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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Journal of Professional Adventurers

AUGUST 1990
48493

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COVER

Tired of getting blasted by North Vietnamese SAMs? Tired of flying an air war run by bureaucrats halfway 'round the world? Tired of not being able to *fight back*? Now's your chance to get even — at least vicariously. Under the realistic touch of Hollywood's finest action/adventure director, John Milius, Paramount's *Flight of the Intruder* thunders its way onto the big screen this month, and SOF was behind the scenes during filming to bring you an insider's look at what promises to be the hottest Vietnam war film of the year. If Hollywood had you convinced that the good guys never won — it's time to take another look. Veteran screenwriter/military enthusiast/SOFer Dan Gagliasso does just that, beginning on page 52. Photo: Bruce McBroom/Paramount
 INSET: SOF inside Laos with the Chao Fa. Photo taken minutes after ELOL commandos (the Red Team) overran regime outpost at Ban Na Van. See "Lords of the Sky," page 44. Photo: Fred Christo

COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

PERESTROIKA in the Soviet Union holds two dangers for the West. The first is that it might fail. The second is that it might succeed.

Failure of perestroika would consist of the overthrow of the wing of the Soviet Communist party headed by Mikhail Gorbachev and the reassertion of Stalinist authoritarianism in the Soviet Union, with all that implies in terms of Soviet expansionism and support for international terrorism. If events take that course, the Cold War will resume where it left off when the wall came down.

Success of perestroika poses several different risks, depending on the form success takes.

One possibility is that perestroika will succeed in resuscitating the Soviet economy and revitalizing Soviet society without making the country less aggressive. In that case we will have a more dangerous adversary to contend with than before the process began.

A second possibility is that perestroika, which means "restructuring" in Russian, will succeed in doing precisely that to the Soviet Union — that is lead to the disintegration of the Soviet Union into its component national republics. This sort of success would presumably be welcomed in the West, on the theory that small, free nations are less of a threat than large, oppressed ones. The conventional wisdom is that this scenario would make the world less dangerous.

But would it? There are very few examples in history of empires that have dissolved without spilling blood in wholesale lots. The so-called "peaceful" breakup of the British Empire after World War II resulted in a series of wars, revolutions, famines and massacres that cost well over a million lives. Usually it's worse.

If the Soviet Union breaks up into its constituent republics, how will they divvy up the 10,000 to 15,000 nuclear bombs that are now collective property? Will Soviet dissolution result in a dozen or more new members of the nuclear club? Will all republics trying to leave the Soviet Union conduct their affairs as peacefully as Lithuania, or will Azerbaijan and Armenia be more the norm? Will the world sleep easier with independent Islamic republics installed in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Soviet Georgia — nukes or no nukes? And will the success of secessionist movements in the Soviet Union trigger copycat secessionist movements elsewhere in the world — in places like Kurdistan and Tibet, for instance?

The various reform and independence movements underway in the Soviet Union are for the most part just causes, but there is no guarantee — as liberals automatically assume — that their success would result in either a more stable or less dangerous world. History suggests otherwise.

It is a near certainty, however, that the massive defense cuts the liberals are attempting to ram through Congress — such as the 50 percent reduction in defense spending by the year 2000 voted by the House of Representatives on 1 May — will make the world much less stable and much more dangerous, because it will wither American ability to influence global affairs at a time when the American ability to influence them is *more crucial* than ever to preventing war.

Perestroika in the Soviet Union, whatever its outcome, is unlikely to cause Iraq, Iran, Libya or any one of a dozen other countries that are busily acquiring ballistic missiles and nuclear and chemical weapons to declare a peace dividend any time soon. Those who want the United States to do so and gut its armed forces may, if they are lucky, live to regret it. ✕

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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. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, photos, 272 pp. **\$24.95**



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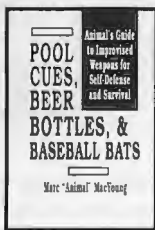
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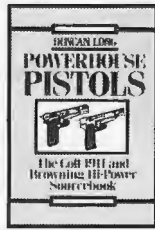
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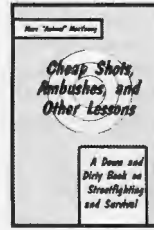
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TEDDY ROOSEVELT'S COLT RIPPED ... Lowlifes stole the .45 Colt revolver TR carried up San Juan Hill. National Park Service, who runs TR's home in NY as museum, values loss at \$500,000.

METZENBAUM PACKS IT IN FROM PACS ... Anti-gun Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) received \$1.1 million during the years 1983 to 1988 from Political Action Committees, of an overall take of \$8 million in campaign contributions.

DEVIL'S SECRET NAME ... Insightful, action-packed tour of one man's Third World wars by ex-SOFer Jim Morris (see review SOF, September 1989), is now available in paperback @ \$4.95 by Dell Books — look for it, ask for it at your newsstand.

AIRBORNE JOKES/CARTOONS ... Got any good ones? Send 'em to SGM Rick Dunlap, Box 71614, Ft. Bragg, NC 28307-5000. Top's compiling a book, needs your contributions.

He noted a guerrilla's most important equipment is his boots. We agree, and think Danner is the best there is. We were pleased to cut a deal with Danner to buy their seconds and returns, which we donated to Freedom Medicine, Inc. FMI has been using them as training incentives in their paramedic school in Pakistan — the top three mujahideen medic graduates in a class each get a pair to wear back to Afghanistan.



SOF staffer Paul Fanshaw with the contras inside Nicaragua, on the road to Managua as we go to press, sent back this photo of two eclecticly equipped contras, carrying a folding-stock AK and a .50 sniper rifle. Photo: courtesy of CMA

LETTERS FROM HOME ... Always good for the troops. Write Bill Herrmann at America Cares Campaign, Dept. SOF, 5045 Ozark St., Lot 5, North Charleston, SC 29418 or call at (808) 744-4709 and he'll tell you what he's got going this year.

PRO-GUN PAPER ... Citizens for Safe Government recently published premiere issue of *The CSG Sentinel*, a well done pro-gun newspaper. Solid stuff. Write CSG, Box 93345, Dept. SOF, Atlanta, GA 30318 for details.

FREE BOOK CATALOG ... Rutgers Book Center usually gets a buck for their 100-plus page 1990 book catalog, but if you say SOF sent you — you'll get it free. Write them at 127 Raritan Ave., Dept. SOF, Highland Park, NJ 08904.

REMEMBERING IRA HAYES ... USMC Iwo Jima hero Ira Hayes to be honored by monument in Sacaton, Arizona, built by a number of local groups. For info contact Oscar Urrea, American Legion Post #2, Dept. SOF, 2125 S. Industrial Park Drive, Tempe, AZ 85282.

JUST CAUSE PHOTO CONTEST ... Deadline has been extended! Any branch of service, any subject during Operation Just Cause. Two categories (black/white, color), \$300 first, \$200 second, \$100 third prize. See June Bulletin Board or call Tom Slizewski (303) 449-3750 for details.

Continued on page 86

AFGHANISTAN: Regime president Najibullah arrested 127 people, including 11 generals, air defense chief, and CG of rocket base in Karra District for allegedly plotting a coup ...

BELGIUM: Canadian-born rocket scientist Gerald Bull caught two rounds in the neck from silenced .32 while entering apartment; \$20,000 in pocket rules out robbery. Whodunnit? Anybody ...

BHUTAN: Himalayan kingdom now has official, national dress code — effort to stem “Western” influence ...

BURMA: Although 207 political parties registered for “multi-party” elections, key opposition leaders under house arrest, hundreds of their supporters jailed ... **PRC:** S.S. *Statue of Democracy* sailed from France to eastern coast of PRC, will broadcast news and encouragement to mainland ... China launched “Asiasat” satellite, marking its entry into satellite business. Made by Hughes Aircraft, owned by Hong Kong consortium, launched on Long March 3 rocket from Sichun Province ... **CUBA:** Upset about the new TV Marti which will beam U.S. broadcasts to Cuba, Castro has been jamming south Florida radio stations with loud, typically Castro speeches ... **CZECHOSLOVAKIA:**

Grumbings from the Slovak Republic about independence now that the Reds have loosened their noose; Czechoslovakia only existed as a republic since after WWI, then again after WWII but under the heel of USSR ... **ENGLAND:** Proposed one-third troop cuts, removal of most of 67,000 troops from FRG ...

ETHIOPIA: Eritrean freedom fighters claim to have sunk nine Ethiopian naval vessels and captured 46 tanks in three assaults on Red Sea port of Massawa ... **FRG:** Drove of defecting ComBloc agents turning themselves in to Western authorities. Join flood, rat on your ComBuddies before they do you — straight-up numbers to call: Berlin 030/8674216, Hamburg 040/244443, or Munich 080/312010. Total amnesty not guaranteed, but FRG BfV/LfV probably won't prosecute *if you tell 'em SOF sent you*, heh, heh ... **GHANA:** Accra government legalized shooting/selling of wandering pigs, set loose by owners to forage, creating havoc ... **INDIA:** 40 killed, hundreds injured during voting, despite deployment of 50,000 troops to keep order ... **IRAN:** Three days of rioting in Tehran, 11 killed by Islamic

Revolutionary Guard. Cause? Canceled soccer match. All soccer fans, most Iranians, nuts ... **IVORY COAST:** Schools, universities closed in response to demonstrations against government austerity plan, new taxes ...

JAPAN: Talk of banning aluminum “assault bats” — baseball-bat weapon of choice for street punks. Street crime in Japan? Can't be, folks there aren't allowed guns ... **KASHMIR:** Tiny nation fitting uncomfortably into tight triangle where Pakistan-India-China meet, in for rough sledding. Extremist/separatist groups in Kashmir now playing their hand, some receiving outside support based on religious/political ideologies. Watch this one ... **SOUTH KOREA:** U.S. plans to remove 5,000 troops by 1993. Koreans promise to contribute \$350 million toward cost of U.S. troops there ... **LAOS:** 38 Vietnamese who cut through Laos en route to central Vietnam last year extradited back to Vietnam. Laotian court already sentenced them. No word who they may have been working for, nor target ...

LIBERIA: No coups good coups when unsuccessful coup against President Samuel Doe left many dead and wounded — 100,000 fled to neighboring Ivory Coast ... **MALAWI:** How can one of poorest nations with high rate of infant mortality have rise in population? One person in 10 in Malawi is refugee from dirty war in Mozambique. They still flow in at some 15,000 a month ...

MEXICO: A “Panamanian Resistance Committee” — deposed PRD exiles — playing Latin-American Exile game with help of some Mexican politicians ...

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: World's largest copper mine still shut down (Bougainville), 700 government troops tied up by 150 hardcore rebels under Francis Ona. SOF staffer on way there, watch for story ... **PHILIPPINES:** Former Lt. Col. Rodolfo Aquinaldo, rebellious anti-communist governor of Cagayan Province, has agreed to vacate his post after alleged involvement in December 1989 coup attempt, and similar attempt in August 1987 ... Bernabe Buscayno, founder of New People's Army, has packed it in, and is now leading a peaceful agricultural commune. He says, “Now is not the time for armed struggle” ... Power outages throughout country ... **PERU:** “Peasant Defense Patrols” retaliating with fierce night

attacks on Senderistas. Government study cites 18,000 civilians dead, \$16 billion in damage, so far ... **ROMANIA:** Among sharpshooters engaging pro-Ceausescu regime forces were Olympic medalists Ion Cornileu (Rapid-Fire Pistol), Sorbin Babii (Free Pistol). Gun-control tyrants, take note ... **SCOTLAND:** In poll we Scotchmen can file with string too short to use, native Scots indicated fewer than 20% happy with status quo — 36% want split from UK, 44% want independent parliament in a decentralized Britain ... **SRI LANKA:** Last of Indian “peacekeeping” troops now home ... **SUDAN:** Sudanese army units crossed Ugandan border at Atatur, engaged Ugandan National Resistance Army units before crossing two miles of Uganda to attack Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) units in flank ... A coup in progress as we go to press ... **SWITZERLAND:** World Health Organization officials glad to hear that U.S. and USSR plan to destroy last existing smallpox virus, now held at Atlanta, Georgia, and Georgian S.S.R., respectively. Wipe out endangered species? Greenpeace know about this? ...

THAILAND: Khmer Rouge glommed 4,000 Cambodian refugees in camp at Borai, for porters ... **TUNISIA:** Islamic students, police clashed, 583 arrested, of which 283 were then drafted (might have worked for us during Vietnam) ... **USSR:** Recent edition of *Pravda* raked Saudis over coals for providing arms and ammo to mujahideen — said they should support *intifada* and the PLO instead ... new twin-engine version Ram-M (NATO code name Mystic) spy plane spotted near Moscow ... Sovs announced their intention to join INTERPOL, probably next September ... **VENEZUELA:** In Caracas popular unrest over economic policies, in Meuda student demonstrators did \$900,000 damage ... **VIETNAM:** Sovs magnanimously offered to pull out of Cam Ranh Bay if we would pull out of Philippines. We said no. Now, Sovs pulling out anyway, as they always planned ... Radical economic changes under the *doi moi* (renovation) program accelerating VN to *become one of most* “market-oriented” economies in the communist world. Unemployment in some areas 20%, dearth of foreign capital, no new jobs. ☒

YEAH, WE'RE GOOD: GETTING

BETTER ... I wish to extend my thanks to SOF for doing an outstanding job of reporting on world events. I have gotten more insight on the current developments in Afghanistan, Angola, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Philippines from your combat correspondents than I have ever gotten from the mainstream press. In addition, your magazine is informational, quite humorous in places, and is a perfect complement to *Time* and *Jane's Defense Weekly*. Where else could one find a thorough, objectively presented expose on a supposedly "framed church lady" alongside an out-in-the-bushes field report of the latest in night-vision weapons sight technology?

Today's SOF is a lot different than the one I seem to remember of years past, which I thought to be kind of a morbid, death-porno Spooks-R-Us type magazine. I don't know which has changed — the magazine, or merely my erroneous perception of it — at any rate, it is now deserving of awards in journalistic excellence, and is otherwise a first class, respectable publication. Keep it up!

Ted Avellone
Alachua, Florida

Over the last 15 years *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* has changed. We've gradually shifted our editorial focus from the knife-between-the-teeth, Spooks-R-Us format (which, admittedly, was very successful for us during the magazine's first decade), to an increased emphasis on in-depth, front-line combat reporting and tough political issues. And, as we move into the 1990s, you'll continue to notice more changes in SOF, ranging from design to the types of articles we run.

This month, you'll see a cleaner column layout and the addition of a new monthly column — *World SitRep* — on page five. We're also in the process of upgrading our maps and other graphics, enhancing our use of color, and making it easier for you to follow articles that continue into the back pages of the magazine.

Nothing dramatic, just a consistent effort on our part to upgrade the packaging of SOF to make it more appealing to our current readers as well as the new readers and advertisers we

want to attract.

Even less dramatic, but of more pointed interest to you, are the changes we plan for our articles. Throughout the next year you'll see shorter features — and more of them — in each issue that cover a larger range of topics. Does this mean we're abandoning in-depth coverage of the world's hot spots? Emphatically: No. We are, however, going to give you tighter writing that packs more of a punch while still providing the breadth of coverage you've come to expect from SOF.

And, since we are The Journal of Professional Adventurers, you'll also see additional action/adventure feature articles coming in from our intrepid band of combat correspondents scattered around the world. Even the most hardcore CCs need wind-down time, so we've got them parachuting off buildings in the United Kingdom and diving on World War II wrecks in the South Pacific — relaxing, SOF-type pursuits.

What won't be changing in SOF? Our commitment to excellence in combat reporting from around the world. Our commitment to individual liberty, and freedom for those oppressed. And, our commitment to you that we'll continue to publish the finest action/adventure magazine in the world today. - John Coleman

SOF AGREES WITH JANE FONDA ...

During a publicity ploy on local smog,

Jane Fonda was rambling on about correcting the smog problem. In addition to getting rid of trucks (and all interstate commerce at the same time), she said she would get rid of gasoline-burning engines (and cars) because "They emit carbon dioxide." Sorry Jane, what they emit is carbon MONOXIDE - so another publicity seeking device strikes back. Heaven help us from actors and actresses making a publicity seeking try by being "experts."

Thanks,
Rob Steiner
Upland, California

The combustion products from any hydrocarbon-fueled engine are carbon dioxide and water. Since no such engines are totally efficient, some fuel is not completely burned. Thus some hydrocarbons (unburned fuel) and some carbon monoxide (incompletely burned fuel) go out the exhaust. The immediate environmental concern is that carbon monoxide is toxic — one of several toxins in smog. The long-range concern is that the carbon dioxide we produce from burning fossil fuel in cars, houses and industry contributes to the "greenhouse effect" and that if we warm the planet by a few degrees, the polar ice will melt. Now, that doesn't concern us here in the Rockies, because New York and Los Angeles will be the first to flood. And with any luck there will be insufficient warning for



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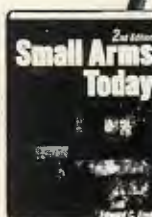
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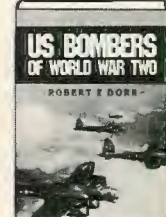
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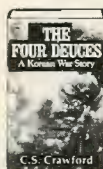
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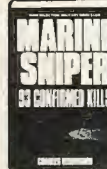
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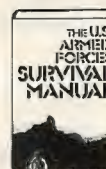
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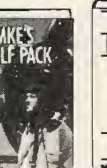
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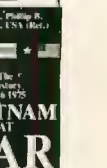
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SOF 8/9

those who live there to make it to here. But carbon dioxide buildup is a legitimate concern. So, although we can't agree with you on this one, Rob, your letter was very much appreciated, because it did give us a chance to use a headline we'd been saving for 15 years, just in case.

LITHUANIA, UKRAINE ... The opinion of Lithuanians in the Chicago area, which has the largest concentration of Lithuanians outside Lithuania, is that there is no hope for Lithuanian independence. The Soviets' willingness to use force to maintain their control over other nations is well documented. It does not appear that Lithuania will be the nation to break the Soviet track record.

If any good can come out of this situation, it is that the American people have the advantage of being armed and can prevent such a tyrannical crackdown, whereas the citizens of Eastern Europe are disarmed and have to suffer whatever the Soviets throw at them. I wonder if Senator Kennedy can convince Lithuanians that they are better off not owning para-military rifles and handguns. While he's at it, he can go to Red China and give a speech in Tiananmen Square.

I am the NRA

Sasha C. Jankovic
United States Citizen

While the many peoples of Eastern Europe chafe under the communist yoke, others also are realizing the importance of private weapons possession. Last October the new non-communist Ukrainian National Party was organized. Para 1.b. of their program reads in part: "Guaranteed permission for possession of private firearms. The absence of private firearms makes the citizen defenseless against armed criminals and is a fundamental restraint on the democratization of society. Without private firearms democracy becomes a farce which allows the usurpation of power by a single party..." To which we can only add, right on!

IS SOF OFFICIAL? I am an Army ROTC cadet at a university in Boston. I frequently read your magazine and I'm

impressed by your many articles on tactics. As a cadet, I am taught combat tactics strictly by U.S. Army manuals. However, I often find your accounts informative and more realistic to a particular situation. My question is: since most of the articles are first-hand experiences by men who served in the military during combat, can they be used in interpreting current Army doctrines on tactics?

For example, in conducting an ambush/raid/recon etc., would it be generally acceptable to use the first-hand accounts in SOF as an accurate supplement to learning official U.S. Army tactics?

C. B. Hittner
Boston, Massachusetts

We're glad you find SOF's articles useful. They are written from experience, but when interfacing the diverse experiences of others with your official training, it's good to keep two things in mind: that the doctrine in U.S. Army manuals is also a distillation of a wealth of experience and is sound; and that an important military principle is that everyone must march to the same drummer. Our writers are for the most part veterans of the U.S. services, but most have also served with other military services and the thoughts they express usually represent their best gleanings, which may or may not have come from their U.S. service. We hope our articles are useful in interpreting current doctrine, and that they would be an accurate supplement to a study of U.S. Army, or any army's, tactics. But if there ever is a conflict between the "right" way and the "Army" way, as long as you're marching to an Army drummer, best to learn — and execute — things the Army way.

AYATOLLAH GOONERS? [Ed note: reader enclosed editorial clippings critical of U.S. aid to the Afghans in light of some factions being tied to radical Moslem movements, and the Afghan propensity for factional fighting.]

Are these Ayatollah Gooners the same people you have been lauding as the Last Guardians of Freedom and Democracy in the Near East? Please comment.

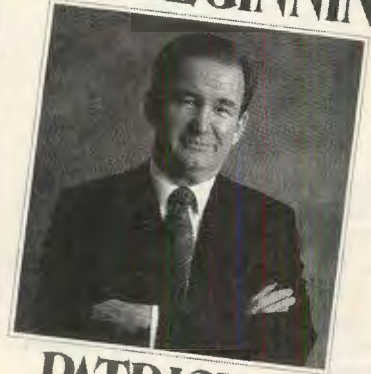
Tom Robb
Bismarck, North Dakota

Our support over the years for the mujahideen has not been predicated upon an opinion that they are the "Last Guardians of Freedom and Democracy" but upon the fact that they are men who want to be free, and have the guts to fight for their liberty, and who, therefore, deserve the support of other free men everywhere. Thus far, the radical elements who would substitute the yoke of a communist dictatorship for their own have been a minority, and we called for an end of aid to those elements months ago (see, for instance, "Bulletin Board," SOF, March '89). The situation in Afghanistan has never been a simple black/white equation. Throughout their history, there have been internecine tribal conflicts and factional infighting in Afghanistan. It has been, and is, our premise that they should be left free from outside interference to select their own path toward democracy within the context of their own cultural experience. This is not possible under the control of an outside invader (USSR) or a dictatorial and outside-directed political system (communism). We regret, and always have, any counter-productive factional fighting that detracts from their more important fight against communism. But remember, when we kicked off our own yoke a couple hundred years ago, it wasn't a simple matter of Whigs vs. Tories. There was a dearth of unanimity, but largely with help from the freedom-loving, British-fighting French we pulled it off and then managed to pull it together. We hope you caught the story "The Execution," (July '90) as it dealt with just this matter. Better to help those who would fight for their freedom — warts and all — than some who we have "aided" in times past who had no will to fight.

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 readers' 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. ✉

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IN REVIEW

CODE NAME BADGER: THE TRUE LIFE STORY OF A BRITISH SECRET AGENT. By Colonel John E. Cottell, M.V.O., O.B.E., M.C. with Arthur Gordon. Published by William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1990. 384 pages w/photos. \$19.95. Review by Alexander Erskins.

WOW! What an exciting book! Blood is spilled in every chapter. The intrepid Colonel Cottell is brutalized by the Nazis, tortured by the Gestapo, consigned to the Buchenwald death camps, and is saved only by the end of World War II. But then he stumbles into the hands of the KGB in the middle of the Cold War — not once, but twice — and eventually winds up in Lubyanka Prison in Moscow where he is tortured to within a gnat's hair of insanity. Fortunately he is saved by a prisoner exchange.

Once recovered, the secret warrior sallies forth, only to be pursued by faceless assassins throughout the British Isles and even as far afield as Algeria where he is forced to shoot two determined killers in a hotel in Algiers. During several encounters in England he plants several Irish and Bulgarian assassins, presumably in the pay of the Russians. Finally, a sniper nails Cottell in Northern Ireland but the Colonel bounces back — only to endure humiliation and rejection at the hand of his own service.

He faces an impressive array of enemies afield but the most sinister fiends are within his own service, MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). Cottell is convinced that he has been manipulated, abused, and misused since 1942 by his nameless "masters" in the SIS. In fact, he recounts where they have had him framed and convicted for petty theft one time, and shoplifting another. Indeed, he suspects that "they" may well have been the authors of several beatings, perhaps even attempted murders, which he suffered at the hands of thugs in England. Why put up with this sort of treatment?

As a onetime practitioner of the intelligence craft I read the book with an eye toward seeing what I could learn about SIS intelligence operations: their methods, targets, communications, problems, and other technical details of the "trade." There is not a word in this book about intelligence collection. Cottell apparently never ran an agent in his whole career, nor did he use any tradecraft

beyond a few hoary tricks that were passe 50 years ago. Nor does he ever use any clandestine communications techniques. The only thing he appears to do on his overseas missions is carry microfilm. Microfilm as a means of agent communication went out in the 1950s, replaced by microdots and radio communications. And why send a courier such as Cottell when the message could be sent more securely by diplomatic pouch? A pointless adventure, perhaps, but good reading!

"I am skeptical that Colonel Cottell is a genuine spook."

I am skeptical that Colonel Cottell is a genuine spook.

Granted that the British run a different intelligence service than we do in the United States, but I still find it hard to believe that they would keep this joker around. On grounds of productivity, Cottell never recruited any new agents and never ran an intelligence-gathering operation or any sub-agents whom he mentions, and this makes him a losing concern if cost-effectiveness is any measure. His only operational activities seem to be carrying microfilm, acting as a target for the "commie pinko perverts" throughout the Cold War, and doing a little spotting and development of voluptuous young maidens in London. This would hardly warrant continued employment in most intelligence services I know of.

Despite Cottell's assertion that he was cashiered for violations of the Official Secrets Act I can find nothing in the book that would be construed as a violation. He doesn't name any intelligence officers (beyond a few who have been publicly identified in years past), he shares no SIS secrets with the reader, reveals nothing of their operations, tells of none of their fiascoes, discusses none of their targets or intentions; in fact, he reveals absolutely nothing of the myriad secrets that intelligence services guard so zealously.

One thing he does share with us is blood, and there's far too much of that spilled in this book. The actual game of espionage between the major services

is relatively bloodless, especially in the civilized parts of the world where Cottell claims to have operated. While people do get killed occasionally in the Third World, or by minor services at the request of the big boys, there is an unspoken agreement between the U.S.-UK-USSR that assassination is pretty much out — otherwise we'd have all been killed off long ago.

I can see no reason for the Russians to target Cottell for repeated assassination attempts as they'd already squeezed him dry under interrogation. He was, by his own admission, a minor player so what could they have gained? Conversely the Brits dislike violence by foreign intelligence services in England and the Russians would be risking a nasty diplomatic incident if they had been caught with blood on their hands. It just isn't logical.

Another problem I have with Cottell is the use of pointless tradecraft in London. Believe me, MI6 officers go to the office in London, just like any other government servant. They don't spook around from safehouse to safehouse, mouthing passwords and fumbling with roses in their left lapel, etc.

Beyond pointless, Cottell's tradecraft is also bad. He flies off to a rendezvous in East Germany to pass some more microfilm. Fine, but the meeting is scheduled for a hotel where Cottell has rented some sort of meeting room. This suggests that he and his traveling companion, described as a hard case from the Special Air Service, are going to have a face-to-face meeting with the agents. This is *very* bad. The hotel will be under scrutiny of the East German service, the room may very well be bugged, the agents met will be incriminated by having contact with foreigners — the whole scenario is a fiasco. In addition he is carrying a gadget-filled briefcase and a special dagger concealed in a pen, both highly incriminating since ordinary businessmen would never have anything similar. In fact, to carry spy paraphernalia is as good as an admission of guilt. Rule one on trips into denied, hostile areas is to carry nothing that can identify the agent as being connected with the intelligence game.

I would guess that this book is a hoax. But it is at least as thrilling as the usual spy novel, so it certainly should provide an evening's light reading. ✎



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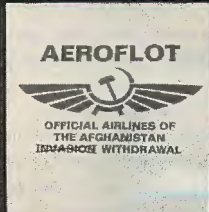
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COMBAT CRAFT

by Major C.E. Parks

AT first sight the Vehicle Control Point (VCP) appeared quite normal. The soldiers wore denims and combat jackets without any headgear, but that was not unusual in itself because soldiers in this part of South Armagh, Northern Ireland, were normally deployed by helicopter due to the danger of culvert mines under the roads.

I was in a hurry to return to my office in Bessbrook, and preoccupied with the briefing I was due to give my boss in half an hour. I was alone in the car because I had to leave in a hurry and no one was available as escort.

Pulling up behind a large bread van that blocked the road, I idly glanced at the LMG gunner who lay in the ditch on my right. My blood froze. The LMG had a curved magazine and a bell-shaped flash-hider — a .303 Bren Gun, not the 7.62mm converted gun currently carried by British troops, which meant this was — I looked desperately in the car's rear view mirror — a Provisional IRA

The first rule, which I had broken, is never to travel alone. The second is to let your control know where you are going and via what route. Before you set out you must make sure that you and your companion know and understand how you intend to deal with trouble.

Of course the choice of a companion is critical. Two young, fit-looking men in a car are almost by definition suspicious, but a man and woman together seldom rate a second glance. The problem is that she must be able to hold up her end in a firefight and, with apologies to the feminists out there, you don't find too many girls like that to the pound.

Equipment, too, is important and we'll cover various elements of that aspect as we go, but you will need as a minimum, a portable radio in addition to any radio fitted to the car, a pistol for the driver and some form of SMG for the passenger.

IRA Auto Ambush

barely projects past the Sterling's magazine well. But I've never thought there was much point to a burp-gun if it only holds enough ammo for one burp.

Once you're on the road the best rule is never to stop for anyone. Turn aside, reverse out of trouble or at worst drive on straight through while the passenger engages the enemy as necessary. That, of course, is not as easy as it sounds, but it is a lot better than some of the alternatives.

But what happens if you *must* stop, behind that bread van for example? One option is to bluff your way through. That requires cool nerve, good preparation, and lots of luck.

You will be asked for some sort of ID to start with, and it had better be good. Secondly, you had better know the area at least as well as the enemy and he's probably lived there all his life. Lastly, there had better be nothing visible in the car that shouts army, police or what have you. No maps, folders, ammo boxes, issue flashlights or gear, and no concealed radio that bursts into life just as you are convincing Seamus or Abdul that you are on a bird watching trip from the big city.

If that sounds difficult, it is. The chances are you're not going to get away with it if the opposition is half way alert, and bluff should remain the very last option. At the point that you are told to get out of the car, move on to the second option immediately. Although you've already lost surprise, you may be able to make up for it with speed.

If you are stopped and there is no backing out of trouble (a second bread van behind you, for example), your best option is an aggressive withdrawal. Surprise is likely to be on your side, as if the terrorists were expecting you they would have already ambushed you and strictly limited your options. There are also a couple of ways you can increase the surprise factor.

Once it is obvious you must abandon your vehicle and you are committed to action, the principles of speed and firepower are what can save you. The passenger should open fire through the windshield, firing about half a magazine. As he does, the driver dismounts, goes to the back of the vehicle, and opens fire. Once he does so, the passenger joins him and opens fire again, while the driver then returns to



Immediate response to a road ambush can cost you some auto glass, but save your life. Author notes that sweeping up the glass when you get back to base is better than the alternative. Photo: courtesy of Maj. C. E. Parks

VCP, not the Security Forces at all. Unless I did some very rapid thinking, I was dead.

Anyone who works under cover in a hostile environment wholly or partly controlled by terrorists should expect to sooner or later find themselves in a similar situation and know in advance how they intend to get out of it.

A Heckler & Koch MP5K is probably best, but an Ingram or UZI will do in a pinch. What won't do at any price within the confines of an auto is a Sterling or similar beast with a side-mounted magazine. Because of bad experiences with the long horizontal magazines in tight places, the British service now issues a short five-round magazine that

the front of the vehicle, and once there he is joined by the passenger, and having swept the area they leave on foot.

An alternate fire and movement plan is for both partners to keep to their own side of the road, firing while the other moves, and changing mags as they go. A large-capacity auto pistol is a great comfort in such circumstances, no matter what revolver fans may say. What we need here is primary weight of fire — accuracy is a bonus.

And when it is clearly impossible to escape with the vehicle, what can be more unsettling for a terrorist than a nice healthy bang just as he's begin-

TO BEAT THE 'BUSH:

- Never travel alone; pick the right companion.
- Choose your route carefully; notify your control.
- Carefully select weapons and equipment.
- Never stop for any reason.
- Know and aggressively practice anti-ambush drill

ning to focus on the action? A WP grenade, or even better, a magnesium aircraft flare rigged on a seven-second delay and fired from the driver's seat will ensure just that, and has the added bonus of making sure that anything vital that gets left behind in the rush is reduced to ashes along with the car.

I remember my Sandhurst platoon sergeant explaining that when on patrol the commander should point out emergency rendezvous (RVs) every 500 meters or so, but that is not practical on a 20-mile car journey. The best solution is to decide on a certain distance back that you will try to RV if you must abandon your vehicle and get separated — although the very best solution is not to get separated.

Once you are out of immediate trouble you will begin to realize that you are now in the middle of hostile territory, low on ammo, with the locals thoroughly alarmed. That's where the hand-held radio comes in.

How, I hear you ask, did I get out of my own predicament cited above? With aplomb, but only because of an undeserved extra ration of luck and not much else. While I was sitting there wondering how I was going to get away with it this time, I heard the familiar and welcome rhythm of a helicopter approaching from behind a nearby hill.

The Provies were far too busy making tracks for south of the border, down Dundalk way, to pay attention to me. I suddenly found myself alone on a deserted road, ruminating on how to relate this incident so others might avoid having to rely on their own scant ration of luck. ☒

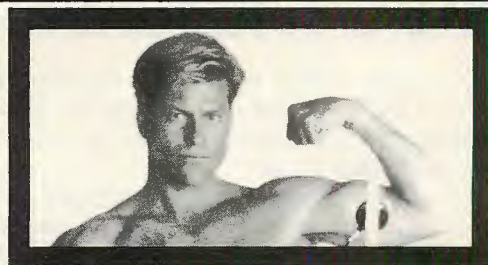
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I WAS THERE

by Ian Graham

AFRICA is not the only place where game poaching is a problem. Nor is it the only place where poachers play rough. The only way to deal with these people is to play as rough as they do. And that's how I found myself up to my clavicle in camouflage and willows beside a river near the border of Kansas and Oklahoma.

Poachers had been active in the area for several years. Dr. Dan, the administrator of a wildlife study tract belonging to a nearby university, had filled me in on their activities.

Their favorite method of killing deer was by positioning cable snares on trails. The deer would run headlong into the loop and strangle, dying silently, and the poacher would take the skin and, if it were a buck with good antlers, the head. The rest of the animal was tossed into the brush and left to rot, and the snare was reset.

The heads were sold to "sportsmen" who had them mounted for display, supposedly legal game they had brought down in an honorable hunt. The hides were sold to unscrupulous taxidermists and others who made them into buckskin.

Deer are not the only animals illegally killed by poachers. Steel traps are used to take beaver, mink, muskrats, raccoons and other fur bearers. Fish traps can take dozens of channel catfish in one night. Owls, geese, ducks, cranes, and herons are shot and sold to various dealers.

The Biology Department of the university does not have a big enough budget to patrol the tract and Dr. Dan is not allowed to carry a gun. As I said, these poachers play rough. They have a lucrative operation going, and they all are armed. A lawyer from the city, who owns land abutting the tract, caught a poacher skinning a deer and made a citizen's arrest. He received threats against his life and the lives of his family, and decided to attempt no more arrests. An overheard conversation of three poachers in the woods convinced him to put his property up for sale.

As a private citizen, I was not bound by the university's regulation forbidding Dr. Dan to go armed. As a former mercenary in the Far East and a former major in the Nationalist Chinese army, having led many commando raids into enemy territory, I was pretty well quali-

fied to be a vigilante and do whatever was necessary to discourage these poaching bastards. At the same time, I had to preserve my anonymity to keep the poachers from retaliating against me. Dr. Dan had to be kept in the dark, too. His ethical principles would not allow him to condone my activities, effective as they may be.

That's how I happened to be spending Sunday afternoon standing in a clump of river willows, a .22 Ruger Bearcat in the pocket of my camouflage fatigues and a 9mm Walther P38 in a shoulder holster. The mud on my face had dried and was causing the skin to feel puckered and tight. When I heard voices around the bend in the trail my face was not the only thing that puck-



Poacher (behind pickup hood) preparing to illegally shoot whitetail buck. Deer is a decoy placed there by Fish & Game agents who are watching him. Photo: Missouri Department of Conservation

ered. Dr. Dan and his graduate students did not work in the tract on weekends. It could only be poachers.

I eased out of the willows and started up the trail. Around the bend, two men were rigging a cable snare on a limb above their heads. They were concentrating on adjusting the snare and had not yet seen me. I did not recognize them as local boys. One had a big folding knife in a leather snap-pouch on his belt. A Winchester 94 leaned against a cottonwood about 10 feet behind them.

Leveling the P38 at them, I said, "Hello, boys." I could almost hear their vertebrae snap when they looked at me.

"Who the hell are you?" demanded the mean-looking one. He looked like one of the hillbillies in *Deliverance*.

"I'm the boy who's going to put a stop to your poaching."

Poacher Payback

"Who's poaching?" asked the wimpy-looking one, stupidly.

Ignoring his question, I said, "Tell your buddies that if they poach around here anymore they'll have to deal with me."

Hardnose sneered and The Wimp laughed out loud. I used my left hand to pull a length of nylon shot-line out of my pocket. I dropped it on the ground in front of The Wimp.

"Tie him up," I said, looking toward a small tree beside the trail.

"Like hell he will," growled Hardnose.

I dropped the muzzle of the P38 and put a shot between The Wimp's feet. The 124-grain FMJ slug sprayed fine river sand up the inside of his legs. Convinced I meant business, he picked up the nylon cord and stood there rubbing his legs.

Hardnose was cussing, but when I swung the pistol toward him and told him to belly up to the tree and put his arms around it, he did. I had The Wimp tie Hardnose's hands and then told him to throw the rifle into the river. Confiscation had entered my mind — it was a damn fine rifle — but I did not want them to think I was robbing them. The river was shallow. They would probably fish it out later, anyway.

"Now get this," I said. "Don't come back for your partner inside 24 hours ..."

"Twenty-four hours!" they both shouted.

"... because I'll still be around here. If I see you I'll shoot your ass."

Then I told The Wimp to go back to town and warn his cronies that anyone poaching along this stretch of the river would receive the same treatment. He took off, taking steps about 14 feet long and the water splashing all over him. To make sure he kept up his enthusiasm, and just for the fun of it, I put a shot on each side of him as he ran.

With Hardnose's curses ringing in my ears, I moved as fast as I could toward my car, a quarter of a mile away. Even though I was sure they would not recognize me if they saw me again, I stayed pretty close to home for awhile.

Dr. Dan told me later with puzzlement in his voice, "I don't know what happened, but poaching in the tract has dropped off to almost nothing."

Big surprise, I thought. ☒

ANOTHER PEACETIME CASUALTY.

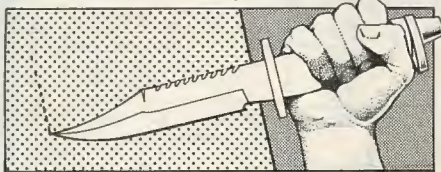
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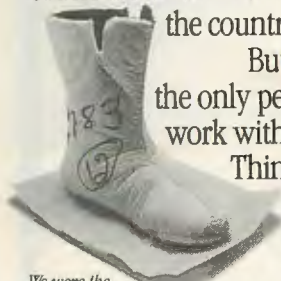
That sounded like an order to us, so we had our full-grain leather tanned black inside and out (that way it doesn't show white at the seams), cut it



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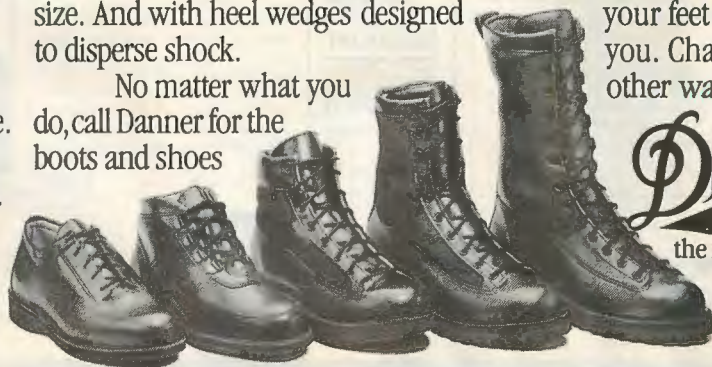
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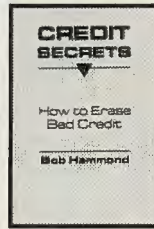


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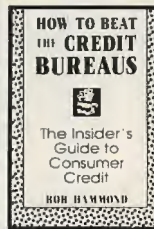
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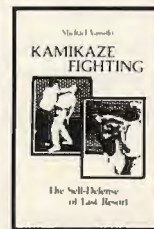
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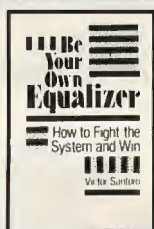
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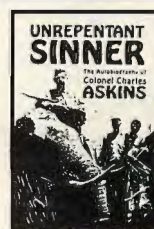
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FULL AUTO

9mm Wound Ballistics

by Peter G. Kokalis

THE FBI's endorsement of Winchester's OSM subsonic 147-grain Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) 9mm Parabellum cartridge has resulted in a massive rush for a piece of the pie by U.S. ammunition manufacturers. The magic number has become "147" and there are at least five cartridges of this type now available with more on the way. Unfortunately, a 9mm JHP bullet of this weight, traveling at subsonic velocities is no guarantee of effective performance. SOF has complete tests on the Federal, Winchester, Black Hills, American Cartridge Co., and Speer 147-grain JHP 9mm bullets. Only three can be recommended.

Winchester's OSM remains the standard by which all others of this type must be judged. When fired from the 4.72-inch barrel of a Browning High Power it will leave the muzzle at an average velocity of 960 feet per second (fps). This bullet will expand to about .59 caliber without fragmentation in soft tissue with penetration to a depth of approximately 13 inches.

Black Hills Ammunition (Dept. SOF, 3401 South Highway 79, Rapid City, SD 57701; phone: 605-348-5150) supplies subsonic 147-grain JHP 9mm Parabellum cartridges with a bullet that looks like Winchester's, but is not.

When fired from the Browning High Power, the Black Hills 147-grain JHP load will travel downrange at about 970 fps and will expand to .58 caliber without fragmentation in soft tissue. The average penetration depth is 14 inches.

The American Ballistics Company, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1410, Marietta, GA 30061; phone: 404-426-5311), a contractor for the U.S. Department of Defense, also fields a 147-grain JHP load with a bullet that resembles the Winchester OSM, but is in fact manufactured by them. American Ballistics Company also manufactures their own cartridge cases and other special purpose ammunition for governmental agencies. Their products are now available to the public.

Their "147" 9mm load will leave the Browning High Power's muzzle at about 1,025 fps. It expands to about .59 caliber and will penetrate from 12.5 to 13 inches in soft tissue.

In my opinion Federal's 147-grain JHP subsonic Hydra-Shok 9mm ammunition is a scam. It contains a large

hollow-point cavity with a strange post in the center that is supposed to direct mysterious "hydraulic forces" against the cavity wall to ensure expansion. Tests by three independent researchers have demonstrated that expansion is identical when the post is removed. Furthermore, performance is erratic, as in many instances both the jacket and that portion of the projectile that mushrooms break away from the rest of the bullet, leaving only the lead core (as a consequence, of reduced caliber and weight) with its post, to penetrate any appreciable distance. Federal is obviously aware of all this as they recently sold several million rounds of 9mm ammunition to the U.S. Navy that featured a 147-grain JHP bullet without the



Member of elite Special Response Team of El Salvador's *Policia Nacional* prepares to fire H&K MP5 A3 submachine gun. In what manner its barrel length affects the performance of increasingly popular 147-grain JHP subsonic 9mm Parabellum ammunition is of vital importance to SWAT teams.

Hydra-Shok post. Navy tests on this ammunition indicate both adequate penetration and expansion.

Charades like this might be humorous were it not for the post's potential for over-penetration. To obtain the penetration in soft tissue required for effective performance, law enforcement agencies must accept the risk of some occasional over-penetration. But, they must limit the risk of over-penetration to the fullest extent possible, without sacrificing the performance required. Forensic pathologists and hunters have long noted bullets lodged against the skin at the exit end of a wound track. Research conducted at the U.S. Army's Wound Ballistics Lab indicates that skin tissue is the equiva-

lent —in retarding the bullet's path through the body — to at least 4 inches of soft tissue. In any scenario where a Hydra-Shok bullet reaches the skin at the back end of a wound, the small point on its post is likely to pierce the skin and result in a tear that will permit the projectile to exit the body (in contrast to the large flattened surface of a conventional expanded hollow-point bullet which is prevented from exiting the body by a "trampoline-like" action of the skin tissue). It doesn't take much imagination to conjecture what an attorney would do with that kind of information. Thus the Hydra-Shok design does nothing for performance, but increases the possibility of over-penetration and exposes law enforcement agencies, and others to unnecessary liability. This ammunition should be avoided and Federal should cease its manufacture.

SOF also obtained some of the new Speer 147-grain JHP 9mm bullets for test and evaluation. They differ considerably in construction from either the Winchester OSM, Black Hills or American Ballistics Co. bullets in this caliber and weight. The jacket is serrated at the tip and the six jacket petals are folded down into the cavity. This apparently inhibits expansion and when loaded to a powder charge weight that produced a muzzle velocity of about 965 fps, this bullet would not expand and over-penetrated in soft tissue to a depth of 32 to 34 inches. When we increased the charge weight to deliver a muzzle velocity of approximately 1,080 fps, the tip of the bullet fragmented leaving only the core and bottom half of the jacket (representing 62 to 69 percent of the original weight) to penetrate 14 to 16 inches in soft tissue. This is unacceptable performance and Speer's engineers need to return to the drawing board on this project.

The Black Hills, Winchester OSM and American Ballistics Co. 147-grain JHP subsonic loads can be recommended without reservation for use in any 9mm Parabellum pistol through which they will feed with reliability. But, what happens when you shoot ammunition of this type in a submachine gun or carbine? We would expect the velocity and expansion to increase and the penetration to decrease. Because what we expect to happen does not always occur, the scientific method requires us

to attempt to disprove any hypothesis we develop.

Both of these loads were fired in a Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine gun with an 8.85-inch barrel and an HK94 carbine with a 16.2-inch barrel. The velocity of the American Ballistic Co. 147-grain JHP was essentially unaffected by either of the increased barrel lengths, still averaging about 1,025 fps. As a result, expansion remained at .59 caliber and penetration stayed at 12.5 to 13 inches. Although the HK94's barrel drove the Black Hills bullet up 75 fps, its expansion and penetration were not affected adversely by the longer barrels of either the MP5 or HK94.

Power Plus Enterprises, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 6070, Columbus, GA 31907; phone: 404-561-1717) has recently introduced a 9mm 160-grain Jacketed Soft Point (JSP) bullet in an unusual rebated boat-tail configuration. Only the tip of the lead core is exposed. Traveling at about 1,000 fps, this bullet does not expand, but will yaw after 5 inches of penetration in soft tissue and up until almost 12 inches of penetration. However, it over-penetrates to about 23 inches. Interesting, but we have more effective ammunition in this caliber.

Flat-nosed Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) bullets will most frequently over-penetrate. Black Hills distributes a 9mm load with a 147-grain FMJ flat-nosed bullet. It travels downrange at only

1,000 fps, but will penetrate up to 50 inches of soft tissue. Flat-nosed and truncated-cone bullets are "shoulder stabilized" both in flight and in tissue. They bore straight ahead without any yaw and this explains their extreme over-penetration. Save this cartridge for boring through bull's-eyes, as it is very accurate but dangerously over-penetrative.

In juxtaposition, American Ballistics Co. markets a 158-grain FMJ round-nose 9mm subsonic load that was designed for use in sound-suppressed submachine guns. Although apparently imperceptible in test simulants, round-nosed bullets of this type may actually yaw up to 15 degrees in soft tissue. With a muzzle velocity of about 950 fps, this bullet will penetrate more than 24 inches of soft tissue.

American Ballistics Co. also distributes a unique high-velocity 9mm Parabellum cartridge with a 93-grain hollow-point, ductile copper bullet turned on a screw machine. Flying downrange at more than 1,500 fps, this light-weight bullet will penetrate from 12.5 to 15 inches of soft tissue and expand from .45 to .50 caliber. Expansion is perfectly concentric and the copper's elasticity prevents fragmentation at this velocity. Called the "CU 2" cartridge, its effectiveness is not easily dismissed.

We want expanding handgun bullets to retain as much of their original weight

as possible. Usually, the more they fragment the less effective they are, as, in contrast to fragmenting rifle bullets, most handgun bullet fragments are "passive," i.e., they remain near the main wound track.

The Eldorado™ Cartridge Corporation, a subsidiary of PMC, (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 308, Boulder City, NV; phone: 702-294-0025), has recently introduced what they call Starfire ammunition in .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum, 9mm Parabellum and 10mm Auto. These JHP bullets have uniformly spaced flutes and ribs, extending nearly the entire length of the bullet core. Factory literature states, "The ribs provide central mass for stable flight, and the adjacent tapered flutes split incoming fluidic material. The result of this radical new design provides optimum expansion while retaining maximum bullet weight for ideal penetration and rapid incapacitation." SOF's test results with the 9mm 115-grain and .357 Magnum 150-grain Starfire bullets do not substantiate this impressive-sounding gobbledegook.

When driven through the four-inch barrel of a Ruger Police Service Six revolver at the factory-specified velocity of approximately 1,250 fps, the 150-grain Starfire bullet will penetrate only 10.7 to 11.9 inches of soft tissue.

Continued on page 84

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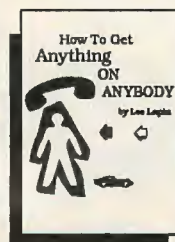
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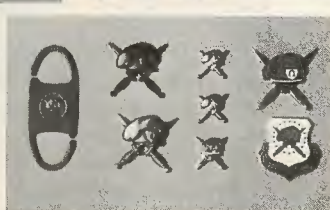
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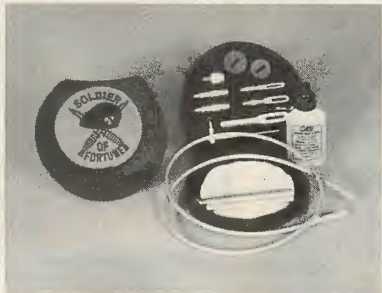
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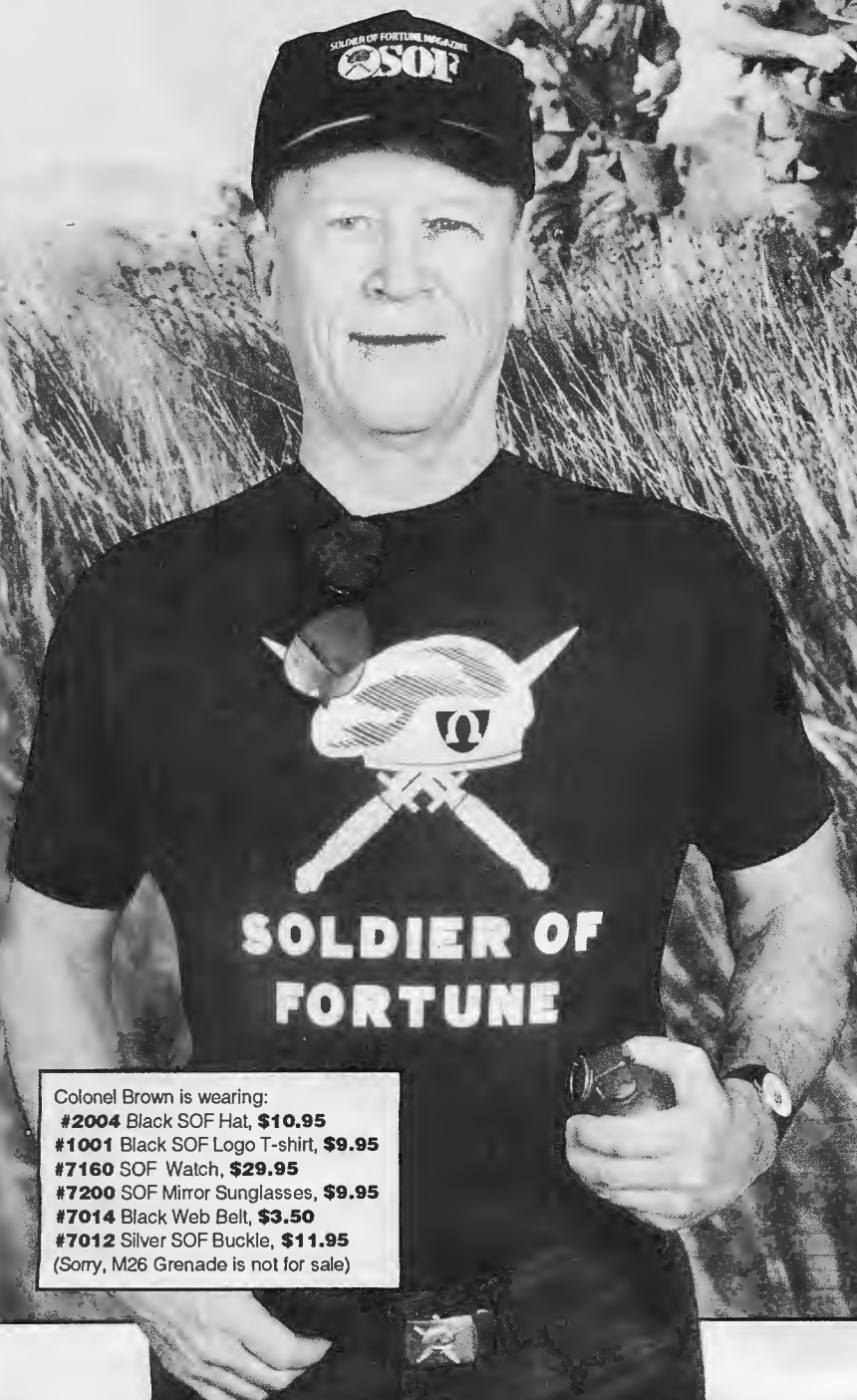
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by Tom Slizewski



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To find out more contact U.S. Cavalry, Dept. SOF, 2855 Centennial Ave., Radcliff, KY 40160-9000; phone (502) 351-1167.

HIGHER CAPACITY ... Eagle International now offers its high-capacity Alpha-Mag .45 pistol magazines with a low profile base pad that allows for a nine-round capacity without significantly extending the base pad. This means you'll be able to use your existing holsters while increasing the time between reloadings.

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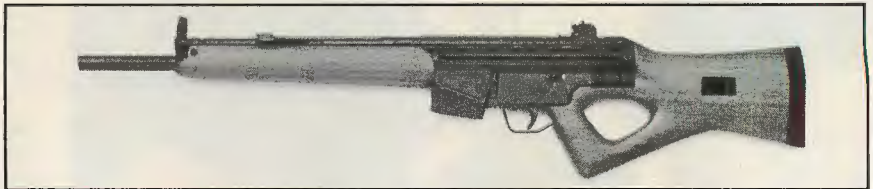
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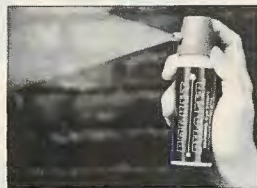
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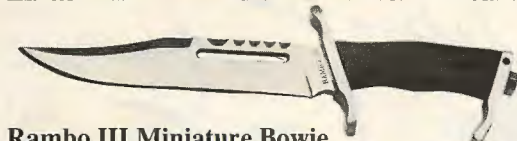
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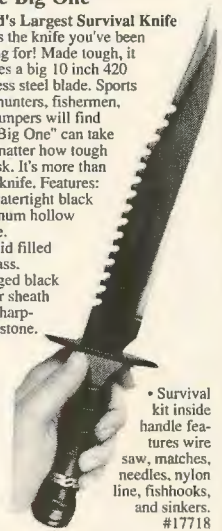
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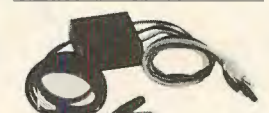
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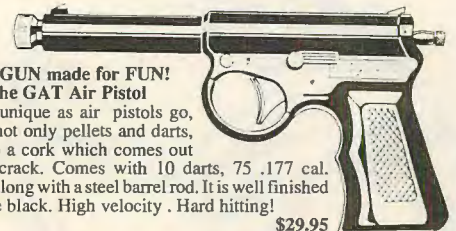
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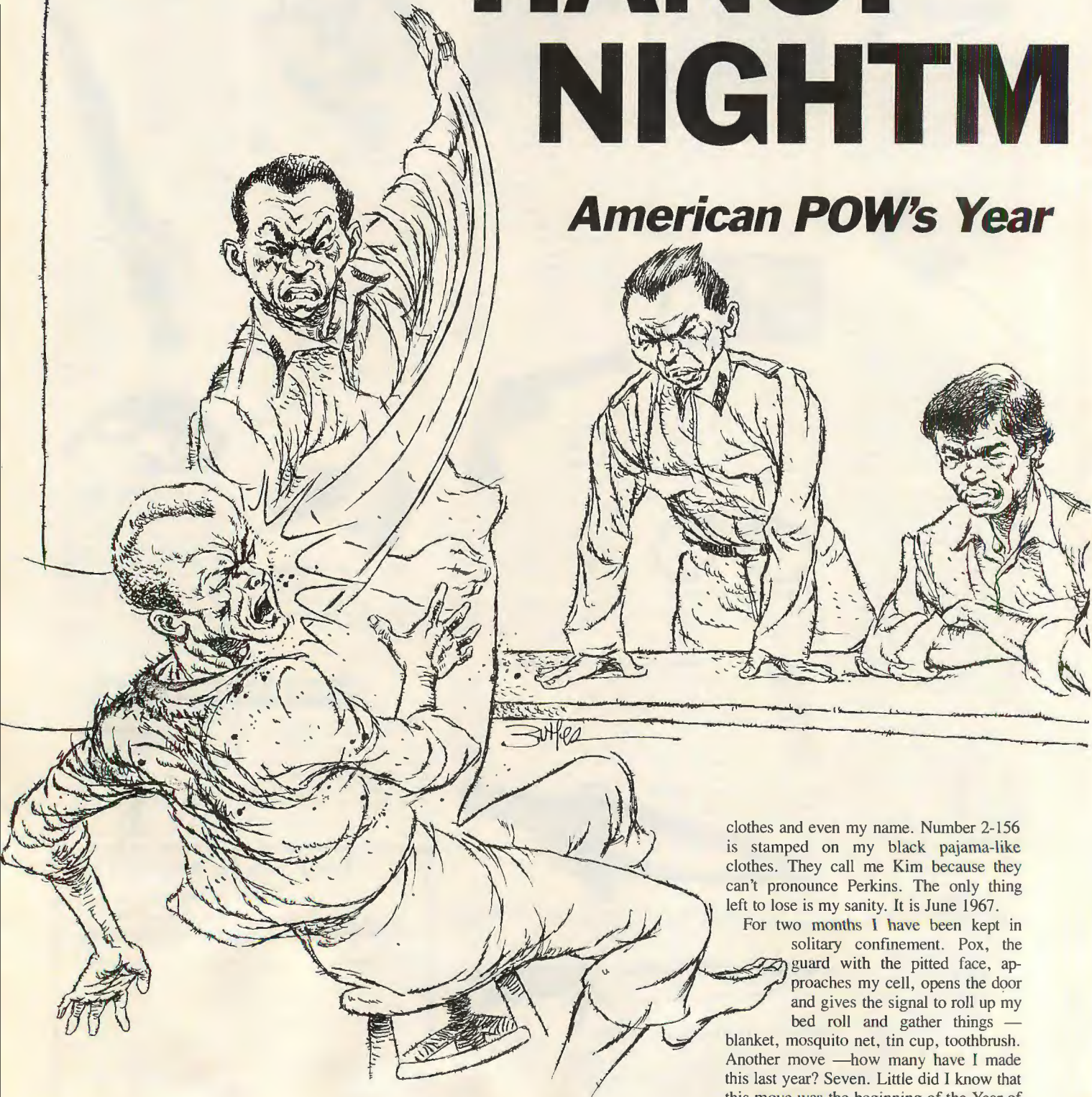
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HANOI NIGHTM

American POW's Year



THEY take me to interrogation at night. There sits Lump (the one we call the political commissar) and two strangers. They try to pass themselves off as Vietnamese, but they speak fluent English with an accent I can't place. It is obvious they are not the neutral Red Cross.

Through the latticework I've seen a gray

two-door sedan come into the prison every night for the past week. Vietnamese only ride bicycles — even the highest ranking officers. Several tall men get out of the car.

I'm in the gatehouse, a solitary cell in the prison camp we call the Zoo. After a year in North Vietnamese prisons, I feel that I have lost everything: freedom, family, country,

clothes and even my name. Number 2-156 is stamped on my black pajama-like clothes. They call me Kim because they can't pronounce Perkins. The only thing left to lose is my sanity. It is June 1967.

For two months I have been kept in solitary confinement. Pox, the guard with the pitted face, approaches my cell, opens the door and gives the signal to roll up my bed roll and gather things — blanket, mosquito net, tin cup, toothbrush. Another move — how many have I made this last year? Seven. Little did I know that this move was the beginning of the Year of Terror.

Pox takes me over to the Stable. I had lived in this building before. There are four cells, three next to each other and one separated by a shower used only by the guards. I try to determine what is going to happen next by the expression on his face. I should know better. The camp saying is "never anticipate a gook!" He opens the

ARE

of Terror

by Glendon Perkins

Illustration by Ralph Butler



door of the cell and there stand Paul and Steve, my old cellmates. As soon as he leaves we begin to compare notes on what has happened to each of us. They, too, have been interrogated by the foreigners. In fact, one beat Paul.

Through the tap code we soon find out that everyone in the Stable has been interrogated by the foreigners. The 10 of us draw the conclusion we might be in some type of testing program that will last only three months at the most.

The Vietnamese interrogations were always a search for military information and propaganda. The interrogations with the foreigners are different. Paul was beaten a second time, classical music was played for Steve, while I sat in the cell for two weeks wondering what they would do to me. We never knew why Paul was beaten, Steve listened to music and I waited, or when the order would change. There is now a constant knot in my stomach. Just the jingle of keys in the turnkey's hands as he walks mum-

bling under his breath, "Kim, Bat, Man" (his names for us) is sufficient to send me to the toilet pail in the corner. We are now subjected to threats, beatings, torture, all with the goal of total surrender.

In the next two weeks Paul and Steve are interrogated almost daily. Finally it's my turn. They ask if I am ready to surrender and condemn my country for the bombing raids on women, children and old people. They ask if I am ready to surrender totally. My answer is an emphatic no!

Their response: "We will force you and if you make us it will go extremely hard on you. We will fill your tank for the whole trip. We will make you do much more, everything if you keep resisting."

I tell them I just want to sit in my cell and wait out the war. Disgust with my attitude is written on their faces. Guards are called to take me back to the cell. The guards push me around and are unusually abusive. One carries an iron bar about 3 feet long with two U-shaped shackles on it. They shove me into the cell, point to the floor, for me to sit. I try not to look arrogant and increase the abuse. The shackles are tight, but are forced over my ankles and the bar is slipped through the shackles and padlocked. I've been handcuffed before, but the leg irons are new. Leg irons stay in place for six days and are taken off only to go to interrogation. Guards seem to delight in opening the cell door, making me get up, creep over to the door and bow. With every move, the irons cut flesh off my ankles.

"Perskins," the foreigners say, "you have a very bad attitude. You won't necessarily go home after the war. Our government will try you as a war criminal and you may live in our jails forever, or we may kill you. Only if you cooperate with us and confess your crimes will our people have leniency on you." These same old lines have been repeated thousands of times. "Do you surrender? Will you do everything that we ask of you?" "No, no, I will not condemn my country. We are not the aggressors, you communists are!" "Then we will break every bone in your body," says the tallest one. They have me backed in a corner and are badgering me knowing I will react. I lift up my arms. "They have been broken before, but I will not voluntarily condemn my country." It would be impossible to live with that. Whirling in my mind is the fear that once I reach the breaking point, they could make me do anything they wanted. I fear this more than death, but I know the choice won't be mine.

The siren wails, an air raid starts, so it is back to my cell. I thought I might have held my own that round. Mistake! After the raid, it's back to the interrogation room again. (We have decided the strangers are Cubans.) There they sit, Lump, Fidel, Chico, the names we have given the foreigners,

Alice (the queer guard) and Tank (the one known for meanness), and Scar, my favorite hateful guard. I laugh inwardly at the expression on his face; he is trying to look as vicious as possible.

On the table are tools of their trade: ropes, irons, fanbelts, and guns. "Perskins, sit on the stool. Perskins, you say you don't give a damn about bombing our people. We are going to teach you a lesson."

"No, what I said was that I don't want to condemn my country."

Wham! Scar Face hits me and knocks me off the stool. I try to curl up into a ball on the floor. Fidel picks me up and makes me stand, Chico karate chops me across the back of the neck. I fall to the floor again, very hard this time.

"Get up, you bastard," Fidel shouts.

I lie there until he jerks me up. He cuffs his left hand for a blow to my eardrum. (I had learned that technique myself from my brother-in-law, who had taught judo in World War II. If he breaks both drums simultaneously, he could kill me.) I am being struck so hard that I urinate in my pants. Most of the blows are to the sides of my head. I promise myself that someday after the war I will find that son of a bitch and then it will be my turn. Fidel says, "I will fill your tank with enough gas so you won't have to come back for a refill, enough for the whole trip." (End of the war). Finally they take me back to the cell. I can walk with my head up and feel proud. They had to beat me, but I won't be their patsy for free.

A few days later, I am moved into solitary again. This time to the small cell in front of the theater, a special treatment cell, with just enough room to lie down or stand up.

A week passes with no interrogations. What are they up to now? It is hot in the cell, my body is itching all over, and I sweat most of the day and night. I need to wash badly. I guess the time of day by watching shadows from the sun and listening to gongs in the camp.

About 2000 hours on a Sunday night, the cell door opens and a new guard motions for me to roll up my belongings. Another move. We walk toward a truck parked in the middle of the prison yard. Maybe I have beaten this program and they are moving me to another prison camp. He motions for me to put my things down and he takes me into the interrogation room where I was beaten.

There sits Lump, the political commissar who speaks English, and the Fox, the Vietnamese camp commander. They are all smiles. "How have you been, Perskins? Are you receiving good treatment here?" Here we go again with the soft sell.

PRISONER PERKINS

Glendon Perkins spent six years as a POW in Vietnam after being shot down over North Vietnam in 1966. He holds the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross. Perkins retired from the Air Force in 1978 and now lives with his family in Orlando, Florida. His first article for SOF, "The Devil's Lotto," appeared in May 1989.

I can't seem to help my smart mouth. "I love it here, this is my favorite place." I glare at them with hatred in my eyes.

Their smiles quickly disappear for a moment. "Have a cigarette, Perskins." The Fox is a chain smoker.

"No, I don't want one." I don't smoke and never have at their interrogations. Last December I asked for the daily ration of three cigarettes so I could give them to the others who smoked. Maybe that is why I am being tested now. Sharing your rations is a crime. Fox insists that I smoke with him and I keep refusing. The guard is called to stand behind me. Wheels start to turn in my head. If the Fox feels he is losing face, then I'm in trouble. I thought I had beaten this program, but I see that this can go on indefinitely. I'll fake it and save my strength for something more important. I light up, but it keeps going out. I really don't know how to smoke. The Fox smokes several while I play with this one.

Smiles return, they ask, "Are you now ready to surrender?" What is this game? I had told the Cubans that they weren't

time. I start praying and shaking. Poor Steve, he is moaning and screaming. No music now, just beatings. This must be to scare me into thinking it will happen to me again. Later I learn that Steve had his arms tied behind his back and was put down on his knees. Three of them beat his head and dragged him across the concrete floor. This was our "humane and lenient" treatment. To the communists, a bullet in the head is bad treatment. Sometimes, during the torture and beatings, I would have welcomed the bullet. The choice was never mine.

Next, quiz time. Fidel asks me to write about being an EWO (Electronics Warfare Officer) on B-52s, draw pictures of the cockpit, etc. The frequencies are classified so I cover the whole frequency spectrum in order to confuse and not answer. I write the B-52 can jam all frequencies at the same time. They ask how low a B-52 can fly. I say when the wheels are 1 inch off the ground, it is flying. They want to know how high it can fly. I answer, "I think 100,000 feet, but I am not a pilot and I am only guessing, there are no instruments in

rier (a newspaper in English) to read with all the facts! So I take their facts and feed them back to them. "You say 5,000 sorties and so many shoot downs." I divide that out and come back with the statement that "actually we are saving airplanes during the war, we lose more planes on training missions than in combat." Lump says, "You make planes faster than we make bicycles." Was that supposed to be a joke?

November 1967 and changes are coming about. Ten more prisoners are entered into the Cuban program. Each one is asked to voluntarily submit or they will be forced to submit. Submission means being physically, mentally and emotionally unable to take further beatings and torture. The second line of defense is lies and evasions. One or two of the new group submits voluntarily and are asked to do almost nothing. The others are brutality forced into submission. The psychological war is still on.

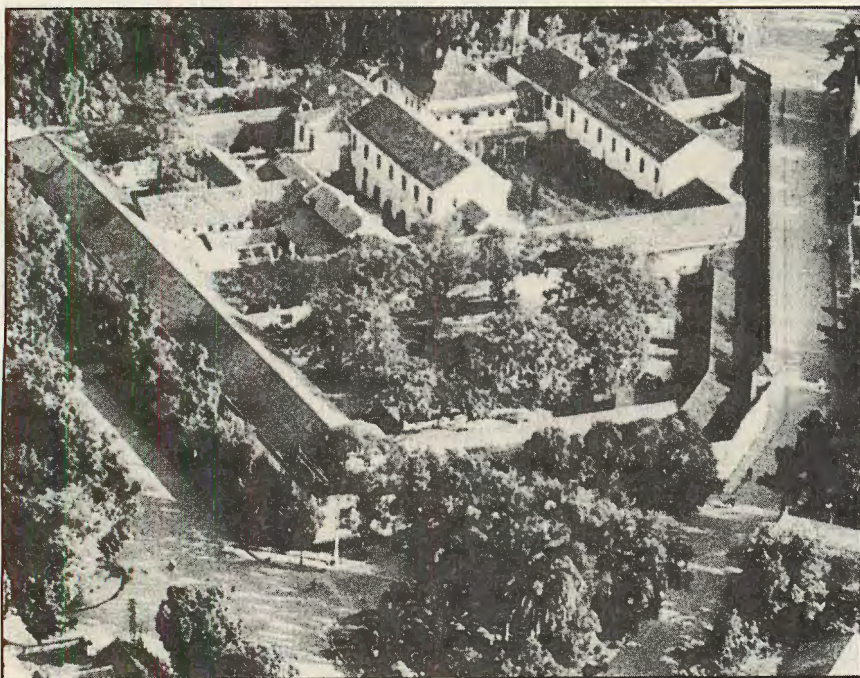
Hard labor outside the cell increases. We go on daily work details, emptying trucks of melons or rice and making coal balls for the fires. We dig gardens, fishponds and foxholes. Paul has stated during a quiz that he won't help their war effort, so for punishment he is forced to dig foxholes around the prison yard. Their goal is to make us become obedient servants.

At the next quiz they ask me about hobbies. Thinking I can distract them from military information, I remark that I play the organ, read books, and raise dogs. Those innocent remarks come back to haunt me. A choir of prisoners is formed to mark the coming Christmas season. Most of us murmur under our breath that the VC would use anything for propaganda. Our senior officer covertly passes the word that a choir would be OK. "Give them their nickel's worth of propaganda, we may gain a lot in communications and morale."

The choir is formed and I am to play an old field pump organ from China. We are asked if we know anyone that can sing. Two men are selected from each building in the camp. Lump says, because of this privilege, we must not communicate with any others. "Of course, of course, we would never do that," we say.

Within one day, our communications net is in full swing. We now know where every man is in every cell. Our information is more complete and current than ever before.

On Christmas Eve 1967, the choir members are loaded into a bus and tied together and blindfolded. We wonder what will happen next. After 20 minutes we arrive at another camp or place we are not sure of. They take off our blindfolds and untie us and lead us into a building. Prisoners are there from three other camps. I can tell from the numbers on their shirts. We are ordered to sit straight, look straight ahead and not communicate with anyone. I see many faces for the first time, hands and feet are tapping, communication is in full swing. The tap code we have used for years



During the nightmare year described here the author was held in the prison known as the Zoo, but he also spent time in the infamous Hanoi Hilton, shown above. Photo: courtesy DoD

Vietnamese and I didn't owe them anything. Maybe this is why the Fox is trying tonight. My answer is still no. It's getting late. The quiz, as we called the interrogations, finally ends. I am taken to another cell, this time to the back of the theater, only 20 feet from the quiz and torture room.

Two days pass and Fidel and Chico are back. I hear them talking, they want Man — the Vietnamese name for Steve. It must be his turn. The window is covered with louvered shutters so I can only see 2 feet but I can hear everything that is going on. Is this why I am here?

Fidel shouts at Steve. Wham, bam! Jesus, they are really getting nasty this

my area."

This line gets me nowhere. The Vietnamese do not understand my sarcasm, but the Cubans understand it all too well. Fidel says, "Don't give that 'Fuck You' look!" I had gotten by the past year in quizzes with smart answers. Now my smart answers are understood and recognized.

Propaganda time. Fidel demands I write about the 3,000th U.S. airplane shot down. I said I will have to divide by three as I think it is more like a thousand aircraft down.

Repeatedly he asks me, "What do you think about all the planes we are shooting down?" They hand me the Vietnam Cou-

between the cells, we use visually now. I hear the soft murmur of names already well known among us.

Our choir director has written all the music from memory. Words and titles are changed to delude the enemy into thinking they are religious carols. I play and the men are standing tall and singing "My Country Tis of Thee," "America the Beautiful," and others. Titles and words were changed for the VC proofreaders, but now we sing the actual words from the bottom of our hearts. It's Christmas Eve 1967, downtown Hanoi, and American prisoners are singing "God Bless America" at the top of their voices. I have goose bumps all over my body. We are giving the VC the finger and they are smiling. It's one of my best moments out of six and a half years in Hanoi. The television cameras are rolling. One year later, my wife will see this film on American TV, and she will know that at least at that moment I was alive.

Spring of 1968 and we see less of the Cubans. We are kept very busy with work details and daily interrogations by a group of young guards we call the "Quiz Kids." They seem to use the quiz sessions to practice their English. All have proper names to match their character. GTA (gold tooth asshole) is the one I am stuck with. He is making life miserable, some quizzes lasting half-a-day, me sitting on a small wooden stool in front of his desk. No water or break, just listen to 4,000 years of guided communist Vietnamese history, and then he orders me to repeat it back to him. My American version of 60 ethnic groups always fighting and warring against each other, never a united country, is not acceptable, so I must listen again. I want to choke this queer bastard and snuff out his beady smile right then and there. But common sense tells me I will have to deal with Fidel again if I show too much resistance. So I quell my anger and sit on my hands knowing that someday I'll go home and won't have to see or listen to GTA again.

Just as pressure is diminishing, we are caught communicating. Each of us is taken for interrogation with Fidel. The most heinous crime is to tell on your fellow POW, even under extreme duress. Steve is taken out first and not brought back. Then Paul and he is kept outside the cell so he can't tell me anything while I'm being taken out. The look on his face says bad news.

Fidel says, "You criminals are communicating again and Steve has confessed. Now I want you to tell me about the others." Nausea clamps my stomach and climbs my spine. What he wants is betrayal of a fellow POW. That he can force me is my greatest nightmare.

I deny that we communicate; he knows I am lying. "Then what have you been doing in your cell?"

I have to think fast, divert to another subject. "Do you know the Theory of Infinite Speed?" I ask.

POW STATUS TODAY

On 19 May 1973, after Operation Homecoming, President Richard Nixon told us, "All of our courageous POWs have been set free and are here back home in America." But as of today, according to the National League of Families, there are 2,303 Americans still prisoner, missing or unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, including 42 civilians, two of whom are women. By country, this includes Vietnam (1,678: North-597; South-1,081); Laos (537); Cambodia (82); China, territorial waters (6).

As of 1 April 1990 there have been 1,362 first-hand live sighting reports in Indochina since 1975. Of these reports: 1,248 have been resolved; 920 pertain to individuals who have since left Indochina (returned POWs, known missionaries or civilians detained after Saigon fell and later released); 328 are fabrications. The remaining 114 are as yet unresolved and under investigation using all available intelligence assets. The 114 can be further divided into 62 dealing with reported Americans seen in a prisoner situation and 52 in non-prisoner situations.

Are there still living American prison-

ers in Southeast Asia? This emotional and controversial question still has not been answered.

The official position of the National League of Families is: "We believe Americans are still alive in southeast Asia based on the history of the issue, the numerous discrepancy cases of men last known alive and not yet returned and the weight of intelligence data which supports our view. Our position is based on objective information, not speculation or wishful thinking."

President George Bush states, "Let me simply state the policy of this new Administration. The fullest possible accounting remains a matter of highest national priority. We will do everything a government can do to recover the missing, and if we discover proof of captivity, we will take action to bring our men home."

When the author was told by his tormentors, "you may live in our jails forever," was it just a ploy to make him talk, or could it be that some Americans are still living Glendon Perkins' nightmare?

— S. Max



"Tell me," he says.

"Speed is the measurement of time and distance. We keep decreasing the time it takes to cover distance until it is zero — in other words infinite speed is standing still or being everywhere at one time."

He looks at me strangely. "I am going to give you a book to read, Perskins, one written by American authors." It is the socialists of the '30s. I return to my cell. I skated again.

Time creeps along. Nerves are frayed, my stomach is in an emotional upheaval. Constant diarrhea, skin rash, ringworm, boils and daily interrogations are taking their toll on me. Eleven months now, when will it end?

Propaganda broadcasts daily in the camp tell of the peace talks. Lump and Fidel ask 10 of us what we think. As usual our answers are not satisfactory. Lump says, "You are arrogant and bellicose."

Minutes later, Carl, the senior officer in our cell, is taken into the courtyard and told to kneel with arms held high. Chico beats him with a fanbelt. Fidel stands in the doorway watching our reactions. Then he calls us one at a time to come outside and get on our knees with arms held high. Pancho gives two wild haymakers to the head of each of us. For each blow Carl is whipped with the fanbelt.

This turns out to be our final punishment under Fidel. Several days pass and word comes through our covert communications network that a party was given for the Cubans. We hope it was a farewell party. A month passes and we don't see them.

The Year of Terror has come to an end. We can only guess what their intentions were. Were we guinea pigs, had Cubans come to practice interrogations on us?

Continued on page 82

THAILAND'S TE



IN one of the final scenes of the movie "Under Fire," actor Nick Nolte as journalist Russell Price, joins in the celebration as the Sandinistas triumphantly march into Managua. To his disgust, he finds beside him a mercenary acquaintance who keeps popping into his life, alternately amusing and shocking him. Price wants nothing to do with the man and makes his

exit. As he does, though, the merc calls out, "See you in Thailand."

This sentiment has been shared more than a few over the years. Early on in our Indochina involvement, books began to appear with titles such as *Thailand: Another Vietnam?* and *Thailand: The War That Is, The War That Will Be* ("A first-hand report of another Vietnam in the making,"

read the subtitle). It was only a matter of time, such analyses predicted, before the next domino found itself wobbling. The script writers for "Under Fire" obviously agreed with

them.

Still, the movie barely had time to hit the theaters before Thailand had won its war with communist insurgents and was on the verge of an economic boom. Today, Bangkok is being heralded as the next "Asian miracle." The Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) is still around and still dreaming of the day its "people's war" will culminate in a Marxist victory. Yet it has become a shrill voice with no audience — and a minimal number of followers willing to stay in the bush.

The reasons for this stunning development haven't yet been studied in detail. This is a mistake because in many ways the Thai campaign against the CPT is a textbook example of how to wage a

MARKS IN THAILAND

Tom Marks, SOF's roving correspondent, has recently filed stories from Peru, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka. A West Point graduate and former infantry officer, Marks is at home in Hawaii when not tracking a story for SOF.

RROR YEARS



One-Time Domino Stands Fast Against Communism

by Tom Marks

ABOVE: Thai army regulars capture two suspected communist insurgents during clear and secure operation in Nan province. Photo: Bangkok Post

LEFT: October 1976 saw a military putsch in Thailand that resulted in 30 deaths and over 150 wounded, mostly students. Photo: Sygma

counterinsurgency.

Architect of Victory

Textbooks are far from my mind as I sit in the small hut listening to the conversation going on about me. The village is in Phayao Province but formerly belonged to Chiang Rai Province.

"Our major difficulty is the low prices we're receiving for our agricultural products," the deputy headman is saying. "The price paid by the rice mill for our paddy is low, so we get less than the government price."

Gradually the discussion widens. The rough terrain means there is a continuing shortage of land for crop expansion. Alternate crops are necessary, as are agricultural extension services.

Deforestation is affecting the water supply. A tank is needed to hold drinking water because the close proximity of another village, sharing the same source stream, is causing shortages during periods of heavy use.

The discussion is far-ranging, but it is guided by the figure in the blue safari suit. In his 60s, bespectacled, but lean and fit, he quietly asks a question. No, comes the reply, there are no security problems. All that is done.

The distinguished guest nods and says to me, "In CPM (civil/police/military) success comes from the people. Their involvement is the key. We must get popular participation."

None of the others speak English. They

smile; then the animated talk resumes. Are the children going to school? What type fertilizers are being used? Hours later, we're still at it, the guest probing every aspect of the village and its life.

The painstaking attention to detail is illustrative of the man. No ordinary visitor, he is Saiyud Kerdphol, the individual known to insiders as the architect of the Thai counterinsurgency victory and, arguably, together with Sir Robert Thompson, one of the most knowledgeable COIN strategists in the world today. No longer in government service, he nevertheless continues his work. "CPM" is the strategy that Saiyud so patiently pushed year after year. It sought to deal with the insurgency through a combined

civil-military reformist response while others advocated massive firepower as the cure for instability.

"Simply driving the communists out of an area is not enough," he reflects. "We must take advantage of the favorable conditions now to develop. We must get popular participation while we can."

Thus it is that we have journeyed to this out-of-the-way village in what was once one of the hotbeds of the Thai insurgency. Sporadic incidents continue to occur — only a week before our arrival a neighboring area had witnessed a mine ambush in which several men were wounded — but the bustle of everyday life is our best protection. For all practical

purposes, the war has vanished. Left to live their lives in peace, the Yao and Miao (or H'mong, as they call themselves) tribesmen are prospering.

The deputy, a Miao, responds to my observation that this village is at a lower elevation than that traditionally occupied by Miao. "We came to this area when we were attacked by the communists. Things have worked out for the best. Here, life is more stable. There is development. When there was no development, people had to go with the communists, because the communists made them promises of a better life."

His implication is clear — the CPT no longer has anything to offer, so no one joins

THAILAND'S PEOPLE'S WAR

Earliest communist activities in Thailand were attempts by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to expand among the Chinese community in Bangkok. Consequently, as early as 1933 the Thai government promulgated an anti-communist statute (significantly, in Thai, this was a prohibition of "Un-Thai activities"), followed in later years by similar ordinances.

Underground communist activity nevertheless continued with Vietnamese cadres joining the Chinese personnel in organizational efforts. Ho Chi Minh himself made a secret visit in 1929 as the Comintern's Southeast Asia representative. Still, the Chinese retained the dominant role. A "Thai Section" of the CCP was set up in December 1942, and this later became the "Thai Communist Party" (TCP). At the 1952 Second Party Congress, under strong Maoist influence, this was changed to the "Communist Party of Thailand" (CPT). Thereafter, talk about "liberation forces" became standard CPT fare. In the late 1950s, Thais were for the first time sent for training to China, North Vietnam and Laos.

By the Third Party Congress in 1961, the Maoists within CPT ranks were firmly in control. A formal resolution declared that armed struggle (people's war) was the proper strategy for revolution in Thailand, and plans were laid for its implementation. These included the establishment in 1962 of a "Northeast Region Jungle Headquarters," together with organizations to support the guerrilla forces, such as the "Farmers' Liberation Association." The clandestine CPT radio, "Voices of the People of Thailand" (VOPT), also began broadcasting in 1962; and in 1963 it commenced issuing CPT statements designed to foster the impression that a budding anti-government united front was forming. The first clash between government and CPT forces occurred in the northeast on 7 August 1965, subsequently celebrated annually by the CPT

as "Gun Firing Day."

The insurgency grew in step with the war in Vietnam. Conflict was centered in three major areas: the northeast, north and south. Each of these areas possessed local features that fostered unrest; thus, there was little coordination or even liaison between the areas. Undoubtedly geography played a role in this, but so did the nature of the CPT's external support.

The northern insurgency was essentially a Chinese-supplied operation which used former World War II infiltration routes and a newly constructed road network in northern Laos, while that in the northeast drew its support from the North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao allies. A major component of this second effort was the 35th PL/95th NVA Combined Command, a logistics network which was formally already in existence by 1961-62 and possibly largely an indigenous effort, though also the least important sector of the three. The northeast and north were the premier efforts, and the Sino-Vietnamese/Pathet Lao rivalry limited the support reaching the CPT.

Hence the growth and intensity of the insurgency depended in many respects upon the machinations of its outside supporters, for "in-country" the communists consistently failed to achieve inroads among the lowland Thai who made up the majority of the population. Consequently, they were unable to develop a true national liberation movement. This meant increased reliance upon military rather than political action, which, unsettling though it was to the countryside, held little promise of ultimate success. By 1970 internal sources were incapable of meeting logistics needs, and from that date external sources predominated in the CPT weapons supply system. When these sources dried up in 1980, the Thai CPM network was waiting to catch the falling movement.

— T.M.



Aggressive but cautious patrolling is taught to SF candidates. Photo: Liaison/Olivier

them. At this point, the village headman himself appears. Also a Miao, he was once on a "Border Watching Team" set up by Saiyud in the old days, when the latter, now a retired four-star general and former Supreme Commander of the entire Thai armed forces structure, was but a lowly field grade. The headman grins in recognition and extends his hand to Saiyud. So continues the personal CPM campaign of an old soldier dedicated to following a basic principle of war: exploit success.

Looking about, it is hard to imagine that this is the land where the general and I first met so many years ago. He was then a lieutenant general; I was a second lieutenant with a brand new Ranger tab on my shoulder, airborne wings on my chest. I had just jumped into a village with a "show the flag" group of *Matraphas* (friendship) paratroops (male and female, civilians and military). The whole program had been one of Saiyud's many brainchildren, so he had choppered in to see how things were going. As hordes of wide-eyed children clustered around us and treated us like gods, we took stock of the dismal living conditions and promised that things would be better in the future. Clearly, that better day has come. The process is instructive.

It was early in the '60s that disturbing rumors began to drift out of the northern Thai hills indicating the communists had made steps toward the infiltration of the hill tribes there. A small minority of but 250,000 among the then-nearly 35 million Thai (the kingdom now has passed 60 million in population), the hill tribes had long been thought a possible target of subversion and hence a latent threat to Thai security. With their unique way of life and customs, they had successfully resisted assimilation and retained their proud



ABOVE: Insurgents surrender to Thai forces during waning days of the "revolution."
Photo: Liaison/Olivier

independence, coexisting with their lowland neighbors in a sometimes troubled relationship. Already there was trouble in the northeast, or *Isan*. Now, the infiltration of communist contact teams into the northern tribes, particularly the Miao, who numbered 50,000, thrust the problem squarely in the face of the Thai government.

By 1963-64 the communists had a full-fledged recruiting program in operation. While initial contact had been made by Miao from China, the recruiting teams soon came to be made up of tribesmen who had received training in Laos, North Vietnam, or China. These first individuals had been very carefully selected. As fellow Miao, they were accepted. Their primary lure to young recruits was the offer of status in the sense of being in the vanguard of a traditional *oa phoa thay*, a rebellion "to make a king." The message fell on receptive ears after years of neglect and frequent abuse by lowland authorities.

A series of land quarrels in Chiangrai and Nan provinces between tribesmen and ethnic Thai offered the communists an opportunity for dramatic expansion. December 1967 saw the beginning of a series of incidents throughout the north.

Initial Thai military responses were heavy-handed and succeeded primarily in



Thai Commando with RPG during night operations. Photo: Liaison/Olivier

making enemies. The military answered ambushes with artillery and napalm, destroying villages and alienating the people. A flood of refugees resulted, and the economy of a large area in the north was completely destroyed. Attempts by more enlightened officials to adopt alternative means of addressing the problem were mired in red tape and lacked resources.

"Body count" remained the order of the

day throughout the '60s. The heavy-handed official approach only increased the ability of the insurgents to recruit. As the number of destroyed villages grew, so did the number of guerrilla recruits. Some CPT propaganda sessions reportedly involved as many as 200 armed guerrillas. Though its strength was only an estimated 3,000 in 1973, the northern guerrilla movement managed to make life extremely unsettled in many areas of the north.

Pointless "search and destroy" missions in the north culminated in January 1972 when some 12,000 security forces



personnel engaged in Operation Phu Kwang, the biggest such exercise ever conducted in Thailand. Its aim was to dislodge several hundred Miao based in the rugged Tri-province area (Vietnam had its Parrot's Beak threatening Saigon; Thailand had a Laotian equivalent bordered by three Thai provinces and pointing a dagger toward the central Thai heartland). The operation ended after some two months, with nothing to show for its efforts except 60 troops dead and another 200 wounded, virtually all to booby traps. Most of the insurgents monitored the operations from Laos, to which they had withdrawn as the logistical buildup for the large maneuver became obvious months ahead of time. Once the operation ended, they reinfiltated into Thailand.

What eventually forced a new approach to northern operations were the political changes which overtook Thailand itself. In October 1973 student-led demonstrations toppled the military government. There followed three years of often-chaotic direct democracy, succeeded by several military governments which struggled to come up with an acceptable mix of effective government and popular participation. Ultimately, a hybrid system was put in place, drawing its legitimacy and stability largely from the enormous power still wielded by a monarchy that technically had little authority.

Led by a former military man, Prem Tinsulanonda, the government dramatically changed course. Two extraordinary documents — Prime Minister (PM) Order No. 66/23 (66th order in the Buddhist Era year 2523 (1980), "The Policy for the Fight to Defeat the Communists" and PM Order No. 65/25 (1982), "Plan for the Political Offensive" — outlined a politically driven offensive strategy. Said 66/23, unequivocally, "Political factors are crucial (to the success of counterinsurgency), and military operations must be conducted essentially to support and promote political goals." The follow-up 65/25 left no doubt what Prem had in mind, "Let the development of democracy be the guiding principle ... We estimate that the CPT has slowed our democratic development, using *weak* points as propaganda subjects to deceive the people. Simultaneously, the CPT itself has pretended to give democracy to the people.

What the CPT has in mind, however, is tactical democracy ... (To meet them) all patterns of dictatorship must be destroyed." The bottom line: bureaucracy must be made to serve the people, and all must become involved in politics. It was the beginning of the end for the communists.

"Search and destroy" was replaced by development and efforts to incorporate all areas of the kingdom, the northern hills included, into the political framework. Simultaneously, external events went the Thai way. The Sino-Vietnamese conflict

U.S.-equipped Thai regular with M16 on security duty in guerrilla country. Photo: Sygma/Hernandez



Thai Rangers during camouflage and concealment training. Photo: Liaison/Olivier

led to a cutoff in aid to the CPT from Laos and Vietnam and the denial of sanctuaries in those two countries (the CPT had sought unsuccessfully to remain neutral in the struggle between its principal backers). There followed a sharp reduction in Chinese aid, too, as Peking sought to woo Bangkok to its side. Welcoming back to the fold all who would forsake violence, the Thai cleaned up. By the end of 1982, the insurgency was falling apart even as the economy began to boom.

Die-hards remained in the jungles, but the main body came in. What had loomed as a threat to the system became, for all practical purposes, a minor law and order irritant. Participating in the fruits of development became the first order of business, not making revolution.

Search for an Approach

Looking back, it all seems so simple, so inevitable. It never looked that way at the time. In reality, victory was a hard fought process. The communists, after all, had been active in Thailand even before World War II (see sidebar), and armed encounters began to occur in August 1965. The end, in other words, was anything but preordained.

How, then, had things finally fallen into place? Saiyud responds simply, "Prem. What made the difference was having someone who could order support. This made all the difference in the world. We already had the ideas and the concepts. They had been in place for years."

Bangkok's traditional centers of power made little enough contribution to clearing up the problem. True, in December 1965, the highest levels of the Thai military government moved to deal with the communist problem, by ordering the formation of the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC). Saiyud was placed in charge of it, probably because his background included covert operations in Laos against the communists. But what the powers-that-be had in mind was better management of the anti-guerrilla campaign, not counterinsurgency.

Observes Saiyud, "The RTA (Royal Thai Army) then was run by 'the old school,' the pre-World War II officers. They had tremendous difficulty understanding counterinsurgency, rebellion, and the fundamental causes which fed revolt. Praphas (former Deputy Prime Minister and the "muscle" behind the government brought down in 1973), for example, named CSOC the 'suppression command.' He could understand that the fight had to be a coordinated effort — that's why he set up CSOC — but he wasn't talking about CPM. The younger generation of officers, though, at least some of them, were more attuned to reality. Among them was Prem."

Still, in 1965 neither Prem nor Saiyud had a great deal of influence. CSOC was at first given command authority only over the small CPM task forces deployed to insurgent-affected areas. Guided by a comprehensive intelligence network set up

WHERE THE ARMIES ARE

By 1973, when a student-led rebellion toppled the military government in Thailand, concentration of the military upper echelons on politics had definitely affected the capabilities and structure of the armed forces. The combined number of officers and NCOs in the army was greater than the total number of troops. In the armed forces as a whole — an establishment of some 200,000 members — there were approximately 600 generals and admirals.

The army alone had 24 four-star rank holders from a strength of just 130,000. Four of the army's six infantry combat divisions were in the vicinity of the capital, together with major armor and artillery units, which together accounted for some 36,000 men. "Armies" of but one "division" each were in the two most active insurgent regions: the Third Army of two infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment in the north, and the Second Army in the northeast. The Fourth Regiment, an independent force of some 6,000 men, operated in the key Tri-province region at the juncture of the Second and Third armies, its headquarters at Lom Sak. The Fourth Army of two regimental combat teams — 2,500 men — worked in the south.

Internally, this force was opposed by a steadily increasing insurgent strength, estimated at some 8,500 men under arms. While not a large number compared to the national population of 41 million (1973), three-quarters of the insurgents were concentrated in the north and northeast, and 35 of 71 provinces were listed officially as areas of insurgent activity. Insurgency remained for

the rebels a low-cost proposition in terms of the resources input necessary to sustain a given level of violence, and responses were costly.

Constructed in classic communist fashion, the CPT was led by a seven-man Politburo controlled by ethnic Sino-Thai. Beneath this was a Central Committee that normally consisted of about 20 members. Both the Politburo and Central Committee nominally reported to the Party Congress. In reality, party congresses were few; only the fourth such gathering occurred in early 1982. Actually conducting the "armed struggle" for the party was the "Thai People's Liberation Armed Forces" (TPLAF), the main force atop a structure of local and regional forces.

In seeking to deal with the communists, lackluster battlefield performance and unimaginative strategy were the most notable failings of government forces. Yet to view the battle as that of a small insurgent group holding at bay the much larger military resources of the government is to misstate the case. Most army troops — approximately 85 percent at any one time — took no part in counterinsurgency, being involved rather in training and politics. Stability operations remained primarily the business of the thinly stretched 8,000-man Border Patrol Police (BBP), which was also charged with border security. For the military as a whole, service away from Bangkok remained a distasteful episode to be borne as innocuously as possible before rotation back to the comforts of the capital.

— T.M.

by Saiyud, these began to show real promise by 1967. But when CSOC asked for more units, military opponents, jealously guarding their own turfs, demurred. Hence, authority over field units was transferred back to regional army commanders. Thereafter, the counterinsurgency program became largely ineffective. Most commanders simply did not deploy their forces in what was viewed as a secondary mission.

This remained the case until November 1973, one month after the popular uprising that led to the installation of democratic government, when what one source termed "a relatively obscure major general named Prem Tinsulanonda" became the Deputy CG of the Second Army. Among his many duties was responsibility for directing the northeast region's counterinsurgency program. He took over at a time when the COIN effort was disorganized and ineffective (see sidebar). Modifying the original CPM approach by enhancing its political aspects, Prem soon began to see results. Psychological operations, persuasion, and heavy use of the civilian

provincial governors and their resources constituted a marked departure from the normal emphasis upon firepower. By 1975-76, the Second Army region had become a model of sorts in dealing with the insurgency.

That Prem would perform in the manner he did was no surprise to those who knew him well. Observed Saiyud, "When Prem was in charge of the Cavalry School in Bangkok, I was with the army headquarters. Together, with several others, we formed a 'Golf Committee'. We discussed the security situation while playing golf. Prem, especially, had time to ponder the situation. Therefore, we talked a lot about how to deal with the insurgency. Prem was also very influenced by the thinking of the king and queen, who maintained a keen interest in counterinsurgency and had papers on the subject regularly prepared for them. How precisely all the elements came together, I don't know, but, obviously a combination of things resulted in a correct approach." This approach can be characterized as development for security, with



As in Vietnam, the Buddhist religion plays an integral part in Thailand's politics and culture. Photo: Tom Marks



General Saiyud's success can be partly attributed to his kinship with the people. He did not rule only from the comfort and safety of the capital but frequently visited the countryside. Photo: Tom Marks

"development" understood as a socio-economic-political process. "It is the weakness of the system which allows guerrillas to grow," states Saiyud flatly. "The target, therefore, is the population, not areas or enemy forces. Problems of the system must be addressed. The popular base of the insurgents must be destroyed. Strengthen the villages first, then, go into the jungle after the guerrillas. Don't thrash around in the unpopulated hinterland."

Thirteen years were to pass — from Saiyud's 1965 assignment to CSOC until Prem's 1973 assignment to the northeast — before this philosophy would blossom full force. During the interim, Saiyud had to be content with doing what he could. In particular, he developed a set of principles to guide the counterinsurgency effort.

"We understood immediately that what we were dealing with was a political

problem," reflects Saiyud. "We applied CPM immediately to the problems of the northeast, yet we knew more was needed than simply a response. Coordination is the key to winning, but all must look at the problem through the same eyes. You need a common blueprint upon which to base the plan.

"Two things were obvious: there is nothing worse than to fight the wrong way, and the key is the people. We had to ask ourselves, why do the people have a problem, why are they taking up arms? We did a lot of mechanical things, such as setting up Village Defense Corps and special training centers through which we could run all regular companies. The crucial point, though, more than numbers, is orientation. You have to keep analyzing a target area. You have to keep asking yourself, 'What are the reasons for popular

discontent? What are the problems?' Figure out the solutions, then implement and coordinate."

CSOC was intended to do this. To establish the nature of the problems, Saiyud did two things. First, an intelligence analysis center was set up with branches in the field. Copies of all government reports (and any other data which could be gathered up) were fed into the system, then analyzed with the aid of borrowed computer time, a novel methodology for Thailand at the time. This allowed typical bureaucratic misstatement and inaccuracy to be weeded out and a definitive assessment of the problem to be distributed. Second, an extensive research and analysis branch began to function under the brilliant and controversial scholar Somchai Rakwijit. It quickly produced comprehensive assessments based upon sound data. In particular, it sent researchers into the field, often alone, to conduct studies of guerrilla-infested areas.

Using this data, Saiyud directed his response. It was classic counterinsurgency, the sort of approach textbooks outline: identify the problem; move in with solutions using the military to shield the effort; send specially trained forces to harry and kill the guerrillas.

Again, it all seems so logical. Yet, as Saiyud analyzes, "There was lots of resistance to CPM. I had to make myself director of the CSOC operations center or else I would have no command authority. But there were problems, because many thought I was just empire building. But there was no other way to do it. I had to have the authority (to command the units involved in COIN operations). Still, this (the fear of empire-building) is why the counterinsurgency effort was returned to the military in 1967. You could write a whole chapter on the subsequent difficulties involved in getting the CPM system into operation."

Even to get units trained for COIN, Saiyud notes, was a struggle. Even to carry out counterinsurgency operations was a struggle. CSOC could not command, only advise.

Saiyud says, "Our operations were conducted under the guise of training. We set up training camps right in the middle of communist-infested areas, rather than having a single, centrally located facility. We planned courses of 3-4 months per company, with one week set aside for reorganization. Companies were given guidelines before reporting but allowed to set things up themselves. After 'basic training,' units went through actual operations as 'advance training.' Because the operations were only 'training,' there were no 'results' necessary, such as body count, which would look bad on anyone's record. By keeping units operating this way, we were gradually able to bring to the army a greater understanding of counterinsurgency."

Hand-in-hand with such stratagems went

development of the Thai infrastructure. "Accelerated Rural Development" (ARD) was used to target specific areas where the standard of living was substandard. Roads and electricity were put through to even the most remote villages. Nothing, it should be hastily added, proceeded as rapidly and smoothly as it appears here on the printed page. But it happened.

Perhaps most fundamentally of all, in 1966-67 Saiyud had been instrumental in forming the Volunteer Defense Corps — effectively, village militia. Special Forces control teams were used. "You have to have adequate control," Saiyud makes clear, "or such groups turn into private armies." Initially limited to their local areas, they eventually evolved into more mobile combat forces. As might be predicted, they were highly effective, because they knew their areas. Ultimately, they became what in English is normally rendered as "Rangers." The communists would call them "regional forces." They were to be the units which broke the back of the insurgency.

Democracy as the Solution

That the people armed should spell the end for the CPT was irony of the first order — considering that it was the communists who claimed to be waging the "people's war." Like everything else in the Thai counterinsurgency, it was also a development which was a long time coming.

Scholars debate endlessly why individuals are willing to risk all and join with a group of guerrillas. Somchai and his CSOC researchers found that the CPT leadership had been able to construct a viable movement only when repression and traditional causes, such as poverty and lack of social mobility, created for them a following. In particular, when demands by



Author Tom Marks with Thai villager during his last visit to Thailand.

northeastern politicians and local leaders for greater development efforts in their area were met with violence, violence became the only alternative. Many opposition figures, together with numerous villagers, fled into the jungle. They provided the CPT with its first real mass base and the foundation upon which it created its so-called "new villages."

Saiyud's response was on a higher plane than the establishment was operating upon, but his ideas for self-defense forces and local participation were ahead of not only the bureaucracy but even the populace. Traditionally oriented Thai villagers were not yet given to defending what was theirs. This ended in October 1973.

Overthrow of military rule was followed by three years of increasingly chaotic democracy, then by several hybrid regimes that culminated in Prem's becoming Prime Minister in February 1980 (by September 1978 he had risen to the key position in the Thai bureaucracy, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army).

If the 1973-80 interim was one of turmoil, it was also one of popular mobilization. Predictably, it was the left which called out the masses first. Among its many demands was that CSOC be disbanded; instead, it was renamed the "Internal Security Operations Command" (ISOC). Other demands, though, were not so easy to address, calling as they did for the restructuring of Thailand along radical lines. Yet unlike in many countries, in Thailand there was a massive counter-reaction to demands for leftist political solutions. For such solutions, communism among them, were seen as threats to the two things which were the linchpins of Thai society, Buddhism and the monarchy.

Soon, regular clashes between left and right wing pressure groups were a feature of daily life. These climaxed in October 1976.

A political crisis for democratic government erupted when radical students based at Thammasat University perceived as having elements within the military, stormed the campus. Numerous deaths resulted; the government, unable to control the situation, collapsed. It was replaced by a succession of mixed civil-military administrations.

Though the military remained the real power behind the scenes, things could never go back to the way they were before. The populations had become too politicized. Hence, the central argument was no longer *whether* the people should rule but, instead, *how best to structure a democratic system* appropriate for Thai culture. In the end, as Prem maintained stability and growth, a mixed parliamentary system was adopted which had as one of its unique features the election of a prime minister who need not be an elected member of parliament. In other words, elected officials were free to choose as national leader anyone they felt was up to the job.

That man, for several terms, was Prem. Running his military establishment were like-minded individuals, men who could at times sound more like populist politicians than soldiers. Eventually moving to the top position — one with limited operational power, given the realities of Thai military politics, but a position from which needed changes could be made to further professionalize the Thai military — was Saiyud, made armed forces Supreme Commander. After retirement, he continued as one of Prem's advisers.

In July 1988, when the situation dictated, Prem chose to stand down and allowed himself to be replaced by the leader of the majority party in parliament, Chatichai

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The remote, inaccessible provinces in the north saw the most insurgent activity. Thailand's success at defeating the communist uprising is particularly amazing considering its unstable neighbors.

MEDITERRANEAN MINEFIELD

Malta's Unsung Heroes Finally End World War II

by Frank Terrell

WE anchored directly over the wreck site, our little boat bobbing in the choppy seas just outside the harbor mouth. Sergeant Ray Falzon, the senior diver, went down first. After checking the anchor line he surfaced and signalled that all was okay. I pulled on my mask and rolled back into the murky water. My camera was handed to me by the third team member before he too joined us.

We followed the anchor line down through near zero visibility to 10 or 12 meters where the visibility suddenly cleared to reveal a mass of torn and twisted wreckage scattered about the sea bed at 15 meters. Ray pointed at an encrusted and weed-covered object. A bomb! Nearby lay another, and another. They were everywhere.

After surfacing to collect lifting equipment, both divers returned and got to work on a big 200-250 pound aerial bomb. I hovered close by, one hand gripping an old steel cable in an effort to steady myself in the current, the other hand balancing the camera in its bulky underwater housing.

I watched the whole operation through the camera viewfinder, photographing Ray and his colleague as they checked the bomb's fuse before maneuvering the device in order to shackle it to a lift bag. I kept telling myself that these men knew exactly what they were doing, that nothing would go wrong — but it was still uncomfortable being so close.

Quickly, the lift bag was attached to the

bomb. One of the divers then removed his mouthpiece and held it beneath the bag, inflating it with air purged from his regulator. The bomb was lifted several feet. Sergeant Falzon checked that it was secure before inflating the bag further, causing it to shoot to the surface and out of sight.

Once back in the boat they explained that ordinarily the bomb would now be towed to deeper water and jettisoned by means of a quick-release device connecting the lift bag to the boat. The method was then demonstrated for me — and the bomb plummeted back to the sea bed directly underneath us! The seconds passed. We didn't disappear in a mighty explosion and fountain of spray. My relief was considerable — but I hoped that my expression appeared as unconcerned as my hosts!

The next day I accompanied Ray on another lifting operation. These dives were certainly different from others I had been on around Malta!

Malta is familiar to many Europeans as a holiday isle basking in the middle of the Mediterranean. Yet, from time immemorial, its location has also attracted the attention of invaders and attackers.

For two years during World War II allied Malta's strategic value made it the target of German and Italian bombers and fighter aircraft. Half a century later, as the bomb-ruins and abandoned airfields make way for industrial estates and modern apartment blocks, memories of Malta's "Second Great Siege" are fast disappearing — but

the legacy of unexploded ordnance from World War II cannot be obliterated quite so easily. Workmen frequently unearth mines and bombs

dropped by Axis aircraft, or lost or dumped by the British. In spite of clearance work by the Royal Navy and Armed Forces of Malta (ARM), the harbors and coastal waters are still littered with the remains of ships and aircraft — often loaded with ammunition and explosives. Every summer, scuba divers report findings of even more bombs.

During the post-war years, such items were dealt with by HM Forces based on the island. However, the imminent departure of Britain's troops dictated that Malta form its own Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit. In 1970, an officer and a Senior NCO (SNCO) were dispatched by the Maltese to Britain for training. They were followed by a second officer and another SNCO, all four of whom were trained in conventional bomb disposal and to deal with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Today, the EOD section of 1 Regiment Armed Forces of Malta consists of five senior members who are IED qualified. They are responsible for approximately 20 personnel who are trained locally in bomb disposal. With so many devices still lying around Malta's coast, it is also necessary for those in EOD to be proficient SCUBA divers, and three-month courses in underwater work are regularly run by a team from Italy's *Marina Militare* (Navy).

During its eventful existence, Malta's

Author warily photographs EOD divers in March 1989 as they remove British aerial bomb. Detonating mechanism is checked for safety, bomb is rigged to lifting bag. Bag is partly inflated, rigging double-checked, then it is bombs away to the surface. Such devices are towed to deep water and jettisoned. Quantities of such unexploded bombs (UBXs) precludes their individual deactivation. Bombs deeper than 20 meters are left where they are. Photo: Frank Terrell

SOF'S MALTESE FALCON

Frank Terrell is a former Royal Marine and current freelance photojournalist. His work has appeared in numerous publications in Europe and the United States, including SOF (see "Devil's Spearhead," March '90).





Malta, the “unsinkable battleship” strategically located in the middle of Axis supply lines to Africa during World War II.

EOD Section has dealt with hundreds of incidents. Ordnance encountered ranges from single rifle rounds to 1,800kg German “Satan” bombs. For three years, between 1970-73, the EOD Section adhered to the procedures learned at Kineton and Chatten-den, in England, when dealing with unexploded bombs. However, neutralizing the fuse and then drilling the casing and steaming out the explosive could take two days to complete. At such a rate, it would take forever to dispose of all the ordnance scattered around Malta. After consulting with specialists flown in from Germany, the EOD section was advised that generally, German wartime aerial bombs were fairly safe *if handled with care!* Consequently, EOD decided to resort to disposal methods reminiscent of those practiced by their predecessors in the grim days of 1940-42: After immunizing the fuse — essentially the most dangerous part — the bomb would simply be loaded on board a truck, transported to a waiting patrol boat, and unceremoniously dumped at sea. This procedure took no more than six hours from start to finish.

In 19 years, not a single EOD operator

has been lost. Quite a record. Yet, not one member of the section has ever been formally recognized, let alone decorated for his work. When, in March 1989, I first visited the section, I discovered that a 1,000kg German bomb had recently been disposed of after it was unearthed at a building site. I mentioned that a similar bomb had just been defused in London.

“No doubt they evacuated the whole area during the operation,” commented a senior member of EOD section.

“Yes, they did,” I confirmed, well aware that such precautions are almost unheard of in Malta.

“And they probably received a medal afterward,” continued my host.

“Probably,” I agreed.

The veteran of countless hair-raising incidents smiled.

“We get bugger-all,” he stated laconically, adding, “Ours is a very thankless task!”

It is true that incidents which would make news headlines in many countries attract very little public attention in Malta. Memories of the war are still fresh in the minds of many, and the report of another bomb find simply does not interest anyone. If 1,000kg “Herman” bombs are not especially unusual, then 500kg and 250kg bombs are almost a common find. A



A medium-sized bomb discovered just outside Grand Harbour. Photo: Frank Terrell

typically terse report, chosen at random from EOD files, reads:



A pair of deck guns raised from wreckage of destroyer HMS Jersey, summer 1985. Photo: C. Azzopardi



Raising wreckage believed to be from MV Talbot, during a joint Royal Navy/Malta EOD task in 1985. Personnel sift through thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition. Photo: courtesy Royal Navy Fleet Clearance Diving Team.



Four British torpedoes, believed to be from the destroyer HMS Maori, being raised from Grand Harbour, June 1985. Photo: C. Azzopardi

“On Friday 17 October 1980 at 1545 hours I was informed by the Adjutant Task Force, that PWD workers had discovered a bomb ... I immediately went to the scene of the incident and found a 250kg German bomb with one transverse fuse, a 25 series impact, and a dummy fuse near the base plug.

“After the necessary preparations were made the bomb was transported to Menqa, hoisted onto Patrol Craft 23 and dumped at sea six miles from the Grand Harbour at 1825 hours.”

Another event, that *did* make the local newspapers, occurred on the morning of 16 October 1983 when a fishing boat made port having trawled up the wreckage of a wartime aircraft. When EOD arrived, they checked for any weapons and unexploded ordnance. None were found, and afterward EOD filed its usual brief report, recording that: “The aircraft appears to be a bomber as it is of a large type, probably of German origin ...” Then, without further ado, the unique find was hauled away to a nearby rubbish tip.

Such incidents no doubt stood the unit in good stead when, during the summer of 1985, an operation took place to clear the Grand Harbour of wartime debris. Those vessels from the famous “Malta Convoys” which made port were often attacked and sunk at their moorings. One, the merchantman *Talbot*, had already been partially

MALTA: THE UNSINKABLE BATTLESHIP

Not a great tactician — or great anything else — Mussolini overlooked the strategic importance of Malta when he decided there might be some shared spoils if he would join Hitler and declare war on the Allies in June 1940. Despite his militaristic posing and successes against essentially unarmed Ethiopians, however, Mussolini was ill-prepared to fight an actual war.

Having convinced himself he was a warlord, Mussolini invaded Greece and Albania, and sent his forces in Libya to attack British forces in Egypt, to gain the Suez Canal and access to Arabian oil fields. The best laid plans of mice and men — Mussolini was the former — do often go astray, however, and within months Mussolini's war effort was in shreds. His land forces met with disaster in Greece and North Africa, and the Royal Navy had squashed his fleet at Taranto.

Thus the end of 1940 saw Hitler having to come to the aid of his little buddy, and in December the Luftwaffe's 10 Fliegerkorps moved to Sicily, 60 miles from Malta. At that point the Axis had some 400 aircraft in the area, and Malta had 16 Wellington bombers, 12 Fairey Swordfish torpedo bombers, a handful of Martin light bombers and 16 Hurricanes.

When Italy declared war, there were no fighters on Malta, although they had been allotted four squadrons of Hawker Hurricanes. There were only five Fairey Swordfish biplanes operational, and an additional four Gladiators (also obsolete biplanes) were found in crates and hastily assembled. These nine refugees from a barnstorming show took on the *Regia Aeronautica* and held them at bay for 18 days until four Hurricanes arrived to assist them.

Mussolini's oversight in attempting to take more grandiose targets and not attack Malta first would cost the Axis dearly throughout the war. Malta could

not have been in a more strategic position to provide support for Allied efforts in the Med and North Africa. And Malta and her incredibly brave population was absolutely unsinkable, although the Axis certainly tried.

With Axis operations in the Med now firmly under German leadership and logistics, Malta was to become not only a Royal refuge and base of operations, but also a fortress under siege.

On 16 January 1941 Luftwaffe dive-bombers appeared over Malta for the first time. Approximately 70 Ju-87 Stukas attacked in waves, their main target being the carrier *Illustrious*. Fulmar fighters from the *Illustrious* had been flown to land bases, and they joined in the defense. When the battle ended, the Allies had lost no planes, the Luftwaffe 10.

The British were handicapped in their North African campaign by having to ship fuel and supplies around the horn of Africa, whereas the Axis only had to move materiel 300 miles across the Med. But Malta provided the Allies with a sharp knife in the middle of the Axis supply line. More than 60 percent of Afrika Korps supplies shipped from Italy were sunk. Fuel was the worst loss to Rommel, and in November 1941 he was nearly forced to curtail operations for want of it.

This brought the full wrath of the Axis upon the tiny island of Malta, and in early December the Luftwaffe began a five-month systematic bombing campaign to crush the Royal Navy and Air Forces operating from Malta. At some points, more than 300 planes were overhead at one time. A belated invasion of Malta, Operation Hercules, was planned. The number of RAF Hurricanes operational dwindled to 11, and the Navy base at Valetta was badly damaged. Replacement Supermarine Spitfires were flown in from aircraft carriers starting in March, but were quickly destroyed on

the ground by massed raids on the airfields. Axis attacks on 26 March were so heavy that the RAF situation report stated there had been too many combats to describe them individually.

But the Brits and Maltese, a peaceful people of incredible courage and tenacity, refused to call it quits.

In the meantime, things were not going well for the Crown in North Africa, but Rommel's successes there resulted in a reprieve for beleaguered Malta. When Rommel took Tobruk he captured extensive fuel supplies, and persuaded Berlin that the troops slated for the Hercules invasion of Malta should be assigned to him, to boost German forces in North Africa. The Axis therefore did not invade, but intensified their blockade of Malta in an attempt to starve them out. Only heroic efforts by the British Navy and merchant fleet to supply, and the stamina of the men on the island, kept Malta alive and fighting.

Except for fierce bombardment during October 1941 when a concerted attempt was being made to get fuel supplies to Rommel, Malta did not again come under the heavy air attacks typical of the early part of the war before she was adequately defended. During this last eight-day siege the RAF shot down over 100 enemy planes, losing 27. After the tide turned against Rommel for good in November there were additional attacks on Malta, but as the Axis was swept from Africa the raids on Malta dwindled to naught. The worst was over. But it had been hell. Wrote one pilot "...it makes the battle of Britain seem like child's play."

And from the uncountable quantities of ordnance dispensed across or dropped upon Malta by Axis and Ally alike, there survive unexploded, undiscovered duds to once again test the mettle of the brave Maltese.

— Don McLean

cleared, but much still remained. Along with a special team from the Royal Navy, the EOD Section was involved in raising what was left of the vessel, along with the large amount of ammunition still on board.

A massive floating crane, *Taklift 1*, was used to bring the wreckage to the surface. It made an eerie sight as the rusting hulk was brought up, after 43 years beneath the harbor mud and silt. Thousands of small arms and a number of big shells were recovered, all of which then had to be disposed of by EOD.

During the same operation, other fascinating items were also raised. HMS *Jersey*, a J-Class Destroyer, sunk after hitting a mine at the harbor entrance, was cleared by explosives immediately after the event. Now, much of her remains were salvaged,



WO Freddie Montefort with World War II Italian shell found on Malta in the 1960s. Malta was extensively bombed, but never shelled by the enemy — how this unexploded shell got to Malta is a mystery. At right of photo are 18-inch British naval shell from where *Talabot* was sunk, and 12-inch shell. Photo: Frank Terrell

including what was left of her armament. Four torpedoes, still mounted in racks, were also recovered. They probably came from another destroyer, perhaps HMS *Maori*, bombed and sunk during a night raid on 12 February 1942.

Despite the mammoth operation, unexploded ordnance continues to come to light. A recent *gregale*, or northeasterly wind, generated the worst storm in living memory. The sea bed was churned over, revealing wrecks dating from ancient through to modern times. The big steel wreck that I had dived just outside the Grand Harbour was a victim of that *gregale*. Previously recognizable as a sunken ship, it had been torn apart by the raging storm. Its hazardous cargo is scheduled to be dealt with by EOD shortly.



Procedures today for removing unexploded bombs are painstaking and hazardous. Here EOD team examines 500kg German bomb unearthed at former RAF aerodrome at Takali. Disposal today is in deep water, as opposed to expedient war-time methods in photo at right. Photo: AFM

The task will probably be considered child's play in comparison to an incident in May 1982, when EOD was called to deal with a Buoyant Contact Mine that had bobbed to the surface southeast of the island. It was thought that the mine, containing some 320kg of explosive, was likely to be in an unstable condition. It was therefore decided to dispose of the threat with a 20mm Oerlikon gun mounted on one of the local patrol boats. However, the gunners were unable to take proper aim as the mine was only partially visible. Deteriorating light conditions and a heavy swell

only served to make matters worse. According to the incident report, the officer commanding "...therefore instructed a diver, Bombardier Dimech, to secure a line to the chain forming part of the mine. Bdr. Dimech showed extreme courage in the execution of this task. A marker buoy and a floating light were tied to the line so that a watch could be kept by a patrol craft all night through."

Early on 6 May, the mine was carefully towed to calm waters near Filfla, an islet south of Malta, and "...eventually disposed of by placing explosive charges and detonating it using the safety fuse means of initiation."

The report ends by stating:

"Special mention in this operation must go to the following personnel for showing extreme courage, professionalism and determination in facing extreme dangers ..." There follows a list of six names. Probably,

it is the closest anyone in EOD section will ever get to receiving some kind of recognition.

While the disposal of wartime ordnance takes up much of their time, EOD personnel are also responsible for a number of other tasks. These include: responding to bomb threats and IEDs; airport security; sea-search and rescue; underwater clearance, and even the unpleasant but necessary job of recovering victims of drowning.

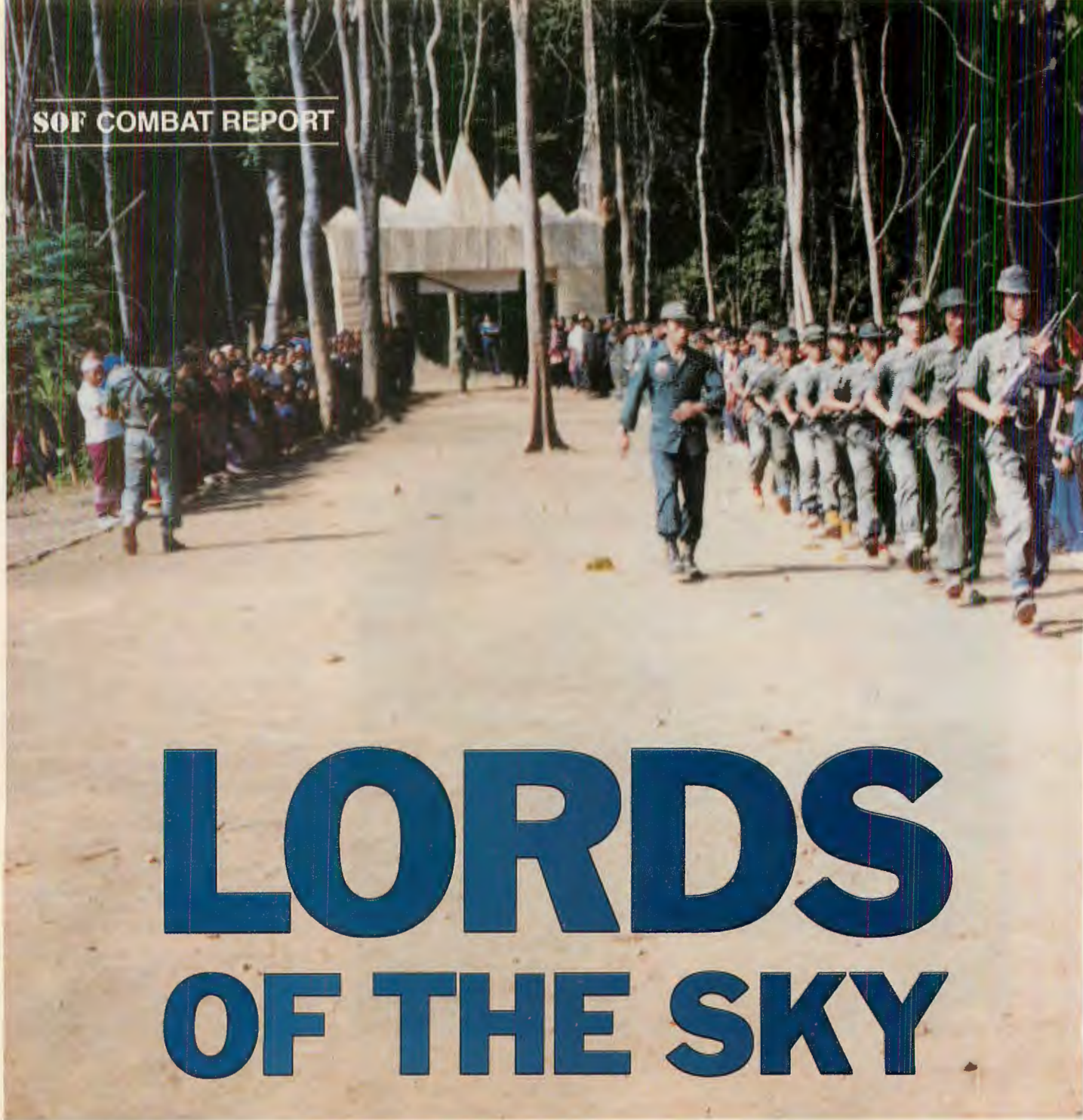
Malta is an island where party politics can and do lead to acts of violence. Significantly, the majority of incidents tend to be bomb threats. Some are just hoax calls. Others involve IEDs. Major Albert Camilleri, at the time of my visits Section OC, has been involved in many such incidents. A fairly typical case involved the officer being called out to Rabat, in central Malta, during the night of 28 June 1987. The major later recorded, "From preliminary investigations so far carried out, it appears that an explosive device consisting of a high explosive substance of about 1.5 kilograms was placed on the right hand side of a ... metal pylon supporting electricity supply and telephone cables.

"No one was injured by the blast, but the explosion cut the 18-centimeter diameter pipe in two, leaving about a meter length embedded in concrete which was pulverized by the explosion, and throwing the remaining 10 meter length of the pipe about 1.6 meters away from its original position. The bottom part of the 10 meter pipe was left resting on the surface of a field while

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During World War II, unexploded bombs were simply rolled off the cliffs at Hal-Far airfield into the sea below. Many are still there. Photo: Imperial War Museum





LORDS OF THE SKY

ELOL fighters on parade, spirit gate in background. Author found Chao Fah to be well-motivated, well-trained, well-disciplined and effective. Photo: Fred Christo

Of all the nations caught up and consumed in Southeast Asia's decades of war, none remains more of an enigma to outsiders than Laos.

France first established a protectorate in Laos in 1893. In 1941, French authority was suppressed by Japan. When the Japanese withdrew in 1945, an independence movement known as Lao Issara set up a government, which collapsed with the return of the French in 1946. France subsequently left after the Geneva accords

of 1954, leaving the Royal government to fight it out with the communist Pathet Lao from 1953 to 1973, with that war becoming part of the larger Indochina conflict.

In 1974 the Paris peace agreement established a coalition government between the Pathet Lao and King Savang Vatthana. After communist victories in Cambodia and Vietnam, the king abdicated in 1975, and Laos was declared a "People's Democratic Republic." The Pathet Lao have always been a virtual satellite of the Vietnamese communists.

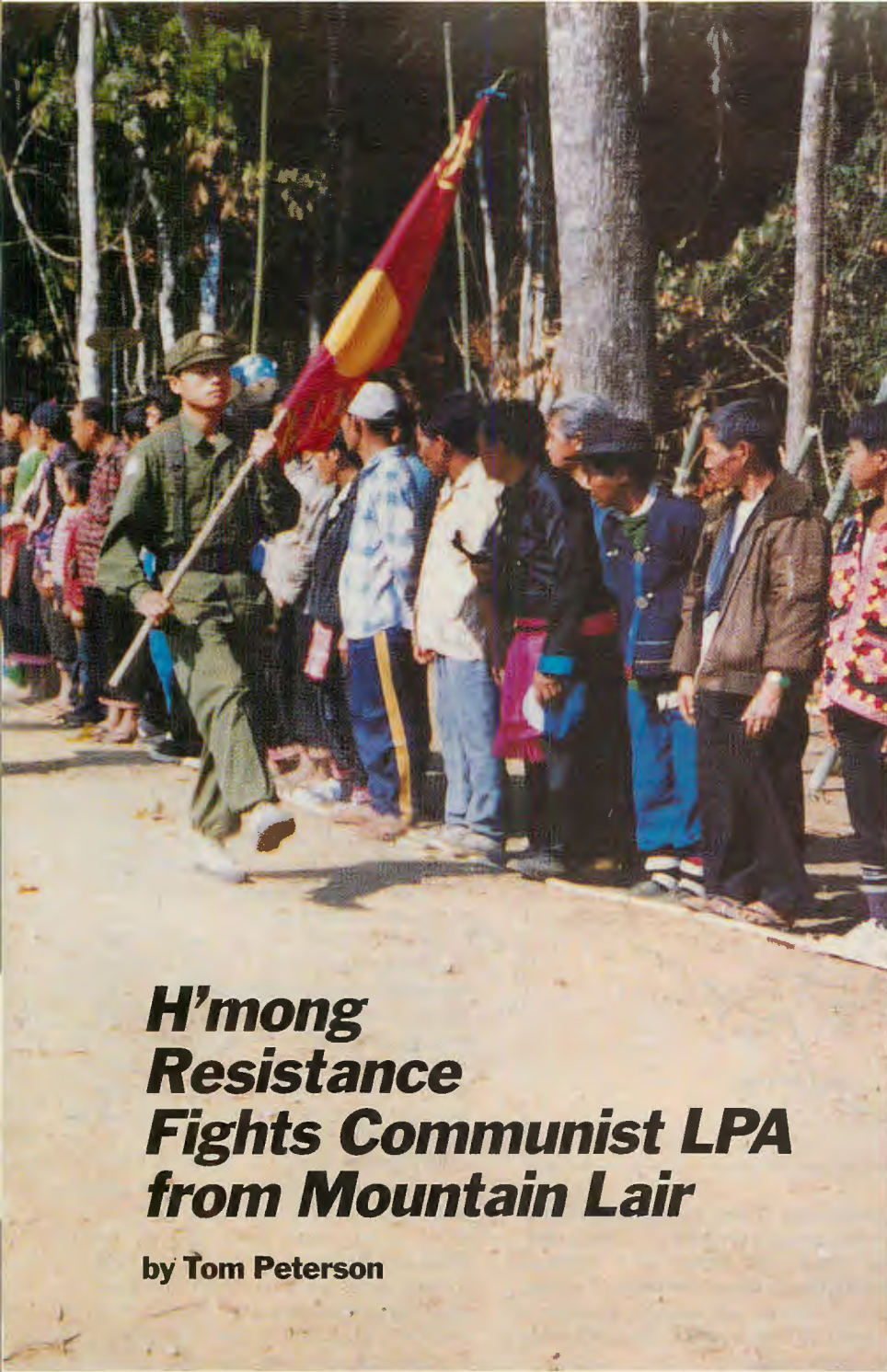
During the 1960s and 1970s, U.S.-supported Thai, H'mong and other tribal soldiers battled communist Vietnamese regulars there in places now only re-

membered by the survivors — Skyline Ridge, Thunder Ridge, Phu Pha Thi, Phu Pha Xai, the Plain of Jars and countless Lima (landing) Sites.

Even when the panoply of U.S. airpower (including B-52 strikes) was deployed, the conflict in Laos was still referred to as "the secret war." Thai soldiers who fought there referred to their tours as "duty in the third country." The Vietnamese never even admitted to being there.

The soil of Laos probably holds more Thai, French, American and Vietnamese dead than the government that sent them there would care to admit.

By 1975 the weary Americans and Thais had departed, leaving behind only their



H'mong Resistance Fights Communist LPA from Mountain Lair

by Tom Peterson

dead and missing. The victorious Vietnamese stayed on, of course, installing their Lao communist allies as the new ruling elite of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR).

Even members of the old U.S.-backed power structure abandoned Laos to start new lives elsewhere.

But for many of the H'mong and other hill tribes the only option was, and still is, to remain in Laos and fight on. Landlocked, isolated from the outside world, many of these people tied their fate to their ancestral mountains and called themselves the Chao Fah — the Lords of the Sky. In later years they acquired a new name — the Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos

(ELOL), through still calling their fighting forces the Chao Fah.

From this point on the Chao Fah seemed to fade into the mist of legend. Vague accounts of their struggle emerged now and then from the cloud-shrouded mountains and triple-canopy jungle. But like most information emerging from Laos it was hard to tell what was fact, what was fantasy. The only way to discern the truth was to go there.

The players in this conflict are:

ELOL — Ethnic Liberation Organi-

zation of Laos, President Pa Kao Her, Lao-based, largely H'mong insurgents.

LUF — Lao United Front, General Vang Pao, largely foreign-based, ethnically mixed insurgents.

LPDR — Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vietnamese-backed communist regime.

LPA — Lao People's Army, ground forces of the LPDR; descendant of the Pathet Lao and PLA (People's Liberation Army).

PAVN — People's Army of Vietnam, still operational in Laos.

WE struggled in the darkness through the high jungle of Sayaboury Province in northern Laos. The dry season was here, but in the highlands it was chilly, particularly at night. Every time we took a break we shivered in our sweat-soaked clothes. We couldn't wait to get moving again. Humping hills with a ruck is an exercise in endurance, but in their home terrain, our H'mong guides took the hills at a brisk pace. There was an LPA offensive on — it was no time to linger along the trail to ELOL headquarters. It would be a good time for us to get a sitrep and observe the ELOL fighters in action.

About midnight we reached the ELOL base area. Animal pens, growling dogs and shadowy forms with AKs told us that this was the place. We entered a hut and were welcomed by some men writing reports by candlelight. Before long we were asleep under our poncho liners.

By daylight we saw that our hut was in a compound separate from the village. Two locked gates clearly indicated that this was a restricted area.

Within the small but neat compound were three huts, a small stable, vegetable plots and even a very clean latrine. A cool mountain stream ran nearby, and drinking water was separately fed in by a system of bamboo pipes. We sensed organization and discipline. H'mong troops greeted us by saluting smartly or snapping to attention, their AKs always at their sides.

ELOL President Pa Kao Her is a cheerful man of average height with leathery brown skin from decades of exposure to the elements. He greeted us over coffee, and went back to the main hut to attend to his duties. About noon there were intermittent explosions from the south — the LPA firing harassment and interdiction (H&I) against the Lao United Front (LUF), another resistance group led by H'mong General Vang Pao.

Nearly two months earlier, on 5 December 1989, the LUF had proclaimed a "Revolutionary Government" at its base

THE PETERSON PAPERS

Tom Peterson has traveled extensively throughout Burma, Thailand and Southeast Asia covering the region's forgotten wars for SOF. See "Bad Day at Thingannyinaung," February '90 and "Karen Kill Zone," March '90.



camp south of where we were. It also announced that it was restoring Prince Suriyavong Vongsawang, in exile in France, as the new monarch of Laos and claimed to hold vast liberated zones in the north and central parts of the country.

Intelligence sources in Thailand expressed skepticism about the LUF's operational effectiveness and credibility. General Vang Pao and Panga Uthong Suwannavong certainly weren't doing much to inspire initial confidence in the new "government" — they weren't even present for its inauguration.

Although expressing concern for the LUF fighters, who like themselves are also mostly H'mong, every ELOL member we spoke to regarded General Pao's operations as a long-standing joke.

"On 5 December LUF promoted over 20 men to general ranks. But they have only about 200 troops. Now over half of these are colonels and generals," commented the ELOL chief of staff who guided us in the night before.

He added that LUF lacked the supporting

infrastructure among the population that is vital to guerrilla operations. "There's nothing wrong with setting up a resistance government," the officer noted, "as long as you have the necessary organization to support it. Otherwise the whole effort has no real meaning."

"The LUF appointed a complete set of province and district officials for north and central Laos, yet hardly any of these people have even set foot into their areas of responsibility. Most of them haven't even set foot in Laos," he observed with a chuckle.

The chief of staff wasn't too happy about LUF setting up their government in an ELOL operational area, either. "They made too big a publicity stunt out of it," he told us.

"Of course when the LPA came up they knew just where to find them. So when the LPA opened the attack on 14 January all the LUF simply ran back into Thailand. They should have dispersed and tried to ambush the LPA but they didn't. The LUF made all the noise but we're the ones getting hit

now, not just here but inside, too," he said, referring to the LPA offensive now underway.

ELOL said that the LUF even refused to coordinate its operations in this sector with them. All the ELOL could do was to send some troops out to keep a watch over developments in the LUF base area. Shortly before we arrived these troops observed smoke rising from the area, indicating the LPA had set fire to the base.

The ELOL officer further stated that the LUF has too much activity in the refugee camps in Thailand which left them vulnerable to LPA agents and infiltrators.

That evening ELOL President Pa Kao Her told us that an ELOL patrol had ambushed some LPA northwest of our base area. Initial reports said that they had killed one LPA soldier and captured an AK and some documents. This led to some speculation that the dead man may have been an officer. We would soon find out since the patrol was heading back.

The ELOL headquarters complex was similar to what an NVA HQ must have looked like during the Vietnam War. High-speed trails ran throughout the area for quick movement. Hillside trails had been shored up with logs to keep them from being eroded. Steps had also been cut into the hillside where the slopes were particularly steep. The various command, troop and logistical installations were well dispersed and camouflaged.

The HQ itself was a small, well-organized position with a trench line and rudimentary bunkers surrounding it. The fighting positions were designed more for delaying action than actually holding out against sustained attack. ELOL's main action if attacked in force would be to slip away and hit the enemy from behind by raid and ambush.

This makes sense. A guerrilla force, especially in the stage when it is still weaker in numbers and weapons, can't afford to get pinned down in costly (in blood and bullets) static combat. To hold ground in this phase sacrifices the guerrilla's edge in mobility and surrenders their initiative. Camps, unlike dead men and lost weapons, can always be replaced.

With troops fanned out for security, we moved into a long hut for a sitrep from President Pa Kao Her.

"The LPA," he began, "began moving up troops for this latest offensive on 24 December 1989. These present operations are the biggest anti-resistance drives since the early 1980s."

"All this is probably in response to the LUF setting up their resistance government. Unfortunately the LPA are mostly hitting our base areas," the president continued as LPA H&I fire rumbled in the distance.

The following ELOL base areas were being hit: an area along the Lao-Vietnamese border in Khammouane Province (opposite Vietnam's Nghe An Province); Phu Bia, Xieng Khuang Province;

Long Yen-Long Pot in Xieng Khouang-Luang Prabang-Vientiane tri-border area; Phu Kong Kao in upper Vientiane Province; Phu Jia in Luang Prabang Province and here in the Nam Pouy area of Sayaboury Province near Thailand. Other LUF border bases further to the north in Say-

aboury were also being attacked.

These operations, reportedly involving up to 6,000 LPA troops, were being supported by artillery and air assets. The president said that Lao MiG-21s and Mi-8 helicopter gunships had been hitting villages, farming areas and suspected ELOL

positions in the interior base areas since 5 January. Probably due to the proximity of the border with Thailand, no airstrikes had yet been conducted in this area. The extent of casualties and damages remained unclear.

"We try to keep 24-hour radio contact

THE EVOLUTION OF ELOL

The Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos grew out of a main H'mong resistance group called the Chao Fah, which means Lords of the Sky. Some accounts refer to them as the Sky Soldiers.

The Chao Fah came into being shortly after the Vietnamese-backed Lao communists took control of the country in 1975. The senior founder of the Chao Fah and ELOL is Zhong Zhua Her, a H'mong officer now in his 60s with several decades of combat experience. He rallied the Chao Fah on Phu Bia, the highest peak in Laos, south of Long Tieng, the old H'mong stronghold during the U.S.-backed phase of the war in Laos.

Unlike the former senior H'mong leader General Vang Pao, who chose to flee to Thailand and organize resistance from the outside, the Chao Fah started their struggle deep inside Laos. The philosophy that Laos can only be liberated by people who remain and fight inside Laos itself is an integral part of ELOL philosophy and strategy.

It is believed that this difference in approach has led to a deep rift between ELOL and Gen. Vang Pao's Lao United Front (LUF), which remains to this day.

In the beginning, many Chao Fah members were soldiers who had served in the U.S.-backed tribal irregular forces against the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and their Pathet Lao allies.

However, with increasingly harsh treatment being inflicted on the H'mong and other hill tribes, more recruits flocked to the Chao Fah. Faced with increasing opposition, the Lao People's Army (LPA) and PAVN attacked tribal villages, killing many people and forcing the rest to either flee to Thailand or join the resistance.

ELOL officers say that during the late 1970s there were up to 20,000 fighters in the Chao Fah, although only a few thousand of these could be armed. Meanwhile since 1975 the LPA/PAVN has mounted repeated operations against the main Chao Fah base area at Phu Bia. ELOL says these drives always ended in failure for the LPA/PAVN, with heavy casualties.

By 1981 the constant attacks and diminishing supplies forced the Chao Fah to scale back to a more defensive posture. Because the fighting took place deep in the interior, very little detail has emerged about the long years of struggle at Phu

Bia. Refugees who eventually made it out to Thailand reported that the LPA/PAVN subjected Phu Bia to heavy air and artillery bombardment, using both conventional and chemical munitions, followed by infantry assaults up the mountain. Heavy civilian casualties were reported, as H'mong villages in the area bore the brunt of the fighting.

Faced with this difficult situation, Zhong Zhua Her ordered Chao Fah to disperse. Some forces were sent to China under Pa Kao Her, current president of ELOL and like Zhong Zhua Her an experienced combat leader. Zhong Zhua Her stayed behind in the Phu Bia area, where he remains at this writing, still fighting on.

As enemies of the Vietnamese, the Chinese eagerly provided assistance to the Chao Fah and other resistance groups. In addition to weapons and supplies the Chinese provided training for unit leaders, staff officers and medics. Two other groups given aid by Peking at this time were the Lao Neutralist Revolutionary Organization (LNRO) of Gen. Kong Le and a group of dissident Lao communists.

That arrangement fell through when the various groups, especially the LNRO, couldn't reach any agreement on joint operations. Fed up with this divisive factionalism, the Chinese terminated assistance to all groups during 1983-1984 and sent them back to Laos. By 1985 President Pa Kao Her had brought his men out to Sayaboury Province in northern Laos, near the Thai border. From then on the Chao Fah have fought under the banner of ELOL.

Unlike other groups, ELOL appears to fight step-by-step according to a predetermined political/military strategy. Its major efforts are directed at infrastructure building, mainly among the H'mong and other tribal people.

ELOL claims its organization is established throughout the provinces of north and central Laos, and claims moderate success in the infiltration of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and militia apparatus at village level, and of some lowland towns such as the old royal capital of Luang Prabang.

Meanwhile ELOL's military forces have been carefully trained and built up. ELOL's officers say they have 3,000 men in armed units, with another 6,000 trained but without weapons. Their military activities take the form of highly mobile operations based on sound intelligence. In

classic guerrilla fashion, to ensure success ELOL forces only strike when conditions are in their favor.

Individual weapons are variants of the Kalashnikov, either Chinese made or captured ComBloc, which facilitates the use of captured enemy arms and ammunition. Support weapons include a few M79 grenade launchers plus RPG-2 and RPG-7 rocket launchers, and a few 60mm mortars.

Current ELOL operations are usually at squad level (about 10 men), conducting ambushes and raids. Serious logistical problems limit offensive operations, especially ones of company size or more.

Despite problems with logistics, ELOL has managed to conduct some highly successful operations. Last October at Ban Na Van in Sayaboury Province, ELOL forces raided the LPA 22nd Light Battalion, killing 64 and capturing scores of weapons. Thanks to careful planning and courageous fighting, their only casualties were two ELOL wounded.

Since that successful operation, ELOL has stepped up its activity in Sayaboury Province. During the last dry season they conducted a series of successful ambushes on a LPA/PAVN Dac Cong special operations unit that tried to penetrate the Nam Pouy base area.

Unfortunately, ELOL's relations with the other main resistance group, the LUF, remain poor to nonexistent. Although ELOL and LUF commanders inside Laos do conduct joint operations, the relationship between senior leaders remains strained. As the most senior H'mong leader, General Vang Pao has long attempted to bring ELOL under his authority. ELOL has consistently rejected such moves on the grounds that it does not want to be part of what they believe to be a totally ineffective effort.

This split seems to be exacerbated by social tensions. General Vang Pao's displeasure with ELOL is said to stem from the fact both Zhong Zhua Her and Pa Kao Her were once his direct subordinates. Most present ELOL leaders were battalion and company commanders or school teachers and minor officials in pre-1975 Laos. They were the ones who shouldered most of the field leadership burden, but were excluded from the upper echelons of power.

Having followed the old elite into defeat, they are no longer so willing to stake their future on people they view as undeserving of their allegiance. — T.P.



ELOL President Pa Kao Her prays at spirit altar before leading troops on mission. Photo: Fred Christo

with our forces inside, but they've been able to transmit only a few brief reports because of the attacks," the president explained.

"Also once the fighting started our people dispersed to avoid getting hit. This has meant that they haven't been able to get full details from all the people in their areas yet. The fact that we usually have only one radio per base area adds to the difficulty in sending the reports out."

ELOL would deal with this offensive by first dispersing its forces and civilians in its base areas to minimize casualties. Next they would conduct as many raids and ambushes as possible to inflict maximum losses on the LPA.

"Although we are presently preoccupied with this offensive our main objective remains to build up our forces and infrastructure in the interior," the president said. "We consider our infrastructure-building work among the population to be of the greatest importance. Without this nothing else is possible. We depend on the people for food, intelligence and recruits," he emphasized.

He further stated that although ELOL has up to 3,000 men in its armed units along with another 6,000 men trained but without weapons, its offensive operations are still severely limited by serious supply and equipment shortages.

"Right now we have to either buy, steal

or capture from the LPA," the president said, describing their logistics.

"But we try to train our troops as well as possible, considering our limited resources," he went on. "With fewer weapons we really have to emphasize quality over quantity to get the most out of what we have."

At present ELOL troops receive one month's basic combat training. For those

Chao Fah commando brings up RPG-2 under fire, during successful raid on PLA base at Ban Na Van, October 1988. Photo: Fred Christo

who show potential this is followed later on by a two-month junior combat leader's course. Senior officers are trained in a three-month program.

"If we had more time, budget and other resources we could expand training at all levels. At least three or four months for basic," he said.

ELOL infrastructure among the population now covers many areas in the northern and central provinces of Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Udomxai, Borkeo, Nam Tha, Phong Saly, Sam Neua and Khammouane. Armed units of varying



strength operate throughout these provinces.

Much of the ELOL network in Kieng Khouang, Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Khammouane has been operational since 1975 when resistance began. The others have been built up over the years since.

"In every ELOL village we have at least six cadres to organize and lead the people to support our operations," he explained. "These cadres set up an infrastructure with village leaders responsible for security, administration, health, education, agriculture, forestry and youth."

"Before we expand our network into a new village we keep it under observation

ELOL guerrilla in Nam Pouy, with AK and muzzle-loader. Due to shortage of arms and ammo, it is not unusual to see ELOL soldiers with muzzle-loaders for foraging, to conserve their battle ammo. Photo: Max Weale



until we know as much about it as possible. For example we have to know who the [communist] party and *kong lom* [village militia] leaders are. We have to know conditions in the village and the outlook of the villagers themselves. Even in the villages not yet targeted for infiltration we must know these facts to always be at least one step ahead of the enemy," the president concluded.

Depending on security conditions, contact with the people is then made either by an armed propaganda team or by individual ELOL operatives, often disguised as ordi-

nary villagers.

With the seed of a network established, the governing village communist organization is then dealt with, through a range of lenient to extreme measures. First the ELOL cadres will try to subvert the party's operatives to work for them through persuasion or blackmail. If this approach is deemed inappropriate or fails to yield results, harsher measures consisting of threats (to force the communists to flee the village) or ultimately removal (for the totally intractable) are employed.

When asked if PAVN troops were still in Laos, the President replied that they were — but not as openly as before.

Hanoi claims to have removed all its soldiers, except for advisers, since 1988. No observers were present to observe this claimed withdrawal, so it remains unverified.

According to the president these PAVN forces are kept dispersed in rugged areas of Xieng Khouang, Phong Saly, Sam Neua, Attapue and Saravanne provinces. He noted that these are restricted areas, often near the Vietnamese border, with little or no population.

"Even the LPA are usually kept out of these zones," the president added.

Although reports state that there are 14,000 to 20,000 PAVN in Laos organized into three divisions, confirmed details about unit strength and order of battle are still hard to come by. Even ELOL admits that gathering intelligence on the PAVN presence has been difficult since they have limited infrastructure and forces in the specific areas where Hanoi's troops are reported.

ELOL headquarters personnel pose with battle standard. Note variety of weapons designs and vintage — about the only thing they have in common is that they fight for liberty. When they can be had, ComBloc weapons are preferred as they allow the use of captured ammunition. Photo: Fred Christo



H'mong boy, carrying M16A1 rifle for his father, Nam Pouy, last March. Photo: Max Weale

The president stated many PAVN are also assigned to LPA units as advisers and ordinary soldiers. The many Vietnamese civilians who settled in Laos after 1975 also provide cover for PAVN troops. The number of settlers has been variously reported as between 300,000 and 1 million (not including tens of thousands of ethnic Vietnamese citizens of pre-1975 Laos).

"You must remember that the PAVN have been in Laos for nearly 15 years. This is even more if you include the years since the late 1950s when they first came to fight us. Many of these troops have married Lao



H'mong patrol leader in jacket captured from LPA unit commander displays captured Hungarian AMD-65. In classic guerrilla form, Chao Fah lets the enemy supply them. Photo: Fred Christo

women and speak Lao fluently. They know Laos very well. This country, in effect, has become their new home. It isn't that difficult for them to blend in," the president pointed out.

We continued our tour with a briefing by the ELOL chief of staff, who advised that the LPA had deployed eight battalions for operations in Sayaboury Province. Up to five of these were currently in the field while the remaining three were in reserve. He said that these latter may be partly or wholly PAVN units being held back to hit difficult objectives later on.

Although eight battalions sounds like a fair sized force (at least 4,000 men) the ELOL officer said that in reality most LPA units are badly understrength. He told us that due to desertions and supply problems most LPA light battalions numbered only 100 to 200 men while the main battalions could, at best, muster about 300.

ELOL officers also informed me that most LPA soldiers, particularly from platoon leader on down, are H'mong, Mien, Phu Noi or Khmu tribesmen while the lowland Lao Loum predominate from company commander level upwards.

The chief of staff reported that for the attack on the LUF the LPA had 130mm artillery firing in support from positions to our south on Route 1. Old U.S. 105mm



Chao Fah guerrillas at base camp in Nam Pouy. Uniform on man at right is remnant of Chinese assistance provided Lao insurgents during the 1980s. Photo: Max Weale

field pieces had also been towed into positions closer to the border.

"The LPA haven't used artillery on us yet since they don't know exactly where our positions are," he said. Except for disturbed vegetation we didn't see any real damage from shelling in the ELOL base

area.

He added that the LPA had employed mostly mortars and recoilless rifles for supporting fire in the ELOL areas.

In this area the chief of staff said that two main LPA units had been deployed. One was a 300-man force engaged in sweeping the LUF base area to the south. Another smaller force of 200 men from the 22nd LPA Light Battalion were deployed against ELOL. Supplies for these forces were being moved down Route 1 by truck then

carried up either by the troops themselves or by locally conscripted villagers.

"The LPA use H'mong troops against us too," the chief of staff said. "Sometimes these H'mong troops will try to tell us who they are so we won't shoot at them. But we can't let them come up here and hit us. We have to kill them just the same, even if they are our brothers. Last year I remember we blew a claymore on some LPA troops led by a H'mong lieutenant. He died later on with a nail [from the home-made ELOL claymore] stuck in his windpipe."

The officer noted that LUF reluctance to shoot H'mong LPA troops made the attack on their base area very easy for the government forces.

"None of the 300 men scheduled to attack the LUF even bothered to desert. They knew it was probably going to be an easy operation. There has been little actual fighting there and very few LPA have been killed or wounded," he added.

"But of the approximately 300 troops sent up to attack about 50 deserted along the way. These troops, from the 22nd Light Battalion based at Ban Na Van [about 11.5 kilometers to the northeast], are our long time adversaries. They know it is dangerous to come into our area," the officer continued.

"The LPA troops have a song they sing among themselves that says only the brave and those who want to die go to Na Van," he said with a grin.

"The government in Vientiane says there is no war and no resistance. But the troops come out here and they get killed. It becomes quite a big shock for the men sent here," he added.

That evening after we returned to the village the ambush patrol came back in. The patrol leader said that they had set up the ambush in the late afternoon on a trail from Ban Na Van to the forward LPA position about 5 kilometers northeast of us. He had deployed his nine men in two teams about 100 meters apart and they were getting out their claymores when they heard the LPA coming up the trail from the east.

The ambushers waited quietly as five LPA walked into the killing zone. The lead man had just turned back from talking with his friends when the ELOL patrol leader shot him through the chest with his AK.

The remaining LPA ran back down the trail and started returning fire. Two of these were seen shooting from behind the cover of a large tree. The ELOL troops poured back AK and M-79 fire at them and pitched a number of fragmentation grenades.

Though some fire was still coming from further down the trail, the patrol leader dashed out to grab the dead man's weapon and field pack. Unable to remove the pack from the still-twitching LPA soldier, the patrol leader cut it away with his knife and jumped back into the trailside vegetation.

Having expended nearly all his own ammo the patrol leader used the dead man's as they broke contact. The troops further down the trail claimed another LPA killed

but broke contact before the man's weapon and pack were recovered.

The weapon captured turned out to be a seldom-seen Hungarian AK, in good condition. Contents of the very small, old Chinese-type pack revealed that the late owner was Lance Corporal Khamsorn of the 22nd Light Battalion signals section. A notebook contained the unit's radio code and the names of four other men in the signals section.

The code was a fairly simple letter and number cipher, which the LPA had probably deleted from use by now. It wasn't of much immediate value to ELOL in any case, since they had no signals intercept

and we certainly never thought the government would use such devices on us so we kept no records or evidence of the incident. All I remember now is that it took place in 1978. But who would believe these things happened to us anyway," he said resignedly.

Almost everyone we talked to related similar painful accounts. Earlier in the day the village defense leader told us why he joined ELOL.

He began by telling us that communist officials didn't make contact with his isolated village until 1982. The H'mong village leaders were asked to come to meet with the officials so that government

"The war ends when the H'mong are gone."

capability.

The well-hidden ELOL positions deny the LPA any clear targets to home in on, negating their superior firepower. LPA attacks and attempted sweeps have been effectively met with carefully-prepared ambushes. In theory the LPA were on the attack but in reality the initiative lay with ELOL. The guerrillas dictated the conditions, hitting the "attackers" when and where it was most advantageous for them — up close with devastating claymore and small arms fire.

The chief of staff said that every time the LPA probed the base area this happened to them. Earlier President Pa Kao Her told us that about 200 LPA had been killed by ELOL in this area over the past couple of years.

We often sat up until late into the night talking with ELOL members, learning more about them and why they were still fighting after all these years. The chief of staff, a former school teacher, told us that he had even spent several years trying to coexist with the new communist system. The killing of friends and relatives finally forced him to join the struggle.

"The people who were killed weren't even in the resistance," he told us. "But the LPA came to our village and shot them during the night. In the morning the soldiers wouldn't even let us take the bodies away for burial.

"I also remember another day when a MiG flew high over the village. Afterwards a yellow residue appeared on many of the houses and on people's clothes. Soon about 50 people became violently ill with severe vomiting and diarrhea. Two of these people died," he related.

"When we informed the Lao officials about this they told us that it was a U.S. chemical attack. At that time we didn't really know what to make of it. We didn't know anything about chemical weapons

services could be brought to the villagers.

"On 20 October 1982, 34 senior members of our village went, unarmed, to meet the Lao authorities. There were hundreds of LPA plus 50 PAVN and three Soviet advisers at the meeting place. As soon as our people arrived the soldiers started shooting. Only two escaped alive," said the man, who also served as a H'mong spiritual leader.

He noted that, at the time, there were no resistance forces operating in this area. After the massacre the villagers fled temporarily to Thailand. Their homes were burnt to the ground, but the people came back to rebuild and fight, the man told us.

The chief of staff told us that the Lao communist officials use a phrase among themselves that "the war ends when the H'mong are gone."

A few of the people we spoke to also told us about their experience in China when Peking was still supporting resistance operations in Laos. The Chinese provided ELOL with weapons and supplies but it is the training and indoctrination they gave in guerrilla warfare that continues to have most marked effect.

Before they went to China the ELOL fighters were already highly experienced in the tactics of guerrilla fighting, but from the Chinese they learned the strategy of guerrilla warfare. In essence ELOL learned the finer points of how to meld political and military strategy with the tactics of guerrilla struggle.

It is strangely ironic that these people learned so much about fighting communists from the Chinese, who are themselves communists. It is also worthy of note that some of the world's most successful anti-communist resistance leaders, such as UNITA's Dr. Jonas Savimbi, are graduates of Chinese guerrilla warfare schools.

Continued on page 85

SOF BEHIND THE SCENES

FLIGHT OF TH

Hollywood Goes Where U.S.

by Dan Gagliasso

Photos by Bruce McBroom



E INTRUDER

Navy Couldn't



"The A-6 bomber has been the only true all-weather attack aircraft in the U.S. Navy. This made it the workhorse of attack naval aviation during the Vietnam conflict. Capa-

ble of close air support, deep strike missions, highly maneuverable, and —most importantly— a crew concept performed by two professionals combine to make this the most

sophisticated attack weapons system in the Free World."

*— Lou Drendel
A-6 Intruder in Action*

TWISTED wreckage of a Navy A-6 Intruder bomber smolders on the edge of an overgrown jungle clearing. A downed pilot from another A-6 rushes to the open canopy of the crashed plane, his Navy-issue .38 snub-nosed revolver gripped tightly in his hand. Quickly he helps the wounded pilot out of the wreckage. The A-6's bombardier/navigator is slumped over dead in the other seat. Rounds from AK-47s, SKSs and even old French Lebel's chew up the earth all around the two fleeing Americans. The Pathet Lao guerrillas who are shooting are ready to close in for the kill, preparing to finish off what appears to be easy prey.

Suddenly two prop-driven Air Force A-1 Sky Raiders whiz overhead, strafing the Pathet Lao with 20mm cannon fire. The hotshot Air Force pilots dip their wings in salute as they buzz their Navy brethren on the ground, not more than 12 feet above the deck. Just as they gain altitude over the communist troops the Sky Raiders let loose with a spectacular napalm strike that sends heat waves reverberating for several hundred yards all around.

No, this is not somewhere in Southeast Asia during the late 1960s or early 1970s. Rather, it is the island of Kauai, Hawaii, in November of 1989. Kauai is standing in for Laos during the filming of the \$30 million Paramount film, *Flight of the Intruder*, based on Steven Coonts' best selling novel. *Intruder* deals with the personal and professional trials of a group of A-6 bomber pilots during the latter part of the Vietnam War.

The film is being expertly helmed by Academy Award-nominated writer/director John Milius. Milius needs little introduction to the readers of SOF. As the writer or director of such classics as *The Wind and the Lion*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Conan the Barbarian* and *Red Dawn*, Milius has always shown a deft and able hand at filling the screen with authentic and exciting action. *Flight of the Intruder* should prove to be no exception.

On location in Kauai, producer Mace

Film crew moves in for closeups during crash sequence.



Neufeld was fond of saying that *Intruder* was the film that Milius was born to direct. Not an armchair adventurer, John Milius is an expert surfer and trap and skeet shooter, and a knowledgeable gun collector. He once demanded a \$25,000 Purdy shotgun in exchange for rewriting the script for the original *Dirty Harry*.

Milius is also an incredibly well-read military historian in his own right. While not a veteran, he has done his best to experience the military life in his films. In his office at Paramount, a framed photo of the director in a flight suit in front of an Air Force F-15 fighter hangs on the wall. Several years ago the pilots at Edwards Air Force Base took him up for a hop in that F-15, an experience the active director still relishes.

Starring in *Flight of the Intruder* is relative newcomer Brad Johnson (*Nam Angels, Always*). Johnson is a former steer wrestler and calf roper in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. Many film insiders feel he has the potential to become another John Wayne. He is also a seasoned shooter and hunter who once worked as a hunting guide.

"I think Brad would just as soon give up all this Hollywood stuff and become a Navy flyer. These Navy people really like him and he likes them," said director Milius. Johnson, Milius and other key production personnel spent research time on the aircraft carrier *USS Independence*.

In Hawaii it wasn't unusual to see Johnson hanging out with the film's stunt pilots at the Sheraton's bar, viewing videotape of the day's flying sequences. In fact, Johnson, who is a pilot himself, went to the extent of going through the Navy's physiological tests at Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Washington. After passing with flying colors, Johnson was taken on the "million dollar ride" through the Cascades in the B/N seat of an A-6 bomber.

Co-starring with Johnson are Danny Glover (*Lethal Weapon*), and Willem Dafoe (*Platoon*). Both actors went through similar prefilming research, Glover with Johnson at Whidbey Island and Dafoe at the Naval Air Station, Barbarous Point,



John Milius directs a scene in the rain.

Hawaii.

Producer Neufeld sees *Intruder* as a kind of updating of the classic Korean War novel and film, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*. Neufeld has achieved a reputation for producing quality films with military backgrounds. He produced *No Way Out* in 1988 and *The Hunt for Red October*, based on the Tom Clancy best-seller, just released this spring. He is also developing the Clancy novel *Clear and Present Danger* with John Milius writing the script.

The relationships Neufeld's production company established with the U.S. Navy while filming *Red October* made a great deal of the filming of *Intruder* possible. Secretary of the Navy Lawrence Garret; Director of Carrier and Air Station Program Division, Rear Admiral Frederick Metz; Naval Air Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral John Fetterman — all provided the top level cooperation that gave U.S. Navy support to the filming. It was with their help that permission to shoot for 12 days at sea on the aircraft carrier *USS Independence* was granted.

According to Lloyd's of London the flight deck of an aircraft carrier is considered the most dangerous job environment in the world. Given what takes place there, and the young age of the workers involved, and the speed at which multiple large aircraft must take off and land, it's no wonder. Add a motion picture crew of uninitiated Hollywood-types and you could be asking for a lot of unnecessary trouble.

The job of helping to make the film crew's presence safe and productive fell to the Director of the Navy Officer of Information West, Captain Mike Sherman, and Liaison Officer, Lieutenant Jim Brooks. Their duties included getting the production whatever they needed when they needed it, while still looking out for the interests of the U.S. Navy. Often after a successful military film such as *Top Gun* or *An Officer and a Gentleman* recruitment will jump as much as 30 percent. So one hand does wash the other, so to speak.

Sherman and Brooks went beyond the

call of duty on *Intruder*. A-6 bombers and Navy pilots were utilized during much of the filming. Three A-6 wrecks were cannibalized to make up the one crashed A-6 seen in the Laotian scenes. Castings were made of Intruder pilots' helmets. All of this cooperation doesn't come cheap though. For instance, Paramount was charged over \$3,100 an hour for each Navy A-6 that became airborne.

All this cooperation would be for naught if the film didn't look and feel like Yankee Station off the coast of Vietnam in 1972. The job of making various departments and individuals aware of the real Navy in Vietnam fell to technical adviser Captain Sam Sayers, USN retired.

Captain Sayers is a real American hero, soft-spoken, talented, self-effacing. He was an original A-6 test pilot for Grumman Aircraft in the early 1960s. In November of 1965 he shipped out on the aircraft carrier USS *Kittyhawk* with squadron VA-85, "The Black Falcons," one of the first A-6 Intruder bomber squadrons.

In a little less than two years Captain Sayers flew 164 combat missions, many of them going "Downtown" over Hanoi. Eventually, fate caught up with Sayers and his B/N 100 miles northeast of Da Nang. Their Intruder was hit by 37mm cannon fire and crippled. Sayers managed to limp the bomber out to the Gulf of Tonkin before he and his B/N had to eject.

Ejecting from the cockpit of an A-6 is tricky business at best. You have two choices of how to go. If you jettison the canopy and slide it back you risk jamming it and not being able to eject at all. Then it's Alpha Mike Foxtrot — Adios Motherfuckers. Sayers and his B/N opted to eject *through* the glass dome of the canopy and risk cutting up their hands and arms, rather than taking a chance on not being able to get out at all.

Once in the water, the two Americans looked toward the North Vietnamese shoreline to see enemy sampans coming out to capture them. The cavalry, in the form of U.S. air support and an Air Force Albatross amphibious seaplane, came to the rescue, just in the nick of time.

As a prelude to Milius doing any writing on the script, Captain Sayers took the writer/director to a gathering of retired A-6 pilots. The salty old flyboys inundated Milius with dozens of stories that would help add an authentic feel to the script. Unlike many Hollywood types, Milius knows a good thing when he hears it and he



TOP: Mock-up of Soviet ZSU 23mm anti-aircraft gun. Guns are twin .50s modified by special effects expert Joe Lombardi.

ABOVE: Sky Raiders drop napalm on Pathet Lao.

took advantage of the colorful information being sent his way.

Two of the more interesting stories Milius incorporated into the script include a wonderful Nisei flavored tale, and a story of noble but frustrated elan. The first involves a group of A-6 pilots who were ordered out on an especially dangerous Alpha strike over North Vietnam. Alpha strike was the designation of an all-out daylight air raid. The pilots of this particular squadron marched out onto the

tarmac of their carrier, all sporting Japanese Kamakazi headbands, and then bowed en masse to the ship's bridge.

The other story involves the retirement of the prop-driven A-1 Sky Raider from the Navy in 1968. One pilot unfurled an incredibly long scarf and left his canopy open just as the ship's catapult launched him into the sky. His long talisman was then seen flowing out into the slipstream.

Milius did it one better. In one spontaneous moment he asked one of the stunt pilots flying an on-line Air Force Sky Raider to get a long scarf from wardrobe and a .45 automatic pistol from props. As the pilot comes in as low as possible over the two downed Navy pilots he opens his canopy and unfurls his long scarf. Then, having used up all of his 20mm ammunition and having already dropped his napalm, the A-1 pilot begins to pop off at the Pathet Lao troops with his handgun in a last futile act of defiance in support of his downed fellow flyers.

SOF SCREENWRITER

Dan Gagliasso rode bulls on the rodeo circuit before becoming a screenwriter and has since written three Vietnam War movies: *Eye of the Eagle II*, *'Nam Angels*, and *Last Stand at Lang Mei*. He has just finished a screenplay involving an FBI investigation into ritualistic murders on an Indian reservation. He is also associate producer on a film MGM/United Artists is developing about the Nobistor mercenary affair (described in "Soldiers of Misfortune," SOF April, May, June '87).



ABOVE: Napalm strike against attacking Pathet Lao buys time for Grafton and Camparelli to escape capture.

TOP RIGHT: Sky Raider strafes NVA while film crew catches the action.

RIGHT: Navy crewmen prepare A-6 Intruder for takeoff during filming.

Military aircraft really are the stars of this film. The A-6 Intruder has the lead, with two A-1 Sky Raiders co-starring. A Nomad O2A FAO light recon ship and an HH-53 Jolly Green Giant helicopter play the supporting roles.

Handling the aerial coordinator duties was accomplished stunt pilot Steve Hinton and his crew from Fighter Rebuilders in Chino, California, assisted by World War II flying buff and pilot Jay Cullum.

Steve Hinton is a legend among pilots of all types, having won the Reno air races five times in the last decade. He was almost killed at Reno one year when he crashed in the Red Baron, a P-51 he was piloting at top speeds for a prop driven plane. For almost

10 years he also held the world's speed record in a prop driven plane.

Hinton's film credentials include almost every film made in the last 10 years featuring vintage prop planes, such as *Always*, *1941*, *War and Remembrance*, and the television show *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. That's Hinton in the Sky Raider with the flowing scarf and .45.

The Sky Raider Hinton was flying was on loan from the Douglas Aircraft Museum of Flight in Santa Monica, California. The other Sky Raider is owned by Hinton's co-flyer Cullum, who is an acknowledged expert on prop war planes of World War II.

Weapons on *Intruder* were provided mostly by Stembridge Gun Rentals of Glendale, California. Danny Sprague of Stembridge was on the set every day in Kauai making sure that the arsenal of combat weapons being used worked properly and were being handled safely.

All manner of communist bloc weaponry is represented. Degtyarev light machine guns, SKSs, RPDs, RPKs and of course AK-47s. Some of the more unusual weap-

ons used in the filming were old bolt-action French Lebel's, a Dragunov (SVD) sniper rifle and the 1891 Mosin Nagent sniper rifle affixed with a PU scope.

Sprague explained how most of the AK-47s used in films today are actually Valmet 78s that have been altered to look like Kalashnikovs. More than once director Milius would call for a specific weapon to put into the hands of a particular extra to add authenticity to a scene.

In fact *Cold Steel Knives* contributed one of their Bowie knives for a scene Milius thought up involving a combat knife that B/N Willem Dafoe carries. Pilot Jake Grafton (Brad Johnson) pulls Dafoe's knife from its sheath and studies the blade thoughtfully for a long moment before asking, "Do you know something I don't?"

The most unusual weapon in the film's stockpile was the communist ZSU 23mm anti-aircraft gun. Special effects expert Joe Lombardi hooked up an automatic solenoid system to four modified .50 caliber machine gun mounts altered to look like the



ZSU's 23mm guns. The lower part of the armed vehicle was built by the Andre Brothers, who used photos from Jane's *Armor and Artillery* to help them build the track part of the ZSU.

Special effects wizard Lombardi is a legend in the film business, the man responsible for the gigantic napalm blast in *Apocalypse Now* and a permanent fixture on almost any John Milius film. Lombardi delights in telling the kinds of stories SOF readers love. One of his personal favorites details how British troops in Malaysia used to use primer cord wrapped around Japanese prisoners' necks as an interrogation device during World War II.

Lombardi was also responsible for the napalm strikes and strafing runs depicted in the film, the largest napalm explosion used 16,000 gallons of gas to feed its flames.

Many actors cast as supporting players in military roles just don't have the look or feel necessary to convey the reality of the situations they're supposedly depicting. Not so on a Milius film. The director's penchant for casting authentic looking

Navy types is evident throughout *Intruder*.

Actor Peter Sheryako (*Death Wish IV*) was so convincing in his part as a senior chief petty officer that while filming on the USS *Independence* he was repeatedly mistaken for the real article by officers and enlisted men serving on the carrier. Another actor, Ken Wright (*Hanoi Hilton, Last Stand at Lang Me*), showed up at Milius' office with properly drawn up Navy orders and in a Class A khaki uniform. The following week he was cast as a Navy captain.

Reb Brown (*Uncommon Valor*) stands out in his part as the Swedish air boss of the carrier's flight deck. And Jarred Chandler (*Feds*) who plays the rookie pilot Razor, is in reality not only a professional actor but also a senior ROTC cadet at UCLA.

Milius added one more unusual touch of authenticity by casting his 14-year-old son Ethan's teacher as a Laotian guerrilla. The teacher, Mr. Minh, is a former Vietnamese refugee whose family fled South Vietnam after the fall of the country in 1975. Minh plays a Pathet Lao who is shot dead by

Danny Glover.

Glover certainly proved his mettle early during the filming after he severely cut open the palm of his hand at the beginning of a day's shooting. Since in that particular scene his character is supposed to be wounded, Glover insisted upon waiting until all his scenes were done before going to the hospital. *Eight hours* and 11 stitches later he was finally sewn up.

Those who have read Coonts' novel are familiar with the "Beast," U.S. Naval Aviation's version of a mechanical bull. The "Beast" was actually the nose section of an F-8 Crusader that operated off a compressed air charge, which propelled the nose section down a length of track toward a stagnant pond.

This contraption was the brainchild of the base commander at Subic Bay, but was set up in the "Zoo" officers club on the Cubi Point side of the base. Landing the "Beast," especially after large amounts of alcohol had been consumed, was a trial in

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UNDER THE VOLCANO

Could Guatemala Erupt Into Another El Salvador?

by Morgan Tanner Photos by David Bjorkman

OUR driver stomps on the gas, yanking the speeding blue Nissan around steep curves up the volcano Acatenango. In the back of the pickup, five men and a woman bounce with each bump in the dirt road. Although they are army soldiers, they are dressed in polyester shirts and jeans, looking like Guatemalan workers going to their jobs in the coffee fields. Except for the fact that they have weapons — M16s, Galils, M79s — hidden by jackets and held at the ready on their laps.

Ahead of the truck, the volcano Fuego spews forth a stream of acrid grey smoke, a visible reminder of the power that lies coiled in its belly. Guatemala's Marxist guerrillas have likened themselves to a volcano. Today their numbers are fewer than a few years ago. They blow bridges and electrical towers, burn trucks on the highways, and rob travelers at gunpoint as a sign of their dominant power. The question is, do they have the potential power to stoke a savage guerrilla war in Guatemala as the FMLN did in neighboring El Salvador? Or is the threat as harmless as a puff of smoke?

Following the Nissan, an army major guns his red-and-white Kawasaki to keep up, his CAR15 awkwardly thrust between the seat and his butt. Ours are the only two vehicles on the rural road behind the volcano, and people gawk out the windows

of their houses as we pass. When the major fails to emerge from a curve, the woman in back raps on the window and motions the driver to stop. He reluctantly brakes beside a plantation of shrubby coffee trees, leaving the engine running.

The men in the back grip their weapons a little tighter. They listen nervously for the purr of the major's motorcycle, but their eyes search between the coffee bushes for signs of movement. They know well the guerrilla's habits of ambush; the woman with us was a radio operator for the guerrillas for six years. Later, our mission accomplished, she'll insist that we return to the main military base by an alternate route to foil any ambush. They do not underestimate the guerrillas' intelligence network.

The driver fidgets. "We don't want to have to go back for him," he mutters.

Then, a flash of red appears around the curve and the Kawasaki speeds toward us. Before the bike catches up, the Nissan's driver floors the gas pedal and the truck shoots ahead. The truck fairly flies from bump to bump up the rough road. What's the hurry? I wonder.

"You saw those people on the roadside?" the driver asks. "We don't want to give anyone time to send a message that we're coming. A couple of months ago on this road, someone took out a commercial truck with an RPG."

Guns, Lies and Counting Coup

When we reach the army outpost of El Socorro, the major posts guards at the Nissan, and

we begin a half-hour climb straight up. Behind the volcanoes southwest of Guatemala City, El Socorro straddles a flank of the big mountain Balamjuyu. To one side of the camp lies a lush native jungle; it is from here that the guerrillas of ORPA (Organization of People in Arms) snipe at the soldiers. To the other side grow some of the finest coffee beans in the country, the red berries producing hundreds of jobs and 50 million quetzals in tax revenues for the country. Coffee, according to the *Europa Yearbook*, accounts for more than 40 percent of the country's total export earnings. Meaning "help" in Spanish, El Socorro serves as a buffer between the civilians who own and work the coffee crops and the subversives who harass them.

At the camp, the commanding officer beckons us to follow. Neither Major "Kawasaki" nor Captain "Azor," as we'll call them, want their names known for fear of recrimination. Following the captain, we thread our way through trenches, stepping on spent 5.56 casings underfoot. Azor motions us into a bunker covered with black plastic and packed earth. A soldier lights a candle and brings cups of strong, rich coffee.

"The guerrillas organize into groups of eight to carry out maneuvers in this area,"

TANNER ON GUATEMALA

Veteran SOF correspondent Morgan Tanner is an experienced Central American observer who is a serious student of the political and cultural climate in Guatemala today. This thoughtful piece explores the interrelationship between poverty, crime and revolution, and makes use of lessons Tanner learned while researching the two part, in-depth series on the gang-drug connection in America (June-July 1989).

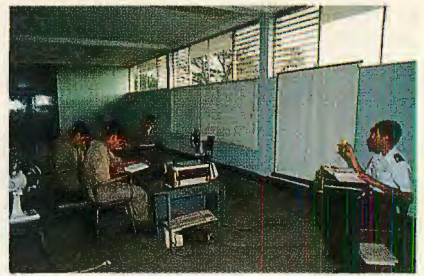
Guatemalan army troops return to Panabaj outpost from five-day patrol around Lake Atitlan.

INSET: Army troops take launch, armed with 7.62x51mm FN MAG 58, across Lake Atitlan from Panajachel to Panabaj outpost.



ABOVE: Marines (called *Caimon*, or crocodiles), armed with 5.56x45mm Galil rifles, stationed in Panabaj Base on Lake Atitlan, stand for review by Colonel Ochoa.

BELOW: Female soldier armed with 9mm Beretta Model 12 submachine gun talks with widows and orphans of Santiago Atitlan area.



Students listen to instructors in a classroom on Airbase of the South.



Students training to be pilots at the new School of Military Aviation check instruments in cockpit of chopper.



Main gate to Military Zone 14 base outside of Solala.

Azor says. "It gives them maximum flexibility and they don't attract so much attention."

Official military estimates put the number of subversives in the area of the volcanoes at fewer than 100. They are from the Xavier Tambriz faction of ORPA, a member of the umbrella organization URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity). Meanwhile, the EGP (Guatemalan Army of the Poor) continue to fight in the country's northern highlands. ORPA's assaults on El Socorro are usually sporadic fire, but on 5 August 1989 they engaged in a sustained firefight.

"They attacked at first light," says Azor, "and fired on us until late afternoon. They launched 15 grenades from an RPG, but we had no casualties. We used under 1,000 rounds of 5.56."

The paratroopers assigned to El Socorro carry M16A2s. The army previously used Galils but is switching to M16s, starting with its elite units, because the Galils' bores are shot out.

ORPA guerrillas carry AR15s, M16s and Mini-14s. They also leave a specter of terror in their absence by planting claymores and "quitpies," anti-personnel mines made from small juice cans and designed to sever a soldier's foot.

"We cannot jeopardize our troops by sending them into the mountains at this time because we lack helicopters for

evacuation," says Colonel Jose Quilo, commander until recently of the military zone that contains El Socorro and Balamjuyu.

The army's counter to the mines has been special teams commissioned to infiltrate the mountains, find and deactivate the mines. Then they make footpaths for the infantry to follow.

"Our mine teams recently found 15 mines in eight days," Col. Gustavo Mendez, commander of Military Zone 14, Solola, told us.

In November, patrols conducted two major operations in the area of Balamjuyu.

"We uncovered outposts, but we haven't yet found the main camp," says Quilo. "At this time, we are providing security on the highways and protecting the small bridges. In a couple of weeks, we'll go again into the mountains in search of them."

Military Intelligence says that ORPA has three main objectives. One is purely military assaults such as those waged against El Socorro. The second is to count coup against the military by occupying the central parks of strategic towns such as Patzicia right off the Pan-American Highway or San Miguel Duenas near the tourist town of Antigua.

"Their plan is to create propaganda," Captain Azor said.

"It is their new way of operating," Quilo agrees. "Since the war started in Salvador, they go into the towns and villages and make speeches to the people supporting the FMLN. They believe that the war there will be an example to the people of Guatemala about how the guerrillas can gain power."

In November, ORPA subversives attempted a coup in Patzicia but the army discovered the plan and occupied the town before the guerrillas arrived. A search of the town uncovered tunnels under one of the houses. In an earlier attempt on the city, however, the guerrillas counted coup on the army. For 15 minutes, they occupied the central park of Patzicia.

"My chief of staff called me and asked, 'What happened? The guerrillas were in Patzicia,'" Quilo recalls. "Patzicia is about 65 kilometers from the capital, and the incident made big news. That is the importance of guerrilla activity near the city. If this had happened in an isolated area, the media wouldn't have noticed."

ORPA's third objective is to grab the media's attention by burning trucks and buses on major highways. On 12 December, 200 pounds of TNT blew the Coyolate Bridge on CA2, the major traffic artery on the south coast. The destruction of Guatemala's major shipping route made big news in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Mexico. Traffic was rerouted through the mountains while the government rushed to put up a temporary Bailey bridge. Then, in a near-miracle, a one-lane bridge was opened in less than a week. While ORPA was suspected of blowing the bridge, the

While the Guatemalan military prunes the power and number of the country's Marxist guerrillas, the scandals in President Vinicio Cerezo's government fuel an unrest that could spread like wildfire from the cities to the battlefield.

On the military front, the army continues to fight the forces of EGP (Guatemalan Army of the Poor) in the country's rural north, and more important ORPA forces (Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms) in strategic areas near Guatemala City. Shortly before SOF went to press, the people of Santa Maria de Jesus, just 55 kilometers from the capital, vowed to form a civilian defense patrol after a clash between the army and ORPA left one child dead and four people injured. Close to the tourist center Antigua, Santa Maria de Jesus is the starting point for climbers making the popular trek up Volcano de Aqua. The army will donate rifles to the civil patrol.

On the ethical front, the civilian government appears to be swamped in scandal. Cerezo, the first civilian president in nearly 20 years, stands accused of living the high life while 1,000 children recently died of measles for lack of vaccine, and also turning a deaf ear to allegations that his friends are drug traffickers.

Apparently Cerezo's government lost, without a trace, \$2 million donated to immunize children by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID.) AID wants to know what happened to the money before it will give more. Meanwhile, Cerezo has been sailing the Caribbean in his own yacht.

Even more damaging is Cerezo's blind eye toward drugs being grown in

and shipped through Guatemala. Since Cerezo was elected in 1986, Guatemala has become the world's seventh largest producer of opium poppies, surpassing Mexico. The army battles ORPA in the area of San Marcos where the poppies grow, but army spokesman Col. Luis Issacs says that the subversives aren't in league with the narco-traffickers beyond providing security to the plantations. Drugs are the job of the Hacienda Police. "The armed forces don't enter directly because that's not our function," says Issacs. Still, the army's supersecret G-2 intelligences supplies information on drug traffickers to the Guatemala City-based DEA team.

Cerezo's anticorruption chief Lt. Col. Hugh Moran apparently made drugs his business. Moran was caught loading 25 kilos of cocaine onto a government-owned plane bound for Miami. More aptly titled "corruption chief," Moran was nevertheless defended by Cerezo, who then tried to send Moran to Washington, D.C., for military training until the U.S. Embassy revoked his visa. The army exorcised Moran from its ranks, so Cerezo put him in charge of the country's largest port.

The corruption has given rise to rumors that the United States looks with disfavor on Cerezo's chosen successor, Christian Democrat Alfonso Cabrera. Presidential elections will take place at the end of this year.

Meanwhile, in the battle of greed versus social programs, it's the Guatemalan people, more than half of them poverty-stricken Indians, who are caught in the crossfire.

— M.T.

job was so professional that officers privately speculate it was done by or with foreign help — a frightening prospect. There are those who fear that Cuba might make a hard-line drive for Marxism with a strike in Guatemala where there are veteran, Cuban-aided Marxist guerrillas.

In support of the war in Salvador, the subversives ambush buses and private cars on the Pan-Am Highway, taking citizens' and tourists' money and jewelry as a "war tax."

"They stop the vehicles and make the people listen to their speeches in favor of the FMLN," says Col. Quilo. "They say, 'Look at Salvador. It is a war of the people, and you, too, must support us here in Guatemala.'"

"The subversives have gone from being a danger to being just a bother," concludes Col. Mendez. "But in some ways this makes them even more dangerous because they have to make sensational acts."

In Guatemala City, terrorists have blown up telephone booths and electrical towers and put bombs in doorways. Even the Red

Cross office and personnel from Brigade for Peace, a Canadian organization, have been targeted. The incidents frequently make news in the international press, with extensive impact. The U.S. State Department issued a travelers advisory while we were in Guatemala against travel in all but three locations.

"They do these things so people will say, 'The army can't control the subversives,'" says Col. Carlos Pozuelos, commander of the Air Base of the South. "But whether it's here, or in the U.S. or Colombia, urban terrorism is very difficult to control."

The military especially condemns violence during 1990, an election year, as subversives attempt to create an impression of instability.

According to army spokesman Issacs, "When any group of subversives executes these type of activities against civilians, it is a statement about the decadence of the movement."

"They are acts of desperation," Col. Mendez emphasized.

MILITARY AVIATION SCHOOL

In 1990, Guatemala's Military Aviation School (EMA) will graduate its first class of fixed-wing and helicopter pilots trained in its new quarters on the Pacific coast.

EMA's new facility is located on the newly formed Air Base of the South and offers a vast improvement over its former location in Guatemala City's international airport, according to Col. Carlos Pozuelos, commander of both EMA and the Air Base.

"The area is perfect for training pilots," he says. "We have tower control, a runway, good buildings, and flat land dotted with 275 private runways usable in case of emergency."

The formation of the new air base near Retalhuleu also serves to decentralize air force resources from its main base in Guatemala City. A Vietnam-era UH-1H stationed at the base is used for medevac.

"Our mission at this air base is to provide supply and evacuation support for troops on the south coast," Pozuelos says.

The rich lands of the coast are the "lungs of the country," Pozuelos explains, creating millions of dollars in revenue and jobs from cotton, sugar cane, corn and cattle.

"This is where the subversives like to put obstacles," he adds.

The air base works in support of troops at Zone 1316, which formerly occupied the base at Retalhuleu but which has a new facility in Mazatenango. Two companies of infantry from 1316 currently provide security for the Air Base and EMA.

EMA's goal in 1990 is to supply the air force with 15 new pilots — 10 fixed-wing and five chopper pilots, and start a second class, according to Capt. Cesar Lopez, one of seven EMA helicopter instructors and also an officer of the air base.

Future chopper pilots train on a civilian *Jet Bell Ranger* 206B, and will be qualified to pilot that craft when they graduate in October 1990.

In 1990, EMA is training twice as many fixed-wing pilots as chopper pilots.

"We need more fixed-wing pilots because a lot of Air Force pilots are going commercial," Lopez says. They're drawn by the higher salaries offered by airline companies.

Future fixed-wing pilots take basic flight training on the T-41, with advanced training on the PC-7. They receive 200 hours of flying time before graduation and are qualified to co-pilot a C-47, Arava or Fokker.

Special candidates go on to be trained on the A-37 attack planes.

Trainees pass a rigorous screening during the application phase and score high in algebra, trigonometry, history and English.

"The majority of the manuals for aircraft and also the checklist is English," says Lopez.

Captain Sergio Melindea Crispin heads EMA's classroom program where trainees spend 931 hours. Guatemalan pilots trained in the United States have developed both the classroom and flight-training programs for EMA, refining them to fit the country's needs.

Despite their enthusiasm, however, instructors are forced to improvise around limited and old equipment. The Jet Ranger, vintage 1979, is the only working chopper available to the five trainees. The Link Trainer (Simulator) that fixed-wing pilots must use for 50 hours before they learn to fly with instruments must be fixed before it can be used. Simple items such as a slide projector bulb costing 100 quetzals (\$30 U.S.) in Guatemala are hard to come by on EMA's tight budget.

Late in the evening after a hard day of classroom, flight and physical training, the five chopper trainees pull their desks into a circle and work at memorizing what they learned that day. They grapple with problems in trig and instructions in English as if their lives depended on their understanding — as indeed they may. A survey of their manuals shows a *Rotary Wing Flight Manual* (1974), *Navigation for Army Aviation* (1965), *Search and Rescue* (1985), *Aerodynamics for Pilots* (1967), *Instrument Flying* (1976). The fixed wing program badly needs a syllabus for the T-41. But the men's morale is high; they're fulfilling their dreams of learning to fly.

"Always we're able to overcome these obstacles with diligence and enthusiasm," says Col. Pozuelos. "This is the secret of our success in Guatemala. We maintain to the utmost. And we fly with pride."

— M. T.

The military has stepped up patrol operations on the highways. As a result, it has intercepted wires and batteries used for fabricating explosives, sticks of dynamite, and several 10-pound packages of TNT.

"We want to drive the subversives back up into the mountains where we can fight them with artillery, aircraft and mortars," says Quilo. "We want political candidates

to be able to make their speeches in any town, and go home alive. We want workers to be able to harvest and transport the coffee crop. We want to make life very normal."

Progress in Paradise

The army launch we ride in skims across Lake Atitlan toward three majestic volcanoes on the far shore. The lake lies captured in the hollow at the base of the

volcanoes — 16 miles long by 11.5 miles wide and 1,050 feet deep, located some 90 miles west of Guatemala City at 4,500 feet above sea level. Behind us white, touristed high-rise hotels dot the shore of the lake. Ahead are the primitive Indian villages that have figured prominently in the guerrillas' strategies. The launch, outfitted with eight armed soldiers and an FN MAG 58 in the bow, is headed toward Panabaj, a military outpost at the foot of the volcano Santiago Atitlan.

"The subversives sometimes shoot down at us from that volcano," says Guatemalan army Capt. Marvin Deleon, pointing to San Pedro on the right.

The thin fiberglass of the boat would offer little resistance to a 7.62mm round.

The rugged territory on the perimeter of the lake has historically been a stronghold for armed guerrillas. The outpost Panabaj was established on the perimeter of the town Santiago Atitlan to deny the guerrillas logistical support from the population. An in-coming patrol arrives in Panabaj just as we do. In the briefing, we're told that in their five-day patrol they encountered no enemy fire. But the ebb in guerrilla activity in the area is only the downturn of the cycle, which may well be followed by a surge.

Countering guerrilla forces in the area of Lake Atitlan has been tough, according to Maj. Julion Xicay Zacarias, commanding officer of Panabaj. The town of Santiago Atitlan is relatively isolated, accessible only by water and two primitive roads — one a strategic route from the lake to the sugar and cotton plantations on the south coast. A few days after we had left Panabaj, ORPA troops wearing OD uniforms with distinctive red and black handkerchiefs stopped traffic on one of Santiago's roads and made passengers listen to their speeches.

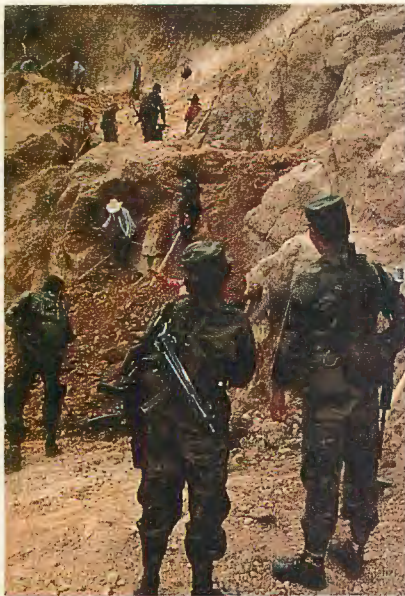
"The subversives have cultivated the population for 14 years," says Zacarias. "We have barely two years here."

Separated by the lake from commerce and outside influence, the town is the religious center and ancient stronghold of the Mayan highland tribe Tzutuhil. The townspeople have a xenophobia that has made it difficult for the army to develop a rapport in Santiago. Zacarias describes the town's population as being "independent."

"They have their own ways," he says. "For example, most of them speak only Tzutuhil. If you speak Spanish to them, they are suspicious."

In the area around the lake, the army deals with three different languages, Tzutuhil, Quiche in Solola, and Cakshiquel in San Lucas.

In Santiago, ORPA guerrillas mined the people's support for more than a decade with their Campesino Resistance Popular (CPR). Collaborators in the town still supply food and munitions to the guerrillas, and agitators stir up opposition to the military in the outpost of Panabaj. Soldiers



Indians from Solola work with homemade tools on road around Lake Atitlan. US Army Corps of Engineers blasted and bulldozed through one particularly rocky area. ORPA guerrillas harassed workers by shooting at them from cliffs above until they provided protection. Troops are still cautious in this area.



Bridge over Coyolate River on main southern coast road CA2 between Mexico and El Salvador, blown with estimated 200 pounds of TNT during early morning hours of 12 December 1989. ORPA was blamed for blast, but some officers speculate privately that it was a foreign job, evidenced by professionalism of the work.

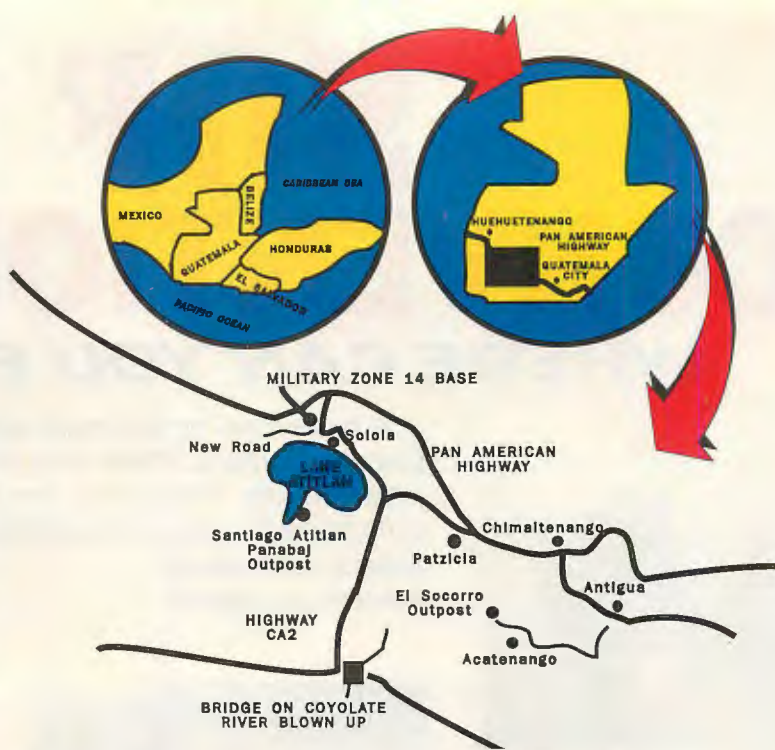


Small ORPA anti-personnel mines made from small juice and bean paste cans, with sophisticated syringe initiating devices — an ORPA trademark.

are forbidden to go into Santiago in groups of fewer than 10, and never unarmed.

The army's strategy at Lake Atitlan has been to win the goodwill of the population through civilian programs run by Civil

Continued on page 77



ABOVE: Author's area of operations.

OUTSIDE VIEWS

We were in Guatemala when word came that U.S. troops had invaded Panama. For a week, no one could speak of anything else.

"Have you heard the news?" were the first words out of everyone's mouth.

Situated only three countries north of Panama, Guatemalans wondered what ramifications the invasion would hold for them. There also was the possibility of a backlash against Americans touring or living in Guatemala. The night after the invasion, someone rapped hard on the heavy, barred wooden doors of our hotel, and I heard the caretaker talking with someone in the street about the hotel's *extranjeros*, or tourists. After a muffled conversation, the doors swung open and an armed guard sat watch throughout the night in case radical sympathizers with Manuel Noriega decided to take out their aggression on the hotel's American guests.

Officially, the Organization of American States, of which Guatemala is a member, condemned the U.S. action in Panama, and refused to recognize U.S.-backed president Guillermo Endara. But private sentiment differed radically from the public stance.

"It's about time the U.S. kicked his ass," military officers declared.

Siding with the United States, their fear was that Noriega would make it into the jungle and gather a guerrilla force strong enough to make things tough for years to come. It's a problem the Guatemalan military knows a lot about, having fought Marxist guerrillas for nearly 30 years. In the days following the invasion, they sat glued to every televi-

sion news report, knowing how bad the United States would look if Noriega escaped.

Noriega is history, but one issue that hurts our reputation in Central America is our problem with drug addiction. "I read that 40 percent of American high school students have tried drugs or are addicted," one officer told me. Unfortunately, his is a common perception. Where he got his statistics — or even if they are accurate — doesn't matter. The point is that people in Central America perceive that drug use in the United States is out of control, and it makes us seem decadent.

Likewise, violence at home — especially racial violence — holds special significance for America-watchers. Several military officers expressed shock over the letter bombings that for apparently racial motives killed and maimed southern judges. Not long before that, a conservative Filipino businessman at a party wanted to know if I thought the United States was in danger of being enveloped in race wars.

Americans live in a fishbowl that the whole world watches. In Guatemala, CNN is commonly received, and cable companies carry two local news stations from Denver, Colorado. Guatemalans daily know the temperature in Aspen, and how the Bronco's John Elway is feeling. They watch U.S. news on the tube in their one-room living-bed-cooking area or go down to the appliance store to see what we're doing. I'm reminded of the adage, if you want to be respected, you've got to be respectable.

— M.T.

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DOUBLE EAGLE .45

Colt Corrupts Browning's Classic

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



Colt Double Eagle's trigger guard has been increased in size forcing the hand farther down on the grip and elevating the bore's axis. This results in increased muzzle flip during recoil.

IN the almost eight decades since its introduction, more than three million Colt Government Model M1911 .45 ACP pistols and variants have been produced. It is, arguably, the finest fighting handgun ever devised. Without doubt, it has been eclipsed in recent years by large-capacity, double-action 9mm Parabellum pistols and has been placed by many on the endangered species list.

Some even insist that "condition one" (a round in the chamber, a full magazine seated in place, the hammer fully cocked and the thumb safety engaged) is an unacceptable legal liability. In fact, few law enforcement agencies permit personnel to carry a single-action handgun in this mode. Completely lost in the shuffle seems

to be Jeff Cooper's Rule III: "Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target."

In acquiescence to this trend toward double-action semiautomatic pistols, Colt has unveiled the .45 ACP Double Eagle, in my opinion, a decidedly unworthy successor to the Government Model.

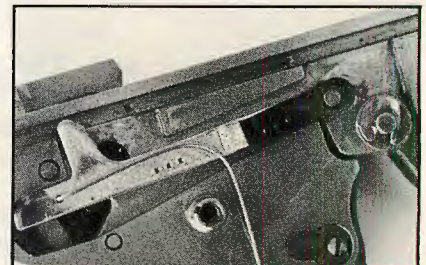
The method of operation, as perfected by John Moses Browning, remains the same, as do numerous other features. Locked-breech, recoil-operated, the barrel and slide are held together by two ribs on the top of the barrel at the chamber end which engage two recesses in the underside of the slide. Securely locked together during the moment of high chamber pressure, the barrel and slide travel rearward a short distance still firmly mated to each other. During recoil, the barrel swings backward on its link, which is attached to the frame by the slide stop pin passing through it. As rearward travel continues, the barrel is forced downward and away from the slide.

The barrel's rearward travel ceases when it strikes its stop in the frame, while the slide continues backward to complete extraction and ejection of the empty case before rebounding, by means of the recoil spring, to strip and chamber another round from the magazine.

The Double Eagle has, with the exception of springs and some of the small components, been fabricated from stainless steel. Both the slide and frame are milled forgings. The weight, empty, is 39 ounces, which is about the same as a standard Government Model. Height is approximately 5½ inches and the overall length is 8½ inches. Barrel specifications remain as before, with an overall length of 5 inches and a six-groove bore with a lefthand rate of twist of one turn in 16 inches (1:16 inches).

Little has been changed in the slide group either. The top of the slide, bead-blasted to reduce glare, carries the blued, high-profile fixed sights first introduced with the compact Officers ACP Models. The open, square-notch rear sight can be drifted in its dovetail to adjust windage zero if required. The front sight is peened in place and will eventually part company from the slide. The sight radius is approximately 6.5 inches. There is a single white dot in the front sight and two in the rear sight. Colored dots, squares or bars serve no function in target acquisition during high stress. The cocking serrations on each polished side of the slide are raked forward in the Colt Gold Cup manner.

The spring-loaded, inertia-type firing pin characteristic of the Government Models has been retained. The irritating, spring



When not retained by the right grip panel, Double Eagle's double-action drawbar and spring will fall off the frame.



Colt Double Eagle field stripped.

loaded firing-pin lock introduced in 1983 on all Series 80 Colts is also present on this new Series 90 pistol. Gratefully, the Series 70 collet bushing — all too prone to failure — has been replaced by an original solid-type barrel bushing. The firing pin stop, extractor and recoil spring plug are unchanged. The single-coil mainspring has a steel guide rod, unlike the plastic rod introduced with the 10mm Delta Elite.

Double Eagle and Government Model slides are not interchangeable as the double-action trigger mechanisms required relocation of the disconnecter.

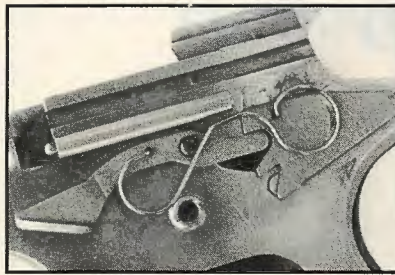
Moving down to the frame group, only the slide stop, hammer configuration (a ringed Commander-type), ejector and magazine catch-release system and location are familiar M1911-type features. After that, things start to change radically — all too often for the worse.

To accommodate the arc of the pivoting double-action trigger, the trigger guard has been increased in size. This positions the hand farther down on the grip portion of the frame and elevates the bore's axis, which serves to increase muzzle flip during recoil. Some of the lost gripping surface is regained by a relief cut on the front strap just in back of the trigger guard. The front strap has longitudinal gripping grooves. The front of the trigger guard has been recurved and checkered, a silly fetish introduced as a requirement of the XM9/10 Request For Proposal (RPF). If you fire from a Weaver hold with the support hand securely wrapped around the firing hand, there is no reason to place the index finger on the trigger guard. In any event, this finger will invariably slide off during the recoil cycle. A rounded trigger guard reduces the temptation to adopt this useless affectation. Furthermore, many holsters will not accept M1911-type pistols with squared-off trigger guards.

Conspicuous by its absence is the M1911's manual safety lever on the left side of the frame. As a substitute we have a decocking lever protruding from the top front edge of the left grip panel. To lower the cocked hammer with a round in the chamber, first point the muzzle in a safe direction. Then press down on the decocking lever and release it. The hammer will fall onto what Colt euphemistically calls the "safety stop" (the old half-cock notch?)

COLT DOUBLE EAGLE SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:**45 ACP.
Operation:Short recoil, locked breech; double-action trigger mechanism; decocking lever drops hammer to safety stop position.
Feed mechanism:Eight-round, single-column, detachable box-type magazine with fixed floorplate.
Barrel:Six grooves with a lefthand twist of one turn in 16 inches.
Barrel length:5 inches.
Overall length:8.5 inches.
Height:5.5 inches.
Width:1.33 inches (at the grip panels).
Weight, empty:39 ounces.
Sights:Fixed front sight blade with single white dot; open square-notch rear sight with two white dots — adjustable for windage zero only. Sight radius of 6.5 inches.
Finish:Stainless steel.
Grip panels:Checkered, black Xenoy with Colt logo; each retained by two screws in a threaded bushing staked to the frame.
Price:\$679.95.
Manufacturer:Colt Firearms Company, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Talcott Road, Hartford, CT 06101.
T&E Summary:Both the decocking lever and double action drawbar with their respective springs will fall off the frame when the grip panels are removed — an objectionable trade-off for a dubious feature. Unacceptable reliability with the magazine provided.



Engineering afterthought: the decocking lever together with its axis pin and spring will part company from the frame when the left grip panel is removed.

— intended also to prevent the hammer from striking the firing pin in the event that the primary sear notch fails. To permit manipulation of this device, the grip panel is necessarily open in the area surrounding the lever. With a certainty approaching death and taxes, any debris in the vicinity will enter the mechanism at this point.

The grip panels are fabricated from a black thermoplastic developed by General Electric. Called Xenoy, it's a high-impact synthetic that is abrasion resistant, warp-free, and impervious to most chemicals found in firearms lubricants and solvents. As the grip panels are held to the frame in the conventional manner, i.e., two slotted screws in each panel threaded to bushings in the frame, one would assume they should be removed for normal maintenance. This is not the case and the instruction manual provided goes no further than standard field stripping and, in fact, warns against further disassembly. If you do remove the left grip

panel, the front decocking lever together with its slotted axis pin and spring will fall off the frame. Pity the poor wretch who commits this sin in the field. Totally unacceptable.

On the right side, appearing also to be an engineering afterthought, is the double-action mechanism attached to the exterior of the frame. When the hammer is resting on the safety stop, pulling the trigger (whose axis pin is held in place by a partially exposed washer and retaining ring) forces a spring-loaded drawbar forward so that its rear lug engages a hook on the underside of the hammer to rotate it to the cocked position. Near the end of the trigger's movement the drawbar's lug pushes a plunger lever up to force the firing pin lock up and free the striker, while also driving the sear clear of the hammer. Final trigger movement cams the drawbar's lug out of engagement with the hammer hook to release the hammer. After ignition, the rearward traveling slide depresses the drawbar and cocks the hammer. Subsequent shots are fired single-action. This drawbar mechanism requires the front of the right grip panel to be open as well, exposing the interior to debris and the elements. If you remove the right grip panel, both the drawbar and its spring will fall off the frame. Should the unbreakable grip panel break, you would, of course, have no firearm until it was replaced. Equally intolerable.

All of this nonsense yields a double-action trigger pull weight of 11 pounds with

Continued on page 75

COLT FORGET YOUR GUN

Buckling Under To Anti-Gun Hysteria

by Paul Danish

IN the past five years, bumbling by Colt Industries nearly destroyed the firearms division from which the conglomerate took its name.

The firearms division endured a four-year strike, during which time it lost its contract with the U.S. Army for the manufacture of M16s to Fabrique Nationale. In 1989, the parent conglomerate — fearful that other Colt divisions could lose defense contracts — caved into pressure from the Bush Administration and ordered the firearms division to quit making AR15s for the civilian market. Prices soared as quickly as respect for Colt in the shooting community plunged.

The latest chapter in the Colt saga reads like a good news, bad news story.

The good news is that after months of trying,

managers of the firearms unit have succeeded in buying the division from Colt Industries, rechristening it Colt's Manufacturing Company, Inc., and settling the strike. The bad news is that the company bungled its first important decision — what to do about AR15 production.

On 2 April Colt's Manufacturing Company, Inc. issued what was a case study in deception, deceit, and dishonesty. It is worth quoting in some detail:

"Colt's Manufacturing Company, Inc.'s management announced that it will not produce assault rifles for civilian use. It also announced at the same time that it will re-enter the long gun sporting market abdicated by its predecessor company ...

"Colt's Manufacturing Company, Inc. ... will broaden its product line. One of the first additions will be a new Sporter rifle ...

"Colt's manufacturing company has substantially modified the Sporter. These modifications provide the same qualities that make the Sporter the first choice for competitive shooting (it is used extensively at national matches), and for hunting and predator control.

"A special benefit for competitive shooters, as well as sportsmen, is Colt's conversion kit that allows the sporter to be an even more versatile rifle by accommodating .22 long rifle caliber sporting ammunition.

"The important changes on the new Sporter are as follows:

"*It is purely a sporting rifle with an excellent safety record.

"*You must pull the trigger once for each round fired.

"*It is capable of firing a maximum of five rounds due to a permanent modification to the magazine.

"*It is rigorously designed to prevent any modifications to any other firing mode.

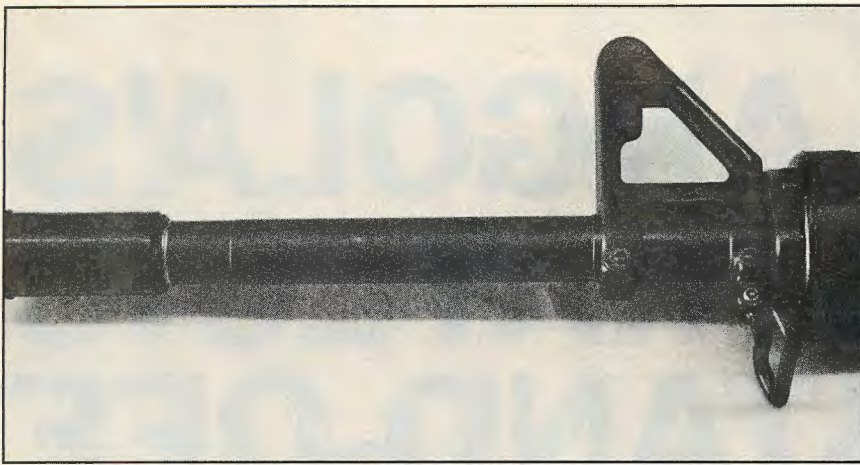
"It is with these carefully designed modifications that the new Colt's Manufacturing Company is returning the Sporter to this important segment of its traditional market."

After a phone call from SOF Associate Editor Paul Danish to Colt spokesman John Nassif, we can offer the following translation and elaboration of the above:

Colt will not produce M16 assault rifles for the civilian market, because assault rifles are by definition selective fire weapons, and the McClure-Volkner Act of 1986 specifically forbids the manufacture of selective fire weapons for the civilian market. The AR15 is another matter.

Colt will resume production of the AR15 semi-auto, which, by virtue of the fact that it is not an assault rifle, can properly be called a "sporting" rifle (whatever that means). It will, however, sell the AR15 only with detachable five-round magazines, actually a 20-round magazine into which a V-shaped sheet metal block has been installed with a rivet permanently retaining the floorplate so that it cannot be disassembled and the block removed. This, together with the removal of the bayonet lug, appears to be the sum total of the substantive changes between the old AR15 Sporter and the new AR15 Sporter. Third party suppliers of AR15 magazines are, of course, free to provide larger





Colt's Sporter has bayonet lug removed. This apparently takes it out of the dark realm of "assault" rifles.

capacity products.

The suggestion that the new rifle is "a purely sporting rifle with an excellent safety record" is a self-contradictory embarrassment. If it has an excellent safety record (which the AR15 does) it is not a new rifle. If it is a "new Sporter," as Colt repeatedly claims, it doesn't have a safety record.

The suggestion that semiautomatic fire is a new feature is not true. Neither is the suggestion that there has been some new modification to make conversion to fully automatic or burst fire more difficult.

In addition, there are at least three important things Colt deliberately neglected to mention in its release.

1. Colt failed to mention it is contemplating a number of modifications to the AR15 that it intends to introduce over the next three to five months. While it isn't saying what these are as yet, they likely will be an

Included with every Sporter is Colt's .22 conversion kit. This kit was previously sold separately and raises the current price by about \$200.



attempt to meet the grotesque, contradictory criteria adopted by the BATF last July in order to justify its import ban on most semiauto derivatives of assault rifles. If this is the case we can look forward to AR15 derivatives without such features as pistol grips or flash suppressors, because in the BATF's estimation these make the rifle too accurate for a mere Sporter—and without folding stocks, because the BATF says these make it dangerously inaccurate.

2. Colt failed to mention that it will no longer sell you an AR15 unless you buy its new .22 long conversion kit as well. The latter will be sold separately to people who already own AR15s for \$167.95, should they want it, which gives some idea of how much Colt is jacking the price by the addition of this extra, which has never held much interest for AR15 buyers in the past.

3. Colt failed to mention the price of its product. The new price will be \$1,019.95 with a standard barrel and \$1,059.95 with a heavier match barrel, or roughly double what it was when Colt stopped making AR15s in March 1989. This price is largely a reflection of the artificial shortage created by Colt's manufacturing moratorium and the mandatory inclusion of the .22 long rifle conversion kit, and to the extent that it is, it can be viewed as price gouging.

There is no great mystery as to what's going on here. Colt is pandering to the gun control lobby in the hope of re-introducing the AR15 without setting off another wave of anti-gun hysteria, and, perhaps, ingratiating itself to the Bush Administration in the process. Such appeasement never works, and Colt management is certifiably insane if it thinks it will.

Nor is Colt's strategy for the reintroduction of the AR15 likely to win many friends in the shooting community. The bottom line is that Colt is offering a less attractive product at about twice the price. That is not the way to win good will or a broader market.

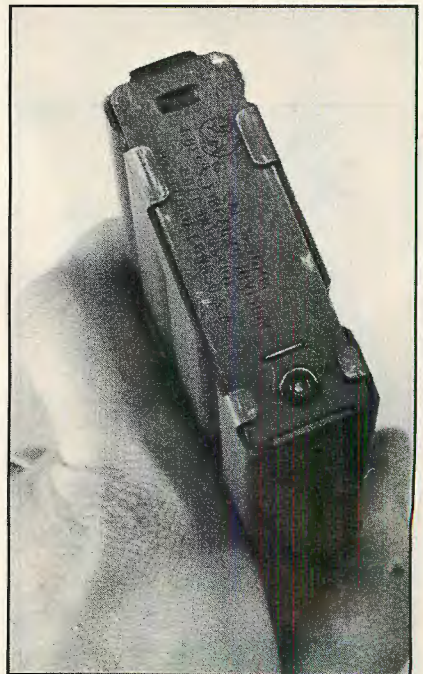
In my estimation, the time has come when Colt needs to hear from its friends.

It needs to be told that if it hopes to succeed Colt must stand behind its product instead of apologizing for it—and that means far more than honoring the warranty.

It means Colt should publicly rebut the lies the gun control lobby has told about its product and the owners of its product—starting with the libel that the AR15 is the preferred weapon of drug dealers or any other class of criminals.

It means Colt should reject the proposition that a sporting purpose rather than the Second Amendment legitimizes gun ownership, rather than hiding behind that peculiar doctrine of the Second Amendment's enemies.

It means Colt should speak out clearly in defense of the Second Amendment instead of engaging in an unending spiral of unilateral compromises with those who would destroy it. If Colt should ally itself with those Americans battling to defeat gun control in Congress and the state legislatures, instead of trying to make a separate peace with the gun grabbers.



Two modified 20-round magazines are included with each Sporter into which a sheet metal block has been inserted to allow the magazine to hold only five rounds. The magazine's baseplate is held on with a rivet, making it impractical to remove the sheet metal block.

And first and foremost, it means offering the American people the best possible product it knows how to make at a fair competitive price—not redesigning and degrading its performance in order to appease Handgun Control, Inc.

These are not the things Colt wants to hear, but they are the things Colt needs to hear, and it needs to hear them now.

Colt's President and CEO is Richard Gamble. He can be reached by writing Colt's Manufacturing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, Connecticut 06144.

Write him a letter and tell him it's great to have him back. Tell him Colt makes the best rifle of its kind in the world. And tell him to keep it that way. ✕

ANGOLA'S STRATEGIC STAND-OFF

UNITA and FAPLA Battle for Mavinga

by Hilton Hamann



UNITA trooper armed with folding-stocked Hungarian AMD-65 assault rifle. Although UNITA freedom fighters are armed with weapons procured from many sources, materiel must now be flown in from Zaire. Photo: Rick Venable

For nearly 16 years Angola has been torn by a civil war waged between FAPLA (Army for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Angola, the communist Angolan army) and the anti-communist guer-

rillas of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola). FAPLA has received huge quantities of materiel from the communist bloc, and direct military aid in the form of Cuban troops and advisers and support from SWAPO allies to their south. During the course of this conflict, UNITA has evolved into a well-trained and motivated fighting force, largely supplied by anti-communist Western powers. As the situation evolves throughout southern Africa, there are indications that perhaps the conflict in Angola may be within sight of a resolution. An SOF correspondent files the following update.

AS we go to press, the situation in Angola is pretty much a Mexican standoff, with the balance perhaps beginning to tilt in favor of UNITA. Despite claims to the contrary, the UNITA stronghold of Mavinga has not fallen to Marxist military forces. Although FAPLA succeeded in getting a tactical group across the Lomba River, they have been unable to take the town.

UNITA guerrillas have succeeded in cutting off much of the supplies being ferried from Cuito Cuanavale to the FAPLA forces, through constant attacks on supply convoys. Only sufficient materiel for FAPLA to maintain a defensive position has filtered through.

UNITA's forces at the front appear to be in high spirits and their campaign of persuading FAPLA soldiers to cross over and desert, known as "Ground-shout,"

seems to be working. While I was there an officer and three other FAPLA men handed themselves over to Savimbi's men.

Complicating matters for the govern-

ment forces is the fact that the rainy season is coming to an end, and no rain has fallen for the past few weeks. Water is reported to be in particularly short supply — a problem not faced by the rebels who are operating in friendly territory with much shorter supply lines.

The current government offensive against the rebels began in December of last year when Marxist President Eduardo Dos Santos, reportedly on the advice of his generals, decided to opt for a military solution. Intelligence sources, both in Angola and Pretoria, claim Dos Santos received absolute assurance that Mavinga would be taken in Phase One of the operation and that Phase Two would soon see FAPLA occupying Jamba, UNITA's capital.

The generals, however, have been unable to deliver. President Dos Santos is now faced with three options:

- Re-supply and strengthen forces at the Mavinga front. This would be followed by a new military offensive which in turn would strengthen his hand in any future negotiations with the guerrillas.

- Call a cease-fire and snow the issue by talking about negotiations. This option would offer the greatest advantages to the Marxists. UNITA's tactics have been to attack the rear areas and supply columns on their way to the front. A cease-fire would put a stop to this most damaging rebel tactic, and allow the Marxists to re-group and consolidate in preparation for a new offensive.

- Call off the operation completely and withdraw to Cuito Cuanavale.

Sources in Luanda report that Dos Santos is particularly annoyed by the failure of his generals to deliver what they promised. Despite the fact his military commanders have briefed him that there is little more they can do, the president is reported to have insisted the first option be carried out and ordered that Mavinga be taken.

JAMBA JOURNALIST

Hilton Hamann is a freelance journalist based in South Africa, specializing in military affairs. Hamann has extensively covered the ongoing conflicts throughout southern Africa, traveling with UNITA forces in Angola, RENAMO forces in Mozambique, and South African forces in Namibia for SOF.

This has led to problems for his military as political decisions are now taking precedence over practical tactical considerations.

Further complicating their headache is the fact the vast majority of Cuban troops deployed in the southern regions have been withdrawn to north of the 13th Parallel, in line with terms of the Namibia Accord. This has left defensive gaps that UNITA has been quick to exploit. FAPLA soldiers have been transferred from the north in an attempt to resolve the situation, leaving the government's resources thinly spread.

UNITA now knocks out the lights and water in the capital city of Luanda with such monotonous regularity it is reported that the British Embassy has complained to Savimbi, complaining that they are unable to do their work.

Dos Santos' decision means troops currently deployed in the "Cuban" areas are being re-deployed around Mavinga and logistic supplies are being re-routed to the front, away from units trying to plug the defensive gaps in the rest of the country, as confirmed by satellite photographs. This once again leaves the government vulnerable to attack in these areas.

The regime's position has further been weakened by the fact its traditional ally, SWAPO, having returned to Namibia, is no longer there to protect its southwestern flank.

Despite the hard situation in which the government finds itself, it also must be said that UNITA is in no position to win. The freedom movement's logistical support that used to come from the immediate south is now gone, and U.S. supplies now must be



air ferried in from Zaire. Meanwhile the Soviets continue to supply large quantities of weaponry to FAPLA. On 8 March a large quantity of high-altitude phosphorous bombs was unloaded and shipped to Cuito Cuanavale.

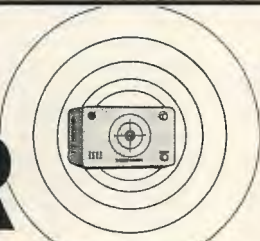
Although FAPLA does not occupy Mavinga, they have succeeded in denying UNITA its use and completely destroyed the airfield in an attack by 14 MiG-23s at the end of January.

South Africa is openly pressuring both UNITA and the Marxists to enter into some kind of peace settlement. The South Africans' nightmare is that the conflict will spill over into newly independent Namibia, and thus present SWAPO

Angola — is the war finally headed for a resolution?

Continued on page 74

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#116 June 1987: MERC OPS PART 3 —Busted and jail bound in Brazil; SOUTH AMERICA —Merc work in Suriname; VIETNAM —POW/

MIA private citizen rescue attempts; WAR IN THE SHADOWS —Running guns to Khadaffi; WEAPONS —Hungarian High Power; Fighting with folding knives.

#117 July 1987: USA —Police battle border bandits; ELITE UNITS —Britain's Gurkhas; Royal Marines hit the beach in Norway; COMBAT REPORT —Walking through Cambodia's killing ground; WEAPONS —Assault rifle look-alikes; Israeli Sirkis 9mm.

#118 August 1987: COMBAT REPORT —Burmese attack Mon army; SOUTH AMERICA —SOF at rebel HQ in Suriname; CENTRAL AMERICA —On patrol with Guatemalan army; HISTORY —The making of America's 10th Mountain Division; WEAPONS —Ruger's P-85.

#119 September 1987: COMBAT REPORTS —Contra Redeyes down Sandinista chopper; SADF Pathfinders shoot it out with SWAPO; Brit officer corners Omani rebels in Dhofar; WEAPONS —Brits new SA80; SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 1 —Small arms.

#120 October 1987: COMBAT REPORTS —Deep desert raid in Ethiopia; MIDDLE EAST —Motley trains Christian commandos in Lebanon; CENTRAL AMERICA —Guatemalan paras; U.S. Army reserve in Honduras; Invading Nicaragua; WEAPONS —Reeve's superknife; SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 2 —Heavy machine guns.

#121 November 1987: COMBAT REPORTS —Soviets destroy Afghan village; Rhodesia Fireforce callout; USA —Drugs, feds and 'freelancers' in California's emerald triangle; Police battle Indians at Wounded Knee; WEAPONS —Ruger 77/22 with sound suppressor; SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 3 —Submachine guns.

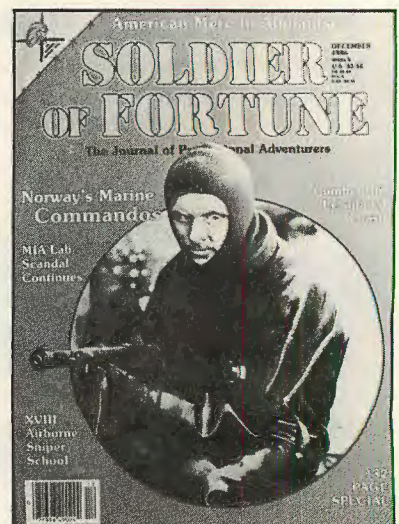
#122 December 1987: USA —Ollie North's secret slide show; ELITE UNITS —British SAS; Spike team in Laos 1968; SOUTH AMERICA —Legionnaires AWOL in Suriname; WEAPONS —Colt .45; Chinese knife pistol; Mossberg M500 shotgun; '38 Specials.

#123 January 1988: USA —Spetsnaz invade America; U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division; VIETNAM —America's missed opportunity to invade the north; BURMA —Open season on Duck Mountain; SOF correspondent jailed; AFRICA —SOF rescues missionaries from Mozambique; WEAPONS —SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 4 —Tank killers.

#124 February 1988: AFRICA —Eritrea's fatal females; ELITE UNITS —U.S. Navy SEALs in Libya; VIETNAM —Spike team shot out of Laos; SPAIN —'Foreign' legion for nationals only; WEAPONS —Sandinista foot-poppers; Army's M9 bayonet; SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 5 —General purpose MGs.

#125 March 1988: CAMBODIA —Walking through two ambushes; Living off the jungle; SRI LANKA —Indian troops fail to keep the peace; VIETNAM —NVA meets American secret weapon; Little Larry Dring the great scrounger; WEAPONS —SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 6 —Type 63 rifle and new grenade launcher.

#126 April 1988: AFGHANISTAN —U.S. media spreads disinformation; Four battles that turned the tide; Endgame: Soviets and muj jockey for position; ARABIA —Royal Marine leads Omanis through ambush alley; VI-



ETNAM —Two-tour vet flies his last mission over North Vietnam; WEAPONS —SOF T&Es Chinese weapons Pt. 7 —Pistols.

#127 May 1988: COMBAT REPORTS —Siege in Angola; On patrol in Philippines; Night battle in Afghanistan; DRUG WAR —Soviets import drugs to western Europe; Bekaa Valley drugs fuel endless conflict; USA —Bragg's Scout Recon and Surveillance Course. VIETNAM —Spectre gunships over Laos.

#128 June 1988: COMBAT REPORTS —Direct Hit on Afghan militia fort; Cleaning up Philippines murder city; American adviser with Salvadoran paras during strike on Guazapa; VIETNAM —la Drang aerial ambush; WEAPONS —Most often used handguns; .45 vs 9mm; Last chapter in SOF's look at Chinese weapons, Pt. 8 —hand grenades.

#129 July 1988: COMBAT REPORTS —SOF editor chases terrors in Angola; Afghans fire up fort at Shah Kabul; ELITE UNITS —Sri Lanka's Special Force; Philippine Scout Rangers in training; VIETNAM —Deadly day for Aussies; WEAPONS —Remington M24 sniper weapon system.

#130 August 1988: COMBAT REPORTS: SOF staffer spends five months inside Nicaragua; DEA, U.S. Army and Bolivian Leopards on drug raid; ADVENTURE —Hunting for Japanese war booty in Philippines; WEAPONS —Glock's compact 17.

#131 September 1988: AFGHANISTAN —SOF team in-country to witness Soviet withdrawal; FALKLANDS —Charting the invasion beaches; POWS —Japanese holdouts on Guam after WW II; WEAPONS —South Africa's SS-77 GPMG; S. Africa's R4 rifle.

#132 October 1988: AFGHANISTAN —SOF team joins muj in attack; DRUG WAR —A look at U.S. Customs Air Branch flying aces; ELITE UNITS —Marine's 3rd Force Recon; SRI LANKA —In the field with insurgent Tigers of Eelam; WEAPONS —Complete guide to AK imports.

#133 November 1988: GRENADA —Part one of the real story behind the invasion; CENTRAL AMERICA —Winning hearts and Mayans in Guatemala; AFGHANISTAN —With muj convoy in bandit country; WEAPONS —Remington's Model 870.

#134 December 1988: GRENADA —Part two, the 82nd Airborne's role in securing the island; MIDDLE EAST —Israeli commandos kill Abu Jihad; Next target —Abu Nidal, called the most dangerous man in the world. AFRICA —20th century's most successful merc, the Robert Denard story; WEAPONS —Knives for combat; wound ballistics.

#135 January 1989: SPETSNAZ —SOF hunts Soviet elite in Alaska; HISTORY —U.S. plans to strike Japan before Pearl Harbor; GRENADA —Marines role in Op Urgent Fury; ELITE UNITS —SOF with Salvador's ATLATCATL; Irish Rangers; Jerusalem's sappers; WEAPONS —Wound ballistics part two.

#136 February 1989: MERCS —The Barry Sadler story; Merc bar in Guatemala City; AFRICA —SOF in Chad; HISTORY —Brits face Afghan death march; PHILIPPINES —Government victory on Panay; WEAPONS —Guns of Ovamboland; Ruger mine thirty; Swedish Ks.

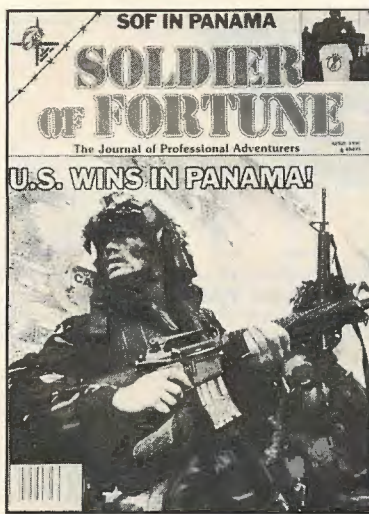
#137 March 1989: AFGHANISTAN —SOF debriefs four Afghan helicopter pilots; SOUTH AMERICA —SOF staffer wounded during Peruvian live fire; WEAPONS —Taurus .357 Magnums; Today's surface-to-Air missiles keep aircraft at bay; U.S. Army sniper rifle specs ill-conceived.

#138 April 1989: MIDDLE EAST —Golani Brigade's battle at Beaufort Castle; Beirut's forever war; DRUG WAR —SOF in Peru's cocaine valley; AFGHANISTAN —Muj fighting to win the peace; WEAPONS —10mm handguns; Demented inventions; UZI caliber conversions.

#139 May 1989: AFGHANISTAN —SOF correspondent inside Kabul;

Interview with Abdul Haq, commander poised to take the city; VIETNAM —Downed American flyer in Hanoi prison camp; POW/MIA video "We Can Keep You Forever" review; WEAPONS —M60 quick fixes.

#140 June 1989: DRUG WAR —Crack in America and L.A. gang warfare; AFGHANISTAN —Muj defend Safed Koh mountain passes; MILAN beginning to appear in Afghanistan; AFRICA —Mike Hoare's Congo Mercs' Masterpiece; WEAPONS —Applegate-Fairbairn classic smat-



chet; H&K's P7K3 pistol.

#141 July 1989: SOUTHEAST ASIA —Escape and Evasion in Cambodia; ELITE UNITS —Colombia's Lanceros; STATESIDE —Crack and drug gangs invade the heartland; AFGHANISTAN —Congressmen Wilson gets muj Stinger missiles; WEAPONS —New Detonics compact .45; Facts on gun ownership.

#142 August 1989: ELITE UNITS —U.S. Marine snipers in Beirut; Oman's Cobra commandos; AFGHANISTAN —Muj attack Jalalabad; AFRICA —Angola's ambush alley; VIETNAM —Cav scouts prowl for POWs; WEAPONS —S. Africa's 155mm artillery.

#143 September 1989: VIETNAM TODAY —Ho Chi Minh City's ARVN vets; AFRICA —Combat tour to central Angola; Insiders account of Rhodesian Fire Force's air component; ELITE UNITS —SAS ops in Northern Ireland; MERC WORK —CTU rescues American held overseas; WEAPONS —H-S Precision's take-down sniper system.

#144 October 1989: MIDDLE EAST —Delta/SEAL hostage rescue plan betrayed; AFGHANISTAN —SOF correspondent treks to Panjshir Valley, interview commander Massoud; SOUTHEAST ASIA —American aids rescue after Cambodian massacre; WEAPONS —U.S. Army's next combat rifle; U.S.-made Hind helicopter clones.

#145 November 1989: ELITE UNITS —What it takes to wear the green beret; British commando gunners; SWA/Namibia's Koevoet counterinsurgency police; AFRICA —SOF staffer again rescues westerners from Mozambique; WEAPONS —Soviet LAW, RPG-22; North American Arms' pint-sized .22; Finally a knife designed for U.S. airborne.

#146 December 1989: VIETNAM —MACV/SOG spike team fights for its life; NVA general's pistol causes controversy; AFGHANISTAN —Muj fight each other before uniting against Reds; MIDDLE EAST —Lt. Col. Oliver North's fight against terrorism; CENTRAL AMERICA —El Salvador's dying insurgency; WEAPONS —Casull's .454 cannon.

#147 January 1990: INSURGENCIAS —Mozambique, Guatemala, Sri Lanka; ELITE UNITS —SOF correspondent trains with Soviet paras; ANALYSIS —Oliver North and bombing of Libya; HISTORY —Tillamook guerrillas; WEAPONS —French surplus militaryrifles.

#148 February 1990: SOF BEHIND THE LINES —Burma, Nicaragua, Afghanistan; ELITE UNITS —South Africa's Recco Commandos; ANALYSIS —China; WEAPONS —Israeli Timber Wolf, Philippine bolo.

#149 March 1990: DRUG WAR —Rangers in firefight with crack dealers; BURMA —SOF under fire with Karen rebels; ELITE UNITS —South Africa's Recces Part 2, Brit Pathfinders; PERU —at focal point of Sendero Luminoso insurgency; WEAPONS —Walther's THP with Warp 3 sound suppressor.

#150 April 1990: PANAMA —Noriega falls and SOF is there —exclusive first-person reports; DRUG WAR —Patrolling with night narcs; ANGOLA —UNITA beats crack Marxist FAPLA offensive; AFGHANISTAN —SOF's reporter escapes execution; WEAPONS —Italy's 9mm Spectre, SOF Three-Gun Match.

#151 May 1990: EL SALVADOR —Inside Salvador's Tet, American church merc unmasked, exclusive on FMLN assassin's bullet; PANAMA —Combat photographer goes down in action, Spectre gunships hit Noriega's HQ, 82nd Airborne sniper; WEAPONS —Israeli night observation equipment.

#152 June 1990: VIETNAM —Secret SEAL mission; SOUTH AMERICA —Brit mercs target Medellin drug cartel kingpins, Yank trains Peruvian security teams; Beirut —SOF with Christian Lebanese Forces; PANAMA —Marines get in on the action; WEAPONS —Glock's

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#153 July 1990: EASTERN EUROPE —What really happened in Romania; COMBAT REPORT —Cambodia resistance attacks regime fort; VIETNAM —Shootout on Highway One; AFGHANISTAN —Muj versus muj; USA —Death of a bank robber; WEAPONS —SOF exposes Comblco support of FMLN.

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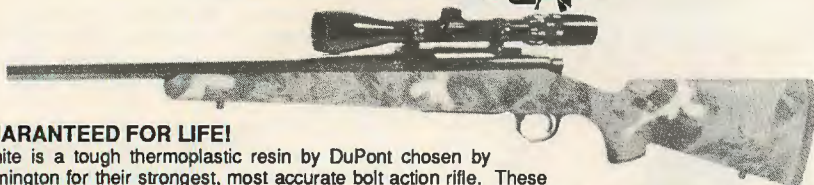
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ANGOLA SITREP

Continued from page 71

with an excuse to invite the Cubans to come in and help out.

Intelligence sources report Cubans being seen at Mpacha and Rundu in northern Namibia, and it is an open secret that the new Namibian government wants to start a flying school at Grootfontein with Cuban assistance.

Savimbi knows his rear areas could be threatened by developments in Namibia. In private discussions he has conceded the current fighting could well be the last military offensive launched by either side. The purpose, then, of the current fighting is to secure positions of strength for the future negotiations which must follow. ✕

INTRUDER

Continued from page 57

itself. The object was to drop the arresting hook off the nose section at the right moment so as to catch the arresting wire laid across the track. Miss the wire, as most did, and you were dumped head first into the slime pond.

The "Beast" in the film was designed by Production Designer Jack Collis and Art Director Al Heschang. Everyone involved in *Intruder* had their own ideas of what this contraption might have looked like. Technical adviser Sayers even tried to track down an eight millimeter film supposedly showing the "Beast" in action, but this proved to be a false trail.

Finally Collins and Heschang came up with a highly elevated length of track with a winged seat that had an arresting hook underneath. As a concession to celluloid storytelling, the "Beast" is now housed in the Tailhook Bar in Po City instead of in the basement of the Subic Point Officers Club. Any veteran who spent his R&R in the Philippines will recognize *Intruder's* spirited depiction of the infamous Olangapo, or Po City, complete with rows of whorehouses and dozens of bars. A section of the turn-of-the-century plantation town of Hanapepe in Kauai was dressed to look like a neon lit section of honky-tonks — from the teenage bargirls to the shotgun-toting bouncers and the alligator feeding pits. "Two bits, sailor, feed the duckies to the gators. Two bits, sailor." It's all there.

Flight of the *Intruder* should prove to be a perfect antidote for SOF readers who feel that the public has been fed a little too much *Born of the Fourth of July* lopsidedness. The comradery of an elite group of aviators, the sacrifice of men in combat for each other, and the real feel of naval aviation during the Vietnam War are all brought to life expertly by a writer/director who runs his productions like a seasoned Special Forces captain rather than a war-college-

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trained staff officer type.

The writer would like to thank the following for their generous assistance and cooperation. Mike Kochman, Don Levy and Andy Lipshultz of Paramount Motion Pictures. Lieutenant Jim Brooks, Hollywood Liaison, USN. Joyce Lilley, Leonard Brady and, of course, John Milius.

DOUBLE EAGLE

Continued from page 67

considerable overtravel and a fairly crisp single-action pull weight of 3 1/4 pounds in our test specimen.

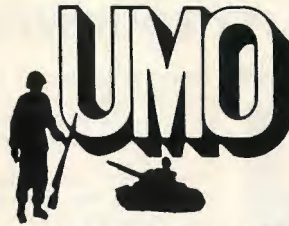
The one-piece mainspring housing/tang is also made of black Xenoy with checkering on the lower half. The magazine-well has been slightly beveled to ease insertion of the magazines.

Magazine capacity has been increased to eight rounds by use of the double-tongued Devel follower as produced by Shooting Star Industries and a Wolff follower spring. The magazine body, manufactured by Metalfarm, remains the same. It should also be re-designed, as all modern pistol and submachine gun magazines include a removable floorplate.

Field stripping the Double Eagle is no different from any of the M1911 series. However, most of those familiar with the M1911 employ takedown procedures that do not conform with the instructions in Colt's manual. First, remove the magazine and clear the pistol by retracting the slide and visually inspecting the chamber. Wrap your right hand over the slide with the web of the hand under the tang and the thumb over the left grip panel. In this manner retract the slide until its disassembly notch is in line with the back end of the slide stop. Push the slide stop up and then to the left from its projection on the right side of the frame and withdraw it completely. Ease the slide forward and off the frame while holding its underside firmly against the palm of your left hand to prevent the recoil spring from popping out. Withdraw the recoil spring and guide rod. Rotate the barrel bushing 90 degrees clockwise and drop out the recoil spring plug. Rotate the bushing 180 degrees counter-clockwise and withdraw it from the slide. Swing the barrel's link forward, lift the chamber end of the barrel up and push the barrel forward and out of the slide.

To remove the firing pin and extractor, you must depress the firing pin lock and at the same time depress the firing pin so that you can slide the firing pin stop down and out of the slide. Keeping the firing pin lock depressed withdraw the firing pin and spring. Then remove the firing pin lock and spring to free the extractor and permit its withdrawal. Reassemble in the reverse order. Install the recoil spring with the smaller diameter end over the guide rod.

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the \$679.95 suggested retail price of this pistol will want to remove the grip panels for cleaning. To do so you will need the following damage-control information. After you have removed the left grip panel and retrieved the parts, which hopefully fell where you can locate them, take the front decocking lever's slotted axis pin and insert it, slot up, into its hole in the frame. Take the front decocking lever and set it back onto the frame with its larger hole over the axis pin and its tail end in the upper, rounded notch in the rear decocking lever. Place the ends of the decocking mechanisms's spring into the small holes in the front and rear decocking levers with the spring's center-bend up. Gently replace the grip panel, without disturbing these components, and turn the two grip screws into their bushings.

Removal of the right grip panel will require re-installation of the drawbar and its spring. Place the drawbar back on the frame with its rear lug in back of the hammer hook and the hole in front over the pin on the trigger casting. Place the hooked ends of the L-shaped spring into their respective holes in the drawbar and frame with the spring positioned above the frame's top grip-screw bushing. Carefully replace the grip panel and install the grip screws.

Test firing 1,000 rounds of assorted .45 ACP ammunition through the Colt Double Eagle demonstrated unacceptable reliability. There were 40 failures to feed, usually the last round in the magazine. Thus, the Mean Rounds Between Stoppages (MRBS) was 25. You can expect to perform a tap, rack, bang drill at least once with every 25 rounds fired. The ammunition employed in SOF's test and evaluation ranged from Black Hills 185-grain Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) to 230-grain U.S. military ball (Full Metal Case). The stoppages were not associated with any particular bullet configuration. As no other types of stoppages or failures were observed, this problem could have resulted from a defective magazine component.

Perceived recoil was identical to any Government Model .45, but the muzzle climb was greater and this increases the time required for target re-acquisition. When fired from the Weaver position in the single-action mode at a distance of 21 feet (75 percent of all documented pistol fights have occurred at ranges of less than 7 yards), the Double Eagle will dump most of its rounds into a 2-inch group. This also approximates the accuracy potential of most M1911 series pistols. The length of trigger travel in double-action will be too long for those with small hands. Most of their double-action shots will pull to the right. Those with large hands will find the single-action trigger travel to be too short and can expect to pull those shots to the left.

There are no plans to offer the Double Eagle in 9mm Parabellum. A 10mm chambering will be forthcoming. Colt's perception is correct. The FBI's decision to adopt

a 10mm handgun will no doubt crimp future sales of 9mm pistols to law enforcement agencies. The FBI's comprehensive tests were based upon sound principles of wound ballistics. Overall results demonstrated that the FBI/Sierra 180-grain JHP 10mm load was clearly superior to the other loads tested, with the exception of Remington's .45 ACP 185-grain JHP which fell only 2.5 percent below the round adopted. This is a statistically insignificant difference. However, as no pistol meeting their requirements existed during the time frame of the tests, they decided, quite logically, to select the winning cartridge and seek a handgun chambered for it. However, those of us already committed to the .45 ACP cartridge need have no fear of its performance based upon the FBI test results. In fact, within the past year the FBI authorized use of the .45 ACP cartridge for its agents.

Like it or not, and I don't, double-action semiautomatic pistols are here to stay. It's unlikely that many police administrators can be convinced to permit personnel to carry handguns in condition one. But, stressing cost-effectiveness and a minimum of re-tooling to the exclusion of user requirements, the execution of Colt's Double Eagle turkey is badly flawed and won't fly. As usual, it has been showered with nothing but gushing enthusiasm by the self-styled cognoscenti of the popular gun press. A more sensible compromise is that offered by the Czech CZ75, the Italian Tanfoglio TZ75 (Series 88) distributed by F.I.E. or the Brazilian Taurus PT92 AF — a double-action trigger mechanism combined with a frame-mounted safety lever that permits "cocked and locked" carry if desired. ☞

UNDER THE VOLCANO

Continued from page 63

Affairs, whose ranks include indigenous soldiers who speak the native languages. In Panabaj, Civil Affairs sponsors sports and cultural activities and feeds 250 orphans and widows. Women soldiers work closely with the townswomen.

"Women and children know many confidences," says Sergeant Major Jesus Castro of Civil Affairs in Panabaj.

The area is particularly strategic internationally because of the many European and American tourists who visit the lake and its town Panajachel. Many Europeans own businesses and chalet-style homes there. The European Economic Community (EEC) is supporting self-help programs for the development of the lake basin, according to Mendez, to the tune of nearly 26 million quetzals (approximately U.S.\$9 million).

"The idea is to improve the lives of all the inhabitants of the lake basin," says Mendez, commander of the lake basin. "But a primary goal is to preserve the

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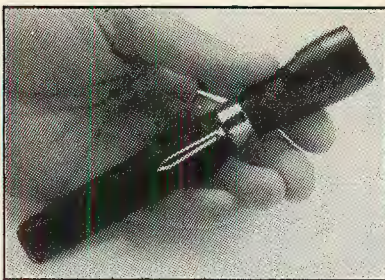
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lake."

The lake has become so polluted that many native fish species have disappeared, and the indigenous people who until recently used it for both drinking water and a sewer have suffered from gastro-intestinal illnesses. Development of a potable water supply is a major project.

Captain Deleon takes us to an EEC-funded project, a shelf road around the lake. Providing work is the basic goal of the road, and it employs 300 to 400 men. Deleon muscled a Jeep through the hairpin curves of the new one-lane road, followed by a deuce-and-a-half full of armed soldiers.

"Utz," he shouts to the Indians he encounters, using the Cakchiquel word for "good." He grasps their hands in a firm shake, building a mountain of good PR for the army.

When the road narrows, we leave the Jeep and hoof it up a rough foot trail. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked on the road during May, June and July 1989, according to Deleon, blasting and churning its way through a boulder field. Subversives on the cliffs above the road took potshots at the engineers until soldiers were assigned to guard them. As we take the trail a klick beyond the roadwork, Deleon sends troops ahead to secure the area.

Half a mile in, we come upon 20 or so men who are working to enlarge the path to car-width. Taking over where the Corps left off, they tear at the earth with picks and iron blades lashed to poles. When Deleon introduces us as countrymen of the engineers, the men lean on their picks and shovels and smile at us in hopes the Corps will return with its backhoes and dynamite. The going is rough for the laborers, especially since fewer men are coming to work on the project — discouraged by the hard work and lack of regular pay. The men say that while they were hired to work for 176 quetzals a month, they haven't been paid in months. "The check's in the mail," so to speak.

"The government is deficient," someone complains, not clarifying whether he means in funds or bookkeeping.

But despite setbacks, the self-development programs initiated throughout the country by the military and the government are winning the confidence of the population according to Col. Issacs.

"It was Mao Zedong who said that a population is to subversives as water is to fish," he says.

Fish out of water die, and subversive activity without the support of the people dies, too, which is the army's objective at Lake Atitlan.

"In Guatemala today, the subversive forces don't have much support," Issacs adds. "No significant munitions, no arms traffic, no food supplies. And because the people don't support them, they are reduced to stealing. That's when we take the water from the fish bowl."

El Salvador's Contagious War

Heading to the Pacific coast that lies beyond the volcanoes, we hitch a ride on a C-47. Built in the 1940s, the plane is older than any of us on it, providing an airborne example of the Guatemalan air force's resolve "to maintain to the utmost because you never know how long it will have to last." For lack of parts, most of the military's helicopters are grounded, and pilots-in-training diligently study from U.S. manuals printed in the 1970s.

The C-47 glides south past the sentinel volcanoes. The coast is the bread-basket of Guatemala, with its huge farms of cotton and cane. And inset into the broad fields are narrow strips of nude land — the private runways of the plantations. According to Col. Carlos Pozuelos, commander of the Air Base of the South, the coast has more than 275 private air strips, all of which lie beyond the range of the country's radar system in Guatemala City. Could these airstrips provide safe landing for secret shipments of arms that would stoke an explosive guerrilla war in Guatemala equal to that in El Salvador?

"Nicaragua — by courtesy of Cuba — has put an incredible amount of weapons and support into El Salvador and Guatemala," explains one officer who asks not to be identified. "Guatemala has received weapons from Nicaragua by air, land and sea."

"We understand that our borders aren't completely closed," agrees Col. Jose Quilo, "but because of our vigilance, it would be very difficult for anyone to bring weapons like the SAM 7 into Guatemala."

According to Col. Issacs, military intelligence has prevented the subversive movement from reaching an explosive potential.

"In 1982, the army found 20 houses with arms and munitions in (large) quantities," he told us. "They were all destroyed, and the guerrillas haven't been able to re-establish their combat teams or supply lines since. The only thing they've been able to introduce in the last three years has been anti-personnel mines, which are made here in Guatemala. But they haven't been able to bring in new arms since 1982 when they began to use RPG-2 and RPG-7 rockets."

Likewise, the FMLN of Salvador will be weak for years to come, predicts Pozuelos.

"Salvador's guerrillas will need three to five years to recuperate their forces," he predicts. "They lost commanders, weapons and hundreds of soldiers. They can get weapons, but they can't easily replace the experienced leadership."

It is dissatisfied people, more than weapons, that make a war. Guatemalans shun the subversives in favor of the government, partly because they're still war-weary from the early 1980s and also because they have a democratic vote.

"The guerrillas in El Salvador had the support of the population, which is why they could take the offensive," explains

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Pozuelos.

But the Guatemalan army also has experienced the power of an alienated population. In the mid-'70s, hungry, isolated, poverty-stricken Indians were easy converts for guerrillas who promised them a short, intense war followed by the sweet spoils of victory — Mercedes and money. A dangerous percentage of the population in rural areas supported the subversives.

"In 1981, we came this close to losing the country," says one officer, holding his thumb and forefinger an inch apart.

In response, the military in conjunction with the government initiated ambitious programs to win the affection of the people. Soldiers learned to pay for whatever they received from the Indians, and to respect the Indian women. Self-help projects such as those at Lake Atitlan gave the army and government a more positive image although some detractors still ask why the help was so long in coming.

But many military officers in Guatemala believe that guerrilla activity in their country is stoked by issues larger than national issues. The heart of the FMLN in El Salvador — like that of the ORPA guerrillas in Guatemala — beats to an international rhythm.

"The subversive movement no longer responds to strictly local or regional interests," Col. Mendez told us. "The leadership responds to an international terrorist scheme that has certain objectives."

"The Salvadoran guerrillas were responding to the changing picture in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union," agrees Pozuelos. "The question has become, 'Who will support Castro? Who will support Ortega?' The answer is, 'Nobody.' I don't think the Eastern Bloc will [continue to] support Nicaragua. Castro has no more than five more years in power, then he will be in a situation something like Noriega. He's living from Russian bread, and he'll have to swallow perestroika, or he'll be out. So the guerrillas in Salvador had to go to it immediately before they lost the opportunity to do anything."

"Movements with communist connections are losing value in Central America," continues Mendez. "The wave of democracy is sweeping Central America. The concept of taking power by force is becoming obsolete. This will make the guerrillas search for the legal road — the road of elections and the formation of a political party."

Guatemalans will elect a new civilian president in December 1990. At that point, President Vinicio Cerezo will become the first modern civilian president elected through democratic process to finish his term. But poverty — growing at an alarming rate — threatens to undermine Guatemala's relative peace. According to newspaper reports, more than 5,000 laborers looking for work crossed into Chiapas, Mexico, in the first five days of 1990. The Indian population is growing and



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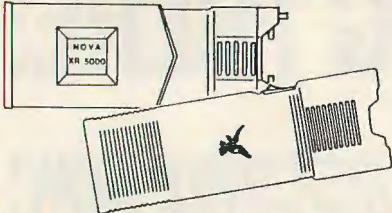
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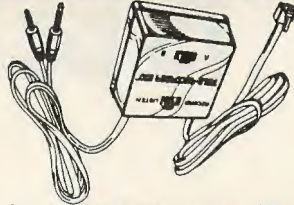
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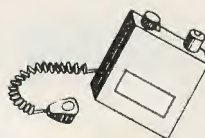
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may reach 60 percent of the country's total population. According to one statistic, 84 percent of Guatemalan families fall below the poverty level. More people are living in houses made of cardboard. Children can't attend public school, which is free, because they can't afford notebooks and pens. Meanwhile, Cerezo was sailing in his own 67-foot yacht at a time when the country lacked enough foreign exchange to pay for gasoline imports.

Some point to the lesson, hard-learned, that impoverished people are ripe for subversives promising a better life. They fear that a war on poverty, which could be won now with beans, might have to be fought later with bullets. They also fear that Marxist agitators outside the country might send in arms and aid enough to whip Guatemala's guerrillas into a fighting force.

So the military battles the subversives with weapons, with intelligence, and with people programs to keep them from having explosive power.

For as Captain Deleon says, even during this period of relative peace, "*Uno sola golondrina no hacia verano*" — "*One swallow does not a summer make.*"

HANOI NIGHTMARE

Continued from page 29

Could they break us without torture? I never found the answers to these questions.

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[NOTE: Names have been changed to protect the privacy of others.]

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TERROR YEARS

Continued from page 37

Choonhavan, the present Prime Minister. Prem retired quietly, and Thailand became a semblance of a parliamentary democracy.

In this process, too much credit cannot be given to Prem. At some point in time, it seems likely he will be remembered in much the same light as George

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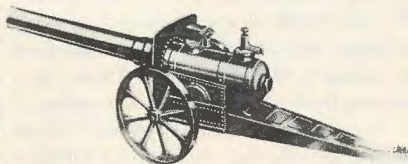


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Washington, who once also had the chance to become dictator and instead stayed true to his star. The result of Prem's fealty to popular sovereignty, in a counter-insurgency sense, was simple: grievances could be redressed within the political system. And it was the CPT which proved unable to deal with real "power to the people."

Wedded to orthodox Maoism, the Sino-Thai leaders of the CPT knew only one strategy: to encircle the cities with the countryside. Yet the political action was in the towns, particularly in the metropolis that was Bangkok (there is only one city of any size in Thailand, and that is Bangkok). A strategic debate was in the works already in 1976 when the storming of Thammasat caused 4,000-plus men and women, the cream of Thailand's activists, to flee into the jungle. Seen by many observers as a manpower windfall for the CPT, in reality they were poison. For they demanded change within the organization, changes designed to make it "more Thai" and more relevant to the events swirling about the kingdom. Instead, they found a miniature version of Mao in Vietnam, with the CPT Politburo unwilling — perhaps, psychologically incapable — to change.

The 1982 Fourth Party Congress brought the difference over strategy into the open. Already, CPM a la Prem and the fallout of the Sino-Vietnamese split were buffeting the party. In the field, the Thai increasingly withdrew regular units from counter-insurgency operations and replaced them with "Rangers." In virtually a mirror image of the CPT setup, the government had formed the equivalents of local, regional and main forces (the main forces were the regular troops). With overwhelming numbers and a cause — democracy — they were taking the guerrilla groups to the cleaners. It was too much; the majority of the party called it quits.

Operations still go on, but they're virtual training exercises for the security forces. The "Ranger" concept has become a permanent feature of territorial defense much along the lines of Switzerland — or China.

Asked, given the benefit of hindsight, if he would do anything different, Saiyud replies, "Strategically, I would do the same; tactically, of course, there are always many things you could change. In particular, I have a deeper understanding of the role democracy has played in all of this."

"The army cannot build democracy. It must be a shield. Only the people can build [democracy]. Half the battle is to overthrow the government — the other half is to build representative government. This is crucial. Our strategy all along was rural development and decentralization. We were thinking largely in terms of administration, though, when what was at issue was people controlling their lives. ISOC and the military can provide security, that is so, but it is better to get people to

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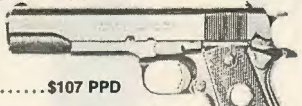
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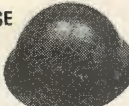
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provide security, to get them involved in what is crucial to them. Keep a mass of democratic people around you all the time, and you will be safe."

Saiyud leans back. Laopang Sasong, 40, a former communist guerrilla, looks on. He spent 10 years with the CPT and was trained in China, North Vietnam and Laos.

Why had he joined the guerrillas, I ask? Comes the response, "Because the communists said that if they liberated the country, all races would be treated equally."

Why had he come back to the fold? "Because of the new situation."

Looking back at it all, what was his assessment of his 10 years as a guerrilla? "It was a waste of time. We didn't accomplish anything. Life is OK here. We have enough food, school for the children; I raise some chickens, do my work.

Will life be better in 10 years for you and your children? "It depends on us. If we're industrious, there is the opportunity."

Saiyud, the old soldier, leans back and beams. That, in a nutshell, is what CPM is all about. Give the people a voice in their lives and the protection they need and there will be no insurgency. ✕

MALTA

Continued from page 43

the uppermost part was left dangling at an angle by the thin wires holding the ceramic insulators and the pipe together. The explosion caused metal and stone to fly to a maximum distance of 46 meters ..."

Very occasionally, other peoples' problems spill over into Malta. Usually, it involves an Arab knifed or shot dead for any of a variety of reasons. Sometimes though, an event occurs with far more sinister undertones. On 16 August 1987, EOD recorded that, "At about 1700 hours on Saturday 15 August ... we were informed by PC125 Farrugia (Yacht Marina Immigration Police), that he had received an anonymous telephone call stating that explosive devices were planted on the underside and on board the Motor Yacht *Angel*, which was undergoing repairs afloat at the Manoel Island Yacht Yard."

A subsequent search revealed nothing. Two days later, EOD was informed that as the yacht was being pulled on to a slipway, "... a member of the crew ... noticed two black objects, about 2.2 meters away from each other which were connected together electrically by a red cable, affixed to the lower part of the keel, about 7 meters away from the propeller on the starboard side ..."

Lt Charles Azzopardi told me what happened next.

"From investigations carried out by EOD personnel, it transpired that the objects were a type of magnetic mine.

"The yacht was immediately moved from the slipway and anchored in a safe area and then evacuated while we attempted to identify the mines so as to know the best way to deal with them."

The Maltese EOD contacted their counterparts in Britain and elsewhere, but nobody was able to positively identify the mine. There was no option but to go in blind. Lt. Azzopardi:

"The final part of the operation began early on Friday 21 August. Five EOD members were engaged in this hazardous undertaking. Being the senior member of the diving team, I dived alone to the mines and attached a rope to their carrying handles. We fully expected the mines to blow up as soon as they came unstuck, so after swimming to shore I tied the other end of the rope to the back of a Land Rover which would enable us to work from a safe distance — using the rope to slide the mines along the hull until they came off at the end.

"The first attempt ended abruptly when the mines' carrying handles came off! So, I had to make a second approach in order to repeat the whole procedure. This time, I was even more nervous than before, but managed to keep my feelings under control, and succeeded in securing the rope once again.

"This time the mines came off. There was no explosion and after a while — we call it "soak time" in EOD terms — the yacht was towed away to safety.

"The mines were destroyed in-situ by placing explosive charges on them ..."

The Press merited the operation a brief mention after which the *Angel*, and the heroism displayed by Lt Azzopardi, were forgotten.

My last visit to EOD Section was in October 1989 shortly after commencement of a six-month clearance project of fields bordering one side of the disused runway at the former RAF aerodrome at Takali. As a wartime fighter base, the site was subjected to numerous air attacks. Many bombs failed to go off, and some still lie buried in the soft soil surrounding the airfield. Clearance work is a slow process, with teams sweeping small sections of an area at a time. Whenever their Forster Locators detect something, it has to be dug out. So far, a lot of rusting shrapnel and bomb tail-fins are all that have been found but EOD knows it can only be a matter of time before an unexploded bomb is located.

At least, when the land is eventually handed back to the farmers, they can be confident of plowing their fields in safety. ✕

FULL AUTO

Continued from page 21

Expansion ranges from .65 to .69 caliber with 24 to 29 percent of the original bullet weight lost to small fragments. When we dropped the muzzle



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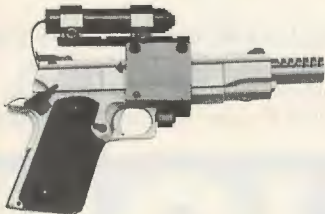
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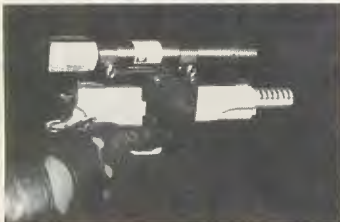
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velocity to about 980 fps (by decreasing the charge weight), this bullet penetrated up 12.5 inches of soft tissue with expansion to .70 caliber and only minor fragmentation. High velocity, more often than not detrimental to hollow-point handgun bullet performance, continues to serve as an obsessive mantra, attracting ammunition manufacturers in spite of its clearly demonstrated tendency to cause over-expansion, excessive fragmentation and under-penetration.

The 9mm Parabellum 115-grain Starfire bullet is even worse. At close to the factory velocity of 1,145 fps, this bullet expands up to .90 caliber, loses 19 percent of its original weight to small fragments and penetrates only slightly more than 7 inches of soft tissue. In an attempt to improve this dismal performance we dropped the muzzle velocity by 100 fps. Expansion decreased to .73 to .80 caliber with only minor fragmentation and the penetration increased to about 8 to 10 inches.

For those of you packing nine mils, we can recommend only the Winchester OSM, Black Hills and American Ballistics Co. 147-grain JHP subsonic ammunition. They are effective and feed reliably through any high-quality handgun, submachine or carbine.

However, I and most of my associates pack .45's. While the Black Hills 185-grain JHP round in .45 ACP is an excellent and effective load, I have always felt that a heavier, reliably-expanding bullet would further increase the .45's performance level.

Power Plus, Inc. has a 275-grain JHP rebated boat-tail round that pushes the old brute to its maximum potential. Muzzle velocity is about 900 fps and perceived recoil is stout but not objectionable. Expansion is from .70 to .78 caliber and occasionally the core will shed its jacket at the very end of the bullet's path in soft tissue. Penetration ranges from 13.5 to 15.5 inches. Who could ask for anything more?

Unfortunately, because of its nose configuration, this bullet must be fired through a pistol with a polished feed ramp and throated barrel. Feeding reliability must be confirmed by firing at the very least 200 rounds through your pistol.

LAO RESISTANCE

Continued from page 51

But it isn't just the way ELOL fights that sets it apart from other, generally unorganized, Lao resistance groups. They articulate some very clear political goals.

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power. Things can't return to the way they were in Laos before 1975," Yang Teng, the ELOL secretary general, told us on one occasion.

"The Lao Loum ruling elite lost the right to govern by losing the country to the Vietnamese through their laziness and corruption. They even abandoned and killed their own king," he said, referring to the last Lao monarch who reportedly died in a communist prison camp several years ago.

"We tribal people make up half the population of Laos. We have fought and died more than the Lao Loum. So it is our country just as much as theirs. In any new political arrangement we must be taken into account and given the right to govern ourselves as well as have equal say in how Laos is run," Yang Teng explained.

"Only the people who stay and fight inside can liberate Laos from the communists. You can't do it from the United States or France or even Thailand," he said in reference to the large number of overseas-based Lao resistance leaders.

"Take the LUF for example. They have General Vang Pao, the most famous H'mong leader, plus fighting forces that are predominantly H'mong. But many of their leaders are Lao Loum of the old order living overseas. These people want to use the H'mong to die for their own ends. It is no different than the LPA who send their H'mong troops up here to fight us. These people (the Lao Loum — communists and anticommunists) are hoping we'll kill each

other out of existence," he added.

"Even we H'mongs and other tribal people can't return completely to our old ways. We can't go back to such practices as growing opium or destroying the forest and wildlife to support ourselves," the ELOL official said.

Yang Teng also noted that even though most attacks have been directed at ELOL in this current LPA offensive, the Vientiane regime never mentions the organization by name. He said that this is because the old discredited leaders of the LUF present an easier target for the government's propaganda. This seems to indicate that while the LUF are the ones being denounced it is ELOL that Vientiane is most concerned about.

With that thought in mind it will be interesting to see how the situation in Laos develops over this current dry season. Not long after we left the ELOL base area, reports from Vientiane stated that the hospitals there were already filling up with LPA casualties. ✕

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Continued from page 4

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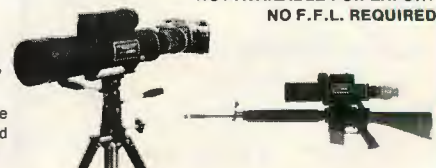
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FIFTY-SEVEN SHERIDAN TANKS ON THE WALL ... Fifty-seven Sheridan tanks of original 1,562 M551s remain in Army inventories, all deployed with 82nd Airborne. Army needs new light tank, is looking at several options, recently horse-traded the Marines for some LAVs as a stop-gap.

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MOAMMAR'S TOYSHOP ... Czech President Havel said Czech communist regime sold Libya some 1,000 tons of Semtex — "Enough to last world terrorism 150 years." Prized by bomb-throwing Bolsheviks and similar scum because it's hard to detect, seven ounces does for average plane. Libya won't sell it back to new Czech regime. Moammar's probably just mad because his war-gas factory burned down.


HOT BEEF SANDWICHES ... Guess what Sovs are doing with the radioactive beef being grown around Chernobyl: not burying it — it's too valuable. They're shipping it to a variety of points in the USSR, so no one area gets lethal doses. Soviet fast food: first McDonald's, now self-microwaving beef.

DEWEY RIFLES? ... Worked in Vietnam, late '60s. Named for Maj. A. Peter Dewey who died in Vietnam in 1945, this "private" army consisted mainly of German and Dutch soldiers. SOF is assisting writer's research, and a top resource is you — our readership who were there going and doing. Any information you can provide, from scuttlebutt to documents and photos to printed references wanted. Send to Bulletin Board Editor, Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

CREDIT WHERE DUE ... We didn't know at the time, but found out in a hurry that photos accompanying our story on SEAL Operation Thunderhead, "The Last Detail," were taken by Tim Reeves. Our apologies for the omission. ☒



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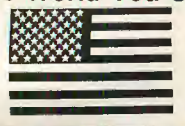


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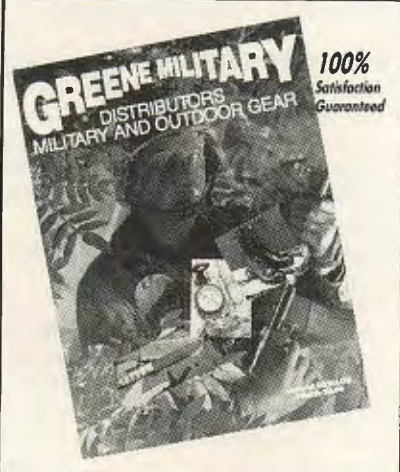
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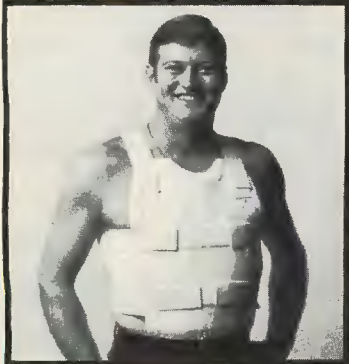
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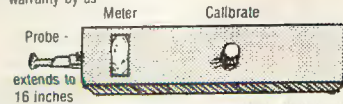
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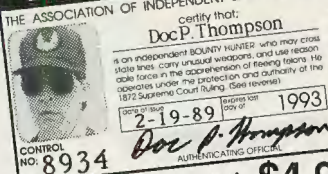
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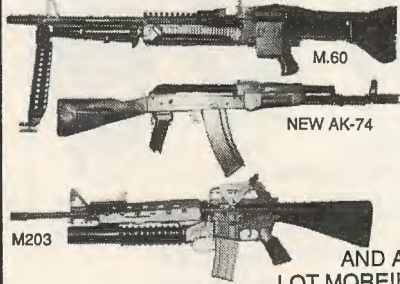
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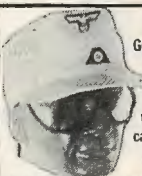
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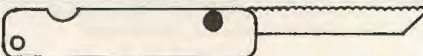
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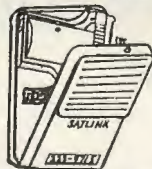
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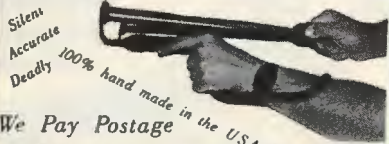
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PARTING SHOT

Paracaidista Wish List

by Alexander M.S. McColl

ATTENTION all Airborne troopers and civilian skydivers!

As long-term readers will know, SOF has been pretty tight (in a couple of senses of the word) with the Salvadoran Airborne Battalion since 1983. We jumped with them in February 1983 at Ahuachapan, and one of SOF's first fire-fights in Central America was with them in April 1983 at a place called Montepeque in Cuscatlan Province. In 1983 and 1984 one of our major efforts was in support of their rigger loft, both working with and training their riggers, and providing several thousand dollars worth of supplies and spare parts, including such things as new sewing ma-

chines. We were also able to supply them maroon berets, shoulder patches and a full set of serially numbered metal jump wings. In December 1989, SOF's Edward J. Bishop went to war with them again during the FMLN's abortive but nearly successful attempt to take over San Salvador.

Lately we found that for some reason the official U.S. effort hasn't been able to provide adequate supplies for their rigger loft, and the idea of these brave, willing and aggressive Salvo paratroopers going out the door with less than first-class air items doesn't sit well.

The following is a "wish list" sent

by the Salvadoran paracaidistas. If any of you has access to any of the items on the list, or the civilian equivalents (we realize the Federal Stock Numbers don't mean much to civilians), AND you can get it to us without getting yourself or us in trouble with Authority, not only SOF but especially the Salvadoran Paracaidistas will be extremely grateful.

Items should be sent to:

**Salvadoran Paracaidistas
c/o SOF Warehouse
5735 Arapahoe Avenue
Boulder, Colorado 80303**

Contributions NOT tax-deductible, and for that reason all the more appreciated.

Quantity	Item	Fed. Stock Number
50 rolls	Textile, Woven Reinforcing, Cotton	8305-00-268-2411
100 ea.	Pouch	1670-590-9909
50 ea.	Thread, Type I, Class "A"	83100-115-9168
25 ea.	Thread, Type 11, Class "A"	8300-227-1239
100 ea.	Thread, Nylon Type	8310-00-262-2780
100 ea.	#6/3 ply	8310-00-5153667
5 ea.	Dwyer Windmeter	6680-00-833-7010
50 ea.	Parts	1670-00-375-9134
50 ea.	Parts	1670-00-491-0919
500 yds.	Nylon Webbing, Type B, Mil-W-4088 1 23/32 (6500 pound)	8305-00-004-2538
500 yds.	Nylon Webbing, Type 12 Mil-W-4088 1 23/32 (1200 pound)	8305-00-177-5069
500 yds.	Nylon Webbing, Type 12 Mil-W-4088 1 23/32 (1200 pound)	8305-00-200-4586
500 yds.	Nylon Webbing, Type 12 Mil-W-4088 1 23/32 (1200 pound)	8305-00-263-3599
500 yds.	Nylon Webbing, Type 12 Mil-W-4088 1 23/32 (1200 pound)	8305-00-263-3594
500 yds.	Nylon Webbing, Type III, Black Mil-T 5038-3/8"	8315-00-176-8083
1200 yds.	Tape, Textile, Mil-T 5038, Type IV, 1 1/2"	8315-00-176-8084
1200 yds.	Tape, Textile, Mil-T 5038, Type IV, 1 1/2"	8315-00-190-6521
1200 yds.	Tape, Textile, Mil-T 5038, Type IV, 1 1/2"	8315-00-190-8085 8470-01-092-7527
100 ea.	Helmet of Troops, size —medium	8470-01-092-7526
100 ea.	Helmet of Troops, size —medium	
100 yds.	Webbing, Textile Type IV, Elastic 1" or 1 1/2", Black or O.D.	8305-00-261-8579
500 yds.	Cloth, Parachute, Nylon w/Ripstock Pattern, Pre-shrunk, Camo	8305-00-115-9168

Camo Uniforms (medium and small sizes)

Boots (medium and small sizes)

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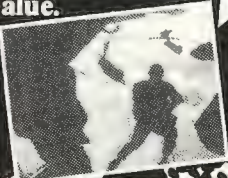
HAS MR. Free!

HE'S GIVING STUFF AWAY!
But just for a limited time (until he regains his sanity or August 25th, 1990, whichever comes first). So order quickly!

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The Key to Our Front Door!
(when you order \$50,000.00 of our stuff.)

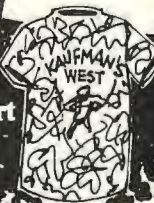
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(with our soldier logo) - when you order over \$35.00 of our stuff.

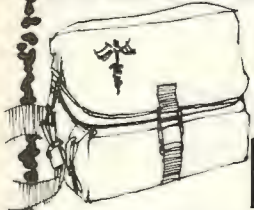


Free!

Waterproof Matches
(one box free when you order at least \$15.00 of merchandise)



Medic's Kit Bag -



style like the ones used in Vietnam. Nylon with 3 zippered compartments that fold open. New.
Item #S-290... \$27.75.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Camouflage T-Shirt -

- Top quality, 50% cotton, 50% polyester. Choose:
- Woodland Camo Item #T-510... \$6.95.
 - Desert Camo Item #T-511... \$8.95.
 - Tiger Stripe Camo Item #T-512... \$8.95.
 - Urban Camo Item #T-565... \$8.95.
 - Big Folks Woodland Camo Item #A-625 XXL... \$9.95.
 - XXXL... \$12.95.



IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT

Jogging Shorts -

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

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



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Chin Strap



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Jungle Hats -

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

- Woodland Camo... Item #H-210
- Olive Drab (OD) Green... Item #H-225
- Tiger Stripe Camo... Item #H-230
- Solid Black... Item #H-235
- Khaki... Item #H-240
- Choose Anyone... \$12.95.

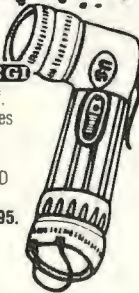
Jungle Hat - A copy of the real thing, made in the USA. A great value at \$7.95/each!
Item #H-245. Select:

- Woodland Camo
- Tiger Stripe Camo
- Olive Drab (OD) Green
- Black

Anglehead

Flashlites - GENUINE GI

indestructible plastic; waterproof, non-glare, clips onto any belt. Uses 2 D cell batteries (not included) and comes complete with spare bulb and extra lenses. Choose: OD green or black.
Item #R-165... \$6.95.



Krypton Bulbs for GI Flashlite -

high intensity bulb makes your light twice as bright!! (will work in any standard flashlite). Installs in seconds.
Item #R-725... \$2.95/pkg of 2 bulbs.

DOG TAGS

Regulation GI dog tags set of 2 tags and 2 chains (one 4", one 24"). Choose:
Stainless Steel Set... Item #X-670... \$4.00.
Black Commando Set... Item #X-675... \$6.00.

Printing For Dog Tags - We'll print anything that fits! (6 lines, 15 spaces per line).
Item #X-685... only \$1.50 per tag (\$3.00/set).

Sorry! No Dog Tag Printing Orders By Telephone.

Dog Tag Silencers - black, non-glare rubber bumpers for tag.
Item #X-650... \$1.95/pair.

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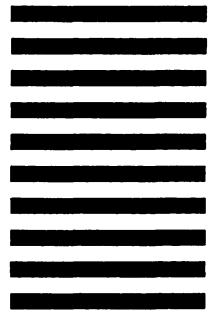
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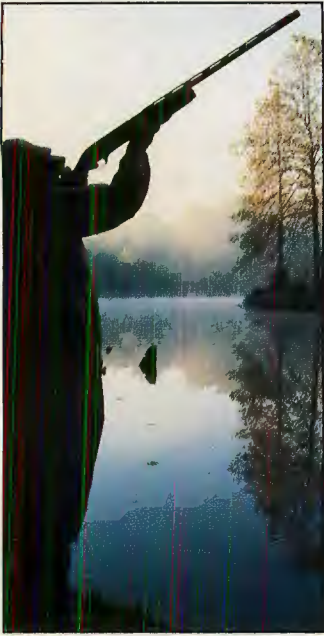
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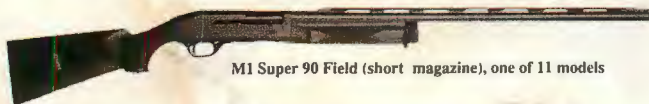
The complete line-up.

Benelli M1 Super 90 A defensive firearm, a utility shotgun, or a dependable sporting arm, all describe the M1 Super 90. The Benelli inertia recoil operating system means fast-firing, reliable function with all types of 12 gauge shells, from light 2 3/4 inch field loads to the most potent 3 inch magnums. Special ghost ring sights are now options on the M1 SLUG and DEFENSE models. The M1 Super 90 FIELD model unites the quick handling M1 receiver and tough polymer stock with a wide choice of sporting barrels. A complete set of screw-in chokes gives the M1 FIELD unmatched versatility for hunting under the toughest conditions imaginable.

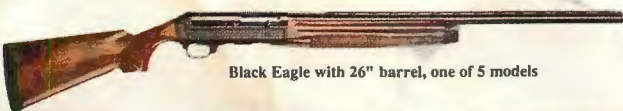
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Benelli Montefeltro Super 90 A direct descendent of the M1, the Montefeltro uses the same simple and reliable operating system. There is no complicated gas system to collect grime and powder residues. No complex linkages or pistons to clean or maintain. Like all Benelli shotguns, the Montefeltro disassembles completely without tools for easy cleaning and maintenance. The unique Benelli loading system lets you change a shell in the chamber without emptying the entire magazine. Something you'll appreciate if you need to change loads or want to safely unload the chamber. With the special buttstock adjustment kit the Montefeltro and Black Eagle shotguns can be easily custom-fitted to any shooter.

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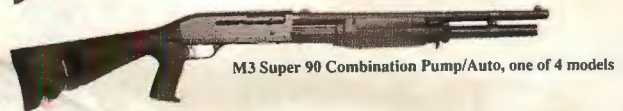
M1 Super 90 Field (short magazine), one of 11 models



Black Eagle with 26" barrel, one of 5 models



Montefeltro Super 90 Standard Hunter, one of 7 models



M3 Super 90 Combination Pump/Auto, one of 4 models

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