



# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Journal of Professional Adventurers

JULY 1991  
No. 06711

## ROMANIA'S PUPPET REVOLUTION

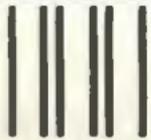
PERU IN PERIL

DEATH OF A  
GENTLEMAN BANDIT

ARSENAL OF TERROR



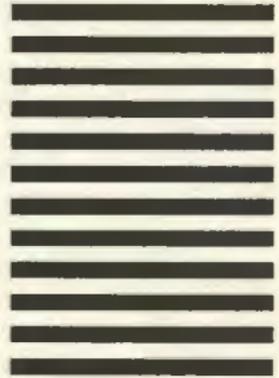
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Early in this century the American hunter agreed to foot the bill for the restoration of dwindling wildlife populations.

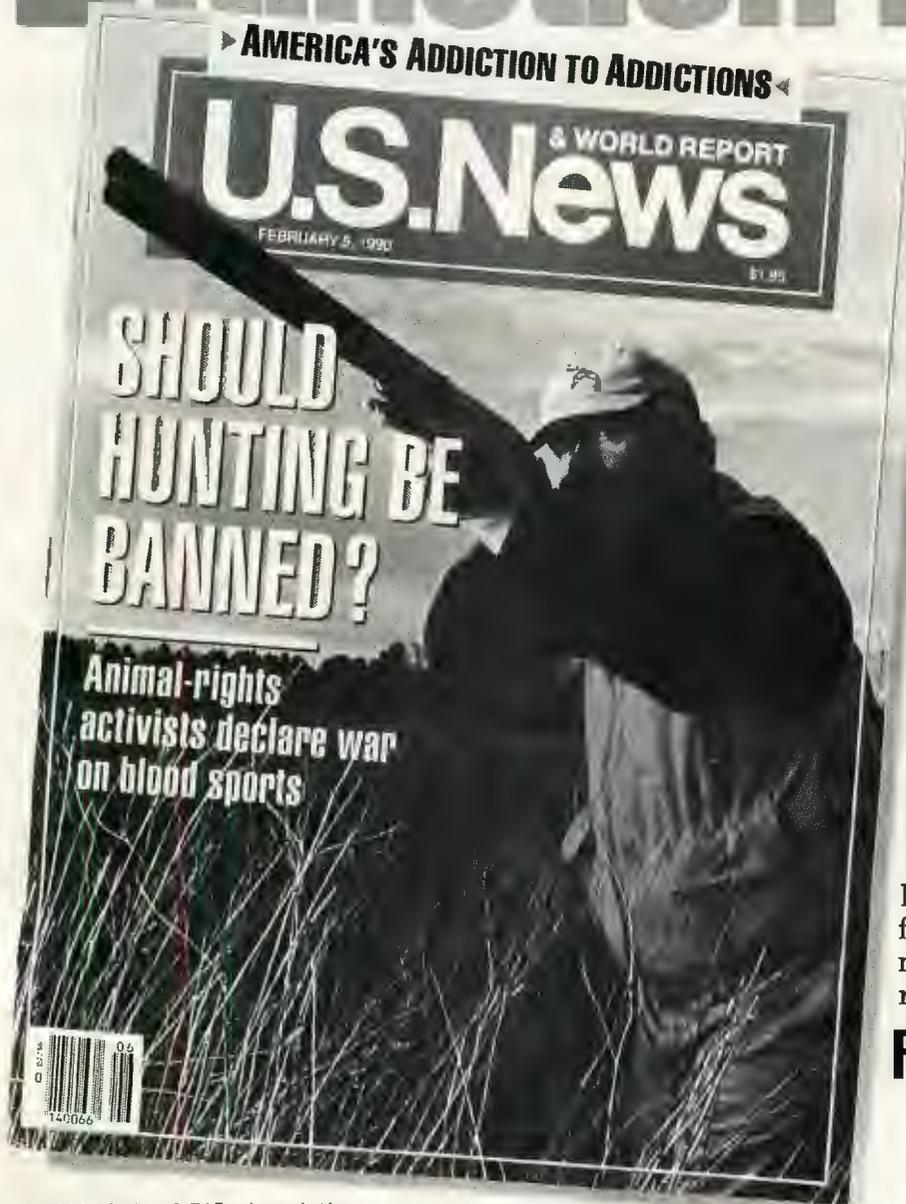
It took decades of dedication and \$6 billion in hunters' dollars. Deer, elk, antelope, wild turkey and dozens of other species rebounded. But now hunters themselves are on the endangered list. That means *you*, whatever you hunt.

Sensationalistic anti-hunting stories like this one in *U.S. News & World Report* just feed the flames. There is a strong movement afoot to ban hunting. All hunting. And it's gaining momentum.

With this kind of media attack, many Americans are becoming convinced that you should hang up your bow, handgun or long gun forever. Fortunately for hunters, there's a strong organization standing in the way: the National Rifle Association of America.

Millions of NRA members have defended your right to own a firearm. Now 16 million hunters need to defend their hunting rights. Or accept extinction.

**Fight For Hunting Rights.  
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Call 1-800-862-2800.**



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## COVER

**COVER:** As Soviet satellite nations one after another rise up against their former masters, one of the most dramatic stories has been the spontaneous revolt of the Romanian people against their vicious leader, Nicolae Ceaucescu. Now it appears that there were KGB hands behind the scenes in this "spontaneous" rush for freedom, and SOF brings you the story beginning on page 48. Photo: Jose Nicolas



# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## Liberate Lithuania

**I**T'S fear that keeps the world's 143 independent nations from recognizing Lithuanian independence, but it's not fear of Gorbachev. It's fear of an independent Lithuania.

What is wryly called the community of nations pretends Lithuania doesn't exist, because when it comes to the question of secession, most of them — including this one — are looking over their shoulders. If Lithuania leaves the Soviet Union today, can the Basque region leave Spain tomorrow, Scotland, Wales, and Ulster leave Britain the day after that, and Quebec leave Canada next week? Can Kashmir then leave India, Tibet leave China, and the Kurds carve a state out of Iran and Iraq? Can the Eritrians leave Ethiopia? Can the Karens get free of Burma and the Timorese free of Indonesia and the Tamilese free of Sri Lanka? Can Puerto Rico leave the United States?

Most of the world's approximately two dozen remaining wars are secessionist struggles. They have replaced Marxist revolution as the single most common cause of armed struggle.

The press claims Bush's refusal to recognize Lithuanian independence stems from fear that criticizing Gorbachev will weaken the reform movement in the Soviet Union. Maybe so, but if he is not also concerned that secessionist movements in the Soviet Union will awaken secessionist sentiment elsewhere — with all the danger and instability that implies in an age when fourth and fifth rate powers are acquiring nuclear, chemical, and biological arms — he is insane.

That may explain why the response of the United States and the rest of the world to Lithuania's declaration of independence has been embarrassed silence. But it does not excuse it. It's a response that's contemptible, and wrong.

It is contemptible to remain silent on Lithuania because Lithuania's cause both just and unique. The country is part of the Soviet Union only because it was invaded and annexed by Stalin in 1940. That invasion was one of the products of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the bargain between Hitler and Stalin to divvy up their neighbors that triggered World War II. Unlike other Soviet Republics contemplating secession, unlike most of the other secessionist movements in the world, the continued oppression of Lithuania and the other Baltic republics is part of the unfinished business of World War II and can be dealt with in that context.

Lithuania's claim is clearly that of a wronged party seeking to be made whole again. Its national aspirations — independence and liberty — are those of the American people. To turn our backs on them is to turn our backs on our most deeply held values, and that is as contemptible as it is self-destructive.

It is wrong to remain silent on Lithuania because appeasing the enemies of liberty never works. It only gives them reason to believe they can prevail. Allowing Lithuanian independence to be strangled in the cradle will no more further the cause of reform in the Soviet Union than allowing Czech independence to be snuffed out in 1938 moderated the conduct of the Third Reich.

Gorbachev did not launch his campaign to restructure the Soviet Union because he became bored with Marxism. He did it because the Soviet Union had become economically, politically, technologically, and above all, militarily non-competitive with the West, because in the 40-year twilight struggle the West stayed the course. If there was any lesson to be learned from the Reagan years, it was precisely that: Stay true to principle and stay the course. It's a national tragedy and disgrace that Reagan's vice-president never learned that. ✕

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# SEALS

## UDT/SEAL Operations in Vietnam

by T.L. Bosiljevac

The Vietcong feared them above all American troops. U.S. Navy SEALs staged ambushes, gathered intelligence, raided VC strongholds, captured prisoners and supplies and created havoc in the enemy's rear areas. *SEALS: UDT/SEAL Operations in Vietnam* tells the dramatic story of these highly trained commandos in southeast Asia, from the early coastal reconnaissance missions to the withdrawal of the last SEAL team. Describing scores of combat missions, author and active-duty SEAL T.L. Bosiljevac recounts incredible acts of skill and valor by SEAL troops under fire. Sixteen pages of never-before-published photographs show SEALs in training, on patrol in VC territory and moving up canals in the Mekong Delta. This is the definitive book on this elite unit's role in the Vietnam War. 5½ x 8½, hardcover, photos, 272 pp. **\$24.95**



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|  | <p><b>MAKE MY DAY!</b><br/><b>Hayduke's Best Revenge Techniques for the Punks in Your Life</b><br/>by George Hayduke</p> <p>Hayduke is back and meaner than ever with this all-new bag of bully-busting tricks. Hundreds of ideas from readers who rallied to George's stirring cry ("Do unto others before they get unto you") fill this antic anthology that will amaze and amuse you. <i>Make My Day!</i> is intended for entertainment purposes only. 5½ x 8½, hardcover, 224 pp. <b>\$17.95</b></p> |  | <p><b>TO RIDE, SHOOT STRAIGHT AND SPEAK THE TRUTH</b><br/>by Jeff Cooper</p> <p>Combat mind-set, proper sighting, tactical residential architecture, nuclear war — these are some of the many subjects explored by Jeff Cooper in this illustrated anthology. The author also discusses various arms, fighting skills and the importance of knowing how to defend oneself, and one's honor, in our rapidly changing world. 5½ x 8½, hardcover, illus., 384 pp. <b>\$26.00</b></p> |  | <p><b>U.S. NAVY SEAL COMBAT MANUAL</b></p> <p>One of the most rare FMs in the field of military collecting, with special emphasis on underwater demolition techniques and explosives. Equipment and tactics employed by this elite fighting force are covered, as are SEAL weapons, communications, driving, infiltration and exfiltration, survival, and more. 8½ x 11, softcover, photos, illus., 240 pp. <b>\$14.95</b></p>  |
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## KUDOS FROM THE COPS...

Sirs:

I do not know of any other magazine that holds truth, justice and the defense of true liberty more at heart and in contact with its avid readers than *Soldier of Fortune*. I have been a reader since 1976 when the magazine first came out. I salute each of you, in your ongoing quest to provide a light in the dark halls of treason, treachery and injustice that this nation has fallen into.

"Command Guidance" continues to be, I feel, the best editorial anywhere in the free world for stating what needs to be stated: Hold Liberty strong, do not submit to gun control, prosecute the criminals, and stand firm on the Constitution!

In a nation fraught with liberal decay and seething with anti-freedom messages everywhere (newspapers, TV, radio, etc.) *Soldier of Fortune* continues to be, and hopefully shall continue to be, an eddy in the tide of insanity; a stiff backbone to pressures of the current administration and others.

I urge everyone, join the NRA if you haven't — but most of all, join *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. Nobody has done more to defend patriotism and the flag more than this magazine and its staff. I hope and pray for the continued support of its ideals and its standards of excellence dedicated to those who fight to keep it alive.

As a police officer, your magazine is the only true survival guide!

Michael W. Stewart  
Sugar Land, Texas

*Smokey, thanks for your support. You couldn't have said it more kindly if you had borrowed our own lips.*



# FLAK

## MORE GUN MAGAZINES...

Sirs:

These are pictures of some of the ordnance that was captured by U.S. troops during operation Just Cause. Each pallet box can hold up to 54 cubic feet of ammo or other ordnance such as LAWs and Chinese-made rockets. Looking in these boxes you find everything from a BB to 20mm linked. The boxes in the picture have rifle magazines from FN/FALs, G3s, Galils, M16s and AKs. I would suspect that the numerous weapons systems and small arms made it hard for the PDF to keep proper maintenance on such an array of weapons. If Mr. Noriega had his shit together and uniformity among weapons systems we might still have been fighting them. The piece you did on Panama in the April issue was outstanding. Just thought I would return the favor for a job well done.

L/Cpl R. P. Marsh, USMC



## SHORT ON NEWS? TRY SHORT-WAVE...

Sirs:

Congratulations on your last few issues that have focused on Africa. Readers can gain more insight to events in southern Africa from the Voice of South Africa, broadcast on the shortwave band between 8-9 p.m. Central Standard Time to the U.S. and Canada on 11935, 9580, and 9615 kHz.

D.M.  
St. Louis, Missouri

## LETTERS

Your input has made FLAK one of SOF's most popular columns. Share your opinion of SOF or any other topic you consider worth our reader's attention. Please be concise; we reserve right to edit for content and brevity. Although volume won't allow us to acknowledge or answer all mail, we read and value every letter: the best we will print in FLAK. Write to FLAK. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306

## DON'T BLAME THE COPS...

Sirs:

Concerning "Drug War Firefight" (March '90): involved Rangers came down too hard on the Tacoma PD by implication. In our USA lobby democracy, police carry out orders given by elected politicians. If you don't agree with local drug policy and strategy, complain to the local politicians! Personally, I never met a cop I didn't like; politicians are something else. But then, they simply bow to the most powerful lobbies.

Fifteen seconds (10-minutes???) is too long for a fire-fight; burst and scam. I though Rangers were pros at stealth; did they use brass catchers?

John St. Clair  
Hitchcock, South Dakota

*We never met a cop we didn't like, either. Your observation that police carry out orders that emanate directly or indirectly from political entities is true, and obvious. There was no criticism of the Tacoma police intended, but aren't you coming down a little hard on SSG Foulk and his friends? This was not a "Ranger" operation — it was a neighborhood that was trying to defend itself from armed crack gangs, and it just happened a Ranger lived in one house. After the gangs openly and repeatedly threatened folks at the barbecue where neighbors were meeting, SSG Foulk prudently asked some friends over for the evening to sit it out. If my house came under attack I'd surely have returned fire to drive them off, too. Trust me, if Foulk and his friends and neighbors had wanted to take out their attackers — as opposed to break their siege — they would have used considerably less time and ammo. Yes, Rangers are pros at stealth and all other aspects of military operations, but in this situation they were the attackees and simply returned suppressive fire when fired upon. It showed pretty good discipline to me, to have not taken out the whole lot. Most folks, when shot at, shoot back to kill.*

*Regards the separate matter of how long a firefight should last: they just last until the shooting stops, which usually coincides with the point one side runs out of courage or ammo. In the Battle of the Bulge they had some that lasted for several hours. In the Tacoma incident, it evidently took the crack dealers 10 minutes to decide they weren't dealing with helpless little old ladies. But then, they may have been slow learners. And damn lucky Foulk and his neighbors didn't*

come out of their houses and chase them down the street with lethal intent.

## FREE PRESS FOR COMMIES, TOO...

Sirs:

Recently, two females were at my son's high school (Newton County High, Covington, Georgia) and handed out this newspaper. One of them was a member of the "American Socialist Party" and the other a member of the "American Communist Party." Is there anything we can do about this?

Concerned Ex-Soldier and Citizen,  
Michael D. Lyles  
Oxford, Georgia

*Lucky for both them and us, we're in a country where the fool's right to publish and speak is protected. Unless they were guilty of trespass (some schools don't allow any kind of solicitation on school grounds), they were probably within their legal rights. Tell you what I'd do, though: I'd get an immigrant who lived under and escaped the scourge of communism (take your pick, America's full of 'em — Cubans, Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Vietnamese, Chinese, etc.) and stand right next to those commies and pass out copies of Soldier of Fortune. I guarantee your immigrant friend would be more than happy to tell the kids what communism is really like. And odds are good the commies would just go away. Cockroaches and termites wither away in sunlight.*

## WORTH LOOKING FOR...

Sirs:

I have been an avid reader of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* for 11 years. I have not always agreed with all of the information submitted by your staff, but by and large it has been the most consistent and to-the-point news magazine on the market. While some may see it as a magazine filled with exciting stories set in far off places, it is really one of the finest news magazines in print. You help show why the U.S. should be helping some nations we are not, and why we should not be helping some we are. You try to help people see the weak and corrupt people running our government, while applauding those who try to make a difference. YOU help people see truly important news the gutless Dan Rather-type news agencies won't show.



This is what really upsets me. I have enjoyed the freedom of being able to walk into any book and magazine shop, or any grocery store or quickmart and pick up a copy of SOF. That is all changing now. It is becoming increasingly hard to find SOF without searching. I was informed this last weekend that lobby and "public interest" groups are harassing these establishments to pull or phase out this magazine and many other respectable magazines, that they all lump together with radical publications as dangerous. I cannot see how anyone could label *Combat Handguns* as dangerous — it is written by nationally renowned police officers — but people see "combat" and "handgun" on the cover and never look inside, just like they do with *Soldier of Fortune*. If people bothered to look through the pages they would see what they are missing. I know SOF is too conservative for some, the information is beyond those kinds of narrow-minded boundaries, but they really should see what they're missing. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
Barry Small

*You keep asking for us at the newsstand, and we'll keep doing our best to be worth the hunt.*

## MANIACS WILL FIND A WAY...

Sirs:

The laws in Canada are very strict, especially with so-called restricted and prohibited firearms. A semi-auto hunting rifle, however, requires only a FAC (Firearms Acquisition Certificate), available from the police

provided the applicant has no record of mental incompetency or a criminal record. Mark Lepeen legally obtained the Mini-14 and nobody could possibly foresee that the rifle would be used to kill 14 women at the engineering section of the University of Montreal. The truth of the matter is that if the "great gun grabbers" ban everything in Canada that can fire, it will not stop a disturbed man who wants to kill 14 women. *He will find a way.* The problem lies with a few disturbed people who make law-abiding gun owners appear to be a group of terrorists. Even if there were no guns in Canada, Mr. Lepeen would have found a way.

Michael Templeton  
Rockwood, Ontario, Canada

*You're right, of course. Person A kills person B (or in Lepeen's case B, C, D, E, etc.) because there is something about them he doesn't like, or because he has a severely bent head — not because he has a weapon. A maniac bent on killing doesn't care if he breaks a law — a law that restrains peaceful folks from accessing adequate defensive weapons — when he gets his weapon. And if he can't get an atomic bomb or machine gun, he'll make do with less than his weapon of choice because his mindset has to do with killing, not weapons. Case in point in this country was one Richard Speck, who murdered a houseful of nurses in Chicago. Did he use an "assault rifle" or a "Saturday night special"? Of course not — he used their own kitchen knife and killed them all but one who saved herself by hiding under a bed. If there had been a gun in the house, chances are he'd have only killed one — maybe none — before they offed him.*



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- #7050 SOF Luggage Tag, white with black logo. **\$4.95**
- #7110 SOF Ashtray, white with red logo. **\$4.95**
- #7120 Stein. 12-oz., clear with red logo. **\$7.50**
- #7100 Shot Glass. 4-oz., clear with red logo. **\$4.95**
- #7130 SOF Leather Coasters. Set of 4 with logo. **\$5.95**



**Patches** (From left to right)

- #7003 Shield Patch. **\$4.95**
- #7002 SOF Round Patch, OD. **\$2.95**
- #7001 SOF Round Patch, red. **\$2.95**
- #7060 SOF Patch, black. **\$4.95**



**Badges** (By vertical rows, from left)

- #7005 SOF Key Ring. **\$5.25**
- #7024 Beret Badge, black. **\$8.00**
- #7023 Beret Badge, silver. **\$8.00**
- #7021 SOF Lapel Pin, silver. **\$5.95**
- #7043 SOF Lapel Pin, gold. **\$5.95**
- #7020 SOF Lapel Pin, red. **\$3.95**
- #7022 Beret Badge, red. **\$7.00**
- #7053 Death to Tyrants Badge. **\$5.95**

**Items on Right** (Clockwise from left.)

- #2004 Black SOF Ball Cap with scrambled eggs. Col. Brown's favorite. **\$10.95**
- #2001 Maroon Beret. Sizes 6 1/2 - 7 3/4. (Beret badge not included.) **\$14.95**
- #2010 Khaki Field Cap. Lined. S,M. **\$22.95**
- (#2011 Unlined Field Cap. S,L,XL. **\$12.00**)
- #2021 SOF Ball Cap with Oak Leaf Cluster. Distinctive, brilliant white. **\$9.95**
- #7014 Web Belt, black. (No Buckle.) **\$3.50**
- #7012 SOF Silver Military Buckle. **\$11.95**
- #7013 SOF Black Military Buckle. **\$11.95**
- #2020 SOF Oak Cluster Cap, grey. **\$9.95**
- #5005 SOF Duffel Bag. Large size. Black, sturdy rip-stop nylon for hard wear. **\$29.95**

**Items Below** (Clockwise from left.)

- #7051 SOF Navy Blue tie. Oh, so subtle way of letting your presence be known. **\$15.95**
- #7200 SOF Mirrored Sunglasses. **\$9.95**
- #7140 SOF Money Clip. **\$5.95**
- #7045 SOF Zippo lighter. For those who value never-fail dependability. OD. **\$16.95**
- #7006 Ranger knife. 4 in. blade, 9 inches overall. Grooved grip. Black with bronze SOF logo. An impressive instrument. **\$39.95**
- #7161 SOF Watch. Red logo and black, waterproof band. 1-year warranty. **\$29.95**



**Item Above**

- #5008 Otis Gun Cleaning Kit. A gun's best friend in the field holds cleaning rod, brass-slotted tips and "T" handles, patches, solvent, instructions. All in a pocket-size case with OD SOF logo. **\$29.95**

**Items Below** (From left.)

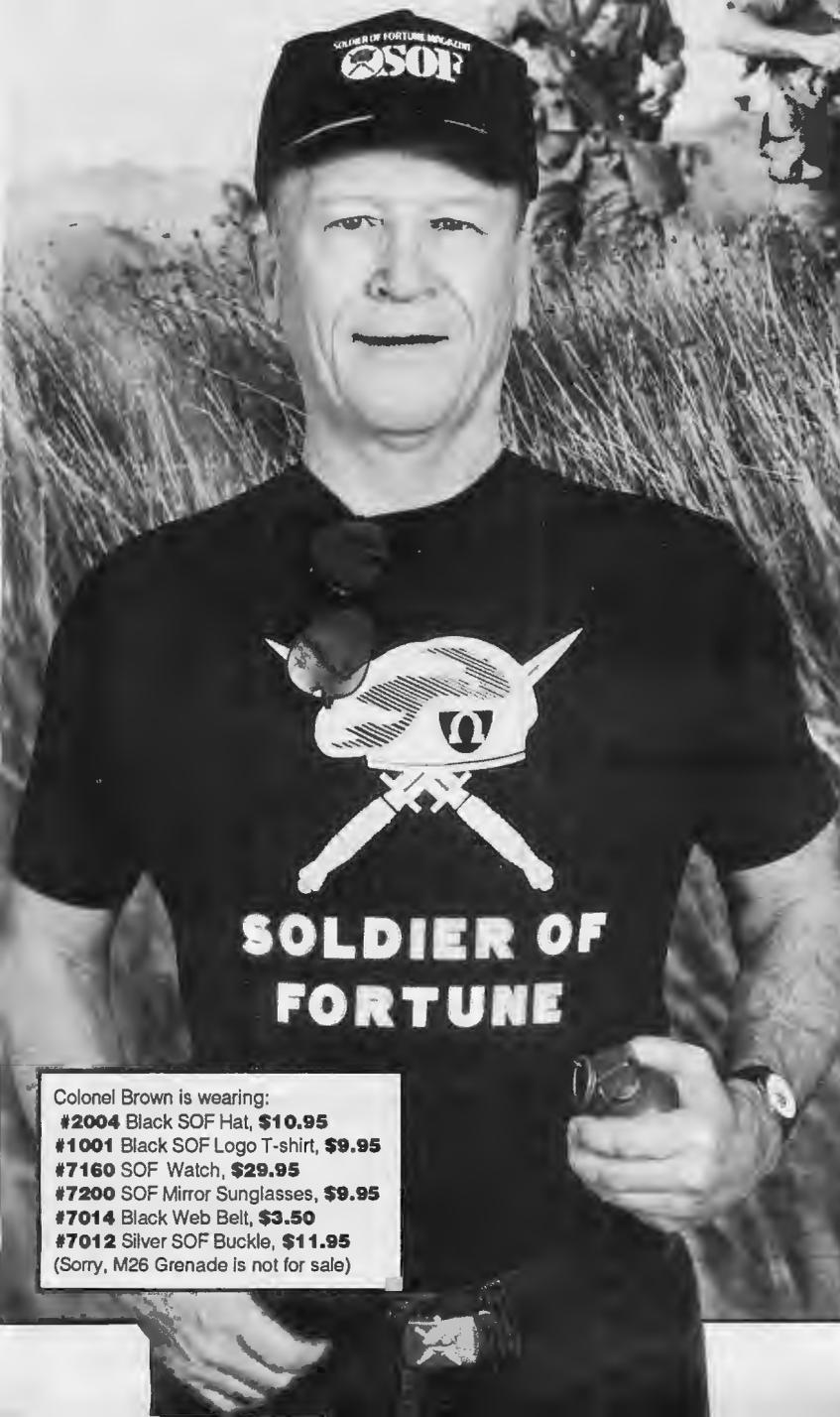
- #5010 SOF Fanny Pack. Roomy pack frees your hands for important activities. Durable black nylon with SOF logo. **\$24.95**
- #5009 Omega Group Waist Pack. Convenient size when you want to travel light. Black nylon with white Omega logo. **\$14.95**



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 Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine  
 Talking about his SOF Exchange

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  - #7160 SOF Watch, **\$29.95**
  - #7200 SOF Mirror Sunglasses, **\$9.95**
  - #7014 Black Web Belt, **\$3.50**
  - #7012 Silver SOF Buckle, **\$11.95**
- (Sorry, M26 Grenade is not for sale)

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## BULLET HOLE BUFFS...

The International Wound Ballistics Association (IWBA) is a newly formed independent, non-profit organization composed of scientists, physicians, criminologists, law enforcement personnel, engineers, researchers and other professionals engaged in the study of all aspects of wound ballistics. Its purposes are the advancement of knowledge of the subject through open, non-classified scientific research and data collection without political, national, institutional or commercial influence and the establishment and maintenance of meaningful standards within the methodology. The IWBA Institute will serve as a research, testing, standards and training facility.

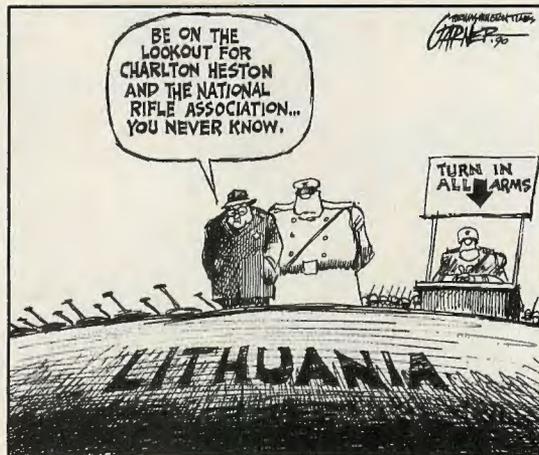
Its Charter Board is composed of recognized wound ballistics authorities from the U.S., France, Switzerland and West Germany. SOF's Technical Editor, Peter G. Kokalis, is a Full Member of the IWBA. SOF readers with an interest in this important subject are invited to participate as Associate Members, which costs \$60 per year and includes a subscription to the openly peer-reviewed publication, *Wound Ballistics Review*. The Journal of the IWBA. Technical seminars and classes will be scheduled as well as an annual meeting which will serve as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas on wound ballistics. For further information contact the International Wound Ballistics Association (Dept. SOF, 2830 D Pinole Valley Road, Suite #112, Pinole, CA 94564)

# BULLETIN BOARD



## LONGEST WAR: 30,000 DEAD...

We have lost over 30,000 men in our longest war — the war on crime. A national monument has been authorized in Washington, D.C., to those who have fallen in this war, but funds for it must come from private sources. U-Haul corporation spearheaded the effort with a \$5,000 donation and has involved its dealers and employees in the collection effort. Donations should be sent to: National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, Dept. SOF, 1360 Beverly Rd. #305, McLean, VA 22107. It won't bring back those who have died protecting the American people, but it *is* a way to say thanks to those who still serve.



## THE SANDINISTA CLEAN SWEEP...

Violeta Chamorro may have cleaned up the votes in Nicaragua, but before the Sandinistas turn over the reins Ortega and his apparatchiks are busily vacuum-cleaning the country to ensure that their retirement is as elitist as their reign. The country is being stripped of cars, houses, ranches, business, radio stations — even typewriters and money from banks. And the rotten SOBs have even voted themselves a blanket amnesty that covers the murderous crimes they committed when in power and prevents prosecution for future crimes. Two good things have come from this blatant showing of their true colors: the teary-eyed "Nicaragua is not our enemy" supporters of the Sandinistas are being treated to some impossible-to-ignore hindsight; and as Refugee Relief International's Alex McColl sagely noted, it doesn't look like the Sandinistas plan to head for the hills and fight as guerrillas.

## WHAT SORT OF MAN READS SOF?...

During January/February 1990 an exhaustive subscriber survey was conducted for SOF by Chicago-based Research USA, Inc. The reason for this periodic drill is to measure the reading and buying habits of SOFers for the benefit of advertisers, who, as you know, help pay the freight for magazines. Some interesting numbers appeared in the tabulation, which would indicate that SOF readers may well be richer, smarter and possibly better-looking than SOF staffers. To wit: median age 40.9 years, median income \$53,500, 75.6% went to college. SOF readers are 99% male, 57% married, 72% own their home, 69% belong to NRA, 29% are Viet-vets, 13% are in the National Guard or Army Reserve, 13.6% are active/retired military, 12.2% work in law enforcement. Generous and loyal, too: the average subscriber shares his copy of SOF with 1.8 friends, has been a reader for 7.2 years, and over 83% ordered general merchandise from ads in SOF last year. We always thought our readers were a cut above average, this survey tends to prove it. Any potential advertisers may get a copy of the complete survey by contacting the Advertising Department at SOF.

## AOUN SENDING MONEY AHEAD?

Gen. Michel Aoun, the defrocked but not departed leader of the Lebanese Army (see "Onward Christian Soldiers," June '90) has been accused of holding stolen millions in overseas bank accounts. French leftist weekly *Le Canard Enchanine* charges that Aoun has a secret account worth \$15.7 million at the Paris National Bank (Aoun told *Le Monde* that the monies were "gifts from the Lebanese Diaspora . . . intended for the army's . . . needs and to help the victims"). Uh-huh. Leftist *Al-Safir* of Beirut alleges that Aoun has glommed some \$100 million that a friendly Arab country put in the overseas account of a Lebanese military attache. *Al Safir* says most of the money has been transferred to Aoun's personal accounts.

## RELIEF IS JUST A SOLOVIEV AWAY...

UN relief flights to some parts of southern Sudan, where British researchers project that 250,000 may die of starvation, have been suspended by the government

because "conditions were too dangerous." The Sudanese government expressed interest in buying two Soviet transports to "ferry supplies," and the acting Soviet ambassador let them take the planes "for a test drive." Heh, heh. The Sudanese promptly loaded the planes with bombs, flew down to Yirol in rebel country, and shoved ordnance out the cargo doors. Sudanese strongman Gen. Omar al-Bashir poker-faced: "They were not Sudanese planes that bombed Yirol." Heh, heh.

## SYMBIONESE LIBERATION ARMY...

The SLA, a terrorist organization going strong the year SOF published its first issue, robbed a bank in April 1975 and a woman customer in the bank to deposit her church's collection money was killed with a sawed-off shotgun. Patricia Hearst, daughter of publishing magnate Randolph Hearst, had been kidnapped by the SLA a year earlier and accompanied her captors on this robbery as a driver. She, of course, did well-publicized time for crimes committed after having been kidnapped by the SLA. But the trigger person on this bank job, believed to be Emily Harris (now a computer analyst in Los Angeles), went unprosecuted for this bank job. California authorities are now looking to indict her for murder, for which there is no statute of limitations.

## KGB TO MAKE AMENDS?

Deputy Director Vladimir Pirozhov of the KGB recently told U.S. human rights officials that the KGB is reviewing "hundreds of thousands" of past arrests to search out and make amends for past abuses. Oh really? Soviet communist regimes have killed nearly twice as many of their own people in the gulags as Hitler and the National Socialists of Germany did in all their death camps. Some qualified estimates run the total from gulags, purges and forced communization of the Ukraine to over 50 million. Does this mean the KGB is going to initiate a "Nuremberg Trial" for bloodthirsty communists in the USSR? What amends will they make to millions upon millions crying for justice from unmarked graves? Get serious, Vladimir. His own mother was arrested by the NKVD (predecessor of the KGB), and his uncle executed by them. And he went to work for the

KGB anyway. Yup, that's a man I'll believe.

## GOLDEN PARACHUTES...

It's the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Army Airborne, and the Society of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (SEP) will be celebrating 5-8 July in Washington, D.C. For information contact them at Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 27822, Washington, D.C. 20038-0822

In addition, under the auspices of the USA Airborne 50th Anniversary Foundation, some 25 other Airborne associations are going all the way in Washington the week of 3-8 July. It is also the 38th anniversary of Special Forces, and the Special Forces Association is planning their own celebration, and is publishing a souvenir journal commemorating both anniversaries. For more info on these blowouts, call SFA Convention '90 Chairman Clyde J. Sincere, Jr. at (703) 385-4515.

## AGENT ORANGE, PART II...

U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson overturned a portion of the VA regulations covering disability and death claims based on Agent Orange/dioxin exposure and all benefits denials made under those regulations. In short, it's a new ball game — even if your claim was denied before 26 September 1985, you may file a *new* claim. Details from the 800 number in the phone book under "United States Government" or "Veterans Administration." Or contact the lawyers who represent veterans and next of kin who are class members in the *Nehmer* lawsuit: National Veterans Legal Services Project, Dept. SOF (*Nehmer* Class Member Info), 2001 S Street N.W., Suite 610, Washington, D.C. 20009.

## JUMP WITH BATTALION DE PARACAIDISTAS

El Salvador cordially invites you to participate in the 27th anniversary celebration of the El Salvador Parachute Battalion, 27 September to 2 October 1990. Mass drop from classic C-123 ... awards ceremony and banquet at Officer's Club in Ilopango ... wings and certificate presented by officers of the Airborne Battalion ... authorization letters for wings given to each jumper for your 201 file. Tour packet includes: round-trip airfare from New Orleans

to San Salvador, billeting at Special Warfare Command/Airborne in Ilopango, all transportation in-country, all jump equipment, and most meals.

Leave New Orleans on Thursday, 27 September, return Tuesday, 2 October. Total cost of package is \$995 — for non-jumping guests \$695. Numbers strictly limited to first-come, first-served basis. Deposit of \$300 required to secure your slot must be received before 1 August 1990, non-refundable after that date. Current passport and Salvadoran visa required. Contact Harry Clafin, Jump Coordinator, Rt 1, Box 88, Bronough, MO 64728, or call Harry at (417)-843-3555. Don't wait and get left standing on the ground, call Harry today.



Still going strong after 50 years is the Browning Hi-Power, shown here with molded grips, ambidextrous safety and matte finish. Still manufactured in Belgium by FN, Browning's parent company, current models are assembled in Portugal. For info contact Browning, Dept. SOF, Route One, Morgan, UT 84050

## SOVIET WHEAT DEAL...

After years trying to compete with the West in the export of manufactured goods, the Soviets have come to the realization that the only field where they can compete is arms. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, from 1980 to 1988 they exported 985 tanks/self-propelled guns, 1,625 pieces of light armor, 4,685 artillery pieces, 405 supersonic aircraft, 310 helicopters and 6,110 surface-to-air missiles. When selling arms to impoverished Third-World countries, payment can be a problem, but the Sovs are flexible. They'll barter sugar from Cuba, for instance, and natural gas from Afghanistan (at half what they pay from the West). In Ethiopia, they loaded their ships with coffee ... and grain that had been sent to Ethiopia

*Continued on page 85*

## INCOMING

Prestige Shirt Company is offering polo shirts with either Special Forces or Marine logos. In addition to the logo you get three lines of writing that state your unit and duty station (or whatever you'd like to say). Each shirt is custom-made and will only set you back \$20. See illustrated ad in back of this issue.

With the match competitor firmly in mind, Eagle Arms created the EA-15 E2 H-Bar. This 5.56mm AR-15 variant, touted as offering unparalleled performance, features an extra-heavy bull barrel, precision-machined forged receiver and is made to withstand harsh climates. Call Eagle Arms for more info at (309) 799-5619.

Magnum Products is offering a key chain complete with .357 Magnum hollow-point round attached. The round can't be fired and the whole thing costs a mere \$4.95 from Magnum Products of Aurora, Colorado.



A couple years back "mini" flashlights were all the rage even though they offered little except portability. Now U.S. Cavalry is offering the Mini Crookneck. One look will tell you that this is a miniature version of the U.S. military's standard issue flashlight. The Mini Crookneck is only 6-inches long and operates on two AA batteries. Call U.S. Cav for more info at (502) 351-1167.

We likely all know someone who can't keep himself from rattling on

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



by Tom Slizewski

and on about machine guns. What to do? One answer is to buy the full-auto mouth in your life a subscription to *Machine Gun News*. Each monthly issue is chock full of information near and dear to the hearts of rattle gun aficionados. Around here I'm going broke buying subscriptions, but it will be worth it.

If this isn't your first issue of SOF, you've seen the numerous ads for \$10 books detailing how to change your identity, never pay taxes, teach your dog to rob banks, etc... Now there's a new twist on this old idea. Introducing *The Passport Report* and *PT — The Perpetual Traveler*, two books by Scope Ltd. that will set you back a Franklin each. (That's \$100 for those who've never seen one, or so they tell me.) They're bound in leather and cover topics like how to disappear from all computers, avoiding taxes, getting dual nationality, legally obtaining a second foreign passport and many other things. Both can be had for \$175.

McPherson Archery has just the thing for the archer looking for speed and accuracy — the Eliminator. The Eliminator is McPherson's latest bow model and boasts a velocity of 238 feet per second at AMO standard 60-pound draw weight, 30-inch draw length and SAE 2117 wrought aluminum, 540-grain arrows. If that lost you, give McPherson Archery a call, they'll be glad to explain it to you at (507) 437-7958, or in Canada (819) 566-8424.

## YUGO BINOCULARS

Mitchell Arms Inc. is importing Yugoslav military binoculars designed for command and control of the modern battlefield. Manufactured by Zrak and standard issue with the Yugoslav armed forces, their salient features are directed to the professional military.

Referred to as the "Hand Binocular RD 7x40," they offer standard 7x magnification with a 40mm lens. The

field of view at 1,000 meters is 148 meters (or 8.5 degrees). Weighing in at 2.6 pounds, they are massive and rugged. The black rubber-armored body is ribbed to improve gripping surface. Exposed metal surfaces are finished with an olive-green baked-enamel coating.

Each monocular is individually focused with a range in diopter from -3 to +5. The oculars have soft rubber eyecups and a protective cover. Inside the ocular cover is a set of amber filters to enhance contrast



under hazy lighting conditions. The objective lenses have individual snap-off guard caps.

There is an artillery-type graduated reticle pattern in the right monocular. It's tritium-illuminated for night applications and can be used to determine angles in both horizontal and vertical planes and distances. Turning a knob on the left monocular rotates an infrared detection filter into the field of view.

The adjustable gray nylon neck strap is complemented by a leather jacket strap that permits the binoculars to be securely attached to a field jacket or LBE when not in use.

Fully coated lenses result in images that are sharp and brilliant at all ranges and under all lighting conditions tested, which ranged from bright sunlight to moonlight. MilSpec quality is not inexpensive and these superb combat binoculars carry a suggested retail of \$625.00.

Contact Mitchell Arms, Dept. SOF, 3400 W. MacArthur Blvd., Suite 1, Santa Ana, CA 92704; phone (714) 957-5711. ☒

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**W**E'RE selective when it comes to offering books through our SOF Exchange. In fact, rare is the occasion when the staff can agree that a particular book is good enough to rate the SOF seal of approval. As you'll notice in our Exchange ads, we don't offer many books for that reason. Such was not the case when **NAM - THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE - 1965-75** came our way; not a soul in the organization — Vietnam vet or not — offered up a negative word on this excellent addition to the SOF library.

If you're interested in Vietnam, you'll certainly know by now that the market is flooded with books on the subject, ranging from scholarly dissertations on the geopolitical implications of C-Rations as a weapon of war to self-flagellating treatises on "War Crimes Confessions of an Army Postal Clerk in Saigon" — they're either dry-as-dust analyses without the human side, or so micro-sketched first-person that you're left clueless about the overall conflict.

**NAM** is the answer to the Vietnam reader's prayer: 114 short chapters written primarily by men who fought the war (beginning with the Marine landing at Da Nang in 1965 through the fall of Saigon in '75), with extensively researched sidebar articles, first-rate photos, graphs & charts, maps, superb graphics, and a detailed chronology added to give you a full understanding of who did what, how they did it — and why. The original magazine series from which **NAM** evolved, published by Orbis in London, was so skillfully done and well received that the entire package was reformatted into 650 pages bound in oversized (9 x 12 inch) hardcover.

In short, **NAM** is (in the current jargon) a "user friendly" guide to the strategy & tactics, equipment & weaponry, and — most important of all — the human side of the war. To pick a few examples of what to expect: Cutting the VC Lifeline, Ambush, Landing Zone Under Fire, Stop the War, Search and Destroy, Prisoners of War, Namspeak, Fighting the VC Way, Dog Fight Over North Vietnam and The Men From the North, The Firefight Experience, The Australian Commitment, Forward Air Controller, Why I Joined the VC, Blacks in the Nam, Long Range Reconnaissance, Hamburger Hill, Grunt Free Press — you get the idea: the good fellows from Orbis in the United Kingdom took a close look at our little foray into Southeast Asia and came up with an exceptional outline they felt would explain the multifaceted U.S. war to their British audience.

It worked, and **NAM** is the finest book of its type we've seen to date. If

## IN REVIEW



by John Coleman

you want to live (or for some reason, relive) a firefight or ambush, crawl through a boobytrapped VC tunnel or hammer NVA positions from a Phantom (and have a look at all that from the other side of the gun barrel, too); or if you want someone in your life to catch a glimpse of what it was all about sans screeching political rhetoric, then **NAM - THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE - 1965-75** serves it up as realistically as it comes.



**NAM - THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE - 1965-75** is available through the SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306 for \$39.95 plus \$3 p&h in check or money order. Or, you can call toll-free 1-800-323-1776 and speak to Operator 131 who'll take your Visa, MasterCard or other orders. You will not be disappointed.

With all of us shedding our winter coats for coats of suntan oil as summer approaches, it's time to stock up on reading material for those long, languid days by the pool (or, in our case, atop the bunker). In no particular order as they're all first-rate:

**The Regiment** by Christopher Nicole (St. Martin's Press, Fifth Avenue, New York) is an excellent historical novel centering on a young British officer who helps defend the Empire from the Boers of South Africa through to the Germans in World War I. In another theater of operations, namely Vietnam, Kent Anderson served as a sergeant in the 5th Special Forces Group. His novel, **Sympathy for the Devil**, first appeared in 1987 and reads as well now as it did then. For a deathly dark-humored look at the SF war (Kirkus Reviews called it "morally repugnant"; I call it realistic), look for **Sympathy for the Devil** in paperback on your newsstand or contact Warner Books on Fifth Avenue, New York. And in a book that encompasses both Africa and Vietnam, Tony Geraghty (familiar for his in-depth *Inside the SAS*) takes us inside the French Foreign Legion with **March or Die** (Facts on File, Park Avenue South, New York) from its birth in 1831 to today.

As **NAM** gives us war from another point of view, so too does Daniel Bolger's **Feast of Bones** (Presidio Press, Novato, California), the gripping tale of a young Soviet paratrooper caught up in the war and intrigue of Afghanistan. Also from Presidio comes **Sword of the Shaheen** by M.E. Morris, an all-too-realistic novel that reflects today's headlines: Arab terrorists have the "Bomb" and their target is the United States.

And distributed by Daring Books out of Canton, Ohio, come four new non-fiction works on southern Africa originally published by our long-time Africa correspondent Al Venter. **South African Dispatches - Two Centuries of the Best in South African Journalism** by Jennifer Crwys-Williams, **South Africa's Border War: 1966-1989** by Willem Steenkamp, **War in Angola - The Final South African Phase** by Helmoed-Römer Heitman, and **The War Diaries of André Dennison** (who served in the Rhodesian African Rifles during that conflict) by Dr. J.T. Wood will put you 99 steps ahead of the average American in your understanding of the turbulent Sub-Sahara.

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# The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air

Chevrolet



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**UNIT:** Charlie Battery, 4/42nd Artillery, 4th Division.

**STATION:** High mountain ridge in Vietnam's Central Highlands — name of LZ forgotten.

**MISSION:** Direct fire artillery practice, shooting visible target.

**VICTIMS:** Huge trees providing top layer of jungle's triple canopy.

**RESULTS:** Variable.

**TIME:** Late afternoon, 1970.

**W**E had been hitting a few, missing a few, and silently giving thanks that the terrain spared us from shootouts with NVA armor. As usual, a small gallery of bored grunts had gathered behind the two firing guns. These were bunkerline grunts, or line companies in for resupply or on short standdown.

We Redlegs (artillery) were providing entertainment and — with good hits — a morale boost. Our Battery Commander (BC) sat behind our 105mm howitzer on the sandbagged parapet, watching our progress.

I peered through the gunner's scope. The target wavered in the hazy distance. Across the breech, Lynch talked to himself, glued to the coaxial direct fire scope. "Got 'er?" I asked.

"Yeah, got 'er."

"Blow her down, then."

Lynch reached up alongside the breech and rapped the firing mechanism with a right hammer fist. We all watched as the High Explosive (HE) round howled down range, missed the chosen tree, and detonated unseen back in the bush. We watched the round explode through the gun scopes.

"Jumpin' Jesus!" Lynch breathed quietly across the gun trails. "Maybe we hit a bridge in Hanoi!"

Then an unfamiliar voice spoke. "Good thing you guys aren't working for a lumber company, you ain't hit nothin' but twigs in the last half hour!"

The gun crew turned to the speaker, incredulous at such an indiscreet observation of the truth. Didn't this clown know our reputation as the best firing battery in the 4th Division? Obviously he didn't. We didn't know him either — an FNG, infantry, officer-type, with a loud mouth.

The gun crew ignored him while we fiddled with the sights and reloaded; behind us, the BC took up the implied challenge. I turned back and watched. The BC eased up off the sandbags, put on a Sunday smile and began bantering with our detractor. We still fired at trees, adjusting our sights, but mainly we listened.

Our BC spoke: "A friendly wager? One shot — one tree goes down. You pick the tree."

Victim (chortling), "Outstanding! I can live with a sure thing! Let's call it



# I WAS THERE

by Randy Fey

## One Tree, One Kill



Typical four-man 105mm howitzer crew. These men are from Battery C, 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery at Fire Support Base "Charlie 2," four miles south of the DMZ. Photo: DoD

a bet. Ten cases of Budweiser!" BC and victim shook hands.

Obviously, we had a gambling man here. Two really, the BC knew damn well it took half-a-dozen hits to bring down some of these Asian Redwoods. He jumped into that bet pretty fast, I thought. I looked across the gun at Lynch. His eyes bugged out a bit. Ten cases of Bud in the bush, delivered, was more than you'd ask of Santa Claus. But if the BC said so ...

The BC ushered the victim up to our howitzer and had him pick out a target tree in the direct fire scope. He picked a monster, maybe 10 feet in diameter and 80 feet tall. "Sure, we kin whack that bitch in one round," Lynch observed under his breath, "as long as the nearest battleship's takin' requests."

"BC knows what he's doing," I murmured, although I sure didn't.

BC: "0800 hours, right?" The victim agreed, smiling. He swaggered away.

"Right," I echoed, eyeballing the BC. "Sure. One shot, one tree down. BC's got one of them nuclear rounds stashed in his hooch. What an opportunity!"

BC: "Christ! For 10 cases of Bud I'd nuke division HQ! The beer we get out here isn't fit for a piss tube. You men get this pig on the money, and I'll work out the details." The BC stepped out of the parapet and headed toward the engineer's hooch.

We talked it over while tuning up our direct fire proficiency. Not for a minute did we doubt the ability of cannon fire to level the specified tree. A 16-inch high explosive round from the USS *New Jersey* would do the trick, or perhaps a WWI-era German railroad gun could be hauled in for the job via the Orient Express.

A quick analysis of the cost/benefit ratio (benefit — 240 cans of Bud) put an end to speculation on exotic solutions. The job had to be done with our own firepower — or at least look that way to non-Redlegs.

Our captain had two objectives in mind: acquisition of mucho free beer, and bestowal of a deserved dose of humility on our detractor. Guided by these mission criteria, the BC wasted no time in insuring the total destruction of the chosen target. If the chosen target was in fact too large for our four-inch gun, so be it — she was still



# 4X4



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coming down with one round fired.

By profession a mathematics teacher, our BC thought in terms of objectivity and efficiency. A challenge had surfaced, been met and publicly noted. Our cannon couldn't do the job, but it had to (or at least it had to appear to do it).

How to down the tree at the given time, and make it appear to be the result of one, well-placed arty round? Anyone who's lived for long on firebases knows the answer to this question. Nobody, but nobody, blows trees better than combat engineers. Engineers blow trees with more finesse than most of us blow our noses.

At 0800 hours, some interested grunts showed up at the gun parapet, victim included.

We already had a round loaded, as per the BC's specifications. As the witnessing crowd gathered, we opened the breech and loaded the brass, complete with a full powder charge. The target tree had been aimed at long before; we checked the sights for the sake of the witnesses. The conclusion was foregone, but anything but obvious to outsiders.

We all know better than to bet against a sure thing; blasting a large tree from a distance with a light artillery piece looks chancy at best to a layman. But we weren't laymen. We had a thirsty — and crafty — battery commander. He had journeyed over to the engineer's hooch, done some business, and come up with a beer-crazy lieutenant willing to perform some creative blasting in trade for some beer. During bunkerline chowtime, he managed to saunter through the wire equipped with a rucksack loaded full of C4 and necessary accessories.

The loaded round was a fuseless smoke round; we didn't care to donate an HE to the NVA. The order: miss the tree by a hair, and act innocent. We slapped the breech shut. Lynch glued his eye to the direct fire scope, cranked the barrel up a bit for effect, and said, "Ready!"

I checked my sight; our aim was off 10 or so feet as per instructions. We did not want to chance bouncing off the target — someone might notice.

"Fire!"

Lynch hammered the striker, and the lime-green smoke round howled downrange. No one but a Redleg could have noticed that the flash of color was the wrong color.

The combat engineer had spent the night outside the wire, set up a comfortable distance away from the target. He had thoughtfully emplaced some 50 or so pounds of C4 around the base of the doomed tree, strung a

*Continued on page 72*



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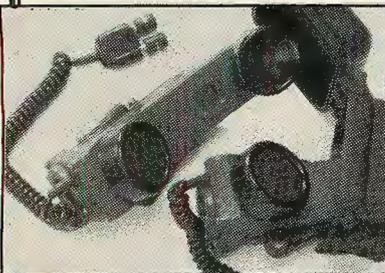


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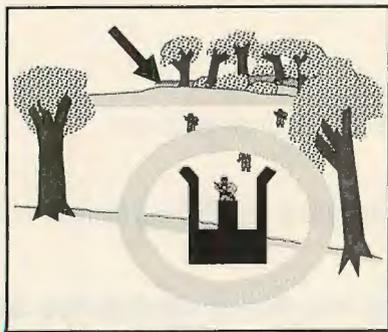
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**S**MALL units, such as squads and platoons, are extremely vulnerable in action. The loss of only a few men may leave the unit totally ineffective, unable to accomplish its mission. Vulnerability can be reduced, however, through good organization — which can increase flexibility at the same time.

The squad has its origin in the attempt to tighten up organization and improve flexibility. Originally, the platoon was a mob with a single leader (sometimes with an assistant), who had a hell of a time controlling his troops in action. As the range and power of weapons increased, and small units had to disperse to reduce vulnerability, the problem of controlling the platoon in action became insurmountable. The solution was to break the platoon down into sub-units, each with its own leader. And so the squad was born.

The squad, in turn, was subject to the same problems as the platoon. As long as units advanced in waves, walking upright into the teeth of enemy fire, the squad leader could maintain some kind of control — but those tactics, and the organizations that supported them, died on the Somme, the Meuse, and other battlefields of World War I. It was the Germans who discovered a tactical alternative to the human wave attacks that characterized major offensives on the Western Front. They developed their so-called *Hutier* tactics, which emphasized the operation of small



**Figure 1.** Lead fire team as seen by the enemy. Arrow shows where trailing fire team can be expected to go into action.

groups acting in concert to penetrate and bypass Allied positions on the Italian and Russian fronts. Then, in 1918, they nearly broke the Western Front in France with these tactics.

By the end of the war, it was obvious that small unit tactics were the *key to both survival and victory*. But as successful as the *Hutier* tactics were, they introduced almost as many problems as they solved. It proved almost impossible for a single sergeant (or even a sergeant with a corporal help-



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Munremur MacGerrcinn

## Third Team Theme

ing him) to control a dozen or so men under fire. There had to be a better way.

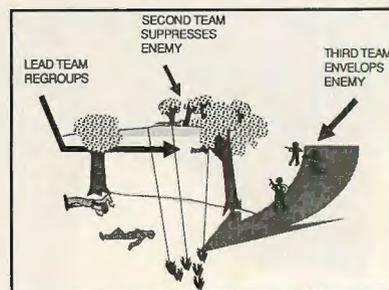
In the 1930s, the Marines were fighting the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. There, during the small, confused actions typical of jungle warfare, Merritt Edson experimented with squad organization. Edson's idea was to break the squad down into smaller groups, which he called fire teams. He experimented with fire teams of various sizes, and with various weapons mixes. For example, a fire team might consist of one or two riflemen with '03 Springfields, a Browning Automatic Rifle man, and a man with a Thompson submachine gun. Several fire teams made up a squad, and the squad leader controlled his squad through the team leaders.

The fire team concept was a howling success. It had several distinct advantages over the old squad mob:

- It reduced the number of men the squad leader had to deal with, from a dozen or so to three.
- It increased the "leader-to-led" ratio, something that has since been demonstrated to dramatically increase the effectiveness of small units in combat.
- It made the squad more survivable, since losses in one fire team did not cripple others.
- It strengthened the chain of command in action: if the squad leader was lost, the senior team leader appointed a private to lead his team and took over the squad.
- It increased the flexibility of the squad, since the fire teams could be assigned different tasks in action. The weapons mix within the team also enhanced flexibility.

Both the Army and the Marine Corps adopted Edson's fire team concept, but not to the same degree. The Marines — perhaps with a better grasp of Edson's principles — redesigned their squads, producing three fire teams, each with a BAR man to provide a base of fire. The Army merely divided its unwieldy squad into two fire teams and for over 40 years has struggled with the result. The Marines did, at one time, adopt a

two-fire-team squad, but quickly saw the error of their ways, and went back to the three-fire-team organization. To understand why the three-fire-team squad is better, let's look at a classic



**Figure 2.** With a third fire team, a squad that has been hit with a bloody nose ambush still has the capability of enveloping the ambush.

small-unit problem — the "bloody nose" ambush.

The idea behind a bloody nose ambush is simple: to slow up an advancing enemy, using as few men as possible to do it, while the rest of the unit gets away or finishes its business. It's no exaggeration to say that the bloody nose ambush is what put the word "elusive" into the phrase "elusive guerrilla."

As effective as it is simple, the bloody nose usually comprises two or three men left behind to fire on enemy lead elements as they appear. If they can inflict several casualties so much the better, but even if they hit only one man they can cause enough confusion to slow up a pursuing force. In the resultant confusion they can almost always manage to escape, only to repeat the bloody nose a few hundred meters farther on.

Of course, the counter to the bloody nose is obvious: simply pin down the delaying element with a high volume of fire and keep them pinned while a fire team outflanks them. Rub them out, then move rapidly before the enemy main body realizes what's happened and sets out another bloody nose. But this is where the two-fire-team squad breaks down. It's almost impossible to execute a good pin-and-outflank against a

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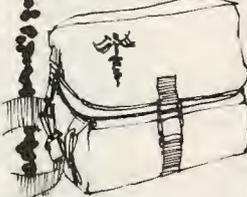


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bloody nose with only two fire teams.

The reason is simple. As Figure 1 shows, the lead fire team is the vulnerable team; they're the ones who get the bloody nose. As soon as the first shots are fired, that lead team is in trouble. Their problem is to get them-

much choice of action, either. They must get to a position where they can provide covering fire for the lead team. Usually, that will be about 50 meters from the point where the lead fire team first appeared on the high ground — if there is any. The arrow in Figure 1



Figure 3. A 10-man squad organized into three fire teams.

selves out of the killing zone, bringing any wounded with them if they can. That's about all that can be expected of them.

The trailing fire team doesn't have

shows where a savvy sniper would expect the second fire team to establish their base of fire.

Now we've got one team in the killing zone, struggling to get out, one team providing covering fire for them — and nobody to do the enveloping! No problem, you say? We just have another squad to do the enveloping while our trailing team provides a base of fire? Terrific! We've deployed the whole damn platoon to chase down two raggedy-ass riflemen — and the bastards'll probably get away while the platoon is de-

ploying.

With a three-fire-team squad, we don't need to deploy the platoon. In fact, we've got several alternatives. We can outflank the bloody nose from the left or right, as Figure 2 shows, or we can increase the base of fire if we think the enemy is too strong to be outflanked; or if the terrain permits, we can make a direct assault.

But don't you need big squads to have three fire teams? Not really. Although Marine squads have varied from 13 to 14 men, you can have three fire teams with as few as 10 men, as Figure 3 shows. (Of course, now that the Army in its wisdom has reduced the squad to nine men they have a problem, especially in Bradley-equipped units where three of those men make up the vehicle crew.)

The three-fire-team organization fits in well with other missions. For example, in attacking a bunker or other fortified position, you need three teams: a suppression team to keep the enemy "buttoned up," an assault team to carry out the actual attack, and a security team to protect the other two teams. In an ambush or a raid, you need an assault element, a support element, and a security element. The three-fire-team squad is the way to go. Don't let anybody tell you different.

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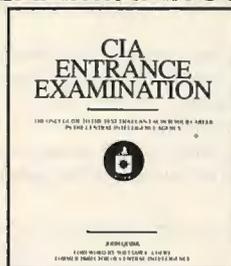
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# DEATH OF A BANK ROBBER

## *Gentleman Bandit's Number Up at 50*

by Morgan Tanner

Photos Courtesy Eddie Morales

**W**HEN Eddie Morales grabbed his .38 out of his holster one October afternoon in 1987, he didn't know that 50 was about to become his lucky number.

A cop on the Denver vice squad, Eddie was working off-duty at the Silverado Savings and Loan protecting the cash from the "Gentleman Bandit," the smooth-talking robber of some four dozen banks in Pennsylvania, New York, Missouri, Minnesota, Indiana, Colorado and Washington. An FBI analysis of the Bandit's MO showed he preferred quiet, neighborhood banks without uniformed guards. The Silverado fit the bill — in fact it was where he had pulled his first successful heist in

Colorado. Eddie Morales was hired to stop him.

As usual on Wednesdays, Eddie stopped by home after his shift on vice and dressed for his stint at the Silverado in a gray three-piece suit. According to the FBI, the polite, clean-cut Gentleman Bandit struck his targets on Wednesday or Friday afternoons from 1500 to 1700 hours. From 1300 hours to closing each Wednesday, Eddie pretended to be a bank teller. He situated himself at the teller window farthest from the front door, one partially concealed by a counter sign advertising Certificates of Deposit. As was his habit, Eddie put a closed sign in front of him and opened

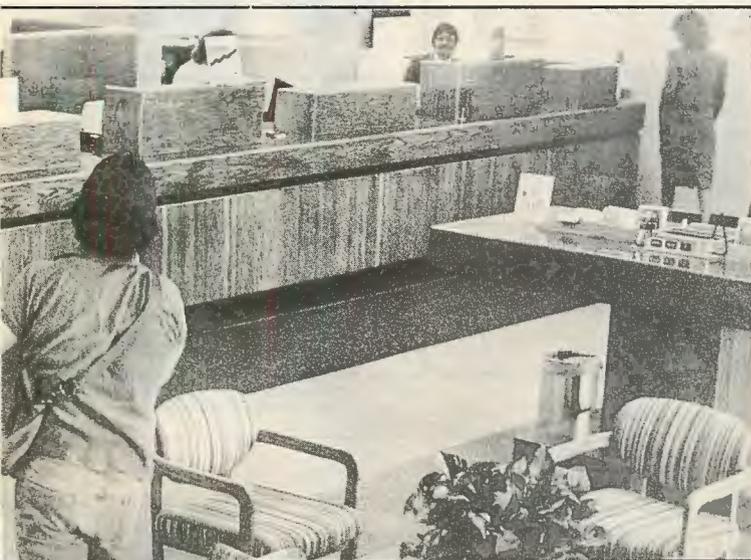
a book.

"I was reading about the Zodiac murders and was pretty engrossed," he recalls. "But I kept feeling kind of weird. Antsy. Twice I quit reading and went outside the bank to look around — something I had never done before. You know that feeling you get when someone's looking at you? That's how I felt. I went out to the parking lot twice, but I didn't see anything."

Eddie was talking with one of the women tellers when, at 1630, a bank executive sitting in her office noticed a man riding up to the bank on a bicycle. She recognized him from when he had robbed the bank before.

The "Gentleman Bandit" walks into the Silverado S&L in Jefferson County, Colorado, and reaches inside his bag for his nickel-plated S&W Model 39 pistol. "Good afternoon ladies," he says, "this is a robbery." He doesn't see officer Eddie Morales at the far end of the counter because a sign partially hides him from view. A female bank employee (far right) walks out of the field of fire after Eddie tells her to "Get out of Dodge."

He still does not see Officer Eddie Morales and motions the women tellers to get the money ready and move toward the far end of the counter. Pressed for time, his tension seems to be mounting. Eddie knows he has to do something fast, before the women get in his way. He wishes he had brought his .45 instead of his Chief's Special .38.



## TANNER REPORT

Veteran SOF correspondent Morgan Tanner is equally at home covering combat zones in Central America and the violent streets of the U.S.A. Recent Tanner articles have focused on the gang/crack connection in America.

"She said, 'Eddie, here he comes,'" Eddie recalls. "I looked up and knew right away it was the Gentleman Bandit. The FBI had photos of him from previous robberies, and I used to look at them all the time."

The man who walked through the glass door of the bank fairly bristled with self-confidence. In his mid-thirties, he looked athletic. He had a big, dark moustache, and dark hair peeked out from under his blue baseball cap. He wore a red knit shirt, nice-fitting designer blue-jeans, a black and gold Seiko watch, and white Nikes. As the man strode into the bank, Eddie hit the surveillance camera and silent alarm and told the woman he had been talking with to get out of the way. He watched with alarm as the man suddenly reached into a gray shoulder bag and pulled out a gun.

"I knew then it was going to be a one-on-one confrontation," he says.

In the seconds that followed, Eddie lamented his own choice of a weapon. He was 15 feet from the Bandit, but he immediately recognized the type of gun the robber carried — a big, nickel-plated Smith & Wesson Model 39 autoloader. Morales was carrying an S&W Model 60 Chief's Special .38 revolver. It held just five rounds of Remington jacketed hollow-point +P ammunition. Doubts suddenly flooded Eddie's mind — thoughts like "I'm out-gunned," and "he has a lot more rounds," and "he's probably a better shot than I am."

"I couldn't hit a bull in the butt with that five-shot," Eddie says. "I was wishing I had brought my .45, or my 9mm, or my shotgun."

But wishing didn't change the facts. The Bandit politely approached the women tellers, weapon in hand.

Although he has never shot anyone, the Bandit waves his gun threatening the women. Eddie's training clicks in and he looks out over the field of fire making certain no bystander has come into the bank. The field is clear. Still hidden by the sign, he pulls his .38 loaded with five rounds of Remington Hollow Point +P ammo.

"Good afternoon, ladies," Eddie recalls the Bandit saying. "This is a robbery. Put the money on the counter."

"I'll never forget that he used the word 'ladies,'" Eddie says. "It suddenly clicked for me that the guy hadn't seen me."

The women reached for the money he demanded, but they moved too slowly to suit him. He waved his gun at them.

"You could see the tension mounting in him," Eddie says. "He figured he had three, four, five minutes tops to get in and out before the police showed up."

According to photos from the surveillance camera, the events that followed took less than a minute. To Eddie, it seemed like eternity. To the Bandit, it was a lifetime.

"Put the money up and start moving," Eddie recalls him saying.

The Bandit motioned with the barrel of his gun that the women should move down the teller line toward the far wall.

"I started thinking, 'Oh man, he's going to bunch them all up on me, and then I won't be able to do anything with these civilians in the way,'" Eddie recalls. "I figured I'd have to do something right away."

Eddie yelled, "Police officer. Drop it."

The Bandit stiffened in surprise, but he made no motion to drop his gun.

"I was scared shitless," Eddie says. "In 'Gunsmoke,' James Arness always wins the shootout. But real life isn't that way. I didn't know this guy. Maybe he was a former SEAL — trained really well."

The Bandit swung and faced Eddie. He had never fired on anyone during his bank robberies, but he had never been con-

Eddie yells, "Police officer. Drop it!" The Bandit stiffens in surprise but makes no motion to drop his gun. The Bandit has never been confronted before. He is ready with the safety off and a 9mm round in the chute. "I could see the question in his eyes, run or fight?" Eddie recalls. "Then, I could see when his mind said, 'Do it.'" The Bandit starts raising his gun.

fronted before. In case he was someday challenged, he was ready. The FBI found that he had the safety off his 9mm, and a round in the chute.

"I could see the question in his eyes, run or fight?" Eddie recalls. "Then, I could see when his mind said, 'Do it.'" "

The Bandit started raising his gun.

"That's when I dropped the hammer," Eddie says.

In the dead silence of the bank, the shot sounded like a howitzer. As he had been trained to do, Eddie fired in a two-shot sequence. The first round hit the Bandit in the chest. He slumped to the floor.

"It was then that I almost made a mistake," Eddie recalls. "My reaction was to run around the counter and rope him up like an old rodeo cowboy. One part of your mind is gushing up like an oil well ready to pop, and the other is saying, 'Calm down, calm down.' I stopped, regrouped and looked at him. I had to make sure he wasn't playing possum — laying for me with another gun."

The Bandit struggled to stand up.

"Roll over and show me your hands," Eddie remembers shouting. "But he wouldn't. Finally I said, 'If you don't, I'm going to cap you again.'" "

The Bandit rolled over, and Eddie saw a gun lying on the floor next to a baseball cap and black wig. He stared at the nearly bald man, then ran forward and kicked the gun out of the way. He handcuffed the Bandit's hands behind him and hollered for the women to call an ambulance. He knelt



## GENTLEMEN PREFER BANKS

The Gentleman Bandit pulled off 49 successful bank robberies in seven states, netting \$350,000 and making him the third most prolific bank robber since the FBI began investigating the crime in the 1920s. Dellinger outrobbed such notables as Bonnie and Clyde and John Dillinger, but fell short of the all-time records of Edwin Dodson, who stole \$220,000 in 64 heists during seven months in 1983, and Gilbert Everett who hit 53 banks.

In 1929, the first year for which the FBI has records, there were 450 bank robberies. In 1988 there were 7,386.

down by the Bandit, patting him down for another weapon.

"Who are you?" Eddie recalls asking.

"Dellinger," said the Bandit.

"I thought he was playing with me, saying he was John Dillinger reincarnated," Eddie says, referring to the infamous bank robber of the 1930s. "I asked him, 'Are you going to play this to the end?'"

"Dellinger," the down man repeated.

Eddie raised the Bandit's red shirt and saw the skin of his belly turning blue from internal bleeding. Looking at the wound in his chest, he figured that the hit would have been a "10" on a silhouette target.

"You shot me, you asshole," the Bandit said.

"Lay still," Eddie comforted. "Save your breath."

But lying on the floor in the bank, the Bandit knew he was hurt badly.

"I guess 50 isn't my lucky number," he said.

At the time, neither Eddie nor the FBI

As his police training clicks in, Eddie fires a two-shot sequence aimed at the center of mass. The first hollow-point round hits the Bandit in the chest. He slumps to the floor. The second round lodges in a door jam. The shots sound like a howitzer and the muzzle blast knocks over the sign that earlier had hidden Eddie.



knew that the Gentleman Bandit had pulled off 49 successful bank robberies in seven states, netting \$350,000 and making him the third most prolific bank robber in FBI history. Later, in the emergency room, he'd shout to the nurses that he'd robbed 50 banks.

"I felt sorry for him," Eddie says. "I told him, 'You made me shoot you.' He really did. I didn't want to shoot him. But I know he would have shot me. He had nothing to lose."

The Bandit was flown to a hospital, and Eddie answered what seemed like a zillion questions for county and FBI investigators. The next day, Eddie woke early and turned on the morning news to learn the Bandit's condition. Melvin Ray Dellinger, Jr., as the Gentleman Bandit was finally identified, died at 0425, 8 October 1987, 12 hours after he suffered an inoperable wound to his liver. The autopsy described it as a "large caliber gunshot wound in the right lower chest" with the slug lodging near his spine. According to Eddie, the hollow-point Plus P round had expanded to nearly a .50 caliber. The second round Eddie fired was found later in a door jam.

"I really thought he'd make it," Eddie says. "I thought he was too cocky to die."

The Bandit died leaving a lot of questions unanswered. Questions like what he did with the \$350,000 he stole and what motivated him to rob banks. In dying, he also forged a bond with Eddie Morales.

After the shooting, Eddie wanted to get right back to his work as a cop, to try to get his emotions back in order. But officially he was the suspect in a homicide and had to wait until investigators cleared him of any wrong-doing. During those days of waiting, he discovered that he and Melvin Dellinger were both 34, born with a few weeks of each other during the summer of 1953. Eddie grew up in New York City,

only a few hours' drive from Dellinger's home in Pennsylvania. When Eddie joined the Air Force, Dellinger went into the Army. And while Eddie became an Air Force security cop, Dellinger was accepted into the Warrant Officer program, and then dropped out when he was caught robbing a bank.

"It makes you wonder why he did it," Eddie says. "He was obviously smart enough to do something else."

"The Gentleman Bandit was good, careful and lucky," said Bob Pence of Denver's FBI. But on 7 October 1987, things "didn't go his way."

Before he became the successful Gentleman Bandit, Dellinger bungled two bank robberies during his internship. In the first, a teller in a Florida bank handed over \$532 when he told her that an accomplice across the street had a shotgun pointed at her. The next day he was reading the newspaper at breakfast in a hotel when he noticed that a composite drawing looked a lot like him. The waitress thought so, too. She called the police. In his second attempt, he told a bank loan officer in St. Louis, Missouri, that he'd blow up a briefcase bomb unless he got \$50,000. While Dellinger waited in the lobby, the loan officer hustled off to get the money and came back with the police. Dellinger served time in federal prison in El Reno, Oklahoma.

According to Pence, Dellinger once told fellow inmates that bank robbery was "the ultimate crime." There were two rules for being successful, he said. Don't get caught at the scene and don't tell anyone.

One of those rules Dellinger followed to the letter; breaking the other cost him his life. He was caught red-handed by Eddie Morales. But taking his own advice, he never told anyone — not even his wife — how he got his spending cash. Instead, he carried a note in his pocket that gave his

The Bandit slumps to the floor. Eddie's impulse tells him to run around the counter like an old rodeo cowboy and rope up the Bandit. "Part of my mind gushes up like an oil well ready to pop, while the other part says, 'Calm down, calm down.' I stop, regroup and look for his gun."





Former Denver Police Vice Squad officer Eddie Morales holding a plaque he received from the FBI for his role in stopping the Gentleman Bandit. Photo: David Bjorkman, National News Service

wife's name and telephone number. It said, "My wife knows nothing about this. Please tell her I'm sorry. Thanks." His neighbors were shocked when they discovered that the quiet, kind man who had watched their houses for them while they were on vacation was the Gentleman Bandit. They thought he was a traveling carpet salesman. His wife, who often saw him working at a word processor, knew him as a writer.

The FBI believes he was a gambler. According to Pence, Dellinger probably piddled away the stolen money in the casinos of New Jersey and Las Vegas,

The Bandit struggles to get up. Eddie shouts, "Roll over and show me your hands." The Bandit doesn't move. Finally Eddie says, "If you don't, I'm going to cap you again." The Bandit finally rolls over and Eddie sees his empty hands and blood on his shirt. Stepping out from behind the counter he sees the gun lying on the floor next to a baseball cap and black wig (hidden by chair).



where he was a preferred customer at Caesar's Palace, living a "good, not gaudy life." And robbing banks — 49 of them over four years, and two on one day — definitely qualified him as a gambler. Finally, while attempting his 50th, the "house" won.

"His biggest mistake was he was too cocky — so cocky that he came back to the first bank he ever robbed," Eddie says.

What kept Eddie from making mistakes that could have cost him his life during the shooting was his police training. His training clicked in, and he followed the drill he had learned as a cadet: Fire in two-shot sequences, aim at center mass, pick your shot, pick your time, and make sure you really have to shoot.

"I could have shot him in the back when he was busy, but I didn't," says Eddie. "I gave him every opportunity. But after a certain point, you can't hesitate. You just do what you have to, and explain it later. Afterward, you have a lifetime to scrutinize your actions."

A team of investigators scrutinized Eddie's actions and found him justified in shooting the Gentleman Bandit. He received thanks and plaques — one from the FBI — and went back to his job on the police force. But Eddie's memory of that day didn't die with the Bandit. He dreamed repeatedly of shooting Dellinger. The dreams differed from his usual cop dreams — those where "a guy's coming after you and you shoot him and shoot him, but he doesn't go down, and you wonder if someone put blanks in your gun."

"In my dreams, I almost relived the shootout," he says. "Just like in the photographs. I look at those, and I get an adrenaline rush again."

No cop can deny that every day on the job is a gamble. But most say they're at their best when they're facing a challenge.

"Your buddies get shot, you get scared, but always you go back to the job," Eddie says. "It's an adrenaline rush. In a dope deal, every time you kick in a door, you wonder what's going to be behind it. Is there a guy with an M60?"

In robbing the Silverado S&L, Melvin Dellinger met his match in Eddie Morales. He might have had a premonition about that heist and wrote the note to his wife, or maybe he carried it on every robbery. But he must have figured that

## FBI STATISTICS

The FBI attributes the following robberies to the "Gentleman Bandit."

| DATE     | BANK & LOCATION                                 |
|----------|---|
| 1983     |   |
| May 26   | First Blair County Nat'l Bank, Tipton, PA       |
| July 19  | Columbia S&L Assn., Altoona, PA                 |
| Aug. 30  | Valley Bank & Trust, Chambersburg, PA           |
| Oct. 13  | First United Federal S&L, Johnstown, PA         |
| Nov. 10  | Hamilton Bank, York, PA                         |
| Dec. 2   | Lebanon Valley Nat'l Bank, Myerstown, PA        |
| 1984     |   |
| Jan. 30  | Security Savings Assn., Hazleton, PA            |
| March 2  | Landmark Savings, Greensburg, PA                |
| April 9  | Silverado Banking, Jefferson County, CO         |
| April 11 | Empire S&L, Federal Heights, CO                 |
| April 3  | Mellon Bank, Lewisburg, PA                      |
| June 1   | Minnesota Federal S&L, Minnetonka, MN           |
| July 3   | Empire S&L, Jefferson County, CO                |
| July 12  | Drovers & Mechanics, York, PA                   |
| Aug. 22  | York Federal S&L, Camp Hill, PA                 |
| Sept. 6  | First Federal S&L, Gladstone, MO                |
| Sept. 6  | Home Savings Assn., Independence, MO            |
| Oct. 26  | Otero S&L, Colorado Springs, CO                 |
| Dec. 5   | Empire S&L, Colorado Springs, CO                |
| Dec. 27  | First Federal S&L, Johnson City, NY             |
| 1985     |   |
| March 20 | Capital Federal S&L, Wheat Ridge, CO            |
| March 29 | Railroadmen's Federal Savings, Indianapolis, IN |
| May 8    | World S&L, Ft. Collins, CO                      |
| June 5   | Omnibank, Englewood, CO                         |
| Aug. 15  | Empire S&L, Arvada, CO                          |
| Oct. 2   | Silverado Savings, Colorado Springs, CO         |
| Oct. 23  | World S&L Assn., Aurora, CO                     |
| Nov. 7   | First Federal Savings, Littleton, CO            |
| 1986     |   |
| Jan. 15  | Empire S&L, Lakewood, CO                        |
| Jan. 30  | Key S&L Assn., Littleton, CO                    |
| Feb. 20  | Empire S&L, Colorado Springs, CO                |
| March 14 | First Federal S&L, Loveland, CO                 |
| March 27 | Prudential Bank, Redmond, WA                    |
| April 24 | Columbia S&L Assn., Northglenn, CO              |
| June 6   | Empire Savings Bank, Ft. Collins, CO            |
| July 10  | Commercial Federal, Denver, CO                  |
| Aug. 8   | Central Bank, Aurora, CO                        |
| Aug. 14  | Drovers & Mechanics, Spring Garden Town., PA    |
| Sept. 11 | Fulton Bank, Manheim, PA                        |
| 1987     |   |
| Feb. 4   | First Federal Savings, Littleton, CO            |
| Feb. 13  | Empire S&L, Boulder, CO                         |
| Feb. 25  | First Federal S&L, Johnson City, NY             |
| March 18 | Hamilton Bank, Hanover, PA                      |
| May 12   | American Federal S&L, Colorado Springs, CO      |
| May 28   | Empire S&L, Colorado Springs, CO                |
| July 9   | First Federal S&L, Aurora, CO                   |
| July 23  | University Federal Savings Bank, Tacoma, WA     |
| Aug. 8   | Empire Savings, Wheat Ridge, CO                 |
| Sept. 10 | Colorado National Bank, Greeley, CO             |
| Oct. 7   | Silverado Banking, Jefferson County, CO         |

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

someday his number would be up.

"Everything he did was a gamble," Eddie muses. "Maybe robbing banks was part of his game. Like 'how long can I get away with it?' If he'd stopped at 49, he'd still be alive." ❌

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(Courtesy of SOF)

by Robert K. Brown

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Handgun Control, Inc. also understands the value of that kind of deception. That's why the organization that spent the last year and millions of dollars whipping up public hysteria against semiautomatic rifles has always claimed it was only interested in banning handguns.

We at SOF think Gorbachev would feel right at home in Handgun Control, Inc., so sensitive, solicitous chappies that we are, we passed the hat and bought him a complimentary membership for his contributions to gun control. It's the least we can do for glasnost. And truth in advertising. ✂

**A**NOTHER gun-grabber joins Handgun Control, Inc.

When Mikhail Gorbachev ordered the Red Army into Lithuania last April, one of the first things it did was order the people to turn in their guns. The same thing happened in Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Soviet Georgia.

In the last 12 months Mikhail Gorbachev has done more for gun control than anyone else in the world. More than Sarah Brady or Howard Metzenbaum or *Time* Magazine. More than William Bennett or George Bush. He ordered the people of at least four of the Soviet Union's republics disarmed. And because in the Soviet Union all guns are registered, he's made it stick.

In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev is considered a liberal, and he has at least one thing in common with liberals in the West: he doesn't trust ordinary people with guns. Like liberals in the West, he knows that when ordinary people are armed it's much harder to restructure their lives along lines more to your liking.

And like liberals in the West, he also knows the importance of hiding your true intentions when it comes to gun control. That's why when the Red Army confiscated guns in Lithuania it announced it was doing so to maintain "law and order," even though the real reason was fear that if the Lithuanian people were armed they might try to shoot their way

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# SHOT SHOW '90

## *American Arms Industry Alive and Well*

by Galen Geer

A total of 1,210 exhibitors crowded into the Las Vegas Convention Center last January for the 1990 "Shooting Hunting Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show. By using the SHOT Show to showcase new products and innovative improvements of existing lines, both established manufacturers and industry newcomers proved once again that the outdoor and firearms industries are alive and well in America.

Many exhibitors rely on the SHOT Show to provide the lion's share of their merchandise and gun orders for the coming year. New companies often view their first SHOT Show as a make-or-break sales experience. Established companies frequently use the SHOT Show as an opportunity to test new products and concepts. A product that is well received at SHOT will make the company catalog for at least the next year.

### A Sampling of New Products

No single publication could hope to cover the entire SHOT Show, even if new products were the only focus of the coverage. The following sampling of companies and their products represents only a fraction of the new products that were on display this year. Other products will be presented to SOF readers in future issues. If you want to learn more about any of these products, write the company using the address listed.

The Shot Show is a good indicator of trends within the industry. An example of this at this year's show was the proliferation of companies entering the laser sight market. Lasers have been around for years but laser production has been expensive and very few shooters could afford them. Recent innovations and the expiration of patents have brought down the cost of diodes, however, and the retail price of a laser sight is now comparable with that of optical rifle scopes, allowing more companies to enter the market. Accordingly, some companies that are traditionally associated with visual optics are now marketing laser sights. Among these is Tasco, which introduced its new LaserPoint at this year's show. This laser sight has three modes of operation — continuous, pulsed and multi-mode — which sets it apart from other laser sights. Tasco also introduced a new Titan rifle scope series, now available in 3X-9X with 42mm objective, and a 1.5X-6X also with a 42mm objective. (Tasco, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 520080, Miami, FL 32152.)

Another offering in the laser field comes



Gerber's "Stealth" knife introduced at the 1990 SHOT Show.



Camillus Cutlery commemorative series of knives.



Al Mar (left) with SOF Publisher/Editor Robert K. Brown. Brown is wearing Al Mar's new TAC Jacket, introduced at the SHOT Show. Photo: Galen Geer



Ron Robley of Gerber Legendary Blades (center) listens as customers explain their knife needs during the 1990 SHOT Show. Photo: Galen Geer



Heinz Thummel, inventor of the laser sight system and owner of Laser Devices, demonstrating one of his lasers. Photo: Galen Geer



TOP & ABOVE: Walls of Texas introduced several new camouflage clothing items at the SHOT Show.

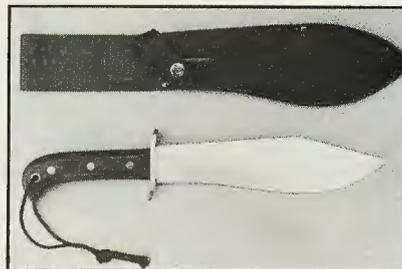
from Aimpoint, a firm well established in the electronic red dot sighting system scope market. Aimpoint is now offering a compact laser sight, also called Laserpoint, to complement their red dot scopes. Aimpoint has also expanded its line of red dot sighting systems with the addition of the 3000 line of scopes. (Aimpoint, Dept. SOF, 203 Eldon St., Suite 302, Herndon, VA 22070.)

A company that has specialized in laser sight systems is Laser Devices, Inc., a firm headed by Heins Thummel, inventor of the laser sight system. The company markets a variety of laser sights of different sizes and intensities and offers special glasses to enable the lasers to be used in daylight. In addition, Thummel has reflective laser targets for range practices. (Laser Devices, Inc., Dept. SOF, 2880 Research Park Dr. #100, Soquel, CA 95073.)

It seems that virtually every rifle scope company has a new offering on the market. One new scope from Shepherd Scopes, Ltd. is the Sniper-Counter Sniper Scope that is a 3X10X140mm giant scope with special range finding features built in. (Shepherd Scope, Ltd., Dept. SOF, Box 189, Waterloo, NE 68069.)

Pentax, well known for its camera line, also manufactures rifle and pistol scopes. This year Pentax introduced two new scopes. The larger scope is a 6X-18X variable with a 40mm objective. The other is a 4X-12X Mini with a 36mm objective diameter. (Pentax, Dept. SOF, 35 Inverness Dr., East Englewood, CO 80112.)

Knives always attract a lot of interest at SHOT Shows, and a particularly interesting



Catoctin Cutlery is marketing this Italian Navy Knife in the United States.



Brigade Quartermaster, Ltd. is actively competing in the camouflage market with their ASAT camouflage pattern shown here. Photo: Galen Geer

one this year was shown by Catoctin Cutlery. The #685 N.E.K. Italian Navy Knife is a large-bladed weapon that is used by Italian navy helicopter crew members as an emergency knife. (Catoctin Cutlery, Dept. SOF, Box 188, Smithsburg, MD 21783.)

Gerber Legendary Blades (FISKARS) introduced five knives at the SHOT Show, including a new "Stealth" knife. The latter is a survival knife system with an innovative sheath that is part of the knife



Aimpoint's entry into the laser market is its compact Laserpoint.

package. Gerber also introduced a new knife system in the Magnum L.S.T. line.

These knives have interchangeable blades for a wide range of jobs. (Gerber, Dept. SOF, 401 Fourth St., Wausau, WI 54401.)

This year the U.S. armed forces are being commemorated with knives from Camillus Cutlery. A collection of four authentic combat knives, including the Navy Mark 2, Army Mark 3 Trench Knife, Marine Corps Fighting Knife and the Air Force Pilot Survival Knife is available. Each blade is embossed in 18-karat gold with the seal for the branch of service that uses it. (Camillus Cutlery, Dept. SOF, 54 Main St., Camillus, NY 13031.)

An unusual knife that has proven itself in the field is the "Game Skinner" from Outdoor Edge Cutlery. This year David Block has introduced a smaller version, dubbed the "Game Trapper," which will appeal to serious sportsmen who hunt a wide variety of game. (Outdoor Edge, Dept. SOF, 2888 Bluff St., Suite 130, Boulder, CO 80301.)

A knife company that has become a part of the SOF tradition is Al Mar. This year Al has introduced Al Mar Action Gear, a line of 28 new clothing products, including Tactical Jackets, pullovers, vest and shooting bags. As he has with his knives, Al Mar is establishing himself with a line of products that will become standards in the adventure clothing market. (Al Mar, Dept. SOF, 5755 S.W. Jean Rd., Suite 101, Lake Oswego, OR 97035.)

Camouflage clothing in various patterns has been an important part of past shows, and this year camouflage was still attracting attention. Brigade Quartermaster has entered the camouflage market with its own pattern, called ASAT. The ASAT camouflage is an All-Season, All-Terrain camouflage that is based on the light and dark contrasting pattern concept that is intended to provide breakup of the human form. (Brigade Quartermaster, Dept. SOF, 1025 Cobb International Blvd., Kennesaw, GA 30144.)

Another camouflage product exhibited at the show came from Walls' Industries of Cleburne, Texas. It uses a new Realtree Brown-Leaf pattern, which "picks up" the surrounding colors in its own pattern. Walls uses the new Realtree pattern in a wide variety of the hunting and outdoor clothing it manufactures, including coveralls, jackets and the Legend Hunting Coat. (Walls Industries, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 98, Cleburne, TX 76031.)

An important side of the industry is the shooter accessory line, and in this area



Silva's newest compass floats and has been shock tested to withstand extremes in temperature.

Bianchi International used the SHOT Show to introduce several new undercover rigs, including the model 4613 "Shark" rig. The shark holster body is made from two layers of tough abrasion-resistant ballistic weave fabric; the harness is made from 1-inch web nylon. An offside ammo pouch that accommodates either two single or double-stacked magazines can be worn either horizontally or vertically. The Shark is available in either right- or left-handed versions.

Also from Bianchi this year are the "Top Draw I and II" holsters for law enforcement. The Top Draw I is a straight-up holster and the Top Draw II has a 15-degree cant to allow an angled draw. Both holsters are made from cowhide, and the holster and shank are lined with steel for extra protection and durability. (Bianchi International, Dept. SOF, 100 Calle Cortez, Temecula, CA 92390.)

Johnson Camping, Inc. introduced a product that SOF readers who are frequent travelers will find appealing: The Camp Trail Travel Kit. The Travel Kit is a zippered, folding mini-briefcase that has four bottle/can compartments on one side and a fold-out mesh pocket with a second deep pocket on the other side. The kit holds the shaving and personal gear that makes traveling semi-comfortable, yet the kit takes up very little room and can be dropped in a briefcase for an overnight trip. (Camp Trail, Dept. SOF, 625 Conklin Rd., P.O. Box 966, Binghamton, NY 13902.)

Johnson is also the parent company of Silva, and this year Silva introduced a floating compass that is light, compact and



Johnson Camping, Inc. has introduced the compact Camp Trail Travel Kit.

features a full size sighting mirror with inch, millimeter, and declination scales for precise map reading. Silva shock tested the compass, and it has proven accurate in extremes from -40 degrees to +140 degrees F. (Silva, Dept. SOF, 625 Conklin Rd., Binghamton, NY 13902.)

Ram-Line, famous for its plastic products, has introduced the Sun-Tech .22 Long Rifle pistol. The 1990 SHOT Show was the first public showing of the new pistol and it commanded a lot of attention at the show because of the use of plastics in its construction and its hybrid composite barrel. (Ram-Line, Dept. SOF, 15611 W. 6th Ave., Golden, CO 80401.)

Every reloading shooter wants to know the velocity of his bullet, and Shooting Chrony, Inc. has developed a compact chronograph that will tell him. It has a velocity range of 70 ft/s to 9,999 ft/s, and the unit is economical. (Shooting Chrony, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 101, Niagara Falls, NY 14207.)

No matter what type of outdoor or shooting product a person is interested in, it was probably at the SHOT Show. But, the best news to come out of the show was not the new product announcements, but the enthusiasm for the shooting and hunting industry. Based on what we saw and heard in Vegas last January, the shooting and hunting sports are going strong for another year. ✕

# PERU'S FATAL DISTRACTION

## *Military Targets Druggers As Sendero Marches On*

by Tom Marks



Peruvian *Guardia Civil* chopper patrols the highlands, as policeman watches countryside over sights of Star Z-45 SMG. Early government responses to Sendero Luminoso were by police, as civil authority was suspicious of giving military too much power. Photo: courtesy of Gustavo Gorriti, *Caritas Magazine*

**I**N two previous articles, SOF Foreign Correspondent Tom Marks examined efforts by the communist insurgent group Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path") to wage revolutionary warfare in Peru. Marks found that Sendero had caused serious disruption of Peruvian life. Yet our corre-

spondent emerged cautiously optimistic concerning the situation in the key sector of Ayacucho — even while pointing out the no-win dilemma of a military which was attempting to fight a counterinsurgency without coherent government support. In this final look at troubled Peru — a land as

vast and populous as Texas, New Mexico and Arizona combined — Marks questions a senior Peruvian intelligence officer who consented to be interviewed only on the condition that his identity not be revealed. The officer voices concerns that need to be aired: his critique of Lima's COIN program has the stamp of authority. Throughout the interview, the officer will be referred to simply as "Pablo."

**SOF:** Let me start by saying that I'm basically familiar with your ideas through my sources here. I've asked to speak with you directly, because your views on the situation in Peru highlight aspects of the government's security situation — and strategy for dealing with it — that you feel could use a good bit of improvement. A starting point: although Peru appears to be doing some things correctly militarily, evidence indicates that Sendero Luminoso continues to expand. What is the crux of the problem?

**Pablo:** What strikes me is the appalling ignorance of government officials about the nature of the movement [Sendero], its background, its history, even its strategy. Most of the people who deal with the "Shining Path" insurgency — either on a professional or other basis — misunderstand it. People, in other words, do not understand who is killing them. Why are they so stubbornly closed to knowledge, to understanding the reality of the enemy? Counterinsurgency doctrine here has been a very effective screen to reality. After all those years, they [government authorities] can parrot some Sendero thoughts, but they do not understand them. Neither the military nor the police have a correct grasp of the enemy they are fighting, so they fight the insurgency the wrong way. And the

politicians have no idea and have to bow to military wisdom.

**SOF: Is the situation really that serious?**

Pablo: Peru probably has lost 20,000 dead in this struggle. People accept that we have arrived at a point where Sendero is a serious danger to the very existence of the country. Yet even now they don't know what it's all about. Most people here are not willing to tackle reality face on. This is an administrative war. Whoever can eliminate the enemy's administrative framework will win. But that's lost on our military. They want to seek out the enemy and annihilate him using the skills learned in military school. You have an armed bureaucracy, so you have to use it. You have a conventional approach with revolutionary war rhetoric. The Peruvian army was — and is — very influenced by the French army. All those notions of metaphysical warfare have their roots there — as does the widespread use of torture.

In a phrase, they want to mold reality to fit military bureaucracy. When they have to deal with an unnatural kind of responsibility, there's dysfunction. In times of danger, a certain amount of creativity is tolerated. But in countries where there is almost feudal servitude to the institution, such as here, the possibilities are limited.

**SOF: Aren't you overlooking the success the government has had historically against the earliest attempt by the communists to wage revolutionary warfare in Peru?**

Pablo: True, we cannot dismiss the military out of hand. When our first insurgency broke out in 1965, the military was able to quell it in a short time using some fairly sophisticated methods. The military subsequently took power in what might be called a "counterinsurgency coup." They instituted numerous reforms, for they had notions of how to use deep social reforms to prevent reoccurrence of a revolutionary situation, at least as guided by the social sciences of the time [e.g. land reform, etc.]. They believed the usual: you have to reform and so forth. This was the dominant thought of the time. Their efforts failed, however, for reasons we now understand. Most particularly, they alienated the key managerial sector of the economy. In other words, if you go too far with reforms, you kill the patient. State machinery, too, became too bloated. It was a splendid and well-meaning failure; lots of new expectations were raised.

Because of that failure, sectors of the military thought all of these reforms were wrong. They watched what was happening elsewhere in Latin America, especially in Argentina, with which we had close relations, and saw the use of ruthless methods of eradication. With the reformists soiled by failure, the more repressive approach had the glow of success. Throughout the hemisphere, Argentina was admired for winning. Their whole approach was comprehensive. That's what you'll find in

our army.

They don't understand, of course, the key differences between the cases. Argentinian guerrillas did not have deep roots. They were too militaristic. When they went for confrontation, they never had a chance. The military could muster more firepower. They were a very shallow organization. They were very much a manifestation of the Cuban tradition. Sendero Luminoso does not belong to this tradition. It opts for popular war using the experiences of Mao and, very much, the Vietnam war. It uses the methodology and doctrine of Maoism, even the same slogans. Ruthlessness just won't do for getting at the roots of such a phenomenon. I mean, Chiang Kai-shek could teach these people a thing or two about ruthlessness — and he lost! This misguided approach comes out of a lack of even very little translation of the good books on Vietnam. There's very little new thought coming in.

**SOF: Still, having just come from Ayacucho, I was pleasantly surprised by how different the security situation was from what I had been led to expect. The approach to the problem was anything but conventional.**

Pablo: Some years ago the situation in Ayacucho reached tragic proportions. Local people were made to go on sweeps, then left alone unprotected, armed only with pointed stakes. All too often they bore the brunt of the battle, because they were the real enemy to Sendero. Sendero made that very clear.

Now, Shining Path is being defeated in some places. The peasants have been rising against it. The situation goes back and forth. In many areas peasants have formed their own units and are trying to get weapons. These are the people who should be cared for, but this has frequently not been the case. The general in Ayacucho is opposed to arming these militias, for it would weaken the army's monopoly of force.

**SOF: I didn't get that impression when I talked with him. Regardless, if your statement is accurate on a countrywide basis, the situation is bound to grow much worse, because attempts by the insurgents to mobilize the people must be met with counter-mobilization by the government. Absent that, the military will inevitably be overwhelmed by the proverbial "war of the flea" — that is, the dog can't scratch everywhere at once. Militias are an essential tool of counterinsurgency.**

Pablo: That is the bleak future we are staring at. The only thing going for the military is that Peru does not have a socialist neighbor, so you don't have a Ho Chi Minh Trail. But you might soon get a

very active "Cessna Trail." Links with the coca trade continue to grow.

Though the military response in Ayacucho was brutal, killing many innocent people, it also wounded the movement. Consequently, it retreated eastwards into the jungles, where it found a full-fledged coca movement. Paradoxically, there it found some of the ingredients necessary for real insurgency. Sendero promised to protect the coca growers against the government and the narcotraffickers. Hence, it gained popular support. From this area, Sendero launched a new strategy. Now, columns come out of valleys and inflict violence. The columns are aided by supporters whom the army has been unable to wipe out in the villages. By December 1987, virtually all of these eastern valleys were under Sendero control.

**SOF: There are reports, however, that Sendero is repeating its Ayacucho mistakes. From the Upper Hualлага, in particular, come reports of militaristic tendencies, of columns engaging in violence divorced from political control. In this respect, could Sendero not be committing the error exemplified by the**

## ANALYTICAL MARKS

In this third and final article in his series on Peru, Tom Marks obtains a long-range prognosis through an interview with a senior Peruvian intelligence officer. A frequent contributor to SOF, Marks has filed stories from the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Sri Lanka, and Peru. A former infantry officer, Marks works and makes his home in Hawaii when not on assignment for SOF.

**Philippine New People's Army (NPA) and its blunder in placing military over political struggle (see "Political Body Count," June 1989)?**

Pablo: There have certainly been some problems. But bear in mind, considering the movement as a whole, Sendero goes to great pains to avoid fascistic errors. It is much more thorough in its Maoist approach than the NPA ever was. It has, in fact, published scathing criticism of the NPA. It claims the NPA has abandoned the basic tenets of people's war. Sendero is much more consistent in its approach to popular war, though it should be noted it is using much more Viet Cong methods than those of early Mao. Terror and coercion are for it very important ways to gain support, going hand in hand with propaganda and agitprop. Persuasion versus terror is an incorrect dichotomy in analyzing their methods. Indoctrination holds the key. The "propaganda of the deed" is very important. The perception of strength goes a long way to being a magnet. True, there are cases of sheer coercion. Yet generally, there is a good balance between indoctrination and coercion. It should be understood, though, that life for a Sendero member is not very pretty. Nobody can be sure of anything except for "the Emperor" [Sendero leader Abimael Guzman Reynoso].

This is an essential element of instability which provides a very important element of pressure.

**SOF: How has Sendero turned this orientation into gains in terms of control over population?**

Pablo: They have been able to grow so fast because they emphasize the Leninist nature of the communist party. They are the Communist Party of Peru. So they have many front organizations.

Sendero has a formal structure, popular committees charged with government or other responsibilities. The party keeps this apparatus clandestine. It runs education, taxation, and all other functions of a government. The actual way in which these functions are carried out changes from area to area. Yet they enlist almost everybody in an organization, often more than one.

Sendero is not just in the mountains. It is also very much in urban areas. It carries out actions in the cities as well as the countryside, which is important given the level of urbanization in Peru. It sees the whole country as a base area with urban and rural areas complementary. Military actions are absolutely secondary to political aims. To gain control of territory and population is the aim of those actions — not to fight the army.

The Sendero plan is to split the country along the sierra [the mountains that run the length of Peru], then cut off Lima from its main food supplies [which are mainly to the north; in the south the road net is not nearly as well developed]. Sendero has spread all along this spine and continues to grow. This was to have been the year of decision (1989), but it will probably take another year and a half, at least, before anything major occurs. But it's coming. This country is in serious shape.

**SOF: In meeting the threat, Peru certainly has not even begun to really tap its available military strength. Most of the army, for instance, is not involved in counterinsurgency operations. What about Sendero's own military? What are they like?**

Pablo: Sendero has local, regional, and main forces. In the Upper Huallaga the situation is especially like this. There, the first company of the main force was formed as early as 1982. All important leaders in this military structure are party members. This is not the case with the troops, however.

Let me emphasize, though: their actions with people under their control are as important as their cutting edge, the areas where they are expanding with the help of their armed fighters. They know they need to have a deep infrastructure. The popular-war approach requires so much discipline and *stubborn consistency*. This is the first time we're seeing it in Latin America. Sendero has every reason to be happy about the way things have been going so far. The war is only nine years old, yet it has been imposed on a country which really wanted to live in peace. Further, there were limited

resources for such an undertaking.

**SOF: Where does Sendero hope to end up? Should they be successful, what would "their" Peru be like?**

Pablo: In the Shining Path understanding of history, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was a turning point. They figure he [Mao] did not go far enough. There can be, they believe, several cultural revolutions.

**SOF: A movement believing that one of the more bizarre episodes in human history is "normal" — what accounts for such a movement?**

Pablo: There is no single explanation for Sendero. You might simply say that our insurgency is a product of too many things coming together at one point. But if you had to simplify, what is happening is because Sendero set out to do this revolutionary project. Every action is part of the popular war approach. Leadership is the most important part of the explanation.

**SOF: Is this, then, Che Guevara's *foco* theory run amok? [Che believed that a small group of dedicated revolutionaries, serving as the core, or *foco*, could accelerate the revolutionary process. In essence, they could "make a revolution" by creating the conditions necessary for the overthrow of the existing system.]**

Pablo: No this is very different. Talking to the Senderistas is like reading Mao. Before the first shot was fired, there were years and years of careful political work, of organization, of sending cadre to live in the countryside, of forming organizations using the social situation to give life to the revolutionary episode. They opposed government reforms, because they damaged the movement. When the first incidents occurred in 1980, you already had 15 years of thorough organizational work. If there were not certain social conditions, their efforts would have been to no avail. But the social situation by itself would have produced a very different revolt had Sendero not been there to channel the dissent.

**SOF: In opposing such people, you no doubt have some ideas of your own. We earlier discussed briefly, for example, the Philippine case. Any lessons there that Peru could utilize?**

Pablo: In defeating the Huks, the Philippines made a major contribution. There, an indigenous government beat an insurgency using essentially democratic means. Of course, here the situation is much more complicated. We have, for example, the cocaine trade factor. It is the most important export the bankrupt Peruvian economy has. The United States wants us to eradicate it, yet a whole part of our society has grown up around it. So most of these eradication measures have played into the hands of Shining Path. If things do not change in a substantial way, the American presence here will have the practical impact of intensifying the war. The military seems to understand this clearly. Yet, now that Firebase Santa Lucia is operational — the



epitome of a firebase — the Americans want us to apply herbicide. It's Agent Orange all over again.

Until now, South American countries have been low priority in U.S. foreign policy. But now drugs have made a difference. The issue, in fact, has taken precedence over all others. But *our* very clear priority for now is the war. We can live with the drug problem for the time being. We cannot live with the war.

**SOF: What will it take to end the war?**

Pablo: We have no overall counterinsurgency plan. In 1965 there was a plan. Now, we have none. We're just reacting. We need to revive our earlier plans and be autocritical. We must look for the enemy within. As an immediate step, special operations must be used against revolutionary operations. But beyond that, you have to look at the problem with a strategic vision. You must support the economic and social actions of the government, because it is contradictions in these areas which produce the conflict. In the sierra, the government does not take actions to lift the level of life. Further, we have not integrated the regions of the insurgency — as well as many others — into the national life. Our country is so large and so diverse. It is not integrated. We don't have a nation-state; we have a meeting of regions.

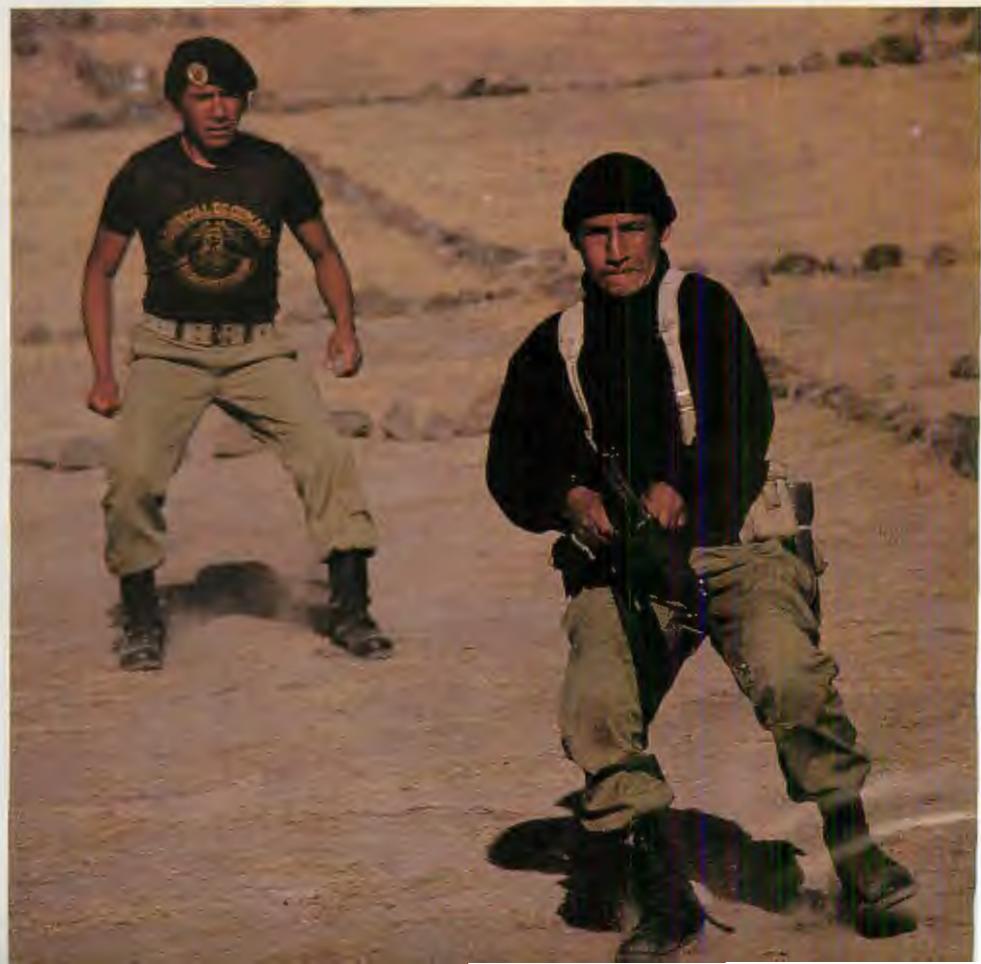


**ABOVE:** *Guardia Civil* members display communist flag captured from Senderos in early '80s. Under leadership of Abimael Guzman, Sendero Luminoso has grown its own peculiar type of communist insurgency. Photo: courtesy of Gustavo Gorriti, *Caritas Magazine*



**ABOVE RIGHT:** With dynamite stolen from Peru's numerous mining operations, Senderos started blowing vital power nets in early '80s. When these power lines were cut outside of Lima in August 1982, it blacked out the capital and 10 other cities. Photo: courtesy of Gustavo Gorriti, *Caritas Magazine*.

**RIGHT:** *Compania Lince* (Lynx Company) troopers train with FN/FAL rifles in Ayacucho. Author found such troops to be young, fit, and with high morale. According to interviewee "Pablo" more such troops are needed, as Peru's most immediate threat is from *Senderistas*, not drug lords. Photo: Tom Marks



The real problem of Peru is national integration.

It is not only important to win, but *how* you win. You perhaps can win with fascist methods, but then you set yourself back a hundred years. We, therefore, cannot just let our military do what they wish. You have to leave society intact at the end of the process. ✕

**SOF MUJ VERSUS MUJ**

***Blood Feuds Ravage Afghanistan  
While Kabul Stands***

# THE EXECUTION

**Text & Photos by Jake Border**



**S**AYED Jamal stepped forward and greeted me in normal Afghan fashion with a tight embrace and three kisses on the cheek, followed by a firm handshake.

He looked much the same as I remembered him from our last meeting in 1988, except for two differences. First, Sayed Jamal's aquiline features, framed by his characteristic goatee and tightly wrapped turban, were no longer commanding nor confident but masked in fear. Second, his feet were fettered with rods and chains.

The former commander of the Afghan resistance party Hezb-i-Islami in the northern provincial capital of Taloqan was now a prisoner of his enemy, Ahmad Shah Massoud.

Massoud belongs to the rival Jamiat-i-Islami, which like Hezb is one of the seven Afghan political parties based in Peshawar, Pakistan. Throughout Afghanistan these two parties have distinguished themselves on the battlefield not only against their common communist enemies, but also against each other.

This rivalry flared in July 1989 when Sayed Jamal orchestrated an ambush against a convoy of Jamiat jeeps that was returning from a strategy-planning conference at Massoud's military headquarters, about four hours' drive from Taloqan. One of Massoud's top men was killed in the ambush. Of the others who were captured, some were set free but 31, say Jamiat, were executed.

Massoud retaliated and after a brief skirmish captured Sayed Jamal and 1200 of his men, the bulk of whom defected to Massoud's side. Sayed Jamal, Eshoni Merza (his brother and second in command), and about 100 Hezb were imprisoned.

Four months after the ambush I was sitting with Sayed Jamal and three armed guards in the jail "guest room." Massoud had given me written permission to visit the jail but the decision to see me rested with the prisoner himself. While I had gambled successfully on meeting Sayed Jamal I failed dismally in getting him to talk.

Yes, he was being well fed and well treated and his cell was comfortable — even praying and sleeping in chains — but he wouldn't open up on the ambush or the killings.

Massoud's men were saying that they had intercepted radio messages from the Hezb-i-Islami party boss Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Peshawar ordering the whole operation, but this remained unproven. All that Sayed Jamal offered was that his brother was in charge of the ambush; he himself had been in Taloqan City when it happened.

It was an exacting and embarrassing

assignment to attempt an interview with a man whose face so clearly betrayed the knowledge that if found guilty he could expect no mercy from his accusers.

I felt especially awkward because in the winter of 1988 a letter of introduction written for me by Sayed Jamal had got me out of a dicey situation after I had been arrested by Hezb in the arms bazaar of Ishkamish. When there was little else left to say, Sayed Jamal excused himself and shuffled off with a Kalashnikov-armed guard to wash in preparation for his prayers.

In an interview that same day Massoud had told me that the fate of Sayed Jamal rested on the decision of the *ulama* (religious scholars) of the four northern provinces under his control.

Sayed Jamal was found guilty on 23 December 1989 and was hanged in public in Taloqan along with his brother and several others.

This internecine conflict all too clearly illustrates the bitter rivalry between the mujahideen factions contesting for supremacy in Afghanistan, conflict which not only belies any claim of muj unity but also saps the morale of commanders genuinely attempting to tackle the opposition army of President Najibullah of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).

Following the February 1989 Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan there were high expectations among Afghans and foreign observers that the mujahideen would sweep Kabul clean of the ruling DRA regime.

They have failed to do so. Moreover, only five capitals in the provincial outlands have fallen to the guerrillas. Even the DRA garrison at Samarkheil — the capture of which was the only muj victory in the debacle that was the battle for Jalalabad — has been recaptured by Najibullah's troops.

The war in Afghanistan has shifted gears and the move seems to have favored the DRA. No longer can the muj limit themselves to hit-and-run guerrilla tactics but they must switch to conventional army warfare, a change for which they are largely unprepared.

An exception is found in Ahmad Shah Massoud, who has distinguished himself by his singular ability not only to notch up an impressive list of victories but also to adapt his men to the changing military milieu.

Massoud heads the 9,000-strong and growing Islamic Army of Afghanistan which rides shotgun for his political organization the Shura-i-Nazir (Council of the North). The army, composed of regional forces (i.e. local muj) and a 2,500-man mobile central strike force under Massoud's personal command, is the product of military training schools that run recruits through a four-week basic course that stresses efficiency in a variety of weapons coupled with religious studies, political indoctrination, elementary study of strategy and tactics, and lectures on the history of

the jihad or religious struggle.

The central forces break up into four regular battalions of 400-500 men each and a heavy weapons battalion beefed up with captured Soviet BMP-1 tanks and BTR-60 APCs. There is also a small commando unit that effectively operates as Massoud's bodyguard.

A lack of funds has inhibited the planned wholesale purchase of uniforms designed to muj specifications, so the central forces ironically continue to wear their adopted standard uniform — summer-issue khaki pants and jacket of the Soviet army. These are being phased out slowly as U.S. Army-surplus uniforms become available.

Although a native of the now-muj-controlled Panjshir Valley in Kapisa Province, Massoud centers his operations in the adjoining province of Takhar to the north. His stronghold is in the Warsaj Valley to the southeast of the provincial capital Taloqan, which the Soviets left in August 1988.

The bulk of the DRA troops either surrendered or quit Taloqan soon after and the muj entered the city with barely a shot fired, although the nagging presence of 500-600 hard-core types, holed up in a public garden called Bagh-i-Zaqira on the city outskirts supported by pro-DRA militiamen scattered at outposts to the north of the city, prompted joint-party operations there (Massoud and Sayed Jamal were then

**Armed with a Kalashnikov, Sayed Jamal on street in Taloqan City during better times in December 1988. Note that he wears his zipper at half mast, much like our great leader Robert K. Brown. Hopefully this doesn't mean that RKB will be executed any time soon.**



**BMP-1 IFV in Massoud's heavy weapons battalion, which includes two ex-Soviet troopers: Ahmadullah from Siberia (2nd from left) and Azizullah from Moldavia, to his right.**



**Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of Hezb-i-Islami, at a press conference in Peshawar.**

allies), that dragged on until December 1988, when the whole area was finally liberated. (See "Bagh-i-Zaqira Garden Party," December '89).

With Taloqan secure both logic and rumor indicated that the summer fighting season of 1989 would be a hot one. Massoud would go for a major target, either Kunduz or Faisabad, the provincial capitals flanking Taloqan and still in government hands.

In expectation of this offensive I trekked across the Hindu Kush for a week and hitched a ride to Taloqan where I found a dozen of my colleagues anxiously waiting

for the same action.

We were disappointed.

Neither attack occurred. The Sayed Jamal attempt at back-stabbing had put all ops on hold.

Meanwhile, a new development arose that further delayed the long-awaited offensive.

Abdul Basir Khalid, an independent Jamiat commander with a large fiefdom around Faisabad, emerged from his lair for his first face-to-face meeting with Massoud in 10 years. Even during the historic 1988 visit of his party boss Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani to Taloqan in September 1988, Basir Khalid did not budge from Faisabad. Jamait sources hinted that both pride and personal rivalry with Arianpour (likewise a

**Massoud's heavy weapons receive attention from men of battalion. Note BRDM Scout car and 82mm recoilless rifle.**

native of Badakhshan Province and one of Massoud's lieutenants), precluded previous meetings.

Personal differences apparently reconciled, the two Jamiat leaders failed to agree on unity but reached an understanding for a joint operation against Faisabad. Events closer to Taloqan, however, forced Massoud to focus on his home front.

Khwaja-i-Ghar, a small government garrison town 40 kilometers north of Taloqan, had been recaptured from the muj and upgraded to the status of new DRA provincial capital. Now defended by army regu-



Gholam Ali (2nd from left), survivor of Sayed Jamal massacre, and group in Khanabad.

lars as well as militia (some of them Taloqan survivors), it was expecting a supply column from Kunduz to reportedly outfit a government assault against Taloqan.

Massoud decided to strike first, but again he was thwarted by Hezb-i-Islami who struck at his rear in a move that upped the ante in the continuing Sayed Jamal vendetta.

Taking advantage of movement of elements of the central forces from their battalion headquarters in the town of Ishkamish (south of Taloqan) to reinforce the planned Khwaja-i-Ghar operation, 700-800 muj commanded by Engineer Bashir (Hezb regional commander for northern Afghanistan) under the direction of Abdul Karib Karyob (head of Hezb-i-Islami political offices in Peshawar), attacked Ishkamish in revenge for Sayed Jamal's arrest and imprisonment.



ABOVE: Map reading classes are part of training in Massoud's Islamic Army of Afghanistan.



LEFT: Ahmad Shah Massoud, leader of Jamiat-i-Islami in Taloqan City.

Massoud counterattacked by dispatching his Taloqan-based central forces battalion commanded by Panoh (a battle-hardened veteran from the Panjshir) supported by regional forces under Akram Khan (who had distinguished himself in the battle for Bagh-i-Zaqira).

The Hezb were routed in one day's fighting and Jamiat re-occupied Ishkamish with only minor casualties, but the Kwaja-i-Ghar operation was postponed and the DRA arms convoy got through.

Nothing seemed to be going right for Massoud. Every time he was ready for a major move he was being tripped by Hezb, and the DRA remained in control.

Circumstantial evidence might suggest to the casual observer that there is complicity between the DRA and Hezb but even Jamiat denies this. However, according to one Jamiat commander a relationship does exist between DRA morale and Hezb-Jamiat inter-party fighting in general.

Gholam Ali is a Jamiat commander from Khanabad and a good friend of mine; I'd spent several weeks with him in 1988 including a botched and aborted attack on Kunduz city. Although illiterate, Gholam Ali is a good story-teller and uniquely qualified to discuss the Sayed Jamal killings — he was a survivor.

His story goes like this. Massoud's week-long war council had indeed targeted Kunduz for the upcoming offensive; it was described as "a gateway to freedom." After Kunduz had fallen the rest would easily follow.

"We should cooperate with each other to defeat the enemy," Massoud had said, instructing his commanders to invite other parties to join the Shura-i-Nazir in military ops. However at the conference's end Massoud received information that caused him to warn his commanders that Sayed Jamal was brewing trouble.

Nevertheless a convoy of four jeeps departed for Taloqan. Gholam Ali was in the first jeep which was ambushed just past the Hezb post at Tangi Farkhar. They surrendered with no shots fired by either side; the single killing during the ambush occurred when the next jeep was stopped and the occupants tried to make a run for it.

About 50 Jamiat were captured and taken to a village where Gholam Ali said they were searched, robbed of watches and cash, insulted and beaten. The prisoners were split up — Gholam Ali and four others whose names were on a list spent the night in a field then were moved several times to new locations, until finally they ended up at a bridge.

Here the prisoners thought they would be set free. "Sayed Jamal is a good man," said one, "he will let us go." Some, in fact, had been freed.

When a second group of Hezb appeared on the other side of the bridge the prisoners became suspicious. The guards ordered them to cross the bridge, and then left.

"We didn't want to move," related Gholam Ali. "We knew they would kill us

on that bridge."

The Hezb on the other side taunted them. "Why aren't you coming over?" they called. "Why are you afraid?"

They had no choice. They walked onto the bridge. "Then they shot us," Gholam Ali said, "and I fell into a deep place."

He was lucky. Three bullets had ripped through his side but he was still alive; the others were dead. When he was sure the Hezb had left Gholam Ali dressed his wounds and dragged himself to the main road from where he hitched a ride back to Taloqan in a bus.

As for the morale of the DRA, Gholam Ali claims that in Kunduz it was high after the Sayed Jamal incident ("the mujahideen are busy among themselves"), down again after Sayed Jamal's arrest ("now it is our turn") when families were evacuated to Kabul, then up again with the arrival of Engineer Bashir in Khanabad ("he might cause Jamiat problems"). Indeed he did.

Weeks before the Ishkamish attack, Massoud had personally acknowledged the potential threat of Engineer Bashir during a novel "press-briefing" in Taloqan, stating that troops would be deployed to protect his flank, a caution he seemed to have neglected.

Curiously, Massoud encouraged us to visit his rival, glibly assuring us of our safety. At that time Sayed Jamal was still alive in jail and Massoud was sending reconnaissance teams out to photograph and map enemy targets, the locations of which were secret and the time of attack always "in 3-4 days time." Two of us decided to make the visit.

We used the public taxi service to Khanabad and arrived to find Engineer Bashir away in Baghlan with all his men. A small group had been left behind to guard their headquarters, where we were welcomed without question and invited to spend the night. Dinner was simple but nourishing and our hosts polite and well-disciplined.

It was an encouraging if unfruitful visit. Certainly the Khanabad Hezb were not ogres out for our blood and I was determined to grab the next chance I had to see Engineer Bashir, confident that he would be as generous with his time as his men had been with their hospitality.

I was wrong.

Ten days later on my way to Kunduz on the first leg of a trip to Emam Sahib I stopped off to pay my respects to Gholam Ali in Khanabad. A colleague was there and he had arranged an appointment next morning to meet Engineer Bashir. Would I like to come along?

Engineer Bashir sat with one or two aides in a room in a mosque that incongruously sported an SVD Soviet sniper rifle leaning up against the wall. He looked younger than I had expected, his face almost boyish yet bearded, without lines of fatigue or worry.

We were looking at the man Jamiat held responsible for ordering Sayed Jamal to

## TRAITOR MUJ?

Many claim that the order to massacre Massoud's men can be directly linked to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-i-Islami, one of the most prominent groups in the Afghan Resistance. According to widely published reports, Hekmatyar has now formed a political liaison with General Shahnowaz Tanai, an officer in the communist Afghan army and the leader of March's bloody coup attempt against communist Afghan president Najibullah.

The fiery fundamentalist Hekmatyar has often been accused of being interested only in self-aggrandizement, supporting the mujahideen when it was convenient, then transferring his allegiance to the Kabul regime when there was more to be gained. The "Free Afghanistan Report" of March 1990 asserts there is more than convenience involved. They say a recent report by the U.S. Commission on Terrorism and Counterterrorism claims Hekmatyar has been an agent for the Kabul regime since 1973.

Whatever Hekmatyar's motives are, the fact remains that his relatively small group of Hezb-i-Islami has received the vast preponderance of aid from Western nations and the Pakistani intelligence service-controlled supply pipeline, and they've used those supplies to kill other mujahideen rather than the Soviets and the communist DRA regime in Kabul. Hekmatyar's detractors believe that the cold-blooded murder of Massoud's men has finally shown the Hezb-i-Islami leader's true colors, and that future aid from the West should be funnelled to groups like Massoud's Jamiat who have proven themselves to be fighting for freedom rather than for their own personal gain.

—SOF Staff

ambush the Shura-i-Nazar convoy.

Engineer Bashir addressed us with an air of elegant politeness and courtesy that barely concealed his inner anger. In a passionate speech that had me surreptitiously checking his bodyguards for itchy trigger fingers, he berated us for appearing before him without letters of introduction from the Hezb political office in Peshawar and for our journalistic favoritism of Massoud.

"We make jihad for Allah, not the Western press," he said, "but in 10 years we have had no useful propaganda from western journalists."

He was furious not only at the imprisonment of Sayed Jamal whom he referred to as "a respectable man and famous commander of Hezb-i-Islami," but also that he was paraded before "sneering journalists" like a monkey in a cage.

By now Engineer Bashir's cheeks were flushed. He didn't blame us personally, he

said, but made it quite clear we were tolerated purely out of the goodness of his own heart. We could ask no questions and take no photographs. In response to a final desperate attempt to elicit at least an official "comment," Engineer Bashir paused for a good minute's silence which raised the tension in the room to an almost tangible level, then came out with a statement that could be construed as a very thinly veiled threat.

"Don't disturb me by pressing more for talks. You should give thanks to God that I'm not speaking badly to you," he said.

But however upset he might have been by his perceived bad treatment by the Western press, Engineer Bashir reserved his full wrath for Massoud. "As you know," he said, "Massoud is my enemy — he is fighting against us in the north."

We left. For a man not willing to give us an interview about the relationship between Hezb and Jamiat he certainly left us in no doubt as to how they stood.

Unprovoked Jamiat attacks against Hezb were uncommon, but not unheard of. While visiting Emam Sahib on the Afghan-Soviet border, local Hezb commander Amir Latif described how the Jamiat commander Amir Osman had taken advantage of the arrests of Sayed Jamal and his men to stage an attack.

Latif concedes however that this fight reflected a local territorial dispute and not official party policy, a point acknowledged by the Emam Sahib Jamiat commander who had remained neutral during the fighting, and who today maintains cordial relations with Latif.

What is interesting though, is that at one stage in the fighting some of Osman's men got surrounded by Hezb and the only way out was to escape via the Amu Darya River, which they crossed, entering the USSR. Even Massoud did not deny this. But Latif alleges that two of Osman's commanders were met by a Soviet commander "Tahirov," a Kazakh, who feted them in his base before delivering them safely back to Osman.

Osman he claims, is a confederate of Samad, the militia boss of Khwaja-i-Ghar, which is just a few hours drive east of Dasht-i-Archi. Osman receives weapons from Samad, says Latif, not directly but via a muj turncoat named Mullah Mohammad Rasul who used to belong to the Karakat party.

Khwaja-i-Ghar is a melting pot of muj treachery and double-dealing. Before making my trip to Emam Sahib I was warned by a senior Shura-i-Mazar officer in Taloqan not to trust anyone there, not even local Jamiat commanders. "Some have switched to the government side," he said, "others are with us but some of their men are with Khad."

Strange? Not at all. Not for Afghanistan. Soon after my arrival in Taloqan in October last year I met Wujkhun, one of the militia commanders who had fought against Mas-



soud in the Bagh-i-Zaqira op. I was astonished. This bugger had been shelling Taloan bazaar last time I was here, and now we were sitting together drinking tea in that same bazaar. Not only was Wujkhun free but strolling around with a bunch of bodyguards armed to the teeth. What the hell was going on?

Well, he had surrendered and now belonged to Jamiat he said. I couldn't believe it. I checked with Massoud himself, who explained: "We haven't accepted him as Jamiat. He came with a commander of Hezb who joined Jamiat, that's the situation."

Ah, right. And what of Allah Berdy, the Hezb-turned-Khad commander you fought against then? "Allah Berdy joined Hezb then later came to Jamiat," said Massoud. "But he is neither Hezb nor Jamiat, he is still siding with the government."

And what about Koori Mali, the Jamiat commander-turned-militiaman who reneged on his promise to revert to Jamiat and went on to be such a thorn in Massoud's side during the Bagh-i-Zaqira fighting? He had escaped. Where was he now, with promotion in rank to Brigadier General? You guessed it. Where else — Khwaja-i-Ghar.

Erring on the side of conciliation has

always cost Massoud dearly, yet he continues to pursue the policy of offering the hand of friendship. "Sometimes it's better to talk, to take the soft path," asserts Massoud. "You lose nothing by making contacts."

Not always. In February 1989 for example, just one day after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the Jamiat political office in Peshawar announced the mass defection of three regiments of DRA troops and militia in a region north of Taloan. The press had a field day. It was variously reported that anywhere between 2,000 and 12,000 men had defected with an arsenal of weapons.

In reality, not one soldier came over. Jamiat wasn't lying, they were just premature in their announcement. According to Massoud, three DRA commanders had actually negotiated their defection with Jamiat but when the government got wind of the deal they brought the errant commanders back into the government fold with the classic combination of stick and carrot.

## ONE JAKE

Jake Border (above left) has been in Afghanistan so often that he has formed friendships with a number of mujahid leaders. Since intense interparty rivalry often involves blood-feuds, treachery and murder, this can be a dangerous proposition. In this case Border meets with one old friend who is about to be executed by another. Recent Border articles include "Afghan Walkabout," February '90 and "Bagh-i-Zaqira Garden Party," Dec. '89.

First they were threatened with Scuds, later offered promotions in rank. One of those commanders was Samad. The place — Khwaja-i-Ghar.

It is interesting to note that regional considerations may overrule party principle, even where Hezb are concerned. Hezb commander Tajuddin of Khanabad, for example, refused to participate in the Ishkamish attack, honoring a locally signed seven-party mujahideen mutual non-aggression pact.

The muj administration of Khanabad is independent of Massoud's Shura-i-Nazar, coming under the umbrella of the Afghan Interim Government based in Peshawar. Many Afghans in Khanabad see this as a safeguard against getting caught in the

*Continued on page 72*

**SOF EXCLUSIVE**

# COMBLOC



# CONNECTION

***Apologists Have Insisted FMLN Terrorists***

***Were Armed Largely With Weapons***

***Captured From the Salvadoran Army. SOF***

***Exposes This Lie With Irrefutable Evidence***

***of Massive ComBloc Support***



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

**I**T was to have been the "final offensive." The FMLN (*Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*) had been planning, preparing and stockpiling weapons and ammunition for the better part of five years. It turned instead into the last hurrah.

What was intended to be the freely elected government of El Salvador's Armageddon commenced at 2100 hours on Saturday, 11 November 1989. Massing approximately 10,000 terrorists, according to intel reports, the FMLN struck almost simultaneously at four locations: San Salvador, San Miguel, Usulután and Zacatecoluca (in the vicinity of Comalapa airport). Six thousand terrorists invaded the northwestern, working-class neighborhoods of San Ramon, Zacamil, Mejicanos, Ciudad Delgado and Soyapango in San Salvador. Other attack points in the city included the military HQ complex, the private house of President Alfredo Cristiani, the official presidential residence and Ilopango air base (about 8 clicks due west of San Salvador and headquarters of the Airborne Battalion and the Salvadoran air force). The other 4,000 guerrillas were distributed among the three other major objectives.

The attack at Zacatecoluca was designed to serve two objectives: first, to draw the Salvadoran army from San Salvador and second, to open an aerial re-supply line from Nicaragua for the terrorists by means of the many small agricultural airstrips in the area.

The fighting was most intense, and the situation most precarious, from the opening of the offensive until Wednesday, 15 November. Until then the Salvadoran armed forces had refrained from employing the air force in fear of inflicting civilian casualties. But small-arms fire proved insufficient to dislodge the guerrillas, and by the 15th the army's position had become desperate. At midnight on Wednesday evening the AC-47 gunships and UH-1H helicopters began their deadly reaping to save the city and the government of El Salvador. The aircraft turned the tide in favor of the Salvadoran armed forces. Fierce firefights continued until Sunday, 19 November, but the FMLN began its withdrawal from San Salvador shortly after the air force entered the fray.

The FMLN offensive was planned as a three-phase operation. Phase One was to destroy the government and military com-

mand of the country. For one and a half years the FMLN had been stocking safe houses (such as Jennifer Jean Casolo's) in San Salvador with food, medical supplies, weapons, ammunition and propaganda. Government sources estimated that 12,000 weapons had been stashed, half of which were to be turned over to their presumed sympathizers in the working-class neighborhoods. Once the masses had joined the revolution, Phase Two was to have been the declaration of a free zone within the city (similar to the enclaves in Beirut) and the commencement of air support from Nicaragua via Ilopango air base. Phase Three was to issue a call for a cease-fire, draw the government into negotiations, and then launch major attacks on the army brigades outside the city to complete the destruction of the armed forces.

None of this occurred, principally because almost without exception the people failed to rally to the Marxist cause. Instead of eliciting sympathy, the mass destruction in the working-class neighborhoods only served to enrage the populace against the FMLN. In an attempt to regain both the

*Continued on page 43*

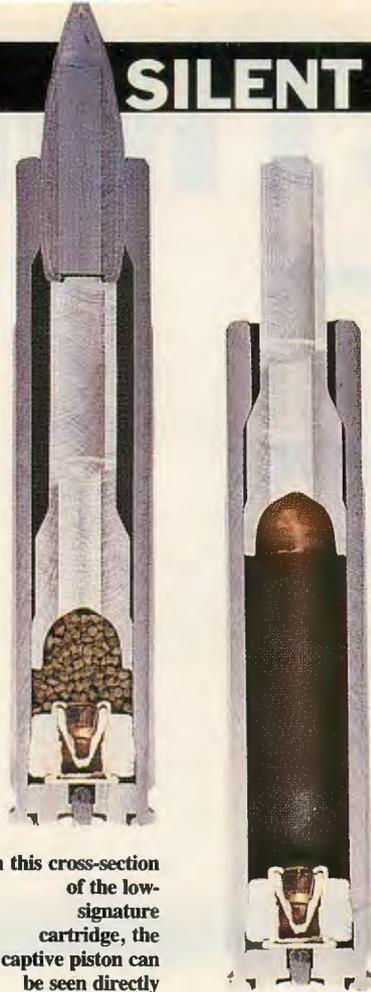
# SILENT KILLERS

Assassination is an ugly, sinister word, heavily charged with fear. While the act itself is as old as humanity, it would appear now to be wildly out of sync with the current state of world affairs and trends portrayed by both politicians and the media. But, beneath the facade of perestroika and supposedly crumbling communism lies the Machiavellian world of the assassin, who is still very much in business — from Beirut to San Salvador.

While once no more than a dagger would suffice, the assassin's tools have in modern times become ever more specialized. Silence is the cloak behind which the assassin operates. There have been no end of devices and gimmicks designed to permit the assassin to terminate his victim in silence and successfully elude subsequent pursuit by the victim's avengers. In an exclusive report (see SOF, "Mystery Bullet," page 60, May '90), SOF recently exposed the new ComBloc 7.62x62.8mm low-signature cartridge intended solely for termination with extreme prejudice. Although we have still not obtained a specimen of the handgun chambered for this clandestine round, during my trip to El Salvador I did procure a photograph of the weapon — published here for the first time.

From the photograph, the firearm's salient features can be determined. It is, in essence, *nothing more* or less than a small over/under double-barreled derringer with the grip-frame configuration of a pocket semiauto pistol.

Overall length is approximately 5.8 inches. The height is about 4.1 inches. The superposed barrels, a monobloc unit, are hinged to the frame (directly in front of the trigger guard) and break open after a spring-loaded, serrated catch-release lever (on the left side of the frame) with a knurled button is pivoted downward. The barrel length is about 3.3 inches. However, almost 2.4 inches of that dimension is taken by the chamber required for the 7.62x62.8mm low-signature cartridge case. That leaves less than an inch for the bore. The barrels are crowned and project slightly from the barrel block. A rectangular slot milled between the barrels at the rear obviously accommodates



In this cross-section of the low-signature cartridge, the captive piston can be seen directly behind the projectile.

Cross-section of the 7.62x62.8mm low-signature cartridge showing position of the components after ignition.

to a minimum and preserve the limited velocity potential provided by piston propulsion. A smooth bore would further reduce drag on the bullet. The World War II FP-45 Liberator pistol had a smooth bore and the keyholing of its 230-grain .45 caliber bullet was considered to be an attribute. In any event, the 122.5-grain boattail bullet of the 7.62x62.8mm low-signature cartridge will probably commence significant yaw in flight shortly after it leaves the muzzle. It is doubtful that the system's useful accuracy potential extends very much beyond 10 feet.

We have determined the propellant charge-weight of the 7.62x62.8mm low-signature cartridge to be 2.3 grains of a lime-green extruded tubular kernel powder. The charge completely fills the cavity in the base of the piston. We can speculate that the powder is extremely fast burning and in that regard probably lies somewhere between Hercules Bullseye and Unique. Through metallurgical analysis we have further determined that the cartridge case was made from mild steel with a tensile strength of 45,000 to 50,000 psi.

Assassinations of heavily guarded targets at such close ranges is usually suicidal. Since the assassin is not always expendable (at least for the moment), systems were developed

the finger-grip ends of the two-round clip used to insert and remove the cartridges.

The checkered plastic grip panels are each retained by a single screw. The fixed front and rear sights are surprisingly substantial for a handgun of this size and intended purpose. The trigger is non-pivoting and appears to be of the plunger type. The hammer is not exposed, and I assume this is a double-action-only mechanism. A safety lever is mounted to the left side of the frame directly above the grip panel.

While it cannot be determined from the photograph, it may be that the bores are not rifled. Based upon what we know of previous experiments in captive piston technology, we have projected the velocity of the cartridge's projectile to be somewhere near 500 fps. The extremely short bore was probably designed to reduce drag

long ago (Hiram P. Maxim patented his first sound suppressor design in 1908) for suppressing the sound of rifles that can be employed at greater distances. To complement the 7.62x62.8mm low-signature system, a Soviet sound suppressor for the Kalashnikov rifle has been issued to the FMLN in El Salvador.

Examination of photographs of this suppressor reveals, with one possible exception, conventional technology throughout its design. Although unsophisticated by today's standards, it is probably reasonably effective, if employed with subsonic ammunition.

Overall length of the "can" is approximately 200mm (8 inches). The unit is installed by turning it onto the threaded muzzle end of a Kalashnikov after first removing the rifle's muzzle nut (AK-47) or muzzle brake (AKM) which have a left hand thread. A spring-loaded disassembly catch retains the suppressor unit securely on the barrel. The exterior tubing appears to be fabricated from anodized aluminum. The main housing has an exterior diameter of about 38mm (1.5 inches). The rear endcap has a diameter of approximately 50mm (2 inches).

The interior assembly consists of 10 flat-washer baffles evenly spaced on three stack rods. All sound suppressors make use of the Combined Gas Law which states that pressure equals temperature multiplied by a constant divided by volume. As muzzle blast is a consequence of relatively high-pressure gasses exiting the barrel, reduction of this pressure immediately before exit, by either increasing the volume or decreasing the temperature (cooling), or both, will reduce the sound. Baffles delay exit of the propellant gases until their temperature and pressure drop to levels that diminish the muzzle blast.

The only peculiar aspect of this suppressor's design is the location of a neoprene wipe assembly (approximately 3/4-inch thick) at the rear of the unit next to the rifle's muzzle, instead of at the front end of the

Left to right: Soviet caliber 7.62x39mm subsonic cartridge features a heavy 192.3-grain FMJ, flat based bullet which is considerably longer than the standard 122.5-grain boattail bullet.



First published photo of the small over/under double-barreled derringer chambered for the 7.62x62.8mm low-signature cartridge.



suppressor — the more conventional location. I can only speculate that, in this instance, the wipe has been placed at the rear in an attempt to reduce back pressure. Expanding propellant gases have a tendency to re-enter the bore when blocked by a suppressor on the muzzle — in my experience, even more than usual with Kalashnikov-type weapons. Gas bleeding into the operator's face can be disconcerting, and noise discharged out the ejection port is increased. The wipe has no pre-drilled hole, and after the bullet and the main charge of gas behind it have been spit through the wipe the rubber will close and re-seal the rear of the unit. The trade-off will almost certainly be a serious degradation of the system's accuracy potential. This wipe location will upset the bullet's path almost immediately

the first. After 20 shots the degradation in sound suppression would be quite noticeable and, if possible, the wipe would probably be changed at that point.

With the thick neoprene wipe adjacent to the rifle's muzzle, we can further anticipate that firing standard-issue ball ammunition might be dangerous. During my examination of caliber 7.62x39mm ammunition at the Policia Nacional, I encountered a handful of

Soviet manufactured (headstamped either '711 77' or '711 78') subsonic cartridges. This load can be identified by a black tip over a green band on

the bullet. Referred to as the Type "US," the FMJ bullet is flat-based and considerably longer than the standard boattail ball projectile. It weighs 192.3 grains, nominal, and has a lead core at the rear and hardened-steel penetrator core at the front end. Propelled by only eight grains of an IMR type, extruded tubular kernel powder (standard ComBloc ball has a charge weight of 26 grains of a similar powder), the muzzle velocity is about 920 fps.

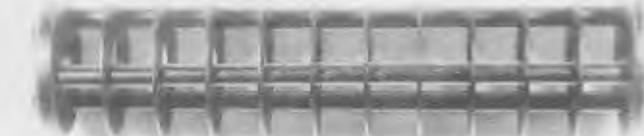
As they have for thousands of years, assassins will continue to attempt to change the course of history with a single blow. While circumstance will forever play no small role in their success, their equipment remains a paramount consideration. Those agents of the Evil Empire sent forth with either of the above two devices are poorly served. Although interesting to students of this black art, neither represent the highest level of current technology.

initiative and the sympathy of the masses, on Saturday, 25 November, the FMLN launched an attack on the upper-class neighborhoods of Colonia Escalon, Reparto Miralvalle and Colonia San Benito. After more killing and destruction, the guerrillas withdrew and the offensive slowly ground to a halt.

In addition to millions of dollars worth of property damage, intelligence sources report the casualty toll of the November offensive is as follows (all figures are approximate): FMLN — KIA 2,000, WIA 4,000; Salvadoran armed forces — KIA 600, WIA 1,500; civilians — KIA 100, WIA 500. The FMLN failed to take any of its objectives. Five years of supplies were expended. FMLN numbers are now down to an estimated 6,000, and the guerrillas have started to press-gang recruits. They have returned to their former tactics — the slow destruction of El Salvador's economy by the bombing and sabotage of electrical power and agricultural production (principally coffee and cotton). They continue also to sow mines (see "Maiming For Marx," May '88) which indiscriminately tear apart the limbs and lives of both soldiers and innocent civilians. In other words, 6,000 bastards are making life miserable for five and half million people, as they have for a decade. Only the Jennifer Casolos of this world could find any equity in that equation.

One of the more unusual aspects of the November offensive was the introduction of ComBloc small arms on a massive scale into a revolution that previously masqueraded as indigenous through employment of U.S. weapons left in Vietnam. Napoleon Romero, a one-time leader of the FMLN, has stated that a 1979 agreement between Cuba, Nicaragua and the various Salvadoran rebel factions stipulated that no ComBloc armaments would be provided to FMLN forces in order to disguise the Managua-Havana-Moscow connection and give the false impression that the rebel movement was entirely indigenous in origin. In addition, commonality with Salvadoran army weapons, such as the M16 rifle and M60 GPMG, permitted the terrorists to use captured stores of ammunition.

On 25 November 1989 a twin-engine Cessna, without identification, crashed near Piedra Pacha in the sub-zone of Jucuaran close to the coast and in the vicinity of numerous small agricultural airstrips. On board were a Nicaraguan

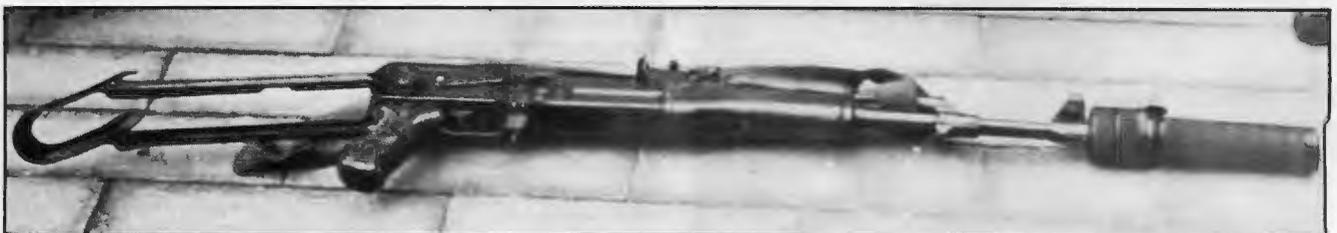


Interior baffle system of Kalashnikov sound suppressor consists of 10 flat-washer baffles on three stack rods.

and the larger than normal holes in the baffles are obviously intended to accommodate this yaw. I doubt the effective range of this suppressor unit is more than 25 to 50 meters. Four- to six-inch groups at 25 meters are to be expected. That means stalking the quarry at unacceptably close ranges. I would prefer some gas in my face and increased noise signature at the ejection port with the capability for head shots from at least 100 meters. In this instance, Soviet designers, it would appear, have failed to address the user's requirements.

Degradation of sound suppression will increase with each subsequent shot fired after

AK-47 with sound suppressor captured from FMLN in El Salvador.





**ABOVE:** Soldiers of El Salvador's Airborne Battalion pose in front of some of the Hungarian and East German AKMs and Soviet RPG-7s captured by their unit during the November offensive.

**LEFT:** RPKs captured by Airborne Battalion. Buttstocks, pistol grips, selector markings and radial cooling fins on the barrel all indicate Yugoslavian manufacture.

Cartridge cross-sections on page 42 courtesy Urschel Mfg. Inc., Scottsdale, AZ.

airlines pilot who was flying the aircraft and three uniformed individuals whose boots appeared to have been manufactured in Nicaragua. None of them survived the crash. Also on board were 24 North Korean SA-7 Grail surface-to-air missiles, one U.S. Redeye surface-to-air missile, one 75mm recoilless rifle with 21 rounds and 34 unidentified grenades.

SAM-7s make headlines, but counterinsurgency wars are still largely fought with rifles. By mid-1986, no more than five Kalashnikovs had been captured from FMLN terrorists. All were carried by guerrilla leaders, apparently as a badge of rank. I examined two at that time. One was of Yugoslavian origin, the other an early Russian AK-47. By November of 1989, intelligence estimates put the number of Kalashnikovs in El Salvador at close to 20,000.

Between the Airborne Battalion and the Policía Nacional, I was able to examine close to two hundred AKs. Most had been manufactured in either Hungary or East Germany. Those of Hungarian origin were



Czech Vz23 9mm submachine guns, with their wooden buttstocks removed to enhance compactness, exhibit evidence of underground storage. They were sold to Cuba in the 1960s.



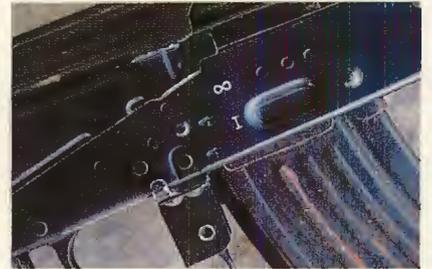
Closeup of selector markings on North Korean AK-47.



Rifle grenade launcher on the muzzle of a North Korean AK-47.



Rifle grenade launcher sight attached to the right side of North Korean AK-47.



Closeup of selector markings on Hungarian AKM — infinity symbol stands for full auto and Roman numeral 'I' for semiauto.

all standard AKMs with rigid wooden buttstocks, most showing evidence of heavy use. Hungarian Kalashnikovs carry selector markings of an infinity sign (a sideways numeral "8") for full auto and the Roman numeral "I" for semiauto. Their wood furniture is not laminated in the Soviet manner.

All of the East German specimens were the MPiKMS-72 folding-stock variant. Without exception all were new and had been manufactured in 1984. This AKM model can be immediately distinguished by its unusual single-strut steel buttstock which is hinged at the rear of the receiver and swings against the right side of the receiver. Other distinguishing characteristics include selector markings "D" ("dauerfeuer" for full auto) and "E" ("einzelfeuer" for semiauto), a tan plastic pistol grip and muzzle brake of the Soviet AKM style, a phenolic handguard with vertical gripping serrations on each side, and a brown plastic guard over the gas cylinder. Elevation increments on the rear sight are 100-meter intervals from 100 to 800 me-



Manufactured by the PRC and originally exported to Dallas, Texas, by Norinco for commercial sale in the U.S., this caliber 5.56x45mm NATO semiauto-only AKM was supplied to the FMLN by U.S. sympathizers.

ters. The battle-sight setting is marked "N." In all other respects this model follows the standard Russian AKM pattern, including the five-component anti-bounce device which acts as a mechanical drag on the hammer to delay its striking the firing pin until the bolt group has stopped moving.

I also examined one East German AK-47 with a down-folder stock manufactured in 1960. There were several North Korean AK-47s, also of the down-folder variety. One North Korean AK-47 was equipped with a rigid wooden stock and modified for grenade launching by attachment of a launcher on the muzzle. It was similar in appearance to the Polish LON-1; it had a grenade launching sight on the right side of the receiver below the rear sight and a modified gas cylinder with a cut-off valve. During my examination of caliber 7.62x39mm ammunition, I came across a handful of crimped ballistite (blank) cartridges with black tips, also of North Korean manufacture, designed for launching rifle grenades from this weapon.

With the exception of two red plastic Soviet manufactured magazines, all of the 30-round Kalashnikov magazines I observed were of blued steel and devoid of markings.

There were a substantial number of RPK squad automatics and all were of Yugoslavian manufacture. Selector markings on Yugoslavian Kalashnikovs are "R" (full auto) and "J" (semiauto). The bipod-equipped Yugoslavian M72 LMG can be distinguished from a distance by the radial cooling fins along that length of the barrel directly under the gas cylinder. In addition, the wooden buttstock is that of the M70B1 rifle and not that of the Soviet RPK.

Most surprising of all were three caliber 5.56x45mm NATO semiauto-only AKMs that were manufactured in the People's Republic of China and exported to Dallas, Texas, by Norinco for commercial sale. All carried the Norinco logo, the arsenal code of "66" in a triangle and the model designation "84S." The serial number of one of these rifles was "309138." Well-intentioned gifts, no doubt, from FMLN sympathizers in the United States, but hardly desirable when tens of thousands of selective-fire Kalashnikovs (whose magazines will not interchange with those of 5.56x45mm caliber) were in the FMLN inventory.

Although caliber 7.62x39mm ammunition for the Kalashnikovs is removed from the original packing crates and cardboard boxes and shipped to El Salvador from Nicaragua in grain sacks, examination of the cartridge headstamps provides explicit information concerning the country of origin, factory and date of manufacture. A statistical analysis of a significant quantity of small arms ammunition can yield valuable information concerning the identity of the nations supporting the FMLN terrorists and the relative extent of their support. With these objectives, I individually exam-

ined approximately 5,000 captured caliber 7.62x39mm cartridges in storage at the Policia Nacional HQ in San Salvador. They yielded the following information:

At least six countries have manufactured 7.62x39mm ammunition that was supplied to the communist terrorists in El Salvador. They are Cuba, the Soviet Union, North Korea, Romania, East Germany and Bulgaria. Cartridges originating from North Korea (headstamped '93 79,' '93 82,' '93 84,' '93 85' and a triangle plus circle symbols), Romania (headstamped '22 80'), Bulgaria (headstamped '10 87') and East Germany (headstamped with either factory code '04' — believed to be the old Polte factory in Magdeburg — or '05' — believed to be the old MWS factory in Schonebeck — and various dates of manufacture) represented less than 10 percent of the total inspected.

The remainder were more or less equally divided between Cuba (headstamped with factory code '13' and manufacture dates of '81,' '82,' '83,' '84,' '85,' '87' and '88') and the USSR (headstamped with factory codes '17,' '60,' '270,' '539' and '711' with manufacture dates throughout the 1970s and 1980s).

About 20 percent of the cartridges were tracer (green tip). While a very few of these were of North Korean manufacture, the vast majority were Russian. No tracer ammunition of Cuban origin was observed and it would appear that factory '13' does not at present have this potential. Prior to 1980, the Cuban headstamp code was 'PMV.' This factory was apparently established by Soviet engineers during the mid-1970s, as the earliest 'PMV' headstamp noted by collectors is '77.' No Cuban 7.62x39mm cartridges with a 1986 date of manufacture were observed. Least common was the year 1985, all specimens of which had a dark colored primer cup in contrast to the brass primer cup of all other Cuban-manufactured 7.62x39mm ammunition. All Cuban ammunition has a copper-washed steel case and a red primer annulus and case-mouth sealant. Several specimens of this type were observed without headstamps. They are presumed to be of Cuban origin, but this or the time frame of manufacture cannot be established with any degree of certainty.

Although statistically insignificant, I did find two cartridges headstamped 'PMC 7.62x39MM,' indicating manufacture in South Korea for sale in the United States.

I found only two types of bayonets for the FMLN's Kalashnikovs. Most prevalent was the East German AKM wire-cutter style with a 1st pattern bayonet (black plastic grips and a large, bulbous pommel) and a matte-black, 2nd pattern plastic scabbard molded with a distinctive partial cross-rib at the midpoint. In smaller quantity were older AK-47 bayonets with a spear-point blade and steel scabbard of undetermined origin. All of these captured bayonets now occupy positions of great pride on the web gear of Salvadoran

soldiers.

Light machine guns still provide the most important base of firepower for any platoon or squad-sized unit. While the RPK prevails, there is ample evidence that the superb Soviet PKM GPMG has been issued to the FMLN, even though I never personally inspected any. I did find numerous 250-round non-disintegrating belts for the PKM and a 500-round belt box intended for use with the PKM in the anti-aircraft role. Furthermore, I have a "Manual de Instruccion para Comandos Urbanos" printed by the FMLN that covers disassembly/assembly, zeroing, immediate action charts and both ground and anti-aircraft employment of the PKM, as well as the AKM, RPK, M26-A2 grenade launcher, RPG-7, RPG-18 and Dragunov.

I examined two SVD (Samozariyadnaya sniperskaya Vintovka Dragunova) sniper rifles complete with PSO-1 telescopic sights. Both appeared to be of Soviet origin. However, the serial numbers and arsenal codes had been ground off the bottom of the receiver in back of the magazine-well.

All of the caliber 7.62x54R ammunition, both ball and tracer, provided for the FMLN's PKMs and SVDs was of Russian origin (factory codes '60' and '188' — manufactured in the 1980s). Factory '188' purportedly produces "match-grade" ammunition for the Dragunov.

Nobody wants submachine guns anymore. Why should they, when a folding-stock Kalashnikov is available? Nevertheless, a substantial quantity have been captured from the FMLN. Most common were the Czechoslovakian Vz23 (fixed wooden stock) and Vz25 (folding stock) 9mm Parabellum SMGs. In the early 1960s, large quantities of these burp guns were sold to Cuba. All that I examined were badly corroded from extensive underground storage. Some of the Vz23 specimens had had their stocks removed, apparently to enhance their compactness. The 9mm cartridges accompanying the weapons were produced in Argentina, Portugal and Austria. Several Austrian Steyr MPi69 SMGs have also been found in FMLN hands, as well as a U.S. M3A1 "Grease Gun," the latter so badly corroded it would not function.

Pistols play an even more insignificant role in modern combat, yet they abound in El Salvador, apparently as badges of rank among guerrilla commanders. They are principally of two types and calibers. I examined at least a dozen Hungarian PA-63

### *Continued on page 83*

**RIGHT:** The cartridge trail leads directly to six Marxist countries. Captured caliber 7.62x39mm ammunition can be identified by the headstamps (left to right) — top row: '04' (East Germany), '10' (Bulgaria), '22' (Romania), '93' and triangle with zero (North Korea); bottom row: '13' (Cuba), '17,' '60,' '270,' '539' and '711' are all Soviet factories. Manufacture dates range from 1970 to 1988.



Closeup of East German MPiKMS-72 manufactured in 1984 shows selector markings of 'D' ("dauerfeuer" for full auto) and 'E' ("einzelfeuer" for semiauto) and details of its unique folding stock.



Closeup of North Korean AK-47 downfolder with Soviet-made red plastic magazine.



Designed for use against helicopters, parachute flares filled with wire-wrapped Flex-X can be fired singly by pull-cord or by means of this shoulder-held nine-tube launcher. The maximum effective range is 600 to 700 meters.



Introduction of ComBloc small arms has added four new calibers to complicate the FMLN logistics (left to right): 7.62x54R (ball and tracer), 7.62x39mm (ball, ballistite and tracer), 7.62x25mm and 9mm Makarov.



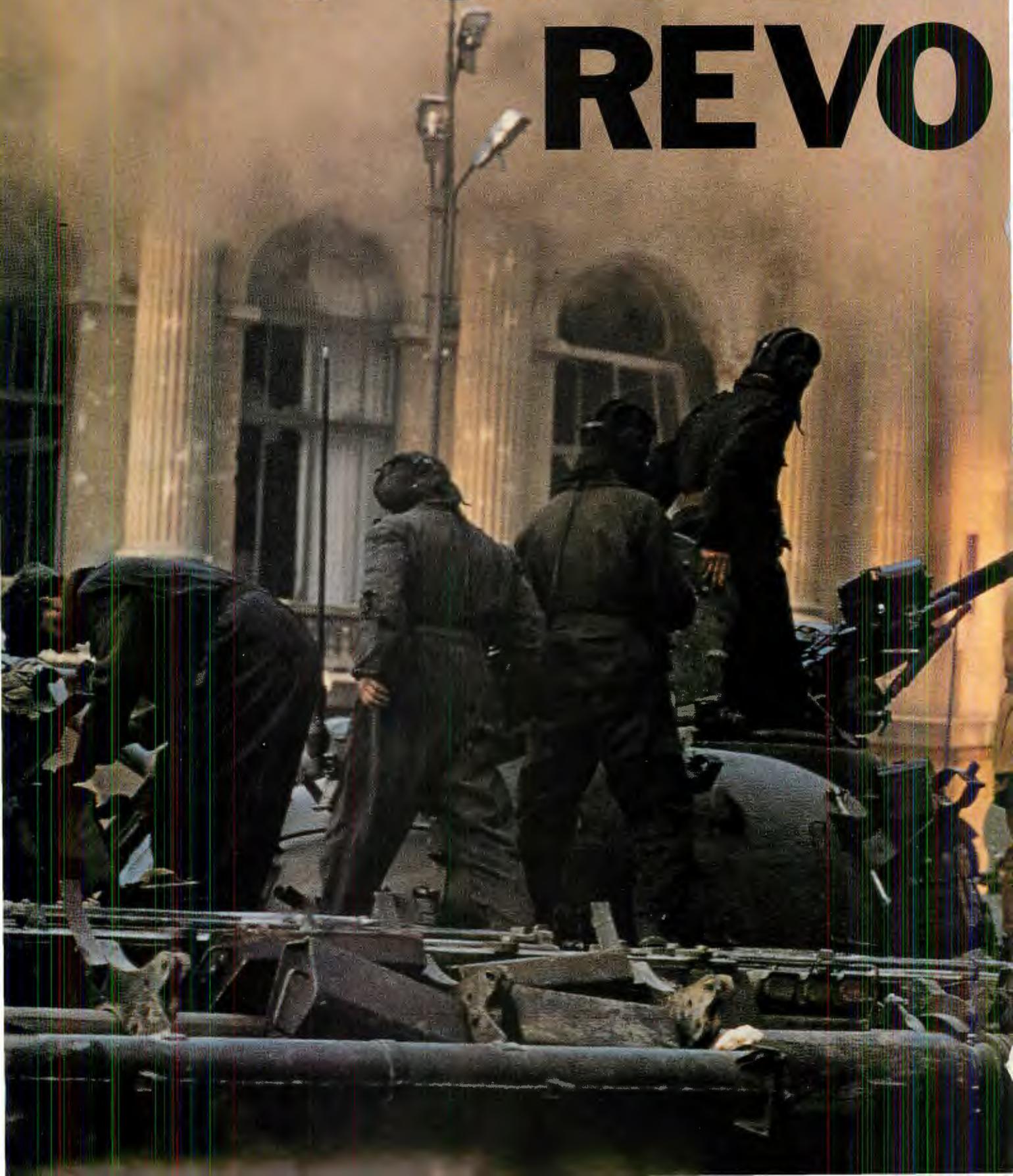
Hungarian PA-63 Makarov pistols were captured from the FMLN in large numbers during the November offensive. Based upon the Walther PP, this double-action, blowback-operated pistol has a lightweight alloy frame. Shown with two terrorist manuals published by the FMLN, one on explosives, the other covering ComBloc small arms.



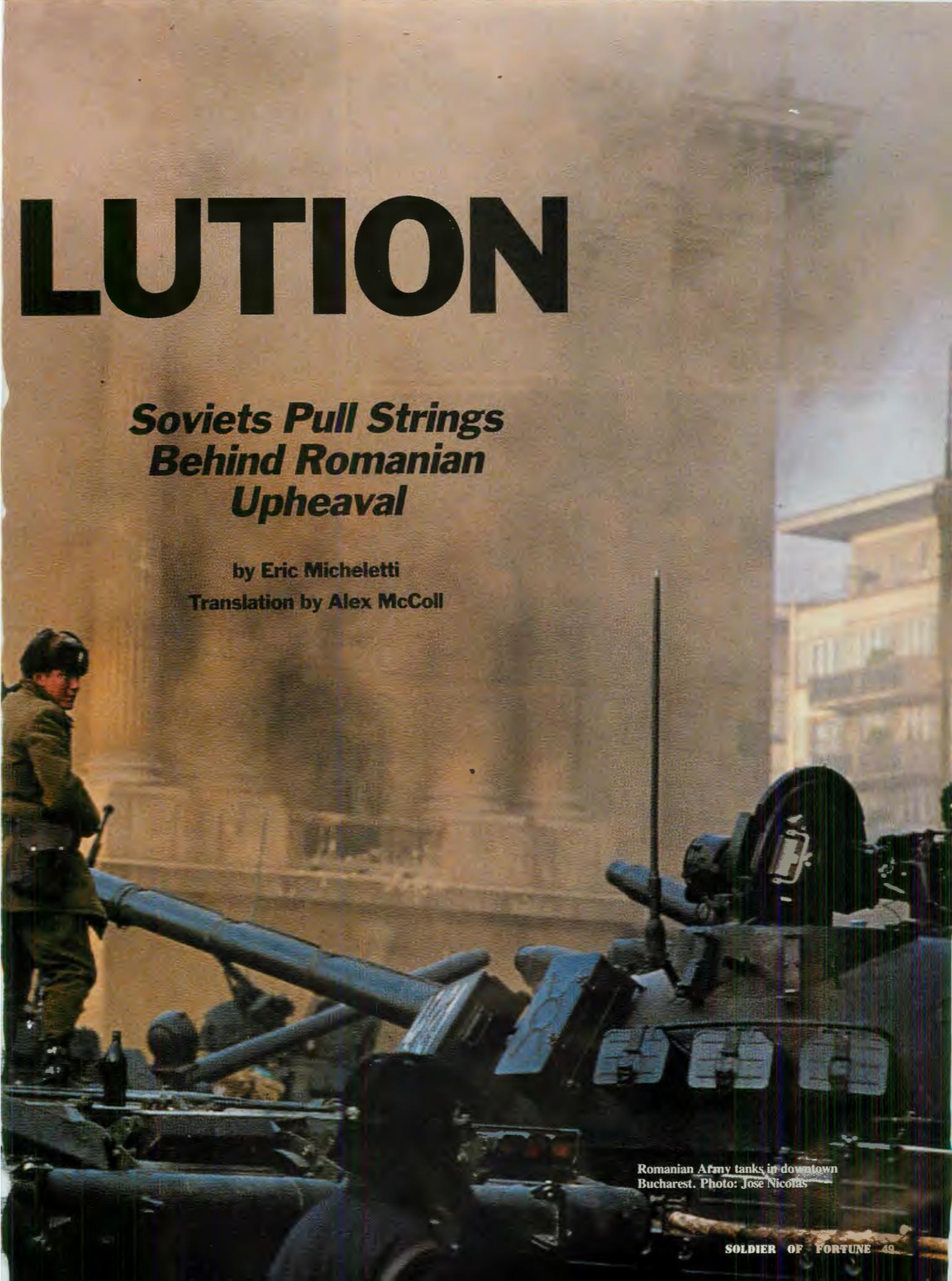
Improvised "flare bombs" are fabricated from German parachute flares modified by the addition of a wire-wrapped charge of the plastic explosive Flex-X.

SOF GLASNOST

# PUPPET REVO



# LUTION

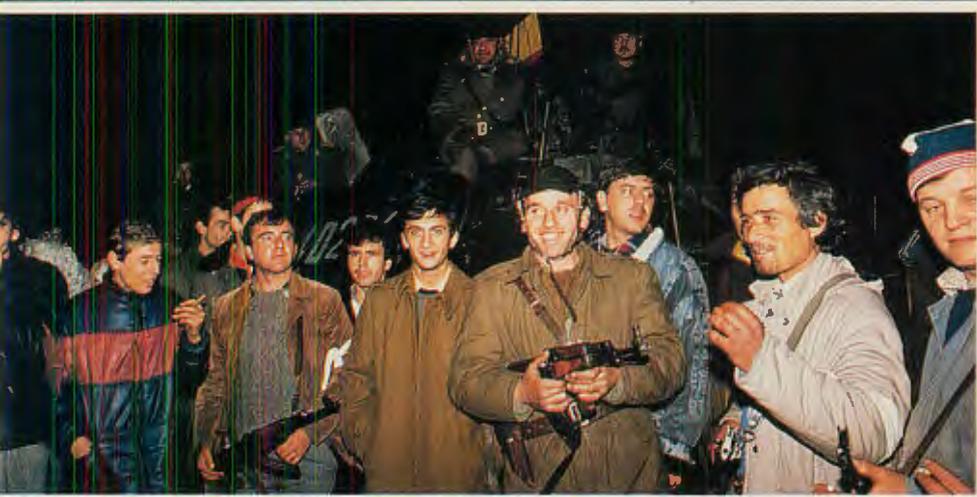


## *Soviets Pull Strings Behind Romanian Upheaval*

by Eric Micheletti

Translation by Alex McColl

Romanian Army tanks in downtown  
Bucharest. Photo: Jose Nicolas



**B**UCHAREST, Ministry of the Interior, Monday, 18 December, 1530 hours. Since morning the reports had been piling up on the desk of Tudor Postelnicu, Ceaucescu's Minister of the Interior: "The demonstrations of the last two days in Timisoara were instigated and stirred up by provocateurs. The forces of order — army soldiers and the militia — have been provoked beyond endurance. Bloodshed is inevitable."

These reports noted the presence of "Soviet observers," who followed and photographed these things from one end to the other. The bizarre part is that they were on the scene even before the crowd, the agitators or the police got there! The reports concluded, "There is a strong presumption that the Soviet 'observers' were in fact the instigators of these demonstrations!"

In fact the Securitate was right, for the Kremlin had decided in great secrecy and as early as 24 November to strike down Ceaucescu and his main collaborators by whatever means might be required. Four days before that, the *Conducator* had signed his own death warrant in a speech at the Congress of the Romanian Communist Party. Very suspicious of Gorbachev, and to the surprise of everyone, the master of Romania denounced the annexation of Romanian territories at the end of World War II, and demanded the return of northern Bukovina and Bessarabia to the motherland. There was astonishment in Moscow. Was this an attempt at one-upmanship by a Ceaucescu threatened by a pro-Soviet reform tendency within the Romanian Communist Party, or was it empty talk so he could sound like the other rulers in East Europe?

The Kremlin decided to react immediately. Orders were given to the KGB and, for the first time, also to the GRU (which maintains very close and privileged relations with their Romanian counterparts) to activate heretofore dormant networks and to provide maximum support (money, contacts and operatives) to a semi-clandestine movement called the National Salvation Front. This movement, consisting of high officials of the regime who were recruited when it was set up over two years earlier after the riots at Brasov, had been lying dormant.

After the coup, the leaders of the Front

**TOP INSET:** The morning of 23 December in the Place de la Republique: Police, who have rallied to the new regime, fire on suspected Securitate positions in the National Museum. Note new shortened version of Romanian-produced AKM, often seen in hands of police during this insurgency. Photo: Jose Nicolas

**BOTTOM INSET:** Students and soldiers in the street on the decisive night of 22-23 December. Photo: Jose Nicolas

**LEFT:** Very early Saturday morning, tanks have surrounded the blazing National Museum. Throughout the following night they will spray the facade with machine-gun fire. Photo: Jose Nicolas

## STRANGE FIREFIGHTS

Beginning the evening of 22 December, what became of the famous 20,000 men of the Securitate? And among the die-hards, why did none of them have RPG-7 rocket launchers to stop the army's tanks, as you always find in the street battles in Beirut? All they had were assault rifles, sniper rifles or even pistols. And in the army, why did no observer report deployment of light artillery — 76 and 82mm weapons — to meet the eventual counterattack of the motorized units of the Securitate? Other weapons always present in a *real* war that were missing in this case were mortars (82mm and 120mm) and Sagger-type antitank missiles. Could it be that the scenario had already been worked out the night before the coup?

Other questions: where was the navy with its 7,500 sailors of whom 2,500 were recalled reservists? Where was the air force with its 32,000 men, including 10,000 recalled reservists, equipped with 45 MiG-23s, 185 MiG-21 F/PF/Us, 90 MiG-17s and a fleet of combat helicopters? Same for the 15,000 frontier guards and the 250,000 men of the Patriotic Guard. To say nothing of the antiterrorist group based near Bucharest and the famous Directorate No. 5, assigned to protect Party dignitaries, all of whom took off.

In fact, it is reasonable to ask whether there was really any consistent opposition by the Securitate, or merely delaying actions fought by gangs of "desperadoes" trying to escape.

who were now in power keep insisting that "the revolution was spontaneous," despite the statement by General Militaru that "The Front has been operating for over six months." General Ion Pacepa, one of the chiefs of the Romanian secret services, alleged that Militaru was an agent of the Soviet GRU.

In fact the Soviet objective, of course never clearly admitted, has for some time been to get rid of Ceaucescu, who was no longer presentable as compared to the other new regimes in Eastern Europe, but also and most important, to maintain the communist system in Romania, even at the cost of "re-doing the facade" of the regime.<sup>1</sup>

Given these facts, the pretty picture of spontaneous events loses credibility. It was orchestrated entirely by Gorbachev, the real mastermind of the coup. Make no mistake, given the considerable police and counterintelligence apparatus of the communist states, all dependent on the KGB, there would have been no difficulty in crushing the popular movements in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia . . . and in Romania.

Back to the chain of events: on Saturday, 16 December 1989, the first "spontaneous" demonstrations broke out in Timi-

soara. The cycle of provocation and repression launched by the "foreign agents," so the reports say, worked to perfection. By 18 December Ceaucescu knew what he was up against, but believed that he had won and left for Tehran — against the advice of his closest associates, who begged him to stay. But in his absence they did nothing, and the networks, which were becoming less and less clandestine, made their move throughout the country, and especially in the army, the militia and the Securitate. On his return from Iran, the *Conducator* finally understood the danger, and announced in a speech on television that there was in Romania a plot being directed from the outside.

It was too late, the end was coming. He tried to rally the "loyalists" in the Place de la Republique, but was booed and shouted down. Ceaucescu finally understood why, when he offered to resign on 17 December, his resignation was refused.<sup>2</sup> It was too early; the conspirators were not yet ready.

Thursday, 21 December, at 1530 the "insurgents" demonstrated in and overran Cluj, a city close to Timisoara. It was a test, and it worked, as there was no reaction by the Securitate or the militia. Their chiefs had already gone over to the rebellion. Friday morning the army came out of its barracks, and the coup d'etat really began. In the classic "putsch" manner, the troops and insurgents took possession of the radio and TV stations in Bucharest. The expertise of the KGB was becoming obvious.

News of massacres and thousands being killed was spread without interruption by Soviet, Yugoslav and Hungarian TV. It was a stroke of genius — the insurgents understood (or "big brother" whispered it to them) that to persuade the West, there must be televised pictures, all the more effective if televised live. So the world was treated to a non-stop series of real or fake shots of "combat," of massacres,<sup>3</sup> of populations rejoicing. All the major cities rose up at the same time as the capital: Timisoara, Arad, Resita, Brasov, Sibiu and Constanza.

What then were the 20,000<sup>4</sup> men of the Securitate, described as Ceaucescu's Pretorian guard, armed to the teeth and ready to do anything, doing? In fact, more than 80% of them were let into the *secret some hours* before the coup, and stayed prudently at home. The rest, who either happened to be on duty or were the hardcore true believers, fought all through Friday night and part of Saturday, as they still believed in the presence of the *Conducator* in Bucharest. Or, as was stated by a militia member at his trial, "I was on guard in front of our buildings when armed groups appeared. All I could think of was to defend the place against the enemies of the country!"

To which the judge replied: "But you killed innocent people for that tyrant Ceaucescu!"

The militia member then became the

*Continued on page 53*



## THE ROMANIAN ARMY AND THE COUP D'ETAT

At the time of the coup, the Romanian army had a strength of 140,000 men, including 93,000 conscripts, organized into two armored divisions (about 1,430 tanks, including 1,000 T-54/55s, 200 M-77s and 30 T-72s, plus 250 quite obsolete T-34s); eight motorized divisions (of which half were at 50% strength); three mountain regiments; five regiments of artillery and two airborne regiments, plus service troops. It must be noted that Ceaucescu distrusted his army, and especially the senior officers — for good reason — and for this reason allowed them very little ammunition. On the other hand, it would be wrong to say that its weapons were entirely obsolete. In fact, its armament was at all points identical

to that of the adjoining Warsaw Pact countries. Further, the Romanians, along with the other Pact countries, had received T-72s, MiG-23s and MiG-24s. This modern materiel did not get involved in the fighting, given the weak to non-existent resistance by the members of the Securitate.

On the other hand, noteworthy is the almost total lack of combat experience of the soldiers in the Romanian army. It suffices to see the photos and films of confused soldiers firing in all directions, almost always at nothing in particular or, even worse, on curious bystanders. Moreover, the present authorities in Romania admit that 90% of the victims of the fighting were accidentally killed by the army or by civilian insurgents.

**TOP:** A column of Romanian-made T-54 tanks moves into the Place de la République. In the foreground is a wrecked Securitate vehicle. Photo: Jose Nicolas

**RIGHT:** Soldiers and members of the "Patriotic Youth" fire on buildings from which "terrorists" have fired on the crowds. Note man in pork-pie hat with Stechkin machine pistol. Photo: Jose Nicolas





ABOVE: Insurgent students with “guttled” communist Romanian flags. Cutting out the communist coat of arms was a popular release during the revolution. Photo: Jose Nicolas



## FRENCH CONNECTION

Eric Micheletti is editor of *Raids* magazine, an excellent French-published counterpart to SOF. This article and many of these photos first appeared in *Raids*' March issue, and are reprinted by arrangement. Text translation by Alex McColl.

accuser: “First of all, I had no orders to do otherwise, and further, throughout your whole career you have been sentencing people in the name of that same tyrant. . . .” In fact, it was just a few teams of Securisti that caused all the skirmishes and insecurity in part of Timisoara and in Bucharest. In the capital this handful — holed up in

numerous official buildings such as the Presidential Palace, the National Museum, the Library and in the Central Committee building

which were all linked by underground tunnels built before the war — *was able to* block all advances by the *armored units* of the insurgent army. But make no mistake, there were only about a hundred Securisti fighting in all of Bucharest, and mostly to

*Continued on page 55*

*This is the unusual adventure of a young Frenchman who was in Bucharest during the fall of the Ceaucescu regime. Not content to follow the progress of the last battles, his investigations while the Romanian capital was in a state of chaos led him into the headquarters of the Securitate. He then set to work finding and recovering — not without trouble since some of the Romanians took him for a sympathizer for the dictator's guard — documents and equipment that are now unique witnesses to history.*

Arriving at the famous Place de la Republique in front of the Presidential

lashnikovs, waved us through. I was immediately struck by the quantity of web-gear pouches cluttering the ground. They were all over. Gradually, as we approached the Presidential Palace, we noticed that the windows were riddled with bullet holes. A slight breeze moved the curtains, tragic white flags in this strange atmosphere. The lights were still on, the only sign of life inside the palace. In its fall, the regime didn't even have time to turn off the lights, and its replacement hadn't gotten around to it. Everything was motionless, as in a vast museum presented to the whole world.

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## **“We have defeated the monster,” one hears everywhere.**

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Palace in Bucharest, we saw tanks of the Romanian army. They kept their main guns pointed at possible points of resistance by the Securitate, notwithstanding the announcement a bit earlier of the death of Ceaucescu and his wife. In fact, isolated, desperate small groups of deserters were even then trying to exfiltrate the hot spots in Bucharest, using their small arms to clear a way.

Numerous roadblocks were set up to prevent their escape. For the moment, fear of a “kamikaze” terrorist was on all faces, and the men of the Securitate were fighting in civilian clothes, the better to disappear into the civilian population.

The last defenders of the regime had finally failed in their effort to intimidate the people and to prevent the formation of a government by the Front for National Salvation. But they were taking cruel revenge by randomly firing at anyone passing in front of their assault rifles. To prevent panic the army encircled the last points of resistance and was reducing them with small-arms fire, sometimes supported by the heavy machine guns on the T-54s. Not having seen any knocked-out tanks in the center of the city, it was obvious that no RPG-7 rocket launchers were used in the battle. Could one conclude that the Securitate was never equipped with this weapon, which undoubtedly would have scattered the concentrations of tanks standing around the toughest points of resistance?

We went through the last barricade on foot. As always, half-frozen students searched through our bags and pockets and “patted down” our bodies. Among them were some pretty girls who asked for our papers and the reason for our being in Bucharest. As everything was in order their comrades, armed with the inevitable Ka-

The people of Bucharest had come to watch it from a distance. They were both proud and relieved at having taken to the streets at a good time. “We have defeated the monster,” one hears

everywhere. “By their enormous, spontaneous uprising, the people have ended the communist nightmare,” passers-by tell me. “We were never communists,” they all declare and by tearing the socialist coat-of-arms out of the Romanian flag, many seemed to equate socialism, communism and the infamous Ceaucescu couple. Many seemed to be trying to regain their virginity!

People were talking with the armored crews and bringing them food, but no one ventured onto the opposite sidewalk by the main gate of the palace, even though there was no one on guard there. “It’s dangerous, there are still terrorists in the cellars.” In fact, the army was still alert for their possible appearance; best not to be surprised. So I headed for other ruins and came across a military cap lying in a gutter. It was a Securitate cap, whose owner wished no doubt to detach himself from this

somewhat too-visible emblem. On closer inspection I found a bullet-hole above the visor; the cap’s owner had probably been killed. My action in looking at the cap drew the attention of a passer-by who led me to a basement window a bit farther along. A group of idlers had clustered for a look at an untidy room littered with military equipment. What was this place that had been burned out except for the entrance hall and the reception area whose potted palms had been machine gunned in their vases?

“That’s the headquarters of the Securitate,” a soldier told me.

The floor was littered with assorted military items: trousers, various papers and a jacket with the shoulder-boards torn off (I later found out that it belonged to a general). On a wall riddled with bullet-holes was a map of Romania and a colored poster of the rank insignia of the troops of the Ministry of the Interior. The insurgents had sacked everything, emptying every desk drawer. I ventured into other, unlighted and pillaged rooms, in the midst of dumped-out ammunition boxes and wrecked furniture, splashing in water that was running down the walls from pipes broken in the fire. Then another room that must have been the dressing room for the men of the Securitate. Here, also, everything was on the floor. The lockers had been systematically emptied; caps and uniforms were mixed with scattered papers in indescribable chaos. Dumped-out storage bins disgorged uniforms soaking in the water that flowed down the corridors, in the midst of account books reduced to a soggy mass. In one corner a pile of shoe boxes, mostly empty; the troops that assaulted the building took them, leaving only a few unpaired shoes. Also lying about were bundles of greeting cards for the holidays of 23 August and 1 May. On leaving I saw dozens of five-liter bottles of acetone under a staircase, evidence of an antiquated but hardly damaged laboratory.

The attackers had been content with superficially rummaging through drawers full of materials for the detection of toxic gasses. Hundreds of ampoules, mostly out-of-date, seemed to constitute most of the inventory of a laboratory apparently intended to monitor the anti-pollution struggle. For this purpose the chemists had some very ordinary detection kits, each with a hole to permit air to be drawn in by an electric pump across various detection ampoules suspended inside the kit. From the appearance of these ampoules they would determine the presence of a toxic

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## **On closer inspection I found a bullet-hole above the visor; the cap’s owner had probably been killed.**

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gas.\* On the wall of the laboratory was a map of downtown Bucharest marked with all sorts of pollution sources, inscribed with large circles showing the distance between the Presidential Palace and these sources of pollution. Beside the stairs leading to the outside court of the building was the arms room, emptied except for some empty cartridge boxes and some piles of excre-

ment. The smell was unbearable. A little farther along, the snack-bar also looked like a battlefield — the obligatory official portraits were torn to shreds, the tables and chairs totally destroyed. Across from the

**A little farther along, the snack-bar also looked like a battlefield — the obligatory official portraits were torn to shreds, the tables and chairs totally destroyed.**

dining hall was a radio repair shop, with assorted obsolete telephones and wrecked Soviet radios. Like the laboratory, all this had an air of being out-of-date, patched up, improvised.

At the end of the corridor were several files that, to my great surprise, had not been opened. In them we found Romanian communist party and national flags intact, and even a pile of framed portraits of Ceaucescu. A little staircase led up to the ground floor, the only floor still standing. The fire had brought down the others, including the roof. In the middle of a pile of bricks mixed with file holders deformed by the fire was a burned-out Soviet radio. In some parts of the building the flames had not yet been put out. Suddenly a great crash resounded through the building. We thought first that it was an explosion, but it turned out to be part of the facade collapsing, taking with it the floor at ground level and even going through the ceiling of the radio room in the basement that we had just left.

We continued toward the entrance hall. Account books, reports, assorted business cards, leave records were thrown about in disorder. On the floor, covered with water, plans classified "Top Secret" a few days ago were floating pitifully and of interest to no one. Among them were plans for the defense of the Presidential Palace and Ceaucescu's villas. Finally, we came to the gym, dilapidated like the rest, with a half-burned floor and 19th century windows.

In the back of this room was a leather training dummy, with arms at 180 degrees, its leather face beaten up, and its belly the recipient of thousands of blows with the fist. A mocking sight in this setting of the end of the world.

— Nicolas Peucelle

\* Ceaucescu had a morbid fear of an assassination attempt or a poisoning, so every room in which he went was checked for poisonous gasses.



Artifacts for history — the debris of a communist dictatorship, gleaned from the ruins of the Securitate HQ in Bucharest. Shown clockwise from 7 o'clock: shoulderboards, insurgent's brassard, officer's parade belt, officer's service cap, PCR banner, portrait of the Conducator behind Securitate and police hats found in the street, a Soviet T-33 pistol, AK and AK bayonet, shirt for the Securitate sports team "Dynamo," and holster. Collection courtesy of Eurosurplus. Photo: Eric Micheletti

*Continued from page 53*

save their own skins. Further, beginning Saturday afternoon, some of them were trying to escape and get through the numerous roadblocks dressed in civilian clothes or army uniforms.

This started the manhunts and settling of accounts with the excesses appropriate to a revolution. All the while the "combat" went on, which usually took this form: the insurgents or the crowd would point out a target, or the presence of a Securitate agent in a building. This would bring on a tank, which would conscientiously spray down the facade of the building with its DShK 12.7mm HMG. The agent, if there was one, had long since disappeared. The machine guns of the T-54/55s and T-77s spent hours thus ravaging the facades of the buildings around the Place de la Republique in Bucharest.

At the same time, the Committee of National Salvation installed itself. It had already been "spontaneously" presented on television. Meanwhile, Ceaucescu and his wife were arrested by the army after a pitiable flight. Three days later they were executed after a rigged trial. His immediate disposal was very much to the advantage of the new holders of power, who thus had

nothing to fear from embarrassing revelations concerning certain members of the junta, or concerning certain other countries, that would have surely come out during a public trial of the Conducator. Regarding the remainder of the Conducator's clique, the Front decided to forego a real manhunt against the men associated with Ceaucescu . . . including those in their own group.<sup>5</sup>

It was, in short, a superb coup d'état, masterfully planned and executed, and as usual the West understood nothing of the manipulation that concealed it. ✕

#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Almost everyone with any real power in the Committee of National Salvation was compromised one way or another with the former regime.

<sup>2</sup> During the trial of the four closest associates of the Conducator, ex-prime minister Ion Dinca would declare that Ceaucescu had offered his own resignation several times beginning on 17 December. This statement was confirmed by Tudor Postelnicu, Minister of the Interior and head of the Securitate.

<sup>3</sup> The well-known footage of the faked massacre at Timisoara is a good example of the very well-orchestrated press manipulation that was disseminated throughout the world.

<sup>4</sup> These 20,000 men (not 30,000 or 60,000 as had been stated) were organized into 15 battalions equipped with armored vehicles and antitank guns. Nevertheless, these units were not as well armed as the troops of the militia.

<sup>5</sup> Excepting the four closest associates of the "Conducator" who were tried in January. Moreover, these each delivered magnificent self-criticism in the best tradition of triumphant Stalinism!



# CHAOS & COUR IN CAMBODIA

Non-Communist Resistance soldier with West German Armbrust AT weapon. Orange tab indicates this is a live round.



# Non-Communist Resistance Fires Up Regime Fort

Text & Photos by Peter Douglas

**T**HE rainy season had just ended as the column of *Armee Nationale Sihanoukiste* (ANS) guerrillas I accompanied made its way through the thick forest that blankets the Dong Rek

range. Only occasional glimpses, between the thick mesh of foliage, gave views of the limitless trees stretching to the far horizon. Careful attention to the track itself was well warranted given the nasty habit adopted by all contending factions in Cambodia of laying mines.

On past trips into Cambodia with the Non-Communist Resistance (NCR) they had been predominantly dressed in poor quality Thai-produced camouflage fatigues. These soon became much the worse for wear; colors faded and rips and tears were soon dominant features in the men's attire. Metal hardware on cheap webbing and backpacks rusted up and snapped off. The packs themselves split open at the seams, normally at the most inopportune moments. Few had boots, relying on canvas tennis shoes from which the soles detached themselves. Few were lucky enough to possess "Ho Chi Minh Sandals," made from car tires, which did not wear out. By the end of a two-week patrol, most men were left standing in rags.

In 1988 the first batches of U.S.-supplied "woodland" camouflage fatigues had arrived. By late 1989 these deliveries to the NCR had transformed them from a rag-tag looking mob into a force with military bearing, who wore their U.S. fatigues with a great deal of pride. Sadly, someone responsible for planning what equipment could be distributed under non-lethal aid programs seemed to believe that

## CAMBODIA COMMENTATOR

Correspondent Peter Douglas has done several tours in Cambodia with the Non-Communist Resistance. His last trek was chronicled in, "In The Jaws of the Tiger," July '89. He's also filed stories from Afghanistan and Lebanon. Before embarking on a career as a combat photojournalist Douglas served with Britain's Royal Marines.

an ethnic army has no need for boots. Instead, black canvas pumps were issued. Evidently designed without field duties in mind these soon began to fall apart under the heavy punishment of field operations. I wonder how quickly whoever made the decision to exclude boots would change their mind if they had to spend even one day trekking through tropical forests.

Also arriving in 1988 were the first Singapore-supplied M16 rifles. These weapons were soon in evidence in large numbers. While the AK-47 is far more rugged, and as such, more suited to the rough handling of protracted field operations, the benefits of the M16 to the morale of the men is such that they are favored by NCR leaders.

On this trip walking with the NCR there was a striking difference in atmosphere from past trips. In the past there had been a constant air of tension — at any moment you were liable to be ambushed, or forced to change the route and detour around enemy patrols. This time, the column marched with a relaxed, almost carefree, attitude brought about by the withdrawal of Vietnamese units from the region we were in. Added to this was the complete failure of the People's Republic of Kampuchea's (PRK) army to take over the aggressive patrolling that had been practiced by the Vietnamese. Instead the PRK army adopted a defensive stance, neglecting to mount even rudimentary patrols any dis-

# AGE



**Soviet T-54 tank captured and being used by the Non-Communist Resistance.**

tance from their bases. This change in the scenario made a hell of a difference in the speed and ease with which the guerrillas could operate. Having seized the initiative in the deep forest, they were determined to ensure that it remained a no-go area for the PRK army.

The weather at this time of the year was much cooler than it would be in a few months time. While the sun was up, it felt like no more than a normal hot summer day. When we camped for the night we slung our hammocks and I dug down into the bowels of my backpack to fish out the strong mosquito poison that had been essential during the steamy nights on past trips.

All around me the other men were also delving into backpacks, only they began to pull out warm sweaters, scarves and woolly hats. It looked like a very elaborate practical joke. Once muffled up in warm clothes they lit fires close to their hammocks. The air was soon thick with smoke, I presumed this was to ward off the swarms of mosquitoes I was expecting. The sun dipped beneath the horizon and in that startling eastern way it was pitch black in minutes. Along with the sun the temperature began to plummet and the reason for the lack of mosquitoes became obvious, they had all frozen to death!

I spent the rest of the night miserably shuffling around the fire trying to roll my mosquito defense net into a makeshift blanket to ward off the unexpected night chill.

After a couple of days trekking through the forest we arrived at Phom Saleem. Here, in a bamboo forest, Colonel Nek Bouchay was assembling men for an attack on a PRK position at Kouk Mon. Simultaneously several other coordinated attacks would be launched at smaller bases.

Fresh supplies arrived by bullock cart from the recently captured town of Thma Pok. Among the cart loads of equipment were over a hundred mortar bombs for the newly supplied 81mm mortars. Until recently the NCR were reliant on limited supplies of 61mm Chinese mortars. While sufficient as a close-support weapon against surface targets they were hardly suitable for use on dug-in positions such as the PRK army held at Kouk Mon.

Once the supplies had been distributed, a final officer's briefing was held. This was conducted without the benefit of a detailed model. Instead a map, liberally sprinkled with symbols designating enemy and friendly forces, was rolled out and the eight senior officers gathered round as Col. Bouchay ran through his battle plan. As it turned out, in the forthcoming action one of these officers would be killed.

Elsewhere, junior officers conducted briefings with men in groups of about 50.

**Troops train with French 89mm LRAC AT weapons prior to attack.**



The operational plan for the attack against Kouk Mon hinged on two vital ingredients — timing and intelligence. It was crucial that all three assault groups were deployed in their positions well before H hour (the designated time for the attack to begin) to clear a path through the minefield. They also required up-to-date intelligence on the defenses and troop dispositions of the PRK defenders (sound criteria for the success of any military operation). These are hard goals to attain, particularly under the stress, confusion and chance of war.

The defenses of Kouk Mon had not been altered for a considerable period and Colonel Nek Bouchay's concern not to alert the defenders to an imminent attack resulted in close reconnaissance and observation being curtailed for several days prior to the assault.

As forces had to be gathered from several differing regions not all commanders were familiar with the local topography. The same security considerations that suspended normal observation and reconnaissance denied them the opportunity to make their own reconnaissance.

The operation was carefully planned by men familiar with the ground. This may have influenced the decision not to build a scale briefing mode. Instead, maps were used for orientation and a hand drawn, larger-scale, map for the battle plan. This may not have been drawn accurately to scale thus contributing to confusion about real distances on the ground.

Since some officers were not familiar with the ground and because the plan entailed a cautious night approach to reach the assault position, insufficient contingency time was allowed for the approach march.

Colonel Bouchay's plan was to keep the 81mm mortar in reserve to cover the retreat if things went wrong. In retrospect it would have been better to deploy this (perhaps even as the start signal) to cause as much havoc and confusion on the unsuspecting defenders as possible. One can certainly question the decision to ferry the mortar bombs up with one of the assault groups (each man carrying a single bomb) and to hold the mortar itself back with tactical headquarters. This separation of the mortar from its munitions was unsound and on the day would leave the withdrawing assault groups without the planned mortar fire support.

On the night of the attack the three, 100-man assault teams in the "first wave" found the moonless night an added burden when working to a tight operational schedule. At least one team became temporarily disoriented by unexpected thick areas of forest and men became separated in the pitch darkness under the trees. These factors all conspired to delay the assault teams.

By 0430 hours, later than expected, only two teams were in position, waiting for the third team to signal that it was in place. Sappers, from the two deployed teams, began to clear paths through the three bands of defensive mines. They now discovered that recent modifications had been made to the defensive perimeter. The three bands of mines had become 10 bands! Small buried M14 anti-personnel, surface trip-wire POM Zs and large Vietnamese command-detonated claymores ("Min Dan Heung 10") were positioned in great numbers.

At 0510, assaults targeted against other PRK positions in the locality began. This must have awakened every soldier in the PRK government garrison at Kouk Mon and they rushed to man their defenses.

The third assault team arrived a few minutes later and deployed. They now frantically attempted to clear a path through the mines in front of them. The task of locating and lifting, or defusing, mines as they steadily inched their way closer to the enemy, could not be rushed. A path sufficient to allow an assault had to be cleared. Time was running out as the cover of darkness was being eroded by the approaching dawn and the enemy were now alerted.

Finally at 0530 the PRK defenders detected movement outside the perimeter as the assault teams began to crawl forward. The

defenders opened up with everything they had, small arms, light machine guns, bunkered 12.7mm HMGs, mortars, two D-130 artillery pieces (capable of rotating 360 degrees on their fold-out carriages) and two T-54 tanks, which fired both their main armament and turret mounted 12.7mm HMGs.

To the credit of the assault teams they immediately hurled themselves at the defenders. Most of the assault team casualties occurred at this point as they moved forward over the only partially cleared bands of mines. All the time the sappers continued to work calmly under fire to neutralize more mines.

By this stage the assault teams on two sides were less than 20 meters from the defenders. The third team, opposite the hull-down tanks had been the last to arrive. They were still more than a hundred meters from the earth rampart surrounding the post, attempting to crawl over flat open ground.

The defending tanks and artillery were firing on a flat trajectory over open sights. One Carl Gustav round was seen to strike a glancing blow on a T-54 turret and tumble away into the interior of the base. Hundreds of RPG rockets were fired into the base, smoke and dust hung heavily in the air, like a dark blanket holding back the dawn. The cacophony of battle was deafening at close quarters.

Commander Sek Van Chop, responsible for the third assault team and tasked with knocking out the tanks, scurried forward to take over one of the antitank weapons. He reached one team, took their weapon and crawled closer still. Finding a suitable position, from which he felt he might strike a killing blow against one of the T-54s, he cautiously raised himself to fire and was instantly killed by a direct hit from a tank shell. Men trying to recover his body were wounded by the 12.7mm HMG fire from the tanks.

The sudden loss of their commander at this early stage adversely affected the morale of this assault team. Their efforts now became divided between attempting to hit the well-screened tanks and recovering the body of their dead commander. Both of these goals were unsuccessful in the face of the continued direct fire from the main armament and HMGs of both tanks, not to mention small-arms fire from enemy troops manning the earth rampart and frequent incoming of mortar bombs.

However, in the meantime, Assault Group Two had succeeded in driving some of the enemy back from the defensive earth rampart by sustained RPG and small-arms fire. A small party rushed forward, suffering casualties from mines and small arms fire on the way. Those who reached the shelter of the earth rampart hurled their grenades over into the trenches on the other side, and then quickly crawling to the crest, directed small arms fire at the retreating forms of the defenders as they abandoned their trenches.

From this elevated position they were able to pour sustained fire into some shallow trenches set further back inside the base. These, too, were soon abandoned by the men in them, some of whom were bowled over as they withdrew. Tracers and RPG rockets set fire to several coconut-palm thatched huts. Thick smoke from these reduced visibility still further.

Under covering fire from four of the assault team members who had reached the rampart crest, half-a-dozen more now attempted to enter the base. Support fire was indiscriminate as smoke effectively obscured vision from the rampart crest into the base.

The small group, including the assault team commander for this flank, was able to reach the main accommodation area 20 meters directly in front of them. Here they took cover in an abandoned mortar pit from where they could fire across the base and hurl their last grenades at several more thatched huts close by. Several dead PRK soldiers lay sprawled in the dirt, another shared their trench.

Despite the smoke, the rising flames of the burning huts were

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After the briefing and pep-talk a Buddhist blessing was given as the men stood, heads bowed, in solemn silence; each man alone with his thoughts.

The basic plan called for a three-pronged assault; each assault group of about 100 men, approaching from different directions. Each group was also to be supported by a "second wave" of a further 100 men. A further group was to block the road to Samrong to the east, in case enemy relief forces approached. The Kouk Mon attack was to be synchronized with attacks on other bases, all of which were scheduled to begin at 0500.

The assault groups were ordered to creep as close as possible under cover of darkness, removing mines as they did so. At 0500 hours RPG rockets were to be fired at the defenses and a sudden assault launched, the hope being that the element of surprise would carry them through the first line of defense. Once inside they were confident that they could suppress the opposition and prevent them from organizing any further effective defense. One assault group was tasked with destroying two T-54 tanks deployed in their sector.

Besides the tanks, Col. Bouchay was also concerned with overpowering and neutralizing two D-130 artillery pieces inside the base. These are mounted on a base that can rotate 360 degrees and allow for fire on a flat trajectory in direct support. The tanks were hull down and the D-130s placed in gun pits which effectively screened their crews from small arms fire. There were also several mortar pits located

**RIGHT: NCR troops ready for march to Kouk Mon. Note numerous RPDs and yet no Western-manufactured light machine guns.**



**ABOVE: As dusk falls over Cambodia Col. Bouchay receives position reports from various assault groups poised to attack at dawn.**

around the position. Surrounding the whole Kouk Mon defensive perimeter was a high earth rampart beyond which lay an estimated three rings of mines. Obviously timing would prove critical.

While 81mm mortars were available to the resistance Col. Bouchay had opted to restrict their use to fire support in case of withdrawal, feeling that to deploy them in

close support of an assault was too hazardous.

While all the briefings were being conducted, the field surgical team was prepar-



ing an emergency hospital. This entailed constructing operating tables out of bamboo and lashing up ponchos to shield the tables from the sun or rain. It was comforting to observe this degree of planning for



Leader of the assault on Kouk Mon, Colonel Nek Bouchay.

casualties. In most guerrilla armies, being wounded other than superficially is tantamount to a death warrant.



Primitive casualty evacuation by ox cart. This soldier was wounded in the fighting near Svay Chek.

At 1400 the remaining units gathered in a clearing. Here for the first time I caught sight of the new antitank weapons being made available to the NCR. Supplied through Singapore were 84mm Carl Gustavs (affectionately known within the British forces as "Charlie Gee"), 89mm French LRACs and the small, lightweight, one-shot, West German Armbrust. These weapons were highly prized additions to the guerrilla's armory.

At 1500 hours the assembled men moved out in single file, snaking their way through bands of trees and across large open clearings of tall grass. In one of these clearings were the traces of an abandoned Vietnamese base. Silent derelict bunkers marked the perimeters. Inside a few blackened timbers lay where buildings had once stood. A warning came down the line not to

deviate from the track as this area was still heavily sewn with mines.

There was a general sigh of relief as we safely cleared the remains of this old enemy base. After a few hours' hot afternoon marching we emerged from the forest and began to cross large, open areas of abandoned paddy fields, now overgrown with tall grass. There was no sign of life anywhere, other than the thin column of moving men, and no other sound except the soft swishing of the grass as they passed.

As the sun began to go down a brief halt was called. The men hunkered down into small groups, some smoked, others snatched a quick meal of dry noodles, the last meal before the attack. The late, golden afternoon light began to cast long, soft shadows.

A small knot of officers stood conferring beside a dead, leafless tree, the murmur of their voices carried on the gentle afternoon

*Continued on page 73*

# LIES, DAMNED LIES & THE MEDIA

## *Popular Press Twists Facts in Cambodia*

**Text & Photos by Peter Douglas**

**T**HE media has a proven track record of failing to understand and accurately report on the ongoing Cambodian situation. Its past failures allowed years of Khmer Rouge genocide to go unreported. And it is currently responsible for much emotive, but misguided, reporting that has whipped up public support for a repressive regime, installed by foreign invaders with a bloody track record.

Much mud-slinging has been conducted by the world media accusing the Non-Communist Resistance (NCR) of being sympathetic to the communist Khmer Rouge cause and even of actively supporting them. This reflects poorly on the media, demonstrating an appalling ignorance of the complex Cambodian story by those responsible for reporting it.

There are four factions in Cambodia, two communist and two non-communist. The two non-communist factions are aligned under a single banner, that of the NCR. The other two factions come under the respective banners of the Khmer Rouge and the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK).

The Khmer Rouge were forced out of power after Vietnam invaded in 1978. Vietnam then installed the PRK regime to power in Phnom Penh (Cambodia's capital). However a fact that is invariably overlooked in the media is that the PRK regime is itself no more than a splinter faction of the Khmer Rouge. This came about when political loyalties within the Khmer Rouge became divided between the leadership, aligned to China, and a smaller faction, loyal to Vietnam.

The leadership set about purging the party of those loyal to Vietnam, who they

considered to be dangerous dissidents. When the bloody internal purges began, large numbers of Khmer Rouge fled to safety across the border into Vietnam. Vietnam then formed these men into the Kampuchean National Eastern Zone Front for National Liberation (KNEZFNL), who duly returned to Cambodia in the front line of Vietnam's 1978 invasion. Their loyalty to Vietnam was rewarded when Vietnam formed the PRK government, drawn largely from the KNEZFNL.

It is the resulting enmity between the divided Khmer Rouge factions that fundamentally now constitutes the barrier to a negotiated settlement. The PRK regime faction in Phnom Penh refuses to discuss any power-sharing with their former masters now waging war from the jungle.

Matters are further complicated by the fact that the Khmer Rouge continue to hold the Cambodian seat at the United Nations. Despite the atrocities committed under their rule the UN was reluctant to oust them only to recognize a puppet regime of former Khmer Rouge installed by a Vietnamese invasion. To make the situation more palatable, in 1982 the Western powers encouraged the NCR to form a political alliance with the Khmer Rouge. This meant that the NCR could share the Cambodian United Nations seat and gain political credibility as members of a power-sharing coalition government in exile. The NCR had hoped by this act to enable independent military support for them to become a tangible reality. Instead they found that nothing had changed in the stand taken by the West on military aid. Precious little support was forthcoming.

There was a tangible decrease (although not a cessation) in hostilities between their army and that of the Khmer Rouge, though the latter still jealously guarded its own interests in the interior.

It also improved their relationship with China. China welcomed NCR participation in the new coalition government as it provided a thin smokescreen for the Khmer Rouge leadership, who now claimed that this was a demonstration of the fact that they had changed. They were now willing to share power within a democratic government. Pol Pot (the infamous leader of the Khmer Rouge) even announced that he had "retired" from the leadership. China began to supply the NCR with military assistance, although much below the levels handed out to the Khmer Rouge.

The West continued to voice its support of the NCR but maintained a wary attitude regarding the question of direct military assistance. The NCR continued to argue that its alliance with the Khmer Rouge was one born from the necessity of the moment. They were united for one purpose, to rid Cambodia of the Vietnamese invaders. There could be no question of any sympathies with the Khmer Rouge dogma. They compared their alliance to that of Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedong, who were forced to lay aside their differences to unite against the invading Japanese. More recently they drew attention to the Western alliance with Stalin in World War II.

Before the alliance of 1982 the NCR had been faced with the reality of having to fight the invading Vietnamese, with its 200,000 man army of occupation, while keeping a wary eye on the Khmer Rouge at

the same time. They had in fact been fighting a war against both, and doing so with very little outside assistance; a situation that was placing their small military force in a precarious situation. With the alliance they were receiving more military support, albeit from China, and had eased the friction with Khmer Rouge forces on the ground. This allowed them to do two important things: expand their size, and carry the war deeper into the interior.

With Vietnam's unexpected early withdrawal, the media war intensified as the PRK regime set about trying to entice the NCR to divorce itself from the Khmer Rouge and the United Nations-recognized coalition government and join them in Phnom Penh, on non-power sharing terms! With the other hand, however, they were conducting a largely successful campaign in the world media to present the NCR's alliance with the Khmer Rouge as one that demonstrated active NCR support for a return to power by the Khmer Rouge.

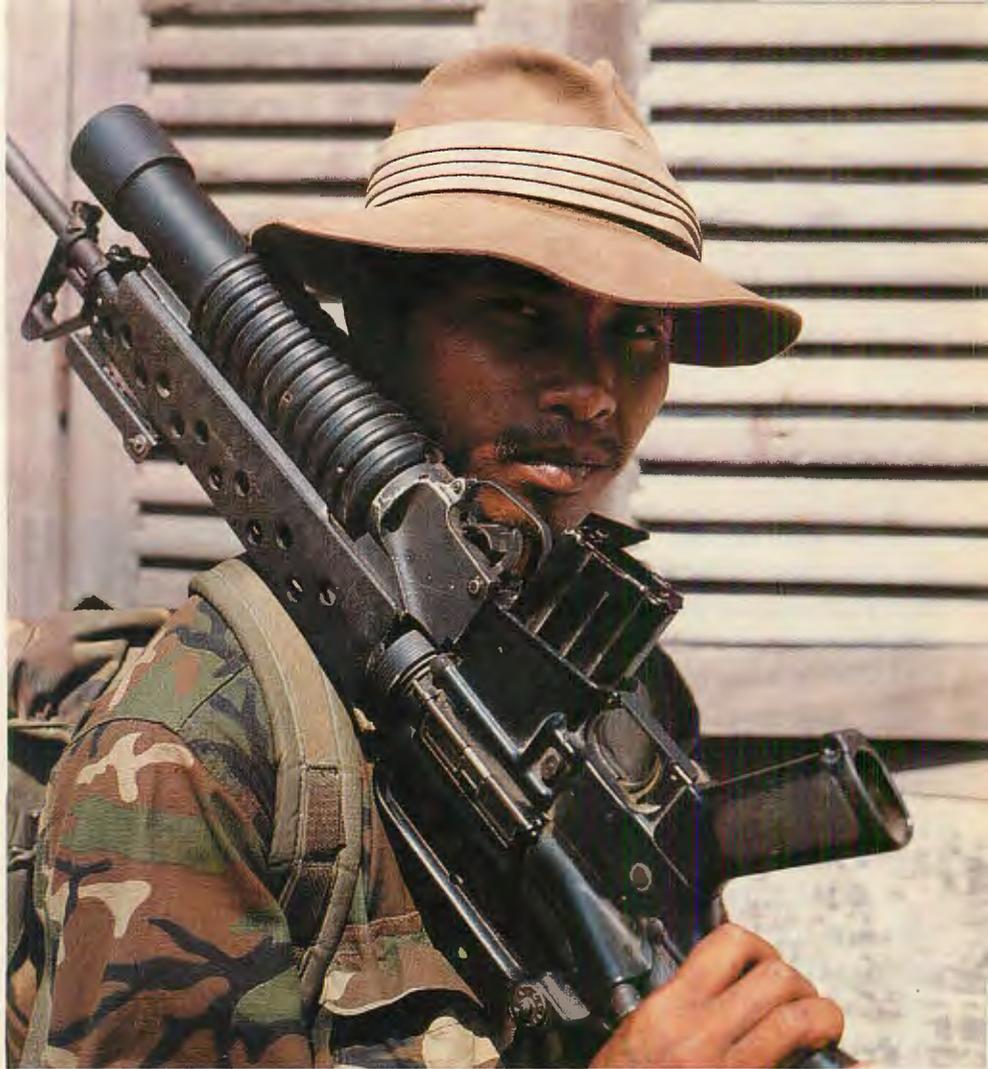
At the same time they were presenting themselves to the media as the one and only alternative to a Khmer Rouge return to power. In the explosion of media coverage at the time of Vietnam's withdrawal few media reports mentioned that the PRK government is composed of ex-Khmer Rouge who broke away from the main party, not out of any disagreement over their bloody track record or their radical communist ideology but purely to save their own necks over the question of loyalty to Vietnam during the internal party purges.

The media, enjoying easy access to the story from Phnom Penh and specially organized facilities during the much vaunted Vietnamese withdrawal, were very receptive to the PRK regime's publicity machine and its NCR smear campaign. The bulk of the coverage leaves the impression that only the PRK regime can hold off a full Khmer Rouge return to power and that there is a re-emergence of the Khmer Rouge as a power in Cambodia directly brought about by Western aid for the NCR.

The fact is that the Khmer Rouge is Cambodian; they are based inside, deep inside, Cambodia and have been for many years; a 200,000-man Vietnamese army of occupation failed to eradicate them and the only faction that offers anything other than a return of Khmer Rouge power, be it under the Khmer Rouge or PRK regime banner, is the NCR.

Tragically for the Cambodian people the misguided media presentation of the situation unleashed a wave of public feeling in the West against the limited support of Western powers for the NCR. For the United States in particular, Southeast Asia is a political hot potato and Western governments have allowed this public pressure to affect policy decisions over aid for the NCR.

One result of all this is that there is now pressure for the NCR to leave the United Nations-recognized coalition government in exile and declare themselves independent, but to do so at a period when not one



Thousands of Cambodians, like this one with U.S.-manufactured M16/M203, have fought all their lives to bring democracy to their homeland.

Western power is willing to stand up and openly give them support.

If the NCR were to dissolve their association with the coalition government, military supplies from China, on which they are presently dependent, would cease and they would again be facing a simultaneous war with both the Khmer Rouge and the PRK regime. Such a move would seriously weaken their position and they would still lack Western military support.

The NCR themselves accept that in the future there will be another war with the Khmer Rouge, but they are adamant that now is not the time to declare such a war. First they want either a negotiated settlement, or a military one, that brings about a universally accepted quadripartite government in Phnom Penh. As members of the recognized government they would be in a position to counter effectively any Khmer Rouge power-mongering and, finally, confront them if they must. The Khmer Rouge are a Cambodian problem and will ultimately have to be dealt with, either politically or more likely by force of arms.

One should bear in mind that the current leaders of the PRK regime were not just ordinary soldiers, following orders under

the Khmer Rouge. They occupied positions of power, positions that would have ensured their knowledge of the genocide occurring in Cambodia, and they remained loyal to the Khmer Rouge throughout the worst years of slaughter.

It is a fact that during those years, when Cambodia's current leaders helped to administer, there were a few Cambodians who were fighting a guerrilla war against the Khmer Rouge. These were men who were willing to risk everything, who refused to accept defeat; who fought in small groups, surviving year after year in the remote jungles by their cunning and wits; who endured the massacre of entire families; who saw their brothers-in-arms dying of starvation. They are still in the jungle, still fighting, and still largely unsupported by the free world. They, and not the PRK regime, remain deserving of Western support if Cambodia is ever to rid itself of its eternal civil war.

It is because of the media's continuing failure to understand or accurately report the facts of the Cambodian situation that the very people fighting for freedom and democracy remain little known, much maligned and largely unsupported by the free world. ☒

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# SHOOTOUT ON HIGHWAY ONE

*Decoys and Sitting Ducks at Trang Bang*

by Jim Ross



M113 APCs move through a rice field near LZ Stinson, Vietnam. APCs were used to protect from — or in this instance draw — fire. Photo: U.S. Army photo by SP4 Herbert Brady

**T**HE Highway One Shootout, as it came to be known, was a textbook example of the VC tactic of involving innocent villagers in firefights to cause civilian casualties, to in turn make the American military effort look bad. It happened the night of 12 April 1970 in a hamlet near Trang Bang.

I had been in-country two months and was currently a PFC M60 gunner with A Company, 2/22d Infantry (Mechanized), 25th Division. We were operating out of LZ Devin, a fire-support base on Highway One northwest of Saigon — not far from the Iron Triangle. It was a rutty, sun-bleached AO, lightly covered with willow groves and gnarled scrub. We had been there about a week, uneventfully securing the arty, when somebody in management noticed the lack of action and straightaway contrived to do something about it.

I had spent the day working on the wire,

and was alone in 4th Squad's bunker dabbing my face with a towel to keep sweat drops off a half-written letter, when Lieutenant Martin popped in with the news.

"I'm looking for volunteers," he said enthusiastically.

The man was always upbeat, forever smiling. You could *never be sure* of his true intent or the actual weight of his announcements.

Instinctively I took the defensive. "What for?"

"A mission tonight."

"A mission? What kind of mission?" I



**First Platoon APC waiting to leave fire support base Devin, where they were detailed to provide security. Photo: Jim Ross**

frowned. It didn't sound right.

"First Platoon's been detailed to police the highway tonight," he said as though we had won a raffle.

"Seriously?"

"Would I kid about something as bizarre as that?"

I asked what the set-up was, still suspicious. He said that Battalion had decided to let the VC know that nighttime use of Route One could no longer be taken for granted. The enemy knew our APCs didn't recon after dark, and with no ground units in the area they had lately enjoyed total freedom of movement. Our objective was to rove from Devin to Cu Chi and back all night — about 15 miles one way.

"That's crazy," I said.

"Maybe so," he countered, "but that doesn't change the fact we're going." He smiled that wily smile. "Now, are you in, or not?"

### PFC ROSS REPORTING

Jim Ross was a tail-gunner on an M60 and a PFC in A Co., 2/22d Infantry (Mech), 25th Inf Div operating near the Iron Triangle of Vietnam when this incident took place in 1970. He now resides in Bethany, Oklahoma.

I eyed him. "Why do I have a choice?"

"Simple. The CO wants to leave two here from each squad to cover our share of the perimeter."

It sounded insane, but I hadn't yet experienced enough to want to miss anything, and I didn't like the idea of expanded watch. So if I had to stay awake either way...

"I'll go."

"Good man. We move in an hour."

The platoon assembled at dusk. Our squad consisted of our driver John Kendall, rifleman Ricky Gilmore, our squad leader Steve Daniel, .50 gunner Gary Stallings, myself, and Virgil — a not-well-liked loner from 2nd Platoon who doubled as company sniper and king dooper. His reputation for killing existed largely in his own mind. Among those with 3rd Squad were my friend Carl Petrowski and my good buddy Dave Santa-Cruz. Lieutenant Martin rode with 2nd Squad.

Steel pots in place, flak jackets zippered and chests smothered in bandoleers, the platoon eased onto the dark-

ened road in numerical sequence: 1-1 (1st Platoon-1st Squad) out front, 1-4 drag.

The night was still, diesel engines and clattering treads amplifying our sense of conspicuousness. We proceeded with headlights off, and the moonless night made driving difficult — accelerating, braking, accelerating, braking — closing ranks, stopping abruptly, bouncing the troops.

Flexing like an accordion, the line made its initial run, passing through Trang Bang and the tiny unnamed hamlet farther south.

The trip down was tense but without incident. Executing an about-face a half klick outside Cu Chi, we stopped dead on the deserted blacktop for a breather. We were a long way from the security of Devin and the rest of the company, and I was already beginning to feel vulnerable. We were four detached tracks in the middle of Vietnam in the middle of the night, advertising our presence in a taunting, daring way, and all I could see in the blackness were dancing images of jumbo claymores and incoming rockets.



Taunted to action by APCs patrolling at night, Charlie center-punched this APC with a PG round and all the small arms he had. Photo: Jim Ross

The sense of adventure had been rapidly replaced by a creeping, expanding sense of fear, the kind of fear that crawls up through your belly and jams in your throat with a twinge — like when you're staring up at the axle of your truck and your not-that-reliable bumper jack creaks and suddenly you picture yourself a smear of glistening bone and gore decorating the driveway.

I shuddered, dug for a smoke.

"Spooky," Gilmore remarked. He sat opposite me, on the left rear of the track's deck.

"Suicidal might be a better word," John said grumpily. He had crawled out of the driver's hatch and sat hunched over, sucking hard on a Winston.

"There it is," Gilmore added. "The gooks have beaucoup time between passes to arrange a very meaningful 'bush.'"

"And," Sergeant Daniel elaborated, "we'll make a hell of a lot of passes between now and sunrise."

For a minute nobody said anything. Daniel was considered a hard case and not generally included in idle conversations. As a squad leader he was seriously inept, a deficiency he compensated for by being pushy and stubborn. He was tolerated, that's all.

I broke the silence. "Maybe we'll be lucky," I said, not believing it, "Maybe there aren't any dinks posted along this stretch of road."

Gilmore spat. "Yeah, maybe," he said, playing along, "Maybe."

"Keep telling yourselves that," Stallings said flatly. Gary took a hard-core, street-fighter's approach to war. He was well regarded, if only because of his attitude, which made him dangerous but invaluable. You knew exactly where he stood and what to expect in every situation. "But in the meantime you damn well better be ready to stomp ass, cause that's where this joy ride's headed."

That said, the track jolted forward and attentive eyes returned to probing the horizon.

Pass two ended outside Devin's ghostly perimeter. We pivoted, then rattled right back to Cu Chi. By midnight, we had made a half-dozen runs, and earlier tensions started to ease. The hour, blending with the drone of the APCs, had lulled us into a state of dozing tranquility; chins on chests, heads bobbing — alertness stolen by some night-mare bandit.

Cruising toward Devin, we entered the hamlet, its scattered huts silhouetted faintly against the black velvet sky. John slowed as we started into the final curve, then accelerated just in time to see the disappearing outline of 1-3 drive into the blast of a mammoth claymore that shattered the blackness and sent a brilliant flash jetting out the rear of their track. The platoon was already strung out and 1-4, now lagging badly, was suddenly positioned for total isolation.

For long seconds brains vapor-locked. Then John, reflexively, braked and swung hard left, bouncing off the blacktop and down a sloped embankment that elevated the roadway slightly above the adjacent rice field. Blistering machine-gun fire swept the highway, shooing us along like ducks

before a hose. It was a slow-motion eternity before John at last swiveled the track into firing position.

Our weapons barked in ensemble as we struggled to orient ourselves, determine the location of the others, get flares up, and attempt commo with the lieutenant.

Gilmore and Renfro were already aground, firing prone. Standing inside the track behind the deck-mounted 60, I directed a stream of red lines into the hootches across the road. Daniel, beside me, yelled something to Stallings but was disregarded as Gary maniacally jackhammered the .50, sending an arc of tumbling hot brass onto the deck. Between bursts John's M79 launched grenades in methodical thunks.

A quick glance up the road explained the platoon's dispersal. The kill zone was long, 200 meters, and the incoming sufficient to discourage movement.

Flares pulsed, partially illuminating the nightscape, and we could see through the lattice of tracers the profile of 1-3 beyond a wisp of trees. Both 1-1 and 1-2 were out of sight.

"Ammo," Stallings called.

"AMMO GODDAMNIT!"

Daniel pitched a box up just as the .50 spit a final slug and stilled. In seconds fresh explosions erupted from the gun, stitching the village in uneven rows. Small arms cracked, a single mortar dropped in, and an errant RPG skittered crazily across the ground and detonated in a dike.

"They're gonna chop us up if we don't move," Daniel bawled.

"No place to go," Stallings declared.

"We can't—"

"Gimme more ammo!"

Flustered, Daniel hoisted up two more boxes, then stationed himself so close to me that when he resumed firing his brass was programmed to bounce off my face.

"Get out of the way," I complained.

He shifted slightly and ripped off another 20. Half of them stung my head like bees. I yelled at him again. He glowered at me, then ducked below and fumbled for the radio's handset. After excitedly explaining our situation to the lieutenant, he popped up and exclaimed, "L-T says everybody move away from the track, now!"

"The hell you say!" Stallings shot back. "I got enough ammo on board to kill every pissant gook in the AQ."

"We're dead without these guns," I shouted, wishing I was a hundred miles from the track but somehow coded to Gary's instincts.

"We're dead," Daniel insisted, "if we don't di-di. They're loaded with RPGs and we're their best target."

"Bullshit . . ." Stallings started.

"You can't hit 'em anyway," he wailed, "they're in bunkers, man!"

We kept firing. Daniel exited the rear door.

A fresh rocket whizzed by, destroying some unidentified object to our rear.

"Get off that track, damn you," Daniel squalled.

The next rocket left sparks on the deck, convincing even Stallings that for once Daniel was right and that we would be no help at all dead. So he exhausted a belt and angrily snatched up his rifle.

He didn't have to ask me to follow.

We fell to firing positions in the open next to Renfro and Gilmore. Daniel scurried back to the track to grab a PRC-25 and toss out ammo. John had dismounted the other side, staying close for a quick re-entry. Swearing in gusts, Stallings began to expend magazines in single bursts. Spent magazines covered the ground.

Daniel scrambled back over, gesturing wildly.

"Say it!" Gilmore barked.

"It's Carl. Carl Petrowski. He was sittin' on a box of C-4 that flamed up when the gooks blew the 'bush. Dave says he fell off 1-3 right across the road from us."

I looked at him, disbelieving. Carl was the platoon's good guy, a laid-back country boy who had never learned a mean word and handled nearly every hardship with an accepting smile and a shrug. I couldn't imagine him being left to die and nobody doing anything.

"You mean he's been there all this time, and we're just now finding out?" Stallings asked tensely.

"Roger," he said unaffectedly. "Doc wanted to go after him, but he's way up the road on 1-2 and the lieutenant vetoed the idea. I told Dave we'd keep our eyes peeled in case he's alive and tried to move."

"I'm going after him," I said. I didn't plan to say it. The words just fell out, like spilled popcorn, and I couldn't put them back.

For a second Daniel looked startled, then said sternly, "You listen to me. I can't risk losing you or anybody else. Even if you get across, you'll never make it back. Look at this crossfire, man. *Look* at it!"

Deaf to logic, I repeated the pronouncement, then, for reasons still unexplained, I turned to Renfro, who I didn't like or trust, and said, "You gonna help me?"

His expression went from mild interest to surprise. Then he glared at me, knowing he couldn't refuse. He was on the spot, his status as the cool-headed combatant at stake. He glanced at Gilmore, who shrugged, then grabbed a spare bandoleer and rose to his knees. "Well let's go then," he said irritably.

"Don't do this, guys," Daniel mumbled weakly.

"Shut up, man," Stallings said.

We knee-walked around the back of the track, then low-crawled to the edge of the blacktop.

"You're gonna die," Daniel called after us.

On a silent signal we lurched forward, emptying our rifles as we darted across in a crouch and dived headlong down the opposite slope. Quickly we checked each other, then scanned the smoky darkness for

Petrowski's carcass. A new flare burst overhead, turning the smoke white and the ground into a patchwork of pale yellow and angled shadows. From a hut only 30 yards off arrows of red and green sliced the air in a confusion of misdirected stray rounds.

We sighted him at the same time, 60 feet away, and through the undulating light we rolled and squiggled and scrambled, inching desperately along, heads down, until a lifetime later he was within our grasp.

He was alive but unconscious, breathing in shallow gasps. He had a small chest wound and a fist-sized hole in his upper right leg, his shirt and pants drenched with blood. There was no weapon in sight.

"We'll never get him back," Renfro said, gulping air.

"We have to, now."

He knew it was so, and for a second our eyes locked, then we moved swiftly into position. I took the top half, gripping him under the arms. Renfro cradled his knees.

We drew deep breaths and, at that moment, the God of Timing smiled.

The lone flare rocking jerkily above blinked out and there was a lull in the holocaust. In a staggering frenzy we stumbled up onto the road. Carl's butt was scraping the pavement and halfway across I dropped my rifle, a mishap that caused me to trip and send the three of us sprawling. A weak cry of fear escaped me as new flares poofed accusingly, spotlighting us in the act.

Recovering frantically, we moved out in a crouch-run, bobbing and weaving through irregular tracers.

We fell again going down the slope; I heard Carl groan. The track was now 20 yards away.

"Hang on, buddy," I heard myself say, "we're almost there."

Awkwardly, we cuffed his armpits and dragged him to safety, positioning him behind a low stump to the rear of 1-4. Renfro sprinted to the track and returned with two towels; one he placed under Carl's head, the other I tied snugly around the mushy crater that had been his thigh. Gilmore had already called for a dustoff, which arrived as we returned to the firing line, but immediately backed off.

"LZ's too hot," Daniel advised. "We'll have to wait."

I buried my face in the dirt at the hiss of another rocket, waited for the explosion, then slammed in a new magazine and jerked the trigger. The firefight continued.

Over the next 10 minutes it became evident that we were no longer pinned down. Our enemy had run low on either ammo or spirit, and under diminishing fire Stallings and I raced each other to the track. John was already aboard, imitating an auctioneer in his radio conversation with the lieutenant.

"Company's on the way," he bellowed. "L-T says to mount up and get our asses out of here now. Move!"

Daniel ducked in the back door as Gilmore and Renfro emptied their weapons

on a backward run. John, poised to jam gears, sat coiled like a spring until they finally piled in, lugging Carl with them, then stomped the accelerator and charged the road.

Pandemonium ruled as the track leapt forward. Daniel was squawking into the radio while the dustoff, again overhead, beat the air like a rug. Stallings was halfway to burning up a barrel, and the thought of what might happen when we hit the asphalt if the VC had backup claymores preempted rational thinking.

Which helps explain why we were on the highway before anybody noticed that Carl had become a floormat.

"Hey, get off him," I hollered.

The complaint was ignored.

"GODDAMNIT, GET OFF HIM!" We were moving toward 1-3 now and incoming was down to a trickle. I was heard, though I had to push Daniel, still blasting like a madman, to get his boot out of Carl's face.

We linked with 3rd Squad, then scooted up to where the others waited. Straightaway the medevac landed and 1-3's people began loading their wounded.

John dropped the back ramp and as Carl was extracted I signaled to Doc that we had him and, with the lieutenant alongside, he jogged over.

The lieutenant motioned to Daniel. "Order another dustoff," then to the platoon in general: "Everybody but gunners and drivers spread out. Santa-Cruz, when the medevac gets here pop yellow smoke." Dave gave a thumbs up and the lieutenant turned to John. "How many casualties in your squad, Kendall?"

"None, lieutenant. Except Petrowski from 1-3."

His brows arched and he said, "No shit?"

"No shit, sir."

The platoon fanned out, forming a perimeter, but all contact was lost. The firefight was over.

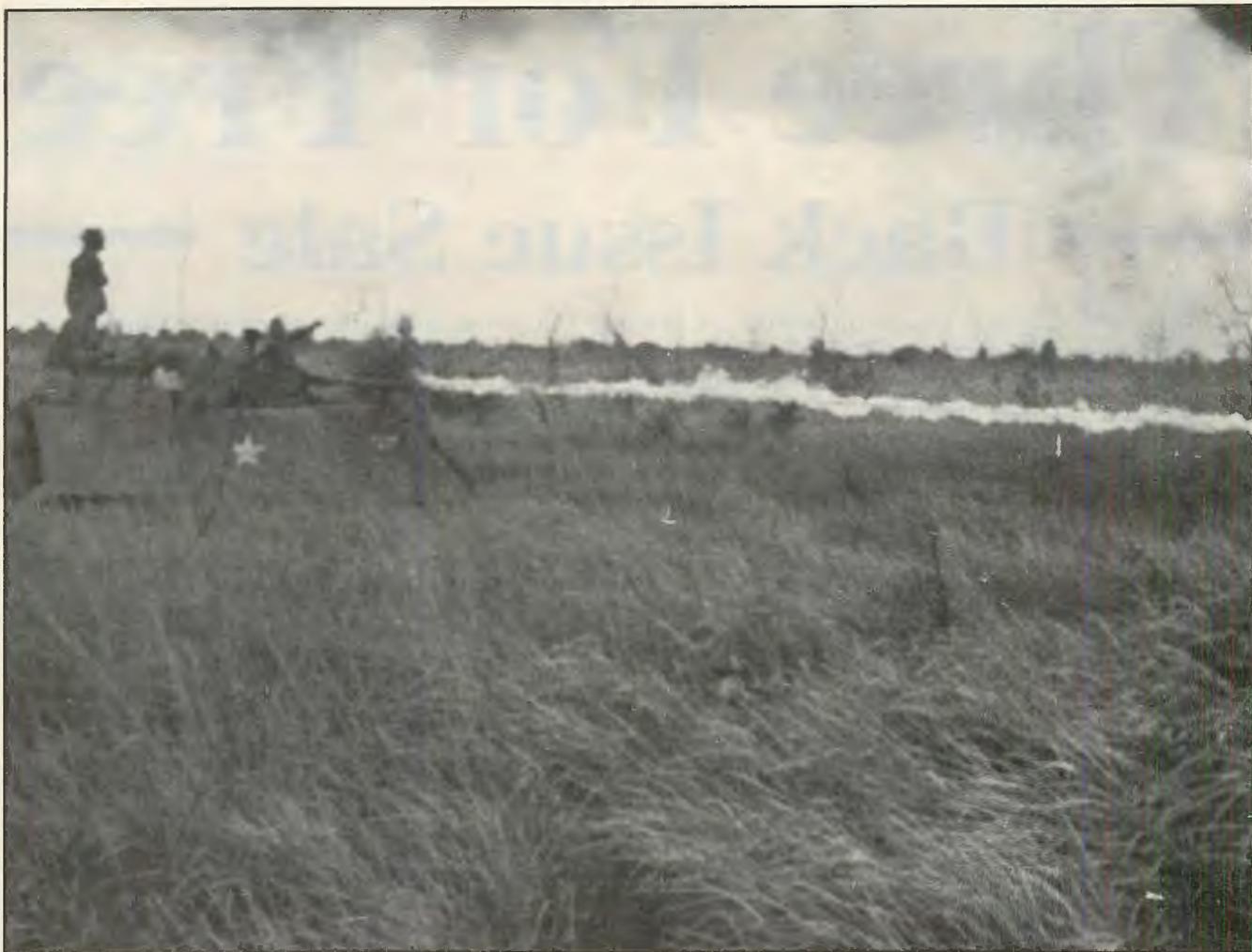
I sat next to the 60 in relieved silence, watching fires in the ville gain momentum, fatigue now binding my every joint. Flare ships had arrived, dropping titanic globes of illumination so bright they stole darkness even from nooks and crannies. Plumes of smoke drifted lazily, filling nostrils with the pungency of phosphorous and cordite. Flames licked up from thatched roofs, blending eerily with the swaying flarelight, and from some secret place a cache of munitions intermittently cooked off.

Overhead, new chopper blades slapped the air, and as Dave popped smoke the second medevac landed under the cover of two Cobras. This coincided with the clank and rumble of APCs as 3rd platoon and the CP roared into our position.

We watched the gunships re-kill the already dead village, then wearily headed back to Devin, leaving our reinforcements behind to recon the rubble.

The next morning I asked Dave if he had any word on Carl.

"Report is that he'll live, but he won't be



Mopping up after ambush, APC-mounted flame throwers were used to detonate boobytraps in area surrounding ville. Photo: Jim Ross

back. Took a claymore pellet in the chest and collapsed a lung. The leg shot's bad. Lots of damage there. They won't know if he's keepin' it till he gets to Japan. The others are okay. Minor shrapnel and burn wounds. They'll all be back in a week or so."

We were sitting on a half-wall of sandbags outside his bunker. He was more relaxed than I would've thought, considering it was the third consecutive firefight in which his track had been hit. I made a mental note to share guard with him later and learn how he had managed, so far, to drift through his tour, quietly getting the job done, without taking it personally or actually getting involved.

"Well at least Carl's alive," I said.

"He was lucky. You guys were lucky too."

"What'd the sweep turn up?"

"Don't know how many there were," he said. "Maybe a company. Who knows? We killed six VC and nine civilians."

"Whoa. Wait a minute," I said. "You're saying we wasted more civilians than gooks?"

"That's right. Either us or the VC, hard to say for sure. And the numbers came from Lieutenant Martine, so they're most likely accurate."

I pondered this while Dave fired smokes for both of us.

"Maybe you can explain something to me, Dave," I said. "I'm still new, but common sense doesn't take much experience, and it seems to me that by jumpin' us, they knew what the outcome was likely to be. Is that right?"

"Basically," he said, puffing thoughtfully.

"So let's check the score. In return for screwin' up the health records of six GIs and causing minor damage to a couple of tracks, they lost 15 of their own and a whole village. That about right?"

Stallings heard this as he shuffled by. "Damned straight," he quipped, grinning.

"Between us and the Cobras there wasn't enough left for a weenie roast." He continued on, not expecting a reply. Dave just smiled and shook his head.

"You're right," Dave said, "but you can bet if the press hears about it we'll look like a pack of renegades by the time the story reaches The World. It's all part of the dinks' divide and conquer strategy."

He took a draw, wiped his brow. "See, they know they can't beat us militarily, so they've concentrated on destroying our morale by turning our buddies back on the block against us. They figured once they

took away support from home, it'd just be a matter of time. He paused. "They're masters of propaganda, and so far they've done a helluva job suckering the American public."

"But what can we do about it?"

"All we can do is try to break their backs before the withdrawal's complete. We already know the South can't take 'em, so the only way to do it is to invade Cambodia first, then the North. Thing is, it'll never happen now."

I agreed that it wouldn't.

"Hell," he went on, "we had 'em beat two years ago. Tet kicked their ass. They were ready to quit. But the commie-inspired protestors spooked the government out of giving Westy the extra men he needed to snuff 'em for good."

He slouched back, flipped the cigarette. "We're being driven out by our own people, and when we're gone the NVA'll be hoisting their flag over South Vietnam in short order. Watch and see."

Dave was right on target, though he would never know it. *He was killed by an RPG while riding point .50 in Cambodia six weeks later.*

By then, the Shootout on Highway One was just another memory, and the little hamlet was rebuilt and thriving. ✎

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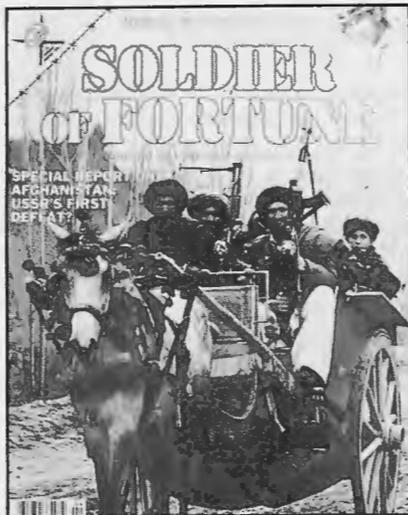
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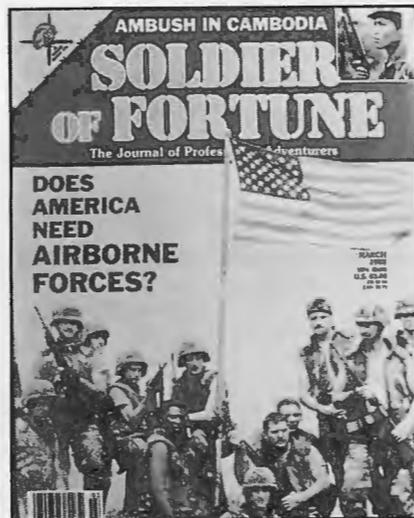
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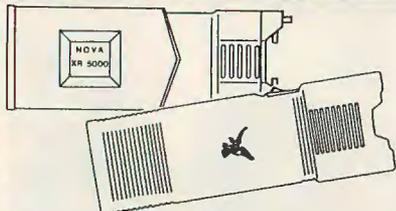
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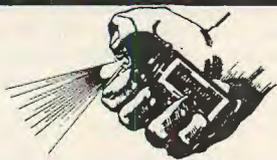
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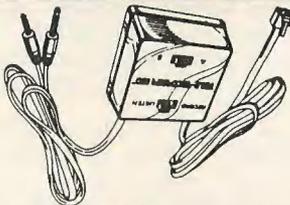
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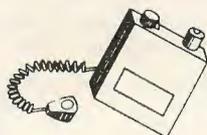
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## AFGHAN EXECUTION

Continued from page 39

mangle of Hezb-Jamiat inter-party rivalry. In my last interview with Massoud in November 1989, before returning to Pakistan in a race to cross the mountain passes before being cut off by the winter snows, he expressed his confidence that the defeat of Hezb by Jamiat at Ishkamish would see the end of armed conflict between the two parties in the north of Afghanistan.

"I think this is the last battle between Hezb and Jamiat," Massoud said. "In terms of military action against the Shura-i-Nazar Hezb has understood that it cannot win."

Massoud further claimed that even the Peshawar office of Hezb-i-Islami — which Massoud believes ordered both the Sayed Jamal massacre and the Ishkamish attack — has softened its stance against Jamiat and favors negotiation over confrontation.

Even allowing for a Hezb-Jamiat rapprochement Massoud still faces a critical test in the field against Najibullah's forces. Here there is a problem — a shortage of arms and ammunition.

"This year we have received not a single bullet," claimed Massoud, alleging that he is being deliberately strangled of military aid from Pakistan.

To compensate, Massoud has bought munitions on the black market in Pakistan, but here too the specter of Hezb interference has waved its brutal fist. The mid-November 1989 explosions which destroyed the Jamiat arms depot in Garam Chesma on the Afghan-Pakistan border have been acknowledged as sabotage by the investigating team of Pakistani experts; Hezb is one of several groups suspected of being responsible.

Afghan Interim Government President Sibghatullah Mujaddidi recently downplayed inter-party clashes claiming they did not affect the jihad.

On the contrary, in light of the departure of the Soviets, these festering rivalries bring into question the very validity of the jihad, which by definition calls for self-sacrifice.

The challenge to the mujahideen is whether they are mature enough to abandon their centuries-old traditions of tribal vendettas and parochial squabbles in order to pursue a higher, common goal. Six million Afghan refugees are waiting — still — to see if they are equal to the task. ✕

## I WAS THERE

Continued from page 16

long length of det cord away from it, and camped out for the night in the jungle. His instructions were to wait for a shot at 0800, pause a heartbeat, and detonate the target. He was

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awake, thankfully, and he performed flawlessly.

The tree stood still a split-second as its base blasted into black splinters and carbon, then it rose briefly like some organic ICBM gone haywire, leaned top-heavy and crashed flat into the underbrush. "Hey, nice shot, Lynch. We missed her by 10 feet." Redlegs know if you watch a round closely you can see where it lands. We had followed the light-green blur fly toward — and past — the target.

None of the grunts had noticed anything awry. That was outside of their area of expertise. All they saw was the tree hitting the ground as if God himself had hammered it.

The victim, suitably awe-stricken, paid up. The beer came in on the next resupply bird. Mission accomplished: victim suitably chastised, battery reputation upheld and bolstered, and nobody died on our side.

"I'll drink to that!" said our BC. So we did. ☒

**CAMBODIA**

*Continued from page 61*

breeze. Occasionally there was a nervous laugh from one of the men seated out of sight in the tall grass. While we rested the sky changed into a blood red sunset.

With the light now fading fast the officers' "O Group" broke up, each moving off toward his party of men. Like a phantom army the guerrillas now rose up from the grass, re-formed ranks, and set off toward the dark shadows of a distant tree line. The column soon split into several fragments and each headed off on its own bearing.

Now darkness rushed up on us, obliterating everything. Before the moon rose we had to stumble along feeling our way, ever nervous of losing sight of the man in front who was no more than a faint form, slightly darker than the rest of the black night. One second he was there, then he wasn't and I'd pick up my pace, afraid of never finding him or anyone else again, only to slam, hard, into his backpack, evoking a muttered curse from the now solid shadow.

Logs, branches and vines seemed determined to snare my feet. Holes and hollows in the ground, which don't seem to exist in daylight, now cropped up at every other step. Fears of twisting an ankle, or breaking a leg, filled my mind as I stumbled along, trying to keep pace with the ever-elusive phantom in front.

Another halt was called. The group I was attached to numbered about 30 men and consisted of Col. Bouchay and the rest of Tactical HQ, along with the 81mm mortar team. While most of us slumped to the ground to rest one man climbed a tree

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to erect a radio aerial. After much cracking of branches, and several near falls, he secured it safely to the top. Radio contact with other units was established for a situation report. All seemed to be going well as the different groups closed with the target.

With more branch-cracking the agile soldier clambered back to earth from his treetop perch with the radio antenna. This was soon stowed away and again we moved off into the night.

Not much later we emerged onto a narrow cart track and followed it, careful to avoid the deep ruts that ran along it. The track was lined by trees that blocked even the pale starlight. By now each man hung onto the webbing of the man in front, literally the blind leading the blind. When the track took a sharp turn to the right we ploughed straight on and emerged into a wide clearing of more tall grass. Cautiously we edged our way along by the trees that lined the clearing.

Reaching a particularly thick clump of trees yet another halt was called. This time it was to be our position for the night. After the attack began we were to edge forward another 500 meters, where the second wave was meant to be. When the second wave advanced I was to go forward with them and join those in the front line. My escort indicated a bush at the base of a tree and said I could rest next to it. As I stepped forward he held me back as two others began to thrash at the bushes with sticks. This lasted a few seconds, after which I settled down comfortably next to my backpack and asked my interpreter what the stick thrashing was about. I could just make out a flash of white teeth as he broke into a wide grin and said, "snakes!" With this thought to keep me company I laid on the ground prepared for a sleepless night.

Unexpectedly I dozed off, but woke with a start later to find the dark clearing now bathed in blue moonlight. Close by stood several guerrillas, holding a whispered conversation. Bleary eyed, and stiff from the cold of the night, I checked the time. It was 0450, 10 minutes before H hour. The radio antenna had been attached to the top of another treetop. There was an air of excited expectation as H hour approached.

It was 0500 hours and there was total silence all about. Where was the expected attack? Surprise at the non-start of the assault soon gave way to concern as the minutes continued to tick past. By 0510 Col. Bouchay had established radio contact with at least one assault group. He was softly, but sternly, urging them to begin the attack as dawn was already creeping into the eastern horizon.

At 0520 the peace was shattered by the roar of exploding RPG rockets, which echoed like distant thunder. This sounded too far off to be the attack on Kouk Mon, unless we had strayed far from our intended line of advance in the night.

Colonel Bouchay was asking for contact reports and received in exchange

nothing but radio static. The moonlight was being relentlessly eroded as dawn crept into the eastern sky. The shadows grew paler. Still no sign of the attack on Kouk Mon being initiated.

By 0530 Col. Bouchay was very concerned about the delay and decided the attack must begin immediately, despite the fact that at least one assault group was still not in position. He issued frantic orders, "Attack, Attack, Attack!" Seconds later another great roar of RPG rockets, much closer, drowned out the sounds of battle from the other assaults against more distant targets. This time we could clearly hear the gritty chatter of small-arms fire. But there were also barking bursts from 12.7mm heavy machine guns, a weapon not possessed by the assault group. The PRK opposition was responding much faster than anticipated.

We peered anxiously toward the next tree line, the direction in which the battle was raging. The 81mm mortar team prepared to advance to a pre-arranged point, where their supply of bombs had been deposited. Colonel Bouchay's radio crackled with desperate radio messages between forward field commanders as he constantly asked for battle reports. These came back over the radio net, screamed above the sounds of forward battle.

We then heard, quite distinctly, the throbbing of tank engines. The original battle plan called for these to have been targeted and destroyed before the main assault. Something seemed to have gone wrong. Mortar bombs began to explode in the trees a few hundred yards from Tactical HQ. These were not, yet, life-threatening to us but they were falling in the ground we would have to advance across.

Reports from the front had now become confused. There were casualties from mines... One assault group was inside the perimeter... The enemy had rallied and launched a counter-strike... One tank had been hit... Both tanks were mobile and outside the perimeter with infantry support... The assault was a success... The advance was held up. It was hard to assemble a clear picture.

Each commander fed back battle reports according to what he could see. The Duke of Wellington once said that "The history of a battle is not unlike the history of a ball. Some individuals may recollect all the little events of which the great result is the battle won or lost; but no individual can recollect the order in which, or the exact moment at which, they occurred, which makes all the difference as to their value of importance." It is a sentiment with which I can fully sympathize. During this attack there were a wealth of contradictory reports, each subject to the individual's viewpoint. But it did seem certain that all was not going according to plan.

The report of enemy troops outside the perimeter supported by tanks was alarming. We could certainly hear the tanks maneuvering about, which seemed to discredit

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other reports that they had been hit. The 81mm mortar team was stopped from advancing to their pre-designated base plate position until verification of the status of the tanks could be ascertained. At the time it proved impossible to do this. Their movement was spotted in the tree line. A security group immediately rushed out to lay an extended defensive perimeter. I moved forward to witness and photograph the expected clash.

The security group fanned out and moved forward to a line of tree stumps and shrubbery to establish a defense line. To do so meant wading through knee-deep water with soft mud underfoot, making it heavy going. As I hurried up from behind, those in front closed up and waved in a lone figure emerging from the tree line. He turned out to be a wounded guerrilla making his way back from the front lines, having been shot in the arm. As the wounded man walked toward us, clutching his injured arm where a dark stain of blood soaked through his sleeve, he had the slightly blank, pale and bloodless, expression of shock on his face.

Members of the security cordon reached him and escorted him back toward Tactical HQ. They led him gently, almost tenderly, each expressing concerned advice and clearing the way. No one spoke directly to the wounded man, whose large eyes gazed at the men helping him.

I, armed with camera, approached from a flank. The wounded man was led past as I filmed. He cast an unseeing glance in my direction as I kept him in the viewfinder. Looking through the electronic eye of the video camera I was aware of a feeling of detachment as I filmed, and then a feeling of shame. Why this was so is hard to say. I think it was because this man had just returned from the sharp end of battle and, not having been there with him, there was a hesitation in my filming, a questioning of whether I had the right to film him now. I had requested permission to be with the lead elements of the assault and this had been denied. Nonetheless, in the same way as a survivor carries a feeling of guilt for having survived, I also felt guilt for not having been there.

As the wounded man and his escort walked past I filmed for a few seconds more to get the reverse shot. These few seconds effectively placed me in the rear. A few more seconds elapsed as I stowed equipment. As I moved off to catch up I cursed the water and mud for being such hard going.

Like a grenade exploding, there was a sudden, loud, report as a geyser of dark, muddy water and clods of mud arched up only 15 yards off to the right. I flinched away from the blast and instinctively tried, crouched very low, to run, expecting a fusillade of small-arms fire to erupt from the nearby tree line. Everyone else also anticipated a deadly hail of small-arms fire and desperately tried to run through the stinking muddy ooze and water of the

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overgrown paddy.

The only cover at hand was a low paddy dike, a few yards away, which felt, exposed as I was, like a mile. Charged with adrenaline we floundered toward it. In the few seconds of heart-tearing effort it took to reach the paddy dike no small-arms fire broke out. Everyone began to slow down as it became apparent we were not, after all, under direct infantry attack.

Then what was the explosion? It wasn't an incoming RPG rocket or a mortar bomb. That left only one alternative — a mine. Anxious looks were exchanged along with a quick head count. Bunsoka, one of the security section, was missing. The realization that he must have stepped on a mine sank home.

Bunsoka had been following behind me as I waded forward to photograph the wounded soldier being brought in. He'd been closing up on me as I'd adjusted my cameras. A chill ran up my spine as I realized he had been following in my footsteps.

Noumail, who also belonged to the security section, bravely ran toward the blast, risking setting off another mine, looking for a way that others had already used through the tall grass. More men closed in from the other side, again trying to follow tracks. They converged by a clump of bushes and bent over something. Someone stood up with two M16s. Then two men stood up from a crouch with a third man, Bunsoka, between them. They lifted him up by forming a cradle with their interlocked arms on which Bunsoka sat, semi-conscious, his arms draped around the necks of the men carrying him. His head drooped.

As they came closer I could see that Bunsoka's eyes were also glazed and unfocused. One foot was shoeless, the sock hung in limp tatters, stained dark with blood.

Bunsoka was carried back to Tactical HQ where a paramedic began to apply first aid. Morphine was injected. Then antiseptic was applied to various wounds. The paramedic only had small field dressings with which to bind up the worst of the wounds. They were hardly sufficient to stem the blood loss. There were also innumerable lacerations and puncture wounds up both legs, arms and chest that had to be cleaned and checked.

Fifteen minutes later Bunsoka was swathed in bandages and placed into a hammock, slung under a long pole, which two men could shoulder between them. They then set off at a quick walking pace, heading back to the rear echelon field hospital.

Meanwhile Col. Bunchay was having to accept that this attack had turned sour and had to be terminated. Due to the contradictory reports about enemy forces being active outside their defensive perimeter the 81mm mortar team could not advance to its pre-designated base plate. As they were now separated from their

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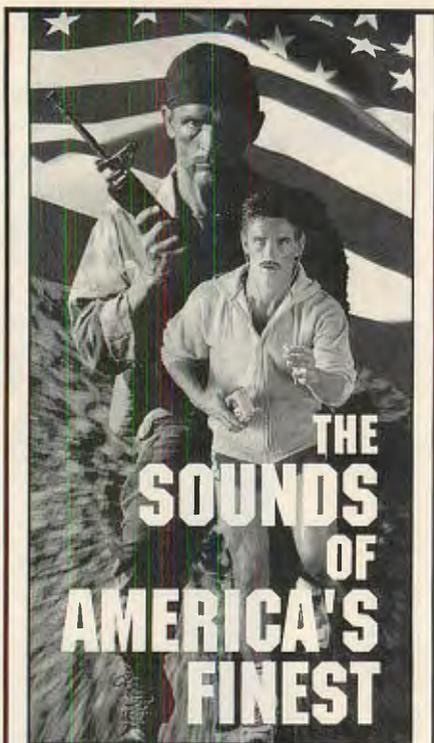
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dumped cache of bombs the mortar remained mute, its crew despondent, unable to offer covering fire as the order to retire was finally given at 0900.

Surprisingly, no artillery support from the PRK artillery fire base at Samrong had been given to the PRK defenders of Kouk Mon. This was much appreciated by the guerrillas as they began their withdrawal from contact.

As they pulled back they linked up with other groups, some encumbered with more wounded slung in hammocks or walking slowly with bloodied bandages. Behind them desultory mortar fire from the PRK defenders of Kouk Mon continued to detonate in the trees.

After the long approach march the night before, the shortage of sleep and the tension of the action, we now walked with slow, leaden steps. At this point no one knew how many casualties there had been. Only a few of the attacking force had been committed before contact was disengaged, but the potential for heavy casualties among those assigned to the assault weighed heavily on everyone's mind.

It took us several hours to retrace our steps to the start line. Here, the field hospital I had seen being prepared was busy with wounded. Each casualty was quickly and efficiently treated, then dispatched back to Thailand for further attention.

When I arrived, Bunsoka was laid out, anesthetized, on the operating table while the paramedics cleaned his multiple wounds. The ground was littered with blood-soaked swabs and bandages as they worked with speedy, near silent, professionalism. A hole had been blown right through his right foot and many bones broken. With careful attention they were optimistic that it could be saved. The surgical team was capable of performing an amputation if called for, but were determined to save that as a last resort. As I watched they were concentrating on stemming blood loss, cleansing the wounds and sending him back to Thailand for the complex operation needed if the foot was to be saved.

Apparently, he had stepped on a small M14 anti-personnel mine but had been partially cushioned from the blast by the soft mud and calf-deep water.

Another casualty, whose back had been splayed open by a passing 12.7 HMG round from one of the T-54 tanks, lay on a tarpaulin close by. He had been pinned down under direct fire when hit. The groove across his back had cut deep, leaving a yawning open wound several inches wide. Under the effect of local anesthetic he lay conscious and seemingly nonplused, as another paramedic roughly swabbed the wound with wads of antiseptic-soaked bandages. After this the paramedic began to stitch his back together with what looked like sail-maker sized stitches.

There were other field hospitals and the wounded were distributed among them to ensure that none were overloaded with

casualties. The guerrillas had suffered three killed, including one officer, and 15 wounded, the greatest cause of casualties being mines.

The base camp was fairly quiet that afternoon as the weary troopers slept off the fatigue of the night march, which for many of the units, had been longer and more grueling than that undertaken by the group I had been with. A few sat silently around fires cooking meals. Shafts of sunlight filtered gently through the fog of blue wood-smoke trapped beneath the tall bamboo.

Hammocks, which had been slung between every available tree, sagged in the middle with the dead weight of sleeping men. A radio somewhere relayed songs in Cambodian from Radio Free Khmer (A U.S.-funded Cambodian language station) or Voice of America. A group of officers sat around another radio sending and receiving reports.

I sat in my hammock, catching up on notes, scribbling down impressions of the events leading to the attack. At this stage there was still insufficient information available to establish exactly what had happened. I stretched out and gave way to the urge to sleep.

A few hours later after a debrief from Col. Bouchay, and from talking to some of the men, I managed to build up a picture of what had happened (see box).

The next day I left Col. Bouchay's guerrilla base behind me, setting off with my escort to see more of the area the NCR calls the "Liberated Zone." This lies in Cambodia's northwest corner, where it backs onto Thailand. It is some 40 miles long and over 20 miles wide. While the NCR penetrated far deeper into Cambodia the "Liberated Zone" is the only area held by them that is completely free of PRK forces. It affords a secure foothold in which to consolidate gains and prepare future offensives.

The way south followed Route 69. Once a proper hard-surfaced road, after 20 years of war, this is now no more than a dirt track in very poor repair. Colonel Hung Yuth (in command of my escort) described it as "communism's gift to Cambodia."

On past trips to Cambodia Route 69 had been a dangerous barrier to cross. Vietnamese patrols were prone to lay ambushes in its vicinity. Crossing it was achieved only after careful reconnaissance, and even then it was always crossed at a run with a quart of adrenaline pumping through your veins. Now we ambled along the road itself with hardly a care in the world. A bullock cart was even hired from a village to carry the men's backpacks. They had been battling for a decade for the simple freedom of walking along the dusty road. As can be imagined, morale was extremely high.

The first stop was at Bantay Chamar, famed as the site of one of the largest ancient Khmer temple complexes after Angkor Wat. Here the temple remained overgrown by jungle, much as Angkor Wat



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Now huge trees grew out of courtyards once flagged in stone and delicately carved Apsara angels supported the strangling embrace of vines and creepers. Deep inside the complex, set far back among the jumbled heaps of collapsed buildings I came across a tall megalith built from large blocks of solid stone. On each of its four sides was carved a huge serene face in classic Khmer style. This was a "Bayon." It is for just such monumental carvings of the ancient Khmer kings that Angkor Wat is famous.

The Khmers said that the Bayon was built with a face carved on four sides in order to be able watch his enemies. The faces are of such a scale that each stone block was sufficient for only part of the face, assembled like a giant jigsaw puzzle to form the whole.

For a Cambodian the Bayon is an emotive monument to past glories; a proof-positive that once they ruled over a vast empire. It is a reminder of a time when they fought their nation's wars in territories far from Cambodia itself. Now, a thousand years later, their war tears the heart out of the country, but their fierce nationalism remains unchanged. It seems in a way that this war is not a new war, but one centuries old. For the enemy the Cambodians have fought for so long to rid their country of is the same enemy for which the four-sided Bayon watches through eternity: the Anamites, known today as the Vietnamese, the traditional enemy of the Khmer empire.

When the NCR had attacked Bantay Chamar, shortly after the Vietnamese pull-out, the PRK garrison had been unable to hold it. Now there are monuments in Bantay Chamar of the battle to liberate Cambodia; the rusting hulks of two T-54 tanks. The first straddles Route 69 as it cuts through Bantay Chamar itself. Fire-blackened, and minus its turret, it is a testimonial to the effectiveness of the recently supplied antitank weapons. Just above the right side-track is a small hole, the entry point of the HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank) round that hit it.

The second T-54 is a few hundred meters south, where its crew abandoned it after seeing the lead tank explode. To be fair the second tank was a sitting duck due to mechanical breakdown.

A good day's hike along Route 69 brought us to the district capital, Thma Pouk. Once it had a population of some 15,000 now reduced to around 6,000. It had also been a Vietnamese military base (then a PRK one after the Vietnamese pulled out). After a day-long battle Thma Pouk was also captured by the NCR during their recent offensive. To date it is the largest town captured by the NCR.

One of three tanks captured in recent fighting was on display in Thma Pouk. Unlike those I had seen at Bantay Chamar this one was working and had a trained crew assigned to it. When I saw it, it was

undergoing trials to ensure that it was fully operational. It was, and was subsequently used in action against another PRK position.

Having commanded the battle that liberated Thma Pouk, General Kreouch Yeum has been appointed governor, to administer the needs of its civilian population. It was evident from speaking to the civilian population that, with the NCR in charge, the standard of life in Thma Pouk had been changed for the better. For the first time in 15 years there was medical treatment available for civilians, a proper school and freedom of religion. The resistance soldiers were trying to rebuild the old Sihanoukist hospital, they were bringing western medical aid and clothing for the children and clearing mines.

The problems of catering to the needs of the civilian population were not all that Gen. Yeum had to worry about. The offensive was still in progress and with it came all the attendant logistical problems. At this time, the drive south toward the town of Sissophon was still in full swing.

One morning we were awakened by the sound of a sustained artillery and rocket barrage that heralded an assault in progress. The drumming of artillery continued for several hours. Later that day a large dust cloud was seen advancing up Route 69 from the south. When it came closer it was found to be a huge convoy of 100 ox carts, ferrying wounded NCR soldiers back to Thailand.

The wounded had already received preliminary first aid on the battlefield and sat with dusty bloodstained bandages, in ones and twos on the ox carts. The more seriously wounded lay on the carts, semi-conscious, with saline drips attached. The convoy of wounded rolled past in almost total silence. There were no cries or complaints, only the endless creaking of wooden ox cart wheels.

An officer accompanying the convoy explained that these casualties had been sustained mostly from the effects of 122mm Stalin Organs (multi-barrelled rocket launchers) and heavy artillery employing pre-designated defensive fire. Apparently a battle was in progress to encroach closer to Svay Chek (the main defensive position of the PRK situated 16 kilometers north of Sissophon) and to surround some of them at the Maca Bridge post. These objectives had been obtained, but in obtaining them the NCR had paid a higher price in casualties than they had anticipated.

Nevertheless the availability of the ox carts, serving the dual purpose of ammunition resupply and casualties evacuation, was an impressive display of logistical planning and support.

In five years reporting on the war in Cambodia with the resistance this was the first time I had been able to leave the jungle, travel openly along main roads and freely meet the civilian population. I was struck by the obvious open popular support

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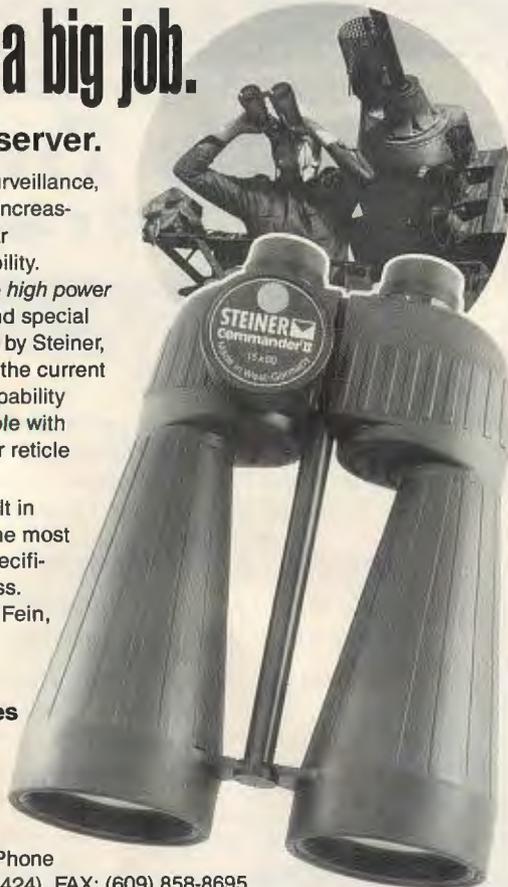
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for the NCR.

While we in the West watch the historic collapse of communism in Eastern Europe the sad reality in Cambodia is that the population continues to suffer under an oppressive communist regime. Eastern Europe is now universally rejecting communism as an unworkable system. But the Cambodians remain caught between the tiger and the crocodile; the Vietnamese-backed communists in power in Phnom Penh, and the Chinese-backed communist Khmer Rouge in the jungle.

However, for the people of Cambodia there is a third choice — the Non-Communist Resistance. They are at last beginning to look like a real army. They have made good use of the limited Western weapons available to them, are progressively more disciplined, have recently made significant military headway in north-western Cambodia and they have the hearts and minds of the people.

For the Cambodian people the Non-Communist Resistance stands between the twin evils of the tiger and the crocodile, perhaps it is about time the Western world stopped screwing around and gave them some real support. ✂

## COMBAT DEBRIEF

Continued from page 59

now partially illuminating the scene and the small band came under heavy small-arms fire and a shower of grenades that killed one man and wounded two more. In front they could see no further than the burning huts, while the crest behind them was lost in a pall of smoke. A high-tide mark had been reached. Feeling isolated, with enemy grenades continuing to explode close to them and no sign of further support, they were forced to retire.

Taking both their casualties with them, they rushed back to the rampart crest. One of the four left in support had been wounded, another was now missing. Trenches on the base side of the rampart, 10 meters on either side of them, were still held by the enemy. Cover was afforded only by lying pressed against the ground, out of sight.

In assessing the confused combat reports from the front lines Col. Bouchay, back in Tac HQ, had to consider that the gap punched in the defenses on the earth rampart on one flank was only a narrow one. Most of the rampart was still in the hands of PRK defenders. It was becoming evident that without more paths through the extended depth of the mine fields he would be unable to commit sufficient men fast enough to shift the balance in his favor. With the death of one commander he had lost effective control of one assault team and its support group. It now seemed that under the present circumstances the assault was bound to fail.

Daylight was increasing all the time, and if a retreat was to be called it was imperative to retire before full daylight rendered this more hazardous. Reluctantly Col. Bouchay called off the attack.

Once the vital element of surprise had been lost there had been little chance of success. What chance there was, foundered on the unexpected additional rings of mines, seven more than anticipated.

Suitable credit however, should be given to the PRK defenders. It also should be borne in mind that they were soldiers from 179 Division, considered one of the best that the PRK has in its predominantly weak and poorly trained army.

On receiving the order to retire, the assault group officers blew shrill blasts on whistles, barely audible over the continued thunderous roar of battle. An orderly withdrawal from contact was then initiated.

The NCR suffered three killed and 15 wounded during this attack. PRK army casualties are unknown. Only two of the six targeted satellite bases, also held by 179 Division personnel, were overrun. However, three weeks later, a fresh effort was made in this sector and six more PRK army positions fell. The Kouk Mon defenders beat off a second attack, after which they found themselves isolated and subjected to continuous harassment from mortar fire.

The low profile siege was made possible by the destruction of all surrounding PRK positions, ensuring safe supply lines from NCR operational bases. The fall of Kouk Mon is inevitable. It's now only a matter of time. ✕

## COMBLOC CONNECTION

*Continued from page 46*

pistols, all in excellent condition. Chambered for the 9mm Makarov cartridge and based upon the Walther PP, this double-action, blowback-operated pistol has a lightweight alloy frame. The seven-round magazines were all loaded with either Bulgarian (factory code '10') or East German (factory code '04') ammunition.

Of Tokarevs there were two variants. I noticed one Russian TT-33 that was manufactured in 1953. It was in poor condition. Far more common were the North Korean Type 68 pistols. While still chambered for the 7.62x25mm cartridge, the Type 68 is a heavily modified TT-33. The swinging link has been replaced by a cam-cut lug on the underside of the barrel in the manner of the Browning High Power. The magazine catch-release has been relocated to the heel of the frame. There is no clip on the right side of the frame to retain the slide stop. The firing pin is held in place by a plate instead of a cross-pin. In overall configuration the North Korean Type 68 is more compact, but bulkier than the TT-33. The

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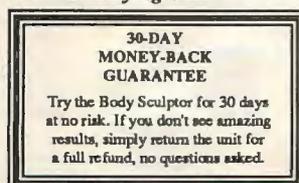
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ammunition accompanying these pistols was of Soviet origin (factory code '38').

The FMLN apparently has friends in Spain also, as a substantial quantity of steel-framed Star 9mm Parabellum pistols have been captured. They are based largely upon the Browning design.

A small quantity of U.S.-manufactured handguns have been captured from the FMLN as well. They include the following: Colt M1911A1 .45 ACP pistols, Colt .38 Special and .357 Magnum revolvers, Smith & Wesson Model 39 9mm pistols and S&W .38 Special Revolvers.

Hand grenades seem to have played but a small role in the November offensive's urban fighting. That's fortunate, as they are sometimes indiscriminate killers and would have increased civilian casualties. However, the FMLN possesses a large and varied inventory of these devices. They include the usual ComBloc mix of Soviet F-1, RG-42, RGD-5 and M75 grenades, together with the dangerous Czech RG34 and RG4 impact-detonated anti-personnel grenades. Others I examined were the Argentine FMK-2, Dutch V-40, Belgian PRB 7/8 and M-50 PRB, German DM-51, Israeli No. 14 offensive type, Austrian ARGES HDGR-73 and the U.S. M26 and Mk-2. Some U.S. M-118 claymores have been captured from the FMLN. Offensive hand grenades have also been improvised from 40mm M79/M203 HE rounds.

The most innovative improvised weapons I encountered were hand-held West

German parachute flares modified by the addition of a wire-wrapped charge of Flex-X, an RDX-based plasticized explosive manufactured in Canada by C.I.L. Designed for use against helicopters, they could either be fired singly by pull-cord or by means of a shoulder-held nine-tube launcher. The maximum effective range is 600 to 700 meters. No aircraft were downed as a result of these "flare-bombs." Flex-X and blocks of TNT are also used with 19-hour parking-meter and 90-minute timers for sabotage of electrical power equipment and terror bombings.

Effective use was made of Soviet RPG-7s and RPG-18s by the FMLN during the November offensive. All of the RPG-7s I examined were of Soviet manufacture. In an attempt to sterilize the RPG-18s, the instruction panels had been removed. There are still a few Soviet-manufactured RPG-2s in FMLN inventory as well.

Of unknown origin, the so-called "M26-A2" grenade launcher appears in the urban commando instruction manual, but I have never seen one. It is shown as a single-shot, breech-loading, break-open, shoulder-fired weapon with a ribbed forearm. There is no trigger guard and the buttstock is of the tubular type. It fires a 30mm grenade, called the VOG-26, with a maximum range of 600 meters. The weight of the weapon, empty, is 6.6 pounds.

The Policia Nacional and the Salvadoran armed forces continue to confiscate the usual mix of U.S. military small arms, such

as M16s, M60 GPMGs and M72 LAWs (the vast majority compliments of North Vietnam) — but in much smaller quantities than previously. What is the explanation for the FMLN's undisguised switch to ComBloc weaponry? Certainly not logistics as this now puts at least seven small arms calibers alone into their pipeline (5.56x45mm NATO, 7.62x51mm NATO, 7.62x39mm, 7.62x54R, 7.62x25mm, 9mm Makarov, and 9mm Parabellum, plus small amounts of .45 ACP, .38 Special and .357 Magnum).

They obviously assumed that they would win the "Final Offensive." Once they had established a Marxist regime with open ties to Nicaragua, Cuba and the Soviet Union, there would no longer be a need for subterfuge. With a dictatorship of the proletariat in place, the need to sway Marxist clergy and trendy leftists in the West — through manipulation of the media — against the Cristiani government would no longer be necessary. The November offensive failed and left in its wake, clearly exposed to all, an Ortega-Castro-Gorbachev connection. Eight nations have provided weapons and munitions to the FMLN: the Soviet Union and Cuba are the lead suppliers, supplemented to greater or lesser extent by Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, North Korea, Romania and Yugoslavia. The evidence is irrefutable, although it will be ignored by the media as it fails its ideological litmus test.

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Nicaragua, supplying the FMLN with the tools of death may have been made considerably more difficult. The FMLN will have to rely on a tenuous supply route that entails smuggling arms into Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and then shipping them by truck across Guatemala to El Salvador. Neither Guatemala nor Honduras is likely to be as receptive to FMLN supply lines running through their territory as was the Sandinista regime. Moreover, with his friend Pineapple Face in the slammer, Castro's freighters are unlikely to find smooth sailing through the Panama Canal should Cuba choose to send the FMLN supplies by sea. Radio Venceremos has announced the slaughter and rape of El Salvador will continue. We shall see. ✕

## BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 9

from kind-hearted Westerners for famine relief.

### LOWAVES THE POW/MIA FLAG...

Governor Jerry Branstad signed a bill authorizing \$10,000 for the purchase of POW/MIA flags to be distributed to Iowan municipalities. The Prisoner of War Freedom Foundation in San Diego is launching a similar campaign with private funds. Info from Fred Moore (619) 561-9711.

### MiG-29s TO FIDEL...

State Department recently confirmed that the Soviets delivered six MiG-29 fighter-bombers to Cuba. Just because they are used to carry nukes in the Soviet Union, and frantic Fidel is trying to buy or build an atomic bomb, some nervous nellies are worrying. Not to worry, didn't you know everything's changed now?

### REUNIONS...

TIN CAN SAILORS...August 13-20...Baltimore/Towson...contact Ed Ward, Executive Secretary, Battleship Cove, Fall River, MA 02721. 1ST EXPLOITATION COMPANY, CCS (SOA), 5th SFGA (ABN), 1ST SF...sometime 1990...contact Tex Houston, Box 441, Stanton, TX 79782. HYNES, JAMES JR., Phu Loi, Vietnam '67-'68: if you'd like a reunion with the Zippo you lost near

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And speaking of reunions and getting hold of old what-zis-name again, here're three books we can heartily recommend: *Reunion Handbook (Special Military Section)*, 222 pages, illus., index @ \$12.95 (how to get your act together and have a complete reunion); *How to Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military*, 50 pages, forms, index @ \$12.95; *You Can Find Anyone!* 140 pages, forms, index @ \$13.45 (hard-core track 'em down info for reunions or whatever purpose). Add a buck-fifty each for postage. All available from: Reunion Research, Dept. SOF, 3145 Geary Blvd. #14, San Francisco, CA 94118 (916) 758-0205.

## COMBAT INFANTRYPerson BADGE?

The Army has decided to award the Army Commendation Medal to acknowledge a job well done by MP Capt. Linda Bray of the 988th MP Company, for leading an assault on a PDF K-9 installation during Operation Just Cause. Some never-miss-a-chance-to-push-their-favorite-cause journalists and politicians — including Colorado's own Pat Schroeder who should know better since she's on the House Armed

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Services committee — were clamoring for a CIB for Capt. Bray, just like the infantrymen got. Somebody finally had to explain that MPs don't get CIBs, nor do tankers, artillerymen, and so forth because it's a Combat *Infantry* Badge. Getting shot at doesn't make you infantry, any more than jumping out of a plane that's on fire makes you airborne or falling out of a swift boat makes you a SEAL.

As ex-infantryman David Braaten noted in the *Washington Times*, the CIB is a badge of honor for the guys who know that they are called the "Queen of Battle" because generals do to the infantry what kings do to queens.

## AS WE GO TO PRESS...

On 15 April, SOF's Paul Fanshaw was the only reporter to cross into Nicaragua from contra headquarters in Honduras with Commandante Franklin, commander of the contras who replaced Enrique Bermudez. Fanshaw, a 13-year vet of the French Foreign Legion, has worked with SOF in Afghanistan, Burma, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Thailand.

To reach their AO requires 2½ weeks on foot. According to our sources, all able contras have returned to Nicaragua. Only 300 small arms, all rusted junk, and a few heavy weapons were turned into the United Nations monitoring force. Estimates of Sandinista army desertions/defectors run between 40% and 60%. Three separate sources state the contras went in "loaded for bear," with "out of the shipping crate-new" AKs and Dragunovs. Where did they come from? We don't know.

The contras are spread throughout the whole northwestern part of Nicaragua and have no intention of moving all their forces into the U.N.-controlled enclosure.

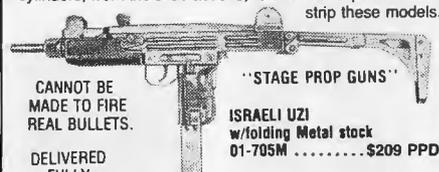
As of this writing, significant contra forces are only 30 miles to the east as the crow flies from Lake Managua. The contra leadership claims they will march on Managua if the Sandinista army and Secret Police leadership are not replaced. If the contras march on Managua SOF will be there. We will see. ☒

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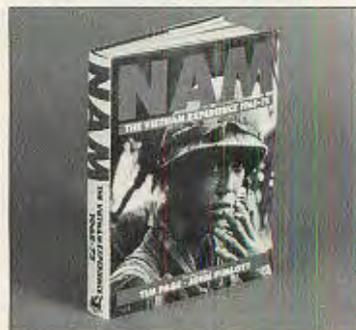
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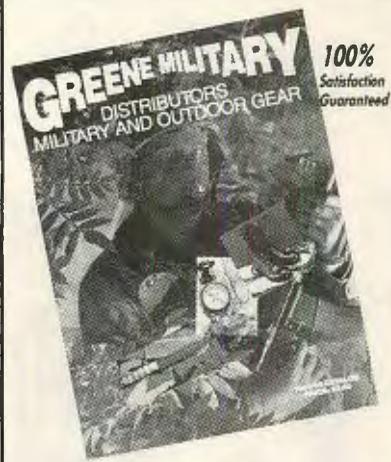
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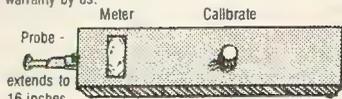
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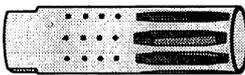
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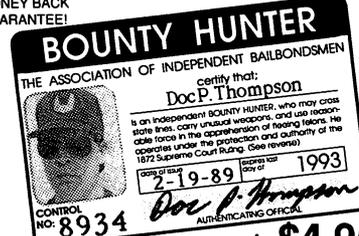
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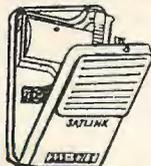
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# PARTING SHOT

by Galen Geer

## Was ABC's Objective Objectivity?

**L**AST January, ABC News anchor Peter Jennings took an in-depth look at gun control. The telecast, prepared in collaboration with *Time* Magazine, purported to present an "objective" view of the gun issue, and was widely acclaimed as being "fair" and "unbiased." Was it?

A detailed review reveals it was anything but.

Jennings' presentation consisted of two parts: an hour-long report entitled "Guns," to provide background, followed by a 1½-hour "Town Meeting" (a panel discussion) on the issue. The two presentations produced the following examples of "fair" and "unbiased" journalism:

- In the background segment, ABC featured 24 different people speaking against guns and seven people speaking in support of gun ownership, a ratio of more than three to one favoring the anti-gun side.

- A negative image of gun ownership or gun use was presented 46 times, while pro-gun positions or images were presented 13 times, again a ratio of more than three to one.

- At no time did Jennings interview a gun-owning doctor, lawyer or other professional person to balance his interviews of professional people in the anti-gun segments, despite the fact that as a group gun owners have more formal education than non gun-owners.

- On at least 86 occasions during the "Town Meeting" portion of the broadcast, Jennings or the anti-gun speakers — Sarah Brady, San Jose Police Chief Joseph McNamara, and Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) — were allowed to present an anti-gun viewpoint, while the pro-gun side was allowed 48 presentations.

- The forum portion of the presentation was supposed to allow speakers for both sides to present their views in a controlled atmosphere. During the broadcast, however, on at least 30 occasions Jennings allowed speakers to interrupt each other. Of these interruptions, 22 were made by the anti-gun side and eight by the pro side. With this unbalanced gate keeping, pro-gun speakers frequently were prevented from presenting their arguments in a complete, coherent man-

ner. (To Jennings' credit, on 13 occasions he solicited information from a neutral position, and on one occasion told Chief McNamara to be quiet and allow the pro-gun side to finish its statement.)

- The week before the show aired, ABC used a hidden camera to film one of its producers, Lisa Cohen, purchasing guns from stores in Las Vegas. During the forum, ABC presented footage of Ms. Cohen buying guns, but it did not show film of those dealers who had refused to sell to her. That omission served to portray all gun dealers as scofflaws and, more seriously, presented a false impression of the ease with which firearms can be obtained. It also left unanswered whether or not Ms. Cohen violated Federal law by buying the weapons. When Jennings asked her why two stores had refused to do business with her, she said in one case it was because she was not a resident of Nevada and "a couple of other things." If Ms. Cohen lives in a place where any of the guns she bought are illegal, her purchases would have constituted a felony. Jennings chose not to pursue that issue, despite the fact he almost certainly was aware of it, if for no other reason than a CBS News employee committed just such a crime (which the Justice Department chose not to prosecute) several months previously.

The "Guns" portion of the ABC presentation began with a review of the Stockton school yard shootings and its aftermath, with interviews, demonstrations and presentations. This is legitimate journalism, as the show aired at about the first anniversary of this incident. However, a fair presentation of the gun issue would have balanced the highly emotional and incendiary Stockton footage with equally powerful footage supporting the case for gun ownership and against gun control, if such footage exists.

And such footage does exist. It was shot in Tiananmen Square and it vividly illustrates a central argument of those opposed to gun control — that the principal reason we have a Second Amendment is that an armed citizenry is a deterrent to tyranny, and that guarantee is as relevant and necessary

in the 20th century as it was in the 18th. Far more violence took place in Tiananmen Square than in Stockton, and many more people died, but ABC chose to ignore it.

Nor did it show the expressions of grief by relatives of Tiananmen victims, or interview any survivors — two particularly serious omissions because much of the "Guns" portion of the ABC presentation was devoted to interviews of grieving family members of shooting victims. Gun control advocates, as usual, were granted a monopoly on the expression of grief.

Americans use firearms one million times a year to *protect* themselves. ABC did not bother to interview any of *them*. That's a grotesque omission and a flagrant violation of the most elementary rule of journalism, which is to get the other side.

Nor was that the only way in which ABC used the manipulation of visual images to give the show an anti-gun bias.

For instance, during the "Guns" segment, the spokesman for guns was Dale Thurston, president of Citizens for a better Stockton, an organization formed to repeal the Stockton assault rifle ban. Thurston presented his case clearly and intelligently. And while he spoke, ABC showed footage of a body being loaded onto a stretcher! A talking head may be dull, but this juxtaposition of speaker and video amounted to an ABC judgment on what the speaker was saying. ABC let Thurston speak his piece, but the visuals it ran while he was speaking were the network's way of calling him a liar.

Surprisingly, many people believe ABC and Jennings tried to present a fair and balanced program on guns. The record shows otherwise. Jennings' presentation was fair only in the sense that it allowed the pro-gun side any air time at all. That is a major improvement, but hardly constitutes fair and balanced coverage — any more than would be a special on free speech giving three quarters of its air time to fascists and using film of grieving families of people killed in riots that had been incited by inflammatory rhetoric.

It is a sad commentary when our major news media use the First Amendment to attack the Second, and not a little ironic, because if they succeed in nullifying the Second Amendment, it will make it vastly easier for the enemies of free speech to launch an assault on the First Amendment. Abraham Lincoln once said that "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves." The people who run television news ought to think about that. ❧

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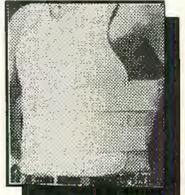
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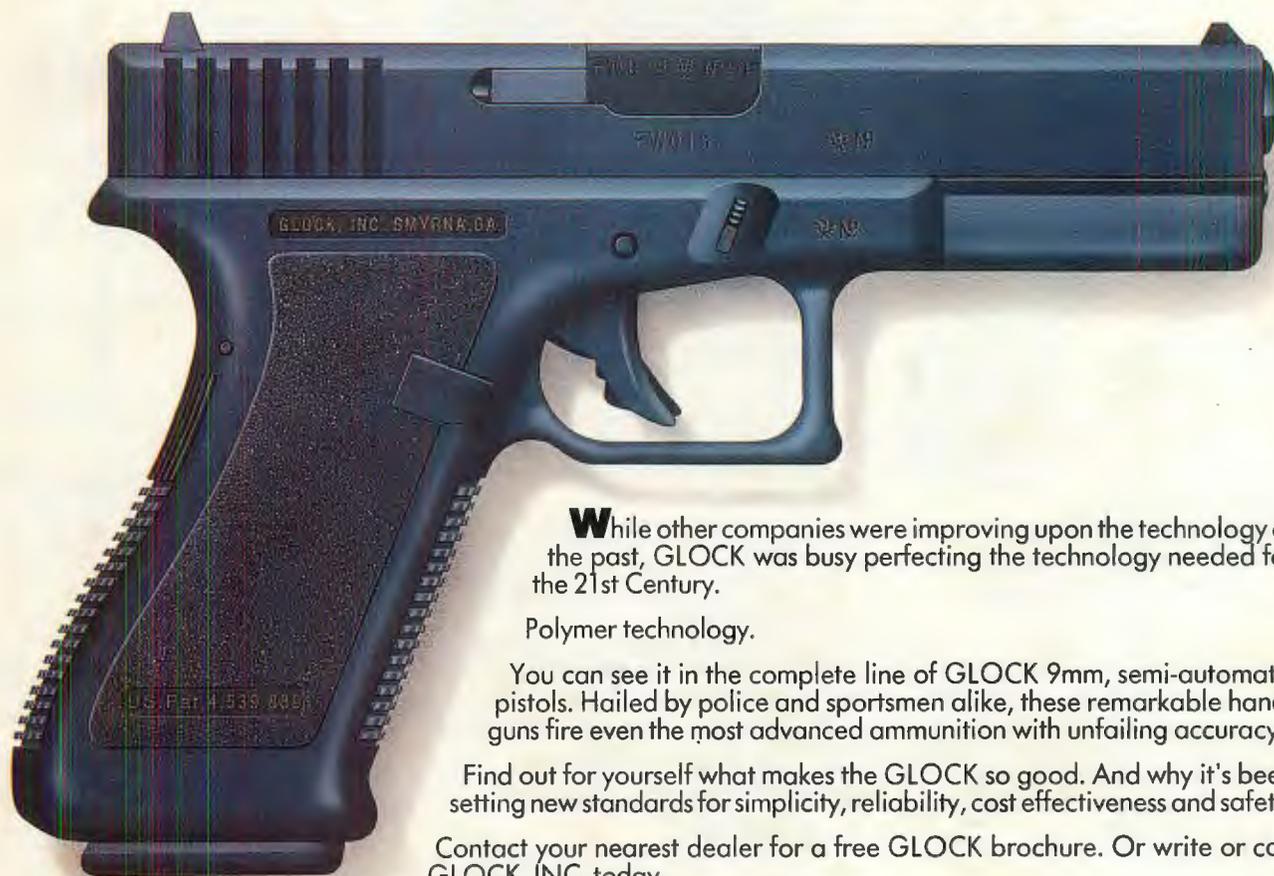
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