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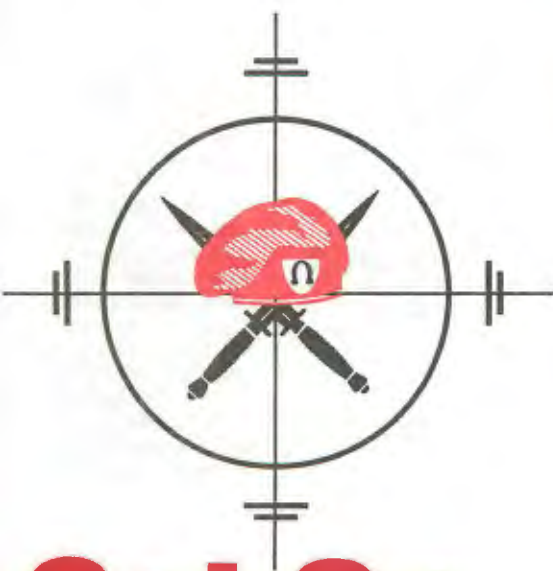
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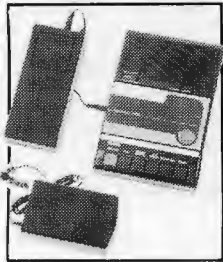
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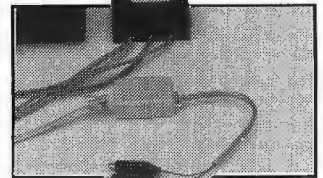
AUDIO SECURITY KIT VHF-Transmitter, Receiver & Automatic VOX Recorder

Crystal controlled FCC type approved VHF transmitter (171 Mhz), sends a clear, crisp signal to the matching receiver up to 1,000 ft. away, where it is connected with a patch cord (included) to our exclusive 10 Hour Voice Activated Recorder. When the transmitter's sensitive microphone picks up sounds in the area, it is sent to the receiver and then the recorder will automatically start and stop, keeping a record of every sound. Ideal for taping hands-free notes as you walk or as a security room monitor. Transmitter comes complete with a clip-on microphone and belt clip for use as a body wire. See warning.

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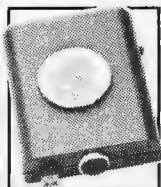
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\$99. (Ship \$5.) Use any FM radio or EPPi's Super Radio II (**\$99.** + Ship \$10.) See warning.

- **TELEPHONE TRANSMITTER KIT** Professional quality. 40 Mhz crystal controlled. Works with scanners, etc. Attaches with alligator clips. Powered by 9 volt battery. Soldering required. Exclusive. Retail **\$195. Sale \$149.** (Ship \$5.) See warning.
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- **PHONE & ROOM KIT** Exclusive unit transmits telephone conversations when the phone is in use and room sounds when the telephone is hung up. Powered by the telephone line. Can be placed in the phone or anywhere along the line. Frequency tuneable 65 Mhz to 119 Mhz. Will work with FM radio. Requires soldering to assemble. See warning. TEL-IKA **\$120.** (Ship \$5.)

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*Notice: These kits are to be used **ONLY** for experimentation, testing and training in Electronic Countermeasures. See warning.

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- **Telephone Scrambler \$299. each.** Minimum of two required. (Ship \$10./pair)
- **Telephone Ear.** Dial up location where the EAR is attached to the line, enter secret code and listen to room sounds. EAR must be in target area. See warning. **\$249.** (Ship \$10.)
- **Shocking Courier Briefcase.** 40,000 volt. Remote activated. **\$499.** (Ship \$20.)
- **SuperScanner Weapons Detector. \$195.** (Ship \$7.50) Frisk'em Pocket Size Unit **\$69.** (Ship \$5.)
- **Scanner.** 200 channel hand-held. **\$269.** (Ship \$10.)
- **Caller I.D. \$89.** (Ship \$7.) 2+ **\$79. each.** (Ship \$10.)
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Photo: Yves Debay

THE INCREDIBLE

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Photo: U.S. Army



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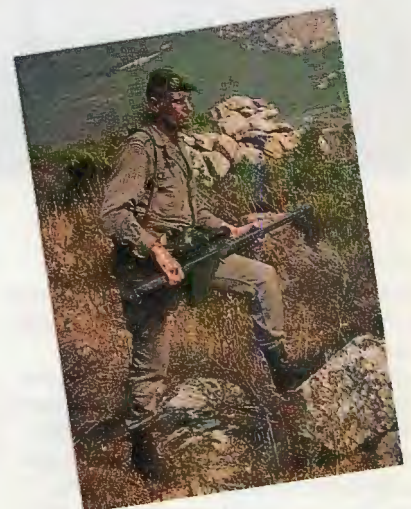
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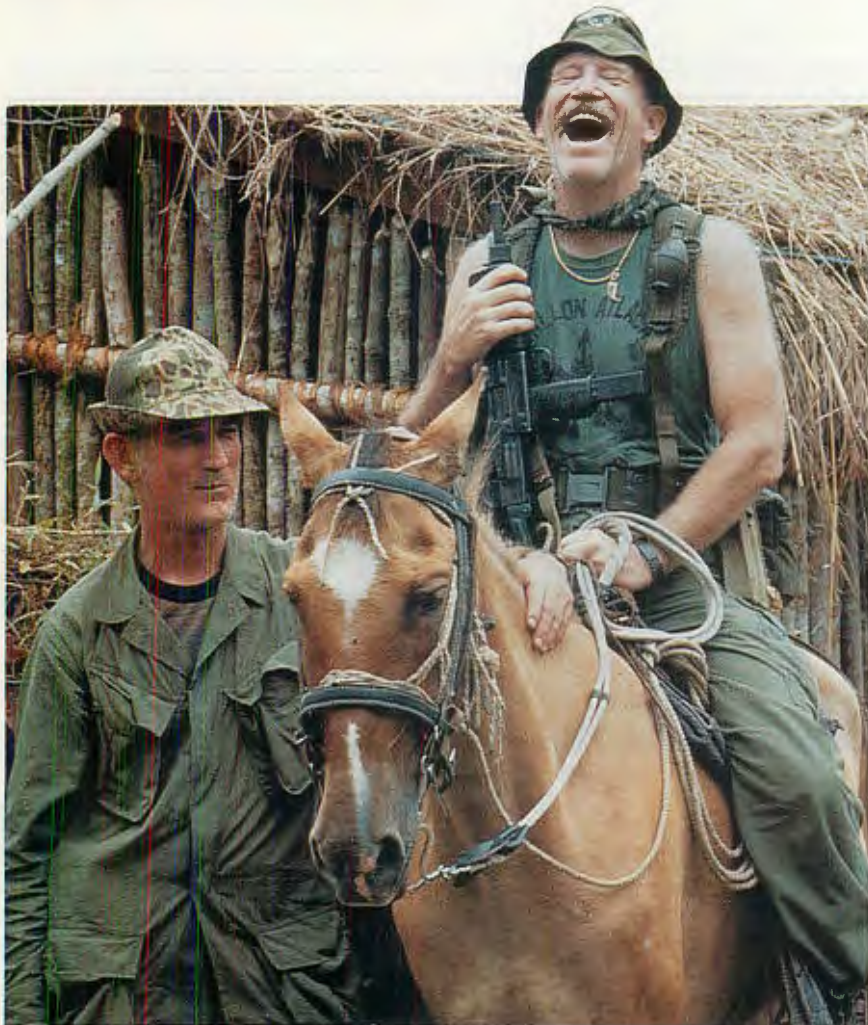


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Photo: Yves Debay

COVER

Cover: While performing field tests for the French military, this Legionnaire carries new American-made M82 A1 Barrett .50-caliber Browning sniping rifle. Weighing in at 35 pounds with a magazine of 11 cartridges, the Barrett will even penetrate a wall to get anyone hiding behind it. Photo: Yves Debay

BULLETIN BOARD



RIDE WITH ROLLING THUNDER ...

Memorial Day, 24 May 1992, will see bikers assemble at the North Pentagon parking lot at 0900 for a ride through Washington, D.C., to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to pay respects to fallen comrades, and to the Reflecting Pool for speeches and demonstrations highlighting concern for return of POW/MIAs. All vets' organizations and citizens welcome. Plan ahead: Call Ray Manzo at (201) 857-1111 for further information and advice on accommodations, etc.

"NAMELESS, FACELESS BUREAUCRATS HAVE STRUCK" ...

"I rise in support of the Volkmer-Sensenbrenner amendment," said Congresswoman Jolene Unsoeld (D-Wash.) at hearings on the House "crime" bill H.R.3371, "because I do not trust a nameless, faceless bureaucrat at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms to determine which fire-

Real Surplus ... Goodie Kings in the vicinity of Fairfax, Virginia, will be glad to know friend of SOF, retired CIA demo expert and all-around fine fellow I. W. Harper has expanded Ed's Bait and Tackle at 9766 Lee Highway into Fairfax Surplus. Open daily, he features genuine GI surplus, from air delivery systems and parachute gear to guns, ammo, LBE, uniforms, tools, equipment and accessories. It's good to be able to buy surplus gear from someone who can tell you from experience what it's for. Above, I. W. (left), horse (center) and RKB (top right) share grins on a 1985 training mission with the contras. Photo: SOF Staff

arms our law-abiding citizens may bear." Well said, Congresswoman. We still are leery of the bureaucrats, but your words have raised our esteem for legislators a notch.

VOLUNTEERS FOR CROATIA ...

Embroiled in combat, the Yugoslavian region is presently the focus of today's "merc" opportunities. An unde-

termined number of foreign volunteers serve with Serbian volunteer forces; anywhere from 50 to 200 serve with the Croats. They are predominantly British, with a smattering of French, Germans and Australians — as well as an unknown number of Croatian-Americans. Pay for the Croatian volunteers is the equivalent of less than \$200 a month. No contract. To join up, one makes his way to Zagreb and asks the first soldier he sees where the International Brigade receiving center is. Both sides in the conflict have accused the other of employing large numbers of bloodthirsty mercenaries. As far as we know, this is not the case (yet).

FED JUDGE UPHOLDS DoD BAN ON GAYS ...

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., has upheld a Defense Department ban on homosexuals in the armed forces, saying the prohibition was partly justified to prevent the spread of AIDS in the military. A Navy midshipman who acknowledged he was gay had challenged the Pentagon's policy as unconstitutional.

SOVS TRADE WHISKEY FOR PEPSI ...

The conversation went something like this: "Da, ve vant Pepsi, bud ve haf no money. You be daking trade?"

"Well maybe, what you got, Ivan?" And the deal sorted out was the Sovs traded some Whiskey Class submarines (clone of German Type XXI Electro-Boot) for Pepsi. Now Pepsico is selling them, sans weapons, for a mere \$200,000 a pop, FOB the Baltic. Price includes training for your crew — bring your own diesel. No Colombian cartels need apply.

WHERE DO I TURN MYSELF IN ...

Several readers sent us news clippings on how "Inter/Action Associates," a Palm Springs, California, and Las Vegas-based protective systems company, has conjured up a profile of the potentially violent employee, as published in *Investor's Business Daily*. • Under age 34, male and white, with migratory job history. • Has fascination with weapons, often owns many types of "automatic and semiautomatic guns." • Chronically disgruntled; often

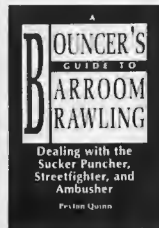
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AMBUSH! Navy SEALs in Deadly Action

The most devastating terror tactic of U.S. Navy SEALs in Vietnam was the ambush. SEALs were experts at delivering themselves silently to ambush sites, setting up kill zones and laying down blankets of fire from which no enemy could escape. Occasional survivors told chilling tales of the "men with green faces" appearing out of nowhere, bringing sudden, violent death. **Ambush!** features all-new, never-before-seen footage from the personal archives of SEAL veterans. This is not a rehash of SEAL history - rather, it is an instructional video on the art of the ambush as told by the men who perfected the tactics. SEAL vets describe what it was like to go out on "wham and scam" operations, the differences between planned vs. hasty ambushes, unconventional methods used only by SEAL teams, the vital importance of the element of surprise and all of the fine details of springing a successful ambush. Filmed with the cooperation of the UDT/SEAL Museum, **Ambush!** is the definitive video on how America's deadliest warriors carried out the deadliest of missions. Color, approx. 60 min., VHS only. **\$29.95**

VIDEO!



A BOUNCER'S GUIDE TO BARROOM BRAWLING

Dealing with the Sucker Puncher, Streetfighter, and Ambusher
by Peyton Quinn

As a bouncer in a biker bar and a participant in dozens of fights, Peyton Quinn knows the difference between fighting fact and fantasy. The result is a unique guide to self-defense that can save your ass in places where brawling is quick, dirty and very violent. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, photos, illus., 264 pp. **\$17.95**



ARRIVE ALIVE

Tony Scott's Complete Counterambush-Antiterrorist Driving Course

Here's a crash course in recognizing and escaping ambushes on the road before they become unsolvable and deadly emergencies. Action-packed footage shows high-speed turns, braking and ramming. Actual assassinations are analyzed for how the killers exploited weaknesses in security. Color, 58 min., VHS only. **\$59.95**

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HOW TO FIND ANYONE ANYWHERE

by Ralph D. Thomas

Here is a virtual encyclopedia on the topic of skip tracing. Learn how to quickly make national sweeps for data, design and execute pretexts that work, get the latest equipment and much more. This is the material that can make or break your investigations. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, 62 pp. **\$19.95**



BLACK MEDICINE: THE VIDEO

Vital Targets, Maximum Punishment A graphic demonstration of how to exploit the vulnerable vital points of the human anatomy. The instructors - bouncers in some of the most violent bars and roadhouses in the country - focus on strikes that they know from experience will put a man down. Some of the techniques in this video are only appropriate for life-or-death situations. Therefore, this film is for information purposes only. Color, approx. 50 min., VHS only. **\$29.95**



U.S. NAVY SEAL COMBAT MANUAL

One of the rarest FMs in the field of military collecting, with special emphasis on underwater demolition techniques and explosives. Equipment and tactics employed by this elite fighting force are covered, as are SEAL weapons, communications, diving, infiltration and exfiltration, survival and more. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, photos, illus., 240 pp. **\$19.95**



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Advanced Backstabbing and Mudslinging Techniques
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FORGOTTEN LEGIONS

Obscure Combat Formations of the Waffen-SS
by Antonio J. Munoz

This history of obscure Waffen-SS units has all the elements of a war novel: ambushes, glider assaults, rescues, courage, betrayal. Included are Turkic, Hungarian, Serbian, Czech and Russian formations, as well as never-before-seen photos, diagrams, maps and first-hand accounts from diaries and survivors. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, photos, illus., 424 pp. **\$59.95**



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by Steve Albrecht

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SEALS

UDT/SEAL Operations in Vietnam
by T.L. Bosiljevac

The definitive book on U.S. Navy SEALs' role in Vietnam. Accounts of combat missions reveal incredible acts of skill and valor by SEAL troops under fire. Sixteen pages of rare photos show SEALs in training, on patrol in VC territory and moving up canals in the Mekong Delta. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, photos, 272 pp. **\$26.95**



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES A-TEAM VIETNAM COMBAT MANUAL

This is the real thing, a reprint of the A Detachment Handbook issued to all Special Forces A-Teams during the Vietnam War. Everything from camp construction to interrogation procedures to psyops is covered. A must for collectors of military and Vietnam memorabilia. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, illus., 304 pp. **\$19.95**

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a troublemaker and constantly violating company policies. • Sees unfairness and injustice when not warranted; has an "everyone is against me" attitude. • Enjoys violent movies and television shows, reads *Soldier of Fortune*-type magazines.

Well, now you know where your missing copy of *SOF* went. It must have been stolen by a postal employee.

WARTHOGS WIN ...

After 12 years of losing to the F-16, A-10s retrofitted with LASTE (Low Altitude Safety and Targeting Enhancement) gear snatched top honors in the recent Gunsmoke bombing competition at Nellis AFB, Nevada. In the Gulf War, A-10s were credited with killing 967 tanks, 926 artillery pieces, 53 Scud missiles and more than 1,000 trucks. Go Warthogs — you're not getting older, you're getting better ...

JUMP WITH IVAN ...

International Airborne Travel (USA), is sponsoring an April 1992 jump in the Soviet Union — or whatever may remain of it by that time. Included are meetings with Spetsnaz units, tour of jump school at Riasan, three jumps from Sov choppers (Soviet para badge and certificate awarded), Cossack prop-blast party, sightseeing/shopping in Moscow. For more information, contact them at P.O. Box 71404, Fort Bragg, NC 28307; phone: 919-867-0785 from 1900-2200 hrs.

ACCEPTABLE LOSS ...

Is the title of a new book written by *SOF* contributor Gregg P. J. Jorgenson, published by Ivy Books. The publisher calls it "an infantry soldier's perspective." Well, I guess: Jorgenson pulled some 54 missions as point man in just 10 months, and although occa-

sionally overran and shot up, lived to write one of the best Vietnam stories to see print so far. Look for it on newsstands.

BLOOD CHIT HISTORIANS ...

Seek information, photos, stories regarding, and samples of U.S., Allied or other blood chits from World War II to the Persian Gulf. Contact Blood Chit History Project, P.O. Box 11131, Berkeley, CA 94701-2131; or call Tom McGarry at 510-521-0496.

WORKING IN THE PERSIAN GULF ...

Is the title of a new book by Blythe Camenson, who has worked in Saudi, Kuwait, Oman and Iraq. The subtitle is *Survival Secrets for Men and Women — the Real Story*, and that's just what the book's about: where the jobs are, what not to put on your resume, how much you can expect to make, what about sex and/or alcohol, what kind of trouble is easy to get into, how to get along with censorship — even tips on how to sleep through the 0400 Prayer Call. Practical stuff from an ex-pat who's been there several times — a good book to read before you go. Available from: Desert Diamond Books, Dept. *SOF*, Box 9580, Coral Springs, FL 33075; \$16.95 plus \$3 shipping/handling; phone: 1-800-351-9278.

PHONE SCAM ALERT ...

An alert from the Defense Intelligence Agency warns that if you carry a pager displaying the number calling you so you may call it back, beware: If you get a call from (212) 540-XXXX (where XXXX can be any four digits), don't call back. If you do, your phone bill will be nicked for a \$55 fee — just like calling a 900 number. Only difference is, you don't get an astrologer or even some heavy breathing. This urgent alert from the DIA is considered serious, as ignorance of this phone scam could "cause substantial fiscal loss."

MILITARY MOUNTAIN BIKES? ...

The transport used to good effect by Japanese troops under General Tomoyuki Yamashita in their 70-day sweep down the Malay peninsula during World War II, a mainstay of Swiss infantrymen, and of course a favorite of Mark Twain in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* is now being touted for use by Army and SF personnel. A modified all-terrain bicycle marketed by the International Terrorism Studies Group of Forest, Virginia, features a folding frame, airless puncture-proof 2.5-inch-wide knobby tires, and rear storage racks for ammo and gear along with quick-release straps for an M16A2 rifle. ☒



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check for desired sound. The Voice Changing Telephone is an ideal security device for women and children home alone; discourages annoying callers; can be used as a pre-screening tool; or use the extreme ranges of the digital processor to create funny cartoon voices. Lesser quality hand-held voice changers run over \$300.00. Our price on this quality Telephone Voice Changer \$89.00 (each add'l \$80.00) each.

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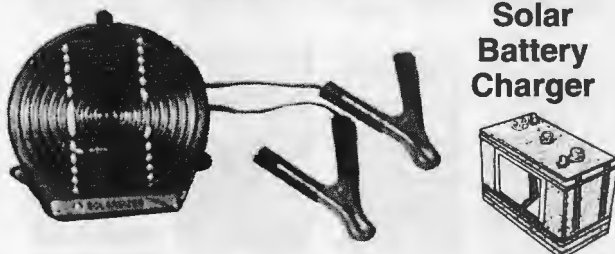
Telephone tap detector notifies you of unauthorized intrusion onto your line. Just plug modular phone into tiny BUG BOX, then plug BUG BOX into wall jack. An indicator light tells you when someone is "listening in". BONUS: Attach BUG BOX to every phone in your house, then you, AND ONLY YOU, can access the phone. BUG BOX not only tells you if someone else is on the line, it KEEPS THEM OFF with its privacy shut-out circuit. Buy one BUG BOX and use its indicator light to monitor line intrusion; buy as many BUG BOX's as you have phones and enjoy total privacy shut-out plus visible light indicators. Sale price \$30.00

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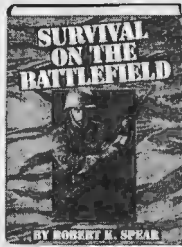
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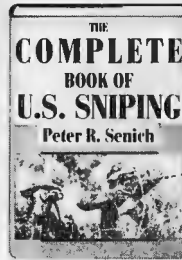
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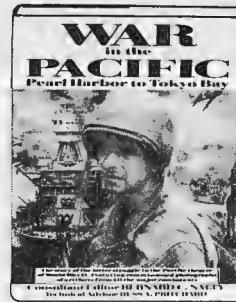
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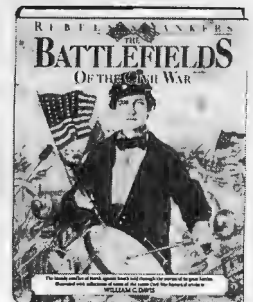
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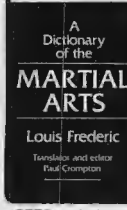
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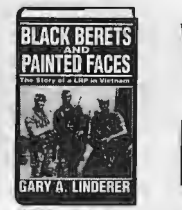
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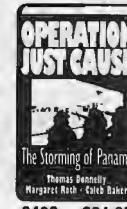
5785 \$16.95x



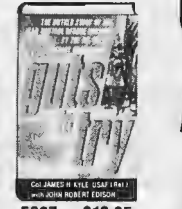
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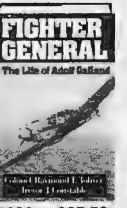
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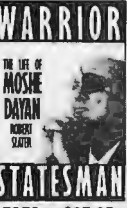
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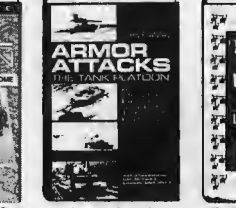
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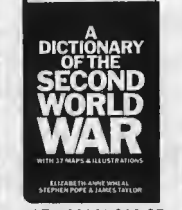
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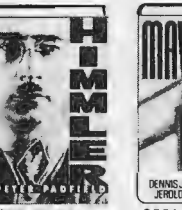
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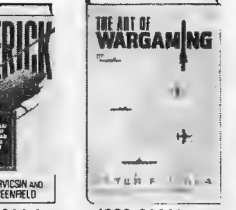
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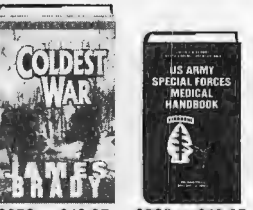
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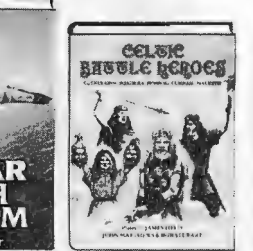
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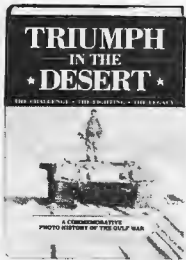
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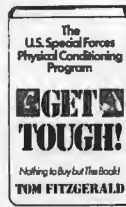
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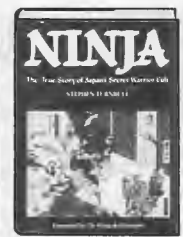
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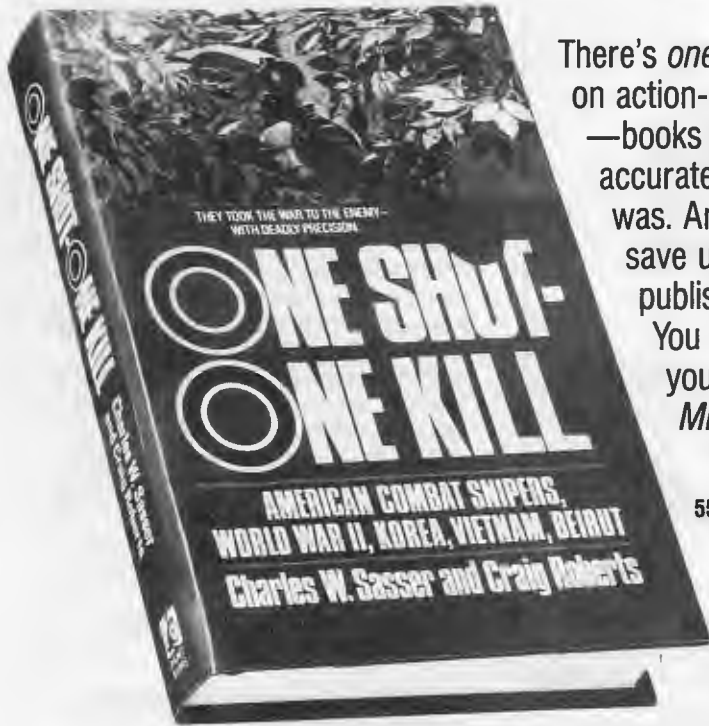
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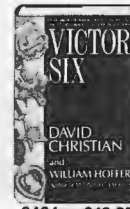


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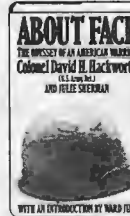
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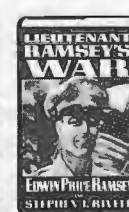
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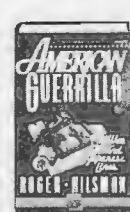
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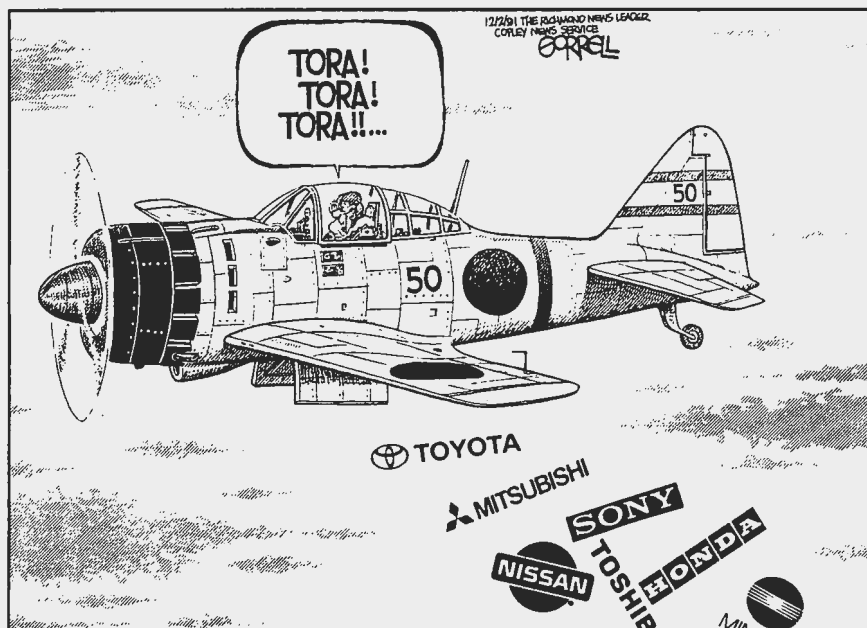
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SOF 3/92



HERITAGE FOUNDATION ...

Regarding your article on the Heritage Foundation and its stand on gun control in the January '92 issue, why not print the address of the Heritage Foundation so your readers can address their remarks to Mr. Feulner.

Maurice Stern
Tucson, Arizona

Good idea. Address your comments on this issue to:

Mr. Edwin J. Feulner, President,
The Heritage Foundation, 214
Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Wash-
ington, DC 20002

Following are excerpts from a letter sent to SOF and the Heritage Foundation:

Dear Mr. Feulner:

My husband and I had pondered the question as to what prompted President Bush to ban certain weapons. The January 1992 issue of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* would seem to answer that question.

Your apparent lack of research on the Second Amendment causes me to wonder if all your research is without depth and substance.

Under the circumstances, I will no longer be a contributor to the Heritage Foundation. Please remove my name from your mailing list.

In recognition of your efforts to destroy my right to defend myself, I will send a monthly contribution of \$10 or more to the Institute for Legislative Action, National Rifle Association.

Louise R. Jensen

GANDER DISASTER ...

As the member of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board who wrote the dissenting report on the 1985 Arrow Air crash at Gander, Newfoundland, I was most interested in SOF's analysis of the U.S. Army's greatest peacetime disaster ("Deadly Homecoming," September '91). Your article gives good reason to believe that explosives were hidden on board the Arrow Air DC-8 — either as an act of sabotage or as contraband cargo.

Speculation about the motives for the cover-up have also highlighted circumstances that may not have had any direct bearing on the cause of the crash. These include the illegal stockpiling of weapons in Egypt, planning for a military rescue of the American hostages in Lebanon and "laundering" of bodies of covert operatives.

I have discussed these possibilities and outlined our struggle to find the true cause in my book "Improbable Cause" (Seal Books, 1991).

Les Filotas
Ontario, Canada

DESERT STORM CORRECTION ...

Outside of recon forces and cross-border raids, Task Force Grizzly (formed around 4th Marines HQ, 2nd Bn. 7th Marines, 3rd Bn. 7th Marines and 3rd Bn. 12th Marines) was the first coalition ground combat unit into Kuwait.

Task Force Grizzly moved to the first obstacle belt on 22 February, two days prior to "G" day, and infiltrated two infantry battalions on foot through the minefield the night prior to the 0600 24 February time of attack. The battalions cleared the Iraqi entrenchments in order to screen and protect Task Force Ripper's large scale breaching operations the following morning.

Also the recapture of Al Jaber airfield was not done by 1 Bn. 7th Marines as alluded to in your articles; that claim rightfully belongs to 3/7 and 2/7, who had to pay for it with loss of life and many wounded.

2nd Lieutenant S.A. Uecker
HQ 4th Marines

LIBERTARIAN PARTY SUPPORTS GUN RIGHTS ...

With all the frustration currently felt by gun owners about the trend by bureaucrats and politicians calling for every restrictive gun control measure, I feel an urgent need to remind armed citizens that there is a political party that supports us.

No, not the Republicans or Democrats, but the only party that demands its candidates adhere to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as the supreme law of the land: The most rapidly growing party in the United States, the Libertarian Party.

To explore the Libertarian Party for yourself, write and ask for a free copy of the pamphlet "Responsible Gun Ownership" and a free copy of "Libertarian Party News," the party newsletter. The mailing address is 1528 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E., Washington, DC 20003.

Dean C. Pleasant
Glendale, Arizona

FRIENDS OF THE KURDS ...

Ever since I saw the articles about Kurds in *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, I've been buying every issue I can get my hands on. I really thank you for publishing the articles by Patrick

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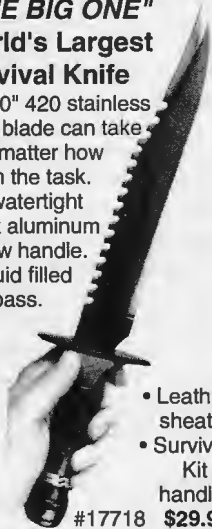
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Eight shot .22 caliber revolver fires tear gas or blanks as fast as you pull the trigger. Heavy-duty metal construction. Checkered grips. Comes with holster, tear gas and blanks.

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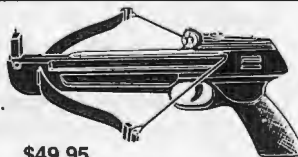
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O'Donnell (October '91) and Peter Douglas (November and December '91). I admire them for taking the risk of going into Iraq.

The Kurdish people will always struggle to break the chains of the four tyrant countries so brutally killing us. I hope you don't forget the Kurdish people. Please, please, keep publishing those great articles that inform the world about these poor people's agony.

I guess the saying that the Kurds have no friends except the mountains is wrong. I think we have a couple of friends out there. *SOF* will always be No.1 on my list of magazines.

Omed Gardi
Denton, Texas

MASSACHUSETTS FOR IRELAND ...

It is no wonder that *Soldier of Fortune* sides with the filthy, Protestant, colonialist, greedy, imperialist English government. As everyone can see, you are English (Americans), and your negative reporting is not believed by anyone, especially of Celtic blood.

A previously enamored subscriber,
William James Colum
MacArdle III (Anglicized)
Quincy, Massachusetts

Your use of the word "terrorist" in reference to the Irish Republican Army brought to my mind the time when I was in Vietnam and when we used to get shelled regularly from a "friendly"

village outside our perimeter.

Today there are areas in Northern Ireland, notably South Armagh, where the British army has relinquished control of the ground. All resupply and troop movements are done by air transport. This is because the insurgents (terrorists in your terminology) have uncontested control of the roads. This is a scenario familiar to me, as I am sure it is familiar to many readers of *Soldier of Fortune*.

It's difficult to believe that the British army, with all its firepower, cannot control deforested countryside, unless the local people were actively engaged in giving aid to the insurgents and didn't want the British army there.

Richard Oh Eigiartargh
W. Roxbury, Massachusetts

BOOT CAMP ...

Morgan Tanner's "Bad Boy Blues" article (January '92) about boot camp training for prisoners was like a breath of fresh air.

I wish the concept were explained to people who simply lose their hope, their pride and their will power. Not the criminals but the miserables.

The military was always the main pathway of a hopeless slum kid out of the slum, thanks in part to boot camp and its special brand of "behavior modification." If the military were to open up a road of "civilian corps," whose main purpose was building houses, roads and high-speed rail tracks, it could straighten out a lot of

people and a lot of problems.

Charles R. Legendy
New York City

CARR MYSTERY ...

Thank you for publishing James L. Pate's fine article on Major Donald Carr (December '91). The story was well-written and presented Butch's situation as it is — a mystery.

I am a cousin of Maj. Carr. Butch and I spent much time together during our growing-up years and continued to be close until his last tour. Our family has had no information about Butch since 1971 — until Colonel Bailey's photo. There is no doubt that this is Butch. His resemblance to my Uncle Don (Butch's father) is uncanny.

Prior to July, we were as active in the issue as families of an MIA were permitted — attended ceremonies, services, etc. But with limited information, we found most doors closed.

Since July, though, we have found the contacts we needed to apply pressure (with few results, I might add), have been able to obtain quite a bit of pertinent information, and spend nearly every weekend speaking to whomever will listen. We also have made several trips to D.C.

I wonder if we had been more demanding years ago, could we have done more for Butch — and our other men still in Southeast Asia? I suppose not. The time wasn't right, I guess. But let's hope the time is right now, because our men's time is running out.

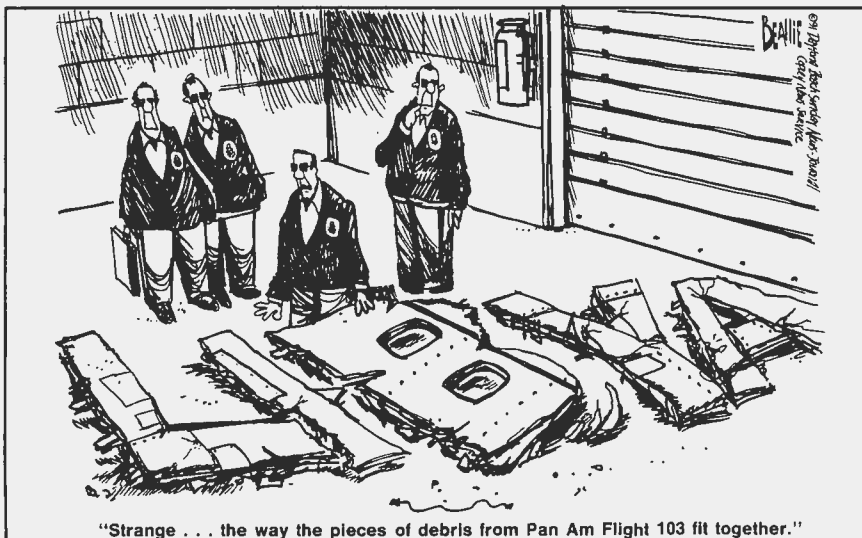
Karen S.K. Miller
South Bend, Indiana

ANNUAL REPORT LOGO ...

Thank you for giving us permission to reproduce the *SOF* Desert Storm logo for our Annual Report to Shareholders.

I have had many of our 2,000-plus shareholders compliment *SOF's* logo in conversations about the report. Many have asked, "Isn't *SOF* the magazine that has all the classified ads for mercenaries?" My quick reply is, "I'm a subscriber to *SOF*, and I'm not a mercenary. Rather I'm a concerned citizen who doesn't like the slanted reporting of *Time* and *Newsweek*."

Douglas Taylor
President, Taylor Devices Inc.
North Tonawanda, New York



"Strange . . . the way the pieces of debris from Pan Am Flight 103 fit together."

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SERBIAN SIDE ...

I was shocked by the reference to Serbian Chetniks as hard-line Marxists in "Crack-up In Croatia" (November '91). Wow, talk about disinformation. Chetniks were primarily Serbian (some Slovenian) guerrillas who went to the hills to fight the Nazis after the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941. They were led by General Dragoljub Mihailovich, who made the cover of *Time* magazine in January 1942 as he and his Chetniks held down seven German divisions.

After a slick disinformation campaign waged against the Chetniks by communist moles in the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), the Allies abandoned Mihailovich in favor of his mortal enemy — the communists (led by Marshall Tito, a Croat).

Mihailovich was executed by the communists on 17 July 1946. His Chetniks had saved the lives of over 500 Allied airmen who had been shot down over Yugoslavia, and President Truman awarded him the Legion of Merit in the Degree of Chief Commander (posthumously) on 29 March 1948 for his contribution to the Allied cause. This remained classified for 20 years by the U.S. State Department so as not to embarrass the communist government of Yugoslavia.

Now, to call the Chetniks hard-line Marxists is absurd, but consider the source. When Hitler invaded Yugoslavia the Croatians were given an independent state led by Ante Pavelic and his Ustashi, who declared war on the United States and Britain on 14 December 1941. These fascists murdered 750,000 Serbians, 60,000 Jews and 26,000 Gypsies trying to "purify" their state. The present conflict in Yugoslavia has brought back the same symbols of their World War II puppet state.

Let's also not forget that the Chetniks in the present conflict were able to capture a significant part of Serb-inhabited Croatia before the YA [Yugoslavian army] got really involved. In fact the inside line in Yugoslavia is that the YA did a lot to rearm the Croats by allowing many of their bases with ammo dumps to be "captured" intact.

The communist agenda in this war is cloudy, but the Serbian Chetniks' is not — freedom for all Serbs in Yugoslavia, from the Croats AND the Communists!



Ancient ethnic animosities fuel Balkan blood feuds. Here, Croatia trooper carries Ultramax 100 SAW. Photo: Jim Wallace

A good story for *SOF* might be had by joining the Serb irregulars.

Nick Mandic
Toronto, Canada

Is it possible the recent article on the Croats was slanted? Please comment on my memory of the World War II years. The story I got about the Croats then was that they had troops called the Ustashi, who made the Gestapo seem like a choir. Supposedly, they would enter a town, and ask some kid to make the sign of the cross. If the kid made the the cross in the Roman Catholic way, they would leave the place alone, but if the horizontal part was done the Orthodox way, the village was given a hard time, all the way from mass conversions on the light side to mass executions on the mean side.

If the Croats had been SOBs in World War II, it is no excuse for an attack two generations later, but it is a reason for Serbians to be mistrustful of Croat intentions toward the Serbian enclaves within Croat areas (like worry about further "conversions" to Catholicism or to fertilizer).

Philip L. Bancroft
Wayland, Massachusetts

There is a saying that truth is the first casualty of war. Mike Williams article "Crack-up In Croatia" proves it again.

Mr. Williams refers to Serbian Chetniks in his main article and sidebar as "hard-line Marxists whose fanatic adherence to Communist ideology was a matter of record." In his interview with the Slovenian who serves as the Yugoslav Consul General to Austria, the consul general refers to the Chetniks as an "extreme right wing organization ... influenced by Mussolini and the Nazis." Well, Mr. Williams, which do you think they were?

Mr. Williams has done a great dis-service to the Chetnik movement and the Serbian people who fought on the side of the United States in two world wars, while the Croatians, who Mr. Williams showed a bias for, fought against America in both wars! Croatia actually declared war on the U.S. in World War II and never signed a treaty to cease hostilities.

Mr. Williams, it's time to brush off the dust and crack open those history books again.

Milorad Sofrenovic
Chicago, Illinois

I was very much disappointed with your article about Yugoslavia. It makes me sick.

Mike Williams and John Evans support pro-fascist government in Croatia and telling untruths. Do they have any knowledge of Yugoslavia or the Yugoslavian People's Army?

I had a good opinion of your magazine, but after this article, no more. If this is an example of the credibility of your articles and the intelligence of your correspondents, future reading will not be necessary.

Kosta Ristic

"Mad Mike" Williams is a brave man, but poorly informed. His article on Yugoslavia was very biased in favor of the Croats and Slovenes.

Mike, you are confused. The Chetniks are not "hard-line Marxists," they are Serbian nationalists. Why didn't you interview any Serbians to hear their side of the story? Why didn't you consult some expert of the Balkan politics and history?

Robert Anderson
Mankato, Minnesota

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I WAS THERE

by "David Smith"

Diary of a Mad Merc

While going through my files recently I came across a letter I received in 1985 from a British mercenary who had been busted in Costa Rica while mucking about with the contras. This letter is one of the best, and funniest, descriptions I've read on the life and times of a mercenary. The author was subsequently released from jail and beat feet back to England. Since he asked me not to use his name and I have not been able to locate him, we are honoring his request for anonymity. — R.K. Brown

Dear Mr. Brown: My name is "David Smith." I am a former officer in the British army, and one of five people (two Brits, two Americans and one French) that you mentioned in your August '85 magazine as currently awaiting trial on charges of "possession of arms and explosives with intent to commit hostile acts against Nicaragua." Although we haven't been able to get regular issues of *SOF*, I managed to glance at October '85 and read your comments on Frank Camper and his "merc school" — I prefer to call it a "jerk school." I had the misfortune of coming into brief contact with Camper on my way down to Costa Rica. I'm sure you'll be interested in hearing the details of our meeting.

I arrived in Alabama from South Africa with another Brit, who claimed that Camper was a friend of his and would get us into Nicaragua. I tagged along as I had no contacts of my own. It turned out that the other Brit was already a full-fledged Camper crony who had attended his jerk school in '81. It has also become apparent that this guy is not the experienced soldier he claims to be (he had a limited career in the British territorial reserve). In fact, on meeting him, his thick horn-rimmed glasses and flat feet gave one the impression of an upwardly mobile accountant, rather than a traveling-gun. So it appears that frauds stick together.

We met Camper at his famous "bunker," where I was hastily told that he was running the Nicaraguan mercenary operation and I would have to do a little orientation training before I went down south.

"In fact," he said, "it's a pity you can't do the school before you go."



Looks can be deceiving: Hardened dog of war or graduate of "jerk school?" Photo: *SOF* files

"Er, yes," I replied, "a pity."

On the first day, we were handed over to Camper's weapons specialist, who I'll call Dan. He was like a 30-year-old child. Incoherent and illiterate, Dan did manage to stumble through the break down of an old AK, but his classic remark came while going over the M16: "This here is the forward bolt assist ... but Frank hasn't told me what it's fer yet ... that comes in the next school, I guess."

Later, he said to me, "Jeez, I wish I could be going down south with you guys, but Frank doesn't think I'm ready yet."

"Is that so?" I replied.

Other Camper cronies, grimly hanging on to their manhood (or should that be puberty) at the bunker included an 18-year-old vet of two jerk schools (soon to become an instructor) who scared me to death by toting his baby Beretta around the place.

Then, Frank told us to get plenty of rest because the following day would herald the start of a tough escape-and-evasion (E&E)/survival exercise. (I have personally participated in many E&E exercises with the British army, including an Special Air Service-run E&E in the Welsh mountains).

The next evening, we were briefed in the back garden of his mother's house, whereupon Frank took us for a run around the block (less than one kilometer) in combat fatigues, while he sang the jerk school song:

"C-130 going down the track, Full of mercenaries who ain't coming back ..."

How apt, I thought.

Please realize at this point that being an ex-officer in the British army, I'm not used to running around a public neighborhood, wearing cammies and singing songs — except maybe when I'm stone drunk. I was most embarrassed, but persuaded myself that this was the price to pay for getting to Central America.

On returning from this forced march, Frank solemnly handed us a bag of rice and a tin can, saying we must now practice cooking rice, as this was to be an important aspect of survival where we were headed.

"Er, right," I said. I cooked the rice.

Off we went on the exercise, having been told to be particularly careful of the trip flares, grenades, enemy search parties and, of course, the dreaded "pellet gun."

"Right," I shuddered in terror, "the pellet gun."

For the next three days, I didn't see anyone. I dismantled a couple of amateurishly set trip devices, then decided to walk the 15 miles back to the bunker for want to something better to do. I arrived to find Frank tearing a stripe off poor old Dan for refusing to stay out at night because he didn't want to be left alone. He was to have been the enemy search party. Sir, I am not making this up.

Before we left, Frank told us we were ready, but he was real sorry that I didn't qualify for one of the coveted "Recondo" patches, because I hadn't done the proper course.

"Oh, shucks," I replied sadly. My final happy reminiscence of the blunder-bunker is of a plaque presented to Frank by one of his hangers-on. It displays a bad imitation French metropolitan army Foreign Legion cap badge and these immortal words:

Vive la mort, Vive la guerre ... etc., except that "mort" (death) is misspelled, and reads "*mord*" which in French means "he, she or it bites." I think that just about sums up the lack of attention to detail and unprofessionalism of jerk school.

My French friend has also come across Camper's cronies in Honduras. Frenchy (five years in a regular French parachute regiment, and a walking military encyclopedia) spent some time in the Las Vegas contra camp, located



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near the Honduras-Nicaragua border, where he came across three Recondo boys. The eldest was stoned 24 hours a day, while the only apparent military experience of the other two was — you guessed it — jerk school.

The entire period they were there they sat in their own hootch and drank beer. They made no effort to approach the contras for training (as was their task) and likewise, quite sensibly, the rebels made no approach to these self-named "hardened dogs of war." Neither did the boys offer to help the digging and construction of shelters for the women and children, which was the priority work at that time. Frenchy tells a small anecdote which paints a perfect picture of Recondo involvement in Nicaragua:

A quiet, well-spoken journalist arrived in the camp to write a story on the contra operation. He was billeted with the rest of the gringos. The older Recondo man asked the journalist if he'd like an Uzi, and the latter politely replied that he didn't particularly want to get involved with any weapons. On the contrary, insisted the battle-hardened Recondo man, "come to the range in the morning and I'll give you a good lesson on the Uzi."

The journalist reluctantly agreed. The following morning he arrived at the range in tiger stripes, comfortably plastering the green beret to his shaven head. He picked up the Uzi, pumped a tight group into the target and smartly unloaded. The two young Recondo vets were struck dumb; the older one grunted and went back to bed for another joint. The journalist was former Special Forces, two years with the Montagnards, etc., etc.

As to my present circumstances, our capture and imprisonment was basically the result of a double cross, and we are presently guests of certain communist ministers within the government. One day the Costa Rican police were helping us and the next day they arrested us. Incidentally, it was the day after the U.S. Congress turned down the measly \$14 million in aid for the contras [April '85].

However, it's hopeful that some of us will be released soon, as we have scraped up enough money to hire a separate lawyer to work on our case. The authorities have no evidence with which to convict us, and are merely keeping us locked up for as long as they can legally get away with it.

If you have the time, why not drop me a line via the British Embassy (they visit me once a week and deliver my mail) to let me know what's going on outside. 'Cos it gets fucking boring in here at times. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,
 "David Smith" ✉



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WORLD SITREP

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CHILE

Military hospital holding former head of secret police General Manuel Contreras bombed — none claim responsibility ...

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BAHRAIN

Signs 10-year deal with United States for expanded U.S. presence, joint military exercises ...

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CAMBODIA

Australian Major General John Sanderson to command UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, overseeing disengagement of warring factions ...

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U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo constructing holding camp for thousands of Haitians rescued from windward passage by U.S. Coast Guard ... some 10% of refugees have tested positive for HIV virus ...

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CANADA

Government suspends new aid projects (\$26.4 million U.S. dollars) to Indonesia, protesting recent killings in East Timor by Indonesian troops ...

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British Embassy briefly occupied by eight guerrillas of the *Alfaro Vive, Carajo* (Alfaro Lives, Damn It) group, demanding their leader be released from Quito prison ...

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Buying 8,000 T4 dirt bikes for army, from Cagiva of Italy, for U.S. \$58.6 million ...

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Situation grim: embargo taking its toll, military forces running amuck, thousands dead ...

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HUNGARY

Budapest arms maker FEG to stop production of military weapons; facing stiff restrictions after flap when large consignment of FEG AKs were diverted to Croatia ...

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Has destroyed its supergun, 1000mm weapon intended to throw shells 600 miles :: Renewed military/economic repression of Kurds, other groups including Shi'ites in south ... UN inspector/adviser announces Iraq was 12 to 18 months from deploying nuclear device of "military use"

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Seven people, including Italian businessmen and an Israeli, arrested for supplying \$50 million in arms to Croatia, including antitank systems, Stinger antiaircraft missiles, Kalashnikov rifles ...

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Mechanical problems delay demilling of chemical munitions ...

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Cuts armed forces from 130,000 to 107,000; ending mandatory service, selling aircraft to raise funds ...

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West African peacekeepers begin implementing agreement to end fighting, provide elections within six months ...

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Widespread unrest; opposition leader calls for general strike following Prime Minister Guy Ranamasay's announcement of transitional government ...



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ZAIRE

Violence continues between competing factions; Western military forces keep lid on, while Zairians fight it out among themselves ...

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USSR [sic]

"... heretic, rebel, a thing to flout; they drew a circle that shut me out ..." (Markham): Leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia withdraw from USSR, form new Slavic commonwealth; Gorbachev calls move illegal/dangerous, fights to maintain central government ... Western banks, hanging for some \$65 billion, take steps to cover their assets; Moscow insists it intends to pay, Russian republic promises to assume responsibility for 61.34%, with rest to be split among Ukraine, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan ... Pockets of intramural combat between various states/ethnicities as old disputes resurface ... Chopper carrying mediators of conflict between Azerbaijan-Armenia crashed in Caucasus Mountains, killing all 20 on board ... Shevardnadze reappointed Soviet Foreign Minister ... Ukraine announces plans for 450,000-man independent military force ...

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More ceasefires arranged, more ceasefires broken; fighting continues at same sporadic pace between central government troops and breakaway republics ... atrocities documented on both sides ... UN peacekeeping force waiting for a peace to keep before going in ...

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Announces plans to halve military, aim for professional force ...

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General Assembly endorses resolution establishing conventional arms register, all nations being asked to provide annual data on imports/exports; also urged to provide information on domestic procurement, inventories ...



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New army commander Lieutenant General Cecil Waidyaratne announces changes in tactics and strategies to speed up annihilation of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, promises Tamils "will be crushed" ...

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Pentagon postpones cut of U.S. forces in South Korea, due to North Korea's nuclear program ...

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Renewed fighting in Mogadishu after President Ali Mahdi Mohamed was overthrown by chief rival General Mohamed Farrah Aidid ... between 70 and 100 die daily from gunshot wounds as anarchy reigns ...

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Receives last of 15 Pacific-class patrol boats from Australia; Fiji was to have received similar craft until series of coups there ...

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MALI

Buying surplus weapons from Egypt: 150 T-54 and T-55 tanks, 200 BTR-50K APCs, 15,000 Egyptian-made Kalashnikov rifles, artillery pieces, etc. Egypt will train Malian troops ...

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NICARAGUA

Leaders of rearmed former contra rebels ("Democratic Forces of National Salvation") announce they have set up four-man council of commanders, say they are working to unite all groups of rearmed contras ...

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RWANDA

Fighting flares along border with Uganda as Rwandan Patriotic Front troops advance 32 miles inland: government claims more than 100 rebels killed ...

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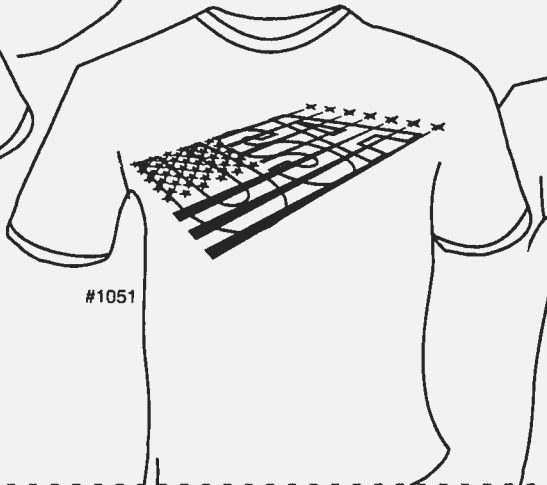
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BATTLE BLADES

by Greg Walker

Gerber's New Legends



Gerber's Gator series come with either conventional or serrated blades. These are large folders, which are effective outdoor working knives. Photo: courtesy Gerber Knives

More Gerber blades have been carried by U.S. troops to the field than probably any other private-purchase knife in recent times. There are quite a few reasons for this, the least having to do with instant access at their base PX. The legendary Gerber Mark 2 fighting knife became the company's most visible product, introduced during the Vietnam War and carried by a number of different units into combat. Gerber sports knives, designed primarily by Al Mar, have long been consumer favorites where premium quality and reliability are critical purchasing concerns.

Today, Fiskars-Gerber continues the rich heritage given the Oregon-based company by its founder, Peter Gerber. After several years of quiet reorganization, it appears Gerber is once again seeking to promote talked-about blade ware. *Battle Blades* began an evaluation of their new "Gator Series" folders by distributing a number of them to a group of special operations folks. These knives went to the field for three weeks. They were carried and used on a daily basis, and resulting observations made by these troops were impressive.

The Gerber Gator folder is available with either a conventional or serrated blade. Handed in Kraton, a preferred synthetic rubber, the folder also offers a practical clip-point pattern with a rear-lock release system. The handle slabs are textured in "simulated alligator scales," a feature promoted as giving the knife an extra-firm grip during use. In my opinion, textured

grips such as this are cosmetic rather than functional. Kraton grips of the proper hardness are enhanced by any pattern molded into them, whether it be checkering or alligator scales. The Gator's secure grip is actually accomplished through proper ergonomic design, the knife fitting the hand exceptionally well when in use.

The blade is ground from high-quality stainless steel. I prefer the serrated version, as it rips quickly through rope, cardboard, cloth and other such materials. Bear in mind you cannot skin game with a serrated edge, nor can you whittle or carve with any degree of accuracy. Select the blade format for what your everyday uses are.

The locking system is fairly basic, yet strong. No Gator tested closed up on its owner's fingers during use. The release bar is easy to manipulate with one hand, positioned so it cannot be accidentally released during most cutting/slashing activities. Overall, this is a well-built hefty folder, meant for light-to-medium outdoor use.

The test Gators were carried in tough little black nylon sheaths, slipping over trouser belts. This sheath gives good fit, has proper Velcro place-



The Patriot is Gerber's most exciting combat knife since its legendary Mark 2 fighter. Blackie Collins designed a sheath featuring a blade safety lock, one of the first in the industry. Photo: courtesy Gerber Knives.

ment for secure closure and is lightweight. It is a well-executed carry system for what is not a small folder. No sheath failures were reported. Suggested retail on the Gator is roughly \$50.

Coming To The Market Next

Following on the heels of the Gator Series is the Gerber Patriot. Referred to by the company as a survival knife

system, the Patriot is actually the first serious battle blade to come from Gerber since the Mark 2. As unique as the knife itself is its sheath, designed by Blackie Collins. Scheduled to be on-line as of January 1992, this may be Gerber's strongest product since the introduction of the BMF combat knife in 1986.

Rather than Kraton, Gerber's designers elected to handle the Patriot in DuPont Zytel. The molded polymer handle features a molded-in blackened butt cap, which acts as a skull crusher. A 6-inch stainless steel blade is likewise blackened, offering daring grind lines ending in a jet-like clip point. Integral dual guards protect the hand during use.

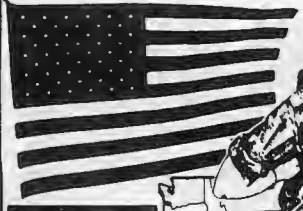
Sheath-wise, the Patriot is carried in a molded scabbard introducing a new knife-to-sheath locking mechanism. A locking safety allows the user to remove the knife or insert it using one hand. The safety can be either "on" or "off," depending upon the user's situation. Inverted carry is accomplished using a molded clip on the backside of the sheath, in conjunction with a molded slot located at the point-end of the scabbard. It should be said that wide experience has shown increased knife loss if a blade is carried inverted. This is regardless of locking systems. It looks *muy macho*, but is simply not practical.

Battle Blades will be among the first to fully evaluate the Patriot as its first production models become available. Suggested retail is quoted at \$130.

Both these products bode well for Gerber's reintroduction as a world-class cutlery producer. Known for design innovation, Gerber has been somewhat dormant since the BMF created such a storm in the mid-1980s. According to Doug Hutchens, Gerber's product manager, the company is preparing to introduce a slew of imaginative cutlery products in 1992. "We have completely redesigned the 'Guardian,' making it more effective and more easily carried than ever before," Hutchens said.

In addition, Gerber will be marketing its version of the Leatherman Tool. Called the "Multi-Plier," the item offers 13 stainless steel tools, to include a

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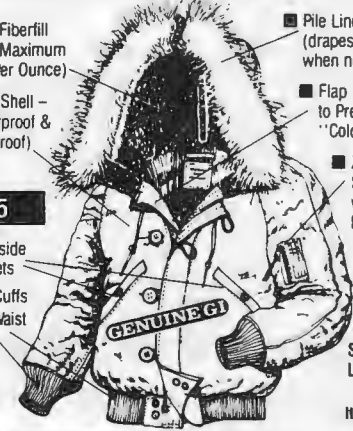
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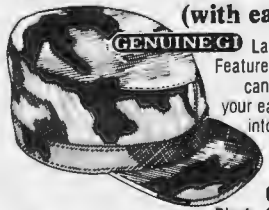
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COMBAT CRAFT

by Louis Awerbuck

Gadgets, Gimmicks & Grim Fairy Tales

Once upon a time, a handsome prince went for a stroll through a forest. Persuaded to kiss an ugly frog, he was amazed when it was transformed into a beautiful princess. And they lived happily ever after.

And if you believe that, you probably are so out of touch with the real world that you believe a newly designed bullet or bolt-on gadgetry will make up for poor tactics or marksmanship in a gunfight.

Maybe it's time to make a long, hard, objective evaluation of current technology and training, and to thoughtfully winnow the wheat from the chaff, to winnow the solid equipment from the bells and whistles, the sound training and tactics from the Hollywood.

We are always looking for a better way; that is the driving force behind progress. Unfortunately, in the fields of tactics and training, "newer" or "easier" is all too often misconstrued as "better" — as if there were no "easier" way to survive an armed confrontation. *Nothing new is a substitute for hitting your intended target.*

The tendency in the last 10 years has been to lean so heavily on technology that the ability to think has fast become a lost art. This, coupled with people's unwavering acceptance of any pearl of wisdom dropped from an "expert's" lips, leads to the drowning-man-clutching-at-a-straw syndrome — invariably with the same result.

Examples In Training

How about the "always fire twice at the torso, no matter what" gospel for handgun confrontations. There is no way you can guarantee these hits in a for-real fight, even at distances of 2 or 3 yards. This is not to suggest that the above mentioned technique is not an excellent training drill, as are systems like the automatic failure drill. But to practice *only* this is suicidal — it simply isn't always an option to you in the street as it is when punching paper or shooting steel.

Talk to the men who've been there. They will tell you they fired their handgun once or half-a-dozen times — but it was different every time. Confine yourself to unrealistic, structured range training and you're setting yourself up for a frog kissing competition.

What's wrong with new equipment?



Before you have to reach for that gun, the author recommends you to have trained in hitting real-world targets. Photo: SOF Staff

Nothing — as long as you think those newly offered options all the way through. A classic example is the parade of ever-changing new Super Bullets.

Currently in 1992, for the handgun, it's the .40 S&W round. Unfortunately, current enthusiasm is based on tests and experiments — not concrete evidence. You can tinker until hell freezes over, but you cannot transform a handgun into an Apache gunship by modifying its ammunition.

If you want a tactically useful, portable, always-at-hand weapon, carry a handgun. If you can make it fly and shoot rockets, then — and only then — will it become equal to a helicopter. "Close" counts in rocket strikes, but not handguns.

As time moves on, we build better equipment — also, worse street fighters. So many people are rushing out to buy a .40 S&W-calibered handgun, you could get crushed in the stampede. But if a shooter misses his target using a 9mm, and misses using a .45, missing the target with a .40 S&W is not going to solve the problem. Nor will shooting twice and missing twice.

We have run so far amok into left field in pursuit of bells and whistles which promise to do our work for us, we are now trying to chew and walk

gum. We've lost sight of the original objective in a pursuit of gadgetry that has taken us from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Let us never forget, in the euphoric aftermath of the Gulf War, what a painfully large percentage of Coalition troops were killed by android, computer-operated friendly fire. You can get out of a computer only what you program into it, and a better bullet is better only if you hit the intended target.

When it comes down to combat, the sword is mightier than the pen. And while Joe Typist is sitting safely at home in front of a warm fireplace, hammering out copy lauding the slick new bells and whistles he just received a free sample of, you're the one who is out in the mud and the blood; charged with the dubious pleasure of having to slay the dragon. If you don't have the knowledge of how to wield your sword, it doesn't matter if it's trusty or rusty. A dose of dragon breath means you're a crispy critter.

Train Like You Fight, Etc.

Training on unrepresentative, 1-dimensional non-moving pieces of paper is beneficial only for learning sight alignment, sight picture, or trigger control. People are not 1-dimensional; they move, and they shoot back — often they shoot first. Once you've progressed beyond the basics, these factors must be incorporated into your training, or you will be in a totally unfamiliar environment the first time you run into a moving, human enemy, when you will not be able to rely on reassuring, familiar reflexes.

Unless you are involved in an out-and-out military conflict, you are *absolutely* responsible for each projectile you initiate. This compounds your problem, as — to the best of your ability — you cannot afford to miss.

In an urban situation, impacting Mr. Baddie with two pellets of a 00 buckshot load, while at the same time butchering a 4-year-old innocent bystander named Mary with the remainder of your shot pattern, probably isn't the ideal tactical solution to the problem.

If you know of, or have experienced

Continued on page 79

ON THE NEWSSTANDS
JANUARY 14, 1992

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE'S

FIGHTING FIREARMS

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**Edited by
Peter G. Kokalis**

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The following is a translation of an article by Yves Debay from the November 1991 issue of RAIDS magazine. The interesting aspect of this is not that the 2nd Regiment Etranger Parachutiste (REP — French Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment) is troop-testing proposed new small arms. What is fascinating is that all three weapons under testing are non-French (one Belgian, one American and one British) and they are, at least by this report, being well-received.

At the end of World War II, the French Army was equipped with a wide and strange assortment of non-French weapons and equipment, mainly but far from wholly American; a lot of it not new, not interchangeable and imperfectly conforming to their ideas of what they needed. This resulted in at least as bad a case of the NIH (Not Invented Here) syndrome as anything we have seen in the United States during the whole postwar period.

If this report is any indication, this attitude may finally be changing. Well, between the Berlin Wall's falling and Russia's recent secession from the Soviet Union, many strange occurrences are sweeping our world.

“A little lower.” The voice of Corporal Smith seems quiet to the ear of Legionnaire Mikovic after a series of explosions have shaken the brush.

Mikovic, a Serb, concentrates ... drops of sweat on his forehead, especially next to the leather sweatband of his green beret, which he has pushed slightly back to allow for better vision. The stock is well seated in the hollow of his shoulder, the bipod up and his left hand firmly holding the small of the stock. Imperceptibly, the finger contracts on the trigger and the shooter holds his breath. “Whatever else, don't flinch!”

Front and rear sights align.

“Fire!”

The weapon has hardly moved. A short burst and a few hot cartridge cases scatter on the tent cloth. But in the target, at heart level, six hits are grouped in less than 15 square centimeters.

“Not bad,” says Corporal Smith, nicknamed “Pappy Boyington” by Legionnaires in his platoon. “Terrific, this Minimi.” This Brit, a weapons specialist, and the Serb, a superb marksman, have been selected, along with several other Legionnaires of the 4th Company, to test weapons which could eventually be adopted for service in the French Army.

FOREIGN LEGION TESTS NEW SMALL

French May Adopt Barrett, Minimi and L-96 A1

Text & Photos by Yves Debay
Translated by Colonel Alexander McColl

BARRETT M-82 SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE

The Barrett M-82 semiautomatic rifle is a precision weapon designed to inflict casualties and damage at long ranges (2,000 meters). It is a short-recoil operated weapon in .50 caliber (12.7mm); the box magazine has a capacity of 11 cartridges.

The M-82, notwithstanding its weight and size, is very accurate at ranges beyond 1,000 meters. Several types of telescopic sights can be installed. Length: 1.57 meters. Weight, empty: 13.4 kilograms [29.5 pounds].





ARMS





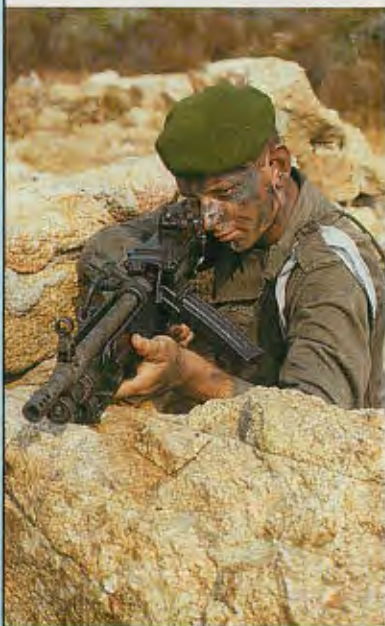
MINIMI LIGHT MACHINE GUN

This is a gas-operated weapon in the 5.56x45mm (FN SS-109 NATO or M-193) caliber. It has a gas regulator, which allows adjusting the cyclic rate for fire from the normal 650-700 rounds per minute to 1,100 rounds per minute.

The Minimi's feed systems are: the M16-type magazine, loose belts, or a 200-round assault-type belt carrier. The weapon comes in three versions: light machine gun, the paratroop version (heavier, weighs 7 kilograms [15.4 pounds] rather than 6.85 kilograms [15.1 pounds]) and vehicle-mounted version.

Currently adopted by Belgium, the United States (M249 SAW), Australia, Canada, Italy and Indonesia; now under evaluation in Tunisia, New Zealand, Sweden and elsewhere.

Length: 1.04-meter (paratroop version: 90cm). Maximum range: 3,600 meters; effective range: 1,000 meters.



Fit For Service

This is how the Service Technique de l'Armee de Terre — Army Technical Service (STAT) and sometimes the manufacturers arrange for prototypes or weapons in production to be tested in the field. The reputation of the "REP men" is long established; manufacturers know their weapons will receive a whole spectrum of exhaustive tests in all sorts of terrain, and by very demanding Legionnaires without bias. The rationale is simple: If the REP is satisfied with the tests, the weapon is clearly fit for service.

With a superb Oxford accent, Pappy Boyington introduces us to his new acquisitions. First the Minimi, also tested in the field by the other two regiments in the 11th Airborne Division (*Division Parachutiste* — (DP), the 3rd and 8th RPIMa (*Regiment Parachutiste d'Infanterie de la Marine* — literally, airborne infantry regiment of the Navy).

A Legionnaire tests the Minimi LMG. It may replace the aging AA-52 as a standard weapon in the French Army.

Translator's note: In the old days they were called the "Infanterie Coloniale," but that's a dirty word now, even in French; in the 17th century, all French overseas colonies were run by the Navy Ministry (Ministere de la Marine), so the "Coloniale," i.e., troops trained and slotted for overseas deployments such as Desert Storm, were given their present designation. Logique, n'est-ce pas? The French equivalent of the U.S. Marines are called "Fusiliers Marins" and are a different organization.

In effect, the French infantry does not presently have a light machine gun to use as a "sweeper" by assault platoons.

For several years now, the Americans have provided their assault platoons with an unequalled firepower: three M203 grenade launchers and three Minimi for

Legionnaires like light weight of Minimi; it can be fired from the hip.

14 men. In France, the only available light machine gun is the aging AA-52, good in the support role with its 7.5mm MAS (or 7.62mm NATO ammunition), but too heavy for skirmishing and assault operations. Also, given the worldwide increase in firepower for light troops, GHQ is considering adopting a light machine gun intended to accompany rifle platoons in the assault. At present these platoons are armed only with the unique FAMAS. (*Translators note: the FAMAS is a French "bull-pup"-style assault rifle in the 5.56mm caliber.*)

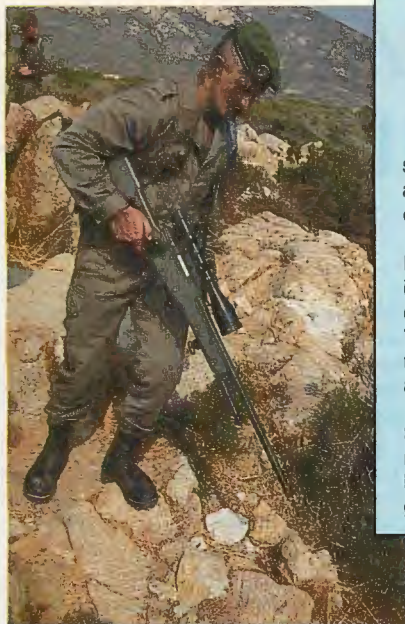
One of the very few models already on the market has been obtained: the FN Minimi in the 5.56mm NATO caliber, made by the famous arms factory at Herstal. This Belgian weapon, derived from the universally known MAG, is also built under license in the United States for the U.S. Army and Marines under the name M249 SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon).

Opinion in the 4th Company is unanimous. "It's what we need," said Cpl. Smith very simply. Light, simple, gas-operated and therefore reliable, compact and capable of being fired from the hip, the Minimi is truly conceived and designed for the assault. The Belgian model, shorter than the U.S. M249, is also accurate.

The peephole of the rear sight aligns well on the bead of the front sight. A further advantage: The feed is either by loose belt, by a 200-round assault-type belt carrier, or by the standard M16 magazine.

Thanks to its power and great accuracy at long range, the Barrett can engage enemy infantry, or exposed armor personnel and lightly armored personnel carriers.





L-96 A1 SNIPER RIFLE

The L-96 A1 is the new British army sniper rifle. This bolt-action rifle, with an ambidextrous stock, is designed to operate in extreme environments.

The L-96 A1 normally comes in .30 NATO (7.62x51mm); it is also available in .300 Winchester Mag., 243 Winchester, 7mm Remington Mag., and 7/08. There are three versions: antiterrorist, "long range" (over 1,000 meters) and with silencer.

The sight on this weapon is a Schmidt und Bender PM 6x42; the magazine has a 10-round capacity. Length: 1.12-meters; weight: 6.5 kilograms [14.3 pounds].

Top-of-the-line weapon for the expert rifleman of the British army: The L-96 A1 sniper rifle. This bolt-action rifle has a ten shot magazine like the French FR-F2.

Ammunition is not a problem: The 5.56mm cartridge is widely used and compatible with the FAMAS assault rifle. The only two minor faults found by Legionnaires were tendencies for overheating and powder fouling.

How To "Tickle" A Tank

The 4th Company is the REP's "sniper" company, so they also got a "monster" for several months: The M-82 A1 Barrett sniping rifle in 12.7mm caliber.

Why such a weapon in the REP? The lieutenant commanding the test detachment told us: "A paratroop unit always lacks long-range weapons. Of course, we have two MILAN launchers per company, plus those in the CEA (*Compagnie d'éclairage et d'appui* — reconnaissance and support company), but those are the only weapons that reach out to 2,000 meters. Beyond that, the company only reaches out to 600 meters with the LRACs (*Lance-roquette anti-chars* — anti-tank rocket launchers).

"The Barrett rifle, with its powerful cartridge, will let us 'tickle' a tank at more than 1,000 meters." (*Footnote in original text: In fact, the effective range is 1,200 meters and the maximum range is 1,800 meters.*) "Of course this isn't an anti-tank weapon, but it penetrates light armor, and with its accuracy it can take out the driver or tank commander, or the fuel tank.

"Don't forget that the Barrett was developed as a result of experience in Beirut; it will go through a wall, killing anyone sheltering behind. We have devised a carrying case and a rig for parachuting and transport of this weapon," the lieutenant noted. "Nevertheless it weighs 16 kilograms [35 pounds] with a magazine of 11 cartridges (13.4 kilograms

[29.5 pounds] empty); humping this thing is no easy job!"

A crew for this weapon — as the Barrett is a real mini-cannon — will consist (if the weapon is adopted) of three men: the team chief, the gunner, and a range estimator



On a firing range near Camp Raffali, Corsica, Legionnaires qualify with the 5.56mm FAMAS. French military feels if a weapons system meets Legionnaire standards, it's good enough for French army.

trained to replace the gunner. Such a team, operating in the field and flexibly employed, could cause a lot of damage.

Barrett on shoulder, the feline silhouette of Cpl. Smith appears. With his inimitable accent, the English Legionnaire tells us: "This is a weapon for professionals, made for elite troops who know how to use it. It's as heavy as a MILAN, but think of the damage and confusion among the enemy, cut down by explosive bullets and whose fuel tanks have been blown up by incendiary rounds."

Notwithstanding its massive appearance and impressive length, the recoil is less than that of the standard FR-F2. A long

sound suppressor can be mounted; not really silent to the friendly side, but effective on the enemy side. The 8-power telescope can be adjusted to reduce the shooter's eye fatigue. The only defect noted is the fragility of the dismounting pins, but these are replaceable by a particularly effective system invented by the REP. Barretts, like the Minimis, were used by the 4th Company during the intervention in Rwanda; this allowed them to test these weapons in a tropical environment.

The Latest Thing In Sniper Rifles

Finally, Cpl. Smith shows us the most recent acquisition of 4th Company's test platoon: a superb English sniping rifle, the L-96 A1. It will not replace the FR-F2 only recently brought into service, but it could be used for special occasions. Built around a "wish list," it has recently been adopted by Her Majesty's army.

It is more or less the ultimate in sniper rifles: about 900 grams [2 pounds] heavier than the FR-F2, but it shoots 200 meters further and the optics are better. This is a

manual bolt-action system; preferred by the snipers, as the system moves less than with a semi-automatic. On the other hand, the snipers have found that sweaty hands slip around a lot more on the plastic stock of this weapon than they do on a wood stock. Another advantage of the L-96 A1: All first-echelon repairs can be made by the shooter; also, he can adjust the trigger.

Come evening, after a hard day's work on the firing ranges, the Legionnaires catch a Kronenbourg beer in the Company dayroom.

It's summertime, and this evening they will stroll through the port of Calvi or have a drink to the sound of guitars in their favorite bistro. There is no shortage of pretty tourists ... One must make use of the occasion, as the unit is leaving for Djibouti in a few weeks. And you can be sure that the 4th Company will bring along some bizarre weapons to test in the desert. ✕

GREENPEACE ON EARTH ... BAD WILL TOWARD MEN

When a controversial film about Greenpeace premiered on Reykjavik television in 1989, the usually lively streets of the Icelandic capital were almost deserted.

Just two hours before airtime, a judge had denied Greenpeace's petition for an injunction to stop the broadcast. The atmosphere surrounding the film's broadcast was so volatile that a police watch was put into effect, because local authorities were concerned about violent reactions from Greenpeace members who had a reputation for "direct action."

After its tumultuous premiere in Iceland, the film went on to be aired to similar intense interest in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and other European countries. In every instance, Greenpeace fought bitterly to stop its broadcast using the threat of reprisals and legal prosecution. The film was eventually shown at Cannes, where it was called "one of the most remarkable documentaries made."

What kind of movie could rivet almost the whole population of a country to their TV sets and cause Greenpeace so much heartburn?

The film was Magnus Gudmundsson's powerful documentary, *Survival in the High North*. It depicts the clash between environmentalists and the hunting peoples of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, who eke out a subsistence living through harvesting non-endangered marine mammals.

Gudmundsson's film also exposes the unprincipled and sordid tactics used by Greenpeace and animal rights groups in their fund-raising campaigns. Greenpeace

is shown to have faked sensational scenes and to have paid for animal torture used in its propaganda films. Revealed, too, is Greenpeace's selective use of scientific fact to make false claims about the effect limited harvesting has on seal populations — claims rejected by scientists.

A co-founder of Greenpeace, who left the group to start his own environmental organization, described Greenpeace's fraud and hypocrisy this way: "It doesn't matter what is true; it only matters what

people believe is true. You are what the media defines you to be." And Greenpeace has capitalized on this phenomenon to the fullest.

With the media's help, Greenpeace has made itself appear as the Robin Hood of the environmental movement. But the folk hero story has been turned inside out. In reality, Greenpeace is a powerful multimillion-dollar international organization that exploits the economically fragile communities of the North for fund-raising purposes, and keeps the money for itself.

People of the High North have always depended completely on the animals in their region for food and income. In some communities, marine mammals are the only source of meat.

We in the United States and other industrialized countries, with large and diversified economies, don't realize how utterly dependent these people are upon this one resource.

And now Greenpeace, in its efforts to

"save" non-endangered animal species, has destroyed the economy of the Northern communities through irresponsible boycotts and manipulation of the public's perceptions.

Iceland's Foreign Minister, Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, compared Greenpeace's boycott of Icelandic goods to methods used by the Nazis against Jewish shopkeepers.

Since its release, *Survival in the High North* has had a tremendous impact on the politics of the area, and has even forced the reluctant news media to question Greenpeace's actions and internal goings-on.

Der Spiegel, the famous German news magazine, even ran a story titled "The Money Machine — Greenpeace."

Revelations have surfaced that millions of dollars in donations are finding their way into Greenpeace savings accounts and are not being used to fight for the organization's causes.

Even though *Survival in the High North* has done a great service to the world by exposing Greenpeace for what it really is — a group of environmentalist thugs and terrorists — the persecution of innocent people continues.

I spoke to Magnus Gudmundsson on the phone recently. He called from Iceland to tell me he is in the middle of making a follow-up film. He had just returned from visiting with Greenland natives who are totally dependent on harvesting marine mammals for their livelihood. He said Greenpeace "totally destroyed the social, economic and cultural foundation of these communities" and left people in a "horrible situation."

Continued on page 77



IN MEMORIAM

Harlon Carter 1913-1991

by George Nyfeler

Harlon B. Carter, 78, career lawman and longtime leader of the National Rifle Association (NRA), died 19 November 1991 in Southern Arizona.

Son of a border patrolman, Carter was born in southern Arizona, moved to southwest Texas as a youngster and grew up in Laredo, Texas, where he began a lifelong association with hunting, shooting and the law. At age 16, he was involved in an altercation and forced to defend his life with a gun. He was exonerated by an appeals court, which ruled it to have been self-defense.

A graduate of the University of Texas and of Emory Law School, Carter entered the U.S. Border Patrol, a paramilitary law-enforcement organization, at Del Rio, Texas, in 1936. He remained in federal law enforcement until 1970, serving in every capacity with the Border Patrol, including service as chief from 1950 to 1957. He was appointed commissioner of the southwest region for the Immigration and Naturalization Service; he was the first career law-enforcement officer appointed to this position, usually reserved for political appointees.

While in federal law enforcement, he served as NRA president from 1965 to 1967, sat on its board of directors from 1951 through 1969, and was elected in 1969 to the NRA executive council to serve with voice, but without vote, for life.

Carter served on the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, a board advising the Secretary of the Army on matters pertaining to the Director of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM), from 1964 to 1970, and was one of only 53 civilians to win the "distinguished" designation in both rifle and pistol marksmanship. Also, he was named "outstanding American handgunner" in 1977.

After moving to southern Arizona in 1970, he was called from retirement to be first head of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action (ILA). It was only through his tenacity that he and the ILA were able to establish their independence from the remainder of the organization



Harlon B. Carter

— an independence that proved vital to maintaining a clear, concise legislative agenda, focused only on gun and hunting issues. Carter's efforts established the NRA as the premier grassroots lobbying organization in the country.

After establishing ILA, he returned in 1976 to retirement in Arizona. The 1977 revolt of the NRA membership in Cincinnati against leadership that was varying from defense of the Second Amendment called Carter once again to Washington, to serve as NRA executive vice president, a post he held until 1985. On Carter's "watch," the NRA grew from 900,000 to more than 3 million members, with a like increase in shooting programs, member-

ship benefits and legislative clout.

Carter was elected to honorary life NRA membership in 1985, an honor bestowed only 12 times in the 120-year history of NRA.

NRA Executive Vice President Wayne La Pierre called Carter "our champion and our fiercest warrior." He truly was.

Carter is survived by his wife Maryann and two sons, both on duty today with the U.S. Border Patrol.

The family has asked that memorials be made to the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, 1600 Rhode Island Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20036; or St. Mary's Hospice, 1601 W. St. Mary's Road, Tucson, AZ 85745. ☞



WOMEN IN COMBAT?

One Grunt's Opinion

by First Sergeant Charles W. Sasser



The official word in the military is that women are proving themselves to be the equal of male soldiers in every respect. Facts prove otherwise.
Photo: U.S. Army

I had been in a man's army for most of my 24-year career — paratroopers, scouts, Special Forces. I remember the disgust I felt the first time I saw a female at Fort Bragg wearing a green beret, the sacred symbol of the elite Special Forces.

Green Berets were *men*, snake eaters, the subject of ballads and legends. They jumped out of perfectly good airplanes and chewed up commie guerrillas for lunch. Now here came this slip of a girl strutting across the grinder wearing a *green beret*. There had been a lawsuit or something to allow women to wear it if they were clerk typists or in some kind of support position.

I stared. "Next thing you know," I muttered, "they'll be wanting the Army to issue them balls."

What the Army was issuing them, I discovered as soon as I was activated from the Reserves for Desert Storm active duty, were *condoms*. I was first sergeant, top NCO, for a military police (MP) company of 120 soldiers, 21 of whom were females. My supply sergeant lugged in three hefty bags full of condoms and dumped them on the orderly room floor. On patrols in the jungles, we had stretched rubbers over M16 muzzles to keep out rain and mud or dust. But even if my company was going to be patrolling, we wouldn't be doing *that* much patrolling.

"The company that screws together stays together, first sergeant," the supply sergeant quipped. "Make sure to tell our soldiers when we pass them out to keep the screwing within the company. No use

raising the morale of some other outfit."

Even before the Gulf War began, the official word from throughout the defense and political establishment was that women were proving themselves to be the equal of male soldiers in every respect. Military spokesmen went to great lengths to cover up statistics or information that might indicate otherwise.

For instance, they wouldn't talk about prostitution or homosexuality. When I asked an Army PAO (Public Affairs Officer) for the annual number of unwed pregnancies in just one battalion, the evidence of which was apparent walking around post in maternity BDUs (Battle Dress Uniforms), he responded that he was forbidden to supply that kind of information.

"Why?" I asked.

"It's political," he admitted.

There is a block on each officer's or NCO's fitness and evaluation report to be marked indicating whether he supports equal opportunity. Making it known that if he fails to at least pay lip service to women's rights in the military, it's the kiss of death for his career. This report is so important that lifers routinely lie about the activities of women or exaggerate their feats because they fear their own careers

might suffer if marked otherwise.

The CIB Flap

Take, for example, incidents during Operation Just Cause, the 1989 U.S. invasion of General Noriega's Panama. Military spokesmen, eager to demonstrate their compliance to the party line, played up through the news media the role of a female MP lieutenant who supposedly led her platoon against stiff resistance to rout a heavily armed Panamanian force. Turned out she personally barely got within sight of the objective (a dog kennel), enemy defenders there put up slight resistance, and the most she could have suffered under the circumstances was a hang nail.

On a slightly different level, two female truck drivers broke into frantic tears and refused to take a supply truck through a minimally hostile area. Two male dogfaces took over the mission. Army PAOs valiantly attempted to cover up details of the incident, even going so far at first as to deny it had even occurred. However, males showing such cowardice would have been court-martialed.

I like women; I love them. I didn't want to be

Is this the new face of war? Female soldier applies camouflage paint in training for a new role as front-line soldier. Photo: Charles W. Sasser

branded a chauvinist pig by rejecting female soldiers outright. Still, when it came to women actually serving in my combat army with me, I suffered what some sociologists might call culture shock. I had learned something over the years about men and women together.

If it turned out I was wrong about it, then I'd choke on crow. But if it turned out I was right and a man's army was still a man's army, then I'd talk about that too and to hell with my "equal opportunity block." Truth is truth. There seems to be precious little of it around anymore.

As the Desert Storm call-up began, newspapers and magazines filled up with stories and photos of cute rifle-toting blondes from Texas and buxom warrior brunettes from California. Women who made up less than 10% of forces called up for the Gulf received 60% of the news coverage. You would have thought women, who by law are allowed only to serve as support troops, were going to fight the whole war themselves. Male soldiers especially grew acutely nauseous over cutesy stories such as "Nanny Wears Combat Boots" and "Papa Stays Home With Junior While Mommy Defends The Nation."

Although the brief war certainly did not test the concept of female combatants, major media fell into lock-step, "politically correct" thinking as soon as it ended. The United States exploded with acco-

lades for female soldiers in Saudi. You knew the answer was "yes" before you ever read *Life* magazine's cover story asking if women were ready for full combat equality with men.

All The Views That's Fit To Print

These Amazons of the desert were superwomen, if you believed the publicity. One of them captured by the enemy because she got lost in the desert was on her way to becoming a national celebrity before someone discovered she was having a romance with a married fellow soldier, who was leaving his wife and



children for her. Just another one of those little things about men and women together.

When women were activated for Desert Storm, the result was much like that of the alert following an incident on 18 August 1976, during which North Koreans attacked a detail of American soldiers pruning a tree on the DMZ. Two Americans were killed and nine injured.

As it became apparent that the alert was for real, commanders throughout Korea were flooded with requests from female soldiers for transfer to the rear. Many women near the border simply abandoned their posts on their own and headed south. Some turned up in units far to the rear. Other females in uniform reported for duty with their children in tow. In a number of instances, male NCOs left their posts to attend to the safety of their wives and girlfriends in other units.

The upshot is that such behavior is easily predictable for those who admit human nature or know anything at all about the biological and social evolution of men and women. The simple fact is that men and women developed separate and distinct physical, emotional and biological characteristics because of the different

demands of their roles — women as child bearers, homemakers, nurturers; men as warriors and hunters.

No amount of legislation or lobbying is going to make a 110-pound female do anything but sit on a 100-pound combat rucksack. No cries for equality are going to keep a male MP from busting his ass to get to a female MP assigned a trouble call, such as a fight in a bar. He's simply acting upon thousands of years' evolution, in which physically stronger and more aggressive males have protected their females.

It came as no surprise to me, therefore, when females in my company began campaigning to remain home, only days after the outfit activated. The company had barely started up training when two of my females approached me with the news that they were pregnant and couldn't be shipped overseas. A third wrote her congressman requesting intervention, so she could stay home and care for her 4-year-old daughter.

"Why did you enlist in the first place?" I asked her. "You always knew this could happen."

Combat Goes With The Uniform

"I never thought it ever would, though. I wanted the Army to help pay for college," she replied. "I can't go to war. I'm a woman."

She admitted what flatterers of women in uniform won't, and what the politically aware military goes to great lengths to conceal: Women want the name — they don't want the game. Combat requires physical and emotional characteristics the average woman simply does not possess.

A little-publicized 1982 U.S. Army study concluded that barely 10% of Army women possessed the strength to meet minimum physical requirements for 75% of jobs for enlisted soldiers. The armed forces' physical training (PT) test has been doctored to compensate for females' general lack of strength and endurance. Women doing pushups, for example, do them on their knees.

By most measures, women are simply a bad buy for the military. They suffer higher rates of attrition, with lower retention rates. They are three times more likely to be discharged for homosexuality than men; they miss twice as much time as men for medical reasons; they are 14 times as likely as men to be injured in training.

War is hell, as the novelists all say. In spite of "smart bombs" and high-tech equipment, war is still no push-button affair. The grunt is still called a grunt, because battle requires strength to hump heavy loads; endurance to stay in the fight while running, jumping, and lifting, along with a certain male aggressiveness to win that the average female simply does not have.

The weaker sex in uniform is routinely protected and catered to, while maintain-

ing a pretense that it can handle anything as well as men. Take a common example: I needed an advance party. It was a choice assignment, but it required a certain amount of labor.

"Don't send any of the females," my NCO in charge begged. "We're talking about lifting and carrying 100-pound duffel bags."

I sent 10 men. I needed a job done; I didn't need five men working while five women struggled and finally gave up to watch helplessly. One of my female section leaders complained.

Sexual Indiscrimination

"Top, that's sexual discrimination. I'm going to complain to the inspector general."

"Be my guest," I said.

She was the same female NCO and women's libber caught in the hallway with two of her male subordinates. One had his palm thrust down between her legs, while the other had both hands up her BDU top, cupping her breasts. These were men she would have been required to lead in combat. Compromised like that, how was she going to lead them anywhere, except to the nearest little Arab tent with a bed in it?

"We don't have camp followers anymore," a platoon sergeant said. "We don't need them. We recruit 'em and bring 'em with us."

Stretched over rifle muzzles, my company's supply of rubbers would have lasted maybe a year or so. As it happened, it quickly became apparent that the outfit would be burning far more rubber than gunpowder. Men and women were billeted in adjacent rooms on the same floor; the action started immediately. Even those soldiers married just days before we deployed overseas soon sought solace in each other's arms.

"They're up there fucking like minks!" an NCO exclaimed.

The CO and I tried to control it by limiting coed visitation and issuing policies against opposite sexes being alone in closed rooms together.

"How are you going to enforce it?" I was asked.

I scratched my head.

"M a y b e

you'd better get with supply and make sure

we have a plentiful supply of condoms," I conceded.

Although my first two "pregnancies" turned out to be unsuccessful ploys to stay home, there were no false labors in the pregnancies that followed. Within six months, 10 of the company's 21 women turned up pregnant. Rumors about who or who wasn't sleeping with whom; where, and how many times, reminded me of a bizarre juxtaposition of *M*A*S*H* with *Love Boat* and *Dallas*. Most who became

pregnant sought abortions in Europe. So far, the Army doesn't provide abortions, but I'm certain it's being considered.

The CO and I stopped reporting pregnancies to division headquarters. Division raised hell about it. What were we supposed to do? Issue corks?

"We could use a cork," admitted one of my platoon sergeants. "Specialist C _____ has gone through every swinging jock in the platoon and is starting all over again. I don't have soldiers. I have a pack of dogs in heat, and they're starting to fight each other over the bitch."

Every time a female killed the rabbit, I had to replace her with a male, even if that meant he did double duty. How could you run an army when your soldiers kept turning up pregnant and couldn't work or fight? It was little consolation knowing other outfits with women were having similar problems.

Candor On The Cutting Room Floor

In Saudi, a female soldier named Cindi was asked by a network news interviewer: "And what's your job? What are you doing over here?"

"I'm the camp whore," the girl shot back with more honesty than the public was deemed prepared to accept.

This footage never aired.



Female airman trains with new M9 9mm pistol. Photo: courtesy DoD

Elsewhere, the Army quickly squelched a report about a woman noncom who earned \$10,000 in just a few weeks engaging in the world's oldest profession. Army investigators quietly shipped her home.

A few cable stations *did* run an edited piece about the "Love Boat," a Navy ship in the Gulf that had to set sail back to home port, because so many of its largely female crew apparently combined morning sickness with seasickness.

Ten percent of my company — the female percentage — took up 90% of my problem-solving time. The old adage about two women being unable to live in the same house seemed to be as true in the Army as anywhere else. My females were continuously bickering and squabbling over issues most men would have found inconsequential. Minor personal grievances flared constantly.

"Top, I can't live with that slut. Move her away from me or ... or I'll die."

I had two female clerks. I moved one of them out of the office to a desk in the hallway to keep them from fighting. That didn't work. Sulking was followed by tearful accusations that I favored one over the other, that one was gossiping, or that one had started rumors about the other getting pregnant. They developed PMS on the same day.

"Top, you have to make a choice," screeched my primary clerk. "I can't stand it any longer. It's either me or her. Make up your mind."

Every time someone burst into my office breathlessly yelling "Top? Top?" my standard reply was: "Calm down. Which one of my females is pregnant now? Or which one has killed the other?"

Soldiering In The New Age

One afternoon I found myself bedside, waiting for an ambulance while one of my female specialists had a miscarriage. She wept uncontrollably while I awkwardly held her hand and stroked her cheek. I stared at the wall, a little confused by it all.

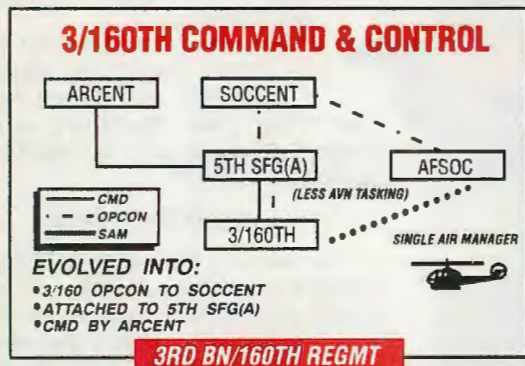
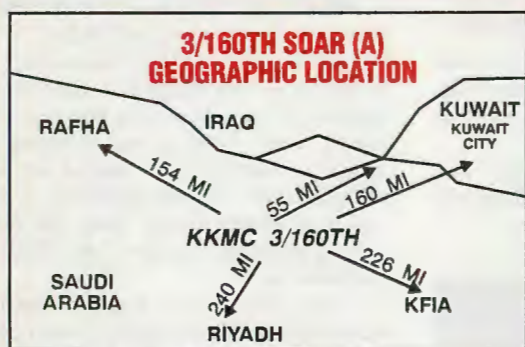
I'd been to five wars, spent much of my life as a tough sergeant in combat outfits. I'd shot it out with Central American guerrillas and parachuted onto the Korean DMZ. I'd been wounded in combat. Had it all come down to this — refereeing a bunch of women in uniform, half of whom were pregnant?

What had the U.S. Army become, when unwed women waddled about in maternity battle uniforms? When morale and fighting effectiveness were being leached away? When tough combat sergeants found themselves handling miscarriages and settling female spats? The feminization of the American military was destroying its ability to wage war.

It used to be that old sergeants like myself stood ramrod straight up in front of

Continued on page 74

"NIGHT STA



"We wanted aces. Daredevils, barnstormers, hot rodders; guys [pilots] who could pick it up, turn it around on a dime, and put it back down with a flair."
— "Chargin' Charlie" Beckwith, former commander, Delta Force

The advent of today's Special Operations Aviation (SOA) forces sprang from the womb of Operation "Rice Bowl," the 1980 rescue attempt that evolved into the mother of all military disasters on the hard-packed sands of Dasht-e-Kavir in Iran. Although a tragedy in terms of national pride, "Desert One" proved to be the fire from which a determined SOA phoenix rose.

The U.S. Army moved quickly, establishing "Task Force 158" in 1980 as a direct response to the events at Desert One. Crews and airframes were drawn from the

FLYERS DON'T QUIT''

160th Special Operations Air Regiment Rules the Night

by Greg Walker



MH-47 of 3/160th lifts off for a night mission from its site in Saudi Arabia. Note "little bird" (upper right) flying escort. Photo: courtesy USSCOM/USASOCOM

158th Aviation Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division, based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. By 1982, TF-158 had been redesignated as Task Force 160, fielding two companies from the 158th, one company from the 159th, and elements from the 229th, which comprised the attack side of the house.

A highly classified unit, TF-160 began training in earnest to remedy problems spotlighted by the Iran disaster. A series of fatal accidents brought the unit to the media's attention, with particular focus on the use of night vision aids. As TF-160's survivability depended upon the effective use of darkness, night vision equipment was experimented with to a degree unheard of by the other services. Soon, the problems were ironed out, so media attention drifted elsewhere.

Task Force 160 soon became the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group. In this configuration, it was able to field two

attack companies, two lift companies, a Chinook company and support companies, to include the headquarters element.

In June 1990, the 160th was reorganized as a regiment (SOAR), so as to become the one command tasked to manage all SOA assets and capabilities. Incorporated into the regiment were the Army's active component Special Forces group aviation detachments. Today, the 160th SOAR is staffed by 1,396 personnel. Its headquarters and first two battalions are located at Fort Campbell; the 3rd Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield at Savannah, Georgia, where it supports the 1st Ranger Battalion. Missions are assigned as follows:

- 1st Battalion, 160th, composed of 30 MH-60s, 18 AH-6s, and 18 MH-6s. Their mission is classified, as the 1st flies support for primarily "black" (covert) Special Operations Force (SOF) operations.

- 2nd Battalion, 160th, composed of 24

MH-47s (modified CH-47Ds). The 2nd flies support for both black and "white" (overt) SOF operations, acting primarily as infiltration/exfiltration platforms.

- 3rd Battalion, 160th, composed of 10 MH-60s, eight MH-47s. The 3rd flies all white SOF support, and was the announced battalion deployed to Operations Desert Shield/Storm.

Finally, the regiment has a forward deployed detachment supporting Army SF assets still in Panama, and a National Guard battalion located in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The Men Of SOF Aviation

Colonel Joseph Fucci possesses precisely the personality one might expect in an SOF aviator. What's it really like to be a part of the 160th SOAR?

"Special ops means longer hours, harder work, and more frequent separations from family than normal



aviation requirements," Fucci told me. "We train worldwide, as opposed to training primarily on the post your unit is located at." Others interviewed expressed this same thought, adding that unlike in Air Force special operations, all 160th SOAR personnel are volunteers. Does such a mandate make a difference?

"Yes, most certainly," assures a senior 160th pilot. "The people we support know we volunteered for special operations, just as they did. We live in the field with them, train alongside them, get dirty and tired and worn-out, just like they do. We're not 'pretty boys' with fancy scarves. Our customers know we'll come and get'em, regardless of the situation."

Special Forces ground operators, who counted on the 160th for both black and white SOA support, agree. "They're the best," exclaimed a young SF NCO who served in the gulf. "No one flies like the 160th. Without them, we couldn't have gotten the job done."

Indeed. During an earlier interview held on the West Coast, a SEAL commander recalled watching an Air Force helicopter pilot rapidly preparing to leave the SEALs' combat search and rescue (CSAR) site after a Scud attack.

"I asked him where he was going, and he told me he was taking his Pave-Lo further inland where it was safer. I reminded him it would take an additional hour for his aircraft to reach us if there was a pilot downed in the Gulf, but he didn't seem to care much about my opinion on the matter," the SEAL officer said. "Give me the guns from Task Force 160, any day. They just look at you and say, 'When do you want to go?' They're not playing at special ops."

War In The Gulf

The 3rd Battalion 160th deployed to the Gulf early on, prepared to execute all the tasks and missions expected of it. Roughly 30 days passed before the battalion received its mission priorities, as decided upon by SOCCENT (Special Operations Command Central). Combat search and rescue (CSAR) was the unit's No. 1 priority, given the enormity of the planned air campaign. Foreign Internal Defense (FID) would be the 160th's other concern.

SOCCENT turned the management of all aviation assets committed to CSAR over to Air Force Special Operations Command Central (AFSOC). SOA aircraft, representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force, were to provide on-call rescue crews and airframes for downed pilots, their crews and black/white SOF forces.

MH-47s from 160th SOAR refuel in tandem for the first time in flight. Having unlimited range, these aircraft hold Army rotary-wing record for longest continuous flight in combat theater — 15 hours from Fort Campbell to Panama. Photo: courtesy USSCOM/USASOCOM

Air crews and "black" operators conducting missions in northern Iraq became the responsibility of SOFs located in Turkey. In all, seven CSAR launch sites were made ready, five in Saudi Arabia and two in Turkey. The additional 160 missions included:

- Suppression of enemy air defenses.



AH-6 "G" model flies many missions, including attack. "Little bird" is quick and reliable, carries rockets and miniguns. One plummeted into Gulf in stormy conditions: another Night Stalker AH-6 flying from carrier lifted pilot from water with skid, deposited him on small island and flew protective orbit until help arrived. This was fourth CSAR mission, published here for first time. Photo: courtesy USSCOM/USASOCOM

- Close air support.
- Combat air support.
- Penetration points.
- Minimum risk routes.

Training for CSAR began immediately. Both MH-60 Black Hawks and MH-47 Chinooks were utilized, their crews creating new tactics and maneuvers never before thought of.

"We began by planning how to avoid Iraqi SAM sites," offered one Chinook pilot. "Then we began flying practice missions from 200-400 miles in distance. At night, we began by flying at 300 feet, reducing that to 100 feet at 100 knots. During daylight hours we'd fly at 25-50 feet off the deck." He went on to call the 160th's MH-47s easily the most sophisticated SOA airframes in service today.

Chinook crews from the 160th built security teams for CSAR operations using

Green Berets, white SOF SEALs, Air Force combat controllers, and pararescue personnel. CSAR tactics included the infiltration of a rescue team and vehicle (Humvee) 200 miles behind enemy lines, with the Chinook setting down while the mobile desert vehicle made the recovery.

"We didn't have to fly right to the crash site," another pilot said. "Rather than alert the Iraqis — who were all over the place anyhow — we could set down and let the ground operators go out and make the pick-up. Everyone was using satellite navigational aids, which put you within a meter of where you were standing, so getting lost wasn't a problem."

Clean Snatch

On 17 February at 2000 hours, a U.S. F-16 went down 40 miles behind enemy lines. Two Army SOA MH-60s using night vision devices launched, accompanied by 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group security teams. The teams



STABO is one of fastest methods for getting more than two operators off ground. Here, SOF personnel practice lifts by 160th SOAR airframe. Photo: courtesy USSCOM/USASOCOM

were armed with AT-4 shoulder-fired recoilless antiarmor weapons and M16/M203 rifles.

The F-16 pilot was rescued, although frustrated Iraqis on the ground fired missiles after the retreating aircraft. Onboard jamming devices, coupled with emergency evasive action by the pilots left the missiles far behind. This was the first and only CSAR mission conducted in darkness using NVG (night vision goggle) capabilities in zero ambient-light conditions.

On 24 February at 1400 hours, a three-man SF reconnaissance team 200 miles inside Iraq was compromised by civilian foot traffic. Making an immediate decision not to kill civilians, despite having battlefield justification to do so, Master Sergeant Jeff Sims prepared for a fight.

Taken under fire by Iraqi reaction forces sent out to capture them, the SF team requested a daylight "hot" extraction. AFSOC doctrine stated daylight extractions were too dangerous for SOA rotary assets, further, that all infiltrations/extractions would be conducted using two aircraft. The AFSOC commander made a guts-ball decision, alerting the 160th to fly the mission anyhow.

Although reported by both the 160th and

DEATH WAITS IN THE DARK — THE NIGHT STALKERS

Task Force 160 was recognized as a unit on 16 October 1981. They became known as the "Night Stalkers," due to their unique ability to navigate in total darkness, flying just above the "deck." The Night Stalkers were capable of striking anywhere in the world.

Their first combat deployment was in Operation Urgent Fury, in Grenada. In June 1988, the Task Force once again answered the call of the National Command Authority, flying a classified mission (Operation Mount Hope III) deep into enemy territory, under the most demanding environmental circumstances faced by Army aviators.

During Operation Prime Chance, the unit supported a joint task force in yet another classified mission. This time, the Night Stalkers participated in the first-ever neutralization of an enemy threat while using night vision goggles and forward-looking infrared devices (FLIR).

During Operation Just Cause, the 160th provided daring air support for the Rangers and other black/white SOF assets as Panama was freed. Their skills allowed them to rule the night, often chasing Panama's hostile dictator as he attempted to evade U.S. security forces intent upon capturing him.

Today, the 160th SOAR is a proud regiment tasked with the management and training of the finest special operations pilots and crews in the world. The regiment's motto, "Night Stalkers Don't Quit," announces the unit's commitment to those it serves. The unit logo is a winged horse, symbolizing aviation. Behind the horse sits the moon, representing night. The stars flowing behind the horse represent night vision, and the sword held above the rider's head demonstrates the desire to strike quickly and with accuracy. The rider, of course, is Death.

— G.W.

media as a preplanned single-airframe rescue, in reality two MH-60 Black Hawks were scrambled. The men of "Lady Godiva," piloted by Chief Warrant Officer Jim Crisafulli and CWO Randy Stephens, watched in horror as their sister ship's engine burst into flames while the two aircraft were still on the tarmac.

"We knew they could cancel us right then," Crisafulli recalled, "but both Randy and I were praying they'd let us go." AFSOC did, launching Lady Godiva for a 200-mile run through Iraqi air defenses in midday.

"We chose to fly almost directly to where the team was," Crisafulli added. "I knew these guys, having worked with them for several years when the SF aviation detachments were still around." Flying at 25-50 feet off the deck, the Black Hawk crew and its SF security team watched as sunlight bounced off hundreds of vehicle mirrors. "We didn't know if we were being fired at, or what. We just kept flying."

An F-16, called in to provide close air support by Sims, was relaying information to Lady Godiva as she flew through Iraq. "We never had direct commo with the team," the veteran helicopter pilot noted. "They'd lost their antenna, but were somehow communicating with the F-16, who relayed to us. He was dropping ordnance all around them, trying to keep the Iraqis off until we got there. Finally, I remember the pilot telling us if we weren't there in 10 minutes, there'd be no team to recover."

Lady Godiva's crew put the pedal to the metal. On board, the crew chiefs were preparing the dual miniguns as the Green Beret security team readied their own personal weapons. When the Black Hawk burst over a ridge, Crisafulli dropped the airframe into a dive while everyone attempted to spot the team's hiding place.

"Someone yelled 'missile!'" Crisafulli recalled, "and we went into evasive action. It turned out later the team had popped a flare to attract our attention. I saw some huge steel towers with power lines running between them and headed for them, thinking the team was on the other side. Just as I was about to dive under the power lines, we spotted a third, smaller line."

Crisafulli hauled back on the chopper's stick, rolling the straining aircraft over the power lines rather than underneath. "The crew chiefs were hanging on, the SF guys plastered up against the compartment's roof." Crisafulli had just discovered the team was on the other side of the lines when Sims, using a VH-17 signal panel to attract the chopper's attention, caught their eye.

"This all happened in split seconds," Crisafulli related. "I rolled the chopper back over the wires and set it down. All I could hear were the miniguns going off. One of the SF security team [Gordy Hopple] jumped off the bird and began



Black Hawks from 160th SOAR, mounting miniguns, provided black or white SOF support during Desert Shield/Storm. Security teams from 5th Group, as shown, were armed with AT rockets, M203s and M16s with Aim-Point sights, and issue Beretta pistol. Night vision goggles were standard issue. Photo: courtesy Chapter 38, Special Forces Association

firing his weapon from the hip. I remember Gordie's aim being very effective.

"People came running past where I was sitting in the cockpit. We were taking hits. Then I saw Sims [the team's leader] working his way toward me. He was hauling a rucksack full of gear they hadn't been able to destroy yet. He wasn't going to leave it behind. I watched him look up at me as he passed by, a big smile on his face. I thought to myself, 'Hey, you don't have time to smile. Get on board, we gotta get outta here!'"

Crisafulli and Stephens would be awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses for their heroic actions. Their crew would receive Bronze Stars with "V" devices. Sims would win the Silver Star, and his two comrades Bronze Stars with "V" devices. "You can say what you want about Rambo," offered Crisafulli. "These guys [today's Green Berets] are the real thing. They make Rambo look like a pussy."

Mission Accomplished

At the conclusion of Desert Storm, the 160th had accomplished the following:

- No casualties (White SOA).
- All missions flown to within +/-30 seconds of time-on-target.
- All missions 100% successful.
- First night CSAR flown.
- An operational readiness of 92% for MH-60s, 84% for MH-47s.

But there had been casualties. Current special operations doctrine calls for no information to be released regarding black SOF/SOA missions. This includes POWs, MIAs and those killed in action.

Black SOF involves those units which are highly classified, units such as Delta and SEAL Team 6. Officially, USSOCOM gives USASOC's killed in action as eight Army SOF personnel. Four of those killed were from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. They were:

- Captain Charles W. Cooper.
- Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael F.

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TALES OF A POW HUNTER

SF Colonel Goes Through the Looking Glass in Southeast Asia

by Colonel Fred Caristo

Photos by DoD

During eight tours in Vietnam, Colonel Fred Caristo was involved in more than 200 POW recovery operations while assigned to MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observation Group) and USARV (U.S. Army, Republic of Vietnam). As commander of A Detachment, the special operations battalion in charge of POW rescue, body recovery and intelligence collection, Caristo probably knew more about the POW/MIA situation than anyone else in or out of the government. Part I of his story, which ran last month, detailed various recovery ops; Part II describes some of the behind-the-scenes deals, meetings with shady characters, scams and frauds that then and now characterize the search for American POWs in Vietnam.

IN January 1966 I got word that a close friend, Sergeant Frank Badoluti, was lost in the An Lao Valley. Frank was a member of Project Delta. I have never seen an accurate statistic, but I believe Delta took more casualties proportionally than any other unit in the war. As devoted Special Forces soldiers of Delta, both Americans and indigenous Vietnamese really paid a price.

By the time news of Frank's loss filtered down to me, several months had passed. Furthermore, because of lack of communication between various groups working in the area, I could not obtain details as to Frank's status. This compartmentalization was an ongoing problem, so I finally had to go to Nha Trang to get information at Delta headquarters. From what I pieced together from reports of the remaining members in Frank's team, I felt I could lead one of my teams into An Lao and recover Frank's remains.

Six indigs and I infiltrated by parachute

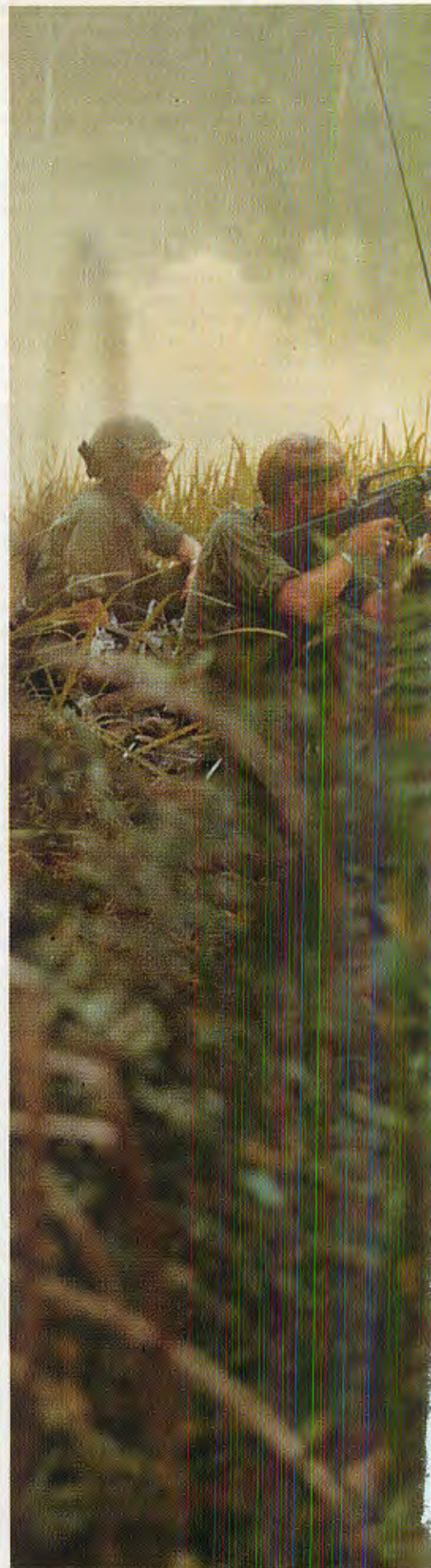
into An Lao Valley wearing tree jump suits; jumping at 350 feet above the highest terrain feature. (The team would later be dropped into North Vietnam at just 250 feet above the highest terrain feature.) At this altitude a reserve chute was useless so we didn't even bother to carry them.

The initial infiltration went well. We assembled on the ground and moved out to establish an OB (Operational Base). We had gone about three clicks when our point man kicked a booby-trapped grenade. It rolled off the trail and went off harmlessly. After a short pause to allow the point man to clean out his shorts, we changed direction.

As the sun came up, we established an OB two clicks from the area we planned to sweep first. We set up in what was called a "covey of quail" – everyone lay in a circle with their heads pointing into the center. The on-duty sentry sat in the circle's center employing principles of night observation: scanning in 360-degree, off-center vision with development of visual purple. Should an emergency arise, the sentry could immediately rise to a crouch and begin firing on full auto.

Each man would set up his weapon pointed away from the circle. This gave us 360-degree firepower. In case of action, the team leader would assess the situation, then scream above the deafening roar his direction of withdrawal and the number of meters to move out (for example: "9 o'clock; 300!"). Despite how many times we practiced this at our training camp at Long Thanh, it always got screwed up in the field.

At about 1500 hours the following afternoon, we could hear rounds leaving a tube somewhere. Suddenly those rounds began splashing in very close to our OB. They were walking in on us. Everyone was





American troops often found themselves on bogus POW rescue missions, intentionally diverted by the VC/NVA from more important AOs.

waiting for a direction and distance, but in the high undergrowth it was impossible to see the actual impact of the shells.

Then, as if in slow motion, a shell came through the canopy and impacted about 20 meters from the covey-of-quail. It hit with no explosion, no nothing. Was it a dud? Not being a cannon cocker (artilleryman), I thought it might be a time fuse.

It was time to act. I screamed a direction and distance in Vietnamese and we headed out. That night, we established another OB and the next day began searching for Frank's remains. We scoured the area for two days, breaking all operational rules by not going to ground in daylight.

I am convinced we found the exact spot where Frank's body had been left months earlier, but we did not find any remains. To this day I feel better that I at least tried to recover a buddy.

War Of A Thousand Fiefdoms

I also learned a valuable lesson on this



operation. Vietnam was a war of a thousand fiefdoms: MACV, USARV, KFV (Korean Forces), AFV (Australian Forces), NZFV (New Zealand Forces), Regional Forces, Popular Forces, SOG, Project Delta, Project Omega, Project Cherry, VN Rangers, LLDB (*Luc Luong Dac Biet*, Vietnamese Special Forces) and of course MARVN (the not-so-gracious term for ARVN, Army of the Republic of Vietnam).

Who put the arty in on us? Who knows?

This is the problem with everyone having his own fiefdom. The resulting compartmentalization made coordination impossible. Every time you went to the field you took your ass in your hands, but that's another story.

While I was at SOG, we attempted to recover several POWs reported held in camps along the South Vietnam border. On two occasions we found ARVN prisoners and brought them home, but we simply could not find the elusive American POWs anywhere south of the DMZ during the 1966-68 time frame.

I moved on to Detachment A in mid-1968 and immediately started working the

POW issue. Ever since word had been released that we would pay for POWs or American bodies, we were receiving so many sightings that we could not process them all.

One of my indig sources reported his sister was married to a Viet Cong (VC) company commander in charge of security for a POW camp where five U.S. prisoners were being held. His plan was to defect to ARVN, taking the five Americans along. He would become a *Hoi Chanh* (someone who had gone into the *Chu Hoi* program), absolving him of all crimes he committed while a VC, and he would receive \$25,000 in U.S. dollars (which would quadruple on the black market). The VC commander would be a rich man and on the winning side.

Cast Of A Bad B-Movie

I had several meetings with the indig source and a cast of three characters who could only have come from a bad

Author Caristo (second from right) and rest of team who went on recovery op into An Lao Valley. These Nung (Black Thai) indig were all carrying Swedish Ks. Fred was armed with a SOG-issued Uzi. Photo: Col. Fred Caristo

B-movie. These consisted of the source, who had proven to be extremely reliable in the past; a second indig who spoke excellent English and claimed Americans were his first love and that he was negotiating only out of the goodness of his heart; a brother of the defector, who was along only to insure the potential defector's well-being; and a hard-ass who did not like Americans, always wanted more money and constantly made outlandish demands with excuses about why the op could not go forward.

The hard-ass caused our negotiations to be drawn out for an extended time. After meeting with the group over a three-week period in hotels, safe houses, bars and outlying villages, we arrived at a plan.

Our strategy called for a battalion of the 9th Infantry Division out of Dong Tam to

secure a sector around a designated village. The VC commander would move the prisoners to the village, then the battalion would shrink around the village and everyone would be secure.

We ran the op, but the VC and prisoners were no-shows. The primary source came in several days later claiming he had lost contact with the rest of the cast of characters; we decided to lose contact with him, permanently.

Reliable Source B came in and stated he had a cousin who was the village chief of Ap Thuy. There were two American prisoners being held by the local VC militia in this village. The village chief wanted to defect, take the prisoners with him and collect a reward. Sound familiar?

I believe the VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) mounted an intelligence effort to tie up American assets. During my tenure with SOG I ran into some very sophisticated counterintelligence operations mounted by the NVA with turncoat U.S.-trained agents in North Vietnam. These tantalizing POW stories appeared to be another polished counterintelligence effort on the part of the VC/NVA.

Fred's Counter-Operation

At this point I decided to conduct a counter-operation of my own. The plan called for me to meet with a cast of characters in a hotel room and show them several thousand dollars in green during the negotiations. This was a hook — I felt they would not be able to resist all that green. One of our Vietnamese sources, posing as a pimp, rented two adjacent rooms at the Vinh Loi hotel in Saigon, and a special team went in the night before.

The team completely bugged Room A and tapped into Room B. To provide a cover, they had three Vietnamese employees posing as prostitutes. Room B had all the listening equipment and would have a Vietnamese linguist as well as recording equipment to monitor everything taking place in Room A.

On day two, the characters showed up for our meeting late — in typical Asian fashion. After flashing my green and not receiving the typical drool reflex, I began to worry. The phone rang. I answered, then stated I had an emergency meet and would return in 30 minutes. I left.

Now the plot thickened. What was supposed to happen was that the bugged conversation in Room A would now turn to the money, and myriad other intelligence questions we needed answered. What did happen was that I left, the door closed, someone stated in Vietnamese, "*Im*" (shut up), and then there was complete silence. Halfway through the 30-minute hush someone passed gas and everyone giggled. That's the extent of what we got on tape. These guys were pros — no drool over the money and total discipline.

I was curious, so I set up another meet with them. At our next encounter they

requested that we set up a negotiation session in Can Tho, and told me to take the money to impress their VC contact. I described how this ill-fated project turned out in last month's *SOF*; suffice it to say that I found myself emptying my Browning Hi-Power down the hall of the Ba Sac Hotel and running off, narrowly avoiding five guys who apparently planned to grab the money and the good guys at the same time. (For a more complete description of this event, see "We Tried So Hard," February '92).

Through our sources, Detachment A received a number of U.S. bodies that had been left on the battlefield. One typical scenario was to have a U.S. unit ambushed at night, so it would immediately move out of the area. The next day, Ong the rice farmer would find a body in his paddy, bury it and go along about his business. A sweep of the area within several days would turn up nothing, and a new name would be added to the MIA list.

Recovering Tim's Body

One recovery that stands out was Private First Class Timothy Kapown. Tim was KIA while on an op with the 9th Infantry Division in the delta. Several personnel signed documents stating his body was not recoverable.

However, accounts of Tim's death and the loss of his body did not jibe and were contradictory. Tim's parents kept pushing for a proper accountability for their son's remains. One sworn statement claimed Tim's body had been washed off a riverine craft, while another said the body was completely destroyed by the rocket which killed him.

Then one of our sources presented me with a name tape reportedly taken from Tim's body. It really bothered me that the name tape was brand new, not the sweat-stained tape of an American soldier who had humped the delta, much less been buried for seven months.

I decided to investigate further despite my doubts. I had my source set up a meeting with the indig who reportedly had the body. The meeting spot was so far out in the boonies that we had to take a pedicab from one village to another and then walk two clicks on what were probably mined rice paddy dikes.

We met in a small village. Initially, there were five indig in a small hut, but soon it was standing room only as the population swelled to about 25 armed members of the local Popular Forces. The negotiations were getting nowhere as everyone was talking at once.

I had opened an attache case and showed \$250 in green, all in \$10s (you could get more for large bills on the black market, but \$10s made a bigger and more impressive stack to ruffle through). I also agreed to pay another \$250 when the remains were positively identified. The negotiators wanted \$5,000, the amount we were offering at the time for live POWs.

The large crowd was getting out of hand, waving .30-caliber carbines, and I felt like I was in the center of a feeding frenzy. I had conducted the entire negotiations in Vietnamese and had even held all conversations with my back-up in Vietnamese. But one indig piped up from the back, just like we were not even there, saying, "Let's kill them and take the money!"

This pissed me off. I pulled my 9mm out from under my Hawaiian shirt, cranked a round in the chamber, put it to the main negotiator's head and informed him I was departing in five minutes with a U.S. body or his.

After swallowing his Adam's apple, he told me to reach under the bed I was sitting on. I removed a plastic table cloth, opened a box and stared at the skeletal remains of what I hoped was PFC Timothy Kapown. There was what appeared to be a genuine dog tag with his name on it.

Within five days, the devoted personnel at the Tan Son Nhut mortuary positively IDed Tim and shipped his remains to his grieving family. May he rest in peace. He fought hard and died for what I considered an ungrateful nation at the time. We paid



Author ran several heliborne operations in an attempt to recover prisoners. Yet the VC always seemed to know when they were coming and had time to move POWs into tunnels. Note abandoned rice bowl and food basket in this VC tunnel complex.

the remainder of the \$500 and were subsequently deluged with skeletal remains.

Bones, Bones, Everywhere

When the indig discovered we could differentiate between Asian, Caucasian and Negroid skulls by the depth of the palate, they began digging up every French cemetery in South Vietnam. It was a constant struggle to keep one step ahead of the scam artists. They would take a dead ARVN, put him in a black-market U.S. uniform, put a grenade next to his head, pull the pin and attempt to turn in the remains.

We were worried that they would start hitting U.S.-types and then try to sell us their remains. The guys at the Tan Son Nhut mortuary were simply amazing. These dedicated professionals have never been adequately recognized for the work

they did. Although there were ID errors made at the Da Nang mortuary, the much larger Tan Son Nhut facility never had an ID error by 1970, even during the 1968 Tet Offensive. At that time, they had worked 120 hours straight, with bodies everywhere, yet their devotion and respect toward fallen comrades never faltered.

We had a number of reports that Chinese businessmen in Thailand had access to POWs, and for X-number of dollars they could obtain the captives' release. I traveled to Thailand on several occasions and proceeded to border-crossing points at Nong Khai and Nakhon Phanom. Each time, the contacts wanted up-front money for bribing prison camp officials or guards to gain the POWs.

These leads never led to anything, but they had to be pursued. We owed it to our guys.

We ran several ops out of Ha Tien across the Cambodian border into the U Minh forest in South Vietnam, even landing on several small islands in the Gulf of Thailand looking for POWs. Again, we followed every lead that sounded even remotely credible.

While searching for Central Office for South Vietnam (VC headquarters) in Cambodia, one of our sources reported seeing two Caucasians serving as medics in what he believed was a POW camp housing ARVN prisoners. I wanted to get in there and photograph these guys firsthand, but the operation was turned down as too dangerous. I had a local carpenter build a sharpening block that a wood chopper normally carried to sharpen his ax, and had a Minox camera inserted inside. The camera could be triggered as the wood cutter sharpened his ax on the block.

I had never spoken to the source in English, as he was a genuine farm boy. I had several Americans come in and speak U.S.-style English around him, then exposed him to some Aussies and French speaking English, in hopes he could discern accents when he heard them. I also gave him a note written in English, requesting some malaria pills.

He went in to the AO and returned 10 days later. He took several pictures, some of which were blurred by movement or were too far from the camera. But we did get two pictures clearly showing a blond Caucasian and another tall individual with his back to the camera. My source had also given the note to a Cambodian worker in the camp who claimed to speak a little English. The Cambodian said he gave the note to the Caucasians, telling them it had come from an English-speaking friend in Phnom Penh.

Sorry, Buddy

The note was returned to me with the added lines, "Sorry, buddy, we're fresh

Continued on page 82

Postcards From the Contras

Part 2
by Glenn Garvin



Uncle Ollie
Security Fence Dr. #1
Washington, D.C.
20000

*Gullible Gringos,
Eccentric Millionaires
and the Raid on
Managua*

All wars provide humorous stories, but the war in Nicaragua provided more bizarre moments than most. Glenn Garvin covered the war for six years, spending most of his time with the contras. This is the second of a two-part story on his experiences.

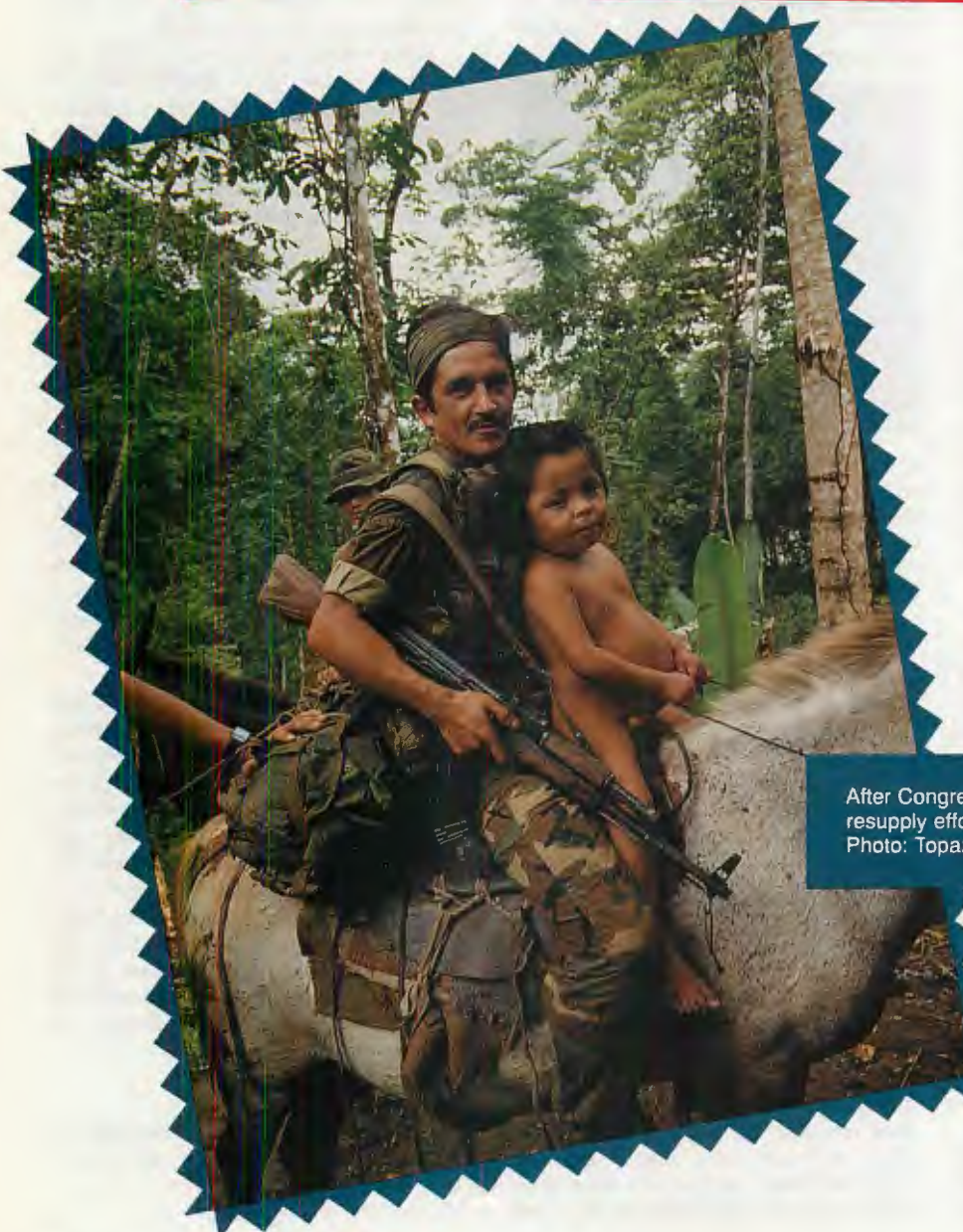
ALL day long we squatted under a grapefruit tree, listening to the dull thunder of artillery on the other side of the mountain, wondering what the Sandinistas were shooting at. They might be firing at random, launching their expensive Soviet rockets out into the trackless jungle to pulverize monkeys and coconuts, but the shelling had been going on for hours now.

It seemed more likely they were blasting away at the contra patrol that was supposed to meet our little group of journalists here but was now 36 hours late. Finally, in late afternoon, the artillery stopped. And a few minutes later, six figures in dusty olive

After Congress cut Contra Funds, aerial resupply efforts were replaced by mules.
Photo: Topaz

green appeared at the top of the ridge and headed down the crusty dirt road toward us. Even a mile away we could see the sun glinting off the cruel curves of their rifles. There was just enough time for us to panic.

"Look, I know its kind of late to be thinking about this," I said, squinting at the approaching soldiers, "but how are we going to tell if those guys are Sandinistas or contras?"



"I don't know," Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, the thin, scholarly reporter from the *London Spectator*, replied. "Everybody wears the same uniforms and carries the same guns."

It had never occurred to us, when the contras told us to meet them on this remote mountaintop in Nicaragua, that they would schedule a rendezvous in an area where the Sandinista army was active. After all, the idea was to show reporters how freely they could move around the country's northern part.

"If they're Sandinistas," Sue Mullin, a freelance photographer who was the other member of our little group, asked, "what will they do?"

"I'm not sure," I said. "But they might wonder what three gringos are doing hanging around in the middle of a combat zone, 30 miles from the nearest town."

By now we were whispering. The soldiers were only a few dozen yards away. We peered at them for a sign — maybe the tiny red star pins Sandinista officers wore on their caps. But the thick layer of dust made it impossible to pick out any details. We tried to look nonchalant — Yes, lieutenant, we're just out here interviewing this grapefruit tree.

The first soldier stopped, tilted his camouflaged cowboy hat up, and gestured at me. "Hey, amigo," he said. "Can you tell me ... " — *Here it comes, I thought, he's going to ask me Daniel Ortega's middle name, and when I don't know it we'll all be arrested as CIA agents* — "has there been any shooting up the road today?"

"No, no, all quiet," I answered. The soldier smiled, nodded and walked on, followed by his five companions. As they walked away, I realized we still didn't know who they were. They might even be our contra patrol, assuming from our studied indifference that we weren't the right gringos, so they would have to look further.

As the soldiers trudged on, Ambrose walked over to a nearby peasant shack, where a toothless old woman had been watching our encounter.

"Senora," he asked, "do you know if those soldiers were Sandinistas, or contras?"

"Sandinistas, of course," she said, and went back inside her hut. We could hear her in there with her husband, laughing, and I could just picture the conversation.

"Imagine that, Juan, those gringos think they're going to explain the war in Nicaragua to the world, and they can't even tell one army from another. No wonder the North American Congress can't make up its mind."

Fantasy Island

When the CIA moved its supply flight out to Swan Island, the agency thought it was an ideal set-up: no prying journalists or congressmen, no embarrassing incidents with Honduran peasants, no fear of

Sandinista attack. (If the contras saw any ill omen in the fact that the island had been used in staging the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, they tactfully kept their mouths shut about it.)

The CIA was not even fazed when the very first airplane to fly off the island couldn't find its way back and had to ditch in the middle of the Atlantic. By mid-1986, Swan Island was home to about 150 contras, a Honduran army platoon, three or four CIA officers, a handful of former Rhodesian pilots who flew the supply planes — and several thousand iguanas balefully surveying this invasion of their ances-



Contras also used dugouts as transport. Here, SOF's Paul Fanshaw, an ex-Legionnaire, travels on Coco River in 1987. Photo: Steve Salisbury

tral homeland.

But the CIA soon discovered Swan Island had its own highly novel problem: Dozens of bales of marijuana, dumped by drug smugglers, washed up on its beaches every week. Some of the contras found the marijuana a pleasurable diversion on an island with no television, radio or bars. Then they began to imagine it might be profitable as well, if they loaded it onto the supply flights with instructions to drop it somewhere on the mainland. The CIA officers, horror-struck when they thought of the headlines that would result if one of their planes was caught unloading marijuana, had to organize anti-dope patrols.

Gringos Are Very Strange People

"Gringos are very strange people," a contra politician told me confidentially one day after a fight with the U.S. State Department. I could see why he thought so. Meet a few of the gringos the contra army encountered along the way:

- **Hubert Humphreys**, a Memphis millionaire who owns a Holiday Inn in the Cayman Islands. Humphreys frequently donated money to the contras, and after a gift of \$60,000 that came at a particularly critical time, he was invited to visit one of the camps in Honduras. There, with much pomp and circumstance, Humphreys was made an honorary colonel in the contra army.

A few hours later, an aide to contra commander Enrique Bermudez came in with an unusual request. He wanted to

schedule a parade of marching contras.

"A parade?" Bermudez questioned, annoyed. "What for? This is a guerrilla army."

"Senor Humphreys just gave us another \$15,000," the aide responded. "I thought we could promote him to general and have a parade in his honor."

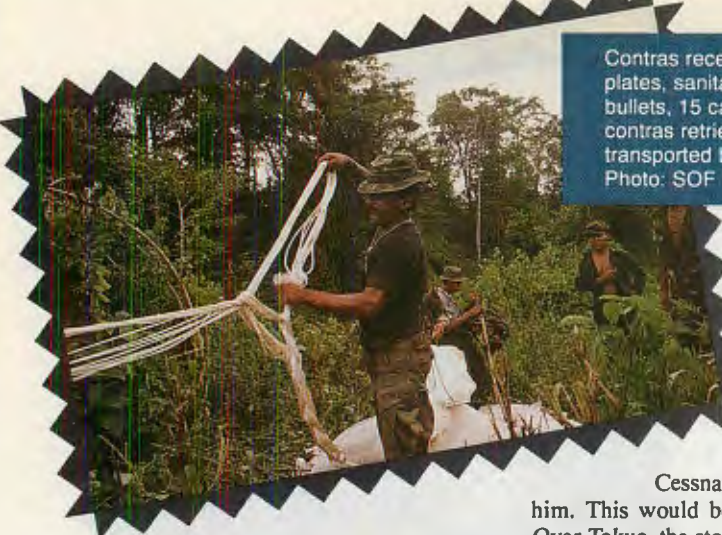
"Line 'em up," Bermudez said.

Humphreys told friends he hoped that if the contras won, he would get the rights to build a canal across Nicaragua. A Texas millionaire, Maco Stewart, was less ambitious: He only wanted to float "war bonds" that would be redeemable later for one of Nicaragua's tiny offshore islands.

- **Steve McAlister**, the only gringo to actually join a contra unit. McAlister was a 26-year-old U.S. Army private when he saw a television documentary on the contras in 1985. When he had two weeks of leave the following year, he flew from his base in West Germany to Costa Rica and found his way to the contra office there. When he learned that a Sandinista offensive was underway, he wangled a ride to the Nicaraguan border, borrowed a rifle and went inside to help. His unit was ambushed almost immediately; he was trapped inside, and his two weeks stretched into two months.

When McAlister finally returned from Nicaragua, he discovered his U.S. Army unit had been transferred back to

Contras received weird airdrops of dinner plates, sanitary napkins and, instead of bullets, 15 cases of suppositories. Here contras retrieve chutes that they later transported back to base camp by dugout. Photo: SOF files.



Personally Bombs Managua.' Maybe he'll think twice if he's going along."

What neither Hull, the pilot, Pastora nor anyone else considered was that the Bunker was located less than 200 yards from

the Inter-Continental Hotel, where nearly every foreign journalist and visiting political dignitary — including American congressmen who, regardless of ideological orientation, hovered around Nicaragua like a flock of political vultures — stayed during visits to Managua.

Depending on how hot the news was in Nicaragua on a given day, there might be anywhere from a half-dozen to a couple hundred media and political celebrities housed at the Inter-Con; NBC and CBS News even maintained bureaus there. A 500-pound bomb landing squarely on the Bunker would still do serious damage to the Inter-Con — and if the bomb missed the Bunker by a few yards, the carnage would be mind-boggling.

When Pastora heard the pilot's idea, he canceled the mission.

Everybody Has His Own Gringo

The weirdly incestuous relationship between the U.S. government and contra politicians led to a bizarre method of settling political arguments. In haggling about a particular operation, one contra might say: "Well, the CIA says ... " And from across the table another might retort: "So what? The State Department thinks ... "

Contra politician Aristides Sanchez refined this technique to its highest point when he got a CIA officer on the speaker phone, right in the middle of a meeting over whether the contras should name a new military commander. The CIA man

Louisiana. He gaily traipsed into the base and told his officers what had happened.

"Nicaragua? No kidding?" one of the officers asked. "Whose side are we on there?" The news that McAlister had been fighting for the good guys only slightly mollified the officer. "Couldn't you have called?" he complained.

The Army tossed McAlister in the stockade for three weeks, then discharged him. And he caught the next plane to Costa Rica and went right back to his contra unit, where he spent another seven months. *Peregrino*, the contras called him — Pilgrim.

• *John Hull, an old Indiana rancher who became the chief liaison between the CIA and the contras in Costa Rica.* Hull was at the center of a group of American farmers who owned land along Costa Rica's remote northern border. They lived out a story that was half John Wayne and half Don Knotts. They raced the border's back roads in Jeep Cherokees, blasting away at iguanas and monkeys with their hunting rifles; they drank rum and danced with the local girls — and they hated the Sandinistas like hell itself.

Practically all of them let contras camp out on their lands and use their little airstrips for resupply. One of them, a loopy Illinois rancher named Jim Denby, even liked to take his plane across the border and buzz so low over Sandinista gun emplacements that he could spit on them. (That kind of came to a halt after the Sandinistas shot him down in 1987).

Hull was much less of a nutball than most of them, and the CIA station chief started coming around more and more often. Eventually, for all intents and purposes, Hull was the CIA up on the border. The American Left has accused him, in that capacity, of just about everything short of the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa.

We can't kill a whole forest worth of newsprint to go into that just now, but it's worth noting that John Hull prevented the most harebrained stunt ever devised by the contras, coincidentally probably saving the lives of a whole bunch of people he

personally despised, namely liberals and reporters.

In 1983, Eden Pastora decided he wanted to bomb Managua, using one of the little twin-engine

Cessnas the CIA had supplied him. This would be like *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, the story of a famous American bomber raid on Tokyo in the early days of World War II, where the United States served notice that, even in a weakened state, they could bring the war directly to Japan.

Not only would a raid on Managua garner incredible international publicity, but the Sandinistas wouldn't be able to keep it a secret from ordinary Nicaraguans by censoring the news as they nearly always did. Everyone in Managua would see that the contras were real.

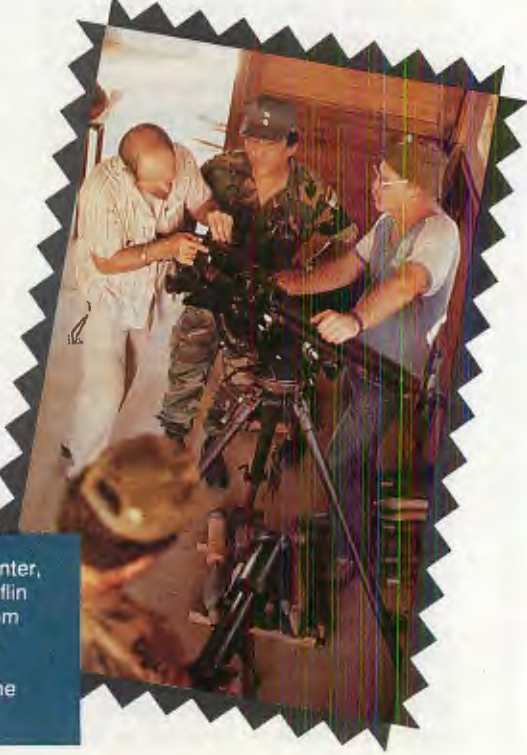
The target: The Bunker — the old Somoza headquarters complex in the middle of Managua — now the nerve center of the Sandinista army. Because most of the buildings were heavily reinforced, Pastora insisted that the little Cessna carry a 500-pound bomb.

The pilot who drew the assignment for the mission was worried. He suspected the Bunker would be protected by heavy concentrations of anti-aircraft guns, and the heavy bomb would make the plane slow and unmaneuverable as it approached. He knew better than to argue with the mercurial Pastora, so he went to see his old friend Hull, who agreed that it was a stupid idea.

"I saw a report on Managua air defense last week," Hull told the pilot. "You're right — the Bunker is ringed with Soviet guns, the kind that lock onto a target with radar. You'll never even get close."

The pilot was downcast. He didn't want to look like a coward, but he also didn't want to fly a certain suicide mission.

"Look, tell Pastora you think it's a great idea," Hull — who privately thought Pastora was a blowhard fool — suggested. "But tell him the propaganda value will be a lot better if he flies along with you. Think of the headlines, 'Commandante Zero



Contra leader Enrique Bermudez (in center, with R.K. Brown on right and Harry Clatlin on left) discusses problems with 12.7mm Deglayrev heavy machine gun in 1985 contra base camp. Bermudez was assassinated in Managua in 1990 by the Sandinistas. Photo: Topaz.



Illustration: Susan Edson

be one of the most powerful, and sinister, families in Nicaragua. So many conversations began, *los maldito Garcia* ... those damned Garcias.

Finally, one afternoon a slightly drunken contra official told me his wife had just left him for a Garcia.

"Who are these Garcias?" I demanded.

"And why haven't I ever met one?"

"You really don't know?" the contra asked in astonishment. "What are the last three letters of 'Garcia'?"

This was how I learned that "Garcia family" was contraspeak for the CIA, an innocent phrase that could be shouted in drunken anger at a Tegucigalpa bar (and was, often) without panicking everyone in the room.

Colonel Jaime

That's what the contras called him. He wasn't really a colonel, but the contras liked to give the CIA men ranks for some reason. Jaime's predecessor had been a colonel, so he was a colonel, too.

Jaime's real name was Jim Adkins. He was a veteran of the CIA's secret war in Laos, where he lived in a hootch a grenade's throw from the North Vietnamese border. For months at a time, he saw no one but the primitive H'mong tribesmen he was supposed to mold into a modern army. Adkins didn't mind that, but he hated all the rules and regulations that headquarters kept devising in an attempt to placate a hostile Congress. In the end, trying to play by congressional rules didn't do any good anyway; the American advisers flew home, and the H'mong stayed there to pay the piper.

Never again, Adkins decided, and when the CIA first asked him to go to Nicaragua in 1982 as chief liaison to the contras, he refused. Finally, in September 1985, the seventh floor gave him a direct order and he headed for Central America.

When he got to Honduras, Adkins was confronted with a confusing and often contradictory set of rules of engagement that seemed to have been designed by some bureaucratic Dali. In Washington, Congress and the Reagan administration were using the contra program as a club to beat each other senseless; it was the CIA officers on the ground in Honduras who had to make some sense out of the debris.

So a CIA officer could fly out to the Nicaraguan border and count refugees who were dying of dysentery, or from gangrene that set in after their toes were blown off by Sandinista land mines. That was OK, that was gathering intelligence. But he couldn't load the helicopter with food or medicine, or carry any of the dying refugees back to hospitals; that would be

settled the dispute on the spot: The contra who was proposing a change was "an imbecile," he shouted. Case closed. The contras even had a saying about this form of argument — everybody has his own gringo.

This could lead to some complicated problems for the gringos, too. In January 1989, in the dying hours of the Reagan administration, I went up to Elliot Abrams' suite of offices on the fourth floor of the U.S. State Department to see if there were any last-second conspiracies afoot. One of Abrams' assistants was screaming incoherently into a phone. When he finally slammed it down, he explained he was settling a dispute between four contra leaders: Adolfo Calero, Alfredo Cesar, Enrique Bermudez and Aristides Sanchez.

"You know what I'm doing today?" he asked. "I'm trying to find tickets to an inaugural ball for Sanchez, Cesar and

Bermudez. You know why? Because that fucking Calero got tickets from Jack Kemp, and then he ran down to Miami and started prancing around, waving them under everyone's nose ... 'I got tickets because I'm the one that really counts!' Now I have to fund three more sets or it will be a major political incident ... over a goddamn fucking ticket to an inaugural ball!"

Footnote: When Aristides Sanchez walked by, some of the other contras would whisper: *There goes the most expensive butt in the whole contra movement.* It seems he once billed the organization \$4,000 for a bee sting on his rear end, suffered during a visit to one of the border camps.

The Garcia Family

I used to hear contras talk about the Garcia family all the time. They seemed to

Continued on page 74



THE INCREDIBLE

HULK



**One
Captain,
Three
Crews,
Six Months
and Millions
of Dollars in
Nightmare
Voyage to
the Persian
Gulf**

**Text & Photos
by Nathaniel Gibbs**

ON 30 August 1990, I stepped off a plane in Norfolk, Virginia, and grabbed a taxi for the shipyard. At the time, I thought I was going to take command of one of our country's Ready Reserve Fleet ships and steam off full-ahead to help our troops in the Persian Gulf. My romantic visions didn't last long.

At the shipyard, I was met by an agent of the Military Sealift Command. During a brief interview, I was questioned about my previous command experience, with particular attention directed toward rust buckets. Although I had been captain of a new, modern container ship on my last job, I sensed they were more interested in the fact that I had previously commanded several trashed-out, overaged freighters.

I've never been known for shying away from the truth, especially during a job

interview. I extolled the hardships of running a rust bucket, lessons I had learned over the years, the benefits of such schooling — I believe I even interjected a trace of nostalgia (for \$9,000 per month pay, all this didn't seem excessive).

The interview ended with handshakes all around and a backslap or two. I was the man for the job. The agent drove me to the airport, put me on a plane for Beaumont, Texas, and waved bye-bye. I was on my way to take the SS *Washington* out of lay-up.

The next morning, I took a launch out to the fleet anchorage. The *Washington* was nested with about two-dozen other ghosts from the past — all at anchor, side by side and dressed with new battleship-gray paint jobs. It looked to be in good shape, I thought, as the launch throttled back and squatted alongside the gangway.

A few moments later, I was stumbling



Nat Gibbs was captain of one of the largest and most modern, seagoing freighters in the world — then he took command of the *Washington*.

and feeling my way in the dark through the ship, while bumping against trash, junk and garbage collected from eight years of lay-up. The odor from this accumulation, laced with the nose-shattering smell of acetylene, was enough to gag a wharf rat.

Somewhere up ahead there was human life. I could hear the muffled sound of voices, and occasionally I caught a glimpse of the reflected glow from a flashlight. I worked my way down the passageway, entering a room where several men were bent over a table studying blueprints.

“Gentlemen,” I announced, “I’m Nat Gibbs. I’m the new captain.”

A lean, wiry man carrying a face full of wrinkles detached himself from the group and extended his hand. “I’m the port engineer, captain. Welcome aboard.”

Unready Reserve Fleet

From that moment on, until February of the following year, I received a daily lesson in the real theory behind the Ready Reserve Fleet. There were 86 Ready Reserve ships activated for the Gulf War — in varying stages of decrepitude and disrepair. And many of the available crew members were in about the same shape.

The *Washington*’s keel was laid in 1943. Originally a T-2 tanker, it was later bought by Sea Train Lines and converted to a heavy-lift freighter, with railroad tracks embedded in the cargo deck to accommodate freight cars. With several ownership changes, it saw service in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Now, 47 years later, it was a crippled relic from the past, equivalent to a 135-year-old senior citizen.

By midmorning, most of the newly hired crew had reported aboard. By early afternoon, about half of them were lined up outside my office asking for discharges. They had seen the engine room, couldn’t believe what they saw and now wanted to flee the wreck. Luckily, I had brought a

ball-point pen from home and, using some discharges I found aboard ship, I began signing off crew members.

I would wear out several ball-points over the ensuing days. Since the ship had been completely stripped of all supplies, equipment and repair parts, everything had to be ordered.

The next day, we were towed down the river to Port Neches and tied up next to the riverbank. Repair crews came aboard and began working day and night to get us out to sea. Living conditions were primitive, while scorching heat from the hottest weather in southeast Texas history made life unbearable. Shoreside and military officials were exerting a lot of pressure to push us out to sea.

“Hell, this ship’s in good condition. Needs a little touch-up here and there. That’s about all,” they said.



Christmas at sea, Captain Gibbs celebrates with Army sergeant wearing what he thought was Persian Gulf camouflage.

In the meantime, port and ship engineers were having problems. The machinery aboard ship was obsolete, with new repair parts unobtainable. This led to cannibalization of other junk ships in the fleet. “Used but good,” became the standard joke.

Finally, we fired up the boilers and put them on line, tested piping and conducted inspection of all gear. This caused more chaos: water lines broke and gushed into about half the forecastle, flooding out

crewmembers in the radio shack and mess hall. The “black gang” had to wear rain gear in the engine room; I worked at my desk in ankle-deep water. Then the boilers, pumps and generators broke down.

Just Sort Of Patch It Up

Meanwhile, on deck, the cargo gear, ballast system and lifesaving equipment was found to be unfit, even for a garage sale, and the navigational gear was a joke. By this time we were all working around the clock, spurred on by optimistic idiots from shore, who asked, “Can’t you just sort of patch it up now and fix it later at sea?”

After a week of continuous repair, we were told to post the sailing board (a plank used by visitors to leave the ship). For the next week-and-a-half, we changed the sailing board twice daily. On several occasions we called the pilot and tugs to assist in sailing, but the engineer couldn’t get us away from the dock. Since the winches weren’t working, the gangway and mooring lines had to be pulled in by hand.

By putting the crew on the slow bell (working very slowly), we bought additional time for correcting last-minute engine problems. After one aborted attempt at sailing, I checked the engine room. The main pump and secondary generator were broken down, while the parts were scattered about on deck.

A few days later, we actually got away from the dock and headed to Houston, Texas, to pick up cargo. On our way through the Gulf of Mexico, we conducted sea trials for certification of seaworthiness. We crept across, holding our breath.

At Houston, we began loading army trucks while undergoing additional repair work. A big problem there was security, as practiced by the U.S. Army and Navy. Incoming repair crews were stopped at the gate and detained for hours; seamen, engineers and repair crews leaving the ship on business were challenged on the dock and not allowed to return.

Captain Gibbs and crew members of the *Washington* try to get into the holiday spirit as they steam (very slowly) toward the Persian Gulf.



Finally, the ship's crew and shoreside repair gangs were issued security passes for freedom of movement. But no sooner had this happened than they began changing colors of the passes every other day without notifying us, so we had the problem all over again. The result — unbelievably long coffee breaks and bad jokes while we wore out the seats of our pants.

By now, most of the crew had turned over, and those remaining wanted off. A suitcase parade formed every morning outside my office, demanding discharges.

Chugging Toward Saudi Arabia

On the evening of 7 September, we finally put out to sea, making it about five miles offshore in the Gulf before breaking down. A tug came and towed us back to Port Arthur, Texas, for repair work. A few days later, we again attempted sailing, but couldn't make it away from the dock. After several tries over the following week, we rattled out to sea. We were finally on our way to Saudi Arabia.

Southeast of New Orleans, I got a call from the engine room. We had developed boiler trouble. During a hurried, MariSat (marine satellite) phone call to our agent, we agreed to steam at half-ahead to Port Everglades, Florida; pass close to the sea buoy and take on a repair crew. They were to ride with us up the coast and do repair work prior to reaching Wilmington, North Carolina. They would then disembark by launch before we jumped off for the Atlantic crossing at Cape Hatteras.

We picked up the repair crew offshore of Port Everglades, steaming 10 miles up the coast before our steering gear locked in the hard-right position and the plant broke down. Without power, we turned sideways in the Gulf Stream and started drifting up the coast. I ordered some soldiers riding with us to turn on the headlights of all army trucks on deck and warn away traffic. The VHF had died with the power, but by hooking up dry-cell batteries we were able to warn radio traffic of our condition. The first incoming transmission I heard was from a tug and tow: "Hey, cap, I've been watching you. Seems like you're up to your behind in alligators."

The next day, we were towed back to Port Everglades, but found they were not equipped for major repairs. The tugs hooked on again and dragged us up to Jacksonville, Florida. Before entering the shipyard, the Army took away our cargo and we were declared unseaworthy. After a week in the yard, we were ordered to steam back toward Beaumont, Texas, and conduct sea trials on the way. Halfway there, we were pronounced seaworthy again and told to return to Jacksonville for cargo.

Seagoing Drunks And Senior Citizen Seamen

At Jacksonville, we loaded again, made additional repairs and signed on a new crew. By then I had gone through most of three crew changes. Word had gotten out to the union halls through scuttlebutt, reinforced by newspaper articles and the *Journal of Commerce*. We were the Abbott and Costello act of the waterfront. As a result, we began receiving replacement crews more suited to central casting than professional life on the high seas.

Seagoing drunks and seamen taken out of retirement began showing up. Walking

down. I myself assumed we would probably make it one day, or two at the most, along the great circle route before calling for a tug. But to everyone's astonishment, we made it across the Atlantic before bad news arrived. It came from the chief engineer, one day out of Gibraltar. The boilers were using more water than we were making. We had 36 hours left before engine shutdown. I altered course for Cadiz, Spain.

As soon as we arrived in Cadiz, the Army took away our cargo — we were unseaworthy again. However, ours was not the only rust bucket in Cadiz; there were some ships docked near us that had been towed all the way across the Atlantic. We spent one month and a ton of money in Cadiz undergoing repair work; we also had another crew turnover. One of the replacement crew members shipped to us from the States was 82 years old. I also signed aboard my fifth chief engineer.

Ugly Duckling On The French Riviera

Following repairs, orders came to go to Livorno, Italy, and pick up scrapped army vehicles for return to the States. We never made it. On the way we were diverted to Villefranche, France, to await further orders.

Villefranche is a small, picturesque cul-de-sac harbor, centrally located on the French Riviera. The people of Villefranche couldn't believe it when this obscene piece of junk limped into their harbor and tied up to a mooring buoy among multi-million dollar yachts. We fit in like an ugly, stud duck in a pond full of virgin swans.

The crew thought it was great. A few miles down the highway to our right was Monaco, to the left Nice and Cannes. We took advantage of the stay to do much-needed repair work; but after two weeks I became uneasy. Fearing that the Military Sealift Command had lost track of us, I contacted them in London. The call produced immediate results: I was told to go to Bremerhaven, Germany,

and pick up Army cargo for Saudi Arabia.

I retraced my route through the Mediterranean, up the coast past Cadiz and through the English Channel to Bremerhaven on the North Sea. There, I picked up a cargo of army tanks, charged out a bunch of crewmen (some quitting and some fired) and did extensive repair work before heading toward the Persian Gulf.

The ship celebrated Christmas at sea, just prior to transiting the Suez Canal. A couple of days at Port Said, Egypt, gave us time to take on boiler water for the final



antiques were signed aboard, only to be discharged a few days later with medical problems. They weren't staying long enough to build up familiarity. I chewed out the chief engineer and threatened to fire him for not coming up to my office for his payoff and discharge, before he told me that he didn't have any payoff coming. He had just come from the hall to sign on as a replacement for the one getting off.

On the day we steamed past the Jacksonville sea buoy and took off again for Saudi Arabia, bets were being made on how far we would get before breaking



VOYAGE OF THE WASHINGTON

1. Departs lay-up fleet at Beaumont, Texas.
2. Ties up along riverbank at Port Neches, Texas, for repair work.
3. Sails to Houston, Texas, to load cargo.
4. Sails for Persian Gulf, breaks down in Gulf of Mexico.
5. Towed back to Port Neches for repair work.
6. Sails for Persian Gulf, develops engine trouble.
7. Picks up repair crew at Port Everglades, Florida.
8. Steering gear and engine break down.
9. Towed to Port Everglades, then to Jacksonville, Florida.
10. Ship declared unseaworthy, cargo taken away.
11. Ship repaired and sails back to Beaumont.
12. Ship diverted back to Jacksonville for cargo.
13. Ship sails for Persian Gulf.
14. Boiler trouble develops, ship stops at Cadiz, Spain.
15. Ship declared unseaworthy, cargo taken away.
16. Ship repaired at Cadiz.
17. Ship sails to Livorno, Italy, for cargo.
18. Multiple problems develop en route.
19. Ship diverted to Villefranche, France.
20. Ship undergoes repair work.
21. Ship retraces route out of Mediterranean, up West Coast, through English Channel to Bremerhaven, Germany.
22. Ship undergoes repair and loads army M1A1 tanks.
23. Ship sails to Persian Gulf, undergoes repair work at Port Said, Egypt, then transits Suez Canal.
24. Ship reaches Persian Gulf, towed to docks at Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, for discharge.
25. Ship sails toward Gibraltar but must stop at Damman and Bahrain for boiler water.
26. Ship transits Suez Canal, immediately develops multiple problems.
27. Ship limps into Livorno, Italy, for repair work.
28. Crew leaves ship.

leg of the voyage to Saudi Arabia.

Almost four-and-a-half months after leaving the lay-up fleet, we celebrated the new year. The Persian Gulf was just around the bend from Oman, and our spirits soared. We were about to deliver our first cargo.

A few days later, the tugboats nudged us up to the dock at Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, and we began discharging tanks. An Army colonel pranced up and down the dock sporting a grin the size of a sliced watermelon. I don't know who was more proud: the colonel of his new tanks or the crew of the *Washington* at having made it to our destination.

After several days' discharging cargo, coupled with repair work, we received orders to head toward Gibraltar. Before leaving the Persian Gulf, though, we had to stop in at Damman and Bahrain for boiler water, then once again at Suez.

We cleared the Suez Canal without problems, taking off for the Straits of Messina. We were on a roll, but then the dice came up snake eyes — the ship broke down again. After explaining to the head office that we needed repairs, we received a telex telling us to go to Livorno, Italy,

Route of the *Washington* took it thousands of miles, cost millions of dollars and gave Captain Gibbs a head of gray hair.

and do only emergency repairs while loading cargo. We telexed back a list of 57 emergency repair items needing immediate attention.

A week later, the entire crew was on a plane for the States. After spending something like \$20 million to keep this rust bucket afloat, the government was faced with a decision: Repair the ship again or send it to the graveyard?

Personally, I'd made that decision months before.

Nathaniel Gibbs has stalked the adventure trail all his adult life. He has served in four wars and two uprisings in various capacities — Marine private, Army lieutenant, and ordinary seaman through captain in the Merchant Marine.

During the past few years, he has turned his hand to writing. Gibbs has authored pieces for numerous publications, and recently completed his first novel, Vietnam Sealift. ✕

CONVENTION '91

SMOKE
AND
FIRE
IN LAS VEGAS



Peter Kokalis' firepower demonstration on Saturday began with firing of antique machine guns, including this replica of a caliber .45-70 Gatling gun.



Culminating show was the "Mad Minute," — more than 20 machine guns lined up firing simultaneously. Firing here are an M14A1, caliber 7.62x51mm NATO (Vietnam War vintage) and World War I-vintage, caliber 7.92mm water-cooled Maxim machine gun on Swiss tripod.



French Hotchkiss machine gun, model 1914 caliber 8mm Lebel fires at targets including 70 gallons of gas ignited by detonators.



"Constant" LoMont fired over 4,000 rounds in these two Belgian FN Mag 58 GPMGs; caliber 7.62x51mm NATO, mounted in tandem on a pedestal mount.

GO AHEAD MICKEY, MAKE OUR DAY

What could be as much fun as the SOF Convention in Las Vegas? How about the first annual East Coast Convention/EXPO in Orlando, Florida. From March 13-15, we're invading the home of Disney World — Mickey will never be the same.

There will be a three-day expo, with nearly 400 exhibits. We're going to present daily seminars given by experts on such topics as terrorism, POW/MIAs, and all types of weapons. Also, you can take part in events such as defensive/evasive driving, rappelling and paintball competitions (for conventioners over age 18).

On successive evenings, there will be a barbeque and a banquet. And if there's ever a lull in the action, you can check out Disney World.

We're looking forward to introducing ourselves to Florida. Hope to see you there.



Pugil stick competition as always went on late into the night, as contestants in different weight categories tried to be left high and dry on Sahara's pool.



Soviet defector Alexander Zuyev (left) meets U.S. Army A-10 Warthog pilots Eric Salmonson (center) and John Marks, Persian Gulf war heroes.



Hollywood director John Milius (center) was guest range machine gunner this year as the crowd patiently waited for everything to be blown to hell.



Combat Medicine Workshop featured a hands-on "mass casualty practical," where participants had to triage four bombing victims.



Bob Taylor's purebred German Shepherds could sniff out drugs and explosives, as well as defend their owners.



Congratulated here by General Jack Singlaub (left), Alex Zuyev received a standing ovation at banquet when he recalled his daring flight from Soviet Georgia in a MIG-29.



SOF's expo is a cornucopia of guns and equipment; thousands of people came in over the weekend to see stuff they wouldn't find anywhere else. Photo: Ralph Montoya



Leaders of the H'mong community received certificates of commendation presented by the U.S. Council for World Freedom. Photo: Ralph Montoya



After the banquet SOF auctioned off items that varied from interesting (like this Iraqi tank unit commander's flag, held up by Col. Alex McColl) to the useless (RKB's old desert boots) to the gross (Kitty Baran's jock strap). Photo: Ralph Montoya



Jungle and urban environment co-mingle in El Salvador, providing a wide range of cover and concealment for both sides in the decade-old conflict.

REACH OUT AND H.I.T.T. SOMEONE

SOF's Kokalis Upgrades Salvadoran SRT Skills

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

T

wo nights after we arrived in El Salvador to provide Level II countersniper training to the *Equipo de Reaccion Especial* (Special Reaction Team, or ERE) of the *Policia Nacional* (National Police — PN), terrorists of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) with RPG-7s attacked a group of vigilantes in a cemetery (how appropriate) near our quarters at the *Direccion General* (PN headquarters). Two innocent civilians were killed. Welcome to El Salvador.

Consisting of 50 enlisted personnel and one officer, the ERE's mission includes sniper incidents, barricaded terrorists with hostages, VIP protection and counterterrorist operations in general. In addition, the ERE continues to raid FMLN safe houses on an almost daily basis, capturing terrorists and large caches of weapons, munitions and explosives.

All of these scenarios provide potential applications for highly skilled marksmen with scoped rifles. In February 1991, SOF provided a basic Level I countersniper course for the ERE. (See "Sniper School," Sept. '91.) I was determined to return and turn it up a notch for this combat-hardened unit with advanced Level II countersniper training. We were able to do so eight months later, this past October.

Several days prior to conducting the Level II countersniper course, I and my co-instructor, once again Chris Mayer — a police officer with 23 years experience in Southern California law enforcement agencies — participated in a house search that included 26 ERE members. Together with another eight police officers — undercover detectives, explosives personnel, photographers and uniformed police — we served a search warrant on a house where kidnapers were suspected of holding Billy Sol, a TACA Airlines executive and friend of SOF, who had disappeared several months earlier.

Warned that the alleged kidnappers/terrorists were heavily armed and would probably resist, we raced across San Salvador in PN pickup trucks, armed to the teeth with everything imaginable, up to and including several M203 40mm grenade launchers attached to M16A1 rifles. The ride across town proved to be more dangerous than our encounter with the house occupants. Driving the streets of San Salvador can be more lethal than a firefight with the FMLN.

Assorted Incendiaries

After surrounding the house, we moved in — expecting contact at any moment — only to be greeted by an 80-year-old maid too deaf to hear, along with two *campesinos* too frightened to even speak.

We located the cellar — under a bedroom trapdoor — where Billy Sol was alleged to be held, but it showed no evidence of having ever been occupied.

Also uncovered were about a half-pound of marijuana, an unregistered Colt Python .357 Magnum revolver with a 2.5-inch barrel and 24 cartridges; 27 assorted .30-06 and 7x57mm military ball cartridges dating from the 1940s; a Browning High Power magazine with nine rounds; one tear gas grenade and several uniforms from an American military academy.

A pile of nothing. Except, that is, for three other items we uncovered: A sack with 350 empty detonator tubes, another containing about 15 pounds of potassium chlorate (used as an oxidizer in improvised explosives, and very little else — highly unstable, it is usually mixed with petroleum-based grease)

and one more sack filled with powdered sulfur (another ingredient of improvised explosives). These will get you in deep trouble with authorities even in the United States, let alone war-ravaged El Salvador.

Comotions like this one prove constant distractions in El Salvador, where you usually go to sleep hearing machine-gun fire in the streets and wake up to bombs going off. Somehow, training the troops manages to flow around these disruptive incidents.

An intensive four-day and one-evening course was designed for the ERE, based upon the High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) that SOF staff participated in during an advanced countersniper program at Yavapai Firearms Academy in Prescott, Arizona. (See "HITTs and Myths," Jan. '92.)

How does "Level II" training differ from a so-called introductory countersniper course? Advanced firearms training presumes the student has already mastered skills of basic marksmanship, the various firing positions and required knowledge about his weapon system. Advanced training concentrates on tactical exercises and application of basic marksmanship skills to training which simulates reality as much as possible.

Before we examine advanced training SOF designed for the ERE, we need to take a look at weapons available to ERE countersnipers. Three different sniper systems are inventoried by the ERE, and all of these were employed during the Level II phase of their countersniper training.

Policia Nacional Hardware

They have one captured Dragunov (SVD). Although the serial number of the

However, in my opinion the Dragunov has been vastly overrated by Western authorities. It is a mass-produced, field-issued, selected marksman rifle. It is not a sub-MOA precision tool intended for surgical kills at distances of 800 meters and greater. There are just too many parts twisting and turning in any Kalashnikov-type firearm, and few Dragunovs will shoot better than 2 MOA at 100 meters.

The skeletonized, wood-laminate buttstock does little to minimize the sharp recoil of this full-power rifle cartridge. In fact, by the last day of the four-day Level II countersniper course, two individuals assigned to this rifle, after firing close to 400 rounds each, abandoned it in favor of a Steyr SSG, as the cumulative effects of the recoil were more than they could tolerate. Yet these tough cookies were born and raised in a world of hurt. Over the past eight years I have seen Salvadoran soldiers stoically handle a great deal of

pain and suffering on countless occasions. The Dragunov is not a pleasant rifle to shoot.

Standard-issue Soviet 7.62x54R Type LPS ball ammunition is capable of only mediocre accuracy. There is no match-grade ammunition available for this rifle in El Salvador. I selected Type LPS ball manufactured in 1983 and 1987 with factory code "188" for use in this course. This Soviet factory purportedly produces match-grade ammunition; given a choice, ammunition from the same (or at least a similar) lot should be fired in sniper-grade rifles.

While checking each round from the 7.62x54R ammo box in the ERE supply room, I made a unique discovery. There were several rounds headstamped "93 82," with

both copper-washed and brass-washed steel cases. This is the arsenal code for North Korea and indicates manufacture in 1982. No North Korean ammunition in this caliber has previously ever been reported anywhere, although it is logical to assume they have manufactured it.

Fortunately, the highly-regarded Steyr-Mannlicher SSG 69 (*Scharfschützengewehr*, Model 1969) bolt-action sniper rifle predominates in the ERE inventory. The standard sniping rifle of the Austrian army and numerous other law enforcement agencies and military units, it is in general a superb off-the-shelf choice for this application. When fed match-grade 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition, the SSG 69 will almost always shoot at least 0.5 MOA at 100 meters. It has a number of outstanding features, with few

Yet these tough cookies were born and raised in a world of hurt. Over the past eight years I have seen Salvadoran soldiers stoically handle a great deal of pain and suffering on countless occasions.

bolt carrier was obliterated with a center punch and that of the receiver ground off, while all Cyrillic markings on the PSO-1 scope windage and elevation turrets were gouged out, the origin was clearly Soviet.

Gas-operated and firing from the closed-bolt position, the locked-breech semiautomatic-only Dragunov employs the same rotary bolt system as the Kalashnikov assault rifles and RPK squad automatic.

The four-power PSO-1 scope features battery-powered reticle illumination, but the batteries are of a type unique to this unit. A rubber eyecup provides the correct eye relief of 2.72 inches. Field of view is 6 degrees. There is an excellent rangefinding reticle pattern, adapted from the RPG-7V's optical sight. The PSO-1 is a fine piece of glass.

deficiencies. Overall length is 45.6 inches and the weight, empty, hovers just over 10 pounds with a scope.

While you must go to a custom-made rig to surpass the Steyr SSG, a few of its idiosyncrasies can be irritating. The trigger/magazine-well is a complicated single piece of molded black plastic. Over time, gun lubricants will attack this synthetic material, compromising its structural integrity and forcing replacement. The five-round, Steyr-Mannlicher-type rotary magazine fits flush within the stock and is also made of plastic. It is, in my opinion, the weakest link in the SSG 69 system, and is prone to breakage. Almost half of the SSG 69 magazines in the ERE's inventory are damaged to one degree or another. Some are no longer usable.

With these exceptions, the Steyr SSG 69 rifle is sturdy and robust. It is holding up well under El Salvador's adverse conditions. The greatest problem we encountered was with the scopes mated to these rifles.

Substandard Scopes

Two of the ERE's SSG 69 rifles were equipped with Redfield 3-9X variable scopes. The ocular's focus-adjustment ring on one of these scopes was inoperative. After the second day of the course, the reticle pattern on the other Redfield scope kept rotating within the scope tube. The other seven rifles were fitted with scopes marked "Mannlicher 6X," built by Burris in substantial quantities in the early 1980s for Steyr of America. They are not Mil-spec, but rather a commercial scope produced for a Steyr-Mannlicher sales promotion. One of these Burris scopes had broken crosshairs. Four of them fogged up during heavy rain we encountered on the evening of the course's second day. These were unserviceable the next morning.

All nine of these scopes were intended for sporting purposes only. Hunters usually shoot no more than 20 or 30 rounds per year, if that much. By the time we finished Level II training, these scopes had been subjected to the pounding recoil of several thousand rounds of 7.62x51mm ammunition. They are literally self-destructing.

With the U.S. M118 Special Ball ammunition issued to the ERE we were never able to reach the SSG 69's true accuracy potential, and the very best groups were no better than 1.5 MOA. Headstamped "LC 87" with NATO cross in circle, this ammunition was manufactured at Lake City Arsenal in 1987. The 173-grain FMJ M72-type bullet (the old .30 caliber match bullet) was produced on Lake City's very tired bullet-forming dies, which have seen better days by far.

The ERE also has one M21 sniper system and one heavy-barrel (stainless steel) Springfield Armory M1A. The screw that interfaces the Leatherwood



ART scope to the M14 was missing, so the M21 was not used. The M1A had a camouflaged synthetic stock with a leather cheekpiece, an M14A1 bipod, and was in almost new condition. While overly heavy, it performed without stoppages and with accuracy almost approaching that of the SSG 69s throughout the course.

An integral part of our Level II course was the moving target system designed by Louis Awerbuck and now manufactured by the tactical division of The Robar Companies Inc. (Dept. SOF, 21438 N.7th Avenue, Suite B, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone: 602-581-2648).

Most firearms training does not simulate reality. Most live-fire range training takes place at known distances with either static, 1-dimensional paper targets, or reactive steel plates facing straight on. On the streets of San Salvador, live enemy targets bob and weave in an erratic manner, rarely presenting a frontal shot.

ERE countersnipers move to firing stations during complex tactical exercise, making maximum use of available cover and concealment.

Awerbuck's moving target system attempts to duplicate reality in a cost-effective manner. We used two paper targets in conjunction with the moving-target apparatus. As a hostage or barricade, we employed the "option" type target with squared-off head and torso, developed by the Yavapai Firearms Academy (YFA, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 27290, Prescott Valley, AZ 86312; phone: 602-772-8262). Its camouflage pattern inhibits shooters from looking over the weapon for their hits and in so doing throwing the weapon downward after the trigger has been pulled and impacting low. The torso kill zone measures approximately 12 inches long by 8 inches wide. The outline representing the eye-socket kill zone is about 2x4.5 inches.



Our enemy target was the life-size "PLO terrorist," available from Know Your Enemy (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 794, Anaheim, CA 92815-0794). The brain area above its eye sockets was outlined and became the only acceptable target in drills involving the moving target system, as instant incapacitation is required in hostage scenarios.

The first morning of the course commenced with zeroing rifles at 25 meters using the YFA camouflage target.

This was followed by torso and then head shots at the same target from the same distance. Seventeen students were enrolled and all but one were paired off as two-man teams alternating between observing and shooting. Throughout the course, one team always worked with the moving target system; first at 25 meters and then 50 meters.

Why So Close-Up?

Many will question shooting at 25 and 50 meters in a Level II countersniper course. However, the fact is that the average law-enforcement countersniper's

engagement distance is well under 100 meters in urban environments. His targets will most probably be moving about, sometimes spastically, and he must hit with utmost precision, as hostages may often be covering a large portion of the target.

Pretending that countersnipers routinely take out enemy targets under those circumstances at distances of 1,000 meters or more is a fantasy beneath serious discussion. Even on the battlefield, I have never personally witnessed a sniper kill at a distance greater than 300 meters. I'm sure shots at far greater distances have been taken and, on occasion, made — but not in the city, where the ERE operates.

After more torso and head work at 50 meters with the camouflage target, the students were given 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

SOF's Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis and co-instructor Chris Mayer, together with graduating class of the Level II countersniper course provided to the SWAT Team of El Salvador's *Policia Nacional*.

could be given at any moment within the 10-minute time frame. This is an excellent and realistic exercise in mental discipline. Law-enforcement countersnipers may have to wait for hours before making just one sudden, surgical hit within seconds.

Our first day finished with a review of the kneeling, sitting and low roll-over prone firing positions from behind a steel gate.

In juxtaposition to the "10-minute" drill, the second day began with an exercise requiring students to run 50 meters, and then, from the position of their choice, fire one suppressive snap-shot at a steel plate followed by one precise head-shot at the camouflage target, both from 80 meters. All students chose prone.

Positions included sitting, squatting (sometimes called "rice paddy prone") and kneeling. Off-hand snap-shots fired



Countersniper leapfrogs to another firing station, while his partner provides suppressive fire.



from the shoulder were also reviewed and practiced. A countersniper may have to employ this latter technique, if surprised by an enemy target at close range while moving through a building to his firing position.

Using two countersnipers at a time, students were run through a "leap frog" exercise. The first man shot and then quickly moved to the next station, while the other man was delivering a cover shot.

To alter the shooters' perception of the center of mass, we sometimes folded over the corners of the camouflage target. Also, targets were sometimes pivoted to present a 45-degree perspective. At that angle, a shot aimed at the center of the torso might pass only through the rib cage, without striking any of the body's vital structures.

This day ended with night shooting. While we passed a Sure-Fire 6P flashlight beam across the row of targets, the countersnipers fired torso- and then head-shots at 80 meters for three hours. All this in a driving rain that, as previously stated, put four scopes out of service the next day.

On the third day, students repeated previous exercises, including 50-meter torso- and head-shots, "10-minute" drills, 50-meter run and shoot, 80-meter torso- and head-shots and work on the moving target system. However, the day started with a "surprise" exercise.

Upon our command, the students were instructed to retrieve their rifles and ammunition from the PN pickup trucks. The exercise ended when the first shooter was able to set up and hit the steel plate at 80 meters. Law-enforcement countersnipers must be mentally prepared for an unanticipated emergency the moment they load their equipment into the vehicle.

Our third afternoon was spent in a complex tactical exercise, consisting of movement by means of cover and concealment to five stations at 100 meters

Springfield Armory heavy-barrel M1A with camouflaged synthetic stock, M14A1 bipod and ART-type scope — heavy and cumbersome, but accurate and reliable.



ERE countersnipers firing from the kneeling position.

each, which required the shooter to employ improvised firing positions.

The course's final day was spent reviewing each drill covered during the previous three days, and running every man through the tactical exercise at least twice.

The Good Guys

Top honors in the Level II training were taken by "Mala Cria" (Child of Bad Parentage), "Mafia," "Tractor," and the unit's first sergeant, whom I had previously nicknamed "Sargento del Almacen" (literally "Sergeant of the Supply Room").

Other top shooters included the ERE's new commander, Lieutenant "Heathcliff," and "Baby Indio." Also participating were "Cosa Seria" (Serious Matter), "Guapo" (Handsome), "Chivo" (Goat), "Fosforo" (Match), "Atlatl," "Muneco" (Baby Face), "Caballo" (Horse), and newcomers "Africano,"

"Diente de Oro" (Gold Tooth), "Speedy Gonzalez" and "Duende" (the Dwarf). I will, of course, forever be known as "Pantera Rosa" (Pink Panther) to the ERE, and Chris Mayer called "Oso Grande" (Great Bear).

The day after the course, we had scheduled a trip to my old stomping grounds — the Atlacatl Battalion. However, the highway was blockaded by FMLN terrorists looking to draw either the battalion or Cavalry Regiment into an ambush.

We went instead to the beach for a party with the members of our countersniper class. Our bus, garishly decorated in a manner more than a little reminiscent of buses I saw in Peshawar, Pakistan, many years ago, was named "Alexander." Inside, above the driver, were mounted several dozen chrome emblems of various automobiles. I assume they represented this vehicle's road kills.

Our bus's security consisted of an adolescent armed with a machete (often referred to in El Salvador as "The Rifle that Never Runs Out of Bullets"). This in spite of the fact that within the bus were 20 men, each armed with a handgun and a total of two CAR-15s and two Kalashnikovs.

When we were about to return, we were informed that approximately 70 terrorists had blocked the highway and were stopping buses. I shall never know if they were looking for handouts or the Pantera Rosa. As numerical odds were not in our favor — the Gs have RPG-7s and lots of PG-7 grenades — we decided discretion was the better part of valor and returned via another route. A pity, since a firefight with the FMLN would have made for a more exciting end to this story. But, rumors to the contrary, the war is far from over in El Salvador, and there will undoubtedly be other occasions for myself and the FMLN to exchange greetings. ✕



KOKALIS' PICKS FOR SALVADOR'S MEAN STREETS

Text & Photo by Peter G. Kokalis



states of awareness, or stay at home.

As soon as I arrive to visit a unit in El Salvador, I request that a rifle be issued to me and any other member of the *SOF* staff accompanying me. Whenever it is possible to carry one — and sometimes it is not — a rifle is to be preferred over a handgun when violent confrontations are anticipated. M16s and their variants are usually accounted for in El Salvador and are in short supply. However, the *almacenes* (supply rooms) are still stuffed with Kalashnikovs captured during the 1989 FMLN offensive.

There's nothing wrong with a Kalashnikov, and once again I was issued an East German MPiKMS-72 with side-folding stock. The East Germans used to make some of the finest AKs. All I have examined in El Salvador were manufactured in 1984. This AKM model can be immediately distinguished by its unusual single-strut steel buttstock, which is hinged at the rear of the receiver and swings against the right side of the receiver.

Other distinguishing MPiKMS-72 characteristics include selector markings "D" ("dauerfeuer" for full auto) and "E" ("einzelfeuer" for semiauto); a tan plastic pistol grip and muzzle brake of the Soviet AKM style, a phenolic handguard with vertical gripping serrations on each side, and a brown plastic guard over the gas cylinder.

Elevation increments on the rear sight are at 100-meter intervals, from 100 to 800 meters. The battle sight setting is marked "N." In all other respects this model follows the standard Soviet AKM pattern, including the five-component anti-bounce device, which acts as a mechanical drag on the hammer to delay its striking the firing pin until the bolt group has stopped moving.

I am normally not enamored with folding stocks on any assault rifle, as fixed stocks provide a superior firing platform. However, the folding stock on the

Two months before we arrived in El Salvador to provide Countersniper Level II training to the ERE of the *Policia Nacional* (PN), an officer I had met in 1983 in the Atlacatl Battalion, Captain Lan, was ambushed by FMLN terrorists on the highway from Compalapa airport to San Salvador. They put 40 bullets in him.

One month prior to our arrival, the brother of a friend was ambushed on the highway from La Libertad to San Salvador. Firing through the windshield of his car, he hit one of his attackers in the chest and the other in the abdomen with subsonic 147-grain JHPs from his S&W Model 59. The fight was stopped, but both

survived. He escaped unscathed.

On the night before our arrival, the PN substation at San Marcos (where we conduct our training) was attacked by guerillas with RPG-7s. Only the roof sustained damage.

The morning we left San Salvador, FMLN saboteurs completely shut down the city's electrical power.

El Salvador is still a very dangerous place. Anyone who works with either their law enforcement units or their military should be prepared for contact with the FMLN at any time. You must be ready for "Front sight. Press," at all times. Expect to spend the entire time in either yellow (relaxed, unspecific alert), orange (specific alert — anticipating contact) or red (mental trigger — poised for the draw stroke)

MPiKMS-72 is sturdy and stable, offering a more compact package for toting in a vehicle — especially one like the 1970s-vintage 4-door sedan once again assigned to us.

Chris Mayer requested and again was given the same captured North Korean Type 68 AKM he had during his first trip. A rarely seen variant, the Type 68 differs in numerous ways from the Soviet AKM. Although it has a stamped sheet-metal receiver, there is no anti-bounce device. The mahogany-stained and varnished wood furniture is typical of all North Korean Kalashnikovs. The muzzle device, barrel diameter (smaller on the Soviet AKM), gas block, front sling swivel, buttstock and its means of attachment to the receiver body are all those of the AK-47. The front-sight assembly has lightening holes on the sides — a peculiarity of North Korean AKs. There is a roller on the rear sling swivel, and the receiver rivets are of the Eastern European type.

When in uniform and in the field, I carried six spare AK magazines in a load bearing vest designed by Eagle Industries Unlimited Inc. (Dept. SOF, 400 Biltmore Dr., Suite 530, Fenton, MO 63026; phone: 314-343-7547, catalog \$3). When moving about in civilian clothes in the car, I carried the six magazines in a U.S. “fanny pack.” Mayer carried four spare magazines in a vest of his own design while out at the range.

You can load 30 rounds into the rugged Kalashnikov magazine without fear of a stoppage. As the AK has no hold-open, I prefer to load the last three rounds in the magazine with tracer to serve as an indication that it's time for tactical reload (not as easy with the AK as it is with the M16).

Sometimes, even in El Salvador, there is no alternative but to carry a concealed weapon; that pretty much rules out an assault rifle. If you must be armed with no more than a handgun, then you're well-advised to maximize its limited potential to the fullest extent possible. For most *pistoleros*, that means a handgun chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge, although I have at times carried a 9mm pistol in El Salvador to avoid stigmatizing students with a “lesser caliber” syndrome.

However, we were not providing pistol instruction; whenever a low profile was indicated, this time I packed a customized Para-Ordinance P14.45. It is the first really significant improvement on John Browning's battle-proven design in 81 years. Its wider frame, required to accommodate a

13-round magazine, reduces perceived recoil and alters handling characteristics to improve hit probability and accuracy potential. This particular specimen was completely reworked by M1911A1 specialist Richard K. Becker (Dept. SOF, 1202 Crestview Drive SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403).

Sam Andrews Jr. (1040 S.W. 11th Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32601; phone: 904-376-8809 — catalog \$3) provided what I feel is the best shoulder holster available, his Lightweight Rig with special harness system. Whenever I wore my Banana Republic photographer's vest, it covered this shoulder holster and pistol with two spare magazines, for a total of 40 rounds.

Mayer carried a pre-“Series 70” Lightweight Commander that had also been extensively modified (Trijicon sights, beavertail grip safety, beveled magazine-well, polished feed ramp, trigger job, slightly extended thumb safety, frame cut out at junction of trigger guard and front strap, and Pachmayr rubber grip panels). His holster was Bruce Nelson's No. 1 Professional, carried cross-draw.

Both of these pistols were charged with Black Hills' (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5070, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone: 605-348-5150) 185-grain JHP load. I prefer their earlier loading, which employed the Remington bullet. Stepping out of a Government Model's 5-inch barrel at little more than 950 fps, this bullet will penetrate from 14 to 17 inches of soft tissue, depending upon the amount of expansion, which varies from .57 to .68 caliber (as expansion increases, penetration decreases). Until Winchester's new 230-grain JHP becomes generally available, this remains my load of preference in caliber .45 ACP.

We each carried a S&W .38 Special 2-inch snubbie as backup. Mayer kept a Model 49 “Bodyguard” in his pocket. Its only modifications were Pachmayr rubber grips and a “duty” trigger job.

My backup pistol is an S&W Model 642. This is the new lightweight version of the Model 640 Centennial hammerless. With an alloy frame and stainless-steel

cylinder and barrel, its empty weight is only 15.8 ounces. It has a duty action job by Frank Glenn (Dept. SOF, 16036 N. 49th Ave., Glendale, AZ 85306; phone: 602-978-9089) that reduced the double-action-only trigger pull weight from 10.5 pounds to a smooth 8.75 pounds, without removing any coils from the mainspring.

This revolver is also equipped with a set of uncheckered Detective grips from Herrett's Stocks Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 741, Twin Falls, Idaho 83303-0741; phone: 1-800-635-9334). When stuffed with the most effective ammunition, this small snubnose will kick like a mule, and the American black walnut Detective stocks provide the most significant reduction in perceived recoil, with the least compromise in

concealability.

I carried the Model 642 in either a small Cordura equipment bag manufactured by The Wilderness (Dept. SOF, 5130 N. 19th Avenue, Suite 11, Phoenix, AZ 85015; phone: 602-242-4945 — catalog \$1) or a new cross-draw holster developed for me by Bruce Nelson (Dept. SOF, Combat leather, P.O. Box 8691 CRB, Tucson, AZ 85738 — catalog \$3).

Although the Model 642 is not rated for “+P” ammunition, the best choice in .38 Special is the so-called “FBI load.” Federal Cartridge Co. (Dept. SOF, 900 Ehlen Drive, Anoka, MN 55303; phone: 612-421-0646) catalogs their versions as No. 38G. Averaging 830 fps from the Model 642's 2-inch barrel, this 158-grain Lead Hollow Point (LHP) bullet will expand to .59 caliber and penetrate about 12.5 inches of soft tissue. This is a handgun to be carried a great deal and fired little. Practice with ammunition a bit less stout; however, it would take several thousand rounds of +P ammunition to rattle the Model 642's cage.

I prefer the flat Bianchi Speed Strip for carrying an extra five rounds in the pocket, but these lead alloy bullets deform easily and should be stowed, if possible, where they will not knock about.

When in the field, I carry a large Bagwell fighting Bowie knife on my LBE, with a “Champion” model Swiss Army knife in my combat vest. Prowling the streets of San Salvador, I had “The General Purpose One Hand Knife” by A.G. Russell (Dept. SOF, 1705 Highway 71 N., Springdale, AR 72764; phone: 1-800-255-9034) in one of the infinite, and sometimes confusing, number of pockets in my Banana Republic vest. The handle of

Continued on page 83

*Sometimes
there is no
alternative but
to carry a
concealed
weapon.*

EXCLUSIVE

GUNS OF



In background is drum magazine HS-91, with receiver made from square tube. The "Transformer"-toy cleverness of the basic design renders it adaptable to almost any available magazine or potentially changing available materials. Photo: Roman Majetic



Tubular-receiver HS-91 submachine guns, showing how basic model is adapted to various available stick or drum magazines. In background is canvas bag that comes with weapon. Photo: Roman Majetic

Widely used in the days before the assault rifle as a close infantry weapon, submachine guns developed during and after

World War II shared one salient feature: They could be made with a minimum of critical tools and machinery, at minimal cost, in a minimum time, in maximum numbers, and as the Russians proved with the PPS-43, in a city under siege.

These latter characteristics are still true. And to the embattled Croats, the submachine gun they have is better than the sophisticated battle rifle they do not. On a recent trip through the Balkan war zone, this correspondent had the opportunity to review an interesting example of ad hoc ordnance, now in serial production in Croatia — the HS-91 submachine gun.

As interesting as the adaptive engineering evident in this weapon is the fact that it represents not only a weapon evolving from concept to test-firing in an incredibly short time (10 days), but that it is also the first indigenous Croatian firearm.

Also worthy of note is that this is *not* an official military weapon, but was developed by civilians, and is manufactured for civilians for civilian (as opposed to civil) defense. Although developed with the knowledge and blessing of the Croatian Ministry of Defense, all work was privately funded. Now these full-auto weapons are being sold to individual citizens for roughly \$300 each — as fast as they can be produced.

Design work on the weapon began 5 August 1991 with an idea, and proceeded around the clock with a team of five material engineers, one design engineer and one gun hobbyist. The only man in the group with any firearms experience before the war was the hobbyist, and his was as a hunter. The prototype gun was completed and test-fired on 15 August. There were no evident problems with the gun, and its rather flexible design was finalized.

Commencement of serial production and official christening of the project were feted on 25 October with wine, songs and the national anthem; a Croatian flag and a designated project Godfather were present at the christening. The designation HS-91 is derived from H (Hrvatski — Croatian), S (Strojnika — machine gun) and 91 for the year of production.

The development began with a literature

AUGUST

NEW CROATIAN CIVILIAN DEFENSE SUBMACHINE GUN BY ROBIN ANTHONY

search to select the usable good features of existing designs. Ideas from the design team were incorporated, then a workable design amalgamated that could be built within the constraints of materials and facilities at hand in a country at war.

Although not a sophisticated design, nor perhaps even a design introducing ideas new to the field, the HS-91 does represent an intelligent and creative adaptation of proven ideas, designed into an envelope whose configuration was dictated as much by available materials as any other consideration. The Mission Essential Need Statement (MENS) in this case was utterly simple: "We need something to defend ourselves with."

A Gun For All Magazines

Because another primary consideration was the design/availability of an ammo-fed device, the intelligent choice was made to design the HS-91 configuration flexible enough so that the basic design and production could be adapted to accept several available magazines — thus avoiding the expense, time and cost of tooling for a unique magazine, and also rendering usable the melange of various magazines one would find in any European war zone.

Bearing in mind that existing sources of supply, meager as they were, would be subject to interruption, even the receiver design was "finalized" in a flexible mode. Although the "standard" design incorporates a seamless tube receiver, alternate models were designed and built with a square tube receiver. The trigger-housing/frame group is a simple casting.

Parts interchangeability was taken as far as it could be in components such as barrels, "Greasegun"-type telescoping wire stocks, internal components and trigger housings. All components can be manufactured in a basic shop that has a lathe, mill, welder and light foundry.

Common to all HS-91s are overall dimensions of 700mm (28 inches) with stock extended, and 514mm (20.5 inches) with stock retracted. The common rate of fire is 600 rounds per minute, and although designed for close combat or police work, the designers consider its usable range to be 300 meters. All have been produced in 9x19mm (Parabellum) caliber.

Serial production when I was there was given as 100 per day — quite an accomplishment for a country with no

history of arms production. Each weapon is shipped with a cloth bag containing cleaning equipment. There appears to be no end in sight for the market.

The Guns Of Desperation

The inspiration for the HS-91 came from a priest who, when the people asked him how they could defend themselves, told them they should make a gun. Others have taken this advice to heart, as well

trigger return spring, with a manual ejector on the left side. Above it, the two-handed pistol is of similar design and construction. The ancient revolver is shown for size comparison. At top is a Streetsweeper/Striker adaptation with rotary magazine, which functions as a manually operated repeater.

How long such weapons would hold together in combat is moot, but they would at least have considerable psychological



Made in the home to defend that home: 12-gauge weapons made with water pipe and ingenuity. Cylinder of "Streetsweeper" model at top is turned manually, weapon cocked by pulling back on recycled gearshift knob. (Inset:) Close-up of two-handed 12-gauge pistol shows spring-loaded manual extractor attached to barrel, and trigger/sear return spring. Note exposed cartridge base. None of these weapons has a provision for safety. Safety adapter kit would be a 20-foot firing cord. Photos: Damir Hutinec

— with varying degrees of sophistication. Shown here is an assortment of home workshop weapons made in the village of Dalj, all in 12-gauge and made from 3/4-inch water pipe, and all lending a reverse meaning to the term "suicide special."

The break-open shotgun at the bottom is striker-fired and uses a rubber band for a

impact. When confronted by a man holding such a weapon, the enemy would know for sure *this man is prepared to die for his cause.*

The author wishes to express thanks to Ms. Sandra Veice Sukreski for assistance in translating documents used in this article. Author Robin Anthony is proprietor of a technical equipment repair service.

QUESTIONS FOR THE KGB

by Jim Holmes

If the former Soviets are no longer the enemy of the West, and the KGB no longer a hostile intelligence service, its archives should be opened in the spirit of *glasnost* and friendship. The Cold War left many important mysteries, which the new Russian leaders could reveal to prove they have truly turned a new leaf. Here are a few of the more interesting questions which have yet to be answered:

1. Given that Lee Harvey Oswald, assassin of John F. Kennedy, moved freely in both the Soviet Union and at the Soviet Embassy/KGB center in Mexico City, it has long been suspected that the Soviet intelligence service had some prior knowledge of Oswald's plan to kill the president. What did the Soviets know, and when did they know it?

2. The KGB defector Victor Sheymov has asserted that the KGB suggested to the Bulgarian intelligence service (its direct subsidiary) the idea of eliminating Pope John Paul II. Did the KGB in fact mastermind the 1981 assassination attempt on the Pope?

3. Was the KGB responsible for the airplane explosion that killed Pakistani President Zia and the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, men who were supporting the Afghan freedom fighters?

4. Because the KGB controlled all important channels for both the military and the Kremlin — and kept detailed records on critical events — it must know the full story of Korean Air Lines flight 007, the jumbo jet that was shot down in 1983. Will mysteries surrounding both the shootdown and the final fate of the aircraft finally be revealed?

5. Evidence proving that several of the Soviets' former satellite states supported international terrorists has surfaced since the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe. Will the new KGB admit which

KGB AND POWs

In the 27 October 1990 issue of the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, Edward Trivan revealed that retired KGB Major General Oleg Kalugin, in an interview in March 1990 stated that Russians had interrogated American POWs in Vietnam. This was two years after the United States and Vietnamese governments had stated all U.S. POWs had been returned.

Kalugin repeated this statement on camera to Jeff McMullen, a reporter for Australia's *60 Minutes* television program. McMullen also quoted a KGB interrogator who stated nine U.S. POWs he questioned later had their throats cut by the North Vietnamese.

North Vietnamese Colonel Bhu Tin, who accepted Saigon's surrender, confirmed in testimony before the U.S. Senate Select Committee, that Russians had interrogated U.S. POWs.

The Defense Intelligence Agency has done nothing to follow up this lead. The Senate Select Committee only now is pursuing this lead. And only because of pressure from a well-known journalist, even though Senator John Kerry has had a copy of the Australian tape since October, and Senator Bob Smith has had a copy of the transcript since August.

Why has the Select Committee acted only now? Is it a case of conspiracy or stupidity? Stay tuned.

—Robert K. Brown

international terrorist groups received training, intelligence, arms and financial support from the old KGB?

6. Soviet and Chinese support of the international narcotics trade as a weapon against the non-communist world was detailed in Joe Douglass Jr.'s 1990 book *Red Cocaine*. To what extent has the KGB been involved in drug trafficking, both as a means to earn foreign currency and weaken the West?

7. Was Vitaly Yurchenko, the KGB officer who briefly defected to America and then returned to the USSR, dispatched to the West as a false defector? Where is he now, and can he be interviewed? Who have the KGB successfully sent over as double agents in the past?

8. Who were the most successful past KGB agents working in Western media, governments and intelligence agencies, and who are the current agents? How extensively has the KGB penetrated the U.S. Congress — either its staff or members?

9. Was there any connection between the KGB and the late business tycoon Armand Hammer? Did the KGB use him in any way?

10. Does the KGB have agents posing as reformers in the various former Soviet republics? Or working in the democratic opposition movements?

11. In light of 40 years' KGB control and infiltration of Eastern Europe — along with acknowledged continued cooperation between the KGB and its reformed sister services — are KGB agents still working secretly in Eastern European governments?

Jim Holmes is a researcher in Soviet affairs, who has written often on the intelligence services of the former Soviet empire. This article is reprinted by permission of West Watch.

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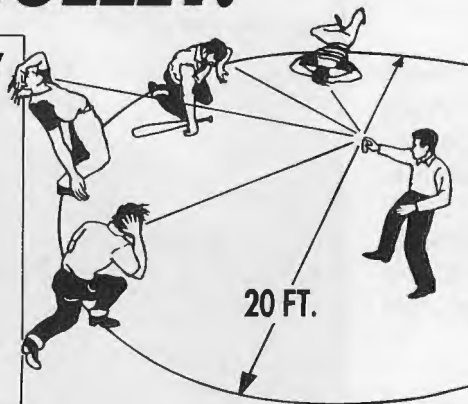
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WOMEN

Continued from page 41

a tough outfit and shouted, "All right, men! Sound off like you got a pair!"

No more. That's sex discrimination. Besides, I don't think there's anybody left in the military with a working pair left. It takes more balls these days to face the strong political lobby that keeps pushing to put women in foxholes than it does to stand up before an enemy.

During a fraternization investigation, involving one of my male lieutenant platoon leaders and an enlisted woman who had gotten pregnant, I shook my head in disgust.

"If I never see another woman in uniform," I said, "it'll still be way too soon."

Ever mindful of his career, the 8th Infantry Division deputy provost marshal in Europe glanced around to make sure no one lurked nearby ready to check his equal opportunity block. His voice lowered.

"Don't ever let anyone hear you say that," he cautioned. Then he added softly, nodding his head in guarded agreement. "But it's duly noted."

Charles Sasser has written over 2,500 magazine articles. He is a 24-year military veteran, currently in the Army reserves, who was called to active duty for Operation Desert Storm.

CONTRAS

Continued from page 53

active participation in the war.

If a contra unit was planning to attack a target, and asked if there were a machine gun nest next to it, the CIA officer could confirm that. That was intelligence-sharing. But he couldn't tell them that there was also a rocket launcher there — not unless they asked. That would be taking the initiative.

But, it seemed to the CIA officers, all these rules could be suspended if someone in Congress wanted a favor. In the summer of 1986, militant American Indian activist Russell Means, on a tour inside Nicaragua with Indian contras, was trapped by a Sandinista offensive. A cable from Langley arrived in Tegucigalpa: plan a rescue mission to get Means out.

The CIA men were dumbfounded. They weren't allowed to evacuate wounded contras from Nicaragua — they weren't allowed to evacuate dying refugee babies from Nicaragua — but they were supposed to send helicopters deep inside, right into the middle of a combat zone, to rescue a man who was accused of the murder of two FBI agents? Damn right, headquarters said, he has friends in Congress. After an exchange of vicious cables, Adkins and his

staff prepared a rescue plan.

Two helicopters would fly halfway down Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. The distance was so great that the CIA would have to infiltrate a refueling team by sea. The plan would work, Adkins thought, but there was a good chance that some CIA people would die in the process. Just as they were about to launch the operation, Means got out by himself.

Adkins tried to live with the rules for a while. But, he told the other officers, he couldn't sleep at night; he kept seeing the faces of the starving refugees he met during his visits to the border — refugees who had walked for weeks after hearing that Americans were dispensing \$24 million worth of humanitarian aid. Thousands of them were arriving at San Andres de Bocay, a cluster of huts in eastern Honduras that was separated from the country's interior by mountains and dense jungle that it would take a month to cross on foot.

So Adkins began to break the rules. When a CIA officer went to San Andres de Bocay, his helicopter was loaded with food. When he flew back out, the helicopter was loaded with refugees. Sometimes, if the officer was going to be on the ground at the border for several hours, the helicopter would spend the time shuttling back and forth on the same cycle: food out, people in. Once, Adkins sent a helicopter to the border when there was no real need for a CIA visit. The illicit cargo: measles vaccine. During his last trip, Adkins had seen four-dozen tiny graves in a clearing where refugee women were burying their babies.

And once there was a load of weapons and ammo. It was in November 1986, when after a two-year cutoff, U.S. military aid had started to flow to the contras again. Thousands of them, newly equipped, were heading back to Nicaragua to fight. And congressional delegations were shuttling in to the headquarters at Yamales, Honduras, on a daily basis.

The Sandinistas were infiltrating troops into the area, and Adkins could listen to their radio conversations as they tried to get one of the CIA helicopters full of congressmen in the sights of their surface-to-air missiles. He cabled headquarters to stop the congressional visits. Headquarters answered the visit would continue, and contras should send out patrols to ensure safety of the congressmen.

Adkins went to visit Enrique Bermudez, the contra commander.

"I need you to send out patrols," he said.

"You told us to concentrate on infiltration," Bermudez protested. "You told us you didn't even want us to keep this base."

"Look, Enrique, you gotta do it," Adkins said wearily.

Bermudez smacked a table angrily. "If you want it done, you give us help," he said. "You've got to supply the patrols by helicopter. We've got enough problems supplying the men who are going back to

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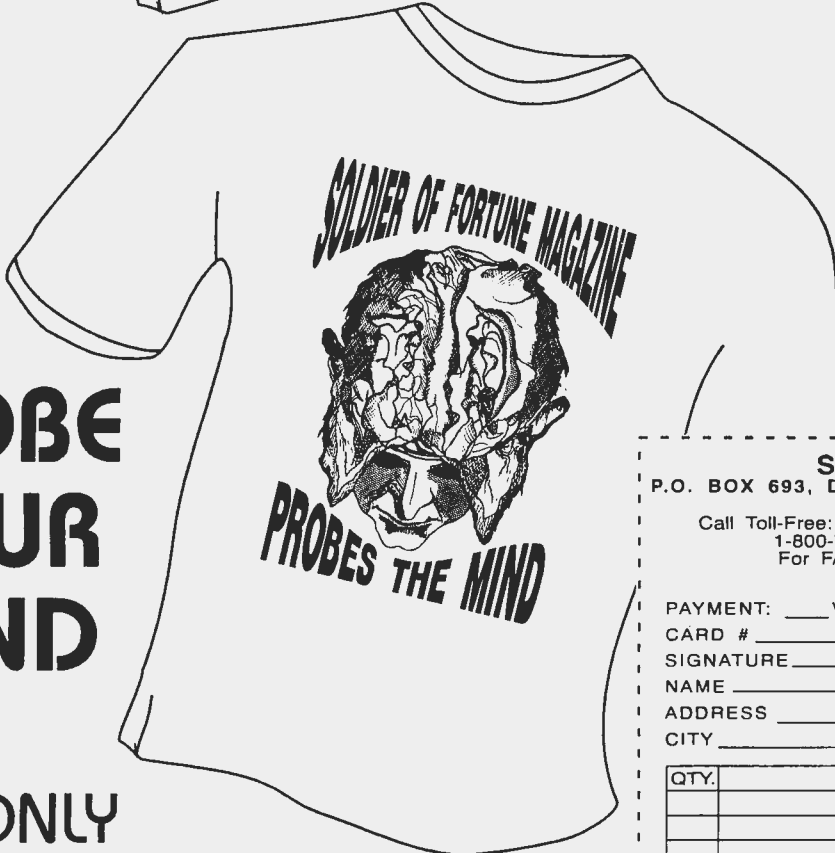
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Nicaragua." So Adkins broke the rules again.

A few weeks later, the Iran-Contra scandal broke, and there were investigators all over the place. They found out about the refugee supply flights and the measles vaccine and the patrols. And five days before Christmas 1987, after two decades in the CIA — after winning medals not only for espionage but for saving the life of an American ambassador — Jim Adkins was fired.

Somehow, despite all the media fire-power concentrated on the Iran-Contra scandal, the case of Jim Adkins never really became well known. He wasn't called to testify to any of the congressional committees, he never talked to reporters and he hasn't hit the lecture circuit. But he does keep in touch with some of the people he knew in Honduras: contras, State Department officials, the other CIA men. A few weeks ago he was having lunch with one of them, and the visitor asked if Adkins had any regrets.

"Just one," Adkins replied. "I regret doing anything at all to contribute to the security of those sons of bitches in Congress. My advice to any future agency officer is to let them die." His tone softened. "The rest of it was just saving lives."

Glenn Garvin's book, Everybody Had His Own Gringo: The CIA and the Contras, will be published in March by Brassey's. Garvin covered the war from 1983-1989 for the Washington Times.

GREENPEACE

Continued from page 36

Forced into unproductive and meaningless lives on welfare, many residents have lost hope and are being driven to suicide in record numbers. Greenpeace should not be allowed to strong-arm human beings into oblivion, in order to save non-endangered animals.

Apparently not satisfied with crippling the economy of the region and devastating its people, Greenpeace is readying the fatal blow. According to Gudmundsson, they have now targeted the region's fishing industry. Greenpeace intends to draw the world's attention to what it considers cruel methods of fishing. It now describes traditional trawling nets as "parachutes of death."

Gudmundsson's next film will attempt to expose Greenpeace's new deceit before the region's economy is totally annihilated by these unscientific and fake environmentalists.

When an injustice like Greenpeace's campaigns against the High Northern communities is exposed, it becomes the responsibility of people who care about fairness and justice to stop it. Magnus

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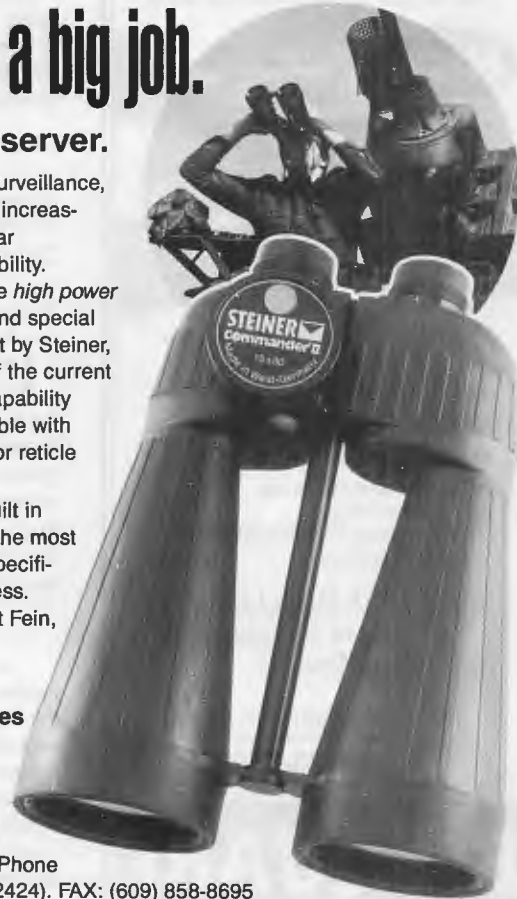
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Gudmundsson does not take this responsibility lightly. He is still pursuing this story, at great personal hardship and expense. But he has been halted from further progress because of lack of money. He needs our help to continue his valiant effort to stop Greenpeace's campaign against human beings in the name of saving animals.

Commenting on the Greenpeace controversy, Lone Dybkjaer, Danish minister of environmental affairs said, "The problem with some of these organizations is that they only see one side of the matter."

I don't believe that is the case. I am sure Greenpeace sees both sides of the matter — it simply does not care about the human side.

When I talked with Gudmundsson, he emphasized that he is a journalist and assured me that his new film will be a journalistic product. "The film will be as objective as possible, but it will tell the truth," he said.

Videotape cassettes of *Survival in the High North* are available from Magnus Gudmundsson for \$50 each. Donations to help him complete his new film are needed and greatly appreciated. Contact: Magnus Gudmundsson, Laugavegur 26, 101 Reykjavik, Iceland; Fax: 011-354-1-624233, Telephone: 011-354-1-620060.

Kris Marquardt is chairman of Putting People First — an organization dedicated to preserving people's rights over animal rights. You can contact them at 4401 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 310-A, Washington, D.C. 20008-2302; phone: 202-364-7277.

160th

Continued from page 45

Anderson.

- Sergeant Mario Vega-Velazquez.
- Sergeant Christopher J. Chapman.

All four were killed when their MH-60 hit a sand dune while en route back to a launch site. They were carrying Delta personnel involved in Scud-hunting missions. Three Delta operators, Sergeant Major Patrick R. Hurley, MSgt. Eloy A. Rodriguez, and MSgt. Otto S. Clark, were also killed in the crash.

Lessons Learned

As in every conflict, lessons are learned. Deployed as a self-contained unit, the regiment found it needed better external security forces to secure its hangers and staging bases when deployed. Additional hand-held antiaircraft weapons would be required for base defense in the event they came under air attack. Command and control proved more than able to successfully manage mission requirements and priorities.

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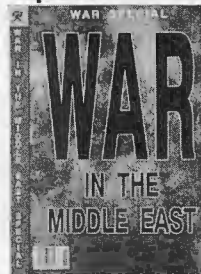
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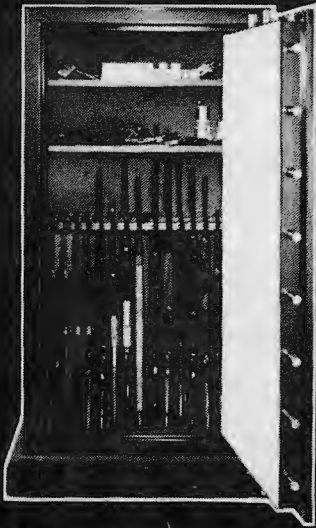
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"What we need is a more active support base when it comes to giving the regiment the equipment and personnel we must have," commented a pilot involved in black SOF operations. "This unit did some incredible things over the desert, things no one will ever hear about. Missions no other SOA asset could fly. There are, in my opinion, no better SOF pilots and crews than those here with the 160th today. But we can only do so much with what we've got."

Some things the regiment needs are more helicopters. "We were supposed to get over 50 of the new MH-47 "Echo" models, but now we're being told we'll see about 25. These are the most sophisticated penetrator rotary aircraft in the world, and we need all 50," the pilot added.

Pilots and crew went on to say better management of SOA careers is needed, with more personnel added to take the strain off those already in the unit. Airframe survivability equipment is needed, such as radar detectors, chaff dispensers, antimissile systems and improved onboard weaponry. Colonel Fucci said his regiment's budget will be protected for at least another two years, but after that "it's anyone's guess."

Perhaps those most qualified to vouch for this exceptionally professional and highly dedicated unit are their "customers."

"If the 160th puts you on the ground, they'll be back to get you," said one decorated operator.

"No one can touch us when we fly at night," added a veteran night stalker. "At night, we rule the air. You have to have special people for this job, special people with special talents. We're here to take care of the guys on the ground. That's our job, that's what they pay us for."

Greg Walker is a former SOF operator. He is a decade member of the Special Forces Association as well as an associate member of the Special Operations Association. The author is currently preparing a work on special operations for Ballantine Books. This is the third installment of a Special Operations series he's writing for Soldier of Fortune.

COMBAT CRAFT

Continued from page 30

a problem even remotely similar to the above hypothetical situation, it's probably time to revise your training ideas. If you can't shoot on the move, or hit a moving 3-dimensional target — either face-on or at an angle permitting an angle of projectile-entry relative to a human's vitals — you're clutching at straws.

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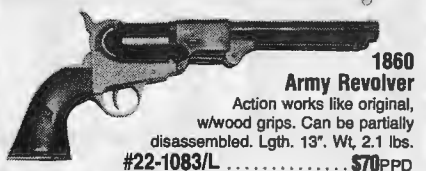


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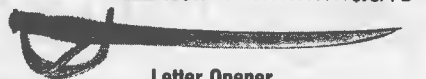
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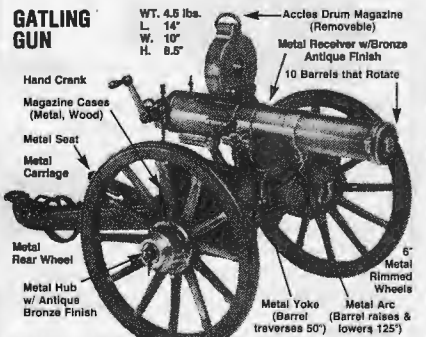


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Louis Awerbuck is honcho of Yavapai Firearms Academy in Prescott Valley, Arizona. ☞

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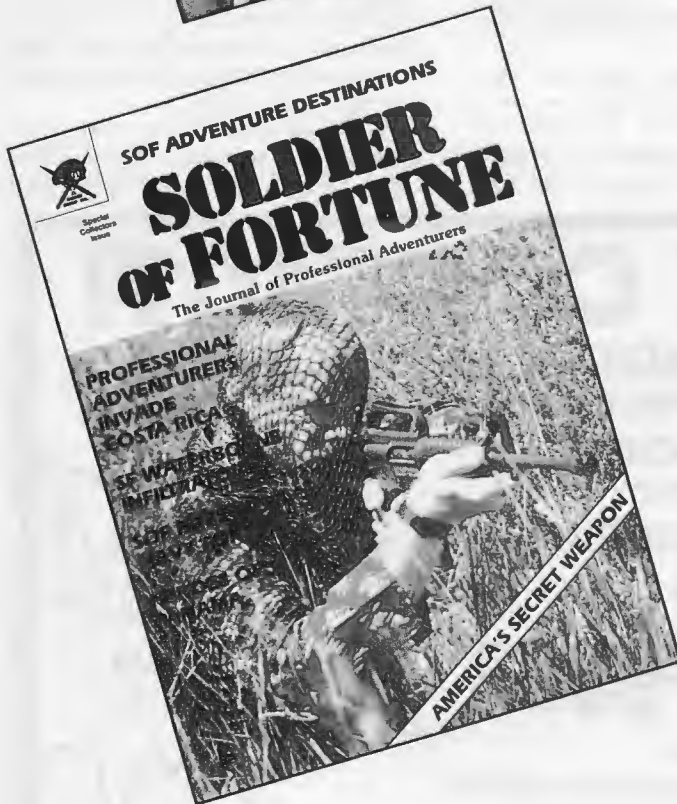
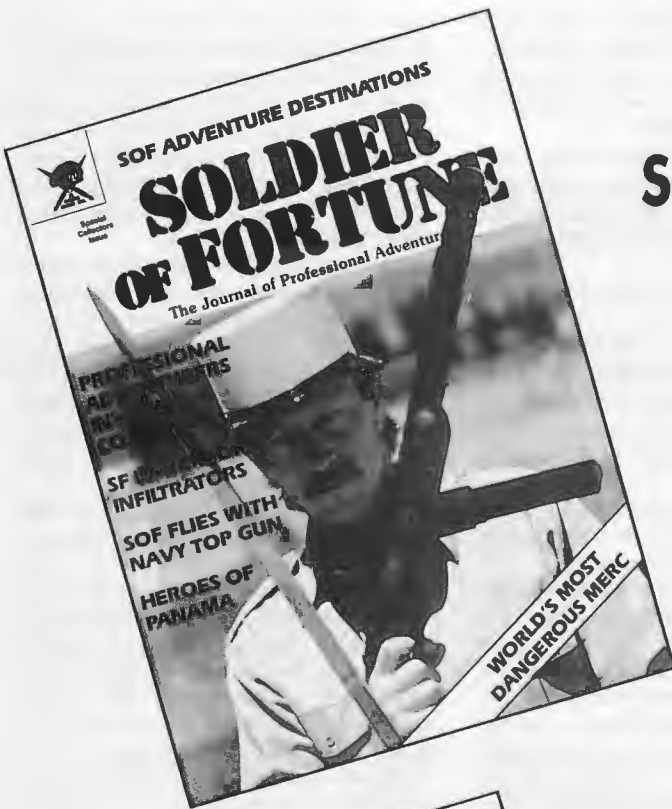


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BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 26

modified needle-nose plier. Unique to this Gerber product is how the plier slides out from inside the plier handles when needed. This allows one-hand operation, something lacking in other utility pocket tools. Gerber will offer three variations of the Multi-Plier, ranging in price from \$70 to \$80.

Having carried and worked with Gerber products for more than 15 years now, it's nice to see this U.S.-based cutlery house making such dramatic moves into the 1990s. The Gator series is a good buy if you're looking for a sturdy folder, while the Patriot promises to be one of the better combat-knife buys of the year. If you're looking for a utility pocket tool apparently able to do it all, check out the Multi-Plier.

Gerber's legendary blades are back.

For further information contact Doug Hutchens at 503-639-6161. ✂

POW HUNTER

Continued from page 29

out of malaria pills." Were they Caucasian POWs? Were they two stay-behinds? According to the source, they did not

appear to be under guard. Going over MIAs with Joint Personnel Recovery Center, we could not match the photo taken by our source with photos or descriptions of any MIAs.

In late 1969, I left Southeast Asia because of wounds. I had been in Vietnam five straight years without a break, and had a number of skin diseases and parasites no one had ever heard of.

I returned with the Phoenix Program in early 1971 and was based at Soc Trang in the delta. The delta was almost devoid of NVA troops with the exception of PAVN platoons, which were providing security for various province infrastructures (they were also there to keep an eye on the local cadre).

All prisoners held in the delta fell under the control of the VC, who constantly moved POWs around for security.

I gathered every bit of POW intelligence I could obtain from my Phoenix sources. I had also recruited my own Phoenix platoon, made up of Khmer Krom (Cambodians, indigenous mostly to the delta of South Vietnam). My boss, Colonel Juji Hada, the Vietnamese province chief, and U.S. province senior adviser Leslie Holcomb permitted me to control my own operation.

Several heliborne operations were initiated by me in an attempt to recover a prisoner on whom we had numerous reports. He was described as being a Caucasian about 19 years of age who

spoke fairly good Vietnamese (despite having been held only about one year). In July 1971 we ran a recovery heliborne op based on some reliable info. Because the VC always seemed to know when we were coming and had time to move prisoners (it took only minutes to get them into tunnels), I had the helicopters orbit low, at about one klick off the LZ.

I had the C&C (Command and Control) ship go in low and fast on a single pass, identify the LZ and pop smoke. We then immediately followed in the slick, right behind the C&C. As the slick started into the LZ, the door gunners opened up. There was a load of red stuff (tracer) going out, but unfortunately there was more green stuff (enemy tracer) coming in.

We sustained over 30 hits on our lead ship, where I was. Three of my troops in the cargo compartment were hit (two killed, one wounded), and we started to go in the hard way. The other three slicks were also taking hits. An aircraft commander had been hit in the face by a shattered wind screen. My ship's commander pulled pitch, hopped over the hedge row and we slammed into the adjacent rice paddy. A loaded slick landed beside us, and picked up the remaining combatants on the ship. The C&C also landed, picking up our crew and dead and wounded from our ship.

We tried to reinsert but were driven off again on final approach. The C&C then called for two orbiting gunships which



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LET'S PUT THE JUSTICE BACK

TODAY YOU HAVE A GREATER CHANCE OF BEING A VICTIM OF VIOLENT CRIME THAN OF BEING HURT IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT.

CASE Carl Wayne Buntion: 11 felony convictions, 9 prison terms, serves 15 months of 15-year sentence for sexually assaulting a child, released on 6th parole. Weeks later he murders Houston police officer Jim Irby.

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CASE Samuel Barnett: 20 convictions dating from 1969, serves half of 12-year sentence for raping 9-year-old girl, released. Days later he rapes the same girl again, now 15, in the same East Oakland garage.

A SERIOUS CRIME IN THE U.S. WILL COST THE CRIMINAL AN AVERAGE OF 8.5 DAYS IN PRISON.*

CASE Alan Rose: Shoots wife, serves 7 months of 7-year sentence, out on probation in Florida. Shoots and kills his girlfriend.

IN THE FAILED

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

38 STATES ARE NOW UNDER COURT ORDER TO RELEASE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PRISONERS.

CASE Raymond Paul Wisecarver: Serves 4 years of 8-year sentence for voluntary manslaughter, released. Arrested in California for 60 armed robberies in a 7-month crime spree.

2 OUT OF 3 RELEASED CRIMINALS WILL BE ARRESTED AGAIN WITHIN 36 MONTHS.

CASE James Pough: Charged with manslaughter in 1971, plea-bargains to aggravated assault, serves 5 years on probation, criminal record expunged. His 1990 suicidal shooting rampage in Florida claims 9 lives.

4 OUT OF 5 STATE PRISON INMATES ARE REPEAT OFFENDERS.

CASE Donald Leroy Evans: Long arrest record dating from 1974, serves 5 years of 15-year sentence for sexual assault, paroled. Arrested in Louisiana, claims to have killed 60 people in 10 years across 20 states.

PROOF OF TOTAL COLLAPSE:

70% of all violent crimes are committed by only 6% of all violent criminals. More than half are released to the streets awaiting trial. Of those, 20% escape and 16% commit another crime while released. Finally, for every 100 serious crimes committed, only 5 criminals go to jail.

HERE'S HOW:

Introducing the National Rifle Association's CrimeStrike. It's a new NRA division just as tough as the NRA. Its mission is to use NRA power to put real justice back in our criminal justice system. And to put armed violent criminals behind bars.

Why the NRA?

Because armed criminals aren't just the greatest threat to your life and family. They're also the greatest threat to your Second Amendment right to own a gun. It is their violent misuse of firearms that makes *your* firearms the target for gun-ban groups, anti-gun politicians and the media.

Enough is enough.

Together we can give victims, prosecutors and police the united voice and powerful machinery of the NRA to fix the system. The CrimeStrike coalition of law-

CrimeStrike.

against armed criminals.

- Reveal parole boards members who release violent criminals to our streets.

abiding Americans — gun owners and non-gun owners alike — *can save lives and reduce armed criminal violence.*

How CrimeStrike Works.

City by city, the CrimeStrike task force will get tough wherever the system is soft on crime. Our team of veteran law enforcement professionals will mobilize the power of publicity and grassroots advocacy to:

- Identify armed repeat offenders and demand just punishment.
- Disclose conviction and sentencing records of lenient prosecutors and judges.
- Expose plea-bargainers who downgrade charges

- Unseat politicians who oppose mandatory sentencing and building adequate prison space.
- Overturn laws and rulings that favor criminals.
- Lobby for adequate manpower, equipment and resources for local police departments.

The NRA does not advocate vigilantism, armed encounters with criminals, interfering with police duties, or violating any law. CrimeStrike simply unites victims, prosecutors, police and honest citizens like you to stop the violent collapse of the criminal justice system and to protect your right to own a firearm.

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If you think CrimeStrike will work, support us.
If you want it to work, *join us*.



Wayne LaPierre
Chief Executive Officer
National Rifle Association of America



Sources: U.S. Department of Justice Special Report, "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1983"; U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Violent Crime in the United States" published 1991; Morgan O. Reynolds, Ph.D., Texas A&M University National Center for Policy Analysis, "Crime Pays, But So Does Imprisonment," March 1990; Dr. Paul Blackman, Ph.D., "Crime and Violence," 1988, quoting *U.S. News & World Report*, March 1988, based on U.S. Department of Justice statistics; *Police Chief* magazine, March 1988, based on U.S. Department of Justice statistics.

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came in with nails (fléchette rockets) over my protest, as I feared for prisoners on the ground. After three attempts we finally got on the ground. In the assault I lost two more troops, one to a mine and one to automatic weapons fire. So far, I had four killed and one wounded. We finally reached the village and found nine VC bodies, six hit by nails and three by our door gunners on the slicks. There were also several blood trails.

Some Extremely Large Sandals

The worst part of the operation was finding a mess kit with warm rice and a spoon along with some large sandal prints, which I guesstimated to be about a size 11 (too big for any indig).

It was getting dark, so I called the C&C and requested an extraction. We had completed only a half-ass search, as everything in the village was booby-trapped. We started toward the pickup zone when all hell broke loose. The amount of tracer coming out of the village was amazing. Those of us on the ground weren't being fired on, but the inbound choppers were — and we were in no position to support them. The slicks pulled off on two attempts to extract. We started to move out for the long walk home.

Then someone on the C&C chose to try the gunships again — we were told to hold in place. The gunship came in at an angle which placed them behind us as they fired their nails. These rockets left the tube

traveling out to a designated distance, where a second ignition took place. A puff of willie pete (white phosphorus) appeared; the fléchette canisters were opening behind us with fléchettes going directly over our heads to their target. The "whosh" as they went by was amazing.

The nails did the trick; we were extracted. We hadn't found any POWs, but I was confident there was a large Caucasian in the area. Unfortunately, I had spent one year in the delta and a slot had become available in Cambodia — so it was time to move on.

Colonel Fred Caristo was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry during a POW rescue operation in Cambodia in 1966.

MEAN STREETS

Continued from page 69

this unique knife is machined from a solid piece of stainless spring steel. That, and the two-piece pivot screw make this one of the strongest pocket knives you can own. The blade length is 3 1/8 inches.

On my belt, in a Kydex synthetic sheath, was a small fighting knife, called the "Backup," with a 4.8-inch, phosphate-finished blade by Bob Terzuola (Dept. SOF, Rt. 6, Box 83A, Santa Fe, NM

87501; phone 505-473-1002 — free catalog), who spent many years in Central America and now specializes in custom fighting folders. I have carried this superb knife for a number of years, as have numerous other professionals, including SOF's Explosives/Demolitions Editor, John Donovan.

One last piece of equipment needs to be mentioned. The lights go out too frequently in El Salvador to be without a flashlight. More professional gun handlers carry the Sure-Fire 6P flashlight by Laser Products (Dept. SOF, 18300 Mt. Baldy Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708) than any other. Now either lithium-battery-powered or rechargeable, it turns on by pressing a rubber push button at the rear of the unit. This permits night-firing by means of the Harries technique, as taught at Jeff Cooper's American Pistol Institute (API), in which the flashlight is controlled and operated with the support hand from a slightly modified, isometric Weaver position. When held against the forearm of an assault rifle or shotgun, the Sure-Fire 6P will also turn on when you squeeze it against the handguard.

Equipment is important in surviving the deadly environment of war-torn El Salvador. But without training and experience in the proper techniques, and continued reinforcement through constant practice, you might as well be armed with nothing more than a five-bladed, gold-plated pocket-knife for all the good it will do you.



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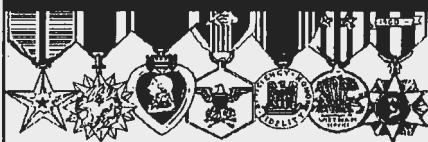
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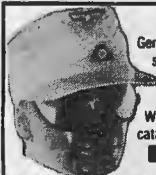
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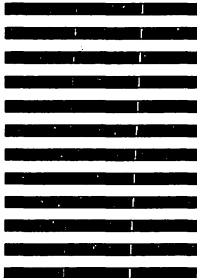




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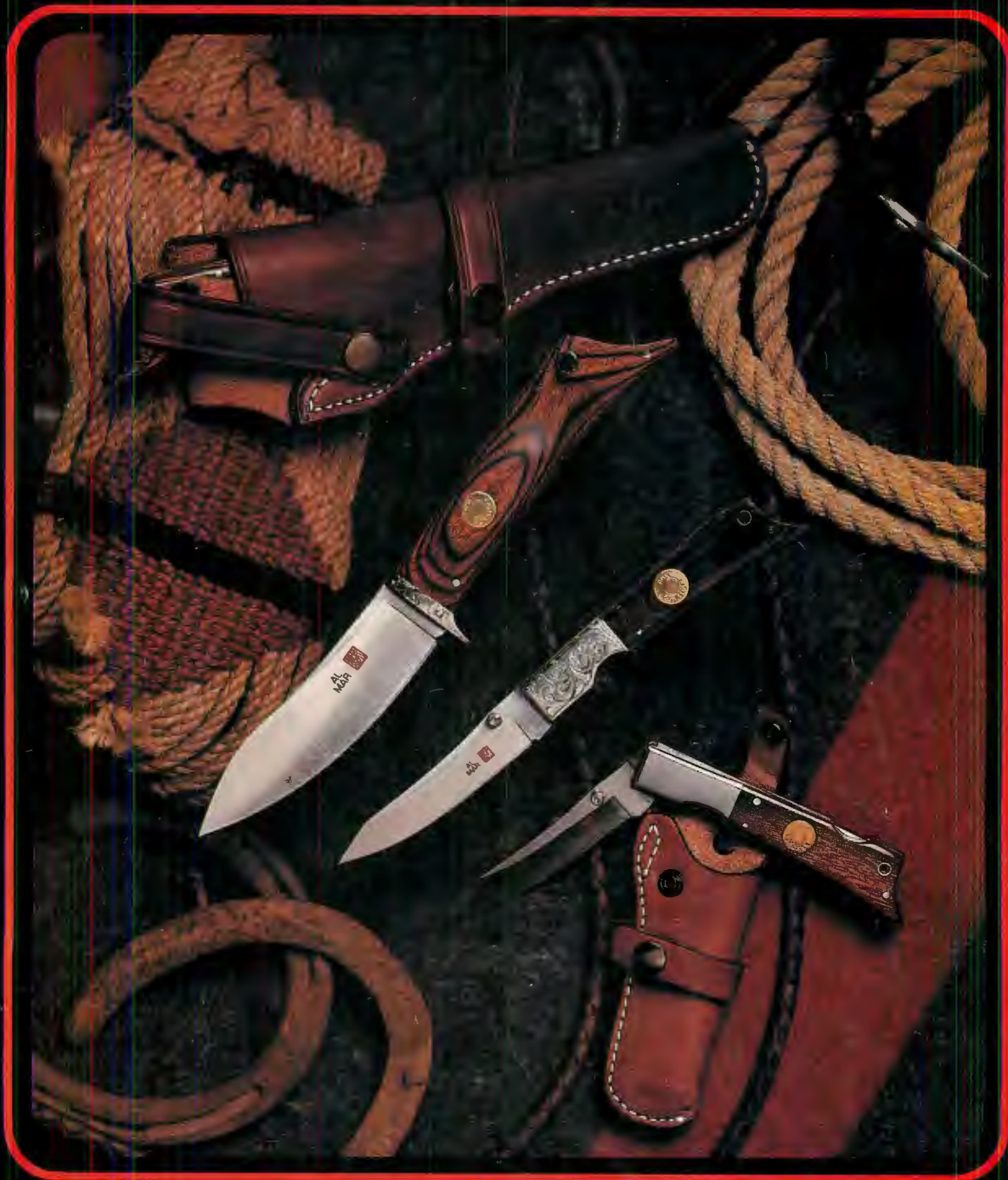


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