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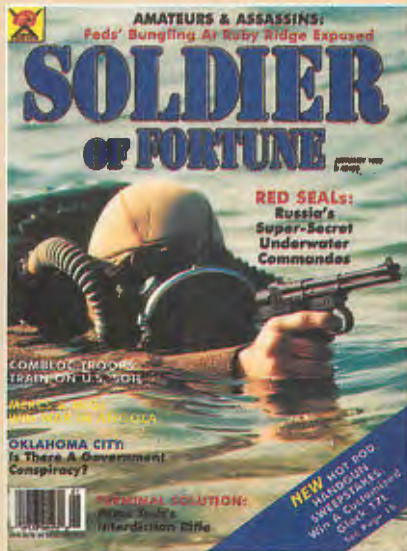
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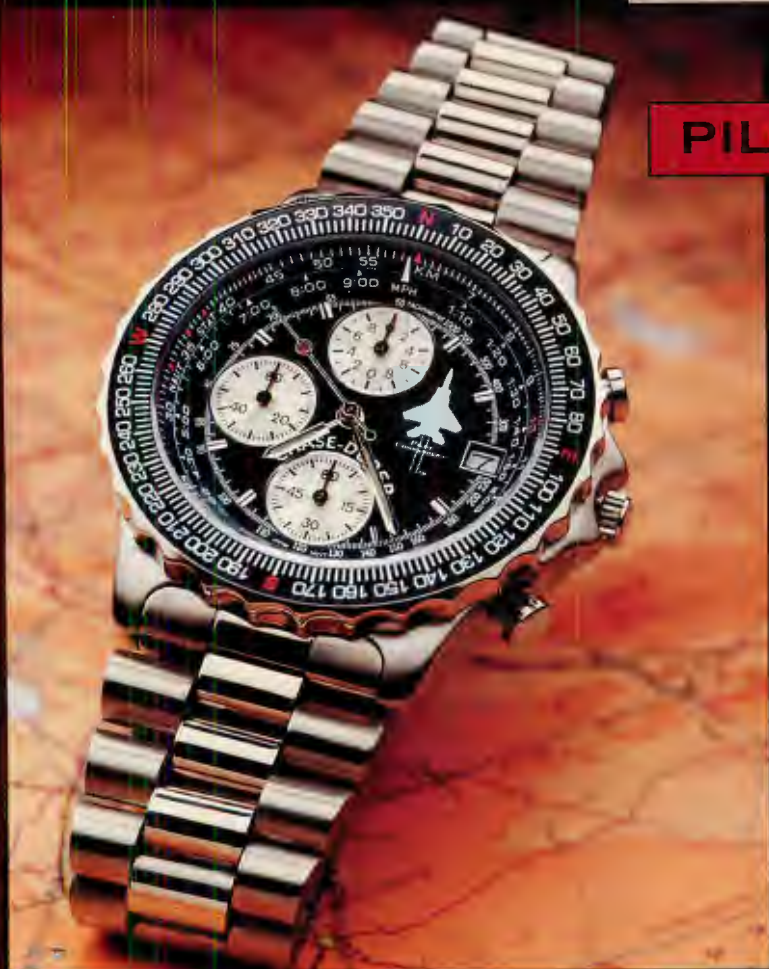


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COMMAND GUIDANCE

Political Psyops

by Robert K. Brown

"It's no use to vote, Clinton's got it in the bag" reads the subliminal message the Clinton campaign sends to voters who would vote against him ... *if* they voted. And it's good strategy, because a vote not cast is a vote for Clinton. Selling despair is more effective than selling ideas, especially if you don't have any marketable ideas except those you co-opted from the Republicans.

That's classic Sun Tzu, people: Don't fall for it!

As noted by earlier philosophers and reiterated by General Eisenhower, "all that is necessary

for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing."

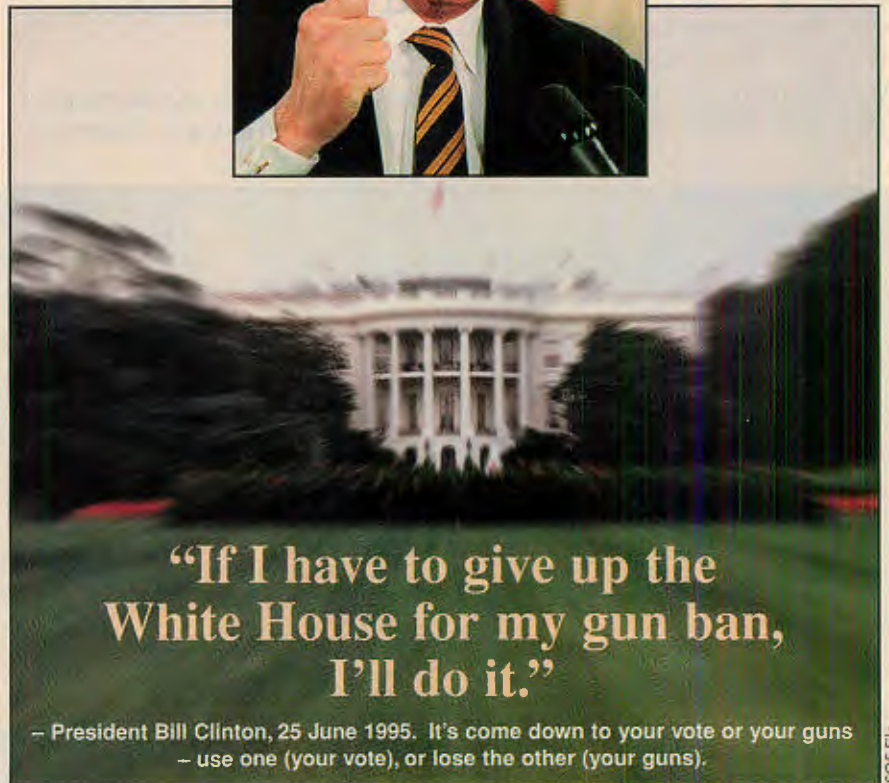
This will be a close election, and the most important election of our generation. The fate of private gun ownership in America, and quite possibly the fate of the Republic itself, hangs in the balance.

There will be no excuses good enough to tell your children if you do not vote and Clinton is re-elected.

No one can vote for you. You must do it for yourself, and you must do it for your country.

Vote
 November 5th. ✖

AP Photo/Charles Tasnadi



SOF File

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FEATURES

AMERICA'S NEW EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Mark H. Milstein

Paratroopers formerly known as the 325th Airborne Battalion Combat Team are in the spotlight these days. Redesignated the 1/508th, they've globetrotted on two continents and recently *might* have been on-call to help kidnap a Balkan VIP. **32**

DRAGUNOV — THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND

Valery N. Shilin

The late Evgenie Fedorovich Dragunov was a modest, hard-working man who produced some real killers. Here's an exclusive

profile of him and the *Snaiperskaya Vintovka Dragunova Skladnaya*: Russia's 7.62mmx54R, SVDS folding-stock sniper rifle. **36**

VIVA LA COMPAGNIE

Richard Lucas

East Europeans usually join for the money; Japanese, for the prestige; Americans and Australians, for adventure; and Frenchmen — well, they usually are running from a "family problem." *SOF* visits the legendary French Foreign Legion. **40**

ALL ABOARD THE FEDERAL EXPRESS

James L. Pate

Set up by the ATF and slammed by a vindictive judge in Tacoma, a

widely respected gunsmith in Washington is railroaded into prison. Al Woodbridge's nightmarish case sounds like a Kafka novel — and should keep law-abiding gun owners sleepless in (and near) Seattle. **44**

UNDERCOVER COMPACT

Peter G. Kokalis

The new SIG-Sauer P239 is a highly dependable, reasonably priced 9mm semiauto. It's completely at home on the range — but with its 8-round magazine is a Clinton-inspired concealed-carry "companion." **50**

ANGUISH IN ANGOLA

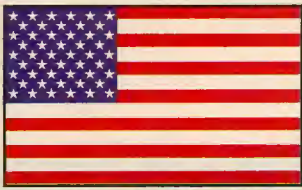
Al J. Venter

Rich in oil and diamonds but ravaged by civil war, Angola has



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Mark H. Milstein



Anguish In Angola — page 56

Al J. Venter

seen a "U.N." of foreign troops, spooks and mercs in its long-running conflict. Despite a peace treaty, UNITA leader Savimbi and his rebels wait for the country to implode. 56

MINED CAMP

Rob Krott

Refugee Relief International's medical-aid volunteers are goers and doers — not wishful thinkers or bleeding hearts. Operating on a shoestring budget, an RRI team attends to some of Cambodia's needy while avoiding the murderous Khmer Rouge. *SOF* was there. 59

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Shotguns Clinton Will Never Let You Own

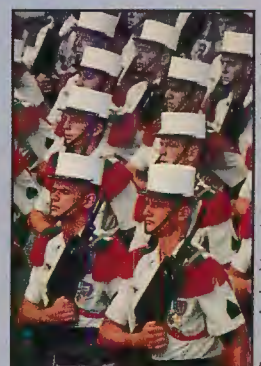
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COVER

For some, the legion is a shot at adventure; for others, a chance at a new life. These French Foreign Legion paras (of the *2eme Regiment Entrange de la Parachutist*) march on Bastille Day in Paris with fixed bayonets on 5.56mm FAMAS G2 assault rifles. *SOF*'s report begins on page 40.



Remy de la Mauviniere/AP Wide World

BULLETIN BOARD

HAVE YOU VOTED YET?

HELP A HEROINE

If any reader has information relating to a Vietnamese girl being beaten after attempting to aid an American POW who was being marched with other captured pilots along Trinh Hoai Duc Street (Hanoi), to Hang Day Stadium sometime during 1966-8, please contact immediately Tom Reisinger at *SOF*; phone: 303-449-3750; fax: 303-444-5617; E-mail: editor@sofmag.com.

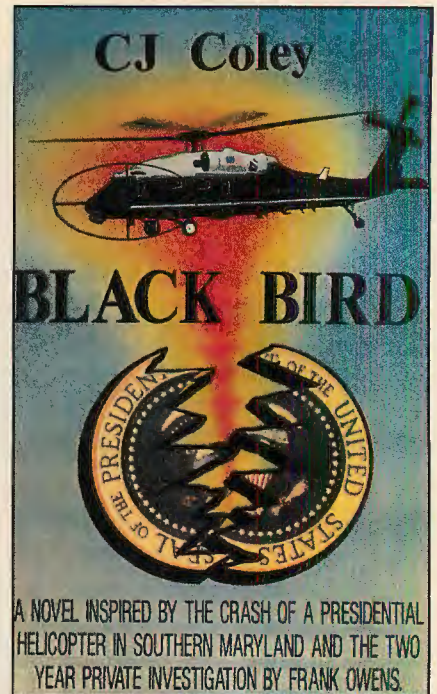
ATF/DOJ COVERUP IN ARIZONA VIPER CASE?

When it was revealed in federal district court that the feds, from Bill Clinton on down, had lied when they claimed Arizona's infamous Viper Team had plotted to blow up numerous federal buildings in downtown Phoenix, the national news media quickly scurried out of town. Perhaps with good reason (see "Desert Swarm," Sept. '96).

With a 3 December 1996 trial date set for the Vipers, there is increasing evidence of a high-level conspiracy within the Justice Department, Bureau

of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and, quite possibly, the White House to cover up very serious federal firearms violations discovered at Shooter's World, Arizona's largest retail gun store, committed in order to use the store as a front for ATF's investigation of various suspected "militia" groups.

After a lengthy and exhaustive investigation by ATF compliance inspectors, it was revealed that Shooter's World had records of discrepancies involving more than 5,000 firearms, hundreds of guns unaccounted for, and ... there was evidence of numerous sales to juveniles and other unauthorized persons. Although Shooter's World general manager Greg Goodrich considered the findings of the ATF investigation "a minor clerical problem," D. J. McCombs, ATF's area supervisor for compliance operations, backed his inspectors in their findings that Shooter's World "substantially and irreversibly violated firearms laws and regulations," recommended that the store's federal firearms license be revoked. However, this recommendation was overruled by ATF brass in March when John H. Brooks, ATF assistant district director in Dallas, informed Shooter's World that their FFL was safe.



Art imitates life — and death: If you were intrigued by last month's story on the mysterious crash of a presidential helicopter in May 1993 (see "Star Wars Fratricide," Nov. '96), you'll be interested to know the government coverup has inspired a novel: *Black Bird*, by C.J. Coley, an engineer for a defense contractor. The 374-page *Black Bird* is available @ \$16.95 from Gulf Coast Freedom Publishing, Dept. SOF, 936 E. Mulberry St., Angleton, TX 77515. Credit card orders may be phoned to 409-849-7201.



Books For Sailors, too: As mostly a motley crew of former ground-pounders and grunts, we at *SOF* were pleased to receive a letter from Cmdr. R. T. Holdcroft, CO of the *USS Radford*, thanking us for the books they received (which were, of course, from you readers out there) in our Books For The Troops project. The project has been successfully concluded. The *Radford* is a *Spruance*-class destroyer homeported in Norfolk, currently deployed in the Med as a member of the *USS Washington* battle group. The *Radford* has some 350 men and women aboard. Good reading and smooth sailing, swabbies, look for you in home port!

If there appears to be something wrong with this picture, there is: Both of the ATF's undercover informants in the Viper case worked at Shooter's World. Assistant manager Drew Nolan and store security director Scott J. "Doc" Wells were both paid ATF informants. Further, Wells was also a sworn officer with the State Fish and Game Department.

Sources close to the U.S. Attorney's office have told *SOF* that some of the lawyers in that office feel they have been deceived, and are becoming increasingly worried as this case develops. In addition to full trial coverage, *SOF* will be providing an insider's look into not only the Viper Team, but also the complete ATF investigation. — R.L.S.

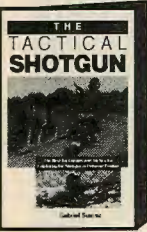
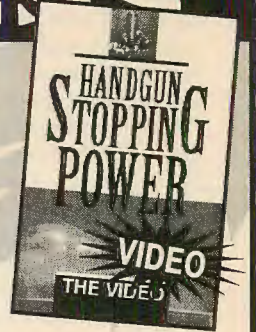
THE LETTER OF THE LAW

The wires weaving that fishy new

HANDGUN STOPPING POWER: THE VIDEO

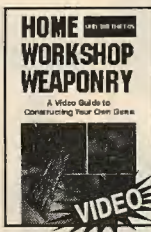
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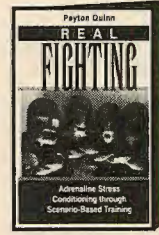
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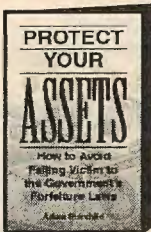
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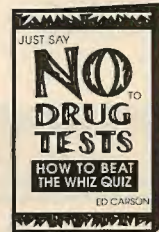
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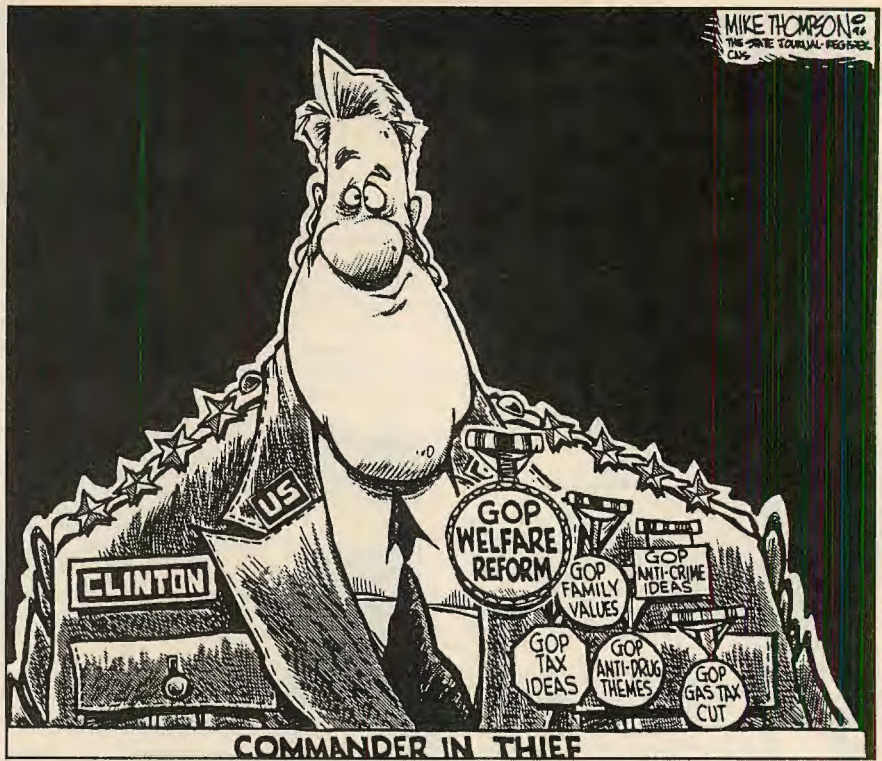
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phenomenon called the Internet have been smoking recently over the implications of new decrees that tobacco is addictive and the new presidential fiat that it should be a controlled substance. Now, here is the People's Republic of Boulder, you already can pay a \$1,000 fine for lighting up in a public place — even on stage when playing the part of a smoker. That's a little extreme, but a fairly predictable reaction from generations mobilized by having smoke blown in their faces. The reaction of most tobacco users is either "Wal, [patoo] I'll jes' step outside," or "[cough] It's yer (pick one: house, office, store, vehicle) so we don't mind going along with yer house rules."

But what has tobacco (pick one:) users/addicts smoking under as well as above the collar is the interface behind the new official premise that tobacco is an addictive and controlled substance and the form one must sign under existing laws/regulations to buy a firearm. The form asks (among other impertinent questions), "Are you now an unlawful user of, or addicted to, marijuana, or any depressant, stimulant, or narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance? (emphasis ours). The *Wall Street Journal* asked an ATF spokesman in Washington for a reaction, who replied, "It would be



COMMANDER IN THIEF

speculative to comment..." Now that's a reassuring answer.

If tobacco is officially ruled to be addictive and made a controlled substance, this writer — who is not a lawyer — can't see any way around the fact that a smoker (unless maybe

he could prove he was only a recreational smoker), would have to answer "yes" on the Form 4473, which would disqualify him from purchasing a firearm. Lying on the form by saying "no" to the question is, of course, a felony. But one Internet wag

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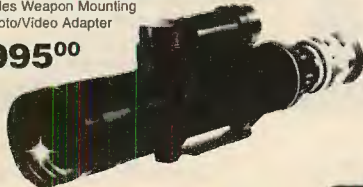
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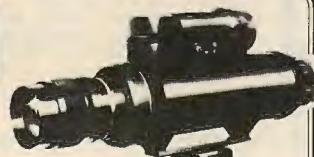
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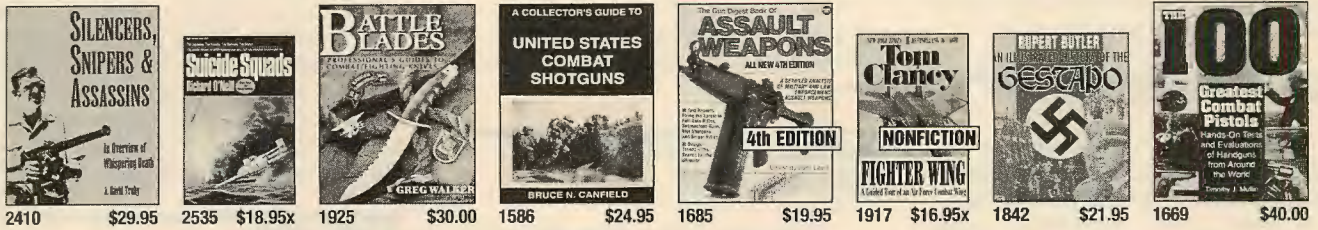


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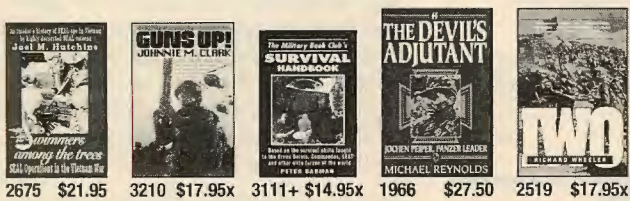
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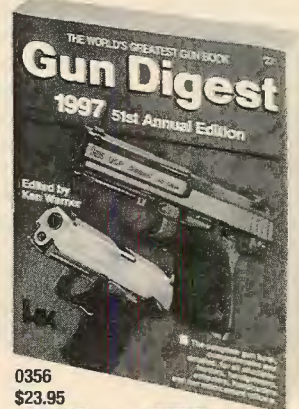
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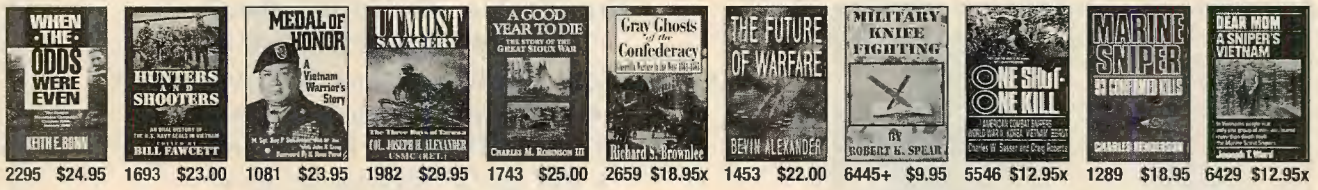


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proposed that those filling out the form employ the Presidential dodge: Simply reply "But, hey, I never inhaled..."

WHERE TO SEE BIG BUSTS

Research by David Burnham, co-director of the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, shows that when it comes to ATF criminal referrals the smaller the population density the bigger the number of criminal referrals. Gathering records from 90 U.S. district attorneys, the Justice Department, ATF and the Office of Personnel Management, Burnham discovered that the Montana federal district was number one in criminal cases referred from the ATF to federal prosecutors in 1995, with 127 cases for a population of 870,000. Also in the running were western North Carolina with 200 referrals with a population of 2.2 million, and southern Florida with 113 cases among a population of 1.4 million. By contrast, the Los Angeles area had 113 cases from a population of nearly 16 million; the federal district that includes Manhattan had 172 cases and a population of 3 million. Chicago had 98 cases from among its 8 million residents, but it's common knowledge how law-abiding folks in the Chicago area

are. Asked Burnham, "Is the central law-enforcement problem in this country crime in districts that are somewhat more rural, or is it the gun problem in the cities?"

CORRECTION AND CLARIFICATION

In the story "Black Suits, Badges and Bradleys" (Aug. '96) we reported the FBI's preference for the Leupold 3.5X10X50mm scope on its SWAT-team sniper rifles. As some sharp-eyed readers have brought to our attention, the scope pictured on page 60 appears to have a 40mm objective lens: It appears to be a custom job, not standard stuff for the Hostage Rescue Team. It was also brought to our attention that the HRT uses both Leupold and Unertl scopes, and team shooters also have .300 Winchester magnums in the armory. Thanks for keeping us honest, guys.

—JLP

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Newsday reports that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

recently gave one of its top awards — the Carey Award (named after the late Robert W. Carey, pioneer of total quality management within the V.A.) — in recognition of superior customer service, and for achieving a 20-fold increase in productivity... to the Calverton National Cemetery.

JUMP LAOS

Until recently, off-limits to Westerners, the Laotian government is permitting a jump this December, during its national sports celebration. Sponsored by Friendship Airborne Tours (Dept. SOF, 82 Woodfield Ct., Racine, WI 53402; phone: 414-639-0780; fax: 414-639-7686), the jump tour runs from 13-23 December. Win modern Laotian Army jump wings, plus wings from the Royal Thai army and marines as options, tour the historic Plain of Jars and various cultural attractions, R&R in Thailand... and be home for Christmas. Time is short on this one: Tell Santa you want to go then give 'em a call.

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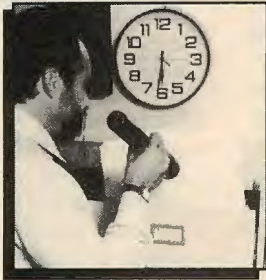
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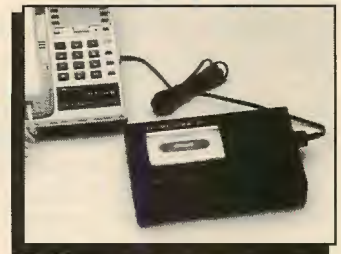
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SLICK WILLIE WATCH

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

The axiomatic observation that "birds of a feather flock together" is not news. Neither is the childhood truism that you are known by the company you keep. But were these cliches not already a part of the language, never have we had an administration in Washington that is so perfectly cast to inspire them.

Never have we had an administration so completely wracked with scandal nor so shot through with scandalous personalities, from the bottom (the ones who have fallen away through scandalous missteps, criminal prosecutions, exposed conflicts of interest and so on) to the top (those who have been protected by the falling away or sacrificial demise of others). And swirling around the tempest of demonstrable scandal and corruption is an unprecedented aroma of scandals so sweeping and so serious they would be beyond rational consideration were it not for the credence lent by the tip of the iceberg already visible.

The latest loud and smelly flap,

which with serendipitous timing broke in the middle of the Democratic love fest in Chicago, concerns White House strategist Dick Morris — the dude largely responsible for plotting the re-election course of the current administration, credited with Clinton's political rebirth ... and even co-author of Clinton's convention speech stressing [heh, heh] "values" — who had recently been described by *USA Today* as "openly devoted to his non-sense wife." We guess that in this administration being openly devoted to your wife means you only buy the best, as Morris and the administration parted company in a flash when his \$200-an-hour hooker went to the press with the story of Morris letting her listen in on private conversations with the Prez (as far as we know, there is no truth to the rumor that she thought *his* voice sounded familiar on the phone).

Although this story broke while the Clintonistas were busily trying to project their warm, fuzzy image of "values" [sic] to the American electorate, it gets even better. As we go to press, now that he's a famous reprobate, Morris has struck an upgraded \$2.5

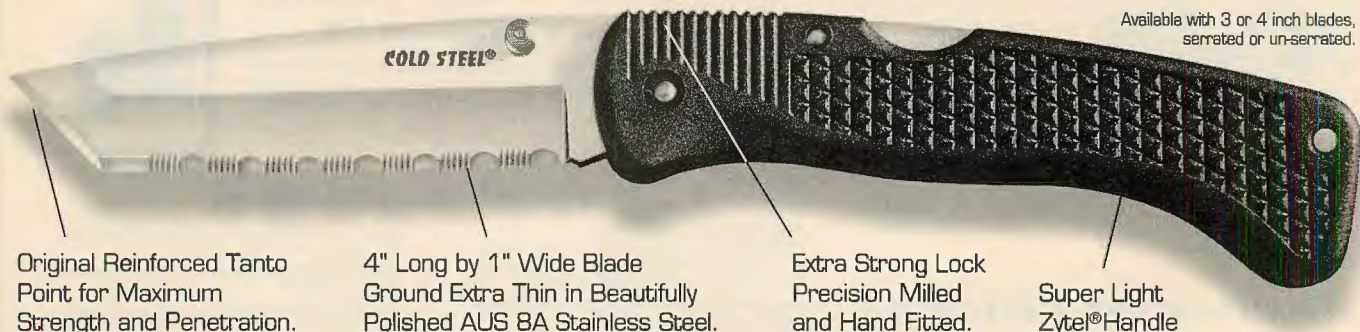
million book deal with Random House for his book, the unauthorized contract for which had originally been signed months ago without knowledge of the White House, telling the inside story of how Morris got the Prez re-elected. Honor amongst thieves? Never was, never will be.

SPEAKING OF HONOR

Susan McDougal, former Whitewater investment partner of Bill and Hillary Clinton, has been sentenced to two years for bilking federally insured financial institutions. She subsequently has been found in contempt of court for refusing to testify before a grand jury about the Clintons' role in the case; she could receive an additional 18 months. Her former husband, James McDougal, was also found guilty, and, looking at considerable hard time himself, he has been hinting he might cooperate with investigators chasing after the Clintons, in exchange for a reduced sentence. His sentencing has been delayed until after the elections. Former Governor Jim Guy Tucker has also been convicted in the case.

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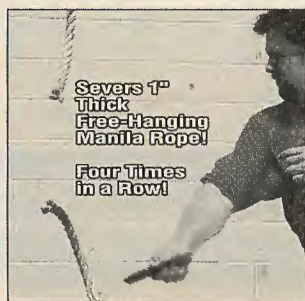
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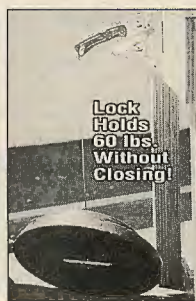
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In an often brutal yet professionally direct approach, Jerry Peterson's new video series shows you how to destroy these attackers, while taking you to the ultimate level of fighting.

The culmination of a 2-year transformation from actual SCARS military archive techniques, his **Instructor Qualification Series** offers you the opportunity to learn what until now was taught to military Special Operations forces (SEALS, Rangers, Green Berets, etc.).

It's been called "the most brutally effective fighting system ever seen."

Before explaining more about this system, here's how Jerry Peterson, the creator of this system, became the first — and only — civilian ever to standardize, license and teach a hand-to-weapon fighting system to the United States military.

In 1989, Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC), the group which controls all SEAL activity, was looking for ways to standardize hand-to-weapon combat techniques. After an exhaustive review, they had rejected every single martial art form in the world.

They found each completely unworkable in combat-oriented fighting situations where SEALS were in full gear, carrying 100# packs, and often knee-deep in water.

Amazing Scientific System

Then a SEAL NSWC officer (with black belts in 3 martial arts) saw Jerry Peterson's scientific fighting system. What he stumbled on wasn't martial arts. In fact it was unlike anything he'd ever seen before.

The SEAL officer watched in disbelief as a class of inexperienced students threw real punches for virtually 1 full hour, never repeating the same sequences. In one session he witnessed more fighting than most martial arts students see in a year.

Later, two top brass at NSWC saw the officer demonstrating moves he'd learned. But intrigue turned to doubt when they learned the originator was an ex-Army enlisted man.

Still they met with Jerry, as much out of admiration for his Vietnam record as anything (he spent 15 months as lead point for Charlie Company, the 173rd Airborne — one of the most decorated units of the war). As Vietnam vets, the SEAL officers figured Jerry at least would understand their needs.

Easily Defeats Decorated SEAL

But they were totally unprepared for what happened. To prove his system, Jerry Peterson and a highly-decorated SEAL Officer (and at 240, 100 pounds heavier than Jerry) went toe-to-toe — but at half speed. To the Officer's amazement he was instantly disabled and dropped to his knees.

Only then did he realize — had he not been talked out of going full speed by others who knew the awesome power of Jerry Peterson's system, his false confidence in his martial arts training and in his sheer size advantage would have left him with an arm broken as easily as a match stick!

In 5 short minutes these SEAL officers — men who had seen everything in the way of brutal fight-

ing, and who had virtually unlimited budgets to develop the SEALS into the world's best — were blown away by Jerry Peterson's *Autokinematic™* fighting system.

Officially Required SEAL Training

Following a pilot program at Command headquarters all SEALS began receiving this training. Still, hardheaded, cocky, non-believing SEALS, many with extensive martial arts backgrounds, constantly tested Jerry:

□ SEALS are the most proficient combat swimmers in the world. Yet 40-year-old Jerry (who wasn't a particularly good swimmer) "drowned" SEAL after SEAL in training. His scientific principles apply on any terrain.

□ SEALS are trained to run 20 miles in soft sand. But Jerry (who really wasn't in great shape) had them gasping just 5 minutes into his first workouts while he participated effortlessly. He used breathing techniques others had never seen (techniques he can teach you in minutes).

□ In Europe Jerry challenged a deployed SEAL platoon to pin him against a wall. All thought it a joke. Yet he escaped — from the grasp of 14 of the most proficient fighting men in the world (then showed it was no trick — simply physics, and easily learned).

Today SEALS use all these scientific techniques and many more. Since 1989, Navy SEALS go through a minimum of 40 and up to 600 rigorous hours of Jerry Peterson's training prior to deployment (often in intense, 24-hour a day sessions).

Top Government Officials Amazed

His system was demonstrated to Navy Admirals, a 4-Star General, and Congressional leaders — as well as the Secretary of the Navy and the U.S. Secretary of Defense!

Jerry was even called in prior to Desert Storm to brief the military on using *Neural Offensive Linguistics™* (a cornerstone of his system, it defines a mind set which eliminates all defensive thinking, allowing anyone, even you, to make instantaneously correct decisions in the midst of any hostile environment).

Devastating Power Gives You An Unfair Advantage

In his *HCS* video course Jerry Peterson introduced you to his revolutionary system.

Now, with the publication of *Jerry Peterson's SCAR-HCS Hand-To-Weapon* fighting system, Jerry leads you into the never-before-seen world of brutal, no-holds-barred gun, knife and club fighting — material you've never seen (unless you were in elite Special Operation forces).

You'll learn the same hand-to-weapon techniques, the same mental approaches, the same "kill" sets Jerry developed for over 200 SEAL SCARS instructors. (These SCARS instructors now teach this system to all branches of the military Spec Op forces — Army, Navy and Air Force).

You'll know how to defeat, seriously disable and, when necessary, kill anyone threatening your life or the life of a loved one or friend!

Guaranteed To Work In Your Most Nightmarish Hostile Situation

Everything in his system was proven in the most intense war lab of the past 30 years — Vietnam!

But this isn't a course to impress friends at your Karate studio. The Instructor Qualification Series is Jerry Peterson's complete professional fighting system.

And professional fighting has but one objective: to defeat an attacker incredibly fast. In 29 years Jerry's longest fight lasted but 5 seconds!

This system is only for those who need a powerful yet amazingly simple system (simple because it's based on quickly-mastered scientific principles not a difficult art form) to protect them in life-threatening situations.

No Navy SEAL has ever lost in hand-to-hand combat when correctly applying Jerry's system! And they never will (nor will you) because ... his system is undefeatable!

This Totally Integrated System Enables You To Destroy Any Attacker — With Absolutely No Fear Or Hesitation!

Cheap imitators advertise fighter after fighter after fighter — a hodgepodge of unrelated, non-scientific moves. Now they even lie, hoping to con you into believing SEALS would lose to these guys. But they know. No one beats a Peterson-trained SEAL.

These 'wanna-bes' teach one move if an attacker swings a fist at you, another if he's got a knife.

But Jerry Peterson's scientific system teaches you why you MUST use the exact same techniques — with a weapon or without! What everyone else teaches is wrong. Just ask the SEALS!

The imitators claim they've trained Navy SEALS. But Jerry Peterson is the sole creator of the official hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon combat fighting system used by the SEALS today.

He's the only civilian with a Naval Special Warfare course number (*SCARS-CFC# K-431-0096*) plus a new \$2.5 million military facility predicated solely on his SCARS training.

The Navy SEAL 'wanna-be' trainers? They've got nothing — no official status, no course number.

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Jerry Peterson's system is brutal. It has to be. Yet it's surprisingly easy to learn. It requires NO athletic ability, NO speed, NO conditioning.

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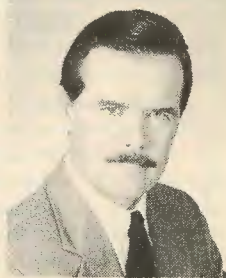
Jerry has created a Free special report revealing the amazing details about his scientific weapons fighting system — the system which has made the Navy SEALS an undefeatable fighting force.

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Official SEAL SCARS-CFC
Creator Jerry Peterson

WHITE HOUSE RECRUITING TECHNIQUE?

Giving credit where credit is due, one has to acknowledge the President's talent for turning lemons into lemonade. Considering the turnover rate at the White House, there probably has to be a fairly high priority attached to either recruiting replacement help or identifying a pool of potential help, considering the high attrition rate among those who leave sacrificially, leave while the leaving is good, or those who go directly to jail.

A case to illustrate Clinton's semi-admirable lemonade-making talent: Recently released Justice Department figures show that during the first years of the Clinton presidency, drug use among teens has soared more than 80%. And, we assume, these kids are inhaling. Not a surprise, considering the way Clinton slashed funding to the war on drugs. The administration has caught a certain amount of heat this election year for slashing the drug-war efforts, and what we assume is the resulting surge in teen drug use. Not to worry.

As we write this, Clinton is on the stump in Colorado, pontificating how, by golly, he's going to make prison parolees take drug tests, and if, by golly, those nasty old cons test posi-

tive, they're headed back to the slam for sure.

As occasional taxpayers, we regard that course of action as a waste of government money. We think we'll approach the General Accounting Office with a much more cost-effective solution: When a paroled con tests positive for drug use, we know for sure two things. First, we already know he's a crook; if he tests positive for drugs, then we know he's also a druggie. Perfect:

They automatically qualify for White House staff.

As we go to press with this, the outcome of the election is unknown, to be decided about the time this edition hits the streets. However, we wonder: If it's appropriate to give drug tests for parolees turned out of the big house, would it not also be appropriate to give drug tests to people turned out of the White House (just to make sure they're still not inhaling...)? ✖



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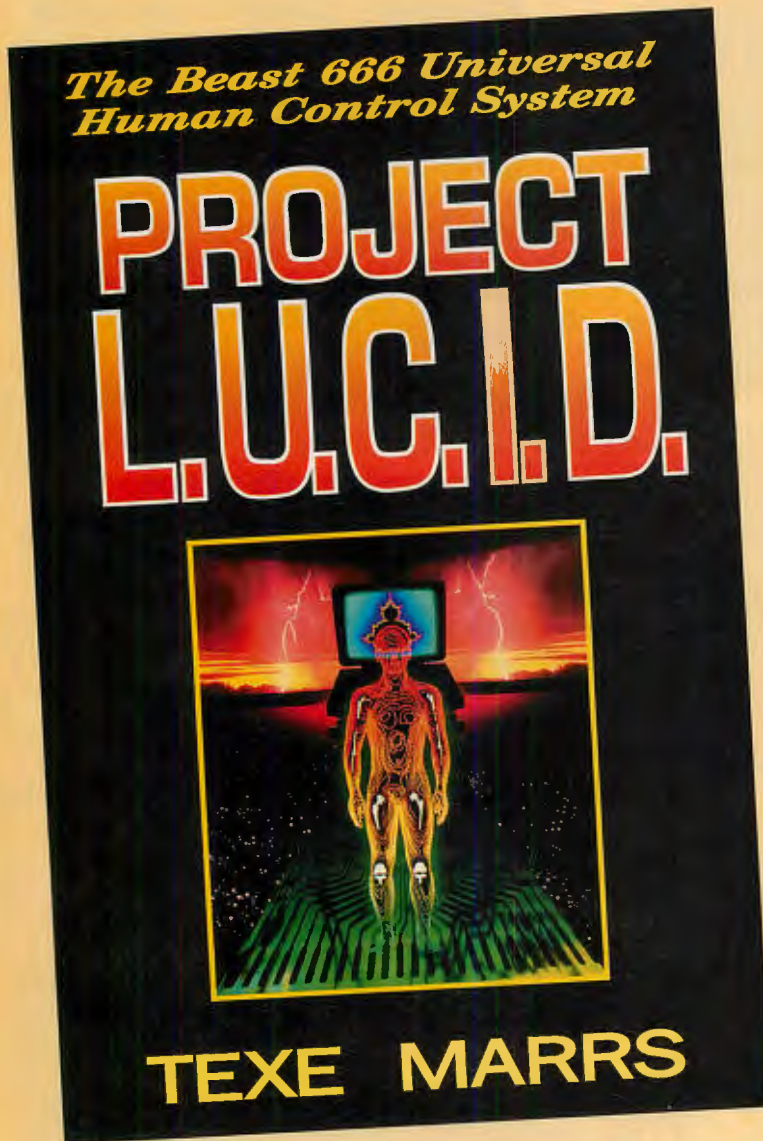
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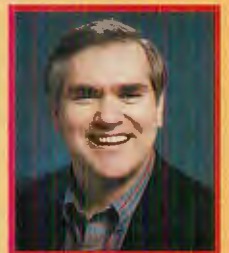


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WORLD SITREP

1

UNITED STATES

Many non-combat soldiers have not fired M-16s in 1-3 years due to ammo shortages; pay has not kept up with inflation, though \$266-billion compromise budget for 1997 to provide 3% increase and upgrades to military housing; and, highest-ever divorce rates for service members. • Presidential panel finds Pentagon's credibility "gravely undermined" following recent discovery of secret 1991 report that said chemical weapons *were* stored at south-Iraq depot blown up earlier that year by Army; 1,100 U.S. troops likely exposed to toxins. • FBI to reassign 500 agents (5% of force) to counterterrorism, including postings to 46 foreign cities; CIA had objected to FBI's foreign presence.

2

RUSSIA

Unpaid wages, awful living conditions drive some Russian troops to suicide, *Krasnaya Zvezda* ("Red Star") newspaper reports. • National Security Adviser Alexander Lebed, architect of Chechnya peace accord, estimates up to 90,000 people — 3 times the common estimate — died in fighting there; Moscow reluctantly backs accords which defer the independence issue for 5 years; Afghan-style clan war expected among Chechen factions after Russian pullout. • A post-Soviet first: Russia tops America in 1995 arms sales to Third World with \$6 billion in deals.

5

AFGHANISTAN

President Carter's CIA campaign aiding Afghan *mujahideen* against Soviet invaders inadvertently trained thousands of Arab militants; many now active worldwide as Islamic extremists, U.S. officials admit. • Taliban rebel general, flying MiG-21 fighter, defects to government air base; says foreigners (Pakistan) control Taliban movement.

6

BOSNIA

American-led, \$400-million program this year to re-arm Muslim-Croat federation delivers armored vehicles, helicopters, antitank missiles, 1,000 M-16s, 200 machine guns, ammo and field radios. • NATO planners project another 2 years of peacekeeping; U.S. DIA's chief says war *will* resume if IFOR mission (to end 20 Dec.) is not followed up.

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SOUTH AFRICA

President Mandela announces he will step down next year as head of the ruling African National Congress (ANC). • Ex-police colonel, commander of counterinsurgency unit, is convicted of 6 murders and other *apartheid*-era crimes; 11 former military and security leaders stand trial for a massacre 9 years ago. Ex-President de Klerk says national leaders never ordered killings and tortures of ANC and other activists. • Former government officials still export tons of weapons from Pretoria-area airfield to foreign customers including Rwanda and Angola's UNITA, local press report.

12

13

12

COLOMBIA

Vice President de la Calle resigns, urges President Samper to do the same because he lacks credibility (from complicity with drug cartels) and failed to control unemployment, quell unrest by coca farmers, and control leftist rebels. • FARC rebels, linked to cocaine and heroin traffickers, launch strongest attacks in nearly 30 years, killing dozens of police and soldiers and overrunning an army post.

11

HAITI

Members of President Preval's 100-man security force, trained by the U.S. State Department, assassinate two opposition politicians in a drive-by shooting after attacking government buildings in Port au Prince.

3

IRAQ

Post-Gulf War sanctions barring arms imports have far greater effect on Saddam Hussein's military than U.S. missile strikes. Western analysts agree. Only about half of Iraq's 2,200 tanks and 370 aircraft are operational, the rest cannibalized for parts; ammo and fuel are low; and, Republican Guards' morale dropped dangerously.

4

ISRAEL

Civil-defense program, once one of world's best, suffers budget cuts, no longer can provide 5 million Israelis with new gas masks every 3 years. • U.S. observers stunned by successful anti-missile test: In its third launch, "Arrow 2" makes metal-on-metal intercept of Scud-type target over Mediterranean.

7

BRITAIN

Following a \$1.1-billion reduction in defense spending, influential committee in Parliament strongly warns government against further cuts; says the Bosnia op and other peacekeeping commitments are straining the army; serviceability of RAF fighters is only 50-63%.

8

AUSTRIA

Debate rages over issue of renouncing neutrality and joining NATO; left-wing parties call for national referendum.

9

ALGERIA

Insurgents from Islamic Salvation Front and Armed Islamic Group (GIA) destroy 627 schools in the last four years. • French intelligence agents say the GIA sought bomb-making training from Basque ETA separatists (whose terror attacks this summer hit tourist resorts in Spain).

2

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PERU

Government concludes the army, navy and air force have been infiltrated by drug traffickers after cocaine shipments are found on three ships and one airplane. President Fujimori orders search of all military bases, vessels, and aircraft.

16

15

14

OKINAWA

Fueling resentment against the heavy U.S. military presence here — a cornerstone of Japanese defense policy — Tokyo's Supreme Court rules that Okinawa's governor *must* cooperate in forcing hostile landowners to renew leases on U.S. bases.

10

15

PHILIPPINES

Manila and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) sign peace agreement to end Mindanao's 26-year Islamic rebellion. Some 5,500 guerrillas will be integrated into national army; peace council will push economic development; and, 3 years later, voting in 14 southern provinces determines which will have Moro governments. Region's Christian majority and more radical Muslims oppose agreement.

16

CAMBODIA

Government predicts "beginning of the end" of Khmer Rouge as rebels loyal to deputy commander Ieng Sary break away from forces of Khmer founder, Pol Pot. Phnom Penh sends 700 soldiers to aid Sary's forces in combat against hard-line Khmer rebels.

World SitRep is excerpted in part from the biweekly newsletter *For Your Eyes Only: An Open Intelligence Summary of Current Military Affairs*. Published by Tiger Publications, P.O. Box 8753, Amarillo, Texas, 79114-8759; subscriptions are \$70 per year (26 issues), \$74.38 in Texas. Sample issue available for \$3. Those interested in reliable, up-to-date world intel are encouraged to subscribe.

GOD ONLY KNOWS...

I like your magazine. Keep up the good work.

Just finished reading "Big Sky Surrender" [Sept. '96 report on the peaceful end to the FBI-Freemen standoff in Montana]; good reading, informative. The question that keeps running through my mind is, what would have happened if this wasn't an election year?

The outcome may have been different.

John F. Stucklik
Windsor, Wis.

U.S. EMBASSY LAUDS SOF REPORT

On behalf of those men who gave their lives in the *SS Mayaguez* rescue attempt [in 1975] and the members of the Joint Task Force - Full Accounting (JTF-FA), the U.S. Central Identification Laboratory and the [recovery ship] *USS Brunswick*, I would like to thank you for publishing "Mayaguez: Forgotten Battle — Searching For America's Last MIAs" in the May '96 *Soldier Of Fortune*. The story of this ill-fated mission and these men had gone unnoticed by the American people for too long. Mr. Will Cadence's article was a fitting tribute to those 18 men who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of their country.

The U.S. ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia, Kenneth M. Quinn, read this article prior to going to Tang Island during our recent Joint Field Activity in April '96. Through this article, he was able to visualize the battle as he walked along the beach and in the jungle. The tragic story of the three-man fire team had been lost to all but the historians. Even Ambassador Quinn, who was on duty at the White House during the incident, did not know those three

Marines were left on the island.

The story of these three and their fellow airmen and Marines has moved the ambassador to establish a memorial to members of the Armed Forces who gave their lives in defense of U.S. citizens in Cambodia and those who came to Cambodia in an attempt to bring home the mortal remains of the 18 who died. The memorial will be in the receiving foyer of the U.S. Embassy, where all who visit will be reminded of the sacrifice made by these men. The memorial's center piece will be a glass-encased "steel pot" helmet recovered on Tang Island, topped by a brass plaque with the names of the fallen. To one side will be photographs of the battle and the Tang Island recovery operations in November '95 and April-May '96.

We would like to request permission to use portions of "Mayaguez:



"Forgotten Battle" as a press-release handout at the dedication ceremony, tentatively scheduled for mid-October. The story of these men will be told at the ceremony. [SOF's] contribution of segments of Mr. Cadence's story would greatly contribute to ensuring these men are not forgotten.

I sincerely thank you for your assistance in making this memorial a small token of a grateful nation to fellow servicemen and their families who sacrificed so much.

Sgt. 1st Class John A. Lundgren
JTF-FA, Detachment 4
U.S. Embassy

"IF I HAVE TO EXPLAIN..."

This is an open letter to anyone who is interested in Operation Desert Storm; however, it is specifically directed at veterans of other conflicts, and active-duty military.

There is an opinion circulating out there that Desert Storm wasn't combat. I first encountered this upon returning stateside in April '91. I was visiting a friend and we got to talking to his neighbor, a Korean War vet. When this guy found out I had recently returned from Kuwait, the first thing he said was, "You guys did a good job." This was immediately followed by, "Of course, it wasn't a *real* war."

The other day I was talking to a young soldier who recently graduated from basic. He commented on the hat I was wearing: a ball cap with "Desert Storm Veteran" embroidered on it, as well as my sergeant's insignia; a Marine eagle, globe and anchor; and a TOW pin. He asked, and I related some of my experiences from the Gulf. The conversation ended when he said, "Well, it wasn't any Vietnam."

You know, he's right. But that doesn't change the fact that it was a shooting war with all the fear, adrenaline, exhilaration, and garbage that go along with armed conflict. ...

I only related the first and last times that I ran into this attitude to conserve space. ... Nobody who has served in a combat theater of operations should be disrespected. ... To borrow a phrase from the bikers, "If I have to explain, you wouldn't understand." I just wish it didn't apply to active military or other vets.

Paul Turner
Seaside, Calif.

True, Desert Storm wasn't "a Vietnam." But then, Vietnam wasn't a

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The new Springfield Armory Ultra Compact 1911-A1 packs .45ACP firepower into a pistol no larger than a typical .38 snub. Standard features include a match-grade barrel fitted directly to the slide, beavertail grip safety, extended thumb safety and high-visibility sights. This is a no-nonsense, top quality defensive pistol.

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Korea; the Korean War wasn't a WWII — and Somalia wasn't a Grenada or Panama. Every war or military action is unique, except on one point: When politicians and diplomats fail, Americans in uniform die.

FOR AN ARGUMENT, TALK POLITICS

Publisher Robert K. Brown's Oct. '96 Command Guidance ["Dole And The Gun Vote"], recommending that readers not vote Libertarian, was clearly written and well intentioned. However, his advice is based on two incorrect assumptions: that a Republican administration will do a good job of protecting our right to keep and bear arms, and that a vote for a Libertarian candidate would be a wasted vote.

The GOP has an unfortunate history of compromising on the issue of gun rights. This has had two bad effects: The first is that this series of small compromises has led to substantial erosion of our Second Amendment rights. The second, more insidious, effect has been to give legitimacy to the idea that our fundamental freedoms, as listed in the Bill of Rights, are somehow "negotiable" and subject to compromise.

The Republican Party also ... takes gun owners very much for granted. Thus, it has no real incentive to take our concerns seriously.

The idea that a vote for a Libertarian candidate would be wasted is also incorrect. If the Libertarian Party makes a strong enough showing, the Republicans will realize that it would be in their interest to be more principled in their commitment to freedom. ...

David M. Schmidt
 North Carolina
 via E-mail

In his editorial in the Oct. '96 issue, Robert K. Brown criticized Bill Clinton for "being tight with convicted felons." At the 1995 SOF Convention, I noticed Brown was "tight" with convicted felon G. Gordon Liddy. If Brown objects to people associating with felons, why did Brown invite Liddy to be the keynote speaker at the convention?

Brown asserted Bob Dole "has a long history of fighting for the Second Amendment." Dole voted for the Gun Control Act of 1968 which created the dreaded BATF and defined gun ownership as a mere privilege subject to governmental restriction or revocation rather than being an inalienable, individual liberty.

Dole voted for the Brady Bill in 1992, claimed to oppose it in 1993,

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then congratulated Sarah Brady when it passed. ...

Clinton is anti-gun and stated he will veto any bill repealing the 1994 semi-auto ban. Dole was voting for anti-gun laws when Clinton was still in college and also states he will veto repeal of the odious semi-auto ban. Yet Brown has the audacity to claim that voting for the Libertarian Party candidate (Harry Browne) "is the same as voting Democratic." Sorry Bob, not all *SOF* readers are that stupid.

I don't want a lying, anti-gun Republican in the White House any more than I want the lying, anti-gun Democrat that's there now. I'm voting for Harry Browne as the Libertarians are the only party genuinely committed to restoring personal freedom in America.

Karen White
Canistota, S.D.

Philosophically, the Libertarians have the purest view on American civil liberties of any political party. But the hard reality is, this race is between Clinton, an arrogant, left-wing yuppie and accomplished liar, and Dole, a centrist Republican who is well-rounded and basically honorable. Nobody else has a chance in '96. And while Dole's record on 2nd Amendment

issues certainly isn't perfect, Clinton's short record already is awful. As to "being tight" with convicted felons, should I ever run for President I'll carefully choose my company. — R.K.B.

I would like to amplify Robert K. Brown's [Oct. '96] Command Guidance with the following observations.

The *Clintonistas* were not put in power either by an international conspiracy or by the voters who voted for Slick Willie but, instead, by the people in America who — though eligible to vote — either failed to register or failed to actually vote. With voter participation at record lows, why should any politician pay attention to the view of people who haven't the grit to register and vote?

If you think Dole is just like Clinton, and that is your excuse either for not voting or voting for a third-party candidate (as a protest), then you are voting for another four years of just what we are getting now. If you think your vote doesn't count, you are especially wrong. Your vote counts, whether you cast it or not.

If you call yourself a "patriot" but don't have the balls to register and vote, forget stockpiling coins, food,

guns and ammo — you have already lost the war because you have ceded the only lawful check on the existing Administration. The power of the ballot box must precede any effort at active resistance to tyranny. If you register and vote, you may avoid that necessity. If you don't, you have given the other side all the excuse and support they need to disarm and enslave you lawfully. ...

Lee McMillian, attorney
South Houston, Texas
via E-mail

I've been reading *SOF* for three years now. I admire Jim Pate's no-holds-barred journalism. He has written many stories of U.S. government abuses, corruption, inefficiencies and injustices. ... He is luckier than most of his Asian counterparts, a few of whom met untimely deaths by sticking their noses in government excesses, stupidity and bureaucracy.

I hope things change for good after your November election. I can't wait to see Bill and Hillary out. ...

Robert V. Manlangit, student
Manila, Philippines

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So secure is the lamination, these blades can routinely be bent 45 degrees with no loss of lamination or memory. We bent ours in a vise next to a protractor — no cheating: It took the abuse.

We tested Matt's Kenpo Fighter, an unusual new tactical knife designed by Tai Goo and Mike Pick, of the Universal Kenpo Federation. Only the fact it weighs 5 ounces took getting used to. The 5.5-inch blade is housed in a secure Kydex sheath. The handle is grooved, glass-filled nylon, angular and secure in the hand — but facilitating a change of grip without losing the knife, or losing track of its position in the hand.

On Matt's insistence, we abused it heartily: hacked seasoned hardwood; stabbed green logs, prying out chunks with the point; pounded the blade into one log with another; cut up a pile of



cardboard boxes; cut steel bands, pried open a wood crate — all the things you would only do to your brother-in-law's knife. A minute with a diamond stick and the edge was "factory."

Incredibly light weight, it is not a "lightweight" — it's a blade you can carry with ease and use with supreme confidence. The unusually shaped handle falls comfortably into the hand, offering a secure grip. Always room on your LBE for a knife like this. Serious gear. Highly recommended.

Matt makes a full line of custom hunters, skinners, fighters — all the most knife for the weight that we've seen, flawlessly executed. Matt's knives are available from Blade Runner Knives, Dept. SOF, 907 W. Prince Rd., Tucson, AZ 85705; phone: 520-293-8023.

RHINO-TOUGH BINOS

When the Red Army captured the famous Carl Zeiss-Jena optical plant in what became East Germany, the Sovs packed up tooling and equipment from that plant and shipped it to Kazan, Russia. There, at the Kazan Optical and Mechanical Factory, they commenced production of 8X30 tank commander's binoculars, which differ not a whit in style, features, or optical quality from the original Carl Zeiss-Jena models. These original mil-spec, Russian-issue but brand-new binos feature individually focusing diopters and rangefinder reticle, amber filters and fully coated optics. They come with leather ocular covers, strap and case. They are designed to operate at -40 F to +122 F, and in 80% humidity. They carry an unconditional one-year warranty from the importer, Sovietski Collection.

These 8X30 tank commander's binos proved crystal clear, sharp to the edge of the lens — not a hint of parallax. Although ruggedly built of steel, they weigh less than a pound and a half. Binoculars of comparable design and optical quality usually run

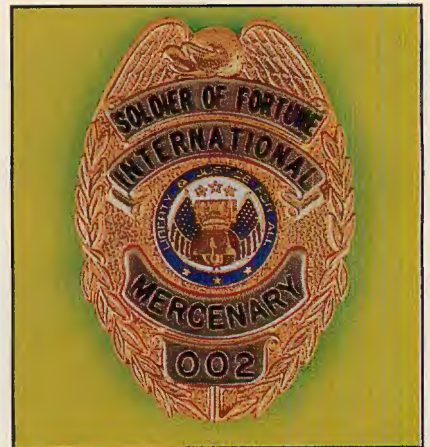


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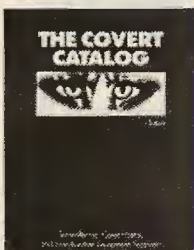
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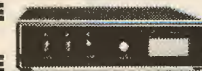
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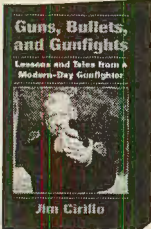
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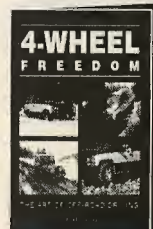


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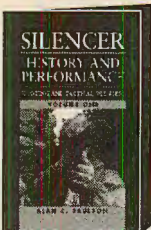
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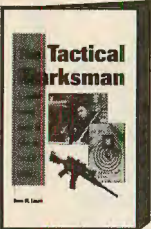
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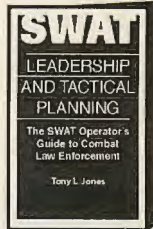


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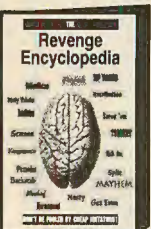
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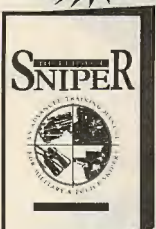
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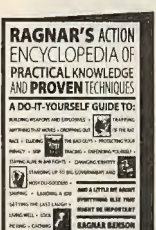
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I WAS THERE

Text & Photo by John Pascucci

Sense Of Danger

When faced with danger we are taught to react. Freezing up and doing nothing will kill you as sure as a .44 Magnum.

Westchester County, New York, not only encompasses some of New York state's garden spots but also borders the Bronx. As a Deputy Sheriff, I had already been involved with the New Rochelle Sniper and "Son of Sam" cases, but after a successful attempt at mopping up mob-originated corruption within the department, and being the star witness for the Governor's Special Prosecutor, I knew it was time to move on. When the opportunity to become a fed presented itself, I leaped, even though it required a cross-country move and a tour of hanging on at the bottom rung of the pay scale.

On my final day with the Sheriff's Department, I had already sold my uniforms and most of my carry guns to help finance my journey to San Diego, so I had to work in plain clothes with my badge pinned to my lapel, '40's-style. I was assigned to family court, where volatile emotions of family strife made it a definite high-risk assignment. Random violence has nothing on good old-fashioned family violence, especially during the beginning of the epidemic we now call "juvenile violence."

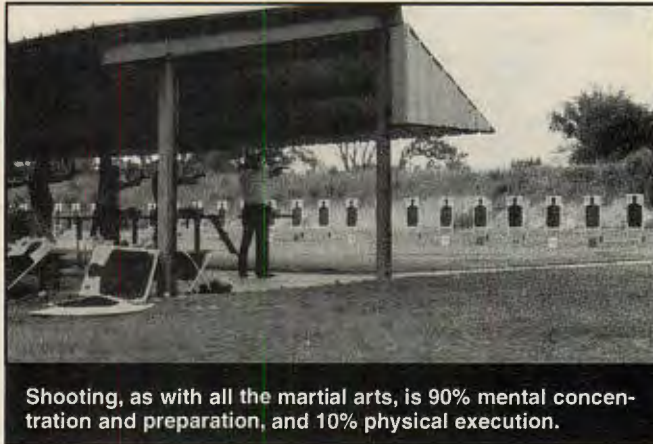
Working in what was to the deputies a 20-story city, which contained the New York State Supreme Court and the county courts, including all the ancillary offices and agencies, everyone who visited this vertical metropolis was seemingly a bad guy, a bad guy's target or, the absolute worst: a lawyer.

On this, my last shift as a deputy sheriff, I was armed with an old-style .38 detective special, with 158-grain, round-nosed, lead reloads. Since this was 1978, I guess "state of the art" was a S&W 59, High-Power or government model with adjustable sights. S&W 59s that worked were great; Model 19s or Pythons were common among those who knew.

It happened during a hearing: A deranged off-duty NYC detective, obviously distraught at the prospect of losing a custody fight over his chil-

dren, and having been just taken off the rubber-gun squad, opened fire. He popped off wild shots at his wife who, with a bevy of other civilians, was elbow-to-elbow in a jammed waiting room.

Upon hearing the first shots, I reacted with more balls than brains. (Rethinking the incident now, some two decades later, forces my pucker factor off the scale.) I drew my puny Colt and charged hell-bent toward the waiting room, forcing my way through the churning mass of horrified civilians as they smashed out the exit door in ultra-panic. I burst into the room and bolted past the shooter,



Shooting, as with all the martial arts, is 90% mental concentration and preparation, and 10% physical execution.

squatting low in the corner parallel to the entry door – but behind me. I sensed him more than saw him as he rose up and methodically drew down on me, ready to crack off his next shot.

Jerking around, I fired twice, striking him in his third shirt button and then through the armpit as the initial round spun him. Though my ammunition has been the subject of scorn by gun writers, these bullets performed to perfection. Shot one exited the torso and lodged in the lining of his sports jacket. Shot two blew through and lodged in the opposite armpit just beneath the skin. Both bullets fully expanded. The shooter was unable to get off his more-than-likely lethal shot at me thanks to my skill, training, and a generous serving of luck. He died almost immediately of a ruptured aorta, severed by both rounds.

Ironically, his victim, an innocent bystander, shot dead-center in the middle of her forehead, was the wife of a cop. Since she took his first round, I do not suffer any regrets for

not having been able to prevent her death; it simply was not possible. Her murder initiated the situation and because of my actions, the body count was limited to one good guy and one bad. Fifty people panicking then rioting in a 25x15-foot room could have made for an infinitely worse scenario.

At the time, I was a successful competitive shooter, ranked fourth in the state of New York and in the top hundred nationally in PPC, bulls-eye and Jeff Cooper's brand new combat matches. I believe those who claim you can't train for combat by punching holes in paper targets are dead wrong. My training, the hours of practicing trigger pull, sight alignment and grip enabled me to do what very few have ever done.

We know that the vast majority of cops never fire their weapons during their careers; not only don't they fire their weapons in anger, but most never go up against a hostile, trained professional. Based upon my self-developed skill levels, I was able to literally put two in his "X" ring before he could get off a shot.

My gun was in my hand, as it should have been, when I went into

that room. I remember having both eyes open, seeing where I wanted the bullet to go and squeezing the trigger. But I don't remember the reports. Since my enemy was just 3 to 5 yards away, I do not remember the sight picture, although I did consciously place the front sight on the center of mass.

Shooting, as with all the martial arts, is 90% mental concentration and preparation, and 10% physical execution. I and, more importantly, others live today today because I had the mental conditioning to evaluate a combat situation and the skills necessary to implement actions to negate criminal violence by way of greater and more devastating force.

John Pascucci is the author of The Manhunter, a hard-edged book chronicling his meritorious career as Chief of International Operations for the U.S. Marshal's Service, during which he tracked many of the "top guns" of the criminal world. ✕

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PIX MODEL 13

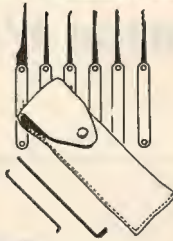
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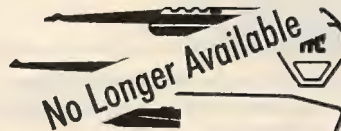


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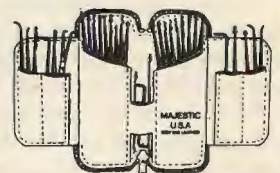


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Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

Fighting Shotguns Clinton Will Never Let You Own



Izhevsk Mechanical Plant project engineer prepares to fire the Model IJ-81K law-enforcement shotgun at the factory test range in the bitter cold of a typical Russian winter in the western Urals 1,130 kilometers east of Moscow.

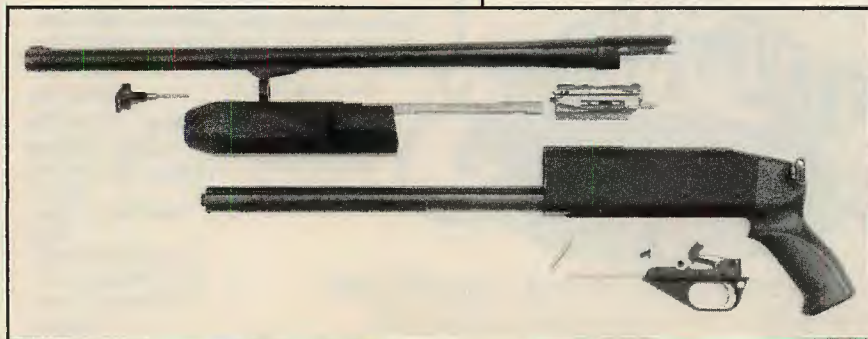
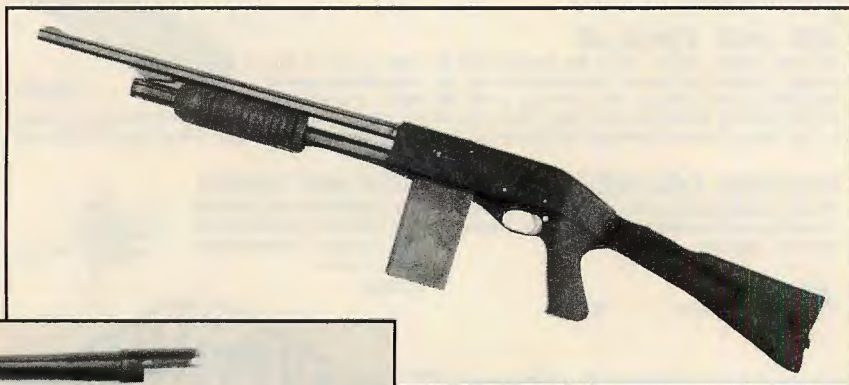
Three distinct categories of shoulder-mounted weapons are deployed by law-enforcement tactical operations teams for dynamic entries, most often in combination with one another: the submachine gun — here the H&K MP5 clearly dominates, although some federal agencies have adopted the Colt SMG; the so-called “tactical carbine,” which is usually a semiautomatic-only version of the Colt M16/AR-15 series or, somewhat less frequently, the Steyr AUG; and the 12-gauge fighting shotgun. With regard to shotguns, the Remington and Mossberg slide-actions prevail, although some departments issue either the Remington 11-87 or

the Benelli M1 Super 90 semiautos.

While there are proponents of all three systems, the shotgun in recent years has lost ground to first the seemingly ubiquitous MP5 and now

more recently to the increasingly fashionable tactical carbine. This is a mistake in my opinion, as when employed within the framework of its limitations and maximizing its salient characteristics, the fighting shotgun with its multiple-projectile ammunition provides short-range lethality and overall munitions versatility matched by no other firearm. The late Elmer Keith once referred to the shotgun as “the best alley cleaner of all.”

Both the British involvement in the Malayan counterinsurgency conflict of the 1950s and the American experience in Vietnam demonstrated that slide-action types offer the greatest mechanical reliability in a military environment. However, most law-enforcement applications are far less demanding on equipment and there is no doubt that semiauto shotguns are significantly faster than pump types in both target re-acquisition and shooter response to a projected threat. But, the fact remains that semiauto shotguns will on occasion go down at inappropriate times as a result of some type of malfunction that is not operator-induced. When a slide-action malfunctions, it is invariably the operator's fault. I'd rather take my chances on my own level of competence with a slide-action shotgun than a semiauto over which I



Russian Model IJ-81K (above) law-enforcement shotgun features a four-round, detachable box-type magazine and the folding buttstock of the AK100 assault-rifle series. (left) Russian Model IJ-81 law enforcement shotgun, field-stripped — note similarity to slide-action Remington Model 870.

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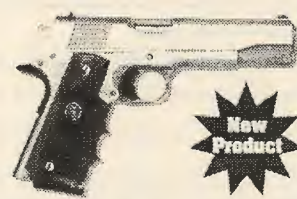


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Shotgun News 50th Anniversary

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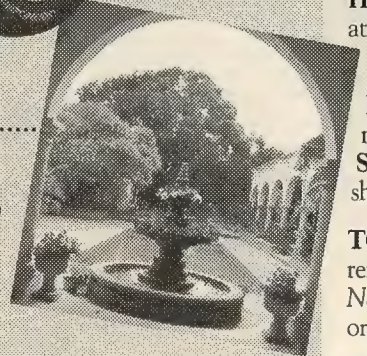
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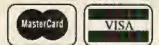
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- 2. TO ENTER WITHOUT PURCHASE OR SUBSCRIPTION:** On an Official Entry Form only, available by mail as indicated in Rule 2A, hand print your name, address, (including zip code), daytime and evening telephone numbers. Residents of the State of Washington only, need not affix postage to return envelopes.
2A. For each Official Entry Form you wish to be sent by mail, send a separate, self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: SHOTGUN NEWS ENTRY FORM REQUEST, P.O. Box 5081, Blair, NE 68009. Requests must be received by 2/11/97. Limit one request per envelope. Completed entry forms must be received at the address listed on the entry form by the last day of each month indicated in Rule 1 to be eligible for that month's prize drawing (and subsequent monthly prize drawings) and/or by 3/11/97 to be eligible for the Grand Prize/Trip Prize drawings.
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- 6. For the names of the winners, available after May 31, 1997, send a separate, stamped, self-addressed (#10) envelope to: Shotgun News Winners, P.O. Box 5082, Blair, NE 68009.**

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have no functional control.

During my trip to Russia in November 1994 to participate in the celebration of Mikhail T. Kalashnikov's 75th birthday, I was presented with the opportunity to test and evaluate a new series of slide-action combat shotguns developed and manufactured at the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant (Dept. SOF, Izhevsky Mekhanichesky Zavod, Promyshlennaya Str. 8, 426063, Izhevsk, Russia; phone: 011-7-3412-763544; fax: 011-7-3412-765890) which manufactures sporting shotguns and both the Makarov and PSM pistols. Unfortunately, as a consequence of recently concluded negotiations with Russians arms industry representatives in Washington, D.C., the new trade agreement with Russia will preclude importation of firearms to the United States that do not clearly meet the "sporting applications" standards established by the Clinton administration, which is without doubt the most anti-gun group to hold the reins of federal power in the history of our country.

While there is nothing especially innovative about the Model IJ-81 shotgun series, they reflect the robust qualities at reasonable prices we have come to associate with Russian small-arms systems. The method of locked-breech operation has been taken from the Remington Model 870, which, in turn, is patterned after that of the John Browning-designed Model 11 semiautomatic shotgun. When in battery, the bolt remains locked to the barrel by means of a locking block within the bolt body, which engages a recess in the barrel extension — in this instance on top but offset slightly to the left. Receiver strength is not critical in this type of system as the recoil forces are mostly absorbed by the bolt assembly and barrel extension. A steel slide, to which has been attached a stepped lug (also housed within the bolt body), is mated to a single-action arm on the left side. When the slide is racked forward, the front step on this lug moves under the front end of the locking block and pivots it upward to engage its forward projection in the recess on the top left of the barrel extension.

After firing, when the forearm is manually driven rearward, the slide moves back through about a half-inch of free travel, after which the locking block drops downward to unlock the action. Completion of the rearward stroke by the operator will draw all of the reciprocating parts to the rear and eject the empty shell out the ejection port on the right side of the receiver.

Continued on page 69

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America's New Expeditionary Force

1/508th On Call For Karadzic?

Text & Photos by Mark H. Milstein

After the bloody fiasco of the October 1993 manhunt for Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid in Mogadishu, White House and Congressional know-it-alls claimed

America had sworn off for good the use of its troops as international "bounty hunters." That was then.

This summer, the *Sunday Times* of London, one of the world's most respected newspapers, reported that the U.S. military

was "poised to seize [Bosnian Serb leader] Radovan Karadzic in an airborne raid at his base in the Bosnian Serb stronghold, Pale."

Quoting unidentified intelligence sources in the United States and Britain, the *Times* on 4 August said the Pentagon planned to use a large number of highly trained airborne troops to act as a first-strike and security force, with the actual snatch being handled by a special-operations team.

The *Times* went on to say that U.S. General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made it clear early on that he opposed seizing Karadzic, as did the British defense chief, General Sir Peter Inge.

Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic are wanted by the U.N. war crimes tribunal in the Hague, Netherlands, on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. (See "All MOUT And No Mission," Oct. '96 *SOF*.)

Following the newspaper's report, accusations flew back and forth across the Atlantic. The Clinton administration denied any plans for such action. Sources close to *SOF*, however, said the plan to kidnap Karadzic had been a "go"; someone within the Pentagon or White House, obviously fearing a "Mogadishu," leaked word of the plan to the British press, ruining opsec and killing the plan — for now.



Black Hawk with long-range fuel tanks departs after delivering 1/508th squads. In troop-transport ops during combat, helicopters are highly vulnerable to attack while on ground; air-assault troops must quickly exit and establish LZ security.

Most observers agreed that any overt attempt by U.S. troops to kidnap the heavily guarded Karadzic and bring him to trial could — so close to the November election — have become Clinton's political downfall if the op went bad.

But had there been a contingency plan for such a daring act, it likely would have comprised Army Rangers supporting a Delta Force team.

A possible scenario: Covered by hidden squads of heavily armed infantrymen, Delta operators would infiltrate Karadzic's quarters (probably at night), quietly killing his bodyguards and binding and gagging the VIP, if necessary, before rushing him to a rendezvous with a SpecOps helicopter. (A Delta medic likely would have been on site in case the middle-aged Karadzic was injured or suffered a heart attack.)

Or, instead of a Ranger element flown in specially from the States, paratroopers of the U.S. Army's Italy-based Southern European Task Force (SETAF) might have provided the infantry support. Oddly enough, elements of the 1st Battalion of the 508th (1/508th) Airborne Combat Team *did* spend the first half of July at a remote training site in Albania alongside forces from a number of NATO allies. The no-nonsense tactics they diligently practiced would have fit handily in the snatch mission suggested in the *Times'* report.

Sounds Like Bosnia...

Under the name "Peaceful Eagle '96," a NATO/Partnership for Peace training exercise, SETAF command sent two companies of the 1/508th, along with a number of UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters, to Albania. (The 1/508th previously was named the 325th Airborne Battalion Combat Team, and was the cover story of the Feb.'96 *SOF*.) Ostensibly, the exercise was to "enhance Southern Region stability by expanding military contacts and cooperation between Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and the United States."

The SETAF press office was calling the exercise "routine." However, much of the

training that took place was short on expanding "military cooperation" with five former Communist states and, instead, seemed focused on a series of exercises — much of which was off limits to the press — intended to hone the air-assault skills of the most rapid reaction force in the U.S. Army.

"The Republic of Shalimar and the Republic of Chaco" are in a state of war, read the sitrep hanging from the bulletin board in the press tent. "The two [fictional] republics were formed in 1992, with nationalists instigating ethnic tension. Human rights abuses and war crimes have been committed. As a result of fighting, there are one million refugees. There have been numerous cease-fire violations. The Chaco region is most heavily contested, with one million mines. Over 50,000 casualties and 150,000 wounded."

As a work of fiction, it hardly was Tom Clancy.

"This sounds a lot like Bosnia, doesn't it?" I asked Captain John Robinson, a press officer for the 1/508th. "It does a little," he

replied, "but we're not supposed to say that."

Outside, on a bulletin board next to the latrines, a notice read, "The village of Biza, and the cemetery on the north side of town, are off limits."

This was going to be interesting.

Watching For The Man

Good training, timely and accurate intel, then surprise and speed — without them, any snatch-and-grab is doomed. Quick capture followed by immediate extrication of the target and every assault-team member, without complications, is a tough balancing act even for the most seasoned professionals.

Trying to approximate some future real-life mission, the 1/508th troops in Albania spent the better part of one day, for example, in exercises intended to improve their prisoner-handling skills. The airborne infantrymen were divided into squads and platoons for the various scenarios: roadblocks, checkpoints, and ambushes.

At one point the NATO press officers pulled the news media back to a ridge over-



Squad awaiting pickup during Albania training duck heads against cloud of dirt as Black Hawk lands.



looking the checkpoint. They told us to wait for a "surprise."

Below us, the 1/508th troops knew that any trucks or cars passing through the checkpoint could contain their "target," so they were especially vigilant. In a few minutes, an Albanian army deuce-and-a-half truck pulled up and attempted to drive through without being searched.

"This one could have our man," Sergeant J.R. Johnson yelled to the squad. "SAW gunner, wake up!"

Private 1st Class Adam Delgado crouched behind a sandbag wall near the gate at the roadblock. His finger nervously stroked the trigger on his M249 squad automatic weapon loaded with blank ammunition. Under the watchful eye of their lieutenant, specialists John Stopa and James Galaz approached the truck and ordered the driver and his passenger to slowly exit the truck and place their hands above their heads.

The driver looked dumbfounded. A soldier screamed the command once more.

Inside the truck, the passenger rummaged for something below the dashboard. Sergeant Johnson yelled for the truck's door to be yanked open and the passenger and driver taken out and placed on the road with their hands up. This time, Galaz and Stopa reacted with more force and the driver and passenger were none-too-gently placed, hands above their heads, against the grill of the truck. The rest of the squad began searching the vehicle. In the rear cargo area they found a man hidden behind some boxes. They had their quarry.

"I know this all looks a bit simplistic to you, but we are preparing for missions that might come up in the future," Lieutenant Colonel Arnold Neil Gordon Bray, the new commander of the 1/508th, told reporters. "I won't say this is training for one specific mission or another, but instead you could view this as preparation for real-life scenarios which we as a highly mobile, airborne combat team need to be prepared for. The more training my men get, the better

they will be able to handle any environment they are exposed to."

Turkish and Albanian troops soon arrived at the site to practice frisking "POWs" and maintaining checkpoint security. The American troops were moved to a secluded area for further training.

Unass The Bird, Run, Hit The Dirt

On the other side of a nearby hill, Bravo Company's Capt. Scott E. McCulloch and its 3rd Platoon were preparing for an afternoon of air-assault exercises.

Two Black Hawk helicopters, each with long-range fuel tanks, stood at-the-ready as McCulloch ordered his men to break down into six-man squads and await further orders. On command, the squads ran to the awaiting helicopters, climbed aboard and strapped themselves in. According to air-mobile SOP, they removed the magazines from their weapons, put gun barrels to the floor, sounded off, and waited for the response of "OK!" Then they went through the entire procedure again, in reverse.

The squads continued to repeat the drill, working to perfect the choreography needed to assure quick entry and exit from a chopper on a "hot" landing zone. After assessing the platoon's performance, Capt. McCulloch gave the order to power up the helicopters.

Again, the two squads raced to the waiting Black Hawks. This time, the helicopters took off. I and other members of the press accompanied Staff Sgt. Victor Farmer, sergeants Robert Cumo and Odie Summers, and specialists Michael Siver, Karl Hopkins and Corey Stender. The squad was armed with M16A2 rifles, a SAW, an M60 general-purpose machine gun, and an M203 grenade launcher. Our bird, the lead aircraft, quickly flew 20 kilometers to a remote river bed.

The Black Hawk touched down.

The crew chief signalled "OK."

The infantrymen poured out of the Black Hawk into the swirling dust to establish LZ security: They fanned out, ran short distances from the chopper, then dropped onto the gravel, weapons ready. The second Black Hawk followed and delivered its troops.

With a roar the Black Hawks lifted off to hover above the river bed. Down drafts churned clouds of pebbles and sand amid the troops and journalists. Then the choppers moved out to simulate close air support. We continued forward to a small clearing 50 meters ahead and halted.

Ten minutes later the order came: Re-board the Black Hawks.

The squads regrouped and quickly made their way back to the LZ. Practice makes perfect. With good professionalism, Bravo Company's 3rd Platoon was working through a less-than-sexy but nonetheless important element of a hypothetical mission.

It was time to fly again. This time, 3rd Platoon would touch down at the edge of a "heavily defended forest" ringed with old, concrete bunkers. The troops would make their way over a pre-planned route



At mock checkpoint 1/508th troopers search Albanian truck for a "fugitive" while others guard driver and passenger. The multi-national exercise ostensibly was to expand "military cooperation" between host Albania and Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and America; curiously, much of the training for 1/508th troops was conducted at night or away from journalists.

through the forest to a staging area that acted as a target zone.

Caught With Pants Down

It was nearly 90 degrees without a cloud in the sky, and having to pretend it was the dead of night wasn't easy. Somewhere in the woods, along the trail that led to 3rd Platoon's target area, was a blank-ammo ambush provided by either Italian *Alpini* (mountain) troops or professional soldiers from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's (FYROM) newly formed *Skorpion* Regiment.

The *Alpini* are a tough, highly mobile force that originally was part of the Italian contingent to the allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land Contingent). The Macedonian force, while short on unit history, comprised many former Yugoslavian National Army troops who saw action in the early days of the breakup of the former federation on the front lines of Slovenia and Croatia.

Captain McCulloch ordered his men to fan out.

"Keep your distance," he yelled. "Keep your eyes on the tree line. Watch for mines and pay attention to the bunkers!"

The paratroopers moved forward in squad tactical formations, scanning the tree line for "defenders" and watching for dummy mines. A point man, Spec. Michael Siver, reached the tree line

first and signaled "all clear." Soon every man was in the forest and making his way over a steep ridge into a small valley bisected by a stream. The troops searched for signs of the "enemy," but what they saw was a different sort of movement.

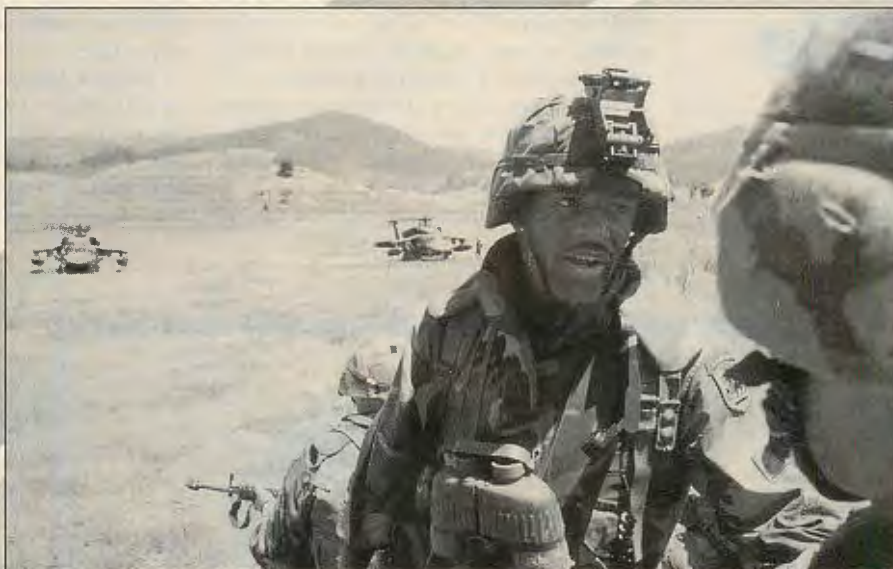
"I've got a shitter," yelled Spec. Hopkins to Sgt. Cumo. Hopkins pointed at an Albanian soldier beside a tree with his pants around his ankles and a look of complete embarrassment on his face. Clearly, this was not part of the plan. Cumo's squad moved on, flanking the red-face Albanian and making its way toward a second line of trees.

The platoon halted and dropped into a secure formation; canteens came out during the five-minute breather. "Where were the defenders?" I openly wondered. "Why weren't we under attack?"

What little simulated gunfire I could hear seemed to come from an area occupied by other 1/508th troops during training reporters weren't permitted to view. In fact, while SETAF took pains to give the press access to a healthy cross-section of the training involving the "other partici-



SAW gunner Spec. Karl Hopkins and his squad take a breather near old machine-gun bunker (right), one of 176,000 built in Albania during communist regime of invasion-paranoid dictator Enver Hoxha. (See "Memorials To Marxist Madness," Sept. '94 *SOF*.)



Staff Sgt. Victor Farmer critiques his men's performance during pause in "Peaceful Eagle '96"; two Black Hawk helicopters idle in background. (Device attached to front of Farmer's Kevlar helmet is mount for night-vision device.)



Troops from nine countries comprising NATO and Partnership For Peace members converged on a training area in Albania. These officers inspect the base camp built for "Peaceful Eagle '96," one of the first exercises of its kind in post-Cold War Europe. "This sounds a lot like Bosnia, doesn't it?" I asked Capt. John Robinson, a press officer for the 1/508th. "It does a little," he replied, "but we're not supposed to say that." Outside, on a bulletin board next to the latrines, a notice read, "The village of Biza, and the cemetery on the north side of town, are off limits."

pants," much of the 1/508's training took place either out of the eye of the press or at night.

Just as the day's scheduled exercises were coming to an end, the Black Hawk crews began prepping their aircraft for a second set of air-assault exercises to begin shortly before dusk. The press, unfortunately, was not invited to view any night training. Reporters and photographers soon found themselves rattling along aboard a twin-rotor Chinook for a 20-minute flight back to Rinas International Airport outside of Tirana.

Busy Boys

Utilized in more real-world deployments in the past two years than any other unit in the Army, the 1/508th, with its own helicopter fleet and artillery battery, could rightly be seen as a new "American Expeditionary Force."

Here is the unit's travel itinerary for the last two years: mid-summer 1994, deployed (as the 325th ABCT) to Rwanda, wracked by tribal warfare; December 1995, deployed to Bosnia (as the 325th ABCT) as a U.S. lead element to NATO's "Operation Joint Endeavor," and secured Tuzla air base; April 1996, deployed to Dubrovnik, Croatia, (as the 325th ABCT) to provide security at the site of the crash

of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown's Air Force jet; and June 1996, deployed (as the 1/508th) to riot-torn Liberia to act as security for evacuation of U.S. and other foreign citizens.

The 1/508th definitely is, as they say at Fort Benning's Ranger School, "in the spotlight."

"Look for us to be deployed back to Africa quite soon," a senior officer in the 1/508th told me. "We've been working [training] lately using regular commercial ferry boats, the ones that go between Italy and the Adriatic coast.

"Look at a map, and see what countries can be accessed by ship and you'll know," he added. "That's all I can say."

I later wondered if this paratroop officer was just rattling my cage. On the other hand, nothing would surprise me about these guys.

SOF Chief Foreign Correspondent Mark H. Milstein can be reached via E-mail at ansphoto@pronet.hu, at his office in Budapest, Hungary. ✉

Exclusive: SVDS Sniper Rifle

DRAGUNOV

The Man Behind the Rifle

by Valery N. Shilin

Photos courtesy of Izhmash Joint Stock Company

The Izhmash Joint Stock Company of Izhevsk, Russia, is familiar to SOF readers from articles on the Bison (Bison) submachine gun and the Kalashnikov AK-100 weapons by Peter G. Kokalis in May and August 1995. Well received by SOF readers world-wide, the articles resulted in many inquiries to the factory about the firearms and their designers.

As a result, Soldier Of Fortune has been granted exclusive and direct access to the latest designs of Izhmash, the largest Russian arms manufacturer.

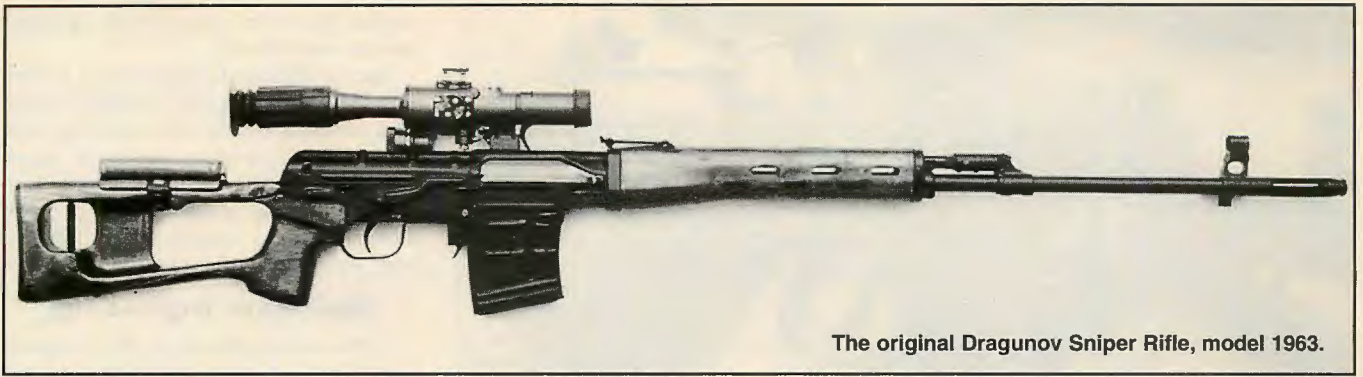
Izhevsk, a thousand miles east of

Moscow, deep in the Ural Mountains, is the Mecca of Russian arms designers. Nearly all modern small arms adopted by Soviet or Russian armed forces were designed and manufactured there, including the legendary AK-47, AKM, AK-74, AK-100 series, Makarov pistols, and the SVD Dragunov sniper rifle.

Evgenie Fedorovich Dragunov was born on 20 February 1920 in Izhevsk, into a long line of gunsmiths. Following the family tradition, he graduated from the Izhevsk Industrial School in 1938 as a machinist and went to work in the factory where his grand-



Evgenie Fedorovich Dragunov, 1920-1991
—the famed Russian arms designer in a rare photo
from the archives of the Izhmash Historic
Museum, Arms Section.

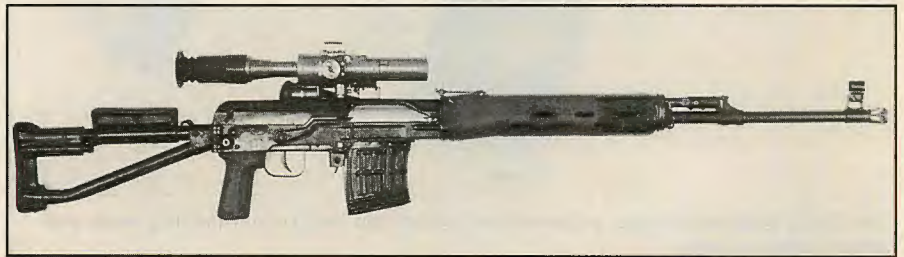


The original Dragunov Sniper Rifle, model 1963.

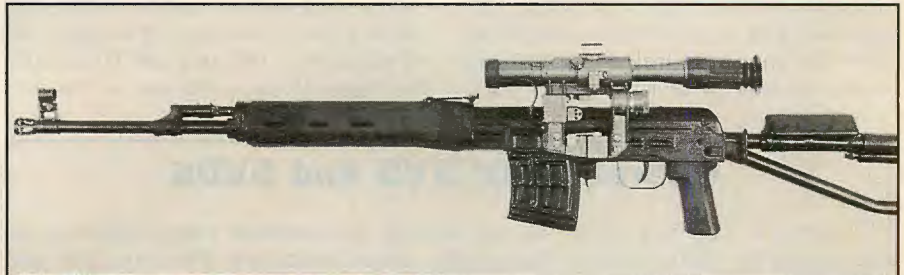
father had worked in Czarist times. His first project was to improve machining techniques for the Mosin-Nagant M1891/30 rifle bayonet.

In 1939 he was recruited into the Soviet army, serving in a regimental gunsmith workshop. With the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War in 1941, he was promoted to senior armorer, which afforded him priceless experience with both Russian and enemy automatic weapons. Dragunov was an accomplished and enthusiastic target shooter, and his shooting skills proved very useful in the war, as well as his subsequent career as an arms designer.

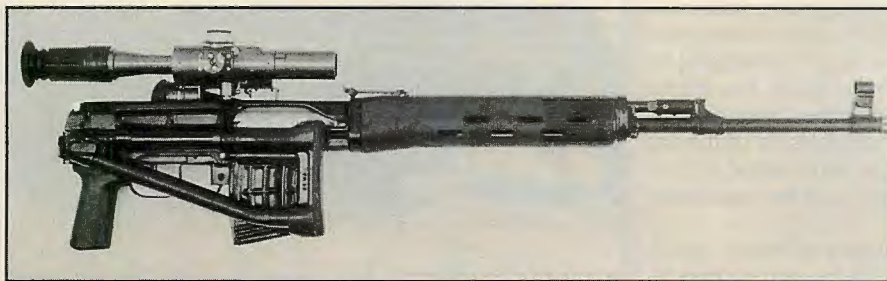
After the war, Dragunov returned to Izhevsk and joined the Arms Designing Bureau to resume his work and education. He again turned his attention the Mosin-Nagant three-line ["line" is an archaic unit of measurement equal to 1/10 inch] bolt-action repeating rifle. Mounted with scopes and a modified bolt handle, the venerable Mosin was widely used as a sniper weapon



Right side of the improved Dragunov SVDS, with buttstock extended.



Left side of SVDS, with buttstock extended.



Right side view of SVDS, with buttstock folded.

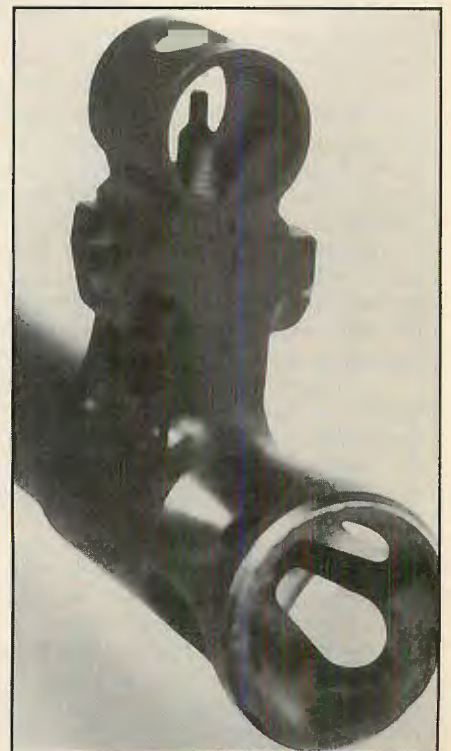
during the war. It was a rugged and reliable weapon, but when scoped was slow to reload with single rounds being inserted under the scope, into the fixed magazine. Dragunov devised a new scope mount that provided sufficient clearance between the scope and receiver to allow use of the standard charging clip. He also produced a number of sporting versions of this rifle.

Dragunov's multi-faceted talent established a new trend in Russian small-arms design. As a leading project engineer, he designed 27 various firearms including the MO-50, IOA-50, Zenith, *Strela* (Arrow), *Taiga*, CM and Biathlon target rifles. Modern versions of the latter, in .22LR, are better known as the Biathlon 7-2, Biathlon 7-3, and Biathlon 7-4 rifles, winners of several Olympic Gold Medals.

The Challenge Of A Semiauto Sniper

In 1958 Dragunov accepted the challenge of designing a semiautomatic sniper rifle. The rifle envisioned in the MENS submitted by the GRAU (*Glavnoye Raketno - Artilleriyskoye Upravleniye* — the Chief Missile and Artillery Department of the Soviet Ministry for Defense) was more than a simple sniper rifle. In addition to high accuracy and substantial range, the weapon had to be light-weight, compact, and capable of semiautomatic fire.

The Russian tradition of training dedicated snipers dates to the 18th and 19th centuries: During the Crimean campaign against British and French troops, Russia fielded small units of selected marksmen with excel-



The SVDS monoblock muzzle attachment, comprising the front sight base, front sight, hood, and conical muzzle brake, is pinned to the barrel.



The SVDS buttstock hinge, buttstock lock knob, top (bolt) cover locking lever, and safety selector lever.

lent shooting skills. Their first performance at the battle of Sebastopol was unexpectedly effective, with a great demoralizing effect upon the enemy, as they targeted crucial enemy personnel at advanced ranges, while

remaining beyond counter fire. Special high-accuracy rifles did not exist at that time, and the men had to use standard weapons. The development in 1891 of a new 7.62mm rifle by Sergei Mosin, a designer in the Tula

Operation Of SVD And SVDS

Both the SVD and SVDS are self-loading, gas-operated rifles. Operation is accomplished by the energy of propellant gases, which are driven into the gas cylinder on top of the barrel, from a small port in the barrel.

Upon firing, a portion of propellant gases, propelling the bullet along the bore channel, escape into the gas cylinder, and exert pressure upon the front surface of the piston. The whole group being driven rearward, the bolt turns to the right, disengaging its three locking lugs from their recesses in the receiver. The extractor claw removes the empty case from the chamber, and the ejector disposes of it through the opening in the right side of the top cover. As the bolt carrier travels farther, the recoil spring is compressed, the hammer is cocked and engaged with the autosafety cocking cam.

This cycle completed, the bolt group begins its return travel, driven by the recoil spring. The assembly goes forward, a round is stripped from the magazine and chambered, the bolt turns left to lock the chamber while the bolt carrier releases the hammer from the autosafety sear. With the hammer cocked and bolt locked, the rifle is ready to fire again.

The trigger mechanism's mainspring is of the multiple-strand type. After the trigger has been released, its extension moves forward, and is retained by the sear. When the trigger is pulled, its hook moves the sear and disengages it from the hammer cocking cam. The hammer, actuated by the mainspring, pivots forward to strike the firing pin. The firing pin moves forward and strikes the primer, firing a round.

When the last round is spent and the bolt carrier slams the rear wall of the receiver, the magazine follower lifts the bolt catch to retain the whole mechanism in the open, rearward position. As soon as a new load of ammunition is supplied in the magazine, the operator pulls rearward and releases the retracting handle and the bolt group is free to travel forward to chamber a new round.

The construction of the gas regulator makes it possible to change the energy supplied to the gas piston. The regulator slot is normally set at "1", but if the rifle has been operated for some time without cleaning, or it has been extensively used under adverse conditions and the mechanisms become unreliable, the regulator should be set at "2". This procedure can be performed with the rim of a cartridge.

—V.S.

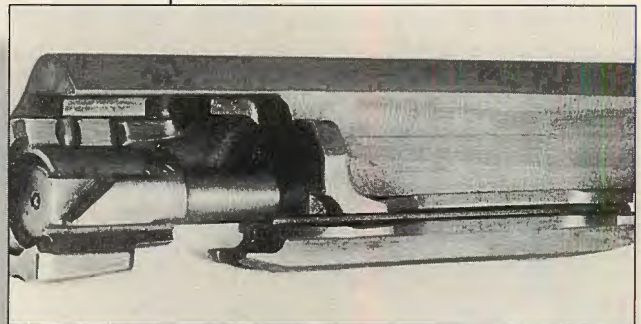
Arsenal, was a major step toward creating a more accurate weapon.

Such a dedicated sniper rifle, a version of the M1891 Mosin, was eventually developed in Russia in 1930. Other attempts were also made to produce dedicated sniper rifles, but the army returned to the well-proven model of 1891/30. Post-war attempts, such as variants of the SKS carbine, were also not successful.

Diplomatic Engineering

In his work on the sniper rifle, Dragunov would have to compromise between two major schools of thought: In order to enhance accuracy, he had to first minimize tolerances between moving parts, while maintaining a relatively higher weight, and keep a longer barrel. On the other hand, these tolerances had to be sufficient to provide trouble-free operation under adverse conditions (fluctuating temperature, high humidity, dust, etc.); and for better maneuverability of an operator, the rifle had to be made lighter and more compact. It was also important to reduce chamber pressure to optimize reliable automatic reloading (and accuracy of fire) — but for the sake of operational reliability the pressure had to be high.

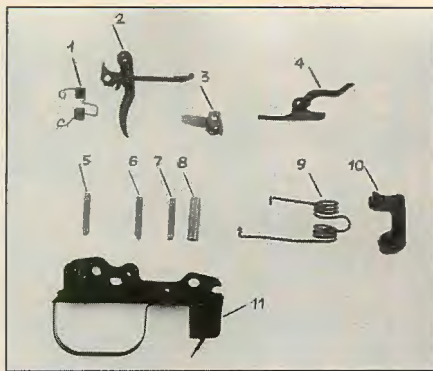
The new rifle, in caliber 7.62x54R, was ready for technical assessment and tests in 1959. The gun showed fair accuracy but its reliability, and especially durability of components, was inadequate. Although there is a common perception in the West that under the Soviets all defense production was so heavily monopolized that centralization left



Bolt with bolt-carrier assembly. The bolt and the bolt carrier are the principle components of the rifle action. The bolt carrier receives pressure of propellant gases through the connecting rod and actuates the whole mechanism of the rifle.

scant place for competition, the evolution of the SVD (*Snaiperskaya Vintovka Dragunova*) is an example to the contrary.

Parallel to Dragunov's team, another group of designers, headed by Alexander Konstantinov, worked on a similar project. The competition became pretty tough, as the stakes were high: The better of the two firearms would be adopted for service. Another year and a half was devoted to upgrading the first version of the SVD. Konstantinov also did his best, and the cost effectiveness of his rifle was even better than the Dragunov. In the end, however, the Army ruled in favor of superior accuracy potential,



The disassembled trigger mechanism shows 1—trigger spring, 2—trigger with extension, 3—sear, 4—autosafety sear, 5-6-7—sear and autosafety axis pins, 8—trigger axis pin, 9—multiple-strand main spring, 10—hammer, 11—trigger mechanism body.

incredible durability and effectiveness of fire — all qualities the SVD possessed. Finally, in 1963 the SVD became an issue weapon of the Soviet army sharpshooters.

Comparing the SVD with the M1891/30 shows the Dragunov has an effective rate of fire of 20 to 30 rounds per minute, while the Mosin 11891-30 only five. Accuracy — judged as 100% impacts in a 100mm circle — favors the SVD. A shoot-off with highly skilled marksmen showed the following relative accuracy, measured in millimeters:

Accuracy potential of SVD, model 1963, and Mosin-Nagant model 1891/30, R100:

Weapon	Range in meters					
	100	200	300	400	500	600
Mosin M1891/30	66.0	132.3	192.3	264.0	352.0	440.0
SVD, mod. 1963	60.0	118.7	177.5	237.5	307.5	395.0

This data tells us that the R100 factor of the SVD at 600 yards equals 360mm (14.17 inches): The requirement for sniper rifles in NATO is 15 inches at that range.

A new weapon is usually designed to match a specific type of ammunition, but with the SVD it was the opposite: A special sniper cartridge with a steel core was developed by a group of engineers headed by V. Sabelnikov; using this ammunition, the SVD showed accuracy far better than with existing standard cartridges.

Dragunov: A Modest Munitions Magician

When researching this article I talked with those in the Izhmash Design Bureau who had worked with Dragunov and intimately knew him and his family. I was told repeatedly that the article would be incomplete without mention of Dragunov as a man. In their opinion, his personal qualities were the foundation and extension of his technical talent.

Although an ordnance expert of the highest acclaim, Dragunov, as a personality, was described by his fellow designers as most unselfish and unpretentious in private life.

Continued on page 70

SPECIFICATIONS

SVDS

SVD

Caliber: 7.62x54R

7.62x54R

Ammunition: Rimmed, steel case; 7H2M bullet with steel core of 9.8g; powder charge of 3.1g.*

Probable killing range: 3,800m (4,158 yds)

3,800m (4,158 yds)

Sighting range:

-with open sights; 1,200m (1,313 yds)

1,200m (1,313 yds)

-with optical scope; 1,300m (1,422 yds)

1,300m (1,422 yds)

-with night-vision device; 300m (328 yds)

300m (328 yds)

Operation: Gas-operated with regulator, locked-breech with a rotary bolt, firing from the closed-bolt position.

Feed: Black, stamped sheet-steel 10-round, detachable, box-type magazine.

Weight with INI-1scope,

with empty magazine: 4.3kg (9.4 lb.)

4.68kg (10.2 lb.)

Length, overall: 1,220mm (48.0 inches)**

-with extended stock: 1,135mm (44.7 inches)

-with folded stock: 875mm (34.5 inches)

Barrel: Four-groove with right-hand twist of one turn in 240mm (9.4 inches).

Barrel lengths: 620mm (24.4 inches.)

565mm (22.3 inches)

Sights: Round-post-type front sight with protective hood, adjustable for both elevation and windage zero. Sliding tangent-type rear sight with an open U-shaped notch adjustable for elevation only, in 100-meter increments to the range of 1,200m (1,313 yards).

Finish: Black phosphate, with lacquer coating.

Furniture: Laminated frame-type buttstock and handguards.

Black fiberglass-reinforced ployamide handguards, pistol grip and buttstock-end.

Accessories: Sling, carrying pouch, bayonet, cleaning kit, optical sights and night-vision devices.

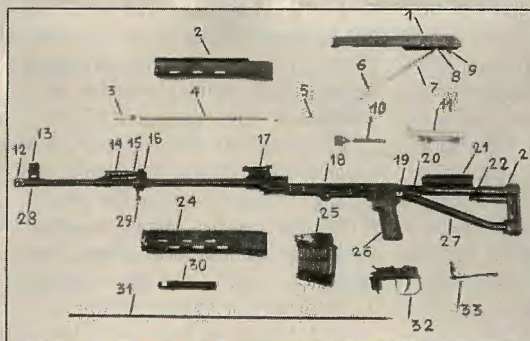
Status: Currently in production. Proceeding to series production.

Manufacturer: IZHMAH Joint Stock Company, 3 Derjabin Str., 426006 Izhevsk, Russia; fax and voice: 011-7-3412-784016 or 011-7-3412-785373; or telephone: 011-7-3412-786753.

* tracer and armor-piercing-incendiary types of ammunition are also usable.

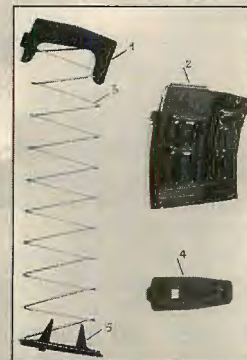
** rifle without bayonet.

—V.S.



SVDS, field-stripped. The components are: 1—top [bolt] cover, 2—right handguard, 3—piston, 4—connecting rod, 5-6-7—single-strand springs, 8—guiding rod, 9—top (bolt) cover lock, 10—bolt, 11—bolt carrier, 12—muzzle brake, 13—front sight hood, 14—gas regulator, 15—gas chamber, 16—handguard holding ring, 17—rear sight, 18—receiver, 19—buttstock lock knob, 20—sling swivel, 21—cheek plate (rest), 22—cheek plate lock, 23—buttplate, 24—left handguard, 25—magazine assembly, 26—pistol grip, 27—folding buttstock, 28—front sight base, 29—handguard retainer, 30—container with cleaning tools, 31—cleaning rod, 32—trigger mechanism, 33—safety lever.

(below) Magazine, disassembled: 1—follower, 2—magazine body, 3—spring, 4—bottom cover, 5—floor plate.





Since 1831, at the height of her colonial empire, the military interests of France have been well-served by her elite, competent Foreign Legion.

VIVA LA COMPAGNIE

...Honey, I Joined The Legion...

Text & Photos by Richard Lucas

I could just make out the group of 40 individuals getting off the bus in the early morning light. "Here they are, our Parisiens," said legion public relations officer Colonel Germain. The motley crew was ushered up the hill behind the main gate and formed into loose ranks at the induction center. "Qui parle francais?" asked the OIC. Only one hand went up and, as I was later to learn, this man had already been in the legion. The others, if chosen, would have three months to become operational in the language, no minor task, and then five years in which to master it.

Each man had presented himself at one of the 20 French Foreign Legion recruitment offices throughout the country — legion recruitment and enlistment is performed only in France. These recruits met the primary requirements: being between 17 and 40 years old, having some sort of identity papers and no obvious physical handicaps. They had been regrouped at a selection center, in this case Paris, and after preliminary tests spent the night on the train to

Marseilles. They had now arrived at legion headquarters at Aubagne in south central France. For some of them, Aubagne would become their spiritual home for the next five years, their first enlistment in the legion.

A legionnaire will pass through Aubagne several times during his career: His initial contract is signed before the general in the *Salle d'Honneur*. When transferred, he returns to receive new orders and for the obligatory visit to the legion museum. The 1st Regiment in Aubagne keeps the flame of some 150 years of legion tradition — a tradition that has led legionnaires to the forefront of every war fought by France since the legion was created in 1831.

After a briefing in various languages, the group was led to the basement where their personal possessions were cataloged and held, and civilian clothes exchanged for a green track-suit and tennis shoes.

For the next two weeks they would go through a series of interviews and tests to determine if they possess the qualifications and character to become legionnaires. The

decision on who is accepted or not lies in the hands of four men: the chief medical officer, security officer, vocations officer, and an army psychologist. They meet weekly to discuss candidates, each of whom they have personally interviewed, to arrive at one of three possible results. If the candidate is found apt he will be sent, after a week of preparatives, to legion basic training at the 4th Regiment in Castelnaudary. If judged inapt he may be definitively excluded, or considered temporarily inapt, to present himself again in six months. In the two latter cases he will be sent back to the recruitment post where his candidature originated, and back to civilian life.

Immigrants To A Nation Unto Itself

Like any nation open to foreigners, the legion has had its waves of immigration. There were Spaniards and Italians in the '30s, Germans after the war. Now, the majority of the candidates are from Eastern Europe. Col. Jacques Hogard, head of

recruitment, noted, "We can make some general observations: The Eastern Europeans are mainly here for economic reasons, the Japanese for prestige, Americans and Australians are looking for adventure, Frenchmen usually come because of family or social problems and so on. But in reality each legionnaire has his own personal reasons for being here and each man is treated as an individual without any regard given to nationality, race, or social class. Whatever the case may be, once a man becomes a legionnaire he leaves his past behind and starts a new life. With a new identity, a new future and, in a way, a new family."

Selection begins with extensive medical exams. Requirements are identical to those for French army non-commissioned officer candidates. In the two weeks that follow, each man is treated as an individual. His personal strengths, weaknesses, experience, and aptitudes all considered.

The only man with complete knowledge of the legionnaires' past is the security officer. "The thing I want most from the candidate is honesty. We are here primarily to protect the legionnaire. Many of these men have had problems in civilian life, either legal or financial, or they wouldn't be here. I'm not saying that we accept criminals. That may have been true 30 or 40 years ago, but in today's legion there is no place for that type of individual. But to clear the slate, to give the man the opportunity of a new start, we will, if we deem it necessary or at the request of the candidate, change his name and place and date of birth. You might say that his past stops here in this office; once he goes through that door he has a new identity. As security officer my job is to ensure that identity remains intact."



In a rite followed by shaved-headed trainees everywhere, new recruits pick up their gear and head for their quarters at Aubagne, France. Below, new legionnaires train in the remote mountains near Castelnaudary, France.



Sergeant Jean Dufour

This anonymity can be permanently retained by the legionnaire into civilian life or, after three years' service, he may request a regularization of identity and possible French citizenship.

Other criteria for selection are the vocational experience and aptitude of the candidate and his psychological fitness and motivation. The "psychologist" responsible for determining mental stability and motivation is Adjutant-Chef Marinsek, a veteran legionnaire with more than 15 years' service, who worked his way through the ranks. His decisions are based entirely on intuition. As Col. Germain put it, "Marinsek meets with each candidate two or three times in order to get a feeling about the individual. He often can't explain why or how but his decision, one way or the other, carries a lot of weight. ... This shows you how subjective the selection is in the legion."

Evaluating candidates' vocational background and aptitudes then matching them to present and future needs of the legion falls to Major Karli, vocations officer.

"There is a certain turnover in the legion and the gaps have to be filled but at present we have more candidates than we can use. We are now accepting about one out of eight, so you see the selection is fairly rigorous. The person's background is taken into consideration. Previous military experience is helpful but not necessary. Civilian experiences can be just as important. ... We may even accept someone fresh out of high school if we feel he has the right attitude and potential to make it as a legionnaire."

One unusual aspect of the tests was the lack of really rigorous physical tests. I asked Col. Germain. He told me, "No one walks in here a legionnaire. We figure that it takes two years to get a man up to that level both physically and mentally. Almost all of these men have had problems somewhere along the line or they wouldn't be here. We



That the legion is a unit steeped in its own rich history and tradition is illustrated by these sappers in parade dress.

have to assume that in one way or another they are fragile. Our goal is not to break people but to progressively build them up so that, eventually, they can function as legionnaires.”

In the legion, be it here in Aubagne, in Castelnaudary or later in the operational regiments, orders are rarely, if ever, shouted. Where I had expected the aggressive barking of drill sergeants, like something out of *Full Metal Jacket*, I was to find a sort of calm serenity coupled with iron-hard discipline. The legion is often compared to the U.S. Marines. In reality, the mood of pensive meditation one finds is much closer to the spirit of a monastic order of warrior knights, the Templars, for example, than the rowdy gung-hoism of Camp Lejeune.

The Contract

Having passed two weeks of selection, the candidates turn in their tracksuits for French army fatigues and the traditional legion green beret. Selected to start basic training, the men go through a week of preparatives and once a training section is formed, they are sent to Castelnaudary, the “University” of the legion, in the southwest of France. Before leaving for basic, the recruits are assembled in the *Salle d'Honneur* and in front of the commanding officer they recite the code of honor and sign enlistment papers — the “contract” as it is called in the legion. For the past three weeks the candidates could back out, with



The training facility at Castelnaudary includes facilities for weapons training — in photo a new legionnaire learns various types and positions of fire on the standard 5.56mm FAMAS rifle.

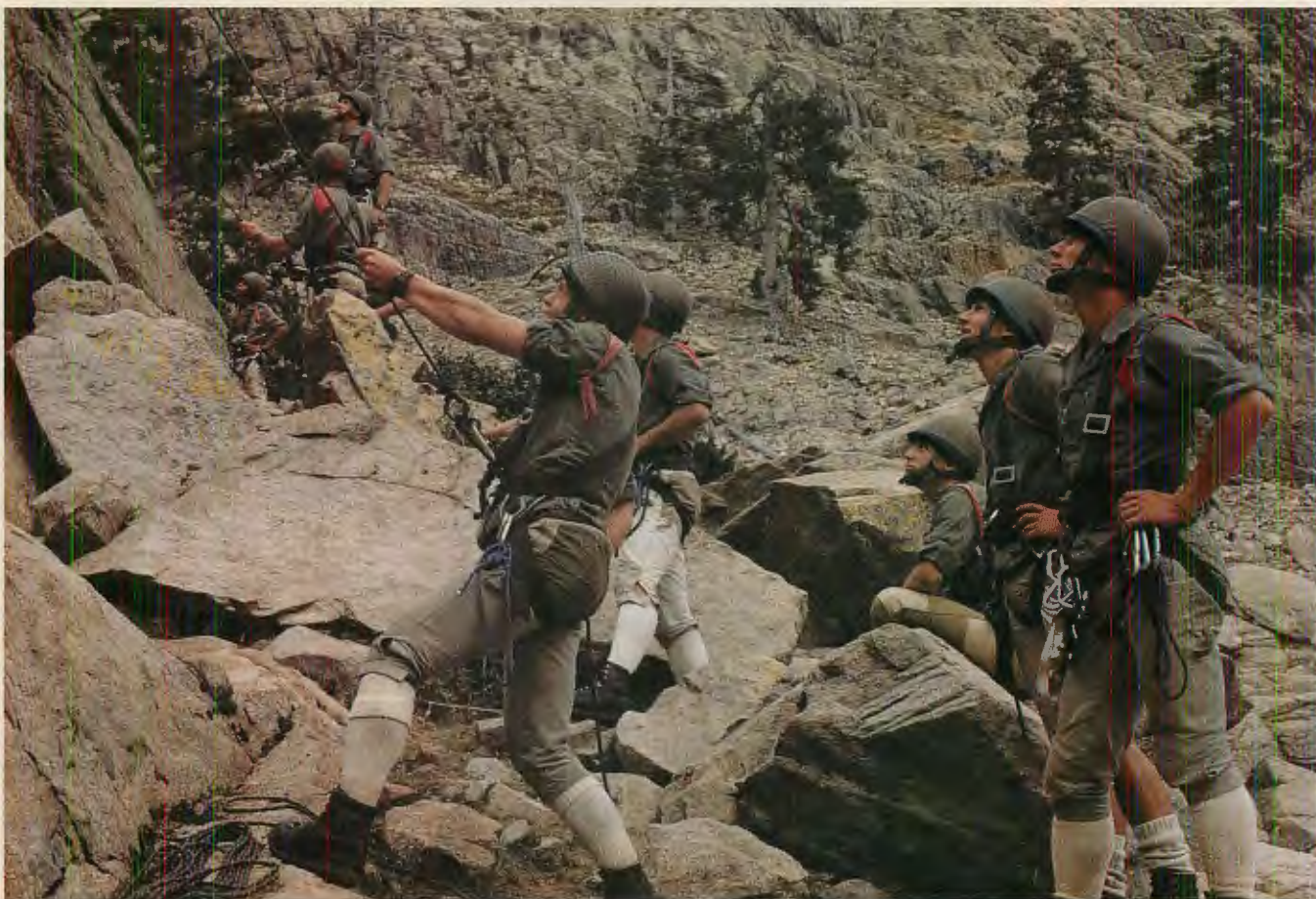
no questions asked. With the initial signing of the contract the recruit has taken the first official step in becoming a legionnaire. During the 15 weeks of basic training he may decide that the legion is not for him and the contract can still be annulled. But when he has completed basic and passes through headquarters again on the way to his first regimental assignment, his contract is finalized and placed in the legion archives.

When a would-be legionnaire presents himself at one of the recruitment offices, he is shown a video aptly entitled *The Contract*. The film is a general introduction to the legion and at the same time outlines the terms of his enlistment contract, the obligations and guidelines a legionnaire must follow during his career.

In general, the legionnaire has the same status, pay scale and follows the same code of discipline as soldiers in the regular French army. However *The Contract* does contain certain guidelines adapted particularly for the legion.

Pay is determined by rank, service, and special duty. After 15 years the legionnaire is entitled to a pension paid either in France or abroad in the currency of his choosing.

After three years he may ask for French nationality. After one year he is entitled to 15 days leave, two years 20 days, three years 25 days, four years and more 40 days. He may take his leave abroad if his papers are in order.



Legionnaires carry out mountain training in the rugged mountains surrounding Calvi, on the French island of Corsica.

After five years he may wear civilian clothes off duty. He may own a car if he has been in for five years and is a corporal. He may marry with permission of his CO, if his papers are in order and if he is a non-commissioned officer or corporal chef, or a corporal with seven years of service, or a first-class legionnaire with more than 10 years' service.

The provisions of the contract codify the attachment and the dependence of the legionnaire on the legion and, to a certain extent, limit his contact with the civilian world outside. They are accompanied by certain unwritten traditions to which the legionnaire is expected to adhere. For example, all legionnaires are expected to be on base for Christmas and celebrate within the cama-

raderie of other legionnaires. The legion motto *Legio Patria Nostra* ("The legion is our homeland") exemplifies this feeling. It is expressed by the men themselves when they speak of "la grande famille." They may be serving France but, first and foremost, a legionnaire serves the legion.

Castelnaudary

At Castelnaudary each volunteer is issued basic equipment, then sent to one of four farms in the rugged, desolate countryside. Here, cut-off from the outside world, he begins the first steps in the making of a legionnaire.

At Raissac, one of four such farms, CO Captain Darras explained the procedure. "The recruits spend one month here on the

farm. Without any outside contacts or distractions, they concentrate on the basics: French language, understanding basic commands and learning the essential vocabulary, care of equipment, care of oneself, intensive physical training. And, most importantly, it gives them the opportunity to begin to work as a team, together, in close daily contact. They begin to rely on themselves and, at the same time, their fellow legionnaires."

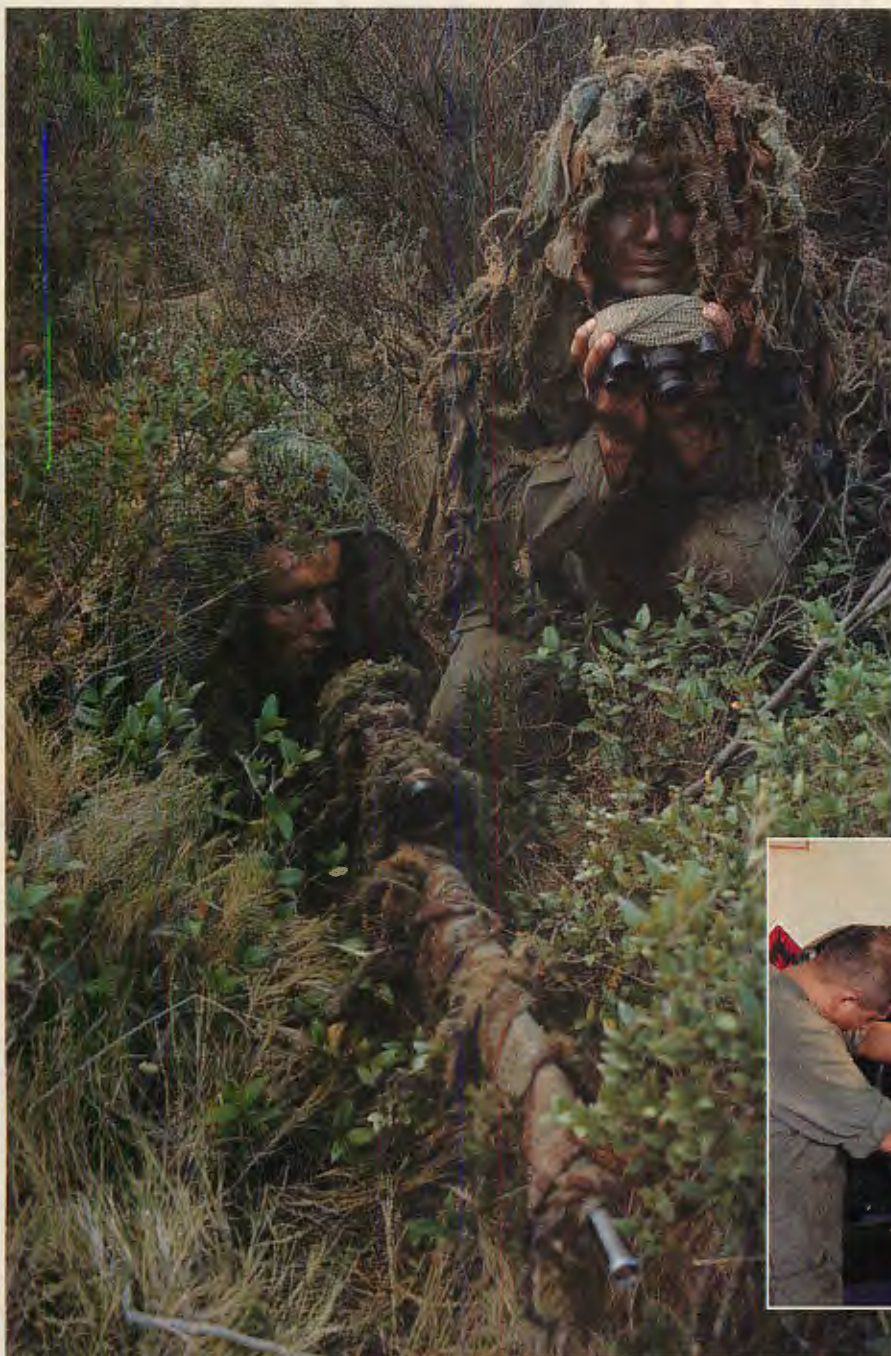
The month of isolation is concluded by a tough two- or three-day march through rugged terrain that usually ends at some significant site. At this moment the recruits are awarded the famous kepi blanc, the white cap that has come to symbolize the legion.

They return to the main camp at Castelnaudary to continue training for three months. During this time they acquire a working knowledge of French, become proficient in basic weaponry, continue physical conditioning, and become familiar with the regulations and traditions of the legion.

Besides the three basic-training companies and the main command group, Castelnaudary includes a company for forming NCOs and another company to train technical specialists. If a man continues in the legion he will undoubtedly come back to "Castel" either to continue his career as an NCO or to attend a specialists school in ammo, weaponry, computers, mechanics, engineering or other advanced skills.

Upon completion of basic, legionnaires return to the Aubagne headquarters to close their contract and be assigned to an operational regiment. They will go either to the 1st REC (armor) at Orange, the 2nd REI (motorized infantry) in Nimes, the 6th REG (combat engineers) in Avignon or the prestigious 2nd REP (paratroops) on the French island of Corsica. Or, they may receive overseas duty with the 5th Regiment based in Tahiti, the 13th Demi-Brigade in Djibouti (east Africa), the DLEM detachment at

Continued on page 66



Sniper team armed with FR-F2 7.62x51 rifles trains on Corsica. As ground-pounders everywhere, the legion trains continually — but a great deal of the training for this elite unit would qualify as hands-on, as they serve the interests of France around the globe.



No longer as refuge for those who couldn't make it in civilian life, the legion is a thoroughly modern force whose men are trained in skills ranging from computers to automotive technology.

All Aboard

The Federal Express

Al Woodbridge Railroaded By Anti-Gun Judge

by James L. Pate



Gun owners rally outside federal courthouse in Tacoma — a converted railroad station — in support of “railroaded” gun dealer “Big Al” Woodbridge. (inset) Stephanie Cole and her son Joey were among supporters of Al Woodbridge, protesting Woodbridge’s politically motivated prosecution.

Tacoma News Tribune, by Russ Carmack.
courtesy Lori Tkaczak

The place of Al Woodbridge's woes is heavy with an eerie symbolism: an old train station converted into a federal courthouse in Tacoma, Washington.

"It was appropriate, because Big Al got railroaded," said Mike Peterson, a former Marine Corps officer, referring to Woodbridge's conviction in 1994 on 12 counts of illegally possessing machine guns. It was based on a probe initiated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in 1989.

Peterson is but one of thousands of supporters outraged by what they see as a gross miscarriage of justice against an innocent man by a court system in which the constitutional guarantees to a fair and impartial trial have been corrupted by today's politically correct anti-gun agenda.

The Woodbridge travesty goes far beyond his nightmarish sojourn to the bar of ersatz justice in an old train station. The facts in the case of the *United States of America vs. Allan Edward Woodbridge* are baffling and complex, as surreal as a Franz Kafka novel.

For Big Al, though, this story is not fiction, but a cruel reality. A former gunsmith, lobbyist and law-and-order champion who had no previous criminal record, he is now a convicted felon who will be unable to own or possess any firearms when released from federal prison, scheduled for 3 December, to a halfway house in Seattle.

A dozen Washington state legislators, three county sheriffs, Seattle police officers



Al Woodbridge testifies at federal trial — four years after the case was thrown out of state court for lack of evidence — in which judge pronounced him guilty while jury was still out deliberating.

Tacoma News Tribune, by Russ Cormack.

and firefighters, all of whom were longtime friends of Big Al, signed affidavits swearing to his status as an honest, law-abiding citizen. Indeed, much of his gun business was with police agencies. All were condemned by U.S. District Court Judge Jack E. Tanner Sr. for "poor judgment."

Tanner, a liberal Carter appointee known for his outspoken opinions against the private ownership of firearms, rejected 11 of the 12 defense witnesses Woodbridge's lawyers planned to call. The one defense witness was limited by the judge to 30 minutes. Jurors did not get to hear testimony from firearms experts who believe ATF agents used heavily oiled bolts and other questionable techniques to get Woodbridge's weapons to malfunction in such a way as to appear to fire full auto.

Tanner even rejected the introduction of Big Al's Federal Firearms License. Woodbridge's FFL was for the manufacture of Title II weapons: machine guns, short-barreled rifles and shotguns, sound suppressors and "any other weapon" under the National Firearms Act (NFA).

Tanner came out of retirement specifically to hear the Woodbridge case: It had already been assigned to another judge. Tanner compared Al Woodbridge to Al Capone, the Chicago mob leader, and referred pointedly in court to the notorious machine-gun massacre of rival gangsters on St. Valentine's Day, 1929.

With the federal court jury still out deliberating, unsequestered and thus subject to taint by the news media and other outside sources, Judge Tanner told Woodbridge in open court that "there is no question in my mind ... that you are guilty." Tanner's unusual and obviously prejudicial comment was broadcast on radio and TV and published in area newspapers.

A day later, the jury voted to convict on all counts. Tanner imposed what some described as "a semi-automatic sentence" of 57 months, the maximum under federal sentencing guidelines. "You did it for greed," Tanner said, implying Woodbridge had sold machine guns, although no evidence of that was presented during trial.

Blatant Judicial Prejudice

"There is absolutely no justification for possessing a machine gun," Tanner said. "They were designed to kill people, many at a time." Woodbridge's guns could have been obtained by a "13- or 14-year-old, who could have taken them to school and shot up a classroom."

A vocal and active supporter of law enforcement, here Woodbridge speaks at an NRA event promoting CrimeStrike. Woodbridge's best clientele were lawmen, and he was a tireless champion of law and order — but the judge compared Al Woodbridge to '30s gangster Al Capone. It's the criminal, stupid, not Al Woodbridge.



courtesy Lori Tkaczak



courtesy Lori Tkaczak

Woodbridge helps friend's son fire a BAR at an Oregon range: Federal judge characterized Big Al as a merchant of death unconcerned with the welfare of women and children.

Somewhat inflammatory, *n'est pas?*

In fact, Big Al had already been tried four years earlier in Washington state court on the same charges. The state's case was so flimsy that, even without any evidence pre-

sented by Woodbridge's defense attorneys, that judge dismissed the charges *with prejudice*, meaning the state could not refile the charges. Ten of the 12 state jurors remained afterward to talk to the defendant, telling

him they would have voted to acquit, even if the defense did not present a case, because the evidence lacked credibility.

But the government refused to return the \$30,000 in firearms confiscated.

"Basically, they told me that they do not return drugs to drug dealers and they *were not* going to return guns to a gun dealer," Woodbridge told *Soldier Of Fortune* in one of several telephone interviews from federal prison.

So Woodbridge filed a civil suit to force the government to return his property. When that suit was about to be heard, Assistant U.S. Attorney William H. Redkey Jr. indicted Big Al on the very same charges that had been thrown out of state court four years earlier. Woodbridge, who has never wavered in his insistence that he has not violated a single gun law, concedes he was too confident about being acquitted of the federal charges.

That confidence "was based on my innocence," he said. "But that's why people should take notice, not because it's me, but because the very same thing could happen to *them*. People always think it can't happen to them. I'm proof that it can happen to *you*. No owner of any semiautomatic is safe from being prosecuted for possessing a quote-unquote machine gun because of what happened to me."

At 6-feet-2-inches and more than 300 pounds, it's obvious how Woodbridge got the nickname Big Al. With his large frame,



courtesy Lori Tkaczak

In a still photo made from a video, ATF Special Agent Ben Silva test-fires one of Woodbridge's weapons. Before witnesses, Silva bragged at the range that he had prosecuted more than 20 people on the basis of trigger malfunctions. Silva is now working in an undercover capacity.

long, bushy white beard and affable manner, he reminds one of Santa Claus — a role he's played for kids a few times in the past. Big Al, 52, also has taught kids about guns: about how to handle them safely and shoot them competently.

A Political Prisoner

A gunsmith since 1978, Woodbridge's passion for firearms led him to volunteer as a legislative lobbyist for the Washington State Rifle and Pistol Association in 1982. He was so effective that in 1988, he was hired as a paid lobbyist for the Gun Owners Action League, a post he held until his federal trial in January 1994.

"There's two theories about why" the ATF decided to go after Al Woodbridge, he said. "One was my political activism. Between 1988, and 1992, we did not have a single anti-gun law passed in the state of Washington."

The other theory is there were 12 NFA Title II manufacturers and dealers in Washington. But "I was pushing my beliefs. I was willing to sell my product and educate the public on NFA."

Woodbridge was "a leading pro-gun legislative lobbyist," said Steve Halbrook, author, Second Amendment scholar and gun lawyer. "He was not a flaming radical. He was very reasonable and very effective. And he was well respected, even by those in the state legislature who opposed his views.

"His conviction is a terrible injustice," said Halbrook, who was not involved in Woodbridge's defense. "The judge was extremely biased in court. His wrongful conviction goes to the heart of our judicial process and the supposed constitutional guarantees of the 5th and 6th amendments; the right to call his own witnesses... the basic right to a fair trial.

"Al Woodbridge is a political prisoner in the truest sense of the definition," Halbrook said.

The Woodbridge conviction — which has been upheld at the appellate level — is "a blowout for the Bill of Rights," said Larry Pratt, head of Gun Owners of America. "This case comes straight out of Alice in Wonderland."

It began with the shipment of some parts for a *Fabrique Nationale* FAL from Ontario, Canada, to Woodbridge's shop, "Big Al's Guns," located in Sumner, a small town near Tacoma. Funny thing, though. Al had not ordered these parts.

The FAL parts "were a surprise to me," Woodbridge said. "The simple thing would have been to call Canada and ask who ordered the things. I had not ordered them and did not know they were coming to my shop."

Woodbridge said he has since learned that "a friend" from Arkansas who was a Title II manufacturer ordered the parts while traveling in Canada, and had them shipped to Woodbridge's business because he planned to be in Washington to visit, Big Al said. He intended to pick up the parts and take them to a customer in California.

A Set-Up, Or Someone's Stupid Mistake?

Woodbridge declined to name the man. "I have so many friends who are suspicious of this guy, but the guy's been a friend of mine for 10 or 15 years. I don't know what to say."

On inspecting the package's contents at the Seattle-Tacoma airport, U.S. Customs

agents consulted the ATF. The ATF agent, Benjamin Silva, wasn't sure either. He called a Guns South gunsmith, who speculated that they "could be" machine gun parts, but said he couldn't be sure without seeing them. (It turned out the FAL parts were *not* restricted in any way.)

This is where the case gets complicated. Washington is the only state west of the Mississippi in which the private possession

Never Pet A Tiger

Sam Earl, 50, had always run an honest business, IWI Firearms, in Joliet, Ill. Over the years, he had tipped off the cops to any customer who obviously had criminal intent. He "knew just about everybody from Chicago" with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, said ATF Special Agent Mike Casali.

Over the years, Earl had helped law-enforcement agencies arrest crooked cops, and he tipped off police when an aspiring politician tried to hire someone to kill the politician's wife. Earl was also a good citizen when a member of Chicago's Mafia wanted to illegally modify semi-automatic rifles to full-auto. The mobster went to prison, thanks in large part to Sam Earl.



Earl had also helped in the arrest of gang-bangers by the dozen, Casali said, including one who brazenly walked in, still bleeding from a bullet wound in the face, and used his girlfriend to make a straw purchase of an AK-47 rifle to use against the street punk who'd just shot him. Earl advised the would-be buyer, a convicted felon, to return in a couple of hours to pick up the weapon. When he did, Casali and other plain-clothes ATF agents were posing as customers. The bad guy, got the gun, some

ammo and left, followed into the parking lot by the agents. Earl grabbed a loaded rifle and went to the door, to provide cover in case his agent buddies needed it. That's the kind of stand-up guy Sam Earl is.

Earl's mistake was refusing to lie for the ATF, he said. Casali and Casali's wife, Diane Klipfel, also an ATF agent, ran afoul of the bureau when they became whistle-blowers against corrupt cops. (See "Rise And Fall Of The ATF," May '96; "Dirty Cops And Robbers," June '96; and "Windy City Scapegoats," July '96). Earl was solicited by ATF to provide any evidence that would damage the credibility of the husband-and-wife whistle-blowers. Earl refused, he said because, "Mike and Diane are straight-arrow, by-the-book cops. They're honest as the day is long."

The ATF went after Earl's business. They discovered he had forgotten to pay a \$45 state franchise tax to keep his corporation registered. Since his Federal Firearms License was issued to the corporation, agents told Earl, they must retroactively revoke his FFL and padlock his business. Unless, of course, he could come up with some dirt on Casali and Klipfel. No dice, Sam said.

The Gun Gestapo came after Earl and his daughter, who helped him run the business. They threatened to put her in jail and place her kids in foster homes.

"I can fight them, but no way will I risk my grandchildren," Earl said. Consequently, he lost his business, including an inventory of more than \$500,000. He lost his house and his life savings. Finally, under all the stress, he lost his health, suffering two heart attacks.

Earl now lives in Reeds Springs, Ark., about 8 miles from Branson, Mo., where he lives in a trailer owned by his mother. He's opened a small gun shop, the Old Barn Gun Shop, but he can't even afford a phone for his business or his residence.

"I thought I was a friend of ATF," Earl lamented. "Now, because I wouldn't lie for them, I'm destitute, flat-ass busted. I'd hate to see what they do to their enemies."

—JLP

of machine guns is illegal. But other weapons regulated under the National Firearms Act — short-barreled shotguns, short-barreled rifles, sound suppressors and “any other” weapon — are legal as long as the \$200 federal transfer tax has been paid.

As a federally licensed Title II manufacturer in Washington state, Woodbridge could legally possess and manufacture all except machine guns and machine-gun parts. In fact, Woodbridge owned a legally registered private collection of machine guns, which he had to keep stored in Oregon.

Agent Silva took his suspicions to the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department. The sheriff, a gun-control advocate, had butted heads with Woodbridge in the past over pending firearms legislation. Big Al had once made fun of the sheriff’s obvious ignorance of weapons after the lawman, displaying an UZI, did not know how to open the bolt, and then inserted a 30-round magazine into an AR-15 backwards before posing for a photograph.

The mysterious FAL parts were used as probable cause to get a search warrant for Big Al’s shop and home. The state search warrant was dated 21 September 1989. It alleged an offense on 22 September. The parts were not actually delivered until 25 September, when Special Agent Silva and several deputies waited nearby.

Big Al was away. His wife, Lori Tkaczak, signed for the package, placed it inside the storm door of the business and returned to their house, 75 yards away. Agent Silva and the deputies arrived moments later and handcuffed Lori. She said they all but ignored the package, more interested in two AR-15s they saw in a bedroom.

Instead of pulling the bolts back to make sure the guns were unloaded, Silva pulled the pin that allowed him to separate the weapons’ upper and lower receivers, so he could visually inspect the trigger mechanism, hammer and other internal parts. The weapons, manufactured by Olympic Arms, had M16 hammers and other military parts, less expensive than AR-15 parts.

“It was a pretextual search ... a fishing expedition,” Halbrook said. “No reasonable person disassembles a weapon to make sure it’s unloaded.”

Semiauto “Machine Guns”

But the guns were not fully automatic, so they were not illegal, Woodbridge has consistently claimed. One had a serial number, “USMC 33,” one of a 150-gun production run. The other, a carbine version AR-15, had a personalized serial number, “Big Al,” a special issue bestowed upon Woodbridge because he sold so many of the Olympic weapons.



courtesy Lori Tkaczak

Big Al, flanked by his daughter Jessica and wife Lori Tkaczak, at federal correctional facility where he is being held. His health has deteriorated during his incarceration, and he now has to walk with a cane.

Woodbridge told *SOF* the Olympic Arms “Big Al” AR-15 had a hammer, trigger, disconnect, bolt and selector that were M16 parts, but that all the other parts were standard AR-15 parts. It did not have an auto-sear, nor did any of the other weapons seized.

Olympic “cast its guns with bumps by the selector switch so it can’t go into that position,” Woodbridge said. (This fact cast in a dubious light claims by ATF that the Branch Davidians in the Waco case converted the Olympic Arms AR-15 receivers bought by David Koresh and Henry McMahon.)

Among other items besides weapons

seized by Silva were some Sten-gun tubes and the remains of a Thompson submachine-gun receiver that had been cut in two with a torch. ATF technicians later put the Thompson receiver together with duct tape, and used other parts in the ATF inventory to construct a weapon that the ATF claims fired a bullet. Based on this, ATF claimed the cut-up Thompson receiver constituted possession of a machine gun. ATF also claimed the Sten gun tubes were “machine guns,” even though they had no rifling, no machine work, no welds, no barrel extension or magazine well.

Other government claims about the weapons were inconsistent. For instance, a Palmetto Arms BH15A1 rifle was said by the prosecution in the state trial to only fire in the full-auto mode. But at Woodbridge’s federal trial, the prosecutor said the same weapon fired both in the full- and semiauto modes.

Woodbridge has never wavered in his contention that every weapon seized by the government in the raid on his home and business was legal, and not one of them was capable of full-auto fire when lawmen seized them. If they were able to shoot full-auto, he said, it’s because they were modified or manipulated by government agents after their seizure.

“The worst thing was that when I went down to look at the stuff in Tacoma, the Pierce County sheriff wouldn’t allow me into the evidence room to inspect” any of the items seized from his home and business.

Kicking A Sleeping Dog

The sheriff refused to return Woodbridge’s weapons, and Big Al sued. As the suit was about to come to trial, he was indicted by the

feds on the same charges that had been thrown out of state court four years earlier for lack of evidence.

As Al and his lawyers were riding up the elevator on the first day of the federal criminal trial, they were handed a letter from the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department. The letter said part of the evidence, the Sten-gun tubes, had been inadvertently “destroyed.” Two of the seized weapons — the “Big Al” AR-15 and a custom-made H&K 94 — were “missing.”

In 18 years and more than 19,000 weapons held in the sheriff’s evidence locker, these were the only two guns ever “lost,” the sheriff later said.



Big Al visits with a local lawman in his former gunshop in Sumner, Washington.

courtesy Lori Tkaczak

U.S. District Court Judge Tanner later implied that Woodbridge was responsible for the missing weapons — even though Big Al had been denied admission to the property room, much less been allowed to handle the guns.

At Woodbridge's resentencing hearing — his time was reduced to 46 months — Tanner raised the question on "whether any of the machine guns he sold ... have caused death. It is likely if his business had continued that sooner or later human life would be lost. Consequently, his sentence at the high end of the guideline range is warranted."

Woodbridge objected that he had never sold a machine gun to anyone.

"There is still the machine guns missing out there someplace," Tanner retorted.

"I didn't have anything to do with that, sir," Woodbridge replied, according to court records. "I didn't lose it in the property room. I had no way to get it out of the property room."

"You had [the guns] in the first place," Tanner responded. "It's missing from the Pierce County Sheriff's evidence locker ... [Woodbridge] made it possible for somebody to take it. Because if he hadn't had it ... it wouldn't disappear. [Woodbridge] made it possible for somebody to take" the two missing guns.

One of Big Al's attorneys objected to Tanner's assertion that Woodbridge was responsible for the missing guns. The lawyer cited as an example an unrelated state case in which he ended up in possession of a firearm which the lawyer subsequently turned over to the police department in Bellevue, Wash.

"Is the [judge] suggesting that somehow, if the Bellevue Police Department thereafter lost that weapon ... is the court suggesting that either morally or legally I'm responsible?" the lawyer asked.

"I don't see the analogy," Tanner retorted. "You're talking about weapons in a generic term. Whether it was an atom bomb ... the record is undisputed that [Woodbridge] had possession of that [sic] machine gun and it was seized by law enforcement and then it disappeared. ... Do you think Santa Claus came down the chimney and took it?"

"It was a clear enough innuendo," Woodbridge told *SOF*, citing his resemblance to Santa Claus. "How the hell do I steal guns out of the Pierce County property room?"

Sleight Of Hand "Evidence"

Another glaring discrepancy in the case, which Tanner refused to allow before the jury, was a statement made by agent Silva at a range when he test-fired the seized weapons. In a video shown to the jury, Silva appears to read the serial number and type of each weapon, followed by the words "machine gun," as if those words were imprinted on the receiver.

What the jury did *not* hear was evidence that Silva had told a woman in another case that he was particularly adept at lubricating bolts on semi-automatic rifles, thus causing them to apparently fire in a full-auto mode.

Nor did Tanner allow the jury to hear about a conversation on 2 July 1991, at the test-fire range in the Woodbridge case, when agent Silva bragged that he had obtained machine-gun convictions against more than 20 defendants based on malfunctioning multiple-discharges caused by lubrication or manipulation of internal parts.

"I was amazed at how candid he was about that," said Don Manning, a Yakima gun-shop owner who, with Woodbridge, Woodbridge's wife and Seattle firefighter John Hubbard, witnessed Silva's statement.

"Guys like Ben Silva scare the heck out

of me," Hubbard told *SOF*. "I thought that was very peculiar, that he'd be so brazen about it. I tell people to open the transcript of Al's trial to any page they want, read three pages and tell me he got a fair trial."

As a matter of fact, Silva's claim about the prosecution of defendants for possession of "machine guns" based on malfunctioning semiautomatic rifles was picked up by a video recorder running nearby.

Woodbridge told Silva that then-ATF Director Steve Higgins had said such malfunctions as "slam fires" using soft primers would not be prosecuted as machine guns.

"Do you know what the definition of machine-gun fire is under federal law?" agent Silva asks on the video soundtrack.

Slam Fire vs. Slam Dunk

"We also know what Steven Higgins has said about slam-fires, Ben," Woodbridge said. "We're not ignorant folks here."

"What does he say?" Silva asked.

"He says you do not do that," Woodbridge said. "He said he considers guns that malfunction or slam-fire to be mechanically defective guns."

"Well, I've prosecuted about 20 people for the same thing," Silva said.

Woodbridge, who already has spent \$160,000 for attorneys, has no money to appeal his conviction to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"It appears I'll be a felon from now on," he told *SOF*, his voice cracking with emotion. "Besides, with Clinton's new terrorism bill, I only have until Sept. 8 [1996] to file *habeas corpus*, or I lose the right" to further appeal.

"I just couldn't afford justice," he said sadly. "I sit in here and read about [President] Clinton whining about being in debt and I wonder what the hell's going on in this country." ❧

DONATIONS NEEDED

Al Woodbridge's wife and daughter have been struggling to survive financially while he has been imprisoned, and still face thousands of dollars in unpaid legal bills when he gets out. Your donations will be most appreciated. Send your contributions to

**Al Woodbridge
P.O. Box 1066
Sumner, WA 98390**

(Readers might like to know that the single most frequent contributor to *SOF's* Books For The Troops drive — concluded recently — with parcels carefully wrapped and sent at his own expense from his address at the federal slam in Sheridan, Oregon, has been Al Woodbridge. Now it's our turn to be unselfish. Send what you can, but send it quickly.)

SIG P239



UNDERCOVER COMPACT

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

The number of so-called "compact" handguns currently available is almost overwhelming. Two principal factors are responsible for this: the surge of concealed-carry legislation enacted throughout the country and the ban on magazines holding more than 10 rounds. That the anti-gun, liberal buffoons who forced a totally worthless magazine ban on us should be partially responsible for the proliferation of a category of "easily concealable" firearms they consider especially sinister is more than a little ironic.

The SIG-Sauer pistols distributed by SIGARMS Inc., are noted for their exceptional quality and reliability, with operating features common to the entire series and all at relatively high prices. Their new compact P239 model varies from these characteris-

tics in only one regard. Carrying a suggested retail price of \$575, the P239 is priced significantly lower than the other pistols in this series. *Soldier Of Fortune* was recently provided a P239 chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge for extensive test and evaluation.

Several decades ago, the famous Swiss firm of *Schweizerische Industrie-Gesellschaft* (SIG) combined with the German firm J.P. Sauer and Sohn to produce a series of military and police pistols. The pistols were designed by SIG at Neuhausen Rhinefalls and are manufactured at the Sauer works, which moved from Suhl to Eckernforde, Thuringia, in 1951. The marriage allowed SIG to slide around the stringent Swiss regulations controlling military small-arms exports and provided Sauer with

a vehicle to re-enter the lucrative (in that time frame) field of military armaments.

During World War II, Sauer produced K98k rifles of highly regarded quality, the legendary Luftwaffe drilling and the unusual 38H ("H" for hammer fire) pistol (caliber 7.65mm/.32 ACP). This clever hammer-type pistol was provided with a lever on the left side of the frame for both cocking and uncocking the hammer. As a result, the pistol could be fired either double-action or single-action at any time by manipulation of the lever only.

SIG is equally noted, not only for its lavish-quality P210 pistol, but for 125 years of robust, although often over-engineered infantry rifles and some rather peculiar machine-gun designs. These latter deficiencies were no doubt a consequence of the lack of experienced users' input, as Switzerland was last at war in 1814.

In 1975, the Swiss armed forces adopted the SIG-Sauer P220 as the Pistole 75 in 9mm Parabellum. This pistol, chambered in 9mm Parabellum, 7.65 Parabellum (.30 Luger), .45 ACP or .38 Super, was marketed in the United States by Browning of Morgan, Utah, under the name BDA (Browning Double-Action) and for a short time only by Hawes National Corp., of Van Nuys, Calif. Eventually, the pistol was imported by Interarms under the SIG-Sauer designation.

In 1978, the SIG-Sauer P225 was introduced. Slightly smaller and lighter than the P220, it carries one less round in the maga-

zine (eight instead of nine). The magazine catch/release was relocated from the heel of the butt to the left side of the frame at the rear of the trigger guard. The grip portion of the frame was reshaped. And, an automatic firing-pin lock, which can only be deactivated by intentionally pulling the trigger, was installed to optimize safety. This combination of a locked firing pin and positive hammer rebound into a safety intercept notch prevents accidental discharge of a chambered round, even if the pistol is dropped with the hammer cocked, half-cocked or down. Designed as a police service pistol, the P225 was one of three standardized by the West German government, where it was known as the P6. The other two were the Walther P5 (a compact and redesigned version of the P38) and the Heckler & Koch PSP (P7).

The P226 was conceived in 1980 specifically as SIG's candidate in the American XM9 trials. It differs from the P220 in magazine capacity (15 rounds), the location of the magazine catch/release, and the shape of its grips. It was entered into the XM9 trials by the Saco Defense Systems Division of Maremont Corp., of Saco, Maine. For a number of reasons, some still controversial, it lost and the Beretta 92F was adopted as the M9. In 1988, the P228, in essence a P225 with increased magazine capacity (13 rounds), was introduced. It was adopted several years ago by U. S. armed forces as the M11 for issue where a compact design is desirable.

In 1991, I and a few others were shown a prototype of the SIG-Sauer series chambered for the .40 S&W cartridge. Several manufacturers rushed to introduce pistols chambered for the .40 S&W. This proved to be a mistake, as this round amplified the forces working against the reciprocating parts more than anticipated and increased the slide velocity by a considerable margin. Heckler & Koch spent several years developing a design that could withstand these additional forces. Four years ago H&K introduced the .40 S&W P7M10 (now discontinued) and, two years later, the USP, also chambered for that round. Both of these pistols feature heavy, massive slides designed to absorb the increased recoil forces and reduce the slide velocity.

SIGARMS introduced their .40 S&W pistol, called the P229, during this same delayed time frame. Slides of previous models in this series were heavy-gauge steel stampings with the breech block as a separate component pinned in place and an electron-beam-welded muzzle bushing. To increase its strength substantially, the P229's slide is a machined stainless-steel investment casting (with a black-oxide finish) manufactured in the United States. Other components, including the frame, were manufactured in Germany.

Concealable SIGs

The new compact P239's slide, frame and barrel are manufactured in the United



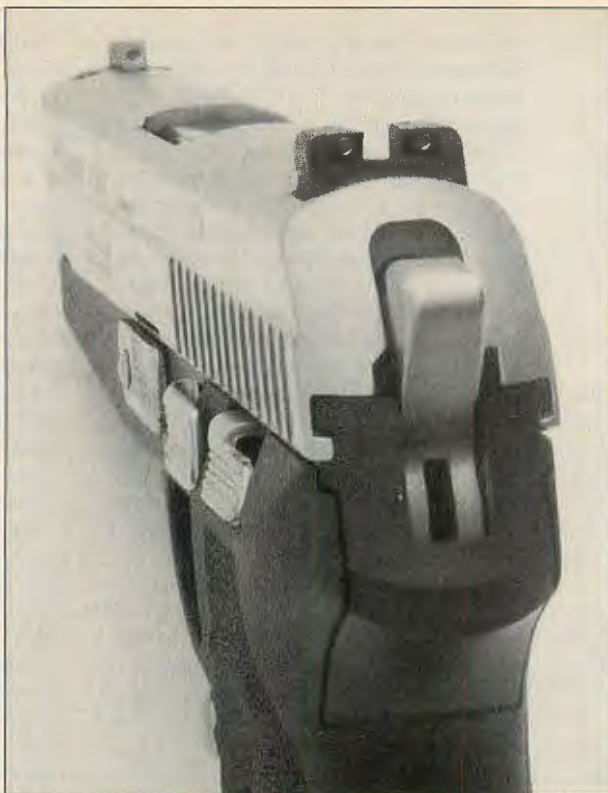
Custom SIG-Sauer P239 was given a Level One deluxe package by Tony Jimakas that includes an action job that consists of throating the barrel, polishing both the barrel's feed ramp and the locking block's cartridge guide and deburring and polishing the slide's interior surfaces and most of the internal components in the frame assembly. The slide and several other components were hard-chromed by Checkmate Custom Gun Refinishing.

States. The lockwork and other small components are still provided by Sauer. The P239's slide remains a machined, stainless-steel investment casting with a black oxide finish. Its wide and deep cocking serrations are more than ample. Both the extractor and firing pin are spring-loaded. The recoil spring is a flat-coil compression type. The full-length guide rod is made from steel tubing.

The sights provided are more than adequate for a combat pistol. A forward sloping, ramp-type front sight blade, 0.140-inch wide, is dovetailed to the front of the slide. An open square-notch rear sight, with a 0.150-inch wide notch, is also dovetail-fitted to the slide. Sight radius is 5.2 inches. An optional sight pusher is available to move the sights in their respective dovetails to adjust windage zero.

Our test specimen was equipped with SIGLITE night sights installed by Trijicon. This \$100 option is well worth the cost and I know of no better method for acquiring a target in subdued light than self-luminous tritium sights. Trijicon's tritium-phosphor microspheres are lightweight, insensitive to temperature variations and are always "on." Decay of tritium H3 within the radio-luminescent capsules creates soft beta rays that are converted to visible light when they strike the phosphor particles that coat the inside of the glass microsphere. Tritium's half-life (the time required to reduce the illumination by 50%) is about 12.5 years, with a functional life exceeding 15 years.

The frame is made from a black-anodized aluminum alloy. The



SOF's P239 test specimen was equipped with SIGLITE night sights installed by Trijicon. This \$100 option is well worth the cost, as there is no better method for acquiring the target in subdued-light environments than self-luminous tritium sights.

front strap carries fine horizontal serrations. Gratefully, the front of the trigger guard is rounded, not squared off or recurved, to conform to this current, totally useless fetish. At 15 degrees, the P239's grip-to-frame angle (the angle between the front leading edge of the front strap and a line perpendicular to the bore's axis) is very close to the classic 17 degrees of the Colt M1911A1 Government Model. The injection-molded, black plastic, two-piece, wrap-around grip panels have light stippling on the sides and back strap and feel very comfortable. Unlike the SIG P210, the slide rides on rails located on the frame's outer surface.

This is the smallest locked-breech pistol in the SIG-Sauer series. The weight, with an empty magazine, is 27.5 ounces. Overall length is 6.6 inches (167.6mm) with a barrel length of 3.6 inches (91.4mm). The six-groove barrel has a right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches (254mm). Overall height is 5.1 inches (129.5mm) and the width (at the top of the grip panels) is 1.2 inches (30.5mm).

All of the P239's operating controls are located on the left side of the frame. Southpaws need not apply. The hammer-drop (or "decocking") lever is positioned between the slide-stop lever and the magazine catch/release button. Thumbing downward on the hammer-drop lever takes the sear out of register with the full-cock hammer notch. As the hammer-drop lever is released, hammer-spring pressure drops the hammer that is then caught by the sear engaging the safety intercept notch, which is the hammer's rest



P239 controls, from left to right: The disassembly lever, decocking lever and slide-stop lever, as well as the magazine catch/release, conform to those of the entire SIG-Sauer pistol series.

position when the hammer spring is not compressed. During and after operation of the hammer-drop lever, the firing pin remains constantly blocked. No other manually operated safety is provided, as the P239 can be discharged only if the trigger is pulled. The hammer-drop lever is spring-loaded and returns to the double-action fire position after it's released. There is no magazine safety.

It is intended that the first shot will be fired double-action. Subsequent shots will be fired single-action. When the trigger is pulled in the double-action mode, a trigger bar, engaging the double-action notch, cocks the hammer. In the final phase of

movement the trigger bar pivots the safety lever which frees the firing pin's movement and rotates the sear. At the final instant, the trigger bar disengages from the double-action notch by camming against the hammer pivot pin. This trips the hammer which strikes the firing pin to ignite the primer. If the slide does not go fully forward into battery, contact between the firing-pin lock and safety lever does not occur and firing-pin movement is prevented. In this unlocked state, the slide also cams down the trigger bar and interrupts subsequent trigger function. As the slide recoils rearward it rolls back the hammer so the next shot can be fired in the single-action mode.

After the last shot has been fired, a shelf on the magazine follower pushes the spring-loaded, slide-stop lever upward to hold the slide assembly to the rear. The slide-stop, disassembly and hammer-drop levers, and fixed ejector are all sheet-metal stampings. The sheet-metal ejector is held to the frame by a roll pin that also retains the sear spring. The hammer, trigger and magazine catch/release button are investment castings.

When the magazine catch/release is depressed, the single-column, detachable box-type magazine falls freely away, whether loaded or unloaded. Magazine capacity is eight rounds. The magazine body is a punch-welded, sheet-metal stamp-

Wrapped in Sharkskin

The holster you wrap around a handgun designed for concealment is second in importance to only the pistol itself. There are only a handful of custom holster makers that meet the standards required by armed professionals. The late Bruce Nelson, Tony Kanaley of Milt Sparks Holsters Inc., Ken Null, and Greg Kramer are the names most frequently mentioned in my loop. I have and frequently use holsters made by all of these legendary leather artisans. Null and Kramer work almost exclusively with premium horsehide, except exotic leathers such as sharkskin and snake on special request.

While harder to hand mold than steerhide, many consider horsehide to be the finest material available for holster making. Sharkskin is extremely durable and is mainly used as boot leather. It is more water repellent than either horsehide or steerhide and with its distinctive "wrinkle" texture is very attractive. I recently had Greg Kramer make up some sharkskin rigs to test and evaluate with our customized SIG-Sauer P239.

The Tiger Shark material Greg used was supplied to him pre-dyed black and chrome-tanned. As this tanning process will corrode steel, Kramer laminated it to horsehide (with the finished or "smooth" side of the horsehide on the interior of the holsters and pouch and the back side of the belt). After gluing the sharkskin to the horsehide, the edges were lock-stitched with double rows of black nylon thread. The edges were then hand-burnished to a brilliant sheen. A sight track is permanently molded into each holster.

I was given a 1.25-inch belt, which I consider to be less obtrusive for concealed carry, and a single-magazine pouch (all you should ever need on the street — save bulkier double-magazine pouches for training at Thunder Ranch or Gunsite). Two different holsters were furnished for the P239.

One of my favorite Kramer rigs is his vertical scabbard which I most frequently wear crossdraw. This provides a good balance between speed and comfort, excellent accessibility when sitting and permits a drawstroke that does not "telegraph" to your opponent as much as a strongside rig.

Those looking for a holster that can be put on and taken off easily and frequently should examine Kramer's strong-

side MSP Paddle rig. This is the current issue holster for the plainclothes dicks of the Michigan State Police. It was chosen only after more than a year and a half of extensive testing and evaluation. It is, without doubt, the most comfortable paddle rig I have ever worn. Only the holster's thin paddle is inserted inside the waistband. As

the paddle is reinforced with plastic, it serves as a spring to keep the pistol's butt end snugged in tight to the side, a characteristic sadly lacking in many belt holsters. This enhances the holster's stability and maximizes concealment. The holster itself is



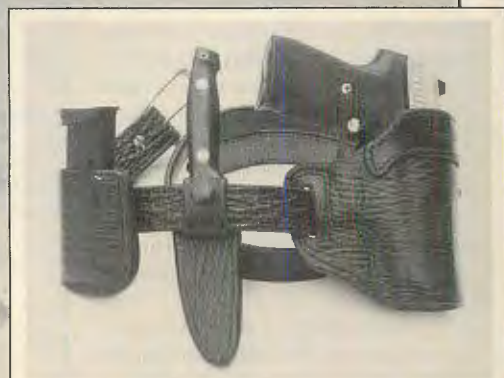
Sharkskin version of Kramer's strongside MSP Paddle rig.

attached to the paddle with a screw and rubber-cushion system. The handgun is carried at a high-ride FBI tilt (muzzle rearward rake). A bevel-edged welt locks the paddle into the waistband of the pants. A removable, snap-closure belt loop provides the security necessary to ensure that the holster

will not come out of the pants along with

the pistol during the drawstroke. It's also just the ticket for those who desire a strong-side carry with beltless slacks.

Kramer's sharkskin holsters have been ordered by a number of U.S. Navy SEALs on an individual procurement basis. Predator tough, they add a touch of class that matches the quality of any custom combat handgun. They are expensive and as they say, if you have to ask the price, you probably can't afford one.



Vertical scabbard, magazine pouch, knife sheath and 1.25-inch belt handcrafted in sharkskin by Greg Kramer.

ing. The follower and follower spring's bottom plate are stamped sheet-metal pressings and the floorplate, which has a finger extension, is a black plastic injection molding. Disassembly of the magazine follows conventional procedures. There are seven indicator holes on each side of the magazine body. Early reports from limp-wristed gun writers indicated that the P239 would not function if a full magazine was inserted after a round had been chambered. This is not true and the total capacity of the pistol is nine rounds.

All of the SIGARMS series operate by the locked-breech, short-recoil method pioneered by John M. Browning. The single locking lug milled above the barrel's chamber uses the slide's ejection port as its locking recess. This precludes cutting recesses into the slide's interior and risking a compromise of its structural integrity. After ignition of the primer and propellant charge, the slide and barrel recoil rearward together about 0.12-inch until a cam slot milled into the lug on the barrel's underside contacts a steel locking block in the alloy frame, which draws the barrel downward, unlocking it from the front lip of the ejection port. By this time pressures have dropped to a safe level. The rear end of the locking block serves as a cartridge guide directly below the barrel's integral feed ramp. The front contour of the cam slot on the barrel's underside lug has been cut square to direct counter-recoiling forces up and forward into the barrel itself. The cam slot on early Browning High Power pistols was cut round and resulted in eventual fracture of the lug as the unlocking forces were propagated downward into the weakest portion of the lug.

Perfecting Performance

Armed professionals justifiably demand performance beyond merely "adequate" from their equipment. While all of the SIGARMS pistols will operate in a completely satisfactory manner right out of the factory box (something we can no longer expect from manufacturers such as Colt), they can be pushed to an even higher level of reliability. No individual pistolsmith has worked on more SIG-Sauer handguns than Tony Jimakas. TJ is a leading authority on SIGs and we sent him our P239 with instructions to concentrate on work that would improve the pistol's reliability and add a few cosmetic changes that would further enhance its appearance.

TJ provided his Level One deluxe package which includes an action job that consists of throating the barrel, polishing both the barrel's feed ramp and the locking block's cartridge guide, and deburring and polishing the slide's interior surfaces and most of the internal components in the frame assembly. The barrel was also



With a black-anodized, aluminum-alloy frame and weighing only 27.5 ounces, empty, the compact SIG-Sauer P239, chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge, exhibits very little perceived recoil.

satin-polished to remove scratches and hide wear marks. The trigger was given a round radius and polished for a smoother stroke and a more fluid double-action pull through. Fitting and polishing the extractor included adjustment to the correct tension to prevent breakage, undercutting the extractor hook

for an improved bite on the case's extractor groove, and rounding off the top of the extractor to prevent damage if a brain-dead operator drops a round into the chamber and lets the slide fly forward into battery. TJ also rounded off the P239's trigger-draw bar to prevent galling of the aluminum-alloy frame. He also deburred and polished all five angles of the barrel's exterior to improve cycling (an addition to the Level One package). The double-action trigger-pull weight was reduced from its factory set 9.25 pounds to an incredibly smooth 8.75 pounds. Tony lightened the fore-travel and creep in the single-action mode to provide a crisp pull-weight of 3 pounds: 1.25 pounds less than the original 4.25 pounds.

The hammer was semi-bobbed and its corners and edges were rounded and beveled to reduce the possibility of snagging on the clothing, enhancing the draw stroke and inhibiting clothing wear. TJ re-cut one-way angled serrations on the hammer to further reduce snagging and for more positive manual cocking. The rear face of the front sight blade was highlighted with "orange glo," a TJ trademark and the only colored front sight enhancement that I have ever found to be actually effective. Both of these features were in addition to the Level One package.

Subsequent to this work, the slide, trigger, magazine catch/release button, hammer-drop lever, slide-stop lever, disassembly lever and hammer were sent to Checkmate Custom Gun Refinishing for hard chroming. They used a combination of both matte (glass beaded) and satin (a brushed stainless-steel effect) techniques to provide a true hard-chrome surface

Points Of Contact

Black Hills Ammunition
Dept. SOF
P.O. Box 3090
Rapid City, SD 57709

Phone: 605-348-5150. Call for the location of your nearest dealer. If there is none, Black Hills will ship to you at retail.

Checkmate Custom Gun Refinishing
Dept. SOF
370 Champion Drive
Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: 352-799-5774

Kramer Handgun Leather
Dept. SOF
P.O. Box 112154
Tacoma, WA 98411
Phone: 800-510-2666 for credit-card orders only;
206-564-6652 for information
Fax: 206-564-1214; catalog: \$5

SIGARMS Inc.
Dept. SOF
Corporate Park
Exeter, NH 03833
Phone: 603-772-2302
Fax: 603-772-9082

TJ's Custom Gunworks
Dept. SOF
P.O. Box 69
Ontario, CA 91762
Phone: 909-923-4422; price list: \$2

finish that looks attractive and will resist holster wear. They did an excellent job and I can recommend them highly.

When these components were returned to TJ, he gave them a final fitting and added a set of his stainless-steel hex-head grip panel screws, which are available for all SIG-Sauer pistols. Quite attractive, they also are not as easily marred as the slot-head screws issued with the pistol.

Field stripping the P239 presents no problems: Remove the magazine and inspect the chamber to make certain it is unloaded. Retract the slide and lock it rearward with the slide-stop lever. Rotate the disassembly lever, located on the left side of the frame, downward 90 degrees. Retract the slide assembly just enough so that the slide-stop lever drops down. Draw the slide assembly forward until it separates from the frame rails. Remove the recoil spring and guide rod. Drop the barrel out of the slide. Remove the grip panels. Disassemble the magazine. No further disassembly is required or recommended. Re-assemble in the reverse order. Be careful not to over-tighten the grip-panel screws.

Home On The Range

All testing was conducted with Jacketed Hollow Points (JHPs) from Black Hills Ammunition. Any handgun intended for serious social purposes must be able to feed and function reliably with expanding ammunition. Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) 9mm Parabellum ball ammunition invariably over-penetrates to an undesirable extent. A minimum of about 12 inches of penetration in soft tissue up to a maximum of approximately 18 inches is the desired range. That's exactly the penetration performance range designed into the superb Hornady XTP bullets used in Black Hills 147-grain 9mm Parabellum ammunition.

All firing was conducted at a range of 7 yards since most gunfights with a handgun occur at this distance and less. Using an off-hand Weaver hold, the P239 will shoot between 1 and 2 inches at this range. This is more than adequate for defensive purposes.

Performance during our test and evaluation was flawless. This is not surprising, as the entire SIG-Sauer series is highly touted for reliability. The custom work performed by Tony Jimakas provides an added level of reliability that only professional pistoleros might demand. I have large hands and personally found the grip area to be on the small side. The P239 feels somewhat top heavy, as does the superb, caliber .40 S&W P229. Those law-enforcement agencies that issue the popular P226 will find the P239 to be an excellent companion backup piece, as the location and type of operating controls are identical throughout the SIG-Sauer line of pistols. The P239 is competitively priced and should find favor with anyone seeking a compact concealment pistol that makes no compromise to quality. It is anticipated that at some time in the future the P239 will become available in both .40 S&W and .357 SIG chamberings. ❧

SIG-SAUER P239 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** 9mm Parabellum.
- Operation:** Locked-breech, short-recoil, semiautomatic, double-action/single-action with hammer-drop lever and no manual safety.
- Weight:** Empty with magazine, 27.5 ounces.
- Feed mechanism:** 8-round, single-column, detachable box-type magazine.
- Length, overall:** 6.6 inches (167.6mm).
- Width:** 1.2 inches (30.5mm) at the top of the grip panels.
- Height:** 5.1 inches (129.5mm).
- Barrel:** Six-groove with a twist of one turn in 10 inches (254mm).
- Barrel length:** 3.6 inches (91.4mm).
- Sights:** Forward sloping, ramp-type front-sight blade, 0.140-inch wide, dovetailed to the front of the slide. Open, square-notch rear sight, with a 0.150-inch wide notch, also dovetail-fitted to the slide. Sight radius is 5.2 inches.
- Finish:** Black-anodized, aluminum-alloy frame. Selected components custom hard-chromed.
- Price:** \$575 plus custom work and hard-chroming.
- T&E summary:** Exceptional quality and reliability, with operating features common to the entire SIG-Sauer pistol series. Reasonably priced.



SIG-Sauer P239, field stripped.

ANGUISH IN ANGOOLA

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

Merc Muscle Checks Civil War

Military turmoil grows in the shadows between war and peace in Angola. At the end of summer, a new round of hostilities appeared imminent in spite of early (and premature) optimism for peace between the Marxist government and its tenacious foe, the UNITA rebel movement.

Another round of civil war in this former Portuguese colony would involve millions of hopeless, hungry shanty dwellers who crowd every Angolan city and town. They have become so restless that at least twice in recent months the government has sent out

riot police in Luanda, the capital. There is much talk in diplomatic circles there that the army is restless. Mineral-hungry Western nations watch anxiously.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jonas Savimbi, maverick leader of UNITA (*Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola*: National Union for the Complete Independence of Angola), sits out the turmoil in the bush. The U.N.-brokered peace treaty calls for the demobilization of his troops; of the estimated 60,000 men sent forward by summer's end, the vast majority were sick, wounded,

Angolan soldiers practice dry-fire missions with 82mm mortars at camp near Saurimo in northeastern Angola. The Luanda government recently has enjoyed a shaky cease-fire with UNITA. However, there are new concerns: the erosion of discipline and respect for authority among lower-ranking, government troops.



UNITA troops pose amid wreckage of Angolan MiG-23 fighter shot down by rebels' surface-to-air missile.



Government troops perform daily maintenance on their Russian-built infantry combat vehicle. Highly maneuverable and mounting 30mm cannons, BMP-2s are a mainstay at Angolan army defensive positions. (right) Rebel soldier undergoes surgery in bush hospital in UNITA-held diamond fields of northeastern Angola. During civil war, rebels often had better medical facilities than did government troops.



second-rate or simply noncombatants.

Savimbi has said he is waiting for Angola to implode. "Then I will take it," he told a correspondent for *Agence France Presse*.

This sad scenario has been in the cards before, many times. But this time around there are American trainers, ex-Special Forces men, involved with the Angolan army and national police. The Americans began working early this year in Angola after the South African mercenary organization Executive Outcomes "left." The identity of the Americans' employer was not readily determined.

According to *SOF* sources, the trainers are employees of Military Professional Resources Inc. (1201 E. Abingdon Dr., Suite 425, Alexandria, VA 22314; phone: 703-684-0853), which currently has military trainers working in Bosnia.

In a 5 September phone interview, however, an MPRI spokesman flatly denied his corporation was working in Angola.

"We are not involved in any way, shape



Waste not, want not: UNITA crewmen swarm over an aged T-34/85 medium tank that survived government service in the "Border War" of the '80s — only to fall into rebel hands years later. (Note Savimbi's photo taped to rear of turret.)



UNITA "core fighters" have become skilled in river-crossings in rubber boats. Combat-engineer units also clear land mines and erect small bridges. (inset) Column of UNITA "home guard" troops and supporters carry packs of ammunition and other supplies over primitive bridge through swamp. Although inferior as combat troops, home guard and their families are vast resource for Savimbi and his "core fighters".



Following clash with UNITA forces, bodies of government soldiers sometimes were burned — the easiest way to dispose of corpses.

UNITA's Order Of Battle

The major component of the Angolan peace agreement is the demobilization of UNITA's military forces. In numerous clashes with government troops, Jonas Savimbi's rebels have captured an impressive arsenal of mostly Soviet/Russian-made vehicles, weapons and equipment; illicit sales of diamonds also have provided cash for weapons' purchases on the European market.

Savimbi and his generals have been understandably secretive about UNITA's order of battle. An analysis by *Soldier Of Fortune*, based on information from reliable sources in Pretoria and London, shows it to be one of the largest — and most conventionally arrayed — “guerrilla” movements in the world:

Home Guard Force has almost unlimited resources. The bulk of the Angolan population is passionately opposed to the MPLA's corrupt, nepotistic and ineffectual government in Luanda. Savimbi has no shortage of these largely untrained volunteers to aid, feed and supply his “core” army. The home guard is almost entirely rural and is spread throughout Angola.

Core Fighters remained virtually at full strength at summer's end, despite MPLA and United Nations' calls for demobilization. There are four distinct infantry commands, plus combat support — approximately 40,000 men:

Batalhoes Regulares: 15 “regular” infantry battalions of 1,000 men each. Well-trained, equipped and led, these battalions have much experience gained from South African special forces during the anti-Marxist “Border War” of the '80s.

Batalhoes de Penetracao: 6 “penetration” battalions of 600 UNITA long-range troops each. These elite troops specialize in attacking and disorganizing Angolan government outposts and lines of communication and logistics.

Commandos Especiais: 10 of these special-assignment units, each with 300 men skilled in unconventional tasks including assassination of Angolan military officers.

Brigada De Accao Technica De Explosivos: 20 of these 50-man demolition teams can be assigned to strike high-risk targets such as dams, power lines, oil rigs, satcom dishes, etc.

Combat-support troops usually are attached as needed in core-fighter units. **Armor:** About 30 T-55 and T-62 tanks, and a few T-34/85s; generally held around UNITA headquarters until needed elsewhere.

Mechanized infantry: Approximately 50 vehicles, including BMP-1s, BTR-60s, BRDM-2s, and AML 90s (French and South African), all found within Batalhoes Regulares.

Fast-attack: 4x4 Toyota pickup trucks (akin to the Somali “technical”) can carry anti-tank missiles (of which UNITA is believed to have about 50, including American-made TOWs), or anti-aircraft weapons comprising an estimated 50 Soviet/Russian-made 14.5mm heavy machine guns in single or quad configurations. These light vehicles have been used in support of Batalhoes Penetracao and are ideally suited for the hit-and-run tactics of guerrilla campaigns.

Artillery comprises about 100 towed pieces (including 122mm howitzers and 130mm field guns) and an unknown number of BM-14 and BM-21 multiple rocket launchers. The mortar inventory numbers at 600 or more tubes, mostly 82mm.

Surface-to-air missiles are matter of some mystery. The tally of unexplained aircraft crashes, particularly in the northeast and in the Luanda envelope, strongly suggests a UNITA threat. It is believed that at any time Savimbi has less than 20 Russian-made SA-7s and only a handful of the more modern SA-14s and -16s on hand. (Savimbi's agents, however, can buy this deadly hardware on the open arms market in Eastern Europe.)

Combat-engineer units are well equipped for mine clearance, bridging and boating. In recent years, UNITA increasingly has resorted to moving men and equipment on water, especially out of secret sites in Zaire.

Communications are well developed: by landline, radio “push-to-talk” and even encrypted satcom systems. Even so, couriers are routinely used for the sake of security.

Support troops vary in terms of size and level of military training. They total approximately 20,000 troops, and comprise 12 to 14 semi-regular battalions of 800 men each who are relatively well-trained and equipped; 16 dispersed columns of about 300 irregulars each who are poorly equipped and of limited value in offensive actions; and, 32 compact guerrilla columns of 150 men each who generally are little more than bandits.

Aerial resupply of UNITA is conducted, for the right price, by a variety of commercial firms. These include ATO, TSA, TAC, Guila Air, Express City Cargo, Skydeck, Fil Air, Walt Air. All operate out of either South Africa, Zaire, Zambia or the Congo, submitting false flight plans. Several of these aircraft have been blown up by Angolan agents, mostly in Zaire. In January, an overloaded Antonov-32 transport smuggling fuel and other supplies to UNITA (in violation of U.N. sanctions) crashed in Kinshasa, Zaire, killing 300. The Russian pilots were jailed for two years.

— A.J.V.

or form,” retired Army Lieutenant General Harry E. Soyster told *SOF* Publisher Robert K. Brown. He added, with a chuckle, “If you can get us involved, please let us know.”

Soyster, ex-director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, added: “I've been on a marketing trip there ... in Luanda,” but it resulted in “absolutely zero” business. MPRI maintains a data base on about 3,000 former U.S. military specialists who are prospective employees.

He remarked that he certainly was “aware of Executive Outcomes,” and understood that at one time the South African firm viewed MPRI as direct competition which, Soyster added, it is not. “Whatever Executive Outcomes does, we do not do.”



During Executive Outcomes' stay in Angola, former members of South Africa army reconnaissance units — such as these three men preparing for night op — trained and fought alongside government troops. Nowadays, former EO mercenaries remain in Angola in the employ of various low-profile, subsidiary companies.

Chaos Or Realized Potential?

Reports from the authoritative Jane's Group in London state that EO simply has changed its name; most of the South African mercs who served with Angola's armed forces, *Forcas Armadas de Angolanas* (FAA), remain in the country ostensibly as farmers, miners, prospectors and traders. While the name of the EO's Pretoria-based holding company, Strategic Resource Corporation, remains the same, with Eben Barlow at its head, the new subsidiaries have unusual ones: Stuart Mills International, Shibata Security, Saracen International Branch Energy, Bridge Resources, and the paramilitary Alpha 5.

The U.N. group in Luanda has stated that EO, through these subsidiaries, is “still involved in working with the Angolan military against UNITA.”

All told, the situation there remains critical.

President Jose Eduardo dos Santos in June sacked his entire cabinet as well as Prime Minister Marcolino Moco and the governor of Angola's central bank, the *Banco de Angola*. In a desperate bid to shore up the currency, dos Santos has threatened black-market money dealers with the death penalty.

A year ago the government lopped three zeros off the national currency, the *kwanza*,

Continued on page 62

MINED CAMP

Everywhere I looked there were amputees.

Leaning nonchalantly against the outside wall of the Phreah Ket Mealea Military Hospital, I watched Cambodian soldiers and patients come and go. My companions were inside, discussing our humanitarian mission and making arrangements for my participation as an "add-on."

The five Americans all had been trained, at one time or another, as U.S. military medical personnel: Army Reserve, Special Forces, or Air Force. On this trip, though, the team members all were volunteers with Refugee Relief International (RRI).

Cambodia needs all of the help it can get.

After years of war, many people there are victims of antipersonnel land mines, which are intended to maim and inflict horrible pain rather than kill. On paper, one badly wounded soldier requires two comrades for assistance, which equals three soldiers out of action. Reality isn't so neat: The casualties in Cambodia aren't just guerrillas and soldiers, but civilians, too.

The United Nations estimated earlier this year that Cambodia has at least 8 million mines in its soil.

Amputees here in Phnom Penh, the capital, walk on prosthetic limbs or hobble on crutches. Outside any hotel frequented by foreigners and the marketplace, a foreigner regularly is beseeched by an amputee, sometimes in uniform, pointing at his stump or even his prosthesis and asking for a handout.

Most of the adult amputees have found employment in various occupations, including the myriad of cottage industries. Others survive by begging. If I had given a dollar to every amputee I saw, I would've been broke before the week was out.

Mine-clearance teams from several countries work throughout the countryside. Inhibited by the presence of Khmer Rouge and the often intractable bureaucracy of the Cambodian government, they are attempting to remove mines scattered willy-nilly by the murderous Khmer Rouge, government troops past and present, and the Vietnamese. Those lethal seeds bring a terrible harvest.

What's *really* disheartening is seeing young women and small children mutilated by these insidious, impersonal weapons.

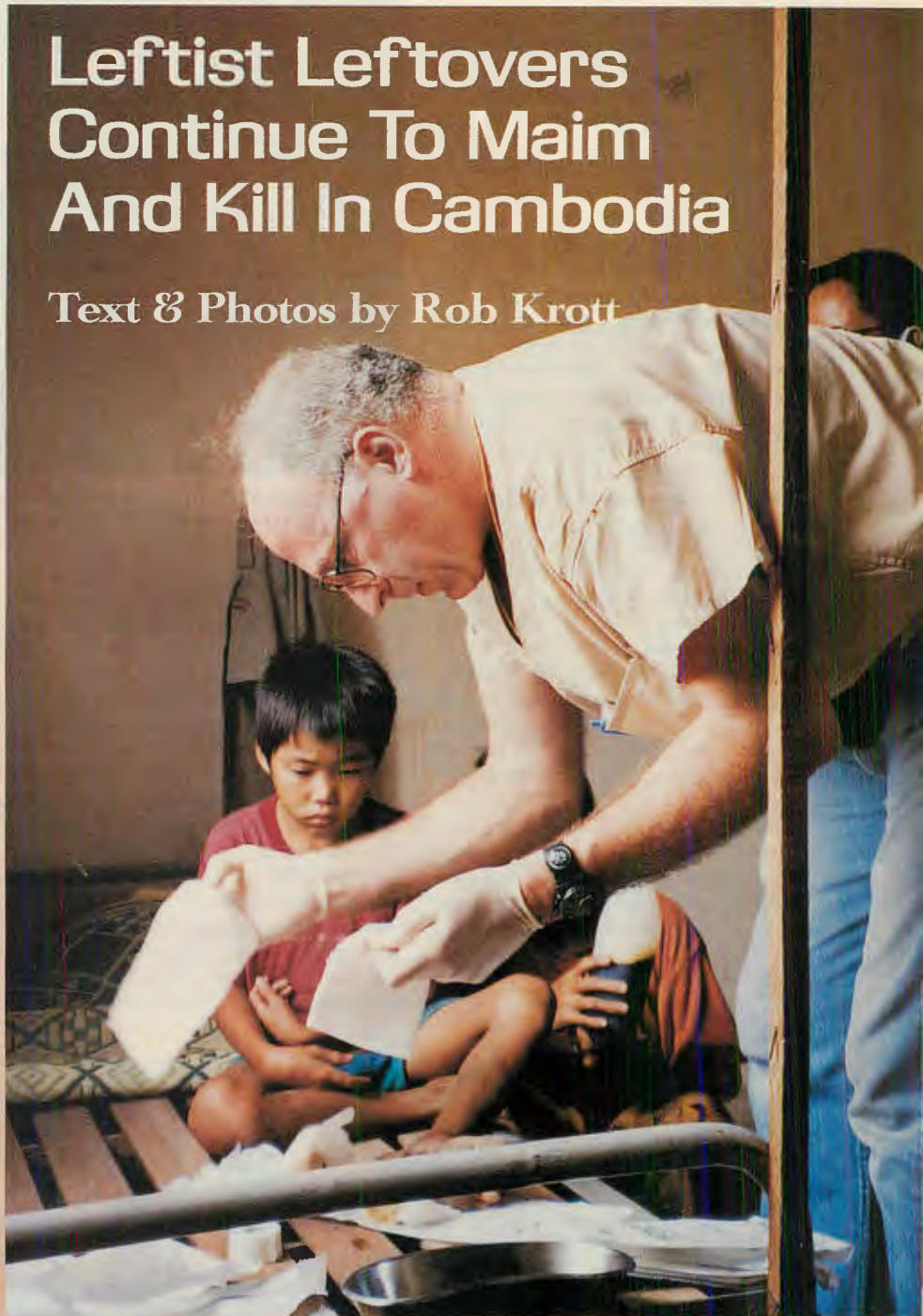
Labor Of Love

I flew in from Bangkok with Major David Mohler, a U.S. Army Reserve doctor. We got our visas, grabbed our gear — which included Mohler's rucksack and a footlocker full of medical supplies — processed through airport customs and then headed for the Allson Hotel and a rendezvous with the RRI team.

After checking in, I wearily stowed my

Leftist Leftovers Continue To Maim And Kill In Cambodia

Text & Photos by Rob Krott



RRI Director and Medcap team leader John Padgett bandages foot of Cambodian boy during "sick call" at police garrison in Takev Province.

gear in a room occupied by Andy Hyslop. Hyslop is a former Air Force medic, former Navy search-and-rescue specialist, and a retired Santa Clara, Calif., fireman. (He later would serve as the RRI stay-behind contact man and logistics chief in Thailand for the team's follow-on mission into an area of Burma controlled by Karen guerrillas.)

The team assembled for dinner. It was an impressive group of skilled, dedicated men operating on a shoestring budget.

In addition to Hyslop, there was team leader and RRI Director John Padgett (known as *bac si*: Vietnamese for "doctor"), a physician's assistant, Army Reserve captain, and fluent speaker of Thai and

Vietnamese. My traveling companion Mohler, a Stanford- and Cornell-educated orthopedic surgeon and medical professor, studied *this* type of medicine in the mountains of Afghanistan. (Mohler's command of French is very useful in France's former Southeast Asian colonies.) Also, there were "Jeff," a civilian RN, former Army Special Forces (SF) medic, and a talented photographer; and "Phil," a nurse anesthetist with lots of bush time as an SF medic and whose private-sector experience included missions in Sarajevo and Colombia.

Mohler and Padgett had been in Cambodia before.

Last year, while Khmer Rouge guerrillas fought government troops, eight U.S. Army reservists from the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion (Foreign Internal Defense/Unconventional Warfare) based in Upland, Calif., teamed up with an active-duty SF detachment to conduct a two-week op providing medical training and treatment. (That medical civic-action program, or Medcap, was the subject of an article in the winter '96 *Army Reserve Magazine*.)

When the team arrived at Phreah Ket Mealea Military Hospital in Phnom Penh, team leader Mohler tallied almost 500 needy patients; he would assist in several operations, including the inevitable amputations. The hospital was in bad shape. Surgeons sometimes used car batteries to power lights in the operating room, and the facility had little running water and an awful sewage system. The first order of business for the Reserve and SF soldiers was cleaning up the vermin-infested hospital grounds.

"You wouldn't have recognized this place the way it looked when we were here before," Padgett recalled. "No one would believe how bad it was. We expected bad sanitation conditions elsewhere, but not here at the hospital. We couldn't believe this — right here at the hospital — piles of garbage, human waste."



RRI volunteer Andy Hyslop (right), a former Air Force medic and retired California fireman, dispenses prescribed drugs to government police troops.

One of the hospital buildings was used as a communal latrine; even its outer steps were covered with piles of human feces. Medical waste, including used syringes, was just dumped on the grounds. The waste and garbage were collected in a large pile and thoroughly burned. As any SF medic will tell you, the importance of good field sanitation to preventive medicine cannot be overemphasized.

During that mission, the Americans also trained two companies of Cambodian army medics before shifting to villages outside the capital. For five days they ran an open clinic, treating more than 2,000 medical and/or dental patients. Padgett worked post-

op and in-patient care. For him, that deployment was a sort of homecoming: As an SF medic, Padgett served five tours in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

Sick, Lame And Lazy

Arrangements for our Medcap having been confirmed, four of the team members came back out and got me. They had loaded the van with medical supplies; also, our team had two new members: Cambodian doctors we called "Sister" and "Pam." They were two very nice ladies. Mohler stayed behind at the military hospital to assist in surgery.

We drove to the Pieh Sovanary School in Takev Province. The RRI mission was to carry out a Medcap for civilians and former Khmer Rouge soldiers at the government Amnesty Center for Khmer Rouge. The medics might have some mine casualties to treat, but they knew that almost any other ailment might face them, too.

These refugee camps, called "reconciliation centers," are set up around the country to allow Pol Pot's Khmer followers, former communist soldiers, and other guerrillas to lay down their arms, receive amnesty and become eligible for government aid. Aid includes the first modern medical care many had ever seen. Cambodia has a shortage of doctors, many of whom were victims of the infamous Killing Fields: The Khmer Rouge slaughtered anybody who was a member of the intelligentsia, which included doctors, nurses and other health-care specialists.

Our drive through the Cambodian countryside to the reconciliation center was scenic but uneventful. Padgett thought this Medcap would be like the one several months earlier: Hundreds of patients were



Throng of local villagers and members of national-police garrison wait for medical attention of RRI team members and two Cambodian doctors.

seen every day.

But when we arrived we found that the Cambodian authorities had achieved one of those bureaucratic communications SNAFUs that are fairly common in the Third World: Padgett hadn't been told that the reconciliation center and its ex-Khmer residents had been moved. The center now was a national-police post and training academy. Nobody knew where the reconciliation center had been relocated.

Padgett quickly conferred with his team and the two Cambodian doctors.

"Well, we're here so we'll do our job," said Padgett, taking it all in stride. He saw no point in gallivanting around the countryside looking for the relocation center when there were plenty of villagers and police trainees right here needing medical treatment.

Pam and Sister conferred with the police commander, who in turn barked out a string of commands to an aide. Orders were given and the word quickly spread that the doctors were here.

Sick, lame and lazy, come one, come all. The police cleared out two combination office-living areas: one for an examination room and another for use as the dispensary-pharmacy. *Bac si* and his team sprang into action.



Display case at police academy is packed with (deactivated) mines, grenades and projectiles removed from Cambodian countryside. The United Nations has estimated Cambodia has at least 8 million mines in its soil.

Coconuts And A Kalashnikov

Hyslop and I ran the "pharmacy." Padgett gave us a short period of instruction. Then we unloaded medical supplies from the van. Most were meds we'd seen in similar circumstances though some were labeled with an unfamiliar brand name. Our room was empty except for a loaded AK-47 propped in the corner — a comforting sight, all things considered. The police officer who had given up his room for the day nodded in the direction of the Chinese-made Kalashnikov and said, "Khmer Rouge."

We hoped there weren't any in the vicinity, and even so, it was unlikely they'd raid a government police station in broad daylight. Abductions by the Khmer Rouge had occurred recently much closer to Phnom Penh than this, and in broad daylight. Christopher Howes, a member of Mines Advisory group (MAG), a British EOD team, was snatched along with his interpreter just 20 clicks north of Siem Reap, a popular tourist destination. The Khmer Rouge later trumpeted the Brit's capture. More ominously, two Italians attached to the U.N. mission had left a pop-

Continued on page 68



Bac si Padgett and (right) a doctor from Phnom Penh military hospital, known as "Sister" to RRI team members, attend to dozens of young children.



SOF's correspondent, Krott, lends a hand in the RRI "pharmacy." To his rear, propped up in corner, is policeman's AK-47 — to be used in the event of Khmer Rouge attack.

courtesy Rob Krott

RRI: Professionalism Under Fire

Refugee Relief International Inc. (RRI), was founded in 1982 in Colorado as a non-profit organization and received IRS tax-exempt status in 1983. Its administrative and logistical space is provided at the home offices of Omega Group, Ltd., the publishing company for *Soldier Of Fortune* and *Fighting Firearms* magazines.

In its early years, RRI provided medical supplies and other aid for refugees and war victims in Central America. The tiny organization shipped more than 20 tons of donated supplies and equipment, worth an estimated \$5 million, and dispatched volunteer Medcap teams to those strife-ridden areas.

Since then, RRI has provided humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the former Yugoslavia, Burma, Thailand and Cambodia.

RRI teams comprise unpaid volunteers, most of whom are U.S. military veterans. Their cool professionalism under extreme — sometimes life-threatening — conditions has earned them the respect and gratitude of people they have aided. Unfortunately, as volunteers for a non-profit relief organization they still must reach deep into their own pockets to make projects like the Cambodian Medcap mission a reality instead of just a good idea.

RRI gratefully accepts any monetary contributions, which are tax deductible. Contributions may be sent to Refugee Relief International, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. For additional information, contact SOF Special Projects Director Alexander McColl at 303-449-3750.

—R.K.

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ANGUISH IN ANGOLA

Continued from page 58

giving it an official exchange rate of 2,500 to the U.S. dollar. In 12 months it has fallen to 250,000 to the dollar on the black market.

A member of the U.N. Angolan Verification Mission 3 told me that Luanda was waiting for "an explosion." Once a modern city, Luanda not long ago went more than a month with no running water. Electricity is sporadic. The police and civil service in the capital haven't been paid for months; in the interior some have received no money for a year or more, causing many security elements to resort to banditry to survive.

Walking about the streets of Luanda this year, I saw youngsters attack older people and stone them to death. Some of the murderers were only eight or nine years old. They attacked old people at will. Passersby did nothing to help; nor did the police, though there were some in the area. Foreign observers in the capital, including some U.N. personnel, perceive an even more disturbing trend than mindless street violence: a breakdown of authority within the army.

Much of the anger within the lower ranks is directed at senior FAA officers who tend to live well, in contrast to the suffering masses.

These officers are held responsible for the deteriorating situation. A colonel who was slow in producing his identification card when asked to do so by a guard at Luanda's international airport was shot 27 times when a soldier emptied his AK-47 into him as he sat in his Russian-made vehicle.

However, unlike many African nations — dirt-poor and chaotic — Angola has immense potential.

As big as France, Spain and Britain together, it lacked for nothing (apart from human rights) under the Portuguese. It has been at civil war since the Portuguese were ignominiously pushed out in 1975. There was to have been an internationally sponsored election for leaders after the Portuguese left. With Cuban and Soviet help, however, the Marxist MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola*: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) under Agostino Neto grabbed power in a putsch. He died in 1979, and was succeeded by the Soviet-educated dos Santos. The MPLA has maintained authority by force ever since. The main opposition, including Savimbi's UNITA, fled to the bush and that was the start of the civil war.

What concerns Western observers most about this state of affairs is that a breakdown of authority could affect exports by one of Africa's biggest oil producers.

According to government figures for 1995, Angola produced 227 million barrels of oil; its biggest customers were the United States (68% of exports), South Korea, Taiwan, and Europe. Foreign companies involved in this industry include Chevron, Elf (Italian), Amoco, Texaco,

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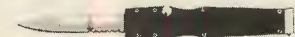


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Gulf and Petrofina (Portuguese). Should civil war erupt, these facilities could be damaged, as they were in the fighting in 1994. The refinery at Soyo in the northwest, near the border with Zaire, only recently returned to operation.

Then there also is concern about Angola's diamond fields, some of the richest in the world.

The governments of Australia and Malaysia in August reportedly proposed investments totaling \$100 million — contingent on national stability. The South African diamond cartel, de Beers, recently hired the oddly named successors to Executive Outcomes to handle security in the northeast and north-central areas where de Beers is active. This follows much speculation and innuendo in the past about whether Executive Outcomes was in any way linked with de Beers.

A "U.N." Of Foreign Muscle

Angola's long-running conflict has cost 500,000 or more lives and has involved, among others, South African soldiers and airmen, Cuban regulars, East German pilots, and North Korean and Communist Chinese instructors and advisers (with UNITA); also Rhodesian helicopter pilots; Frenchmen (including the legendary merc, Bob Denard, with UNITA); Portuguese and South African mercenaries; American CIA operatives (first with Holden Roberto, an unrehabilitated alcoholic, and later with Savimbi, who received Stinger anti-aircraft missiles) and Air America flyers (during the transition phase); and instructors and money from countries as diverse as Brazil, Morocco, Zaire, and Saudi Arabia. At one stage, in the colonial war, even Che Guevara had a hand in the fighting with the MPLA.

Nowadays Savimbi, living in spartan isolation in the bush at Bailundu in the central highlands, holds the key to what is likely to happen to Angola. In August he spurned President dos Santos' offer of a vice-presidential post in a coalition government, but did not rule out future negotiations with Luanda.

Savimbi is surrounded by members of his "core fighter" units: regular infantry and elite "penetration" battalions; special-assignment units; a demolition "brigade" and combat engineers; about 80 armored vehicles, 100 artillery pieces, a limited anti-aircraft capability, and a first-rate radio-communications network — in all, nearly 40,000 men. (See accompanying article.)

The protocol also required that UNITA integrate its armored units within the New Angolan Armed Forces — a provision also being ignored. Some are in the central regions north of Huambo but the bulk is deployed around the diamond fields, principally Cafunfu, the scene of several earlier battles with government forces. (See "Targets Of Opportunism," April '96 *SOF*.)

Observers who have been with UNITA units in the field have seen strict control and discipline. Further, having spent the best part of 30 years as a specialist in Mao-type

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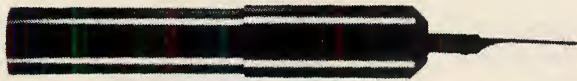
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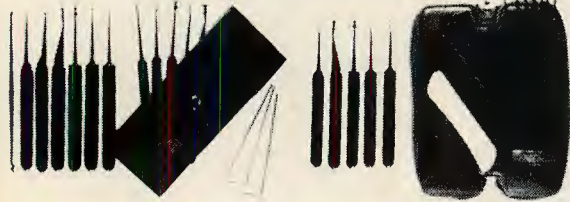
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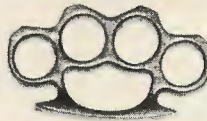
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guerrilla warfare, Savimbi has developed excellent intelligence sources within the Angolan government and military; also, in the rebel Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC), U.N. organizations and ancillary bodies such as Executive Outcomes and its various successors. (It further is known that some UNITA sympathizers had inadvertently been recruited by Executive Outcomes. One, a South African radio operator based in Saurimo, eventually was exposed — and never was seen again.)

The U.N.-brokered "Lusaka Protocol" that followed the peace agreement required all of UNITA's estimated 62,500 troops to stand down and disarm. It further required that UNITA integrate 26,000 troops (as well as 18 generals) by 15 August into the "new" national army being trained by the American company. It never happened.

The first 14 UNITA officers arrived at a designated base outside Luanda on 1 June. Two weeks later, 50,000 more UNITA "troops" were registered at U.N. quartering areas, but they mostly were farmers, laymen, and villagers who supply the "core" units and only occasionally took up arms. (In UNITA there are about 10 "home guard" soldiers for every core fighter.) One of Savimbi's top officers, General Altino Bango Sapalalo ("Bok"), later said UNITA would not compel its soldiers to join the New Angolan Armed Forces if they were unwilling.

"Obviously, these men have had many years of war," Bok said, "and most of them would prefer to leave military life. This is the problem."

For his part, Savimbi by then should have moved his headquarters to Luanda. He refused, saying the government had plans to kill him — as it almost did the last time there was a cease-fire: Government tanks slaughtered about 10,000 of his men in and around Luanda in that bloodbath.

Clearly, the wily rebel leader was stalling.

"UNITA's failure to deliver personnel to the Angolan army is delaying progress in the political sphere," the United Nations announced on 23 August. "The Angolan government has made clear that there will be no Government of Unity and National Reconciliation until UNITA demilitarizes."

Mercs vs. UNITA = Stalemate

How secure is Savimbi?

The government in Luanda claims he is increasingly isolated. UNITA is impotent, it says. Recent events indicate otherwise.

Savimbi re-established control over the rebel movement during its Eighth Congress held at Bailundo in February 1995, when a "Dual Path Agenda" was unveiled. He then received key military support from all of his senior commanders, including the chief of staff, Gen. Arlindo Chenda ("Ben Ben").

Although much of the Agenda remains secret, this much leaked out: While UNITA would abide by the peace process, Savimbi simultaneously would prepare his core elements to resume full-scale guerrilla war as soon as the government in Luanda collapsed

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UNITA's leader, Dr. Jonas Savimbi (lower right), watches troops pass in parade outside Huambo in the central highlands. Posters with his photo, such as the one on this wall, are seen throughout areas under UNITA's control.

or was seriously threatened. The latter would include an army coup d'etat or serious civil unrest in the cities, possibly from food shortages.

Both scenarios not only are possible in the immediate future, but likely. Savimbi also is aware that a serious power struggle is probable within the ranks of the MPLA when the tenure of the current parliament, elected in 1992, expires.

In Savimbi's favor are some of the worst socioeconomic indicators in the world: Inflation is running at about 4,000%; salaries have fallen in the past year; the basic wage is about \$6 a month. Almost a quarter of the population of 10 million relies on foreign aid to survive, but the United Nations is running out of cash to keep this operation alive. (The Angolan government has had to solicit foreign contributions to pay for UNITA's demobilization, which is projected to cost \$66 million.)

Luanda, the capital, has been spared none of this. It is awash with rotting garbage, crippled fighters, and the violent street children who roam the streets in gangs; mysteriously, some recently have acquired firearms.

Oil, in theory, should remedy all of these ills. The country's daily output, according to Sonagol, the state-controlled oil company, eventually will rise to about 750,000 barrels — due largely to massive investments by the foreign companies. The problem is, this revenue is tied up for the next four years to pay off foreign loans; very little ever reaches the central bank. The same with diamonds, most of which are smuggled out through Zaire.

UNITA is estimated (again by U.N. sources) to earn about \$500 million a year

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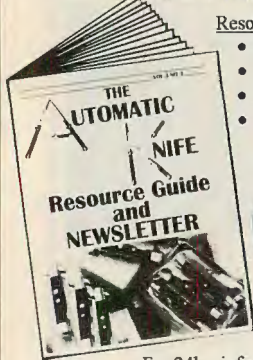
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from illicit diggings. It is no secret that many of the gemstone source areas in the north and south Lunda provinces are controlled by UNITA soldiers. This is one of the reasons why Endiama, the national diamond-mining organization, recently signed an agreement with de Beers to develop four more diamond-mining areas. And South African mercenaries, formerly with Executive Outcomes, will protect those interests.

The worst news of all — in the short term, anyway — is that the International Monetary Fund has declined to help President dos Santos. It might do so in the future: The IMF was due to examine the Angolan issue again in September — but by then conditions might have further deteriorated.

About all that is certain in Angola at present is that nothing will improve while foreign soldiers (in or out of uniform) are there. As long as the successors to Executive Outcomes stay put, Savimbi cannot move. Once they go, he and his UNITA rebels will take over the country in months.

Al J. Venter, SOF's contributing editor for African affairs, has written extensively on Executive Outcome's operations in Angola. He resides in Chinook, Wash.

[Information on the Angolan crisis can be found on the Internet at the U.N. web site: <http://www.reliefweb.int>. For the official party line, see Angola's site: <http://www.angola.org/angola>.]

FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION

Continued from page 43

Mayotte (Indian Ocean) or the 3rd REI (home of the famous legion jungle school) in French Guyana. Whatever his first posting, a legionnaire will spend at least two of his first five years overseas.

A Few Very Good Men

Today's legion numbers roughly 8,500 men; 2,000 officers, almost all French. Of the remaining 6,500, native English speakers make up only about 7%, and Americans are a minority among them. In Calvi, home of the paratroopers, I located two Americans. Their stories illustrate the diversity that makes the legion what it is: Patrick Sheers is from Montgomery, Alabama. As a member of the 4th company — 2nd REP in Corsica, he was training for hostage-rescue operations in the north of the island. Here the stark terrain, which bears a striking resemblance to the countryside of lower Bosnia, was well chosen for training for an eventual intervention in the former Yugoslavia. Sheer's company, trained in demolitions, sniping, and sabotage, specializes in behind-the-lines operations.

Sheers joined the legion after four years at the University of Chicago, majoring in economics. He is nearing the end of his five-year enlistment. "The legion has been an experience. I had the chance to be assigned

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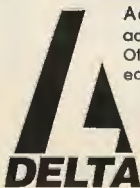
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to the REP and it's been continuous action ever since. Maybe it wouldn't have been the same in some other unit but here it's been interesting. But then again, five years is enough. I've already applied to grad-school and I'm going back to the States to do an MBA. As far as the legion goes, I did it and that's good enough for me."

The other American I met had quite a different story. Bob Bligh is a Marine veteran of two tours in 'Nam. The six-foot-five Texan took his recon skills to Africa and after some adventuring, made his way to France and joined the legion. That was more than 15 years ago and he's now a weapons specialist.

Over a beer at the non-coms' bar, Bligh talked about his experiences. He had been in almost all of the legion's tactical operations, spending more time overseas than at home. "I'm one of the dinosaurs here. I was in the legion when some of these kids coming in were hardly born. A career in the legion is a pretty rugged life. It's still tough but I get the feeling it was tougher before... What anyone joining the legion should know is that they'll be pushed to the max. Also that they'll be the first to go and there won't be any letters to the senator or any public opinion to protect them. The only people they can count on are their fellow legionnaires.

In Diversity There Is Strength

"The legion is tough, but I don't think we're any tougher than any other elite group, the SAS, the SEALs, whatever. But we have one thing that's unique. We have a wealth of experience you don't find anywhere else in the world. In one company you have all the major languages covered. In one company you'll find anyone from a Russian border guard to a Danish fighter pilot, a navy captain to a mountain guide, a trial lawyer to an expert pickpocket. You put all of that together and you have a group which can get by in any situation, under any conditions. This wealth of experience is what really makes the legion unique."

Bligh's comments reflect the very nature of the legion. A body composed of diverse elements from the four corners of the globe that fit together to form a close-knit military unit, a military unit that is at once admired and mistrusted by the French themselves — admired for its efficiency and the ability to work such varied backgrounds together, and yet mistrusted because of the foreign nature of those very backgrounds.

When on parade the legion marches at a slow, deliberate pace. The cadence seems to exemplify the quiet confidence that binds these men and their officers together. The legion marching past is certain to bring applause from the spectators. It is said that in applauding the legion the French are applauding themselves in recognition that out of such disparate elements they are able to form one of the world's most cohesive and formidable fighting units.

Richard Lucas is a combat photographer who has covered conflicts in Europe, Asia,

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the Middle East, and Africa — often in close contact with the French Foreign Legion.

[Note: For further legion recruitment information, readers may contact: R. Brown, 206 W. Water St., Elmira, NY 14901; phone: 607-734-3166, fax: 607-734-1718.] ✕

MINED CAMP

Continued from page 61

ular Phnom Penh nightclub on their motorcycles late one night with their two indigenous "girlfriends." They all disappeared. It was a sobering thought: well-intentioned foreigners on humanitarian missions, scarfed up like that.

There was no time to worry about hostiles; our patients were arriving. Scores of villagers, mostly young mothers with infants, were lined up outside the door of the RRI field clinic. There also were dozens of policemen and police trainees waiting to see the doctors.

Martial-arts training is an integral part of the police academy's daily curriculum, and these officers and cadets mostly were suffering from hyperextension of knees and elbows during *Tae Kwon Do* training (an injury common to that popular, Korean fighting style). These boys were serious about their sparring; I was treated to an

impromptu demonstration later from two trainees who took great pride in their skills.

The police trainees kept the clinic stocked with fresh coconut milk for the "docs." We didn't get much time to enjoy the sweet nectar, though — too busy. Hyslop and I dispensed the meds as fast as the four docs could write the prescriptions, all while answering the questions of a man we suspected was a former government intelligence agent; ignoring the giggles of local maidens; and charming the children despite their increasingly annoying habit of chirping "hello, hello" at us.

As the afternoon lengthened we packed up the gear and loaded the van. The long line of patients finally dwindled to nothing. Since we were traveling without an armed escort, it was imperative that we make it back to the capital before nightfall. I thought again of the missing Brit and Italians.

No Wimps Or Bleeding Hearts

The Phreah Ket Mealea Military Hospital in Phnom Penh needs supplies and money. With the preponderance of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) for relief in this country it's a wonder that medical facilities overall aren't in better condition. The problem with Phreah Ket is that none of the more than 300-odd relief organizations will help because it is a "military" hospital. Yet, within the Cambodian system it functions much the same way as an American "county hospital" where local

people receive medical care whether they can pay or not.

The military hospital serves the multitudes of Phnom Penh's needy; approximately 50% of its patients are indigent civilians. If not for Phreah Ket they would receive no medical care. Of course, it would make too much sense for a well-meaning NGO to establish a "people's clinic" on the grounds. Then again, too many foreign "relief" workers would rather hang out at local bars and bitch about the local bureaucracies rather than bend a few rules and get the job done. (I'm not alone in that assessment: Rory Nugent, a journalist who spent time in the Sudan, once wrote, "In my experience only a few aid workers answer a calling; most seem to mark time and somehow feel good about it.")

People who do get the job done are people like the RRI team in Cambodia. A unique group, these guys are goers and doers — not a bunch of wishful thinkers, bleeding hearts, and effete cocktail-party talkers who actually are unprepared to confront a bad situation in the Third World.

Refugee Relief International has a whole network of supporters around the globe who help make arrangements, absorbing costs of overseas phone calls, faxes, and gas money while giving up their own time away from business and family. The organization also receives donated medical supplies mailed at the expense of the donor.

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Rob Krott is an SOF senior foreign correspondent who has reported from war zones in Bosnia, Somalia, the Sudan, and elsewhere. ✕

FULL AUTO

Continued from page 31

The Model IJ-81 shotguns I fired had 22-inch (560mm) barrels which were choked cylinder bore. Theoretically, this means no choke at all. However, most manufacturers supposedly add 0.002-inch or 0.003-inch of constriction at the muzzle to even out the spread and prevent donut-shaped patterns. These shotguns are chambered for both the standard 2 3/4-inch and 3-inch magnum shells. The front sight consists of a brass bead attached to a forward sloping ramped base. The investment-cast receiver, made of black-anodized aluminum alloy, has a short, raised serrated rib on the top at the front end to assist in proper alignment of the front sight bead.

The trigger mechanism is similar to that of the Remington Model 870. There is a conventional cross-bolt which must be pushed to the left to fire the weapon. A checkered button on the right side of the trigger housing

serves as the action release.

The bolt group is hard-chromed. A spring-loaded extractor is mounted on the right side of the breech face. On the left is a spring-loaded hook to keep the shell flush against the breech face. The firing pin is spring-loaded.

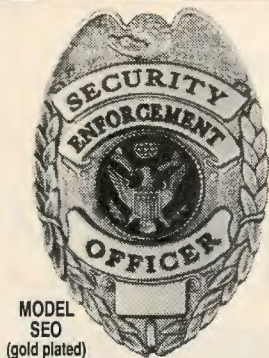
There are two magazine options. A standard tubular magazine under the barrel is available with a four-round capacity. The Model IJ-81K (*korobchaty magazin* — box magazine) has a four-round, single-column, detachable box-type magazine with a stamped, sheet-metal steel body featuring punch-welded construction. This latter variant is more appealing as it permits the operator to select from magazines containing buckshot, slugs or the numerous other specialty rounds that provide the scattergun with its great variety of ammunition types.

The forearm, usually either walnut or stained beech, is grooved in the traditional manner so often encountered on law-enforcement shotguns in the United States. A black synthetic forearm is also available. There are two stock options. A variant without a buttstock has the rear sling swivel attached to the top of its pistol grip. This version can be dismissed out of hand as shotguns should always be fired from a strong shoulder mount to

maximize hit probability. However, these shotguns are normally equipped with the same buttstock found on the AK100 series assault rifles (see "The Black Kalashnikovs", August '95). This buttstock, which folds to the left, is made from black, fiberglass-reinforced polyamide. It has a cutout on the left side to accommodate the scope mount riveted to the left side of the AK100 receiver, so in this instance it's totally useless. The right side of the buttstock has the same peculiar lightening groove found on both sides of the AK74's laminated-wood buttstock.

I fired many hundreds of rounds through these Russian law-enforcement shotguns in the bitter cold of a typical Russian winter at the factory test range in Izhevsk, located 1,130 kilometers east of Moscow in the western part of the Urals. When the actions were jacked smartly to the rear after firing a round and then fully forward with vigor — a technique that must be applied to all slide-action shotguns — operation was flawless. It's a pity they will probably never be imported to the United States as they would provide a cost-effective alternative and considerable competition to Remington and Mossberg. I especially liked the Model IJ-81K with its detachable box-type magazine. ✕

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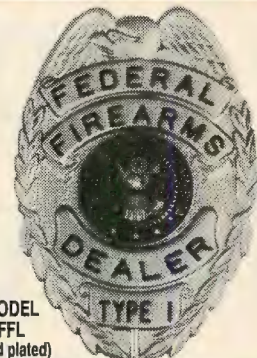
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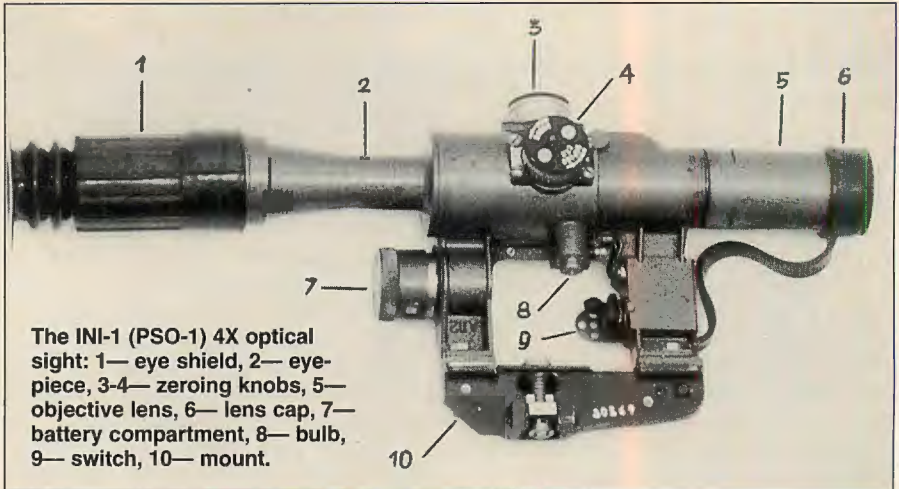
DRAGUNOV

Continued from page 39

never caring for fame or glory. Once a local news story noted, "... quite a number of people are surprised — why Dragunov had so few decorations, just the two of them: the Lenin Prize and the Order of 'Token of Honor.' Maybe, it is because in Izhevsk, in Izhmash, there works another brilliant arms designer — Mikhail Kalashnikov."

A man's measure can not be taken only by counting awards; a more true measure is what remains in people's memory, after he is gone. Evgenie Fedorovich was a man with a strong sense of duty, totally committed to the cause and loyal to friends. Like a guru, he lavishly shared knowledge with the younger generation of his team. Many of them went on to become first-class specialists, but they still speak of themselves as Dragunov's disciples. Evgenie Fedorovich died on 4 August 1991.

I remember the day I walked into the design office, some time after his funeral. There was a portrait on the wall above his old table. It was somewhat unexpected, and moving. I stood there for a few moments, thinking, when somebody behind me said, rather pathetically, "You know why we liked him? Look, his working desk was never locked up, and he always had his



The INI-1 (PSO-1) 4X optical sight: 1— eye shield, 2— eyepiece, 3-4— zeroing knobs, 5— objective lens, 6— lens cap, 7— battery compartment, 8— bulb, 9— switch, 10— mount.

drawing board in one room with regular engineers. He was one of us. He never considered himself as a god on Mount Olympus, which was such a contrast to other big shots."

Dragunov's two sons, Mikhail and Alexei, carry on the family tradition as gun designers, Mikhail at the Izhevsk Mechanical Factory and Alexei at Izhmash. Evgenie Fedorovich left some unfinished projects, one being a machine pistol in 9x18mm. As the documentation was with the Izhevsk Mechanical Factory, Mikhail

continued the development to a successful completion. The old master was also working on a sniper rifle within a more compact envelope, which was completed by Izhmash. Its present configuration as the SVDS *Snaiperskaya Vintovka Dragunova Skladnaya* — Folding Dragunov Sniper Rifle — appeared in 1994.

The SVDS Rifle

The SVD and SVDS have a number of differences, in response to new conditions in contemporary warfare. For example, the

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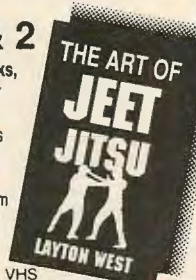
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The 10-round magazine assembly common to the SVD and SVDS rifles.

SVDS is better adapted for airborne and armored troops: Its overall length of 875mm (34.5 inches) with folded stock is roughly equal to the height of seated soldier.

The rifle can be operated from vehicles, using them as shelter from small-arms fire. It can fire either special sniper cartridges or regular rounds with a steel core, in 7.62x54R. It also can employ tracer and armor-piercing incendiary ammunition.

Externally, the SVDS differs thus: It has a folding buttstock, a shorter barrel, a new conical muzzle brake with teardrop-shaped apertures, a pistol grip under the receiver, and handguards made of fiberglass-reinforced polyamide; further, the SVDS has no bayonet lug, the bayonet coming in an accessory kit.

The right-side-folding buttstock is made of welded tubular-steel segments, and attaches to the rear of the receiver with a hinge similar to that of the AKS-74. The buttstock release catch was adapted from the Kalashnikov SMG. The cheek rest has three functional positions: in "marching order" the rest is pivoted up and locked in vertical position above the upper bar of the buttstock; the two "firing order" positions are, locked at the angle above the upper bar of the stock when the operator uses an optic scope or a night-vision device, or unlooked and pivoted down inside the buttstock frame when firing with open sights. The buttplate is also made from reinforced polyamide. The entire construction of the folding buttstock is strong enough to be used in hand-to-hand combat.

The barrel is 565mm (22.3 inches) long, featuring four grooves with right-hand twist of one turn in 240mm (9.4 inches), with the width of grooves equal to 3.8mm (1.5 "lines"). The first designs of SVD had a pitch of one turn in 320mm (12.6 inches). The pitch was subsequently increased to 9.4 inches, which degraded accuracy with regular cartridges and reduced the muzzle velocity from 830 m/second (2,721 fps) to 810 m/second (2,657 fps), but was done in order to improve the trajectory of tracer and

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armor-piercing-incendiary bullets, which required a greater speed of rotation rather than a higher linear velocity. The outer diameter of the barrel in the SVDS is larger than that of SVD by 1mm, making the barrel walls in the SVDS 0.5mm thicker — a heavier barrel is always welcome with sniper and target rifles, as it improves accuracy potential. The bore and the chamber are chromium plated.

The muzzle is fitted with a monoblock front sight base, integral with the flash suppresser. The whole device is attached to the barrel with two pins. One peculiarity of the new flash suppresser is its conical, funnel-type geometry with four teardrop, asymmetrically positioned slots. The lower two slots are placed in such a manner that none of them comes into a central position. The web between these slots is wider than the one between the upper slots, to help dampen muzzle jump, and to eliminate gas jets. The jets, if diverted strictly downwards, would significantly increase the dust signature of the weapon. Despite that the new brake is 65mm (2.6 inches) shorter than the one of the SVD, it is in no way less effective in either suppressing flash signature or lessening the muzzle blast — important considerations when using light-amplification-type night sights.

The pistol grip, located under the receiver and attached to it with a single long



Chief project engineer for the SVDS redesign was Azariy Nesterov, with 38 years at the Izhmash Arms Designing Center. His input into the SVDS project was significant.

screw, is also made from thermosetting, reinforced polyamide. For ergonomic reasons, the trigger and trigger guard were shifted forward about 10mm.

The SVDS rifle has the usual pressed-metal selector lever on the right side of the receiver: up for safe, down for semiautomatic. The safety levers of SVD and SVDS differ slightly in shape; in the latter the side ear has been changed from the lower posi-

tion to the upper, to facilitate manipulation. A top-cover locking lever, in the rear receiver of both rifles, is geometrically identical but in the SVDS its locking angle is somewhat less.

The handguards of the SVDS are also made from black, reinforced polyamide. They have pronounced horizontal ribs, to provide an enhanced gripping surface. On the inside surface of the guards are additional ribs for strength. Like the SVD, the new rifle has 12 ventilation openings in the handguards, six on each side.

Although 70% of SVD and SVDS components are interchangeable, there are many subtle differences. The SVDS top cover has been strengthened by increasing its thickness from 0.7mm to 1mm. The gas regulator of the new rifle has a few minor alterations. The new piston has no obturation grooves. Outer diameter of the gas piston and internal diameter of the gas tube are 10.5mm and 14mm respectively; on the SVD they are 9.5mm and 13mm.

The steel-bodied, sheet-metal magazines with prominent reinforcing ribs, for both SVD and SVDS rifles, hold 10 rounds. No tools are required to load these staggered-column, detachable-box type magazines. The magazines have a hold-open device so the bolt group will remain rearward after firing the last round.

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The SVDS represents the logical evolution of a robust and proven military arm. As with all Russian small arms, the Dragunov sniper rifles have earned their reputation for utter reliability. This does not mean, however, that the rifle can do without any maintenance at all!

When I was serving my term in the army, during a routine morning inspection our sergeant would find somebody's gun was not properly cleaned. He would definitely "see hell" and send the careless trooper to the guard-house. He called it "punishment without pardoning" and did it to show us that, despite the durability of the Russian small arms, the rifles had to be properly taken care of. Tough but right.

Valery N. Shilin, 44, is a senior marketing officer with Izhmash Joint Stock Company. ☒

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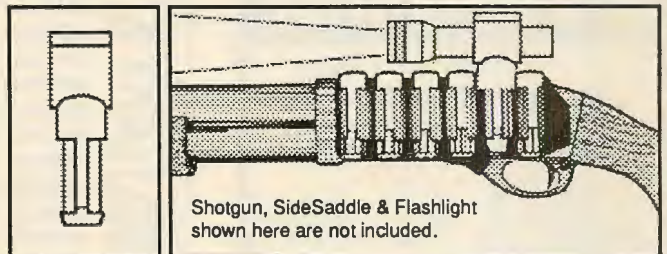
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

















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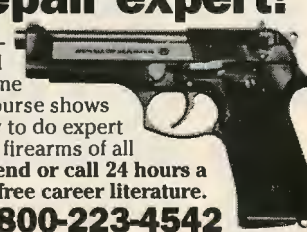
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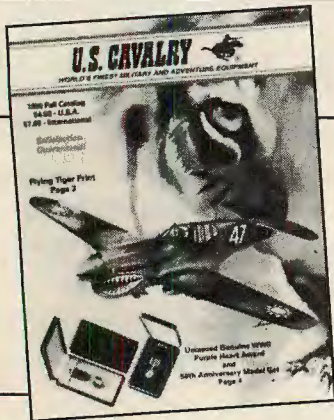
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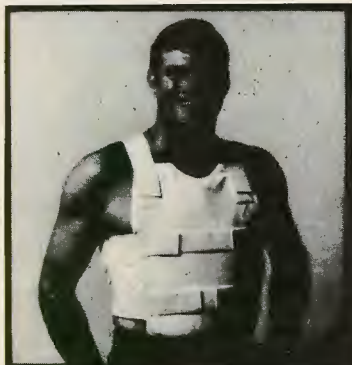
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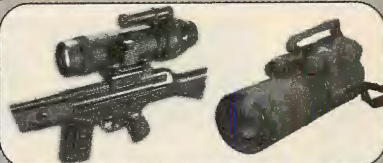
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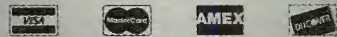
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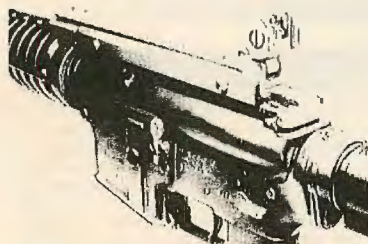
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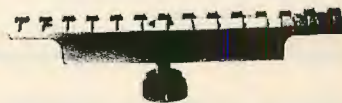
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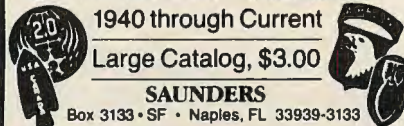
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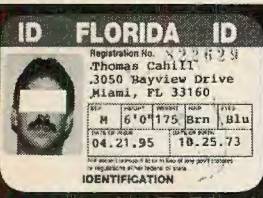
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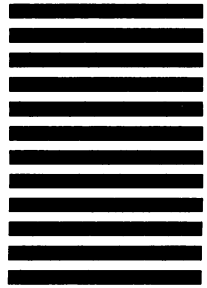
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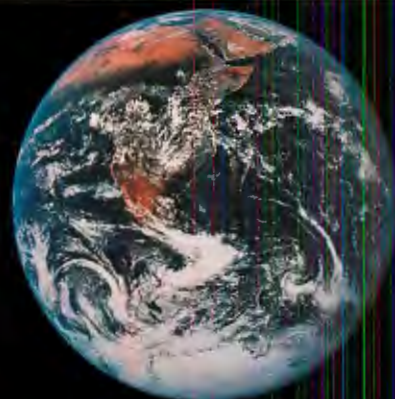


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