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MARCH 1991  
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**The Journal of Professional Adventurers**

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FIGHTING IRAQ**

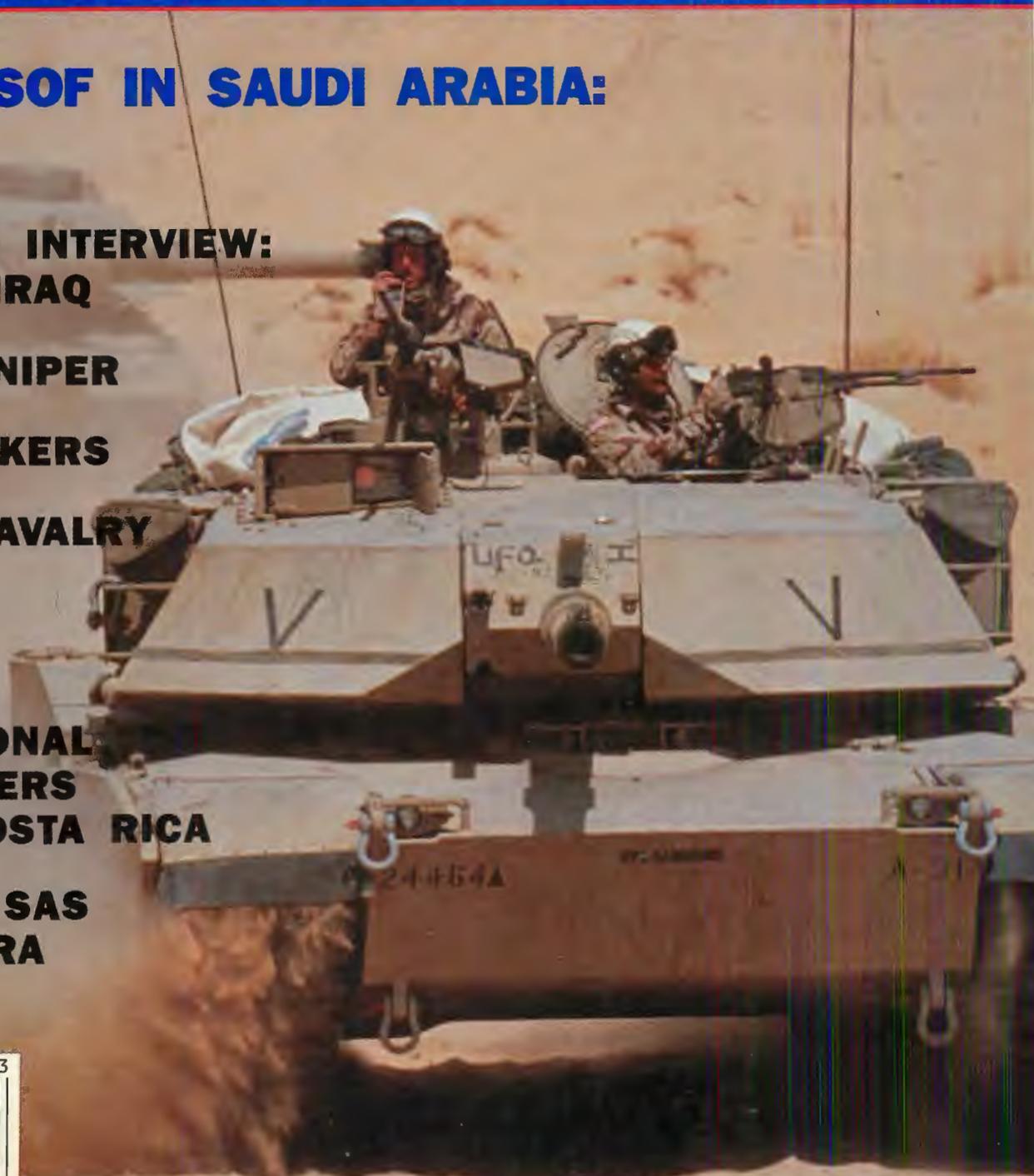
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MARCH 1991



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### RAID

#### GAULOISES . . . . Tom Slizewski

Where can teams of top athletes and adventurers from around the world get together to compete? This year, in Costa Rica, in something like a combination of Special Forces training and an ultra-triathlon. SOF staffer Tom Slizewski was lean, mean, and on the scene

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Edward Brown

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**COVER**

From a military (and our) point of view, Operation Desert Shield is the most important story of the day, and that's why, for the fourth month running, we've featured it as our cover story — the first time in 15 years of publishing we've had such a string of similar covers. There are other wars and conflicts ongoing as you read this, but nothing with the destructive potential of the Middle East, and certainly none which involves us as personally and directly as does Desert Shield. As long as we're fielding U.S. and allied forces in a hostile area, we'll continue to give them the coverage they deserve. It's the very least we can do, and in this issue we start their stories on page 44. Photo: P. Durand/Syigma

**INSET:** In our many years of covering conflicts around the world, we've never run across anything as bizarre — and deadly — as the ongoing "revolution" in Africa's Liberia, where mud, blood, beer and fear are the orders of the day. SOF's Editor/Publisher Bob Brown (a fellow who's just about seen it all) called "Rap Revolution and the Prince of Darkness" the most shocking story he's ever read, and we think you'll agree. For the not-faint-of-heart, it begins on page 32. Photo: John Jameson



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**VIETNAM BIRD DOGS** ..... Bill Hooper as told to Jim Hooper  
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The fall of the Iron Curtain has brought to light a host of little-seen ComBloc weapons. Case in point is a unique East German survival knife/AKM bayonet combo 74

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# BULLETIN BOARD



SOF editor/publisher Robert K. Brown met recently in Washington with freedom fighter Dr. Jonas Savimbi and well-known conservative Howard Phillips. Seldom out of the combat zones of his native Angola, Dr. Savimbi was attending a Washington banquet in his honor. Howard Phillips is honcho of U.S. Taxpayers Alliance, 450 Maple Ave. E, Vienna, VA 22180. Photo: Robert E. Rountree, Jr.

## CMP STILL UNDER ATTACK

Update: The National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice (NBPRP), the group mandated by law to advise the Secretary of the Army on the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), has held its first meeting since Congress decided to cut funding. Unfortunately, not much was accomplished.

The Director of Civilian Marksmanship attempted to outline to the Board the realities of how high user's fees would have to be if the CMP were to become self-sustaining by the end of 1992, as the current law requires. No amount of official assumptions could get within \$1.5 million of the amount that would be required.

In times past, the Board had get-it-done members like Gens. Curtis LeMay and Lew Walt, but that is not the case today and solid recommendations are yet to come out of this meeting. Perhaps it is good that the American military is constitutionally subservient to civilian authority — or at least it would be good if there weren't people like Pete Stark running amok through the halls of Congress trying to sabotage the CMP.

The only way the CMP will be re-funded (at the rate of about two cents per American per year) and

saved is if you as a voter give Congress your two-cents worth. This benefit to the American military of preinduction small arms training for civilians *must* be saved, but it is a battle that the military cannot fight. It must be fought for them by the voters.

Write your senators and congressmen and tell them how you feel, that you want the CMP re-funded. Then enlist the aid of any organization to which you belong (VFW, American Legion, Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimist, Jaycee groups, local gun clubs, etc.). Have them send letters as a group in support of the CMP.

Act now!

## ROCK AND ROLL ACROSS TEXAS

The nationally famed Hill Country Machine Gun Shoot is slated for Memorial Day weekend (25-26 May) outside San Antonio. It's always a blast. Drop a line to Kay Tumlinson, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 6511, San Antonio, TX 78209; (512) 824-8240 for details on visiting or attending as a registered shooter.

## NEXT MONTH

SOF's special fold-out Middle East Ops map. Watch for it. Also, watch for an upcoming War in the Middle East issue.

## REGISTER YOUR ROCK AND ROLEX

Los Angeles City Councilman Nate Holden introduced an ordinance that would require a five-day waiting period for the purchase of a used Rolex wristwatch. It would also require all Rolex owners to have their watches registered. What was this inanity supposed to stop? Why, the violent thefts of Rolex watches, of course. Chief of Security for Rolex in L.A., Philip Stone, termed the proposed ordinance "ludicrous."

## SCAM ENDS; YOU MAY HELP WITH JUSTICE

One Thomas J. Appoloni (various aliases) is in custody of the Silver Bow County Sheriff's Office in Butte, Montana, awaiting extradition to any number of states where he obtained employment as a gunsmith before cleaning out the stores where he worked. His favorite targets were military-style semi-auto rifles and other high-ticket items. Subject is W-M-CAU, 6-feet-2 inches tall, 270 pounds, thin gray hair, has Bugs Bunny tattoo on forearm. If he scammed you, contact Detective Tom Green at the Silver Bow Sheriff's office, or your local law enforcement agency.

## HOHNER SENDS THE BLUES TO SAUDI

Hohner, Inc. of Ashland, Virginia, is sending free shipments of their harmonicas to the troops in the Gulf, complete with instruction books. Asked why, Hohner rep. Jack Kavoukian said, "We wanted the young men and women over there to know we were thinking of them and to have a little reminder of something distinctly American." Hohner is the world's largest producer of harmonicas.

SOF thinks it's a great idea. We're sending large, free shipments of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine to the troops in the Gulf and, as of this writing, have collected and shipped more than a half-ton of paperback books. We'll keep on supplying the SOFs, but we need you to keep on supplying the books. Please forward them to: Books for the Troops, c/o SOF, 5735 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80303, and we'll see that they get there. ☒

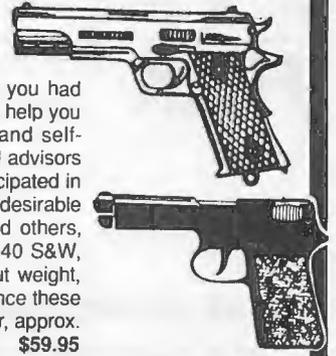
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## WE'RE SORRY, CANADA

I am a disappointed Canadian reader. I bought your December '90 issue and in the story "Desert Shield Showdown" you had every flag for countries serving over there but the Canadian flag. I am a proud ex-Canadian Forces infantryman who feels they should be acknowledged in the job they are doing over there.

Philip Clarke  
Mississauga, Ontario

"Desert Shield Showdown" provides unsurpassed coverage of the events in the Middle East, but you failed to mention the Canadian Armed Forces' assistance.

On 10 August 1990 Canada announced that it was sending two destroyers and a supply ship to the Gulf. We recently sent a squadron of F18s. Also in the Gulf are members of the 119th Air Defence battery, equipped with Blowpipe missile launchers.

Canada was one of the first countries to join the U.S. in contending with Saddam Hussein.

P.E. James  
Halifax, Canada

*We dropped the ball, straight-up and simple, and send our apologies to the Canadian armed forces, especially those on-station in the Middle East. At the time we were putting the "Desert Shield Showdown" package together,*

*we were focusing a lot of attention on the Mohawk Indian crisis in Quebec and let slide the fact that the first contingent of Canadians (navy) were about ready to set sail. We do value our allies — especially our northern neighbors — and regret we let their contribution to Desert Shield pass unmentioned.*

## NO KUWAIT MERC MARKET

Regarding your Bulletin Board item in the Nov. '90 issue entitled "Kuwait Recruits Mercs," the article is a "complete fabrication" according to the Kuwait Embassy in London. Mr. Al Khobaizi's office denies the quotation in your article and draws attention to the daily London-based newspaper, *The Evening Standard*, as a possible source of this rumor.

In any event, for the record, Kuwait is not in the merc market.

C.J. Clark  
London

*When we went to press with that issue, four independent sources in the United Kingdom verified that the Kuwaitis were indeed in the process of establishing a pool of qualified military personnel for service in the Middle East. A Kuwaiti source in Washington, D.C., to whom we read the piece, did not deny the veracity of what we printed. We believe that, in the initial*

*upheaval following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (and before we fully committed U.S. forces and support), the Kuwaiti hierarchy grabbed at any straw — including the use of mercs. Given that they had at least \$10 billion in unfrozen assets, the idea of creating at least a military training cadre composed of qualified foreigners was certainly a feasible proposition. Once things settled down, however, and the U.S. government (read Central Intelligence Agency) became involved with the Kuwaiti resistance, the idea lost its momentum and deniability became the Kuwaiti byword. Reports now reaching us from the AO tell us that there are foreigners actively involved in training the Kuwaiti resistance and army-in-exile. Beyond that, we cannot comment.*

## ATROCITY BY ANY OTHER NAME STILL AN ATROCITY

I am concerned with the combat ethics your article "The Big Lie," by Marty Casey (March '90) seems to put forth. Regarding photos showing a contra execution of a prisoner you say that "The photos, although grisly, showed an incident that is not uncommon in guerrilla warfare where neither side is in a position — or has the inclination — to hold prisoners." This sentence, and the lack of any discussion on this particular incident elsewhere, seems to imply that such actions are to be expected.

An atrocity is an atrocity no matter which side commits it. I don't hold all the contras responsible for this one atrocity any more than I hold the entire U.S. Army responsible for My Lai, but it must be made perfectly clear that this type of action is reprehensible.

Timothy Bendel  
Boulder, CO

*We couldn't agree more, but then, we in the United States operate under a set of values and code of ethics whereby "atrocities" are reprehensible and repugnant to our way of thinking. There are others in this world, though, who don't see things as we do — and that's simply reality rather than posturing. We wish it could be otherwise.*



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## CANADA'S CIVIL WAR

Congratulations on a great story covering "Canada's Civil War" (Dec. '90). Finally a story comes out of the situation that shows the full story truthfully. Most people agree that we cannot tolerate lawlessness or anarchy in a country. Many people aren't just mad at the natives but also the government which is to blame for the crisis. I would like to say "well done" to the Canadian Forces soldiers who took a lot of crap from everyone and still maintained their professionalism and got the job done.

Brad Blois  
New Glasgow, Canada

I would like to comment on your article in December '90 issue on the brothers up North on the Oka reservation. I'm from the Navajo reservation here in New Mexico and would just like to thank the SOF publishers for expressing their concerns for us Native Americans who still hold our most sacred lands with honor and respect. Thanks to Managing Editor John Coleman

Fritzdarrel K. King Sr.  
Shiprock, New Mexico

Your piece on "Canada's Civil War" was the most informed article on the military exigencies of the Oka/Kahnawake/Chateaugay crisis yet written. Keep up the good work.

P.E. James  
Halifax, Canada

Your story on "Canada's Civil War" attempts to glorify the Mohawk Warriors as heroes who are fighting for their ancestral land. This is far from the truth. Even some Mohawk chiefs have condemned the so-called Warriors as a gang of criminals and terrorists who are protecting a huge gambling and smuggling empire on the Mohawk Indian Reserves. They have abused and intimidated many of their own people who are opposed to these criminal activities. The real heroes are the 3,400 soldiers of the Canadian army who showed incredible patience and restraint and brought the three-month standoff at Oka to a peaceful end.

Robert Denneck  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Given the extraordinary circum-

*stances under which they operated, I too was impressed with the Canadian military I encountered during my two trips up to Canada. In the main, I was also impressed with the Mohawk Warriors behind the barricades. There were ample opportunities and provocations for both sides to start throwing bullets at each other yet, as I wrote in the article, no one really did want to fire the first shots — and they didn't. I hope the same level of patience carries over into the courtroom, where the next battles between government and Mohawk will take place. As that story develops, we'll keep you posted.*

— John Coleman

## COLT BROUHAHA

I would like to thank Paul Danish for his very informative article on the Colt AR-15 (Aug. '90). I was not aware what the Colt firm was doing to this fine weapon. Being a fan of the AR-15, I was disgusted by what I read. Not only are they ruining a fine weapon and practically robbing potential buyers with the new price, they are also giving in to the anti-gunners.

I am in the Army and use an M16 almost every day. I own an AR-15A2 and a CAR-15. If Colt goes through with its plans for the AR-15 I won't buy another one. For that matter I probably won't buy another Colt product.

B.R. Hicks Jr.  
Ft. Richardson, AK

Why do you come down so hard on Colt for redesigning their AR-15 into what the bureaucrats call a "Sporter" so that they can still be sold to us?

On page 24 of the same August issue you sing the praises of H & K for selling the "new HK Hunting rifle SR9" which is an HK 91 with a new stock, no bayonet lug, and solid flash suppressor. I also understand that Springfield Armory and perhaps other importers are doing the same to skirt the inane BATF import regulations.

Importers and other manufactures have no choice but to comply with the law. C'mon guys ... give 'em a break! Aren't we better off with the modified guns than no guns at all? Let's stop shooting ourselves in the foot by swinging after the bell.

P. Benevento  
North Haven, CT

## MARINE PERSPECTIVE

Concerning your December '90 issue and unit locations in Saudi Arabia, I know all units' exact locations and one inaccuracy particularly irritates me. The 82nd Airborne has never been close to where you show they are. They are what we call REMFs.

We are not the ones having USO shows and getting publicity. We are here to do a job and you don't hear us complain. We have too much discipline to. We like it the good old fashioned way — the Corps way — Harder the Better!

A U.S. Marine  
Saudi Arabia

*Whoa! Calm down, Gyrene. First, we intentionally put unit locations in only the most general areas of operation. No sense in giving Saddam and his minions any more intel on deployments than what they already have. Second, it's good to see that "friendly" unit rivalry between the Corps and Army Airborne is alive and well. If the balloon goes up over there, we think you'll both appreciate having each other covering your flanks.*

## SOF INTELLIGENCE

I am an Intelligence officer in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve and I find SOF invaluable for current updates of various groups and countries. I give many current Intel briefings to various squadrons and aircrew and your articles often act as a starting point as additional interest information. I am at present entering all my copies of SOF into a computer database for quicker access.

B.M. Dundas-Taylor  
Queensland, Australia

## COMBAT CRAFT FAN

I really like the Combat Craft column over the Combat Weaponcraft column of the past. Articles like "First of Things is Water," (Nov. '90), and "POW Staying Alive" (Dec. '90) show that there's more to staying alive in war than outflanking the enemy.

Joe Cavanaugh  
Onamia, MN ✕

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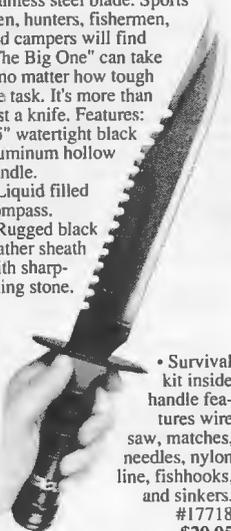


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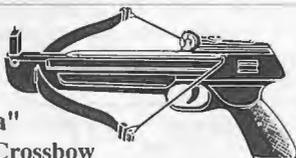
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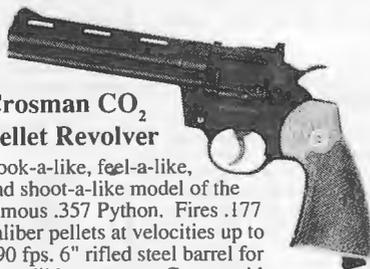
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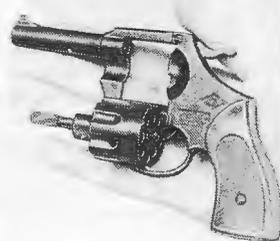
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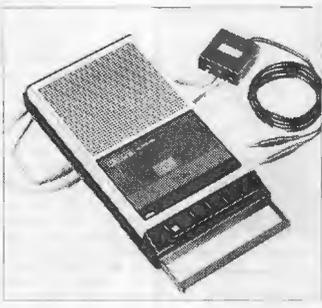
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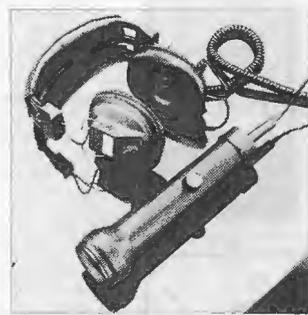
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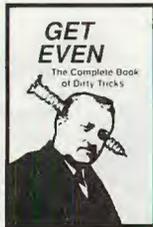


## COMBAT RIFLES OF THE 21st CENTURY

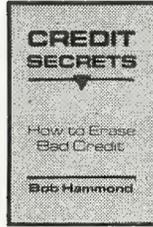
Futuristic Firearms for Tomorrow's Battlefields

by Duncan Long

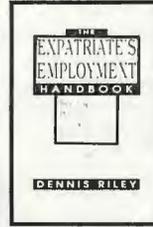
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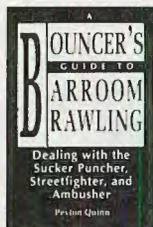
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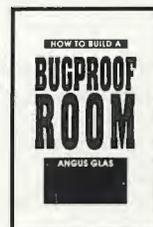
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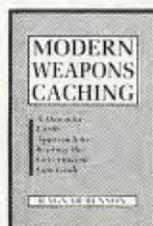
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# COMBAT CRAFT

by Chuck Fremont

## Desert Navigation: Dead Reckoning to Stay Alive

**LONG-RANGE** desert operations challenge the most skilled land navigation experts because of the repetitive nature of the terrain, the often featureless topography, poorly defined borders and low-visibility conditions due to sandstorms. Other navigation problems are also compounded by the difficult environment.

The same piece of desert looks different at different times of the day. Land forms that show up sharply in the morning sun are lost in the afternoon glare. Mesas and gullies suddenly appear with the advent of evening shadows and vanish again with the night. The moon seems to rise on an entirely different world.

During the British intervention in Kuwait in 1961, when Iraq's threatened invasion was thwarted by rapid deployment of Royal Marine Commandos to Kuwait, three Royal Marines were captured by Iraqi forces when they miscalculated their position and crossed the border into hostile territory. In October 1990, during Operation Desert Shield, a French team was also captured by Iraq due to a similar mistake.

So far, no American troops have won an expense-paid trip to Baghdad because of a navigational error, but it could happen. The techniques outlined below, adapted from principles taught in NAVSPECWAR (SEAL) and Army Special Forces Waterborne Infiltration training courses, may keep you or your men from becoming "guests" of Sad-

dam Hussein.

U.S. training doctrine for mechanized infantry operations emphasizes land navigation by terrain association. This is the preferred method for several reasons: the speed of mechanized combat, the need for rapid and accurate coordination with Army and Air Force aviators during air-land battle, the inability to leave a vehicle to check azimuth with a hand-held compass (most U.S. infantry vehicles lack on-board compasses), and the high probability of human error with compass and celestial navigation. But terrain association in the desert isn't the same as in the Fulda Gap, and other navigation methods may be necessary.

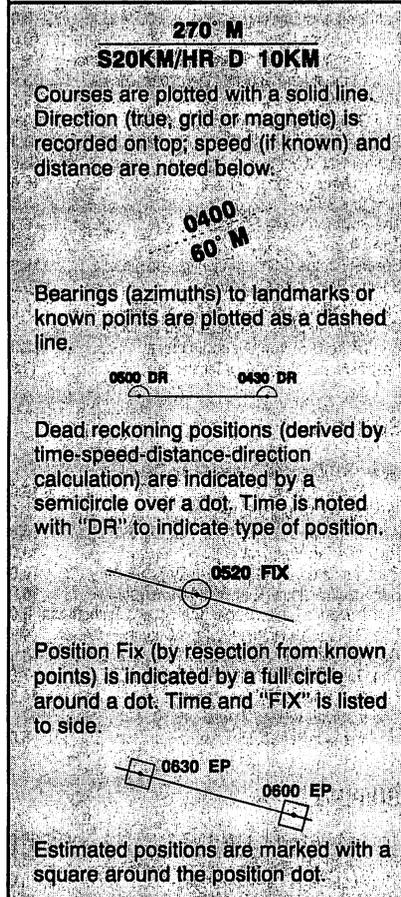
### Early Answers

The earliest type of navigation, known as "piloting," relied on recognizable landmarks. But when early sailors began venturing over the horizon and beyond known landmarks, they developed a method of navigation that became known as "dead reckoning." Dead reckoning built on piloting, by advancing from a starting point or known position by a given course and distance. Course could be determined either by compass or celestial navigation, and distance was calculated by keeping track of time and speed.

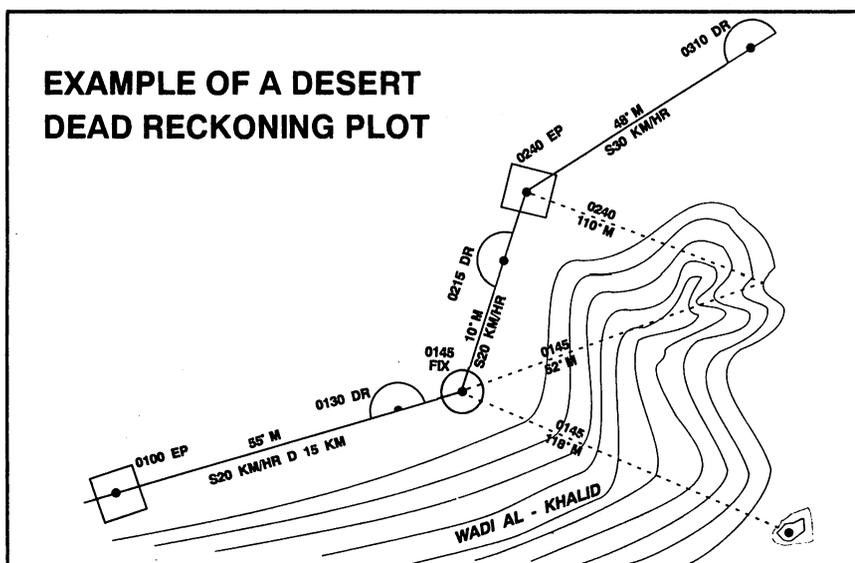
Because dead reckoning involves speed through water, rather than speed over bottom, it gives the sailor an approximate position that needs to be corrected whenever possible by taking a "fix," or position check, from landmarks as they come into view. Known positions, courses and fixes are noted in the navigator's log or plotted on charts. Dead reckoning is often used in Special Operations waterborne infiltrations because it doesn't require sophisticated navigation aids and instruments and is pretty straightforward.

Dead reckoning on land is a little different than in water. First, you don't have to worry about effects of current and wind drift. Distance can be kept track of by vehicle odometers, eliminating the time-speed-distance calculations of nautical navigation. And landmarks may be a little more available, allowing more frequent position

### DEAD RECKONING PLOTTING SYMBOLS MODIFIED FOR LAND USE



### EXAMPLE OF A DESERT DEAD RECKONING PLOT



Continued on page 79

# THE PLANE THAT CONQUERED THE SKIES.



Precision-engineered model of *Shoo Shoo Baby* is shown smaller than actual size of 9 3/4" in length. Wingspan of 12 1/4". Scale 1:96.

The B-17 "Flying Fortress." It was the very backbone of the Allied aerial offensive during World War II. Now, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of World War II, the Air Force Museum Foundation authorizes the authentic re-creation of a rare surviving B-17G that actually saw combat. It's called *Shoo Shoo Baby*, now on permanent display at the U.S. Air Force Museum.

Here is a remarkable die-cast model of the original, precision engineered of 111 components with a vast array of operating features. The propellers actually spin. The landing gear is retractable. The bomb bay doors open and close.

*Shoo Shoo Baby* also has astonishing detail. With a removable canopy that reveals the interior of the plane. Even the nose art re-creates the original's.

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This aircraft was designed and engineered from the actual B-17G "Flying Fortress," nicknamed *Shoo Shoo Baby*. It has not been authorized or endorsed by any branch of the United States Military or its manufacturer.

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# WORLD SITREP

5

## CAMBODIA

Khmer Rouge netting over a million a month from Palin rubies marketed in Thailand; diplomat notes "for the Khmer Rouge the Palin gem business is like a license to print money."

2

## BANGLADESH

President Ershad cracking down to prevent further violence between Muslims and Hindus.

1

## AFGHANISTAN

Pakistan officials flew mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Massoud to Islamabad for courting and conferences - trying to put together an anti-Kabul coalition aside from madman Hekmatyar.

4

## BURMA

Military leaders forcing few leaders of National League for Democracy who have not been jailed to sign away the party; 2,000 of 3,000 prisoners held in Rangoon jail spirited away before inspection by UN Human Rights Commission ... government troops raided monastery in Mandalay.

3

## BELGIUM

European Community (EC) foreign ministers meeting in Brussels heard proposal from Italy to include defense and security considerations in 12-nation organization's charter.

6

## CHAD

Rebel leader Gen. Deby has dissolved Parliament; President Habre has fled to Cameroon.

7

## COLOMBIA

Leftist guerrillas launched biggest offensive of year, killing 40 in northern provinces before being driven back.

8

## ČECHO-SLOVAKIA

Armed Gypsies hijacking international trains, stripping tourists to last penny, hitting emergency brake and bailing out to waiting cars ... Czech, Hungarian companies to bid on parts for European Fighter Aircraft (EFA) program.

9

## EGYPT

Being forgiven \$6.7 billion in military aid debts to U.S. as thanks for help in Gulf crisis.

10

## GERMANY

Papers report over 700 Soviet troops have deserted and fled to the woods; some 800 a year have died stationed there, mostly suicides ... communist party revealed it has some DM 2 billion in assets (safely out of the country).

11

## GUINEA-BISSAU

To receive \$50 million in aid from Taiwan.

12

## HAITI

26 declared presidential candidates disqualified for not following filing rules.

13

## HUNGARY

Officials of crumbling Warsaw Pact have agreed on how to divvy up tanks and heavy weapons ... Hungary has joined Council of Europe.

14

## INDIA

Will not give asylum, will prosecute Burmese who hijacked Thai airliner to Calcutta ... Hindu/Moslem/caste riots, secessionist violence.

15

## IRAQ

Three French troops from multinational force strayed 100km across border; taken prisoner, but released since they weren't women or children ... claims 8 million new volunteers for Popular Army (reserves) - analysts think maybe 600,000 total.



32

### VIETNAM

Stepping up relations with outside world ... looking for somebody to take up slack left by waning Soviet presence; would like U.S. Navy back at Cam Rahn Bay ... Soviet troops have begun pull-out.

30

### USSR

Moscow threatens total blockade if Baltic states don't abandon attempts to establish own economic institutions ... Bolshevik revolution parade marred by counterparades, demonstrations, man who fired shotgun 150 yards from reviewing stand in Red Square ... draftdodgers may cause restructuring of Soviet military ... Russian Federation began implementing its own radical program for market economy ... Moldavian nationalists attacked checkpoints along border with Romania.

31

### VENEZUELA

To get Mirage 50 fighters as part of \$397 million air force upgrade program with Dassault.

29

### THAILAND

New political party set up by former army commander Chaovalit Yongchalyut.

28

### SOUTH KOREA

Wavering on F-18 deal ... sending gas masks to their embassies in Middle East.

27

### SINGAPORE

Has signed deal for U.S. access to naval, air bases; will take up some slack from waning U.S. presence in Philippines.

26

### RWANDA

Government accuses rebels of breaking cease-fire; Uganda, Zaire, Burundi sending men to join peacekeeping forces.

24

### POLAND

Polish, German negotiators agreed on present border along Oder and Neisse rivers.

25

### PRC

Two planners of last year's democracy movement charged with plotting to overthrow government ... investments by Taiwan based companies tapering off.

16

### JAPAN

Emperor Akihito enthroned, 158 countries sent dignitaries ... Prime Minister Kaifu survived defeat of his plan to send troops to Gulf, but still has domestic problems.

22

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Starvation, disease spreading on Bougainville Island in wake of government blockade after Joseph Kabui's secessionist revolt ... copper mine still closed ... rains washed out most local gardens.

23

### PHILIPPINES

NPA setback: intel agents captured Reynaldo Bernardo, deputy chief of Alex Boncayao Brigade, responsible for assassination of scores of police and military officers ... troops killed 10 rebels in central Philippines ... U.S. will withdraw all land-based planes by next year.

17

### JOHNSON ISLAND

All not well at chemwar disposal works; no leaks, but only operating 22% of time.

20

### NEPAL

King Birenda stepped down, issued royal proclamation of new constitution, ending 222-year absolute monarchy.

18

### KUWAIT

Ad hoc resistance groups selling boobytrapped video cams to Iraqis, setting off car bombs.

19

### LEBANON

Christian Lebanese Forces withdrawing from Beirut, one of last groups to leave under new peace plan.

21

### NICARAGUA

Has re-established diplomatic ties with Taiwan; PRC quickly severed ties with Nicaragua in response ... former contras blocked roads in spreading protest against Chamorro's not giving them land as promised.



# I WAS THERE

by John Robertson

## Aussie Tiger Hunt

AS part of our government's ongoing defense commitments in the region, we found ourselves, along with another destroyer escort of the same class, deployed to show the flag to our Southeast Asian neighbors. Normally our area of operations would center around Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Frequently we found ourselves alongside in Singapore for periods of routine maintenance and general R&R.

Several weeks after departing Australia our deployment was proving to be void of much excitement while at sea. We encountered no vessels in distress, nor did we come across any Indochinese refugees fleeing southward to freedom in boats of questionable seaworthiness. There was no sign of pirates or the like, and we received

organized in order to alleviate the boredom. Luckily our periods at sea were well punctuated with port visits to places such as Bangkok, where the crew had no trouble finding activities to occupy themselves or filling their social calendars.

On this particular deployment we would be making the journey across the Bay of Bengal to call at Madras, India. In doing so we would be the first Australian warship to visit the port in something like 10 years. The visit was regarded with mixed feelings by a greater part of the respective ships' companies. The level of enthusiasm was not enhanced when the crew members who had visited Madras 10 years earlier told stories that in order to have a beer ashore, it would be necessary to obtain a certificate stating that

asked personnel who were interested in participating in a tiger shoot while in India to place their names on the list posted in the main passageway. To all of us who have ever fallen for tricks such as requisitioning striped paint or volunteering to be coxswain of the splash target, the concept of a tiger hunt was viewed with great caution and regarded as a definite trap for young players.

By virtue of modern communications our accompanying sister ship was brought into the scheme and was similarly calling for volunteers for what was now to be a coordinated hunt between the two ships. I thought the idea of a tiger hunt, especially in a day and age where conservation of the species is of prime importance, was a bit too farfetched and in some respects

bordered on the absurd. However, I guess I underestimated the gullibility of some of the younger crew members because as the days passed the number of volunteers grew.

The enthusiasm of the tiger hunting party was fostered by the remainder of the crew — those who were not silly enough to volunteer. Constant encouragement and advice were offered to the prospective hunters. Some senior sailors went to great lengths to



Tiger hunting party ready for action.  
Photo: John Robertson

no special instructions ordering us to alter course to monitor events in a particular region. So our time at sea was principally occupied with passage exercises between ourselves, our sister ship and units from various Asian navies. Lack of activity meant that our time at sea was beginning to reach "South Sea Island Cruise" status.

Occasionally an intermess pistol shoot, steel beach barbecue or sports day on the upper decks would be

you were an alcoholic. Before you could purchase or consume any alcoholic beverage you would have to present your certificate to the local authorities for their scrutiny and approval.

Passage between Malaysia and India was particularly quiet. Something had to be done to break the monotony. I suppose the lack of activity started the wheels turning in the heads of some of the old hands on board, as one day daily orders carried a notice requesting volunteers for a tiger hunt. The note was quite brief and simply

pass on their knowledge of stalking big game to the volunteers, obviously utilizing the experiences they gained when as junior sailors they volunteered for crocodile hunting expeditions in Northern Australia. The visit liaison officer even covered different aspects of the hunt when he appeared on the ship's internal television program to do a background story on the ship's stay in Madras.

Unfortunately not all the prospective hunters were allowed to join the party. One sub-lieutenant was refused permission by his commanding officer on

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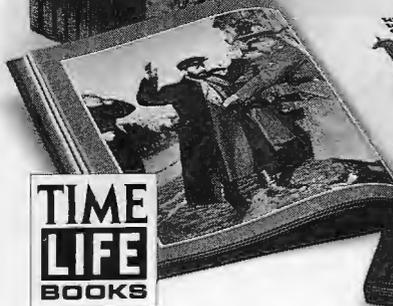
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the grounds that he was on the visit liaison team and consequently would be required for other duties while in Madras. Bitterly disappointed at his CO's decision, the subby had no intention of giving in without a fight. He decided his best course of action would be to address his dissatisfaction in writing to his CO. He outlined his case fluently and logically. His principal argument was that due to the infrequency of visits to India by our navy, he would probably never again participate in the adventure of a tiger hunt. In short he was being denied the experience of a lifetime. In reply to his complaint he was quickly counseled by his CO, and as a consequence the sub-lieutenant withdrew his complaint and his name from the list of volunteers.

Our arrival in Madras was greeted with great anticipation by the crews of both ships. Once alongside and routine berthing matters were taken care of, a pipe was made over the main broadcast system: "Tiger hunting party to draw rifles!"

Having drawn webbing the previous night, the party filed through the armory to collect an SLR and then proceeded to the upper deck. Another pipe was made:

"Tiger hunting party fall in one deck aft!"

The hunters began to assemble, all

kitted up for a day on the sub-continent taking pot-shots at possible man-eaters. It was now clear that some volunteers had decided to withdraw from the party. Perhaps they had seen the light when told that it was mandatory for all members of the hunting party to wear steel helmets. Not to worry, there were still enough members of the party remaining to bag at least a dozen tigers.

After a few preliminary drill orders, the petty officer quartermaster gunner stood the party at ease and commenced to brief them on the important aspects of the hunt.

"The hunt will be a coordinated exercise making optimum use of elephants as a means of transport and as firing platforms. Therefore, each party member will be required to sign for one elephant and one Indian bearer."

The hunters exchanged a few brief glances among themselves. One chap consoled the bloke next to him by telling him that the steel helmets would probably protect their skulls if they were unfortunate enough to fall from their elephants.

By now quite a crowd had gathered on the upper deck to view the proceedings. Even the ship's television crew was capturing the event on video. Indian sailors on adjacent ships and the motley collection of hawkers on the

wharf looked on in bemusement. The petty officer continued:

"The head guide for the day's events will be Mr. G. Din." (As in Gunga Din!)

Slowly, one by one, the hunters were beginning to see the joke, but the briefing was far from finished.

"Under no circumstances are you to dismount from your elephant, unless instructed to do so by the head guide. Additionally, under no circumstances are you to shoot your bearer, unless of course instructed by the head guide!"

More smiles appeared on the faces of the hunters.

"Gentlemen, you are reminded that the bag limit is two tigers per man. Finally, if anyone here is unfamiliar with the characteristics, nature and appearance of your prey, then this is what you will be dealing with ..."

With this statement the petty officer produced from a black plastic bag a small fluffy child's toy with yellow and black stripes, a big pink tongue and a silly grin!

At that point in time our cuddly friend was not the only one with a silly grin. All our not-so-great white hunters were now displaying them. The remainder of the crew were either falling about in raucous laughter or smiling smugly, obviously satisfied with the results of the great Madras Tiger Hunt. ✕

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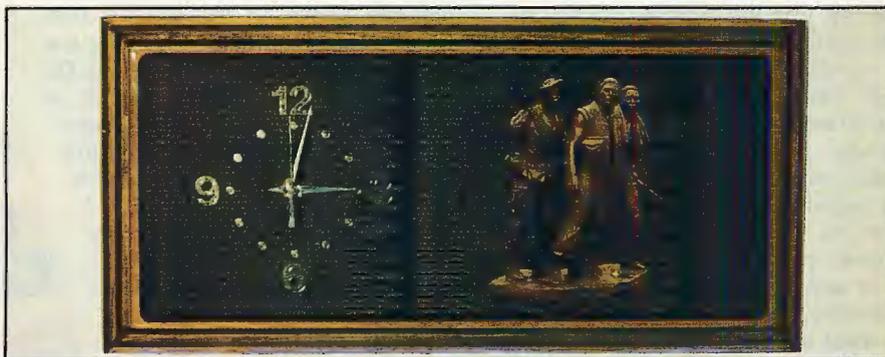
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# IN REVIEW

by John Coleman

**WAR** is such a human condition. No other species consciously plans and executes it — or spends so much time writing about it. Perhaps some time, if we read enough about war, we'll finally realize just what a pointless and wasteful exercise it really is. Or maybe not. Our future, in terms of killing each other, seems just as bleak as it always has.

Ian Slater throws us a frightening vision of that future in **WWIII** (Fawcett Gold Medal), a novel that may have been slightly overtaken by current events but which still bears the harsh mark of reality. Slater, a political science Ph.D. and Australian naval intelligence vet, sets up a scenario wherein North Korea slashes south, decimating ROK and U.S. forces. The Kremlin decides the time is right for the Big Push and sends the Warsaw Pact hordes streaming through and around the Fulda Gap, smashing — but not quite defeating — the NATO line.

Today, with the Warsaw Pact crumbled and the two Koreas singing songs of reunification, the above doesn't seem likely — but then, neither did Pearl Harbor.

Slater makes **WWIII** work on a number of levels, from his nearly perfect technical accuracy (it might have been his editor who tagged *M113* armored personnel carriers with the *M114* scout vehicle nomenclature) to believable air-sea-land strategies, to the most important part: people. You can actually visualize Slater's characters and walk a bit in their shoes, regardless of which battlefield their war's taking place on. (Certainly the best character in this book is General Freeman, a Pattonesque hero who'll stick with you.) If Desert Shield isn't enough to scare the hell out of you, then this book will.

If the future doesn't particularly bother you the past should, and Janice Young Brooks' **Guests of the Emperor** (Ballantine) is just the book to do it.

In fiction based on fact, Brooks

zeros in on the fall of Singapore at the beginning of World War II and the lives of women taken prisoner by the Japanese invaders. It's brutal in more ways than one. The sudden snap from peacetime complacency and the good life as a European in Asia to prisoner status was traumatic enough; existing the next 3 1/2 years in a Japanese prison camp under Darwinian life-or-death conditions was indeed an exercise in adaptability and survival of the fittest. Some grew up in the process but few grew old, and Janice Brooks does a superb job with **Guests of the Emperor** of putting you in the role of mindful watcher as their daily fight to stay alive unfolds. Let's hope no one ever has to go through that sort of ordeal again.

Survival, of course, is the key to our existence, and there's now a series of first-rate books on the subject. Bob Spear, who is currently deputy for the U.S. Army's Deception Operations Division at Ft. Leavenworth has, in a straightforward and easy-to-assimilate fashion, shed light on what are inherently complicated topics in his **Survival on the Battlefield: A Handbook to Military Martial Arts, Surviving Hostage Situations** (with Major D. Michael Moak), and **Close-Quarters Combat for Police and Security Forces**. (Universal Force Dynamics Publishing, Dept. SOF, 410 Delaware, Leavenworth, KS 66048; phone (913) 682-6518).

These are not rehashes of armchair-warrior theory; Spear has a hands-on knowledge stemming from years spent as a military trainer around the world, and the singular ability to express it in writing. Well worth a phone call or letter — it might just help keep you alive down the road.

For a book of a different stripe check out **Tiger Patterns** by Richard Denis

Johnson (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5532, Titusville, FL 32783-5532; phone (407) 269-3181), perhaps the definitive work on the tiger stripe-pattern camouflage of the Vietnam era. Did you think there were only one or two? Think again: Johnson has 150 "Tigers" in his collection, certainly ranking him as one of the world's top collectors of the genre.

In **Tiger Patterns** Johnson pulls out the stops and gives you everything you want to know (or would ever need to know) about Tigers ranging from early war to late, "John Wayne" to "tadpole" sparse and dense patterns; fabric weights and garment cuts; buttons and zippers — and everything else you could possibly imagine. This is a work of love and a collector's dream, and with your copy you can slay 'em down at the local VFW.

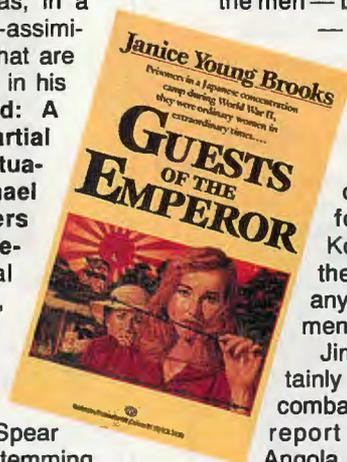
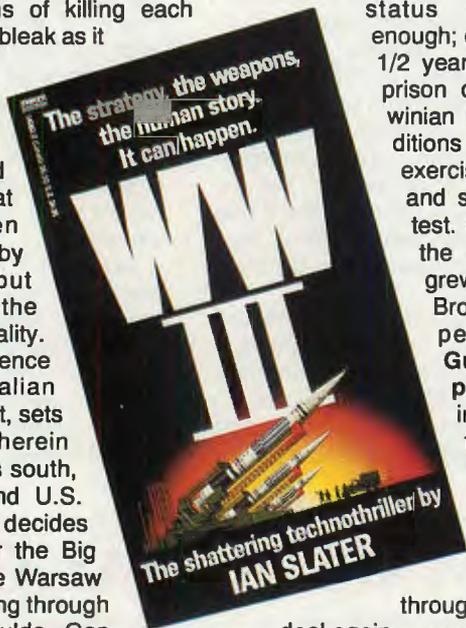
Finally, to take a quantum leap from tiger stripes to southern Africa, we offer **Beneath the Visiting Moon: Images of Combat in Southern Africa** by Jim Hooper (Lexington Books), a finely tuned and taut frontline look at a war that few in the media (SOF excepted) ever bothered to report: South West Africa's (SWA, now Namibia) and South Africa's fight against the Cuban- and Soviet-backed South West African People's Organization (SWAPO).

Hooper spent months with *Koevoet* (SWA's counterinsurgency police unit) during their field ops, coming to know the men — both black and white

— who endlessly scoured southern Africa's harsh bushveldt for SWAPO's elusive terrorists. More often than not they found them, and Koevoet racked up the highest kill ratio of any security force element in the AO.

Jim Hooper is certainly one of the finest combat correspondents to report from the SWA/Angola theater, and **Beneath the Visiting Moon**

reflects the best of that breed of journalism and journalist. Namibia's war may be over now, but Hooper never lets us forget that good men fought — and all too often died — in it. ☞



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We feature here a selection of clothing and accessories with Operation Desert Shield in mind. Kaufman's always applauds the men and women in the armed forces who serve our country, and we give a special salute to the troops in the middle east during this crisis.



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AS SEEN ON TV

# SAVE GAS! CUT ENGINE WEAR IN HALF!

Slick 50, the space-age miracle engine treatment applauded by Consumer's Digest magazine, prestigious independent laboratories throughout the world, and over 15-million satisfied automobile, truck, RV, boat, and heavy equipment users, is now available to you.

One treatment with Slick 50 can cut your engine wear in half and make your engine run smoother, quieter, faster, and cooler than ever before. Slick 50 makes an unmistakable difference you can hear and feel in both newer and older cars.

## The Secret Is PTFE

PTFE is an abbreviation for polytetrafluoroethylene. The Guinness Book of World Records calls PTFE the slipperiest solid substance known to man—the equivalent of wet ice on wet ice. The Space Shuttle Columbia uses PTFE in its gears and bearings because it's the only chemical lubricant that can withstand the heat and corrosive elements of space. It won't rust, is immune to acids and alkalines, and the more pressure it's under, the more slippery it becomes.

Slick 50's unique actuated formulation bonds these powerful PTFE resins to the mechanical surfaces of all internal combustion gasoline and diesel engines, creating a strong, protective coating that can dramatically reduce friction and wear.

## 7 Ways Slick 50 Can Save You Money and Increase Reliability

Although individual results may vary, tests have shown that Slick 50 effectively:

1. Reduces gas consumption.
2. Prolongs battery life by decreasing drag on starter, resulting in less amperage being required for start-up. (Makes cold weather starts faster and easier.)
3. Helps extend the life of internal metal, mechanical engine parts.
4. Lowers peak engine operating temperatures, helping to prevent overheating and oil breakdown even under the most demanding conditions.
5. Increases horsepower and compression (especially important for small economy cars and large RVs).
6. Lowers maintenance costs, reduces repairs, and minimizes or eliminates costly overhauls.
7. Makes an automobile last longer and keeps its resale value high.

## How to Conquer Your Engine's #1 Enemy—Lubrication Starvation

Slick 50 is a metal treatment that bonds actuated PTFE to all mechanical moving engine parts, creating a strong, durable, lasting, dry-film protective coating that provides full-time lubrication even when there is insufficient oil on the parts like at start-up and when engine heat has broken down the oil. Instead of metal rubbing against metal, PTFE glides against PTFE, reducing friction and wear. It is this unique ability of Slick 50 to dramatically reduce friction that's responsible for its cutting engine wear by 50% or more.

## Most Often Asked Questions About Slick 50

### How is Slick 50 applied?

Slick 50 is easy to use. At your next oil and filter change, simply substitute one quart of Slick 50 for one quart of new oil being added. Drive the car for 30 minutes, and leave Slick 50 in the crankcase. As the engine operates, the oil will carry Slick 50 throughout the engine where it bonds to the porous metal surfaces.

### Does it have to be used with every oil change?

Certainly not. One treatment with Slick 50 provides anti-wear protection for more than 50,000 miles. It remains bonded to the engine parts no matter how many times the oil is changed.

- INCREASE POWER
- IMPROVE PERFORMANCE
- SAVE THOUSANDS OF \$\$\$ ON REPAIR BILLS, MAINTENANCE & OVERHAULS



■ The premiere EPA-recognized engine and lubricant testing lab in the U.S. conducted a strictly-controlled experiment using industry standard ASTM procedures. They found that a Slick 50-treated engine showed 50% less engine wear than an untreated engine and fuel consumption was reduced. To our knowledge, it is the only product of its kind to pass the punishing wear reduction tests conducted by an EPA-approved lab using nationally accepted ASTM standard procedures.

■ The Automotive Services Council for Pennsylvania torture-tested Slick 50 and televised the astounding results on WTVE. Three cars, with 75,000 to 129,000 miles on their odometers, were treated with Slick 50. Six months later, the oil was drained from each vehicle, and the cars were driven, without the oil plugs, for about a half hour. The water temperature never rose, and the engines sustained no apparent damage.

## Testimonials

### ■ Increased Power Wins Races

*Dirt track champion, winner of over 40 modified stock car feature racing events and recent winner of 11 races in 15 starts, says: "We've tested lots of products and found Slick 50 to be the best there is. It allows us to push the car to the limit and not be worried about hurting the motor."*

Andy Belmont, NASCAR "Rookie of the Year"  
National Champion NASCAR  
Charlotte/Daytona Dash Series

### ■ Increased Gas Mileage by 20% ■ Fewer Repairs & No Major Breakdowns in 200,000-Mile-Plus Fleet Vehicles

*"Our newspaper has a fleet of 65 vehicles that have been completely treated with Slick 50 products, including engines, automatic or manual transmissions and differential drive gear boxes. As a result of the treatment, gasoline mileage increased by 20%, and engine breakdown decreased tremendously."*

### ■ Eliminated Repairs on Police Cars

### ■ Fuel Savings

*"Thank you for the cost-effective, budget-saving benefits of Slick 50 engine treatment. I bought the product about four years ago for treating our city police cars. Since that time, we are happy to say, all car engines have been virtually trouble free. They haven't needed any repairs at all. Also our fuel savings have been noticeable."*

## Money-Back Guarantee

Now your car can run better, faster, quieter, smoother, and last longer than ever before. And you could easily save thousands of dollars in gasoline, maintenance, and repair bills. Find out for yourself why over 15-million people are excited about Slick 50. We're so sure you'll be excited too, that we offer a 100% money-back guarantee. Call or write today.

### 100% Money-Back Guarantee Order Form

Yes, I want to extend the life of my engine, improve performance, and save money. Rush me risk free:

- \_\_\_ One quart of Slick 50 at \$29.95 plus \$3.95 shipping & handling.
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### Does Slick 50 have any affect on automobile warranties?

No. The use of Slick 50 does not in any way affect a car's warranty. Petrolon, the manufacturers of Slick 50, has letters on file from automobile and engine manufacturers to document that fact. Slick 50 carrier oil meets or exceeds all specifications that Detroit applies to products added to an engine. New engines need at least a 3- to 4-thousand mile burnishing-in period. Slick 50 should not be added until the first oil change.

## Internationally-Recognized Labs Unanimously Agree on Slick 50 Benefits

■ **Consumer's Digest Magazine** in the March/April 1982 issue, stated: "We were somewhat skeptical at first, but it turns out that Slick 50 does exactly what Petrolon, the manufacturer, claims it does. In fact, the more we looked, the more facts stacked up on the product's side. The substance does, in fact, suspend the oil and will adhere to engine parts. The process by which this is accomplished is a closely-guarded secret.... Slick 50 does reduce engine heat and ordinary wear, and our informal tests indicate that it will improve gas mileage by about 2 or 3 miles per gallon."

■ **TUV, the West German equivalent of our Underwriter's Laboratories and foremost automotive testing authority in Europe**, found substantial increases in both gas mileage and horsepower resulting from a reduction in friction.

■ **Nordisk Motor Test Center, Sweden's most advanced motor-testing facility**, reported a 10% to 17% decrease in fuel consumption and attributes to Slick 50, "better sealed engines, performance increases and cleaner exhaust."



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Photo Gary Cook

# WHY JOHNNY CAN'T SHOOT

Chipmunk .22 Leads Children's Crusade Against Gun Illiteracy

by Peter G. Kokalis



Children represent our future. In order for the rights guaranteed to us under the Second Amendment to persevere, we must demonstrate to them that firearms can provide a lifetime of safe and enriching enjoyment and pleasure. The Chipmunk rifle serves as an excellent instrument to perform this all-important rite of passage.

**A**T first glance, the review of a single-shot .22 caliber child's rifle in *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* would appear to be incongruous — at the very least. Surely, amidst the glut of “wondernines,” combat shotguns, military-type rifles and machine guns, SOF, which publishes no more than

a handful of firearms reviews per issue, has more significant priorities in this area than a miniature rifle configured and designed for 6- to 12-year-olds.

No firearms topic, however, is more significant than the alarming erosion of our rights as supposedly protected by the Second Amendment to the Constitution. Make no mistake about it, at the present time we are losing those rights at an almost asymptotic rate. Never before in our history has the Second Amendment been challenged, compromised and subverted to the extent witnessed within the last two years.

The forces assembled against U.S. gun

owners have at their command a powerful group of influential politicians at all levels of government — municipal, state and federal — and the active support of the majority of the media in all its forms. Leering smugly out of the boob tube, Sarah Brady and her HCI cohorts exhibit only supreme confidence in their ultimate victory, as the champagne drooling down their chins so aptly attests. Why shouldn't they? California and New Jersey have fallen. Serious anti-gun campaigns threaten at least a dozen other states.

Virulent anti-gunners in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have and will continue to introduce legislation ban-

ning and restricting firearms of every type. They will never stop doing so. Senator Howard Metzenbaum and Congressman William Hughes also remain confident of their final victory over gun owners. And why shouldn't they as well? Who can or will sweep them out of office? Their arrogance of power is a direct consequence of an incumbent protection plan that has resulted in a lower turnover rate than in the Soviet Politburo.

Every time a new firearms species is attacked, a new and ominous-sounding buzzword is invented. First it was "Saturday night specials." More recently the sinister "assault guns" (a total misnomer for semiautomatic-only military-type rifles, less than one-half of one percent of which have ever been used in the commission of a violent crime). What's next? How about "sniper rifles" for starters. That would include any centerfire rifle to which a scope could be attached.

It may sound farfetched, but how long will it be before *Time Magazine* picks up on that chilling category of weaponry? The media gleefully dances to every tune the gun-phobes play. NBC runs a series on "Guns and Drugs" during the nightly news that has nothing whatever to do with firearms. Ah, but what a catchy title. *U.S. News & World Report* blasts hunting while so-called animal-rights activists declare war on blood sports, disrupting hunters in our nation's fields and forests with a shrill cacophony of air horns, amplified music and hysterical shouting. Destroy hunting and you remove another justification for firearms ownership.

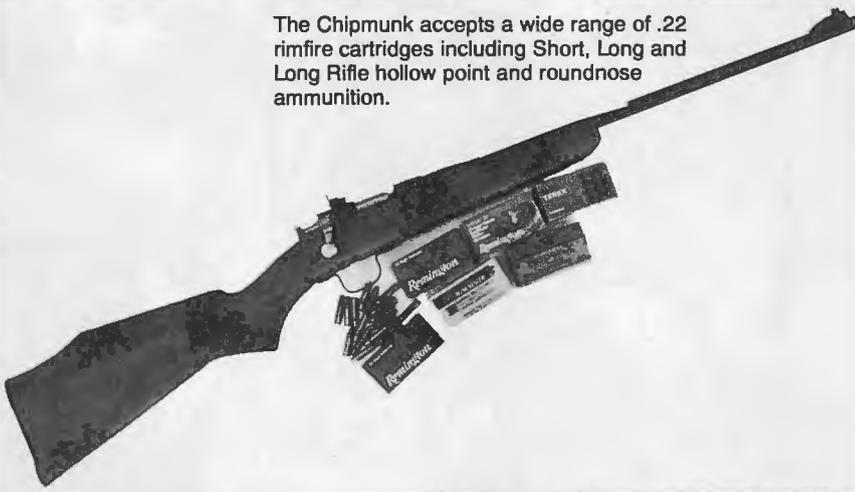
And so it goes. Every day in every way we grow a little weaker. What is the gunowner's usual response to this massive and overwhelming attack on his constitutional rights and his chattel property? Most do absolutely nothing but commiserate with each other (it's called "singing to the choir"). A few write letters to local newspapers and their congressmen. An even smaller number send 10 or 20 bucks to the NRA. Sorry, but if you've personally done little more than this, our plight will remain hopeless and irreversible and the next time you're looking for someone to blame, just look in the mirror.

As our society becomes ever more urbanized, ever fewer are exposed to firearms. The only real source of strength we ever had — a broad base of support from millions of hunters and shooters who were raised as small children with .22 rimfire rifles — is dwindling. With every generation that passes fewer and fewer young people are exposed to shooting pastimes. Their parents know next to nothing about firearms and many fear them. As vast megapolis areas swallow up the countryside, it becomes more and more difficult to find outdoor shooting sites. If we — that is each and every one of us — don't do something besides beating our gums, the ball game is all but over and Brady, Hughes, Metzenbaum and others of

## CHIPMUNK SPECIFICATIONS

**Caliber:** ..... .22 Rimfire — short, long or long rifle.  
**Operation:** ..... Single-shot turnbolt, manual cocking piece at end of bolt.  
**Weight:** ..... Approximately 2 1/2 pounds.  
**Length, overall:** ..... 30 inches.  
**Barrel:** ..... Six-groove, right-hand twist with one turn in 16 inches.  
**Barrel length:** ..... 16 1/8 inches.  
**Sights:** ..... Front: fixed blade on top of a serrated ramp; rear: peep aperture adjustable for windage and elevation zero.  
**Finish:** ..... Salt blued barreled action; bolt group left "in the white."  
**Furniture:** ..... American walnut stock with black plastic buttplate; length of pull: 11 1/2 inches.  
**Price:** ..... \$149.95.  
**Manufacturer:** ..... Oregon Arms, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1104, Medford, OR 97501-0081 — phone: 503-664-5586.  
**T&E Summary:** ..... Safe, reliable and robust. Inexpensive. Acceptable accuracy potential. Designed as a child's rifle and an ideal instrument for the rite of passage required to preserve our heritage as a nation of free men armed. Deserves the widest possible distribution.

The Chipmunk accepts a wide range of .22 rimfire cartridges including Short, Long and Long Rifle hollow point and roundnose ammunition.



their ilk will walk off with all the marbles (your firearms).

The children of our society represent the future, in each and every way, including the preservation and sustenance of the Second Amendment. We must do everything we possibly can to instill in them our belief that free men everywhere in our nation have the unalienable right to keep and bear arms, that guns are not evil and that firearms can provide a lifetime of safe and enriching enjoyment and pleasure. I want each and everyone reading this to purchase at least one Chipmunk rifle. I want each and every one of you to give a Chipmunk rifle to a child — your child, your brother's or sister's child, your neighbor's child or whoever, with the clear proviso that they obtain certified instruction in firearms safety before they use it.

The Chipmunk rifle carries a suggested retail price of \$149.95. If you can't bring yourself to divert that paltry sum from your annual expenditure on firearms and

ammunition, you don't deserve to retain the right to own those firearms — and in a shorter time frame than you think possible, you won't.

For only one-quarter the cost of the next "wondermine" on your wish list, you get a mighty fine little rifle in the Chipmunk. Barrel length is 16 1/8 inches and the barrel tapers from 3/4-inch in diameter at the chamber end to about 1/2-inch at the crowned muzzle. The barrel has a six-groove bore with a right-hand twist of one turn in 16 inches. Combined with an 11 1/2-inch length of pull (the distance from the buttplate to the front/center of the trigger), the Chipmunk's overall length is only 30 inches. (Length of pull on rifles and shotguns designed for adults varies from about 13 to 14 inches.) The weight is approximately 2 1/2 pounds. While the bolt assembly has been left "in the white," the barrel and receiver have been

*Continued on page 76*

# BRITAIN'S AFRICA CORPS

## BMATT Trains Troops in Sub-Saharan High Veldt

Text & Photos by Frank Noble



Lt. Col. Black (SO1 at Nyanga) confers with instructor, Capt. Sawtell, during leadership course.

**I**N December 1979, a cease-fire was implemented in Rhodesia's guerrilla war preparatory to elections that would result in a new leader, Robert Mugabe, for a new nation — Zimbabwe. The cease-fire agreement called for both sides to disengage and be confined to separate locations:

the Security Forces to their existing bases, and ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army) and ZIPRA (Zimbabwe Independent People's Revolutionary Army) to various assembly points. Thousands of guerrillas became the responsibility of a Commonwealth Monitoring Group (CMG) consisting of troops drawn from five countries. They faced the unenviable task of looking after suspicious, sometimes hostile, and potentially dangerous

groups of armed men and women who, after Mugabe's election, became increasingly restless as they considered their role now that the war was over.

To combat the boredom that might easily have led to dissension, British troops of the CMG took it on themselves to conduct a training program for guerrillas in their care. It worked, as Mugabe was quick to notice. He appreciated too well the difficulties that could arise when

merging forces. Because of the tribal differences of ZANLA (who were Shona) and ZIPRA (Ndebele), nobody could realistically expect one to accept terms imposed by the other. Neither could the Patriotic Front be expected to take orders from ex-members of the Security Forces — and vice versa. An integrated army could be achieved only if orchestrated by a neutral force. Britain's Margaret Thatcher agreed to provide such a training team.

Those in the CMG had had ample time to assess the situation, but also to favor one side over the other. Consequently, they were replaced by a batch fresh from the UK who arrived in April 1980, just before independence.

It can be argued that British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT) Zimbabwe owes its origins to the 1977 Anglo-American proposal which called for the formation of a Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) "based on the Liberation Forces" but including "acceptable elements of the Rhodesian Defence Forces." Although at this time the war still had two years to go, it's interesting to note that the West had already formulated plans that excluded those who supported the existing government.

The team began by creating a command structure by the unusual expedient of bestowing instant promotions on those who showed potential. Former guerrillas were now informed that they were to be assigned a rank, depending on experience and ability, from lieutenant colonel to corporal. The cadre was then entrusted with the training of some 350 ZIPRA and ZANLA who were to be the nucleus of the new Zimbabwe National Army. It was a crazy system but this was Africa.

According to the commander of BMATT Zimbabwe, Brigadier Tim Toyne-Sewell, "It seems to have worked. There were problems, such as the trouble in Matabeleland [between rival black groups], and there was one pretty hefty mutiny in '82 which was put down pretty rigorously by the joint command consisting of the commanders of the various factions — Rhodesian, ZIPRA, ZANLA and BMATT... Basically, the integration of the army went ahead successfully from then on."

Explaining the philosophy behind BMATT, the Brigadier continued, "So many countries, unlike ours, impose their systems on those they are training. They don't adapt to the needs of that particular country, and I think that is where we are good.... We've always been able to adapt and also to get on well with the people we are training."

In the early days, BMATT concentrated on producing fighting formations — battalions and brigades — that would be capable of defending Zimbabwe, if required. A decade later, the Zimbabwe National Army comprises six conventional infantry brigades, an airborne-commando brigade and a presidential guard. Although



BMATT adviser at Border Camp where organization recruits are trained.

it has come a long way since 1980, the army still has some growing pains. For instance, the army inherited from the former Security Forces a logistics system for which they were never instructed and therefore never able to understand. To rectify the situation, BMATT has set up a logistics school.

"It is a huge success," maintains Brig. Toyne-Sewell. "We've now trained pretty well every quartermaster in the army and pretty well every motor transport officer, so they understand the systems that they should be implementing."

Another hiccup resulted because of the "instant ranks" structure incorporated 10 years previously. There is now a blockage in the higher echelons, where staff officers have held the same rank since they were first "promoted" in 1980! Due to the oversight, BMATT has established a staff college to cater for up to 50 officers a year.

Today, BMATT Zimbabwe is split into two main groups. Headquarters, a fenced enclosure at KGV Barracks, near Harare, is home for 31 personnel. A similar number are based in the northeast, at

Nyanga. The Nyanga detachment is divided between the Mozambique Training Team (MTT), a joint British/Zimbabwean/Mozambican effort, and the Zimbabwean Battalion Battle School (BBS).

When the BBS was established, British advisers retained control until the ZNA was capable of taking over. Now, only three British officers are directly involved with the day-to-day running of the school. SO1 at Nyanga, Lt. Col. David Black, explained, "We're not here to tell (the ZNA) what to do ... They tell us what they want, and we advise them how to do it ... In '86-'87 we started to back off and act purely as advisers while they took on the training side.

"That's exactly how BMATT should operate: Go in. Set it up. Show them how it works and then withdraw and let them get on with it."

Although BMATT has scaled down field training where the ZNA is concerned, it has increased its commitment to neighboring Mozambique.

In 1983, Mozambique's President Samora Machel was so impressed by

## MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique is a land torn apart by war. The anti-Marxist National Resistance Movement (MNR), popularly known as Renamo, is fighting to create a democratic multi-party state and has virtual control of 80% of the country. The Armed Forces of Mozambique (FAM) occupy the main cities which, for some reason, seem to hold little interest for the guerrillas. Instead, Renamo tends to concentrate its efforts against the routes running east-west across Mozambique. There are four such routes, or corridors.

The Nacala Corridor is served by a railway that stretches from Entre Lagos, 615 kilometers across Mozambique, to the coastal town of Nacala.

The Tete Corridor is a tarred 262-kilometer road that runs from Nyamapanda, on the Zimbabwe border, through Tete to the Malawi border at Zobue.

The road, rail and pipeline systems which constitute the Beira Corridor run more or less parallel for some 300 kilometers, from Manica Province to the city and port of Beira. Power lines, stretching from Chicamba Real Dam, south-east, to Beira are an equally essential part of the system.

Maputo is served by the Limpopo Corridor, a 534-kilometer rail link, beginning at Chicualacuala on the border with Zimbabwe. A surfaced road runs from Maputo as far as Barragem on the Limpopo. From there on, a dirt road continues to Zimbabwe.

The southern end of the Limpopo line, from Chokwe to Maputo, is protected by a Mozambican brigade trained and equipped by BMATT. Its presence serves as a deterrent against Renamo attacks aimed at disrupting a British-funded railway refurbishment program. The remainder of the line north of Chokwe, and the three other corridors, are defended by the FAM, which is supported by the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) — two thirds of which is deployed in Mozambique or on border patrols.

Why are the corridors considered so important? Simply put, they provide Mozambique and its landlocked neighbors with alternatives to South African transport routes. Faced with the choice between relying on the port facilities at Durban or Beira, it makes economic sense for a country like Zimbabwe to opt for the shorter routes through Mozambique.

Realizing the potential of such a system, foreign governments and investors are pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into Mozambique. British involvement includes keeping the corridors open — by providing military assistance and training for the ZNA and the Mozambican army — short term strategy which, no doubt, will reap dividends for the future.

And, after all, isn't that what Western aid to Africa is really all about?

— F.N.

bican army. This was not an entirely satisfactory arrangement, however. So, BMATT began to train rifle companies that would remain together after being deployed across the border.

In March 1989, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher arrived in Zimbabwe and met with President Robert Mugabe and the late Samora Machel's successor, Joachim Chissano. The Mozambican leader won a great deal of support from Mrs. Thatcher, who agreed not only to double company training, but also to fund the building of a training center specifically for the Mozambique training program.

The new Border Camp was officially opened just over a year later, in June 1990. At peak periods, the place bristles with activity as Mozambican recruits are put through their paces. The MTT itself is still a relatively small affair, with the British contributing 10 officers and 10 senior



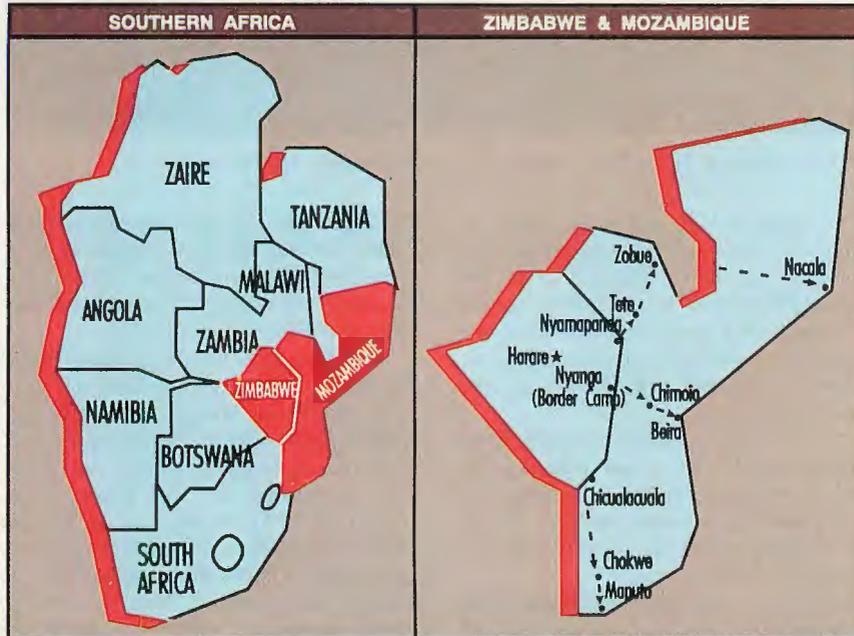
Tests being conducted in early phases of leadership training.

NCOs organized into two teams, and eight personnel for a support group and an HQ. The Mozambican army provides interpreters both for the British and the Zimbabwean instructors, for all lessons have to be translated into Portuguese, the language of Mozambique. The 14 ZNA instructors are drawn from the nearby Battalion Battle School. Most are former guerrillas or ex-members of the Rhodesian Security Forces whose trade was learned the hard way.

"They've all been operating down in Mozambique. They know the country. They know the bush," Lt. Col. Black said.

Such experience, combined with British training expertise, has developed into a unique partnership tailored to the requirements of Mozambique's military.

Those selected for training are recruited from all 10 provinces of Mozambique. After being gathered at Chimoio, the nervous youngsters are issued with uniforms and given a week's basic drill before being transported to the border, where they are handed over to the MTT. The 60 or so Mozambicans are accompanied by their future company officers, all graduates of the BMATT officer course. Upon arrival, the five officers are taken aside for refresher training. The recruits are subjected to a medical examination and the very young — some may be only 14 or 15 years of age — weeded out. The remainder go straight into four weeks of basic recruit



Map shows locations of Border Camp near Nyanga in Zimbabwe and four disputed corridors through Mozambique.

BMATT's efforts in Zimbabwe that he requested similar assistance for his own forces. Initially, FAM (Armed Forces of Mozambique) was allocated places at British military institutions, including Sandhurst. Within three years, though, a decision was reached to set up training facilities in Africa. But starting such a

project in war-torn Mozambique would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible. Robert Mugabe therefore agreed to let his old ally use Zimbabwe as a base.

To begin with, the British at Nyanga trained some 300 officers who were subsequently dispersed throughout the Mozam-

training, similar to that conducted by any Western army. At the end of the first month, the training team selects the company NCOs according to individual merit. For example, the man who proves himself a natural scrounger and who always manages to keep his kit in order will probably end up as company quartermaster. The biggest, most rambunctious, is a natural candidate for sergeant major. These people are put through an NCO's course. At the same time, potential signallers, medics and cooks are given a crash course according to their respective skills.

The start of week seven finds everybody together as a company for the first time. Now, the men are trained, first at section (squad), then platoon and, finally, at company level. The final weeks are spent in the bush, where the staff draw back in order to give the recruits the confidence to operate as a company. During this period, the emphasis is on physical conditioning and battle simulation — the latter conducted using live overhead fire.

At the end of 16 weeks, the company passes out and is deployed across the border. As a parting gift, the troops are fully kitted out with British equipment. Apart from weapons and ammunition, everything else, from DPM (camouflage) uniforms, to items such as binoculars, compasses and wristwatches, and even radio sets, is paid for by the good old — and largely unsuspecting — British taxpayer.

By September 1990, BMATT had supplied Mozambique with three trained battalions, a brigade headquarters and logisticians — in effect, a brigade.

Lieutenant Colonel Black told me that a recent decision has been made to expand the brigade by a fourth, specialist, company. It is to include a reconnaissance element for long range patrolling outward from the Chokwe-Maputo railway line which the brigade defends against Renamo attack.

The first recce course commenced in August 1990. The 16-week program revises basic infantry skills, particularly patrolling, and includes instruction in medical procedures, signals and tracking. It also teaches survival, which was the stage reached during the period of my visit.

The survival phase takes place on the 450 square kilometer training area near Border Camp. To get there, we took Lt. Col. Black's Land-Rover as far as we could before continuing on foot. Another officer, Captain Sawtell, led the way across terrain that was fairly typical of northeast Zimbabwe, where the relatively flat ground is dotted with the ubiquitous msasa tree and an occasional thorny acacia. The usually lush undergrowth was much depleted, having been burned off by bush fires, and the scent of wood smoke hung heavily in the air. It was a distinctive, not unpleasant aroma, peculiar to Africa.

Following a long walk, we reached a



Capt. Hunati of the ZNA Intelligence Corps.

clearing where a group of Africans, incongruous in British DPMs, were being addressed by a British army sergeant. A black officer translated his words for the benefit of the recruits, who listened as it was explained how to catch small game with traps and snares. Afterwards, the troops demonstrated their proficiency by putting together several examples from twigs and bits of wire. Captain Sawtell pointed out that many of those on the course came from an agricultural background and had a natural flare for the outdoor life. A few, though, had lived in Maputo and Beira and therefore lacked such bush skills. The lesson was largely for their benefit.

Captain Sawtell then led us toward another group busily applying the finishing touches to shelters, sturdily constructed from twigs and other natural materials. Nearby, a third group paid close

attention as a ZNA instructor delivered a lecture on edible roots and fruits.

All good stuff, but what was learned at Nyanga had to be applied under active service conditions. Did such training count for much in Mozambique? Those on the recce course were graduates of company training at Nyanga, seasoned troops who had already faced Renamo in combat. What did they think?

"Does everybody feel that their training here is useful for conditions across the border?" I asked.

An interpreter put the question to the men. Their reply, which needs no translation, was a unanimous and resounding "Si!"

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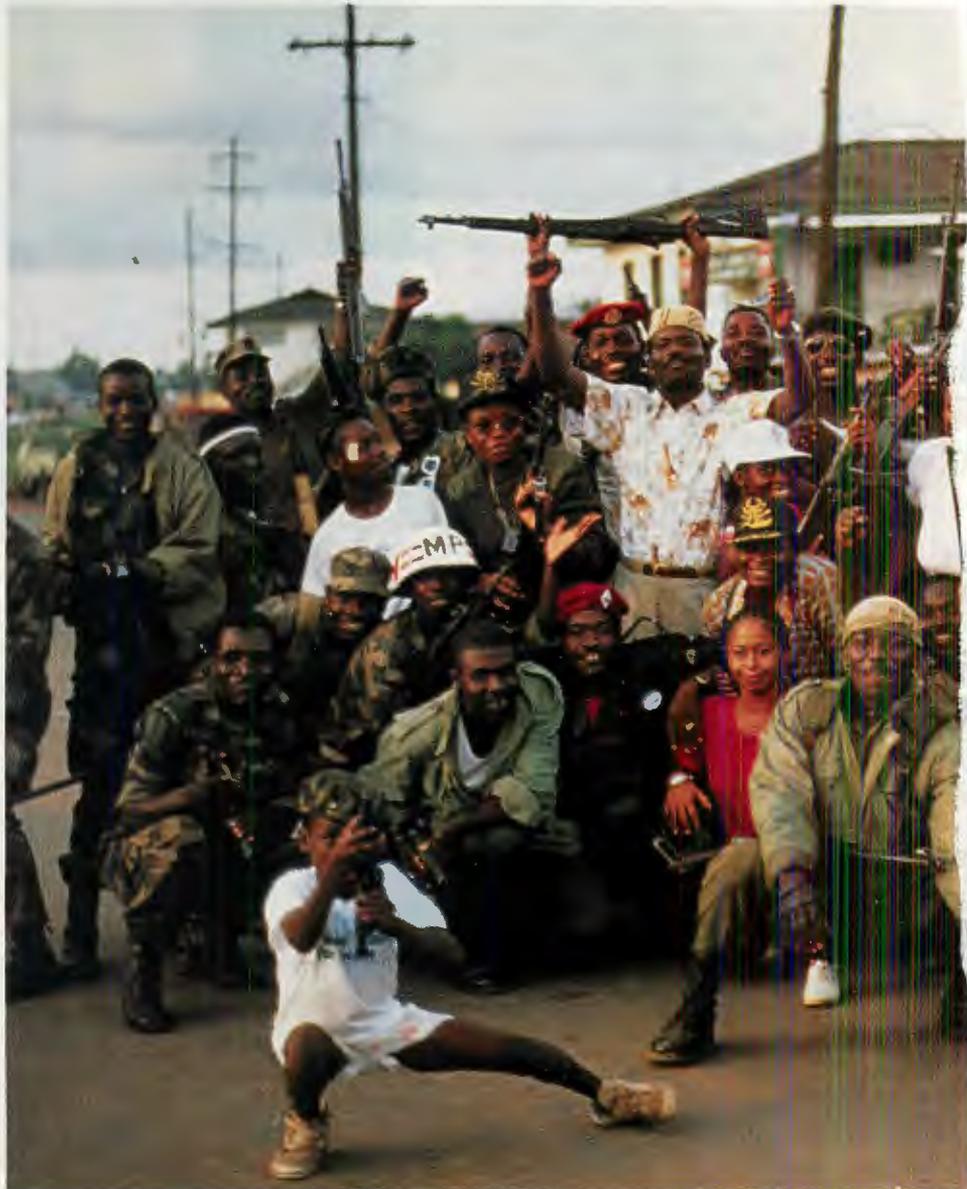
# RAP REVOLUTION AND THE PR OF DARKNE

## Year Zero Descends on Bloody

Text & Photos by John Jameson

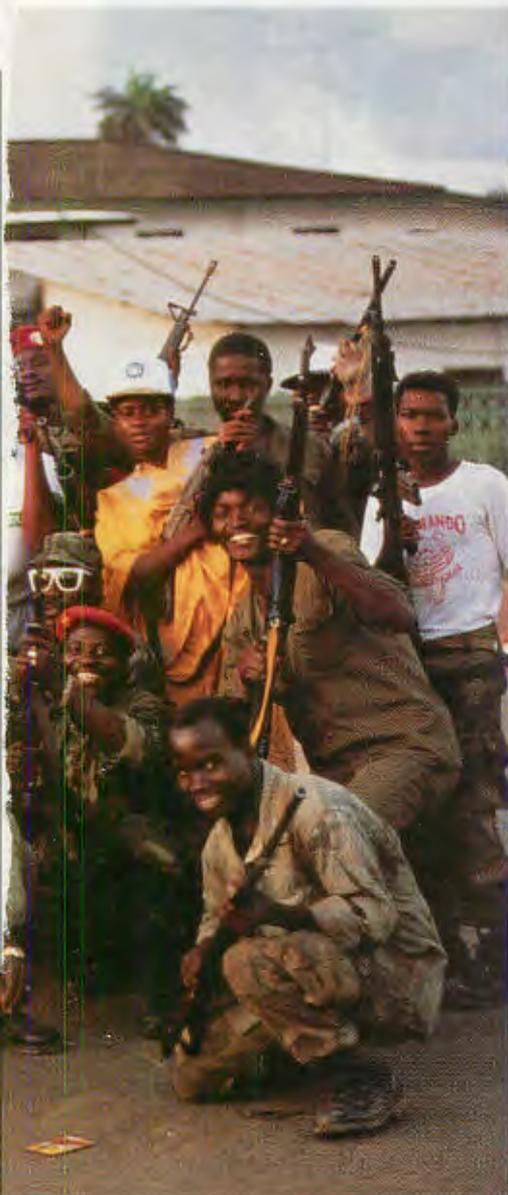


In Liberia, only the bizarre can be considered normal. A day in the life of the country includes everything from UZI-toting ex-prostitute bodyguards to kids selling skulls to buy food. Photos here are mostly of Prince's men, who commonly wear women's dresses and wigs as they go about their business of dragging Liberia into the dark ages.



# INCE SS

## Liberia



The latest struggle for power in Liberia has turned what was already a violent country into one where atrocities are as common as flies feeding on murdered Monrovia civilians. For more on the tribes involved, their principal players and everyday life in the country, see "Flashpoint Liberia" in SOF's October 1990 issue.

"**C**OMMANDO!" the half-crazed adolescent guard shrieked in my face. I had been primed, but hardly expected to be shouting back, trying to keep a straight face, "Brave ... Strong ... Intelligent." This was the formula for getting into Prince Johnson's "executive mansion" on the outskirts of the Liberian capital, Monrovia. But it got me in.

"Welcome to Liberia," Prince Johnson, field marshal and acting president of war-torn Liberia, said. Taking a cold can of Budweiser from his desktop fridge, he stretched out a golden knuckled hand and with a wide, toothy grin said, "Here, come

and have a beer."

This was my bizarre introduction to one of the latest of Africa's bloody civil wars. Prince Johnson was the leader of the INPFL (Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia), or, as he jokingly put it, "I Need Prince For Liberia." At his elbow played a video of him crooning out the tune, "By the Rivers of Babylon," his features beaming. The mansion seemed like a mad combination of a Mercedes dealership (vehicles "acquired" from the late president) and a freak show, with guerrilla fighters in wigs, bouncing-bimbo presidential bodyguards, UZI-toting 10-year-olds and chained baboons about.

Prince Johnson's "rap" revolution resembled a Hollywood B-type horror film written by a scriptwriter on acid. Only this movie was too frighteningly real.

Liberia was established by American philanthropists in the last century as a black republic for freed slaves, pledged to liberty and progress. Instead, it quickly degenerated into a nationwide plantation, ruled over by the former slaves who became Americo-Liberian landowners. It was not until Master Sergeant Samuel Doe overthrew the Americo-Liberian ruling families in 1980, resulting in their beachside executions, that indigenous Liberians ruled for the first time. But Doe's rule was even worse, dragging Liberia back to the heart of Africa's darkness. Tribal killings became commonplace.

Having rid the country of the former president and part-time cannibal, Samuel Doe, Prince became the ruler of Monrovia by grace of the West African peace keeping force, ECOMOG. Already, however, he has found himself fighting against his erstwhile comrade Charles Taylor in a bitter struggle for power.

### Prince Paints the Town Red

Prince's patrol of the Monrovia suburbs is now a nightly ritual, regularly ending in death. It is a chance for him to get away from his mansion and the war by seeking adulation from the masses — along with the satisfying possibility of blowing someone away.

I was invited to accompany the presidential entourage as it set out in a cavalcade of jeeps and pick-ups, bristling with machine guns and automatic rifles. A case of Bud was loaded onto Prince's wagon. We barely got beyond the gates, when he jumped out and swapped vehicles with his heavy bevy of Liberian beauties — his personal bodyguards, who travel in the jeep behind. Why? His tape deck had jammed.

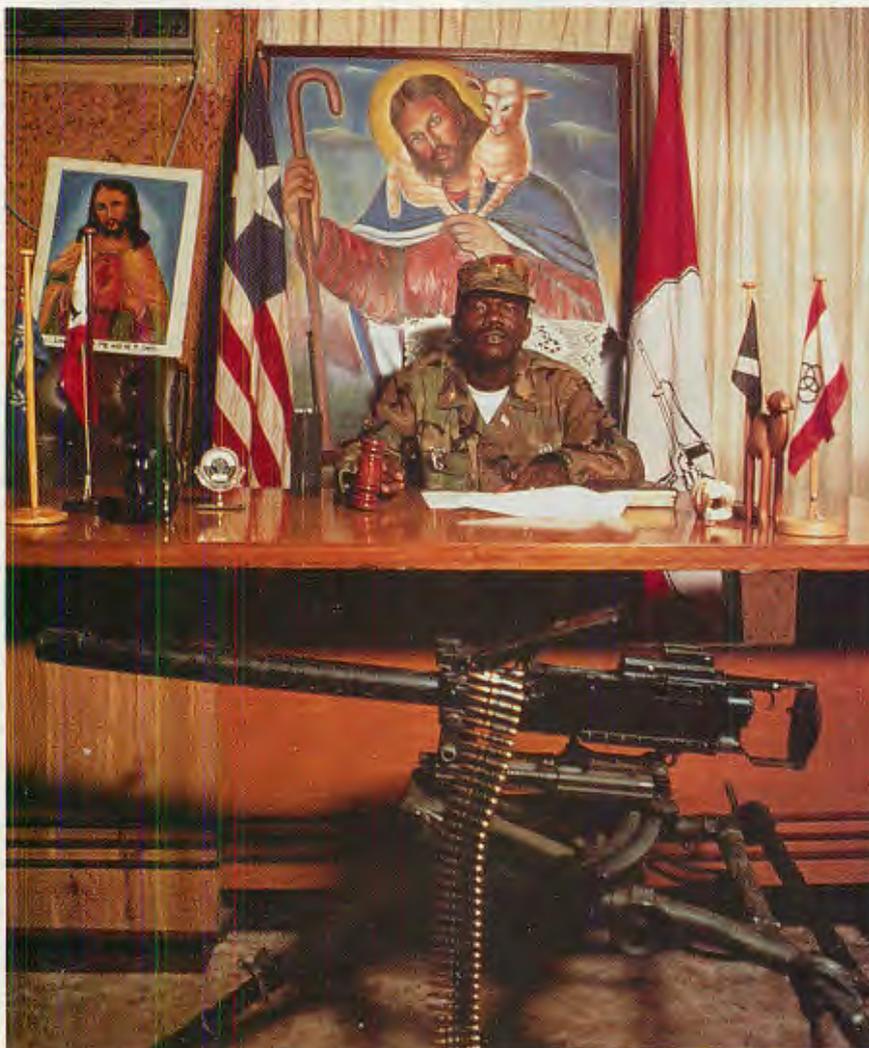
Another stop, and the field marshal relieved himself before inspecting men at one of his checkpoints. A car decked in the camouflage used by Charles Taylor — his rival — was there with the driver's door open, engine running. "Where de driver?" he asked ... (Silence) ... "Who let him go?"

Tension was in the air, and we all felt





ABOVE: Prince poses with Palestinian sidekick and Amal militia bodyguard from Beirut. Despite having attended college in Libya in 1987, Prince claims he has no connection with Khadaffi.



LEFT: The Prince of Darkness sits in the "executive mansion," headquarters of his rap revolution, on the outskirts of Monrovia. The caption under the picture of Christ reads, "Look Unto Me and Ye Will Be Saved."

the field marshal's anger. His harridans titter with anticipation, chanting, "He's going to kill someone tonight." I felt as if I were accompanying a one-man death squad.

We headed down the main drag into town, passing crowds desperately searching for food. More than 200,000 starving refugees have joined the already famished population of Monrovia. With the fear of an imminent outbreak of cholera and scores dying each day from malnutrition, only carrion-eating birds prosper. "Even mosquitoes starve here," a doctor said, bitter at the lack of aid.

An apathetic cheer greeted Prince's road show. Another empty Bud flew out the window, followed by an astute observation from a femme fatale, "Man, they're gonna think we're just a load of boozers."

At a school, hungry people surged forward to listen to Prince as he explained that the shortage of food was the fault of the international community for allowing Liberia to suffer. A spindly youth approached. "Please sir, can you give us some spaghetti?" Prince had done his PR for the evening, and was tired of their

plight. "Watch it, or I'll spaghetti you," he brutally replied.

We had moved only a few yards when a curvaceous, big-bottomed girl caught his eye. Prince took another step, eyeing the local talent, though this time he refused on second inspection. The girl was lucky, unaware that she had nearly "volunteered" to join the ranks of his presidential bodyguards.

Further on, he saw one of his undercover boys driving a new car. Again the entourage was brought to an abrupt halt. Prince got out, having already decided that the man was guilty of looting. The driver tried desperately to explain, imploring him, "Please sir. Pleease." Prince wasn't interested, ordering his men to seize the cowering man, who was dragged before the headlights of his car. Prince picked up a nickel-plated magnum revolver. With a bright flash and a mighty roar, the gun fired. But Prince missed his target, and the driver bolted for the darkness — a totally natural reaction if you ask me — but to everyone else it confirmed his guilt.

What followed was like some primal drag hunt, with jeeps wheeled off the road and into the bush to hunt the guy down. But the African bush was not big enough to hide him from Prince's baying bloodhounds. In a short time, he was brought back struggling and whimpering, a livid red gash on his head.

"I can't buy a life," Prince shouts, "but I sure can take a life." His men threw the driver, now as good as dead, into the back of a jeep to be dealt with later. As we drove back to the base camp, his witches were cackling with sickening, ghoulish delight.

"It really pisses him off when our boys try and loot. You know, Samuel Doe died in our bathroom," one of them said.

"And it only takes one bullet for one man," a commando said, referring to Prince's Machiavellian form of discipline. As the field marshal went by, the commando quickly hid a can of Bud pilfered from the Prince's stock. "Oh, we're not afraid of him," he continued, "but you've gotta accord him the respect, as he is a field marshal."

Prince was often on the rampage, dealing out his singularly rough "justice" to those unlucky enough to cross his path — a horrifying spectacle of man's inner cruelty, bent on blood. I had no illusions when a former nurse, recently dragooned into Prince's team of bodyguards said, "Everyone is afraid of him. You can never tell what mood he's in." For her, survival meant pleasing Prince. "I tell you, my friend, he'll kill you if he wants to." I believed her.

It was evident that all of Prince's men were afraid of his mercurial moods. I certainly was — he had killed one foreigner just for giving one of his "wives" a lift. His senior officers and even his deputy knew that his justice was summary and capricious, always final, and very much dependent on how many Buds

he has popped.

### A Parade Fit for a Prince

Back at base, Prince's anger was assuaged with a soothing, cold can of beer. "Tomorrow, my men want to make me a three-star general," he said, beaming with drunken delight at the thought of further aggrandizement. This would be just another addition to his legion of meaningless titles. He lit a fat cigar, having enjoyed the evening so far. Prince likes killing and blood cools his temper.

He looked across at his chief of staff, known colloquially as "Mr. Hard Ass," and noticed he was wearing a cap with four stars. His jaw dropped. This will not do. No one upstages Prince; people "must accord him the respect." "In fact," he stammered, "they are going to make me a five-star general."

But he wanted the evening to end on an historic note, as his now-usurped and out-starred chief of staff barely bothered to stifle a bored yawn. "Mr. Hard Ass" has heard it all before. "Come here tomorrow" said Prince, unaware that as a field marshal, he was already a five-star general. "As tomorrow I suspend the constitution and declare my military government."

The next morning, a sultry hungover air permeated the camp. It did not auger well for Prince's parade, as the ground was awash from rain and was a muddy quagmire. A report came in of an ambush along a road that was supposedly under Prince's control. He emerged, looking decidedly jaded, wearing ammunition pouches with sartorially matching, dangling grenades. He started yelling into his walkie-talkie, demanding reports from equally confused commanders: "Hullo Tango. Hullo Tango. This is Sunshine. This is Sunshine! ... Emergency over ... What the hell's happenin' over dere?"

A voice replied over the mushy static, calling for reinforcements. Espying three would-be shirkers slinking off into the woods, Prince raised his Kalashnikov in their direction. "They're gonna die," one of his Beirut bodyguards wryly commented. But they were spared, only to be sent to the front singing out Prince's war chant:

*"Sounds of music,  
sounds of guns.*

*Sounds of bazookas,  
sounds of reggae."*

"Here, you can go with them," Prince said, handing me a Kalashnikov with three unwieldy magazines taped together. He promised he would join me at the front in a while. Having dispatched me and his men to the front, the field marshal retired to his office for some hair of the dog, his mouth parched and promotion forgotten.

Karim, my Amal driver, was not impressed. "He won't come," he snorted, as five youths in wigs clambered into the back of a Chevy pickup. Their pop-gun Beretta SMGs were hardly reassuring as

we careened down the muddy track. It was along this road that Charles Taylor's boys had "revved up" Prince Johnson's boys.

"Be ready now," Karim warned, as we bounced by two shot-up jeeps. Karim had barely finished speaking when a burst of automatic weapons fire came from the undergrowth, 100 meters from the road. Karim shifted down and accelerated out of the corner. With hardly a chance to return fire, we were soon gone. Karim was a veteran of many battles and was scornful of the Liberian rebels. "They're no good," he said.

"Mr. Hard Ass" had reached Mount Barclay with his "spearhead platoon," overcoming only minor resistance. Taylor's men had melted back into the bush, leaving the INPFL strung out along the road with tenuous control at best. The fighting between the two groups has resulted in few casualties on either side. With battle lines changing daily, it is the civilians who are taking the brunt, and both sides are suspicious of fifth columnists.

Karim laughed when I asked when Prince was going to join us. The fighting had not been tough, the only casualties being civilians killed by Taylor's men some weeks before. The plan was to wait for the 1st Battalion Nigerian Airborne to link up with them.

Back at base, Prince was going over finances with his Lebanese "tax collector," Mustaffa, and his shrew of a German wife. They had convinced Prince that as he was now Monrovia's ruler, he could tax the profiting Lebanese merchants to finance his revolution. Mustaffa would turn up regularly with suitcases full of worthless Liberian dollars. What Prince didn't seem to realize was that all transactions were being made in Uncle Sam's bucks, not Liberian.

### I Stand for Democracy

Hearing that we had run into a spot of bother in the Chevy, Prince launched into a personal dissertation on his quarrel with Taylor. "I went to Libya in 1987 with Charles Taylor and 167 men, all Gio and Mano tribesmen. I was studying Khadafi's green book at Fatah University. Certain portions were fine for me and I took what I wanted and rejected what I didn't want. I have no connection with Libya now ... That's why I preach democracy and stand for democracy.

"I turned up on the [Ivory Coast] border to find Taylor had not sent the arms he promised. *Life or Death. No retreat, no surrender.* This is where I got those words from. So with eight men and a borrowed cutlass and shotgun, we arrested the officer of an army detachment on last year's Christmas Eve. He only gave us his arms under pressure, so we killed him and took over the ammo dump. From that my revolution started.

"We have been fighting a serious war against Taylor since then. The only solu-



## CHARLES TAYLOR, I PRESUME

Thankfully there was no other road traffic, as bends were taken at speed, with the car slithering round almost side-on, kicking up great sheets of mud and gravel. At this reckless pace, like demented rally drivers, we raced along the muddy jungle roads threading through the mist-shrouded shoulders of the Nimba mountains on our way to Monrovia, capital of Liberia. In Liberia one felt that bad things could happen at any point, and one's foot would press a little harder on the accelerator.

All traffic within National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) lines drove at full tilt with hazard lights flashing and red flags (the NPFL color) fluttering from wing mirrors. In our case, this was a red sock donated by another journalist at the border.

Checkpoints did nothing to alleviate our concerns, embellished as they were with grinning human skulls. They were also poorly sited, invariably positioned after a sharp bend, which allowed barely enough time to slam on the brakes. Some checkpoints were no more than a length of string across the road, others had stout barriers of wooden poles. The only aid in spotting them were the ubiquitous NPFL red rags. One set of journalists had the windscreen of their hired car destroyed when, in the pitch black of a jungle night, they drove straight into a wooden pole suspended above the road.

Sudden arrivals like this naturally invoked alarm among the sleeping guards. Some ran off and had to be coaxed back to open the barricade with offers of cigarettes. Such faint-hearted road guardians, however, were infinitely preferable to the more martially inclined. These would spring from the surrounding underbrush brandishing a rusted assortment of antiquated shotguns or homemade rifles held together by layers of tightly wound bicycle inner tubes. They inevitably screamed

hysterically for you to get out of the car and were twice as hysterical when you complied.

After running a few of these checkpoints, however, it was apparent that most of those in the NPFL were more scared of us than we were of them ... not to say that an armed mob waving shotguns and sharp implements under our noses didn't warrant some respect. They wore no discernible military uniforms, most being clothed in rags, indicative of the poverty from which the bulk of them were drawn.

For the rigors of the trip, journalists entering Liberia usually hired four-wheel drive jeeps in neighboring Ivory Coast. For my trip, suffering the constraints of a much tighter budget, I was forced to settle on something more modest. Small, blue, and Japanese, it was the sort of car generally employed by elderly matrons for popping round to the shops.

The monsoon rains, expected at any moment, would soon turn the earthen roads into a quagmire of mud. My brief was to find and interview NPFL leader Charles Taylor and, with the real concern of being stranded by the rains, I was in a race against the weather. There was little time to admire the scenery — dense jungle towering on either side of the road like the walls of a green canyon.

A halt was necessary in Kakata for clearance from G-2, the Gestapo-like security section that controls the main NPFL checkpoints "processing" the thousands of starving refugees fleeing Monrovia. It didn't take long at one of these G-2 checkpoints to become aware of the chilling reality behind the "processing."

Men, women and children were arbitrarily selected from the crowds for "questioning" on suspicion of "spying." G-2 acted as judge, jury and executioner. There were no investigations; suspicion was tantamount

to guilt, and the only sentence meted out was death. When I was there, the average time between detention and execution was 10 minutes.

Every NPFL checkpoint summarily executed people. Each had a favorite execution ground, detectable by a sickening smell long before actually reaching it. The majority of bodies had arms securely bound at the elbows before they were killed. Most had been shot, but throat-cutting and stabbing victims were also in ample evidence.

Initially, journalists with the NPFL forces were quartered in Harbel, at the former guest house of the Firestone rubber plantation. They were eventually thrown out to fend for themselves, as the NPFL also kept several high-ranking Doe government prisoners there. The prisoners were secreted in locked rooms so the inconvenience of journalist witnesses could be avoided when their inevitable torture began.

NPFL frontline soldiers were little better than the ragged examples encountered at jungle checkpoints. The principal difference lay in better quality clothing — the result of extensive looting, although, inexplicably, many of them wore wigs and women's clothing. The most abundant firearm was the World War II-vintage Soviet 7.62x25mm PPS 43 SMG. American M1 Garands were in evidence, along with an assortment of AK-47s, many of Romanian origin. Green, wooden ammunition boxes bore neat black stencilling proclaiming their place of origin: Libya.

Militarily, the NPFL was a joke. After the death of its original military strategist, Elmer Johnson, it lost all momentum. Each day, NPFL troops advanced a few hundred meters over a no-man's-land of shattered streets on the periphery of Monrovia, then retreated at night, only to cover the same



FAR LEFT: When not killing someone to relax, Prince enjoys jamming with friends to the tune of "By the Rivers of Babylon."

LEFT: The big video hit at INPFL headquarters is the slow execution of Samuel Doe, Liberia's former president. Doe lost his ears, his fingers, his hair — even his *juju* cord.

tion of Taylor is violence. The war is now over ... Give democracy a chance ..."

Speaking with the ranting rhythm of reggae, Prince got caught up in conflicting clichés. "The solution to modern day problem is violence: no peace or negotiation in Liberia right now. Peace has failed. The solution is to fight Taylor and fuck him up, and not call him to peace negotiations. Any man who invite Taylor and me to the peace table — I will kill Taylor on that table. I want the whole world to know this. If they surrender, I will give them clemency, but I will see that we safety them.

"If the people want me for president I will put the uniform down. The voice of the people is the voice of God, and I can't

ground the next day. To describe their military discipline as lax would be generous in the extreme. A few NPFL diehards led the rest of the rabble, whipping up courage by chanting anti-Doe slogans and firing into the sky. I saw more real effort, however, in the plundering and execution of civilians.

In the disorganized forays against the enemy which I accompanied, NPFL shooting was wild and totally blind. Seeing them killed or wounded from their own fire was not uncommon. The prevalent approach seemed to be to use all ammunition as fast as possible (preferably well beyond range of the enemy), then head for home as soon as it was expended. Clashes with the enemy came about more by accident than plan.

Not being renowned for leading from the front (preferring others to undergo the risks of actual battle), there was no chance of finding Taylor on the front lines. He was to be found safely back at the Firestone mansion in Harbel (not to be confused with ex-President Doe's executive mansion in Monrovia).

The security measures surrounding Taylor were formidable, and arranging an interview proved difficult. Finally I could see no alternative but to try to bluff my way in to see him.

Guards at the first checkpoint allowed me to pass just as some of Taylor's "special commando" bodyguards came thundering down the road in a beat-up bus. Barring the road, they physically assaulted the car, kicking it and striking it with assault rifles whilst screaming at me to reverse. This request would have been difficult to carry out, as checkpoint personnel were lying in the mud behind my rear wheels being flayed with belts by their colleagues. This insane display was put on by Taylor's Libyan-trained elite.

The NPFL invasion began with this small force, funded and trained in Libya, then led across the Ivory Coast border by Elmer Johnson. They were less prepared than originally planned, as Taylor, then placed in command of logistics, failed to deliver promised arms.

Accounting for missing funds has become a habit for Taylor. When a minister in the Doe government, he once served time in a U.S. jail awaiting extradition back to Liberia. Seems he needed to answer a million dollar embezzlement charge involving the purchase of nonexistent bulldozers. He escaped and fled to Libya, preferring to join the fledgling NPFL rather than face the consequences awaiting him at home. As he lacked military talent, Taylor was assigned a more familiar political role, which he was able to use to usurp power for himself.

The hardcore of the NPFL are not Liberians, but a motley collection of black African mercenaries in whom Taylor places more trust than his own Liberian nationals. This stems from a deep-rooted paranoia that Liberians might turn on him. As a result, he surrounds himself with the "special commando," a title applied to anyone who has undergone Libyan training — endowing them with an assumed expertise which is wholly unwarranted.

Like his mentor, Khadaffi, Taylor has also established an Amazonian personal bodyguard. His wife and sister dress in tight-fitting cammies with matching handbags, high heels and pistol holsters. Reeking of perfume and bristling with sidearms and assault rifles, they hover around Taylor in a comic parody of the "commando" bodyguard.

The death of Elmer Johnson, ex-U.S. Marine and, until his death, the NPFL's charismatic chief strategist and military leader, probably was not the result of an

ambush by President Doe's soldiers. Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that it was Taylor who ordered Elmer Johnson eliminated, as he was a threat to his own position. Not long after this, Prince Johnson broke away to establish his own force when he suspected he was next for the chop.

After a week of dispatching notes via everyone I met, an interview was finally granted. With some reservations about my reception, I set out once more to drive up to the mansion house. This time, guards at the first checkpoint clustered around my car to display livid weals and deep cuts inflicted by belt whipping, refusing to allow passage. Eventually, suitable authority was found to escort me through the five checkpoints on the way up the hill. At the last, the guard was dressed somewhat formally in black tails; for all the world, a butler with an assault rifle!

Charles Taylor, "President Taylor," as he insists on being called (somewhat prematurely given that he has failed to secure the capital and is losing ground), strutted down the main staircase to meet me. Dressed in a tight-fitting white jumpsuit which bulged uncomfortably around the waist, his partiality for sticky pastries was evident.

It was hard to decide whether Taylor actually believed what he said, or seriously expected anyone else to. It was, however, quickly apparent that he was not the man to rescue Liberia from sinking ever deeper into civil war or the NPFL from splintering into increasingly rival factions. According to Taylor, U.S. Marines were so afraid of the NPFL they would not dare attempt any landings. This was said the day before they made several heliborne landings to evacu-

*Continued on page 84*

say no. Who saved them in firs' place? I saved them. The other people ... they run away people."

### Snuff Video

"Here, you can watch Doe die," Prince said, grinning with pride as he handed me a VHS copy of the snuff movie showing the former president's last hours. It was in Prince's office where the final scene was played out. Like a Shakespearian tragedy, the vanquished dictator sat in his undershorts, bleeding from bullet wounds, at the feet of the victorious Prince. A doe-eyed picture of Jesus Christ stared down at the pathetic sight as Doe squealed for fraternal mercy. The caption under Christ' read, "Look Unto Me and Ye Will Be Saved."

Doe beseeched for the love of the Almighty, but only Prince was listening. "Cut his ears off," Prince said, sipping from a can of Bud. No one moved at first, for they believed Doe, their president, possessed magical powers. Angry that his order was going unheeded, Prince then shouted, "I say, cut his ears. Cut the man's ears!"

Later that evening Doe's ears were given back to him, cooked, and he was forced to eat them with rice. His fingers were then removed, along with his hair, which was thought to be a source of his magical powers. He was then left to bleed to death in the girls' bathroom.

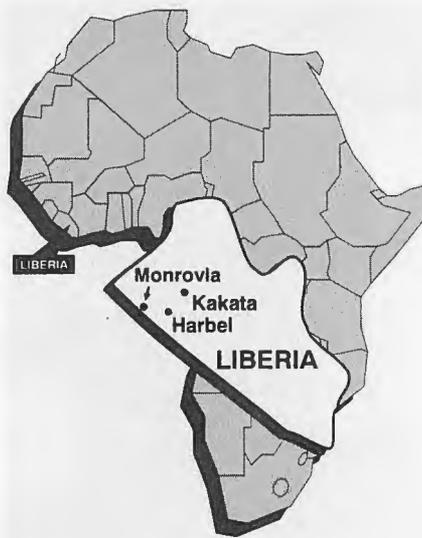
"It was my gun that surrender Doe," Prince said. Afraid that the president's dead body was still capable of invoking African magic, however, he then had Doe's *juju* cord removed. "But I could never untie Doe, because he was a man who believed in African science — that he can disappear and nothin' can happen to him. So why I go and untie Doe and Doe disappear now? So I could never untie Doe.

"I question Doe, 'What happen the Liberian economy?' I say, 'Where de money?' He say, 'All I got is \$500 in my bank.' Do you believe that? Jus' \$500. He were never a fair man. So now Doe dead."

If nothing else, Prince will be remembered for ridding Liberia of Samuel Doe. The manner of the execution and the way he now rules, however, has left people worrying whether Prince is another Doe. "Heal the wounds, I say, but the man who frustrates me, I will kill," he said.

### In the Wake of Samuel Doe

Doe's Liberian legacy is everywhere to be seen, especially in Monrovia, where the most horrific testament still stands. You can smell St. Peter's Lutheran church before you see it. It was here that 35 men from Doe's death squad massacred 600 mainly Gio and Mano men, women and children who had sought sanctuary from Doe's Krahn troops. The times for church services are still pinned to the door, which is held ajar by what at first appears to be a pile of tattered and stained children's clothes. It is only the protruding bone that



intimates that this pile of clothes was once a little girl.

Inside, beneath the bullet-splintered pews, lie the decomposing bodies of the last congregation. Numbers of the hymns last sung are still on the wall. The only sound now disturbing the eerie blue silence is the angry buzz of flies going about their putrid business.

After being herded inside, the group was gunned down in an orgiastic frenzy of tribal hatred that marked the 10 bloody years of Doe's rule. When the gunmen ran out of ammunition, they drew their machetes and butchered the survivors.

At the altar, crumpled bodies lie like rag dolls in lazy and terrible profusion, decapitated heads like blasphemous human chalices of some satanic sacrificial offering. The church has become a charnel house of spent cartridges and putrefying human flesh.

At the nearby Spriggs-Payne airport, sun-bleached bones are all that remain of 250 medical students, massacred by Doe's gunmen at the end of July. A skull with a bullet-shattered temple lies midst its own bones. A delicately embroidered dress still covers those of a female student, her arm outstretched clutching house keys. On the airport bulletin board is a fly blown copy of a Doe government newspaper, bold type headline reading, "Gov't Condemns Killings."

In downtown Monrovia, Doe's victims lie uncollected in the streets and burned-out shells of torched houses. The British Embassy keeps its patio doors closed from the stench of other unfortunate victims, left to rot on the beach.

One 10-year-old child was carrying a skull around in a sack, trying to sell it for \$10 to one of the few foreigners left in the city. The day after Doe's death, kids appeared selling "Doe ears" at a dollar an ear. Scavenging for food has become the only occupation left for Monrovia. There are no unlooted shops left, and the only source of supply is from a spiralling black market run by shady Lebanese.

The following morning, the field marshal was in an upbeat mood. With his court *kapellmeister*, a Jimi Hendrix look-alike and self-styled "leader of mysticians," Prince launched into "By the Rivers of Babylon." Accompanied by electric keyboards and tom-toms, his bodyguards mopped his brow in time with the music.

A report of another ambush came in, the funky field marshal never missing a beat. He continued to strum his guitar, ordering his men to, "Counter ... Attack ... with ... maximum ... response ... No retreat ... No surrender ... Death ... before ... dishonor ..." Meanwhile, the band grooved on with a new number:

"I don't know why Jesus loves me,  
but he does!

He doesn't want me to be president,  
and I don't know why."

The jam session over, Prince had an announcement for the whole world. "I hereby suspend the constitution and proclaim myself acting president. This decree shall take immediate effect upon the signature of the field marshal and acting president." Prince is a stickler for legal formalities.

He handed me the original, signed copy of his announcement and, before departing, said, "You know I'm a polygamist. So when a Liberian says he's going out for a walk with his girlfriends, you don't want to delay him. I need rest. Even steel can get rust."

Nigerian and Ghanaian troops are now spearheading a combined West African force to keep the "peace." Their initial efforts were best illustrated by their leaflets, calling on Liberians to "bury the hatchet in the pursuit of peace." As if enough blood had not been spilled, they allowed Doe to fall into Prince's hands, with the inevitable result. Now they have combined forces with Prince, and are taking on Taylor together.

The Nigerians have no illusions about Prince, but for the moment it is expedient to work with him. Slowly clenching his fist, a senior Nigerian officer said, "We have Prince Johnson by the balls, and can squeeze them whenever we like." They know they will have to "deal" with him one day, if they are ever to achieve their mission of bringing peace to Liberia.

As we go to press, Liberia's warring factions have agreed to a cease-fire to end that country's year of death and turmoil. Signing the agreement were a Liberian army officer representing followers of executed Samuel Doe, Charles Taylor and, despite what he huffed at Jameson, a representative sent by Prince. Perhaps now Liberia will become a pleasant, peaceful nation ... and perhaps Robert K. Brown will support Jane Fonda in the 1992 presidential race, too.

British photojournalist John Jameson has been a regular contributor to *SOF* over the years, filing stories from Afghanistan to Africa. 🐘



TOP: Prince enjoys a moment with some of his more than 200 female bodyguards. "They are all my wives," he says, "as I am a polygamist."

ABOVE: INPFL fighters. Look at them now, because they may not be around later. Prince has killed a foreigner for giving one of his "wives" a lift, and his own men for stealing one of his Budweisers.

ABOVE RIGHT: One of Prince's young rap revolutionaries waits for something to do with his Browning .50.



**B**UNGEE jumping is like having an orgasm during a car wreck.

Carl Finocchiaro, who has flung himself nearly 200 times from bridges and balloons explains, "It's that violent and that fun."

It's a cold, clear midnight in the Colorado Rockies, and he talks across a campfire to a dozen men who want to bounce at the business end of a bungee cord. They titter uneasily, firelight lighting their faces. In the dark beyond the fire, coyotes yelp.

As president of Bungee Jumping Colorado, Finocchiaro has supervised 500 first-time bungee jumpers. He requires them to report to the campfire by 2330 hours, where they learn bungee basics and sign waivers releasing him from liability.

"It's not like an amusement park ride," he warns. "You might get bruises and abrasions. If you're looking for something completely predictable, then don't do this."

In the morning, the men will leap off a railroad trestle 120 feet high. Finocchiaro

requires their first jump to be a swan dive because it's familiar and also keeps them from banging into the bridge supports. For their second, he recommends "Max(imum) Fear" — jumping backwards off the bridge.

"Something special happens when you're falling down while looking up," he says. "You feel your life fly out of your esophagus."

#### Fear of Dying

At first light, you hike a railroad track toward a trestle some 2 miles down the line. The autumn aspen are as pink as peaches.

"It's a nice day to die," someone jokes.

"I'm dying to jump," another person adds.

"And well you may," Jeff Venier confirms.

Known as "Reverend Recoil," he and Mike Magee, "Captain Psycho," are the bungee jumpmasters — *elasticians*, as they like to be called.

The banter lets you shadowbox with your fear. You don't believe you'll die — or even get hurt. The point of bungee jumping is to face your fear. And have fun doing it.

"Bungee jumping is massively safe," David Boston, chairman of the Oxford Stunt Factory in Great Britain, who dives from 160-foot cranes to raise money for charity, reports. "The danger is only a

perceptible one. The real danger is absolutely minimal, less than climbing."

Three jumpers in France died while bungee jumping. Recently, an Australian woman narrowly escaped death when her cord broke. But in Great Britain and the United States no deaths or serious injuries have been reported, although the increasing number of do-it-yourselfers may ruin that record. One stiff jumped 240 feet from the Golden Gate Bridge wearing one spindly cord. It snapped, but he was saved by a passing boat.

At the trestle, the joking dies down.

"It's so high," someone whispers.

Reverend Recoil and Capt. Psycho go to the middle of the trestle and anchor the cords to the ties. Finocchiaro decides the jumping order, grouping people according to weight. Under 150 pounds requires three cords, over 225 pounds requires five. They work efficiently; the jumping must be complete before the train comes at noon. Bungee jumping isn't illegal, but jumping from bridges and trestles constitutes trespassing. Somehow, that seems the least of our worries.

"Bring on the lemmings," Rev. Recoil shouts.

Fear knots your stomach, but you step out onto the narrow, sideless trestle. The ties are slippery with frost, and in the spaces between them, the ground lies 120 feet below.

"Ah, infantile adults in search of the ultimate fear," Rev. Recoil exclaims.

He connects your seat and shoulder harness with two carabiners to the cords.

"Aren't those pretty?" the Captain asks. "For the next two minutes, those are your lifelines."

The blue-and-white cords, about as thick as your thumb, are military spec.



# ATTACK OF THE BEACH BLANKET DEATH DIVERS FROM HELL

## The Real Story

by Morgan Tanner Photos by David Bjorkman

Each is made with 365 strands of rubber, covered with a strong nylon sheath. Their function is to reduce the opening shock of a parachute when tanks are dropped from aircraft. Each cord holds in excess of 1,300 pounds of static weight.

"We only load ours to 200 pounds dynamic weight," Finocchiaro says.

An aerospace engineer whose specialty is structural dynamics, Finocchiaro, 30, says he's always been fascinated by energy. He concocted explosives when he was a kid, then graduated to ultra-lights and sky diving, and finally to bungee

jumping.

"In terms of safety, human error is the weakest link," he adds.

To prevent errors, Rev. Recoil and Capt. Psycho check and cross-check their work. They test your seat harness for comfort, too. Sweat pants are more forgiving than jeans.

"First, we preload the crotch," Rev. Recoil says.

"Or you'll be shooting blanks from now on," the Captain adds.

They repeat the instructions for the swan dive that will take you out and away

from the bridge.

"Head down, arms out," Rev. Recoil instructs.

"Don't belly flop," the Captain warns.

Their orders are crisp and loud enough to pierce a brain addled by fear. Rev. Recoil slowly releases the loop of the cord over the edge of the trestle.

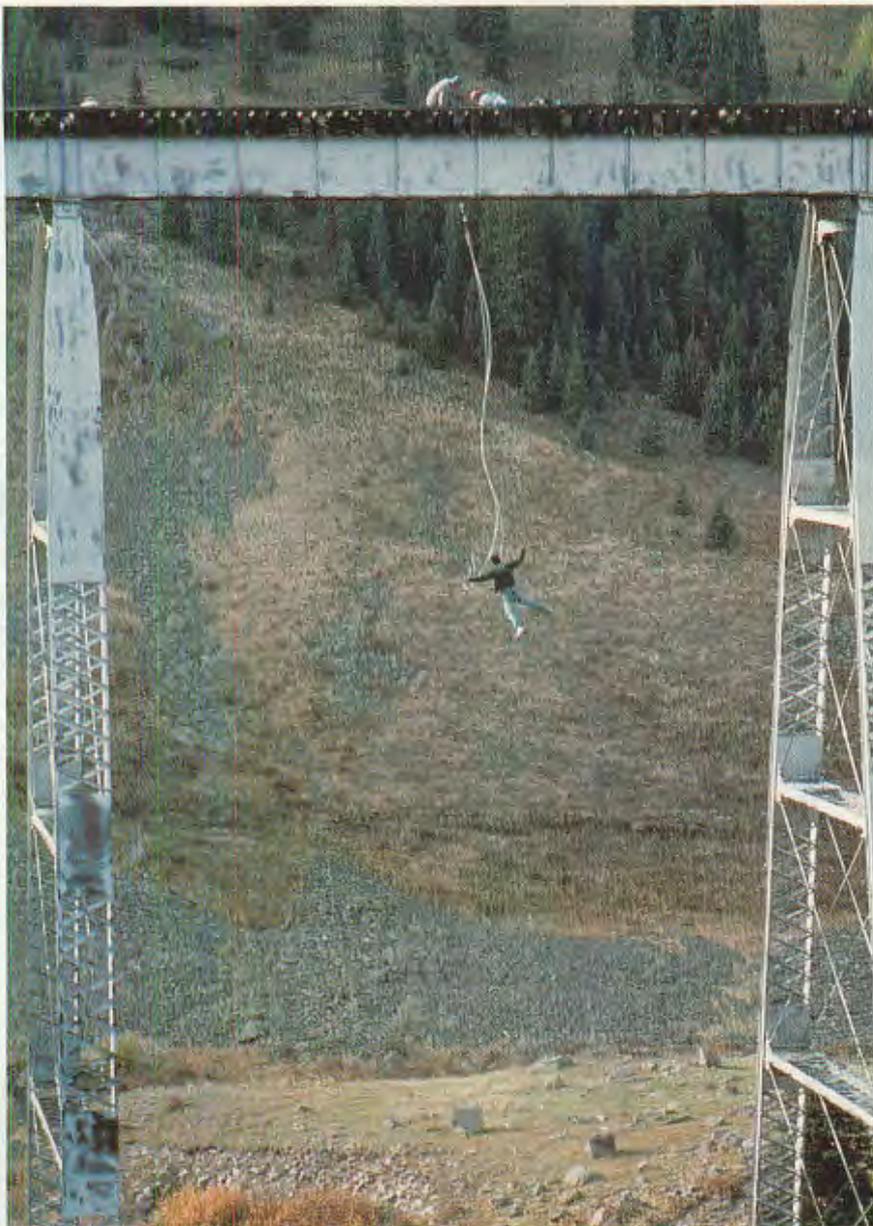
"You're going to feel the weight of the bungee on your shoulders and your crotch, dragging you over the side," he explains. "Now you know it's for real," the Captain says.

He hands you the end of a red cord that will steady you when you're on the edge. Your senses are suddenly keen. Your cheeks sting from the wind. You hear the stream gurgling below. It's only a teaspoon of water, and you wish you could dive over a blue lake instead of rocks.

Reverend Recoil's voice lances your thoughts.

"Whenever you're ready, and not before, put one foot here, the other there," he says, patting the edge.





Jumps are off 120-foot-high railway trestle, and must be completed before the train comes at noon. Bungee jumping isn't illegal but jumping from bridges and trestles constitutes trespassing.



Jumper takes off on first swan dive.



Capt. Psycho in red cape and goggles takes off after clients have finished.

## ORIGINAL LAND DIVERS

To encourage female bungee-jumpers, Bungee Jumping Colorado lets women who jump naked jump for free. But on the tropical island where "land diving" originated, only one woman ever jumped, and she probably wore a grass skirt.

The tradition of land diving belongs to the natives on Pentecost Island in the New Hebrides of the South Pacific. They were almost completely isolated until World War II, when some of the natives helped the U.S. Army on Espiritu Island, the largest in the island group. Their practice of diving head-first from a tower appeared in 1955 in a *National Geographic* article by Irving and Electa Johnson and again in 1970 in an article by Kal Muller.

Ostensibly, the land divers helped ensure a good crop of yams. But the deeper purpose behind their daring was rooted in that age-old man-woman thing.

According to Muller, legend has it that a native named Tamalie so mistreated his wife that she ran away. She climbed high up in a banyan tree before he climbed up after her. As Tamalie neared, his wife tied lianas around her ankles. When he tried to grab her, she jumped. He followed. The woman was saved by the vines, Tamalie plunged to his death. After that, the men vowed that no woman should ever again best them, and they built a tower where they could practice jumping. And so, the tradition began.

In the late 1960s, the men in the village of Bunlap lashed together logs to build an 83-foot tower. They forbade women from entering the area. Each man built his own platform on the tower and prepared his own lianas. Then, the day before the jump, they softened the ground around the tower to a depth of about 10 inches.

After a ritual bath, the men climbed to their platforms and tied the vines to their ankles. Before each man jumped, he was allowed a "talk-talk" during which he complained about his wife, while she had to stand and listen.

Then, the men were ready to jump. The most daring of them leapt from a platform 80 feet high. His landing was perfect. Just as his forehead touched the ground, the vines on his ankles snapped taut, breaking his fall — instead of his neck.

There's no record of how his wife treated him after he publicly berated her. Maybe it's better that modern women get to do some bungee-jumping themselves — naked or not.

— M.T.

Your feet turn to lead, but you manage to slide one toward the edge, then the other, careful to keep your toes from hanging over. You look down; it's as if you are on the roof of a 10-story building. "The funny thing is, you stand there scared to death you're going to fall, and the

next minute, you jump," Anette Nolz, who has jumped six times, comments.

Only two people in Finocchiaro's experience refused to jump once they got to the trestle. He screens out people who might back down, and Rev. Recoil bolsters those with momentary misgivings.

"There's a place in everyone that lets them jump if you can just touch it," he says.

For macho and money, you decide to jump. Because the other guys are doing it and because you've already paid out \$65 you can't walk away.

"You ready?" Rev. Recoil asks.

Your brain flames with terror. Your instinct for self-preservation claws your heart. Your jaw muscles clench, and he takes it as a nod.

"Three, two, one," he booms.

You smother your howling fear and jump, sinking like a stone into the void.

"Excuse Me While I Kiss the Sky."

For two seconds you hurtle groundward at speeds approaching 64 feet per second, 44 miles per hour. You fall headfirst for 100 feet. Then, the stretching cord gradually stops you, and the harness turns you right-side up.

Some jumpers are scared speechless, others shriek, some groan like they're playing a part in *The Exorcist* — or *Debbie Does Dallas*. Most first jumpers don't remember falling.

"That's why we give people two jumps," Finocchiaro explains.

The handful of U.S. companies providing commercial bungee jumping charge from \$50 to \$95 for a single jump, usually from a balloon (although regulatory agencies are taking another look at balloon usage). The whole experience may take an hour or two. Finocchiaro gives jumpers a night around a campfire and two jumps for \$65.

While you fall, Rev. Recoil and the Captain watch between the ties. After the cord stretches to its limit, it begins a series of five or so recoils — each 70 percent of the one before. The first one takes you by surprise. You can catapult skyward, hang weightless for an instant, then plunge. In the reflex of monkeys and newborn infants, you desperately grasp for something to hang onto.

"Looks like he's washing windows," says Rev. Recoil, laughing at your flailing hands.

"Wax on, wax off, just like in Karate Kid," agrees the Captain.

You reach up for the cord.

"Hands away, hands away," Rev. Recoil commands.

Grab the extending cord, and it will burn your skin. If it twangs your cheeks or lips, you'll have "bungee face." When the harness makes mush of your masculinity, you've got bungee balls.

By the second recoil, you know you're going to live. You relax. You're a kid again, riding a giant pendulum with a

## SOLO IN A SLINGSHOT

While bobbing on a bungee cord is thrill enough for most people, bungee catapulting produces an even greater high.

"Bungee jumping is the same every time. You fall at 32 feet/sec/sec," says David Aitkenhead, 32, a member of the Dangerous Sports Club in Great Britain. "Catapulting is infinitely variable. You can fly 100 feet above the point where the cord's attached. It produces a far bigger thrill."

The Dangerous Sports Club invented modern bungee jumping in the late 1970s when Christopher Baker concocted the idea. In 1978, club president David Kirke and his cronies dressed in tuxedos, fastened themselves to the cords, and jumped 245 feet from the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England.

"All they had was a computer model that said it would work," Aitkenhead recalls during a telephone interview. "They never tested it on small bridges first."

For their daring, they were ticketed for trespassing.

Then, in 1980, Kirke set the world record when he bungee-jumped from the 1,053-foot Royal Gorge Bridge in Colorado. When his crew tried to haul him back up onto the bridge, they couldn't lift him plus his more than 400 feet of cord. He hung suspended for five hours until a crane came to his rescue.

With few opportunities for bridge-jumping, the British bungee boys resorted to using cranes.

"Once we had a crane, we got the idea for catapulting," Aitkenhead remembers. Being somewhat more "dodgy" than

bungee jumping, Aitkenhead wouldn't recommend catapulting to the general public.

"There's a slight possibility that on the rebound, the wind could catch you and slam you into the crane," he warns. "There's a possibility for heavy bruising."

One dangerous sporting device on the club's drawing board is a backpack airplane a la James Bond. Aitkenhead describes it as a jet-powered hang glider.

"We fired David Kirke from a cliff using a military rocket launcher. It's a target drone launcher, really. We took off the (target) airplane and put on a steel chair."

Kirke survived, but the project is on hold while he writes a book about the club's adventures. The club began at Oxford University in 1977. Kirke, now 45, and his friends were the first to hang glide from the summit of Kilimanjaro (19,321 feet), and he was the first to cross the English Channel in a helium balloon shaped like a kangaroo (he sat in the pouch), and the first to cross the English Channel in a micro (ultra) light.

As for Aitkenhead, he continues to bungee jump and wants to catapult up a bridge. He would hang under the bridge on bungees and then a winch or Land-Rover would pull him down. Remove the anchor, and *voilà*, he would be airborne.

"People ask if I'd hit the bridge, but if the angle were right, I wouldn't," he claims. "There should be sufficient velocity to pass under and out beyond."

While most men wouldn't try it, this doesn't seem particularly dangerous to Aitkenhead, who adds unnecessarily, "I like to do different things than playing darts at the pub."

— M.T.

crazy arc. You lie back against the harness and whoop with joy.

"I can fly," screams one jubilant jumper.

When the rebounds stop, Rev. Recoil and Capt. Psycho lower you slowly to the ground. It's easier than pulling you up. Emily Trask grabs your foot and plants it.

But you can't walk or talk. Your brain boils in the white heat of exhilaration. It was a suicidal leap with a happy ending. It was a falling dream in which you didn't wake up and didn't hit bottom. You've conquered fear.

Pumped up, you scale the canyon, eager to jump again. This time, you'll try Max Fear. Reverend Recoil laughs at your confident grin.

"Even when I don't get to jump, I feel high," he says.

### The Two Faces of Thrill

In the afternoon, the fledging jumpers gone, the crew flies for fun. Positioned on the edge, they take a deep breath, program their brains and bodies, and dive.

Emily Trask executes a perfect double flip.

Captain Psycho puts on a flaming red cape and does a handstand before he

tumbles into space.

The Reverend goes for maximum recoil. He loads a bag with 60 pounds of rocks, then drops it at the nadir of his fall. Instead of 70 feet of rebound, he gets 95.

Finocchiaro climbs the cord on every recoil for maximum thrill. They say that even after dozens of jumps, fear lurks. Not the fear of heights — that subsides — nor of equipment failure, but of a deep, abiding fear that won't let go.

"Every time, I wonder why I keep jumping," Trask admits.

"I'm scared every time," Finocchiaro agrees. "Your brain relentlessly barks at you. It's a heartfelt fear like you want to stop what's going to happen."

By the time this article appears, he will have jumped from a bridge 750 feet high. For him, the thrill is worth the fear; or maybe fear's its cause.

"Bungee jumping," he reflects, "is the ultimate thrill."

*Morgan Tanner is a Boulder-based freelance writer who has published many articles in SOF on such varied subjects as terrorism in Central America, gang violence, SWAT team competitions, and modern day mountain men.* ❧



Ever-present Saudi sand is more than an annoyance. Here a Sea Stallion sent to pick up author and band members disappears into its own dust storm at the LZ, and has an uncomfortably near miss with a sister ship.



I WAS looking, but I couldn't see him. It wasn't until I got inside 50 yards that I could barely discern his left shoulder sticking out of the thistle bush he'd been using for cover. By that time

it was too late — I had stumbled into a Marine sniper position, and the man with his finger on the trigger was an “up and rising star” among that tight fraternity of trained killers.

Had Sergeant Thomas E. Ryan been wearing his full desert camo, a suit of garnish known in the sniper business as a “Ghillie suit” (named after a suit Scottish

game keepers wore in the 1700s), I would have passed by without seeing him in the prone position, caressing the trigger of his sniper rifle as if it were a Stradivarius.

Even in today's hi-tech world of war, the most feared and most respected warrior on the battlefield is still the sniper.

Ryan shrugged. “Reducing the enemy's capability is what war is all about, so why all the fuss about snipers?” he said.

“Does it really make any difference whether you're killed with artillery as opposed to a sniper? We're talking about reducing the same thing; reducing the enemy. Perhaps it's the fear of someone putting you in his cross hairs that shakes up troops on both sides so much,” Ryan said as he scanned the featureless terrain around his position.

However, cleverly concealed, a sniper can strike fear into units with a single round.

“One Shot, One Kill — that's our motto,” noted this 27-year-old Marine from Kansas City, Kansas, who had never picked up a weapon, much less fired one

# CROSS HAIRS ON BAGHDAD

## USMC Scout Snipers Wait to Reach Out and Touch Someone

Text & Photos by Ross Simpson

before shipping off to boot camp 10 years ago.

Today, Ryan is "chief sniper," of 1/7, 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Saudi Arabia.

With his M40A1, the 7.62x51mm sniper rifle custom-made for U.S. Marines and Navy SEALs, Ryan can take a target down at 1,000 yards with one shot.

Like his rifle, Ryan's ammo is also handmade: precision loaded 7.62 match brass topped with 173-grain Sierra boat tail bullets.

Fully loaded with five rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber, this sniper rifle with its 10-power scope and 24-inch heavy varmint barrel weighs 14 1/2 pounds.

"When we squeeze off a shot," Ryan said, "we want to hold a 1-inch group for every 100 yards we shoot. For instance, if the target is 300 yards, I want to be able to hold my rounds in a 3-inch group."

### Ryan Re-Ups in Saudi Land

As 1,000 comrades-in-arms stood at attention in the Saudi desert, Tom raised

his right hand and took the oath of allegiance for a second tour from his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mattis of Richland, Washington. It was the 215th anniversary of the Marine Corps.

The TL (tactical limit) for a sniper platoon is 10 shooters. Ryan, the platoon leader, has nine counting himself. And he's the "Top Gun."

After boot camp, Ryan was selected to attend the 1st Marine Division Sniper School at Camp Pendleton, California. Later, he was chosen to attend the Sniper Instructor School at Quantico, Virginia, where he picked up some finer points of shooting from the No. 1 Marine sniper, White Feather — aka Carlos Hathcock — who established the Marine Corps' Sniper School.

Hathcock, who had 98 confirmed kills in Vietnam before retiring on medical disability and becoming a consultant to the Corps and police SWAT teams in major cities across the country, preaches patience to young snipers. Ryan learned that lesson from the master himself.

Ryan recounts, "If you don't have the

patience sniping requires, you'll force the issue, force the shot, and could get yourself and your scout killed. Patience is the key. You may never get the shot, but the longer you wait and the more preparation you put into a mission, the greater the chances you'll live and your target will die."

Carlos Hathcock devised a formula for computing range and bullet drift so that he could drop NVA at incredible distances. One NVA officer met his maker when Hathcock hit him at more than 2,500 yards with a single shot from a .50 caliber machine gun that sported an 8x rifle scope.

With Hathcock, nothing was impossible. Hathcock could watch heat rising from a rice paddy and calculate in his mind how much elevation and windage he had to "crank in" before squeezing off a round. Nothing fancy. Just a simple formula.

Ryan and other Marine Corps snipers are taught in school to use those theories. However, because of the "one shot — one kill" demands of the job, today's sniper takes along calculators to figure the wind drift and range.

"We also tape little cheat sheets, range

## PARTY TIME IN THE DESERT

No matter where Leathernecks happen to be on the Marine Corps' birthday, they always take time to celebrate — even in the desert of Saudi Arabia, where they are training to shove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait if President Bush determines a military solution is the only way to resolve the Persian Gulf Crisis.

Hopping aboard a CH-53 Sea Stallion from HMH-463, I flew north to where 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines were preparing to P-A-R-T-Y by firing up charcoal grills and breaking out non-alcoholic beverages, barbecued beans, and birthday cakes.

The terrain was barren as we headed northwest from the port of Jubail to 3-11's forward artillery position. Not much to see; only an occasional set of tracks in the sand below as we flew in formation with our sister ship. Although there were no unfriendlies in the region, the crew chief and 1st Mech manned their

machine guns, scanning the landscape that rushed below us. As a welcoming committee of two grunts popped smoke below us, the crew chief yelled in our ears to pull our goggles down. Good thing. The Stallion stirred up quite a sandstorm when the giant helo landed. Sand was sucked in both gun ports in front of the cargo compartment, covering everyone with a fine layer of grit. As we jumped off the rear ramp and ran for the top of a sand dune, we were sandblasted. I am still washing sand out of my ears.

Third Battalion, Chesty Puller's old unit, really threw quite a party. In keeping with Marine Corps tradition the guest of honor, in this case Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude, assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division, got the first piece of birthday cake. The next two slices went to the oldest grunt present at the party — Gunnery Sergeant George Colvin — and the youngest Leatherneck in the outfit — Private First Class Robert Leslie, Jr., a field radio operator from North Valley Station, New York.

After birthday messages from Marine Corps Commandant General A.M. Gray, and Lieutenant General W.E. Boomer, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Brig. Gen. Draude noted that this was the third Marine Corps Birthday he had celebrated with Lt. Gen. Boomer either at war or preparing for war. He further noted to the men of the 3-11 that he couldn't think of any place he'd rather be than about to enter Harm's Way with Marines on the 215th anniversary of the Corps. Does the brass know something we don't know?

After the speeches were delivered and the cake cut with a K-Bar knife, since none of the battalion's officers brought his ceremonial sword with him, the party

began.

"Are you sure those aren't camel burgers?" one Marine groused as he pointed to some patties sizzling on a grill.

"Man, these are 100% pure beef patties I'm cooking," the Marine behind the grill replied. "Tried 'em myself."

After lunch, there were baseball games, football games, frisbee and mail call.

Corporal Mitchell Owens from Payson, Arizona, got 14 letters from kids at Glendale Elementary School in Phoenix where his sister-in-law teaches seventh grade.

The young boys and girls wanted to know all about him. How tall are you? What color is your hair? How did you get to be a corporal? However, some kids just wanted to tell him about their cat or dog.

Unlike some of the guys who read letters simply addressed "Service Member," and discard

them, Cpl. Owens answers every letter he receives — 30 so far.

From 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, we rode to 1st Battalion, 7th Marines in the back of a 5 1/2-ton truck for another party where the guest of honor was someone special.

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mattis invited his grunts of 1-7 to give Brig. Patrick Cordingly, commander of the British 7th Armoured Brigade — the Desert Rats of WWII fame — "a hearty devil dog welcome." "My goodness," Cordingly responded, "that scared me. I wonder what it would do to the chaps on the other side."

As Cordingly stood in the midst of a semi-circle of Marines, he said their unit's bravery in battle was legendary, and he was proud to be on their flank, and, "If this conflict gets nasty there is no one I'd rather be next door to in a scrap than 1-7."

Brigadier Cordingly promised, "We've brought some fine armor with us [120 Challenger main battle tanks], and we won't let you Yanks down."

Asked if he thinks war is inevitable, Cordingly replied, "Yes! The stage is set."

The cake that Cordingly partook of was carried by a team of stretcher bearers, in keeping with Marine Corps tradition of never leaving its dead or wounded behind.

Unlike 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, there was no barbecue and no ball game at 1-7, as they were scheduled for a night training exercise at sunset. But the grunts did enjoy the birthday cake and collectively said this would be one birthday they probably will never forget.

— R.S.



Birthday party for the Corps starts for real as a leatherneck digs into the cake.

cards and wind calculation cards to the stocks of our rifles in order to help us do our job," Ryan says. The scout, who covers the "back door" so he and the shooter don't have any unexpected guests, talks to the sniper much like a caddy talks to a PGA golfer who's trying to make the best of a bad lie on a difficult green.

### Not Best by Lucky Shots

Snipers can't rely totally on "cheat sheets." They must be able to recall the information they need from the darkest recesses of their brain in a flash. And although Tom Ryan is not, and may never be, in his mentor's league, he didn't become the best in his battalion with lucky shots.

"Some members of my platoon might disagree that I'm the best," Ryan laughed as he checked his gear before returning to his sniper position on the battalion's perimeter. "But I've had the best training of any shooter in my platoon, and as their leader, I have to know more than my junior riflemen."

Before he went back to work, SOF asked Ryan why he became a sniper. "They work independently of their regular rifle platoon," Ryan said as he sat on a sand dune cradling his camouflaged rifle. "Grunts usually work in a 35-man platoon, whereas a two-man sniper team, shooter and scout, work alone. I like that."

"You also have to have a little higher level of maturity, initiative and leadership to become a sniper, and because you're dealing with battalion commanders on special projects. You have to have a higher level of professionalism than the average Marine."

I asked him if his sniper mission made him feel like an assassin. "In a way, yes, because we are tasked to eliminate selected targets. We are also scouts. We go out and find the most secure route of travel for the battalion. That's why we are called Scout Snipers. Shooting is the most rewarding part of our mission, but it's only half of what we are called upon to do."

"Have you ever shot anyone?"

"No, I haven't."

"If you have to pull the trigger in Kuwait, could you kill an Iraqi soldier?"

### Nothing Personal

"That's a question most of us in my platoon have played over in our minds. And, yes, I could. I'd rather not, however my training would enable me to reduce key targets that down the road could inflict casualties upon my battalion and other allied forces in the area. So if the need ever arises, I could take him out."

"Nothing personal?"

"Not at all. Just business. The enemy is trying his best to take me out, and I'm doing my best to take him out, and I feel we're better at what we do than he is."

Grunts in 3rd Battalion have had a lot of time since landing in Saudi Arabia to think about what could happen in Kuwait, and

RIGHT: Sgt. Ryan is sworn in for another hitch by Lt. Col. Jim Mattis as his battalion stands at attention. Lt. Col. Mattis notes re-enlistments in his unit are double a year ago — no Marine wants to miss out on some possible action.

how long they may be here. An informal poll of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines found March or April 1991 as the earliest they expect to come home, and only after they have kicked Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait north of here.

Some of the younger men say they can “smell death in the air.” Most are eager to fight. One said, “The sooner, the better, because then we can go home.”

A young Marine from Michigan said flatly, “Let’s do it. We’re tired of sitting out here in the desert eating sand and swatting flies.”

“It’s time we rolled into Kuwait and kicked some ass,” added a buddy.

Older and wiser grunts like Gunnery Sergeant George Colvin, a 47-year-old Vietnam veteran from Rustin, Louisiana, is a little more reserved and thoughtful in his comments. “I hope we can settle this dispute with Saddam peacefully, because I have seen how horrible war can be.”

Brigadier General Thomas Draude, assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division agrees with Gunny Colvin. “I served three tours in Vietnam, and I have to say I would be the happiest man in the world if this conflict could be resolved without a shot being fired in anger.”

Draude, who hails from Annandale, Virginia, hopes the latest U.S. troop deployments to the Persian Gulf will convince Saddam Hussein it’s in his best interest to withdraw his forces from Kuwait.

### Saddam: Get the Hell Out of Dodge

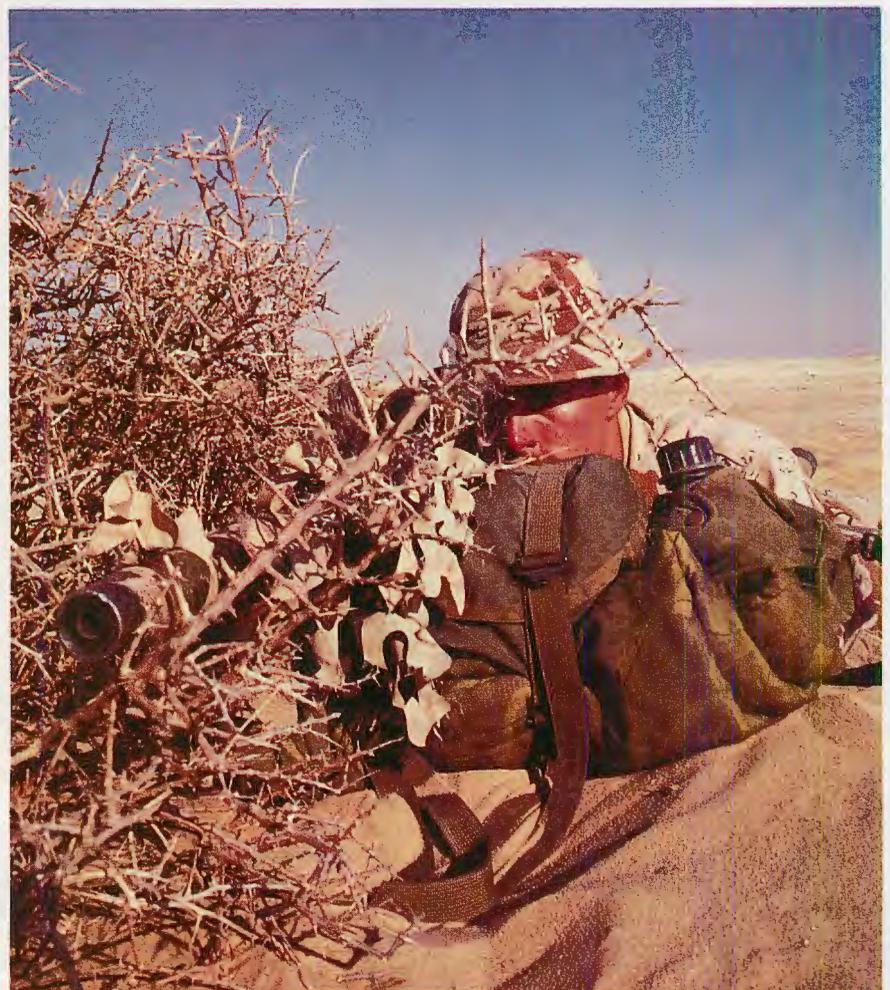
“Yeah,” a young leatherneck from New Jersey agreed as he waved his K-Bar to make his point. “It’s a signal to Saddam that he oughta *get the hell out of Dodge!*”

Sergeant Ryan can also smell war in the wind. It fills his nostrils every time he turns his head to see which way the wind is blowing. “By his very actions, Saddam Hussein has said to the world he is not going to leave Kuwait, and we cannot allow him to stay there,” Ryan said as he put a pinch of Skoal under his lip.

“I feel we’re going to see some action before we go home,” Ryan added as he ran his fingers over his sniper rifle. “And if the word is given, we’re going to give Hussein a taste of his own medicine.”

Although the Gulf Crisis has been running hot and cold for months and could simmer until the spring of ’91, Sgt. Thomas Ryan believes the pot is going to boil over. “We feel we’re going to do it.”

*Correspondent Ross Simpson, a frequent contributor, is covering the Persian Gulf crisis for SOF.*



Marine Scout Sniper Sgt. Thomas E. Ryan of Kansas City, Kansas, draws a bead from behind scant cover of a thistle bush in Saudi Arabian desert.

# THE FRENCH



**I**N the vast expanses of the Saudi Arabian desert, the best defense available to large military formations is constant, far-reaching reconnaissance. Forward reconnaissance, what the French call "investigation," is the mission of the 4th Squadron of the 1st Regiment de Hussards Parachutistes (RHP). Since their deployment to Saudi Arabia in early October, the RHP has been training to accomplish its mission in the harsh climate and difficult conditions of the Arabian peninsula.

The RHP was originally raised in France in 1740 by a Hungarian immigrant, Count Bercheny, and the regimental crest still carries his name. The RAP still displays many of the traditions and attitudes of an old cavalry regiment and performs traditional cavalry functions such as screening and reconnaissance, but its character is more that of an airborne than an armor formation. Discipline is by no means lax, but saluting and the traditional French slap on the thigh are given more as greetings to a fellow soldier than

as an act of military courtesy.

As a regiment of the 11th Parachute Division, a key element in France's Force D'Action Rapide, or FAR (see "French Far and Legion"), all the soldiers in the RHP are parachute-qualified. Their most frequent role is providing forward reconnaissance and additional firepower when the 11th deploys. Originally mounted in jeeps, the regiment converted to ERC 90 light armored vehicles to provide the 11th with an armor capability. The present



Captain Galy-Dejean, commanding officer for whom the 4th Squadron is named, 1st RHP.

French contingent in Saudi Arabia consists of a variety of armor and infantry units from the French army and Foreign Legion. The 4th Squadron provides reconnaissance for the entire force, but works most often with the Legion's 1st Cavalry Regiment.

First RHP, based in Tarbes in the southwest of France, consists of three reconnaissance squadrons, one antitank squadron (equipped with the combat-proven Milan antitank missile) and a headquarters and support squadron. Each of these squadrons is made up of four combat platoons, each equipped with ERC 90s and one headquarters platoon. In addition to the ERCs, the squadron also contains some two dozen other vehicles ranging from heavy trucks to the venerable

Renault jeep. The jeeps carry forward-mounted 7.62mm light machine guns while the light trucks carry top-mounted .50 cal. heavy machine guns. Although the machine guns are meant mostly for self-defense, they can provide additional offensive firepower when required.

The chief weapon of the squadron is the ERC 90, with its 90mm gun. Known as the "lance," it is the lightest armored vehicle in the French inventory. The crews operate with the hatches open, exposing themselves to the possibility of enemy fire, but allowing greater visibility. Additionally, the open hatches help keep the heat down and, most importantly, allow the vehicle commander to maintain visual contact with the squadron commander. Most of the signals used are given in the form of hand and arm signals, reducing the reliability on radio transmissions and providing extra security from enemy electronic countermeasures.

## Captain Galy-Dejean

Command when operating in the field comes from the squadron's commander, Captain Galy-Dejean. Galy-Dejean is a career officer who began his 14 years of service as an enlisted man in the 1st RHP. French cavalry squadrons are not known by numeric designators, but rather by the surname of their commander. So the 4th squadron is officially the Escadron Galy-Dejean. Galy-Dejean has given more than his name to the squadron, seeking to impose on his men something of his own character. As a parachutist and former

# CONNECTION

## SOF in the Sand With the French Cav

Text & Photos by John McDonald



The ERC 90, the heaviest weapon of the 4th Squadron, 1st RHP, provides armor capability for a highly mobile force.

pathfinder, his values are those recognized by airborne units the world over. Whether in the field on operations or in physical training the captain leads from the front, and by example.

When operating in the desert, the ERCs and other vehicles move on-line or in a "V" formation. The blowing sand and dust generated by the fast-moving vehicles precludes moving in column. While underway, the captain speeds from one end of the formation to the other, giving signals to his vehicle commanders to change formation or shift direction. Working as much as 15 kilometers forward of the main body and as far as 40 kilometers to the side, the squadron functions very much as light cavalry did 100 years ago.

### When Big Guns Are Small

The 90mm guns don't offer much in the way of offensive power for engaging tanks, but it is the squadron's mission to avoid contact. The soldiers of the RHP are quick to correct anyone who refers to their ERCs as tanks. Engaging the enemy results in loss of surprise and quickly dates whatever intelligence the squadron is providing for the larger formations behind them. Except when called on to join in an attack or when required for self-defense, the 90mm guns are almost superfluous.

Training in the desert is meant to get the squadron used to operating in the vast empty spaces, familiarize them with navigating here and maintain operational readiness. All of these seem to have been

accomplished. The squadron is comfortable in its new home and troops seem confident of their ability to execute their mission. All weapons are fired regularly, from each soldier's FA MAS to the 90mm guns. When not outside their perimeter or on guard duty, the FA MAS rifles are kept in heavy cotton bags to reduce exposure to the elements and the sand. They are fired completely dry as any lubricant acts as a

magnet for the fine sand and dust of the Saudi desert. There have been no weapons failures or maintenance problems resulting from the hostile conditions.

When not operating, the squadron occupies a basecamp near the other French units. Covering some 15 acres, the camp consists of tents for the troops, areas to park their vehicles and damn little else. Except for their meals, the French army is not long on creature comforts. Electric power for lights and cooking is provided by 10,000kw generators.

The desert can be extremely cold at night. Whether the temperature is actually that low or if it is just that the wide range between daily highs and lows makes it seem so cold, I can't say. But even in a sweatshirt, sweater and French army parka, I was as cold as I've ever been.

The cold doesn't seem to bother the troops. They rise at 0630 and after coffee and a light breakfast, fall out in PT gear for morning formation.

After a few brief words from the boss they work out, frequently playing volleyball. Following that, they begin the day's work. The daily routine, morning PT, training and maintenance of vehicles and equipment, doesn't differ much from their routine in France. One noticeable difference is

the lack of wine and beer in the mess. The Holy Koran's ban on alcohol extends to the visiting forces, even the French. Despite the lack of wine, the evening mess is still the center of the unit's existence. The comradery and friendly arguments of the evening mess are an important factor in the high morale.

Morale is high for several reasons. Confidence in their weapons, equipment and themselves is perhaps the principal strength of the squadron. The high morale doesn't take the form of bragging or making dire predictions about the fate of the Iraqis, but is displayed in the calm professionalism of the squadron's officers and men. A full-strength squadron would have 114 men (five officers, 19 NCOs and



French light trucks mount .50 cal. machine guns, primarily for self-defense.

Continued on page 84

# TARGET SADDAM

## Marine Arty Takes Aim at Iraq

Text & Photos by Ross Simpson



FDC officer Capt. John Ambrosia in front of Saddam target, courtesy of SOF.



**W**HEN I raised the camouflage netting and walked into the fire direction center (FDC) for 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, I knew they had a purpose in life.

Tacked to a map of their area of responsibility is a target with Saddam Hussein's mug on it — courtesy of SOF.

"I didn't know where it came from," Lieutenant Colonel Mark Adams, commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, admits as he shows Colonel Shaalah Al-Haraby from the Saudi Army National

Guard (SANG), how FDC functions in a battalion mass fire mission.

Neither did anyone else in FDC, but no one, including the fire direction officer, wants to take down the target.

Captain John Ambrosia from Rochester, New York, adds, grinning like the cat who ate the canary, "You know who likes it? The Saudis over there."

When Ambrosia tells Col. Shaalah that his eight-gun battery is going to shoot some "fire for effect" missions, the Saudi officer cries, "No! No! We shoot to kill HIM," as he points toward Saddam's poster on the bulkhead of the FDC.

"Stand by to fire," radios the operations chief, Staff Sergeant Arthur Arechiga from Brownsville, Texas. "FIRE!"

The Saudi and his aide de camp smile from ear to ear as the big guns open up. "Yes, I like it too much," Col. Shaalah says as a salvo of 155mm HE leaves the tubes.

### Saudis Will Fight

As opposed to some observers who think the Saudis will skeddadle when the first shots are fired, Col. Shaalah believes his men will stand and fight. "They won't run, because we want to return Kuwait to our brothers."

When Golf Battery fires in support of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, a nearby infantry regiment, FDC is hopping. It's very, very confusing, very loud and very exciting in the fire direction center during a fire mission. To the uninformed it looks like a Chinese fire drill. Radios are crackling, people running around, shouting. But everyone knows what they've got to do, and they do it.

"If they're not, you've got people bumping heads, and the rounds don't go downrange where they're supposed to," Ambrosia adds, chatting with me and at the same time orchestrating a fire mission.

Behind SSgt. Arechiga sits Lance

Corporal Daniel Raab from Phoenix. Raab is operating a prototype piece of electronics that is not yet a part of official Marine Corps gear. This battlefield communications terminal controls and coordinates tactical fire on a target at the battalion level.



Golf Battery in action.

Raab would prefer not to process fire missions, but says he's ready to do what has to be done.

"Target Alpha Charley, zero-zero-zero-one, two-four rounds (24)," went the word from FDC to eight guns in Golf Battery.

### RAP Music

One-Niner-Eights, as the 155s are affectionately called by their crews, are capable of firing standard projectiles about 15km, up to 30km with rocket assisted projectiles (RAPs).

The RAP rounds are spectacular. Seven to 10 seconds after leaving the tube, you hear the rocket kick in as the round leaves a beautiful white streak across the sky. In a flash, they're gone.

Golf Battery is a direct support arm of the 7th Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in Saudi Arabia. Golf's commanding officer, Capt. Cal Swain from Chicago, says the One-Niner-Eights in his battery are the weapon of choice for direct support of the infantry. The

howitzers are augmented by self-propelled 8-inch artillery.

"We can fire Copperhead (laser-guided rounds), smoke, illum, WP (white phosphorous) or high explosive ammunition."

If Swain's battery has to pick up and move on short notice, it can be in position to put "steel on target" within 30 minutes. However, there are problems associated with moving fast across the desert.

"You have to be careful of the terrain," Swain explains, "because it's easy to get the howitzers stuck." But the past three months have given Golf Battery invaluable training in reading terrain. Time has taught Swain where he can and can't go in the desert.

### Shooting Boosts Morale

Golf was the first Marine Corps artillery battery to deploy to Saudi Arabia. Captain Swain says his men are getting "antsy" waiting to get the show on the road, but their morale is high.

The motto of Golf Battery is "Run, Shoot and Communicate," and the whole crew is happiest when they're shooting. "It's a real morale booster," battalion commander Adams explains, adding that his people are ready to do whatever the commander-in-chief decides to do about Saddam's army of occupation in neighboring Kuwait.

In artillery outfits like Golf Battery, the FDC is its eyes and ears, the very heart and soul of the battalion. When everyone is pulling together and putting rounds on target, Cpt. Ambrosia says it's "like an orchestra."

Captain Ambrosia asks his operations chief if the target is in the open or dug in.

"In the open," SSgt. Arechiga replies.

"Fuse time," Ambrosia snaps when he learns the simulated target is a personnel vehicle.

The term "fuse time," means the shell will burst 20 meters above the ground, spraying everything within its range with deadly shrapnel. By calling for "fuse variable time," Ambrosia can lower the airburst to 7 meters.

"We don't want to shoot point detonate (PD) round at a personnel target," Ambrosia says, "because the PD will dig into the sand and have limited effect."

That's why Ambrosia has ordered the pace-setters on No. 6 gun in the battery to "fuse time."

As LCpl. Paul Heyland from Arlington, Texas, sets the fuse on a round and lugs the 100-pound projectile to the ammo tray, he comments, "Bursting one of these babies in the air is like hurling 80 hand grenades onto the battlefield."

Even though I have sponge plugs in my ears, I turn away from the howitzer and cup my ears when it belches fire and smoke, ramming the trails deeper into the sand.

From behind the gun all I can see are asses and elbows as the crew services the

gun, then fires three rounds as fast as they can open the breech, swab the barrel and ram another round into the field piece.

After the guns fall silent, there isn't a soul in this 10-man crew, from section chief, Cpl. Cory Calkins from Mesa, Arizona, to the powder man, LCpl. George T. Alcaraz from San Francisco, who claims he isn't frightened about the prospect of having to pack up their howitzer and head north to duel with Iraqi artillery.

### Scared but Ready

"I'm scared, but if it has to be done, we need to go in there [Kuwait] and do it, instead of standing around here watching our gear rust away," insists Calkins.

If war breaks out in the Persian Gulf, Golf Battery will move up to within 7 miles of the front lines so its guns can fire in support of advancing infantry.



Author files report for NBC Radio near Golf Battery.

Since the 155s can fire about 15km, this means Golf Battery will be about 5km behind the action — almost too close for comfort.

There are no John Waynes in Golf Battery, just a bunch of boys who want to go home in one piece. They speak openly about their thoughts.

"I'm afraid of dying," Calkins admits, "and I don't want anybody in my section to die. We've trained hard and I want to get everybody back home safely." This young corporal has been in the Marine Corps for seven years.

"Nobody wants to die," LCpl. Michael Tate from Birmingham adds as he pulls the lanyard and sends the rounds downrange. "But you gotta do whatcha gotta do."

"There's some fear in everybody," LCpl. Diaz Rosendo from 29 Palms, California, where the battery is home-based, states. "Yes, there is some fear in me, but I'm here to do a job."

"Anybody who tells you he ain't scared is full of shit," Paul Heyland says. He hopes fellows in front of him don't "fuck-up," and let Iraqis break through

the lines.

"If we got mechs (mechanized infantry) with us, it's OK," the slow-talking Texan adds, "but if we've got tanks coming down our throats and we're firing at 'em with a howitzer, that's going to be scary."

In the case of a human-wave assault, the standing order is "Expend All Remaining," as Calkins and company face the Iraqi armor face on.

Heyland's buddies laugh when I ask him what he would do if his crew expends its combat load of 15 rounds and the ammo truck can't get to them.

"I'll just pick up my rifle, and hide 'til they roll over us," Heyland claims.

### Willy Peter Falls Like Fiery Rain

But before that happens, the Pace-Setters plan to take a lot of Iraqis down with a "mix of misery" including white phosphorous smoke (WPS).

"You oughta see what that stuff does to you," someone from the gun crew comments, as he cleans up after firing three rounds downrange.

"I saw a four-round burst of Willy Peter at 29 Palms," Weyland remembers, "and it was awesome as the phosphorous fell like fiery rain. What a wicked way to die."

"Even if you're underground in a covered hole it eats up the oxygen and suffocates you," section chief Calkins adds.

"And if the smoke doesn't get you, the phosphorous will," A-gunner LCpl. Travis Homes from Portland, Oregon, says as he cranks in the elevation on the 155.

"Yeah, Willy Peter is definitely the big dick," Weyland chuckles as he prepares to set fuses for another fire mission.

"But don't forget," Holmes reminds them, "they have the same stuff we got."

Most of the men in Golf Battery are young, in their late teens or early twenties. But their commanding officer feels they are ready for what lies ahead.

Lieutenant Colonel Adams, who stands about 2 feet taller than his Saudi counterpart explains, "It's good for morale to get to shoot like we've done for the past three days. It gives the men confidence in themselves."

However, the uncertainty of the future has taken its toll among younger members of Golf Battery. One young man, LCpl. George T. Alcaraz from San Francisco jumps like he's been shot when one of the guns in his battery fires, catching him off guard.

Alcaraz and I have been talking about how hard it is on his mother and little sister back home to have him away for the holidays, and how much he misses them.

"Ah, what were we talking about?" laughs Alcaraz after the round left the tube next door. Although he insists he is OK, it's clear the unexpected round rattled his cage.

But like others I've talked to, Alcaraz

*Continued on page 86*

# MAKING TRACKS TO IRAQ

## 24th Division Roaring to Go

Text & Photos by Ross Simpson



**W**ILLIAM Guyan's crew was soaking up some Saudi sunshine when I walked up the rock-strewn trail behind their tank. Parked just below the crest of a ridge looking north toward Kuwait, their

M1 tank in its desert camo looked like a hawk ready to swoop down on some unsuspecting prey. What a magnificent view the "Studs From Hell" had.

"Best seat in the house!"

yelled the suntanned second lieutenant from Sturbridge, Massachusetts.

As I climbed aboard the M1 I asked, "Where'd you get the nickname?"

Guyan, a political science major from the University of Arizona in Tucson, replied, "The guys in my platoon chose it before we left Fort Stewart."

Although his platoon has a "handle," Guyan's four-man crew has been unable to come up with a suitable name for their tank.

Carey Sutterfield, the driver, who hails from Woodward, Oklahoma, said,

"The lieutenant wants to call it, DEAR SADDAM. But we wanna call it DAMN YANKEE because Guyan is from New England."

The crew has been arguing over a name since it arrived in Saudi Arabia on 27 August 1990, but nobody's taken it upon himself to cut a stencil and do the deed.

Steve Karlock pulls a 105mm round from storage rack, prepares to slam it home.



Guyan's platoon is part of D Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, the first "heavy mech" unit sent to Saudi Arabia to halt Saddam Hussein's march south toward Saudi Arabia. Now that they've accomplished that mission, the men of the Victory Division want to know when they can kick Saddam's army out of Kuwait and go home.

Times were tough in the desert when 3-7 first arrived. The base camp is still primitive by REMF standards, with no PX and no females.

The "Cottonbalers," as the 3rd Bn is called in honor of Andrew Jackson's men who fought from behind cotton bales at the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812, are beginning to get a few creature comforts like hot chow and cold showers.

But "Cottonbalers" are still sleeping on the cold ground beside their armored vehicles,

despite talk of being provided some tents before the rainy season sets in.

### Desert Not Always Hot

It does rain in the desert, as much as 4 inches at a whack and there is nowhere for it to go. You just have to wait for it to soak in to the sand.

Cold? Yeah! It gets cold out here too. The temperature drops to about 50 degrees in the desert at night.

"Cold enough to freeze your ass off," observed Sutterfield who has done his share of shaking and shivering. "Guess they don't want us to get too comfortable," the okie said as he showed me the beast he drives.

Although Specialist Sutterfield says the M1 is better than anything the Iraqis have



Lt. Col. Dave Jensen, commander of the "Cottonbalers," with CSM Robles.



on the battlefield, including several thousand T-64s and the T-72 with its improved armor, Lieutenant Guyan will feel a lot better about going “beak to beak with Baghdad’s best” when he gets his hands on the much improved M1A1, hundreds of which arrived in mid-November at a Saudi seaport.

The M1A1 sports a 120mm main gun, instead of a 105mm that’s mounted on older model M1s like Guyan’s.

Ammunition for the German-made smooth-bore M256 cannon is composed of four cartridges — a kinetic energy Armor Piercing Fin Stabilized Discarding Sabot-Tracer (APFSDS-T) round, a chemical energy High Explosive Anti-Tank Multi-Purpose with Tracer (HEAT-MP/T) round and training counterparts for each.

The M829/A1, or sabot round, features a one-piece depleted uranium penetrator. The M830, or antitank round, contains a shaped warhead charge. The M865 and M831 are training counterparts for each of the previously mentioned rounds.

The M1A1’s special armor, compartmentalization of fuel and ammunition storage, automatic fire detection and suppression system, and

high mobility provide the four-man crew with the greatest level of protection — protection levels which exceed those of any other tank in the world.

The M1A1s also have a Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) microclimatic cooling system that allows tank crews to fight without wearing bulky chemical and biological warfare suits.

Add to all of this a thermal sight, laser rangefinder, and a four-

speed automatic transmission, 1500-horsepower gas-turbine engine, and you’ve got what the infantry calls, “Whispering Death.”

#### Desert is Different

It was quiet in Guyan’s sector as I sat on the turret of his 67-ton tank (combat loaded) and talked to him and his crew about what lies over the horizon. Each had just been to the local barber. They looked like sheep that had just been sheared.

“The new look,” laughed

Lt. Guyan and Sutterfield atop the M1 in the Saudi Desert at Assembly Point Cotton.

Sergeant Earnest Ross, a 26-year-old career soldier from Magnolia, Arkansas, who claims the other three members of the crew were jealous of his hairdo and copied his “do.”

All fun aside, tankers are faced with a couple of problems in the Saudi desert. The biggest problem is the same one that plagued Columbus — accurately judging distance.

I judged some tanks on a distant ridge to be about 5,000 meters away. “More like 8,000,” Ross said as he squinted through the laser rangefinder. “Distance out here is deceiving.”

It’s also difficult to navigate in the desert, because maps don’t show all of the things that are out here.

Maps are in short supply throughout the entire AO. Usually maps are divvied up, one per platoon. Instead of five-color topographical maps which are a must for any tank commander, maps are often photocopies of aviation charts. Sometimes, a Michelin map from a local car rental agency is the only map tankers have. But Army map makers are working



2nd Lt. Bill Guyan, platoon leader and track commander.

Sgt. Earnest Ross shows off his new haircut.



overtime to meet the demand.

Lack of maps is not uncommon in military ventures like Operation Desert Shield. Historian Cornelius Ryan wrote that U.S. scouts entering Germany during World War II sometimes had to thumb their way through tourist guides to get their bearings.

Folklore in the 82nd Airborne Division, which is also here in Saudi Arabia, holds that maps guiding many paratroopers in the 1983 Grenada invasion were based on a road atlas.

Times have changed. A lot of units in Saudi Arabia are using a Global Positioning System, a high-tech black box that uses satellites to pinpoint within a meter their exact position anywhere on the planet. But the device is too expensive for everyone to have one.

### Moving in the Desert

William Guyan says most problems with navigation occur after the sun goes down. No problem in the daytime. "The enemy can see your dust from a long ways," Guyan said as his eyes swept across the featureless terrain below his tank.

"But we can see him before he can see us, especially at night," the 25-year-old shavetail said. "Even if we see each other at the same time, we'll still get the first shot in."

Sergeant Ross, who believes his tank has one of the best fire control systems on the market today said, "We can pump some rounds downrange pretty quickly."

Probably the biggest challenge in the desert is learning to drive from point A to point B without getting stuck or driving off a cliff like the one immediately in front of Guyan's tank.

Carey Sutterfield is used to driving his M1 through the forests of West Germany, but there are no trees where he's driving now. And that's comforting to the young soldier.

"There really ain't nothing you can hit out here," Sutterfield said as he slid into the forward hatch and wiggled down into his reclining couch like the sand viper that hides in the rocks near his tank.

"You could fall asleep and drive for miles, 'cause there's nothing out there," he laughed.

Visibility is limited on moonless nights, even with night-vision viewers up front, but on moonlit nights, driving an M1 tank across the desert is like driving down the Santa Monica Freeway in California at 40 mph.

However, drivers like Sutterfield have to be constantly on the lookout for dark spots in the sand, a sign of salt marshes where heavy tanks could bog down and become stranded.

Sutterfield worries most about throwing a track in battle and being left behind. "I know my platoon wouldn't do that, but the thought of being left out there on the battlefield still scares me," he said.

The desert takes on a totally different look after dark. Shadows and the way the moon bathes the hills around the 3rd Bn make the landscape look surreal.

"During the daytime, it's easier to navigate, because we can see the sun and tell which way we're headed," Guyan said as he wiped the sweat off his skinhead. "But at night, we have to dismount and use a hand-held compass, and tankers don't like to get off their tanks — too dangerous."

Navigating unfamiliar, featureless terrain at night is where guys like Guyan have an edge over the Iraqi tankers.

"We have night vision devices the Iraqis don't have. We can see through smoke they can't see through, so we own the night," the young lieutenant said as he told his crew to saddle up.

Although Guyan feels he has superior equipment, he fears being outflanked. "Having a tank come up from behind us



could be fatal," Guyan said, "because the rear of any tank is its weakest point."

"We can take almost anything head on and keep on trucking, but if something gets to our rear, even infantry, we could get hurt," he observed.

That's why tanks maneuver in such a way as to be able to "swat flies" off their turrets with bursts of machine-gun fire from one .50 cal. or two 7.62mm machine guns.

As Guyan's crew prepared to leave the ridge and move to another position for the night, we talked about when war might break out in the Persian Gulf.

### When Will It Hit the Fan?

Guyan thinks the "shit will hit the fan in the middle of the night" for a couple of reasons.

"It has to, because that's where we have an edge," Guyan said, "and that's when we'll achieve our biggest shock effect."

If there is an offensive in Kuwait, whoever gets the jump on the other guy will most likely win.

"Guards that are supposed to be awake, sometimes are sleeping," Guyan said, "and it's easier to surprise an enemy force

after dark."

Unlike the Iraqi armored units they may face, none of Guyan's crew has any combat experience. All of them are "cherries." And many still have that basic training look.

William Guyan graduated from the Officer Basic Course at Fort Knox, Kentucky, in June 1990 and spent one month at Fort Stewart, Georgia, home of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), before Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August.

Guyan's loader, 21-year-old Scott Karlock, came straight to Saudi Arabia out of Basic and Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Knox. While the New Yorker was happy about coming to the "Kingdom," he's not happy about the possibility of having to fight.

"I'm not afraid to fight," Karlock said as he reached into the ammo rack behind him in the turret and pulled out a 105mm round and slammed it into the breach. "I'll do what I have to do when the time comes."

Like Karlock who sits beside him inside the turret, Sgt. Ross isn't anxious to go into battle either. "But I'm confident my crew will go back home together after this thing is over."

"With our Air Force and Navy to back us up, Saddam's no match for us," Karlock said. "We can still take 'em. They don't have the air support we have, and no navy, so I figure we can beat 'em. All we gotta do is fight smart."

The M1 and its big brother the M1A1 can fire on the run. "run and gun," or "lase and blaze," as they say. The book calls for a loader like Karlock to be able to load a round every five seconds, but Karlock says he can "slam a new round home every three seconds."

Like Karlock, Sgt. Ross is also confident of victory.

### The Victory Division

After all, Ross said, "The 24th is the Victory Division." Officers in the 3rd Bn always shout, "Victory" when they return a salute.

"I'm just sorry the Iraqis have to be our opponents," Sgt. Ross said, "because we're not going up there to lose."

A couple of days before President Bush traveled to the Persian Gulf to have Thanksgiving Dinner with troops in the desert, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein sent another 250,000 soldiers into Kuwait. But that didn't cause tankers in Delta Company to lose any sleep.

Lieutenant Guyan, who feels few of the additional forces are front-line soldiers, said, "It reminds me a lot of what Hitler did in the waning days of World War II before he blew his brains out. Sounds to me like Saddam is scraping the bottom of the barrel like Hitler did when he fortified Berlin with young boys and old men."

Guyan's gunner said the more men Hussein sends to Kuwait the bigger the targets will be. "I think he's reaching a



ABOVE: Lt. Guyan (at left) and his crew, Carey Sutterfield (standing rear), Sgt. Earnest Ross (right), Scott Karlock (front).

RIGHT: Here's looking at *you* Saddam, through the M1's thermal sight at 1,200 meters.



break point where he's got to make a decision," Guyan said as he plugged his headset into the intercom system in the command cupola where he rides. "He's gotta stop bluffing, because we've just called his bluff."

Guyan points to 150,000 more U.S. troops heading to Saudi Arabia to give the U.S.-led multinational force an offensive capability. "I think Saddam is in for a shock if he thinks he can hold his own against us," Guyan said. He thinks Saddam is getting some bad advice from his generals. "Hussein doesn't understand the ferocity of modern warfare."

"Saddam bases his tactics on Iraq's eight-year-old war with Iran, a war where both sides used human wave tactics, but there won't be any human waves this time, and that's why I think Saddam is going to

be hurtin' fast," Guyan said. And if war comes to Kuwait, Lt. William J. Guyan doesn't believe it's going to be a very long battle. Neither does his commanding officer.

#### Command Interview

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Jensen from

Wilmington, Delaware, discussed a likely battle scenario as we ate dinner together at his rest camp in the Saudi desert. Following is a transcript of our exclusive interview with the 40-year-old commanding officer of 3rd Bn, 7th

*Continued on page 87*

# RAID GAULOISES

## Professional Adventurers Invade Costa Rica

Text & Photos by Tom Slizewski

Late last year we got word that a contest for "professional adventurers" was afoot. Since we are the journal for same, we started checking it out and found that yes, a whole bunch of crazy people were going to get together in Costa Rica and pit their skills and well-being against — something.

That "something" turned out to be Raid Gauloises, a 12-day killer endurance race that involved everything from rafting to horseback riding, parachuting to orienteering, to just plain hard-ass humping. SOF-type fun, to be sure. We didn't have time to field our own team (at least one that would have a shot at



Slizewski

the title), so we opted instead to send SOF Editor Tom Slizewski and Contributor Chuck Fremont down to cover this rather manic event, held in one of the most beautiful countries in the world (they both went, kicking and screaming about "hardship" tours, but they went). Somehow

they survived, and the first of their two-part series follows.

**F**LOATING sideways down the Rio Platanares in a Daihatsu 4X4 with water splashing through the window wasn't part of the plan. But then plans rarely survive the point of contact.

This "contact" was no exception. SOF contributor Chuck Fremont and I were on the trail of the Raid Gauloises (pronounced Gaul-waz), a unique race/adventure/endurance contest that defies easy

labeling.

We'd planned our coverage in detail prior to our arrival in San Jose, Costa Rica (the starting point of the Raid), but were immediately thrown a curve when we found out the organizers had moved the start to the Caribbean coast town of Puerto Limon some 150 kilometers away.

This would be the first of many "curves" we'd have to contend with. We found that throughout the Raid the organization was loose and that participants and journalists alike would have to think on their feet to keep up. At the beginning everyone was given a list of checkpoints, resupply sites and a range of dates when to be there; then you were on your own.

Within an hour we were carving our way through the towering peaks of Costa Rica's (CR's) rugged central mountains in our tiny Japanese 4X4. Driving in the country is an adventure in itself, as traffic signs and road markings are treated as mere recommendations, to be ignored more often than not. This has made traffic deaths the number one killer of young men in the country and one sees commemorative crosses along all the major roadways. Though my life flashed before my eyes a





For four days teams straggled into Jimenez along this beach.

couple of times and my beard froze every time I was forced to share a 1-1/2-lane road with three vehicles (two of them being trucks), we made it to Limon.

Limon is CR's major port on the Caribbean side and is populated primarily by Afro-Caribbeans who settled here at the turn of the century when railroad jobs were plentiful and cheap labor flooded into the country. While the town itself is nothing to look at, the beaches around it are magnets for sun-worshippers and surfers alike.

The unexpected arrival of some 300 "raiders" and support staff filled all available lodging. We'd almost resigned ourselves to camping when we struck pay dirt and found a room at the *Cabinas Cochinas*, a living monument to Third Worldliness. The refrigerator, which wasn't plugged in and smelled like a refrigerator that hasn't been plugged in, had more rust than paint. On top was what had to be the world's least ambitious cockroach. This little guy was moving so slow a passing snail would have blown him off the road. Eight hours later he still hadn't made it across.

On the table was a covered bowl which contained a solid blob of crystallized



sugar. The shower had towels that I normally wouldn't dry my dog off with — small, moldy, worn-out rags.

We unloaded our gear and spent several hours running down the Gauloises management. Miracle of miracles, we finally succeeded in finding someone who admitted to knowing something about the Raid. "There's a press center at the *Maribu Caribe Hotel*," we were told. We made our way there and found the press center staffed by two native women who knew absolutely nothing about the Raid. "Wait for press meeting later," they communi-

Team Equinox emerges from the rain forest for the final leg into San Gerardo after more than three days on the mountain.

cated in pidgin English.

Later there was indeed a press briefing where we met the man behind the Raid, Gerard Fusil. Trite as it may sound, Fusil, 44, looked like an older Indiana Jones with his booney hat, rugged features, just a hint of a beard and a gleam of adventure in his eye. Fusil's no stranger to living on the edge; he was a member of the four-man crew that broke the transatlantic yachting

record in 1981 and has acted as scout/pointman for the Paris-Dakar desert rally (in which several competitors die each year), among other things.

Fusil was in his element here, heading up the event he founded, the 2nd annual Raid Gauloises. The first was in November 1989 in New Zealand. As Fusil describes it, "The Raid Gauloises is a concept of sporting adventure which calls on the resources and knowledge of man alone ... it implies total autonomy in a natural environment, a different lifestyle diagonally opposed to normal daily life."

### 300km of Jungle

The Raid is basically a contest in which teams of five competitors, a least one of whom must be a woman, race to be the first to finish. The Raid started on the Caribbean/Atlantic coast and wound its way diagonally across the country to the Pacific coast, a distance of more than 300km. Unlike pure endurance contests, such as triathalons and "Iron Man" races, in the Raid your brain power is as important as your physical conditioning. There's no official route to take for much of the race; your team is given checkpoints on the map and you orienteer your way toward them, taking any route you choose.

Thirty-four teams anteed up the nearly \$10,000 entry fee to compete. Twenty-eight teams were French, one French-Gabonese-New Zealander, one Belgian, one Luxembourgian, two Costa Rican and one multinational team of journalists. All but the Luxembourgian and one CR team had sponsors with deep pockets behind them to pay the entry fee and the remaining \$10,000-\$50,000 needed to field a team.

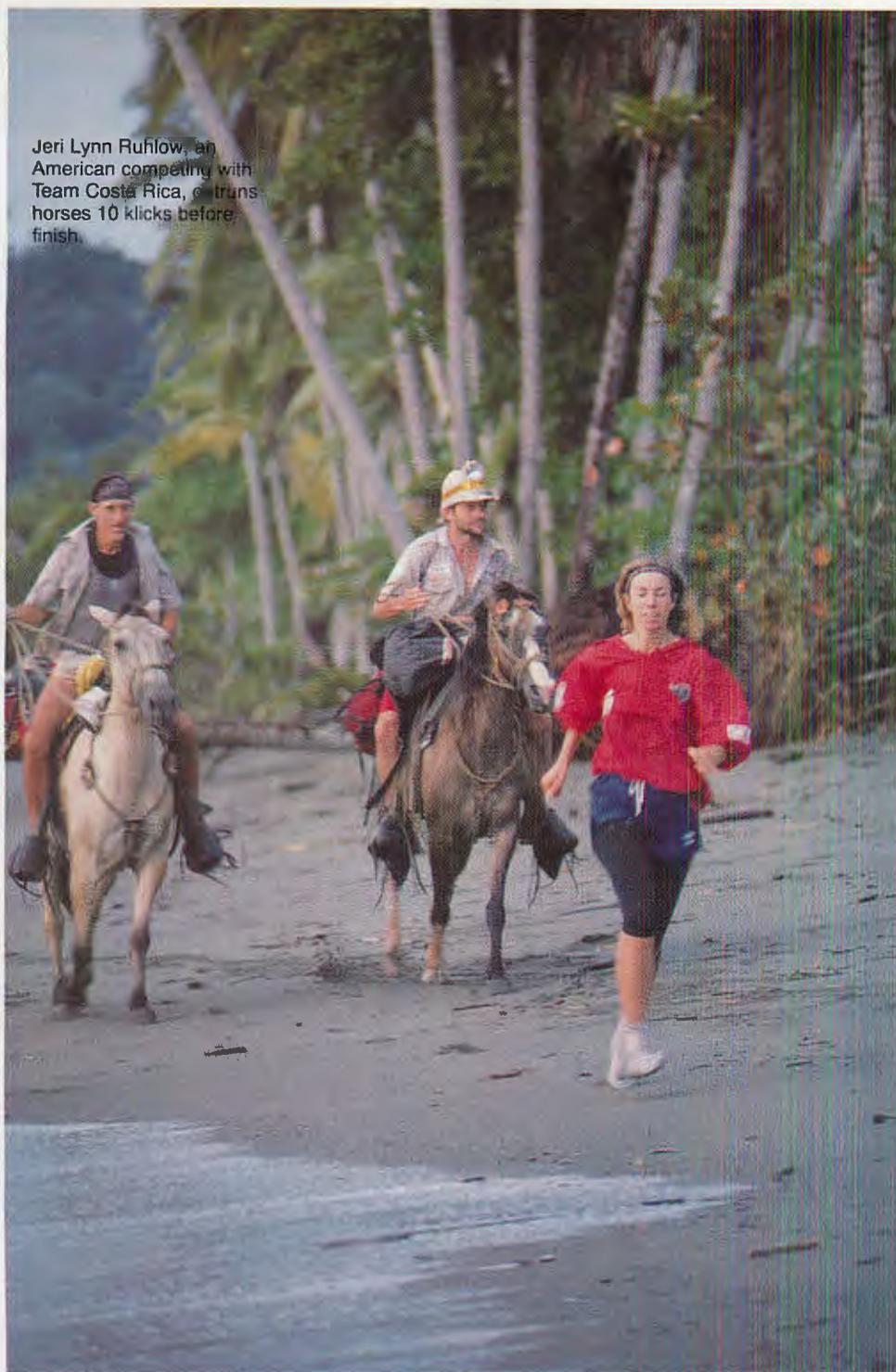
With each team are at least two support members who drive a support vehicle to meet their team at predesignated assistance/resupply points. One member of each team is designated the captain and must prove his orienteering knowledge before being allowed to start. Each team must also include a certified river guide.

When you figure in air fare for seven people, 4X4 rental, food for two weeks and specialized clothing and equipment, it's easy to see how the cost adds up. Raid Gauloises provides the required canoes, rafts and parachutes; the teams provide the rest.

With two inflatable canoes per team rigged in various configurations, the teams lined up on the beach at Playa Bonita near Puerto Limon on 1 December. A gunshot signalled "go" and 170 raiders hit the surf. They were required to canoe several clicks along the coast, land on the beach, then carry their canoes a short stretch to the Tortuguero canal. Here, they embarked for the trip to Barra Matina Norte, more than 20km away.

### Airborne in Banana Land

No road parallels the canal, so support vehicles had a 40km trip through



Jeri Lynn Ruhlow, an American competing with Team Costa Rica, outruns horses 10 clicks before finish.

seemingly endless expanses of banana fields. Bananas are CR's number one cash crop. Though more labor intensive than cattle or coffee, they yield 284 times more money per acre than cattle.

Racing through plantations in dust plumes left by faster vehicles, I got the feeling of being in a road rally. Several times, someone in a greater hurry than I would whip by on the shoulder of the road. I could usually only catch a glimpse of a bestickered jeep, and was left eating dust.

Eventually, the dust caked everything and I was forced to wipe off the gauges just to read them. Visibility was no more than

20 feet, as I was reminded whenever I failed to notice a hole in the road. Suddenly — "kaachuuunng" — the jeep was airborne.

I had jumped over the tracks of the Atlantic Railroad. Financed by European money and built by foreign laborers, these tracks were the only way to travel coast to coast in CR until a road was completed in 1970. Construction took 19 years, killed 4,000 workers and cost \$8 million (an unheard-of sum at the time). The train still runs daily from San Jose, the capital, to Limon, and fare is only a buck; the trip takes only two hours by car, however, and

seven to eight by train.

Thankfully, the train was nowhere to be seen when I flew over the crossing, which resembled a ski jump as much as anything else. Afterwards I ran into the first of many detours from the road, none of which showed up on either of my two maps. With a compass, some recognizable landmarks, and common sense, I found the one dirt trail that led to Barra Matina Norte, which turned out to be a single house with a small pier.

The first teams arrived at the finish about four hours after starting. Teams continued to straggle in until mid-afternoon. After their arrival times were recorded, they boarded their support vehicles for the road trip to Grano De Oro.

Though the physical distance between Barra Matina Norte and Grano De Oro is only 120km, the last 25km are what the French referred to as *route de terre* — dirt road. Calling this last stretch a dirt road is like calling a marathon a jog around the block. While true, it doesn't begin to give you the full picture. The route to Grano De Oro indeed started as a dirt road, became a four-wheel drive trail, then degenerated into a goat track. Twenty-five clicks took us two hours in four-wheel drive low.

It was just beginning to get dark when we arrived at the cow pasture which served as the bivouac site. We found ourselves deep in CR's mystical cloud forest, an area of perpetual rain — up to 360 inches a year. The rain is a light, constant drizzle that soaks you to the skin within minutes of exposure. We set up our shelters and ate Lurp rations. It was my first experience with these bags of epicurean delight. They beat the heck out of MREs and C-Rats, but the plastic spoon was still the best part.

#### At 0300 the Cows Came Home

It rained all evening and throughout the night. Just before 0300 I woke to find a large member of the bovine family standing next to my tent. A French team had knocked over the fence allowing the cows to wander among the tents. I glared at it in a daze, trying to communicate that now would not be a good time to relieve itself. It was gone when I again woke, leaving no large oval-shaped surprises.

At 0530 on 2 December, the first team set off for the most grueling part of the Raid. Depending on how teams finished in the canoeing, they started at timed intervals on a hike from Grano De Oro to San Gerardo, a distance of more than 70km over some of the roughest terrain CR has to offer.

From Grano De Oro through three checkpoints at Sitio Hilda, Point 3333 and Chirripo (the highest point in southern Central America), the teams were racing to be first across the mountain. It always rains at this altitude, there are rivers to cross, serious mud to contend with, and only unmapped, often overgrown, Indian trails to walk along. It was more than many teams could handle.

The support teams and I left via the route de "terror" we came in on and drove the circuitous road around the mountain to Cartago and on to San Isidro, then back up into the forest of clouds to San Gerardo. Like almost every place we camped, San Gerardo didn't appear on anything but the most detailed of maps. To no one's surprise, it was raining; there were brief respites from the constant drizzle, but it basically rained for three straight days.

We received updates on the teams as they reached the checkpoints (note that the teams take the name of their sponsors). At Sitio Hilda, *Cafe Brit* (Costa Rican premium coffee) showed up first, with *L'Arche* (a French restaurant chain similar to Howard Johnson's) 40 minutes behind. *Delmas* (a French shipping business) came in another 20 minutes back. At Point 3333, *Cafe Brit* still held the lead, but non-sponsored Team Costa Rica had moved into second, with *Delmas* just behind. At the third checkpoint, Chirripo, Team Costa Rica was in first place, *Cafe Brit* in second, and *L'Arche* in third.

Team Costa Rica pushed its way into San Gerardo just after 1300 on 4 December. *Cafe Brit* was close behind with the French *Groupe D'Intervention Gendarmerie Nationale* (GIGS) — the national military police antiterrorist group sponsored by Gore-Tex — moving up to third. The Gabonese woman on the *Delmas* team developed altitude sickness and gave up. Members from several teams surrendered, and at least three were evacuated by helicopter on the first two days alone. Many looked like death warmed-over by the time they wandered into San Gerardo.

#### Rafting the General

The next leg called for rafting down the Rio General from San Isidro to Paso Real, a distance of more than 70km. At Paso Real the teams switched from raft to canoe for the final 30km stretch to Palmar Norte. Here, they were picked up by their support vehicles and driven along 17km of labyrinthine dirt tracks, deep in coffee country, to the hamlet of Sierpe.

The waters of the Rio General are class 4 and 5 whitewater rapids. This means that they are fast and more-or-less safe, though deaths are not unheard-of on class 5 rapids. Teams were not allowed to travel between 1730 and 0530 on any portion of the river due to the danger of rafting at night.

River travel allowed the teams to cover ground in much shorter time than traveling on foot. By 7 December, the lead teams were canoeing toward the Pacific Ocean along the Rio Sierpe to Guerra, where they disembarked and made their way 60km on foot along the Osa Peninsula to Carate. In Carate each team took on three horses for the final 40km stretch to the finish.

Horses proved to be a mixed blessing. For those who knew how to handle them, three members from a team could ride at a steady pace. Most, however, had no

horsemanship skills and could barely get them to move. At least one team abandoned a slow-moving horse.

There was no way to follow the teams once they left Sierpe, as the river ran through virgin rain forest. The next place to catch a glimpse of the raiders was outside of Puerto Jimenez, the major town on the Osa Peninsula and the finish line for the Raid Gauloises.

We spent a night in Palmar Norte, where sleeping space was so rare locals took in some of the overflow by renting out rooms in their houses. I was saved from having to sleep in a closet (a bargain at \$6 a night) by a British camera team I'd helped earlier. They were trying to follow the Raid in a Toyota sedan — an impossibility. Their car didn't even last one day along a sort-of-paved road.

#### Highway to Hell

If there is a highway to Hell, it must look a lot like the Inter-Americana between Palmar Norte and the Panamanian border. With potholes that could more accurately be classified as foxholes, and the occasional street-wide trench, this stretch of road ages cars fast. I saw numerous car carcasses along the side of the road, and it was no mystery how they got that way.

Driving on this "road" was reminiscent of a Mad Max movie, and a recipe for disaster. Though they always blew by too fast to see, I could swear all the truck drivers had mohawks and full-body tattoos. My personal lowlight came when a Raid Gauloises support vehicle, stacked so full of gear it blocked its rear window and mirrors, passed me, came to a complete stop in the middle of the highway, then proceeded in reverse until, over my screaming horn, it slammed into my vehicle. That's when I learned of CR's simple, no-hassle insurance system: If the damage is to your car, it's your fault. *C'est la vie*.

There's a world of difference once you get off the Inter-Americana and onto the road to Rincon. This is the nicest 21km of continuous road in the country. The motorcyclist in me took over as we sliced through the serpentine red-paved roadway. We didn't see so much as a single human being as we made our way to Rincon, past mountains of blood-red earth. The local name for it is *terra rosa* — literally, red earth. It's actually oxidized iron — rust — that has mixed with the dirt to turn it a blood red.

At Rincon, the road becomes dirt again. It's slow going to Jimenez, but at least the rivers are bridged (mostly with World War II-era Bailey bridges). Jimenez and most of the Osa peninsula are effected by a freak weather pattern that, like the cloud forests of the central mountains, results in huge amounts of rain, upwards of 150 inches a year.

Few people live out in this almost prehistoric land, and over 108,000 acres

are protected by the government against commercial exploitation. This has made Osa a paradise of vegetation and wildlife. To date, 500 species of trees and more than 285 types of birds have been identified. The point was brought home to me when upon entering Jimenez, there were seven Scarlet Macaws perched in a tree. Later, one sidled up to a bar we were in and cawed-out what sounded like, "Polly want a rum and coke." The barkeep satisfied it with wet soda crackers. It emptied its glass, swaggered along the bar John Wayne style, and flew out the door.

Thoroughly tired of camping and among the first to arrive in Jimenez, we got ourselves a room — no extra charge for the large mold growing on the wall. Within a couple of hours we were out on our asses, asked to leave because some French microphone holder had our room reserved. Since the mold had doubled in size in the two hours we'd been there, and a sweet-faced girl had drawn the short straw and had to approach the two guys from SOF to ask them to leave, we didn't raise a fuss. Not content to hang around with the other press taking happy-snaps at the finish line, we decided to head into the rain forest to meet the lead teams.

#### A Taste of the Russian Front

The invincible, two-tone, slightly dented Daihatsu from Hell roared to life and off we went. Our 1989-dated U.S. Army Escape & Evasion map showed a sort of road going up to Carate, where the teams would pick up their horses. What it didn't show was the more than eight unbridged streams and rivers one had to cross to get there. Heading into the jungle the tide was low and we crossed with ease. Some 20 clicks into the interior, we ran into full-fledged, drive-in-and-drown river. Showing perhaps uncharacteristic good sense, we did not attempt fording.

Instead, we turned around looking for a way to drive through the jungle to the beach, along which the teams would most likely be traveling. Night fell like a hammer, and what had been a barely navigable dirt track became a nightmare of mud, rocks and vehicle-swallowing ditches; the jeep slid along out of control as often as not. With a symphony of skid plate impacts drowning out the sound of the straining motor and odd kamikaze owls buzzing the headlights, we plodded along.

More disheartening was the fact that the rivers we were crossing seemed to be getting deeper — as indeed they were; the tide was coming in. I managed to keep us moving along fairly well and only slipped

completely off the track once. Getting a 4X4 stuck so it won't move in either direction makes for tense moments, but we wriggled loose.

All went relatively well until we ran into "the river." A local was waiting on the opposite side when we arrived, and his advice was to wait 20 minutes before fording. Fremont threw an object in the river to gauge the tide and found it was getting deeper, not shallower — we had to cross now!

Fremont got out. I took a deep breath and slowly entered the river; the local looked perplexed. As noted at the beginning of this story, the car briefly floated. Water splashed through the windows and the headlights were completely submerged, when unexpectedly the car touched bottom and roared out under its own power, whereupon it promptly stalled.

"Pequeno pero fuerte!" the local exclaimed, not hiding his amazement — "small but strong." We found out the next day that two vehicles were complete losses after being washed into the Pacific while trying to ford these rivers.

The Daihatsu started again but would no longer idle. We found a way to the beach and set up camp. For the next two days we photographed and talked with the lead teams heading into Jimenez.

After all that work, we missed the first place team. Exhausted, we crashed into our hammocks and slept. At around 0400 by my reckoning, the French GIGS team rode by without waking us (or even seeing us). Some two hours later, Team Costa Rica rode up; unfortunately they'd lost a team member and could no longer win. Hours behind them came the L'Arche team. Teams that had started out at the mountain 10 minutes apart were now hours and even days apart. Many teams had to be led off the mountain by a guide flown in by helicopter.

Though teams drop out, individuals are never forced to quit. If your team loses more than two people, you can take on members from other teams. This makes you ineligible to win, but allows all individuals to finish the Raid if they are able. You're not out of it until you

surrender or until the 12th day, when all teams must be finished.

As it turned out, the first team finished early in the afternoon on 8 December. The GIGS team would have made it several hours earlier, but was forced to wait for the tide to recede as the finish line was located on a tidal mud flat that was under water for much of the day. They waited for hours, but when they saw Team Costa Rica approaching on the horizon, decided to force their horses to swim to the finish. It worked, though one horse almost drowned and literally had to be given human-to-horse resuscitation.

On 12 December it was over, and all team members that wanted to boarded planes for a flight up the coast to Quepos, where they made a parachute jump to officially mark the end of the 2nd Raid Gauloises.

We headed back to what the locals in Jimenez called "the anthill" — San Jose. It turned out we hadn't followed any of our original plan, but managed to keep up with the Raid at every step. The participants also found that you can't experience something like this by following a set scheme. Skill, flexibility and perseverance will win out over a plan every time.

It would be a crime to end this article without giving the host country, Costa Rica, a plug. The Ticos, as Costa Ricans refer to themselves, are a warm, friendly people, and the country they live in is an outdoorsmen's paradise. *Outside* magazine said, "This West Virginia-size chunk of Central America offers more beauty and adventure per acre than any other place in the world." I agree. But regardless of location, the Raid Gauloises is one heck of an adventure.

*Who are the people that participate in this event? How can you join? Stay tuned next month for Chuck Fremont's account of his trek through the mountains and interviews with the raiders.* ✕



Captain of winning GIGS/Gore-Tex team after three-day hump over mountains.



Team Lyofal briefly gets above the cloud forest during Day 1 of mountain trek. Photo: Chuck Fremont

#### TOP TO BOTTOM:

- The last 100 yards before the finish.
- Scarlet Macaw orders a drink.
- Youths carry coffee to market.
- Rafting down the Rio General on Day 5. Photo: Chuck Fremont
- Organizer Gerard Fusil briefs New Caledonia team before mountain trek.
- Manic scene at cow pasture bivouac site on Day 2.
- Bananas, bananas everywhere. Raiders during hump over mountains. Photo: Chuck Fremont



**BARRA MATINA NORTE**

**LIMON**

**GRANO DE ORO**

**CARTAGO**

**CORDILLERA DE TALAMANCA**

**SAN GERARDO**

**SAN ISIDRO**

**VALLE DEL GENERAL**

**PASO REAL**

**PALMA NORTE**

**SIERPE**

**DIQUIS**

**GUERRA**

**BAHIA DE CORONADO**

**JIMENEZ**

**CARATE**

**GOLFO DULCE**

**KEY TO MAP**

- Rafting
- Canoeing
- Hiking
- Ride & Run
- 4-wheeling



# FAST AND FURIOUS

by Edward Brown

**T**HE lead man of the FAST (Fleet Antiterrorist Security Team) kept to the shadows alongside the still-silent building at the Naval Operations Base (NOB), Norfolk. Glancing back in the gloom, he could barely make out the five other Marines close behind him, all in camouflage paint, loaded with grenades and carrying pistols, 9mm submachine guns, 12-gauge shotguns with OO buck, and M16A2s. The beating of a helicopter in the distance was growing louder. It wouldn't be long now.

The unthinkable had finally happened. Terrorists were making their first massive strike in the United States, at the home port of the Atlantic fleet in Virginia, and were trying to do as much damage (and cause as much embarrassment) as they could before being overwhelmed by the American response. However, no sooner had the terrorists gotten aboard NOB than their plans went awry. They'd cut their way undetected through the fence after a car-fire diversion at the main gate, but soon afterwards had been forced to start shooting and so disclose their presence when a roving patrol of the Security Force Battalion spotted them. The terrorists hurriedly split up into nine seven-man groups and ran for previously selected objectives on the base. The good news was that soon after their night-time incursion, eight of these terrorist teams had already been rolled up by quick action — the bad that there was at least one group still loose, and if they were equipped like their fanatic brothers-in-arms already down, they had automatic weapons and rucksacks full of ammunition and Semtex plastic explosive.

## The Response

The Marine Corps has in place and ready to go in both FMF (Fleet Marine Force) Atlantic and Pacific, two companies of FAST Marines. The Atlantic Company consists of eight officers and 337 enlisted men, the Pacific Company six officers and 250 enlisted men, all equipped and trained to be the cutting edge of the sword that deals with terrorists who

attempt to board U.S. Naval installations with evil intent. FAST is a state-of-the-art response to the contemporary threat to our country from fanatics of the Third World.

FAST companies are part of a fairly new formation, the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion (MCSFBn). Four years ago, after a high-level study team determined that the terrorist danger was real and not likely to go away, and that we had to have in our people inventory Marines specially trained for anti-terrorism, these two battalions on the East and West Coasts were organized and came on line in the spring of 1987. Marine Corps Security Force Companies of the MCSFBn replaced most of the Marine barracks security elements all over the world, but they operate with a considerably wider brief than this traditional — and very largely ceremonial — unit of the "Old Corps."

In December 1988 Marines stood their last watches at naval installation gates everywhere, and MCSFBn, the size of a beefed up regiment, began the serious work of developing effective training and procedures to thwart the terrorist threat. This included antiterrorist training for security at the MCSF companies in places such as Norfolk and Charlestown, Virginia, and Kings Bay, Georgia — as well as those in London, Rota, Naples, and Bermuda. On the Pacific side, this meant companies in Adak, North Island, Diego Garcia and Alameda.

They also train the Marines who are assigned to detachments aboard ships of the fleet. One of the most important of MCSFBn tasks is to prepare cadre to go out and conduct training programs in marksmanship and tactics for shore installation sailors who might one day find themselves putting this training into practice in dealing with terrorist raids.

## Fast and Furious

The Fleet Antiterrorist Security Team is the shock troop element of the MCSFBn. With its eight officers and 337 enlisted men, it's about a third bigger than the

average Marine Corps letter line company. It breaks down into a company headquarters and six platoons of three squads each, a squad consisting of two teams of six and seven men respectively. Endemic to these platoons are specialist "Close Quarter Battle" (CQB) groups whose metier is room clearing. There is also a Weapons Platoon, equipped with mortars, machine guns, and SMAWS (short-range man-portable antitank weapons).

There are two ways to come to FAST — by assignment as a Marine '03, or by volunteering — but making the grade and staying there takes some considerable doing. Enlisted Marines get to a FAST company after boot camp, seven weeks of MCT (Marine Combat Training), and another seven weeks of SOI (School of Infantry), the MOS school for Marine grunts.

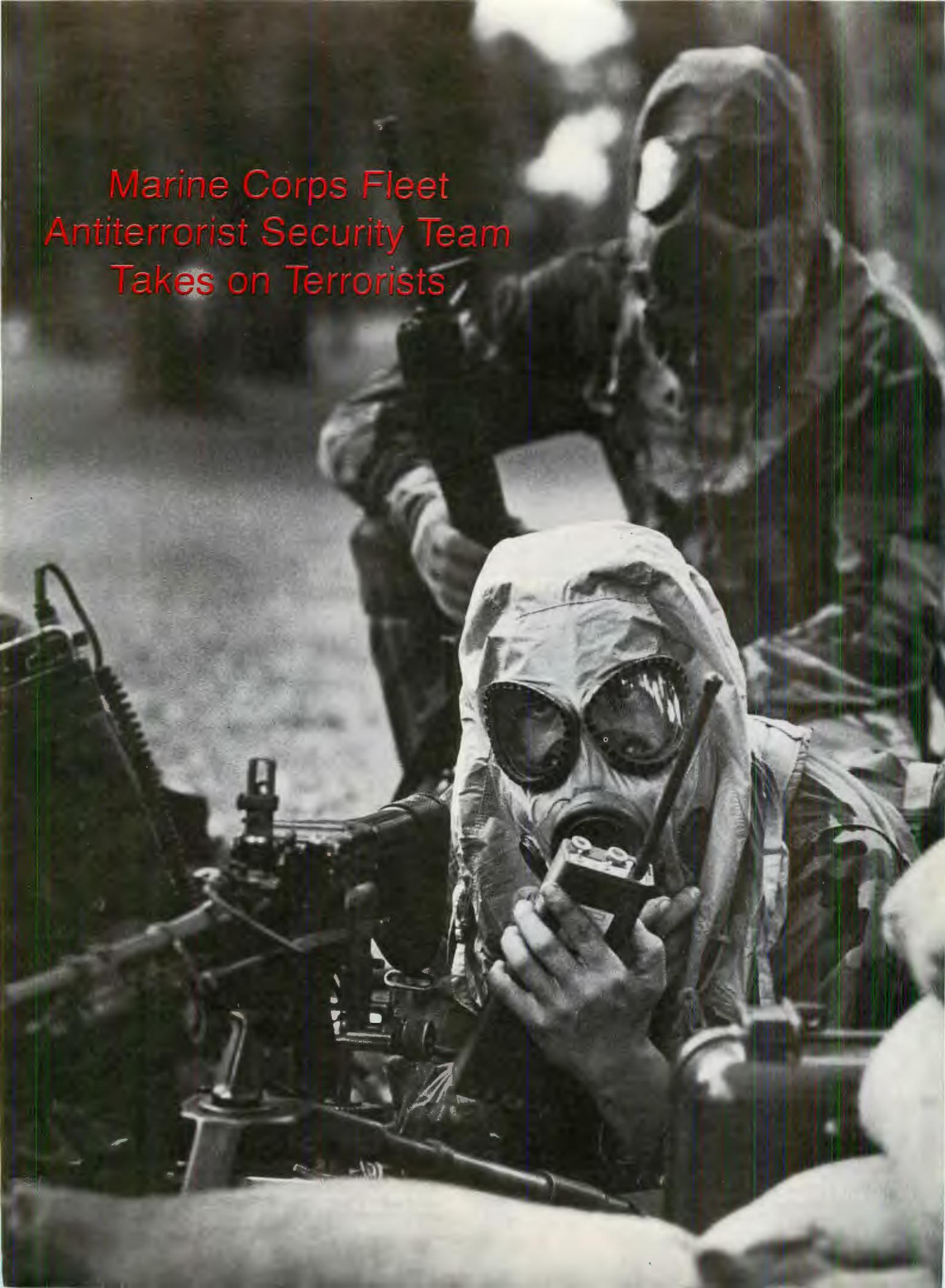
Then it's on to the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion and four more weeks of specialized training which will give the Marine what he needs to begin pulling his weight when he gets his FAST assignment. Coming from Boot Camp via MCT and the SOI, of course, the FAST aspirant is already a disciplined, trained Marine, but he still has plenty to learn here before he can call himself a FAST Marine.

## Training to be Prepared

SOF spent three days observing some of this training at Camp A.P. Hill in Virginia, a venerable Army field training base, and at the MCSFBn facility (unnamed for security reasons) on the Virginia-North Carolina border. Though some of the MCSFBn antiterrorist training is classified, one thing for sure is that it's heavy on weapons work. Trainees fire many rounds through an assortment of fairly exotic weapons at close range dis-

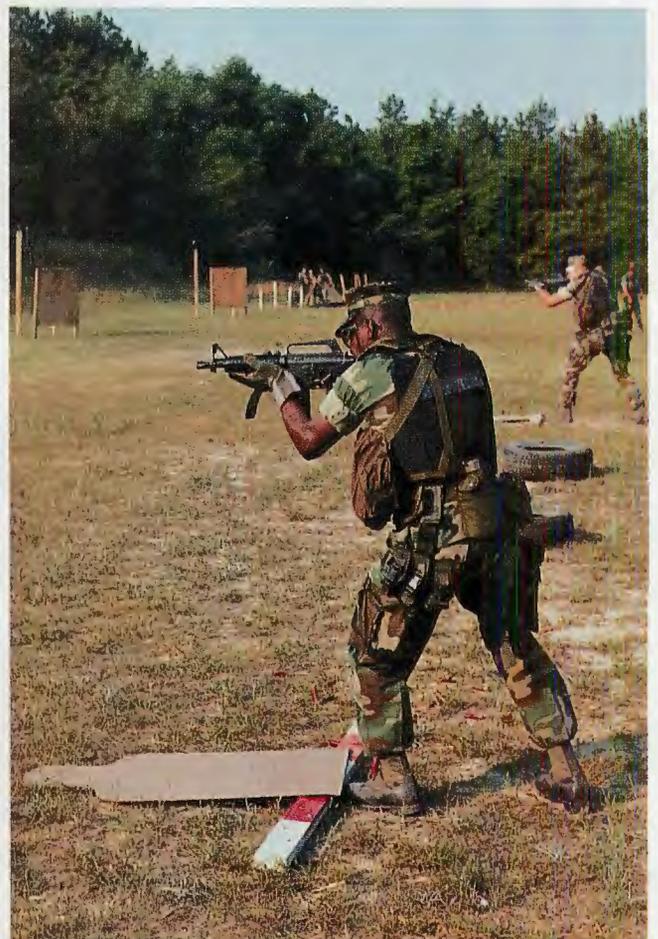
LCpls. Mario Peco (foreground) and John Newman of FAST company Weapons Platoon, MCSFBn, man an M60E3 machine gun after simulated chemical attack on U.S. Naval Station, Mayport, Florida. Photo: SSgt. Earnie Grafton, USMC PAO

Marine Corps Fleet  
Antiterrorist Security Team  
Takes on Terrorists





FAST is not merely an acronym — these Leathernecks are trained to react to a terrorist threat with speed and precision, no matter where it is. Photo: SSgt. Earnie Grafton, USMC PAO



Marine training with Colt submachine gun on range at Camp A.P. Hill. Note Second Chance vest, "gunslinger" after-market holster for 9mm pistol. Photo: Ed Brown

FAST team at door, ready to breach with shotgun and rush. H&K MP5 A3 submachine gun carried by last team member is fitted with grenade launcher that can fire gas, explosive, signaling rounds. Photo: Ed Brown

tances of 3, 7, 10, 15 and 25 meters under varying conditions, with the stress not only on boosting skills for immediate aimed fire, but also on developing the capacity to make instant judgments on when to keep what FAST calls a "straight trigger finger" to avoid puncturing innocent hostages or bystanders.

After finishing the basic course in 9mm pistol, they go to the combat course, firing round after round in the standing, kneeling, both-knees-down, and prone positions, depending on how far the target is downrange. Trainees also learn how to fire from behind barricades. After satisfying exacting range instructors like Gunnery Sergeant David Everts ("We make sure here that if they ever get into a shooting confrontation, which means they have to defend themselves, they will be able to do it — and that we'll be proud of them"), they go on to the shotgun. Gunnery Sergeant Everts explains, "We try to get the idea across that whatever they can do with a rifle, they can do with a shotgun. We use the same terms for both weapons, such as 'field carry' and 'condition three weapon,' which means loaded magazine, no round in the chamber, safety on, so what the Marine has learned in SOI for the M16A2 prepares him for the shotgun."

### Shotguns for Surgery

Lieutenant Colonel Donald Turner, Executive Officer of MCSFBn, makes the further point that "We feel we've only scratched the surface with the shotgun in the Marine Corps. We're reviving and 'rehabing' it as a weapon whose patterning can be effectively used for precision work rather than street sweeping. It really is a most versatile weapon, and that is brought out in our schooling with it here." And the shotgun the Corps is using these days, a Mossberg with nine-round magazine, full choke and rifle-type sights, will put the OO buck or rifled slug just where the shooter tells it to go.

After qualifying with both pistol and shotgun, trainees begin the tactical firing course that requires them to move forward, back, and laterally, engaging targets as they go. Everts notes, "By the time we get finished with them here, they are on the way to being fairly proficient with both shotgun and 9mm. It's 12 days of intensive day-and-night training and each Marine winds up having fired 835 rounds in the course."

### Steel Targets, Paintballs and Realism

The range at A.P. Hill for advanced firing features moving targets with life-sized bad guys painted on them and

## FAST IN THE GULF

The Marine PAO advises that security considerations preclude "any mention of FAST elements in the Gulf." This disclaimer aside, it's a good bet that not only bits and pieces of FAST, but big chunks of FAST's parent Marine Corps Security Force Battalion as well are in-theater with a vigilant eye to thwart any terrorist attempts on U.S. headquarters groups. As Marines know from bitter experience, this part of the world is a breeding ground for terrorists of every anti-Western stripe.

With two-thirds of the Corps dug in there just waiting to see the whites of Iraqi eyes over battle sights, it would be strange indeed to leave behind the premier troops of FAST and the MCSF battalions.

In the words of one MCSF Battalion spokesman, "Our training scenario has remained relatively unchanged and there have been no changes in our equipment." Since FAST already has in its bag of tricks the widest variety of goodies and ordnance to sustain operations everywhere from jungles to arctic tundras, it's unlikely FAST Marines needed anything more than a few sets of chocolate-chip BDUs and lightweight skivvies before they headed out to Saudiland to take care of business.

— E.B.

"shooting on steel" with knockdown silhouettes. Captain Bill Cope, in charge up here, says, "Nothing's written in stone — we're always trying to improve our instruction, and we've recently gone from four to six weeks of firing. We have them shoot down lanes, as if they were in a building corridor, and that gets the Marine ready for the shooting house exercises later. We have a 'man on man' race in which two Marines side-by-side on the firing line engage targets with the SMG, then shift to the pistol."

Besides using A.P. Hill and their facility on the Carolina border, FAST Marines train and shoot at Fort Bragg, Camp LeJeune, Fort Pickett, even the FBI "Tire House" at Quantico. They train in the shooting house at Hill and a ramshackle building at Norfolk, the "Paint House," for paintball exercises.

Asked by SOF what he thought of all this shooting, Lance Corporal Harry Jones said he enjoyed it tremendously. "Where else in the world could you fire so many rounds and actually get money for it? And it's paying off — after only one week here my confidence and shooting skills have improved greatly."

### Favorite Guns and Fast Rope

Lance Corporal Vance Morris said, "It's the second time I've been through the school, and it's even better this time around. I really feel confident that if I ever had to put into practice what I've learned

here, there would be no problem whatsoever." Asked which weapon in the FAST battery he preferred, Morris replied, "The HK. The Colt fires a bit low and you have to hold high Kentucky windage with it, but the MP5 A3 impacts right where you point it."

"The only trouble is," said FAST Company First Sergeant Steve Mellinger, who overheard this opinion, "the HK costs about twice as much as the Colt."

Despite the popularity of the MP5 A3 and Colt SMG here, there are some Marines who still swear by their updated M16s — Sergeant R.L. Parson, for one, who stated, "I like all the live firing we do, and I'm improving my marksmanship every day with all these weapons, but my favorite weapon remains the M16A2. I really enjoy firing it and think this rifle is a real step up from the old M16A1."

And to get Marines where the bad guys are to employ some of these highly developed shooting skills, FAST has some insertion tricks that are mind-boggling. These include "fast roping," and a dizzying, head-first rappel using a figure-eight descender, snap links and tactical sit harness called the "spider crawl."

They practice these techniques on a structure the SeaBees built for them at the MCSFBn facility south of Norfolk. The tower, almost a dead ringer for one of the old 42-footers at the Fort Benning jump school, has a helicopter troop-compartment mockup on one end, where 10 men sitting chock-a-block on the deck can, in a couple of seconds, slide down two fat ropes mounted on either side of the chopper by "fast roping." The "spider crawl" rappel used by FAST is even more eye-popping. A FAST Marine trussed up in what looks like sophisticated rock-climbing gear stands at the edge of the roof, and controlling his motion with one hand on the rappel line that runs through the figure-eight descender clipped to his waist, lets himself gently fall forward until he's upside down with his feet now pointing toward the heavens. He then works his way down the wall, being sure to keep his upslope line clear of windows so as not to give himself away. He can crab along the wall horizontally to a degree, and look into the building as he goes. He even has the ability to draw his pistol and engage a target inside if this is warranted. During training the spider crawler is belayed from below by a Marine standing well out from the wall, but in an action situation he'd be on his own.

### Self-Discipline

Of course a high degree of physical fitness is required for such stunts, and FAST commanders take pains to see their Marines stay in top shape. Major D.W. Reilly, skipper of the MCSFBn FAST Company, says this means "a session of PT every day, be it exercises or running in sweat gear, double-timing in uniform and field boots, going through the throws and

holds of close combat, or even sometimes organized games." Most Marines, of whatever vintage, are in good physical shape, but the FAST people SOF saw at Norfolk really have that lean and mean look. And virtually all of them — officers, senior staff NCOs, and men — have haircuts that approximate the "wind blown" Parris Island clip.

Though the training of FAST Marines in weapons, tactics and patrolling is as exacting, or more so, than in any other Marine unit, there's an interesting co-emphasis throughout toward the development of individual self-discipline, particularly in the gray areas of when to engage and when to hold fire.

Owing to the kinds of missions FAST is tasked with — helping out Naval security forces when Marines are required, augmenting base security to repel terrorist incursions of U.S. naval installations,



providing security for nuclear refueling/de-fueling ops, and activating contingency sites — it's quite possible a FAST platoon or company could end up in a wildly anarchic situation with terrorists, civilians and hostages mixed up in a melange of explosions, firing, burning buildings, screaming, and confusion. It is therefore imperative that the FAST Marine who would be thrust into such a tumult be able to keep his cool and, while still having the go-ahead and means to defend himself, avoid taking out civilians or hostages by hasty, ill-considered response or over-reaction.

"We're really not looking for fire eaters," says MCSFBn Lt. Col. Donald Turner. "We want mature, disciplined and spirited team players who can master the varied and complex skills needed for success in FAST type missions. Just Cause was unique for FAST. The kinds of missions we've had have largely been on Naval installations, providing security in a permissive environment. But we want to be the best at our job, whether it's providing security or going into an urban-type environment (in which U.S. or

foreign nationals would be threatened) and selectively engaging targets."

Lieutenant Colonel Turner continued, "We never lose sight of what everything rests on here. The proficiency, training, desire, and expertise of the individual Marine — these are the basics that we focus on first and foremost. That's what held us together in Panama. The FAST Marines down there had access to an awesome array of weaponry. It could have been very easy for them to have become mesmerized by the firepower at their disposal, but it was our constant emphasis in training here that kept the individual Marine there on his toes and thinking. We've proven you can take a disciplined 18- or 19-year-old and teach him to be discriminating, using some of the techniques police use, things such as 'keeping a straight trigger finger' after the weapon is brought up for possible engage-

ment until he's sure firing is appropriate. One of the big reasons FAST was so effective in Just Cause was this restraint." At lunch the first day in Norfolk, Lt. Col. Turner casually mentioned, "You're going to be impressed with these young men you'll be seeing and talking to the next couple of days." After time with the FAST Marines in the field at A.P. Hill and the MCSFBn training facility, and seeing just how they were training to handle any task, SOF has to agree.

Ed Brown is a former Marine Infantry officer and current member of the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association. He writes for a number of newspapers and professional journals, and is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

Happy snap of Lieutenant Martin and his FAST team shows eight good men and a good assortment of mission-oriented weapons that include the MP5 A3 and Colt 9mm submachine guns, 12-gauge Mossberg shotgun, scoped M16A2 rifle, and Beretta 9mm service pistol in after-market web gear. Photo: Ed Brown

The plan was for Lt. Martin's group (part of which was the specialist room-clearing-and-urban-combat "CQB team") to move in on an objective after the LAI (light armored infantry) had put a perimeter around it and the LAVs a base of fire on it, if necessary. FAST would

I was able to sit down with people in FAST company who had participated in Just Cause and get some informal "After Action Reports" for SOF readers.

Platoon Commander Lieutenant Wayne Martin gave some background: "First Platoon, FAST, got to Rodman Naval Base, Panama, as part of a routine and ongoing rotation process on 10 December ... on 18 December we started to get the feeling that something was about to happen, and at 1830 the next day — six hours prior to H-Hour — we got the word we'd be going in that night.

"We didn't have time to rehearse but earlier we had been able to get to Fort Davis on the Atlantic side of the Canal for an abbreviated session of jungle training/orientation, and we then got a chance to work with some U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter pilots, 'fast roping' and flying nap-of-the-earth. Actually, when H-Hour was coming up, we couldn't do anything unusual in the way of preparation for the operation, at least out in the open...

"We had two Suburban-type vehicles from the MCSF Company there and planned to use these to follow the LAVs in trace. We'd anticipated that something like Just Cause might go and had brought all our equipment down, and we had everything we needed. We didn't wear helmets, but did have on our Second Chance vests, and carried 120 rounds for the SMGs, 45 for the 9mm pistol. Each Marine had anywhere from two to four frag grenades, and at least three 'flash bangs.' Platoon members with SMGs also had M16A2s, two had M203s, in case of need, and took along seven 30-round magazines for them. We had eight shotguns for breaching purposes. FAST had a wide variety of weaponry, and this allowed us real flexibility. Whoever came up with the idea of attaching lights under the barrels of our SMGs and 9mm had the right idea. When the sun's up you don't think about it, but when it starts getting dark, having that means of illuminating a possible target can mean everything."

The plan was for Lt. Martin's group (part of which was the specialist room-clearing-and-urban-combat "CQB team") to move in on an objective after the LAI (light armored infantry) had put a perimeter around it and the LAVs a base of fire on it, if necessary. FAST would

## FAST IN JUST CAUSE: CRITIQUE

then come up and deploy to clear any buildings there.

Lieutenant Martin continued, "The LAVs moved so fast that we had contact at our first objective five minutes after leaving Rodman — at 0105. The LAVs had already begun engaging the DNTP (Transport Police) station when we got there, and it was here that Corporal Garreth Isaacs of 2nd Light Armored Infantry was KIA...the toughest assault during that time for us was when we hit the 10th Military Zone Headquarters of the PDF at La Chorrea. We'd had intel reports that there were a large force of PDF here, so we got in touch with a Marine FAC working with the Air Force and he brought in A-7s which were on station. They did a thorough prep of the target and then LAI and FAST moved in. This was a difficult one because the buildings were large, with many rooms and corridors, and it was getting dark.

"If the situation allowed for it, we'd usually begin clearing a room by throwing in a flash-bang, then rushing in at once to capitalize on the surprise and confusion. We didn't just go in and hose the place down with submachine-gun fire because of the very real possibility in this operation of causing harm to innocent civilians. Our full package of MOUT training helped out a lot here. FAST cleared some 30 buildings in Just Cause, from shacks to three-story barracks with wings."

Besides the Second Marine Division LAVs and LAI, FAST worked with a U.S. Army Special Ops Psy Team in Just Cause, in sound vehicles calling for surrender. This tactic proved to be effective in many cases. When some of these people saw a large and powerful force rolling in on them, their sporting blood turned to pee pee and they just threw in the towel. FAST platoon members who fought in Just Cause generally agreed that in many cases there was not a lot of resolve on the part of the Panamanians to put up much of a fight. Lieutenant Martin noted, "The contacts we had were sporadic and short in duration... those who did elect to fight would engage us from covered and concealed positions at some distance, then quickly move off. Maybe this was because it seemed most of the people down there were in favor of the U.S. effort."

And just about everywhere the Marines went people would jump up and point out PDFs or "Ding Bats," the U.S. term for Dignity Battalion members. Any time someone was

identified as one of the bad guys, he'd be detained and moved back. On one occasion a couple of men in their 20s drinking beer came up to FAST Marines and offered to give them information on the movements of some local DBs. People there saw this and told FAST the two men were themselves Ding Bats. As they were flexcuffed and led away, there was cheering from a crowd which had assembled. FAST has several Spanish speakers in its ranks, so communication with Panamanians who wanted to provide intelligence was no problem, and every man had a smattering of "survival Spanish" to help him function vis-a-vis the population there.

Staff Sergeant Joe Marty recalled, "Late on the morning of the 21st, we got word that a force of Ding Bats had gone into Arraijan and was looting the place and raising Cain. MarFor sent in the LAVs and we came in behind them, but things were fairly quiet by the time we got over there. That night S-2 reported 300 PDFs, mixed with Dignity Battalion troops and armed with AK-47s and RPGs, were coming up from the south to assault us and get the town back. By this time I had 22 FAST Marines and four LAVs. A couple of PDFs in civilian clothes but carrying weapons came up on us and failed to respond to our challenge. They were fired on and one killed; the other picked up his partner's AK-47, jumped over a fence, and was gone."

On the morning of 22 December another report came in that the port city of Vaca Monte was being trashed by DBs, and once again SSgt. Marty and his Marines saddled up and got over there, along with some LAI. "Sergeant Silva and the CQB team started clearing a row of houses and I had the rest of my people check the high ground across from the town, then came down and helped him and the LAI clear the rest of the houses. We also cleared about 100 boats in the harbor, and took in some detainees — about 25 'keepers' — and ran 24 patrols in the hills around Vaca Monte. One of the things I found surprising was the variety in the weapons we confiscated while on road block and in house clearing: AK-47s, sporting rifles, shotguns, many in .410 gauge, 30-30s, even some vintage Daisy BB guns."

Corporal Hector Delgado was with two groups of the FAST platoon in Just Cause, with SSgt. Marty at Arraijan, then with CQB doing, among other things, interpreting duties. As a native Spanish speaker, he

was perhaps more attuned to the mood of the Panamanians than some other Marines, and was impressed with the friendliness of the populace. "Of course," he recalls, "people wanted more than anything to get out of an area where there was shooting going on, but they still seemed quite happy. The kids would jump around and their parents were thanking us, some with tears in their eyes. They were really glad to be getting rid of Noriega. Working with the LAVs was something — it gave us a good feeling to have that rolling artillery right there with us."

Lance Corporal Charles Garrick ended up the platoon historian for Just Cause. He explained this was "mainly because I had a good memory of the events and details of the operation. After the shooting we walked the ground with Mister Rowe, the MarFor PAO, and gave him our collective impressions of what had happened, particularly on the first night of the assault, and I seemed to be able to get the sequence of events right." His other job in the FAST platoon was as number one man on the CQB team. "I was either in front of the lieutenant or just in back of him going into buildings, and that may account for my good recall of what went on. I was up front for everything, at least initially."

Sergeant Salvatore Silva says that 10 days sustainment training his CQB team had at A.P. Hill just before rotating to Panama, particularly the time spent in the Shooting House, was a big help. "We also had some days at the FBI Tire House at Quantico, and that was valuable as well. The most exciting time for me was when we assaulted the PDF 10th Military Zone Headquarters. Everyone was so pumped up that we didn't even realize we were taking rounds from snipers outside the perimeter and only found this out later from Captain Gaskins. There was so much shooting going on when we made our entry into the first building — suppressive and door-breaching fire from the LAVs included — and you have such a narrow focus in a situation like that, no one realized we were getting this incoming."

Staff Sergeant Paul May was with SSgt. Marty's section. "My job changed a lot because our group was moved around so much and given different missions. I went from Arraijan to working with the police to helping provide security at the

*Continued on page 82*

# VIETNAM BIRD DOG

## One Flew Over the Hornet's Nest

by Bill Hooper as told to Jim Hooper

Photos courtesy of the author



Hooper flies up Highway 1 to DMZ. Photo was taken with 500mm lens from another Bird Dog.

Bill Hooper was drafted in December 1965 and sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, for basic training then to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for advanced infantry training. Upon completion he passed the board for Officer Candidate School, and received his commission as a second lieutenant in the artillery. He was accepted for fixed wing flight training and sent to Fort Stewart, Georgia, for primary and then Fort Rucker, Alabama, for advanced training.

In June 1968 he arrived in the Republic of South Vietnam and was assigned to the 21st Reconnaissance Aircraft Company ("Black Aces") as an O-1 Bird Dog pilot. Six weeks later, he requested assignment to the all-volunteer 220th RAC ("Catkillers") which operated on both

sides of the DMZ and was considered to have the most dangerous mission profile for Bird Dogs in the entire theatre. On 23 March 1969, after logging over 900 combat flying hours, the 21-year-old captain was seriously wounded while directing artillery fire against an NVA bunker system inside North Vietnam. In spite of a shattered right arm, he was successful in returning to an emergency airstrip south of the Ben Hai River. After 18 months in the hospital he returned to college, graduating with a Masters Degree in Ocean Engineering. The following is a typical day-in-the-life of a Vietnam Bird Dog.

**I**ARRIVED in Vietnam as a fresh faced 20-year-old 1st lieutenant and was as-

signed to the 21st RAC, which was headquartered at Chu Lai in I Corps some 40 or 50 miles south of Danang. I was assigned to the 3rd Platoon, which was located within a small citadel in the city of Quang Ngai. Our flight operations were staged out of a small airfield on the western side of the Quang Ngai River, approximately 5 kilometers from our HQ in the citadel. We were tasked with providing support to the 1st ARVN Regiment.

During the latter part of June 1968, combined NVA-VC forces were increasing pressure on Quang Ngai in an attempt to force the 1st ARVN Regiment from that location. Typically, around 0100-0300 the city would receive sporadic mortar and



Presentation of Silver Star for actions in DMZ, March 1965.

occasional rocket fire accompanied by small skirmishes on the outskirts of the city.

One night the mortar fire became particularly intense and by around 0300 we had been advised that NVA-VC forces had penetrated the city limits and that units of the 1st ARVN Regiment were engaging them in street-to-street fighting. At about the same time we were informed that the bridges over the Quang Ngai River connecting the city to the airfield had been attacked. At around 0530 it was confirmed that the main bridge had in fact been blown and a smaller auxiliary bridge heavily damaged. Concurrent with this information, we received orders from the 1st ARVN Command Post to launch a single aircraft to recon the outskirts of the city and provide fire support as required.

### Bachelors Fly First

The first problem was the passage between the city and the airfield. As the city was still unsecured and some street fighting still in progress, there were no ARVN troops to escort a pilot to the airfield. As I was the only bachelor in our platoon, I was asked to fly the first mission. They provided me with a jeep — less driver — to get to the airfield. By now it was full light, and requests for air support were being received steadily from the southwest side of the city.

I grabbed two bandoleers of magazines, laid my M16 across my lap and departed the citadel, driving down the main avenue on the western route to the airfield. While sporadic fire was clearly audible, its location was distant enough that I couldn't pinpoint its exact location. I fully antici-

pated receiving at least sniper fire along the route, but the trip was uneventful. As I neared the one standing bridge, which was only a few hundred meters from the airfield, I saw the first signs of the night's fighting. Three VC bodies, feet and hands tied together and slung from bamboo poles, lay alongside the road.

When I reached the bridge, repair work was already in progress with temporary bracing in place to allow my crossing. During the night, armored units of the 1st Americal Division had managed to move in and secure the airfield which, while a priority target for the enemy, was still fully operational. None of the aircraft had received any damage at all.

As I taxied out of the revetment, increased enemy activity was reported on the southwest quadrant of the city. I began my mission by reconning this area and reporting to the field commanders, advising them of troop movements and locations. By now, friendly forces were so dispersed that neither tactical air nor artillery support was possible without risk to them.

It was soon apparent that NVA and VC forces were desperately trying to disengage by splitting into smaller groups and moving north and northwest in an attempt to cross the Quang Ngai River. By 1000 hours there were some dozen different contact points and I was flying from one to another, providing recon support. Unknown to us at the time, there was a platoon-size enemy force holed up in a hamlet only about 500 meters southwest of the airfield. It was to remain there, undetected, for most of the day.

After one refueling stop, I continued throughout the afternoon, supporting the ground units as I had in the morning by providing reconnaissance information on enemy locations, access routes and potential ambush sites to ground units. With about three hours of daylight remaining, the enemy unit that was waiting for nightfall was accidentally discovered in the hamlet. Two ARVN armored units quickly moved in to cut off their escape route. Within 15 minutes they had positioned themselves on three sides of the hamlet. The remaining side was clear, dry rice paddy area with absolutely no cover for escape. The obvious strategy of the ARVN commanders and U.S. advisory personnel was to force their escape across

the open area so they could be more effectively engaged.

The ARVN units had brought up a number of APCs and were engaging the hamlet with their .50s, but after half an hour had been unable to force the withdrawal of the NVA-VC force. Because the hamlet was so small — perhaps two acres in size — neither tactical air nor artillery could be used because of the risk to friendlies. As the Bird Dog could be armed with four 2.75-inch HE rockets — roughly equivalent to a 105mm howitzer round — it was decided to use me as their tactical air support. Helicopter gunships would have been far more effective, but none were available.

By 1530, one other pilot had joined me in providing recon support, and two relief pilots had reached the airfield. With the decision to use the Bird Dogs as tactical air, I directed the crew chiefs to set up an arming post on the taxi-way. This allowed us to land, taxi up to the post, rearm and take off with a total elapsed time of less than four minutes. The target area was so close to the airfield that it never required the aircraft to leave the standard flight pattern.

With the deployment of four aircraft, we would take off at two minute intervals, turn cross wind,



Bill Hooper, call sign Black Ace 17, in Quang Nyai, Summer 1968.

turn again on the downwind leg, roll in on the target and at a range of 150-200 meters fire pairs of rockets at five second intervals. The aircraft would then reestablish its downwind leg, turn to base leg and final, pull up to the arming post and continue the sequence. We continued to engage the target until approximately 1800 when all return fire from the hamlet ceased.

The result of the engagement was one ARVN wounded and 19 NVA-VC killed or wounded. This overall action by the NVA and VC turned out to be the last major effort to engage Quang Ngai and the 1st ARVN Regiment until the final fall of South Vietnam. ❧

# ARMAGH

**D**URING the early part of 1987 things had gone badly for the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Almost a dozen officers had been killed by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) since the beginning of the year in all manner of attacks ranging from close quarter assassination to the use of improvised explosive devices. In addition, a senior member of the British judiciary and his wife were murdered by PIRA on the border between Ulster and Eire. They had been returning from a vacation in Southern Ireland. It was against this backdrop that information was received by British intelligence services concerning a spectacular attack being planned by PIRA.

The attack was audacious and ambitious. It took the form of a ground assault by a special grouping of at least two active service units (ASUs, the basic PIRA operational unit, normally consisting of four terrorists) from the East Tyrone Brigade. They were brought together under the command of James Lynagh, 32, well known to British security forces as a ruthless, hard-core terrorist with a string of murders under his belt, including that of Sir Norman Strong, the speaker of Stormont parliament and his son at their Caledon estate in the early 1980s. Sir Norman was 86 years old at the time of his murder.

Lynagh had been a member of the PIRA for over 13 years. His second in command was 30-year-old Patrick Kelly. Kelly was also a hardened terrorist, commanding an ASU within the East Tyrone Brigade. Linked with Lynagh and Kelly was Patrick McKearney, 32, a man considered by the RUC to be one of the most dangerous terrorists operating in Northern Ireland and the border areas. McKearney had been on the run since 1983 after he broke out of the Maze Prison. Lynagh and McKearney were wanted by both the RUC and the Southern Irish Police, the Gardai. These three, together with a fourth member of the group, Gerard O'Callaghan, 29, made up the most experienced part of the team. The remaining four were

relatively inexperienced. Michael Gormley and Eugene Kelly, both 25, were gaining experience almost daily. Declan Arthurs and Seamus Donnelly, both 21, were beginners being "blooded" on their first operation. By any standards, it was one of the most formidable lineups of seasoned urban terrorists to be found anywhere in the world.



Outside of the police station showing the devastation caused by the 300 pound device. All that was left of the JCB can be seen in the foreground, a wheel.

A key piece of intelligence fit into place when a JCB mechanical digger was reported stolen. A year earlier, the PIRA had conducted an attack on a police station situated at The Birches, 5 miles from the village of Loughgall, County Armagh. In that attack, the PIRA had tried to ram the gates of the police station with a stolen JCB mechanical digger. A large explosive device had been placed in the digger's

bucket and the terrorists had ridden "shotgun," ready to engage any policemen that happened to be in the way. That attack had been unsuccessful. The theft of the digger, intelligence believed, indicated that the target was to be a rural police station and, given the large number of terrorists involved, some kind of direct assault into the station could not be ruled out. It was unlikely that the target would be one of the heavily fortified police stations along the border, as even without the presence of British soldiers, this would have undoubtedly led to casualties among the terrorists. This was something they would not accept. A short list of possible targets was drawn up and the Special Air Service (SAS) was called in to advise on a plan to prevent the attack, and to ambush the terrorists, killing or capturing them.

One of the police stations identified as a potential target was the station located in the village of Loughgall itself, just outside the city of Armagh. Loughgall was everybody's typical idea of a sleepy country village. It had a church, a village hall and an estate that had once belonged to a local squire. The local soccer field was located opposite the police station and adjacent to one end of the station was

# AMBUSH

*SAS Secret Op Turns Tables, Kills Eight Terrorists in Northern Ireland*

by John Stanley

the team's clubhouse. The police station itself was moderately fortified, as are all such stations in Northern Ireland, but was only occupied at certain times of the day by a village constable and a sergeant. This was because crime in the farming community that it served was low by any standards, in fact no terrorist incidents had ever taken place in Loughgall.

Covert surveillance by the RUC's elite surveillance unit, E4A, was conducted on several key PIRA members in the East Tyrone area. This included the brigade quartermaster, who would undoubtedly supply the weapons and explosives to be used in any operation within his area. The surveillance of the quartermaster soon led to

the discovery of the JCB mechanical digger. The JCB was hidden in an abandoned farmhouse located 8 miles from the village of Loughgall. From their surveillance positions, E4A observed the arrival of 300 pounds of homemade explosive, which was ferried into the farmhouse and packed in the JCB's bucket. A fuze was fitted so that it ran down the digger's arm to the cab.

Intelligence now believed that they had pinpointed the target, the station at Loughgall. Air reconnaissance was flown and the photographs gave a good indication of the layout of the village; this, together with ground reconnaissance carried out by SAS patrols, enabled the SAS to formulate a sound plan for an operation to foil the attack. Detailed operations orders were given and rehearsals conducted.

Most of the men deployed were armed with Heckler and Koch G3A4K rifles. A small number were armed with M16A1s and an even smaller number were armed with the British Army's GPMG. This proved to be a wise tactical decision in light of what was to come. All were equipped with personal radios and carried their equipment in a chest harness or webbing. Each man carried a back-up 9mm Browning pistol with an extended 20-round magazine fitted. These were carried in either shoulder holsters or hip holsters depending on the personal taste of the individual. The SAS were divided into groups or call signs and each call sign given a particular task. One of the main ambush, or killer, groups was placed inside the station and one outside in a small wooded area on the opposite side of the road. Cut-off or stop groups were placed east and west of the station, at the main road junction and in the area of the church. In addition, further stop groups were positioned in wooded areas north and south of the station.

After a reported increase in activity at the abandoned farmhouse, the SAS ambush groups deployed "on the ground." The SAS took up classic ambush positions around the outside of the police station. Inside, a group of SAS soldiers in civilian clothes provided close protection for an extremely nervous RUC constable who had been told to maintain a pretense of normality. The waiting now began, and



ABOVE: The troubles in Northern Ireland have been extensive enough that authorities have had to deploy not only the SAS, but many other troops as well. Here soldiers armed with L85A1 rifles are on alert in West Belfast. Photo: AP/Wide World

RIGHT: British soldier on routine patrol in Northern Ireland aims his LIA1 rifle from an armored vehicle. Special troops such as the SAS often opt for alternative weapons tailored to their mission. Photo AP/Wide World



the SAS specializes in waiting.

On the morning of Friday, 8 May, a blue Toyota delivery van was reported stolen by armed and masked men in the Dungannon area. Most of the key terrorists, known as "players" in the language of counterterrorist operations, had been kept under surveillance since the beginning of the operation. Shortly before 1700 on Friday, Lynagh was observed crossing the border from Monaghan. At about the same time, Kelly left his home in Dungannon and moved to the farm.

Lynagh appeared shortly after and in the next 30 minutes or so E4A observed a total of eight terrorists arrive. All but two changed into blue coveralls, sneakers (some with socks pulled over them to foil any subsequent forensic investigation), and each carried a pair of rubber household gloves and a balaclava mask. The two designated drivers, one for the JCB and the other for the Toyota van, remained in civilian clothes, so as not to arouse the suspicions of anyone who might observe them moving to the target. The terrorist group then left the farmhouse and headed toward Loughgall.

The SAS soldiers lying in wait were not immediately aware of these developments and were secretly hoping that this op would not, like so many others, turn out to be another false alarm. The outlying stop groups in particular had to stay alert as it would be their job to warn of the arrival of the terrorists. At approximately 1900 hours a flurry of radio messages indicated that something was happening. The JCB had been spotted moving into Loughgall with its bucket raised. It was being "fronted" by the blue Toyota van. As both vehicles drove past the police station very slowly, the SAS braced themselves for imminent contact. But the van and digger drove past. It was not unusual for vehicles to slow down in front of police stations due to protective ramps known as "sleeping policemen." The SAS soldiers in the station, however, were able to observe the drive past and reported that the drivers of both vehicles had not taken their eyes off the station. Every soldier on the ground now knew this was it.

At around 1920 hours, both vehicles again moved through the village and approached the police station. This time the blue Toyota van jerked to a halt and six heavily armed terrorists leapt out and immediately began firing at the front of the police station. Under cover of this fire, the JCB, with the 300 pound explosive device in its bucket, came down the road, swerved to the right and crashed through the perimeter security fence. The JCB driver placed the raised bucket against the right half of the police station building, lit the fuze and leapt from the cab.

The remaining terrorists at the time were placing a heavy volume of automatic fire on the front of the police station. The SAS returned fire. Every SAS soldier in a position to open fire on the terrorists did

so. The first to return fire were the soldiers located in the station itself. From their firing positions on the upper floor, they were able to effectively engage the terrorists located in and around the van outside.

Some of the terrorists were killed in this first burst, among them the driver of the van, Seamus Donnelly, and Lynagh's second-in-command, Patrick Kelly. The remaining terrorists took cover around

the van and continued firing at the station. At this time SAS soldiers located in positions outside the station opened fire, killing two more terrorists, Eugene Kelly and Declan Arthurs, both of whom had taken up firing positions under the van. The sudden SAS fire came as a rude shock to the terrorists, who had planned for an easy kill. Lynagh, their leader, and Pat McKearney jumped back into the rear of the van seeking feeble sanctuary from the merciless fire; perhaps they did not realize that Donnelly was already dead at the wheel. Both died inside as the SAS bullets cut through the thin sides of the vehicle.

Suddenly, a white Citroen car, which had been caught in the ambush, began reversing rapidly out of the kill zone. The SAS stop group located further up the road in the vicinity of the church observed that the passenger of the vehicle was dressed in the same blue coveralls as the other terrorists and was attempting to turn in his seat to face the rear.

Believing the car contained terrorists and that the passenger was about to fire on them, three SAS soldiers opened fire on the car, killing the driver instantly and severely wounding the passenger. Tragically, the driver and passenger were both innocent civilians. A second car, driven by a woman and containing her eight year old daughter, was also caught in the kill zone. The mother had frozen at the wheel and the young girl, terrified, was lying on the rear seat. The SAS stop group commander, observing that the car was taking hits, crossed the open road and, in no uncertain terms, ordered her to drive out of the area.

Unexpectedly the 300 pound explosive in the JCB's bucket exploded. The explosion was deafening to all around. The shape of the bucket had a directional effect on the device and literally sliced off the right half of the station. The SAS soldiers outside immediately concluded, wrongly, that their comrades inside had all been killed or at least were out of action. They began closing in.

Gormley, the JCB driver, had hidden behind a low wall after jumping from the cab and now tried to make a run for it. He was challenged by a soldier moving towards the station and when he turned quickly, the soldier could see something in his hand. Thinking it was a handgun the soldier shot him dead. It turned out to be the Zippo lighter used to light the bomb's fuze. The last remaining terrorist, O'Callaghan, was



ABOVE: Toyota delivery van used by terrorists. Tires were shot out by SAS in the first exchange of fire. Driver was also killed in this initial burst. Large hole was caused by a piece of shrapnel from the JCB digger when the device exploded.

BELOW: Inside the van where Lynagh and McKearney died after trying to escape fire from SAS soldiers. Lying next to Lynagh's leg is the SPAS shotgun and one of the FNC rifles.



observed crossing the road from the rubble of the station to a stone wall that separated the road from the rubble. He was carrying an automatic rifle and as he tried to raise it he was hit by a hail of fire from the SAS soldiers and died before he hit the ground.

A third civilian car that had been caught in the crossfire contained an innocent salesman, who had simply ducked down in his seat the moment the shooting started. The car had taken a number of hits and the salesman now decided that it was time to leave. He jumped out of the car and ran to the rear of a group of houses situated next to the remains of the station. An SAS soldier who saw him run shouted a challenge but the salesman kept running. As the man was obviously unarmed and the SAS soldier had no reason to feel threatened, he did not engage him, but simply chased the man around the rear of the houses and floored him with a rugby tackle. The man was arrested and held until he could be positively identified and then handed over to police.

As the shooting ended, the SAS soldiers stationed inside the station emerged from the ruined building. To everyone's relief, the only casualties were one soldier and the police constable with slight injuries caused by flying fragments. The remainder of the SAS force then began cautiously checking the area for any terrorists who may have escaped the onslaught and were hiding. They were covered by comrades still hidden, as the SAS had learned from bitter experience that wounded or even surrendered terrorists were extremely dangerous. Having confirmed that all the terrorists, were, in fact, dead and the area was secure, the SAS began treating the injured.

The SAS stop group that had engaged the occupants of the white Citroen, returned to the car and an SAS soldier began treating the wounded passenger. In light of later claims by the PIRA that the SAS had cold bloodily executed wounded terrorists, it should be noted that the SAS soldier who now administered first aid, had only minutes before shot him and still believed the man to be a terrorist.

Within 30 minutes of the contact's initiation, RUC and regular security forces units arrived on the scene and

established outer cordons. The SAS kept everyone out of the immediate contact area, allowing only an ambulance in to evacuate the seriously wounded passenger from the white Citroen. A Wessex helicopter was now circling the area. Its pilot and crew having no prior knowledge of the operation had heard the explosion and tremendous firefight and were now trying to find out what happened. Civilians from the village were also beginning to filter out onto the main road. Some were in a state of shock, others simply sightseeing. All were unable to comprehend the magnitude of what had just taken place in their small village.

It was important to extract the SAS from the scene as soon as possible, to prevent their identification by any watching PIRA sympathizers or members of the press, who would certainly be arriving shortly. The soldiers themselves now wore issued black balaclava masks to protect them against any quick thinking opportunist with a telephoto lens. It must have been a confusing scene to the RUC officers and regular soldiers now on the outer cordon. Army Gazelle and Lynx helicopters began to arrive and put down on an LZ established on the

soccer field opposite the police station. The SAS sticks loaded onto the helicopters and were flown to a nearby police station to begin the long process of de-briefing, handing over of weapons to the police and making statements, all of which were required for the subsequent police investigation and coroner's inquest. The terrorists had been well armed for their failed attack. Included in the nine weapons recovered from the dead terrorists were three Heckler & Koch G3s, two Belgian-made FNCs (a caliber 5.56x45mm NATO assault rifle, that has become a favorite of the PIRA), an FN FAL, a SPAS 12 shotgun and two pistols. The G3 rifles, the FNCs and one of the handguns had been used in no less than seven separate murders throughout the province, in the preceding 16 months. One of the G3 rifles was Patrick Kelly's personal weapon. A number of the weapons used that day had taped back-to-back magazines to facilitate rapid reloading.

That night the rioting began in West

## IRA ROOTS

Centuries of strife followed the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in 1170. Various battles and skirmishes were fought as successive English monarchs attempted to impose their will on the Irish people. Eventually the Irish lost and nearly 200 years after their defeat Great Britain (England and Scotland) united with Ireland to form the United Kingdom.

This didn't stop Irish nationalists from fighting for independence well into the 20th century. Their fight culminated in the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty establishing a predominantly Catholic Irish Free State separate from Ulster (Northern Ireland). This Irish Free State was initially part of the Commonwealth and only left and became an independent republic after World War II. The six northern, and predominantly Protestant, counties have remained a part of the United Kingdom to the present day.

This arrangement does not sit well with Irish nationalists who continue to fight to completely expel the British from the island. The Brits, however, can't easily pack up and go (assuming they wanted to) because Northern Ireland is largely populated by Protestant Britons, many who've lived here for generations. These people fear, and rightly so, that it would not go well for them if they suddenly became part of Ireland.

Currently the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), different from the Irish Republican Army of old, is the major threat in the area. PIRA does not enjoy the more widespread support the old (and very much communist) IRA did, due to their willingness to accept arms from absolutely anyone. They've been solidly tied to the Soviet Union, Cuba and Libya among other rogue nations.

To combat the threat in N. Ireland the British have some 9,200 regular army troops, organized in six resident and four temporary infantry battalions as well as one SAS, one engineer and two aviation squadrons, deployed.

There are also nine battalions in the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR) whose primary mission is internal security. This makes nearly 20,000 troops to guard an area slightly larger than the state of Connecticut and with a population just over 1.5 million. And that's not even counting the 8,000-man Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), which resembles an army as much as the police force it is.

These troops are perhaps buying security but certainly not peace of mind. The various nationalist factions have shown they are willing to strike anytime, anywhere and at anyone.

Approximately 3,000 people, including 168 RUC personnel, from both sides have been killed in Northern Ireland since 1969 and there seems to be no end in sight.

— Tom S.



ABOVE: The white Citroen car which was mistakenly thought to contain escaping terrorists. The driver still slumped half out of the vehicle.

BELOW: Front of van after terrorist tried to take cover around it. Driver lies slumped over to the left in the cab. The terrorist lying in foreground with G3 rifle is Patrick Kelly.



Continued on page 87

# A POINTED TALE

## Unique East German Survival Knife/AKM Bayonet Combo

Text & Photo by Peter G. Kokalis

**T**HE fall of communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe has generated mountains of military equipment discarded by the Evil Empire's former minions as they quickly divest themselves of all vestiges of their past allegiance to Karl Marx. Their frenzied haste to do so is reminiscent of the Waffen SS — most of whom disrobed to their shorts after World War II.

A substantial quantity of this material has accumulated in East Germany. A considerable portion was once fielded by the East German armed forces. Some of this militia has recently been imported to the United States. Items once

rare, such as East German army helmets, are now as common as dirt. East German camouflage uniforms can now be cut into polishing rags. Midst this incredible glut — which has turned a great deal of collector-grade bullion into fool's gold — a few pearls can still be found.

A new and interesting version of the AKM wire-cutter bayonet (See "ComBloc Bayonets," April '87) has recently been uncovered that heretofore has never been noted or described. Known as the East German KM 87, it is, in essence, a survival knife/bayonet with a number of useful features. Designed for the East German version of the 5.45x39mm AK-74 series

(called the MPiAKS-74), it can be fitted to any AKM. It has been reported that no more than 5,000 were manufactured. Estimates of those available for import range in the low hundreds.

The wire-cutter principle employed by all AKM bayonets has been applied to the U.S. M9 bayonet. A rectangular hole in the blade can be mated over, and pivot on, a lug on the scabbard. This forms a scissors-

87. To gain working leverage for wire-cutting, the bayonet should be mounted on the rifle and employed in a manner similar to the barbed-wire cutters fitted to the British SMLE rifle during World War I.

The KM 87's blade is satin-chrome plated with black-oxide sharpened edges. There is a row of sawteeth along the back edge — a feature of dubious value. There is no fuller (the so-called "blood

groove"). There is a single muzzle ring on the cross-piece at the bottom, or sharpened edge, of the blade as AKM bayonets are mounted on the rifle with the sharpened edge up. A hole at the other edge of the crosspiece is used to attach a black nylon lanyard which



The East German KM87 survival knife/bayonet can be used both for conventional thrust and parry and to extricate yourself from the wilderness, as it contains a surprisingly complete kit of survival tools within its compact envelope.

like wire-cutter between the back edge of the blade and a projection on the tip of the scabbard. On similar wire-cutter AKM bayonets this projection is usually kidney-shaped and attached with two rivets, but on the KM 87 it attaches with only a circular stud and a single rivet. This modification is to accommodate a screwdriver that is integral with the scabbard tip of the KM

is provided. There is a 5-centimeter ruler at the top edge of the blade on the right side. A clinometer for measuring the angle of an incline has been etched on the left side of the blade. The blades and pommels are serial numbered, the scabbards are not.

The KM 87 is equipped with a ribbed black plastic scabbard of the 2nd pattern type. It has been molded with a distinctive partial cross-rib at the midpoint that is characteristic of East German 2nd pattern scabbards. AKM hangers are usually attached to a crossbar on the back of the scabbard by means of a spring-clip. The

*Continued on page 77*

# Exhibitors

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## CHIPMUNK .22

Continued from page 27

salt blued.

With safety as a primary design parameter, the action has features not normally encountered on inexpensive single-shot .22s. For maximum safety, the bolt's countersunk face completely surrounds the cartridge rim except for a small gas-relief cut. Although unlikely, gas from a ruptured case rim would be vented through this cut and out the top of the rifle. The single claw extractor is held in place by a spring-loaded plunger protruding from the large locking lug on the right side of the bolt. When the action is closed, this locking lug bears against the split receiver ring. A spring-loaded detent plunger at the rear end of the locking lug engages a notch in the ring face when the bolt is locked in battery to prevent the bolt from inadvertently opening.

Of the single-shot type, the Chipmunk has no magazine. After a cartridge has been inserted and the bolt closed, the rifle remains uncocked. The knurled cocking piece at the end of the bolt must be manually retracted to fire the rifle and this provides the greatest possible margin of safety for novices. The firing pin has both a mainspring and a return spring. While the firing pin is uncocked, its return spring holds it rearward and the sear blocks its forward movement. Thus, even with a loaded chamber, the Chipmunk requires no additional manual safety for safe handling.

When cocked, the bolt cannot be rotated and before opening it, the rifle must either be fired or the cocking piece released forward under control (carefully) while pulling the trigger. When the bolt handle is lifted up and drawn rearward, the sear enters a cut in the striker, forcing the firing pin forward to serve as a "bump-type" ejector. Pulling the trigger, and thus dropping the sear downward while retracting the bolt, permits the bolt to be removed for cleaning. Trigger pull-weight on SOF's test specimen was a spongy, but light, 2 3/4 pounds. The pull-weight is not adjustable.

The action and barrel are attached to a very attractive walnut stock with a black plastic buttplate by a single slotted take-down screw. This screw has a very wide slot and only a hollow-ground screwdriver of the correct size should be used for this disassembly. Made from American walnut, the stock has a Monte Carlo comb and pistol grip. When separated from the stock, the barreled action has an overall length of only 19 3/4 inches. Retained by two wood screws, the trigger guard is a steel sheet-metal stamping. For those to whom this is cosmetically offensive, a milled steel trigger guard is available as an option for \$17.50.

The top of the chamber has been drilled and tapped for a scope mount base which

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cost \$9.95 and accepts "tip-off" rings. Other than deluxe hand checkering, the only other accessory of note is a carrying case for \$24.95.

For most, the iron sights featured as standard on the Chipmunk will suffice. The front sight is a front-sloping blade on top of a serrated ramp. The peep aperture rear sight is held by its windage-adjustment screw to an L-shaped piece of steel attached to the split receiver ring. Unspecified graduations permit adjustment of both elevation and windage zero.

As marked on its barrel, the Chipmunk will chamber .22 Short, .22 Long and .22 Long Rifle (LR) cartridges. SOF's test firing included Remington High Velocity .22 Short and .22 LR, Remington Viper™ Hyper Velocity .22 LR, Winchester Super-X High Velocity .22 LR, Western Super-X Long and Canadian Eley Tenex .22 LR ammunition. There were no stoppages of any type and when the bolt was retracted smartly, both extraction and ejection were positive.

This is not a match rifle. However, when fired from a rest at 25 yards, five-shot groups yielded an average dispersion of only one to 1 1/2 inches with all of the ammunition tested. At 50 feet, the more probable range at which this rifle will be fired, you can expect the group dispersion to be not much greater than half an inch.

Because it is lightweight, compact and capable of greater practical accuracy than most handguns, the Chipmunk rifle provides potential applications for backpackers and those assembling a survival kit, such as pilots and fourwheelers.

But, that's beside the point. It is first and foremost an excellent instrument for the all-important rite of passage required to preserve and protect our tradition as a nation of free men armed. On that basis alone, the Chipmunk deserves the widest possible distribution. Further information can be obtained from its manufacturer, Oregon Arms, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1104, Medford, OR 97501-0081 — phone: 503-664-5586). ☒

## A POINTED TALE

Continued from page 74

KM 87's gray nylon webbing hanger has been attached to the scabbard with three rivets and cannot be removed. A gray nylon strap with Velcro-type stays wraps around the bayonet's handle for retention in the scabbard. A metal signal mirror has been riveted to the rear strap of the two-piece hanger. A small black leather strap sewn to the front webbing strap slides into a steel keeper on the rear strap to hold the two-piece hanger together.

These small variations might be interesting to a collector, but the KM 87's handle and its contents reveal its potential utility to those unimpressed by such



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esoterica. The black plastic grips are rounded and have three finger grooves. The steel pommel is basically of 2nd pattern configuration and its base end can be used as a hammer. It also serves as an end cap for the hollow handle. A small steel pin impinges against a similar, but vertical, pin on the grips to align the pommel when it is screwed back onto the hollow handle and the bayonet is fixed on a rifle. A coil of monofilament fishing line is stored behind a leather washer in the pommel's hollow interior.

After the pommel has been removed, a brown plastic canister will drop out of the handle's hollow interior when the open end of the handle is struck smartly on the palm of the hand. The canister's end cap contains a small magnifying glass. Inside the canister are three water purification tablets, two sewing needles, polyester thread, two 9mm and two 16mm brass fishing hooks, four split-shot lead sinkers in three sizes and two green and one red long-burning, storm-resistant (i.e., water- and wind-proof) matches that can be used for starting fires or emergency signaling. The bottom of the canister has a striking surface for the matches. A short length of the thread and one of the sinkers are used in conjunction with the clinometer graduations on the bayonet blade to measure slope angles.

A German-language instruction manual is also included with the KM 87. In keeping with the often bizarre Teutonic fetish for stamping numbers on every conceivable part, it is marked with the bayonet's serial number.

Although minimal, this is a well-designed survival kit. There is, of course, no end to what can be included if you can anticipate being lost or stranded in the desert or the arctic. In my case, that would necessitate a backpack filled with 150 pounds of essential ingredients. That type of kit will inevitably be left in the closet as none of us ever anticipate disasters of this type. Every component of the KM 87 rests no farther than your belt.

This interesting survival knife/bayonet, apparently a last gasp of the Communist East German military establishment, provides appeal to both collectors and end users. A very limited quantity of the KM 87 has been imported. For further information on its availability and price, contact FME (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 8001, Riverside, CA 92515-8001).

## COMBAT CRAFT

*Continued from page 12*

checks. This makes it easier.

Complicating things, however, is the more difficult task of maintaining a straight course on land that may be cut by wadis, or ravines and dry washes, unnavigable evaporite beds, rock out-



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crops and other terrain features that must be steered around.

## No Problem

In practice, though, this isn't too big a problem. A good driver will pick a feature or point on the horizon to drive toward while maneuvering around obstacles. The navigator, who will probably be the vehicle commander, needs to keep track of general direction, major course changes, speed, time and distance covered on his map plot. This information can be plotted using the same symbols used in nautical navigation (see illustration). Odometer distance should be corrected as necessary to account for minor steering adjustments during cross-country driving. Every minor turn need not be plotted.

What the navigator *does* need to do is estimate position at least every half hour and take fixes whenever he is able. This should be done routinely while on the move. If there is doubt about a position and a good landmark comes into view — and the tactical environment allows — it may be worthwhile to stop, get out of the track, and shoot a good back azimuth with the lensatic compass. If you keep a good course plot, you'll always have a linear feature — the plotted line — to cut with the azimuth line. This will give you a pretty good position estimate even if you can only shoot an azimuth to one feature.

(Note: We've all been taught in Basic Training not to make marks on our maps, in case of capture. I would suggest that if marking the map will help us avoid capture and complete our mission, it's OK. But use some common sense and don't list unnecessary information — "Battalion CP" with a position fix, for instance.)

The navigator should also be looking ahead on the map and predicting terrain features to shoot fixes on over the next 30 to 60 minutes. He can also give the driver a heads-up on dangerous terrain ahead.

If you're fortunate enough to be in a vehicle equipped with a compass, dead reckoning will be simplified. Aircraft compasses and better vehicle compasses — such as those sold for the serious off-road and rally market — have adjustments to compensate for iron surroundings, but hand-held compasses shouldn't be used inside a track, Humvee or whatever unless you know for certain what the induced compass error is and know that the error remains constant while the vehicle is moving.

So desert dead reckoning is actually a combination of compass (or celestial) navigation combined with terrain association, resection, and pace count, mechanized style, with an odometer.

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8. FAMAS MAS223
9. Heckler & Koch HK-91, H-93, HK-94 and PSG-1
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11. SKS with detachable magazine
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13. Springfield Armory BM59 and SAR-48
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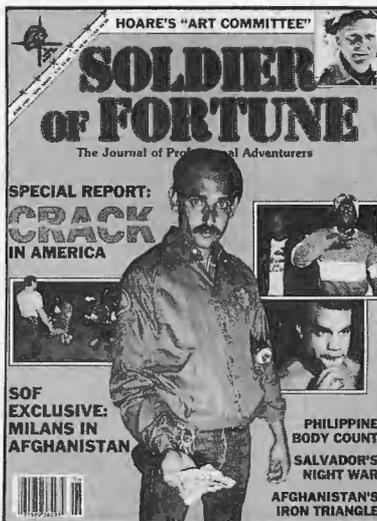
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#158 December 1990: SPECIAL MIDDLE EAST COVERAGE SECTION: Desert Shield showdown, Brit escapes from Kuwait, spec ops, terrorists back Hussein, SOF's RKB in Gulf of Oman; CANADA: civil war; COLOMBIA: kid killers; WEAPONS: S&W's Model 640 Centennial; MERCENARIES: French Foreign Legion —last bastion of the international soldier; SOUTHEAST ASIA: fortress Taiwan.



correspondent trains with Soviet paras; ANALYSIS: Oliver North and bombing of Libya; HISTORY: Tillamook guerrillas; WEAPONS: French surplus military rifles.

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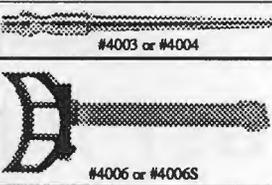
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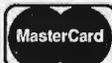
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The idea is to always have a good position estimate and know which way you're going. You need to know where you've started from, where you've been, and hopefully where you're going. Keep all of these elements straight, and you won't get lost out there.

Chuck Fremont is a Special Forces Reserve NCO, and frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

## CRITIQUE

Continued from page 67

ambassador's residence. We were going from jungle patrolling to guard duty in one day — it was very diversified. And when Vice President Quayle came later, we provided his security. I thought the PDF and DB really weren't very well trained or well motivated. Most of the time they didn't put up much of a fight. Often we'd go into a town and someone would come over and point out where some people were who wanted to give themselves up. I did see every kind of weapon you can imagine down there, though, including one really odd Chinese 5.56mm with a square bolt.

"Reports that did cause us some concern at first were of the 'Battalion 2000.' They were listed as having armor, but apparently Spectre gunships took care of them early on, and they were out of it. I saw some of their vehicles later and they'd been really messed up."

— E.B.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Though the primary mission of FAST is basically security rather than direct action, their armory is well stocked, and they can go in loaded for bear.

Every man carries an M9 pistol, with extended magazines when necessary, in an after-market "deuce gear" holster worn low and secured with a leg band, large enough to accommodate "sure lights" attached to the bottom of the pistol for dusk and night MOUT operations.

FAST issues two 9mm submachine guns: the Colt Model R0635 and the H&K MP5 A3, both with retractable stocks. The well-liked MP5 A3 can also be equipped with a grenade launcher.

The 9mm Colt looks a lot like its big brother in 5.56mm, but it is slightly lighter and shorter. Little training is required when a Marine trades his M16A2 rifle for an R0635.

With FAST's mission — close-in,

urban combat — it's easy to see why the Corps chose 9mm SMGs. The lighter cartridge is more manageable on auto fire, and is less likely to keep on going after impacting a target, a consideration when civilians and bad guys are jumbled up together.

The Mossberg shotgun, Model 590, is used principally by FAST as a door breaching weapon, but with its nine rounds of 12 gauge ammo the Mossberg can be a potent antipersonnel weapon as well. The 590 has rifle-type sights, and FAST Marines are encouraged to think of the shotgun as a precision weapon, and trained to employ it accordingly. The 590 weighs 7 1/4 pounds, is 40 inches overall, is Parkerized with stock and forearm of tough synthetic. The Model 590 has an interchangeable barrel capacity, a bayonet lug and sling swivels.

And that's just the small arms. FAST Companies in both the Atlantic and Pacific FMFs have some awesome organic weaponry, including MK19 40mm automatic grenade launchers, three M2 HB .50 caliber machine guns, 12 M60s, three 60mm mortars, and 12 "bunker busters" — 83mm MK 153 MOD D SMAWS. This looks like a hybrid of a 3.5 rocket launcher and the late and unlamented LAW, weighs 29.34 pounds, is 54 inches long, and has an effective range of 250 meters. Unlike the older 3.5, the SMAW is designed to be fired by one man, and it has a 9mm spotting rifle attached. The SMAW fires a 13-pound encased rocket that arms itself 10 meters down-range and packs the wallop of a 2.4 pound HE warhead. It will bust hard-stand fortifications and even some armor.

The 40mm automatic grenade launcher is also a relatively new weapon which, owing to its weight of 68 pounds, is usually vehicle mounted, but may also be employed from a tripod. It fires belt-fed 40mm grenades at a rate of 350-450 rounds per minute at a muzzle velocity of 790 feet per second, and can really saturate an area with HE.

One of the more interesting devices in the FAST bag of tricks is the "Flash Bang" concussion grenade, a device used to good effect in Just Cause. This "Assault Grenade Mark III, A2" contains 8 ounces of TNT flaked powder, and in the words of one demo man, "will really rattle your ears and stun the hell out of you. In a confined space it's like a super flash bulb going off, with a bang like a 105 simulator."

Then there's the profusion of other unusual gear FAST Marines are festooned with: web pouches tailored to carry concussion grenades and SMG magazines, "Second Chance" protective vests, Gore-tex laminate cold weather outerwear, figure-eight de-

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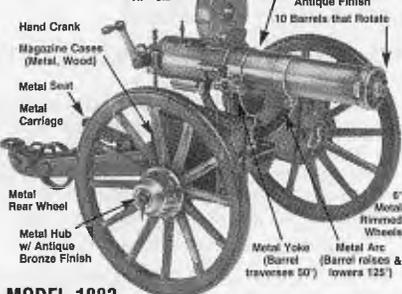


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scenders, snap links, and tactical "sit harnesses" for rappelling. One of the most interesting items of gear FAST has at its disposal, the "Fast Rope," deserves a word of explanation. It's a python-thick line that looks like the climbing ropes used in gym class, except it has a tensile strength of 35,000 pounds. A 12-man FAST team can clear a chopper in a matter of seconds, like firemen sliding down a pole.

— E.B. ✎

## CHARLES TAYLOR

Continued from page 37

ate U.S. personnel and to secure a perimeter around the U.S. Embassy. He derided any talk that an African intervention force would be able to land. Such a force later landed over 5,000 men, unopposed by the NPFL. Taylor also ridiculed Prince Johnson and his much smaller force, but it was to be Prince Johnson, not Taylor, who would capture most of central Monrovia and President Doe.

By the end of the interview there was no doubt in my mind that Taylor had nothing but self-interest at heart, regardless of the terrible cost to Liberia. As I raced my small blue car back to the Ivory Coast border, competing with gathering monsoon clouds, I was not sorry to be leaving. Meeting Taylor had been an anticlimax of the first order.

Militarily, Taylor has shot himself in the foot. NPFL fortunes slumped and never recovered after losing Prince and Elmer Johnson. It would appear that Taylor's own paranoia has led him to actions that have effectively "snatched defeat from the jaws of victory." But, whilst he lacks the strategic aptitude to bring the war to a conclusive end, he retains the potential to remain a festering wound in Liberian politics for many years to come ... provided he doesn't eliminate too many of his own supporters.

Meanwhile, Liberia continues to count the cost in butchered civilians.

— Peter Douglas ✎

Arabia isn't as dramatic as it is for some of the other military organizations deployed here. France is by no means a poor nation, but the army has the attitude that poverty is a virtue. They don't have the largess of their American cousins, and they are better soldiers because of it.

The motto of the Escadron Galy-Dejean is "sans repit" (without rest). Watching them train in the desert, it seems that rest is just one of many things they do without. But for all they lack, they have an abundance of the virtues which produce success in combat. They are physically fit, confident, and display a high degree of professionalism and esprit de corps. While many in Washington and elsewhere question the behavior and motivation of the French, it would be a mistake for anyone, especially the Iraqis, to question the competence and resolve of France's soldiers in Saudi Arabia.

John McDonald is a former SOF staffer, currently on assignment for SOF in the Persian Gulf.

## FRENCH FAR AND LEGION

When the political leadership of France decides to exercise its military options, the instrument used is the Force D'Action Rapide. Known by its acronym FAR, the five combat divisions of the Force comprise the immediate reaction force of the French military. The regiments of FAR have responded to crises in Chad, the Central African Republic, Lebanon and, most recently, Saudi Arabia.

Five divisions, along with a logistics brigade and command elements belong to FAR. The divisions are organized by functions and include the 4th Airmobile Division, the 6th Light Armored Division, the 9th Marine Division, the 11th Airborne Division and the 27th Alpine Division. Most soldiers serving in the FAR are professionals, as opposed to conscripts. Among its components are four regiments from the French Foreign Legion.

**4e Division Aero Mobile:** The combat aviation element of the FAR, the 4th Division provides helicopters for transport, resupply, close air support, command and control and an effective antitank capability. Comprising of six regiments, the division contains roughly 7,000 men and 250 helicopters. Of the helicopters, 90 are antitank, 30 for reconnaissance and 30 for command and control, plus 70 Puma large transport aircraft, and 30 smaller Gazelles for troop movement and supply missions—used much as Hueys were used in Vietnam. The 4th is headquartered in Nancy in northwest France.

**6e Division Legere Blindée (light armor):** Home to three Foreign Legion regiments (the 6th Engineer, the 1st Cavalry and the 2nd Infantry), the 6th Division is well-represented in Saudi Arabia. Elements of all three Legion regiments mentioned above are here, as are troops of the Spahis, cavalry regiments raised during the French presence in North Africa. The 6th consists of seven regiments containing 7,200 fight-

## FRENCH CONNECTION

Continued from page 49

90 other ranks), and in the Escadron Galy-Dejean they are all professional soldiers. There are no conscripts here. Many of the troops have seen service in Chad, Djibouti and the Central African Republic.

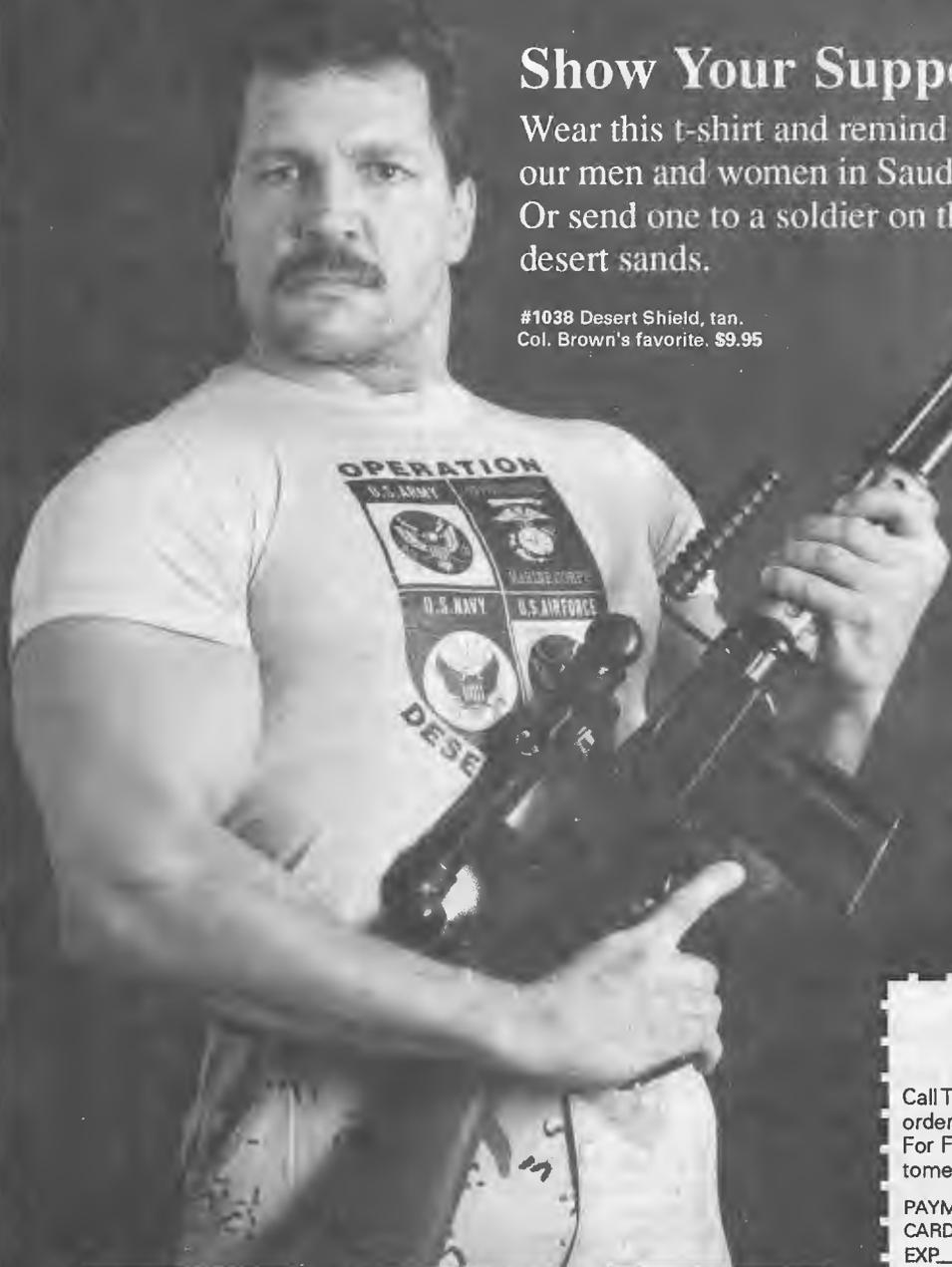
But perhaps the most important contributing factor to the high morale is the attitude of the professional elements of the French army. Conditions in France just aren't a lot better than they are here. That is not meant as a criticism, for as one Foreign Legion colonel explained, comfort is the enemy of the soldiers of France. They experience little enough comfort at home and the change from France to Saudi

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ing vehicles and 36 artillery pieces. The 6th is headquartered in Nimes.

**9e Division D'Infanterie de Marine:** Six marine regiments and one regiment of engineers make up the 9th. The marines provide an amphibious capability and are geared for air transport as well. Its regiments contain some 72 light armored reconnaissance vehicles and 30 artillery pieces. The 9th is headquartered in Nantes.

**11e Division Parachutiste:** With over 14,000 men the 11th is the largest of the FAR's divisions. Thirteen regiments belong to the 11th, including the Foreign Legion's 2nd Parachute Regiment. Among its elements are air delivery troops, marine parachutists, russards with the ERC 90 armored reconnaissance vehicle and an airborne engineer regiment. The division is capable of commando and reconnaissance operations, antitank operations and anti-air defense. The 11th is headquartered in Toulouse.

**27e Division Alpine:** France's specialist for mountain and arctic warfare, the 27th contains roughly 10,000 men, 1,100 anti-tank missile launchers and 36 light armored vehicles. The division is made up of nine regiments. In addition to operating in the mountains and in extreme weather, the division is also capable of fighting in an urban environment. The 27th is headquartered in Grenoble.

In addition to the above five divisions, the FAR also has a command element and a logistics brigade headquartered in Maisons-Lafitte, near Paris. The commander of the FAR is also the senior French officer present in Saudi Arabia, and commands all French forces operating there. The logistics brigade provides the division with units specializing in everything from field medicine to water purification.

Altogether the FAR numbers some 42,000 highly trained soldiers, able to perform a wide variety of combat and training missions. Charged with the defense of France as well as protecting her interests overseas, the FAR provides the French government with a credible and capable force when military intervention is the required response to a crisis.

— J.M. ✕



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## TARGET SADDAM

*Continued from page 51*

feels the scary part of being this close to the front is not knowing what's going to happen.

"Like when we first got here on August 12th, if they would have said here's your ammo and you're heading up north, it would have been over with by now, but this waiting game is a killer," Alcaraz explains.

"The men upstairs know what's going on, but they don't tell us," Cpl. Christopher McNeely from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, says. "But I guess when they're ready to tell us, we go do whatever they want us to do."

McNeely thinks a move is in his immediate future. "I think we'll go north.

I don't see us spending all this money to come over here, sit here and just go home. I see us doing something," he insists. McNeely confesses he's scared like everybody else on his crew, but he feels he's had the best training money can buy, and he's ready to "Do it." That's why he joined the Marine Corps.

To cope with stress, the Pace-Setters spend their spare time reading letters from home to each other. "Occasionally, we write each other's families," Alcaraz says.

Like others in the battery, Alcaraz is just waiting for the other shoe to drop in this standoff with Saddam — "Waiting for word to CSMO — Cut The Shit and Move Out."

### Which Way is Hell

You can tell a lot about a Marine by just reading inscriptions on his Kevlar cover. Things like, "Merry Christmas," "I Love You," and an occasional question like, "Which Way Is Hell?" on the helmet Alcaraz wears.

Which way is Hell? "Up north in Kuwait," replies the young leatherneck. "That's where Hell is, and that's where we're headed." ✂

---

## ARMAGH AMBUSH

*Continued from page 73*

Belfast and other Republican strongholds all over Northern Ireland. The PIRA had suffered its most crushing defeat since the beginning of the present conflict. Black flags appeared all along the Falls Road. A total of eight terrorists had been killed without the loss of a single SAS soldier. The tragic death of an innocent motorist and the wounding of his passenger, were the only events that marred an otherwise perfect antiterrorist operation.

Once again the SAS had triumphed against terrorism. It would be a long time before the East Tyrone brigade recovered, but, as the SAS knew only too well, recover they would and this was proven on the following Remembrance Day at Enniskillen.

John Stanley is the *nom de guerre* of a retired SAS soldier who served in the British army for 22 years. Traveling all over the world with the SAS, Stanley saw active service in the Middle East, Northern Ireland and the Falklands. ✂

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## TRACKS TO IRAQ

*Continued from page 55*

Regiment, 24th Infantry Division.

SOF: Are you guys ready to rock 'n' roll?

A: I honestly feel we're prepared to do

whatever it is we're called upon to do. I was telling them [his men] just this morning before you got here that one of the biggest stress removers is knowing that you know how to deal with the things you've been given to deal with.

I mean just knowing if you're a tank gunner, you know how to gun. If you're an infantry soldier, you know how to move and shoot in these sand dunes. If you're under NBC [Nuclear, Biological or Chemical] attack, you know how to use your gear. And I really believe that my soldiers are ready.

We don't want to [fight], and of course nobody knows how we're going to react to what would probably be a tremendous bleeding should we have to fight, but I think they're ready.

SOF: Is it going to be a bloodbath?

A: Yeah, I think there will be serious casualties.

SOF: How much are field commanders like yourself counting on air power to chop up Iraqi armor and fortified positions?

A: A great deal. I think it would be a big mistake for us not to bring the full brunt of what we can airwise against the enemy, before we ever attempted anything on the ground. And I really think that's the key to our success.

We can soften up the underbelly with our air to the point that I think we can make a real fair fight even outnumbered. And I'm impressed. I've heard numbers of systems that are available, and I hope we don't fight, but I'll tell you, I think if we did, the air war will determine it even before we get committed.

I just don't think they [Iraqis] appreciate the capacity we have to target their systems and take 'em out before we get in harm's way. If we bring everything to bear at a certain place at a certain time, we will make an impact rather quickly, I think.

### Strike in the Night

SOF: Conventional wisdom says this whole thing will start at night. From a commander's viewpoint, what would it be like?

A: I think we're looking at about five days of air war where battalions like mine aren't involved. We're staging somewhere, but we're not really involved in a fight. We might be reacting to some artillery or Scud missiles or maybe even some chemicals if he [Saddam] is crazy enough to use them, but I see an air war of about 72 hours where it's pure air and I honestly, in my own mind and heart, think that in about 24 hours to 48 hours, we're going to win that war.

And then the air belongs to us, and that's when we can divert the effort...to take out anti-air systems and their air force, and [then] use those assets and put 'em against command and control, artillery, and ground targets, and when we got those working in conjunction with the ground, that's when we would move. Personally, I

see a very cold, dark night [when the shooting starts] and by the time the sun comes up the next morning, I think we will have made 20-30km. There's been some contact and some fighting, but not a whole lot from a ground maneuver point of view. When the sun comes up, the Iraqis will be looking for a place to hide. But we will keep pressure on them, maintain contact and wait for nightfall so we can go back at 'em.

SOF: So, they'll get no rest?

A: Right. They can't fight us like they fought Iran where they took a break and did logistics [resupplied] and then went back to the war. There aren't going to be any 12-hour breaks this time. It's going to be a continuous fight. But it's not going to be easy. I think it will be bloody. But I feel confident that we can do what we're supposed to do.

SOF: Where are we going to lose the troops if the air takes it to them first? Where's the blood letting going to be on our side?

A: They've got tremendous artillery capability and if we don't take that out before we commit to ground troops, we're going to take some tank hits. They've got a pretty good tank in the T-72. They have experience, but I think our guys will learn fast under combat conditions and will make up the deficit, their experience versus ours. We have an edge technologically. What we're lacking is combat experience, but I think it will come very quickly should we be called upon to fight.

### Things To Watch

SOF: What's your biggest concern?

A: I'm concerned about differentiating between friend and foe on the battlefield. The Syrians also use Soviet-built T-72s. And the only way we can tell friend from foe is their position on the battlefield. Somebody smarter than us, or a level higher than us, has got to put us in a position on the battlefield so we aren't going to be looking at Syrian T-72s at the same time we might be looking at Iraqi T-72's, or we're going to have a significant problem, cause as you know, through thermal sights the signature is the same. It doesn't distinguish patterns of paint or camouflage. I mean it's a concern. It really is. Our training has taught us that the guy who shoots first wins a tank engagement. If he's in range, you've gotta shoot. We can't be fooling around wondering whether it's a Syrian or an Iraqi. It's gonna have to be cleared up for us before we shoot. And I think it can be done simply by positioning on the battlefield.

[Note: To avoid shooting Syrian tanks, the multinational force has placed Syrian armor on the far western or left flank — but battle lines change during the course of combat.]

SOF: What about the young American tanker? He's not going to

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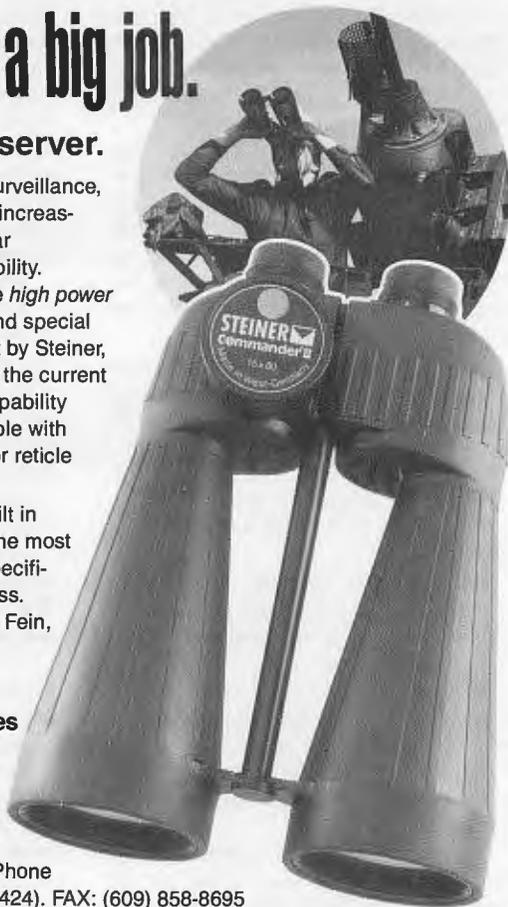
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wait to pull the trigger on a tank in his sights is he?

**A:** You know I'm concerned about that very point. There will be a tendency to hesitate. I'm seeing this when I watch guys fire live bullets when they go downrange for the first time. There will be a tendency to hesitate. I don't know how we get over that.

**SOF:** If you hesitate, you're dead!

**A:** Exactly. What we've learned is that the guy who shoots first usually wins. But you've got to hit what you shoot at. And I'm a little concerned that the guys may hesitate. I hope that by shooting more live rounds, and talking to them, we can help them, but I think we'll have some foreknowledge of what's going to happen. I think we'll have five to seven days worth of knowledge if we're going to attack or defend. It'll take them that long to attack down to where we are, and it will probably take us that long to get up to where we can kick off an attack. And with that foreknowledge, I think we can talk through this problem of hesitation. In the meantime, tank commanders are eliminating much of the problem by giving their gunners "Fire Commands." If you're being told to shoot, maybe that will help young gunners click that round off.

**What Will It Be Like?**

**SOF:** How much confusion is there going to be when this thing kicks off? Will people go absolutely crazy out there?

**A:** I'd like to tell [you] that it won't, but I'm sure it's going to be crazy for a while. At my level, I should have a pretty good understanding of what's happening. But once you get above my level where a brigade commander has three battalions to deal with, or a division commander has eight or nine, I'm sure it's going to be pretty confusing.

**SOF:** Are you concerned about the numbers of Iraqis you face?

**A:** No. I'm not overly concerned about the numbers. I'm hearing every day different numbers, but I'm not overly concerned about them, because I just think that the capability we have in terms of technology, especially at night, and what air can do to strip out the multipliers, will really even things up. And probably give us an advantage.

They're not very good at putting everything they have together at one point, one place at one time to have an effect on the battlefield. They fight tanks pretty good, they fight infantry pretty good, they use artillery OK, but they don't fight tanks-infantry-artillery and all of the other assets they have very well together. I think we're going to hand them so much to deal with at one point and time on the battlefield, they're not going to be able to deal with that, and that'll open up the window for us.

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Jensen graduated from the University of Delaware



## IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING TO OWNERS OF RUGER P-85 9MM PISTOLS



We have recently learned of a broken firing pin in a P85 automatic pistol which caused the pistol to fire as a result of decocking. This is the first report of this nature in over 200,000 pistols delivered to customers since 1987. No injury occurred because the shooter kept the pistol pointed in a safe direction during decocking.

Nevertheless, we regard this incident as important because it reveals a potential danger which we are prepared to eliminate in all P85 pistols now in use. This modification is very simple and does not alter the handling or appearance of this pistol, but it must be installed at the factory.

Accordingly, we urgently request that all owners of P85 pistols contact us immediately to obtain any further information they may desire, and to arrange for return of their P85 pistols to the factory for modification. Please contact us at:

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Or call us for P85 inquiries *only* at: 1-800-424-1886. Please have your pistol serial number available when contacting us.

We will schedule your gun for factory installation of a new safety/decock system free of charge. It will prevent this type of accidental firing even in the rare event of firing pin breakage.

This free safety modification applies *only* to pistols rollmarked "P85" on the slide. Pistols which are rollmarked "MKII" will have these modifications as part of their original manufacture, and are not subject to this modification.

We are also taking this opportunity to remind shooters of the most common and basic firearms safety rule:

### ALWAYS KEEP THE PISTOL POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION!

This is particularly important when loading, unloading, or decocking any pistol.

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with a degree in elementary education, with emphasis on special education, handicapped and retarded children. But he knew from the time he was a junior in high school that he wanted to make the military a career.

Jensen entered the U.S. Army in August 1972, but never got any combat experience in Vietnam. That's why Jensen depends so heavily on his Command Sergeant Major (CSM), Miguel Robles, from St. Croix, Virgin Islands. Robles did three combat tours in Vietnam.

Colonel Jensen said, "[His] first tour was with the 2nd of the 18th, 1st Infantry Division in June 1966. Robles served with the 3/5 Cav with the 9th Infantry Division. Robles was wounded during each of those tours. His neck still bears scar tissue from burns he suffered when he had an APC blown out from under him.

"Miguel is the big brother I never had," Jensen said. He looks forward to coffee every morning with the CSM.

Robles believes his troops are ready to deal with Saddam's army. "These guys are better equipped and prepared than they were in Vietnam. They can give as well as receive," Robles told me as he dropped by our dinner table to talk to the CO. But he cautioned against drawing any further parallels with what happened in Vietnam.

"It's a different ball game out here," he said. "Just look around. Do you see any jungle? There's no place to hide out here." And unlike the poorly equipped Viet Cong he fought, the Iraqis are well armed.

Although it's difficult for Miguel Robles to tell a young soldier what he's going to face, just the fact they know he's been there is comforting.

"When they ask me what's the best thing they can do under fire," Robles said, "I tell them to go with their instincts, 'cause 99% of the time your initial reaction will be the right one. When bullets are flying, I won't have to tell a man to duck. He'll get down."

How does Robles feel about the possibility of going into combat one more time?

"Before we deployed to Saudi Arabia, my wife said a person shouldn't have to go through this twice in his lifetime." Robles says he thinks about it, "But you don't let it get to you."

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Sorry kid. I don't know.

Ross Simpson is on assignment in the Gulf for Soldier of Fortune. ✕

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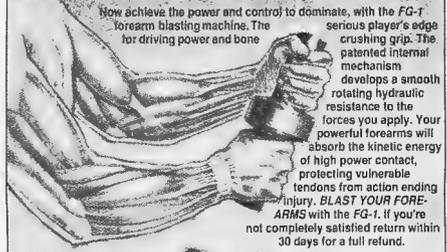
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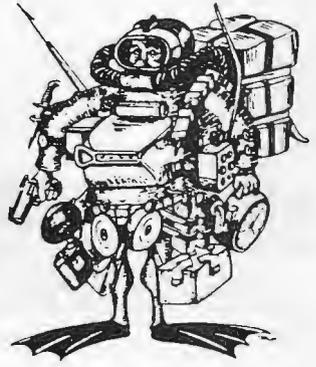
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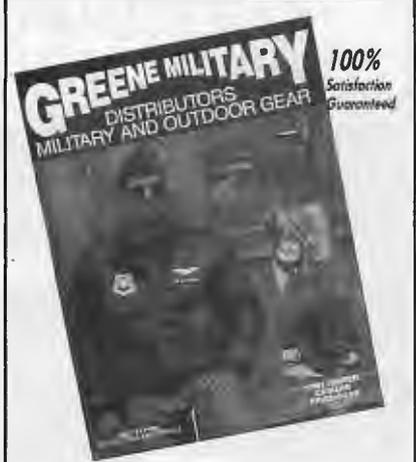
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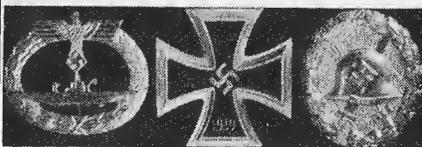
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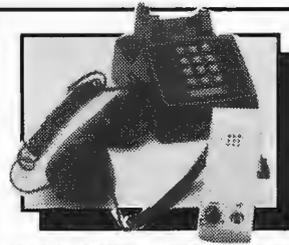
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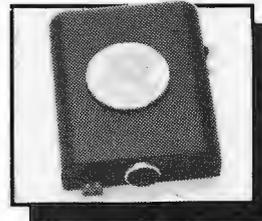
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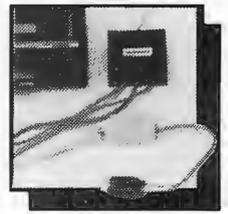
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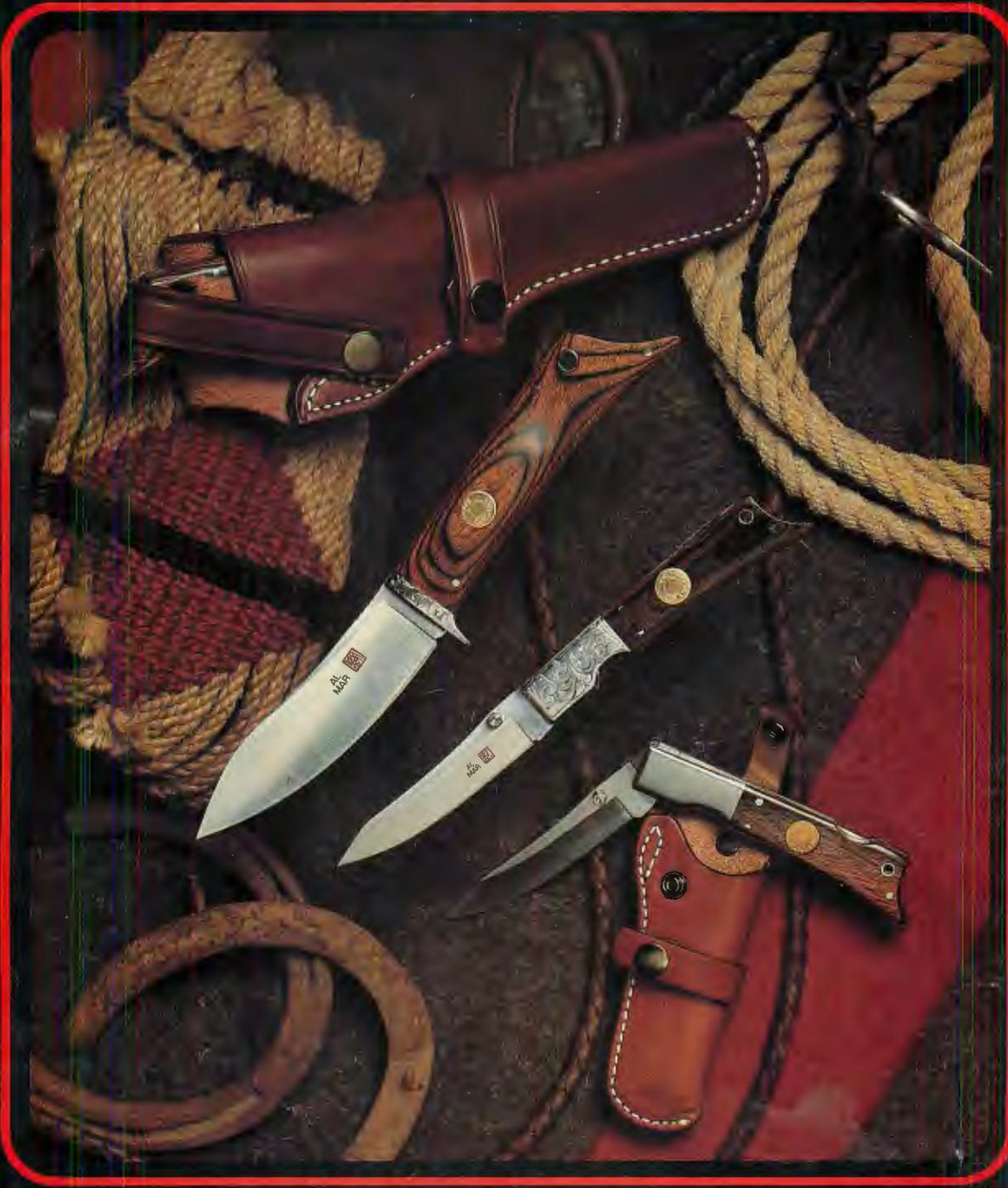
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