



**SOF INVADES KUWAIT**

JUNE 1991

48493

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Journal of Professional Adventurers

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WITH SAUDI SPEARHEAD**

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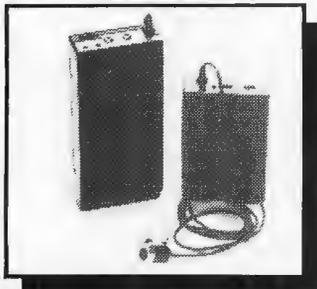
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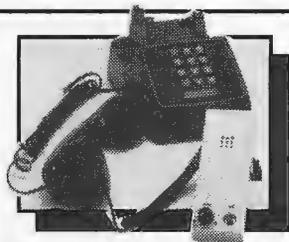
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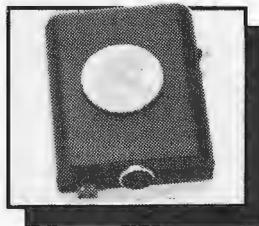
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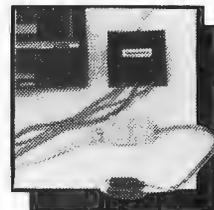
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# SOF

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Photo: James L. Pate



**COVER**

SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown has fought many battles in his time, both in combat and against bureaucratic BS. In most cases he won — or at least broke even. When he landed in Saudi Arabia on 12 January to cover the impending war, little did he realize he'd be facing the biggest obstacle of his career — the United States military censorship machine. Blocked at every turn, our intrepid boss tried every trick in the book to circumvent the sometimes inane rules and restrictions placed on journalists in Saudi (although he'd certainly agree that the Banana Republic "boob and dork" press brigade required adult guidance). Undaunted, he soon came to realize that the only way to cover the war was to break the rules, and using what he terms his "smoke and mirrors" routine, made his way to the front. For all his earlier frustrations, the payoff came when he hooked up with the lead Saudi armor unit during their assault into Kuwait. While others sat patiently in the rear Bob Brown rode to the sound of the guns, and his story begins on page 48. Photo: Sygma/J. Langevin

# BULLETIN BOARD

## SOF's "OPERATION DESERT STORM" PHOTO CONTEST

Send your best color or b/w shots to: P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Many prizes to be awarded.

Also, send us any stories you may have of the media, or other strange things you saw in the Gulf.

See next month's issue for further details.



Back from liberating/looting Kuwait, SOF's intrepid leader Robert K. Brown helps contributing editor for military affairs and Refugee Relief International honcho Alex McColl load up a batch of X-ray equipment on its way to a hospital in Bluefields, eastern Nicaragua. Tax-deductible donations of medical supplies (anything not requiring refrigeration or lock-up) are *always* needed — contact McColl at RRI, c/o SOF.

## OR JUMP IN POLAND

Historic first Polish friendship jump 3-10 June, sponsored by Phantom Division. Tour packet includes three jumps, firing Polish weapons, billeting/meals, tours, transportation from New York, Polish jump wings — lots more. Time is running out; call Jim Turney at (901) 853-7146.

## REPORT CARD TIME

Care to score these Gulf War predictions you did *not* read in SOF?

- Israel will enter war, breaking anti-Iraq coalition.
- Anti-Saddam coalition a house of cards Bush can't possibly keep together.
- Bush's home support for going to

war is thin, and waning.

- "Peace" demonstrations are but the tip of the iceberg.

- The elite Republican Guard is a formidable foe that will fight to the death.

- Saddam Hussein is an incalculably clever strategist.

- Air war will cause tremendous civilian casualties.

- All anti-Saddam forces are vulnerable to Scuds, chemical attacks.

- War must be over by Moslem Ramadan holidays.

- Air prepping of Saddam's forces will be ineffective, necessitating bloody ground war and tens of thousands (minimum 45,000) of U.S. casualties.

- Arab terrorists will bring world travel, commerce to a standstill.

- Arab/Moslem masses will rise in support of Saddam, toppling Arab/Moslem governments in the Coalition.

dam, toppling Arab/Moslem governments in the Coalition.

- We are overly optimistic about the duration of, casualties from a war with Saddam's forces.

- Abrams MBT, Bradley AFV, various high-tech weapons unproven, unreliable.

- Even if we win, we will lose.

- Even if Saddam loses, he will win.

While you're at it, care to score some individual quotes?

- Iraqi ambassador to Belgium: *We will fight to the last child.*

- Saddam Hussein: *The Americans will drown in their own blood.*

- JCS Gen. Colin Powell about Saddam's army: *We're going to cut it off, then kill it.*

- President Vaclav Havel, speaking from Prague about his sending 200 volunteers trained in anti-chemical warfare to support Desert Shield/Storm: *For the first time after a long*

period of oppression in our history we can freely express our sympathy with the democratic world.

- SOF's fearless leader Col. Bob Brown regarding the mass media, quoted from Saudi Arabia in Newsweek: *I thought I'd be riding the lead tank into Baghdad by now. Instead I'm stuck in a briefing room with the biggest bunch of boobs and dorks I've ever met.*

## AND SOMETIMES EVEN SOF BITES IT

The photos accompanying the article "Most Dangerous Weapon" by David Halevy and Neil Livingstone, on pages 56-59 of the January '91 issue were not credited. Credit goes to our sharp-eyed friends at AP/Wide World Photos. SOF regrets the omission.

## WE GOT, HE GOT, GOOD MARKS

Kudos to SOF's Chief Foreign Correspondent Dr. Tom Marks, who recently received his doctorate in political science from the University of Hawaii.

## THANKS FOR HELPING US HELP

During Operation Desert Shield/Storm you readers responded to SOF's request by sending in literally tons of books for the troops, which we repackaged and sent on to the Gulf via co-conspirators in the Air National Guard. The last batches were shared with the USAF hospital in England, and the VA hospital in Denver, Colorado. At this writing we've also sent over \$1,500 to the USO from Gulf War T-shirt sales. The troops say thanks. ☺



# PALADIN PRESS



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by Duncan Long

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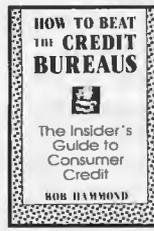
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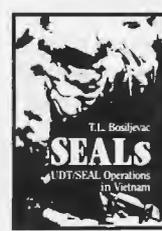


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## R.I.P. ENRIQUE

To all the mindless "peace at any price" drones, our liberal, self-serving congressmen, and those who protested against the Nicaraguan contras and for the Sandinistas: Your hands are stained with blood.

Enrique Bermudez, one of the founders of the Nicaraguan contras, was gunned down on 16 February by a Sandinista assassination squad. No one seems to have noticed, least of all our liberal media.

Because of Bermudez' actions, the people of Nicaragua were able to hold democratic elections and gain some freedom. But the frail democracy of Nicaragua is in danger. The Sandinistas control the army, and thus the country. Bermudez is dead and we are saddened. But he will not be forgotten.

William C. Godsey, M.D.

Robert D. Godsey

Memphis, Tennessee

## WHOOPS

My friends and I enjoy reading SOF, but being aboard a Navy vessel, often miss a lot of issues. I'm writing on behalf of my shipmates because of an error in your December '90 issue. In that issue, you mentioned that the USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) was in the Persian Gulf participating in Operation Desert Storm.

The *Mount Whitney* was nowhere near the Gulf. It was taking a cruise in

the Caribbean. It was never even a part of Desert Storm. Our ship, the USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), however, has been on station here in the Gulf since 01 September 1990, and will stay until God knows when.

It's a pretty bad thing to give credit to our sister ship and not us. This error, however, will not change my judgment about your magazine: It's still the best. Taking nothing away from the *Mount Whitney*, the crew of the *Blue Ridge* would appreciate having the record set straight.

Concerned Shipmates

USS *Blue Ridge*

(LCC 19)

To "Concerned Shipmates," RM3 Joe A. Riel and other sailors from the *Blue Ridge* who wrote, consider the record straightened.

## "THE TROUBLES"

As a close follower of Irish-English history and relations, I feel it necessary to comment on "Armagh Ambush" (March '91). Considering author John Stanley's SAS background, his anti-IRA sentiments are understood. For the sake of accuracy, however, it should be noted that the formation of the IRA was a result of repressive British rule.

To many people, the acts of British security forces are prime examples of terrorism. One example was the mur-

der of 14 sports fans in Dublin when British troops fired at spectators. Another example was the recent killing of an Irishman who was hit in the back by machine-gun rounds. The British trooper responsible said his trigger finger had "slipped."

A united, democratic Irish republic (the goal of the IRA), free from British repression, is the only solution to "the troubles."

Brendan McCrudden

Chicago, Illinois

## SHOOT HIM WITH WHAT?

I have been a reader of SOF for many years, and have followed your coverage of antigun fanatics very closely. While deployed during Operation Desert Storm, I got into a discussion with an antigunner on how to get Saddam Hussein out of power.

We first discussed Saddam's army turning on him, but both agreed loyal factions probably could hold off any large-scale military rebellion. "Why don't the civilians turn on him?" a third party to the discussion asked. "But they don't have any guns," the antigunner sadly responded.

I hope one of the many consequences of the Persian Gulf war will be to enlighten all antigunners to the dangers of an unarmed citizenry when power gets out of control.

John J. Ortolano

USS *Theodore Roosevelt*  
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## STUCK AT HOME

This is a not letter of protest against Operation Desert Storm, but rather against the way in which our military picked units to participate in the operation. I am an MP at the Sierra Army Depot, Herlong, California, with several years of experience in combat-support roles.

Several other MPs and I requested transfers to MP units in the Persian Gulf when the war started, but our requests were denied. I discovered that if a National Guard unit could have assumed our duty at Sierra, we would have been free to go.

I have nothing against the Guard, but I (and several others here) feel that it should stay in the United States and take over for active duty units during times of war. I know that some Guard



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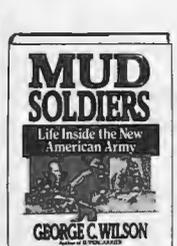
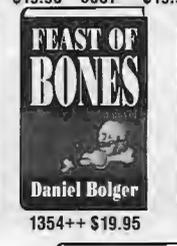
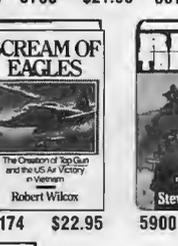
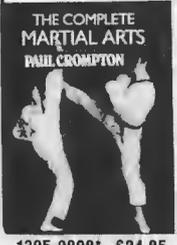
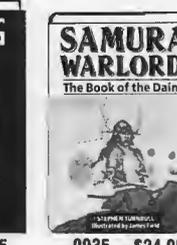
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# FLAK

units did well in Desert Storm, but it seems active duty military units should always be the first to be sent.

Morale has been very low here since our post commander first told us that none of us would be going to the Gulf. The whole affair has been like a slap in the face. On top of that, with no opportunity to be in a combat unit, chances of being selected to a rank higher than staff sergeant (E-6) are less than great.



And now... the Democratic response to the President's speech.

I joined the Army to defend my country and its interests, not sit at home and watch Guard MP units in the Persian Gulf on TV.

(Name withheld by request)  
Sierra Army Depot  
Herlong, California

## AMENDMENTS

The NRA should take a new, different approach in its counterattacks against gun-control supporters. The NRA should make it known that it will campaign for tighter controls on the press as tighter controls are placed on the right to own firearms.

The admittedly twisted logic behind this should be that if law-abiding people aren't responsible enough to own guns, then they shouldn't be allowed the benefits of free speech, either.

No one really wants restrictions on the press, naturally. What is needed, however, is for these almighty gun-control journalists to be shaken down from their high horses. They need to be taught that if they keep messing with everyone else's rights, sooner or later,

someone will be messing with theirs.

Joe Krakovsky  
Wildwood, Illinois

## GLOAT AND BE HAPPY

I have nothing but praise for President Bush's handling of the live-fire training exercise in the Persian Sandlot. I do, however, take exception with a part of his latest speech declaring an end to the war.

The president states that now is not the time to gloat. I beg to differ. While Mr. Bush has to be diplomatic and politically sensitive, I don't.

Saddam: We kicked your butt!

I'm talking goodbye to the Republican National Wimps, adios to your 4,200 Soviet-made T-Whatever armored targets and *auf wiedersehen* to your 500,000-man (?) collection of desert fertilizer. Incidentally, I'm sure the Iranians

appreciate your donation of 100-plus MiGs (NATO codename Chickencrap) to their air force.

Let me also offer a hearty "well done" to our boys, and due apologies to Mr. Bush.

L. Twiggy Schrubb  
King of Prussia,  
Pennsylvania

## RENAMO FLIP-FLOP?

I enjoy SOF immensely. To date, you have appeared to remain true to the ideals of freedom. Over the years, one of my favorite topics covered by SOF has been the RENAMO freedom fighters in Mozambique.

In these stories, you have praised the virtues of the RENAMO fighters, and put down the government forces trying to stop them. From what was written, I have gained a real like for RENAMO, and a hefty dislike for the government of Mozambique.

Now, in your March '91 issue, you have totally reversed your position. In that story, you say how good it is that British are training forces for combat

against RENAMO!

The training program sounded good, but the wrong guys were being trained. Whose side are you people on, anyway?

Matthew T. Carlton  
Grants, New Mexico

*As you mentioned, our position on RENAMO in Mozambique is well known. The idea behind the article was simply to report on the British military working in Zimbabwe as trainers and advisers — not to make comment on the political reasons which brought them there. British overseas training and advisory teams, much like our own Special Forces Mobile Training Teams, go where they're sent and do what they're instructed to do. You'd be surprised (and probably somewhat aghast) to hear about some of the countries in Africa where Uncle Sam sends our own MTTs. Our political stance on Mozambique and RENAMO hasn't changed, and neither has our respect for British troops thrust into a tough job.*

## GLAZED EYES

I have been reading SOF since issue one, and am really pleased with the way the magazine has evolved over the years. One of my favorite pieces was "Jeep to Hand Combat," run back in the old days.

It will never cease to amaze me that people who have never read SOF think that it should be banned from publication. I know career military officers who have never opened the cover of SOF — they think all they will find are articles on how to assassinate sentries and ads for hit men. Their eyes become glazed when I try to explain that SOF reports on hot spots around the world — struggles and places ignored by Time, Newsweek and CBS.

Please keep up the good work, and I will continue to try to convince the unwashed masses that SOF is a news magazine.

Mark Yaworski  
Poolesville, Maryland

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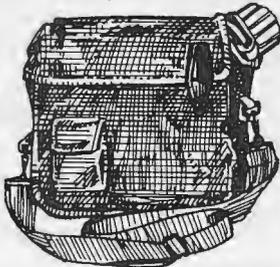
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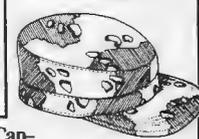
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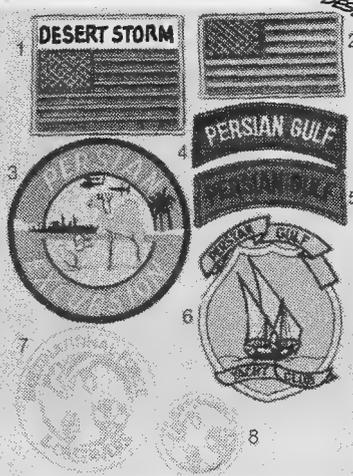
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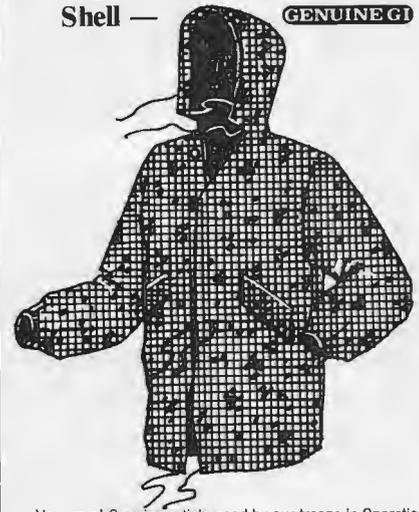
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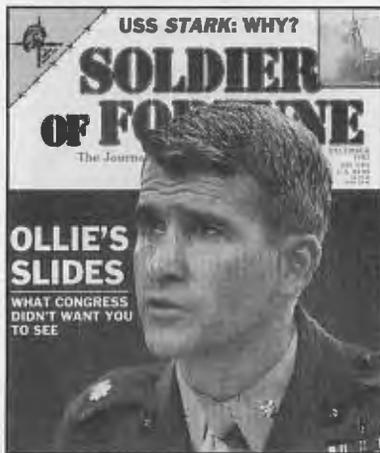
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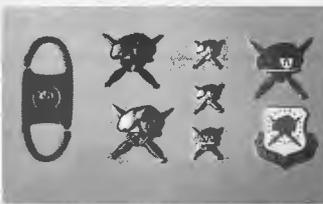
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(#7025 Not shown, bronze. **\$8.00**)
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# FULL AUTO

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

## Fine Tuning a Fine Weapon

**NO** military small arms weapon system is born perfect. All those of merit eventually evolve through a series of modifications. Flawed designs are usually not with us long enough for changes to be implemented.

Arguably the finest military sidearm ever fielded, the Colt Government Model .45 ACP pistol, was originally fielded as the Model 1911. Combat is the ultimate test bed and after World War I substantial changes were made in 1921. These included an arched and checkered mainspring housing, a shorter checkered trigger, recess cuts on both sides of the frame to accommodate the trigger finger, a longer horn on the grip safety and a slightly shortened hammer spur. With these alterations the arm took the designation M1911A1.

guard. The modifications were designed to enhance both production and performance of the M1 Garand.

The M16A1 evolved into the M16A2. The famous .303 British Bren Light Machine Gun (LMG) started life as the Mk I and went through changes as the Mk I\*, Mk 2, Mk 3 and finally the L4A1 through L4A7 7.62x51mm NATO series. There are numerous other examples.

The U.S. caliber 5.56x45mm NATO M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) is no exception and has already been modified several times since it was type classified on 1 February 1982. The front sight has been changed four times and the rear sight has seen three modifications.

Recently, a Product Improvement Program (PIP) kit with a significant

muzzle climb during burst-fire and diminish the dust signature when firing from the prone position in desert environments.

Original M249 barrels had a left-hand thread at the muzzle to accept the FN-designed flash hider. In theory, this should cause the rotating bullet to tighten rather than loosen the flash hider. The thread direction was changed to right-hand and the front part of the barrel was reshaped, both to accommodate the M16A2 flash hider. The peel washer (a series of shims) used to retain and orient the M16A2's flash hider was replaced by a unique conical-shaped washer. To install the flash hider with this special washer in place, you must turn it onto the muzzle with a torque wrench to 25 ft./lbs., minimum, and then continue to rotate the unit until the correct orientation has been obtained.

The original non-articulated carrying handle was a legitimate area of criticism. All too often, it served as a spear to impale the operator when assuming the prone position. The new folding carrying handle has three positions: folded on top of the heat shield, the upright position for carrying, or folded down along the right side of the barrel. To fold the handle over the heat shield or along the right side of the barrel, push rearward on the spring-loaded handle to move its locking tab out of the deeply recessed center notch. The handle can be locked back into the carrying position by merely rotating it upward.

The original gas regulator had two positions, "N" (normal) which produced a cyclic rate of 750 rpm and "A" (adverse) which stepped the cyclic rate up to 1,050 rpm. Gunners will always opt for the higher rate of fire on any automatic weapon, feeling, I suppose with no small amount of justification, that combat is in itself an adverse condition. This inevitably results in accelerated wear to the reciprocating parts. The two-position gas regulator has been replaced with a one-position gas regulator sleeve and the gas block's gas adjustment screw has been replaced by a set of orifice plugs. These latter have been set to force all of the available gas energy into the mechanism. Yet no matter what degree of fouling is present, the gun will



The Product Improvement Program for the M249 SAW includes a redesigned plastic buttstock assembly and a new three-position carrying handle among other things.

To the layman, the highly regarded M1 Garand appears without apparent change from the inception of its series production in 1937 at Springfield Armory to the very last rifle manufactured in 1956. That was hardly the case. At one time or another during its production run of more than 5 1/2 million rifles, the following components were modified: lower band and pin; bullet guide; buttplate; firing pin; follower and follower arm, pin and rod; front and rear sights; gas cylinder and lock and lock screw; operating rod and spring; safety; trigger, trigger housing and

number of improvements was adopted for the M249. It is now in the pipeline in substantial quantity.

One of the kit's components was previously adopted. A ventilated heat shield now clips on over the barrel above the forearm. Made from stamped sheet-metal, it has a black, synthetic handguard. The front of the heat shield hooks under the gas block's retaining pin which has been extended on either side. When the barrel is removed, the heat shield can be transferred to a spare barrel.

Three important modifications have been made to the barrel assembly. The M249's original flash hider has been replaced with that of the M16A2. A bird-cage-type, the sixth port on the bottom (present on the M16A1 flash hider) was deleted to slightly reduce



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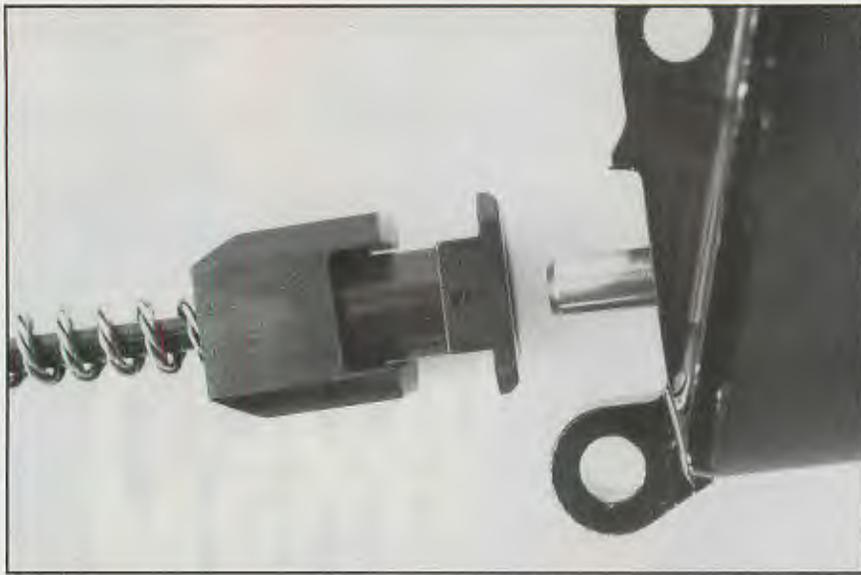
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Probably the most important alteration was the addition of a hydraulic buffer in the buttstock that impinges against a two-piece steel block, called a transfer bar, at the end of the recoil spring's guide rod.

continue to operate at its optimum rate of 750 rpm.

This has been accomplished by installation of a hydraulic buffer which absorbs all excess energy introduced into the system and eliminates any erratic decline or increase in the rate of

fire. The original spring buffer, formerly attached to the rear of the recoil spring's guide rod, has been deleted and replaced by a two-piece steel block called a transfer bar assembly which directs the path of the system's recoil energy to the tip of the hydraulic buffer.

The new buffer protrudes from a completely redesigned plastic buttstock assembly that replaces the original skeletonized stock which was fabricated from aluminum castings and

tubing. The steel wire buttstrap of the original has been retained in slightly different configuration. The new buttstock exhibits excellent human engineering and features a hooked shape on the underside, somewhat in the manner of ComBloc machine guns like the RPD and RPK, and a serrated cast-aluminum buttplate.

The PIP kit's only other modification is to instruct armorers to remove the link-ejection-port dust cover, the sharp edge of which sometimes cut operators when they retracted the cocking handle.

It's important to mention that the new barrel assembly must be used in conjunction with the hydraulic buffer and transfer bar assembly. If used alone without the hydraulic buffer, the gas block's orifice plug setting will produce a cyclic rate in excess of 1,000 rpm and the weapon will eventually self-destruct.

The SAW concept needs no justification from me. The M249 (FN Minimi) machine gun was selected from a rigorous, competitive evaluation of four candidate systems. The M249 SAW has just completed its ultimate performance test in the heat of ground battle midst the swirling sand of Desert Storm. By all accounts to date, it has acquitted itself in a satisfactory manner. ✕

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# IN REVIEW

by John Coleman

Liberals will hate this book. So will former President Jimmy Carter, Ollie North, the infamous Christic Institute and any number of Foggy Bottom bureaucrats. It's guaranteed to raise hackles all over.

I don't think retired Major General John K. Singlaub will give a damn.

**HAZARDOUS DUTY - An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century** (Summit Books), by John Singlaub, co-written with a deft touch from Malcolm McConnell, is the story of one man's career that actually reads more like a quest, one that has allowed no deviation from the goal of duty to one's country, and the battle against those who would bring it harm.

If that sounds somewhat simplistic in this realpolitik world of the political backstab, self-aggrandizement and ideological fence straddling, where patriotism, duty and honor are considered naive, then John K. Singlaub must stand as a raw unsophisticate. Today's young government bright-boys, who consciously avoid anything that smacks of independent thought or action, would definitely think him so. That's the difference between those who sit and twiddle — and those who go and do.

Singlaub started going and doing back in 1943, when as a young paratrooper officer he volunteered for duty with the Office of Strategic Services and found himself working behind German lines with the French Resistance. It was his first taste of clandestine operations and he found he was good at it. It was also his first personal confrontation with fascism and starkly brutal oppression. Both factors would shape his career, in the military and later as a civilian in the private sector, for the next four-and-a-half decades.

That, of course, is what **HAZARDOUS DUTY** is all about, the life of a professional soldier with a somewhat unusual career that wound him in and out of covert special operations ranging from China to Manchuria to Korea to Vietnam, interspersed with regular unit commands and staff assignments.

By itself, Singlaub's military life would make fascinating reading, but there's more. John Singlaub ran afoul of Jimmy Carter's proposed military disinvestment of Korea (a disturbing chapter on how the press can quickly

end a career) which resulted in Singlaub's early retirement. Rather than settle into Washington's comfortable lobby of Beltway Bandits, he became involved with a number of private organizations that advocated a strong national defense. Perhaps more important, they recognized that communism, in any number of guises, presented a real threat to the security of the United States.

In this day and age, that attitude may seem passe. Yet in the late 1970s and early-middle '80s, East Bloc (specifically Soviet) expansionism was highly visible in places such as Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and, of course, Nicaragua, and the United States government seemed unwilling or unprepared to do much about it.

John Singlaub and others weren't as complacent.

With Congress dithering over aid to the contras, with an on-again/off-again attitude, thousands of young Nicaraguans who were prepared to sacrifice their lives to free their country from repressive, Soviet-backed Sandinista rule languished in the jungles and mountains of their homeland and neighboring Honduras. U.S. aid was sporadic; CIA on-site support so compartmentalized that when Agency personnel withdrew, there was little in the way of a support infrastructure left.

As an active-duty soldier, there was little Singlaub could have done about the situation. As a private citizen, there was much.

Enter Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and the motley crew of Iran/Contra. To ensure that his efforts wouldn't contravene U.S. government policy, Singlaub liaised with North, the government's pointman for the project, in organizing private sector assistance for the contras. Although Singlaub had doubts about him (he felt the young colonel, although bright and hard-working, lacked the requisite background for such a sensitive position), he deferred to North's control of the unofficial-official supply effort.

Using his own contacts and resources, Singlaub went shopping for weapons, aircraft, and other supplies for the contras, successfully delivering tons of desperately needed equipment. But the more he worked with

North, the more his doubts about control of funding, and specifically North's choice of an air adviser — retired Air Force Major General Richard Secord — grew. As eventually did his concerns about Oliver North's integrity.

During the subsequent mini-series dubbed the Iran/Contra hearings, in which Singlaub played a role and walked away with his honor intact, his reservations and misgivings were sadly proven all too prescient. It was a frustrating experience, one of many that plagued him both as a soldier and civilian in service to his country.

You sense that frustration, tinged with sadness, throughout **HAZARDOUS DUTY**, of a man with a clear vision of how things could have been confronted by those with no vision at all — or worse, by some who put bank accounts and personal glory above all else. In the real world that's to be expected, but it's refreshing to sense the surprise in John Singlaub when he encounters it. Perhaps that's naivete. Perhaps he's a man to whom the code of duty to country is so strong that he can't fathom others who don't feel and act the same way. It's a tantalizing thought that in a world of Watergates and Irangates, people like General John K. Singlaub actually exist.

Reviewers who slam this book because of Singlaub's single-minded views of right and wrong, of good and evil, will do so for all the wrong reasons. Quite simply, they'll forget that some people are willing to take a stand for their beliefs; that they've developed their world view based on first-hand experiences at the front lines rather than through rhetorical discourse, safely conducted well out of harm's way. It's a rather sad commentary that those who sit and twiddle — and criticize from afar — far outnumber those who go and do.

I give **HAZARDOUS DUTY** a four-star recommendation. It's exciting, well written, and John Singlaub — although discretely diplomatic at times — doesn't pull any punches. Beyond that, you should read it because Singlaub had the guts to write it. Few others would display the same courage.

**HAZARDOUS DUTY** will be released in June and available through your local book store. ☞

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# WORLD SITREP

## 1 ALBANIA

Armored forces called out to protect government installations against violent protesters.

## 2 BULGARIA

Communist party being forced to divest about half of its assets, which are supposed to go back to the folks.

## 3 BURMA

Taking advantage of international preoccupation with Gulf war, SLORC arrests more opposition leaders, bans more opposition parties, makes usual promises of democratic reforms ... Also makes offer of business opportunities to Kachin Independence Army (KIA) leaders if they will quit — they decline.

## 4 ĀSFR

Synthesis chemical works, manufacturers of infamous Semtex explosive, for sale. Brit, U.S., Japanese firms negotiating. New Semtex now produced with traceable scent.

## 5 CAMBODIA

Quantities of Vietnamese-manufactured RPGs, directional mines captured by Sihanoukist forces. French, Indonesian officials ask Thailand to try to broker settlement between four warring factions.

## 6 CANARY ISLANDS

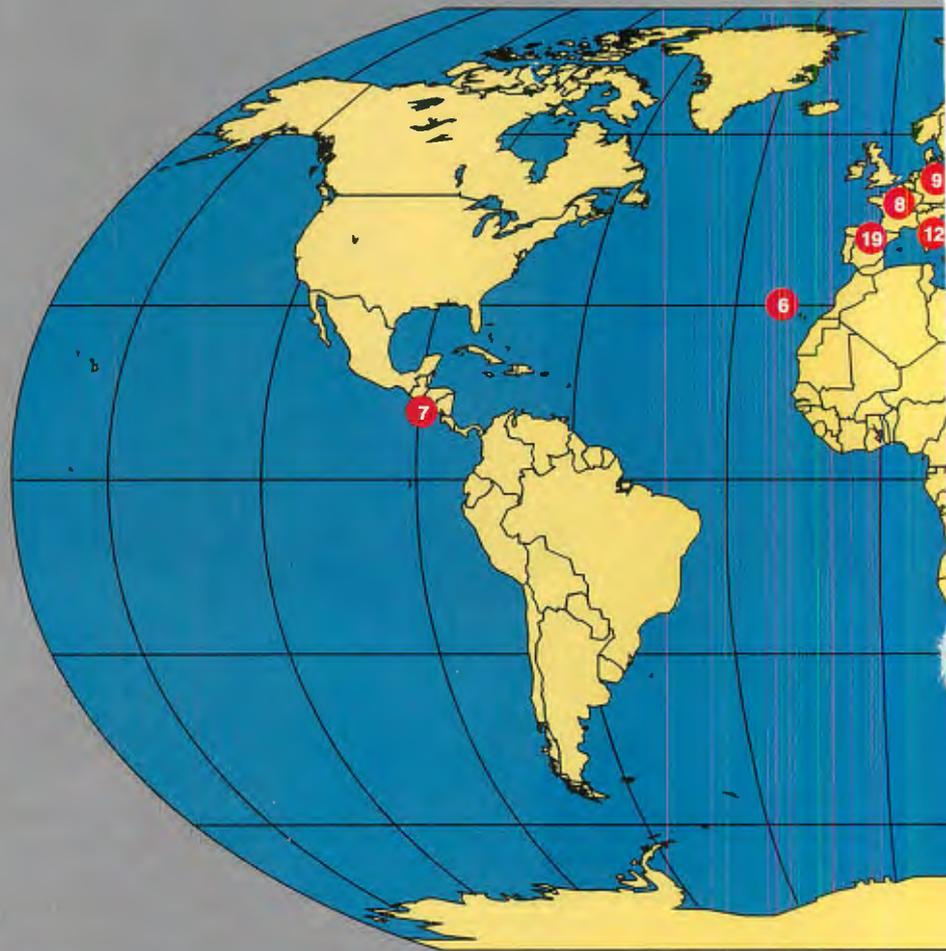
Ship carrying two tons of Colombian coke seized — biggest seizure in Spanish history.

## 23 ZIMBABWE

Zim troops guarding pipeline in Mozambique's Gaza Province kill 34 RENAMO rebels in recent fire-fight. Estimated 10,000 Zim troops remain in Mozambique guarding pipelines, road and rail nets.

## 22 VIETNAM

Broke, Soviets are letting go 4 1/2 gas/oil blocks they had been granted for exploration off Vietnamese coast near Bach Ho field. Exxon, Texaco, Amoco, Phillips, Conoco and Mobil negotiating with Petrovietnam to sign deals if/when U.S. embargo is lifted.



## 7 EL SALVADOR

Battles in San Salvador between leftist guerrillas and government forces after unsuccessful attack on President Cristiani's residence ... Five U.S. military advisers die when chopper crashes into lake; chopper reported mechanical trouble soon after takeoff.

## 8 FRANCE

Two banks damaged on Corsica by separatists who separated from the separatist FLNC. Italian holiday village, home of leading French banker, also attacked.

## 9 GERMANY

Hunt continues for some 2,000 domestic and 582 foreign sleeper Stasi agents; none fingered yet, although partial list has been handed over to parliament ... Government expects to spend an additional DM 30 billion a year to pay for contribution to Gulf war, rebuild East Germany, help Eastern Europe.

21

### USSR

Group of Soviet army officers publicly accuses Communist Party of plotting coup in Lithuania last January ... Leningrad hotel fire kills 16, including one American, after TV set explodes ... \$3 million in medical aid sent directly from Washington to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, bypassing Moscow.

20

### THAILAND

Military coup topples government of Premier Chatichai; leaders of coup promise quick return to democracy.

18

### SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Aramco officials working on deals to build chain of refineries in East and Southeast Asia; negotiations with South Korea, Japan, Thailand.

19

### SPAIN

Bomb set by GRAPO (October First Antifascist Resistance Group) explodes at local traffic authority in Gijon; no injuries.

17

### REUNION

French government shuts down pirate TV station; youthful rioters spark violence ... dozens killed. Two squadrons of riot police dispatched.

16

### POLAND

Warsaw Pact ministers meet and formally dissolve their military alliance; will meet again in Prague next July to finish emptying the wastebaskets ... Japan to supply technology and assistance to help Poland stem pollution from coal-fired generating plants.

15

### PHILIPPINES

President Aquino suing journalist who alleged she hid under bed in August 1987 coup attempt because, "This particular statement gives the impression that the commander-in-chief of the armed forces is a coward." Manila court recently found 16 military officers guilty of Benigno Aquino's murder in 1983; sentenced them to life.

12

### ITALY

Parliament passes tough new drug law banning grass, coke, smack; imposing tougher penalties. First drafted in 1988, new law was strongly opposed by communists/leftists.

14

### PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Equips four fighters with air-refueling kits purchased from Iran, is shopping for suitable tankers ... Buying 24 Su-27 fighters from USSR ... Californians note: A man from Guangxi was given a bullet in the head after being convicted of diverting irrigation water without permission.

10

### INDIA

Returns Charlie-class nuclear attack sub it leased from Soviets for three years; now expected to build German-designed subs in local yards.

11

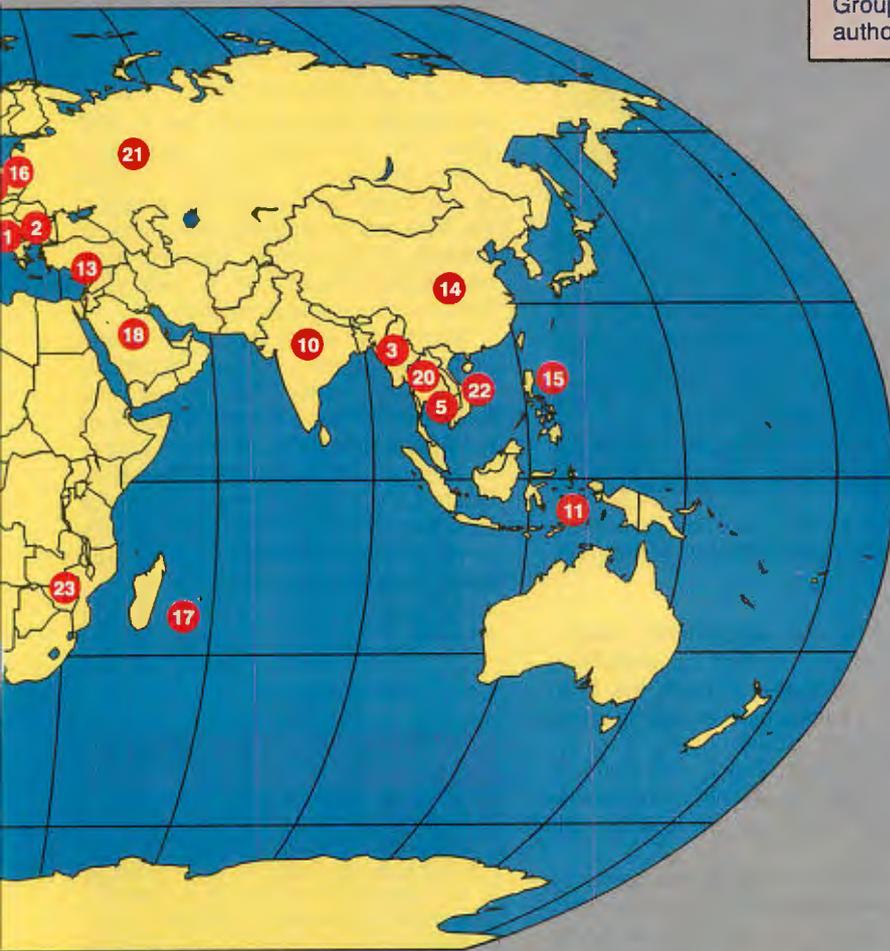
### INDONESIA

Moslem hijacker Azhar Muhammas Safar, first convicted in 1981, executed by firing squad in Bandung.

13

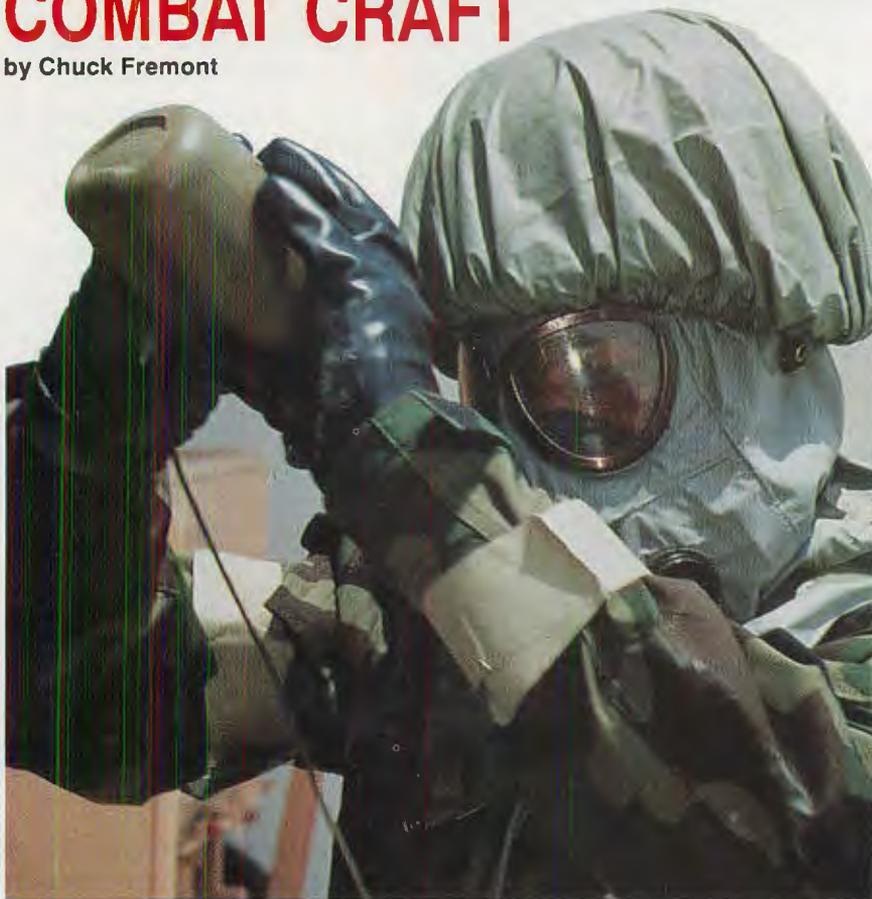
### LEBANON

Pro-Syrian gunmen free Habib al-Chartouni, 1982 assassin of President Bashir Gemayel. He was in prison at Roumieh.



# COMBAT CRAFT

by Chuck Fremont



According to early reports, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps suffered more heat casualties during Desert Shield than actual combat losses during Desert Storm. Photo: U.S. Army/Sgt. Roman

**DESERT** Shield and Desert Storm are history, but desert warfare will probably stay with us for quite a while.

Some Desert Storm veterans (82nd Airborne Division personnel in particular) spent seven months or more in the desert of Saudi Arabia. These troopers received intense training and actual combat experience in the desert environment; they probably are not the ones who need to read this column. For others, including personnel arriving later who were spared the experience of the Arabian summer heat, read on.

We don't have the final figures yet, but from available accounts, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps suffered more heat casualties during Desert Shield than actual combat losses in Desert Storm.

Heatstroke may not sound as dramatic as taking a hit from a 7.62x39mm round, but it can be just as deadly. In fact, the medics consider heatstroke a true medical emergency. The lesser heat and solar injuries — sunburn, dehydration, heat syncope and heat exhaustion — can also be serious, especially if they are ignored.

Humans are essentially water-cooled. Blood, heated by exercising muscles, circulates through the skin, where it is cooled by evaporating water (perspiration). Some cooling also occurs in the lungs, and in drier climates and at higher elevations, a substantial amount of water can be lost through breathing.

But perspiration is still the main way our bodies keep cool. A soldier working hard in a hot, dry climate can easily lose over a liter of water per hour through perspiration. Thus, military requirements for at least 2 gallons (just less than 8 liters) of drinking water per man each day are not excessive.

Drinking large quantities of water doesn't guarantee that you won't sustain a heat injury. If the climate is humid, perspiration may accumulate on the skin without evaporating as rapidly as necessary. Clothing that is tight-fitting or made of low-breathability material also reduces evaporation. Current battle dress uniforms (BDUs) have been criticized for being less breathable than Vietnam-era jungle fatigues.

Whether this is because of the fabric

## Beat the Heat

itself, the tailoring (NATO unisex uniforms are generally tight in the crotch and buttocks for American males) or the anti-infrared dyes (used to defeat thermal imaging devices) depends on whom you talk to. Practically every trooper with experience wearing both uniforms, however, gripes about the BDUs. Recent-issue BDUs seem to fit somewhat better.

You can improve cooling while wearing BDUs by leaving the fly and shirt front unbuttoned, not wearing a T-shirt (allowing air to better circulate to the torso), and either not blousing the trousers or blousing them loosely outside of the boots. Keeping load bearing equipment (LBE, or web gear) loose enhances air circulation.

Some guys like to rip out the seams under the armpits. It's not regulation, but it helps. Also, lots of washing seems to increase the breathability of the BDU material. Try to keep a couple of sets of well-washed and broken-in BDUs in your deployment kit. Make sure they fit loosely. And never starch anything you plan to fight in. Army regs even prohibit starching BDUs.

In the field, have people watch one another for signs of heat injury. Com-

*Continued on page 24*

### SOF Recommendation

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plaints of dizziness or weakness in high heat conditions are a warning sign of heat syncope (normal body temperature, but borderline for heat exhaustion) and actual heat exhaustion (temperature higher than normal, but below 104 degrees). These are the mildest forms of heat injury, but they shouldn't be ignored. Nausea, vomiting and fainting may also occur.

Anyone suffering these symptoms should lie down, preferably in a shaded or cool spot. The feet should be elevated as in treating for shock, and fluid intake should be increased. Salt intake may need to be increased, particularly if muscle cramps are a problem. Athletic electrolyte mixes containing potassium salts and military oral hydration packets are especially helpful.

Take note of your urine color: dark yellow or orange may indicate dehydration. And if you wake up in the morning without needing to urinate, you probably need to drink more water. Anytime urinary output is below normal in a hot environment, physical activity should be reduced.

### Heatstroke: The Killer

Medics carefully monitor the temperature of a person suffering from heat exhaustion. Any temperature above 104 indicates heatstroke, which can kill or cause permanent brain damage, kidney and liver failure and other problems.

The victim's pulse is usually rapid and thready, and confused behavior, convulsions and unconsciousness may occur. Hot, dry skin is not necessarily present with heatstroke despite common belief. Anyone who has previously suffered a heat injury is at greater risk for heatstroke.

Active cooling, preferably immersion in cool (but not ice) water is needed. If this isn't possible, use water-soaked towels or cloths to cool the victim's skin. Clothing should be removed or loosened to increase air circulation. Victims may complain of headaches, but don't administer aspirin. Treat for shock and evacuate as soon as possible.

The greatest risk of heatstroke is usually during the first week of deployment to a hot climate. After this acclimatization period, bodies adjust and one sweats easier. "Rationing" water does not hasten this adjustment. Hard training prior to deployment can help.

A distance runner, training for the Badwater 146 in California, trained in extra clothes to get used to running while hot. But this sort of training still won't prepare you for that first breath of superheated desert air when you step out of a C-130. Keep filling your canteens, and take it easy at first. ☒

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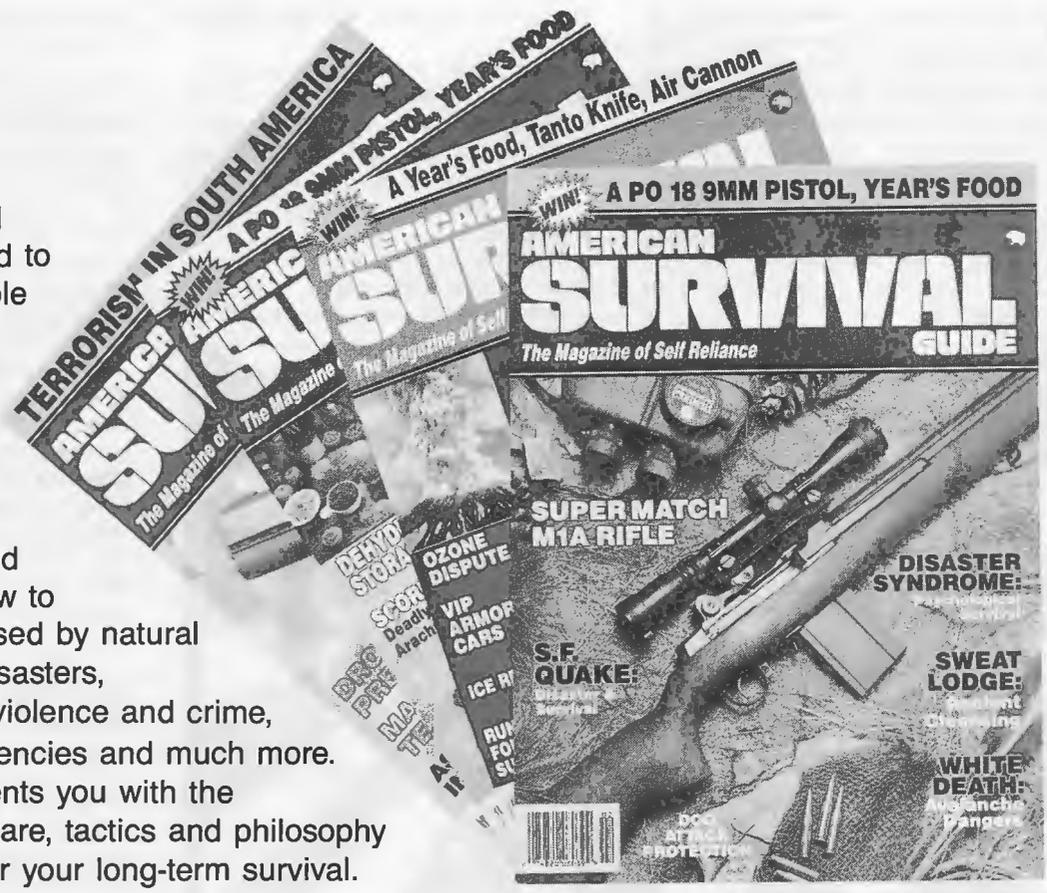
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# I WAS THERE

by James M. Massey as told to George T. Williams

## Leyte Luck

IN my 30 years of service in the U.S. Army, I only volunteered once! That was in February 1943 when I found myself accepted by Major Edward H. Lahti as a prospective paratrooper in the then-forming 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Toccoa, Georgia. Upon passing the initial "Currahee Run," I was accepted, and was lucky enough to be assigned to the 2nd squad of the 2nd platoon of Company G.

World War II, Korea, and two tours in Vietnam.

How proper training with the greatest weapon in the U.S. arsenal contributed to my survival was perhaps best illustrated by Company G's first baptism of fire. This occurred early on our mission at Leyte, in the Philippines.

We had received word of a Japanese mountain-top supply trail. Our mission was to seize the top of the

bullet which passed through my hand, removing the web of my hand between the first finger and thumb.

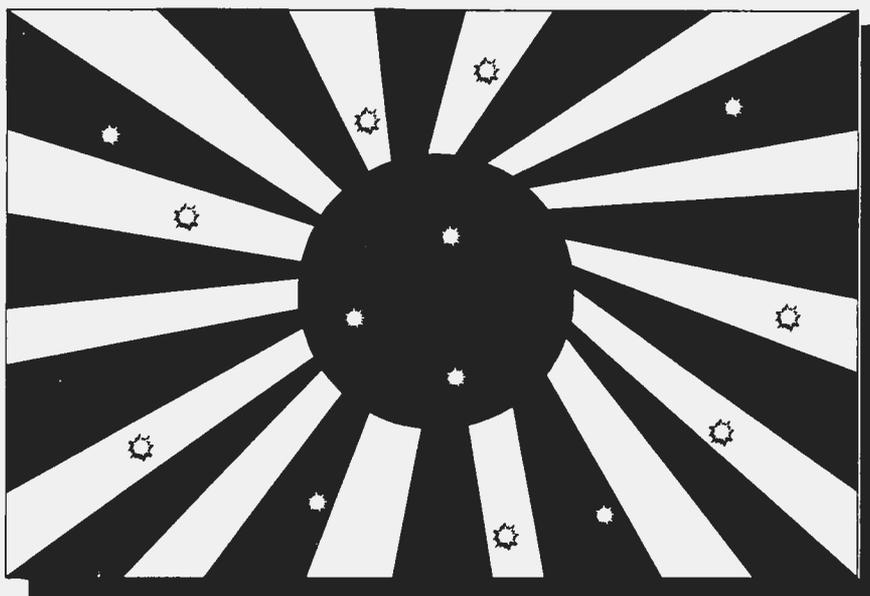
Sliding back down to the stream bed while still trying to scramble up, I found myself alone with my LMG (without the tripod). When I looked up, there were far too many Japanese creeping forward, and way too many of them shooting at me. With nowhere to go, I wrapped my folded poncho around the barrel jacket and started firing — first come, first served.

My target selection rapidly changed when I saw two Japanese crews with "woodpeckers" (a 7.7mm Type 92 Hotchkiss-type machine gun with a slow rate of fire that gave it a peculiar firing signature — hence the name "woodpecker") moving into firing position. I had just dispatched the two guns when one more moved into view. Two short bursts were all that I needed to take it out.

By this time, I was able to judge that from the way the bullets were striking all around, the Japanese doing the shooting had to be above me. I fired blindly into the trees to my front. I seem to remember 12 or 14 bodies and weapons falling from the trees, landing hard on the ground in front of me. I got credit for three Japanese LMGs and 21 soldiers with my M1919A4.

It seemed like an eternity between the first shot and my eventually running out of ammo. After gently placing the empty gun in the water of the stream, I brought my carbine into play. I heard Buzz Miley shout, "Hold on Rebel, we're moving up!" It was the first time in the action I'd had time to think, and now true fear took over. The attack was fought off as the company moved up, and the action ceased as quickly as it had begun.

I was awarded the Silver Star by General Douglas MacArthur. Then, as now, I felt it was more a citation honoring the officers and NCOs of Company G who had trained us so well. I would like to add that for the rest of the war, and into Korea and Vietnam, the training and trust in the M1919A4 and its replacements, the M1919A6 and M60, was always like a magnet to me. When the action started, regardless of my rank or position, something always drew me to the LMG ... and its *security*. ☒



Our training in Company G was outstanding, though at the time we thought it was torture. Captain Jim Lorio and 2nd Lieutenant "Buzz" Miley were my officers, and it was years before I realized just how fortunate I was to have them. These officers and our NCOs were totally dedicated to making us the best-trained soldiers in the Army.

After we finished individual arms training, we were appointed to crew-served weapon teams. I became first-gunner of the M1919A4 LMG (the belt-fed, .30 caliber Browning light machine gun). My range qualification score won me the first-gunner position as well as promotion to private first class.

What an honor in those early years. After 48 years, my shoulders are still square from carrying that sucker. The teamwork stressed in our machine-gun training in my early years was so thorough that it carried me through

mountain, destroy any Japanese forces found, and permanently disrupt the trail, which was supplying enemy forces the length of the island. While working our way up the mountain, we were ambushed by a sizable enemy force.

Lloyd Frantz, Bob Perkins and I made up the LMG crew. We were moving along a small, high-banked stream when the ambush erupted. Japanese rounds were hitting everywhere around us, with some of our comrades taking serious wounds. Caught in a stream bed, we tried to escape up the muddy banks with the others. Bullets were zipping by our ears and throwing mud all around.

As other members of the squad made their way to safety, the sides of the stream became more and more slippery. Bob Perkins was being pulled from above by Lloyd, and was nearly to safety with me pushing from below. Then he was nailed hard in the hip by a

AS SEEN ON 

# 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.

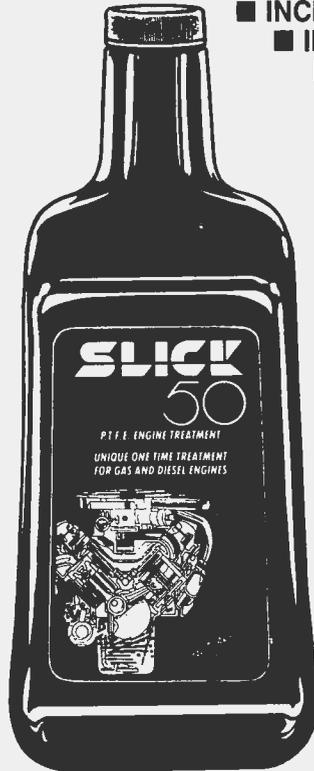
## Most Often Asked Questions About Slick 50

### 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. Flush me risk free:

- \_\_\_ One quart of Slick 50 at \$29.95 plus \$3.95 shipping & handling.
- \_\_\_ Two quarts of Slick 50 at \$59.90. Free shipping.

Enclosed is my:  Check  Money order  Visa  MasterCard  
Please make your check or money order payable to SLICK 50.  
California residents add \$2.02 per quart sales tax.

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (FOR UPS DELIVERY) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

SLICK 50 - Dept. 21  
12015 Sherman Road  
North Hollywood, CA 91605  
For Immediate Delivery  
Call 1-818-765-8538

© 1991 Melvin Powers

### Does Slick 50 have any effect 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."

# TIGERS IN PARADISE

## Short-Lived Cease-Fire in Bloodsoaked Sri Lanka

by Frank Noble

ON New Year's Eve 1990, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) began a unilateral cease-fire, suspending six months of renewed fighting between the separatist movement and security forces in Sri Lanka.

Only days earlier I had been in the north of the country observing how the government was responding to guerrilla activities. I discovered that the LTTE held sway in much of the northern and eastern provinces while the army, employed in a defensive role, protected certain districts from terrorist attacks and prevented the LTTE from occupying other areas.

The army's task in these areas is both difficult and unenviable. All of the smaller outposts, as well as individual positions on the outskirts of larger cantonments, were potential targets. Significantly, the guerrillas were quietly encircling military bases throughout the operational areas.

The army acknowledges that in jungle fighting or when besieging an outpost, the Tigers are a formidable foe. However, in conventional warfare, it appears that government forces have the edge over the guerrillas.

"They cannot hold ground" is an opinion about the LTTE that I was to hear echoed time and again. But, the army, suffering from acute manpower and equipment shortages, can no longer afford to sacrifice limited resources in protracted engagements. It has fought itself to a virtual standstill.

This became clear during my tour of lonely outposts in Sri Lanka's embattled north. At Palaly, Lieutenant Colonel Palitha Fernando, in charge of personnel and administration (G1) of 21 Brigade, thoroughly briefed me on the local situation. He then explained how the base area had been expanded and consolidated after five days of fighting in October.

Currently, the army was in control of 25 square kilometers that included the harbor

### TWO DECADES OF WAR

For almost two decades the lovely island of Sri Lanka has been torn apart by a bloody civil war between the majority Sinhalese and the militant minority Tamil population.

The majority of Sri Lanka's 16 million people are Buddhist Sinhalese (74%), with Hindu Tamils making up approximately 18% of the population. The rest are a mixture of descendants of various colonists and a few of the original inhabitants, the Veddahs.

Roughly two-thirds of the Tamils are so-called Ceylon Tamils, who originally came from southern India and have lived in Sri Lanka for many centuries. The others are Indian Tamils, whose ancestors were brought from India in the late 19th century to work the tea and rubber plantations. Ceylon Tamils live mainly in the north and east of the island. The Indian Tamils tend to live in the center of the island near the tea estates.

In 1972 the two major Ceylon Tamil political parties joined forces to work for Tamil interests. They promoted the use of Tamil as an official language, tried to resolve specific Tamil grievances such as discrimination in public employment, ownership of land and inequality of access to higher education.

The Tamil United Front (TUF), as the group was called, eventually called for the establishment of a separate Tamil State called Tamil Eelam in the northern and eastern provinces of the island. The TUF party later changed its name to the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

Also starting in the early 1970s, a

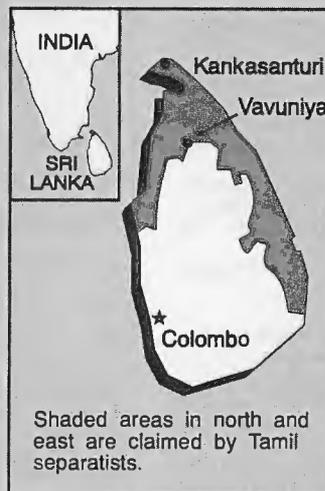
small group of militant Tamils calling themselves the Tamil Tigers turned to terrorism to achieve their goals, murdering policemen, politicians and civilians.

In 1978 the constitution retained Sinhala as the official language, but made Tamil a national language and recognized the rights of minorities. In 1979 the government passed a strict antiterrorism bill which rejected Tamil claims to a separate state, but maintained a dialogue with TULF leaders.

Tension between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority continued to build. In July 1983 there were nationwide anti-Tamil riots and in 1987 President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Gandhi of India signed an accord calling for the disarmament of Tamil militants. The accord also called for an amnesty for Tamil guerrillas, Tamil and English to share official status with Sinhala, greater political autonomy for Tamil-dominated areas, the closure of Tamil bases in India and an Indian peacekeeping force to guarantee the accord.

Unfortunately the accord was not successful at stopping the violence. Indian "peacekeeping" troops found themselves both fighting Tamils in the north and being accused of turning their heads at Tamil atrocities. In the south, extremist Sinhalese nationalists started terrorist acts of their own.

Since that time many cease-fires have been made and broken, but Sri Lanka's "little war" continues to kill thousands of innocent people.



— S. Max

facilities at Kankasanturi and the approaches to Palaly airfield. The area was ringed with defense works consisting of bunkers situated at intervals along a flimsy barricade of wood and sheets of corrugated tin. The safety of the base relied on this, and on army patrols conducted up to 100 meters from the perimeter, beyond which was LTTE territory.

### Funny, They Didn't Look Jewish

Lieutenant Colonel Fernando followed his briefing with a tour of the LTTE's old defenses. During a 14-month cease-fire that ended in June, the Tigers had built an impressive network of connecting trenches and tunnels.

Within the present boundary, at Vayavilan, a former school was transformed into a massive bunker. In the main building, underground quarters were built below the ground floor, reinforced with earth and concrete blast walls.



SLA troops undergo mortar training at Palaly.

Notwithstanding the fact that the defenses faced one direction only — a vital error that left three sides open to attack — it was an impressive feat of military engineering. “Where did the LTTE acquire such skills?” I asked.

“I believe there is a similar defense system on the West Bank,” an officer commented.

“Israelis?” I asked. The officer raised his eyebrows questioningly, but said no more.

That very day, the newspapers claimed that foreigners were operating with the guerrillas. What did my hosts think about the allegations? Some felt that mercenaries, or even Mossad, might be assisting the Tigers. Lt. Col. Fernando, however, had doubts. “There is a rumor that there are white-skinned people advising and fighting with the LTTE, but we have not seen any,” was all that he would say.

In the afternoon, Lt. Col. Fernando provided a liaison officer to show me around. Major Deepal Subasinghe, second-in-command of 4th Battalion, the Gajaba Regiment, seemed genuinely delighted at the prospect. I immediately took to the fellow.

He was cheerful and, it transpired, unafraid of taking risks. Perhaps that was



SLA soldier sites his Bren in Vavuniya bunker.

why Lt. Col. Fernando called to me as we were leaving his office. “You know the limitations; keep within the boundary.”

Deepal, who showed me more in two hours than I was to see in the whole rest of my time in Sri Lanka, encouraged me to photograph everyone and everything around Palaly.

Early in the tour, he stopped our jeep alongside part of the cantonment defenses and was leading me toward a bunker when there was a loud “crack!” as a round

was taking a chance. The major was clearly disappointed. So was I. There followed another conversation in Sinhalese which ended with Deepal grinning broadly.

“OK,” he said, “he will shoot for us. Then, we run.”

We squeezed through a gap in the fence, only to be confronted with a wired entanglement. Deepal called for directions to the gunner. The response was a deafening burst of fire as the .50 cal. began pumping rounds toward the LTTE. We had no choice but to gingerly tip-toe across the wire and then sprint for the ruin. Inside, the noise was terrific. The empty rooms amplified, not just the din from the Browning, but also that of AKs being fired from inside the building.

I quickly photographed the scene: A sniper fired from a broken window, and

*Continued on page 75*

Tamil, married to a Sinhalese, serves as a village militiaman.



SLA troops with Soviet-built armored car known locally as a Yaka.

passed directly overhead. The LTTE, positioned in ruins several hundred meters away, were engaging troops holding another ruin about 50 meters outside the barricade.

“Keep within the boundary,” I’d been told. Well, surely it would be all right to venture just a short distance beyond. When I asked Deepal, he sought the opinion of a soldier standing beside a .50 cal. Browning. The man thought that we would





# ARMOR AFRIKAANS

South African Necessity  
Becomes Mother of Invention

Text & Photos by Robert Mackenzie

Author (sunglasses, front row) with crew  
and admirers of Oifant Mk 1B.



**C**LIMBING out of his dive, the Buccaneer pilot never even saw the effect of his cluster bombs on the target. We did, though, from the security of our Casspir armored vehicle about a kilometer away from the targeted hilltop bunkers and trenches. The trenches were enveloped in smoke, flame, and dust as several cluster bomb units (CBUs) exploded directly overhead.

Closely following the bombs, salvos of 155mm high-explosive (HE) rounds fired in battery from G-6 self-propelled gun/howitzers 35km away impacted on the same hilltop, further devastating the enemy strongpoint.

A squadron of Olifant tanks stormed into the position, 105mm main guns and machine guns blazing. Close behind them a company of Ratel-mounted infantry, firing 20mm cannons, more machine guns

and rifles completed the assault, as supporting artillery fire shifted to destroy fleeing survivors and prevent counter-attack.

Within 20 minutes of the initial airstrike, friendly forces occupied the tactically vital hill. Phase one of a combined-arms (infantry, armor and artillery) advance was completed. That day alone, friendly forces would push deeper than 30km into enemy-held territory.

A three-week exercise involving hundreds of troops and scores of armored fighting vehicles concluded with the spectacular events of the attack and advance described above. This exercise was the culmination of the battle-handling phase of a course for company- and field-grade officers from all branches of the South African army.

As students on the course, they also

acted in company, battalion, and brigade staff and command positions during training in the many skills needed to conduct operations in different aspects of war. The advance, attack (day and night), defense, withdrawal, river crossing and bridging, and many other operations whose mastery is essential to professional officers, were practiced repeatedly under realistic conditions, with troops drawn from South African Defence Forces (SADF) infantry, armor and artillery units.

#### Front Row Seat With IAI

As a member of a tour group organized by the International Armor Institute (IAI), I was fortunate to be travelling with the exercise command group during the dramatic climax to the six-month course. Conducted at a vast training facility in northwestern Cape Province known as

Lohattha Battle School, the exercise simulated combat conditions experienced by SADF units during many battles in Angola against Cubans and Angolan soldiers.

The training staff at Lohattha are veterans of those battles, so their lessons are current and extremely relevant. Further, because the terrain at the school is very similar to that found throughout southern Angola, Namibia, or near the Zimbabwean border — all regions where conventional battles could occur — problems encountered and solved at Lohattha would be more easily overcome on a real battlefield.

Complementing the superb training given at all levels to members of the SADF is the excellence of their equipment. One effect of the international arms embargo, in place against South Africa since 1977, has been the necessity for local development and production of everything from bullets to tanks and artillery. That development has resulted in some of the best weapons in use in the world today.

The G-6 155mm self-propelled gun (SPG), for instance, is acknowledged by most experts to be the best gun in its class, capable of hitting targets 40km away with a 103-pound HE shell. A new armored car, called the Rooikat, is also state-of-the-art. It mounts a high-velocity, gyro-stabilized 76mm gun, travels 70 mph on roads, 40 mph cross-country, and can climb 7% grades.

The South African Valkyrie multiple rocket launch system (MRLS), and the rocket-propelled, mine-field clearing system (called Plofadder, which translates roughly as “explosive snake”) are at least as good as anything developed by the United States. South African factories are now producing ships, tanks and helicopters, as well. So much for sanctions.

Local military requirements, technical expertise and manufacturing ingenuity have created a whole range of combat vehicles unique for their use of wheels rather than the tracks common to most Western and Soviet equivalents. Immense areas of southern Africa have no roads at all, or at best, rough dirt trails. Semi-desert vegetation and sandy soil are most common. In this environment, wheels, even on 45-ton vehicles, have many advantages over tracks.

Maintenance time has been reduced by half, as has construction costs for the vehicles themselves. Fuel consumption is about 40% of that for tracked vehicles, and similar performance can be obtained with half the power, reducing the weight and size of the engines and transmissions.

Wheeled vehicles can travel much further than tracked ones, which need to be carried on transporters or railway cars for long-distance moves. These factors have led the SADF to opt for wheels whenever possible, so that now only their main battle tanks (MBTs) and armored recovery

vehicles (ARVs) — built on tank chassis — run on tracks.

The overall economic benefits of wheeled combat vehicles have made them very attractive to Third World countries looking to build their ground forces on a tight budget. I saw a few innovations that even the United States should be evaluating.

Some recently developed products include:



Rooikat Armored Car

A wheeled 8x8 intended to replace dated Eland-90 armored cars in the armored reconnaissance role, the Rooikat is especially impressive. Fast, maneuverable, and built with crew comfort in mind, it is designed specifically for local conditions, with particular regard to African terrain and a Soviet-equipped enemy. It first entered service in 1989.

Speed: 120 kph on road; 60 kph cross-country.

Armament: 76mm high-velocity gun, stabilized for firing on the move, with 48 rounds carried on board. Export versions could be fitted with 105mm gun. Two 7.62mm machine guns, one coaxial and one for the vehicle commander.

Weight: 28 tons.

Crew: Four — commander, driver, gunner, loader.

Obstacle crossing: 70% gradient, 2-

meter trench crossing, 1-meter step, can ford 1.5-meter-deep water. Equipped with run-flat tires, it can operate even with two flats on the same side.

Night vision devices: Both infrared and passive.

Defensive measures: Protected against 23mm on turret and front of hull. Smoke-grenade launchers and exhaust smoke system provide efficient screening. Low profile and high maneuverability.

Olifant Mk 1B Main Battle Tank

The Olifant Mk 1A and 1B are both “modifications” of the 1950s model British Centurion tank. Whereas the Mk 1A resembles its parent, the 1B has nothing left of the original except its hull and road wheels. Even the hull has been upgraded with additional armor including a double floor which houses the suspension and also protects against mines.

Built to defeat the Soviet T-62 and T-72 tanks in use by potential enemies in southern Africa, it incorporates up-to-date fire control systems with a powerful diesel engine, automatic transmission and high-tech armor. Squadrons began training with the tank in early 1991. Many specifications on the Mk 1B are still classified.

Speed: 65 kph cross-country.

Range: 400km road; 350km cross-



country.

Armament: 105mm L7 gun with stabilized fire control. Two 7.62mm machine guns, coaxial and commander.

Crew: Four — commander, driver, gunner, loader.

Weight: 59 tons.

Height: 9 feet, 8 inches (approx.).

Night vision devices: Infrared and passive. (Photo: courtesy Armscor.)



### Ratel Infantry Combat Vehicle

Another example of South African ingenuity, it was introduced in 1976 and was thus the first wheeled infantry combat vehicle (ICV) to enter service anywhere.

The Ratel and its variants comprise a family of wheeled 6x6 vehicles that fulfill most operational functions required of a mechanized infantry unit's transport. ICVs have either a turret-mounted 20mm cannon or 60mm breech-loading mortar. There are command models, ambulances, logistic vehicles, and 81mm mortar carriers, while antitank versions have a 90mm gun or the newly developed "Batteleur" missile launcher.

All variants have the same chassis, engine, transmission and many other parts, which obviously reduces problems with spares, and also ensures that performance is standardized. ICVs, for instance, can not outrun their logistic and other support vehicles, and all can keep up with tanks under most battlefield conditions.

Crew: Three plus nine infantrymen.

Armament: 20mm cannon or 60mm breech-loaded mortar. Two or three 7.62mm machine guns.

Speed: 105 kph road; 40 kph cross-country.



Range: 1,000km road; 600km cross-country.

Weight: 18.5 tons combat-loaded.

Height: 7 feet, 6 inches.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE

Consisting of the army, air force, navy and South African Medical Service, the South African Defence Force (SADF) has an overall commander appointed from one of the services.

As Chief of the SADF, he is accountable to the minister of defense, and is responsible primarily for national defense against hostile outside forces. His secondary responsibilities include preventing terrorism, maintaining internal order and preserving the essential functions of the country as directed by the government. Some 47% of the SADF consists of the Citizen's Force, made up of draftees who serve an initial one year active duty, including training, and then are obligated for up to 720 days spread out over 12 years.

Commando force units and the career soldiers of the Permanent Force make up the rest of the SADF. Only white males are liable for compulsory service, but there are thousands of non-white and female volunteers. Each arm of the service has its own training schools and a college.

SADF roots go back to the early commando and citizens' defense groups which protected the Cape from 1650 on, throughout Dutch and British rule. South Africa was unified in 1910 and the Union Defence Force was created by the Defence Act of 1912 under General J.C. Smuts.

World War I saw the Union Defence Force's first action, with 254,666 men involved (56% white, 10% colored, 34% black), of whom 12,354 were killed in action fighting on the side of the Allies in

East Africa, Palestine and France. The South African air force was founded in 1920, after the war, and the navy in 1922.

South Africa, again fighting on the side of the Allies, entered World War II in 1939. Some 334,324 sailors, troops and pilots went to fight in North Africa, Abyssinia (Ethiopia), and Madagascar, and conducted convoy duties and mine clearing operations in the Mediterranean.

South African airmen also assisted in the "Warsaw Concerto," dropping relief supplies to that beleaguered Polish city. There were 12,046 South Africans killed in World War II. The Berlin airlift and the Korean War also benefited from South African involvement, with 20 crews flying 1,240 sorties to Berlin, and 826 air force personnel in Korea, of whom 44 were killed.

In 1958, the Union Defence Force became the SADF and in 1961 South Africa became a republic. Throughout the 1970s, the SADF modernized and organized to defend against potential threats from Cubans and communists in Angola, and African National Congress (ANC) terrorists in Marxist Mozambique.

Today, external political situations have changed and immediate external dangers for South Africa have perhaps diminished. Some reductions in the SADF have occurred, and more are planned, including the closure of three navy bases, elimination of a squadron of Mirage F-1 aircraft, and large cuts in army strength. The military remains strong enough, however, to ensure its success as the guardian of the nation.

— R. Mac.

Obstacle crossing: 27% gradient, 1.15-meter trench, 0.6-meter step.

### G-5 155mm Towed Gun/Howitzer

The G-5 was developed from combat experience in Angola where in 1975 SADF artillerymen found themselves out-gunned by Soviet 130mm M-46 and 122mm D-30 guns. A combination of high-tech manufacturing techniques, superb design and base-bleed ammunition make this the best of its class in the world.

A particularly useful innovation is the addition of a built-in diesel motor to lift and move the gun's trails. It even provides some mobility — 10 mph — without the necessity for a towing vehicle.

Gun range at sea level: 30km with standard ammunition; 39km with base bleed; 0-5km direct fire.

Crew: Five, but can be operated by three men.

Ammunition: HE (with up to 4,750 fragments), red or white phosphorous, illumination, sub-munition with 56 bomblets, base ejection smoke.

### G-6 Self-Propelled 155mm Gun/Howitzer

Also developed from experience in Angola, the G-6 uses the same barrel as the

G-5, but with a bore evacuator added to make it suitable for use in the confined space of a turret.

It is the most powerful wheeled SPG in the world, while its gun is acknowledged to be among the best of its class in the world. A powerful diesel engine and six drive wheels give it amazing mobility, while computerized fire-control and navigation systems ensure accuracy.

Armament: 155mm gun and .50 Browning machine gun.

Ammunition: 47 rounds on board.



Vehicle Range: 600km.

Gun range: (Same as for G-5.)

Speed: 90kph on road; 40 kph cross-country.

Crew: Six.

## VALKYRIE



Photo: courtesy SADF

Weight: 46 tons.  
Height: 10 feet, 6 inches.  
Traverse: 80 degrees.  
Elevation: -5 to +75 degrees.

### Valkyrie Multiple Rocket Launch System

Yet another development from Angolan campaigns, and widely used with great success by SADF artillerymen, the Valkyrie is a modern version of the BM-21 "Stalin's Organ" so often used by Soviet client states.

Again, modern technology has made a big difference. While the BM-21 can throw a salvo of 40 122mm rockets some 20km, when they explode they usually do little more than make a lot of noise because of their poor fusing and fragmentation. The 127mm Valkyrie, on the other hand, is accurate and deadly. South African scientists have devised a prefragmented warhead that sprays 8,500 steel balls over an area of 1,500 square meters.

When used with an airburst fuse, the lethality of just one rocket is very impressive — a volley is devastating. In one of the last battles fought by the SADF in Angola, an enemy battalion was spotted crossing a wide river bed by a South African observer. He contacted an artillery battery, and within minutes the rockets arrived. The enemy battalion was virtually annihilated.

Launch systems: 6x6 armored truck with 40 missile tubes, or 4x4 Unimog with 24 tubes. The Unimog system is air-transportable. Both systems can be fired from inside the cab as single rockets or ripple salvos at a rate of one per second. They can be completely reloaded in less than 10 minutes.

127mm rocket: Nominal maximum range is 22km at sea level. Shorter ranges are achieved by applying aerodynamic brake rings to rocket. Each weighs 130 pounds.

Warheads: Antipersonnel fragmenta-



Photo: courtesy Armscor

tion, submunition head with antiarmor capability and various cargo heads.

Fuse: Dual-purpose with settings for impact detonation or airburst at 25 feet above the ground.

### Batteleur Antitank Missile

Bringing the SADF into the missile age

## THE WHERE AND WHY OF IAI

Want to punch off rounds from a 105mm gun on a main battle tank? Accompany the command staff of an armored battle group on live-fire exercises? Dive below the surface of the Atlantic in a diesel submarine? Ride around in military helicopters and transport aircraft? If you do, you could try your local travel agent. Or, better, you could contact the nearest representative of the International Armor Institute (IAI).

A newly formed organization with members in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Australia and South Africa, the IAI is dedicated to providing members with adventures usually unavailable to the general public. Due to contacts built up over years of service in many armies, opportunities exist for military enthusiasts to broaden their experience while at the same time meeting like-minded travelers and visiting new places.

The IAI's most recent tour, to South Africa, included visits to a wide variety of military installations: from Cape Town in the south, to Messina on the northern border. Highlights were a night attack involving an armor/infantry/artillery battle group, and a series of daylight attacks by the same task force augmented with close air support aircraft. Live ammunition was used throughout — thousands of smoke and high-explosive rounds from tank guns, 155mm artillery pieces, armored cars, mortars, and infantry weapons.

On a different stop, the South African Defence Force (SADF) armor school put on a stunning display for their annual visitors day, including a squadron of Olifant tanks conducting a live-fire assault with extensive supporting fire, all happening right in front of the bleachers.

While visiting the armor school, IAI members rode in tanks and armored cars and got to fire the main guns. The itinerary also included military museums, a tactical airbase built on the Israeli design (widely dispersed, hardened and

camouflaged hangars and facilities) near the Mozambique border, a police tour of Soweto (a mostly black township near Johannesburg), the SADF artillery school, and various army units such as 116 Battalion whose soldiers are all black South Africans.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in matters military, and at this time there is no charge to get on the mailing list. There is no discrimination based on age, sex or military service, although ladies should note that sometimes field accommodation is a little Spartan, but not unduly so.

On the South African tour of nearly three weeks duration, for instance, two nights were spent in tents, the remainder in very good hotels. Prices for a typical IAI tour run about \$3,000, remarkably inexpensive considering that it includes, in addition to the military program, all transportation, accommodations, all breakfasts and many other meals, a variety of get-togethers in military messes, and visits to local tourist attractions. There is also some free time in the schedule for shopping, recovering from hangovers, or whatever.

Another trip to South Africa, similar to the one on which this article is based, is scheduled for October-November 1991. I enjoyed myself immensely and unreservedly recommend the IAI's tour. Contact one of the following for details:

North America: International Armor Institute, PO Box 1312, Station B, Oshawa, Ontario L1J6PA, Canada; phone (416) 434-2329.

France: Dr. Pierre-George Hacpille, 77 Rue De Prony, Paris 75017; Phone 1-47-634333.

Germany: S.A.F.I.R., Sadderather Berg 12, D-4050 Monchengladbach 3; phone 02166-604773.

United Kingdom: SAR Travel Ltd., 5th Floor, 266 Regent St., London W1R 5DA; phone 71-839-2764.

— R. Mac.

in regard to tank warfare, the Batteleur (named after a type of eagle), is a 127mm, tube-launched, laser-guided missile with a hollow-charge warhead that can penetrate more than 650mm of armor.

Its primary launch system is a three-tube launcher mounted on a Ratel variant, although it can also be fired from helicopters. A single-tube ground launcher is under development. Acknowledged to have a range of 4km, some sources claim it actually can reach accurately out to 8km. The Batteleur has been used in Angolan combat, reportedly as early as 1987.

#### Plofadder Minefield Clearing System

Like its American and British counterparts, the Plofadder uses a rocket to carry a linear explosive charge across a minefield. The charge (basically a hose filled with explosive material) then detonates, clearing a pathway suitable for tanks and troops to cross safely.

Again like its counterparts, the system is carried on an armored vehicle and can be launched with the crew buttoned up inside. Plofadder's safe lane is 100 yards long and 4 yards wide, with an additional 3 feet on each side clearable most of the time.

*Major Robert MacKenzie is SOF's Contributing Editor for Unconventional Operations. He filed this report from South Africa.*

## SOUTH AFRICAN ARMY

One of the four branches of the SADF, the South African army has a core of career soldiers in the Permanent Force, complemented by the part-time Citizen's Force and Commando Force.

Essentially a militia, the army has three primary missions: the defense of South Africa on land, support of the South African police in maintaining domestic law and order, and assisting with disaster/relief work. Two major components, the Conventional Force and the Territorial Force, carry out these functions.

The Conventional Force has two divisions, each with three mechanized brigades and support units. There is also one independent parachute brigade composed of three battalions (two reserve and one active) and a light artillery regiment. Citizen's Force members, with a few Permanent Force officers in top posts, man the Conventional Force.

Highly mobile conventional operations, often over long distances and in rugged terrain, are their primary role. Counterinsurgency operations along and within South African borders are the primary responsibility of the Territorial Force. Divided into 10 geographical commands, the Territorial Force is a mixture of local militia units

*Continued on page 76*

## SOUTH AFRICAN ARMOR IN ACTION



South African para-bats on patrol in northern Namibia dismount "Casspir" mine-and-bullet protected vehicle. Photo: Michael R. Doyle

In August 1987 South Africa began the deployment into Angola of what was to become a force of just less than 3,000 men. A year later, this force had irrevocably changed the strategic situation in the region. Also, it effectively forced the *Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola* (MPLA), Cuba and the Soviet Union to adopt a new strategy and negotiate a settlement.

This operation would include the first tank battles involving South African armor since World War II. It also saw the adoption of modified tactics and strategies in order to overcome equipment weaknesses and geographical disadvantages.

Though South African armor — the Olifant main battle tank, the Ratel 90 and the Ratel ZT-3 — played an important role in the conflict, there is little doubt that the really effective work was done by G5 155mm artillery pieces.

Only 16 of these guns were taken into Angola — one battery was in action every day for 12 months (with no technical failures). They succeeded in making every corner of the battlefield and its environs unsafe for the Angolans, and in keeping the Quito Cuanavale air base closed.

South African armor was first drawn into action in early October 1987 when FAPLA 47th Brigade was destroyed along the banks of the Lomba river when they were attacked by Ratel 90s. At the end of the battle, FAPLA losses included 18 tanks, two BTR-4 armored recovery vehicles, 22 BTR-60 armored personnel carriers, four SA-8 SAM launcher vehi-

cles, one Flat Face air defense radar, 85 trucks, an assortment of antiaircraft guns, and other vehicles.

Though the South Africans won, and the battle would later prove to have been decisive, it taught the South African Defence Force (SADF) that the 90mm gun of the Ratel 90 was simply not "up to scratch" against tanks.

Most of the enemy tanks destroyed took seven or eight hits before being knocked out. It was the South Africans' ability to effectively jam Angolan communications and so prevent their tanks from coordinating properly that had enabled the SADF to carry the day.

The lessons learned in the battle at the Lomba river were largely responsible for the deployment of the Olifant tank with its larger 105mm gun. It was also around this time that the SADF deployed the ZT-3, a new antitank missile which proved to be very effective after some initial problems with its guidance system.

The year-long campaign in Angola proved difficult for South African armor, as the region was essentially "non-armor terrain." The area of operations was covered in thick brush and soft sand which very often prevented full rotation of tank turrets. Tank commanders often had to resort to "point shooting."

In the final analysis, it was the Olifant's toughness, ability to cope with the heaviest of bush, and the fact that the South Africans' tactics enabled them to move faster and out-manuever the Angolan T54/55s, that proved to be decisive.

— Hilton Hamann



# PIRANHA PATROL



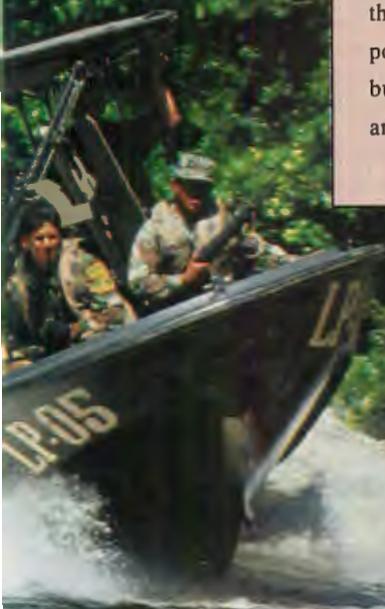
## U.S. Coast Guard River Rats Fight Bolivia's Drug War

Text & Photos by James L. Pate

**W**ILD-EYED cattle shifted nervously, some slipping noisily on the barge's smelly, damp deck, as two 22-foot Piranha patrol boats throttled their twin Evinrudes back to idle and bumped alongside to tie up. With CAR-15s slung over their shoulders, two U.S. Coast Guardsmen climbed up and over the side.

It could have been any routine boarding and vessel search in U.S. waters. Except this was on the Mamore River, a major Amazon basin tributary in northeast Bolivia, populated by alligators, piranhas, vampire bats and snakes — anacondas, pythons, bushmasters and fer-de-lances — plus *narcotraficantes* and other dangerous rodents and reptiles.

A hundred yards off either side of the barge and tug, two more Piranhas from the



Bolivian Piranha patrol boat speeds up creek on trail of drug traffickers.

Bolivian navy's *Diablos Azules* (Blue Devils) Squadron, one with a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent aboard, circled to provide covering fire if needed. Eight of the black-hulled Boston Whalers, each fitted with an M60 machine gun mount, were bought by the State Department for the Blue Devils Squadron for \$694,000.

While Bill and J.R., the Coast Guard advisers, followed and watched, four members of Bolivia's Rural Mobile Patrol Unit, or UMOPAR (a U.S.-created antidrug battalion of the National Police), searched the barge and tug for drug contraband. A Bolivian navy lieutenant inspected the tug's cargo manifest and vessel registration.

Bill and J.R. are members of a little-known, Coast Guard Special Operations unit, the Drug Interdiction Assist Team, or DIAT, created three years ago and based in Portsmouth, Virginia. Like the DEA and U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to the DEA's Operation Snowcap in Bolivia, they serve 90-day in-country terms.

They have had training in jungle survival, unconventional warfare and demolitions, and are graduates of an abbreviated, DEA-tailored U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. They have also attended language and other specialized schools.

"The Coast Guard was brought in because they have the law enforcement boarding skills and the expertise in small boat operations that the State Department felt the DEA needed," Larry A. Leveron said, a DEA agent who is team leader for the U.S. riverine advisers, based in the northeastern Bolivian city of Trinidad.

### Jungle Raids

DIAT's members can — and often do — accompany DEA advisers and UMOPAR on jungle raids against cocaine laboratories, and on midnight "snatches" in which suspects under indictment by the Bolivian government are surprised and arrested in their homes, spirited away into the darkness in Zodiac rafts, and ultimately picked up by Bolivian air force helicopters.

DIAT and the rest of the Snowcap riverine team have participated in several large cocaine seizures in the last two years, including one of 623 kilos in April 1989, the largest such seizure in Bolivian history.

"This is not your father's Coast Guard," Bill wisecracked, paraphrasing an Oldsmobile television commercial from the States. "And I love it. Most of it is in-the-field training, hands-on OJT. You can teach all day in the classroom, but you have to get the student out on an operation

with the equipment, under real life conditions, to know whether you've succeeded."

That is an advantage Coast Guard advisers have over their training counterparts from U.S. Army Special Forces and Navy SEALs, who are forbidden from going on operations. But except in times of war, when it comes under the operational control of the Navy, the Coast Guard belongs to the Department of Transportation.

While it is a military organization per se, its many missions — with the exception of search-and-rescue — are law enforcement missions. So its expertise can be offered to foreign governments as law enforcement — not military — assistance.

DIAT is a virtually unnoticed escalation



Mother ship was known as the African Queen — well-worn, a bit funky but comfortable. Author's "stateroom" was on top level, front right of photo.

of the Coast Guard's role in President Bush's much-vaunted "war" on drugs. DIAT's 20 or 30 members — the exact number is confidential — assist in most operational phases of Snowcap in Bolivia, and in Ecuador. But DIAT's primary responsibility is the riverine program, essential to the success of Snowcap in Bolivia, a landlocked, Alaska-size country with less than 1,000 miles of paved highway, but more miles of navigable rivers than the United States has coastline.

DIAT members are assigned to Bolivia in groups of four: an officer, an NCO and two senior enlisted people. They teach boat motor, fiberglass and rubber boat repair; law enforcement boardings; evidence collection; navigation; riverine patrol techniques and — thank goodness — basic boating safety.

### Open Contempt

After troubled started in Bolivia and Ecuador two years ago, the riverine program is up and running again in both countries, and is being expanded this summer to include a port-security program in Guatemala.

Critics and supporters of Snowcap's riverine program concur that its ultimate

success or failure will likely be proved in Bolivia, where it began. The outcome remains to be seen. Some deeply rooted obstacles, such as the Bolivian navy's often open contempt for UMOPAR, remain.

An August 1990 report titled "Stopping the Flood of Cocaine with Operation Snowcap: Is It Working?" issued by the House Committee on Government Operations, said the "riverine operations are disappointing... According to the Department of State, the United States-Bolivian riverine program has been the least successful and most troublesome of all interdiction programs attempted in Bolivia." The report blamed corruption, as well as command and operational shortcomings, for the program's lack of success.

Some major problems have been and continue to be addressed, most notably corruption within the Bolivian military. Other problems include logistics and repair, and a lack of support by and sometimes outright hostility to the program by some Bolivian naval officers. Although logistics and resupply have been improved markedly, inventory and property accountability by the Bolivians remains a problem.

The most promising recent development is the selection of an enthusiastic, well-educated career naval officer, Captain Napoleon Prado, 42, to replace an uncooperative skipper of the Blue Devils Squadron who had alleged ties to drug smugglers. Prado, a graduate of the Bolivian War

College and recently returned from the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, expressed his determination to make the riverine program work. Yet he had a realistic perspective on the scope of the drug problem and how it impacts both countries.

"There will be supply as long as there is demand," according to Prado, who was on the first antinarcotics assignment of his 18-year career and his first riverine patrol. "When wealthy nations like the United States create a demand, economically depressed nations like Bolivia will respond."

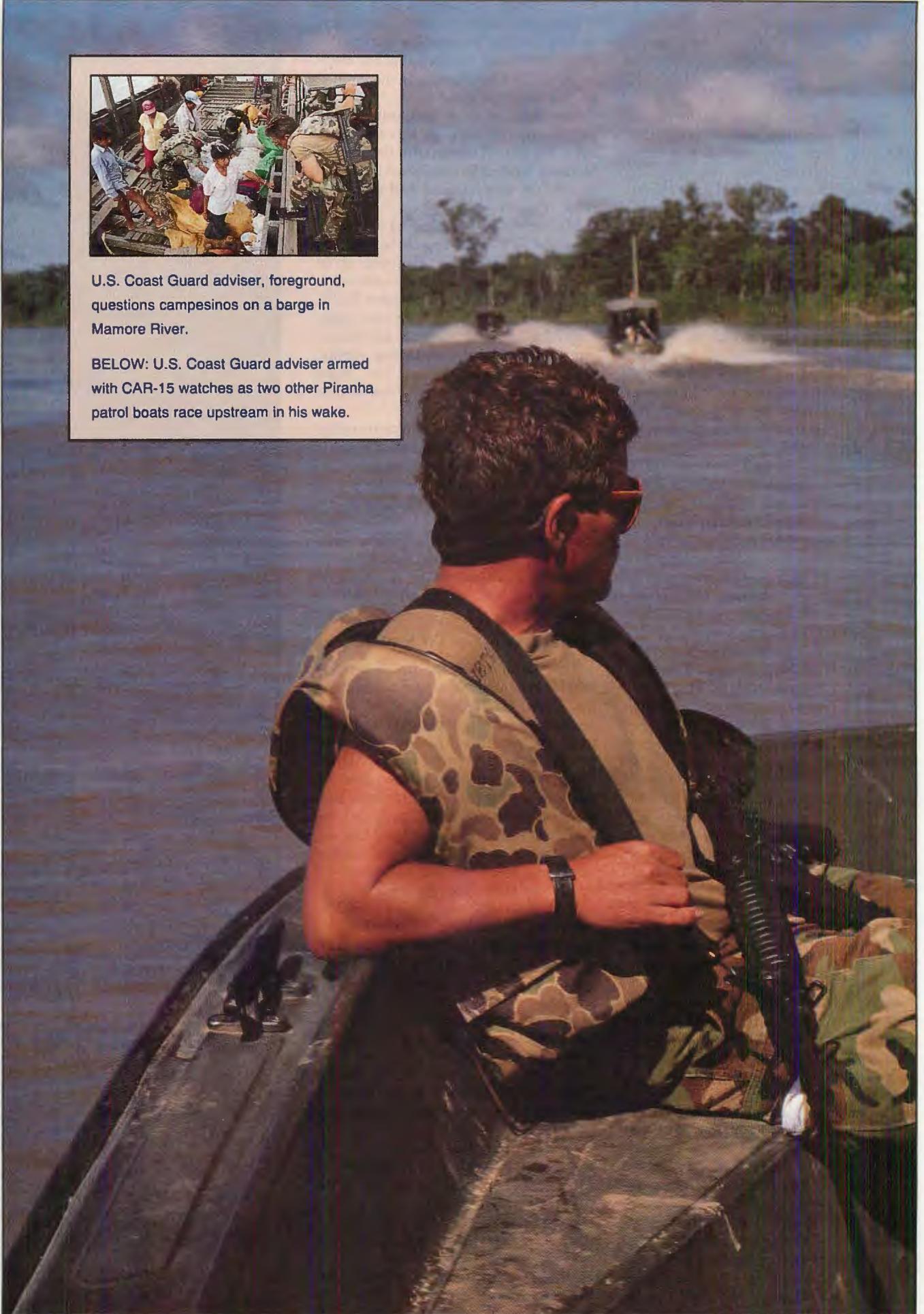
The narcotrafficantes "have a structure just like any big business," Prado said. "You can't fight the problem only with the military and the police. You have to fight on other fronts. Cocaine is not just a law enforcement problem, it is a political problem, an economic problem, an educational problem and a social problem. And affirmative solutions in those realms are more important to an ultimate solution of the overall problem.

"Still, you can't take the military or the police out of the equation, especially in the near term," he continued. "We are buying time so longer term solutions in other areas



U.S. Coast Guard adviser, foreground, questions campesinos on a barge in Mamore River.

BELOW: U.S. Coast Guard adviser armed with CAR-15 watches as two other Piranha patrol boats race upstream in his wake.



have time to work. Also, a drug problem is by definition a national security problem, and that makes military involvement critical."

### Into the Red Zone

The cattle barge turned out to be an uneventful, routine search. But the UMOPAR guys were edgy. It was their first joint operation with the navy in months. And we were headed upriver into the Chapare, identified on DEA maps as the notorious "Red Zone," a hilly region north of Cochabamba.

Four months earlier, in an operation in which the riverine patrol played an integral part, DEA Agent Hawthorne Hope was seriously wounded in a fierce gunfight that left three drug traffickers no longer eligible for the census. Coca growers in the Chapare, most of whom have come in the last 20 years to capitalize on the growing demand of Colombian drug lords, are known for their open hostility toward the DEA and UMOPAR.

Aside from Hope's wound, that operation was otherwise a success. Two drug labs were seized, and more than 20 arrests were made, including that of Carmelo "Meco" Dominguez, a major trafficker, his lawyers and his chief pilot. Nine of his 21 aircraft were also seized, along with ranches, houses, an airplane hangar and a popular Santa Cruz discotheque called Regine's.

But the four UMOPARs on the cattle barge found nothing illegal, searching politely and without incident. They were looking for coca paste or coca base, two of the raw materials used to make the powdery cocaine hydrochloride sold on U.S. streets.

They also looked for potassium permanganate, ether alcohol, acetone, and sulfuric and hydrochloric acids, all common industrial chemicals. And all essential for purifying cocaine alkaloids at crude labs hidden in the remote jungles of Bolivia's Beni and Pando departments — wild, sparsely populated areas accessible only by boat and aircraft.

"If people back home knew what chemicals were used in making cocaine, things like gasoline and kerosene," Bill said, "if they could see how primitive and nasty these labs are, they'd never put that crap in their bodies." Bill was an E-6 from Cincinnati who had served as a Marine guard at the U.S. Embassies in Laos and Brazil.

The cattle barge was among two dozen vessels boarded the first afternoon of the riverine operation. The vessels ranged from such barges to colorfully painted, triple-decked, screw-driven riverboats vaguely reminiscent of those that once plied the Mississippi, to small dugout canoes used by *campesinos* who live along the rivers and creeks in thatched huts with dirt floors.

No contraband was found. But that is not to say the trip was without excitement.

For one thing, the Bolivian boat drivers — lieutenants, as opposed to the lower-ranking enlisted personnel who typically pilot Coast Guard vessels in that size range — used only two positions on the throttle: all stop and flank speed.

The thrill of their boat driving was compounded by the huge logs and entire trees that were floating down the flooded Mamore, the four Piranhas weaving in and out at top speed in the half-mile-wide river.

My interest in these floating barricades increased as twilight approached and the patrol was apparently confused about where to rendezvous with the mother ship. The mother ship was *El Libertador*, M223, a 50-foot wooden barge with two decks, bunks for 35 people, a cook, and fuel to replenish our rapidly dwindling supply, which was paid for by the State Department's Narcotics Assistance Section.

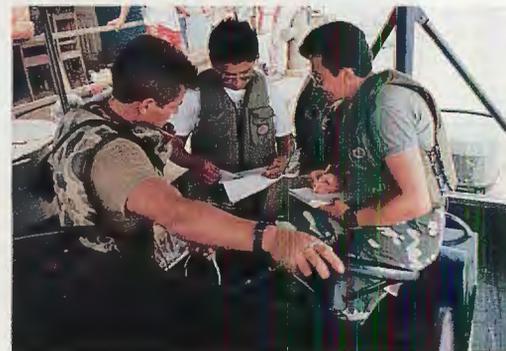
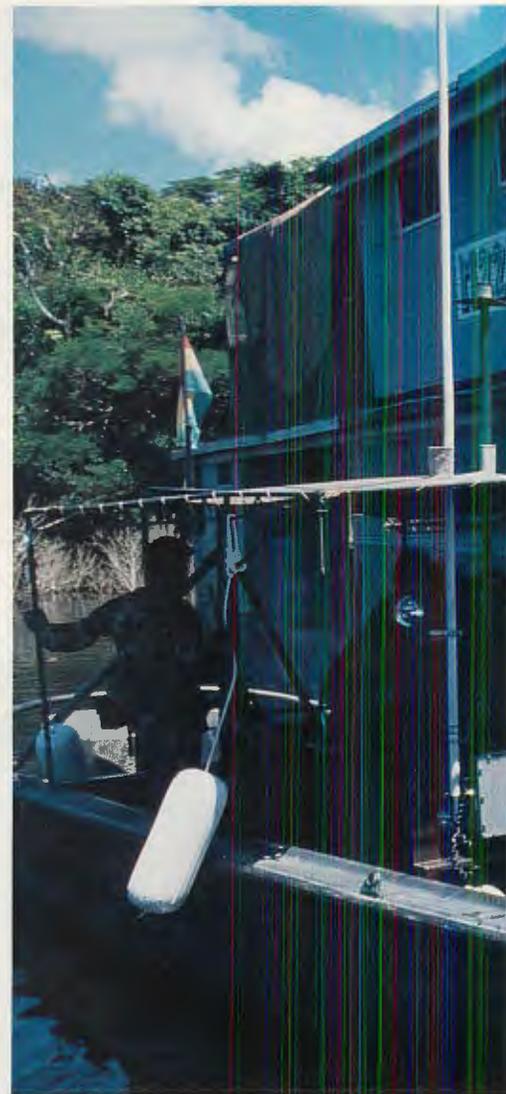
Darkness came and still no mother ship. Our four patrol boats continued running full-bore up the Mamore. Although all of the boats had come fully equipped with radios and M60 machine guns, two were running without the M60s, which I was told were "somewhere in Bolivia." My vessel was without a radio, which no one wanted to explain, and the two boats in front of us had no running lights or spotlights.

### High-Speed Search For Mother Ship

This did not deter the Bolivians from running at flank speed in tight formation as the Coast Guard adviser, J.R., and I strained to see into the darkness. J.R., a tough, no-nonsense Spaniard with prior service in the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps, tried to get an explanation from the Bolivian lieutenant, who ignored him. Angry at the brush-off, J.R. sat in the bow, cursing to himself in Spanish and English, throwing in some Italian and French expletives when he had exhausted his vocabulary in the first two tongues.

I shared that feeling of helpless frustration. It reminded me of taking off from Ilopango air force base in El Salvador one wickedly hot day in 1984. I was aboard a grossly overloaded C-47 that spent a nerve-wracking 30 minutes skimming treetops and hill crests, easy pea-shooter range for the Salvadoran guerrillas. The Salvadoran air force crew was apparently oblivious to the danger. Engines throbbing madly at full throttle in the torpid air, we finally gained safe altitude.

Gazing into the darkness of the Mamore, I weighed the possibilities of what would happen if we hit one of the colossal trees floating in the river. I would likely be thrown out. If that happened, I remembered that the thing to do was stay near the boat — if I wasn't knocked unconscious. The only uncertainty after that point was whether I'd be eaten by the little piranhas in the river or run over by





the big Piranha patrol boat hugging our ass. I never could decide which would be a more preferable way to die.

The mother ship finally loomed up out of the darkness, tied up at a jungle base camp. The food was tasty: spiced pasta for supper, eggs and fried piranha for breakfast. The old tub was well-worn and a bit funky, but still comfortable. Bill and I got a "stateroom" topside, just aft of the bridge. It was apparent why the advisers referred to the vessel as the African Queen.

We headed out in the Piranhas again the next morning, headed up the Chapare River, and then up a creek too narrow for one boat to pass the other. This didn't stop the helmsmen from tail-gating at top speed. They apparently thought the tow beam across the stern was a bumper in case of collisions. If we kept this up, I knew there would be an accident. I was right.

### Wipe-Out

Traveling in the third boat, we rounded a sharp bend in the creek and almost collided with the second boat, which was apparently out of control. The driver had lost his grip on the helm and the second boat had spun around 180 degrees in the creek and shot up into the swampy jungle foliage at top speed. Clutching a bow line for dear life, Bill was thrown to the deck.

Afterward, he was uncharacteristically diplomatic. "I try not to critique them too much in the field. You have to be careful not to offend their sense of *machismo* in front of their peers," he said. He then added that he wanted to consult with the navy instructors to make sure their instructions to the Bolivians were not contradictory before discussing problems in a classroom setting.

The purpose of our going up the creek was never clear to me. One lieutenant said Prado wanted to find out how far the Piranhas could go on the small creek. I do know that if there were any drug labs up there, the dopers were bound to have heard the roaring boat engines long before we got near them. The creek finally got too narrow and too shallow and, to my relief, we turned back toward open water and headed back toward Trinidad.

Although this riverine patrol did not make any drug or chemical contraband seizures, U.S. officials say the importance of the riverine program lies not in how many seizures or lab raids are made — statistics they compare to body counts from Vietnam — but in maintaining a constant presence that denies drug traffickers the use of the rivers to move their supplies and products.

According to Don F. Ferrarone, the DEA agent in charge of Bolivian operations for the last two years, the riverine program has been a difficult program to make work. "When I got here, I was willing to give it another shot ... even if I wasn't sold on it," he said. Since then,



TOP: Patrol boats tie up to mother ship for fuel and food. Note M60 in aft of Piranha.

ABOVE LEFT: U.S. Coast Guard adviser, left, goes over a vessel registration with two members of Bolivian navy.

LEFT: Unit patch: UMOPAR — Rural Mobile Patrol Unit, the anti-narcotics battalion of Bolivian National Police.

ABOVE: Capt. Napoleon Prado, center, dines aboard mother ship after high-speed run up river.

Continued on page 79



# SMALL ARMS OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

by Peter G. Kokalis

**W**HILE media attention has focused almost exclusively on the amazing high-technology weapons systems arrayed against Iraq in the Persian Gulf, the fact remains that in the end it is always the common foot soldier who must meet with and destroy the enemy and occupy the ground he once held. His rifle and auxiliary small arms are still the principal tools

he will employ to accomplish these primary missions of close combat, as they have been for the last hundred years.

Quite clearly the Patriot PAC-2 antimissile system stands as master over the 1950s-vintage Soviet Scud. Laser-guided bombs and Tomahawk cruise missiles were equally impressive. But, what about small arms? For years high technology's

Kuwaiti M-84 MBT, an improved version of the T-72 built by Yugoslavia, prepares for final thrust into Kuwait City. Note 12.7x108mm NSVT Soviet designed HMG that can be used in ground or anti-aircraft role. Photo: Robert K. Brown

weak sister in the West, can it be that Iraq's largely Soviet-designed small arms

systems were superior to those of the Coalition?

### U.S. Small Arms

A decision to adopt a service pistol chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge — in order to conform with NATO standards — immediately enraged all those for whom only the .45 ACP round would do. This was followed by anger over the selection of a foreign design. Much to the glee of its detractors, the U.S. armed forces have experienced some slide failures with the M9. However, the problem is one of metallurgy, not design efficiency.

The M9 is more or less typical of the current generation of so-called “wonder-nine” pistols, which are all double-action and have large capacity magazines (15 rounds for the M9).

In general, the handling characteristics are excellent with acceptable hit probability and accuracy potential. The grip-to-frame angle and balance are adequate. Early reports from Saudi Arabia indicated the M9 was performing in a satisfactory manner.

Submachine guns — by definition selective-fire, shoulder-held weapons chambered for pistol ammunition — are moribund. The development of lightweight, short-barreled assault rifles has signaled their death knell. While 20 million submachine guns of one sort or another were fielded during World War II, their short effective range of rarely more than 100 meters, limited accuracy due to their open-bolt operation (with the exception of the H&K MP5 series), and relatively low power precluded their widespread employment in Desert Storm. There remains but one highly specialized application for these relics of the past. When their barrels are shrouded by a sound suppressor, burp guns were effectively employed by the elite units (U.S. Navy SEALs, U.S. Army Delta and British SAS) who were engaged in clandestine operations including ambush, assassination, prisoner recovery, EPW snatches and reconnaissance. The Heckler & Koch MP5 SD is one of the finest examples of the suppressed machine gun genre and was used with great success by U.S. Special Ops groups operating behind Iraqi lines.

No weapon ever adopted by the U.S.

military has created as much hysterical controversy as the M16. It has been attacked at all levels, from its “pipsqueak” cartridge to its method of operation and “Mattel toy” construction. Yet it has survived its legion of detractors to become one of the finest assault rifles in the world. The M16A2 currently fielded by the U.S. Armed Forces is not the same weapon that went to war in Vietnam a quarter of a century ago.

While the method of operation remains the same — direct gas action without a piston — a significant number of needed modifications were incorporated into the M16A2. Barrel twist was changed from one turn in 12 inches to one in 7 inches to stabilize the heavier M855 ball and M856 tracer ammunition. The 62-grain M855 bullet's performance in the human body essentially duplicates that of the older 55-grain M193 round with slightly increased fragmentation.

The 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge is usually effective out to 200 yards.

Images of Hollywood's *Beau Geste* aside, even in arid environments most infantry contacts will be under 100 yards. For that the M16A2 will more than suffice. Weakest link in the M16 series is the 30-round aluminum magazine. Most stoppages in the M16 can be attributed to damaged magazines, which, if suspect, should be pitched in the nearest ditch and replaced. In any event, never load more than 29 rounds.

A shortened version of the M16A2 was adopted by the U.S. Armed Forces as the M4. So far, only a modest quantity have been acquired. Reminiscent of the CAR-15s and XM177E2 fielded during the Vietnam War, these carbines have 14-inch barrels. Barrel configuration differs somewhat from the Colt Commando to permit attachment of the M203 grenade launcher and the hand guard has double heat shields. The M16A2's 800-meter sight system has been retained.

Also chambered for the M855 caliber 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge is the U.S. Army's M249 SAW. Although selected

from a rigorous competitive evaluation of four candidate systems, the M249 has also seen its share of contentious commentary. Gas-operated with a short-stroke piston and two-lug rotary bolt, the M249 fires from the open-bolt position to inhibit “cook-offs,” as do most belt-fed machine guns. It was designed to accept either disintegrating link belts or the M16 30-round box magazine without modification.

That has proved to be a major design error for, in my experience, the M249 will not function reliably with any magazine, loaded to any capacity. This weapon should be restricted to belt-fed operation only. Another area of concern is the M249's accuracy potential.

With those exceptions, the M249 is generally the very model of a modern SAW. When belt-fed, reliability exceeds all competing designs. When employed for area-target fire support, as it most often should be, the accuracy potential is adequate. It has numerous desirable features, not the least of which is its weight, which is only 21.3 lbs. with a 200-round assault pack. It has a quick-change, chrome-lined barrel and exhibits excellent human engineering overall. It provides the fire power required at the squad level in a compact and lightweight envelope.

While it has been reported that U.S. Navy SEALs are employing some M14 rifles and both the M21 (M14 with ART scope) and M24 Sniper Weapon System are chambered for the 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge and were employed in Desert Storm, the most prevalent weapon utilizing this round is the M60E3 adopted by the USMC. M80 7.62x51mm ball is an excellent choice for the rare occasions when contacts occur beyond 200 meters.

The M60E3 machine gun chambered for this cartridge is a decided improvement over the despicable M60 GPMG (general

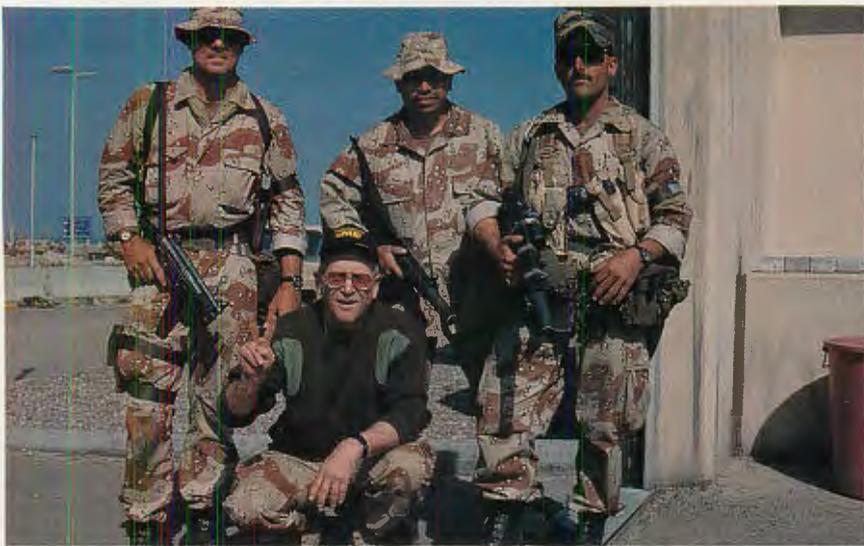


Capt. Rorick De Normann (right), 32, from Ascot, Berkshire, England, carries bullpup-configured L85A1; trooper on left, Sterling SMG. Both are assigned to the famed “Desert Rats” 7th Armored Bde. Note insignia of same on door. Photo: Robert K. Brown



Middle East is a paradise for gun jeeps that come in many flavors and variations. Here, in Kuwait City, are two 7.62mm FN MAG GPMGs mounted on 4x4. Photo: Robert K. Brown

purpose machine gun). Weighing only 18 lbs., a light bipod has been mounted to the receiver (where it stays when the barrel is changed, unlike the M60). The forearm has been redesigned and now ends in a pistol grip. The barrel has been lightened and incorporates an M16-style flash suppressor.



U.S. Army Special Operations personnel providing security for U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City after its liberation. From left to right troops carry Heckler & Koch MP5SD and sound-suppressed MP5SDs. Photo: Robert K. Brown

This lightened barrel has already caused serious problems. When high rates of sustained fire are employed without changing barrels within the prescribed intervals (and this is almost never done during the high anxiety of the battlefield), the barrel will slump with the possible consequence of damage to the gun and injury to the operator. A heavier barrel will probably eventually be adopted, but nothing as yet has been done about this deficiency. The M60E3's carrying handle has been moved to the barrel to assist barrel changing. The gas system has been revamped, which means the piston can no longer be installed backwards.

Far superior is the caliber 7.62x51mm M240 machine gun mounted on U.S. main battle tanks and armored fighting vehicles. This is the coaxial version of the famous FN MAG58 GPMG, which is in service with the armed forces of more than 80 countries. The "MAG" is belt-fed, gas-operated and fires from the open-bolt position. Reliability is a salient feature of this widely adopted weapon. It can be faulted in only one area. There are a lot of bits and pieces and it takes a long time to properly clean a

RPG-7s were part of small arms inventory for many of the Coalition forces and the bad guys. Photo: Robert K. Brown



BELOW: French troops carried the bullpup-configured FA MAS into combat in the Middle East. They were issued plastic carrying cases, a policy the U.S. should consider. Photo: Bassignac/Liaison



gas-fouled "MAG."

John Browning's venerable .50 caliber M2 HB heavy machine gun, affectionately known as "Ma Deuce," is still very much alive and booming. It's attached to the turret of the M1A1 Abrams main battle tank and on the M113 armored personnel carrier (APC). In restricted roles it's still sitting on sand dunes fixed to the 44-lb. M3 tripod. Its 708-grain bullet with a hard steel core and muzzle velocity approaching 3,000 fps can defeat light vehicles and will give enemy personnel a grade-A migraine headache no matter where it strikes on the human body. Firing from the closed-bolt position, the M2 HB — when equipped with a sturdy MilSpec

scope — can reach out to well beyond 2,000 meters and touch anyone.

Recoil-operated with a reasonable cyclic rate of about 550 rpm, the M2 HB is the most rugged and reliable machine gun in our inventory. Very little ever breaks and maintenance is relatively simple as its recoil operation throws very little fouling into the system. Ma Deuce is still the ultimate heavy machine gun — bar none — even after more than 65 years of use on all the world's battlefields.



### French Small Arms

While France adopted a modified version of the Beretta Model 92F 9mm pistol in 1987, known as the *Pistolet Automatique MAS 9mm G1*, the Model 1950 is still in service. A thoroughly reliable single-action 9mm Parabellum pistol with the swinging link and dual locking lugs of the Colt M1911A1, the M1950 is short-recoil operated. It cannot be fired with the magazine removed. It has a modular hammer/sear assembly which can be removed from the frame as one piece during disassembly.

French soldiers refer to it as *le Clairon*. But this bugle spits bullets. France's service rifle, the FA MAS (*Fusil Automatique, Manufacture d'Armes de St. Etienne*), has already demonstrated itself to be an effective and generally well-conceived piece of ordnance. Placed into production in 1979, the bullpup-configured FA MAS is chambered for the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge of the M193



type as the barrel twist is 1:12 inches. Weighing 8 lbs., empty, and firing from the closed-bolt position, the method of operation is by means of delayed blowback.

To accommodate the bullpup configuration, the trigger mechanism and pistol grip have been mounted to the lower hand guard. At about 3 MOA at 100 meters, the accuracy potential is acceptable.

Reliability is of a high order. Because of its proximity to the operator, muzzle blast is more noticeable. There were buttstock failures during early series production, but



Special Operations personnel based at Kuwait City International Airport carrying M16A2s. Note the ubiquitous .50 cal. mounted on civilian pickup. On the left is Capt. Fred "Doc" Kraft, Mill Valley, California, a reservist who has spent six months in the Middle East. He carries the 9mm Beretta. Photo: Robert K. Brown

weight, tubular aluminum bipod and a cleverly designed, ambidextrous web sling.

Almost as bad as the M60, the French AA 52 (*Armee Automatique Model 52*) GPMG is chambered for the French 7.5x54mm rifle cartridge and is delayed-

this problem has been corrected. French troops participating in Desert Storm were issued plastic cases for the FA MAS. While it's downright ugly, principally because of the huge carrying handle on the upper handguard, the FA MAS is an excellent weapon. It's usually issued with a light-

Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Dennison, HHC SF Command, Ft. Bragg, N.C., left, carries Heckler & Koch MP5SD. In background is special ops vehicle which can carry a variety of .50 cal. HMGs, M60s, M14s and M136 antitank weapons. Photo: Robert K. Brown

blowback in operation. Designed for ease of manufacture, the receiver body is made of semi cylindrical tubes welded together.

To prevent premature unlocking while chamber pressures are still too high, the AA 52 employs an unusual, troublesome, two-piece bolt. The bolt's two parts are joined by a fragile T-shaped connecting pin about 1 inch long. If this pin is broken or lost the weapon cannot be made to operate. French troops would have been better served to discard their AA 52 GPMGs and employ captured Soviet PK machine guns.

#### British Small Arms

One of John Browning's greatest



M60 mounted on MP Humvee stationed on main highway between Hafar-al-Batin and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. MPs from left to right are: Sgt. John McPhail, Jr., 34, Society Hill, SC, E-4 Joseph Cromer, 28, Florence, SC, and E-4 Gary Lowder, 37, Florence, SC. Photo: Robert K. Brown

designs, the Browning High Power 9mm Parabellum pistol still serves in the British armed forces, where it is known as the L11A1. Locked-breech, short-recoil operated, this single-action classic has a magazine capacity of 13 rounds.

Sturdy and reliable, the High Power can only be faulted in the area of its frame-mounted safety lever which is difficult to manipulate — an important consideration for those who carry the arm in “condition one” (a round in the chamber, a full magazine seated in place, the hammer fully cocked and the thumb safety engaged).

We can offer no compliments for the new caliber 5.56x45mm NATO British service rifle, civilian designation SA-80. Essentially an AR18 action in EM2 bullpup form, the L85A1 Individual Weapon (IW) represents a fiasco of major proportions. Its failure to perform adequately during Desert Storm is no more than the final straw in what will shortly become one of the biggest small arms scandals of this century.

Soon after fielding it was found that when dropped from a height of several feet onto the muzzle, the L85A1 would fire. This was corrected, but the new trigger has such a small gap between its rear surface and the front of the pistol grip that small particles of sand immediately impede the operator’s ability to pivot the trigger. This is literally a fatal flaw.

In the manner of the woeful U.S. M3 “Grease Gun,” the L85A1’s magazine catch/release button would dump magazines when inadvertently depressed by equipment or the operator’s body. An interim solution, in the form of a shield attached with glue (!) was fielded. The newly redesigned magazine catch/release is reported to be no better than before.

The firing pin is fragile and breaks at the tip. Projecting from the bolt face, the jagged, broken tip results in primer ignition out of battery (called “a slam fire”) with a very real potential for damage to the weapon and serious injury to the operator.

The barrel’s gas port is drilled after the

bore has been chrome-plated and this strips chrome from the port area. Both the crossbolt-type safety and bolt release button are made of plastic and break easily. The rear sling swivel is attached to the buttplate which is fixed to the receiver body by two screws. It doesn’t take long before the buttplate tears away from the receiver. The captive upper and lower receiver retaining pin assemblies are of poor design and are easily damaged by repeated disassembly. The handguard’s hinged top-cover opens spontaneously and breaks off. Receiver and trigger housing welds are of low quality.

The L86A1 Light Support Weapon (LSW) shares all of the L85A1’s incredible defects and a few more besides. It has no quick-change barrel system and has limited potential for sustained fire due to its 30-round, bottom-fed magazine. The accuracy potential, even at close range, is dismal. After several hundred rounds, fouling clogs the gas cylinder preventing the bolt carrier from moving forward enough to trip the auto safety sear. When that happens, the gun will stop firing.

Gratefully, a substantial number of British troops are still armed with the caliber 7.62x51mm NATO L1A1 Commonwealth FAL. While too large (overall length approaches 45 inches) and too heavy (11 lbs., 3 oz. with a loaded magazine) by today’s standards, it is vastly superior to the L85A1. Gas operated with an adjustable regulator, the FAL fires from the closed-bolt position and, at one time or another, was adopted by more than 90 nations.

However, it was never noted for reliable operation in high dust and sand environments. It did not perform well during the 1955 Suez Canal Zone crisis and as a result “sand cuts” were embodied in the bolt carrier and the hold-open device was omitted.

The Israelis experienced similar problems and were led, as a consequence, to develop and adopt the Galil — a Kalashnikov derivative.

L86A1 Light Support Weapons have as yet not completely replaced the FN MAG 58 GPMG in British service, where in modified form it is known as the L7A1/2 “Jimpy.” Differing only cosmetically (i.e., a black plastic buttstock) and with a 10-position instead of three-position

adjustable gas regulator, the L7A1/2 series demonstrated its value during the Falklands campaign, although the Royal Marines preferred the slightly lighter, magazine-fed L4 Bren. A thoroughly battle-proven machine gun, the MAG is not noted as particularly dust-sensitive.

### Iraqi Small Arms

With few exceptions, Iraq’s military small arms are of ComBloc origin. In general, these weapons systems can be characterized as highly reliable with only mediocre accuracy potential and little design concentration on human engineering.

The principal Iraqi sidearm is the TT-33 Tokarev pistol. Chambered for the 7.62x25mm cartridge, the Tokarev is essentially a much modified Colt-Browning design. The method of operation is locked-breech, short recoil. All modifications to John Browning’s original design were intended to simplify manufacture and enhance reliability. Although the hammer has a half-cock position, this pistol should not be carried with a chambered round. The 86-grain round-nose FMJ bullet has a muzzle velocity of about 1,450 fps and will most often over-penetrate in human targets.

The standard-issue Iraqi rifle is the Kalashnikov, called the “Tabuk,” chambered for both the 7.62x39mm and 5.45x39mm cartridges. Most are of Soviet, East German or Romanian manufacture. Some were locally manufactured at a factory established for the Iraqi armed forces by technicians from the Izhmash Industrial Combine’s Izhevsk weapons factory.



Two troopers with M16 A2s take a break from souvenir collecting to pose in front of RPG launchers. Photo: Robert K. Brown

Fifty million Kalashnikovs can’t be wrong and it is the world’s most ubiquitous military small arm. Gas-operated and firing from the closed-bolt position, the *Avtomat Kalashnikov* (AK) has a much-copied rotary bolt that is piston-actuated. The pinned and riveted, sheet-metal receivers of the AKM series most often are seen with a five-component mechanical device that delays hammer drop until the

complete cessation of all bolt-carrier bounce.

Probably the world’s most reliable infantry rifle, the Kalashnikov falls short only in the areas of ergonomics and accuracy. The selector lever, on the right side of the receiver body, clatters excessively when manipulated.

AK magazines, although rugged and more reliable than those of the M16, must be rocked forward to remove and rearward



to insert. As a consequence, tactical reloads are slow and awkward for all except highly trained operators. The open U-notch rear sight is far inferior to the M16's peep aperture and can only be adjusted for range.

82nd Airborne trooper with M249. Infantry firefights were relatively few and far between. Most ground actions were conducted by armored forces. Photo: Langevin/Sygma



Kalashnikov triggers are notorious for horrendous and variable creep with sudden, uncontrolled let-off. Except for Yugoslav variants, AK buttstocks are too short for most Westerners. All models of the Kalashnikov exhibit excessive flash signatures. Few AKs will shoot better than 5-6 MOA at 100 meters and Ivan apparently feels that's close enough for government work. The wound ballistics potential of the boat-tail 7.62x39mm bullet is mediocre.

Called the "Al-Kadisia," the Iraqis manufacture a Dragunov-type sniper rifle with technical assistance from Yugoslavia. Although its scope has an excellent range-finding reticle pattern, the Dragunov is overrated and will rarely shoot better than 3 MOA at 100 meters, even with match-grade ammunition. The skeletonized stock exhibits poor ergonomics and tends to exaggerate the perceived recoil of the full-size 7.62x54R cartridge.

Except for a few French AA 52 and Belgian FN MAG58 GPMGs, Iraqi machine guns are exclusively of ComBloc origin. The RPK is no more than a Kalashnikov rifle with a longer barrel, bipod and redesigned buttstock. Unless Soviet-type 75-round drums are employed, this weapon will "monopod" on its

AKs, in many variations, were used by both good and bad guys. Here, Sheik Mubarek, a Saudi tribal chief who provided heavy construction equipment support for Egyptian and Saudi forces, supervises cutting passage through berm to allow support vehicles to follow tanks into Kuwait. Photo: Robert K. Brown

40-round box-type magazine when fired from the prone position. Lacking a quick-change barrel, its sustained-fire potential is limited.

First introduced to the Soviet Army in 1961, the PK GPMG was eventually product-improved and lightened into the PKM (*Pulemet Kalashnikova Modernizirovanniy*) series. A quarter century of fighting from arid regions to tropical jungles has demonstrated it to be flawless, with the possible exception of an overly complex feed mechanism required to accommodate the 100-year-old 7.62x54R rimmed cartridge. Weighing less than 20 lbs., the PK's most distinctive characteristic is its skeletonized buttstock, fabricated from wood laminate material.

The cyclic rate is about 650 rpm and although it has no buffer system of any

*Continued on page 78*

# SOF INVADES

RKB Strikes First



**B**eing up on top of the vehicle gives you a far greater impression of the scope and magnitude of this whole operation. It's easy to envision oneself with Rommel or Montgomery roaring back and forth across the Libyan desert ... a truly awesome sight. The weather is cool, the sky overcast. A great day for a desert offensive ... My adrenaline pump roars right along with the growl of scores of tanks and APCs barreling across the billiard table-like barren desert ... 'Jeb' Stuart and George Patton must be smiling. I am."

SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown landed in Saudi Arabia on 12 January 1991. For the next 40 days and nights he battled a military bureaucracy intent upon denying press access to front-line

# KUWAIT

With Saudi Spearhead

by Robert K. Brown



INSET: Publisher Robert K. Brown poses next to hastily abandoned Iraqi antitank position inside Kuwait. Gary Neese's "Ultimate" jacket system proved to be excellent choice to deal with fluctuating temperatures and weather conditions in desert. Photo: U.S. contractor

Coalition troops celebrate victory in outskirts of Kuwait. Photo: Sygma/P. Durand





Kuwait City residents responded to liberating army with as much enthusiasm as the French when Paris was liberated from the Nazis. Note blaze orange I.D. panel on top of gunjeep. Photo: Sygma/Langevin

combat troops — or any troops for that matter. He also had to contend with the Banana Republic Brigade, hundreds of pseudo “war” correspondents whose closest brush with combat was filing expense account forms with the head office. As Brown was quoted in the Wall Street Journal and Newsweek, “I thought I’d be riding the lead tank into Baghdad by now. Instead, I’m stuck in a briefing room with the biggest bunch of boobs and dorks I’ve ever met.”

But it was the lopsided treatment of the press corps that finally forced him to break all the rules and make his own way to the front. Media “barking dogs” — the major television networks, newspapers and news weeklies — were courted by the brass while the rest, SOF included, were left out in the cold. Bob Brown, after covering conflicts around the world (and actively participating in more than a few), had had enough.

Packing up his cameras and trusty tape

recorder he headed north, employing “smoke and mirrors” tactics to circumvent the rules and avoid roving military police anti-journalist patrols. The following, taken from his hours of taped notes as he infiltrated the war zone and eventually rode into Kuwait City with the lead elements of the Kuwaiti armored brigade, picks up on 21 February.

21 February, 1745 hours

I find myself at a construction site near the Saudi Arabian National Guard [SANG] compound in the desert northeast of Hafar Al Batin.

Bedouin troops here provide security for the oil pipeline laid in the early years of the Iran-Iraq War. There is also a U.S. Army compound, mission unknown, and an Egyptian compound, where I had lunch with Colonel Zagloul Mohammed Fathey, chief of staff of the Egyptian 3rd Mechanized Division.

Interesting the way Fathey lives — a

large tent probably 30 feet long and 15 feet wide, carpeted. He has a full-size wooden desk, chairs with upholstered pillows. He is a veteran of the ’67 and ’73 wars with Israel.

In the background, outgoing 155mm rounds can be heard. There are also what appear to be B-52 arc lights, or what the media now calls carpet bombing, for reasons unbeknownst to me.

I’m out here with Tim Lambon, a Rhodesian who used to work in a Rhodesian special intelligence unit. He drifted into TV work and met *Soldier of Fortune’s* African correspondent, Al Venter. The two worked on a project in Afghanistan. Since then, Lambon has been working for an independent British TV firm.

Lambon and I decided it was useless to stay in Riyadh — we were sick of being stonewalled by the joint information bureau [JIB.] It was apparent that the only journalists who were getting access to the troops on the front lines were those with a lot of clout, i.e., the major “barking dogs” on your major TV stations.

I met a young hotshot from the *Wall Street Journal* last week, Steve Horowitz, who contacted me regarding an interview. His intention was to interview people from the press for a *Journal* piece on press attitudes about the war.

After spending some time with (SOF associates) Mike Williams and Paul Fanshaw, and myself, he decided that SOF’s trials and tribulations were of sufficient interest for a story.

He wanted something unusual, some “color,” and wasn’t particularly overjoyed with what he was finding on the walk from the Riyadh Hyatt Regency to the Riyadh Wendy’s. He wanted to come out here to Hafar Al Batin. But I figured if we accompanied him, it was more likely

Brown watches gap being cut in berm to allow combat support vehicles access route to Kuwait. Photo: Faisel





Left, Bedouin scout who guards pipeline near Saudi-Kuwaiti border and right, Sheik Mubarek, who assisted Brown on way to Kuwait. Bedouins prefer bolt-action rifles. Mubarek carries Al Mar "Desert Shield" knife on cartridge belt. Photo: Robert K. Brown

his story would make the front page of his paper. I rationalized that a large percentage of the cost of this so-far unproductive trip could be justified by the P.R. value of a favorable article in the *Journal*. [Horowitz's article on SOF's frustrations appeared on the front page of the *Journal* on 21 February.]

Mike Williams and I decided we would take Horowitz's car and drive back the next morning. I was expecting to get approval to interview some of the Marine recon troops that had been trapped in the battle for Khafji to supplement Mike's article.

It was Marine recon who called in Marine air and artillery support, significantly affecting the outcome of the battle for Khafji. I had submitted a written request and subsequently discussed the request with Major Keith Oliver, the Marine Corps representative on the JIB.

Oliver said he was enthusiastic about the concept, that the Riyadh JIB was enthusiastic, and that he would be contacting his counterpart in Dhahran to see how my interview could be arranged. This was a unilateral request; in other words, it was a request that only I be allowed to conduct the specially arranged interview.

Upon our return, I contacted Oliver, who said he was now very pessimistic about the request after having contacted Dhahran. No explanation was forthcoming. It became clear that I was not going to get anything through the normal channels or following the rules.

#### 1804 hours

Our options were limited. We could continue to piss and moan in Riyadh or

throw the dice and try and tag onto a column of somebody's troops during the confusion expected when the ground offensive kicked off. Lambon and I decided we had no choice but to exercise the "smoke and mirrors" option. The worst the Saudis or U.S. forces could do would be to throw us out of the world's greatest kitty litter box.

Lambon, in his early 30s, slim, with a GI haircut, definitely had a good military appearance. He also had a brand new four-door Nissan Safari four-wheel-drive vehicle, which happened to be scarcer than pigs in Mecca. (Apparently, the U.S. military leased all the four-wheel-drive vehicles for staff and administrative types so that all the Humvees would be available for more vital tasks.)

Lambon painted the Nissan desert tan, taped inverted "V" shapes on the doors (which all the Coalition vehicles were running around with), and slapped an orange I.D. panel on top. Our basic plan was to bamboozle our way through the Saudi checkpoints on the road from Riyadh to Hafar Al Batin appearing as U.S. military.

When I pointed out that the rental agency might be upset about our new poly-vinyl acrylic paint job — which wouldn't wash off — Lambon said, "Ah, screw 'em. We'll deal with that when I turn it in. The mission comes first."

We put on outfits which could be mistaken for U.S. uniforms by the Saudis, who were as unfamiliar with our uniforms as we were with theirs. I wore desert cammie pants, desert boots, an olive drab "wooly pully," and a desert cammie boonie hat with jump wings. Lambon wore a crewcut and desert cammies.

We had found earlier that as long as we appeared to be military, the Saudis would wave us by without asking for I.D. Our disguises worked effectively to get us to Hafar Al Batin. Upon arriving, we reconned the Al Fao hotel to see if any journalists were inside.

My plan was to link up with a Saudi sheik, Mubarek, since I had established rapport with him on an earlier trip to Hafar and see how he could help us. We met Mubarek and indicated we were having difficulty getting rooms — the hotel was booked.

Mubarek offered to put us up in his suite, which meant we were in two drab, dingy rooms instead of one. But the price was right, so we accepted. Lambon decided to go on to Rafha. My gut feeling was that I should play my cards with Mubarek and see what might develop. I laid an Al Mar "Desert Shield" knife on him last night and he seemed to really appreciate it. A little low key bribery often helps.

#### 1818 hours

Some general observations on how this whole situation has developed: It has been a classic case of extreme frustration. Since

the military and the Saudis work to make it impossible for the average reporter to cover this war, the only way anything can be achieved is by cheating, lying and violating most of the rules and regulations.

Certainly the stories that I need do not include going out and doing a piece on a combat support unit ... no matter how important a part they play. I picked up a technique from an experienced magazine journalist for creating phony documents, which we utilized prior to our last trip up here. Using a Saudi Ministry of Information request sheet, we made up a line of bullshit saying that we were authorized to come up here to visit the Kuwaiti armored brigade.

We simply typed in the minister of information's name and had an Arab friend sign it in Arabic. He then wrote an additional bullshit message at the bottom in Arabic. The concept here was to confuse anyone we might run into — either Saudi or American — who would give us a difficult time. Always forge documents that are so vague they never can be traced back to anyone in the combat area.

Prior to our departure, the Saudi minister of information had published a directive denying all journalists travel to anywhere in the general AO where we have been operating. The memo also said no journalists were allowed to wear military uniforms.

Well, of course, everybody was not following the minister's wishes. There were about 40 correspondents in the area. When I came up here with Mike Williams a week ago, we ran into a journalist who said he had a contact in one of the military units who said there was going to be a sweep to police up all the journalists and send them back. That hasn't happened yet.

We theorized a number of journalists create rumors of this nature to serve their

Brown grabs an AK for a quick pose on berm near Kuwait border. Desert camies helped "smoke and mirror" him by Saudi check points. Photo: Faisal



own purposes, for example to scare off other journalists. This certainly could be true. In any case, the old adage that all is fair in love and war could also be twisted to say all is fair in love and journalism. This was a "cut-throat, screw your buddy, look out for yourself" scenario. Rules are for suckers who will never get to where the action is.

#### 1829 hours

The Sheik is on a trip where he is apparently arranging to move a lot of heavy equipment up to the Kuwaiti border. For whatever reason, he said he couldn't take me with him tonight, but would tomorrow. At least I'm slowly getting closer to where the action is.

One of the reasons for my camping here in the desert, is the hope that Mubarek can get me in with the Egyptians. If that happens, I can hook up with recon units and get across the border, perhaps observe some of the fighting. We shall see. This is obviously the best shot I've had to date.

#### 2016 hours

Just came back from having tea and dates with the Bedouins. The city Arabs that I met in Riyadh simply didn't do much for me. They seemed rather soft and effete. The Bedouins, however, are Saudi Arabia's cowboys, or mountain men — down to earth, solid, and with a sense of humor. They were a pleasure to be around, even though communication was primitive.

A few reflections: I mentioned earlier that this was "smoke and mirrors," which extends not only to bamboozling American and Saudi authorities, but also editors.

Lambon, who got permission from his home office to drive up here on this op, did so only after he told his editor that he was coming up here with an American colonel. Now that wasn't a total lie, but certainly some omissions were made, e.g., that I was a lieutenant colonel and retired from the

Reserves. Whatever gets the job done.

Another amusing scam: A group of British reporters drove up to a British installation with a military-looking vehicle where a young guard asked for the password. An authoritarian voice in the back of the vehicle responded with vigor and started chewing out the young troop's ass, telling him that he wanted to see the

his tribe supported whichever Arabic king was responsible for unifying the country around 1920. Mubarek's aide, Faisal, told me that Mubarek is highly regarded because he assumed his position to help the government for no salary, and that when the war is over he will assume a very significant position in the regime.

He also mentioned something I heard from two other Saudi sources: that this whole war has disturbed the Saudi psyche considerably. They're puzzled and upset that they've spent so much money for defense and yet in this time of crisis they've been so impotent and had to rely on infidels for their defense.

The feeling is that the Saudis are going to seriously reevaluate their military capabilities, which undoubtedly will result in a much more powerful military machine.

#### 22 February, 0745 hours

An Egyptian mechanized unit has been moving past my tent for the last two hours, and ... another unit's coming in to the east now with a full brigade. The vehicles are well-spaced so it's hard to get a count on how many there are. I'm by the side of the road looking like George Patton giving them the thumbs up — they appear to be in good spirits,

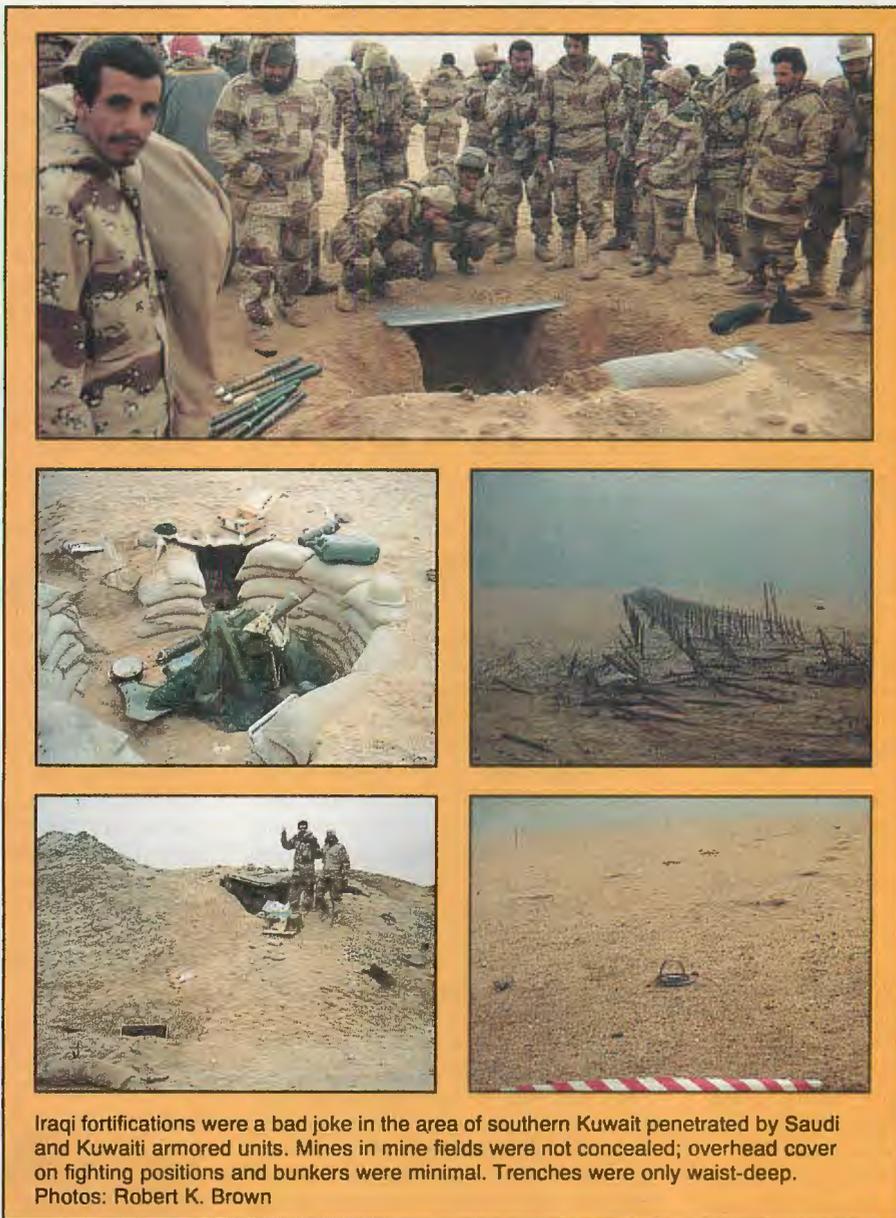
with some motioning for me to get on.

#### 1012 hours

Looks like most of the Egyptians have passed. The armored vehicles lead the way followed by armored personnel carriers [APCs], self-propelled guns [SPs] and trucks. I can hear B-52 strikes in the background. We heard them thumping through most of last night.

I was contemplating hitchhiking. However, if I did that, it might put Mubarek in the shits. Since he has been my host, I guess I'll be a nice guy and pass.

It's hard to know what other correspondents are accessing. I guess I'll hang loose here and when Mubarek comes,



Iraqi fortifications were a bad joke in the area of southern Kuwait penetrated by Saudi and Kuwaiti armored units. Mines in mine fields were not concealed; overhead cover on fighting positions and bunkers were minimal. Trenches were only waist-deep. Photos: Robert K. Brown

general.

The kid was quaking when the tirade finished. The Brit journalist then asked the troop if he knew the password. The troop told him not only the password, but also the response. The journalists proceeded on into headquarters. "Smoke and mirrors."

I still haven't completely figured out the story on Sheik Mubarek. He is apparently wealthy and claims to own a 100-square-kilometer farm between Dhahran and Riyadh. He is not in the army. He is apparently in the construction business and is in charge of building support facilities and roads.

He claims to be from one of the 10 most powerful tribes in Saudi Arabia, and that



U.S. troops examine abandoned Iraqi T-72 tank in Kuwait. Note oil well fires in background. Photo: Sygma/Langevin



Egyptian M-60 tanks await order to attack behind berm located 5 clicks south of Saudi-Kuwaiti border. Photo: Robert K. Brown

see if he can get me with the Egyptians on the way up front.

Where do the flies come from? God knows what they eat out here, but there are 10,000 of them per meal.

#### 1100 hours

I just chatted with an Egyptian lieutenant colonel engineer who said that he thinks it's going to be about two days before the main Coalition thrust. What we've been seeing today is the movement of the 3rd Egyptian Mechanized Division to their attack positions.

#### 1211 hours

I am now on a berm located a few clicks south of the Kuwaiti border.

We saw a large explosion maybe 20 clicks away, a large black cloud rising into the sky. No way to determine what kind of ordnance impacted. The Egyptians have been placed forward so we are moving

along the route they apparently used this morning. We're now pulling into a construction area.

We are 5 clicks from the border and 18 clicks from the main Iraqi defensive line. Apparently, this was as good a decision as I have made to date ...

Faisel: This is a very dangerous area here.

Brown: And, Faisel, why do you say that it is very dangerous?

Faisel: Because we are within the range of the Iraqi artillery. There was one rocket that landed just up the road about a half an hour ago.

Brown: Maybe the Iraqis will shoot some artillery and it will be very exciting. What do you think about that?

Faisel: I don't think that it would be very exciting for me! (Laughter).

#### 1313 hours

We are moving up with the dozer, directly to the berm. Now the question is whether or not they will let me drive the dozer to breach the berm, which will allow support vehicles to follow the tracked vehicles.

That would truly be a magnificent accomplishment, and this is truly a high. The last 48 hours make it all worthwhile — the waiting, the B.S., the putting up with stupid people — now it's all worthwhile.

#### 1320 hours

Suddenly it is all *not* worthwhile — there are some asshole journalists here, with a pool. So much for my visions of a great scoop.

The Egyptians have moved their armor up behind the berm. There are two APCs or trucks between each M-60 tank and their tanks are about 75 yards apart. I examine the interior of one of their M-113s. They are certainly well used but in very good condition. Things look neat and orderly; obviously a professional operation here.

Behind the line of vehicles and tanks are individual foxholes which provide shelter from incoming. To the rear we have a number of tents spread out over at least 400 yards back from the berm. Trucks and support vehicles are dispersed in case of artillery attack.

It appears from the way they're positioned that they'll make a linear frontal attack. Once they cross the berm, that could well change depending on their op plans which I am not privy to. We are following one of the bulldozers through a gap in the wall. Exciting! As we go through, we can see a large black cloud down range, probably 20 clicks away. Anyhow, we are through the berm.

Egyptian M-113 squadron commander: A rocket...

Brown: What kind of rocket?



Burnt out Iraqi vehicles like these tankers littered all highways into Kuwait City. Photo: Robert K. Brown

Squadron commander: Aircraft rocket.  
Brown: From U.S. aircraft?  
Squadron commander: Yes.

### 23 February, 0823 hours

Time for some morning observations while waiting to see whether or not Saddam pulls out today. According to Hassan, one of Sheik Mubarek's workers, Bush has given Saddam until "noon today" to get out.

I don't know whether that is our time or Washington time. More Egyptian troops have been moving through. It's difficult to determine what unit they're from, but obviously the one Egyptian brigade is not all that's been deployed.

A few observations on the scenery here at my AO. Rain has brought up a fine coating of grass all over the desert. If you look at it from afar you would think you were looking at Kansas wheat fields in early spring.

Coalition forces have sprinkled vehicle revetments all over the desert, which almost appear as sailing ships on a green sea from a distance. This won't last long, as far as the green goes. Flies are still everywhere, of course. I actually saw three or four dogs out here. Normally the Arabs, for reasons unbeknownst to me, don't like dogs.

But it clears my mind staying out here in the desert. I could have gone into Hafar Al Batin last night, and maybe I should have, in order to contact Lambon and see what success he was having in accessing American units. I'm still hoping that I'll be able to tag along with Mubarek and the Egyptian troops.

And the Egyptians are still moving. You can read in a military manual about an armored division's table of organization, but until you actually see it, it simply doesn't impact on you. They have been moving here now, off and on, since a little after 0700.

### 1004 hours

I have developed my amusement for the day: a field-expedient fly trap, consisting of a 2-inch-high glass cylinder teacup, one-fourth full of tea heavily laced with sugar and milk. I note, flies occasionally fall into the mixture. I have found a way to accelerate the process. Heh, Heh.

When the flies walk on the inside of the cup, I slap my book down on the rim — the flies fall into the tea and drown. How satisfying. Right now there are about 15 casualties. This is a very gratifying experience, and the most amusing thing I've done in the last five weeks.

To most effectively use this field-expedient fly trap, one has to develop certain skills. Once the fly is on the inside of the cup, one brings the palm of the hand down firmly and jolt the fly down into the mass of other squirming and obnoxious sons-of-bitches.

Another technique is to wait until there are four or five on the inside, then clamp your palm over the cup. Then you get the tea swirling around up along the sides and have them all fighting for their lives (evil laughter).

Also when you bring your — ah, here's another one — palm down firmly on the top of the rim, the force will often shake the little creature loose from the side and plop him down into the gooey mass. In my experiments, not a single fly was able to escape after becoming stuck in the tea. What a pleasure. Oh, yes, it's tea time again. I do not care if I never see another cup of Lipton tea. The Bedouin serving the tea thinks I'm crazy. At this point, I wouldn't argue the point.

More B-52 strikes. The remainder of the Egyptian division keeps moving north, mostly all combat and combat support. Occasionally, a Black Hawk in desert cammie, scuttles overhead. Faisal told me three Scuds were fired at the Bahrain airport last night, but doesn't know for certain whether or not they were shot down by Patriots. In the latest issue of Newsweek it was suggested that a lot of Coalition flights had to be altered to deal with the Scud threat. So the Scuds are not only a psychological terror weapon, but are also having an impact on our air campaign.

A reporter from some paper based in Cairo just showed up in a flight suit, a leather vest, and patent-leather shoes. God save us from news boobs. I asked him if he was going with the Egyptians if they made a ground attack, to which he replied he would if he could. I mentioned that I would like to go with them, too. He asked if I wanted to see Kuwait and, of course, I said yes, so we shall see if he can help arrange something. Develop new options whenever possible and pursue them all concurrently.

With the Egyptian APCs on line behind the berm in attack position and the movement of combat support this morning, I surmise the ground offensive will kick off tomorrow, on the 24th (unless political B.S. is thrown into the picture). I think I'll go into Hafar Al Batin tonight to see how the other journalists are doing.

I will be talking to Mubarek later this afternoon, so can check to see if there is any way he can get me locked in with the Egyptians when they move. I should have

made an effort yesterday when I was up on the front line B.S.ing with the Egyptian M-113 squadron commander. Didn't think of it at the time.

### 1643 hours

We've been heading down the road northeast of Ruqi, a border checkpoint between Iraq and Saudi. It has been eerie driving on this road with no other traffic, but now we're starting to encounter some Egyptian units.

We just passed all the dug-in Egyptian 155mm SPs. I saw an American unit with them, but didn't have a chance to talk to them. I guess the American unit would be forward air controllers.

We've been watching the sun gradually sink in the west. But there is an aura of excitement in the air that only war can bring. A desert sunset is pretty, but it is much more intriguing when there is a background of smoke from a B-52 strike rising into the air 20 clicks to the north.

### 24 February, 0853 hours

We are on our way to the front. Sheik Mubarek has just informed me that he has arranged for me to ride with the Egyptians. As we bounce along, I still have my fingers crossed. We moved from Hafar Al Batin to his construction base camp positioned near the SANG compound.

We brought along Forrest Sawyer from ABC-TV News, with his crew. We left instructions that when the crew with the satellite and ancillary equipment showed up, they should be guided to a rendezvous point up near the front. The weather is overcast and a light rain is falling. Onward!

### 0913 hours

Mubarek just told me he's arranged for the ABC News crew to go on a tank with the Saudis, and for me to go with the



About 10 clicks north of Kuwait City on the road to Basra, U.S. air and elements of the famed 24th Mech Div. created a 100-acre junkyard out of fleeing Iraqi vehicles. Photo: Robert K. Brown

Egyptians. That makes me more than satisfied, as I think the Egyptians are combat tested and probably will see more action. Besides that, I would rather be with the combat-tested unit.

We're getting seriously close to the front. On the right, about 20 tanker trucks,

both military and civilian, are moving toward the front. We can see rear echelon units under cammie netting, probably about 500 meters away.

Sawyer says that the military slapped a 48-hour embargo on all TV pool broadcasts. Being out here, Sawyer and his men will have a superb chance to scoop other TV networks if they can get their satellite dish to feed.

#### 0940 hours

We are moving forward with rear echelon units, mostly ambulances and vehicle retrieval systems. Clouds are starting to part — it's clearing up, and visibility has increased. Out of the right window, I can see what appears to be smoke rising from the front lines. We're getting closer.

We just stopped where there was an American team attaching mine plows to explode mines on four Saudi M-60s. The Marine lieutenant colonel putting them on said that plows have to be used instead of line-exploding charges, as the Iraqis have Italian mines with three baffles.

Pressure will knock out the first baffle,

After weeks of air strikes, it was "hands up time" for Iraqi troops. One rumor was Iraqi commanders ordered all troops to turn in white underclothes to prevent surrender. Obviously these Iraqis failed to follow orders. Photos: Sygma/Langevin

but the other two baffles can only be exploded by actual pressure. The Egyptians have not moved out yet; their armor is still behind the berm, which incidentally was built some years ago as an antismuggling barrier.

I finally got a fix on our location. To our north is the Kuwaiti border, not the Iraqi border. We are barreling into the Egyptian rear now, apparently looking for the HQ so we can liaise with whomever is going to put who with whom here.

It is amazing the amount of equipment a division has — columns stretch out as far

as the eye can see. We are hearing some explosions now, rather large stuff, as the blasts have to be at least 18 clicks away.

#### 1210 hours

We are now trying to find the ABC News crew with the satellite dish, generator and ancillary items. More air strikes rumble in the distance. Above the length of the berm is this linear column of smoke which comes from hundreds of fires

U.S. trooper covers Iraqi with M16A2 with Aimpoint. Photo: Sygma/Langevin





A Pearson Engineering track-width mine plow is hastily attached to M-60 tank prior to ground offensive. Photo: Sygma/Langevin

in the Kuwaiti oil fields.

Apparently, the attack is not going to kick off with the Egyptians until 0400. Which means I'll have to wait around here for another 16 hours and get up early in the morning, which doesn't make me a happy camper. The adrenaline level has dropped way, way down and I'm getting bored.

I explained to Sawyer that I thought he'd be better off going with the Egyptians. It didn't seem likely that the untested Saudi units were going to play any major role in the ground offensive. He had an obligation to the Saudis, however, and his major objective was to beat out the competition.

He now has about 36 hours to do that with the 48-hour news embargo in place. If he can't get a satellite feed set up, he'll still be able to get some of the Saudis and have the tape driven back to Riyadh.

#### 1327 hours

Still looking for the missing vehicle with the satellite dish. We have a problem with communication out here. The satellite crew and Saudi drivers were directed to go to the Bedouin compound; somebody else told them to go to the "water point." At any rate, they've disappeared ... perhaps never to be seen again. Mubarek is most unhappy with the world at this point.

Egyptians are breaking ammo out of packing crates and stacking it around their long-range 122mm guns; troops are being issued web gear with ammo. The time grows near.

#### 1527 hours

Helter-skelter, the ABC crew finally located the satellite equipment and vehicles. Seems there was some problem with one of the vehicles using contaminated fuel. Now they are trying to make a decision as to where to place the satellite station.

We have two stories at this time: One

from the Saudis, that the offensive is going to launch from this area and is going to kick off at 0400 tomorrow; another from Mubarek, who says the Egyptians are going to kick it off at 1600 this evening. What I am going to do remains to be seen. I'll continue to go with the flow.

After a couple of interesting adventures with Sawyer, I spent the night camped out with his ABC crew. Earlier in the evening, I was riding with him in his 4x4 trying to find the Saudi HQ. As we were driving through the Egyptian encampment, I remarked to Sawyer, "Smells like skunk. They got any skunks around here?" He didn't know.

A hundred meters later, we were halted by a rather nervous group of young Egyptian troops wearing gas masks with AK-47s pointed directly at us. They wanted to know just who in the hell we were. It was "open the door verry slowly," "get out of the car verry slowly" and "raise your hands verry slowly" time.

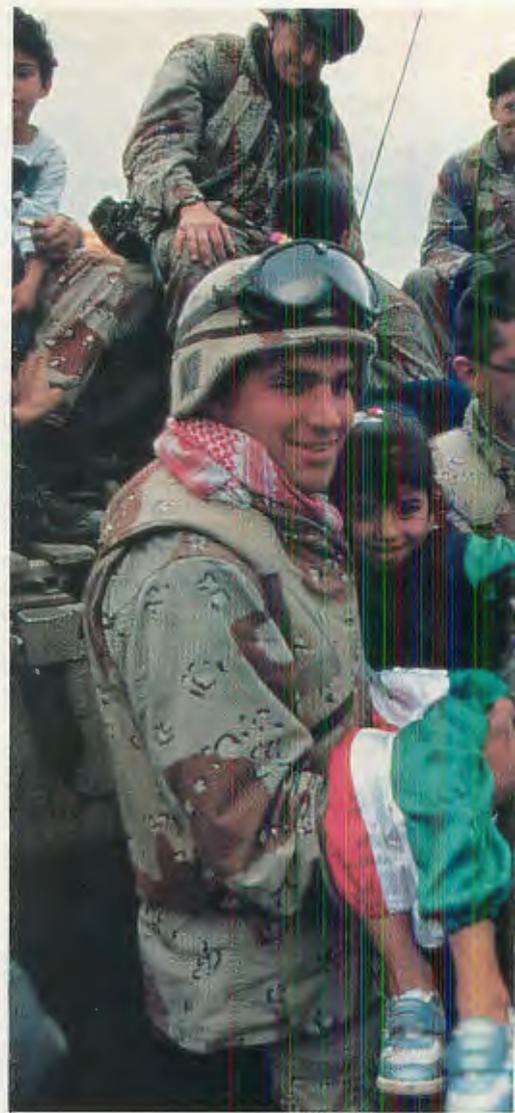
We convinced them we weren't terrorists, but decided since we weren't communicating real well, it would be best if we did an about face. Obviously the gas alert had been sounded, and recollecting the "skunk" smell, we put on our gas masks. We didn't die, however, so it was a false alarm — not that we didn't "pucker" for a few minutes before it was over.

#### 25 February 0832

I looked over the shoulder of the ABC News production chief as he read a note from Sawyer, who by this time was several clicks closer to the front.

On the note, I found the phrase "lose Brown" somewhat disconcerting, but clear. I told the producer I saw the note, and would bow out with no hassles. He mumbled some shit about Sawyer having to suck up to the Saudis so much he was getting scabs on his lips.

Mubarek had disappeared and I was 70 miles out in the desert with no ride. Watching the last of the Arab forces move through the gap in the berm, I was faced



American troops were greeted as liberators as they entered Kuwait City. Photo: Sygma/Langevin

with beginning the long and unpleasant hike back to Hafar Al Batin.

And then the last Saudi jeep going through the berm stopped. A Saudi MP first lieutenant got out.

Saudi MP: Do you have a ride?

Brown: No.

Saudi MP: Would you like one?

Brown: Oh my God, does a bear shit in the woods? Boy, howdy!

My fortunes had been radically reversed. I jumped in and we raced off. I was through the berm and on my way to Kuwait.

We soon caught up with the column, which had halted for reasons unknown. The Saudi MP said we may be stopped here for six or seven hours, maybe less. Then he was talking to another Saudi.

Paranoia time. Was he talking to his commanding officer? Were they talking about who the gringo with the *Soldier of Fortune* cap was?

Fortunately, nothing came of the conversation. We were far enough to the rear of the column that no command



American advisers on board.

1500 hours

I just finished chatting with an American major from one of the choppers. He's flying as an adviser to the Saudi scouts. They're screening the right flank.

His associate told me they took fire from a couple of bunkers. They took them out, and the Iraqis who were left all surrendered — not in ones or twos, but 30 and 40 at a time. Then the major came back and said we would be moving out of



ABOVE: American Special Operations Command troops view British Airways 747 destroyed during fighting. Photo: Robert K. Brown

BELOW: M-60 tank with nose-mounted mine/barrier plow ready to penetrate Iraqi lines. Photo: Robert K. Brown



elements could see me. The farther back, the better. The unidentified Saudi took off his glasses. They studied them. Apparently, they were talking about glasses. Great. Now one was laughing and the other wasn't. More paranoia began to build.

1214 hours

Every time a vehicle goes by, I lower my head. Every time the Saudi MP starts up our jeep, I wonder where we're going and who might see me. Getting closer to the command element, I'm hoping no one feels it their duty to let the generals know I'm around.

Next thing I know, I've been dumped out of the jeep. The Saudi MP says he'll be back for me in about an hour. I hide behind a Nissan patrol vehicle. If he doesn't come back, I'll have some real fancy humping to do. At least I have a compass. The question now is do I attempt to get another ride, or sit here hoping he returns.

And then who magically appears? Mubarek, who says I'm a very impatient person. He adds I must not be able to fish, as I move around all the time. In any case, he says he has permission for me to go in any of the vehicles, as long as there is



room. But he doesn't designate any specific vehicle. We'll see.

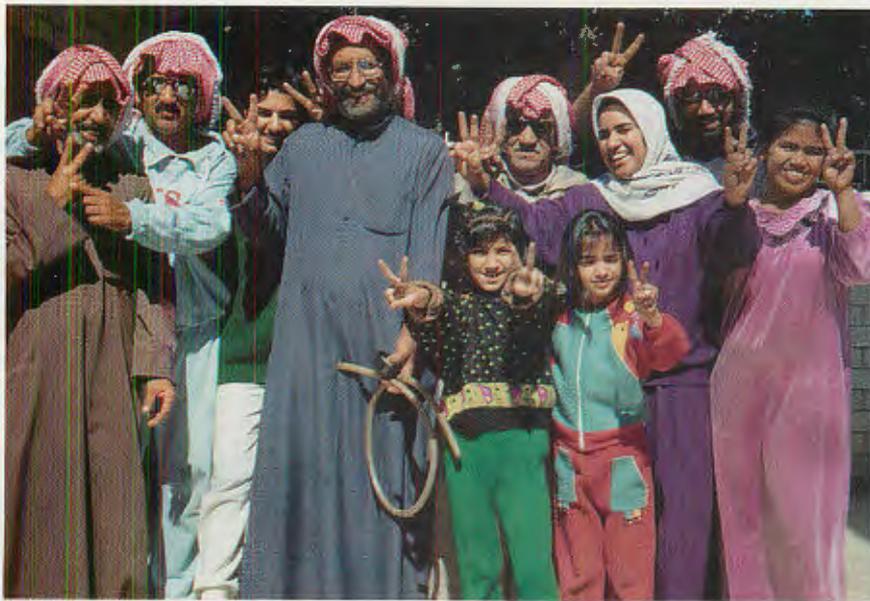
The last few days have been some of the most unusual days I've had in a long time. But not without some interest. My interest increases proportionally to my proximity to the front — my interest was way up when I was thinking of hiking the god-damned road through this miserable desert.

Three choppers just landed. Looks like

Saudi SP crews prepare to fire a prep on Iraqi forces prior to ground offensive. Photo: Robert K. Brown

here in about an hour.

I just met a Saudi prince. The major's associate said I ought to get him to see if he could get me a ride, but the conversation never quite developed that way. Maybe if I lay an SOF patch on him he might assist me. If he comes back, I'll



Credit must be given where due. Kuwaiti family who hosted Brown for several nights and put him in touch with the Kuwaiti resistance, give "V for victory" sign after liberation. Photo: Robert K. Brown

make the request.

And then finally I'm in a vehicle. Out of nowhere, an American contractor I know shows up. He gets me a seat in a 4x4.

#### 26 February, 0615 hours

Last night was tolerable. We borrowed a poncho, three stakes and some parachute cord from an American liaison, then rigged a lean-to on the side of our vehicle. I quickly found that sleeping with one's head under the frame of a vehicle doesn't work very well. Looks like we'll be deploying shortly.

#### 0758 hours

We started moving at 0750. Heading north is a convoy of school busses, which I assume is going to pick up the many thousands of EPWs (enemy prisoners of war). As of this morning word is that there are 20,000 in hand, and there's trouble in moving them. We move on, hopefully farther than we made in the last displacement.

#### 0809 hours

We've now caught up with the main body. Temporary hold here. The other column to our right is continuing to move forward. I've never seen so many military vehicles in my entire life. You get a good feel for the scope of this operation, because the land is flat and there's no undergrowth or any other type of vegetation.

#### 0829 hours

The gringo who got me a ride remarked, "I identify with your situation, so much because I've been a hitchhiker to wars so often ... and damn it, anybody who wants to work as bad as you shouldn't have to

cover the war with briefings in Riyadh." Amen. I will always owe this dude. I invited him to the SOF Convention in September. He accepted. Anyhow, we are finally inside Kuwait.

#### 1011 hours

We are in the third defensive belt of the Iraqi position. We just finished looting some bunkers.

#### 1015 hours

Approaching another Iraqi bunker. My goodness, what do we have here? A Russian radio would be a superb item to auction off for Refugee Relief at the SOF convention, but it's too heavy.

Iraqi defensive positions are not impressive. I wonder if they are representative of the vaunted Republican



Brown receives Kuwaiti flag from Kuwaiti resistance. It will be auctioned at the SOF Convention. Photo: Robert K. Brown

Guard fortifications. The bunker I'm looking at here has a light framework over it, maybe 6 or 8 inches of dirt or sand; another one with some logs across it, maybe three 8-inch logs, some galvanized iron and another 8 inches of sand on it.

Last night a source explained to me how Forrest Sawyer and ABC got permission to circumvent the press pool regulations and broadcast with the vanguard of the Saudi division. Sawyer sent personal letters to Lieutenant General Kalid bin Sultan,

Saudi commander-in-chief, and subsequently got an interview with him. Kalid was favorably disposed toward ABC and Sawyer because Kalid was on Nightline and apparently Sawyer does Nightline a fair number of times. Sawyer told me he couldn't tell me how he got the deal.

#### 1105 hours

Brown: These mortar positions as far as protection go are dreadful. There is one that I am looking at here with a couple of 4x4s running one way and a couple more 4x4s crossing them with just galvanized iron or tin and about 6 inches of sand over them. Wouldn't protect one from a runaway camel. And on down the yellow brick road. Actually it is kind of yellow out here isn't it?

U.S. contractor: Yellow, yellow, yellow.

Brown: 1115 hours, this battalion is moving out. We are following the command track. This is a most impressive sight. It is really the yellow desert road.

U.S. contractor: It is a wide highway. A thousand lane highway.

Brown: Being up on top of the vehicle gives you a far greater impression of the scope and magnitude of this whole operation. It is easy to envision oneself being with Rommel or Montgomery rumbling back and forth across the Libyan desert in '41 and '42. A truly awesome sight. The weather is cool, the sky overcast. A great day for a desert offensive. Beats the shit out of blowing sand. And it's stopped raining, too. This is like going to a massive, motorized picnic. No enemy contact yet.

#### 1142 hours

It is starting to drizzle as we continue to advance. My adrenaline pump roars right along with the growl of the scores of tanks and APCs barreling across the billiard table-like barren desert. Lawrence of Arabia, Attila the Hun, "Jeb" Stuart and George Patton must be smiling. I am.

#### 1151 hours

We are again approaching the lead element of the vanguard of this column. Apparently, there is some action going on. We don't know what. Some of the people dismounted but there's no incoming.

We are going through another defensive position, we see occasional craters from CBUs (cluster bomb units)...we are now in the Iraqi artillery positions. Some Saudi vehicles stop and look quickly through the artillery bunkers, for loot like the old man here. Looks like we are all racing along to hit the Iraqi command post up ahead about 500 meters. Seems to be neither rhyme nor reason as to why the Saudis are moving but the tracks are moving fast.

#### 1207 hours

We are now about 75 meters behind the lead tank and we want to get up about 50

feet behind it. We are approaching the lead tank from the left rear and the lead tank has stopped. Lead tank's just traversed his gun; maybe we will get some boom-booms. To the left of the lead tank, probably at 2,000 meters, it looks like there are some antennas, probably some kind of Iraqi commo position and/or headquarters.

This is not as gratifying as being a member of the U.S. armed forces, but on the other hand, I have a greater opportunity to be at the sharp end of the sword than hundreds of thousands of GIs. There would be much to say, though, to be in one of these tank turrets punching the bad guys down range. "Not like it used to be, but it'll do," as they said in *The Wild Bunch*.

Splitting with ABC has been to my advantage as had I stayed with them I would have had to stay with their support satellite unit and I doubt that I would ever have gotten as far as I have now. So fuck 'em. In covering a dozen-odd wars and revolutions, I have never ridden such an emotional roller coaster over such a long period of time. The old man upstairs is looking out for me after all.

1231 hours

Ain't nobody between us and the bad guys except one tank. How about those cookies! We are headed almost due north toward our ultimate objective — Kuwait City! Allll-right!

1254 hours

We stop. We're turning around? Going back? For prayers? Jesus wept! These Moslems pray five times a day, and with a three-hour lunch they truly test one's patience.

1317 hours

Have turned around, again facing the front.

1450 hours

We are now linked up with a column of APCs, the same battalion we were with before. On our left we see a column of Kuwaiti APCs buzzing along, about 200 meters away. The compass shows we are going east.

1520 hours

We are now pulling onto an asphalt road, a high-speed route of approach. Now we are hearing the rattle of small arms; no one seems concerned because the troops are all giving us the victory sign as we go by the Kuwaiti units. Saudis and Kuwaitis are shooting their FNs and machine guns in the air. Everybody is a happy camper. Every time we drive by the Kuwaitis with a TV camera they think that it is fitting to sound off with their FALs on full auto. My God, there is a driver shooting without his hands on the wheel! I hope the motherfucker doesn't drop his FN another

15 degrees or we are going to meet Allah prematurely.

We are now following about 18 Kuwaiti tanks that are on line. On the left is a column ... my God, it runs for tens of clicks — supply vehicles and more armored vehicles and more supply vehicles. We are moving with the tanks. It is very difficult to make an estimate of the situation; the fog of battle has enveloped us — or at least me.

1547 hours

We continue to explode through the desert. The question is how soon we will be in Kuwait City. Of course, I have no way of knowing what the intelligence picture is. We have heard no news since early this morning. No briefings for the troops, much less for an SOF journalist. The old Iraqis are out there about 3,000 meters; they could pop one in our vehicle

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## **My adrenaline roars right along with the growl of the scores of tanks and APCs barreling across the billiard table-like barren desert.**

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just as well as they could into one of these lead tanks. It makes it interesting. Twenty four hours ago this time, I was looking at playing Bedouin-in-the-desert by my lonesome.

1616 hours

It is still like a thousand-lane highway with vehicles weaving in and out with no apparent order of march. These guys have been in too many camel charges. Most vehicles stay 200-300 meters behind the lead tank, but not us. No sir, we are right up there about 100 meters behind the lead echelon which, of course, is gratifying. Isn't this fun! It's a very strange day and visibility is limited to 1,000 meters at best. No sun; it looks like we are going into very low cloud cover. I don't know what the ceiling would be but it is not worth shit. Maybe the plan is to allow the Kuwaitis to enter the city first because after all it is their homeland.

At this point, I finally believe that I am going to get to Kuwait City. Maybe not the first journalist but certainly sure as hell not the last, and I'm one of the few journalists with one of the attacking columns. I think that the observation Joe Galloway, senior editor from *U.S. News*, made is correct that when the ground offensive began, control of the press would break down. This is certainly true of the Saudis.

27 February, 0710 hours

We are now starting to pass destroyed enemy vehicles: two or three tanks out there, a large transport truck, a tracked missile launcher — and down the yellow brick road, or in this case an asphalt

highway, we go. Another tank destroyed off to the left. We are making about 60 clicks an hour. Not too shabby. Once again the weather is overcast this morning. It's cool, a little bit of wind, a light smattering of rain. On the right we are passing a column of Kuwaiti Humvees, quarter-tons and deuce-and-a-halves. We come to a road sign: Kuwait City, 49 kilometers. All fucking right.

0757 hours

Just talked to a trooper from the 2nd Armored Division and when I was done, a Colonel Sylvester informed me that I just walked through a minefield. Subsequently, a sergeant told me that it was primarily antitank and not many antipersonnel mines. Little comfort. I had failed to follow the old dictum of walking where vehicles had tread. The sergeant major said the Abrams (tank) has proved its worth — has been taking out Iraqi tanks far beyond published maximum ranges. The 2nd Armored has not lost a tank yet.

0839 hours

We're getting ready to move out again. "Gentleman, start your engines."

1003 hours

We are on the move into the outskirts of Kuwait City again. Ernie Cox, photographer for the *Chicago Tribune*, told me that the plan was to let the American forces punch a hole through the Iraqis and then let Kuwaiti and Saudi forces make the triumphal entry into Kuwait City. 2nd Armored units are positioned on our left flank and Marines on the right flank as we move forward. This is a thoroughly amazing experience: honking horns, stopping, jumping out, taking pictures; everybody giving the "V for victory" sign, celebration time; and along the road a variety of burned out, shot up, bombed down Iraqi vehicles. A good place to be and the right time to be there.

1102 hours

I am sure that this is the first time in history that an armored thrust into enemy territory has been accompanied by journalists in 4x4 commercial vehicles. Our new driver, whom I have unfondly named "Cowboy," likes to race with the fucking tanks. It is a challenging sport, one that I would just as soon take a pass on.

What we have now is a parade with jubilant Kuwaiti citizens tagging onto the tail of the military column as we try to work our way again up to the front of the column. Crowds are lining the street, shooting their guns, embracing each other and us journalists; cheering, flag waving, clapping hands; Arab women chanting "alalalala" or whatever that silly-ass thing is that they do. I have arrived. I have beat the system. What a buzz! It's not Baghdad, but it'll do. ✖



# WHITE WARRIOR

Walking the Wild Side in East Africa

Text & Photos by Rob Krott



I first saw Maralal, the tribal center of the Samburu tribe, on my way to Richard Leakey's research camp located on Lake Turkana. Maralal is located in Kenya's Northern Frontier District (NFD), an arid expanse of hostile wasteland dotted with thorn trees, totalling 1/5 of Kenya's territory.

Maralal, a dusty little town, consists of a crossroads with the ubiquitous general store and a few "watering holes," most with chicken wire enclosing the bar. Elegant Samburu warriors strut along Maralal's two streets. Proud, tall and muscular, these men take particular care in their braided and ochred (iron ore-pigmented) hair, along with the V-shaped ochre designs on their chests and backs.

Though they must leave their nearly 8-foot-long throwing spears and leaf-bladed short swords outside of town, they can still carry a knobkerrie — a 2-foot length of thorn tree wood topped with a truck tire lug nut. The warriors need this weapon to protect their families and herds from marauding bandits and rustlers, as well as the occasional poacher. Also, tribal flare-ups occur from time to time.

The occasional tribal policeman lounges about Maralal clad in a wraparound skirt. Most carry SMLE No. 5,



Mk I Jungle Carbines with one magazine and a few loose rounds. They are the law in the NFD.

I was enchanted by the absolute wildness of the town on my way to Lake Turkana, and vowed to return before leaving Kenya. I did so two months after first passing through. Since I intended to stay for only a few days, I loaded a ruck with some food, my personal first aid kit, a spare pair of socks, a bundle of twigs from a small tree (the bark of which contains a mild stimulant and appetite suppressant), and a poncho.

With only a few shillings in my pocket, I hopped a "country bus" in Nairobi, and headed for Nyahururu. I made it to Nyahururu that day, but couldn't catch a ride north. The next morning I rode a decrepit school bus through Rumuruti and Kisima to Maralal.

I jumped off the bus and was instantly besieged by a dozen or so teenage boys, begging me to buy bracelets. Grounding my ruck at a place called Buffalo House, I began wandering around the town. At nightfall, I ended up in the Farruga Disco, a small, dingy place, lit by four colored light bulbs and frequented by the town's few whores.

An attractive young prostitute named Jennifer made me an offer for about \$2, but given the widespread VD and AIDS among the population, I politely declined. Whites were rare here, and the working girls were unhappy that I wasn't buying.

The next day I met two English girls from Operation Raleigh, a Peace Corps-type of group. They were stranded and had no ammo with their base camp. I then ran into Wilfred Thesiger, the noted adventurer/explorer, on my way out of town, and on his advice headed into the hills of the Podo Forest.

Climbing Loikas Mountain, I traveled through a Turkana village. Sensing some hostility, however, I kept moving. On the outskirts of the village, I encountered

With a little iron ore pigment and a native friend or two, author transforms from American tourist to Samburu warrior. Author's hair is greased down with iron ore pigment and goat's fat.

some Samburu men, and stopped to play a backgammon-like game. We all drank copious quantities of corn liquor. I noticed there were several young men around, and through sign language and a Swahili phrase book, found there was to be a wedding the next day. The groom and the

"best man" invited me to the wedding. Much more corn liquor was consumed.

The next morning I woke to find that the wedding invitation included a change of clothes. I would be dressed as a Samburu warrior — my hair, chest and back were to be ochred. After being ochred and dressed, I minced along in my "Firestones," sandals made from old tires.

Entering the bride's hut, I joined the warriors as the ceremonial wedding bull was driven over the fence and slaughtered. At this moment, the bride, all of 15, was being circumcised. The couple was then married. The next hour or so was spent butchering the bull. The hefty, yet razor-sharp, short swords made short work of the steaming carcass.

An orange pigment was painted on my face, and ornaments donated by a few of the warriors completed my ensemble. I spent the remainder of the morning inside one

of the smoky huts with several old men who alternated between amusement and wonder that they had a "white warrior" in their midst. We chewed on twigs and drank corn liquor (my head still reeling from the previous night; the stuff was definitely not Jack Daniels).

Many of the warriors were gathering in Maralal for the wedding feast. I joined them, much to their amazement. I made friends with three of them, and it was decided that I would live with the clan for several weeks. All afternoon it rained, and we were shuttled from hut to hut. The smoke was nearly unbearable, and I had to squat outside in the rain periodically.

Many of the Samburu suffer from respiratory infections and eye problems, there being little ventilation in their huts. Shortly before nightfall, we all moved across the ridge in groups to rejoin the wedding party, roughly 5 miles away, and danced for the next five or six hours.



"Adopted" by the Samburu, author was able to participate in the "slaying of the beast" ritual with his new friends.



After chewing narcotic twigs and drinking corn liquor at Samburu wedding ceremony, warriors often became hysterical and went into trances.

The young men chanted and swayed in an attempt to find favor with the girls, all about 14 or 15, who were clustered in a group and singing. The women were very beautiful, their breasts ochred for this occasion, with ornate beadwork draped around their shaven heads. The young men propositioned the girls by whisking them in the face with their long, ochred braids.

Some of the warriors became hysterical in their dance-induced trances, and had to be subdued. The chanting and humming had its effect upon me, as did the corn liquor and twigs, and everything became a blank until I found myself standing near an old man. We watched the sun set as he smiled at me and bobbed his head up and down knowingly.

As the dancing ceased with the very last hint of light, the warriors gathered together. A small group grabbed their spears. Primed for action, I raced down the mountain with my new found friend, "James." I wondered what the embassy would tell my family, and was wishing that I had an M16 rather than a knife on my belt. I suddenly found myself tumbling in the dark.

The straps on one of my "Fi-restones" had snapped. A warrior dragged me by the arm, and I was forced to go on barefoot. Expecting rustlers or bandits, I learned we

were on some type of impromptu semi-ceremonial cattle raid. My liquor-clouded brain was having problems figuring out what was going on.

I retrieved my ruck and put on a pair of boots after pulling thorns from my battered feet. Not even the Samburu go barefoot in the bush. James, two other warriors and I headed for their clan's huts, a day's walk away. I was amazed I could carry a pack and still maintain the warriors' long-strided pace through the bush. We stopped twice to chew twigs; I was grateful for the mild narcotic. Pantomiming a rest break, they were pleased when I shook my head negatively. By first light, we were bedded down in a warm, smoky hut.

### Dangerous Swim

I woke to a hot cup of milky, sweet tea and the curious gazes of Samburu children. I spent the next three or four days attempting to learn the Ma'a language, and wandered about the countryside. Days went by. In need of a bath, I walked down to the reservoir. Knowing that I would risk infection with bilharzia (the flukes of freshwater snails which burrow into the skin and multiply in the bloodstream), I went swimming. I rubbed my body with sand. The ochre in my hair mixed with goat fat was water-resistant.

New houses had been built, and the

herds would not start their semi-nomadic journeys for several weeks. Anxious for some type of action, but mindful of the need for a rifle should I head toward the Sudanese border to the northwest, I safaried over the nearby hills with James to Operoi, where the Operation Raleigh folks were building a dispensary.

Picking up another warrior along the way, our spear count was three. We passed a lion kill. Miles down the track, I found several shell casings, some 7.62x51mm NATO and some 7.62x39mm ComBloc. My spear suddenly seemed inadequate.

The view climbing down into Operoi reminded me of something from a Tarzan movie. In Operoi I found a shallow pit — the dispensary project was not going well. In charge was a Navy seabee on temporarily assigned duty. He claimed he was a SEAL in Vietnam, and we chatted while I drank his coffee. I spent the night wrapped in my poncho and huddled around a fire while James hunted for female companionship. I'm sure he ended the night much warmer than I did.

In the morning we headed back into the hills. Winding up the side of a mountain, I got the sweats/chills, even though the temperature was near 100 degrees. I began vomiting. The dry heaves subsided and I blacked out momentarily.

# TRIBES

## SAMBURU

An Eastern-Nilotic tribe, the Samburu are a nomadic Ma'a-speaking people akin to the Maasai, whose language they share. The 73,600 Samburu live in family groupings of five to 10 in oblong huts of grass and mud built on a pole frame.

Pastoralists, they subsist on the meat, blood, and (mostly) milk of their cattle and goats. More agriculture has been practiced lately in the uplands, with maize being added as dietary staple. The young boys tend the sheep and goats, while the old men and the warriors herd cattle.

The men are circumcised before being considered warriors, with the privilege of decorating their bodies and hair with red ochre. The young girls are circumcised immediately before marriage, and are always married to a senior warrior who has been granted the privilege of marriage.

New agricultural practices, ranching plans, education and greater access to the "modern world" are causing cultural changes in the Samburu tribe.

## MAU MAU

Originating in the 1950s among the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya, *Mau Mau* was a violently militant nationalist movement advocating the expulsion of all whites from Kenya.

The British government of Kenya declared a state of emergency in October 1952 after a Kikuyu leader and several Europeans were killed. Troops were sent in from the UK, and by the end of 1955, only about 1,500 Mau Mau (and their leader, Dedan Kimathi) were left in the heavily forested area of the Aberdare Mountains.

These hardcore Mau Mau terrorists were bushcraft experts, more animal than man, living off the land and clothed in animal skins. Pseudo-gangs of Kikuyu, mostly former Mau Mau, were used to hunt them down, eventually exterminating them and capturing Kimathi. Following four years of military operations by British and Kenyan forces, the conflict ended in 1956.

Although built upon a hatred of whites, the Mau Mau killed fewer than 100 Europeans (63 military and 32 settlers). More than 2,000 Kikuyu became casualties, however. Approximately 11,000 Mau Mau were killed in the fighting and 20,000 Kikuyu interned in detention camps.

## TURKANA

The Turkana inhabit northwest Kenya from Lake Turkana to the Ugandan border. An Eastern-Nilotic, Teso-speaking group of pastoralists, they live in "neighborhood" groupings. They currently number about 200,000 in population, and are famous for producing Olympic gold medalists in track events.

They subsist mainly upon their herds — milk and blood from cattle and a dried milk or yogurt — camel's milk, millet, gourds, wild berries and fish (edible Lake Turkana varieties include Nile Perch up to 7 feet long and Tilapia).

Turkana women wear a multitude of bead necklaces and neckrings of brass or aluminum, and cost a bride-price of several cattle or camels. Turkana men are expert herders and skilled fighters with a wrist knife, finger knife or 8-foot spear.

Once isolated from the modern world, tourism, hydroelectric projects, fishing operations and Christian missionaries have now brought them into frequent contact with the outside world. A high death rate was compounded by the incursion of Ugandan raiders during Idi Amin's regime.

— R.K.

# KENYA AT A GLANCE

## PEOPLE

Kenya has an estimated population of 22,600,000, with an annual growth rate of 4.2% — one of the highest rates in the world. Swahili is the official language of Kenya's many ethnic groups, but Bantu, Kikuyu and English are also spoken. Kenya's literacy rate is 59%. Approximately 27% of the population are Protestant; 26% Catholic; 19% Animist; and 6% Moslem.

## GOVERNMENT

Daniel arap Moi has been the president of the Republic of Kenya since 1978. The Kenya African National Union (KANU), led by Moi, is Kenya's only political party. In the past decade, Moi has banned politically critical publications, outlawed tribal associations and limited the power of both the parliament and judiciary. Some say Moi has developed a personality cult. On the other hand, he has also released political prisoners and extended public education to the seventh grade. Kenya is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

## MILITARY

The Kenyan army, about 13,000 strong, is among the best in black Africa. Service is voluntary, and there are no organized reserves. Ground forces consist of two armored battalions, one armored reconnaissance battalion, five infantry battalions, two artillery battalions, and one air cavalry battalion (which includes special forces). Although the Kenyan army could defend itself against its weaker neighbors (Uganda, Tanzania and Somalia), it could not withstand a full-scale attack from Ethiopia. Kenya also maintains a small air force and navy.

## ECONOMY

Kenya's gross national product is about \$6 billion; per capita income \$350. Primary exports are coffee and petroleum products; primary import is industrial machinery. Principal trading partners are Western European countries, Japan, the United States, Uganda and Saudi Arabia.

## RECENT HISTORY

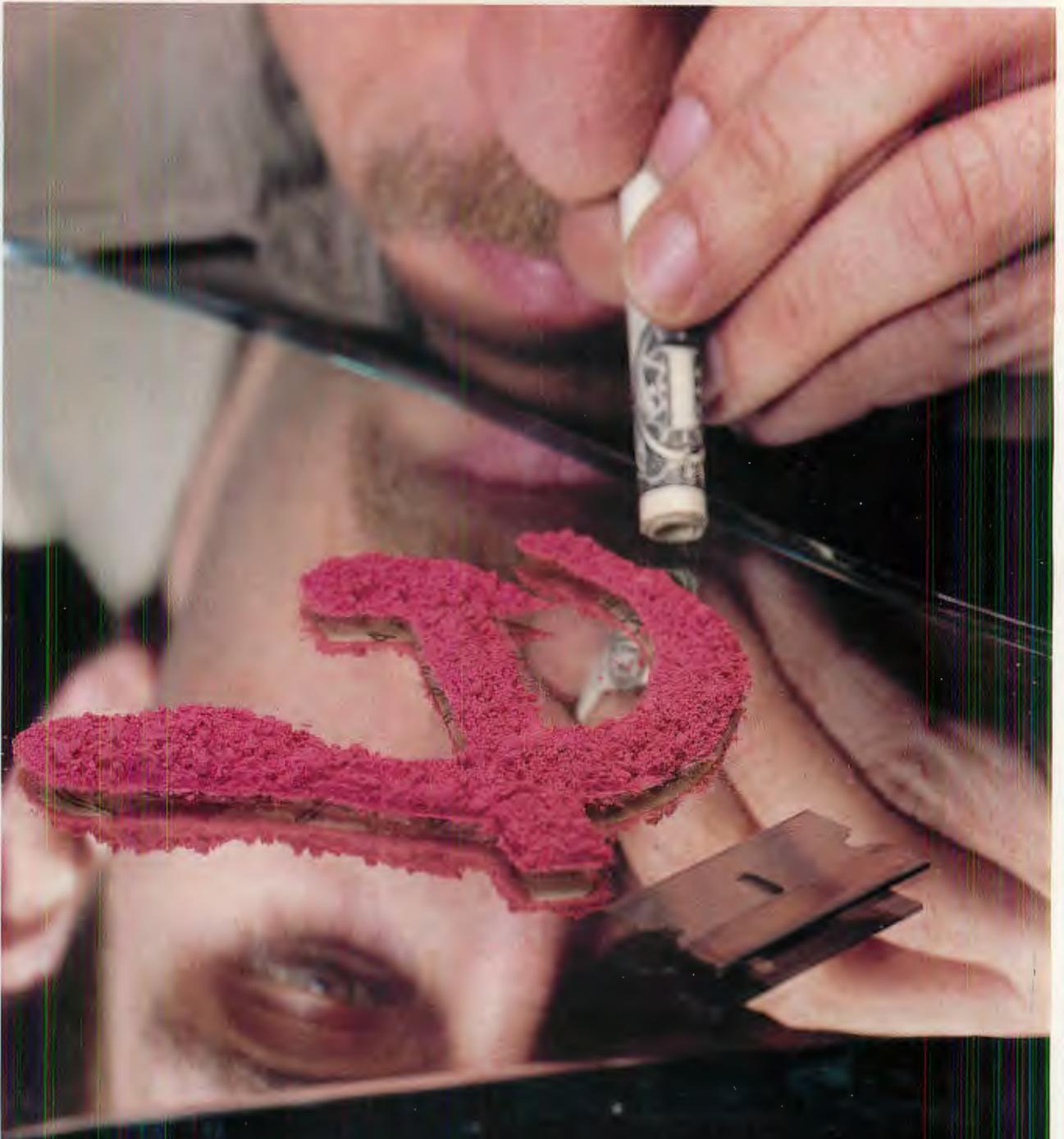
Kenya, formerly a British colony and protectorate, was made a crown colony in 1920. British domination of the White Highlands area, long regarded by the Kikuyu people as their territory, was a factor leading to the Mau Mau movement in 1952. In 1954, the British began preparing Kenya for African rule and independence. In 1963, Kenya became independent, with Jomo Kenyatta as the first president.

Attempting to travel despite my illness, the next two days were hell. It rained. My suede *batas*, built for the desert, soaked up water and my socks rotted off my feet, causing blisters. It was a relief to find refuge in a warm, cozy hut. A night's sleep in the warm hut and a cup of hot tea revitalized me.

*Continued on page 75*

Typical Samburu tribal attire consists of elaborate beaded headdress, jewelry, skirt, and "Firestones" — sandals made from automobile tires.





# RED COCAINE

*Drugging of the American Military*

Photo: Gary Cook/Image Studio

by Joseph D. Douglass Jr.  
Photos AP/Wide World

**D**RUGS were not, as most people believe, a mere "social phenomenon" in Vietnam. Rather, they were one of the enemy's most successful weapons — covertly employed without the knowledge of even the Army's most senior commanders.

Indeed, most commanders did not even acknowledge they had a problem, let alone know they were the target of a massive sabotage operation, until the news media and Congress grew concerned. This concern surfaced in 1968, and then exploded in late summer 1970, when heroin addiction began escalating out of control.

Beginning in June 1970, heroin suddenly was everywhere. And it was cheap — \$1 a vial for what would cost \$250 in New York City. Consumption increased, and deaths due to drug overdose rose precipitously from two per month to more than two per day. The problem could no longer be ignored.

A presidential commission was formed to look into this situation. General Lew Walt was one of its members. Two main sources of the drugs were identified: China and North Vietnam. It was also clear to the commission, or to Gen. Walt at least, that the drugs were a form of political warfare being conducted covertly against United States servicemen.

### Damnably Orders and Errant Nonsense

Walt testified to Congress in 1972 that they had uncovered reports of widespread opium cultivation in North Vietnam and Viet Cong involvement in trafficking. One defector told of their plans to use drugs to undermine American morale and of how their reconnaissance activities often went undetected because U.S. security forces were using drugs.

All senior Vietnamese officers whom Walt talked to were convinced that the heroin epidemic was political, not criminal or social, in origin. Unfortunately, this view was not shared by senior U.S. commanders, who blamed the use of drugs on the poor quality of recruits and interpreted the U.S. military problem as merely spillover from U.S. domestic turmoil. As Gen. Westmoreland stated in his book on the Vietnam War, the drug problem simply spread "from civilian society into the Army."

Even the presidential commission that Gen. Walt served on did not help. Its report was never released. Those in power did not want to risk bad publicity and the adverse effect such information might have on their "new initiative" toward China. As Gen. Walt himself later remarked to his friend, Gen. Al Knight, "Keeping silent about the role of China was the most damnably order I ever received."

Rumors about the role of China did leak out, and, in response, in 1972 a confidential White House directive was sent to the factious executive agencies telling them that the stories about Red China's role in the drug trade were "errant nonsense." The agencies were directed to cease making derogatory statements about the People's Republic of China.

While the focus of attention was Vietnam and the high percentage of heroin addicts who returned from there, by the late 1960s drugs became a major problem throughout the U.S. military. A counterintelligence agent investigating Fort Dix, New Jersey, found that 75% of the GIs smoked marijuana; 55% took LSD or Methedrine once a week, and 35% took them several times a week. Amphetamines or barbiturates were used regularly by 40%, and 20% were heroin users.

### High In Heidelberg

In Europe, the problem was even more pronounced than in Vietnam. Indeed, the integrity of the U.S. command in Europe itself was seriously jeopardized. This motivated a major effort in the early 1970s to discipline drug users and punish the traffickers.

Tens of thousands of soldiers were discharged or reassigned to



different units in an all-out effort to stop the drug plague. While conditions were improved, the measures had limited long-term impact. In 1981, surveys of personnel within various U.S. military units in Europe identified drug usage rates as high as 45%.

The U.S. military ultimately began to recognize that drug use by servicemen was a serious problem. By the late 1980s, a major antidrug education program, coupled with extensive use of random drug-use tests and the expulsion of soldiers and officers who were drug users, brought about a significant decline in the use of drugs. Today, the percentage of drug users in the military services is well below 5%, a tremendous improvement.

However, aside from the presidential commission study in Vietnam, which unfortunately was suppressed, there does not appear to have been any serious effort to understand the origins of the drug problem. Even today there is no evident appreciation within the services as to the origins of the problem.

Drug usage has been, and remains, mainly the domain of criminal investigations units rather than an interest of intelligence and counterintelligence. The object is to find the users and kick them out, rather than find out what was causing the problem in the first place.

To understand the military drug problem, it is important to begin with the Korean War, when the Chinese and North Koreans introduced the use of drugs as important military weapons against U.S. servicemen. The Chinese expanded their techniques against the French during the Indochina War.

In January 1954, Lt. Gen. Cogy explained to a U.S. Army officer, Colonel Molloy Vaughan, that China had been using drugs

Narcotics agents got lucky when they seized this opium shipment in Bangkok headed for Saigon in the 1960s.

as weapons against the French and that the drugs were having a serious effect on the morale of the French soldiers. Also, they were eroding support for the war back in France. This was a new weapon, he explained, and was most effective. The United States should be wary of it, he advised Vaughan.

The Chinese decided to expand their narcotics production in 1957 as part of the "Great Leap Forward," both to raise money, and, as explained by China's Premier Chou En-lai in 1958, because the war in Vietnam was likely to escalate and poppies had proven to be an effective weapon for weakening U.S. combat forces. "By exporting large quantities of morphine and heroin, we are able to weaken the U.S. combat force and to defeat it without even fighting at all," Chou said.

The Soviets were also aware of the potential of drugs for use as military weapons. They even had analyses of the effectiveness of drug use during the Indochina War that were prepared by French communists who were serving in the French military during that war.

It was Khrushchev himself who first recognized the strategic importance of this "new weapon" and directed his people to conduct a detailed study of its potential. The study, which was conducted by a joint civilian-military, Soviet-Czech, science-intelligence team, concluded that the use of drugs as weapons should be exploited. In 1955, the Soviet Defense Council made their decision: Drugs would be used henceforth as strategic weapons in the war against the West.

#### Cocaine Cadres

From 1955 to 1960, the Soviets developed the strategy for the covert marketing of drugs and trained necessary intelligence cadres. The first main target was U.S. servicemen. The objective was first to undermine the health and morale of the U.S. military forces, and second to weaken the overall U.S. defense posture.

In addition to targeting the services directly, indirect attacks were made by targeting youth in schools and in the inner-cities who were most likely to be drafted into military service. By 1960, the strategy was in place, intelligence specialists had been trained, and counterintelligence studies of U.S. drug intelligence had been completed. Then they went operational — in North and Latin America (initially through Cuba), Asia, Southeast Asia (Indonesia), the Middle East and Europe.

The portion of their operations oriented toward the Vietnam situation began in 1963 when Czech intelligence, operating as Soviet surrogates, were directed to establish training centers for drug traffickers in North Vietnam. As described by Jan Sejna, former secretary of the Defense Council, these training centers were essentially duplicates of ones that had been set up in the Soviet Union in the late 1950s.

In 1964, following the establishment of these centers, the Soviets had the Czechs negotiate an agreement with the North Vietnamese to begin the production of drugs in North Vietnam and to assist in their transportation south through Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia to U.S. installations throughout Southeast Asia.

The North Vietnamese were pleased with this agreement, among other reasons, because it placed them in competition with the Chinese. The agreement was concealed within another agreement that ostensibly dealt with the production of natural rubber. It was signed by the North Vietnamese official Premier Pham Van Dong and Czechoslovak Prime Minister Josef Lenart.

In 1964, the Chinese were also intensifying their operations. They negotiated and signed a secret agreement with the communist

party of Japan to obtain their assistance in pushing drugs onto U.S. servicemen in Japan and Okinawa. Under the agreement, China's counterintelligence performed background security checks on all Japanese who were scheduled for recruitment for the operation.

In return for their assistance, the communist party of Japan received 25% of the profits. The details on this arrangement were provided to Czech intelligence by the Soviet KGB. They were given to me by Sejna, who participated in the planning and review of the Soviet Bloc narcotics operation.

In 1965, the Soviet-Czech-North Vietnamese operation was in full swing. To complete the picture, the Soviets also opened drug operations to ensure that drugs were available not only in the war zone, but also in nearby locations where U.S. servicemen went for "rest and recuperation." Czech intelligence services established narcotics operations in Australia in 1965 mainly for this purpose.

#### Free Drugs!

It was also in 1965 that Chou En-lai explained to Egypt's President Nasser during a state visit that the Chinese were growing the very best poppies for the U.S. servicemen. "We will use opium to shatter the morale of the U.S. troops in Vietnam ... The effects on the United States will indeed be beyond prediction," Chou told Nasser.

It is interesting to note that 1965-1966 is the approximate time when the drug problem in Vietnam underwent a marked increase; 1965 is also the year when the Soviets criticized the Czech management of the drug operations in Vietnam. The Soviets felt the Czechs were too intent on making money. The first priority was to promote drug usage, not make money, the Soviets said.

If the U.S. military will use the drugs, give it to them for free, the Czech officials were instructed. Their objectives were to undermine the morale of the soldiers, recruit agents, and impair the functioning of officers, especially the decision process. The primary targets among the officers were the command staff, personnel associated with communications and situation analysis, and intelligence officers.

Growth of drug usage was not left to chance. Tactics were developed to force the drugs onto unsuspecting U.S. servicemen. Many mechanisms were employed. Most important, U.S. and Vietnamese servicemen were recruited to become drug pushers in return for a cut of the profits. There is always an ample supply of such willing participants, especially when command itself is unaware of what is happening, salaries are low, and time and opportunity are present.

Second in importance, prostitutes were used to promote the use of drugs. Other techniques were also used with great effectiveness. Cigarettes laced with very pure heroin were given away free, and opium was mixed with marijuana to help induce addiction. Heroin was sold under the "label" of cocaine, which was not then considered addictive; marijuana (or hashish) was everywhere. Machine-made marijuana cigarettes with opium or heroin packed in look-alike Marlboro and Kool packages even appeared on the scene.

#### Drug Ops Stepped-Up

The impact of the overall drug operations undertaken against the United States had become so successful that in 1967, the Soviets decided to intensify the operation. This was done both to build upon prior success and to capitalize on the opportunity to expand



Drugs and paraphernalia confiscated during week-long clamp down at Can Tho airfield in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

operations while the United States' attention (and that of other nations as well) was focused on the Vietnam War. In effect, the war was used both as a diversion and an opportunity.

The Soviets convened a meeting of top Eastern European and Cuban officials. Raul Castro was one of the Cuban officials who attended the meeting. While plans were formulated to intensify all dimensions of the drug operation, special attention was given to the operation that was directed against the U.S. military — again, to capitalize on the Vietnam War and the opportunity it presented.

The Soviets announced a new plan to create “zones of strategic destruction” with drugs at major U.S. military bases. The Soviets considered this operation so important that they assigned a senior military intelligence official, Maj. Gen. Vasil Fedorenko, the task of coordinating the efforts of all the satellite intelligence services.

Each country then appointed its own coordinator who served as the point-of-contact with Fedorenko. The coordinators then worked with their own intelligence officers who were in charge of operations in the various regions of the world where the United States had military installations.

### Hippy Phenomenon

The impact of this effort was felt throughout U.S. military bases around the world, as demonstrated by the previously described situation in Europe and Fort Dix. In Vietnam, there was also a marked increase in the drug problem, which some people mistakenly associated with the aftermath of the Tet offensive that had taken place in January. Unfortunately, no one recognized what was really happening.

There was brief opportunity in Vietnam in 1968 to come to grips with the problem. When Gen. Abrams took over Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), he immediately directed an effort to review U.S. objectives and develop a joint strategic objectives plan. In developing this plan, an analysis was made of the obstacles that would need to be overcome to achieve the objective.

Two problems identified by officers who were working on the plan were “drugs” and “combat refusals.” The senior MAC staff officers objected strongly to the inclusion of such material in the plan and insisted that it be deleted, which it was. Their concern was that it reflected negatively on the command and amounted to nothing more than “airing dirty linen in public.”

Obviously, the U.S. military officers, especially the senior ones, did not understand that the war was being waged with drugs as well as guns. They did not understand that the drug problem was serious, was an obstacle, and needed to be addressed with the same urgency that would be directed to silencing a key enemy artillery position. This failure is understandable. At that time, the senior officer corps was, for the most part, not familiar with drugs or their use. To them, drugs were a “hippy” phenomenon.

The capstone of the drug operation in Vietnam came in the summer of 1970, two months after the “secret invasion” of Cambodia. Heroin suddenly became readily available at the gates of all U.S. installations. Consequently, “drug casualties”

increased.

In 1971, fewer than 5,000 American soldiers required hospital treatment for combat wounds. Four times that number, 20,529, were treated for serious drug abuse. As an Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI) officer recalled, in 1971 the Air Force lost more personnel to drugs than to combat. During its investigation of Cam Ranh Bay, OSI learned that more than half of the security police were on drugs.

### Cuban Connection

It would be nice if this were all just history of days gone by. But it is not. In 1988, Maj. Juan Rodriguez, a Cuban intelligence official prior to his defection, explained the Cuban drug strategy in an interview that was published in Miami's *El Nuevo Herald*. “Drugs are the best way



to destroy the United States. The [Cuban] American G.I. smokes marijuana through government is con- water pipe in South Vietnam. vinced that by undermining the will of American youth to resist, they can destroy the enemy without firing one bullet,” Rodriguez said. “The foundation of any army is the youth, and he who is able to morally destroy the youth, destroys the army.”

At about the same time that plans were being drafted to go into Panama for Operation Just Cause, U.S. Special Operations forces started thinking about their possible role in the war on drugs. Plans for operations in Latin America began to take shape. Largely as a result of strong objections from a whole host of Latin American countries whose politicians had a finger in the drug money pot, U.S. support has been limited to training and non-combat roles in support of Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) operations.

Deploying into either Latin America or the Middle East, U.S. troops could not be closer to the source of drugs — and the intelligence networks that were so successful in moving drugs into the U.S. military services during the Vietnam War — than if they were deployed into the middle of the Golden Triangle.

The drug weapon has been notably successful in the past. As Chou En-lai correctly observed, successful “beyond prediction.”

*Joseph D. Douglass Jr. is the author of the definitive book Red Cocaine, which deals with covert ComBloc drug operations. He currently works as a defense analyst in Washington, D.C.*

SOF's Chief Foreign Correspondent Survives  
New Guinea's Man-Eating Jungle

# NIGHTMARE IN GREEN

by Dr. Tom Marks

Photos courtesy Papua New Guinea Post-Courier



**INSET:** Enormous Panguna copper mine fouled environment and made money for outsiders, not people of Bougainville.

**C**ALLING the sopping emerald sponge that embraces Papua New Guinea (PNG) "forest" is like calling the Bataan Death March a hike. Americans who fought there during World War II no doubt had other terms, for it is as horrendous an environment as can be found anywhere on earth. The harsh conditions destroyed entire battalions before they could even get at the enemy. Survivors have nightmares in green, still.

Much American blood was spilled in jungle fastness — 360 aircraft and approximately 1,500 personnel remain missing from the Army Air Corps alone. Yet today, PNG has become virtually unknown in the United States. Despite the hellacious fighting, combat that marked the beginning of the long road back from defeat and on to victory in Tokyo, our memories have grown dim.

Who now, aside from those who fought there, can recall names such as the Kokoda Trail, "Bloody Buna," or Rabaul? Who can go to a map and point to the location of the Coral Sea? The Australians still celebrate that memorable sea battle, but America seems to have forgotten.

It was with all this in mind that SOF sent me to PNG, a sprawling collection of

some 600 islands north of Australia. Slightly larger in land area than California, slightly smaller than Thailand, some 92% of the country is covered with rugged terrain wrapped in thick rain forest. My assignment was to trek the Kokoda Trail, the route used by the Japanese in their nearly successful assault on Port Moresby in 1942. While doing that I was also to see what was going on today in this land that had once been a household word in America.

Certainly, there is no shortage of action today. A diverse nation of approximately 3 1/2 million people — readers will grow accustomed to my use of such terms as "about" and "some" and "approximately," for nothing is ever really counted — PNG is so fragmented that conflict abounds. There are 750-800 distinct languages, and virtually every valley has its own quasi-independent clan. The capital, Port Moresby, population about 250,000, has a modern veneer and all the trappings of statehood but exercises only tenuous control over the hinterland. So treacherous is the terrain that there is only a limited road network. The natives get around quite well by foot, but government writ is extended by air. Naturally, such a mode of

power projection severely limits its effectiveness.

There have been regular uprisings so numerous and diverse in their origins and goals that they defy neat categorization. Some emerged from a background of local cult activity; others were opposed to specific government policies, at least ostensibly; still others sought greater local autonomy. The ongoing fracas on Bougainville falls into this last category.

On a more continuous and low-level basis, the police are kept hopping by constant episodes of clan warfare, now made more deadly by the arrival of modern weaponry. Gone are the quaint sparrings, with an occasional arrow in the buttocks, seen in old black-and-white anthropology films. At any one time, most of the country's major urban centers are likely to be under curfew in an effort to combat the growing wave of violent crime. Foreign firms fear for their employees; several have gone to the extraordinary length of having them carry handsets and report in at prearranged times with their whereabouts.

### Man-Eating Jungle

Yet all this seemed far away as I set out on the Kokoda Trail. When the Japanese arrived on 22 July 1942 with a landing at Buna, the drive swept ever onward until it stalled in September, a victim as much of the elements as of the Allied resistance. With some 5,000 troops forward and a greater number in the rear providing support, the Japanese seemed to have their

PNG troops return to mainland after unsuccessfully tackling terrain of Bougainville and guerrillas of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army.





goal within their grasp. But it was not to be; the obstacles of the trail, amplified by aerial bombardment, proved too great. Forward troops made it to Ioribaiwa, almost the last village before Port Moresby.

For my own assault, I had no 5,000 men. There were, in fact, only two others: light machine gunner Nicolas Claude Loubier, 23, of the renowned French-Canadian 22nd Regiment, headquartered in Quebec, and our guide, Thomas Bogajiwai, 20, younger brother of the equally renowned (at least in Papua New Guinea) Osborne "Bonnie" Bogajiwai.

"Bonnie" holds the world record for crossing the Kokoda Trail's "traveled" portion, the 100 kilometers from Kokoda itself to Ower's Corner (some distance from Port Moresby). Our time frame, coming in the midst of a week-long string of "dry" days (which means it only rains "a little" each day), called for an 11-day crossing. Bonnie, on 29 May 1986, romped home in an incredible 28 hours 14 minutes. I don't know if Thomas has ever clocked himself, but, as I was to learn, he is definitely from the same family!

We selected July to coincide with the months the actual fighting occurred in 1942. The Japanese had selected the "dry" season for their assault. One notable World War II memoir claimed that "the jungle is neutral," but it seemed anything but neutral as we humped along. The elements were awful. Temperatures hovered in the 90-100 degree range; the humidity was 90%. Bugs swarmed, and brief rests ended abruptly as we scrambled up to avoid the charge of leeches across the jungle floor, making for our body heat. By day we broiled, at night the chilling cold prevented sleep. Rain appeared at all hours.

PNG troops claim 7.62x51mm NATO L1A1s provided by Australian government for their battle with Bougainville guerrillas.

All this was child's play when compared to the terrain. It is not the distance that is exhausting but its configuration, an endless sawtooth of grades labelled "steep very tiresome" on our map. Touted as one of the 10 toughest treks in the world today, the Kokoda track has been designated a "national hiking trail" by the government. There are even signs, at start and finish, to that effect. Tourists actually show up believing it.

What they find is wave after wave of 70-80% slopes that never end. Even as the legs begin to labor under the buildup of lactic acid, the feet are unable to do much save slip and slide over the slick clay surface. Sometimes the trail is visible; often it is not. At the bottom of every plunge is swamp and another opportunity to get the legs and feet soaked. At one point we estimated that it had taken us an hour to cover what on the map is no more than half a kilometer. So indispensable was my walking stick that at night my hands remained clenched, as though still supporting my weight in an effort to prevent yet another fall.

Nights were a treat, because villages along the way were hospitable. A drafty hut with a

leaking roof is better than the raw elements. Most important, on a pile of dirt atop a raised floor, a fire could be lit. The cold seemed to take care of the mosquitoes, but there was plenty of evidence they were around — malaria is ubiquitous (as are a wide variety of other afflictions). We took our pills and prayed.

As we stumbled along I thought about what this must have been like during combat. Trying to hold ground in reaction to an enemy trying to kill you multiplies the difficulties I have described above. In combat, the necessities of war, like weapons and ammunition, must be carried, even as

the energy-draining process of bucking the elements goes on. Constant dampness, hunger, disease, slippery slopes, insect and leech bites ... all magnify tasks which in other circumstances might be tolerable.

The tools of combat can feel like lead. During the Kokoda campaign, packs reportedly weighed 60 pounds. This, of course, did not include weapons. As we struggled along we had no such burden. My ruck and camera gear were on the order of 35-40 pounds. My 6-foot, normally 160-pound frame was soon down to 148. I was to learn later that I had picked up hookworm, but all I knew at the time

Who can forget the famous World War II photo of the wounded allied soldier ... being gently led to safety by a Papuan?



was that the going kept getting tougher.

The story of the Kapa Kapa Track gives an idea of the ordeal the troops endured during World War II. As the Japanese drove toward Port Moresby, General Douglas MacArthur's staff conceived of a plan to send an American force through the jungle in a flanking movement. On the maps at headquarters, the Kapa Kapa Track neatly intersected the Kokoda Trail, the main avenue of advance for the enemy, at a point behind the Japanese front lines.

Already, the harsh terrain of the Kokoda Trail had exacted a fearsome toll from both sides. Running from Buna, on the north side of Papua, to Port Moresby in the south (a hitherto minor outpost that had become a major staging area in the effort to stem the Japanese onslaught), the trail crossed the Owen Stanley Range.

In places the mountains rose to 13,000 feet, with the trail meandering across its plunges and ascents, a minor cut in thick jungle — a hundred miles of boiling days and freezing nights; of rain that at times reached 300 inches per year; of slick clay so non-porous that water simply ran off it, bringing life only to the leeches and insects. Swarms of mosquitoes insured that malaria was a staple. For the troops of both sides,

burdened by the paraphernalia of war, it was a nightmare almost beyond endurance. The Kapa Kapa Track was to be worse.

According to intelligence sources, no foreigner had been on the track since 1917. The natives themselves would not use it, because they thought it was haunted. When they finally stumbled out the other end, the American troops of the 126th Infantry Regiment were convinced the natives, as always, had their environ-

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA ARMED FORCES

When Papua New Guinea (PNG) became independent, the government inherited a small, integrated force composed of land, maritime, and air elements that had previously been components of their parent Australian services. The present PNG military continues to field these three arms. In August 1980, a PNG contingent put down the secessionist rebellion in Vanuatu at the request of the newly independent government of that fellow Melanesian country. Presently, small forces are deployed along the western border with Irian Jaya due to anti-Indonesian guerrilla activity on the other side that occasionally spills over into PNG. In the past there have been numerous incursions by Jakarta's forces.

•Army: 3,654 personnel in two infantry, a signal, and an engineer battalion. The infantry battalions are attached to 1 Pacific Islands Regiment at Taurama Barracks, Port Moresby, and 2 PIR at Moem Barracks, Wewack. The force is presently undergoing expansion to cope with growing internal security duties. Token forces are again reported to be on Bougainville.

•Navy: 300 personnel with seven craft — five attack-class patrol boats (four *Tarangau* operational) and two *Salamaua* (Australian *Balikipapan*) LCTs; all based Port Moresby.

•Air Force: 140 personnel with nine aircraft — five C-47 Dakotas, three N-22B Searchmaster Bs, and one N-22B Missionmaster. The squadron is stationed at Nazdap Airport in Lae.

•Defense Agreements: Most foreign defense assistance comes from Australia, with which PNG maintains a Defense Cooperation Program. Under the program, Australia continues to provide the services of loan personnel to Port Moresby. Presently, Australia has some 100 officers seconded, mainly in technical and specialized positions. Australia continues to pay the salaries of these personnel, as well as the costs of training PNG personnel in Australia. Since the start of the current Bougainville crisis, an Australian training team has been upgrading counterinsurgency skills. Australian radio has reported that similar training is to be provided by the Malaysian government. Australian units regularly operate in PNG itself for training purposes. A "visiting forces agreement" and "defense cooperation program" are also in existence with New Zealand, while an "understanding" was apparently concluded with Israel in 1984 for defense aid.

— T.M.



ment pegged correctly. It had taken the GIs a week to move just 16 miles. They had lost most of their equipment, were virtually out of food, and had been decimated by disease (their uniforms and equipment, perhaps all too predictably, were completely unsuited to the climate).

There was no chance the men could fight. The regiment's second battalion could not be made combat-effective even after a week's rest. An entire unit had been lost without the Japanese ever firing a shot.

As for the Japanese, though seemingly well-prepared, they could not avoid the impact of the environment either.

PNG troops, despite lessons of history, were not in good physical condition. They wore old steel pots, hot clothing and carried heavy rifles. They were no match for rebels who knew lay of land and traveled light.



Guerrillas of "Free Papua Movement" fight Indonesians on Irian Jaya, on the western half of their island. Note use of spears and rifles.

MacArthur's flanking movement came in October after the Japanese attack had already ground to a halt. The supply lines and the human endurance of the elite, battle-hardened South Seas Detachment (*Nankai Shitai*), essentially a reinforced regiment, simply could not meet the demands of the advance.

At first, it had appeared the advance would be yet another daring and audacious Japanese success. From their forward supply point at Kokoda, seized in fierce fighting from Australian and Papuan territorials (reservists) in mid-August, Japanese logistics personnel seemingly had less than 60 miles to span to sustain their combat units, five reinforced battalions (deployed in two regimental combat teams). Augmented by thousands of impressed porters, they tried mightily to do the job.

When the forward units entered Isurava, victory seemed within their grasp. Their enemy, three battalions of Australian reservists with minimal training, fought gallantly but had been forced to give ground steadily.

But they were not the problem. The Kokoda Trail was the problem. Faced with its obstacles, the Japanese advance simply disintegrated.

The condition of the troops on both sides at this point was beyond comprehension. In just two months, they had reached the limits of human endurance. Japanese war correspondent Seizo Okada wrote, "Their uniforms were soiled with blood and mud and sweat and torn to pieces. There were infantrymen without rifles, men walking on bare feet, men wearing blankets of straw rice bags instead of uniforms, men reduced to skin and bones plodding along with the help of a stick, men gasping and crawling on the ground ... some of them lying there for a while and struggling to their feet again, while others stirred no more."

As the Allied forces, aided by shorter

lines and an increasing ability to use air assets to move supplies transitioned to the offensive, the Japanese fell back. By November, they were back again in Buna, which they fortified to such an extent that it was not until January that Allied control could be established.

### Bloody Buna

"Bloody Buna"

it was called, in grudging tribute to the nightmarish conditions of combat. In terms of ferocity and sheer demands placed upon men and material, the Kokoda-Buna campaign had in its league only the simultaneous — and much better known — Guadalcanal fighting in the neighboring Solomon Islands. Both actions, together with that at Milne Bay, where the Japanese unsuccessfully attempted a pincer movement in conjunction with their Kokoda thrust, were the beginning of the end for Tokyo's defensive perimeter. In both, weather and terrain were as great an obstacle as the enemy — for both sides.

Initially, it was clearly the Allies who got the worst of the fighting. Certainly the Japanese were able to project greater combat power at their chosen point of attack. Time and again, Australian positions were forced to fall back as Japanese units outflanked them, appearing out of seemingly impenetrable jungle. Even as the Aussies staggered backward, they found themselves accosted on all sides by apparently fresh, nimble fighters.

How to account for this seeming ease of movement by the enemy? It is fashionable to label as "elite" the Japanese on the trail, thereby assigning them higher qualities than one would expect from "normal" soldiers. True, the Australians who faced the initial onslaught were reservists, and later they were regulars hastily withdrawn from the deserts of North Africa, hardly ideal training ground for the Kokoda Trail. Nevertheless, I doubt that promoting the Japanese to "elite" status explains much aside from possibly high motivation and morale.

Instead, in a process I have seen many times while covering Asian conflicts, what the Japanese had in their units were largely peasants from the countryside. Though Japan was an industrial power by World

War II, it remained predominantly rural. Consequently, it was not that Tokyo's soldiers were any tougher in makeup than their opponents. Rather, they were simply better prepared because their conditions of life in the countryside more resembled those of the field than did the corresponding lives of the Allies. Hard lives produce hard fighters.

Generally speaking, the more urban the background of the soldiers, the more training required to whip them into shape. It is a process British officers have commented upon as they have watched their Gurkhas move out of the hills to towns. The small men from Nepal still make good soldiers. But a great deal more training and toughening up are required before they get to that point.

For rural folk, mobility comes from leg power. For the "civilized," it comes from machines. It is no accident that the overwhelming number of airstrips, still in use today, lie on the Allied side of the Owen Stanley Range. As first the Australians, then the combined Allied forces, struggled to stem the Japanese tide, they poured supplies into the battle using small, often dangerously sited, airstrips.

These airfields are everywhere on the Port Moresby side. On the Buna side, there are few. By the time the battle reached that stage, the Japanese retreat was so rapid that few supply points were needed. The Allied troops, in any case, had toughened up and could make do with less.

Such a process, as any who have been through Ranger School can attest, can be relatively rapid. Jungle can be frightening, but often the transition is more mental than physical. The only way to survive is to learn its ways.

Retracing the route of the Japanese, we gradually settled into a routine, learning to walk with shorter steps, to move in bursts.



BRA men roadblocks leading down to Panguna mine.

We learned the plants that somehow the bugs avoided, and tied them in our caps so that they dangled about our heads. We found solace in the ice cold, rushing streams, so clear there was not a rock that was not clearly visible beneath the surface. Numbed muscles stopped aching.

And then there were the villagers. To

them, we were men from the moon, strange creatures encased in strange suits and burdened down with mammoth bundles. To us, they were a breath of fresh air amidst stifling humidity.

As is ever the case, the locals knew what they were doing. Dressed only in loose shirt and shorts, rarely wearing shoes, they moved easily along the trail. Virtually all have long since converted to the Seventh Day Adventist faith and practice what they have heard preached.

Exhausted, we would stumble out of the bush, to be greeted with gifts of bananas or tangerines. Their English was often rudimentary, but their friendship was not constrained by any such barriers. When Nicolas became lost — he disappeared within 100 meters of me — it was the villagers who found him several days later. He had played it smart, stayed near water, and waited for the search party.

Of course the locals found him. Who can forget the famous World War II photo of the wounded Allied soldier, bandages covering his eyes, being gently led to safety by a Papuan? We were never asked for a dime. They gave out of kindness, and we opened our rucks in return.

The locals rarely carried packs themselves. Stashing a few "biscuits" (crackers or cookies) in their pockets, with perhaps a handkerchief of rice, they seemed to have little trouble doing in three or four days the trip that we planned to take us two weeks. Ultimately, the weather got so bad that we pushed straight through and cut days off our anticipated trek. We simply had to get out of there!

At times we were overwhelmed by such sheer exhaustion that we slept where we happened to pause. At night, particularly when there was no village in which to shelter, I would lie and listen to the strange sounds, curled into a ball in an effort to ward off, simultaneously, the cold, the damp, and the bugs. What was out there? Even on a trek, one can never be too sure.



Leaders of BRA: center, Sam Kauona, left, James Sirko and right, Linus Kabutoa.

Too many strange things occur in PNG.

When figures appeared in the shadows of our fire, it was usually a group of travelers on their way to or home from the bright lights of Port Moresby. The closer we got, the more sparse became the population, until at last all that was left of

**The enemy was not the problem —  
the Kokoda Trail was the problem.  
Faced with its obstacles the Japanese  
advance simply disintegrated.**

anticipated villages were bare spots where once had stood huts. Sometimes we found single huts with families who had remained, but all others had gone to look for the pot of gold they expected to find at the urban end of the rainbow.

Few find things as wonderful as they hope, which is one reason for the

mushrooming crime rate. As previously rural families are torn apart under the unfamiliar pressures of city life, their youth drift off. Gangs become surrogate families; assaults and pillaging become the means of gaining access to the glittering "cargo." Only the Kokoda Trail remains unchanged.

#### Battered Bougainville

The trail's military lessons, though, have been slow to sink in, at least in PNG itself. Sent to Bougainville in early 1989 to quell the third separatist uprising on the 80,000-inhabitant island since PNG independence in 1975, the PNG army launched what turned into a disastrous counterinsurgency effort. So unsuccessful were its efforts to cope with guerrillas on their home ground, mountainous jungle, that all forces left in March 1990, and the island was placed under blockade.

"We were pulled out because we were taking more casualties than even the civilians!" analyzed an army rifleman, who had been on Bougainville and asked that I not use his name.

"Everything is very strange now. We're not supposed to talk to you for fear we'll divulge some national secret — as though there is such a thing in PNG!

"I was over there for a few months, but I got back when it became clear it was nothing but a bloody awful way to die. We were completely unprepared for war in the rough terrain. We had been to the field a lot before we went, but it was not real bush training, just maneuvering in high grass. Our troops were not in good physical shape, and we used standard equipment, such as our heavy rifle and steel pots.

"The rebels, though, knew the lay of the land and had light arms, homemade shotguns, even M16s. I don't know where they got the M16s. From the Solomons, maybe. They even had some AK-47s. When we were ambushed, we'd spray

*Continued on page 84*



# WHITE WARRIOR

Continued from page 63

The witch doctor in Wamba wanted to meet me, the "white warrior." Becoming restless I loaded up my few remaining possessions, after giving anything nonessential to James' mother. I bade James and his family farewell, and moved south to Kisima to find a ride east toward Wamba.

Fortunately, I caught a ride in a Toyota pickup. I had intended to walk for one or two days, but my feet were badly injured. Storm clouds broke overhead and I hastily rigged a poncho hooch at the Wamba-Maralal-Nyahururu "road" junction outside the cluster of shacks called Kisima. I spent the morning bandaging my feet and updating my journal as I waited out the torrential downpour.

## Bandit Country

I eventually hitched a ride in another Toyota pickup. This one had three men crammed in the front and one particularly nasty looking Somali in the rear. They were obviously surprised to see anyone out here, especially a lone American. Grabbing my ruck and poncho I jumped in the back. As the Somali in the rear leaned out to yell at the driver, I noticed a large bone-handled knife hanging inside his dirty jacket.

We stopped in several small settlements and loaded/unloaded people and goats. One goat decided to urinate on my ruck. In each town old crones pawed at me, and in cackling Swahili, demanded money. I had just enough left for a bus ticket back to Nairobi from Isiolo, if I made it that far.

In Wamba, the driver and the Somali with the wicked-looking knife demanded payment. The owner of the truck agreed to a free ride after I explained my situation. The Somali didn't agree, and I was one step ahead when he reached inside his jacket. My knife audibly slid from its sheath.

I was sizing up my chances of being disemboweled in the dirty street of some unknown ville in a Third World African nation when a Samburu chief or councilman walked over with two warriors. The sight of his .303 Lee Enfield and my cheerful greeting of "Sopah!" were just what the situation needed. The Samburu knew of me, and a few choice words sent the Toyota pickup crew on its way. That I was obviously prepared to knife-fight a Somali (none too well-liked by the Samburu) on the through street of Wamba impressed the warriors. This was the most excitement Wamba had seen in years. The old men filled me in on the happenings around Wamba and the problems with bandits near Isiolo, Marsabit, and to the north near Sudan.

The Marsabit area of the Samburu Reserve is known as "bandit country." Bands of poachers, bandits, and former

freedom fighters from East Africa's various regimes, wearing fatigues and armed with Kalashnikovs, knock off trucks, tourists, and country buses. Old fashioned highway robbery is a problem throughout the Samburu Reserve.

After spending some time in Wamba and wondering what I would do if confronted by bandits brandishing Kalashnikovs, I wandered several miles further east until I caught a ride into Isiolo. Outside Isiolo, I held my breath as we passed a police checkpoint.

## Nairobi Street Fight

Entering Isiolo I asked for directions to the country bus station, humped over, and purchased a ticket to Nairobi. There I ran into a street hustler who quickly bartered a goat skin-covered sword/swaggerstick for my dirty black T-shirt. After a long ride to Nairobi, I spent the morning in the bus station compound waiting for first light.

I could either risk having my ruck pockets stripped as I walked through the midmorning crowds of the rough River Road area, or encounter muggers on the deserted streets at 0600. I chose the latter. Shouldering my ruck and gripping my new sword/swaggerstick, I headed toward the tall buildings and taxi stands of downtown Nairobi.

I noticed two men shadowing my movements on the opposite side of the street. My neck prickled as I heard footsteps closing rapidly behind me. He brushed by me making a two-handed grab at my Seiko. A diver's watch, it has a buckle band and didn't strip off my wrist as he expected. I caught him with a smashing blow to the face. With the ruck still on my back, I bared the cheap tin blade of the swaggerstick and slashed at a second attacker.

The two on the opposite side of the street stopped and the two I'd beaten off hovered at a safe distance as I backed off. I was fortunate neither was carrying a weapon. The adrenaline rush carried me to a taxi in record time. I flew out of Nairobi one day later, with only one more day left on my visa.

Despite all the warnings I'd heard about traveling alone in wild northern Kenya, I came closer to real physical harm in downtown Nairobi. So much for civilization.

*Rob Krott was an infantry platoon leader in the 1/17th Infantry (Mech). After ETS-ing from the Army in 1988, he enrolled as a graduate student of anthropology at Harvard University.*

# SRI LANKA

Continued from page 29

another young soldier sat exhausted in an old chair as he observed the enemy

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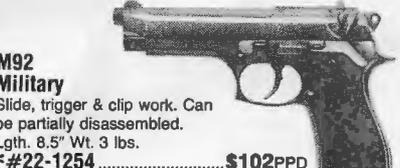
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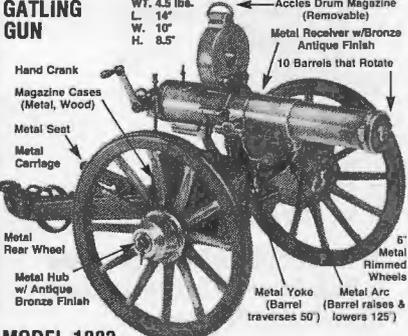
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position. When I was finished, Deepal and I doubled back to the boundary fence. I finally had some worthwhile material.

This was just as well, I decided, after arriving at the next location. Compared to the excitement of Palaly, Vavuniya seemed awfully dull although, I was told, the Tigers often let off a few rounds after dark. In desperation, I asked to be allowed to spend the night in an outlying bunker. My request was refused. Instead, a major offered to take me along during his rounds that evening.

It was still daylight when we climbed in to a Mahindra jeep. The major drove, pointing out bunkers and other positions along the way. Part of the journey took us along a causeway, with paddy fields on either side. The major drew my attention to the jungle beyond the field on our left. The Tigers were somewhere over there. "Have you ever been shot at while taking this route?" I asked the major. He laughed, then said, "No, no, never. Don't worry."

By the time we completed the rounds, it was dark. On the way back, we stopped at some huts to drink tea with a couple of officers. They and the major were chatting when there was the unmistakable sound of AK firing. Everybody rushed outside as more shots were heard, closer this time. The major issued an order, and all lights in the area were quickly doused. Silence. Then, a single shot, and a tracer round arced lazily above the trees to our front.

The two officers fetched their AKs and ran off to investigate. Soon after, there was a burst of automatic fire. We assumed it was the officers but when they returned we were told that it had been the LTTE. The major made a decision, and ordered me back into the jeep. I was horrified. I had disliked traveling by road since day one in this place.

Now I would gladly have walked. Instead, I found myself sitting between our new driver and the major, who had borrowed an AK and was promising to deal with anyone impudent enough to shoot at us. Another armed man sat in the back.

### Jeep Ride From Hell

With headlights blazing, we bounced back to the causeway and, a moment later, began taking fire. I couldn't see anything, but the cracks were audible even above the sound of the engine. I looked at the major. "Did you hear that?" I yelled. He smiled and said, "It's all right, don't worry."

There was another shot, and another, until it seemed that the whole of the LTTE were trying to kill us. Tracer whipped immediately overhead and now I glimpsed muzzle flashes to our right. In the back, our armed escort was rendered useless as he was thrown about by the lurching vehicle.

As for the major — he had chosen to face left, away from the direction of the enemy threat. I glanced at the driver, his grim expression illuminated by the

dashboard's green glow. The man was hunched instinctively behind the steering wheel, and I suddenly realized that I, too, was no longer sitting straight. It would have been farcical had our predicament not been so deadly serious.

We hurtled along that stretch of open road for nearly one minute, which is a long time when you are being shot at. It is a miracle that we weren't hit. At last, we reached the safety of a built-up area and took shelter inside a bunker. The firing abruptly stopped, then started again, and continued for more than half an hour before finally quieting down. The respite allowed us to continue back to the major's quarters.

There were no further incidents during my stay at Vavuniya. Subsequently, I headed south to Anuradhapura before continuing to Colombo.

After returning home, I read of the Tamil Tigers' offer to suspend hostilities. The security forces ceased offensive operations three days later. Unfortunately, there were violations. By the time the LTTE officially called off its truce late in January 1991, the war had already resumed in earnest.

*Australia-based photojournalist Frank Noble is a former British Royal Marine who has published articles in many publications.*

## AFRICAN ARMY

*Continued from page 35*

called commandos, Citizen's Force units and a few training units, mostly operating as light infantry. Obviously, these units can be bolstered by artillery, airborne, and even armored units from the Conventional Force if required.

A system of decentralized command gives primary responsibility to each of the 10 area commanders, while the chief of the army, a lieutenant general, exercises overall command from army headquarters in Pretoria. Intelligence gathering and dissemination is also conducted by regional commanders.

All white male citizens aged 18-55 years serve an initial one year tour followed by 720 days of subsequent service in a branch of the military. Of approximately 75,000 men now on active duty, 60,000 are in the army, 10,000 in the air force, and about 5,000 in the navy.

Much of army training is done at unit and command level, but the Conventional Force trains at the Army Battle School at Lohattha, in northern Cape Province. Lohattha is big enough for full-scale, division-size exercises employing live artillery fire, airstrikes, and tactical movement for all troops and

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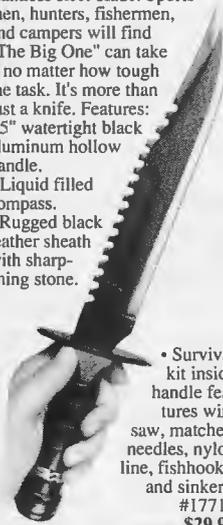
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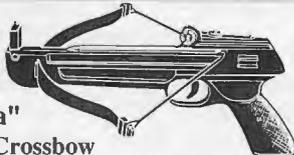


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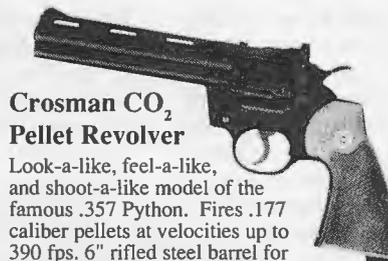
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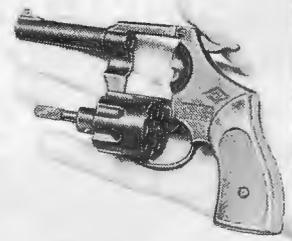


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units involved. The South Africa Army College at Voortrekkerhoogte provides command and staff training for officers, senior NCOs and warrant officers.

Many non-white soldiers volunteer for the army, and their pay, service conditions and career opportunities are the same as those of their white comrades-in-arms. In the Cape, non-white soldiers serve in three separate infantry units, and there is a black company in the active parachute battalion.

Around the rest of South Africa are six other black battalions, five of which are ethnically homogeneous, composed respectively of Swazi, Shangaan, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, and Zulu tribesmen. After two years' volunteer service, those interested can continue their career in the army in either the Cape Regiment or in the various corps of the Permanent Force.

Women volunteers also serve in a large variety of army professions including signals, personnel, logistics, intelligence, and public relations. Like our own servicewomen, they are not given combat assignments. The South Africa Army Women's College provides advanced training, and after completing the course, women can continue an army career either full-time in the Permanent Force, or part-time in the Citizen and Commando Forces.

Structural components of the army are divided into fighting and support services known as corps. Infantry, armor, artillery, and antiaircraft constitute the fighting corps, while the engineers, signals, technical service, ordnance, personnel, finance, catering, military police and musicians are the supporting corps. Largest of these corps is the infantry. All of the corps have functions comparable to those of similar corps in other armies.

The South African army is a modern, well-organized force, suitable to its country's needs and accurately reflecting the geopolitical situation. Supported by an innovative and efficient armaments industry, and a well-educated and dedicated citizenry, it remains the best army on the continent.

Current reductions in budget allocations and manning levels testify to the success of the SADF, and the army in particular, in defeating its enemies. Cubans and Soviets, Angolans and indigenous terrorists, have been met and beaten in battles over the past two decades, and have now withdrawn. The ultimate purpose of any defense establishment, of course, is deterrence. The better they have filled their active role, the more effective their deterrent effect in the future.

Should their enemies return, the South African army will be ready.

— R. Mac. ✕

## ARMS OF THE GULF

Continued from page 47

kind, the lack of perceived recoil when fired from the bipod is nothing short of amazing. If bursts are kept to three or four shots, the muzzle climb is negligible. The accuracy potential when fired from its lightweight aluminum tripod is more than adequate out to its effective range of approximately 800 meters. The handling characteristics are excellent, with a consequence of exceptionally high hit probability in the hands of experienced operators. This is truly an outstanding machine gun. It is gas-operated with an adjustable three-position regulator, has Kalashnikov-type rotary-bolt locking and fires from the open-bolt position.

Iraq's heavy machine gun is the caliber 12.7x108mm *Degtyarev Pekhotnyy* (DP) Model 38/46, a modification of the DShK 38 which featured a complicated rotary feed system, replaced by a more conventional shuttle system on the DP Model 38/46. With good reason, this weapon is usually encountered mounted on armored vehicles. Sans the barrel, the receiver group alone weighs 78.5 lbs.—18.5 lbs more than Ma Deuce. Add another 28 lbs. for the barrel which has totally superfluous radial cooling fins over almost its entire length.

The distinctive bulbous muzzle device is moderately effective in controlling muzzle jump at the expense of considerable side blast and muzzle flash. Great balls of fire spew out of the muzzle and burning embers of propellant all too frequently fly back into the operator's face. All in all, a reliable brute, but not quite in Ma Deuce's class. The 12.7x108mm cartridge matches the accuracy and effectiveness of the .50 cal. Browning (12.7x99mm) round.

### Small Arms vs. the Desert

Desert environments will play havoc with any small arms system. When they overrun Iraqi defensive bunkers, U.S. Marines encountered Kalashnikov magazines so clogged with sand grains that the followers were jammed halfway up the magazine bodies.

Dust-sized particles can be every bit as abrasive as sand on a firearm's operating mechanism. The endless argument has always been to lubricate or not, and, if so, how much and what kind. Deserts represent an extremely adverse environment for military small arms, more so than even a tropical rain forest or the arctic. It's beyond the scope of current technology to design firearms that will operate reliably, if left unattended, in every possible environment. Increased maintenance and moderate lubrication are the only alternatives at this time. There are no magic potions that will preclude the drudge of repeated disassembly and cleaning.

This is not to say that some small arms systems are not more tolerant of harsh climatic regimens than others. Clearly, the Kalashnikov, with its built-in loose tolerances, is marginally superior in reliability to the M16. However, this is more than counter-balanced by the M16's greater accuracy potential, better human engineering and the more effective wound ballistics potential of its cartridge.

In general, the military small arms of the Coalition did not demonstrate themselves to be superior to the ComBloc weapons lined up against them on the other side of the trench. Iraq was quickly crushed in a 100-hour ground offensive because of high technology, air superiority, a massive 42-day air and artillery bombardment that scrambled their brains, and the vastly superior training of the non-conscripted U.S., British and French troops.

The Persian Gulf War ended so swiftly and was so one-sided that small arms development should not be greatly affected. Though hopefully the British will reexamine their abysmal L85A1. ❌

"We know absolutely that the traffickers shut down when riverine is in an area," he said. "We know it works, but you can't measure it with seizures. Because they're not going to be stupid if we're sitting in a chokepoint on a river."

Sherman Hinson, acting director of the State Department's Narcotics Affairs Section in Bolivia and a civilian veteran of counterinsurgency riverine operations in South Vietnam, said denial of the use of rivers by traffickers — not interdiction of drugs — is at the crux of the riverine program's mission.

"If you think about dealing with the cocaine problem in terms of physically stopping all the shipments of the drug from leaving Bolivia, Peru, or Colombia, or from entering the United States, you can't," Hinson told me. "The resources aren't there. If that was what we were trying to do, we would be doomed to failure."

He said the goal is to so disrupt the drug trafficking organizations, by making them constantly move their labs and making water transport of their supplies a risky venture, that it reduces their demand for raw materials, thus lowering the prices offered for coca leaves and reducing the economic incentive for farmers who grow the crops.

#### Bribery and Corruption

Bolivia's riverine program, established in 1988, has "like any new program, had

its share of troubles," Hinson said. The Bolivian navy had no tradition of involvement in counternarcotics work. As an armed force, a lot of them resented association with the police. And there was a lot of corruption — narcotics-related and otherwise — in the Bolivian navy.

"Most of the Bolivian navy is involved in the commercial transport of cargo, just as most of the Bolivian air force is engaged in the commercial transport of cargo," Hinson continued. "They do it for cash, as a nation-building service in a country where a transportation infrastructure is all but nonexistent. It also provides additional operating revenue in a country strapped for money."

Indeed, it is that lack of money that makes bribery and corruption what Ferrarone called "an extremely serious obstacle." With a per capita income of \$650 a year among its 7 million people, Bolivia is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere after Haiti. Hinson said he has seen "some of the frustration of the Coast Guard advisers who were here with Snowcap... frustrations at what they know the program can do, and what they could see that it's not doing."

The riverine mission remains, Hinson said, to deny drug barons the use of the rivers, provide for the regulation and monitoring of legitimate vessel traffic and provide a waterborne mobility.

"We've still got problems, but things have improved a hell of a lot," Paul said,

## PIRANHA PATROL

Continued from page 41

Ferrarone said, the riverine program has improved its mobility, intelligence-gathering and length of operations.

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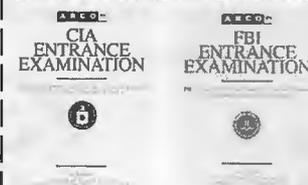


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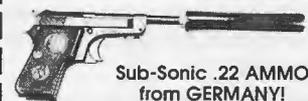
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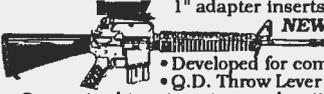
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a DEA riverine adviser who served one Bolivia tour at Chimore, an isolated UMOPAR camp used by U.S. Army Special Forces for training in the Chapare region. Paul was now serving his second tour as a riverine adviser out of Trinidad.

Like many of the agents assigned, he has a varied background: a veteran of U.S. Army artillery, a former locomotive engineer, a Texas Highway Patrol trooper and a U.S. Border Patrol agent before joining the DEA in 1986. After attending the DEA Ranger School, the U.S. Army Jungle Warfare School and undergoing riverine training by the Navy's Special Boat Unit in New Orleans and Navy SEALs in San Diego, he was first assigned to Bolivia in 1989.

According to Larry Leveron, the DEA's riverine team leader, "We started out crawling, we've learned to walk, and now we're starting to run ... It's a strange operation we have here, especially considering the varied group we've put together, with several different U.S. agencies involved with several different parts of the Bolivian government.

"The main key has to be flexibility. You can't judge success or failure here by the same yardstick you might use in the States. It's hard for outsiders to realize all the players, all the coordination and all the problems peculiar to this environment that have to be dealt with."

Relaxing with a cerveza Pacena and nursing his sunburn after returning from the two-day riverine patrol, Bill agreed.

"We come down here with lots of high-tech equipment and different ideas," Bill said. "We come to teach them, but they teach us things, too. These guys are used to going into the jungle with nothing but a rifle and a canteen. We're trying to teach concrete things like boating safety, how to read the river, and watch for snags.

"But there are other intangibles that are just as important," he added. "We try to teach military professionalism and integrity, and you can't do that in a classroom. The only way to teach that is by example. And if we pull out now, who will set that example?"

## SOF CORRESPONDENT FINDS BOLIVIA'S WHOREHOUSES NOT UP TO SNUFF

Sensitive to its reputation as a center for clandestine drug labs that convert coca paste and coca base into cocaine hydrochloride, the people of Bolivia's Beni department are pushing tourism as a source of income for the undeveloped, cash-poor region, which is about the size of Kansas.

If one likes camping, fishing, river-boating and wildlife photography, Beni is a wonderful place. There is a beautiful old Catholic church in the capital city, Trinidad, and a town square with



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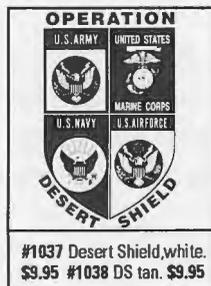


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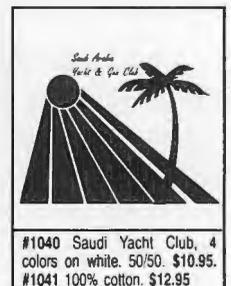
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warehouse was run by the government, which sent in the cops at 0100 each morning to close the doors. The wings were divided into the cheap dates and the more desirable dames, available women of all races and sizes resting on their elbows in open windows, where customers could inspect the merchandise.

Some SOF colleagues who ventured in a few years back said they opted for the high-price spread: \$2.50 for the standard, extra for any acrobatic extras or oral endearment, something Bolivian whores won't do at any price.

But it's the little extra attention that makes such places pleasant and interesting.

"I was undressing," a friend told me, "and she told me to keep my socks on. The floors got a little messy, she told me, and she said she didn't want me to slip on the floor."

That kind of courtesy keeps 'em coming back. And the ladies of the evening in Bolivia could take some lessons from their counterparts in Peru.

— J.P.

*James L. Pate, a former associate editor at Soldier of Fortune Magazine who has spent time in El Salvador and Nicaragua, spent 18 days with Operation Snowcap personnel in Bolivia in February '91. This is the first of a two-part account of his trip.*

*Next month, Pate recounts an air-mobile raid against a remote ranch owned by drug kingpins, and a three-day snoop-and-poop Zodiac raft operation along the Yacuma River around Santa Ana.*

*Also in the second part, Pate assesses the pros and cons of Snowcap by talking to the highly motivated men who operate out on the pointed end of the bayonet in the war on drugs, and looks at whether their obvious dedication is enough to sustain the controversial program.*

## NIGHTMARE IN GREEN

*Continued from page 73*

everything, while the guerrillas picked us off one-by-one.

"With the pullout, we're being retrained. The Australians have a training mission here. We also have the experience of our units which have been on the border with Irian Jaya. But no one wants to go back. It's bloody hell over there."

Small wonder it turned out to be such. With the exception of minor urban centers, Bougainville's rugged terrain is as thickly forested now as it was during World War II. Then, it became known principally as the graveyard of the man who planned Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yamamoto.

Ambushed by U.S. P-38 fighters as he flew on an inspection tour, he died when his plane crashed on the southwest side of the island. A memorial marks the spot where the craft still rests, largely intact (a Japanese businessman tourist apparently bribed the locals and carted off a wing before the authorities got word of the scheme and foiled the disappearance of the entire plane).

Monuments are not all that has been disturbed on the Jamaica-sized island, which lies 300 miles east of the mainland. Smack in the middle of the jungle, operating since 1972, is the mammoth Panguna copper mine, an enormous man-made hole 4.2 miles in circumference. So rich is Panguna, that it annually produces — or did — 2% of the world's copper. As such, it provided approximately 40% of PNG's export earnings and 17% of total government revenue. Unfortunately, it also fouled the environment.

"Tailings" estimated at "millions of tons" litter the landscape, and pollution has killed off the fish in the affected areas of the Jaba River. Small potatoes? Not to traditional landowners.

Led by a charismatic figure named Francis Ona and his military chief, Sam Kauona, what began as a campaign for greater royalties quickly snowballed as all manner of grievances surfaced. Taken together, they were the voice of a traditional way of life under assault. The locals were determined not to stand by while an unresponsive federal government and a runaway extractive economy, complete with massive in-migration of outside labor, ruined their island.

An Australian expat businessman, a longtime resident of Bougainville, married to an island woman, told me, "The basic problem is that so much goes out of the province and nothing comes in. The government never does anything for the place. There are more sealed roads in Rabaul alone than in all of Bougainville. The traditional landowners, in particular, the holders of the real power on the island, are very unhappy.

"When trouble broke out [in November 1988]," he continued, "Port Moresby sent the riot police. They were used to doing things the way they do in the highlands. So they beat up people, torched some villages and houses. Then they picked up a boy walking by the side of the road whom they claimed had done something. They beat him up in the back of a pickup truck, then threw him out on the road. He died. But he turned out not to be the one they wanted, but the son of a traditional landowner. That really got things going. Then the army was sent in [January 1989].

"The army was completely out of its depth, completely at the mercy of the terrain. The rebels used a variety of weapons. The army would fire at the slightest provocation but never knew what it was shooting at.

"The rebels, the Bougainville

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Revolutionary Army (BRA), made homemade shotguns that used .50 caliber shells. You take the bolt from a door and file the end to a point for a firing pin. Attach it to a barrel; use pressure to draw it back; release — you have a bolt with a primitive firing pin. It worked well enough.

“The BRA also made masterful use of bows and arrows. They used one they had confiscated to kill three soldiers with arrows through the throat.

“They also used the long homemade spearguns that are used in deep water. They attach explosives and use them in the way the Romans used catapults. And they set off explosives everywhere after they stole mining stocks. The army had to run like crazy.”

Hyperbole? Apparently not. With casualties rising, Port Moresby ordered the troops back to the mainland and left the islanders to their own devices under pressure of the blockade. Peace negotiations are now ongoing, with a tentative settlement reached. Yet the fact remains: Despite the obvious implications of PNG's terrain and history, the military had found itself singularly unprepared for guerrilla warfare.

Indeed, when called into action by the government, it was able to deploy only four understrength companies and various support units. Even to do that required that it strip its forces on the Irian Jaya border, leaving but two platoons — and there, a guerrilla war continued to sputter, too. Insurgents of *Organisasi Palua Merdeka*, or “Free Papua Movement,” ethnically if not racially related to inhabitants of PNG, refused to acquiesce in the Indonesian occupation of Irian Jaya, the western half of New Guinea. Their stubborn action frequently (though less so of late) spilled over onto PNG soil, leading Indonesian soldiers or planes to follow.

Unable to do much save protest where Jakarta was concerned, PNG went after the only target it could realistically tackle, OPM itself. Or at least it thought it could tackle them. In this endeavor it was no more successful than it had been in Bougainville. Facing a small force that knew the ways and terrain of the jungle, Port Moresby's troops could do little save seek the proverbial needle in the haystack.

At this writing, PNG is in the process of attempting to make good on its mistakes. A multitude of tasks lie ahead. Still, the most pressing, obviously, is to turn what has become an urban-bound parade ground force into a proper field army. For that, Port Moresby would seem to have the most natural training ground in the world: Send them up onto the Kokoda Trail!

Tom Marks, SOF's Hawaii-based Chief Foreign Correspondent, recently completed his doctorate in Political Science. ✎

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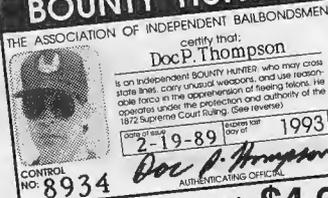
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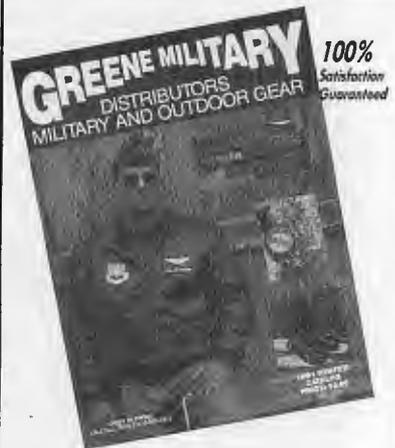
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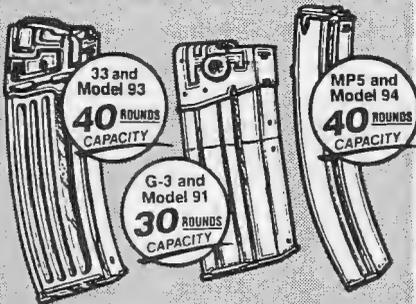
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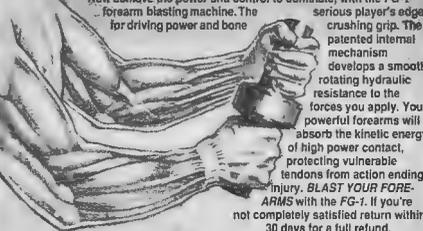
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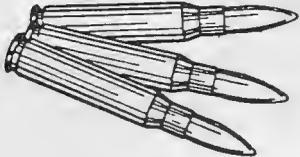
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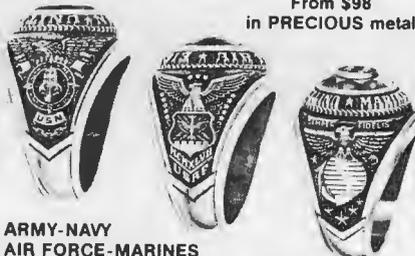
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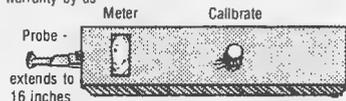
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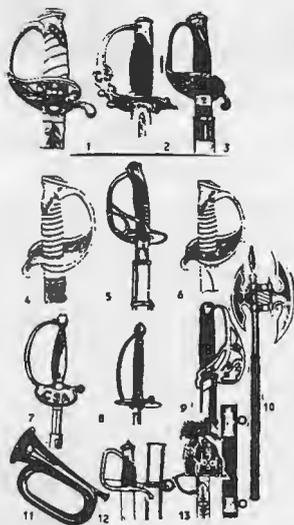
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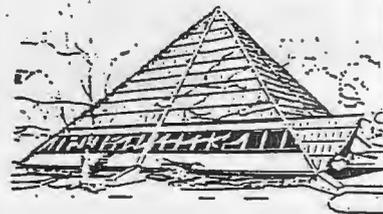
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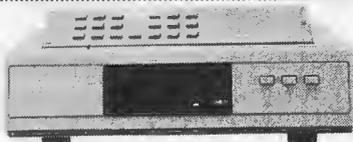
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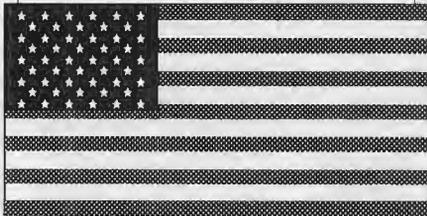
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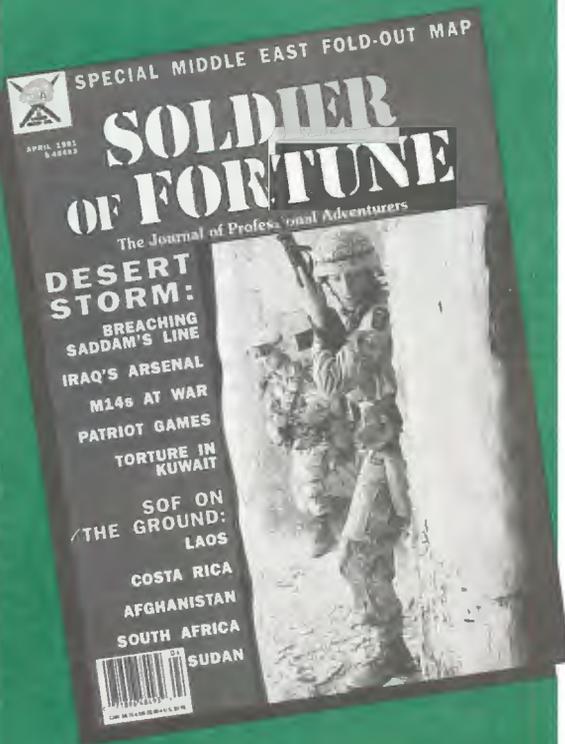
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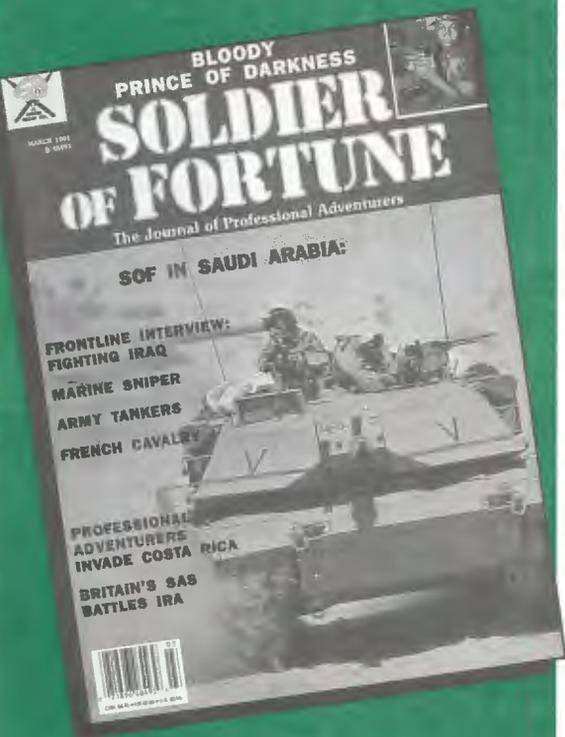
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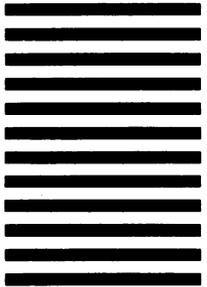
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