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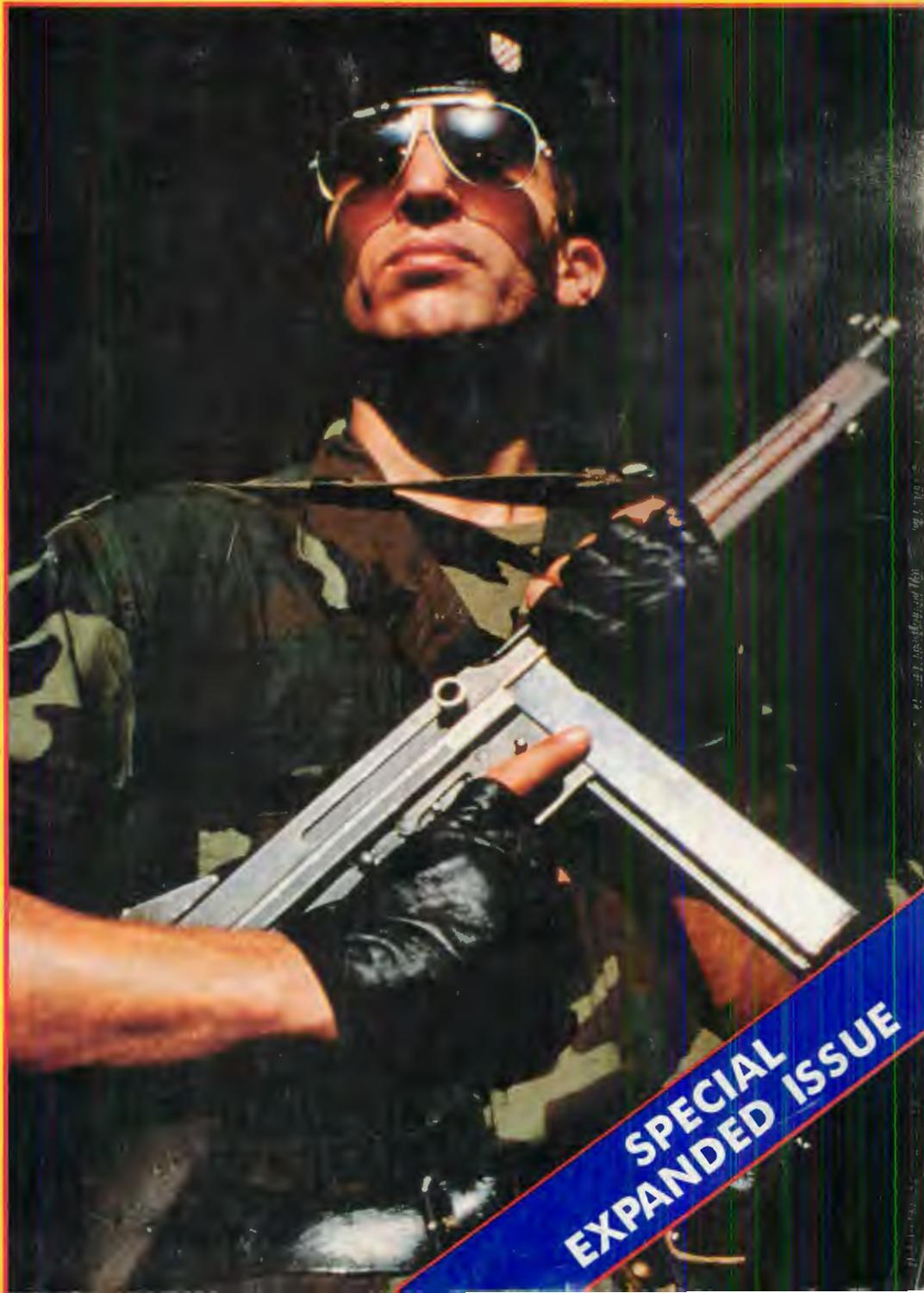
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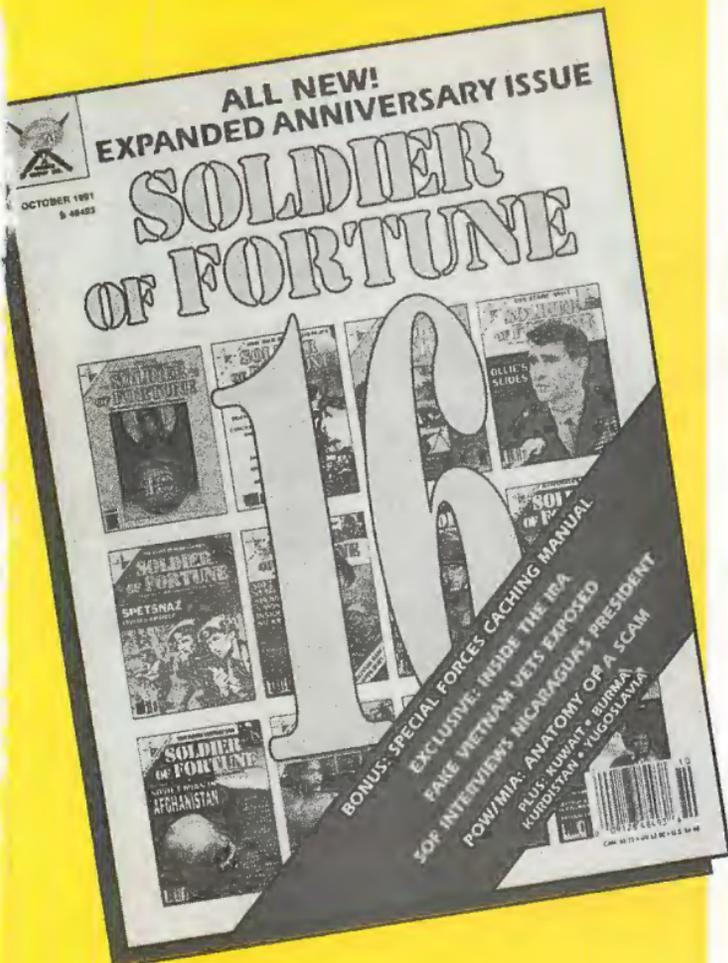
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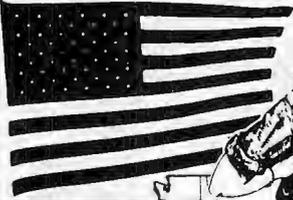
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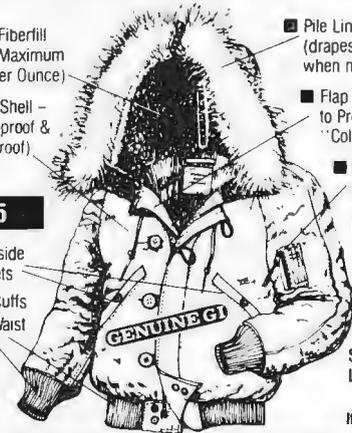
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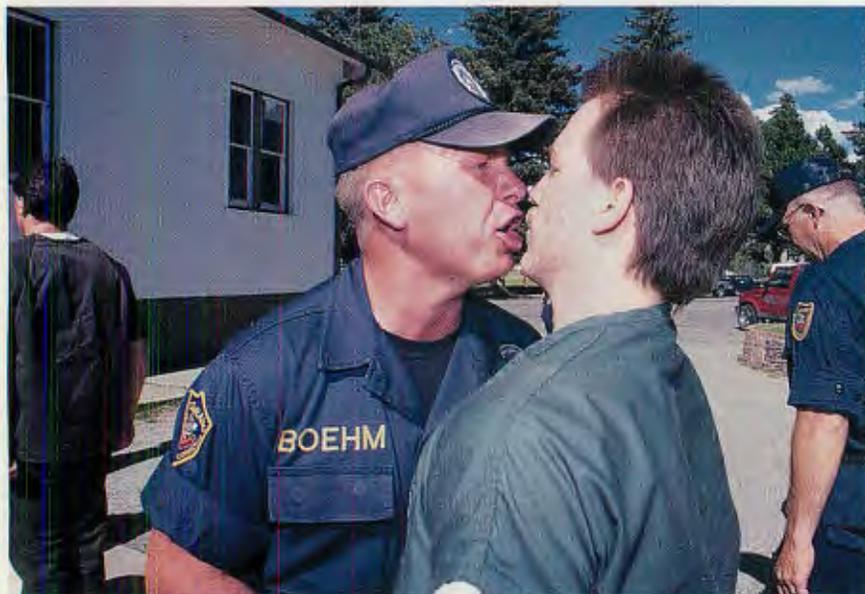
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**COVER**

COVER: SOF correspondents on assignment in Yugoslavia found Croats from all over the world have returned to their homeland to join in the battle for independence. Croatian partisans like this one (armed with World War II-era Thompson submachine gun), profess themselves willing and eager to defend their country to the death. Our battlefield report starts on page 34. Photo: Sygma/Gyori

# BULLETIN BOARD

## BIG BUCKS ...

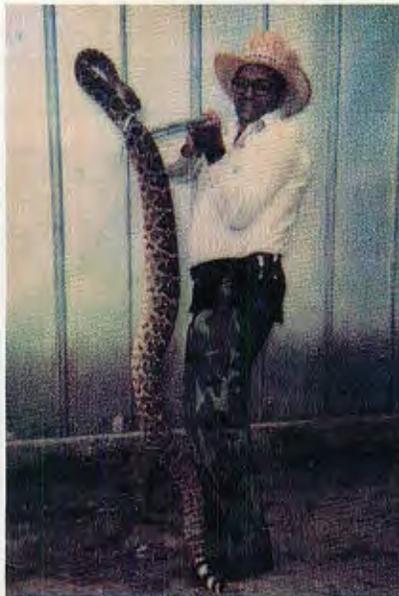
Buck Knives of El Cajon, California, has sold nearly \$1 million worth — some 14,050 units — of their controversial M9 multipurpose bayonet systems to the Royal Australian Army. The firm is currently producing 315,600 M9s for the U.S. Army and is bidding for production of another 30,000. Negotiations are underway with Turkey, Greece, Kuwait and until the U.N. embargo, Yugoslavia. Buck officials project some 12% of sales in 1991 will have been for export.

## HOTTER THAN A \$1.5 MILLION PISTOL ...

The U.S. Naval Weapons Support Center at Crane, Ind., the procurement agency for USSOCOM (U.S. Special Operations Command), has awarded competitive contracts to Colt and Heckler & Koch for development of prototype .45 pistols, as the first phase of a three-part program to procure a new pistol for American SOF personnel.

Colt and H&K are to each deliver 30 prototype pistols by 1 August 1992 for evaluation. Colt's initial contract was in the amount of \$1.5 million; H&K's for \$1.3 million. In the balance of the competition hangs a contract to produce approximately 8,000 pistols for DoD procurement.

Unsatisfactory mean-rounds-between-failure performance in harsh environs by the Beretta M92F (M9) 9mm pistol led to the establishment last year of a joint-service operational requirement on a handgun for troops, such as SOF personnel, who might actually be tasked to kill someone with their pistol. The 9mm M9 is deemed adequate for personal defense, but a more reliable



**WHO'S WHOSE LUNCH?** Friend of SOF and one of Texas' leading crazy persons, Earl Gregston, poses with 76-plus-inch western diamondback captured by Noel Gregston near Robert Lee, Texas. A split second after the photo was taken, this *crotalus atrox*, aka *snakus humongous*, took a swipe at Earl down the 4-foot catch-stick. He missed Earl's hand by a whisker, but earned a place of honor on a felt plaque. Photo: courtesy Earl Gregston

design and more lethal caliber were desired in a serious weapon. The prototype pistols being produced by Colt and H&K are also to incorporate laser sights and a sound suppressor.

## TOMAWHOOPS ...

After registering X-ring performance on targets all over Iraq during the Gulf War, an unarmed Tomahawk cruise missile fired from the cruiser *USS San Jacinto* in the Gulf of Mexico came down 13km east of Jackson, Ala. — some 160km off target.

## AND OUR OWN OOPS ...

In last month's article on Jeff Cooper's GSP pistol, we got some points almost right: Chairman Jeff is a retired Lieutenant Colonel *USMCR*, not *USAR*; the fellow assisting gunsmith Kit Carson in converting M1911A1 pistols to GSPs is John Mahan; and Jeff's opinion of the collet-type bushing is that it merely lowers the cost of production — it does *not* enhance accuracy.

## GULF TOLLS ...

Department of Defense sources indicate nearly one-fourth of the 148 U.S. military personnel killed in action during the Gulf War were victims of "friendly" fire. Investigations have confirmed 28 incidents in which our forces fired on each other, killing 35 and wounding 72 (total American war casualties included 467 wounded). In addition, 27 of the 35 U.S. armored fighting vehicles badly damaged were hit by U.S. fire, as evidenced by residue from the depleted-uranium AP rounds fired from our M1A1 tanks.

Sixteen intramural ground engagements resulted in 24 American servicemen being killed, with 57 wounded. Army spokesmen said many of these engagements occurred by night at long ranges or during conditions of bad visibility when thermal-imaging sights were being used. In the worst incident, U.S. AFVs were moving through Iraqi lines at night when five M1A1 MBTs and five Bradley IFVs were fired upon by M1A1s — killing six and wounding 25.

Eleven men were killed and 15 wounded in air-to-ground engagements. The worst incident occurred when a USAF A-10 fired a Maverick missile that subsequently "malfunc-



Naval Air Station Key West was the site of retirement ceremonies for the venerable A-3 Skywarrior — aka "Whale" — on 27 September. First delivered to the Navy in 1956, the A-3 was designed as a nuclear bomber — and as such was the heaviest carrier-based jet to operate over the longest period from Navy flat-tops. The (just barely) supersonic A-3 was fully aerobatic and served in various configurations as a heavy-attack bomber, tanker and electronic-warfare platform; also in intelligence, SpecOps and research missions. Photo: U.S. Navy



TIME TO "TAKE OUT" THE TRASH...



# BULLETIN BOARD

tioned in flight" and targeted a USMC LAV-25, killing seven and wounding two.

Nor did our allies escape our deadly "friendly" fire. In four friendly-fire incidents, nine U.K. combatants were killed and 16 injured. In the worst, nine troops were killed when their two Warrior IFVs were mistakenly targeted by USAF A-10s, and in another incident two Scorpion recon vehicles were fired on by U.S. M1A1 tanks. The remaining incidents were Challenger 1 tanks firing at U.K. IFVs with thermal-imaging sights at long range or in bad visibility.

During the planning stages of Operation Desert Storm, concerns were that Coalition armor made in the USSR, such as Syrian tanks, would be especially vulnerable to friendly fire, but no such incidents have been reported.

Test Systems Inc. was awarded a \$3.2 million contract to supply 100,010 anti-fratricide identification devices (AFID) last February, but by the close of hostilities only 196 systems had been delivered. AFID mounts an infra-red beacon on AVFs to provide identification for friendly aircraft, but inverted "V" signs and fluorescent panels were the only devices widely available in the Gulf War.

The Army Training and Doctrinal Command is coordinating efforts to



SOF was stunned to learn that knife expert and SOF contributor Ernie Franco, whose expertise with edged weapons has made him a regular at past conventions, is in the hospital recovering from surgery on a malignant brain tumor. As we go to press, Ernie remains in critical condition in intensive care. Good folks help each other, and the Franco family is in need of financial assistance: Please donate what you can to: The Franco Family, #3 Gossett St., Williamston, SC 29697.

improve technology, doctrine and training to preclude future "friendly" fire incidents.

## HAWKS UP, IRAQIS DOWN ...

Captain Steve Mathews, American-Kuwaiti liaison officer, reports U.S. Hawk anti-aircraft missiles in the hands of Kuwaiti air defense units downed at least 22 Iraqi aircraft and one helicopter during the 2 August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Despite manpower shortages and equipment in a marginal state of readiness due to the desert environment, three Hawk batteries worked in concert to destroy a significant segment of the attacking Iraqi aircraft. Two Hawk batteries south of Kuwait City downed nine aircraft before they were ordered to evacuate, which forced Iraqi planes to fly closer to Fialka Island, where another battalion zapped 13 more aircraft and one chopper.

## PERRY IN PERIL...

The DCM program — including the national matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, hundreds of junior shooting programs along with thousands of civilian marksmen and instructors who would be called upon in time of national emergency — is in serious jeopardy. Facing the axe in the name of "economy," the DCM program has been one of the most cost-effective factors in national defense for many decades: Call your senator and tell them the DCM and the shooting programs it supports are too important to discard. Urge them to continue DCM funding and repeal the restrictive amendments signed into law last year. Do it today. Your senator may be reached at (202) 224-4121.

## CASTING THE KURDS AWAY ...

While multi-national forces along the Iraqi border sit on their tuffets, Saddam's troops are blowing Kurds away in the worst fighting of many months. As we go to press there are hundreds of dead and wounded, and Kurdish refugees flee at more than 1,000 per an hour from battlefields around Suleimaniya. Saddam consolidated power, then reneged on autonomy for the Kurds — no surprise. The U.S.-led multinational force in place to protect the Kurds is doing nothing — we wish we could be surprised. ☒







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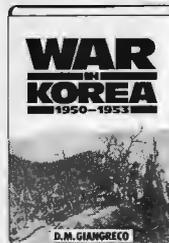
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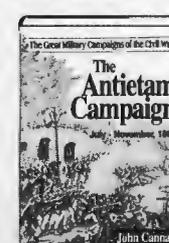
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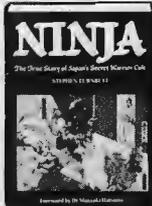
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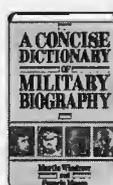
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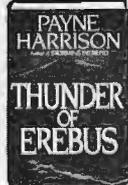
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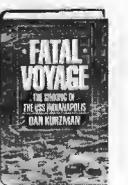
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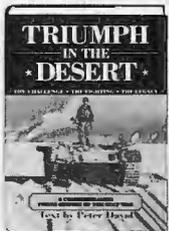
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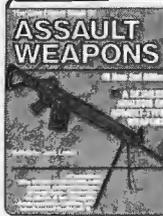
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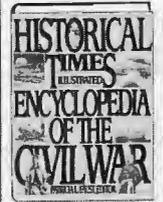
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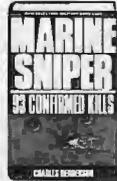
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## DISARMED AND INNOCUOUS? ...

I am disgusted by the gratuitous and fawning drivel you published in your September '91 story, "Armed and Deadly."

The DEA's current force-down program has terrorized and injured innocent families and destroyed family aircraft without compensation, and its "drug war" has eroded the Second, Fourth and Fifth Amendments to our Constitution.

Prohibition didn't work in the 1920s and it won't work in the 1990s. Drug prohibition, gun prohibition, on and on — I am not willing to pay the price with my liberties. The DEA has done more to undermine the values of this country than all drug dealers combined.

Judging by the broad abuse and expansion of police powers, government increasingly micromanaging the lives of law-abiding citizens, confiscatory taxation and the efforts to disarm law-abiding citizens, we have more to fear from our government than from criminals.

Edgar A. Suter, MD  
San Ramon, California

## COMBAT CROSSBOW CONCERNS ...

I have been a faithful reader of your magazine since 1976. I was a soldier once, and can see through the bullshit often published in other magazines. It is the distinct lack of bullshit in SOF that appeals to me.

I am now the director of engineering at a firm which manufactures compound archery bows. It is my personal knowledge of compound bows and archery bows combined with my military experience which prompted me to write this letter.

On page 26 of your October '91 issue, an article titled "Silent Sentry Snuffer" (Combat Craft) appears. I have a few comments about this piece. First, there is no argument that Preci-



sion Shooting Equipment manufactures a fine product. However, the assertion that a crossbow should be considered for use in combat is false and dangerous.

Any one of a number of suppressed firearms would be better. Any bow which shoots at 266 feet per second would be too loud for the job. Also, an arrow kills by causing blood loss, so a kill would not be instant. Even if you were able to shoot a bad guy quietly, there's no guarantee he's going to die quietly. In this scenario, head shots would be required.

Give me a good sound suppressor and some subsonic ammunition for my primary weapon, and I'll leave the medieval stuff in the archery shop. I'm sure the professionals won't take that article seriously; I hope no one else does either.

Kevin R. Mussack  
Seneca Castle, New York

*Mr. Mussack makes some good points, but I wonder if he read past the title — admittedly a poor choice; a PSE crossbow isn't "silent" any more than a suppressed M16 is — and photo caption. Quoting from the article: "It isn't*

*an absolutely silent weapon. Immediately after release, you will hear the distinctive sound of the cable and arrow whipping forward, and there is a loud 'thunk' as the arrow strikes." Also, "Sentry removal ... means a first-shot kill, preferably through a central nervous system hit." This means brain or spinal cord and is true regardless of weapon. Hit someone at the base of his skull with a double-bladed broadhead driven by a 150-pound bow at close range and I doubt he'll*

*live long.*

*Sure, a suppressed firearm is better — if you have one. The point, as stated up front in the article, is that few units outside of rarified SpecOps teams have access to low noise-signature weapons, yet they may need them. Archers were successfully employed in WWII, hardly a "medieval" situation, and bow technology has since advanced tremendously. It seems reasonable that modern compound bows and crossbows, in the hands of a skilled user, may have a limited combat role. But don't throw away your suppressor. — C.F.*

## PAWNS ON THE PERIMETER ...

The hullabaloo over the United States' victory in the Gulf War is just that: hullabaloo. The fact of the matter is that the Iraqi government is still very much in place and still possesses frightening military capability.

It is heinous that your government has simply abandoned the Kurds and Shi'ites. *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* has often, and quite rightly, criticized the way in which communist regimes treat their "useful pawns." The U.S. government has shown itself no better, having encouraged the Kurds and Shi'ites to rebel against Hussein, then dropping them once American objectives were met.

J. Smith, P.J. Smith  
Clubview, South Africa

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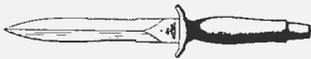
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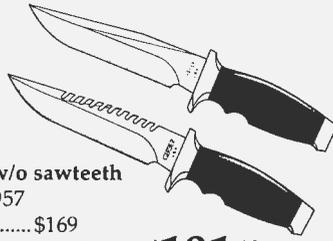
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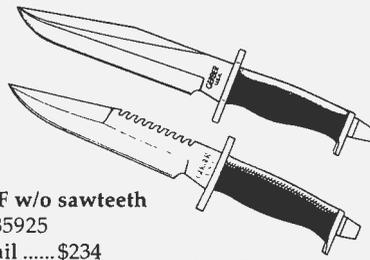
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You'll find little argument here; SOF has, in recent stories from the Middle East, been critical of the way in which the Kurds and Shi'ites were abandoned by our government. However, making moral comparisons between what the U.S. didn't do for these groups with atrocities committed by communist regimes against their "useful pawns" probably would be stretching things a bit.

## WAKE UP AND DIE ...

I would like to compliment both SOF and the reporting of Robert MacKenzie on the problems here in South Africa (see "Tribes," April '91 and "Armor Afrikaans," June '91).

I have had first-hand experience with the ridiculous violence in this country, and I find it absolutely ironic that the blacks here are finally waking up to the fact that the African National Congress (ANC) is an organization that is destroying the blacks, the country, and anything else it can get its hands on.

Blacks who work for me have totally changed their opinion of the ANC in the span of three months. They cannot even sleep at night because of AK gunfire. Members of the ANC set up ambushes, then run like hell when the South African police or army shows up.



And when Zulu warriors scream their war cry, "Usuthu! Usuthu!" ANC members get off maybe two shots from a dark house, then run away leaving their weapons behind.

Stuart Ceronie  
Alberton, South Africa

## SANITY VS. MUTINY ...

The letter from Corporal Patson, "Real Deal on Steel," October '91, does not go down well. While I would disagree with the reported ban on combat knives, I think the corporal has a lot to learn. Since when do men from entire divisions tell their CO to "shove his stupid regulation"? If true, the U.S. Army is in a sad condition. I believe the correct term for that type of action is mutiny. I'm surprised you guys didn't jump on this kid.

J.L. Echols  
Satellite Beach,  
Florida

## FEAR OF H.U.T.A. EPIDEMICS ...

Regarding your story "Does the U.S. Army Have a Fear of Firearms?" (November '91), I would like to relate an experience I had while providing air defense for Task Force Citadel (the 101st Airborne's ground attack into Iraq).

Moving into Iraq, there were MP vehicles, each with an M60 mounted on top, riding on our flanks for security. I sat on top of my "Hummer" just prior to the invasion and watched a senior NCO tell an MP to "get his fucking rounds out of the feed tray." The MP was told that he could not load his weapon until contact was made with the enemy. The MP's surprise was evident.

I prayed that the air assault which had taken off a few hours earlier had already neutralized the Iraqis, as we definitely had a head-up-the-ass epidemic on the ground.

This was only one of many situations I witnessed which bear out what Colonel Brown had to say in his story.  
David Akin  
2nd BN, 44th ADA  
Fort Campbell, Kentucky

## DISTORTED VISION? ...

I was disappointed by President Chamorro's comments in "Violeta's Vision" (October '91). She told Steve Salisbury that she would like to buy all the firearms in Nicaragua and bury them. She also supports a licensing system for carrying firearms.

Chamorro has forgotten that armed contras forced the Sandinistas to hold elections that brought her to the presidency. Furthermore, armed contras are a deterrence to Sandinista coup plots.

Nicaragua needs a fair election process, a fair judiciary and a competent government without corruption. An armed Nicaraguan citizenry will help to see that those needs are fulfilled.

Sasha C. Jankovic  
Louisville, Kentucky

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# I WAS THERE

by Robert Seborg



French legionnaires, Moroccan police and American MPs (including author), guard "White City," arguably the largest whorehouse in North Africa. Anyone remember the MOS for pimp?

It was 7 March 1951 when I got word that my Air Force Reserve outfit, based at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Neb., was being called-up for active duty in the Korean War. At the time, I was single and an Omaha police officer, so the call-up didn't screw things up too badly for me.

As usual, things didn't work out the way I figured they would. Instead of being sent to Korea, I ended up in French Morocco, assigned to the 3906 Air Police Squadron at Sidi Slimane Air Force Base. This was one of several new secret bases the Air Force was building — one in a series of secret new air bases everyone knew about.

As about 300 of us pulled into the new base, we discovered it consisted of some 60 tents and one old C-47 cargo plane. We were stuck out in the desert about 7 miles west of the burg called Sidi Slimane. Viewing these Spartan conditions naturally shocked us spoiled Air Force boys; we thought army troops might live this way, but not the Air Force.

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This was to be our home for the next year. Almost to the man the question was, "Where are the women and booze?" It only took one trip to town to discover the answer to that question — there weren't any.

Since base security was our responsibility, we proceeded to guard the lone "Goony Bird" on the airstrip and some unfinished POL (petroleum, oil, lubricants) tanks. Base patrol consisted of driving around in circles, and the main gate was a shed looking like a two-hole outhouse with no door.

It soon became apparent that the best job was town patrol, and only a few fortunate men received this assignment. Being a police officer apparently weighed in the decision of my being selected for this "plum job." My partners and I pulled highway patrol, covering three small towns and one larger city. Our assignment was to make sure none of our boys got into trouble and that they stayed out of the towns.

Generally military policemen (MPs)

who work around prostitutes are expected to keep things strictly on a professional basis. But experience seemed to verify that the old theory of "bees around honey" held true with whores and MPs. It seemed these fallen doves were always looking for an MP to have a big love relationship with.

At one point, I was assigned town patrol in Meknes, an attractive city located about 50 miles southeast from our Sidi Slimane air base in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. Our mission was town patrol in Meknes proper with foot patrol of a womens' prison called "White City." Its inmates had been convicted of various types of crimes and given fines which most of them could not pay, so they went to prison.

The only way out of White City was to earn enough to pay off the fines. They did this by screwing their way out; so in fact the prison was nothing but a government sponsored and owned whorehouse.

There were hundreds of women in

White City, which was about two to three blocks square, surrounded by a high white wall with glass embedded on top so as to void any means of escape. Inside the walls there were a series of apartment-type buildings housing inmates, all about three stories high. Their ground level consisted of a bar and dance floor while the second and third stories held small rooms where prisoners lived and entertained.

As a customer walked through the prison gate, he would be immediately surrounded by a number of inmates, all willing to fight for his business. Manning the only entrance were five French legionnaires, several Arab and French policemen and two red-blooded American air policemen (that's us). Our task: "Keep our boys out."

We found these legionnaires to be a great bunch of guys, though many were German Wehrmacht and SS

*Continued on page 108*

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2

## ALGERIA

State of emergency in effect since June rioting by Islamic extremists is lifted.

1

## ALBANIA

About 300 Italian marines of San Marco regiment stationed at Albanian ports of Valona and Durazzon to help keep civilians from escaping to Italy.

3

## ANGOLA

Savimbi returns to capital of Luanda for first time in 16 years, addresses rally of 60,000 supporters — peace accord calls for elections next year ... UNITA, MPLA forces demobilizing, prisoners being exchanged.

5

## AUSTRALIA

Talk of merging military forces with New Zealand within 20 years ... Aussies throw hat in ring to lead any U.N. peacekeeping force in Cambodia.

6

## BOLIVIA

Getting ready for punch-up with Chile over territory seized by Chile in 1878.

7

## CUBA

Soviets to pull out military forces; U.S. will stay at Guantanamo ... Cuba owes USSR roughly \$40 billion for military equipment, other aid ... Castro courting foreign investors, particularly for tourist industry; more than 200 foreign firms jumped, lured by promises of immediate repatriation of profits, generous tax exemptions.

8

## EL SALVADOR

Jury convicts army colonel in 1989 killing of six Jesuit priests and two women; convicts lieutenant of one murder; clears seven troopers ... President Cristiani and FMLN leaders sign peace accord — for whatever that may be worth — worked out under U.N. auspices that calls for range of military, political, economic reforms, incorporation of FMLN into civilian police force.

9

## ESTONIA

Leaders of newly freed Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania meet to work out details of customs union modeled after European Community; plan to cooperate on transportation, communications projects, resource development.

11

## FRANCE

Klaus Barbie, "butcher of Lyon," dies of cancer at age 77.

12

## GERMANY

East German spy leader Markus Wolf, who headed spy operations from 1958 to 1987, turns himself in; courts will decide if his activities were legal under then-East German law.

10

## FINLAND

Has made \$49.3 million deal with Germans to buy goodies from former NVA stocks: small arms, artillery ammo; ZSU 23-2 AA guns, bridge-laying vehicles, mine-laying vehicles; several replacement MiG-21 engines.

13

## ICELAND

Iceland, only NATO member without an armed force, will lose one-third of U.S. fighters based there.



**26****ZAIRE**

Pillaging by 3,000 unpaid soldiers and rioting by unfed civilians kills 30, spurs Mobutu, opposition parties to agree that opposition member Etienne Tshisekedi should form crisis government ... French, Belgian forces move in to protect their nationals; French hold airport at sacked capital of Kinshasa; copper prices soar as trouble spreads to mining centers.

**25****YUGOSLAVIA**

U.N. Security Council declares arms embargo; U.S. Secretary of State Baker accuses central government of unacceptable aggression against Republic of Croatia ... fighting rages on, including sea and air battles.

**24****USSR**

Powerful explosion rocks Tbilisi TV center, HQ for opposition to hardline Georgian leader Gamsakhurdia; state of emergency called by Gamsakhurdia; one opposition leader calls for expulsion of all Soviet troops, membership in NATO ... In Republic of Tadjikistan, thousands rally to protest installation of old-school communist as president ... Russia, the Ukraine and Kazakhstan play host to three-day seminars by U.S. IRS officials. (If free enterprise ever takes hold, riff'd KGB agents will require minimal retraining as tax men).

**23****SRI LANKA**

Nearly one month's hard fighting at Elephant Pass in north kills more than 1,200 Tamil Tigers, 200 army troops; fighting a week later at Welioya kills another 200 retreating Tamils; supplies coming from India now being interdicted by Indian authorities angry over suspected Tamil role in assassination of Prime Minister Gandhi.

**22****ROMANIA**

Rioting by 52,000 coal miners idles 15 mines (two deaths), forces Premier Roman to resign; Roman calls for President Iliescu to hold elections, prove democracy is alive.

**21****PRC**

Arms maker Norinco has five-year plan to increase exports of consumer goods to Third World — motor bikes, minivans, refrigerators, bikes and optical goods; output for 1991 already projected to double 1990 levels.

**20****PHILIPPINES**

Senate rejects agreement for U.S. bases at Subic Bay; little hope left for any deal ... Plans to buy Kfir fighters from Israel rather than F-16s from U.S.

**19****NICARAGUA**

Attacks in north by "recontras"; three clandestine Sandinista groups uncovered.

**18****NETHERLANDS**

Considering armed intervention in Suriname, independent from Netherlands since 1975, to stem flow of drugs from Columbia to Amsterdam; drug flow thought to be orchestrated by Suriname Army Commander Colonel Desi Bouterse.

**14****INDIA**

Women will be admitted to armed forces in navy's legal, accounting and electronics branches.

**16****JAPAN**

Japan Defense Agency to develop, deploy indigenous tandem-seat light helicopter for air-to-air combat.

**15****IRAQ**

Dictator with the short memory backs down, agrees U.N. inspectors will have unfettered access to weapons facilities ... U.N. deploying U-2 recon craft on loan from U.S.

**17****KASHMIR**

Week-long artillery battle between Pakistani, Indian forces ends with 30 killed, 10,000 refugees fleeing.



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# Remember Desert Storm

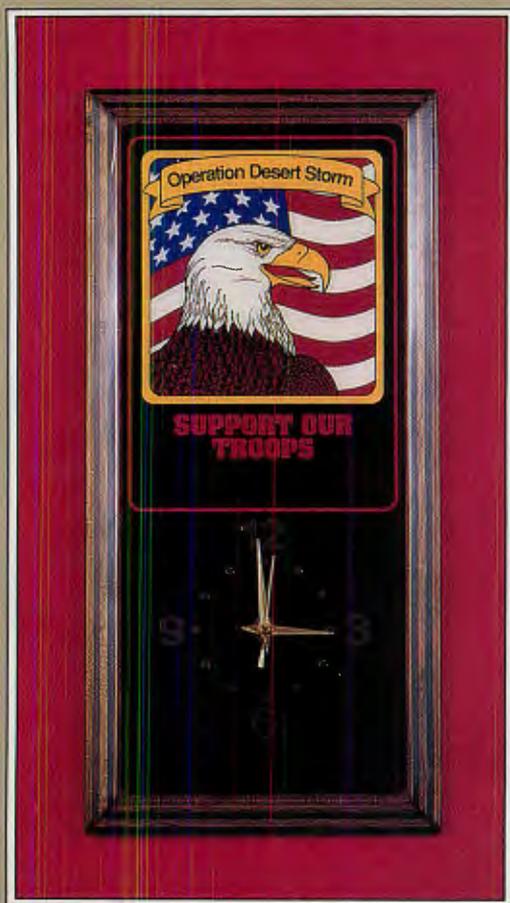
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## Close Encounters of the Combat Kind

# COMBAT CRAFT

Text & Photo by Chuck Fremont



**J**ACK Thompson should be a familiar name to *SOF* readers. A professional's professional, Jack's resume reads like an outline for an adventure novel — except that it's all true. From service in Vietnam as a young Marine through Rhodesian duty with the SAS, first as a trooper and later as an instructor, to security consulting in Central America, Jack has "seen the elephant" — several times.

You stay alive in Jack's world by being smart, tough and quick. Jack is always one step ahead of the competition because he thinks things through, based on his experience, and then tests his theories in the real world. I doubt there is a better combat pistol instructor alive, and possibly rifle as well. And here I mean combat, as in other guys shooting at you — not "combat" target shooting.

Jack has looked especially hard at what it takes to stay alive with a pistol in the most usual type of shooting incident — a sudden and unexpected attack at close range. This often takes place in an urban environment, such as a brutal close-range robbery or terrorist attack. It could also happen to a military adviser in a rural setting who, because of politically motivated "rules of en-

gagement" is only allowed to carry a sidearm.

"What you must do in this kind of attack," Jack told me, "is hit your attacker hard and fast — and at least twice. You must hit him in a vital spot. This is the absolute minimum if you want to survive this type of attack." The technique is sometimes called "double-tapping," but Jack doesn't use this expression because of its imprecision and implied casualness.

Training people to accomplish this, Jack puts them in a stress environment by timing them — from the signal, to draw, to second shot fired.

Jack uses a Pro-Timer shooter's chronograph and doesn't give students passing grades unless they make it in two seconds or less. Both shots must strike a vital area on a full-size silhouette target 2 meters away. Two hits in two seconds at 2 meters. Call it "Rule 2-2-2."

"Speed is the most critical element," Jack continued. "Most shooters, given time to get into the right stance, get a good sight-picture, good grip, all that stuff, can shoot fairly accurately. What they can't do is do it fast — twice. So I start people at a real close range, 2 meters, because that's the range a lot of attacks take place at. Too many

Jack Thompson coaches *SOF* editor/publisher Robert K. Brown on finer points of combat shooting.

people do all their shooting at 25 meters."

So how fast can a really top shooter get two solid hits at close range?

"One of my guys in Salvador does it in just over a second. This is a shade faster than I can do it; he's the first guy I've seen beat me at this. He's real talented and has excellent motor skills," Jack said.

"What about the rest of us?" I asked him. "I'm a klutz with a pistol."

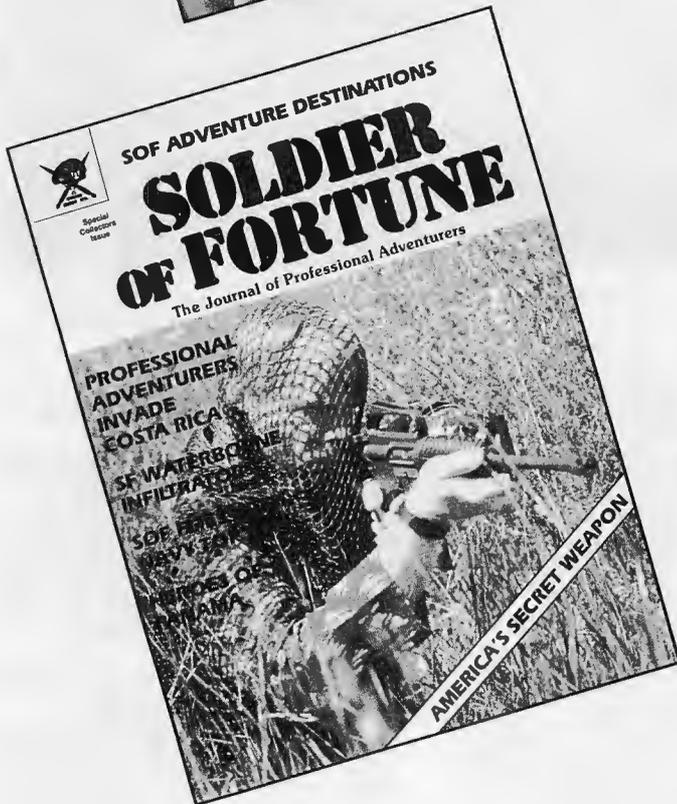
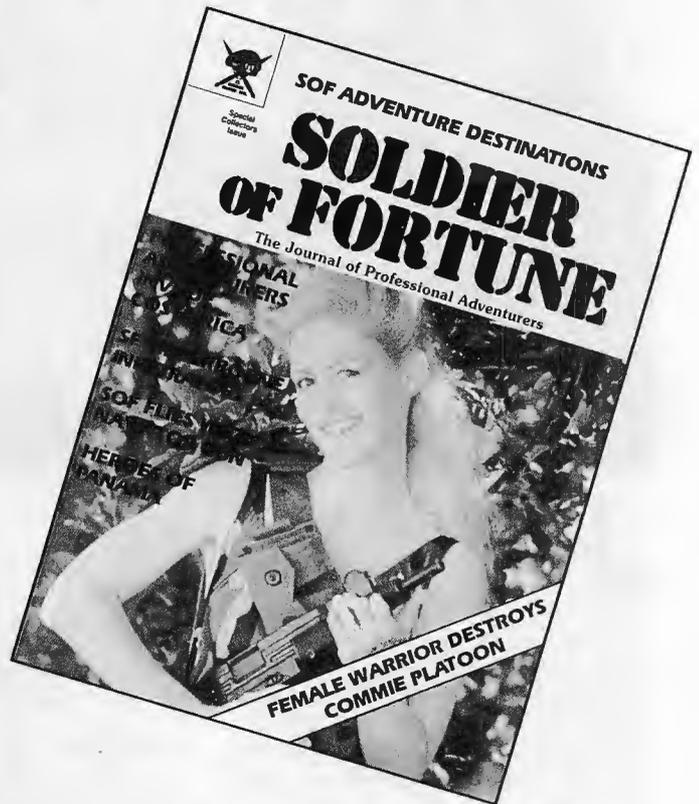
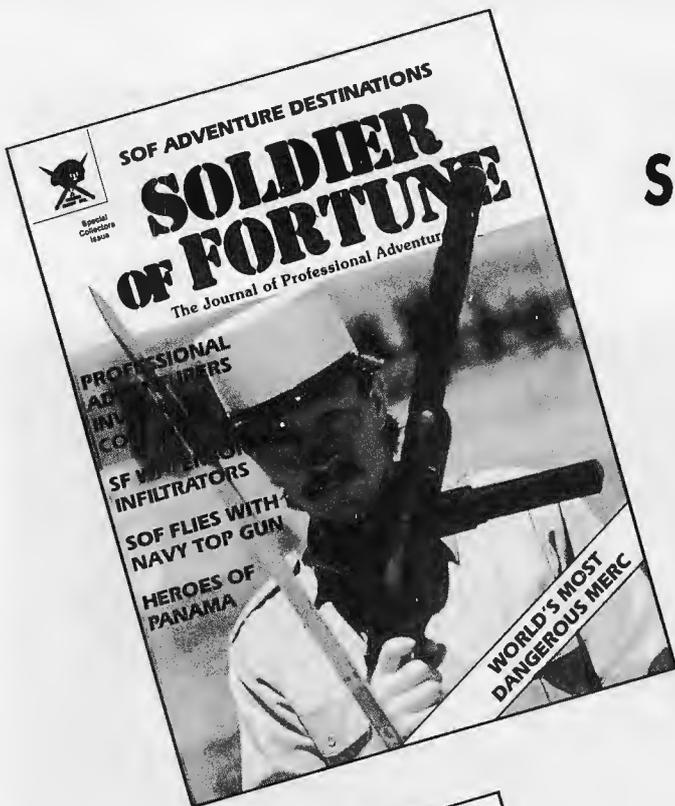
"Most shooters, if they're motivated, will get to just under two seconds, but not everyone can. With more coaching, I usually get a good man to around 1.5 seconds. That's with a lot of rounds and a lot of Pro-Timer paper," Jack noted. "I keep detailed statistics on each student so we can look at what he's doing." He showed me computer-generated spreadsheets and plots, and the progress of his shooters was clear.

Only when a student is competent at 2 meters will Thompson let him work at a longer range. For me, that's going to take a little work. But I *will* learn Rule 2-2-2. ✕

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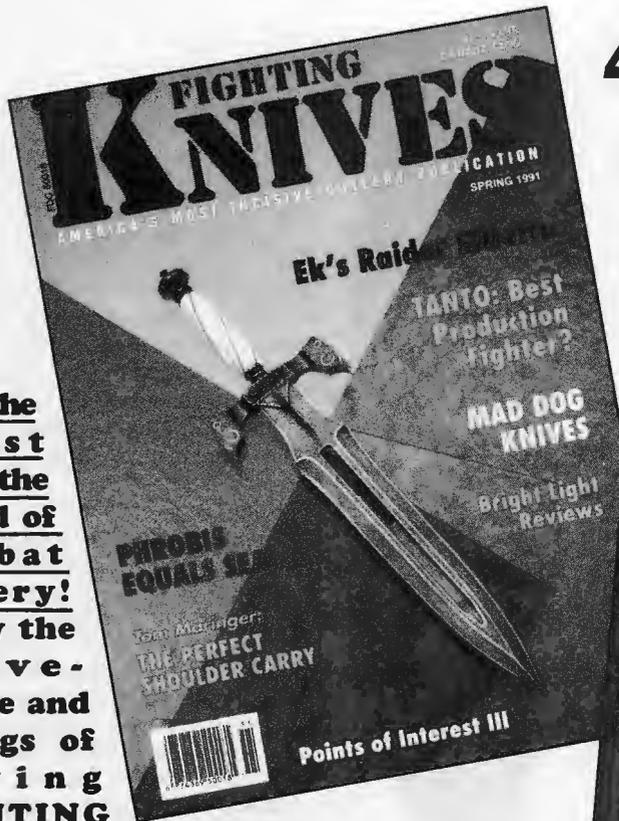
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CLOXJ

# BATTLE BLADES

Text & Photos by Greg Walker

IF there's any one knife which seems to fit most of our everyday needs, it is the venerable 4- to 6-inch fixed-blade. Two of the nicest ones offered come from custom makers Ken Largin and Wild Bill Caldwell. I've spent the last six months working with examples of both.

To begin with, the presence of a mid-size fixed-blade offers a broad range of applications in either urban or field environments. The fixed-blade does not rely on moving parts, being a single piece of edged steel. This allows the knife a greater degree of potential strength and reliability, given that proper heat-treatment and tempering are part of the manufacturing phase.

This is not to imply certain field folders aren't tough enough for the job, as many are. But a sturdy and compact fixed-blade is normally easier to get to and far more resilient than the bulk of its folding cousins.

The advantage of the mid-size blade over those in the Bowie-knife range (7 1/2-plus inches) has to do with ease of carry and low profile. During a recent multiple knife evaluation, active duty evaluators found their large knives rode too low on military pistol belts (combat harnesses).

This caused discomfort and distraction during land navigation courses and long-range rucksack marches, as the sheaths tended to catch in semi-open cargo pockets as well as on natural obstacles. They also dug into hip and buttock areas during rest periods.

Blades such as those offered by Largin and Caldwell fared far better in such areas, while pos-

Wild Bill Caldwell's spear-point combat knife is a mixture of natural hardwood, selected carbon steel and Bill's hard-won experience as a soldier, outdoorsman and martial artist.



Ken Largin's "Desert Storm U.S.A." knife is a cooperative project supported by members of the Knifemaker's Guild. Largin sent numerous free copies of this blade to our troops in the Gulf. Today it is still available at a discount to military personnel.

sessing the additional advantage of multiple-mounting positions on the combat harness. These are primarily found on the pistol belt itself or on the shoulder straps.

Compact blades are simply more practical for carry as they integrate themselves nicely among canteens, ammo pouches, butt packs, strobe lights, first aid kits, compasses, pistol holsters, etc. My own harness recently weighed in at 35 pounds without the additional 6 pounds of water and full complement of loaded magazines I am normally expected to carry.

In addition, big knives stick out like sore thumbs, drawing unnecessary attention to themselves. Knife-carry guidelines for combat/support troops are determined by local unit commanders, not by broad military regulation. Desert Storm veterans carried a multi-

## First-Rate Fixed-Blades

tude of knives during the war, some despite the voiced anti-knife policies of their divisional commanders.

Soldiers carrying mid-size knives drew less attention to their violation of such policies than those toting monster blades. I have yet to hear of anyone being court-martialed for daring to take a knife overseas, and indeed, many were successfully sent to the Gulf by concerned parties — with the help of both the military and U.S. Postal Service.

Ken Largin (Kelgin Knives, Dept. SOF, 23035 Pocket Road, Batesville, IN 47006; phone: 812-934-5938) is a Knifemaker's Guild member, and through his hard work the Guild agreed to participate in Ken's "Desert Storm U.S.A." project. Essentially, Largin developed a straightforward boot-pattern, which he wanted to send at no cost to as many Desert Storm troops as he could during the war.

Makers and suppliers who wished to support the project were encouraged to touch base with Ken, who issued specs for materials and grinding. Grip materials were donated as well as steels, grinding equipment and most importantly, time and labor. "I couldn't believe the response," Largin said. "Everyone wanted to do something to help. Jim Weyer even shot our promotional picture at no cost." The first batch of 100 knives were sent to combat troops with help of the military.

My Desert Storm knife arrived with a 4 1/2-inch blade and CocoBolo grips. It is marked "KELGIN" on the right side, "DESERT STORM U.S.A." on the left. Actual participants in the Gulf War received serial-numbered knives to denote their involvement in the theater of operations. With the war over, Kelgin is selling this remarkable little blade to service personnel (with proof) for less than \$100. Civilians pay slightly more.

Of particular note is the quality of the sheath provided. Full leather construction, single stitching, a velcro security strap and strong steel attachment clip make this one of the best little tote-arounds I've seen.

The Desert Storm knife carries well and is exceptionally comfortable in the hand. It attends to small and medium

*Continued on page 26*

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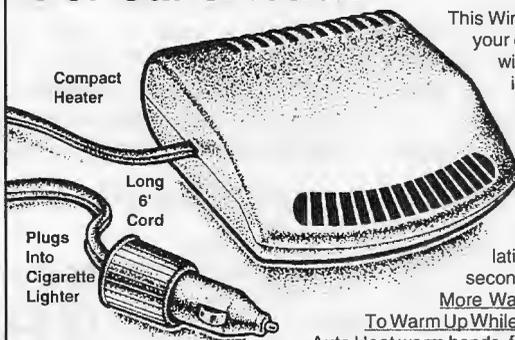
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cutting tasks with ease. As a fighter its blade length is capable of good penetration with respect to the lower belly and throat areas. This is an excellent cutlery selection for armored/airborne personnel, where space constraints are all too real.

Our test knife met all requirements, to include ease of sharpening in the field using a DMT-medium hone. The Knifemaker's Guild deserves warm praise for its support of Ken's desire to support our troops. Individual Guild efforts at providing knives during the war were nothing less than outstanding.

Wild Bill Caldwell hails from West Monroe, La., where he has been blacksmithing and knife making more than 20 years. He served as a paratrooper in Vietnam and later saw combat in the Congo. Like Largin, Caldwell is a member of the Knifemaker's Guild, although today he makes only a limited number of knives for sale. "All my orders come through Paul Basch (Dept. SOF, 111 W. Del Amo Blvd., Suite 1, Long Beach, CA 90805; phone: 213-423-5362) these days," Bill said. "As I'm no longer a full-time knife maker, it's easier for me to have Paul make the arrangements."

I've carried my Caldwell spear point more than two years now. Its 6-inch blade is hammered from Hobson's special-blend steel, which Bill prefers for such knives. Handled in hardwood with a simple double guard, the knife is extremely strong and well built.

As a combat blade this is one of the more adroit patterns I've seen — a natural evolution of Caldwell's own combat experience. When it came into my possession the pattern was marked at \$175. "If someone wants such a knife, they can get in touch with Paul concerning availability and current price," Bill said.

In terms of carry, I've used a generic black nylon sheath from MILTECH (Dept. SOF, Box 584, Nevada, MO 64772) which has accomplished its mission nicely. By the time you read this, the knife will have been transferred to a Kydex rig from the Cutlery Shoppe (1-800-231-1272), as I prefer the advantages of such a sheath with this knife.

Largin and Caldwell will discuss slight variations to their original pattern as long as such adaptations will not compromise integrity of the blade. Materials such as steels and handle grips can be special-ordered by the customer for both knives.

These are dynamic mid-size knives developed specifically for field use under extreme conditions. I highly recommend either for your consideration, especially if size and weight are primary factors in your carry-knife equation. ✂

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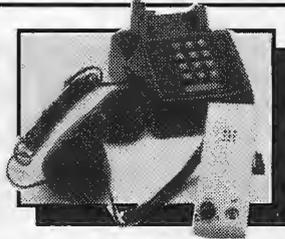
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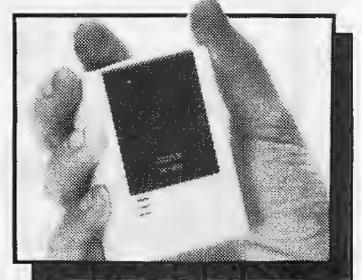


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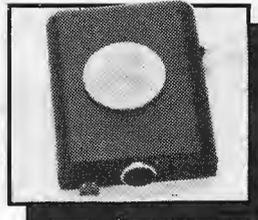
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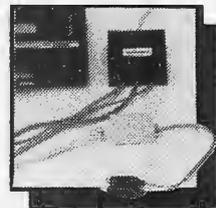
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# CALIFORNIA DREAMING

**H**OLLYWOOD film director Oliver Stone created a furor over his decision to make a movie about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, based on former New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's outlandish and much-ridiculed "investigation" of the Kennedy case.

George Lardner of the *Washington Post* wrote an article that called the Garrison probe "a fraud" and said Stone is "chasing fiction."

Lardner covered the Garrison case in the late 1960s and laughs at the portion of Stone's original script which had David Ferrie (one of the men investigated by Garrison) murdered by two Latin conspirators named "Bull" and "the Indian." Ferrie did eventually die (of natural causes, according to New Orleans coroner Dr. Nicholas Chetta), and Lardner himself was the last person known to have seen Ferrie alive.

Stone cannot stand criticism; he flew into a rage when he read the Lardner story. He sent such a long and vindictive letter to the *Post*, the newspaper published it as a half-page article and allowed Lardner another quarter-page to respond.

Admittedly a heavy drug user in the 1960s, Stone may be suffering from flashbacks and paranoia, as he seems to believe that anyone who puts down his JFK movie could be working for the U.S. government as part of the greatest conspiracy plot the world has ever known. In a *New Orleans Times-Picayune* article, Stone called Lardner "a CIA-agent journalist," while his letter to Lardner said that the *Post* might have some type of sinister hidden agenda designed to destroy his film.

Incredibly, Stone even implied in his letter that Lardner may be lying about Ferrie's death: "Lardner is the last man we know of to see Ferrie alive. He claims he left Ferrie alive." What does Stone mean by this? Does he think Lardner might have left Ferrie dead?

*Time* magazine's Richard Zoglin says the plot of Stone's movie blames the assassination on "a coalition that included



## Is Oliver Stoned?

by Johann  
W. Rush

Director Oliver Stone's career has mirrored the direction of the arrow next to him; Vietnam vets and others concerned about historical accuracy in his films, however, probably would point the arrow in a different direction.

the Mafia, the CIA and other protectors of the military-industrial complex." While Stone's script may have been written in Hollywood, the basic Mafia, CIA and military-industrial complex conspiracy scenario was first published in Moscow in a series of anti-American propaganda articles written by Iona Andronov in 1977.

The series, published in the Soviet propaganda magazine *New Times*, was titled "On the Trail of a President's Killers," remarkably similar to the title of Jim Garrison's 1988 book, *On the Trail of the Assassins*. This may not be a coincidence, since Andronov had several secret meetings with Garrison in New Orleans in the 1970s, and both men agree the American government is basically evil.

A book published in 1984 by two propaganda writers employed by the Soviet government praised Garrison and even went so far as to suggest he would make a great movie hero.

The authors (one of whom met secretly with Garrison in his home in 1969) wrote, "There is something in him from those heroes of the past which only remain on

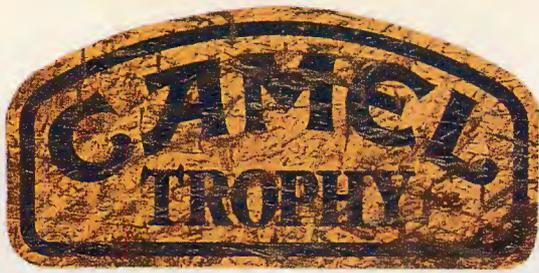
the screen of American cinemas — the strolling Don Quixotes, the American Wild West, fighting for the weak and for the poor against insidious and pitiless mercenaries." This fictional Soviet propaganda image is exactly the same one Oliver Stone chose to give Garrison in his new JFK movie.

In a letter to the *Times-Picayune* published this past June, Stone claims Garrison's office phones were tapped and the district attorney was followed by FBI agents in the late 1960s. If that is true, the obvious reason was because Garrison was having clandestine meetings with agents of the Soviet Union, and those agents were encouraging Garrison to blame the Kennedy assassination on the U.S. government.

The Soviet book went so far as to say that in 1969, Garrison himself called a special meeting of "all Soviet journalists" covering his investigation. The book says they met secretly at his home, and when Garrison greeted them at the door, they could see a large pistol tucked just inside his belt.

Calling a meeting of Soviet journalists is the same as calling a meeting of KGB agents since, according to John Barron of *Reader's Digest*, "a sizable portion of Soviet nationals posted abroad as staff

*Continued on page 104*



# TOBACCO ROAD

## DATELINE: AFRICA Driving 1,000 Miles For A Camel Trophy

**Text & Photos by Robert Young Pelton**

**A**N annual event — part reality, part illusion — The Camel Trophy calls forth heroic images of stalwart men in yellow Land-Rovers battling through green tropical hells, living up to its slogan: “The Toughest Test of Man and Machine.” This year, more than 1.5 million people from 17 countries vied for 68 available seats — each one hoping to add to the legend.

The 1991 Camel Trophy roughly traced terrain great explorers/adventurers such as Burton, Stanley, Speke, Grant and Livingstone risked their lives to follow — the dangerous and difficult slave route from Bagamoyo to Ujiji — in their search to shed light on an age-old mystery: the source of the Nile.

However, this once-obscure slave trail into Africa’s interior is now a major traffic corridor, so we follow a remote route of game tracks, open savannas and abandoned roads. Our trip begins in the fetid, tropical heat of Dar es Salaam and takes us through malarial swamps, thorny savannas, equatorial jungles and finally into the higher and cooler climate of Burundi — more than 1,000 miles of some of the most varied and challenging terrain our world offers.

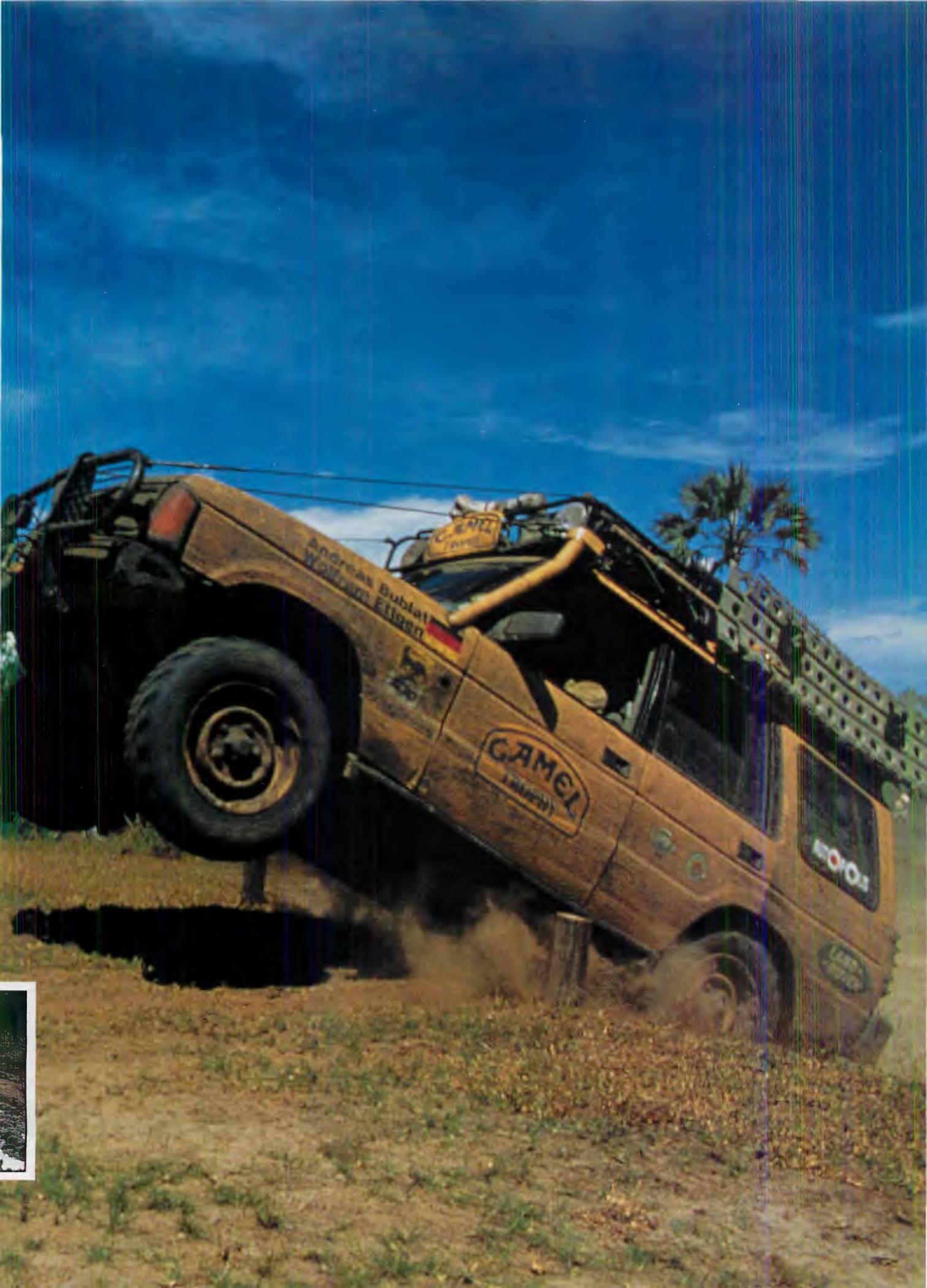
Although we had air support, satellite navigation, high-resolution maps and the finest in off-road equipment, these didn’t shield us from misfortune.

Past American participation has been sporadic, though U.S. teams competed in four of 11 previous Trophies, with Colorado’s Tom Collins and Don Floyd of California placing highest of them (tying for first place in Madagascar in 1987).



By the time the Camel Trophy is over, 29 brand-new, identically prepared yellow Land-Rovers worth more than \$1 million will be turned into rolling junk.





Although the biggest fans of The Camel Trophy are still Germans, Italians, French and Dutch, a new world has just opened with communism's collapse — interest is drawing Soviets and East Europeans, especially since last year's Siberian event.

Past Trophies have challenged inhospitable regions of the Amazon, Africa and the Far East. Each one has its official story — and the real story. Despite advertising images, the Camel Trophyist is not a rugged, hairy-chested, chain-smoking stud. Competitors come from an amazing mix of backgrounds.

#### No Easy Roads

**A**n incredible amount of stress comes from off-road driving through 12- to 18-foot walls of grass. And it rains every night, swelling rivers, washing out makeshift bridges and deepening ravines. Fallen tree branches suddenly sprout like lances. Stream beds present themselves quickly and dramatically as we slam on the brakes to avoid going head over heels into them.

To confirm a former road, or at least a bridge, we almost plunge into a 10-foot gap created by two naked bridge supports. We must drive fast, as going slow means getting stuck. Each river we cross runs higher and faster, swollen by the heavy rains. As night turns to day and to night again all we see is grass. Forging ravines and rivers affords our only break from the monotony. But we push hard and get bogged down relatively few times.

#### New Vistas, New Dangers

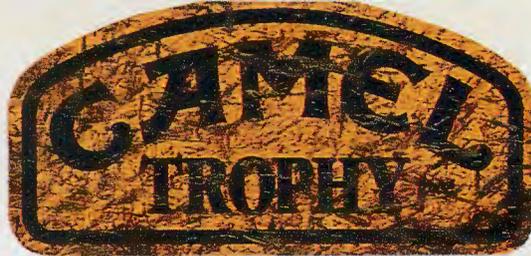
Leaving muddy, grassy swamps behind, we enter the classic East African savannah. Puffy, white clouds form an endless pattern combined with the lazy sound of tsetse flies, while giraffes shyly watch from the distance. Time slows down and our senses are sharpened. Thousands of purple and yellow flowers carpet the land. Later, vultures aimlessly circle our convoy. We discover bleached, tuskless skeletons of elephants killed by poachers. It is very hot.

Our once-soaked clothes and feet are now dry. Our hands are hard, cracked and calloused. The burning sun tans our skin and clears up our rashes, grass cuts and insect bites. We adapt to hot, dry savanna days and cool, crisp nights.

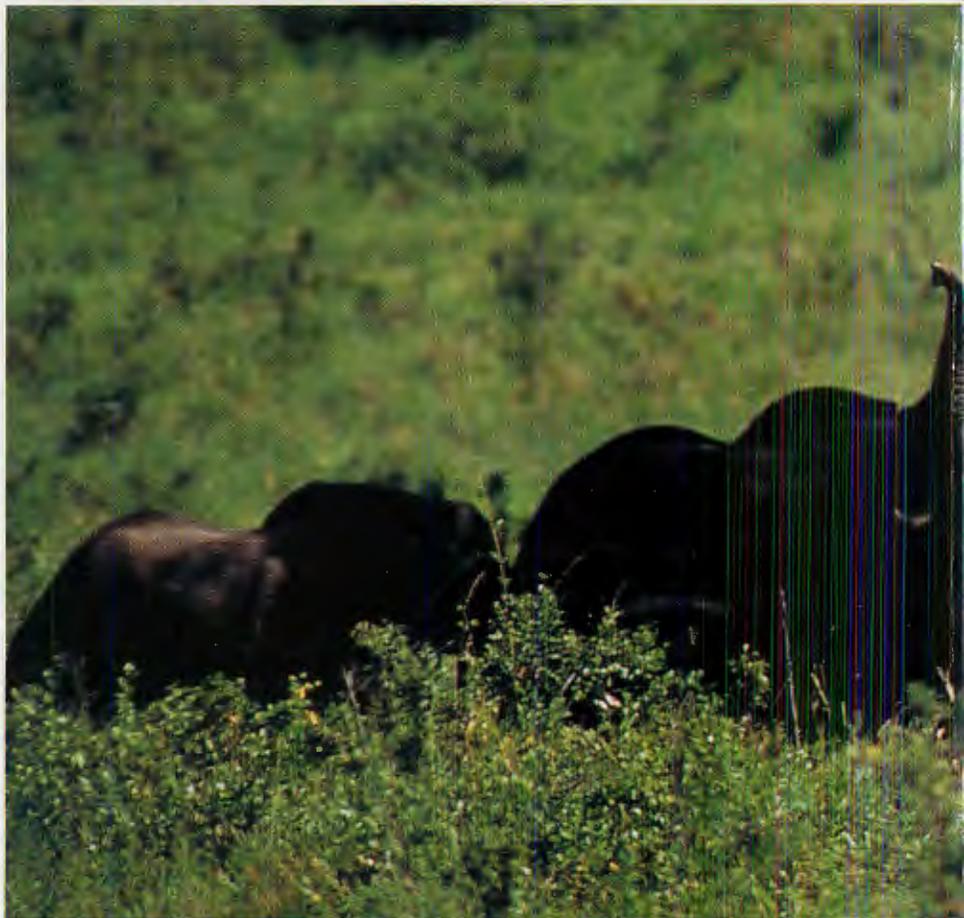
We fight acacia thorns. These light, hollow daggers are everywhere and can penetrate right through heavy boots. They become projectiles, smacking through an open window at 40 mph looking for soft flesh to penetrate.

We also become good friends with the scourge of Africa — the tsetse fly. Built like deer flies with mandibles designed to bite through water buffalo skin, these dudes are vicious.

After crossing the savanna, we now see the hills and mountains of Central Africa dead ahead of us. Late that night we pull



**It's not uncharging to a trail bare**



End-of-race festivities include performance by native drummers and speech by the president of Barundi. Trophyists mingle with cream of Barundi society, who don't know quite what to make of them

usual to see a Land-Rover  
ward us at high speed along  
ly wide enough for walking.



Entertainment in Barundi isn't too different from the days of Stanley and Livingstone.

points vehicles are doubling back over the same trail.

It's not unusual to see a Land-Rover charging toward us at high speed along a trail barely wide enough for walking. These jousts become very real games of chicken. Both cars swerve at the last moment, crumpling metal as they sideswipe trees.

Watch out! A slight error shatters a giant cactus into a dozen pieces. Duck! The Rover is sprayed with white, rubbery juice — 6-foot green arms are now wedged between our brush guards. Oops! A tight, swift passage between trees mashes our side panels an inch each. Yikes! We nearly flatten cattle herders, their confusion reflects meeting the last crazed crew. Small blunders so far, but nothing slows us down ... until we miscalculate the depth of a river crossing and end up half-submerged in water. At 0300 hours we slide into the final checkpoint, exhausted but elated. The Camel Trophy is over, yet we are hooked.

#### The Last Day

**B**y dawn's brilliant light we see the havoc wrought on vehicles. Compared with others, ours is OK. Russians and French ripped each other's in a sideswipe. Most Rovers have been compressed about 4 to 5 inches by narrow trees, and many have cracked windows and bent steering rods.

Finally, the victors are announced. Turkey is declared overall winner of The 1991 Camel Trophy. Greece finishes second; Switzerland third; Belgium fourth; the UK fifth — and we are awarded sixth place. Overall, a most respectable performance for us Americans.

Time for the real celebration! One by one, teams start hurling each other in the pool. Soon more are in than out. After we run out of khaki-clad victims, everything goes in: Sabena stewardesses, lawn furniture, waiters, pots and pans.

Laughing riotously, we pour what beer is left on each others' heads and swap shirts, cards, stickers and souvenirs. Soon, Americans become Russians, Turks/Italians, Greeks/British — till the room is a true United Nations of soaking wet, half-drunk adventurers. When beer runs out, we migrate to an all-night disco on the shores of Lake Tanganyika.

#### The 13th Camel Trophy: Lucky Or Foolish?

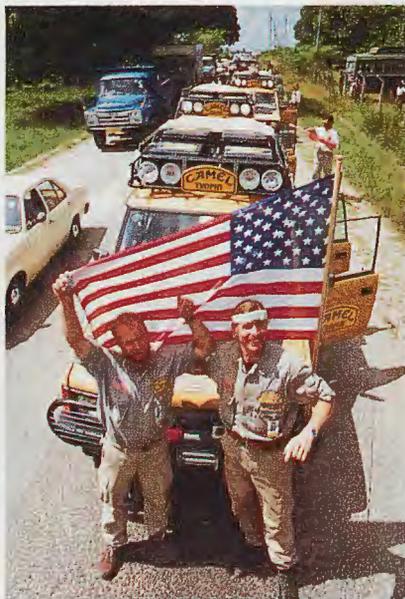
Returning to South America for a third time, 1992's Camel Trophy will journey through northern highlands of Brazil and the Guyanas. The 1,000 miles from Manaus, Brazil to Georgetown, Guyana, may prove the biggest challenge yet.

To learn about participating, contact: Tom Collins, U.S. Camel Trophy, Dept. SOF, PO Box 587, Snowmass, CO 81654.

Robert Young Pelton was a participating journalist with the U.S. team in the 1991 Camel Trophy Run. 



Above: When all the points are added up Turkey is the overall winner.



At end of race, teams put flags in holders and drive through city screaming and singing at top of their lungs.

into the ranger station in Rungwa to refuel, replace tires and sleep. Next day: the Trophy's conclusion.

#### Beat Around The Bush

Now we face a maze of small trails leading in and out of swamps, rivers and gullies. The park is snarled with streaked, mud-splattered vehicles blasting in and out of trails, bringing chaos. Cars are staggered a few minutes apart; at many



Above: Convoy portion of the Trophy took contestants along trails, through rivers and into miles of 20-foot-high grass.



Damir, a Croat special forces leader, on patrol near Petrinja, Yugoslavia. An American citizen, the former geologist returned to his homeland to fight for freedom. His Ultimax 100 squad automatic weapon, Singapore produced, uses a 100-round drum to feed 5.56x45mm ammo. Photo: Jim Wallace

# YANKS IN YUGOSLAVIA

## Expat Croat-Americans Fight in Bloody Balkans

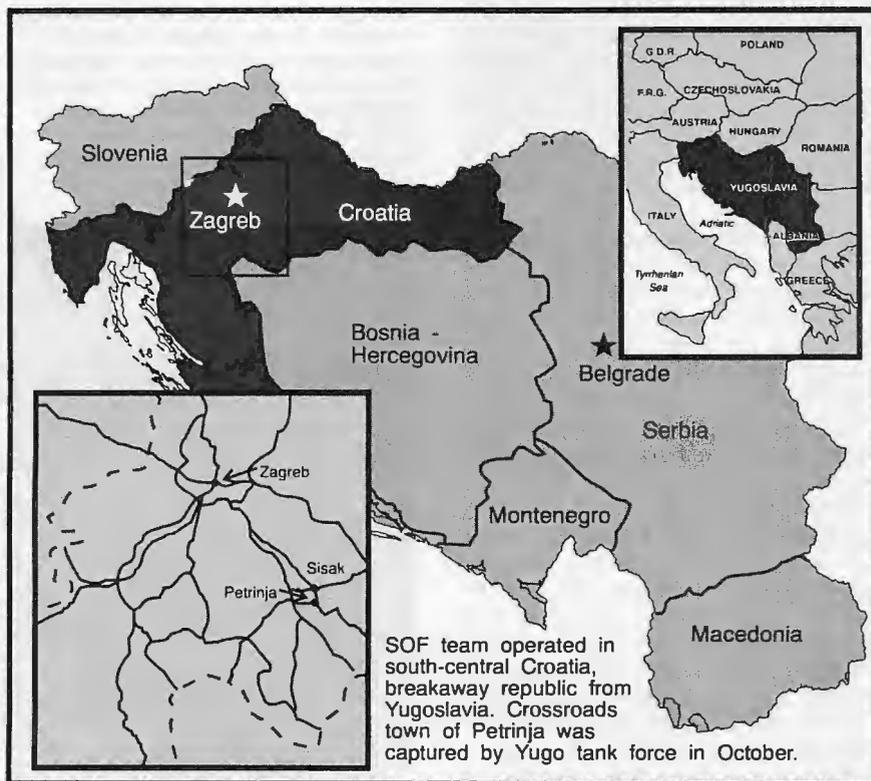
Text & Photos by Jim Wallace

Croatia's fight for national independence from communist Yugoslavia is a classic struggle of irregular forces against a numerically stronger modern army. In the following battlefield report, SOF correspondent Jim Wallace (who traveled to Yugoslavia with Bob Jordan, an experienced professional soldier, and Fred Turner, a retired U.S. Navy SEAL) tells the story of this Balkan war as he experienced it — from the field with a small unit of Croatian partisans. Look for Bob Jordan's account of the SOF team in action next month.

**D**AMIR rested the Ultimax 100 machine gun against his shoulder as he lit a cigarette. It was early evening and we had just returned from a patrol into the center of Petrinja, Croatia, now a deserted no-man's-land haunted by Serbian snipers. One of them had taken a shot at us. Bad idea. A Croat militiaman took him out with one careful shot from a 7mm Remington Magnum hunting rifle.

Damir spoke easily now, coming down slowly from the adrenaline high of contact. "You know, I really don't want anything to do with the army. If I had wanted to be a soldier, I would have joined the Yugoslav army and now I would be a deserter, fighting for Croatia like Stipe." He nodded toward a lanky Croat in his late twenties, cleaning a Kalashnikov. "But now, this is the most important thing I can do. We must win our freedom."

He became a soldier by circumstance, but he was plenty good at it. Six feet tall and a muscular 190 pounds, with a broken



## CONTACT IN CROATIA

A black cat stalked toward us from a stack of firewood — it was the only thing moving. The Croatian partisans I was with were very still. One of them petted the cat, and it rubbed against his leg, happy for attention. It wore a collar — someone's pet, whose owners were now refugees, fleeing tank fire from the Samara army barracks 800 meters to our front. Petrinja was quiet this September afternoon. Too quiet.

I holstered the CZ-75 I carried, lifting my camera to get a picture of the soldier with the cat. There was something reassuring about seeing this compassion in a war-ravaged town.

Suddenly there was single shot. It was nearby. Not a sharp rifle crack — it sounded like a pistol or submachine gun. Then quiet again. My senses sharpened, and we waited.

Another shot, this time a rifle. It was off to my right and in front of me, but not far away — maybe 30 meters. Then quiet.

Then came a loud crack from a high-powered rifle, very close. We tensed. Damir and Stipe came running past us, followed by a militiaman carrying Damir's 7mm magnum Mauser sporter; a beautiful custom rifle with set triggers and six-power scope.

"Sniper. Branco got him," Damir called, sprinting past me. "Let's get the hell out of here. They'll be angry now." Fine with me.

We moved back down the main street, staying close to the walls. Rifle grenades exploded where we had been, and automatic rifle fire whistled harmlessly past us in the street. I thought about the cat. Then I looked behind me. The young Croat soldier was carrying it. One life taken, one saved.

— J.W.

nose and piercing gray eyes, he looked like a fighter. In fact, he was a Golden Gloves champion boxer during his six years in the United States. Now back in his homeland, the 34-year-old former geologist serves in an elite special forces unit of Croatia's national guard.

These soldiers wear no rank, and they elect leaders at the team or platoon level. Natural leaders like Damir and others such as Stipe, trained by the federal army they now fight, are identified quickly in this ad hoc army. They lead because they are respected; respected because they have the skills or determination needed in this desperate struggle.

Stipe is an explosives and demolitions expert — a professional demo man trained well by the Yugoslavian federal army. That training has cost them a few bridges and many men since Stipe deserted in



favor of his Croatian homeland. Now there is a price on his head as a deserter.

### Are You The Boss For Explosives?

I met him when he knocked on the door of my hotel room in Petrinja. "Are you the boss for explosives?" he asked in heavily accented, but otherwise excellent, English. "I have guns for you." He handed me a CZ-75 and a Tokarev. "You can keep these until we get you and the others AKs."

I would have a number of talks with Stipe in coming days. As a former demo man in the U.S. Special Forces (SF), it was a fantastic opportunity for me to share techniques with a counterpart trained by an East Bloc force. I'm a journalist now, but

Vlado, born in Croatia but raised in Canada from age 3, has returned as part of a North American "Lincoln Brigade" of ethnic Croats determined to free their homeland from domination by Serbian communists. M79 90mm antitank rocket launcher was captured from federal army. Croatian national guard has a limited antitank capability. Photo: Jim Wallace



Croatian air defense team with optically-sighted 20mm Oerlikon near Sisak, Yugoslavia. Croats use several varieties of 20mm anti-aircraft artillery and have downed MiGs with such weapons. Photo: Bob Jordan

doubt I would have this kind of opportunity writing for *The Washington Post*.

There were others, notably young Canadians, Americans and Australians of Croatian heritage whose families fled communism after World War II. Vlado, 22, just graduated from college in Ottawa and is here on a student visa. He planned on graduate school in Zagreb, capital of Croatia, but now is caught up in a war his parents could never fight. Graduate school for Vlado will be Croatian officer candidate training.

Fracturing of the communist world which began in the Baltic republics has ripped south and east like a jagged fault line, shattering the bedrock of tyranny throughout Eastern Europe and even the former Soviet Union. This is the opportunity oppressed Croatia has waited for. It's now or never for freedom. Damir, Vlado and Stipe are desperate to not lose this chance.

But the situation in Yugoslavia is complicated by the centuries-old fight between western-oriented Catholic Croatia against Orthodox Serbia, which is strongly influenced by relatively recent domination of the Ottoman Turks. There is bitter ethnic hatred between these Balkan tribes who differ little racially, but are worlds apart in cultural values.

Stef, 24, is a Tom Cruise look-alike from Chicago who would probably be walking along the lake shore with a good-looking girl on a warm September afternoon like this, if he were back in Illinois. Now he's cleaning the grease from a new M70 assault rifle, the Yugo version of the AKM, just captured from a Yugoslavian army depot. Fred Turner, Bob Jordan and I are doing the same, while

Damir speaks of the troubles of war. The smells of gasoline and cosmoline mix in the muggy afternoon air.

### Politicians Get In The Way

"The biggest problem we have is with our own politicians. They don't really want to fight the *Cetniks*, it seems like." *Cetniks* (pronounced *Chetniks*) are the Serbian irregulars who do much of the sniping, and many of them live within Croatia's borders. Some 10%-15% of Croatia's population is Serbian. They are concentrated in enclaves such as the city of Knin near the southern Adriatic coast, and also found in smaller clusters scattered throughout Croatia.

These snipers and terrorists are backed up by T-84 tanks and 120mm mortars of the federal army in divided Petrinja, home to a major Yugoslavian army mechanized force garrisoned at the Samarica barracks on the south side of town. Petrinja is 8km cross-country from Sisak, 12 klicks by road.

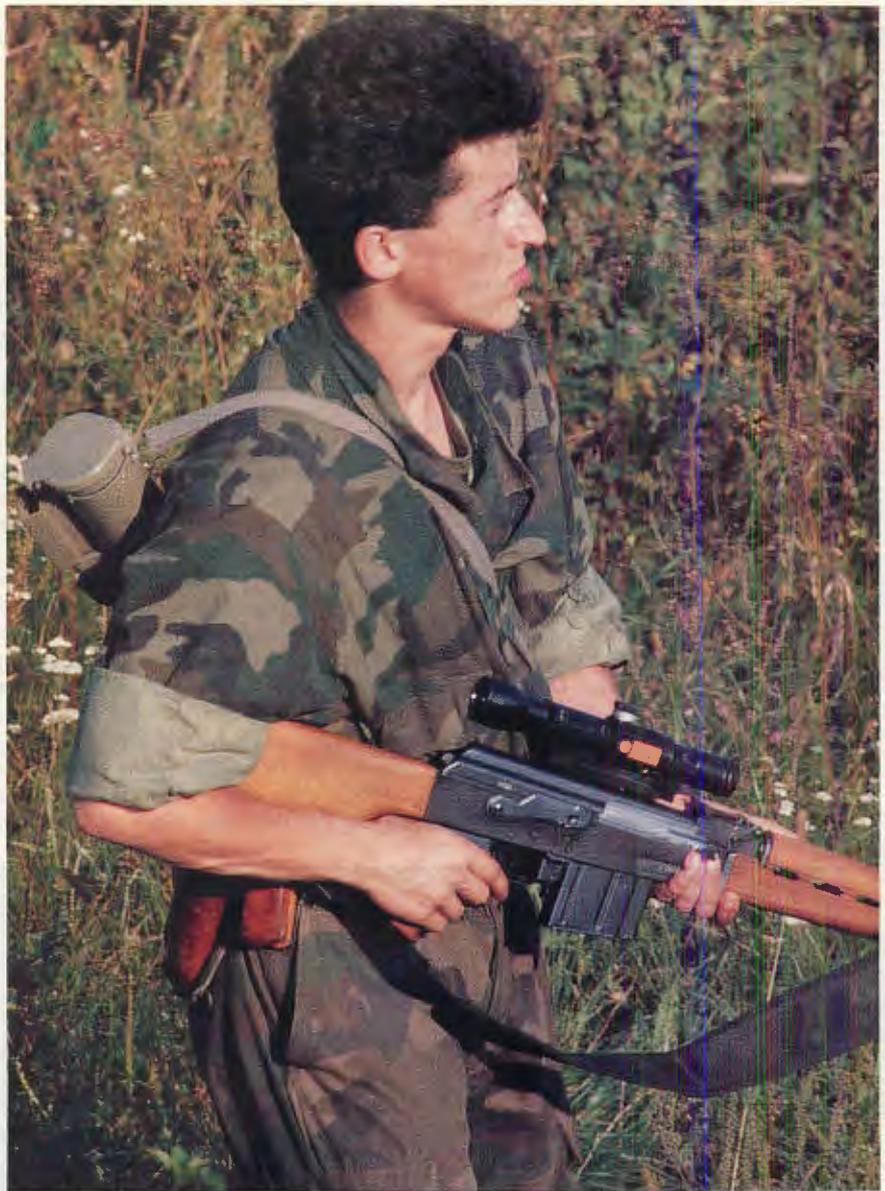
"We find out where they are, and then our own command tells us, 'No, don't shoot them, maybe there will be a cease fire,' or some bullshit like that. Then the *Cetniks* shoot another of our guys." Damir is not happy about this. Politicians are the bane of every soldier's existence.

"The politicians even keep the best weapons for themselves. I don't know what a guy in Zagreb in the Ministry of Defense thinks he needs a brand new Steyr sniper rifle for, but I can show where this guy has one, leaning in the corner in his office. It's a beautiful rifle; Zeiss scope, black fiberglass stock, everything, and look what my guys have." Damir gestured toward a tall young Croat carrying a sporterized Mauser 98 with four-power scope. The rifle had seen better days.

Damir was especially worried about the T-84s, a Yugoslav variant of the Soviet T-72. "They hardly ever come out with the tanks. They just sit there in the base. Every once in a while they shoot something in Petrinja. Like the church. They shot the steeple from the church. They think that is funny. The Serbs want to destroy any evidence of Croatian culture, so they destroy churches with tanks. They are animals," he said.

Fred asked him what they had for antitank weapons. "Not much. A few RPGs, and they don't do much to a T-84," Damir replied. Fred agreed.

Fred is an interesting guy. Fit and intelligent, with the common sense and casual good nature I've always seen in Navy SEALs, he's past what is usually regarded as military age. He returned from Vietnam highly decorated, and the SEALs



On the way to inspect wreckage of downed MiG near Petrinja in central Croatia. Croat militiaman scans countryside for Serbian forces. Weapon is 7.92mm M76, Yugo version of Soviet Dragunov. Four-power scope has tritium element for use at night. Photo: Jim Wallace.

never had a reputation for passing out medals. Fred has a wife and young daughter back in San Diego and spoke often about finding the right gifts for them.

I asked Damir if they had plastic explosive. "Yeah, we have some, I don't know how much. We can ask Stipe," he replied.

Then I asked if he was familiar with a platter charge, and when he shook his head I explained the concept. Damir looked interested. "Yeah, if you could show our

guys that, it would be great. I don't think Stipe knows about this."

Although I was there as a journalist, Croatia supports human rights, including free speech, so I figured what the hell. Maybe I could pass on some knowledge that would save some lives, or at least a church. Damir rounded up Stipe, and I sketched the platter charge out in my notebook.

### Claymore Mine For Tanks

"No, I haven't made this, but it seems like it would work. Yes, a good idea. Like a claymore mine for tanks. Yes," Stipe mused. "I have about 40 kilos of *plastique*, I think. We'll make some charges later this afternoon." He scooted off in his VW transporter to get some steel plates cut at the local welding shop.

**"Yes, I have TNT.  
No Problem."**

Later, Damir organized a group of Croat combat engineers (not federally trained guys like Stipe), for a hasty class on the subject. I also showed them the finer points of blowing antitank ditches with cratering charges. Damir and Stipe were sharp leaders and soon took over instruction. I had "trained the trainers" in the best tradition of SF operations.

Bob asked Damir about Yugoslav army tactics when they advanced with armor. "Almost always, the tanks are going alone. They don't have much infantry around them," he replied.

"Then you can kill them," Bob said, talking in some detail about tank hunting. Damir took it all in, hungry for any knowledge which could help his men, and Bob was happy to oblige.

An articulate, intelligent 42-year-old who was medically retired from the U.S. Army as a young troop due to wounds suffered in Vietnam, Bob went on to become a major in the South African army. He carries a deep anger from having served the losing sides in two hard wars, and this anger was now channeled toward killing Serbs.

Damir and his men invited us to lunch. "We'll have lamb roasted on a stick, Croatian style. It's really good, the best

way to fix lamb." He was right. The lamb was superb, served in big chunks on a steaming platter in a nearby roadhouse. Plenty of Karlovac pivo (beer) accompanied the meal. Afterwards Fred shot some pool with Stipe. Fred was good, but Stipe was better.

"Hey, he knows the table," Fred exclaimed with a laugh.

#### M-6 Mines

That afternoon, after we finished cleaning the new weapons, Stipe showed me some other booty in his warehouse. "Look Jim, new M-6 mines. They are a copy of the U.S. antitank mine. I have trained with this."

This mine was new to me, but Stipe was right: It was a near copy of the U.S. M21 AT mine, which kills a tank by firing a platter charge at its underbelly. Interestingly, it was shipped with a detonator in place. He showed me how to use the special key to arm it. I showed him how to employ it as a platter charge for an urban tank ambush, where paved streets made normal employment of the mine, with its whip-like firing device, impractical. He nodded enthusiastically.

"Yes, there is a well for the detonator already in the right place. It's for an

anti-handling device, but I see what you mean. If I use an electric detonator, I can command fire it," Stipe noted. "Yes, it would certainly work. I could destroy the T-84's tracks at least, and then we would throw the satchel charge under it. Yes, this would do it!"

Nothing makes a demo man happier than discovering a new way to blow something up. Especially something big and dangerous that is trying to kill him and his men. "Do you have explosive to make satchel charges?" I asked.

"Yes. Come, I'll show you." Stipe led me to a truck outside. "Here, about 50 boxes of ammonal; 1,000 kilos, over one ton U.S. Do you think it will work?" He opened a box of half-kilo (about one pound) sticks. I broke one open. It seemed like an ammonium nitrate-based quarrying charge.

"Sure, but you should probably put a stick of TNT in the middle to make sure it explodes completely, then tape maybe 10 of these tightly around it," I answered.

"Yes, of course. I have TNT. No problem." And he showed me a crate of green-wrapped sticks. A pinewood box next to it was filled with electric and non-electric blasting caps. Let's hope the roads aren't bumpy, I thought.

## EUROPE'S LEBANON

London's *Economist* recently described the situation in Yugoslavia as a new Lebanon, and that's not a bad analogy. Since some 10%-15% of the population within Croatia's borders are Serbs, there is a serious internal security problem. Croatia's inexperienced national guard is faced with simultaneously fighting three wars.

First, there is the counterinsurgency against Serbian guerrillas. This is a tough one, as the Croatian police force was heavily Serbian — about 60%, according to several Croats I spoke with. There is still much concern about informers within the police, and the Serbs have good access to weapons.

Well-armed Cetniks — Serbian irregulars — operate as snipers and terrorists throughout Croatia, and have carved off chunks of the region in strongholds such as Knin. They are opposed by local Croatian militias and occasionally by police. This war is really somewhere between genuine combat and a protracted gang fight, where the shoot-outs are between well-armed grown men.

Then there is the guerrilla war Croats are fighting against the Yugoslavian army. This struggle is complicated by lack of training, *materiel* and indecisive politicians who are reluctant to attack federal bases. Despite such problems, Croat partisans have scored many victories and captured impressive quanti-



Croat militiamen prepare to launch patrol into no-man's-land in Petrinja, about 10 days before town fell to Yugo army. Trooper on left carries sporterized Mauser 98 with four-power scope. Photo: Fred Turner



Correspondent Wallace, carrying CZ-75, sprints across street in Petrinja, about 800 meters from Yugo army garrison. Damir waves him across as other militiamen stand ready to provide suppressive fire. Photo: Fred Turner

ties of arms and ammunition, including tanks, artillery and antitank weapons. While we were in Sisak, one of these bands captured a major federal supply depot east of Zagreb. If Croatia wins her freedom, it will be through successes of these dedicated fighters.

Third, Croatia is fighting a bitter defensive war against attacks by tank armies and modern air power of Serbian Yugoslavia. Federal army bases are located in key communities throughout the Republic of Croatia. The Serbs have tremendous firepower advantage, and Croats have suffered heavy losses. The cities of Vukovar and Osijek in eastern Croatia (on the auto route from Belgrade to Zagreb), have been pounded by tank, rocket and artillery fire, as well as air attacks.

Dubrovnik, the "Jewel of the Adriatic" on the coast of southern Croatia, is being rocketed, bombed and attacked by naval gunfire. Fires are destroying homes and farms in the hills outside the community. Heavy machine-gun fire rips at churches and government buildings. This beautiful medieval city is a living museum of Croatian culture, and the thought of its destruction tears at Croatia's national soul. Targets in and near Zagreb have been intermittently bombed by MiGs, while the presidential palace in the heart of downtown Zagreb was rocketed by Yugoslavia's air force on 7 October 1991. Interestingly, all



Stipe had more new toys. "Look at what else we captured, Jim. Here is an M-71 rocket launcher for the 128mm rocket." He pointed to a green crate, speaking rapidly in Croatian at two guardsmen. They carried the box outside and opened it. Inside was a short firing tube, a set of bipod legs, three small baseplates and an accessory bag. The tube

Serbian MiG-21 was shot down by Croat anti-aircraft fire near Petrinja. Tail section was largest piece of wreckage. Pilot ejected too late, and died either on impact or during ejection. MiG was on a bombing mission and may also have been flying reconnaissance. Serbia controls all airspace over Croatia. Photo: Jim Wallace

was still covered with grease. We unpacked it, cleaned it, then carefully mounted the sight, which seemed like a mortar sight.

Then they brought out some rounds, which looked like large artillery shells backed with rocket motors. Fred looked at it and shook his head. "Stipe, I'm glad you guys have this and not the Serbs."

"Yes, but they still have many. We need many more," Stipe said.

Suddenly the air raid siren blared, and soon we heard explosions. We worried that Serbs were bombing the refinery just outside of Sisak. Also, Damir's base would be a likely target. His guys had two 20mm anti-aircraft guns, but only optically sighted. Damir organized a group to climb a nearby tower, leading them up the five-story structure with his Ultimax slung over his shoulder. With its 100-round drum, it was not a lightweight weapon.

We joined the group, carrying fresh AKMs and a shoulder pouch with four extra magazines each. I heard a jet in the distance, and later learned the guard group at Petrinja had shot a MiG down.

On the following day we returned to Petrinja to check out the MiG wreckage and recon the area for a possible tank ambush using the new mines. It was very quiet, and the local commander wasn't around. Damir was hesitant to set up tank traps without consulting the locals — good judgment — so we walked the 4 or 5km to the wreckage of the MiG, in a cornfield outside of town.

The pilot's body was in a ditch about 30 meters from the MiGs tail section, its largest piece of wreckage. He must have ejected at the last second, as his parachute was barely deployed. "A senior captain,"

three top Croat leaders were present when it was hit. There are reports of chemical weapons use, apparently a "CS"-type tear gas or riot-control agent. To understand this third war, imagine the U.S. Civil War if the Union forces had World War I-style air power and weaponry, with a will to use it ruthlessly.

Serbia's strategy emphasizes controlling main lines of communication, such as the autobahn and rail lines running east from Zagreb, through the Sava Valley toward Belgrade. Also important is the Sava River, a major route for barge traffic. A naval blockade has closed Croatia's major Adriatic ports, including Rijeka, Split and Dubrovnik.

Sisak, a regional government center and militia headquarters 60km southeast of Zagreb, is being probed by the Serbs, along with Karlovac, a manufacturing center on the main highway from Zagreb to the Adriatic.

In order to cut north-south transport, Yugoslav forces have captured key crossroads towns, such as Petrinja on the Kupa River, 12km from Sisak, which finally fell to Serb tanks early in October, and Kostajnica on the border with Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croats call this the "salami strategy." They feel Serbia wants to slice their country into sections, to control a piece at a time.

— J.W.

## YUGOSLAV TERROR ROCKET

This Yugoslav rocket launcher, LRL M-71 128mm, fires a 27kg rocket from 800 to 8,000 meters, according to a Croat rocket technician trained by the Yugoslav army who briefed our team. He claimed the high-explosive-filled warhead will fracture eardrums 50 meters from wherever it hits.



Yugoslav 128mm M71 LRL rocket launcher and crew. Militiaman on left, a rocket technician trained by the Yugo army, briefed Wallace on this system. Photo: Jim Wallace

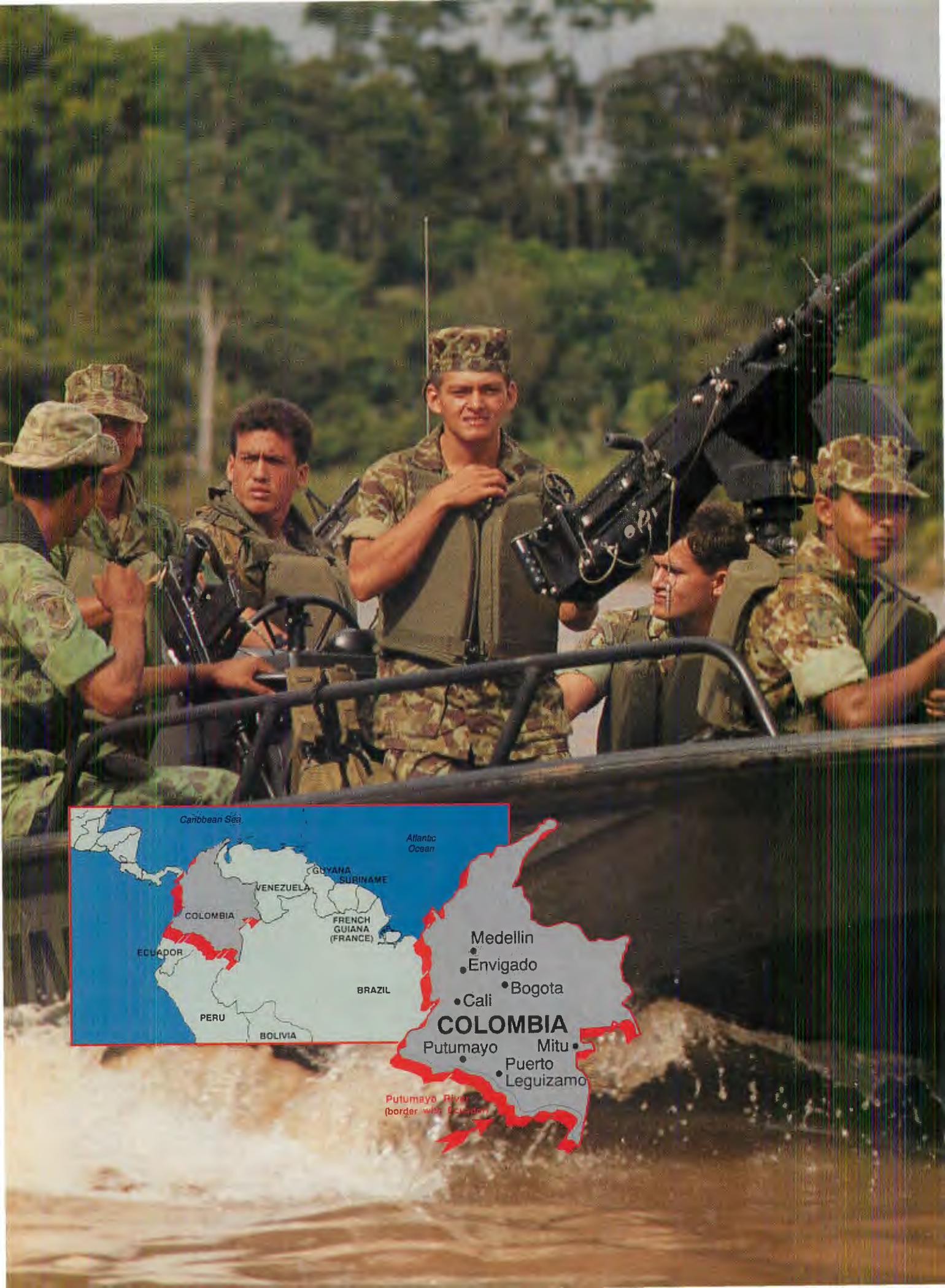
Its sight is a dual-purpose unit, also meant to be used as a mortar sight. A dual scale, graduated in mils, has red numerals for use with the rocket launcher and black for use with a mortar, probably the 120mm. The launcher must be anchored firmly with large screws through three baseplates before firing. Rounds are muzzle-loaded as with a mortar, and the firing device consists of a spring-wound generator with a built-in continuity tester. For transport, the firing device and sight mount inside the tube ends, sealing the mechanism.

A good crew will get three rockets off fast and then bug out rapidly, according to the technician, before counterbattery fire finds them. Back-blast danger area extends about 30 meters, and smoke trail is about 20-30 meters. He claimed the launcher's accuracy is significantly better than mortars.

— J.W.

Stipe observed, heading for the tail. I followed. It was a MiG-21. Stipe unscrewed a panel in the vertical stabilizer. "The black box is here. We should get the black box. You could give it to the CIA. Maybe they could learn something," he said. "In the army, they told us always to get the black box. Also,

Continued on page 111





Most rivers patrolled by these light, fast Piranhas are small and swift-flowing — yet are the transport net of Colombia.

# Just Say Alto!

## Fighting Narcs and Guerrillas on Colombia's River Network

Text & Photos by Milton C. Toby

**A**NYONE trying to make sense of the Byzantine twists and turns in Colombia's drug war these days has to be shaking their head in confusion.

After eluding authorities for years, Pablo Escobar, head of the powerful and violent Medellin Cartel, surrendered last June to Colombian authorities. He was then whisked by helicopter to a specially constructed prison near Envigado, his home town.

It would appear Escobar traded his surrender for leniency. There is speculation in Colombia he may serve a sentence as short as eight years, despite being implicated in hundreds of murders and other major crimes.

Surrender of Escobar and his cronies from the Medellin Cartel certainly was a moral victory for Colombia — its government even took out a full-page ad in the *Washington Post* asserting its success — but determining whether these events mark genuine victories in the drug war will have to wait.

Even if these surrenders completely shut down business of the Medellin Cartel, the flow of drugs out of Colombia may not be affected at all. Other individuals and

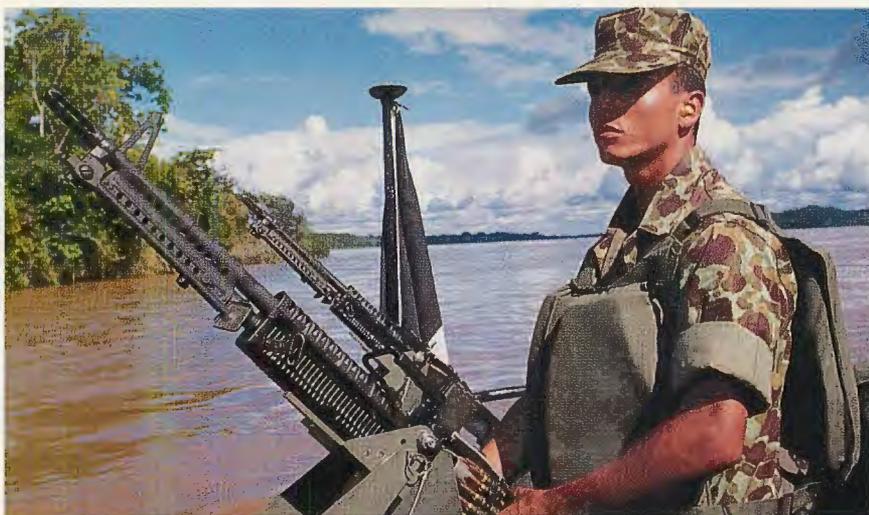
organizations, including the smaller Cali Cartel (see "Undercover in Colombia" on page 40 of this issue) already are taking up the slack in cocaine production.

Colombian President Cesar Gaviria called the timing a coincidence, but Escobar's surrender came only hours after a vote of Bogota's constituent assembly made extradition of criminals to other countries not legally possible. The combination of no extradition with a light sentence is an undeniably good deal for Escobar and other drug traffickers — so good that Colombians' resolve to pursue the drug war with real vigor now is being questioned in the United States.

Many Colombians feel the drug problem is one of consumption in other countries more than one of production by Colombia; so a compromise with traffickers to end years of violence, without necessarily reducing the flow of cocaine, is an honorable goal to some.

On the plus side, the Colombian government's anti-narcotics efforts are succeeding as never before. Through the first half of 1991, more than 40,000 kilos of cocaine were seized, nearly as much coke as was taken in all of 1990 (when 44,962 kilos were found), and far more than seizures in any year during the 1980s.

Many major drug interdiction opera-



**Riverine on routine patrol wears life preserver while manning M60 machine gun mounted on Piranha.**

tions in Colombia have been orchestrated by anti-narcotics units of the Colombian National Police, but the military now threatens to turn up the heat on drug traffickers as well. General Louis Eduardo Roca, commander of Colombia's armed forces, recently told his officers to renew and intensify operations against groups which manufacture and export cocaine.

**I**n recent months the military has been busy trying to deal with increased guerrilla activities, at the expense of their anti-narcotics efforts, but the emphasis now may be shifting back to the narcos.

Military actions during continuing Dignity Operation Maneuvers this year already have resulted in more than 50 arrests and seizures of some 8,600 kilos of cocaine, numerous weapons, vehicles, and communications equipment; plus destruction of 10 processing labs, according to General Roca.

#### Tell It To The Riverines

Some of the newest tools in the military's drug interdiction arsenal are riverine squads which are already beginning to patrol some Colombian rivers.

River operations in Colombia are nothing new. They have been conducted by the military for years, but have shown little for their efforts. Ill-equipped and often outgunned by the narcos and guerrillas, the old river patrols seldom ventured out at night, and generally did not conduct raids on land.

However, the new riverine squads are well-armed, highly mobile and capable of operating both at night and on land. For the first time they should give the Colombian military a meaningful presence on the rivers.

Flying south from Bogota to Puerto Leguizamo to spend a week with some riverine squads midway through their training, I easily could see why control of rivers is so important to the military, to the

narcos, and to guerrillas.

Terrain along the Putumayo River, which borders Ecuador, is typical of many Colombian regions: The jungle is impenetrable and roads simply do not exist. One exception is Puerto Leguizamo, which has one road out to La Tagua, another port town a few miles away on the Caqueta River.

In much of the country where narcos and guerrillas operate there are only two ways to move people and goods — both legitimate and illegal: Use the rivers or fly into tiny airfields carved out of the jungle.

For heavy, bulky items, like coca leaves or paste, drums of chemicals for processing cocaine, or laboratory equipment and supplies, only the rivers are practical. They are the jungle interstates, and authorities hope the riverines will become their new "highway patrol."

#### Fishing And Piranhas

Colombia's riverine program has operated only since early this year. When I visited Puerto Leguizamo in late May there were two groups up and running, and another two in training. A fleet of 20 operational boats is a goal of the program, being funded by the United States as part of an antinarcotics aid package to total \$30 million during the current fiscal year.

The 22-foot Piranha boats, purchased from U.S. supplier Boston Whaler at some \$85,000 each, are equipped with impressive hardware. They mount a .50

**Riverines, armed with M14 rifles, search owner of small boat at checkpoint. All river traffic is subject to search; night traffic is forbidden.**



caliber machine gun in the bow, two M60 machine guns on each side near the stern, communications equipment and twin Evinrude outboards, giving a top speed of around 35 knots fully loaded. The Piranhas should be able to outrun, and riverines aboard outgun, almost any opposition they are likely to meet on the water.

After a few days in Leguizamo (which included some "fishing" with C-4 explosives you won't see on "The American Sportsman"), my introduction to the riverine program came during a nighttime search-and-seizure exercise on the Putumayo River.

Our target barge was making little headway against the swift current, and since we were running without lights on a nearly moonless night, the only hint of illumination came from a few lights in Puerto Leguizamo. Tracking the barge about 100 yards aft and to starboard were two riverine patrol boats. I knew they were there only because I had been briefed on the exercise.

**T**he sleek, dark-hulled Piranhas were completely invisible in the darkness, and the sound of their twin Evinrudes was masked by engine noise from the tug pushing the barge upstream.

I had no idea the boats had moved just a few yards from the barge until a blinding searchlight beamed from the lead boat and a command to stop was shouted. The lead boat circled slowly, a marine playing the searchlight over the barge. A second boat avoided the light and stayed out of sight, providing cover. An unsuspecting barge crew almost certainly would never know a second boat hid there unless there was trouble, which of course was the idea.

#### Convivial Pursuit

Riverines had gone through their first search-and-seizure exercises earlier that day, practicing first while the barge was moored at a dock, then later as we were underway. The exercises had seemed like a game for some trainees, and a few joked through their searches and grinned while they politely frisked their "prisoners."

Colombians tend to be easy-going, an officer explained, so they often have trouble being firm in their searches. And that can get them in trouble. *Be thorough, be forceful, take charge of a situation at the start* were principles emphasized over and over in training.

That night in the dark, things seemed a little more real, maybe a little more dangerous. When the patrol boat pulled alongside the barge for a few seconds and a half-dozen riverines boarded, they were all business. Smiles and jokes were gone, replaced by a purposefulness which had been missing earlier in daylight.

Search procedures learned by riverines are more or less standard for customs services worldwide: Get the crew and passengers to the front of the boat where they can be searched and guarded, then carefully check out contents of the vessel.

Riverines do not conduct invasive searches — procedures involving boat dismantling to find built-in hiding places — because such efforts are time consuming, and few boats they encounter will have such sophisticated design.

### Coke, Chemicals, Contraband

Searchers concentrate their efforts on looking for cocaine and its precursors, for production chemicals en route to laboratories, and also for weapons and booby traps.

Trainees' enthusiasm was not always matched by their skill. One marine shoved aside a heavy iron hatchcover without noticing that attached to it was a thin wire, triggering a smoke bomb. Chagrined, he smiled through the thick, blue-gray smoke and said: "Commandante, there is a bomb."

"Don't tell me," a marine in charge of the boarding party replied, "tell St. Peter. You're already dead."

A second marine fell victim to a smoke bomb hidden in a pile of lumber stacked on deck, while a third was caught when one of the "prisoners" evaded his guards and set off a booby trap attached with duct tape to the superstructure.

They were good lessons, and important ones for the riverines to remember, since mistakes in a real operation can be deadly. Earlier this year several marines were killed or injured by a real bomb inadvertently set off during an upriver search.

A few riverines later got to put their training into practice when a small boat stopped at a nearby checkpoint. River traffic is prohibited by night, and any boat on the water after dark is fair game for authorities.

During the day all boats passing the Puerto Leguizamo checkpoint must stop and be searched, and the riverine patrol will also have authority to stop and search any boat, anywhere, at any time. One of the principle aims of the program is to set up random floating checkpoints at various locations to make narco and guerrilla travel more difficult.

The unit's first real search was uneventful — people on the boat probably knew the drill better than the riverines — and the cargo, including a few drums of gasoline, appeared legitimate. Gasoline also can be used in manufacturing cocaine, though. Training stresses awareness of cargoes which seem innocent, but in fact might not be.

### Suspicious Cargoes

It is unlikely that all the various processing chemicals would be carried on the same boat at the same time, but the same boat, or same crew, making repeated trips with seemingly innocuous cargoes should trigger some suspicion. And some obvious processing chemicals like acetone or sulfuric and hydrochloric acids probably should never be considered legitimate.

Not every boat on the river will be a slow-moving barge like ours in the exercise, and not every crew will be cooperative, so riverine training also includes pursuit techniques. Even fully loaded, the Piranhas should be able to easily outrun any vessel riverines might encounter, at least in a real-life situation. Training is another matter, and a good skipper in a similarly equipped boat can give young marine coxswains and their Piranhas a real run for the money.

Thirty-five mph — only a little faster than school-zone speed in a car — takes on an entirely new dimension on the river. Going that speed in a straight line on calm water is exciting. Going that fast in close pursuit of another boat, with a good driver who alternates running flat out with zig-zagging between floating logs while coming ridiculously close to shore, gives an unmistakable adrenaline rush.



Riverines practice searches on fellow trooper. Good-natured Colombians must learn to be stern on job.

Riverines always wear life jackets in case they get bounced out of a boat — always a hazard while inexperienced coxswains are trying to learn the finer points of pursuit, and an even greater danger during the stress of an actual high-speed chase.

Boat handling, maintenance and safety are emphasized throughout training, and even the best boat drivers may get into trouble through exuberance or equipment failure. The latter left one boat several feet up in a tree during a high-speed training run early in the program, and the explanation — "If it hadn't been for that tree we would have made it!" — fits nicely among other infamous last words.

Denying the rivers to narcos and guerrillas will be the primary function of riverine patrols, but they will also be expected to plan and execute land raids against processing laboratories, jungle airstrips and guerrilla outposts. Riverine trainees come into the month-long program with basic military skills, but more sophisticated insertion and extraction techniques must be learned, and the exercises, from simple two-boat maneuvers to

complex four-boat operations, are repeated again and again.

The riverines' introduction to land operations was a two-boat exercise with the lead boat landing eight to 10 marines, then speeding away from shore to relative safety mid-river. The second boat remained off shore to provide constant cover for the landing. After a few minutes of reconnaissance (during which they were supposed to have come across a larger contingent of narcos or guerrillas), the marines tossed a smoke grenade to signal retreat and delineate their flank, then moved to the riverbank to be extracted.

There was evidence that the operational briefing might have been a little too brief, however. Problems during the first few landings included boats being grounded on the bank and riverines mixing up assignments while failing to provide cover for each other. By morning's end, however, exercises were going smoothly.

Insertion-extraction maneuvers were repeated that afternoon with hot guns, a luxury for the Colombian military, as live-fire exercises are often curtailed due to supply shortages. Whatever the reason — whether the morning's practice runs were paying dividends, or if it was the daunting prospect of their friends in cover boats loading live ammunition into machine guns — riverines' landings and pick-ups came off without a hitch.

Covering formations were quickly set up, both on the riverbank and during the exercise's recon portion. Also, the riverines were especially careful when time came to call in fire for their retreat.

### The Cattle Is The Payoff

Gunners in the cover boat had orders to shoot only when they saw smoke from riverines on shore, and to fire only into the designated kill zone. The only casualty from the first two training sessions was a cow. Locals are advised before live-fire training is planned, but this farmer apparently did not get the message. Or maybe he just needed a new cow.

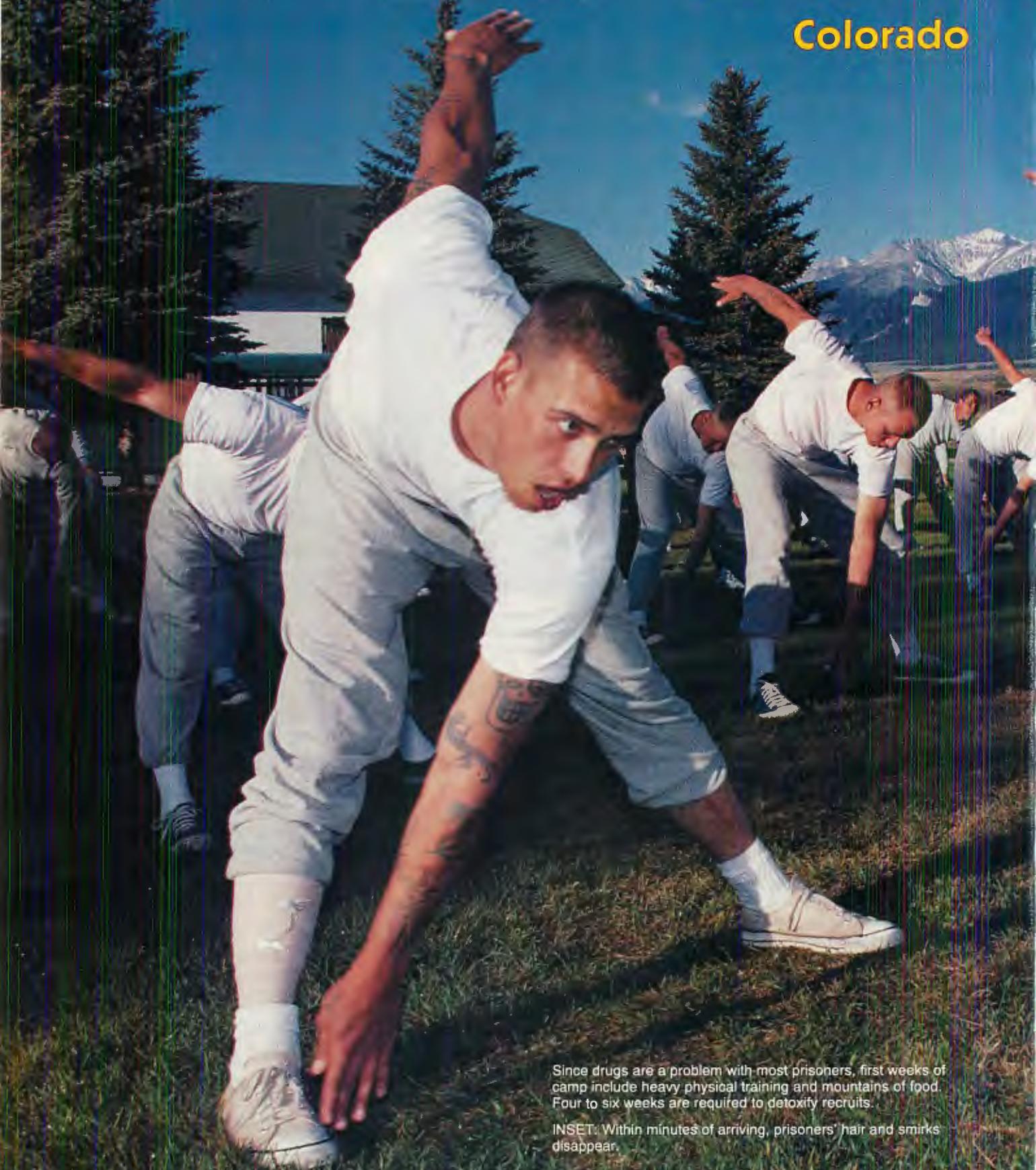
Subsequent exercises got more complicated. There were four-boat drills, with two boats providing cover and two others rotating to insert and extract two squads of riverines. Also, a complex overnight assault leading into another land operation. For that one, riverine officers had to plan a daybreak raid against a position several kilometers from Puerto Leguizamo. After spending an uncomfortable night on the water, trainees were then inserted for a live-fire dawn assault on the position.

One "prisoner" taken during the successful raid was carrying a map detailing supposed guerrilla movements near Puerto Leguizamo. Using such intelligence gathered during the raid, riverines then had to stage a live-fire ambush on the town's outskirts of the town.

*Continued on page 108*

# BAD BOY

Colorado



Since drugs are a problem with most prisoners, first weeks of camp include heavy physical training and mountains of food. Four to six weeks are required to detoxify recruits.

INSET: Within minutes of arriving, prisoners' hair and smirks disappear.

# BLUES

## Cons Pass Jail, Go Directly to Boot Camp

by Morgan Tanner      Photos by David Bjorkman



**“Y**OU slime balls, I’ll smoke you like a cheap cigar!” Lieutenant John Fandrey shouts to 30 men inside a blue prison bus.

As the motley crew ambles off the bus, Fandrey’s personnel descend on them like hornets.

“Get over here,” orders Fandrey, pointing to three-dozen sets of yellow-painted footsteps. His voice sounds like the business-end of a buzz saw, a serious asset in his position as head drill instructor (DI). “Here, you do not walk. This is not a picnic. Every step you take, you’re at double-time.”

Fandrey’s men swarm over the prisoners, probing for attitudes — “Are you bad, man? You’re just a punk!” They use no physical contact, no profanity except for emphasis, and no racial slurs, but their in-your-face, shouted orders are verbal punches.

Belly-to-belly, nose-to-nose, they taunt the prisoners into reacting — “You’re a maggot. Say it! Say, ‘sir, I’m a maggot, sir.’” The prisoners’ jaws clench in anger and fear, their sweat runs. Their every smirk, every hesitation, is punished with push-ups, performed until their shaking arms freeze up — “You wanna’ quit, do it now before the bus leaves.” Boot camp has begun.

“You got 90 days of hell ahead of you,” Fandrey screeches. “You know what state you’re in? You’re in the state of shock. The only way you’re going to survive here is to follow orders.”

It's your basic initial shock incident, a method used in military boot camps to identify recruits copping an attitude, and those likely to be lazy or resist authority. Fandrey and his personnel use it for the same reason. Like the Marines, their mission is to build a Few Good Men. Their obstacle is that their "recruits" are young, first-time felons sentenced to several years' hard time for nonviolent crimes such as cocaine possession, auto theft or burglary.

Each "zero" day, 30 or so new prisoners are delivered in handcuffs and shackles to the boot camp at the prison facility in Buena Vista, Colo., high in the Rocky Mountains. Craggy Mount Princeton, a 14,000-foot peak in the Collegiate Range, is back-drop to this school of hard knocks. Prisoners arrive wearing their attitudes like cloaks of invincibility. Within minutes, their hair and smirks disappear. Their attitudes take a little longer.

"My goal is to wipe their slate clean," says Fandrey, 38, a long, lean, rusty nail of a man with 14 years as an Army Ranger and Green Beret. "I want to wipe away their identity of drugs and broken homes. I want them to be able to start over."

A do-over is what correctional boot camp offers its recruits — one last hand-hold in their fall down the long, dark well of habitual crime. In effect, they exchange sentences of three to five years or longer for three months in boot camp — if they survive. "Shock incarceration" are the words coined to describe the experience. The method is behavior modification, as applied in military boot camps.

"Military recruit training is behavior modification in nature," says Major Mike Perry, head of the Colorado boot camp and a 20-year Marine veteran with seven years' experience in recruit and officer candidate training. "You take a civilian and get him used to regimented military life and also a changing value system.

"In our society, it's an aberration to kill another individual. So in the military our objective is to put out a warrior — someone able to go into combat and kill another human being and still come back and function in society on a normal basis," Maj. Perry adds.

The objective of the correctional boot camp is to build functional, productive citizens out of criminals 18 to 25 years old. It's a process beginning with the "zero" day shock treatment which softens their egos, through the stress of physical exertion and in-your-face screaming.

"I'll break them," Fandrey promises. "I can get pretty harsh. I can get pretty rude. I want that kid to cry, to let out his

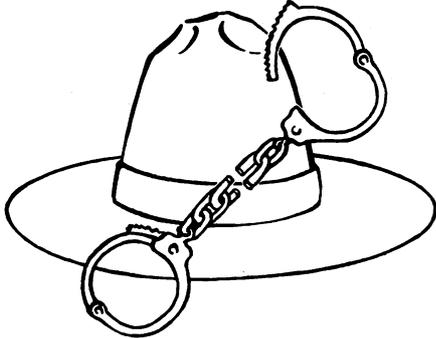
emotions."

"It's like being cornered by a big, mean dog. I take him apart, and then I back off and talk man-to-man. Within about five minutes I can go from being very negative, pounding on a kid, to being very positive and putting him back together," Fandrey says.

Taking-apart lasts from a couple of days to a week. Stress is the crowbar used by Fandrey's DIs. From 0500 to 2100, dawn till dark.

"Get up, get out of the rack. Lock your body at attention!" screams DI Christopher Valdez at 0500 one June morning.

Valdez, 28, a former Marine, and Casey Swanson, 43, a corrections officer, rouse recruits before first light. They are sleep-



ing in military-surplus tents on the prison lawn, awaiting completion of a new boot camp facility. The thin mountain air is frosty.

"You got 30 seconds to get out of my house," Valdez shouts.

Men scramble into uniforms and re-

trieve their shoes from buckets outside the tent flap. New recruits spend nights without foot gear as a deterrent to running away.

"Are you sliming on me?" Valdez demands of a recruit stifling a yawn.

"Sir, no, sir."

"You move like pond water. It stands still and stinks. Get down," Valdez orders. The recruit drops to the ground and pounds out 20 push-ups. Recruits intimately know asphalt in the discipline area: a rectangular piece of hell, painted with footsteps and handprints which offer a self-guided tour of intense punishment.

#### Drying Out Pickled Brains

As a prerequisite for entering boot camp, recruits waive prisoners' rights to disciplinary hearings. DIs watch with eagle eyes for the slightest infractions. Punishment in the form of physical exercise is swift and consistent. The message is: Every action has a consequence. Their muscles burning with fatigue, the prisoners learn to follow the DIs' tough standards.

Every activity throughout their day subtly advances recruits through boot camp's lessons. Menial tasks teach them work ethic; following military protocol teaches them respect. In their first four weeks, physical exercise and mountains of food serve to detoxify them. Along their road to crime were many potholes — including dysfunctional families, abusive parents, lack of discipline and homelessness. But there was one common denominator:

"Dope," Perry says.

They have pickled their brains with

alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and LSD, so it takes four to six weeks for them to dry out. According to U.S. Justice Department statistics, more than 50% of all jail inmates report being high on drugs or alcohol at the time of their crime; for young offenders, that figure might be higher.

In Colorado, as elsewhere, drugs are commonly available behind prison walls, and for that reason Perry doesn't allow his recruits to have visitors, books or gifts, all of which might conceal drugs. Recruits' personal belongings are limited to a wedding ring and a religious medallion and/or document. They daily attend drug and alcohol counseling sessions and learn the 12-step Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) program.

One of 30 correctional boot camps nationwide, the Colorado program integrates military-style disciplines and physical exercise with drug counseling and educational programs, according to Perry. The point is not to build big biceps but to instill good values. This is done by creating a sense of family and society. The DIs serve as big brothers; Fandrey is the father and Perry is, well, higher.

"They're not quite sure what a man is," Perry explains, because few grew up with a good role model. "They're confused, misguided. We provide them with good examples."

"Sibling" rivalries among races haven't surfaced in the boot camp family as they have in prisons and the military. Ku Klux Klan-types are sprinkled into squads with Bloods or rival Crips gangmembers, dubbed by the staff as "cowards running in packs." Exhaustion is the great equalizer. Also, individualism — uttering the words "I" or "you" — is forbidden. No one is allowed to be anything but a team player.

After breakfast, Valdez and the men from the first platoon work out with weights made from logs. Named after Wilma Flintstone and neighbor Betty Rubble, the crude "barbells" are two stout lengths of tree trunk, stuck on the ends of a pipe. Muscular and confident, Valdez coaxes the recruits to out-perform their previous records on the theory that achievement builds achievers.

"Go five more," he encourages. "Don't quit on yourself. Nothing in life is free."

The men strain against the weight, and shine in their successes. The exercise resembles boys' camp more than boot camp. Until someone messes up. Valdez glances at a recruit rolling up the sleeves on his T-shirt.

"You think you're back on the block?" Valdez asks.

"Sir, just getting sun, sir," the recruit says.

"Sir, Elvis, sir," another recruit adds.

Valdez nods. The strong mountain sun can burn a "farmer's tan" within minutes.

"Eyeballs here," he growls and starts



After haircuts, recruits are hosed down to wash away residue and prevent dehydration. Their boots are soaking in buckets to prevent blisters.

rolling his own shirt sleeve. "Make yourself Elvis. One does Elvis, we all do Elvis."

**T**hat's the boot camp way. Even marching gears the recruits to stay in step with their society. During their first days in camp, they begin each march maneuver with the shouted reminder: "Sir, take a full 30-inch step with the left foot, sir." Nevertheless, some start with their right foot, and their ranks are wavy-gravy. But after a month of training, they perform left flank, right flank and counter-column without a hitch. Under the DIs' watchful direction, they begin to shed attitudes like an outgrown coat.

As Valdez tells them, "Be all that you can be without the Army."

#### How To Become A Drill Instructor

To a certain extent, the DIs' experience at boot camp mirrors that of the recruits.

First there's the requirement for physical fitness. Perry makes it a condition of employment that both DIs and case managers (counselors) must be able to do 10 pull-ups, run 2 miles (at 8,000-foot altitude) in less than 16 minutes and do 40 sit-ups in two minutes.

"We wanted the job bad enough to go out and get it," case manager Patrick Drawbridge says. "In the prison, a lot of (employees) knew they weren't going to be able to make it, so they began bad-mouthing the program."

"Everyone out here had to sacrifice something in their personal value system," Maj. Perry adds. Some quit smoking and chewing tobacco. Drawbridge gave up the beard he had worn 17 years. All the men gave up a normal haircut for a high-and-tight scalping.

As for training, Fandrey, Valdez, Swanson, Keith Monahan (a former Air Force captain) and Kevin Coblentz went to the Marine base at Quantico, Virginia, which also trains corrections officers. (The Army has scheduled a similar course at Fort McClellan, Ala.) There, the word "stress" took on a new meaning for them as Marine DIs applied their own expert in-your-face techniques.

"The theory is that before they can

adequately dish out stress, they have to get a taste of it," says Marine Captain Robert Sellers, officer-in-charge when the Colorado DIs attended.

The first four days were chaos, according to Sellers. "Working as a team was difficult for them," he notes. "We had 74 corrections officers from eight states, all with different uniforms, attitudes and ways of doing things.

"We wanted them to see that you can take a diverse group and by putting them through hardships together, they learn to work together. But for the first few days, they remained in their state groups," Sellers adds. "Finally, we broke them up by forcing them to interact with other states and people of different ranks. That helped build the team."

Most important, the corrections DIs learned the value of leadership by example: never demanding of their charges something they can't or don't do with them. "You always have to be ahead of the recruits," Sellers concludes.

#### Universities Of Crime

Negative example is one reason ex-convicts are more likely to return to prison



Physical training includes weight lifting with homemade "Flintstones" barbells — two lengths of tree trunk stuck on the ends of a pipe.

than go straight. According to national statistics, from 40 to 66% of first-time offenders return to jail after being released; they essentially do "life on the installment plan."

**I**n the early 1970s, judges, psychologists and criminologists gathered to discuss why recidivism (return to prison) was so high — why rehab programs didn't seem to work. The consensus was that prisons are universities of crime, where career criminals set the standards.

"Inside, life is rough unless you have a gang to run with," says boot camp case manager Gus Argys. "Bikers, Bloods, Crips, Aryans ... If you're on your own, they'll steal your clothes and canteen articles, beat and rape you. These recruits out here, they're scared to death of going



Prisoners exchange three to five-year prison sentences for three months in boot camp — if they can take it. No physical contact, profanity or racial slurs are used — just in-your-face, nose-to-nose taunts, leaving prisoners' jaws clenched in anger and fear.

inside."

**"A**s soon as you expose them to inmates, they start developing that career-criminal identity," Perry adds. He keeps his recruits completely isolated from the prison population — even from mentors exhorting them to stay out of jail.

But the verdict is still out on the effectiveness of boot-camp rehabilitation. In 1979, Georgia corrections officials felt they had a moral duty to try and help first-time offenders straighten out, so they started the nation's first military-style prison program, followed by Florida and other states. Skeptics who have seen dozens of other rehab programs fail have little faith the boot camps can make any difference. They say boot-camp recidivism statistics aren't any better than those of many real prisons. Others cite a best-case return rate of 20%, or a worst-case rate of 45%.

"The statistics don't prove the score," Perry argues. Some programs have been downgraded by a non-military leadership, squeamish about the shock tactics or inexperienced in military behavior-modification techniques.

A financial advantage boot camps offer, however, is that they house four inmates at a cost of one in jail. "Our program is going to set the standards," Perry adds.

However, boot camp isn't about statistics, but men — the recruits, and the DIs and case managers who work with them. At 0430, when the instructors put on their Smokey Bear-style hats, they also put on the bark-and-bite persona it is believed will make a difference in the recruits' lives.

In observing, you never get the impression DIs are hostile or wound too tight. Fandrey calls it an on-off switch.

*Continued on page 96*

# SHOOT

Elephants, Rhinos —  
Endangered Species in

# KENYA

Perhaps Tsavo's last rhino?



Photo: Gamma/Liaison

Big, dumb - and worth  
\$15,000-20,000 per horn.



Photo: Gamma/Liaison

How many dead  
elephants does it  
take to make  
a billiard ball ...?



Photo: Guerrini/Liaison

Nairobi  
Tsavo  
National Park  
Malindi  
Mombasa



This one died  
trying to find out.

Photo: courtesy author

# TO KILL

## and Poachers — Become Kenya

by Sibyl MacKenzie

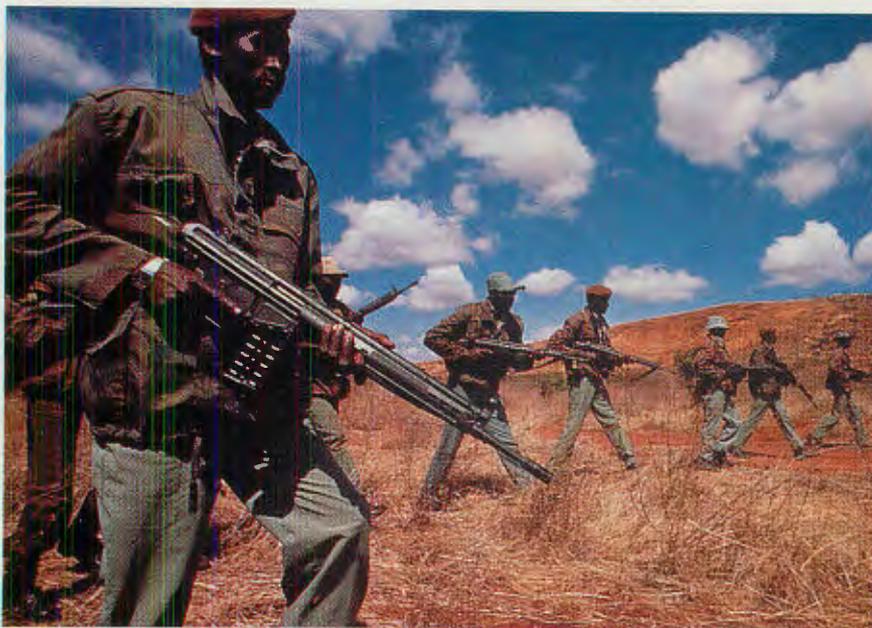
**L**ike a coven of witches slaving over a promising sacrificial victim, Somalia, Ethiopia, the Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania surround Kenya. They don't make good enough fences for these kind of neighbors. Bristling with AK-47s wielded by the socially undeveloped, administered by the inept or corrupt and utterly impoverished, these countries are not among Africa's success stories. Despite several outstanding problems, Kenya, however, is.

William Meda, secretary of information for the Kenyan Embassy in Washington, D.C., admits "refugees" present one of the bigger problems. People with guns, facing famine and political chaos in their own lands, roam into Kenya looking to make a buck anyhow, anywhere. Another serious problem, endemic to the Third World, is over-population.

In 1969 Kenya's population was 11 million. Today it is estimated at 25 million, with 60% less than 15 years old. A whopping 4.1% birthrate in the



**M**ount Kilimanjaro frames Managing Editor Coleman and author near Tanzanian border. During that phase of the trip, SOF's team traveled in convoy with armed Kenya police escorts. In 1989, five tourists and naturalist George Adamson were shot and killed in separate incidents in Kenya's parks, probably by poachers. Photo: Robert MacKenzie



early '80s triggered a serious governmental birth-control program, but the birthrate remains high, at 3.4% in 1990. At least the government is trying. Other countries equally hard hit, but less concerned, will contribute to the doubling of Africa's human population in 24 years.

#### Species Extermination Inc.

**A**dd a mass of hungry people with modern weapons to a black-market price of \$15,000-20,000 per kilogram (2.2 pounds) of rhino horn, and you begin to understand why Lloyd's of London probably wouldn't insure African rhinos for any fee.

I sure wouldn't want to be a rhino—big, stupid, uncamouflaged, with the proverbial pot of gold sitting on my nose. Nor would I want to be an elephant, even bigger albeit brighter, with a fortune sticking out of my mouth.

With these facts in mind I could put the TV program I had seen last fall into context. I had switched on a public broadcast documentary (neutrally entitled "African Elephants" or something like that) only to see camouflaged game rangers, observation aircraft overhead, in a vicious firefight with a gang of poachers. I sat up. Somebody had gotten serious about poaching in Africa. That somebody turned out to be President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, pushed to desperate measures.

1988 was a very bad year for Kenyan wildlife. In all of Kenya there were only 500 rhinos left. Meru Park dolefully reported the loss of their last five in a brazen attack on 30 October. Thirty heavily armed poachers had held out-gunned rangers of Meru Park headquarters at bay, while they slaughtered all five rhinos and removed their horns.

In the Shaba Game Reserve three rangers were killed when their vehicle was ambushed by poachers, making off with tusks of four elephants slaughtered earlier.

**I**n 1988 Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi gave the order to shoot poachers on sight, a highly controversial decision but also highly effective: In May 1989 only nine elephants were reported killed in the Tsavo area, while prior to that an average of two elephants were killed each day.

Photo: Guerrini/Liaison



**C**ulling — the controlled shooting of animals — is one of the most hotly debated practices in Africa today. Many countries have outlawed culling, but others, such as Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa, believe it's a necessary population-control measure. Human nature being what it is, culling ops also offer many windows for corruption.

Photo: Louise Gubb/Liaison

In another park, 92 elephants were reported killed in just a few months.

The plight of Kenya's elephants, having dropped from a population of 140,000 in 1970 to less than 16,000 by 1989, mirrored that of Africa as a whole. In 1979, Africa's total elephant population was 1,300,000. By 1991, they numbered less than 650,000. In the early '80s, some 100,000 elephants annually — including calves — died to supply the yearly demand for 800 tons of ivory.

Average tusk size on the 1982 illegal market weighed 21.3 pounds. By 1989 the average weight was down to 10 pounds, because all larger animals had been slaughtered and poachers were now working on females and young males. These dire circumstances forced President Moi in 1988 to order all poachers shot on sight.

Poachers not only threatened the survival of elephants and rhinos, but of Kenya's economy. Tourism, Kenya's primary source of foreign exchange, was also being hit. In 1989, five tourists and a well-known naturalist named George Adamson were shot and killed in separate game park incidents.

**O**ne of these involved a bus full of Americans who came under fire, with one woman killed. Kenyan safari tours went on special in American travel agencies, and still didn't sell. The PBS documentary noted the draconian measures taken to rectify Kenya's poaching ills and mentioned that a fellow named Simon Trevor, based in Tsavo East Park, had not only done much of the filming, but had helped evolve a strategy to save the animals.

#### One Lonely Rhino

Thundering through another pothole, more accurately described as a crater, with red dust filling the gaps in my teeth like grout, perched in back of a small Suzuki four-wheel drive with amputated shock absorbers, I began to regret ever having heard of Simon Trevor.

The guys sat in front. Both SOF Managing Editor John Coleman and Contributing Editor Bob MacKenzie, also my husband, had politely offered to sit on the rear metal bench, but I had foolishly refused. I was, after all, smaller, and the space was not ample. With each ensuing jolt I suspected I was becoming even smaller, or at least more compact.

It was April 1991, and we were on our way to see Simon Trevor at Tsavo East. Kenya has set aside some 7.6% of its land for wildlife reserves, and Tsavo East together with Tsavo West comprise one of the largest protected areas in the world, covering a territory nearly as large as Massachusetts.

Our destination lay near the end of the road from Nairobi to Mombasa, on the country's main highway to the sea. A new tar road — black, smooth and tempting, but still waiting for lines to be painted

—lay inviolate to our left. We jolted and jounced down the “temporary” bypass.

Sandwiched between ancient and very large trucks of bizarre configuration, all driven by heat-crazed, paid-by-the-load drivers, we spent five hours doing 125 miles. Finally, turning off one of Africa’s famous “hell-runs,” we arrived.

**S**imon Trevor, bronzed and wiry, but seeming a little tentative about yet another bunch of elephant-huggers from America, met us in the shady veranda of his house inside the gates of Tsavo. Kenya’s equatorial sun shone through cracks and crevasses in the wooden walls, and the din of manual construction clattered in the background as some addition to the house went up. We explained that we were interested in poaching.

Simon Trevor has lived in Tsavo East since 1958 when 45,000 elephants roamed its hills and savannas, and he has seen many natural fluctuations in the environment. There were droughts in the 1950s, ’60s and ’70s for instance, and nearly 9,000 elephants died as a result.

Then in the 1970s poaching became widespread. Some 30,000 elephants have fallen to gunfire since then. In the same period, a once thriving rhino population dropped from 6,000 to zero, virtually all of them dying for their horn. Trevor says there might be one left, but he hasn’t been seen for a while. One lonely rhino.

### Killing, Culling, Cutting, And Aphrodisiacs

Too late for the rhinos, poaching has finally been stopped in Tsavo. Following President Moi’s 1988 directive, hundreds of poachers have been killed, and others arrested and jailed. Anti-poaching police units, paramilitary police and park rangers have been trained, armed and equipped to beat gangs from Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia and Ethiopia.

Networks of local informers have been used to track and arrest criminals. Anthropologist Richard Leakey, appointed head of Kenya’s Wildlife Service in April 1989, has weeded out corrupt officials and reorganized his park rangers into an honest, efficient force. As a result, in May 1989 only nine elephants were reported killed in the Tsavo area, while prior to this an average of two elephants were killed each day.

**T**revor sees suppression of the world ivory trade as the most effective way to save “jumbos,” and, in his mind, the jumbos are the flagship: “If we can’t even keep the elephants alive, how can we save all the other, less-publicized animals? If there were no market for ivory, then there would be no poaching.”

In October 1989, 105 of the 110 nations party to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species agreed to ban the raw ivory trade. Important exceptions are South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana; all with large herds of

## HEADING FOR KENYA?

A few helpful (we hope) pointers:

- Go in the off-season. We lucked out: no rain; cheaper rates and far fewer obnoxious tourists.

- Get your shot record up to date, and take your malaria pills. Lots of refugees coming in bring bugs. Buy Flying Doctor medical service insurance when you rent your four-wheeler; they’ll come pick you up unless the mosquitos carry you off first.

- All the tour books call Kenyan maps “unreliable.” Wrong. They’re terrible. Expect errors of 50-60km if you can ever find the road the map says is supposed to be there. At least if you head east you’ll hit the Indian Ocean sooner — or later.

- If you’re going anywhere outside Nairobi, don’t rent anything less than we did: a four-wheel-drive 1.1-liter Suzuki. It cost more than U.S. \$100 per day; Land Rovers will bump over U.S. \$250. Get a Rover if you can swing it as there’s less chance a 3-foot-deep pothole will swallow you whole. Use the major agencies; they may cost more, but they say they will come get you if your bush-buster goes bust in the bush.

- Don’t sleep on the beach (so we were told by the locals) and don’t screw around in the coastal towns, especially after dark. The only safe place to park your car in Mombasa is the Mombasa Club, after you’ve “tipped” the security guard coming and going. There isn’t a safe place to park your car in Malindi further up the coast. In between there are scores of seaside resort hotels catering mainly to Italians; your guess is as good as ours as to how safe they are.

- One notable exception to the above “no camping” advisory: One of Simon Trevor’s cohorts recommended a secure beachfront campsite on the southern edge of Malindi, the Silver Sands, and he couldn’t have been more right. For a couple of bucks you can throw your sleeping bag on the beach and crash, all the while surrounded by security guards, hot showers, clean toilets and a little food kiosk next door. For a few more bucks you can rent a tiny bungalow with two to four beds. Best deal we ran across in Kenya.

- Buy your bush shoes in Kenya from the Bata shoe chain. Cheap and good. You can rent some camping gear, but little things like gas canisters for cook stoves were hard to find and expensive when we did. Carry in as much as you can, but stay away from military-looking and camouflaged gear, a rule of thumb for all of Africa.

—John Coleman

elephants. These three countries practice “culling,” a population-control measure that is anathema to Trevor.

A commonly used option for wildlife control, culling allows the licensed

shooting of elephants when a country’s herds grow too large for their environment. But according to Trevor, all culling operations are windows for corruption. Any pile of dead elephants can be called a culling operation, and any legal sale of ivory opens channels for illegal marketing as well. Countries which allow culling defend the practice hotly and with considerable scientific justification, but there is evidence corrupt officials have reaped enormous personal profits from doctored counts and “license fees.”

Rhinos are even more difficult to protect than elephants, as rhino horn is easier to smuggle and far more valuable. Most of it goes to the Arabian Peninsula, where the horn is carved into dagger handles, or to eastern Asia where it is ground into aphrodisiac powders of dubious merit. There used to be hundreds of thousands of black rhino in Africa, but now there are less than 4,000, and East Africa has fewer than 1,000 alive today.

Trevor doubts the merit of a recently introduced practice of cutting horns from live rhinos to make the animal valueless to poachers. It’s expensive, he told us, difficult to perform on an unwilling rhino, and the horns grow back in three years. Besides, poachers rarely check to see whether a rhino has a horn before they fill it full of AK-47 rounds. They shoot first and look later.

### Shillings For Lives

**T**revor considers current paramilitary anti-poaching efforts too expensive to maintain permanently. He is more hopeful for success of the Tsavo Community Conservation Project, initiated at the same time as the anti-poaching program in 1988. This program and others like it channel profits from national parks directly back to villagers living on park borders.

In return, local residents help by reporting and identifying poachers, and refrain from killing wandering animals. Community awareness that a dead elephant dead might provide one huge feast — but that money from tourists who come to see that elephant can go on for years — is critical to change the attitudes of tribesmen.

Local tribes have understandably resented appropriation of their lands to create parks sheltering animals whose habits sometimes cause damage to crops and people. Now, local groups are cooperating on ways of using park revenues to benefit both people and animals. Trevor’s long-held view that coexistence is not only possible but mutually beneficial is being accepted in government circles as well as tribal councils.

For instance, elephants push down trees, thereby opening up grasslands which are used by cattle farmers. Jumbos also keep

*Continued on page 98*

# CHAO FA

## SOF Joins H'mong

Trooper with ChiCom Type 56-1 rifle: U.S. M16 rifles are preferred for lightness, but Kalashnikov-type weapons are more practical due to availability of captured ammo.



**B**EFORE us lies the Pathet Lao camp, its communist garrison unaware our patrol has crept to within 100 meters of their position.

One by one, H'mong tribesmen creep up to an opening in the thick bamboo to take a look, to marvel at the peacefulness of the scene. So eager are they at times to share in the excitement of the moment that five or six wedge themselves into the narrow opening, forming a diminutive knot of green-suited soldiers.

It has not been easy, but a day of

# FIREFIGHT

## in Embattled Laos

Text & Photos by Tom Marks

slithering through the jungle has been rewarded. Surprise is on our side.

With great deliberation, the men pick their fields of fire — RPG-7 rocket launcher to the left, M79 grenade launchers to the right, small arms providing security. Pang Chang Her, our 30-year-old “group” leader, talks softly into his ICOM radio to coordinate with his fire support, a 60mm tube aimed by dead reckoning from a nearby ridge.

Clearly, though, he has more than fire support on his mind. He’s worried I might get killed.

Half a dozen times as we approached the camp, the patrol had clustered around while Pang Chang earnestly asked if I

wanted to “remain here” or “go with the soldiers.” Each time I responded “go with the soldiers,” and explained that pictures taken a mile from the action would be more lethal to my career than anything the enemy could throw at us. Each time he had looked resigned and we had moved on.

Now that we had actually arrived, though, and stood face to face with a better-armed and more numerous enemy barricaded in bunkers, he was obviously worried. Could I possibly shrink? — he seems to wonder.

At 6 feet, I tower over my companions. Hill people, who all seem to come in at an average height somewhere between 5 feet and 5-foot 3 inches. They are so close to

Guerrillas in the mist ... “It’s easy to understand why the H’mong live in a world that fuses the tangible and the spiritual,” Marks observes.

the ground they don’t have to dig foxholes. I look like Snow White with armed dwarfs.

And my bush hat, in Pang Chang’s eyes, puts me in the starting lineup of the Celtics. But when he asks if I have a different color shirt — mine is the dark blue of the Thai peasant — I begin to chuckle.

“Enough already,” I whisper. “I’ll survive.”

My shirt is the least of our problems. Under a fierce sun, the hilltop is already awash in brilliant colors. For two weeks there has been little save fog and rain, but now we have a dazzling display of emerald, as even olive uniforms reflect the intense sunlight. Weapons twinkle; the red

and black streamers many men wear on their shirt sleeves — to call for help from the spirits — look like neon insignias of rank. I keep my shirt.

As Pang Chang moves me from place to place, trying to make my sheer bulk blend in with something (I actually weigh but 160 pounds), his deputy Xiong Por, 34, adjusts firing positions and checks the weapons. Ammunition supplies are limited, so it is important to make the most of the precious seconds of advantage surprise will bring. My concern, of course, is to capture the activities on film.

### Duel in The Sun

This takes some doing, because the sun is so bright it is absolutely necessary that it be behind me. So each time Pang Chang puts me somewhere, a spot selected with safety in mind, I must crawl away to get a better angle. And each subsequent position I take up is, in his eyes, more dangerous than the last. Ah, if only I could explain “combat correspondent” in H’mong.

But at last we are ready. Pang Chang calls for the mortar crew to initiate attack. An exchange, unintelligible to me, follows over the ICOM. A crestfallen look crosses his face. The mortar crew, not yet having finished lunch, has asked for a delay.

In true H’mong fashion, Pang Chang gives his assent. For in a world where many groups are subsisting on a diet of cucumbers and rice, with rats thrown in for meat, food is not a consideration lightly dismissed. One patrol I accompanied was so weakened from improper diet that it halted virtually every 15 minutes to rest.

Still, every conflict has its rhythms, and delays here and there do not in the end alter the result — it is not long before the first of 10 mortar shells slams into the camp, and the Fourth of July is here. Simultaneously, Xiong Por puts an PG-7 round into a bunker.

### Jungle Combat

What follows is a jungle version of the “Mad Minute.” For a moment, we have the advantage. As mortar and PG rounds fly into the camp, several structures go down. A brief glimpse of figures scrambling for emplacements, then I am too busy clicking away to see anything more, save the blur of motion around me.

Xiong Por has fired the first PG round from my left. Its tremendous roar and signature leave our position looking like an Indian smoke signal gone awry. Behind me, to my right, two M79s pop away. AK-47s pepper the camp as the Pathet Lao begin to return fire.

It takes them but a moment to recover. They have taken casualties, but intend to inflict some of their own. My blue shirt is the least of our problems: Our rocket smoke is like a beacon pointing to the thick stand of bamboo providing cover for Xiong Por.

A tremendous roar signals arrival of a Lao return RPG-7 shot. Xiong Por goes down, hit in the face by shell fragments, while I fly over backwards. A soldier between but slightly behind us ducks instinctively, and escapes entirely.

The round has hit just above where I had been crouching only moments before I had moved, predictably, to get a better camera angle. Yet the bamboo absorbs the brunt of the explosion. Xiong Por is up almost before I can refocus my camera. Blood

streams down his right cheek. Undeterred by either the wound or the hail of lead coming from the Lao position, he quickly reloads the RPG-7 and lets loose a second round. Then another. The fourth misfires.

### Incoming!

As Xiong Por pulls the dud from his tube, tinkers with it, tries to fire, then does this over several times, the sky rains nasty things. The camp itself has opened up with everything from machine guns to mortars, while mutually supporting positions miles away throw in artillery shells. The distinctive *Wuuuuump* of incoming rounds drowns out the yells of the patrol.

Handing the now-useless RPG-7 tube to another soldier, Xiong Por moves quickly to the other side of our attack formation. A crack shot, he instructs the M79 grenadiers to load for him, while he places round after round on the Lao camp.

Protected by thick tree trunks which look as though they belong more in Oregon than Laos, Xiong Por swings out and pops off a round, then swings back behind the cover. It is a rhythmic sequence, quick yet completely unhurried — Glance at the target. Check the weapon. Step Out. Pop. Step back. Weapon to loader. Check new weapon. Step Out. Pop. Throughout, his expression never changes. To his right, a fellow soldier follows his instructions and fires his own M79 — a deadly duet.

Meantime, the blocking force, forward of our position, peppers the camp gates to prevent an assault force from moving against us. The noise is deafening.

And every time I move to get an angle, Pang Chang casts anxious glances in my direction.

### They Shoot, We Shoot, I Shoot

I keep snapping pictures. I am to learn subsequently that the patrol is tickled to

death — a macabre pun, I admit — that I have insisted upon accompanying them “to the front,” though at times they no doubt must have been convinced they were shepherding a baby elephant through the bush. Everything, from the width of cuts in the thick brush to the height of hidden passages through bamboo groves, is sized for the little people. Fortunately, bullets are completely impartial. I’m just as safe — or as vulnerable — as the next man.

It finally is, in fact, considerations of increasing vulnerability which determine our next move. Smoke rises from the camp. We continue to score hits, but by this time our positions have been pinpointed. Indirect fire is beginning to land uncomfortably close. Hence, it is time to go.

We slide away, even as the Lao claw to get at us. Classic guerrilla warfare tactics leave the intended blows of our conventionally-minded foe with only air to strike.

Still, the Pathet Lao are not about to give up so easily. Under normal circumstances the H’mong would not have actually withdrawn, but only slid to another position, waiting to ambush Lao efforts to sally forth. This would have gone on several days before the patrol withdrew at its leisure. With me along, however, my safety seems to be of paramount concern. This isn’t my call: It’s just the way the H’mong do business.

Earlier in fact, prior to our departure, the Number Two man in the H’mong hierarchy, Yang Teng, 39, had briefed this patrol on the great honor they gained being accompanied by a foreign journalist. Though I couldn’t be sure, I also sensed (from the way their eyes changed expression) they were being told they had better bring me back. After all, I could imagine Yang Teng thinking: Dead journalists don’t produce good stories.

### Roots of Rebellion

And their struggle needs the publicity. While certain elements in the West are knocking themselves out to tear down Columbus and the destruction of native cultures which his “discovery” of the Americas began, an area such as Laos — where the “natives” are, right here and now, locked in combat against genocide — remains out of sight and out of mind. Few seem to know of the H’mong struggle: Fewer still seem to care.

The reason for this indifference is not difficult to discern. Put simply, the H’mong have, in recent years, consistently been on the “wrong side.” They are tarred by their association with the West in conflicts which have wracked Indochina.

In the First Indochina War (1946-54), a majority of H’mong fought with the French. Similarly, in the Second Indochina War (1955-75) a majority fought with the Americans. Having sided with “imperialists,” the H’mong now find themselves branded as far from



“politically correct” by the left-leaning mainstream of those movements which normally speak out for native peoples or the environment. Ergo, while they are indeed an indigenous people being slaughtered, they hold ideologically incorrect beliefs and thus may be properly sacrificed for the good of the revolution.

**T**his is irony of the first order, because the H'mong association with first the French, then the Americans, stemmed only from their desire to preserve their way of life and their freedom, two qualities the left claims to hold dear — though, in reality, only so long as they're being exercised in the name of coercive utopianism.

For their part, the tribesmen arrived in Southeast Asia in large numbers only in the last century, after the brutal repression of their revolts against the Chinese in Yunnan. Nearly 3 million H'mong continue to reside in China in dozens of “autonomous” enclaves, but they have not been thrust onto the world stage the way their brethren in Southeast Asia have.

Those who fled south settled in Vietnam (particularly Tonkin, where one of their centers, Dien Bien Phu, was eventually to become a household word), Laos and Thailand. They carried their revolts to Tonkin, where they were crushed in 1860. Eventually, though, between 1918 and 1922, a massive H'mong messianic uprising, led by one Batchai, spread over



Most troops are married — some with more than one wife — but see their families infrequently, preferring to keep them remote from combat zones when they can.

40,000 square kilometers of Laos and Tonkin. To end it required the largest French military expedition mounted in colonial Indochina up to that time.

Subsequently, the French allowed the H'mong to rule themselves, though their elected leaders were made to report to

H'mong patrol enters village, to be greeted by honor guard of other fighters. Note diversity of weapons, either cast-offs from SE Asia's many wars, or succor from fleeting alliances with other powers using the H'mong to further their own ends.

French commissioners. Thus it was no surprise that most tribesmen threw in their lot with the colonialists in the later anti-colonial struggle. They were further supportive of the status quo since the Lao monarch, with whom the H'mong had a close, enduring relationship, also by and large backed the French.

#### Parting of Ways

Of course, not all H'mong threw in their lot with Paris. Rivalry between the H'mong Lyfoung and Faydang clans was intense and sometimes violent. And when a period of Lyfoung ascendancy coincided with the Viet Minh liberation movement's penetration of the northwestern Tonkin and northeastern Lao hills (particularly during the Japanese occupation of World War II), the sidelined Faydang supported the communists. It was a division which was to persist to the present.

During the First Indochina War, the French became involved in using the opium trade in Laos to finance their covert operations there, particularly those of the Mixed Airborne Command Group (MACG). The most successful MACG



Patrol has prayer before moving out to attack communist positions. Patrols — and all other important events — begin and end with prayers to spirits.

unit was that of Touby Lyfoung, a French-appointed clan chief, who later became the key pro-Western H'mong political leader. His chief field commander was a H'mong officer in the Royal Lao Army, Vang Pao. Vang Pao, as is well known, was to become leader of the CIA-supported "Secret Army" during the fierce fighting which wracked Laos in 1961-67. H'mong support for the American war effort was natural because, to the hill people, the political system called "communism" represented the ultimate effort by outsiders to intrude into their lives.

As the H'mong, in so many words, articulated the issue: After centuries of revolt against interference, to include revolt against the colonialists, an arrangement has been reached. Our relationship with the French is an uneasy one, to be sure; viable only so long as interference in our affairs is minimal and so long as the Lao Royal family maintains its role as our patrons. But now comes a new set of outsiders, the Vietnamese, advocating something called independence — which in practice seems to mean assimilation by the lowlanders and cultural oblivion. Better the devil we know ... we chose to fight with the French — and later, the Americans.

This desire to preserve their way of life cannot be separated from another facet of H'mong existence, the regular appearance of those claiming to be a *Chaofa*, or savior (messiah). Key tenets of H'mong belief, apparently stemming from their inability to find a land of their own, speak of a liberator or king (*phoathay*) who will come to rule. This tenet is intertwined with the traditional practice of shamans and sorcerers, providing powerful kindling for

sparks of belief to turn into conflagration.

### A Prophet

Batchai, in the massive revolt of 1918-22, claimed to be a *Chaofa*. Thus it was in the turmoil which swept Laos in the 1950s and 1960s (particularly in the main H'mong area embraced by Sam Neua and Xieng Khouang provinces), that a new *Chaofa* appeared, Yang Shang Lue.

**A**n illiterate peasant, Shang Lue created a unique alphabet for the H'mong language, which hitherto had relied upon an adapted romanized script which missionaries had provided. He preached H'mong unity, literacy and cultural survival.

A small, unassuming man, Shang Lue quickly became suspect to both sides. His missionaries ranged even into communist-held territory, spreading the H'mong script and its inherent message of cultural integrity. This was the last thing the communists wanted, because it placed ethnicity before ideology.

Likewise, the established H'mong powers saw him as a subversive. Arrested in the early 1960s and held at the main "Secret Army" center of Long Chenn Xieng Khouang, Shang Lue was eventually assassinated in 1971 by unknown assailants. It is assumed by virtually all observers that the assassins came from Vang Pao's group, though they wore communist uniforms and carried AK-47s.

In any case, when the "Secret Army" fell into disarray with the drawdown of American forces in Southeast Asia, Vang Pao and his chief officers apparently reached an agreement with the Pathet Lao — who were controlled by the Vietnamese, who did virtually all of the fighting in Laos anyway — that in return for the departure of the H'mong leadership, the remaining tribes would be allowed to live in peace.

The leadership did indeed depart, most for the United States; but the Lao and Vietnamese did not keep their end of the bargain. Almost immediately they moved to arrest or kill many of the key stay-behinds. They quickly found themselves with yet another major H'mong revolt on their hands.

This revolt, however, was not driven by the CIA or any other outside force. Rather, it grew out of the "Chao Fa" movement, those followers of Yang Shang Lue who had remained in Laos. Led by a Shang Lue disciple, Pa Kao Her, now 59, the H'mong held their own as they sought assistance. This was not readily available. The Americans had withdrawn from the field.

For a time, the Chinese, locked in conflict with Vietnamese efforts to dominate former French Indochina, armed and trained some H'mong. Later, the Thai, inspired by the same motives as the Chinese, also provided limited weapons and equipment. By and large, however, the H'mong were on their own.

Gradually, they have been worn down, principally because the communist counterinsurgency approaches a model followed by the Soviets in Afghanistan: go after the support base. To that end, the Lao and the Vietnamese make insurgent villages their principal targets.

### Fight for Survival

Massacring women and children is certainly easier than chasing guerrillas, but the H'mong have proved amazingly resilient. The main center of resistance has been the Phu Bia area, south of the Plaine des Jarres ("Plain of Jars") in Xieng Khouang. It's here in this rugged area that "Yellow Rain" has been most used (to be discussed in further detail in a follow-on article), but the communists have been unable to break resistance there or in the other half-dozen upland areas still held by the H'mong.

Further, to give their movement greater flexibility, the H'mong fighters have attempted to relocate their families to safe areas. This has become more difficult as Thailand, previously the destination of choice, has begun to cooperate with Laos, which Bangkok desires amiable commercial and political relations with. In mid-1991, for instance, the Thai drove major concentrations of H'mong in Nan Province back across the border.

**T**his is where I found them, in the Lao province of Sayaboury some months later; the leadership fighting a battle on two fronts. On one hand, they kept a wary eye on not only the Lao but the Thai; on the other hand, they coordinated a large-scale, desperate effort to gather food and other necessities for their families.

What concerns the Chao Fa most is that it may have to lock horns with the Thai, a particularly distasteful prospect since Bangkok has long been intimately involved with the tribesmen.

Seeking to safeguard their borders from the Vietnamese, for instance — a concern centuries old — it was the Thai who provided a majority of advisers to the H'mong during the "Secret War." And it was the Thai who, when the going got tough, sent in regular battalions in an effort to stem the Vietnamese advance (these

After a day of cat-and-mouse with pursuing Lao, author and patrol arrive safely back at base camp.



units were termed "mercenaries" by the ill-informed U.S. press, due to their officially "unofficial" status). Now, with a return of military politicians to power in Bangkok, past allegiances have been cast aside in pursuit of financial rewards.

For the time being, though, chances of armed clashes remain a far-off prospect. Numerous elements within the Thai hierarchy continue to aid the H'mong on the sly, even as the Bangkok powers-that-be wallow in their ill-gotten gains.

### The Good Fight

Of more immediate concern are the fellows we've just been shooting at. This Pathet Lao camp is one of many, established at regular intervals some kilometers back from the border. Their purpose is to cut off contact between the guerrillas deeper inside Laos and H'mong families in the border area. This will disrupt the insurgent logistics, because villages relocated further into the La interior are subject to attack.

Chiang Kai-shek's great sixth encirclement campaign against Mao's



Patrol moves out after break: Uniforms are patterned after Chinese models, but made in Thailand.

guerrillas comes to mind; except that the rugged, jungle-covered terrain of Laos has thus far frustrated communist efforts to exercise effective control over the space in between the camps. Still, by heavy use of H&I (harassment & interdiction) fire, the Lao can make life unsettled for the H'mong, and particularly for their families.

It is the communist propensity to drop artillery and mortar fire on any H'mong they see which has brought us to the particular camp in question. Like the patient guerrillas they are, the tribesmen have watched and waited, then picked the time and place to retaliate.

Our early morning departure from a host village takes us first to a staging area, manned only by fighters. There the guerrillas clean weapons and plan the assault under direction of the area



Checking weapons before going on patrol, here a U.S. M79 bloop gun. Note mix of uniforms and LBE.

commander, Xiong Bliang Yang, 42, a former soldier in Vang Pao's army. When preparations are complete, we muster in single file, atop a ridge.

**W**e stand in an open-air church of sorts; a grove filled with poles, each topped with a small board supporting candles and offerings. The patrol prays to the spirits for safety, fervently, it seems, because the area we will be traversing has been indiscriminately sewn with mines, another Soviet-like tactic practiced by the Lao.

The H'mong are deathly afraid of the mines — understandably. In the absence of all but the most basic medical supplies, a wound often means a horrible death. Even if the victim lives, he is faced with the prospect of leading a highlander's tough life as a cripple; hardly an appealing scenario.

Prayers complete at last, we move out. Pang Chang Her's English, learned from missionaries, is functional but limited. About every 15 minutes he asks me, "Tom, do you believe in Jesus?" It's as much a query to establish that I'm still breathing as it is to probe my religious orientation. This is clear, because I can offer any response I like and be met with the same smile. We do find that we know several of the same hymns, though my memory stemming from Camp Pendleton's interdenominational Sunday school is rustier than his.

Thus we sing a bit and move along. Progress is all off-trail, which is a nightmare for me. The temperature hovers at about 93 degrees, the humidity at least matching that figure in percentage. I sweat buckets, a circumstance which is to pose considerable problems later on.

The dimensions of our trails through the jungle I mentioned earlier. I judge this is

what it must be like to run uphill over hurdles while doing the duck walk. It's not all that different from Samar in the Philippines. I'm just five years older.

### Guliver's Travails

"Oh God, I am five years older ... " I think to myself as the bullets fly overhead, rockets and the mortars explode, and artillery shells fall further afield.

Yes, normally the patrol would hang around and ambush the communists, but today Pang Chang has decided digression is the better part of valor. That is, what if the journalist gets hit? Thus he's decided to head for a safe area as quickly as his patrol's little legs can carry it. This not so good for my rather longer legs.

Knowing the communists will expect us



A crack shot, Xiong Por fires RPG-7 into Lao camp minutes after a Lao PG-7 blast bloodied his face with metal fragments and bowled author over.

to take the easy way, we nip down into a crease, avoiding the ridge lines where there are trails, and strike off straight through the jungle. Up and down, over hill and dale, through every manner of bush and tree.

We stop briefly to check on Xiong Por's wound, which proves to be just embedded shrapnel, then press on. On and on, with the Lao desperately trying to come up with something to show for their pain. Mortar

Continued on page 115

# “WHITE DEATH”

## SOF in the Snow with Finnish Defense Force

Text & Photos by Gary Sprung

**I**N 1949, Stalin's Foreign Minister Molotov told the foreign minister of Lithuania, "You must be realistic enough to understand that the time of small nations has passed." Today, the people of Lithuania refuse to accept that

idea. For guidance, they can look at their neighbor, Finland, which successfully preserved its independence and freedom.

During a visit to Finland, I learned the details of Finland's Winter War, and of how that experience continues to shape the

country's foreign and defense policy. Soldiers on cross-country skis proved decisive in Finland's struggle during World War II, and they remain critical today.

Stalin dubbed Finnish soldiers the "White Death" because of their skiing



**ABOVE LEFT:** After being drafted into Finland's defense forces at age 20, every Finnish male learns how to ski (and ski and ski and ski). Should an enemy succeed in crossing border, 700,000 well-trained skiing soldiers would be armed and waiting.

**ABOVE:** Young soldier cradles his Finnish 7.62x39mm M76T rifle — essentially a Soviet AK-47 with minor changes, manufactured at Sako's Tourula Works. Besides Finnish forces, Qataris and Indonesians also carry the weapon.

**LEFT:** Basic strategy of Finnish soldiers is to hide, blast out of nowhere on skis, hit, then disappear. To that end, much time is spent perfecting technique.



## FINLAND AS PEACEKEEPER



officers; Denmark trains officers for the military police; and Norway trains officers of logistics and transport units. Finland also maintains as a standby force a motorized infantry battalion of 700 men ready to jump into future U.N. operations.

— G.S.

Finland has applied its expertise in keeping peace with its neighbors in many corners of the world. Finland entered the U.N. in 1955, and one year later, began participating in U.N. peacekeeping operations. The nordic nation has joined, and in many cases directed, nearly every U.N. military operation since that time. All Finn soldiers involved in U.N. operations are volunteers.

Finland's first role was to send a company to help supervise the armistice between Egypt and Israel in 1956. The company operated in the Sinai for two years. Finland joined U.N. forces in Cyprus in 1964 with a battalion that stayed until 1977. Finn officers continue today to participate there.

Finland's role in the Middle East continued with the 1973 war between Israel and its neighbors. The nation sent a battalion of more than 600 men to supervise the cease-fire in the Gulf of Suez area. When Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979, the Finn forces were moved to the Golan Heights area to supervise that cease-fire. Finland also has helped with problems in southern Lebanon since 1982.

The longest Finnish presence in U.N. forces was in the "cease-fire" between India and Pakistan, begun in 1961 and still continuing. The Finns also participated in the Iran-Iraq cease-fire.

Finland often works in close cooperation with other nordic nations in U.N. military training. Currently, responsibility for training is shared by four countries: Finland trains military observers; Sweden trains staff

and winter-survival abilities. Also, the Finns inflicted casualties of 10 to one against the Soviets. Today, the Soviets have learned the same skills, but they have no desire to again face their neighbor in conflict.

**I**f I were a Soviet army commander, I would dread the thought of attacking Finland. As soon as my forces crossed the 1,200-kilometer border, they would encounter resistance far more organized than the Vietnamese, far more dedicated than the Afghans. I'd especially want to avoid winter, when the Finns' cross-country skiing expertise might put me at a serious disadvantage.

Finland has 700,000 pairs of skis sequestered for the possibility of invasion. It has 700,000 men trained in winter warfare, ready to spring up with fierce loyalty to their goal of maintaining an independent, Western-style nation. In this homogeneous culture with universal conscription to the defense forces, controversy over the military is nearly nonexistent. If anything, many men enjoy the infrequent requirements to get out in the nation's vast forests and reinvigorate their outdoor survival and defense skills.

Knowledge of terrain is critical to the nation's defense strategy. All officers travel the land to learn the geography, while local experts know every stone and every nook and cranny of the forests and the Lapland hills. They know where to hide, where the high spots are — where the forest will offer adequate concealment, but not too tight for slinky armored personnel carriers (APCs).

Every Finnish man must enter military service at age 20 for eight or 11 months of training. Nearly every one of these conscripts already know the art of skiing. The

military camps teach them how to combine skiing with soldiering. But Finland's military leaders fear that as the population further urbanizes, more and more young men will enter the service without the basic skiing skills.

Military skis may seem odd to experienced cross-country recreationists. They are long, from 210-250 centimeters, and therefore very heavy. Widths are around 80-100mm, wider than many alpine skis, but they have no sidecut. This design may seem awkward, but it serves to keep soldiers on top of the snow, so they don't have to break trail through deep snow while approaching "the enemy." (The Finns never speak of the Soviet Union as their enemy; they want the Soviets to feel secure and comfortable with them.)

I was most impressed by the APCs the Finn soldiers use. Two cabs on four separate tracks, with a rotating power linkage between, allow the two halves to twist and turn independently. The vehicles' narrow width lets them squeeze between trees. Each machine carries 24 men and tows another 24 skiers behind on ropes. At the Joensuu base, these vehicles were put to use as ski-track setters, providing a network of 30 kilometers for both soldiers and local civilians. Off-duty soldiers were scurrying around with full biathlete gear; off-duty officers coached.

The basic strategy of skiing soldiers is to use the terrain to hide, to suddenly appear out of nowhere, to hit, then disappear — in other words, ambush. Should "the enemy" succeed in advancing into Finnish territory, the army, in essentially a mechanized guerrilla tactic, would burn all houses, leaving no shelter.

Kari Kytömaa, a partisan army reserve officer, felt eager to explain the strategy:

"We must say the night is not our enemy; we are allied with the darkness in Finland. There are four good generals in Finland: General Winter, General Night, General Forest and General Lake."

Finland pursues a policy of strict neutrality. Its primary goal is to retain its national independence. It abides by a principle of keeping out of all military alliances to avoid getting involved in "great power" conflicts. This policy has been in effect since the nation's beginning. Finns take pride that their Parliament has met without interruption since 1912, and that they have lived under one constitution since their independence in 1917. They remained unoccupied and unconquered during World War II.

**W**hile visiting with members of the Finnish Telemark Society, I learned that each person had served in the military and recalled the experience favorably. But they had no desire whatsoever to employ their soldiering skills. Nor is there any impetus to get involved in military actions, except participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions. Finland has provided more U.N. soldiers per capita than any other nation.

The Finns' national sport, cross-country skiing, brings them into intimate and regular contact with the beauty and mystery of nature. This occurs even during military service. The base in Joensuu was, in fact, quite beautiful, with a lush pine forest and an expansive frozen lake. I suspect this appreciation of nature is one key factor in the evolution of one of earth's "most civilized peoples."

Gary Sprung is a freelance writer who lives in Crested Butte, Colorado. ❧

# WINNERS DESERT STORM PHOTO CONTEST

## OTHER WINNERS

- 11th  
Donald Hall
- 12th  
S. Parker
- 13th  
L/Cpl. Scott McCourry
- 14th  
Cpl. Eric Meulenberg
- 15th  
Kevin O'Neal
- 16th  
Patrick J. Brady
- 17th  
L/Cpl. James H. Knox
- 18th  
Dennis Osborne
- 19th  
SSgt. Patrick Atkins
- 20th  
Barry B. Naquin
- 21st  
Maj. Chuck Schmitz
- 22nd  
Kevin March
- 23rd  
Larry Pettit
- 24th  
Anthony Cimorelli
- 25th  
PFC Chris White
- 26th  
L/Cpl. Rivera
- 27th  
Wilson Scott Berry
- 28th  
Stan Hall
- 29th  
Danny Rice
- 30th  
SPC Wiliam Lazarich

Judging by the response to our "Desert Storm Photo Contest," it seems our fighting forces are well equipped with film and cameras.

Reproduced here are 2nd through 10th place entries. Though there were 30 winners, that's all we have room to print.

"But what about 1st place?" you ask?

Well, you're going to have to wait till next month. The grand prize winning photograph(s) will appear as a special two-page feature next month. They're so unique we wanted to research their background and write an accompanying article.

"Will these guys stop at nothing to get me to buy the next issue?" you ask?

Well, no. But this will be worth the wait. Trust us. ✂



### WHO WRECKED MY GUNSHIP?

When U.S. unit paid a surprise visit to an airstrip, this MI-24 Hind-D didn't fare well. Now if we could only figure out what unit it was. I'm sure they left a tell-tale mark somewhere ... It was probably the Marines. In fact, I'm almost certain. Photo: Steven Parker



### SURPRISE INSIDE. COLLECT THE WHOLE SET!

See what happens when you don't buy the kids Nintendo. They get in with the wrong crowd, start on cap guns, then mortars — and before you know it they're hooked on howitzer rounds. Photo: PFC Damlan Martelli



### RUSHWACKED

Kind of says it all. Photo: J.B. Paskauskas



**IRAQI SALUTE ARMY CHOPPERS**

Piloted by "War Man," 2nd Armored Cav regiment AH-1F Cobra, receives the "Iraqi salute" from Republican Guards/Crossing Guards/Hall Monitors, or some such Iraqi elite unit on 28 February. Photo: AirCav Source



**OUT OF THE COUNTRY BY SUNDOWN**

Marine Humvee/TOW team overwatches their little place in the sun. "We haven't had a surrender in almost 10 minutes. Guess that means we got the whole country." Photo: L/Cpl. Thompson



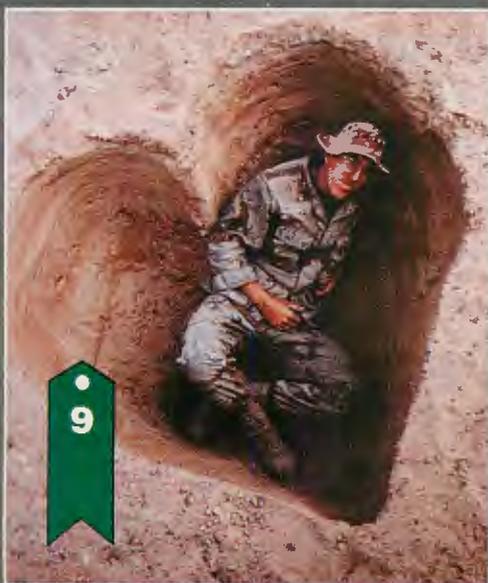
**WHAT, US BOMBED?**

There was lots to do in the desert: sit on 15,000-lb. bombs, lay on 15,000-lb. bombs, stand on 15,000-lb. bombs; did I mention sitting on 15,000-lb. bombs? Photo: TSgt. F. Castillo



**HOW MANY MARINES DOES IT TAKE TO RAISE A FLAG?**

Three. One to raise it and two to pose dramatically for the camera. What, you left the lens cap on? Tear it down, do it again. Photo: Sgt. Snellgroves



**TOO CUTE FOR WORDS**

Son, I know you miss the little lady (any little lady), but that hole is not a regulation hole. Besides, it's probably against Saudi law. Photo: Cpl. Stephen Kline



**HERE'S LOOKIN' AT YOU SADDAM**

Kind of says it all, too. Photo: Clark David



*Well, I had only myself to blame. I had arrived uninvited, unexpected and unannounced. I had burst into a room full of trigger-happy guerrillas while local security forces were patrolling nearby — not recommended procedure. Further, Kashmiri militants had been growing increasingly shy of the press — infidel Westerners in particular.*

*But recommended protocols and traditional courtesies were fast being trampled by events in Kashmir, and the particular gentleman I wanted to meet had neither mail address nor phone — there was scant option but to drop in.*

**A**S is often the case on the subcontinent, a little patience and ingenuity paid off. After a couple hours and endless cups of sugary tea on the other side of town, I was eventually passed over to a Kashmiri I took to be a militant. Without talking we drove across town in an 1950-vintage Ambassador, the Indian-manufactured clone of an English Hillman.

Horn blaring, we inched through a crowded bazaar, where hard-eyed, helmeted Indian paramilitary troops stood in doorways. They warily eyed the populace, IA SL rifles (Commonwealth FALs, manufactured at Ishapore Arsenal) at the ready. We swung onto a wide concrete bridge across the Jhelum River, past sand-bagged bunkers from which muzzles of Bren LMGs protruded, and finally into the Old Town section of Baramulla.

North of Srinagar where the lush valley of Kashmir meets the mountains, Baramulla has long been a stronghold of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami (Islamic Society) party — and more recently, of its military wing the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (Party of Holy Warriors). More than any other in a plethora of separatist guerrilla factions, it was “HM” (as it is now known in Kashmir) which was responsible for an increasing quantity of Indian body bags flying south. The urban guerrillas’ fantasy world comprising the labyrinth of the Old Town was one area they liked to think of as home turf — about as close to a no-go area for the Indian military as there is.

#### **An Unexpected Visitor**

The car lurched to an abrupt halt outside a tall building on a narrow street. Not a single Indian soldier was in sight — unusual in Kashmir these days. My driver said simply “here” and got out. I followed him through a wooden gate into a garden,

passing several guys in civilian clothes with folding-stock Chinese AKs. Beyond the house door was a dark, winding staircase rising to a low-ceilinged room.

It was small, airless and very full. On three sides militants sat on chairs and a narrow bed. The far side was dominated by a desk at which sat a heavily-built man with a wispy beard, probably in his early twenties, facing the rest. There was no doubt at all who was in charge. On the desk was a Chicom Tokarev pistol and pair of loaded Kalashnikov magazines.

To say my entrance elicited surprise would be some understatement. The babble of voices cut to stunned silence as some 20 pairs of eyes focused on me. The man at the desk recovered his composure first, then fired a stream of angry Kashmiri at the guide.

I was brusquely ordered to sit down, then an interrogation began, conducted by the guy behind the desk in passable English. Name? Nationality? Profession? ID? His tone was bluntly hostile. He seemed staggered I’d simply managed to stroll in. Given several hundred troops in

events intervened to my advantage. The door flew open and a youth carrying a rifle burst into the room shouting. Even before he’d finished, the assembled company was on its feet, snatching up weapons and pushing through the door. The commander — whose name I later learned was Asrarul-Haq — was also on his feet issuing a stream of orders and slamming a magazine into a Type 56-1 Chinese folding-stock AK. I was curtly ordered to move out and hustled back down the stairs, across the yard and out onto the street. We could hear the crackle of rifle fire from a few hundred meters away.

An Indian Army garrison town, Baramulla is divided by the Jhelum River which flows up through the valley of Kashmir. On the southern bank is a new bazaar, army cantonments and civil administration buildings. On the northern bank, wedged between the river and the mountains, is the Old Town.

After Kashmiri insurgency gained rapid momentum in early 1990, security forces had called the shots on the southern half of town, while the Old Town was dominated

# INDIAN COUNTRY

## SOF With Kashmir’s Mutinous Moslems

Text & Photos by Mike Winchester

the immediate vicinity with even more interest in meeting him than I had, this was understandable.

As we went over the details of my contacts, my eyes strayed to the door and my mind to the two Swedish engineers and an Israeli tourist currently being held hostage by separatist militants elsewhere in this valley. I began to wonder if things were not already out of control: They were certainly out of my control.

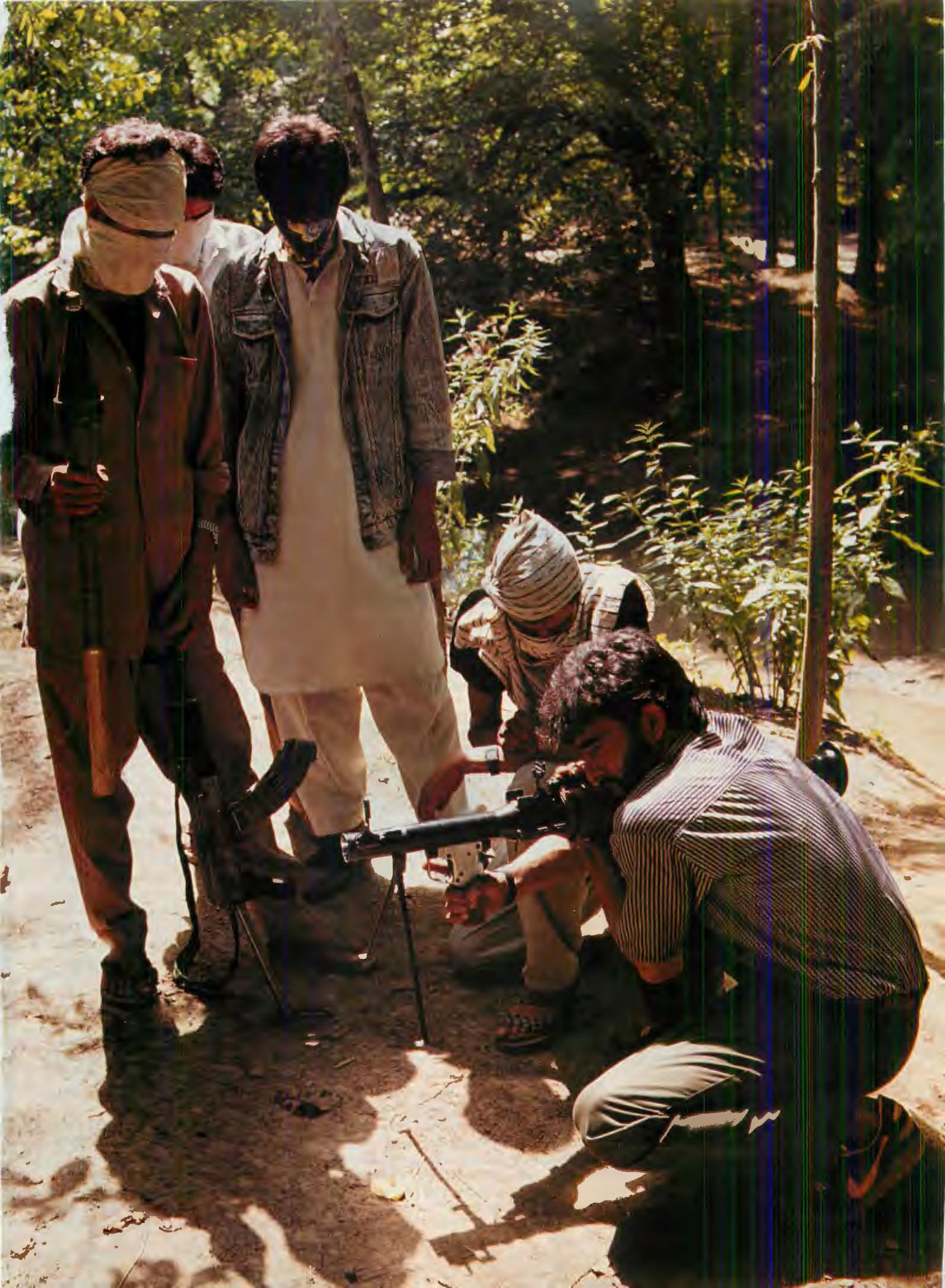
Having barged in on their little conference, there was no way I would now leave without permission. As the questioning continued, it became clear this was not likely forthcoming. Nobody had yet used the word, but the bottom line was I was their prisoner.

It was at this delicate juncture that

by guerrillas. Occasionally, after serious clashes — some involving day-long firefights across Baramulla — the Central Reserve Police and army units would move into the Old Town for cordon-and-search operations through the maze of sloping lanes and back streets. Otherwise, they generally steered well clear. Today it looked like a surprise cordon-and-search operation was being sprung — and resisted.

Down the street a holding operation of some sort was underway, aimed at giving

Pakistani mentors supply rebels with eclectic mix of weapons, often Soviet designs of Chinese manufacture such as the Type 69 (RPG-7) grenade launcher being studied here.





Indian authorities crack down on Kashmiri protest parade. Author is not optimistic about the central government's chances for keeping the lid on.

guerrillas in the house time to make good their escape. Several Kalashnikov-wallahs took up defensive positions in doorways. Others warily moved backwards down the street, rifles at the hip, waiting for the first hint of an Indian trooper emerging from an alley or round a corner — he'd never know what hit him. A few civilians were quickly scattering into houses as we hurried down the street towards the same car we'd arrived in.

Asrar and a mate pushed me into the front seat, two others piling in after me. Weapons sticking out of every window, the vehicle careened away from the noise of the firefight. No false heroics here!

**T**hree minutes later we were out of town, accelerating up a dirt track into the hills. I had time to reflect on the situation. My own driver and car were somewhere on the other side of town. I was being taken for a ride at gunpoint to an unknown destination with a bunch of Islamic zealots whose main claim to international renown at that moment was their growing collection of Western hostages. And the backdrop for our mutual escape from the firefight was the connection I figured some of them must now be making — between my own arrival and that of the Indian military an embarrassingly short time afterwards. My only consolation was in finding the people I was looking for, and they were Kashmiri rather than Lebanese.

On the far bank of the Jhelum a large Indian army camp was visible, but on our side there were little more than pickets and check-points. This was just as well: We'd have had considerable trouble talking our way through. Twenty minutes later we pulled up at a farm house near the edge of a mountain village.

Even before the business in early 1990



ABOVE: Indian troops on vehicle patrol in Srinagar. Patrols are constant, military presence nearly universal — but rebels are reducing Indian government's practical authority to the range of a rifle.



Paramilitary Central Reserve Police on walking patrol in Srinagar. Note locals turning backs to patrol.

in Baramulla, it was clear enough that the conflict in Kashmir was moving a lot faster than was generally recognized. Insurgency had begun in August 1988 when the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) — an organization scarcely heard of beyond India — set off a couple of bombs in Srinagar, the state capital.

But it was not until January 1990 that a low-level law-and-order problem erupted into a Kashmiri national uprising, when hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens spilled into the streets of Srinagar, demanding *azaadi* (freedom) and separation from India — to be met with bullets.

In months which followed, scores of unarmed demonstrators were gunned down by Indian paramilitary forces. Thousands were rounded up and tortured in military interrogation centers. Thousands more youths fled to the Pakistani-controlled area of the divided and disputed territory, in search of training and weapons.

One year and a half later, the white-hot anti-Indian fury of early 1990 had died. In its place was a dull, bitter alienation of the vast mass of Kashmiris from all things Indian. In Delhi and Srinagar, senior Indian officials counted on time and the economic squeeze caused by lost tourist revenue to encourage a return to "normalcy." But this did not take into consideration the negative contribution of their own security forces.

**C**ontinued excesses of the mainly Hindu Indian paramilitary — particularly the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) responsible for holding the lid on Kashmir's urban areas — as good as guaranteed the bleeding wound of Kashmir was not going to heal. This past May 1991, 16 civilians were gunned down in the street in the Khanyar quarter of Srinagar. No sooner had outrage over subsided than 35 more unarmed citizens were massacred by rampaging CRPF troops in Chotta Bazaar, also in Srinagar. Ranks of the insurgency, meanwhile, steadily swelled.

Spring 1990 Indian estimates listed some 600 armed militants on the loose, mostly in urban areas. By late that year, this figure was up to 3,500-4,000. By early summer 1991, most independent estimates cited far more than 10,000 militants belonging to a plethora of different factions as active — in every town and village of the valley.

In addition, as Indian spokesmen were quick to point out, some 4,000-5,000 other militants were either undergoing military training in camps scattered across Pakistani-administered "Azad" Kashmir and southeast Afghanistan or, having completed their schooling, were waiting to reinfiltre back across the lines of control. If 1990 were any yardstick, they would be returning with ample quantities of arms and ammunition (machine guns, RPGs, mines, grenades, and Chinese assault rifles), in some cases up to four rifles per man.

#### Early Engagements

By late April this year, snows on upper slopes of the Pir Panjal range dividing Azad Kashmir from the Indian-held Vale of Kashmir had mostly melted. And Kashmir's hidden war had begun.

This was a battle for the Line of Control (LOC), which next to the Korean DMZ enjoys the distinction of being probably the second-most heavily militarized frontier on the planet. What happens along the LOC, where Indian and Pakistanis regulars machine-gun and shell each other

with lethal regularity, is rarely reported by the press.

Also, the high-risk cat-and-mouse game played between reinfiltrating Kashmiri guerrillas and Indian Army patrols is reported only occasionally — in the form of body-count statistics. No outsiders have crossed the highly dangerous LOC with the insurgents. And the Indian Army prefers to keep its field operations strictly to itself.

Nevertheless, the battle for the LOC over the summer of 1991 (which continues as we go to press) is critical to the future of the conflict as a whole — as Indian maneuvers indicate. An estimated 200,000 regular army troops have now been deployed in Jammu and Kashmir. Some are stationed along the arid heights of Ladakh (or Little Tibet) in the eastern reaches of the state to counter any threat from Chinese forces in Tibet. But the majority are strung out along the 750km LOC stretching from the Punjab border in the south, northwards along the Pir Panjal then swinging eastward across the Himalayas towards Kargil.

In anticipation of a returning influx of "PTMs" (Pak-Trained Militants), army units — many of them Gurkha battalions with considerable mountain experience — were reinforced over winter 1990-1991. A triple-layered defense of pickets and patrols spanning the LOC's length, first established in 1990, has been beefed up.

**B**ut the accelerating rate of reinfiltration took even the Indians by surprise. Kashmiri militants began moving back in tens, twenties, and then incredibly, hundreds. Those who preferred not to trust to stealth and the 12,000-foot mountain slopes relied on sheer numbers to shoot their way through.

Indians got a taste of things to come on the morning of 5 May 1991 when a patrol of the paramilitary Assam Rifles commanded by a Gurkha NCO, Naik Subedar P.B. Chettri, was struggling through knee-deep snow in the Dudhi sector of the LOC, several clicks inside Indian territory. Almost before they realized it they had blundered into a large group of more than 150 guerrillas resting on their descent from a 14,000-foot pass out of Pakistani Kashmir.

An instant firefight erupted, wounding two Indians within minutes. It was to continue the next 72 hours. When shooting finally stopped, Indian troops, by then heavily reinforced, had killed 73 guerrillas and captured 15. More than 80 others escaped, however.

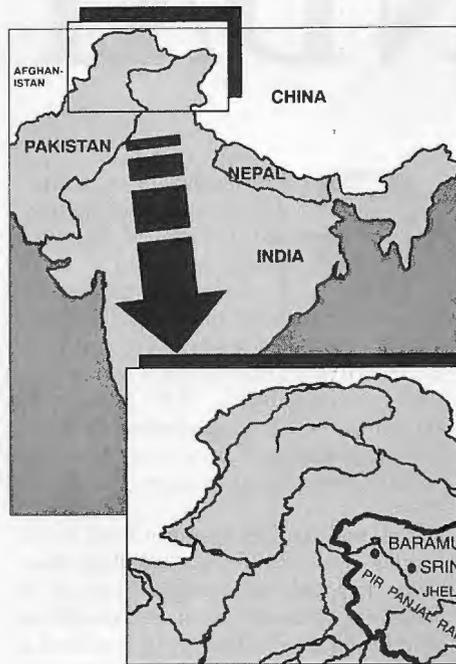
Both Indians and the militants agree the LOC is simply impossible to seal. Along the Punjab border (where infiltration by Sikh militants, gun runners and dope smugglers is also a massive headache) Delhi is spending tens of millions of dollars constructing an elaborate fence, in hopes of substantially reducing successful infiltrations. They harbor no illusions over the viability of a similar project, however,

for the spectacularly rugged terrain of the Pir Panjal and Western Himalayas.

By this past July the insurgent body-count along the LOC was up to 112. But hundreds were still getting through.

At the same time, guerrillas were making a broadly concerted effort to establish their campaign more firmly in the valley. Through 1991 the emphasis has been squarely on improving tactics, establishing units in rural areas and, not the least, building capabilities to train new recruits inside the valley.

All of this was evident in Baramulla where HM was obviously well organized



and operating a fledgling parallel administration. Indian authority had been reduced to the range of a IA SL rifle.

#### Tea Talk

In the farmhouse, I was taken to a carpeted upper room where Asrar and two lieutenants sat down and ordered up tea. Though still suspicious, their initial alarm and hostility was wearing off, the ice broken by our escape from town. Nor, to my considerable relief, was there any attempt to tie me into the coincidental security force operation. By the time tea and cakes arrived, it looked like I was out of the woods.

**O**ver tea my hosts made no secret of the fact they were organizing, massively and quickly. They were, said Asrar, part of HM's "Zia-ul-Haq Shahid" Company, (named for the "martyred" Pakistani president whose career had been abruptly terminated with the sabotage of his C-130 transport in 1988). In Baramulla, HM fielded four companies, or something more than 400 armed guerrillas.

While they effectively controlled the Old Town and maintained a significant presence there, the emphasis was now on moving into more secure rural areas such

as we were now in. There, having a basic radio communications network, fielded units or village safehouses could count on adequate early warning in the event of a security force sweep.

Unsurprisingly, all the main Kashmiri militant commanders captured by Indian forces in the last year and a half — and there have been a good many — have been grabbed in urban areas, generally Srinagar, the nerve center of the revolt. There Indian intelligence can operate, and whole suburbs can be sealed off within minutes.

Shifting into the countryside reflects a realization of the dangers of urban areas and the limited mobility streets afford. It also shows the revolt itself now draws a growing number of rural recruits.

Tactical aspects of the conflict are changing too. The militants are supplementing a daily fare of small, isolated hit-and-run attacks on security force patrols with larger operations targeting lines of communication — e.g. blowing key bridges and ambushing Indian Army convoys.

"We are now focusing on the army," Asrar said. Three days earlier his own company had staged an ambush a few clicks outside Baramulla, using electrically detonated mines which destroyed a truck on the main road to Srinagar. He outlined

the operation in detail and I knew this was no bullshit: I'd examined the crater and the scene of the ambush myself some three hours earlier.

Just how well the militants have succeeded in establishing training camps inside Indian-held Kashmir is a little less clear. Both of the largest guerrilla organizations — the nationalist JKLF and the Islamist HM — claim they've set up "training camps." But whether they have even semi-permanent facilities, with assault courses and shooting ranges associated with conventional military training, is highly questionable.

But as the Indians themselves are well aware, the direction in which events are moving is all too clear. As Girish Saxena, state governor and New Delhi's pointman in Kashmir put it this past June: "Earlier these camps were very patchy. Now there is an attempt to organize them professionally."

What is certain is basic training in the use of small arms and RPGs takes place in villages and houses across the valley. This may not be turning out special forces recruitment material, but it is putting onto streets a lot of youths who can handle an

*Continued on page 109*

# ET TU HERITAGE FOUNDATION?

## Conservative Think Tank Backstabs American Gunowners

by Paul Danish



Mr. Feulner, President  
Heritage Foundation  
Photo: courtesy Heritage Foundation

**G**UN owners often assume that all those favoring Second Amendment rights are conservatives and all those attempting to disarm the American people are liberals.

They shouldn't.

The Heritage Foundation, a highly conservative Washington, D.C. think tank, played a key role in persuading the Bush administration to ban imports of several dozen semiautomatic versions of assault rifles last year.

Just one day after President Bush, at the urging of then-"drug czar" William Bennett, imposed the semiauto ban as a temporary measure, Heritage Foundation President Edwin J. Feulner Jr. sent Bush a confidential memorandum urging him to make it permanent. The memo urged the Bush administration to "permanently ban the import of automatic or semiautomatic assault weapons without a permit from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF)."

Bush subsequently cited the Heritage recommendation in justifying the import ban.

The Heritage memo seems to have influenced not only the decision to permanently restrict the rifles, but also the way Bush's administration went about making the ban firm.

For instance, Feulner suggested "before announcing a permanent ban, the President should instruct the BATF, in conjunction with the FBI and the Department of Justice, to draw up guidelines that carefully define the class of weapons being banned."

Although the Bush administration followed this last suggestion, it portrayed the BATF as conducting a four-month study of whether or not the ban should be made permanent, not as writing the implementing regulations for a done policy decision.

The Heritage memo also appears to have been a source of some criteria the BATF was subsequently to use in justifying the ban. Feulner suggested "the num-

ber of rounds that a gun is capable of firing without reloading can indicate the intended purpose of the weapons," although in the next sentence he conceded such a criterion is "far from conclusive" because "many legitimate hunting rifles are capable of accepting clips [sic] with as many as 30 rounds."

Nevertheless, he argued that "for the purpose of defining the class of banned imports," the BATF "should consider including semiautomatic guns capable of holding more than six rounds at one time."

This same bizarre argument — that the ability to accept a large-capacity magazine can define a rifle as something other than a firearm with a sporting purpose, even though weapons specifically intended for use in sport have the ability to accept an identical large-capacity magazine — was included in the BATF ruling making the ban permanent.

### Absurd Assertions

**F**eulner also argued that physical appearance of a firearm be taken into account in determining whether or not it should be banned, because "many imported assault rifles have the physical appearance of war weapons," and "such 'Rambo'-looking rifles have a strong appeal to individuals inclined to use the weapons for an unlawful purpose."

This statement is factually untrue — crime statistics show conclusively that rifles with military features are almost never used by criminals — but the BATF nonetheless focused on such features as bayonet lugs, flash suppressors and pistol grips as a means of setting apart the rifles it wanted to ban from other semiautomatic rifles.

Nor was making the import ban on military-style semiautomatic rifles the only anti-gun measure recommended to the White House by the Heritage Foundation. Feulner's memo also recommended the Bush administration "accelerate the attorney general's development of a sys-

tem to identify felons who seek to purchase a firearm," — in effect, a national background check.

An amendment to the Omnibus Drug Bill of 1988 ordered the attorney general to develop a system for "the immediate and accurate identification of felons" attempting to purchase guns. The law gave the attorney general one year to report on his progress in complying with the statute; Feulner recommended that process be speeded up.

In fact, what happened was Attorney General Richard Thornburgh reported to Congress that creation of such a system was impractical because much of the nation's police and court records were not computerized, and upgrading them would take years and cost billions of dollars.

**H**eritage also recommended existing laws requiring handgun registration be enforced more strictly and effectively, suggesting the Bush administration seek a new law making it a federal crime for anyone to possess or transport across state lines any weapon in a manner which violates laws of either state. The latter is necessary, Feulner said, "to prevent individuals from purchasing a gun in a state with lenient gun laws and transporting it into a state with stricter laws."

#### State Laws — Federal Enforcement?

Such a law would, of course, put the federal government in the business of enforcing the restrictive gun laws passed by states like California and New York, and would commit it to enforcing even more restrictive ones, should they be passed.

By the same token, stricter enforcement of existing gun-registration laws would commit government to going after millions of otherwise law-abiding Americans; those who choose to own firearms in order to protect themselves and refuse to comply with laws intended to disarm them. It is estimated that in New York City alone there are more than 1 million unregistered hand guns, the overwhelming majority of which are owned by honest people concerned (quite sensibly) with personal safety.

For the Heritage Foundation to endorse a series of gun-control measures is as surprising as the ACLU demanding jail for flag burners or calling for a crackdown on pornography. Why would it do so?

That question cannot be answered with certainty, because Feulner declined to be interviewed by SOF regarding the memo, despite repeated requests.

Cheryl Rubin, a spokeswoman for the Heritage Foundation, repeatedly claimed the foundation has done little or no work on gun issues, adding the memo was prepared only because George Bush asked Heritage for its thoughts on the semi-auto ban.

"This was asked of Dr. Feulner by the president, and so he went ahead and

thought about it and gave him some recommendations," she said. "It wasn't something that Ed Feulner did on his own. He was actually asked for his opinion at the time, and it's not an issue we've ever followed up on again."

In terms of the issues the foundation usually focuses on, she said the Second Amendment "wasn't an issue at all for us."

"Our role in it was [in response to] a direct request from President Bush," she said. "And when he requested it, you don't say 'no' to the president, but you come up with something and think about it — even if it isn't a main area that you as an organization focus on."

#### No Thought, But No Hesitation

That the Heritage Foundation has given little or no thought in the past to gun issues is certainly believable, judging from the Feulner memo's language, which showed its drafter was, at best, unfamiliar with firearms.

Thus the references to "semiautomatic assault rifles" (which is a contradiction in terms, much like "four-legged biped") and to 30-round "clips" rather than magazines; the factually wrong assertion that military-style weapons appeal to criminals, and the suggestion that the weapons could be successfully banned by focusing on their appearance.

Pro-gun organizations predicted that basing the ban on these last factors would cause affected gun makers to cosmetically redesign their products to meet BATF criteria, so that they could again be legally imported: This has now happened.

**M**oreover, Heritage's appraisal of the political impact of its recommendations showed it was wildly ignorant of gun owners' views and of gun politics, and as a result gave our president poor counsel. For instance, Feulner said he believed his recommendations would "retain the support of your gun-owning constituency ... rebuild the logical, cooperative relationship that has been ruptured between the gun owners and the police and ... deal with a real problem."

What really happened was that Bush's gun-owning constituency sent him more than 1 million letters and telegrams of protest, while relations between the firearms community and police organizations (although not individual police officers) are more strained than ever.

Heritage's misreading of gun organizations was further evidenced in the recommendation that the BATF consider banning semiautomatic guns capable of holding more than six rounds at once. This was accompanied by the comment: "NRA may not accept a limit of less than 10." What really happened was that both the NRA as an organization and its individual members found proposals to limit magazine capacities preposterous, and

have unambiguously opposed them.

Given the Foundation's acknowledged disinterest in gun rights, it would not have been unreasonable for it to have spent some time educating itself before offering advice to the president. In fact, it responded to the White House request in great haste. That much is known because Feulner's memo, dated 15 March 1989, states it is being written in response to the President's request of 13 March, only two days earlier.

Moreover, the memo refers to the president's decision on 14 March temporarily banning the import of semiautomatic weapons; 24 hours later the president had a memo in his hands from Feulner recommending the ban be made permanent, which does not leave a lot of time for reflection, let alone research and consultation.

**T**his sequence of events leads you to wonder if the president might not have been better served had Feulner admitted gun issues were outside of the Heritage Foundation's area of expertise. As a rule, it is certainly true that "you don't say 'no' to the president," but should that still be the case when the president asks you for advice on a subject in which you have little interest or knowledge?

#### The Chicken or the Egg?

Alternatively, it leads you to wonder if the contents of the Heritage memo might not have been in response to a White House request for support — in order to show conservative backing for the import ban — rather than a White House request for advice.

There is certainly nothing unusual in presidents asking Washington think tanks to draft reports justifying decisions they are about to take, rather than asking for advice before making up their minds. That's the way the game of government is played.

But you have to wonder: Is it better to tell the chief executive what he wants to hear, or what he needs to hear? Dr. Feulner was not available for comment.

Since he was not within reach at this writing, perhaps the Heritage Foundation would respond to an open letter:

**Dear Dr. Feulner:**

I was disappointed that you were unavailable for comment regarding Heritage's memo to President Bush supporting a permanent ban on the import of 43 types of semiautomatic rifles. *Soldier of Fortune* had six questions regarding the memo, and I would like to offer you an opportunity to respond to them in writing.

❶ Did the White House offer Heritage any guidance regarding the recommendations

*Continued on page 115*

# LAND OF DISENCHANTMENT

## Post-Election Nicaragua's Uncertain Future

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

**B**ULLETS whirred inches over our heads as a merciless fusillade of AK automatic rifle fire erupted from the jungle gloom.

Damn! My Miskito Indian Resistance comrades and I had hardly set foot on the muddy banks of the Nicaraguan side of the Coco River — the border with Honduras — when Sandinista soldiers started firing at us. Ambushed, we had to abort our own ambush mission that rainy morning and make a clumsy retreat.

We frantically ferried and waded back across the Coco River. Exhausted, we tapped our last reservoirs of endurance to struggle against the powerful current and reach our Honduran sanctuary. Bringing up the rear, a husky Indian came trudging from the water carrying a wounded comrade; rebels fired rocket-propelled grenades and a 60mm commando mortar to provide us cover.

Hunched under my heavy pack, I ran to help our casualty. He was a young muchacho, maybe 16 years old. His legs were bloody, and he seemed to be in shock from hemorrhaging. His dark-skinned face was blanched; the eyes were vacant, ebony dots.

I was the next casualty. After we hacked through webs of vines and branches to a partial clearing, a tree with a trunk at least 2 feet thick snapped out of the soggy earth



Mortally wounded contra is attended to during attack on La Luz-Siuna in northeastern Nicaragua. Though the body count was much higher during the war, death and politically motivated killings are still a part of everyday life in Nicaragua.

and fell on my head. Plank!

**A** blur of vegetation and the sensation of falling were the last things I remembered that day. The glancing blow knocked me unconscious for a day and a half. Had it hit me squarely, I would have certainly been killed.

"We had a bad day," Comandante Blas understated after I regained consciousness.

"But someday we shall drink a beer together in Managua to victory."

### A Curious Toast

That was in 1984 — the contras' Valley Forge, as my dear friend Dr. Ken Wells, an adviser to American presidents since Dwight Eisenhower, succinctly put it.

A lot has changed since then. The Soviet Bloc collapsed on itself and in 1990 the Sandinistas were ousted in free elections (which they conceded to hold largely due to economic isolation, diplomatic pressure, internal discontent and punishing commando-guerrilla warfare waged by the Resistance).

Sure enough, Comandante Blas and I toasted to "victory" in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, one muggy evening last year. We drank a malty, locally brewed Victoria Lager with one former and two active Sandinista militants — a trio of shapely *senoritas* — in an open-air volcanic lakeside restaurant near the Sandinista Ministry of Defense.

The ladies joined our toast, though it was unclear as to whose victory they saluted. "Violeta has the government, but

Former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega tries to rally support for his Sandinista party. He was unsuccessful and lost the election to UNO, a conglomeration of opposition parties headed by Violeta Chamorro.





Nicaraguan police confiscate marijuana. As their economy continues to flounder, Nicaraguans are making money where they can, often turning to drug trafficking and black marketing.

the Sandinistas still have the power," Blas ruefully footnoted.

**W**hile his statement isn't entirely true, the Sandinistas still control the military and police (although President Violeta Chamorro has substantially reduced both forces). Meanwhile Daniel Ortega, strongman of the former Sandinista junta, seems to be carrying out his vow of "governing from below" by bullying the conflict-eschewing Chamorro government with tactics such as provoking partisan strikes, street unrest and disobedience to the law — while he threatens "social explosion" if the government moves against "revolutionary conquests."

In fact, much — if not most — state property has remained in possession of the Sandinistas. During the transition of governments the Sandinista regime hastily passed laws on state and confiscated private properties, either giving them away or selling at nominal prices to themselves and many individual militants. This period has become known as "the Pinata."

Though President Chamorro was elected by a landslide and her coalition of 14 disparate political parties won a solid majority in the legislative assembly, her

partnership's name, National Opposition Union (better known by its Spanish acronym UNO), perhaps remains an appropriate description of a government which in some ways still appears to be of the opposition.

Complete reconciliation appears distant. Not everyone has let bygones be bygones. Aftershocks of war shudder Nicaragua's precarious peace as segments of the opposing sides have clashed in sporadic violence, over property disputes and "settling scores," particularly in the countryside.

The resulting death toll — reportedly in the upper double-digits for each group, with former contras suffering the most — is minuscule compared to the slaughter of as many as 60,000 Nicaraguans during the contra war. But a lack of justice and the mounting body count from a virtually out-of-control spiral of attacks and reprisals have hundreds of former contras re-arming — becoming "recontras" to defend themselves from Sandinista persecution.

I was a little apprehensive as I boarded my Aeronica flight to Managua. I couldn't

help recalling one of the most vivid scenes of my last trip: Seeing a mural inside Managua's main post office depicting a campesino swinging his machete at the neck of a terrified white man with blond hair, under the approving gaze of none other than General Cesar Augusto Sandino — the Nicaraguan nationalist from whom Sandinistas take their name.

**“**Oh no, don't let the Sandinistas know who you work for," advised my elderly friend Manuela, sitting beside me in the Soviet-built Tupolev airliner. "Violeta Chamorro is president, but don't forget that the Sandinistas still have the arms. If you're not careful, you could disappear."

"Aren't you worried?" I asked, considering Manuela was a staunch anti-Sandinista now returning to her own country, attempting to reclaim properties earlier confiscated.

"Look, I'm an old *senora*. I can say what I want. But it's best to be prudent."

Indeed, I was trying to be prudent. It wasn't coincidence we were flying

**[Ortega] threatens "social ex  
moves against "revolu**



together. I had coordinated my trip with hers; just in case of any problems, I could count on some help.

#### Grimy Managua

Leaving a cooled airport, the year-long oppressive heat and humidity overwhelmed me as if I had entered a Dreadnought boiler room — and this at 2200 hours! The worst Washington, D.C., summer is downright comfortable by comparison.

Managua's climate literally smothers both humans and animals. It lacquers you with a viscous film of grimy sweat, drains you of all energy and gumption, leaving

Recontra Dimas Tigrillo has again taken up arms, claiming only cosmetic changes have been made in Nicaragua while Sandinistas still hold all positions of real power.

you in a languid state where time is warped and punctuality virtually non-existent. No wonder Nicaragua is among Latin American countries most afflicted by the laziness of the *manana* culture — the promise to do tomorrow what should be done today.

Managua reeked of feces and insecticide. It seemed with the war over, Nicaraguans had channeled their passion for slaughtering one another into killing

flies and mosquitos.

The "guest home" where I spent the night on Manuela's recommendation was a pocket of nauseating stench. The place was an absolute fleabag, not the cozy home-away-from-home Manuela remembered. The insecticide didn't seem to bother the scores of cockroaches sharing my tiny squalid room, but it almost killed me.

Most noticeable in Managua today (to anyone who had ever visited Nicaragua while Ortega ruled) is the absence of Sandinista soldiers. According to President Chamorro, her government has slashed armed forces from 80,000 to 26,000 troops. Critics say the cuts are mostly cosmetic since many discharged soldiers keep their rifles at home on "active reserve," but no one can reasonably deny military presence has subsided drastically.

During the Sandinista dictatorship, soldiers were everywhere. Civilians were mere specks in a sea of olive-green and camouflage. Now it's the reverse. You see few uniformed soldiers outside their bases. Tanks and armored personnel carriers have been mothballed.

#### Big Brother In Reform School

The once fearsome Sandinista police state molded by Cuban and East German secret police is being transformed into a civilian state police along the lines of Spain's *Guardia Civil*, with the assistance of Spanish law-enforcement advisers.

Gone are the dreaded Sandinista Defense Committees (the grass roots "eyes and ears of the revolution") and KGB-patterned State Security.

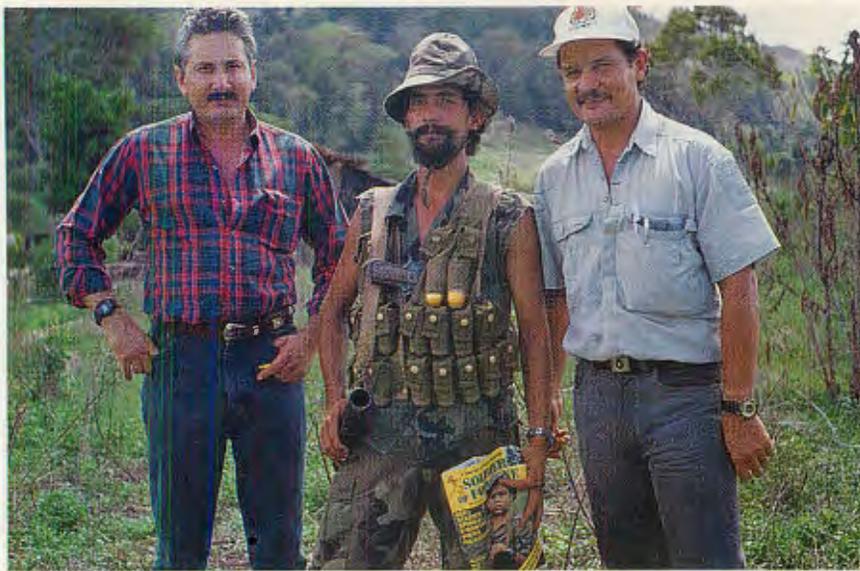
A repudiated Ministry of the Interior, under which these repressive organs terrorized the population, has been renamed Ministry of Government Affairs. Its villainous minister, the dwarfish Tomas Borge, replaced by a self-effacing civilian of greater moral and physical stature. Moreover, its ranks have been reduced from roughly 30,000 to only 11,500 members, including National Police, customs, forestry and all other branches.

Inspector Dr. Ulises Somarriba, director of the Civil Inspector's Office, is the first to admit, though, that the military and police still have the same Sandinista structure and commanders — from armed forces chief General Humberto Ortega (Daniel's brother), on down — including some who have notorious human rights records.

Bad habits die hard, explained Comandante Francisco Cuadra, police chief of southeastern Nicaragua. "We've made some errors. But who doesn't make mistakes," he laments. "What's important is that we're correcting our errors. We just want to carry out our work, leaving politics at home when we put on our uniforms."

Comandante Cuadra spoke figuratively. Literally, he and his comrades still wear politics on their sleeve: bold red and black Sandinista patches.

**plosion" if the government  
tionary conquests."**



Still, the enrollment of Big Brother in reform school has undammed a flood of free speech. After decades of successive dictatorships (the longest being the half-century Somoza family dynasty overthrown by the Sandinista revolution), Nicaraguans are speaking out without fear the state will lock them up or worse.

**A**nd most of their ire seems directed at the Sandinistas. Turn on a radio or television and you hear callers lambaste Sandinista leaders appearing on talk shows. Program hosts have had to literally beg audiences to refrain from insulting Sandinista guests. And this is restrained compared with conversations heard in cafes, restaurants, markets, taverns and other social settings where people pull no punches and call Sandinistas thieves and murderers.

#### Dying For Ortega's Mansion

"They came to power with worn boots and sweaty olive-green shirts, and they went with Mercedes', mansions, jewels, and riches of all kind," fumes Moises

Former high-ranking contra commanders Rigoberto and Johnson flank recontra commandante Rojito. At this point most former contras don't feel the grievances justify restarting the war.

Hassan, a disenchanted Sandinista, in the leftist Mexican newspaper *La Ormada*. Hassan is a former member of the Revolutionary Junta of National Reconstruction and one-time mayor of Managua.

"I fought four years in defense of the revolution and in the end it served only to provide a life of luxury for a chosen few," says wheelchair-bound war veteran Ernesto Alvarado in the same article.

No one really knows how much state property the Sandinistas plundered during the Pinata, as records have disappeared. But legislative and independent investigators estimate a total between \$300 million and \$700 million.

Not sticking around to help clean up the mess, disheartened leftist American and European *internacionalistas* — or

Sandalistas as Nicaraguans deride these Sandinista sycophants — have massively deserted the country. "They don't care about Nicaragua. They just wanted to play revolutionary," was a typical comment made by both Sandinistas and their opponents.

Hyperinflation inherited from the Sandinistas has been dramatically cut by President Chamorro. Still, many prices remain exorbitant after a decade of mismanagement, war and the U.S. commercial embargo. Nicaragua now ranks as the second-poorest country in the hemisphere, above only Haiti.

With workers' monthly salaries as low as \$20 and a combined unemployment-underemployment as high as 50%, Nicaraguans are desperate. Crime and prostitution have soared.

**C**rime and political turmoil are exacerbated by the war legacy of a civilian populace armed to the teeth (thanks in large part to Sandinistas opening their arsenals for trusted supporters during the two-month transition). The glut of arms is so great you can buy an assault rifle for less than a portable radio on the black market.

"I can take you to a place where you can get an AK-47 for 300 cordovas (US \$60)," a former contra commander confided. Government officials claim the lion's share of some 100,000 combat weapons illegally circulating among citizenry belongs to Sandinista militants and cooperative farmers.

#### Desperate Desmovilizados

A few blocks from the Ministry of Defense is the headquarters of the Interamerican Commission of Support and Verification (known by its Spanish acronym CIAV), which aids contras' reincorporation into civilian life. Nearby, the governmental Institute of Repatriation, responsible for the welfare of former contras and others, shares the same city block as a major Sandinista labor union.

Even President Chamorro's newspaper *La Prensa* and the pro-Sandinista *El Nuevo Diario* are neighbors. But the appearance of normality is a cruel mirage, say former contras, known as *desmovilizados*.

More than a year ago about 22,000 contras laid down arms in exchange for government promises of social benefits and guarantees for their physical security. Today many former contras find themselves besieged by unmitigated poverty and Sandinista persecution, mostly in the rural areas where battles raged during the war.

They feel abandoned by a government they say wouldn't have enjoyed the opportunity to be elected, had it not been for their armed resistance.

"The situation is grave," according to Miguel Escobar, a former contra recently wounded by Sandinista cooperative farmers when he returned to his confiscated farm. "As long as the





Though not nearly approaching the size of the contra Resistance, the recontras are gaining recruits as conditions in Nicaragua worsen.

government doesn't fulfill what it promised and disarm all the Sandinista Front, there is not going to be peace in Nicaragua."

**I**n similar language, on the other end of the spectrum, demobilized Sandinista soldiers complain of recontra attacks and the government's failure to give them up to one year's promised severance pay, land and other social benefits.

I accompanied the Vice Minister of Repatriation, Oscar Sobalvarro, one of three former contras holding high-ranking posts in the Chamorro administration, on one of his frequent trips to the mountainous northern province of Jinotega. A throng of some 300 demobilized contras waited for their former commandante, who had formed part of the Resistance's final general staff.

"The Sandinistas don't get tired of killing our brothers of the Resistance," decried Francisco, a paunchy middle-aged campesino, who muttered his last name unintelligibly, perhaps fearful of Sandinista reprisals. This could have been a reason why most demobilized contras I interviewed at the meeting preferred to identify themselves by their old *noms de guerre*. (In contrast, the former contras I talked with in Managua usually didn't worry about revealing their real names.)

"Those who were State Security before, today pass as National Police, and they are the ones who come killing campesinos," Francisco continued. "We are all afraid."

Inspector Somarriba later explained their grievances to me: "They have reason to distrust (the Sandinistas) because all the chiefs of police in the (former) war zones are the same that fought against them and killed many prisoners on the battlefield," he said.

I was surprised to observe no military presence in the area, but this was deceptive, the peasants said. "The Sandinistas make incursions through the brush," explained one.

"There hasn't been one single case of vengeful persecution by the army against the members of the Resistance that have laid down their weapons and incorporated into our country's civilian life," armed forces Deputy Chief General Joaquin Cuadra (no relation to the contra commandante) swears, blaming violence on personal grudges and drunken altercations.

### Contras Murdered One-By-One

Peasants specifically condemn the slaying of their neighbor Fransico Cano, a popular former contra commander known as Chapulin. He had been gunned down in front of his young nephew under murky circumstances, during a shoot-out with a platoon-sized joint patrol of soldiers and police (two of whom were wounded) who attempted to confiscate Cano's pistol as he tended his field.

Sandinistas claim the patrol (which included three former-contra police) reacted in self-defense. Surviving family and former contras insist it was cold-blooded murder, motivated by political hatred.

"They gave him thirty-some bullet holes and then poked out his eyes," exclaimed Cano's sister Sonia, tearfully recalling seeing the victim's body.

"It isn't that the Sandinistas are persecuting them systematically, but, yes, there is an ideological-political attitude," noted Inspector Somarriba.

If *revanchismo*, as Nicaraguans call political revenge, sparks lingering violence between former contras and Sandinistas, the fight over land fuels it. The story of Miguel Escobar is a case in point of this danger.

"Upon arriving at a confiscated estate of ours, an armed Sandinista cooperative ambushed us," the former contra told me in Managua.

**E**scobar hobbled on crutches, shot in the leg and hip during the attack on the pickup he, his brother and three others were driving. Seeking refuge in a patch of coffee bushes they were quickly surrounded. One Sandinista said: "Let's waste them. They're making life impossible for us."

Had it not been for his brother, who escaped to get help, Escobar might have joined the ranks of former combatants ironically killed during "peace," after surviving years of guerrilla warfare.

"What good is it to have a plot of land and a house, if the Sandinistas can come anytime to kill you," said another angry former contra.

"Military impunity still exists," laments Inspector Somarriba. "Some cases have remained unpunished. The problem is that commissions are appointed

that do nothing more than discuss what they are going to do. They never arrive at, or act on, a conclusion."

Often these commissions are impeded by a lack of cooperation from the Sandinistas, intransigence and open hostility. "Military commanders exist who are respectful of civilian officials," Inspector Somarriba added. "But there are also commanders and other military men who still want to rebel; they don't admit that there is a civilian authority over their functions."

"The case is bogged down," complains Luis Flej, a former contra commander and part of an independent commission picked by President Chamorro to investigate the murder of Resistance chief Enrique Bermudez. "There's no cooperation from the police. The police haven't given us much information. They don't take the case with the seriousness it deserves — I think for political reasons it doesn't interest them."

**T**here is no evidence linking Sandinistas to the murder, Flej notes, but a pattern exists where there are usually few advances in other cases where contras have been victims.

### Life (And Death) In A Northern Town

Even given overwhelming evidence implicating Sandinistas in committing massacres, cases are closed inexplicably, contends attorney Ignacio Brenes of the Nicaraguan Pro-Human Rights Association.

The most dramatic example, Brenes notes, is the massacre over two days of 13 residents (some with their throats cut) in the northern town of Jalapa; allegedly committed by Sandinista troops in reprisal for a bloodless takeover of the town police station by an anti-Sandinista mob.

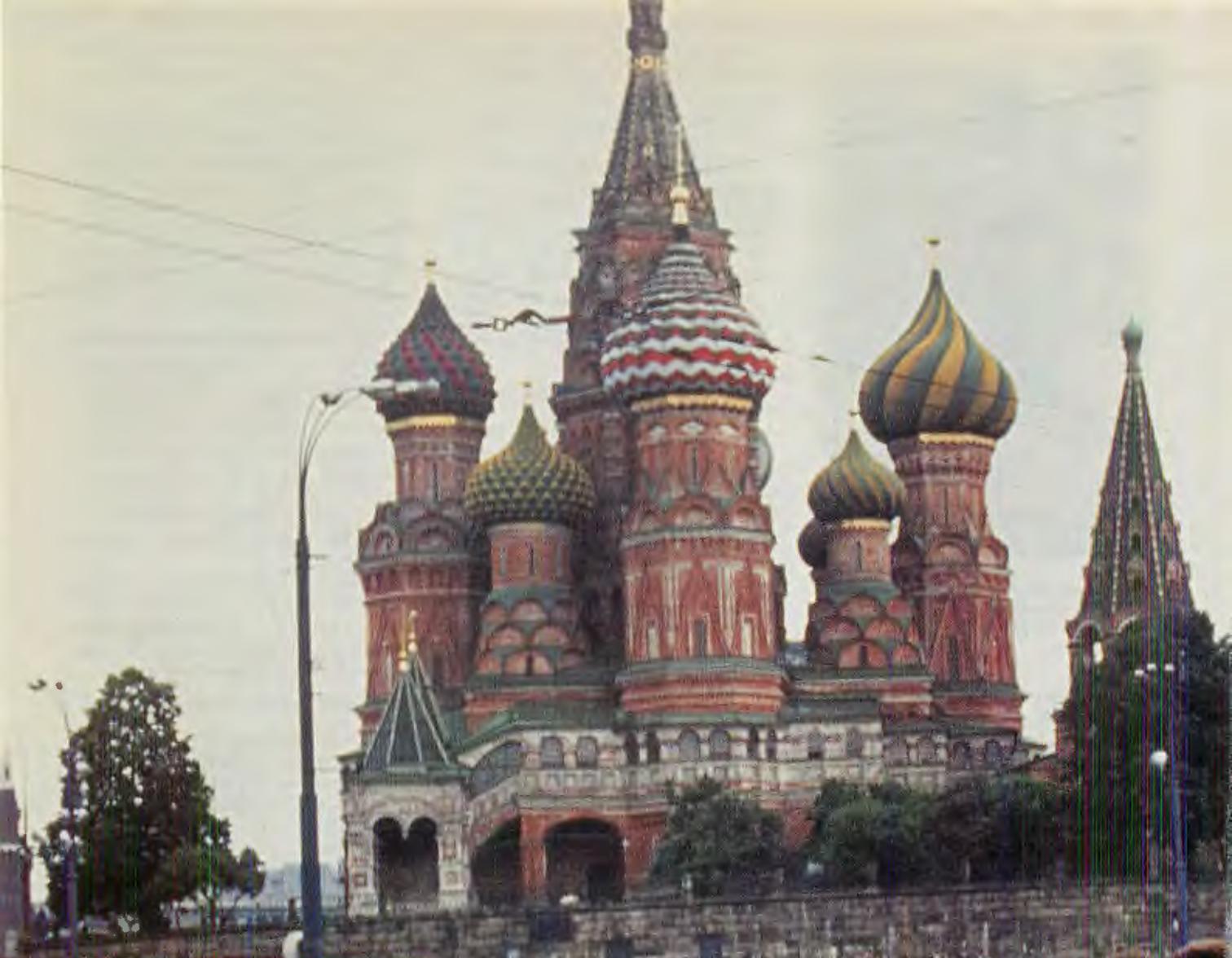
"Currently, the case of Jalapa is closed, despite the countless testimonies gathered," Brenes angrily says. "According to the testimonies we took, the case of Jalapa was a massacre street-by-street, house-by-house, carried out by the army and its paramilitary members. Moreover, when we arrived at the Association of Cattlemen to take declarations from several witnesses, the police shot at the president of the association, wounding him in the foot."

Vice Minister Sobalvarro urges his former brothers in arms to "be patient," echoing the government line as he crisscrosses the country trying to keep their desperation and rage from exploding into rebellion. "Your needs will soon be attended," he says.

But peasants have run out of patience. Hundreds have taken up arms again and begun to fight back.

At the end of July a group of recontras led by Commandante Indomable attacked the northern town of Quilali, reportedly killing two policemen and wounding six

*Continued on page 105*



*"A coup consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder."*

*— from Coup d'Etat:  
A Practical Handbook*



UMORS of an impending coup in the Soviet Union have been cocktail-party fodder for the past few years, at least among those who make it their business to scrutinize Moscow.

At least since September 1990, when Soviet airborne troops inexplicably showed up in battle dress for the country's annual potato harvest, the rumor mill has been grinding away. Every month, it seemed, new evidence emerged to show a coup was imminent — or, even more disturbing, that a silent coup had already taken place.

When the real thing finally arrived this past August 1991, it was enough to make old Bolsheviks roll over in their graves. The move to topple Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev didn't simply fail; it collapsed so quickly and so thoroughly that Western analysts were left disoriented in the face of its ineptitude. Where were the mass arrests? The news blackouts and seizures of transport lines?

# FAILURE OF A COUP

## Soviet Old Guard Caught Off-Guard

by Susan Katz Keating



A fitting end to a colossal blunder: Statue of KGB founder Felix Dzerzhinsky is toppled on 22 August after coup failed and its leaders, including KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, are taken into custody. Photo: Merillon/Liaison



Failure to arrest Russian President Boris Yeltsin was a major blunder of coup instigators. Yeltsin took to the streets to rally massive and broad-based opposition against new "leadership." Photo: Merillon/Liaison



Gorbachev supporters formed roadblocks with whatever vehicles they could find to keep tanks away from Russian seat of government. This widespread opposition caused some troops to defect and others to refuse direct orders, dooming the coup to failure. Photo: Zamur/Liaison



“If the general principle of tactics is the application of force at the right place,” the book states, “the coup achieves this with surgical precision by striking at the organizational heart of the whole state; if speed is often important in military operations, in the coup it is an essential requirement.”

That need is based on the fragile nature of a government overthrow. “Leaders of a coup never really know when they have succeeded,” Luitwak wrote. “That is one of the problems of coming to power in a coup d’etat. Resistance could start at any time.” Hence, the need to acquire as much

Defiant Yeltsin denounces coup and supports reinstatement of Gorbachev. Russian people were firmly on his side, and coup leaders realized Siberia may be in their future. One coup leader committed suicide; the rest attempted, unsuccessfully, to flee. Photo: URSS/Liaison

“They should have known they were up against a formidable task,” according to Edward Luitwak, whose *Coup d’Etat: A Practical Handbook* is the self-help manual of choice for aspiring junta leaders.

What about roadblocks, curfews and closures of public buildings?

Lacking these basics (and more), the coup was so poorly executed there was speculation in some circles that the whole thing was a Potemkin plot — set up to appear like a bungled takeover, while in reality serving some secret, sinister purpose.

What appears to have happened, though, is that plotters acted with excessive haste, as if they were so eager to fight they forgot to load their weapons.

Written in 1968 while Luitwak was a student at the London School of Economics, *Coup d’Etat* is not the most prominent title at bookstore chains; but it is readily available, and would have provided the Moscow plotters with precisely the outline they needed for success. According to the author, now a military analyst with Georgetown University’s Center for Strategic and International Studies, the group neglected to complete even the first step.

As noted in the handbook, the crucial opening phase of a coup must be carried out at an even more intense level than is required of a military strike.



Yeltsin bodyguard, armed with AKSU-74 assault rifle, waits with tens of thousands of others in front of Russian “White House” for Yeltsin to speak. Russian president’s speech against coup leaders effectively ended any chance of success. Photo: Merillon/Liaison

power as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### Too Little, Too Late

The Moscow putsch, however, got off to a sluggish start. True, Gorbachev was arrested in a vulnerable moment, while on vacation in the Crimea. But after his capture, another four hours went by before military operations got underway in Moscow.

Still another 10 hours elapsed before elite units of the KGB and the Interior Ministry showed up in the nation's capital. The Russian parliament building, known as the White House, was left unmolested for seven hours after Gorbachev's arrest, giving Russian President Boris Yeltsin ample time to develop countermeasures.

The handbook specifies leaders of Gorbachev's caliber are of particular danger to an unfolding coup; but Luttwak rejects the notion that the schemers further hindered their cause by sparing the life of the Soviet president.

"Killing Gorbachev would not have helped them," he said. "They had to seize or silence all independent sources of power. By having him under lock and key, they had solved the Gorbachev problem."

It was, apparently, the only true measure of control they achieved.

The plotters announced themselves on television before they had placed even Moscow under their power, thereby enabling their opposition to formulate a counter strategy.

By going public so soon, organizers also lost the advantage of confusion. Whereas defenders of the status quo always know something is up when a coup is put into action, it takes time for them to discern exactly what is going on. The plotters were enormously helpful to the opposition, in that they defined the specific nature of the existing threat.

"A coup works by seizing all the levers of power before anyone notices," Luttwak noted. "By the time the committee presented itself on television, it should already have had everything secured. Once you go public, it's too late. At the very least, you are supposed to control all sources of power in the capital city: police, army units, and security forces, and also such figures as major trade union and religious and political leaders who can go in the streets and rally opposition against you."

But the most fundamental error was the failure to arrest Yeltsin: "That alone condemned the coup," he said.

### Yeltsin, A T-72 And The KGB

By the time Yeltsin had converted a Soviet tank into his personal platform, there was little the plotters could do. Shooting him down or even dragging him off the turret would only have elevated him to martyr status in the eyes of a horrified worldwide audience.

"Like President Bush and many others,



## THE COUP UNFOLDS

**Monday, 19 August 1991**

Eight-member committee, including defense minister, interior minister and KGB chief, overthrows Gorbachev, arresting him at his vacation home in the Crimea. Yeltsin urges resistance to coup plotters.

**Tuesday, 20 August 1991**

Soviet troops surround Russian parliament building. Yeltsin rallies more than 50,000 supporters. Hundreds of Soviet troops switch sides to protect Yeltsin.

**Wednesday, 21 August 1991**

Coup fails. Hard-line leaders flee Moscow. Soviet parliament formally reinstates Gorbachev as president. Gorbachev returns to Moscow.

**Thursday, 22 August 1991**

One coup leader commits suicide while others are arrested. Yeltsin orders the disbanding of Communist Party cells in the Soviet armed forces stationed on Russian territory.

**Friday, 23 August 1991**

Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh is fired by Gorbachev for not opposing the coup. Yeltsin suspends *Pravda* and five other Communist Party newspapers. Gorbachev thanks Yeltsin.

**Saturday, 24 August 1991**

Gorbachev resigns from Communist Party leadership; orders seizure by the state of its property; bans it from all state organizations and suggests it dissolve itself.

Yeltsin says Russia is taking control of all government communications from the Kremlin and orders seizure of all Communist Party and KGB archives.

they enormously underestimated Yeltsin," Luttwak said. "However, in fairness to the coup leaders, they did try to do the right thing. They ordered KGB units to arrest Yeltsin, but they were not obeyed (see sidebar)."

Coup leaders utilized unreliable units throughout Moscow as well. Luttwak's handbook stresses the need to infiltrate armed forces with elements sympathetic to a coup. But the force used to impose control over Moscow consisted mainly of relatively privileged local conscripts who supported Gorbachev. Others were commanded by division chiefs loyal to Yeltsin. No one, least of all the coup leaders, should have been surprised when tank crews moved not to attack Yeltsin but to defend him.

Reliable troops commanded by two of the plotters — Interior Minister Boris Pugo and KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov — were not called in.

### Today Moscow, Tomorrow The World?

But even if conspirators had taken Moscow, they would have been faced with the much larger problem of how to control the rest of the country.

That, Luttwak said, is the key to

completing a successful coup. "It depends on how many independent power centers you have."

In the case of the Soviet Union, it is a factor that demands careful attention. "There are simply too many power centers outside Moscow. None could ultimately resist the united Soviet forces if the plotters did consolidate control; but they would have resisted anyway," he added.

"The Baltic states would not have accepted the coup. Also, Georgia, Moldavia and Armenia would not be so easy to suppress. Georgians would certainly fight," Luttwak observed.

Other significant foes would be the various committees of workers, such as miners in the Ukraine and Siberia, along with the widely dispersed committee of railway workers. "If the trains are stopped, that can paralyze any government completely," he said.

The collapse of this particular effort has brought speculation that another attempt may be in the wings — this time from hard-liners who will study mistakes of their predecessors.

Luttwak considers this unlikely. "I

*Continued on page 102*

# GEER ON GEAR

by Galen Geer

If your days seem to be merging into a dusty 9-to-5 monotony, you're probably suffering from a thirst for adventure. The adventurer's song may be a weekend in the mountains, or weeks in the Alaskan wilds hunting big game.

No matter where in the world you find yourself heading, you'll need the proper tools — from a boat to reach the upper waters of a tropical river — to the right ammunition to bring down your prey on a weekend hunt. The following products have been designed with the demands of the adventurer/sportsman in mind, and we at SOF recommend them.



## Zodiac Boats

▲ Our images of Zodiac boats usually involve Jacques Cousteau chasing rare creatures in the ocean, or commandos on a night mission sneaking into enemy territory, or maybe Greenpeace activists chasing down a trawler. SpecOps-types may remember a sneering instructor dumping them in a bay, telling them to "get in the Zodiac."

Zodiac boats show up just about anywhere there's water and adventure to be found. Among the most stable of all watercraft, a Zodiac can run up shallows which would ground a conventional boat, while carrying more people and gear than comparable ridged-hulled boats.

Zodiac boats are made from rip-proof polyester-based plastomer fabric, with seams welded using a heat-and-pressure thermobonding process. Zodiac boat hulls are designed for stability and performance, with an inflatable keel adding to their versatility.

If you want more information on Zodiac boats write: Zodiac Boats, Dept. SOF, Thompson Creek Road., Post Office 400, Stevensville, MD 21666.



## Binos For Eyeglass Wearers

▲ Eyeglass wearers have always had to fumble with their binoculars. Jason Optics has solved this problem by introducing their "GlassesOn" binoculars. Jason extended the eye relief on the instruments so eyeglass wearers may keep on their glasses while using these binoculars.

"GlassesOn" are available in three sizes, 7x35, 10x50 and 8x40. Write: Jason Optics, Image Group Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 28, Easton, PA 18044.

## Practical Slings

▼ Shooters in this country have been slow to accept shotgun slings, but recently growing numbers of wing shooters going further afield are discovering the value of these slings. Butler Creek, a Montana company specializing in products for the shooting sports, has begun marketing shotgun and rifle slings which are comfortable for long use. They've done this by eliminating the problem of sling fatigue when carrying a weapon by using a built-in stretch, which acts as a shock absorber, yet is solid enough to be used as a hasty sling rest.

Another Butler Creek product worth mentioning is the "Thumb Saver," an attachment for the Ruger MK I, Colt Woodsman or Huntsman, AMT Lightning and Buckmark pistol magazines. The Thumb Saver allows you to compress the magazine spring for quick loading without developing a sore thumb. For more information on these products write: Butler Creek Corporation, Dept. SOF, 290 Arden Drive, Belgrade, MT 59714.





**Pact Chronograph**

▲ Successful sportsmen who know their equipment do not overlook bullet performance. Because every gun shoots just a little different, serious hunters check a variety of different loads looking for the one which will give them shot-to-shot performance they can rely on, whether hunting deer in the mountains of the western United States or the African Big Five.

To get reliable performance, velocity must be checked. PACT Inc. is now marketing an excellent affordable chronograph for the average shooter. The Model 1 chronograph comes with professional skyscreens 14 inches high and 12 inches wide at the top. This chronograph unit will maintain data on up to 10 shots displaying the shot number and velocity in feet per second.

When you are through shooting, the Model 1 will calculate a statistical summary of the highest and lowest shots of the

**Saf-T-Bak All-Weather Clothing**

▼ Whether fishing the Florida flats or scrambling along the banks of an Alaskan river, you could always run into an afternoon rain which might trigger hypothermia. Carrying a rainsuit is an OK solution but sometimes awkward. Saf-T-Bak, a company making quality outdoor clothing (including blaze orange insulated jackets and coveralls for big game hunters), has recently introduced a new line of quality all-weather clothing.

The pants, jacket and shorts are made from BarrierTex, a micro-denier fabric by Milliken & Co., which sheds water, yet breathes. The pant legs can be zipped off, leaving shorts in hot weather, and then may be pulled back on over hiking boots, and zipped back into place when foul weather threatens. Write: Saf-T-Bak, Dept. SOF, 201 Cayuga Ave., Altoona, PA 16602.



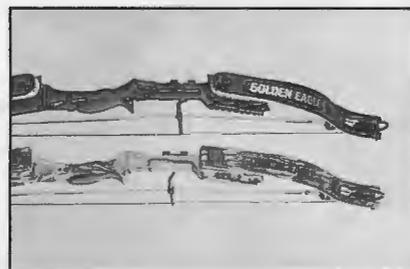
string, the average velocity, its extreme spread, standard deviation and average deviation of the string.

To find out more on the Model 1 write: PACT Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 53152, Grand Prairie, TX 75053.

**Golden Eagle "Formula" Bows**

► Archery hunting is one of the fastest-growing outdoor adventure sports because it brings the hunter and quarry closer, making a hunt more personal. Golden Eagle Archery has developed three new hunting bows capable of shooting ultra-light arrows at speeds in excess of 300 fps, with 70 pounds of bow draw weight.

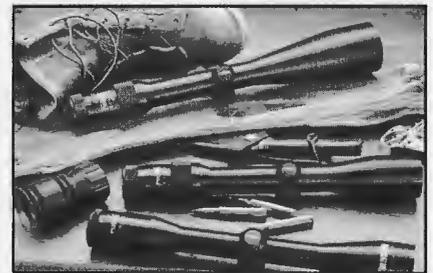
Part of the bow's design is a patented "Hyper-Force" handle, increasing the bow's power stroke by 2 full inches without affecting draw length. The bows are balanced with weight forward, reducing the need for a stabilizer. To learn more about these new hunting bows contact: Golden Eagle Archery, Dept. SOF, 1111 Corporate Drive, Farmington, NY 14425.



**Schrade Pro Hunter Knives**

▲ Several years ago an elk hunter bled to death after slashing his wrist trying to field dress an elk. Making sure the knife doesn't slip while field dressing is critical to blade design. Schrade cutlery has introduced the Pro Hunter and Mini Pro Hunter fixed-blade knives designed for safety when field dressing big game animals.

Both knives have drop-point blades, hollow ground edges, black Delrin handles, brass guards and compression rivets. The Pro Hunter is 8 inches long and the 7-inch Mini Pro is also available. For more facts on these knives contact: Schrade Cutlery, Images Group, Attn: Missy Riley, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 28, Easton, PA 18044.



**Steiner's Penetrator Scope**

▲ Successful big game hunters know most of their shots will occur either at early morning or late evening in poor light. To overcome this problem Steiner-Germany has developed a new rifle scope which enhances the human eye's ability to spot game.

Steiner's Penetrator scope is designed on the principle that nature's camouflage color — brown — is high in the red band of the spectrum. The Penetrator's optics maximize the light transmission in the red band while reflecting many of the green and blue light waves. This combination enhances the game animal while reducing foliage visibility.

Steiner Penetrator scopes are available in three different scope configurations including: 6x42, 1.56x42 variable and a 3-12x56 variable. For more information on Penetrator scopes write: Pioneer Marketing & Research Inc., Dept. SOF, 216 Haddon Ave., Westmont, NJ 08108.✕

# HITTS AND MYTHS

**T**raining is the key ingredient in a successful response to lethal aggression, whether that response is made by an individual, a law enforcement Special Reaction Team (SRT) or a military unit.

Unfortunately, most firearms training does not simulate reality. Generally, live-fire range training takes place at known distances with either static, two-dimensional paper targets or reactive steel plates facing straight on. On the streets or in the bush, live enemy targets bob and weave erratically and rarely present a frontal shot.

There is no more prominent exponent of realistic firearms training than Louis Awerbuck, currently owner and director of the Yavapai Firearms Academy (YFA), a mobile small arms training facility operating out of Prescott Valley, Ariz. Immediately prior to opening YFA, he served as chief

rangemaster at Jeff Cooper's American Pistol Institute, where he was awarded the title of shooting master.

An adjunct firearms instructor for the Central Training Academy, Department of Energy, Awerbuck has trained civilians, law enforcement agencies and U.S. military personnel throughout the country. A native South African, he also served in the South African Defense Force.

Realistic training is a hallmark of all of Louie Awerbuck's courses, and he has also written a seminal book on practical range training titled *Hit or Myth* (\$12.50 post-paid from Yavapai Firearms Academy Ltd., Dept. SOF, PO Box 27290, Prescott Valley, AZ 86312; phone: 602-772-8262).

Courses at YFA include training with the handgun, submachine gun, combat shotgun, assault rifle and sniper rifle. They also address specific user requirements for these weapons, with customized training designed to meet the user's Mission Essential Need Statement (MENS).

In preparation for our return to El Salvador to provide Level II countersniper training

Firing from the braced squatting position behind barricade during HITT countersniper course.



for the Special Response Team of the *Policia Nacional* (See "Sniper School," September, '91), I asked Awerbuck to provide High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) focused on advanced urban countersniper techniques for myself and Chris Mayer, my co-instructor. SOF's Editor/Publisher and an avid high-power shooter, Robert K. Brown,



Participants of HITT urban countersniper course firing from the prone with bipods. SOF's three-man team is on the right.

decided to tag along. Two others also took part in the three-day course.

### Five Easy Snipers

Four participants were armed with bolt-action rifles. Brown used a Robar SR90 (see sidebar) and I had my personal Steyr SSG with Parker Hale bipod and Swarovski 6-power ZFM scope with rangefinder reticle pattern. Both Brown and I employed Federal 308M match ammunition, which has the superb Sierra 168-grain MatchKing Hollow-Point Boattail (HPBT) bullet.

**M**ayer was equipped with a customized Remington Model 700 Varminter in an early McMillan stock with Harris bipod and a Leupold & Stevens 3.5-10x Law Enforcement scope. He used reloads with the Sierra 168-grain MatchKing bullet.

Another student had a caliber .30-06 pre-64 Winchester Model 70 fitted with a Leupold & Stevens 2.5-8x variable scope and Harris bipod. He used recently manufactured Yugoslav ball ammunition.

There was also an M14-type semiautomatic-only rifle with a Federal Ordnance receiver and Chinese parts. This rifle was equipped with a Harris bipod, Fabian Brothers muzzle brake, Leupold & Stevens 4-12x variable scope and Weaver rings. The scope mount failed on this latter rig during our second day and this shooter switched to an H&K 91.

Our first morning was spent zeroing the rifles at 25 yards and then firing at the torso from the prone, kneeling and sitting positions at 25 yards — two sets of three-shot groups from each position without a time limit. This was followed by 25-yard head shots from the prone position, then torso shots at 50 yards from the prone and finally head shots at 50 yards from the prone.

This culminated in a “10-minute” drill which consisted of a single head shot fired from the prone, no later than three seconds after the instructor’s command (which could be given at any moment within the 10-minute time frame). We waited approximately six minutes for the command to fire. This is an excellent and

realistic exercise in mental discipline.

After this we fired from the prone at a reactive steel plate target at 75 yards. The first day ended with a “leap-frog” drill. Working in two-man teams, participants shot from four stations with one man shooting while the other moved to the next station. All firing was carefully aimed at the steel plate. Wild, suppressive-type fire was not permitted. Precise, surgically placed shots were emphasized during this exercise and throughout the course.

The shooters were forced to use a code to indicate they were out of ammunition and needed to reload, moving only while their partner was shooting. In most instances, military or law-enforcement snipers operate as either two- or three-man teams. Their efforts must be coordinated and interdependent. Movement must be choreographed as precisely as a ballet and as carefully as the shot is placed on the target.

### 1,000-Yard Kills Everyday

Shooting at only 25, 50 and 75 yards in a sniper course? U.S. Marine Corps snipers routinely take out targets at 1,000 yards or more every day before they eat their Wheaties. But do they? I have personally never witnessed a sniper-kill even out in the bush at a distance greater



Robert K. Brown firing from the low prone at 200-yard steel plate with Robar SR90 sniper rifle.

than 300 yards, though I’m sure shots at far greater distances have been taken and, on occasion, made. But not in the city, and don’t forget this was “urban” HITT countersniper training, not a long-range, open-field stalking course.

The average law-enforcement countersniper’s engagement distance is well under 100 yards in city environments. His targets will be moving about, sometimes almost spastically, and he must connect with the utmost precision as

# AWERBUCK'S COURSE ON CUTTING EDGE OF SNIPING

TEXT & PHOTOS BY PETER G. KOKALIS





Louis Awerbuck observes two-man sniper team moving through exercise involving stepped barrier during grueling HITT countersniper course.

hostages may often be covering a large portion of the target.

YFA's paper target is of the so-called "option" type, that is to say with a squared-off head and torso. Its camouflage pattern inhibits shooters from looking over the gun for their hits, and in so doing throwing the weapon downward after the trigger has been pulled, causing low impact. The torso kill zone measures approximately 12 inches long by 8

inches wide.

An outline representing the eye-socket kill zone is about 2 inches by 4 1/2 inches. The target's rear side has a zero target with 1-inch squares, a 100-yard small-bore bull's-eye target and three black option-type targets scaled to represent 50, 100 and 200 yards at 25 yards. This excellent and versatile target is used for most of SOF's tests and evaluations of combat firearms.

On our second day everything was quickly moved up several notches. After an initial exercise firing "cold" shots at the torso and then the head, Mayer and I were sent on a daytime tactical exercise with no time limit. Although we both

carried our rifles, Mayer was selected as the shooter and I as the team observer.

I kept my Steyr SSG in an Eagle Industries Drag Bag (see sidebar) and used a pair of Yugoslav military 7x40 binoculars as we deployed under maximum cover and concealment across the scorching hot desert surface.

**C**rawling several hundred yards on your stomach across the thorn of every cacti and mesquite bush in the Upper Sonoran Life Zone at mid-day in August will demonstrate to anyone the unforgiving and brutal nature of arid region environments. We located our target in an arroyo, hidden behind dense sagebrush. Shooting from less than 20 feet, Mayer's bullet was deflected by a branch and I was forced to launch the coup de grace.

### Snipers In the Sonoran Desert

As cut and bruised as we were, this proved to be an easier go than what followed, when we were introduced to moving targets. Bobbing and weaving side-to-side and back and forth, we first practiced frontal torso and then frontal head shots on the YFA camouflage target. This was followed by a moving humanoid paper target which presented a 3/4 view. We were given two shots only at this target from 50 yards and could select either the torso or head. A torso shot had to be placed well back toward the spine to avoid shooting through nothing more than its coat.

We then moved up to two separate paper

## THE BACK-PACKING SNIPER

**Drag bags** are not necessarily purses for transvestites. In fact, the "Drag Bag" as manufactured by Eagle Industries Unlimited Inc. (Dept. SOF, 400 Biltmore Drive, Suite 530, Fenton, MO 63026; phone: 314-343-7547. Catalog \$3) was designed and built to meet needs of the military and law enforcement countersniper. It is a completely self-contained system for carrying a scoped countersniper rifle, bipod, spare ammunition, binoculars and/or spotting scope and other equipment up to the point of anticipated contact, and then moving quietly into position.

Constructed of heavy-duty 11-ounce abrasion-resistant Cordura nylon, milspec webbing and hardware are used throughout. Available colors include woodland camouflage pattern, olive drab, black, and chocolate brown. The case is fully padded with 3/8-inch high-density, shock-resistant closed-cell foam. For easy access and use as a ground pad, the case opens fully with an extra heavy-duty, two-way foam-backed zipper. A security flap over the zipper snaps shut for additional protection.

Every feature on the Drag Bag is designed to meet requirements of professional users. The interior has two one-inch-wide nylon straps with Fastex quick-release buckles for securing the rifle. The interior accessory pouch holds two boxes of 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition, with room for a sectional cleaning rod and accessories.

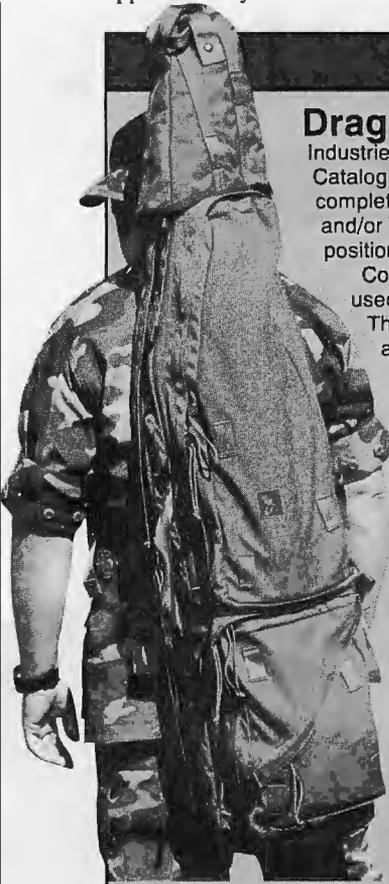
The top of the bag has 11 loops for attaching camouflage. A nose cover protects it and eases movement through heavy brush. Drag loops on the front and top of the bag allow it to be pushed or pulled through the bush. Both cargo pouches open with heavy-duty, two-way zippers and have two full-length compression straps with Fastex quick-release buckles for securing gear.

The rear cargo pouch will accommodate a pair of binoculars and has a flat pocket on its flap. The front cargo pouch will hold a spotting scope and tripod. Three pieces of one-inch-wide abrasion-resistant Cordura webbing on the bottom of the bag serve to protect it when being slid into position.

Padded shoulder straps with quick-release Fastex buckles permit back-packing and can be switched for muzzle up-or-down carry. The shoulder straps stow quickly behind the bottom abrasion webbing to ease hand carrying or dragging. A Cordura nylon outer bag is available for low-profile transportation.

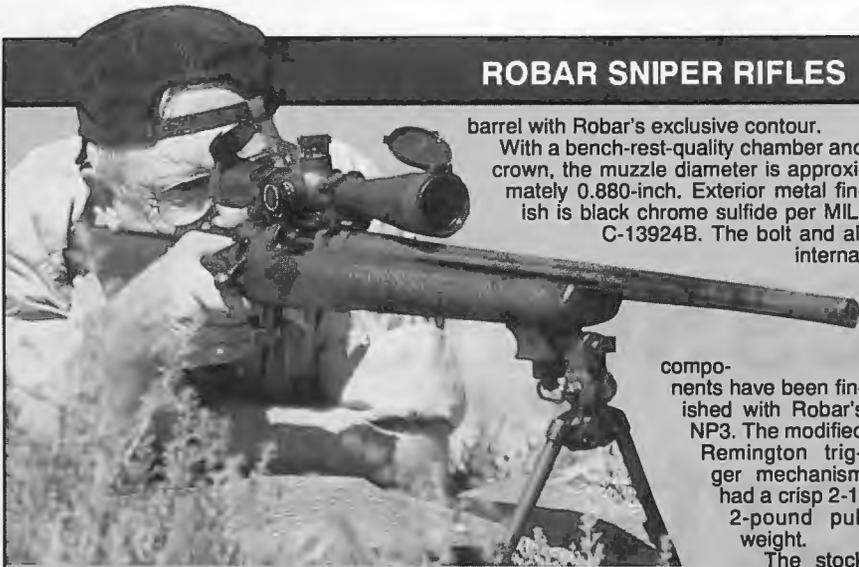
SOF's staff used the Eagle Industries Drag Bag throughout the HITT course in Prescott, Ariz. Except for some minor scuffing caused by dragging it through sagebrush, mesquite and creosote during one of the tactical exercises, it survived relatively unscathed and served admirably. Highly specialized, this is a superb piece of equipment for countersniper teams. Suggested retail price is \$253.

— P.G.K.



Eagle Industries' Drag Bag is constructed of heavy-duty 11-ounce abrasion-resistant nylon and features padded shoulder straps for back-packing countersniper's rifle and equipment.

## ROBAR SNIPER RIFLES



barrel with Robar's exclusive contour. With a bench-rest-quality chamber and crown, the muzzle diameter is approximately 0.880-inch. Exterior metal finish is black chrome sulfide per MIL-C-13924B. The bolt and all internal

components have been finished with Robar's NP3. The modified Remington trigger mechanism had a crisp 2-1/2-pound pull weight.

The stock is built exclusively for Robar under license by McMillan Fibreglas Stocks Inc. This ambidextrous, synthetic stock has an adjustable comb, three-way adjustable butt assembly, accessory forend rail to which has been added the excellent Parker Hale bipod (a scaled-down version of the Bren LMG bipod), and a more vertically-oriented pistol grip with thumb rests and palm swells. The forend is slightly tapered in thickness from the front to the trigger guard to aid in gross elevation adjustments.

Internally, the action is pillar bedded with a completely free-floated barrel channel. The exterior features Robar's "non-slip" surface texturing. Quick-release sling swivel studs are standard. The stock is available in black, gray or various camouflage patterns.

Our test specimen was equipped with a Leupold & Stevens Ultra 10X-M1 military/police scope which has 30mm solid-tube construction and 1/4-minute click-adjustable windage and elevation, a separate focusing knob and a conventional duplex reticle pattern. Other scopes are available, including Phobis International, Bausch & Lomb, Zeiss, Swarovski, Kahles, Redfield and Weaver.

The SR90 is priced at \$2,475, about half the government's cost for the M24 Sniper Weapon System (SWS)—although this

price does not include an optical system or the bipod. Several SR90 rifles were used by special ops groups during Desert Storm with considerable success. As Brown commented on several occasions during the HITT course, nothing brings a shooter to a higher level of confidence than knowing his rifle is capable of the highest level of accuracy.

Our backup rifle was a Robar SR60. Just one step below the SR90, this rifle is currently in use with the Los Angeles Police Department Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) team and the Special Response Teams (SRT) of numerous other law enforcement agencies nationwide.

It is in most regards similar to the SR90, except for its stock. Also built by McMillan, the ambidextrous Monte Carlo is non-adjustable, but possesses most of the other features described. So equipped, the SR60 costs \$1,750 without a scope or bipod. Our test specimen was finished with an urban camouflage pattern and equipped with a Harris bipod.

While I wouldn't want to tote these or any other sniper system of this weight category for any substantial distance in the bush, Robar's sniper rifle series, which also includes lightweight (touted as merely 8 1/4 pounds sans scope) and plain Jane models, provides outstanding accuracy in an acceptable envelope for most urban law enforcement applications.

— P.G.K.

**Robar SR60 is just one step below the SR90 and is currently in use with the Los Angeles Police Department SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) Team.**



SOF's Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown used Robar's top-of-the-line SR90 caliber .308 countersniper rifle throughout the HITT course. Completely accurized Remington 700 BDL action has been mated with a McMillan stock and fluted Schneider barrel.

**Ideally**, sniper rifles should provide bench rest accuracy with hunting rifle portability. They usually come closer to the former than the latter. The tactical division of The Robar Companies Inc. (Dept. SOF, 21438 North 7th Avenue, Suite B, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone: 602-581-2648) designs, builds and markets a line of military and law enforcement sniper rifles with a guaranteed accuracy potential of half-minute of angle with Federal 308M ammunition. SOF was provided with two of these rifles for test and evaluation during the HITT course in Prescott, Ariz.

Robert K. Brown used Robar's top-of-the-line SR90 throughout the course. Although heavy (about 14 1/2 pounds complete with scope and bipod), it has the precision of a surgical instrument. Its Remington 700 BDL action is completely accurized, machined, ground and lapped. The bolt is modified with a military-style extractor. To this has been fitted a fluted Schneider stainless steel, match-grade

targets, with one serving as a hostage while a rear target moved back and forth. Finally we were presented with a clothed 3-dimensional head and torso. We each fired one shot at the body from an acute angle and then moved to a frontal position



for a head shot.

When the target is wearing a cap and rolling his head back and forth, and you must concentrate with every fiber of your body to hit it in the brain cavity at 50 or 75 yards, then fantasies of routine "1,000-meter kills" begin to take on a different perspective. This scenario was engaged by two-man teams with only one shot permitted.

After sundown, we fired frontal-torso and then head shots, each five-shot groups, on the camouflage target from 50 yards while the instructor waved a flashlight back and forth across the line of targets. The evening culminated with a night tactical problem for two students who had not gone on the day exercise.

**Challenging 3-dimensional moving targets used in HITT countersniper course stress realism and the erratic movements encountered on the street. Note unacceptable peripheral hits on left side of rear target's face.**

**O**ur third and final day of the course began with a surprise. Awerbuck informed us that few plan ahead for unexpected emergencies. To demonstrate this, we were instructed on his command to retrieve our rifles from the vehicles. This exercise ended when the first shooter was able to set up and hit the reactive steel plate at 200 yards. In the real world, contact with the enemy never occurs on your timetable.

### They Shoot Gongs, Don't They?

Using the YFA camouflage target, we then zeroed our rifles for 200 yards with five torso shots followed by five head shots. Every student then shot at the 200-yard steel plate. During the two-man, 200-yard steel plate exercise, the first man fired, then moved to the next station while his partner was shooting.

There were a total of five stations; the

*Continued on page 104*

# Lessons Of Desert Storm

What Went Right ...  
What Went Wrong ...  
in the Persian Gulf

by Dale B. Cooper

**F**ive months after the end of hostilities against Iraq, the Department of Defense has sent Congress an *Interim Report on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict*. Although the final analysis will not be submitted until January 1992, this preliminary report provides facts and figures previously unavailable, identifies lessons learned and highlights areas that need improvement.

Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm presented the most important test of American arms in 25 years. Saddam Hussein's forces possessed superb artillery, front-line T-72 tanks, modern MiG-29 aircraft, ballistic missiles, biological and chemical weapons and a vast, sophisticated air defense system. The Iraqi army, battle-hardened by eight years of combat against Iran, was the fourth largest worldwide. Further, Iraqi combat engineers, rated among the world's best, had months to construct their defenses in Kuwait.

And yet the Coalition routed this force in six weeks with miraculously low casualties on our side. There's no doubt the impressive victory will affect American military and security interests for years to

come. But we must also remember that much of our military capability went untested.

For example, there was no submarine threat, no attack by enemy aircraft on our troops, port facilities or storage areas. Chemical and biological warfare, although threatened, was never employed; amphibious forces were not tested under fire and Saddam's Scud missiles, while terrifying to those individuals within their range, were inaccurate.

## Assessing Our Air Power

Coalition forces controlled the skies over Kuwait and Iraq from virtually the beginning of the war, sparing our ground forces and naval units from attack.

During the first 24 hours, more than 1,300 combat sorties were flown by U.S. and Coalition aircraft. Additionally, the U.S. Navy launched 106 Tomahawk missiles. Coalition aircraft destroyed 41 Iraqi warplanes, including five modern MiG-29s and six helicopters in air-to-air combat without the loss of a single allied aircraft.

According to the Air Force, 34 of 39 U.S. air-to-air kills (including one MiG-29

pilot who flew into the ground) were attributed to the F-15C. AIM-7 Sparrow missiles accounted for 25 kills; AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles had eight kills.

In total, the 120 F-15s deployed to the Persian Gulf flew 5,906 sorties with an average sortie length of 5.19 hours. No F-15Cs were lost, however two F-15Es were lost early on during night missions.

The F-15 Strike Eagle tested a relatively new weapons system — Low Altitude Navigation Infrared For Night (LANTIRN) — used to deliver more than 1,700 laser-guided bombs. On a "tank plinking mission" two F-15Es loaded with eight GBU-12 precision-guided bombs were able to kill up to 16 tanks in some 30 minutes.

Key contributors to the highly successful air campaign, F-15Es attacked fixed Scud sites and airfields on the war's first day. By the third day, a squadron of F-15Es had shifted primarily to Scud hunting missions, but as U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney pointed out, Scud seeking was difficult and costly in terms of assets.

The equivalent of three squadrons of aircraft were eventually assigned this very



Threats of chemical and biological attack forced Coalition troops to train and operate frequently in mission oriented protective posture (MOPP) gear even though no such attacks occurred. Initial reports indicate equipment performed adequately, but chemical protective suits were described as too hot to wear in the desert and also claustrophobic. Photo: Dale B. Cooper



An F/A-18 Hornet is launched on mission off forward catapult aboard USS *Midway* in Persian Gulf. Photo: Dale B. Cooper

difficult mission against targets which could emerge from hiding places, fire, then hide again.

F-16s in the west and A-10s in the east maintained constant airborne alert during daylight hours, with F-15Es, F-16s and A-6Es on ardent alert nighttimes. In addition, RF-4C and F-14A reconnaissance aircraft flew daily flights over suspected Scud sites.

**A**lthough Scud launches were not stopped, they were suppressed. Launches averaged five per day for the Gulf War's initial 10 days, however this was reduced to roughly one daily thereafter.

Tragically, one Scud struck an Army barracks in Dhahran, inflicting the conflict's greatest single-event casualties. Twenty-eight U.S. Army Reservists from the 14th Quartermaster Detachment at Greensburg, Pa. (including two women reservists), were killed in the single strike; 97 others were injured.

#### The Truth About Scuds And Patriots

During the war, the media gave unquestioning coverage to Army claims that Patriot missiles "successfully intercepted" 45 of 47 incoming Scuds. But in a presentation to the U.S. House Armed Services Committee (HASC) on 22 April 1991, military analyst P.M. Sprey painted a much different picture.

Sprey said it later appeared 158 Patriots were fired at the 47 Scuds. Furthermore, very few "successfully intercepted" warheads were prevented from impacting the ground and exploding. Citing evidence from Israeli sources, Sprey claimed only one Scud warhead was destroyed in midair, noting less than 20% were deflected off course to land outside a defended area.

Published figures show Israeli casualties per Scud fired increased by 80% after Patriots started defending Israel. No one has yet revealed the number of Patriots which fell on defended territory, adding

casualties and extra damage.

An air defense control center in southern Iraq received the war's first bombing raid from the U.S. F-117, or Stealth Fighter, poking out one of Saddam's electronic eyes. Forty-two deployed F-117s flew about 2% of total attack sorties in the war, yet struck more than 40% of the strategic target list. Stealth fighters flew almost 1,300 attack sorties, dropping more than 2,000 tons of bombs. According to the U.S. Air Force, more than 80% of the precision-guided bombs hit their targets, limiting collateral damage.

Stealth fighters were the only aircraft to "go downtown," operating in heavily defended skies over urban Baghdad. Although Iraqis put up an awesome curtain of antiaircraft artillery (AAA) and surface-to-air (SAM) missiles above Baghdad, their gunners might as well have fired blanks for all the damage they inflicted on F-117s.

By virtue of its stealth characteristics, the F-117 requires fewer support assets. For example, eight conventional (non-

Kuwaiti desert was littered with destroyed Iraqi equipment. This blackened hulk of Iraqi T-55 tank was hit by TOW missiles fired by Super Cobra gunships.

Photo: Randy Hammond



Stealth) aircraft attacking a single airfield require 30 additional aircraft to provide radar jamming, carry radar-homing (HARM) missiles and suppress enemy air-defense systems. The use of Stealth aircraft allowed planners to divert other air assets to the interdiction campaign.

However, in his closed-door presentation to HASC members, Sprey questioned the F-117's combat performance. "The Stealth does not appear to be stealthy," Sprey observed, noting that a wide variety of ordinary French, Chinese or British search radars easily tracked the F-117.

**S**prey also claimed the payload of the fighter is quite limited. Based on radio traffic from F-117 pilots coming off targets in and around Baghdad, Sprey said the Stealth's fuel status is clearly marginal.

Asked to evaluate other airborne delivery systems, Sprey dumped on Harrier Jump Jets: "The AV-8B Harrier appears to be a major disappointment." He questioned its survivability. Six of 60 Harriers deployed to the Persian Gulf were shot down, "leaving the Marine Corps with a very serious deficiency in close-support aircraft," Sprey said.

Commenting on Sprey's assessment of the situation, a former squadron commander who had two Harriers shot down said, "Sprey is full of shit."

#### A-10 Is A-OK

While Sprey found problems with the Stealth and the Harrier, he heaped praise on the Air Force A-10.

"With only 144 of the 1,800 combat aircraft flying," Sprey told the House committee, "the A-10 force accounted for 100 of the 1,700 tank kills claimed during the air campaign. A-10s also accounted for 1,200 of the 1,300 artillery pieces claimed

as air kills.”

Interviews of POWs quickly established the A-10 was the warplane most feared by Iraqi soldiers because it stayed “long and low” over the battlefield instead of hitting and running like supersonic jet fighters. Iraqi soldiers also dreaded the multi-barrelled 30mm cannon which fired incendiary uranium-depleted armor-piercing rounds, capable of making Swiss cheese of tanks and other armored vehicles.

**D**espite the Thunderbolt’s stellar performance in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. Air Force still wants to retire its active fleet of A-10s.

A baptism by fire was given the U.S. F/A-18, flown by the Navy and Marine Corps during Operation Desert Storm. The multipurpose high-performance attack fighter executed interdiction strikes while providing its own air cover, thus eliminating a need for escort aircraft.

No single event of the war better demonstrated the value of Hornet multimission capability than when two F/A-18s from VFA-81, a fighter/attack squadron attached to USS *Saratoga* shot down two Iraqi MiG-21s on the war’s first day.

The Hornets were on a scheduled bombing mission against an Iraqi airfield when U.S. pilots detected two “bogies” 7 miles away. Switching their weapons’ computer systems from bombing mode to the air-to-air mode, they confirmed the planes as hostile and downed both MiGs, using Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles. The F/A-18s then resumed their bombing run in support of a Coalition strike on the airfield.

Along with F/A-18s, F-117s, F-15Cs, F-15Es, F-16s, A-6Es, A-7Es, A-10s and F-111s, B-52Gs were used to attack strategic targets.

Some 112,000 combat and support sorties were flown against Iraq by fixed-wing aircraft. Preliminary reports indicate

**N***o single event of the war better demonstrated the value of Hornet multimission capability than when two F/A-18s from VFA-18, a fighter/attack squadron attached to USS *Saratoga* shot down two Iraqi MiG-21s on the war’s first day.*

a total of 28 U.S. fixed-wing aircraft, including one F/A-18, were lost in combat for an unprecedented low attrition rate of 0.03%.

#### M1A1 Power

Coalition aircraft were the principal instruments of military force during Desert Storm’s first 38 days. In the final four days, air power operated hand in hand with fast-moving ground forces.

The success of the ground campaign



Patriot Missile Battery protecting Dhahran Airbase. Computer software problems with the Patriot allowed a Scud missile to sneak into Dhahran and kill 28 Army reservists in a makeshift barracks. Photo R.D. Ward/DoD

depended heavily on the capabilities of the M1-series tank. More than 1,100 M1A1s were shipped to Saudi Arabia from Europe and the United States, including M1A1 HA (heavy armor modified) tanks which were provided for VII Corps, and the 2d ACR (armored cavalry regiment). About 27% of tanks in the theater on G-Day (when the ground war began) were M1A1 HA.

Defensively, the special-armor package proved extremely successful. There were no confirmed penetrations of M1/M1A1s by Iraqi projectiles.

Offensively, the M1A1 scored many of its first-round hits while on the move.

Many targets it destroyed may also have been moving at time of engagement. The M1A1 target-acquisition and fire-control systems allowed gunners to hit targets before Iraqi tanks were able to fire back.

Furthermore, the M1A1’s 120mm main gun could engage Iraqi tanks from beyond the enemy’s range. An example of this effectiveness is the Battle of Medina Ridge. In this engagement the 2d Brigade of the 1st Armored Division destroyed as many as 100 Iraqi tanks and 30 BMP

armored personnel carriers in 45 minutes.

While engaging Iraqi T-72 tanks, the M1A1 consistently achieved catastrophic kills (turret separations), even against enemy located behind thick berms and other defensive emplacements. Sabot, or kinetic-energy penetrating rounds, performed better than expected.

**T**he M1A1 maintained high operational-readiness rates despite the desert environment. On one occasion, the 3d Armored Division moved more than 300 tanks some 200km in one night without a single breakdown. However, the Pentagon’s interim report indicates several areas require improvement.

- Support and command/control vehicles (M88A1s, M577s and M113s) could not keep up with fast-moving M1A1s. Supply distribution also had difficulty following. In a longer operation, the need for more supply trucks would have posed problems.

- Sealift delivered the bulk (95%) of all U.S. cargo and equipment, but more lift was needed than had been programmed to support 501,000 military personnel. Had the Coalition not had an extended period of time to deploy (some seven months before the ground war began), “the tactical situation might have been precarious,” the Pentagon concluded.

The bottom line: DoD must be able to move larger and heavier numbers of forces in less time, so as to defend our national interests with a lower degree of risk.

- Additionally, rapid movement of ground forces over featureless desert terrain demonstrated a need for an identification system (friend or foe) and a global positioning system (GPS) receiver for key ground vehicles.

Field commanders have stated that VII Corps’ bold sweep across the western desert, deep into enemy territory while



While engaging Iraqi T-72 tanks, the M1A1 consistently achieved catastrophic kills (turret separations) even against tanks covered by thick berms and other defensive emplacements. Here a T-72 has been destroyed by a direct hit of a kinetic-energy round. Photo: Vernon Forenpozar

Iraqis were unaware, could not have been accomplished without GPS. The system was so good that Captain Cal Swain, commanding Golf Battery, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, said superiors at 1st Marine Division Headquarters knew where his group was at all times. GPS can pinpoint location of a unit to within 1 meter. But Swain noted there was only one GPS per battalion, not enough to track fast-moving artillery units like his.

#### Friend Or Foe

A friend-or-foe identification system might have saved the lives of seven Marines killed when an A-10 attacked their LAV (light armored vehicle) with a Maverick missile near Khafji. Such a system might have also saved lives of two 101st Airborne troopers fired on by an Apache helicopter.

After initial friendly-fire losses, the director of the Joint Staff requested a review of current technology be conducted, in an effort to develop a "quick fix" to the problem.

AFID (anti-fratricide identification device), better known as the "DARPA light" was made available to ground forces on 26 February, just 27 days after the young leathernecks were killed at Khafji.

A beacon which uses two high-powered infrared diodes to generate a skyward-directed signal, the DARPA light is visible through standard third-generation night-vision goggles from a distance of up to 5 miles, under normal nighttime conditions. The light runs on seven "C" alkaline batteries.

Since the DARPA light featured a protective collar preventing infrared (IR) energy from detection by ground forces, and since the Coalition had air supremacy, there was little worry of Iraqi aircraft using emitters to target Coalition vehicles

equipped with AFID lights.

In an effort to facilitate ground-to-ground and air-to-ground identification, inverted V's and fluorescent-orange panels were used on vehicles. They worked well at close quarters, but not at long ranges.

The problem is simple. We can shoot further than we can positively identify targets. AFID-type technology does not

address problems of thermal-imaging systems (such as the Maverick missile), while the introduction of more beyond-visual-range weapons will only complicate friend-or-foe identification.

#### Apaches, Hellfires, Vipers And Tomahawks

A variety of helicopters were employed in combat and combat support roles during the Gulf War. On the morning of 17 January at 0238 hours local, 22 minutes prior to commencement of Phase I of Operation Desert Storm (H-Hour), Air Force Special Operations MH-53 Pave Low helicopters crossed into Iraqi airspace, leading a flight of Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopters — the first strike of Desert Storm.

The Apaches destroyed key Iraqi radars with Hellfire missiles, creating a 12-mile-wide corridor used by Coalition air forces to pass through en route to Baghdad and targets in western Iraq.

Iraqi air defense forces fired two heat-seeking missiles at the attack team on its return flight, but the Apaches used electronic countermeasures and evasive actions to defeat the missiles.

In all, 15 battalions (274 AH-64s) were deployed in the Persian Gulf. The stand-off range of Apaches with Hellfire missiles outdistanced anything the Iraqis had. Preliminary reports indicate 2,876 Hellfires were launched at Iraqi targets.

On 2 March a battalion of Apaches from the 24th Mechanized Division attacked a Republican Guard armored column west of Basra. Vipers from the 1st Battalion destroyed 84 tanks and armored vehicles, four air defense systems, eight artillery pieces and 38 wheeled vehicles. Only one AH-64 was lost to enemy fire, and there were no crew fatalities.

Desert Storm provided the first combat test of TLAM, or Tomahawk cruise missiles. A total of 288 Tomahawks were fired, 276 by surface ships and 12 by submarines. Approximately 80% of the attacks took place in daylight.

TLAM's ability to strike as weather conditions restricted other precision-delivered munitions, and to hit Baghdad in

broad daylight without endangering pilots, complemented other strike platforms.

As for the half-billion dollars' worth of Tomahawks we hurled at Saddam, military analyst Sprey says the Tomahawk looks like a made-to-order target for light machine guns. In fact, he claims several TLAMs were shot down over Iraq.

Sprey told HASC members the Tomahawk's terrain map-matching navigation system is vulnerable to getting lost over surface which is either too featureless or too craggy; the optical scene-matching terminal guidance can be defeated by smoke or camouflage. Observers reportedly saw several Tomahawks crash into apartment buildings.

#### SEALs In The Desert

Special Operations Forces (SOF) were among the first units to deploy to the



PsyOps dropped thousands of these leaflets over southern Kuwait. On the back, in Arabic and English, were the following instructions on how to surrender:

#### CEASE RESISTANCE — BE SAFE

To seek refuge safely, the bearer must strictly adhere to the following procedures:

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' positions slowly, with the lead soldier holding this document above his head.
5. If you do this, you will not die.



AH-64 Apache attack helicopters destroyed key Iraqi radar with Hellfire missiles in first strike of Desert Storm. Here Apache AH-64 refuels at refueling pit in Iraq as crew waits in cockpit. Photo: Robert Elliott

Kuwait theater of operations. Units included Special Forces and Army Special Operations aircraft; Navy SEALs and special boats units; Air Force Special Operations aircraft and Special Operations combat control teams, along with Psychological Operations (PsyOps) and Civil Affairs units.

Commencing on 16 January, one day before the air war began, Navy SEALs conducted Special Reconnaissance on Kuwait beaches. During these missions, Iraqi beach patrols passed as close as 50 yards, but never saw the SEALs.

One SEAL platoon was directly involved in the battle of Khafji, a border outpost which Iraqi forces attacked on 29 January. As Iraqis prepared to move south down the coastal highway leading to Saudi Arabia, the SEALs called in close air support from Marine AV-8B Harriers and Air Force AC-130 Spectre gunships.

SEALs stood their ground at the border crossing, providing real-time intelligence regarding Iraqi troop-strength and vehicular movements, until they were engaged by 12.7mm machine gun and mortar fire from the advancing enemy. These SEALs were the last U.S. forces to leave that part of the border prior to the battle for Khafji.

At Khafji one Spectre was unfortunately shot down supporting Marine ground forces. All 14 Air Force crew members were killed. Their C-130 was later found at a depth of 50 feet, offshore in the northern Arabian Sea.

On 24 February as the ground war began, SEALs swam ashore near Kuwait City prior to H-hour, detonated six charges and simultaneously called in air strikes on beach bunkers.

At a rare public hearing on this mission, U.S. Special Operations troops told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) of special units going into Iraq and Kuwait before the ground war to gather intelligence, spread psychological propaganda, prepare for the real invasion and rescue downed Coalition pilots.

Army Lieutenant Colonel David Plumer told senators how Iraqi patrols passed by

## OPERATION DESERT DEFICIENCIES

Although we did not test our full range of military capability during the brief air and ground offensive against Iraq, we learned a lot of lessons about systems that work and some which need work. Here, in a nutshell, is what went wrong with Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm:

- We found we did not have enough heavy equipment transports or off-road mobility for logistics-support vehicles.

- Helicopters and other equipment were maintained only with extra care in the harsh desert environment.

- We were inept at clearing land and sea mines, especially shallow water mines. This might have imposed significant additional costs had large-scale amphibious operations been required.

- Morale and intentions of Iraqi forces (and their leaders) were obscure to us.

- Field commanders wanted more tactical reconnaissance and imagery. We also had difficulty with battle damage assessment (BDA) due to adverse weather over much of Iraq. It was often impossible to confirm destruction of dug-in targets until Coalition forces arrived to see for themselves. The lack of BDA complicated decisions on when to begin transition to the ground war.

- Our tactical ballistic missile defense (Patriots) worked, but imperfectly.

- Mobile (Scud) missile-hunting was difficult and costly; we will need to do better.

- We were ill-prepared at the start for defense against biological weapons.

- And there were, as in any war, civilian casualties and losses related to fire by friendly forces.

— D.B.C.



The 3d Armored Division moves from tactical assembly to forward point near Kuwaiti border. At one point this division moved 300 M1A1 tanks 200km in one night without a single breakdown. Photo: D.W. Holmes II

SEALs crouched in waves close to shore, but never spotted them. For weeks before this, SEALs had been swimming near shore gathering intelligence on Iraqi

positions in Kuwait.

As a result of the SEAL attack, two Iraqi armored divisions turned their guns and tanks to the sea, while the real invasion was beginning far to the west in a sweep which surrounded Iraq's crack Republican Guard.

### SpecOps Rescues

Due to dense enemy concentrations on the battlefield, downed pilots were frequently captured immediately after parachuting to the ground. There were a total of 35 downed Coalition aircraft and 64 downed crewmen. Seven combat search and rescue (CSAR) missions were launched, resulting in three saves.

First came a daring daylight recovery on 21 January of a Navy F-14 pilot downed deep in enemy territory. Quarterbacked by an AWACS, two A-10s and a Pave Low helicopter flew into the area more than 160 miles inside Iraq.

The A-10s destroyed an Iraqi radio-intercept truck, then the Pave Low used smoke from the truck as a final reference point to locate the pilot. After a successful pickup, the Pave Low returned to its base only eight hours after the F-14 was downed.

The second effort on 17 January was a nighttime save of an Air Force F-16 pilot downed 60 miles behind enemy lines. Army SOF personnel using night vision goggles responded with two MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Following the successful recovery, an Iraqi missile was fired at the trailing helicopter, but the Blackhawk eluded it with evasive maneuvers.

Some SOF were attached to Coalition units during the war. For example, a SEAL platoon and a battalion of the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) trained Royal Saudi land forces in close air support, naval gunfire support and fire support coordination. However, the number of language-trained personnel was not sufficient to meet the full range of requirements for Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

### Mind Games

Psychological Operations played a key role in the destruction of enemy morale and contributed to large-scale surrenders and desertions by Iraqi soldiers. Early on, intelligence had identified weakness in Iraqi troop morale, and these frailties were exploited by PsyOps personnel.

In November 1990, messages had been beamed into the occupied Kuwait. Then five days before the air campaign began, on 12 January, 1,027,620 leaflets were dropped over southern Kuwait instructing Iraqi soldiers on how to surrender. Some 265,000 leaflets were dropped over Baghdad on 20 January.

PsyOps efforts focused on breaking the

*Continued on page 100*

# UNDERCOVER IN COLOMBIA

## American Merc Infiltrates the Cali Cartel

by Mitchell Henderson

**I**N February 1990, a special agent from the U.S. Customs office in Tampa called me to ask if I would be interested in going to Colombia to negotiate an undercover drug deal.

While working as a Tampa police officer, I had met several customs agents who later recruited me to help them out when they learned I had moved to Central America. Specifically, in 1989 they had me set up a Costa Rican import/export business, subsidiary to an undercover Tampa import/export company. I was the representative for the Costa Rican enterprise.

Although I didn't know it then, the two special agents acting as president and vice president of the Tampa parent company had already started negotiating the sale of both companies to some unknown parties in Cali, Colombia, through a Humberto Renteria.

The two undercover agents were going to sell both companies for

\$300,000 and then remain as employees to smuggle 1 metric ton of cocaine per month through Costa Rica to Tampa.

Renteria called the agents to tell them the president of a company in Cali was interested, but wanted one of the partners to visit and discuss the details. However, the U.S. government would not risk sending an agent to Colombia, so someone "expendable" was needed, as one customs supervisor put it. That's where I came in.

After the two customs agents detailed their plan to me, I accepted the task and flew to Cali on 23 February. That evening I met with Humberto Renteria and confirmed we wanted \$300,000 up front for both companies and 4% of the value of each cocaine load.

The following evening, a driver picked up Renteria and me in front of the Hotel Intercontinental. He drove us to an apartment building on a hill overlooking Cali. Only one apartment in the complex was occupied — the office and hideout of Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela. He, his brother Gilberto and Jose Santacruz-Londono make up a triumvirate controlling the Cali Cartel.

As we approached the building our driver honked, then an old man came out and unlocked a gate to the garage. Nobody ever came here by themselves — a driver always picked them up. That way, a constant coming and going of strange vehicles was avoided, and traffic appeared normal for an 8-unit apartment complex. There were

no armed guards outside; everything appeared normal and mundane.

Inside, one bodyguard was constantly protecting Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela; possibly the only one on the premises who was armed. On a table in the living room was a briefcase with a phone and scrambler. The decor was simple: table, chairs, a sofa and television.

The bodyguard motioned me to a table, and politely asked if I would like a drink — Coca-Cola or Popular, a local soda, were the options offered. There was no alcohol in the room, no ladies, no disco music as heard in the movies. Everything here was strictly business, a multibillion-dollar business at that.

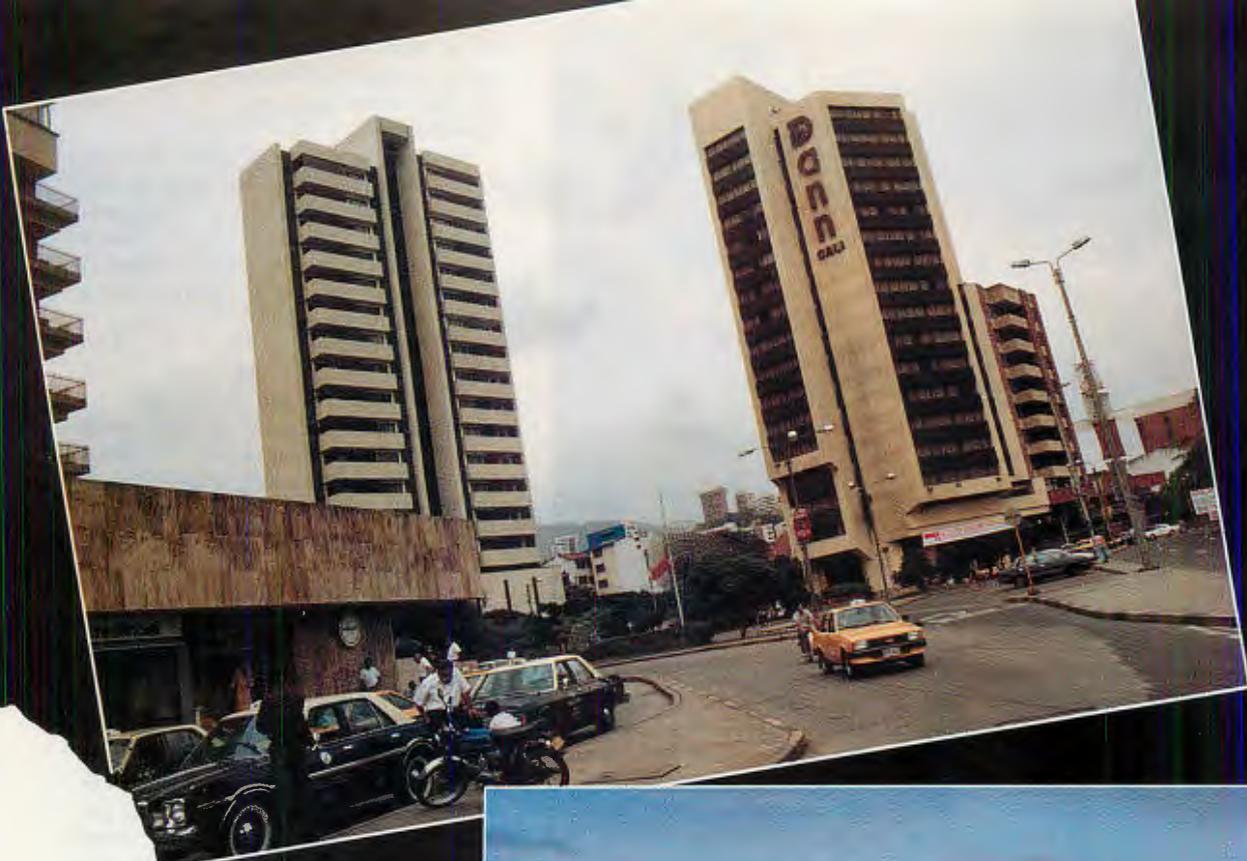
Accepting a Popular, I waited for Miguel to conclude some business over the phone. I overheard him talking to someone in Mexico about moving 50 metric tons of cocaine into the United States over the next couple of weeks. I wondered to myself who the hell snorts all the stuff up.

Miguel then waived us into another room furnished with a desk, three chairs and a bookshelf. Renteria formally introduced me, then Miguel motioned for us to be seated.

### Trafficking In Drugs 101

Miguel asked me what we had to offer. I replied we had a good clean import/export company which had been in business in Costa Rica several years — mostly sending seafood to Tampa.

He questioned whether we had ever shipped drugs. I answered no. He asked if I or my other partners used cocaine. I told him I had never used drugs, and Renteria vouched for all of us. Miguel said only



lowlifes use drugs, adding he would not do business with anyone who did. He called them unreliable and disloyal.

Miguel then offered to pay \$300,000 for the two companies. He would pay \$150,000 once he had someone check the businesses out, and the other \$150,000 once the first cocaine load made it through successfully. However, after doing some figuring, he stated that 4% of each load was too much for us.

**H**e offered 2% for my partners and me, and 2% to Renteria. Miguel told me this figured out to \$100,000 monthly for myself alone, noting he didn't want me getting much more, because I might go on a spending spree and attract too much attention. I agreed to his terms.

Then Miguel warned me that I better not fuck with the company's capital or family. If I betrayed him, he would have my children murdered first, then me. He said this was necessary so that my soul would never rest, knowing I was responsible for the death of my children and wife.

"Are you going to betray me?" Miguel asked. Looking him in the eye, I said I would not betray him — and told the truth. Betrayal implies you are loyal to someone, then turn on them. In fact, I had never been on this man's side.

Miguel then said that in Colombia they used to firm business pacts like this with a blood oath, but due to the AIDS epidemic

**TOP:** Street corner in downtown Cali, Colombia, where author and gang contact were picked up to be taken to Miguel Rodriguez's hideout. Photo: Mitchell Henderson

**ABOVE:** Playa Herradura, Costa Rica — the beach where Colombian boat delivered cocaine to author and gang member at 0200 one morning. During four-hour drive to San Jose author hoped like hell there were no cops around. Photo: Mitchell Henderson

we would settle for a handshake.

We were led back into the living room so Miguel could call a Mr. Rada in Panama





Author tipped off Costa Rican authorities to seize 150 kilos of cocaine he'd stashed at his warehouse in San Jose, Costa Rica. Photo: Costa Rican OIJ

City to inspect our business in Costa Rica. He wanted me to fly to Panama the next day to meet with Rada. Of course, I had nothing ready in Costa Rica, so I prayed Rada would not be home.

**W**hile waiting to get through by phone, Miguel sent his driver out for some food. As I looked at the situation, I realized Miguel was a prisoner. He could not go out to eat, take in a movie, or go dancing. He worked 16 hours daily, seven days a week running his business.

Because he needed power, he had to make lots of money. Without that power, Miguel would lose what little freedom he had. The entire Colombian National Police and army were out trying to hunt him down, and he was on the list of 11 most-wanted drug lords in the United States (down from 12 since Medellin Cartel boss Rodriguez-Gacha was killed a couple of years ago).

What was worse, I was there with him. An ex-cop working for the U.S. government, unarmed, and with no backup or support. I felt like a trapped rat and I just wanted out of there. The movie "Scarface" with Al Pacino came to mind. By God, I thought, if somebody starts up a chainsaw, I'm jumping out the damned window.

Rada was not home, so we agreed for him to call me at my attorney's office in San Jose, Costa Rica, the

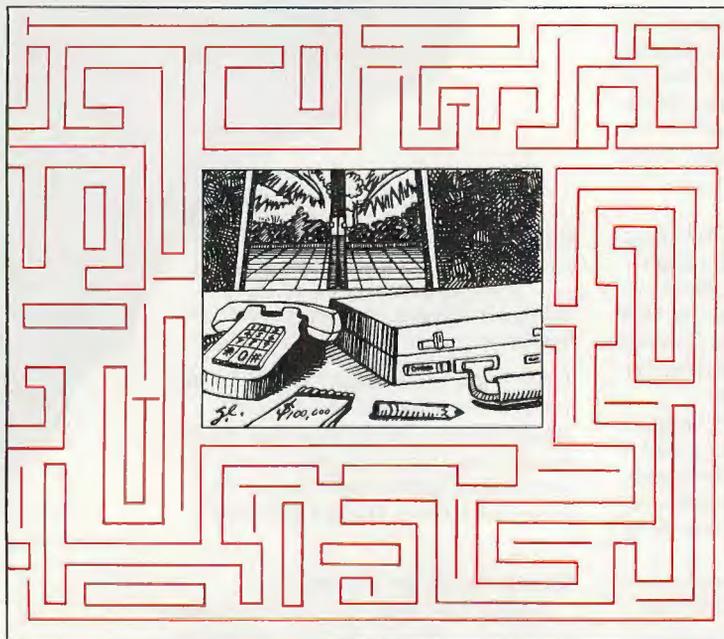
following week. The driver took Renteria and me back to the hotel. He suggested I hop in a *chiva* and party around town. Chivas are open-air buses with musical bands which cruise from disco to disco in Cali. They looked like fun, but I just went to the bar in the hotel, got shitfaced and passed out in my room.

The next day I hopped on a flight to Barranquilla, then onward to Miami and Tampa. When the guys in Customs found out who we made the deal with, they were jubilant. So now we had to get everything ready for Rada's inspection.

I flew to Costa Rica on the following day, paying our attorney \$1,000 to swear to any lie I had told Miguel. Rada later called from Panama, but said he would be delayed in arriving.

Meanwhile, a plane loaded with about 500 kilos of cocaine was busted by Costa

**"An ex-cop working for the U.S. government, unarmed, and with no backup or support. I felt like a trapped rat." Illustration: Susan Edson**



Rican authorities at Quepos on the Pacific coast. Another 500 kilos were taken down in San Francisco, part of the same operation.

Mr. Rada did not call again. Renteria called instead, asking to meet in San Andres, a Colombian island in the Caribbean between Colombia and Costa Rica. I agreed and left just before Holy Week. I figured they wanted to change their plan a little since they just lost 1,000 kilos.

**W**hen I got to San Andres, Renteria was not there. I got spooked and started thinking they had investigated me, found out who I was and were going to whack me. Fortunately it was just a travel mix-up. Due to the heavy vacation traffic during Holy Week, they could not make it anytime soon. So after Holy Week, they wanted me to fly back to Cali.

### More Risk, Less Boredom

I wasn't crazy about returning to Cali. Now that they had had time to check things out, I thought there was a good chance they might utilize pain to elicit further information from me. I spent a miserable Holy Week vacation worrying, but I just had to risk it. As one of my Army sergeants once told me, "If life gets boring, risk it." The more risk, the less boredom.

On 17 April 1990, I flew once again to Cali. The next morning I met with Renteria and we drove to an office near the stadium. There we met with Carlos Rojas and Jairo Arcilia, who would be in charge of arranging all the particulars.

Renteria said the deal was the same, they would pay \$300,000 — but not until after the first load of cocaine arrived safely. However they would only send 100 kilos, just to test the route. We would still

be paid \$100,000 each though, just as if 1,000 kilos had gone through. I couldn't argue with a deal like that. Arcilia said Gilberto (Miguel's brother, I assume) suggested it would not be prudent to risk 1,000 kilos on a first run, especially after the substantial losses they had suffered just a few weeks earlier. The new plan was that a guy named Heriberto would arrange to ship 100 kilos of cocaine in a small watercraft from Buenaventura, Colombia, to a secluded Costa Rican beach (Playa Herradura).

Delivery would take five days, and one day before it arrived in Costa Rica, Heriberto would fly there and meet me. We would then drive down to the beach, act like we were camping, and the boat would land near us sometime after midnight to off-load the cocaine. I would

then take it to San Jose, pack it in fish and ship it out of Puerto Limon to Tampa.

That evening, Renteria, Rojas, Arcilia and I went to the Tienda Vieja nightclub and got smashed on some Aguardiente Cristal. The next morning we met with Heriberto to firm up the plan.

Heriberto asked if he could run 10 kilos through with the load instead of taking a \$10,000 advance payment, and Rojas agreed. Then Renteria and I went to the airport to board a flight to San Andres. He was to meet a girlfriend there, while I would catch a flight the next day to Costa Rica.

**T**hat evening in San Andres we picked up Clara Inez de Duque at the airport and went to the Tiuna Hotel discotheque to party. I left the disco about midnight and was picked up by two Colombian National Police who took me to a shack outside town to meet with a DAS (Department Administrative Security) agent.

From midnight to 0500 they grilled me about what I was doing in Colombia. I said I was a tourist. They threatened to throw me in prison. I replied I had done nothing wrong, but they assured me they could supply evidence or witnesses to convict me of whatever was wanted.

I figured that since they had me in this abandoned shack instead of a jail, they either wanted a bribe or were trying to see if I would cop out to working for the U.S. government so they could tell Renteria. Finally I offered them \$20 and the problem was resolved. Later I flew back to Costa Rica to wait for Heriberto and the cocaine to show up.

On the morning of 12 May, Carlos Gonzales, Arcilia's driver from Cali, called my apartment in San Jose to say he was coming over in 15 minutes. Once he arrived, I asked what happened to Heriberto. The driver said Heriberto was too afraid to come to Costa Rica, fearing he would get busted. Carlos also informed me we would be picking up 150 kilos instead of 110.

After loading up the pickup, we drove to Jaco Beach just south of Playa Herradura. Then we checked into a hotel, ate and went to a disco to get drunk. Next morning, we drove out to Playa Herradura to set up camp. It was Sunday, so there were lots of people on the beach. As evening approached they all started to drift away, headed back for San Jose.

But a European couple with a young daughter did not appear to be leaving. I remarked to Carlos that I wished they

## CALI COCAINE TRAIL



would hurry up. He said they better or they would end up as fish food if they were still around when the boat arrived. I replied it would be a waste because the woman was very pretty. Gonzales said we could all put her to one final use if we had to.

I did not want to be involved in a multiple murder; it was not in the original plan. Fortunately, the family finally left.

At 0200 on the morning of the 14th, the boat came in. Its captain seemed like a nice old man, though a pirate. The crew was heavily armed and scared about getting caught. These guys looked like they would have no problem killing an innocent family.

### Just Me, Carlos And 150 Kilos Of Cocaine

We loaded the cocaine into my pickup, which had a camper shell, and drove to San Jose. It was a four-hour drive, and I hoped like hell there were no cops around. Once again, I had no backup or support. It was just me, Carlos and 150 kilos of cocaine.

**B**y daylight we made it back to my apartment in San Jose — without a hitch. I dropped Carlos off, then drove to a phone booth and called a DEA agent to say I was taking the coke to my warehouse.

He said he would call OIJ (*Organization de Investigacion Judicial*, the Costa Rican FBI) to come and seize it. Carlos got the next flight to San Andres, and I called Renteria to tell him it was all safely stashed.

A few days later, Renteria called and asked me if the cocaine was on its way to Tampa, and I said it was. He then asked if I would pick up the load once it got to Tampa and drive it to Miami to deliver to Clara, the girl I had met in San Andres. I said this was OK with me, but we would have to clear it with the two guys (undercover agents) in Tampa.

On 20 May, I flew back to Tampa; the cocaine was supposed to arrive on the 24th or so. After some more conversations with Renteria over the phone, including some heated ones over us getting some money up front, we all agreed I would drive the load to Miami and deliver it to Clara.

Once in Miami, we arranged to deliver the cocaine to a shopping center in Kendall. I would have a female customs agent with me posing as my girlfriend. The cocaine packages were in a rented minivan. There was a van-load of customs SWAT guys and several other cars in the area.

Clara first went to where the other two company guys were to give them about \$90,000. Then she drove across the street to where my "girlfriend" and I waited in a restaurant. Clara entered, we spoke briefly of San Andres, I gave her the keys to the minivan and she gave me keys to a car she had rented. Then she walked out to the minivan.

**W**hen she opened the door, the SWAT guys swarmed down and busted her. Unlike the Medellin boys, the Cali people are low-key — almost invisible. There were no guns, no backup, nothing extravagant. They sent one unarmed young woman to deliver \$90,000 cash and pick up 150 kilos of cocaine. As Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela had told me, "It's just business, like any other, and it is carried on with trust, not guns."

Clara Inez de Duque did some controlled deliveries after her arrest, and all of her recipients were arrested.

In February 1991, three Americans, one Costa Rican and four Colombians were convicted for conspiracy to traffic in cocaine and given prison terms of 20 years each. Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela, Renteria, Rojas, Arcilia and Gonzalez are still at large in Colombia. It is not safe for them to come to the U.S., nor is it safe for me to go to Colombia.

*Mitchell Henderson, formerly an officer on the Tampa police force, is living under an assumed name and still actively working for the U.S. government.*

# CONCEALMENT

**I**n some jurisdictions there are no provisions for legally carrying a concealed weapon (often referred to as "CCW"). Depending upon the area, carrying a concealed weapon without a permit is either a felony or misdemeanor unless you are an active member of a federal or local law enforcement agency.

Arizona is such a state: Carrying a concealed weapon here is a misdemeanor as established by Title 13 of Arizona state law. However, Arizona's criminal code also states that provisions against carrying a deadly weapon "...shall not apply to a weapon or weapons carried in a belt holster which holster is wholly or partially visible..."

Concealment can also take the form of illusion. If the holster we select doesn't look like a conventional holster, but we can legally demonstrate that it is, then (at least in the state of Arizona) we can step out onto the streets armed, yet without appearing to be so.

Originally designed by Ralph Holzhaus II of The Wilderness (Dept. SOF, 5130 N. 19th Avenue, Suite 11, Phoenix, AZ 85015; phone: 602-242-4945. Catalog \$1) to protect a handgun during mountain rescues, the Safepacker holster looks like

either a minuscule briefcase or a weapon container from a Star Trek episode, depending, I suppose, upon your mindset.

The Safepacker is fabricated from 1000-denier Cordura nylon, with 1/4-inch closed-cell neoprene foam in between and a Fastex quick-release buckle. Because of its large belt loop, the Safepacker can be attached to any size belt, including large pack-frame belts and fixed objects such as boat gunwales or car-door handles. The holster's flap contains a velcro closure pocket. I carry a small Legend flashlight, pen, notebook and business cards in mine.

While not recommended for large revolvers with barrel lengths over 6 inches, my Safepacker, which is largest of five sizes, holds a full-sized .45 ACP Glock Model 21, as well as a Colt Government Model 1911A1. The smallest Safepacker accommodates the tiny Colt Mustang .380 ACP pistol (you should specify weapon and caliber when you order). The price is \$49.95 (square butt revolvers with over 3-inch barrels cost an additional \$10) and this includes an adjustable hand strap and "D" rings for attachment of an optional 1-inch adjustable shoulder strap.

In my opinion, the greatest single advantage of the Safepacker is surprise and, as a consequence, the draw stroke

sequence should always appear almost casual. The product's designer recommends a draw stroke sequence in which the holster is retained on the wrist of your weak hand. He believes the opponent's eyes will focus on the holster, diverting attention from your weapon.

While it may appear to be the height of arrogance to disagree with a product's designer on the technique of its use, I don't want a holster or anything else dangling from my hand when I'm firing from the two-handed Weaver position in a real gunfight.

The draw stroke sequence developed by SOF's staff is as follows. Insert the handgun into the holster with the slide or top strap next to the weapon compartment's velcro break-away closure. The Safepacker is carried in the left hand (for a right-handed shooter) with the slide facing down and the muzzle forward (as shown in photo).

Swing the holster up and index it against your stomach, just above the belt line. Slide the left hand under the flap while positioning the thumb and index finger on the Fastex quick-release buckle. Open the buckle and let the holster swing downward while continuing to grip the holster flap with the left hand. Reach into the gun



▲ Recommended draw stroke sequence for the unique Safepacker holster: Safepacker is carried in the left hand with the pistol's slide facing down and the muzzle forward.



▲ Next, swing the holster up and index it against your stomach, just above the belt line. Slide the left hand under the flap while positioning the thumb and index finger on the Fastex quick-release buckle.



# HOLSTERS

## Packing Pistols Without A Permit

Text & Photos  
by Peter G. Kokalis

compartment, brushing the velcro closure open while grabbing the weapon. Withdraw the handgun, let the Safepacker fall to the ground and assume the Weaver position.

The method just described will also, with practice, produce the fastest and most consistent par times. But just what are "reality" (not competition) par times?

Ronin Colman, president of Practical Applied Computer Technology Inc., designs and manufactures action timers used by the majority of IPSC competitors. In his opinion, the parameters defining "reality" par time are hitting an 8-inch reactive steel plate at 21 feet, nine out of 10 times with a service handgun from a holster such as Bruce Nelson's No.1 Professional. Without a jacket and drawing from the strong side, 1.5 seconds would be an excellent time under these circumstances. A par time of 1.35 to 1.4 seconds would be even better and 1.2 seconds would be black-belt performance.

Put on a jacket and you can expect to add 0.2 to 0.3 seconds to those times. Cross-draw shooters will be about 0.1 seconds faster, will not telegraph the draw stroke to an opponent on their flanks or rear and will never screw up because of an interfering coat jacket. If you practice with

regularity, using the draw stroke sequence I recommend, your par time should eventually be between 2.0 and 2.4 seconds with the Safepacker. That is more than acceptable when combined with the added element of surprise in your favor.

There's more than one way to skin a cat and there are several alternative methods for deploying the Safepacker, all of which I find ingenious.

Joggers and hikers, whether trudging along mountain trails or in shopping malls, will be attracted to the Safepacker Runner's Pack which features a 3/8-inch closed-cell foam hip and back pad, along with two 16-ounce water bottles held in their pocket by velcro closure straps, one on each side of the Safepacker holster. Price of the Runner's Pack alone, complete with a large Fastex quick-release belt buckle, is \$39.95.

You can't walk into a corporate board meeting wearing a Runner's Pack, and in that environment the Safepacker holster by itself might look suspicious. Under these circumstances, you are well-advised to attach your Safepacker holster to the outside of a Safepacker briefcase, either the regular (13.5 by 16.5 inches) or large (13.3 by 19 inches) at \$99.00 each.

These briefcases are also fabricated

from black Cordura nylon with closed-cell foam padding, have two large interior open pockets, two zippered pockets, a key chain holder, pockets for flashlights, spare magazines or other items and an optional shoulder strap. An 11- by 14-inch Mini-Brief is available for \$89.95.

The Wilderness also manufactures a host of other unique and innovative products including a cellular-phone case; an ankle pack; the "Halfway Decent" glasses case; the "Leatherman" tool case for horizontal carry; the "Giles" bag for range use, tools or other equipment; a pouch for the popular Laser Products Sure-Fire 6 flashlight; an instructor belt with rappelling "D" ring; the "Ugly" pouch for magazines and other equipment; a Yaqui-slide-type open-belt holster; the Fastpack backpack and both over- and under-flight bags.

With the exception of the Leatherman tool case, for which I can find as yet no personal application, I can recommend all Holzhaus designs without reservation. The Wilderness also custom-manufactures backpacking, mountaineering, rock or ice climbing, and rescue equipment of all kinds. Everything I have examined is superbly made of the highest quality materials. ✕



▲ Runner's Pack with padded hip and back pad holds two 16-ounce water bottles and Safepacker holster.

◀ Finally, open the buckle and let the holster swing downward while continuing to hold the holster flap with the left hand. Reach into the gun compartment, brushing the velcro closure open while grabbing the weapon. Withdraw the handgun, let the Safepacker fall to the ground and assume the Weaver position.



▲ Wilderness briefcase designed to hold Safepacker holster on the outside, holds everything required for the heated discussions of a corporate board meeting, and more, on the inside.

## BAD BOY BLUES

Continued from page 47

Drill and drive. Hassle and hope. Command and counsel. Being there with whatever it takes to help the recruit go straight.

### Quitters Get Crossbars

Behind a closed door, a recruit confides to a DI that he wants to quit. In the yard outside, five "graves" are a grim reminder of recruits Perry and Fandrey deemed unsalvageable. Now, they're behind bars.

"You want to go down in life as being a quitter?" asks the DI. "If you died tomorrow, wouldn't you want to be known as a man who tried, who wouldn't quit?"

"I always been a quitter," comes the mumbled reply.

"You got to turn it around," the DI coaxes. "Say, 'when the going gets tough, the recruit gets tough.'" The recruit stammers the sentence.

"Louder," the DI demands. The reply carries little conviction.

The DI grows exasperated: "You got to say it in your friggin' heart and mean it. Now shut those emotions inside. Do I make myself clear?"

"Sir, yes, sir."

"What?"

"Sir, yes, sir," comes the shouted reply.

"Now get outta my house."

The recruit blows out the door and the

DI follows, shaking his head in a silent "no." The recruit will soon be on the receiving end of Lt. Fandrey's motivational techniques, and perhaps even Perry's.

"We don't let them quit," Fandrey says. "We hope all our lung power hasn't been for nothing."

By the third month, recruits know the ropes. Now, they perform push-ups more for exercise than punishment, and their arms bulge with muscles made from experience. The DIs afford them some leeway, "smokin' and jokin'" with them — trying to provoke a slip.

"If they're disciplined, they never get loose," Valdez comments.

The boot-camp experience seems so positive that most recruits briefly flirt with the idea of applying to become Marines, before the case managers channel them into more viable options. Through counseling and diagnostics, they identify occupations they may wish to pursue, and the steps for achieving them. When they leave boot camp, they carry a folder of appointments with names of support personnel who will smooth their transition.

"I'm putting out a motivated product," Perry says, "but the support system outside is crucial to their success."

If money were no object, Fandrey would offer recruits a refresher course in boot-camp tactics to build self-esteem and discipline for when things get rough. "I'd like to be able to snatch them up and bring

them back if they got off the track," he says.

### From Hard Time To Pell Grants

Close to graduating from boot camp, the first platoon double-times it into place for inspection. In turn, each recruit snaps his hands up so Valdez can inspect the fingernails. Valdez peers into their ears, and scrutinizes condition of their uniforms and boots. And because I want to know, he asks each of his plans for the future.

"Sir, I'm going to be a psychologist, sir."

"How're you going to accomplish that?"

"Bachelor of arts, and then an M.S., sir."

The next recruit wants to be a corporate lawyer and raise his two kids. Another is going to study robotic technology. Each states his dreams — a counselor for adolescent drug-users; chef; heavy equipment operator; forest ranger; graphic arts designer; hotel manager.

They talk about Pell Grants and student loans for college. "What do I have here?" Valdez demands. "A fraternity?"

The next recruit wants to be a painter. Valdez sees wax in his ear. "I wouldn't hire you, no attention to detail. Fix it," he orders.

Another plans to be a commercial pilot — he has a thread dangling from his pocket. "You better get that Irish pennant squared away," Valdez booms. "Little

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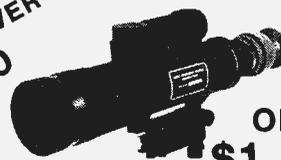
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things like that will kill you."

Inspection over, they march off. Their ranks are straight and close, their movements precise as pistons. Inside the prison fence, inmates stop a volleyball game to taunt them, slinging grimy propositions through the fence. But the recruits pay no attention; they've already been hassled by professionals.

The objective of the military recruit training is to instill self-discipline. It has given these men hope.

Like soldiers, they're doing battle; they're fighting for their lives. One fuck-up and they're lost.

*Morgan Tanner has covered international conflicts for 10 years as a correspondent for SOF and National News Service.*

## KENYA

Continued from page 51

water holes open by carrying off mud on their skins, and by sealing pond floors and sides with tons of compaction from their feet. Without the elephants, Trevor said, the water holes in Tsavo would dry up in two years.

Money from tourists who pay to see those same elephants is being used to build schools, wells, markets and other needed amenities for people living on game parks' borders. One can only hope a balance between man's exploding population and the needs of animals is reached before the animals vanish from Kenya's dusty, rolling vastness. Too late for that one last rhino, wandering somewhere in Tsavo East.

### Tourist Blight

Driving via exotic and odorous Mombasa, Kenya's Indian Ocean seaport, to Tsavo West, I lost some of Trevor's optimism. Pregnant women, each surrounded by her planetary system of children, were everywhere. Africa once again seemed to be the merging of a Malthusian Disaster with an Environmentalist Nightmare.

Despite the Kenyan government's best efforts, birth control hadn't seemed to have made it to the sticks yet. However, schools and community water stations were spaced at regular intervals along the road, evidence of Kenya's commitment to improving living conditions for its exploding population.

Tsavo West was more touristy than Tsavo East. Having slept the previous night on a beach (we were, after all, on an SOF expense account), we checked into a modest lodge to dislodge a few pounds of accumulated dirt from hair, skins and throats. After luxuriating in hot baths, we met at the bar for suds of a different type and found ourselves awash in a flood of tourists.

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Tourists are a blight on the face of the earth, and this particular group from various European countries was doing a good job of blighting Tsavo West with their garrulous ignorance. For example, dinner for guests was accompanied by dinner for a local leopard placed in a tree just off the veranda, in hopes he would appear and entertain the human diners with his own lack of table manners.

As the meal progressed without an appearance, a lady at the next table kept asking, in an 'orrible Cockney accent, whether the cheetah was coming, and where was the bleedin' cheetah? Hopes of a show were fading when suddenly a large leopard materialized from the darkness, leapt into the tree, and leapt back into the darkness with his haunch of venison. Before a single flash bulb could pop, he was gone.

Most of the tourists had missed him entirely, and fell to wailing and gnashing their teeth in disappointment. To mollify them, the lodge member in charge of leopards, muttering "that was not the regular leopard," very reluctantly climbed the tree and put up some more meat. On cue, "the regular leopard," far more nonchalant, climbed the tree and posed on the limb, chowing down on the grisly gobbets. Apparently the first leopard had been an interloper.

Flash bulbs went off like tracers over Baghdad but they didn't even bother this fellow, who just kept chewing. I tried not to hear the lady behind me commenting on how cute the cheetah was. Early next morning, before THEY got up and into their waiting busses, we fled north to our next stop, Amboseli Park.

### Convoy In Paradise

Our anti-tourist escape and evasion plans, however, were foiled at the border of Tsavo West. Impassive guards told us we couldn't leave the park and drive by ourselves along the Tanzanian border to Amboseli. They did not realize *Soldier of Fortune* editors don't need to travel in convoy, and insisted we wait for the rest of the tourists and an armed escort.

Grumpily, we went to watch some hippos grunting and farting in a nearby pond, and lunched less than sumptuously on bully beef and crackers. The guys really liked it, being accustomed to such sorts of food, but I wouldn't recommend it to gourmets. Even with Tabasco sauce. We got back to the gate in time to join a long chain of busses full of safari-seekers. A dozen policemen, armed with AKs, FNs and G-3s, spread out in the convoy. As we had been designated tail-end Charlie by the commander, we got one who also had a radio. He was tall, taciturn and fortunately thin, since it was mighty cozy in the back of our Suzuki. He refused to comment upon what macabre incident had necessitated the presence of armed guards for every tourist convoy near the Tanzanian border, but I could imagine.

Hours later we arrived at Amboseli National Park, which was flat and deceptively dry-looking. Mount Kilimanjaro, which had loomed on our left the whole bone-jarring trip, presided over the flat plains like a white-capped monarch. Even during midsummer in equatorial Kenya there is snow on top of Kilimanjaro's twin peaks. Looking for accommodation, we rejected the old Amboseli Lodge, site of the filming of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," because of its utter and abject dilapidation.

I couldn't imagine Ava Gardner or Gregory Peck in the fly-specked hovels, decorated with some previous tenant's lunch fragments. The place was an architectural memento mori, somewhat redundant in Amboseli where piles of bleached bones punctuated the plains. Our second choice for accommodation was half underwater as, we later discovered to our chagrin, were half the park roads. No problem, the beds at least were dry.

Masai tribesmen, tall, extremely thin and delicate with long, long acquisitive fingers, surround Amboseli park. The Masai are the target of an active *Neighbors as Partners* program, one of the main goals being to stop them from grazing their cattle in the park. Cattle-raising is the main staple of Masai life, not hunting, and they resent grazing land being taken from them.

They also do not realize that some of the benefits they enjoy come from park revenues. One Masai, interviewed by Mr. Kangwana of the African Wildlife Federation, commented that the park doesn't even bring him the price of a soda, though he had three children at a school built with revenues from a tourist campsite. Cooperative efforts are underway to rectify this situation.

That campsite was the scene of our last night in the Kenyan bush. Wading to the breakfast room got old, so we decided to camp out. Despite the fact that we immersed our Suzuki to the door jambs in a bog due to optimistic driving on the part of a certain managing editor and inadequate reconnaissance on the rest of our part (which provided many minutes of amusing footage for a bus load of camcorder-carrying Germans), we arrived at camp in good time. A giant frog had pursued my husband around the puddle while he tried to unstick our vehicle, so the incident did have its comic side.

Kilimanjaro filled the southern horizon, and the plains of Amboseli stretched around us as we unrolled our sleeping bags on the ground and climbed in. John and Bob, veterans of African wars and nights in the bush, actually seemed sleepy. I wasn't.

"What's that?" I hissed into Bob's ear. He rolled over and mumbled that it was a hyena. Another heart-thudding, grumbling growl/roar/snarl/bark/whoop sounded even closer.

"What's THAT?"

"A hyena." Sure. Then a definitely

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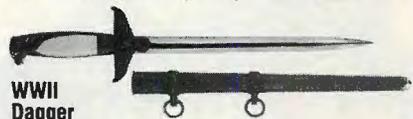
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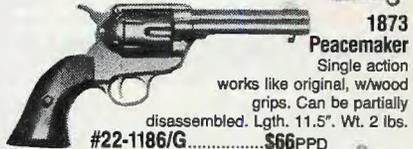
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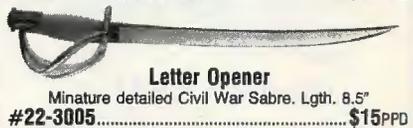
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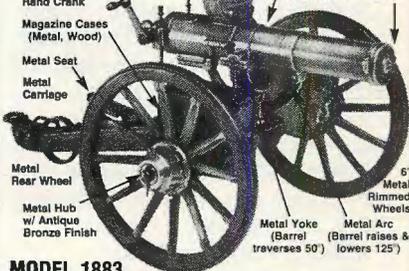
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closer, hostile noise of a no doubt famished man- (or woman-) eater caused me to elbow Bob sharply in the side.

"WHAT'S THAT?" "A hyena." He turned the other way and put the sleeping bag over his head. We survived the night.

Dawn brought a family of elephants silhouetted against the rose of the rising sun, and a herd of Cape buffalo snorting nearby. We all wondered, I think, if that sight would still be there to see in 20 or even five years hence.

Kenya's paramilitary anti-poaching efforts have worked. Long-term solutions, however, lie in forging cooperative bonds between the local population and animal life. Botswana has a program which pays farmers to raise wild animals for safaris. Zimbabwe allows local groups control over the wildlife in their areas, as long as they present management plans.

Profits from the wildlife go to build schools and provide medical care. These programs have promise. Most important, however, is population control. African countries are too poor to provide adequately for populations which will double four times in 100 years. If population growth is not slowed there will be no quality of life for people, and no room for animals. Hopefully, man and the animals will achieve a balance.

If not, the last of the great herds will fade away with our memories of them.

*Sibyl MacKenzie represented the Washington, D.C.-based U.S. Global Strategy Council on this trip through Kenya and southern Africa. She's been intimately involved in African affairs for the USGSC since 1987, including a 300-mile foot trek through Mozambique in early 1989. She's still recovering from the Kenyan road system.*

**DESERT STORM**

*Continued from page 89*

Iraqi will to fight, and on increasing fear among front-line soldiers. In one especially effective method, Coalition forces dropped leaflets to specific units announcing they would soon be bombed. After the attack new leaflets would fall reminding the enemy they might be bombed again. This amplified the psychological impact of bombings and lent credibility to other messages.

In addition to dropping conventional "iron bombs," high-flying B-52s were also used to shower free-conduct passes to front-line Iraqi positions. Additionally, loudspeaker teams attached to maneuver units encouraged surrender of Iraqi soldiers. In one case, an entire Iraqi battalion gave up to a 1st Cavalry helicopter patrol when the attached PsyOps team broadcast "death from

above" was imminent.

Discussions with Iraqi EPWs (enemy prisoners of war) indicated the PsyOps campaign was a major factor, influencing substantial numbers of Iraqi soldiers to surrender. An informal survey of EPWs conducted by PsyOps personnel who prepared the leaflets suggested these simple messages caused 80% of those who read them to surrender.

**Trouble With Mines**

Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm exposed a gap in U.S. mine warfare capability. Two of our ships were struck by mines — *USS Tripoli* (a helicopter carrier) and *USS Princeton* (an Aegis-class cruiser). *Tripoli* suffered a huge gash in her hull, but *Princeton* was almost cut in half by Iraqi mines.

"We'll never know just how close it came to breaking in half," *Princeton* Captain Ted Hontz told me. A pair of "influence" mines detonated two seconds apart as the *Princeton* sailed close to Kuwait on 18 February.

"The first mine exploded under the stern of the cruiser, whipping it up like a fiberglass fishing pole," the ship's chief damage control officer, Rick Breaux, explained.

Two heartbeats later, another influence mine exploded about 300 yards off starboard (right side) sending another horizontal shock wave slamming into the *Princeton's* side, twisting metal like cardboard and causing two large rips in the cruiser's superstructure.

Despite computers on warships, human lookouts with binoculars and plenty of coffee to keep them awake are the only real defense against floating mines. Lookouts stand at bow and stern in flak jackets and helmets, peering at the flat blue expanse of the Persian Gulf, hoping to spot a bobbing mine before it strikes their ship. Only specialized minehunters have sensitive-enough sonar to detect the sort of underwater influence mines that almost severed the *Princeton*.

Explosions under and near the cruiser hurled a mine watch on its stern nearly 10 feet into the air and badly injured him. Three more of the 360 crewmen aboard *Princeton* were slightly injured.

Sailors said if the blast had hit 20 minutes later, when all hands were due back at their stations, many more would have been injured or killed.

"We were lucky," Capt. Hontz summed up.

Looking back on the Gulf War, many field commanders say the same thing. "Had the Iraqis chosen to stand and fight, they could have hurt us," Marine Lieutenant Colonel Jim Mattis, former commanding officer of 1st Battalion 7th Marines (who breached the first minefield in Kuwait) observed. "But they chose life over death and surrendered by the thousands."

As a result, only two of 1,200 men in

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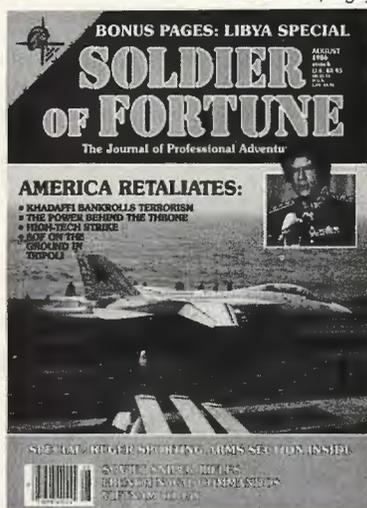
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1/7th were wounded during the 100-hour ground campaign.

As of mid-July, when the Pentagon's interim report was submitted to Congress, there was no final total of U.S. casualties.

During Operation Desert Shield, there were 84 U.S. non-battle deaths, such as vehicle accidents or heart attacks.

During Operation Desert Storm, according to official U.S. military casualty figures as of 24 June 1991, the numbers were as follows:

Killed in action — 148; wounded in action — 458; non-battle deaths — 138; non-battle injuries — 2,978.

There is no formal system for reporting Coalition military casualty figures, much less Coalition civilian casualties, while very limited information is available on which to base an assessment of Iraqi military or civilian casualties.

Although he steadfastly refused to get into the business of body counts, General Normal Schwarzkopf said the impact of the Gulf War would only be felt by Iraq when the male population of many cities, towns and villages failed to return home.

*Dale B. Cooper is a freelance combat correspondent who covered the Persian Gulf War for SOF from the beginning of Operation Desert Shield.*

## COUPS 101

*Continued from page 77*

don't think there will be another coup. Without the center, they would need a committee of MVD (paramilitary troops from the Ministry of Internal Affairs) and KGB troops and officers deciding to do it. In the current atmosphere, they could not rely on their subordinates to follow them. You can't start a coup if you don't know if people will obey you or not," he said.

Nevertheless, Luttwak maintains the August coup could have been pulled off. Its failure was that of the organizers, not of the form itself. "Coups are not becoming more difficult to stage," he said, scoffing at the idea of modern equipment — fax machines, telephones, even photocopiers — interfering with government overthrows. "That is a maniacal exaggeration of the power of modern communications. Communications can be stopped by pulling a lever."

The Moscow conspirators not only failed to pull any levers, they also neglected to pull out all the stops. "That is the difference in succeeding in the first place or not," Luttwak said. "They simply never had the control."

## ALPHA FAILS TO ATTACK

The job itself would have taken a half hour at most — just another day's work for the KGB's elite antiterrorist Alpha Group.

But when the order came to stage an attack on the Russian parliament building, where Boris Yeltsin was holed up, the group refused.

It was an unprecedented case of insubordination within the unit; never before had there been a refusal to carry out orders since Alpha Group was formed in 1974.

According to a report from the Soviet news agency Tass, the group's chief at the time, Viktor Karpukhin (who has since been replaced), ordered his deputy leaders to storm the building at 1800 hours. Shocked deputies questioned the source of the order, and were told it came from the government.

One by one, 20 commanders refused to obey. Because they balked, the attack was rescheduled for 2000 hours; the commanders again refused. They continued to resist the order, despite being threatened with punishments ranging from court-martial to execution.

After three more postponements, the raid was ultimately scrapped. The deputies later explained they resisted the order because it was unlawful.

Relatively little is known about the elite Alpha Group, partially because it has been kept under heavy wraps from Western intelligence; and also because the Soviet Union from time to time changes designations of its various internal organizations in order to confound outsiders.

One U.S. intelligence agent refers to the Alpha Group as "the personal whack team for the Politburo." It is believed to fall under Directorate K, for counterintelligence, which in turn comes under the first chief directorate for foreign intelligence. Although this might seem an odd chain of command for a unit such as Alpha Group, it is consistent with KGB doctrine, which does not distinguish between the functions of "sword and shield," as do Western intelligence agencies.

In 1979 the team served with distinction (of sorts) in Afghanistan, where it received orders to kill everyone found within the presidential palace. The order was carried out to the letter: Everyone present, from the royal household on down to children of the palace staff, was murdered.

More recently, the unit took part in the January 1991 capture of the Lithuanian broadcast center in Vilnius.

Considering its illustrious background, why did members of the Alpha Group refuse to follow orders?

"It's not likely that they did," according to Joseph Finder, a Sovietologist and author of the *The Moscow Club*, a novel depicting an attempted coup in the Soviet Union. "These people are not selected for their beliefs in democracy. They go through enormous background checks. The leaders normally select thuggish types."

Once on the team, Alpha Group members go through training more rigorous than any in the Soviet armed forces. According to one analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency, the closest comparable training course in the West is that endured by the British SAS.

The KGB unit's training is multifaceted, including rough-terrain jumping, underwater maneuvers and desert operations.

"These are operatives," Finder said. "I find it very difficult to believe they would do

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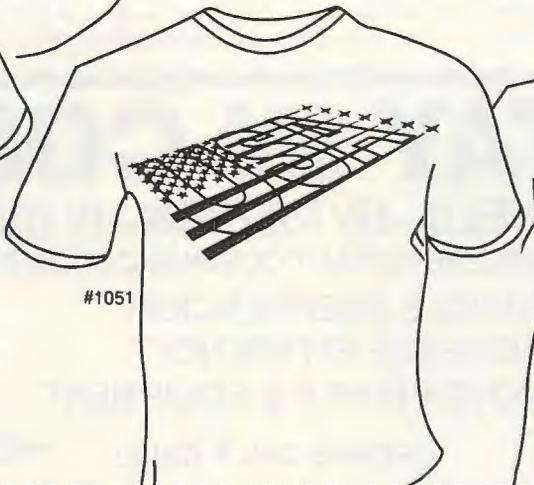
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this (refuse a direct order)." Finder suspects a certain amount of disinformation regarding the group's failure to obey.

"The version we're being peddled is, everyone revolted: the KGB, the military, etc. The important question here is, where was Yeltsin at the point of refusal?" Finder asked. "When were they supposed to arrest him? When was it clear to them that the coup had failed? Maybe the order to arrest Yeltsin was rescinded once it became clear the coup would fail."

According to Edward Luttwak, author of *Coup D'Etat: A Practical Handbook*, historical timing was everything.

"Nothing is more difficult to keep track of than cultural change," he said. "At what point do cultures change? It was easy to see that they should have arrested Yeltsin; but it was not easy to see that a KGB unit would not obey. It is hard to defect at the moment of cultural change."

"These guys are not total idiots," a DIA analyst noted. "At some point they were smart enough to know which way the wind was blowing. It wasn't hard to miss. For the past six months all they had to do was look around and see that the whole place was falling apart."

Whatever the motive, one thing is clear: Alpha Group was sent to storm the Russian parliament building armed with assault rifles, grenade launchers and antitank missiles — all of which went unused.

— S.K.K.

*Susan Katz Keating is a Washington-based journalist specializing in military*

*and intelligence issues. She's a veteran of the U.S. Army and frequent contributor to SOF.*

## STONE

*Continued from page 29*

members of TASS (and) Novosti ... are KGB and GRU officers." One agent at the Garrison meeting was Sergei Losev, who then worked for TASS. His 1984 JFK book was published by Novosti.

Caught in the middle of all this scandal is Hollywood nice-guy Kevin Costner, who Stone chose to portray Garrison in the movie. During the first few weeks Costner spent in New Orleans filming, he learned Garrison was not respected by legitimate American journalists, most Warren Commission critics or even by some of the men who worked on (but eventually dropped out of) Garrison's investigative team.

Realizing the predicament he had gotten himself into, Costner gave the Gannett News Service his new, enlightened opinion of Garrison: "He's deadly sincere. I don't believe everything he says, but I believe he believes what he says." How could Costner believably portray someone he doesn't believe? It's unbelievable.

Oliver Stone has been called a leftist because many of his movies attack American institutions and ridicule American sol-

diers. His film *Platoon* made our boys in Vietnam look like murderers and thugs who raped village girls and killed old men and women. A scene near the end of that movie shows an armored personnel carrier (APC) rolling through the jungle loaded with GIs after the last battle.

Stone is such a master of subliminal cinematic technique, movie reviewers never noticed the APC was flying a black and white-striped Nazi military flag — complete with a black swastika centered in a field of red! That's what Oliver Stone thought of our soldiers in Vietnam. His JFK movie tells us exactly what he (and the KGB) thinks of our government.

*Johann W. Rush is an award-winning journalist currently writing a book to prove Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President Kennedy, and that all conspiracy stories originated with the KGB.*

## SNIPING

*Continued from page 83*

second exercise demanded each man in a team take two shots at the gong before moving to the next station. From a stepped barricade with a window and low opening, everyone fired at the 200-yard steel plate from low prone, squatting and other tactically appropriate positions.

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The final exercise consisted of five shots fired at the 200-yard steel plate, starting from the prone at 200 yards and then running to four closer positions, several of which required kneeling to visually acquire the target.

While fun to shoot at, Awerbuck stressed that it's a bad practice to shoot exclusively at reactive steel gongs as the shooter will eventually invariably fail to follow through and look only for target movement as he pushes the weapon down and away.

Once training received in a course of this type has been absorbed, it becomes the responsibility of the individual or team to repeat it over and over again, with as many different variations as may be contrived, until proficiency is maximized.

When your very life, or others' lives, may rely upon consequences of your response to a deadly confrontation, it should be self-evident why you can never train too much — and why the world's elite special operations groups spend a majority of their time in the live-fire fun house. ☒

## NICARAGUA

*Continued from page 73*

others. One month later a dozen of Indomable's men were reported killed



Nissan loaded with Sandinista weapons is burned after contra capture of La Luz-Siuna in December 1987. The communities of 10,000 were the largest captured by the Resistance in their almost 10 years fighting the Sandinista government.

when their truck ran over a mine. It's unclear if it was a war leftover.

According to armed forces chief Gen. Humberto Ortega there are as many as 1,100 recontras, but no more than half of them roam the countryside full-time, in small bands which have little coordination with each other.

Scarcely organized under the banner Enrique Bermudez Democratic Front, the recontras have no central-command structure. However, commandantes Indomable and Dimas Tigrillo are most prominent, claiming several hundred rebels each.

"It's irresponsible and exaggerated to speak of the reinitiation of the war in our

country," said Gen. Cuadra, army chief of staff, to journalists after testifying in Congress. "It's a question of some members of the contras who have dedicated their activity to banditry and cattle rustling for subsistence. Some political sectors have tried to take advantage and politicize a socioeconomic situation."

"The people who are with Indomable are criminals, bums who don't want to work," Vice Minister Sobalvarro, the former contra commander, quoted by a wire service shortly before his vehicle was reportedly stolen and driven to Indomable's headquarters.

Recontras deny being common bandits and accuse their former leaders in the new government of selling out. "The objective is to get the government to fulfill its promises," said recontra Commandante Dimas Tigrillo, a 38-year-old ex-farmer who claims to have fought 10 years in the Resistance. "It promised us a pile of things and it has not come through. Fire Humberto Ortega — from him on down — and proceed to a new army that is not Sandinista."

However the government rejects this demand. "Some Nicaraguans want the army to disappear; the pain and hate was overwhelming these last 10 years," explains Inspector Somarriba. "However, there wasn't a revolution here, but a transition by election, and the army is constitutional."

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The recontras lack the numbers, organization, coordination and support of the last decade's resistance. That level of support would be hard to approach. "... (Laying down our arms) is not worth it, nor is it worth it to continue the war," said Miguel Soza, the former contra Commandante Emiliano, summing up the paradoxical feelings of most former contras I talked with.

But the recontras can cause a hell of a lot of destruction. Some of their groups certainly have the firepower. When I talked with Commandante Dimas Tigrillo in Jinotega, his platoon-sized escort was armed with AK-47s, CAR-15s, German H&K grenade launchers and plenty of ammo.

"Listen, we have mortars, RPGs and missiles to knock down planes," the short, bearded commander boasted. "These arms are perhaps hidden in the ground."

That is entirely possible. Former contra commanders told me their forces cached 20% of armament at the war's end.

Tigrillo hopes one day America will provide support; however, the U.S. government rejects this possibility. While it sympathizes with former contras' grievances, it stresses support for the Chamorro administration. Ironically, the Sandinista army also would accept U.S. military assistance, including advisers.

"I don't see any inconsistency," Gen. Cuadra answered my query on this at the legislative assembly this past spring. This was the first time a Sandinista official has publicly expressed such a desire, and a dramatic about-face from the days of vowing to bust *Imperialista* asses.

United States government officials would like to see Sandinista-influenced armed forces prove a commitment to democracy, and back-up claims of stopping arms shipments to Central American revolutionaries beyond the slightest doubt before even considering U.S. military aid to Nicaragua.

### Progress? *Manana*

Despite cases of military and police impunity, Inspector Somarriba sees progress. Human rights abuses are far below wartime highs while he sees the armed forces "entering reality and comprehending that this country cannot continue in an environment of war."

Referring to the recontras, Gen. Cuadra states, "The answer to this problem isn't military. It's a social and economic answer."

In a public opinion poll taken in Managua by the independent Institute of Nicaraguan Studies one year after Chamorro became president, a majority of those surveyed considered that the army (58%), and continuance of Humberto Ortega as its chief (57.2%) contributes to the stability of the country.

"I don't know if Gen. Humberto Ortega is a democrat or not, or if he is just an opportunist, but at least he's acting like a

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democrat," says Jose Davila, a former Resistance leader exiled in Costa Rica and now a prominent columnist working for *La Prensa*.

"He formally resigned from the Sandinista directorate; he salutes and obeys Dona Violeta; he's dutifully carried out her orders to reduce the army and to investigate the problem of the missiles (SAMs supposedly stolen from an army warehouse by retired and active-duty officers and illegally sold to Salvadoran guerrillas). And he hasn't attempted a coup d'etat when he could have easily done so, especially during the disturbances last year," Davila adds.

But that's little comfort to the grieving survivors of the *desmovilizados* and sympathizers slaughtered by Ortega's troops. In Nicaragua today, as in the past, there are no easy answers.

*SOF's Senior Foreign Correspondent Steve Salisbury has lived in Central America for the past decade. He's covered the contra insurgency since the beginning and has written dozens of articles for SOF. This was his first legal trip into Nicaragua in 10 years.*

## I WAS THERE

*Continued from page 15*

(*Schutzstaffel*) vets. We never talked politics but they volunteered quite a bit of their experiences fighting Russians on the eastern front. Conversation never got around to the western front.

On several occasions we conducted guided tours for groups of visiting U.S. officers from the Pentagon. The brass always seemed to wear civilian clothes. A typical tour only took an hour; however, for some reason these would sometimes last several hours as some of the group always managed to get "lost." When they finally showed up they would have these happy contented looks on their smiling faces, and be expressing thanks for such a culturally enriching experience. As Kipling wrote, "Ours is not to reason why..." though it made me wonder if there was an MOS (Military Occupation Specialty) for being a pimp.

Years later, when my kids asked me what action I saw during the Korean War, I replied I didn't want to talk about it. As they walked away I heard one of them say, "I bet he saw plenty of action." I thought to myself, "Boy, did I." But that type of action is better left unexplained. ☒

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## ALTO

*Continued from page 43*

It is still far too early in development of the riverine program to judge just what Colombia and the United States are getting for their drug interdiction efforts and dollars. The potential is there, though; riverine patrols already have staged a few successful raids along the Putumayo, putting a couple of processing labs out of commission. A testament to their success is growing resentment — and some increased guerrilla activity — in Puerto Leguizamo as a result of the perceived threat riverines pose to the cocaine business, an important component of the local economy.

The real payoff will come when the presence of the riverine patrols forces narcos and guerrillas to rethink their use of rivers and shut down when riverines are operating. For this to happen, these marines have to be seen as a force to be reckoned with, not a group to be outgunned, intimidated, or bribed.

A riverine program in Bolivia under direction of the U.S. Coast Guard has met with mixed results and some criticism since being established in 1988, and the Colombian riverines have many problems in common with their Bolivian neighbors.

### Putting A House In Order

There often is little coordination between branches of the Colombian military. One riverine raid on the Putumayo, for instance, was in question because it would take place within the jurisdiction of an army base, and there was real doubt permission could be obtained. There also has been little coordination between the military and national police, responsible for the bulk of Colombia's past drug interdiction efforts.

Corruption in the military is also a problem here, just as throughout most of Latin America, and there was private speculation that if the army was informed about the raid mentioned earlier, one of their insiders would tip off the narcos.

What the Colombian program has in its favor is that it is a Colombian program. Lots of money and much of the expertise initially are coming from the United States, but Colombians are the primary players, learning to plan and execute their own river operations. They are making their own fair share of mistakes in the program's beginning; but, like recruits who tripped booby traps during search-and-seizure exercises, they also are learning from those mistakes.

One of the best things about the Colombian riverine program, according to one U.S. military officer in Bogota, is the Colombians are building for their own future. Once the program is established it can stand on its own, and even if U.S. assistance is withdrawn the riverine patrols still should be effective against

narcos and guerrillas.

In the long run the United States cannot fight the drug war in Colombia: Colombians must fight it for themselves. And they will.

Milton C. Toby is an American living and working in Colombia. This is his first article for SOF. ✍

## KASHMIR

Continued from page 65

RPG well enough to blow up an army truck. If they live long enough, the rest may be learned on the job.

### Resistance Fundamentals

I suggested taking a look at HM's local village training program. Asrar led me outside to an open area shaded by spreading mulberry trees in the center of the village.

Two guerrillas were putting local youths through their paces. Both instructors were PTMs. One, Karkar, had also seen action in Afghanistan outside the town of Khost before it fell in March 1991. I was not surprised. Hundreds of Kashmiri Muslim militants had trained and fought in hills around Khost in the late 1980s, many courtesy of Afghan guerrilla chieftain Jalaludin Haqqani.

This morning's curriculum covered the Chinese-made T-56 Kalashnikov assault rifle and the RPG — firing positions, stripping, cleaning. Nothing sophisticated, but you don't need a Ph.D. to fire an AK-clone or an RPG. And if enough of them are used with even moderate effectiveness in the ambush-target-rich environment of Kashmir, the result is likely to be a significant attrition of Indian men and machines. There is no shortage of weapons among the Islamist HM and several other allied groups.

By summer 1991, the Hisb-ul-Mujahideen had emerged from the shadows as perhaps the largest and best-organized faction in the valley.

This tells you a good deal more about HM's connections across the LOC than about its popularity within Indian Kashmir. In 1988 when low-level insurgency began in Indian Kashmir no one had heard of the faction. It emerged in 1989 from nowhere as the armed wing of the Kashmiri branch of the Jamaat-i-Islami, a small but well-organized fundamentalist political party championing accession to Pakistan.

With its pro-Pakistan stance and close ties to the Pakistani branch of Jama'at — a highly influential party with tight links to military intelligence — HM moved fast to the top of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) list of clients which are supplied training and weapons.

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were opened to like-minded fundamentalist commanders of the Afghan mujahideen, such as Haqqani, only too happy to provide training and combat experience for Kashmir's "jihad." For hundreds of militant Kashmiris intoxicated with the heady wine of "holy war," it didn't take long to work out that HM was the party providing the most the fastest. The organization's numbers swelled from a few score into hundreds and then thousands.

The flip side of the coin was when Pakistan stepped up support to fundamentalist factions championing accession — its support to the Kashmir's most popular faction, the independence-seeking and essentially nationalist JKLF, was withdrawn.

While the idea of a reunited independent Kashmiri state attracts a huge following in Kashmir, it finds few takers in ruling circles of Pakistan. Official Islamabad policy follows U.N. resolutions passed in 1948 and 1949 in the wake of the first Indo-Pak war over Kashmir — that a plebiscite should be held in Kashmir. The option for the populace would be to choose accession to India or to Pakistan — not independence. Thus the popular JKLF, with its dreams of an independent secular "Switzerland of the sub-continent," represents a challenge to Pakistan's own ambitions in the region.

This does not mean Pakistan has always been anti-JKLF. Initially, in the late 1980s, Pakistani support to Kashmiri militants was funneled almost entirely to the JKLF. There was a simple and pragmatic reason for this: Whatever its long-term goals, JKLF was the only game in town, the one organization committed to armed struggle against India which had an underground network and popular support.

But with the troubles of 1990 and the emergence of HM and its pro-Pakistan allies, the JKLF had outlived its usefulness to the Paks. As its Pakistan-based founder and chairman Amanullah Khan succinctly put it early this year: "the moment the Pakistanis created alternatives like the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, they turned their backs on us."

Inside Kashmir, the fear in JKLF ranks was not just about Pakistan's cutting back once-generous support — but that through HM Pakistan was bent on actively undermining the nationalists. This was already clearly happening at one level.

Many leaders of HM and other pro-Pakistani Islamist factions had once been leading cadres of the JKLF — until on visits to Pakistan they were persuaded of the wisdom of embracing Islamist ideology, buying Islamabad's line on accession, and climbing aboard the Pakistani training-and-arms supply wagon. Mohammad Ahsan Dar, today the head of HM, was himself once a JKLF member.

What bothered JKLF loyalists a lot more, however, was a suspicion its

repetitive misfortunes in the valley were something other than plain bad luck. In August 1990 the party lost both its top commanders, Yasin Malek and Hamid Sheikh, in an Indian raid on a Srinagar not-so-safe-house. Then in March 1991, deputy commander Mohammad Selim was picked up by Indian forces at a road checkpoint. In neither case was there any convincing evidence to implicate the HM as having tipped off the Indians, but in JKLF minds suspicions remained: The run of bad luck seemed to flow only in one direction.

Violence finally exploded early this past May. Not long after the arrest of Selim and the killing of another JKLF commander in Srinagar, nationalist militants moved in on HM in Srinagar's Old City, triggering several days of skirmishing. In this unprecedented rift in the Kashmiri movement as a whole, pro-JKLF demonstrators hit the streets of Srinagar shouting slogans of "Death to Pakistan!" as grinning Indian security forces stood aside and watched.

Even though pressure had been building up for months, the final eruption of pent-up hostilities between pro-Pak Islamists and JKLF nationalists shocked both sides. Quite aside from its effect on the insurgency should it spread, the infighting provided Indians with a propaganda bonanza — and they hadn't had too many of those.

Hastily convened meetings between JKLF and HM chiefs resulted in joint statements being issued from both sides pledging the two groups would not let political differences stand in the way of the common anti-Indian struggle. The rift was swiftly, if unconvincingly, papered over.

But even without a looming split between Islamist and nationalist factions, Kashmir's militants are not likely either to join Pakistan or achieve independence in the foreseeable future.

On one crucial level, the West has studiously ignored the plight of Kashmir. They produce apples, not oil. Militarily, at this stage in the conflict, even given better training and more weapons, there is no way guerrillas can inflict the sort of punishment on security forces required to compel a change of policy.

But were not the Soviets forced out of Afghanistan by a guerrilla struggle bleeding them financially, politically and diplomatically rather than defeating them militarily? Despite all differences in the mujahideen camp? Was not the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) obliged to withdraw from northern Sri Lanka, bloodied and checkmated in a no-win guerrilla war with the Tamil Tigers?

Yes; and yes. But ... In Kashmir there is one critical difference.

Whatever hatred is felt by the overwhelming majority of Muslim Kashmiris for Indian troops occupying their state, as far as New Delhi is concerned those troops are fighting on

home turf — not in an off-shore adventure. Whatever be the rights and wrongs of the 44-year-old squabble over conditions in Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi regards these as inalienable from the Indian Union and will fight accordingly.

For India, an optimum scenario in Kashmir might parallel the 1970s separatist guerrilla conflict in its northeastern state of Nagaland. This was an insurgency in a remote corner of the country, where a realization of the hopelessness of rebel victory finally prompted a restoration of political dialog — and a peaceful solution within the framework of India's constitution.

There is, however, another uglier and more probable scenario — that of Sri Lanka. There, ethnic alienation and perceived discrimination by the majority Sinhalese community pushed a generation of young Tamils to arms. Externally-supplied training and weapons — ironically from India's own foreign intelligence service, RAW — gave guerrillas of one faction, the Tamil Tigers, a push they needed to dominate the insurgency. The rest is both history and today's news.

In terms of ethnic and religious alienation, outside support, and a conflict fast gaining pace (while one favored faction muscles its way to the fore), there are already disturbing similarities between Kashmir in 1991 and Sri Lanka of 1984 and 1985.

A Sri Lanka-type future for Kashmir is profoundly worrying for India. What Pakistan and the international community should be worrying about is the possibility of a weak, frustrated government in New Delhi seeking to preempt such a scenario through teaching Pakistan a "final lesson." With both states now nuclear-capable, scrambling to develop or buy ballistic-missile delivery systems, India vs. Pakistan Round Four will be nothing like the first three.

*Photojournalist Mike Winchester frequently covers events in Asia for SOF, most recently the escalating conflict in Kashmir.*

---

## YUGOSLAVIA

*Continued from page 39*

they trained us where the recorder is on American and NATO aircraft."

He got the panel off, and sure enough, there was the flight recorder. Actually, it was an orange-yellow color rather than black. I unscrewed the electrical connection and lifted it out.

That evening, Damir's men all came to our hotel, and we drank pivo and passed around a bottle of Scotch which Bob

*Continued on page 115*

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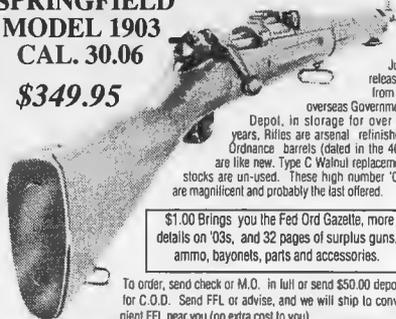
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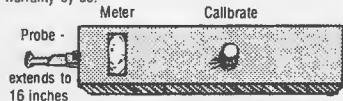
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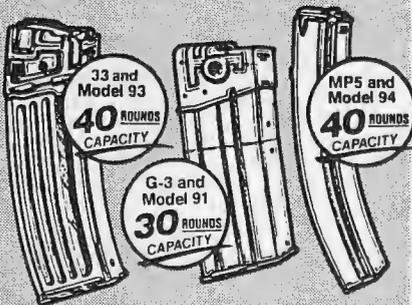
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## YUGOSLAVIA

Continued from page 111

bought at the duty-free shop in London's Heathrow airport. I contributed a *Playboy* "Girls of Summer" special issue, which seemed to be appreciated. These guys had been away from wives and girlfriends too long.

And so had Fred and Bob. They left for the States the next day, though they plan to return soon. As I write this, I'm still here. I'll stay as long as I can, and report what I am able on the struggle of these brave people against a determined enemy.

Jim Wallace is a former U.S. Army Special Forces explosives technician and intelligence analyst. ✕

## HERITAGE

Continued from page 67

arrive at them independently?

② Did Heritage consult with anyone in the shooting community or with any gun organizations before drafting its memo? If so, who — and if not, why not?

③ Did Heritage consult with any anti-gun

organizations, particularly anti-gun police organizations, prior to drafting its memo? If so, who?

④ You indicated in the memo that you thought the federal role in gun control should be based on the Commerce Clause of the Constitution. What limits, if any, do you think the Second Amendment — which is nowhere mentioned in the Heritage memo — imposes on the federal government?

⑤ Crime statistics conclusively show that rifles of all kinds, including military-style weapons, are only rarely used by criminals. What evidence did the Heritage Foundation have for its assertion that "'Rambo'-looking rifles have a strong appeal to individuals inclined to use weapons for an unlawful purpose"?

⑥ Cheryl Rubin, Heritage's spokeswoman, repeatedly told *SOF* that the Second Amendment is not a Heritage area of interest. In view of the fact that tens of millions of conservative Americans consider the right to keep and bear arms as fundamental as the right to free speech, and often vote for a candidate on the strength of his or her Second Amendment views, why isn't it?

Heritage is one of the leading voices for conservative thought in the United States,

and I think it is important that its views on this issue be known, so I would strongly urge you to give the gun issue some additional attention. *SOF* would be pleased to print any thoughts you would care to share with us.

Sincerely,

Robert K. Brown  
Editor/Publisher  
*Soldier of Fortune Magazine*

Paul Danish is a newspaper columnist and regular contributor to *SOF*. ✕

## LAOS

Continued from page 57

shells crash down in groups. Several strike quite near, exploded by the thick bamboo cover overhead. I instinctively duck my head.

What, Me Worry?

"Are you afraid, Tom?" asks Pang

Continued on page 120

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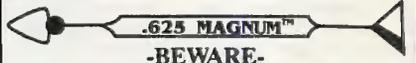
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Chang. Everyone laughs. The H'mong are as concerned as they'll ever be, but this business of having the baby elephant along adds a bit of variety to what otherwise would be just another dangerous romp in the woods.

We move on. There isn't even a foot of level ground. It's all ups and downs.

And then trouble begins for me. I feel it first in the telltale cramps in my legs. We've long since run out of water, and I've continued sweating like a river. Trying to twist the limited vocabulary contained in "Do you believe in Jesus?" along with several other religious phrases, into an explanation of imminent heat exhaustion proves beyond me, and I'm overwhelmed by a sense of impending doom. The nausea starts. I begin to stagger.

Behind us, the Pathet Lao are still thrashing about, not sure where we are, but plastering the area with indirect fire. They also bring up a couple of heavy machine guns and start firing at random. By this time, I pass out.

What follows can only be described with reference to the one time I was foolish enough to get talked into a marathon. To be sure, I coach track, was a big jock at West Point (a pole vaulter, where the length of my run was precisely 33 yards), and I happen to have taken the open title in the decathlon once at home in Hawaii. In shape. Still, 26-plus miles is not a normal thing for a body — and neither is running up and down hills in Laos while being shot at.

The two have a lot in common. I recall cruising by the marathon 21-mile mark in something like 2:10 and thinking, "You stud, a piece of cake." I took one more step and was pole-axed. It took me nearly as long to do the next five-plus miles as it did to do the first 21. So it was with Laos.

Each time I'd go down, the H'mong — too small to do much except try to protect me — would dutifully form a

perimeter. They'd look around carefully and tell some jokes. For his part, Pang Chang would softly urge me on each time I regained consciousness. I'd make another burst, with the little people helping as best they could. I was just too big for them!

Eventually, we came to the point where I was moving 10 yards on all fours, passing out, coming up for air, then moving another 10 yards. The whole world looked like a swimming pool; thorns were cutting me to pieces; my clothes were in shreds.

I tried to explain to the patrol that a little water was all I needed. At one point, in fact, we passed over a stream. The water was good, so I started to drink, but my escorts pulled me away, saying drinking water in the heat would make me sick.

"Jesus Saves" wasn't up to explaining that I was already quite sick, and that water was just what I needed. Things got worse.

As I lay face down in a convenient mud puddle after one collapse, a heavy machine gun opened up behind us. I heard the response of the rear guard, the lighter report of their AK-47s echoing amid the foliage.

"Christ, what a way to go," I thought, "done in by a body that just won't play the game."

### Only If You Insist

But then there was Pang Chang next to me: "Tom, you can move little bit fast? The Lao come to kill us!"

I think my laughter carried me the next half-mile.

Finally, the Lao gave up. The mortars and the artillery stopped. So, too, did my body.

In retrospect, I realize we were within 50 meters of a position where we were to spend the night. But by that time, climbing up a steep hill, I had no idea what planet I was on, much less which final 50 meters I was supposed to cover. I went clean out.

Xiong Bliu Yang, who was waiting for us, clamored down and hoisted me onto his

back. No doubt, given his 12 children (from four wives), he had a wealth of experience upon which to draw. And he gave me some water.

It's amazing how quickly the human body will revive when it's treated properly. Some water, a few cucumbers, a little rice ... I'm alive again. I decline the rat. Even my efforts at macho have their cultural limits!

A few hours later, I feel fine. Would that it be so easy to bring the H'mong dead back to life.

### Counting Coup, Counting Blessings

We have been lucky this go-round. The communist camp has been tagged but good, and the only H'mong casualty, Xiong Por, has escaped serious injury. Days do not always end so well. We thank the spirits, then retire.

But not to sleep. Far into the night, as the fire in my hut burns bright, villagers stop by to talk about their lives and the world. They recount for me their legends — how the world began, how men and women came to be, how Yang Shang Lue received "the H'mong letters," and of how the H'mong have been condemned to lead a hard, troubled life.

Yet they do not complain. "We believe," says a combatant, "that if we have faith, our future will again be good. Some of us must die, some of our families must die, but one day the Gods will change the government of Laos ... We know they do not think we are animals, for while they kill us, they do not eat us or use our skin for shoes. So one day they will realize we are human, too, and stop what they are doing."

Until then? "We fight only to protect ourselves," he concludes. "Killing has become necessary for us to survive. But it is not what we want."

*Dr. Tom Marks is Soldier of Fortune's Chief Foreign Correspondent.* ✕

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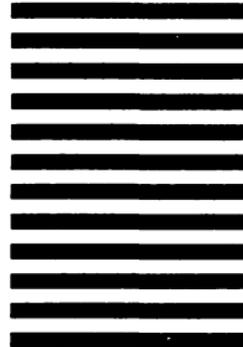
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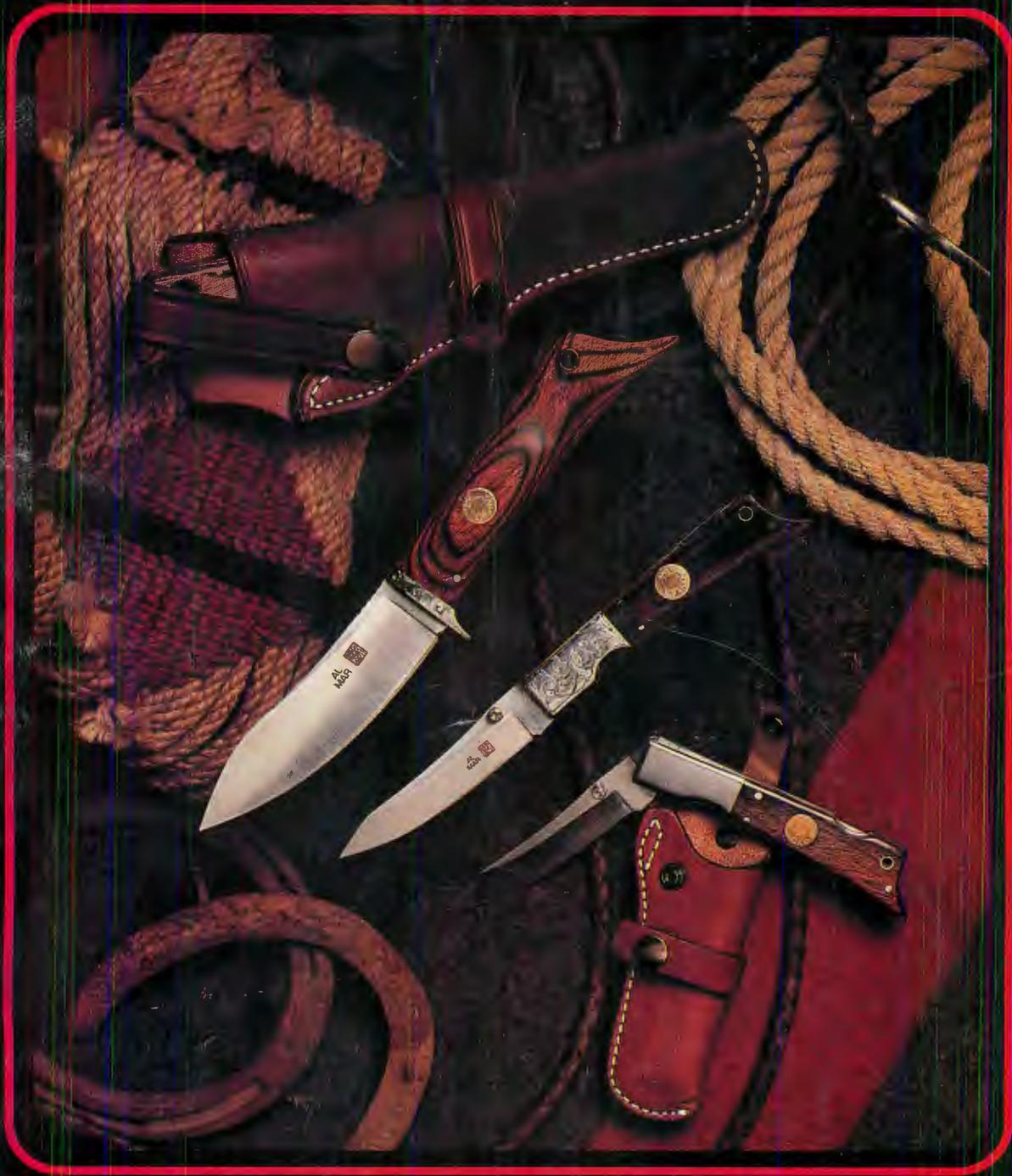
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