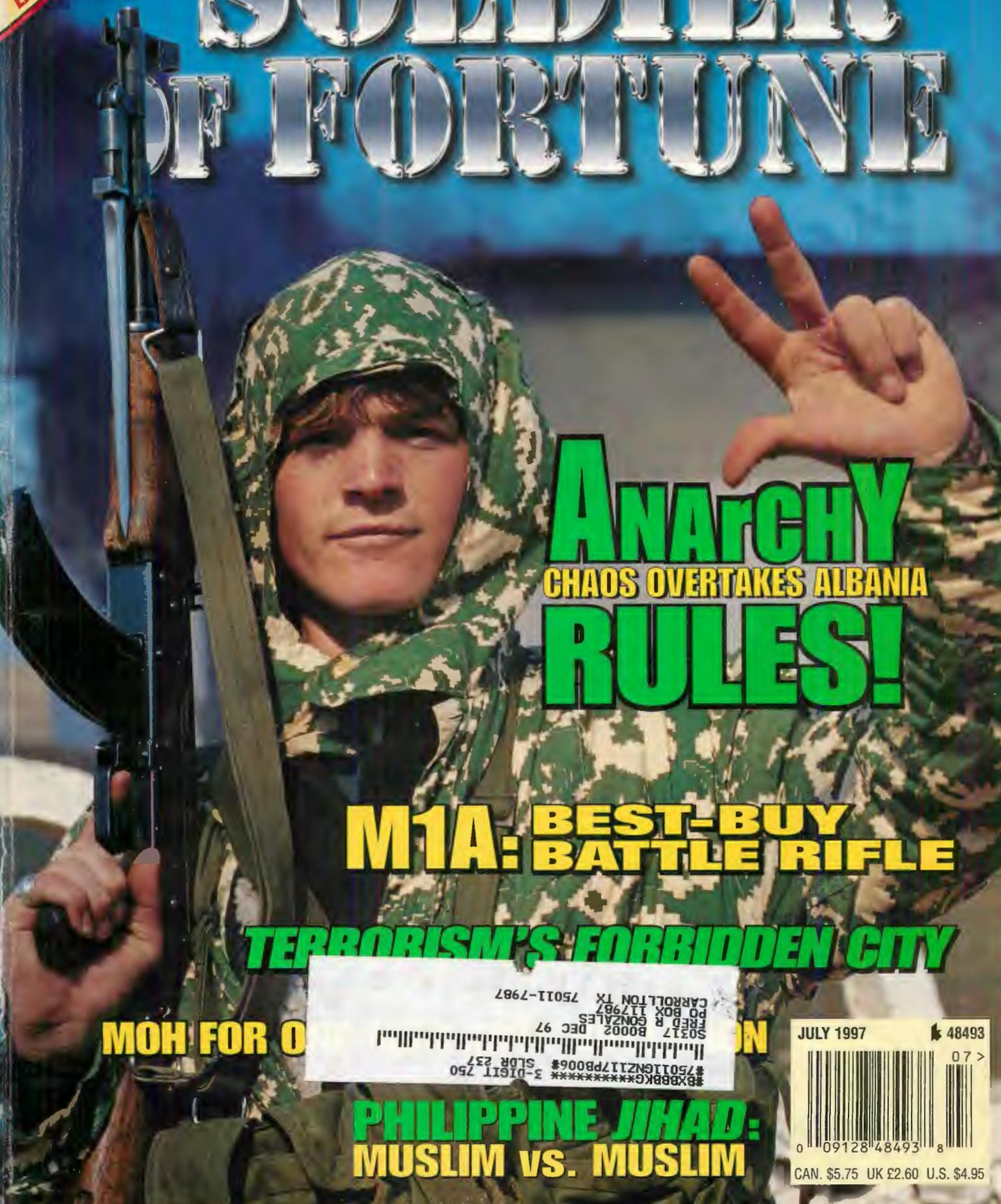


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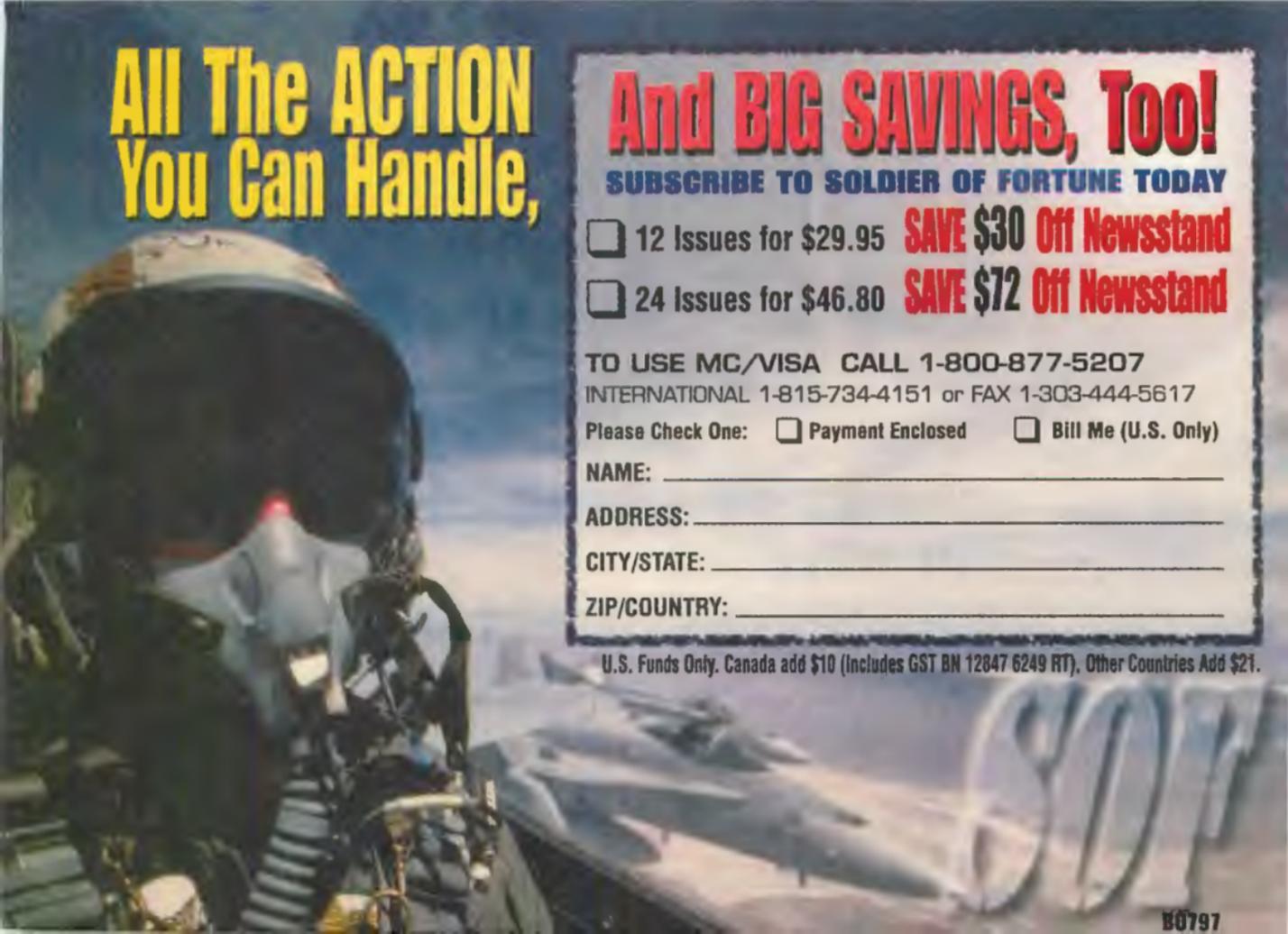
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Reuters/Yannis Behrakis/Archive



Department of Defense



Steven L. Waterman

# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by James L. Pate

## Evasion Of Justice

“Nothing does more to sap the life of a democracy than the abuse of power,” wrote Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, the *London Sunday Telegraph*'s Washington correspondent. “Public trust is dangerously low ... Of all the bad things that [President] Clinton has done to America, the worst is turning the FBI into a federal replica of the Arkansas State Police.”

The latest glimpse of the FBI's political prostitution may be seen 20 June, the sentencing date for E. Michael Kahoe, a high-ranking FBI official who pleaded guilty to obstructing justice in the probe of the Randy Weaver family tragedy, a government orgy of lies and savagery in 1992. Holding her baby, Vicki Weaver was killed, based on illegal shoot-to-kill orders.

Kahoe admitted shredding documents to conceal this — and other — FBI crimes.

One might argue that Kahoe's punishment signifies justice. As with Hoover's carefully cultivated image, such “justice” is a bright and shining lie concealing an ugly truth.

Prosecutor Steve Pelak told U.S. District Court Judge Ricardo M. Urbina at a recent hearing that FBI agents believe once Kahoe is sentenced, the Weaver probe is over. Consequently, agents with knowledge about the shooting have clammed up, Pelak admitted. They also refused to cooperate with federal prosecutor Ron Howen, who quit in the middle of Randy Weaver's trial, so shaken was he by how much evidence the FBI hid or concocted.

If no other agents are indicted in the Weaver probe by the time of Kahoe's sentencing, the FBI coverup will have succeeded.

If Kahoe is guilty of a cover-up, it is logical that there are other criminals concealed by Kahoe's obstruction of justice. But others implicated — former assistant director Larry Potts, former deputy assistant Danny Coulson, former violent crimes unit chief Gale R. Evans and former Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) commander Dick Rogers — will likely evade justice.

FBI scandals since the Weaver tragedy are numerous: the Waco holocaust, the lab fiasco, the botched Olympic Games bombing investigation, the illicit use of FBI files by White House dirty tricksters, etc., *ad nauseum*.

Such successful evasion of justice should have a poster boy. *Soldier Of Fortune* nominates Special Agent Lon T. Horiuchi, AKA “Lon Itchy Finger” (a more suitable sobriquet might be “the Butcher of Ruby Ridge.”)

He's the man — we use that noun loosely here — who killed Mrs. Weaver.

It is also Horiuchi who set in motion the final series of events that, in the cold and clinical description of the FBI, “resulted in the resolution of the situation at the Branch Davidian complex.” (Makes it sound like something good happened in Waco on 19 April 1993, doesn't it?)

Horiuchi was a sniper-team leader at Waco. Minutes after a CEV armored vehicle began pumping toxic CS chemicals into Mount Carmel at 0600, Horiuchi “heard popping noises ... [and] saw green tracer rounds bouncing off the CEV.” At 0607, Horiuchi “called in a ‘compromise,’” according to the interview report, dated 21 April 1993: “Compromise was the signal ... that FBI personnel had been subjected to hostile gunfire.”

Horiuchi's signal set off the FBI's final solution: spraying its CS as quickly as possible and demolishing the building. Six hours later, about 80 people, most of them women and children, were immolated. Experts, using the FBI's own aerial infrared videotapes, show government machinegun-fire into the building in the final minutes, contrary to FBI claims that its agents never fired a shot.

The FBI has not released its infrared video from the 0600 time frame. Given that no one else reported seeing green tracer rounds, that video should be released to verify Horiuchi's claim. Did the Butcher of Ruby Ridge see such shots? Or did his bloodlust beget a butchery far more ugly than that in Idaho? ☒

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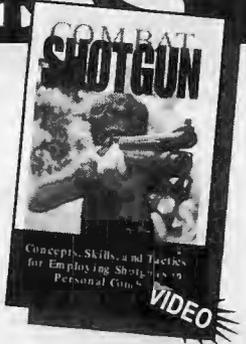
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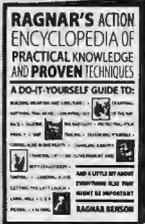
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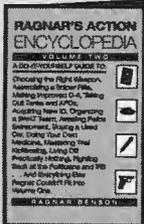
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## Constructive Criticism



As a member of the NRA and a loyal *SOF* subscriber and reader since your magazine was first published, I submit some thoughts concerning your latest issue.

In the May 97 issue you have dedicated your editorial and a 6-page feature story to the political infighting within the NRA. I just noticed that your Internet home page has also been dedicated to this important issue.

I read *SOF* for the following reasons:

1: keep informed about hot spots and low-intensity conflicts occurring around the world

2: keep informed about the latest in all types of weapons technology

3: read interesting stories about military affairs and history

4: read interesting stories about American law enforcement both positive and negative—like the buttheads at ATF

5: see interesting photos of interesting people in interesting positions, like that communist Najibullah strung up by his communist neck

I do not read *SOF* to keep informed about the internal politics of the NRA ... even though these issues are important in their own right. Your editorial was enough. Filling the middle of *SOF*'s May issue with the NRA's affairs, I feel takes away from the direction of *SOF*.

*SOF* needs to stay focused on world hotspots and the changing world around us. The magazine is really the only decent one of its kind. Do not let *SOF* get bogged down in other people's fights.

Mike Turenne,  
Guatemala  
via E-mail

## Taliban Truths

I was very pleased to see the recent article on Afghanistan, it was informative, thoughtful and detailed. Mike Winchester indeed has the guts to print what the mainstream media ignore, but falls just shy of presenting a complete picture of everybody's involvement. Speaking from an Afghan's point of view, we are all very familiar with the fact that Pakistan is trying to control and invade Afghanistan, via the Taliban, but what about the United States role in all this?

Winchester's article falls short because he shifts all the blame on Pakistan, and

doesn't mention one critical word about the CIA, or the U.S.' crucial role! I mean, if you really are concerned about the truth and take responsibility to accurately report all sides of the story, then why omit knowledge about one government's very large role in shaping policy there, i.e. the U.S.? There's no way he could live in Kabul and Pakistan and not be aware of the United States' influence there. I'll really be impressed if one of your journalists has the courage to present all sides, including ones that some people don't want to hear about.

Ansar Rahel  
Afghanistan

## Drive On!!



I would like to take this time to personally thank you and your staff for such an outstanding magazine. I have just used the SITREP map as a resource for a Sunday school lesson. The help that the map gave is greatly appreciated. The American public should thank their lucky stars that you guys are out there keeping us in tune with the going-ons of Washington and abroad. Thanks again! Drive on!! *Hoo-ahh!*

Scott Walters  
via E-Mail

## Gulf War Suspicions

I served with the 37th Engineers from February 91 to August 93, including all of the ground war in Iraq. I enjoyed your articles covering the largest non-nuclear demolition in the history of the U.S. Army. Unfortunately I am suspicious of Brian Martin and some of the other veterans who are now sick. Too many guys who were also there have no problems and are still serving proudly on active duty. My theory is that a combination of Nutra-sweet poisoning, overexposure to permethrin insect repellent and perhaps the ptydymbromide pills made those gentlemen sick.

Capt. Darren Klemens  
via E-mail

*Your thoughts on this might be as close to the money as anybody's. Whatever the root cause(s) may be of Gulf War Syndrome, they would appear to be subtle, and quite possibly a combination of subtle factors working synergistically. The point of the article was that these troops are indeed*

*sick— some very sick— got that way while on duty, and should be treated like walking wounded— not malingerers— and that initial DoD claims there was no exposure to chemical warfare agents was wrong and perhaps disingenuous.*

## South Africa Calling

Hello, just to help you identify the unknown "rocket, possibly 40mm" [of weapons found at Khamisiyah, Iraq]: the item is an anti-personnel rifle grenade used on the 7.62mm SKS rifle. Interestingly, it does not need a blank to propel the grenade, there is a bullet trap in it, the momentum of the bullet being used to propel the grenade.

In the war against SWAPO this particular grenade was not often used but another version, the anti-tank shaped-charge grenade version saw a lot of action against us. It was a very effective ambush weapon used in tandem with RPG 7s, claiming a lot of lives especially from those who were involved in the Reaction Forces and travelled in Caspirs.

The SKS rifle came with a sight that could be flipped up to provide the correct elevation and ranges for this particular grenade. The antipersonnel grenade was a thick coil of segmented iron wrapped around the main charge; when the grenade hit the intended target the charge scattered the 1m X mm segments. Max range that the grenade could be effectively shot, 170m.

Hope this should enlighten your burgeoning archives on small arms.

Name Withheld  
1st Lieutenant, 101 Battalion  
via E-mail

## No More Nixon Knocks!

Don Kirk's otherwise well-written article on the release of our POWs by North Vietnam in 1973 was badly flawed by two inaccurate and misleading comments about Richard Nixon. Apparently as a member of the news media, gratuitous and vindictive criticisms of Nixon are irresistible to Mr. Kirk even at this late date.

He characterizes the existence of the POWs as Nixon's "easy rationalization for remaining in the war," as if Nixon actually wanted to continue our disastrous involvement initiated by Kennedy and Johnson. The opposite is true. The return of the POWs was a key issue in Nixon's frustrating efforts to get us out of Vietnam with some semblance of honor.

Mr. Kirk then describes "a sense of revulsion over the Nixon-serving, show business aspect of the releases." The revul-

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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, nonscientific 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-CFCH* 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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Official SEAL SCARS-CFC  
Creator Jerry Peterson

sion must have been Kirks's alone, for in every newsreel I've seen and book I've read by the POWs themselves, they appear unanimous in their support for Nixon's tough stance with the North Vietnamese, especially in carrying out Operation Linebacker, the Christmas bombing campaign. As far as "show business" is concerned, that just seems to be the American way. Would Mr. Kirk have been revolted at the two-day Grand Review of the Union Armies in Washington at the conclusion of the Civil War? Was he disgusted by Norman Schwarzkopf's non-stop grandstanding at the conclusion of the Gulf War? Or does he reserve his contempt for Richard Nixon?

George W. Blishak  
Toluca Lake, Calif.

### SLORC Sucks



Last year a reporter for your magazine, Rob Krott, asked for permission to spend several days with our KNLA scout/sniper unit at the "Camp Shooter" training site. In the five years I have commanded, fought with and trained the scout/snipers the number one rule has been security and secrecy. This has been

one of the reasons for our effectiveness, and I had misgivings about a *Ko Lo Wah* (foreigner) coming to do a story on my unit. However after meeting Rob and laying down very strict guidelines, and making (as it turned out) unnecessary threats on his well being if the security of our camp was compromised, we agreed to have him do the article for *SOF*. Lt. Lay Mu and I made the right decision: Rob is a true soldier as well as a good writer, as his story in the January 1997 *SOF* proved.



courtesy correspondent

I can't describe the excitement of the men when the magazine found its way to our new "Camp Shooter." Sometimes we feel like the world doesn't know or care about our struggle for freedom. Unfortunately, several of the soldiers featured in the article didn't get to see it. They joined the seemingly endless list of Karen who have died fighting for the freedom Americans seem to take for granted.

The situation in Burma is grimmer than it

has been since we began our fight for freedom almost 50 years ago. Our families now have no safe areas in Burma or Thailand. On 28 January 1997, SLORC soldiers, guided by DKBA traitors, crossed over into Thailand and burned and looted one large refugee camp just 10 minutes out of Mae Sot. Two other large camps were also fired upon, with one 81-year-old woman killed. In the next few weeks thousands of refugees were fleeing Burma trying to find refuge in Thailand and in some areas they were being forced back into Burma by the Thai military.

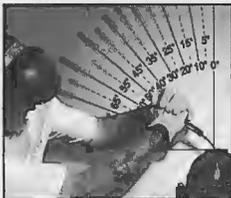
Around the 8th of February SLORC started a major offensive against KNLA. On February 10th we had to abandon the latest "shooter camp" just hours ahead of SLORC. We are currently engaged in behind-the-lines guerrilla warfare as the KNLA now holds no bases or land. The latest reports have us outnumbered about 50 to 1, but as Blade keeps reminding us "That just gives us more targets ..." We have no option now but to continue fighting. The alternative is death, rape and torture for us and our families, or imprisonment in Thailand.

Although the scout/snipers are better trained and equipped now than they have been for some time, most of the men are without boots and some only have knives they have made out of bamboo.

I want to thank you and your magazine and Rob Krott for your continued support in our fight for freedom. Anyone who wants to

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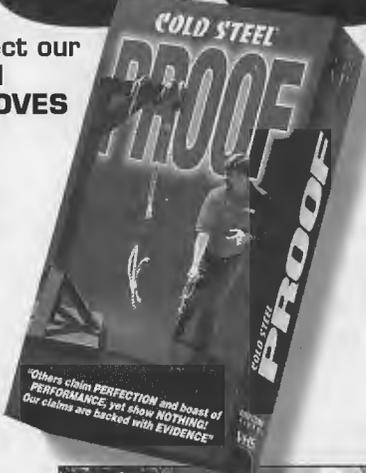


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help our unit can contact Rob Krott at P.O. Box 1573, Olean, NY 14760. I am enclosing pictures you can publish if you wish.

A Karen Freedom Fighter  
Burma

*In above photos, scout/snipers train with aging M1903 Springfield rifle, fitted with M1919A6 .30-06 Browning machine-gun barrel. (inset) Karen refugee children stand in the ashes of their camp, burned by SLORC in January.*

### Hostage Raid Failure Revealed



The raid to free the embassy hostages taken by Iran failed for one reason only. The Soviets picked up nearly every communication and transmission weeks prior to the raid.

Upon picking up the task force to free the hostages on radar, the Soviet Air Force dispatched six fighters to intercept the task force on the pretense that the USSR was defending a probable flagrant border violation. Moscow informed Washington minutes after radar confirmed (along with radio transmissions) that the Soviets would intercept and engage the task force. The Carter administration, that sadly lacked intestinal fortitude, immediately called off the mission after informing the commanders of the situation. In its haste to depart the area, the aircraft collision occurred. This can be confirmed by recent declassified documents released by the Russians and through any U.S. embassy employee with a high security clearance that was stationed in Moscow at the time. Time to come clean on this one ...

Steve Winiecke  
Tampa, Florida  
via E-Mail

### Concealed Carry Input

A recent contribution to FLAK speaks of the privilege and immunity clause of the Constitution.

The clause which seems more pertinent to me is the section immediately preceding the one cited. ARTICLE IV, Section 1 reads: "Each State shall give credit to the public acts, etc. of every other state. Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records and judicial proceedings of every other state. And the Congress may by general laws prescribe the manner in which such acts, records and proceedings shall be proved, and the effect thereof." It is this clause, backed by relevant Congressional action, that requires the mutual recognition of marriage, divorce, driver's licensing, etc. This is where CHLs ought to be mutually recognizable.

Walter Lee ☞

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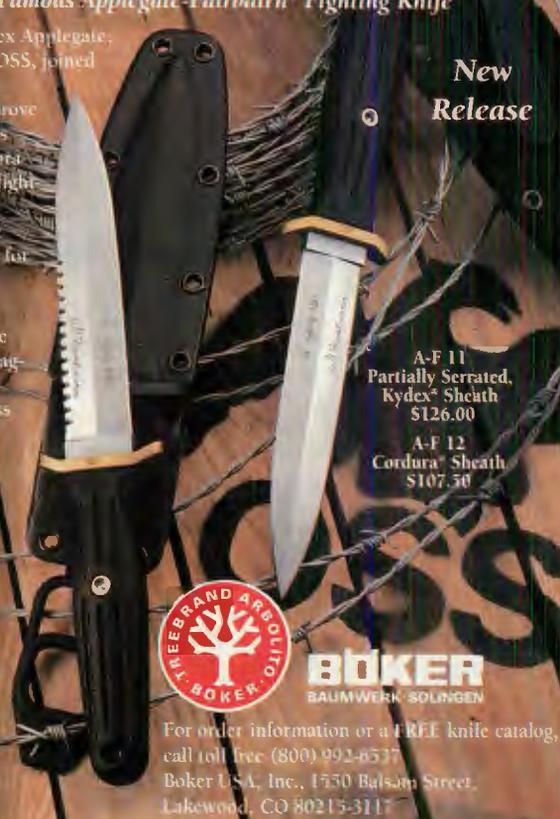
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# BULLETIN BOARD

## HUBBELL IN WACO'S WEB

More evidence has emerged indicating that the federal government spurned chances to arrest Branch Davidian leader David Koresh; this from a "very troubled" member of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Hostage Rescue Team who's expressed fear that "we're going to be made the fall guys."

On 17 April 1993, two days before the fire that killed about 80 people, including at least 30 women and children, HRT inserted four to six men into the rear area of Mount Carmel, usually referred to as the gymnasium, where furniture and other personal items belonging to church members were stored. The HRT team was there "to plant devices," a confidential source said. The source, citing security restrictions, declined to describe the devices, except to confirm "they were not destructive devices."

HRT team members hid among a jumble of boxes when they heard someone approaching. It was Koresh, alone and unarmed, apparently looking for something. As he rummaged through a carton, the team quietly radioed the command post that Koresh was in close proximity and that they could easily subdue him and remove him quickly from the building.

The response: On-scene commanders were not authorized to make such a decision. The team should stand by for permission from Washington (shades of the Vietnam War). The FBI called the Department of Justice, which contacted then Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell, First Family chum and their Waco point man.

The word came back to the team waiting inside Mount Carmel: Hubbell forbade Koresh's removal, which could have ended the stand-off without further violence. Hubbell cited two factors in his decision, the source said: the news media and the "need [for the standoff] to go on just a couple of more days."

Two days later, the HRT launched its dawn gas and armored vehicle non-assault, which resulted in the deadly fire. Contacted by *SOF*, Hubbell deferred to his attorney, John Neilds, who, after listening to the substance of the source's information, said he would get back to this reporter. Subsequent phone calls to Neilds and Hubbell went unreturned.

—James L. Pate

## HIGH COURT TURNS DOWN WACO APPEAL

The U.S. Supreme Court voted 18 April — a day before the fourth anniversary of the Waco holocaust — not to hear the appeals of six Branch Davidians whose attorneys contend they were given unfairly long prison sentences.

The six Davidians — Kevin A. Whitecliff, Jaime Castillo, Brad E. Branch, Renos L. Avraam, Graeme L. Craddock and Paul G. Fatta — were acquitted of the government's key charge, conspiracy in the murder of four BATF agents killed in the infamous raid of 28 February 1993. The raid set off a 51-day stand-off that ended in a fire that killed about 80 people, most of them women and children.

The jury, confused by the complicated wording of the jury instructions, found the six guilty of a subsequent count of possessing "firearms" in the commission of the conspiracy the jury said the defendants did not commit. (Castillo, Whitecliff, Branch and Avraam were found guilty of manslaughter.)

U.S. District Court Judge Walter Smith initially threw out the subsequent possession count verdict, saying that it was illogical that the defendants could be guilty of a subsequent count predicated upon a crime of which they had been found not guilty. But three



Mike Gruber, American Firearms Industry

*SOF* honcho Robert K. Brown is congratulated by Andrew M. Molchan, publisher of *American Firearms Industry* magazine and organizer of the Firearms Trade Expo, on receiving the prestigious 1997 Cicero Award, sponsored by *AFI* and the National Association of Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers. Awarded last April at the Expo in Atlantic City, N.J., the Cicero award is presented annually to a group or individual who has distinguished himself as a pro-gun advocate supporting the rights of individuals to use firearms for self-protection. Past recipients include Harlon Carter, Bill Ruger, Joe Tartaro, Richard Feldman, Marion Hammer, Larry Pratt, Sheriff Richard Mack and Jim Fotis.

days later, after the jury had been released, Smith reversed himself, letting the subsequent count stand.

As a result, Castillo, Whitecliff, Branch and Avraam got 40 years each, versus the 10 years they could have received without the firearms conviction. Craddock got 20 years and Fatta 10. Jurors later said that, had they understood the sentencing implications, they would have voted to acquit on the firearms account.

Castillo's attorney, Stephen P. Halbrook of Fairfax, Virginia, disputed a report in *The Washington Times* that this was the defendants' "last chance to escape long prison terms."

"This is not the end of the world," Halbrook told *Soldier Of Fortune*, "We have just begun to fight."

Although the Supreme Court does not explain its reason for hearing an appeal, Halbrook said a "plausible explanation" would be a condition of the ruling in the case by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which ordered the cases of the six remanded to the U.S. District court for re-sentencing. The high court can't rule on the issue of unfairly long sentences until the defendants are re-sentenced, Halbrook postulated.

A key issue, Halbrook said, is Smith's unilateral decision that the count in question involved not just a "firearm," but a "machine gun," the former involving a five-year sentence, the latter a 30-year term. That particular count in the indictments refers only to "firearms," not machine guns, Halbrook said, and the jury made no determination referring to "machine guns."

Halbrook said he will also argue the issue of acquittal on the predicate conspiracy count, that if a defendant is acquitted of the predicate count, it is illogical to find guilt on a related subsequent count. He acknowledged, though, some circuit courts have upheld the inconsistency in other cases. Finally, Halbrook said, in order to impose the longer prison terms, Smith must find that machine guns

were actually carried and used by the defendants during the ATF's raid "and the evidence is inconclusive on that." — James L. Pate

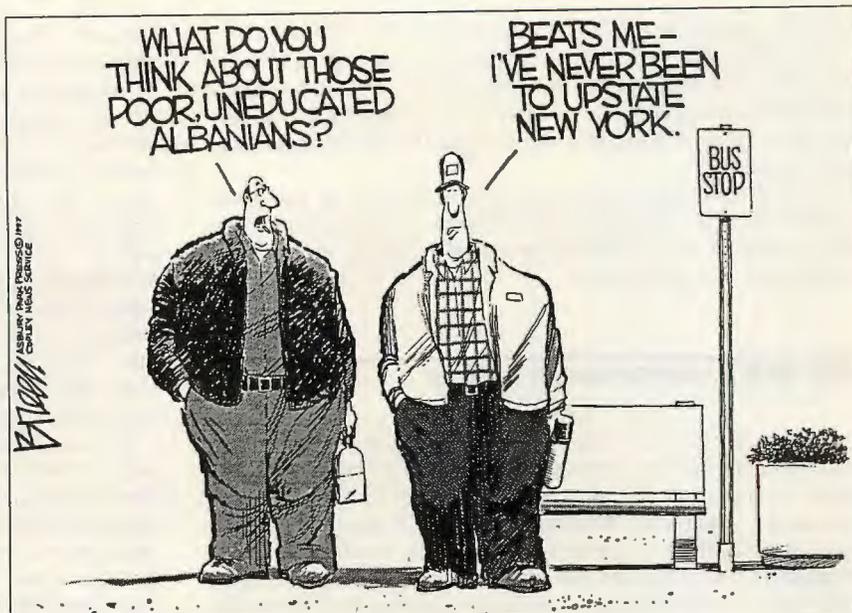
### JUDGE CASTS DOUBT ON ATF'S INTEGRITY

Special Agent Mike Casali won his first round against the BATF in a ruling by a Merit Systems Protection Board Judge: Casali and his wife, Special Agent Diane Klipfel, were targeted for headquarters wrath after they blew the whistle on widespread corruption among top agents and some of the Chicago police officers assigned to ATF's Chicago office (see "Rise and Fall of the ATF," "Dirty Cops And Robbers," and "Windy City Scapegoats," May, June and July '96).

ATF's argument for trying to fire Casali and Klipfel "can charitably be described as novel," Administrative Judge Stephen E. Manrose wrote. Manrose said the ATF intentionally included allegations in its removal notice that it knew to be false, noting headquarters managers "failed to adhere to the high ethical standards expected from federal law-enforcement agencies."

"Such an intentional disregard of the law casts doubt on the integrity of ATF's entire disciplinary process," stated Manrose, who singled out some brass-hats at headquarters for individual criticism.

ATF's now-retired associate director, Charlie Thompson, who dithered for 13 months without deciding whether to fire Casali and Klipfel, was scorned by Manrose for arguing "that he was too busy." Thompson's lame excuse was "an admission the he failed to perform an important part of his job."



In the interim, Casali and Klipfel, both with outstanding service records, were stripped of their badges and guns. Thompson's successor as the deciding official, Daniel Black, also retired without acting on the case, while Casali and Klipfel languished in the storage closet to which they had been banished. Black was replaced by Bradley Buckles, who whined that "it was difficult to put his decision into written form."

"Mr. Buckles' testimony lacks credibility," the judge said.

In contrast, "it was not easy to discredit" Casali, the judge said. "He had an excellent service record ... He received excellent work appraisals ... And did not have a prior disciplinary record. He received the Director's Award for 'exceptional courage and valor'."

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when he engaged armed drug dealers in Miami in a shoot-out.”

Yet, when ATF held special ceremonies in Washington to honor its agents who had engaged in hostile actions, it has consistently excluded Casali, who has “a permanent loss of hearing in both ears as a result of his overexposure to direct gunfire in [the Miami] and other incidents.”

Klipfel’s personnel hearing was due to be heard in late April. Meanwhile, a federal grand jury in Chicago, looking into corrupt cops, continues to hear evidence produced by, among others, Casali and Klipfel. Watch this space.

— James L. Pate

## THE NRA’S WHITTINGTON CENTER

About 10 miles southwest of Raton, N.M., lies a truly world-class shooting facility: some 52 square miles of high desert and piñon country dedicated to the shooting sports, hunting, and conservation — the NRA’s Whittington Center. Comparing favorably in size and facility to major military ranges, the Whittington Center features 14 rifle, pistol and shotgun ranges suitable for any imaginable type of competitive shooting. There is extensive wilderness for hunting and outdoor activities, supported by a good road net. There are excellent supporting facilities for lodging, cafeteria, officers and maintenance of the exceptionally well-kept property.

Originally part of a Spanish land grant to the Beaubien and Miranda families, the acreage has been divided over the years into large ranches, including the 33,640 Whittington parcel, subsequently named for the Amarillo, Texas, attorney who was in charge of the site selection committee in 1973 when the “NRA Outdoor Center” was purchased for \$3.5 million. In 1977, the NRA National Convention enacted that no member dues would be spent for the Center, and it became the NRA Special Contribution Fund with its own 15-member board of directors, and contributions were tax-deductible. In 1986, Mike Ballew became

Executive Director, and most of the ranges and other facilities have been built during his tenure.

Member contributions have been very well-administered: The list of national and international shooting events facilitated by the Whittington Center seems nearly endless, including the second annual international Super Sniper Shootout sponsored by Autaga Arms., Inc., which was this writer’s reason for visiting the center. There are guided hunts for elk, mule deer, lion, bear and wild turkey. One of the most worthwhile activities is the NRA Whittington Adventure, held in two sessions in June and July, for youths between 13 and 17. Participants are trained in rifle, pistol, shotgun and black-powder shooting; plus hunting, camping and other outdoor skills. For the future of shooting sports and gun rights, there’s much to be said for this attention to the next generation of NRA members.

When this land was first purchased, shortly after the Gun Control Act of 1968, there was a perception that gun rights were about to come under an unprecedented attack in this country, and shooting ranges were being closed down at an unprecedented rate due to urban sprawl, objections to noise, and etc., and the Center was perceived as a future sanctuary for shooters. It has proven to be this and much more. NRA members (and their guests) are always welcome at the Whittington Center. Any time you are in the northeastern part of New Mexico, it’s worth your time swing by for a visit.

The necessary effort at the NRA dedicated to the political activities involved in defending Second Amendment rights might lead outsiders to think that’s all the NRA is about. But the Whittington Center is a good example of the breadth and depth of the NRA’s commitment to the shooting sports, as well.

Inquiries and contributions should be sent to:

NRA Whittington Center  
P.O. Box 700  
Raton, NM 87740  
phone: 505-445-3615

— Alex McColl

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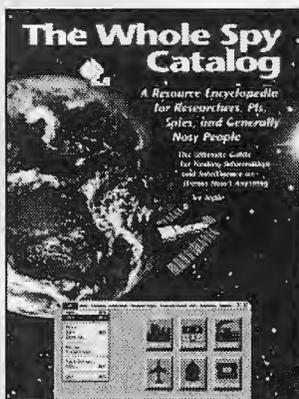


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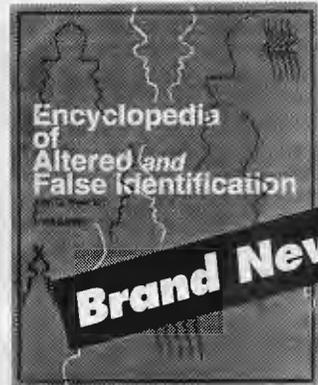
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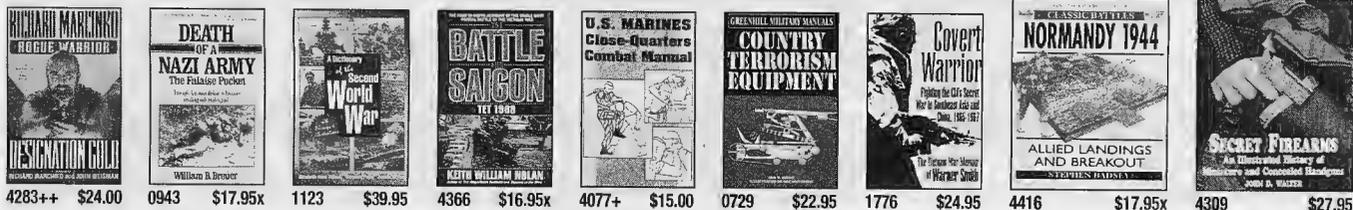
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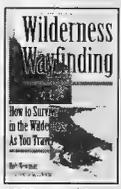
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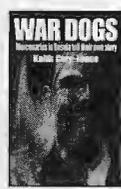
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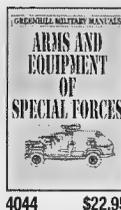
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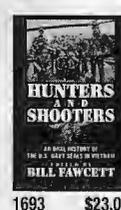
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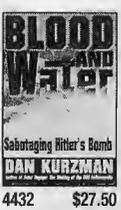
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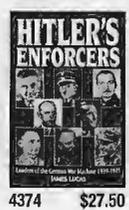
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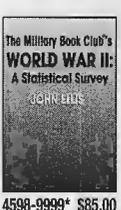
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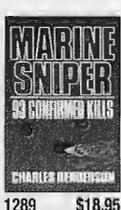
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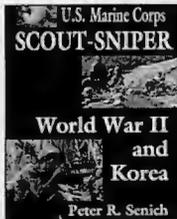
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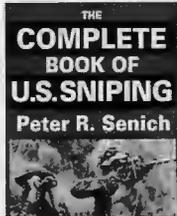
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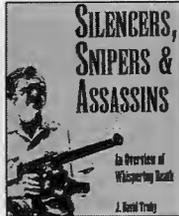
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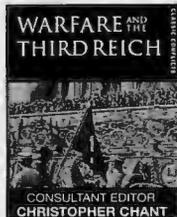
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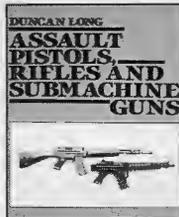
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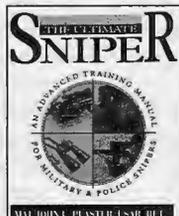
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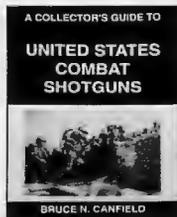
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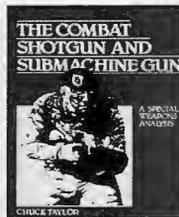
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# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Maj. John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret.)

## Immediate Action Drills

The most effective way to prevail in a chance contact with a numerically superior foe is an Immediate Action or "IA" drill. Part surprise and part bluff leavened with ingenuity, nowhere in military history did IA drills better evolve than in SOG, the top-secret Studies and Observation

Group, whose Green Berets conducted covert missions in Southeast Asia.

A SOG IA drill was executed at the instant of a chance contact, when what happens in a few seconds shapes what happens over the next 30 minutes. A SOG team's IA drill was thoroughly rehearsed and mastered

to hit the more-numerous enemy with such a blur of fire and action that he was knocked off balance, leaving the SOG men free to break contact and evade.

Typically, an IA Drill "trigger" is one shot, usually fired by the point man, though even if the enemy fires first it's executed the same way. Odd-numbered men jump one step right, even men one step left, and face the direction of fire whether hit from the front, back or side. The man closest empties his weapon full auto at the enemy in three-to-five-round bursts, then dashes between his arrayed comrades to lead the team away in the opposite direction. The split second



courtesy author



J.D. Bath

the first man's weapon empties, the next man picks up the slack, also on full-auto; then he, too, runs down the middle, trailing the first man. And so on.

From first shot to last is 30 seconds or less, a shocking blur of focused fire that seemed ten times the fury of a mere six or eight men. Against SOG IA drills, no force, no matter it's size or armament, stood a chance "for 30 seconds." After that the advantage shifted decisively to greater firepower and superior numbers.

An IA drill should be applicable to almost any contact, front, rear, right, left and keep it simple or you'll rehearse so many variations that your men cannot do any of them well.

To add destructive effect, make it SOP that from the instant of contact, your two M203 grenadiers pump out 40mm rounds as quickly as possible, and only transition to their 30-round M16 magazines when it's each man's turn to withdraw. Your goal is one long continuous burst of small-arms fire, accented by exploding 40mm projectiles.

SOG team leaders constantly looked for new devices or techniques to enhance their IA drills. One simple measure was placing rifle grenades, a powerful but underestimated weapon, on some CAR15s. The downside is that the shooter must pull the grenade

(inset) Special Forces-led SOG recon team practices an IA drill beneath Marble Mountain, Danang, 1968. (above) "For one covert mission into Cambodia, author's weapons included a CAR15, K-Bar knife and — an airhorn?"

pin to arm it and it won't detonate for five seconds after launch.

White phosphorous and frag grenades are useful, provided it's SOP that your men only toss them when it doesn't preclude firing M16s at the appointed second. To quick-toss grenades, SOG men developed a special rig using electrical tape and rubber bands, so they could grab a grenade from their harness, spin, jerk it free and pull the pin with one motion.

Many teams had claymore mines on their point man's and tail gunner's rucksacks, with a 45-second time-delay fuze. The point or tail furthest from enemy contact would remove the claymore and orient it toward the enemy's fire. Five seconds before it was his turn to shoot and withdraw, just as the last of his teammates rushed past, he'd ignite the fuze.

My SOP was that no one employed CS unless I tossed my CS grenade, but then, "automatically," each grenadier would fire two CS rounds and my native team leader would throw his CS grenade, all oriented in the same area where my CS landed.

Martin Bennett of Recon Team New York modified his Soviet RPG rounds with ten-penny nails and CS powder packets to create a projectile he called, "The Porcupine." Many SOG men chopped off Soviet RPD drum-fed machine guns, making them comparable in size to a Thompson submachine gun but firing the full-power 7.62x39mm round. With a drum modified to carry 125 belted rounds, a team's two RPDs added amazing firepower throughout the IA drill.

The crowning touch of a successful IA drill was to make the NVA fear they'd stumbled into not a recon team but a much larger unit. One way to achieve this was to generously employ tracer ammunition.

Since tracer typically is used only on belted machine guns and loaded one per five ball rounds, think of the effect when your six M16s have 100% tracer in the first magazine, plus two Soviet RPD machine guns with pure tracer in their 125-round drums! This had tremendous psychological effect, sending bad guys scrambling for cover; but you can't keep firing tracer or your weapon will overheat and cook-off any round you chamber.

Recon Team California team leader Joe Walker fired a 60mm mortar during IA drills, causing the enemy to conclude he "must" be leading a platoon, not a mere recon team.

It's only common sense that attempting the obvious — the predictable — enables the enemy to respond in ways he already knows. Therefore, an effective IA drill should include some element of deception.

I built a grapefruit-sized firefight simulator, linking together a dozen non-electric blasting caps with time fuze; although it sounded like gunfire, an exploding cap always tore and extinguished the fuze before they'd all detonated. Eventually, I found success by modifying time-delay

*Continued on page 71*

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# I Was There

Text & Photos by  
Michael James Jaquish

When I traded my stateside law-enforcement job for a career in international security, my first assignment was Liberia, West Africa. My mission, according to the company, was to deal with internal discipline problems within the 700-man U.S. Embassy security force.

But it wasn't as simple as it sounded. Liberia was under the grip of Samuel K. Doe, a vicious dictator commonly called "Sergeant Doe," and a member of the cannibalistic *Krahn* tribe. Doe had become Africa's most bloodthirsty ruler after he and two Liberian army sergeants mounted a *coup d'état* in 1980 and topped it off by stewing the previous ruler.

Doe's death squads conducted regular nightly search-and-destroy missions throughout the capital city of Monrovia, eliminating opponents and potential troublemakers. And two months after my arrival Liberia was invaded by a group of Libyan-trained rebels headed by Charles Taylor, a deposed Liberian government official.

Despite Doe's best efforts to quell the invasion, reports continued to filter in verifying that the rebellion was swelling. Former vic-

tims of Doe's oppressive regime and his own soldiers were eager to switch allegiance. With each passing day, the rebel force fought its way closer to Monrovia and the tension within the city grew.

This was clearly not a "police matter." It was becoming obvious that my law-enforcement career had done little to prepare me for the festering anarchy that was unfolding. My life appeared to have

## Recipe For Tyrants

dissolved into a nightmarish version of the Eyewitness News. Only this was no television show. I had been catapulted into the insane arena of African revolutions — each day worse than the one before.

My personal wake-up call that signaled the degree of deteriorating political instability was the midnight shooting death of my American roommate by the Liberian army at a roadblock. The embassy filed its official protest, which had no noticeable impact.

The following week two armed men in military fatigues shot their way into the general manager's bungalow (next to mine) in the dark pre-dawn hours. Before any of us could react they robbed the manager and his wife of several hundred U.S. dollars and vanished into the jungle. The GM happened to be a retired U.S. Marine lieutenant colonel who undoubtedly would have put up a bit more resistance, had not the Liberian government restricted civilian ownership of weapons.

The following Sunday we were swapping lies over a bottle of Johnny Walker around the pool in our compound when a sudden burst of automatic-rifle fire from the next compound shattered the calm. As we dove for the pavement, the firing clattered on and we scrambled beneath a wicker table bracing for the spray of bullets that would turn us all into dead news items.

We listened to screams and shouted threats punctuated by the unmistakable "thud" of a rifle's buttstroke impacting human flesh and bone. It didn't take a linguist to figure out some terrified soul was pleading for his life.

Suddenly, three pistol shots echoed and all was quiet. The GM grabbed his wife and darted for the house while I sprinted over to the beach gate to see where the shooters were headed.

Flies buzzed in the 100-degree heat as I peered cautiously through a slit in the heavy wooden gate. The popular beach was totally deserted. Suddenly, two Liberians in army fatigues emerged from the clutter of shacks up

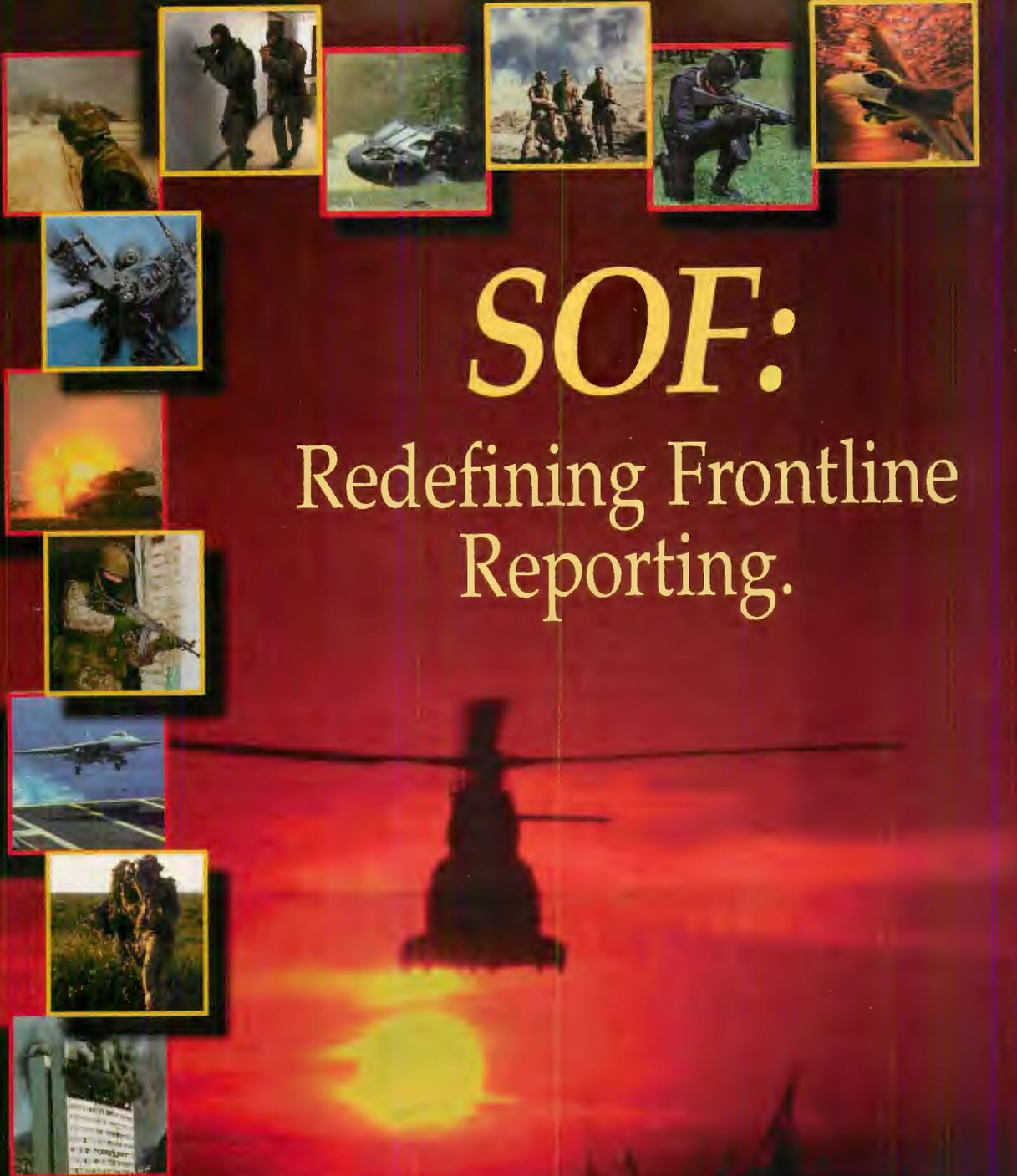
(above, inset) Author with three of Liberia's "finest." Wonder where they are today? (left, inset) "Start the revolution without us!" R & R between volleys, 1990.



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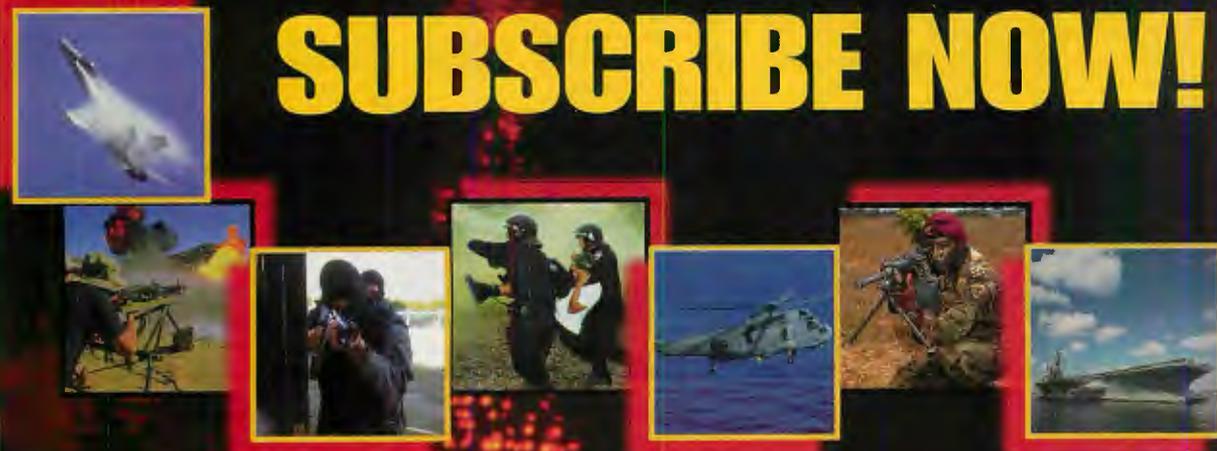
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the beach, each with an AK-47 in one hand and an emaciated wrist of a young dead man in the other. Their "kill," about 16, wore a single tattered tennis shoe, blue jogging trunks and a white T-shirt with "New York City" emblazoned on the front. They dragged him to the water and shoved him face down in the shallow surf. One gunman lit a cigarette, took a drag and handed it to his partner. Then, after chuckling a few minutes while applying a few brisk kicks to the corpse, they shouldered their weapons, turned and sauntered up the sand.

I crouched there transfixed by that bloody spectacle for some time, vaguely entranced by the way the blood dribbled slowly into the white sand from a gaping hole where his left ear had been. Each gentle caress of the surf swept the growing pool of blood away, and allowed a fresh one to form. The clear, green water seemed to be struggling to purify the beach from the corruption of murder.

A few days later I was passing the hospital and noticed a crowd milling about the entrance and caught a macabre glimpse of six disembodied heads aligned on the steps in a perverted display of indescribable brutality. My stomach lurched. Doe's nightly death squads had been working overtime, again.

That grizzly image clung to my mind as I sat numbly at my desk a few minutes later listening to the first in a long line of security officers lined up to kick off the daily ritual of time-off requests, loans or favors.

This guy looked a bit more serious than most. His eyes were dry, but I could tell he'd been crying. He was obviously struggling to project a brave exterior.

"Sir! Good morning, Sir!" He greeted, injecting as much vigor as he could muster.

"What can I do for you?" I asked.

"Requesting a day off, Sir!"

I glanced at the man's file and noted he was scheduled for first shift at an embassy residential compound for the next three days.

"Reason?" I asked. The guards had a real knack for concocting bogus excuses for circumventing the policy of two days' notice on leave requests.

"Sir! My brother was killed last night, Sir! The hospital requests I report to identify his ... remains," he replied with a choke.

I instantly knew he was referring to one of those I had seen on display and without further comment I nodded permission.

As incredible as these incidents may have seemed at the time, things got a whole lot worse before we were evacuated by U.S. Marine helicopters. Our names were prominently entered on a presidential hit list. As I watched the smoking ruin of Monrovia recede in the distance, I recalled what an old African had said to me before the fighting moved into the city: "When elephants fight, the grass gets crushed."

As of this date Liberia remains at war with itself; an estimated half-million of its citizens dying by butchery and starvation. ✕

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## PIX MODEL 13

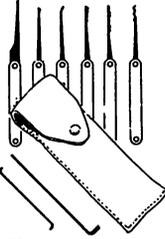
This deluxe yet compact kit features 11 of the most commonly used tools. Comes in a slim cowhide leather case for discreet undercover operatives. As a special bonus, a 5-piece set of warded picks is included. A 16-piece set total. Also included, a copy of "Lockpicking Simplified." Receive all this at a low price of  
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- All Picks with Metal Handles.
- Copy of Lockpicking Simplified.

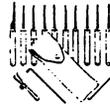
PXP 8 \$24.95



## PXP 10

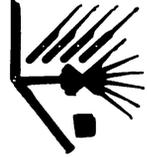
- Shirt Pocket Size.
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- Has 13 Picks, Tension Wrenches and Broken Key Extractor.
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- Copy of Lockpicking Simplified.

PXP 10 \$34.95



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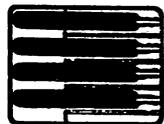
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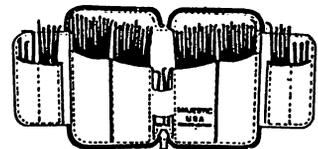
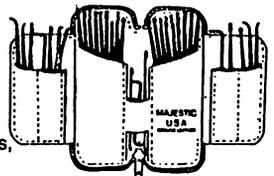


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# SLICK WILLIE WATCH

## Pouring Gas On The Fire

As readers of *SOF* have come to expect, this column is devoted to commentary and occasional satire on the latest scandals, political machinations, and displays of arrogance by First Yuppies Bill and Hillary Clinton. They certainly have it coming.

The Clintons and many of their supporters/apologists (not all of whom are decadent Hollywood types; some are decent but misguided citizens) are participants in a propaganda effort that would make Joseph Goebbels proud. Their Big Lie amounts to this: Any American who 1) regards President Clinton as a sleazy crook (which he is) and 2) believes in a strict interpretation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and the right of law-abiding citizens to own firearms, 3) owns a gun himself, and 4) harbors suspicion or fear of Washington can be only one thing: *a right-wing extremist*.

This nasty strain of White House-sanctioned intolerance and finger-pointing goes well beyond *political correctness*. Call it "New McCarthyism."

## Friendly Fire In The War of Words

Unfortunately, there are plenty of folks on the political Right who are providing ideological ammunition to the political enemy.



These folks are stupid and/or hungry for publicity and power and eagerly open their mouths whenever a reporter (probably an anti-gun liberal) is within range to record their "patriot" pronouncements. You know the (stereo)type — you've seen these guys on television news: cammie uniforms with make-believe ranks, beer bellies, "assault-type" weapons, and — most damning of all — inarticulate or spewing nutty talk about "war against the govern-

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ment." (On the other hand, underground groups that are organized and deadly serious about anti-government actions wouldn't come within a mile of a TV camera.)

SOF Publisher and Vietnam veteran Robert K. Brown has a contemptuous term for these loose cannons on the right: "carport commandos." It fits.

This magazine has, and always will, vigorously support law-abiding American men and women who are willing to take up arms in legitimate defense of themselves, their homes and families, and their country. But there is a big difference between these solid citizens and the *carport commandos*.

Does the latter stay informed of current events? Probably not. The handy excuse is "The media is [sic] biased." Do they regularly vote? "Why bother? The government is corrupt." Do they participate in the *marketplace of ideas*, engaging in public debates on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment or other important, related matters? Only if they could wear their cammies, posture, and spout inflammatory slogans.

Carport commandos and their ilk pour gasoline on the "fire" of the anti-gun and anti-conservative hysteria in this country. They play right into the hands of leftist-paranoia mongers in congress, the media, and the wealthy, lily-white Southern Poverty Law Center, the New McCarthyism's lead organization. (In case you hadn't heard, SPLC founder Morris Dees, like Sen. Joe McCarthy, has a *list* of enemies of the state. Send check or money order ...)

Strutting and posturing, the carport commandos unnecessarily frighten the public. And guess what? That fear can translate into votes — for *Big Brother* advocates like Bill Clinton.

#### Another April 19

It came ... and it went.

As far as the editors at SOF could determine, there were no incidents of anti-government violence anywhere in the United States this year on April 19 — despite all of the dark predictions of ... *something*. For this peaceful passage, we (and especially the SOF editor who grew up in Oklahoma) are thankful.

That date is remembered for, among other things, the battle of Lexington, 1775; the Nazi SS attack on Warsaw's Jewish ghetto, 1943; the aborted federal raid on the Weaver property at Ruby Ridge, 1992; the disastrous federal raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, 1993; and, the Oklahoma City bombing, 1995.

Nothing memorable happened last year on April 19. But *this* year, as the dreaded date approached, conspiracy theorists and the ever-talkative "patriots-for-profit" had a great time spewing BS — and far too many of the mainstream media wallowed in it. ❌



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On *SOF's* recent trek to Albania and Zaire we carried two excellent hard-use, fail-safe pens from U.S. Cavalry, one of our favorite military and adventure outfitters. The Fisher Space Pen (above) writes every time, in any position, over any surface. It's not every day you have to write on a greasy photo, upside-down, under water — but if that's the mission, the Fisher will do it. The Nite-Writer by EMI (inset), also from U.S. Cav, is the pen that provides its own pin-point of light for writing in the dark. In fact, when our guys cleared customs in Zaire, the electricity was off and the customs officer was so impressed with the write-in-the-dark pen that — well, let's just say it didn't come home with us. Both available from U.S. Cavalry, Dept. SOF, 2855 Centennial Ave., Radcliff, KY 40160-9000; phone: 502-351-1164; fax: 502-352-0266. ✕

### MIGHTIER THAN SWORDS

Some "combat" journalists take a lap-top computer to a gin mill safely away from the action and write their story: not *SOF*. Likely as not, our correspondents have a camera in one hand and a rifle in the other, and a wet or sweaty note pad in their hip pocket and a pen in their shirt. And that pen had better write in the wet, upside-down, over grease/oil/blood — and, better yet, in the dark.

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# WORLD SITREP

## 1 UNITED STATES

**High standards:** Only 70% of 170 pararescue ("PJ") operators' slots and 82% of 553 combat control-team (CCT) members' slots are filled, Air Force SpecOps commander says. Reason: 70% failure of airmen attending 62-week PJ course or 54-week CCT course. • **Bosnia weakens preparedness:** Cost of U.S. role in Balkan peacekeeping, originally projected at \$1.5 billion by Clinton administration, reaches \$5 billion. SecDef Cohen reaffirms vow of June '98 pullout by U.S. Meanwhile, Army — training budget gutted by Bosnia op — seeks \$2-billion emergency appropriation. European allies refuse responsibility for SFOR after Cohen's 18-month deadline, say they will withdraw from Bosnia if U.S. departs. • Noting Iran's increasing military and terror threat, Pentagon agrees to periodic 3-way training with Israel and Turkey (recent allies). • **Anti-hackers:** Army's INSCOM creates emergency-response teams against hackers and computer-security breaches worldwide; Navy and Air Force have similar units.

## 2 RUSSIA

**Harsh lessons from Chechnya:** Front-line units radioing location reports "in the clear" risked sigint interception by rebels (with captured radios) who plotted map coordinates and called in fire from Chechen (captured) multiple-rocket launchers, Western analysts report. Mech movement in cities is difficult to control and protect; a Russian brigade lost 102 of 120 armored vehicles in 1 day of urban combat. Russian artillery "fire tables" — number and type of round according to target classification — are obsolete. In urban combat, arty batteries deployed as 1- or 2-gun sections — whose junior leaders usually could not function without direct supervision. Massive civilian casualties are inevitable when city residents cannot (or will not) evacuate urban battleground.

## 7 SAUDI ARABIA

Kingdom eyes replacement of its 50-56 Chinese-made CSS-2 ballistic missiles (medium range; HE warheads) which are nearly obsolete and, filled with toxic liquid fuel, increasingly hazardous. (Missile maintenance reportedly requires that 200 or so Chinese technicians live there.) Riyadh, while renewing pledge against chemical and biological weapons, considers purchase of new long-range, solid-fueled missiles as strategic deterrent to Iran. Washington warns this could escalate the Middle East arms race.

## 8 BRITAIN

**Gurkha activism:** Retirees from the British army seek pensions equivalent with those of British soldiers and the right to live in the United Kingdom. Gurkha retirees' association says some 25,000 former troops live in Nepal. • **Going-out-of-business sale:** As Hong Kong's 1 July transition to (likely hardline) Chinese rule nears, British navy there receives \$10-million offer from Philippines for 3 Peacock-class patrol ships and spare parts. (Uruguay already has purchased 3 Wessex utility helicopters from Britain's Hong Kong garrison, which intends to leave nothing for China.)

## 9 GERMANY

**Bundeswehr budget blues:** Planned cuts will reduce army to second-rate force unable to participate in international peacekeeping — report by parliamentary watchdog group. • Strict arms-export laws strangle German defense industries even while France, Britain and America enjoy healthy sales, particularly in Middle East, industry leaders tell Kohl government. Defense-related industries employed 280,000 in 1990; now, only 90,000.

## 10 MEXICO

**Soldiers as cops:** Up to 2,600 troops don police uniforms, temporarily replace Mexico City cops undergoing mandatory training — including anti-corruption classes. Analysts warn army also is vulnerable to narco-traffickers' corruption; 1 general already arrested for taking bribes. • **Whiz quiz:** In urinalysis testing of attorney general's personnel, 241 field agents tested "positive." • U.S. DEA reports mistrust of all levels of law enforcement here.

## 11 COLOMBIA

Police arrest 5 rebels in Bogota armed with 44 rocket-propelled grenades. Series of ELN and FARC vehicle bombs produces dozens of casualties, mostly civilians. • Government estimates combined strength of ELN and FARC at 12,000. • Police raid home of jailed drug-cartel kingpin, find (U.S.) \$4.8 million cash, some in newly printed bills; also, sophisticated radio-intercept gear for monitoring of military and police communications.

## 14 ARMENIA

**Simmering cease-fire:** In complaint to U.N., government accuses Azerbaijan of secretly purchasing 12 combat aircraft (MiG-21s, Su-15s and Su-25s) and 100 T-55 tanks from the Ukraine in 1993-5, contrary to terms of cease-fire over Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. (At the same time, however, Armenia apparently was receiving secret shipments of heavy weapons and munitions from Russia.)

## 15 LEBANON

Beirut appeals for international assistance in clearing at least 200,000 land mines (of Chinese, Israeli, Russian and U.S.-manufacture) in 70 square kilometers of the southeastern Bekaa Valley.

3

**CANADA**

**Somalia fallout lingers:** After major review of Armed Forces, defense minister recommends smaller, more selective commitment of troops to humanitarian ops and peacekeeping. This might signal end of Canada's leadership in U.N.-led missions (such as unsuccessful 1992-3 intervention in Somalia). Minister also suggests changes in military-justice system.

4

**SINGAPORE**

Military on tiny, affluent island-nation — lacking ground and air space for combat maneuvers — currently trains on or from facilities in 10 countries, including army training in Bangladesh, Thailand and Taiwan and flight training in Australia, America (Arizona and Texas), and Indonesia. Observers say overseas deployments of forces, especially combat air, lessen fears by Singapore's neighbors of military buildup. Singapore reportedly plans similar arrangements with South Africa and Turkey.

5

**TAIWAN**

Government officials complain that Washington diplomatically courts mainland China while refusing to sell U.S.-made advanced air-to-air missiles, all-weather attack missiles, diesel submarines, and high-tech communication systems necessary for Taiwan's defense.

6

**AUSTRALIA**

**Verdict in SAS crash:** Human error, pilots' inexperience in SpecOps night flying, and poor planning contributed to the June '96 collision of 2 Black Hawk helicopters in a Special Air Service Regiment counterterrorism exercise — defense minister's report. (Eighteen troops died, 12 injured.) Investigators rule out mechanical error, and say the Black Hawk design prevented more deaths. Army modernization plans call for creation of SpecOps-aviation unit.

12

**GUATEMALA**

Some 3,600 *URNG* rebels begin disarmament, handing over small arms, explosives, some heavy weapons, and mines to U.N. monitors. Peace accord is expected to end decades of civil war.

16

**SYRIA**

**Good news for Jerusalem:** Coalition of 10 hardline Palestinian/anti-Israel groups based in Damascus — including *Hamas*, Islamic Jihad, and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — are fragmented over policy issues including relations with Arafat.

13

**SRI LANKA**

**Rebels coordinate attacks:** Tamil Tiger units destroy a bridge and attack an air base to delay reinforcement of a 200-man army garrison (eventually overrun) in eastern Sri Lanka. In 7 hours of fighting, 48 soldiers are killed and nearly 100 wounded; at least 160 rebels die. — A government Mi-24 "Hind" gunship explodes in flight, killing the three crewmen (two of whom are Russian) — the seventh aircraft lost this year.

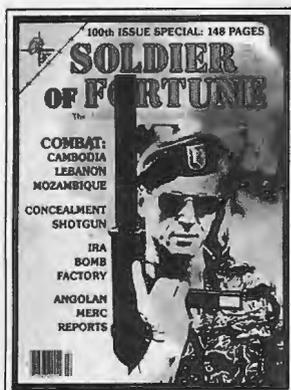
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# MEDAL OF HONOR

## At Dawn's Bloody Light

### **VC Charge At Firebase Cudgel**

by Samuel Zaffiri

**T**here was nothing about young Sammy L. Davis that would have marked him as someone capable of battlefield heroism.

Although he had shown some talent as a high-school football player in Mooresville, Ind., he quit the sport after his junior year because he had discovered girls. In 1966, after high school, he drifted into an oil-field job in southern Illinois. There he might have stayed if five of his friends had not convinced him to join the Army. A recruiter told them if they all enlisted for three years on the "buddy plan," he would *guarantee* they spent their Army time together. The last time Davis saw his buddies was at the reception center in Indianapolis.

He attended basic training and then moved on to Fort Sill, Okla., for two months of artillery training. On 7 March 1967 Davis found himself on a plane headed for Vietnam. He was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division, whose divisional base camp was just northeast of Saigon.

Most of the 9th ID's units operated in the Mekong Delta: 150,000 square miles of rich soil crisscrossed by thousands of streams, canals and rivers. The Delta was home to nearly half of South Vietnam's population and was one of the best rice-producing areas in the world. In an attempt to bring the Delta under their control, the communists had committed more than 80,000 guerrillas backed by thousands of sympathizers. The Viet Cong carved out huge base areas for themselves in the Delta's more inaccessible interiors. From such base areas, the VC began a move to take over the entire Delta.

To counter this, the U.S. commander, General William C. Westmoreland, in early 1966 had ordered the 9th ID to enter the Delta in force and in conjunction with other allied units.

#### **Artillery: Queen Of Battle**

Davis arrived at Tan An, the base camp of the 9th ID's 3rd Brigade, the "Go Devils." He was assigned to Charlie Battery of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Artillery. Charlie had four 105mm towed howitzers for support of the three Red Devil maneuver battalions.

The Viet Cong had quickly realized how lethal artillery fire could be to their troops in the open and began targeting U.S. firebases. Although Private 1st Class Davis had as yet not been on a firebase overrun by the VC — something feared by all artillerymen — he had been on a number of firebases early in his tour that were pounded by VC artillery, mortars, recoilless rifles, and rockets.

In an attempt to break the VC hold over one Delta refuge, known as Base Area 470, in November 1967 Major Gen. George G. O'Connor, 9th ID's commander, drew up "Operation Ken Giang": the establishment of three firebases in the area to provide fire support for infantry units engaging VC troops. Firebase Cudgel was one of the three sites.

On the morning of 16 November the area where it was to be constructed was pounded by U.S. artillery and then four F-4 Phantom jets. However, the VC had a number of bunkers there; as the first helicopters approached their LZ, communist troops opened up with 12.7mm heavy machine guns. One chopper lost its tail rotor and crashed into a rice paddy; another had its hydraulics shot out and likewise crashed. Nobody was killed, but the message was clear: If the Americans wanted that area, they were going to have to fight for it.

A crude perimeter was quickly secured around Cudgel. Chinook



Congressional Medal of Honor Society

Sergeant Sammy L. Davis, later assigned to the 92nd Artillery of the 2nd Armored Division, wears the Medal of Honor he received in 1968 for actions in defense of Firebase Cudgel, 18 November 1967.

helicopters brought in the howitzers of Charlie and Delta batteries. Charlie quickly set up its guns on small patches of dry ground along the western edge of the firebase. Because there was little dry ground in the eastern section, three special platforms were flown in and placed in the knee-deep water. Delta's three 105s were placed on these aluminum floats.

The artillerymen did not string concertina wire around their positions: A 300-meter-long canal ran along the northern part of the firebase and two other long canals were barriers along the western and eastern parts. Only the southern part of Cudgel was open ground.

The artillerymen, instead, spent most of their first day firing in support of the 5/60th Infantry Battalion, which was in heavy contact with a VC battalion just a few miles north of Cudgel. When the enemy broke contact, Charlie Company of the 5/60th and the battalion's recon platoon were lifted into Cudgel to provide security. Charlie had been in constant contact for 24 hours; the men were wet and exhausted. Even so, they soon had sandbagged bunkers and fighting holes surrounding the two batteries, with 2nd Platoon along the northern perimeter by Delta Battery, 4th along the eastern, and 1st and 3rd along the southern.

Captain Russell, Charlie Company's commander, ordered the recon platoon to cross a rickety bridge to the opposite side of the western canal across from Charlie Battery. Lieutenant Alley, the platoon leader, had his platoon construct five bunkers on the opposite bank and placed two listening posts (LPs) 100 meters out.

Charlie Company and the recon platoon then spent much of the day trying to clean up and get some sleep. There was to be no rest for the other two line companies of the 5/60th: They were in contact throughout the day, and both artillery batteries were kept busy firing in support of them. Artillerymen tried to rest between fire missions.

Sergeant James Gant, a tough black soldier, instead drilled his three men in between fire missions. He required Sammy Davis, Delbert Cole, and Marvin Hart to learn *every* job on the howitzer — even blindfolding them so they could learn to cut charges and set

fuses in the dark. Davis thought these drills were just harassment. Although he did not actually hate the sergeant, he did not particularly like him either.

By nightfall the artillerymen were dog-tired. Around midnight they set out guards and turned in. The Viet Cong, however, were on the move.

## Night Moves

Three full VC companies from the 267th Main Force Battalion, along with two heavy-weapons platoons, had boarded sampans and small boats on the Tra Lot River, about 3 kilometers west of Cudgel.

In darkness the vessels, staggered every 100 meters or so, moved down the Tra Lot; then they turned onto a small canal that ran to the northeast, eventually skirting the western perimeter of Cudgel. At a grove of nipa palms 300 meters south of Cudgel, the VC troops disembarked and moved into a staging area stocked with B-40 rockets, 82mm mortar rounds, grenades, and boxes of belted machine-gun ammo. VC officers gave final instructions. Led by guides, the assault companies and heavy-weapons platoons moved out, followed by male porters carrying extra ammunition and by 20-30 female nurses assigned to treat the wounded.

A main-force unit, the 267th wore khaki uniforms (not black pajamas), green floppy canvas hats, and tire-track sandals or canvas shoes. Riflemen carried the Soviet AK-47 and a basic load of four 30-round magazines. Most of the infantrymen carried grenades and canvas-wrapped satchel charges.

At about 0100, one company halted west of the American recon troops' bunkers; the other two took up positions about 100 meters south of 1st and 3rd



**Durability, light weight, accuracy, and variety of 105mm ammunition made the M101 howitzer a mainstay of U.S. artillery units in Vietnam, whether massed at firebases or from hastily occupied sites. Howitzers at Firebase Cudgel were equipped with shielding that helped protect Pfc. Sammy L. Davis and teammates from VC small-arms and B-40 rocket fire.**



U.S. Army photos

platoons' bunkers. While the VC assault troops made final preparations, mortarmen set up their weapons. Other VC, carrying B-40 rockets, took up positions in the center and along the flanks of the attacking companies.

At about 0150 the VC mortars opened up. Most of the men in the 1st and 3rd platoons took cover in bunkers. While the mortars were firing, the two VC companies to the south began slowly creeping forward to within 20 meters of the American positions. GIs on one LP grabbed their rifles and radios and ran back to Cudgel screaming, "Don't shoot! LPs coming in! Don't shoot!"

Minutes later about 200 VC troops along 1st and 3rd platoons' front opened up with AK-47s and machine guns. When Americans returned fire from the bunkers, about 10-15 VC crawled even closer and tossed grenades.

Then, led by cadre shouting commands so loudly the Americans could hear them, the VC rose up and rushed forward in a line, methodically firing three- and four-round bursts from the hip.

GIs manning the bunkers opened up with M16s and M60 machine guns. Others fired their claymores. As fast as they could pull the pins, men began lobbing grenades. Because of the closeness of the enemy, M79 grenadiers began firing flechette rounds.

### From Bad To Worse

The fire took a toll on VC attackers. A dozen or so went down. Then every time a claymore exploded, a half-dozen VC screamed out in pain. Prodded by their cadre, however, they pushed forward, pouring steady gunfire at 1st and 3rd platoons.

In a matter of seconds, Lt. Dor, 3rd Platoon's leader, was seriously wounded and Sgt. Brooker, the platoon sergeant, was killed. Seeing this, the radio operator went into a blind panic and ran back toward the howitzers. His panic was contagious: In a matter of seconds all of 3rd Platoon bolted, leaving 1st Platoon's flank exposed.

Thinking the VC were going to roll up his left flank, Lt. Becraft, the 1st Platoon leader, radioed Capt. Russell for permission to withdraw to the batteries. Russell refused, saying he would soon have 3rd Platoon back on line. Becraft replied there wasn't time; he was being overrun *now* — VC were already behind him. If they didn't pull back, Becraft screamed, 1st Platoon was going to be wiped out. Russell said to withdraw.

Dragging their wounded, the men of 1st Platoon shot their way through the VC who had gotten into their rear, then scampered back to Delta Battery. There they poured fire into the charging VC, temporarily halting the attack.

With the area cleared of GIs, Delta Battery turned its howitzers in the direction of the VC attack, bore-sighted them, and began firing antipersonnel "beehives," each of which contained 8,500 metal flechettes (darts). About a dozen beehives forced the VC to pull back. However, in the darkness they continued to fire rifles, machine guns, mortars, and B-40s at the howitzers.

Captain Russell radioed a newly arrived Cobra helicopter gunship to strafe the area south of the two batteries. The pilot used his minigun to hose the area with thousands of rounds. When an enemy 12.7mm machine gun opened fire at him, the Cobra pilot followed the tracers to their source and destroyed the machine gun.

### "You Die Tonight, GI!"

Although their attack from the south had been halted, VC commanders were not ready to concede the fight. After the Cobra attack, about 130 VC troops, again behind a mortar attack, surged out of the surrounding vegetation and rushed the recon's position.



Arms Communications

For decades the CH-47 Chinook helicopter has been used to lift artillery pieces and ammunition into remote sites such as Firebase Cudgel in Vietnam.

The LP to the front of the platoon's left flank was overrun; three men there had to run for their lives. Then (in what the Americans would recall as a "mob formation") VC troops attacked the five bunkers head-on. The Americans blew their claymore mines; under the light of flares they watched enemy bodies being flung backwards by the blasts.

But VC troops came on, some screaming, "You die tonight, GI! Come on, GI, and die!"

Lieutenant Alley realized his platoon was going to be wiped out if it did not withdraw. Not wanting to create a panic, he moved down to the bunkers on his left flank and ordered the men there to start falling back to the small bridge. Alley and a few others soon were giving covering fire while the rest formed a human chain on the bridge to move the wounded.

The Americans had just cleared the bridge when the VC charged across the canal in groups of 10 to 20. The crossing was covered by dozens of VC who poured rifle and machine-gun fire at Charlie Battery, where the men from recon, most of whom had lost their weapons, were huddled.

Then B-40s rocketed toward the battery. Huddling behind Charlie Battery's guns, Alley radioed Lieutenant Colonel William Steele, the battalion commander. He told Steele that most of his men did not have weapons and were in danger of being overrun; but if they *did* use beehives they might kill any Americans still on the other side of the canal. Steele told him to fire beehives.

### Fire In The Hole

Alley ordered Charlie Battery to fire. At that instant, several mortar rounds hit the battery; one hit a pile of powder bags near Sammy's gun, setting them ablaze and igniting the howitzer's tires.

With the tires smoking and smoldering, Davis, Cole, Hart, and Sgt. Gant turned the big gun toward the masses of VC crossing the river. They were sighting the weapon when a VC soldier moved up to the edge of the canal and fired a B-40. It detonated on the howitzer's protective shield, knocking Davis into a nearby hole and blowing Gant backwards 10 meters. Hart and Cole took cover behind another gun.

Davis was unconscious. Thinking him dead, the gun crew behind him began firing beehives right over the top of him. Davis awoke and howled, "You're hitting me! Stop firing!"

He got up groggily, his butt and lower back peppered with flechettes. Only his flak jacket, which looked like a pincushion, had saved him. Davis did not have time to deal with the pain. When he looked to his front, he saw a dozen VC nearing shore. He grabbed an M16 lying nearby and from a kneeling position methodically fired. When he had emptied his magazine and could not find another, he picked up an M60 and turned it on the next wave of VC coming through the water. When it was out of ammo he threw it in the canal so the VC would not get it.

With a 12.7mm machine gun firing at him, he now rushed to the gun. At that moment a flare went off overhead and Davis looked westward across the canal: The opposite bank was *covered* with VC troops. Davis realized his gun alone was in a position to hit the VC with direct fire. If he did not do something quickly, Firebase Cudgel was finished.

The 105mm, however, was a wreck. The tires were burned off and the recoil mechanism destroyed; moreover, most of the powder bags had burned and many of the canisters had been damaged. In spite of this, Davis set the howitzer on muzzle action, then scrambled around until he found a good canister. He scooped up loose powder with his hands. He remembered suddenly that a beehive

round required a "charge 7" so he added two or three more handfuls to make sure it had enough. (He realized later that he probably had put in a charge 15 or 20.)

He inserted a beehive into the canister and was about to load the round when a VC rifleman shot him in the right leg. Another, manning a heavy machine gun, was firing at him, tearing away metal chunks from the shield and trails. Ignoring his wound and the machine-gun fire, Davis slammed in the round, closed the breech block, and pulled the lanyard. The howitzer roared.

### Sounds Of Angry Bees

The heavy charge and the lack of a recoil mechanism caused the howitzer to leap backwards. It rolled over Davis, breaking three of his ribs and a vertebra. In pain from a dozen wounds and covered with blood, Davis got to his feet and looked out.

His shot had knocked a huge swathe from the VC mass. The howitzer, however, had been knocked over on its side. With all his strength, Davis got his arms under the gun's trails and righted it. Once again, he scrambled around under the gray light of flares trying to locate another good canister. He again scooped in powder by hand, and inserted a beehive.

By now, another mob of VC had moved along the canal. Fifteen or 20 were already in the water, coming directly at him. He adjusted the direction of the barrel, slammed in the antipersonnel round, closed the breech block, and pulled the lanyard. When he looked out, the VC in the water were gone and another large swathe had been cut through the mob on the banks of the canal. The enemy machine gunner continued firing at him, tearing away fist-sized chunks of the howitzer's trails.

There were no flares up at the moment; he had to assemble the third round in the dark. While he was filling the canister with powder, the realization hit him: *This was why Sgt. Gant had drilled us; not to harass but to prepare for a situation like this.*

The thought hanging in his mind, Davis slammed in and fired a third beehive, then a fourth, a fifth, and finally a sixth. He looked out to see that the VC attack had stopped. A number of wounded VC were limping and crawling back away from the canal, whose far edge was littered with bodies.

In spite of these casualties, the VC commanders had not given up. If they could not overrun the firebase, they would pound the hell out of it with mortars and rockets.

### Looking For Stragglers

Davis was preparing to fire another beehive when he looked to his left and saw someone waving a hat. He moved down to the edge of the canal for a better look.

"Help me," the man was screaming. "Don't shoot! Please help me!"

Davis hesitated. VC soldiers frequently called out like that to sucker Americans to their deaths. By the light of a flare, however, he saw that the man was *black* — an American.

Davis grabbed his air mattress and began inflating it. A rifle round had penetrated it and he had to pinch the bullet hole shut to keep the air in. With the air mattress under one arm, he began dog-paddling across the canal, thinking, *What the hell am I doing? I don't even know how to swim.*

It took Davis about 30 seconds to cross the canal. There he found Gwendell Holloway, who had been screaming. Holloway had been in the recon LP that was overrun. While retreating, he had been shot in the back and could barely walk. Still clutching his M16, Holloway led Davis to a small hole about 20 meters inside a cluster of palms.

Huddling in the hole were two other men, Billy Ray Crawford and Jim Deister. Crawford, another survivor from the LPs, had lost his right foot. To keep from bleeding to death, he had applied a tourniquet to his foot and was holding it in place with his hand. Deister, a combat engineer who had been in a bunker on the far left flank, had been shot in the chest and head. He was slipping in and out of consciousness.

Davis picked up Deister and threw him over his shoulder. The four GIs started back toward the canal. Twice they had to stop as small groups of VC rushed past them.

When they were about 10 meters from the canal, three or four VC spotted them. Davis dropped Deister, grabbed Holloway's M16 and fired two quick bursts, dropping all of the enemy soldiers. Davis then handed the M16 back to Holloway, picked up Deister, and scrambled to the canal. He lowered the wounded man to the ground and reinflated the air mattress.

### Sink Or Swim

Since Deister was the worst casualty, Davis decided to take him first. He threw the limp figure over the mattress. Holding the hole closed with one hand, Davis paddled with the other. Deister once nearly slipped off the mattress.

Thinking that both Davis and Deister were going to drown, Bill Murray, a man from Charlie's #1 gun, dove into the canal and swam furiously to them. Murray helped stabilize Deister on the mattress; then, with Davis, started paddling toward shore. Seeing an enemy machine gun open fire on the swimmers, Terry Thompson, a man from Cudgel's fire-direction center, grabbed an M60, set up on the bank of the canal, and returned suppressive fire.

While Thompson was firing, Davis and Murray pushed Deister up onto the canal bank. Frank Gage, another man from #1 gun, rushed down to the bank and helped drag Deister to cover. Still clutching the air mattress, Davis started back across. The enemy machine gun was firing again; bullets slapped the water all around Davis.

On the other side, Davis once again used Holloway's rifle to shoot some VC charging at them. That threat eliminated, he helped Crawford onto the improvised raft and started out once again, kicking and paddling furiously. Halfway across the canal Murray met them. Together they got Crawford to shore where Gage and some other men pulled him out of the water.

For a *third* time Davis started back across the canal, again tormented by the enemy machine gunner who obviously was determined in spite of Thompson's suppressive fire. When the mattress was a few feet from shore, Holloway limped and crawled toward it. At the edge of the water, Holloway threw his M16 in the canal, then lay down over the mattress. His arms and legs feeling like dead weight, Davis kicked and paddled. He had hardly moved a few meters, though, when his strength ran out. His wounds had left him so weak he could no longer hold onto the mattress and keep Holloway afloat. *I'm going to drown*, Davis thought, *and Holloway will drown, too.*

No, that couldn't happen. He had to make it. Davis kicked out hard with both legs and paddled with his left hand. Then he saw salvation coming toward him in the form of Murray and Gage. The two grabbed the front of the mattress and, swimming furiously, pulled Holloway to shore and to cover.

Davis could hear men calling for him to get out of the water. But he was too tired to climb out. He just wanted to rest here for a



A 1996 Missouri reunion of some Firebase Cudgel veterans (left to right): Terry Thompson, Jim Deister, Davis (wearing Medal of Honor), Gwendell Holloway, and Bill Murray, a Silver Star recipient.

courtesy Sammy L. Davis

*Continued on page 66*



# Falling Star

## ATF "Air Force" Downed By Friendly Fire

by James L. Pate



William Marshall Reece was "always ... looked up to as something of a hero by his family," one lifelong friend wrote to a federal judge late last year. How ironic, then, that Reece, the product of a Bible-belt upbringing in small-town Georgia, ended up much like the protagonist in Theodore Dreiser's novel, *An American Tragedy*.

Sadly, Reece's story is not fiction, but an ugly truth; a story of hard work and dedication done in by the very success he worked so hard to obtain. With that success came bureaucratic power. The power begat temptations that nurtured the seeds of his corruption and bore the bitter fruit that poisoned his life.

His genesis is that of many quintessentially all-American boys. Now 58, Reece graduated from high school in rural Jones County, about 75 miles southeast of Atlanta, went off to college, joined a fraternity, did a hitch in the Air Force and, in 1963, married a woman he met in North Carolina.

Three years later, with the first two of three boys in tow, the Reece family moved back to Georgia. Reece won acceptance for training as a special agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. His first post of duty was Swainsboro, Georgia.

"Marshall developed rapidly," his first area supervisor, retired ATF Special Agent Edward P. Gray, wrote late last year. "He was an extremely hard worker. His job performance, including the collection and preservation of evidence, the development

of informants, etc., far surpassed that of his more experienced colleagues."

During those halcyon years, there wasn't "a more compassionate human being" than Marshall Reece, his wife, Mary Alice, recalled. "We had all the love, kindness, help and attention he could give. We were an ideal family ..."

Indeed, Reece was looked up to and



James L. Pate



AP/Wide World

Robert E. Sanders, (left) former ATF assistant director, noted that, "If adequate safeguards and honest management had been the rule, Mr. Reece might not have been tempted ... or ... [his embezzlement] would have been detected before it turned into a full-blown criminal matter. ATF management should share blame for Mr. Reece's fall." (right) In a TV interview, ATF Director John Magaw assured the public such a \$1.5 million theft as Reece's "could not happen again. Actually, it was our personnel that found" the theft. Asked to explain how such a huge theft could occur, Magaw defended the ATF, saying that "some very good people over the years have been underfunded."

respected as a community leader and deacon in the church, she said; "kind and fair ... Even the bootleggers he arrested ... liked him. Family ties were still very strong," she recalled in a sad letter to U.S. District Court Judge James Fox.

Those family ties are in tatters now, the marriage broken.

Mary Alice lives and teaches in Dunn, North Carolina, a small town about 40 miles south of Raleigh, where the family moved in 1970. Reece is living in Georgia again, an inmate at the maximum security federal penitentiary in Atlanta. He was sentenced by Fox in February to seven years and three months imprisonment for mail fraud and income tax evasion.

### The Ascent

In his more than 25 years as an agent and manager — a key founder of the aviation section of the bureau's Special Operations Division — Reece became one of ATF's most trusted and well-liked members. But by the time he retired in October 1993, he was the key suspect in the theft of almost \$1.5 million from the agency's aviation budget. More than a third of the aviation section's funds were stolen by Reece between 1988 and his retirement five years later.

In explaining his upward departure from the federal sentencing guidelines, U.S. District Court Judge Fox noted that Reece was responsible for "the largest internal theft in the history of the ATF ... [one that] may cause the loss of public



Norm Taylor Collection

**Controversial heart of the ATF's air force was the OV-10D Bronco, a close-support aircraft featuring a variety of ordnance and FLIR. Planes tracked down by SOF still had hard points for mounting such ordnance. Reece's raid on the ATF aviation budget played a major role in destroying the ATF air force he had worked so hard to create. His case figured heavily in congressional decision last fall to abolish ATF's air operations, Capitol Hill sources told SOF.**

confidence ..." (it did — see sidebar).

Reece's case represents not only a personal tragedy for him and his family, but "an enormous embarrassment for ATF," said Robert E. Sanders, ATF's former assistant director, who headed the law-enforcement branch before his retirement in 1983. "This case gets at the heart of the good-old-boy network, one in which incompetent or corrupt managers get plenty of unchecked power and very little direction or oversight from above.

"This kind of cronyism fosters abuse," Sanders said. "Chronic problems are ignored unless they reach critical mass. Mistakes are covered up instead of corrected. Many guilty go unpunished. It's no wonder that many otherwise good agents suffer moral and ethical decay once put into this environment.

"If adequate safeguards and honest management had been the rule," he said, "Mr. Reece might not have been tempted by such a scheme. Or if he was, it would have been detected before it turned into a full-blown criminal matter. ATF management should share blame for Mr. Reece's fall."

Indeed, it was not until after Reece's retirement that his successor found financial discrepancies in ATF's aviation budget and reported them to his superiors. The ATF was reluctant to act. It was only after Reece's case came to the attention of authorities outside ATF that a meaningful probe began.

A subsequent Department of Treasury audit reported that ATF "did not provide adequate management oversight" of its aviation program. Special Agent Richard L. Garner, then chief of ATF's Special Operations Division, and Margaret M. Moore, its deputy chief, "delegated full

responsibility for the aviation program to [Reece, although he] did not adequately document his actions or program operations."

Neither Garner nor Moore have been called to account for their management failure. Indeed, both have since been promoted. Moore became special agent in charge (SAC) of ATF's Baltimore region, and, most recently, she was promoted again to be the SAC in Seattle. Her promotions were approved despite allegations of her unauthorized use of a government vehicle for a Mexico vacation, and her physical altercation with an ATF female employee.

Garner went on to become ATF's liaison to the Defense Department. In that role, Garner worked through Operation Alliance and Joint Task Force Six to arrange for an Army Green Beret detachment from the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group to train the ATF for its ill-fated Waco raid. Garner was promoted from his ATF job at the Pentagon to become the SAC in ATF's office in Nashville, Tennessee.

He was sent to Nashville to replace Watson Cummins Beaty. The former SAC was punitively removed after an Internal Affairs probe of allegations that Beaty used his ATF credit card to have child pornography mailed to the office, and that he lewdly exposed himself to female office staff. Despite compelling evidence, ATF headquarters chose not to refer Beaty for criminal prosecution and instead transferred him to his home state, Alabama, where he held a make-work job until his retirement a few months later.

Like Beaty, ATF allowed Reece to retire with a pension and full benefits, which, once vested, cannot be taken away. At his retire-

ment in October 1993, Reece was ATF's chief pilot and head of the Special Operations Division's aviation section. Many of his colleagues expressed shock and dismay afterward, when news surfaced that he was under investigation by the Department of Justice public integrity section.

### **Remembering Him As He Was**

"I have never known a law-enforcement officer more dedicated to his job than Marshall Reece was during those years," said retired Special Agent Charles H. Weems in a letter to Fox, the federal judge to whom Reece entered a guilty plea. Reece "was the first to volunteer for ... dangerous assignments. He worked extended undercover investigations involving not only liquor law violations, but gun smuggling and narcotics cases. He was in almost constant danger for his entire career because of his willingness to ... volunteer ... no matter the hours or the danger involved."

Some family members, friends and colleagues believe it was the cumulative stress of hard work and dangerous undercover assignments that ultimately warped Reece's judgment and character, according to the many letters to Fox asking for a lenient sentence.

"I asked him to cut back on the hours he was working," Weems said in his letter to Fox, "telling him he was going to destroy his health and possibly his family life. On one occasion, he had to be hospitalized (against his will) because he suffered from flight fatigue and overwork. ... He flew triple the number of hours that other pilots flew and was always the most productive."

The hard work took a toll that was visi-

ble to people who'd known Reece all his life. One was James C. Roberts, who'd known him since 8th grade and was a college fraternity brother.

"After he began working for the government, my family and I did not see much of him," Roberts wrote. "When we did, we hardly recognized him. The times we've seen him have caused us to wonder and worry about his well-being. From his conversation and what little we knew about his work, we were never sure what was real or what was exaggeration or fiction."

His family noticed, too.

### Adopting The Role

"I truly believe the stress at work and the multiple roles he took on as an undercover agent altered his thinking in a way we cannot understand," wrote Robert N. "Butch" Reece, the defendant's brother, who is sheriff of Jones County, Georgia, where Marshall Reece's father and one of his three sons are deputies. "Our family saw him change, even in the way he communicated with us.

"Some might say his personality was bizarre or abnormal, but to him it was a way of staying alive," Sheriff Reece wrote,

"working to stay one step ahead of the person you are with, not to let your true identity be known. Years of this kind of work must have a devastating effect on your body and mind.

"His work consumed him and he loved every minute of it," his brother said. "I know of the personal sacrifice he made for his job. His wife and three boys took second place to his job. ... Sadly to say, all said and done, if he had his youth again, he would choose the same life."

Mary Alice Reece, who made it clear to Judge Fox in the first sentence that "this letter is not a plea for leniency," wrote that as

## Congress Grounds ATF Air Force

Marshall Reece's theft of almost \$1.5 million from the aviation budget of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms indelibly stained his career and wrecked his family. It also played a major role in destroying the ATF air force he had worked so hard to create. Reece's case loomed large in the decision last fall by members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to abolish ATF's air operations, Capitol Hill sources said.

"It wasn't just the theft itself, and the abysmal mismanagement and financial irresponsibility on ATF's part that it demonstrated," said one staff member who played a key role in eliminating the aviation line item from ATF's final budget appropriation. "It was the fact that ATF headquarters used the same type of deceptive practices — the use of phony companies — to conceal its acquisition of military aircraft to expand its air operations.

"There was also a great concern, given ATF's reputation for recklessness in the Waco raid and elsewhere, that the use of these types of aircraft was another disaster waiting to happen," said the Senate aide, who asked not to be named.

The ATF's acquisition of 22 OV-10D Broncos from the Department of Defense (DoD) was revealed by *Soldier Of Fortune* (see "ATF Watch," Sept. '95; and "SOF Exposes ATF Warbirds," Oct. '95). ATF used two private shell corporations to conceal its ownership of the military aircraft, which is not approved for civilian ownership.

The paper trail, as sniffed out by *SOF*, went like this: DoD, which had surplused the Broncos, transferred ownership to the General Services Administration. GSA then moved title to Mid-Air Salvage Inc., which listed as its address a new, then-unoccupied townhouse in Franklin Park, N.J.

This was a tipoff of something odd. As a close-air support and offensive combat aircraft, the OV-10Ds, as they were configured, were not approved for sale to the private sector. Although equipped with a night-observation system that would make for plausible utility by ATF as a surveillance platform, the aircraft obtained by the gun bureau also were equipped with "hard points" for mounting 20mm guns, rocket pods and other ordnance.

According to aviation experts who inspected some of the OV-10s bought by ATF, the aircraft also had gun sights and laser target designators, disturbing extras when considered in light of the persistent credible evidence that the ATF used military helicopters to strafe a religious retreat during the Waco raid, when at least three unarmed people, including a mother who had just finished nursing her infant child, were



James L. Pate

killed by airborne gunfire.

In October 1994, on the same day the airplanes were transferred from GSA to Mid-Air Salvage, the New Jersey company passed title to American Warbirds, Inc., according to Federal Aviation Administration records. American Warbirds, Inc., listed its address as 5-1 Metropolitan Court, Gaithersburg, Md.

Apparently, Marshall Reece was much more clever in setting up his private phony front-businesses than were his colleagues in ATF's special-operations division. American Warbirds wasn't listed in the local phone directory, and no one at any area airports had ever heard of it. It was not listed as a business with local tax assessors, nor was its corporate charter, suggested on FAA documents, listed in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, or Virginia. Three phone calls penetrated the cover.

Worse yet, the address was a major operational security blunder by ATF. In trying to conceal one covert activity, American Warbirds, it led *SOF*'s investigative team directly to a much more sensitive facility, ATF's radio and surveillance electronics shop.

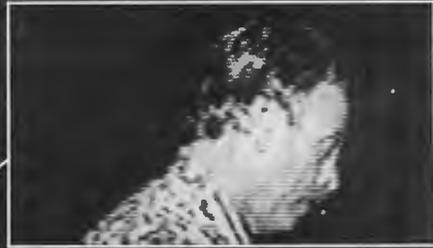
Over the next three weeks, *SOF* subsequently recovered from the adjacent trash dumpster just the type of information a terrorist or gangster would want to acquire if planning some type of violence against federal agents.

Documents included three sets of floor plans for that office, with the names of agents and technicians written in their assigned workspaces. Also found were wiring diagrams, frequencies and programming codes for various ATF communications nets in major metropolitan areas, and dozens of classified documents detailing the real names, the names of family members, their addresses, phone numbers and code names of several undercover agents around the country who'd requested technical assistance from that office.

Dozens of recovered documents marked "top secret" were turned over to an attorney authorized to handle such material, and forwarded by him to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which looked into the apparent security breach. As far as *SOF* can determine, no one in ATF was punished. But given such sloppy security precautions, it is no wonder congressional oversight questions were raised about ATF's need for counterinsurgency airplanes.

— JLP

Thanks to lax or non-existent security, *SOF* tracked down this front company for the ATF's ill-fated air force "American Warbirds, Inc." at 5-1 Metropolitan Court, Gaithersburg, Md. Such clumsy use of CIA-style front-companies lead one Senate staffer to confide to *SOF*, "It wasn't just the theft itself, and the abysmal mismanagement and financial irresponsibility on ATF's part that it demonstrated, it was the fact that ATF headquarters used the same type of deceptive practices — the use of phony companies — to conceal its acquisition of military aircraft to expand its air operations. There was also a great concern, given ATF's reputation for recklessness in the Waco raid and elsewhere, that the use of these types of aircraft was another disaster waiting to happen."



Just prior to congressional Waco hearings, Washington, D.C. TV Channel 7 attempted an ambush interview with Reece, who bolted from camera. They had to settle for shots of his JFK Cadillac limo, boat, and some of his ill-gotten real estate.

soon as her husband began working as an agent in 1966, "... the long days, weeks and months without having a husband and father ... began. ... In 1970, we had our third son and moved to Dunn, N.C. He had now become a pilot for ATF and the long, long months of undercover work began.

"In 1974 or 1975, while meeting with an informant, he was bushwhacked and left by the Cape Fear River," she recounted. "Shortly after this, he was hospitalized. I had already begun to sense something different about him. During this stay in the hospital, two doctors strongly advised him to seek the help of a psychiatrist. We were told that he was not in control of his life, and he would self-destruct if he did not get help.

"He did not seek this help," she said. "He ... didn't think he needed it."

Despite the health problems and signals of mental stress, Reece continued to be promoted in ATF. Although he eventually rose to command all of the bureau's air operations as its chief pilot by 1988, he and his family remained in Dunn, N.C., where he became a well-regarded figure at the nearby Harnett County Airport.

As the tempo of ATF investigations involving aircraft increased, Reece won approval from headquarters to lease

replacement airplanes on a short-term basis. At that time, ATF had one-year leases for seven Partenavia fixed-wing airplanes from Midwest Holding Corporation in Harrodsburg, Ky., and Mira Slovak Aviation in Santa Paula, Calif. They were based in various locations, including Los Angeles, Miami and Houston.

When one of these regular aircraft, leased for a year at the time, was unavailable because of repairs or other reasons, a short-term lease had to be arranged.

### Becoming The Enemy

Over a period of time, as he grew increasingly estranged from his wife and family, Reece set up a series of dummy aircraft leasing companies: Four D Associates, B2 Properties Pre-Flight Training, Wing Air Lease Inc., and Southern Air (not the same Central Intelligence Agency proprietary airline used in the Contra War).

Then Reece used four other people, including a young woman with whom he began keeping company, to rent several post office boxes as front addresses for the shell corporations he had set up. Separated from his wife, Reece moved to nearby Erwin, a small town on the Cape Fear River a few miles north of Fayetteville. He opened sev-

eral corresponding checking accounts, which listed the other four people as signatories — all diversions he had learned to use to escape detection as an undercover agent.

In fact, court records state, it was Reece who controlled all the companies, all the post office boxes and all the checking accounts, but the subterfuges were used "to ... conceal his involvement," the court record states.

Now, Special Agent Reece began submitting invoices from the dummy companies for the short-term lease of aircraft services that were never delivered; indeed, for which the necessity never existed. The U.S. Treasury checks were mailed to the bogus companies at the various post offices and then "deposited into bank accounts in the names of other individuals, but controlled by" Reece.

In addition, Reece was using his ATF VISA credit card for extensive personal purchases. All the while, the phony credit card vouchers and the bogus aircraft lease invoices were being approved by Reece's superior, Margaret M. Moore, and by the division head, Richard L. Garner.

While ATF would not punish Reece, the Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service took a dim view when his actions came to light. In 1991, for instance, Reece

reported a taxable income in 1990 of \$14,294.00, and paid \$2,141.00 in taxes. Actually, investigators later learned, his income that year, thanks to his embezzlement and defrauding of ATF funds, was \$202,008.98, and his real tax bill was \$57,136.51.

Reece's newfound wealth was hard to miss. In addition to a horse farm near the North Carolina-South Carolina border, he bought two additional vacation homes in nearby Myrtle Beach, S.C. One \$225,000 mortgage was paid off in three years. He also bought a luxury sport fishing yacht and opened a charter fishing business, bought three aircraft and bragged that he owned one of John F. Kennedy's old limousines.

According to his new neighbors, he spent lavishly and usually paid cash. "He lived very well," next-door neighbor Eleanor Adair told reporter Kim Skeen of WJLA television in Washington, D.C. "I used to always wonder where his little gold-entree tree was."

In an interview with Skeen, ATF Director John Magaw assured the public that a theft such as Reece's "could not happen again. Actually, it was our personnel that found" the theft. Asked to explain how such a huge theft could occur, Magaw defended the ATF, saying that "some very good people over the years have been underfunded."

### The Ledger of Justice

Reece ultimately pleaded guilty to a two-count bill of criminal information that accused him of mail fraud and income tax evasion. The procedure avoids grand jury indictment, and is usually employed when a defendant agrees to cooperate in an ongoing criminal probe. But further criminal charges against others appear unlikely, court records indicate.

"Evidence in the case reveals that ... [Reece] used at least four other persons to open post office boxes ..." Judge Fox noted in one court order. "These and other persons reportedly were signatories on various checking accounts. ... There are other allegations which amply demonstrate the defendant's ability to ... employ others to carry out his illegal schemes ..."

"At the November 4, 1996, sentencing hearing, the prosecutor expressed the government's belief that it had insufficient evidence to charge these other persons as accomplices," Fox wrote.

Fox was responding to an argument from Reece's attorney against an upward departure from the federal sentencing guidelines. The attorney, Richard T. Gammon of Raleigh, N.C., opposed the upward departure "because there is no evidence of any corruption of a governmental function.

"There has been no evidence indicating that Mr. Reece's fraudulent conduct was part of a systematic or pervasive corruption

of a governmental function," Gammon wrote. "There has been no evidence indicating that the functioning of the ATF has been corrupted. While Mr. Reece's actions may have been corrupt in and of themselves, the ATF has continued to operate without interruption or difficulty.

"Furthermore, there has been no indication that the public is likely to lose confidence in government as a result of Mr. Reece's conduct," said Gammon. "There is no evidence that the public is any more aware of Mr. Reece's wrongdoing than that of any other public official."

### Final Accounting

Judge Fox wasn't buying what Gammon was trying to sell. He sentenced Reece to five years' imprisonment, the maximum, for mail fraud. He sentenced the former agent to an additional two years and three months for income tax evasion. The judge ordered that the prison sentences must be served consecutively (i.e. one after the other, not at the same time). Gammon appealed the upward departure from the sentencing guidelines.

It should be noted that Reece received



Reece's plea agreement stipulated the government would not prosecute for other crimes such as private use of a Cessna 421 provided by Midwest Holding Corp., Inc.

what might be perceived by some as preferential treatment from federal prosecutors. For instance, he was not charged with the actual theft of funds, or for credit card fraud, or for making false statements to federal investigators, or for obstruction of justice, or for continuing criminal enterprise, one which spanned five years.

The plea agreement stipulates that the government "will not further prosecute the defendant for other conduct now known to the public integrity section, excluding crimes of violence, regarding: (1) short-term lease of aircraft by ATF; (2) fraudulent use of the defendant's government-issued VISA card during the period February 1991 through September 1993; (3) use of a Cessna 421 provided by Midwest Holding Corp., Inc."

In his judgment, Fox noted that Reece "engaged in continued criminal conduct," which is often prosecuted under the RICO law, or Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organization, and stated that Reece "obstructed the administration of justice by providing materially false statements regarding his finances ... His conduct was part of a systematic or pervasive corruption

of a government function ..."

Nor did Reece have to pay a fine, nor does he have to repay the money he stole, at least not all of it.

Fines, which could have ranged from \$10,000 to \$100,000, were waived, although he was charged a routine \$50 assessment for each of the two counts. The court determined that a full restitution of stolen tax dollars would amount to \$1,452,157.52. In the plea agreement, Reece acknowledged restitution of \$550,672. At the final judgment at his sentencing, however, Reece was ordered to repay ATF only \$195,723.00 — about 13 cents on every dollar he stole.

Court documents do not mention federal seizure of any property that Reece might have purchased with his ill-gotten gain. They do state that the \$195,723.00 restitution that was ordered was "based on [the] estimated net worth of" Reece.

Once out of prison, Reece will be placed on three years of supervised probation. He is forbidden from possessing firearms or destructive devices, and he must remain involved in ongoing mental health treatment.

"I believe that Marshall is emotionally unstable," retired Coast Guard Captain Gerald T. Willis, one of Reece's college classmates, wrote the judge. "I understand he was not cooperative in his own defense."

In asking Fox for "consideration for leniency," Willis said he did so "out of love for what he was, and pride in the friendship I shared with a career professional. Marshall is without doubt the most dedicated law-enforcement agent I have ever known."

Acknowledging Reece had "some sort of mental breakdown," a boyhood friend, attorney Frank H. Childs Jr., wrote Fox that "there is no excuse for what he did. ... Marshall is ... totally devastated, not for himself, but for what he has done to his family ... Living with the knowledge that he brought such shame, embarrassment and humiliation to his family will be the worst possible punishment he could suffer."

In her conclusion to Fox, Mary Alice Reece sadly recounted how "the professional liar that he had become was destroying our family ... He had lost control of his ability to differentiate between his real life and his assumed lives ... Living with this person ... was mentally destroying us. We were now living with a stranger.

"Marshall appeared to have become a man without a conscience," she lamented, "and a person without the ability to show love ... My boys and I suffered extensively ... I feel his job helped destroy the qualities that once dictated his life," the life of a man whose family had once seen him as a hero.

James L. Pate is SOF's National Affairs Editor. ✎

# SOF In Albania



by Mark H. Milstein

## FROM THE BAD TO WORSE

**Mobs' Marxist/Mafia Madness Unleashes Anarchy**



Roddy Scott photos

**"The** Kalashnikovs are mine," screamed an elderly man as he passed through the smoldering doorway of the former Albanian army arsenal near Fier, some 80 kilometers southwest of Tirana. "Get away you idiots! Those are mine!"

None of the other dozen looters paid him any attention as they dragged away crates of grenades, small-arms ammunition, assault rifles, and artillery shells. A handful of Albanian soldiers who, not hours before, were manning the arsenal and barracks complex now were huddled near the motor pool, changing their uniforms for civilian clothes and preparing some pilfered office equipment for transport.

As word spread that the army was pulling out of Fier, car after car crammed with locals — bent on recouping some of their losses in the now-infamous failed "pyramid" investment schemes — drove up to the fence. Their aim was simple: strip clean virtually every item from the buildings.

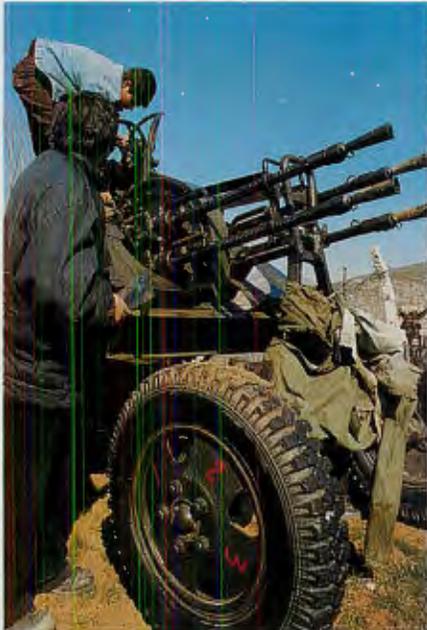
*Brrrrp — brrrrp — brrrrp.* Three young men with matching black Levis, leather bomber jackets, and aviator-style sunglasses were test-firing

Rioters-turned-looters fan flames of anarchy as Albania cringes.



Mark H. Millstein

Accidentally shot by fellow rebel, Albanian with stomach wound is carried to hospital in Vlora. (below, left) New owners conduct cram course on anti-aircraft gun. "Now that we have it, what the hell do we do with it?" (below, right) German Bundeswehr troops fire on Albanian gunmen taking potshots at 120 European civilians being evacuated by helicopter from Tirana.



Roddy Scott



Reuters/Faith Kamdir



Roddy Scott

Women participate in shooting and looting at army arsenal, where bayonets (inset) are used to break open ammo crates.

Roddy Scott

their newly acquired firearms.

"Down with Berisha," one yelled at me, making the three-fingered symbol of the opposition. His partner, now sporting a camouflaged poncho liner, ran his finger under his neck, knife-like, while yelling Berisha's name.

The message was clear: Sali Berisha, former cardiologist and now the embattled president of Albania (and friend of the Clinton administration), was the most wanted man in this part of the turbulent Balkans.

### A Growing Power Struggle

Albanians like to say that, as a people, they never do anything by halves. As communists under dictator Envar Hoxha, they lived in Europe's most isolated and backward nation. And earlier this year, after living high on false prosperity fueled by pyramid schemes and the smuggling of drugs, booze, and cigarettes, they created one of the world's most anarchistic states.

"Security Force Member Killed Accidentally By His Gun," read the headline on 7 March in the *Albanian Daily News*, the country's English-language daily. The article reported: "A doctor at Tirana hospital said a 25-year-old recruit was killed by his Kalashnikov as he was taking a nap. 'Probably he was sleeping with his throat leaned on the barrel,' the doctor said. The gun accidentally fired a shot and blew up his brain [sic]. Many inexperienced young men have been called under arm [sic] recently to be used to suppress an anti-government rebellion in the south of the country. ..."

After two days of soaking up local culture at the lobby bar of the Hotel International in Tirana, it was time for me to head south and meet some of these "inexperienced young men" under arms, enjoy some muzzle flash, and sniff some cordite.

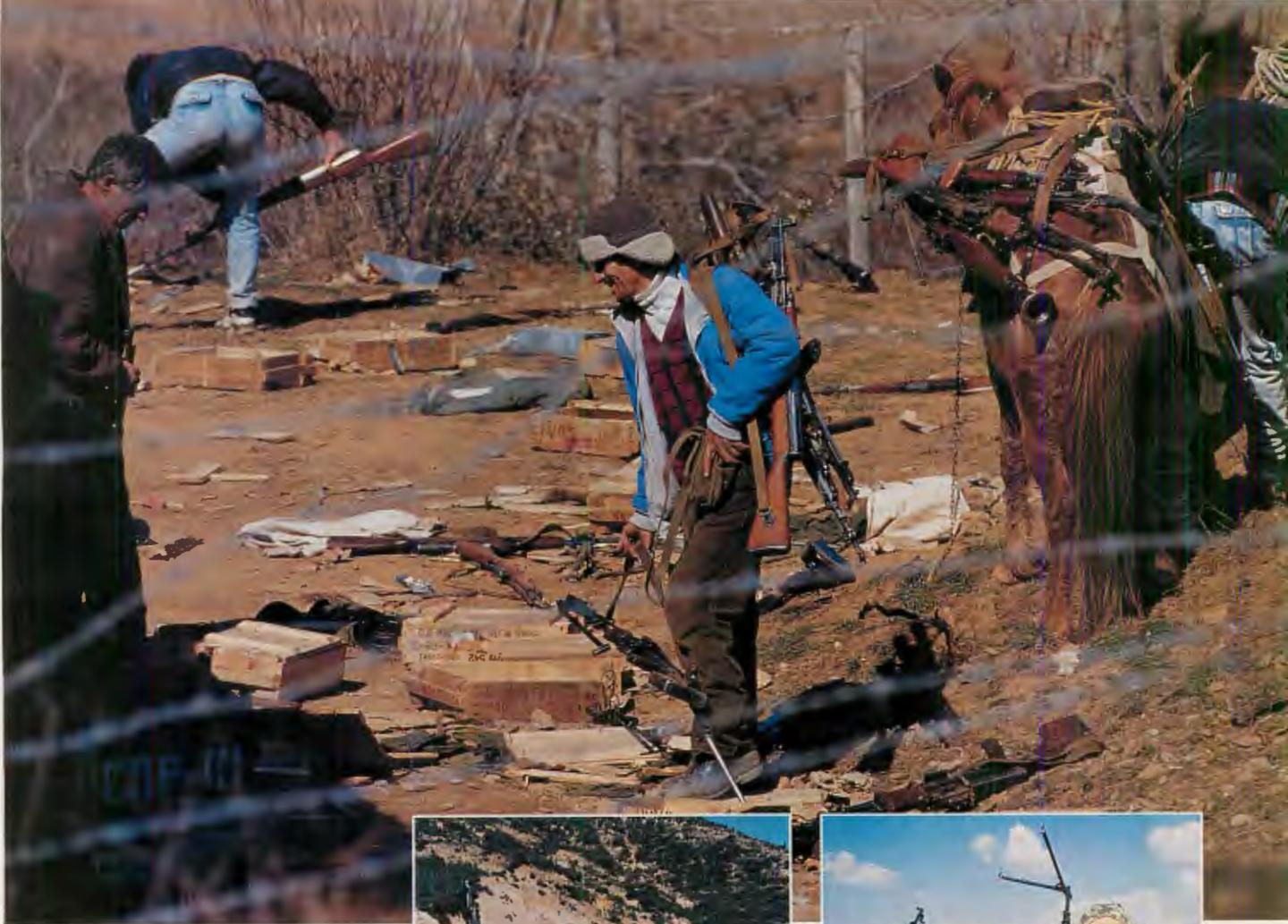
Contrary to popular opinion or some reports in major international media, the mobs of people rampaging through Albania's streets, looting, pillaging, and firing into the sky, were not "the People" who protested for democracy in the streets of Belgrade for nearly 90 days, demanded democracy in Haiti, or breached the Berlin Wall in 1989. Rather, they were unwitting dupes in a growing power struggle pitting the government against a coalition of unrepentant communists and the Albanian *mafia* that, if it had its way, would take the country from this free-for-all to full-scale civil war.

This marriage of bitter out-of-power communists and newly empowered, violent organized-crime rings might seem a bit too much for some foreigner to believe, but after driving south from Tirana through nearly 10 government and rebel checkpoints and entering the port city of Vlora — "cradle of the popular uprising against an unpopular government" — the picture became clearer to me.

### Calm ... Except For Gunfire

Our driver, a price-gouging capitalist, knew the situation well. After charging \$200 for the day, he then told us he wouldn't



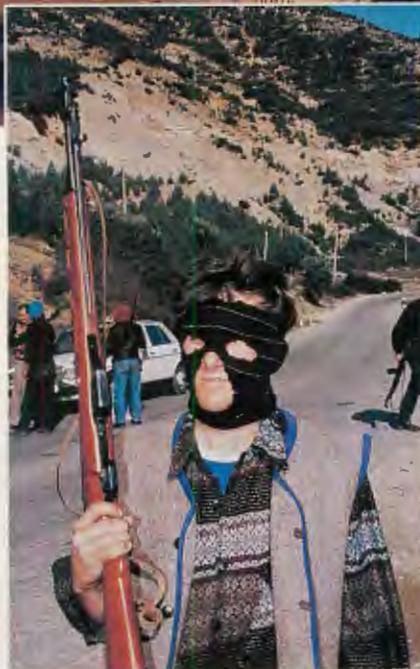


(above) Looters at government arsenal in southeastern Albania use pack horses to haul away rifles, machine guns, and RPG-7 launchers. Anti-government crowd at impromptu roadblock in southern Albania is armed with 7.62x39mm SKS and AK-47 rifles and at least one RPD machine gun with 100-round drum.

drive into Vlora because he feared that the Tirana license plates on his car would earn him a bullet to the neck. He would only go as far south as Levan, about 22 kilometers north of Vlora. We were on our own from that point.

My traveling companions for the day were two Danish photographers, both of whom readily admitted they'd never heard a *real* weapon fired before, let alone been the target of an out-of-control mob or militia. About 2 kilometers south of Levan we manage to grab a ride in a dump truck filled with freshly recruited rebels on their way to man the barricades in Vlora.

The city was, for the most part, calm except for the incessant crackle of automatic-weapons' fire and the occasional concussion of outgoing artillery. Two thousand to 3,000 men and boys milled about Vlora's central square. Most were there for a meeting of the local defense council led (as I learned from two Americans who claimed to be missionaries) by ex-army officers. The mood was peaceful but the threat of violence definitely existed.



Mark H. Milstein



Mark H. Milstein



Mark H. Milstein

Rumors that government agents and members of the *Sherbimi Informativ Kombetar* (SHIK), the infamous secret police, had breached Vlora's defenses along its mountainous eastern approach prompted a few Kalashnikov- and SKS-toting young men to jump into their new Mercedes and leave the meeting. Two more cars soon followed.

While the speeches continued we foreigners busied ourselves reading newly printed death notices posted on the wall of one of the city's recently looted banks. A German-speaking Albanian offered to take us to the wake of a 16-year-old boy, shot by

his neighbors the day before. What this had to do with the uprising wasn't quite clear, but after knocking back four short glasses of plum brandy with the boy's father everything began making more sense. Well, almost everything.

"My boy, Artur, was killed by the mafia," his father, Artur Osmani, Sr., told us. "They made our neighbor do it!"

We nodded, and continued to stare at Artur's 9mm-perforated body, which lay across two coffee tables only inches from our glasses.

"This isn't about democracy," the boy's

father screamed at our translator, "it's about revenge. My boy is innocent! He didn't steal from the mafia, he only wanted to get our money back from the pyramids ..."

### Modern-Day "Robin Hoods"

As Albania's Stalinist government crumbled in 1992, Vlora's mafia filled the breach. Emboldened by a weak government and seen by recently deposed communists as potential allies with muscle, Vlora's mafiosi solidified ties with the former government and nearby Italian gangs, amassing great amounts of money and power.

The weakness of central authority also provided opportunities for scam artists of all shapes and sizes and about a half-dozen pyramid schemes — half of which were openly supported by the Berisha government.

Last fall, after success in the national elections guaranteed Berisha and his party continued "control" of Albania, the government went after Vlora's mafia and began to confiscate their fast cigarette boats (smuggling craft) and closed a number of known mafia business interests. The crime ring was not pleased and, as many in Vlora told us, used the nearly simultaneous collapse of some pyramid schemes, which bankrupted many Albanians, to add popular legitimacy to their anger.

Cloaking themselves under the guise of modern-day Robin Hoods, the mafia/former communist coalition began fomenting popular support for Berisha's removal. They also used the collapse of local authority and the onset of anarchy to settle some outstanding debts and even the playing field.

Moreover, during this chaos the Albanian mafia bought hundreds, perhaps thousands, of pilfered Kalashnikov rifles for the equivalent of (U.S.) \$8-\$10 apiece for probable resale in neighboring countries, a German security official told an *SOF* contributor.



Mark H. Milstein

Nothing runs like a Deere! Revolutionists ferried to war zone aboard one of Moline's finest.

### Street "Justice"

Word began to spread throughout Vlora that government forces, backed by tanks, were making their way into the city after having crushed the city's meager defenses at a bridge on the way to Levan.

The streets began to empty of people; the pitch of gunfire began to pick up. Chaos was ensuing, and we fast-walked back to the center of town. A group of about 40 or so rebels, each sporting colorful face masks or bandannas, and SKS rifles or freshly looted AKs, were putting together a makeshift checkpoint across from the post office and telephone and telegraph center.

A crushed car and a surplus American GM pickup truck, one of about 50 donated to the Albanian army by the U.S. Southern European Task Force as part of NATO's

Partnership For Peace program, were being used as barricades. The vehicles soon were doused with diesel and set ablaze. They belched black smoke.

Stoked on alcohol and testosterone, the rebels stopped every car attempting to cross their turf, "arresting" strangers, and even finding a young man who last year skipped out on a bar tab at a cafe that employed one of the rebels.

This unfortunate deadbeat was then dragged out of his car, read some sort of charges by one rebel sporting a submachine gun, then presented to the former bartender for immediate "execution."

The mood was tense, with many of the rebels screaming for the miscreant's head. The former bartender was handed a pistol. He placed the barrel against the skull of the now-trembling deadbeat. Just before he pulled the trigger, though, he jerked the pistol straight up in the air and fired. A second of silence went by before a few of the rebels laughed out loud. They slapped the near-convulsive victim on the back of his head before admonishing him never to steal from them again, and sent him on his way.

Two French photojournalists had heard that a number of rebels were killed and others wounded in a firefight with government forces on the road to Levan. It was time to head to Vlora's hospital.

We got there just as two wounded men were taken into the X-ray room. The "screamer," as the least-wounded rebel was soon known, had a slug in his upper arm that failed to break the bone and was easily extracted by a nurse with a pair of what looked like household pliers. His partner suffered a more serious stomach wound and was taken immediately to surgery.

According to the original story, the two rebels were shot when their position was attacked by a government BMP (infantry fighting vehicle) that tried to cross the bridge over the Vjosa River. When we finally arrived at the scene of the firefight an hour or so later, the story had changed again: The two wounded (and no dead) were victims of "friendly fire." As for the BMP, no one we spoke to actually had *seen* it.

### What Goes Up ...

The next morning we moved out again, this time in the direction of Gjirokastra, a small city about 30 kilometers northwest of the Greek border. We never got there.

The unrest that exploded in Vlora had spread to other cities in the south, including the port of Saranda. The army, whose conscripts receive a paltry \$5 a month, was falling apart by the minute with units defecting at an alarming rate. The police chief in Krahas, a small town south of the oil-refinery center of Ballsh, told us that since most soldiers and their families lost money in the pyramid schemes and feared the mafia more than the government, they gladly opened the armories and joined the looting.

Now, many of the newly armed Albanians were spoiling for a fight. "We will hold this road until we run out of bul-

## "More With Less"

Improvise, adapt, overcome — or simply *make do*. That's what the Marine Corps, typically found at the light end of Pentagon budgets, has done throughout its history. A perfect example of leatherneck resourcefulness are the fast-attack vehicles — highly modified jeeps — the 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit used in Albania during the evacuation of foreign civilians. One gun jeep was constantly on station at the U.S. Embassy in Tirana.

The Marines started with the M151 (a vehicle line that first saw production in 1960), beefed up the suspensions, installed roll bars, and added wide radial tires.



Mark H. Milstein

Topped off with M2HB .50-caliber machine gun, it resembles the WWII desert "rat patrol" jeep. There is a tradeoff for agility: Armor is limited to the crew's Kevlar helmets and flak jackets.

The vehicle's primary advantage is that two will fit on a CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter. "When on a ship like the *USS Nassau* and doing any kind of 'hero' work, you can't take a Hummer [HMMWV] — it won't fit

on a CH-53," explained Gunnery Sergeant Tim Shearer, a native of Perry, Iowa. Off Albania, "we got a mission order and 30 minutes later we had choppers in the air.

"We can do more with less," the public-affairs NCO added. "This has always been the hallmark of the Marines."

—Robert K. Brown



U.S. Marine CH-47 helicopter lands near American embassy, unloads troops, and picks up American and European evacuees. During return flight to *USS Nashville*, crewmen watch for ground fire — especially surface-to-air missiles. Minutes later, *SOF* Publisher Robert K. Brown is escorted across deck of amphibious ship.



photos by Mark H. Milstein

lets,” one rebel told me at a checkpoint outside of Krahas.

It was becoming obvious, too, that few Albanians respected Newton’s law of gravity. With tens of thousands of bullets being shot into the air, someone was bound to get hurt.

“Since last Friday,” the *Albanian Daily News* said, “the city of Vlora reported 25 killings by gun shoots [sic] or accidental dynamite explosions. Another 102 were wounded by fast falling lead bullets.” (A foreign relief agency, having conducted surveys at 13 hospitals, later reported that 84 Albanians had been killed and 1,330 injured as of 19 March.)

The next day we drove to the newly fallen city of Tepelena, near a strategic junction and north of Gjirokastar. Thousands of protesters were in the streets, shooting weapons into the air and demanding that President Berisha step down immediately or face death.

One newly formed local militia had hooked a large artillery piece to the trailer hitch on a car and dragged it into the middle of the road just north of the town’s center. A rebel told me that someone was back at the armory looking for shells for the weapon.

“We’ll use it to send Berisha to the moon,” he told me. I tried not to laugh.

We told the rebels that we had just passed a large army convoy of about 300 soldiers

and six tanks heading from Ballsh toward Fier; it looked as if the government was running scared. Two rebels immediately began firing wildly into the air, sending reporters and unarmed civilians scampering for cover.

“They’re like dogs barking at night,” one of my Danish compatriots said. “One shoots, and then all of the others have to shoot. It’s sick. This is like that film *Lord of the Flies*.”

### Cameras Confiscated

Just south of the town of Lushnja we later found the convoy of tanks and buses, still plodding along at a snail’s pace. A posse of SHIK agents in unmarked cars road shotgun for the convoy, pulling over and pistol-whipping anyone stupid enough to try passing them. One driver who attempted to pass the convoy was given a light beating by one of the SHIK teams. He asked us for a napkin to wipe the blood from his broken nose before he could drive on.

A kilometer or so south of Lushnje the convoy stopped for a collective piss break; so did every car following them. At one point the three of us got out of our car to stretch and before we knew it two SHIK agents were upon us, punching our driver in the head and admonishing us to get back in the car.

But just as we frantically tried to get back in our taxi, one of the SHIK agents spotted our cameras and immediately con-

fiscated them.

“You’ll have to follow us,” the lead agent said as they drove off toward Lushnja.

We tried to follow but soon lost them in a swirl of dust on winding, back roads leading through a zone of rusting factories. The sun had already set and with darkness rapidly falling on Albania, we stood alongside the road leading to Lushnja waiting for a miracle. It came 20 minutes later: The same two SHIK agents came speeding by and, as luck would have it, were halted at a police roadblock up the road.

As the agents and police argued over IDs and who was in charge, I quickly opened the back door of the agents’ Mercedes, lunged over the back seat between the two men, and grabbed our cameras by the straps.

Before you could say “Envar Hoxha,” I was back in our taxi and on the road to Tirana. Southern Albania was becoming a viper pit.

### Very Important Shrubbery

A week later I was back in the south, having linked up with *SOF* Publisher Robert K. Brown and photographer and ex-Legionnaire Paul Fanshaw. CNN was reporting that Italian army helicopters had begun an airlift of expatriates from Vlora and Tirana. At the same time, the U.S. Marine 26th Expeditionary

*Continued on page 72*



hen night falls in the southern Philippines, the *c-rump* of rocket-propelled grenades and the twang of rebel sniper fire elicit the responsive staccato of automatic weapons and occasional artillery and mortar rounds from government troops chasing hit-and-run MILF rebels through the dense jungle surrounding the rubber and coconut plantations at the remote village of Tipo Tipo.

In the heart of Basilan Island province, off the historic southwestern Mindanao port of Zamboanga, Tipo Tipo is where the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) has decided to wage what may be a climactic struggle for survival against not only the Philippine army, but also the rival Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). MILF guerrilla leaders, mostly of the Yakan tribe that dominates the island, accuse the MNLF, led by members of the Tausug tribe from nearby Sulu, of betraying all Moro warriors in their ancient struggle for Mindanao, the large southern island long claimed by Philippine Muslims as their rightful country. The MNLF's cardinal offense, in the eyes of the MILF, was coming to terms with the government last September in a breakthrough peace agreement.

Government raids on the diehard MILF guerrillas holed up on this island dramatizes the fragility of that agreement — even though the MNLF for now is fighting alongside the government, after having fought against Philippine marines and army troops for decades.

"The MNLF wants to keep the peace," says a top MNLF commander, Jann Jakilan, pledging to abide by the agreement signed by MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari and Philippine President Fidel Ramos, the former general who spent much of his career directing the action against Muslim as well as communist rebels. "We are now assisting government forces" emphasizes Jakilan — an almost unimaginable reversal that gives the MNLF the pretext it has long wanted to go after the MILF, its arch-rival in the quest for loyalty among Muslims.

The harder the MNLF forces fight on behalf of the government, however, the more determined is the MILF to keep up this revolt that is deeply rooted in American and Spanish colonial history. (The Spanish gave Filipino Muslims the name "Moro" after the Muslim Moors whom they drove back to North Africa from the Iberian peninsula.) "The MILF are putting forces into Basilan," Philippine army Colonel Edmund Pocada told me as his troops fanned out on an operation among the coconut trees outside Tipo Tipo. "The people don't want Basilan to become a battleground, but the MILF seem to have chosen it."

Commander Jakilan, a 23-year veteran of revolt against the government, now goes unarmed as he accompanies Philippine

army officers and civilian officials to Tipo Tipo. It is a self-conscious gesture of cooperation, not defeat, for a man who still holds the august title of "commander of the second mobile army" of the MNLF. "Since I was assigned as chairman of the joint ceasefire on Basilan, I do not need security," says Jakilan, who now wears only civilian clothes. His troops, uniformed and heavily armed, remain in Camp Bohemarang a mile or so from the center of the village — ready to integrate with government forces under the terms of the peace agreement, willing to do battle against the MILF, or, for that matter, primed to fight against government forces again if they suspect betrayal.

## Fragile Coalition Among Strange Bedfellows

While the MILF fights on for the Muslims' own *Bangsamoro* or Moro nation, the question is: How long can peace with the MNLF last as MNLF and government troops face the realities of working together on a daily basis? "Misunderstandings" and "accidents" are bound to happen. A few nights before I was on this hilly jungle island, a mere 30 miles across, MNLF and government forces encountered one another by surprise, wounding and killing a few on each side, before their commanders realized the clash was "a mistake."

On the road from Tipo Tipo, I encoun-

# JOINT JIHAD



(inset, left) MNLF Commander Kasang Jankal preparing to go on ops with government forces, wearing chest patch of Moro National Liberation Front-Joint Ceasefire Commission. (inset, center) Basilan Gov. Jerry Salapudden, visiting Tipo Tipo during government/MNLF military operation. (inset, right) Commander Jann Jakilan, renowned MNLF guerrilla commander, now wearing civilian clothes while working with government forces.

tered some of Jakilan's troops moving up to take positions alongside Philippine army forces. Government officers talk casually with their erstwhile foes, telling them where to hook up with what unit. "We trust the Philippine government," says an MNLF soldier. "We are counting on integration." His commander, Kasang Jankal, still wears a patch saying, "Provincial Army/State of Basilan," a reminder of the MNLF's claim to run its own military establishment. Still, says the commander, now on the MNLF Provincial Joint Ceasefire Commission, "The ceasefire is going smoothly." A few days later came proof of how closely the MNLF and army soldiers are collaborating when several MNLF troops become the first

Moro guerrillas ever to die while fighting for the government *against* other Moros.

Jakilan makes clear, however, that his men are not about to lay down their arms on orders of any government — even though they are no longer using them to ambush government troops along the treacherous 50-mile, pot holed road leading up the hills to Tipo Tipo. "Our forces will still exist until such time as the transition is completed," says Jakilan, who studied civil engineering at a university in Manila before deciding to dedicate his life to fighting for the Philippines' Muslim minority. Philippine Muslims now comprise some 7 million people, most of them living in southern Mindanao and outlying islands. As

we drove down the road, we came across favorite ambush points of both the MILF and the MNLF. "Here they hit us a few months ago," says a guide. "Here is where they attacked last year. It is very easy to hide around this bend."

### Arafat Of The Philippines

The MNLF staunchly denies the signing of the peace — and the election of Misuari as governor of a four-province area called the "Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao" — is a sellout brought about by promises of aid and investment. "This negotiated agreement is the fruit of the revolution," says Jakilan, putting the best face on the compromise. "Our goal now is the regular autonomous government" — a structure that he fervently believes must extend over a 14-province, nine-city area as agreed on in a deal signed in Tripoli under the watchful eye of Libyan leader Moammar Khadaffi in 1976. The Philippine government is willing to give Misuari all the appurtenances of power, including enormous "development funds" and a private plane for jetting back and forth to Manila for photo ops with Ramos and other leaders as long as he cooperates — and forgets about his own Moro nation.

"Of course it's not a perfect arrangement," Misuari remarked to me in the lobby of the Manila Midtown Hotel, where he hangs out with his entourage during his frequent trips to the capital, but he is quite adamant about who's got the upper hand among Muslims. "I don't see any room for any other group getting more power and influence. It's the MNLF that is going to have the bigger say over Mindanao and the outlying islands" — including Basilan as well as Sulu, Misuari's birthplace and center of Tausug influence. So optimistic is this former rebel chieftain that he now gives talks to foreign business leaders at some of Manila's fanciest hotels, urging them to invest in what is now a "safe" area.

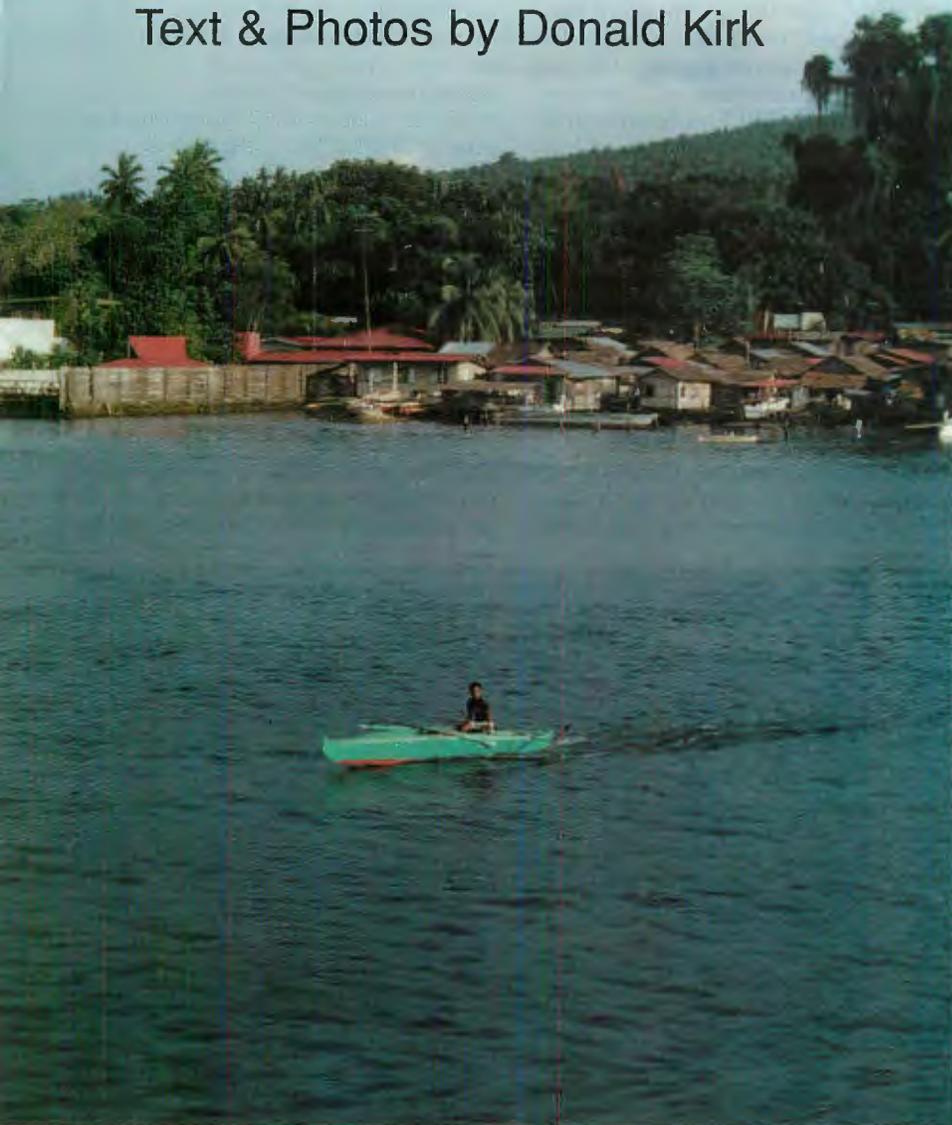
President Ramos is now "my big boss," he told one such gathering in the plush Shangri La Hotel. "He has instructed me to play a prominent role in trying to quell some of the trouble spots."

At his headquarters in Cotabato City, about a day's ferry ride east of here, Misuari dismissed the MILF as serious competition and talked only in glowing terms of the prospects for lasting peace in a region where, until a few months ago, he com-

## Philippine Government, Moro Rebels Join Forces



Text & Photos by Donald Kirk



Skyline of Bibi, Basilan, illustrates clashing cultures that have divided Philippine Islands since Spanish colonial days. Mosque (center) represents some 7 million Muslims in a predominantly Catholic country who have fought for centuries for an independent state. (inset top, right) Patch of "Provincial Army, State of Basilan," is relic of MNLF dream of independent government with Basilan as member state, still worn by MNLF troops operating with Philippine government. (inset top, left) Patch for Philippine army soldiers in southern Mindanao.



Philippine army soldiers on a "Mestizo" tank — an aging APC upgraded with a gun turret — head out on maneuvers in Tipo Tipo. (Mestizo means partly one race, partly another — often used in Philippines for "Mestizo Chinese," "Mestizo Spanish," "Mestizo American" etc.)

(below) Guerrilla soldier of Moro National Liberation Front, on way to Tipo Tipo, Basilan Island, to join forces with Philippine Army and national police in ongoing fight against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Note grotesque M16 magazine.

(below, right) MNLF troopers, still wearing patches of "Bangsamoro Army," former rebel force of MNLF that fought for decades against Philippine Armed Forces in Mindanao and outlying islands, wait to rendezvous with government troops and police for joint ops against rival MILF Moros.

manded more than 10,000 rebels. "People ask me why is there still trouble in parts of Mindanao," says Misuari. "Some of these people are just flexing their muscles. The MILF has given us their assurance they will cooperate." No such word, however, emanates from the MILF headquarters in the jungles 50 miles north of the city. A local governor, Zachariah Candao, works for a separate peace between the government and the MILF, who remain unchallenged in their redoubt to the north, while distracting the government with the battle for Basilan. "If there is a way we can strike an agreement with the MILF to bring development to the area, we will," says Candao. "What we are really hoping for is an interim peace."

### Unrepentant Rebels

MILF zealots denounce the peace with Misuari's MNLF as a buy off and a sham. "We have given instructions to our men to

stay in defensive positions," says Ghazali Gaafar, a top MILF leader whom one of Candao's aides reached for me by phone from Candao's residence. "When we are attacked without provocation, we have to defend our position," said Gaafar, reluctant to tell me where he was. "That is what happened in Basilan." He listed the body count in the battle so far as "five martyrs" — slain MILF fighters — and eight wounded on his side against 91 dead and 45 wounded on the government side. "If we are not attacked, then we will not attack. Our plan is to strengthen our forces. We are going on with our training. It is continuous."

The MILF aren't the only ones who don't like the peace agreement with the MNLF."

From the other side of the spectrum, Christians in Mindanao — several million of whom have migrated to the region over the past century — view concession to the



Muslims, any Muslims, MNLF or MILF or assorted fringe groups, as a cave-in to terrorist threats. Christian vigilante groups threaten to attack Muslim forces in retaliation not only for the peace agreement but for the kidnappings and killings, including gruesome beheadings of businessmen. On the other side, MILF guerrillas exact taxes and tribute on the roads but say it's all for the Moro nation.

It is the ghostly specter of "lost commands" of breakaway rebel units, many of them merely bands of robbers, killers-for-hire and kidnappers-for-ransom, that inspires the worst fears among civilians. Outside the heavily armed compounds of such figures as Misuari and Candao, on the streets of Cotabato, Philippine marines have been rushed in to bolster the national police in response to a wave of kidnappings and killings.

Misuari acknowledges the threat. "In some places, like in Cotabato, there is a spate of kidnappings for ransom," he admits. "People have developed kidnapping into some kind of industry. They will pursue their catch for days on end. I have sent a series of contact men. I have issued a statement, 'Please discontinue these activities, you are driving investors away from the area.' President Ramos has given instructions to prepare the area, to rehabilitate the area, so these people can find an alternative to the activities they are doing." He urges the government to forget the past. "Unless we can offer that, they will always have that apprehension and cannot rejoin society."

Misuari says "it is my duty to ensure there will be rapid changes so we can put [away] this ugly face of the past." But in Basilan, ugliness is still present-tense and high-level optimism is not catching on. More than 12,000 people, most of them from the Yakan tribe that produces many of the MILF guerrillas, have fled the worst fighting. Refugees huddle in a school building in Tipo Tipo while a team of government hospital workers hands out food and medicine. "You cannot say their heart is really with the government," says a nurse. "They are really the same with the MILF. The MILF wants no part of a ceasefire."

A few miles from the center of Tipo Tipo lie the burned-out hulks of a couple of Philippine army vehicles. One is called a "Mestizo tank" — an armored personnel carrier with a turret-mounted cannon. The other is an armored car, a "Simba" assembled for a British company at the former U.S. Navy base at Subic Bay north of Manila. Both of them were knocked out by rocket-propelled grenades fired by MILF guerrillas.

The fighting is haphazard. Two days before I got here, government troops fired at

guerrillas, killing one, coming back with his rifle, an old Garand.

## Making War - Or Buying Bargaining Chips?

I talked with Basilan's governor, Jerry Salapudden, as he lead medical workers up the road to Tipo Tipo to tend to the refugees: He sees the peace with the MNLF as the only way to begin solving the problem.



without a fight — or at least a monetary incentive. The capital town, Isabella, still flourishes as a busy little port just eight miles from Zamboanga. "The whole island, with inlets and coves for fishing villages, provides a good jumping board for going to Sulu or to Zamboanga," says Salapudden. "That is why Basilan has all the major fronts" — the MNLF, the MILF, even the fanatical but smaller *Abu Sayeff*, another breakaway group. "When there is agreement, the likelihood is there will be a sharing of power between the MILF and the MNLF. The MILF elements here are under orders to launch this military offensive to gain some limited objective, to exert pressure on the national government, to impress the national government and the national community that the MILF is also a force to reckon with — even to exert pressure on Chairman Misuari so he will personally exert pressure on the Philippine government."

One thing is for sure, continued Governor Salapudden, "Without the MILF in the mainstream of society, peace will

(top) Soldiers in uniform, and local militia man in civilian garb, congregate during operation in Tipo Tipo. (left) Tipo Tipo villagers wait patiently while government officials give a pep talk during lull in area fighting. Most of them are refugees from outlying areas. Winning hearts and Moros? At least they are listening. (below, left) Local old-timer waves a bolo knife for grinning kids and soldiers outside municipal hall, Tipo Tipo. Mingling and cooperation between local Muslims, government military and police personnel, and former rebels is encouraging. (below, right) Nurse (left) administers medicine as part of civic action program in Tipo Tipo. Mom, pop, baby are refugees from fighting in surrounding areas. Such benefits of peace with the government may help keep the peace.



"They're not coming down to surrender," says the governor, who knows from personal experience. He fought alongside the MNLF for a dozen years before joining the government side in 1984. He believes the agreement between the government and the MNLF has justified what Moro guerrillas once denounced as his betrayal of their cause. "I have proven they were wrong, and I have proven myself right," he says. "The only way is to integrate our forces. Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile personal differences. That is all."

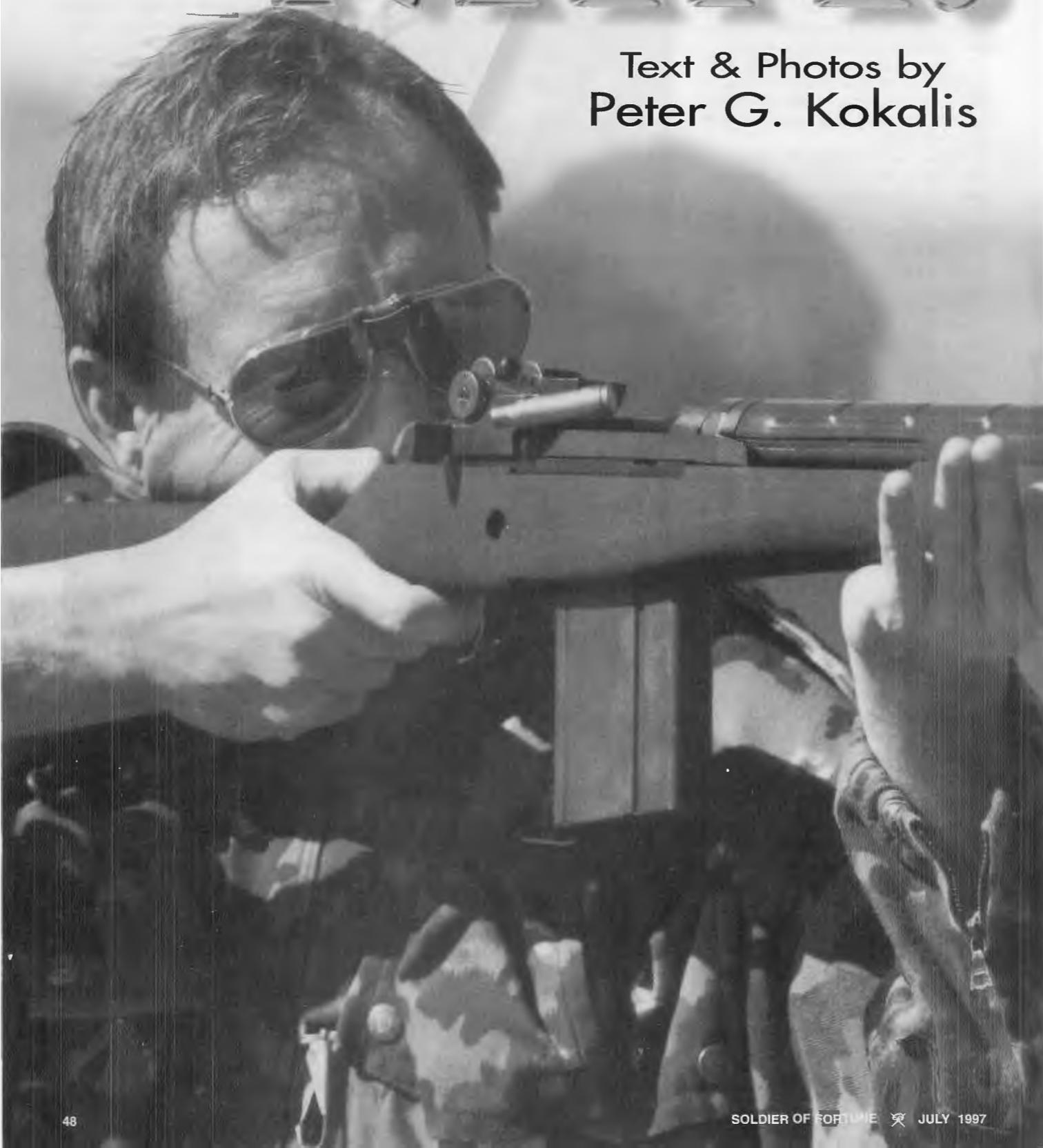
This verdant island, however, is too strategic a prize for anyone to relinquish

never be permanent." How, then, do you ever get any of these hardened guerrillas to turn in their weapons in accordance with terms on a piece of paper? Salapudden suggests a face-saving way to give MNLF returnees an impression of their old power — and have them on the government side. "We will give them new weapons when they join government units," the governor says confidently. "They will turn in their old ones. That is the way." As for the MILF, he assures me, "Together we will defeat them" — the same promise government officials have been making in Mindanao since the colonial era.

*A frequent contributor to SOF, Don Kirk is a Washington-based freelance photo journalist with much time on the ground in the Far East and Pacific.* ☞

# M1A:

Text & Photos by  
Peter G. Kokalis



# LOCKED & LOADED

## **Springfield Armory's Best-Buy Battle Rifle**

**S**pringfield Armory's standard M1A now comes from the factory fully "loaded." That is to say loaded with extras, including either a National Match carbon steel or stainless-steel barrel, a National Match-tuned trigger assembly, a National Match flash suppressor and three USGI 20-round magazines. That's \$579 worth of extra features at no additional cost.

The M1A is, of course, Springfield Armory's semiautomatic-only version of the M14. The M14's origins lie with its justifiably famous predecessor, the .30 M1 Garand. While the M1 Garand served with distinction beyond that of any other World War II infantry rifle, by 1944 its shortcomings were obvious. It was too heavy, its eight-round *en bloc* clip was less than satisfactory and there was no selective-fire capability.

Experiments to correct these deficiencies resulted in the Springfield Armory (the government arsenal in Springfield, Massachusetts) T20 series which was



Springfield Armory's M1A is the popular semiauto version of the M14, a robust, reliable and battle-proven rifle. (inset) "Loaded" M1A comes equipped with either a National Match carbon steel or stainless-steel barrel, a National Match-tuned trigger assembly, a National Match flash suppressor and three USGI 20-round magazines.

supposed to employ a 20-round magazine compatible with the M1918(A2) Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Remington also prepared several prototypes based on the M1 Garand: the T22 series, the T23 and the T27. All were unsatisfactory. While Frankford Arsenal was developing a new cartridge, the T65, Earle Harvey, Colonel Rene R. Studler's protégé at Springfield, was designing the 7-pound T25, which did not hold up under sustained full-auto fire. This was followed by the T47, which in turn was replaced by the T44 and adopted

as the M14 on 1 May 1957.

In addition to Springfield Armory government facility in Massachusetts, three companies were awarded M14 production contracts out of the 42 firms that entered bid proposals in March 1961. Production ceased on 30 June 1964 after the M14 was phased out of the Vietnam War by the M16. Deliveries of the M14 were as follows: Springfield Armory, 167,000; Harrington & Richardson Inc., 537,582; Thompson Ramo Wooldridge (TRW), 319,163; and Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp. (Winchester), 356,501. Unit

cost ranged from \$69.75 to \$85 each.

The M1A rifle sent to *Soldier Of Fortune* for test and evaluation differs from the original M14 in many significant ways other than the absence of selective-fire capability (which was never a successful feature of the M14 anyway). Today's Springfield Armory (Springfield, Inc., Dept. SOF, 420 West Main, Geneseo, IL 61254; phone: 309-944-5631; fax: 309-944-3676) has applied modern manufacturing techniques to all areas of the M1A's production.

The M1A receiver is a precision invest-

## Method of Operation: M14/M1A

Gas-operated, these rifles fire from the closed-bolt position. After the trigger is squeezed to rotate the hammer forward and drive the firing pin to ignite the cartridge primer, the bullet moves up the bore and a portion of the propellant gases passes through the vent drilled into the bottom of the barrel. The gases move past a cutoff valve, which can be rotated for grenade launching, and through a hole in the piston.

The piston's hollow interior fills with gas and the piston is forced rearward, driving the operating rod and bolt with it when enough pressure has developed to overcome the forces represented by friction and the recoil spring. Once the piston starts rearward, its port and the barrel's gas vent are no longer in alignment and no further gas can enter the system, escaping instead to the atmosphere via an exhaust hole in the gas cylinder after the piston has moved backward 1.5 inches. Like the M60 GPMG, this system supposedly requires no gas regulator. In theory, the pressure required to move the operating rod and bolt will automatically increase until it is sufficient to counter the forces of inertia.

The operating rod goes through 3/8-inch of free travel to permit chamber pressures to drop to a safe level before a hump on the op rod's cam slot forces the bolt roller (on the right lug) upward. This motion disengages the bolt's two locking lugs from the receiver's locking recesses. The rotation to the left provides the primary extraction required to loosen and unseat the empty case from the chamber. As the bolt moves back, the empty case is extracted and held to the bolt face by the extractor claw. As soon as the case is completely withdrawn from the chamber, the ejector drives the "bump"-type ejector rod forward to throw the case out of the rifle to the right. The op rod's hump also assists the ejection process to a small degree. After ejection of the empty case, the compressed recoil spring drives the bolt forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it.

Powered by a gas system first developed for the White semiautomatic rifle of 1929, this portion of the M14/M1A system consists of five major components. A knurled plug is threaded to the front of the gas cylinder and must be removed with a combination tool. A little more than 3 1/2 inches in length, the piston has a 1 3/4-inch solid shaft and 1 3/4-inch hollow cylin-

der with seven gas grooves around its external circumference and a single gas port. The gas cylinder itself is held in place by a lock piece threaded to the barrel. A slot-headed spindle valve attached to the gas cylinder must be rotated with the combo tool so its slot is parallel to the barrel, shutting off gas flow to the piston, for launching grenades with the M64 blank cartridge. This latter feature has no application for the vast majority who employ the M1A as either a target rifle or law-enforcement-selected marksman system.

As with some of its other parts, the M14's trigger mechanism was lifted right out of the M1 Garand. Its major components are

a hammer with two hooks, a trigger with an extension that is the main sear, and a spring-loaded secondary sear directly behind. When the hammer is cocked, it is held back by the main sear. When the trigger is pulled, the main sear moves forward off its notch on the hammer and the hammer then rotates up and forward, driven by its coil spring. When the bolt moves back and rolls the hammer down, it's caught by the secondary sear.



Springfield Armory M1A, field stripped.

In semiautomatic fire, when the trigger is released, the secondary sear moves back out of engagement with the hammer. As the hammer starts forward after the trigger has been released, it is caught once more by the main sear and held until the trigger is pulled again. Although it does not apply to the M1A rifle, in full-auto fire the hammer is also held by the secondary sear, but rotation of the eccentric selector shaft (missing on the M1A) to the "A" position moves the connector assembly rearward into contact with the operating rod and the sear release to the rear into contact with the secondary sear, causing it to release the hammer and fire a round every time the bolt closes, until the trigger is released.

The safety is mounted in the front portion of the trigger guard; again, just like the M1 Garand. Push forward to disengage. When engaged, it blocks the main sear and prevents the trigger from being pulled rearward.

The trigger pull is of the two-stage type preferred by the U.S. military. After drawing up the slack, pull weight on the National Match-tuned trigger assembly provided on the M1A sent to SOF for test and evaluation was a crisp and consistent 4.25 pounds. That's excellent.

— P.G.K.

ment casting made from 8620 ordnance steel, the same material used to make the original military M1 Garand and M14 receivers. It is 100% machined and in numerous areas has been made thicker for added strength. These receivers are subjected to rigorous inspection procedures throughout the manufacturing process. Except for the stainless steel barrel, the M1A receiver and all other steel components carry a black oxide finish.

Overall length of the M1A is 44.3 inches. Weight of the standard grade M1A, empty is 8.7 pounds. This sounds heavy by today's standards, but once you start adding lights and scopes to the M16, you'd be surprised how fast its weight escalates to very close to that of the M14/M1A. The barrel length remains at 22 inches. Original M14 barrels had four-groove rifling with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. The 416R stainless steel barrel provided on our test specimen has six-groove rifling with a right-hand twist of one turn in 11 inches. This slightly faster rate of twist offers better accuracy with a wider range of projectile weights, ranging from standard 150-grain military FMJ (full metal jacket) ball to the new 175-grain BTHP (boat-tail hollow-point) moly-coated bullets becoming popular with high-power competitors. Springfield Armory's M1A barrels have chrome-lined bores and chambers.

Barrel threads at the muzzle retain an efficient, and often copied, 3-inch flash suppressor. With five elongated slots on the sides and top, the flash suppressor body also contains the front sight assembly. A knurled and notched nut retains this assembly on the barrel and requires a "capstan" pliers to install or remove. An allen-head jam nut prevents the capstan nut from backing off. The flash suppressor body also used to contain a bayonet lug, but our test specimen was a so-called "post ban" rifle and this feature was deleted. Apparently Slick Willie and Sarah Brady determined, at least to their own satisfaction, that bayonets serve no "sporting purpose." Personally, I always thought a highly choreographed bayonet charge was far more sporting, when last used during World War I, than the massed fire from German Maxims.

Instead of the clip guide usually mounted directly in front of the rear sight assembly on the receiver, there is a block of steel with a threaded hole on the left side. This is the rear attachment point for the Springfield Armory scope mount. Made from aircraft-grade aluminum, this mount has an integral Picatinny rail.

Attached to the trigger housing by a roll pin, the spring-loaded magazine catch release lever must be pressed forward to remove the magazine. Loaded magazines

should be tilted forward and rolled back when inserted into the magazine-well. Vaguely based upon that of the BAR, the 20-round, staggered-column, box-type magazine was a decided step forward in reliability. M14 magazines were fabricated by a number of different subcontractors. Their mark will always be found at the back of the magazine's body near the bottom. As they are all milspec, none are preferable to any other, but beware of unmarked aftermarket magazines. In my experience they cannot be trusted. All of Springfield Armory's M14 magazines are original USGI. Two of the three magazines sent to us were marked "BRW S-1", the other was marked "OM."

Twenty-round magazines seem to offer the best capacity for 7.62x51mm NATO infantry rifles. I have used 30-round maga-

zines in both the FN FAL and H&K G3 and found them to be too heavy and clumsy, even when the rifle is fired from a strong shoulder mount.

Our standard M1A was equipped with a walnut stock, traditional for the M14, although for a while during the Vietnam War brown fiberglass stocks were an item of issue. Other stock options available from Springfield Armory at extra cost include a genuine G.I. walnut stock, brown or black laminated stocks and black or camouflage-pattern fiberglass stocks. Our test specimen was supplied with a USGI brown plastic upper handguard. The M14's aluminum buttplate has a hinged steel shoulder strap. A double-compartment in the stock stores the combination tool, chamber and bore brushes, lubricant container and five-piece

## Zeroing the M14/M1A

The sighting system on the M14/M1A is a great classic in the American military tradition. Patterned after the M1 Garand, the blade front sight has open protective ears and can be adjusted for windage zero by sliding the assembly in its dovetail after the allen-head set screw has been loosened. The drum-type rear sight has a peep aperture. Its elevation knob, on the left side, is adjustable from zero to 72 very audible clicks, each one of which represents 1 MOA (Minute Of Angle). Eight to 12 clicks upward from the zero position should get you on the paper at 100 meters. Many match shooters like to get this down to six clicks by milling down the front sight blade by 10 to 15 thousandths (while maintaining the forward angle of the blade). The rear sight aperture can be adjusted from zero to 16 clicks (each of which also represent 1 MOA) to the right or left of the center index line by rotating the windage knob on the right side. Springfield Armory National Match and Super Match M1A

rifles have a 1/2-MOA elevation adjustment built into the eyepiece which is rotated 180 degrees up or down to achieve the adjustment change. You can minimize wear on these components with a light coating of Tetra Gun G (available from Brownells Inc., Dept. SOF, 200 South Front Street, Montezuma, IA 50171-9989; phone: 515-623-5401).

One click of elevation or windage will move the bullet's strike approximately 0.7 centimeters at a range of 25 meters (approximately 2.8 centimeters at 100 meters). To compute the approximate distance that one click will move the bullet's strike at a given range in meters (remember 1 MOA means 1 inch in 100 yards), divide the range by 25 meters and multiply by 0.7 centimeters. U.S. Army doctrine during the M14's era,

prescribed a battlesight zero of 250 meters. This can be obtained by zeroing the rifle at 25 meters since the trajectory will provide a point of impact at that distance which closely matches the point of impact at a range of 250 meters.

After the battlesight zero has been obtained, the rear sight must be calibrated. Turn the elevation knob forward until it reaches the lowest setting and count the number of clicks required to do this. Loosen the set screw in the center of the elevation knob with the combo tool until the knob can again be rotated forward (i.e., is independent of the aperture's movement up or down). The elevation knob is marked 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 with a large M to indicate these marks are in hundreds of meters. Rotate the elevation knob forward until the 250-meter index line (the long line between the numbers 2 and 4 on the knob) is aligned with the receiver's index line. Then turn the knob forward the exact number of clicks required to achieve the 250-meter battlesight setting. Tighten the center screw. Rack the rear sight out to its highest elevation setting and tighten the center screw again. Turn the elevation knob back down to its lowest setting. Turn back up the number the number of clicks required to reach the battlesight setting and the 250-meter line should be aligned exactly with the receiver's index line.

— P.G.K.



**With 168-grain BTHP, moly-coated, match-bullet loads from Black Hills Ammunition, the Springfield Armory M1A will fire consistent 1.5 MOA groups from the bench using only the iron sights.**



Semiauto M1A (bottom) evolved from the U.S. M14. Its M14A1 squad automatic version (top) was not successful, as the 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge cannot be controlled when fired full-auto in a rifle-weight envelope.

## M1A Disassembly Procedures

Remove the magazine and clear the rifle. Grasp the rear of the trigger guard and pull away and toward the muzzle at the same time. Withdraw the trigger mechanism. Separate the barreled receiver from the stock by placing the rifle in a position with the sights downward. Hold the receiver by the rear sight and with the other hand lift the stock off the receiver. With the bolt forward, push the recoil spring toward the muzzle to relieve pressure on the connector lock. Use the roll pin on the connector lock to draw the lock away from the guide rod and toward the op rod. Holding the recoil spring under control, withdraw it and the guide rod from the operating rod's hollow interior. Pull the retracting handle to the rear. Toward the end of the operating rod's rearward travel, pull the retracting handle up and out. When the lug on the bottom rear of the operating rod disengages from the receiver, rotate the op rod down and out. Pull the operating rod to the rear to disengage its tube from the operating rod's guide on the receiver. To remove the bolt, grasp it by the roller (right lug), slide it forward and then lift the bolt upward and out to the right with a rotating motion. Removal and reassembly of the operating rod and bolt requires practice. Frequent disassembly past this level of field stripping is not recommended. The gas system, especially, should not be disassembled as long as the piston slides freely in the cylinder, or until 300 rounds have been fired. A tight fit between the flash hider and the gas system is essential for maximum accuracy. The handguard can be removed without disassembling the gas system. Place the barreled receiver on a flat surface with the sight down. Insert a drift in the hole on each side of the underside of the rear handguard band and pry the band out of each of its retaining slots in the barrel. Then carefully lift the rear of the handguard up and to the rear. M14 magazines should be periodically disassembled for cleaning.

The bore should be cleaned using a bore guide of the type available from Brownells to prevent damage to the crown. After cleaning and during reassembly, the bolt roller and operating rod slot on the receiver should be lightly lubricated with a film of Tetra Gun G or Kleen-Bore's TW25-B High Tech Lubricant. Use G96 Gun Treatment (G96 Products Co., Inc., Dept. SOF, 237 River Street, Paterson, NJ 07544-1684; phone: 800-782-6672; fax: 201-684-3848) on the other components. Do not lubricate the gas system. Do not snap the handguard in place. Align the rear band with the slots in the barrel and slide the handguard rearward. If the gas system has been disassembled, remember to install the piston with its flat side to the barrel and open end to the muzzle.

— P.G.K.

cleaning rod (none of which were supplied with the SOF test specimen). Sling swivels are attached to the bottom of the stock at the front and rear. The rear-sling swivel is fixed, like that found on the M16. We were supplied with the excellent Springfield Armory leather competition sling.

Springfield Armory offers a comprehensive line of accessories for their M1A series of rifles. In addition to the sling, there is a very effective muzzle stabilizer, USGI muzzle protector, USGI rear sight cover, nylon or leather cheekpieces, scope mount, 20-round USGI magazines, 5- and 10-round magazines, ballistic nylon rifles cases, USGI cleaning kit, National



Bores on both the M1 Garand and M14/M1A series can be cleaned only from the muzzle end. A bore guide of the type available from Brownells should always be used to prevent damage to the crown.

Match sight kit, bipods, bayonet, combo tool, flash-suppressor pliers, gas-cylinder tool and technical manuals.

SOF's test and evaluation of the Springfield Armory M1A was conducted using match-grade ammo from Black Hills Ammunition (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709-3090; phone: 605-348-5150; fax: 605-348-9827 — call for information about purchasing direct at retail

# Springfield Armory M1A

## SPECIFICATIONS

if there is no Black Hills distributor near you). This ammunition features a moly-coated 168-grain BTHP (Boat-Tail Hollow-Point) bullet. This process involves impact plating bullets with molybdenum disulphide and a protective coating of wax. Moly-coating produces a protective surface in the barrel with a number of important benefits. Metal fouling is significantly reduced and less maintenance is required.

Moly-coated bullets will also reduce both chamber pressure and muzzle velocity because of the reduction in the coefficient of friction. Increasing the propellant charge weight will bring the muzzle velocity back up. When fired at identical velocities, moly-coated bullets will provide flatter trajectories at long range than un-treated bullets. Accuracy is also significantly enhanced. Many shooters are reporting an improvement of 10-20% with match-grade projectiles. This is partially a consequence of the improved uniformity of muzzle velocity. The standard deviation is normally reduced by about 15%. Especially important is the incredible almost twofold increase in barrel life. Barrels that will normally maintain match-grade accuracy up to 3,000 to 3,500 rounds will last at least 6,000 rounds when moly-coated bullets are fired through them exclusively.

Using only the iron sights, I was able to shoot consistent 1.5 MOA groups with this rifle and ammunition combination. This speaks highly of both, and an optical sight would undoubtedly cut this group dispersion to less than 1 MOA.

Any experienced shooter should have no trouble handling the M1A's felt recoil which is, in fact, somewhat less than that of either the FN FAL series or Heckler & Koch G3/HK91 rifles. No stoppages occurred during *SOF*'s test and evaluation of the M1A. This is a robust, reliable and battle-proven rifle. There is absolutely no justification for selective-fire capability on a battle rifle of this weight and caliber. While too heavy for today's fire-and-movement battlefield environment, the M1A has broad appeal among high-power competitors and those with a penchant for military small arms. With a suggested retail price of \$1,381, Springfield Armory's "loaded" M1A is an attractive package. ☒

**Caliber:** 7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Winchester)

**Operation:** Gas. No regulator. Piston impinges upon operating rod. Locking by means of rotary two-lug bolt (with roller on right lug). Fire from the closed-bolt position.

**Feed:** 20-round, staggered-column, detachable box-type magazine

**Weight, empty:** 8.7 pounds

**Length, overall:** 44.3 inches

**Barrel:** Six-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 11 inches. Either carbon steel or stainless steel available. Chrome-lined bore and chamber.

**Sights:** Blade-type front with protective ears; adjustable for windage zero. M1 Garand-type rear sight with peep aperture, adjustable for elevation and windage, audible 1 MOA clicks.

**Finish:** Black oxide

**Furniture:** Walnut, fiberglass or laminated stocks with brown plastic handguard.

**Accessories:** Muzzle stabilizer, USGI muzzle protector, USGI rear sight cover, leather sling, nylon or leather cheekpieces, scope mount, 5-, 10- and 20-round magazines, ballistic nylon rifles cases, cleaning kit, National Match sight kit, bipods, bayonet, combo tool, flash suppressor pliers, gas cylinder tool and technical manuals.

**Sug. retail price:** "Loaded" M1A with walnut stock, National Match carbon steel or stainless-steel barrel, tuned trigger assembly, National Match flash suppressor and three 20-round USGI magazines: \$1,381.

**Manufacturer:** Springfield Armory, Springfield Inc., Dept. SOF, 420 West Main, Geneseo, IL 61254; phone: 309-944-5631; fax: 309-944-3676.

**T&E summary:** Authentic semiautomatic-only version of a great, but short-lived, battle rifle. Rugged and reliable. Somewhat heavy by today's standards. Still dominant among high-power match shooters.



**USGI M14 maintenance equipment includes (top to bottom) cleaning kit pouch, combination tool, bore brush, five-piece cleaning rod, oil bottle, chamber brush, gas-cylinder wrench and flash-suppressor pliers.**

## Required Reading For M1A Owners

*The M14 Owner's Guide and Match Conditioning Instructions.* By Scott A. Duff and CWO John M. Miller. Scott A. Duff Publications, P.O. Box 414, Export, PA 15632; phone: 412-327-8246. 1996. 180 pages with illustrations. \$19.95 + \$3.05 p&h.

This magnificent little book should be an absolute prerequisite for owning an M14/M1A rifle. Scott Duff is a leading authority on the M1 Garand and my good friend, John Miller, has more than 30 years of experience in shooting, maintaining and match-conditioning the M14 rifle series, as well as many other military small arms.

There is information to found here that is available nowhere else. Starting with chapters on the history of the M14's development, as well as its production record, and the nomenclature of components, the authors then provide a unique section on what to look for when selecting an M1A-type rifle. Following this are chapters on operation and functioning; disassembly and assembly; stoppages and malfunctions; cleaning, lubrication and maintenance; zeroing procedures; and inspection, tips and tricks. The text culminates with John Miller's exhaustive and superb chapter on match-conditioning instructions.

Many of the important line drawings are from the hand of John Miller himself. The appendices are particularly excellent as they cover gunsmiths; parts, accessories and tool dealers; book dealers; and a bibliography of books covering the M14 series.

An important new reference work in the field of military small arms, I can recommend *The M14 Owner's Guide* without reservations. — P.G.K.

# From Brown Water To Silver Screen

Text & Photos  
by Steven L. Waterman

**Y**our entry team lines up in the dimly lit hall of a run-down tenement building, loaded with tools of the trade: primary weapon, flash-bang grenades, ballistic vest, Kevlar helmet, spare magazines, handcuffs, pistol, radios and ancillary equipment. Waiting is bad enough, but bunching up butt-to-belly button with the rest of your tactical entry team can really crank up the pucker factor: You always have time to wonder about the bad guys on the other side of the door. "Are they all barricaded inside with weapons at the ready? Will I get inside and see my front sight before somebody puts a round into me? Have they booby-trapped anything?" You hope they don't know you're outside, but if they do, and they haven't hauled ass out the back door past your perimeter guys, the training and the skills imparted to you by some of the best instructors in the field will make the difference.

Global Studies Group, Inc. trains men to survive situations like this, and to hear their students talk, the money spent is damn well worth it. It is a good investment if only one police officer is saved from injury or death; if only one non-hostile civilian is spared an accidental shooting by an overanxious officer, or as the result of a confrontation where a weapon was discharged accidentally.

Funds spent on training such entry teams comes back in the form of a professional, controlled approach, and the costs *not* incurred by lawsuits from shooting the wrong guy, or medical and funeral expenses from somebody getting

killed by a stupid mistake.

The pucker factor is still just as high — but

mistakes are fewer,

and confidence and

competence sky-

rocket. When a raid

takes place, the folks

inside are not supposed to

be simply "taken out" as in

the movies. You can't simply knock

the door down, rush in, and shoot every-

body in the room. There may be only a couple bad

guys and several innocent victims, as in hostage situa-

tions. Other times family members are awakened and

become hostile — wouldn't you? How do you handle a

250-pound gorilla, on crack, who attempts to grab

your weapon as you sweep down a hallway? You

could just shoot him, but the paper-

work wouldn't be worth it. Unless

he is armed and a threat or is

about to successfully relieve you

of your weapon, it is usually

not/not good form to bust a

cap on the guy. That is a last

resort; a final option you really

shouldn't have to employ.

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## **Ex-SEAL Keeps Hollywood Honest**

## Take 'Em Down - Don't Shoot 'Em Up

Shooting up the place is a poor option. Bullets can go through walls and cause collateral damage. If you have to fire your weapon, you better be damn sure of your target and have the marksmanship to hit it effectively. These obvious shibboleths are easy enough on paper, but they don't work in the real world without realistic, finely tuned training.

One training facility that specializes in bringing modified (civilian version) SpecOps tactical skills to law-enforcement agencies, Global Studies Group, Inc.(GSGI), is a combination security and training company owned by former SEAL Harry Humphries. GSGI provides security-related staffing and consulting services to the international market, and trains qualified, private individuals and groups in personal survival skills, in addition to law-enforcement personnel. The police officers, Fortune 500 executives, Hollywood producers/directors/actors/stunt men and others who've dealt with Harry Humphries universally speak well of him and the training he provides.

GSGI courses for law-enforcement personnel and civilians include:

- Tactical Team Entry Methods (police departments only)
- Simulation Entry and Clearance Training (police departments only)
- Tactical Pistol and Shotgun
- Advanced Shotgun/Pistol
- Tactical Climbing and Rappelling
- Women's Defensive Pistol
- Street Combat Survival Skills 101 (Edged Weapons)
- Plus specialized and individual training courses available on request.

GSGI's training is highly regarded in police circles. Detective Sergeant Doug Kingery and seven of his Tactical

Entry Team from the Bell Gardens, Calif., Police Department recently attended a two-day course in tactical entry and room clearing. Harry and three of his hand-picked instructors taught the course, including two-, four-, six-, and eight-man team room entries, use of flash/bang grenades, semi-auto and full-auto drill with the HK MP5, team handling of emergency situations, reloading, malfunctions, etc., dealing with non-lethal threats inside breached rooms, breaching doors using tools and special equipment, and security of non-hostile personnel.

### Real Training For The Real Streets

Training at GSGI is hands-on and micro-managed. When the Bell Gardens team arrived, they clearly were not greenhorns. A few of their number had been in firefights in the line of duty and knew this stuff was for real. However, before the two-day session was over they had developed a whole new appreciation for Harry and his SpecOps crew. Detective Sergeant Doug Kingery sums it: "The weapons handling techniques are unsurpassed by anything I've seen during my 17-year career in law enforcement." Doug is the leader of the Tactical Entry Team and, along with three others on the Team, a member of the Bell Gardens Police Department Gang Detail.

The other members of the team work narcotics. Detective Mike Dicesare added, "The instructors' real-life knowledge of actual armed confrontation is superior to any-

**Mike Dicesare of Bell Gardens, Calif., Tactical Entry Team trains with MP5, noting that "the instructors' real-life knowledge of actual shooting confrontation is superior to anything I've experienced. Shooting from-the-ready all the way to a clear sight picture impressed me as a technique that may some day save me or one of my team members."**





Hands on, GSGI's Joe Hawes (above) discusses techniques with a member of the Bell Gardens Tactical Entry Team. (below) Harry Humphries helps Bell Gardens Tactical Entry Team member with fine points

of weapons handling — fine points that can be crucial in a takedown. (below) GSGI's students learn an entry team's greatest challenge is usually *after* entry has been effected.



thing I've experienced. Shooting from-the-ready all the way to a clear sight picture impressed me as a technique that may some day save me or one of my team members."

Other practical topics covered included securing equipment, having magazines readily accessible, and making sure the operator doesn't have his finger in the trigger guard unless ready to fire. Basic? Perhaps, but such but can contribute to a fatality or injury during a raid — and attention to basics distinguishes trained professionals. Catching your LBE on a nail or other protrusion can spin you around, causing you to lose your balance and fail to cover your sector of a room. Being startled or having somebody try and take your weapon while your finger is in the trigger guard can result in a sympathetic muscle response causing a negligent discharge. Being able to see the front sight of the MP5 while wearing a chemical protective mask was another skill learned here. The officers were shown how to mount the MP5 with the butt placed squarely on the nose piece of the mask. After a full day of dry team-entry practice and live-fire weapons handling drills, the group split up into teams. While some continued range drills with Bill Murphy



and Joe Hawes, the others went through the shoot house with Denny (Snake) Chalker and Harry.

### Can-Do Cadre

GSGI's cadre are the cream of the crop. Bill Murphy was a police officer for 17 years in LA's and Orange County's Police Departments, is a Police Academy Instructor, Impact Weapons Instructor, range master at the Gunsite Training Center and a U.S. Air Force Adjunct Instructor at the Pararescue Advanced Weapons Center. Bill has seen it all and has been involved in a number of shootouts during his career.

Denny Chalker, another of Harry's hand-picked instructors, notes, "team-entry training is balls-to-the-wall shit — a

very intense subject. Our program stresses Safety, Safety, and Safety — people can, and do, get killed learning this stuff.” Denny is a veteran of a number of years of Army and naval service. He has extensive combat experience and specializes in counter-terrorism, air operations, marine operations, close-quarter battle, and free/technical climbing.

Joe Hawes, a heavily muscled individual trained in weapons and counter-terrorism, spoke highly of the Bell Gardens team: “I love it when we can take a group of people like this and get them fired up to learn, although in this group that was not a problem. We watched as they made excellent progress over a short period of time. These guys tried really hard. After all, it’s their asses on the line when they go back to work. This isn’t just a weekend of fun in the sun for them.”

Another of Harry’s instructor staff is Ernest Emerson, the hand-to-hand and edged-weapons instructor. He is also the maker of Emerson SpecWar Knives. Ernest is a small, unpretentious guy who can whip his weight in wildcats, but probably will never have to because of his charming personality. His experience in martial arts extends back over 23 years. Delta Force began buying his knives in increasing numbers, and word about the quality of Ernest’s knives traveled across the pond. Orders started coming in from British SAS, SBS, German GSG9 agents, and various SpecWar types from other countries.

### GSGI’s Been-There, Done-That Director

GSGI director Harry Humphries has an extensive combat and counter-terrorism background. He was one of the few SEALs assigned to The Combined Studies Program as adviser to Provincial Reconnaissance Units, probably the first “Company”-sponsored CT teams. He’s often engaged as an anti/counter-terrorism consultant. As a former SEAL 2 member from the original team, he saw action prior to and during the Viet Nam period. Working for SEAL legends the likes of Bob (Eagle) Gallagher, Evy Barrett and Dick Marcinko, Harry got his first taste of training SEALs going to combat. It’s been in his blood since. He’s been an instructor at The Advanced SWAT Hostage Rescue Instructor School, Eastern Michigan University, is participating in the Master Instructors’ program at the Police Training Institute, Illinois University, and is a Special Operations Adjunct Instructor at Gunsite Training Center, Pauldin, Arizona. GSGI also runs courses for private individuals.

Harry’s students are law-abiding people who would like to feel more secure in their everyday existence. Much personal security training is based around mental awareness of the individual. In most instances, the security business involves training the customer to recognize threat or potential danger. Harry refers to this as “hardening the target.” Things as simple as breaking the patterns of personal travel, exercise, and social life are among the techniques used. Simple as this sounds, it can confuse potential aggressors.

As Major Rogers once said, “Never come back the same way you went.” This is a simple adage easily applied. Hollywood films usually depict the bad guys as having assets in place to tap all phones, eavesdrop on all conversations, and be able to trail anyone. These misconceptions only become reality when potential targets refuse to change their daily routines. Bad habits cannot be broken, only written over by good habits that are kept fresh in the mind by repetition and training. As Colonel David Hackworth says, “learn it right and you’ll do it right the rest of your life; learn it wrong and you’ll spend the rest of your life trying



Sorting out individuals once entry is effected is vital. Non-hostiles, or even hostiles without lethal potential, are handled with minimum force. Denny Chalker demonstrates a hip throw on one of the students.

to learn how to do it right.” There’s a great deal of truth in that.

### Real Training For The Reel World

Denny and Joe Hawes portrayed Navy SEALs, and Bill played a member of the San Francisco Police Department’s SWAT Team in the recent movie *The Rock*, in which Harry Humphries was the technical director. In his newest role in the movie industry, Harry has become one of the top, if not *the* top, technical director in the field of anti/counter-terrorist and special-operations movies. In the most recently released movie, *The Rock*, Harry and Snake Chalker trained the actors and extras to look, act, and think like SEALs and Marines. The movie is doing extremely well at the box office and in its video release.

In his most recent technical advisory gig, Harry also portrays a weapons instructor. In the production of the movie, tentatively titled *Pursuit of Honor* (produced by Scott Free Productions, directed by Ridley Scott and starring Demi Moore), Harry, working with former Force Recon Phil Nielsen, stunt coordinator (a fellow SEAL-gone-Hollywood) Keith Woullard, and former Kiwi SAS Mark Lonsdale, trained 50 actors and extras (assisted by six former SEALs just playing stunt men) in a two-week intensive course designed to expose them to the rigors of SpecOps training. They hated the training, but loved the results. Demi Moore performed all of her own stunts and handled the physical stuff



GSGI’s instructors include (from left) Bill Murphy, Denny Chalker, Harry Humphries, and Joe Hawes.

Continued on page 67



Damascus. The little guy in the trench coat with bulges in all the wrong places became conspicuous the moment I left the

Sham Tower hotel and even more so as I ambled across Damascus towards the Al Hamidieh market. Eventually, he was paces behind me and stayed there.

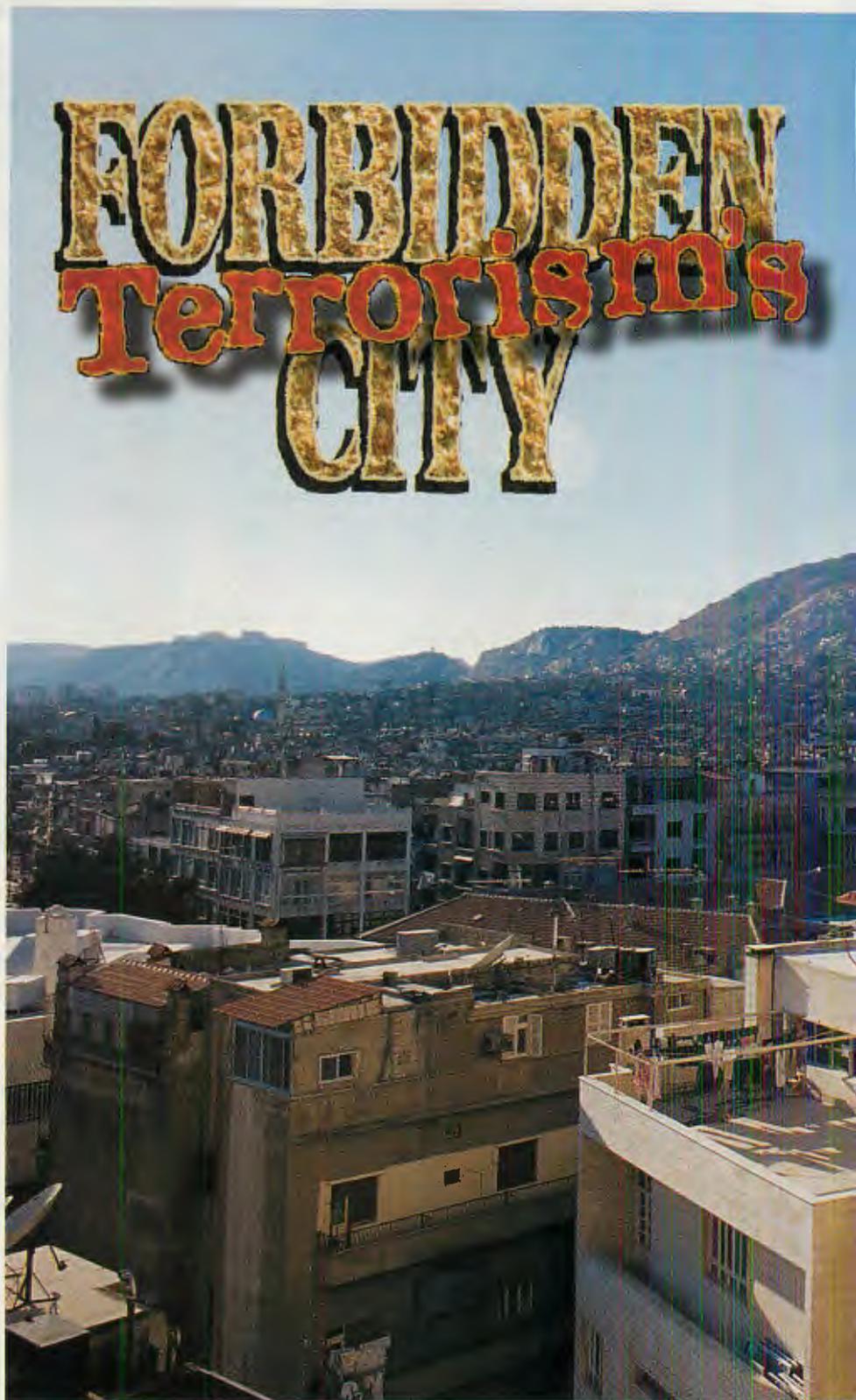
A stranger sauntered up to me in Straight Street and mumbled something in English. I was being followed, he said, did I know? "You should be careful," he suggested once I had made sense of it all. All I could do was nod. And smile. The little guy was still there.

After that my shadow backed off a little. But his presence, and of others like him during the time I spent in Syria early this year, caused me to take fewer photographs than on any assignment in more than three decades of covering Africa and the Middle East. From shadows on foreigners, to omnipresent posters and statues of the president, to the plethora of men in uniform and military vehicles, Syria is a country where the government is obviously, and firmly, in control.

### Terrorist U.

For a nation of its size, Syria also seeks to exert a disproportional influence on external matters. Unfortunately, there are people in Syria making weighty decisions that affect the future of an entire Near East region who are totally out of touch with what is happening elsewhere in the world. It's a dangerous conundrum. Similar situations elsewhere have led to war. In addition, there is a strong anti-Western, anti-American bias, some of

Rooftop view of the Syrian capital, Damascus. Mount Qasyun looms in the background. Tourists — but not journalists — have fairly open access to this closed society. (below) *President Assad Goes To War Against Israel*; such images are found everywhere in Syria — even though he has had his nose bloodied each time he has tried it.



which fringes on xenophobia, and state-sponsorship of foreign rebel groups.

Although concern is often expressed in the foreign press, not a word is printed in Damascus' English-language *Syria Times* about the dozen-odd terrorist organizations hosted by President Hafez al-Assad. Among others, they include the Japanese Red Army faction, the Abu Nidal Organization *Al Sa'iq*, the Islamic Resistance, the Armenian Secret Army and the anti-Turkish PKK (Kurdish Revolutionary Workers

Party). Nor does the local press mention that Syria has the poorest human rights record in the region, or that there are tens of thousands of political prisoners in Syrian jails.

Although one needs to visit Syria to appreciate the extent of the nation's alienation within the international community, it is difficult, since few journalists are welcome. I gambled and did so with a tourist visa, after numerous calls to the Syrian Embassy in Washington over several months yielded nothing.

# SOF On The Clean, Mean Streets Of Downtown Damascus

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter



Heroes present: Portraits of the Great Leader are everywhere in Syria. (Below) The late Basil (the "Martyr") usually flanks his father: He became a martyr when, driving drunk, he rolled his sports car at 140 MPH.

Heroes past: Saladin's citadel stands at the edge of the old walled suq in Damascus. Saladin's tradition has become a rallying point for many fundamentalists.

In Damascus, I presented myself to Mr. Taleb Kadi Amin, Director of Public Relations and Foreign Media. He said I had broken the law: I was not to leave Damascus for any reason without prior reference to his office.

My baggage was surreptitiously searched (several times), my movements monitored and, I imagine, my calls tapped. This is serious business, and it starts at the airport when you are asked why you have a brand-new passport and whether there were

Israeli stamps in the old one?

Yet, in spite of these anomalies, Syrians in the streets of Damascus were the friendliest of people; affable, genial — although reserved. All inquired about conditions "outside." None showed hostility. I was not invited to any Syrian home, nor is any foreigner likely to be.

However, Syria goes to extraordinary lengths to encourage visits to historical sites. Visitors granted tourist visas can go anywhere. There are no restrictions, if visitors stick to

established tourist routes. All other foreigners who arrive in the country — diplomats and those with dubious agendas like myself — are suspect. They need a specific kind of visa to enter, another to leave.

## Growing, In A Vacuum

Although isolated, Damascus has seen much recent development. Long rows of multi-storied apartment blocks line many larger boulevards, such as the 10-lane Fayez Mansour Highway, or along the new airport



**Damascus is a big city of about two million, and growing, but water supplies make it vulnerable in any future Middle East war.**

route. The city is not an uncomfortable place to live. You can travel across town for a dollar, and eat for very little in some of the best Arab restaurants in the Near East. Western hotels are expensive but you can buy a five-day-old *Herald Tribune* (with their Syrian exposés excised).

Dress is largely Western, although traditional dress is not uncommon. Among women, the head scarf, or *ratouy*, is making a comeback in line with encroaching Islamic fundamentalism, a trend being carefully watched. The Moslem Brotherhood has always been opposed to Assad's Socialist Ba'athism.

Unlike most Arab cities, there are Christian churches and even synagogues. Compared to Beirut, Damascus is clean, as is the city's water system, though it is susceptible (like the electricity grid) to stoppages.

The immediate impression of Damascus is one of a thoroughly regimented conurbation with the military very much in evidence. Every third or fourth vehicle is a Russian army wagon or jeep. Soldiers are everywhere. Schoolchildren wear regulation olive-drab uniforms, and from school go straight into the military.

A disturbing feature of the city is the number of images of the president. Banners and flags bearing his visage hang from buildings, and across streets. Posters are everywhere. Driving from the airport you are left with little doubt who is in charge. It reminded me of the era of North Korea's Kim Il Sung at its worst.

### Maximum Leader

Many such posters are flanked by one of his sons, the "martyr" Basil who killed himself in a drunk-driving accident on the airport road or the younger Bashar, who studied ophthalmology in Britain. Sometimes all three are displayed together.

No non-governmental organizations (NGO) exist. Freemasonry is regarded as satanic. Nor do even welfare organizations such as The Round-Table or Rotary exist. Both British and American governments gave up trying to persuade Syria to accept volunteer service organizations or Peace Corps volunteers, though they do need them. Both organizations are suspect.

There are five separate and identifiable security or intelligence departments, the *Mukhabarat*, keeping Syria on its toes. There is also a Customs Intelligence Department. But even they have a difficult task, for computers are the latest devil in the minds of those who guard the Syrian nation from American contamination.

Modems are especially dangerous, as they allow communication abroad without the possibility of monitoring by state security organizations. Cruising the Internet is a criminal offense: A department has been set up in Damascus solely to counter this nefarious Western influence. Bill Gates would not be welcome.

### Don't Mess With El Supremo

Assad heads an oligarchy that brooks no opposition: He is not a man to be trifled with. In this regard, he shares a number of unsettling traits with his neighbor, Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Both are certifiably schizoid. And it shows, because, like Baghdad, Damascus is

a city perpetually on edge. Expatriates quickly get used to the number of security guards. Like Assad's pictures, they are everywhere. In the exclusive southwest suburbs of Malki or Mezzeh where diplomats, army commanders and senior government functionaries live, it is impossible to avoid them. However, Damascus is regarded by those who live there as the safest city in the world. There is almost no crime. Muggings are a foreign phenomenon.

In some areas members of the Presidential Guard — grim and unsmiling in regulation gray or blue trench coats — do the rounds. All cradle folding-stock AKs and many patrol in Mercedes or BMW sedans. All have walkie-talkies. These young thugs are prominent around the British Embassy, since the president has a town home just a few houses up from the chancery on Kurd'Ali Street.

Security in Syria is not open to discussion. Like President Assad's health, and Israel, there are some things one does not discuss. Everyone knows that very little of what is said escapes being reported: At a British Embassy watering hole, the Fig & Whistle, shortly after Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath in Lebanon last April, someone mentioned a fund for those who had lost possessions in the shelling. Another raised the question whether a similar fund had been started for Israelis who had suffered damage from Hezbollah's katyushas. For this foolish retort he was put out of the country in a week.

Syria has suffered badly in confrontations with Israel. In 1981, the Syrian Air Force was nearly destroyed in a succession of IAF pre-emptive strikes. And shortly afterward Assad could do nothing about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Since

Damascus blames foreigners (Americans in particular) for many of its woes, visitors to this beleaguered nation come under scrutiny spotlight — they might be spies.

### A Strong-Man's Military

The Syrian military is very high-profile. With a weak, multi-tiered currency and unstable economy, Syria continues to maintain one of the largest standing armies east of Suez. Active forces are reckoned to be about 425,000, of which more than three-quarters are army.

Reserves reportedly number half a million, with another million trained personnel to be marshaled during general mobilization. Assad maintains a military and security force of 35,000 in Lebanon, many listed as "special forces," though they don't rate comparison to any such Western force.

Universal conscription in Syria lasts 30 months. Western sources in Damascus observe that this draft program is flexible and depends on family, social or economic connections.

As with most oil-producing countries, Syria's economy is in decline, yet defense annually gobbles up about \$2.5 billion — a quarter of the budget. Western military attachés in Damascus observe that the ratio of armaments in Syria is similar to that of Iraq prior to the invasion of Kuwait. Like Baghdad, almost all hardware is Soviet or Warsaw Pact: 4,600 main battle tanks (2,100 T-54/55; 1,000 T-62 M/K and 1,500 T-72/72M), plus more than 5,000 armored vehicles (BRDM, BMP, and BTR) and towed artillery — complemented by almost 600 combat aircraft.

*Jane's World Armies* notes that "the lessons of the Gulf War have had a profound effect on Syrian policies," especially the ease with which largely Western forces were able to cripple Iraq in a few days. Prior to the involvement of Coalition forces against Saddam Hussein, Syria was one of the most vocal anti-Western Arab states. These sentiments, today, are curiously muted.

More important, Syria now has to pay in hard currency for new military purchases from Moscow. Consequently, Syria has fallen behind in the arms race. Very little advanced or innovative military equipment reaches Syria from Russia. Israel, in contrast, continues to receive state-of-the-art technology from Washington for all three services.

There are other problems: The supply of spares is critical. Many military vehicles in and around Damascus looked as if they need replacements, although I was warned by one diplomat that the Syrians keep their best hardware in reserve.

### A Large, But Unknown, Quantity

Consequently, no one except Assad and his "inner circle" knows, for instance, exactly how many and what combat aircraft are operational, or whether the three Soviet *Romeo* class submarines based at Latakia will ever put to sea. Like Assad's health, these are not subjects for conjecture. Those few Western military attachés that I met made it clear that theirs was an extremely difficult job.

Little has changed since Moscow first had a hand in Syria's build-up and deployment in the sixties. There are still hundreds of Russian military advisers in the country.

The core of the Syrian Armed Forces is centered on Damascus, a prime Israeli target. It might be recalled in 1973, only pressure from Washington halted an attacking IDF force 20 miles from the city's Omayyad Mosque.

Syria's combat element comprises two army corps, reformed in 1985 for more flexibility and to assume operational command of the 35,000 men in Lebanon. There are also three independent divisions. Additionally, there is a general reserve and special forces group. Both are outside the organization of the battle corps.

President Assad heads the chain of command: He is New Prophet, Head of State and Supreme Commander of Syrian Armed

Forces all in one. The Deputy Prime Minister is also Minister of Defense and Deputy C-in-C, an impressive title, yet no decision of any consequence is made without reference to *El Ab el Khaad* (Father-Leader) himself.

In several conflicts, the actions of the Syrian armed forces have been confined to the usual preordained set-pieces or tactics. There is little versatility either in the implementation or execution phase of any plan.

In this, the Russians (as we have seen from their own inviolable strategies in Afghanistan) are partly to blame. The result is that once an order is passed on by an officer, it is carried out, no matter that a more recent development might demand a revision or a change. This often-cluttered mind-set seems to have filtered through to all levels of the meticulously tiered Syrian civil and military authority.

### Only El Ab el Khaad Is Allowed Mistakes

For to understand the nation, one must appreciate the complexities of the contemporary Syrian psyche. There have been many instances in the past where a modicum of initiative might have produced a better result — but the consequences if this spark of originality goes wrong are horrific. The perpetrator would certainly be labeled a traitor. He might end up suspended by his neck in Gallows Square. His family also suffers. For a start, all their assets would be sequestered.

So, everything goes by the book. As my Israeli informants note, this makes it all so predictable. Events following the death of Assad's eldest son, Basil, are symptomatic. He was drunk when he set off on the airport road in his powerful sports car to fetch his girlfriend. Under normal circumstances, he would have let his escort drive. Instead, Basil demanded the keys. It was estimated that when the car rolled, it was traveling at 140 MPH. Basil was killed outright and his escort critically injured.

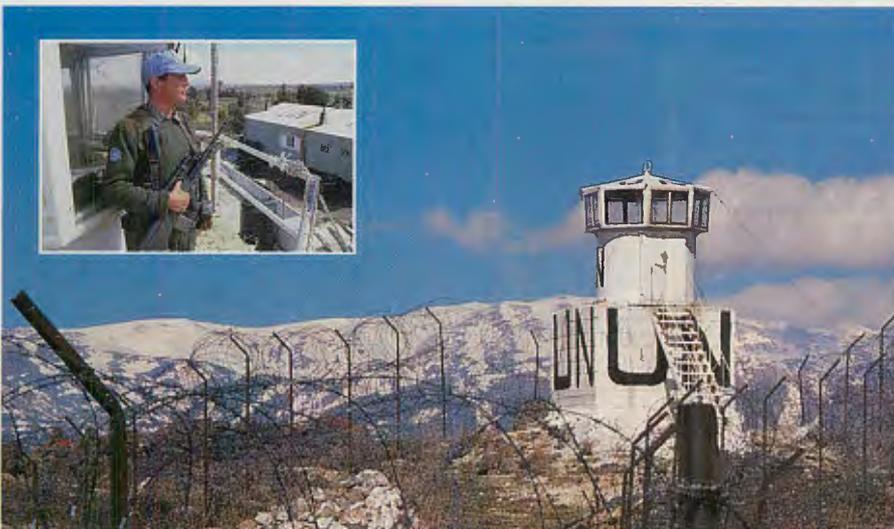
The bodyguard was nursed back to health, brought before a court and sentenced to death. The man was taken and shot.

Syrian armed forces are heavily entrenched in the southwestern corner of the country. Through this panhandle, adjacent to the Golan Heights, the Israelis came before. If there is to be another war, this is the route they are likely to take again.

Israeli and Syrian forces are ranged on both sides of a designated Area of Separation (AOS), varying in width over its 50-mile length from about eight miles (from the top of 9,000-foot Mount Hermon) in the north, to a few hundred yards in the south on the Yarmouk River.

While this stretch of ground (administered by Syria, with a U.N. presence) represents the border between the two countries, it does not follow the original, political demarcation. Two Areas of Limitation (AOL) are ranged on both sides of the AOS, the first 12 miles wide and the second, half that.

*Continued on page 69*



Snow-covered Mount Hermon (9,000 ft.) straddles the southwestern flank of the region along the cease-fire line. Israeli defenses are clearly visible but pictures were *streng verboten*. (inset) U.N. troop with Steyr AUG mans one of the positions in the Golan Area of Limitation.

# MAYHEM, MYSTICISM and MISERY

## Uganda's "Lord's Resistance Army"

Our Toyota pickup was bouncing all over the road. The driver was avoiding what was left of the pavement and staying on the dirt — it was that bad. This was the Gulu district of the Northern Province of Uganda. My ultimate destination was the Sudan, where I wanted to rejoin the war against Khartoum's slave-trading Islamic regime. However, there was a mean little bush war right here in northern Uganda.

I was alternately cursing my bad judgment and praying for an assault rifle. Even if the road didn't kill us, there were bandits, rebels, guerrillas, freedom fighters, and the occasional homicidal, illiterate African with an AK-47 — take your pick. While freelance banditry is commonplace, the real threat here is from the "Lord's Resistance Army": a brutal force of perhaps a couple of thousand dirty, dreadlocked guerrillas who will hijack and rob civilian vehicles for clothes, money, and food and commit atrocities while claiming fundamentalist Christian beliefs.

Traveling with some foreign relief workers, I had

Text & Photos by Rob Krott



In northern Uganda a cattleman armed with old AK-47 stands guard at a watering hole. Soldiers of the Uganda People's Defense Force (government army), edgy over prospect of sudden contact with LRA rebels, order *SOF* correspondent away. They wear relatively new uniforms, but sandals instead of boots. Elsewhere in Gulu district, UPDF troops dismount vehicle to conduct foot patrol.



just passed a government infantry patrol that was trying to “pacify” the area. Unfortunately the government (one or the other of about a half dozen) has been trying to pacify this area for the past 20 years.

The day’s *New Vision*, a government organ serving as the national newspaper, carried a front-page article on the surrender ultimatum President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni had issued to LRA leader Joseph Kony. The ultimatum ran out the day I entered the area of operations (AO).

Once again my “timing” was just perfect — for getting myself ventilated by a Kalashnikov-toting zealot mumbling the Ten Commandments.

## In The Eye Of The Storm

The usual scenario in an African insurgency has the president hunkering down, surrounded by the praetorian guard, while his military commanders fight out in the bush. Not so in Uganda. President Museveni has taken a personal role in the conduct of Uganda’s current counterinsurgency effort against the LRA in the north and the pro-Amin West Nile Bank Front rebels in the west.

As of March of this year, Museveni (a former leftist guerrilla who fought against dictator Idi Amin) was spending weeks at a time in Gulu, in the center of LRA activity, personally commanding government forces.

The LRA’s AO is the heavily forested Acholi tribal area, from Gulu north to the Ugandan border. Even relief-organization vehicles are stopped and robbed by the rebels. The LRA trades kidnapped children for AK rifles, feeding the illicit but widespread slave trade in the Sudan. The LRA also has outlawed bicycles; anyone caught cycling has his feet hacked off. I’m not making this up.

Teenaged boys are press-ganged into the LRA ranks and sent to bush camps for training and indoctrination. Sadly, this is nothing new in Uganda: In the late ‘80s large numbers of pre-teen boys, mostly war orphans, were serving in the army. Under Museveni’s regime the *kadogos* (“little ones”) were disarmed and enrolled in special schools in hopes of keeping them from joining the various rebel groups. It hasn’t been entirely successful.

Since early 1996, Gulu has suffered repeated LRA attacks. Gulu is not exactly a tourist mecca, but I took a look around during a stopover. It is one of those East African towns that manages to be both bustling with commerce and indolently lazy at the same time. The dusty streets were crowded with bicycles, carts, and smoke-belching *matatus*: the Nissan vans used as taxis by as many as 20 or 30 people at a time. At midday the heat was unbearable; at night the bugs were pestilential.

Except when Ugandan army helicopter gunships hover above Gulu before continuing on search-and-destroy missions in the bush, no one would ever guess it is the epicenter of a bloody guerrilla war.

## The Ugandan Army Today

The local troops I saw in the Gulu district wore a hodgepodge of uniforms; many wore knee-high “barn boots” of green rubber. Web gear, insignias, or uniform caps were rarely seen. Little had changed since my first encounter with Ugandan soldiers a few years ago.

One soldier I spoke with carried a poorly maintained Kalashnikov rifle, its barrel plugged with caked mud. Other weapons I saw were also poorly maintained: slings made of rags, the laminate on the wood stocks peeling or completely worn away, and the sole magazine dented and the bottom caked with mud, indicating the troops were shoving the magazines into the ground and using the rifles’ receivers as chairs.

By contrast, three troopers I joked and smoked with outside Gulu’s

Acholi Inn were well equipped, with woodland-pattern camouflage uniforms, decent-looking black leather combat boots, and serviceable web gear. The sergeant in charge, armed with an FN Minimi 5.56x45mm Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW), had a belt of ammunition crisscrossing his chest Pancho Villa-style.

In anticipation that Kony would ignore Museveni’s ultimatum, professional troops, such as these three, were shipped in from Kampala in the south a week before my arrival. The three were not forthcoming with information on upcoming ops; they probably didn’t know much themselves. I engaged them in the usual soldiers’ BS session, centering around the “three Ws”: weapons, whiskey, and women. We talked as they stood by their vehicle, a fairly new

Landcruiser, until they snapped to attention as a civilian appeared. He was obviously some type of government official and they were his escort. No photos, I was told.

The next day I caught a ride north with some relief vehicles. During the drive I saw a platoon of soldiers north of Gulu marching down a road past a T-55 tank abandoned in some previous battle. They were young but well-equipped by Ugandan standards; their weapons included RPD machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). They were a comforting sight as some of Kony’s rebels had recently stopped a Catholic Relief Services vehicle and robbed the



LRA photos obtained by Ugandan government purportedly show LRA leader Joseph Kony in military-style uniform, and (below) in unconventional dress and dreadlocks with Vickers Berthier .303-caliber machine gun (at right).



Kenyan drivers of all of their clothes. They left the CRS field representative, Todd Cornett of Oregon, with his clothes but took his money and his wristwatch. (After being thrown face down on the road and a Kalashnikov muzzle jammed against his skull, Cornett demanded his passport back and, amazingly, it was returned.)

I was riding next to Cornett and praying he would have better luck this trip. The St. Christopher’s medallion must have done the trick. Our trip proved to be uneventful — or so I thought at the time. I found out later that two vehicles carrying local traders with passengers and livestock that were following us and had fallen behind were hit by rebels. The death toll eventually reached 13. A week later, while I was in the Sudan, a Ugandan government official’s Landcruiser and military escort were blown away by RPGs.

A few days after that the rebels hit a nearby government outpost in an unprecedented nighttime raid. The rebels attacked around 0200 as the soldiers slept. Stumbling bleary-eyed from their huts,

they were cut down by the waiting guns of Kony's rebels. The dead were stripped of uniforms, boots, equipment, and all weapons before Kony's warriors melted back into the bush.

## The Acholi

The LRA finds support among Gulu's indigenous people, the Acholi. Descendants of a variety of peoples believed to have migrated south from Sudan nearly 400 years ago, the Acholi number nearly 700,000 people in northern Uganda and southern Sudan. They raise sheep and cattle; grow corn, sorghum, beans and squash; hunt in clan-owned tracts; and fish streams and swamps. They are organized patrilineally in clans and live in small villages ruled by lineal chiefs. The British considered the Acholi a martial people and recruited many into the colonial military.

Even in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, tribal hatreds in Africa run deep; consider the fighting in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, and Liberia.

Past Ugandan President Milton Obote's 10,000-man army was largely Acholi, yet he selected a popular junior officer of a Western Nile tribe, Idi Amin Dada, and promoted him rapidly as his personal protégé. Major General Amin led a 1971 coup while Obote was abroad and initiated mass executions of Acholi and Langi troops, methodically killing more than 3,000 Acholi soldiers within his first three months as dictator.

Under Idi Amin's reign of terror the Acholi, who were staunch supporters of Obote, were severely persecuted; a whole generation of military-aged males were systematically executed. In response to Obote's failed 1972 guerrilla invasion from Tanzania, Amin exacted vengeance on the Acholi. By the time of Tanzania's full intervention in 1979, Amin's 25,000-man army was half Sudanese and Nubian, another quarter was Zairian, and the remaining quarter could be called Ugandan, but they were mostly West Nile peoples. Ugandans feared this "foreign" occupation force, running in abject terror at soldiers' approach.

During the liberation of Gulu by Tanzanian troops, hundreds of spear-carrying Acholi filled the streets to hunt down people from the West Nile tribes. The Tanzanians were unable to stop the massacre.

The all-Acholi Kitgum Militia drove off Amin's troops in the north without assistance from the Tanzanians or anti-Amin rebels of the Uganda National Liberation Army. After the war no one dared disband this militia. At one time they even outnumbered the Ugandan army. The Acholi later were plagued by large numbers of former Amin soldiers and bandits who had fled to the north.

President Museveni severely punished soldiers convicted of assault and robbery; many were executed for murder or rape. In many cases officers conducted the executions with the local people invited as public witnesses. (The same human-rights organizations that protested the army's abuses then protested the execution of the culprits.) Despite draconian measures, human-rights violations by soldiers contin-

ued into the 1990s; Amnesty International continued to document cases in the Gulu district.

## Bullets Into Water

The LRA was born in the early 1980s when the "Holy Spirit Movement" (HSM) gained popularity in Acholi territory.

An Acholi "prophet," Alice Lakwena, claimed that divine messages urged her people to revolt against the government — even though the Acholi people were unarmed. Alice told them to smear cooking oil on their bodies to ward off bullets and throw stones at soldiers. Alice, who had them believing she could turn enemy bullets into water, claimed divine intervention would turn stones into hand grenades. Large numbers of Alice's followers soon went to their "heavenly reward" after trying the cooking-oil body armor and the stones-to-grenades trick in clashes with the army. Learning their lesson, HSM followers began accumulating guns wherever they could: by ambushing soldiers, scouring old battlefields, building them in home workshops from water pipes and scrap, or trading for them on the black market.

In 1987, Alice Lakwena fled to Kenya, one step ahead of Museveni's secret police. The Kenyans promptly jailed the "prophet." Joseph Kony, who called himself a mystic and supposedly is Alice Lakwena's nephew, and colleague Odong Latek took over the HSM. The Acholi-based movement grew with Kony acceding to full leadership.

By 1989, Kony had three brigades of rebels near Kitgum and a mobile brigade of 700 men near Gulu. Later that year Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) attacked a combined force of Kony's HSM followers and Ugandan People's Army (UPA) troops left over from the previous regime (who refused the proffered assimilation into the NRA, the actual Ugandan army). The battle at Soroti, a city in central Uganda, was a disaster for Kony and his allies: 400 killed, 180 captured, and another 500 surrendered.

Kony then changed his strategy from open warfare with the government's army — which he couldn't win — to terrorism and guerrilla warfare: kidnappings, convoy ambushes, and attacks on hospitals and schools.

He is undoubtedly a charismatic leader supported by active propaganda that mixes the residual religious teachings of decades of fervent missionaries while appealing to long-standing tribal enmities plus a distrust of a historically persecutory government. Despite the actions of the LRA, which would seem to alienate the people rather than win hearts and minds, Kony retains much grassroots support.

Aldo Ogen, a counselor with the World Vision aid agency, last year told the BBC: "Kony has become a myth. He's difficult to understand, he's difficult to compete with. The rebels wreak destruction and it leaves people in a desperate state. When you hear about Kony, you are immediately in his hands."

Ogen counsels former LRA fighters and has constructed a good profile of Kony, said to be a former Catholic church worker: "Kony is highly skilled at indoctrinating peo-



(above) Ugandan troops display captured rebel ordnance, including antitank mines and RPG-7 rounds. The government of neighboring Sudan supplies the LRA with weapons. (below) Despite government's recent efforts to prevent Ugandan children from serving as fighters (soldiers, guerrillas, tribal militiamen, or bandits), guns still end up in the hands of pre-teen combatants like this boy.



ple. He can even send his supporters on rebel attacks and they will carry out his attacks because they believe he is there in spirit standing behind them."

Betty Bigombe, the Ugandan minister for the northern district, met Kony on several occasions in 1992 for peace talks. She later said: "He's an illiterate, a young man, maybe 29 or 30. He's obsessed, but he's not stupid. He knows how to work on the psychology of his followers and they really believe him, especially those who have been around for a long time."

### African Alphabet Soup

In 1990 Kony renamed the bizarre HSM the "United Democratic Christian Movement." His insurgents carried out a series of raids in Kitgum, Lira, and Apac districts and executed major operations in Gulu and Soroti. He eventually renamed the movement the Lord's Resistance Army, probably in response to the government's National Resistance Army (NRA) and National Resistance Movement (NRM) whose local resistance councils were to form a basis for a people's democracy.

From 1989 to 1993 the NRA (now Ugandan People's Defense Force) continued to enjoy limited successes against the LRA, but was unable to destroy it. Kony's rebels continued to grow in strength, preying like bandits off local people and biding their time. Meanwhile, the Museveni government was busy fighting other insurgent groups as well.



**SOF correspondent hastily photographs rifleman (probably UPDF soldier) and his family in small village near Gulu. Barrel of his AK-47 is plugged with dried mud.**

The past armies and insurgencies of Uganda's turbulent history during and after Idi Amin's barbaric regime are a veritable alphabet soup of acronyms; in the past decade the Ugandan army has had to fight most of them or their stragglers: the Karamajong Rebels; units of the former Uganda National Army once loyal to Amin; troops of the Uganda National Liberation Army who followed the Tanzanian army from their exile in Tanzania to oust Amin; Lieutenant Colonel John Angelo Okello's Uganda People's Democratic Army; and various organized bandit groups.

### LRA Supported By Khartoum

Despite 1995's determined offensive by Ugandan army units, the LRA still is tearing up northern Uganda.

When LRA rebels shot up an army-escorted convoy in late 1995 they still threw rocks during their ambushes, expecting them to explode like bombs. They nonetheless killed 21 civilians, wounded 68, and abducted 292 others in the attack. They now have real hand grenades, courtesy of the Sudanese army.

To offset Uganda's tacit support of the largely Christian-led Sudanese People's Liberation Army, which controls the southern Sudan's border region, the Sudanese Islamic regime in Khartoum has provided training and arms to the LRA. Kony's followers even are reportedly permitted to give up their "Christian" teachings and convert



to Islam. In February 1996 Kony crossed back into Uganda from camps in the Sudan at the head of a large, well-equipped force. His rebels supposedly killed as many as 500 Ugandan soldiers in a pitched battle north of Gulu. In August 1996 one of the most bloodthirsty incidents to date in the undeclared civil war occurred when the LRA massacred more than 60 civilians for "government collaboration."

Before receiving aid from the Sudanese, Kony's headquarters was previously thought to be hidden in the Kidepo National Park, which is largely controlled by the Karamajong, an independent and hardy people who specialize in cattle rustling. Now better organized and equipped with modern weaponry, the LRA has emerged from its bush camps to range over a larger territory.

### Christian Rasta-mans

Government officials have reported that many of Kony's followers wear their hair in Rastafarian plaits (as might Kony himself) and cover their bodies with "bulletproof" shea-nut oil. Kony supporters argue that nothing more than normal praying is done before a battle.

Museveni's government has repeatedly attempted to discredit Kony by painting the LRA rebels as either bandits or illiterate Christian fanatics who want to rule Uganda by the Ten Commandments. Others claim that is all the government's propaganda and that Kony is not a Christian fundamentalist at all; that the name Lord's Resistance Army originated in 1989 when Ugandan army troops and Rwandan mercenaries were sent north into Acholi lands to subdue the people. (Museveni had recruited more than 1,000 Rwandans as NRA cadre.) In this version, the Acholi people gave Kony's force the LRA name after they stopped the onslaught of Ugandan troops — a tale that flies in the face of historical reality.

The large number of civilians who have suffered at the hands of his followers also bear witness to the LRA's strange beliefs. Reports of people having limbs hacked off, civilian convoys being machine-gunned, and relief workers stripped of their clothes at gun point is indisputable evidence that these are not "Christians."

Museveni and the UPDF seem unable to curb the growing insurgency. Khartoum's support of the LRA has presented Kampala with additional problems. Further, an increased military response against the Acholi-based rebellion will probably only result in more LRA recruits.

The UPDF simply does not have the skill and expertise to fight a complex counterinsurgency campaign against a well-armed and motivated foe. Additionally, Museveni's government is struggling to repair the damage of more than two decades of fighting. A hearts-and-minds approach through civic affairs and social development, to gain the support of the Acholi people, is the only solution — but it will not be easy.

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

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## At Dawn's Bloody Light

Continued from page 33

moment, get back his strength. Dazed, he let his hands drop to his sides and sank to the bottom of the canal. For long seconds, he sat there in the cool water.

*This is great. So cool. So far away from all that craziness up there.*

Davis reached out with his hands to the bottom of the canal — and touched some discarded artillery canisters. That brought him back to reality. He surfaced.

Davis painfully crawled up the canal bank and looked around. The sky was full of flares and crisscrossing tracer rounds in blue, green, and red. He stumbled groggily back to his howitzer. Just behind it, he found Gant flat on his back.

Davis rushed to his side. "Sergeant Gant, are you OK?"

Gant was too weak to speak. He lifted his right arm slightly and Davis took his hand. As he did, he noticed that Gant had an untreated chest wound. Tearing off a piece from a poncho, Davis covered the hole, then wrapped a rag around the improvised dressing to keep in place.

The black sergeant's breathing now came more regularly. Davis took his hand again.

"You'll be all right, Sarge. I'll get you out of here."

### By Dawn's Early Light

The VC finally broke off the attack around 0330 and recovered what dead and wounded they could. With first light, Davis and a number of men crossed the small bridge to a horrific scene.

Dozens of VC dead were scattered all along the bank of the canal. There were more in the water. Most of the dead were pincushioned with beehive flechettes; some had even been pinned to trees by the metal darts, while others had their hands pinned to their rifles. Davis was pleased to see that someone else's beehive had taken out the machine gun that had tormented his swim: Darts were actually sticking in the barrel of the weapon, whose gunner had been blown backwards and pinned to the ground.

Farther west from the canal, they walked through recon's former positions. Of the 33 men in the recon platoon, three had been killed and 22 wounded.

Total U.S. casualties at Cudgel were seven killed and 74 wounded. Seventy-eight VC bodies were found; many more likely were carried away.

By 1000, Sgt. Gant and the other wounded had been medevaced out. Davis was still on his feet at Cudgel, feeling the last dregs of adrenaline. Then he went to a field latrine to relieve himself. As Davis dropped his trousers, Cole screamed, "My God, Sammy, look at your leg!" Davis looked down at his forgotten wound — and passed out.

He awoke in the hospital in Dong Tam as Army doctors were removing shrapnel from his chest and legs and flechettes from his butt and back. In all, they took 23 beehive projec-

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tiles from Davis; one had punctured a kidney. That wound, in turn, had become contaminated with dioxin (from defoliants) in the water. Davis developed a 107-degree fever.

To bring down his temperature, doctors wanted to give him a blood transfusion. Because of the many wounded, the hospital was out of Davis' blood type. When Gwendell Holloway, elsewhere in the hospital, heard that Davis needed blood and that they had the same type, he told a nurse: "Take my blood and give it to him. He saved my life. That's the least I can do for him."

Later, while recuperating in Japan, Sammy Davis learned he was being considered for the Medal of Honor.

President Lyndon B. Johnson pinned the medal on Davis (by then, a sergeant at Fort Hood, Texas) and four other soldiers on 19 November 1968 at the White House. Davis also received another award: a letter from Holloway's grateful mother.

"I want to thank you for saving my son," she wrote. "If it hadn't been for you he would almost certainly be dead."

*Samuel Zaffiri served in Vietnam in the Army's 1st Infantry Division. He is author of the books Hamburger Hill and Westmoreland. His previous SOF contribution was "Stumpf's Revenge," July '96.* ✕

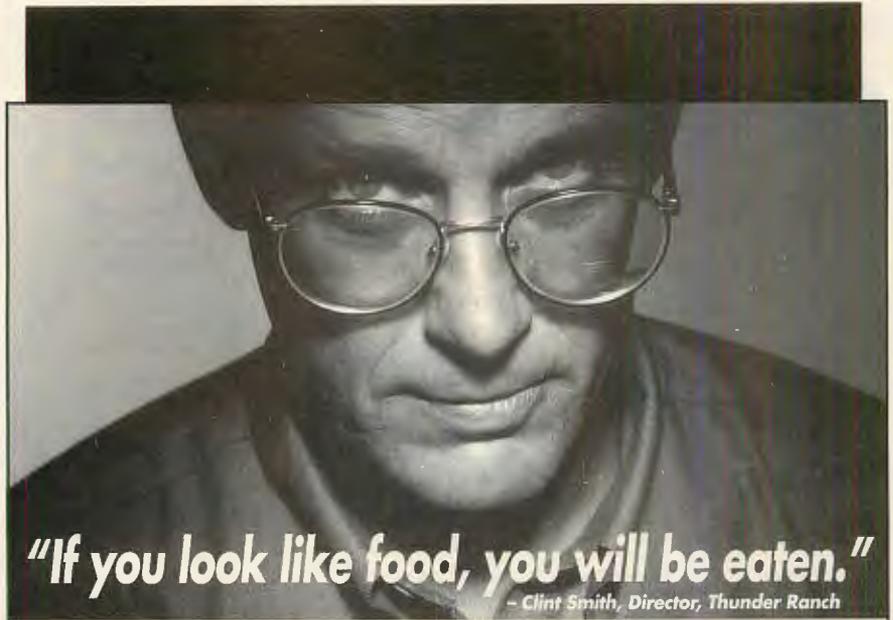
## To The Silver Screen

Continued from page 57

with the best of them. "She was really a trooper. She got through all the hard physical stuff with no complaints. I was impressed," remarked Harry.

Given the politically correct climate in Washington, action (war) films are not held in high regard by many critics of the movie industry. Attempts made toward censorship are focusing not only on sexually explicit material, but "action"-type productions, as well, because of their violence. It is difficult to produce a motion picture depicting combat without a credible level of violence and death, but some directors have spent a vast amount of resources in creating excessively graphic scenes — which for the most part are totally unnecessary. Through Harry, a new look of realism has come to the motion picture screen. His training makes actors know how to look, feel and react in simulated combat sequences, acting naturally with their handling of weapons and tactics.

This frees them from having to consciously think about the physical motions and allows them to be at their best as actors. This air of realism spills over into the audience and results in a better quality production. Death is death, but when the gratuitous overuse of all its grossness and gory finality are played down, this does not detract from the story line. "If you do it right and have a decent story to tell, all that gory, violent crap that gets you in trouble with the pushers of the "V" chip isn't needed," notes Harry. *The Rock* and *Con Air* (soon to be

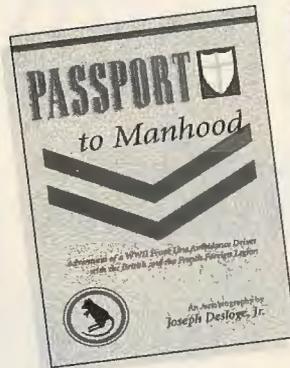


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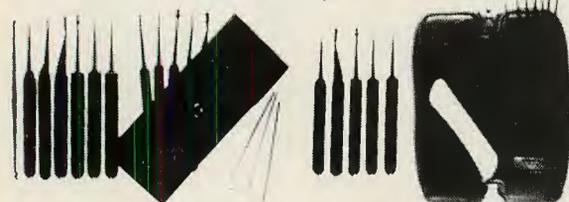
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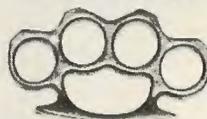
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released), were produced by Jerry Bruckheimer (Don Simpson was co-producer of *The Rock*, but died during the production. *The Rock* was dedicated to Don's memory). In *Con Air*, Harry and his troop did military fire stunts, but his larger role was behind-the-scenes training the actors and extras to act and look real.

### Truth In Filming

Jerry Bruckheimer, one of the top realistic-action-movie producers in the business (*Top Gun*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Crimson Tide*, *The Rock*, *Con Air* and others) has high praise for Harry's role in the area of technical directing. "When writers bring a script into my office, they know that Harry is going to tear it apart if it strays into an area that isn't realistic. Harry's great. He keeps them honest." Jerry's insistence on bringing the greatest possible degree of realism to his movies has a positive effect on his crew, inspiring them to work that much harder to produce a quality that is becoming the standard in his films.

Harry expands, "The actors often don't realize that their look isn't realistic. They never run out of ammunition, never have a weapon jam, never trip and fall over something in the way, they flinch when they fire their weapon, or run around with a finger in the trigger guard. We break them of bad habits and teach them that things legitimately *do* go wrong in combat, and how to correct the problem as if they were in combat.

"It adds all that much more to the reality, and when a combat veteran sees one of these films he can say, "Yeah, that happened to me once. I dropped a magazine in the dirt and had to clean the sand out of it before I could fire it." Harry is the technical director on the *Soldier Of Fortune, Inc.* television series, now in production for fall release. This one-hour weekly show will center around a team of five SpecOps-types and is also produced by Jerry Bruckheimer. The lead role will be played by Brad Johnson, who starred in *Flight of The Intruder*. I asked Jerry why he insisted on such a high degree of realism when there were all these other "hack and chop" movies out there making money.

### Tribute By Accurate Portrayal

"The men of Special Operations are the silent heroes of the day. Many of the things they do are not known to the general public. These men give a lot to their country and to us, the American people. We try and show as much of reality as we can in these films without giving away secrets, and it is my way of giving back to these men something they truly deserve." Global Studies Group also has a Mexican connection.

Through the intense and persistent work of Kurt Norrigan and his brother, Paul, Harry has been able to negotiate with the government of Mexico to open an office in Mexico City. From there GSGI will be able to assist Mexico in the training of their police officers and special teams.

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This will allow GSGI to further develop international business in other countries of Latin America.

Mexico has incredibly tough gun laws, and there are few reliable private security companies. If a corporation needs armed guards, they have to hire the Auxiliary Police. These officers might be compared to some of our "rent-a-cop" companies here, except they work for the government. The Regular Police perform the routine work of police officers, working the streets and highways and investigating crimes, etc. The Auxiliary Police do the other work, for the most part, and their training is somewhat less than that of the regulars. Kurt Norrigan says he never used to give the Second Amendment much thought until he started working in a country where private gun ownership doesn't exist. "It's the best way I know of to keep a place under the government's thumb."

Kurt says. "Let's hope the Second Amendment never gets overturned here at home."

Former SEAL Steven Waterman is a Maine-based freelance writer and photographer. Global Studies Group, Inc. can be contacted at Box 1006, Huntington Beach, CA 92605; phone: 310-637-7166; fax: 310-637-7154. ✂

## Terrorism's Forbidden City

Continued from page 61

After the 1973 ceasefire, it was agreed that only 162 artillery pieces (with range of less than 15 miles) would be allowed in the first, and 36 (under 122mm) in the second. No missile system with a range more than 16 miles is permitted in either. Main battle tanks are limited to 450 in the 12-mile zone and another 75 in the 6-mile zones.

Clearly, the arrangement makes little allowance for recent artillery or rocketry development. Some of the Israeli weapons pointing at Damascus could easily strike from hundreds of miles away,

## At War, But At Rest

The total U.N. "mission area" in Syria is roughly 2,000 square miles, with 1,050 U.N. personnel to "keep the peace."

Their task is not made easier by 20,000-odd civilians living in the AOS. While there is no fence on the Syrian (Bravo) side of the AOS, a 9-foot electrified "technical fence" stands on the Israeli (Alpha) border. Checkpoint Charlie, adjacent to the abandoned Syrian town of Kuneitra, allows U.N. personnel and those Israelis and Syrians responsible for monitoring the ceasefire to pass. A U.N. spokesman of the HQ camp at Al Faouar said there were about 200 "violations" a week, mostly nonbelligerent.

Both sides are permitted to maintain a 6,000-man force within their respective exclusion zone. While U.N. offices accept

lists of troops from both sides, one task is to physically count tanks and artillery deployed by each side, every 14 days.

I was able to observe hardware deployed by Syria on my journey to Golan. Further dug-in positions were pointed out to me, *in situ*, while I was in the AOS. They litter the countryside. Many of the tanks were antiquated T-34s.

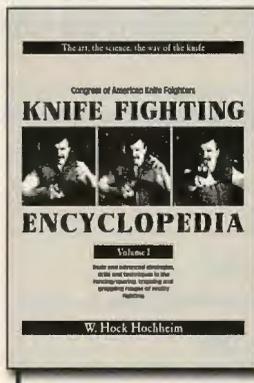
Much of this equipment is arrayed alongside the main road leading to the southwest, as are heavily fortified Syrian Army camps. No photographs are allowed in any of the areas.

Mine fields are the biggest problem facing the U.N. command at present. No one

— in Syria or Israel — is sure how many there are or how far they extend. The U.N. would like to clear, or at least mark, them but it was the view of a Canadian UNDOF (U.N. Disengagement Observer Force) officer that Israel is happy with things as they are. The mines are a powerful deterrent should hostilities break out.

## The First Of Things Is Water

As with the Jordan River and the Golan, secrecy surrounds Syrian water potential. While it is known that almost a dozen new dams have been built and two government ministries deal with nothing else, the country is most vulnerable regarding long-term



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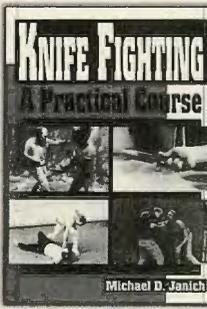
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water supply. The huge Euphrates Dam with its 320-meter water level supplies much of the country's water and electrical needs, but is hundreds of miles from big cities and its pipelines are vulnerable. All could be knocked out in a single Israeli air strike.

Water supplies to this city of almost two million are a sensitive issue, as strategically important as defense. Should the Israelis breach them, Assad or his successors could be faced with a horrific disaster, especially in summer when temperatures push well over 100 degrees.

Assad, meanwhile, remains entrenched. No one is certain how sick he is or how long he will last. No one dares ask. He has a treatable cancer, but he looked an ill man, weak and unfocused, appearing on TV during my visit.

He has other problems. Assad is an Alawaite, a minority Shi'ite tribe always regarded as inferior in a land that traditionally chose a Sunni aristocrat to lead them.

Judging by the numerous hierarchical portraits, this is one leader that intends to keep his dynasty intact. Bashar is increasingly seen on TV and at official functions in uniform. But he is no Basil, who had been groomed since childhood to take over.

Whether Bashar has the guile and the *panache* to survive without his father is moot. There have been rumblings among the populace — and many more bomb blasts than reported in the state-controlled media. There are also those known to want change, in keeping with more enlightened developments elsewhere.

People are tired of the "Big Brother" syndrome. Everyone is terrified of the country's security services and what might happen if they say or do the wrong thing.

Observers in Damascus feel a power struggle might already have begun. There is an element in the military command that would like nothing better than a scrap with Israel. Until now they have been kept in check by Assad. There are also Syrian commanders known for their irrationality: Assad fired Major General Muhammed Khuli when implicated in a failed attempt to bomb an Israeli airliner in 1986.

In view of Syria's close ties to militant rebel groups in many countries, Syria's neighbors are as concerned about Assad's longevity as is Washington. Turkey, like Israel, is watching the situation with interest. Turkish Kurdish bases in the Bekaa might have been closed, as has been claimed, but who really knows what goes on in the huge expanse of desert that surrounds Damascus? The same holds for Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and, to a lesser degree, Iraq.

As long as Syria remains the principal conduit of weapons and trained personnel from Iran to Hezbollah fundamentalists fighting in Lebanon, developments in Damascus could eventually influence events throughout the entire Middle East when Assad goes.

Al J. Venter is SOF's long-time contributing editor for Africa. ✕



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## Combat Weaponcraft

Continued from page 17

frag, white phosphorous and CS grenades, which my withdrawing team could scatter on our back trail, leaving a sort of minefield which a pursuing enemy crossed only at great peril. I made these by replacing the fuzes on ordinary grenades with non-electric caps and time fuze, cut anywhere from 30 seconds to 10 minutes.

We also experimented with unusual sounds, for their diversionary and psychological effects.

I was leading RT California, with Rex Jacob, John Yancey and Galen Musselman and four Montagnards, into northeast Cambodia's Base Area 609, searching for the hidden headquarters of the NVA 66th Infantry Regiment. It was an especially dangerous area, with a secret road leading north to the Ho Chi Minh Trail's Highway 110, a dozen miles away.

On our second day we walked into an L-shaped ambush with about 20 NVA firing AKs, machine guns and RPGs. We squatted down and opened up but heavy enemy fire almost had us pinned in a bowl; an IA drill was no use because falling back meant going uphill, right into the enemy's fire. In 18 months of running recon, this was the worst tactical predicament I'd yet encountered.

I reached for a grenade but my hand found my airhorn instead. I depressed its plunger for 15 full seconds, "AHHHHHHH-HHHHHHHH-OORRRRRRRRRRR!" and when I lifted my finger you could hear a pin drop! Uncertain of this horrifying-sounding Yankee weapon, the North Vietnamese had run for their lives; maybe they thought we'd finally perfected a hand-held minigun.

After your soldiers can execute IA drills perfectly, with a honed, smooth flow from beginning to end, they'll achieve not just a greater likelihood of surviving shootouts against a more numerous foe, but the overall confidence required to operate effectively behind enemy lines.

In summation:

- Plan with sophistication, execute with simplicity.
- Execute your IA drill aggressively.
- When contact is inevitable, initiate it yourself.
- Always include a deceptive or diversionary element.
- Do the unexpected, even the unthinkable.
- Don't attempt the same trick twice.
- Practice, practice, practice!

Already noted for his superb sniping handbook, *The Ultimate Sniper*, Maj. Plaster has authored a long-awaited history of covert specops in Southeast Asia, *SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam*, published by Simon & Schuster and available at your local bookstores. ✕

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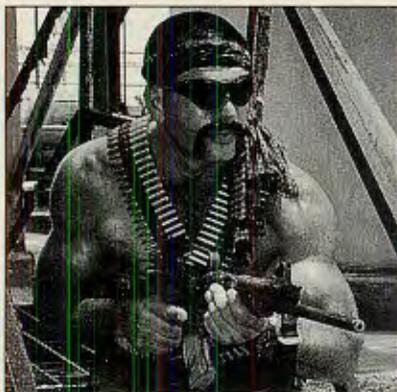
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## From Bad To Worse

Continued from page 43

Unit's evacuation of Americans from Albania was nearing completion.

By then about 30 Marines had taken up positions at the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, with another 60 stationed at the embassy's housing area. Ambassador Marisa Lino permitted the Marines to build sand-bag bunkers on embassy grounds, but refused to allow them to cut down shrubs and trees to create fields of fire. Regardless, the leather-necks created enough of a defensive perimeter to fend off any erstwhile attackers



(above) Rebel gunman scopes out now-routine roadblock often resulting in rousting of “civilians” and ripping-off cameras from journalists. (right) Young “troop” with war trophy. All's a rush till the rounds start flying — and your friends start dying.

until reinforcements could arrive.

Brown was a big hit with the Marines. He engaged them in a friendly BS session, gave out some magazines, and passed around two of his journalistic aids — a Ka-Bar “Next Generation” scabbard knife and a big lock-blade, Cold Steel's “Vaquero Grande” — for the young warriors to examine and critique.

One of them told us that their on-the-ground intel on Albania “isn't worth a shit,” and they only knew what they heard on Voice of America and learn from passing journalists. Another Marine told us that, the day before, one of the embassy's civilian guards, armed with an AK-47, shot and killed a carload of locals who tried to crash the gate.

Still another Marine recounted how earlier in the week an Albanian T-55 tank had approached the embassy. The Marines used rifle- and SAW- fire to send it away.

After almost four days in-country, having been cheated, threatened and shot at, Brown made the command decision to leave Albania on one of the last Marine helicopters out. The U.S. Consul made all

three of us sign promissory notes stating that we would repay the government \$450 upon arrival in Italy, then stamped our passports forbidding us to travel anywhere but straight back to the United States if we *didn't* pay up. It was a first for all three of us: Uncle Sam charging Americans to be evacuated. The consul told us that nearly 900 citizens and dependents had already been airlifted to safety.

Soon it was time for *SOF's* team to head over to the U.S. Embassy housing area, where an LZ had been established. Two Marine CH-47 helicopters from the amphibious ship *USS Nashville*, escorted by two Huey gunships, were scheduled to come pick us up. (The Chinooks bore the markings



photos by Mark H. Milstein

“SFOR” — NATO Stabilization Force — for use in the ongoing Bosnia op.) They arrived and our group was led aboard and strapped in. In the air, Marine crewmen kept their eyes peeled; a few days earlier there had been reports of a shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile launched from a nearby hilltop.

Our flight, however, was uneventful. Less than an hour later we were on the busy deck of the *Nashville* in the Adriatic Sea, and chaotic Albania was another day closer to full-blown anarchy.

*Milstein is SOF's chief foreign correspondent. His previous report from Albania was “America's New Expeditionary Force,” Dec. '96.*

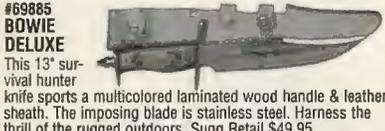
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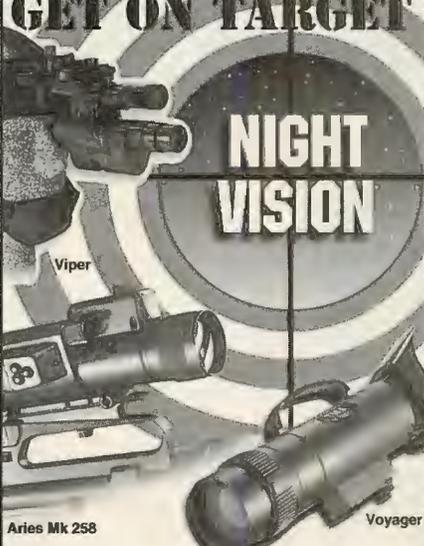
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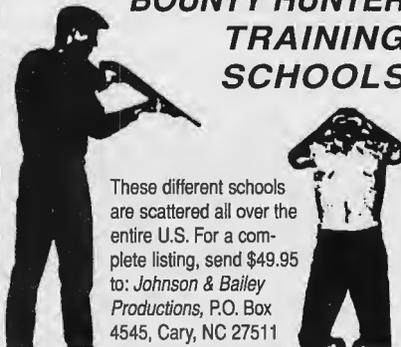
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# SOUND OFF

by Col. David H. Hackworth (Ret.)

## Loss of the Warrior Spirit

Colonel James Hallums is a warrior's warrior. One of the best who ever wore Army green.

I pray that neither of my two sons ever goes to war, but if our nation should call, I'd want them to serve under a leader like Hallums. I know he'd lead them by personal example, look after their welfare as if they were his own sons and never assign them a task that he had not done himself and would not do again.

He would cherish them. But he'd train them until they fell and then pick them up and train them some more. He'd swear at them, kick their tails, make them do the impossible while teaching them every trick that's needed to make it through the worst horror of all horrors: close combat.

Under Hallums — a proven leader who fought in Vietnam and El Salvador and skippered tough outfits from a platoon to a brigade — my sons' chances of coming back alive would be all that I could hope for.

Sadly, Hallums, who represents a dying breed in the U.S. Army — the warrior leader — has been ambushed by the politically correct gang that is gutting the Army and destroying West Point.

He was knocked off in the line of duty.

He was not taken out by hot steel but cut down by disloyal and backstabbing pretenders who are insidiously doing to our Army what no foreign enemy has ever done.

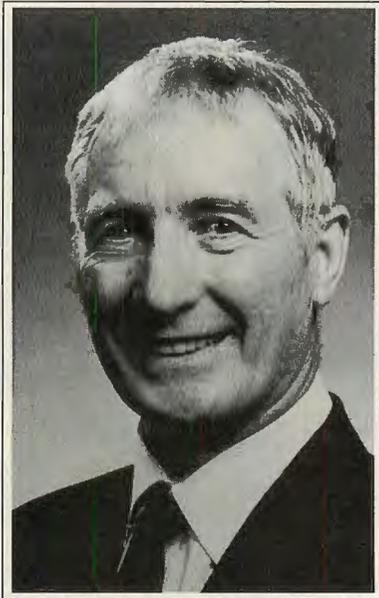
He was ambushed at West Point by the very subordinates he'd been tasked to shape up. Shamefully, the generals there and at the Pentagon went along with this miscarriage of justice — the very generals who asked Hallums to shake up the academy's leadership department and get them to again produce lieutenants who know how to lead soldiers and win battles.

Hallums was picked from all the colonels in the Army to square away a limp leadership department that had been made soft and ineffective by tenured types who are living examples of the adage, "Those that can, do; those that can't, teach."

For one year, he kicked butt, took names, made flabby clerks, who had forgotten what soldiering is all about, wear proper uniforms and hammered them for failing in their mission to turn out warriors capable of leading our sons and daughters.

The academics revolted. These touchy-feely turncoats ambushed Hallums, accusing him of creating an "intimidating, hostile or offensive environment."

Captain Sharon Bowers said he was guilty of "sexual harassment" because he walked through the department in his running



*Col. David Hackworth (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.*

outfit and flexed his biceps.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Hughes, another perfumed prince leadership instructor, who prefers life in the Ivy Tower of West Point academia over the mud and sweat of being with infantry troops, whined to the generals that he "felt very awkward" when Hallums changed into running clothes while talking to him.

These reports exploded like a hand grenade. Hallums, who came to West Point with the promise of a star, was found "guilty" by a kangaroo court of sexual harassment and "abusive leadership." He was drummed out of the Army after 30 years of distinguished service.

His sin was that he was not politically correct.

If this can happen at West Point then America's Army is in deep trouble. For West Point is the heart and soul of our Army. It has produced the Lewises and Clarks, the Lees and Grants, the Pershings and Pattons and tens of thousands of other valiant warrior leaders who have led American soldiers in peace and war.

These leaders have explored our country, built our bridges, fought our battles and served as great role models for guys like me and countless other professional and citizen soldiers.

West Point has always set the highest standard for the Army and taught through

repeated selfless examples the meaning of Duty, Honor and Country. But now the brass there brag not about what great warrior leaders their graduates are but how "humanized" they've become.

What will our nation do when there are no more Hallums left to lead our youth in battle, the most dehumanizing horror show known?

When will our senior military leaders remember their oaths and that the mission of the Army is not to be politically correct, but to fight and destroy America's foes?

[Http://www.hackworth.com](http://www.hackworth.com) is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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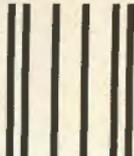
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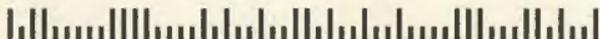
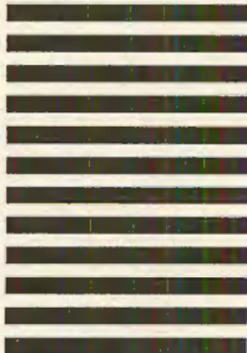
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