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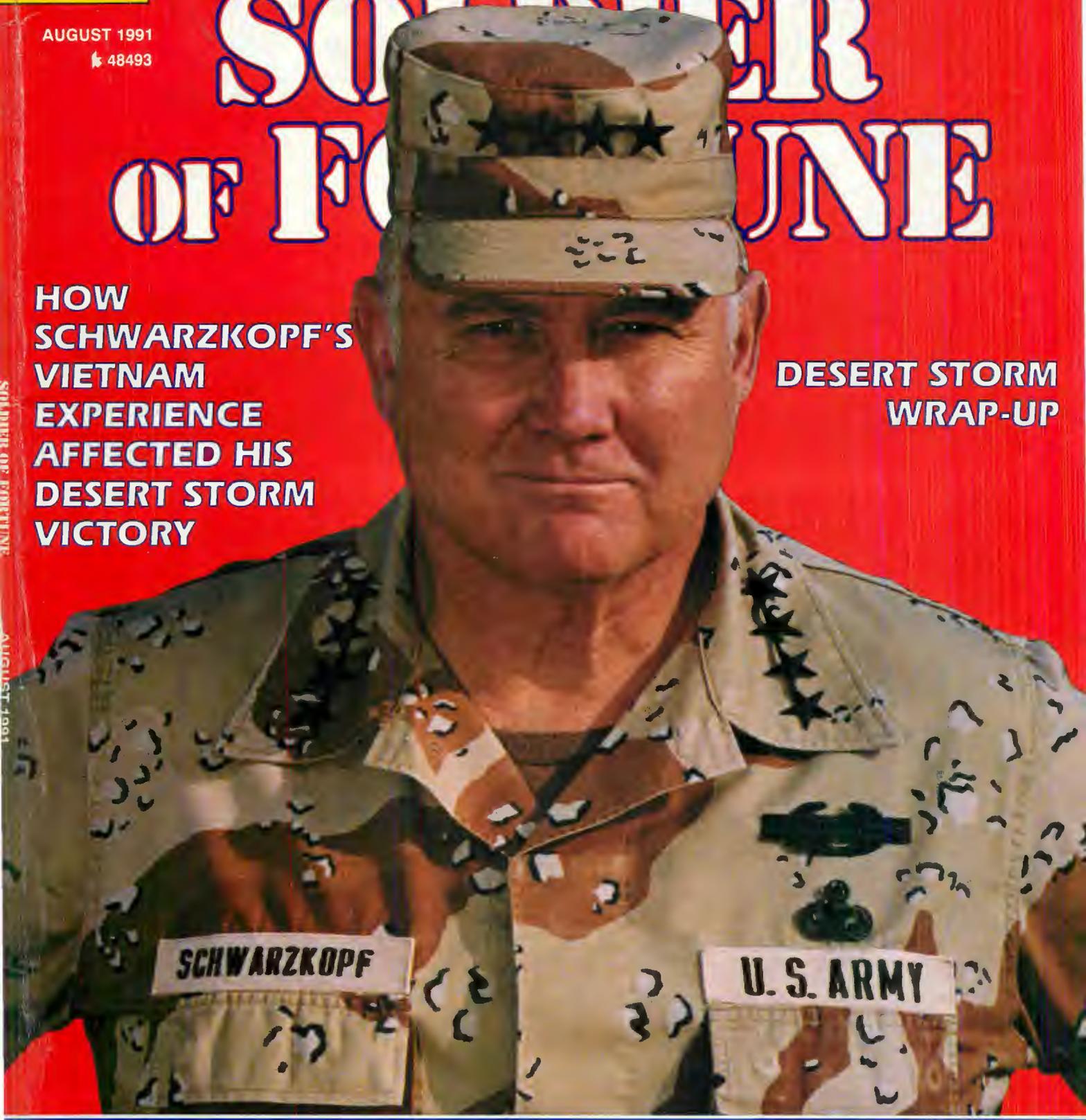
AUGUST 1991
48493

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

**HOW
SCHWARZKOPF'S
VIETNAM
EXPERIENCE
AFFECTED HIS
DESERT STORM
VICTORY**

**DESERT STORM
WRAP-UP**

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE August 1991



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SOF SURVIVES CAMBODIAN BATTLE**



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SOF 8/91

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by Robert K. Brown

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The Brady Bill has passed the House of Representatives. By the time you read this, it will probably be under consideration by the Senate, where pro-gun senators from Western and rural states will hopefully prevail over their urban, anti-gun colleagues.

But the fight will be a tough one, and it is critical that all of us who value the right to keep and bear arms make our voices heard in this debate. We cannot afford to stand silently by as the Second Amendment is, piece by piece, repealed.

Brady is viewed by gun control advocates as important because it represents a defeat of the NRA. The NRA has allowed itself to become the issue in this latest debate. Its failure to forge politically effective coalitions led directly to this defeat — a defeat that will open the door to "effective" legislation, as Rep. Edward Feighan, D-Ohio, the Brady Bill's principal sponsor in the House, phrased it on a recent "Nightline" interview.

I think we all know what Feighan, Metzenbaum and Kennedy view as "effective."

Americans are fed up with crime, and for good reason. More than 100,000 Americans were victims of violent crime in 1990, according to FBI statistics. Gun control is being sold to the American public as crime control despite hard evidence to the contrary.

The average American is not a firearms enthusiast, and the idea of a waiting period seems to make "common sense."

But Brady is not significant because of the waiting period requirement. The

real significance of Brady lies in the fact that it requires citizens to ask for police permission to exercise their Constitutional rights.

Imagine the editorial firestorm in the media if the press were required to get police or court permission before publishing news stories that might adversely affect someone's life — for example, the naming of rape victims, as *The New York Times* and NBC News did in the case of the alleged rape at the Kennedy compound in Florida. Yet this is precisely what Brady does with our Second Amendment rights.



This is not acceptable. No voice has been stronger in supporting the working

police officer than SOF. But the role of the police in a free country does not include passing judgment on whether citizens should be allowed to exercise their civil liberties. Those rights are inalienable.

What the police are supposed to do is bring lawbreakers to justice, and American cops do a damn fine job of this. But the revolving-door criminal justice system that the Kennedys and Metzenbaums and liberal activists have given us makes a mockery of the efforts of our working police officers.

The predictable results of 20-plus years of plea-bargaining, suspended sentences, shackles on our police officers and criminal-rights measures are confirmed by crime statistics. Now we, the law-abiding citizens of this country, are being asked to surrender our civil liberties because criminals have gained so many freedoms.

Excuse me if I don't think this makes "common sense." ✖

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FEATURES



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Photo: SSgt. Taylor

PAIN AND PANIC IN PANAMA Steve Salisbury
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KILLING FIELDS IN FULL BLOOM Peter Bussian
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★ SPECIAL PERSIAN GULF WAR SECTION ★

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General Schwarzkopf promised he would give the world "a complete rundown on what we were doing, why we were doing it; the strategy behind what we were doing" in the most decisive military victory of our time. Here's what he said **40**

STORMIN' NORMAN Richard Mackenzie
The spectacular leadership of Operation Desert Storm didn't just happen — it went to school, mostly in Vietnam. In this unique profile, read how the cream of the leadership, Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf, came to be the man he is today **46**

YOUNG GUNS Dale B. Cooper
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WHAM, BAM, THANKS, SADDAM Galen Geer
Iraqi tanks had enemies, and Iraqi tanks had enemies. Two A-10 "Warthogs," the deadliest ground-attack aircraft in the world, and their drivers — "Karl" and "Fish" — were enemies. Saddam's still having nightmares about these guys **60**

COBRA COWBOYS Dale B. Cooper
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SEMPER FATAL Dale B. Cooper
What happens when farmers, truck drivers, plumbers and college students from Washington state get called to active duty? In the Marine Reserves' Bravo Company, they establish a combat record unequalled in Corps history **68**

DESERT LOGISTICS Dale B. Cooper
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Photo: Max Weale





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COLUMNS

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TASK FORCE RIPPER Dale B. Cooper
 Intel reports said they were way outnumbered, that the odds were stacked against them. Nobody seemed to care in the Marines' Task Force Ripper, the first Coalition ground troops to assault Kuwait. After eating sand and swatting flies for six months, they went straight for Iraq's throat **86**



Gen. Schwarzkopf — Page 46
 Photo: A. Tannenbaum/Sygma

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COVER: A joke making the rounds in Washington, D.C., goes something like this: "What is General Schwarzkopf going to do after he retires?" Response: "Anything he wants." General, you deserve whatever you can get. But as the Bear — and everyone else who served in Vietnam — knows, it's been a long and rocky road from Vietnam to Iraq for the military. We took a close look at Norman Schwarzkopf's journey this month, to see how our rice-paddy war affected the way he ran *this* one. It's a thoughtful look at the man who finally restored public confidence in our military machine and the men and women who run it. Just who is the Bear? You can find out, beginning on page 46. Photo: Black Star/Brack



Harriers — Page 52

Photo: DoD

"PARTY" CRASHING IN KRAKOW Tom Bates
 Former SOF staffer inspects Poland's elite 6th Pomeranian Airborne Assault Brigade and lives to tell about it **92**

MOUNTAINS OF MILITARIA Peter G. Kokalis
 Springfield Sporters received a trove of small arms when it bid on 40 containers of obsolete military miscellany offered by the Colombian government. Here's your chance to catch a glimpse **98**

"PUPPET MASTERS" Susan Katz Keating
 U.S. Army Colonel Millard Peck headed up the Defense Intelligence Agency's desk for Vietnam prisoners of war and those missing in action — until he realized he and his section were being stonewalled. In a harsh memo dated 12 February of this year, subject: *Request for Relief*, Peck lifts the lid of this Pandora's Box of deceit, and in an exclusive interview with SOF, tells the rest of the story. Another chapter in the U.S. Government's POW/MIA Book of Shame **102**

BULLETIN BOARD



Noted Sgt. Rescoe (left), "There's been a lot of support by Americans, and believe me, we appreciate it. But when Joe Conforte supports the troops, he really supports the troops." Photo: Craig Sailor, *Reno Gazette-Journal*

PATRIOTIC PIMP PLEDGES NO-COST NOOKIE ...

Heart-warming support for our troops in the Gulf has taken many forms, most reflecting what the individual or organization had to offer: letters from school kids, books from individuals and libraries, homemade cookies from veterans organizations, a country full of flags and yellow ribbons to let the troops know we cared.

Companies welcomed troops home with special deals on cars and VCRs, and Joe Conforte, manager and former owner of the Mustang Ranch east of Reno, Nevada, announced last December that troops who had served in the Gulf would be donated a 24-hour date with their pick of the litter — market value \$1,000 — if they bring proof they served in the Gulf (and are not married — ethics, you know).

Conforte claims so far more than 500 returning troops have taken him up on the offer, and a thousand have written from Saudi saying they were coming soon. Usual arrangements are a split between the prostitutes and Mustang Ranch, but Conforte is picking up the tab for the girls, noting, "You know, this is all IRS deductible. It is." We can assume he knows, as last year Mustang Ranch was glommed and auctioned by the IRS toward \$15 million they say he owes from a 1977 tax conviction.

Sergeant Howard Rescoe and Cpl. Robert Regalado of the 1st Marine Division created something of a flap

when they showed up at Mustang in dress blues and made the front page of Reno papers. Noted Marine spokesman Sgt. Nephi Limb at Camp Pendleton, "They were on authorized leave status in authorized leave uniforms ... (but) it's not something we endorse. It's not something we want to see the Marines take part in. The Marine Corps cares very much about its image."

After-action reports were not available at press time.

So much for Mom and apple pie.



COLT RAMPANT AGAIN?

After a hiatus that had gun owners wondering whatever happened to Colt's support of the Second Amendment, there has been a change at the helm, and Colt is actively fighting the California attorney general's petition to ban the sale of Colt Sporter Rifles.

"The emotional controversy over the ownership of sporting firearms continues to cloud the basic issues which plague our society," Colt President Ronald E. Stillwell said, "not the least of which is holding criminals responsible for their crimes. It is clear that telling the people of California that crimes and the drug problem will be diminished by banning firearms is nothing more than voodoo crime control."

As do most gun owners and manufacturers, Colt supports legislation that

would provide strong penalties for criminal misuse of all firearms — but opposes any legislation banning sporting firearms such as the Colt Sporter. Company spokesmen reiterated that Colt firmly believes in the rights of all law-abiding citizens as provided under the Second Amendment.

SOF WINS FIRST AMENDMENT SUIT ...

In a benchmark decision for First Amendment rights and responsibilities of the media, liability charges against SOF were recently dismissed by Orange County, California Superior Court Judge Jack Mandel. The suit, which claimed that the magazine should be responsible for an advertisement appearing in the publication, had been filed by two individuals who were injured while watching the purchaser of a book, supposedly advertised in the magazine, use said book to build a munitions device which exploded.

RED CROSS THANKS SOF; SOF THANKS YOU ...

Dear Mr. Brown:

On behalf of the United States Air Force hospitals in England and the American Red Cross, warm thanks for your very generous gift of books [for troops wounded in the Gulf.] Patients here have been delighted, not only with the reading pleasure, but for the support and good wishes these gifts represent.

The war ended much sooner and at lower cost to our troops than we dared hope; all our casualties have by now been returned from England to the USA, and the three contingency hospitals have been packed up. The books you sent will be used in the two permanent USAF hospitals here, a happy reminder of the concern felt back home.

Sincerely yours,
Margaret M. Jennings
Hospital-Community Liaison
American Red Cross
Hospital Community Liaison
RAF Lakenheath
APO New York, NY 01979

And thanks where thanks is due: the tons of books we forwarded to the troops in Saudi and to the USAF hospital graciously came from you,

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MANSTOPPERS Selecting the Right Double-Action Pistol

This video will help you select the right double-action auto pistol for your personal defense needs. Technical advisors Col. Rex Applegate, Wiley Clapp, Tom Campbell and Chuck Karwan contributed to the evaluations of the latest autos from Colt, S&W, Ruger, Glock, SIG-Sauer and others. From the right caliber to the right safety, this video covers it all. Color, approx. 60 min., VHS only. **\$59.95**



BUSINESS PARTNERS The Best Pistol/Ammunition Combinations for Personal Defense by Peter Alan Kasler

Here is a practical and realistic assessment of which modern bullets work best in which handguns to get the job done in a life-or-death situation. From the truth about wound ballistics to the debate over the most effective calibers, this book holds nothing back. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, photos, illus., 200 pp. **\$22.95**

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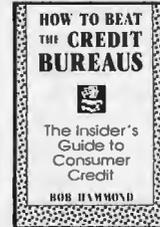
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our readers, whose response to our request for help was staggering. It was our privilege to pass along your support for our troops in Desert Storm. We couldn't have done it without you.

KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL COIN ...

Oft in the past, when a government — ours included — wanted to finance a project, they printed money to do it. This time, however, they're minting special commemorative silver dollars to sell, proceeds going to the project. On 6 May 1991 the U.S. Mint struck the first of 1 million Korean War Memorial Coins. They cost \$31 paper dollars for a proof coin, or \$26 for an uncirculated coin, and may be ordered from the U.S. Mint by calling (800) 652-3838, or writing Customer Service Center, U.S. Mint, 10001 Aerospace Dr., Lanham, MD 20706. If you don't have paper dollars to trade, they will accept plastic promises via Visa and Mastercard.

A \$7 surcharge in the price of these memorial coins goes toward completion of the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. One and a half million Americans fought in Korea — more than 103,000 were wounded; more than 33,000 were killed; more than 8,000 remains are still unaccounted for. When the Korean War Veterans Memorial was authorized, it was with the stipulation that it be paid for by private funds, and the \$7 surcharge will help. This minting represents an easy way to provide money for that worthwhile project, and it represents a rare chance to send money to the U.S. Treasury and get something tangible in return. Photo: courtesy U.S. Mint.

CBS: NRA MEMBERS, YES — NRA ADS NO ...

The CBS "All-Star Salute to the Troops" show featured NRA stalwart Charlton Heston and a number of other national entertainers who are ardent NRA supporters. The NRA wanted to help sponsor the show, but their first two ads, dealing with the Staggers Instantaneous Check Bill vs. the Feighan-Brady bill, were rejected. So the NRA offered an ad dealing with the Second Amendment — which was rejected as "too political." Next the NRA proposed an ad dealing with the NRA's role in training U.S. Olympic



shooters: rejected. Then the NRA submitted their latest gun safety ad for hunters: shot down. Controlled media in the USA? Nawwww ...

F.O.P. CANDIDATE FAVORS PRIVATE FIREARMS ...

Career police officer Tom Posumato, 51, of Newark, NJ, candidate for president of the Fraternal Order of Police stated in a position paper on gun legislation: *As a police officer and a family man, I am truly disturbed by the increasing number of crimes committed with guns in this country. But I don't believe that legislation aimed at curtailing ownership by law-abiding citizens is the answer.*

I am not a member of any gun organization, nor am I a hunter or sports enthusiast. Nonetheless, I can't see taking away the enjoyment of those who are. I view personal gun ownership as a right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and to limit that right is to ignore the simple truth that criminals are the real cause of increasing gun crime.

There are limits, in my opinion, to legal gun ownership. Access should certainly be barred to those with a history of mental illness or to those with criminal convictions. In New Jersey, we have the toughest gun laws in the nation. But have we seen a significant drop in gun-related crime? Not

according to our state's annual crime reports.

That's why I strongly favor greater penalties against those who commit crimes with weapons. As National FOP President, I would appeal to the membership to press for laws that take criminals off the streets and keep them off.

My opponent, Dewey Stokes, has favored virtually every gun control measure introduced at the federal level during his four years as president... In taking an iron-fisted position, Stokes is speaking for all of us at the local and state levels, saying that we want law enforcement resources in every state to be allocated toward checking out law abiding citizens. But under terms of the Brady Bill, the federal government would provide no funds to cover these administrative costs.

Stokes is part of the movement that would compel local law enforcement to spend its resources on background checks that could take an officer away from other duties for an entire day. Even if the checks were optional, there is nothing in the Brady Bill to protect police from liability in cases where citizens accuse them of negligence.

I believe that it is a failing on the president's part to treat these issues as if he alone were the voice of the FOP. I know that there is a significant portion of members in this country who do not agree with Stoke's gun control position.

As president, I will listen to everyone's views on gun control before carrying a torch to Congress. ☒



A "Cut Above" The Rest!

Introducing the new Gryphon M30A1

A knife is only as good as the materials from which it's made, and from point to pommel, the new Gryphon M30A1 is unsurpassed! It should be--it was designed by world famous knife maker Robert Terzuola. Absolutely no compromise has been made to bring you the M30A1--the finest combat knife money can buy. You will feel the quality of the M30A1 the first time you pick it up. It's produced by skilled craftsmen in Seki, Japan. Nestled in the mountains, Seki has been Japan's sword-making capital for centuries.

The best blade money can buy

The M30A1's razor-sharp 6 1/4" blade is made from ATS-34 steel, the choice of most premier custom knife makers in America--and what a blade it is! The massive full-length tang extends to, and becomes part of, the lanyard hole for maximum strength. Each blade is double hollow-ground by hand, expertly sub-zero quenched and double tempered for added durability and edge retention. Each blade is Rockwell tested (Rc 58-59) to assure perfection. The Rockwell test mark is clearly visible on the blade of each M30A1. But that's only the beginning.

A handle you can hold onto

Without a properly designed handle, your knife is next to worthless. The Gryphon M30A1 has a handle designed to fit anyone's hand comfortably. The handle is made from durable DuPont Zytel which has been UV and heat stabilized--the result, a handle that is impervious to the elements. You'll get a secure grip in any position because the handle is lightly checkered and slightly ridged for a positive, non-slip grip. The low top guard allows you to place your thumb on the back of the blade for maximum control and extra leverage when cutting.

A sheath truly worthy of this knife

A knife as fine as the Gryphon M30A1 deserves a superior sheath. Gryphon Knives realized the importance of a top-quality sheath and teamed up with renowned sheath-maker Blackie Collins to create something special. The result of Blackie's handicraft is a fantastic Cordura sheath, made specially for the Gryphon M30A1. It's stitched with heavy thread and quadruple-riveted. It's lined with a thick rubber welt to protect the user and the knife blade. And it's finished off with a sturdy snap closure which keeps your knife secure in its sheath. A Bianchi military-spec belt fastener is included for use with G.I. pistol belts. A handy leg tie-down keeps the sheath doubly secure.

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Blade steel	ATS-34
Rc hardness	58-59
Blade length	6 1/4"
Length overall	11 1/4"
Blade thickness	3/16"
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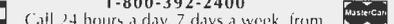
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REPLY TO "STUCK" ...

I would like to respond to the writer of "Stuck at home" in the June '91 issue of SOF. Let me say that while the writer's eagerness to serve in the Gulf is commendable, his sour grapes are not.

The Army (and other services) had certain requirements to fill and (fortunately) had enough units to fill them. Not everyone gets a chance to be a hero. Those National Guard units that went did exactly the same thing the Regular Army did: follow orders and go where they were sent.

The mission of the Guard is whatever the policy makers say it is. Currently, that mission is not limited to replacing Regular units in garrison duty.

I now have 16 years in the military — four in the Coast Guard and 12 in the Army National Guard. If I am ever called, I will do the best job I can; if I am never called, I will do my best to train those who follow me so they'll be ready if they get called.

What I won't do is complain about unfairness when I can be accomplishing my mission.

Capt. Dennis P. Morehouse
Oregon Army National Guard
Roseburg, Oregon

BUNGLED YAKA ...

On page 29 in your June '91 issue, in the story titled "Tigers In Paradise," there is a photo of a vehicle with a caption that reads, in part, "... Soviet-built armored car known locally as a Yaka."

In fairness, the photo is not taken from the most advantageous angle and people in the vicinity partially obscure the vehicle. Nonetheless, the caption is incorrect.

The vehicle in the photo is actually a British Alvis (now British Leyland) Saracen armored personnel carrier. The Saracen was built in Britain in the 1950s-1960s; a companion vehicle built on the same chassis was the Saladin armored car, mounting a 76mm gun. Both vehicles saw extensive service with the British army in various parts of the world.

Lt. Col. G. Davidson Smith
Royal Canadian Dragoons (Ret.)
Ottawa, Canada

SOF received two letters (the other from Barry Nelson) about our Yaka misidentification. We apologize for the mistake, and will use more care in making future identifications.

CARE FOR COASTIES ...

Congratulations on the fine article, "Piranha Patrol" [June '91]. It is not often that the Coast Guard receives

recognition for the more interesting aspects of its duties. The Drug Interdiction Assist Team (DIAT) program must be one of our nation's best-kept secrets; I have talked to many active-duty Coast Guardsmen who do not even know of its existence.

What international publication other than SOF would care about a few Coasties earning their pay? Keep up the good work.

Lt. J.L. Echols
U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)
Satellite Beach, Florida

DANGEROUS IGNORANCE ...

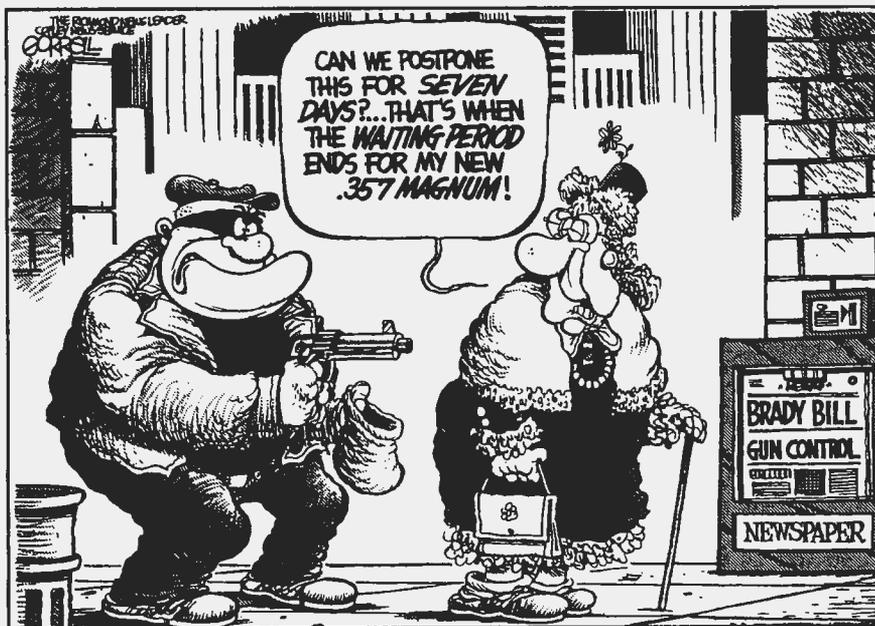
I am a senior at a university in Brooklyn, New York, and I need to write to air out some frustrations. My speech class recently had a debate, the topic of which was: "Do people have the right to own firearms?" A colleague and I debated in the affirmative; three others debated that people do not have the right to own firearms.

More than anything else, the debate showed how supremely ignorant anti-gunners are of the gun issue. But it didn't end there. We continued the debate outside of class, and I began to realize how pompous and hypocritical these anti-gun people are. One of them, who is a good friend despite our opposing views, was offered a gun magazine to read so he could see how "the other side" views the issue. He derided the idea and said he was so anti-guns, he wouldn't read it.

When I mentioned a Flak letter in the December 1989 issue of SOF about a woman who was raped after she surrendered her weapons, he claimed it was forged! These people have been brainwashed into thinking that whenever someone is shot, a fascist outcry to ban everything from law-abiding citizens must follow.

Despite the fact that an incredible majority of shootings can be traced to illegal sources (remember, I'm in New York), they want *no one* aside from the police to own guns. The idea of a citizen protecting himself from thugs is completely lost on them.

I subscribe to *Time* and the *New York Times*, as well as SOF, to balance the information I receive. I think that if people are going to be so vehemently against something, they should first know what the hell they're talking



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about, which the anti-gunners do not.

One last thing: I enjoy your magazine mostly for its informative and intriguing foreign war coverage — you people are providing us an invaluable service by reporting on these “forgotten” conflicts.

Jerry Park
Brooklyn, New York

REGISTER YOUR ROCK ...

I recently read an article in *Parade* magazine by Jack Anderson. In the story, Jack was assaulted and mugged by a man wielding a 3-foot-long pipe. I think Jack was right by suggesting we license pipes and have a seven-day waiting period before one can be purchased from the plumbing store.

Blame the weapon you are attacked with; not the criminal using it. In the Bible, Cain killed Abel with a rock.

Maybe we could take care of the unemployment problem by numbering and registering all rocks. Also, more people have been killed in automobile accidents in our country than in all of the wars we have been involved in. But the slaughter goes on. Bernard Goetz was attacked by youths with sharpened screwdrivers ...

Shall I go on, or does anyone else see the big picture?

Siegfried J. Pinchut
Garden Grove, California

WHATIZIT? ...

Please refer to the article titled “Target Saddam” in your March '91 issue. The article was very interesting and timely to artillerymen; I have a problem, however, with the semantics used relating to weapons in the story.

A “howitzer” used to be a short-barreled, high-angle, plunging-fire, relatively low-velocity cannon as compared to a “gun,” which had a higher velocity, longer range and flatter trajectory.

My earliest experience with these weapons was 56 years ago with the old Coast Artillery, when I was a range officer on a 155mm GPF of French descent. Our group took over from the 12th Marine Defense Battalion in the Russell Islands.

The old 155mm GPF was a very accurate weapon, excellent for harbor

defense. Our needs and interests at Russell, however, were primarily anti-aircraft, for which we had various weapons to choose from.

My question: Is the weapon on page 50 of “Target Saddam” considered to be a “howitzer”? The barrel looks far too long, i.e., more like the old “gun.” Please clarify.

Col. James H. Jensen
AUS (Ret.)
San Mateo, California

The weapon in the article is officially classified as a 155mm howitzer M198, although its maximum range (with the same weight of projectile) is about the same as the old 155mm guns M1 and M2 (now called M59) of World War II fame that replaced the 155mm GPFs. The self-propelled version of the 155mm howitzer and the 8-inch howitzer have also gone to long-barreled forms with “gun” type ranges.

In short, the distinction between “gun” and “howitzer” has become very indistinct. Still, even the latter-day howitzers have the capability of high-angle fire and variable charges. —Alex McColl

DIRTY IN THE DESERT ...

I am a U.S. Army tanker who served in Operation Desert Storm. I am writing to you regarding media coverage of the war. Almost everything shown was of the “pretty” side of the war.

Units like the 82nd and 101st Airborne, 24th Mech. and the Marines were all that was ever seen or heard of in the media. I am a member of the most powerful unit in the world, the Spearhead 3rd Armored Division. But we received little or no media coverage. We didn't live the “pretty” life like many in the Rapid Deployment Forces. We lived down and dirty in the desert. We didn't have fancy desert uniforms; we were the “men in green.”

We need no sympathy; just recognition like the other units got. We are all proud Americans who served our country until the end. Spearhead!

Cpl. Matt Green
3rd Armored Cavalry

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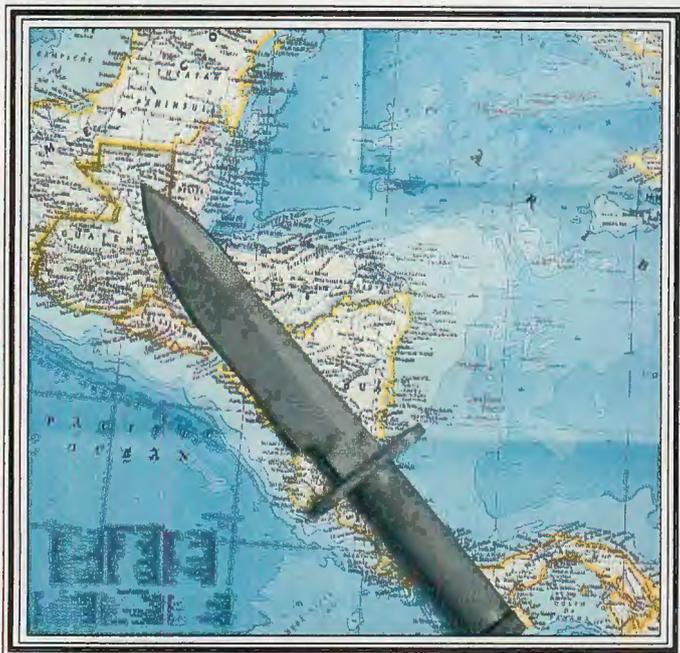
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BATTLE BLADES

by Greg Walker

Parrish Survivor



The Parrish Survivor went south in 1983 after being spotted by Green Berets needing a rugged, multipurpose field knife at a reasonable price. A superior design featuring Parrish's unique triple-tooth saw, the Survivor remains available for \$225, making it one of the best custom cutlery buys on the market. Photo: RP Knives

SOF's involvement with knives has been a long one. It began in 1975 when we published the David Steele classic, "Underwater Knife Fighting Techniques," and has continued ever since.

Over the years SOF has introduced, evaluated, reviewed and promoted an impressive array of combat blades. As retired Colonel Rex Applegate commented, "The kinds of bladed weapons encountered may vary from the

common pen knife to the World War I fighting knife, complete with brass knuckles.

"The razor, the popular hunting knife, knives with retracting or snap-out blades, the standard pocket knife, the kitchen or butcher knife, or the real fighting knife — may be employed in an assault. All are dangerous and can inflict serious wounds; but some are more to be

feared than others." SOF's forays into the world of edged weaponry has indeed reflected this thought.

In April 1991, Bob Brown and I met to discuss SOF's long-dormant cutlery column. "You can't undermine the value of a good knife," Brown said. "That's why my magazine has always tried to service our readers' interest in the field." After two days of talks, SOF is pleased to announce the rebirth of Battle Blades.

As per *Soldier of Fortune* tradition, we will shoot from the hip, and shoot straight when talking about blade ware. Parallel to this philosophy is my intention to present viable, factual, up-to-date information on the many forms of blade ware available today.

There will be no destruction testing for the simple reason that I can break

any knife given the proper setting and tools. There will be no knives evaluated or announced in SOF which are previously known to perform at less than their advertised levels.

In short, we'll be looking at only the best to begin with so as not to waste your time and money when searching for that perfect "silent partner."

RP Knives: Parrish Survivor

It was in early 1984 when I examined my first Parrish Survivor, purchased by a friend while the two of us were serving with Special Forces. It was an impressive looking knife and its field performance in Panama's triple-canopy jungles was attested to by its owner. For \$225 I thought he'd gotten a heck of a deal.

My own Survivor has been a constant companion since 1986. Made in June of 1985, it was the 487th such knife out of 1,000 delivered to date. Bear in mind that 1,000 knives of any particular model translates as a superbly successful project. Given Parrish is a custom knifemaker, spending roughly 10 hours on each Survivor's fabrication from start to finish, this is an impressive testament to the knife's popularity.

"Most have gone to Special Operations personnel, although quite a few are being bought by guys in the French Foreign Legion. I know of at least three that were deployed to Desert Storm; their owners were a pilot, a Green Beret and a paratrooper from the 82nd Airborne." In addition, Parrish sold a small number of this model to a Special Operations unit which issues them for specific missions. A source wishing to remain unidentified said these knives were most likely deployed to the Gulf during Desert Shield.

The Survivor's 8-inch blade is formed using the stock removal method of knife-making. This means that it is ground by hand from a billet of steel as opposed to being forged or stamped. Considering the intended use of the knife as a field tool, the selection of 440 C stainless steel is a good one as it is a respected standard in the industry, possessing high carbon content (0.95 to 1.2%) as well as chromium level (16 to 18%).

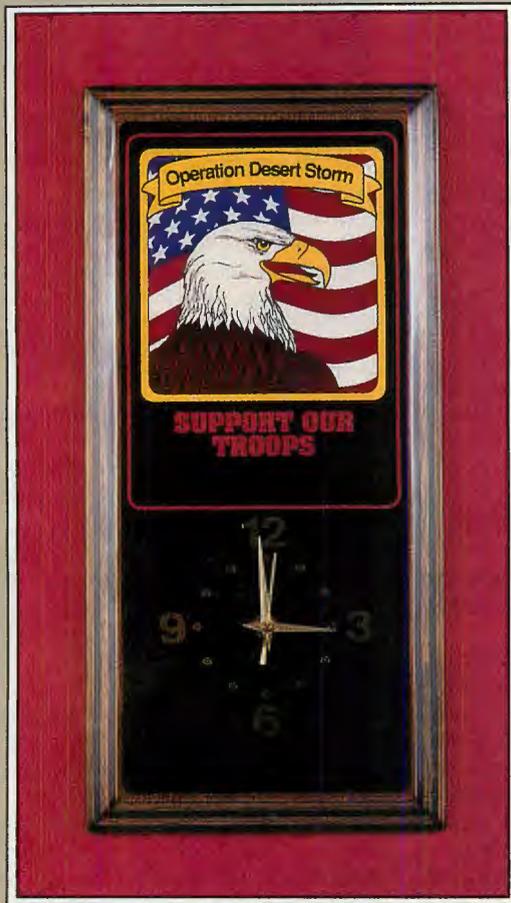
Parrish developed the unique triple-

SPECIFICATIONS: PARRISH SURVIVOR

Blade Steel	440 C Stainless
Rockwell Rating	58 RC
Saw	Triple-tooth of 50
Handle/Guard	304 Stainless
Sheath	Leather or Cordura
Price	\$225 plus shipping costs

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

RP KNIVES, Dept. SOF, 1922 Spartanburg Hwy., Hendersonville, NC 28739 (704) 692-3466



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SOF's "OPERATION DESERT STORM" PHOTO CONTEST

A lot of shots were fired in the Persian Gulf War, many with a camera. SOF magazine will be offering some serious prizes for your best photographs, either black and white or color. Photographs can be of anything, but action shots probably will be judged higher than others. Also, feel free to submit any stories of the media or other strange things you may have seen in the Gulf.

Prizes are as follows:

Grand Prize

\$1,000 plus a 1-year subscription to SOF

2nd Place

\$500 plus a 1-year subscription to SOF

3rd Place

\$250 plus a 1-year subscription to SOF

4th Place

\$100 plus a 1-year subscription to SOF

5th-30th Place

1-year subscription to SOF

Send your best work to: SOF Photo Contest, PO Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Appropriately, winners will be chosen on 2 August 1991 — exactly one year after The Mother Of All Screw Ups began.

Please print name and address on back of all photos to expedite return.

tooth saw which measures 4 3/4-inches along the blade's 1/4-inch-thick back. An aggressive pattern, it cleans itself while employed, and I have never experienced disappointment while having to utilize it as a saw. Equally, this feature rips canvas, rubber, thin plastics and cloth with ease. Use the proper, edged tool for the task and save yourself time, energy and possible injury.

The cutting edge is applied at roughly an 18-degree angle and is wonderfully durable. I've gone for as long as a week before having to hone my knife, and then I use a DMT diamond hone (fine) which brings the edge back up in less than 30 seconds.

I have long preferred the spear point as a design feature on survival knives, and Parrish's is both carefully executed and strong enough to withstand prying, twisting and moderate bending employments. (Note: Parrish fully sharpens the broad tip's false edge, which allows for excellent penetration and a secondary cutting edge.)

The hollow handle is formed from 304 stainless steel, as is the hefty double guard. This is one of the best such steels for working blade ware fixtures and is seen extensively on those knives coming from respected custom makers. Bonded to the blade using a two-part process, this is one survival knife which defies breakage at this critical juncture.

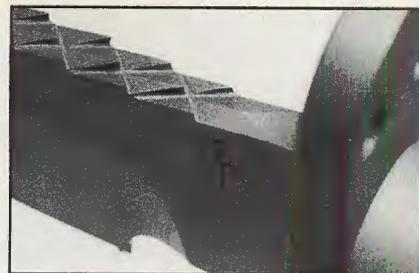
There is a 3 1/2-inch deep compartment available for 72-hour survival items (matches, aspirin, water purification tablets), this sealed by a flat butt cap using an O-ring made from a synthetic rubber called Buna-N. In more than five years of use I have yet to encounter moisture contamination of the compartment when properly closed.

The Survivor's metal handle is knurled for greater grip retention, and Parrish provides a synthetic slip-over like those used on police riot batons for further insulation/retention in cold climates or around a water environment.

Criticism about metal-handled knives centers around one's hand possibly freezing to such a material during use. Having lived and hunted in Alaska, my only comment is that smart people wear gloves under these conditions, and know enough not to touch an exposed metal surface of any kind when outdoors.

Further, cold hands become inoperable under harsh temperatures — so much so that working with an implement becomes impossible as the degree of exposure escalates.

As for weight, I don't find the Survivor to be cumbersome in the least. It is blade-heavy, which



"The RP Survivor is the best metal-cutting saw I have tested ... Parrish's knife is for real." Tony Tocci's observations came from this talented cutlery writer's in-depth testing of a number of survival knives for *Knives Illustrated* in 1989. What makes it work so well is Robert Parrish's exclusive triple-tooth pattern. Photo: RP Knives

accounts for its tremendous chopping capability.

Parrish provides both a leather and a black Cordura sheath for the Survivor — the customer's choice. I prefer the leather format as it is strongly stitched and riveted, offering a durable outer pocket for storage concerns and a sturdy strap 'n strap arrangement which is more than effective as a security system.

Both sheath packages are designed to fit the standard-width military pistol belt. I seldom use a leg tie-down cord as all such systems restrict leg movement. At the same time, I have tied the sheath down prior to parachute operations to prevent the scabbard from flapping around during exit from the aircraft. This also holds true when involved in cast and recovery operations when performing coastal/riverine missions.

My observations on the Survivor center on its admirable workmanship and sound design. Robert Parrish has been a knifemaker for 20 years and he's learned his lessons well. Number 487 has been with me a long time and has seen both field and urban activity. I have no complaints about its performance.

Of notable interest is Parrish's pricing, held at \$225 despite economic winds of whim which have seen custom knife prices soar. There is a six-month waiting period, but no deposit is required to order. A catalog is available for \$2, and I advocate getting one as Parrish does a number of both working and art knives which are impressive.

If you're looking for a rugged, well-made knife with the features we've discussed, look no further than Robert Parrish.

Greg Walker is a former Special Forces sergeant who served in Latin America. He is currently executive editor of Fighting Knives magazine and is a long-standing member of the Special Operations Association. ✕

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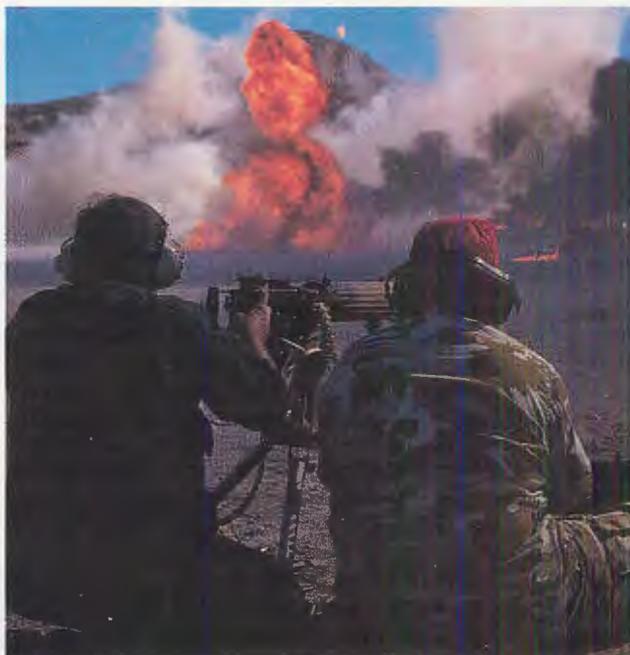
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(Until Friday, Aug. 16, 1991. After Aug. 16.....\$125)

Battle of the Blades included only to first 200 who pre-register. No exceptions.

(Battle of the Blades sponsored by Al Mar Knives)

WORLD SITREP

3 **BURMA**
Fighting on two fronts along Thai border: in hills opposite Mae Sariang at Phaw Hta between government and Karens/dissident students. Second front between Thai troops and druggies: backed by Burmese government, druggies from Wa hill tribesmen (formerly with defunct Communist Party of Burma) getting it on with Thais and drug warlord Khun Sa at same time.

4 **CAMBODIA**
Government asks international community for a million tons of rice to make up for shortages caused by drought and dislocation of 150,000 rice-growing peasants during harvest season.

5 **COLOMBIA**
Haggling with guerrillas over site for proposed discussions of proposed peace talks.

6 **EGYPT**
Will buy 46 Turkish-built F-16 fighters for \$1.6 billion — financed by U.S. military loans.

7 **EL SALVADOR**
Leftist guerrillas claim army deliberately killed nephew of Nicaraguan President Chamorro and 13 other rebels in ambush.

8 **ETHIOPIA**
Americans evacuate as rebels close on Addis Ababa.

9 **GERMANY**
Asks for U.S. business participation to help rebuild industry in eastern Germany.

10 **GREECE**
Expelling 200 Palestinians in wake of bomb that killed 20 people, including the Palestinian carrying it.

11 **HONDURAS**
Accused U.S. of violating national sovereignty after they busted a narcotrafficante plane that turned out to be part of a DEA setup.

2 **BANGLADESH**
Up to 300,000 feared dead in aftermath of cyclone and floods.

1 **AFGHANISTAN**
Khost fallen — on to Gardez, capital of Paktia. Regime hit Asadabad three weeks later with Scuds, claims Paks helped in Khost offensive; Islamabad says no. Is Khost domino or bargaining chip?



12 **HUNGARY**
Negotiating bilateral treaty with USSR to replace former military bonds; new treaty not to exclude possibility of joining other countries — even Western nations — in other pacts ... Suzuki of Japan to build joint-venture hatchback car here.

14 **LAOS**
As Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) meets, politburo gets reshuffled; four dropped so far.

15 **LEBANON**
Seventeenth anniversary of civil war that has killed an estimated 150,000. Quiet for now.

13 **JAPAN**
Six navy vessels (four mine sweepers, supply ship, support ship) working Gulf waters; estimates are multinational forces have another four months to go to clean up mines.

16 **LESOTHO**
Coup by army officers — second in five years — disposed military ruler Justin Lekhanya.

29

YUGOSLAVIA

Armed Serbs fighting Croatian police, many killed on both sides ... Croatian vice president's helicopter fired upon ... 700,000 workers went on strike in Serbia, demanding four-months back wages.

28

VIETNAM

To improve image, wipe out corruption, communist party has purged some 78,200 members.

27

USSR

Senior military officials say army on 18-month countdown to disintegration; troops restive over slow depoliticization — in 1985 there were 600 draft evaders, in 1990: 30,000 ... Gorbachev asks Washington for another \$500 million in credit (in addition to \$1 billion granted in December) to buy corn and other commodities ... Snow Brand Milk Products of Japan suspends shipments of baby formula until Sovs settle their bill ... Paratroops airlifted to Yerevan, Armenia, when fighting along Armenian-Azerbaijan border killed 36.

26

SWITZERLAND

The 30,000 holders of anonymous bank accounts, mostly foreign, will have to start registering 1 July 1991. Swiss officials cite problems over deposits of illegal money.

25

SYRIA

Buying Chinese M-9 surface-to-surface rockets with 375-mile range.

24

SINGAPORE

Army commandos stormed hijacked Singapore Airlines Airbus, took out four Pakistani hijackers, released 114 passengers unharmed.

23

PHILIPPINES

Road construction projects on Luzon, critical for development of agriculture, being hampered by NPA, who fear loss of sanctuary.

22

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Buying 24 Su-27 ground-attack aircraft from Soviets for \$700 million and negotiating with Iran for the Su-22 and MiG-29 fighters, plus Su-24 and Su-25 ground-attack planes flown there by Iraqis; PRC wants to swap tanks, artillery, other ground-force weapons, possibly M-class tactical missiles if international community doesn't object too strongly ... Food prices raised "to curb waste."

17

LUXEMBOURG

All 12 European Community leaders call for an international tribunal to try Saddam Hussein for war crimes, atrocities, genocide.

19

NIGERIA

Massive security operations in attempt to stem fighting between Christians and Moslems.

20

NORTH KOREA

Amnesty International reports that 12 prison camps hold more than 100,000 political prisoners.

21

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Teetering on anarchy; government instigating program to stop violent crime wave — curfews, more cops, more prosecutors, more jails. Critics suggest government attack crime in government first.

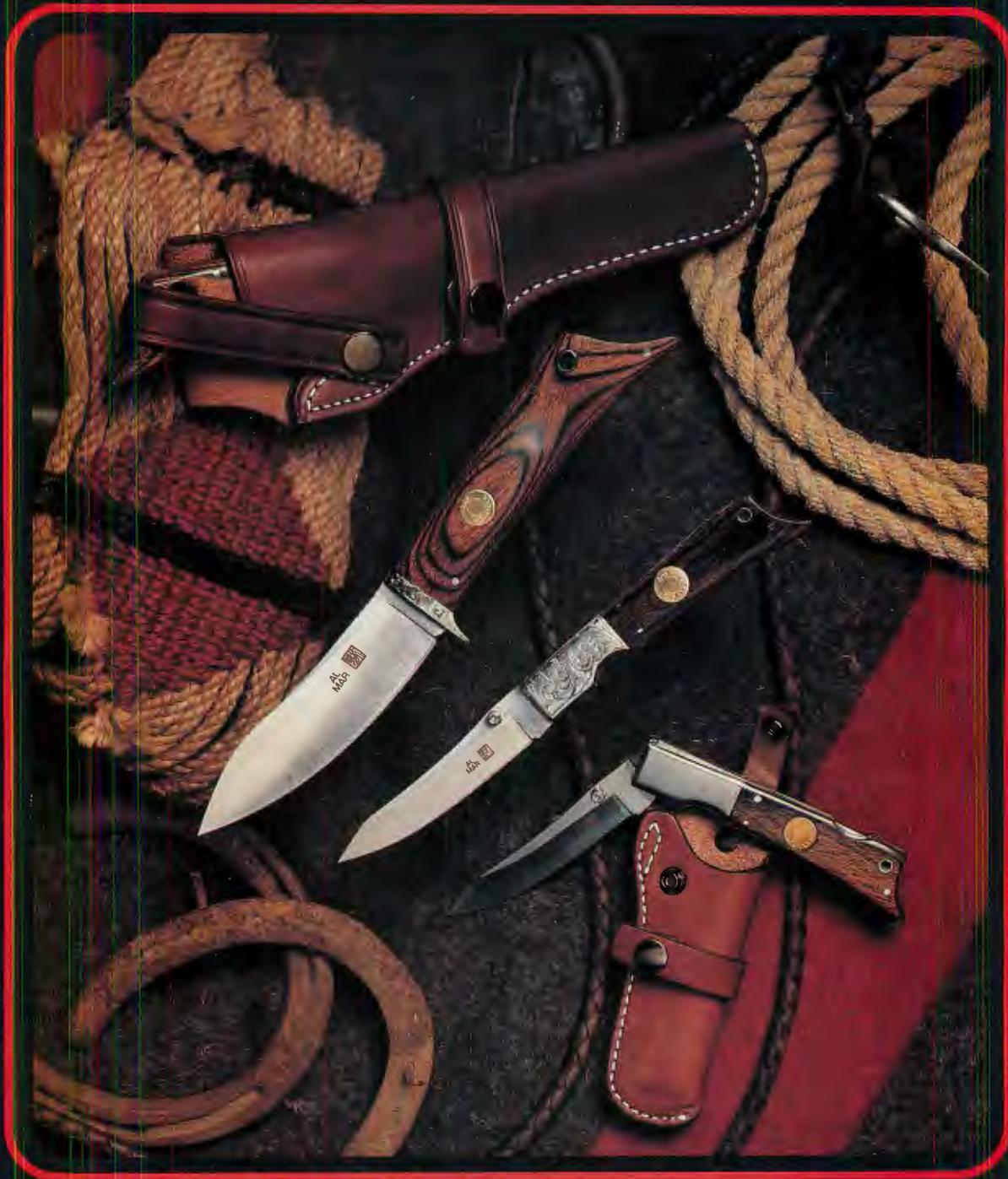
18

MONGOLIA

Soviet forces nearly gone. Improving relations with PRC allow cutting of forces, much military equipment on the block. PRC interested in squadron of Mi-24 Hind choppers — older models, but of interest to PRC to upgrade their chopper capability and manufacturing expertise.



GUNSTOCK



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Rates of Fire

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

THE "cyclic rate" of a machine gun is defined as the theoretical maximum rate of fire of the weapon operated continuously with an infinite supply of ammunition, disregarding the requirement to change magazines or belts. It is always expressed in rounds per minute (RPM). Who cares?

Everyone from the designer to the end user *should* care as the cyclic rate affects everything from hit probability to component life. A wide range of factors affect a machine gun's cyclic rate. Some of the most important are the method of operation (gas, recoil, retarded or pure, unlocked blowback), the mass of the reciprocating parts, port pressure (in gas-operated weapons), ammunition, fouling, buffers, recoil springs, magazine stripping pressure, belt load, atmospheric conditions and lubrication.

Cyclic rates on blowback-operated submachine guns can be adjusted by increasing or decreasing the mass of the bolt group. The cyclic rate of the M1921 Thompson submachine gun was lowered from 800 rpm to 600 rpm on the M1928 version by means of a heavier actuator.

Reducing the port pressure on a gas-operated machine gun by diminishing the amount of gas permitted to reach the piston will lower the cyclic rate, but all too often decreases the reliability. Increased fouling will work to the same end.

High pressure ammunition and extreme heat will increase cyclic rates somewhat. An increase in the ambient temperature will raise a bullet's muzzle velocity at the rate of approximately 1 1/2 feet per second (fps) per degree Fahrenheit and this will result in higher cyclic rates. Lubricants will also slightly increase cyclic rates, that is until they trap enough debris to increase the coefficient of friction of the reciprocating parts, at which time the cyclic rate will start to go down.

Weak recoil springs with low force constants will generally lower the cyclic rate. Stronger springs will increase rates of fire up to a point. If the recoil spring is too stiff, the bolt group will be unable to complete its rearward travel and the resulting "short cycle" will either cause a runaway or a failure to feed. Buffers of various types can also be employed to moderate cyclic rates

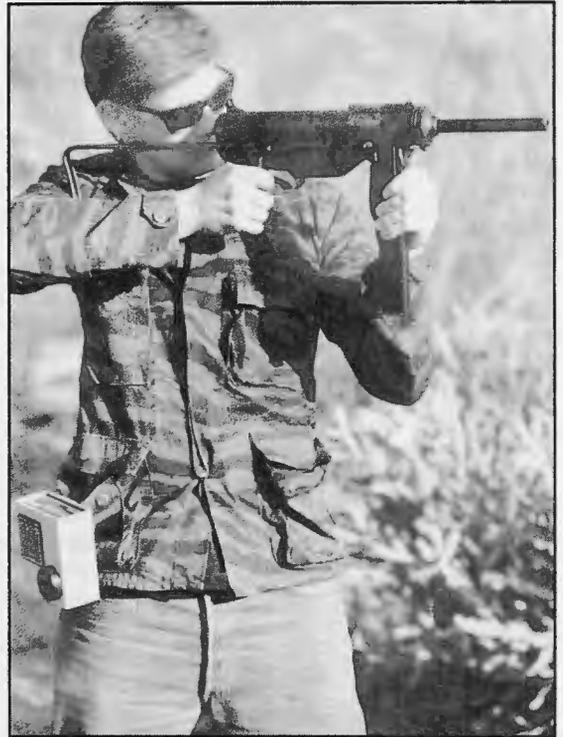
and increase component life.

Added to this complicated set of parameters is the fact that manufacturers frequently fudge about the cyclic rate in their specifications tables, as they are acutely aware that high cyclic rates generally decrease the hit probability of shoulder-fired weapons. A classic case in point is the Mini-UZI. IMI claims this worthless little bullet hose has a cyclic rate of 900 rpm. In truth, it's in excess of 1,200 rpm.

How can you determine the actual cyclic rate of a given machine gun and ammunition combination? What effect does the type and amount of lubrication you're using have on your weapon's cyclic rate? How does an environment like the Lower Sonoran Desert affect a submachine gun's rate of fire? Does the length of a free-hanging belt significantly affect the cyclic rate? Do you need to increase maintenance intervals?

Until now, unless you were prepared for a megabucks investment, there was no answer to these questions. Practical Applied Computer Technology Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 531525, Grand Prairie, TX 75053; phone 1-800-722-8462) is justifiably well-known in IPSC and reloaders circles for their PACT™ MKIII Championship Timer/Chronograph. At no extra cost, they have just added a cyclic rate counter option to the PACT MKIII.

Measuring only 5 inches wide by 5 1/4 inches long by 2 1/4 inches thick and weighing just 16 ounces, the PACT MKIII timer is self-contained, except for the optional chronograph detector screens and infrared printer. Powered by a 9-volt battery, a belt clip on the rear permits operation by the shooter himself. A microphone and the membrane-type keypad that controls all functions are located on top of the unit. At the rear are the on/off switch, input jacks for the chronograph sky-screens and other more complex functions and an infrared beam projector



M3 "Grease Gun" chugs away at only 405 rpm. Shooter determines the cyclic rate of his full auto weapon and ammo combination with PACT™ MKIII attached to his side with belt clip.

for the cordless printer. A 32-character liquid crystal display on the front provides the required information.

The PACT MKIII timer reads in thousands of a second and will hear shots that are as close as .03 seconds apart. That's the equivalent of 2,000 rpm, which will cover most full auto weapons with the exception of esoterica like the Heckler & Koch VP70, which fires three-shot bursts at the rate of 2,200 rpm. In any event, the VP70's three-shot string does not give enough data points at .001 second resolution for an accurate reading. To maximize the accuracy of the results, the measured burst should contain at least 20 shots.

To use the PACT MKIII timer for this purpose, first turn the unit on and wait for the screen to display "TIMER COMMAND:" Then push the "SET/MENU" key twice and the display will read "SWITCH TO FULL AUTO?" Push the "PRT YES" key and the screen will read "FULL AUTO COMMAND:" Push

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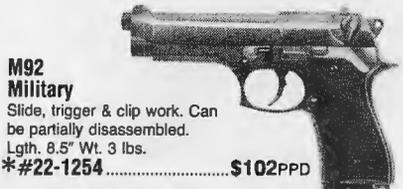
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*#01-300S (Nickel Finish).....\$119PPD



WWI Dagger

German Diplomatic Dress. Lgth. 15". Wt. 1 lb.
#22-4042.....\$50PPD



M92 Military

Slide, trigger & clip work. Can be partially disassembled. Lgth. 8.5" Wt. 3 lbs.
*#22-1254.....\$102PPD



1873 Peacemaker

Single action works like original, w/wood grips. Can be partially disassembled. Lgth. 11.5". Wt. 2 lbs.
#22-1186/G.....\$66PPD

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#14-711.....\$14PPD



1860 Army Revolver

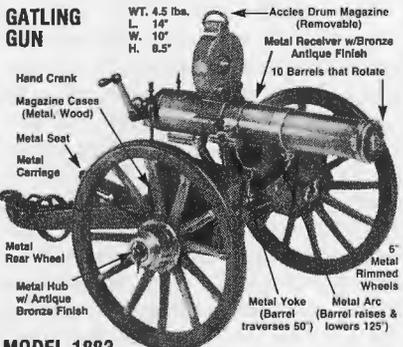
Action works like original, w/wood grips. Can be partially disassembled. Lgth. 13". Wt. 2.1 lbs.
#22-1083/L.....\$70PPD



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"GO" and fire when ready. When the burst is complete push "RVW" (Review) and the cyclic rate will appear on the screen.

If you want to save this information, you'll need the cordless infrared printer (manufactured by Hewlett Packard and powered by four AA batteries). Simply turn the printer on and position it so that it can pick up the infrared beam at the rear of the PACT MKIII timer. Then push the "PRT YES" key on the timer and the cyclic rate, shot number, interval between each shot and the cumulative time interval will print out on thermal paper.

We tested the PACT MKIII timer with a caliber .45 ACP M3 "Grease Gun" SMG; a belt-fed, caliber 5.56x45mm NATO, Stoner 63A machine gun; a World War I-vintage caliber .303 British Vickers, water-cooled medium machine gun and a Model 1893 Gatling gun. The ambient temperature was 65 degrees Fahrenheit. We fired four 20-round bursts, using Black Hills 230-grain FMJ, through the M3. Most sources give the M3's cyclic rate as 350 to 450 rpm. Our test specimen averaged 405 rpm, validating its reputation as the slow mover of submachine guns and indicating why no selector lever was ever required. As spongy as its trigger is, even the rankest amateur can tick off single shots with this 8-pound cake decorator.

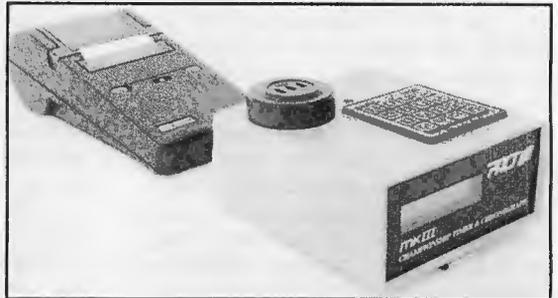
Firing the Stoner 63A at the lowest, middle and highest gas regulator settings provided even more interesting information. Twenty-round, free-hanging belts of PMC M193-type ball ammunition were used. The cyclic rates attained were 715, 830 and 860 rpm, respectively. At 715 rpm, this weapon's reliability will be no better than marginal and the middle gas regulator position should always be used except after long periods of firing without maintenance when heavy fouling induces sluggish operation. At that time, the gas regulator should be moved to its highest setting. Midway through the belt, the time interval between shots began to decrease at each of the three gas regulator settings. This is to be expected. As the belt load decreases, less energy is required to lift the belt and more of the system's available energy is directed to driving the bolt group rearward with a corresponding increase in the cyclic rate.

Belgian-made ball ammunition, headstamped "FN 66" was fired through the Vickers. Vickers' cyclic rates vary from 450 to 550 rpm and our test specimen averaged 527 rpm, indicating that the fuzee spring tension

had been adjusted correctly for this ammunition.

The Gatling gun we tested was set up to use 17-round sheet-metal feed strips. Cheaper to manufacture than the more complex Gatling feed mechanisms, such as the Accles drum, these feed strips have one fatal flaw. They all too frequently jam in the gun. When not jammed and turning the crank as fast as practical, we generated a surprising cyclic rate of 657 rpm.

There is no end to the type of full auto weapons' experimentation that can be conducted with the PACT MKIII timer. It costs only \$299.95 plus shipping. For a nominal charge, older PACT MKIII units can be modified to include the cyclic rate counter. The optional infrared printer is \$125; compared to what was previously availa-



When coupled with the cordless infrared printer, the PACT™ MKIII provides a permanent record of the cyclic rate, shot number, interval between each shot and the cumulative time interval. Unit also serves as a timer for action shooting practice — and a chronograph when skyscreens are added.

ble, this is more than reasonable. However, the PACT MKIII timer also provides two other distinctly different and important functions, each one of which by itself is worth the price.

Most SOF readers are interested in combat handguns and their application to self-defense scenarios. As developed by Jeff Cooper, the principles of the combat handgun are threefold: Deligentia (Accuracy), Vis (Power) and Celeritis (Speed) — collectively known as "DVC" by Gunsite graduates. Power, at least to the extent possible in a handgun, can be provided by the caliber .45 ACP cartridge. The two other elements are motor skills and can only be maintained by frequent practice. The paper or steel targets we employ will assess our progress with regard to accuracy.

Keeping track of the speed of your draw stroke and target acquisition presents a problem easily solved with the PACT MKIII Championship Timer, which is used by all the top IPSC and NRA action shooters. It provides you with a start beep (instant or delayed) to commence presentation of the

Continued on page 110

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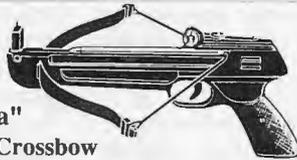
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COMBAT CRAFT

by Dave Ganci

Signaling in the Sticks

MURPHY'S Law dictates that at one time or another, every vehicle ever made will break down in the boondocks — be it a jeep, Humvee or pickup truck. And when it does break down, the driver will realize he forgot to tell anyone where he was going or when he would return. He will be ... stranded. And he's going to want to be rescued — ASAP.

Even without a vehicle, anyone who spends a great deal of time in the boonies can easily find himself in circumstances that require rescue. The trick is letting someone know you need help.

As a corollary to the above cited Murphy's Law: When disaster strikes, chances are you forgot to bring any signaling devices, and gave no thought

to who would notice your absence or when anyone would come looking for you. Chances are you aren't sure where you are.

If you have radio contact with a base operator or CB contact with another vehicle, you can give an approximate location — using these transmission methods as signaling tools. But you still must improvise ground and air signaling devices to attract the attention of those looking for you. If you have no radio capability, you must depend on makeshift signaling techniques to grab the eye of any passing aircraft or ground vehicle. Either way, you have to act fast and make your situation known.

The first thing you need to do if you have a vehicle is to open all the doors,

trunk-lid and hood — a universal distress signal. Then you need to take an inventory of everything in your possession that might aid you in signaling for help; your job is to make yourself as conspicuous as possible to anything that flies, drives or walks.

Old newspapers, magazines or cardboard make good fire tinder; old clothes, tarps, covers or flags provide attention-getters — especially if bright colored; gasoline from the fuel tank is the best fire-starter; the side or rear-view mirror can be used for a signal mirror; the horn can be used for audible signaling; floor mats, spare tire and anything rubber can be burned — making black smoke which is highly visible for long distances; road flares for igniting fires; spray paint for marking up the vehicle ... anything that will make your immediate environment stand out from its surroundings.

After the inventory is made, signal fires must be set up. Brush and wood must be gathered to build three fires about 40 feet apart in a triangle — at least 100 feet away from the vehicle. The piles should be pyramidal and at least 4 to 5 feet high. The paper materials should be stuffed into the middle of the piles ... the gasoline and road flares ready for ignition.

Large stones or tree limbs can be used to lay out a 50-foot "X" on the ground — close to the fire triangle. The "X" is the easiest shape to spot from the air and will draw the eye to the other signals.

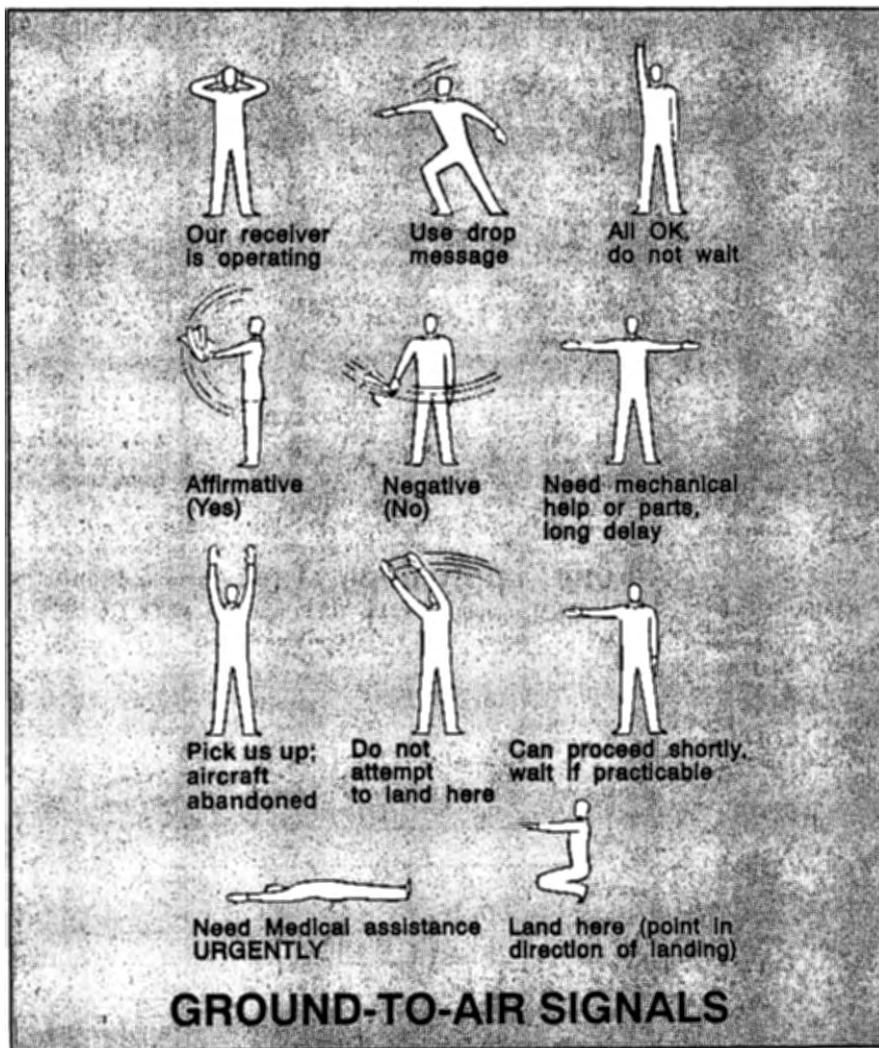
If the terrain is barren of burnable material, three road flares can be used for the fire triangle. If no flares are available, three boulder piles (spray painted if possible) or three bunches of seat-cover material — if a different color from the ground — can be used.

Three of anything is the universal distress signal.

Mirrors can be used to reflect the sun into the eyes of the pilot or vehicle driver in the distance — or into the eyes of a person on foot for that matter. This is a technique that takes practice. The would-be rescuer must be at such an angle from the sun that the reflecting beam can be easily flashed into his eyes.

The horn can be used to signal

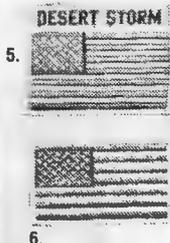
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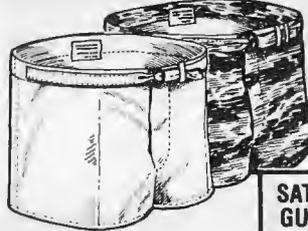
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COMBAT CRAFT

vehicles or persons out of shouting range — three beeps of two seconds each, spaced two seconds apart and repeated every 20 seconds. This is the same sequence used for gunshots.

Headlights can be turned on at night, also using the same frequency as the horn. They can be taken out of the moldings and turned upward to signal aircraft.

Tarps, old clothes or flagging can be laid out and held down with stones next to the large "X." The brightest piece of material should be tied onto a long branch and used for waving at aircraft.

Let's say you got lucky and were rescued within 24 hours. For your next trip, you decide to equip yourself with the best signaling devices and not get caught short again.

First, always leave a detailed itinerary of your journey and keep track of routes traveled. Next, gather a couple of commercial (red) smoke bombs and a couple of military aerial flares — the biggest available. (The pen flares are all right at night but virtually worthless during the day.) Try out all of the above to make sure you know how to use them.

Get the best brass police whistle available. The whistle will carry almost as far as the vehicle horn and certainly farther than the human voice — which becomes useless after repeated shouts.

Military signal panels should be on the list. They provide a bright purple and red surface for aircraft to spot.

A strobe light is a must. Military issue is best but there are some good ones available commercially. They can be seen for miles at night by both air and ground searchers.

A Sunday newspaper stuffed into a ruck or vehicle trunk makes a great signaling "X" when laid out and anchored by dirt.

A pair of heavy-duty gloves for collecting wood and brush is thrown in along with a couple cans of red and orange spray paint.

The most important signaling item of all is then added. As a matter of fact, two should be procured — just in case one breaks: the signal mirror. The best kind is the military Mark 3 Type 2. There are two sizes. The big one is a must. And you must practice with it to perfect your signaling technique.

			
1. Require doctor, serious injuries	2. Require medical supplies	3. Unable to proceed	4. Require food and water
			
5. Require firearms & ammunition	6. Indicate direction to proceed	7. Am proceeding in this direction	8. Will attempt to take off
			
9. Aircraft badly damaged	10. Probably safe to land here	11. All well	12. Require fuel and oil
			
13. No. Negative	14. Yes. Affirmative	15. Not understood	16. Require engineer
			
17. Require compass and map		18. Require signal lamp	

GROUND-TO-AIR MARKINGS

The key to using all available sight and sound signaling techniques is timing. Aircraft can fly by quickly, or be too high or too far away, or be going in the wrong direction. Vehicles can be too far away or traveling too fast. If the signal fires are wasted on either, they must be rebuilt.

If an aircraft is heading to the scene — and it isn't over 500 feet above the terrain — it's probably looking for something. If it's very high and moving fast, it's probably not aware of your emergency. The trick is to wait until the target is as close to your position as possible — and heading toward it. Then light everything up at once, wave the clothing, jump up and down, throw dust into the air, beep the horn, try the signal mirror — attempt to will the pilot or vehicle driver to see the signals.

In short, make the biggest display possible to grab the rescuer's eye and ear. That's the best way to get back

into town in time for happy hour.

There is a special signaling device sold only to aircraft owners and pilots — which can only be used in the case of a downed airplane. It's called the human emergency locator. It transmits a distress signal to a network of satellites which transmit to the U.S. Air Force Rescue Center. The Rescue Center then mobilizes a rescue mission that pinpoints your location. This device is basically a hand-held ELT, or emergency location transmitter, and can be used to augment the ELT that is required equipment on most aircraft. The ELT also transmits a location message.

Emergency Locator Products Corp. manufacturers such an instrument. It's called ELP-1000 and sells for \$254.95. It can be ordered from ELP Corp., Dept. SOF, 1565D Fifth Industrial Court, Bayshore, New York 11706; (516) 666-5049. ✕

PAIN AND PANIC IN PANAMA

Searching For Justice After Just Cause

by Steve Salisbury
Photos by Peter Noble

*FACING PAGE:
Faces still covered in camo paint, weary U.S. Army soldiers take a break during extensive live-fire exercise. There are now about 10,000 U.S. troops in Panama — slightly fewer than the number before Operation Just Cause.*

THE terror began an hour before midnight for the guests of the Hotel California in the heart of Panama City. It was just a week before Good Friday when half a dozen assailants — armed with Kalashnikovs, shotguns and pistols — barreled out of a blue Japanese sedan and attacked the hotel.

According to witnesses, they stormed both the reception area and the adjacent in-house restaurant. Not content to loot only cash registers and safes, the nylon stocking-masked robbers systematically mugged the guests of the six-story, economy-class hotel floor by floor.

Apparently not concerned with the threat of police intervention, the gang shouted that they were police looking for Colombians as they kicked room doors open, bashed terrified victims with rifle butts and pistol handles and stripped them of cash, jewelry and other valuables.

Gun metal against skulls and limbs splattering blood wrought chilling screams that reverberated through the hallways, turning them into corridors of horror.

Days later in the hotel restaurant, guest Jose Herrera still trembled as he recounted the terror.

Startled by all the commotion, the middle-aged computer engineer cracked open his door and spied a trio of the bandits busting into another room. He locked the door, put on his clothes and called the police. As soon as he hung up, the door burst open. The next thing he knew a shadowy figure armed with “a machine gun and a silver revolver” began pistol-whipping him.

Smack! The cold steel came down on the back of his head, shooting streaks of pain into his cranium. “The money!” the robber demanded. Driven by fear and shaking uncontrollably, the mild-mannered, bespectacled man emptied his pants pockets and was then ordered to open his attache case. Herrera turned on the light to comply with the demand when he saw the face of his tormentor. The



Graffiti in Panama City reflects the apprehension many Panamanians feel about the integrity and effectiveness of their PDF police force.



*"I'm Panamanian.
Don't kill me. Please
don't kill me. He
took me into another
room to shoot me
— to kill me ..."*

man had pulled the nylon stocking mask back over his head so he could breathe easier.

"He had blood on the mask," Herrera recalled. "I thought he had killed someone. It seemed that he busted a person's head and blood splashed him. I was afraid.

"I'm Panamanian. Don't kill me. Please don't kill me," Herrera remembered pleading. "He took me to another room to shoot me — to kill me — for I turned on the light and he was without his mask on. And another [robber] told him to let me be. I was begging them not to kill me. He told me to lie on the floor, and I remained there trembling for an hour."

No Need To Dial 911

The robbers plundered the hotel unopposed for about an hour before fleeing. Police posted nearby didn't intervene. Only an hour after the heist did a couple of cops arrive to make a cursory check. "They [the robbers] were sure the police were not going to come. More sure, they had connections with the police," Herrera charged, an accusation echoed by other guests and the hotel management.

"For me, it was 100% trained people with a lot of experience with weapons. For me, it was the police," Herrera said. Police Internal Affairs subsequently was called to investigate this still unresolved case.

A year and a half after an American military assault deposed one of the world's most hated tyrants, strongman General Manuel Noriega, from his stranglehold on Panama to a Florida jail to face charges of cocaine trafficking, things have gotten worse.

This small, yet vital, Central American nation is now plagued by an unprecedented crime wave, the violence and scope of which have even shocked Panamanians accustomed to a chronically serious crime problem.

"I would say it (the crime rate) has probably increased 100%, at least, since the invasion," Panama's first civilian police director in half a century, Ebrahim Asvat, said. "Certain types of crime are more common now than they were before, like armed robbery," he added.

Police statistics recorded 13 bank robberies in 1990 and six in the first quarter of this year, while press reports put the figure as high as 30 during the 15 months following Noriega's ouster. And last year's 192 homicides nearly equalled the 202 civilians the United States Southern Command estimates were killed during Operation Just Cause. (Critics of the invasion speculate that at least 10 times as many civilians were killed during the U.S. military operation,

though they have failed to provide lists of the dead to back their claim.)

Much of this explosion of crime can be traced to the thuggish legacy of Noriega's defeated and disbanded Panamanian Defense Force (PDF). A combination of army and paramilitary police, the PDF at its peak had about 17,000 troops. It was used primarily by the *generalissimo* to terrorize Noriega's political opposition and anyone else who crossed him.

Social Control By Terror

"The crime rate has increased because of several factors," Director Asvat said in a late March interview in his modest office. "First, there was a huge distribution of weapons during the period of the invasion by the PDF to the community — to anyone who wanted a gun. The second thing is previously we had social control by terror.

"The PDF had not only terrorized the delinquents, it had also terrorized the population. That was the way social control was exercised in Panama. And the other aspect that's important is that the PDF was also the regulator of organized crime in Panama. So most of the in-fighting we see right now is due to the fact that there is no regulator anymore."

Another important factor is that the unemployment rate has hovered around 20% over the last three years — according to statistics provided by the U.S. Embassy in Panama. And now the ranks of the unemployed include many disgruntled former Noriega troops — among them as many as 6,000 ex-PDF members purged or "retired" from Panama's new, reconstituted police force.

State terrorism has disappeared with the emergence of a civilian democratic government (though jailed Noriega supporters accused of criminal wrongdoing decry political persecution). But some vanquished soldiers — even among those now serving as policemen — appear to be continuing the PDF tradition of terrorizing citizens; though now for their personal gain instead of executing Noriega's orders of political repression.

"There's information that indicates that in a series of criminal occurrences, apparently of common order, ex-military men and others who work in the National Police and the Judicial Technical Police are found involved," Attorney General Rogelio Cruz was quoted in a Panamanian newspaper.

Since the American invasion, a demilitarized public force, pledged to uphold democratic values and apolitical professional standards, has replaced the PDF. Yet, given no other practical alternative to fill its ranks, it is currently almost entirely made up of PDF people who have decided to "let bygones be bygones," according to a corporal who had been in the PDF.

As of late March, 10,600 of the 10,900 members of the National Police (the largest branch of the Public Force, which also includes the separate Judicial Technical Police investigative branch of less

PDF police check a map before patrolling some of Panama City's most crime-infested streets.





Many U.S. Army units, from the engineers to the medical corps, have made major contributions to the Panamanian people's efforts to rebuild their post-Noriega homeland. Wide smiles on the faces of these children best express the feelings many Panamanians have toward U.S. troops.



Plainclothes PDF policemen arrive on the scene of a reported burglary.

than 900 agents and the small maritime and air services, together numbering about 800 members) were former PDF, according to Director Asvat.

This has raised the question of their loyalty to the civilian government, the leaders of which — including President Guillermo Endara and both of the country's vice-presidents (Panama has two) — the PDF has bludgeoned, arrested and prevented from taking office after they apparently defeated Noriega by a landslide in elections held in May 1989.

Director Asvat was confident that the purging of all high-ranking PDF officers, from lieutenant colonel up, along with half of the majors and captains, would greatly help the situation. That, in

conjunction with the administering of 20- and 120-hour courses designed to reform remaining ex-PDF soldiers into professional police officers would be enough, according to Asvat, to keep the Public Force straight as new agents were recruited and former Noriega troops phased out.

Opinion surveys show most Panamanians are wary of such optimism. In a Dichter and Neira poll conducted in March 1991, more than 70% of those surveyed responded that they had no confidence in the police. More than 54% affirmed their belief that the Public Force is still the PDF in civilian disguise, as opposed to

only about 32% who replied in the negative. And 49% of the respondents answered that they thought civilian authority didn't have control over "military men," while 38.5% responded that they thought it did.

Memories are still fresh of a two-day, early December 1990 rebellion orchestrated by former PDF men. They freed retired Colonel Eduardo Herrera Hassan, a dissident PDF officer opposed to the Noriega dictatorship who became Public Force Director in the new government before being arrested on charges of conspiring against the state.

The PDF force rescued him from an island jail by helicopter and persuaded him to lead their group of between 50 and 100 armed men, apparently including active-duty police, in a bloodless



Your tax dollars at work: one of many construction and irrigation projects the U.S. military has taken on throughout Panama.

takeover of a section of police headquarters.

President Endara had to call on American soldiers to quell the "coup attempt," in the words of government officials, a term Hassan disputes, claiming he only intended to call attention to the plight of security forces degraded by civilian politicians. The retired colonel was recaptured when a U.S. Army battalion intervened in an action that reportedly produced no deaths and few injuries.

Most of the rebels escaped, according to Panamanian and American officials, including the alleged revolt's mastermind, retired Captain Jorge Bernal (who later appeared in the Guatemalan Embassy seeking political asylum). As many as 100 policemen suspected of backing the rebellion were discharged.

Terrorists In The Shadows

The rebels who avoided capture are suspected in the flare-up of crime in the Panama City area. Another gang of former Noriega soldiers and militants is reportedly criminally active in western Chiriqui province. It remains to be seen whether these two bands are connected to each other or to the shadowy terrorist group, M-20.

M-20, short for "Movement of the 20th of December," the date the U.S. invasion commenced in 1989, has claimed responsibility for a string of minor terrorism and sabotage against U.S. targets, including a grenade attack at the crowded *My Place* discotheque early last year that reportedly killed one American serviceman and wounded four others, along with several Panamanians. (Some believe a jealous Panamanian could have perpetrated this attack following a dispute with American patrons over a girl and later anonymously blamed it on M-20 to cover his tracks.)

Since the December uprising, Panama has been relatively peaceful; at least there has been a lull in politically oriented violence. Yet a deepening political crisis has shaken this country of 2.4 million inhabitants. Confusion, incompetence, backstabbing and recrimination reign as the governing coalition of four political parties — whose common ground was ousting Noriega and little else — has come apart.

Panamanians have lost confidence in their government. A recent poll showed only 14% of those surveyed believe President Endara is effective; no politician rated higher than 35%. And in a more disturbing blow to Endara's image and credibility, it was subsequently reported that he had been a board member and treasurer a few years ago of several companies accused in an affidavit by DEA Agent Yvette Torres of laundering cocaine money.

President Endara, under no indictment himself, denied any wrongdoing and dismissed the leaking of the affidavit's contents by a leader of the Revolutionary Democratic Party, an opposition party identified with the previous Noriega regime, as politically motivated.

Government officials and legislators seem more interested in bickering among themselves than defusing the time bomb of deteriorating social, economic and political problems.

"There's going to be a powder keg soon," warned Isabel Corro, founder and chair of the Association of Family Members of Casualties of the U.S. Intervention. Corro's group demands identification of the victims of Just Cause, and calls for the honoring of the dead PDF soldiers, declaring 20 December 1989 a day of mourning.

"And if there isn't a stop now," she said, "at any moment there's going to be an explosion, and urban guerrillas will invade. The only thing missing is a voice that says 'let's go.'"

Many Panamanians view such a warning as alarmist. But if it comes to the unlikely extreme of guerrilla warfare, the voice to inspire it could quite possibly be that of a disgruntled member of the Public Force. The root causes of the December rebellion, claimed by its front man, Hassan, run deep in the Public Force.

Eight-hour work days (as compared to barracks life in the PDF) don't make up for the profound unhappiness police feel over low salaries (\$280 a month for a bottom-level agent, the same as in the PDF) and the removal of many privileges they enjoyed under Noriega, such as free transportation and meals. But what has taken a severe toll on their morale is the humiliation they feel from being demeaned by unforgiving government leaders and rejected by much, if not most, of the public, suspicious of their history in Noriega's ranks.

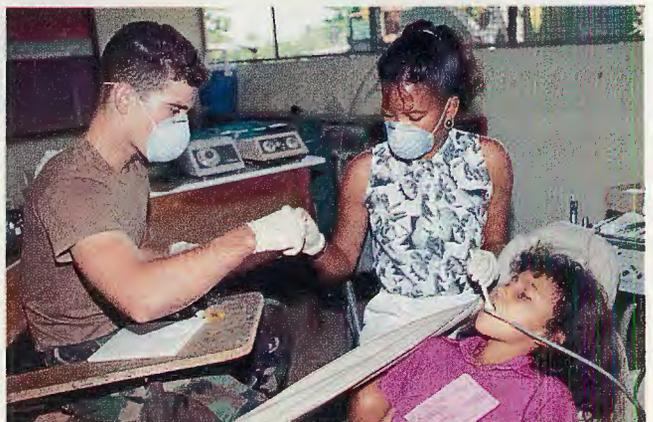
"It's sad, but the people of Panama are easily manipulated and managed," a Public Force lieutenant confidentially told me. (I was conversing off-the-record with several disillusioned policemen, all veterans of Noriega's army, in a dingy, ill-lit office at a Panama City station.) "There are more drugs now. There is more corruption now — not only in the police, but in high levels of the government, everywhere. And still, people dwell on the past."

"We want to live in peace, but we want respect," a sergeant added, summing up the anger of his comrades. "Before, there was respect and discipline and confidence in the Defense Force. But now our leaders don't even respect us. Panamanian Vice-President Ford called us faggots who don't confront the criminals. In the past, we had fewer problems with criminals because we would kill them.

.38 S&Ws vs. UZIs

"But today we catch them and the judges let them go. And if we do anything wrong arresting them, we can go to jail. For us to make progress in fighting crime we have to have the support of our leaders. They don't even give us our 8% annual pay raise like we got before [in the PDF]. We have to be better equipped, better armed. We carry .38 Smith and Wessons while criminals sometimes are armed with UZIs."

The United States government has provided the Public Force with communications gear and Chevrolet Corsica patrol cars. But tons of Cuban-supplied AK-47s and other assault weapons captured by the U.S. Army during the invasion are now stored in military warehouses in Pennsylvania, according to Police Chief Asvat. It's rare to see Public Force agents carrying an automatic rifle; and when you do, it's usually a Taiwanese-made T-65, a shoddy copy of an American M16, the police complain.



U.S. Army dentist works with Panamanian health professional treating people in a local clinic.



A policeman keeps vigil under the weary eyes of a frightened and distrustful public. Most PDF policemen used to work for Noriega.

Not being issued combat rifles is normal for American police, but forcing Panama's former soldiers to exchange their automatic weapons for revolvers has been like forcing a writer to give up his word processor for a typewriter; and it is a painful reminder that the government distrusts its own security force.

A lieutenant lamented: "I chose to join the PDF because I wanted to have a career in the military. After all my training and studies I now have to work as a policeman. Being a cop is very good. But it's sad when you can't have the career you want, for which you've always prepared and enjoyed for several years. The Defense Force's mistake was getting involved in politics. And now I'm paying for it."

Government efforts to insulate the current of police discontent with poor public relations have been like wrapping an exposed incandescent wire with Scotch tape: it smolders through the weak, transparent cover.

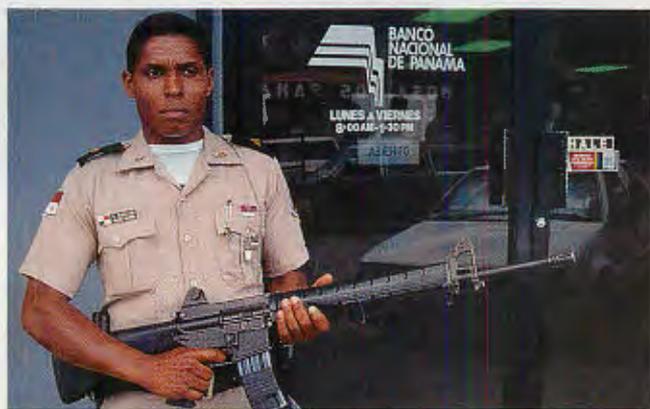
"When the government took power, it demilitarized the Panamanian troops because it didn't want military men," Isabel Corro said. Her father was a PDF lieutenant killed during Just Cause.

"The government took away the large-caliber weapons because it was afraid of a coup. If he (President Endara) says all the police are on his side and everyone backs him and everyone loves him, for what reason did he have to resort to Southern Command to seize Hassan [in the frustrated December rebellion] and not to the Public Force? He knows the force doesn't like him."

How do the police feel about their erstwhile commander-in-chief, Gen. Manuel Noriega?

Noriega Should Be Shot

"He should be shot by firing squad," the sergeant of the group



Violent crime has become so rampant in Panama it is necessary for police to post heavily armed guards outside of banks on paydays. Here, a policeman stands guard with a 5.56mm Type 65 assault rifle made in Taiwan. The rifle is essentially a hybrid weapon exhibiting features taken directly from the M16A1 and AR-18.

U.S. Military Role in Panama Two Years After Just Cause

Fearful of potential rebellion from the ranks of the hastily created Public Force, almost completely composed of former Noriega soldiers, the Panamanian government allowed U.S. infantry forces initially to carry out joint patrols with the lightly armed Public Force on a large scale.

"We had a joint patrol ratio back then of about three American infantry soldiers to one Panamanian National Police (PNP) officer," U.S. Army First Lieutenant Paul Fredenburg said.

GIs were at first wary of their new partners — especially given that their erstwhile enemies of just a few days prior carried .38 revolvers and often followed their American supervisors on foot patrols. But hesitancy disappeared quickly, according to both Panamanian police and American soldiers, and both sides operated together without conflict.

According to Bill Ornsby, Southern Command Army spokesman, about 50 U.S. Special Forces troops, supported by another 200, continued to operate until mid-fall 1990 in the cities and countryside. They gathered intelligence, took inventory of Public Force and community needs, and acted as a liaison between Southern Command and community leaders and police. But this operation has been scaled down to a handful of American Special Forces troops, generally dressed in civilian clothing to maintain a low profile.

Currently, the American military presence in Panama has returned to slightly below its pre-invasion strength of about 10,000 troops in the Panama Canal area. Its field relationship with the Public Force has been reduced to "courtesy patrols" of usually one U.S. MP teamed up with one Panamanian cop to maintain order in public places where there are U.S. citizens or interests.

"We don't want to have anything military to do with the Public Force," a U.S. Embassy spokesperson in Panama City said. "In a democracy you have a civilian police force. We want to assist the Panamanian government in its decision to form the Public Force as a civilian police force. Demilitarization is the word."

Perhaps the U.S. Armed Forces' greatest contribution now to peace and stability in Panama is its constant civic action.

"We're here to help Panamanians," Second Lieutenant Deno Murphy of the 142nd Medical Battalion said. He and 20 other American soldiers were helping about 30 Panamanian doctors, dentists, veterinarians and their assistants in the dusty town of Ocu. "We're getting good, positive field training and it's an opportunity to work medically on a real-world mission. We're not here to take anything away from the Panamanians. This is their show."

"The United States Army has come to our community and we feel very happy," Kendall Royo, head of the Ocu chapter of the Red Cross, said. "We feel very grateful to the American Army and to the United States for this help they've been doing not only in Ocu, but in the other areas of the country. We cooperate with them at every moment they need us."

All U.S. military units (not including minor exceptions such as embassy details) are scheduled to withdraw from Panama by 31 December 1999 as part of the Panama Canal Treaties. But, given the mutual goodwill and friendship existing between the U.S. Armed Forces and the Panamanian people, it's a good bet GIs will still be carrying out civic action in Panama well beyond that date.

— S.S.

of policemen I talked with in the dingy office said. His comrades vociferously seconded the suggestion.

"He betrayed us ... Noriega is a chicken. He took the easy way out and ran and deserted us," a wiry agent wearing a dark baseball cap added. "It showed he had personal interests he wanted to protect and no honor to defend the country. Before we didn't believe those stories of him being a *narcotraficante* [narcotics trafficker]. Now I think he deserves to be shot."

"We were ready to fight the *gringo* invaders and defend our

Continued on page 113

KILLING FIELDS



*KPNLF, ANS and Khmer Rouge fighters with captured T-54 tank shortly after liberation of Kamping Puoy. Next stop: Phnom Sruk.
Photo: Peter Bussian*

SOF Correspondents Join Cambodian Forces In Attack On Phnom Sruk

by Peter Bussian

IN FULL BLOOM

CROSSING into Cambodia from Thailand, just south of the Site 2 refugee camp, I felt as though I had just time-warped back 50 years.

The single dirt track led on forever across the beautiful land that cried out in pain from its recent past: four years (1975-1978) of brutal Khmer Rouge rule, when as many as 4 million people were killed; then 12 years of civil war, up to the present day, with the Vietnamese-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) communists in Phnom Penh.

I wondered how such fertile land could lead to such death and destruction.

Reaching the headquarters of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), one of the non-communist resistance factions fighting the PRK, I was met by a heavy-set man who looked to be in his 50s, General Pan Thai, head of the general staff.

Over coffee, I was told that there would be a campaign to take the town of Phnom Sruk, 40km east of Thmar Puok, the KPNLF stronghold and center of civilian operations. As the general talked, a strange beast from his private zoo paced the ground eating rocks.

I wondered what I would be eating for the next week.

An hour later, we were off down the dusty road toward Thmar Puok. I lucked out, as the other two journalists with me, *Soldier of Fortune* correspondent Tom Peterson and photographer Max Weale, speak fluent Thai, which made communication a snap.

The soldiers in the truck were light-hearted. After 12 years of bloody civil war, they had become pros, heading out to do a job they had done so many times before, enjoying the ride and the company. It was three hours to Thmar Puok, where we had a great lunch of God-knows-what. I didn't ask. Then we headed out — another four hours by truck.

Every Man A Liberation Front

Pulling up to our rendezvous, I was amazed to see two ancient Soviet tanks. One didn't run and was being towed to battle to be used for its gun. Life in the fast lane. There were many soldiers from each of the rebel groups milling around, mostly U.S.-backed KPNLF and Chinese-backed Sihanoukists.

There were even a few Khmer Rouge around, more for



KPNLF troop adjusts sling on freshly captured AK-47 in preparation for attack on Phnom Puoy. Photo: Max Weale

observation than anything else. Khmer Rouge were easy to pick out (even aside from their uniforms) because they never smile and if you try to take their picture, they scowl and give you a look that kills. (See "Chaotic Cambodia" sidebar for more on who's who.)

I cleaned up a bit and walked around, studying the map that Tom Peterson had brought. The plan for attack was to head south, take the village of Kamping Puoy, then head south again and take Phnom Sruk from the east.

Hopefully the enemy PRK troops would be expecting us from the west. At the same time, other KPNLF regiments would attack four other towns and blow up two bridges on Highway 6, the main east-west artery in Cambodia, isolating the enemy soldiers.

The attack was scheduled for 0200 the following morning, but then we got delayed for a day at the last minute. No explanation, but I assumed because this was a coordinated attack, leaders were still trying to get everything and everyone in place.

The next afternoon, we headed out across a vast field. The back of the

Nissan truck was packed full of soldiers and gear and, once again, my flabby Western body was wincing in pain. The guy next to me, or under me, mimicked explosions and pointed to the field. Bingo. Land mines. Great. Then I found out that only one guy with us knew the road — and he wasn't driving.

So all eyes were on this guy, the driver watching him in his rearview mirror ... I was watching him too, instead of breathing. It began to get dark and I thought about New Mexico and how I would never see it again.

Land Of The Legless

We kept veering off the road, then had to back up and try again. On one occasion we got stuck, got out and started pushing. Visions of legless refugees invaded my thoughts. The little Soviet mines used here are perfect for popping off your leg just below the knee.

But we got through the field — all still walking. I sucked in air and passed out cigarettes, making friends. We spent the night in a very small village just across the river from the enemy PRK troops. Our guys were drinking Mekong whisky and fading off to sleep.

Waking early, we had the usual breakfast of rice and fried frog, freshly caught that morning. I had some American rations and

“As the last truck pulled out, a shell ex



Captured PRK troops after liberation of Kamping Puoy. POWs are treated well by the resistance for various reasons, including propoganda value. Photo: Peter Bussian

ever seen a foreigner; they stared at me beyond belief. I gave the old ladies some Copenhagen in exchange for betel nut. All of us got sick.

Next, we traveled by oxcart to meet up with artillery support to take the main objective — Phnom Sruk. Tom Peterson broke his foot in an oxcart accident, but stoically said it didn't hurt.

At our new camp we put up our hammocks as a soldier picked little red berries and handed them out to us, giggling hysterically as our mouths puckered and we spit them out. I wasn't laughing. A few guys sat around the fire roasting chicken. The commander was perched cross-legged under a tree, talking on the radio — and listening intently to the battle going on just a few kilometers away at Phnom Sruk.

We had been on the move for two days now, first liberating the village of Kamping Puoy, then moving into this position. The troops were dead tired; this little respite meant a lot. But not for long.

The radio erupted with screaming voices. The front line soldiers were in

Preparing for battle on the two T-54 tanks (one pulls the other) shortly before the attack on Phnom Sruk. Photo: Max Weale



passed around some five-year-old beef stroganoff. Then we headed off on foot and wagon to take Kamping Puoy, which didn't take long after the (working) tank arrived.

After a while, the KPNLF soldiers had their tank positioned just outside of the village. Apparently, as soon as the enemy troops saw it, they got scared. But it took a brief firefight to get them to surrender. We took about 15 PRK troops as prisoners. There were no casualties.

None of the younger people in the newly liberated village had

ploded right in the middle of the camp.’’



Residents of Kamping Puoy cheer KPNLF troops after liberating their town — 1) for kicking the PRK out, 2) for not destroying their homes in the process. Photo: Peter Bussian

trouble. Five enemy tanks had opened fire from Phnom Sruk. Guys scrambled off down the hill to fire off a few rounds from their captured, Soviet-made 122mm guns.

The rest of us loaded up the trucks with supplies in anticipation of falling back. KPNLF guys on USAID-supplied dirt bikes clattered off down the land-mine infested road to find a new camp.

Then we hunkered down to wait for the fire. We dug holes, more for something to do than for any real hope that they would save us if a shell landed dead-on in the camp. Every few minutes, a faint explosion could be heard far off to the southeast.

No one uttered a sound. Then I heard an enormous whizzing sound and the shells landed. Most of them hit around 1,000 meters to the west. But, as the hours grew, the shells got closer. Everyone was wondering how close they had to get before we could bolt.

Finally, the order came. As Tom Peterson, Max and I were evacuating by motorcycle, troops began piling into their enormous, ugly Soviet trucks. Soon, we were off down the bumpy road. As the last truck pulled out, a shell exploded right in the middle of the camp. A little further down the road, another shell exploded 3 meters off the right side of the truck, amazingly doing no damage.

After reaching our destination, everyone was talking at once — tales of our “close one” and the disappointment at failing to take Phnom Sruk. Hands were flailing. We broke out the Mekong and talked deep into the night, keeping a watchful eye on the horizon — and ears wide open. We could have to fall back again.

After about two hours, the shelling started again. We

HANDLING CAMBODIAN POWs

During my stay in Cambodia, I found it interesting the way POWs were treated by various factions in the war.

One late morning, I came across a group of nine POWs; a few KPNLF troops stood guard. The captured men were all in their late teens or early 20s, wearing standard-issue, faded PRK khaki uniforms.

They appeared more relieved to be out of the fight and still alive than fearful of having been captured. The conversations between the POWs and their captors appeared to be quite relaxed.

The general attitude among resistance troops I met was that these men had been forced by the PRK regime to serve in the army and, therefore, were victims of the government like everyone else. Because of this, the KPNLF troops didn't seem to harbor any personal

hatred for the individual PRK soldiers.

The senior-ranking POW was a 20-year-old sergeant named Yea Sophi. He said the contingent he had left with from Kompong Cham by truck started with 700 men, but by the time they arrived at Phnom Sruk, only 500 remained due to desertions on the way.

From here, the POWs would be sent to the rear for interrogation. Resistance policy is to release nearly all POWs after interrogation.

The purpose of this is have the released prisoners return home and spread the word of their humane treatment at the hands of the resistance.

By doing this, the KPNLF serve the cause of the resistance by encouraging even more desertions and surrenders.

— Tom Peterson

CHAOTIC CAMBODIA: FORECAST CALLS FOR BLOOD

For Cambodia, 1991 began with continuing, but still unsuccessful, efforts to find a political solution to that country's devastating civil war.

The question of a political solution rests with a plan drafted by the Permanent Five members of the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council (the U.S., the UK, the USSR, France and China).

Called "the last best chance for peace in Cambodia," this plan calls for the U.N. to assume administrative authority over the country, deploy a large peacekeeping force to maintain security, and organize free and fair elections so that the people of Cambodia (the Khmers) can choose who will govern them.

As part of the plan, a 12-member Supreme National Council (SNC) has also been formed to represent Cambodian sovereignty during the transitional period of U.N. administration. The SNC is composed of six members from the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) government and six from the resistance (two from each of the major three factions).

To ensure that one side or the other doesn't take advantage of the plan, a number of measures have been set down by the U.N.

First, the U.N. is to supervise the vital ministries of defense, interior and foreign affairs to ensure they are in neutral hands.

Second, all armed forces of the PRK and the resistance are to be disarmed and demobilized under U.N. supervision.

Third, U.N. officials are to be placed in both the offices of the resistance groups and the PRK with full powers to monitor operations and remove or reas-

sign anyone who is violating the peace plan.

Fourth, the U.N. is to verify that all Vietnamese troops have been withdrawn from Cambodia.

The resistance has accepted the plan without reservation. The PRK has not.

Early in October 1990, the first meeting of the SNC collapsed when disputes arose over its composition. The PRK objected to resistance president Prince Sihanouk's role as chairman, as well as his even being a member of the SNC.

The resistance, in turn, objected to PRK leader Heng Samrin's prime minister Hun Sen's demand to be SNC vice-chairman.

Although the resistance later dropped its objection to Hun Sen, the PRK has continued to reject Prince Sihanouk. The resistance feels that without Sihanouk, the SNC would become dominated by Hun Sen and used as an international platform to push the PRK's (and Vietnam's) agenda for Cambodia.

All of this, however, has been largely overshadowed by the PRK rejection of the U.N. plan.

The PRK rulers in Phnom Penh claim that the plan contains no safeguards to prevent a return to power by the Khmer Rouge (officially known as the D.K. — Democratic Kampu-

chea), who ruthlessly ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1978. Therefore, they have said that they will agree to having forces from both sides moved to designated areas, but will not agree to disarm or demobilize their own soldiers.

The U.N. has tried to explain to the PRK that any attempt to grab power will be prevented by U.N. peacekeeping forces. Additionally, the two non-communist resistance factions, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and Sihanouk's forces, the *Armee Nationale Sihanoukiste* (ANS),

have said that they would assist the U.N. in keeping tabs on the Khmer Rouge to prevent them from concealing troops and weapons for a

power-grab.

The Permanent Five nations also feel that if the PRK is allowed its conditions, the resistance would also demand theirs, and the plan would eventually collapse from endless bickering over the terms.

However, to date, the PRK government remains steadfast in its rejection of the plan. The PRK has also decided to organize its own national elections in 1992, with or without a political settlement.

The resistance feels that the PRK is simply afraid of losing power in a free election, and views the PRK as nothing more than a puppet of Vietnam. (It

estimates there are still 10,000 to 30,000 Vietnamese troops in Cambodia.)

The resistance has been capitalizing on this discontent by increasing its political and civil-affairs operations in rural Cambodia.

Also, preoccupied with its own problems, the old patron of communist Southeast Asia, the Soviet Union, has announced that it is cutting military and economic aid both to the PRK in Phnom Penh, and Hanoi.

Thus, in general, the PRK troops remain confined to the main population centers and communication routes. Its periodic efforts to push into resistance-held areas with its generally poor-quality troops have been short-lived and unsuccessful. The initiative of where and when to strike rests mainly with the resistance, even though they are often short of ammunition and supplies.

The non-communist resistance has received some military aid from China and Singapore, along with non-lethal assistance from the U.S., which ranges from trucks and radios to medicine and Meals, Ready to Eat (MREs).

Importantly (and dangerously), however, it is believed that the exclusively Chinese-supported Khmer Rouge have ample stocks of both ammunition and supplies. But, even while the KPNLF attack on Phnom Sruk failed because of ammunition and supply problems, the other objectives along and near Highway 6 were taken. However, even here, the resistance was forced to quickly pull back north of Highway 6 after overrunning five positions and destroying two bridges to avoid PRK fire-

Cont. on page 106



Young ANS troops being issued RPG-launchers prior to assaults on PRK-held towns of Kamping Puoy and Phnom Sruk. Photo: Max Weale

were out of ammunition, so we clattered into the old trucks and started off down the road, heading straight for Thmar Puok and the Thai border. Along the way, we passed through little villages, where people all came out and cheered. It was cold and I had frigid AK-47s embedded in my backside.

We heard on the radio that the rest of the KPNLF offensive had been a success: four towns were taken and both bridges were blown up on Highway 6. Only our group had failed to take Phnom Sruk, the main objective. The men told me this was common. Ammunition and military hardware are in constant short supply for the KPNLF, giving the Khmer Rouge the upper hand in the resistance.

Finally we reached Thmar Puok, practically civilization, ate and went to bed — in a real bed.

The next morning, we high-tailed over to the border. General Pan

Thai was in a good mood after the success of the last few days. On the whole, the offensive went great — relatively light KPNLF losses: 10 dead and a few wounded. (See "Attack On Phnom Sruk" sidebar for strategy and weaponry used in the battle.)

Also, a lot of territory had been gained. PRK forces were now cut off from resupply on Highway 6. In a few days the rebels would try for the village of Phnom Sruk once again — this time knowing the situation better and hopefully with more ammo.

General Pan Thai needed to go teach a military class and was on the run. We said our good-byes and crossed over into Thailand.

Back in the Thai border town of Aranyaprathet, I headed for the local ice cream parlor.

Peter Bussian is a freelance photojournalist based in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

ATTACK ON PHNOM SRUK

The main objectives of this attack were the district town of Phnom Sruk (about 300km northwest of Phnom Penh) and a series of PRK-held posts and bridges along a 15km stretch of Highway 6 between Sisophon and Siem Reap.

Max Weale, Peter Bussian and I went in with the forces attacking Phnom Sruk.

If totally successful, the operation would cut the only remaining road link to Siem Reap, a provincial city of about 70,000 people, and the nearby Angkor Wat temple complex, the symbolic heart and soul of the Khmer nation.

In May and June of 1990, forces fighting against the PRK had already taken control of up to 75km of Highway 6 east of Siem Reap toward the central Cambodian city of Kompong Thom (about 150km north of Phnom Penh).

The isolation and fall of Siem Reap and Angkor Wat would have serious political and military implications for the PRK regime.

Since then, the PRK forces had been left with only one way to resupply and reinforce Siem Reap and most of northern and western Cambodia by road from the capital. This involved making a detour around the southern portion of Lake Tonle Sap along Highway 5 from Phnom Penh through Battambang and Sisophon.

The town of Phnom Sruk covers approximately 2 square kilometers and lies about 15km north of Highway 6, to which it is linked by a dirt road called Highway 815. A number of villages are located around the town, mostly to the north. The town itself was said to be largely empty of its civilian population.

The terrain around Phnom Sruk is, almost without exception, totally flat and open. Only the sparsely wooded areas about 3 to 5km to the north and on the eastern edge of the town itself provided any significant cover.

Enemy forces defending the area reportedly consisted of about 500 to 600 men drawn from regular troops of Regiment 11, Division 1709, local forces, and A-3 field police. The bulk of these troops (perhaps 300 to 400) were deployed to hold three strongpoints located in the southeast, center and southwest of the town.

The main position was reported to be located in the southwest corner of Phnom Sruk,

around the district office. The position in the southeastern edge of town was also said to hold ammunition and weapons stores. A string of defensive positions were reported to be in place along a series of villages close to the northern outskirts of the town.

The eastern and western approaches to the town were said to be heavily mined.

The remainder of the PRK forces were deployed outward to a number of small posts around Phnom Sruk. Five kilometers northeast and northwest of town the villages of Kamping Puoy and Trapeang Thmar, respec-

tively, were reported to be positioned. The vehicle in town was said to be non-operational but kept there to reinforce the strongpoints as a sort of big, steel bunker.

The main PRK position (which could provide rapid support to Phnom Sruk) was at Pranet Preah, about 25km to the southwest below Highway 6. An estimated 500 troops (some reportedly Vietnamese) were based there with a number of T-54s, artillery pieces and BM-21 truck-mounted multiple rocket-launchers.

Another post manned by 200 local troops with one 130mm field gun was located at Rum-

northwest would be a KPRLF force of 500 men that would close with Highways 815 and 6 to block any PRK attempt to reinforce Phnom Sruk. This force would destroy the wooden bridge at O-Rumchek, mine Highway 815 and set up 75mm recoilless rifles to engage any armor moving along the road.

Supporting fire would be provided by a small battery of three captured Soviet-made 76mm, 85mm and 122mm guns in addition to one BM-6 107mm multiple rocket-launcher firing from positions about 10km north of Phnom Sruk.

Closer in, 82mm mortars would add their fire to the attack from baseplate positions about 3km north of the town. The command post would locate forward positions to within a few hundred meters of the artillery.

Additionally, the post at Rumdual would be rocketed by about 30 107mm rockets in an attack to divert the defenders' attention away from Phnom Sruk during the initial stages of the assault.

Also supporting the resistance would be the two T-54s captured from the PRK in earlier battles.

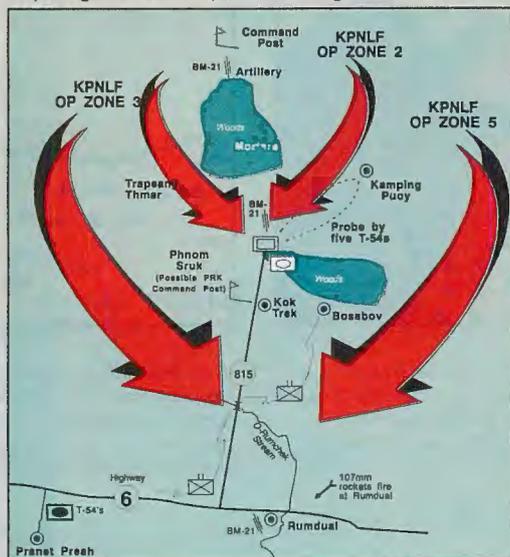
The resistance field commanders expressed full confidence in their soldiers' morale and abilities. Their only concern was their limited stocks of rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and artillery rounds. But they hoped to overcome this by a fast, hard-hitting advance, which would carry them right into the town before PRK forces could react properly.

Still, there were nagging concerns, as ammunition shortages had already caused an earlier disaster at Phnom Sruk. In February 1990, resistance forces captured the town but then lost it in a counter-attack shortly afterward when they ran out of ammo. As many as 200 men were captured by the PRK in that action.

The armor which the resistance had planned to use in spearheading the attack was now also out of the picture. The two tanks had to work in support of each other with the infantry. And, the commanders didn't want to risk losing the still-operational tank. Without it, the non-operational T-54 would have to be abandoned, since only the operational tank could tow it away in the event of the attack being called off.

Only a rapid ammunition resupply, now being organized, could get the attack moving again.

— Tom Peterson



tively, held understrength companies of only 30 to 40 men each.

At Kok Trek, south of Phnom Sruk on Highway 815, were an estimated 80 to 100 troops. This position was of special interest since it possibly also contained the command post of Regiment 11.

Also, about 100 to 150 troops deployed in several platoon posts were strung out in a south to northeast picket line starting from a wooden bridge on Highway 815 spanning O-Rumchek stream, which intersected the road 8km southwest of town. The outpost line ran from the bridge to the village of Bosobov, just southeast of Phnom Sruk.

In addition to the standard support weapons of mortars and recoilless rifles, these troops were also backed up by two field guns positioned inside the town, one 76mm, the other 122mm.

Two T-54 tanks were reportedly in place at Kok Trek. From time to time these vehicles would drive up to Phnom Sruk where a third T-54 was reported

dual village on Highway 6 about 15km south of town and east of the intersection of Highway 815 with the main road.

Basically, the resistance operational plan called for simultaneous assaults against numerous targets over a wide area employing maximum speed and shock of action to break and confuse the PRK forces.

All attacks would go in shortly before or after midnight to take advantage of the darkness to conceal movement and gain maximum surprise.

While the Phnom Sruk area would be the objective of Operation Zone 3 troops (reinforced by other elements), the targets to the west would be hit by Operation Zone 5 troops and the KPRLF 1 Brigade.

Five hundred KPRLF soldiers would push from the northeast on Kamping Puoy (the town itself) and the picket-line strung out southeast of it. Simultaneously, KPRLF forces would attack from the northwest through Trapeang Thmar with another 500 men.

Also approaching from the

“THE BEAR”

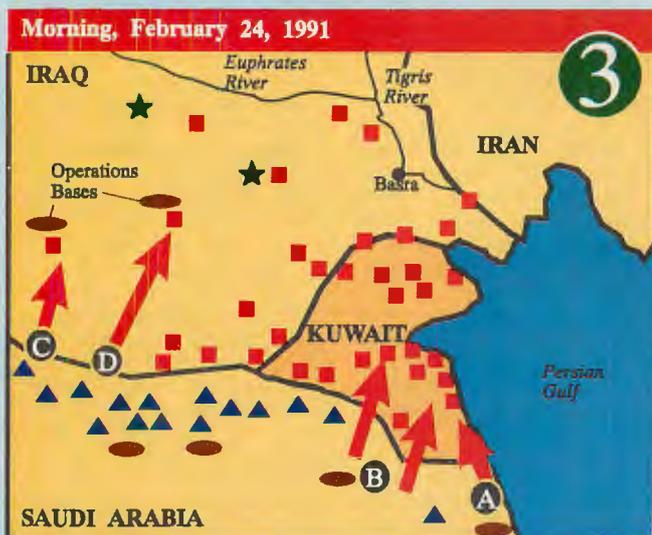
General Norman Schwarzkopf's Complete



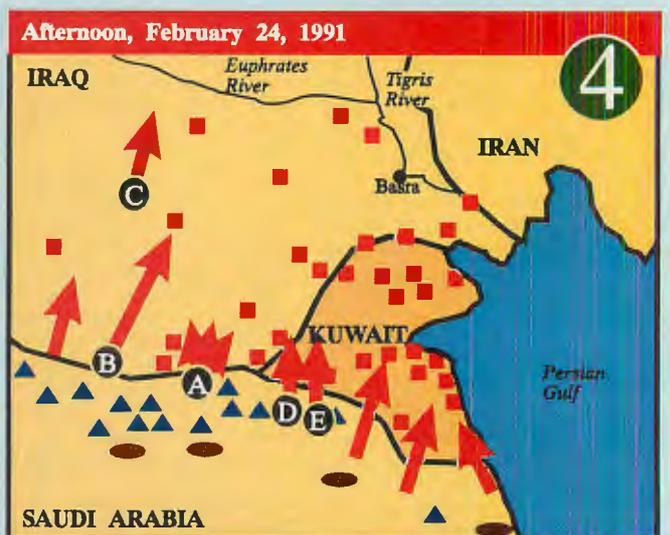
Before the air war began, Iraqi forces outnumbered Coalition troops 3 to 2; U.S. and Coalition forces were concentrated and aligned opposite the enemy in Kuwait, reinforcing Iraq's belief that an attack would come over the Saudi-Kuwaiti frontier. An active naval presence in the gulf presented the threat of an amphibious landing.



With Iraq's ability to perform air reconnaissance wiped out by the air war, Coalition forces shifted to the west unobserved, gaining the vital element of surprise. Logistics bases were created by moving thousands upon thousands of tons of supplies. U.S. Special Forces (★) were dropped behind enemy lines to provide friendly reconnaissance.



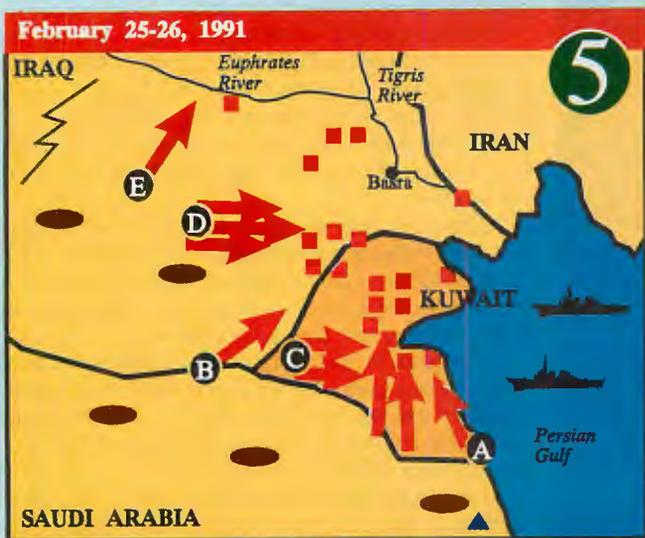
At 0400, two Saudi task forces (A) moved up the coast, penetrating Iraqi defenses. The 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions (B) punched through the border near where Iraq expected an assault to begin. The biggest surprise took place to the west: French forces and one brigade from the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division (C) drove toward As Salman airfield. Hours later, the 101st Airborne Division (D) moved north to establish a forward fuel and ammunition base.



Later that day the surprise invasion in the west continued as the U.S. VII Corps (A), which included the 1st British Armored Division, mounted a massive assault into Iraq. The 24th Mechanized Infantry Division (B) also broke over the western border, and the 101st Airborne (C) continued pressing north to the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. That afternoon an Egyptian-led Arab force (D) and a second Saudi force (E) broke across the Kuwait border further to the east.

REPORTS

Briefing on Operation Desert Storm

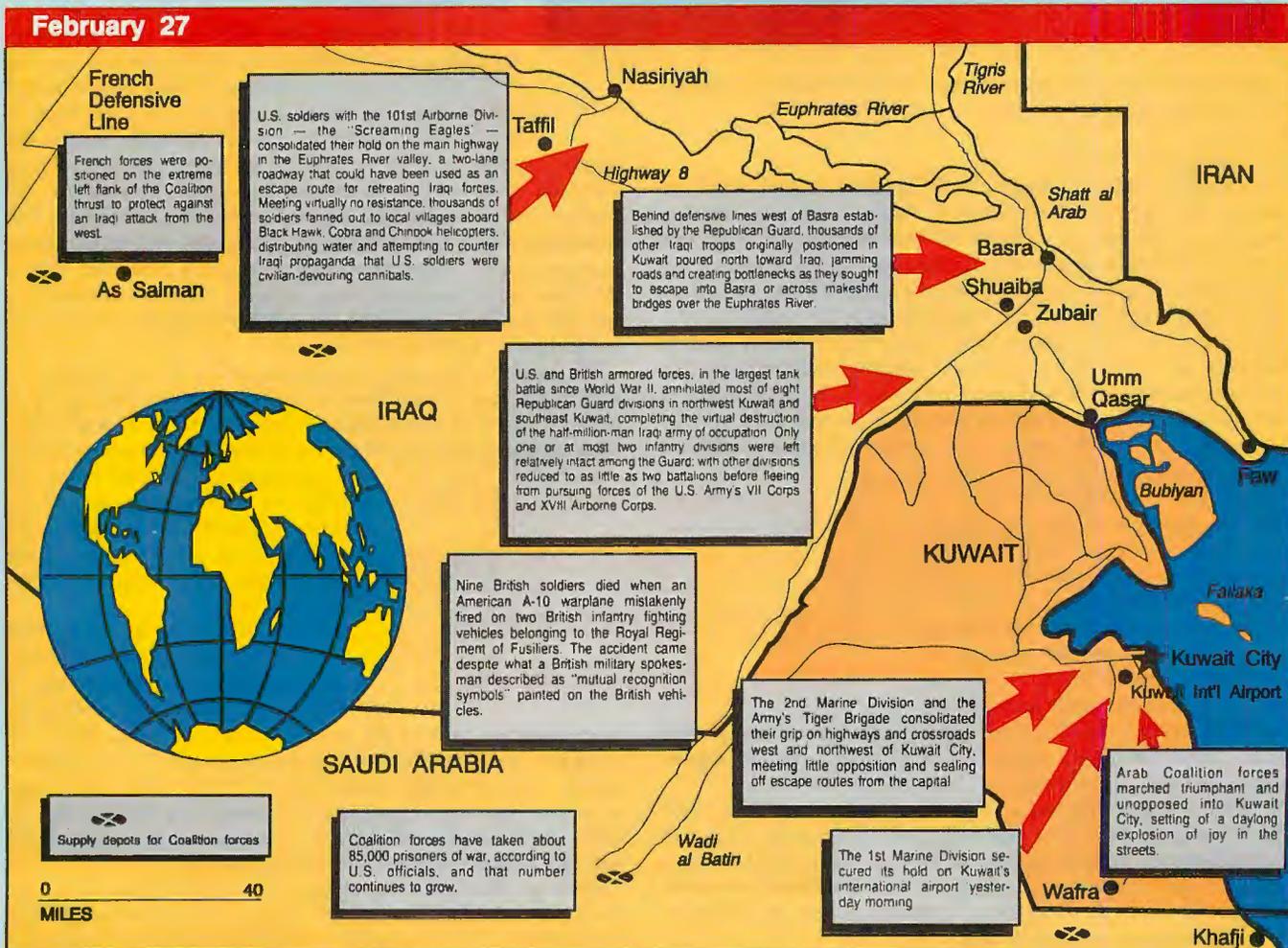


On 27 February 1991, General Norman Schwarzkopf gave a briefing to the press and the world on the strategy behind Operation Desert Storm. Here is a complete text of that briefing:

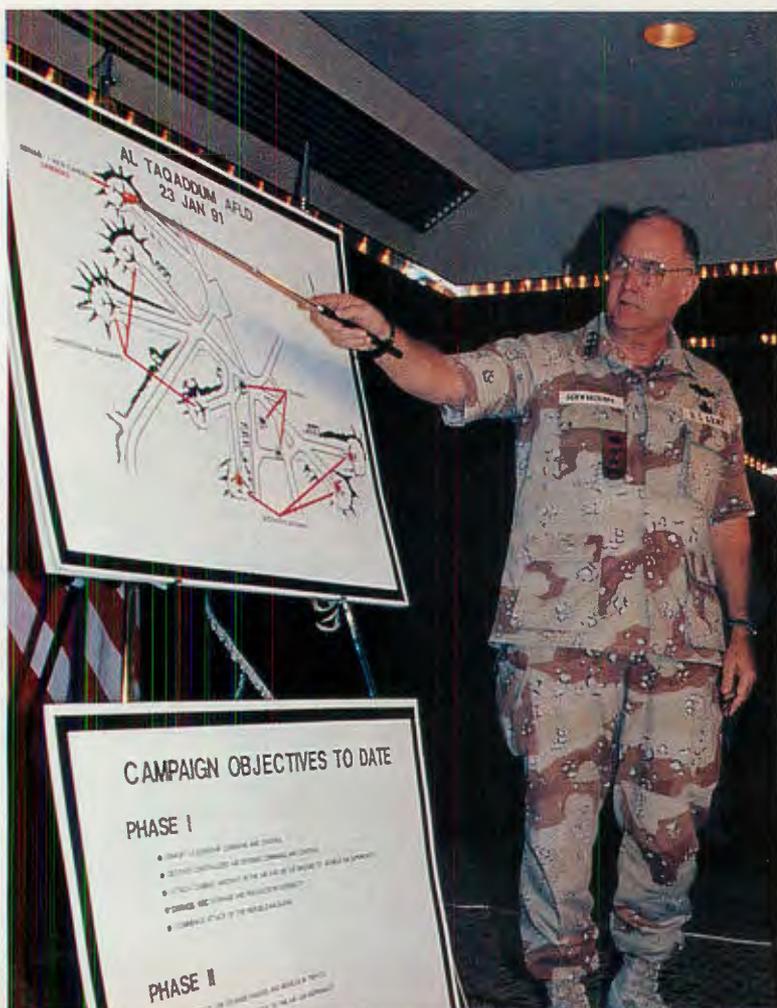
I promised some of you all a few days ago that as soon as the opportunity presented itself, I would give you a complete rundown on what we were doing, and, more importantly, why we were doing it; the strategy behind what we were doing.

I've been asked by [Defense] Secretary [Richard B.] Cheney to do that this evening, and so, if you will bear with me, we're going

Saudi troops (A) continued driving up the Kuwait coast. Off the coast, U.S. Special Forces pursued mine-clearing operations, keeping alive the threat of an amphibious landing. British forces (B) drove east, as did additional Arab forces (C) and the VII Corps (D). The 24th Division (E) thrust to the Euphrates River and blocked east-west roads, cutting off Iraqi forces. French troops set up a defensive line in the west.



Charts used by permission of the Washington Post.



Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf points to operations map during his 27 February briefing. Photo: J. Langevin/Syigma

to go through a briefing.

This goes back to 7 August to 17 January. As you recall, we started our deployment on the 7th of August. Basically, what we started out against was a couple of hundred thousand Iraqis that were in the Kuwait theater of operation. I don't have to remind you all that we brought over initially defensive forces, in the form of the 101st [Airborne Division], the 82nd [Airborne Division], the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Cavalry, and, in essence, we had them arrayed to the south behind the Saudi task force. Also, there were Arab forces over here in this area arrayed in defensive positions. And that, in essence, is the way we started.

In the middle of November, the decision was made to increase the force because by that time huge numbers of Iraqi forces had flowed in the area and generally in the disposition as they're shown right here, and therefore, we increased the forces and built up more forces.

I would tell you that at this time we made a very deliberate decision to align all of those forces within the boundary looking north towards Kuwait, this being King Khalid military city over here. So, we aligned those forces so it very much looked like they were all aligned directly on the Iraqi position.

We also at that time had a very active naval presence out in the Gulf. And we made sure that everybody understood about that naval presence. One of the reasons why we did that is because it became very apparent to us early on that the Iraqis were quite concerned about an amphibious operation across the shores to liberate Kuwait, this being Kuwait City.

They put a very, very heavy barrier of infantry along here and they proceeded to build an extensive barrier that went all the way across the border, down, and around, and up the side of Kuwait.

Basically, the problem we were faced with was this: When you looked at the troop numbers, they really outnumbered us about 3 to 2. And when you consider the number of combat service support people we had, that's logisticians and that sort of thing, in our armed forces, as far as fighting troops, we were really outnumbered 2 to 1.

In addition to that, they had 4,700 tanks versus our 3,500 when the buildup was complete, and they had a great deal more artillery than we do.

I think any student of military strategy would tell you that in order to attack a position, you should have a ratio of approximately 3 to 1 in favor of the attacker. And, in order to attack a position that is heavily dug-in and barricaded, such as the one we had here, you should have a ratio of 5 to 1 in the way of troops in the favor of the attacker.

So, you can see basically what our problem was at that time. We were outnumbered at a minimum 3 to 2 as far as troops were concerned; we were outnumbered as far as tanks were concerned; and we had to come up with some way to make up the difference.

I apologize for the busy nature of this chart, but I think it's very important for you to understand exactly what our strategy was. What you see here is a color coding where green is a "go" sign or a good sign as far as our forces are concerned; yellow would be a "caution" sign, and red would be a "stop" sign. Green represents units that have been attrited below 50% strength; the yellow are units that are between 50 and 75% strength; and of course the red are units that are over 75% strength.

What we did, of course, was start an extensive air campaign, and I briefed you in quite some detail on that in the past. One of the purposes I told you at that time of the extensive air campaign was to isolate the Kuwaiti theater of operation by taking out all the bridges and supply lines that ran between the north and the southern part of Iraq. That was to prevent reinforcement and supply coming into the southern part of Iraq and the Kuwaiti theater of operation. We also conducted a very heavy bombing campaign, and many people questioned why — why the extensive bombing campaign. This is the reason why. It was necessary to reduce these forces down to a strength that made them weaker, particularly along the front-line barrier that we had to go through.

We continued our heavy operations out in the sea because we wanted the Iraqis to continue to believe that we were going to conduct a massive amphibious operation in this area. And I think many of you recall the number of amphibious rehearsals we had, to

include Imminent Thunder [a Marine amphibious training operation on the beaches of Saudi Arabia before the beginning of the ground war] that was written about quite extensively for many reasons.

But we continued to have those operations because we wanted him to concentrate his forces, which he did.

I think this is probably one of the most important parts of the entire briefing I could talk about. As you know, very early on, we took out the Iraqi air force. We knew that he [Iraqi President Saddam Hussein] had very, very limited reconnaissance means. And therefore, when we took out his air force, for all intents and purposes, we took out his ability to see what we were doing down here in Saudi Arabia.

Once we had taken out his eyes, we did what could best be described as the Hail Mary play in football. I think you recall, when the quarterback is desperate for a touchdown at the very end, what

Once we had taken out his eyes, we did what could best be described as the Hail Mary play in football.

he does is, he steps up behind the center, and all of a sudden every single one of his receivers goes way out to one flank, and they all run down the field as fast as they possibly can and into the end zone, and he lobs the ball.

In essence that's what we did. When we knew he couldn't see us any more, we did a massive movement of troops all the way out to the west, to the extreme west, because at that time we knew he was still fixed in this area with the vast majority of his forces, and once the air campaign started, he would be incapable of moving out to counter this move, even if he knew we made it.

There were some additional troops out in this area, but they did not have the capability or the time to put in the barrier that had been described by Saddam Hussein as an absolutely impenetrable tank barrier that no one would ever get through; I believe those were his words.

So this was absolutely an extraordinary move, I must tell you. I can't recall any time in the annals of military history when this number of forces have moved over this distance to put themselves in a position to be able to attack.

But what's more important — and I think it's very, very important that I make this point — and that's these logistics bases. Not only did we move the troops out there, but we literally moved thousands and thousands of tons of fuel, of ammunition, of spare parts, of water and of food, out here into this area, because we wanted to have enough supplies on hand so that if we launched this and if we got into a slugfest battle, which we very easily could have gotten into, we'd have enough supplies to last for 60 days.

So it was an absolutely gigantic accomplishment, and I can't give credit enough to the logisticians and the transporters who were able to pull this off, to the superb support we had from the Saudi government, the literally thousands and thousands of drivers, really, of every national origin, who helped us in this move out here. And of course, great credit goes to the commanders of these units who were also able to maneuver their forces out here and put them in this position.

But as a result, by 23 February, what you found is this situation. The front lines had been attrited down to a point where all of these units were at 50% or below. The second level, basically, that we had to face — and these were the real tough fighters that we were worried about right here — were attrited to some place between 50 and 75%, although we still had the Republican Guard located here and here, and part of the Republican Guard in this area, they were very strong; and the Republican Guard up in this area, strong.

And we continued to hit the bridges all across this area to make absolutely sure that no more reinforcements came into the battle.

This was the situation on 23 February.

I shouldn't forget these fellas. That SF stands for special forces. We put special forces deep into the enemy territory. They went out on strategic reconnaissance for us. And they let us know what was going on out there, and they were the eyes that were out there, and it's very important that I not forget those folks.

Our plan initially had been to start over here in this area and do exactly what the Iraqis thought we were going to do, and that's take them head-on into their most heavily defended area. Also, at the same time, we launched amphibious flanks and naval gunfire in this

area so that they continued to think that we were going to be attacking along this coast, and therefore fixed their forces in this position.

Our hope was that by fixing the forces in this position and with this attack through here in this position, we would basically keep the forces here and they wouldn't know what was going on out in this area. And I believe we succeeded in that very well.

At 4 o'clock in the morning, the Marines, the 1st Marine Division and the 2nd Marine Division, launched attacks through the barrier system. They were accompanied by the Tiger Brigade, U.S. Army Tiger Brigade of the 2nd Armored Division. At the same time, over here, two Saudi task forces also launched a penetration through this barrier.

But while they were doing that, at 4 o'clock in the morning over here, the 6th French Armored Division, accompanied by a brigade of the 82nd Airborne, also launched an overland attack to their objective up in this area, As Salman airfield. And we were held up a little bit by the weather, but by 8 o'clock in the morning, the 101st

Airborne Air Assault launched an air assault deep in the enemy territory to establish a forward operating base in this location right here.

Let me talk about each one of those moves.

First of all, the Saudis over here on the east coast did a terrific job. They went up against a very, very tough barrier system. They breached the barrier very, very effectively. They moved out aggressively and contin-



Iraqis had 4,700 tanks to Coalition's 3,500, but most ended up like the one above. Photo: Robert K. Brown

ued their attack up the coast.

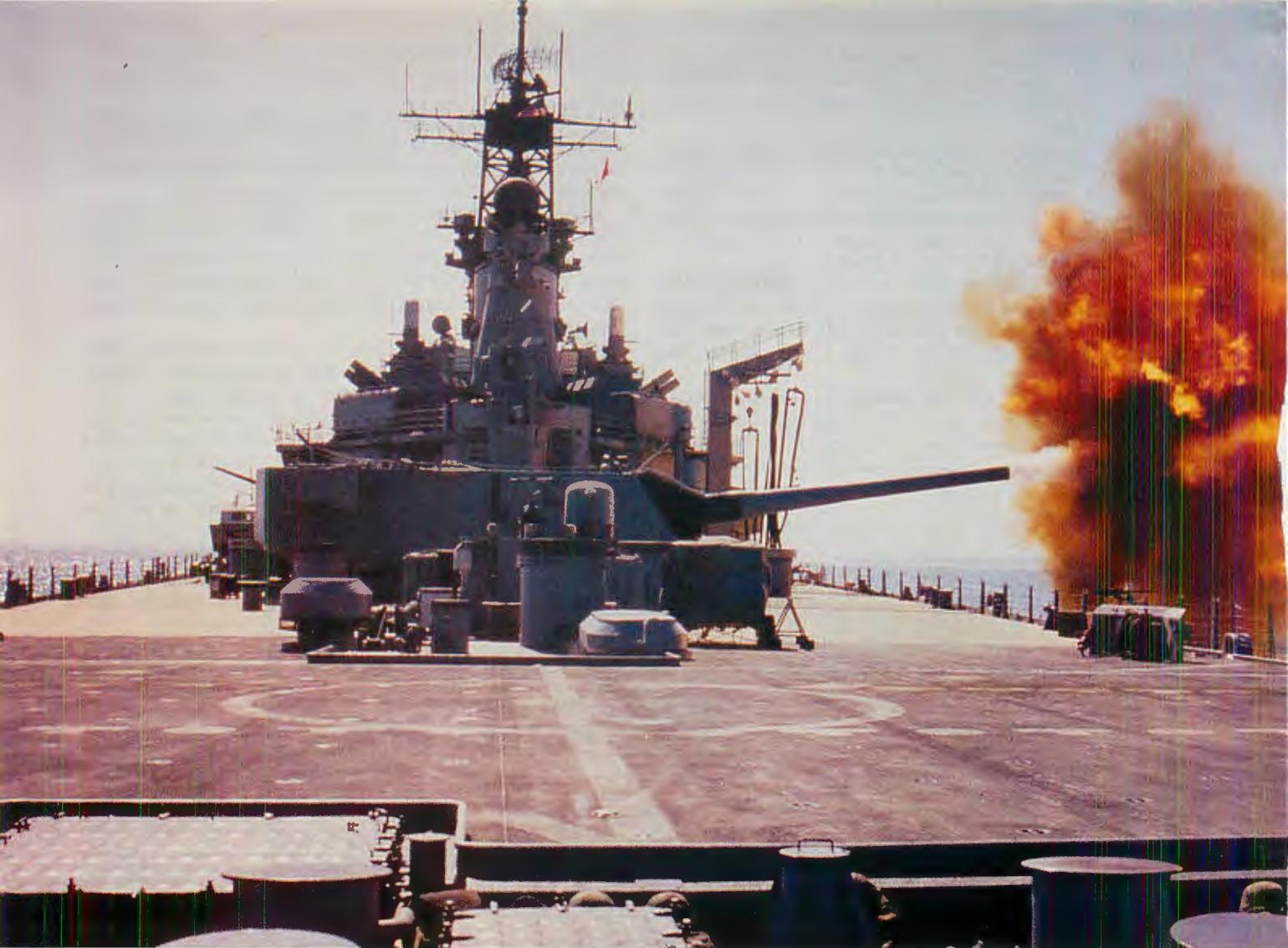
I can't say enough about the two Marine divisions. If I use words like brilliant, it would really be an under-description of the absolutely superb job that they did in breaching the so-called impenetrable barrier. It was a classic, absolutely classic, military breaching of a very, very tough minefield, barbed wire, fire trenches-type barrier.

They went through the first barrier like it was water. They went across into the second barrier line, even though they were under artillery fire at the time. They continued to open up that breach. And then they brought both divisions streaming through that breach. Absolutely superb operation, a textbook, and I think it'll be studied for many, many years to come as the way to do it.

I would also like to say that the French did an absolutely superb job of moving out rapidly to take their objective out here, and they were very, very successful, as was the 101st. And again, we still had the Special Forces located in this area. What we found was as soon as we breached these obstacles here and started bringing pressure, we started getting a large number of surrenders. I think I talked to some of you all about that when I briefed you on the evening of the 24th.

We found we got a large number of surrenders. We also found that these forces right here were getting a larger number of surrenders and were meeting with a great deal of success.

We were worried about the weather. The weather, it turned out, was going to get pretty bad the next day, and we were worried about launching this air assault. And we also started to have a huge number of atrocities, of really the most unspeakable type, committed in downtown Kuwait City, to include reports that the desalination plant had been destroyed. And when we heard that, we were quite concerned about what might be going on.



Based upon that and the situation as it was developing, we made a decision that rather than wait until the following morning to launch the remainder of these forces, that we would go ahead and launch those forces that afternoon.

So this was the situation the afternoon of the 24th. The Marines continued to make great progress going through the breach in this area and were moving rapidly north. The Saudi task force on the east coast was also moving rapidly to the north and making very, very good progress.

We launched another Egyptian-Arab force in this location and another Saudi force in this location, again to penetrate the barrier, but once again to make the enemy continue to think that we're doing exactly what he wanted us to do, and that's make a head-long assault into a very, very tough barrier system, a very, very tough mission for these folks here.

But at the same time, what we did was continue to attack with the French. We continued — we launched an attack on the part of the entire VII Corps where the 1st Infantry Division went through, breached an obstacle and minefield barrier here, established quite a large breach, through which we passed the 1st British Armored Division.

At the same time, we launched the 1st Armored Division, the 3rd Armored Division, and because of our deception plan and the way it worked, we didn't even have to worry about a barrier. We just went right around the enemy and were behind him in no time at all.

The 2nd Armored Cavalry Division and the 24th Mech Division also launched out here in the far west. And I ought to talk about the 101st because this is an important point.

Once the 101st had their forward operation base established here, they then went ahead and launched into the Tigris and the Euphrates Valley. There's a lot of people who are still saying that

USS Wisconsin fires guns during Operation Desert Storm. Naval presence kept Iraq worried about an amphibious attack to liberate Kuwait. Photo: DoD

the object of the United States of America was to capture Iraq and cause the downfall of the entire country of Iraq.

Ladies and gentlemen, when we were here, we were 150 miles away from Baghdad, and there was nobody between us and Baghdad.

If it had been our intention to take Iraq, if it had been our intention to destroy the country, if it had been our intention to overrun the country, we could have done it unopposed for all intents and purposes from this position at this time. But that was not our intention. We had never said it was our intention.

Our intention was purely to eject the Iraqis out of Kuwait and to destroy the military power that had come in here. So, this was the situation at the end of February the 24th in the afternoon.

The next two days went exactly like we thought they would go. The Saudis continued to make great progress up on the eastern flank, keeping the pressure off the Marines on the flank here; the Special Forces went out and started operating small boat operations out in this area to help clear mines but also to threaten the flanks here and to continue to make them think that we were, in fact, going to conduct amphibious operations.

The Saudi forces that came in and took — and Arab forces that came in and took — these two initial objectives, turned to come in on the flank heading toward Kuwait City.

The British passed through and continued to attack up this flank, and, of course, the VII Corps came in and attacked in this direction. The 24th Infantry Division made an unbelievable move all the way across into the Tigris and Euphrates Valley and proceeded in blocking this avenue of egress out of — which was the only avenue

... when we were here, we were 150 miles away from Baghdad, and there was nobody between us and Baghdad.



of egress left because we continued to make sure that the bridges stayed down. So, there was no way out once the 24th was in this area and the 101st continued to operate in here.

The French, having succeeded in achieving all of their objectives, then set up a flanking position, a flank guard position here to make sure that no forces came in and got us from the flank. By this time, we had destroyed or rendered completely ineffective over 21 Iraqi divisions. And, of course, that then brings us to today. Where we are today is we now have a solid wall across the north of the XVIII Airborne Corps, consisting of the units shown right here, attacking straight to the east; we have a solid wall here, again, of the VII Corps, also attacking straight to the east. The forces that they are fighting right now are the forces of the Republican Guard.

Again, today, we had a very significant day when the Arab forces coming from the west and the east closed in and moved into Kuwait City, where they are now in the process of clearing Kuwait City entirely and assuring that it's absolutely secure. The 1st Marine Division continues to hold Kuwaiti International Airport; the 2nd Marine Division continues to be in a position where it blocks any egress out of the city of Kuwait, so no one can leave. To date, we have destroyed over 29 — destroyed or rendered inoperable; I don't like to say "destroyed" because that gives you the vision of absolutely killing everyone, and that's not what we are doing — but we have rendered completely ineffective over 29 Iraqi divisions, and the gates are closed. There was no way out of here; there was no way out of here; and the enemy is fighting us in this location right here.

We continue, of course, to have overwhelming air power. The air has done a terrific job from start to finish in supporting the ground forces, and we also have had great support from the Navy, both in

Crew at Patriot missile site, Riyadh. Photo: Robert K. Brown

the form of naval gunfire and in the support of carrier air. That's the situation at the present time.

Peace is not without a cost. These have been the U.S. casualties to date. As you can see, these are the casualties that we had in the air war. Then, of course, we had the terrible misfortune of the Scud attack the other night, which, again, because the weapon malfunctioned, it caused death, unfortunately, rather than a proper function.

The loss of one human life is intolerable to any of us who are in the military. But I would tell you that casualties of that order of magnitude, considering the job that's been done and the number of forces that are involved, is almost miraculous as far as the light number of casualties. It will never be miraculous for the families of those people, but it is miraculous.

Anyhow, this is what's happened to date with the Iraqis. They started out with over 4,000 tanks; as of today, we have over 3,000 confirmed destroyed, and I do mean destroyed or captured. And, as a matter of fact, that number is low because you can add 700 to that as a result of a battle that's going on right now with the Republican Guard. So, that number is very, very high, and we've almost completely destroyed the offensive capability of the Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti theater of operation. The armored vehicle count is also very, very high. And, of course, you can see we're doing great damage to the artillery. The battle is still going on, and I suspect that these numbers will mount rather considerably.

It is not a Nintendo game. It is a tough battlefield where people are risking their lives at all times, and great heroes are out there, and we ought to all be very, very proud of them. ☠

STORMIN' NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF

Genius of Desert Storm

by Richard Mackenzie

WAVE after wave of applause rolled through the U.S. House of Representatives with members of Congress from both the House and the Senate standing in respect, even adulation. The smiles and the cheers thundered on as General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the genius of Desert Storm, stepped with dignity up to the dais to deliver a spell-binding speech to a capacity audience.

He thanked God, the president, Congress and the American people. He spoke with unashamed pride and love when he thanked the troops. "Who were we?" Schwarzkopf asked. "We were 541,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen. We were the thunder and lightning of Operation Desert Storm. We're the U.S. military and damned proud of it."

Without his actually saying as much, his presence spoke also of another war in which he had served — Vietnam. The last senior Army officer to address Congress was Gen. William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam. In his address on 28 April 1967, he spoke of victory and triumph that would never come. Westmoreland told Congress, "Backed at home by resolve, confidence, patience, determination and continued support, we will prevail in Vietnam over the Communist aggressor."

Schwarzkopf seemed to be trying to exorcise the ghost of Vietnam. In a direct contrast to Westmoreland's unfulfilled

hope for bipartisan support for the Vietnam War, Schwarzkopf thanked the American people for what they had already done during the Gulf War. "Because of you, when that terrible first day of war came, we knew we would not fail. We knew we had the strength of the American people behind us. And with that strength, we were able to get the job done, kick the Iraqis out of Kuwait and get back home."

With his words, Schwarzkopf unfurled the Desert Storm victory like a giant banner whipping in the wind. He would also march in the glow of that glory on 10 June in New York City when he headed what New York Mayor David Dinkins called the Mother of All Ticker Tape Parades.

If Schwarzkopf invoked the memory of Vietnam in his appearance before Congress, he carried it with him in Desert Storm. So did virtually every senior commander of the U.S. Forces. Vietnam permeated aspects of the operation across the board — from the decision not to release enemy casualty statistics and thereby get into the "body count business" to the way that air operations were conducted.

"The Bear"

With two tours in Vietnam and a key role in Grenada, Schwarzkopf is one of the most highly decorated soldiers among the Pentagon's senior commanders. He was first an infantryman, then trained as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf.
Photo: A. Tannenbaum/Sygma





Standing 6 feet 3 inches with the bulk that contributes to his nickname, “The Bear,” he is the model of a decent family man according to the deputy commander in chief of CentCom, Lieutenant General Calvin A. Waller. He does have a temper, which he has been known to unleash on those who work for him.

Wounded twice while in Vietnam, he earned two Purple Hearts, three Silver Stars, two Bronze stars with “V” device, Master Parachutist Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge, Legion of Merit, Defense Superior Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Throughout the two months of Desert Storm, I spoke with Schwarzkopf and half a dozen of the key generals helping him run the war. Each of them had been a young officer in the conflict in Southeast Asia. Each vowed not to repeat what they thought were the mistakes of Vietnam. More important, they vowed not to have earlier errors imposed on them.

Lightning Deception And The Hail Mary Attack

The day before senior Iraqi soldiers traveled overland to Safwan in southern Iraq in effect to surrender, Schwarzkopf sat in his headquarters at the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Defense and Aviation, stretching back in a chair to talk about the war he was about to win. He spoke of what will be studied by military historians — the lightning deception he pulled off, the “Hail Mary” attack. He spoke of his childhood, controversies of the siege on Baghdad and of his love for the troops.

“I have loved soldiers since my first platoon,” he said after a long, emotional pause. “I learned a long time ago that the American soldier, if he is properly resourced and properly led, will do anything in the world you ask him to do. That’s this,” he added, waving his hand in arc across an imaginary map. “I don’t know of many armies in the world that would have ever done the Hail Mary play,

Contrary to the way the Vietnam War was run, in the Persian Gulf, President Bush left decisions up to the military. Photo: Markowitz/Sygma

even begun to think they could have done it. An awful lot of people told me I was crazy. A lot of my staff, my subordinate officers, doubted our capability to do that. Then once you’re out there, whoosh! Not just do it, but be able to logistically support it.”

Eventually and inevitably, our conversation turned to Vietnam and how



General Dad with son, daughter and Mrs. Schwarzkopf at homecoming on 21 April 1991. Photo: Ed Kennedy/Sygma

its specter had hung over the blazing desert crisis. “It did,” Schwarzkopf said. “But remember: The United States military did not lose the war in Vietnam. Period. In the two years I was in Vietnam, I was in many battles. I was never in a defeat.”

He grinned sheepishly. “Came pretty close a couple of times. But we were never defeated. The outcome of the Vietnam War was a political defeat, but it was not a military defeat. Despite the number of times you heard the petty dictators and people like that always talk about the glorious way the Viet Cong defeated the U.S. military, it’s a myth. It never happened.”

But, he added, it taught him and those of

his era a lesson. “Those of us who were involved in that type of war had to analyze how that war was conducted. And we had to determine that the next time we went to war, we probably had to do it in a different way. Not necessarily from the military standpoint but from the political standpoint.”

Air Force Lt. Gen. Charles A. Horner, who ran the air war, agreed: “Many of us came through the same experience in Vietnam and saw all the gross errors in the operation there and vowed it would never happen again.”

At the height of the war, Marine Brigadier General Richard I. Neal, the man who ran the underground war room in Riyadh at night as deputy director of operations of U.S. Central Command, sat back in an office in the Riyadh Hyatt Regency Hotel, relaxing for a brief time before going on duty. “We don’t have the ‘Johnson looking at the map and picking the targets’ mentality. Thank God, those days are over.”

“That,” Gen. Horner added, “was ‘disaster.’”

General Neal said that in his time in Vietnam he did not see such interference firsthand. “I was a lieutenant and a captain there. My war was what was to the left and to the right of me. But it was a terrible way to run a war. I realize we are under the leadership and the direction of the civilians and that’s the way it should be. But once

political decisions are made — President Bush has left it up to the folks who know what they’re doing.”

Army Brig. Gen. James D. Starling, director of logistics and security assistance for Desert Storm, the man who headed up the miracle of keeping an Army supplied during the “Hail Mary” operation, said Vietnam hung over the Gulf War, especially for Schwarzkopf. “I have often heard him talk about his experience in Vietnam and the unwillingness of people

to support that operation — from Congress to the U.S. public. He was bound and determined that, if he was going to do it, he would only do it if he had the backing of Congress and the defense establishment and the President and everybody involved.”

Schwarzkopf also was determined that the lowest-ranking grunt felt he had a “just cause,” Starling said, that “everybody was behind him and supported him 100%.”

A senior logistics officer who acted as a spokesman for the U.S. Forces early in the war, Brig. Gen. Pat Stevens, was the first to voice the real reason that Schwarzkopf

the generation now leading the U.S. military, there are memories of soldiers coming home from Vietnam to a public that sometimes spat on them at airports or accused them of being “baby killers.” It was many years before the Vietnam veterans got their parades or their monument.

It was so distasteful to Schwarzkopf at the time that he considered packing it in, even though he had spent most of his life heading toward a military career.

Stormin’ Norman’s Boyhood

Born in Trenton, New Jersey, on 22 August 1934, Schwarzkopf said his

Iran where he spent the next five years reorganizing the Iranian national police force. Young Norman rarely saw his father until he joined him in Iran in 1946.

“I wasn’t your normal, tough, macho young boy,” he recalled. He said that may have been the influence of living his younger years with his mother and two sisters, “the fact that I had this responsibility on my shoulders.”

Childhood experiences would contribute to his disdain for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Schwarzkopf remembers being “pushed around a lot” but can’t say why. “I learned to hate the bully. I learned to hate the playground group that went around pushing other people around. I never ran with that bunch as a young boy.”

In 1946, he joined his father in Iran, with his mother and sisters coming six months later. He lived and went to school in Iran, Rome, Germany and finally Switzerland before returning to the United States where he got a football scholarship at Valley Forge Military Academy. He followed in his father’s footsteps to West Point, graduating 42nd out of 485 in the class of 1956.

In 1963, he was sent to the University of Southern California to study for a master’s degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering. In 1965, he was ordered back to West Point to start teaching. He pushed to go to Vietnam, however. The Army eventually transferred him on the



Schwarzkopf is one Vietnam-era veteran who finally got his parade.
Photo: A. Tannenbaum/Sygma

would not allow the release of a body count of enemy dead. “A number of us who served in Vietnam went through the experience of getting into that,” he told a news conference in which reporters were pressing him for statistics. “I have a great deal of sympathy for you all in trying to report the facts, and that often leads you into numbers ... I wish there was some way to get away from that, because frequently they’re not meaningful.”

His own memory of Vietnam and “the body count business” was negative, he said, citing how inflated figures were sometimes given. “We had instances, unfortunately, in Vietnam where there were incorrect numbers being furnished. It’s like any young person and a lot of older people who are competing to achieve results, for very good purposes. They’re frequently going, perhaps, to go awry on that. So we don’t find it healthy to do that.”

Scottish-born Marine Major General Robert B. Johnson, Schwarzkopf’s chief of staff, served twice in Vietnam, his first tour starting in May 1965 and his second as a rifle company commander from 1967 to 1968. He, too, said he found the “body count business” unhealthy.

Each time one of the men spoke, his eyes revealed a mind remembering. For



Schwarzkopf gives complete briefing on daring and ingenious strategy behind Operation Desert Storm. Photo: J. Langevin/Sygma

earliest memories are of his father hosting the popular radio show, “Gangbusters.” The elder H. Norman Schwarzkopf was a veteran of World War I and had headed the New Jersey State Police where he led the investigation into the kidnapping and murder of the infant son of famed aviator Charles Lindbergh. The father rejoined the Army during World War II and was sent to

condition that he return to the academy after his tour of duty to honor another two-year teaching tour.

Refusing To Follow Orders

A quarter of a century later, he recalled one of his first assignments in Vietnam, after he was sent up-country to Pleiku. Once there, he refused to carry out an operation because the safety of his men was not covered. “I was a young captain, three days short of being promoted to major, advising the Vietnamese.

“We were getting to go into a military



operation during the Ia Drang Valley campaign, and had been given this wonderful operations order written in [perfect general staff-style] by the senior Vietnamese headquarters. Then I discovered that, contrary to the order, we had no fire support or any advance air strikes.

"So I went back and advised my Vietnamese counterparts not to go. Three or four hours later, I was hauled before an array of colonels. 'Captain,' one of them said, 'how dare you say *not go*? Who are you to decide what adequate air support is?'"

"'Sir, with all due respect,' I answered, 'when I'm the senior man on the ground, and it's my ass hanging out, adequate air support is about a hundred sorties of B-52s, all in direct support of me. I may be willing to accept something less, but that's just barely adequate when it's my butt on the line.'"

"Of course, they got furious. But that's my approach to the military operations. You're talking human lives, and my responsibility is to accomplish the objective with a minimum loss of the troops under my command. That's my job — not just accomplishing the mission."

The colonels got over it.

Promoted to major a month after he arrived in Vietnam, Schwarzkopf was the senior man in a small group of advisers sent with 1,000 South Vietnamese Airborne to try to rescue a Special Forces camp in Duc Co, guarding Highway 14, an old two-lane road built by the French that ran into Cambodia.

Tale Of Two Silver Stars

A bloody battle raged for two weeks. It was during that encounter that one of the most famous photographs of Schwarzkopf was taken, showing him helping to carry a wounded South Vietnamese soldier to safety. For rescuing and reorganizing the beleaguered paratroopers at Duc Co, Schwarzkopf was awarded his first Silver Star.

He won the second on Valentines Day

"The Bear" thanked God, the president, Congress and the American people. Photo: Sygma

1966 as he led a paratrooper attack on a Viet Cong position. The citation states: "Exposing himself to intense hostile fire, he was wounded four times yet refused to take cover or medical evaluation until consolidation of the objective and the evacuation of wounded subordinates was completed."

In his book, *Friendly Fire*, C.D.B. Bryan tells the story of an operation on 17 February 1970 in which two members of Charlie Company of Schwarzkopf's 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, were killed by U.S. artillery. The parents of one of the soldiers for a long time accused Schwarzkopf himself of covering up the facts around the incident. Author Bryan thoroughly investigated the case in his book, which was first published in 1976, absolving then-Lieutenant Colonel Schwarzkopf and



Colln Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf share a light moment. Photo: Orban/Sygma

concluding that the parents were wrong and that Schwarzkopf was blameless.

Minefield Horror

Bryan also provided the definitive account of one of Schwarzkopf's most harrowing experiences in Vietnam. On 18 May 1970, a portion of his Bravo Company became trapped in a minefield. One soldier stepped on a mine. The explosion wounded the company

commander and a lieutenant. The men called for a medical evacuation helicopter. Schwarzkopf was orbiting in a UH-1 Huey command and control helicopter when he heard the call.

On landing, he turned over his helicopter to take out the wounded, then fixed his attention to the rest of the patrol, who were frozen in panic. Calmly but firmly, he told them to retrace their steps. As they began to do so, a private stepped on another mine, blowing him in the air with an explosion that also wounding Schwarzkopf and his artillery liaison officer, Captain Bob Trabbert.

Finally, step by terrifying step, Schwarzkopf reached the private who lay writhing with one of his legs snapped with the bones exposed. Schwarzkopf called for someone to cut some branches from a tree to use as a splint. As a soldier started to do so, he stepped on another mine. Its full force hit Capt. Trabbert.

"Oh, my God!" Schwarzkopf yelled. One of Trabbert's legs was blown off, an arm snapped back to expose the white bone of the elbow socket and a hole blown in his head. Though he looked sure to die,



Gen. Schwarzkopf's triumphant return to U.S. soil. Photo: Ed Kennedy/Sygma

Trabbert would survive. Three others were killed instantly.

So it was not surprising that when a *New York Times* reporter in a question at Gen. Schwarzkopf's victory briefing assumed that the Iraqi fortifications were not as intense as had been expected, the Vietnam veteran snapped, "Have you ever been in a minefield?"

"No," the young journalist replied.

"All there has to be is one mine, and that's intense. There were plenty of mines out there, plenty of barbed wire."

The "whole reason" he volunteered for Vietnam a second time, he said, was because he honestly believed he could be a better battalion commander, could accomplish the mission with less loss of life. After his first tour, he said, he came home with "probably the greatest feeling of satisfaction."

"I slept in the mud, ate rice and

Vietnamese food with chop sticks for one solid year ... And I really felt that I was honestly helping people."

What he found when he went back the second time, he said, was a "cesspool."

Facing Doubts

If he had doubts in Vietnam, he also had them in Saudi Arabia. "Sure," he told me, "Clausewitz calls it the 'fog of war.' I am sure that when Xerxes lined up at the Battle of Arbella and sat there with his hundreds of thousands of forces facing Alexander the Great on the other side with his very few forces, Alexander probably had a hell of a lot of second thoughts. He probably thought, 'Holy Smokes!'

"Back in those days, if you lost, you and your entire army were just lined up and slaughtered. So I'm sure Alexander the Great had a lot of second thoughts. OK? Maybe even Xerxes had second thoughts: 'Hmmm! What am I going to do if this guy really is as tough as they say he is?' So you never know. There's no guarantee in this business."

He and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin Powell, had that discussion, he said "[We] went through all the mental calculations and said, 'This should work, this should prevail.' And yet at the same time, you can dream up your worst scenarios. It's not fear but this feeling in the pit of your stomach. But there's an old expression, 'Don't take counsel of your fears.'"

He also had long ago learned to watch out for other emotions. He felt pity, he said, for the cannon fodder Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had positioned on the front line. "Very much so," he said. "I think everybody did. I think we all felt sorry for the front line Iraqi troops because we knew they didn't want to be there. But, in balance, I've got to tell you, I had a lot of friends in Vietnam who saw some poor fellow out there that was about to surrender, took pity on him and ended up getting shot by him. In the final analysis, those guys in the front line trenches were perfectly prepared to shoot and kill us. I'm sure if they'd won this thing and we hadn't they'd all be crowing about the number of us they'd killed."

No one ever dared to spit on Schwarzkopf when he came back to "the world" from Vietnam, but he was insulted, he has said, when he spoke at civic groups after returning. At one meeting, someone in the audience asked

him if he had ever napalmed babies. "I don't need this gaff," he said at the time, planning to quit the Army. Finally, however, he was able to come to grips with the Vietnam aftermath.

When Desert Storm was still Desert Shield, Schwarzkopf said he believed there already had been a turnaround in public opinion. He recalled flying into Grenada. In the distance from his helicopter, he saw red graffiti on a building in the capital of St. George. He expected it to say "Down with the U.S." or something similar. In fact, it said "God Bless America!"

"I'm 100% sure we did the right thing in Grenada. First of all, I think it was



During battle to rescue beleaguered paratroopers at Duc Co, Vietnam, Schwarzkopf helped carry wounded South Vietnamese soldier to safety. He received first Silver Star after this battle. Photo: AP/Wide World

healthy for the military to have been involved in an operation that the American public had resolutely endorsed. Also it was good to have been involved in an operation that was recognized by everybody as a very successful one, given the recent history of the armed forces, which some people considered a tie, and Vietnam, which others felt was a defeat."

Remembering Vietnam is an emotional experience for the general. "The Vietnam

experience left a lot of scars," he said. "I was on the Cambodian border at a time when the rules were that the enemy could attack across the border and beat up on you and do anything he wanted. But when you started to get the upper hand, he could run back across the border and you weren't allowed to chase him. That's not my favorite way to fight a war."

He summarized his philosophy of war. "When you go to war, you're going to war all the way. That's exactly where I come from. No more Cambodian border situations for me."

Come August 1991, there will be no more wars for Schwarzkopf. He retires from the Army after service and leadership of more than one-third of a century.

As he reflects on his achievements, he wants to make certain that the credit is shared. "Any commander is only as good as his unit, as the troops he is commanding. And that's why I love 'em. I have seen soldiers time and time again do things they didn't have to do.

"I want to go back to a fundamental theory of leadership. Leadership is not getting people to do what they ordinarily do. Leadership is getting people to willingly do that which they ordinarily wouldn't do.

"If I stood at the door," he said, gesturing to the passage to an outer office, "and I said, 'Everybody coming through that door gets a \$50 bill, I'd be overrun. That's not leadership. The ultimate challenge of leadership is asking someone to do something that may get them killed. In order to do that, you have to establish in the minds of the people you're asking that you're more than just a title or position.

"By virtue of your rank, you have the right to ask them to die. It takes a hell of a lot more than that before they're going to do that."

He stopped and stared toward a map of the endless Arabian deserts. "I'll bet you," he said finally, "there were 10,000 acts of heroism in the last four days. You'll never know about it. Nobody thinks he's a hero when he does it. But I'll bet you there were 10,000 out there on that battlefield."

Richard Mackenzie covered Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and southern Iraq for a national news weekly. He won a 1989 National Headliner Award for his gripping and investigative coverage of the war in Afghanistan, where he spent months on end slogging through the Hindu Kush mountain range to write about the Afghan resistance. ✕

YOUNG



Young Guns (left to right): Capts. Scott Walsh, Mike Kenny, Art Tommassette, Dave Salanthe and Adam Greer. Photo: SSgt. Taylor



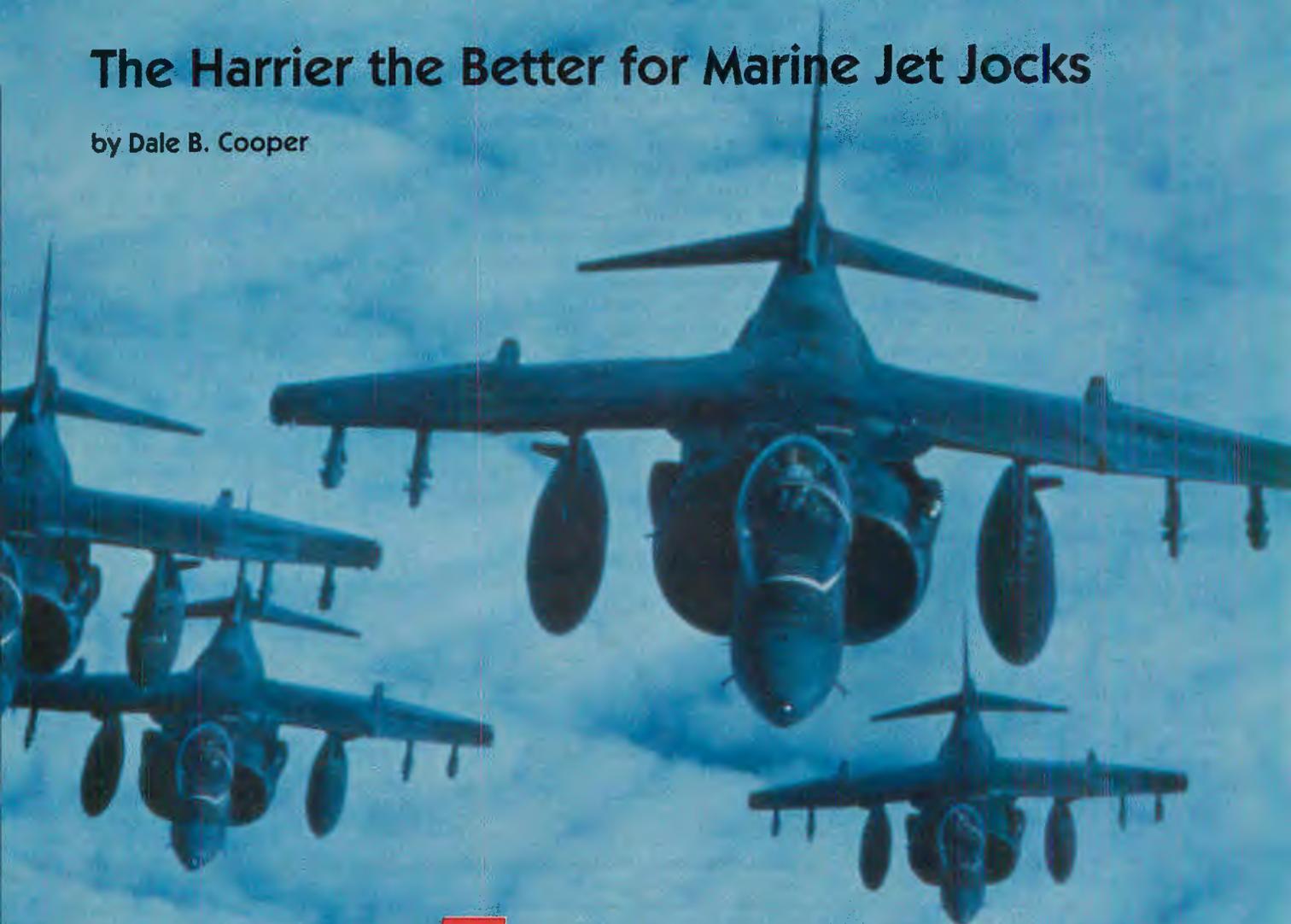
Photo: DoD

Dale B. Cooper is an experienced military freelance writer who has covered operations from Just Cause in Panama to Operation Desert Storm. He is a frequent contributor to SOF.

GUNS

The Harrier the Better for Marine Jet Jocks

by Dale B. Cooper



THEY called themselves The Young Guns — “Vapor,” “Pisser,” “Turbo,” “Salt” and “Rosey” — five hotshot Harrier pilots ... but only one of them would find out how hot he was. Literally.

On 25 February, the second day of the ground war in Kuwait, Captain John S. Walsh (call sign “Vapor”), 28, from San Ramon, California, took a hard hit from a hand-held surface-to-air missile (SAM). The shoulder-fired Iraqi missile turned his AV-8B into a giant blowtorch.

Walsh, part of VMA-542, used every ounce of strength he had to manhandle his burning attack aircraft over friendly lines before safely ejecting from the dead bird. It was a hair-raising experience for the Young Gun.

He was flying north to pounce on Iraqi troops before they sank their teeth into the left flank of the 2nd Marine Division. About 25 minutes after taking off from an 8,000-foot runway at King Abdul Aziz naval base in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, Walsh and his lead, Major Dan Peters, 34, from Pensacola, Florida, hit a large armored column at first light.

After dumping their ordnance, Walsh and Peters returned to Tanajib Airfield, a forward base where they refueled and rearmed. Returning to the target, they had to get in line behind other sections hitting the tanks.

The weather was bad on 25 February — a 10,000-foot cloud deck and thick, black smoke from burning wellheads under the cumulus lid.

Descending through the clouds and smoke, Walsh and Peters were the third section going back in to hit the target. Walsh got separated from Peters in the clouds,

and joined up on another section.

"I got hit in the right rear nozzle as I turned onto the target at about 8,000 feet," Walsh said. "The blast blew a lot of the right flaps off, put a lot of holes in the wing, and set fire to gas in the wing tanks."

Two F/A-18 forward air controllers (FACs) saw Walsh get hit and came up alongside to assess damage and see what they could do for him. Peters (call sign "Salt") also caught up.

"What a blaze," Peters said as he stared at sheets of flames cascading over the wing and rippling back along the fuselage of Walsh's AV-8B Harrier.

"The fire is about three times the length of the plane," radioed one of the GIBs (guys in the back) in an F/A-18 escorting Walsh south toward friendly lines.

"It (the SAM) really knocked the hell out of the plane," according to Walsh, whose initial reaction was one of anger. But there was no way he was going to punch out over Kuwait after the punishment he and other pilots had inflicted on Iraqi tankers for almost two hours. "They would have killed me for sure," he said.

Flying A Burning Harrier

The plane's engine was still running, but not performing very well, as Walsh limped south with a fire that was consuming fuel at an alarming rate.

Suddenly, he realized he hadn't gotten rid of his ordnance, which by this time probably was sizzling like a T-bone steak on a barbecue grill. Burning was one thing, but blowing up in mid-air would really ruin his day, so he punched off the bombs and lightened his load a bit.

With his systems beginning to fail, and a few miles from friendly lines, Walsh began to look for a "divert," some road he could set down on and perhaps save his Harrier.

Then like a light bulb being switched on in his brain, he remembered an intel brief that morning at which he was told 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, had seized control of Ahmed 'Al Jaber Airfield, the southernmost of three airfields in Kuwait. Although the main runways had been cratered, one was left untouched for use as a possible forward base.

"With parts of the right wing beginning to fly off, and the aircraft losing altitude, I knew I had to get this plane down quickly," he said.

The F/A-18s flew ahead to check out which runway was the best one, but Walsh couldn't get his gear down. Too many systems shot for a straight-in landing, but how about a vertical landing? When he moved the nozzles, the plane became "squirrely," so he immediately put the nozzle back to where it was.

Walsh overflowed the runway trying to "blow" his gear down with a back-up system, but it didn't work. The two in-line wheels went down, but the outriggers wouldn't. And there's no way you can land a Harrier in a configuration like that if you want to walk away in one piece.

It's a good thing Walsh's landing gear wouldn't come down because the Marines had not taken the airfield yet. Walsh would have landed amid a thousand Iraqi soldiers with only his 9mm Beretta.

Just as Walsh was talking to his wingman and the FACs about where would be the best place to "punch-out" so he wouldn't run into any bad guys on the

"What a wild ride," he recalled. He barely got two swings in the chute before it thudded to the ground. Luckily, he landed in soft sand; the parachutes are rather small and don't let you down very gently.

Staggering to his feet as the parachute dragged him across the sandy desert, he popped his chute harness, regained his senses, and ran a little ways south where he jumped into an Iraqi trench and got on the horn (survival radio) to the guys upstairs who were circling above him.

"I'm okay," Walsh radioed, as a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon. Company coming, he thought. Good guys or bad guys? Too far to tell. But as they got closer, he determined they were members of a Marine patrol from Task Force Shepard who saw the plane go down and set out to find the pilot. Talk about roadside service.

Walsh suffered a compression fracture in his vertebrae and bruised feet, but was back on the flight schedule the following day. As it happened, the war ended before he got back into the saddle.

A Young American Dies In The Gulf

Walsh was lucky. Captain Trey Wilbourn, who would have become the sixth Young Gun had he lived, wasn't. The 27-year-old native of Huntsville, Alabama, was killed when his Harrier failed to come off a target on the night of 23 February.

Was Wilbourn shot down? Or did he lose situational awareness, as an F/

A-18 FAC suggested, and simply fly into the ground? No one knows. Army Graves Registration found precious little at the crash site in Kuwait. An investigation was unable to determine the cause of the mysterious crash: just a big hole in the ground, and a lot of small pieces of debris — all of which you could hold in your hand.

Wilbourn, call sign "LZ" because of his flat-top haircut, was one of the most popular pilots in VMA-542. He was killed two days before Walsh was shot down by a SAM.

Ironically, Maj. Peters was with both men. "When we took off at about 1930 the weather was sketchy, but by the time we rendezvoused with our FACs, it had improved. Wilbourn was leading the hop. I was the wingman. It was the second hop of the day for us," Peters said.

Peters led Wilbourn earlier in the day on a battlefield prep mission: hitting enemy positions in anticipation of the ground war.



Laser-guided bombs awaiting delivery to Kuwait, address unknown.
Photo: SSgt. Taylor

ground, the Harrier decided for him.

"The flight controls froze up and the plane flipped over on its back," Walsh said. He wound up "punching-out" upside down at about 900 feet. But Harriers have very good ejection seats.

Upside Down Punch-Out

"They won't shoot you into the ground if you're upside down," he said as he talked about pulling the ejection handle. "All I remember is a blinding flash above my head as det cord blew the canopy to bits, and flames between my feet as the rocket motor under my seat ignited and hurled me clear of the aircraft, which had stopped burning by then."

It felt like a hundred pairs of hands were tugging on his body as Walsh blasted into a 250 mph slipstream. An explosive charge blows the parachute open, slowing pilots down to zero airspeed. Spinning around in the chute, Walsh saw his plane hit the ground and explode in a fireball.

This was Wilbourn's 37th sortie over Kuwait — his next to last.

Usually, F/A-18 Deltas, or "Fast FACs," fly ahead, find a lucrative target, and lead the Harriers to it, but for some unknown reason on the first hop, fuel or mechanical, there was no Fast FAC available for Peters and Wilbourn on the day before the ground war kicked off. So the Harrier pilots decided to press on and find their own targets.

There was a lot of trash over the target area, a combination of clouds and smoke from the burning oil fields, but Peters found a hole and led Wilbourn down through the clouds. But he was unable to find the specific target that was listed on their schedule to hit.

"LZ" Takes The Lead

Coming off target, Peters said, "Trey, I just can't find a thing down there at this time worth hitting," but Wilbourn replied, "Hey, I just saw something on my left-hand side as I came out." So Peters passed Wilbourn the lead.

"As I rolled in, he got shot at just off-target by two hand-held SAMs, but they missed him," Peters said. Both pilots plastered the trenchline and returned to base where they refueled and rearmed with MK83 1,000-pound bombs for their upcoming night mission.

Although Trey Wilbourn was not yet section leader-qualified, it was not unusual for him to lead the hop under the watchful eyes of a more experienced pilot such as Dan Peters. Talk about on-the-job training. This was it.

Since AV-8Bs don't have any forward-looking infrared systems (FLIRs), they depend on OV-10 Broncos, F/A-18 Hornets, A-6 Intruders or ground FACs to mark the targets for them. A pair of F/A-18Ds were running low on fuel, and couldn't handle the Harriers. However, as Peters and Wilbourn were about to call it a night and head home, one of the Fast FACs said an A-6 working some bombing raids on tank concentrations near the Ali Al Salem Airbase just west of Kuwait City could use some help.

Ironically, the A-6 pilot had been one of Wilbourn's squadron mates when he flew with VMA (AW) 121 during an eight-month cruise on the USS *Ranger* before he transitioned to Harriers.

"After a healthy exchange on the radio, we were really pumped up at the thought of getting to work with an A-6," Peters said, "and especially to get a crack at



tanks instead of trenchlines."

The game plan called for the A-6 Intruder to drop his last MK82 (500-pound general purpose bomb) on the cluster of tanks that had huddled together for the night, and the Harriers would drop their

high explosives on the A-6's mark.

Peters followed Wilbourn to the target in trail, about a mile and half behind his lead, dipping down to about 18,000 feet as they approached the tank park. Ten miles out, Wilbourn and Peters could see two

fires burning on the ground from a previous strike. "A piece of cake," thought Peters ("Salt") as he watched "LZ" roll over and go in for the kill.

"As his bombs left the racks, I heard his tone," Peters said, "and saw his first bombs impact the ground. Right on target. Then shortly thereafter, I saw a second, more brilliant explosion on the ground."

"LZ" Didn't Answer

At the time, Peters thought Wilbourn had some bombs go long, and hit something big. He came up on his mike and said "Wow! Pretty big secondary." But "LZ" didn't answer. Peters had been running an air-to-air tactical air navigation (TACAN) program so he could keep track of how far they were apart, but his TACAN's DME (distance measuring equipment) wasn't reading anything ahead of him.

"It was then that I realized he had crashed," Peters said. He orbited the area looking and listening for any sign of life in the darkness before flying home alone and reporting the missing aircraft. Peters will always wonder what happened to Wil-

"It was then that I realized he had crashed."



Captured camouflaged Iraqi artillery. Photo: courtesy VMA-542

bourne. There had been reports the Iraqis had reduced the amount of tracers in their ammunition, so it's possible some of the antiaircraft artillery (AAA) in the area killed Wilbourn before he hit the ground.

But one member of VMA-542 who did not want to be identified said pilots only have a second or so to "pull out" when they drop their bombs. The slightest hesitation "and you hit the ground going 600 miles per hour," the veteran pilot said.

In his eulogy at memorial services for the young Harrier pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Ted Herman, commanding officer of VMA-542, said, "We can ask ourselves, 'Why? Why Trey Wilbourn?' The Greeks and the Romans prayed before a battle that if they must die, it be an honorable death, death which served a purpose.

"Trey's death was such," Herman said. "He risked his life 38 times to neutralize Iraqi artillery and tanks. Every mission he flew diminished the threat to our Marines on the ground. Trey Wilbourn was a credit to the Corps. He was proud to be a Marine; proud of his squadron. And we are proud of him. We will miss him."

But Wilbourn's death didn't sink in for several days. These men were up to their stripes in sorties. Then all of a sudden, this guy everyone loved like a brother wasn't responding to the jokes and jibes in the ready room. Then it hit like a 10-pound hammer as squadron mates gathered his personal belongings and inventoried his gear.

Showtime For Liberation

The plan for the liberation of Kuwait was divided into four phases. Phase 1 called for long-range air strikes on Iraq; phase 2 for the rollback of enemy air defenses; phase 3 for battlefield preparation; and phase 4 called for close air support during the ground war.

So it came as no surprise to Herman when the AV-8Bs were scrambled on the morning of 17 January to silence Iraqi artillery positions just north of the Saudi-Kuwaiti border.

The flightlines at Jubail were jumping: Pilots running to their planes, ground crews checking and rechecking bombs, a few last minute messages being scribbled on munitions with magic markers.

"The whole friggin' country of Kuwait was bristling with antiaircraft and missile batteries, but the squadron's first combat sortie since Vietnam encountered an eerie silence across the border," Herman said as he recalled in vivid detail his first mission.

"We were surprised at how clearly the targets stood out. When you looked down, an artillery revetment stood out like a great big sore. No camouflage. Just sitting there. In the open. Guns everywhere."

He remembers licking his chops like a dog in a meat market. "So many targets to choose from. Hundreds of them. Which one do I hit?" Herman hit a half-moon

shaped artillery revetment with six guns in it. Wingmen followed suit.

"There was absolutely no opposition," he said as he and his wingmen rolled in and shot up the joint with 300 rounds each of 25mm cannon shells. Of the six artillery pieces in that revetment, one was flipped over by 1,000-pounders and two others were smoking. None of the sophisticated threats he had been warned about by intel surfaced — no SAMs, nothing!

"Ground crews jumped up and down as we returned to base with empty bomb racks and scorched flash suppressors on our 25mm guns," he said as he proudly unfurled the squadron's red and gold flag he carried into battle.

Jubilation turned to meditation the next day, 18 January, when it was learned that an OV-10 Bronco had been shot down on the first hop of the morning, and its two-man Marine crew captured.

Herman had a close call when he and Walsh rolled in on a series of Iraqi trenches. "Just as I was getting ready to pickle (drop ordnance), this white flash went right past my nose, causing me to flinch and pull off the target without dropping my bombs."

Kiss A SAM Site Good-bye

Herman looked up to see a smoke trail going toward Walsh. "I yelled, 'Break! Break! Get your flares out!'" Dash-3 (the second section leader) in trail also broke into the clouds. Dash-4, his wingman, and the last Harrier in the four-plane strike, saw the smoke trail and followed it down to an intersection where Will Hechinger dropped four 1,000-pound bombs on the SA-7 site. Kiss a SAM site good-bye.

Although the threat of AAA and SAMs never materialized to the extent forecasted by military intelligence, it was there in varying degrees with every sortie, and

Aerial view of infamous Highway 8 littered with burning vehicles after air strikes. Photo: Lt. Col. Ted Herman



would ultimately account for the downing of five AV-8Bs and two OV-10s in southeast Kuwait where 12 Iraqi divisions were crowded into an area of 35x70 miles.

In the beginning, pilots didn't know what muzzle flashes on the ground looked like. It took two weeks for some, including Herman, to realize that what they thought were little puddles of water or oil, or shards of flying glass, were actually anti-aircraft gunners trying to kill them. But fire coming their way was mostly ineffectual.

"Geez, I Hope They're Not Shooting At Me"

"'Geez, I hope they're not shooting at me' is the most common thought that comes to mind," Herman said, "but most times it doesn't matter. Just a second or so later you've salvaged your load and are on your back jinking away, glancing over your shoulder to see if anybody's shooting at your wingman who followed you down into a hail of fire. You pop a few flares for insurance, then get the hell out of there."

The danger of being shot down like Walsh was negated by flying high (staying out of SAM and AAA envelopes), but to guarantee hits with Rockeyes (MK-80 cluster bombs), the VMA-542s had to go lower. In the latter weeks of the air war, palls of black, sooty oil smoke from burning wellheads in southern Kuwait forced the squadron to go even lower. During the second and third weeks of the war, two AV-8Bs were shot down and their pilots made POWs.

The Harriers of VMA-542 flew more than 1,200 sorties between 17 January when the air war began and 27 February when the ground war ended. They dropped more than 2.5 million pounds of ordnance and expended 150,000 rounds of 25mm ammo.

Young Guns like "Pisser," aka Capt. Michael Kenny, 26, from Ogden, Utah, had a field day destroying eight artillery sites, three tanks, four armored personnel carriers (APCs), 10 other vehicles and three buildings.

Major Wade Straw, 43, from New Bern, North Carolina, kept the numbers for his squadron. And they are impressive.

"We destroyed between 80 and 100 tanks, almost 300 artillery pieces and APCs, troops and a lot of buildings," Straw reported. He saw more than his share of combat in Vietnam, logging 1,100 hours of combat time as a Cobra pilot with the 1st Air Cavalry — five years of flying in one year.

Despite extensive combat experience, Straw was as nervous as Kenny, the new kid on the block. "You're nervous about two things," Straw, who was awarded three Silver Stars for heroism in Vietnam,



Captured Iraqi artillery in Kuwait abandoned by Iraqis who surrendered rather than fought. Photo: courtesy VMA-542

told me. "Number one, you're nervous about having your ass handed to you, and number two you want to do your job and do it right, and you can screw things up under pressure."

Young Gun Adam Greer, a 26-year-old captain from Dallas, Texas, was as nervous as hell on his first hop. "We were kind of assholes and elbows," Greer (call sign "Rosey") said, "because we had no idea what to expect. We went in there with Sidewinders looking for MiGs. All we wanted to do was drop our ordnance and get the hell out of there."

Sitting Ducks On The Highway To Hell

Hunting for the Harriers was particularly good on 26 February along Highway 8 north of Kuwait City, the road that became known as the infamous "Highway to Hell." Fleeing Iraqis had jammed the road with tanks, APCs, semis and private cars they had stolen in Kuwait. Every-

body was in a big hurry to get back to the Iraqi border, but they bogged down and got caught in the open like sitting ducks on a pond.

"It was a smorgasbord," according to Capt. Dave Ellis, 32, from Paisely, Florida, who beat up on the fleeing column with six cluster bombs, each cluster containing 250 bomblets. Ellis ended the war with 27 confirmed tank kills, three APCs, and 10 other vehicles.

Major Jimmy Lee, 34, from Atlanta, Georgia, call sign "Rebel" for obvious reasons, led the second section to roll in on Highway 8. "The F/A-18 FAC told us this target just came open," he said, "and to get in there as fast as we could, because it was going to be a multiple-target situation." The FAC wasn't fooling.

"It was a parking lot!" he said.

"Bumper-to-bumper traffic leading up to the parking lot where there was mass confusion as vehicles tried to get out of the way of falling bombs. We knew there were military vehicles in that convoy, and we also knew there were bad guys in civilian cars down there, so we had no misgivings about bombing the hell out of them," Lee continued. He also had six MK-20 Rockeye cluster bombs on the racks which he dropped two at a time, 150 yards apart, creating a killing zone the size of two football fields.

"Inside that area, there was total destruction," he said. He never got a chance to rake the column with his 300 rounds of 25mm cannon fire. It made no sense to fire BBs at the enemy when the Harriers had cluster bombs.

When Lee came off the target he could hear guys "checking in" all over the sky. "Everyone in southern Kuwait knew something big was going down on Highway 8, and they didn't want to miss the party."

Captain Dave Salathe, 28, from Bedford, Pennsylvania, also expected more from the Iraqis, but didn't complain. After releasing his ordnance, Salathe rolled over on his back to avoid being hit by flak which looked like the Fourth of July.

Salathe did have some good BDA (battle damage assessment). He got his wife, Sharon, the adjutant at MAG-26, another Marine Air Group in the theater, pregnant during one of her conjugal visits. "I think I was the only Marine in Saudi Arabia smiling before the ground war started," Salathe laughed.

Salathe said he wants to have the baby's little bottom tattooed with "Made in Saudi Arabia," but First Lieutenant Sharon Salathe may have something to say about that. ✂

It made no sense to fire BBs ... when Harriers had cluster bombs.

EYES OF THE STORM

Gulf War SpecOps

by Munremur MacGerrcinn

Photos by Robert K. Brown



Humvee with SOCCENT personnel detailed for liaison with Saudi forces. Humvee and SOCCENT both performed admirably in Gulf War.

Operation Desert Storm may well go down as one of the greatest military campaigns in history. Part and parcel of the campaign was a highly sophisticated deception plan that covered the actual operations like a cloak of darkness. Although Desert Storm planners deny it, it appears that much of the fabric of that cloak involved releasing information in such a way as to mislead the Iraqis as to the planners' true intentions.

As the dust settles, information from various sources, including interviews with participants, reveals that Desert Storm also was the largest Special Operations (SpecOps) campaign in history. Just how large it was can be gleaned from the size of the forces involved. Special Operations Command, Central Command (SOCCENT), a headquarters consisting of only 31 people, expanded almost tenfold, and commanded some 3,000 SpecOps troops



SOCCENT troops take breather next to FAVs (fast attack vehicles) at Kuwait City International Airport. Fast (80 mph), adaptable, FAVs carried 40mm Mk 19 Mod 3 automatic grenade launcher, M60s, "Ma Deuces," M136 (AT4) light antiarmor weapons, TOWs and 30mm ASP-30 cannons. Many driven by SEALs carried M14 in mount by driver.

of all services.

The first shots of Desert Storm were fired by SOCCENT elements, who crossed into Kuwait and Iraq prior to the air war. Some sources indicate that these elements were sent to target and take out critical installations such as radars, air defense batteries, and command, control and communications facilities, but this is unverified.

What can be verified is that of the five doctrinal SpecOps missions, four were carried out during the war in the Persian Gulf. Members of SOCCENT carried out unconventional warfare (UW) inside Kuwait, assisting members of the Kuwaiti Resistance. Strategic Reconnaissance (SR) made a major contribution, since SOCCENT elements provided virtually all of the on-the-ground intelligence available to the Coalition forces.

Direct action (DA) missions were carried out from day one, as SOCCENT elements knocked out key installations. Unverified sources claim they brought back samples of Iraqi radars and similar top-secret equipment.

By far the greatest SpecOps contribution to Desert Storm, however, was foreign

internal development (FID). It's no exaggeration to say that U.S. Special Forces teams were the glue that held the Pan-Arab forces together. Initially, it was obvious that to work together on the battlefield, the Arab forces would have to have U.S. representatives on the spot to request air support, logistics support, and coordinate actions with other Coalition forces.

Within a few days, it became obvious that these on-the-spot troops would have to do more than that: they would have to provide training and technical assistance of all kinds if the Pan-Arab forces were to play their assigned roles in the coming ground war.

It quickly became obvious that there simply weren't enough Special Forces types in-theater to do the job, and the call went out for volunteers. Many of those who responded had no background at all in Special Forces, but the need was so great, they were accepted anyway. In the end, this turned out to be an advantage.

Many of these conventional infantrymen, tankers and logistics types had skills not usually found in Special Forces, and they understood the needs of conventional forces even better than their Special Forces buddies. On the other side of the coin, many conventional types had no training in dealing with other cultures, and some of them experienced difficulties in understanding their Arab counterparts' ways of doing things.

Creating An Army From Scratch

One of the first FID problems was to create a Kuwaiti army from scratch. Here the Special Forces troopers encountered the first of many touchy problems. The Saudis, who were supposed to outfit the Kuwaitis, seemed less than keen. They were friendly on the surface, but there



Col. Jesse Thompson, SOCCENT commander (in LBE) and Saudi counterpart. As noted by Gen. Schwarzkopf, SpecOps played a significant role in the Persian Gulf War effort. Many operations will undoubtedly remain classified for some time.

obviously was some reluctance from the top to building a first-rate Kuwaiti force.

This points out one of the key issues encountered by SOCCENT — there were obviously some hidden political agendas among the Arab nations in the Coalition. These were often reflected in the way the Arab forces treated the SOCCENT training elements.

The Saudis were polite and correct. The

Kuwaitis were enthusiastic and friendly. The Egyptians were a little touchy — they considered themselves the most sophisticated and capable of the Arab forces, and probably were correct. They still had the stamp of Saad el Shazli's brilliant leadership from the early 1970s.

The Syrians frankly regarded the American Special Forces troopers as spies. SOCCENT elements were not allowed to collocate with the Syrian units they were supposed to be helping, and all attempts to provide any training were met by the same refrain, "The sun hasn't shone from Damascus." Finally, with the ground war in the offing, the Syrians began to see reality — no Special Forces, no air support. The clouds went away, and the sun came out.

In combat, the Pan-Arab forces were a little slower than the Americans anticipated — not because they held back, but because they take a thorough approach to war. The Egyptians, in particular, probably because so much of the Western desert is still sown with mines from World War II, have a healthy respect for mine fields and clear their lanes meticulously.

Also, they have a clear understanding of the impact of enemy observation in the desert — probably learned during their many clashes with the Israelis. At one point, a tower in the midst of an Iraqi position held up the Egyptian advance. While the debate about how to deal with this was going on, the accompanying Special Forces team unlimbered an M24 sniper rifle and brought the observer tumbling down with a single shot.

That settled the issue — a total of 336 Iraqis, the entire battalion, or as many as hadn't already deserted, surrendered. That has to be some kind of record for a single 7.62 x 51mm round!

During the actual ground war, the Special Forces teams provided liaison, coordinated air support, and generally provided Central Command (CENTCOM) Headquarters with "desert truth" — accurate reports on the status and location of Arab forces.

Applying "Desert Truth"

The ground war was kicked off by a planned total of nine SR teams who were scheduled to go in at G-minus 48 hours. Because of the Soviet peace initiative, this was pushed back to G-minus 24, then one of the missions had to be scrubbed due to interference with the XVIII Airborne flight plans. The remaining eight teams went in, although one had to abort when it was "painted" by Iraqi radar on the way.

Another team had to abort on the ground. The area where they landed was too open and rocky (satellite intelligence can't tell the texture of the soil, or lack of it). With no place to hide, and no way to dig a hole, the team had to call for extraction.

Continued on page 116



“WHAM, BAM, THANKS, SADDAM”

Warthog Warriors Feast on Iraqi Armor

by Galen Geer

Photos courtesy Captains
Salomonson and Marks

ON the second day of the Persian Gulf ground war two A-10 pilots, completing their third mission, reported they were coming home with zero bullets and zero missiles. Someone joked that the two pilots set a record for shooting up the most ordnance in one day.

One of the pilots explained they destroyed or damaged 33 tanks that day, 23 of which were confirmed kills. That got someone's attention. Suddenly the 76th Tactical Fighter Squadron's (TFS) Captain Eric "Fish" Salomonson and First Lieutenant (now Captain) John "Karl" Marks were certified heroes.

"I was glad to be doing my job," Salomonson said. "It was what I trained for, what I was over there to do. On that day I was just able to do it a little better."

Other people thought differently. The next day Salomonson and Marks were asked to talk to an Air Force reporter about their mission, to which they agreed. Afterward the young Air Force journalist asked if they would meet a press pool and talk about their three missions.

"We didn't think much about it," Marks said, "but we said, 'sure, why not?' We were surprised when the press pool set



up cameras for CNN and about 15 reporters started asking questions.

"We flew one more mission," Marks explained, "and then the war ended." The two Warthog pilots, however, had become heroes.

The "job" for both men started years before, when they first entered the Air Force, following somewhat different paths to the day when they flew side by side on their three missions to glory.

Bordering States, Different Paths

Captain Salomonson entered the Air Force in November 1986, through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he majored in industrial construction. Lieutenant Marks made his way to the Air Force two weeks after he graduated from the University of Kansas with a business degree, also in 1986.

After entering the Air Force, Salomonson found himself at Shepherd AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas, for pilot training, after which he was sent to the Air Force's pilot survival schools. The land survival school at Fairchild AFB in Washington state was followed by water survival school at Homestead AFB, Florida. Marks took his initial flight training at Columbus AFB, Mississippi, and was picked for his first choice, flying A-10s.

Following survival school, the next phase of training for both Salomonson and Marks was Fighter Lead-In at Holloman AFB, New Mexico, for two months, learning the basics of flying fighters. The last school for both Salomonson and Marks was at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona, where they learned to fly the A-10 Thunderbolt II.

Salomonson graduated from the A-10 school near the end of August 1988 and was sent to Korea, where he flew A-10s out of Suwon AFB until November 1989 when he returned to the States and reported to England AFB, Louisiana, and joined the 76th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

For Marks, the route to England AFB was more direct. "After I finished all my schools my first assignment was England Air Force Base," he said.

Their aircraft, the A-10 Thunderbolt II, is seldom called the "Thunderbolt" by pilots or anyone else; the plane is affectionately known as the "Warthog" because it lacks any graceful appearance. Pilots, however, quickly come to love the "Hog" because it is the deadliest ground-attack aircraft in the world and usually



brings its pilot home.

During the war at least 15 A-10 pilots were able to fly their crippled aircraft home in spite of horrific damage that would have brought most other aircraft down. One plane had a 6-foot hole in the leading edge of the wing and the pilot still made it back. Another pilot, from the 76th TFS, had most of his rear controls shot away and came home using emergency trim only. Although he skidded off the runway and smashed the landing gear, he was able to walk away.

Anatomy Of A Warthog

The first A-10 was flown in 1972; it entered Air Force service five years later as the A-10A. The main armament is the GAU-8 Avenger 30mm, seven-barreled rotary cannon, firing high-velocity, armor-piercing depleted uranium rounds which punch through more armor than either lead or steel; plus every fifth round has an explosive tip packing its own punch.

The A-10 can also carry up to 8 tons of air-to-ground munitions including various bombs, AGM-65 Maverick missiles and AIM-9

Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and an array of electronic countermeasure gear.

The pilot sits in a tub made of titanium armor that can withstand hits from guns as large as 23mm. Redundant controls for the aircraft include a cable system stretched through different parts of the aircraft. The heavily armored twin engines, two GE turbofans, develop nearly 10,000 pounds of thrust and are located high on the rear of the fuselage for maximum surface-to-air missile protection.

"We know the Iraqis were afraid of us, because POWs said when they saw our distinctive profile they knew we were going to put a hurt on them."

A-10 Thunderbolt II on runway near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Neither Salomonson nor Marks is thrilled with the prospect of seeing the A-10 phased out of the Air Force arsenal. "The numbers speak for themselves," Marks said. "The A-10 accounted for more armored targets destroyed than any other aircraft type. It is the right aircraft for that role."

Salomonson agreed, pointing out that the A-10 is an aircraft that performed its mission superbly in its first combat test. "We know the Iraqis were afraid of us," Salomonson said, "because POWs said when they saw our distinctive profile they knew we were going to put a hurt on them."

When Iraq made the fatal jump and invaded Kuwait, the 76th TFS was one of the units sent over in the early days of the build-up to defend Saudi Arabia and buy the world some time.

"Once the decision was made," Salomonson recalled, "we were ready."

To go over, the pilots had to fly their fighters from their Louisiana base to Saudi Arabia and go to war. "We expected to be flying into combat," Marks explained, "and we flew over cocked and loaded. The aircraft were loaded with missiles and bullets and the pilots were wearing their sidearms."

The flight to war began on 27 August with the squadron's 24 fighters organized into cells of six aircraft each with a KC-135 tanker mother-ship serving as a flying gas station and providing navigation.

"The flight from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, to Spain," Salomonson said, "was the longest flight ever for any A-10 pilot." For most pilots the flight to Spain was 13 1/2 hours. A few pilots, like John Marks, actually had longer flights. "I was flying spare forward, where we take off with the cell in front in case one of them drops off," he said.

The flight plan was laid out so that no

"When they told us
on the 16th that 'this is it,'
we are going to war, we were ready."



pilot was ever in a position where he would not have enough fuel to reach safety in an emergency. After resting in Spain, the squadron completed its flight into harm's way. On 31 August, the A-10s landed at a Spartan air base near Dhahran.

“We landed, turned around and prepared to go to war,” both men explained, adding that no one was really sure what was going to happen next. “We knew there was nothing between us and the Iraqi army,” Marks said, “so we were ready.”

Into Saudi Arabia

Salomonson said they landed in Saudi Arabia and began sitting on alert. “We were waiting, but we also began a building process. We settled ourselves and the maintenance and support people in, then began a building-block approach to our role in the build-up.”

“We had only limited routes we could fly,” Salomonson and Marks explained. “Slowly the squadron established more military operating areas working with growing numbers of the ground units, becoming better equipped to handle the problems of combat.”

“When the war started,” Salomonson said, “we were operating exactly the way we needed to for a successful combat role.”

Marks agreed, adding, “We were ready to fight from the first. Iraq didn’t invade Saudi Arabia, giving us the time to become 100% ready. For weeks, the one unspoken word was the ‘O-word’ for ‘O-fensive.’ We talked defense, we trained defense, we were there to defend — not attack.”

The “O” word began to creep into conversation when pilots looked a few weeks ahead, wondering how they would go on the offensive, planning the tactics they would employ to fight and win. A forward operating location (FOL) near Hafar al Batin was readied and the pilots

were able to anticipate many of the tactics employed during the war.

“When they told us on the 16th that ‘this is it,’ we are going to war, we were ready,” Marks said. The early targets were the Iraqi radar, command and control sites, anything giving the Iraqis eyes and ears. Both pilots recall the ease A-10 pilots had in destroying “dug-in” targets.

“From our perspective, if we could see it, we were able to put ordnance on it,” Salomonson said. Most of the targets were in revetments protecting the equipment from a near miss — something Warthog pilots seldom do.

Thanks For The Targets

“When they parked their tanks it was really good shooting,” Salomonson said. “We rolled in, shot, and left.”

“All we could say,” Marks added, “was ‘thank you very much’ and shoot it.”

Iraq did use decoys but they didn’t work very well. Warthog pilots could tell if a target was a decoy if it left tracks. A tank leaves big tracks in the desert. When the “Hog” pilots didn’t see tracks, they became suspicious.

“They parked their tanks in a row of revetments 100 yards apart,” Marks explained.

“We could fly over them and if we saw tracks we knew it was a tank. We could count them: tank, tank, decoy, tank, truck ... and shoot them.”

Throughout the air war the most frequent combat mission was to fly a “kill box” 30 minutes by 30 minutes, which amounted to 100 square miles of ground.

“We would be given our kill box,” Marks explained, “and if there were any specific targets in there we would shoot them up first, then anything else we could find.” Hog pilots became very good at spotting targets even if the Iraqi army did try to dig them in. On occasion an Iraqi

Salomonson (left) and Marks pose with A-10 “Warthog.”

would try to drive across the desert.

“You wouldn’t believe it,” Salomonson said, “we’d be there and some crazy Iraqi would try to drive across the desert. You could roll in on a moving target like a truck, strafe it with your guns and watch it slide off the road in a ball of flame. For us, to take out something like that was, well, great, because we knew it was some equipment that would never move again.”

For the 76th, 2 February was a black day, as Capt. Dale Storr was shot down over Kuwait. Both Salomonson and Marks were paired off to fly search and rescue alert that day, and took off to search for him. Later they learned Storr had been captured within minutes after parachuting to safety.

In the 76th, pilots rotated flying jobs and wingmen, and senior pilots are flight leaders. Both Salomonson and Marks are flight leaders but, because of the way missions were drawn, often flew together. When they flew together Salomonson’s seniority made him the flight leader. The pair proved a lethal combination when the ground war opened.

“We wanted the ground war to kick off,” Salomonson explained, “because we were running out of targets. We figured the Army would flush targets out for us.”

It worked; in the opening hours of the ground attack Salomonson and Marks found themselves flying over Iraq in front of 7th Corps’ lead elements. They could see the forward attacking elements and the impacts of multiple rocket-launchers (MRLs). Five miles in front of the lead elements, with the artillery getting closer, they were busy “plinking” tanks for the grunts.

At the end of the first day they left seven tanks burning and three others damaged.

They also smashed some artillery positions with the 30mm gun, setting the artillery rounds off in the gun pits.

A Pilot's Dream

The next morning, Salomonson and Marks were supposed to be on alert, sitting out the war unless needed. They went to their airplanes, started the engines for a check and were told they had work to do.

"We took off in pitch black," Salomonson said. A night flight of A-10s discovered some tanks and shot the lead and trailing tanks, trapping them. The surviving tanks drove off the road into the revetments on both sides of the road.

After a brief conversation between the two flights of A-10s and a third flight that flew in to help the attack, the targets were divided. The second flight of A-10s were to shoot the targets on the east side while Salomonson and Marks took the tanks to the west.

"It was an A-10 pilot's dream," Marks said. "They were hot from running and the infrared-sensing Mavericks easily locked on so we could shoot them."

After shooting their missiles they rolled in and began shooting the tanks with their 30mm guns. When the four A-10s finished, 20 of the 30 tanks they had

cloud of thick, black smoke from the oil fires put a new, dangerous edge on the mission. There was nothing in the rule book that said they had to take on the tanks. But they did.

"The Marines and Coalition troops were between 5 and 10 miles away, headed up the road right for those tanks," Salomonson remembered. If the tanks weren't destroyed they would catch the approaching Marines in their sights. The two pilots attacked the tanks.

"It wasn't easy," Marks recalled. "The rain was making the wind screen blurry. To shoot the Maverick you first line-up optically on the target. It was so bad that to shoot we were closer than we normally were with the guns."

16 Down

As the attack progressed, Salomonson had better luck with his Mavericks than Marks so, for the first few passes, Salomonson shot his missiles



1st Lt. John "Karl" Marks after mission over Kuwait/Iraq.

main operating base. By this time they had killed 16 Iraqi tanks. But the day wasn't over.

"We landed and were refueled and rearmed. Operations asked if we knew where those tanks were; we said we did," Salomonson explained. "So they sent us back to kill more tanks."

At first, Salomonson and Marks strayed too close to the coast and found themselves attracting triple-A, so they moved inland a few miles and met another Marine F-18 FAC who directed them to tanks south of Kuwait City. This time the tanks were dug-in around an "X" intersection. The A-10s were equipped with both infrared and contrast-seeking Mavericks, plus their 30mm guns. When the attack ended, Salomonson and Marks left seven more tanks burning and four others damaged.

They were heroes and didn't know it. That wasn't important. Every day of their Air Force career had been leading toward this one day over the sands of the Middle East when the two pilots, flying the ugliest fighter in the American arsenal, would personally prove that when given a mission, and the freedom to complete it, they were among the best fighting men in the world. Just like other Americans were proving it day after day in the Persian Gulf War.

Galen Geer, a former SOF staffer, is currently our Contributing Editor for Outdoor Affairs. He's written extensively on military, firearms and hunting topics.



discovered were burning. Salomonson and Marks returned to the FOL for fuel and ammo.

"We refueled, rearmed, and were ready to go for the second mission of the day," Salomonson said. This time they were sent closer to Kuwait City where a Marine F-18D Hornet, working as a forward air controller (FAC), gave the coordinates for some dug-in tanks.

The combination of weather, anti-aircraft threat from 37mm guns and the growing

and Marks followed him with a strafing run. After Salomonson shot his missiles they reversed roles.

"When we were through we had seven burning tanks," Marks said. As they flew down the road they found some more targets and Marks was able to leave another tank burning with a missile. As he pulled off the target, Marks realized he was in the middle of a thick cloud of flak.

"I told 'Fish' to pull off, that we had thick flak," Marks remembered. "I started jinking my aircraft to avoid it."

The maneuverers paid off. Marks escaped the flak. The two ships headed for their

COBRA COWBOYS



Killer Marine Copters Ride Low in the Sky,
High in the Saddle, Over Kuwait

by Dale B. Cooper
Photos courtesy Captain Randy Hammond



America's new breed of high-tech warriors stand ready in front of their battle-proven Cobra at "Lonesome Dove." Left to right: Maj. Tom Bray, Capt. Pete Coz, Capt. Tim Raymon, Capt. Chris McCullough, Capt. Randy Hammond, Capt. Steve Rudder, 1st Lt. Brian McCrary and Capt. Mark Phillips.

TASK Force Ripper, the first Coalition unit to assault Iraqi positions in Kuwait, could not have accomplished its task without help from two squadrons of Cobra gunships.

The Cobras were the airborne eyes for Task Force Ripper as 6,000 grunts kicked Saddam's ass back to Baghdad and slaughtered his soldiers like sheep. A sign hanging around the neck of a dead Iraqi tanker issued a stark warning to other Iraqis who passed by the burned-out hulk: "Don't Fuck With The Marines."

One of the Cobra pilots, who made many Iraqi soldiers wish they had never heard of Kuwait, earned the handle "King Cobra" for his exploits on the battlefield.

Captain Randy Hammond, 32, of Temecula, California, chalked up more Iraqi kills than any other SuperCobra pilot in Kuwait.

Hammond, a member of the "Scarfaces" (HMLA-367) from Camp Pendleton, California, destroyed 10 tanks, three armored personnel carriers (APCs), eight other armored vehicles, three antiaircraft artillery (AAA) pieces, including a pair of S-12s (85mm guns) and a ZSU 23-4 Quad 23mm self-propelled antiaircraft vehicle. Hammond also killed an unknown number of Iraqi soldiers.

"I couldn't tell how many I killed," Hammond said, "because pieces fly everywhere when you hit 'em with 20 mike mike [20mm cannon fire]."

Hammond's squadron was "hell on skids" when it came to knocking out enemy armor and artillery. The Scarfaces outshot the Gunfighters (HMLA-369) by a country mile: destroying a total of 104 pieces of equipment, including 44 tanks and 51 APCs. The four helicopters that make up the air division Hammond leads accounted for 27 of the 44 tanks destroyed. And 21 of those kills came during three sorties on the second day of the war.

Hammond's air division also recorded the only Cobra kills on a pair of T-72 tanks under the lights (illumination flares), a difficult task given the Cobra's lack of night-fighting equipment.

What you're about to read is the account of Capt. Hammond, a flight lead in charge of four AH-1 Whiskey-model SuperCobras, and what happened to him from the "git go."

"It's Started"

"I was laying in the rack on 17 January when our sergeant major ran into our tent at 0330 and said, 'It's started.' We could hear jets roaring overhead as we turned on the radio and heard reports from Baghdad, Riyadh, Dhahran and various places that the air war had begun," Hammond recalled.

"Nineteen January was the first time my squadron was activated. We were standing alert that night at Al Mishab airfield in Saudi Arabia when our RPVs (remote-piloted vehicles) detected some

enemy tanks moving down the coastal highway toward the Saudi border town of Khafji.

"We were scrambled and sent to an area called the 'Elbow,' where Kuwait meets Iraq at a 90 degree angle on the southwestern border of Kuwait. We went out there to support some LAVs (light armored vehicles) that were under attack," Hammond said.

By the time he and his flight of three Cobras showed up (one went down in the chocks with mechanical problems and could not launch), the Iraqis had retired back toward the border after crossing swords with the LAVs and being pummeled by some A-10 Thunderbolts. Seven Marines aboard one LAV became the first KIAs of the Kuwaiti conflict when a Warthog (A-10) hit their LAV by mistake with an unforgiving Maverick missile.

"We received some multiple rocket-launcher and heavy machine-gun fire from the Iraqis," Hammond, who illuminated the area with flares and returned fire, keeping the Iraqis at bay, recounted.

As the sun came up on 30 January, the combat situation changed. "Now it was our game," Hammond said with determined confidence. "We were ready to roll. The LAVs that had taken a beating during the night were directed to move to a position on the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, and his flight moved up well forward of them, about 5,000 meters, and began clearing the area."

At a police post on the border, Hammond's flight spotted three T-62 tanks, engaged them with TOW missiles and destroyed them all. Continuing to press the attack, he swung in toward 15 other vehicles, knocking out yet another tank moving toward the LAVs. Nine Iraqi soldiers ran into the open, threw up their hands and started waving white flags.

"My co-pilot, Capt. Mark Phillips (who did most of the flying while Hammond operated the weapons systems in the rear seat), used our helicopter to round 'em up like cows and called for the LAVs to come and get them," Hammond recalled. "The tanks took a 180-degree heading back into Kuwait as the LAVs moved toward their objective."

As Hammond's flight pressed the attack, it became the target of AAA fire—a good tactic for the Iraqis to employ, being that all helicopters are vulnerable in

a hover.

Numero Uno

But before he backed off, Hammond got the first tank kill by an attack helicopter in the Persian Gulf.

"As these guys headed out of town [Khafji], we started shooting TOWs at them," he said. The TOW Hammond fired at the T-62 was a wire-guided missile (packing an 8.6-pound shaped charge) that proved to be very effective against tanks.

"When I hit it, the turret blew apart," Hammond said, "and we got a pretty good secondary (explosion) out of it." The TOWs his helicopter carried in side racks were more effective on enemy armor than Hammond thought they'd be.

He also was about to see a spectacular display of marksmanship by his second section lead, Capt. Steve Rudder, and his co-pilot, First Lieutenant Brian McCrayer, who put "one helluva TOW shot" into a

fleeing T-62, beyond the normal range of a TOW.

"The only explanation I have" Hammond said, "is somebody at the factory put some extra wire in it, because that baby reached out more than 4,000 meters and hit the tank, causing its turret to flip upside down and land on the open hole like a tiddlywink."

Hammond and his buddies were chomping at the bit to get at the Iraqis. "We worked our ass off from the time we arrived in Saudi Arabia until we pulled the first trigger," he said. "You know after six months with no beer, no fun, and no women, we were chomping at the bit." But nailing some tanks relieved a lot of their pent-up emotions.

The Scarfaces were not called upon again until the first night of the ground war, 24 February. HMLA was on alert at a forward arming and refueling point (FARP), a place codenamed "Lonesome Dove," near the "Elbow."

A call came in for a mission 15km south of Ali Al Salem airfield. 2nd Marine Division needed help from Scarface. "The division had pushed north and consolidated its position for the night," Hammond said.

He lamented the fact that his SuperCobra had limited night-fighting capability, but, as one battalion commander put it, "You dance with who you bring, and if you bring bad equipment, you still have to dance."

The thermal imagery system (TIS) on some of 2nd Division's M1A1 tanks had picked up heat signatures from 40 to 50

"I couldn't tell how many I killed, because pieces fly everywhere when you hit 'em with 20 mike mike."

Iraqi T-72 tanks heading their way.

"It was probably the toughest flying I've ever done," Hammond, who was flying with night-vision goggles, confessed. "Flying through heavy fire and smoke significantly degraded the capability of the goggles." It was a real challenge for Hammond and his wingmen just to keep from smashing into one other.

An OV-10 Bronco forward air controller (FAC) had Hammond's section fly about 5 to 7 miles forward of their own friendlies, where they encountered the Iraqi armor.

But the fire and smoke were too heavy to get a laser spot from the Bronco for a Hellfire missile engagement. Hammond led his Cobras in closer, illuminated the target with 21 flares, and destroyed the lead T-72 in the column with a TOW.

In rapid-fire succession, Hammond's flight put seven TOWs into seven more tanks, forcing the column to grind to a halt. "It was like shooting fish in a barrel," he grinned. The lack of light forced his flight

to move dangerously close to the tanks.

With all of the smoke, Hammond found himself in a 50-foot hover over some dug-in T-72s and hundreds of Iraqi infantry in trenches, all looking up at him. "Definitely not the place to be," he sighed.

Two missiles were launched against Hammond as his wingman, Capt. Steve Rudder, rolled in and started scattering the enemy with 20mm cannon fire.

No Apparent Fear Of Death

"Yeah, Rudder has no apparent fear of death," Hammond reflected. The missiles fired at Hammond were bigger than shoulder-fired projectiles. "They had a real big launch signature, probably an SA-8 or SA-6 — possibly an SA-9." He then called in the grid coordinates, after which Marine artillery saturated the area with high explosives.

But the main Iraqi engagement followed in what was described to Hammond by Colonel Richard Hodary, Papa Bear Task Force commander, as "the largest tank battle the Marine Corps has ever been involved in."

A total of 75 enemy tanks were destroyed — 24 by Cobras. Hammond got nine tanks, all but one of a half-dozen AAA positions, nine vehicles and two APCs.

When Hammond arrived on the scene, Papa Bear's right flank was being attacked by a large Iraqi armored force, and Papa

Bear had shifted the armor to the east to meet the enemy head-on.

"The enemy was still out of range from the M-60A1 main guns, so they cleared us in front of the friendly tanks," Hammond said. He then wasted no time destroying about 10 Iraqi tanks and vehicles, taking 200 enemy POWs in the process. He also picked off a couple of anti-aircraft positions during the roundup.

Out of ammo and missiles, he returned to "Lonesome Dove" to refuel and rearm. But turning your back on the enemy is dangerous for a helicopter pilot. "The Iraqis would lay down on top of their AK-47s pretending to be dead," Hammond explained, "but when we turned our tail to them, they'd jump up and try to shoot us in the back."

Appointment With Allah

Such tactics caused Cobra crews to save some 20mm ammo just in case one of Saddam's soldiers wanted to commit suicide. "We were always willing to

schedule an appointment with Allah for them," Hammond joked.

It seemed like every time Hammond's flight of four Cobras went out on a mission, everybody and his brother took a shot at them. But the Iraqis didn't employ their anti-aircraft guns (S-60s and ZSU 23-4s) like they should have.

"Rudder is the most aggressive Cobra pilot I've ever known. He had a very strong desire to go out and kill the enemy."

blade and another took a chunk of shrapnel in its side. But they stayed airborne.

Corporal Bryan R. Freeman, working as a FAC in a TOW-equipped Humvee, spotted the source of fire being directed at Hammond, and lased the building from which the hail of fire was coming.

"We put six Hellfire missiles and four TOW missiles into it," Hammond smiled, "silencing it good." The explosion not only destroyed the building, but also knocked down a tall antenna, which fell across two gun positions. A double kill for the Cobras. Freeman was awarded a Silver Star for his heroics.

After blowing the building to bits, Hammond and Freeman teamed up to destroy another four or five tanks before the main tank element of Task Force Papa Bear called for Hammond to engage an enemy command post defended by about 40 Iraqi troops and a pair of anti-aircraft batteries.

"We put six Hellfires into it and destroyed everything on that hill that moved with rockets and 20mm," Hammond recalled.

After the Iraqis saw their command post go up in smoke, 200 of them raised their hands in the air, bringing down the curtain on the last shooting engagement of the war for Capt. Randy Hammond.

"Greatest Force-Multipliers"

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mattis, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, spearheading the first Coalition assault into Kuwait, had nothing but praise for the Cobra pilots. "They were the greatest force-multiplier out there on the battlefield in Kuwait, and we couldn't have won the war without them," he said.



"I think there was a real breakdown in their command and control," Hammond theorized. None of the Scarfaces were scratched, but a couple of their Cobras got dinged. One took a bullet through the

Capt. Mark Phillips poses with Czech NBC officer in front of his Cobra. An American and Czech soldier fighting on the same side would have been unthinkable just a year ago.

The glory of drawing the first blood and the most blood would not have been possible had Hammond not had an unselfish Marine aviator as his second section lead.

Captain Rudder and his co-pilot, 1st Lt. Brian McCrary, continued to press the attack, destroying the source of the tracer fire with their 20mm gun. "Rudder saved our skin," Hammond, who wrote up Rudder for a Silver Star, said.

"Rudder is the most aggressive Cobra pilot I've ever known," Hammond pointed out as he talked about his brush with death. "He had a very strong desire to go out and kill the enemy."

Although HMLA-367 wound up with the most Cobra kills in the Kuwaiti theater of operations, HMLA-369, the Gunfighters who were the first Cobras to arrive in Saudi Arabia, earned a reputation for busting bunkers.

Captain Eric Hastings, 32, from Dunnigan, California, has no idea how many missions he flew in Kuwait. "You just got up in the morning and started flying wherever the FAC wanted you to fly."

Khafji was the first place the Gunfighters got their guns wet. HMLA-369 was the first Cobra squadron to arrive on the scene, engaging Iraqi mechanized units on the northern end of the Saudi border town and knocking out two APCs.

The U.S. air battle ended abruptly, however, when it was announced that Coalition ground forces would drive the Iraqis out of Khafji. This was an obvious political move by Central Command designed to allow the Saudis a piece of the action in retaking one of their own cities.

Taking The Heat Off

Like the Scarfaces, their cousins from Camp Pendleton, the Gunfighters, were not called again until the night of the invasion. A Gunfighter, Tony Larson, got a direct TOW hit on an Iraqi multiple rocket-launcher, sending it sky-high and taking some heat off cannoneers in the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines.

Hastings and his section helped Lt. Col. Mattis' men at the Emir's farm by hovering over a tree line and checking to see if anyone was home in a series of bunkers below. Hastings probably shot more rockets and 20mm than any other Cobra pilot, but he didn't carry any Hellfires or TOWs, so he couldn't bag any Iraqi tanks.

Captain Russell McGee, 27, from Graham, Texas, flew the front seat, or gunner/navigator position, in his Cobra, along with Capt. Perry Maas.

"Khafji was the first time we fired in combat," the lanky Texan recalled, "and it was the first time we fired at enemy targets on night-vision goggles." McGee and his mates were awakened from a deep sleep and told to "saddle up and high-tail



The future is here. Capt. Randy Hammond wearing night-vision goggles which enable him to fly and fight in pitch-black darkness.

it to Khafji."

Maas, McGee's back-seater, 29, from Northfield, Minnesota, said that the Cobras took a back seat to the jet jockeys after Khafji. There was no need for close air support until Task Force Ripper breached two Iraqi mine fields inside Kuwait on the morning of 24 February. Then the fat was in the fire for both the Gunfighters and the Scarfaces.

Maas remembers the day he was sitting in the waiting room at Al Mishab airfield when "kaboom," a missile hit the base. "Wow, did we hit the floor fast," he said with raised eyebrows.

McGee remembers the diplomatic roller coaster ride before the air war began on 17 January. Although there was still hope that Saddam would blink first and back out of Kuwait gracefully, "Intel reports we were receiving gave Cobra pilots a different

picture," McGee recalled.

Captain Dave Koellein-Dewaele, "K.D." for short, said that the cease-fire came as shock to him. K.D., 30, from Oakdale, Minnesota, fired Hellfires at bunkers and BTR-60s, the Soviet version of a Marine Corps LAV. K.D. said he'll remember the "100-hour war" as a "piece of cake."

The only time the Iraqis fought was when they were in the burning oil fields and the Marines couldn't see them. "If they had chosen to fight in there, it would have been a real nightmare because of the limited visibility," K.D. explained.

Although the Gunfighters didn't chalk up any tank kills, they still remind the Scarfaces that they were the first Cobra squadron to arrive in Saudi Arabia, and had Saddam headed south, they would have been the only cowboys around at the OK Corral. ✕

Thick black smoke from a Kuwaiti oil well billows into the desert sky. Saddam's retreating troops set hundreds of such fires throughout Kuwait.

“We blew the turret off every T-72 we hit,” Corporal Vernon Forenpohar, a 25-year-old Marine Reservist from Selah, Washington, said. Forenpohar and 110 other members of Bravo Company, 4th Tank Battalion spearheaded the 2nd Marine Division’s ground assault into Kuwait on 24 February.

Bravo’s *blitzkrieg* is what legends are made of in the United States Marine Corps. By the end of the advance into Kuwait, Bravo Company, call sign “Predator,” had destroyed 59 Iraqi tanks, 30 of which were Soviet-built T-72s.

Bravo is also credited with destroying 28 BMPs (mechanized infantry combat vehicles), seven BTRs (armored personnel carriers), 20 trucks, one ZSU-23-4 (an armored antiaircraft weapon), and four Toyota Land Cruisers. A total of 119 Iraqi vehicles were

Cpls. Briscoe and Forenpohar, gunner and commander of “Torture Chamber,” take a break beside latest war trophy.



SEMPER FATAL

by Dale B. Cooper

Photos by Corporal Vernon Forenpoar

Yakima Yank Marine Reservists Kick, Bash and Take Names

destroyed by Bravo Company.

The farmers, truck drivers, plumbers and college students who were called to active duty in Bravo established a combat record unequalled in Marine Corps history. It also may have dispelled long-standing myths about Marine Reserve units' ability to fight.

After a brief — but bloody — action, the commander of the 2nd Tank Battalion to which Bravo was attached, flew over the battlefield to survey the damage. When he asked how many tanks did that amount of damage, he was told 13.

"He couldn't believe it," First Sergeant Robert D. Martin, who joined Bravo two days before it was activated and deployed to the Persian Gulf, said.

Military intelligence had warned "Predator" to expect Soviet-built T-72s on the battlefield, but after confronting the best armor Saddam had, none of the Marines had anything good to say about the highly touted tanks or their Iraqi crews.

"The T-72 is a piece of shit," Cpl. Forenpoar, whose crew chalked 17 kills on the turret of his tank, said. "Every T-72 we hit had a catastrophic turret separation

— in other words the turrets came off the tanks. The only tanks we hit that didn't lose their turrets were the ancient T-54/55s. They stayed intact. The T-72s disintegrated.

66 In some cases, the turret ring which holds the turret in place as it traverses was still attached to the tank hulk. The impact of a 120mm round completely ripped the seams out of the welds and blew the whole turret off the top of the hole."

Unlike BMPs, which Forenpoar hit with high explosive rounds at ranges of 1,500 meters or less, he never got close enough to any Iraqi tanks to see the round's impact. Muzzle-flash and smoke obscured most of the distant targets.

Desert Butter At Reveille

Forenpoar, who is one of the "top guns" in Bravo, having destroyed eight tanks, five BMPs and four trucks said, "It was just a major explosion and a lot of secondaries as ammunition cooked off." Six of the eight tanks he killed were T-72s.

Bravo went through the Iraqi armor like a hot knife through butter. Thirty-three of

the 34 tanks destroyed during the so-called "Reveille Engagement" were blown to bits in a battle that lasted only 80 seconds.

Before Bravo fought its first engagement with enemy armor, it had to breach two mine belts. Everyone had moved into position on the night of 23 February, with the exception of 1st Sgt. Martin and a maintenance crew who had to replace an engine in one of the tanks. With a lot of huffing and puffing, the task was finished and the tank delivered to its crew 15 minutes before the attack began.

What you're about to read are eyewitness accounts of those battles by young men from the Yakima Valley of Washington state.

"We hit the first minefield at about 0600 on the morning on 24 February," Forenpoar, who drives a truck in civilian life, said. "The engineers lost three or four 60s (M-60 tanks) trying to breach the mine field as we waited for enemy artillery to begin raining down on our heads at any moment." He said this happened as 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, funneled through a narrow gap in the first minefield.

66 They (the engineers) finally got one of the lanes cleared on our right flank," Forenpoar said.

"I think it was Green Lane Six. Then 1st Platoon sent their plow-tank through to proof the lane, make sure it was clear of mines."

Halfway through the minefield, Sgt. Bob Trainor's tank, "The Four Horsemen," hit an Iraqi mine, blowing the left track off and damaging the road

Bravo went through the Iraqi armor
like a hot knife through butter.

... by the time the "Reveille Engagement" had ended, he had hit seven tanks with seven rounds — a perfect score.

wheels. "We got a flat tire," Trainor, a 27-year-old operator at the Hanford Nuclear Plant on the outskirts of Richland, Washington, said.

What did it feel like when his tank hit a 25-pound Iraqi mine? "Oh, shit," he said, "it was spooky. Real spooky inside." But no one in his crew was hurt — just shaken up.

"It was the closest thing to death I want to get to," the driver, Lance Corporal Arnel Narvaez of Bremerton, Washington, said. Narvaez lost intercom communication with the rest of the crew after the mine exploded.

No Gas; Flat Tire

Although all of the 14 M1A1s in Bravo were hermetically sealed and offered crews the best possible protection from a gas attack, Trainor said he almost "freaked out" when a fine mist began filling the crew compartment of his tank after it hit the mine.

When Lance Cpl. Sebens James yelled "gas!" Narvaez looked around the compartment and said to himself, "This is not a good way to go." But fear of being gassed was short-lived. The misty vapor was the result of a ruptured hydraulic line, and not the dreaded chemical attack.

Unable to move with a "flat tire," Trainor abandoned his tank on the battlefield, but had to have some help getting safely back to the rear.

Warrant Officer Larry Fritts, a 30-year-old plumber from Snohomish, Washington, came to Trainor's rescue, hitting at least three mines with his tank, "Torture Chamber," as he plowed a safe lane to the disabled "Four Horsemen." Fritts was following Trainor through the breach when "Four Horsemen" hit the mine. None of the crewmen were hurt, but the blast sure rattled their cages.

"It burned our gun barrel, blew the fenders off, and blew the track off," Trainor said. But the mine didn't blow his tank off the ground. "It takes more than a 25-pound mine to lift a 72-ton tank off the ground."

The M1A1 is custom-built around a four-man crew, not eight, but somehow Fritts stuffed Trainor's crew into his tank. Backing up in his own tracks, Fritts ferried the "Four Horsemen" to safety where they watched the company roar through the breach and disappear in a cloud of dust on the horizon.

About 15 to 20 klicks beyond the second minefield, an intel report came over the radio saying to expect "enemy vehicles within about 5,000 meters." As soon as Bravo broke over a small rise in the desert, Cpl. Forenpothar saw several BMPs, T-55 tanks and dismounted infantry.

"We opened fire for about 15 minutes," Forenpothar said, just before the

the sides cave in and then the secondary (explosion) cook off. They just go up in flames. Every piece of ammunition inside of it goes off. It's about the neatest Fourth of July fireworks display you'll ever see in your life."

The Iraqis closed to within 1,000 meters, point-blank range for the 120mm German-made smoothbore guns on the M1A1s. Forenpothar had his sights on the first two BMPs that exploded.

Cruiser Shoot

After taking out the first four or five BMPs and a couple of T-55s, Bravo rolled up on line and began firing at anything moving on the battlefield, including a few Toyota Land Cruisers that were flying across the desert floor at speeds of 50 mph.

Warrant Officer Fritts nailed three of the four fast-moving wheels, leaving only one of the Land Cruisers rolling across the desert after 120mm rounds hit the other tiny vehicles. As darkness swallowed up the smoky battlefield, another 200 EPWs were rounded up and Bravo "retrograded," or moved, to the rear for the night.

About 10 klicks from their first engagement of the Gulf War, Bravo circled the wagons for the night ("coiled up," as the tankers say), putting the commanding officer's and executive officer's tanks in the center of the circle, and backing up the other 11 tanks so that everyone was facing "outboard" with a combined 360-degree field-of-fire.

The men of Bravo had been going "hell bent for leather" for almost 24 hours, crashing for a couple hours of sleep on top of the tanks. However, reveille sounded early on the second day of the Gulf War.

At about 0545 on the morning of 25 February, a lance corporal in 1st Platoon looking through his tank's thermal imaging system (TIS) told his gunner he thought he saw something "out there" in the darkness: some spots or heat sources. The exact nature of the target was unidentifiable at such a long range.

The gunner, Cpl. Brad Briscoe, 23, from Selah, Washington, who graduated from college a few weeks before his unit was activated and deployed to the Gulf, got down inside the tank and looked through the TIS.

"After a few minutes of staring at spots on the scope," Captain Alan Hart said,



The sobering spectacle of a .50 caliber Browning M2 heavy-barrel machine gun with 1,000 rounds of ammo as it sits atop "Torture Chamber."

Iraqis threw in the towel and started waving white flags. Bravo took 273 enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) in the so-called "Candy Cane" engagement.

“BMPs are probably the neatest pieces of armor to blow up. You can actually see the HE (high explosive) round penetrate,” Forenpothar said. “It’s like peeling a tin can open; just as you see the flash of the round going through (the vehicle) you see



Defense Secretary Dick Cheney talks to soldiers of Desert Storm from atop M-60 tank just days prior to outbreak of hostilities.

"he (Briscoe) mentioned it to me." Hart, 1st Platoon leader, heard some "rumblings out there," but thought they were friendly vehicles — perhaps scouts roaming the perimeter.

As Hart, a 29-year-old farmer from Moro, Oregon, was walking back to his tank, Cpl. Briscoe stopped his platoon leader again and said he thought he had seen something. At this point, Hart became alarmed at the sound, which by this time had become louder.

"It sounded like the deep rumble of diesel engines with the clank of tracks on a Caterpillar — nothing like we have on the M-60s or M1A1s," Hart said. He then started running around his section of the coil, shaking his men awake to tell them there were tanks out there, and ordering them to mount up immediately.

"I hopped in my tank and took a look through the thermal sight and identified well over a dozen enemy vehicles out there," Hart said. By this time, he was on the radio hollering for the company to "stand to and come on line."

Only Forenpohar responded immediately. The rest of Bravo couldn't move until their tanks came to life. From the time the driver punches the "start button" in an M1A1, it takes 40 seconds for the turbine-powered tank to "wind up"

and get moving.

"Gotta Shoot These Guys!"

As Hart's tank moved toward the oncoming threat, his gunner kept yelling in the intercom, "Sir ... We gotta shoot these guys! ... Gotta shoot these guys!" The gunner, Cpl. Lee Fowble from Edmonds, Washington, could see Iraqi gun tubes traversing in his direction.

Hart moved his tank up on line with his wingman, Forenpohar, but couldn't fire yet because the loader on his tank, "Hot Bitch," was still on the back of the tank. "Had I fired," Hart said, "the blast would have blown the loader off the tank and severely injured him."

By the time the loader was safely inside his tank, Fowble had put the cross-hairs on an Iraqi tank, and Hart ordered his gunner to fire.

"Just as I was starting to fire," Hart said, "I heard the CO (Capt. Ralph Parkison) come up on the net (radio) and order Bravo to come on line. When my gunner fired, I saw the round go out and smack a T-72 and blow the turret off." He then gave a staccato series of commands as his tank started blasting away: "Shift left ... Fire! Shift left ... Fire!"

In the opening salvos, Hart destroyed four enemy tanks, and by the time the "Reveille Engagement" had ended, he had hit seven tanks with seven rounds — a perfect score. "By then, I couldn't identify any more active targets," he said.

"The battle took only 80 seconds,"

Fritts recalled. "Yeah," Hart added, "after 80 seconds, everything that was visible was blown away by Bravo Company." For the next 10 minutes, Hart could see vehicles trying to flee to the east getting picked off at long range by his fellow tankers. "Every round was hitting," he said.

Hart nailed four tanks before the rest of the company started firing; however, he expressed feeling sorrow for the Iraqis. "Everything was exploding. Those guys couldn't tell where we were. They had no idea which direction to go. They just knew their vehicles were exploding beneath them."

The euphoria that followed the "turkey shoot" was brief. Especially when the Marines saw what their guns had done.

I don't think right after the firefight they felt the same as, say, infantrymen. They were up on a high for a while, but reality started to dawn on them when they saw 72 prisoners surrender," 1st Sgt. Martin grimly recounted.

The casualties were severe. Iraqi soldiers were missing arms and legs, and Martin said the mood changed to one of humanitarianism. The battle was over. Now it was time to take care of the wounded.

Hart remembered announcing over the radio to not shoot the Iraqis if they were moving away from a burning vehicle. "It was so easy to kill them," he said. "There was no satisfaction in mowing them down



TOP LEFT: The human price of war: burnt body of an Iraqi tanker and his tombstone — a shattered T-72.



TOP MIDDLE: Marine stands beside carcass of Soviet T-62 in Iraqi desert.



ABOVE: Cpl. Forenpohar sits triumphantly atop his M1A1, nicknamed "Torture Chamber." Marine desert insignia and tally of enemy armor destroyed decorate turret.



with our machine guns, so we didn't kill any survivors."

The Soviet-built T-72 was simply no match for the M1A1. A tank is a tank, but the M1A1 is a totally different breed of cat on the battlefield, where it is designed to go "head to head" with any piece of armor known to man, and defeat it.

M1A1s Roast T-72s

"We knew there was nothing out there that could penetrate our frontal armor," Capt. Brian Winter of Yakima, Washington, said. Winter, Bravo's

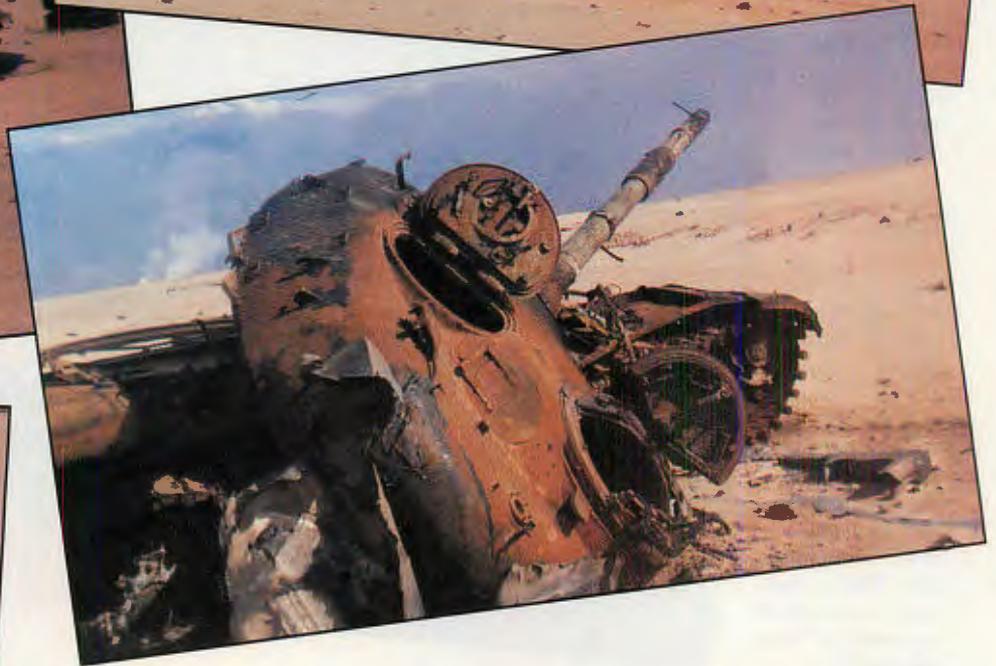
executive officer, believes the M1A1 is the best-protected and best-powered armored fighting vehicle in the world. He feels so strongly about the invincibility of the M1A1, he named his tank "War Wagon."

"It's the baddest ride on the open desert," Hart boasted. He added that he would not want to go to war in a T-72 — which blows apart when you hit it. "The turret flies off. Everyone inside is incinerated to ash. There's nothing identifiable in there and it melts down to nothing. The armor is very thin and the thing goes up like a candle."

Poor design makes the T-72 a disaster waiting to happen, according to Winter. The 31-year-old sheriff's deputy from Yakima County said the Soviet-built T-72 tanks he faced in Kuwait were flaming coffins waiting for someone to strike a match.

"Fuel is stored along the right fender of the T-72 in five or six fuel cells," Winter explained. "And they aren't armored, either." When the Iraqis struck south in search of American units, they turned their highly vulnerable right side to Bravo Company.

"Everything was exploding. Those guys couldn't tell where we were. They just knew their vehicles were being destroyed."



LEFT: Charred remains of a T-72 now lie silent in the Iraqi desert.

TOP RIGHT: Turret of a T-72 after being blown off its chassis.

ABOVE: T-72, the pride of Soviet armor, awaits its final voyage to scrap heap. Unlike earlier T-55s and T-62s, T-72s lost their turrets when hit.

Tactically speaking, the Iraqis were asleep at the switch and didn't wake up until it was too late. "I couldn't believe how they came be-bopping across the desert with their guns pointed skyward," Capt. Hart said. "They weren't ready to fight us."

Hart's tank knocked out a total of eight tanks, four infantry fighting vehicles, and a half-dozen trucks.

Forenpothar's crew could have knocked out 19 instead of 17 enemy vehicles had it not fired a couple of high-explosive antitank (HEAT) rounds off a sabot reticle.

[The sabot is a lightweight carrier which enables a subcaliber projectile to be fired from a larger caliber weapon, giving the projectile an incredibly high velocity and ultimately greater penetrating ability.]

"We screwed up," Forenpothar chuckled, explaining that his gunner got in a hurry and forgot to throw the switch from "sabot" to "HEAT."

Bravo was an M-60A1 tank unit before the war. Activated in mid-December 1990, the unit was sent to Twentynine Palms, California, home of the Marine Air and Ground Combat Center, for a crash-course

on how to operate the M1A1 Abrams. For Bravo Company, transitioning from M-60A1s to M1A1s was like climbing into a Cadillac after driving a Ford.

"We wanted to know how to fight in the M1A1 in worst-case scenarios," Winter explained, "because we felt if something could go wrong, it would, and we wanted to be able to fight in the tank manually with most of the major systems down." As it turned out, the M1A1s borrowed from the Army and stenciled with "USMCR" on the fenders, performed as advertised: spectacularly.

re we were. They had no idea which direction to go. re exploding beneath them."

“Motivation is the key to success. That and a ‘can-do’ attitude.”

But Bravo was a fast study, raising questions about the preparedness of Army Reserve units which were *not* deemed “combat ready” in time for the ground war.

“Motivation is the key to success,” 1st Sgt. Randy Wilcox, a member of the 13-man inspector-instructor staff in Yakima, Washington, said. “That and a ‘can-do’ attitude. My Marines wanted to prove that they could compete on the battlefield with any unit, Marine or Army.” Wilcox was as proud as a “new papa” about his boys.

Prior to the Gulf War, the 4th Tank Battalion was on the chopping block. USMC Headquarters in Arlington Hall, Virginia, was talking about keeping only two Reserve tank companies. And Bravo Company was slated to be one of the “chosen few.”

“The men knew their unit was on the line,” Wilcox recalled, “but we’re blessed with a lot of talent. Many of the men are college-educated, and can master complex weapons systems like the M1A1 in a matter of weeks. For example, crews transitioning to the Abrams are usually given seven weeks to learn the system, but Bravo had only two-and-a-half weeks before it shipped out to Saudi Arabia.”

After intensive training in the California desert, the company was sent to a camp called “Thunderbolt,” where it picked up Army M1A1s from Europe — some of the tanks XVII Corps shipped to the Persian Gulf from Germany in late December 1990.

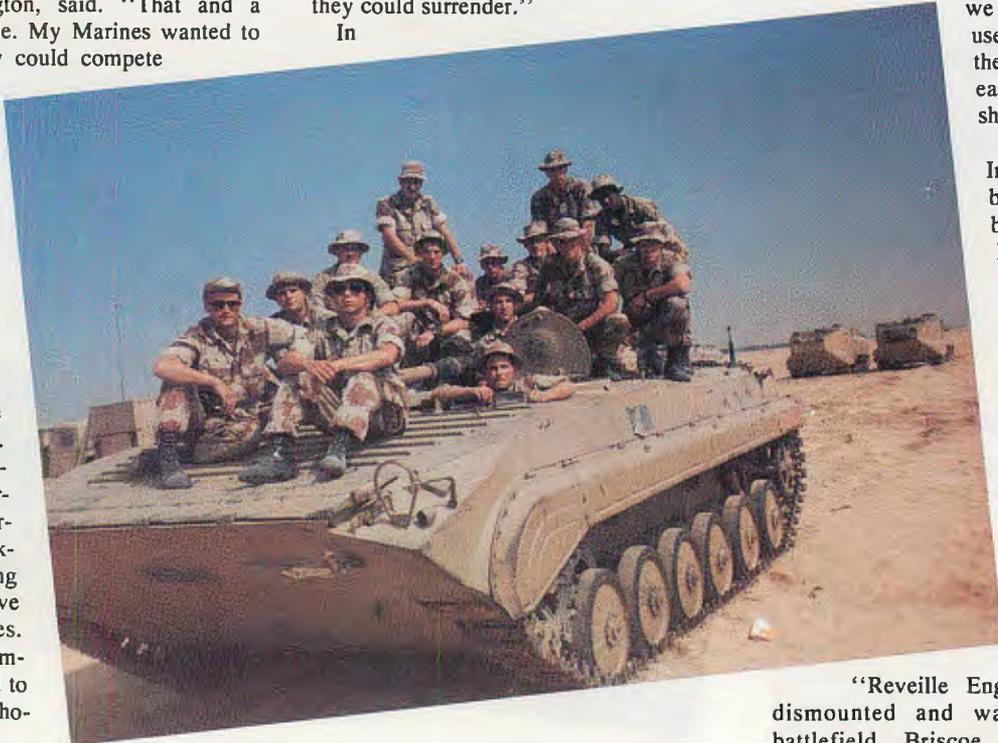
The 14 tanks Bravo borrowed from the Army had been used by regulars. They were missing fire extinguishers, wrenches, tool kits, grease guns — all kinds of things.

Shunted from unit to unit like an unwanted stepchild, Bravo was eventually assigned to lead the ground assault against Iraqi units in Kuwait in support of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The rest of the story is history.

Why didn’t the Iraqi tankers, who had

some 4,000 tanks in the Kuwaiti theater of operations, do better in battle? “I think a lot of them were scared and confused,” Cpl. Forenpohar said, “because our air [power] had pretty well kicked the shit out of their morale. I don’t think they had the will to fight anymore. Some of them acted like they were waiting for us to show up so they could surrender.”

In



The crew of “Torture Chamber” sits atop its newest war trophy, a captured Soviet-built BMP.

fact, a captured Iraqi officer who had been educated in the United States verified this. “The ones who did have the will to fight didn’t have the proper training,” Forenpohar added.

Fearsome No More

Corporal Forenpohar had been told so much about the T-72 tank, he was scared to death of it. “But it was a false fear,” the young tanker said. As far as Forenpohar is concerned, the T-72 is only a modified T-55.

“The armor is thin; there’s no protection for the crew. The 125mm gun shells are brought up from a storage area beneath the floor. It takes 12 seconds to load a T-72. My gunner can load almost three rounds in the same time,” Forenpohar confidently said.

“I depend on my TC (tank commander) to spot what we see,” Brad Briscoe explained, “but the only difference between enemy

tanks and cardboard targets is the T-72s blow up when they get hit.” Briscoe said anxiety was high when Bravo went through the two minefields and fought the first couple of engagements, but after that everyone settled down.

“I don’t know why,” Briscoe said. “Maybe we were just tired or used to the routine by then, but it was an easy game ... a turkey shoot.”

As for why the Iraqis didn’t make a better showing in battle, “I don’t know whether they were poorly trained, or just didn’t have the will to fight,” he reflected. Briscoe went to work for the Boeing Aircraft Company in Seattle as an electrical engineer after returning from the war.

Several days after the

“Reveille Engagement,” Bravo dismantled and walked across the battlefield. Briscoe and his buddies couldn’t believe what they saw. Blackened corpses of Iraqi soldiers lay grotesquely sprawled beside their burned-out tanks, armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles.

Ammunition was still “cooking off” inside the blackened hulks. The sand

Wreckage of Soviet T-55 bears witness to the devastating penetrating power of sabot round fired from M1A1. The sabot is essentially a lightweight carrier that enables the firing of a subcaliber projectile through the bore of a larger caliber weapon resulting in super velocities and awesome destruction.



around the vehicles was scorched black by heat shooting out of the burning vehicles. The scene looked like something from Dante's *Inferno*. After the initial 80-second slaughter, additional Iraqi armored vehicles appeared through the smoke, trying to determine what had taken place.

Sore Thumbs To Dead Thumbs

It was a costly mistake. MIAs are equipped with thermal sights that can see through dense smoke — the Iraqis stood out like sore thumbs. It is believed that at least 80 Iraqi tankers were killed in the battle that began and ended before dawn.

Casualties in Bravo were extremely light; no one was KIA (killed in action). Warrant Officer Fritts broke his knee cap. One of the loaders in 1st Platoon crushed two fingers during an ammo exchange, but refused to be evacuated.

"He continued to lock and load," Fritts said, "although he was in a lot of pain. The rush of adrenaline kept him going until a corpsman was able to treat his crushed hand."

The driver of another tank suffered a severely broken arm when it was struck by a traversing turret. While waiting in an ambush position, the tank commander dismounted and went forward to free the driver's caught arm.

Although his comrades think the Iraqis lost the will to fight, Fritts feels the ones he tangled with on the second day of the war were determined to inflict maximum casualties on his fellow Marines — especially those hauling fuel, ammunition and water forward in a "log," or logistics train, of trucks and four-wheel drive vehicles.

An Iraqi lieutenant who was captured during the "Reveille Engagement" (or "turkey shoot" as some members of Bravo prefer to call the battle), revealed that his armored regiment had been given an azimuth to follow until they made contact with American forces.

"If we hadn't been where we were that day, about 15 miles south of Kuwait City, the Iraqi force would have engaged our "log" train, which had no armor-defeating capability," Fritts said.

During interrogation, the Iraqi officer acknowledged that his unit didn't know what hit it. "Our column was headed across the desert when all of a sudden," he

recounted, "the tank in front of me, to the left of me, and right of me, and behind me, blew up."

"He said it all happened at once," Fritts added. "He looked back and crews were getting out of their tanks to get away from the fires, and he told his crew to evacuate." The enemy officer told Marine interrogators he was on top of his tank ready to jump off of the front fender when it blew up, hurling his body into the air.

When Fritts watched survivors walk toward his position, carrying badly burned and wounded comrades, he wondered how Saddam Hussein could be so cruel as to send some of his best men to their deaths. "He sacrificed them," Fritts bitterly said. "He sacrificed his army."

Destination: Pet Cemetery

After two days of "running and gunning," Bravo moved to a defensive position outside of Kuwait City, a place the Marines called



the "pet cemetery" because of all the animals slaughtered there by the Iraqis. On the way, a few enemy vehicles were engaged, adding to Bravo's total of kills. But for all practical purposes, the battle was over.

In 48 hours, G-2 (Marine Intelligence) said Bravo had broken the backs of the 8th Mechanized Battalion and the 6th Mechanized Battalion of the 3rd Iraqi Armored Division, in that order. The effect was the destruction of 20% of that division's entire armored capability. "Not bad for 13 tanks," 1st Sgt. Martin commented.

Earlier, G-2 had believed that the carnage was caused by the combined efforts of wire-guided weapons (TOWs) and air-to-ground missiles from close-air support aircraft, but Bravo's "First Shirt" set G-2 straight on the matter.

Bravo's baptism-by-fire could not have been more brutally effective or efficient. It was the kind of performance that makes a

first sergeant like Robert Martin smile from ear to ear.

"I'd say the kids passed their final training test with the highest possible score," Martin gleamed. "When you consider that amount of damage was done by one company, with no casualties, it's difficult to imagine. I think the leadership was good, but the kids came around and did their job."

The Marine Corps apparently concurs with that assessment. Martin said that the commander of the 1st Battalion of the 8th Marines indicated that Bravo could receive a Presidential Unit Citation for its achievements on the battlefield.

In the meantime, Bravo will have to be content with a war trophy at their training

The pride of Saddam's armor, a "dreaded" T-72. This was one of the few destroyed T-72s that did not lose its turret when hit by American shells.

center in Yakima. After its heroic action, in which some 119 Iraqi vehicles were knocked out, Bravo Company was allowed to keep a slightly used and abused Soviet-made T-72 tank by Major General William Keys, commanding general of the

2nd Marines Division.

"The T-72 is intact," Martin said, "except for a small hole where it was hit by a LAW [a hand-held, light antitank missile]." No one was inside the tank when it was hit. The Iraqi crew had apparently abandoned it on the battlefield.

After the war ended, Bravo hitched a tank retriever to the war trophy and dragged it all over the desert behind a tank known as "Hawg Boss II." The retriever crew attached a white flag to the Iraqi tank's antenna so that no one would shoot it again.

The tank was shipped back to the States by the Military Sealift Command, and thanks to the efforts of retired Marine Bob Erskine in Yakima and three railroads (the Norfolk and Southern, Burlington and Northern, and Washington Central), agreed to haul the Iraqi tank to Yakima where "Predator" will proudly display their war trophy outside their Reserve training center. ✂

DESERT LOGISTICS

The Supplying of an American Army

WHEN historians write about the "four-day" war in the Persian Gulf, they will conclude that MPS, the Maritime Prepositioning Ships program, played a key role in halting the spread of Saddam Hussein's aggression.

U.S. Marines were ready to fight long before other ground units and MPS is the reason why. Unlike other Coalition troops, they didn't have to wait months for their tanks and artillery to arrive by ship.

The Marine Corps keeps a big chunk of its rolling stock and supplies at sea in three oceans, the Western Pacific, the Eastern Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. According to the former Marine Commandant, General P.X. Kelly, "One phone call gets it all."

Each MPS squadron contains 30 days of supplies for three full Marine amphibious brigades totaling 46,000 men. The Marine brigade is the "punch" of MPS. It's built around the basic component of Marine combat power — the infantryman.

In addition to three full battalions of infantry equipped with rifles, machine guns and mortars, the brigade has a fourth maneuver battalion equipped with tanks and two battalions of field artillery, with 36 medium (155mm) and heavy (203mm) caliber cannons between them.

To take on armored forces, each Marine brigade has 96 TOW launchers. Six improved Hawk and 72 Stinger missile-launchers protect the brigade from air attack and 109 fast LVT-7 assault amphibian vehicles get infantrymen ashore with dry feet.

Each amphibious brigade has 68 helicopters, both transport and attack choppers, including eight CH-53E Super Stallions, America's premier heavy-lift helicopter, capable of hauling up to 16 tons. There are also 24 AH-1Ts, the deadly Cobra gunship that fires a mix of TOW and Hellfire missiles, rockets and machine

 Text & Photos
by Dale B. Cooper 

guns.

There are 78 fixed-wing aircraft assigned to the brigade for close air support. Among them are two squadrons of F/A-18 Hornets and 20 new AV-8B Harriers. There is also a squadron of A-6E Intruder all-weather attack planes and a complement of photo reconnaissance and electronic aircraft.

Mountains of Material

But the unexpected swiftness of the Coalition victory in the Gulf War has left the U.S. military with mountains of surplus material in Saudi Arabia, with even more on order.

As of 5 March 1991, when the first troops began to head home, 450 American ships had off-loaded almost 3 million short tons of dry cargo, including tanks, trucks and artillery, and 878,000 short tons of containerized cargo — everything from soda pop to shoelaces, along with 6.1 million short tons of fuel.

"This war was a logistics war," according to Brigadier General Charles Krulak, who was charged with equipping and supplying the 85,000 Marines who took part in Operation Desert Storm. Supply units are normally in the rear with the gear, but not this time. Commanders took the calculated risk of moving supply bases as far forward as possible.

Logistics Base Charlie, a key supply point, was located just 9 miles from Kuwait. Charlie handled at least 10 C-130 transport planes a day, each one loaded

with 12 tons of bottled water, food, medicine and ammunition.

Army engineers carved the "log base" out of the desert, turning a mile-long stretch of highway into a runway. "With a wheel base of 15 feet, landing a C-130 Hercules on a highway was tricky," Colonel Clay Bailey of the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing said.

Just as in Vietnam, ground crews unloaded pallets of cargo in less than 10 minutes while the planes' four engines were still running. Helicopters with huge cargo nets slung beneath them hauled urgently needed supplies to front line units.

Saudi Arabia contributed most of the 6 million gallons of water and 18 million gallons of fuel that were used daily. One hundred flights each day from the U.S. and Europe brought in food, ammunition and spare parts. Most of the giant C-5As and smaller C-141s landed at Dhahran Air Base.

The "Desert Express," a squadron of C-141 Starlifters, became Uncle Sam's answer to Federal Express. Priority parts were put aboard C-141s in the States and flown via Spain to Saudi Arabia in 18 hours.

The bulk of the "consumables" — beans and bullets — were hauled forward by truck. The backbone of the local supply effort was a fleet of 3,000 U.S. and 2,000 Saudi vehicles. "My people drove 3,000 miles a day and hauled 1 million gallons of

RIGHT: Bradley fighting vehicle being unloaded from MPS vessel in Saudi Arabia. More than 3 million short tons of dry cargo had been unloaded from 450 American ships by 5 March 1991. Photo: DoD

INSET: Lt. Col. William Clayton in front of 1 million MREs stored at his desert camp.





What the well-fed soldier is eating these days. Note the combination of Saudi and American foodstuffs as well as the bottled water.

fresh water a month to the troops," Lieutenant Colonel Sue McConaghy, a tax auditor in civilian life, said.

In December 1981, then-President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, sent a formal proposal to Congress asking that a merchant ship conversion and charter approach be taken to provide MPS.

1 If By Land; 2 If By Sea

And, although Democrats and Republicans in Washington still argue about who was responsible for MPS, long-term prepositioning of equipment and supplies for the Marine Corps meant the difference in the Gulf War. The equipment the 13 ships carried to the war zone was used by the Marine units flown to the scene by the Military Airlift Command.

MPS squadrons are capable of off-loading at piers or from offshore with special equipment with which they have been fitted. "We unloaded these ships so fast," Corporal Don A. Gaines, a supply warehouseman from Flint, Michigan, said, "there weren't enough trucks available in-country to haul all of this stuff to the guys up front."

The four ships in MPS-1 carried 2,300 vehicles, everything from 155mm howitzers to Humvees. Of the 2,300 vehicles, only 17 wouldn't start and had to be jump-started.

Armored vehicles and other rolling stock were gassed en route to Saudi Arabia. But it took about a week to get them ready for combat. Weapons had to be mounted on gun stations and radios installed before armored vehicles were painted desert camo and hauled to the front on flatbed trailer-trucks.

In addition to tanks, trucks and light armored vehicles, which were parked within inches of each other aboard the ships, there were 2,800 steel containers on deck. The dunnage from those 8x8x20-foot containers created a mountainous pile of packing at the port of Al Jubail.

For the first time since World War II,

the U.S. military depended more on sealift than airlift, causing Department of Defense contingency planners to rethink the airlift/sealift ratio for future operations. One and a half ships used by MPS can carry as much tonnage as all of the airlift capability available

— a fact even the top brass could not ignore.

Sealift In The Future

Looking back on the successful operation, Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly said Desert Storm demonstrated the need for increased sealift capability. But the need

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"We go to summer camp for two weeks every year, but we've never seen anything this big. It'll go down in history as one of the biggest supply operations ever."

.....

for increased transport by sea does not mean an end to airlift. Prepositioning of equipment and supplies for a Marine amphibious brigade and Navy support element reduces the number of airlift sorties required from 4,500 to 249 or less. Little or no additional airlift or sealift is needed for resupply in the first month of combat. That's the beauty of the MPS program.

However, the combat arms of any country are only as good as their logistical support. For every three U.S. soldiers on the front lines, there are seven others providing logistical support.

"This is the biggest operation I've ever been involved in," Major Guth G. Germand from Lakeland, Florida, said. Germand commands the 593rd Area

Support Group — his men were responsible for millions of tons of food and ammunition and hundreds of thousands of individual items that keep an army going.

"We're the retail outlet," said Capt. George White, commanding officer of the 251st Supply and Service Company, an Army National Guard unit from Lewisburg and Tullahoma, Tennessee. Each unit in the field sent trucks to White's warehouses to pick up food and water.

It cost more than \$4.5 million a day just to keep U.S. service personnel fed.

Almost 13 million Meals, Ready To Eat (MREs) were consumed every month, enough to feed a city of 140,000 for the same duration. The Army also provided 4 million pounds of coffee and almost 7 million pounds of sugar.

"We go to summer camp for two weeks every year," Second Lieutenant Sandy Beard from Nashville, Tennessee, said. "But we've never seen anything this big. It'll go down in history as one of the biggest supply operations ever."

Piggly Wiggly Beware

Walking through a warehouse in Al Jubail which stored 3.2 million MREs on one side and 1.2 million "T's," or unitized tray rations, on the other side of the football field-sized warehouse, Major Greg McCorkle, a National Guardsman from Jackson, Mississippi, said, "When it comes to rations, Piggly Wiggly (a supermarket chain) has nothing on us."

Japan was prevented by its constitution from contributing any troops to the multinational force, but sent non-lethal items such as Toyota cars and buses, and thousands of recreational items.

"It's unreal, just unreal," Sergeant First Class Timothy C. Page of Dublin, North Carolina, said, as he helped Specialist Christopher Valasic stack TVs in a warehouse at Al Jubail. "The Japanese sent top-of-the-line stuff," he continued, "Sony, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, JVC and Sanyo."

Captain Jones said someone will have to account for all of these recreational items, but doesn't know what will happen to all of the TVs and VCRs when the troops go home. "After all of the stuff I've seen," Jones said, "It'd make the biggest yard

Off-loading group watches as M-60 tanks roll in.



sale the world has ever seen.”

U.S. Navy supply ships poured hundreds of tons of supplies an hour into warships as they steamed off the coast of Kuwait. Commanders said the four-day resupply effort was the largest of its kind ever attempted.

The 224th Support Battalion (Forward) set up shop in the Saudi desert before a logistical base was built. As the support arm of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), the 224th moved three times during its stay in Saudi Arabia, each time inching closer to the front lines.

Like sister supply units, the 224th had to improvise constantly. For example, bottled water became so hot it could not be consumed until some enterprising soldier came up with the idea of wrapping water bottles in wet socks.

Captain Suzanne Hickey, a West Point graduate from Gaithersburg, Maryland, said she will always remember the soldiers in her company who had a “can do” attitude despite many adversities in the desert.

Munitions On The Move

Sergeant Danny Mathis from Macon, Georgia, managed an ammunition transfer point in the desert. Mathis and his men moved 300 short tons of ammo a day to tank and artillery positions. As soon as an area was clear of unfriendlies, Mathis would send his trucks forward to replenish ammunition stocks.

Obviously, military planners at the Pentagon gained much valuable knowledge during Operation Desert Storm. Accountability, however, was probably the biggest lesson learned during the supply side of the operation.

“You have to understand that MPS 2 and 3 came to Saudi Arabia very early in the war, and they had a threat to meet. So getting equipment into the hands of troops was the primary objective,” a Col. Dockendorff said as he watched an M-60 tank clank off a steel ramp.

When an Army unit reported the theft of 50 vehicles, officials assumed they had been swiped for parts. But bar codes helped locate the vehicles, 10 of which were parked in the wrong place. The other 40 were transferred to the Marines by mistake.

When logisticians assigned to ARCENT, the Army’s Central Supply Command, planned for the Gulf War, they planned for a prolonged conflict of at least 60 days in duration. Before the ground war began, the Department of Defense signed contracts for almost 6 million camouflage jackets and trousers, 1.4 million pairs of the newly designed “Schwarzkopf” boot, and 44,000 vests to protect front line soldiers and Marines from shrapnel.

Since the cease-fire, the Defense Personnel Support Center (DPSC) in Philadelphia has been trying to turn off the supply spigot. But Frank Johnson, a spokesman for the center said, “It’s like

trying to turn a river around.” In the first four days after President Bush ordered combat ceased, more than 50,000 tons of weapons and supplies were air and sea-lifted to Saudi Arabia.

Within the first week of the cease-fire, Brig. Gen. John Cusick, commander of the DPSC, issued a “stop work” order on a \$63.5 million rations contract with Vane Foods of Berkley, Illinois.

In order to avoid paying heavy cancellation fees, the Pentagon divided its orders for an item among several contracts with different companies; signing them a few at a time. Now that Desert Storm is over, the remaining contracts the Pentagon planned to award won’t be signed.

Ammunition Disposal

“Clearing out excess hardware will probably take a year,” Maj. Peter Keating, an Army spokesman at the Pentagon, said. Ammunition will have to be inspected, cleaned, repackaged and put back aboard ships, or disposed of in an environmentally safe way if it can’t be reused.

In past wars, the Army dumped fuel and other noxious substances into the ground, but today a lot of stuff just can’t be dumped. This time, military expert David Isby said it will take time, effort and money to properly dispose of unwanted material.

Vehicles bought specifically for the Gulf buildup may be sold to foreign countries (subject to Congressional approval) through the State Department’s foreign military sales program.

Some Iraqi equipment captured by Coalition troops, such as modern, Soviet-made T-72 tanks and BMP-2 armored personnel carriers, will be shipped to the United States, stripped down and examined to glean technical information. The rest of the Iraqi equipment will either be sold as scrap or destroyed.

Lieutenant General William “Gus” Pagonis earned his third star by successfully pulling off the largest logistical move in the history of warfare.

In the first 100 days of Operation Desert Shield, Pagonis’ people moved 150,000 troops through the aerial port at Dhahran and unloaded 150 ships at the seaport in Al Jubail with no accidents.

ARCENT, which Pagonis heads, is like a civilian corporation. “You stock the shelves,” Pagonis said. “And as the goods are sold, you move merchandise from the warehouse to the store.”

But logisticians never have a good day. “There’s always going to be a disconnect somewhere,” Pagonis added as he sat in his office amid charts and graphs. “That’s why we shoot for a good hour.” From day one, Pagonis said his mission was to build up theater stocks to sustain combat forces for up to 60 days without resupply.

ARCENT’s motto is: “Good logistics is combat power.” Although Pagonis said he got a C-minus in tactics at West Point, he knows the importance of logistics. The British defeated German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel’s Afrika Korps in World War II by building bases forward as they went so they wouldn’t have to backtrack for supplies. That’s exactly what Gus Pagonis did in the Gulf War.

Green To Tan To Green

Now that the war is over, Crosbie Saint, the four-star commander of Army forces in Europe, is worried about repainting his armor NATO green. “It was a bitch getting them painted desert tan,” Saint growled, “And now I’ve got to paint them green again.”

Before the bulk of the U.S. forces head home, they’ve got to empty massive supply depots. Unexpended ammunition has to be “sured,” or made safe to repack. The Bush administration must



Working on the engine of one of the thousands of trucks used to haul “beans and bullets” to forward positions. Of the 23,000 vehicles aboard the four ships in MPS-1, only 17 had to be jump-started.

also decide what equipment can be left in the Gulf, what can be sold, and what can be thrown away.

The military adopted a “first in — first out” order of departure for the Desert Storm troops. The order applies to everyone except logisticians.

The “build-down” may be more complicated than the “build-up.” According to Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams, “It’s kind of like packing your car — it takes longer to repack it than it does to unpack it.”

Logisticians made history in the Gulf. General Pagonis doubts their accomplishments will ever be achieved again. “Never have so few moved so many so far in such a short period of time,” he said.

General William G.T. Tuttle, who heads the Army Materiel Command, said getting tons of equipment ready for shipment home reminded him of a fireman who gets his hoses all muddy at a fire, then has to

Continued on page 116

YELLOW

THE dramatic U.S.-led victory in the Persian Gulf War demonstrated convincingly the media's shallowness and inaccuracies in reporting the defense build-up under President Ronald Reagan.

Seldom has our press been so consistently wrong on an important public issue. An "Iron Triangle" of leftists, "whistle blowers" and their patsies in the media did their best to convince us that the weapons systems being developed by the Pentagon over the past decade were largely worthless junk.

The nay-sayers' moans continued to the brink of war. On 5 September Scott Pelley of the "CBS Evening News" denounced the Apache assault helicopter as so complex, and prone to breakdowns, that it would be useless in war. David Shribman of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote on 17 January, "In this war, American illusions [sic] about high technology could be among the victims." Charles Lane wrote in *Newsweek* on 21 January that pilots feared the "fast flying F-15E and the Army's gadget-laden Apache helicopter will be of little use against Iraqi tank columns."

There was much more in this vein.

So what happened when our hardware was put to the test of war? The U.S. obliterated or scared off one of the world's largest military machines. The Iraqi arsenal included a 1 million man army, fighter jets, bombers, thousands of tanks, high-tech weaponry and chemical and biological weapons potential.

The Soviets had provided Saddam Hussein with some of their best weapons. But the war ended in only 43 days, with the ground campaign lasting a scant 100 hours. On the U.S. side, only 122 persons were killed in action, with 21 missing in action. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf called the light casualties miraculous. President Bush referred to our soldiers as "first-class talent." They deserved — and

got — first-class weapons.

Many Americans were surprised at these successes because we have been saddled with a media that does second-class work when reporting defense issues. If policy makers had heeded news organizations and anti-defense activists, some of our best weapons would not have been deployed. These include the surface-to-air Patriot missile, the M-1 Abrams tank, Tomahawk cruise missiles, the F-15 Eagle fighter, the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, and the Apache helicopter.

Be A Patriot, Not A Scud

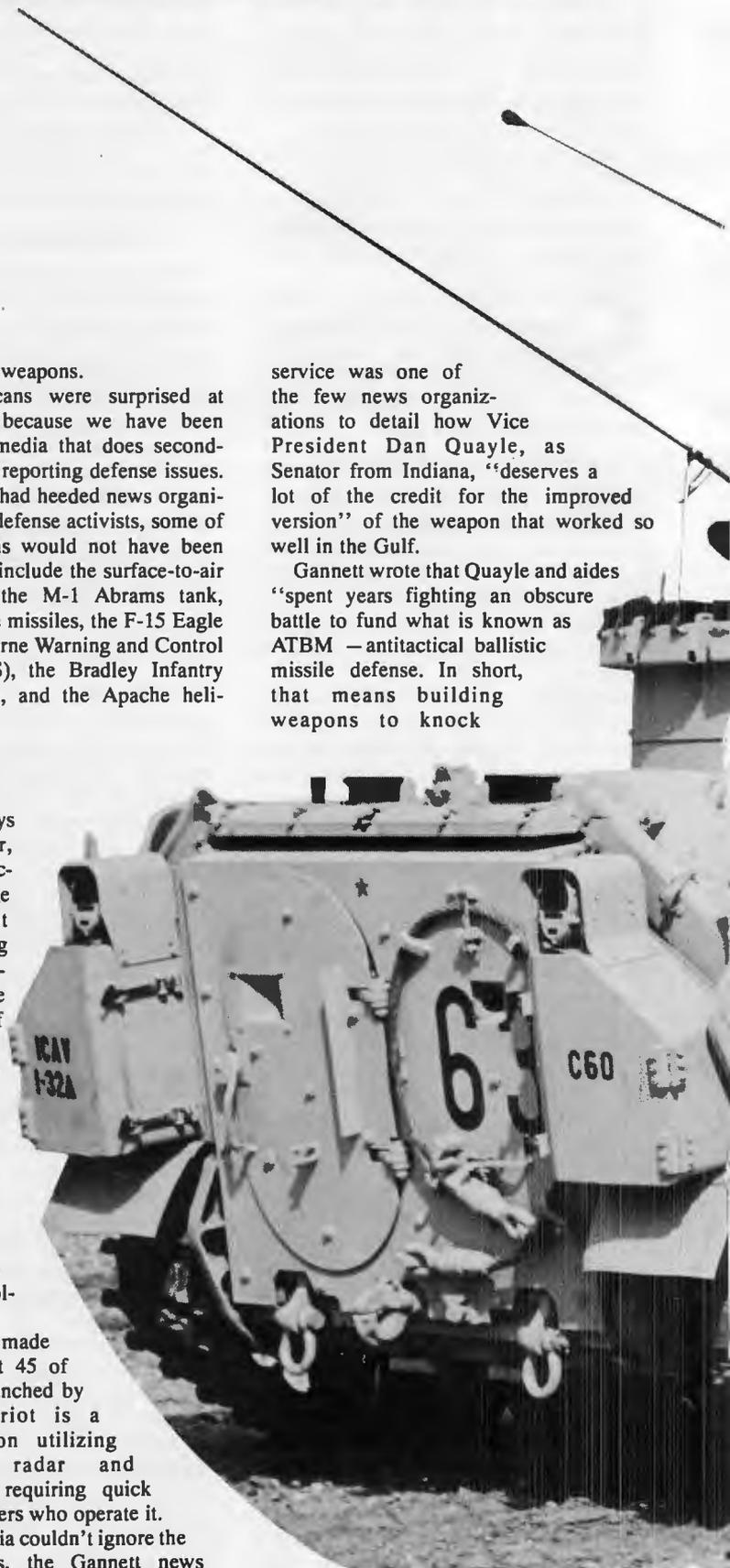
In the early days of the air war, Americans rejoiced at film footage of the Patriot missiles knocking Iraqi Scud missiles out of the sky. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney commented, "A decade of gloom-and-gloom reporting made a lot of people forget that we do, in fact, lead the world in advanced technology."

The Patriots, made by Raytheon, hit 45 of the 47 Scuds launched by Iraq. The Patriot is a complex weapon utilizing sophisticated radar and electronics and requiring quick thinking by soldiers who operate it.

While our media couldn't ignore the Patriot's success, the Gannett news

service was one of the few news organizations to detail how Vice President Dan Quayle, as Senator from Indiana, "deserves a lot of the credit for the improved version" of the weapon that worked so well in the Gulf.

Gannett wrote that Quayle and aides "spent years fighting an obscure battle to fund what is known as ATBM — antitactical ballistic missile defense. In short, that means building weapons to knock



PRESS

Inaccuracy in Media Proves the Rule in Gulf War Reporting

by Cliff Kincaid

down the short-range missiles in the arsenals of the Third World armies.”

A Heritage Foundation report ignored by the major media cited the “strong opposition” in the 1980s to Quayle’s drive, with the support of the Reagan administration, to transform the Patriot into a weapon capable of destroying ballistic missiles in flight.

(The Patriot was originally designed to shoot down warplanes.) The House Armed Services Committee voted against the modification in 1984. But the Senate approved funding for the program. Without the Patriot, Israel would surely have entered the war, breaking up the anti-Iraqi coalition and making Gen. Schwarzkopf’s task more difficult.

The Media “Hall of Shame”

Second-guessing has become popular since the war ended. It is legitimate to give credit, as in the case of Quayle and the Patriot upgrade, and also to fix blame. The *Washington Times* ran a biting

*Bradley Infantry
Fighting Vehicle
Photo: David C. Hogan*



series inducting individuals and groups into a "Desert Hall of Shame" because of their wrong predictions about the war.

The *Washington Post* published its own "correction" of the record on 28 February, detailing how "experts" misjudged the cost and conduct of the war. Buried deep inside the article was a telling criticism attributed to an anonymous Pentagon official: "If you have been reading press accounts of the American military for the past 10 years you would come away with the impression that we're the gang that couldn't shoot straight with weapons that don't work."

During the Reagan defense build-up, several organizations and individuals used the media to agitate sentiment against the hardware that proved so successful in the Gulf War. The record shows a strong interlock between these groups and individuals and the media. One of the media's most popular sources of military-bashing material was the Center for Defense Information (CDI), cited in the *Washington Post* article as an "anti-war Pentagon watchdog group" that predicted that 10,000 Americans would be killed and 35,000 wounded in an overland drive to Baghdad.

Lefty Angel's Role

CDI was founded in 1972 with money from General Motors heir Stewart R. Mott, a longtime angel for leftist groups in Washington, and a big contributor to George McGovern's 1972 run for president. CDI is headed by Gene R. La Rocque, a retired Navy admiral, and its staff includes other former officers. This brass is protective coloration for a group whose record indicates hostility to virtually every new weapons system.

CDI aligned itself with a host of "military reformers" in Congress and elsewhere. Gary Hart, whose 1984 presidential campaign derailed after his womanizing became a public scandal, was a prominent leader of this pack. Hart wrote in his 1983 book, *A New Democracy*, "Not only are we buying equipment so expensive we can't afford enough, we are buying equipment so complex it doesn't work well on the battlefield."

Bob Andrews, a Vietnam veteran, former CIA officer and Senate staffer who now works for a major defense contractor, says the impression created by such "bedroom commandos" as Hart was that America's defense was in the hands of "fools and bunglers." But the Gulf War, he says, demonstrated that the high technology worked. "Across the board," Andrews says, "the low-tech arguments became irrelevant, like the flower children of the 1960s."

During the build-up, he charges, the military reformers and anti-defense activists found allies in the media who served as "professional spitball artists" against practically every weapons system. "Most of these low-tech weapons people

were pushing for something that could not project American power overseas."

CBS And National Defense

A good case can be made that if CBS ran our defense establishment, the U.S. would have lost the Gulf War. CBS's anti-defense bias began in earnest in 1971, when it aired "The Selling of the Pentagon," an anti-military program characterized by wild exaggerations and dishonest editing.

In 1981, CBS News aired a five-hour series on national defense slanted to undermine the consensus in favor of the military buildup that Reagan had made an issue in his campaign. Correspondent Dan Rather asked, "Do we make ourselves stronger by unquestioning faith in new weapons technologies?"

Andrew Lack, the senior producer of the series, was the executive producer of a 19 July 1983, CBS Bill Moyers program, "Pentagon/Underground." It was largely



Apache attack helicopter. Photo: David C. Hogan

based on material supplied by the Project on Military Procurement, a Pentagon-bashing group then led by a young woman named Dina Rasor, who was featured on the show.

Moyers attacked the defense budget in general but purported to expose flaws in the M-1 main battle tank and cruise missile technology. Rasor and an assistant, Paul Hoven, called the M-1 a failed system that often broke down, guzzled gas, and needed too many oil changes. She said the cruise missile "may be a rerun of old failures" and that, if sent on a mission, it may just "get lost."

During the Gulf War, both systems performed flawlessly. The M-1 helped lead the ground assault into Kuwait and Iraq. The Tomahawk cruise missile, manufactured by General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas, has a range of 1,500 miles and carries warheads within a few feet of their targets. According to *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, cruise missiles hit their targets more than 90% of the time.

CBS' popular "60 Minutes" program also specialized in ill-reported exposes of

weapons systems. For example, on 15 February 1987, correspondent Harry Reasoner narrated a story about the FMC corporation's Bradley Fighting Vehicle, a troop-transport and a scouting vehicle with a 25mm gun and TOW antitank missiles.

Reasoner began the story by appearing in front of a large picture of the Bradley, under the story tagline "\$12 Billion of Your Money." The segment featured "whistle blowers" who questioned the Bradley's safety and reliability. Not surprisingly, the story was more flawed than the Bradley. "60 Minutes" misled viewers about one of the most thoroughly tested systems in our arsenal, one that met or exceeded the Army's standards and proved its value in the Gulf War.

Spiking The Good News

Defenders of programs on Pentagon scandals claim their purpose was to highlight problems so that they could be solved. But the constant use of dishonest tactics by Moyers and others suggests the real reason was to smear the U.S. military and get weapons canceled, not fixed. The emphasis on test failures was also misleading. Weapons indeed fail many tests. "But that's why you test these things," Bob Andrews explained, "so you can find out where they fail and then you fix them."

In 1989, ABC refused to air "Early Warning," a documentary favorable to the military in which it had invested \$1.5 million. Narrated by David Hartman, the former host of ABC's "Good Morning America," it was produced with Pentagon cooperation.

It ended up on the Fox Network. An ABC spokesman said his company wanted something that went in a "different direction." They preferred "The Business of Defense: Flaws in the Shield," which they aired 1 December 1988. Sensing what ABC was up to, the Pentagon withheld its cooperation, charging that ABC reporters, including moderator Tom Jarriel, "showed little or no interest in our repeated offers to 'tell the whole story' in a balanced way that would show ABC viewers the complete cycle of the procurement process."

The Razor's Edge

By finding the occasional Pentagon miscue — such as the infamous \$7,622 coffeepot — Dina Rasor of the Project on Military Procurement built credibility when she worked to kill support for weapons systems. One of her chief targets on the Moyers show was the M-1 tank.

She bragged that she had scored a "grand slam" when the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* ran stories on 20 September 1982, about a Pentagon memorandum revealing that the M-1 tank had failed a test. Other reporters picked up the story and various papers wrote editorials condemning the Army's management of the tank.

The AH-64 Apache attack helicopter was another weapon that Raser's group said would not work. Her associate, Gregory Williams, said the helicopter, produced by McDonnell Douglas, was too costly, too fragile and there was "doubt" as to whether its main weaponry, the Hellfire missile, would work.

After the war ended, Pentagon officials told *Aviation Week* that the Apache had the highest operational readiness rate among U.S. Army rotor craft in the Gulf War. They said that one Apache helicopter alone was credited with destroying eight Iraqi Soviet-made T-72 tanks.

Raser's organization is now known as the Project on Government Procurement (PGP), and she works elsewhere. But the mission remains unchanged. PGP is sponsored by the Fund for Constitutional Government, whose president, Anne B. Zill, was formerly Washington representative for leftist philanthropist Mott. She is on the PGP board along with Christic Institute conspiracy theorist Daniel Sheehan. Bob Andrews remembers Raser: "She was a woman who had no personal experience in the military. She was better with her mouth and a press release than she was with any analytical ability on military issues."

Burned By The Cockburns

Raser also has strong ties to far-left journalists — a connection that did not deter CBS from putting her forth as an "authority" on defense. In her book, *The Pentagon Underground*, Raser discloses that she was approached to do the 1983 Moyers/CBS show by Moyers producer Leslie Cockburn, the wife of Andrew Cockburn and sister-in-law of Alexander Cockburn, a prominent British communist.

Leslie Cockburn shares the family ideology. She produced stories on the CBS program "West 57th" charging involvement by the CIA and Nicaraguan freedom fighters in drug smuggling.

All of the Cockburns have used influential media organs to turn public opinion against a strong U.S. military. Andrew Cockburn, who served as a contributing editor for the trade publication *Defense Week*, once took the line that we didn't have to worry about the Soviet military because it had inferior equipment.

But he also doubted the effectiveness of U.S. weapons. He complained in a 22 July 1986 *New York Times* article that the Stinger antiaircraft missile was too "puny" to do much damage to its targets. He claimed a "humid climate" could "play merry hell with the Stinger's electronic innards." Later, Stingers were widely credited with helping to force the Soviets out of Afghanistan.

Yet Andrew Cockburn also complained when our weapons worked. After President Reagan ordered air strikes against terrorist-related targets in Libya,

he argued on ABC's "Good Morning America" that the raids were "callous" and "not the thing that a power like the United States should be engaged in ..."

Brother Alex has enjoyed U.S. hospitality for more than a decade, deriding America all the while. His main American outlet is *The Nation*, but until recently his column appeared regularly in the *Wall Street Journal*. It was in the *Journal* that he maintained that American troops were being sent into battle in the Gulf with "weapons badly made by manufacturers colluding with the Defense Department in the padded invoice and the faked test."

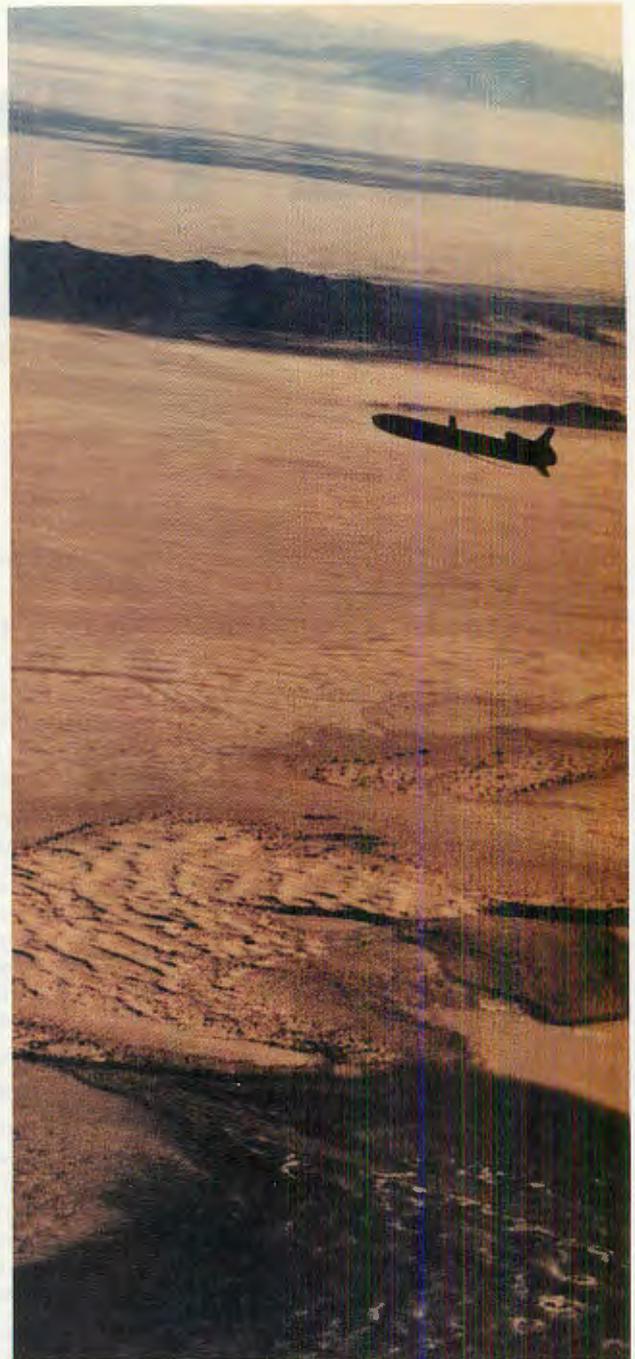
He repeated this charge in a column in *The Nation* before the ground war began. "From information surviving censorship in Saudi Arabia, a somber picture emerges of poor liaison, dubious equipment [and] badly prepared troops," he wrote. "... Kuwait will most likely be vigorously contested, house by house, and just as the battle there could bog down, so too could the U.S. rush toward the rivers northwest of Basra come to grief."

Cockburn's record is consistently spavined when he writes about defense. He charged in the 24 September 1981 *Wall Street Journal* that the AWACS "does not work" and is a "preeminent example of the Pentagon's disastrous high-tech procurement policies over the past generation."

So what happened when the weapon was tested in battle? *Aviation Week and Space Technology* said that the AWACS "played a pivotal role in crushing Iraq's air and ground based military elements." Allied planes flew more than 110,000 sorties, and AWACS operators controlled the "great majority" of them.

Weapons Still Under Fire

Despite these successes, the PGP still claims that some weapons didn't work well enough, or haven't really been tested. Research associate Kevin Paige is nagging at the Patriot's success by claiming that it



Tomahawk cruise missile. Photo: DoD

only operated under "favorable combat conditions" and only demonstrated "part of its required mission capabilities."

A current target of the Pentagon-bashers is the B-1 bomber and the B-2 Stealth bomber, which strategists would like to have configured so that they could be used both for strategic nuclear and conventional missions. The Air Force wants the B-1 as a replacement for the aged B-52. Lieutenant General Charles A. Horner, air commander in the Persian Gulf, said he could have put both planes to deadly use in the air war. But Congressional delays supported by President Carter have delayed their development.

Uninformed media reporting has

Continued on page 117

OPERATION DESERT SLANG

Abdul (ab'-dool) *n.* Generic term for an Arab, *syn.* [derog.] Rag-head.

All-Terrain Vehicle *n.* [Journalese] Any rented vehicle.

Bone Dome *n.* The new helmet made of ballistic (Kevlar) fabric. Also "Fritz" helmet due to similarity to old German design.

Bullet-Stopppers *n. pl.* [derog.] Naval reference to Marines.

Chocolate Chips *n.* U.S. desert camouflage uniforms.



Cleansed *v. pt. part.* Cleared of enemy troops and/or civilian inhabitants.

Cold, Cold, Smoked The Bitch *phr.* Description of successful air-to-air combat.

Dune Goon *n.* Iraqi soldier.

Echelons Beyond Reality *n.* Higher command *syn.* Higher Higher. Derived from the existence of echelons above corporate-national command authority.

Elvis *adj.* [Brit.] Out of date, dead.

Foxtrot *n., v.* Phonetic alphabet, short for the ubiquitous F-word.

Gone Elvis *n.* Missing in action (MIA), e.g., "He's gone Elvis."

Headache *n.* Journalist. See also "media puke."

High-Speed, Low-Drag *n.* High-tech, state-of-the-art.

Homer *n.* Iraqi. From Homer Simpson, a fumbling cartoon character replacing Gomer, from Gomer Pyle, which was used by Vietnam-era troops.

Homies *n.* Tight (as in good or close) friends. From ghetto slang "homeboys."

Janitor *n.* Grunt's self-deprecating label, based on the idea that "police call" is the only infantry skill that can be translated to an equivalent civilian career, also grunt and hump-a-lot.

K-Mart *n.* Kuwait. As in the rival of Target — Iraq.

Little Hollywood *n.* The Dhahran International Hotel's rear veranda, from which all the American networks broadcast. The Blue Domes visible in the background were *cabanas* and storage facilities.

Media Puke *n.* Journalist or officer sitting out the war in hotels. *Syn.* Headache, JIB rat, Patriot Baiter, Pencil, PONTs (Brit.) Persons Of

No Tactical Significance, Video Canary.

Ninja Women *n.* Arab women in black *abaya* *syn.* BMOs.

Nuclear Coffee *n.* Mixture of MRE instant coffee, cocoa, artificial creamer, and sugar packets with hot water in a canteen cup.

Patriot Baiters *n. pl.* TV correspondents, esp. denizens of Little Hollywood, also, Video Canaries.

Pencil *n.* Headache without a camera.

Quick-Turn Burn *n.* Rapid refueling and rearming for aircraft between sorties.

Rotor-Heads *n. pl.* Helicopter pilots.

Sammy, also Saddammy, Saddy *pr. n.*

Saddam Hussein.

Scud Puppies *n.* Patriot missile crews.

Scud-A-Vision *n. pl.* CNN television news channel.

Scudded *v. pt. part.* Drunk.

Scudinvia *n.* [Isr.] Area in western Iraq used to launch Scud missiles.

Self-Propelled Sandbags *n. pl.* Marines.

Semper Gumby *phr.* "Always Flexible," a take-off on the Marine motto, *Semper Fi*.

Septic Yanks *n. pl.* (Brit.) Tanks; garbled Cockney rhyming slang, sometimes used also to refer to American troops.

Service The Target *v.* To destroy the enemy.

Slimed *v. pt. part.* Hit by chemical weapons. Derived from the movie *Ghostbusters*.

Spud *n.* Scud missile, a disparaging term reflecting their poor performance.

T-Rats *n.* "T" or Tray rations. Large TV-dinner-like rations composed of one food item per tray for feeding large groups of troops. These did not work too well.

Target-Rich Environment *n.* Iraq.

Tread-Heads *n.* Tankers.

Tragic Kingdom *n.* Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Tree-Eaters or Snake-eaters *n. pl.* Special Operations troops.

Video Canaries *n.* TV Journalists. Taken from the canaries used by miners to detect the presence of dangerous gas. (May be derived from Stephen King's book, *The Stand*, where canaries are monitored to detect radiation leakage.)

The preceding was excerpted from The Official (Lite) History & Cookbook of the Gulf War, published by Electric Strawberry Press, Dept. SOF, 7911 West Road, Houston, TX 77064; phone (713) 466-4808. To get your copy send check or money order for \$5.95 plus \$1.25 postage. There's lots more where this came from. ☞

OPERATION DESERT JOKES

Before American military personnel commenced *The Mother Of All Evictions* in the Middle East earlier this year, they had ample time to sit around at night discussing their opposition. Once the eviction began, however, this was seldom a very serious affair. More often, American soldiers, sailors and Marines were able to find deficiencies or, shall we say, blemishes in the Iraqi character. Naturally, these "blemishes" soon turned into jokes. Some of the better ones follow:

Q: What does Saddam Hussein have in common with his father? A: Neither one knew when to pull out.

Q: Why won't Saddam Hussein let his children play in the desert? A: Cats keep covering them up.

Q: How do you break things up in an Iraqi bingo game? A: Call out "B-52."

Q: Why isn't Saddam Hussein doing the bar scene in Baghdad anymore? A: Now he can stay home and get bombed.

Q: What's the latest product from Anheuser-Busch? A: It's called "Scud Light"; it takes at least six of them to get a hit.

Q: What is Saddam Hussein's latest military victory? A: One of his Scud missiles made an intercept of a Patriot missile.

Q: What's the latest thing in contraceptives? A: The Patriot condom; it's a complete protection against the Scuds.

Q: What was the terrible dilemma facing the Iraqi troops in Kuwait before the ground offensive began? A: They could either get Saddamized or Bushwhacked.

Q: Why do they avoid teaching sex-ed and driver-ed on the same day in Iraqi schools? A: It confuses the camels.

Q: What are the only two things in Saudi Arabia that work? A: The Patriots and the expatriates.

Q: What's the most popular Saudi war song? A: "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Q: What do you call an Iraqi with a sheep under one arm and a goat under the other? A: A bisexual.

Q: What do you call an Iraqi with a trainload of sheep? A: A pimp.

Q: How many Iraqis does it take to change a light bulb? A: Four — one turning the light bulb, one killing the owner of the house and his family, and two carrying out the TV set.

Q: What's the definition of a queer Iraqi? A: One who prefers sex to looting and killing.

Q: What's the Iraqi definition of Procedural Due Process? A: Kill 'em all, let Allah sort 'em out.

Q: How does Saddam Hussein define

the difference between counterinsurgency and genocide? A: There's a difference?

Q: What's the Iraqi rule for processing refugees? A: Shoot first; check for ID cards after the bodies have cooled.

Q: What's the basic tactical doctrine of the Iraqi army? A: If it shoots back, surrender to it; if it isn't armed, kill it.

Q: What's Saddam Hussein's guideline for improving sexual morality among the Kurds and Shi'ites? A: "Dead men get no tail."

Q: Why is Iraq the largest country in the Middle East? A: Its army is mostly in Saudi Arabia, its air force is in Iran, most of its people are in Turkey, and its economy has gone to hell.

Q: What's the Iraqi rule on "winning hearts and minds?" A: Screw the hearts and minds, get the automobiles and TV sets.

Q: What's the Iraqi rule on environmental protection and energy conservation? A: Torching oil wells is fun!

Q: Why are the Iraqis not stupid? A: Looting and killing unarmed civilians is safer and easier than fighting the 24th Mech.

Q: Why are Iraqis stupid? A: If you don't leave enough survivors for a burial detail, eventually the dead bodies become a health hazard to your own troops. But since when has the Iraqi chain of command been much concerned for the health of its own troops?

Q: Did you know that Iraqi scientists have discovered a cure for AIDS? A: One round 7.62 x 39mm ball; it also cures leukemia and Alzheimer's disease.

Q: What do you call an Iraqi with an IQ of 110? A: A village.

Q: What's the most popular Iraqi birth-control technique? A: It's called the post-natal ballistic method.

Q: Why is Saddam Hussein getting an award from womens' lib? A: For the thousands of women whom he's freed from domination by their husbands.

Q: What's the Iraqi army's rule on protecting civilian property? A: Don't steal anything you can't carry away; smash it in place.

Q: What's the Iraqi army's guideline on protecting civilians? A: Conserve ammunition — don't shoot 'em a second time unless the screaming and moaning is really getting to you.

Q: Where's the safest place to be during a Scud attack? A: Wherever they're trying

to hit.

Q: What's the regimental march of the Iraqi missile corps? A: "This Scud's for you."

Q: What's the regimental mascot of the Iraqi missile corps? A: "Scuds" Mackenzie, a real party animal.

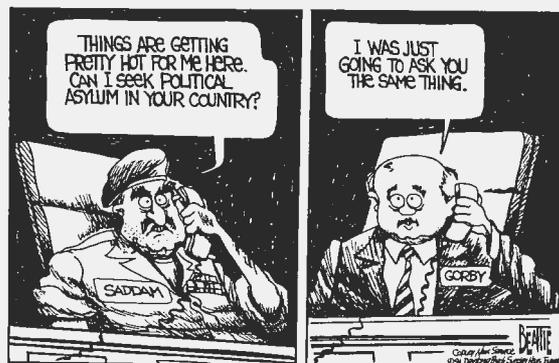
Q: Why are the gays running Saddam Hussein for mayor of San Francisco? A: Anyone who successfully Saddamized two whole countries (Iraq and Kuwait) has to be right up there with Johnny Wadd.

Q: Have you heard the latest Iraqi legal insight? A: "I don't find anything in the Koran or the statute book against killing Kurds, Shi'ites or Kuwaitis."

Q: Do you know why Iraqis are not circumcised? A: That way they have a place to store their chewing gum when surrendering.

"Did you hear that Saddam Hussein has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize?"

"Really? What for?"



"Eliminating minority unrest and controlling the population explosion."

"Oh. I thought it might have something to do with advancing human rights and protecting the environment."

The following jokes are popular at USAF bases in England. (Submitted by Staff Sergeant Charles "Chuck" Wood, USAF.)

Q: How do you get 45 Iraqis into a phone booth? A: Tell them it's not theirs.

Q: What do you do with 45 Iraqis in a phone booth? (Multiple choice)

a. Call them and play the Israeli national anthem. b. Lock the door and tell them to starve. c. Kill 'em all; let the phone company sweep 'em out. d. All of the above.

Analysis of Answers

If you answered:

a. You have a sense of humor. b. You are an Iraqi dictator. c. You are a Marine. d. You read *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. ☒

TASK FORCE RIPPER

U.S. Marines Go for Iraq's Throat

by Dale B. Cooper

O

DDS seemed stacked against the Marines of Task Force Ripper, the first Coalition ground unit to assault Kuwait.

"From the intel estimates, we were way outnumbered," First Lieutenant Brian C. Hornberg, 25, from Houston, Texas, said. Hornberg was executive officer of Alpha Company, 3rd Tank Battalion — the armored unit that plowed safe lanes through two Iraqi minefields in Kuwait on G-Day, 24 February, the day the ground war began against Iraqi troops occupying the tiny state. "But looking back, numbers didn't mean a damn thing," he added.

When the fog of war cleared after the three-day *blitzkrieg* into Kuwait, Task Force Ripper had destroyed 176 tanks, hundreds of other armored vehicles, and captured more than 10,000 enemy soldiers — all at the unbelievable cost of no KIAs (killed in action)

and only 11 WIAs (wounded in action), all of whom returned to duty.

"We were looking at casualty figures in the vicinity of 10%," Task Force Ripper commander Colonel Carl Fulford, 47, from Statesboro, Georgia, recalled, "which would have come out to be about 600 or so." Early on in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Col. Fulford told his subordinates that Iraq's will to fight would determine how fierce the coming battles would be.

"Hussein certainly had the equipment to make the war very deadly," Fulford said, "but as we watched our rounds hit his tanks and explode into balls of fire and turrets go flying off, we couldn't help but think what would have happened to our aluminum-hulled amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs) containing 18 to 20 Marines, had one Iraqi missile or tank round hit them."

Enemy rounds went flying through advancing Marine units, but none hit. "It was as if we were up against the Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight," Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mattis, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, said. Mattis, from Richland, Washington, celebrated his 40th birthday in the field.

Ripper's lightning thrust into Kuwait was conducted by two reinforced battalions of infantry: 1st Battalion, 5th Marines and 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. The infantry was backed up by 3rd Tank Battalion; 3rd Battalion, 11th Artillery Regiment; 1st Combat Engineer Battalion and other supporting units. A couple of weeks after these units arrived back at the Marine Air and Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California, they talked about their involvement in the "100-hour war."

For Second Lieutenant John Anderson, this was the chance of a lifetime: an opportunity to lead men into combat. A "butter bar" fresh out of the infantry officer course (IOC) at Quantico, Virginia, the 24-year-old political science major from Cal. State Fullerton took charge of 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, just three days before shipping out for Saudi Arabia.

2nd Platoon was chosen as Ripper's lead assault platoon. Anderson said he and the 69 men in his platoon were ready to get the show on the road: "We knew the sooner we drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait, the sooner we'd go home."

Private First Class Gerald Fern, an M60 machine gunner from Pueblo, Colorado, was "good to go" on G-Day, but the 20-year-old leatherneck was afraid, because he didn't know what to expect. "I took 2,800 rounds of 7.62mm ammo into Kuwait and came out with the same amount," he said. "But I don't regret not firing a shot."

Private First Class Cody Ernst, 18, from Morehead, Minnesota, was pleasantly surprised when Iraqi soldiers surrendered instead of fighting — especially when he approached a line of trenches with a jammed M16.

Just before dark on 23 February, members of Task Force Ripper donned their chemical suits. Infantrymen climbed into AAVs. "We were packed inside like sardines," according to one leatherneck, who said his "trac" had 24 men in it.

Further back in the darkness, tankers from 3rd Tank Battalion made one last check of their mine plows and newly



installed Israeli-made mine rollers on their M-60 tanks. Cannon cockers from 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, moved their M109 (155mm) howitzers into what their commanding officer, Lt. Col. Mark Adams, called a "flying box" formation. Adams was able to move his battalion *en masse* like fighter planes in formation across the desert at 40 mph.

In the inky darkness of northern Saudi Arabia, Task Force Ripper uncoiled like a giant brown desert viper. 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, began moving to the line of departure at 0515, crossing it a short time later. About 0600, Tiger 3 (tanks from Alpha Company) reported the minefield was close to their front. Lieutenant Hornberg, in "Sagger Magnet," nicknamed for six antennas on his command tank, watched as three platoons of four M-60s each approached the breach. As the sun peeked over the horizon at 0620, Captain Rick Mancini, commanding officer of Alpha, and Capt. Craig Baker, commanding officer of Bravo, popped a red star cluster indicating they had found the mine-

field. Obstacle clearing detachments (OCDs) from both teams, Team Tank and Team Mech, began the task of breaching the minefield.

Team Tank fired their MK58 single-shot line charge, 1100 pounds of C4 on a chain, into the minefield, but it failed to detonate as advertised. When combat engineers were unable to prime it manually, Capt. Mancini called one of his MK154 three-shot line charges forward. It fired, but had to be fused and detonated manually. A plow-equipped M-60 tank advanced the length of the first blast, and another charge was fired to complete the breach. Again, failure to detonate. The OCD again sent an engineer out to manually prime the charge. By 0644, Lane 4 was clear. Over in Lane 3, things were looking up as a one-shot line charge

*"I wished
I was a butterfly,"
the 220-pound Marine chuckled.*

Maj. Mike Applegate, commanding officer of Delta Co., the assault amphibious outfit that carried 1st Bn., 7th Marines to Kuwait City. Note burning oil wells visible in the background. Photo: Cpl. Lou Cappelli

detonated properly, but as Sergeant Scott Helm's tank was halfway through "proofing the lane" with a mine roller, he struck what was probably an Italian double-impulse mine. The crew was OK, but damage to the left road wheel and roller arm created a mobility kill.

Sergeant Helms missed all of the action by the time his tank was repaired and he rejoined Alpha Company outside Kuwait City, but he had a ringside seat at the first obstacle belt as planes from 3rd MAW (Marine Air Wing) attacked in waves of two planes each every seven minutes.

First Lieutenant Brent Wilhoit, 26, from Johnson City, Tennessee, and 24 members of Charlie Company, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, became frustrated when seven of nine line charges



India Battery, 3/11 ready for action in Kuwait. Photo: LCpl. Jesse Patch

LCpl. Gerald Fern, an M60 machine gunner in 2nd Platoon, didn't fire a shot during the Gulf War. Photo: 2nd Lt. John Anderson

failed to detonate properly. Twice, arresting cables snapped, breaking continuity of the electrical circuit, but Wilhoit said the rest of the malfunctions involved fuses not arming in flight. Wilhoit's men had to dismount from their tracks and go forward

to light 40-second fuses.

"The first time we got out was when Helms' tank became disabled in the middle of the minefield," Cpl. James Chapman, 29, from Port Huron, Michigan, reported. "I wished I was a butterfly," the

220-pound Marine chuckled as he recalled gingerly putting one foot in front of another in the minefield.

There were more malfunctions at the second minefield, 34km inside of Kuwait, but Marine combat engineers breached it



Tanker from 3rd Tank Bn. reading smuggled copy of *Penthouse* Magazine before heading into Kuwait. Photo: LCpl. Jesse Patch

anyway. Lieutenant Colonel Mattis believed every engineer who ran out to prime charges manually was "Bronze Star material."

Resistance stiffened at the second obstacle. "I could hear shrapnel hitting the side of my vehicle," Lt. Anderson said. "Snow-storm" (codename for incoming fire) gave him a reality check. "You knew at that point that this was for real."

"I think they thought it would take us 24 hours to reach the second breach," Mattis said, "giving them enough time to move guns and reposition ammunition supplies, but they guessed wrong. It took 1st Battalion 40 minutes to clear the first minefield, but only eight minutes to make it through



Lt. Col. Jim Mattis, commanding officer of 1st Bn., 7th Marines explains tactical situation to Delta Co., the amphibious assault team that went into Kuwait in AAVs Photo: Sgt. Maj. Dwight Walker

the second breach. That was twice as fast as we did during rehearsals. And this was with the added pucker factor of 82mm mortar, 122mm artillery and machine-gun fire."

Before the invasion, Marines from First Reconnaissance Battalion walked 18 clicks from the Kuwaiti border into the first minefield and then crawled through it. The Recon Marines spent two nights in "Indian Country," following enemy patrols and reporting back by satellite. It was "by far the best intel I received," Mattis reported, "even better than satellites and reconnaissance aircraft."

The 3rd Tank Battalion accounted for some 59 kills of T-55s, T-62s and T-72s. "One sabot round hit the frontal arc of the turret on a T-72," Lt. Hornberg, the XO of Alpha Company, said. "It went through the turret, engine, then out the ass-end." No question about the ability of M60 main guns (105mm) to defeat Iraqi armor, and unlike the heavier gunned (120mm) M1A1 which Alpha has transitioned to since the war, the M-60s can fire WP (white phosphorous) rounds and be fitted with dozer blades.

Most of the tanks destroyed by Alpha had been abandoned, according to 2nd Lt. Daniel Smith, 24, from Le Roy, New York. Smith, 1st Platoon Commander in Alpha, said some of the dug-in tanks he hit burned for hours.

One of the longest shots was a 2,200-meter kill of a ZSU 23-4, an anti-aircraft gun mounted on a tracked chassis. "But most of our shots were 500 meters or less, just over the berm," according to Sgt.

Kevin Kessinger, 27, from Rochester, New York, TC (tank commander) on the battalion commander's M-60.

Pitch Black At Noon

The smoke from burning oil wells was so dense, tank commanders such as Staff Sergeant David Stefanko opted to keep the hatches open so he and his loader could see where they were going.

It takes a good battery five to 10 minutes to set up its howitzer and fire. "If they take more than 10 minutes, they're too slow for me," Lt. Col. Mark Adams, 42, from Eldorado, Arkansas, reported. Adams, commander of 3/11, was responsible for providing fire support for 1/5 and 1/7, the two reinforced infantry battalions in Task Force Ripper. They couldn't advance until his batteries were in place.

Adams is still amazed at how his cannon cockers fought in virtual darkness. "I can recall one day at noon when it was pitch black, blacker than the blackest night," he said. "What we had was the enemy shooting at us that we couldn't see because of burning oil wells."

A "down and dirty" artillery duel with the Iraqis never materialized. Lieutenant Colonel Adams credits aerial bombardment of Iraqi positions in Phase 3 (last two weeks) of the air war leading up to G-Day with negating the threat. "After being hit day after day, they were too scared to come out and shoot."

First Lieutenant John Scott, 26, of DeKalb, Illinois, interrogated some of the captured Iraqi soldiers. "The ones we took told Kuwaiti interpreters they didn't want to be there," Scott said. "They were forced to fight."

The Gulf War had to be the weirdest war ever fought by young Marines. Their fathers and grandfathers had to engage in bloody hand-to-hand combat

"What kind of a war was this where the enemy couldn't wait to surrender?"



Left to right, happy campers are: 1st Lt. Brian Hornberg, 2nd Lt. Dennis Sullivan, LCpl. Mark Craft, and LCpl. Shane Paynter. Reactive plates on turret are designed to defeat RPGs and other explosives by blowing the shaped charges outward, not allowing penetration of hull. Photo: courtesy Brian Hornberg



Members of Alpha Co., 3rd Tank Bn., back home at Marine Air and Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California. Photo: Dale B. Cooper

in Vietnam, Korea and World War II. But LCpl. Rosendo Diaz, from Tipton, California, is still dumbfounded by the hordes of Iraqi soldiers passing his truck as he pulled his gun north: "They were waving, smiling and flashing 'V' for victory signs," Diaz recalled. "What kind of a war was this where the enemy couldn't wait to surrender?"

Moments after the second minefield was breached at midday on 24 February, hundreds of Iraqis waving white flags began to crawl out of bunkers and trenches. In the process of rounding up the EPWs (enemy prisoners of war) and herding them south, Lt. Wilhoit and his

combat engineers uncovered a cache containing RPGs and blew it up in place.

"The Iraqis had enough ammo in that bunker to put up a helluva fight had they wanted to," Wilhoit said. "All they had to do was open up and it would have been like Iwo Jima all over again."

In addition to stockpiles of ammunition, some of the bunkers Lt. Scott and the intel people entered looked like looted hardware stores. "There were TVs, home appliances, air conditioners, fire alarms, even carpet samples," Scott laughed.

"We did a number of things to lessen their will to fight," Lt. Col. Mattis said. "We wanted them to know we weren't going to kill them, and when Iraqis hiding in trenches saw their comrades being herded to the rear and the wounded being treated, that lessened their will to fight even more."

However, the overwhelming number of EPWs began to bog down Team Mech's

advance through the minefield. Elements of the combat train had to be called forward to relieve line companies of their task of stripping, searching and shepherding prisoners to the rear.

"Tankers hate to have infantry close to them," Lt. Anderson, who was pressed into service as a "traffic cop" directing Iraqis south, said. "The amount of EPWs coming my way reminded me of Angel Stadium after a Dodgers home game."

Get Out Of Kuwait Free

Some of the Iraqis were waving white flags; others were waving "Get Out of Kuwait Free" cards that were dropped on them by high-flying B-52 bombers. One of these cards showed an Iraqi soldier thinking of his wife and two children as he surrendered to an American GI. On the reverse side, in Arabic, were instructions on how to surrender:

1. Remove the magazine from your weapon.
2. Sling your weapon over your left shoulder, muzzle down.
3. Have both arms raised above your head.
4. Approach the Multi-National Forces' position slowly with the lead soldier

holding this document above his head.

5. If you do this, you will not die.

Some Marines said the Iraqis were waving white T-shirts that they had saved for the occasion. One group of EPWs approached Anderson carrying a 4x20-foot banner. But not every Iraqi surrendered peacefully. A couple of Marines were wounded when an Iraqi soldier pulled the pin on a grenade he was carrying under his shirt. From that point on, prisoners were ordered to "strip down to their skivvies."

Bravo Company rounded up five or six hundred Iraqi prisoners on the first day alone. So many were coming forward, Marines simply waved them south as they moved north in their amphibious assault vehicles. "There were thousands of them coming through," Anderson remembered;



1st Bn. combat engineers shooting line charge into first minefield inside Kuwait. The charge is a chain of 1,100 pounds of C4, rocket-assisted. Photo: 1st Lt. Brian Hornberg

so many he couldn't count them.

Once past the second minefield, Task Force Ripper paused long enough to re-arm and re-fuel before attacking the Emir's farm south of Kuwait City. Artillery was called in and Cobra gunships fired Hellfire and TOW missiles into bunkers, tanks and anything else that posed a threat before Marines formed on-line and swept toward a tree line containing a series of bunkers and trenches.

Massive wellhead fires in the oil fields caused the commander of Task Force Ripper to turn his back on the fires, thinking no one could survive amid the flames, and race toward Al Jaber airfield before dark. But Col. Fulford's heart almost stopped when he began receiving intelligence reports about mechanized forces preparing for a counterattack on his completely exposed right flank.

Enemy tanks tried to use the smoke to mask an attack on Ripper's right flank, but were stopped dead in their tracks by Cobras with TOW missiles. Lance Corporal Aymond saw an Iraqi tank hit by a TOW. "The turret was ripped off the tank

and blown about 50 meters into the air."

"We've Been Waiting To Surrender"

After the Emir's farm, a few skirmishes were fought, but for all practical purposes, the war was winding down for Ripper. Corporal John Pereira, 21, from Miami, Florida, and his fire team captured an Iraqi tank commander when they stormed a building in which he was hiding. "He was just elated to see us," Pereira said. The Iraqi captain asked Lt. Anderson what took him so long. "We've been waiting to surrender," the captured officer told him.

Anderson chatted with the Iraqi officer. "He said Saddam was an asshole who tricked troops into coming to Kuwait." The captain spoke perfect English. He told his captors he was educated at the



One of two line charges that detonated in Iraqi minefield as advertised. Remainder malfunctioned and had to be primed manually by combat engineers. Photo: 1st Lt. Brian Hornberg

University of Illinois, majoring in agriculture, and that he fought in the eight-year war against Iran. "But this isn't my war," he said.

Corporal Pereira came loaded for bear. "I personally had an AT-4 (antitank weapon), my M16, two bandoleers, four grenades and a 5-pound satchel charge for my gunner." Pereira had so much ammunition on him, he could barely walk. "We were so weighted down, we sunk up to our ankles in the sand." And, although he didn't fire a shot, the war was a learning experience for him. "It helped me overcome a lot of fears," he said.

After a brief firefight at the Emir's farm, Task Force Ripper headed north toward Ahmed Al Jaber airbase where four Coalition aircraft had taken hits from anti-aircraft guns. By dark, Ripper was poised just outside the airfield near three cone-shaped German-built bunkers capable of holding hundreds of enemy troops. Smoke poured from one of the bunkers, obviously the target of an air attack. Many of the bunkers at Al Jaber had been abandoned. Dozens of oil wells silhouetted Task Force Ripper as it settled

down for the night.

On the next day, 25 February, one of Ripper's infantry-laden Amtracs hit a mine. Radios crackled with the dreaded words: "Gas! Gas! Gas!" But no chemical agents were detected, and the "all clear" was given. Less than half an hour later, the same thing happened again when chemical detection vehicles took inaccurate readings. The oily smoke was making it difficult to determine if chemical agents were being used. As it turned out, they were not used, despite the discovery of gas shells in bunkers.

26 February found 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, engaged in two simultaneous firefights near what was supposed to be an abandoned quarry, but turned out to be an Iraqi ambush of the combat train.

Cobras had taken thermals on two BTR-50/60s and reported they were cold (abandoned), but when Cpl. Timothy Drake from Winslow, Maine, and other Marines in the "logistics train" drove by, Iraqis inside the armored personnel carriers (APCs) opened up on them.

Under cover of LCpls. Craig Forsythe and Sean Lentini, 2nd Lt. James Welborn moved in and destroyed one of the BTR-50s with a single antitank shot. The young officer earned a Silver Star for this action. The second BTR-50 was destroyed moments later when Pfc. James Wommack, LCpl. Robert Hart and Sgt. Josefo Elisaiya provided cover for 1st Lt. David Raynor and LCpl. David Castleman.

Soviet Swiss Cheese

A section from the "Mobile Dragons" Platoon also engaged the enemy. While LCpls. Eric Hamilton and Harry Horn kept the Iraqi heads down with M203 grenade-launchers, LCpl. James Grier closed in and destroyed the only remaining machine-gun bunker with a single shot. Drake was surprised that the M203s made "swiss cheese" out of the Soviet-made APCs.

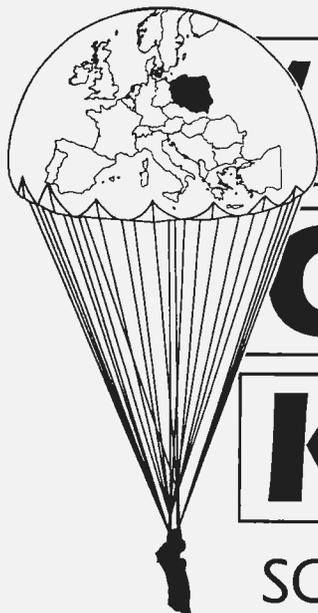
By 1500 hrs., visibility was down to less than 200 meters. A series of brief engagements with enemy T-54/55 tanks were fought as the battalion continued its attack toward Kuwait City.

At 2300, a patrol from Team Mech lead by Sgt. Charles Eckhoff slipped into Kuwait City to scout for enemy activity. Six hours later, the patrol returned, having made no contact.

As the sun rose on 27 February, 1st Battalion saw Kuwait City directly in front of them. Because of limited visibility the day before, many Marines couldn't comprehend how close they were. Charlie Co. awoke to find four fully functional ZSU 23-4 anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) guns abandoned in front of its position.

Blowing horns and random shots could be heard throughout the city as jubilant Kuwaitis waved American, British and

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"PARTY" CRASHING IN KRAKOW

SOF With Elite 6th Pomeranian Airborne Assault Brigade

by Tom Bates



C OUP qualified. That's SOF.

Journalistic coups in military reporting are what SOF readers count on. We usually score them under the noses of, or in spite of, foreign armies and intelligence services.

This time was different. SOF was the first Western news source invited by a Warsaw Pact government to inspect its elite forces. In this case, it was the Polish Ministry of Defense that wanted us to see its elite 6th Airborne Assault Brigade in Krakow, the unit where they hide their *Spetsnaz* (Special Operations) forces.

Turns out SOF has picked up quite a reputation among Warsaw Pact armies for its on-the-ground reports on the Soviets in Afghanistan.

"The Soviets hate you," the new Polish vice minister of defense told me. "That's a great compliment as far as we're concerned. You must know what you're doing if you anger them so much. Having our elite forces on the pages of SOF is our new democratic government's gift to the 'peace loving' Mr. Gorbachev. There could be no greater symbol of defiance to that totalitarian regime, no greater expression of our new independence, of our defiant national character, than to be in your fine magazine."

We didn't need more of an invitation than that. Just weeks after Poland's new anticommunist government was in place, SOF was on the ground in Krakow, Poland — headquarters for the 6th Pomeranian Airborne Assault Brigade (6 Pomorska

Brygada Desantowa-Szturmowa).

Spetsnaz With a Smile

As I stood at the railway station in Krakow waiting for my military escort to 6th Brigade headquarters, I kept flashing back on the "old days" in the early 1980s when I'd spent a lot of time in Poland and elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain. In those days, an American in an SOF T-shirt loitering anywhere in the East Bloc was destined for a dark hole. That sort of tension was missing now. At least in Poland.

It's one thing to sense a change in the civilian atmosphere. It's quite another to expect a similar transformation in a nation's military, particularly one that has been so intertwined with the Soviets for the past 35 years.

My thoughts were thrust back to the present as Lieutenant Colonel Krzysztof Mamczur of the 6th Airborne Brigade briskly tapped me on the shoulder, snapped a salute, and introduced himself in flawless, unaccented English. As a reflex I turned to my friend and interpreter, Bartek Zborski, to have him extend some formal words of greeting. "No need for that," Lt. Col. Mamczur interrupted. "I speak a little English. Welcome to Krakow."

A "little" English? I could just as easily have been talking to a traffic cop in Iowa. "Where'd you pick up that little bit of English of yours?" I asked him.

"Spetsnaz!" he said with a wide grin. "Ever heard of them?" That cleared that up!

After boarding the Soviet-made GAZ

jeep that would take us to brigade headquarters, we suffered what was to be the only technical glitch during the entire visit — the GAZ wouldn't start. After the fourth or fifth try, Mamczur and the driver exchanged glances of disgust, Mamczur nodded with closed eyes, and the driver jumped out of the jeep, opened the hood, banged furiously on God-knows-what in the engine compartment, and the jeep sprang to life.

Soviet Legacies

"Any bets on who sold us this rust bucket?" Mamczur asked of everyone in the jeep. "As you can see, Mr. Bates, Soviet high-tech needs a lot less *glasnost* (publicity) and a lot more *perestroika* (restructuring)."

We all had a good laugh at the Soviets' expense as we sputtered off toward brigade headquarters. I was received in the brigade commander's mildly sumptuous office by his deputy, Colonel Henryk Miszkziel.

He seemed a bit uneasy, but not because he was afraid of revealing any secrets to a Westerner. "You must understand," he had my interpreter explain, "This is all very new to us ... hosting outsiders ... especially Westerners ... particularly an American. Having you in this office five months ago would have been our ticket to some place very unpleasant."

"And we don't have anything like your public affairs office to give you what I think you call a 'dog-and-pony show.' So this is the first day of school for me. If I seem nervous, it's because though I welcome the recent changes in our govern-



TOP: Polish Airborne forces are slated for an air cav role in future. Here, troops of 6th Pomeranian Assault Brigade deploy from Soviet Mi-6 Hook heavy general-purpose helicopters. Troop in center foreground has Polish version of Soviet LPO-50 flamethrower. Photo: Polish Defense Ministry

ABOVE: A stick of 6th Pomeranian Assault Brigade trainees jump over central Poland. Photo: Polish Defense Ministry

Though all this information was now officially declassified, old habits die hard.

ment, I can't unlearn 30 or 40 years of communist-inspired paranoia. Forgive me. If you have any advice for me on how to better handle such a visit, please tell me. We don't want you to leave here disappointed."

Though my Spetsnaz escort was nominally the lowest-ranking officer in the room, there was no doubt, even after being introduced to the brigade commander later in the day, that Mamczur carried all the authority. All eyes turned to him for approval whenever I asked specific questions about the brigade's order of battle, command structure, and so on.

Though all this information was now officially declassified, old habits die hard. They still needed to be reminded of that by someone who traditionally had the unspo-

ken authority over such matters. And Mamczur had the resume to command that authority — he had served as an adviser in Egypt, Syria, Iran and Iraq, and at the United Nations in New York.

According to Miszkziel, the 6th Pomeranian Airborne Assault Brigade was originally formed in May 1957 as a division with about 4,000 men. It was downsized to brigade strength in 1989 and currently has 2,500 men, though they anticipate reducing that number to 2,000 some time in 1991. Average age of recruits is 20 years, with officers averaging 30 years old.

Long Tradition of Airborne

Poland has a long tradition of military parachuting, having had a parachute unit before World War II. The 6th Brigade was



ABOVE: 6th Pomeranian Assault Brigade troops train in river-crossing near Krakow, Poland. Troop in foreground has folding-stock AKMS (PMKMS) fitted with 40mm grenade launcher. Photo: Polish Defense Ministry



ABOVE: Trainees from 6th Pomeranian Assault Brigade go through "monkey's jungle" course patterned after World War II British training. Readers will recall free Poles trained extensively in England to retake homeland from Nazis. Photo: Tom Bates



ABOVE: Author's gracious hosts for his tour of Polish Airborne forces were (L to R) Col. Henryk Miszklel, Brigade Cmdr. Jacek Sokol, Lt. Col. (Spetsnaz) Krzysztof Mamczur. Photo: Tom Bates



ABOVE: 6th Airborne Brigade troops jump with up to 130 kilos of gear: weapon and 90 rounds of ammo, three frag grenades, knife, altimeter, mess kit, rations and water for three days. Photo: Tom Bates



RIGHT: SOF correspondent Bates tries out P-64 pistol designed by Stanislaw Kochanski. Photo: Bartek Zborski

formed in 1957 from the remnants of two Polish units from World War II — the 6th Pomeranian Division and the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade, which fought alongside the British and jumped at Arnheim. Now that Moscow no longer dictates Poland's military policies, the brigade is trying to disassociate itself from years of Soviet domination.

As Miszkiel noted, "We want to reestablish the honorable traditions of Poland's two World War II units that were combined to form the 6th Brigade. Like you Westerners, we are also now free to come up with our own motto for our unit. We've always been envious of slogans like 'He Who Dares Wins' and so on. This might sound silly to you, but it represents a big step forward to us."

Now stationed in Krakow, today's 6th Brigade is Poland's Airborne strike force. It is a unique unit in Poland's military. More lightly equipped and less heavily mechanized than its Soviet counterparts, this is the unit from which Poland's Spetsnaz are gleaned and trained for deep-penetration missions.

Previous Warsaw Pact doctrine subordinated Poland's military to Soviet leadership, integrating it into Soviet strategy in Europe for an offensive role against NATO forces with the assumption that ground warfare would take place outside Poland. The 6th Brigade was earmarked for rapid offensive strikes against NATO forces in northern Europe, specifically Belgium and Denmark.

Not Just New Paint

They trained to fight on foreign soil, with their Spetsnaz units given special language training in Flemish, French and Dutch. The brigade's mission was to create an "external front" in these countries, to tie up the aggressive capability of the opponent, contributing to a quick Pact victory that would preempt or minimize NATO nuclear strikes on Poland.

Polish military doctrine as of 1990 has changed that strategy. Defined as a defensive strategy, the Polish military has been resubordinated to national command and directed to operate solely on Polish soil. Its new mission is to protect national interests rather than to advance Soviet, or any other country's, goals. A similar shift in military doctrine has taken place in all of the countries of the former Warsaw Pact, which was officially disbanded in February 1991.

From what I could see during my short visit with the 6th Brigade, this new doctrine was more than eyewash designed to fool NATO. In addition to downsizing from division to brigade strength, the 6th Airborne Brigade is moving strictly to an air cavalry concept, according to Mamczur and Miszkiel.

"This new defensive preparedness does not mean we aren't prepared to attack," Miszkiel said. "The opponent must be thrown out of Poland and encouraged

never to return uninvited. Our brigade troops will remain Airborne-qualified even though we are abandoning most of our fixed-wing assets.

"Para training gives Special Operations troops an added physical prowess they need and an *esprit de corps* that no other kind of training can equal. We also want to be every bit as qualified as other nations' Special Operations forces, such as your Special Forces."

Before going out to observe training, Miszkiel and Mamczur explained that the brigade is composed of four battalions: air cavalry, artillery, antiaircraft and logistics. Each battalion has its own separate medical, engineer, communications, and antichemical units.

There is also one reconnaissance company per battalion. These recon companies are manned exclusively by Spetsnaz. These Special Operations personnel are selected from the other brigade's troops during the basic training cycle. According to Miszkiel, "Our Spetsnaz are the cream of the cream. They are the brightest, physically strongest troops who show a high degree of motivation and personnel resourcefulness.

"I think in English you would say they are good at 'thinking on their feet.'" After basic training, these Spetsnaz personnel train separately from the rest of the brigade for their long-range reconnaissance mission. I was not allowed to observe their training.

Volunteer Elite

The Airborne Brigade is made up entirely of volunteers from conscripted Polish troops who have completed their two years' compulsory service. They must have exemplary records from their prior service to be admitted. According to numerous sources, there are always more volunteers than openings.

This gung-ho attitude toward the military in Poland is evident at first glance when one sees their uniformed personnel in the streets of any city. They are clearly proud of their association with their nation's military — you can see the professionalism in their manner.

The Soviets discouraged elite units of the former Warsaw Pact from becoming too large or autonomous since they could be used to resist Soviet missions, or to improve solidarity with their neighbors. Though no single Warsaw Pact elite unit compares in size or firepower to the massive Soviet Airborne potential, the small size of these units guarantees that

only the finest-trained and devoted troops are in their ranks. Poland's 6th Airborne Assault Brigade stands as the crown jewel of the old Warsaw Pact elite forces.

Total training time for the brigade is 24 months, with the first two and a half months devoted to basic training. In addition to becoming Airborne-qualified (minimum five day jumps and two night jumps, plus five night HALO — high-altitude, low-opening — jumps), all troops receive training in marksmanship, anti-

Troops of 6th Pomeranian Assault Brigade prepare to fire PGN-60 anti-tank grenades from PMK-DGN-60 (modified AK-47) rifles equipped with LON-1 launchers. Photo: Polish Defense Ministry



Poland's military is the largest of the former Warsaw Pact, and the best equipped.

NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) tactics, mountain climbing, skiing, scuba diving, sailing, hand-to-hand combat, fieldcraft, and training with foreign small-arms. Classroom study in strategy and tactics supplements this field training.

By the end of the 24-month cycle, each trooper must have qualified in two specific arms and/or specialties, such as Sagger antitank missile/rifle, radio operator/driver, etc.

Poland's military is the largest of the former Warsaw Pact, and the best equipped. "In comparison with other Polish and other non-Soviet military units, the 6th Pomeranian Brigade has excellent equipment," Mamczur explained. "[But] the Soviets were never quick to respond to requests; they made sure never to send us their best equipment, and in some important cases they never supplied us with all that an elite unit like ours needs.

"For instance, we have no APCs. Can you believe that? Part of this has to do with Soviet bureaucratic ineptitude, but much has to do with Soviet suspicion of its client states."

Again, a very candid remark from someone of Mamczur's position. From my travels in Poland in the early 1980s and discussions then with various Solidarity leaders, the 6th Brigade (then a division), although deployed in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, was never known for being pro-Soviet.

Airborne troops train near Krakow; in foreground is trooper with PMK (AK-47), rear trooper has RPK SAW with 40-round box magazine. Poles also issue Soviet PK machine guns, Dragunov sniper rifles. Photo: Polish Defense Ministry



"You might notice," Mamczur quipped, "there are no pictures of Gorbachev, or anything else that might remind us of the Soviet Union."

In fact, it was widely assumed at the time I was first there that the Soviet hesitation to intervene in Poland during the days of the Solidarity uprisings was due largely to their concern about possible resistance from this renowned Polish Airborne division. It was no secret on the street that Poland's armed forces were generally viewed by Soviet leaders as perhaps the most troublesome and Poland as the least reliable country in the Soviet harem. Paradoxically, because of its competence, it was Poland's military that played a key role in overall Soviet anti-NATO military strategy.

Aside from the character and specialized training of its troops, the 6th Brigade is unique from Poland's other military units in that it has heavy artillery trans-

ported by rail and road. Other than these artillery pieces, the unit is lightly armed: "commando" knife, the Polish P-64 autoloading pistol and the P63 (Wz63 in some Western literature) machine pistol in 9mm Makarov, the RAK submachine gun, their PMK version of the Soviet AK-47 and PMKM version of the AKM rifles with Polish-made PPS sound suppressors, Soviet night scopes, Sagger antitank guided missiles, recoilless rifles, 120mm mortars, 82mm automatic mortars used as antitank weapons, SAM-7s, and twin 23mm antiaircraft guns. "We're able to buy Western armaments now," Mamczur said enthusiastically.

When I asked what the 6th Brigade would be most interested in from the United States inventory, he replied, "With the exception of the M16A2, you name it, we want it. APCs are high on our list ... the

Bradley would be nice ... your night vision equipment ... and that Stinger ... what a remarkable weapon! That kind of fire-and-forget technology brought the Soviets to their knees in Afghanistan. But the M16A2 is much too finicky a weapon for use in the various likely theaters of today's conflicts. Soviet AKs and AKS [AKMS] fire every time you pull the trigger, no matter how poorly maintained, no matter how foul the weather or surrounding conditions."

With that editorializing behind us, we left command headquarters and headed by car to the small-arms training center for the 2nd Assault

Company of the 6th Brigade and to two of the four battalion training areas outside Krakow: the antiaircraft battalion at Kotoberg, then the air cav battalion at Niepotomicze.

Range facilities at the small-arms training center were similar to what would be seen on any U.S. base. And young troops were just as cocky and relaxed as their American counterparts: "Take my picture — make me rich and famous? ... Put me on cover of Rolling Stone? ... You know any California girl for me? ... Can I have SOF T-shirt?"

A tour of the barracks at Kotoberg and at other battalion facilities reminded me of barracks on U.S. Army bases in Germany. Same bunks (though thinner mattresses), same posters of Rambo and naked women

on the walls.

New Face of Liberty

"You might notice," Mamczur quipped, "there are no pictures of Gorbachev, or anything else that might remind us of the Soviet Union. We're our own country now. Not a puppet. That goes for the military even more so. Once you give it a chance, the individual soldiers' personalities start to give character to a place. This is nothing new to an American, I'm sure, but for us it's completely unheard-of. It's a good thing. Allowing this sort of expression of individualism makes for better soldiers. That's something the Soviets will never understand."

At my other stops at the training facilities, I thought I'd test Mamczur's claim that Poland's new military was there to protect Poland's own national interests rather than advancing the Soviets'. I'd regularly ask every trooper I saw, "Who's the enemy now? Who are you aiming at when you fire your weapon?" The answer was uniform and enthusiastic: "Whoever comes across our border uninvited — whoever doesn't belong in Poland."

After running the obstacle course (referred to as "the monkey's jungle," the design of which they claim came from the British in World War II) with some troops and observing some basic parachute training (the regimen of which is entirely of Polish origin, and not based on Soviet training techniques), we returned to staff headquarters at the end of the day, where I met with Brigade Commander Jacek Sokol.

Though as affable and responsive to questions as anyone I'd ever met, this guy looked like he was half Hun and half Bedouin tribesman. And though more than 50 years old, he damn near ripped my arm out of its socket when he shook my hand.

To help everyone loosen up a little, he broke out a bottle of something that tasted like plum-flavored napalm. The mood and conversation lightened up.

SOF's Underground Fans

"We all know about *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*," Sokol proclaimed. "The higher-ranking officers all read it when they can find a copy. We first heard about it back in 1980 — your reporting on Afghanistan really made the Soviets mad. We heard about it from them. We were told never to read this magazine. So naturally, we had to get our hands on as many copies as we could! We don't agree with everything we read in it, but it has military information that no one can get in this country, even if you have security clearance."

When I asked what they disagreed with most, they all claimed that they felt the reporting on El Salvador and the rest of

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POLAND'S FIRST CIVILIAN

VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE

"Oliver North. Now there's someone your nation should be proud of," Bronislaw "Broniek" Komorowski, Poland's first civilian vice minister of defense commented when I spoke with him in his office at the Defense Ministry in Warsaw.

"People love him here — hawks and doves alike. He's a man you can trust. A man who has the courage to face the devil head on, who has the courage to defend his convictions, no matter what the sacrifice." That brief exchange truly illustrates Poland's bull-by-the-horns national character, and the character of their newly democratic government. Poles aren't afraid of getting their hands dirty defending their liberty, and are now beholden unto no one — especially the Soviets. Komorowski had been appointed vice minister of defense just days before I visited him.

Mere months before he was an outlaw — a former Solidarity leader whose sacrifices in toppling the communist regime had made him a wanted man for nearly a decade. When the tables turned, Komorowski's anti-communist courage paid off when the new democratic leadership appointed him to this high post.

As one of six Polish military vice ministers, and the first civilian to be named to this post, Komorowski's missions are formidable: erase the Soviet-mandated Marxist-Leninist ideological indoctrination programs in Poland's military and restore Poland's nationalist traditions and values. This is not an easy assignment, considering his officer corps, and most of his colleagues, were trained in either the Soviet Union or East Germany.

Komorowski is meeting this challenge head on: "The restructuring of Poland's military involves a transformation from a decidedly offensive force that was a Soviet puppet to a defensive force that answers only to Poland's independent, democratic government.

"This restructuring began in early 1990 by reducing the army by 33,000 men, disbanding 68 units and reorganizing 147 ... To date we have withdrawn from service 400 tanks, 700 guns and mortars, 600 armored personnel carriers and 80 aircraft. Thirty military buildings have been converted to civilian use, and many arms-manufacturing facilities are being retrofitted to handle civilian manufacturing. Our draft will be reduced from two years to 18 months ...

"By the end of 1990, the Polish army will be reduced by another 10,000, leaving 300,000 men in uniform. This is 0.8 percent of the population of Poland, ranking it 13th among armies in Europe."

Changing numbers of men and equipment is the easy part. Changing the mentality of an entire military establishment is another story. Komorowski's first policy decision was to arrange a tour of the USAF

jazz band from Rhein-Main Air Base in Germany to every major Polish military installation, complete with barbecue, beer and fireworks.

"This might sound like an insignificant bit of showmanship to you, but American jazz is a powerful weapon of freedom. The Soviets always did what they could to ban it, or to make their own 'politically correct' jazz. Believe me, American jazz is your country's most underrated and best export. It's the best antitotalitarian subversive weapon I know of. As an American, you probably don't know what jazz sounds like to people who have grown up in the paranoia of a totalitarian system. Its sound is uniquely nonpolitical. It's liberating. It captures the feeling of freedom.

"Symbolism is very important to people who have grown up in these perverse totalitarian systems. The idea of having the American Air Force play this jazz music to our troops might seem strange to you. But it is a great symbol to those Poles who will hear and see this event. It signals once and for all the death of communism and the birth of freedom in our country.

"When I was in Solidarity, we all read over and over again smuggled copies of your Declaration of Independence, of your Constitution, and the writings of Jefferson, Adams, Franklin and Lincoln. Like jazz, these writings were poison to the Soviets. Like jazz, America represents the ideals of freedom and independence that make communism run and hide. It is these ideals I want to instill in our armed forces personnel ...

"When I see American servicemen, officers or enlisted personnel, they project an aura of pride in their country and self-respect that you don't see in communist armies ... American military patches are so prized over here among all the people. The slogans they choose to represent their units, the vitality of the symbols they choose, are greatly admired over here ... We're often envious of that spirit and vitality. And I do believe that it is American servicemen who uniquely represent this.

"Just now, I have sent word to all units in Poland that they are free to invent their own mascots and slogans, to design patches and decals for their personnel, and to display them proudly ... It is a great gift to have the freedom to define yourself and the groups you associate with rather than to have someone else define who you are.

"We are also building a Polish military history museum and a military history institute to encourage research into Poland's military past to do what we can to reveal the truth that the Soviets tried to erase from our people. Courses in history, particularly covering the period from before World War II to the present, will be offered to the troops to teach them what the Soviets never let us learn. Basically, I'm putting together an infrastructure to allow our soldiers to redis-

cover their roots. Administratively, my goal is to establish what you Westerners call a 'public affairs office.' I also want to use this public affairs office to solicit foreign military visitors to come and examine our troops, and to arrange exchanges so our troops can go train with Western troops."

At the time of my visit, Poland was still a member of the Warsaw Pact, which was officially disbanded in February 1991. Komorowski commented: "The Warsaw Pact today is now more of a political-economic alliance, not a military one. Poland will not have to worry about choosing to stay in what is called the Warsaw Pact because I believe the alliance will dissolve on its own very soon.

"Still, I think all nations in the region, East and West, must think in terms of maintaining stability in Europe rather than striving toward absolute national autonomy. Too many internecine conflicts could erupt as the newly liberated nations of Central and Eastern Europe lose the common enemy of the Soviets and revive old quarrels among themselves.

"The current instability in the Soviet Union is a threat to everyone. But the prospect of a reunified, armed Germany has Poles more worried ... Poles dislike the Soviets, but there is a strong residual fear and distrust of a powerful Germany. We'll remain in the Warsaw Pact as long as it exists if only to pacify this fear. After the Pact dissolves, we will have to consider new options.

"With that said, I must tell you, and you can see from history, that Poland has always had an affinity to the West, particularly with the United States. There was a standing joke among Polish military officials during the communist domination that defined the ideal military strategy for Poland: Declare war on America at 23:59 hours on Sunday night, then at one second after midnight on Monday, promptly surrender unconditionally!"

As our conversation drew to a close, Komorowski presented me with a medal newly commissioned by the Defense Ministry for all visiting foreign dignitaries. "The face you see on this medallion is that of Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the Polish general who fought in your Revolutionary War.

"Kosciuszko represents the values necessary for fighting for liberty, whether one's own or someone else's. All defenders of liberty are friends of Poland. Mr. Bates, please accept this Kosciuszko medal as a symbol of Poland's love of the American people and of our desire to emulate what is best and noble in your country."

— T.B.

[Note: Despite the continued tumultuous state of politics in Poland, Komorowski is one of three ministers of defense who have survived the several rounds of reshuffling. As of March 1991, he is still the only civilian vice minister of defense in that country.]



MOUNTAINS OF MILITARIA

Cache 'n' Carry Arms Deal in Colombia

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

Since the mid-19th century every carpet-bagging merchant of death from the infamous Sir Basil Zaharoff to Sam Cummings has peddled his wares in every Spanish-speaking military oligarchy on the North and South American continents.

Cartagena, Colombia, has always been one of the major ports-of-call on their itinerary. Colombia's population of 29 million, ravaged by the Medellin drug lords, has an armed force, including regulars, reserves and paramilitary, numbering close to half a million. Every one of these *hombres* slings a fusil of one type or another.

Colombia's inventory of small arms reads like the table of contents from *Jane's Infantry Weapons*. Their stockpile of sub-machine guns alone includes the Danish Madsen M46, M50 and M53; Walther MPK; H&K MP5A3 and MP5K; Israeli UZI and Mini-UZI; U.S. M3A1 "Grease Gun" and Ingram MAC10. Rifles in recent service consist of Galils (both calibers 5.56x45mm NATO and 7.62x51mm NATO), Beretta AR70, H&K G3, FN FAL, FN SAFN, U.S. M14, .30 MI Carbine, .30 MI Rifle and FN-manufactured '98 Mausers. These latter three items have recently been imported to the U.S. in substantial quantity for sale by Springfield Sporters Inc. (Dept. SOF, RD #1, Penn Run, PA 15765; phone 412-254-2626).

Springfield Sporters is not exactly a household name among U.S. gun owners, except for those firearms cognoscente who hypnotically scan the 164-odd pages of classified and display advertising in the *Shotgun News* three times a month.

Bill Rodgers, who fought the Japanese

LEFT: Stacked like cordwood, an amazing array of 72,000 military rifles await delivery to collectors and shooters in one of Springfield Sporters' warehouses.



SOF's Tech Editor, Peter G. Kokalis, test fires M1 Garand from Colombia. These rifles were sent to Colombia in the late 1950s. Photo: Thomas N. Foster

as a U.S. Marine in the Pacific during World War II, started by selling and trading a trunk full of gun parts for 50 guns and the first month's rent on a small gun store in Pittsburgh. During the late 1950s he purchased a large quantity of '03 Springfield parts, including 50,000 barrels, with the intention of building and marketing a Springfield-type sporting rifle. The actions were to be made in Spain. He decided instead to sell the components. From this evolved what is essentially a mail-order business located since 1959 in a spot-on-the-road called Penn Run, which is in Indiana county — an agricultural area in western Pennsylvania, 10 miles east of Pittsburgh.

Tons of Guns

The Springfield Sporters complex now lies on 3,000 acres of farmland with seven warehouse buildings. In addition to components, they have since the beginning specialized in older military rifles. In particular, Rodgers is one of the world's acknowledged authorities on the Mauser Model 1898 turn-bolt in all of its literally hundreds of variations. With passage of the 1968 Gun Control Act and its prohibition against the importation of military small arms, Rodgers was forced to subsist on his existing inventory.

On 30 October 1984, the Dole Amendment to the 1968 Gun Control Act was signed by President Reagan. The Dole Amendment reclassified small arms manufactured between 1899 and 1946 as curios and relics, exempting most older military arms from the previous stringent import restrictions. There have been subsequent exemptions of more recently made arms.

After passage of the Dole Amendment, Rodgers was unable to secure small arms in the quantities he required from his then current importer. A year was spent in establishing a network of overseas agents and improving his warehouse facilities to

handle the anticipated increase in activity. At present, Springfield Sporters is one of the top two importers of surplus military rifles in the United States and first in the importation of military small arms parts. Their largest warehouse building contains 10,000 square feet of storage area in which

72,000 rifles are housed.

In March 1990, Springfield Sporters was the only bidder on an enormous amount (a total of 40 containers, of which about 20 were filled with material that was

legally importable to the U.S.) of obsolete military equipment and arms offered by the government of Colombia. Far more than a multimillion-dollar letter of credit is involved in negotiating and procuring a major surplus arms deal from a foreign government. There are pitfalls and hidden expenses of which the average person is totally unaware.

Part of the negotiated agreement was the stipulation that Springfield Sporters hire the Colombian army to provide security when the containers were moved from depots surrounding Bogota, more than 1,000 miles past Medellin to the sea port of Cartagena. Rodgers had to pay for use of the military vehicles, shielding aircraft and feeding the soldiers. Just one of the food bills alone amounted to \$3,200!

Grand Garands

Of great interest to SOF readers will be the thousands of .30 M1 rifles ("Garands") that Rodgers retrieved from Colombia. "In my opinion," General Patton said, "the M1 rifle is the greatest battle implement ever devised." While that is arguable, it was, without doubt, the finest infantry rifle fielded during World War II and the Korean War. To this day, it remains immensely popular with U.S. shooters and collectors. Sometime during the late 1950s nearly 19,000 M1 Garands were delivered to the Colombian armed forces through either the Military Assistance Program or via U.S. foreign military sales. They were of every manufacture and vintage.

Type-classified on 9 January 1936, the M1 Garand was the first military semiautomatic rifle to be issued in substantial numbers. Large quantities were produced and by the time production ceased in the 1950s, approximately five and a half million had been made. During World War II the Garand was produced by Springfield Armory and Winchester Repeating Arms Company. While Springfield Armory remained the principal supplier during the Korean War, Harrington & Richardson produced 428,600 and International Harvester Corporation, with assistance from Springfield Armory, manufactured 337,623 of the 1.4 million produced during the 1950s.

Although at 9 1/2 pounds it's no lightweight, the U.S. Rifle Semiautomatic Caliber .30 M1 is relatively simple and tremendously sturdy. Gas operated, its rotary bolt mechanism, along with numerous other features, was continued in the M14. Capable of superb accuracy, it can be faulted only with regard to its 8-round en bloc clip which cannot be "topped off" and is automatically ejected after the last round has been fired.

It has been said that the distinctive pinging sound associated with the clip's ejection sometimes led to fatal results for soldiers in close contact with the enemy or

when firing from concealed positions. This often repeated carping has never been documented. Confusion and noise reign supreme on the battlefield and the sound of a small sheet-metal clip striking the ground could not possibly be detected in such bedlam.

All M1 Garands I inspected at Springfield Sporters' warehouse were all in very good condition or better and most had excellent bores. Although some exhibited exterior finish wear and will be re-parkerized (a phosphate process), they were not pitted and significantly better than the M1 Garands recently imported from South Korea, most of which had "sewer pipe" bores and were re-parkerized over heavy pitting. The price is more than reasonable. Springfield Armory specimens sell for \$280 while those produced by either



Militaria retrieved from Colombia includes Mauser bayonets; .30-06 and .30 M1 Carbine ball ammunition; inert 81mm mortar rounds and rifle grenades; M1 Garand grenade launchers and grenade launcher sight assemblies; ordnance tools, BFAs, case defectors and flash hiders for the .30 M1 Carbine; and numerous other bits and pieces of interesting and unique military equipment.

Winchester, H&R or International Harvester cost \$310.

Attention Collectors

An interesting indigenous leather sling is available for these rifles at \$10 each. More important to Garand collectors and shooters are the enormous quantity of unissued parts that Springfield Sporters imported. These include almost all the small components and both barrels and operating rods, the latter two of which were formerly extremely difficult to obtain. Their illustrated catalog is only \$2 and contains a cornucopia of military rifles, parts, accouterments and other militaria.

Twelve of the M1 Garands I examined were quite unique. Eight were originally

manufactured by Springfield Armory, the other four by Winchester. The rear covers on all twelve were marked "R-74 INDUMIL (for Industria Militar, Bogota, Colombia) NATO." Holes had been drilled in the front and rear handguards and the front portion of the stock to immediately distinguish them from other Garands. Through installation of chamber inserts these rifles were converted to caliber 7.62x51mm NATO. This was never a completely satisfactory method for converting the M1 Garand to 7.62x51mm NATO as these inserts will sooner or later be ejected with an empty case. Rarities such as this should be admired by collectors, but not fired, as the inserts are difficult to reinstall properly.

SOF's test specimen was a Winchester (serial #159954) produced in March, 1942. A commercial barrel without MilSpec markings had apparently been installed by

the Colombian government during the time frame when this rifle was standard issue in their armed forces. The bore was perfect and the rifle shot 2 to 3 MOA from the bench at 100 yards with military ball ammunition and employing the rifle's issue iron sights.

This was achieved with ammunition provided to us by Springfield Sporters,

of which there are millions of rounds of two types. INDUMIL .30-06 military ball, produced at Fabrica Gral. Jose Maria Cordoba, was loaded into a brass case (headstamped "IM 30 66 30") that is Boxer-primed with the primer staked at three points. The propellant charge consists of 55 grains, nominal, of a round ball powder. The 155-grain FMJ (Full Metal Jacket) bullet has a flat base with a copper-alloy jacket over a lead core.

Ball ammunition of this caliber was also supplied to Colombia by Fabrique Nationale. FN's brass case is Berdan-primed and head-stamped "F N 71."

The 58-grain propellant charge is a round ball identical in appearance to that loaded in the INDUMIL cases. The FMJ bullet also weighs 155 grains, nominal, and has a flat base with a copper-alloy jacket over a lead core. However, it is one-half millimeter longer than the INDUMIL bullet

with a slightly more pronounced ogive. I do not know if either of these loads carry corrosive primers.

This ammunition is available belted in Browning Machine Gun (BMG) links (22 cents/round) or in M1 Garand 8-round en bloc clips (25 cents/round). Specify the INDUMIL, as it's Boxer-primed and reloadable. I saw literally mountains of Garand clips in the Springfield Sporters warehouses. In fact, the shipping crates of these clips were so enormous and heavy that the largest fork lift in Cartagena collapsed at dockside when it attempted to lift one of the crates and all of its hydraulic fluid was forced out.

Also available in substantial quantity are .30-06 crimped blanks (INDUMIL, FN and U.S.), rifle grenade ballistite rounds (U.S. Lake City Arsenal), non-crimped blanks with red cardboard plugs and gallery rounds with wooden bullets.

You can come close to the correct zero on an M1 Garand without even firing it. Make certain that the rear sight peep aperture is bottomed out. Loosen the screw on the elevation drum (left side of the rear sight assembly). Rotate the elevation knob forward to "200" and then eight clicks further forward. Take pliers and gently clamp the elevation knob while you tighten the screw on the drum. This is usually close enough for government work.

Mighty Mausers

Without doubt, the Model 1898 Mauser rifle in all its multitude of forms was the most successful military turn-bolt ever designed. German agents and Mauser rifles were at one time ubiquitous throughout Latin America. U.S. small arms of the era, such as the single-shot Remington Rolling-Block breech loader, provided scant competition for Mauser's slick five-shot repeaters. Today, there are

A small portion of the thousands of U.S. M4 .30 M1 Carbine bayonets with both leather and plastic handles brought back from Colombia.





Markings on rare experimental M1 Garand and Model 52 bolt-action rifles indicate conversion from .30-06 to 7.62x51mm NATO. Note Colombian crest on receiver ring of Mauser.

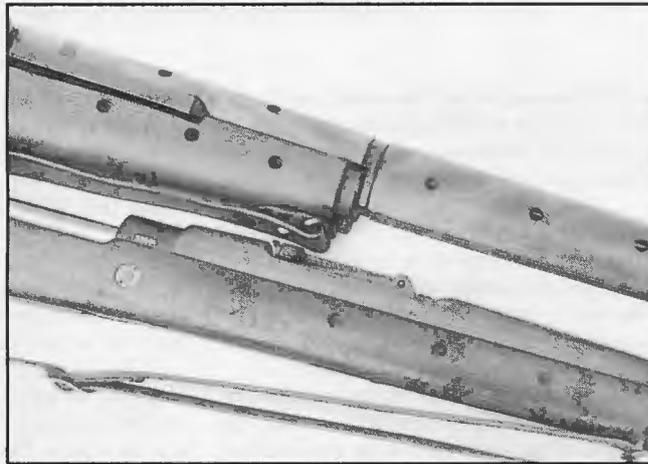
more '98-type actions and rifles in the U.S. than any other bolt-action. With good reason, as it is strong and almost foolproof. The Colombian Mausers imported by Springfield Sporters are chambered for the still-popular .30-06 (7.62x63mm) cartridge, a full-power military round in every sense of the word, which was adopted by the Colombian armed forces during the time frame in which they received the M1 Garands.

Colombian-contract Mausers were manufactured by FN (Fabrique Nationale D'Armes de Guerre, Herstal, Belgium) in the 1950s. They all carry the Colombian national crest with "COLOMBIA FUERZAS MILITARES" over the chamber. The FN markings appear on the left side of the receiver. They are of two types. Most are Model 1952 rifles with 23 3/8-inch barrels. This model has a horizontal bolt handle. The top hand guard extends to the receiver ring. The serial numbers appear on the right side of the receiver and the bolt handle. They were matching on all the specimens I examined. The finish is either phosphate or charcoal gray enamel over phosphate.

Except for numerous storage dings on the wood furniture, the overall condition is excellent with very good to perfect bores. Some exhibit indigenous repairs, such as welded front sling swivels and front barrel band springs formed by hand from drill rod. The price is only \$120 each. An unusual Mauser '98-type indigenous leather sling with a pebble-grained exterior surface is available in new condition for \$10.

For those seeking turn-bolt actions to sporterize, brand new stripped bolts, receivers and barrels are available for \$95 the set. The receivers are marked with the Colombian crest under "REPUBLICA DE COLOMBIA," ".30" and "R. FAMAGE 1957." This latter marking appears to signify *Reformado. Fabrica de Material de Guerra* (Modified. Factory of Military Equipment). The date indicates the year in which earlier FN-produced Model 30 short rifles were converted from 7x57mm (the prior standard military rifle caliber of Colombia) to .30-06 and rebuilt. The receivers and barrels are blued and the bolts, with bent handles, are "in the white."

Eleven of the Model 1952 rifles were



Holes were drilled into the handguards and forward portion of the stocks on experimental M1 Garand (top) and Model 52 Mauser to indicate conversion to caliber 7.62x51mm NATO.

converted to caliber 7.62x51mm NATO by chopping the barrels about a half-inch at the chamber end. As with the experimental Colombian .308 M1 Garands, the handguards and front portion of the buttstocks have been drilled with holes to distinguish them from caliber .30-06 Mausers. In addition, the receiver is marked "R-INDUMIL-80-50 7.62 MM NATO." Apparently both these and the .308 Garands represent an experimental dead end, as no more are known to have been produced.

One hundred of the Colombian Mausers imported by Springfield Sporters were Model 1953 carbines with 17 1/2-inch barrels. The bolt handles are bent in the cavalry style and all serial numbers match. They are rare and will set you back \$300. But, these mothers, weighing just over seven pounds, belch three-foot tongues of flame, cause permanent ear damage to everyone on the firing line and slam you rearward like a pile driver. They should be left hanging on the wall of your gun room.

Friendly Carbines

The thousands of .30 M1 Carbines that were part of the Colombian deal are more

"user friendly." All that I examined were in very good or better condition with excellent bores. They represent every manufacturer with the exception of Irwin-Pederson Arms Company. Those manufactured by Inland Manufacturing Division and Saginaw Steering Gear Division of General Motors, National Postal Meter, Underwood-Elliott-Fisher, Quality Hardware Machine Corporation, Standard Products Company, IBM and Universal (not U.S. military) are priced at \$180 each. Those produced by Winchester or Rock Ola (a jukebox manufacturer) will cost you an additional \$30 because of their name recognition.

Brand new, unissued components for the .30 M1 Carbine are also available.

They include such desirable parts as barrels, stocks, bolts, receivers and slides. In addition, I noted accessories of every type including some that are quite hard to find like the bolt disassembly tool, Dutch-made blank firing shell deflector and BFA and thousands of M4 bayonets with both leather (\$55) and plastic (\$30) handles. The following

seven full-auto M2 parts are not available: hammer; selector and spring; and the disconnecter and its spring, plunger and lever. The BATF has ruled that possession of any or all of these parts contravenes the National Firearms Act, unless you have a registered .30 M2 Carbine or trigger housing.

Rodgers returned with a large assortment of .30 M1 Carbine ball ammunition to include: Federal ("FC 30 CARBINE,") Winchester ("W C C 5 5,") Remington ("R A 5 5") and Dynamit-Nobel ("GECO30M1.") They range in price from 18 to 21 cents/round.

Note that SOF readers should avoid recently imported .30 Carbine ball ammo that is headstamped "L C 52". It was not manufactured at Lake City Arsenal. Highly corrosive, the head stamp is counterfeit and it was, in fact, produced in the PRC for clandestine distribution during the early 1950s and late 1960s to the Philippine Huks (Hukbalahap - a contraction of a Tagalog phrase meaning "People's Anti-Japanese Army"). Red plastic blanks manufactured by Bakelitfabrikken in Oslo, Norway are available from Springfield Sporters and will cycle the .30 M1 Carbine's gas-operated action.

Limited quantities of some other

Continued on page 110

EXCLUSIVE!

“PUPPET MASTERS”

Another Casualty in the Vietnam POW/MIA War

by Susan Katz Keating

Of all the legacies of Vietnam, perhaps the most bitter is the question of prisoners of war and those listed as missing in action. As long-time SOF readers know, the resolution of the POW/MIA question has been one of our magazine's highest priorities.

We've invested thousands of hours, hundreds of thousands of dollars, and racked up countless travel miles in the United States, Southeast Asia and elsewhere to attempt to do what our own government apparently has not — try to resolve the issue or, at the very least, answer the question: did we leave American service personnel behind in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia or China?

Unfortunately, and most frustratingly, our efforts resulted in more questions than answers. If we had more resources — say, the resources available to a government — to pursue the hundreds of tantalizing leads we've uncovered during the last 16 years, then perhaps some answers would have appeared. Perhaps.

There is one thing that is certain about our search, and that is our motive. Many of us here at the magazine served in Vietnam. We wanted answers, no matter whose toes we stomped in the process. There were no hidden agendas, no politics, no reasons not to uncover the truth. If someone had been left behind, we wanted them home. Simple as that.

It really not be that simple, however, in Washington.

For years, allegations have been made that the United States government, or at least elements of it, has been less than honest with the American public about the POW/MIA issue; that, in fact, the government purposefully ignored valid information on POWs and MIAs or failed to act on information it acknowledged. In essence, many of the allegations state there have been cover-ups to save the careers of any number of senior political and military types.

These allegations may, or may not, be true. As Bob Brown put it, “Do I think there's a little room under the Pentagon where a group of people pull the strings of a massive conspiracy? No.” And

neither do most people who have studied the POW/MIA issue to the degree we have here at SOF.

But there are problems. Over the years we've seen good men and women move into government positions that dealt with Southeast Asia POW/MIAs — and move out again with a Force 10 frustration level.

Such was the case with Army Colonel Millard Peck, who for eight months headed up the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) special office for POW/MIA affairs, ostensibly the government's point office for resolution of the issue.

A few days before this issue went to print, we received a letter that read, in part, “I am currently in government service, working on the Southeast Asia POW/MIA issue, and therefore cannot give you my name. The fact that I am sending you a copy of this letter is an indication of the extreme frustration I am feeling, as I consider what I am doing to be tantamount to insubordination.

“But I can certainly understand Col. Peck's feelings as I am also convinced that all of us at the working level of this issue are expendable, and that our government is not making a serious effort to resolve the fates of the unaccounted for in Southeast Asia ... I wish I could give you more, but I want to be able to salvage what is left of my career ...”

Enclosed with that letter was a copy of the following memorandum by Col. Peck, dated 12 February 1991, and a copy of his cover letter to same, dated 28 March 1991.

We sent long-time SOF contributor Susan Katz Keating out to track down Col. Peck — a daunting task as he was avoiding the press — but upon hearing that Susan was representing SOF, he agreed to talk with her during a series of meetings.

We don't know if Col. Peck's memo will actually push the POW/MIA issue back up to the front burner in Washington. Perhaps. More likely, it will simply become another chapter in the government's POW/MIA Book of Shame.

—John Coleman.

BACKGROUND: MILLARD A. PECK, COLONEL, INFANTRY, USA



Colonel Mike Peck was commissioned into the infantry, and is a former Special Forces operative with more than 20 years of service. Among myriad assignments, Col. Peck has served on the French Staff College in Paris and at the NATO Defense College.

During three tours of duty in Vietnam he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Clusters, the Bronze Star for valor with Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Commendation Medal for valor with Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters, and numerous foreign awards.

He has worked extensively with Montagnard tribesmen in Vietnam, and was an instructor at West Point. Prior to being named chief of the special office for POW/MIA, he was assigned to the DIA as duty director for intelligence and also as chief of the Asia division for current intelligence.

— S.K.K.

DATE: 28 March 1991

OFFICE: POW-MIA

SUBJECT: A Farewell

TO: All Personnel

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to bid farewell to the Office and to wish everyone the very best. I will sincerely miss each one of you, and will always retain fond memories of our efforts together and the many triumphs we were able to achieve as a team. Because of the intensity of our activities and being under constant political fire, the bonding that I felt for you was similar to that which occurs to soldiers in combat, and I came to love you as brothers and sisters.
2. The attached document fairly well sums up how I feel about the entire issue, although I subsequently lined out several portions. I am convinced that no one working within the present "structure," will ever satisfactorily resolve the question of whether or not U.S. prisoners were held after the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam or elsewhere.
3. It is my plan to pursue the issue via other avenues, and while so doing, will work diligently to give the POW-MIA office the credit it so richly deserves, and to ensure that your reputation, in all circles, is defended and upheld. Your honor and interests will always be one of my highest priorities — and when I say that, I mean it.
4. Many thanks to everyone, for your support; your devotion; your hard work; and your dedication to excellence. God bless you all ...

Adieu,

Enclosures

MILLARD A. PECK
Colonel, Infantry
USA

LA TE last year the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) special office for POW/MIA affairs received yet another in a long string of reports out of Southeast Asia.

This one was of recent vintage; it purports to describe an event that took place that same month, and not a decade earlier. A number of sources, who told SOF they had disguised certain elements, said the story came from a Vietnamese peasant. The peasant claimed he had been hunting jungle plants in the densely forested Central Highlands.

In the course of his work he heard the sound of an idling engine. Peering out from his cover, the peasant saw a bus containing what he assumed to be laborers. The men got off the bus, relieved themselves by the side of the road, and continued on their way. The episode made the peasant forget about his hunt, and sent him scrambling down the mountain: the men on the bus were middle-aged Caucasians.

The report of this incident found its way to the DIA as a possible sighting of American prisoners still held after the Vietnam War. Although the U.S. government says that the resolution of such cases is the highest national priority, little time was spent either tracking down the peasant or making plans for further action.

According to a source within the POW/MIA office, it was immediately dismissed

out of hand on the grounds that the witness was not credible. Civilian analysts apparently focused on their own doubts that the Central Highlands were not proper plant-hunting grounds, and therefore concluded that the entire story was bogus.

Colonel Millard A. (Mike) Peck, at the time head of the POW/MIA office, thought the report was worth investigating, if only because it stood out from the typical pattern of live-sighting hoaxes. A decorated war hero with three tours in Vietnam, Peck knew his highlands and he knew his peasants.

Certain elements made sense to him, and he pressed for a continued inquiry. Nevertheless — his status as boss notwithstanding — Peck was ignored. The report was filed away with scores of others like it, deemed not credible. For Peck, this was yet another straw leading to the collapse of the camel's back.

Memo On The Wall

In the dawn of Friday, 28 March 1991, Col. Peck slipped into the DIA undetected, and nailed a 5-page single-spaced memo to the door of his own inner sanctum. He then withdrew, intending never to return.

Titled "Request for Relief," the memo was addressed to the DIA's chief, Lieutenant General Harry Soyster. Among other things, the memo charged that the government routinely brushes aside or debunks live-sighting reports on American service-

men held in captivity after the Vietnam War.

"That national leaders continue to address the prisoner of war and missing in action issue as the 'highest national priority' is a travesty ... " Peck wrote. "It appears that the entire issue is being manipulated by unscrupulous people in the government, or associated with the government."

Elsewhere he described his office as having "the mindset to debunk."

Peck took pains to exonerate the DIA from intentional wrongdoing, but said that outside political pressures had rendered the POW office ineffective. "The sad fact," he wrote, "is that this issue is being controlled and a cover-up may be in progress."

The memo, dated 12 February, was discovered around 0730.

Pandemonium

"It was pure pandemonium when they found it," one DIA staffer said. "The deputy division chief just about fell over. They immediately started doing damage control (Department of Defense — DoD — officials feared that the memo had been released to the press, and busied themselves preparing a response), and an hour later it was in front of (Defense Secretary) Cheney. All they could think of was, "What if this gets out? And what the hell was Cheney going to do?"

Cheney, according to the same source,

"The sad fact is that this issue is being controlled and a cover-up may be in progress."

memorandum

DATE: 12 FEB 1991

REPLY TO ATTN OF: POW-MIA

SUBJECT: Request for Relief

TO: DR

U-0173/POW-MIA

1. PURPOSE: I, hereby, request to resign my position as the Chief of the Special Office for Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW-MIA).

2. BACKGROUND:

a. Motivation. My initial acceptance of this posting was based upon two primary motives; first, I had heard that the job was highly contentious and extremely frustrating, that no one would volunteer for it because of its complex political nature. This, of course, made it appear challenging. Secondly, since the end of the Vietnam War, I had heard the persistent rumors of American Servicemen having been abandoned in Indochina, and that the Government was conducting a "cover-up" so as not to be embarrassed. I was curious about this and thought that serving as the Chief of POW-MIA would be an opportunity to satisfy my own interest and help clear the Government's name.

b. The Office's Reputation. It was interesting that my previous exposure to the POW-MIA Office, while assigned to DIA, both as a Duty Director for Intelligence (DDI) and as the Chief of the Asia Division for Current Intelligence (JSI-3), was negative. DIA personnel who worked for me, when dealing with or mentioning the Office, always spoke about it in deprecating tones, alluding to the fact that any report which found its way there would quickly disappear into a "black hole."

c. General Attitudes. Additionally, surveys of active duty military personnel indicated that a high percentage (83%) believed that there were still live American prisoners in Vietnam. This idea was further promulgated in a number of legitimate veterans' periodicals and professional journals, as well as the media in general, which held that where there was so much smoke there must be fire.

d. Cover-Up. The dark side of the issue was particularly unsettling because of the persistent rumors and innuendoes of a Government conspiracy, alleging that U.S. military personnel had been left behind to the victorious communist governments in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and that for "political reasons" or running the risk of a second Vietnam War, their existence was officially denied. Worse yet was the implication that DIA's Special Office for POWs and MIAs was an integral part of this effort to cover the entire affair up so as not to embarrass the Government nor the Defense Establishment.

e. The Crusade. As a Vietnam veteran with a certain amount of experience in Indochina, I was interested in the entire POW-MIA question, and willingly volunteered for the job, viewing it as a sort of holy crusade.

f. The Harsh Reality. Heading up the Office has not been pleasant. My plan was to be totally honest and forthcoming on the entire issue and aggressively pursue innovative actions and concepts to clear up the live sighting business, thereby refurbishing the image and honor of DIA. I became painfully aware, however, that I was not really in charge of my own office, but was merely a figurehead or whipping boy for a larger and totally Machiavellian group of players outside of DIA. What I witnessed during my tenure as the cardboard cut-out "Chief" of POW-MIA could be euphemistically labelled as disillusioning.

3. CURRENT IMPRESSIONS, BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE:

a. Highest National Priority. That National leaders continue to address the prisoner of war and missing in action issue as the "highest national priority" is a travesty. From my vantage point, I observed that the principal government players were interested primarily in conducting a "damage limitation exercise," and appeared to knowingly and deliberately generate an endless succession of manufactured crises and "busy work." Progress consisted in frenetic activity, with little substance and no real results.

b. The Mindset to Debunk. The mindset to "debunk" is alive and well. It is held at all levels, and continues to pervade the POW-MIA Office, which is not necessarily the fault of DIA. Practically all analysis is directed to finding fault with the source. Rarely has there been any effective, active follow through on any of the sightings, nor is there a responsive "action arm" to routinely and aggressively pursue leads. The latter was a moot point, anyway, since the Office was continuously buried in an avalanche of "ad hoc" taskings from every quarter, all of which required an immediate response. It was impossible to plan ahead or prioritize courses of action. Any real effort to pursue live sighting reports or exercise initiative was diminished by the plethora of "busy work" projects directed by higher authority outside of DIA. A number of these grandiose endeavors bordered on the ridiculous, and—quite significantly—there was never an audit trail. None of these taskings was ever requested formally. There was, and still is, a refusal by any of the players to follow normal intelligence channels in dealing with the POW-MIA Office.

c. Duty, Honor, and Integrity. It appears that the entire issue is being manipulated by [unscrupulous] people in the Government, or associated with the Government. Some are using the issue for personal or political advantage and others use it as a forum to perform and feel important, or worse. The sad fact, however, is that this issue is being controlled and a cover-up may be in progress. The entire charade does not appear to be an honest effort, and may never have been.

d. POW-MIA Officers Abandoned. When I assessed the Office for the first time, I was somewhat amazed and greatly disturbed by the fact that I was the only military officer in an organization of more than 40 people. Since combatants of all Services were lost in

Note: Areas originally blacked out by Col. Peck are indicated by brackets.

RESPONSE: NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES

Because of the nature of the allegations made by Colonel Peck in his 12 February 1991 memo against the National League of Families and its director, we asked for their comments. The following is a statement from Sue Scott, chairman of the board of the National League of Families:

"Colonel Peck's resignation and the reasons for it are his to explain. As Chairman of the Board of the National League of Families, what I find surprising is that despite his short 8-month tenure in the job, Col. Peck felt confident in making sweeping accusations against the administration's efforts and those of President Reagan. All of us familiar with the POW/MIA issue recognize that the apathetic non-policy of the 1970s was reversed in 1982, and the priority was continued by President Bush. Those who Col. Peck falsely targets, and their predecessors, were responsible for increasing the assets and personnel in DIA's special POW/MIA office, schizophrenically praised by Col. Peck on the one hand and condemned on the other. We know that the POW/MIA issue is complex, demanding and emotional. Colonel Peck's frustration after only 8 months could have been productively directed toward those who hold the answers, primarily Hanoi. Knowing this reality, the League will continue to focus on Hanoi while advocating and expecting intensified, professional and thorough efforts by all agencies of the U.S. government."

— S.K.K.

demanding that all charges in the memo be answered by close of business that day. Although the memo contained a number of volatile (and substantial) claims, DoD was apparently haunted by two strange facts.

One, the memo was dated more than a month prior to its posting; and two, large portions had been blacked out by Peck. (Col. Peck is thought to have blacked out portions of his memo in order to prevent certain charges from being seen by one of the staff members, a woman closely tied to Ann Mills Griffiths of the National League of Families.) Why had the colonel sat on his resignation for so long, and where was the original, unexpurgated version? Clearly, something was amiss.

An internal inquiry was launched. Meanwhile, the same mechanism which

Vietnam, I would have thought there would at least be a token Service representation for a matter of the "highest National priority." Since the normal mix of officers from all Services is not found in my organization it would appear that the issue, at least at the working level, has, in fact, been abandoned. Also, the horror stories of the succession of military officers at the 0-5 and 0-6 level who have in some manner "rocked the boat" and quickly come to grief at the hands of the Government policy makers who direct the issue, lead one to the conclusion that we are all quite expendable, so by extrapolation one simply concludes that these same bureaucrats would "sacrifice" anyone who was troublesome or contentious—including prisoners of war and missing in action. Not a comforting thought. [Any military officer expected to survive in this environment would have to be myopic, an accomplished sycophant, or totally insouciant.]

e. The DIA Involvement. DIA's role in the affair is truly unfortunate. The overall Agency has generally practiced a "damage limitation drill" on the issue, as well. The POW-MIA Office has been cloistered for all practical purposes and left to its own fortunes. The POW Office is the lowest level in the Government "effort" to resolve the issue, and, oddly for an intelligence organization, has become the "lightening rod" for the entire establishment on the matter. The policy people manipulating the affair have maintained their distance and remained hidden in the shadows, while using the Office as a "toxic waste dump" to bury the whole "mess" out of sight and mind in a facility with limited access to public scrutiny. Whatever happens in the issue, DIA takes the blame, while the real players remain invisible. The fact that the POW-MIA Office is always the center of an investigation is no surprise. Many people suspect that something is rotten about the whole thing, but they cannot find an audit trail to ascribe blame, so they attack the DIA/POW-MIA "dump," simply because it has been placed in the line of fire as a cheap, expendable decoy.

f. "Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi." Many of the puppet masters play a confusing, murky role. [For instance, the Director of the National League of Families occupies an interesting and questionable position in the whole process. Although assiduously "churning" the account to give a tawdry illusion of progress, she is adamantly opposed to any initiative to actually get to the heart of the problem, and, more importantly, interferes in or actively sabotages POW-MIA analyses or investigations. She insists on rewriting or editing all significant documents produced by the Office, inserting her own twist or meaning to what was originally prepared. This is then touted as the DIA position. She apparently has access to top secret, codeword message traffic, for which she is supposedly not cleared, and she receives it well ahead of the DIA intelligence analysts. Her influence in "jerking around" everyone and everything involved in the issue goes far beyond the "war and MIA protester gone straight" scenario. She was brought from the "outside" into the center of the imbroglio, and then, cloaked in a mantle of sanctimony, routinely impedes real progress and insidiously "muddles up" the issue. One wonders who she really is and where she came from ...]

4. CONCLUSIONS:

a. The Stalled Crusade. Unfortunately, what began on such a high note never succeeded in embarking. In some respects, however, I have managed to satisfy some of my curiosity.

b. Everyone is Expendable. I have seen firsthand how ready and willing the policy people are to sacrifice or "abandon" anyone who might be perceived as a political liability. It is quick and facile, and can be easily covered.

c. High-Level Knavery. I feel strongly that this issue is being manipulated and controlled at a higher level, not with the goal of resolving it, but more to obfuscate the question of live prisoners, and give the illusion of progress through hyperactivity.

d. "Smoke and Mirrors." From what I have witnessed, it appears that any soldier left in Vietnam, even inadvertently, was, in fact, abandoned years ago, and that the farce that is being played is no more than political legerdemain done with "smoke and mirrors," to stall the issue until it dies a natural death.

[e. National League of Families. I am convinced that the Director of this organization is much more than meets the eye. As the principal actor in the grand show, she is in the perfect position to clamor for "progress," while really intentionally impeding the effort. And, there are numerous examples of this. Otherwise, it is inconceivable that so many bureaucrats in the "system" would instantaneously do her bidding and humor her every whim.]

f. DIA's Dilemma. Although greatly saddened by the role ascribed to the Defense Intelligence Agency, I feel, at least, that I am dealing with honest men and women who are generally powerless to make the system work. My appeal and attempt to amend this role perhaps never had a chance. We, all, were subject to control. I particularly salute the personnel in the POW-MIA Office for their long suffering, which I regrettably was unable to change. I feel that the Agency and the Office are being used as the "fall guys" or "patsies" to cover the tracks of others.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. One Final Vietnam Casualty. So ends the war and my last grand crusade, like it actually did end, I guess. However, as they say in the Legion, "je ne regrette rien ... " For all of the above, I respectfully request to be relieved of my duties as Chief of the Special Office for Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

b. A Farewell to Arms. So as to avoid the annoyance of being shipped off to some remote corner, out of sight and out of the way, in my own "bamboo cage" of silence somewhere, I further request that the Defense Intelligence Agency, which I have attempted to serve loyally and with honor, assist me in being retired immediately from active military service.

MILLARD A. PECK
Colonel, Infantry
USA

cc

previously served to discredit live-sighting reports appeared to have been set in motion against Peck. Word started leaking out of the Pentagon that Peck had not performed well on the job. He had supposedly thrown in with the "lunatic fringe."

It was suggested that after spending only eight months on the POW/MIA issue, he was in no position to have any knowledge of the complex subject.

Whereas previously he had been hailed for his "blank slate" on POWs (on the grounds that his inexperience meant he had no preconceived axe to grind), he was now being discredited for the same

qualities.

But if the 28 March memo raised a set of serious questions, the original version, obtained by *Soldier of Fortune*, presents a more sinister view of the entire issue. In the portions he later blacked out, Peck

Peck charges that the DIA is manipulated by shadowy "puppet masters."

charges that the DIA is manipulated by shadowy "puppet masters" who intentionally obfuscate the issue. He singled out Anne Mills Griffiths, director of the National League of Families, as

deliberately blocking progress.

"Although assiduously 'churning' the account to give a tawdry illusion of progress," Peck wrote, "she is adamantly opposed to any initiative to actually get to the heart of the problem, and, more importantly, interferes in or actively sabotages POW-MIA analyses or investigations."

Also disturbing is the solution to the memo's 12 February date and its 28 March appearance.

"It was dated 12 February because it was delivered 12 February," says a source close to Peck. "Nailing it up there on the

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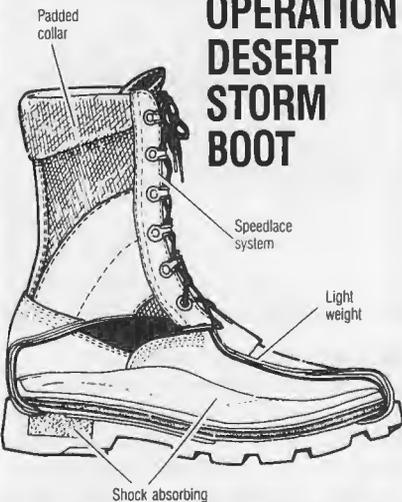
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CHAOTIC CAMBODIA

Continued from page 38

power and armor. Its aim to totally cut the road and further isolate Siem Reap from the west never panned out.

On the other side of the coin, this was followed by the PRK's own unsuccessful attempt to take the KPNLF liberated zone and KPNLF HQ of Boeng Trakuan in early March — unsuccessful despite the employment of a force of 6,500 men (including 2,500 Vietnamese according to the KPNLF), supported by artillery and 15 T-54 tanks.

Militarily, there are a number of areas in Cambodia which will likely become a focus of heavy fighting in 1991. These are as follows:

1. Battambang. This city of 300,000 (the second largest in Cambodia, located 250km northwest of Phnom Penh) has been the target of various operations since early 1990, although most of the fighting reportedly remains in its outlying areas. Highway 5 and the rail line from Phnom Penh could also become even bloodier. The severing of Highway 5, which runs through Battambang, would virtually cut off western Cambodia from the central part of the country.

2. Siem Reap and the Angkor Wat temple complex. Fighting over the dry season could further threaten Siem Reap, the PRK's main hold in northern Cambodia, and Angkor Wat, the symbolic monument of the Khmer people.

3. The Kompong Thom-Kompong Chnang-Kompong Cham triangle. These three provincial towns, northeast of Phnom Penh, have seen increasing activity lately. Resistance control of this area would directly threaten Phnom Penh from the north. From the Kompong Chnang area, the resistance could also cut the westward-running Highway 5.

4. Kompong Speu. With its provincial center located only 45km southwest of Phnom Penh, this area is a potential dagger pointed at the heart of the PRK. It also straddles Highway 4 running from the main port of Kompong Som to the capital.

5. The KPNLF liberated zone in north-west Cambodia. This 2,500 square-kilometer area is expected to see more fighting aimed at pushing the resistance back to the Thai border throughout the dry season, which lasts roughly from January to May.

Given the overall political-military situation in this war, it is not totally impossible that most of western Cambodia could come under resistance control in the near future.

In January, Prince Sihanouk of the ANS charged that the PRK and Vietnam are now preparing for this scenario by planning to pull back to eastern Cambodia which would, in effect, partition the country. ✕

— Tom Peterson

POLAND

Continued from page 96

Central America made the governments allied with the United States look too good, too innocent. They also claimed that

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the image portrayed of the Soviet military made their soldiers look too loyal, too invincible. What did they like most about the magazine? Coverage of the SOF Convention in Las Vegas was the unanimous reply.

Out of curiosity, I asked them about an article I had written on Soviet incursions into Alaska. Though they had not seen the article, they replied that "of course" the Soviets are interested in Alaska. "They have a very good arctic capability — better than the Americans, I believe," Mamczur said.

"American early warning radar is based in Alaska. What better place to train Soviet long-range reconnaissance teams in sabotage on foreign territory? It's a part of Spetsnaz training to successfully infiltrate an enemy's territory. Alaska is so close to Siberia, with a coastline that is impossible to guard. Have Soviet Spetsnaz been in Alaska? It's a silly question you ask."

Good-Bye ... For Now

As I prepared to leave, all three men spoke of how anxious the 6th Brigade is to test its skills against Western forces in friendly competition, particularly against

We're free to make changes now.

U.S. Special Forces. They are proud of their brigade but openly admit that being denied resources and access to Western ways by the Soviets for so many years has prevented them from developing a fighting force worthy of their new national pride.

Sokol and Mamczur offered to host a future SOF Convention in Krakow, or sponsor an SOF jump tour with the brigade. "We know," Mamczur said, "it would be of interest for you Americans, former military people, to come jump with us, earn our brigade jump wings, and train alongside our best troops. In return, we'd like to pick your brains about what you think of our training, our troops. We're free to make changes now. We need some critical review of our forces from the outside, from people who know."

That's an offer too good to refuse. Can you imagine what Poland's former Soviet goon-handlers would think of SOF's annual pugil stick competition being held in Krakow? Of the firepower demo? Of Bo and the girls? Of Master Blaster John Donovan? Who better than Robert K. Brown to show the free Poles how free men play? How 'bout it, Bob?

Tom Bates, a former SOF editor, has traveled widely in the USSR and countries of the former Warsaw Pact — before and after the rusting away of the Iron Curtain. He is now president of Profit magazine, a journal serving the new entrepreneurs of former Warsaw Pact nations. ✕

FULL AUTO

Continued from page 22

weapon. Each time you fire, the timer will simultaneously record and display the shot number, split time between shots and total time. When you complete your string just press the review key to see the time information for each shot. It can also provide you with a stop (par) beep for fixed time runs and dry firing. You can use the "Keyed" beep function to improve your tactical reload times and the "Benchmark" beep function to simulate moving targets.

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"LAP NO" key, erasing it from the computer's memory. When you have completed the string, the PACT MKIII will display a statistical summary of all shots fired. Successively pushing the "RVW" key will provide the following information: high and low velocities and their shot numbers, standard deviation in both fps and the coefficient of variation percentage, mean absolute deviation in fps and its percentage of the average velocity, extreme spread and average velocity. IPSC competitors can also use the PACT MKIII to compute the power factor of their loads. All of this information can also be preserved by means of the infrared printer.

I use the PACT MKIII as a cyclic rate counter, action shooting timer and chronograph. When all of its capabilities are thus utilized, it represents an incredible value. ✕

MILITARIA

Continued from page 101

intriguing firearms were included in the Colombian arms deal. Not the least of interest to collectors is the Winchester Model 61, a nifty little .22 rim fire slide-action rifle. Its feeding system was

close to perfect as the cartridge rim was guided up a T-slot in the bolt face from the time it left the tubular magazine until it was chambered. It was manufactured from 1932 to 1963 and the specimens I observed were all close to collector-grade.

I also looked at some Remington Model 513 T "Matchmaster" and Model 513 S "Sporter" .22 LR bolt-action rifles with six-round detachable box magazines. Long discontinued, this series was first introduced in 1940. There are also a number of Colt Woodsman .22 LR semiauto pistols, about half of which are the Match Target model.

There was a crate of INDUMIL 12 gauge single-barrel, break-open shotguns and even some French Model 1874 Gras rifles. Chambered for the 11x59R Gras cartridge, the Model 1874 was no more than the Chassepot — a bolt-action needle gun — modified to fire a metallic center fire cartridge. The 11mm Gras cartridge, with a 385-grain (no larger than normal for this time frame) lead projectile, had an amazing lifespan, as the last order received by the manufacturer, Gevelot, came from Yemen in 1955.

Several warehouses at the Springfield Sporters site are filled with nothing but militaria and inert ordnance from Colombia. How about an inert mortar for your living room? An 81mm British Stokes-Brandt complete with a full set of accessories, 30mm subcaliber device, base

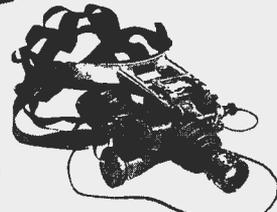
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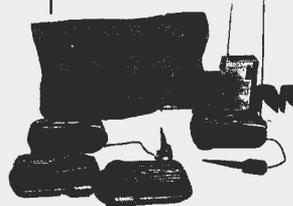


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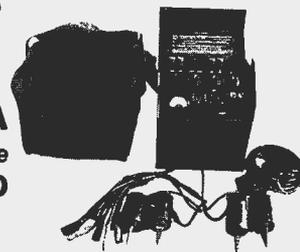
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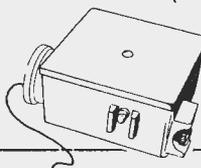


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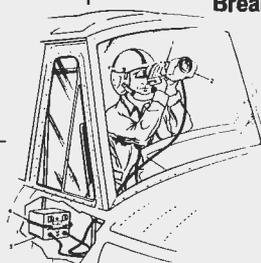
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There are crates upon crates of leather cartridge pouches, oilers, cleaning rods and brushes, combo tools, broken case extractors, M7A3 grenade launchers for the M1 Garand, M1A2 rifle grenade adaptors for the U.S. Mk2, '98 Mauer bayonets of almost every variation, Madsen M53 SMG parts and magazines, FN M52 R-75 and Danish Madsen-Saetter machine gun tripods, gas masks, observation telescopes, USN and bronze-framed International Flare Signal Div., Kilgore Inc. flare pistols, and Thompson SMGs sans the barrel and receiver. The list goes on almost ad infinitum. It would literally takes years to prowl through every packing crate in Springfield Sporters seven warehouse buildings.

Logistics involved in moving a shipment of this size are almost overwhelming. Importers of surplus military equipment must be more efficient and cost effective than the governments with whom they are dealing, as their operating expenses must be added to the price paid for the material itself and will be reflected in the final price charged to the consumer.

At \$280 each the M1 Garands offered by Springfield Sporters are about half what specimens of lesser quality were selling for less than a year ago. That is commentary enough on Bill Rodgers' operation.

GARAND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Those interested in shooting and/or collecting the U.S. Rifle Semiautomatic Caliber .30 M1 require detailed information concerning its operation, production history and maintenance. The following five references provide essential information for serious buffs of this superb battle rifle.

A Collector's Guide to the M1 Garand and the M1 Carbine. By Bruce N. Canfield. 1988. Andrew Mowbray Inc. Dept. SOF, PO Box 460, Lincoln, RI 02865. 154 pages. Illustrated. Hard cover \$35, or soft cover \$20 + \$3.50 p&h each. A basic introduction to the M1 Garand (and .30 M1 Carbine as well) with excellent close-up and historical photos.

The M1 Garand of World War II. By Scott A. Duff. 1987. 77 pages. Illustrated. \$9.95 + \$1.75 p&h. Important information on identification of parts and their evolution and series production with serial numbers.

The M1 Garand: Post World War II. By Scott A. Duff. 1989. 139 pages. Illustrated. \$17.95 + \$3 p&h. Production, deliveries and

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Both of the above, which contain information not found in any other reference, are available from Scott A. Duff, Dept. SOF, PO Box 414, Export, PA 15632.

The Book of The Garand. By Major General Julian S. Hatcher. 1948. 293 pages. Illustrated. Reprinted by the Gun Room Press. Rutgers Book Center, Dept. SOF (catalog \$1), 127 Raritan Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904. \$24.95 + \$1.95 p&h. A classic gun book. Covers the history of early military semiautomatic rifles, development of the Garand and its rivals, functioning, operation, maintenance, match shooting and the M1 Rifle in action during WWII. Unfortunately, most production information was still classified at the time of its writing.

Ordnance Tools, Accessories & Appendages of the M1 Rifle. By Billy Pyle. 1988. 203 pages. Profusely illustrated. G&S Publications, Dept. SOF, PO Box 34005, Houston, TX 77234-4005. \$23.95, including p&h. Photographs of every accessory, munition and piece of equipment ever fielded for the M1 Garand, including bayonets, BFAs, web gear, optics, grenade launchers and rifle grenades, flash hiders, cleaning equipment, gages and training aids such as the bizarre "trigger squeeze convincer." A mind boggling compilation of Garand esoterica. ☒

PANAMA

Continued from page 33

country," their lieutenant explained. "We had been preparing for it for two years. We were prepared to counterattack with 120mm mortars. We plotted Fort Clayton and other gringo military installations. We were going to wage guerrilla warfare without limits against the gringos: terrorism, taking hostages, everything.

"I had received training in guerrilla warfare from the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. We knew we couldn't defeat the United States Army, but we thought if we made it really bloody for the gringos and caused them a lot of pain, public pressure in their own country would force them to pull out."

The lieutenant and his men insisted they would have carried out their plan had it not been for unidentified fifth columnists in the high command who treacherously recalled their key prepositioned armament, including mortars, .50 caliber machine guns and surface-to-air (SAM) missiles.

The scores of police I interviewed were unhappy the United States resorted to remove Noriega by an invasion that humiliated them and killed and wounded so many innocent civilians instead of choosing another, less destructive, method to bring the dictator to justice.

"They should have used the CIA to get him," was a common criticism. But they

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harbored no grudges against Americans as a people. In fact, they spoke very highly of their American law enforcement instructors and the courses they administered.

Typical of sentiments expressed by former PDF members, Public Force Cpl. Roque Maconi told me as he took a rest outside the gate of an American National Guard base that he guarded on the Caribbean coast: "We were fighting for Panama, for patriotic reasons, not so much for Noriega.

"We've Always Been Friends"

"I have nine years of service [first in the PDF and now the Public Force] and nine years working in conjunction with you [Americans]. For I worked together with the American military police and we've always gotten along wonderfully. Even through all that crisis we passed, we've always been friends."

Military Police Capt. Roger Fleer of the Missouri National Guard echoed this sentiment. "Our relationship with the Panamanians has been great," he said after greeting the Panamanian corporal.

If only all Panamanians could be friendly between themselves.

Reshaping the army of a brutal tyrant into a civilian police force sensitive to the rights of both suspects and the community is painful.

"This is a transitional period," Asvat emphasized, referring to the Public Force. "We are going through a very traumatic internal transition. We are also trying to complete a process of demilitarization. We are trying to bring new blood into this institution. This is a project. You cannot say if it is successful or not in two or three months. This is going to take five years."

Panama will probably have to rely on former Noriega soldiers for its public security much longer than that, given the slow, methodical pace of training fresh recruits. In the beginning quarter of this year, police point out, the first class of new blood — 228 cadets — graduated from a 16-week basic course at the new Police Academy, established last September at Gamboa in the canal area with support from the U.S. Justice Department.

Last year, a cadre of 48 second lieutenants were commissioned after graduating from an eight-week Basic Police Officer Training Course at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, according to the U.S. Justice Department.

Training future law enforcement personnel is very important. But if today's police don't receive the respect they desperately are struggling to earn, it may be a long time before Panama can bring its crime problem under control.

Note: Wire service dispatches have reported the Panamanian police chief was replaced in April following a break-up of the government coalition. While these reports didn't identify the police chief by

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name, it's logical to believe it was Director Asvat.

Steve Salisbury is SOF's Senior Foreign Correspondent. He lives in Guatemala and has filed numerous stories from Central and South America for SOF. ✕

LOGISTICS

Continued from page 79

wash them and put them away for the next fire. That's what must be done in the coming months in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

How long will it take to pack up and head home? General Tuttle thought it would take six months for the Army to "regain its readiness." General Pagonis said the heavy combat power should be out of Saudi Arabia in a few months. Removing stores of ammunition may take longer.

Pagonis hopes his team of logisticians can be home by Christmas. ✕

SPEC OPS

Continued from page 59

One other team ran into difficulty when it was discovered by a little girl. Although they knew their secrecy was blown, they held fire — how can you shoot a child? A little later, the child came back with two men and pointed out the team's location. Once more the team held fire.

A half hour later, a bus load of Iraqi troops showed up, and a brisk firefight developed. Fortunately, there were a lot of A-10 Warthogs and some Blackhawks on call, and these provided covering fire while the team was extracted. This was definitely a hot extraction — later, a Blackhawk pilot found where three 7.62 x 39mm rounds had impacted on his seat armor.

At least two other teams were discovered in the course of the first day and had to be extracted. Despite all this, Special Forces accomplished their mission, which was to determine how the Iraqi forces were reacting to the attack, and if they were moving.

There were some key SpecOps lessons in the course of Desert Storm. One of them was that SpecOps isn't a mature component of the force. Although on a par with the other theater components — Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines — the SOCCENT commander was only a colonel. That makes things a little difficult, since the other service component commanders were all three-buttons.

Another lesson was that logistics planning can be a real problem if not adequately prepared in advance. Some

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SOCCENT staffers apparently expected support to appear by magic, and had problems with the detailed procedures necessary to get support where it was needed, when it was needed.

Finally, there was no clear anticipation of how critically important liaison officers and communications were going to be. The magnitude and importance of the FID missions with the Pan-Arab forces were completely underestimated. To the very end of the war, there was a constant scramble to keep up with the support requirements of teams in the field.

Final Analysis: Not Enough To Go Around

In the end, though, maybe the biggest problem was summed up by one Special Forces veteran, as he told of encountering a Marine unit that had walked up from Saudi Arabia, breached the Iraqi defenses by hand, then walked all the way to Kuwait City.

They still had their basic load of ammunition, although they were down to one meal a day, having given most of their rations to surrendering Iraqis. "They were pissed about the whole thing," he said, then paused for a moment, thinking. "The problem was, there just wasn't enough war to go around."

Munremur MacGerrcinn, a military analyst and former infantry officer, is a frequent contributor to SOF.

YELLOW PRESS

Continued from page 83

particularly harmed the B-2 Stealth bomber. A new study, "The B-2 and Network News," by Stephen Aubin of Boston University's Center for Defense Journalism, published by the Aerospace Education Foundation, accuses the TV networks of distorting news about the aircraft and misleading the public about the stakes involved in the decision to fund it.

Aubin documents the familiar pattern of emphasizing images of high cost, failed or delayed test flights, defective parts and corrupt or incompetent defense contractors. When the aircraft had a successful test on 26 August 1989, only the "CBS Evening News" covered it, and with a brief report.

Aubin writes, "In the case of the B-2, any American who had the misfortune of getting all of his news from the networks would have no idea about how cost relates to its mission, the technological advances made, the links to arms control, or even some of the controversies surrounding its technical capabilities, like range and aerodynamics."

Bob Andrews, who fought in the battles for high-tech weapons over the years, has

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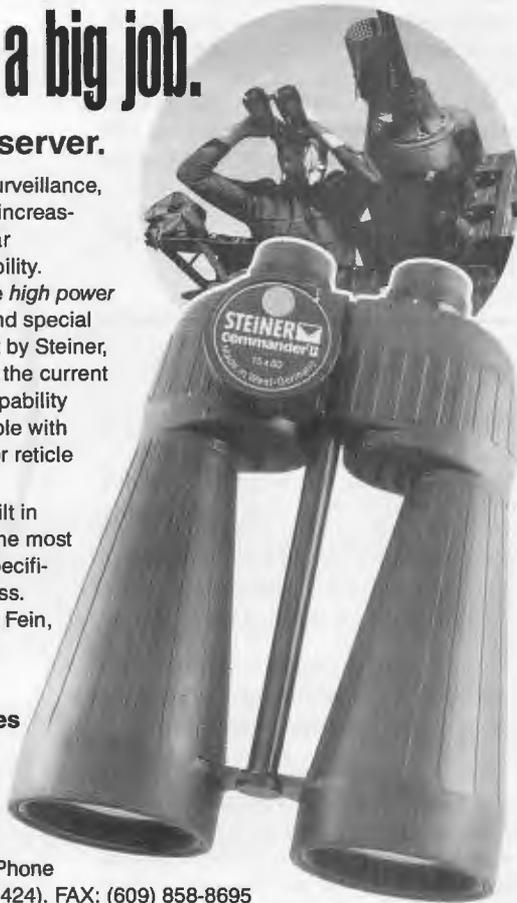
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said, "The people who write about weapons systems should be as accountable as the people who build and use them." On that basis, our troops, the Pentagon and the defense contractors who supplied them should be hailed with flying colors. But many reporters deserve a dishonorable discharge.

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PECK

Continued from page 105

door was the only way to get any attention on the actual charges. There had already been several attempts to bring these issues to the attention of the DIA, and to get some action on them, but to absolutely no avail. It was as if the topic had never even been mentioned."

Was there a deliberate effort to sweep these charges under the rug, or to write them off as the ranting of an overworked zealot?

According to the source, it was already well known that the POW/MIA shop was a source of great frustration to previous occupants of the top slot. When Peck took over the job, he was serious about fulfilling the mandate to gather intelligence data on live-sightings of American POWs.

Realizing that many compelling cases exist from previous U.S. wars, Peck took his mandate to extend beyond the Vietnam War.

The Best Laid Plans

"My plan was to study Korea and World War II, and put together a group to travel where they had to," said Peck. "I wanted to put all that information together and start tracking it down. The leaders of the DIA, to their credit, signed off on it immediately."

Late last year, six new slots were created within the DIA for the purpose of examining those areas. (The six slots were subsequently scrapped as it was felt that there were too many problems involved with doing historical analyses from long ago, and that efforts would be better directed toward investigating new information on the Vietnam cases.)

Despite the outward sign of movement, however, Peck felt that impeding undercurrents were at play. Whenever he was about to make progress in one area, he would be given an emergency make-work task in another. He came to conclude that any support for his leadership was at best superficial. Indeed, the DIA later canceled plans to research POWs from World War II and Korea.

Early this year, Peck requested a meeting with Soyster. Peck presented a slide show and charts, in which he outlined



a number of complaints and recommendations. According to the source, there was no substantive response.

Peck then declared himself in writing, in the memo dated 12 February. According to the source close to Peck, the colonel approached both Soyster and another DIA official as they came out of a meeting, handing each a sealed copy of the complete memo. Peck loitered in the hallway outside Soyster's office, expecting the DIA chief to burst out momentarily in response to the memo. After a time, Peck decided Soyster was not coming out. Peck left the building.

Several days passed before Soyster got in touch with Peck. As the source tells it, Soyster did not discuss the matters contained in the memo, but rather talked about finding a new billet for Peck.

Hear No Evil ...

Peck continued to work as head of the POW/MIA office, expecting to be debriefed on the charges he had made. He was not made party to any inquiry, nor did anyone contact him regarding any of the statements made. The censored version of the memo (along with a note thanking and praising his staff) was posted on 28 March because it was the anniversary of the date he joined the military many years earlier.

"It was a symbolic gesture," the source said.

If the gesture was lost on all but Peck and a few close associates, the dramatic tone of the memo is such that it creates a sense of alarm in even the most casual reader. But underneath the unproven allegations and blood-stirring rhetoric

remains a compelling question: Do any live Americans remain against their will in Vietnam?

"There has never been an honest effort to find out," said the source. "But even if there are none alive, the issue is: Were there men left behind after the Vietnam War ended?"

The United States is unlikely to obtain an answer to that question as long as it continues its current manner of dealing with the Vietnamese, he continued.

"Vietnam never saw an end to the war," the source said. "They wanted to gain trade and recognition, and assume their rightful place in the community of nations. They are trying for normalization of relations with the U.S., and there are people here who have a road map for that process.

"We tell them that in order to achieve that goal, they have to account for our missing men. But we just want bodies or bones. As long as they produce bones, we won't bother them. In the DIA, we think they're holding back skeletons of hundreds of men, which they hope to sell back to us."

In the rush to repatriate remains, he says, no one is interested in pursuing leads on live-sightings.

This is not to say that Mike Peck and his colleagues are the only ones interested in live-sightings. Retired General George Vessey, the president's special envoy on POW/MIA matters, developed a plan for identifying possible live prisoners.

Vessey had gathered approximately 120 cases of Americans last known to be alive and well in Vietnam. His theory was that if

the United States could figure out what happened to those men, then it would shrink the pool of possible live captives.

Vicious Games

"It was a good approach, but it hasn't worked," said the source. "The reason is, the Vietnamese have been duplicitous and reticent to deal with this. They were supposedly going to establish an office in Hanoi where we could go through their archives and work on this, but they're not cooperating. They hate our guts and they lie to us.

"Their goal goes beyond just the military victory, but for an economic one, as well. If they are able to attain normalization, they will have won again, just by waiting."

An example of Vietnamese nose-thumbing surfaced last November, he said, when Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach was visiting the United States. In a meeting with Gen. Vessey, Thach handed over two photos of a black American he identified as Walter T. Robinson. He also gave a serial number, which matched that of a Walter T. Robinson who had served in the war. Thach claimed the man had been living in Vietnam, and was now ready to come home. There was no indication whether he was a prisoner of war or a deserter, simply that he was there.

There was only one snag. The Robinson who served in Vietnam was white, was never taken prisoner, and is currently living in the American Midwest. In addition, Walter T. Robinson's name had surfaced many times previously in connection with live-sighting cases, and it was always a scam of some sort.

Peck and his analysts immediately concluded this was yet another in a long line of hoaxes. They recommended no action be taken. Nevertheless, officials in the DoD insisted the story be given high priority. A government team consisting of a physician, a lawyer, a psychiatrist and assorted others traveled to Hanoi — only to discover there was no American.

And the Vietnamese explanation? Once the U.S. team arrived in Hanoi, the Vietnamese immediately began backpedalling. They said they had never stated unequivocally that an American was ready to come out. They said they were merely passing on information they had received.

It later emerged that another Walter T. Robinson had been a crew member of the *Glomar Java Sear*, a merchant ship that went down off the coast of Vietnam in 1983. He was also white, and disappeared when the ship sank. Despite the racial difference, the crewman's sister was shown photos of Thach's Walter T. Robinson and, predictably, said it was not her brother. The government team returned, empty-handed and confused.

Within Peck's office, there was wide-

Continued on page 123

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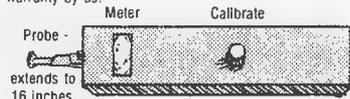
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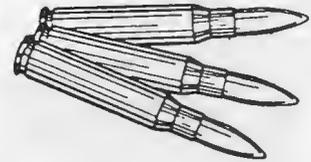
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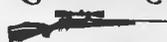
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spread feeling that the entire fiasco would have been avoided if the DoD had simply listened to the experts at the DIA.

Tax Dollars At Work

“They completely ignored their own intelligence,” the source said. “We absolutely told them not to bite, but they went ahead and did it. Then they knocked themselves out trying to guess what the Vietnamese were really up to.

The answer is, they were up to jerking us around. Some Vietnamese intel clerk was probably going through his files, saw there were two Walter T. Robinsons, and decided to have some fun with us. They did it just to jerk us around. They did a very good job.”

It is not known whether any safeguards against future hoodwinking have been put in place at the Pentagon — and, conversely, if any credence has been given to Peck’s charges that legitimate reports are not properly analyzed.

Colonel Peck, in the meantime, is still in the Army, working a desk job until his retirement comes through. He is not sure of his future plans. The POW-MIA office, however, has a new director. He is Robert Scheetz, a career government employee with no prior experience with the issue.

Susan Katz Keating is a Washington-

based journalist who specializes in military and intelligence issues. She has covered POWs for the last 6 years. She is a U.S. Army veteran.

RIPPER

Continued from page 91

Kuwaiti flags in celebration of their liberation. A Marine from Company C was struck by a stray round in the upper arm and slightly injured.

As the war ended, 1/7 found itself in the strange position of protecting Iraqi EPWs from Kuwaiti Resistance forces, who obviously wanted to kill them for atrocities committed in Kuwait City. Some Iraqis, however, did not want any protection. As Alpha Co. A was conducting a sweep, it came across four wounded Iraqi soldiers. While Cpl. Kerry Lee, a machine-gun section leader from Cottonwood, Arizona, was searching one of them, the Iraqi lunged at Lee and was instantly killed by a Marine covering his section leader.

Devil Dogs Devastate Iraqis In Desert

Overall, the “Devil Dogs” of 1/7

destroyed 19 T-54/55s, 18 T-62s, two T-72s, two 82mm mortar positions, 19 APCs, one radar dish, one T-12 (100mm antitank gun), one tower, six artillery pieces, and took more than 2,000 EPWs.

Then Task Force Ripper began moving south toward Saudi Arabia — its mission had been accomplished.

Before pinning on his first star and heading across country from Twentynine Palms to headquarters, USMC, Task Force commander Col. Carl Fulford discussed the three basic mistakes he felt Saddam Hussein made when he invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990:

“The first mistake he made was not attacking south into Saudi Arabia and seizing the ports of Jubail and Ad Dammam. Although that would have extended his lines considerably, it would have taken away our primary ports of debarkation for supplies.

“Secondly, he had no concept of how to fight a modern force with air support, and although he had some air of his own and some air defense weapons, he certainly didn’t have the ability to coordinate it, and it became clear very early that he was no match for our air assets.

Thirdly, I don’t think he convinced his own people of what they were fighting for and why it was worth dying for. Ultimately, I think that’s why the Iraqi soldier was not willing to fight.”

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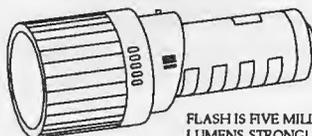
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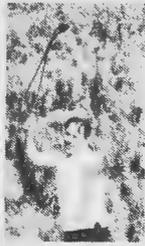
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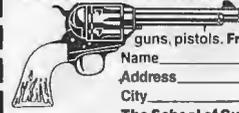
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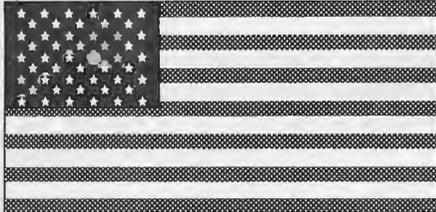
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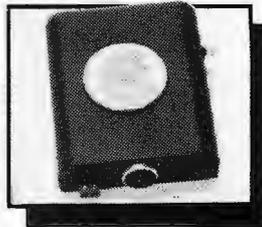
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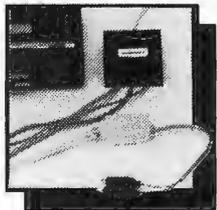
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