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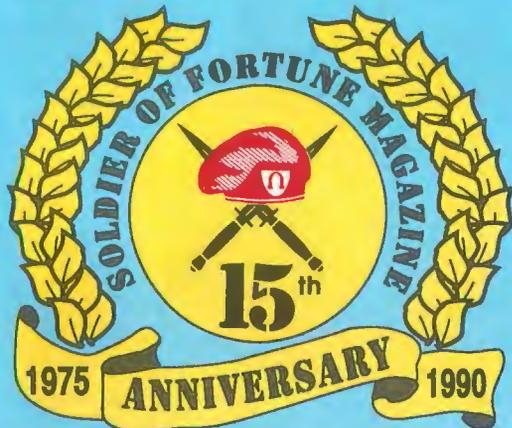
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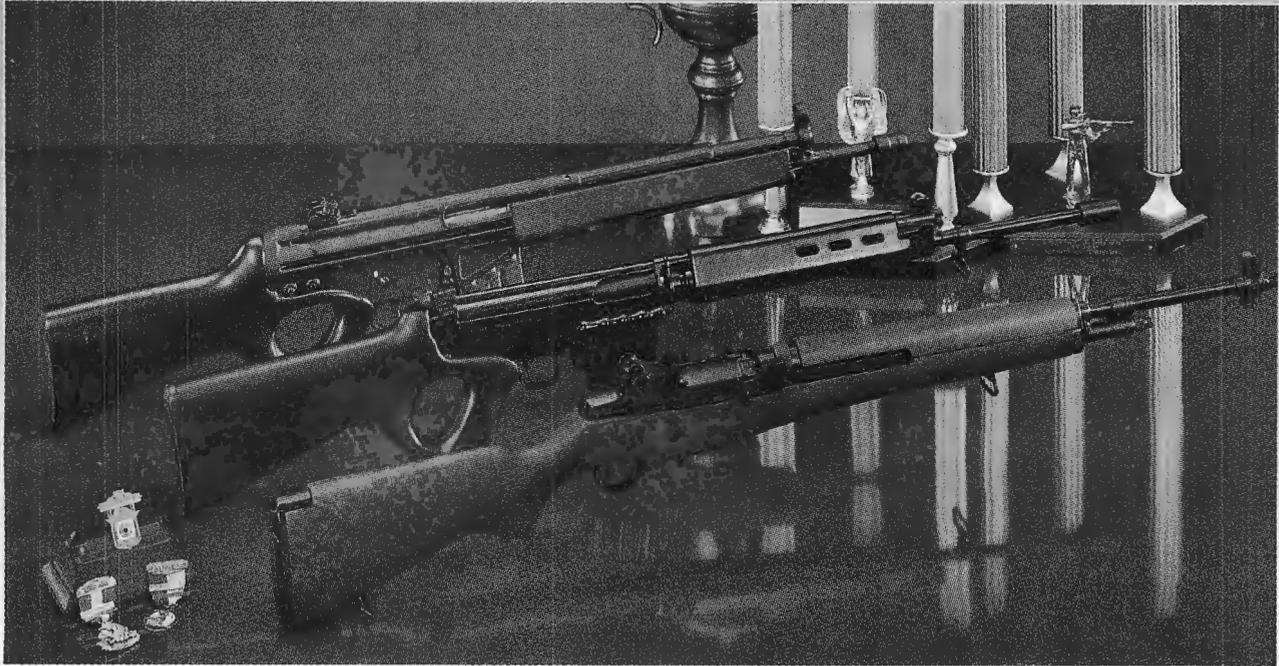
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COVER

While all eyes have focused on the Middle East and our deployment of U.S. forces to that area of operations (which we'll be covering in upcoming issues), other conflicts still rage — specifically, the war on drugs and the drug cartel narcoterrorists' counter-attacks. Indiscriminate bombings are the order of the day in Colombia, and SOF joined up with the handful of men — Bogota's Bomb Squad — who stand between anarchy and the innocent. Roll with the world's busiest bomb squad, beginning on page 40. Photo: Liaison/Diaz
INSET: It was a quiet day in the SOF offices — until 150 hardcore terrorists decided to topple the government of Trinidad. SOF's Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, Special Projects Director Alex McColl, and long-time contributor Chuck Fremont caught the next flight out. You can catch their story, beginning on page 30. Photo: Sygma/Stone

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

WHEN the United Kingdom granted Kuwait full independence in 1961, Iraq decided to annex Kuwait. The Royal Marines respectfully disagreed and were joined by a multinational Arab league force. Thirty years later, Saddam Hussein is trying the same thing. Once again, the civilized world must tell Iraq NO.

As I write this, the United States is gearing up for an attention-getting counterpunch against Hussein. But, by the time you read this, Operation Desert Shield may be history, with Iraq having retreated from Kuwait, returned the funds stolen from the Kuwaiti treasure — roughly U.S. \$8 billion by some estimates — and agreed to pay reparations and make a full accounting for the rape and plunder committed by Iraqi soldiers against Kuwaitis and foreigners. Anything less won't do. If you play, you pay is a lesson Hussein is going to have to learn.

The United States and allied forces may have to resort to a large "firepower demonstration" to convince Saddam that he made a serious mistake. Airpower would probably be the major component of such action. I've watched A-10s pump large quantities of depleted uranium at high velocities into armor. "Hogs" are great attention-getters; F-117 Stealth fighters are more subtle. Each is very effective at making a point.

The 2nd Armor, 24th Mech, 82nd Airborne, Marines and other first-line ground units can get a little more up-close and personal. We noted that at least one U.S. warship exchanged its basic load of cruise missiles for a load with "alternative warheads" before it sailed.

Building a substantial force takes time, which is our greatest adversary. "If you can't beat us, try waiting us out: You'll have plenty of help from the U.S. Congress and media," has been our message to our enemies.

Some protests are already surfacing in the press. Congress, thankfully, is in recess, so we're spared a lot of ignorant rhetoric from the House and Senate. Some of the points made by the press, however, raise valid concerns. That Western Europe and Japan, who are much more dependent on Persian Gulf oil than we are, should bear a significant share of the costs of Desert Shield is true. While 50% of U.S. oil demand is now met by imports, only about 1/4 of imported crude originates in the Middle East. We can make up for that through increased U.S. production. (We might cut back on tanker spills in the process.) For Japan and West Germany, it's another story.

Japan — Kuwait's single largest customer by a factor of roughly two, and Saudi Arabia's number one market as well — has prospered behind a U.S. military shield. We've made a big investment in our military power, and there is nothing wrong with expecting some return on that investment.

Because power corrupts, as borne out by the likes of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Ho and now Hussein, Americans have gone under fire for the benefit of mankind and expected no compensation. This time it's different. The countries that stand to gain the most can, and should, pay us for our effort. Call it mercenary if you want, but it's really just being fair.

But, we can bring in the beancounters later — when tyrants march, the free world can't afford to get into a pissing contest over how to split the tab.

The U.S. servicemen and women who are part of Desert Shield should have no doubts that they are part of a just effort that goes far beyond our exaggerated need for Mideast oil.

Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi military should have no doubts about the ability of our soldiers, sailors and aviators to enforce our national policy.

And the entire world should be advised that in the post-Cold War era, the United States continues to stand its watch, weapons at ready, locked and loaded, prepared to defend the common good. ☒

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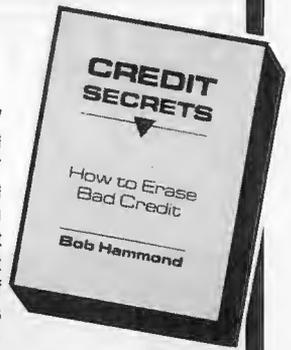
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by Bob Hammond

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SEALS IN VIETNAM
An Inside Look

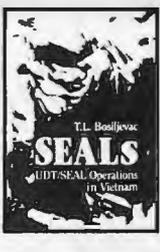
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At festivities during 37th Special Forces Association convention in Washington last July, SOFer John Padgett, SOF Honcho Bob Brown, SF Drinking Buddy, and SOFer Alex McColl pause long enough for the photog to record that they do, on occasion, wear dress blues. Col. Brown admitted he didn't own a dress mess jacket until after he retired, and has only worn it twice — which explains why there are no gravy stains. Photo: Friend of SOF

KUWAIT RECRUITS MERCS ... As we go to press, our sources in London report that the beleaguered state of Kuwait has shipped initial groups of volunteers from London to staging areas in Saudi Arabia to form a resistance army, and is accepting applications from foreigners who have solid military training and experience.

Perhaps due to the fact that U.S. neutrality laws prohibit recruiting for any foreign army within the United States, the Embassy of Kuwait in Washington was unable to confirm or deny this information, but in London Deputy Ambassador Mr. Walid Al'Khobaizi said that thousands of people, including Britons and citizens of other Arab countries, have come forward to "join the fight and win our country back. We are flying out those who are willing and able and who have fighting experience. They will be given guns and ammunition once they are out there. We cannot just sit back and watch what is happening in our country. These people have strong feelings about what is going on and will form an important part of the resistance movement."

Reliable sources in London report that a few hundred volunteers from Great Britain have already been recruited and are thought to be gathering in Saudi Arabia. Stated Kuwaiti spokesman Professor Mohammed L. Alsabah, "We are counting on the help of the international community." Concurrently, Kuwaiti subjects and sympathetic foreign



Armed Mohawk warrior atop barricade on the Kahnawake Reserve south of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Approximately 200 meters away stood the police barricade, with equally serious and well-armed provincial and national police. Photo: John Coleman

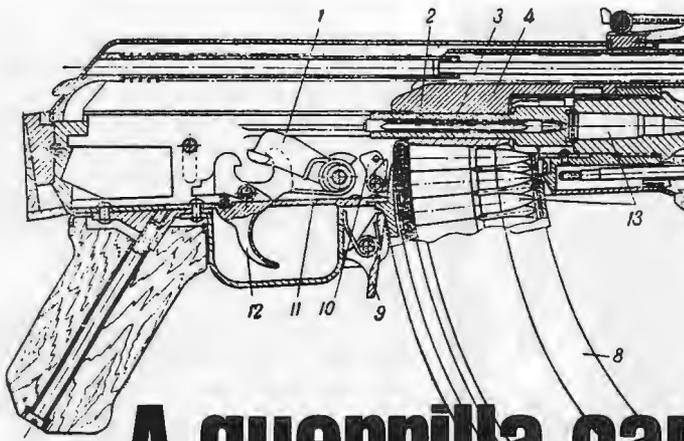
citizens wishing to fight for the Kuwaiti cause are being processed through the Kuwaiti embassy in Cairo, Egypt.

Persons with solid military backgrounds interested in becoming a volunteer would do best to forward their resume (with mail, telephone and FAX address) to: The Embassy of the State of Kuwait, #45 Queensgate, London SW7 5HR, England. To phone from the United States (they are eight hours ahead), dial 011 4471 589 4533.

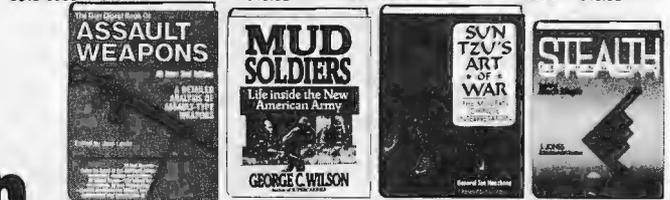
Persons in the United States wishing to help in a non-military volunteer capacity may contact The Committee to Liberate Kuwait, 3500 International Drive N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008 (phone: 202-364-2200) and ask what you may do to help.

Please do not contact the Kuwaiti embassy in Washington, D.C., to volunteer in a military capacity, as they are restrained by U.S. law from any type of recruitment activity. *Please do not contact SOF, as what we know — you now know.*

CANADA'S CIVIL WAR? ... In late July, Managing Editor John Coleman was invited by Mohawk Indians in the Canadian province of Quebec to come up and hear their side of the story. What story was that? Although it hasn't received much U.S. press play, Mohawks had taken up positions behind barricades south and west of Montreal, in effect creating armed enclaves of the Kahnawake and Kanasetake Mohawk Indian reserves. Coleman spent a week in Quebec on both sides of the barricades, interviewing Mohawk Warriors on one side and Sûreté du Québec (Quebec Provincial Police) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police on the other. The issues are complex — sovereignty, land, and cultural identity — and the physical reality deadly: On 11 July, at least 100 SQ officers stormed the barricade at the small town of Oka on the Kanasetake Reserve, about 30 clicks west of Montreal, and one SQ officer was killed. Indians immediately sealed off part of the town with major barricades (using, on Highway 344, SQ vehicles they'd captured) and armed themselves with a variety of weapons including semi-auto AK-types and, incredibly, Soviet-style light machine guns. Similarly armed Mohawks at Kahnawake immediately threw up barricades in support, totally blocking the Mercier Bridge, the main thoroughfare from western Montreal across the St. Lawrence Seaway into southern Quebec, and other subsidiary highways. They claimed they'd affixed explosives to the bridge and would blow it if any further attacks were launched against either enclave. As we go to print the situation is still highly volatile, and we're closely monitoring events. Watch



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for a major feature article in our December issue.

SOF GOES TO WAR ... As we go to print with this issue U.S. forces are in the Middle East, facing down a madman who would be king. SOF staffers and correspondents from around the globe have converged on the area of operations. Their mission? Get up to the front lines and cover the grunts on the ground. Mainstream media will give you 10-second sound bites — we'll give you in-depth stories about the men who heft the M16A2s. Where U.S. troops go, we go.

NEW ALLIANCE FOR POW/MIA ... *National Alliance of Families for the Return of America's Missing Servicemen World War II, Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War* is the long but accurate name of a new and first-rate organization that is already effectively shaking the bushes to do just what their name implies. This all-volunteer (no paid staff), level-headed, totally committed and *effective* organization is only a couple months old, but has already had dramatic success in putting this issue before the American people and politicians via the press. We recently had the pleasure of meeting with their national chairperson, Dolores Alford, and came away with the opinion that this energetic organization is 1) coming from the right direction, 2) heading in the right direction, 3) very competent, 4) has all the right motives, 5) has the moral stamina for the long haul it will take to get action out of the U.S. Government and 6) is entirely deserving of our support. Contact them at Dept. SOF, 5503 17th Ave. N.W., P-200, Seattle, WA 98107 (phone 206-783-1499) and learn what they're all about. Throw in a buck or two to help

with mailing expenses — remember they're all volunteer. But they have their act together and are poised, if we give them the support they deserve, to see this one through.

FOR SALE: SANDINISTA ARMY ... We're *not* making this up: For sale FOB Cortino, Nicaragua, by broker for Sandinistas — 25,000 AKMS assault rifles, 1,000 Type 58 light machine guns, 2,000 PKM light machine guns, 14 million rounds of rifle-caliber ammo, 500 82mm mortars and 10,000 rounds of ammo for same, 20 152mm D-20 howitzers, 10 BM-21 MRLs, 20 BMP APCs, 20 BTR-60 APCs, 200 IFA military transport trucks, 200 120mm mortars and 4,000 rounds of ammo, 1,000 RPG-7 rocket launchers, 100 T-55 medium tanks, 50 T-62 medium tanks, 20 Romanian-made ICA (Aerospatale) AR 330 "Puma" helicopters, a fine assortment of Mi-8, Mi-17, and Mi-25 helicopters, plus 20mm AA guns, interceptor radar systems, 155mm field guns, 122mm BM-25 advanced rocket launcher systems, SAM systems and more. *Serious, financially/legally qualified buyers only* may contact us and we'll put you in touch with the broker.

GRITZ'S LATEST FANTASY ... Here's a hot flash I'll bet you didn't know: the CIA was running drugs to support the contras, so friendlies would get control of Nicaragua, so we could plant 200 atom bombs in Nicaragua and blow a new Pacific/Atlantic canal. "Bo" Gritz stated in a recent speech in Santa Barbara that "When I was commander of Special Forces for Latin America [sic] these plans were already laid out." Heh, heh. Well, there's an *element* of truth in there. Back in the 1880s when it was

obvious a canal across the isthmus would be of great benefit, Uncle Sam was seriously studying a canal through Nicaragua, because connecting the two oceans via Lake Nicaragua would give us the additional benefit of an inland sea where we could station naval power to protect our interests from the French and British navies. Why was it not done then? In one of history's flukes, the day before the U.S. Congress was to select a Nicaraguan or Panamanian route, a congressman who was a stamp collector received a new Nicaraguan stamp, which pictured Lake Nicaragua ... with an active volcano in the background. Well, it would never do, of course, to route a canal past an active volcano, so the Panamanian route was selected. The Nicaraguan route is still feasible, and someday it may well be done. But with 200 nukes?? Bo, did they change your medication or something? The bright promising star of nuclear demolitions has dimmed under the cloud of actual experience. Ask the Soviets about their luck building dams and canals with nukes.

GUN HAMS ... A new pro-gun amateur radio net is alive and well at 28.486. Tune in.

FREE PASSPORT TO CEMETERY ... If traveling overseas primarily to visit the place of burial or memorialization of vets buried or commemorated on the Tablets of the Missing of permanent American military cemeteries on foreign soil, immediate family members may be eligible for "non-fee" or "no-fee" passports. For additional information, write: American Battle Monuments Commission, Dept. SOF, Room 5127, Pulaski Building, 20 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20314.

SF FATALITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ... According to a statistical study done by U.S. Adolph for *The Drop* magazine, 42% of the SF fatalities in SEA were caused by small arms fire; 4% occurred in Laos, 12% in Cambodia and the rest in Vietnam.

AIR DRUG WAR WON?? ... Rep. Nicholas Mavroules (D-Mass.), chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations says in a report that the extensive military network of radar, aerostat balloons and recon aircraft is discouraging drug smuggling by air. That's the good news. Bad news is "the chief threat to our national security in the 1990s may well come from hordes of red tomato cans" as on the ground dope continues to come in on trucks hidden in cans of food, computer games and other items of legitimate commerce. ✂

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WORLD SITREP

ARGENTINA: has agreed to scuttle plans to market Condor missile; we will buy 500 trainer planes from them as consolation ... **AUSTRALIA:** we'll be pulling out of Aussie/U.S. sub base in Western Australia soon; Greenpeace et al. getting to be too much ... **BURMA:** honchos from Burma's voted-out military regime sought assurance of asylum if necessary from Thai defense minister Chaovalit Yongchaiyut; it was granted, but now Chaovalit is out, leaving ousted brass looking for new escape route ... **BULGARIA:** non-communist Union of Democratic forces having hard time of it — in one week they lost four officials (two car accidents, one shooting, one fell down an elevator shaft) ... **CANADA:** coming under fire from human-rights organiza-



tions for drugging people who resist deportation ... **CHILE:** locals miffed as departing Pinochet's people stripped the palace of furniture, rugs, computers, cars ... **CZECHOSLOVAKIA:** at Warsaw Pact meeting in Prague, Czechs proposed complete disbanding of Warsaw Pact by 1991; Poland, Hungary agreed, USSR wants to study on it a while ... **ETHIOPIA:** 12 generals killed in housecleaning after thwarted coup attempt ... **FIJI:** closed Indian Embassy in retaliation for India's reaction to new military regime's constitution, which puts Fiji's 47% population of ethnic Indians at disadvantage ... meanwhile courting both PRC and Taiwan for aid ... **FRG:** reportedly considering adopting MiG-29 Fulcrum fighters for a mixed East/West German air force, and dropping out of Eurofighter program; maybe they could get some used ones from Castro for hard currency ... businessman Juergen Hippenstiel-Imhausen sentenced to five years

for his role in helping Libya build chemwar factory ... **HONDURAS:** since February election in Nicaragua, Honduran authorities have caught 19 arms shipments from Nicaragua en route to the FMLN in El Salvador ... **HUNGARY:** parliament voted overwhelmingly to immediately suspend participation in Warsaw Pact, eventually withdraw completely ... of the some 15,000 apartments that housed Soviet soldiers/families, many are now "unfit for human habitation," will be razed ... **INDIA:** has deployed their new Bofors 155mm howitzers in Kashmir, Jammu and in the Punjab; although they have 400 new guns there is almost no ammunition ... **INDONESIA:** Aceh Province's nationalist movement active again, this time with Libyan support, increasing clashes between troops and insurgents, some 200 weapons recently stolen, 150 separatists recently returned from Libya ... **IRAQ:** you've heard the news; SOF is en route as we go to press to bring you the inside, in-depth story ... **ISRAEL:** IDF officials worried over rash of suicides, have established hotline for soldiers ... **JAPAN:** signing some tentative contracts with Cuba, securing a market should Cuba's economy improve, such as after Castro gets

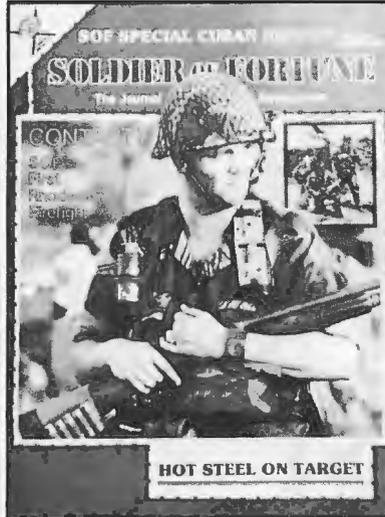
the axe ... **KENYA:** dozens killed in rioting after prominent supporters of political pluralism were detained by government ... **LIBYA:** crash UN program to stem American screw-worm epidemic; fly lays eggs in wounds on cattle, can kill 20% of infected herds ... **LITHUANIA:** plans to establish itself as refuge for Soviet Jews in case Soviet anti-Semitism continues to escalate. ... **PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** Bougainville Revolutionary army under Francis Ona declared independence from PNG; PNG has blockaded island, now without food, fuel, communications ... **NIGERIA:** talk of reducing the size of army, which gets bored and stages coups, as a way to avoid them; had six coups or attempts since independence, the last one in April ... **NORTH KOREA:** wants to withdraw from Non-Proliferation Treaty, probably to build their own nukes ... Korean People's Army showing restlessness over Kim Il Sung's plans to turn reins over to his pup, Kim

Il ... **PAKISTAN:** has produced new-generation Stinger-type missile ANZA2, claims 95% accuracy at third the cost of Stingers ... **PERU:** mass prison break by Victor Polay, 47 other pro-Cuban Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement members just days before leftist Garcia regime turned over power, has new FREDEMO coalition steamed ... **PHILIPPINES:** because of NPA attacks, U.S. service personnel drawing \$110/month hazardous duty pay ... **PRC:** nearly 30% of this year's budget for the People's Liberation Army to go for "internal ideological campaigns" to bolster PLA loyalty to central government ... **ROMANIA:** so far only 21 old-regime officers selected to stand trial ... over 10,000 rallied in Bucharest to protest continued repression ... **SOMALIA:** over 100 killed, over 100 wounded when police fired on crowd of "provocateurs" at a soccer match who began throwing rocks at President Mohammed Siad Barre; SOF's socio-political analysts have determined WW III will start at soccer match ... **SRI LANKA:** renewed fierce fighting between Tamil Tigers and police/soldiers; 600 dead in one week of fighting, including 300 police/soldiers; preoccupied with Kashmir, Indians staying neutral — so far ... **SWITZERLAND:** has put on hold its acquisition of 34 F-18 Hornets to take second look at Mirage 2000-5 ... **SYRIA:** now has more tanks than Hitler did when he invaded Czechoslovakia ... **UKRAINE:** has voted to go it alone, declared sovereignty from USSR; say they will raise own army and mint own money — let's hope they can make it stick ... **USSR:** now admits it took three missiles to shoot down Gary Powers, and that one of those missiles shot down a Sov fighter by mistake ... head of Soviet TV fears "orgy of democracy" with loosened controls on state monopoly of TV [translation: "I'm losing my market for pap"] ... **VENEZUELA:** President Carlos Perez has provided men for Violeta Chamorro's private bodyguard ... **VIETNAM:** now exchanging military attaches with Thailand, has agreed to exchange commanding officers, share military information ... sniveling to PRC for aid, now that Sovs are closing the spigot ... KGB official shot on street (survived) nobody seems to know who did it (wasn't us) ... ✂

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CONGRESSIONAL KUDOS ... What a personal and professional pleasure it must be for you and your staff at *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine to look back at the last 15 years and realize your contribution to changing world history. I am honored to be part of this momentous anniversary. I am happy that it is also a celebration of solid American values and our shared love for freedom.

Congratulations on a job well done. There is much work still ahead for those of us committed to democracy and freedom for the world, but I have few doubts that we are on a sure road to victory.

Sincerely,
Charles Wilson,
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
2nd District, Texas

CANADIAN KUDOS ... "Stay true to principle and stay the course," Robert K. Brown advises President Bush in his editorial "Liberate Lithuania" (*SOF*, July '90). Brown is absolutely correct. It's impossible to get thugs and bullies to improve their behavior by giving in to them!

The Soviet Union invaded and occupied three independent countries — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — in June 1940. These were small, democratic countries. To this day, the Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians want nothing more than Americans and

Canadians enjoy: namely the right to be free from a foreign invader; the right to elect their own leaders, and the right to determine their own national destiny.

It is sad to see President Bush — and our own Canadian leaders are just as bad — more afraid to criticize the Soviet oppressor than to stand up for the Baltic victims. We must remember that if we refuse to stand up for the freedoms of others, we are very likely, through our moral cowardice, to lose our own.

Sincerely,
V. Cinis,
A loyal Canadian reader of *SOF*

BILL OF RIGHTS: PACKAGE DEAL

... There is something that bothers me about the format of your magazine. Actually it is something that is missing. What I want to know is why the single-minded protection of the 2nd Amendment and not the whole Bill of Rights? I would like a little coverage of the suppression of the 4th and 5th amendments.

Richard Teague
Rock Springs, Wyoming

Rest assured we regard every amendment in our Bill of Rights as inviolate and equally important. There are two reasons we tend to emphasize the importance of the 2nd Amendment: the first reason is why the Founding Fathers put it in the Constitution to begin with — that the 2nd Amendment was intended to ensure the American

people would be able to take up their own arms to protect their other guaranteed liberties from a tyrant. Even most communist countries have high-sounding constitutions that "guarantee" various "liberties," but they're not worth the paper they're written on, because the promise of a "right" that doesn't include the in-place mechanism to A: exercise that right, and B: defend that right, for all practical purposes does not exist. The men who framed the Constitution were not merely idealists. They were men of considerable experience, who realized that not only can any people fall victim to outside attack, but that the reins of any nation may fall into the hands of a tyrant — and that the only ultimate defense against both would be individually armed citizens. The second reason we take pains to defend the 2nd Amendment is that the 2nd Amendment is under unprecedented attack, and if we don't defend it, we will lose it. And if we lose our right to keep and bear arms in defense of ourselves, our liberties, and our nation, we can readily lose them all.

OUR TAX MONEY, FOR IRAN? ...

After the earthquake hit Iran, I read two articles in the *Washington Post*: the first one was about all the aid the U.S. was sending them. The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance was sending \$300,000 worth of equipment, tents, medical supplies, etc. The second article about the earthquake quoted an Iranian newspaper, "Even from under the rubble our people chant death to America ... We will cut off the hands of the United States." This bothered the shit out of me.

Our government was sending equipment, bought with our tax money, to people who still hate our guts. The same people who held our embassy staff hostage and terrorized them, the same people responsible for the killing of 200 of our Marines in Lebanon, the same people supporting the terrorists still holding American hostages in Lebanon. How quickly we forget. Who the hell is running our government?

Is there any way you could find out who made the decision to send our tax money to help one of our worst enemies? Please print their names and addresses in your next issue, so that we could write them and let them know just

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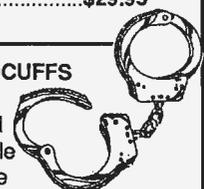
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how we feel. Thank you.
A pissed-off taxpayer,
Jim Bernazani
Manassas, Virginia

Regarding who runs our government, WE do, of course, since we choose our elected representatives. But like a flyer who would put his plane on auto pilot and crawl in the back for a nap, the American electorate never seems to tend to business after an election. We put the day-to-day running of our government in the hands of an unsavory mix of the politicians we elect and the bureaucrats they hire, then sit back and bitch to each other about what they do. That's like one farmer who bitches to another about his hired help, but never takes the help behind the woodshed for a session of attitude adjustment. The only way the help knows their job is in danger is if you remind them. Constantly. Remember, someone who goes into politics instead of taking an honest job bears continual watching. Jim, you have the right idea, so remember the chain of command flows from the voter to the politician to the bureaucrat, but it's up to you to rattle that chain. It could very well have been some bureaucrat who made the decision to send \$300,000 to Iran instead of to friends in need (\$300,000 decisions are made by pretty low-level flunkies in Washington), but the names and addresses of your elected representatives should be on the wall of your local post office. And when you write, ask them if they trust the people who elected them to keep and bear arms.

IT WASN'T FOR NAUGHT ... Mr. Brown: Could you do me and about 3,000,000 other guys a favor? Could you mention something about the contribution made by Vietnam veterans to the collapse of global communism?

The American Left has tried to make the case that Vietnam veterans contributed nothing to anything. The historical truth is otherwise.

Mario Garcia

Global communism is hurting, but only time will tell if it has indeed collapsed or if they have merely been forced to fall back, regroup and change hats. There are several factors that

have caused this — nothing on a global scale is really simple — but one major factor surely has been that communist economies can't stand the strain of war; and win, lose or draw, those who laid their life on the line for liberty in Vietnam helped strain the fubar economies of bloc countries past their point of resilience. And there were other, more tangible benefits to liberty in Southeast Asia — our fight in Vietnam bought time for other countries, such as Thailand, to defeat communism and remain democratic. It is our opinion that any man who at any time fights for liberty makes an important contribution, whether the results are immediately obvious or not.

WRITE A WRITER ... I am researching the following operations in the Vietnam war: Starlite, Cedar Falls, Junction City, battle for Dakto, battle for Lang Vei; firefights at the presidential palace, radio station, SVN JCoF HQ and any other attacks by VC C-10 Bn during Tet 1968. I wish to correspond with participants from either side of these actions.

Your valuable contributions will be greatly appreciated.

Philip Cheung 2/F,
80 Tung Lo Wan Rd.,
Tai Hang, Hong Kong

STANDARD RIFLE SHOOTERS IN DUTCH ... The Netherlands are no longer able to enjoy the yearly Colt Cup Rifle Match in Wallington, Connecticut, since the enactment of the new Dutch firearms law. The new law demands military-style firearms be "adapted" to conform with the Dutch firearms law. Since the match requires rifles must be "standard," Dutch rifle enthusiasts are no longer able to join the Colt Cup.

Official Dutch Government game keepers are no longer permitted to carry a firearm, according to new government regulations, following the new firearms law. It is no longer considered "necessary." If criminals advance on game keepers, they are advised get out as fast as they can run and call police. This is absolutely ridiculous, being in a forest that at night is commonly crowded with armed marauders, and that is being used by more and more drug addicts and dealers. In addition, IRA members have

recently been arrested in Belgian and Dutch woods.

Robert F. de Ruyter
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

LIVING HISTORY ... As a history teacher of 23 years, may I say "excellent work, 100%!" on your magazine. Quite a number of my students now read it.

Thomas A. Balas
Clay, New York

SOF INTELLIGENT?? ... I am a recent reader of SOF, and I was pleasantly surprised to find it an intelligent, informative, entertaining magazine. I do not subscribe to all your views but there are many points of view and news items that, if it were not for SOF, would probably never see the light of day. So much for your pat on the back.

I want to encourage all SOF readers and anyone concerned about the MIA/POWs still abandoned in Southeast Asia to view the video *We Can Keep You Forever*, by American Videos. I have just viewed it for the first time after renting it from a local video store and it is definitely an eye-opener and a motivator. There is no excuse for our government's lackadaisical attitude, and we have no excuse for going along with it. If not for a private effort from committed individuals, the truth about the MIA/POW situation in Southeast Asia may never see the light of day.

H.A. Rutter
Lincoln, Nebraska

Thanks for your kind words. We try to be informative, and if you perceive us as intelligent we won't tell you any different. See the May '89 issue of SOF for John Coleman's review of We Can Keep You Forever, and this issue's Bulletin Board for info on a right-on MIA/POW organization.

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✉

Danny Sullivan on the Winner's Circle.

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Danny Sullivan. Winner of the Indy 500.

I WAS THERE

by Jack Street

Panama Pucker Factor

IT is really going to happen, just as I've dreamed. Panama bound, to kill or die. We're finally ready to do what we've been training for, albeit sometimes unwillingly. Slowly, over the last few days of preparation, the true implications of what we're facing has struck me. Death, when its ponderous specter squats closely beside you, is cold, very cold and very lonely.

One hundred and twenty or so combat-equipped paratroopers are sandwiched into each C-141 Starlifter, Panama bound. Four parallel rows, the length of the fuselage, are strapped into canvas-netting seats facing each other for the trip to capture Omar Torrijos International Airport.

I'm about five jumpers from the nose of the bird, near the last of those to exit the left door. On my right is a stone silent staff sergeant. To my front an Air Force master sergeant and a special forces captain, both with CAR-15s and 9mm pistols. On my left is Private First Class Murphy, my brand new rifleman, fresh out of basic training and airborne school — the only other member of my squad besides me on that bird.

Freezing, drizzling, blowing rain is the order of the night at Fort Bragg on 19 December 1989. Everyone is wearing sweaters, gloves, long john tops ... whatever, to keep warm as the hours crazily spin on toward load time. Outdoors since noon, we're cold, soaked, and tired, operations planning and preparations stealing all but a few hours sleep from the last three days.

"Let's just get this damn thing over with," is the consensus.

"That's why we do well in war," says one. "The Army so thoroughly thrashes us before battle, the fighting part is easy."

In line at the tail of the aircraft is each bird's paratroop load, drawing parachutes and grunting and sweating into harnesses. In the rain.

I look down the parking lane and see



Another paratrooper jumps into combat.

141s fading into the wet mist, a trail of troops behind each gaping, lighted ramp, and flightline personnel desperately crawling over the airplanes, blasting wings with de-icers trying to maintain air-worthiness. I have to urinate, so I do. Right there, along with others, I simply turn outwards from the parachute issue line and piss, already standing in an inch of ice cold rain water.

Once loaded and airborne, we begin to remember it will be hot in Panama. Slowly, our situation precluding much movement, we take turns discarding clothing.

Murphy, having to remove a sweater and overshirt, takes off his parachute harness. Once I help him do that and re-rig, he asks me to re-inspect his harness assembly.

Why, I think to myself, at 500 feet there won't be time to activate a reserve chute anyway.

I look at him, and through a dry throat say, "OK," and proceed. Once done, his smile of relief says it all. He had counted on me as a jumpmaster and his leader to look out for him, and I had. I return his smile and sit down. I hope I look confident; I sure don't feel it.

We doze as best we can during alternate periods of cold and hot, combat aircraft systems being what they are.

"Twenty minuuutes!" the jumpmaster for this flight sounds off with the warning. Oh hell, here it goes.

Oh God, this is for real, I think. God, please don't let me be bayoneted when I hit the ground. Anything but the bayonet.

We slowly put on our helmets and poke our buddies awake.

"Teeeen minuuutes!"

Shit, we're really at war. Deep breath. The air inside the plane is hot.

"Get readyyyyy!"

We unfasten seatbelts. I look at Murphy; he's wide-eyed. I jab him in the ribs and say, "Let's go crazy,"

sneering. He smiles a bit, and I hope I've made him feel a bit easier. I feel coldly neutral at this point.

"Outboard personnel, staaaand uppp!"

The captain, master sergeant and the rest of their aisle bobble up onto their seats, grabbing our wrists and hauling themselves up.

"Inboard personnel, staaaand uppp!"

They help us onto our feet. We put up our seats, rotating them up into the brackets and fastening them with Velcro, allowing more aisle room. The outboard personnel get off their seats and do the same.

"Hooook uppp!"

We hook our parachute lines to the cables running lengthwise along the aircraft ceiling. Our rucksacks are so

laden with ammo and equipment, we have to attempt a sort of hop to reach the cable and pull it down so we can hook up.

God, I feel like throwing up. My rucksack is so heavy I sink to my knees, along with most others. Sweat drips steadily from my brow onto my nose. It tickles, but that feeling is so alien to the present situation that I ignore it. I struggle back up.

"Check statiiic liiines!"

We check our hook-up line to make sure it's not misrouted around arms or equipment.

"Check equipmeent!"

We ensure our equipment is all secure, weapon and ruck ready to go.

Oh Christ, please let's get outta this plane! The bird has been rocking and jinking to avoid antiaircraft fire and people are getting airsick very fast. I've never been airsick before, but I feel the stuff welling up in my throat. All I want is out of the plane at this point. Combat or no, I'll take my chances on the ground rather than this adrenaline-pumped, bile-tasting, roller coaster hellishness.

"Sound off for equipment check!"

This is the last command until GO, when we begin to exit. They can be the longest or shortest minutes of your life.

Thank goodness, about three minutes till jump. Let's get out! Murphy turns to look — as if I'd left. I grin at him and he grins back. Everything seems in slow motion at this point. Murphy continually turns to look at me; I just look back with this crazy-ugly grin, growling, grunting, cursing. I don't feel dangerous, I just want to erase his fear, thereby ending mine.

"Thirty seconds!"

My anger wells up inside. I've gone this far, let me out. I want out! I want to fight, I want to jump, I want to stop the whine of jet-turbines in my ears. My pack weighs me back down to my knees, hard upon the aluminum deck of the aircraft.

"GOOOO!"

I heard the command from far off toward the tail of the plane. Murphy and I struggle off our knees; we all penguin-hobble toward the door as the plane empties. Over the shoulders of the troops ahead of me I can see the jump caution light turn from green to red.

There is no way in hell I've come this far without jumping! I think to myself so I yell GO! GO! GOOOO!...

The staff sergeant behind me must feel the same way, for he echoes my guttural yells. Pushing up against the troops ahead of me, I wade toward the door, the door that will release me from the airborne hell of this combat flight.

Eight troops, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one ... shit, I'm at the door ...

Whoooosh!

Another paratrooper jumps into combat. ☒

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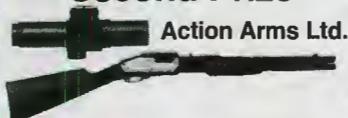
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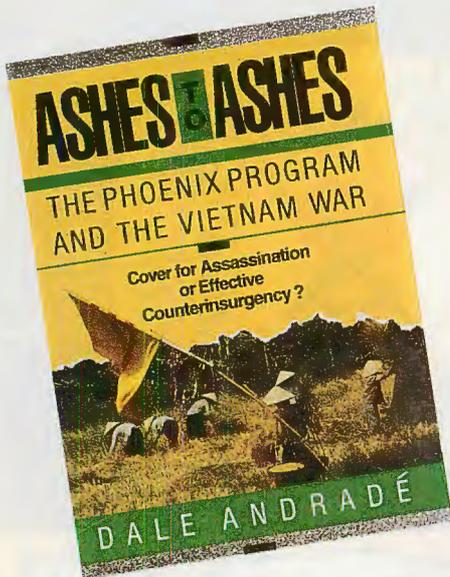
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IN REVIEW



DALE Andradé is a noted military historian and former editor of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, whose specialty is the Vietnam War. Drawn by the mystery surrounding the name "Phoenix" and the ugly press the name continues to draw, Andradé has written the first in-depth examination of what really took place in the Phoenix Program from 1967 until its demise. **Ashes to Ashes** (Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company) cuts through all the myths, lies and half-truths that have surrounded the program and enshrouded it in rumor.

The Phoenix Program was envisioned as a means of destroying the VCI (Viet Cong Infrastructure), and that took on many interpretations. To the United States Army it was a plan designed to strip the military of its control over the war; to the government of South Vietnam it was another stupid American idea good only for lip service; to the anti-war element, Phoenix was a criminal extension of an immoral foreign policy; while still others saw it as a necessary counterinsurgency action which came far too late.

Drawing on interviews with former Phoenix operatives, classified documents and many unpublished sources, the book gives a balanced story of the birth and evolution of Phoenix. Another interesting aspect of **Ashes to Ashes** is its study of the components of Phoenix: the Vietnamese National Police, the National Police Field Force, Regional

and Popular forces, the unpaid Self-Defense Forces, and the Phoenix "tough guys" — the PRU (Provisional Reconnaissance Units). **Ashes to Ashes** answers key questions surrounding this mysterious program in clear textbook fashion, and Andradé passes along what we learned — and failed to learn — from the whole Phoenix experience.

Reviewer Bill Brooks is *SOF's* contributing editor for military history.

IT must have been a scenario as old as soldiering: an old veteran recounts war stories to a trusted acquaintance, and suddenly his one-man audience remarks, "This would make a good book. Seriously, you ought to put this on paper some day." Such must have been the essence of the conversation while Alonso de Contreras was staying at the house of the prolific Spanish playwright Lope de Vega in 1652. Eight years later, while waiting for a ship to take him from Palermo to Malta after having quarreled with the Spanish viceroys of Sicily and Naples, Contreras finally found the occasion to write down the story of his tumultuous life and times and, once he got rolling, he covered 51 swashbuckling years in 11 days. "If God grants me longer life and if anything of interest happens, I shall add it to this story," he concluded but, whatever became of him thereafter, he expanded no further on his autobiography.

After more than 200 years in the limbo of the Madrid archives, Contreras' papers were published in the *State Historical Bulletin* in the late 19th century. Then, they were rediscovered by British author Philip Dallas, who has translated them into English for the first time, and put them in historical context. The result is **The Adventurers of Captain Alonso de Contreras: A 17th Century Journey** (translated and annotated by Philip Dallas, Paragon House), one of the freshest first-hand looks at professional soldiering to come out in centuries.

Besides providing a rare look at everyday life in a Spanish empire at the height of its power and at the threshold of its decline, Contreras' no-nonsense narrative gives an even rarer insight into an outstanding but nonetheless representative example of the men who went to war to defend Christendom from a still-formidable Ottoman Empire in the

Mediterranean, and protect Spanish imperial interests against the growing maritime challenge of England. A restless, homicidal juvenile delinquent at age 14, Alonso de Contreras resisted his mother's entreaties that he become a silversmith, choosing instead to become a career soldier at 15. By the age of 20, he was a sea captain and a seasoned veteran ... although not always in Spanish service. He had a knack for getting into trouble and making enemies, which forced him to desert on several occasions — only to fight on as a mercenary in another army or navy that shared a common cause with his Spanish homeland, most notably the Knights of Malta. Eventually, his service record would reinstate him into the Spanish service. Contreras also managed to make a name for himself among his principle adversaries, the Turks: at one point, bulletins bearing his face and the inscription "Wanted by the Turks, good bounty paid," were posted in seaports throughout the Mediterranean.

As noteworthy as Contreras' escapades is the straightforward way in which he describes them. Although his powers of recall over the past years of his life are equalled by his ability to record them, he is fundamentally a soldier, not a writer. He tends to avoid the flowery prose associated with his era, using just enough to tell the stories. He does not exaggerate much — none of his feats of derring-do are beyond the abilities of a well-trained, well-conditioned mortal — and, most commendably, he does not omit his less-laudible deeds. His exploits and follies alike are matter-of-factly — and quite believably — described in their chronological turn.

Lively, fast-paced and action-packed, **The Adventures of Captain Alonso de Contreras** is heartily recommended to any *Soldier of Fortune* reader in search of something different. For all the changes in ideology and technology over 360 years, the reader will find something universal in the soul of this 17th-century mercenary that makes his story not so much a relic as it is a mirror — and may discover that they are not all that different, after all.

Reviewer Jon Guttman is the former editor of *Modern Warfare* magazine and is currently research director for *Empire Press*. ✕

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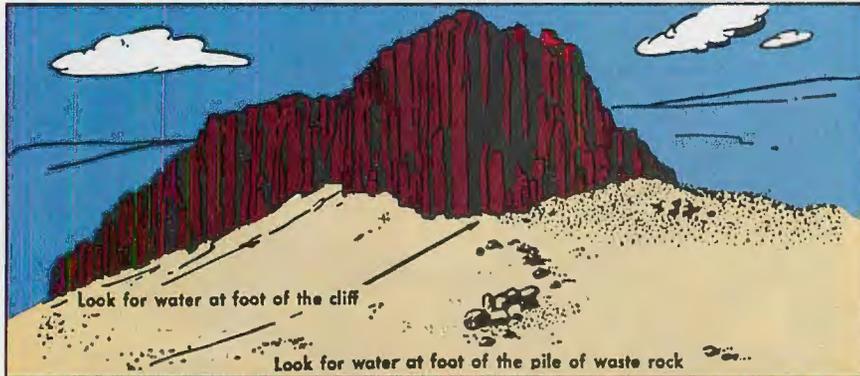
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COMBAT CRAFT

by I.W. Cotham

“First of Things is Water”



If running or standing water is not available, look for it in these places where it naturally collects. Notice greenery, hovering insects, animal scratchings to pinpoint seeps. Stand back and carefully study terrain features as shown above for clues where to look,

GREEK philosopher Miletus noted that “The First of Things is Water.” Man is mostly water. Without it he will die. Man can go days without food, but not long without water. Bare, inactive survival in the most favorable climate requires a quart of water a day. In hot climates a gallon or more is required, much more if you are active, *much* more than that if you are active in the heat of the day.

A man who has lost 2½% of his body weight in water (about a quart and a half) loses 25% of his efficiency. At a loss of 1-5%, man will experience thirst, vague discomfort, no appetite, flushed skin, impatience, sleepiness, increased pulse and nausea. With a loss of 6-10% he will experience dizziness, headache, labored breathing, cyanosis (blue skin), slurred speech and inability to walk. With a loss of 11-20% comes delirium, spasticity, swollen tongue, deafness, dim vision, shriveled skin, numbness of the skin and deficient urination. Death can soon follow. Watch for these symptoms.

When in a situation where water is likely to be scarce the best way to save your water is to save your sweat. Travel only in the cool of the night, wear all your clothing when ambient temperature is higher than yours. The decision whether to drink or save existing water depends on individual circumstances. Bear in mind that when you get dry you get goofy, and irrational actions in a survival situation can kill you before you die of dehydration. If you *know* you will run out of water, decide upon your course of action while you are lucid, and memorize it or write it down. You will be more

apt to follow it when you are in distress later on. Now is the time to start looking for water, not after you run out and are weakened. Most environs will provide water if you know how to find and prepare it.

We will cover basic principles and specific techniques, as circumstances can vary widely depending on environs and available tools. The first step is to *find* water, then you can worry if it is fit to drink!

In arctic regions, snow, glacial ice or old sea ice (which loses much of its salt) are the obvious supplies. As long as they are not salty they are fine as is. Melt in the sun or over a fire, or *slowly* in your

mouth (you can frostbite your lips and tongue). Always melt before ingesting if you can — it is safer and will save valuable calories.

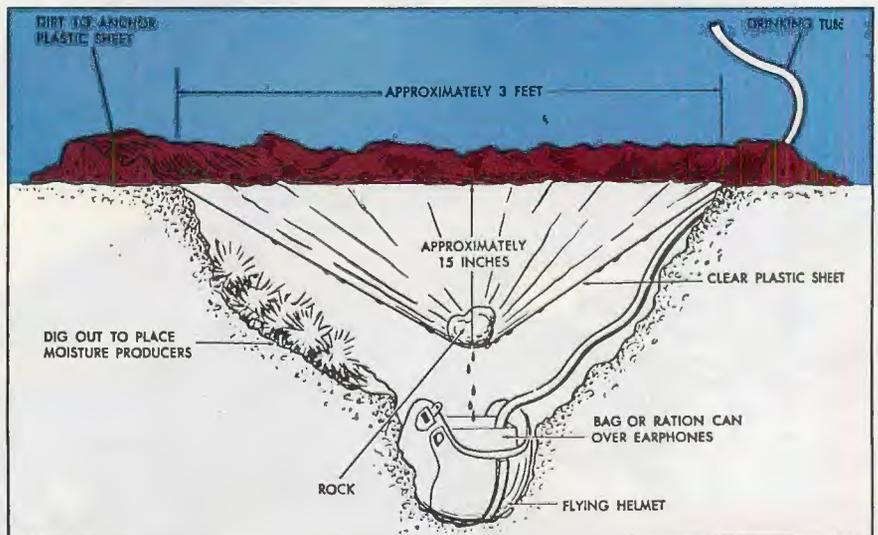
In temperate regions you will find streams and ponds at low points in the topography. Water from a fast-moving stream will likely be good, as oxygen worked into it keeps harmful bacteria to a minimum. Check upstream for a hundred yards or so to ensure there isn't a winter-kill carcass or some other pollutant before you drink.

If streams have dried up, the bottom of a stream bed is still the best place to look. Dig deep holes if you find damp sand, and wait for the water to seep in. Study the stream bed to try and figure where the lowest bedrock under the sand is likely to be. On mountainsides, look for ledges with the greenest grass and do the same.

Most rock formations, even in semi-arid areas, will either divert or hold water. Look for formations that can catch or channel water into springs or seeps. Study the terrain, bearing in mind that water runs downhill. Water can also collect underground atop impervious clay formations. Save digging for water until the last resort, and when you do, use a tool even if it is only a stick or a flat rock. Your ultimate survival will depend on the use of your hands, feet and eyes.

In both temperate and arid regions, watch where animals and birds go at

If no water is found, anything damp — biomass, wet sand, even human waste — can be distilled in a solar still. No plastic? Use vehicle windshield. No container? Use hollowed-out cactus or tuber or bark. Never quit. Build more than one still if you have materials.



dusk and dawn — they probably are going for water. In areas of scarce water, you may thus find food and water at the same place. Look for low, damp points where animals have been digging, or where flies hover; that is a likely place to dig a seep hole.

If no running or standing water is available, and seep holes net nothing, the next best source is plants. Sweet (not bitter, wood taste OK) tree sap is usually not toxic. Cut a hole through the bark and insert the barrel of a pen or a hollow reed just to, but not through, the cambium (inner) layer of bark. In winter or early spring in temperate climates or after a rain in the desert, sap will flow copiously. If the sap is bitter, it can still be used as feed for your solar still. Most fruits and cactus are a fair source of water, directly or as feed for a solar still. An average barrel cactus will provide about a quart of milky juice (one of the very few milky plant juices it is safe to drink), if you break the top off and mash the inside with a rock, or break out pieces and suck the juice. Prickly pear pads are a source of water *and* food if you burn off the spines and peel them.

Animals are also a source of moisture. Rain, dew or frost can be collected on plastic, a tarp, vehicle parts or even cloth or moss and wrung or sucked dry. You may not be as fortunate as Gideon and get a bowl full from a fleece, but in many areas dew and frost are a signifi-

cant water source.

In a jungle or tropical setting, water usually abounds. Aside from streams, ponds and swamps (in order of preference as standing water sources), vines (particularly rattan palm), fruit, coconuts, and mature (yellow) bamboo sections contain water. Palm fronds can be cut off and a container tied to them to catch the drip. Banana plants can be cut to a stump, and the stump hollowed out to provide a basin for sap to collect in. Banana leaves make excellent rain water catches. It is a good idea to plan jungle shelters that will also act as water catches if no other source is evident.

At sea, the best water source is to have a solar still or reverse-osmosis type filter on board, which can actually produce potable water from sea water. They, along with backpack-stowable filters that will filter out bacteria, are available at survival and mountaineering stores. They are expensive, but they are worth it. Barring these you are limited to catching rain and dew and drinking juices from fish or birds that come your way. Plan *before* it rains on how you will catch it: let it collect in the bilge of your boat (for this reason keep a clean bilge), collect it in a tarp, even in cloth. If you have no storage ability on board, drink all you can, every time you can.

Once you find water, you must deal with the reality that not all water is drinkable. Drinking water that gives you

amoebic dysentery is the straightest shortcut to death by dehydration there is. If you are living out of a survival pack, you will have Halazone tablets or an equivalent (eight drops of 2½% iodine per quart, 20 drops of chlorine bleach per quart, etc.). Let the water sit long enough for sediment to settle, and let the treated water sit long enough for the microbicides to work before drinking.

Boiling water for one minute at sea level — plus a minute for every thousand feet of elevation — will kill harmful microbes and parasites. You do not have to have a pot to boil water. Hollow out a log or make another suitable container, pour in the water and put hot rocks into it until it boils (allow room for the rocks when filling the container with water). An open-topped section of green bamboo placed at the edge of a fire works well in the tropics.

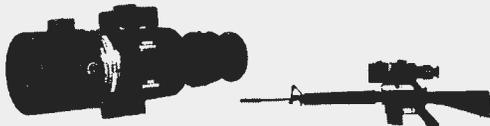
"Poison" water is very, very rare. The alkali water often found in desert settings is usually safe unless it tastes so salty or soapy you cannot get it down. The various chloride and sulfate salts found in these "alkali" springs is dangerous primarily if concentrated enough to cause diarrhea, which in turns leads to dehydration. If there is an abundance of wildlife evident in the water it probably will be OK from a chemical standpoint, but it still should

Continued on page 79

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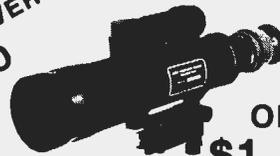
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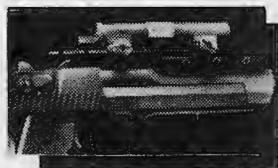
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JUST CAUSE JAILBREAK

U.S. Delta Force Rescues American in Panama

by Neil Livingstone



*To Kurt Muse
With best wishes,
to a great American*

George Bush

Kurt Muse meets with George Bush at White House. Photo: courtesy Neil Livingstone

Kurt Muse, an American citizen born and raised in Panama, had been in Panama's Modelo Prison for months (see SOF, Oct. '90). His pirate radio station, Radio Libertad, had harassed dictator Manuel Noriega relentlessly, providing uncensored, and unlawful, radio broadcasts. When the CIA became aware of the job being done by independents they provided some equipment for the cause, but the

operation remained essentially an independent effort. Finally Muse's luck ran out and he was caught and thrown into prison.

Muse's family escaped and kept pressure on various government agencies in the United States. Letters from the Muse family eventually reached President Bush, who took a personal interest in the case. He ultimately decided that Muse, as the man who had played a key role in rallying the

opposition to Noriega, deserved to be rescued. As planning for Operation Just Cause went into high gear, the elite U.S. Delta Force was given the job of rescuing Kurt Muse.

Unaware of this, Muse sat in his cell, aware from the atmosphere around the prison that something really big was about to happen. He had been assured by his captors that he would be executed immedi-

ately if there were any attempt to rescue him — one guard was assigned to Muse alone. Just past midnight on 19 December Muse was awakened by a burst of gunfire. After a few seconds of dead quiet he heard footsteps pounding up the stairs toward his cell. He grabbed his only weapon, the brace from under his bed, and waited for his executioner.

KURT Muse pressed his body against the floor in a vain effort to reduce his profile even more.

The running stopped across the corridor from his cell and a man began beating on the door of the officer's quarters. "Captain! Captain!," he shouted. "Something's happening."

"No shit," thought Muse.

Seconds later the door swung open and several officers rushed out into the corridor and followed the man downstairs. Once again the prison was engulfed in silence, but it only lasted a few seconds.

Suddenly, according to Muse, "World War III broke loose outside." Spectre gunships opened up on the Comandancia, ripping it apart. The sound of rockets and 105mm howitzers soon merged with the rhythmic noise of the Gatling guns aboard Spectre. Muse couldn't resist stealing a glance out the window and he was flabbergasted to see only a black hole and smoking ground where the PDF had spent so much time shoring up the Comandancia defenses.

The entire district around the Comandancia was soon plunged into darkness and Muse hit the deck again, "expecting at any moment for the guy to come shoot me."

The lights in the prison were also out, which was highly unusual since the prison maintained a backup generator. Whenever the lights had gone out before, the generator always kicked in immediately. But not this time. There was only one explanation: someone had to be inside the prison.

Outside, the war had resumed. Rockets, artillery, and miniguns lit up the night. Muse was rocked by a loud explosion within the prison, which lit up the place, blew his hair back, and sent debris flying into his cell. There was a second explosion, this one even closer, followed by submachine-gun fire, and then a third explosion, closer still, and more submachine-gun fire. The corridor outside Muse's cell was full of smoke. He could hear shouts, people running.

Then he saw what looked like "white laser beams" piercing through the smoke in the corridor: "It was like a light show." Suddenly, he remembers, "this apparition comes to my cell door. The guy looks like Darth Vader. He's wearing a funny looking helmet, funny looking goggles, funny looking uniform, and has a funny looking weapon."

"Moose! You OK?"

The apparition, a U.S. Delta Force commando, shined a light into Muse's cell and shouted, "Moose! You OK?"



Manuel Noriega and soulmate during happier days in Panama. Photo: courtesy Jack Finch

"Yo," answered Muse.

"Stay down! I'm going to blow the door."

There was a flash and a loud bang and before Muse knew it, the Delta operator was next to him. "We're here to take you out," he told Muse, holding him down until he finished giving him instructions. "We're going to the roof. We have a chopper. You're going to get in the middle. Do you understand?"

"You got it."

The din of the battle raging outside was deafening. Every few seconds his cell was illuminated by the flash of an explosion from the direction of the Comandancia.

The Delta man pulled Muse to his feet and put a flak vest and Kevlar helmet on him. Muse tried to buckle the helmet but his fingers seemed to lose their dexterity in the excitement of the moment and he gave up on it. Besides, his rescuer was already motioning him to follow.

Muse followed the Delta man out into the smoke-filled corridor and another commando stepped in behind them, protecting their rear. As they passed the officer's quarters across the hall, Muse could see that the door was open and the room appeared to be shot up, although he couldn't make out any bodies. At the end of the corridor there was an overturned desk riddled with bullet holes; Muse presumed that the guard designated to kill him was lying somewhere underneath. They started up a flight of stairs, joined by other Delta men who had been guarding the landings. Each of the iron gates leading to the roof had been blown off. On the third floor they passed a guard lying on the floor who had been handcuffed.

The four Delta men and Muse burst out onto the roof. They crouched down mo-

mentarily, and the leader of the unit cried, "Go!" They took off at a dead run for a tiny Hughes D-500 helicopter with pods on each side that was waiting for them. Known variously as "the bumblebee" and "the sewing machine," because it sounds like a Singer sewing machine, the chopper's rotor blades were spinning. "Four other people materialized out of the darkness," remembers Muse. Also Delta operators, they had set up a defensive perimeter around the chopper and had exchanged fire with the barracks used by the prison guards, which was located on the other side of a small courtyard, no more than 30 feet from the prison.

"Right across the street, beyond the barracks," says Muse, "the war's going on. Spectres are firing down. There are Blackhawks and other choppers buzzing about on the periphery unloading on the Comandancia. Smoke. Fire. Tracers going down, tracers going sideways, tracers coming toward us."

Chopper Crash

Muse jumped into the tiny chopper, with one man on either side of him, and three other Delta men on each pod. As the pilot began to lift off, they were hit by ground fire and one of the men on the pods took a round through the leg which lodged in his chest. The chopper veered off over the side of the building, narrowly missing the prison wall, and landed in the street. The pilot then drove the chopper down the street "as though it were a car," and hooked a left into a parking lot surrounded by several tall apartment buildings. Then he tried to take off again. This time, as soon as they were in the Comandancia's line of sight, they were hit again. This time they dropped out of the sky like a rock, falling about 30 feet

and crashing on the left pod, injuring all three men on that side.

Stunned but unhurt, and realizing their predicament, Kurt yelled to one of the Delta men, "Give me a weapon! I can help."

The man handed Muse his 9mm pistol and they exited the damaged chopper. He pointed at a stairwell leading into one of the apartment buildings, and they started off at a run. They hadn't gotten more than three steps, however, when the Delta operator went down like he'd been hit with a ton of bricks. Muse dropped to the ground and peered cautiously around for some sign of a sniper, but he couldn't see anything. The Delta man's face was covered with blood and his eyes were closed.

Suddenly, the man's eyes flickered open; to Muse it was "like the guy came back from the dead."

"Hey Moose! You OK?" he shouted to Muse.

"Forget about me," responded Muse. "What about you?"

It turned out the man had been hit a glancing blow on the helmet with one of the rotor blades and knocked unconscious. Muse had lost his helmet in the crash; had he been wearing it he probably would have been hit as well because of the additional height.

He and the stunned Delta man stumbled over to the stairwell and took cover for several minutes and watched as the other commandos carried the casualties away from the chopper and placed them behind a Jeep Wagoneer parked next to one of the buildings. The five uninjured commandos (including the pilot) then took up positions at the front and rear of the Jeep, and were soon joined by Muse and the other Delta man, who seemingly had shaken off the effects of the blow to the head.

Despite their injuries, the casualties — including a man with a chest wound, who was in bad shape — insisted on helping man the defenses. "Incredibly brave young men," insists Muse. "We had to sit on the guy with the chest wound to make him take it easy."

They soon saw a figure moving toward them on the edge of the parking lot. The commandos all drew a bead on the man and were ready to fire when Muse cried out, "Don't shoot!"

"I knew the guy was just a *curioso*, a curious person," he explains. "He clearly wasn't PDF or a Dingbat [member of Noriega's so-called Dignity Battalions]."

Muse hailed the man in Spanish and told him to get lost or he would be shot. The man needed little further inducement when he laid eyes on the black-suited Delta team with their strange weapons pointed at him. "He exited the area like the Road Runner," Muse laughs.

One of the problems confronted by U.S. planners of the invasion was that the PDF were largely outfitted by the United States. They wore the same BDUs, helmets, and tropical boots as American soldiers, and

often carried M16s. To distinguish between friend and foe, U.S. troops involved in the invasion wore infrared reflective tape on their helmets, arm bands, and epaulets, and also used night vision equipment. Infrared devices also were used for signaling purposes.

Call for Help

In order to summon help, one of the Delta men held up an infrared strobe light. Seconds later a Blackhawk screamed overhead, banked sharply to one side, and acknowledged the signal by wiggling its weapons pods. It wasn't long before they heard tracked vehicles coming toward them. Since they knew the PDF did not have tracked vehicles, "it had to be the cavalry." "Obviously they were plan B," observes Muse, "waiting to pick us up if something happened."

When the three armored personnel carriers (APCs) arrived, Muse and the Delta men loaded the wounded aboard and then scrambled in behind them. "We have the PC," radioed the driver of Muse's APC to his base, using Delta's codename for Muse. "We have the PC."

The driver of the lead APC apparently knew only one way of reaching the safety of the Canal Zone, and that was back up the street between the Comandancia and the prison, which was "ground zero" of the Panama invasion. Because of the heavy fire, the machine gunner in Kurt's APC slipped down inside as they passed the Comandancia, which was burning furiously. They could hear bullets, like hail on a tin roof, bouncing off the APC's armor. It was a rough ride, and Muse attempted to steady a Delta man's fractured leg across his lap. The man, who was wearing a bandoleer of shotgun shells, was in extreme pain and Muse kept reassuring him that everything would soon be alright.

As Muse peered up through the machine gunner's hole, he could see flames everywhere. The whole district was on fire. It had been set ablaze by Noriega's Dingbats, in what was perhaps the final, and in many respects the cruelest, act of a cruel regime. To Muse, the most amazing part of the evening was seeing Panamanians standing on the balconies of their burning apartment buildings, waving white handkerchiefs, flags, and towels, beating on pots and pans, and cheering the American APCs as they lumbered by. It is a memory, he says, that will stay with him as long as he lives.

Aftermath

They entered the relative safety of the Canal Zone near Balboa High School, and were immediately engulfed by medical personnel with stretchers, IVs and bandages. There were other American casualties at the location, including one soldier lying face down, naked, with a bullet wound in his back. When the casualties were prepped, they were loaded aboard Blackhawk helicopters for the short ride to Howard Air Force Base.

Muse was told to accompany the casualties aboard one of the choppers, and they put down next to a MASH unit. Rangers were standing guard, charged with the internal perimeter defense. Marines had been assigned the responsibility of Howard's external perimeter defense.

As Muse was escorted into a large tent he could see a line of C-130s waiting to take off on the runway. Once inside the tent, he was shown to a roped-off area in the rear, which was separated into two compartments by a large white sheet. A doctor insisted on giving Muse a brief physical examination; other than a lot of bruises he was in good shape. He asked the doctor what was on the other side of the sheet, and the doctor responded that they hoped Noriega would soon be there. "I was looking forward to meeting him," says Muse. He also was visited by a Special Forces psychiatrist, apparently attached to Delta, who asked him some questions to ascertain his mental well-being.

About 0300 a Delta Force colonel stopped by to see him. Muse asked if it would be possible for him to meet the men who had rescued him and say thanks. The colonel replied that he appreciated his interest, but that it would be impossible. However, he returned a short time later and informed Muse that he had secured permission for him to meet with three of the injured men; the fourth man, who had the chest wound, was in intensive care. Muse was escorted to the MASH unit and over to three men lying on stretchers. "These guys were beat to hell," says Muse. "Blankets over them, IVs, stitches, clotted blood, casts. They really looked bad, but they were all smiling." He did not recognize any of them since their faces had been covered during the operation. Muse got down on one knee since they were lying on the ground.

"Moose," said one of the injured men. "It's really good to see your face."

Fighting back tears, Muse was overwhelmed by "what these young men did for me and the price they paid."

Thanks, Guys

"You guys are the meanest and ugliest fuckers I've met in my life," he told them. "But I love you. You guys saved my life and I'm eternally, eternally grateful." Then, overcome by emotion, the words stopped coming. "It was like a mango in my throat," he says today, tears welling up in his eyes as he retells the incident. "I felt like hugging these guys, kissing them. I couldn't speak."

As he fought to maintain his composure, he got back on his feet and gave them a little salute to say so long, guys.

Once Muse was back in his tent, the colonel returned. "Kurt," he said, "I want to thank you for talking to my troops. My guys train for a lot of missions. They train long and hard, but they never get to do many of them. But for this one they trained long and they trained hard and they got to



ABOVE: B Co. 7th Bn, 6th Inf (Mech) salvages Hughes D-500 helicopter that rescued Muse. Photo: PFC Brian Hoppe



View of shot-up building across from Muse's cell. Photo: courtesy Kurt Muse

do it, and they were successful. And I want to thank you again for talking to my troops and reminding them of their success."

According to Muse, "I just about bought the farm again. Here's this colonel thanking me for thanking his guys for risking their lives to save me, a schmuck who's been messing around with Noriega's airwaves and got caught. I couldn't speak."

Soon PDF casualties started pouring into the MASH unit, and once they were treated, those that were mobile were brought to Muse's tent for interrogation. Along with two guards, he was soon moved to an open tent adjacent to a large tent

housing FAST 3 (Forward Area Surgical Team 3). "It was the most incredibly well-run thing I've seen in my life," he reflects. But he was sobered by the sight of the body bags containing the first American casualties of Operation Just Cause.

Dressed in torn Levis and blood-splattered sneakers and T-shirt, Muse was the only civilian in the area, and the object of a good deal of curiosity. Finally, a colonel from the medical services corps came over and asked, "Are you a prisoner? Or are those guys your bodyguards?"

Muse introduced himself and the colonel recognized his name immediately. Only

Continued on page 75

BELOW: Disabled planes at Paitilla airfield. Photo: Eric Fatzinger/courtesy Jack Finch



CRUSHED CARIBBEAN COUP

*Moslem Extremists Botch
One for Allah in Trinidad
... SOF Was There*

by Chuck Fremont & Alex McColl



The following is Chuck Fremont's inside account of how SOF mobilized to cover the attempted coup in Trinidad and got in before a lot of the big boys in the establishment media. The reader with a military background will note a certain lack of careful planning and well thought-out execution on our part, but what the hell, we got the story anyway.

ABOUT 0900, Saturday morning, 28 July. I'm in Robert K. Brown's Boulder, Colorado, office at SOF. We planned on talking over some business,

then working out at his club.

"Have you heard the news out of Trinidad?" I ask him.

"No, haven't had a chance to look at the paper. What's going on?"

I tell him what the *Denver Post* carried: A band of rebels had taken over Parliament and was holding the Prime Minister hostage. They claimed to have overthrown the democratic government. That's about all anyone knew.

"Do you have anyone down there?" I ask Brown. "This might be an important story — the United States and Britain aren't

going to tolerate something like this, not after Grenada and the Falklands.

"No, nobody near there. One guy in Nicaragua, but he's busy." I don't ask Brown what the guy is busy with. "But hell yes, we should get down there. Doing anything next week?"

"Nothing's locked in."

"Got your passport?"

"Yeah."

"Well, let's do it. Let me call my travel agent." I think to myself that I like this style of decision making: A little Gonzo, but it makes things happen.

Sunday morning, 0905: Brown, Alex McColl and I are wheels up in a DC-9 out of Denver, destination: Barbados. All scheduled flights into Trinidad are cancelled.

RKB's contact at the *Miami Herald* recommended that we try to get in through Barbados. We figure we'll get there, and if it's not over, find some way in. We land in Barbados about 2030 and grab a taxi to the Hilton.

Monday morning. We call the airport. British West Indies Airline is not flying into





Trinidad. We decide to go out to the airport and look for a hungry private pilot.

Aero Services, a small charter service, advertises “We will fly anyone, anytime, anywhere in the Caribbean.” We drive over and talk to Roger. He doesn’t look very hungry. Anyone but us, anytime but now, anywhere but Trinidad is the short version of what he tells us. RKB makes a note to sue him for false advertising. We leave and look for more small planes.

No luck. Across the runway, near the commercial terminal, is a U.S. Coast Guard C-130, flanked by two H-3 maritime patrol helos. We figure they’re busy. Since we’re here, we decide to stop in at the terminal. At the BWIA (“Our friends call us BeeWee”) counter, they confirm that they can’t get us into Trinidad. We huddle. The two colonels will stand by at BeeWee in case something changes. I’m going to try to get a picture of the USCG birds, since we figure they’re outside of their normal patrol area. Besides, they look neat with those orange racing stripes.

I head for the CariCargo offices, which they’re parked behind. I walk in the front



TOP: Its “Up against the wall, MF” time, as Trinidad/Tobago SWAT unit frisks rebel POWs. Photo: Chuck Fremont

ABOVE: Armed with S&W and UZI subgun, SWAT teams stay alert as hostage casualty is evacuated during surrender. Photo: Raul de Molina/Shooting Star



ABOVE: Port-of-Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Key sites during crisis are shown.



ABOVE: Imam Abu Bakr, resident Moslem whacko and leader of rebels, leads surrender parade. Coup attempt was tactically effective; strategically stupid. Photo: R.K. Brown



ABOVE: Trinidad/Tobago Defense Force troopers observe surrender of rebels, are armed with FN FALs and MAG58 LMGs. Photo: Chuck Fremont



ABOVE: After hostages released, rebels surrendered individually, exiting TV House with weapon in left hand sans magazine. By this time, Brown and McColl have infiltrated through police cordon and are directly across entrance to TV House. Photo: R.K. Brown



ABOVE: Rebels surrendered thinking they were going to receive amnesty. Government said no deals under duress, into the slam. Photo: Chuck Fremont



ABOVE: Trooper keeps close watch as rebel disarms explosive charges controlled from inside TV House. Photo: R.K. Brown



Trinidadian trooper armed with Galil guards vehicle entrance to Police HQ. Shattered chassis of car and white outline of sentry's body are stark evidence of violence of attack. Photo: Chuck Fremont

door, tell the receptionist that I need to get back to where the American planes are parked. I have short hair, an American accent and look reasonably fit. No problem. I walk down a hallway past three British guys: short hair, muscular, not too young, but of military age.

"This one is for HQ," one of them is telling another, who is filling out a form of some kind. They look up at me with that "Oh Christ, the Yanks are here," look. I say, "Excuse me," and keep walking.

Through another doorway I see about 40 troops, Caribbean blacks in camouflage battle dress, gathered in an empty warehouse bay. Their M16A1s lean against U.S. "Alice" rucksacks. I keep walking, turn up a staircase, and find an empty office overlooking the C-130 and helos. I get a couple of pictures and walk back out, past the Brits again. They give me that same annoyed look, saying in effect "This is our show, mate."

Back at the BeeWee counter, I tell RKB and McColl what's happening at CariCargo. "Get any pictures?" Brown asks. I tell

him that I don't think these guys wanted their pictures taken. We decide to have lunch.

Brown invites Neville, our driver, to join us. Neville is beginning to wonder who he's involved with. RKB is still thinking photos. "Can you get back in there and get some shots of the local troops?" Maybe.

Neville gives me a ride. We look for a

back entrance or gate. I tell some guys at a cargo dock I need to get back to my plane. No problem. I walk through to the parking apron. The H-3s have started their engines. As I watch, they taxi to the runway and take off. I walk along the apron side of the CariCargo building to an open warehouse door and walk in. Troops are lined up for chow.

"When did you guys get in?" I ask one of them.

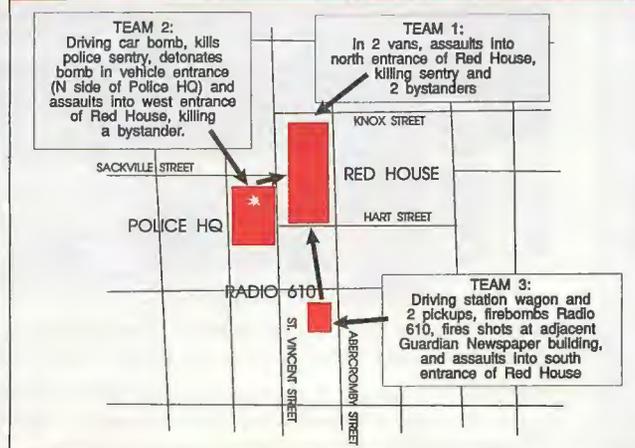
"Early this morning, mon. Since then, we wait."

"Jamaican?" I ask. He nods. "American?" he asks. I nod. A nearby Jamaican in civilian clothes but with an air of authority notices me talking with his troops. I leave. After all, I'm on their side. We leave the airport.

"Neville, how about taking us to the boat docks?" Brown suggests. McColl looks worried. "Look at it this way, Alex, if we go in by boat, we can do some fishing on the way," RKB explains. "Kill two birds with one stone."

I get the feeling McColl has heard rationalizations like this before from Brown. We head for the

ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT 1755 HOURS, 27 JULY 90



GUN CONTROL AT WORK IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

"I've been trying for five years to get a firearms permit — every time there's a new Police Commissioner I apply. Every time, rejected. Never a reason. The very rich, they have gun permits. I'm not saying they bribe the police, but money buys influence. I don't think this is unique to Trinidad and Tobago. I'm an honest merchant, never in trouble, and I can't have a gun to protect my family and my store. But the criminals and maniacs, they all have guns. I don't see Abu Bakr having any trouble getting a gun — lots of guns."

So began one Port-of-Spain shopkeeper's story, a week after the initial attack on Parliament. Sporadic looting was still going on, and the once-elegant central business district looked like a free-fire zone in Beirut. Parts of Henry Street were 2-inches deep with broken glass. Half-inch steel rebar gates were ripped from shattered storefronts along Queen Street. His own store was nothing but a heap of ruined glass shelves and litter.

"Wasn't there anything the merchants could have done to stop this?" I asked him.

He called to another shopkeeper, "Rashiid, what would have happened if we had tried to stop this?"

"We would have been ripped to pieces. It would have been like trying to swim through a feeding frenzy of sharks."

The first merchant continues, "Sir, I've lost everything. I'm not a wealthy man, and the insurance companies tell us that losses due to war or civil insurrection are not covered." (Note: U.S. insurance policies often have similar disclaimers.) "If we had our own guns, you can bet the looters wouldn't have attacked here."

Okay, this guy was clearly upset and speaking more from the heart than the mind. It took a serious application of

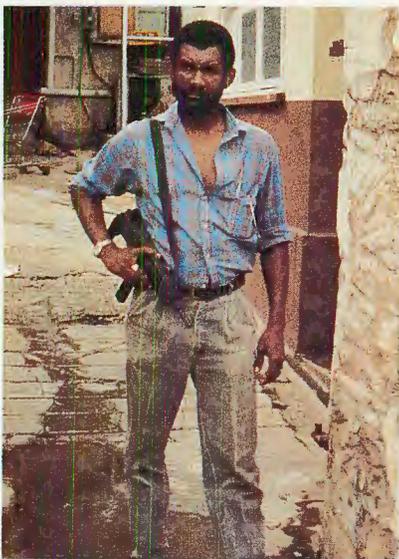
military force to re-establish order in Trinidad. But is it so far-fetched for him to think that armed merchants, operating in an organized defense, could have at least reduced some of the destruction that hammered Port-of-Spain? Armed citizens were credited with helping maintain order after Hurricane Hugo last year, and they protected lives as well as property during Just Cause in Panama.

There's something about the look in a person's eyes when he's defending his home, livelihood or family: It's not the disciplined or detached look of the soldier following orders — orders which include specific rules of engagement. In Western democracies, those rules usually prohibit a soldier from using deadly force except to protect life: This is because life is valued above property or even civil order in our culture. For a contrast, look at China in June '89.

Looters are aware of these rules. But civilians are not governed by such rules and looters know that, too. In the United States, this fact is expressed in opinion polls of criminals that show they are much more worried about getting shot by a homeowner than by the cops. Statistics show that they are right.

So it seems reasonable to suggest that allowing honest citizens to keep and bear arms adds an important dimension to our system of maintaining law and order, an element that can't be provided by the police or military except in a totalitarian state: The inducement in the criminal mind of the fear of imminent, violent death. And that fear, more than all the restrained police and military force that a democracy can muster against its own people, is the real key to maintaining respect for the order of law in difficult times.

— C.F.



ABOVE: Trinidad policeman with UZI patrols near Red House. Photo: Chuck Fremont

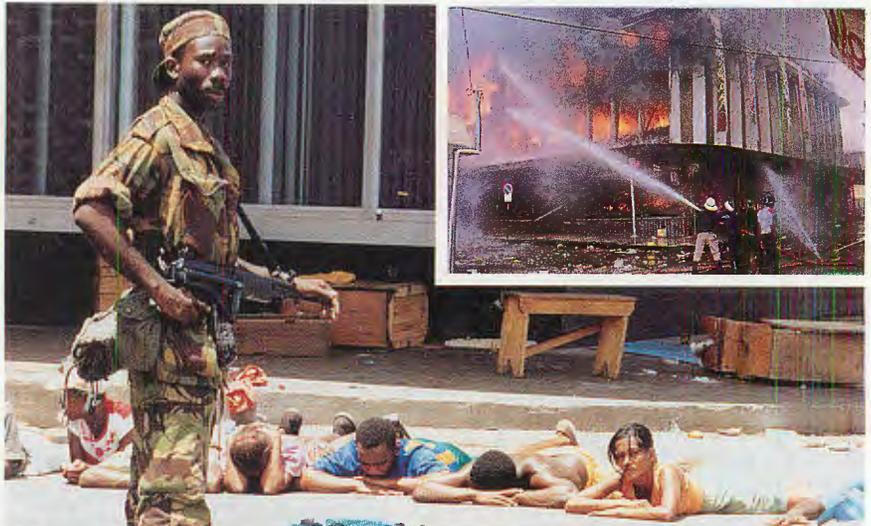


ABOVE: U.S. Coast Guard C-130 H and HH3 helicopters in Barbados.

PREDICTABLE FAILURE

On the level of tactical technique, Abu Bakr's operation had an air of professional competence. The near simultaneous destruction of the police headquarters and seizure of the Red House and the only television station are right out of Coups and Revolutions 101, and all the textbooks. A number of the Moslems in the group were veterans of Trinidadian military service, and Trinidadian authorities suspect Jamaat al-Muslimeen has received training from Libya and Iran. No direct involvement by those countries in the failed coup has yet been proven, but the operation — or at least the initial assault — was carefully planned and executed with violence and precision. On the larger level, however, it was wholly out of touch with cognitive reality. Marx, Lenin and Mao have truly written that unless you have a mass base, i.e., support from a significant part of the whole population, you do not have the "objective conditions" for a revolution. Under these circumstances to make a move is irresponsible adventurism. Apparently Abu Bakr convinced himself that with a mere 112 men and light weapons, he could take over a country of 1.2 million. A classically trained Marxist revolutionary would not be surprised at his total failure.

— C.F. and A.McC



ABOVE: Trooper controls a few of the thousands of looters. Authorities had insufficient forces to both contain rebels and control looters. Photo: Raul de Molina/Shooting Star

TOP RIGHT: Estimates of damage caused by looters runs into hundreds of millions. Shop owners complained they were denied firearm permits; could not defend their property. Photo: Trinidad Guardian

Carenage, where the charter boats tie up. No one wants to go to Trinidad. Neville suggests we try an iceboat, a small fishing boat that uses ice-filled holds to carry its catch. A friend of his just happens to own one. I calculate that it will take us about two days to make it in such a boat. Neville's friend doesn't want to go to Trinidad anyway. Just as well. Neville takes us to a bar where boatmen hang out, called The Boatyard (really). The bartender, Val, knows a guy with a 34-foot Chris Craft. Val remembers a guy he knows who flies general aviation. He phones him. The boat guy shows up. RKB starts negotiating. The guy doesn't really want to go to Trinidad unless we pay upward of \$5,000. McColl remarks, "The Jolly Roger still flies." I go to the bar to get a couple of cokes. Val tells me that his buddy can line up a flight for us. I tell McColl, who looks relieved. RKB tells the boat guy don't call us, we'll call you. Neville takes us back to the Hilton. We listen to the radio on the way: The



ABOVE: Maj. Dave Williams, press liaison officer with Trinidad and Tobago Defense Forces, briefs RKB in Port-of-Spain. Photo: *Trinidad Guardian*



ABOVE: Imam Yasin Abu Bakr, Moslem extremist leader, surrenders to Trinidad and Tobago Regiment officer (with S&W Model 59 9mm. Photo: Chuck Fremont

situation hasn't changed in Trinidad.

Tuesday, 31 July. We have confirmation on the plane — need to be at the airport at 1000.

1000: We meet our pilot, a tall Jamaican. He looks conspicuously unenthused about flying this mission. At 1030, we're wheels up out of Grantley Adams International Airport, with a flight plan for Piarca International at Port-of-Spain. Flying time: approximately one hour.

We process immigration just ahead of the ABC crew. Peter Collins recognizes RKB: "Hello, Colonel. Figured you'd be here." Brown wanders over to get a sitrep from Collins.

It seems that the Holiday Inn in downtown Port-of-Spain is the hip place to be, since you can see Parliament from the higher rooms. We press through the throng of people waiting outside the airport, trying to get out of Trinidad, and cab to the Holiday Inn. We get a nice balcony view of the Red House and the burned out Police

HQ.

Our infiltration is complete.

[Note from RKB: As you can see from our difficulty in getting into Trinidad, SOF obviously needs a corporate jet. You provide the jet, we'll provide the adventure and press credentials. Call us at SOF: (303) 449-3750.]

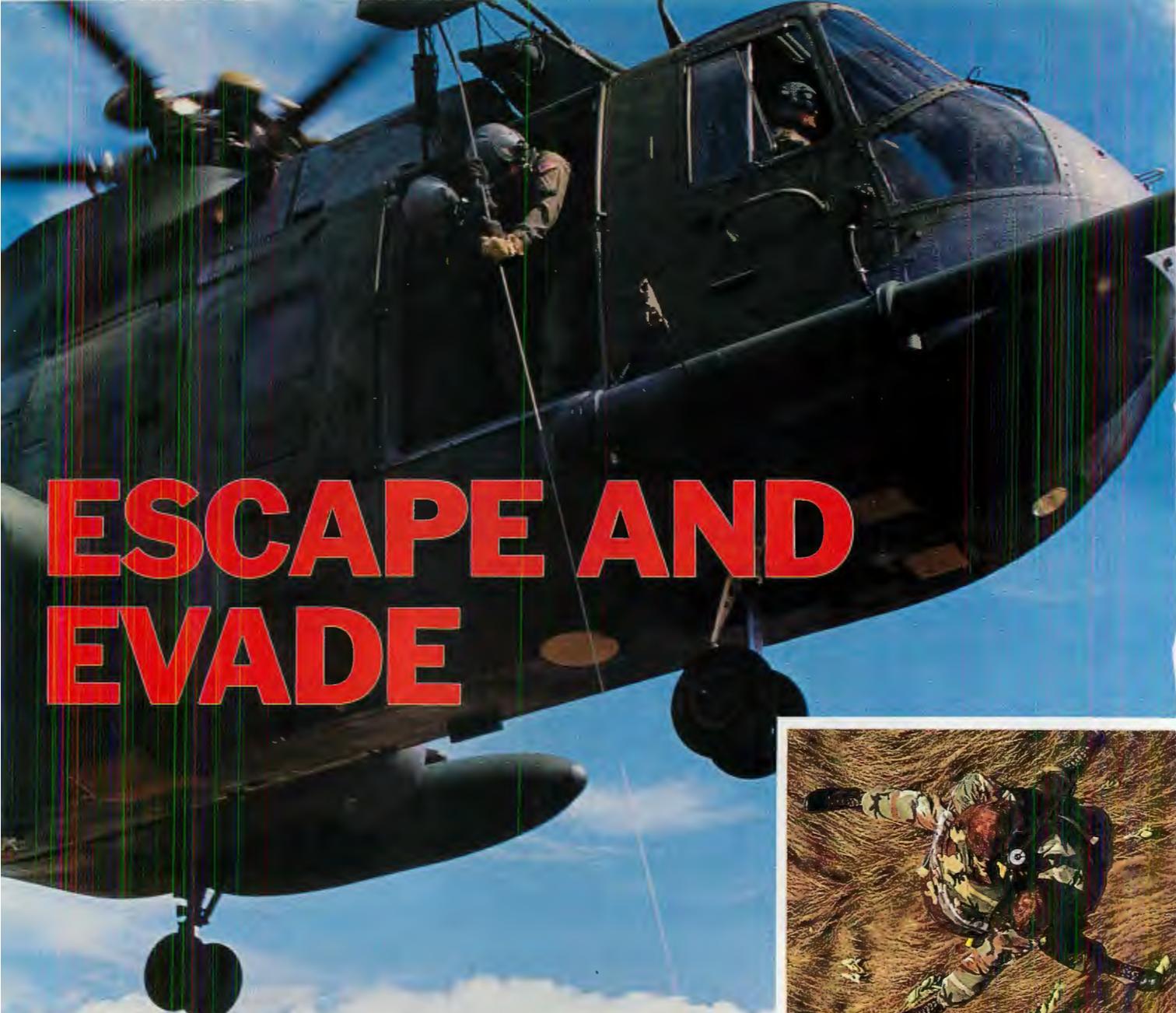
SOF's Military Affairs Editor, Alex McColl picks up the story at this point.

On the evening of Tuesday, 31 July

Continued on page 81



Trinidad Military Police armed with Galils and FN FALs patrol in Port-of-Spain. Arson fires during week of looting added to security problems. Photo: *Trinidad Guardian*



ESCAPE AND EVADE

*U.S. Airmen
Survive in a Hostile
Environment*

by Robert Van Elsberg
Photos Courtesy U.S. Air Force



PALE gray moonlight reflects from the treetops of the densely wooded forest. Here and there a bit of dim light makes its way down to the forest floor, barely dividing shadow from darkness. Crouching in the brush, three members of Echo Team listen for the sound of leaves being trampled or twigs being broken.

Not far away, pararescueman Sergeant John Davis, with Technical Sergeants Craig Johnson and Robert Stahl, watch the team in silence through their night vision goggles. Bathed in an eerie green glow, the members of Echo Team stand out against the trunks of the pines around them. Peering through the trees, Echo Team is unaware of its silent observers.

Team leader Staff Sergeant Michael Grignano peels back the cover hiding the luminous face of his wristwatch. It's almost 0100. He knows somewhere in the forest, eyes are searching for Echo Team. The three life-support technicians have sweated and strained for hours through the dense forest to get to this point — a point known only to them and the pararescuemen. Grignano knows they only have a 15-minute window during which to meet.

A voice suddenly comes over the earplug of the radio carried by each member of Echo Team.

"Echo, this is Stud One."

Grignano keys the transmitter, and with more whisper than voice, responds, "Go ahead Stud One, this is Echo."

Cat & Mouse

Johnson turns to two other pararescuemen behind him and nods. The game of cat and mouse is about to take a more serious turn.

"Echo, take a 050 heading for 10 paces," the pararescueman answers.

Grignano, momentarily shocked by the thought that he was at once very vulnerable, seen but unseeing, motions to Master Sergeant Charles Youngblood and Sgt. Fred Steward to follow. Shielding the glowing face of his compass, he moves

Staff Sgt. Michael Grignano of Echo Team pops a smoke grenade to mark the team's position for the HH-3E Jolly Green Giant rescue helicopter coming to pick up the team.



carefully forward, peering into the darkness, searching for the eyes he knows are watching him. Ten paces and he pauses.

"Echo, stop. Turn left and go 20 paces," the voice commands through the sergeant's radio.

Twenty paces later the team halts and Grignano looks around. There's nothing to be seen in the darkness. Again the voice comes over the radio. "Turn left and go 10 paces."

Eight paces into the walk a voice over the radio orders, "On your bellies!"

The rustle of leaves beneath the three prone airmen barely breaks the silence. Echo Team lies motionless as three pairs of hands rudely and rapidly search every hiding place for concealed weapons.

To Grignano, flat on his face with the pararescueman's knee in his back, this seems too real to be just training. He is helpless. He knows that in real life the pararescueman would kill swiftly and silently if he in any way compromised the link-up. He also knows that anything he might do would be a half-second too late to save his life. A hand snatches away his canteen. Johnson orders him to take out his ID card and put it on his buttocks.

As Grignano, Youngblood and Steward lie on their stomachs, watched by their Air Force Reserve instructor, Tech. Sgt. Terry R. Smith, they know the training must be realistic. For the 15 escape and evasion teams, Wild Stallion, held for the past five years at Phelps-Collins Air National Guard Base in Michigan, has to smell, taste and feel like the real thing. Real enough to

convince the Reserve, Guard and active duty aircrews the life support technicians must train. Because training could spell the difference between life and death for the aircrews.

"Basically, what we tell our aircrews is, 'We know you're the bullet-proof, zipper-suited sun gods who fly, but if you crash and end up on the ground — then you've just become Marines,'" said MSgt. John S. McNulty III, a life support technician



Wild Stallion instructor Tech. Sgt. Terry R. Smith (left) watches as Staff Sgt. Michael L. Grignano orients a map. In the background Echo team members (left) Master Sgt. Charles Youngblood and Sgt. Fred Steward wait to take their turn.

with the Tennessee Air National Guard's 155th Tactical Airlift Squadron. McNulty was one of several instructors serving in the Air Force Reserve-run program.

The authentication link-up lasted only 15 minutes. Johnson's pararescue team had to move on and intercept other escape and evasion teams that night. In real life, however, they might accompany the downed air crew for days or weeks if necessary.

"If an airman goes down behind enemy lines, we'll either fly in and hoist him out or parachute in and walk him out," said Sgt. Thomas Kaeding, a pararescueman with the 102nd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Suffolk County Airport, New York Air National Guard.

Whether or not an airman survives long enough to be spirited out of enemy territory by the pararescuemen is due, in part, to the training given them by their unit's life support technicians. Wild Stallion is designed to put those technicians face-to-face with the same threats their aircrews will have to survive. What they learn will be translated into more effective survival training for their aircrews back home, said Wild Stallion Director Tech. Sgt. Larry D. Owens.

Wild Stallion

"We've always given the aircrews egress training every 180 days — which simply gets them out of the airplane and onto the ground," Owens said. "The Air Force has come back and said, 'Now that we've got them on the ground, let's rescue them.' There was, however, no formal school where we could go to learn to be instructors in escape and evasion. We were pretty much just winging it." He explained that the idea to create the Wild Stallion escape and evasion exercise was born in the minds of two Air Force Reservists — MSgt. Dan Brown and First Lieutenant

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Life Support technicians got some first-hand practice in helicopter airlift techniques.

Mike Connett.

"Dan Brown and Mike Connett traveled extensively visiting survival and instructor schools. They decided to hold their first Wild Stallion exercise with the 10th Air Force's life support technicians. They approached it using the philosophy of 'let's teach the teachers,' so the technicians could go home and teach their aircrews with greater credibility." The program succeeded and became Air Force-wide, with instructors and students coming from Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard and other active duty Air Force units.

Owens explained the Vietnam War taught a painful lesson on the subject of aircrew survival. Downed fliers could not just wait in hostile territory to be airlifted out because ground fire took too heavy a toll on the rescue helicopters. As a result, these airmen faced the challenge of escaping on foot to a designated safe zone, a place where either pararescue teams or friendly partisans could help move them to safety. To train airmen to survive in those situations, the life support technicians had to train themselves in the role of downed aircrew in order to teach from experience.

"You want to see the limitations an aircrew member might have. He's going to have to move very slowly and he might be out in the woods for two or three weeks trying to find the rescue point," said Staff Sgt. Todd Dunluvey, a Wild Stallion instructor from the 128th Tactical Fighter Wing, Truax-Field, Wisconsin Air National Guard.

10-Day Exercise

To prepare the life support technicians to teach a realistic survival program, the 10-day-long Wild Stallion exercise is divided between classroom and hands-on field training.

The instructors spend the first two days on administrative work and preparing equipment and maps. The students arrive at the end of the second day and check into long, open-bay quonset huts where they'll stay during the training. Day three is filled with classroom instruction, fingerprinting, and team assignments for the students.

On the fourth day, the students break into teams, pair up with their instructors and begin the hands-on training. Spending the morning brushing up on map and compass skills, the students receive helicopter hoist training during the afternoon.

The fifth day is filled with land navigation practice, and a night compass course run that evening. The next two days pit the students and instructors in day-long practice escape and evasion exercises against aggressor teams.

The final exercise starts on day eight and runs well into the afternoon of the next day. After receiving their exercise briefings, the students and instructors make a final check of their survival gear. Traveling either by truck or helicopter, they head to a location more than 50 miles southwest of Phelps-Collins Air National Guard Base.

Dropped off at different locations along a forest road, the teams move south to designated pick-up points. Avoiding aggressor teams made up of Air Force security police, they link-up at night with a pararescue team. Still avoiding aggressors, they continue to their pick-up points. There they make radio contact with rescue helicopters which they must vector to their location. Swooping low over the countryside, A-10 Thunderbolt II "Sandy Cover" fighters provide airborne firepower to eliminate any aggressor forces threatening the student teams.

All of this is academic, however, for Grignano, Steward and Youngblood. Not botching the pararescue link-up is foremost in their minds.

The pararescuemen tell Echo Team to get up. Pushing away from the ground, Grignano looks around. The man with the camouflaged face smiles, hands him his canteen and tells him that Echo Team has

Swooping low over the countryside, A-10 Thunderbolt II "Sandy Cover" fighters provide airborne firepower to eliminate any aggressor forces threatening the student teams.

moved well. Scanning the woods with his night vision goggles, Johnson sees a nearby aggressor team.

"We'll create a diversion; you guys head east."

Taking his canteen, Grignano looks down and places it back in its holder on his web belt. When he looks up, the camouflaged face is gone.

Running 100 paces to the east, Echo Team holds up in a spot near a downed tree. They hear a single blank fired as the pararescuemen draw off the aggressors. Lying low for two hours, they move on, arriving early the next morning near the edge of a clearing, their pick-up point.

"Sandy Cover, this is Echo Two," Steward speaks into the mike of his radio. In the sky above, an A-10 pilot from the 301st Tactical Fighter Wing at Carswell Air Force Base answers, "Do you have me visual?"

"Negative, but I can hear you," Steward says.

"I'm going to make a pass. Mark me when you have a visual."

The A-10 streaks over the trees a short distance away.

"Mark — 3 o'clock, ½ mile," Steward says, indicating to the A-10 pilot that the team is on the ground just off the plane's right wing. The sergeant adds, "Give me a hard turn, take a 180 heading. I have you visual — count down to hot mike."

The A-10 banks steeply, turning toward Echo Team's position. As the plane passes over, Steward keys the mike, "3, 2, 1 — mark overhead."

The A-10 pilot radios back, "OK, I've

got your mark. I'll send the Jolly in."

An HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter from the 106th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, New York Air National Guard, circles above the clearing. On the ground, Grignano pops a smoke canister. A cloud of orange smoke rises from the edge of the clearing. The HH-3E settles into a hover and lowers its foliage penetrator, a three-pronged rescue seat which Steward and Grignano quickly straddle. The seat swings and spins in the helicopter's downdraft as they, and later Youngblood, are swiftly hoisted aboard.

Learning to Survive

Echo Team's "survival" was a matter of successfully completing their training. In a war, their aircrew's survival will depend, to a large degree, on how effectively Grignano, Youngblood and Steward, and other life support technicians, can pass on what they've learned. That is why, according to Smith, it is so important for them to get the best training — the type offered at Wild Stallion — to take back to their units.

"We put them into the downed aircrew role so they'll feel the stress and know what it's like to escape and evade in a hostile environment," Owens said. "That's the only way they can learn how to give their aircrews realistic survival training. That's important because after the aircrews finish their survival school at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington, the only update training they're going to get is from these guys.

"And we believe in our job," he added. "Our ultimate job is to fly airplanes and fight the enemies of the United States. When we do that, we're going to have aircraft shot down. The aircraft are replaceable — the people aren't. We want to see them come home."

Robert Van Elsberg is a public affairs specialist at Headquarters, Air Force Reserve, Office of Public Affairs, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. Wild Stallion Director Tech. Sgt. Larry D. Owens is a full-time reservist with the 457th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Carswell Air Force Base, Texas. Staff Sgt. Michael Grignano is stationed with the 355th Tactical Training Wing, and Sgt. Fred Steward is assigned to the 41st Electronic Combat Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Master Sgt. Charles Youngblood is assigned to the Tactical Air Warfare Center, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Pararescuemen Tech. Sgts. Craig Johnson and Robert Stahl and Sgt. John Davis are from the 102nd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Suffolk County Airport, New York Air National Guard. Tech. Sgt. Terry R. Smith is a full-time air reserve technician in the Reserve's 457th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Carswell Air Force Base, Texas. More than 330 Reserve, Guard and active duty Air Force personnel supported or took part in the training — conducted almost exclusively by noncommissioned officers. ✕



ABOVE: 1st Lt. Margaret Silhan is thoroughly searched by Staff Sgt. Alyn Brown, a member of an aggressor team.



ABOVE: Master Sgt. Larry Pruitt is thoroughly searched by Staff Sgt. Alyn Brown, one of the aggressor team members.

RIGHT: Echo Team's Sgt. Fred Steward uses his portable radio to vector in the A-10 Thunderbolt II "Sandy Cover" fighters used to take out aggressors threatening the escape and evasion teams at their pick up points.



ABOVE: Working together, Senior MSgt. James Matulewicz (left) signals the helicopter with a mirror while Airman 1st Class John DeWitt radios their position to the HH-3E.



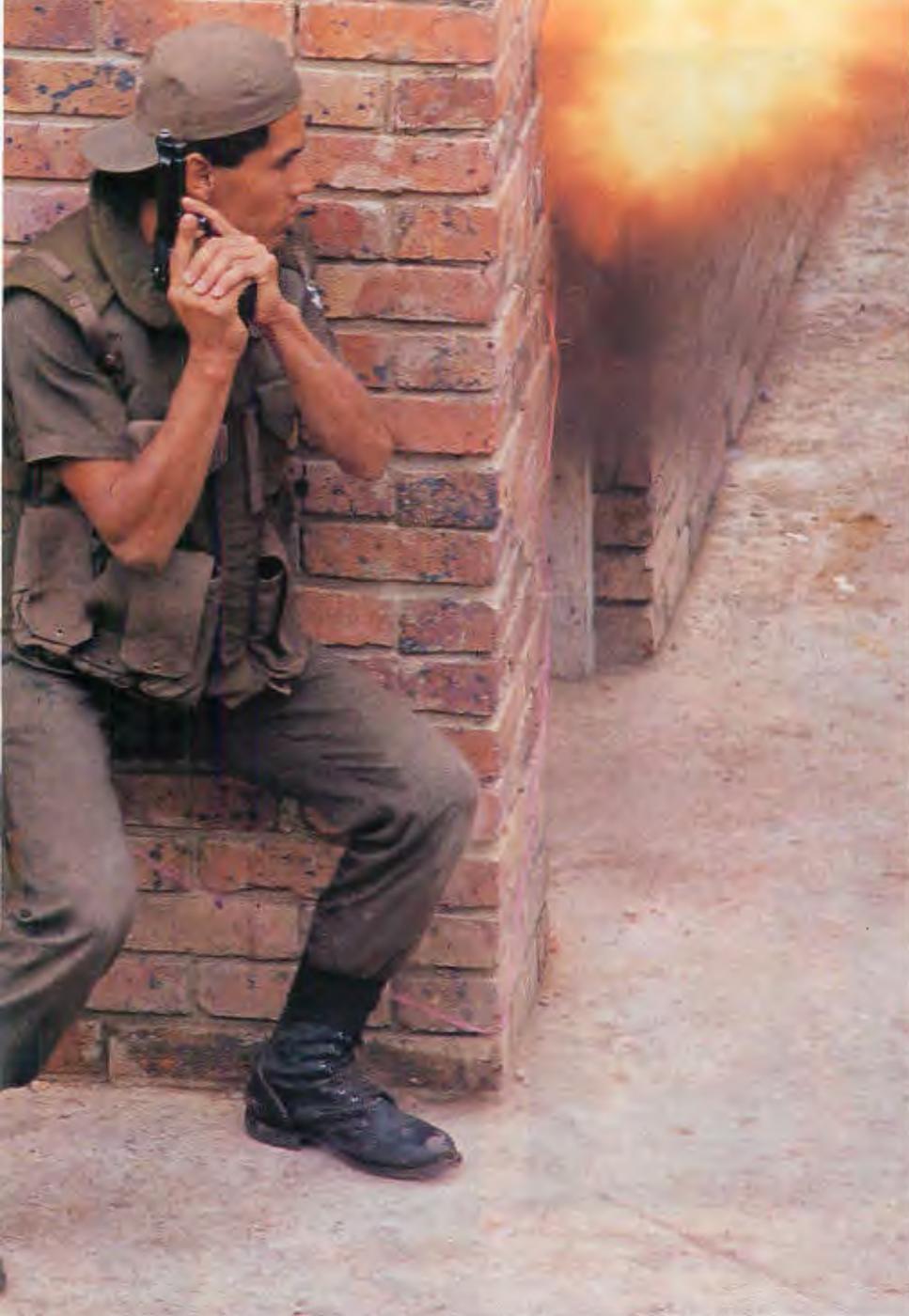
Golden Wild Stallion patch.



NARCOT BESIEG

SOF

TOP: Terror campaign launched last year by Medellin Drug Cartel has kept Colombia's elite anti-terrorist force busy. Photo: Liaison/Diaz



LAST September the Bomb Squad of the Bogota Metropolitan Police received a call that an individual had left a suspicious package at a supermarket in the posh northern part of Colombia's bustling capital. Agent Pedro and his two partners were only a couple of blocks away in their Japanese-made van and were immediately dispatched to the scene.

"At first I didn't think it was anything because we receive so many false alarms," recalled the lanky 27-year-old agent. He was referring to the hysteria produced by the terrorist bombing campaign launched last year by drug barons enraged by the Colombian authorities' crackdown on their billion-dollar cocaine business and the government's policy of extraditing suspected drug kingpins to the United States.

"But we have to take all calls seriously," continued Pedro. (Drug lords have declared open season on cops, so for security reasons the last names of police have been omitted.) "When I opened the blue-and-white plastic bag I saw smoke. There was a coil of lit fuse connected to 15 kilos of dynamite. 'Oh, God, a bomb!' I thought. I instinctively pulled out my cutters and cut the fuse as close to the detonator as I could. Just a few seconds later, as I lifted the part of the fuse I had cut off, whoosh, a spark flared out of the end. I had been only seconds from being blown away. At first, I was calm, but five minutes later I was shaking just thinking of what had happened."

Deadly Bus-Bomb

Pedro not only saved himself, he saved many innocent people in the area from the death and dismemberment he saw in the aftermath of a bus-bomb that exploded in the early morning of 6 December near the headquarters of the Administrative Department of Security — a Colombian version of the FBI, DEA, and Secret Service rolled into one agency and known by its Spanish acronym DAS.

"Many people were without hands and feet. They were still trying to stand up and run away from the great scare that hit in the instant of the explosion. There was a lot of commotion and a lot of dead people," remembered Pedro, who had rushed to the scene of carnage after feeling the explosion's shockwaves and hearing its deafening thunder five blocks away as he waited for a bus to go to work.

Widely believed to have been the work of hired henchmen working for reputed Medellin Cartel godfather Pablo Escobar Gaviria (though no suspect has been apprehended yet), it was the worst vehicle-bomb attack in Colombian history and the second worst bombing. The first was the bomb attributed to narcoterrorists who blew 107 passengers out of the sky on an Avianca Airlines flight the previous month.

According to initial police reports, the explosion of nearly 900 pounds of dynamite packed in a school bus killed 44 people and wounded 647 (some of whom later died of

ERRORISTS E BOGOTA

Joins World's Busiest Bomb Squad

by Steve Salisbury



Bomb Squad demonstrates use of mechanical arm and kevlar shield. Photo: Steve Salisbury

their injuries). It seriously damaged the first half-dozen floors of the 11-story DAS building and destroyed its entire facade. Nearby businesses were blasted into rubble. A crater 45 feet long, 38 feet wide and 13 feet deep was testimony to the explosion's force.

Traditionally, Colombia's drug barons selectively ordered the assassination of their enemies. Known as *sicarios*, impoverished youths hired as hit men by the *narcotraficantes* for as little as a couple of hundred dollars per murder, have gunned down senators, cabinet ministers, politicians (including three presidential candidates), judges, journalists, soldiers, cops and others believed to have been interfering with *El Negocio*, The Business. Just during the first six months of this year, about 155 cops have been assassinated in the northwestern city of Medellin, the world's coke capital.

"A Matter of Business"

In furious response to the government's rejection of their appeals for a truce and their offer to pay off the Colombian national debt in exchange for amnesty, the drug lords escalated their violence on 2 September 1989 by exploding a car-bomb in front of the offices of Bogota's hardline anti-Cartel newspaper, *El Espectador*, injuring a reported 73 people. By June, 18 more car-bombs had exploded in Colombia's major cities, mostly in Bogota and Medellin.

The drug lords seem convinced that terror bombings — especially car-bombs — will eventually break the government's will to prosecute them. And as security has been beefed up at government facilities, narcoterrorists have been increasingly targeting innocent civilians. Bombs attributed to *Los Extraditables*, the Medellin Cartel's armed wing, have exploded in shopping centers, malls, supermarkets and residential neighborhoods. From last September to



Bomb Squad agent simulates removal of dynamite. Photo: Steve Salisbury

mid-June, the wave of narco bombings claimed the lives of 285 men, women and children and injured over 1,100 people nationwide.

"This is a matter of business for the narcotraficantes. Their strategy is to terrorize the population so that it pressures the government to cave in to the narcoterrorist demands," said Sergeant Luis, chief of the Anti-Terrorist Group of Bogota's Section of Judicial Police and Investigation, known by its Spanish acronym SIJIN.

However, the terror of *Los Extraditables* has only hardened the resolve of the Colombian government to give no quarter in its war against drugs. President-elect Cesar Gaviria Trujillo (no relation to Pablo Escobar Gaviria), who became a presidential candidate after his Liberal Party's first nominee, Luis Carlos Galan, was gunned down at a campaign rally allegedly by Medellin Cartel assassins, has vowed to continue President Virgilio Barco's policy

of extraditing suspected drug traffickers indicted by U.S. courts, and to turn up the heat on the narcotraficantes.

Hundreds of elite police reinforcements have been dispatched to Medellin to fight the Cartel on its own turf. They have already struck serious blows against the underworld hierarchy. A few months ago, the National Police's Elite Force killed Pablo Escobar's righthand man and the Cartel's chief of paramilitary operations, Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, in a shootout where Gacha's eight bodyguards and adult son also died. And on 13 June, Elite Force commandos killed John Jairo Arias Tascon, alias Pinina, believed to be a high-ranking element in the Medellin Cartel's terrorist operations, as he tried to flee a police raid on his apartment in a fashionable Medellin district.

These setbacks, added to the capture of a six-man narcoterrorist cell and over 2,000 sticks of dynamite the day before it planned to car-bomb voter pavilions in Bogota during the presidential elections, have stunned the Medellin Cartel. But the Cartel has repeatedly proved its violent resilience: Just hours after Pinina was killed, a tremendous car-bomb exploded about 100 meters from a Medellin police station, killing four and injuring 97.

Drug Lord Revenge

The drug lords have sworn revenge for their fallen comrades and the government's confiscation of their property. In an open letter published in the 13 June issue of *El Tiempo* newspaper, *Los Extraditables*,



Bogota Bomb Squad with Mk7 Marfax "robot." Photo: Steve Salisbury

charging that security forces have tortured and massacred Medellin residents, vowed, "We shall reply with arms to the looting, torture and murder of our companions."

Colombia's authorities are braced for another Cartel terror offensive. Perhaps no target is more tempting for the Cartel than

Bogota, the seat of government and home of the establishment it despises.

Bogota's Metro Police Bomb Squad is on constant alert in the face of this menace. Formed in 1972 largely in response to bombings by leftist guerrilla movements, the Bomb Squad has never before been challenged by such a dangerous and persistent threat as they now face from the Medellin Cartel.

Bogota has to rank among one of the world's most, if not *the* most, bombed cities since last September when the drug lords began their systematic terror-bombings in earnest. According to Corporal Arley, the commander of Bogota's metro police Bomb Squad, known in Spanish as *El Cuerpo Explosivos F-2*, 190



Pablo Escobar Gaviria, reputed godfather of Medellin Cartel, with his reported wife. Photo: *El Espectador*

of 252 bombs planted in the capital exploded between 2 September and 7 June. While some could be attributed to personal grudges of deranged people and lingering leftist guerrilla terrorism, the vast majority of these bombs, including the devastating explosions of eight car-bombs, have been attributed to narcoterrorism.

"It could have been even more tragic. There have been 32 car-bombs that haven't exploded in this period," said the muscular corporal. Complying with the wishes of police officers, for security reasons it's best that details of why these car-bombs didn't explode not be published. The bomb squad's intervention has been crucial to the public's safety. "We've been lucky," said the corporal, who started his police career 10 years ago fighting communist guerrillas in Colombia's jungles before joining the Bomb Squad in the mid-1980s.

Despite Herculean round-the-clock efforts, the Bomb Squad has been unable to prevent detonation of about three-quarters of the bombs planted in this metropolis of approximately five million inhabitants.

Nine Bombs a Night

"Last September was the worst when the narcos started this wave of bombings," said Sergeant Luis. "As many as nine bombs blew up almost every night that month. It was really bad then. Traffic was horrendous while people rushed home from work terrified a car-bomb would suddenly explode. They wouldn't go out at night afraid of the bombs."

"People have become so afraid they see

bombs in every strange package, bags of trash left in unfamiliar places and over-parked cars," said Bomb Squad commander Cpl. Arley. From September 1989 to June 1990 Cpl. Arley logged nearly 1,400 false alarms. Investigating every bomb warning, the 10 men who make up the Bomb Squad and the five drivers attached to their unit have often found themselves stretched thin by the many calls. "Before the elections [for president, 27 May] we were averaging 60 calls a day," claimed the corporal as I interviewed him and two of his agents in a dingy restaurant frequented by police across the street from their headquarters.

The crackle of an urgent voice from the corporal's walkie-talkie interrupted our conversation. Corporal Arley answered the dispatcher in his calm, measured baritone, then returned his attention to me. "We have an emergency call," he said. "A suspicious truck has been abandoned near the Casa Narino. You're welcome to come along."

The Casa Narino — that's the Presidential Palace! I immediately accepted the invitation. I followed the corporal and Agents Pedro and Arturo into a white Nissan van, one of the Bomb Squad's four vehicles, and our driver, nicknamed Bishop in Spanish, wheeled us into the thick lunchtime traffic.

Bishop hit the siren as cars clogged our way, but they were slow to let us pass. "Bogotians have the habit of turning up the volume on their stereos while they're driving and they don't hear us," joked the



Alleged henchman of Medellin Cartel mortally wounded himself on 18 October 1989 when a grenade he carried, supposedly in a plan to attack government officials in the Legislative Assembly, accidentally exploded. Five innocent bystanders were also injured. Photo: *El Espectador*

corporal as he rolled up the sleeves of his black Bomb Squad uniform.

If the crew had any tension, they didn't show it. Their lighthearted banter ranged from girls to World Cup soccer; it seemed more like we were hurrying to a dance or game rather than looking for a truck bomb.



Aftermath of bus-bomb attributed to Medellin Cartel that seriously damaged the Administrative Department of Security headquarters in Bogota on 6 December 1989, killing at least 44 and injuring 647. Photo: *El Espectador*

But I was abruptly reminded of the deadly nature of our mission when my head jarred against the shotgun mounted on the Mk 7 Marfax "robot" in the back of the van. Donated a few months ago by a four-man training team of British Royal Army bomb specialists, the robot, as the Bomb Squad agents affectionately call it, is an English-made bomb deactivator mounted on tracks. It is designed to be operated from a distance by remote-control with the assistance of television, and it can be equipped with X-ray machines, water cannon and shot-guns. "The Englishmen have had good luck with this in Northern Ireland," an agent later told me, "and it's been effective the couple of times we've used it."

The Bomb Squad also has a Canadian-made mechanical arm and Kevlar shield and suit supposedly resistant to an explosion of as much as 25 pounds of dynamite, but this would be useless in disarming a truck-bomb.

After 20 minutes of darting through traffic, we finally arrived at our destination, a street corner two blocks from the Casa Narino. However, there was no truck parked there.

"Hey, are we at the right place?" the corporal asked Bishop.

"Si, this is the address," answered the puzzled driver.

The corporal opened the van's sliding door and shouted to a cop walking his beat. "We've received a call of a suspicious trucked parked here. Have you seen it?"

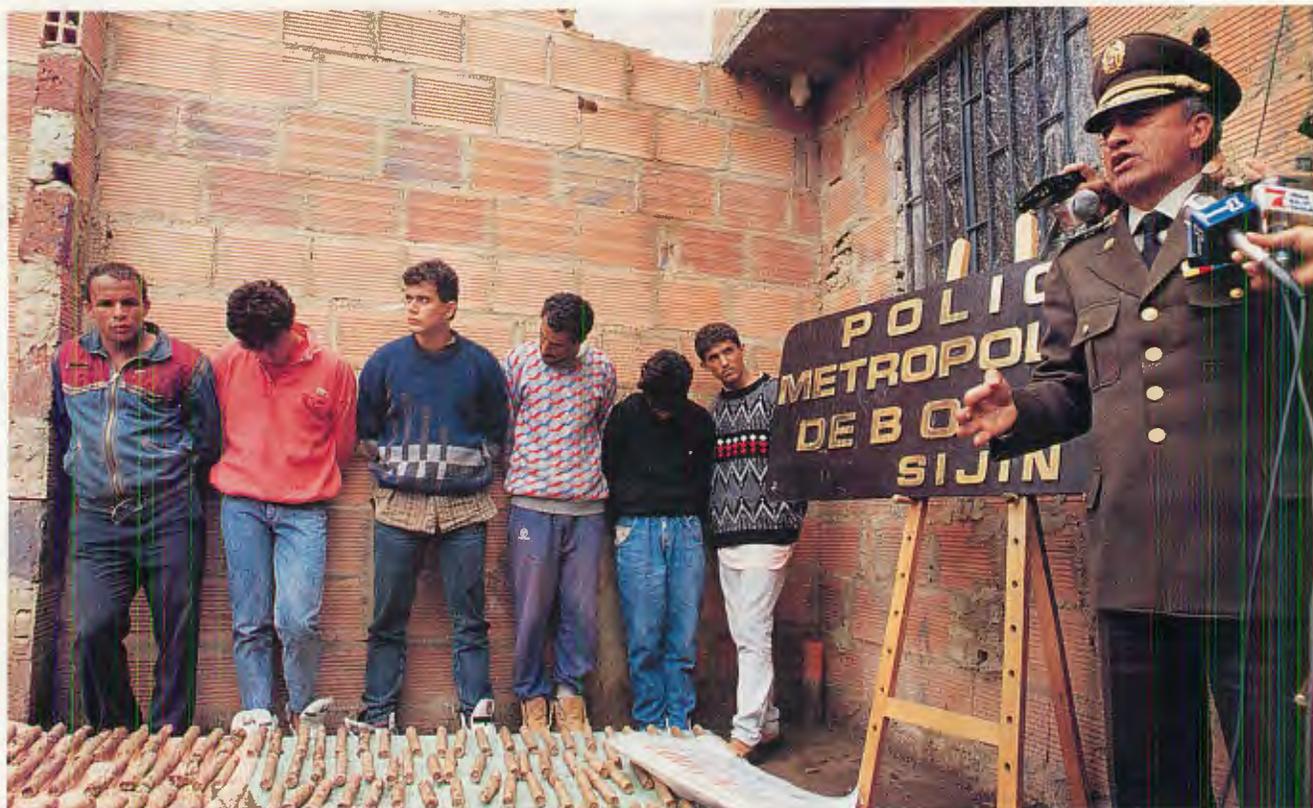
"Yes, sir, it just left. It came to unload fish for a restaurant," replied the policeman, who sported a natty green uniform and shiny Ingram submachine gun.

"See what I mean? The vast number of calls we get turn out to be nothing," the corporal told me with a shrug as we drove off.

False Alarms

That was the first of many false alarms the units I rode with received during the week I accompanied them in early June. There were dozens of false alarms, but no bombs.

"We are having a tranquil spell now because we captured that terrorist-bomb gang the day before the elections [a couple



Arrested terrorists with dynamite are exhibited at Bogota press conference. Photo: Liaison/Angel

of weeks ago],” said Sgt. Luis back at the Anti-Terrorist Group headquarters. “It’s rare we capture the bombers. I’d say we catch less than five percent of them, certainly less than 10 percent. We were lucky when we caught that terrorist band before the elections.” The veteran inspector, who participated in the interrogation of this bomb ring’s suspects, took off his rumpled blue blazer and added, “An alert cop happened to detain two of the terrorists just after they exploded a car-bomb and they told us where the rest of their cell members were and what they planned to bomb.

“What generally happens,” continued the sergeant, “is through our intelligence networks we get information on the location of large caches of explosives. We seize them, then there is a period of calm while the narcoterrorists regroup.” Sergeant Luis predicts by the date this article is published, another spate of bombs will already have caused more death, injury and destruction in Bogota.

“It’s almost impossible to stop bombings,” sighed the sergeant. “Bogota is too big. Too many people. Too many vehicles. Too many targets to protect. The only way I could imagine to stop the bombings is to prevent terrorists and criminals from getting explosives in the first place.”

“Almost all the narco-bombs have been made of commercial ammonium nitrate dynamite,” explains Cpl. Arley. “At first, narco fronts were buying it here in Colombia supposedly for peaceful purposes like

mining, but tightened government restrictions in which only the army can authorize the purchase of explosives has forced the narcos to buy their dynamite in Ecuador and Peru.”

Lately, the Colombian authorities have found ECUAGEL ammonium dynamite, made by the Ecuadorian factory EXPLOCEM and SEMEXSA ammonium dynamite, made by the Peruvian EXSA Industries. With significant segments of the populations of these two impoverished countries making their living by blasting the hard rock of the Andes during mining and road construction, the purchase of commercial explosives in Ecuador and Peru is easy.

After high-level talks with Colombian government officials, the governments of both Peru and Ecuador have agreed to take steps to resolve this problem. But even if these countries also tighten their restrictions on the purchase of explosives, many law enforcement officers believe the drug barons can use bribes and threats to obtain it, pay people to steal it for them or even open their own explosives factory — if they haven’t already done so. “It’s difficult to believe that the narcos wouldn’t be able to get dynamite one way or another,” said a detective.

Odds Are ...

When the Bomb Squad is notified of a genuine bomb, odds are it will explode before the Bomb Squad can arrive to disarm it. According to Cpl. Arley, all but a few bombs that have exploded in Bogota since last September have been detonated by slow-burning fuse. “The narcoterrorists have used fuse to detonate almost all of

their bombs because it’s safer for the terrorist and more sure to make the bomb explode. They just light a fuse measured for enough time to get away and that’s it.”

The simplicity of this detonation method makes it easy even for the impoverished young people who have sold their souls to the Cartel in their desperation to escape the hopelessness of their poverty. “The terrorists who actually place the bombs are almost always from poor, marginal barrios,” said Sgt. Luis. “Those whom we captured on the eve of the elections were from the poor areas of Medellin. When I asked them why they wanted to set off car-bombs and kill innocent people, they answered they were doing it for the money. They told me they were promised 5,000,000 pesos [about 10,000 U.S. dollars at the current official exchange rate] for each car-bomb they exploded. Those who actually carried out the crime would share the money, although I don’t know how they would divide it.” If the six-man cell were to share this payment equally, each member would receive the equivalent of about 1,666 American dollars for every car-bomb they blew up in public.

One of the few narco-credited bombs detonated by means other than fuse massacred the 107 passengers and crew on the Avianca Airlines flight. “The evidence collected from the debris was sent to specialists in the United States, and they concluded it was a plastic explosive, possibly Semtex, triggered by either a clock or altitude mechanism,” said an agent nicknamed The Cat in Spanish for his survival of many encounters disarming car-bombs.

Narcoterrorists have also been suspects

in explosions of bombs that have been detonated chemically, by the accumulation of battery current and, in one case, electrically in an ambush of a police truck in Medellín that killed or wounded at least a dozen agents. According to Bomb Squad personnel, none of these methods has been yet used to detonate a car-bomb. However, the Bomb Squad fears that car-bomb detonation techniques will soon become more sophisticated. "It's just a matter of time," said Agent Hector, one of three agents from Bogotá's metro police who have received explosives and demolition training in the United States.

Bomb Squad Right Stuff

Not just anyone can join the Bomb Squad. A person has to have the right stuff. This includes a balanced, calm temperament, steady nerves and agile mind, excellent health — both of mind and body — and, most important, an unwavering willingness to deactivate with your own hands a bomb that any second could blow you to oblivion.

Psychological and physical exams establish if Bomb Squad candidates have these essential characteristics. But even if a candidate has them, he or she still has to have at least three years of police service and an impeccable record of good conduct before he or she can be accepted for the 12-week Bomb Squad course. (No woman has been part of the squad yet, though not because of sex discrimination, agents insist.)

According to Bomb Squad members, the first six weeks deal exclusively with theory. The students are given general knowledge of explosives and demolition. They learn about ammonium nitrate and gelatin-type dynamite, TNT, C-3, C-4, Flex-X, Semtex-X, Tovex, Pentex, det cord, slow-burning fuse and detonators. They are taught the use and management of explosives by Colombian instructors in police academies in the capital. They learn how to make bombs, how to activate and deactivate them. Photographs and films are shown to students to impress them on what devastating force the explosives can unleash. Pupils are reminded that since 1983 three agents were killed and two seriously injured (one blinded) by bombs that exploded while they were trying to deactivate them. (The bombs that killed the agents were attributed to leftist extremists, while the injured agents were victims of a book-bomb that Bomb Squad members said was sent to a government intelligence officer by a disgruntled civilian employee.)

The next six weeks of the course are dedicated to field practice. The students detonate a variety of explosives to develop a feel for their force and they deactivate simulated bombs in diverse scenarios. At the end of the course, the students have to pass a rigorous written and practical exam where they have to disarm a simulated complex bomb to become members of the Bomb Squad.

As is standard with most of the world's police forces, rookies are assigned as partners to veterans. At this writing, there are no rookies with the Bomb Squad. The newest member joined two years ago, while the senior member has been on the squad for 16 years.

Training never ends for the Bomb Squad. Corporal Arley and his men say explosives and demolition instructors of the American Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), the armies of the United Kingdom and Israel, and of the Canadian government have visited Colombia to run bomb-deactivation courses, ranging from three to six weeks, for the Bogotá metro police and other security forces.

Three Bomb Squad members have taken three-week advanced training courses in the United States. One agent completed two courses in Oklahoma and Baton Rouge, Louisiana; another agent completed one in Jacksonville, Florida; and the remaining agent completed his course in Virginia. More Bomb Squad members are scheduled to soon depart to the United States for advanced training. "The training I received in the United States is excellent," said Arturo, the senior member of the squad. "When I joined in 1974, there wasn't much training. One learned by apprenticeship, on the job. Now our training is more organized, more involved, more sophisticated. But one really doesn't know how to

risks when you can and detonate a bomb away from where it can cause injury or material damage. But even in the most obvious cases to do this, appearances can deceive. I remember once there was a suspicious package left in a telephone booth. After we cleared the area of people, it would have been perfectly reasonable to avoid taking the risk of trying to disarm the package; we could simply yank it to the ground with a long rope. If it exploded, no one would be near to get hurt and a bomb of that size couldn't cause much damage to the surroundings. But there was something inside me saying not to do this. I carefully set the package on the ground and felt vibrations. My partner didn't want me to take any more chances. I suppose we could've avoided risk by blowing the package with det-cord; that would've been understandable for the circumstances. But I just *had* to see what was inside that box. Little by little, I carefully opened it. There was a quick jarring movement and I instinctively shut my eyes and clenched my teeth, certain it would explode. But instead of an explosion, I heard a cry. I opened my eyes to see a baby in the box."

This was one of countless cases where the agents of the Bomb Squad proved they had the right stuff to protect the public.

Yet, as long as millions of Americans continue to blow their minds with cocaine and crack, it's likely Colombian narcoterorists will keep blowing up innocent men,



Bogotá voters are frisked before they vote in May '89 Colombian presidential election. Photo: Steve Salisbury

deactivate a bomb until he does it — one bomb at a time — for each bomb is different."

An Innocent Package

It all boils down to intuition, insists Agent Pedro. "You gotta go by your gut feeling," he said. "It's best to reduce your

women and children as part of their merciless campaign to stop their government from interfering with their billion-dollar business.

Steve Salisbury, *SOF's Senior Foreign Correspondent, has lived and worked in Central and South America for many years.* ✕

RETURN OF LA PANTERA ROSA

SOF's Tech Editor Trains Salvo SWAT

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



ERE shoulder tab above the emblem of El Salvador's Policia Nacional signifies "Equipo de Reaccion Especial" (Special Reaction Team). This unit has experienced a great deal of action during its short time in existence.

“CAPTURE, kill and neutralize terrorists.” That was the mission with which the *Equipo de Reaccion Especial* (Special Reaction Team, or ERE) of El Salvador's *Policia Nacional* (PN) was charged when it was established 25 May 1989, by Lieutenant Colonel Jose Antonio Almendariz Rivas, at that time head of the PN's intelligence section.

The ERE set to work almost immediately, when on 30 May 1989 they raided the house of Mario Gonzales, who belonged to the PRTC (*Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centro Americanos* — Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers) and was in charge of FMLN logistics. Uncovered during the raid was the first concrete evidence of massive ComBloc

support to the FMLN terrorists (see “ComBloc Connection,” July '90). Included in the captured materiel were 283 Kalashnikovs, 88 Hungarian PA-63 pistols, 10 RPG-7s, 30 RPG-18s, more than one million rounds of 7.62x39mm ammunition and a large quantity of explosives.

The ERE more than proved its mettle in combat during the November 1989 offensive. During an intense three-hour contact in Colonia Santa Marta four men of the unit were KIA — one of whom ran out of shells for his shotgun — when they were struck down 25 meters in front of a terrorist base of fire. Three groups from the Policia Hacienda, Bracamonte Battalion and Signal Corps Security unit attempted without success to retrieve the four fallen ERE members.

Realizing they would have to take care of their own, 16 members of ERE broke through the FMLN lines to recover the bodies after four days of unrelenting contact without resupply, water or food and equipped with no more than their basic load. No amount of training can duplicate the fire discipline instilled in troops forced to fight for extended periods with only the ammunition they bring into contact. During this firefight, the ERE accounted for 20 confirmed terrorist KIA, for a kill ratio of 5:1.

Small arms fielded by the ERE throughout the November offensive were no more than M16A1s (some equipped with M203 40mm grenade launchers), 12 gauge shotguns and Heckler & Koch MP5 A3 submachine guns. Forty millimeter grenade ammunition employed were the HEDP Dual Purpose and M576 Multi-Purpose (containing 21 No. 4 buckshot pellets) rounds. The ERE also carried the golfball-sized Dutch V40 mini-grenade. Weighing only 4.2 ounces, the V40 provides 100% casualties at 3 meters from point of detonation.

Shortly after this, on 26 November, the ERE raided the house of Jennifer Jean Casolo — the American Left's apparent

replacement for the aging Jane Fonda — and captured, among other things, 103 60mm mortar rounds, 213 blocks of TNT, 405 blasting caps, 12,510 7.62x39mm rounds, 9,110 5.56x45mm NATO rounds and 325 7.62x51mm NATO rounds. Oddly enough, no Bibles were found among the effects of this innocent little church worker.

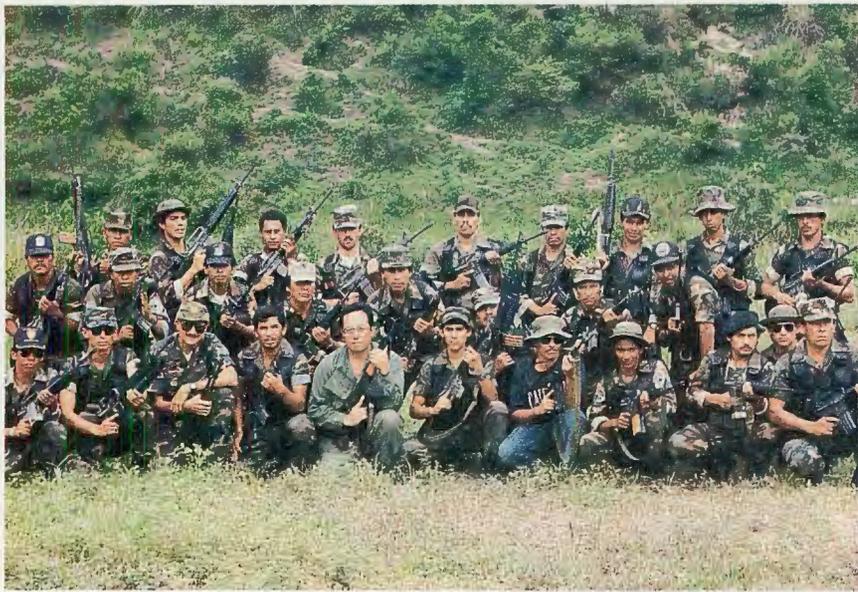
Based upon interrogation reports and information from undercover agents, the ERE continues to raid FMLN safehouses on an almost daily basis, capturing terrorists and large caches of weapons. Their most recent raid uncovered 800-blocks of TNT and a substantial quantity of Flex-X, an RDX-based plasticized explosive manufactured in Canada by C.I.L. In April 1990, a cache of ammunition was captured that points directly to FMLN sympathizers in the United States (see sidebar).

For all of their accomplishments, the ERE is a relatively small unit. The group presently consists of 45 enlisted personnel and one officer. First Lieutenant Aristides Merlos Flores has been commander of the unit since its inception. It began with only seven men. A call for volunteers throughout the Policia Nacional resulted in 40 additional recruits. Qualifications for enlistment in the ERE are high by Salvadoran standards. A minimum 9th grade education is required. A minimum of two years prior military or PN service is mandatory. Successful applicants must pass a complete public and private investigation, a polygraph test and physical test that includes a 2-mile run, push-ups, sit-ups, chin-ups, squat jumps and swimming.

Training for the ERE had consisted almost entirely of material obtained from

Commander of the *Equipo de Reaccion Especial* (ERE) of El Salvador's Policia Nacional fires Heckler & Koch MP5 A3 submachine gun while Special Response Team member crouches next to him ready to fire a 40mm grenade from his M203-equipped M16A1. Note Steiner binoculars as recently adopted by the U.S. Army, and SOF decal on buttstock of M16A1.



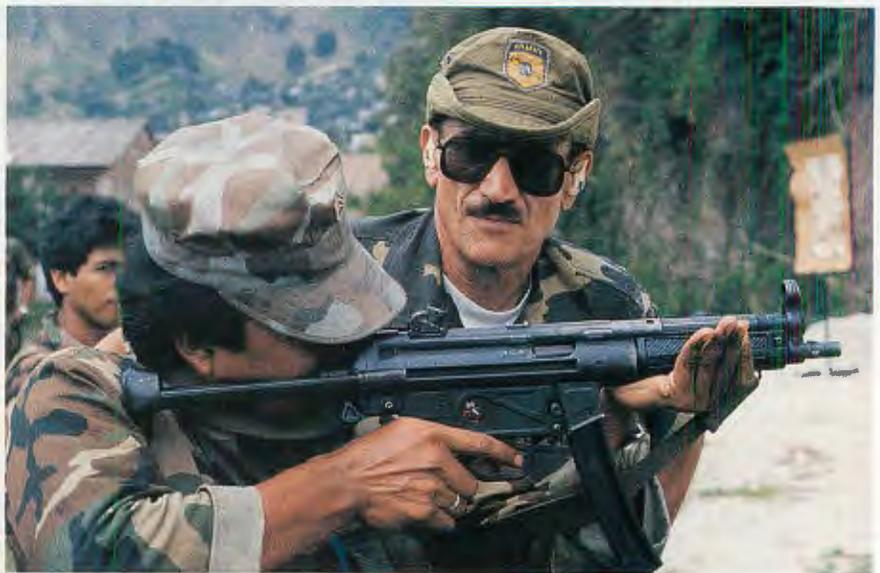


ABOVE: ERE members who participated in SOF's training cycle pose with their instructors, Peter Kokalis and Mark Evan, and Carlos Salinas, the translator.

the U.S. Army MP School Field Circular 19-152, "Special Reaction Teams, Operational Concepts/Training." While it is a valuable conceptual guide, this Field Circular provides no useful information concerning the specifics of small arms employment.

Their lack of weapons training was displayed to me in February 1990 when I was introduced to the unit through a live-fire demonstration presented for my benefit. Most of the firing techniques were obsolete and the hit probability was poor. When Lieutenant Colonel Almendariz asked for my opinion of the unit's performance, I gave him an honest appraisal and suggested that SOF might be able to provide the weapons training required to enhance the ERE's combat effectiveness. He gave his enthusiastic approval and upon my return to the United States, I contacted SOF's Editor/Publisher, Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown, who signed off on the mission without hesitation.

An intensive five-day course was designed which would provide training in the handgun, MP5 submachine gun, combat shotgun and M16A1. As it is the most difficult weapon to master, two days were allocated to the handgun, leaving only one day for each of the other weapons systems. This short time frame would require 10- to 12-hour days with no more than 20 minutes for lunch and only infrequent five-minute breaks, during which time the students would be required to load magazines. Mark Evan, an experienced small arms employment authority, was selected as my co-instructor. Six different men would be trained in each of the four course segments. This would permit the two of us to monitor each of the students carefully throughout the training cycle. It was anticipated that the 24 men exposed to the courses would cross-train the other members of ERE after



SOF's Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis observes ERE student in the submachine gun course as he assumes the standing position required for accurate semiautomatic fire with the MP5. Photo: Mark Evan

our departure.

To be successful, a tight rein on logistics would be necessary. We arrived in El Salvador several days early in June 1990 to inspect the range facility — located at the PN substation in San Marcos, about six clicks south of the PN HQ in San Salvador — and made certain that the target frames, swinging steel gongs and heavy steel plates had been constructed to our specifications. These were supplemented by Dualatron, Know Your Enemy, and Yavapai Firearms Academy camouflage-pattern paper targets that we brought with us.

On the first day of the training cycle we were presented with the option of either riding back and forth to the range facility in an unmarked car with our translator, Carlos Salinas, or in the truck with the troops. A 2-ton, stake-bed truck loaded with armed, uniformed soldiers is an inviting target for

FMLN terrorists. And, the danger of ambush in the urban environment of San Salvador is now every bit as high as it always has been in the bush. Throughout our stay, we heard sporadic machine gun fire and explosions within the city, both night and day. To establish immediate rapport with the ERE and indicate we were willing to share their exposure to contact, we opted for the truck. Fortunately, we never had a contact with the Gs and the truck's driver proved to be more dangerous than the terrorists.

Immediately after our arrival we were each issued a Kalashnikov with five magazines — Mark Evan a Hungarian AKM with rigid stock and I an East German MPiKMS-72 with a side-folding stock. We carried these weapons everywhere during our entire stay, except on a few occasions when we ate in a restaurant, where I packed a Wayne Novak modified Browning High

Power in a DeSantis shoulder rig with an S&W Model 640 Centennial .38 Special as backup in one of Bruce Nelson's inside-the-pants Summer Specials. Mark toted a Colt Officer's Model .45 ACP in Nelson's No. 1 Professional and an S&W Model 649 Bodyguard .38 Special, in a Nelson ankle holster.

The handgun course was scheduled for the first two days. At 0700 on the first day, we were pleased and encouraged to see all 24 men selected for training, not just the six individuals assigned to the handgun course. All of them enthusiastically attended every day of the training cycle to observe, learn and assist those actually taking the course. In addition, their commander, Lt. Merlos, participated as a seventh student in all five days of training. With the exception of the Atlacatl Battalion, all too often the commanders of units I have trained in El Salvador have never exhibited enough interest to even visit the training site, let alone participate in the training with their men.

Except for Lt. Merlos, who was armed with the M9 (Beretta 92F), recently

adopted by the Salvadoran armed forces in emulation of the United States, the ERE has been issued Browning High Powers. It is, without doubt, still one of the finest 9mm combat pistols ever fielded. Unfortunately, however, the ones with which the ERE is equipped — a mixture of Belgian and Argentine manufacture — are all in woeful condition. To further compound the problem, 9mm Parabellum ammunition is difficult to obtain in quantity in El Salvador. We had specified a total of 10,800 rounds for both the handgun and MP5 courses. As Merlos explained, this had required an appeal to divine authority. As a result, our inventory included no less than a dozen different headstamps from eight different countries (Argentina, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Sweden and the United States). Some of these cartridges were more than a half-century old. Most prevalent and of lowest quality was the Argentine ball, a few of which had been manufactured with the primers set into the pocket sideways.

As a consequence of both of the above, we had no difficulty illustrating malfunction procedures. During the two days of the course, the students encountered every stoppage conceivable, including: light hits (weak firing pin spring), failure to extract, failure of the slide to go into battery, failure to retain or seat the magazine (worn magazine catch/release), no firing pin protrusion (firing pin hole pugged with brass shavings), stove pipes, dead rounds, failure of the hammer to fall, slide locked open



Shooting on the move is required training for the effective combat employment of most military small arms, including the MP5.

before last round has been fired (the so-called "Commander Syndrome"), double feed and low stripping pressure (weak magazine follower spring).

In addition to the time devoted to clearing these stoppages, the students spent considerable time with the Weaver stance; the draw stroke; Weaver low ready position; trigger control; follow through and

front sight reacquisition; standing, kneeling, prone and barricade firing positions; shooting on the move; speed and tactical reloading; weak hand firing and reloading; mindset and tactical procedures.

With the exception of Lt. Merlos, who had prior advanced training, all of the students started very poorly. However, by the end of the two days, all were performing considerably better than most students I have observed in similar courses in the United States. Why? In the United States most of those participating in courses of this type are playing games at Fantasy Island, albeit learning something that someday might conceivably save their lives. The ERE has contact with terrorists on the streets of San Salvador on an almost daily basis. Their motivation is high. What they learn today, they will most likely employ tomorrow in a deadly confrontation with the FMLN. We observed the same progress in the other three courses as well.

The MP5 course was scheduled for day three. All of the ERE's MP5 A3s (retractable stock version) are well used and were probably manufactured in the 1970s, but are in generally excellent condition overall. However, the rear sight elevation drums were all frozen with rust and could not be adjusted. Fortunately, the weapons were within tolerable limits for elevation zero and only the horizontal point of impact needed adjustment. The ERE MP5s are equipped with older style forearms and trigger packs that permit semiautomatic and full-auto fire only. In my opinion, the

three-shot burst mechanism is a superfluous feature on this weapon as its 700 rpm cyclic rate permits experienced operators to fire two-shot bursts with ease. Our students stepped up to the firing line with slings ranging from the superb Heckler & Koch multi-purpose carrying sling to boot laces.

During the course of the day, only one stoppage was encountered. It is a one-in-a-million MP5 malfunction that I have experienced only once before. It occurs when an empty case is extracted from the chamber and instead of being propelled out

the ejection port, spins under the bolt carrier to wedge itself between the carrier and trigger group. Clearing this stoppage requires removal of the buttstock and swinging the trigger pack forward to expose the case. If this should occur during a firefight, your best alternative would be to discard the weapon and immediately transition to your handgun. Many of those familiar with the MP5 have heard of this stoppage, but few have ever seen it. Since it is rare and cannot be induced, no one knows for sure what initiates it, although most authorities surmise it might be the result of a weak extractor spring.

The MP5 course covered mindset, ready positions, sight alignment, trigger control, follow through, general manipulation, weapon retention techniques, malfunction



"Geronimo" fires the MP5 from the "rice paddy prone" position.

procedures, tactical procedures, standing, kneeling, squatting (developed many years ago by the USMC and sometimes referred to as the "rice paddy prone"), barricade, prone and low prone firing positions, shooting on the move, reloading and semiauto versus full-auto firing stances.

The students were taught to load only 29 rounds in the magazine because of the weapon's closed-bolt method of operation. They were instructed to observe (whenever the tactical situation permitted) whether the top round was on the left or right of the staggered column prior to insertion in the magazine-well and then to remove the magazine to establish that the top round had moved over (indicating that a round had been chambered).

Also stressed was the ability to employ the MP5 at longer distances than possible with an open-bolt submachine gun. During full-auto firing drills only two-shot bursts were permitted. It was also emphasized that when engaging precision targets (such as head shots in hostage situations) at close ranges, the operator must compensate for the MP5's high line of sight.

No other weapon offers the close-range effectiveness and ammunition versatility of the combat shotgun. It should be selected over the handgun whenever concealment is not a required element. Its potential for self-defense is limited only by the proficiency of its operator. It provides massive stopping power while minimizing the potential for over-penetration — an important consideration in urban environments.

On the day of the shotgun course we



ERE students help to coach their comrades throughout each segment of SOF's training cycle. Here they instruct in the prone position and call shots at the 100-meter line during the rifle course.

were dismayed to see a mix of only No. 4 buckshot and No. 7½ birdshot (some of which was ancient paper-cased Canadian Eley) in the combat vests of those selected for this training. Except at point-blank ranges, birdshot serves no function in a combat shotgun.

For many years, law enforcement agencies have depended on No. 4 buckshot, which has 27 .24-inch diameter pellets in each standard 2¾-inch shell. Penetration problems through car bodies and even clothing have resulted in a return to 00 buckshot with its superior lethality, albeit

somewhat lower hit probability. You can depend on 00 buckshot to put an immediate stop to any confrontation up to 25 yards.

In my experience, Federal Premium Buckshot (Federal Cartridge Co., Dept. SOF, 900 Ehlen Drive, Anoka, MN 55303) will significantly improve 00 buckshot performance if you select their 9 pellet load (the 12-pellet 2¾-inch Magnum load just plain kicks too much). These tower-dropped pellets are 97.5 percent pure lead with 2.5 percent antimony for added hardness. Two polishings guarantee sphericity. Copper-plating further increases resistance

to deformation during firing. Shot is arranged in a spiral configuration within a long-range shot cup with granulated buffer added to fill the gaps. The granulated buffer will eventually leak into the gun's action and chamber and the mouth of these shells should be sealed with nail polish.

Shotgun ammunition of any type is extremely difficult to obtain in large quantities in El Salvador. Through its in-country sources, SOF was able to provide 1,000 rounds of 12 gauge ammunition for the course. We collected all the ERE's No. 4 buckshot and No. 7½ birdshot for use in the training cycle. At the end of the day we issued them more than twice as many Federal Premium 00 buckshot shells as the number of rounds they had turned in to us.

Except for one Remington Model 870 with an extended magazine, the ERE is armed with the Winchester Model 1200 slide-action 12 gauge shotgun. First introduced in 1964, the Model 1200 has a four-round magazine and a 20-inch barrel in the military/police version.

As every shotgun, even those of the same make, model and sequential serial numbers, will throw a pattern different than any other, the students first patterned their weapons on paper at varying distances. No matter how crude it may appear, the importance of the shotgun's front bead sight was stressed throughout the course. Also emphasized was the fact that pump guns must be racked smartly and completely, both rearward and then forward.

This segment of the training cycle also covered mindset once again, ready positions, the critical importance of constantly reloading the shotgun's limited-capacity magazine with the weapon on target, tactical procedures, trigger control, follow through and firing positions to include standing, kneeling, barricade, squatting and prone.

On the final day of training we worked with the M16A1 rifle. All of those issued to the ERE are well-worn. Most exhibit excessive play between the upper and lower receivers. Little remains of the original finish. Some are equipped with M203 40mm grenade launchers. Lieutenant Merlos and several members of the unit carry M16A2 Commandos while several others have M16A1 Carbines. All of the unit's M16A1 rifles are equipped with Vortex flash suppressors donated by SOF. This muzzle device almost completely eliminates the weapon's flash signature.

Proper and periodic maintenance of both the weapon and its magazines (and never loading more than 29 rounds in a 30-round magazine) are the key to reliable operation of the entire M16 series. We retired several magazines with bulged bodies and floorplates before the course commenced. Approximately 6,000 rounds were fired and yet we experienced only one "bolt-over-base" stoppage. Most of the unit's 5.56x45mm NATO ball ammunition is drawn from FMLN stockpiles captured during the November 1989 offensive and is

headstamped "LC 73," indicating an origin from material abandoned by the U.S. in Vietnam.

To be effective, the M16 must be zeroed by the individual to whom it is issued and this was accomplished before proceeding further. With the proper technique, two-shot bursts with the M16 will deliver reliable hits out to 50 meters. However, the principal employment of the infantry rifle should be in the semiautomatic mode and this was heavily stressed throughout the day. Another key concept is balancing speed against accuracy, which requires selection of the firing position that will insure the highest hit probability within the time frame permitted by the specific combat scenario. With that in mind, the standing, braced standing, squatting, kneeling, standard prone and low prone positions were covered. As with the MP5, the M16's high line of sight requires the operator to aim at the top of the forehead to strike between the eyes at extremely close distances.

Other topics covered were the high ready and low ready (muzzle depressed) positions, trigger control, follow through, shooting on the move, malfunction procedures, reloading techniques and tactical procedures.

Feelings of camaraderie are usually intense in small, elite units, especially under the tension of an almost constant combat environment. As the men of the ERE soaked up our training, they began to draw us ever more closely into their midst. We became, at least while we were with them, members of the unit. There were some amusing aspects to this.

Everyone in the ERE has a nickname. Since I could remember neither these nor their given names, I began to call them by names of my own choosing, which usually described their demeanor or physical attributes. There was "Mafia," "Flaco" (Thin), "Feo" (Ugly), "Cabo Indio" (Indian Corporal), "Mudo" (Mute), "Peter Pan," "Geronimo," "Cosa Seria" (Serious Matter), "Shorty," "Antiguo" (Ancient One), "Pequena Lulu" (Little Lulu), "Sargento Muela" (literally "Sergeant Molar Tooth," however, in El Salvador "muela" is an idiom for "stupid"), "Dopey," "Jimmy," "Viejo Tigre" (Old Tiger), "Cristo de Lata" (Tinny Jesus), "Atlacatl," "Bebe" (Baby), "Guapo" (Handsome) and

Continued on page 75

Cartridges captured from FMLN safe house in April 1990. Top row: 5.56x45mm NATO headstamps include "FC 223 REM" (Federal Cartridge Co.), "85 IVI" (Canadian), "FNM 86-2" (Portuguese) and "C J 8" (People's Republic of China). Bottom row: 7.62x39mm headstamps include "WINCHESTER 7.62x39" and PRC lots "31 73," "71 88," "946 80" and "6201 72." All of this ammunition was smuggled from the United States by FMLN sympathizers.

CAPTURED MATERIEL

We were on full alert. Intelligence sources indicated the FMLN was planning to send its greetings via an 81mm mortar attack on the PN HQ. After the usual dinner of eggs, refried beans, crema (sour cream) and thick Salvadoran tortillas at *el comedor de los oficiales* (officers' mess) and with little desire to go to bed with my boots on, I wandered through the dark, pseudo-Gothic hallways of the *Direccion General De Policia Nacional* (built in 1935) and down into the basement where the abandoned dungeons are now used as enlisted barracks, a tailor shop and storage. It is here that all materiel captured by the ERE from FMLN safehouses, with the exception of explosives, is kept. In February I had requested that all materiel captured after I left be segregated so that upon my return in June I might examine it with an eye to a possible change in the FMLN's logistical pipeline.

In one of these former cells, illuminated by only a single bare incandescent bulb, was the cache uncovered by the ERE in April 1990.

Stacked in one corner were six East German MPiKMS-72 Kalashnikovs, two Hungarian AKMs and one Soviet AKM in almost new condition along with about three dozen magazines — mostly steel and of unknown origin, although four were red plastic types of Russian manufacture. All of this was probably residual material left over from the FMLN buildup prior to the November 1989 offensive. Incongruously, lying next to the Soviet AKM was a 19th-century, hinged-frame, pinfire revolver, of undetermined caliber or manufacture, with 12 chambers.

Next to these weapons were what I estimated to be between 50,000 and 100,000 rounds of caliber 7.62x39mm and 5.56x45mm NATO ball ammunition. The 7.62x39mm cartridges were in grain sacks containing three to four thousand rounds each — the standard container by which the FMLN transports ammunition of this caliber across El Salvador. The 5.56x45mm NATO cartridges were tightly and neatly stacked in vertical columns on plastic pallets containing approximately 1,000 rounds each and wrapped in clear plastic.

The ammunition had been removed from the original 20-round boxes in an apparent attempt to disguise its origin. It never ceases to amaze me that terrorist organizations and even some foreign governments seem to be oblivious to the information that can be obtained from a cartridge's headstamp.

The 7.62x39mm ammunition was

mostly of two origins. Much of it was headstamped "WINCHESTER 7.62x39" with Boxer-primed, brass cases. The remainder — with either copper-washed or lacquered, Berdan-primed steel cases — was manufactured in the People's Republic of China. The following headstamps were found on the latter cartridges: "31 73" (in SKS stripper clips), "71 88," "946 79," "946 80," "6201 71" and "6201 72." All of these are lots exported to the United States for commercial consumption.

I found five different headstamps on the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridges: "WCC 89" (Western Cartridge Co., i.e. Winchester, 1989), "FC 223 REM" (Federal Cartridge Co.), "IVI 85" with NATO cross in circle (rejected Canadian government SS 109 type manufactured by Industry Valcartier, Inc., 1985, and imported by Pacific International Merchandising Corporation, Sacramento, California, for commercial sale in the United States), "FNM 86-2" with NATO cross in circle and green tip (SS-109 type manufactured by *Fabrica Nacional Municoes e Armas Legeiras*, Moscovide, Portugal, and exported to the United States for commercial sale) and "C J 8" (manufactured in the PRC and exported to the United States for commercial sale).

It appears that, at least temporarily, the supply route from Nicaragua has been interdicted. All of this ammunition was obtained in the United States. The FMLN fields Kalashnikovs and M16s (obtained from Vietnam via Cuba and Nicaragua). Thus, 7.62x39mm and 5.56x45mm NATO ammunition are their two most important small arms calibers.

The great mix of headstamps indicates to me they are purchasing this ammunition in small lots (probably no more than 1,000 rounds with each buy) at normal retail outlets to avoid arousing suspicion. With hundreds of dupes and sympathizers from New York to Los Angeles, this should present no problem. After accumulating a substantial quantity, the shipment is probably smuggled across the border to Mexico and then down through Guatemala into El Salvador.

While the FMLN failed to drop any mortar bombs on us that evening, this alarming information more than made my day. Need I remind you that the leftist mindset in the United States that would condone this outrage would most often also support efforts to relieve you of your Second Amendment rights? "Hypocrisy" is a synonym for "left liberal."

— P.K.



SOF ON THE DMZ

U.S. Army Keeps 800,000 North Koreans at Bay

Text & Photos by Tom Marks



AS they stand guard on the heavily fortified "Demilitarized Zone" (DMZ) that separates North and South Korea, troops of the U.S. 5-20 Battalion still shake their heads as they recount the story. "It was really something," says Lieutenant Colonel John Lewis, commander of the unit. "During 'Team Spirit' [a recent maneuver] we had stopped next to some rice paddies. An old man who was working there came over and said simply that he wanted to thank us for being in Korea. That was all he said, just that. Then he left."

It is a story worth remembering, for these are difficult times in Korea. And as the country struggles to deal with a host of issues — a slowing economy, rising inflation, a depressed stock market, rampant real estate speculation, government missteps and apparent corruption, continued labor and student unrest — it is often the Americans who are singled out as the root of the problem.

Only a month after Lt. Col. Lewis' encounter, demonstrators shouting anti-American slogans firebombed the U.S. Information Service in the heart of Seoul, an ironic episode as South Korea prepared

to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 25 June 1950 attack by the communist north that launched the Korean War and America's defense of a nation with which it had previously had only the slightest interest and contact. There followed a partnership which has grown to be as ambivalent as it is substantial (see sidebar).

One thing that is not ambivalent is the North Korean threat. As the most forward deployed U.S. battalion in the world today — the Warsaw Pact enemy having chosen to self-destruct — the 5-20 Battalion stands eyeball to eyeball with what is regarded as one of the most dedicated, disciplined, and well-trained opponents against which the United States must be on guard. Numbering some 800,000, the North Korean army is massed just back of the border and, despite some signs of easing tensions, continues to send infiltrators across the DMZ. There have been few incidents recently, but 24-hour-a-day patrols go out in full battle gear, locked and loaded.

Ironically, even as the troops daub on their camouflage paint, there is talk that this may be "the last DMZ battalion." For, with as little fanfare as possible, the United States is beginning to go home in response

to the changing world strategic situation and Congressional desire for spending cuts. While total U.S. military presence in-country stands at 43,000, much of this is involved in support structure. The punch, which once stood at two full divisions, is now the single 2nd Infantry Division of just nine combat battalions — four infantry (two mechanized and two light), two armor, and three artillery (the total fielded as three maneuver brigades). Of the entire 155-mile DMZ, the United States guards a mere 2-1/2-mile-strip.

This is the responsibility of the DMZ Battalion, actually a three-month rotating assignment assumed by the infantry battalions in turn. It was the 5-20th's turn when I arrived. Until now there have been five such battalions, but one is in the process of disbanding. That will leave a perfect number for a year's duty — but diminished combat punch.

Punch, in any case, is no longer an issue. The U.S. presence has grown so small that it is dwarfed by the army of the Republic of Korea, referred to simply as "the ROKs." While the United States has four infantry battalions, the ROKs have *four armies*: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and CFA (Combined Field



Army). Each has a number of component corps (three is standard, though actual assignment of units often differs); these, in turn, are supposed to have a triad division structure (most have more). In total, South Korea has on the order of 40 divisions ready for battle, an impressive number.

Overall command continues to be held by a U.S. four-star, who concurrently holds numerous other "hats," among them that of Commander-in-Chief United Nations Command (CINCUNC), Commander U.S. Forces Korea, and 8th Army Commander. These bureaucratic commands, left over from the Korean War, continue to exist and to insure that even the most routine decisions have a political component. United States ground combat power is integrated into the South Korean defense through the CFA, which marries 2 ID with the ROK 20th Mech (one of the country's three mechanized divisions) and the Capital Division (also mechanized). The force is commanded by Lieutenant General Bill Carpenter, of West Point football ("Lonely End") and Vietnam combat Distinguished Service Cross fame.

The United States is in the driver's seat for obvious reasons. "The Americans are

our ultimate guarantee," says a ROK intelligence officer frankly. "That is why we wish them to remain." That the United States would become involved in a future conflict is virtually guaranteed by the positioning of U.S. forces. Though contingency plans call for the main American effort to be in the east (the DMZ Battalion would ostensibly be pulled out of the line), it is certain that any North Korean attack would see American troops dying next to their ROK counterparts. At that point there would be no turning back.

That role sits just fine with the U.S. front line soldiers. "Beyond a shadow of a doubt we're ready to fight," offers Staff Sergeant Charles Huad (Charlie Co.), a 30 year old from Alabama who enlisted in 1979. "The Army learned its lessons in Grenada and with the Marines [in Lebanon]. Now, a magazine [of ammunition] is just a snap away. We go through the procedures every day. The troops are constantly learning what they would do under certain circumstances. If it comes to that, we'll fight."

Echoes Alpha Company First Sergeant Lonnie Bennett, 38, a Vietnam veteran, "With the leadership we have, the soldiers we have, and the equipment we have, we

can fight. I think we can go forward."

A Constant Threat

Forward, of course, is where the North Koreans would like to go. Since the division of the peninsula in the aftermath of World War II — the Soviets garrisoned half, the U.S. half — communist Pyongyang has been a state mobilized for war. Defense sources estimate that, at any given time it has devoted roughly a fourth, if not more, of its gross national product (GNP) to defense. This is a staggering

Humping through rice paddies along the Korean DMZ with the 5-20th.

INSET: Patrolling the forested mountains of Korea's 155-mile long DMZ in full combat gear.

AT THE CROSSROADS

It is a partnership that has normally been taken for granted. After all, we fought together in both the Korean and Vietnam wars, as well as in countless nameless skirmishes along the DMZ. Yet the American-Korean relationship is at a key juncture. This is because Korea itself is at a critical point in its political, economic and social development. Washington can play a constructive role in the process which is unfolding. To do so will take a good bit of understanding and sophisticated diplomacy. Above all, the United States must not let superficial acts of anti-Americanism obscure the reality that the two countries are linked by significant common interests.

These interests include strategic, economic, political and cultural ties of substantial magnitude. The foundation upon which the edifice rests, of course, is the shared experience of the Korean War. The bonds forged by the trauma of the conflict — Seoul, the capital, changed hands four times, and the country was left devastated — endure still.

Turning to me in the middle of a discussion on the Korean educational system, Yon Doo Che, 49, a veteran chemistry teacher preparing to become a middle school principal, said, "The media exaggerates the anti-American [element of demonstrations]. I want to thank the United States for helping us during the Korean War. I was a boy then, so I know what it was like. You must understand that not all Koreans agree with the students. Many young people do not understand what we have gone through. Furthermore, it is only a fraction of the students who are demonstrating against the United States. Most of us have not forgotten what America has done for us."

The sentiment is repeated endlessly as one travels around the country. Why, then, the virulent anti-U.S. tenor that has become a staple of demonstrations?

"What you have going on here," analyzes a U.S. Embassy official, "is not so

much anti-American sentiment as anti-foreign sentiment. We just happen to be the target due to our important position in the country. Even to label what is happening as anti-foreign may not be totally accurate. What we are seeing is a renaissance of Korean culture."

Agrees Chung-Si Ahn, Professor of Political Science at Seoul National University, Korea's most prestigious institution of higher learning and long the center of Korean student activism, "In a single generation we have gone through the societal change that took Western countries centuries to carry out. This has created tremendous social tension, rife with contradictions. The country has been moving so fast that people have lost track of identity, continuity, ancestry. Nationalism is one way of coping, a search for answers in a country that has never been unified in modern times."

Professor Ahn is describing the rapid transformation into an economic powerhouse of a country which in the early 1960s was a relatively backward state based upon agriculture. In a scant two and half decades the gross national product (GNP) soared from \$2.3 billion to \$169.2 billion; manufacturing went from 14.5% of GNP to 31.6%.

With wealth and success, however, came dislocation. A population once overwhelming rural became substantially urban — 70% today with a projected 77% by the year 2000. Disparities of wealth, a ravaged environment and the disintegration of traditional social and cultural forms came to the fore. Perhaps most salient, demands for a voice in shaping the future clashed with the government's continued authoritarianism. In the absence of reform, radicalism — led by student activism — blossomed. Though a more democratic political structure has now been instituted, the legacy of the protest and turmoil necessary to bring it into being remains.

—T.M.

burden for a country ostensibly at peace. The comparable South Korean figure is 4.6% (the United States spends about 7%; the Soviet Union went bankrupt at double that). It is possible to maintain this levee because North Korea's "Great Leader," Kim Il Sung, has kept the country all but sealed off from the outside world. Austere living for the people releases funds for the military.

What heightens concerns about North Korean forces is that they have always been poised not for defense but invasion. Just in back of the border guards manning the DMZ is a first echelon of 20 infantry divisions (the border guards themselves fall under the reconnaissance section of the division). Arrayed behind this, in the second echelon, are four mechanized corps and an armor corps. And in back of that is a third echelon. Some 70 percent of the North Korean artillery is positioned in hardened firing positions such that it can

support this planned juggernaut as it moves to seize Seoul, the South Korean capital.

That Seoul would be the main objective of any attack stems from its status as the only real strategic target that matters in South Korea. Not only is nearly a quarter of the entire population living there, but it is the ROK's capital and its economic, and social heart.

There are three primary invasion routes:

- The Chorwon Valley — the traditional invasion route to the South used by the North in its 1950 assault.

- The Kaesong-Munsan approach — a shorter invasion route from the North Korean textile town of Kaesong through the South Korean Munsan road junction (about 35 kilometers from Seoul).

- Through the Han Estuary.

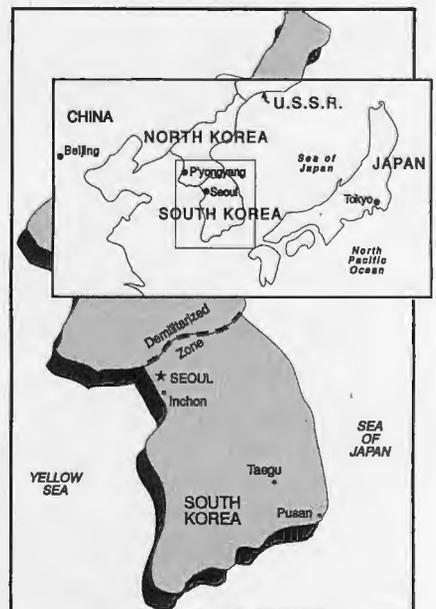
American sources consider the Kaesong-Munsan approach to be the most likely avenue of approach. It is in this corridor that the DMZ Battalion is based. Although

it is only one-third as wide as the Chorwon Valley, it is the shortest and most direct route to Seoul. The Chorwon Valley route, in contrast, is 85 kilometers long and difficult to travel on. Also, supply connections to this route are limited. The Kaesong-Munsan route, in contrast, has several good supply links. The Han Estuary is considered an unlikely avenue because of the North's limited amphibious capabilities and the estuary's extreme tidal fluctuations (second highest in the world).

Regardless of the approach, considerations of terrain would be similar for both land routes. A main attack would be supported by strong secondary thrusts along alternative accesses of advance, as well as elsewhere along the border. These would endeavor to prevent South Korean forces from shifting to mount a counterattack. Simultaneously, specifically trained light infantry brigades would infiltrate South Korean rear areas. Pyongyang has sought to facilitate the initial stages of this effort by laboriously drilling tunnels through the solid rock beneath the DMZ. So far only four of an estimated two dozen have been unearthed, the fourth only recently.

Other services would support the ground effort. The navy would perform interdiction missions and provide lift for amphibious raids and probes. The air force would attempt to strike targets of both a tactical and strategic nature (the North is apparently incapable of close air support). North Korea's superior air defense system would provide protection for rear areas.

North Korean plans call for the first echelon of infantry to make the initial assault, with the mechanized/motorized armor second echelon to exploit breakthroughs. To facilitate this task, Pyongyang's forces were reorganized in 1985. Corps are no longer comprised of divisions but of slightly smaller, more flexible brigades which are structured as combined arms teams. Battalions, too, are



smaller in size, just 300-400 men. To add further bite, older armor, notably the T-34 tank, has been redeployed to the third echelon, and all modern armor has been concentrated in the second echelon. Some reports speak of pure T-62 battalions, but it seems more likely most formations remain mixed T-62/T-54/55.

Caught by surprise in 1950, the South Koreans are determined not to come up short again. The area from the DMZ to Seoul has been turned into a virtual minefield. Tank walls and hardened positions cover the landscape, with underground command bunkers situated deep inside the mountains. All roads are laced with rock drops and demolitions charges. Bridges have been kept narrow and ready for easy destruction.

Though inferior in numbers of troops actually deployed, South Korea, with double the population of the North (42 million versus 21 million), could call up superior reserves. Universal service remains in effect, so there is a large pool of available manpower. The North has greater stockpiles in place, but the South would call upon the United States to make up for any shortfalls. For its backup, Pyongyang now draws a joker, as the Soviets find it no longer to their liking to be sucked into a



Soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division train constantly, knowing 800,000 North Koreans are mere minutes away on the other side of the DMZ.

potential flashpoint.

That the North would consider attacking at all stems from Kim Il Sung's implacable desire to reunify the peninsula. Reunification is a goal of both sides, but ideological differences have kept the event a distant dream. Faced with such a situation, Kim has kept his forces active with probes, raids, and special forces operations. These invariably foundered — it is significant that most were discovered when local residents promptly reported the intruders to the nearest authorities. Though such activities have declined, they have not ceased. The North feels that current unrest in the South, especially anti-American sentiment, provides opportunities for exploitation that were not available earlier.

For the moment, Northern efforts remain an annoyance but not a threat. Of far more concern to Seoul is the continuing disparity in certain categories of equipment, especially artillery. The imbalance in numbers of tubes is so substantial that observers have been led to suggest suicidal



ABOVE: American troops guard only 2-1/2 miles of the DMZ but still mount constant patrols.



107mm mortar mounted in M106 Mortar Carrier behind the Korean DMZ.

tendencies upon the part of the allies. Nevertheless, the South continues to add self-propelled pieces; and the South Korean air force, schooled in the U.S. doctrine of close air support — and backed up by U.S. planes based in-country (and in nearby Japan) — is thought capable of covering at least a good bit of the "king of battle" gap.

Similarly, previous North Korean superiority in armor is also no longer what it was. With Seoul manufacturing what U.S. troops call "a baby M-1," it has vastly improved its tank capability. Armored personnel carriers are also built in-country and are more than adequate. In short, the South's industrial might — its GNP is eight times that of the North — is beginning to make itself felt, even given the unwillingness of the South Koreans to destroy their economy by going on a war footing like the North.

A New Army

Such is the situation in which U.S. forces operate. It was fitting that it was the 5-20th that was doing its rotation as 25 June approached, the anniversary of North Korea's 1950 invasion. It was in 1876 that the 5-20th's ancestor, the 20th Regiment, took part in the ill-fated military expedition against the combined Indian forces massed to defend the Black Hills. Most of the unit was with Gibbon's column. But Company I, attached to the 7th Cavalry, fell with Custer during his renowned "Last Stand." The date was 25 June.

It is now known that the troopers were

not only at a hopeless disadvantage in numbers that day in 1876 but also considerably outgunned. Unprepared U.S. and ROK units, which sought vainly to stem the North Korean tide on that same date in 1950, must have shared their desperation. They did not even have an antitank weapon that could penetrate the communist T-34s. They died bravely but in vain. It took the gallant stand at Pusan and MacArthur's brilliant Inchon landing to reverse the situation.

Things will never again get that far if the current allied forces have anything to say in the matter. And they intend to say plenty. Small though they may be, U.S. forces in place are impressive. Gone is the armed rabble that emerged from the Vietnam War. In its place is a revitalized, re-equipped Army with a sense of purpose.

"Don't give me that crap," admonishes a sergeant to a rifleman who starts to



ROK troops serve with American soldiers on a regular basis.

complain about a scramble up a steep hill during a quick reaction force deployment. "You're a volunteer, my man. Now hump that bush!"

And hump they do — with gusto. Spirit is present everywhere. Execution of tasks is crisp and efficient. No matter what the task, it is done well.

Observes Echo Co. Sergeant First Class

Continued on page 75



NAPOLEON'S SUNKEN TREASURE

SOF Goes for the Gold in Egyptian Waters

Text & Photos by John C. Fine



Various valuable coins were recovered from the wreck of the French flagship *l'Orient*.

ABOUKIR Bay is sheltered and calm, the Mediterranean on the seaward side of the peninsula rough and unprotected. From the air, the site confirms the daring of British Admiral Lord Nelson's strategy in his attack on Napoleon's fleet in the summer of 1798 — a daring plan that could have proven disastrous in the shoals and shallows of the bay.

The hook-shaped peninsula is easily seen. Ile d'el Bequir, the French name for the island, or Aboukir Island, or Nelson's Island as it is called today, provides a landmark for the position of French ships of the line. From the air, one can picture the scene of the battle and understand the French admiral's choice of Aboukir as an anchorage.

One can't help but be astonished that

Egyptian frigate hoists cannon from sunken French ship of the line.

Nelson took the risk he did to surprise the anchored French fleet (see sidebar). Yet his maneuver was almost perfectly executed, with only one British ship — the *Culloden* — running aground.

There is now a project to explore the shipwrecks in Aboukir Bay and to begin excavating the site to recover artifacts from some of the vessels, including the French admiral's flagship *l'Orient*, which exploded and burned during the battle. The project is a cooperative effort between the French and Egyptian navies.

Project divers exploring the shallow waters of the bay soon located the wreckage. In one amazing find, a huge bronze rudder mount was brought to the surface. The writing on it confirmed that the divers had found the French admiral's flagship. The object bore the inscription, "No. 6 Le Dauphin Royal," which was the original name of *l'Orient*.

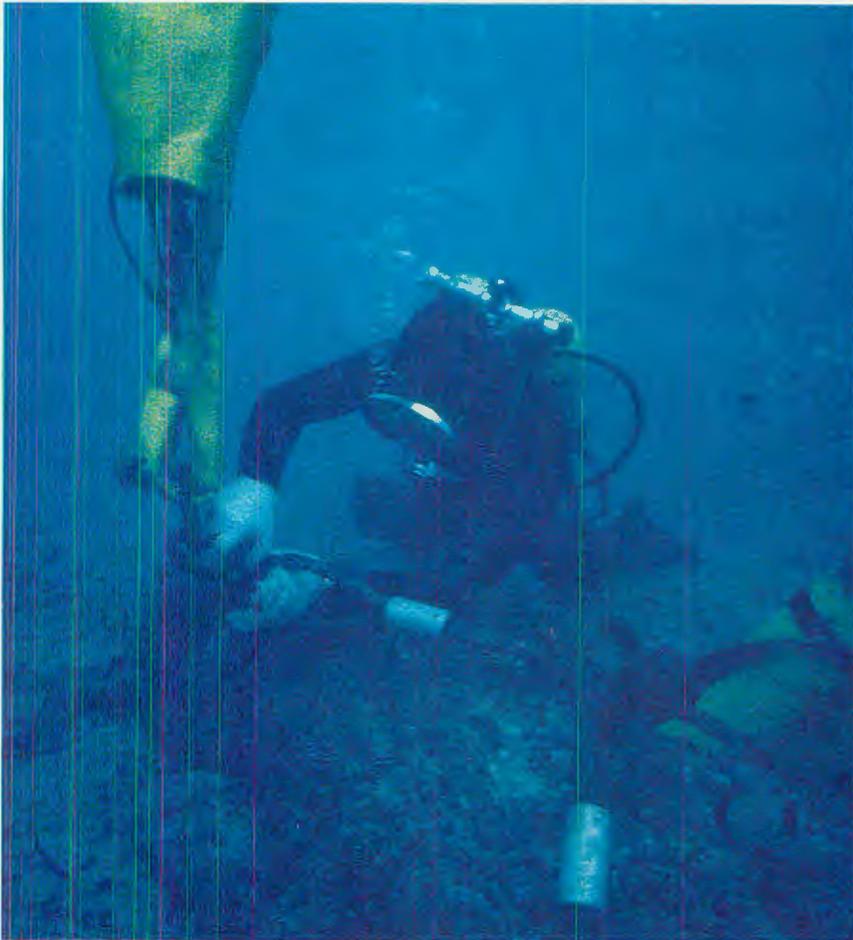
Divers began surfacing with magnificent examples of silver coins from the period, including Spanish King Carlos III pillar dollars, coins of the Republic period, French silver pieces from the Royal period including Louis XV coins dated 1727 and 1728, and assorted coins from the French Revolution.

Searching among the remains of the admiral's flagship, a ship's compass was found, its copper binnacle box intact. There was a lead plate inside the compass holder with a pointed copper needle support. A rare example of a folding gunter's scale, a rule used in navigation, and a pair of navigational dividers were also located among the wreckage.

In the sheltered cove of Aboukir Bay, researchers have located and hope to eventually raise and conserve the huge wooden rudder from *l'Orient*. Cannons have also been raised from the *Guerrier*, the first French ship of the line destroyed in the battle.

Abdallah el Attar, Egypt's Director for Islamic and Coptic Antiquities under whose jurisdiction the shipwrecks fall, has converted the ancient citadel at Quait Bay, overlooking Alexandria's old port, into a museum for relics recovered from Napoleon's fleet. The 15th-century Islamic fort, built on the site of the ruins of the lighthouse of Pharos, originally constructed in Alexander the Great's time, commands a magnificent view of the coast. Cannons recovered from the sunken fleet are set in the inner courtyard and displays of coins and artifacts recovered from the shipwrecks are displayed around halls inside the fortress.

Napoleon's expedition into Egypt was one of the world's most ambitious naval undertakings, with some 400 ships of all kinds involved. The main fleet sailed from



Nile River water is murky due to sewage released into it. Visibility improves as one gets deeper. Here Egyptian frogmen rig cannons for hoisting to the surface.



Toulon in May 1798, arriving two months later at the beach at Marabout in Alexandria. In addition to the capital ships of the line, the French navy used merchant ships to transport cargo and supplies for the expeditionary forces. One of the cargo ships, *Le Patriote*, arrived at the passage into Alexandria harbor on 3 July 1798.

Unlike the other merchant ships, the cargo contained in the holds of *Le Patriote* consisted of scientific instruments for the expedition and equipment to manufacture hydrogen gas for reconnaissance balloons to be used in Egypt.

The captain of *Le Patriote* refused to make port in Alexandria, fearing the shallow reefs and rocks on both sides of the passage into the port. But soon a frigate was observed sailing into port and *Le Patriote's* captain was directed to follow her in. A fresh wind came up and the supply ship was driven onto a rock outcropping. Her rudder was torn away and she was disabled. As the *Le Patriote's* crew went aloft to take in sail, trying to prevent further damage, the ship was suddenly thrown over onto the rocks again and her aft section caved in. *Le Patriote* slowly sank, and with it the precious cargo that would have served the scientists and naturalists who embarked with the expedition.

Egyptian navy divers, along with French and Egyptian archaeologists, began to search for the submerged wreckage of *Le Patriote* just outside the port of Alexandria along the shallow rocky ledges near the channel leading into the port. Research in French and British archives had led them to letters and a hand-drawn map done at the time of the sinking.

Pinpointing the wreckage underwater was surprisingly easy, requiring only two days of searching. The wreck of *Le Patriote* was found on a rock ledge within 3½ meters of the surface. The surrounding water varies from about 7 to 9 meters in depth. Teams of divers on the *Patriote* project, directed by French navy Captain Max Guerout, observed several cannons and a carronade (a short muzzle-loading cannon) from the wreckage almost at once. The exploration continued underwater in spite of high seas, rain and stormy conditions which made the work rough going for the support tug.

The Bay of Alexandria receives effluent from the Nile delta as well as municipal discharges. This makes the surface layer down to two meters a soupy gray that affords no visibility. Once below the surface layer, visibility improves somewhat, depending on climatic conditions.

Beginning of another storm off the coast of Alexandria, where numerous ships have gone down after being forced into the many shoals and rock outcroppings.

When there were heavy rain storms and squalls, visibility was reduced to only a foot or two.

Working with underwater air lifts, the marine archaeologist's equivalent of a vacuum cleaner, divers discovered a rare octant. The octant is a navigational sighting device invented in 1730, used to determine a ship's position before the sextant was invented. When the octant was brought up, it was encrusted with marine growth. Treated and restored in an archaeological laboratory directed by Dr. Yussef el Gheriani, Egypt's Under Secretary of State for Alexandrian Antiquities and Museums, the wooden arms of the octant were preserved and the brass parts cleaned and restored, exposing ornate scroll work.

A miniature bronze cannon was also found at the *Patriote* wreck site. The archaeologists can only guess that the tiny toy cannon served as a souvenir on the captain's desk or was among the belongings of the crew. Interesting tiles and bricks, some bearing the mark of a maker from the region near Marseilles, helped to confirm the wreckage as that of *Le Patriote*. The archaeologists believe the bricks were part of the cargo to be used in constructing ovens used in the manufacture of hydrogen gas for reconnaissance balloons destined as French observation posts on the battlefield.

Other fascinating marine details were discovered by the researchers as well. From copper sheathing and copper nails, the workers confirmed that the shipwreck was doubled with copper below the water line to protect it from worm damage. The sheathing was fastened to the hull with copper rather than iron nails, a technique used in French military vessels after 1767.

This was the first recorded date that a French military vessel was sheathed with copper using copper nails to prevent bimetallic galvanic corrosion which rapidly ate away iron nails in contact with copper and sea water. It can be assumed that French merchant vessels with copper fastened to the hull with copper nails post-date 1767.

Archival information about *Le Patriote* shows it weighed 580 tons.

Bowls and pottery vessels and shards were brought up, also helping to date and corroborate the identity of the wreck. Researchers who studied and weighed cannon balls found on-site determined they were of French weight and measure. All this evidence pointed to the fact that the wreckage was indeed *Le Patriote*, the supply ship for Napoleon's scientists.

The story of Napoleon's expedition in Egypt is fascinating history punctuated by extraordinary maritime events. The Battle of Aboukir Bay, also called the Battle of the Nile, played a major role in shaping those events. Pieces of history recovered from the shipwrecks are helping to piece together that chronicle.

John C. Fine is a freelance writer and professional photographer who has dived "treasure" ships all over the globe. His last SOF story was "Truk Lagoon," July '86.

BATTLE OF THE NILE

The battle at Aboukir marked the beginning of the end of France's adventures in Egypt. Prior to this engagement, British Admiral Lord Nelson had been chasing the French fleet around the Mediterranean, determined to do battle.

Early on, Nelson's flagship was demasted in a gale while sailing from Gibraltar, and he had to put into Sardinia for repairs — thus failing to intercept the French fleet as it sailed to Malta and then Egypt. Nelson's failure to engage the French at sea was fortunate, for he was outgunned and outnumbered and likely would have lost had a battle ensued.

The French fleet attacked Malta and sacked the island, carrying away great treasure, including, it was rumored, the silver gates from the Knight's Palace. In addition to the plunder, the French Admiral's flagship held the pay for Napoleon's troops in the Middle East, an estimated value of 600,000 pounds sterling.

Admiral Bruey, commanding the French fleet of 13 ships of the line and four frigates, debarked Napoleon and his troops at Agami on 2 July 1798, then sailed toward the Bay of Aboukir. Aboukir is a hook-shaped peninsula extending from the eastern coast of Alexandria, Egypt's major port on the Mediterranean. The bay side of this peninsula is called *Al Bahr el Maïet* in Arabic, or the Dead Sea, because it is calm and protected.

The French admiral didn't trust his fleet to the port of Alexandria, reputed to be in poor condition, so he drew his ships up into the Bay of Aboukir and anchored the ships in line. The French commander reasoned that from this anchorage, the shallows and shoals between his vessels and the shore would prevent an enemy from slipping between his anchored ships and the land.

When Nelson received intelligence

about the location of the French fleet, he calculated that the French would have to allow for their ships to swing back on their anchor chains. He thus reasoned that his British warships would have just enough room to sail between the French fleet and shore. Nelson deployed half of his warships to seaward and half behind the French line, between them and the shore.

Until that time French tactics were to present only the seaward side to any possible attacker; they doubled their gun crews on the seaward side of their ships and readied only those guns they assumed would face their adversary. This left the French ships vulnerable on the landward side where their guns were impeded by tables, tackle and gear the French thought unnecessary for battle and stowed there.

Nelson's tactic was executed with great courage and cunning. The 14 British ships soon engaged the enemy, surprising them at anchor. The Battle of Aboukir Bay lasted only from 1740 hours through the night and morning of 1 August 1798 (a short naval battle by the day's standards). Wounded in the head and bleeding profusely from shot fired from a French ship, Nelson thought he was dying. He was taken below decks where he refused to be treated before other sailors he thought could be saved by the harried ship's surgeon were treated. When it was discovered that his wound, although nasty, was superficial, Nelson was patched up.

The next day he awoke to victory. Nine of the French ships were captured, two were burned and two managed to raise sail and escape. Of Nelson's ships, all were damaged but none were lost. Napoleon was now isolated with his expeditionary forces in Egypt and trapped on land. It would be a year before he could escape aboard a blockade-running French frigate.

— J.F.



Napoleon addresses his officers aboard *l'Orient* as she sits off the harbor at Alexandria, Egypt. Napoleon later went on land to lead his expeditionary force, while the fleet anchored at Aboukir Bay, where they met their equivalent of Waterloo.



A black-clad soldier crept out of the bush at the edge of the river and studied the opposite bank. Satisfied, he made a small gesture with his hand, then slipped into the murky water. In quick but silent succession another dozen men emerged from the thick jungle and followed him into the water, holding their weapons at the ready as they moved first waist-deep, then in up to their chests. Slowly making their way along the bank, they spread out and took up positions among clumps of water hyacinth and tree roots, and settled in. Hidden and protected by the river and its vegetation the soldiers waited.

Time passed as slowly as the sluggish current, but eventually the patience of the ambushers was rewarded by the sight of three heavily laden boats paddling toward the killing ground. Armed boatmen, some alert and some with weapons slung,

scanned the trees and bushes on the river bank, but ignored the surface and floating water plants — a lapse in vigilance soon to prove fatal. Detonating with an enormous roar, claymore mines on the high banks sprayed metal pellets across the river. Instantly rifle fire from the still-concealed troops in the water slashed into those few survivors trying to return fire. Shooting into the jungle, not the water, return fire was totally ineffective. Within seconds, all gunfire ceased and only moaning wounded guerrillas on now-drifting boats disturbed the silence, as their blood swirled in red eddies downstream.

Slipping frogmen's fins onto their feet, several men of Thailand's Special Forces swam out to check their targets for life and anything of intelligence value, all the while covered by the watchful eyes and ready weapons of their comrades. Equipped with

plastic bags for documents and demolition charges for non-portable material, they soon completed their tasks and swam back to join the rest of their unit. As silently as they had arrived, the Special Forces troopers left the ambush site and started back to base.

Blank ammunition and simulated claymores are impressive when properly used, and the above demonstration, given to welcome the International Association of Airborne Veterans (IAAV) to Thailand's Special Warfare Command, was impressive indeed. In more than 15 years of active service in several different armies, this was the first time that I had seen an ambush conducted by troops virtually immersed in water.

During the next five days spent parachuting with the IAAV, I was to see a few more "firsts," like an Austrian with more jump



THAI JUMP

SOF Hits the Silk With IAAV

by Robert MacKenzie



ABOVE: IAAV tour member makes safe landing after jumping from helicopter.
Photo: R. MacKenzie

wings on his uniform than I have birthdays taking part of the hydraulic line of his helicopter with him when he exited from 1,250 feet. (The aircrew was not amused but made a good forced landing.) I also saw a civilian jumper exiting a C-123 in good free-fall position, except that he was doing a static-line jump. Fortunately, his static line did not wrap itself around any of the offered body parts. I also witnessed dozens of people with MC-1 steerable parachutes running with the wind all the way into the ground, this despite repeated loudspeaker instructions to turn into the wind. Miraculously, only two suffered broken limbs, although many more sustained bruises and didn't jump the next day.

Author, right, poses with IAAV director, Mike Epstein, after the day's chopper jumps.
Photo: Sibyl MacKenzie

Still, given that there were nearly 100 of us from at least 10 different armies jumping, and that several were overweight or slightly out of practice, the exercise has to be considered a success. Despite the few bad examples mentioned, the large majority of troopers did everything right and logged two good jumps with the Royal

Thailand Special Forces: one from a C-124 Provider, and one from a CH-34 Choctaw. In addition, and more importantly, we all met some really good paratroopers from other countries and reaffirmed that camaraderie special to airborne forces of all nationalities. I have always been convinced that I have more in common with a Russian paratrooper than I do with most American politicians, and that conviction was reinforced on the IAAV tour.

Since the IAAV specializes in taking multi-national groups of former and serving paratroopers to jump with their counterparts in places like Taiwan, Israel and South Africa, it is not surprising that this trip to Thailand was efficient and well-organized. I joined the American contingent at Sea-Tac Airport and watched in amazement as members arrived on flights from all over the United States in time to catch the right plane to Tokyo. At Narita Airport other members from other countries joined us for the flight to Bangkok, and when we arrived there we found that English, German and French members had already arrived, exactly as planned. The director of IAAV, Michael Epstein, certainly deserves congratulations for his preparation. For the remaining 10 days buses arrived on time, hotels had our reserved rooms, and arrangements with the Thai military all worked. Mike says that there were a few snags in comparison to other tours, but I didn't see any worthy of

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AIRBORNE VETERANS

Established by a group of veterans of several nationalities with service in Rhodesia in common, the International Association of Airborne Veterans (IAAV) has expanded to include several hundred veterans of WWII, Korea, the French Indochina War, Algeria, Vietnam, Israel's wars, and various other campaigns.

Although it is not necessary to be a combat vet to join, they do provide the IAAV's hardcore nucleus. It is necessary to be a former member of a military parachute unit, so "legs," civilian skydivers, wannabe Rambos and general flakes need not apply.

For those who are qualified, the IAAV provides a chance to travel to far-off lands, meet former and serving soldiers from all over the world, strap on a parachute, and leap into space from exotic aircraft. For collectors of badges and jump wings with which to adorn your combat jacket, the IAAV enables you to earn them legitimately, instead of buying them at a Soldier of Fortune Convention. And finally, for people who want to combine a little extra spice with normal overseas tourist trips, an IAAV jump tour includes several days of sightseeing, shopping, monument-visiting, and eating ethnic foods. Also, add-on excursions are available for those who have the time and a few extra dollars to spend. Wives and families are welcome on all tours and can observe, but not participate in, military activities.

Mike Epstein, who got his wings in 1956 and served with the 82nd, has been IAAV's director since 1985. He does his best to screen out those fools who might endanger real paratroopers by their incompetence, but inevitably a few slip

through his net only to reveal themselves on tour. They are not asked to return. On the other end of the spectrum, many qualified jumpmasters belong to the Association, and their presence is of great assistance during refresher training as well as the real thing. Membership is \$25 a year which includes a quarterly newsletter and priority on seats — sometimes important when only a limited number are available. Presently, about 2,500 members in 15 countries are on the mailing list. Numbers of participants on a tour vary, depending on parachuting facilities in the host country, but average about 100 troopers and several more family members. Prices are in the region of \$2,500 to \$3,000 for a 10-day visit. This includes airfare, accommodations with breakfast in a good hotel, all parachuting, a cocktail party and formal banquet, and some tourist activity.

To date the IAAV has made one or more visits to Israel, South Africa, Taiwan, Mexico, W. Germany and Thailand, and is planning return visits to all of those countries. Also in the works are jumps in Brazil, Portugal, and Red China, among others. They've jumped C-47, C-119, C-130 and C-160 airplanes, and a few types of helicopters, using T-10 or derivative canopies.

If you like to parachute military-style, to associate with a first-class group of troopers, and to do these things in a variety of interesting places, then the IAAV seems to be the best answer. For further information, write to: IAAV, Dept. SOF, 606 W. Barry St., Suite 181, Chicago, IL 60657 USA; phone (312) 327-3120.

— R.M.

mention.

After a day in Bangkok to get over jet lag, check out the pubs and young ladies in Patpong and perhaps buy a few presents for wives/girlfriends at home, we set off to the Thai Special Warfare Command in the town of Lop Buri. A welcoming speech from the commander was followed by several demonstrations given by his men, and then we were off to jump school for some refresher training. Fuselage mock-ups, ramps and platforms for PLFs, suspended harnesses, and even a 34-foot tower were familiar to most of us, and by the end of the day we were as ready as we would be for the real thing.

Dawn brought a sultry, humid day with a steady breeze of about seven miles an hour. Perfect for a slow descent with an MC-1 canopy (virtually a T-10 with modifications cut to allow a degree of steering capability), although hot work at the airbase and in the plane. Half of us were to jump helicopter while the others did the 123; we would reverse roles the next day. A briefing on wind, DZ conditions and procedures, and flight patterns was given to us in the hangar and we manifested. Fixed-wing jumpers

loaded their chutes onto trucks and went off to a nearby airbase, while those of us doing the chopper jump fitted parachutes and waited for the CH-34. Very shortly a clattering of rotors and whine of turbine — Thai CH-34s have been retrofitted with jet engines — announced the arrival of our aircraft. Loading six troops at a time, and dropping three per pass, the helicopter started work. Since our DZ was right next to the hangar and helipad, nine lifts went quickly and we were finished. Nothing to it except a long five-second vertical drop before opening shock, and then a nice ride down under nylon. Not such a nice ride down for those who didn't know how to use a steerable and hadn't paid attention during ground training, though, since the forward drive of the parachute, added to the wind, meant some of them were impacting at 15-plus miles per hour.

When our Choctaw finished and went home, the Provider arrived overhead and started dropping. Since it was unloading nine-man sticks, the day's parachuting was soon over. The next day was the same, but with about 20 fewer jumpers, as bruises and excuses took their toll. One fellow from

New Jersey went to the hospital for surgery on his two broken femurs. There was still a lot of champagne at the DZ prop-blast party, though, and we wasted no time starting to get in the mood for that night's banquet and wings presentation.

Torrential rain had fallen late each afternoon at Lop Buri and the day of the banquet was no exception. Fortunately it stopped just as our bus arrived at the Special Forces Club for the award ceremony and dinner. Those of us who were wearing our dress uniforms were grateful. My Rhodesian SAS scarlets are capable of soaking up a good deal of water, and, sodden, lose most of their snap. There weren't that many of us in mess dress, but we were a flash bunch, and the object of some envious comments that we could still wear our dress uniforms while others (obviously the remark makers) could not. Some scurrilous asides were made about last minute, hasty alterations, but they were ignored. As I said, we were a colorful group. In addition to my scarlets, we had U.S. Marines, Army and Air Force, all in various dress blues, and the German contingent, looking eerily Teutonic in their light grey tunics with navy blue trousers.

Lining up for the presentation in order of our hotel check-in, I was separated from my usual companions, "the Colonials." Australian, Malaysian, Canadian and English IAAV members had formed an informal group for the exercise, and I was invited to join because of my service in a colonial army, and because I knew English football. Besides, I had once been voted an "Honorary Englishman" and am still proud of that appellation. After a quick rehearsal before the arrival of the general who would give us our wings, we settled down at our tables and soon the ceremony began. In due course and with few mix-ups, we were presented with two sets of Royal Thai wings. Gold and silver bullion on a red background, the basic jump wings have two opposing elephant heads to signify the strength of the airborne. The balloon wings (we were supposed to have jumped a balloon, but it was broken, so we jumped the helicopter instead) are also gold and silver bullion, but on a dark green background, and show the elephant heads along with the balloon and gondola.

Beer and banquet followed, an elegant spread of traditional Thai food, and a display of traditional dancing. Party over, we returned to our hotel in Lop Buri, and departed the next day for R&R in Bangkok. Traveling by bus and river boat, we stopped at several temples and monuments and had thorough briefings on local history by our tour guides. A good but expensive lunch of Western-style food was served on the boat, along with even more expensive wine, as we cruised down the river for about three hours.

A digression to food is in order here, as I ate a wide variety of it while in Thailand, some of it astonishing even to my fairly experienced palette. At the Special Forces

Warfare School we were given a demonstration on jungle survival by a leathery lieutenant who looked as if he could make it just about anywhere. He stood in front of a long table laden with vegetable products and for almost an hour brought out one plant after another, described its uses, and offered us a taste of the edible ones. I chewed, swallowed and spat (surreptitiously) and kept my eye on a bunch of bananas — one of the few things in his display I could recognize. He never offered us any bananas, however; maybe he thought they were too mundane. After the vegetable course we went on to meat. I ate roasted rat and snake, and admired from a discreet distance while the lieutenant man-handled some very lively cobras.

It is safe to say Thai food is the hottest I have ever eaten. Given that the Thais only acquired hot peppers 150-200 years ago, they have integrated them into their cuisine with remarkable skill and cunning. They even put hot peppers in potato chips. Once, while driving up to northern Thailand, we stopped at their equivalent of a Howard Johnson's — an outdoor cafe with a display of food stuffs in a vaguely refrigerated glass case. My guide asked whether I liked local food and, when I nodded yes, ordered up some wild pig, a lizard and some frogs. I watched them take a large skinned lizard out of the refrigerator and grind it up, little lizard lips and all, in a meat grinder. They did the same to the frog. Mercifully, I don't know what they did to the pig. The dishes arrived at the table, cooked into mucilaginous little lumps, laced with some truly Satanic peppers. I lost all feeling in my mouth almost instantly, and in between chews I spent a lot of time wiping my eyes and nose. The fruit in Thailand, however, is sweet, non-aggressive and wonderful. I ate lots of fruits I had never seen before, and they were all exotic and delicious.

Anyway, we were back in Bangkok by evening, and most of us set off to visit cultural highlights, especially those in Patpong. Patpong is the bar/girlie section of Bangkok, justly famous for its legions of young lovelies and truly unusual sex shows. Young (and some not so young) ladies (using the term loosely) do things with their private parts in Patpong that defy credulity and description. Thai authorities insist that AIDS is not a problem in their country, and all prostitutes must carry a medical card listing their frequent check-ups. Still, you obviously play at your own risk, whether baseball or other night games. For just a few quiet drinks (Singha, a local beer, is vile — ask for Kloster) an area called Washington Square, in a completely different section of Bangkok, has several good bars and some surprisingly good steaks and Creole cooking. Expatriates tend to hang-out there, rather than in Patpong.

Mike Epstein had included a couple of days in Bangkok as part of the tour, and then a few more days optional traveling to the forests in the north of the country, or to



ABOVE: Thai jumpmaster thoroughly briefs tour members before chopper jump. Photo: Mick Doyle



ABOVE: Karen contact thanks author for delivering SOF-donated medical supplies. Photo: Sybil MacKenzie



Jump wings awarded tour members for jumping with Thai military include those for fixed-wing aircraft and balloon. Photo: Mick Doyle

the beaches in the south. Bangkok is very colorful, with its various Buddhas, "klongs" (canals) and all, but its air pollution and traffic have to be the absolute worst in the world. Just breathing outside during rush hour is like lying under the exhaust pipe of a bus and I decided that the people I saw jogging were either lunatics or trying to commit suicide by lung cancer. I was glad to get out of town for a visit upcountry.



ABOVE: Thai insurgents paddle into ambush. Photo: R. MacKenzie



Boarding CH-34 chopper for first jump in Thailand. Photo: R. MacKenzie

Future trips to Thailand are being planned by the IAAV, the next one in April 1991. For Vietnam airborne vets who spent their R&R there and want to go back for a bit of the same, I recommend contacting Epstein ASAP. Other active paras who want to see why Bangkok earned its reputation, at the same time getting in a few good jumps and meeting a bunch of really good people would also do well to get on board. You definitely get value for your money.

Contributing Editor Robert MacKenzie frequently writes for us and is a regular speaker at our annual convention. He's served in airborne units since 1966 (including the Rhodesian SAS) and has some 250 jumps to his credit, of which 19 are combat jumps. ✖



ALPHA 66

Cuban Freedom Fighters or Guerrilla Theater?

by John Landers

CASTRO'S over-confident patrol never had a chance. They shuffled down the middle of the trail, lulled by waves of 90-degree heat and the rhythmic sound of cotton uniforms hitting tall grass. The midday air was suddenly pierced by the sound of small arms fire as the squad was ambushed by a team of well-hidden anti-Castro insurgents. The surprised soldiers tried to scramble out of the kill zone, but it was too late.

"All right, tropas, let's try it again," barked the instructor as the "dead communists" rose to their feet. Fortunately for the bad guys, this was just another Alpha 66 weekend training exercise.

Alpha, as it's known in the Cuban exile community, is both a military and political organization. In addition to training and maintaining a light infantry combat unit, Alpha 66 has been conducting a clandestine war against the Castro regime for almost

ABOVE: Some members of Alpha 66 have been training — and fighting — to rid their homeland of Castro for 30 years. Photo: Sygma/Les Stone

Logo for Alpha 66 appropriately shows exiles in small boat. Most exiles escaped — and many have returned to harass or fight Castro — in such craft.

three decades. The group is also active in politics, fighting on all fronts to overthrow the communist government and establish a truly democratic Cuba, and even has a radio broadcast.

Last spring SOF was invited to visit the Alpha 66 training camp in southern Florida. I was greeted by Jose Jimenez, the man responsible for training Alpha's volunteer force.

The recruits at the camp, Jimenez told us, were training to become part of the military arm of Alpha 66. This unit's mission is to assist either an anti-Castro uprising or, though perhaps somewhat unlikely, an international invasion of Cuba. "We don't call [Alpha] a guerrilla force, we don't call it a conventional army or anything like that. We just call it a support force," he explained. Furthermore, Jimenez said, while some may fantasize about ousting Castro with an infantry battalion, "we're not going to dream and say, 'well, we have a force and we're going to land in Cuba,' " because "we understand, and we know, that we don't have the capability to stand up to Castro's army."

The mission of Alpha 66 is to help defeat the communist regime by whatever means necessary. But they are not, he insisted, interested in suicide missions. "We," he added, "have to face reality."

I followed Jimenez around the camp for a while as he supervised the morning exercises. The 75 recruits had already begun the day with a formation, calisthenics, and a run through the confidence course. They were then split up into three classes of 25, with one or two instructors per group.

Outfitted in surplus BDUs, the trainees carried an intriguing assortment of shotguns and military look-alike semi-auto rifles, including Galils, AR15s, AKs, Valmets, and FNCs. Field gear was mostly ex-GI, though usually modified for personal use. The only standard uniform item I noticed was a large, clip-on Alpha 66 nametag attached to the front of each individual's shirt or jacket. Curiously, no one wore any form of rank, though there did not seem to be any confusion as to who was in charge.

This day they were studying, and then practicing, a variety of point ambush techniques. The Alpha instructors constantly stressed what soldiers everywhere know to be the elements of a successful ambush: control, surprise, and coordinated fire. The lesson was kept simple, and every student's question was answered.

After the fundamentals had been explained, the groups moved out into the bush and took turns lying in wait for one another. The camp's remote terrain was well-suited for this; tall grass and scattered shrubs provided abundant concealment. The training was fairly creative. A team that was supposed to be on its way to set up an ambush might be suddenly attacked by a different class. The instructors would then act as referees, declaring many startled



recruits *muerto*. Each exercise, no matter the outcome, was a valuable learning experience. It was obvious that everyone enjoyed the competitive challenge, but the majority understood that this game might be deadly serious for them one day.

I accompanied one class over the target range where the instructors ran alongside the recruits going through a course with .22 LR AR15 look-alikes, shouting, screaming, and firing their semi-auto AKs. Two recruits reached a low plywood wall, dropped to a kneeling position, and carefully squeezed off five shots each at their respective targets. The instructors, meanwhile, continued to harass the trainees as they scurried forward once more. The recruits hit the prone, aimed, and fired again. I observed a dozen more recruits go through the same routine, and almost all managed to concentrate on their targets, despite the considerable distractions provided by the instructors. This training wasn't what I had expected, but it certainly seemed effective. I was told that the classes would be advancing to full-size weaponry in the near future.

While the action at the firing range continued, I watched another group hone their urban combat skills and practice entry and clearing techniques at a mock-up house.

The staff appeared to be knowledgeable, patient and deserving of the respect they got

Andres Nazario Sargen, Secretary General of Alpha 66, in their Miami Headquarters. Photo: D. Clark

from the recruits. Most have extensive military experience, and some of the senior instructors, I learned later, played major roles in many of the CIA-sponsored operations against Cuba's communists during the '60s. Proper military training is hard to come by outside of "real" armies, and frankly, I was surprised by the degree of professionalism I found at Alpha 66. Even though the camp doesn't operate full-time (the volunteers come in from the Miami area once or twice a week), you'd never know it from the instructor's attitudes. The "weekend warrior" mentally simply does not apply to this operation. They do an outstanding job, considering the situation.

The recruits, for the most part, are genuinely interested in the training and perform well. The majority are young working-class people in their 20s. While some of the recruits are a good deal older, they are equally enthusiastic. Individual levels of fitness vary greatly, but no special allowances are made for anyone. The training is not so excessively demanding that slight physical shortcomings cannot be offset by determination. Because the camp is usually fully operational only twice a week, Alpha expects its volunteers to maintain their own exercise programs be-



tween training periods.

About 10 percent of the Alpha 66 recruits are female. These young women appear to be treated — and perform — just like everyone else; they work hard, shoot straight, and generally keep up with their male counterparts. I was told, however, that at least one inter-recruit romance during this training cycle has resulted in marriage. Some might argue that such co-ed relationships might limit a unit's combat effectiveness, but perhaps this is balanced by the promise of yet another generation of anti-Castro activists.

Almost all of the recruits are Cuban exiles, or come from exile families, including a large number who originally came to this country during the 1980 Mariel boatlift. Few have had any prior military experience, so the Alpha program begins at a basic level. The recruits take their training seriously because, most told me, they feel morally compelled to be ready to participate in the eventual liberation of their homeland. Weak spirits, and those merely interested in playing soldier, tend to quickly drop out of the program. The training is too hot, dirty, and disciplined for

wanna-be Rambos.

The individuals I spoke with were quite committed to "la Causa," fighting for a free Cuba. Joining Alpha 66, I heard repeatedly, was the logical way to fight the communist government. "I went out and I researched," one man told me, "and when it came to all of the organizations, I selected Alpha. Their ideas were basically the same as mine when it came to politics." More important, he noted, Alpha 66 is the only group that "actually has a military structure." While other paramilitary anti-Castro units exist, Alpha, because of the quality of its people and its long history of clandestine operations, has earned special respect in the Cuban exile community. Those training to become a part of this organization are anxious to uphold its reputation.

I later spoke with Jose Jimenez about the Alpha 66 program. New recruits, he said, must fill out an application before they can begin training. A background check is then conducted on each individual. The volunteers are issued uniforms, field gear and other essentials. Training weapons are issued to every recruit, though many prefer to bring and use their own. Detailed

Alpha 66 trainees on parade at their training base in southern Florida. Photo: D. Clark

training records are kept for each person so that individual progress can be monitored. This way, only those who complete every part of the program are allowed to graduate. Any trainee who misses too many classes must repeat the training cycle.

Alpha's basic training runs about three months. "They have seven or eight different classes in basic infantry, then they'll go into another three-week period that's more advanced," Jimenez told me. Of those that begin the program, at least 25 percent will drop out. During the last training cycle, he noted, "we had a lot of the bad apples quit," usually because they weren't disciplined or determined enough to stick with it.

As part of their training, recruits must participate in an overnight survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) exercise. The classes are presented in the context of a scenario where they must avoid capture by a large aggressor force and make their way to a rendezvous point. Once they reach their objective, the recruits must

attempt to rescue any captured classmates. While this basic exercise teaches some valuable SERE skills, it also serves another purpose. "It's not going to train them fully," Jimenez explained, "but it shows them the importance of leadership." The recruits, if they are to succeed, have to organize, work together, and adapt to their situation.

Much of the program emphasizes special urban combat tactics. Just about any foreseeable military action in Cuba would take place, at least in part, in towns and cities. Supporting a civilian uprising, in particular, would likely require the capability to fight effectively in an urban environment.

Finally, I asked Jimenez about the legality of their operation. "We try to keep within the law," he said, because Alpha 66 is a responsible organization. The basic training program is strictly limited to the use of semiautomatic weapons, and no explosives are used at any time. The group willingly complies with the numerous local, state and federal laws that affect such training. Cooperation with the authorities, Alpha believes, is very important. Training is conducted with the recruit's safety in mind, and a doctor is always present at the camp. Alpha strives to keep its training safe, legal, and effective.

During the week of 20 de Mayo, I visited Alpha's national headquarters, located in Miami's Little Havana district, to learn about the organization's unique history and philosophy. Humberto Perez, Chief of Military Operations, arranged for my visit to the training camp, and also showed me around Alpha's national headquarters in Miami. In addition to reviewing the group's military history, he gave me carte blanche to roam around, see everything and talk to



Major Israel Sosa leads Alpha 66 group training in the Bahamas in 1970. Note Armalite AR-180, popular with exile groups during the 1960s because of its availability. Photo: Wide World

anyone.

Andres Nazario Sargen, Alpha's leader and Secretary-General, briefed me on their origins and goals. The primary ideological principles of Alpha 66, he explained, are national independence, political democracy and social justice for the Cuban people. Sargen, who was at one time an officer in Castro's guerrilla army, has been fighting for Cuba's freedom for over 30 years.

SOF INTERVIEWS AN OLD FRIEND, FRANCISCO AVILA (PANCHITO), S-3 OF ALPHA 66

SOF: You were a prisoner in Castro's Cuba, for how long and why?

Panchito: I was a prisoner for 12 years. I got caught entering with a group from Alpha in 1967. We were going to assassinate Fidel and start a number of sabotage missions.

SOF: You know that Fidel is all-powerful. How can you hope to bring him down?

Panchito: We are not going to bring down Castro; the Cuban people will do that. We are training to act as a coordination force to help the Cuban people to freedom.

SOF: Hypothetically, if Fidel were to have an uprising today, what could you do?

Panchito: Immediately, we would head for Cuba and put into action our plans. Mainly we would help anyone who was trying to oust Castro.

SOF: Can you tell me what your plans are?

Panchito: No!

SOF: Essentially, what is the mission of Alpha? Do you intend to invade Cuba?

Panchito: You could call it an invasion even if there were only 10 men in the invading force, because we would be entering from a foreign land. But, you have to take into account that what we will be doing is nothing more than acting as a logistical force that will back up the Cuban people. We are not the U.S. Marines. We know there are many in the Cuban military who are waiting for an opportunity to knock off the bearded one, when they start to move, we move. But in the

meantime we are continuing to do what we have been doing for almost 30 years — that is, we are the wasps that keep stinging Fidel. We can't bring him down with our stings, but we can make him very uncomfortable. Sooner or later the accumulation of all those stings will have a good effect. We are just training and waiting for him to fall — we are helping him to fall.

SOF: Do you think that Fidel knows what you are doing, and what steps is he taking to stop you?

Panchito: Fidel has always been very preoccupied by our existence. Before 1980 we launched dozens of missions which hurt Fidel. In 1980, 10 years ago, it was apparent that the Cuban people wanted a change. After the Mariel boatlift of 1980, we launched 11 different infiltration missions. Many of the infiltrators were captured, killed or are today in Cuban jails, but some are in place waiting for the appropriate time. That time is getting very close.

SOF: Then, you don't think Fidel can last very long — why not?

Panchito: The world has changed. Monolithic communism is crumbling from the face of the earth. Many of his former friends are now his enemies. Fidel is alone. Even the Left has abandoned him; just like a sinking ship, the rats are trying to get off the sinking ship. What is more important is that the bullet with his name on it does not necessarily have to come from the exiles. He is surrounded by men who want to get rid of him.

— Marty Casey

Alpha 66 was formed in 1961, when Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, Sargen and other exiled Cubans joined together to fight the Castro regime. Many of the original 66 members had previously been instrumental in overthrowing Batista, but it had soon become apparent that Fidel's new communist government was even worse. Upon their escape to the United States, they organized and chose the name "Alpha."

The group decided that direct military action would be necessary to get rid of Castro. Operating out of Miami, Alpha 66 began their clandestine war against communist Cuba in the early '60s. This period was one of the strange chapters in south Florida's history; the area was thick with spooks, gun runners, mercenaries, and politicians, all of whom were somehow involved in "la Causa." Many of the senior officials I interviewed fondly recall this weird and exciting time, as well as their association with SOF's founder and publisher, Robert K. Brown, and other fellow dedicated anti-communists.

In 1962, Alpha started infiltrating its members into Cuba by boat, forming several guerrilla units in the Escambray mountains. They also began raiding small

military installations along the coast and conducting assorted acts of industrial sabotage. The independent and "semi-sponsored" efforts during this era by Alpha 66 and other anti-Castro groups would make a book in itself.

During the next few years, both the frequency and the intensity of Alpha's attacks increased, putting considerable pressure on Castro's government. Newspaper accounts from this time document many of these incidents, though what percentage went unreported is unknown. Whatever the case, it's clear that this sort of disruptive activity further weakened Cuba's ailing economy and forced their embarrassed military to expend valuable resources trying to maintain control of the island.

Insurgency is always a risky business, however, and a number of Alpha's members were captured or killed in action. The group's motto, *Primero Muertos Que Escalvos* (Better Dead than Enslaved), pays tribute to those who gave their lives fighting for "la Causa." In 1964, Menoyo himself was taken prisoner, along with three other men, while working to establish a resis-

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NUMBAH ONE STORY

Korea MilSpeak Tunnels Under Language Barrier

Text & Photos by Rob Krott



Author commanding Guard Post Collier, a firebase 500 meters from North Korea. Weapon is M21 with ART.

SOUTH Korea — The Land of the Morning Calm, also known to many vets as The Land of Almost Right or The Land of Sliding Doors and Slant-eyed Whores.

Approximately 43,000 U.S. servicemen are stationed in the Republic of Korea, with about 14,500 assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division headquartered at Camp Casey. Every three months a different infantry battalion rotates up to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) just north of Imjin-gak, Imjin River, hence the Imjin Scout Badge (an award given to soldiers completing combat patrols in the “Z” and once worn proudly by enlisted men, before a change in Army regs).

Soldiers the world over are known for their unique lexicon, and the warriors of the 2nd ID have produced, in conjunction with Korean civilians, the “language” of Korean Pidgin English (KPE). Because of the long occupation of the Korean Peninsula by

the Japanese, along with cross-cultural language borrowing by U.S. servicemen with tours in both nations, there are many Japanese loan words found in KPE.

Words like *honcho* and *hootch* have spread outside KPE and are in wide use throughout the U.S. military and society in general. Most Japanese-derived words are corruptions which show their Japanese linguistic roots, such as *ideewa* (ee-dee-wah) meaning “come here,” a corruption of the proper Japanese *o-ide nasai-wa*, and *mostic/most ticky-da* from Japanese Pidgin English *most ricky-tic*, “very soon,” contracted from *mo jiki ni*.

Some have found a great acceptance among the general Korean population (though more commonly near U.S. installations), a good example being *skoshi* “little/small,” taken from the Japanese *sukoshi* “little.” *Skoshi* is commonly combined with other KPE, proper Korean (*Hangul*), Japanese, or English words. *Skoshi chin-*

goos is translated, literally, as “little friends” and is the KPE term for body lice.

Besides memories of the King Club and Hooker Hill in Itaewon (Seoul), and the Lucky Club (Tongduchon), various Miss Lees (Korean ladies of the evening are invariably called Miss Lee), *soju* drinking bouts, and the occasional firefight up on the “Z,” most Warrior Base High School alumni will probably remember these:

AMF — Though having roots somewhat south of Ft. Hood, Texas, this abbreviation for “Adios, motherfucker” seemed to be overly popular with 2nd ID troops (especially after flipping the bird at a platoon of ROK Ironmen, the Korean Special Forces).

Asian Two-Step — No, not a dance move I learned in Seoul ... Vietnam vets will recognize this generic term for Asian kraits and other deadly pit vipers.

Bang-Bang — While little kids may say this when they play soldier in the backyard, this or *boom-boom* is what goes on upstairs when the troopies come in from the paddies.

Balli-Balli — Not onomatopoeic, this has nothing to do with *bang-bang*, though some bar girls have been known to yell this at GIs in frustration ... *balli (palli)* is Hangul for “quickly.” **Note:** It is a common misconception that you must scream the same thing twice at Orientals before they comprehend it (though it does seem to work well with U.S. Marines).

Blowjob Alley — Every *ville* (see *ville*) has one. Going price in '86 was 10 bucks — last of the world's truly great bargains. A pair of Reeboks could be had for the same price.

Buddha-belly — Most often seen on REMFs and other chairborne warriors in Division HQ at Camp Casey and down in Tongson (8th Army HQ in Seoul). A result of a few too many *Crowns* and *OBs*, the two beers indigenous to the Republic of Korea.

Buffalo — Any soldier in the 1/17th Infantry (Mechanized), the only infantry battalion at Camp Casey, since redesignated the 5/20th “Sykes Regulars.” The

Buffaloes were known throughout the peninsula as a crazy bunch given to demolishing bars on occasion. "You Buppalo sojer, crazee honcho, numbah 10." The proper method of greeting a fellow Buffalo was to render the hand salute (if greeting a superior) then re-raise the arm with the forearm perpendicular across the body, making a fist and shouting "Raise Up!" This unit was, without a doubt, the most highly motivated unit in the 2nd ID (though I may be biased ... I still wear my nickel on my dog tags), but the Army redesignated it under the new regimental system in order to foster cohesion! So much for esprit de corps. Oh, yes, David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz was a Buffalo from Bravo Company.

Butterfly — A promiscuous soldier or (this may be redundant) bargirl. To butterfly was to spread the sexual wealth so to speak. An analogy of a butterfly flitting from flower to flower. "You numba 10 butterfly-man" basically means, "You ain't gettin' none tonight, bro."

Casey Cut — The pass through the mountain above Camp Casey and Camp Hovey. *Humping the Cut* 12 miles straight up/down, over and back with a 60-pound ruck was a good character builder. Other extracurricular activities included running *The Horn*, a runner's loop through Casey and Hovey, and *The Manchu Mile*, actually about an eight-mile course near Camp Greaves. It was named for the 1/9 Manchus; what it's called now I don't know.

Cherry Boy — Virgin or naive GIs, also brand new in country (aka *Turtle* because it seems to take so long for a year's tour to crawl by that some GIs feel like turtles). The girls love Cherry Boys, they usually end up paying \$60 for a *short-time*.

Chogie, Cut-a-Chogie — The first time I heard this was from an NCO at Ft. Bragg. I thought it was Cajun Slang. *Chogi* is to walk, run, literally "over there." *Kada* is "to go," so *Cut-a-Chogie* ... Aw, hell, you figure it out, GI.

Coondingee — GI phonetic spelling, actually *Kungdeng'i* — "ass" and while we're in the Cs, *cah gee wah* is "give me," and in case you're feeling gallant, *Chusipsio* is "please."

Happy Boy — ... wants to pay \$20 to spend the night with Miss Lee's brother.

Happy Smoke — Marijuana, something



Behind the bar at Mom's Place, "helping" the bar maid.



Republic of Korea troops — called ROKs — ham it up for the camera.

good soldiers never smoke, unless they're from California ... then it's, like, not their fault, dude.

Honcho — probably originated with the Japanese *hanchō* "squad leader." A common expression was *ponju honcho*, *ponju* being the Hangul term for flatulence, not a popular fellow in the back of a crowded M113 armored personnel carrier. "Mom" in Mom's Place (my company's hangout in Tongduchon) called me "Cola Honcho" — I never drank liquor in a bar when it was full of my troops: by the time they all bought you a drink you were ready to take on the entire North Korean army.

Hootch — Any structure, including your girlfriend's six-foot-square room. *Uchi* is Japanese for house.

Kegogi — Dogmeat. Very tasty, especially after eating MREs for two weeks. More than one unit mascot probably disappeared into somebody's stew pot downtown.

KATUSA — Korean Augmentation to United States Army. A Korean soldier, usually a college boy, who speaks some English and serves with a U.S. unit. Sometimes a blessing, sometimes a curse ... for both sides.

Kimchi — The national dish of Korea. Fermented vegetables, usually cabbage, slightly hot and spicy, you either love it or hate it. Used as an adjective by American troops, much to the consternation of the Civil Military Affairs folks. Korean American soldiers are known as *Kimchi GIs*. Commonly heard was "We're in deep *kimchi*," and not meaning fermented vegetables, at least not fresh ones.

Luke the Gook — The bad guys up north. *Han'guk* is Jangul for "Korean man," so consequently most Koreans are ethnocentrically referred to as "gooks." I was eating lunch in the 1st Brigade O'club one day, next to a first generation Chinese-American infantry lieutenant in my battal-

ion, when he remarked, "I'd really like it here if there weren't so many goddamn gooks." Also, *North Joe*.

Overnight, an — Curfew was 2400 hours unless you had an overnight pass ... only 20% of a unit per night.

ROK, the ROK, ROKs — Republic of



Korean civilians and U.S. GIs' long association has resulted in language only they understand.

Korea, *same-same*, South Korean troops. "Top of the ROK" was printed on the O'Club menus. Why, I have no idea.

Roundeye — Any non-oriental woman, but usually and most specifically an American woman, though French, Swedes, etc., were also acceptable.

Sleeping Dictionary — Supposedly the best (and most enjoyable) way to learn a language. See *Yobo*.

Slicky — To steal, thus *Slicky boy* for thief. A *slicky pass* was an illegal gate or overnight pass. *Taking a slicky* also means going over the fence.

Tongduchon-ni — aka, Dongducheon, TDC, the Ville, Downrange, and Little Chicago (TDC is "famous" for its Chicago pizza; Uno Pizzeria it's not). TDC is the town outside Camp Casey. A fairly large

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THE RIGHT STUFF

For This Hunting Season

Text & Photos by Galen Geer



Columbia's "Ringneck Vest" features Spandex mesh for easy movement.

HUNTING season is coming up and it looks to be one of the best in decades for both big and small game hunters. This promising season can be made even more enjoyable with the right gear. Here are SOF's picks for the best gear for the 1990/91 hunting season.

Clothing

The Bob Allen Company has built a reputation on quality hunting clothing and Bob Allen's "North Woods Woolies" line proves no exception. Their "Woolies" coat is made from 100 percent virgin wool, has a zip-out insulated liner and a quilted leather gun pad. After a decade of blaze orange hunting coats the red and black plaid pattern will appeal to traditionalists.

Also included in the Woolie line are 100 percent virgin wool pants lined with nylon and a wool Jones hat. For more information write: Pam Bradford, c/o Bob Allen Co., Dept. SOF, 214 S.W. Jackson, Des Moines, IA 50315.

Another coat to consider is Remington Arms' blaze orange "Big Game Parka."

It's made with a Cordura outer shell and has a Goretex liner insert. The parka has a detachable hood, fleece-lined collar, adjustable cuffs, reinforced elbows and fleece-lined, hand-rest pockets to keep hands warm when carrying a rifle.

For more information write Dick Dietz, Remington Arms, Dept. SOF, Sales Office, Wilmington, DE 19898.

A good general purpose foul weather shooting/hunting coat that can be worn on or off the range is Shooting Systems' "Shooting Jacket." The outer shell is Supplex nylon to make it rugged and wind resistant; ballistic nylon shooting patches provide extra gun support and its high collar has a built-in hood. The pockets are Velcro sealed with side-entry handwarmers plus a chest flap

pocket and vertical pocket for a small handgun. Between the outer shell and the nylon taffeta lining is a layer of 3-M Thinsulate insulation. For more information write: Ray Kohout, Shooting Systems Group, Inc., Dept. SOF, 1075 Headquarters Park, Fenton, MO 63026.

Experienced shooters and hunters usually wear shooting shirts when hunting or at the range. In warmer hunting climates a good shooting shirt softens big bore recoil. The P.A.S.T. Company is a pioneer in shoulder shields to reduce recoil while making the pads a functional part of the shooter's clothing. Two P.A.S.T. items of special interest to SOF readers include the "Safari Shirt" and the "Classic Shooting Shirt." The Safari Shirt has an extended gun patch, large caliber cartridge pocket and roll-up sleeves held in place with button tabs.

The "Classic Shooting Shirt" has epaulets, a quilted gun patch and is available in three different camouflage patterns plus the traditional tan or light blue in either short or long sleeves. For more information write Joy Morgan, P.A.S.T. Corporation, Dept. SOF, 210 Park Ave., Columbia, MO 65203.

Upland bird hunting is growing and Columbia Sportswear has a line of hunting vests for upland hunters. SOF tested the Columbia "Ringneck Vest" which uses Spandex mesh for easy movement and nylon Supplex/Cordura for comfort and durability. The front flap is expandable, which allows the vest to be worn over a coat in cold weather and the pocket shell loops are covered to keep shells protected.

Columbia has also introduced the "Hell's Canyon Hunting Pant" made of nylon Supplex with briar-proof nylon facing, brush cuffs and adjustable waist and suspender buttons. For information on Columbia Sportswear products call: 1-800-622-6953.

Hunting Accessories

Hundreds of products to make hunting easier now clutter the market. Here are a few I've found useful:

Hunter's Specialties Field Dressing Kits recently caught my eye. Their "Deluxe Game Bag" includes field dressing bag, gloves and tag string. But they also offer the game bag or field dressing gloves separately. Another product from Hunter's



Red and black plaid "North Woods Woolie" hunting jacket should appeal to traditionalists sick of blaze orange hunting wear.

Specialties is the "Safety Game Bag" with shoulder straps for carrying small game or extra hunting gear. Contact Jana R. Waddell, Hunter's Specialties, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5285 Rockwell Dr., NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.

Sometimes you have to travel and a tough gun case that can be taken into the mountains in the back of a Jeep or ATV becomes a necessity if you want your firearm to survive the trip. Kolpin's "Gunboot" is up to the job. This gun case is designed to take abuse and protect your gun and scope under the most adverse conditions. Write: Kolpin Manufacturing, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 107, Fox Lake, WI 53993.

Sooner or later every hunter wants to sit for awhile and watch for game. That's why the folks at Cross River developed their "Pocket Seat" that fits in your back pocket. When needed the seat is screwed into a tree and a brace unfolded to make a sturdy seat. Write: Cross River, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 13, Nekoosa, WI 54457.

Belt pouches aren't uncommon but Neet Products deserves special mention. Their compact belt pouch is made from Cordura with a zippered top and outside tuck-in pocket and large belt loops. As belt pouches go, the Neet pouch is one of the best I've found. Write: Neet Products, Inc., Dept. SOF, Rt. 2, Box 269B, Sedalia, MO 65301.

Land navigation is a skill hunters depend on and Peet Brothers has just made it easier with their altimeters. Using an altimeter to find your way while hunting may seem strange but an altimeter makes land navigation more exact. Write: Peet Brothers Company, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2007, Ocean, NJ 07712.

What hunter hasn't sat beside a trail or over bait only to discover his "trophy" is a spike? Gryphon Engineering has developed the "Trail Monitor" which uses a passive infrared system to record

the times and dates an animal or person enters an area or uses a trail. The more sophisticated TM2500 model can be equipped with a camera to photograph just what animals are using a trail or area. For information write: Gryphon Engineering, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 650407, Roseville, MI 48066.

SOF readers are familiar with the Otis "Whole Kit and Caboodle" gun cleaning kits available from the SOF Exchange (P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306). The Otis shotgun kit is now also available packaged in a Cordura pouch and provides shotgun hunters a convenient cleaning kit they can carry whether hunting in a duck blind or stalking turkeys. Write: Otis Products, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 454, Rt. 12-D, Boonville, NY 13309.



Daisy Manufacturing's "Quick-Pitch" tent will appeal to those of us who wait until the last minute to set-up camp (usually in the dark).

Feather Flex Industries has introduced flexible duck and goose decoys that are lightweight and easy to pack. A bag that carried a dozen traditional decoys can now carry several dozen Feather Flex decoys and still weigh less than a dozen block decoys. Write: Dave Berkley, Feather Flex Decoys, Dept. SOF, 1655 Swan Lake Rd.,

Shown here is Dream Enterprises "Bivouac Buddy" portable shower system. Something you'll want for yourself and everyone else in your hunting party.



Bossier City, LA 71111.

Hunting camp has been made easier by Daisy Manufacturing Company, Inc., with their "Quick Pitch" tents. They are among the easiest up and down tents available using a hub-and-strut construction. To set up a tent just pull the hubs and the tent pops into shape. The tents are made from Nylon Taffeta, the rain fly is made from Rip-Stop nylon and the doors and windows are covered with No-See-Um mesh. Write: Daisy Manufacturing Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 220, Rogers, AK 72757.

Staying clean can be the difference between a good hunt and a miserable one. Dream Enterprises has solved the hunting camp shower problem with the "Bivouac Buddy" portable shower system. The portable shower is easy to set up. Very portable and easily stored with other camping gear. It comes complete with a privacy curtain and is available in camouflage or solid colors. Write: Bivouac Buddy, Dept SOF, 432 Hickory Hill Rd., Sapulpa, OK 74066.

Camp lanterns and stoves have one drawback, they require expensive fuel. Now Coleman has finally introduced gas



Which one's the decoy? But seriously, here's author Galen Geer field testing Feather Flex's flexible duck decoys.

stoves and lanterns that burn unleaded gasoline as well as traditional camping fuel. A problem with unleaded fuel is it does not burn as cleanly as camping fuel and unleaded's purity varies widely. To overcome this problem each new Coleman unleaded gas stove or lantern is packaged with a special filtering funnel designed to filter out particles and impurities found in unleaded fuel. For more information write: Jim Reid, Coleman Products, Dept. SOF, 250 N. Francis, P.O. Box 2931, Wichita, KS 67201.

Outdoor Edge cutlery has created a smaller, more compact version of their successful "Game Skinner" knife. The new knife has the same unique curved blade but is much more compact and can be used on both big and small game. Write: David Bloch, Outdoor Edge, Dept. SOF, 2888 Bluff St., Suite 130, Boulder, CO 80301.

That's all space allows us to mention this time around. If you've tried and tested hunting gear you can recommend without reservation, we'd like to hear from you. Write us, Attention: Adventure Quartermaster. ✕

NAVY THIEVES IN VIETNAM

*Freebooters and Free Enterprise Save U.S.
Army from Alcohol Abuse*

Text & Photos by Michael Reaves



With ramp down, *The Spirit of '76* loads cargo at Chu Lai for distribution to points north.



A hard, unbending regulation in the U.S. Navy forbids any alcoholic beverages on board any vessel. All officers are charged with diligently enforcing this regulation. Searches for this foul substance are common and penalties for having it severe. In addition, officers tend to view enlisted men as the least trustworthy and intelligent of all species on this planet, a belief surely proven by their act of enlistment.

Throughout history, a few daring individuals have taken it upon themselves to prove that an officer — a naval officer in particular — is not as adept at catching this particular infraction of regulations as he is capable of breaking it himself.

One beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon in spring of 1969, my small vessel, the *Spirit of '76*, approached the lush tropical seaport of Chu Lai, in the then Republic of Vietnam. While radioing for permission to enter this huge Army supply depot, our lookout reported a probable confrontation in progress as evidenced by smoke, explosions, and rocket trails falling onto the base.

We were denied entry and ordered to remain offshore for possible support of other waterborne security forces.

Now it just so happens the U.S. Army does not hold such a dim view of their enlisted personnel and had stockpiled literally millions of cases of beer for their troops. A great deal of that cache was in

Delta river traffic in Vietnam was heavy and vulnerable. *The Spirit of '76* once hit a mine, but having been built for landing on the rocky beaches of Alaska before she was preempted by the Navy, the only damage was to a buckled keel plate — and the hapless Marines who were standing at that point.



The Spirit of '76 with a load of concertina wire. More worthy cargoes were safely stowed in the bilges.

Chu Lai, a prize that the enlisted gentlemen on the *Spirit of '76* had coveted for many watches.

The commander of any vessel has a duty to protect his ship, precious naval asset that it may be, at his own discretion. So I naturally ordered our small rubber boat put over the side to begin patrols for sappers and mines. As it happened, the men selected were the most seasoned covert infiltration veterans aboard. Although fortuitous, it was, of course, mere happenstance that these five individuals were selected.

The rain of destruction continued onshore, forcing most of the Army personnel into bunkers for safety. Of course, that meant that our puny five-man Navy frog team felt responsible for the safety of all those supplies waiting on the loading ramps for shipment to forward areas.

Somehow during the course of patrolling the area around my vessel, the individual in charge of the rubber boat felt that a survey of the supply ramps was in order, especially after having observed a rocket land amid the beer staging area. And naturally, after arriving there, he ordered the men to police the area. As the men swept the debris into the water, they wondered what would happen to all those cans floating out to sea.

After having made an informal inspection and noting that the Army would be disappointed if we left them nothing to do, the team withdrew to continue their patrol

duties.

As it was later recounted to me, there was now an obvious need to police the water as well, as all those beer cans floating toward our vessel represented a hazard to navigation. And this was painstakingly done with the kind of diligence that had made our Underwater Demolitions Team such a feared combat unit. Of course, clearing the hazard required many trips to the *Spirit* as the boat could only carry so much of the floating debris, but our frogmen finally recovered the greatest part of this flotsam.

It now became apparent that we would have to select a suitable containment area for this collection of debris, until it could be properly disposed of. Again Navy ingenuity and diligence came to bear, and one of the engineers volunteered to store it in the engine room in the bilge beneath the engines. So as with everything we did, our team promptly and without complaint set to work transferring the nearly 4,000 cans of beer down to the engine room for safe stowage.

After the task was complete, our dutiful engineer suggested that for safety's sake perhaps we should flood the bilges with water so that the heat of the engines would not cause the cans to explode. And during the course of his duties, he also decided to change the oil in the engines and, as is usual, dumped the used oil into the bilges. The oil floated on top of the water that the beer was floating in, and we observed that although canned beer floats in water it does not have enough buoyancy to float in oil.

After some time the all clear was given

and we were allowed to proceed into port, where we were boarded by one of the Army officers, a ramp master. He noted that there had been quite a bit of damage and loss of materiel during the attack and wondered if we would object to an impromptu inspection. Being obedient naval professionals, we invited him to a full tour of our vessel.

He started at the forepeak, which held the basic storage areas, and continued through to the engine rooms where he noticed the recently changed oil and made disparaging comments about the filthy way we kept the vessel. He further admonished us not to pump our bilges while in his port or we would be in violation of standing regulations and held accountable.

We assured him of our firm understanding of and respect for such regulations and that we meant to comply. He then proceeded to give us our ordnance loading instructions, stating he did not want to have our boat on his ramp any longer than necessary, as we had a reputation for being the biggest bunch of thieves in Vietnam.

Here we were, doing our duty, and this gentleman was making wild accusations and slighting our honor after all the work we had voluntarily done to clean up *his* mess. You know, some people are just plain ungrateful. Well, we knew there was a much more appreciative group of very thirsty Marines at our next assigned stopover — where one man's trash would be another man's treasure.

Mike Reaves was a craftmaster in Vietnam, spending three years at Da Nang in the late '60s. He is now a Dallas-based freelance writer.

LA PANTERA ROSA

Continued from page 51

"Sargento del Almacen" (Sergeant of the Supply Room). All of this was received with a great deal of laughter by the comrades of the individual whose nickname was being evoked. There is, however, always a paycheck.

During the lunchbreak of the last day of training, I noticed all of the men gathered under the shade of a mango tree laughing and shouting loudly. Whenever I passed by, they lapsed into silence. When I questioned Carlos Salinas, he informed me that the men were conducting an important meeting. After I asked what it was about, he informed me its purpose was to decide upon what my name was to be in the unit. When I walked over to the tree with my Kalashnikov in hand, I announced that I knew what they were about and assumed the dispute was over a name such as "Rattlesnake" or "Scorpion." Sorry, they said, but they had already selected my name. Because I always walked quickly and hunched over, I would always be known to the ERE as "Pantera Rosa" (Pink Panther).

On Saturday the ERE hosted a party in our honor at the PN's private beach in La Libertad, about 30 clicks south of San Salvador. Upon our return, Geronimo volunteered to ride in our car as a bodyguard since terrorists sometimes infest the highway along this route. It was only after we departed that we noticed that he was almost comatose from the beer he had ingested at the party. He had commandeered Mark's Kalashnikov and kept sliding the selector lever off safe while fingering the trigger and pointing the muzzle at the back of my head. Carlos was driving and armed with only a rusted Colt Detective Special and one speed strip. Having spent the morning pretending I was once again 24 years old, I was fast asleep in the front seat. Mark, surrounded by a drunken bodyguard, sleeping comrade and poorly armed driver, spent the trip back with his Colt OM in the Weaver ready position. The Gs failed to make a play and Mark suffered no more than a case of high anxiety.

On Monday we were escorted to the airport by eight of the boys riding shotgun in a pickup truck in front of our car. As I watched them roll forward at point down the road to Comalapa airport, I began to conjure reasons for my return the ERE. They need training in dynamic entries and help with the three sniper systems they employ (M21, Steyr SSG, and Dragunov).

When we arrived at the TACA ticket counter, their last words to me were, "When will you return?"

"Soon," I said. And I meant it. ✂

SUPPORT THE NRA

JAILBREAK

Continued from page 29

then did Muse realize how extensive the preparations had been leading up to his rescue. Someone brought him a cup of coffee, which he savored. "That cup of coffee," he reflects, "was the real welcome home. I finally felt safe again."

Around noon on 20 December he was taken by truck over to an unmarked private jet, which was warmed up and waiting on the tarmac to transport him to Miami.

Meeting With President Bush

President Bush invited Muse and his family to meet privately with him at the White House. In the anteroom off the Oval Office, they first were greeted by CIA Director William Webster, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, and two members of the National Security Council staff. Then the President came out and ushered them into the Oval Office. "Tell me," said the President, "did you know you were going to be rescued?"

"No, sir," responded Muse.

The visit was warm and informal. Photographs were taken, one of which the president later inscribed to Muse: "To a great American."

Muse also received an invitation to visit the Delta compound at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. At the ceremonies, he was presented with one of the tail rotor blades, mounted on a plaque from the downed chopper. "All's Well That Ends Well," reads the inscription from the 160th SOAG. In addition, Delta gave him a plaque with a Soviet bayonet inscribed with his name, the unit's symbol, and the date of the rescue. Finally, he was made an honorary member of the APC unit that rescued him. So well prepared and armed were the men who rescued him, says Muse, that "the PDF could have had a hundred guys in that prison and a hundred guys would have died."

In March, Muse was reunited with the other Rotarian conspirators in Miami. Today, he resides in the Washington area with his wife and two children. On one of the walls of his den are two framed mugshots: his, which was retrieved from Modelo Prison, and Noriega's, when he was booked in Miami.

Neil Livingstone is an author, lecturer and consultant on terrorism and security topics. An adjunct professor at a number of institutions, including Georgetown University, his most recent book is *Inside the PLO (Morrow, 1990)*, which he co-authored with David Halevy. ✂

SOF ON THE DMZ

Continued from page 55

Edward Johnson, 34, "I came in '75. I'd never seen so many drugs in all my life.

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| <p>A. All of the following rifles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Automat Kalashnikovs (AK) series 2. UZI and Galil 3. Beretta AR-70 (SC-70) 4. CETME C3 5. Colt AR-15 series and CAR-15 series 6. Daewoo K-1, K-2, Max 1 and Max 2, 7. Fabrique Nationale FN/FAL, FN/LAR and FNC 8. FAMAS MAS223 9. Heckler & Koch HK-91, H-93, HK-94 and PSG-1 10. MAC 10 and MAC 11 11. SKS with detachable magazine 12. SIG AMT, SIG 500 Series, and SIG PE-57 13. Springfield Armory BM59 and SAR-48 14. Sterling MK-6 and SAR 15. Steyr AUG 16. Valmet M62, M71S and M78 17. Armalite AR-180 Carbine 18. Bushmaster Assault Rifle (armgun) | <p>19. Calico M-900 Assault Carbine</p> <p>20. Mandall THE-TAC-1 Carbine</p> <p>21. Plainfield Machine Company Carbine</p> <p>22. PJK M-68 Carbine</p> <p>23. Weaver Arm Nighthawk</p> <p>B. All of the following pistols:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UZI 2. Encom MP-9 and MP-45 3. MAC 10 and MAC 11 4. INTRATEC TEC-9 5. Mitchell Arms Spectre Auto 6. Sterling MK-7 7. Calico M-900 <p>C. All of the following shotguns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Franchi SPAS 12 and LAW 12 2. Gilbert Equipment Company Striker 12 and SWD Street Sweeper 3. Encom CM-55 |
|---|--|

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE

Now the Army ... everyone in it wants to be in the Army. If you don't want to do well, you don't have to stay in the Army. There's no such thing as 'lifers.' Everyone is here to be in the Army. I stay in because I see my buddies back home still doing the same thing they were 14 years ago. That's not for me. I don't ever want to go back to that!"

It is a sentiment echoed time and again as I talk with the backbone of any force, the NCOs. All is not perfect — many worry about what they see as a lower standard of discipline and a substitution of alcohol for drugs — but all agree there has been tremendous progress.

Offers Bravo Co. 1st Sgt. Ronald Webb, a 16-year veteran with almost 10 years in the Ranger units, "The quality of troops now is just about the same as back then, but the education level is a lot higher. You see a smarter type troop. What they need to do is to use that to their benefit. Overall, the Army's gotten better, equipment-wise, troop-wise. We're headed in the right direction taking quality over numbers. That's the key: we have to maintain the quality."

Quality has come as a result of design, not chance, argues the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Lewis. "The Army leadership looked at what we had and set out to do something about it. We had plans for troop training, to get right education, to get better-schooled officers. We developed very intense training for the NCOs. Everything happened over an 11-year period. Then we got enhanced funding, which meant new equipment and weapons. What has come from all this effort is a first class Army that can go to war any place, any time. Panama validated that."

The colonel is correct in his assessment. Ironically, just as Congress trips all over itself rushing to demobilize and pour an illusory "peace dividend" into more dead-end, bankrupt social programs, the country has finally gotten the Army it deserves. Colleagues who made it down to Panama for that blitzkrieg came away thoroughly impressed. On the DMZ you could see why.

Almost as impressive as the 5-20th's professionalism is the degree to which it seems to function as a color-blind society. As one who officered amidst the race riots and polarization that swept like a wave through the armed forces as Vietnam ground to a halt, the easy working relationships I witnessed were a breath of fresh air. Questioning one black soldier about the argument that the Army, as a force reportedly approaching one-third black (I could find no one who claimed to know the actual statistic), is "unrepresentative" of American society, I received a straightforward response: "Why would anyone care about that [the percentage of blacks]? We're all just soldiers. You do your job, you move up. Here you get people who take pride in their work."

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First Sergeant Bagle, a black soldier who enlisted in 1965, shares the opinion. "I think society is always going to criticize the military. More blacks are unemployed, so they come in the Army. At my level that poses no problems. I think my people come in from the south due to job opportunities. I think the military gives the southern people a chance to see what life is all about."

Says a white NCO, 1st Sgt. Micky Collins, of Echo Co., a Vietnam veteran, "We have a good Army, but we don't get a cross-section [of American society]. We get a lot of people from poor areas, your poor blacks, whites, chicanos. But the quality of soldiers is better now."

Indeed, while NCOs I questioned disagreed on minor points, none would argue with the bottom line that enforcement of higher standards had made for salutary changes in everything from substance abuse to racial attitudes. Where these subjects preoccupied us in, say, 1972, they seem marginal for today's leaders. Of more concern, instead, is the growing dependence of the Army upon technology.

"We keep getting more and more sophisticated equipment," analyzes SFC Eddie Solomon (Alpha Co.), who has 17 years under his belt. "It just keeps coming. Soldiers today are supposed to be smarter, but we all know having a high school education isn't what it's supposed to be. They're all still young, and this stuff can be pretty complicated."

Guarding the Frontier

For the troops, though, these considerations are far away as they go about the daily tasks of the DMZ Battalion. The unit is charged with four basic missions during its 3-month stay: quick reaction force (QRF), patrol duty, MACE (Mobile Armed Counterpenetration Element), and training. The 5-20th is mechanized, so it has four line companies, in addition to its ITV and Headquarters companies. Mission tasking rotates regularly.

Patrol duty is the bread and butter of the mission quartet. Squad-sized elements led by NCOs operate at all hours following routes planned by the intelligence officer, 1st Lieutenant Paul Marks. Located forward of the battalion itself, on the edge of the DMZ, the S2 shop never closes down as patrols shuffle in and out for outgoing briefings, incoming debriefings — more than 800 in a typical three month period. They are armed and equipped Ranger style.

"Having the NCOs in charge works well," offers Marks, clearly relishing his good fortune at being an S2 with something approximating a combat mission. "The key thing in our whole concept is to give people responsibility. The sergeants lead everything."

As they move through the battalion's assigned sector of the DMZ, the patrols are tracked at all times by reaction platoons based at Guard Posts Collier and Oullette, actually platoon strong points.

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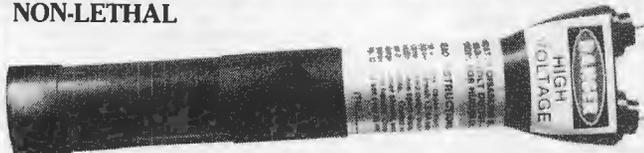
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Additionally, each patrol has an artillery piece dedicated to its support. The artillery crews follow the grunts' progress and go through constant immediate action drills. The battalion's mortar platoon is likewise positioned for direct support and is similarly tested. Should the cavalry need to ride to prevent a Custer-like episode, there are the MACE teams. Backing up everything else is the QRF, prepared at all times to roll out in full combat gear.

When not actually participating in one of the "live round missions," as one troop called them, units are occupied with training. Since priority of ranges and facilities goes to the DMZ battalion, this is an ideal time for weapons firing (all patrols zero their weapons, in any case, every three days) and individual skills such as bayonet fighting.

Continued North Korean attempts to test the U.S. defenses enable the unit to maintain its sharp edge. In the early morning hours of 27 June, for instance, a patrol in an ambush position prepared to decimate an enemy attempt to penetrate the sector. Becoming aware of their predicament, the North Koreans used a streambed to beat a hasty retreat.

So busy are the U.S. troops and their leadership that they have minimal interaction with the ROKs themselves. The effect of this separation is lessened through the KATUSA system (I was told the acronym stands for "Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army"). Under the set-up, South Koreans drafted for military service are, following selection, incorporated directly into the U.S. force structure. Hence, Americans are always in contact with Korean soldiers, even if they are technically KATUSAs rather than ROKs.

With their dual language capabilities, KATUSAs are intended to make day-to-day operations function more smoothly. In many respects the system does this successfully, though there are problems. Many NCOs and officers questioned spoke of the difficulties posed by having their KATUSAs under neither the American nor ROK disciplinary systems (a ROK sergeant major attached to the battalion has disciplinary power). Consequently, they claimed, KATUSAs often end up being used as "additional duty" personnel rather than as integral parts of their units.

In all fairness to the system, I saw none of this. Instead, every patrol and operation I witnessed had KATUSAs functioning just as was intended — as soldiers of an American unit.

More serious are the day-to-day U.S.-ROK frictions which regularly intrude to make life more complicated. The ROKs are renowned for their intense discipline. But this discipline often slides off into rigidity. Instances cited by many U.S. units have involved such episodes as ROK troops — claiming a lack of instructions — stalling entire U.S. armored columns by lying down in front of the tracks or padlocking gates and forcing direct action.

Over the years these episodes have become more severe — at least several have apparently involved firearms being leveled — as the U.S.-ROK relationship has continued to evolve in the face of American redeployment.

Such incidents, happily, remain the exception. What should be emphasized is not the friction but the relative harmony with which two forces, dissimilar culturally, are able to work together in fairly efficient fashion. This ability will become increasingly important as the U.S. role is redefined, especially when overall command reverts to a Korean officer, as is planned in the near future.

For the time being, such considerations remain for the future. Today's task is to insure that the front lines are manned and ready. That the 5-20th is accomplishing admirably.

"We have the troops, the equipment, the attitude, and the morale," says 1st Sgt. Webb. "We can go forward to kick ass."

Tom Marks is a frequent contributor to Soldier of Fortune. A West Point graduate, Marks served as an infantry officer before pursuing a career as a teacher and journalist. ✂

COMBAT CRAFT

Continued from page 22

be purified or boiled. Even the worst alkali water is suitable feed for your solar still.

Water can be partially purified, or at least clarified, by straining it through sand and charcoal filters or through packed grass, bark fiber or cloth. Most parasites can be removed this way. Any turbid water should be filtered or let stand to clarify before it is boiled or treated.

If you do not have a piece of plastic for a solar still, you may be able to adapt a tarp, vehicle glass or panels, or similar material. There may be parts on your vehicle, aircraft or boat that lend themselves to building a metal still. Avoid parts contaminated with anti-freeze (ethylene glycol is deadly poison) or brake fluid (old brake and hydraulic fluid contained PCBs), unless you have a means of thoroughly cleaning them. When you improvise a still bear in mind what makes it work: the sun (or other heat source) evaporates the water until the air in the still is saturated at that temperature; any more will then condense back into water. It will also condense on something cooler, which is why we get dew in the desert at 30% relative humidity. Keeping these principles in mind you see why it is necessary to add a lot of wet material (biomass, wet sand, bad water, etc.) to the solar still to "feed" it in a dry setting, and why it is important to

not open it up unless you must. For this reason a tube to drink from is helpful — it takes an hour or so before the air in the still is saturated and drinkable water begins to collect again.

Think creatively. Look at everything and try to figure how to get the water out of it. Even many rocks and minerals contain water of crystallization that will be released upon roasting, if you are able to build a retort. Burning hydrocarbons produces CO₂ and water — can you condense the smoke from a campfire on cold metal for its water content? Yes, it was done by one clever pilot stranded on a high plateau, who used a wing section at 40 degrees as a "chimney," the steam being condensed on the cold metal and dripping out of a notch before it ran back into the fire. This foul condensation was then used to feed his solar still to produce drinkable water. It wasn't enough by itself to save him, but it was part of his overall effort once he decided he was going to make it. And he did.

Store water when you have it. You can use desert gourds, coconuts, animal bladders or other containers your imagination discovers to store and carry it. Water is there, almost everywhere. It may not be abundant, but it is there if you know where to look and how to get it. You can increase your chances of finding it and making it drinkable if you carry 1) Halazone pills, and 2) a piece of plastic. Bottoms up! ✂

NUMBAH ONE STORY

Continued from page 69

town, it was once almost exclusively a garrison town.

Ville — Every post has its own little Dodge City outside the gate, complete with prostitutes, bars, record stores, tailorshops, pizza joints, you name it. AKA "Downrange" since the VD rate in the division hovered between 60 and 80%, it was safer to be on the wrong end of a rifle range during qualification.

Yamas — pronounced "yahmahs," mountain/hill. Lots of 'em in Korea ... some days I thought I walked up all of 'em.

Hyakimandu — similar to ravioli or an Indian samosa, a fried dough filled with mystery meat. I stayed away from these because I never once saw a cat in Korea.

Yobo — girlfriend, or mistress, paid for by the month, sometimes "bought" first from a bar. More than one West Pointer has brought a yobo home to mom, though certainly not all Korean women married to soldiers were prostitutes (a horrible misconception). Yobo replaced the moose of the 1960s, a term derived from the Japanese *musumee* — "young woman."

Rob Krott was an infantry platoon leader in the 1/17th infantry (Mech). After ETS-

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ing from the Army in 1988 he jumped with the Guatemalan Kaibil, traveled throughout Kenya and enrolled as a graduate student in anthropology at Harvard University. ✕

2nd INFANTRY DIVISION

Organized in 1917 on the battlefield in France, the Second "Indianhead" Infantry Division took part in six campaigns on the Western Front in World War I. In World War II they went ashore at Normandy and fought in six campaigns across Europe.

On 20 July 1950 the main body of the 2nd Infantry Division sailed from Ft. Lewis, Washington for Korea. By 19 August the entire division had arrived and was committed to the defense of the Naktong Perimeter. After the Inchon invasion, the division conducted mop-up operations in southwestern Korea, then joined the rest of the 8th Army in North Korea. When Chinese communist forces intervened in force in November 1950 the 2nd Infantry Division was holding the right flank in the Kunu-ri area. It attempted to extricate itself as the 8th Army withdrew but was overwhelmed and virtually destroyed. After rebuilding they took part in heavy fighting in the Hongchon area, Hwachon Reservoir and later in the Punchbowl, Heart-break Ridge, the Iron Triangle and Pork Chop Hill.

The 2nd Infantry Division received the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation for bravery at Hongchon and was awarded two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations. Its 9th Infantry Regiment won a Navy Presidential

Unit Citation for bravery at the Hwachon Reservoir and a Navy Unit Commendation for its action at Panmunjom, and its 23rd Infantry Regiment won Presidential Unit Citations for bravery at the Twin Tunnels and at Chipyeong-ni. Eighteen Indianhead soldiers won the Medal of Honor for conspicuous bravery on the battlefield.

During the course of the war the division suffered 25,093 casualties, including 7,094 soldiers killed in action or died of wounds, 16,237 wounded in action, 186 missing in action and 1,516 prisoners of war.

After the armistice, the 2nd Infantry Division returned to the United States, but in 1965 it returned to Korea, where it is presently stationed, with headquarters at Tongduchon, north of Seoul.

— S. Max

ALPHA 66

Continued from page 67

stance network in Cuba. In spite of this setback, Alpha 66 continued to wage their not-so-secret war against Castro throughout the '60s, damaging or destroying buildings, machinery, and other targets all over the island.

By 1970, I was told, Alpha was achieving greater success, but also suffering terrible losses. During one operation, 13 members were captured and then summarily executed by the Cuban army. As the

decade progressed, the group, out of necessity, began to restructure its underground network. In Miami, the exile members became more politically involved, joining the Anti-Communist World League and other similar organizations.

In the years that followed, the leaders of Alpha 66 conceived "Plan Maximo Gomez," named after the man who helped lead Cuba's independence movement against Spain. As part of this campaign, a large training facility for their operatives was constructed in the California desert. New guerrilla teams were then infiltrated into the island, where, Alpha officials claim, they have established a large resistance movement. The group takes credit for dozens of mysterious cases of industrial arson reported in Cuba in the '70s. The plan also included the fairly well publicized assassination of Roberto Campos Fernandez, a captain in Castro's secret state security, in Marianao on 9 December 1980.

Alpha's leaders are understandably reluctant to discuss more recent insurgent activities. Sources indicate, however, that although fewer boat raids have taken place in the last couple of years, the resistance movement network is still raising considerable hell on the island.

Throughout this, it would appear that the group's insurgents are doing careful work. Human rights organizations such as Americas Watch and Amnesty International have no record of any abuses committed by



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Alpha 66 since their inception. Too bad the same can't be said of Castro's regime. Many of Alpha's members remain locked up in Cuba's notorious jails, subjected to torture and inhumane conditions.

Today, Alpha 66 remains as dedicated to the struggle for Cuban freedom as they were in 1961. They enjoy widespread support in the Cuban exile community, particularly in Miami. Every exile political group that I contacted, including the Cuban American National Foundation and the Cuban Patriotic Junta, vouched for Alpha's reputation as an effective and responsible anti-Castro organization.

One of my visits to their office took place while a local Spanish-language radio station was conducting a fund-raising telethon for Alpha. Over a dozen phone lines had been installed in the headquarters for the event, and throughout the hours of my stay they rang constantly. Secretary General Sargen also showed me an account book that listed contributions received by the group during the past year. Most of Alpha's funds, I discovered, come in the form of small, regular donations from families all over the hemisphere. Their membership has gradually increased over the years, and Alpha 66 now has chapters in 16 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Santa Domingo and Mexico.

The anti-communist activities of Alpha have been altered somewhat in response to the changing world situation. The group

has developed positive and well-defined political, social, and military programs to further their fight for Cuban freedom. As part of their expanded political program, Alpha 66 is now a member of the Latin-American Anti-Communist Confederation, the World Anti-Communist League, and the Cuban Patriotic Junta. They have also increased their lobbying efforts on behalf of members still imprisoned in Cuba.

Militarily, Alpha has adopted realistic strategies for the '90s. Insurgency networks in Cuba have become more self sufficient, and new emphasis is being placed on maintaining a viable support force. In the event of a popular revolt or invasion, both halves of Alpha's military operations will be ready to work together with the Cuban people to defeat the communist government.

Alpha 66 has evolved to meet the challenges of a new decade. They continue to be at the fore in the fight against Castro, and their political and military actions have set the standards by which all other Cuban exile organizations are judged. Alpha 66 is dedicated to continuing its struggle for a free and independent Cuba well into the next century, if necessary. Seeing their determination, however, I'd be surprised if it takes that long for this communist domino to fall.

John Landers is a Florida-based freelance writer and a frequent contributor to SOF.

CARIBBEAN COUP

Continued from page 35

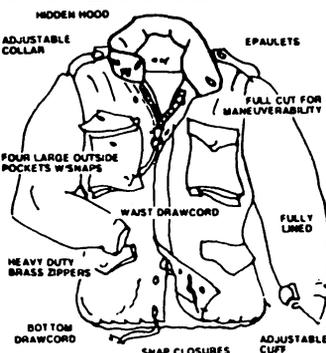
1990, the big event was a press briefing conducted by government spokesman Dr. Gregory Shaw and Defense Force Information Officer, Major David Williams, where we were brought up to date on the official version of what was happening. "Imam" Abu Bakr and his Jamaat-al-Muslimeen were still in possession of and holding hostages in the Parliament House (locally called the Red House more on account of the color of its paint than the political color of the local government) and the headquarters of the Trinidad and Tobago Television station, commonly called "TTT" or simply the Television House. Numerous reporters' questions about alleged agreements with the rebels for the resignation of Prime Minister Robinson, who was then held hostage at the Red House, amnesty for the rebels, and promised elections, about the status of the hostages, and a lot of other things were more or less gracefully not answered by the two spokesmen.

Chuck Fremont struck up an acquaintance, in classic SF style, with a very attractive reporter from the *Guardian*, the best respected of the local daily newspapers. In addition to being a real knock-out, she was well informed and invaluable in our efforts to get the SOF

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slant on the story. We agreed to link up with her and Noel, her photographer, the next day as soon as the curfew lifted.

Wednesday, 1 August 1990: Shortly after noon, the SOF team consisting of Brown, Chuck Fremont and McColl, move out and link up with the reporter and the photographer. After a fruitless trip to a local cemetery following up a firefight lead, we head for the TV House.

Our reporter friend sweet-talks us past the soldiers guarding the perimeter surrounding the television station. About a block further on, there are a couple of smashed up cars blocking the street, and some nervous locals who point out the TV House on the left side of the street about 100 meters further up the street. We go into semi-cover behind one of the smashed cars to confer. Fremont, the reporter and Noel head out down a side street with the intent of circling around and trying to get in from the other side. Eventually they link up with the rest of the press covering the event from a point on the street about 100 meters the other side of the entrance to the TV House.

RKB and I remain in place. Suddenly, a figure emerges from the front door of the TV House, hands on head in the classic gesture of surrender, no weapons in sight; apparently they are releasing the hostages. There is no visible activity on the side of the TV House toward us, but several open windows with dark rooms behind them are not comforting. Nor are the bullet pocks in the walls of buildings around us and the empty cartridge cases here and there on the ground. But no guts, no glory and all that. By cautious bounds we move up the street. If they're releasing hostages, they are, we hope, not in a mood to shoot at us. It took about 20 minutes to cover the 100 yards to the porch of the building of the local Radio Emergency Associated Communications Team (REACT), directly across the street from the front door of the TV house and with a ringside view of the proceedings.

A quick check of alleys and driveways, all blocked, disclose nowhere to hide if the rebels, who by now must have seen us, decide to get nasty. The only course seems to be to adopt a nonchalant, proprietary saunter, as if we don't have a care in the world.

All the while the hostages, and after them the rebels are coming out, at about 2½ minute intervals. The first rebel out is the Imam Abu Bakr. The CNN TV tape of his exit shows RKB and McColl standing beside a car in the street, about 15 meters to the left of the front door of the TV House. We later hear that the press down the street by the barricade were speculating that we had to be CIA supervising the operation, as all the "real" press and TV were behind the barricades. Heh. Heh.

Each rebel comes out with his hands up, individual weapon sans magazine held high in his left hand, stops, makes a left face — some of them with a noticeable show of military training — walks to a point about half way between the TV House and the

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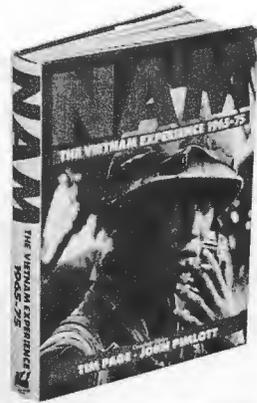


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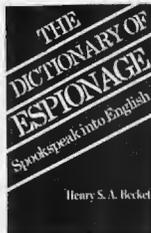
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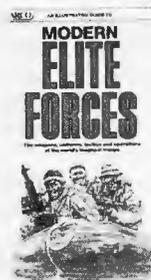
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waiting troops, stops, adds the weapon to the growing pile in the street, raises his hands again and walks the rest of the way to the barricade, consisting of a bus parked across the street and numerous troops. All the while, and it takes about two hours, Abu Bakr is standing on the sidewalk next to the pile of weapons, under a pouring-down rain. A weapon with the magazine out can still have a live round in the chamber. If one of them were to decide to play hero and fire that last round at the troops, we are nicely down range from all those Galils, M60 machine guns, FN FALs and other weapons in the hands of the troops on the barricade. This causes us to keep a wary eye on places to seek cover if the situation gets noisy. To add a further baroque touch, somewhere off to our right front, a burglar-alarm siren is dolefully wailing away.

The surrendering rebels are mostly young men apparently of African, not East-Indian ancestry, many of them in an approximation of uniform consisting of black shirt and trousers and combat boots. The weapons are mostly .30 caliber carbines and assorted pump-action and semi-auto short-barrelled shotguns. I saw no AKs, nor any RPGs or machine guns.

After the last of the rebels had come out, there was a pause and then a couple of senior Defense Force officers, with several soldiers, including a couple in Balaklava hoods and with CAR15s, come up the street, hold some sort of conference in front of the TV House and go away. After a few minutes, up the street comes a young rebel in black clothes, combat boots and with some sort of brass badge on his left sleeve, with three very alert looking soldiers covering him with their Galils. The lad in black goes into the TV House, moves around inside for a while and then comes out with spools of wire, which he very gingerly sets down on the sidewalk. Then, covered by two very wary soldiers, he goes to the beat-up car parked across the street to our left (the one behind which we had been standing) and disarms an explosive charge (or charges) in it. It is then that we notice the pink wires leading from the door of the TV House to this vehicle and to a large white van parked on our side of the street about 5 meters to our right. The lad in black is then sent into this van and comes out with two small things about the size of hand grenades, which he holds at arm's length, unscrews caps and pours some kind of powder out of them onto the rain-wet street. We are later told that this van had in it "enough high explosive to blow down four city blocks." Oh shit. Better we found this out later than sooner.

Shortly thereafter, a polite but quite firm soldier with a Galil comes up the street and suggests we move along, which we do.

At the press briefing later that night, the government spokesman announces that the rebels' surrender was unconditional, that whatever agreements had been made under duress would not hold, and that the rebels

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will be charged with murder and treason (both of which are hanging offenses in Trinidad), kidnapping and inciting to riot.

The Israelis might have done it better, but they have to sort out one of these horror shows about once every two weeks. The Trinidadians do this about once in 20 years, however, and in my opinion did it in extremely respectable style. When it was all over, the rebels were all locked up, the surviving hostages if not intact at least under medical care, and no enforceable concessions had been made.

MSgt Chuck Fremont, a Special Forces Reserve Operations and Intelligence NCO, is a frequent contributor to SOF. Alex McColl, two-tour Vietnam vet and Special Forces Colonel, USAR (Ret.) is SOF's intrepid Military Affairs Editor. The authors joined SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown on this quickly organized trip to cover the first assault on a western hemisphere government by a radical Muslim group. ✕

CARIBBEAN COUP CHRONOLOGY

1 August 1990, about 1800: Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. I look through a gap in the draperies in a deserted second-floor office of a downtown bank. A figure stands in the middle of Knox Street, about 100 meters to my front. He holds a rifle high above his head. Another fanatic has just surrendered to the Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force after holding the Prime Minister, many other government leaders, and in effect the nation hostage for five days in a failed coup attempt.

There are 27 Trinidadians dead, at least 150 wounded or seriously injured. Property damage estimates begin in the tens of millions of dollars and range upward from there. The Jamaat al-Muslimeen, an extremist Trinidadian Moslem group described by Orthodox Moslem experts as belonging to the Islamic Jihad, and known to have ties to Libya's Colonel Muammar el Khadafi and possibly Iran, has just been busted by the local sheriff.

We have assembled this chronology from our own observations, from eyewitnesses, from information provided by the government of Trinidad and Tobago and from information in the local press. In particular, we would like to thank the Trinidad Guardian, the nation's most respected paper, for opening their research files to us.

27 July, late Friday afternoon: Monthly payday for most Trinidadians. The Caribbean League Soccer match is getting underway at the National Stadium. Many Trinidad and Tobago police are soccer fans. In fact, former policeman Yasin Abu Bakr, leader of the Jamaat al-Muslimeen, was a champion player himself.

1755 hrs: An engineer at Trinidad and Tobago Television, or TTT, checks his watch. Time to get the six o'clock broadcast started. He walks from his office, only to run into a group of armed men in the corridor.

"Take us to the broadcast studio," they order. He complies. Joined by more gunmen, they move to the studio where they take control.

Just before 1800: A reporter at the

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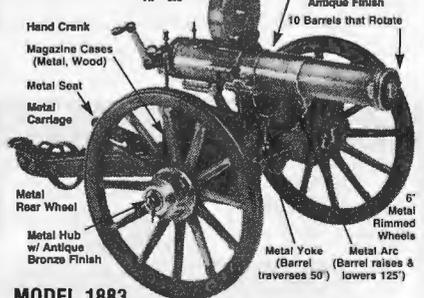
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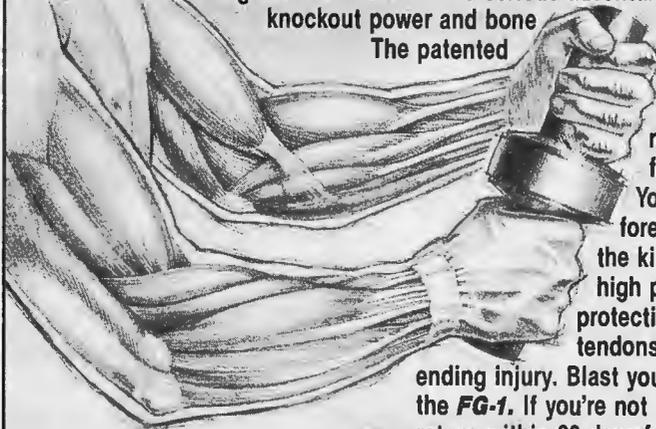
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Trinidad Guardian looks out the window of the newsroom and sees a station wagon pull up in front of the neighboring Radio 610 studios on Abercrombie Street. A group of men follow in pickups. The station wagon tailgate is swung open, and plywood crates with rope carrying handles are opened. Weapons — an assortment of small arms and homemade grenades — are removed from the crate, and the gunmen begin firing into the radio building and toward the Guardian offices. A firebomb is hurled into Radio 610, and a blaze breaks out. Employees extinguish the fire while the gunmen sprint toward the nearby Parliament building, known as the Red House because of its red brick construction.

About 1800: A car carrying several armed men approaches Central Police Headquarters from Sackville Street. They gun down the lone sentry, park their car directly in the entrance and sprint toward the Red House, directly across St. Vincent Street. The car explodes, and the 19th century building, originally a church, is rapidly enveloped in flame. Two vans approach the north entrance of the Red House from Knox Street. As police HQ explodes, they swing into the drive reserved for the Prime Minister, blocking his car. Weapons and munitions are removed from plywood cases, and the gunmen sprint into the entrance to Parliament chambers. They kill a sentry and a female bystander.

1805: The Jamaat al-Muslimeen, commanded by Abu Bakr at the TTT studios and by Bilal Abdullah at the Red House, hold the nation's popular Prime Minister, Mr. A.N.R. Robinson, and much of the Parliament hostage. Eight people are dead, seven of them at the Red House. They also control the nation's commercial television.

1815: Abu Bakr appears on Trinidad and Tobago Television and announces that he has overthrown the government. Looting immediately breaks out in Port-of-Spain.

Through the night: Police and firefighters fight a losing battle against widespread looting and arson, and the Defense Force, the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment (Army) and the Coast Guard (Navy), is alerted. Soldiers of the Regiment, armed with Israeli Galils and FN FAL rifles, take up fighting positions surrounding the Red House and TTT.

28 July, 0600: Member of Parliament Leo Des Vignes, whose foot was shot off by the Muslimeen in the initial Red House assault, is released by his captors. He is hospitalized and dies four days later of a heart attack.

About 0800: Acting President Emmanuel Carter, Senate President (President Noor Hassanali, normally Number Two man in the government, is in England on holiday) announces a State of Emergency, giving the Regiment full martial law powers and imposing a 24-hour curfew in the vicinity of the Red House and TTT. A 22-hour curfew (1500 to 1300) is declared for downtown Port of Spain, and an 18-hour curfew (1800 to 1200) is ordered for the rest of the country. An Emergency Command Post, staffed by regimental, police and civil leaders, is established at the Hilton Hotel in northern Port-of-Spain. U.S. Coast Guard units in Puerto Rico are alerted for possible deployment to evacuate U.S. citizens. Patrol boats returning from drug interdiction duties are held on standby. A Libyan plane, bound for Trinidad from Suriname, is denied landing clearance

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One source reports the rebels have wired explosive charges to the hostages. This is later proven incorrect.

Through the night: Looting intensifies in Port-of-Spain and spreads throughout Trinidad. Neighboring Tobago is mostly calm, though a few problems are later reported. Soldiers of the Regiment exchange sporadic gunfire with the Muslemeen.

29 July, Sunday: Firefights between soldiers and Moslems intensify. Looting and arson continue. The citizens of Port-of-Spain contribute food to soldiers patrolling their neighborhoods.

30 July, Monday, very early in the morning: Soldiers (mostly Jamaican) of the Caribbean Regional Security System (RSS), are airlifted by USCG C-130 Hercules and H-3 long-range helicopters into Barbados. Police Commissioner Jules Bernard returns to Trinidad from the United States, where he has been since before the coup began.

About 1330: In Barbados, two H-3 helos, carrying an unknown number of troops, taxi to the runway and take off.

Later that evening: A *Trinidad Guardian* reporter is phoned by her girlfriend: "Do you know anything about the American soldiers at TTT?" she asks, explaining that she observed several U.S. or possibly British (white-skinned) troops with local soldiers near the television station.

31 July, Tuesday: President Hassanali returns from Britain. The Moslems announce that Prime Minister Robinson has agreed to resign, and that he will be released due to failing health.

About 1400: Robinson, unable to walk due to having taken a Moslem bullet at close range in the ankle, is carried from the Red House by two other released hostages. President Hassanali refuses his "resignation." (Note: At about the same time, SOF's team is wheels up in a chartered Baron out of Barbados). The Regiment and Coast Guard begin to restore order. Occasional shots are heard in the vicinity of the Holiday Inn, about four blocks from the Red House, where the press is gathering. Abu Bakr tells a Reuters correspondent that he "would like Jimmy Carter or Jesse Jackson to get in touch" and handle negotiations. The government declines.

1 August, Wednesday, Emancipation Day in the West Indies: Abu Bakr is rumored to be ready to surrender.

1200: As soon as the curfew lifts, the SOF team links up with *Trinidad Guardian* staff. A firefights is reported at Lapeyrouse Cemetery, near TTT. We head for the cemetery. Nothing is happening at the cemetery, so we continue walking north to TTT. The midday drizzle turns to a warm downpour.

About 1300: Abu Bakr releases 29 hostages, held since Friday inside TTT. They are taken by bus to the General Hospital and Regimental headquarters at Camp Ogen. They appear tired but otherwise unharmed.

1340: A tall gaunt black man, dressed in loose white trousers and shirt, holding his rifle high above his head in a gesture of surrender, steps from the TTT studios into Maravel Road. At least six hooded commandos of the Regiment watch him through the sights of their weapons: Israeli Galils and UZIs, FN FALs, a CAR15.

An officer with a bullhorn commands him to stop and put his hands on his head. Imam Yasin Abu Bakr, 48, would stand in that

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same spot, with three well-armed soldiers dedicating their complete attention to him, for the next two hours while each of the 69 men and boys — the youngest only 14 — with him in the TTT studios surrender. One at a time, they are ordered out of the building, its entrance blocked by a sedan, by commands spoken crisply through the bullhorn. They stop and lay down their weapons. Many of the weapons have the words “Allahu Akbar” (God is great) and Arabic writing painted in white on their buttstocks.

The Moslems look down the barrels of three separate weapons as they walk to a wall, where they are spread-eagled and thoroughly searched. Personal effects collect at their feet. They then are ordered forward by an officer armed with a Smith and Wesson Model 59 9mm pistol. (Like the others, he wears sterile fatigues, no insignia or rank, with velcro-strips where his name-tape would normally be.) The prisoners are loaded into vehicles.

As the prisoners sit in a blue Coast Guard bus, hands on their heads, reporters shout questions at them through the windows: “What are the terms of your surrender?” “We have amnesty. We got what we wanted,” they answer. (Major Dave Williams, Liaison Officer with the Regiment, later explains that the Moslems must have misunderstood something. “The surrender was unconditional, as far as we are concerned,” Williams says. Other officials confirm this.)

I asked a commando officer with a CAR15 if they had trained much for counterterrorist operations and he replied, “No, mon, we never thought this would happen here.”

I told him I thought they had handled it very professionally and asked if they had had any foreign experts or advisers. He said he wasn't sure, but he thought maybe they did. I thought back to the Brits at Barbados and the *Guardian* reporter's friend who saw foreign soldiers. (RKB later received confirmation from a reliable source that the SAS was in Port-of-Spain during the emergency in an advisory role).

About 1600: The last Moslem is out of the building. Abu Bakr is ordered forward. He is searched and moved to the bus by the hooded commando with the Smith and Wesson.

1700: From the second story window of a bank building on Richmond Street, a group of journalists — two Venezuelans, two Trinidadians and myself — watch as Regimental soldiers maneuver two busses, an ambulance and an olive drab cargo truck into position at the intersection of Knox and Abercrombie Streets, near the northwest corner of the Red House. Several medics in white hospital coats stand by behind the truck.

Minister for Culture Mrs. Jennifer Johnson, holding a handkerchief over her face in a futile attempt to mask the stench of the bodies that have lain in the entrance since Friday, walks briskly from the north entrance of Parliament. Again, the British-Caribbean bullhorn voice: “Stop. Hold your hands high.” She is scanned for signs of explosives, and her identity is confirmed. “Now walk behind the truck.” She is met by the medics, who help her to the bus.

One after another, the 17 hostages — parliamentarians, secretaries, journalists, private citizens — walk from the Red House. Some of them start to run as soon as they

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are free of the building. "Walk, don't run," commands the bullhorn. The bus containing the freed hostages moves down Knox Street, and another backs into its place.

The first Moslem is ordered out: "Come out with your hands up." Wounded, he carries no weapon and walks with a limp. Two more wounded Moslems, also unable to carry weapons, are ordered out. Twelve more follow, one at a time, holding their rifles high above their heads in surrender. They follow the commands from the bullhorn. A pile of weapons collects 10 meters in front of the truck. A pause while a Land Cruiser is maneuvered to shine its headlights toward the Red House entrance, as night falls. Then the rest follow, altogether 42. By 2000 it's over.

— C.F.

BAKR PROFILE

Full Name and title: Imam ("Holy Man") Yasin Abu Bakr (Given name: Lennox Phillip)

Born: October 1941, Trinidad and Tobago, British West Indies.

Early years: Mounted policeman with Trinidad Police, champion soccer player. Reportedly studied engineering in Canada.

Quote: "I spent nine years in the police service, and those who know me well will tell you that the two things I am very good at are riding horses and using guns."

Favorite travel destinations: Libya (at least two visits prior to 1988). Has also travelled to Iran at least once, in 1983, while making the "Haj" or holy pilgrimage to Mecca.

Religious background: Converted to Islam, probably in the late 1960s or early '70s, under the influence of the "Islamic Missionaries Guild," a fundamentalist Moslem group. This group followed a radical Saudi-influenced ideology known as "Wahabism," described as a "fierce and merciless" doctrine by Orthodox Moslem experts. Abu Bakr broke away from the Guild, probably in the early 1980s, to form his own even more radical organization, the Jamaat al-Muslimeen. He has been described as "a Black Muslim with an Arabic name, not a true Muslim" by Orthodox observers and is considered by them to be a member of the extremist "Islamic Jihad."

Hobbies: Racking up jail time for illegal anti-government demonstrations (numerous arrests); explosives and demolitions (suspected by Trinidad police as having been behind bombing attacks in 1983 on rival Moslem leaders); firearms collecting (numerous arrests since 1983 for possession of illegal weapons and munitions); import and export (in particular cocaine, marijuana, firearms and ammunition); support of local small businessmen (mostly armed robbers, car thieves, muggers and rapists, drug pushers and petty thieves); women (claims nine wives, though polygamy is illegal under Trinidadian law).

Friends and heroes: Most prominent is Col. Muammar Khadafi of Libya, whom Bakr describes as a "close personal friend" and a "man who promotes freedom, not terrorism."

Source of income: Probably drug smuggling and petty crime account for some support. Rumors of payments from Khadafi continue to circulate but are unconfirmed.

— C.F.

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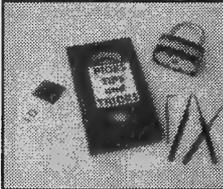
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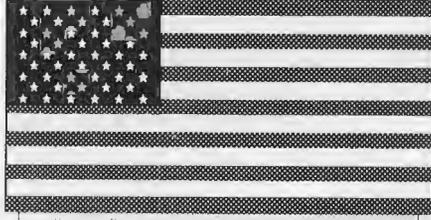
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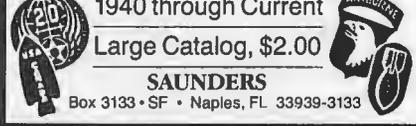
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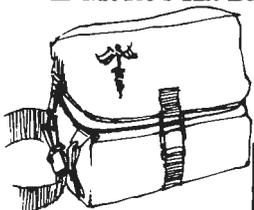
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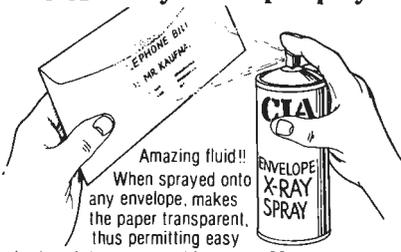
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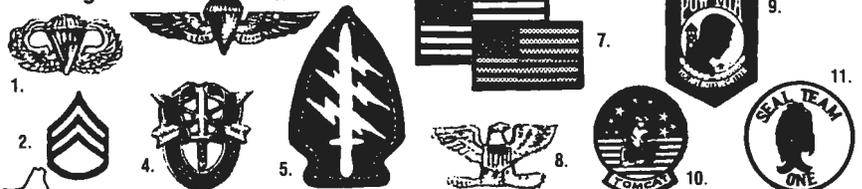
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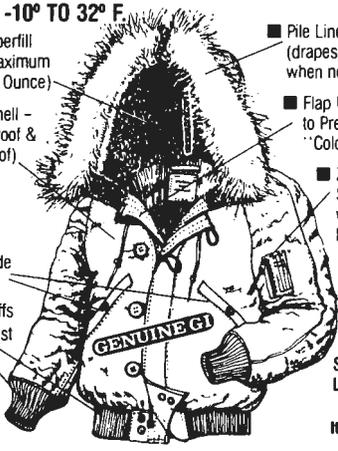


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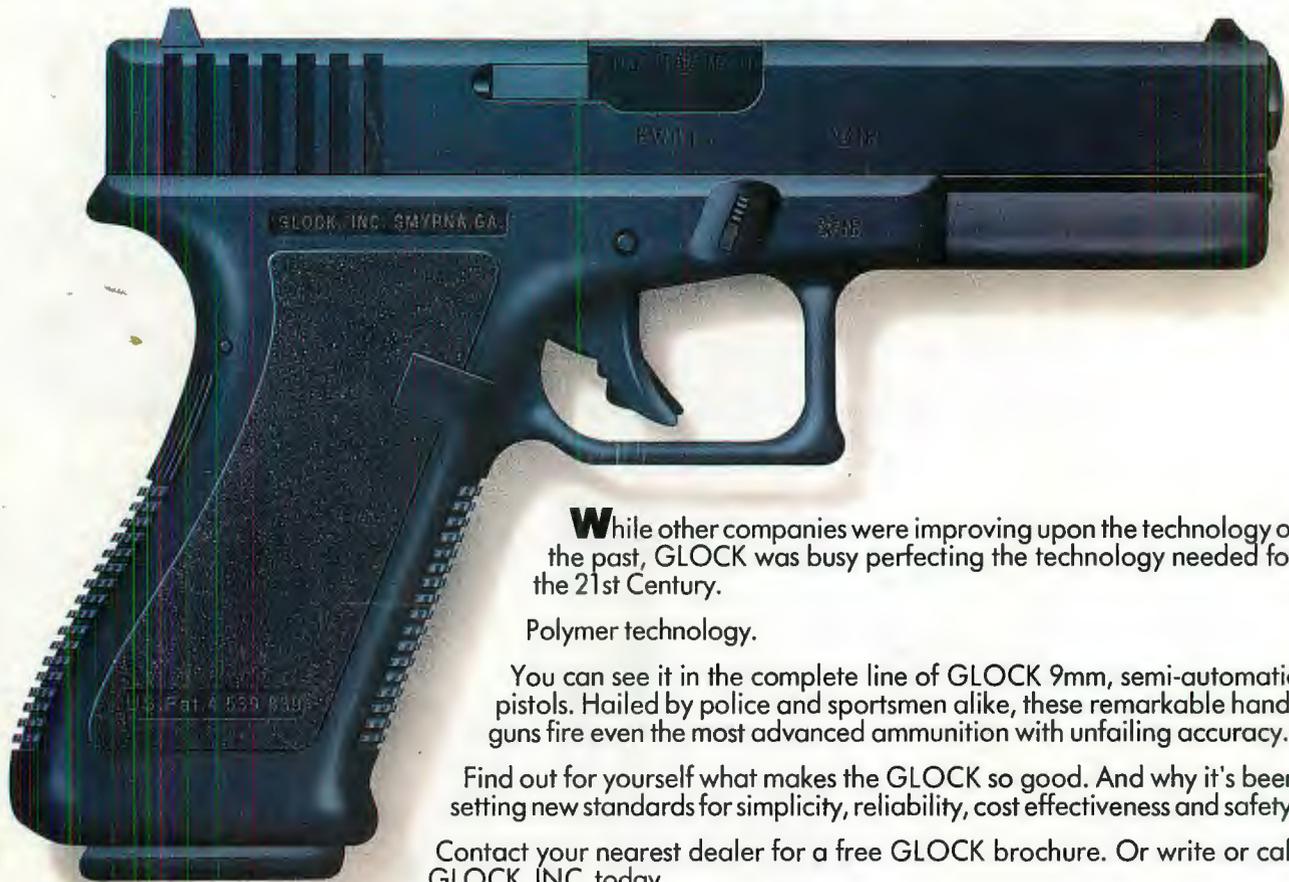
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