



BLOOD FEUD: Urban Mayhem in Kabul

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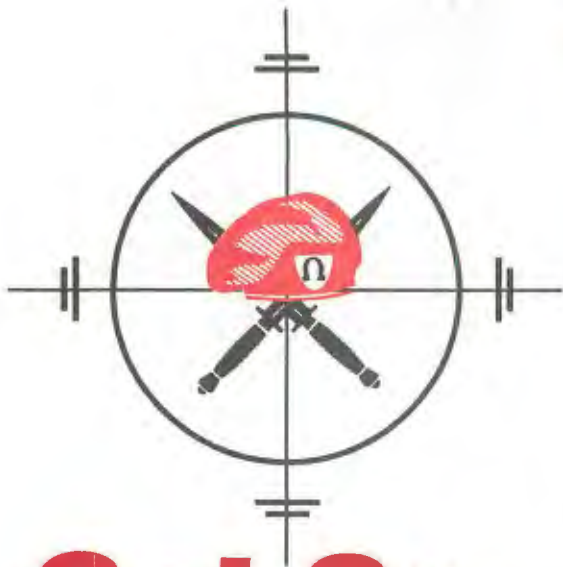
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In Memoriam

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

BUSH IS A WUSS BUT SLICK WILLIE IS WORSE

by Robert K. Brown

Bush and his advisers are some of the dumbest dorks around, especially when it comes to dealing with the gun lobby. Bush was stampeded into banning the importation of assault rifles and has put at serious risk his support among the 5 million voters who vote pro-gun. Dumb, dumb, dumb. And you can bet your bippie he's not going to get many votes from the left-wing anti-gun crowd. And I've been told they are afraid of negative publicity from the anti-gun media if they repeal the ban on assault rifles or take a stand against the Brady Bill. Wuss, wuss, wuss.

All other factors being equal, the big problem is the "baggage" Slick Willie would bring to the administration if elected.

How would you like a cabinet with Daniel Sheehan as attorney general, Tom Hayden as secretary of defense, Peppermint Pattie Schroeder as secretary of the Navy, Jane Fonda as secretary of the Army, Jesse Jackson as secretary of state? How about Jerry Brown as director of Central Intelligence; Sarah Brady as director of BATF; Ice T as director, Department of Justice; Louis Farrakhan as ambassador to Israel, Sister Souljah ambassador to South Africa, Jennifer Cassolo as ambassador to El Salvador, and Molly Yard as ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

I would suggest that if we gun-rights supporters think we have problems with the out-of-control Gestapo-like Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms under Bush, God knows what it would be like under the direction of a Slick Willie appointee.

Slick Willie has already stated he will ban the manufacture, sale, importation and possession of "assault rifles" without defining what these terms mean.

You may feel bitter about Bush, as I do, and puke when you think of Slick Willie playing saxophone in the White House, but do not let that stop you from voting. If you cannot bring yourself to vote for the wuss, at least vote for pro-gun candidates in local and federal elections.

Your vote is important. It makes a difference. As was stated last month in this column, 13% of eligible voters control the outcome of an election. Don't fail to be part of that 13%!

And you can get off your dead ass and have even more of an impact by volunteering to assist in manning the NRA's and grassroots organizations' phone banks. And encourage your friends and relatives to register and vote. Follow up with a phone call to see if they have registered and voted. Offer to drive them to the polls if necessary.

If you don't, then don't whine to SOF about losing your gun rights not so far down the road.

In closing, keep in mind if you vote, vote for pro-gun candidates in state and congressional elections; if you don't vote, or vote for one of the third-party candidates who haven't a prayer of being elected, that's the equivalent of casting a half-vote for America's most prominent draft dodger and would-be gun grabber — Slick Willie. Sarah Brady, Director of the BATF? God help us all. ☒



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SOF

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Photo: Mike Winchester

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Photo: A. Mroz

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Photo: R. I. Emblin



COVER

Accounting for POW/MIAs has been high on Ross Perot's agenda since the Vietnam War. Even now he has a plan for resolving the problem, but unfortunately it doesn't involve a Ramboesque rescue operation.

Photo: Kathie Scrimgeour

BULLETIN BOARD

MEMO FROM RKB:

TO: All *Soldier Of Fortune* Readers, Advertisers, Subscribers, Suppliers, Employees, Conventioneers, Shooters and Friends.

Subject: Decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit in *Braun vs. SOF*.

As most of you are by now aware, on 13 August 1992, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit affirmed, by a 2-1 vote, the verdict and judgment of the U.S. District Court, awarding a judgment of \$4,375,000 to the plaintiffs in this case. This is not good news. If this judgment becomes final and is collected, *SOF* is out of business. But we are still some way from that point. We have every intention of pursuing the appellate process. Mean-

It's a sensitive RSCAAL: the Remote Sensing Chemical Agent Alarm, built by Brunswick Defense. The Marines now have 100 units, and the U.S. Army just awarded a \$9.9 million contract. Army will use units to protect troops in the field, at bases and will integrate it into the "Fox" Nuclear Biological Chemical Reconnaissance System (NBCRS).
Photo: courtesy Brunswick Defense

while, the Agreed Order staying attempts to collect this judgment remains in effect, and we are definitely still in business.

Soldier Of Fortune Magazine will continue to cover the hot spots of the world, the gun rights and POW/MIA issues, the elections, new developments in the military and police, other firearms issues and so on, in the style to which our loyal readers have become accustomed. Bills will continue to be paid; advertising and subscriptions contracts will continue to be honored. We are still in business.

As an editorial in the Boston Herald said regarding the appellate court decision: "Malarkey ... *Soldier Of Fortune* committed no crime, no negligent act. The men who planned and executed Richard Braun's death are the guilty parties. No publication should be punished when someone takes out an ad. If and when this case goes to the Supreme Court, the justices will do well to roll back this attack on press freedom."

In short, we ain't dead yet and we plan to win this battle. With your ongoing support we will do exactly that.

Robert K. Brown
Editor & Publisher

SOF will be petitioning for review of this decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. Indications are that our liability insurer will not be funding this effort. That means that *SOF* has to find the funds to do this. We need your help.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"There are no atheists in foxholes, there are no liberals in riots."

Simi Valley, California, gun dealer Steve Cotter referring to the leap in his sales following the L.A. riot.

HUNTING STORY CONTEST

No, not your most outrageous lie about that 400-yard shot in the rain with iron sights that got your trophy buck. This contest is for outdoor writers who have written a pro-hunting story, one that has been published by

30 September 1992. The Winchester Good News on Hunting! Writers Contest is sponsored by the Winchester Division of Olin Corp., which is putting up \$15,000 in cash prizes. For details, contact Kevin Howard at The Farrel Group, Box 23770, St. Louis, MO 63121; phone: 314-991-3555.

GURKHAS FOR HIRE

The Brits, cutting troops in the wake of the Cold War, are reducing the present force of 7,500 Gurkhas by some 2,500 over the next five years. Having served the Crown for more than 175 years, the Gurkhas first came into Her Majesty's service when an 1816 treaty gave the Crown the right to recruit Gurkhas in Nepal. Since that time, Gurkhas have served loyally and well. But what's a RIF'ed Gurkha to do?

Major Chris Hardy, a former Royal Pioneer corpsman in Hong Kong, left Her Majesty's service to become a "military resettlement director" at TechSearch Asia Ltd., and he may have the answer: Hire 'em out for bodyguards and corporate protection. For a mere \$2,200 per month — \$1,900 if you provide accommodations and Nepalese food — you get a loyal, well-trained Gurkha to check your hotel room for assassins before you enter, shake down your car for bombs before you fire it up, disarm and do a little hand-to-hand with intruders and so on. Such a deal. But better act fast, the oil companies are snapping 'em up.

DESERT STORM VETS NOTE!

Veterans Affairs Secretary Edward J. Derwinski has urged all Gulf War vets to register with Veterans Affairs so they can be screened "even if they at this point don't have any special problems." The VA is offering a medical exam to any Gulf War veteran who wants to become part of its registry, and is suspending ordinarily complex rules for receiving treatment.

Veterans Affairs spokesman Terry Jemison stated, "We're starting to see more and more anecdotal reports" of strange symptoms from Gulf War related illnesses. There have been many reports of parasitic infections, service personnel complaining of chronic fatigue, hair loss, headaches, bleeding gums, depression, aching joints and skin rashes.

Of some 100,000 reservists and National Guardsmen who served in the Gulf, the VA has seen or treated about



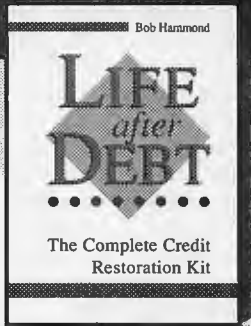


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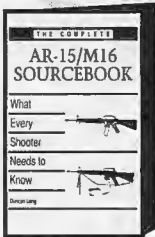
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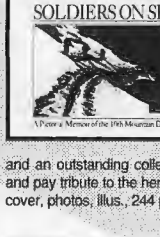
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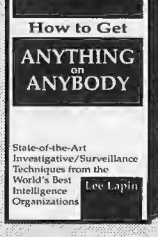
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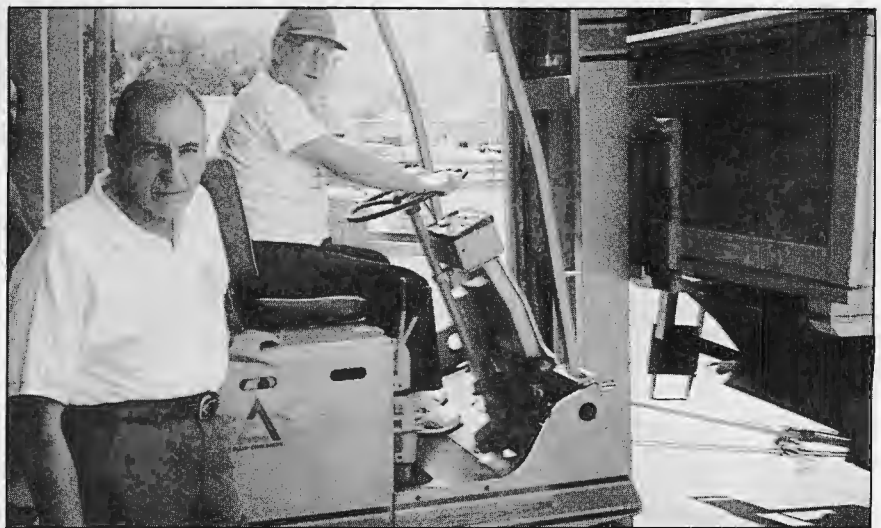
17,000. Derwinski said, "We are telling our people [in the VA] that [the veterans] could have problems that could be caused by smoke, contaminated food or drink, burning oil wells, all sorts of environmental conditions that the troops ran into." Local VA medical centers will be trained to look for any unusual patterns of disease in the Gulf War vets, and three special referral centers will be set up to offer treatment. The effort is to preclude a repeat of the Agent Orange debacle, according to Derwinski.

The VA has asked Congress to authorize a special program to track the health of Desert Storm vets. Vets with service-connected disabilities already have priority access to VA medical services, but changes in the law are required for the VA to offer exams and follow-up consultation to vets who otherwise lack eligibility for outpatient care. Contact your congressional representatives and ask them to support this VA request for authorization.

QUEER FOR ALLAH

The U.S. House Task Force on Unconventional Warfare warns of a government-run counterfeiting operation in Iran, which with help from Syria is flooding the world with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of counterfeit U.S. \$100 bills — and has the potential to do billions. The Task Force documents the Iranian central government bank's use of U.S.-trained printers and U.S.-made note-printing machinery to create unknown millions of nearly perfect \$100 bills, which Iran sells at a discount to the Syrian secret service, which in turn sells at a markup to various traders who use "dollars" in both legitimate and criminal trade.

This huge and well-orchestrated scam also gets much of the money into the international banking system via banks involved in laundering drug money. Recently, Iran has begun moving the queer cash into former Soviet states, especially Central Asian republics,



and Syria has used the counterfeit for strategic weapons purchases. "It is estimated that the potential is there for billions of dollars in counterfeit currency to soon be in circulation, mainly outside the U.S. banking system," the task force reports.

The report continues: "Tehran committed itself to undertake this [counterfeiting] project early in 1990, and almost immediately the IRGC [Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps] intelligence and SAVAMA [another intelligence organization] began dispatching senior operatives to the West to search for and buy needed items to implement the plan."

The task force says there is a second, parallel counterfeiting operation under Syria's direction run by the *Hezbollah* (Party of God) in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon. This operation produces \$100 and \$20 bills, which are passed mostly in Africa. These are of much lower quality, with thinner paper and flatter printing.

Syrian operatives have shipped crate loads of fake U.S. \$100 bills to the former Czechoslovakia and to the Ukraine as payment for high-performance weapons, including tanks and missiles, the task force report says.

RKB — he's the boss, and doesn't often get permission to go near machinery — carries a load of medical supplies from the SOF warehouse to start its journey to Burma, where it's desperately needed by the Karens. Colonel Alex McColl, director of Refugee Relief International, looks on and reminds the cameraman that medical supplies of all kinds (anything that doesn't require cold storage or have to be locked up) are desperately needed by people all over the globe. You can send it to RRI, and they'll see it gets to those who need it most. Call Col. McColl at 303-449-3750 if you have medical supplies to donate. Photo: SOF staff

BEIRUT VETERANS

A new organization is being formed for veterans of Beirut, and at its helm is retired Marine Major Robert Jordan, who was the DoD and Marine spokesman at the time of the embassy bombing. A reunion is planned for a future date; time to be decided at a 23 October meeting. For information on the BVA, contact: Robert T. Jordan, Executive Director, Beirut Veterans of America, 1410 Springfield Pike, Suite 31B, Wyoming, OH 45215; phone: 513-948-0058

THE REUNION NETWORK

54th Signal Bn & Attached Units
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POC: Elmer A. Goetsch (715) 546-2340

13th Armored Division Assn. 14-17 October, @ Louisville, Ky. POC: Miller M. Hanly (304) 343-8288

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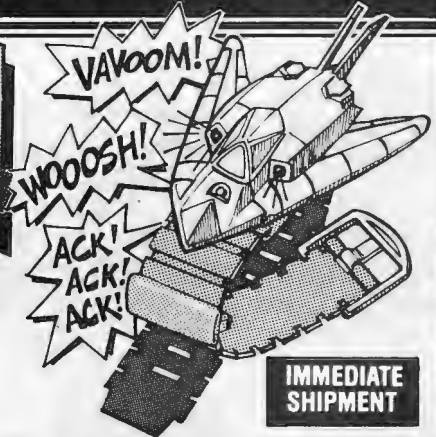
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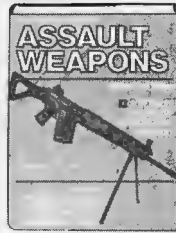
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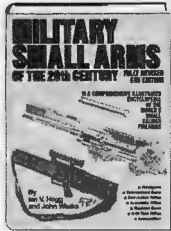
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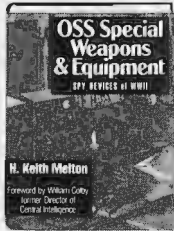
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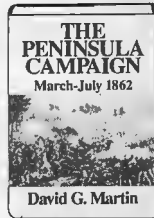
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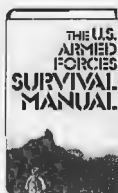
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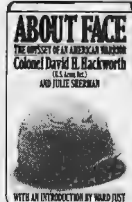
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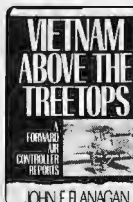
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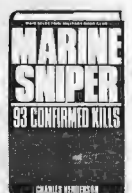
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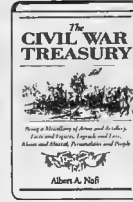
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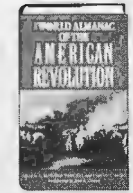
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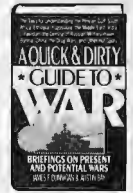
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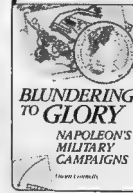
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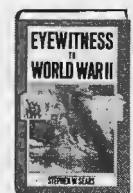
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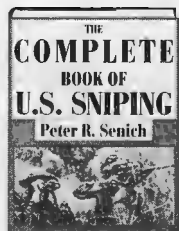
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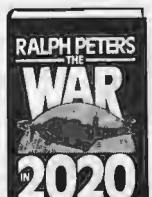
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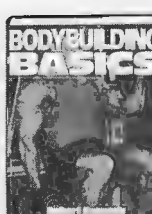
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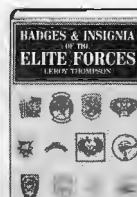
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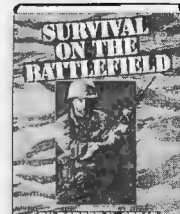
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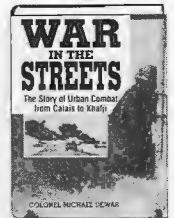
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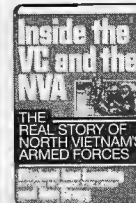
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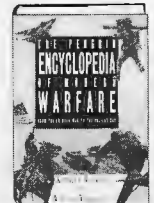
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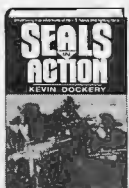
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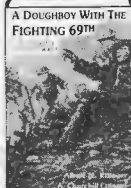
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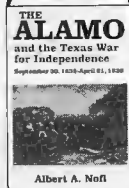
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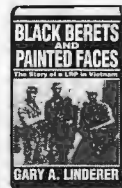
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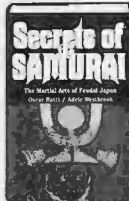
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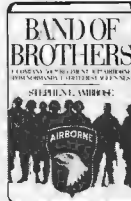
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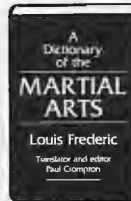
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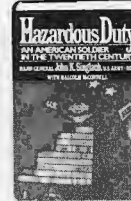
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The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that the 11th Amendment bars the Fund For Animals' suit against the state of Montana for participating with the federals in a plan to hunt bison migrating out of Yellowstone National Park. Free from natural predators, the bison herd has increased beyond the park feed resources; migrating bison — infected with the microbe that gives domestic cows brucellosis and people undulant fever — pose a threat to cattle, people and resources outside the park.

Assault Traps?

Bronx Congressman Jim Sheuer proposes to make trapping illegal in the United States. His bill, H.R. 1354, would not only outlaw the most common trap — the steel leghold — it would make it illegal to even "possess" fur from a "trapped animal." *Huh?* Do these pea-brains actually think a leghold trap leaves a mark on the fur?

The Sheuer bill would make it a felony (not a misdemeanor) to possess either a steel-jaw leghold trap or the fur from any animal caught in such a trap. The most astounding facet of this scenario is the fact that this misguided piece of legislation started off with 115 co-sponsors — and not just the usual collection of legislative flakes, but some who certainly should know better.

Banning the steel leghold trap would not just be a deathblow to commercial trapping. The Wildlife Society, the professional organization of wildlife biologists, has repeatedly stated its official conclusion, after years of study, that the steel-jaw leghold trap is the most efficient and humane tool for the job. Without it, they would be hamstrung. Private conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited, the Isaak Walton League and the National Audubon Society agree. These groups also protect their preserves and control the overpopulation of furbearers by means of the steel-jaw leghold trap.

Animal rights groups have been pushing the ban with dishonest slogans such as "Get a feel for fur — slam your fingers in a car door." Here's our best offer to them: We'll stick any two bodily parts that contain a bone into a leghold trap, if we can slam any one of yours in a car door.

The enforcement provision of the bill establishes that "any individual having authority to enforce this act" may

conduct search and seizure and "make arrests without a warrant." The kicker? Any animal "rights" group that turns in a trapper, dealer or furrier in violation would get half the fine.

The Grand Plan? "The fur industry will be the first domino to fall," said Dan Mathews of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Next in line are hunting, farming and biomedical research. "So what if we put a few businesses under?"

But are "businesses" the real target of the bent-headed animal Nazis? Putting People First states, "... it is just the opening salvo in an agenda to drastically reduce the human population through starvation and disease."

"Humans have grown like a cancer," says PETA founder Ingrid Newkirk. "We're the biggest blight on the face of the earth." Call your congress persons and ask if they support this bill. If they say yes, ask them if they've actually read it.

Hunter Harasser Guilty

A Montana jury of three men and three women has found a Missoula man guilty of hunter harassment, under a Montana law that forbids anyone to interfere with the legal "taking" of an animal. Animal rights nutzoid John Liliburn was charged with stopping hunter Hal Slemmer of Billings from shooting a buffalo last year, by standing in front of Slemmer's rifle. Liliburn's lawyer immediately filed a notice of appeal and requested a stay of sentence, which was approved.

Animal Rights Book Donation Spurned

A school board in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, has said "Thanks, but no thanks" to a donation of two animal rights propaganda pieces targeting young kids: *The Animal Rights Handbook* and *Kids Can Save The Animals* were turned down after the board voted to reject them. School director Carl Risch said the books "are riddled with insinuations that are meant to make non-conforming students feel guilty," adding that the books urge students to resist the use of animals in science classes, to demand vegetarian fare in school cafeterias and to boycott zoos, circuses and rodeos.

One of the books, *Kids Can Save The Animals*, was written by Ingrid Newkirk, director of PETA. "This is a fringe group and it has a lot of radical ideas, but they don't explain that to

children," Risch said. PETA spokesman Steven Simmons said *Kids Can Save The Animals* is not propaganda. *Riiiiight.*

Who's Endangering Whom?

Thus far, it has cost hundreds of millions of dollars to administer the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a well-intentioned but seriously flawed law that has been a dismal failure at protecting endangered species, but which has become very successful at locking up millions of acres of land, throwing people out of work and depriving Americans of their Constitutional rights to private property.

The ESA is due for re-authorization in 1992, but Congressional leadership is trying to delay it until after the elections. The eco-Nazis are fighting to make the ESA even more draconian; some voices of moderation are hoping to alter it so it performs its intended purpose.

As it stands now, the average cost for upkeep of an endangered species, according to 1985 estimates of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is \$2.6 million. Of the species currently under consideration for listing, some 65% are *bugs*, i.e., insects, crustaceans, gastropods. For instance, there are 296 "endangered" snails, 90 in Alabama alone. There are flies from the *Tabanidae* family — bloodsuckers that even the radical National Wildlife Federation admits are "often serious pests of man and animals." Sounds to us like that qualifies them as perfect candidates for a federal handout!

Meanwhile, in the Pacific Northwest, the feds have set aside 6.9 million acres — an area larger than Massachusetts and Rhode Island combined — as spotted owl habitat. The cost of this in 1990 was \$9.7 million, but is estimated by a congressional panel to cost 60,000 jobs and \$3 billion in personal income — and *The Wall Street Journal* reports a 25% increase in the cost of wood products, directly attributable to the listing of the spotted owl. This spotted owl, incidentally, is genetically the same as the one which flourishes in California.

Whooooo's in charge here?

The local bumper sticker of choice in Oregon now is: *Out Of Toilet Paper? Use a Spotted Owl!* Good idea, but if you can't get a spotted owl, try the *Congressional Record*. ☒

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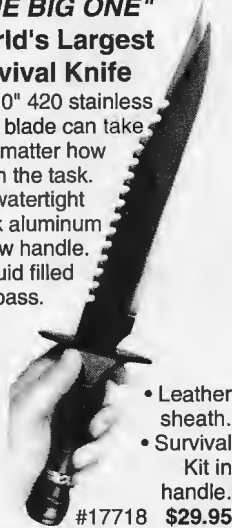


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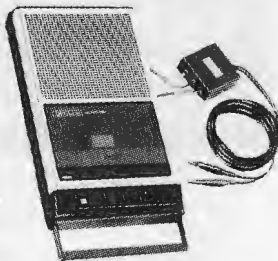
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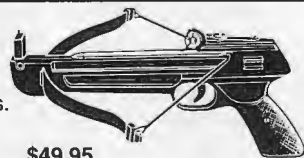
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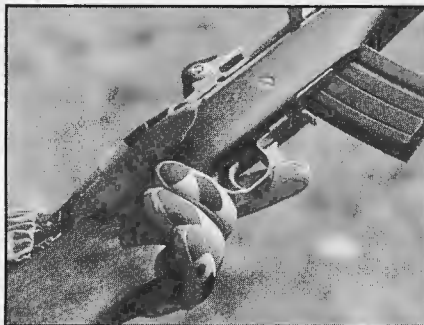
Viper Paddle Holster from DeSantis



- DeSantis Holster & Leather Goods has released a new paddle holster that is ergonomically designed for all-day comfort — the Viper, style No. 65.
- The Viper features a thermal-molded, self-locking polymer paddle allowing the cant to be adjusted from butt-forward to crossdraw, and any angle in between. No belt is necessary with the Viper, and its placement and removal are effortless.
- The holster itself is made from premium saddle leather and is available for most popular handguns. For more information, contact DeSantis Holster & Leather Goods, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2039, New Hyde Park, NY 11040-0701; phone: 516-354-8000.

Doc Doolittle's Neoprene Shooter's Glove

PYI Inc. introduces a new 2mm neoprene shooter's glove that's right on target — frigid digit protection for fishing, hunting, police and military applications. Once wet, most gloves aren't very warm — but these are, just like a diver's wet suit. In use by police across the country, these gloves offer the ability to fire a weapon without removal. The fingers are pre-curved for comfort, and the glove provides a good grip on natural and synthetic surfaces. For more information, contact PTI Inc., Dept. SOF, 7831 196th St. S.W., Edmonds, WA 98020; phone: 206-670-8915.



New Beretta Centurions

Beretta U.S.A. has added two new models to their line of large-frame autoloading pistols: the Centurions, available in 9x19mm and .40 S&W. They are essentially the full-frame Beretta 92F, but with a compact barrel and slide on a full-size frame. This gives a shorter overall length (7.8 inches, compared to the 8.5-inch standard length) and lighter weight (32.2 ounces compared to 34.4 ounces), but retains the full 16-round capacity of 9mm rounds in the 92F, and the 11 rounds of .40 S&W in the 96 model. The Centurions are also offered in double-action-only models. For more information on Beretta's line of quality firearms, knives and accessories, contact Beretta U.S.A., Dept. SOF, 17601 Beretta Drive, Accokeek, MD 20607; phone: 301-283-2191.✕

Colorful New GunRunner



The best camouflage isn't always a "camouflage" look. The best camouflage is to look like everything else around you; the new Michaels of Oregon "GunRunner" fanny-pack holster comes in bright yuppie colors, just like the millions of fanny packs you see bouncing along behind an equal number of compulsive runners all over the country.

While the colors are designed to keep the armed undercover officer truly undercover, the design of the GunRunner makes it easy to carry, conceal and draw an autoloader or revolver from. The pack has three compartments: the rear one designed to conceal a handgun, the center one for extra ammo or gear, while the front compartment contains a removable badge holder, secured with Velcro.

The GunRunner is sold in police outlets and gun stores everywhere. For more details, contact Michaels of Oregon, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 13010, Portland OR 97213.

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610-510

WORLD SITREP

1

Sudan

Sudan People's Liberation Army appears poised to continue civil war despite loss of headquarters town of Torit. SPLA troops, who are mostly Christian and animist, continue to hold some positions and show no sign of surrendering to Islamic fundamentalist government forces ...

2

Lebanon

Israeli air force continues to pound Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon with two raids in early August; attacks were 23rd and 24th Israeli air strikes into Lebanon so far this year ...

3

Iraq

Jane's Defense Weekly reports latest estimates of Iraqi equipment inventory puts tank force at 2,000 to 2,500, compared with 5,000 to 5,500 tanks prior to Desert Storm. APC and IFV force is down to 3,000, from 5,100 before Gulf War. Iraqi air force is said to have about 300 air frames left, of which some 150 have flown since April. Force had more than 700 aircraft before war ...

7

Turkey

Turkey dedicates giant Ataturk Dam on Euphrates, tightening its control of Mideast water supplies. Dam is one of a series Turkey has built on Euphrates and Tigris river systems, giving Turks substantial leverage over Syria and Iraq, both of which depend on Euphrates as a principal source of water ...

8

Cambodia

Khmer Rouge continues to violate terms of cease-fire accords by refusing to turn in their arms. Khmer claim Vietnamese troops are still in-country and that Phnom Penh government has not handed over sufficient weapons of its own to U.N. peacekeepers ...

11

Ukraine

Ukrainian-Russian squabble over how to divide Black Sea fleet of former Soviet Union heats up when a frigate bolts from a training exercise, hoists Ukrainian flag and escapes to Odessa with Russian ships in pursuit. Ukrainian government announces it will keep the vessel ...

14

Afghanistan

U.S. DEA estimates this year's opium output at 800 tons, double last year's yield. Afghans appear to be turning to opium as a means of financing postwar reconstruction and bankrolling continued conflict among guerrilla factions, which recently claimed more than 1,000 lives in and around Kabul ...

15

Philippines

Universal Studios and Walt Disney Co., of all people, have both asked to take over Subic Bay naval base after U.S. Navy pulls out later this year. Universal wants to build a studio complex on the 98,000-acre site, while Disney is proposing a Pacific Rim Disneyland. Other companies have suggested casinos, plastics manufacturing or a shipyard. A committee headed by mayor of Olongapo is to recommend preferred use for the site ...

13

Madagascar

Opposition splinter group briefly seizes state-run radio station and declares overthrow of Marxist (until recently) President Didier Ratsiraka, who has run the island country since 1975. Takeover attempt, which ended with four participants being captured, is latest in a series of protests against Ratsiraka's rule going on now for more than a year ...

4

Poland

Polish government releases 287 cases of Czechoslovakian tank components that had been bound for Syria. Parts had been impounded since June, when it was discovered they had been described in shipping documents as auto parts ...

6

Sri Lanka

Ten senior officers commanding government operations against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are killed by mine blast on recently recaptured Kayts Island, a few miles from Tigers' stronghold on Jaffna Peninsula ...

5

Israel

Major explosion at Israel Military Industries' munitions plant at Nof Yam, north of Tel Aviv, destroys three underground storage bunkers, kills three and injures 47. Blast, which caused millions in damages and deposited debris more than three miles away, was second major explosion at an Israeli munitions storage facility this year ...

9

Germany

Germany becomes first country to begin implementing Conventional Forces in Europe treaty by starting destruction of excess tanks. The good news is that initial batches of tanks to be cut up come from former East German inventory ...

10

Vietnam

Russia tells Vietnamese government it wants to continue to keep a military presence at former U.S. naval base at Cam Ranh Bay. Former Soviet Union previously announced its intention to pull out, but Russian military appears to be having second thoughts; it currently runs a communications facility at Cam Ranh and not much else ...

11

12

Taiwan

Bush administration is reconsidering its long-standing refusal to sell F-16s to Taiwan. The reconsideration comes after reports of Taiwan's interest in purchasing 100 Mirage 2000-5 fighters from France. In June, Taiwanese request to buy 150 F-16Cs was turned down by U.S. Selling F-16s would save jobs at General Dynamics' Fort Worth plant, while signaling China of U.S. displeasure with Chinese human rights violations and missile sales to Third World ...

17

Azerbaijan

Checking a series of reverses, Armenian fighters in Nagorno-Karabakh retake several villages and kill approximately 100 Azerbaijanis in the process. Armenian KIAs are put at six dead ...

19

Kuwait

Two U.S. mechanized Infantry and two armor companies from 1st Cavalry Division, an element of the 5th Special Forces Group, along with Amphibious Squadron One and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted joint training exercises with revived Kuwaiti armed forces, following renewal of Iraq claims to Kuwait and three-week standoff between Baghdad mob and U.N. inspectors in front of Iraq's agriculture ministry ...

18

19

China

China and Vietnam could be headed for a new military clash over 33 islands in the Spratly littoral, which both countries claim. Oil exploration is presently underway in those islands ...

16

Bosnia-Herzegovina

U.N. Security Council passes resolution authorizing use of force to ensure relief supplies get through. Resolution comes following disclosure of Serbian concentration camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in wake of a successful Serbian offensive forcing withdrawal of Croatian forces from Posavina region ...

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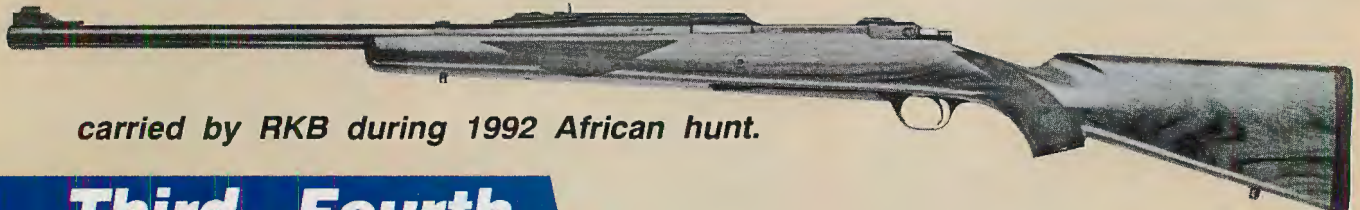
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CNS92

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Marksmanship: Closeup & Professional

by Andy Stanford

Some who watched laser-guided bombs impacting targets in Kuwait and Iraq have prematurely announced the demise of infantry combat. But, as readers of this magazine know, for every Desert Storm, there are dozens of Panamas, Grenadas and Vietnams. Sorry folks, Star Wars hoopla to the contrary, the days of the small unit action are far from over.

Despite the fact that combat marksmanship is as important as ever, it is becoming something of a lost art. What makes this even more surprising is that a lot of good work has been done in this field during the last decade or so by private-sector entities — API/Gunsite, the *Soldier Of Fortune* Three-Gun Match, and the Southern California Tactical Combat Program conspicuous among these.

Much of the problem with today's general rifle training stems from a failure to understand the goal of such instruction. What is ultimately needed

by the "infantryman, comma, one each" (i.e., non-sniper) is accurate fire, delivered quickly from field firing positions, at ranges usually not more than 200 meters.

In fact, the truth of the matter is that most engagements occur far closer. Fortunately, weaknesses in a unit's shooting skills can usually be corrected through local initiative, depending on the availability of training ammunition and a range — and the permission or forgiveness of the officer in charge, as applicable — along with a clear focus on the goal.

Appropriate lecture is the first step. A minimized syllabus consistent with the K.I.S.S. principle will provide the best results, especially since most people would rather shoot than listen to an instructor, anyway. Material covered should include marksmanship fundamentals (zero, sight picture and trigger control), field firing positions and gun handling, as described below.

However, before any weapons training begins, a brief but thorough discussion of firearms safety is always in order. Four rules, as articulated by Jeff Cooper at Gunsite, serve to cover this subject well:

1. All guns are always loaded.
2. Never let your muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger, unless the sights are on the target.
4. Be sure of your target and what is beyond.

With everyone aware of what is required to keep from shooting someone accidentally, instruction can commence regarding what is necessary to shoot someone on purpose.

Before a rifleman can use the sights to align his rifle with the target, the weapon must be zeroed (sighted in). With the weapon zeroed, the sights can now be used to align it with the target. Those issued iron-sighted weapons must be taught the importance of

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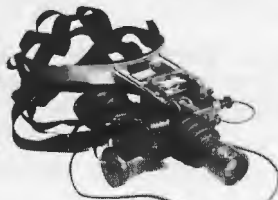
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focusing on the front sight, not the target. The combat rifleman will need to use an adjusted point of aim ("Kentucky windage") — instead of adjusting the sights as competitive match shooters do — to provide lead on moving targets, hold off for wind drift, and hold over for bullet drop.

Trigger control is the key to marksmanship, in combat as well as on the range. Students must understand that the trigger needs to be pressed smoothly, straight to the rear. Naturally, just how well each shooter can accomplish this will only become apparent during live fire. Nonetheless, stressing this point in lecture — and discussing flinching, the No. 1 enemy of good shooting — will reap benefits on the range and in the field.

An understanding of shooting positions is essential for applying the above fundamentals in the "real world." Prone, kneeling, offhand and perhaps squatting positions have the most utility to the combat rifleman. Instruction in the correct use of artificial support is another necessary departure from a competitive marksmanship curriculum: The target shooter's loop sling is rarely, if ever, used in combat firing.

Clearly, firing in combat often involves more than getting into position



U.S. Marines on patrol in Lebanon: Life in combat is not a KD range. Photo: Fred Reed

in a leisurely manner and firing a shot. Therefore, gun-handling skills are required to facilitate quick and positive manipulation of the weapon under stress, without conscious thought. Loading, reloading, carrying, and presenting the weapon should be taught, with an emphasis on efficiency and

economy of motion (and on safety rules 2 and 3). Malfunction clearance is another important subject, and all students should be shown the immediate action required to clear common weapon stoppages.

Obviously, classroom-type instruction on these topics will not impart proficiency with a weapon in and of itself. The only way shooting skills will become reflexive is through hands-on repetition. A building-block approach to live-fire training is best, as this takes into account the fact that the students must "walk before they can run." The following steps provide this logical progression:

1. Firing groups prone over support: This phase of training accomplishes two things: The shooter can zero his weapon and also practice sighting and squeezing the trigger without the additional problem of a shaky firing position.

2. Slowfire from field positions: Shooting should be done at a fairly close range initially, to build shooter confidence. Practicing a correct shooting position and marksmanship fundamentals are the goals of this stage of training.

Continued on page 69

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BATTLE BLADES

Blades For Black Berets

Text & Photo by Greg Walker



Richard Batson has been making knives since 1958, fashioning his first blades for friends who couldn't afford expensive combat knives. Since then, he figures he's made over 500 knives, turning to the trade as a full-time bladesmith in 1972. Batson specializes in combat cutlery, his clients being almost all military professionals, mostly members of U.S. Army special operations units. The demands of special warfare are well known to Batson, whose background includes more than one tour of combat in Southeast Asia as a Green Beret.

One hears about Richard's work by word of mouth. He does not court cutlery collectors, nor does he depend upon knifemaking to pay his bills.

"I enjoy making my knives because I know they'll be used," Batson offered during a recent interview. "That's why I price them all the way I do. Most PFCs can't afford a really good knife. I know I couldn't when I was in the service." Indeed, Batson allows a 40% discount to active-duty military personnel, his priority of work related to how soon a soldier needs one of his several blade models. "I rely on APO addresses to verify their military status," Richard says, "although if I talk to a man long enough, I can tell if he's for real or not."

I was fortunate enough to receive four examples of Richard's work for review and evaluation. Two were borrowed back from active duty sources, the remainder coming from the maker's limited on-hand inventory. My primary interest concerned itself with the Batson Ranger Knife (model B-RK), a combat blade immensely popular with the Army's Ranger battalions over the past several years.

"Richard Batson is the unofficial knifemaker to the Rangers," one source

The Batson Ranger Knife has seen service in Central America and the Persian Gulf. As a combat knife, it is one of the more original designs available.

told me. "His Ranger Knife pattern was approved by the Regiment, and he enjoys a strong following within the unit."

So popular are Batson's creations that USSOCOM commander General Carl Stiner owns several of his combat blades. A presentation B-RK was recently donated to the Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia, for an upcoming regimental ceremony. No other custom knifemaker enjoys this kind of relationship with the Army's "Black Berets."

Our evaluation knife features Richard's standard clip-point grind, although he offers four other grind variations depending upon what a client's needs are. The blade form is reminiscent of the Vietnam-era "SOG Recon" combat knife, developed by Ben Baker at the request of SOG's ground operators. Batson's is a fully functional blade pattern that makes the most of the uniquely American bowie concept so favored by Bo Randall.

At 7.5 inches long, the blade is ground from 1/4-inch 01 Parkins steel, the only cutlery steel Richard will work with. A 3-inch sharpened clip is present (to enhance penetration while allowing for effective back-slashing), as is a three-tooth sawback pattern capable of cutting aircraft aluminum such as found on the MH-60 helicopter.

Batson variable-hardens his blades, a process that allows for a hard edge and softer blade back. This translates into a knife both durable and tough at the correct stress points. At *Fighting Knives* magazine, I've broken more

than one supposed "combat knife" under minimal field conditions; most of these blades were lacking the hardening processes applied to the B-RK.

Both the pommel and double guard are formed from steel, with a lanyard hole present at the base of the pommel for those wishing the added security of a field cord. The guard is likewise drilled, each hole allowing a fixture point should you need to lash the knife to a stout stick, forming a field-expedient survival spear. This is a practical feature to have on one's knife. For example, the Army's "C"-level SERE course teaches construction of just such a spear to its students for both food gathering and self-defense.

Our blade was Parkerized, although four alternate finishes are available upon request. Parkerizing protects the blade from excessive rusting, discoloration and pitting, while cutting down on the steel's natural tendency to reflect light. Most Rangers prefer a blackened knife, as their operations take place during the hours of darkness, an environment where sharpened "signal mirrors" are frowned upon.

Batson offers his handles in small, medium and large sizes, seeking to custom-fit each knife to the hand of his client. Micarta and CocoBolo are offered as handle materials, both extremely durable and resistant to wear, heat damage, cracking, splitting, and moist environments. Our evaluation model arrived in a CocoBolo format, far more attractive than Micarta.

Sheath wise, Richard depends upon Sullivan's Leather, in Tampa, Florida. Each scabbard is double-stitched, with reinforcing copper rivets (blackened) added to further ensure the sheath's staying together under adverse conditions. A single strap-'n'-snap security system locks the Ranger into its leather home, with a nylon cord present on the belt loop, which can be slipped over the knife's handle and tightened for additional security. An adequate leg tie-down cord is also present.

The B-RK is nicely balanced, tending to be blade-heavy. The knife is well-suited for light to medium chopping activities, although I would recommend the saw feature be replaced with Batson's anvil back. This will allow

the knife to be used in conjunction with a wooden club or mallet for serious splitting chores. Edge-holding is excellent, with touch-up work accomplished using a diamond hone. The sharpened false edge works well and is truly sharp. Grind lines were clean, crisp and balanced. We did not attempt sawing through an aircraft frame, as one was not available.

The medium handle runs slightly lean, allowing for an exceptionally strong grip to be realized when the knife is in-hand. In addition, Batson sculpts a series of finger alignment "grooves" into the handle to further enhance grip retention. These are thoughtfully spaced and more than adequate where size is concerned. Unlike most such grooves, these did not feel awkward, nor did they detract from the knife's usefulness during employment.

Overall, the Batson Ranger Knife is as capable a combat blade as one could hope to own. Its design/applica-

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tion is sensible, based upon the maker's firsthand experience in the jungles of Vietnam and Laos. Workmanship was superb on all four models, with fit and finish considerations revealing Batson's expertise as a painstaking craftsman. More impressive is the reasonable price structure offered by Richard to his clients. At a time when far too many cutlery outlets are asking for the moon, Batson asks only for a fair wage where his work is concerned.

Also reviewed were the Batson Ranger Dagger, Small Ranger model and the Batson Combat Knife. Each displayed unique design as well as solid construction and attention to detail. The Ranger Dagger is nearly as popular as the B-RK among the Regiment's personnel, Batson told me.

I heartily recommend the combat creativity of Richard Batson, the Ranger Regiment's preferred knifemaker. For further information regarding prices and ordering, contact this extraordinary bladesmith at (703) 532-5276, or write to Dept. SOF, 6239 N. 22nd St., Arlington, VA 22205. ✂

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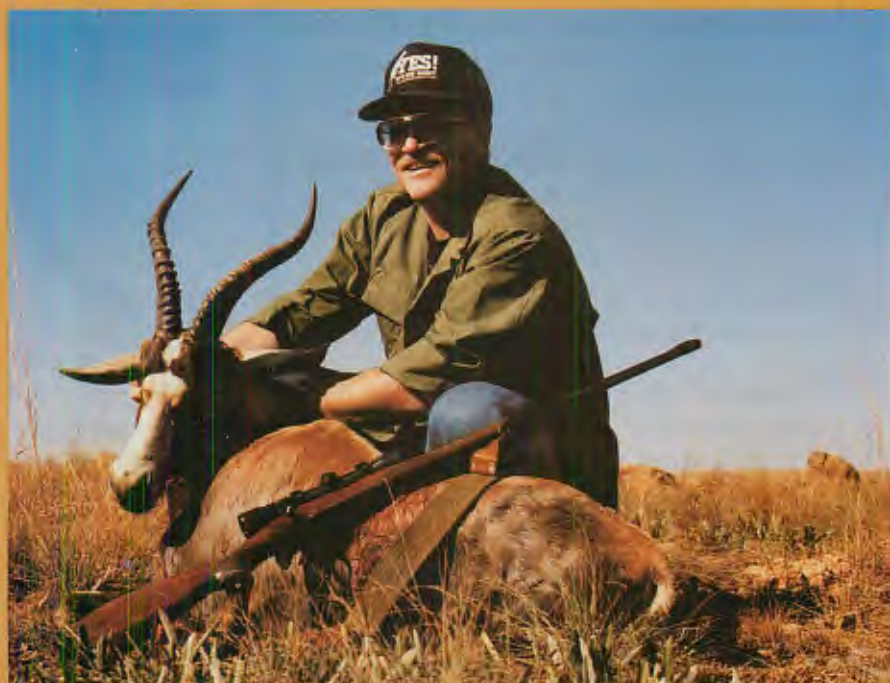
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LOOKING FOR WAR IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

I've just finished reading "Looking for War in All the Wrong Places" [September '92]. I served with many of the guys mentioned in the article.

I was in the same platoon as "Attila the Hun" for about a month. He was forever bitching about the hygienic conditions in our combat zone. Spent most of his time in the cookhouse compulsively cleaning everything in sight. A decent guy, but no soldier.

As for Kevin, I have to take sharp exception to Rob Krott's referring to him as a "kid." I served with Kevin at Vincovci and knew him as a bighearted guy I'd be proud to share a foxhole with any day. He was a man and a good soldier who did a lot more for Croatia than the nose-in-the-air Mr. Krott. So what if Kevin had a bad-conduct discharge, drank like the Irishman he was, hung around in brothels and brawled with the MPs? It's what a guy does in the field that counts.

I ran into a lot of military tourists like Krott in Croatia. They drop around, take a few phony Rambo pictures, sneer at real soldiers and then boogie off to sell articles to *SOF*.

As for the "stewed to the gills" Croat soldier at the train station, it was guys like him who stopped the communist tanks at Vukovar with little more than AKs and *Rakija*. Lots of Croats have bad teeth; it's a poor country, Mr. Krott.

Tom Chittum

Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey

FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION BROUHAHA

I would like to reply to the letter in the June '92 "FLAK" by Mr. Joel Neale. I will agree with you on one point, Mr. Neale: The USMC is the finest fighting force in the world. I would like to point out that the Legion is neither poorly trained nor backward, but a fine professional body of soldiers. I have my suspicions that you couldn't take the training or discipline of military life. That being the case, you would never make it in the USMC, either.

David Moore

London, England

In response to this letter and another one by Wayne Reveen in our August '92 "FLAK" column, Mr. Neale writes:

"I went to the Legion, not believing all its lore, but expecting a physical, disciplined and trained army ready to fight at a moment's notice, anywhere, anytime. Believe me, I researched the topic well in advance, even receiving literature from the Legion's headquarters in Aubagne.

Like any army, the Legion has its share of enlisted GI bullshit, but it would have been nice to get in shape or at least learn some fighting maneuvers and tactics. All I learned was how to sing and march 88 steps a minute. And when I got to 2REP it wasn't much better.

In my section of 52 men at Instruction (the first four months of Basic), the

attrition rate was two guys and that was because of a broken ankle and a heart condition. I finished honor Legionnaire out of 50, with no physical challenge whatsoever. In four months, I think we ran 10 times."

Joel Neale

Vernon, British Columbia

BAD DEAL FOR BO

Repeal of the federal income tax? Abolition of the Federal Reserve? Strict adherence to the Constitution? James "Bo" Gritz sounds like a winner. He'd certainly be a viable alternative to the economic miasma of the Reagan-Bush years. Viva Bo!

Emmett Wofford

El Paso, Texas

I don't know Colonel Gritz ["Bo Knows Politics," September '92], and I don't dispute most of Jim Pate's article, but I think you should turn your reporters to do some research on Bush and his New World Order.

This New World Order will destroy the United States as we know it. If you will do some research, you will find that it will make the U.S. subservient to the United Nations.

I would direct you to the "International Convent on Civil and Political Rights," to which the United States is a signatory. This will allow George to turn rule over to the United Nations in the event he declares a national emergency, such as the drug problem or riots in L.A. It will allow U.N. peace-keeping forces to come into the United States and suspend the U.S. Constitution.

I don't know Jim Pate, but he certainly seems to be a big Bush supporter. I don't know Eustace Mullins, but apparently he has done quite a bit of research on the Federal Reserve System, which is neither federal nor reserve. It is owned by private banks, of which one or more is owned by Jewish interests in England. That is a fact and just to tell the truth does not make one anti-Semitic, anti-black, anti-white, anti-American or anti-anything.

If you think the Democrats are bad and want to take away guns and make the federal government bigger, just wait until George Bush has his way. Certainly, neither Bush nor Clinton are interested in preserving the American way of life. They are both only interested in a global society, with the su-



per-rich in control and all of us as slaves.

George and his "free trade" policy has sent and will send millions of jobs overseas and put millions more Americans out of work. Let's have some articles on this to help wake up the American people before it is too late.

William S. McClelland
Altoona, Florida

After reading the September 1992 article on Bo Gritz, I am not going to renew my subscription.

The hatchet-job article by Jim Pate must have been written for him by the Anti-Defamation League. Mr. Brown, why not look at yourself. You are a pro-Zionist stooge because Jewish magazine dealers control newsstand circulation.

You don't know beans about the background of Operation Desert Storm. We fought it for Israel. Truly, the Zionist Jews have befouled the United States. Their influence into SOF is so obvious. If you would read "The Spotlight" you might learn what's really going on.

Fred Huntley
Nevada City,
California

MORE ON L.A. RIOTS

After reading the article entitled "War Zone Los Angeles" in the August '92 issue, I wonder: Is Jim Morris the *nom de plume* of former President Jimmy Carter?

The noble pose of understanding the oppressed is worthy of the Tooth Fairy himself.

But then I don't blame Jim Morris for espousing pacifism in his story as much as I blame your editors for publishing the story. You are getting soft in the head.

Next, in a future issue, I expect to read that, as "responsible" citizens, you have voluntarily turned in your guns, and all day long you go around humming "Imagine" by John Lennon.

Mike Crawford
Cumming, Georgia

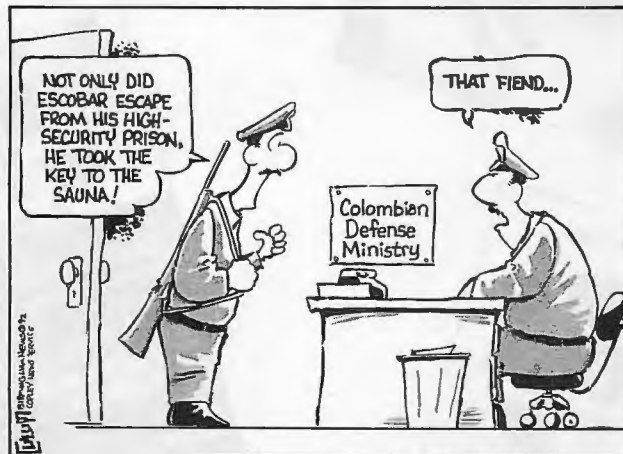
I can't tell you how disappointed I was in your decision to carry Jim Morris' "War Zone Los Angeles" in your August '92 issue. Seems Mr. Morris was feathering his nest by adding to his writer's portfolio while pandering to the typical Southern California media "politically correct" mentality.

He plays softball with the unimpressive Mayor Bradley while "dis-ing" out the usually capable former LAPD Chief Darryl Gates as "yesterday's man." He fawns over TV

reporter Jody Baskerville for her (undeniable) courage while glibly glossing over the predominantly boneheaded reporting that we were served up during the riots; and he describes the *LA Times'* coverage of the LAPD as "sometimes biased." (That's like calling *Pravda's* Cold War international news coverage "sometimes pro-Soviet!")

Let SOF be SOF: Granted that LAPD (and Gates) mishandled the riots — but let's not make liberal bleeding-heart excuses for the murder and mayhem that transpired simply because Gates and his prestigious LAPD have at times been less than perfect over the years.

Mike O'Donnell
San Bernardino, California



Jim Morris responds:
Times have changed. After years of being bashed by liberals for having fought in Vietnam, I am now getting hate mail from SOF readers for my piece on the L.A. riots.

Some of the criticism is justified. I did not mention that the national media hadn't played the entire Rodney King tape because I didn't know it. The media must bear responsibility for not reporting information that they had in their possession, but that is another article.

Some readers seem to think I said the officers were guilty. I did not cover the trial, do not have all the facts, and have no opinion on that. I merely reported that the verdict was not well-received by the city, which should be self-evident by now.

Other readers think that shoot-to-kill orders should have been issued to the police. Probably such an order would have more than halved the death toll and cut property damage by two-thirds. But there is no political support for such a move here — none. The guy who issued the order would have gone to jail.

I believe that the vast majority of blacks and Hispanics in this city are

decent people who did not riot and were the principal victims of the riots. The damage in South-Central will be there for years. In my neighborhood everything was up and running in a week.

It is a fact that many members of minorities in L.A. are scared to death of the cops. The city has paid out millions of dollars in judgments for false arrests, wrongful beatings and wrongful deaths, just in the 18 months I've lived here.

I still believe that the majority of LAPD officers are professionals, cool in a crisis and as fair as they can be. But some of them are not, and just like a drunk soldier on pass, one guy with an attitude makes them all look bad.

As for Gates, most of the people who criticized me for holding him responsible admitted themselves that he had screwed up. Nine years I was in the Army, and I know of too many incidents where commanders got good people killed, then skated because they were in the old-boy network. Gates set the tone for his department.

The blacks are here, so are the Hispanics, legal or illegal, like it or not. Their opinions don't have to be agreed with, but they have to be acknowledged. All the minorities in L.A. constitute a majority now. Which means that when mil-

lions of people become so pissed off that they are willing to burn down their own neighborhoods, you have to at least take a look to see if they have a legitimate bitch.

When I wrote this article I was trying to be impartial. I have covered and been in many fights. I have never seen one where all the good guys were on one side. Life ain't that simple.

OFF-DUTY AND ARMED

Re: "Let Off-Duty Cops Carry" ["Command Guidance," August '92]:

We don't need to support H.R. 4897 when we have the Second Amendment to the Bill of Rights.

If all off-duty cops were armed, no one would be safe anywhere near a bar. Off-duty cops are forever shooting each other in and near bars.

The Second Amendment makes a lot more sense. As far as I know the word "infringed" has not acquired a new meaning even in Newspeak. All we have to do is convince our leaders to obey the Supreme Law of the Land — our Constitution.

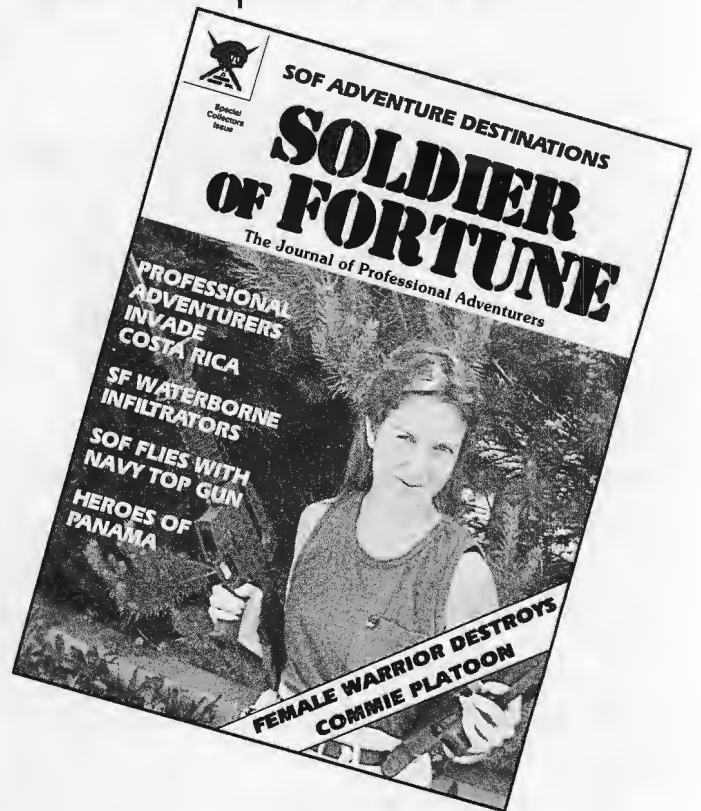
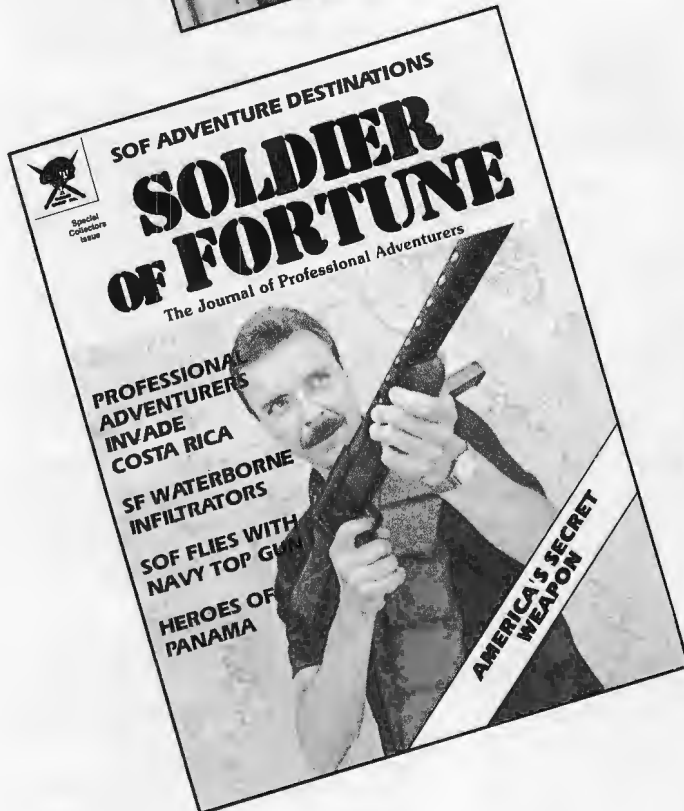
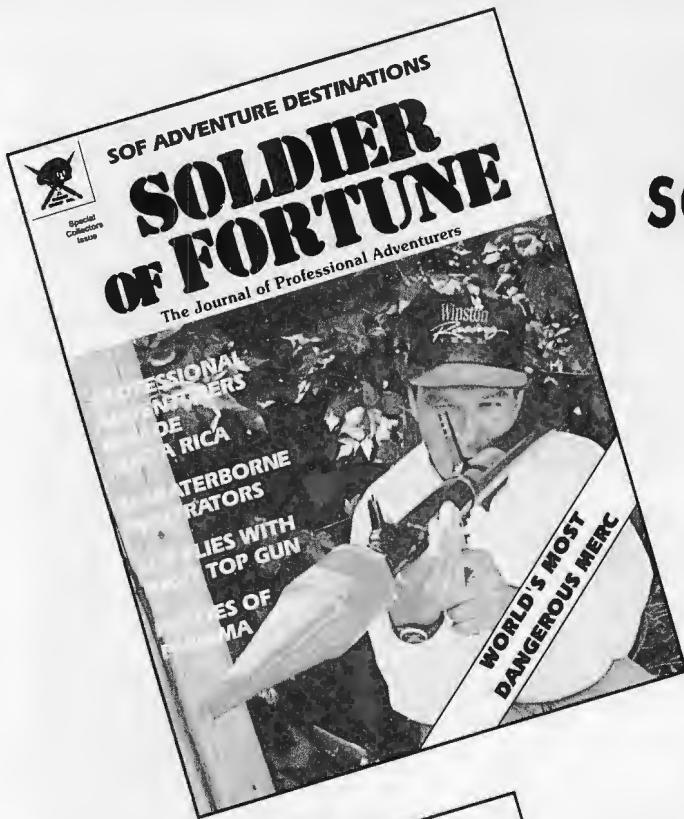
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Every cop I have ever talked to is anti-gun. Every cop I see on TV is anti-gun. Every cop who writes to the newspapers is anti-gun. Sure, they say they are pro-gun. Then when you talk to them it's "but we ought to register handguns" or "there is no reason to own an assault rifle."

Why would I want to give a cop a privilege when they don't even want to give me my rights? When they get into trouble off-duty let them call 911 and let the police protect them just like all the anti-gun pukers want me to do.

Name Withheld
Vancouver, Washington

"Let Off-Duty Cops Carry." Hell, yes. And all citizens without mental problem and criminal records, too! It's called the Second Amendment. Not just cops but all good citizens are obligated by our Constitution to responsibly carry arms, concealed or exposed, and support and protect our loved ones, our life and our property.

Frederick V. Bowles
Oakland, California

I agree that there is a bewildering variety of local laws, rules and interpretations concerning gun carry permits in the United States. But I am wondering about the ramifications of local off-duty cops (and retired cops) having the right to carry anywhere in the United States as proposed by Bill H.R. 4897 in the Congress.

The major reason these cops want to carry a concealed weapon is to protect their own ass. Protecting others is a "benefit" that might occur. Giving off-duty and retired cops national-carry permits would make it harder for law-abiding citizens to obtain a concealed carry permit.

The reasoning is very simple. Since cops (and retired cops) now can have their carry permit for life, why would they want a "civilian" to carry concealed. Remember, retired cops are not cops, but only "citizens" like you and me. They have no police powers. Why should they have more power than me? I probably have more knowledge about guns than most cops.

Cops will become elitists and above the law, as Congress is today. I'm afraid that this proposition for off-duty cops (and retired cops) to carry nationwide at anytime/anywhere until death will prove to be the deathblow for law-abiding citizens to obtain carry permits.

William R. Salvesen
Sundown Arms Co. Inc.
Palisades Park, New Jersey

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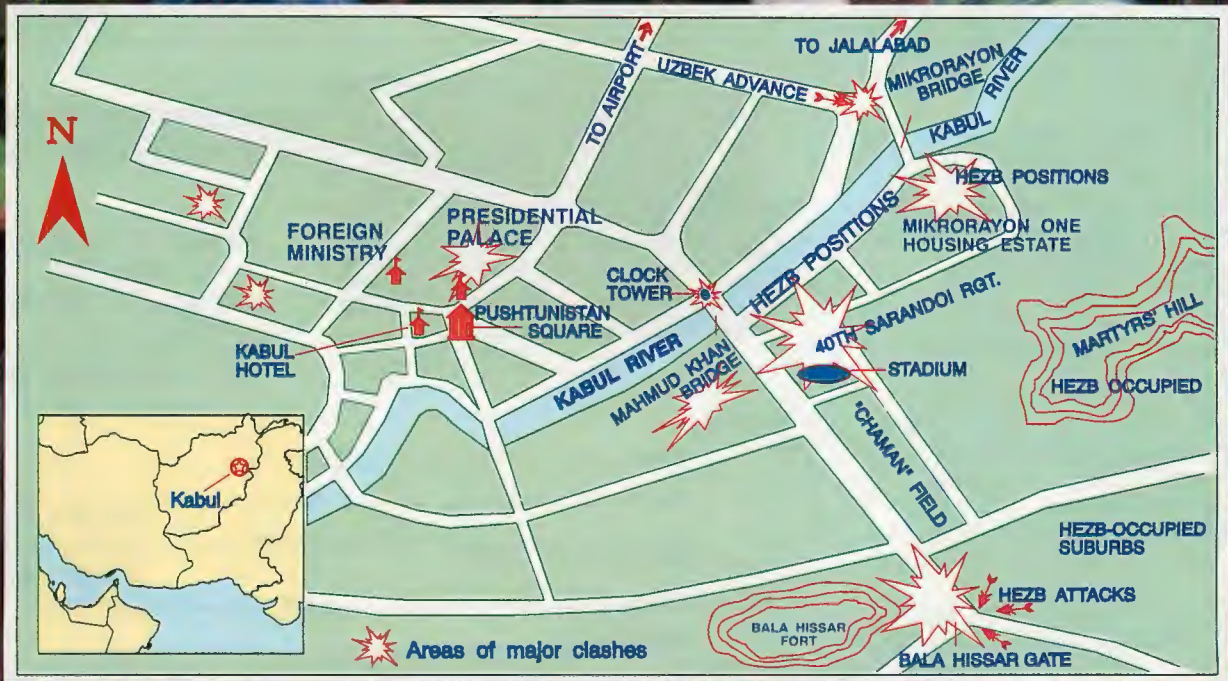
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Kabul in Flames as




Central Kabul, scene of furious mujahideen power struggle. Hezb-i-Islami fundamentalists were entrenched on Martyrs' Hill and other areas along south bank of the Kabul River. Author accompanied Uzbek troops of the 53rd Militia Division, who were tasked with fighting their way across the river and dislodging them.

FEUD

Muj Battles Muj

Text & Photos by Mike Winchester



Gentlemen of the 53rd Militia Division, celebrated for their leisure-hour pursuits: loot, rape, pillage, arson, armed assault and murder.

Locked and loaded, the column pulled out of Kabul's Presidential Palace on the morning of 27 April. There were three BMP armored personnel carriers (APCs), one BTR, a BRDM scout car, a couple of tanks and a truck — plus a company-sized force of Uzbek militiamen. It was clear we were headed for a fight.

When the commanding officer, Major General Abdul Rahman, a short guy in pressed Soviet camouflage fatigues and cap, had asked me if I wanted to come along, I had quickly piled onto the back of a flatbed truck with a few other press types.

While several hundred militiamen milled around before the column moved out, I had watched a big-shot TV crew react as it slowly sank-in that the preparations underway around them portended something rather more dangerous than a media tour of town. After huddled exchanges, they remembered they had very urgent business elsewhere and climbed off the flatbed.

As the populace of southern Afghanistan has found out to its cost in recent years — and as the good citizens of Kabul were in the process of rediscovering — the Uzbek 53rd Militia Division is in a category all its own.

Commanded by an illiterate former farmhand called Abdul Rashid Dustam, the 53rd is renowned nationally for two things. First, they are unquestionably the toughest fighters in Afghanistan, a quality which recommended their services with increasing frequency to President Najibullah (and which was eventually to cost him his job). Second, the 53rd — better known simply as “Dustam”



Supporters of Ahmad Shah Massoud's *Jamiat* party help themselves to weapons from Presidential Palace after taking over Kabul.

— are celebrated for their leisure-hour pursuits: looting, rape, pillaging, arson, armed assault and, not infrequently, murder.

About the only thing the 53rd appears not to be into is protection rackets. By the time these boys have had their fun, there's not a lot left to protect. They are, in short, the Lost Command of the Second Afghan War (1989-??), and if you're doing anything as foolhardy as trying to govern the country, you ignore them at your peril.

Dustam first rose to national notoriety during the Soviet pullout of 1988-89, as Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, found itself increasingly short of enthusiastic fighters. Into the breach stepped Dustam with an irregular formation that was subsequently built up as the communist regime's only real mobile reserve.

In that role they became dangerously indispensable. Essentially a mercenary army of more than 30,000 troops, the 53rd fought on a contract basis and was airlifted into every single hot spot in southern and eastern Afghanistan to hold the line for Kabul.

Overwhelmingly drawn from the downtrodden Uzbek minority of the north, the soldiers of the 53rd also took special delight in settling historical scores with the Pushtuns of the south — Afghanistan's traditional rulers. Duty in the south meant killing Pushtan mujahideen, laying waste Pushtun villages and terrorizing civilians — work the 53rd enjoyed as well as were paid for doing.

They'd also done a stint in Kabul in 1990. Militarily, this involved a protracted clearing operation in Paghman, a mujahideen stronghold on the doorstep of the capital. In town, the 53rd is better remembered for operations in their off-

duty hours that severely embarrassed the government. These included raids on liquor shops and roughing up foreign guests in the best hotels, along with drunken visits to Kabul's street of sin, during which the boys were given to taking off into the night with shrieking whores flung over their shoulders.

Sitting on the top of a truck watching the column forming up, I felt I was witnessing a unique time warp in which the 13th and 20th centuries had met. Here were Genghis Khan's hordes fresh off the steppes and into a Soviet munitions plant. Horses exchanged for APCs, bows for RPGs, swords for Kalashnikovs.

The troops were mostly bearded with long unkempt hair and turbans, wearing distinctive knee-length corduroy smocks over traditional baggy Afghan pants. Save for the officers, all wore slippers rather than boots.

They also injected real meaning into that much overworked term “heavily armed.” Based in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, Dustam has inherited huge quantities of Soviet stocks pushed into Afghanistan in the months leading up to January 1992's joint Soviet-U.S. arms cutoff to Afghanistan.

The 53rd are mechanized with hundreds of BMP-1s, BMP-2s and T-62 main battle tanks donated by Ivan since the end of the Soviet pullout. At small-unit level, the RPG and RPK general-purpose machine guns have virtually achieved the status of personal weapons, with the AKM assault rifle an afterthought, a mere side-arm.

Around 1000 hours that morning, we ground past the gates of the recently liberated palace looking for Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-i-Islami*, the lean, mean, hard men of the Islamic revolution who had unwisely attempted to take over Kabul before the other muj arrived.

We found them on the banks of the Kabul River, about a block away.

In those chaotic days, the “Hezbi” were all over the city, occupying various ministries or barracks. But they were most effectively dug-in atop a long sugarloaf-type feature called the Tappah-e-Shahada, or Martyrs' Hill, surmounted by a cemetery for war dead and by the domed mausoleum of King Nadir Shah. Martyrs' Hill dominates much of eastern and central Kabul, and if you have several T-55 tanks on it as the Hezbi then did, you have a mean field of fire.

They also had units entrenched below the hill, along the south bank of the Kabul River. Some had occupied Mikrorayon One, a complex of bleak, Soviet-style apartment blocks. Others had taken over the barracks of the Sarandoi 40th Regiment military police, further along the riverbank near the sports stadium. Further east, several suburbs close to the hilltop fortress of Bala Hissar were also in Hezbi hands.

In short, there were large numbers of Hekmatyar's men in town. Nobody — themselves included — knew how many, but if you reckoned on 6,000 to 7,000, you probably wouldn't be far off.

Dustam's primary task was to dislodge the Hezbi from the commanding heights of Martyrs' Hill. That meant crossing the river at two key bridges: the Bridge of Mahmud Khan, near the sports stadium, and the Mikrorayon bridge. It would then be possible to sweep the areas at the bottom of the hill, link up with 53rd elements near Bala Hissar, and push up the hill from two sides.

Rahman's column was tasked with taking the Bridge of Mahmud Khan. We approached down a street from the north toward an old clock tower that sits in the middle of a traffic roundabout located at the northern end of the bridge. As the lead vehicles neared the tower, the Hezbi on the southern bank assumed — reasonably enough — that our intentions were not friendly and opened up with a storm of small-arms fire.

The Uzbeks were ready. Most of the

Uzbek militiaman on BTR indirect-fires AGS-17 grenade launcher over bridge and into enemy positions.



militiamen had debussed 100 meters down the street and were advancing warily along the sidewalks toward the clock tower when the firing began. The army kept moving, a BTR taking up position to one side of the clock tower. On the other side, a T-62 ground to a halt, its gun covering the southern riverbank along with a BMP-2.

The river was no more than 40 meters across, a turbid flood enclosed between brick embankments. Across it, the Hezbis had positions in front of the Sarandoi barracks in a row of two-story shops, some tumbledown mud buildings and empty containers. From the clock tower to their positions over the river was maybe 100-150 meters — not whites-of-the-eyes stuff, but if you're looking down the wrong end of a 115mm tank barrel, close enough.

There was a rush for cover behind the clock tower as automatic fire scoured the northern approaches to the bridge. Some militiamen began pushing into a small doorway at the base of the tower, which led to a narrow spiral staircase and upper windows providing a better field of fire down onto the buildings over the river. Other fighters crouched behind the T-62.

Rahman himself — who believed in leading from the front — was standing up beside the tank, coolly directing the troops bunched behind the tower as he surveyed the prospects of moving across the bridge.

They were not good. To our immediate front, the road was swept with fire. Along the embankment at the nearer end of the bridge, several militiamen were already flat behind the cover of a low wall. One guy, wounded in the initial firing, lay on his back grimacing in pain.

I made a dash up some steps into the little garden around the base of the tower. A wounded militiaman was dragged out, apparently a victim of shrapnel from a rocket that hit the tower's other side.

Rahman was not yet prepared to risk limited armor out on the bridge. He needed to clear buildings near its southern end first. They were already taking heat.

From one side of the tower, the T-62 began firing its main gun, supported by 30mm cannon fire from a BMP-2 that had pulled up close by. On the other side, the BTR chipped in with short, savage bursts from the 14.5mm HMG on its turret. Then a guy surfaced from inside and began loosing off with an AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher atop the vehicle (The AGS-17 on the top of an AFV is a common sight now in Afghanistan; it gives the vehicle a dangerous indirect fire capability it

wouldn't otherwise have.). The air reeked of cordite and the noise was deafening. But our advance was still stalled.

What Was SOF Doing Here?

None of which explains what a correspondent for *Soldier Of Fortune* — a publication not famous for its communist sympathies — was doing holed up with a bunch of hard-core Kabul regime militia on the receiving end of ordnance paid for by American taxpayers and fired by a leading faction of Afghan freedom fighters. The answer, of course, is simple: In the Land of A Million Kalashnikovs, where



53rd Militia Div. T-62 fires on Hezb positions across Kabul River.

the double cross and the alliance of convenience are national art forms, nothing is ever what it appears.

Ex-President Najibullah learned this simple truth earlier this year, the hard way. The lesson cost him his job, and if there is any justice in this world it may yet cost him his life.

Early this year, it appeared the mujahideen, divided and squabbling as usual, were a containable problem. Washington and Moscow's arms cutoff went into effect on 1 January. Three months earlier, major muj offensives backed by Pakistan and targeted on the southeastern cities of Gardez and Jalalabad had flopped. Islamabad was now clearly tiring of a war without end over the border in Afghanistan and a refugee presence without end at home. Pakistani big business wanted stability in Afghanistan and a safe transit route to the alleged riches of the now independent Central Asian states.

But Najib's real problem was less from the muj than from the growing ethnic tensions in his own regime. A smart political juggler, he was always ready to pre-empt trouble, playing one group off against another. But with the Soviet Union gone and the West not ready to oblige with recognition and bucks, he was fast running out of time and tricks.

Najib himself is a Pushtun, but a large number of the people doing the fighting

for his regime, both militia and regulars, were from the Tajik and Uzbek northern minorities. They had become increasingly powerful and increasingly tired of serving as cannon fodder for Pushtun generals. On top of this, they weren't getting paid on time.

By late 1991, Najibullah had decided it was time to cut this potential threat down to size and move more loyal Pushtun commanders into key positions in the north. In mid-January, Major General Abdul Momen, a Tajik commander of the 70th Brigade of the elite National Guard based in Heiratan, got his marching orders. He was to hand over his command to a Pushtun.

Mutiny

Momen's response was to tell Najib's northern zone commander — another Pushtun — where he could put his orders. This was not quixotic display of injured pride; Momen had powerful friends. One was 53rd Division boss Abdul Rashid Dustam; another was Sayyid Mansur Naderi, leader of the Ismaeli community, whose 80th Militia Division controlled much of the road between the northern border and Kabul. Overnight, Najibullah was staring down the barrel of a mutiny of northern chiefs, who between them could field up to 200,000 armed men.

A standoff of several weeks followed, during which Najib struggled to patch over the rift, even agreeing to dump his northern zone commander. But in March events began to move with dramatic rapidity when northern mujahideen commander Ahmad Shah Massoud swung onto the offensive, capturing several northern towns from the regime. Then Dustam's 53rd took over the northern capital of Mazar-i-Sharif, sealing Kabul's loss of northern Afghanistan.

In April, a desperate situation became entirely untenable. In less than a week, Massoud's guerrilla alliance, the Supervisory Council, moved to capture a string of key bases north of the capital — the towns of Jabal Saraj and Charikar, the 2nd Division headquarters at Qala-ye-Surkh, and the air base of Bagram, home to the 40th Division. As anti-Najib army commanders swung over to Massoud, these bases fell without a shot being fired.

Then, on Friday, 17 April, Massoud entered a formal alliance with the northern mutineers Dustam, Momen and Naderi. By then, Najib was already history — and knew it.

On 15-16 April, the United Nations' Afghan point man Benon Sevan had attempted a bizarre midnight rescue of the Afghan dictator, personally arriving in Kabul by U.N. jet to pick Najib up and fly him to India.

But Sevan was too late. Earlier the same day, troops of the 53rd — with obvious clearance from senior anti-Najib elements of the regime — had flown south from Mazar in AN-32 transports to take

control of Kabul's Khwaja Rawash airport.

When Najib reached the airport with a Sevan aide, he was turned back by an Uzbek officer of the 53rd and forced to seek shelter in a Kabul U.N. compound where he formally signed his resignation. He's still there, drinking a good deal and thinking over where he went wrong.

The regime was now on auto-pilot, run by a clique of generals and communist politicians led by Foreign Minister Abdul Wakil. Their sole remaining task was to oversee a surrender that Massoud had determined would be unconditional. Militarily, however, the regime in Kabul was still holding together.

I flew in on Friday, 17 April, to find the airport in Dustam's hands and other units of the garrison in their posts. The next day I crossed the lines driving north of Kabul to Charikar, controlled by Massoud's men along with government units of the 2nd Division.

I found Massoud himself at the 2nd Division base of Qalaye-Surkh and talked to him that evening. He made it clear he had no intention of advancing on Kabul — something he was quite capable of doing militarily. Any push into the city which broke the defense belt would, he argued, automatically mean thousands of other muj from a plethora of different parties walking in. Inevitably, there would be fighting, looting and chaos.

All of this was true enough, but in one very real sense, Massoud didn't need to go in, for the simple reason that his own allies already controlled the city. Uzbek militiamen of the 53rd Division controlled the airport, while the top generals of the Kabul garrison inside the city were the same men who'd arranged for the bloodless surrenders of Jabal Saraj, Charikar, and Bagram. Whatever muj political council from Peshawar assumed power would, in the final analysis, be answerable mainly to Massoud and his new ally, Dustam.

The loser in all this was Massoud's arch-rival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his well-organized Hezb-i-Islami party, with its wide international connections — not least with Libya — and its nasty reputation for strong-arm methods. During the war, the Hezbis had clashed with virtually every other muj faction in the country — and occasionally with the Soviets.

But in an otherwise lackluster lineup of muj leaders, only Hekmatyar and

Massoud have stood out as men of charisma and vision. And it was clear from the infighting during the anti-Soviet war that when the communist regime fell, there'd be trouble between these two.

Both leaders are "fundamentalists" — men committed to building an Islamic state. Dividing them are issues of personality, political style, and race. Massoud, a Tajik guerrilla leader and member of the Jamiat party, has an essentially northern constituency (but he is also popular in Kabul). He believes in the politics of consensus. Hekmatyar, a Pushtun politician, has a primarily Pushtun following and believes — as Lenin did — in a tight, disciplined party (led by him) that knows best. Those whose ideas differ have tended to meet abrupt ends.

Like Massoud, Hekmatyar also had supporters inside the regime. Some had been with him for years; others were latecomers who saw in the muj leader a defender of Pushtun power against northern minorities grown

too big for their boots. All were Pushtun and almost all came from the hard-line *Khalq* faction of the ruling communist party. Many were in the Sarandoi military police, an internal security organization answering to the Interior Ministry.

Hekmatyar's attempt to seize power in Kabul was built mainly on the backs of his supporters in the Sarandoi during the last week of April. He probably began to move after the Massoud-Dustam juggernaut took the area north of Kabul and the airport. Activating his regime contacts, he began infiltrating unarmed men into the city to link up with sympathetic Sarandoi and army units.

Anatomy Of A Coup

Muj from Hezb strongholds in the surrounding provinces meanwhile began to march on the city. Massoud reacted by moving units south from Charikar to the northern gates of the city. Both sides were on the start line. The only real question was who was going to jump first.

It was Hekmatyar who moved first. His counter-coup began on the night of Friday, 24 April, and was in the open by Saturday morning.

Around 0800 that morning, I was driving out to the eastern defense perimeter to check out overnight changes. On the city's perimeter, regime troops and muj from various parties had long since shaken

hands. Both sides had agreed that in the interests of avoiding chaos, the muj could enter the city — but only without weapons. But no one had been counting on Hekmatyar.

On the main road out of town to the east I ran into Greg, a South African photographer, and we stopped to exchange notes. I asked him whether he heard anything about Hezbi infiltrators in town.

"Hezbi? Yeah, sure. I just saw a whole base full of them ..."

We were back at the suburban barracks Greg had left within five minutes. Along the driveway, scores of muj were squatting even as fresh arrivals filed in behind us. All were armed with rifles, RPGs or LMGs. Upstairs in the main building we found the office of the base's CO. The corridor outside and the room itself were crowded with muj. But we pushed our way through to find Malim Jan, a tall, thickly mustachioed Pushtun, in uniform and at his desk entertaining some of Hekmatyar's biggest commanders from north of Kabul.

The top muj commander introduced himself as Engineer Mohammed Tareq. He was courteous enough, explaining that his men — more than 1,500 — had moved through the defense perimeter during the night after an army regiment had gone over to them. More were arriving; they were now in town to ensure security in cooperation with the Sarandoi. And if nobody caused problems, everything would be fine. If, on the other hand ...

Hezb had arrived.

That was around 0900 Saturday. By mid-morning, armed Hezbis were popping up all over town. They controlled the Interior Ministry; the Sarandoi 40th Regiment HQ; Martyrs' Hill; the Kabul provincial offices; the Dehmazang police station, and the list went on ...

Around noon, Hezbis were seen arguing with officers of the National Guard at one of the Presidential Palace gates, and minutes later they had taken control of the armor there.

Suddenly the bastards were everywhere. And everywhere I stopped to talk to them it was the same story: "We have come to ensure the security of Kabul."

By midday, Massoud was reacting fast. At the airport, Supervisory Council muj were being choppered in from Bagram, while on the northern side of the city other Jamiat fighters were moving into town. In the west, Shi'ite factions (who have a huge following in Kabul) had taken over the road leading out to the Darulaman Defense Ministry, the Soviet Embassy and several secret police directorates. In the east, the 16th Armored Division base had surrendered to Sunni muj of the Harkati-Enqalab. Kabul was falling to the muj on a first-come, first-served basis.

By early afternoon, Jamiat plainclothesmen — obviously guys from the urban underground — had appeared at



Maj. Gen. Abdul Rahman, leader of attack to secure the Bridge of Mahmud Khan.



Uzbek RPG team ventures out from behind covering armor and establishes position behind low embankment wall.

the gates of the palace complex at Pushtunistan Square with a BMP. This put them less than 100 yards from the gate controlled by Hezb. They began talking to the troops at the gate.

The stakes were rising fast: Control of the palace complex meant control of the symbolic center of political power in Afghanistan.

Later that afternoon the Jamiat militia were joined by uniformed muj in woolen caps, cammie fatigues and boots — unmistakably Massoud's Supervisory Council regulars choppered in. In Pushtunistan Square, crowds of civilians milled around, some cheering and throwing flowers on Jamiat armor.

But this was no wild outpouring of popular joy; the atmosphere was uncertain, oppressive. In the distance came the crackle of small-arms fire. Celebration? Or the first shots?

National Guard troops in the palace were meanwhile being told to change into civilian clothes and head for home. I stood by the gate watching small groups emerge from barrack blocks in their civvies, car-



Militiaman fires on retreating Hezbis after Mahmud Khan bridge has been secured.

rying tin trunks of personal belongings over their shoulders. Their weapons they left behind; before long, rifles were being handed out by the armful to Jamiat civilian supporters — or to anyone else who came along.

Central Kabul was now sliding toward an inevitable explosion. The political chemistry was simply too unstable to avoid it. At nightfall the tension broke dramatically, like a tropical storm. Across the city, a cacophony of automatic fire from thousands of weapons erupted in an orgy

of high-velocity pyrotechnics — the first and most spectacular display of what was to become a deadly evening ritual over the coming weeks. It lasted well over two hours; a sound and light show that covered the night sky above Kabul in a fantastic kaleidoscope of tracer fire and exploding flares. This was "Happy Fire."

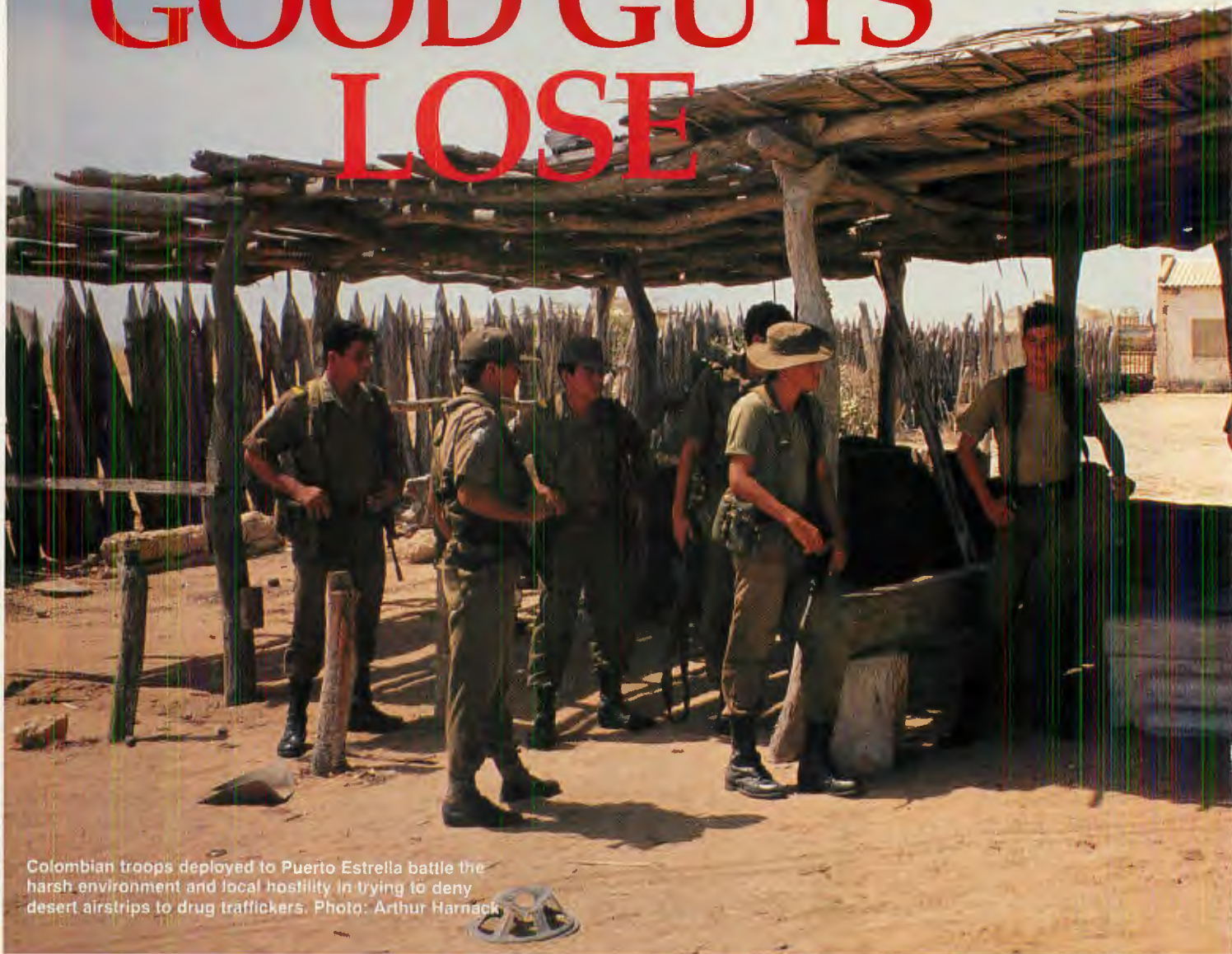
Exactly when the celebrations ended and the war began is difficult to say. The two probably overlapped by an hour or so. I'm a light sleeper, and that night in the Kabul Hotel it seemed gunfire was always on the edge of my consciousness. At some point in the night, the fight for the Presidential Palace began. By midmorning Sunday, 26 April, Kabul was at war.

We decided to move toward Bala Hissar where a T-62 was defending the gate. As we were working our way along the front of some row houses, a couple of civilians and us came under fire. Plaster work was suddenly being drilled out of the wall right above our heads.

I still don't know who the hell was trying to kill us or from where. Everybody

Continued on page 65

SOMETIMES THE GOOD GUYS LOSE



Colombian troops deployed to Puerto Estrella battle the harsh environment and local hostility in trying to deny desert airstrips to drug traffickers. Photo: Arthur Harnack

On 20 June 1991, drug kingpin Pablo Escobar helicoptered to a recently built prison near the town of Envigado and turned himself in to Colombian authorities. Months earlier the three Ochoa brothers, one at a time, did the same at a prison located in the town of Itagui.

All the heads of the powerful and violent Medellin Cartel were now behind bars. Colombians breathed a collective sigh of relief. Most of the international press wiped its hands of the whole subject and conjured in the minds of Americans the image of beaten men locked into

Spartan cells by a victorious government. The war was over.

Hardly.

The drug lords were not so much "beaten" as they were bored. As the most hunted criminals on earth, perhaps in history, the Medellin Cartel leaders had been playing hide-and-seek with authorities for more than six years. For the last two, they had been seriously on the lam and Colombian authorities had indeed gotten close several times. On one occasion it was reported Escobar had been forced to flee into the jungle clad only in his undershorts. Not much of a life for one of the richest men in the world.

Since Escobar's surrender, President César Gaviria has taken great pride in the fact that the drug lord surrendered to "Colombian justice." Also, U.S. President George Bush liked to point out that American anti-drug policies were succeeding. Despite hard questions and occasional snickers from international press correspondents stationed in Colombia, the Gaviria administration stuck to its position that Escobar and his 14 top lieutenants were housed in a "maximum security prison."

That facade came crashing down on 22 July 1992.

At 1100 hours that day, Gaviria sum-

Escobar's Penthouse "Jail" & the River of Death

by David Rivera



As we go to press, Escobar has been indicted in New York for conspiring to plant a bomb that blew up an Avianca Airliner in 1989, killing 110 people, including two U.S. citizens. The U.S. government has offered a \$2 million reward for information leading to Escobar's capture.
Photo: AP/ Wide World

moned Colombia's National Security Council to hear a report by the new National Prosecutor General, Gustavo de Greiff. The report pulled no punches. There was, said de Greiff, "conclusive proof" that Escobar was still running his cocaine operations. What's more, prison authorities were allowing known criminals to enter at will for meetings with Medellin Cartel leaders. Finally, the most damning information of all — a dispute had broken out within the cartel, and top members accused of disloyalty were brought to the prison to be interrogated by Escobar personally. They were then tortured, killed, dumped outside of town and incinerated.

The government had to face the truth and take action. President Gaviria ordered immediate militarization of the prison. Defense Minister Rafael Pardo gave the order to acting armed forces commander General Manuel Murillo. Murillo then ordered Medellin-area army commander Brigadier General Gustavo Pardo (no relation to the defense minister) to carry out the order. What followed can only be described as a fiasco. The Three Stooges vs. Attila the Hun, if you will.

On 20 July, Gen. Pardo had received Colombia's highest military honor for antiguerrilla operations; now, two days later, he seemed paralyzed. Hours passed and frantic calls from the Presidential Palace revealed the order had not been carried out. Finally Gaviria ordered the National Director of Prisons, Colonel Hernando Navas, and Vice Minister of Justice Eduardo Mendoza to go to the prison to find out why nothing was happening. They arrived just before dark.

They entered the unsecured prison and were promptly taken hostage by cartel members who threatened to kill them. One of Escobar's most dangerous hit men, John "Popeye" Velasquez, kept a Mini-UZI pointed at Mendoza's head while the vice minister talked with Gaviria's personal secretary by phone.

It was now approaching midnight. Two top government officials were being held hostage and Gen. Pardo's 4th Brigade had done little more than put up a loose cordon around the prison. In frustration, officials at the Presidential Palace cut Gen. Pardo out of the loop and appointed a



Official photos of Escobar's cell somehow missed his three-room suite, queen-size waterbed, full kitchen, private bath with Jacuzzi, stereo, giant-screen TV, fax machine and more.
Photo: R. I. Emblin

colonel to head the operation. Special forces troops were ordered to fly to Medellin from Bogota to take control of an operation which now had hostage rescue as its prime objective. General Pardo continued to amble around the area, doing nothing. Inside, prison guards took up defensive positions to protect the traffickers from the army.

Just before dawn, the special forces were in place. The signal was given and they stormed the prison. In contrast to every other aspect of the operation, this went flawlessly. Under a hail of automatic weapons fire, the troops freed the two hostages, killing one prison guard in the process and capturing 24 others as well as five cartel leaders.

Unfortunately, "Don Pablo" Escobar and nine others were long gone, having walked out through a prearranged "escape door" in the prison's wall. They ran into a group of 4th Brigade troops, but gave them a plate of potato salad and a promise of "big money." The soldiers let them pass.

In the first few days after the escape there was a flurry of activity and communiqués. Escobar said he would surrender again if he were allowed to return to the same prison; the government agreed to keep the army out. For its part, the government sacked Gen. Pardo, Navas, Mendoza, the prison director, the sub-director, all the guards and various other heads who looked suspiciously like sacrificial lambs.

But as more and more details came to

HOSTILE TOWN AT THE END OF THE EARTH



The "town" of Puerto Estrella is located 330km northeast of Santa Marta, at the tip of the peninsula that juts out into the ocean. It lies at the end of the Guajira desert, a totally inhospitable patch of earth that resembles southern Iraq. Late last year, the government established an Anti-Narcotics Police (ANP) "base" at the edge of town. Everyplace else in the desert region is controlled by narcos.

I flew there this past June aboard an ANP C-47 cargo plane, now christened a BT-67 Guardian after a conversion update done by

Basler Turbo Conversions in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The plane was donated to the ANP by the United States as part of its assistance program.

After landing on the dirt airstrip, we stepped out into a landscape that could best be appreciated by Salvador Dali. Beneath a relentless tropical sun and ceaseless wind, the land had been turned to a uniform beige color, with only scattered, scrawny desert bushes for relief. The ocean was an electric silver color. Just offshore lay the hulk of a freighter which ran aground long ago.

Except for the ANP, I didn't see any human beings the entire time I was there, despite the fact that the town has a population of about 200. Trash was scattered everywhere; doors swung and clattered in the 30 mph wind. It hadn't rained for eight months. I felt as if I were on the alien planet of a long-dead civilization.

Welcome to Puerto Estrella

The police explained we were not welcome here. The desert's residents, primitive Guaju (pronounced "wha-you") Indians, had been making good money the last few years working for the narco-traffickers. The ANP base drastically reduced that income, and the police were thoroughly isolated. The Guajus refuse to sell anything, even a soft drink, to the agents. The 30-man garrison has to have everything, even water, airlifted to them.

Because the ANP budgets only slightly more than \$1 per day for each man's food (transportation costs eat up the budget), the men have to get by on little more than rice. Their barracks is a broken-down, single-story building with mattresses on the floor. No showers, of course. The beach is their toilet.

Despite the hardships, morale is good and they perform their mission well. It is, simply, to try to deny the narcos the use of dozens of clandestine airstrips dotting the desert. They do this by using 20-pound dynamite charges to blow holes in the airstrips at intervals of one-third the strips' length. In the previous two months, the agents had dynamited 13 of them.

We took off in a Bell OH-58 helicopter. Only 10 minutes out, we saw a truly amazing sight: parallel landing strips, each one 50 feet wide and 5,500 feet long, big enough to accommodate a DC-4. They ended at the water's edge, marked by a light tower! During a one-hour overflight of the area I saw more than a dozen airstrips, many with fresh tire tracks.

Unfortunately, blowing up the strips is only a temporary setback for the traffickers. They hire the Guajus to simply fill them in again. Still, the Puerto Estrella ANP base has greatly diminished the area's use and made life more complicated and expensive for the traffickers. Under the circumstances, this counts as a victory.

— D. R.

full of automatic weapons, gas masks, cash, jewels and sophisticated communications equipment, including cellular telephones. They even found photos showing prison guards acting as waiters during numerous parties the cartel members threw for themselves and their families.

On Saturday 1 August, Defense Minister Pardo, Murillo and de Greiff toured the prison. In addition to the items described above, they found four "country houses" located in the woods behind the prison, which served as weekend getaways for Escobar and his men. The houses were camouflaged with artificial vegetation to make them harder to detect through aerial photography. Inside the prison they found a large quantity of women's clothing and numerous pornographic magazines and videos. In the words of de Greiff, "All this makes me nauseous."

Colombians, tired of narco-terror, wanted to believe Escobar was in "prison." From their president on down, no one wanted to know the painful truth. When it was finally forced on them, it was far more bitter than even the most cynical foreigner could have imagined.

What next? Colombia's armed forces are still searching for the elusive drug lord, and the United States is providing the most sophisticated technical assistance available. But as long as money talks, Escobar walks.

THE RIVER OF DEATH

The city of Santiago de Cali is Colombia's third largest metropolitan area and is said to be home to Colombia's most beautiful women.

Equal to the beauty of its women is the viciousness of its drug traffickers. The Cali Cartel, headed by Rodriguez Orejuela, has always kept a low profile, killing only when "necessary" (which has proven an effective strategy — at the time of this writing there are no arrest warrants out for Orejuela.). But the disruption of cocaine

light, it became apparent that a return to anything like the status quo would be impossible. On 27 July, Defense Minister Pardo admitted publicly that Escobar had been in complete control of the prison since the day he "surrendered."

Reports coming out through the first days of August proved once again that truth is stranger than fiction. Consider: Escobar's "cell" was, in reality, a three-room suite of 100-square meters. No concrete block walls here, brother. No bars, either. He had a queen-size waterbed, full kitchen, private bath with Jacuzzi, top-of-the-line stereo equipment, giant screen television, couches, bookshelves, expensive paintings, a computer, a fax machine and more. There was even a dollhouse for his daughter to play with when she came to visit.

Special forces troops found storage bins



The Cauca, Colombia's River of Death, has yielded an estimated 300 bodies as of June this year. Photo: R. I. Emblin

processing caused by the Medellin Cartel's problems created a temporary vacuum, which was filled by a new group of traffickers operating in what authorities believe to be a loose, constantly shifting federation outside control of the traditional traffickers. This group is willing to branch out into opium poppy production, and the members are not at all unwilling to use extreme levels of violence to satisfy their greed. They are *Los Traquetos*.

Cali is located in the department, or state, of Valle del Cauca, so named for the region's most prominent feature, the Cauca River. But late last year the river acquired a new name: *el Rio de la Muerte*, the River of Death.

At the end of the small town of Beltran, the Cauca River bends, forming a natural eddy that often traps floating objects — such as corpses. As of 31 December 1991, 79 bodies had been fished out, only a fraction of the total that float by. In rural Colombia, time seems to stop and things continue unchanged, seemingly outside the normal rhythms of the late 20th century. In 1992, the gruesome floating parade continues. As of June, an estimated 300 corpses had participated.

The victims, almost all young men in their late teens and early 20s, have all been tortured. Fingers smashed, stomachs slashed open and filled with rocks — castrated — some have been bathed in acid.

According to experts in Bogota, Los Traquetos have taken control of a large part of the Cauca valley, often working with corrupt local police and military commanders. They have purchased thousands of acres of land, and silenced opposition. A senior police official in Bogota said, "It would be very hard to replace Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel as the most violent, but these people are trying. They are trying very, very hard."

Not all victims end up in the river. In December of last year, a group of 20 Paes Indians — men, women and children — was massacred by gunmen carrying Kalashnikovs and other automatic weapons. The Indians had been living on the edge of a sprawling hacienda which had recently been purchased by a trafficker. Their presence was inconvenient.

Sometimes The Good Guys Win

Colombian authorities believe Ivan Urdinola is one of the most important of Los Traquetos. He is deeply implicated in cocaine trafficking and opium poppy cultivation. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agreed, citing a 7-ton load of cocaine seized at the Miami airport this past April as belonging to Urdinola's organization.

Unlike many other traffickers, Urdinola comes from an upper-middle-class family and he even received a university education. One could conclude, though, that the humanities were not his favorite subjects.

According to police intelligence

sources, Urdinola is responsible for a large percentage of River of Death victims. A U.S. narcotics expert said Urdinola regularly hires young peasants to work in his cocaine labs and other operations for a few months. At the end of that time they are paid and sent off down the road. However, before that day comes they are "judged." Did any of them ask too many questions? Stick their noses into an area where they had no business? Act suspicious or nervous? Those who don't pass judgment are followed, killed and thrown in the river. And Urdinola gets his money back. He's also killed a number of uncooperative police, the occasional farmer and anyone else who might wander too close for his comfort.

Recently, he became convinced that a

bases. At 0500 on 26 April, 50 ANP agents surrounded one of the haciendas. Urdinola himself, wearing pajamas, went outside to see what was going on. Simultaneously, ANP teams raided six other locations, arresting 80 people and seizing vehicles, weapons, communications equipment and computer records.

Urdinola put up no resistance, telling his wife, "I'll be back in three days." According to intelligence sources, he had been tipped off about the raid but figured that he had enough "pull" to get himself out easily. After all, he had a long-standing relationship with Rodriguez Orejuela, the "Teflon narco."

But he may have fallen victim to his own arrogance. According to a highly placed intelligence source, Urdinola was

bringing down too much heat on the Cali-area players. Too many bodies, too much publicity. The U.S. government put the city off limits to Americans. So, according to this source, Rodriguez Orejuela "fed" Urdinola to the Colombian government, as the Medellin Cartel got rid of Carlos Lehder several years ago when his antics caused too much trouble. At the time of this writing, to everyone's surprise, Urdinola is still behind bars of the traditional variety.

Someone once said, "There are damn lies, and there are statistics." Make your own judgment



group of 35 personal bodyguards had planned to double-cross him on a drug deal. He had them all tortured and killed, then thrown into the river to show that his "justice" is swift and sure.

But, as 1992 wore on, his luck began to slip.

Things started out well for him, and his move into opium poppy cultivation was clearly a success. A former associate said, "He's a man with ambitions. What he wants, he gets. And his goal was to make himself the king of opium poppies."

But the River of Death was, so to speak, making waves. In early '92, Anti-Narcotics Police (ANP) mounted a major intelligence operation against him, identifying and mapping the various haciendas in the Cauca valley that served as his operational

about these:

— In 1991, Colombian authorities seized 72 tons of cocaine, more than the entire estimated U.S. consumption of 1986. In the first four months of 1992, 16 tons of cocaine and base were seized.

— U.S. military aid (all used for anti-narcotics operations) declined from \$73 million in 1989 to \$60 million in 1992. Our State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters support has stayed the same, at \$20 million.

— The Colombian government estimates there are currently 20,000 hectares of opium poppies under cultivation. United States experts generally cite a figure closer to 15,000. Either way, Colombia is now

Continued on page 65

HIGH PERFORMANCE H&K

Pricey P7M10 Does It Right In .40 S&W

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

Hardly a month has gone by in the last two years that someone didn't introduce another pistol chambered for the .40 S&W cartridge. Most were little more than re-chambered 9mm Parabellum envelopes. This appears to be a mistake. The .40 S&W round has proven too hot to be safely contained within a reworked 9mm package. A number of hastily introduced .40 S&W whizbangs are already exhibiting signs of excessive wear, and a few have literally self-destructed.

Hasty decisions are not one of Heckler & Koch's hallmarks. Robust reliability and sometimes a lust for over-engineering are. Heckler & Koch has just introduced the P7M10, a .40 S&W variant of the justifiably famous P-series. They are just about the last to do so. The P7M10 is noticeably heavier and appears to be larger and chunkier than the other pistols in this series. It is also incredibly reliable and built to withstand any punishment the .40 S&W cartridge might deliver to its launching platform.

The weight, empty and without a magazine, of the P7M10 is 2.69 pounds. This compares to 1.75 pounds and 1.87 pounds, respectively, for the 9x19mm P7M8 (8-round magazine) and P7M13 (13-round magazine) pistols. The barrel length remains that of the 9mm P7's: 4.13 inches (105mm). Overall length is that of the P7M13, which is 6.9 inches. At 5.68

inches, the P7M10 is higher than both the P7M8 (5.04 inches) and the P7M13 (5.3 inches). The width, at the grip panels, is exactly that of the P7M10: 1.3 inches.

Introduced in the late 1970s (See "New H&K PSP 9mm," Sept. '79.) as the PSP (*Polizei-Selbstladepistole* — Self-Loading Police Pistol), it was soon referred to as the P7, since this was the government nomenclature applied to it during the West German Federal Police trials of that period. It was nothing if not radical in design.

With the exception of the P7K3 (See "H&K P7K3," June '89.)— an unlocked blowback version chambered for the .380 ACP/.32 ACP/.22 LR cartridges — the P7-series pistols operate by means of gas-retarded blowback. This operating principle was first employed in the World War II-era German *Volksturmgewehr* (People's Assault Rifle — VG1-5) and in an experimental Swiss pistol developed by Eidgenossische Waffenfabrik, Bern. Much later, it was also used to operate the now almost-forgotten Steyr-Daimler-Puch 9mm Parabellum GB pistol.

Most often, gas pressure is used to unlock and open a firearm's action. Reversing this principle, H&K designers used a gas-actuated piston to hold the breech closed until chamber pressures dropped to a safe level. After the cartridge is fired, gases are diverted into a cylinder below the barrel. Acting upon a piston attached

to the front of a slide, they retard the rearward movement of the slide. This system eliminates the requirement for a locking mechanism, and permits both a lightweight slide and a less powerful recoil spring.

The P7M10 also retains the P7 series' unique hammerless, "squeeze-cocker" trigger mechanism. When the squeeze-cocker's hinged lever, located on the grip's front strap, is depressed with a force of about 15 pounds, the firing pin is cocked rearward by a sheet-metal transfer bar attached to this cocking lever. The firing pin's rear end protrudes from the slide and



serves as a cocking indicator. Only about 1.25 pounds of pressure is required to keep the cocking lever depressed. When the trigger is pulled, the transfer bar is drawn downward, permitting the spring-loaded firing pin to move forward and strike the primer with the fastest lock time (the time it takes from completing the trigger pull until the firing pin strikes the primer) of any pistol on the market.

After the pistol has been fired, the striker-type firing pin is recocked automatically as long as the cocking lever remains depressed. The trigger pull weight on *Soldier Of Fortune's* test specimen was a spongy 3.25 pounds. Wide, and with nine grooves, the trigger provides an ex-

cellent purchase for the finger. When the cocking lever is released, the firing pin moves forward to the uncocked position. Thus, all P7-series pistols may be carried safely with a loaded chamber.

If a round fails to fire, the cocking lever can be released and squeezed again to recock the firing pin. When released, the cocking lever makes a loud *clacking* sound as it pivots forward. If you wish to uncock the P7M10 somewhat more silently, you can manually retract the slide about a quarter-inch, then release the lever and let the slide go forward under control.

black. A corrosion-resistant, satin nickel finish is available as an option. Both the rear strap and the cocking lever are lightly stippled. Overall, the craftsmanship displayed in the fabrication of the P7M10 reflects the traditional superb quality associated with all H&K products.

Although there is a lanyard ring at the heel of the magazine-well, a rather superfluous feature on a pistol presumably not designed for cavalry troops, the P7M10 leaves little to be desired with regard to human engineering. The grip angle is 20 degrees. This is defined to be the angle the front leading edge of grip frame (not

bullets of unconventional configuration. P7M10 magazines, of all-steel construction, are easily disassembled, and should be every time the pistol is cleaned.

The magazine catch/release is located exactly where it belongs — directly to the rear of the trigger. It's also ambidextrous. Push down to operate. Empty magazines fall smartly away when released, and are, in fact, actually propelled downward by the catch-release mechanism.

After the last shot has been fired, the slide is held to the rear by a spring-loaded, sheet-metal slide stop, which is pivoted upward by a bent on the steel magazine



All of this requires proper training on the part of the operator. Any pistol's ultimate safety is the shooter's trigger finger. To avoid an accidental discharge, the finger must be kept off the trigger until target acquisition is complete. As this is a basic rule, experienced personnel should have no trouble quickly and safely mastering the squeeze-cocker trigger mechanism.

Of all-steel construction, the P7M10's slide and frame are milled forgings. The slide's frontpiece, with a hole through which the fixed barrel passes during the recoil cycle, is integral with the slide forging. The breech-face/firing-pin housing has been robot-welded to the slide's interior. Exterior finish is an oxide-type matte

the cocking lever) makes with an imaginary line drawn perpendicular and downward from the bore's axis. It is very close to the 17-degree grip angle provided by the Colt M1911A1. The trigger guard is squared off, slightly re-curved and grooved in accordance with the current fetish for such nonsense. If you employ the proper Weaver hold, you will ignore this ergonomic non sequitur.

In spite of its 20-degree grip angle, the 10-round staggered column, single-position-feed, detachable box magazine is positioned almost vertical to the barrel's axis. This enhances feed reliability, even with

Providing the highest possible quality, reliability and durability, Heckler & Koch's new P7M10 .40 S&W pistol was designed for armed professionals demanding milspec performance.

follower. After insertion of a loaded magazine, just squeeze the cocking lever and the slide will fly forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it. When the cocking lever is

depressed, it pivots a bar with a hooked projection against small sprocket wheel in the frame that, in turn, grabs the slide stop and pivots it downward in a typically complex Teutonic manner.

If desired, the slide can be pulled manually to the rear and released to fly forward

in the normal fashion. The slide can also be locked to the rear by pressing the slide stop lever rearward, where it protrudes just above the left side magazine catch/release, with either the thumb or forefinger of the shooting hand, while retracting the slide rearward with the other hand until it locks.

The black synthetic grip panels are heavily stippled. They provide a secure grip, yet, unlike rubber, the hand can be shifted quickly if the initial grip was incorrect.

The rear sight is adjustable for windage only. In daylight it's easy to pick up the front sight blade, as the rear sight's open square is 0.16-inch wide. The sight radius is 5.83 inches, which matches that of the P7M8 and P7M13. P7-series sights have three white dots, one on the steel front sight blade (also adjustable for windage zero by drifting in its dovetail on the slide) and two on the rear sight. They look spiffy under the calm, controlled conditions prevailing on a target range. But, on the street, under stress, when a "flash" front-sight picture is all that counts, they are meaningless as you will not see them.

Fortunately, these white plastic dots can be removed from all P7 steel sights and easily replaced with more useful self-luminous sights. I recommend their installation on all P7-series pistols, as they really enhance target acquisition under subdued light conditions.

Most of my carry pistols (and all of my MP5 SMGs) are equipped with self-luminous sights. Tritium (an isotope of hydrogen) provides the energy source for self-luminous sights of this type. Tritium gas and a phosphor particle are pressurized within a tiny glass capsule. Tritium creates soft beta rays which are converted to visible light when they strike the phosphor particle. The capsules are resistant to oil, water, corrosion and temperature changes.

Most tritium self-luminous sights glow green, simply because this color is highest on the night visibility spectrum. However, operator alignment of three green dots in subdued light can be confusing, as this detracts from emphasis on the front sight and retards target acquisition. Inno-

vative Weaponry Inc. (IWI, Dept. SOF, 337 Eubank N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87123; phone: 800-334-3573) has designed a multicolor night-sight system that focuses attention on the front sight and speeds target acquisition by a considerable margin.

When installed on the H&K P7-series pistols, the three pre-existing holes in the sights are enlarged to accommodate larger and brighter tritium capsules. The largest self-luminous dot (0.108-inch in diameter) is installed in the front sight and is green. The two smaller dots (both 0.093-inch in diameter) in the rear sight are either yellow or orange. In use, I have found the eyes instinctively focus on the green front dot with a strong three-dimensional triangulation effect that helps to funnel the shooter's vision directly onto the target. I can personally recommend IWI's multicolor system highly and without reservations of any kind.

To reduce glare in bright daylight, the top of the P7M10's slide, between the sights, has a modestly raised rib with seven longitudinal grooves.

P7-series barrels are fixed and do not move during the recoil cycle. These barrels are made by the cold-hammer forging process and feature H&K-pioneered polygon bore profiles. Polygonal rifling seals propellant gases behind the bullet and increases barrel life.

P7M10, P7M8 and P7M13 barrel chambers are fluted; those of the P7K3 pistol are not. Fluted chambers theoretically provide a thin film of gas between the case and chamber which serves to ease extraction. In fact, the P7M10 will extract and eject an empty case even if the extractor is missing. The extractor, which doubles as a loaded chamber indicator, only aids in making case extraction smooth and uniform.

For all of its innovative complexity, there is nothing complicated about disas-

sembling the P7M10. First, remove the magazine and clear the chamber by retracting the slide and then letting it travel forward into battery.

The firing pin assembly must be removed while the slide is mounted to the frame. Depress the cocking lever until the end of the firing pin is flush with the slot in the firing pin bushing. Push the firing pin bushing all the way forward and rotate it 90 degrees clockwise. Depress the cocking level fully and remove the firing pin



Heckler & Koch's P7-series now includes (left to right): P7M8 — 9mm Parabellum; P7M10 — .40 S&W; and P7K3 available in three chamberings — .380 ACP, .32 ACP and .22 LR.

bushing together with the firing pin assembly. Although usually not necessary, if you completely disassemble the firing pin assembly, make sure that the collar pin is seated in the U-shaped collar slots after reassembly.

Press the checkered slide-retaining button (located on the rear left side of the frame) while retracting the slide approximately 3/4-inch. Lift up the slide at the rear and push it forward off the barrel and frame. Remove the recoil spring and grip panels.

Use the cylinder cleaning tool provided to remove carbon fouling from the gas cylinder, which is directly under the barrel. Apply solvent to the cylinder wall with the bronze brush supplied. After cleaning and light lubrication of all components, reassemble in the reverse order. Manually operate the slide to insure proper functioning.

What about the P7M10's accuracy potential? Most engagements with a handgun will take place at 21 feet or less. Firing a pistol from 25 yards off a Ransom Rest will provide information concerning its theoretical accuracy potential, but nothing about its practical accuracy in a stress scenario, as I know of no instance where a Ransom Rest has been employed in a gunfight.

Performance

We fired the P7M10 at camouflaged combat targets from 21 feet in the Weaver position. Ammunition manufactured by Federal, Winchester, Hornady, and Black Hills was tested for accuracy. Most of the



H&K P7M10 is also available with a corrosion-resistant nickel finish. Photo: courtesy H&K

H&K P7M10 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:40 S&W.
Operation:	Gas retarded, piston-actuated blowback with fixed barrel.
Feed:	10-round, detachable, staggered-column, single-position feed, box-type magazine.
Weight, empty and without magazine:	2.69 pounds.
Length, overall:	6.9 inches.
Height:	5.68 inches.
Thickness:	1.3 inches (grip frame area).
Barrel:	Cold-hammer forged with polygonal rifling.
Barrel length:	4.13 inches (105mm).
Sights:	Blade-type front sight with a single white plastic dot insert; open square-notch (0.16-inch wide) rear sight with two white dots. Both adjustable for windage zero only. Sight radius: 5.83 inches. Self-luminous tritium sights available from Innovative Weaponry Inc., Dept. SOF, 337 Eubank N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87123; phone: 800-334-3573.
Finish:	Matte-black oxide finish or optional satin nickel.
Suggested retail price:	\$1,259, complete with two magazines and cylinder-cleaning tool and brush.
Manufacturer:	Heckler & Koch GmbH, Oberndorf/Germany.
Importer:	Heckler & Koch Inc., Dept. SOF, 21480 Pacific Blvd., Sterling, VA 22170; phone: 703-450-1900.
T&E summary:	Highest possible quality, reliability and durability. Heavy. Large grip frame area. Expensive. Designed for armed professionals demanding milspec performance. Caliber stands between 9mm Parabellum and .45 ACP in effectiveness.



180-grain Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) bullets tested consistently impacted five rounds into a ragged half-inch hole at this distance. That's excellent (and to no small degree a function of the P7M10's fixed barrel) and will more than do for gun-fights. Bullets weighing only 155 grains

were not as accurate.

As expected, reliability was of the highest order and there were no stoppages in the more than 1,000 rounds fired. Perceived recoil and muzzle jump were of a low level, also expected because of the pistol's high mass. As a consequence of

this latter characteristic, target reacquisition during double tap drills appeared to be somewhat faster, although this was not quantified. Ejection of spent cases was powerful and consistently 15 feet to the right. However, only operators with large hands need apply. This is not a lady's purse pistol, and shooters with smaller-than-normal hands will have difficulty mastering the P7M10's massive grip frame area.

SOF evaluated the terminal effects of a wide array of .40 S&W ammunition. Most was effective and it appears that the ammunition manufacturers are starting to produce handgun bullets of the proper design.

Federal's 180-grain JHP without a post averaged 960 feet per second (fps), expanded to .65 caliber and penetrated, without fragmentation, from 12.3 to 12.5 inches of soft tissue. This is acceptable performance. Their 180-grain JHP Hydra-Shok bullet with its goofy post is loaded into an impressive nicked case. Its performance is less than impressive. Expanding to .68 caliber, it penetrates only 11.7 to 11.9 inches of soft tissue while traveling at 950 fps. That's marginal, and we surely don't need to pay more for less.

Winchester's 180-grain JHP in this caliber also travels downrange at about 940 fps, expands to .65 caliber with only minor fragmentation, and penetrates about 12.5 inches of soft tissue.

Hornady's and Black Hills' .40 S&W ammunition, when loaded with the Hornady 180-grain JHP XTP bullet, turned in the best performance. Velocity ranged from 950 to 975 fps for the Hornady loads, and 850 to 890 fps for the Black Hills ammo. Expansion was stellate-shaped, with the points averaging .68 caliber and the flats at about .64 caliber. There was no fragmentation and this bullet will penetrate about 14.2 inches of soft tissue.

Two 155-grain JHP .40 S&W bullets were tested. Winchester's Silvertip travels at about 930 fps, expands to about .62 caliber and penetrates 12.4 to 13 inches with no fragmentation. Hornady's bullet in this weight performs more erratically even when loaded by Black Hills. Velocity varies by 100 fps (1,050 to 1,150 fps). Expansion is consistent at .62 caliber, but there is noticeable fragmentation of the lead-alloy core all along the wound track, and penetration varies from 10.3 to 13.4 inches. I believe we would be better served if a 200-grain JHP bullet was developed for the .40 S&W. Until that occurs, 180-grain JHP bullets should be selected and, at present, Hornady and Black Hills ammunition provide the best performances in this weight.

The P7M10's envelope remains somewhat of an enigma. In overall length it is considerably more compact than many other pistols chambered for the .40 S&W cartridge. But its grip frame area is large

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*KGB Agent in
America's
Fourth Estate*

I. F. STONE

by Reed Irvine & Joe Goulden

I. F. Stone, the left-wing journalist who was honored as ABC News' "Man of the Week" on June 16, 1989, the day after he died, has been exposed as having been a paid agent of the KGB for many years.

It has been disclosed by former KGB officers that Stone was on the Soviet payroll for at least 15 years. He finally terminated the KGB connection in 1968 because of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. In naming I. F. Stone Man of the Week on *World News Tonight*, anchorman Peter Jennings said Stone had "a truly profound effect" on American journalism.

Jennings declared, "He always succeeded in prompting other people to think. Sometimes they were outraged. But there was no avoiding a connection with Stone's intellect and passion. For many people, it's a rich experience to read or reread Stone's views on America's place in the world, on freedom, on the way government works and sometimes corrupts." Jennings said Stone's credo was, "to write the truth, to defend the weak against the strong, to fight for justice."

Jennings was not alone in praising "Izzy" Stone, who was a faithful follower of Stalin throughout the entire reign of that cruel and bloodthirsty tyrant. Editorialists, obituary writers and a broad range of columnists, including Tom Wicker and Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times*, joined in lauding him. Media eulogies gushed over Stone at a memorial service in Washington, D.C., on July 18, 1989. Richard Dudman, Washington reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, opined that Stone's skepticism "made it sure that he wasn't a communist any more than he was a right-wing ideologue."

At the time, we pointed out that Stone had been a communist at least until 1956, when many of the faithful were disillusioned by Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech exposing Stalin's crimes against his fellow Bolsheviks. We chided Jennings and other journalists who were gushing over Stone for not mentioning that their hero had long served one of the blackest tyrannies in recorded history. We suggested they should write the truth about their hero — none of them did.

We did not know at that time that this icon of the journalistic fraternity had served for more than 15 years as a paid KGB agent! He took both money and his marching orders from Moscow. Moscow gold financed his publication, *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, the peacenik bible. This four-page newsletter had a circulation of 70,000 at its peak, and *The New York Times* noted in a 1989 obituary tribute that "because so many of the readers were political activists, journalists and academics, the influence was greater than its numbers suggest."

In March 1992, retired KGB General Oleg D. Kalugin, who for years ran disinformation and other covert operations under the cover of press officer at the Soviet embassy in Washington, D.C., gave a speech in London; he said: "We had an agent, a



well-known American journalist with a good reputation, who severed his ties with us after 1956 ... I myself convinced him to resume them. But in 1968, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia ... he said he would never again take any money from us."

Kalugin did not name that journalist, but in the June 6 issue of the conservative weekly *Human Events* Herbert Romerstein reported that during a visit to the Soviet Union "a high-ranking retired KGB officer with extensive knowledge about operations against the United States" had informed him that it was I. F. Stone. A few weeks earlier, a former high-ranking Soviet intelligence officer, speaking off the record, had told Accuracy In Media (AIM) chairman Reed Irvine that Stone was one of several prominent journalists who were Soviet agents of influence.

Romerstein (former member of the staff of the House Committee on Un-American Activities and head of the U.S. Information Agency's Office to Counter Soviet Active Measures and Disinformation until his retirement in 1989) had gone to Russia to investigate Soviet disinformation and covert operations. His KGB source told him Stone had begun taking Soviet money before he started his weekly newsletter in 1953. That was the same year Stone published a book titled *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, which parroted the communist line that it was South Korea, not North Korea, which started the Korean War in June 1950. This disinformation was still kicking around as late as 1990, when

it showed up in a Public Broadcasting Service TV documentary, *Korea: The Unknown War*.

Romerstein was told that after Khrushchev's secret 1956 speech disclosing some of Stalin's crimes, Stone broke with the KGB but, as Kalugin had said in his London speech, he was re-recruited. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, Stone again broke his KGB ties. Romerstein's source told him Stone was so upset that he wouldn't even let Kalugin pay for his lunch at their last meeting.

Stone's contacts with KGB officers were observed by the FBI. An FBI surveillance report cited in Curt Gentry's book, *J. Edgar Hoover: the Man and the Secrets*, noted: "On February 11, 1966, at 1:09 p.m., the subject [Stone] was observed to meet Oleg D. Kalugin in front of Harvey's Restaurant, 1107 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. Together, they subsequently entered Harvey's Restaurant." (Ironically, Harvey's was the regular luncheon spot for FBI Director Hoover and his top aide Clyde Tolson.) However, the FBI is less helpful than the KGB in informing the American people about Stone's treasonous activities.



AIM filed a Freedom of Information request for the FBI files on Stone shortly after his death. To date, we have received only heavily censored documents through the year 1950 and have been informed that it may be years before the remaining files are released.

Fearless, Self-Financed Dupe

The Stone mythology was of a fearless, self-financed journalist who found his stories in the small print of obscure congressional hearings. We now know that he lied for years about the financial underpinning of his weekly.

By Stone's oft-repeated account, he started the weekly in 1953 using a mailing list of readers of *The Nation* and the far-left New York newspapers for which he had written. He managed to get 5,000 subscribers at \$5 each. The price remained the same for 19 years, as the circulation grew to 70,000. The mystery of how Stone managed to pay printing and postage bills for the four-page newsletter for such a pittance and indulge in such luxuries as an annual crossing of the Atlantic on the *Queen Elizabeth II* has now been solved. (Former *Washington Post* editor Peter Osnos, Stone's research assistant in 1965-66, wrote in *The New York Times* in an op-ed obituary tribute that these trips were "an irony he savored as a lifelong socialist.")

In a preface to an anthology, *In a Time of Torment 1961-67*, Stone wrote, "I was in the black every one of those years and paid off the loans which helped me begin, without having to appeal to my readers or to wealthy friends to keep going. I paid my bills promptly like a solid bourgeois ... I have been a wholly independent newspaperman, standing alone, without organizational or party backing, beholden to no one but my good readers." His KGB paymasters must have at least smiled when they read that.

Castro's Cuba was high among Stone's loves. On the heels of the Cuban missile crisis, he described Cuba as "a popular democracy, a kind of continuous town meeting under a popular dictator." He said that Castro's exciting, pure revolutionaries were an inspiration for the liberal forces in the Soviet Union. He blamed the Cuban missile crisis on the United States, saying it "was the climax of the hateful attitudes and policies with which we have long sought to dominate, to destroy and to starve out an island neighbor." He said it would have been better to have left the missiles in Cuba rather than risk a nuclear war to force their removal.

Probably Stone's greatest disservice to the cause of freedom was in mobilizing opposition to the Vietnam War in the United States. After speaking at an anti-war "teach-in" in the spring of 1965, Stone wrote, "It was an inspiring occasion. Those intense and concerned young faces, eager to learn, filled one with hope. The teach-in movement is making democracy meaningful ..."

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the media elite snickered when presidents Johnson and Nixon suggested that foreign governments influenced, even directed, the anti-war movement. Both presidents were ridiculed as paranoid red-baiters who did not recognize a grassroots uprising. But there was Izzy Stone, paid with Kremlin gold, fanning the flames of anti-war, draft-resisting sentiment among the youth of America.

Selling Out South Vietnam

Stone rejected the evidence that showed that South Vietnam's National Liberation Front (NLF) was a creature of the communist regime in Hanoi. In December 1963, he wrote: "In South Vietnam itself, the National Liberation Front has made it clear in a clandestine interview that it did not wish 'to exchange one dictatorship for another.' A democratic South Vietnam, an honorable and face-saving peace are possible." Yet, as soon as the north won the war, it liquidated the National Liberation Front and subjected the south to Hanoi's dictatorial rule. Stone, the Stalinist, surely knew the communists were lying in pretending that the NLF was a genuine democratic movement. This was an old red

ruce.

Stone earned his KGB pay in helping the communists transform the failed 1968 Tet offensive into a stunning psychological victory. On February 19, 1968, after our forces had inflicted on the Viet Cong such heavy casualties that they were never again an effective fighting force, Stone wrote: "It is no longer necessary to argue the mendacity of our leaders and the incompetence of our military. Mr. Johnson has assured us that the successful surprise attack on 100 Vietnamese cities and towns was really a Viet Cong defeat; if they suffer a few more such defeats, we'll be lucky to settle for a coalition government in Hawaii."

Stone was quick to pick up The Associated Press correspondent Peter Arnett's dubious claim that a U.S. major had said of the town of Ben Tre, "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it." Stone wrote, "This will go down in the history books as typical of our whole Vietnamese campaign. The whole country is slowly being burnt down to 'save it.'" This theme was quickly picked up and spread by other journalists throughout the United States and the world, even though it was palpably false with respect to both Ben Tre and Vietnam as a whole.

Tom Wicker, syndicated *New York Times* columnist, was one

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SLICK WILLIE THE ARTFUL DRAFT DODGER

by Colonel Alex McColl

SOF being SOF, you can well imagine that a lot of bizarre documents turn up in our offices. But few are more bizarre than the now-famous letter dated 2 December 1969 that Bill Clinton wrote to Colonel Eugene Holmes, then Director of the ROTC program at the University of Arkansas.

The version we have was printed in *The New York Times* on 13 February 1992. No one in Clinton's camp has challenged the authenticity of this letter, i.e., the fact that Clinton, then a 23-year-old graduate student at Oxford University in England, wrote, signed and mailed it. So we will take that as admitted.

First a bit of background: Clinton graduated from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., in 1968 with a sufficiently impressive record that he received a Rhodes scholarship to do two years of graduate study at Oxford. This being the period when the war in Vietnam was going on and the draft in effect, he received student deferments for his undergraduate studies.

Apparently his draft board was so impressed that a local boy had a Rhodes scholarship that they gave him another year's deferment. In April 1969, however, he was told he would be called up in September or October of that year. During the summer of 1969 he took physical exams for officer programs with the U.S. Navy and the Air Force and was disqualified in both.

So, on the basis of an informal indication that he would be accepted by the University of Arkansas Law School, he signed a letter of intent to enroll in the Army ROTC program that fall, and received a deferment for that, beginning in August 1969. This, of course, shielded him from the previously announced call-up. In fact, he never applied for, nor enrolled, either in the University of Arkansas Law School or the ROTC program. He went back to Oxford for the second year of his Rhodes scholarship and from there to Yale Law School.

Eventually, his ROTC deferment was canceled, but by that time the draft lottery system was in effect and, by mere coincidence of course, Clinton drew a high and therefore "safe" number — and never did a day of military service.

His letter was mailed from Oxford, England. Excerpts of the text are set out in the sidebar. He starts out by thanking Col. Holmes for "saving me from the draft." In the next six paragraphs Clinton sets out in clear, articulate words his opposition to and detestation for the Vietnam War and the draft.

At this point, one is permitted to ask how come an individual with these views was signing a letter of intent to enroll in a program training people to be officers in the army fighting that war with a large percentage of draftees in the rank and file.

The first duty of an officer is to lead and enthusiastically support what the chain of command is trying to do. If he ever did

have any intention of actually going through with his commitment to the ROTC program, this involved at least a major switch from the views on the subject set out at such length and with such clarity in his letter. Keep in mind that this letter was written *after*

WAR IS HECK: QUAYLE vs. CLINTON

Of course, a parallel has been drawn between Bill Clinton's maneuvers resulting in his not being drafted and the allegations made during the 1988 campaign concerning Dan Quayle's enrollment in the National Guard. One difference, of course, is that Quayle actually did join the Guard, while Clinton never did a day of military service; during the Vietnam War, a fair number of Guard units were called up and not a few served in Vietnam.

The other has to do with the main-line coverage of these allegations. According to a tally by Media Research Center, during the first 10 days of the Quayle/National Guard controversy the four major broadcast networks did 51 news stories exclusively on his National Guard service, along with some 158 further times the issue was raised during prime-time coverage of the 1988 Republican National Convention.

In the first 10 days of the Clinton draft avoidance story, the four networks aired only 13 stories on this matter. When the 6 February 1992 edition of *The Wall Street Journal* broke the Clinton episode, ABC News made it story No. 5 in their evening news broadcast, while CBS and NBC ignored it altogether. On 18 August 1988, after the Quayle story broke, the four networks aired a total of 15 features on him.

Similarly, a *New York Post* report that Clinton's campaign has a \$2 million line of credit from Jack Stephens, who has been linked to the BCCI scandal, was ignored by all but Reuters and *The Boston Globe*. And, reports in the *New York Post* and *The Dallas Morning News* of interviews with Gennifer Flowers' roommates corroborating the allegations of an adulterous liaison were ignored by the rest of the media. Would this have been the case if the subject had not been the main-line media's fair-haired boy?

— A. M.

he had made the commitment to ROTC, walked out on it and gone back to Oxford. The other possibility is that the objective was "saving me from the draft" during the critical two months of September and October 1969, with no intent at all of honoring this commitment.

Then the letter goes on to explain that his decision not to be a draft resister was "to maintain my political viability within the system." This is a bald admission that, in Clinton's system of values, ambition and political expediency come ahead of any sort of ethical values and principles. To say the least, an unsettling revelation concerning an individual who aspires to the highest office in the land. According to the letter to Col. Holmes, on 12 September 1969 Clinton had written to his draft board asking to be drafted as soon as possible; but, perhaps characteristically, he never mailed the letter.

So other men, probably not as articulate, literate or clever as Bill Clinton, and certainly not as adept at avoiding doing what they didn't care to do, but brave, loyal, willing men went and served and some of them died, while Bill Clinton was attending Oxford and the law school at Yale. Others, holding the Clinton view of the war but not his ideas about "political viability" went to Canada or to Sweden or to jail. In view of what happened in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia beginning in 1975, they were wrong, but at least they upheld what they believed with more than words.

Clinton supporters will say, "And so what? That was 23 years ago. Draft dodging was a recognized indoor sport in 1969, and the Bill Clinton of today isn't the Bill Clinton of 23 years ago."

Draft dodging, like any other sport, also had its rules; it's like the difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion. Outright lies and formal commitments to do something you never had any intention of doing strike us, at least, as a rather unsporting way of making sure that someone else carried the rifle and got shot at.



Photo: R. Maiman/Sygma

An *L.A. Times* story of late August indicates Clinton's uncle, Raymond Clinton, a politically well-connected car dealer in Hot Springs, Arkansas, orchestrated political pressure to delay his nephew's pre-induction physical for more than 10 months so that he could complete his first year's graduate study at Oxford. This directly contradicts Clinton's repeated statements that he did not receive special treatment from his draft board. Somebody's lying here, and we don't think it was the former members and employees of the draft board who talked with the *L.A. Times* reporter.

We find it more than a little unsettling that a man showing the ethical flexibility and lack of character that Clinton did in this incident is seeking the

presidency, particularly considering the awesome powers and responsibilities of that position. And the matter of Gennifer Flowers, whatever else, does not indicate any fundamental change in values of Bill Clinton-1969 and Bill Clinton-1992. Only that he has become more cautious about saying what he really thinks.

As late as this past August, at an American Legion convention, Clinton again waffled on his draft dodging, adding new doubts about his truthfulness. Apparently there really isn't much difference between Bill Clinton of 1969 and Bill Clinton of 1992.

Fortunately for all of us, he was a rather young man when he wrote the letter to Col. Holmes and apparently could not resist the urge to set out a brilliantly articulate discussion of his views and position. Which are now very much part of an unsettling public record. But the idea that the author of that letter may be presiding over Veterans Day ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, to say nothing of the armed forces of this country, is even more unsettling. ✕

EXCERPT FROM BILL CLINTON'S LETTER TO COLONEL EUGENE HOLMES

"First, I want to thank you, not just for saving me from the draft, but for being so kind and decent to me last summer ...

"From my work I came to believe that the draft system itself is illegitimate. No government really rooted in limited, parliamentary democracy should have the power to make its citizens fight and kill and die in a war they may oppose ...

"I decided to accept the draft in spite of my beliefs for one reason: to maintain my political viability within the system.

"For years I have worked to prepare myself for a political life characterized by both practical political ability and concern for rapid social progress. It is a life I still feel com-

pelled to try to lead.

"When the draft came, despite political convictions, I was having a hard time facing the prospect of fighting a war I had been fighting against and that is why I contacted you. ROTC was the one way left in which I could possibly, but not positively, avoid both Vietnam and resistance.

"After I signed the ROTC letter of intent I began to wonder whether the compromise I had made with myself was not more objectionable than the draft would have been, because I had no interest in the ROTC program in itself and all I seemed to have done was to protect myself from physical harm."



THE GR

John Donovan laughed. What else could he do? *Soldier Of Fortune's* Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown had just scrambled into a small tree a few inches ahead of the horns of an African Cape buffalo. He shouldn't have been laughing, but it was just plain funny.

"There we were in deepest, darkest Africa," Donovan explained, "trying to capture wild Cape buffalo, one of the most dangerous animals in Africa."

Drought and an overpopulation of buffalo have forced the South Africans to capture and sell as many Cape buffalo as possible to save the herds. During last May's safari, *SOF's* hunting group was invited to participate in this capture, which was organized by the Latava Ranch on the Gyzankulu homeland.

"We got out there and Rocco Gioia said that since Brown and I were former Special Forces types, we should just go right out there with the catchers carrying a 100-yard-long plastic curtain to herd the buffalo along," Donovan said.

The buffalo had been rounded up by helicopter. Pilot Rob Parson, a former Rhodesian, flew his Bell Jet Ranger at treetop level, sometimes dipping the skids below treetops, holding the rotors only a few feet above disaster to move each group of buffalo into a large enclosure called a *boma*.

Once buffalo are in the *boma*, plastic curtains on cables are pulled shut to trap the confused animals inside the temporary fence. To move buffalo down the *boma*, which narrows like a giant funnel, the South Africans use a variety of techniques.

The day before, they had tried using a helicopter. I flew with Parson, photographing the panicked Cape buffalo. Another tactic was to herd them with pickups, but this became costly when the buffalo repeatedly charged the trucks.

Then someone got the bright idea of using a long sheet of plastic to herd the buffalo toward the chutes, where curtains could be shut behind them. They then would be moved to the waiting trucks. It was around this time that Brown and Donovan got involved.

This plan sounded easier than it was. Brown offered to take Donovan's picture after they had slipped under the fence and were standing inside the large end of the *boma* with the buffalo. "Donovan," Brown said, "you get up there next to the buffalo and I'll get

some pictures of you getting run over."

"That's typical Brown," Donovan recalled. "As soon as we got in with the buffalo and started taking pictures, they charged us so we had to run back and roll under the fence."

Neither Brown nor Donovan were daunted; they went back under the fence and got chased out again until finally the Africans had the buffalo herded up in one corner of the *boma*. "So now we got the South Africans, and the native Africans, and the guys from the game ranch, all watching Brown and me. And we've got to go out there to help them herd buffalo by walking this 100-yard curtain toward them," Donovan explained.

"It's better to have a handful of thorns than an ass full of horns."

— John Donovan

"We got Africans on one side of us, and Africans on the other side of us, and we got this sheet of plastic strung out and we're holding it like a 'Kilroy Was Here' banner. And you don't want to stick your head up, because if the buffalo see your face over the top they'll know where you are and charge you. So you are kind of walking forward blind, not knowing if a buffalo is coming toward you or not.

"We finally got the canvas all the way across but we were about 75 or 125 feet from the nearest canvas to roll under, when all of a sudden here they came!

"By the time I dropped the canvas, Brown was behind me about 40 feet taking pictures, probably hoping to see me get run over. You could tell the buffalo were on a roll and I dropped the canvas when I realized I was the only one standing out there. It had gotten awfully heavy."

Donovan was in full stride when he realized there were only two trees of any size close enough to offer any protection, and those trees were only 8 inches in diameter. "The tree I climbed up turned out to be a thorn tree," he said, "but I didn't know that at the time and didn't really care." After climbing his thorn tree, Donovan could look down and see Brown standing beside the second tree.

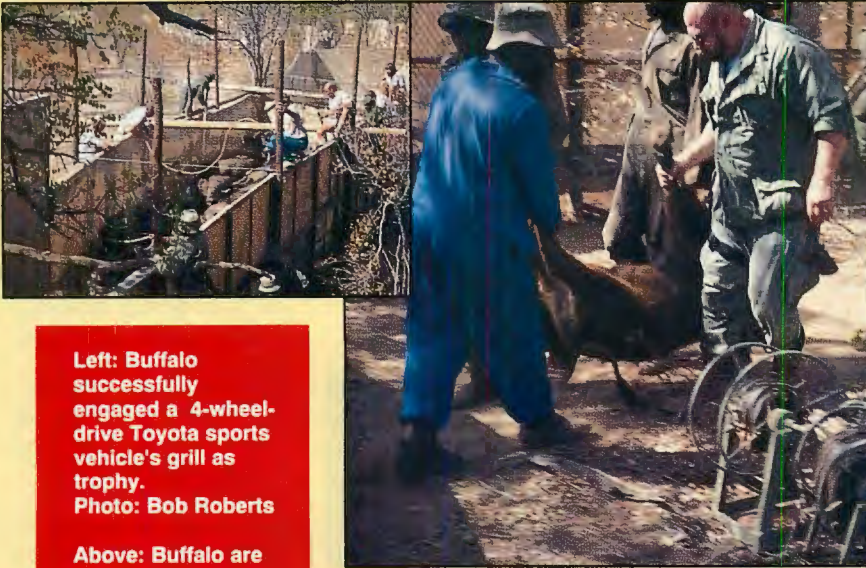
"There he was, his eyes as big as horse turds," Donovan said, "and I yelled at him, 'Brown, get your ass up in the tree!'"

Donovan's shouts must have been louder than the thundering hoofs of the buffalo. Brown reached up and grabbed a tree limb but the limb bent under his weight and dumped him on the ground, twisting his ankle.

"Brown looked up at me and of course I started laughing," Donovan said. "It looked like Brown was going to get trampled into the dirt, but suddenly in one big hop, like out of a cartoon, he was up in

EAT SOF BUFFALO CAPER

by Galen Geer



Left: Buffalo successfully engaged a 4-wheel-drive Toyota sports vehicle's grill as trophy. Photo: Bob Roberts

Above: Buffalo are prodded down canvas chute into cattle truck. Photo: R. K. Brown

Right: Donovan found Buffalo calves much easier to work with. Photo: R. K. Brown

been casually watching the two Americans scramble away from the buffalo. He laconically told Donovan, "One shouldn't climb thorn trees."

Donovan replied: "It's better to have a handful of thorns than an ass full of horns." With all the buffalo in one corner of the boma, everyone was able to get back on the ground, except Brown who was stuck in the tree because of his twisted ankle.

Brown told Donovan he couldn't get out of the tree. One of the Africans gave him his hat and Brown got comfortable in the tree to watch. Everyone returned to carrying the canvas, but the buffalo

wouldn't cooperate and the same thing happened again.

"This time," Donovan noted, "I was a little closer to the smooth tree and when the buffalo came through, ol' Watash here was up in it and that South African was up in the thorn tree. Brown was still up in his tree enjoying the whole thing."

On the third try, the canvas herding trick worked and the buffalo were headed down the chute. Donovan, however, was laughing and harassing Brown for staying in the tree.

After the buffalo were herded into the chute Donovan went back to get Brown out of the tree. That evening, as the two relived the day's adventure, Donovan admitted herding buffalo had been one of the biggest rushes of his life.

Remembering Brown in the tree, he noted, "It was also amusing to see what a full-grown man Brown's age can do when he's impelled by stark terror. In one bound he was in this tree, and that's where he stayed until we got the curtain up on the third pass."

"Of course," Donovan added thoughtfully, "if he hadn't gotten up the tree he would have been a dead man." Brown complained Donovan was laughing at him in his moment of peril, but Donovan countered that Brown had offered to take his picture while the buffalo ran over him.

"There wasn't any meanness intended," Donovan insisted. "But you should have

Continued on page 69

this tree as high as he could go, about 8 or 9 feet, but his hat fell off and was on the ground."

A South African off to one side, safely up in another tree John hadn't seen, had

FLY ME



Sanctions against South Africa are being lifted around the world, and we're happy to see the superb South African Airways (SAA) flying our friendly skies again.

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— G. G.

ROSS PEROT'S PLAN TO BRING OUR POW/MIA's HOME

by Colonel Alex McColl

On 11 August 1992, H. Ross Perot testified to the U.S. Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs. This article is based on his testimony and augmented, where possible, with information gathered by Soldier Of Fortune during our many years investigating the same subject.

Ross Perot has been involved in trying to help U.S. military POWs in Vietnam and Laos, and their families, since late 1969. That's more than 20 years.

In December 1969, after getting the approval of President Nixon, Perot collected a planeload of medical supplies and other items for POWs then being held in North Vietnam. He went to the trouble of getting advice from two returned POWs on exactly what was needed most, and paid for the whole trip.

When the planeload got to Laos, the North Vietnamese Embassy would not let them go through to Hanoi. After days of negotiations and a flight to Copenhagen to talk with the Soviet ambassador, Perot was denied permission to deliver the supplies. The only good that came of this incident was that it publicized the plight of the POWs.

That same Christmas, Perot funded a trip to Paris for a planeload of wives and children of POWs. This also helped draw public attention to the problem of the POWs.

North Vietnam's ambassador in Laos then said that if Perot were a true humanitarian, he would show the same interest in North Vietnamese prisoners being held in South Vietnam. So, in the spring of 1970, again at his own expense and with the approval and concurrence of the U.S. government, Perot visited all the POW camps in South Vietnam. He took note of the fact that prisoners were well-cared for, filmed the whole thing and collected mail for delivery to the families of these NVA prisoners. When Perot

took the mail to Paris, the North Vietnamese refused to accept it. When the U.S. prisoners came home from North Vietnam in

1973, Perot funded a weekend bash in San Francisco for them and for the men who had taken part in the Son Tay raid. Perot learned at this time that beginning in 1969, air crews flying north were briefed on Perot's support for the POWs; also, this had become widely known among POWs being held in North Vietnam.

Prisoners In Laos

In the spring of 1970, Perot was told by a Pathet Lao leader named Soph Petrosy that the Pathet Lao were then holding "tens of tens" — which apparently meant at least 10 groups each of 10 — of American POWs. Petrosy has since repudiated this statement, claiming it was made for propaganda purposes to raise the morale and political consciousness of the Pathet Lao cadres.

According to Perot, at this time he was also briefed by the CIA station chief in the U.S. Embassy in Laos on the numbers of POWs being held in Laos. Perot says that two of his associates were at the briefing, but that the station chief now claims that the meeting never took place. So far, the name of the station chief hasn't surfaced, nor has his version of these events been heard.

Some 350 U.S. military and civilian personnel were then listed as "missing or captured" in Laos. Of these, nine Americans and one Canadian had been returned.



H. Ross Perot speaking in Denver, Colorado, before withdrawing from 1992 presidential race. Photo: Jim Pate



Perot meets with actor Richard Crenna, who portrayed Perot in a television miniseries about Perot's 1979 plot to rescue two employees from imprisonment in Iran. Photo: AP/Wide World

Apparently these were men who were captured in Laos by the NVA, not by the Pathet Lao and were held in North Vietnam, not Laos.

Other than the men mentioned above, Dieter Dengler (who escaped) and one woman named Rosemary Conway, none of the "missing or captured" in Laos have been recovered alive. The line taken by the communist government in Laos is that any who survived their aircraft's crash, or whatever, were killed by enraged villagers.

During his testimony to the Senate Select Committee in Washington in August of this year, Perot emphasized several times that given all this, the burden of accounting for the prisoners they admitted to holding at that time is very much on the present government of Laos. Even now, there is no firm information on the four Americans that the Pathet Lao admitted holding.

Man-Made Island

According to Perot, in 1986 he and a retired general interrogated returned defector Bobby Garwood, who had come out in 1979. To what extent this seven-year delay was due to legal constraints and "advice of counsel," and to what extent due to governmental incompetence and indifference, is not at all clear. Perot stated that Garwood referred to a "man-made island" where U.S. prisoners were held. According to another source, Garwood first brought up the "man-made island" in 1985 when he was appealing his court-martial conviction. This was followed up then and since by the DIA, who found nothing to substantiate this story.

Gregson's Famous Tape

Mark Smith is a former U.S. Army major. At one time he was the commander of the Special Forces Detachment in Korea, whose area of interest included training operations in Thailand, collection of information on possible POWs in Laos and Cambodia and the possibility of cross-border rescue operations. After he got out of the Army in 1984 he, Sergeant "Red" McIntyre and others brought a lawsuit, which was dismissed, against President Reagan and others alleging a cover-up of information on live U.S.

POWs in Southeast Asia. The plaintiffs included a John Obassy, who claimed to have a film of U.S. POWs in Laos; supposedly he knew the names of the alleged POWs in the film but refused to identify them. Given the allegations in the lawsuit, if the film ever did exist, this is indeed bizzare even by the rather baroque standards of the POW/MIA issue.

In 1986 Smith's lawyer wrote a letter to President Reagan stating that a man named Robin Gregson had a videotape showing live U.S. POWs in Vietnam. Reagan passed the matter to then-Vice President George Bush, who contacted Perot.

Everyone who became involved with the Gregson tape, from Bush and Perot on down (with the possible exception of Smith), proceeded quite aware that this was almost certainly a scam, but they pursued the matter to the end anyway, on the 1% chance that it wasn't.

Perot testified that he got involved in the Gregson affair at the request of Bush, and that the asking price for the alleged tape was \$4.2 million; that he spent \$45,000 to get Gregson out of jail in Singapore so that he could produce the tape, and that Gregson came to Washington to appear before a House committee on POW/MIAs in 1986, but changed his mind and refused to testify.

As it happens, *Soldier Of Fortune* is well-acquainted with the background of Gregson and his alleged tape. In 1983 we published an article on a man variously called Sean O'Toole or Robert Toolis, who had allegedly encountered American POWs in Vietnam while there on an arms-buying trip for the Irish Republican Army (IRA). (See "Blarney," *SOF's POW/MIA Special*, Spring '83).

In 1986 O'Toole called *SOF* Publisher Robert K. Brown and suggested he get in touch with a Gregson, formerly of the British Special Air Service (SAS), who was in Bangkok and had valuable information on American POWs still being held.

Brown contacted our Bangkok correspondent, Jim Coyne, and



Perot with group of POW wives leaving Dallas, Texas, with two plane loads of Christmas gifts for U.S. POWs held in North Vietnam. Photo: AP/Wide World

asked him to interview Gregson. What follows is Coyne's account of Gregson's claims, and how Bush and then Perot came to be involved in this whole convoluted story. Even though Perot paid for the whole exercise, we suspect that quite a few of the details here will be news to him:

Coyne's Account

"Before I went to meet with Gregson, I sent a Thai associate ahead to stake out the meeting place at the Rex Hotel in Bangkok. He arrived an hour before I got there, sat in a corner and stayed an hour after I left. I took this precaution because Gregson supposedly was connected with the IRA. That's how we found out that I



Perot is interviewed outside Soviet Embassy in Copenhagen during his unsuccessfully attempt to deliver two planeloads of gifts to American POWs in Hanoi. Photo: AP/Wide World

was under surveillance and was photographed and taped at this meeting. As soon as I left, two Thais and two Caucasians joined Gregson at the table and talked excitedly about our meeting.

"It got my interest up that Gregson had gone to all this trouble, and I revised my original opinion that he was just another nut case.

"Gregson had told me something I just couldn't ignore. He claimed that Lieutenant Colonel Denny Lane, the assistant U.S. Army attaché in Thailand, had screwed him somehow and said the next time he saw him he was going to kill him. I felt obligated to call Lane at the embassy and warn him.

"As soon as I called Denny, he said I should come right down to the embassy and talk to a Regional Security Officer. After I told the RSO exactly had happened, he said, 'We'll take it from here.' That's when I knew I was in trouble.

"Well, the first thing he did was call Gregson's number and ask if he had ever met with me. Of course, after that Gregson

wouldn't have anything to do with me.

"The next time I saw him was at an ice-cream stand outside a theater. I said hello to him, pretending nothing had happened, and he said, 'CIA, it's got to be the CIA.' And I said, 'No, I don't work for the CIA.' And he said, 'Well, listen, all I got to tell you is after the last time I talked to you, the embassy called me up and for the next month there was nothing but noodle vendors, street cleaners and people trimming trees outside my house.' I imagine those noodle vendors were Thai police.

"I kept asking around about Gregson. One of the things that he told me at the meeting was that he had a contract to work on the Rolls-Royces of the Thai royal family. He was trying to impress me with the fact that he was involved with the Thai royal family; what he didn't know was that I was a close friend of General Pichitr Kullavanijaya, who was at that time commanding general of the 1st Division, 'the King's Guard.'

"I called Pichitr to ask him about this guy who was linked to the IRA and was working on the royal family's cars. Pichitr

told me to come right over. When I got there Pichitr called in Lieutenant General Saneh Sittipunt, who was then assistant director general of the Thai national police. Saneh is one of the most honest policemen in Thailand.

"Saneh was then the number-two cop in Thailand. He asked for all my notes from the meeting, and I provided them to him right there, not even photocopies. And when he returned them to me it came via a police courier, in a police envelope, with a note saying 'thank you very much.'

"Then I went to dinner with Jerry Waller, a world-famous British counterinsurgency expert who was with Thompson in Malaya. I mentioned Gregson and Waller said, 'Oh yeah, that guy says he's former SAS, but he's not. Call Brian Reade, the first secretary at the British Embassy.'

"Reade told me, 'If I were you I'd break off all contact. He's a very dangerous guy — half-psychotic and very dangerous.' "

A Beautiful Scam

"Saneh finally filled me in on what Gregson was doing in Thailand. He would pose as a narcotics official from Interpol and have one of his boys — he worked with a gang, half Thai, half foreigners, hippies and bums coming through Thailand. They'd find somebody that wanted to go smoke some Thai-stick or wanted to shoot up some heroin, and he'd have one of his boys sell to this guy.

"Then Gregson would go up and knock on the door and flash them this phony badge and arrest them, and all his Thais would come in and put them in handcuffs. All these guys are tourists, scared to death, and Gregson would come and sit down and say, 'Look, I know you're having a hard time, and if you just give me the name of the person you got this from (one of his cohorts), and \$2,000, I'll let you go.'

"So they would do it. They'd scrounge whatever money they had or cameras or whatever, give it to

WHAT ABOUT BO?

In transcripts of Perot's testimony, one subject was screamingly conspicuous by its absence. This concerned the several attempts, all unsuccessful, by retired Lieutenant Colonel James G. "Bo" Gritz to recover American POWs in Laos.

Operations "Velvet Hammer" (March 1981), "Grand Eagle" and "Lazarus" (both later in 1981) all received wide publicity at the time, which could not have escaped the eyes of Pathet Lao authorities.

Since it appears from the transcripts that the decision has been made to declassify at least some of the signal-intercept intake from this period, it would be interesting to see the Lao and Vietnamese traffic for the periods during and after these operations, at least as it refers to American POWs in Laos or Vietnam, and especially in Laos.

By that time, the Lao and Hanoi regimes must have seen that the \$4 billion or so in reparations that they thought they were going to receive as a result of the Paris Accords of 1973 were not forthcoming. Even then, just one POW coming out and talking would have been a major propaganda disaster for them.

It does not insult the imagination to speculate that at about this time they may have come to the conclusion that the POWs had ceased to be a valuable bargaining asset and had become a potentially disastrous liability — and then taken what, to them, would be the obvious corrective action. It would be instructive to see what, if any, reflection of this appears in the signal intercepts for this period.

The record of these transcripts indicates Senator John Kerry is a competent attorney. Something we would dearly love to see is the transcript of a cross-examination, under oath, of Gritz by a well-prepared Kerry who has also read and analyzed these signal intercepts — stay tuned.

— A. M.

JUST THE PARTY LINE

A good deal of the committee's and the witnesses' time and attention during the U.S. Senate hearings was taken up with the question of who told William Clements to tell Dr. Roger Shields to make the announcement, on 14 April 1973, that all the MIAs and possible POWs who had not come home in Operation Homecoming were dead.

And this in the light of the "Eagleburger Memorandum" of 23 March 1973 that stated, among other things, that approximately 350 U.S. military and civilian personnel were "missing or captured in Laos." Plus many more were missing and not accounted for in South Vietnam, over North Vietnam and so on.

Now, this could be the starting point for a first-class political witch-hunt and for a whole crop of almost-credible conspiracy theories. Especially if one ignores the obvious.

At that time, Richard Nixon, who was already under heavy attack from the Watergate scandal, was president and commander in chief. As such, he was and is ultimately responsible for the decision. So, forget the intermediate scapegoats.

Notwithstanding the great effect of the December 1972 bombing around Hanoi, and the apparent willingness of our adversaries to do it our way, Nixon and Kissinger apparently believed that there was no congressional or public support for going on with the war, and certainly no support for going back in to recover the known POWs not accounted for.

The idea was to put this whole unhappy episode behind us. By the light of hindsight this decision was dreadfully wrong, but it was made.

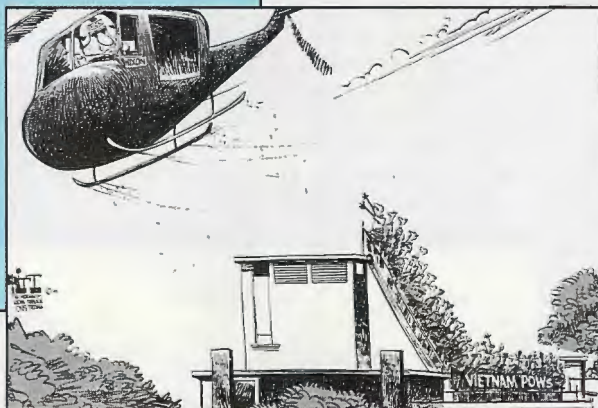
And once the "party line" within the government was that there were no surviving POWs, it did not require a sinister conspiracy to breed the mind-set that got unduly rigorous in analyzing any and all live-sighting reports. And this mentality apparently went forward unchanged during subsequent administrations.

— A. M.

"Then the guy, was let out of jail on an administrative error that had nothing to do with Gregson and the woman found out about it. When she demanded her money back, Gregson claimed he had paid off Saneh, the number-two cop in Thailand.

"Well, this Australian went back to Australia and said that Saneh had taken a \$10,000 bribe to get her brother out of jail. It all came down on Saneh's head. Then Saneh sued Gregson and won. It's a very convoluted story, but the long and the short of it is Gregson was a well-known con artist in Thailand.

"So when Mark Smith came to my house in 1986 and said there was a former SAS guy in Bangkok who had a film show-



Gregson — Gregson would have one of his guys take the handcuffs off and they'd walk.

"It was a beautiful scam. If you're a tourist in Bangkok, especially a drug tourist, you'd figure, 'I got the best deal of my life. I just paid this cop \$2,000 and he let me go.'

"This is how Saneh found out about him. They had arrested an Australian heroin dealer, so Gregson had called his family in Australia and told him that he could get this guy out of jail in Bangkok, but he would need \$10,000 to bribe somebody. This Australian's sister came to Bangkok and gave him \$10,000.

ing live American POWs in Vietnam, I asked right away if his name was Robin Gregson.

"Well, Smith's jaw almost dropped to the floor, and I told him the whole story of how I knew Gregson. For some reason, Smith took him seriously, though, and proceeded to write intelligence

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Perot's candidacy started after comments he made on the Larry King talk show; he quickly found strong support among Americans disgusted with business-as-usual Washington politicians. Photo: AP/Wide World

By late February 1991, the squandered oil wealth of a nation had become spoils of war. After Desert Storm's furious air and ground attacks, hundreds of thousands of tons of Iraqi matériel, much of it undamaged, lay abandoned on the sun-scorched sands of Kuwait and Iraq.

As soon as their smashing "100-hour" ground drive had routed Saddam's 200,000- to 300,000-man occupation force from Kuwait, the American and other Coalition soldiers began reaping the material rewards of victory. Following military tradition unchanged from Roman times, GIs eagerly swept the smoldering battlefield, plucking a fortune in war souvenirs from abandoned Iraqi positions. Fleeing Iraqis left behind everything from cigarettes and prayer rugs to main battle tanks. Highly prized by GIs were pocketable items such as AKM bayonets and Iraqi headgear. But the trophy hunting went far beyond the forays of individual soldiers.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terrill Aitken, curator of Oregon's Military Museum, arrived in time to see U.S. Army combat units, as well as military representatives from several of the 12 allied nations, frantically grabbing what prizes were left standing intact. Everyone wanted to test and evaluate the best enemy weaponry. Some nations, such as Syria and Egypt, wanted to swell their existing inventory of East Bloc arms.

"Our divisions were collecting like crazy, getting the big stuff," Aitken explained. "The 24th Division went over in 10 ships and came back in 11." Eventually, treasures collected would grace museums at Fort Riley, Fort Hood, Fort Stewart



Museum team did not obtain any of the few modern T-72M tanks that survived. Army foreign equipment evaluators will subject this fast, well-protected tank to extensive testing. It mounts a potent 125mm smoothbore.

and other home bases of American units.

Even with this unprecedented collecting underway, the Army's Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., dispatched its own three-man artifact acquisition team, under Major David C. Cole, of the center's Museum Branch, to the war zone in early March. Joining Cole's staff were Aitken, of the Oregon Army National Guard, and Staff Sergeant James Speraw, attached to Maryland's Army National Guard. These intrepid Americans spent more than six months on their grueling desert mission.

By mid-August 1991 they had gathered a mountain of 18,000 war artifacts, 70% of which were Iraqi and 30% American. The heaviest trophies were six main battle tanks of the T-54/55 type (including the Chinese Type-69-1 version). Among the 31 other large pieces were field guns, antiaircraft guns, BMP infantry fighting vehicles and MT-LB tracked multipurpose vehicles. In addition, there were 17 full 40-foot shipping containers, with more than 300 infantry weapons and tons of personal gear, which the Army is distributing according to the needs of nearly 200 collections in Army, National Guard, Army Reserve and other Department of Defense museums.

Why did the Army historical staff decide to send a team on this remarkable odyssey? Most important was the need to acquire more complete museum collections of modern matériel. In previous years, military museum curators had anticipated an influx of artifacts collected during the Grenada and Panama campaigns. The results proved to be somewhat disappointing.

"The units concentrated on one thing — guns," Aitken exclaimed. By museum standards, the troop's collections were

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NS OF SCROUNGE

me the Plunder of Desert Storm

by Christian Sturm

Photos by CWO 2 Terrill Aitken

hopelessly incomplete. Few of items they donated were "historically significant."

Cole and his professionals, determined not to repeat the collecting mistakes of the past, made a detailed "hunt list" in preparation for their desert expedition. "We considered previous wars and listed what was not abundant in the Army museum system," Aitken recalled. "We wanted what was rarest, and that meant getting the basic equipment and personal items from the soldier's kit. One museum item sadly lacking from past wars is footwear. What soldier wants to bring home a pair of smelly old boots from the battlefield?"

From the mother of all junkyards, Cole's team would acquire "an instant base collection" from which have-not museums could draw equipment. The Desert Storm collection was to be comprehensive enough to enable museum curators to build outstanding interpretive historical displays, complete with mannequins in full battle dress.

As the roar of the jet engines enveloped Aitken on his flight to Saudi Arabia, he pictured columns of deserted armor and other vehicles standing silently in the sunlight, as the ground nearby was strewn with discarded ammunition and equipment. The 46-year-old museum curator knew he was flying to the collecting opportunity of a lifetime.

When Aitken and Speraw arrived in Dhahran, they joined Cole and all set out for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to meet with the commander of the 132nd Military History Branch. He quickly guided the team to Hafar al Batim and the rear of the heavy-weight 7th Corps. On the third day, the fast-moving trio linked up with the 3rd Armored Division in Kuwait.

"On the fourth day," Aitken recalled, "we were in Iraq and saw the road signs pointing to Basra and Baghdad."

Iraq On \$5 A Day

The expedition was strictly low-budget. The team's sole means of transportation was an obsolete Dodge M886 ambulance truck, acquired at Fort Meade, Maryland. Cole pressed the light vehicle into service as an artifact hauler, a towing tractor and, of course, as an improvised desert RV. Often badly overloaded with artifacts, the indispensable truck slogged through deep baths of crude oil and jounced over rocky ground, carrying the team over 23,000 miles in Kuwait and southern Iraq.

Only when Cole scheduled helicopter trips to Fallaka Island did the explorers leave their trusty vehicle behind.

The team established a base at Camp Freedom near the Ministry of Education in Kuwait City, the egg-shaped metropolis on the shores of Kuwait Bay. Leaving their prefab hooch daily at 0700 hours, the

At the end of collection run, the team's converted ambulance, with springs sagging under a full load, pulls into base camp.



Team's cleaning table in Kuwait City displays variety of captured Iraqi weapons, including Soviet-designed PK (7.62x51mm) general purpose machine guns, RPK light machine gun, Kalashnikov assault rifles — even a pristine M98 Mauser, circa WWII.

men would drive out to collect military artifacts.

As the truck lurched forward, the men inside peered at a desert torn by tank tracks and littered with shell casings, ammunition crates and other war debris. But sometimes, depending upon whims of the wind, a surreal sky that resembled a towering black wall held Aitken's gaze.

"Look how ungodly dark it is," he would exclaim, looking toward the tall pillars of dense, acrid smoke rising from 732 flaming oil wells, most of them set ablaze by Iraqis. The men were glad when their hunt took them miles away from the billowing clouds of poison.

"We went off the roads in search of Iraqi bunkers — they were all over," Aitken said. "The best items could be found inside them."

Approaching a bunker complex, they slowed their truck to examine the ground. Spotting MRE wrappers and plastic water bottles littering the area, they did not pause for closer inspection. Clearly, throngs of GI souvenir hunters had beaten the team

to the site. "Drive on," somebody would say, "this place has been vacuumed clean."

Soldiers were not the team's only competitors. "Occasionally, the locals approached us, offering to buy guns," Aitken explained. He had to refuse — selling arms to Arabs was not his business. He knew Kuwait's rulers had outlawed possession of assault rifles by civilians. That had little effect on demand for the weapons, however: The black market price was about \$700 each.

Helpful Natives

Once, deeply engrossed in their work, they looked up with a start to see that a group of expressionless Bedouins quietly had surrounded them. There was no hostile intent; the stealthy intruders were merely curious onlookers.

More often, the Arabs were mounted not on camels but on Japanese pickups. Aitken observed them scouring the battlefield for weapons and other Iraqi valuables. At times, when he showed them pictures of various East Bloc weapons, the locals cooperatively pointed in the direction of sites where specific treasures could be found.

Since the desert had not been cleared of mines and other unexploded ordnance, Aitken was relieved when the Arabs eagerly clambered into their trucks and led the way to abandoned Iraqi positions. "They raced ahead of us, driving like wild," he recounted. "We had trouble keeping up with them." The Americans could not understand how these enterprising Bedouins careening across the sand missed being blown to pieces.

Early on, Aitken prudently had visited the EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) people at 7th Corps to learn their safety rules. "Never approach an Iraqi defensive position from the front," the briefers warned. "Go in from the rear, on existing roads." They also instructed the team to avoid areas with tangles of barbed wire: These signaled the presence of Iraqi minefields.

Ironically, however, the greatest threat to the artifact hunters was the American cluster bomb. Attacking aircraft had loosed thousands of these bombs over Iraqi positions, but more than 30% of the bomblets failed to explode. "I think many were dropped from very low altitude," Aitken said, "meaning they did not have time to arm themselves. Of course, the soft sand was a factor, too."

Aitken kept his eyes peeled for the cluster bombs' white casings. And several times, the sight of a bomblet's triangular nylon fins protruding from a layer of deep sand forced him to halt abruptly. He would wipe the sweat from his brow and back out of the dangerous site. "Keep out of the sand — stay on the hard ground" he always told himself. "Just a mild disturbance will set off those darn things." Fortunately, there were no mishaps.

Singling-out a bunker for inspection, Aitken would walk slowly toward its dark entrance carrying his .45, a long stick and a flashlight. Ducking into its gloomy depths, he would pause, whipping off his sunglasses to let his eyes adjust to the darkness. Then he would check for booby traps and other lethal hazards.

"You stand motionless for 30 to 45 seconds, make some noise and listen for rustling sounds," Aitken explained. There were scorpions and several species of poisonous snakes to deal with. Deadly cobras, puff adders or asps slithered into bunkers in search of their prey, the desert rat. These foraging rodents, attracted by the scent of abandoned bulk food stores, infested many former enemy bunkers. Booby traps, on the other hand, were rare. The Iraqis scarcely had time to set any.

Americans expressed surprise at the primitiveness of Iraqi bunkers. Platoon and company bunkers gouged out of the ground had 2x4 supports and roofs of corrugated metal and plywood. The team located one divisional bunker built from pre-cast concrete, but this style was the exception.

"Why, only a couple of inches of sand covered the roofs," Aitken noted. "There was no real overhead protection. Most of these bunkers offered only concealment." He added that no American military man would have thought the enemy defensive position had been in place for as long as the four to six months of occupation. "Americans would have brought in materials to improve their positions. The Iraqis just dug theirs and quit."

The Iraqis could have built stronger bunkers and fortifications. Near the enemy defensive positions, Cole's team discovered dozens of bulldozers, front-end loaders and other heavy construction machinery looted from the Kuwaitis.

Having explored numerous positions well-stocked with weaponry, equipment and supplies, Aitken registered astonishment at the diversity of matériel the Iraqis had acquired. "There was a jumble of equipment," he said. "Standardization was lacking." He found Chinese artillery shells, Polish assault rifles, Romanian boots, uniforms looted from Kuwaitis, East German field bakeries, as well as items from Pakistan, Singapore, South Korea and many other nations. Moreover, much of what Saddam's forces had bought was of inferior quality and in a "sorry state of serviceability." Rust had appeared on surfaces of many weapons.

Aitken shook his head when he saw how many of the Chinese Type-63 personnel carriers the Iraqis had procured. "The Chinese themselves knew the type was inferior. They must have laughed when Saddam's people paid good money for

them," Aitken said. "Saddam had to re-equip after the Iran-Iraq war, but oil prices had slumped, so he went to the discount stores of military hardware. He simply sacrificed quality for quantity." The Iraqis searched worldwide, buying many blocks of matériel in small quantities from various sources, taking advantage of low prices whenever they could.

Cole's team saw few examples of the sophisticated long-range artillery of the type designed by Gerald Bull and sold by Austria, South Africa and France. Most Iraqi units fielded the standard Soviet 122mm, 130mm and 152mm designs. In any case, all Iraqi artillery was severely handicapped by the lack of counterbattery radar and forward observation capability.

Walking around abandoned artillery, Aitken found it easy to picture the Iraqis' plight, especially during a daylight war, as he sighted down the thick barrel of a 152mm field gun. In the distance, the desert view was badly distorted by shimmering heat waves. He squinted against the blinding glare of sun on sand, looking away after a few moments. Everywhere he saw the same monotonous flat landscape. How could anyone call in a grid for a fire mission when there were no

reference points?

Glancing up at the brilliant sky, Aitken realized the artillery position he occupied

"stood out like a sore thumb" from the air. Most sites were dug-in only 5 feet. Obviously, hostile aircraft or artillery with air observers could have knocked out this 152mm heavy battery rather easily. Yes, he concluded, *command of the air is indeed the key to victory in the desert.*

"One thing that he [Hussein] was not short of was ammunition," Aitken observed in understatement. "And the troops carried the Chinese Type-86-P grenade in large numbers." Great stocks of shells, including those of the largest calibers, were stacked or spilled everywhere he went. "Most of it was fresh Chinese-made stuff. Half of it was very fresh and of Jordanian origin. It was still in shipping crates marked 'Aman, Jordan.'"

"Now, I wonder how this happened?" Aitken had asked his comrades in mock ignorance. "Isn't Jordan's army equipped by the West?"

The grim picture of knocked-out Iraqi

tanks, holed, blackened and blistered, could be seen everywhere Cole's team set foot. Ferocious A-10s, Apache helicopters and ground weapons had blasted a swath through Iraqi armor. "I could not tell what had killed the tanks," Aitken admitted, "their destruction was so complete."

Moving undamaged tanks chosen for collection back to base camp proved to be a daunting task. The overworked Dodge might pull a 4.4-ton 57mm antiaircraft gun, but not a 36-ton T-54 tank. Through clever, innovative negotiation, the museum team enlisted the aid of American units with tank recovery vehicles.

Unfortunately, Cole could not lay his hands on a modern T-72M tank — the Army reserved the few found intact for testing and evaluation. None could be spared for museum purposes.

In the field, it appeared the Iraqi soldier enjoyed few comforts available to his American opponents. The explorers found the same primitive conditions everywhere, even in border areas where the elite Republican Guards had dug in. "There was no sign of sanitary facilities," Aitken said. "Apparently they always used cat holes. And we only saw three sleeping bags in our entire search."

Cook bunkers, designated for serving officers, existed only at battalion level. Iraq mainly supplied its troops with bulk rations: Sacks of beans and rice were plentiful. Canned food or any kind of individual rations were scarce. Fresh mutton was available to some units — decaying carcasses of sheep were left behind, tethered to bunkers for slaughter.

Water also was dispensed in bulk. The museum team found bottled water at only one site. Many Iraqi units had to fill their canteens from water trailers parked in the open and heated by the merciless sun. The more fortunate drew water from 55-gallon drums or galvanized cisterns insulated by burial in the sand.

Americans, by contrast, received processed water in sealed bottles. In the desert, using traditional canteens was avoided as these provided breeding places for harmful bacteria.

Preserving The Spoils

After more than three months of field collecting, Cole's party began to devote progressively more time to the Herculean tasks of cleaning, inventorizing and packing during the hot months of June, July and August. Most of the recovered trophies were loaded into containers bound for Anniston Army Depot in Alabama.

Following his return to the States in September, Aitken traveled to Anniston to help in unpacking, more inventorizing and repacking. Many weeks later, thousands of valuable artifacts, having been assigned stock numbers, slowly began flowing to military museums across the United States.

Continued on page 68



Aitken holds Russian RPG-18 in front of his newest martial mannequins, an Iraqi tank driver and Iraqi infantryman. Photo: C. Sturm

Saturation TV coverage of the Gulf War made familiar to the American public the odd silhouette of a new GI vehicle: the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), affectionately known to the troops as the Humvee or, better yet — the Hummer.

According to Susan Carney, manager of corporate communications at AM General, the Hummer's manufacturer, the rugged 4-wheel-drive vehicle was originally built for the U.S. Army after the Pentagon identified requirements for such a unit in the late 1970s. At that time, much of the Army's aging rolling stock was deemed inadequate or obsolete. On a competitive bid basis, AM General was awarded the contract in 1983 to build the Hummer in accordance with the Army's specification "wish list."

Although AM General's history goes back to the early 1900s, its roots are in the Willys/Kaiser/Jeep ancestry. The factory is located in South Bend, Indiana, where Studebakers were once produced. When the company was incorporated in 1971 it built a variety of vehicles, including buses, postal vehicles, 5-ton trucks and 15-ton haulers. The company built 350,000 jeeps in World War II and has already built some 100,000 Hummers.

The Hummer's off-road performance is outstanding because of the original performance targets established by the military. The vehicle had to operate in desert as well as arctic environs, with or without armor, and had to be easily adapted to various applications, such as a cargo and troop carrier, TOW missile carrier, ordnance platform, ambulance, shelter carrier or other mission profiles. [Some eight such standard GI variants are illustrated in article sidebar.]

During Desert Storm operations, the U.S. Marine Corps, Army, Navy and Air Force used some 20,000 Hummers for a variety of duties in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, where the tough but unblooded vehicle surpassed expectations for reliability and performance.

Arnold Schwarzenegger was the first private individual to buy a Hummer (his is a one-of-a-kind modified weapons carrier), but it was Ed Mroz, World War II underground fighter and *Soldier Of Fortune* correspondent, who was one of the first to test-drive the civilian Hummer early last May at the Hollister Hills Park off-road "testing grounds" in central California.

"There were seven Hummers and the same number of test drivers and corporate representatives," Mroz said. "Other 4-wheel-drive vehicles that tried to follow us were left in the dust. They met us later, having avoided the terrain we crossed. The Hummer is definitely not your garden-variety off-road vehicle."

The terrain they pounded the Hummers over was what you'd find in typical military operations, where paved roads are



A HUMVEE

AM General's War Wago

Text & Photos by A. Mroz

nowhere to be found and the landscape cannot be trusted to be flat, solid or predictable.

According to Martin Similuk, commercial Hummer program manager at AM General, the Limited Edition Hummer (which is available factory-direct to the first 1,000 people who reserve one) is offered in four body styles: 4-door soft/open top (base price \$40,500), 2-door pickup (base price \$42,500), 4-door pickup (base price \$44,000) and 4-door enclosed (base price \$47,600).

SOF's test driver noted how none of the Hummers are comfortable by comparison to an RV. The 2-door pickup has limited legroom and a fixed seat position,

making it the least comfortable model. He found the diesel motor to be noisy — but then it's not meant to be a Mercedes. On the highway its acceleration could be compared to an old Volkswagen Beetle. However, these drawbacks are minor if you're looking for a truly tough vehicle for off-road operations.

Coming To A Showroom Near You

Once the Limited Edition Hummers are sold, AM General plans to establish dealerships in cities around the United States. Exact locations are to be announced.

Where a Hummer really excels over a regular sport/utility 4x4 is in ground clear-



IN EVERY GARAGE?

Now Available for Civilian Purchase

ance and width. The Hummer's undercarriage rolls 16 inches above ground, approximately 6 inches higher than anything else in the field of available 4x4s. Additionally, the Hummer has a central pneumatic tire-pressure regulator, allowing the driver to control tire pressure for on/off pavement driving. The Hummer is also 8 inches wider than most 4-wheel-drive vehicles; with a 72-inch-wide track, this allows it to handle 40% side slopes.

The Hummer has a combination of minimum overhang and steep approach-and-departure angles that lets it crawl over tree trunks, climb 60%-grade slopes and ford 30-inch-deep water.

As AM General's sales literature points

out, "The Hummer has demonstrated its unique capabilities in the harsh environment of ground combat ... A bonded and riveted aluminum body and a steel chassis make the Hummer tough and unusually resistant to corrosion, yet amazingly light and flexible for a vehicle with over 2 tons of payload capacity."

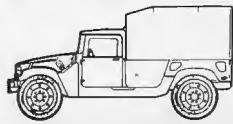
The chassis of the Hummer is constructed on brutish steel rails with five cross members. The drive train is threaded through the frame to avoid contact with the ground. The 6.2-liter diesel V-8 engine produces 150 horsepower and transmits 250 foot-pounds of torque through a 3-speed automatic transmission, providing continuous 4-wheel-drive through a

Gleason torsion differential.

Standard features include fuel injection (as with all diesels), 12-volt 85-amp alternator, 4-wheel inboard-mounted disc brakes, AM/FM stereo and cassette player, halogen headlamps, three-point seat belts, and individual bucket seats for either four passengers (4-door models) or two passengers (2-door models).

A 36-month/36,000-mile warranty is standard. With the purchase of a Hummer the buyer receives a tour of the Hummer manufacturing facility, along with a special one-day training session.

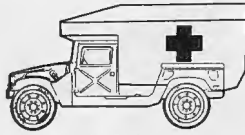
Factory options include air conditioning, 120-amp alternator, trailer towing package with swing-away spare tire car-



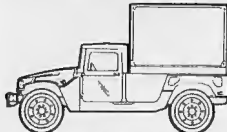
CARGO/TROOP CARRIER
Soft Top Enclosure (2-Door Cab, Troop/Cargo)
M998 W/O W M1038 W/W



TOW MISSILE CARRIER
Basic Armor
M966 W/O W M1036 W/W

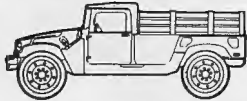


MAXI-AMBULANCE
4 Litter, Basic Armor
M997



S-250 SHELTER CARRIER
M1037 W/O W M1042 W/W

**•Some 12 GI variants are in use:
civilians can choose among four models.**



CARGO/TROOP CARRIER
Soft Top Enclosure (2-Door Cab, Troop Seats)
M998 W/O W M1038 W/W



CARGO/TROOP CARRIER
Soft Top Enclosure (4-Door Cab, Cargo)
M998 W/O W M1038 W/W



ARMAMENT CARRIER
Basic Armor W/7.62mm M60 MG
M1025 W/O W M1026 W/W



ARMAMENT CARRIER
Supplemental Armor W/.50 Cal M2HB MG
M1043 W/O W M1044 W/W

rier including wheel and tire, central tire inflation system, 12,000-pound electric winch, underbody protection package, and brush and headlight guards.

Mroz noted: "The driving technique for the Hummer involves having your left foot constantly on the brake, and the right foot on the accelerator. By alternating the force applied to gas and brake pedal, the Hummer automatically compensates its traction to the wheels, needed for the vehicle to move. The technique is a little out of the ordinary, since on passenger cars with automatic transmissions, this is the so-called wrong way to drive."

Although freeway speeds are attainable with a degree of patience (zero to 60 mph is about 20 seconds, without load), the Hummer crawls over turf that would seem impossible in any other vehicle with tires. Maximum towing capacity is 5,000 pounds and cruising range is 275 miles. Maximum speed is 65 mph.

Thirty-six-inch tires on 16.5-inch rims help the Hummer stay ahead of the competition, if there is any. *SOF's* test drive shows the Hummer is the ultimate go-anywhere, do-anything backcountry/hunting/prospecting/survival vehicle.

Additional specs and ordering information are available from AM General; phone: 1-800-3-HUMVEE.

Al Mroz is a California-based freelance writer.

SPECS

Length:	184.5 inches
Height:	72 inches
Width:	86.5 inches
Ground Clearance:	16 inches
Wheelbase:	130 inches
Track Width:	72 inches
Max Towed Load:	5,000 pounds
Cruising Range:	275 miles
Max Speed:	65 mph
Grade Capability:	60%
Side Slope Capability:	40%
Approach Angle w/o winch:	72 degrees
Approach Angle w/winch:	47 degrees
Departure Angle:	37.5 degrees
Run Flat Capability:	30 miles
Turning radius:	25 feet
Fording Depth:	30 inches
Combined Fuel Economy:	13.5 mpg
Engine:	V8, 6.2L diesel, 150 HP @ 3,600 rpm, mechanical governor, 379.4-cubic-inch with 3.98 bore and 3.82 stroke, 21.2:1 compression ratio
Trannie:	Automatic, maximum input torque rating of 451 lb.ft.; ratios; 1st — 2.48:1, 2nd — 1.48:1, 3rd — 1.0:1 Axles: Hypoid, ratio of 2.73:1, continuous torque rating of 1,281 lb. ft.

Frame:	Steel box section, with five cross members
Electrical:	12V, 85 amp alternator
Steering:	Power assist with variable 13/16:1
Brakes:	Hydraulic, dual-reservoir master cylinder, 4-wheel inboard-mounted disc
Suspension:	Independent double A-frame, with open coil springs and hydraulic shock absorbers
Tires:	37x12.50R-16.5, load range D-radials, with beadlock and run-flat device
Standard Civilian Enhancements:	Map/dome light, console cover, roll-up windows, sliding rear window, lockable doors, keyed ignition, bucket seats, padded interior, heat-sound insulation, halogen headlights
Standard On Limited Edition:	AM/FM stereo radio, cassette player, desert paint, 36-month/36,000-mile warranty, special training course at AM General plant, year membership in "Tread Lightly" program
Options:	Central tire inflation system, brush/headlight guards, underbody skid protection, spare tire carrier, electric winch, air conditioning, trailer hitch, 120-amp alternator

— data courtesy AM General



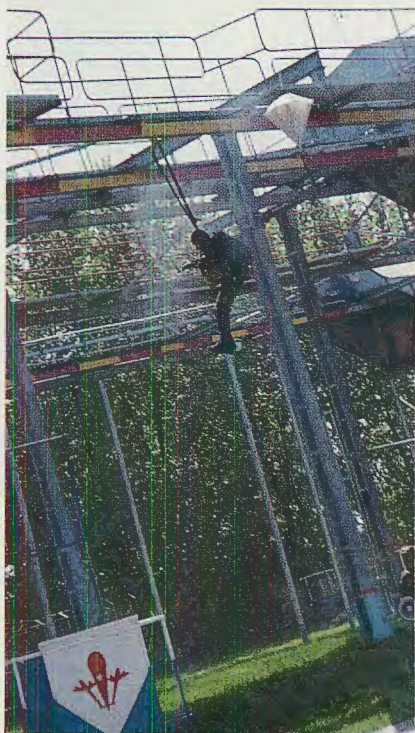
SO JUMPS MOTHER RUSSIA

Staffer Earns Red Army Wings

Text & Photos by Robert MacKenzie

Having fought against communism all my life, I never expected to be jumping out of Mi-8 helicopters at a Russian airborne school, or handing out *Soldier Of Fortune* magazines in Red Square, but there I was. Stranger things have happened, but not many.

During more than 20 years of service in four different armies, and time spent with many others, I always suspected that I had more in common with Soviet ("the enemy") paratroopers than with American politicians. And as one of about 100 parachutists from seven different countries visiting the Russian Airborne Academy in Ryazan,



Russian paratroopers are trained to engage the enemy as they descend. This trooper is firing blanks as he drops from the top of the Russian equivalent of a 34-foot tower.

some 200km southeast of Moscow, I was able to test my hypothesis.

Despite some fairly major cultural differences, such as 200 years of democratic tradition and 40 years of Disneyland, Russian and American paratroops share many fundamental qualities: Loyalty, honor, pride in service, comradeship (in the military, not the communist sense) and occasional frustration with their political leaders form a large part of their character, just as these do in American paras.

Their experience in Afghanistan parallels in many ways our own experience in Vietnam, including POW/MIA issues and problems with narcotics. Russian paras question the legitimacy of the Afghan war and express frustration, bitterness and sorrow over its conduct and for friends killed for no clear purpose, echoing my own feelings about Vietnam.

An indication of the importance that Soviet military planners gave to airborne forces is the large number of them to be found in the former Soviet, now Russian, military. Parachute units comprise seven divisions, totaling about 50,000 men.

Additionally, there are nine independent brigades of infantry, with another 12 brigades of special forces (*Spetsnaz*). These units are equipped with large numbers of air-droppable armored fighting vehicles

(AFVs) and self-propelled (SP) artillery pieces, enabling them to fight as mechanized infantry once they have been dropped. By comparison, American paratroops adopt a light infantry role once out of their harnesses.

Like the pre-volunteer U.S. Army, the Russian army is mostly manned by conscripts. Until recently, each Russian male between ages 15 and 18 was expected to complete between 100 and 140 hours of basic military training to prepare him for military service. This has changed with the breakup of the USSR, and serious discussions about forming an all-volunteer army are underway.

Drafted at 18, youths spend two years in the army. Volunteers who pass rigorous physical requirements can join airborne units. During their second year of service, they may further volunteer to be regular soldiers and, if accepted, receive further training.

Clearly, as was seen during the recent Kuwait campaign, use of modern, high-tech weaponry requires higher skill levels than can be found in soldiers with such short service requirements. Hence the pressure for an all-volunteer military.

After a year of force reductions, necessitated by the new political and financial considerations, the Russian army has dropped from 214 to 190 active divisions and this trend is continuing. Remaining divisions are being reconfigured to be more efficient and harder hitting; these reductions are affecting the airborne troops as well.

Uncertainty about the future, their careers and their country has of course had a detrimental impact on morale, but the paras I met remained professional and optimistic.

Our group was organized by the Inter-

national Airborne Travelers Association (IATA), based in Germany with a representative in the United States. It was the first of its kind to jump at Ryazan. I managed to snivel my way onto the first lift, and thus joined 15 others for a historic jump broadcast on Russian TV.

American, English, German, Italian, Swiss, Greek and French jumpers made up the 16-man load, which is normal for an Mi-8. One American father-son team and one German father-son combination took part, as well as an American father-daughter team.

Looking out the back of the Mi-8 from 2,000 feet over our first drop zone (DZ), I saw that it was mostly an old airfield with runways and taxiways made of rusting PSP (perforated steel planking). I realized that landing in the middle of the DZ would not be a good thing to do, but given the limited steering capabilities of the Russian D-6 parachute, I would have to spend some effort on canopy control to reach the softer sand on the DZ's edges. Inside our helicopter, the port stick of eight was already standing, and the jump master hooked our static lines to the anchor cable.

Although the Russians use a static line system, it differs greatly from that used by most armed forces. The Russian static line pulls a drogue parachute from the top of the main, and the parachutist falls away with the drogue trailing behind him. The main parachute deploys by one of two methods: Either it has an automatic opening device that can be set for varying delays and is initiated at the same time the drogue deploys, or there is a manual rip cord which is pulled after a predetermined count, usually three seconds.

Due to interpretation difficulties, it remained unclear which was the primary opening system, but it seemed a good idea

SORRY SPIGOT

The AT-4 (Spigot), roughly equivalent to the U.S. Army's TOW-1, should have performed as well as its U.S. counterpart. Our observations during weapons and firepower demonstrations, however, led us to believe that U.S. armor had little to fear from the Spigot.



We must have watched 20 firings from ground mounts and BMD mounts and saw not one Spigot hit any target on the range. We saw the wire-guided missiles hit the ground 60 meters in front of the launcher, or fly in great curving arcs into the forests on the flanks, or fly impressively to the maximum range far beyond the targets. One of them, heading directly toward a vehicle hulk downrange, appeared to leap up and over the hulk just before impact, then drop back down and resume its former course.

The gunners were all members of a demonstration unit and were presumably proficient. Perhaps they were conducting a disinformation campaign, but I think the guidance and steering mechanism of the AT-4 leaves a great deal to be desired. The Russians must think so, too, because they have since introduced a replacement.

— R. M.

to use them both. In my three jumps I once counted to four and pulled just as the automatic opener had activated; I once counted to three and felt the main deploy — the last time I counted to four and pulled slightly ahead of the auto-opener.

One trooper reported waiting until a count of eight before pulling his rip cord. Several other people, obviously less experienced parachutists whom I watched from the DZ, must have pulled their main immediately after stepping out of the helicopter. This is always a very foolish thing to do, as there is a slight chance that the main canopy can find its way to the tail rotor, with disastrous results.

Regardless of the differences, the Russian system seemed just as reliable as our own, and in fact it seemed to eliminate the possibility of twisted suspension lines. Watching some 500 jumps, I did not see one instance of “twists.”

Over The Drop Zone

As our aircraft started its run-in, various buzzers went off and the jump master gave us a final check and moved us to the tailgate. Over the DZ he tapped the first jumper, who correctly exited by merely hopping off the back. Three seconds later, No. 2 was tapped and went, as did the rest of the stick at three-second intervals.

I should mention that a tight body position is essential to prevent the drogue from wrapping around an exposed arm. Stepping off the back of an Mi-8 in a slow stick is a very civilized way to jump static line. There is no prop blast or turbulence and the forward speed of the helicopter guarantees that everyone has their own private airspace. During our two days of jumping no one even came close to a collision.

White canopies, smaller than T-10s and seemingly about 28 feet in diameter, are favored by the Russians. They are provided with red rope-like lines (no toggles

or loops) for turning, but have very little forward drive. Pulling both steering lines increases the rate of descent and does give some drive, otherwise the only control mechanism is to pull the appropriate risers at about 50 feet above ground to assist with a slower landing, as is done with other non-steerable canopies.

Most of us managed consistently soft landings, but our PLFs caused consternation among the Russians who are trained to do stand-ups whenever possible and so thought that our falling-over indicated injury. The only notable casualties were one dislocated shoulder and one hairline fracture in a lower leg bone. (The fellow with the broken leg reported that the military hospital where he was taken was adequately equipped and staffed by very friendly doctors and nurses who were amazed to see an American.)

Everyone managed two jumps the first day, and for our third jump we went to another DZ. This one was a grassy steppe big enough to accommodate the entire 82nd Airborne Division in one pass, and our jumps — these from 3,000 feet — went off without incident.

That night we were awarded our wings in a ceremony which, although well-intentioned, probably ranks as the most uncomfortable I have ever endured. A combination of heat, voracious mosquitoes (called “Russian crocodiles” by our hosts) swarming through open windows, and speeches badly and endlessly translated one-at-a-time into four languages while we were held at the position of attention by someone who forgot to give us “at ease,” made parachuting by far the easiest part of earning one’s wings.

On the positive side, we were honored to have General Slyusar, a Hero Of The Soviet Union and career paratrooper, make a short speech about international camaraderie and the brotherhood of airborne soldiers before presenting us our

wings and certificates.

We finally got to the vodka, but food was delayed while long-winded and inane speakers from our group (especially the French spokesman) tormented the audience with gratuitous blather, also badly and endlessly interpreted. Some hard-core types, in compensation, were still drinking as we boarded the buses next morning, where more vodka was provided by our thoughtful Russian escorts in the spirit of good fellowship and in keeping with the “red” carpet treatment given us throughout. We were also treated to a demonstration of Russian-style machismo when paratroopers entertained us by breaking beer bottles over their own heads.

In addition to parachuting, the IATA tour included visits to several military facilities in the Ryazan area. We saw first-line strategic bombers at an air base, went to the airborne museum, paid our respects at a number of World War II monuments and memorials, and toured the airborne officers academy.

One of our stops at the airborne forces base included a demonstration of heavy-drop rigging techniques. We were shown the whole series of 9-ton, BMD-type AFV variants and learned how they are prepared for dropping.

Happy Landings

Unique to the Russians, and partly a spin-off from their space program, is the use of retro-rockets to help brake the descent of heavy pallets. A development from their land recovery of space capsules, the rockets are ignited by altitude sensors and give several seconds of burn before the vehicle lands.

Also, like their astronaut landing technique, armored vehicles are dropped with two crewmen inside. Astonishingly, the driver and co-driver of each BMD are strapped into a styrofoam-padded pod which is loaded into the vehicle just before dropping. If all the parachutes deploy and the retro-rockets fire, the drivers can immediately put their vehicle into action — if the parachutes and rockets don’t work ... any Sheridan or Hummer crews out there eager to volunteer for U.S. trials can contact their chain of command for details.

Another system to get vehicles and crews together has the vehicle commander jump with a radio remote-control, which he can then use to drive his vehicle across the drop zone to his position, in exactly the same way we drive toy cars. I would hate to be lying on the DZ getting out of my harness while remote control ATVs churn blindly all over the place, but the Russians don’t seem to mind the concept.

After our inspection of heavy-drop capabilities we were taken to the parachute training school, where some tour members tried out various training devices. The skills taught were common to all parachuting schools, such as aircraft drill, exit

Simulated attack on guerrilla base included deafening volume of missiles, cannon, machine-gun fire and incoming artillery simulators.



techniques, canopy control and landings, but some of the devices and techniques used were different from any I had seen before. For example, airborne candidates spend time spread-eagled inside a metal hoop, which is then spun vigorously (presumably to develop a sense of balance?).

Enormous clanking metal racks, resembling those used by dry cleaners to move clothing, carried jumpers 60 yards or so through the air before smashing them into the ground. Russian students managed to hit the ground running and clear the area before the next arrival. Americans, trying to do PLFs, could not get out of the way in time and were piled in a heap by the relentless clothes rack. I am sure these machines achieve the aim of producing competent paratroopers for the Russian airborne forces, but they do so in a manner foreign to Western experience.

Other than the parachuting itself, a highlight of the tour took place at a field-firing range in the forests outside of Ryazan. Our group was taken to a viewing stand overlooking a unit of seven BMDs dug into defensive positions.

The scenario was that the "enemy" was about to deliver a simultaneous frontal and flanking attack and that the BMDs were to hold their ground at all costs. Firing was initiated by flares and for the next 10 minutes we were deafened by a heavy volume of missiles, cannon and machine-gun fire, and incoming artillery

simulators.

The BMD gunners were particularly impressive with their cannons, engaging single targets as well as delivering volley fire onto other targets. They were not so good with their wire-guided missiles. Roughly equivalent to the U.S. TOW and closely resembling the Milan, the AT-4 "Spigot" has a difficult steering system that seemed to greatly impair accuracy, and missiles were flying all over the place (see sidebar). For sheer volume of firepower and expenditure of ammunition, the demonstration exceeded any I have seen before.

Russia, a land of mystery to most Americans, continues to open her doors and welcome visitors. Ill-prepared by U.S. media reports and uncertain of what I would find, I was pleasantly surprised by most aspects of my visit. Russian paratroopers are indeed much like their U.S. counterparts, and I suspect that the Russian people share many of our personal values and concerns. Whether or not you visit on a military-type tour, I strongly recommend going over and studying the face of our longtime "enemy."

Editor's note: Soldier Of Fortune is looking into sponsoring a tour to Russia in 1993. Interested readers send inquiries to: SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Attn: Russian Jump Tour

Robert MacKenzie, our Contributing Editor for Special Operations, has logged more than 250 military static-line and freefall jumps. Nineteen of these are combat jumps in southern Africa, including HALO and static-line combat insertions. ✕

I. F. STONE

Continued from page 45

of many liberal journalists who were devoted readers of I. F. Stone's *Weekly*. Speaking of Stone's criticism of the Vietnam War in his column eulogizing the departed guru, Wicker said, "the war in Vietnam, more than any other experience in my professional lifetime, validated independent, searching, skeptical journalism un beholden to official statements by official institutions." [Emphasis added.]

Stone's propaganda work on behalf of the USSR was not journalism, much less "independent, searching and skeptical." He swallowed communist disinformation without hesitation and regurgitated it for the benefit of willing dupes such as Wicker. The dissension he helped stir drove President Johnson from office. During his KGB years, Stone had particular appeal to the young. PBS still periodically airs a laudatory film about his career. *The Nation's* fund-raising arm hawks (for \$20) a two-hour tape of a "conversation" with Stone at age 80.

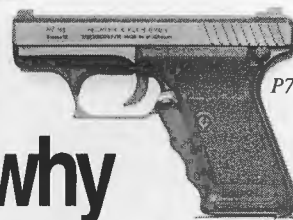
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immunity to their idol by suppressing the revelations about Stone's KGB ties. Romerstein's *Human Events* article was ignored by the major media. Even the conservative *Washington Times* limited its coverage to a brief gossip-column item and an editorial. Romerstein told us the only media call he received was from Ruth Sinai of the AP's Washington bureau. Because Romerstein's source had insisted on his identity being kept confidential, Sinai's editors would not let her file a story on Romerstein's revelations. No journalists are beating down the doors of the FBI seeking confirmation from the bureau's files of what the KGB officer had disclosed.

This article originally appeared in AIM Report, published by Accuracy In Media Inc., 1275 K Street N.W., Suite 1150, Washington, DC 20005; phone: 202-371-6710.

ESCOBAR

Continued from page 39

the world's second-largest producer of opium gum (Burma/Myanmar is biggest).

— The DEA estimates, based on limited sampling, that each hectare produces 10 kilos of gum, which yields 1 kilo of heroin. That kilo sells for some \$60,000 in Colombia, but is worth maybe \$180,000 in the United States. Each hectare produces three crops per year, so has an an-

nual value of a little more than a half-million dollars. This means Colombia is producing \$7.5 billion in drug value (about the same as the gross national product of pre-war Croatia) if the cartels take it all the way to the streets. However, it is as yet uncertain exactly who is converting the gum to heroin, so the pie may be cut differently.

— Through April of this year, 4,626 hectares of opium poppies had been eradicated, either through spraying with Glyphosate or through manual eradication. That's a potential loss for the narcos of \$2.3 billion.

— In 1991, more than 670 Colombian police were killed, mainly in anti-narcotics operations. The United States, 10 times as large, lost 113 officers.

Good news, bad news. What's the bottom line? Despite an outward calm, and with the continuing loss of agents in the field, the "drug war" in Colombia may be all but lost. Colombian and foreign experts close to the situation say privately what no one is willing to even hint at publicly: The narcos, with their immense wealth, have penetrated deep within Colombia's legitimate political and economic sectors. Nearly everyone has been co-opted to one degree or another.

It looks like sometimes the good guys lose.

David Rivera is a freelance journalist based in Colombia.

KABUL

Continued from page 35

was instantly flat, scattered across the ground between the shuttered shop front and a stagnant watercourse that ran alongside the avenue.

Major clashes were underway in the palace grounds where Dustam's troops arrived to support Jamiat. Heavier still was the fighting around the fortress of Bala Hissar, a strategic position dominating the main road out of Kabul south to Logar. Hezb was now battling to seize the old citadel from a mixed force of Jamiat, 53rd Division Uzbeks and regime National Guards whose HQ was in the fort.

The Hezbis appeared to be attacking the fortress from the maze of houses and back streets to its immediate north and east (see map) and were close to the main gate under the ancient battlements. Infantry attacks were being aggressively supported by tank fire from Martyrs' Hill, perhaps two clicks away.

In the fortress complex itself, beneath the battlements, defenders had several tanks hull-down in revetments. One T-62 had moved out in front of the gates to stem the assault. The two sides were trading intense tank, rocket and small-arms fire — the fortress was taking some heavy punishment.

Approaching via back streets, the two

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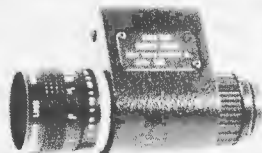


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of us arrived on foot at a wide intersection in full view of both Bala Hissar and Martyrs' Hill. Only then did we realize we had walked more or less into the middle of a battle.

I badly wanted to be off the street. As fate would have it, there was a small door a few meters away. I made a floundering lunge with one of the Afghans, and half-kicked, half-pushed the door open, almost falling into the darkness inside; to find myself in deep shit.

Deep Shit

Plumbing in Kabul has evolved beyond the medieval only in certain select buildings; this was not one of them. The small room was a depository for human excrement. Not just in one spot, but all over its surface, ankle deep. I was back out in less than five seconds, yelling like a madman and pushing past the Afghan who was struggling to get in.

The street was still being raked with machine-gun fire as I sprinted toward another door farther along the street. Three of us arrived at the same time, pushing and shoving, the air alive with the crackle of small-arms fire. We burst in.

On the cement floor of the passageway inside, a man was lying on his back bleeding like a stuck pig from a wound in his lower abdomen. Beside him a near-hysterical woman was wailing and shrieking; crouched beside her were three young children numb with shock and terror.

The woman shrieked over and over in Persian: "For God's sake, get a car! For God's sake, get a car!" Then the kids started howling and wailing.

A furious battle continued outside. Hezbi tank fire was slamming into the walls of the fort, shattering the ancient brickwork in cascades of rubble, and blanketing the battlements in clouds of smoke and dust.

But the Uzbeks and Jamiats were giving back as good as they got. The T-62 in front of the gates some 150 meters down the street was pounding the nearby houses at point-blank range. From the guardhouse, Uzbek militiamen yelling battle cries were sprinting out from cover to loose off from beside the tank with RPGs or simply blaze away with Kalashnikovs. They were drunk with battle.

From positions on the slope directly under the battlements, 23mm antiaircraft cannon were firing back at Martyrs' Hill in short, deafening bursts. But the violent muzzle flashes were attracting increasingly accurate return fire. 100mm tank rounds were impacting among the trenches and weapon pits beneath the walls, sending up geysers of earth and smoke.

Retaliatory air strikes from a pair of MiGs were going in against Hezbi positions on Martyrs' Hill, but they couldn't have been much consolation to the defenders of Bala Hissar.

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of Mahmud Khan was a long row of shops that looked out across a wide sports field. One of the end houses was ablaze, flames roaring through the building. Across the intersection ran a group of terrified women, their flowing chadors billowing behind them and children clutched to their breasts, they fled past Uzbek militiamen firing RPGs across the field.

But for all the din, destruction and death, the Hezbi infantry did not take Bala Hissar. They were, however, still well entrenched on Martyrs' Hill and positions under the hill.

It was only next day, on the Monday, that Jamiat and the Uzbeks began to get on top of the situation with the midday push across the Kabul River at the Bridge of Mahmud Khan.

We were pinned down at the clock tower for perhaps one hour. Had the Hezbi delivered the sort of tank fire they were expending on Bala Hissar, we'd have been in bad trouble. But that day, the tank fire was all ours.

The infantry began to advance, as groups of Uzbeks ventured out from behind the armor to find fresh cover behind the low embankment wall. From there they began putting accurate RPG fire into the positions across the river.

Then the first BMP roared over the bridge and halted a few hundred meters from a burning shop on the other side. It appeared to be taking no return fire.

At that point, a group of militia armed with RPGs and PKs moved onto the bridge and opened up on positions which the Hezbi were evacuating — fast. Leaving the militiamen on the bridge, I sprinted the last 50 meters or so to take cover behind the BMP. Then one of the T-62s moved over the bridge, followed by more APCs; then by a line of infantry.

The bridge was secured.

We were now at the edge of the sports stadium and in a position to outflank the Hezbi still in the Sarandoi base. Over Mikrorayon and Martyrs' Hill, a pair of Mi-24 gunships were in action, circling the area and loosing off rockets. It was a weird feeling, after 10 years of avoiding these fearsome insects, actually feeling glad to see them.

The brunt of the battle for Kabul ended in the hours that followed. That afternoon, the Uzbeks advanced from the stadium to the base of the hill, taking only light casualties. The Hezbi were beaten by superior and more mobile firepower and knew it. Rather than make a stand that night, they pulled out.

In the shattered marble ruins of Nadir Shah's mausoleum, I sat with a group of the 53rd munching a breakfast of stale bread and lukewarm tea, looking out across the eastern suburbs which Hezbi still held.

An hour later, Sibghatullah Mojadidi, the muj's new interim president, arrived overland from Pakistan. Also this same afternoon, against a background of artil-

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lery explosions and scattered fighting, power was formally transferred from the tired remnants of the communist regime to an interim government of the mujahideen. Politically it was headed by Mojadidi; the power behind the throne was its defense minister, Ahmad Shah Massoud.

But in the wings stood the real conquerors of Kabul — Dustam and his Uzbeks. As if to underline the point, on Tuesday night elements of the 53rd assaulted the Hezbis' last stronghold in central Kabul, the Interior Ministry. The complex was also the nerve center of the Sarandoi and the last bastion of hard-line communism in Afghanistan. Amid an orgy of looting and burning, *SOF* acquired a desk-top statuette of one V. I. Lenin, a fitting memento of the final death throes of a bankrupt system.

If that was the end of communism in Afghanistan, it certainly was not the end of the Afghan drama. Hekmatyar had effectively been pushed back out of central Kabul, but he still commanded a major following backed by artillery and armor to the south. His advance elements remained in the city's outer suburbs, a couple of clicks from Bala Hissar. After a decade of Pakistani and Western support, he remains a force impossible to ignore and is now preparing to capitalize on the inevitable Pushtun backlash to the rise of the minorities and the new power equation.

For his part, Massoud rules the Tajik northeast while Dustam dominates the Uzbek northwest. Central Afghanistan has fallen under the sway of a powerful Iran-backed Shi'ite faction. Kabul itself is a Beirut minus the Green Line.

In short, Afghanistan, like Yugoslavia, has moved out of the Marxist frying pan into a fire of ethnic animosities. In a region as volatile as West Asia, the flames may prove difficult to contain.

Mike Winchester is an experienced combat photojournalist who has spent 10 years covering the war in Afghanistan.

SULTANS

Continued from page 57

This distribution process, complicated by bureaucratic procedures, will take months to complete.

It is fortunate that the Oregon Military Museum in Clackamas has an expansion plan. By mid-January 1992, well over 200 Desert Storm artifacts had arrived at the already crowded 6,000-square-foot facility. Even some Iraqi weapons, including a Romanian PK general purpose machine gun, an AKM assault rifle, a Sterling submachine gun, and a German MP-5 submachine gun had trickled in. A Soviet AGS-17 30mm grenade launcher is also expected.

Near the museum's entrance several martial mannequins, one wearing American "chocolate-chip" desert camouflage and three wearing Iraqi combat uniforms, confront visitors in a narrow hallway. Thanks to careful planning, Aitken's collection is so comprehensive that the Iraqi mannequins are correct down to their zippered combat boots, designed to be easily removed for Moslem prayers.

CWO 2 Terrill M. Aitken is the busy curator and sole paid staff member of the Oregon Military Museum. Oregon-based freelance writer Christian Sturm was an Army artillery liaison NCO in Vietnam.

H&K

Continued from page 43

and chunky, and man-sized hands are required for complete control. It will no doubt conceal more easily than the large service pistols, such as the Beretta 92F, but it's no lightweight and those who carry day-in and day-out may find that objectionable. However, there's no free lunch, and I'll take the added mass with the added durability.

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COMBAT WEAPON - CRAFT

Continued from page 21

3. Rapid-fire drills from field positions: This should involve practice at quick position-assumption, reloading and shooting at a cadence appropriate to combat. Offhand, sighted snapshooting is another part of this phase of training.

4. Advanced field firing exercises: The skills learned through range drills should be tested and reinforced at an increasingly advanced level, with physical and mental stress added where appropriate. Fire and maneuver courses, moving target engagements, and night firing are just a few of the possibilities.

At least initially, all shot groups fired by the students should be examined by the instructor. Shooters who are having problems with trigger control — evidenced by too large a group —

should be required to fire from a magazine loaded with dummy and live rounds. Any tendency to anticipate the shot and jerk the trigger will be glaringly apparent when the hammer falls on an inert cartridge.

In addition to live-fire practice, dry firing is an excellent way to program a shooter's "skills memory" and requires neither a range nor ammunition. It is the best therapy for a flinch. Dry firing regularly, in increments of no more than 30 minutes, can do wonders for a rifleman's proficiency at trigger control, position assumption and gun handling.

Train like you fight: Actual gear to be used in the field should be worn during all drills and exercises (including dry firing), except during the initial phase of live-fire instruction. Load-bearing equipment, flak jackets and helmets may require changes in shooting positions or gear location, and it is better to find these things out in practice. Also, firing strings must never require shooters to engage in actions that are tactically unsound. People will revert under stress to the actions they learn in training.

Finally, riflemen need to be exposed to the widest possible range of shooting problems. Conduct shooting exercises in all kinds of terrain; the ground isn't always flat and level like the firing line on a target range. Remember,

though, most firefighters occur at fairly close range, so emphasize getting very quick at 100 meters and under, with night-firing and moving-target practice in addition to daytime, stationary-target engagements.

All of the above may seem to be pure common sense — and it is. However, in military marksmanship training, common sense is often an uncommon virtue. The unit or individual that trains in a realistic manner can exploit this situation. As a result of relevant training, the human factor will provide an edge that results in a clear advantage in combat.

Andy Stanford is director of the Martial Marksmanship Institute, a private-sector organization that provides small-arms training and consulting for the U.S. military. He also is editor of Combat Marksmanship, the journal of the Military Marksmanship Education Foundation.

BUFFALO

Continued from page 49

seen him. One hop and he was up in that tree and he stayed there until I helped him out of it. We went back through the buffalo shit and the knocked-down bushes

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and the only things left standing were our trees. Hell, I didn't know there were any trees there until I took off running, looking for the first thing I could climb that would get me 6 feet in the air.

Donovan shrugged off their brush with death. "I would do it again. The bottom line is it was exciting, and those few seconds were just as exciting as anything I've done. It was as exciting as any parachute drop. Of course you have to come right down out of the tree and try again. Then, being there the third time when it finally worked was the reward. I have got a lot of respect for the guys who do this all time!"

"I take this shit real serious," Donovan added.

Galen Geer is SOF's Outdoor Affairs Editor.

PEROT

Continued from page 53

reports saying that Gregson had this video tape. And this went all the way to Ronald Reagan, who turned it over to Bush.

"So, there was Smith, saying that he wanted at his disposal a Boeing 707 with a crew and \$4.2 million available at 24 hours' notice, to be at Changi Airport in Singapore."

"Smith was able to convince the powers-that-be that there was a film. The government wasn't willing to pay for anything, so Bush went to his friend Perot to ask for money. Of course, to Perot, \$4.2 million is no problem. So Perot agreed to go along with this and bankrolled Smith and I don't know who else.

"It turned out Gregson was in jail in Singapore for some swindle that he was trying to do, unrelated to the POW business, and his bail was \$45,000, which Perot put up and got him out of jail. Gregson, Smith and everybody else were saying he was in jail because of a conspiracy to cover up his POW information.

"All this time, Gregson was under surveillance by just about every police agency in the world, because he was involved in drug trafficking, arms smuggling ... he was a con man with a rap sheet as long as all of our arms. The Singapore special branch was watching him like a hawk. They couldn't figure out why all of a sudden all these high-power folks came out of the woodwork and bailed this guy out.

"After he got out, I understand that Gregson and Mark Smith headed to Cyprus. Gregson reportedly was under DEA surveillance, because the people Gregson was going to talk to were all hashish dealers operating out of Beirut.

Reeled Along Like A Fish

"Somebody high up in the government, probably Bush, had the DEA providing assistance to Gregson and there was an elaborate plan to go into Beirut, because for some reason the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] supposedly had the



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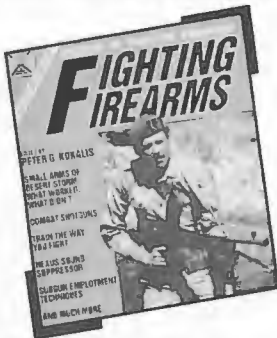
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videotape.

"According to Gregson, the PLO were the people that had it originally, and since the U.S. government wouldn't buy it, they took it back. Believe me, the story had holes. It didn't make a whole lot of sense and you wondered why the intelligence community would be reeled along like a fish on this.

"Anyway, they all went to Cyprus and they came back without the tape. I don't know if they went to Beirut or not. Smith says they did - I have my doubts. Anyway, all of this is being bankrolled by Perot as far as I know.

"I know Perot was behind getting Gregson out of jail in Singapore. I know that Perot was asked by Bush to provide the money to purchase this tape. Given the state of everyone's finances at that time, there's no way that Smith and Gregson could be flying all over the world without someone picking up the tab, and it certainly wasn't the U.S. government. So my deduction is that it was Perot.

"After they went to Cyprus, Gregson was refused entry back into Thailand and I haven't the foggiest idea where he is now. But in Smith's statement and testimony before a House committee on POWs back in 1986, he wanted to have this guy named John Obassy testify and present a videotape of Americans alive in captivity in Vietnam. Well, Obassy was Gregson.

"Gregson came from wherever he was, got as far as Fayetteville, North Carolina, conferred there with Smith and Smith's lawyer and decided not to testify. In his immigration documents Gregson listed as sponsor then-Congressman Billy Hendon, another POW/MIA activist. Smith was subpoenaed to testify, but refused to do so since he felt that neither the administration nor the committee were taking the matter seriously, but were only interested in discrediting him and Gregson.

[About this time, Billy Hendon demanded that the director of DIA give him \$4.2 million for the tape, sight unseen, or sign a statement that he refused to do so. The DIA tried over and over to get access to the film, which was supposedly in the safe of Mark Smith's attorney in Fayetteville, North Carolina.]

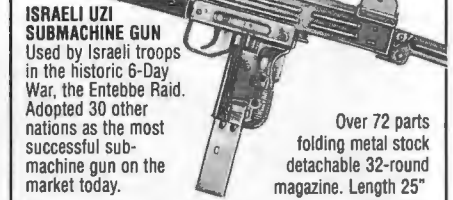
"In short, I believe that Obassy/Gregson and Smith and this whole escapade were financed by Perot - that is my deduction. I don't have any evidence. I don't have any papers that prove this. I know that Perot placed the \$4.2 million to be used to purchase the tape in escrow in a bank in Singapore, and the money was returned to Perot.

"Later, Smith claimed he and Gregson were so upset with the U.S. government's handling of the affair that they burned the tape. When I asked Smith why he didn't prevent Gregson from doing this, after all the efforts Smith had made to collect evidence of live U.S. POWs, he had no answer. It is a real question in my mind

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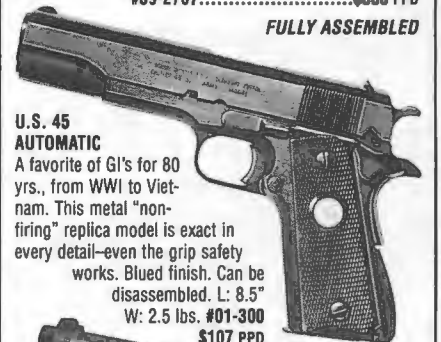


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whether the tape ever existed at all."

Given the vast quantity of scams and deceptions that have clouded this matter, external statements, especially from the likes of Gregson, on the date on which the tape was made are less than overwhelmingly convincing.

\$3 Million-Dollar Man

A videotape made in 1971, for instance, showing NVA guards and prisoners, might be of some value in establishing that recognizable individuals shown in the tape were alive in captivity then, but is not evidence of their status now. If this tape in fact existed, there might or might not

HE BELIEVES THAT, IF THERE ARE ANY STILL-LIVING POWs, NEGOTIATION, INCLUDING MAKING CONCESSIONS AND PAYING RANSOM, IS HOW TO DO IT.

be convincing internal evidence suggesting a date or time frame in which it could have been made.

Also, in 1986 Bush asked Perot to do a follow-on study to the Tighe Commission report. The Tighe Commission inquired into and made a report on the efforts of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to collect and evaluate information and to determine, if possible, the facts concerning the 2,000-odd U.S. MIAs in Southeast Asia.

Based on what the SOF staff has learned, it appears that word never got down to the people in CIA, DIA and DEA that had the answers Perot needed, informing them that he was a member of the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, had a "need to know" and thus was cleared for access to the full details.

According to one of SOF's sources in the course of this study, while being briefed by DIA, Perot said that he was not there to be lectured, got up and walked out. Perot was invited to Hanoi by the Vietnamese and after appropriate palavers with the administration and the Vietnamese, Perot made the trip. He was again in the somewhat equivocal status of a private citizen with an informal blessing of "someone in the White House" and/or "someone in the Pentagon."

He actually made the trip in April 1987, had long discussions with various Vietnamese officials, got a rather clear perception of their viewpoint and brought home no live prisoners.

In his Senate testimony, Perot stated

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all these efforts cost him more than \$3 million. It is rather bitter irony that the only person who got out of confinement as a result of all this was Robin Gregson.

Perot's Conclusions

Reuters' transcript of Perot's testimony is 45 pages, single-spaced. Even though a lot of the discussion goes around and around, it can't even be summarized here. Yet, there are two points on which Perot obviously feels very strongly:

(1) He believes that, if there are any still-living POWs, negotiation, including making concessions and paying ransom, is how to do it and Laos is the place to start. Laos and Vietnam are very hard-up and need our help. Perot feels the presidential emissary, General Vessey, has too narrow a mandate and does not or is not permitted to spend enough time to do the job. This is Perot's explanation for the non-success of all negotiations to date.

However, it should be pointed out that if even one live POW came out and re-counted for the world to hear the hardships and brutalities of 20 or more years of imprisonment, this would be a disastrous setback to the world's perception of the Lao or Vietnamese regimes. The rulers of these places are both Orientals and politicians; this would be a loss of face not to be contemplated, especially since they have repeatedly asserted they are holding no live POWs.

(2) Perot believes the appropriate way to get at the truth of the government's handling of the issue would be to bring all individuals involved in the decision making process together, then give them immunity and compel them to talk.

As we see it, on the other hand, after what happened to Admiral Poindexter and Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, congressional promises of immunity are no longer credible, so this wouldn't work.

This is not to say that Perot doesn't come out looking better than most. A lot of people have made a business out of the POW/MIA tragedy, setting up "non-profit" organizations, raising money, publishing newsletters, peddling conspiracy theories, making emotional appearances on talk shows and before congressional committees, and all the while living quite well off the issue.

Furthermore, in 1980 Perot funded and conducted a raid to extract two of his employees being held in Iran. While this is not directly related to the matter of POWs in Southeast Asia, it shows a loyalty toward his own employees that one could wish were more widely practiced.

Perot seems to have "hewed to the line" more than most on the real priority, which has to be bringing home any surviving American POWs in Southeast Asia.

Colonel Alex McColl is SOF's Director of Special Projects.



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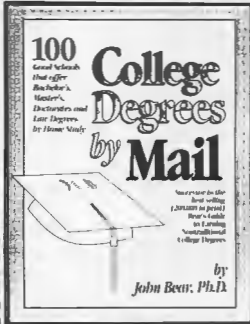
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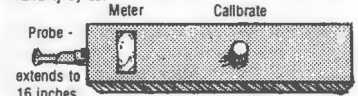
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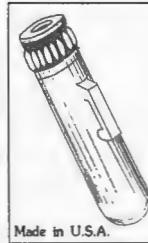
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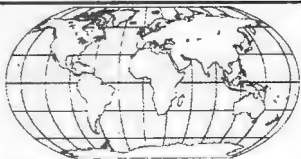
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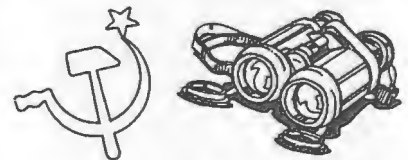
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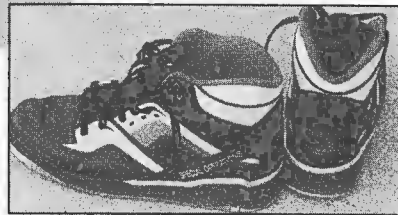
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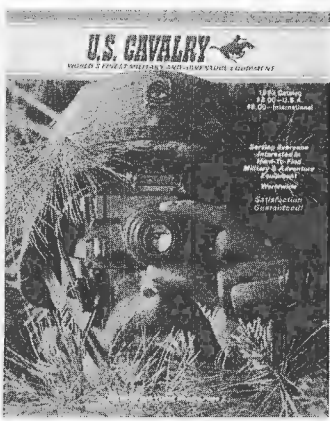
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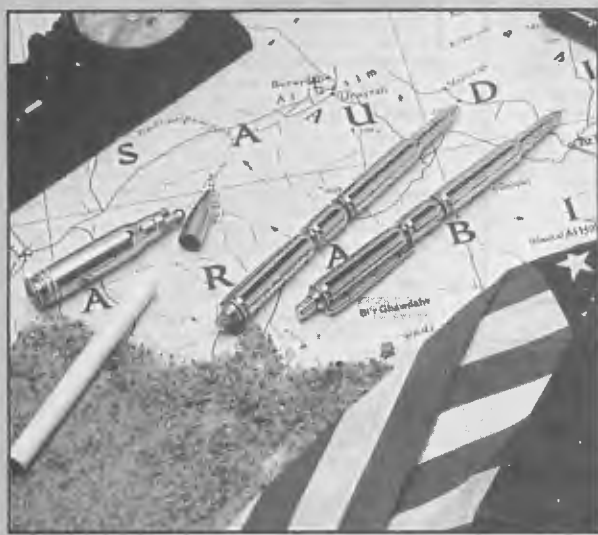
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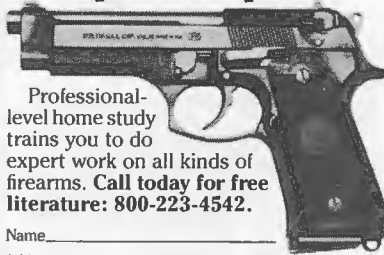
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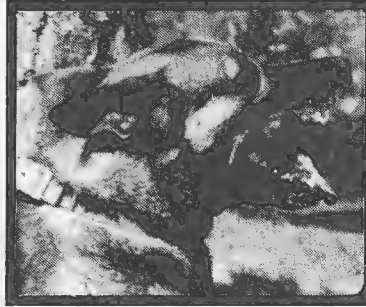
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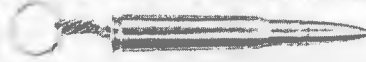
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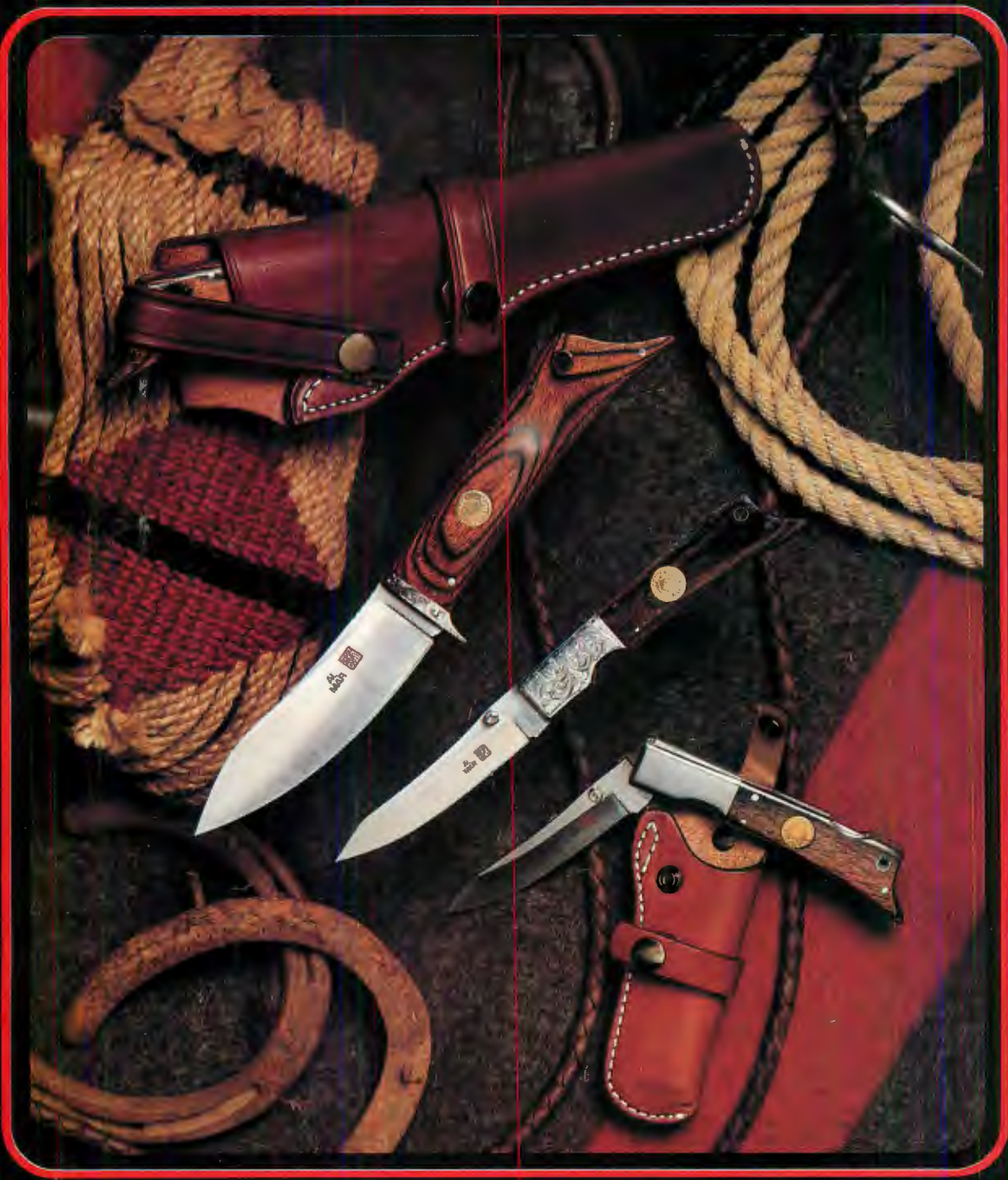
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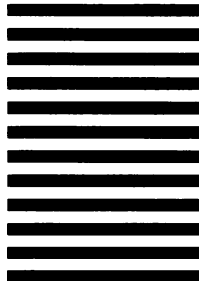
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