is stripped from the magazine and is chambered while the previous empty case is simultaneously ejected out the bottom of the rifle. A chamber guide pin, attached to extensions on the chamber and riding a cam surface on the slide, is pushed from its lower detent position to carry the chamber upward into contact with the fixed firing pin protruding through a hole in the chamber. As the chamber guide pin locks into its upper detent position, the primer, which circles the case head, contacts the firing pin and ignites. Gas pressure drives the cylinder and attached slide assembly rearward and one firing cycle is completed. Kudos to Steyr for rejecting conventionality in this design area.

The caliber 5.56x45mm Steyr ACR fires a sabot, subcaliber, carbon-steel, finned flechette approximately 1/16 inch in diameter, and 1 5/8-inches long. It weighs only 10.2 grains. The flechette's surface is roughened to provide the required coefficient of friction between the projectile and its sabot segments. It is contained by a plastic case (approximately 3/8 inches in diameter and 1 3/4 inches in overall length), which has a molded seat for the primer. Consisting of an aluminum ring with a groove charged with primer mix, the primer is press-fit into the case seat. The flechette,



ABOVE: Colt's ACR will fire both M855 (SS 109) ammunition and a duplex cartridge developed by Colt and Olin. Two nested projectiles with hollow conical bases (35 and 32 grains respectively and apparently of differing weight in an attempt to increase group dispersion) are loaded into the standard brass case. Maximum effective range is 325 meters. These bullets will probably not fragment and any effect from yawing will be minimized by their short overall length.





with its four plastic sabot segments (fabricated from a new liquid crystal polymer and held together with a plastic boot), is inserted into the case after propellant charging. This ammunition develops a chamber pressure of 60,000 psi, substantially more than the 50,750 psi developed by the M855 ball commonly used in the M16A2.

At 30.1 inches only slightly longer than the G11 bullpup, the Steyr ACR weighs 7.1 pounds (without magazine or sights). Because of its finned flechette projectile, the rifling twist is a barely perceptible one turn in every 100 inches. Of modular construction and consisting of fewer than 100 components, Steyr's entry was human engineered with rapid target acquisition, low recoil and simplicity as hallmark features. It's also satisfying to see someone finally position the rear sling swivel where it belongs — on top of the buttstock.

#### Colt ACR

Colt's entry appears to be little more than a souped-up M16. Gas operated, cosmetic changes in human engineering and duplex ammunition are its only hallmarks. The redesigned handguard includes an inner heat shield and an aiming rib on the upper surface with eight air-cooling vent holes of dubious value. A ring on the front end prevents the support hand from sliding forward onto the hot barrel.

The pistol grip, similar to the M16A2's, has been extended in length with a slightly altered profile. The telescoping buttstock now has a cheek-piece on both sides and permits six adjustments of the pull length.

A sighting rib installed above the receiver and the M16A2 800-meter peep aperture rear sight can be removed for installation of an optical sight. The WILD CAT (WILD LEITZ — Combat Acquisition and Targeting) scope used on the Colt ACR is manufactured by Ernst Leitz of Canada and is identical to the optical sight adopted for the Canadian C7A1 (essentially an M16A2 with full-auto capability instead of three-shot burst) and their version of the M249 SAW. It is of 3.5X magnification and is equipped with a self-powered illuminating device for subdued light scenarios. Other optical devices can be installed.

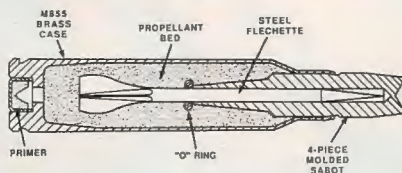
The method of operation remains that of the M16 series. After firing a round, the projectile passes the gas port permitting gas to flow back through a stainless steel tube and a so-called bolt carrier key into the



AAI's ACR is an outgrowth of the SPIW program. In 1974, it was chambered for a micro-caliber 4.32x45mm cartridge with a 28-grain projectile. Now it's back, chambered for a subcaliber flechette. This left side view shows the Trijicon® OCOG™ attached.

hollow interior of the bolt carrier. As the carrier moves rearward, a cam slot cut into the carrier turns the bolt's cam pin, which causes the bolt to rotate clockwise, freeing the eight locking lugs from their abutments in the barrel extension. The carrier's momentum draws the bolt rearward at a slightly reduced velocity.

As the extractor withdraws the cartridge from the chamber, a spring-loaded, bump-type ejector protrudes from the left of the bolt face and rotates the empty case (after it has cleared the chamber) around the extractor claw and out the ejection port of the upper receiver body. The bolt carrier assembly continues rearward compressing the recoil spring and cocking the hammer.



AAI Corporation's ACR fires a flechette almost identical to that of the Steyr ACR. Its muzzle velocity is also high — 4,600 fps. Its sabot differs in configuration from the Steyr and is held together by an "O" ring instead of a plastic boot. These steel needles will zip in and out of soft-tissue target without yawing, deforming or fragmenting.

A newly designed, oil-spring hydraulic buffer (which reduces the cyclic rate and moderates the perceived recoil) and the recoil spring return the carrier and a fresh round is stripped from the magazine. All forward bolt motion stops after the round is chambered. The carrier continues forward to contact the rear face of the barrel extension and its cam slot turns the cam pin which rotates the bolt and its lugs anti-clockwise into the locked position. Direct gas action without a piston was taken from the Swedish Ljungman AG42 rifle.

The M16's trigger mechanism, based on that of the M1 Garand, has also been retained. An ambidextrous selector lever has been added to the right side. There is provision for safe, semiautomatic and full-auto modes:

A new muzzle device has been designed for the Colt ACR. A tube with 30 small ports on each side redirects the gases to reduce recoil and muzzle jump. There is a "bird-cage" flash suppressor (open on all sides) in front of this compensator.

Together with the hydraulic buffer, it is reported that recoil has been reduced by 40 percent compared with the M16A2.

The caliber of this rifle remains 5.56x45mm NATO with a barrel twist of 1:7-inch to accommodate M855 (SS 109) ammunition. It will also fire duplex ammunition developed jointly by Colt and Olin. This ammunition consists of two nested projectiles (35 and 33 grains, respectively), with hollow conical bases, loaded into the standard brass case. Duplex projectile tips carry a yellow color code to distinguish them from the M855 cartridge.

Duplex ammunition was developed to increase hit probability against short range targets, with a maximum effective range of 325 meters. The projected fantasy is that the front projectile will fly down range to the aim point, while the trailing projectile will have a random dispersion directly around the aiming point to compensate for the operator's aiming error. Muzzle velocity of the duplex ammunition is 2,900 fps (about 200 fps slower than the M855 cartridge). Chamber pressures are only 750 psi lower than the 50,750 psi generated by the M855 round.

With the stock fully retracted, Colt's ACR measures 40.6 inches in overall length. The collapsed length is 36.8 inches. The weight, without the 30-round magazine or sights, is 7.3 pounds. Add another pound for a loaded magazine and 1.4 pounds for the scope. In my opinion, all of this is entirely ho hum.

#### AAI Corp. ACR

Clumsy and awkward appearing, AAI's prototype reminds me of a prop left over

*Continued on page 80*



Colt ACR, right side. Note the sighting rib above the receiver and the M16A2 800-meter peep aperture rear sight. The muzzle device, with 30 small ports on each side to redirect the gases, together with a new hydraulic buffer, reportedly reduces recoil by 40 percent compared to the M16A2.



AAI Corp. ACR, right side. Note the selector lever above the trigger which provides for semiautomatic and three-shot burst fire. It has been placed on the wrong side of the rifle for anyone but southpaws. Overall length of the full-stocked AAI candidate is 40 inches. It weighs 7.8 pounds, without magazine or sights.



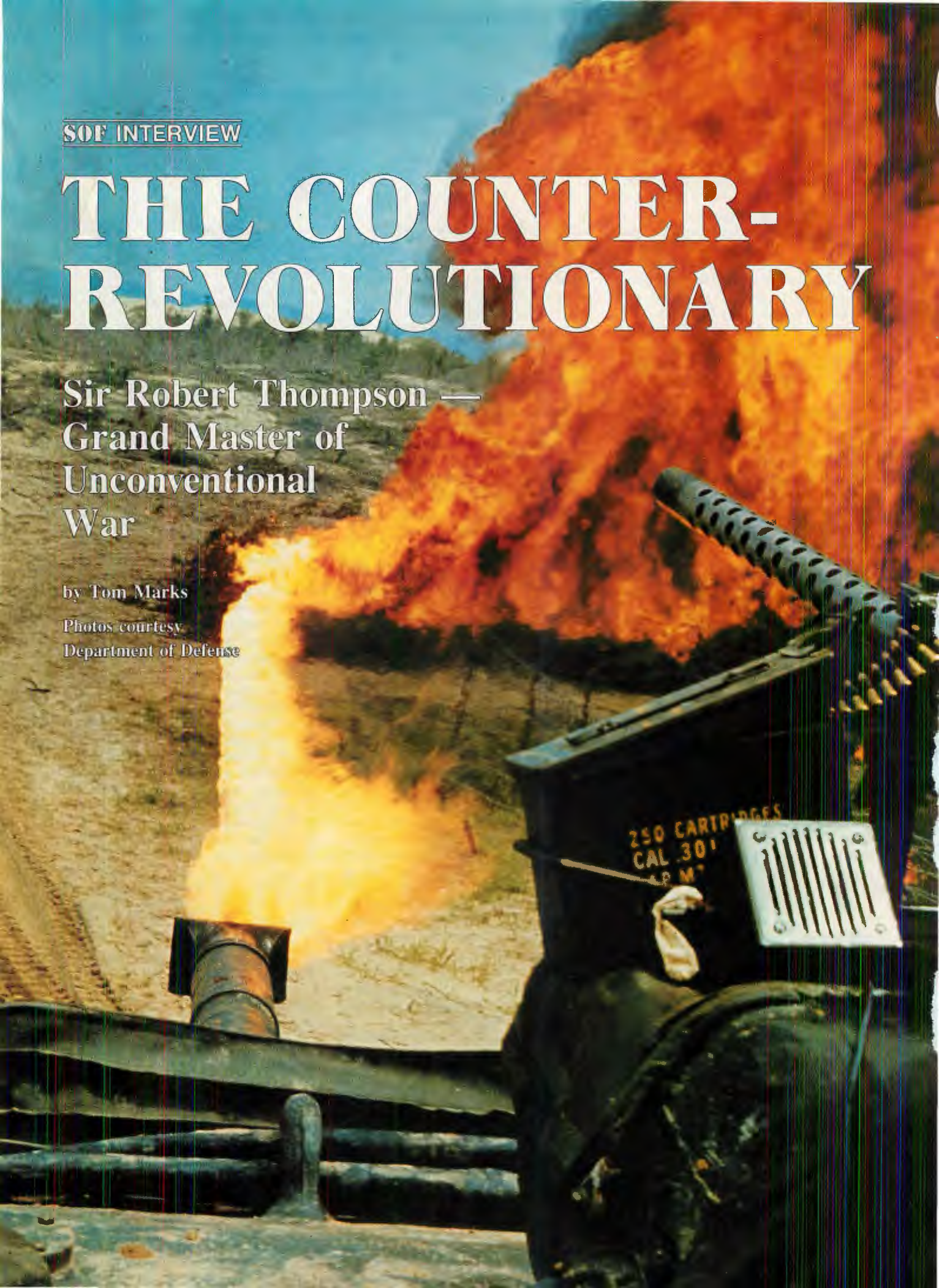
SOF INTERVIEW

# THE COUNTER- REVOLUTIONARY

Sir Robert Thompson —  
Grand Master of  
Unconventional  
War

by Tom Marks

Photos courtesy  
Department of Defense





**W**AR has a way of producing unexpected consequences. When Hong Kong fell to the onrushing Japanese legions on Christmas Day 1941, a Royal Air Force reservist, Robert Thompson, escaped and began a year behind enemy lines in China. Subsequently, having rejoined friendly forces, he was able to put his burgeoning knowledge of guerrilla operations to further use on both the 1943 and 1944 Wingate operations in Burma, where he won the Military Cross and the Distinguished Service Order. Thus began the schooling of the man now generally acknowledged in the West as its foremost practitioner of counter-revolutionary warfare.

If World War II taught Thompson the tradecraft of guerrilla war, it was his 1948-60 term in Malaya that revealed the "revolutionary" nature of the new type of war. Studying communist strategy and methods, Thompson became an architect of the British Advisory Mission to Vietnam, 1961-65. As such he attempted to impress that insurgency was a problem of administrative shortcomings and popular causes rather than an exercise in military tactics. At the conclusion of his term, he was knighted.

Sir Robert's involvement with counterrevolutionary warfare didn't fade after 1965. As a consultant for the RAND Corporation, an American company which specializes in theoretical and political reports for the defense department, and later an adviser for the U.S. government (he made a number of investigative trips to Vietnam at the request of President Richard

On the fall of Vietnam: "The key was the desertion by the United States, the desertion in aid."

M. Nixon), he attempted to continue the fight against the communists.

Yet his most valuable contribution may be that of his pen rather than his sword. His works on revolutionary warfare — *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (1966), *No Exit From Vietnam* (1969), *Revolutionary War in World Strategy 1945-1969* (1970), and *Peace is Not at Hand* (1974) — influenced an entire generation of counterinsurgency fighters. Most recently, he has completed an overview of revolutionary war problems drawing on his experiences from World War II onward. *Make for the Hills* is to be published in Britain this summer.

Now retired to the English countryside, Sir Robert consented to see SOF correspondent Tom Marks over the Easter holiday, some 17 years after the North Vietnamese offensive which he feels settled once and for all the question of whether the South Vietnamese could fight. Given the recent upsurge in works on Vietnam — particularly the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Bright and Shining Lie* by Neil Sheehan and the best-selling *About Face* by David Hackworth — SOF wanted to hear Sir Robert's latest perspective on Vietnam. As the interview below demonstrates, he continues to see essential shortcomings in our understanding of the conflict and of the possibilities we had for victory.

**SOF:** I'd like to ask some basic questions about Vietnam, because it's an area where we in the U.S. still haven't done enough research. The war remains such a painfully touchy subject. Some of the recent books are better than others, but there is considerable debate over basics such as how important was the aid coming over the Ho Chi Minh Trail to the

insurgency in the South, and where did the U.S. policymakers get the notion that interdicting the Ho Chi Minh Trail would end the war in the South?

**RT:** Well, they didn't do that [interdict the trail]. They secured the Ho Chi Minh Trail for Ho Chi Minh. That was the first thing Harriman [U.S. representative W. Averell Harriman] did in the Laos agreement of 1962. The map tells it all. It was this lovely trail down through Laos which gets you through the back door into South Vietnam. Then came the '62 Himalayan war, and as a result of that the Indian member of the control commission in Vietnam (there were three: a Pole, an Indian, and a Canadian) came off the fence.

In 1962 a report of the ICC (International Control Commission) condemned the North's breaches of the 1954 Accords, which also said no foreign troops in Laos. So, there was the North condemned for it, giving Kennedy complete freedom of action if he wanted to go in. You remember Kennedy put that U.S. Marine Corps Regiment into northeast Thailand? He could have used that. Instead, the U.S. tried to get agreement on a neutral government in Laos. That's what Harriman went over there for.

As soon as Kennedy did that, it scared the Vietnamese stiff, and, of course, the Chinese and the Russians. So they demanded the recall of the Geneva Conference. Averell Harriman was the American representative. And he thought that the whole of the agreement was about the government in Vientiane, about neutrality and all that sort of thing. It wasn't. The whole point of that agreement from what the other side wanted was to make sure they had a free run down through Laos. And all they had to do was to

## INTREPID INTERVIEWER

Tom Marks, a former infantry officer and West Point graduate, is an experienced combat reporter who has filed stories with SOF on conflicts in India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Vietnam. Having become a student of modern

warfare through his work, Marks jumped at the opportunity to interview the man who is probably the Western world's foremost expert on counterinsurgency. When he's not on assignment, Marks lives and works in Hawaii.

Squadron Leader Robert Thompson (below left) in 1943 after acting as RAF liaison during Orde Wingate's three-month, 1,000 mile guerrilla raid behind Japanese lines in Burma. Thompson won the Military Cross

and Distinguished Service Order, and went on to become the West's foremost authority on counterrevolutionary warfare. Right: Sir Robert in London. Photos: AP/Wide World





get Article 4 into the agreement: no foreign troops in Laos. That kept Kennedy out, because Mr. Fulbright [Senator J.W. Fulbright, the anti-intervention head of the Foreign Relations Committee] was going to see that the administration kept its word. It didn't keep the North Vietnamese out. They now had a free run. We called it the "Averell Harriman Expressway" — which is what it was! It eventually became a regular highway!

**SOF: Was the trail essential to the war effort?**

RT: Yes, the trail was essential to the war effort. There were two things coming down the trail: men and supplies. When the peace accords were signed in 1954, the North took back about 80,000 men or so from the South. Those 80,000 were all what you might call frontline troops. They were retrained as specialists and later sent south. They brought with them equipment. Now, that doesn't mean that they were, at that stage — 1960-64 — essential to the battle. Certainly they gave it a very considerable boost. But don't forget that it was the North that told the South [communist forces] to get moving again in 1959. Members of the Politburo regularly visited the South relaying instructions; so that it was the North that told them when they were ready to get moving. And it was the North that was sending the stuff, a certain amount of equipment, down the trail. But, don't forget that the South had, in various areas — particularly what was known as Zone D and the U Minh Forest and all of what they called the B-3 Front (which is the Binh Dinh-Quang Nai area) — big areas which the communists had held onto since French times. They didn't have many big villages, but they were outlying and well penetrated, so that they'd left a good nucleus behind.

Further, the 80,000 regroupees were all regulars, which helped. By 1963-1964 the Viet Cong forces were certainly at their strongest. They did just rate a division, though I think they were really more like big regiments. But they called them divisions which were later taken over by the NVA [North Vietnamese Army]. I would have said those were probably the best troops that the other side fielded. They were better than the NVA. So the Viet Cong probably at that stage, 1964, had their best troops, and there's no doubt at all that they had built up during the 1960-64 period and that by '64 the insurgency as such, the Viet Cong insurgency, was winning. In other words they were in a position to start taking on ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] almost directly. They hadn't really captured any province capitals. There were one or two outlying mountain district capitals which they occupied, but there hadn't been any real head-on clashes.

**SOF: And the U.S. role at this point?**

RT: By this time, of course, the U.S. was involved in upping its advisory presence and increasing helicopter support. Additionally, you were slightly more involved with the South Vietnamese air force. But



you had, of course, as yet no ground troops. On the other hand, you did have about 20,000 advisers inside the country by then. Many were military; I've forgotten what the civilian total was. I would say the forecast in spring of '64 was that the Viet Cong would win by 1965. Yes, the Cong would win by the end of '65.

And then, of course, in '65 you had the U.S. entry into the war. I've jumped over all the things like the murder of President Ngo Dinh Diem. The point about the murder of Diem was that it hooked the United States to the generals, having told them that if there was a change of government they would still get paid, which was what they were mainly concerned about. That encouraged them to coup. Yet the generals were a busted trust, as everyone knew — at least that lot of generals were — they were what you might call the hangover from the French . . . they weren't the young officers like Thieu and the others like those who came on afterwards.

**SOF: By 1964, then, we had a situation where there was enough popular support for the insurgency to support regimental formations. It's now 1989. In retrospect,**

**"The Tet Offensive . . . I cannot for the life of me really work out why Giap did it."**

**was there realistically anything a country such as the U.S. could have done when things had reached that point? Or should we have not become involved? Is there something we could have done differently?**

RT: Well, of course, it could have been done differently earlier than 1964. And I certainly did not in any sense regard the situation as hopeless even then. There was still a large area of the countryside (that's the populated countryside — you've got to draw that sort of distinction there) that had the resources and manpower available to the South. These were far greater than what was available to the Viet Cong. The fact that the Viet Cong were in a position where they could challenge ARVN is the perfect guerrilla situation, yes, but they weren't in a situation where they were the dominant force. ARVN still had the force and was still getting recruits. So ARVN was not yet defeated, and their chunks of the countryside, the ones that mattered — those with people and rice — provided a greater resource base





than those of the insurgents.

**SOF:** So the problem was ...?

**RT:** Lots had been lost, and that was due to the fact that there had been no control over what's called the strategic hamlet program, which could be another discussion altogether. What was wrong with our old strategic hamlet program was that it was never strategic, which was what I tried to get across. I had produced the Delta Plan, which was the basis for the strategic hamlets. You had to have a plan whereby you regained control of the countryside, and you have to make it on a strategic basis. You have to use the hamlets to regain control. The hamlets weren't something in themselves. But Nhu, the President's brother, thought they were something in themselves. He thought they could be turned into something political — a base for political power — but to me they were entirely for security and for development. And development was a very important aspect of it. But the Delta Plan got lost, completely, and everyone just went mad on strategic hamlets; the result was that the strategic hamlets were created *not in accordance with the plan*. The phrase I used in '63-'64 in trying to explain

**TOP:** On the difference between the American and British approaches to dealing with insurgency: "In the American way, you were up against the 'gooks' and the 'motherfuckers' back at base and all that sort of thing; whereas in the British way it wasn't unlike a sporting thing — 'Talleyho!'"

**ABOVE:** "I admit that you had to land in strength to stop the takeover in '65. But having done that, I reckon you had twice the number of forces that were necessary."

this to Richardson, who was CIA head back then, was that all you were doing was increasing your commitments without increasing your security. The whole thing was absolutely bound to come to a grinding halt, at which point you'd start to collapse. You see that? By simply putting hamlets out everywhere you've created hostages all over the place. You've got to send troops out to defend them, to hold on, and at some point you're going to run out of troops.

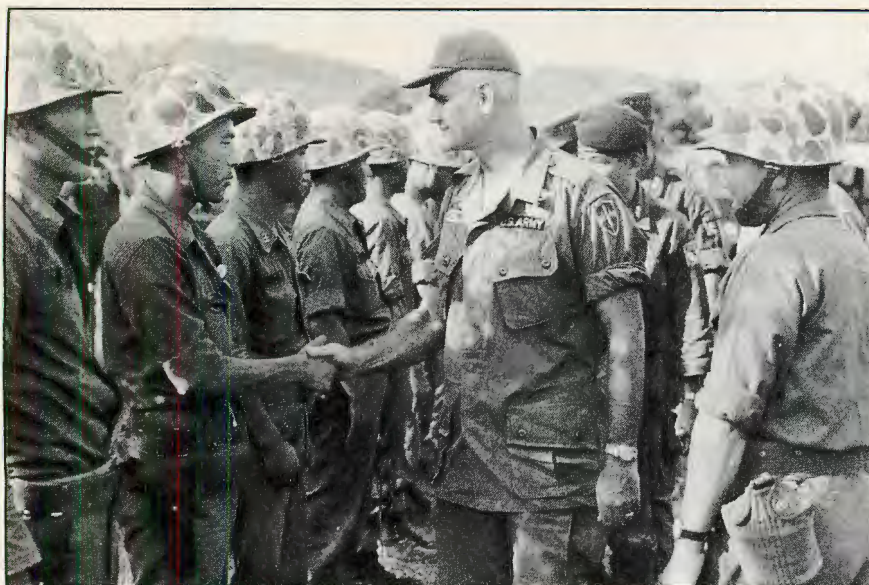
**SOF:** In other words, they weren't doing systematic holding and clearing of areas. They were just going in for details?

**RT:** Exactly. To understand this you have

to look at the '67 Arab-Israeli war. There's Israel being attacked by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and having to make up its mind which front to put its army on, because it couldn't do all three. This is something I think Americans don't generally understand. You've got to have a priority and your priority's got to be an important one. So how the hell do you hold the other fronts while you're focusing on your first priority? The Israelis held them with the kibbutz! The kibbutz held the other fronts! There is your own strategic hamlet working as it ought to work. There's nothing novel about defended villages. In fact the communists used them better than we did. Of course their horror was that we'd learn to do the same.

**SOF:** A number of important American works on the war, such as Neil Sheehan's *A Bright and Shining Lie* and David Halberstam's *The Making of a Quagmire*, advance the battle of Ap Bac as the key event which demonstrated the complete and irredeemable bankruptcy of the South Vietnamese system. It is felt that the defeat of ARVN at that battle demonstrated beyond any shadow of a doubt that the situation at that point was





hopeless and that we put in troops so far after the fact that it doomed us to defeat.

RT: No, I don't think that you could say that. Talking about the system at the time, certainly the South Vietnamese system in the early stages was weak. It did improve. You've got to remember that it was a newly independent country. It had not had any experience at government, and particularly not in the Delta, which had been a French colony where the French manned all the positions right down to the post office, so that the South Vietnamese hadn't had any experience. They were better in the North. And I think you have to look at it in that light: that they simply didn't have the people, either in the military or in the civil side. They certainly didn't have them on the civil side. That was one sector that was completely neglected right throughout the war. The whole system was bad, you see.

**SOF: Many analysts would advance that very point as an argument against helping that system at all.**

RT: Well, it's the old adage: the normal soldier would have fought extremely well if he had been properly led. There is no ques-

**TOP: On Westmoreland:** "If there'd been a Berlin in Vietnam, he'd a' had it . . . When he went in, he saved the South, no question"; on his strategy: "Find 'em and fight 'em: the answer to insurgency is firepower. And that's why we lost the war"; on the Koreans: "Nothing fell apart [when they left Vietnam] because the Koreans had not been contributing to the security of the area at all. All they had been contributing to was their own security."

**ABOVE: On the Vietnamese application of the strategic hamlet program:** "By simply putting hamlets out everywhere you've created hostages all over the place. You've got to send troops out to defend them, to hold on, and at some point you're going to run out of troops."

tion of that. They fought well whenever they were. The weakness was in the training of the army, which was put right later. The person who put it all right was Creighton Abrams. You're taking Ap Bac, on one side, which was an inept little battle; you've got to take account of the other side.

In 1972 three South Vietnamese divisions

recaptured Quang Tri from six North Vietnamese divisions. Those three South Vietnamese divisions — the 1st, the Airborne, and the Marines — were the three best divisions at that point in time in the whole of the Western world, Israel included. They were good. So again you come back to it. The material was there, the assets were there — if you'd got them properly organized. When I was asked in 1961 by General Lemnitzer [Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff], "What is the answer to all this?" I gave him a one word answer. I said, "Organization." I think it was organization that was missing throughout until we got Abrams and Bunker and Thieu. Then, to a certain extent, we got some organization.

**SOF: Still, the argument which seems to have the greatest circulation in America, at least among academics, is that if a country does not have the systemic organization or the human wherewithal to furnish this organization it is somehow deficient.**

RT: Deficient?

**SOF: Yes. There's an implicit moral argument here. The American Left advances the position that since the system is not "right," we have no "right" to be helping it.**

RT: Well, it's not morally wrong to be ignorant. If it was, the same argument would apply to the United States.

**SOF: Well, the Left takes strong exception to America, too. That goes almost without saying. Many others, though, would argue that by 1965 in Vietnam we had reached the stage where we as foreigners had to come in to "save the South." This, they feel, is the most damning indictment of Saigon. The southern system had no legitimacy.**

RT: My view on that is that the fault was largely yours for the omissions between 1954 and 1965. After all, you substituted yourselves for the French, and it was you who then made the mistakes. You didn't organize things properly. That is why you had a system in the South that was incapable of handling an insurgency — because you didn't know how to deal with it yourselves.

The first thing that was wrong in South Vietnam was the size of the army. I maintained in 1962 that if we doubled what became known as the regional forces, the civil guard — they were a rural constabulary under the French, not up to company strength — and halved the army, we'd have held the Viet Cong. The trouble with the army is that the boys go away into the army, and they lose all touch with their homes. The whole point of the civil guard is that they're in their homeland, and they defend their homeland. We had no trouble at all raising home guards, as it were, in 1962, into 1963.

What I'm getting at is that the assets were there, but they were not organized. Nor were people trained. I don't think you trained a single person in any single civil government role, not even to be a vet. I mean *there was no training*. The civil gov-



ernment was ignored, because all you could do was to give guns to the army. And then what went wrong with the civil guard was that — owing to another one of those ghastly Senate riders to a bill that always get the wrong consequences — the military couldn't give military weapons to the civil guard, because the civil guard came under the Ministry of the Interior and didn't come under the Ministry of Defense. Therefore, the civil guard lacked guns other than police weapons.

So what was happening in Vietnam was that you were militarizing the civil functions instead of civilianizing the military functions. You know the British line: the military is in support of the civilians. That's the mistake of 1954-65. And then the Diem thing. That was going on. So if you're blaming anyone for the failure, it's the United States government.

**SOF: Thus, in your opinion, the root of American lack of strategic vision boiled down to rank inexperience and an unwillingness to learn our lessons? Or, to phrase the question another way, what created Westmoreland? World War II? Is it that we tried to fight World War II all over again?**

RT: True. Yes. If there'd been a Berlin in Vietnam, he'd a' had it. No problem. But where I give Westy full marks was, of course, 1965. When he went in, he saved the South. No question. Ia Drang and all that.

There's a point here you have to go back to, which I think is one of the more interesting points about the war. The Viet Cong were winning in 1964, and certainly by 1965. Well, Hanoi reached the same conclusion, and the one thing they couldn't allow was for the Viet Cong to win in 1965 because they would not have been in full control of them. Although they had their people in the South, this would have been a Southern victory, and this liberation front would have been literally up front. They started putting in regular North Vietnamese Army troops in October of '64, so they understood what was going on. They didn't need those troops in the South. What were they going in for? They were going into make sure the North got the South. The North Vietnamese 1st Division went into Kontum in October '64. By the end of the war it ended up in the U Minh. So Westy wasn't just taking on the Viet Cong. By this time the NVA were in, were involved. In fact, the Ia Drang is where he met them, I think, proper for the first time.

**SOF: Unfortunately, Ia Drang was stand-up fighting in difficult but unpopulated terrain. Whereas the "real war" was for people.**

RT: Yes, you come to that very difficult point that when you have American troops and conscripts, the one area in which you cannot use those is a populated area. You've read your Bing West, *The Village*, have you? West, who was a young Marine captain, tells the story of what the Marines called CAPS, the teams attached to the popular forces defending a large village —



**"Those three South Vietnamese divisions ... were the best divisions, at that point in time, in the whole of the Western world, Israel included."**

in Vietnam that means quite a large area — and one of the things the Viet Cong did to try to spoil this was they attacked the district town. I've forgotten the district town, but they asked the American battalion to rescue the town. And the battalion commander had the good sense to say, "I dare not let my troops go in the town," because it would have been a shambles. The Marine CAPS with its popular forces went into the town, and they got the Viet Cong out. It's an interesting story. Do you remember General Thompson, the chief of staff? I had lunch with him sometime in '67, and I said to get things moving in the rural areas again you're going to have to use American troops. And he said, "I dare not let American troops into the populated areas. They are not trained for it." That sums that up, really. So the weakness of the war, all the way through, was the fact that neither the South Vietnamese nor the Americans were

trained for what they were going to do.

**SOF: Were you able to influence this situation?**

RT: I had a long session with Henry Kissinger in October '68. I can't remember precisely when it was ... I had met him before ... but I think it was after Nixon had already been nominated as the Republican candidate over Rockefeller ... it was no further back than that ... and he said, "What are we going to do now?"

I said, change the strategy completely. From now on you use the American forces solely to hold the North Vietnamese off and put all your emphasis on retraining the South Vietnamese and regaining control of the countryside, which was Vietnamization and pacification. And I said if you do that you can withdraw 100,000 American troops in the first year. I said that in October '68. And that's what Nixon bought, and Kissinger became his National Security Adviser.

**SOF: But isn't this what we claimed we were doing?**

RT: You weren't doing it before.

**SOF: In Westmoreland's memoirs, he claims this is what he was intending to do.**

RT: Talk to someone like George





**ABOVE:** "You come to that very difficult point that when you have American troops and conscripts, the one area in which you cannot use those is a populated area."

**RIGHT:** "The weakness of the war, all the way through, was the fact that neither the South Vietnamese nor the Americans were trained for what they were going to do."

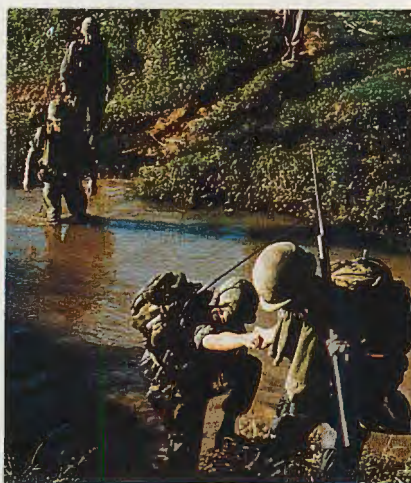
Tanham. He was in Vietnam running the rural affairs program at the beginning of Westy. He had a row with him and said, "Westy, you just haven't got it." And that was in '65.

**SOF:** So what Westmoreland wanted to do was to win by firepower?

**RT:** Yes, find 'em and fight 'em: the answer to insurgency is firepower. At least, that was Westy. And that's why we lost the war. Because that really did turn people off. But I don't think people have paid nearly enough attention to the 1969-72 period, which is the really fascinating period, when the thing started to work. And that's when you got John Vann able to cycle, able to motorbike, all the way up to every district capital in his area.

**SOF:** That period of time remains a great vacuum in our knowledge of the war. In America we have a very dim understanding of what took place during that period and whether there was any movement toward victory, as you've just indicated by the story of Vann's movements.

**RT:** That story is true. I know. I didn't bike around with him, though I did go around with him quite a lot. I went to one district on the coast which the American adviser there said had been under siege the previous year. They had all been confined to the compound. The Viet Cong were in the town, let alone in the villages all around it. Yet when I got there, I drove round the villages on the back of the district chief's Honda, and we weren't even armed. I mean, I rode all over there. You know what going about on a motorbike is, going about on those bum trails, through the ricefields,



through the villages? We weren't bothered by anyone. We had no problems anywhere outside the district towns. That's my view. That's how I know whether security is better or not. And that's what it was like by '71.

**SOF:** So we were making definite progress?

**RT:** Of course that's the whole point of the Easter offensive. It proves it. They had to invade. I told Nixon in '69 they would invade in '72 because they'd have to, because there was no other way. The Viet Cong was over. That's one thing I do give Westy. When the Viet Cong gave him his opportunity in '68, he did bash them. That is true. The Tet offensive . . . I cannot for the life of me really work out why Giap did it. I can't quite believe he thought its psychological impact in the States would be the winner. I can't quite believe that — that even if it failed in the South, that would win it. There's no evidence to support that's what he was thinking.

**SOF:** And I've never been able to find any evidence that he intended that either.

**RT:** Yes, all that he was saying was that the people would rise. Well, they didn't. And that could have been foreseen. But the Viet Cong got into the towns and, of course, it was their best units. And they were slaughtered. Now, my interpretation of this is that Giap wanted to

destroy the military side of the Viet Cong. That's what it looks like to me looking back at it now. I didn't see it that way at the time. But in light of what happened later . . . the whole of the National Liberation Front, or whatever they call themselves, were under house arrest when the North took over! What happened to Madame Binh? Remember Madame Binh? Where's she? That's how I see it now. [Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, foreign minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and a founder of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), was driven out of Vietnam after 1975 war and wrote a book charging North Vietnam with destroying the NLF.]

**SOF:** Truong Nhu Tang, the NLF Minister of Justice, has written a book about how he was duped into believing the front was genuine.

**RT:** Such books are starting to come out now. That's the interesting thing, because in Vietnam no one dares read them, no one dares publish them. It would show how they were all fooled. The North did not have a monopoly on nationalism or ability. Take the North Vietnamese invasion of 1972 — 14 divisions, stopped, in part, with American airpower help. But airpower doesn't work unless the troops hold; if troops flee, airpower is no good to you. It only works if troops can hold and force the enemy to concentrate. And the South Vietnamese held. They lost Quang Tri, but they recaptured it. Giap lost 120,000 men. Now that's not half bad. It gives the answer to our part. This, of course, is where Abrams gets the full marks. He retrained that army, and he re-equipped it, and, of course, you mustn't denigrate Thieu. He was a very capable general. In fact, Thieu was a good general. Generals don't usually make good presidents, but he was good enough as a president. As good as Eisenhower, anyway. But he was a better general. And he put the right people in command of his forces. I think it's staggering that they held Kontum. There were many times we thought it was gone. Of course John Vann had a large part to play. And holding An Loc was pretty good, too. After all, 39 dead tanks inside — T-54s, like that. So you can't say that the South Vietnamese couldn't fight. They did. You had 14 North Vietnamese divisions defeated. True, the North Vietnamese made quite a few mistakes. That I accept. They didn't know how to wage a conventional war with tanks, which was lucky. They bombarded An Loc, a perfect example, just bombarded the town. God knows what they threw in and they created great masses of rubble. You can't drive tanks through rubble! And they didn't have their infantry supporting the tanks sufficiently. So the tanks just drove into rubble and got banged off. Using the LAW, even the police got one in An Loc. I went and saw it. They were terribly pleased. What I'm trying to say is that who would have believed you could withdraw American troops from the places where they were withdrawn between 1969 and 1972 — and don't forget that many of those who remained were not taking part in major op-



erations — who would have thought that nothing would have fallen apart?

**SOF: Unfortunately, the fighting ability of the Vietnamese receives consistently bad press in the U.S.**

RT: Did you ever go to Binh Dinh when the Koreans were there? Well, the Koreans had these enormous bases that they simply covered with sandbags. It would have taken a nuclear bomb to get through their defenses. There were two South Korean divisions there, and, of course, with the ceasefire in '73 they were withdrawn. Everyone said there was no way the area would hold without those two South Korean divisions. But they did, and the question is why? It was only gradually that I worked it out, and this applies to the United States forces as well. When the South Koreans were withdrawn, all their base camps and so on were demolished; they no longer had to be defended. Nothing fell apart in the normal part of the countryside at that time — partly, I'll admit, because the NVA was weak after May '72 — they had been terribly punished. But more importantly, nothing fell apart because the Koreans had not been contributing to the security of the area at all. All they had been contributing to was their own security! And that applies to a large part of the American forces in earlier stages. It would be a very interesting study: how far did American troops contribute at all to the security of the South Vietnamese. That's what it all comes back to, you see. So what I'm saying is that a lot of this could have been dispensed with. I admit that you had to land in strength to stop the takeover in '65. But having done that, I reckon you had twice the number of forces that were necessary. You could have gotten through initially with 250,000 and probably reduced after that. Instead of which you had 500,000, and there was Westy asking for 200,000 more. That's all because the strategy was wrong. Westy never made any use of the South Vietnamese. Didn't understand them. Yet in the end the South Vietnamese were perfectly capable, after three years of Abrams, of taking on 14 North Vietnamese divisions. Which isn't bad.

**SOF: How, then, would you analyze the fall, the next big offensive?**

RT: The key was the desertion by the United States, the desertion in aid. When I went there in '75, the North had built itself up — they had been way down — to where it was estimated they had sufficient supplies for something like 12 months' intensive combat. The South Vietnamese at that point had enough for three weeks. When you get down to that level, a good analogy is keeping electric plants supplied with coal. If you haven't got the dumps, you can't move the coal fast enough to keep them all going. Exactly the same when you've got four fronts, as Thieu had. You cannot move the stuff fast enough to maintain all the fronts simultaneously; the North having the complete initiative and Thieu was not even being allowed to launch spoiling attacks. For the moment Thieu fired a gun, the Sen-



**“It would be a very interesting study: how far did American troops contribute to the security of the South Vietnamese?”**

ate was going to call off aid. He could defend a post — mark me, he had lost an awful number which had been taken contrary to the agreement, of course — but the only people complaining were the Indonesians, who were rather robust, I must say. The Canadians got fed up and went home. But the Indonesians were rather robust on this. I would love to see their reports, but I don't know what's happened to them. They certainly blamed the North Vietnamese for the breaches, but no one worried about those. That's the point. It was Thieu who was not allowed to breach the accords. What a situation! Mark me, he's got no air force left, because he's got no spares; he's got no fuel. The Yom Kippur War had an especially devastating effect on the fuel supplies, because he was having to buy that fuel on the market. You weren't giving him any any longer. And it was 11 times the pre-Yom Kippur War price. So he was stationary. He couldn't move his troops in trucks any longer. I don't think people understand this.

**SOF: Is there anything Thieu could have done in such a situation?**

RT: We had an enormous argument as to the correct military thing for Thieu to do. In any case, I think by March it was too late, but he should have done it in January. He should have moved all the forces he could out of Regions I and II back to Regions III and IV and let I and II go. Militarily, that would have made some sense. But the dilemma: politically, it was impossible. And also you can't just throw people away like that. So it was politically impossible. But that was the argument that was going

on, as to whether militarily that was the correct thing to do. When you're in a situation where the other side has the strategic initiative, it's just like D-Day: where are they actually going to land? It was quite impossible to tell at which point the North Vietnamese would make their major assault. In any case, by then Thieu's got practically no reserves left. That was one thing the North Vietnamese gained out of their 1972 offensive. It was the one gain they had. Not Quang Tri or anything like that. It was the fact that they drew the main South Vietnamese reserves up to Region I, and therefore Thieu had no reserves left except possibly one division in the Delta that he could have brought out from the Delta — which he did, in fact. It meant that the North could mass where it pleased. Again, this time, they had 13-14 divisions in the South and they had another three divisions within two week's movement. The question was where were they going to hit. It was sure to be a weakly held provincial capital, but . . .

We were in that position: the enemy could put three divisions against one any time he liked. And what chance had the one got under the circumstances? No reserves, no firepower.

And the other thing that Americans have never understood — and I got this across to Nixon in the end, and he immediately told Henry [Kissinger] to do something about it — is that the Russian 130mm gun was far better than anything you had. It had gotten everything. Have you ever seen a firebase? Well, how can you sit in a firebase with that firing at you from 12 miles away? The South Vietnamese, if they used their artillery, had to move it within 60 seconds. Otherwise, they were hit. So the dominant weapon on

*Continued on page 77*



# OPERATION

## Delta/SEAL Rescue Force Poised to Snatch American Hostages in Lebanon

by Neil Livingstone and David Halevy  
Illustration by Ralph Butler

**B**y late August 1986 nearly all was in readiness for the boldest military operation of the Reagan era: the rescue of the American hostages in Lebanon. U.S. Army intelligence operatives were busy finalizing the last details. Aided by a network of Lebanese allies, safe houses had been set up, vehicles prepositioned, and infiltration and exfiltration routes identified. The actual operation was to be carried out by members of SEAL Team 6, the Army's Delta Force, and Air Force elements from 1st Special Operations Wing. Under the cloak of darkness they would slip into Lebanon, pluck the hostages from their fetid captivity in the West Beirut suburb of Bir el Aabed and the Sheik Abdallah barracks in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, and then — if all went well — escape to the sanctuary of U.S. warships anchored off the coast.

If all didn't go well, the U.S. commandos were prepared to make it one hell of a fight.

Shortly before it was scheduled to commence, the operation was put on hold. Although the men involved didn't know it at the time, the reason was that the United States was engaged in secret behind-the-scenes dealings with the government of Iran that would later be called the Iran-Contra scandal. Despite millions of dollars and months of preparation devoted to the operation, it was never revived. And America's hostages continue to languish in captivity.

This is the story of the plan to free U.S. hostages in Lebanon by force, rather than by buying their freedom.

### Intelligence Support Activity (ISA)

No problem was more vexing to the Reagan Administration than that of the American hostages in Lebanon. As Oliver North often told friends, "Not a day goes by that the President of the United States doesn't ask about the hostages." In many respects, it was this preoccupation with freeing the hostages that was at the bottom of the Iran/Contra scandal.

In early 1983, the Joint Chiefs had tasked a secret military unit called ISA (Intelligence Support Activity) with developing a viable military operation to free the hostages. Run out of the bowels of the Pentagon, ISA was a good choice for the assignment. No newcomer to the Middle East, ISA had operated in many parts of the Arab world since its creation in 1981, and its agents had worked in Beirut and throughout much of Lebanon. ISA operatives had served under official cover at the U.S. embassy in Beirut and as advisers to the U.S. Marine Expeditionary Force before it pulled out in 1984.

### SHADOW WAR EXPERTS

Neil C. Livingstone and David Halevy are two of the world's leading authorities on international terrorism and the deadly shadow wars of the Middle East.

Livingstone is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University. He has written numerous articles and books on terrorism and national defense, the most recent being *Beyond the Iran-Contra Crisis: The Shape of U.S. Counter-Terrorism Policy in the Post-Reagan Era*, published by Lexington Press.

David Halevy is a 19-year veteran correspondent with *Time Magazine* and a former member of Israeli special operations force. He is also in the Israel Defense Forces reserves.

They previously collaborated on an article detailing how Israeli Commandos assassinated Abu Jihad, the Palestine Liberation Organization's military operations chief, in Tunis (see "Defanging The Serpent," SOF Dec. '88).

The ISA men were not desk jockeys but "can do" types, with little tolerance for red tape, a quality that often brought them into conflict with Pentagon brass. The highly-classified unit had formed in the wake of the abortive rescue mission to free the U.S. hostages in Iran that ended at Desert One in 1980. Initially called the Foreign Operating Group (FOG), the unit's name was later changed to ISA.

ISA's mission was twofold: to collect tactical intelligence and to provide operational support. Its chief mandate was the collection of precise, detailed intelligence for actual and potential operations conducted by the U.S. special operations com-

munity. The lack of such information had contributed to the 1980 failure of "Operation Rice Bowl" in Iran. It was envisioned that ISA would collect the kind of tactical intelligence that the CIA was unable to provide to commando assaults and raiding parties, such as how many guards are at the objective, where they are positioned, what kind of arms they have, which way do the doors swing, and so on.

ISA was also charged with establishing a worldwide logistic network capable of assisting special operations units in executing military operations. Among its responsibilities were identifying and preparing landing and drop zones, conducting reconnaissance, providing transport, and acting as "guides" to raiding parties.

ISA's annual budget was approximately \$10 million and it had a staff of around 120 full-time operators, mostly officers and NCOs. ISA teams included SIGINT (signals intelligence) specialists, special equipment specialists, deep cover penetration agents (most fluent in foreign languages), computer wizards, and communications specialists. There was also an action element composed of small teams of ISA commandos proficient in sniping, close quarters combat, unarmed combat, and explosives.

In order to ensure operational security and secrecy, ISA personnel did not appear on the Army's regular listings, and its personnel were carried on the Army's Special Roster, or ASR. This roster includes army personnel whose identities, units, tasks and deployment are a closely guarded secret. No mention of ISA appeared on the personnel records of members of the unit.

ISA operated under the DCOSOPS of the Army and was tasked both by DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency) and by the Army's Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (ACSI). When special operations opponents at the Pentagon recommended in 1982 that the unit be dismantled, it was saved by the ACSI, Lt. Gen. William "Bill" Odom, who later became the head of the National



# BETRAYAL



Security Agency (NSA). Those with action-oriented billets often spent time with Delta and other special operations units perfecting their commando and anti-terrorist skills.

Because of internal fighting within the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community, ISA had to coordinate all of its activities with the CIA. In an effort to maintain its independence, ISA commanders clashed, at one time or another, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the leadership of Delta, SEAL Team Six, Seaspray, and the Air Force's special operations wing.

During the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, ISA teams accompanied Delta and SEAL Team Six commandos to Akrotiri, Cyprus, to prepare for a rescue mission into Lebanon in the event that negotiations that eventually led to the release of the hostages

broke down. Similarly, ISA operatives were standing by with Navy SEALs to retake the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* later that same year. The seajackers, members of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), surrendered to Egyptian authorities and the operation was called off. ISA personnel, however, were part of an operation which successfully freed eight American hostages in the Sudan, after they had been kidnapped by south Sudanese rebels. Using intelligence collected by ISA operators on the ground and special training provided by Delta, Sudanese commandos were able to rescue the American church and relief agency officials.

#### Profile of an ISA Operator

The military personnel assigned to ISA all generally had some special operations back-

ground and experience. Most received additional training once they joined ISA. New recruits went through an ISA six-month basic training course, and afterwards were given additional training by the CIA, FBI and Secret Service. Those involved with ISA's action component also trained with Delta and other special operations units.

For a profile of a typical ISA operator, "Scuba" is very representative. Since he is still involved in special operations with another military unit, his real name cannot be used. "Scuba" was born on 2 July 1947, in Oregon, where he was raised and educated. In 1968, he dropped out of college and joined the army. Upon graduation from OCS (Officer Candidate School) at Fort Benning in 1969, he was sent to jump school and then was attached to the Sixth



Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg. Late in 1969, he began a three-year tour of duty in Vietnam, mainly conducting long-range reconnaissance missions and surveillance of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

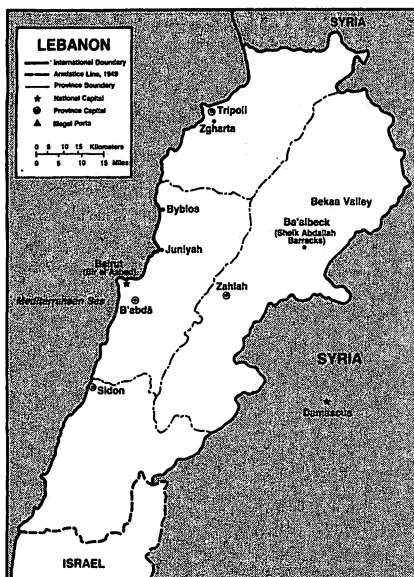
After returning to the states in 1972, he served two years with the Second Armored Division and was sent to the Advanced Infantry Course. Upon graduation he was transferred to the First Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. During his three-year stint at Fort Riley, he got his degree in political science and sociology. After a tour of duty with the Tenth Special Forces Group, he was assigned to FOG, the forerunner of ISA. "Scuba" held top positions with ISA's operations squadron and with its deep cover unit. He stayed with ISA until his retirement in 1987.

### Lebanon: Hothouse of International Terrorism

During the past 14 years, Lebanon has come apart at the seams. In many respects it no longer exists as a viable nation. It is dominated by foreign armies and armed militias, representing different religious factions. One of the unforeseen consequences of the Lebanese civil war has been the rise of the long-oppressed Shi'ites of Lebanon, spurred on by the Iranian revolution and the wave of Islamic fundamentalism that has swept over much of the Middle East.

The leaders of revolutionary Iran viewed Lebanon as another potential Islamic republic. Iran joined the PLO and its leftist allies in an effort to destroy the power of Lebanon's Christian minority, who were regarded as allies of Israel and descendants of the hated Crusaders. As many as 1800 Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) were sent to Lebanon, most based in the Bekaa Valley. By 1983-1984, Iranian operatives had taken over Hezbollah, the so-called Party of God, and were using it to wage war on Lebanese Christians and all sources of Western influence and culture in the country. The United States was regularly described by the Ayatollah Khomeini and other top Iranian leaders as the "great Satan," and Hezbollah terrorists, often with the aid of Syria, struck out repeatedly at U.S. targets in the country. The U.S. embassy and the embassy annex were both bombed, as was the U.S. Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport, with the loss of 241 American servicemen. On 16 March 1984, the CIA's chief-of-station, William Buckley, was kidnapped in Beirut by Iranian terrorists. Buckley died in captivity the following year after having been subjected to continuous torture and abuse. Over the months that followed Buckley's abduction, other Americans living in Lebanon — journalists, educators, a hospital official, a priest, and at least one mentally impaired individual — were also seized and disappeared into the terrorist netherworld.

Virtually all of the Western intelligence organizations were "blind" when it came to dealing with the rising tide of Iranian- and Syrian-backed terrorism in Lebanon. Not only were their respective intelligence ser-



**American hostages in Lebanon were held at the Sheik Abdalla Barracks near Ba'albeck in the Bekaa Valley and in the Bir el Aabed district of Beirut, both Shi'ite controlled areas. Rescue mission was planned as a two-pronged strike.**

vices forced to deal with a totally fluid situation, where nothing remained the same for long, but all had traditionally ignored Lebanon's Shi'ite community. In the past, the Shi'ites had not been a major factor in Lebanon. Even the Israelis, with a massive network in Lebanon had paid little attention to radical Shi'ite factions like Hezbollah and its Iranian masters — until it was too late.

After the traumas of 1983-1984, and with the epidemic of hostage-taking that began in 1985, the United States was desperate to develop intelligence "assets" in Lebanon. A crash program was launched to collect timely information about terrorist threats and to locate the American hostages. According to a top-ranking ISA officer, "When the hostage crisis started taking on a life of its own, we were tasked to provide intelligence and potential support for any type of rescue operation. Delta was told to start planning a rescue operation and we were tasked, apparently by DIA and Delta, to start a collection operation [intelligence] to support Delta's entry into Beirut."

A small number of ISA men had worked undercover in Beirut ever since the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks, but given the urgent need for results and the enormity of the task, it rapidly became clear to ISA officials that they would need to find new allies and recruit new personnel for the operation.

### Recruiting the Network

"It was a blind date," recalled a Lebanese national living in Washington, D.C., who got a mysterious phone call in October 1985. The caller invoked the name of a mutual "friend" in Beirut and asked if Michael would join him for a drink. Michael assumed it was a purely social meeting and agreed without hesitation. When he arrived at the bar at 1600 hours the

following day, he was met by a tall, slender American with a moustache. The man was dressed in a business suit and had a mid-Western twang.

In contrast to Michael's expectation of a casual evening of drinks and chit-chat about mutual friends, the American was all business. He introduced himself as a representative of the U.S. Government, but apologized for his inability to show Michael any identification. Not one for small-talk, the American came straight to the point. He wanted to meet a senior Lebanese Forces intelligence official, who lived outside of Lebanon and was a friend of Michael's. He told Michael that there was a highly-sensitive matter that he wanted to discuss with the Lebanese Forces official — something that would benefit both the United States and the Christian community in Lebanon.

Michael listened to the man but did not initially commit to help him. The conversation then turned to the situation in Lebanon. After about an hour, the man told Michael that he had to leave. "I'll call you," he said, and then gave Michael what later turned out to be a false name, Paul Dunbar.

Uneasy about the strange meeting, Michael got in touch with his friend and told him what had happened. Although they had no idea where the contact might lead, "my friend decided to carry on with the 'game,'" says Michael.

Two weeks later a second meeting was arranged at an Irish pub in the Washington suburb of Alexandria. When Michael arrived this time, he found Dunbar seated at a table in back of the pub with an associate. The associate was six feet tall and all muscle. "He looked every bit an infantry soldier," recalls Michael. Unlike the first meeting, this time Dunbar was far more relaxed and easygoing, although his companion barely uttered a word. Dunbar asked Michael if he enjoyed Washington and they talked about several extraneous subjects. Finally, the conversation took a serious turn. Dunbar told Michael that he was looking for information about Lebanon, very specific information. Michael responded that he needed to know who wanted the information. Dunbar would only say that they were "operating under an inter-agency mandate" and were involved in "anti-terrorist activities." Michael asked them to describe the kind of information they were seeking. "Information about terrorist groups in Lebanon," came the reply. Then, as if an afterthought, Dunbar indicated that they were also interested in any intelligence about the American hostages.

"It was very clear to me that their main interest was the hostages," says Michael, "since there are far better sources than me for information about terrorist groups in Lebanon." They told Michael if he could set up the meeting with his friend, they would introduce him to their superiors, so that he could verify their bona fides.

After the meeting, Michael contacted his friend, the Lebanese intelligence official



who went by the name of "Shanon," and made arrangements for him to come to Washington. Although a Christian, born in Lebanon, Shanon had been raised and educated in Europe and was, in many respects, more European than Lebanese. However, with the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war, Shanon had voluntarily joined the Christian fighting militia, the Lebanese Forces (LF), and quickly rose to the top rung of its intelligence apparatus, even though he was only in his early 30s. He became chief of the LF international section and was sent abroad to liaise with and establish ties to other intelligence agencies, mostly in the West. In practical terms, he was the chief representative of the Lebanese Forces in the West. But more important to ISA, over the years he had developed many unique contacts both within Lebanon's Shi'ite community and Hezbollah. He had meticulously assembled a network of informers, friends, and other contacts in Lebanon, and had the ability to reach into virtually any faction or militia for information.

ISA had selected the right person. Now it was a matter of recruiting him.

Despite misgivings, Shanon agreed to meet in Washington with Michael's mysterious "friends." Michael and the two ISA men picked him up at National Airport and they took great care to avoid being spotted or tailed. "We changed cars three times, drove in circles, and took other evasive action," recalls Shanon. "In the end, I was not sure that they even knew where they were heading."

Finally, after about 45 minutes of driving, they pulled into a hotel near the airport. Shanon was shown to a large suite, where he met two other Americans, identified as Dunbar's "ultimate superiors." One introduced himself as "Mr. Lake," and the other remained anonymous.

The meeting was strained and formal; no one relaxed. Shanon was asked about his access to sensitive information, especially relating to various terrorist groups operating in the Middle East, and about the Soviet role in the region. They also wanted to know about certain terrorist activities in Europe. Shanon responded to the inquiries warily, giving short clipped responses, usually "yes" or "no." Finally, they began a probing series of questions about the Lebanese Forces, its organizational structure, chain of command, and certain key figures.

Shanon was able to quickly ascertain that they were special operations veterans and had spent some time in Beirut during the 1985 TWA 847 hijacking. It was also readily apparent that their only real concern was the American hostages. What troubled Shanon was why they weren't working through normal channels. Since the Lebanese Forces maintained intelligence ties to CIA, DIA, and the Israelis, it seemed strange that they would use such a circuitous route to obtain his cooperation.

As the meeting drew to a close, Shanon concluded that Dunbar and his companions were "for real" and their operation was sanc-

tioned. Security considerations, he decided, explained the elaborate secrecy and distance from other intelligence organizations.

He agreed to help the American effort, and in the months that followed became the central figure in a network of Lebanese intelligence operatives that would ultimately pinpoint the precise location of all the American hostages. This information, in turn, precipitated the most serious rescue attempt to date to wrench the hostages from their Shi'ite captors.

#### Momentum

It took about four months before the Lebanese component was fully operational and transmitting hard information back to ISA. All of the data received by ISA was turned over to CIA and NSA (National Security Agency) for further verification. This led to the positioning of a spy satellite over Lebanon that was dedicated to gathering intelligence about the hostages and, as part of that function, to checking out Shanon's information. For the most part, Shanon's information turned out to be extremely accurate and precise.

On 17 May 1986, for example, ISA received a message from Shanon's operations center regarding the "transfer of the hostages to the region of Hakrak." According to the message, "the source of Riad Tleis of Hezbollah have verified that the prisoners and foreign hostages were transferred from the locality of Brital [Britel] and the Sheik Abdalah barracks (in Na'albek) to a Hezbollah military camp located in the region of Hakrak [Hermel] in the heights of the northern Bekaa."

Several weeks later, Shanon's operatives reported further developments. "On 12 June 1986, the American hostages were transferred from 'Miqraq' fort (compound) in the Ba'albek area to the headquarters of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard [sic] located at 'Breetal' [Britel] town; and they are still there," wrote the ISA man who transcribed the message.

As Shanon's men closed in on the hostages, the U.S. spy satellite monitoring events in Lebanon was repositioned to get a better look at the village of Britel in the Bekaa Valley. This followed receipt of the following message, which was translated from French:

*Please note the positioning of the hostages:*

1. CR [cable reference] 46 where the hostages are probably 70 percent being detained at the moment.

2. Concerning Breetal [Britel] village (in the Bekaa) specific sources identify the detention area of the hostages in the 'al-Husayniya' building or barracks situated at the Breetal village with map coordinates: 221440/189200. Coordinates from the 'Shiek Abdallah' barracks (the main barracks for Hezbollah in the Bekaa valley) in the Breetal (also Brital) area with the deployment of the DCA.

194480/227980

193980/227980

194420/227620

*PS Coordinates of the Mosque of Brital are 188700/221500.*

So successful was the operation that Shanon's men were generating literally hundreds of pages of intelligence material every week. "We did not bargain over the intel," says Shanon. "The traditional way the Lebanese Forces and the Lebanese Government handled intel of this kind was to send 90 percent and bargain over the rest. We gave ISA everything we got. Everything on the Palestinians, Shi'ites, Libyan agents, Iranian agents, Syrian activities." In addition, America's clandestine cooperation with the LF began to take other forms. During the September 1986 hijacking of Pan Am flight 73 to Pakistan, for example, the LF permitted Delta Force to secretly use its facilities in East Beirut in anticipation that the plane would ultimately be diverted to Lebanon. The hijacking, however, was resolved in Karachi after a shootout. Shanon's operators also gave the United States valuable intelligence about terrorist operations in other parts of the world, including an attack on a U.S. base in Turkey.

#### So Close Yet So Far

By the middle of the summer of 1986, Shanon's men had, according to ISA sources, identified where all of the U.S. hostages were being held. CIA sources, by contrast, claim that, "They had a fix on five hostages and did not know where the others were. . . . It was a cat and mouse game, and you can't launch an operation based on this kind of intelligence." An ISA officer disagrees. "They [Lebanese Forces intelligence] provided us with the exact location of every hostage," he claims. They told us where they were being moved to, each new location. We were able to verify this by other means. We could have launched the operation and freed the hostages."

So good was the information being supplied to ISA that the other U.S. intelligence agencies soon were in an uproar. Since ISA had little analytical capability, the information from Lebanon, in its raw form, was fed into the computerized data banks of the U.S. intelligence community. This meant that CIA, NSA, the National Security Council, and certain elements at the State Department ultimately had access to it. As a result, they bombarded ISA with scores of questions and clarifications, often demanding to know the precise source of a specific piece of intelligence. "Everyone wondered where we were getting this unusual and accurate information," said a former ISA man.

Despite bureaucratic jealousies and bickering, however, in July 1986, planning for an operation to rescue the hostages in Lebanon was authorized. That same month, an ISA colonel with the code name "Gabby," traveling undercover and in disguise, was dispatched to Lebanon to get a firsthand look at the situation. He arrived at the Christian-controlled port city of Juniyah and spent 10 days in-country. He inspected the staging areas set up by the Lebanese Forces and actually observed some of the sites where the hostages were being held. At



the same time, Gabby was assessing — before American forces were placed in jeopardy — the efficacy of the Lebanese Forces intelligence network and the key individuals that would be part of any future operation. He was even permitted to meet with some of the LF intelligence “assets” and informers.

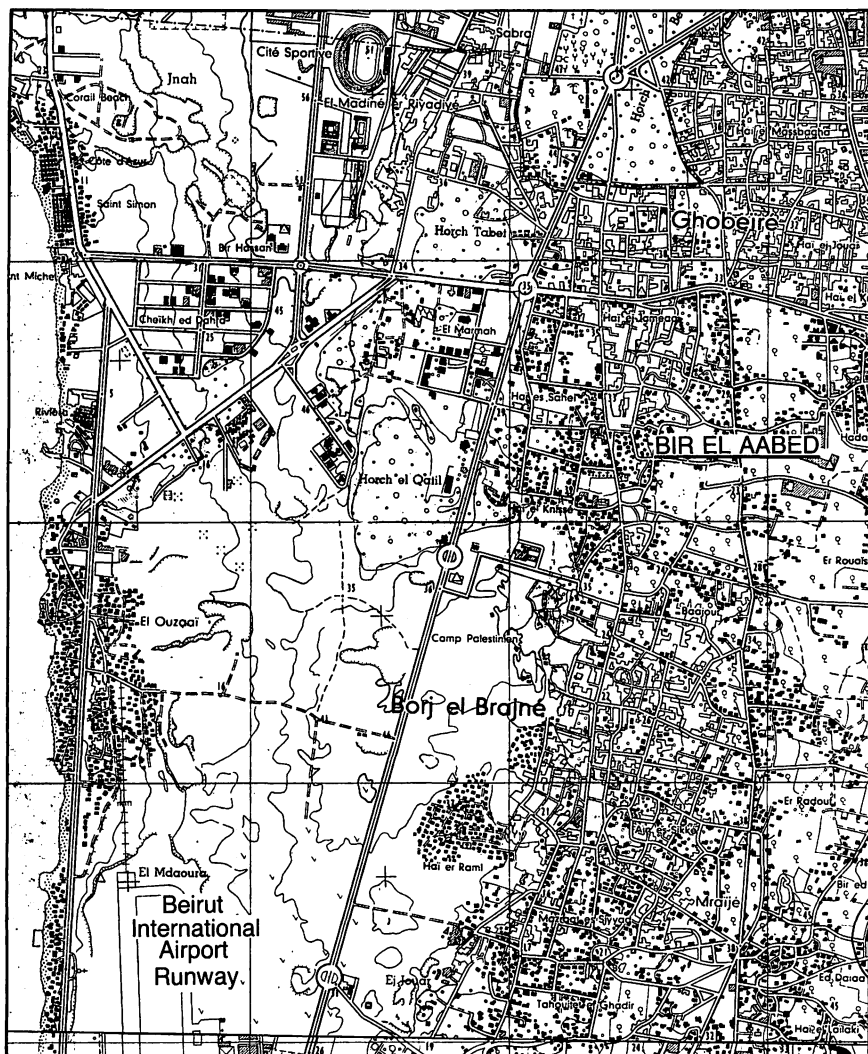
Satisfied with what he had seen, upon Gabby's return ISA began pulling together a rescue operation, working with other special operations elements that would be involved. By the end of August, most of the planning was complete and intelligence collection had been stepped up to monitor the situation in Lebanon as closely as possible. Shanon's network was working around the clock on logistics matters and to detect any changes in the hostages' condition or location that would affect the operation. Overhead, U.S. KH-11 spy satellites were conducting photo recon missions so that highly detailed maps of certain areas in West Beirut and the Bekaa Valley could be produced. NSA, meanwhile, had accelerated its “collection” activities, and was monitoring virtually all phone traffic in the country.

#### The Plan

The final mission plan called for assembling a combined force of 50 to 60 Delta and SEAL Team 6 commandos on a supply ship steaming with the Sixth Fleet. At a designated location north of Cyprus, the commandos would be transferred under cover of darkness to a Christian-operated cargo vessel, which traveled regularly between Lebanon and Larnaca, Cyprus. There would be four empty cargo containers on deck to conceal the presence of the commandos. While the commandos would be ferried to the Christian vessel in small boats, their equipment would be transferred via ship-to-ship cables. The whole procedure was not expected to last more than a half hour.

The equipment being carried by the commandos included special eavesdropping devices that permitted them to monitor events in bunkers; closed rooms, and cellars; satellite communications gear to link the commandos directly to the White House, the Joint Chiefs, and mainframe computers operated by the intelligence community; a secure communications system that would allow the raiders to communicate among themselves without fear of compromise; and portable computers designed to transmit and receive encrypted messages. In addition, they carried certain special weapons, explosives, first aid gear, and equipment for breaching doors. Shanon and his men were asked to provide them with unmarked AK-47s, M16s, and Uzis that could be used in the operation and left behind. The commandos were supposed to dress in civilian clothing or non-identifiable battle fatigues.

Once the vessel reached the port of Beirut, it would put in at dock number five, which was controlled by the Lebanese Forces. The five containers, with the commandos and their equipment inside, would be off-loaded and taken to a remote storage area within the port. Later that night, a Lebanese Forces convoy — including jeeps



**Bir el Aabed area of Beirut, where some of the American hostages were being held, lies northeast of a big Palestinian stronghold in the Borj el Brajne district. Palestinians' Sabra and Chatilla camps, destroyed by successive rounds of fighting with Israeli, Christian, and Shi'ite forces, lay to the north, due east of stadium.**

and six-wheeled trucks — would pick them up and transport them to Christian-controlled East Beirut. There, at safe houses provided by the LF, the commandos would divide into three pre-assigned teams.

Guided by Shanon's men, the first team would enter Moslem West Beirut and make their way to Bir el Aabed, where some of the hostages were being held. The second team, also guided by Lebanese Forces intelligence operatives, would strike out for the Bekaa Valley and the Sheik Abdallah Barracks. The third team would remain behind, held in reserve in case either of the other two units encountered serious problems.

To transport the commandos inside Shi'ite-controlled areas, station wagons, sedans, and Land-Rovers bearing Amal and Hezbollah markings had been assembled. The necessary travel and identification documents had been bought, stolen, and otherwise obtained, and then provided by Shanon to ISA, where they were duplicated.

The operation would be masked by threatening maneuvers, conducted by two Lebanese Forces intelligence teams, designed to draw Shi'ite and Hezbollah units away from the target areas. However, as one American participant remembers, “We did not rely heavily on the Lebanese Forces to fight or even to conduct operations that could have supported us. We were ready to do the operation alone, single-handed, and come home with the hostages.” Although the Christian-dominated Lebanese Army had also expressed, through the CIA, its willingness to be of assistance in the event a rescue was attempted, for security reasons the offer was not accepted.

“The operation was ‘Made in the U.S. of A.’,” says an ISA operator. “We could have used additional support, but the idea was to carry out a clean, neat, quick operation. Every support activity would only have complicated matters. This was supposed to be a quick and dirty operation.”

Timing was all important. The strikes against the two Hezbollah prisons were to be closely coordinated. There was little margin for error. It was expected that the raiders would meet with little resistance at the two prison facilities, since Hezbollah and the Pasdaran operated on the principle that it was not the number of guards but the frequent movement of the hostages that



guaranteed their security. As a result, there were only a small number of guards at each facility. Once the operation at Bir el Aabed was complete, the commandos and, hopefully, the hostages, would head for the coast, using one of a number of potential escape routes. There, they would rendezvous with ISA operators and be evacuated by means of swift boats or helicopters to U.S. naval vessels standing by a short distance away.

The operation in the Bekaa was more complicated and the escape options more limited. The plan called for the team that hit the Sheik Abdallah Barracks to reach the coast and to leave via the sea. In the event of an emergency, however, there was a direct line of communication to the Israelis. Although they had not been informed of all of the operational details, the Israeli defense and intelligence establishment had agreed, in a "worst case" situation, to come to the assistance of the commandos or to provide for "quick entry" into Israeli-controlled territory.

### Internecine Warfare

As usual, there were those at the U.S. embassy in Beirut and in the American intelligence community that were opposed to a high risk operation to rescue the hostages. Some opposed any operation that was not under their personal or institutional control; others refused to enlist behind any idea that was not their own. There was a third category, however, of "weak sisters" and so-called "Arabists," mostly at the State Department, that harbored intense antipathy toward Israel and its Lebanese Christian allies. For political and ideological reasons, they were not above "selling out" an operation that would strengthen American ties to the Christians or provide Ronald Reagan with a dramatic victory in Lebanon.

Relations between the ISA operators and the U.S. embassy in Beirut were virtually nonexistent. The embassy was viewed as having its own agenda, which did not include a military rescue of the hostages. Because of what were seen as past betrayals, ISA and the special operations components involved in the rescue mission treated the American ambassador, the CIA chief-of-station, and other embassy personnel as "the enemy." By contrast, they viewed Shanon and his men as "friends," whose agenda was right out in the open. "They wanted to get recognition for the LFI [Lebanese Forces Intelligence]," says a former ISA officer, "and wanted support from the U.S. of their independent stand in Lebanon." Despite certain bureaucratic problems, however, the CIA ended up providing ISA with cover and other support.

The operation received a major setback in July when a number of the ISA men and commandos were pulled out of the Lebanon operation in order to beef up security in New York. Federal officials were afraid that there might be some kind of foreign terrorist attack in conjunction with the Statue of Liberty centennial celebration on the Fourth of July that was to be attended by the presi-

dent, although there was little hard evidence to sustain such fears.

Between August and October 1986, ISA and the commandos rehearsed the operation and "sat on their suitcases" waiting for the signal to "go." The Lebanese Forces even provided two ships and there was a dry run involving the transfer of men and equipment from one vessel to the other.

### End of the Road

On 11 October 1986, the fax machine began to whine in the small office in suburban Virginia, near the Pentagon, that served as the operational nerve center of ISA. The message being transmitted had originated in Beirut and was forwarded to the Arlington address from Montreal, via secure telephone line. As the slick pages were spewed from the secure machine, a boyish-looking major grabbed them and jammed them into a red cardboard folder. There were no identifying markings on the pages or on the folder.

The major quickly crossed the corridor with the folder tucked underneath his arm and opened a heavy steel-reinforced door which, like the pages and the folder, was unmarked. He did not knock. Across from the door, behind an almost-bare government-issue metal desk, was a grim-faced lieutenant colonel. Without a word, the major handed the folder to his superior and stood motionless in front of the desk.

The colonel placed the folder squarely on the desk in front of him, opened a locked drawer, and extracted a small code pad. He perused the faxed pages slowly, glancing from time-to-time at the code pad. Once he had finished, he reviewed the message a second time for accuracy, then handed both the folder and the code pad to the major.

"Read it," he said bitterly. "We're in trouble. The bad guys won."

The major took a chair and did as instructed, a sense of dread begin to grow in his gut. The message confirmed his worst fears. Finally, he closed the folder and replaced it on the desk, along with the code pad.

"It's all over, colonel. Finished," said the major in a stony voice. "What now?"

The colonel didn't reply. He knew that this was the end of the line and that their promising military careers were most likely over. He also realized that the American hostages were unlikely to be freed any time soon.

*The text of the message was as follows:*

*\*\*\*10/11/86 12:56*

*Attn: Frankie/Oscar [code names for ISA officers]*

*From: Shanon [the Lebanese network]*

*Subject: Current situation*

*We believe the DST [French intelligence] and your bad guys [CIA] are on Tessin's [Syria's] side.*

*Number of reasons:*

*1. On 10/11/86 meetings were held in Tessin [Syria] between SIS [Syrian Intelligence Service] and DST. At the same time the Iranian Minister for the Revolutionary*

*Guards, Mr. Mohsen Daoust is in Tessin [Syria] for conversations with Tessin [Syria] high level.*

*2. Colonel Ghazi Kanaan, chief of SIS in our place [Beirut] left Martyr [Lebanon] in a hurry to Tessin [Syria] to take part in in number one.*

*3. Big bargaining is being discussed:*

*A. A deal on Cargo [hostages] with the complete approval of the bad guys [CIA], DST. Green light for Tessin [Syria] on the subject.*

*B. To take over by Tessin [Syria] the western suburbs [West Beirut].*

*C. Complete cover to Tessin [Syria] in exchange for the Cargo [hostages].*

*D. Green light to Tessin [Syria] to move on Felix [Lebanese Christian Forces] and put Felix finally out of the "Game" [rescue operation].*

*E. It's clear that this will happen in the next weeks.*

*Baba on Felix [ISA's independent network in Lebanon and the Lebanese Christian Forces]*

*Best regards.*

*Keep you informed.*

The rescue operation was being sold out. But why? And by whom? The colonel could only guess at the answers to those questions, but within weeks it would become abundantly clear. First, came the revelations about the Reagan Administration's secret arms-for-hostages dealings with the Iranian government. Then, on 29 October 1986 the French and Iranian governments publicly announced that they had reached a settlement involving a \$1 billion loan. This would pave the way, nearly two years later, for the release of the French hostages being held by Hezbollah.

In retrospect, there could be little question but that the rescue mission had been put on "hold," and subsequently "sold out," because White House policymakers and intelligence officials were afraid to undertake any rescue operation that might impact negatively on their secret negotiations with Iran. In their defense, it could be asserted that they felt that negotiations, rather than force, held greater promise for the successful release of the hostages. Nevertheless, in hindsight there is little question but that they became so committed to the Iranian initiative that they lost sight of everything else, and gave far too little thought to the consequences — for the hostages — if their negotiations failed.

By the time Lt. Col. Oliver North was fired from the National Security Council staff, on 25 November 1986, for his part of the Iran-Contra scandal, the clandestine operation being mounted by ISA and its Lebanese network had already been dismantled. Virtually every trace of the operation was shredded or burned. It was almost as if it had never existed. The most successful operation to penetrate Hezbollah and to collect vital intelligence on Lebanon was over, and along with it any chance of securing the release of America's long-suffering hostages. ☒



# SIDETRACKED SAW

## From Effective Base of Fire to Bullet Hose

by Munremur MacGerrcinn

**T**HE U.S. Army's association with portable automatic weapons goes back to World War I, when American troops were exposed to the French concept of "marching fire." This tactic, designed to seize the initiative from dug-in, well-sited machine guns, consisted of having a line of men move forward at a walking pace, while firing a burst (or a round, depending on the weapon) every time their left foot hit the ground, apparently on the theory that even if you can't hit 'em, you can scare 'em to death.

The concept of suppressive fire is sound, but "marching fire" didn't work. And the French, instead of altering their tactics (as the Germans did, by adopting infiltration and bypass techniques), sought a technolog-

### FIREPOWER ANALYST

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### EVERY MAN A SHORT-RANGE FIRESTORM

Another lab specimen which illustrates a bastard "type" of weapon with an uncertain "function" (and its only socially redeeming importance a high volume of fire) is the Pederson device or "Pistol Caliber .30 Model 1918."

World War I had stalemated into opposing lines of troops, each held with their feet rotting in the muddy trenches by enemy heavy machine guns. It became apparent that when the Doughboys did charge from their lairs they must take with them portable firepower, were they ever to seize the initiative or any worthwhile real estate. They had been issued cylinder-bore shotguns, copious grenades, the miserable Chauchat and best wishes.

To increase individual firepower, assault M1903 .30-06 rifles were converted to the M1903 Mark I by fitting a new sear mechanism and changing the magazine cutoff, and milling a slot on the left side of the receiver for an ejection port to spit out empty brass from the pistol-sized .30 Pederson round. The Pederson device itself replaced the original bolt and enabled it to fire the .30 pistol cartridge, which fed from a 40-round stick magazine sticking out the right side of the device. The conversion was to be quickly made in the field, when about to go over the top or when the enemy was about to do the same in your direction. It could legitimately be regarded as a conceptual precursor to the sub-machine gun. And it was about as tactically important as the snail drums the Germans fitted to their .30 Luger pistol. However, the war became more

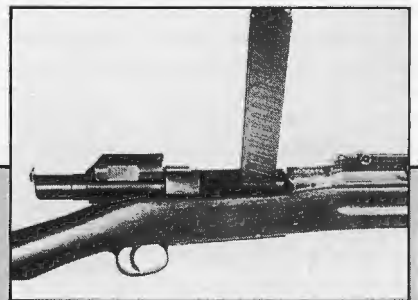
ical solution in the form of increased firepower. The result was adoption of the Hotchkiss machine gun and the Chauchat machine rifle. The miserable Chauchat added nothing to the tactical capability of French units, but perhaps the increased noise level gave some comfort to men repeatedly committed against entrenched German Maxims.

When the United States entered the war, we needed a great deal of logistical assistance. Most American weapons, such as the Springfield rifle and the Colt M1911 .45 caliber autoloading pistol, were excellent, but even these were in short supply and had to be supplemented. To augment the supply

*Continued on page 85*



**ABOVE:** Kit: (a) original M1903 bolt, stowed in bag, (b) stowing bag, (c) spanners used to install Pederson device and lock it in M1903 breech, (d) pouch for five "Pistol .30 M1918" magazines, (e) steel belt canister for device, (f) device itself, which replaced rifle bolt, (g) magazine which attached to right side of device. Photo: courtesy Bill Brophy



**Kaboodle:** Pederson device installed on modified "Mk I" M1903 rifle. Empties from pistol-type cartridges ejected through oval slot milled in left side of receiver. Large stick magazine on right side was designed to give individual soldier superiority of fire at close range. Photo: courtesy Bill Brophy

fluid and the Allies prevailed in spite of such ideas before these top-secret devices could be issued. Mark I rifles were reconverted to their original configuration and the Pederson devices destroyed, leaving only "Mk I" stamped on the receiver, and scars of the milled ejection slot as evidence of the firestorm that never was. — Don McLean





LEFT: During World War II the concept of a maneuverable small unit with its own portable base-of-fire weapon became widespread. Brits based a rifle section — the equivalent of a U.S. infantry squad — around firepower provided by a Bren gun. Converted to 7.62x51 NATO, the Bren soldiers on with various armies worldwide. Photo: courtesy Imperial War Museum

## REACH OUT AND HIT SOMEONE

Although the ranges at which serious engagements are most often decided may be from only a hundred yards down to bayonet point, an important determining factor at that decisive closing is the number of troops on each side who are left to engage their enemy in this final effort. This number of combatants will be the number on each side which entered the engagement, less those who have become casualties to long-range fire from their opponents.

Thus, and this hardly needs stating, the side which can accurately engage their opponent at the greatest range will have a decided advantage in any battle. In the attack, long-range suppressive fire will help seize the initiative earlier, and in the defense long-range fire can engage the enemy earlier and start to cut his numbers before he is able to close upon and threaten the defensive position.

A good example from history is the British "Brown Bess" musket versus the Pennsylvania and Kentucky rifles in the Revolutionary War, and versus the Afghan jezails during the British retreat from Afghanistan (see "Afghan Death March," SOF, February '89). The Brown Bess was one of the fastest shooting weapons of its day but outranged in these incidents, and that fact cost the Brits many a battle. From the longbow to the present, "firepower" per se has repeatedly proven to be no substitute for accurate, *long-range* fire. And if the scenario is in an urban or jungle setting, this advantage of greater range then translates to an advantage in penetration. If you and your opponent are each hiding behind a tree or wall, then it behooves you to access a weapon which can shoot through *his* tree or wall.

The anticipated opponent of the U.S. military is generally assumed to *probably* be troops emanating from or trained and equipped by the Soviet Union. What have *they* been doing lately for a SAW? The RPK — essentially an upscaled Kalashnikov which accepts larger capacity magazines — is current issue in the USSR and other Warsaw Pact nations. It is being replaced with the RPK-74 in

caliber 5.45x39mm. Although the RPK-74 is probably not quite the gun the M249 is (it has no belt feed option but must fire from in-the-way box magazines) it fairly well matches the M249 in caliber and tactical ability. So far, so good. *However*, in the early 1960s the Sovs started fielding the PK machine gun family, which fires the "old" but full-power 7.62x54R round. The PK has evolved into the PKM and PKS, true general-purpose machine guns which weigh but 3½ pounds more than the M249 and can provide area fire, cover final protective lines (FPLs) — even AA fire, out to a thousand yards. The PK is designed — *and issued* — as a close infantry support weapon *at the squad level*.

It warms not my heart that our Canadian, Aussie and Belgian allies (for a total of 20-some in all) also have adopted the Minimi ("M249" to us), as I certainly hope we will always be firing in the same direction. It would neither embarrass nor worry me that allies fighting alongside were able to suppress targets before I could engage them. What worries me is that we are potentially outgunned in the *other* direction, where it matters. I would anticipate great anxiety indeed when an opponent starts keeping my head down at a thousand yards with a PKM, while my options are limited to digging deeper and waiting with my M249 for the whites of his eyes to appear.

Although we anticipate retaining the 7.62mm NATO caliber for armor machine guns (where there is no excuse for adopting something merely because it is easy to carry) — and we *do* have some good new weapons on the horizon here — and we will continue to issue the warts-and-all M60 for the foreseeable future, we will not do so *at infantry squad level*. The PK series is in active production as an evolving and improving GPMG design, and our favorite Soviet watcher David Isby expects it will be deployed well past the turn of the century, perhaps considerably longer. And, not only are the Sovs issuing this 1,000-yard weapon *at squad level*, they are bringing on line prodigious quantities of the 12.7x107mm NSV heavy machine gun. In theory the NSV is issued at battalion level in a heavy weapons platoon, but in *practice*



Excellent Sov-designed PKM GPMG is deployed by Sovs at squad level, has considerable range/power advantage over US M249, weighs but three and a half pounds more empty. Photo: courtesy David Isby

Isby notes that it is found in its flexible mounting on vehicles of every type — *vehicles which go forward with the troops at platoon level*. We are still cranking out the venerable M2 Browning .50, which in spite of its somewhat lesser range and 30 or so extra pounds is an effective counter to the NSV . . . but they are issued at such a high echelon in the U.S. service you'll have to convince a field-grade officer to get one sent forward. It is encouraging that the Marines have put Ma Deuce back on the ground, but even assuming Ma Deuce were deployed in the U.S. service on a basis comparable with the NSV, the best *that* would accomplish is a Mexican standoff. Rifle squads on the line with their M249s will still be getting chewed up by PKs a couple hundred yards before they can effectively return fire.

Assuming this perception of a potential problem is accurate, is there an answer? Yes. Issue a first-rate GPMG in 7.62x51mm NATO at the squad level, as the squad's base-of-fire weapon, as do our anticipated opponents. Want some choices? I'd have a serious look at the FN MAG 58, and the excellent new South African SS-77, or — what the heck, I'm not proud — the PKM modified to 7.62mm NATO caliber (well, why not: they ripped off our MK 19 Mod O as their AGS-17). Or perhaps a vis-avis shakedown of the the above possibles against the M60E3 as currently used by the Marines to see if it has evolved out of its past problems, and if so, issue *more of them, as a SAW*.

As the author points out in this article, the M249 may well be a fine design for what it is, but if we already have the ability to send out all the 5.56mm ammo we can pack from our M16A2s, and the M249 has a range deficiency versus the PKM it is likely to face, *what's it for?* — Don McLean



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## COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 16

tanks. Reconnaissance vehicles will be lower and if these vehicles are expected to be encountered, the trip wire should be set between 210 and 250 cm. In all cases, the trip wires should not be lower than 200 cm.

A single trip wire and trigger can be used to fire more than one mine. If possible, three mines should be set up together. Each mine set 10 mils apart in elevation and spread gives the greatest probability of a successful hit.

When used as an unattended booby trap, a small amount of dust or sand should be placed in the end of the tube in order to create a large firing signature. This will increase the likelihood that the unmanned position will be counterattacked, which is common for a close ambush. AT/AP mines can be set up along the likely avenues of attack on the mine's position to increase material damage to an attacking force.

In an ambush, this device should not be relied upon as the main means of destroying an enemy force but, rather, as a supplement to an ambush force's firepower. The ambush force should be placed 90 to 120 degrees away from the PG-7 mine. The PG-7 mines will draw initial attention away from the attacking force.

When the off-route mine has been deployed, a map of its employment needs to be made in accordance with TC 20-32-1 Hasty Protective Mining. In addition to the normal information required by DA Form 1355-1-R Hasty Protective Mine Field Record, the off-route mine information should include the firing direction of the rocket and the probable maximum range of the rocket. The easiest method of projecting the maximum possible range is to sight down the length of the pipe and identify the first solid object that would detonate the warhead.

Tomorrow's battlefield will require the individual warrior to use all his resources to defeat the enemy. This includes his imagination and the utilization of all materials on hand. Enemy equipment, however, is a resource that can not be depended upon to provide the material advantage needed to defeat modern tanks, as supply by making use of enemy equipment will be ad hoc and unpredictable. But, when the opportunity arises, such munitions as the RPG-7 need to be used to our best advantage. The difference between victory and defeat can be the efficient use of such captured weapons. ☞



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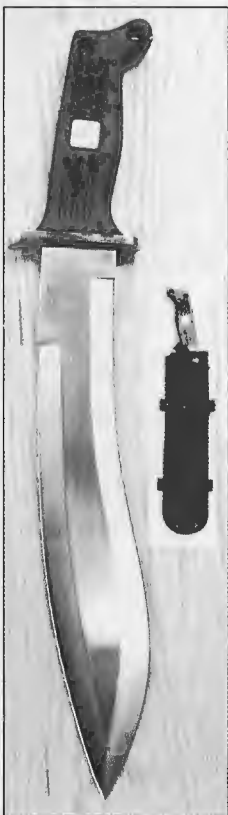
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# CAMBODIAN RESCUE

Continued from page 39

allowed to venture freely on Thai territory, so they headed south through the elephant grass to their Khmer Rouge base camp. Noi, myself, and a small contingent with our wounded friend moved west toward the pickup truck. I had spent the better part of two days around these folks and still had no idea who they were or exactly what their function in life was. Some of them we seemed to acquire in this no man's land, wandering about with no explicable purpose. With their huge knives and bags of cooked rice, groups of two or three seemed to appear out of nowhere at several points earlier in the day. Usually they would sit down, often with no one acknowledging each other, and silently roll a cigarette or eat plain rice with their hand out of a bag. This had been a strange day.

As we walked toward the truck, I saw three soldiers standing in the path waiting for us. Three Royal Thai Army soldiers armed with M16s several clicks from the nearest road were clearly not just passing through. The Thais do not control this area and there was only one reason they were there.

"We have been ordered by our commander to confiscate your film," said one of them in a perfectly friendly tone. The Thais are some of the friendliest people in the world, and they have an ability to make you like them, even if they have orders to ruin your day. How did they know so quickly I had gone in, I thought. I had tried to be as inconspicuous as possible. But it is hard for a six-foot-two inch white guy with a camera to blend in on the Thai-Cambodian border.

"Oh, man, you can't do this to me," I said. "I worked hard for these pictures." They were friendly but firm. They were just grunts with orders, and I knew they could not return to their commander without film.

"Check his pockets" said one to the other. "And the film in the camera as well."

"All right," I conceded. I rewound the film in my Nikon and popped it from the case. I handed it to them along with two rolls from my pocket. They had a job to do and they were pleasant enough. They let us go, mission accomplished as far as they were concerned. At least they didn't arrest me, I thought. It had happened to me more than once coming over the border from some place I wasn't supposed to be.

What the three Thai soldiers didn't know was that I had taken all my exposed film and hidden it in my socks periodically throughout the day. I have had my film confiscated before, and vowed to be prepared in the future. A photographer with no film isn't worth much to anybody. They had gotten two unexposed rolls I keep for just such occasions, and the film in my camera, which had less than five exposed frames. My damage control strategy had been effective.

We made it to the truck and arrived at the Red Cross stand-by ambulance by mid-

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afternoon. The doctor who administered to the boy before he was transferred to the ICRC surgical hospital said that he would live, although a bullet was lodged in his knee and could permanently impair his ability to walk. If he had not received medical care today, said the doctor, he probably would have died from blood loss or dehydration.

I went back to Tapraya to assess the last 24 hours and try to sell the story and pictures.

(TAPRAYA, THAILAND) "Vietnamese backed Heng Samrin troops ambushed a group of more than 100 Cambodian cattle traders today in an apparent dispute over control of this lucrative cross-border black market. At least 37 people were killed, all Cambodians and mostly civilians. Forty-five wounded managed to cross the border into Thailand, and were taken to the International Committee of the Red Cross hospital at Khao I Dang refugee camp, 20 km south of this Thai border town of Tapraya. Thai military sources said seven of the killed were Khmer Rouge soldiers who were escorting the traders back into Cambodia after selling their cattle. Red Cross officials confirmed reports that as many as 30 wounded were unaccounted for and their fate appeared grim. Attempts to organize a rescue effort were complicated by continued fighting in the area. Thai military and relief officials said that it was one of the bloodiest clashes of the year in the 10-year-old civil war in Cambodia. The Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge are the strongest of the tripartite resistance coalition fighting the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia since December 1978."

I called a wire service I had worked for in the past to try and sell the story. "Sounds interesting," said the editor, "How does 50 bucks sound?"

The fact is that a firefight in Cambodia doesn't raise many eyebrows in 1989, 19 years since Sihanouk was overthrown and the United States sent ground troops across the Vietnamese border to dislodge NVA sanctuaries. The same music with different words had been playing on Radio Cambodia for a long time, and the world was getting bored. I accepted the wire service offer, knowing that soon the ambush would be yesterday's news. I understand that it received a full paragraph next to a department store ad in the *New York Times* the following day. I was surprised they even printed it.

I would send the pictures into Bangkok to make the rounds and see if anyone was interested. Freelance photojournalism is an unpredictable business. You never know what will sell or for how much. Or if at all. If I made a couple hundred bucks from the last couple days product, I thought, I would be lucky.

It was getting dark and I was sitting alone in a small restaurant in Tapraya, having my first food since yesterday. I had spent the day walking through a minefield with some very suspicious characters in order to take pictures of dead people. Now I was eating



dinner in a restaurant on the Thai-Cambodian border. Four months ago I was working as a bureaucrat for a state government in the northeastern United States. Steady desk job, good money. I was engaged to be married. Shit, the wedding had been scheduled for next Saturday, I thought over my fried rice with chicken. But I decided to make some changes. My mother is not happy. ✕

## WHY THE NORTH WON

Continued from page 65

the battlefield in the end was the 130. And there as no answer to it. None.

**SOF: Militarily, therefore, defeat for South Vietnam was a pretty straightforward textbook case of collapse before a well-engineered blitzkrieg. Turning to an aspect of the war in the villages which we neglected to discuss earlier, were you familiar with "Phoenix" as we waged it?**

**RT: Yes, though it wasn't new at the time it came in. The methodology had been going on for a long time. Everyone understood, certainly in the front line areas, that even though a village seemed secure, there were enemy people inside, and you had to find out who they were. That they had been trying to do. But what used to happen was**

that by patrolling 'round the villages and so on, you were constantly running into enemy parties, and there were little battles. Half a dozen people would be shot on both sides. What happened during the Phoenix Program was that they said you've got to target this infrastructure. In other words, the people upon whom the guerrillas are dependent to survive. So the next time you have an incident, and you kill three, two of them have got to be called infrastructure. That way you know you're getting the infrastructure. And that's really all that happened. Nothing different was actually happening on the ground to what had happened before 'round villages with popular forces and regional forces operating in the populated areas. There were just constant clashes. Now, you tried to identify the dead and call some of them infrastructure. In other words, you were getting your infrastructure, because this was made the target. This was called assassination whereas in fact it was what had been happening for years — battles happening around the villages.

**SOF: Just before I came to London I was reading a curriculum on the Vietnam War that is being offered to high schools. In it the authors talk about 40,000 people being assassinated under the program. Dale Andradé, an author who has been researching in the classified records, can find evidence of only 3,000 "hits."**

**RT: I would think that was very close to what got classified as infrastructure, but it**

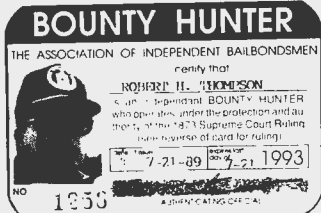
was no more than the usual battle data. They didn't really know who was who. But, there's no doubt that they got better at it. They weren't just terrorizing people. Let me give you an illustration. You know, I was sent out by Nixon at one time to reorganize the whole Vietnamese police, which we did. It took us two months to work it out, and we gave them a report which Thieu accepted and put into operation. The police were reorganized. Of course, that took a lot of time. This was only in 1970. One of the interesting points that followed from this reorganization was that during the invasion of 1972 there was not one single incident in Saigon carried out by the Viet Cong. Yet you know what Saigon was like, don't you? People everywhere, living in rabbit warrens and all. But not one single incident, not even a hand grenade in the park. Now, that's the meaning of having proper police control inside the town! And they had achieved that by 1972, which was interesting. You wouldn't have had that if the government was sustained only by terror. Colby [former CIA director] is the one who knows more about this than anyone else. I'm not saying there weren't the odd assassinations, but I would be surprised if the actual assassinations were such that they numbered more than a few hundred. Of course, assassinations on the other side were a great deal more.

**SOF: Since Vietnam, we've been involved in El Salvador and other places — and, of course, there are numerous other**

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insurgencies going on in places such as Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Do you see any trends in these efforts? It seems we have a horrible lack of lessons learned.

RT: Yes, we proved it all again in Oman. It was done exactly the way it should be. We created administration. That's been written up. It was the same thing all over again, and it worked. From that example you can see where the mistake is being made in other areas; too often all the emphasis goes into the army. I had a session with a chap from USAID who is dealing with Central America, and we discussed the great problem he has getting aid out of Congress for the police. He said, "But they all say they're secret police." I said, yes, of course, they're secret police. Have you ever looked into the laws that they have? Have you ever looked? This was a great mistake in Vietnam, too. Do you ever, I said, send a lawyer there to redraft their laws for them so that the police know what the law is? How can you have a police force enforcing the law if there isn't a law, and they don't know what it is? That's why you have secret police, police being used in that sort of role. And this was a mistake in Vietnam. You see, all your police chaps have been known to teach the police [in other countries] is taking fingerprints and firing guns. They didn't teach them anything else. They focus on technical aspects at the expense of more important concerns.

SOF: Given the important role you've

played in counterinsurgency during the past decades, how do you explain what is going on in a part of your own country, in Northern Ireland? The case has sometimes been called "Britain's Vietnam." Is Northern Ireland an endless hemorrhage? There seems to be little movement toward a solution.

RT: Well you see, you come back to this awful situation that you cannot use the loyalists to destroy the insurgency. That, one could do to a certain extent in Malaya, and that is what we tried to do in Vietnam. In the old days when they had the BA Specials [officially sponsored Protestant hunter/killer teams], the IRA was very much defeated. If you turned the Protestants loose, it would be over in a couple of weeks. You'd have a lot of refugees, but they'd be the other side's refugees this time, not our side's, which is an interesting point. We're used to getting refugees. I'm speaking hypothetically to make a point. You can see the difference. In Northern Ireland we're not supporting one side against the other. We're trying to play a neutral role in the middle there. It just so happens there is no way 'round it. There are no Irish politicians who dare take a firm line against the terror. I have kept out of Ulster. I'm an Ulsterman, so I can't touch it. I've never been near it, nor have I done anything about it. You are compromised just by being an Ulsterman. That's that. My great grandfather was Lord Mayor of Belfast and a member of Parlia-

ment from Belfast. So that's it.

SOF: Looking at it as an analyst, though, is there any possible solution, given the restrictions on the government?

RT: No, given the restrictions, no. But you see, there is one thing I have advocated: you can reach a situation that I call "stable war," which is better than an unstable peace. This is a point I tried to get across in Vietnam, that we had to achieve a point of stable war, because you can never completely get rid of the insurgent movement. Even though you've stopped them, you haven't stopped them forever. As long as their cause has believers, they can always come back. So that's why you have to end up with a stable war situation. That is to a certain extent what one is trying to achieve in Ulster. It can never be better than that.

SOF: Is there any socio-economic basis that could be wiped out? Most of the IRA recruiting seems to go on in the Catholic ghettos.

RT: Well, not entirely. A little bit of recruiting in Londonderry, yes, and a little bit in Belfast, yes, that is true. But a majority of the Catholic population is in certain areas of the countryside. Elsewhere, where you have a pretty solidly Protestant block, there is no recruiting. The interesting point is that, ideologically, support for the insurgency comes from the Irish nationalist movement. Hence, it has no hope whatsoever of winning over the Protestants in the North, and still less hope of doing it in the



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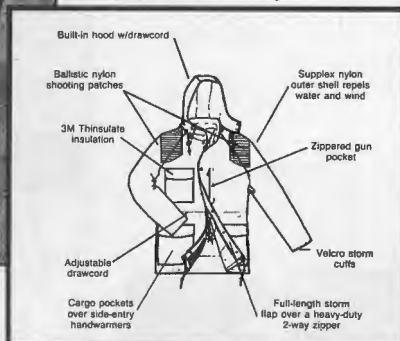
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way they're doing it. Which, of course, brings one back to what is the IRA's long-term aim: to govern Dublin. That's their objective in the end. Further, it is a socialist movement, as well as a nationalist cause. It has no hope in taking Belfast in the way it's going about it. The hope occurred earlier when you had some moves about the late '60s toward reconciliation. The Unionist government then was talking with the South. It's when the strife started in '69 that what you might call the "Irish gentlemen crew," who were at the head of the Ulster government, were ousted by the hardcore and your Paisleys [hardcore Protestant militants] started to come to the fore. Then, of course, talks between the two sides became impossible. But there was a time, when O'Neill was prime minister, that Dublin and Belfast were getting along quite well together. It is possible that the IRA needed to stop that; that this was one of their purposes when the strife started, call it insurgency or whatever. I think that is quite possibly the reason, because they couldn't have a united Ireland in which the IRA had no part to play. I'm not saying they were about to be reunited, but it was getting close to that.

**SOF: How do you assess the state of affairs at the moment?**

RT: We're not winning the insurgency — against either side. The Protestant sectarian murders of the Catholics, for instance, go on just the same. They don't get the press, probably, in the United States that the IRA

ones would. We could end it — if you're prepared to take the refugees. One of the American suggestions has been that we simply go away, which might suit our purposes, though I shudder to think what would happen to Ireland. Provided the North had the guns, there is no question of southern Ireland, Eire, being able to take the North over. The Ulstermen would soon have the Catholics on the ropes. I'm not at all convinced that the South would be able to take over the issue. That is the situation. It's a scandal. We've just got to go on putting up with it. And this is the point of my view on insurgencies. It's the old formula: If your side at a cost which is indefinitely acceptable can impose costs on the other side which are not indefinitely acceptable, then you are winning. You don't have to win a battle. And at the moment, they are not imposing costs on us which are not indefinitely acceptable.

**SOF: And that's your long haul, low cost approach?**

RT: Yes, the cost is not too great. Quite a few people have been writing about the differences between the British and American approaches to dealing with insurgency. One chapter of a manuscript contained a comparison of British and American memoirs. It was fascinating, because it gave you all the answers. As soon as you start to compare the British memoirs of Malaya and the American memoirs of Vietnam — I'm talking about memoirs written by the troops, not journalists or anything like that — you'd got

it all. In the American way, you were up against the "gooks" and the "motherfuckers" back at base and all that sort of thing; whereas in the British it wasn't unlike a sporting thing — "Talleyho!" — and you recognized your generals had got it right, that you were on the winning side.

**SOF: Didn't some of the British commanders in Malaya actually know their counterparts on the other side from the time they spent together fighting the Japanese in World War II?**

RT: Not really. John Davidson did, but not well. Of course, we knew the other side in the sense that we knew how they operated, but that wasn't the key. From that point of view, I knew how the Viet Cong operated. The key point was that we had an understanding of what was involved in building something. In the Vietnam case, it was nearly impossible to make people understand what was happening on the ground. I mean Kissinger never understood. It is, in fact, very difficult to explain to someone who's never been involved in such an enterprise. How do you explain that two villages that are a mile apart are a year apart in the stage to which things have evolved? When General Galvin came to see me here about Central America, I told him the same thing I told Lemnitzer — organization. I asked, is your country prepared to stay with it until the end? He couldn't answer that.

**SOF: Yes, we've lost our institutional memory, so we're just recycling the same theories. Articles are coming out on "low**

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intensity warfare" written by lieutenants and captains who have never "been there."

RT: What's more, I think everything which is happening now is fascinating. You have this enormous army, all working according to a plan to train for a war which they are not going to get because they are a sufficient deterrent to that war. Therefore, they are not going to get it, and they're not trained for the war that they are going to get. I think it's fascinating.

**SOF: So we're left in rather a hopeless position right now.**

RT: Yes, you are. Unfortunately, you are in that hopeless position of a country unlikely to be able to get a bipartisan foreign policy. And if you can't get a bipartisan foreign policy, you can't have a consistent foreign policy. Look at how that destroyed your Vietnam war effort!

**SOF: This is what I have told Filipino personnel involved in their counterinsurgency: do it yourself and, for heavens sake, whatever you do, don't depend upon the Americans.**

RT: Right, local self-sufficiency worked for you in Thailand. You got Thailand right. George Tanham was the U.S. Embassy's insurgency person for Thailand. The Thais were there, they didn't know which way things would go. Suddenly, events went their way. China came out on their side, because it didn't want the Vietnamese to be able to expand further. Simultaneously, in-

ternal problems wracked the movement. The insurgency fell apart.

**SOF: At least some people get the full marks!**

RT: Anyway, I've put it all in here — the lessons [pats manuscript of his book, *Make For the Hills*, to be published summer 1989 in London by Cooper]. You know, this one covers the fall of Hong Kong onwards. It covers more than just Vietnam, though I've put all that in because it shows what's involved. After all, I spent a year of the war behind the Japanese, so I know what goes on in guerrilla camps. Organization and leadership are crucial. But two points are key to this whole business we've been discussing: you start where you are, and you go with what you've got. Learn that. ✂

## 21ST CENTURY RIFLE

*Continued from page 57*

from a 1930's Buck Rogers movie. In one form or another it's been around for a long time, but not that long. AAI's ACR is an outgrowth of the Special Purpose Individual Weapon (SPIW) program, which, in turn, was an offshoot of Project SALVO (1952-1960). Originally, the SPIW was to be a hand-held weapon that fired a controlled burst of small darts, plus a 40mm grenade launcher, all in an envelope weighing less than the M1 Garand.

By 1973, the United States had pulled out

of both Vietnam and the SPIW program. SPIW's last gasp was the 1974 transformation of AAI's XM70 (which fired the erratic XM645 10-grain flechette initiated by a cost-prohibitive piston primer that boosted the cost of the ammunition to more than \$3 per round) into the so-called serial bullet rifle (SBR) chambered for a micro-caliber 4.34x45mm cartridge with a 28-grain projectile.

The SBR featured an impingement-type gas system and a trigger mechanism that fired semiautomatic and the first round of a three-shot burst with the bolt closed, while the second and third shots of a burst were fired from the open-bolt position. AAI's ACR has an entrapped-gas operating system. Propellant gases enter a cylinder through the barrel's gas port to drive a piston rearward. The weapon fires from the closed-bolt position in all modes.

A selector lever above the trigger on the right side provides for semiautomatic and three-shot burst fire. Unless it was designed exclusively for left-handed shooters, it has been placed on the wrong side of the rifle (a hump to the rear of the ejection port deflects flying brass to protect southpaws). The safety is located forward of the trigger housing on the left side where it cannot be reached by the thumb with the shooting hand in the firing position. When placed on safe, a barrier is activated which prevents insertion of the finger into the trigger housing. The pistol grip configuration resembles that of the M16A1.

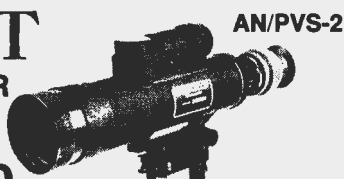
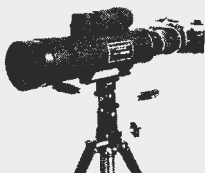
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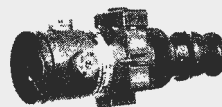
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The full-length, synthetic rigid stock is integral with the lower receiver molding. Both front and rear sling swivels are located on the underside of the weapon — an age-old tradition that serves no useful function except for those strutting about the parade ground. The upper receiver, which also appears to be fabricated from a synthetic compound, extends out to the front sight and has 28 slanted cooling slots on each side. Once more, there is a full length aiming rib along the upper surface. A longitudinal slot on the left side accommodates the retracting handle, which is probably not reciprocating. The lower handguard, also synthetic, is checkered at the rear on each side and slotted at the front for ventilation.

The magazine-well, which accepts a special 30-round, staggered column detachable box-type magazine, is equipped with a flap-type catch-release. The well has been modified to prevent insertion of standard M16 magazines. Since the gas port was moved rearward to accommodate the pressure curve of the flechette ammunition, firing the M855 cartridge in this weapon would raise the port pressure to catastrophic levels.

A pronounced muzzle device was developed for the sabot flechette projectile. It is said that it significantly reduces muzzle climb and decreases the dispersion of the burst patterns.

The Trijicon tritium-powered optical sight (see accompanying article) and the

rear iron sight are interchangeable. There is a spring-loaded, quick-release lever on each side of the receiver to facilitate the changeover.

What goes around comes around. The 4.32x45mm micro-caliber cartridge has been abandoned, and a steel, fin-stabilized, subcaliber flechette once more speeds out of AAI's ACR muzzle at 4,600 fps. It weighs 10.2 grains with a diameter of approximately 1/16 inch and an overall length of 1 1/2 inches. Its point is sharpened and the shaft surface roughened to provide the necessary friction between the flechette and the four plastic sabot segments which are held together by an "O" ring at the rear. As with the Steyr flechette, the sabot segments are fabricated from a liquid crystal polymer. When the assembly (weighing about 21 grains) exits the muzzle, propelled by a non-standard but conventional powder, wind drag separates the sabot segments from the flechette. The flechette package is inserted into a standard 5.56x45mm brass case and primer. Chamber pressures generated by this ammunition are on the order of 55,000 psi.

Overall length of the AAI ACR is 40 inches. The weight, without magazine or sights, is 7.8 pounds. The flechette round requires a barrel twist of only one turn in every 85 inches. AAI's entry represents decades-old technology.

The principal focus of the ACR project is, quite obviously, to increase hit probability.

That's a noble endeavor, but some other important considerations seem to have fallen through the cracks. Every rifle we have adopted in this century, from the Model 1903 Springfield through the M1 Garand, M14 and M16 series, has been capable of far more than just acceptable accuracy. In the hands of trained soldiers, the hit probability was, and remains, of the highest order. To expect "technology" to replace intensive training is nothing short of a national disgrace. Instead of spending a good portion of their time squatting in parking lots to pick up cigarette butts, our troops (at least those expected to pull the triggers) and our nation would be better served by a renewed effort at the firing ranges with competent training personnel.

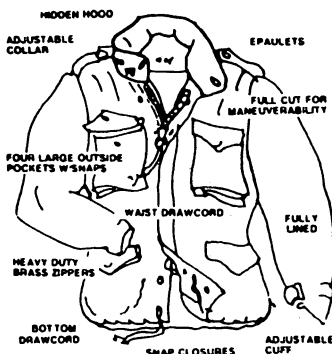
All of the ACR prototypes are too heavy. Reducing the soldier's load should have been another primary goal of these trials. The program's directors will dismiss this objection by repeating that they are concerned with "the technology embodied in the prototype rifles, rather than the individual rifles themselves." They should be reminded that the package's weight is part and parcel with its "technology."

However, my most serious concern is that the ACR program has almost completely ignored the question of wound ballistics. It makes no sense to improve hit probability at the expense of lethality. Of what value is it to eliminate aiming and ranging errors with "technology" instead of adequate train-

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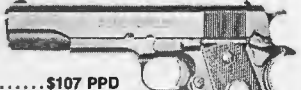
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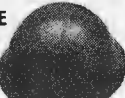
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ing, only to guarantee striking the enemy with a projectile that fails to put him out of action? The engineers involved in this project have no academic or battlefield background in trauma medicine. They have no knowledge of physiology or penetrating missile injuries. To date, there has been no input by medical personnel who understand the topic. As a consequence, the only reference to the terminal effects of the prototype ACR ammunition has been to rely on calculations of their kinetic energy.

Unfortunately, there is no direct correlation between kinetic energy delivered to the target by small arms ammunition and the incapacitation of that target. The amount of a bullet's kinetic energy that is converted to heat energy has never been quantified by those who insist it is a pivotal consideration in wound ballistics. The truth is the principal mechanism of wounding is the wound track itself. The projectile's penetration potential is the most important single parameter. The bullet must penetrate deeply enough to crush, cut and break through the human body's vital structures and organs without exiting the target. For this we need a minimum of 12 inches of penetration in soft tissue and preferably up to 20 inches. Once we have the required penetration, the bullet that makes the biggest hole (by either yawing, fragmenting, or expanding, or by virtue of its original caliber) will do the most damage (See "Killing Effect." SOF, December '88).

Both of the flechette rounds will surely over-penetrate and fall well below the minimal required trauma effect unless they hit bone (and 75 percent of the time they won't). When they don't strike bones, these steel needles will zip in and out of soft-tissue targets without yawing, deforming or fragmenting. They will leave a tiny wound track no larger in diameter than that of their fins. They are little more than high velocity acupuncture and should be rejected out-of-hand.

The Colt/Olin duplex bullets with a steel penetrator core and copper alloy jacket will probably not fragment. Any increase in the wound track due to yawing will be minimized by their short overall length. Dr. Martin L. Fackler, head of the U.S. Army's Wound Ballistics Lab at the Presidio of San Francisco, has speculated that because of the relatively long ogive on these short bullets, yawing will probably commence after only four inches of penetration in soft tissue. That's all to the good, but overall they represent another clear step backward in lethality. Furthermore, duplex-projectile ammunition can apparently be more dangerous to the shooter than his intended target. Several of the Colt prototypes self-destructed when the first bullet lodged in the barrel and was struck by the second projectile.

Only the G11's 4.92mm projectile seems to hold any promise for effective wound ballistics. With a lead core, steel jacket and muzzle velocity of 3,000 fps, it will probably break apart in soft tissue even though there is no cannellure to weaken the jacket. Dr. Fackler predicts they'll go about eight inches before yawing. In addition, at closer

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ranges, there might be some synergistic effect from three projectiles striking the body close together only milliseconds apart because of the three-shot burst mode's extremely high cyclic rate.

It's rumored that, behind the usual closed doors, the Close Combat Armaments Center will conduct wound ballistics studies on this ammunition. Such testing should have occurred long before this phase of the project. We will probably never know the results or the validity of the methodology employed.

If past history is any guide, the ACR program will twist and turn through a tortured labyrinth for many years to come. A total of \$57 million will be expended on this project prior to acquisition of a single rifle. The wounding potential of 5.56x45mm NATO ball ammunition is a proven commodity. Valid tests indicate that our new M855 ball duplicates the performance of the older M193 round. With rigorous schooling of our troops in marksmanship — something which for two centuries has been a fundamental part of the American military tradition — the M16A2 will more than do for now and for well into the future. We need only to remove its carrying handle and install an efficient combat-oriented optical sight, such as the Trijicon® ACOG™, to bridge the gap until a truly lightweight, reliable and cost-effective ACR with the required lethality and desired hit probability is developed. ☒

## BLOODY PANJSHIR

*Continued from page 49*

trot and ran pell-mell for the apparent safety of the wall. As we burst over the canal bank like a mini tidal wave we came to a dead stop. Another group of armed mujahideen were covering us from the court of a small farm on the edge of the village. What had happened in fact was that, anxious about seeing another group moving up close behind them, they had ordered the leaders of our group out of the canal at gunpoint.

The two groups now stood facing each other in uneasy silence, both sides looking equally worried. Suddenly the farm door burst open and a very irate mujahid stormed out, screaming hysterically while waving a Russian Tokarev pistol. The two groups kept well apart as the hysterical Afghan rushed up. We now learned that he was the local commander of a differing faction who was in the middle of a two day battle in the village. His adversary belonged to the same party that we were with and, indeed, was the very commander from whom we had hoped to receive hospitality.

This was a blood feud. This commander had found four of his men butchered in their sleep with their throats cut, an act of revenge for the death of two other mujahideen from our party. It seemed that these two had been shot, and circumstantial evidence laid the blame at his door. In the two day battle,

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three more had been killed and three wounded. Now our fate hung in the balance; and this in a land where the gun is law, and the death of strangers is of little importance... except to the strangers!

An hour was spent in a debate governed more by hysteria than common sense. Having agreed that this was obviously a local problem between two commanders and promising not to support the opposing faction, we were finally permitted to move on. As it was now twilight and we had to walk along the canal towards men who would probably be just as hysterical, and twice as nervous if confronted by an apparent assault building up in the shadows of the opposite end of the village, there was very real reason for concern. The possibility of being shot in the back as we left the markaz of the first commander was also definitely on everybody's minds. Once committed to forward movement there would be no turning back.

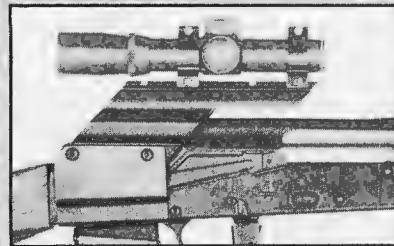
I must shamefully admit to trying to wedge myself midway down the group and keep as many bodies as possible between me and oblivion. However, my shame was lessened by the fact that everybody else was trying to do the same thing.

In the worst possible formation, a big bunched cluster, we advanced down the canal and passed the last sentinels of one faction while approaching the first of another. Matters were not helped when, on leaving the canal, we took a wrong turn and had to feel our way by braille in the now pitch-black night. This, along twisting, tight, little lanes in which one burst from an AK-47 would probably have turned out all our lights. Amazingly enough, despite the close proximity of two armed and hostile groups on the watch for each other, we emerged on the other side of the village without finding the party we hoped to join.

Wandering around like this was both stupid and dangerous. I hoped that the gravity of our situation was apparent to the lead scouts. We now had to re-enter the village from the opposite end. Now both factions might mistake us as a hostile group sneaking up on them. In the end we arrived behind the faction we were trying to join, as they peered into the darkness ahead, looking for any one creeping up on them. Before they were aware of what was going on we were among them. In the confusion both parties milled among each other trying to work out who the other was before declaring their own political position. Much to everyone's relief it was sorted out before any shooting started.

What had begun as just another day had developed into a near fatal one for no logical reason. As a night assault was expected, and we did not wish to be embroiled in a local issue, our party moved on. Instead of a meal and a bed we had several more hours of very rapid night marching to do. The wearing monotony of stumbling after the shadowy forms in front was sharply shaken off by the frequent alarms raised by other armed groups passing in the night. On each occasion we either dived for cover or beat a hasty retreat. I

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had the impression that the other groups were just as nervous and adopting the same attitude. This caution was all due to fear of other mujahideen groups and not in the least, concern for Afghan army patrols.

It took a few more days to reach Gulbaha, which sits right at the entrance to the Salang Pass, the vital supply route which leads north to Russia. Here there is a large Afghan army base called Tapeh Serk where the large convoys, coming overland from Russia, stop overnight before the daylight rush to Kabul.

While I spent a day observing this post, a convoy of several hundred trucks came in. For over two hours non-stop traffic pulled into the base to leaguer up in the open motor pool, God's gift for a mortar or rocket attack, and yet the mujahideen kept a low profile. Again they said that the time was not right for attack.

I decided to push on to the Panjshir Valley, the home base of Ahmad Shah Masoud, the most famous commander in Afghanistan. If there were action afoot anywhere in Afghanistan I assumed I would find it there. ✂

## I WAS THERE

*Continued from page 24*

left foot. Remembering our first aid, we packed him onto the truck and rushed as fast as he would allow us down to the field station where we called the hospital to come get him. They told us they would be close to an hour late, so we went to the local German firehouse on the field station and purchased a case of anesthetic and all three of us were comfortably numb by the time they got there.

I can't vouch for this, but rumor has it that certain people retrieved the soccer-painted bowling ball and placed it outside the dining area, where it has faithfully served to trap several officers and an infinite number of irate Sergeants Major. ✂

## SIDETRACKED SAW

*Continued from page 72*

of Springfields, Remington and Winchester cranked out the British-designed M1917 Enfield, already in production in the United States as the P-14 in .303 caliber, and the M1911 pistol was joined by Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers in the same caliber. The United States was woefully lacking in almost every other class of weapon. Machine guns, tanks, artillery pieces, hand grenades, mortars, aircraft — all of these had to be procured from our allies. In addition to selling us many of our weapons, our allies also provided us with a great deal of our tactical doctrine and training. After all, they had the battle experience and we were the newcomers.

French tactics and training were to greatly influence the United States Army. While much blood was to be spilt over the "marching fire" pipe dream, the unblooded Americans at first couldn't see it coming. They could, however, immediately evaluate such mechanical atrocities as the Chauchat machine rifle; whatever it was this weapon was supposed to do, it was immediately apparent it did not do it well. They malfunctioned frequently even in training, and were totally unsatisfactory in combat. Portable firepower was a pressing necessity, and the U.S. Army issued a mixture of available light machine guns such as the Savage-Lewis, Madsen M1904, Benet-Mercie Machine Rifle M1909, and even the miserable Chauchat (made even more miserable by an unworkable conversion to .30-06). The upshot was a demand for an American tactical equivalent, but more simple and reliable. This was passed on to the great John M. Browning, who was already designing a suitable family of American

machine guns. The result was the famous Browning Automatic Rifle, Model 1918 — the BAR.

During World War I, Colt, Winchester and Marlin-Rockwell manufactured some 85,000 BARs. As originally issued the M1918 weighed only 16 pounds and had neither bipods nor a flip-up butt plate. Thus it was fired as an assault rifle is today, and its powerful cartridge and accuracy were wasted until bipods and a flip-up buttplate were added on the M1918A1 model, enabling it to be used as a base-of-fire weapon.

The end of the war left the U.S. forces with a large stock of weaponry on hand as our production lines were just reaching full steam when the armistice intervened. During the interwar period, most of our combat experience was in Latin America. It was during this period that "Red Mike" Edson began to develop and test what evolved into the fire team concept, using a mixture of weapons. The powerful and reliable BAR was used in conjunction with the Springfield



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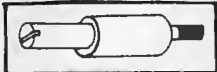
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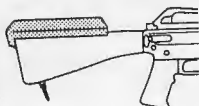
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rifle, where it proved to be a suitable response and base-of-fire weapon to cover a maneuvering element which would flank the enemy. Another Marine, Evans F. Carlson of Carlson's Raiders fame, had worked with Chinese communists fighting the Japanese before America's entry into the war. Borrowing from the communist Chinese practice of fielding three-man teams based around a portable automatic weapon (which was developed to prevent Japanese bypass and flanking) he further polished the fire team concept. By the end of World War II, the Marines were widely using the fire team concept, although loathe to give Edson and Carlson credit for developing it.

The BAR proved to be a suitable base-of-fire weapon around which to build a fire team, as its weight made it quite stable, and its buffer and selective fire capability with a low cyclic rate enhanced the shooter's ability to place a tight pattern of shots on his target. The powerful .30-06 cartridge easily punched through brush and obstacles, a definite asset in jungle warfare. The BAR was an excellent base-of-fire weapon in its day, but by the time we had figured out the proper function for the BAR and modified it to fulfill that role, its day was passing.

In World War II, the United States fielded a new rifle, the famous M1 Garand. This semiautomatic rifle proved to be a highly effective weapon. Its combination of power, range, accuracy and high rate of fire truly deserved General Patton's accolade as "the finest instrument of battle ever developed." The BAR was also extensively used in World War II and Korea, and continued to be the base-of-fire weapon for a fire team until the adoption of the M14. But with the passing of the bolt-action Springfield, it was no longer quite the wonder it had been at its introduction. The newer weapons such as the Japanese type 96, the British Bren and the Soviet Degtyerev were better fitted to the light machine gun or squad automatic weapon role. When compared with the capacity and reloading facility of these weapons, the BAR with its bottom-stuffed 20-round magazine didn't quite measure up, although the power offered by its .30-06 cartridge made up for many of its shortcomings.

One of the most penetrating analyses of the BAR was by Lieutenant Colonel John B. George, in *Shots Fired In Anger*. George, with extensive combat experience on Guadalcanal, and later with Merrill's Marauders in Burma, was not particularly an admirer of the BAR, although he did admire the way it could smother a suspected target with a shotgun-like pattern.

George's analysis is an important piece of work, because he distinguished between what a weapon *is* and what it *does*. Rather than propose a weapon *type* or *style*, he articulated the weapon's *function* or *role* — its purpose or the mission it can perform. His distinction was unfortunately lost on later weapons designers. When work began on a follow-up weapon to the M1, it was



decided that we would have to have a follow-up for the BAR as well, and that this should be a variation of the basic infantry rifle. In other words, the decision was made on *type*, rather than on *function*, just the opposite of the George approach. The result was a comic opera series of designs, beginning with the M15, a heavy barreled version of the then-new M14 rifle. When this proved unsatisfactory, various modifications were made to the basic M14, none of which were satisfactory in view of the sustained fire and mechanical reliability required of a squad automatic weapon.

The adoption of the M16 brought that whole project to a halt, but still left many people in the Army with a vaguely unsatisfied feeling. We "needed" a squad automatic weapon (notice the persistent emphasis on *type*, rather than on *purpose*). In all charity, something was needed. The short range and low penetration ability of the M16 left U.S. infantry units seriously handicapped. This was coupled with a decline in marksmanship, reduced emphasis on fire control within squads, and a general tendency for troops to believe that automatic fire, by sheer noise, could accomplish something that aimed fire could not. When it became apparent something was needed which the 5.56 caliber could not deliver, the commanders in the field did the obvious.

The tactical solution was to increase the number of M60 machine guns. These weapons provided the range and power that the M16 lacked, and conscientious and battle-wise leaders found that by controlling the fire of the M60s, they could largely compensate for the shortcomings of ineffective rifle caliber and marksmanship. In effect, they recognized a needed *function*, and filled the requirement by employing a *type* of weapon that was designed for a different purpose.

In the meantime, the pursuit for a *type* replacement for the BAR went on. Nearly three decades after the BAR was honorably retired, and two decades after the adoption of the M16, we finally have a Squad Automatic Weapon, the M249 SAW. Unlike the BAR (or the M60), which fired a full-power cartridge, the M249 fires the same cartridge as the M16 rifle. And unlike the BAR, which was initially teamed with a bolt-action rifle and later an autoloading rifle, the M249 is teamed with the M16, which can deliver the same automatic fire. What advantage does the M249 offer over the M16 except that it is belt-fed?

We know what *type* weapon the M249 is, but its *function* or *purpose* is unclear. Some of its defenders are quick to point out that it "provides the squad with a high volume of fire" — but what we need is a high volume of *hits*, and at a greater range. A SAW should provide something the basic infantry rifle cannot, or it has no reason for being there. Did we ever have any difficulty in shooting up all the ammunition we could carry? Even when all we had to shoot it in was the M16? Does the M249 have greater range and penetration than the M16? Is it more accurate or more reliable

than the M16? The answer to all of these questions is no.

What we have in the M249 is a weapon of the same range and power as the M16, but with no more accuracy, no more reliability, and considerably increased weight. The M249, in addition to its other shortcomings, fails to answer the fundamental question "If it can't deliver a greater volume of more accurate fire at greater range, *what's it for?*" ❌

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## FULL AUTO

*Continued from page 20*

that served as the basis for making the ban on semiautomatic versions of 43 different types of military rifles permanent, the BATF asserted that IPSC-type matches are not covered by the 1968 law and that informal sport shooting, "plinking," is "primarily a pastime and could not be considered a sport for the purposes of importation . . ."

In short, the BATF has arbitrarily chosen to drastically narrow the definition of what constitutes a sporting use of a firearm in order to accommodate an already-made political decision to ban importation of a class of weapons. It had to do so because the truth simply doesn't fit into the picture the agency and anti-gun politicians are endeavoring to paint for the non-shooting public. It never has and it never will. That, however, does not change the fact that the decision is outrageously deceitful and extremely dangerous. The deceit is obvious; the danger lies in the fact that by denying that some of the most common uses of firearms are "legitimate sporting purposes" the BATF has sown the seeds of a future assault on domestically produced firearms which have a military ancestry.

I, and every member of the SOF staff, are mad as hell that we have to justify our constitutional rights to Senators Howard Metzenbaum and Edward Kennedy, Drug Czar William Bennett and others of their ilk. I expect you are as well or you wouldn't be reading *Soldier of Fortune*.

None of us have access to the five to \$10 million a day in free publicity that the NRA has estimated the media is donating to the gun grabbers. Our collective voices can be heard and measured only if each and every one of you takes the time and effort to contact the President and your senators and representative. Write or phone President George Bush at the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500 (phone: 202-456-1414). Contact your senators at the United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and your congressman at the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

20514. Ask to be connected with your senators and representative by phoning the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121. Let them know in polite, but no uncertain, terms that you are opposed to gun control and that it has no effect on curbing crime.

Finally, we must all unite with membership in the National Rifle Association (1600 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036). Dues are \$25 per year.

If you don't, the sun will soon set on American gun owners just as surely as it did in Great Britain. ❌

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## BULLETIN BOARD

*Continued from page 6*

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### PLEASE PASS THE BUCK . . .

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) writes in a recent issue of *Defense and Diplomacy* magazine that "foreign capital infusions into the Warsaw Pact countries have increased by \$8 billion from 1985 to 1987, and now amount to \$2 billion per month" (emphasis ours). Jean-Francois Revel, author of *Why Democracies Perish* noted recently that "we must not help them surmount their crises while they remain communist, for unless the sickness is able to run its course, they will never fundamentally change." Revel quotes the prediction of mid-19th century author Alexander Herzen: "Socialism will go on developing through all its phases until it achieves its extremes and absurdities. . . The struggle to the death will begin anew, as socialism. . . is vanquished in its turn by the revolution to come." But if Gorby can pere-stroke \$2 billion a month from Western banks, that should at least help the Sovs pay the rent, especially since the landlord canceled their lease in Afghanistan. The USSR's tab at Western banks is now over \$58 billion; they'd like another \$100 billion over the next five years. ❌

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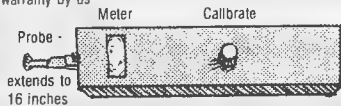
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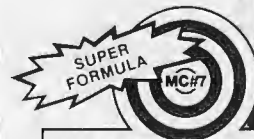
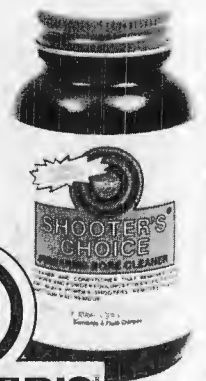
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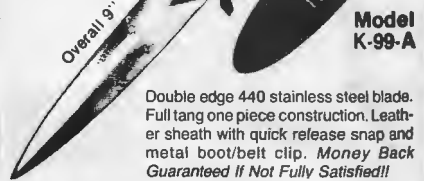
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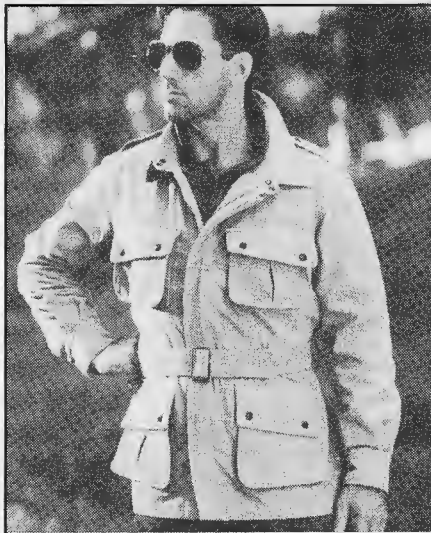
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## PARTING SHOT

# BATF Ban: Dishonesty Is the Best Policy

by Paul Danish

**T**HE Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms decision of 7 July 1989 making permanent the ban on the importation of 43 types of semiautomatic rifles into the United States does a great deal more violence to the right to keep and bear arms than just excluding the firearms in question from the American market.

It is important that gun owners understand the true nature of the outrage the BATF has perpetrated.

First, it is transparently clear that the BATF did not conclude that the ban should be made permanent after a detached study of whether the weapons in question were "generally recognized as particularly suitable for or readily adaptable to sporting purposes." Instead it was decided at the outset — probably in the White House — that the rifles would be banned, and the bureau's mission was to fashion an after-the-fact administrative justification of the already-made political decision to do so.

That in turn required the bureau to do three things: 1) Create a new definition of the term "assault rifle" that fit the firearms it was targeting and set them apart from "sporting rifles;" 2) Create a definition of the term "sporting purposes" that could justify its action; and 3) Assume it had much more administrative discretion than the law grants it.

Since there is no functional difference between semiautomatic rifles that trace their origins to military weapons and semiautomatic rifles designed for civilian uses from the outset, the BATF's attempt to distinguish military style rifles from others was in large part forced to focus on minutiae, furniture, and cosmetics. More than once it verged on the bizarre.

We learn, for instance, that bayonet lugs and grenade launcher mounts have no legitimate sporting purposes. True, but why on earth should anyone care? If there has been a murder committed with a bayonet or a rifle grenade in living memory, it has escaped notice of even the gun-phobics in the national press. There is no recorded instance of a drug gang mounting a bayonet charge on a rival group. For anyone other than a collector such features are

merely cosmetic and their presence does nothing to detract from the sporting uses of the firearms.

The BATF finds the presence of a folding stock unsporting because it allows the firearm to be fired with the stock in the folded position, and it cannot be fired nearly as accurately from that position as it can with an open stock. That argument might be barely plausible — were it not for the fact on the same page the BATF finds pistol grips and flash suppressors disqualifying features because they increase the shooter's ability to fire the rifle accurately.

The ability to accept a detachable magazine can make a rifle military rather than sporting, according to the BATF, although it generously admits that detachable magazines are not limited to military firearms. The difference, it says, is that military rifles generally have large capacity detachable magazines while "sporting" rifles generally have small capacity detachable magazines, an insight that conveniently seems to overlook the fact that small capacity detachable magazines are detachable and replaceable by large capacity detachable magazines.

The fact that a rifle was derived from a machine gun rather than designed from the ground up for the civilian market also weighs heavily in determining whether a rifle has a sporting purpose, according to the BATF, but it chooses not to offer any explanation of why, probably because a) there is no plausible explanation, and b) one of the few originally banned rifles which the BATF chose to allow back into the country, the Finnish Valmet Hunter, is a Kalashnikov derivative.

And the fact that a firearm is chambered to accept a centerfire cartridge having a length of 2.25 inches or less also raises doubts in BATF minds about a rifle's use in sport, although only if it also has some or all of previously mentioned military features. It's a subtlety that's wasted on a lot of dead deer.

If all of this has a Keystone Cops quality to it, it also contains a serious threat to the right to keep and bear arms, and not just the 43 types of arms

whose importation has now been banned. In ruling that detachable magazines, folding stocks, and pistol grips are features that may disqualify a firearm from having a sporting purpose, the BATF has taken a giant step toward delegitimizing any rifle — foreign or domestic — that exhibits them. Gun control advocates will soon argue that if a Steyr or Galil should be banned for having a large capacity detachable magazine, what possible justification can Congress have for not banning a Mini-14 or Mini-30. And it also involves only a short step to go through the same sort of drill with semiautomatic handguns, most of which also owe their origins to military arms.

Much more serious than the BATF's definition of what constitutes a sporting or non-sporting firearm is its definition of what constitutes a sporting or non-sporting purpose.

In order to find that there are no sporting uses for the banned firearms the BATF had to surmount an awkward reality, which is that military-style semiautomatic rifles are widely used in hundreds of recognized practical shooting type competitions (including the SOF Three Gun Match and the National Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio) and are even more widely used in unorganized recreational shooting. It solved the problem with brutal simplicity — by simply denying, in the face of all evidence, that either practical shooting or unorganized recreational shooting are "sports." It characterizes the latter as a "pastime" and the former as "police/combat-type competition" but makes no attempt to explain what it is about such activities that distinguishes them from shooting "sports"; the BATF recognizes only hunting and traditional target shooting as falling in the last category.

The truth, of course, is that there is no meaningful distinction, and the BATF has acted arbitrarily, capriciously, and with profound dishonesty — that is to say it lied — in asserting that there is, because to do otherwise would have made it impossible to find a way of making its import ban permanent.

The damage extends far beyond the ban, however. By ruling that unorganized shooting is not a sport, the BATF has with a stroke of a pen delegitimized the single most common use of firearms in the United States. Worse, it has in effect said that the only legitimate uses for firearms are organized sporting activities or activities, like hunting, licensed by the government. The people who put the Second Amendment in the Constitution would probably have considered that view as being precisely why they put it there in the first place. Modern gun owners should consider this finding as a dagger pointed directly at the heart of the right to keep and bear arms. ❖



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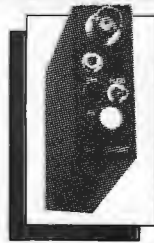


## TRANSTEC Don't be trapped by hidden "bugs"

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

Transtec \$695.

(Ship/Insur. \$10.)



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

## More Products That Protect You

**TELEPHONE SCRAMBLERS** Several models from \$299. to \$6,000. each. (minimum 2 required). Available for telephone, cellular, data and FAX. Fixed or portable units. Call for details.

**STUNLIGHT** A combination of rugged lightweight rechargeable flashlight and 40,000 volt stun gun. Have it with you when "things go bump in the night" or when you travel. Most attacks happen at night, be prepared. \$149. (Ship \$5.50).

**TELEPHONE AUTOSTART SWITCH AND LONG PLAY (8 hour) RECORDER COMBINATION**

Best switch built, not a cheap one that breaks or puts a heavy load or noise on the line. Starts and stops recorder automatically and silently each time any phone on the line is picked up or hung up. Sets up in minutes. Recorder uses standard cassette tapes. Autoswitch \$59.95, Recorder \$125. Save! Both for \$165. (Ship/Insur. \$7.). See warning.

**COUNTERFEIT BILL DETECTOR** Just press button and pass unit over any U.S. bill. In about two seconds the unit detects the presence of the magnetic ink used in real U.S. currency and beeps, indicating that the bill is okay. Small, fits in your pocket, carry with you. Don't get burned! \$79.95 (Ship \$3.).

**PEN MICROPHONE** A sensitive remote powered microphone has been crafted into a standard roller point type pen case. The "pen" fits unnoticed in your pocket but is actually attached by an 18" wire to micro recorder hidden in your pocket. Ideal for note taking or interviews. AL-2 Pen Microphone \$99. We have the world's smallest micro cassette recorder, fits INSIDE a pack of cigarettes. Uses standard micro cassettes. \$349. (Ship/Insur. \$5.). See warning.

**PROFESSIONAL LONG RANGE PARABOLIC DISH MICROPHONE** with our exclusive audio amplifier and graphic equalizer, greatly enhances sounds. Made of clear, high impact plastic. Jack leads provided to hook up your recorder. This is the one you have seen on TV. While nothing works as well as suggested by TV shows, this unit provides the best performance available today. Others sell for \$2,800. Our price \$1,200. (Ship/Insur. \$15.).

**FRISK 'EM HIDDEN WEAPONS DETECTOR** Small lightweight hand held detector, can even find a pin. \$59. (Ship \$3.).

**COMPLETE COUNTERMEASURES SYSTEM** Enables you to professionally check for phone taps, room bugs, laser listening devices and more! Detailed instruction manual included; comes in fitted briefcase. Call for more details. \$2,995. (Ship/Insur. \$25.).

**40,000 VOLT SHOCKING BRIEFCASE** Remote activated! If a thief tries to steal your case, just smile and push the button on your pocket transmitter. 40,000 volts of electricity will knock them flat! And a 125 decibel alarm will sound off causing them to flee. Safe to use. Rechargeable. \$895. (Ship/Insur. \$15.).

**REMOTE ACTIVATED RECORDING BRIEFCASE (RARB-1)** This attractive leather briefcase has a hidden recording system built in. Just push the button on your pocket activation transmitter and the case will silently start recording. Activate from up to 100' away. Keep a record of a conversation without having to move or open your briefcase. \$459. (Ship/Insur. \$10.). Micro Cassette Recorder to fit case \$99. Full Size Long Play 8 Hour Recorder (4 hours per side) \$125. (Ship/Insur. \$7.).

**TELEPHONE EAR** Listen in to your home or business from any phone in the world. This unique device permits ONLY YOU to hear every sound in the building it is placed into. The Telephone Ear plugs into any modular phone jack or can be attached anywhere along the phone line. Simple to hook up and use, just dial the number and enter your special access code. Now you can listen into your premises for as long as you like. Great peace of mind while you're away! Complete with instructions \$249. (Ship \$7.). See warning.

**DL-1000 HAND HELD "BUG" DETECTOR** Sweep your home, office, car or take with you to check hotel rooms, etc. for hidden radio frequency (R.F.) transmitters. The L.E.D. bar graph will lead you right to the signal source. Then by listening through the headphones (included) you will be able to quickly determine if it's an actual bug or just an innocent signal. Will detect room bugs, transmitters in telephones, bumper beepers, etc. Easy to use, instructions included. High quality! \$795. (Ship \$10) **CPM-1000 PROFESSIONAL RF BUG DETECTION UNIT** Wide band detection up to 2 GHz. Portable and rechargeable. L.E.D. bar graph monitor, silent or active search modes, tone generator, etc. Incorporates 5 most important features into one unit. Great to use alone or with our CMS-3 package. \$2,495. (Ship/Insur. \$25.). Best portable R.F. detection unit on the market.

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**SP101  
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ily of Ruger double action revolvers are built to an entirely new industry standard of reliability, endurance, and unparalleled comfort against the shock of today's most powerful Magnum factory ammunition. Ruger's double action family sets the new, world standard for fine revolvers built for the most demanding shooters.

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