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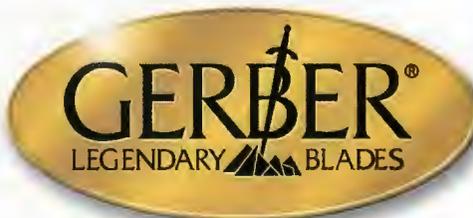
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STOP THE
SERBIAN
TERROR!

COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Clinton's Global Gun Ban

In August of 1995, we were using a white truck that looked something like a U.N. vehicle to run the Serb blockade of Sarajevo and smuggle in some life-saving equipment. All along the route, the Bosnians flipped us off and generally acted hostile toward us. We didn't know it at the time, but the Bosnians were very hostile toward the U.N. at that point, because U.N. officials at Srebrenica had certainly sent to their deaths Muslim civilians seeking refuge from mass-murdering Serbs. The U.N. protection forces' refusal to defend the Muslims resulted in the deaths of perhaps as many as 7,000 people; the mass graves are still being exhumed at this writing.

Certainly, Srebrenica was probably the worst failure of the U.N. in its 50-year history of so-called peacekeeping operations, but the fact of the matter is that every operation the U.N. has undertaken has been a dismal failure, with the exception of those initiated by the United States. Nonetheless, the Clinton administration is throwing its power behind U.N. efforts to eliminate the ability to exercise the universal right of self-defense.

A new administration initiative which is consistent with Clinton's domestic attempts to curtail American rights to self-defense, has begun to limit firearms exports. Both Clinton and the U.N. explain that stopping the annual export of about 250,000 U.S.-made firearms to European Union countries will help keep them away from organized crime, international terrorists and out of places like ex-Yugoslavia.

Truth is, that criminals are always well-armed no matter what the laws or penalties (look at the drug dealers in Washington, D.C.), and, since international terrorism is always state sponsored (usually by U.N.-member countries), they can acquire what

they need without depending upon U.S. exports.

Ex-Yugoslavia is quite another matter. In the summer of 1991, the Communist Serb-dominated Yugoslav government made the unusual move of asking the U.N. to impose an arms embargo against their own country. The government had enough arms and they wanted to prevent those wanting to throw off Communist Serbian rule from arming themselves. Of course, the U.N., including the United States, imposed that embargo thus setting the stage for another round of genocide and mass murder in Europe.



If it had not been for privately owned firearms the Serbs would have been able to brutally squelch the war of independence in Croatia. It was the Winchester, Remingtons and Mossbergs, as well as some Drillings, Mausers and Steys in the hands of

Croatian farmers that stopped the Serbian offensives and enabled them to capture machine guns and tanks.

Having been taught a lesson, the following year the Yugoslav Serbian Army demanded that Bosnia surrender their national guard armories. After President Alia Izetbegovic complied, the army demanded the surrender of all privately owned firearms. Muslims greeted the Serb tanks with bouquets of flowers — in a number of villages now internationally noted for their mass graves.

Depriving the common people in other countries of the means of self-defense guarantees that despotic governments can continue to engage in massive human-rights violations, and even genocide. Both President Clinton and the United Nations want to deprive individuals of the tools necessary to exercise the basic right of self-defense and let the government and the U.N. provide that security for us. ✕

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Robert K. Brown

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SENIOR EDITOR **Don McLean**
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Chief Foreign Correspondent:

Mark H. Milstein

Senior Foreign Correspondents:

**Dale B. Cooper • Peter Douglas
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Africa Al Venter • *Adventure Sports* Robin Postell
America Marty Kufus • *Aviation* Dana Drenkowski
Explosives/Demolitions John Donovan • *Forensic Science*
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IN MEMORIAM

Craig Nunn — Art Director
Lance Motley — Foreign Correspondent
Barry Sadler — Contributing Editor
Robert MacKenzie — Contributing Editor
George Bacon — Foreign Correspondent

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EXPEDIENT HOMEMADE FIREARMS

The 9mm Submachine Gun

by P.A. Luty

Imagine (it's not that hard to do) that you live under a regime that has banned most types of firearms – or controls them so tightly that they may as well be banned. Author P.A. Luty lives in just such a place, and he understands the frustration of attempting to build homemade firearms based on designs that are too complicated or so crude as to be undesirable. In this book he provides clear, step-by-step instructions for an expedient 9mm submachine gun. It is of straight blowback design, fires from the open bolt and holds 18 rounds. It is not pretty; its main priorities are reliability and simple functionality. The beauty of this gun is that it is easily constructed from readily available materials, primarily steel tubing. It does not require a lathe and milling machine, and it can be built by just about anyone in about a week's time – even under adverse social conditions. *For academic study only.* 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, photos, illus. 96 pp. **\$15.00**

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The 9mm Submachine Gun



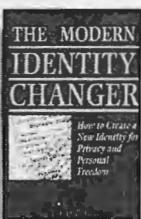
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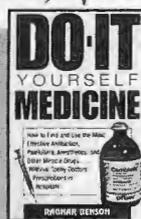
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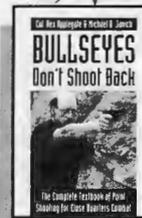
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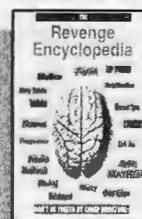
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by Ragnar Benson
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FLAK



CENSORSHIP IN SOF

February 1, 1998
The Editor
Soldier of Fortune
P.O. Box 693
Boulder, CO 80306,
U.S.A.

Dear Sir:

In "Moscow Swat" (*Soldier Of Fortune*, January, 1998), writer Mark H. Milstein glorified [sic] the tough cop tactics of the OMON troops used as SWAT squads by Russian police forces.

Sadly, the article fails to mention the darker side of these OMON special units. They are thugs. They were used as goon squads during the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. *Newsweek* (September 9, 1991) reported that they had "come to embody Soviet terror in the minds of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians. They arrested people at random, pushing them against the nearest wall at gunpoint. They looted stores, seized banks and harassed the leadership of the Baltic independence movement." They were also implicated in the murder of several Lithuanian border guards who died execution style in 1991.

Just setting the record straight.

Sincerely yours,
Verners Cinis
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

P.S. This is my third letter to "Flak." None has appeared. Well, maybe third time lucky for this subscriber.

April 12, 1998
Mr. Robert K. Brown, Editor/Publisher
Soldier of Fortune
P.O. Box 693
Boulder, CO 80306 U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Brown:

I am deeply disappointed by what seems to me to be a clear case of censorship. Over the past year, I have written three letters-to-the-editor to *Soldier Of Fortune* to correct errors [sic] having to do with the armed forces of the former Soviet Union. None of these letters has seen the light of day in your magazine.

The most recent letter was dated February 1, 1998 and took issue with the tough-cop portrayal of the OMON troops in Mark H. Milstein's article "Moscow Swat" (*Soldier Of Fortune*, January 1998). I enclose a copy of this letter. I have had hundreds of letters-to-the-editor published around North America. I know, therefore, that it is not the style of the letter that can be at fault. I have to wonder whether you are perhaps not the tough anticommunist journal you were some years ago. When my subscription renewal date rolls around next March, I shall have to reconsider my continuing support for what seems to have become yet another timid, politically correct magazine.

Sincerely yours,

Verners Cinis
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

Regards your first letter, you were a few years behind SOF in "setting the record straight" regards OMON activities at the time of the collapse of the Soviet empire, because SOF was there in the Baltics getting the story first-hand. Further, you take great liberties with fact when you characterize Milstein's reportage in the cited story as "glorifying" OMON. The story did not "fail" to mention the dark past of other OMON units: This was not meant to be a historical piece. He didn't mention the dark side of the Czar's secret police who used to roam Moscow streets, either.

Regards your chutzpah in referring to our not publishing all your letters in FLAK as "a clear case of censorship": The criteria for any letter we respond to in FLAK out of the thousands we receive is, firstly, whether or not it would be of reader interest; secondly, if we have erred and need to make a correction. Because of greater reader interest in other

letters, we may or may not choose to respond to a perceived error.

Your letter of 1 Feb 98 went unanswered as, toward the last of the list of those to merit a reply in the magazine are the ones that react to something the reader may have perceived we said, but which we did not, or who in our judgment is seriously misreading a particular situation. As a rule, unless there is a widespread misunderstanding of what we published, or a widespread misunderstanding of a situation our reporters observed first-hand, we do not dedicate space to respond in our publication. What "hundreds of other editors" [sic] may have done around North America is up to them.

Another subjective criterion that gives other letters a head start is roughly akin to whether or not we might like to strike up a conversation on the street with its writer. A common reaction among reporters who risk their lives to get stories first-hand, if they would be accused of "a clear case of censorship" would not likely be a polite discourse.

Your name and syntax lead me to believe you are from one of the Baltic States. Are you a fair-weather patriot who bugged out rather than stay and fight the communists? Milstein might well ask to compare scars before he took your opinion very seriously, as he's suffered more wounds from hostile fire than the average WWII GI — and he's done it to get his facts first-hand. He was in Moscow observing first-hand what he reported ... and you read a seven-year-old magazine story and equate that to conditions today? Would you be so presumptuous as to judge any member of a current Americal Division for



Just read your excellent "SpecOps Doom Buggy" article in the May issue: Here is a photo of a Mexican SpecOps Chenoweth Desert Patrol Vehicle, General Army HQ "GAFF" (Grupo Aeromovil de Fuerzas Especiales) — Julio Montes

Julio Montes

If You **BLOCK** In A Fight.....

You're Training In The "Ultimate Lie," Find Out How Over 30,000 Fighters Found The "Ultimate Truth"!!!

When I was ordered into combat I wanted nothing but the Truth!!! I wanted a fighting system that had no limitations. That's why I guarantee his system to be the Ultimate Truth!! I Came Home! Don't bet your life on the LIE of defensive sport-fighting, You'll need more for today's streets—

If you're reading this in a public area, look around, if you were to be jumped by some thug with a knife, club or gun would you know what to do? What if you're with your wife, girlfriend or child could you protect them? Not if you've been trained in the 'arts' or any other fighting system you read about in this magazine.

Yeah, I know you've had training and some of you have become very good at your chosen martial art, sport-fighting or even the half-assed streetfighting your uncle or buddy (the one who did 'time' in 'the joint') showed ya.

But guys, you're kidding yourself if you think that stuff will save your life in a real fight. You know, the type of heinous brawl you read about, where you get jumped unaware and "unprepared" by multiple scumbags with weapons.

Do you really think you can use all that 'grappling' garbage in a multi-fight with weapons? While you're trying to get one dirtbag to 'tap out,' his buddies are doing the "Riverdance" on your head, knees and balls. And why? Because

You Fight Like You Train

If you're training in any sport-fighting scenario use 'blocks' or defensive moves you are in **BIG** trouble if your life is on the line. Especially if your training doesn't seamlessly integrate weapons (knives, clubs and firearms). Why? Because all these systems you read about or train in now are not designed for life and death struggles. They are for sport or non-lethal purposes. Some may claim to be for lethal purposes but they are a joke. No one trains for this because no one can competently and quickly train you: **To kill your attacker (or attackers) who are trying to kill you.** If you are training for 'artistic' or physical conditioning purposes only, stop reading this article now! Only if you are interested in true fighting ability, attaining the true confidence to face any violent situation regardless of the threat if you want to learn the true meaning of...

"Ultimate Fighting"

Then you need to listen to this story. It's 1968, in country Vietnam an 18-year old US Army soldier is in a brutal fire fight. He turns in the middle of the battle to see 4 raging VC soldiers 20 feet away charging straight at him! He immediately attacks and they fall into a ditch. In less than 20 seconds one man emerged from under that pile of dead bodies, that man was Jerry Peterson, 173rd Airborne, 'Charlie' Company.

He spent 15 months in that highly decorated unit as point man. What he learned in that jungle war was, that if you hesitate or go defensive in combat you die! If he had tried to use his M-16 with those 4 VC he would have died because he knew he needed to kill them in close quarters with his hands if he was to survive.

This is true ultimate fighting gents, two guys preparing for months to enter into a ring with a referee, to make sure no one 'cheats' in a 'no holds barred' event, is a sport! Jerry's combat experience proved this and he spent the next 20 years researching all fighting arts and systems. (Looking for the science of human conflict.) During the war he had met some of the best Asian fighters in the world yet he was astonished to find not one 'Guru' or any martial art truly trained for lethal situations.

Back in the states he met most of the 'legends' of the

US martial arts community and not one man none taught true lethal fighting. Why? They simply didn't have the knowledge! Oh, they had some good moves and some correct movements in their techniques but none taught a complete system of fighting. That's when Jerry took his combat proven knowledge and created his 100% effective complete fighting system. This system, called SCARS® (Special Combat Aggressive Reactionary Systems) was closely held information until 1993. But I'm jumping ahead, lets go back to 1987 when SCARS was discovered by the US Navy SEALs. You might like to hear how SCARS became

The First Required Official Hand-to-Hand/Hand-to-Weapon System in US Navy SEAL Training

The Navy SEALs, have the reputation of being the toughest 'commandos' in the US Special Operations Community. In 1987, a special group was created at Naval Special Warfare Command (US Navy SEAL Headquarters) located in Coronado, CA. This groups mission was to standardize hand to hand/hand to weapon training for the worlds most elite commandos. They tested every martial art and 'combat' system for it's effectiveness in the true ultimate fight COMBAT. Every system or 'art' tested was rejected as being NOT combat capable. This includes but is not limited to: *Brazilian or Japanese jujitsu, JKD, TKD, Hapkido, KF, Muay-Thai along with a number of "wannabes" promoted in this magazine making claims they were some sort of official trainers of the SEALs.*

Then they met Jerry Peterson and saw the devastating power of the SCARS program. Jerry dealt with the SEAL, at their level and with his extensive combat record his credibility soared above any of the wannabes the SEALs had seen before. What really impressed the SEALs was that SCARS was created with...

100% Scientific Principles Which You Easily Learn and Instantly Gain An "Unfair Advantage"

In combat there is no room for error. If this system didn't work 'good men would die' and being a combat vet that was totally unacceptable to Jerry. As effective as SCARS proved to be, they were even more blown away by the Offensive Mindset Jerry trains in conjunction with SCARS. This mindset gives you the ability to strike first even if your attacker moves first! The combination of the mental and physical training in the SCARS Program resulted in the SEALs immediately funding the SCARS Project. Jerry created an instructor course that produced over 200+ combat SCARS Instructors. These SCARS certified SEAL instructors have taught SCARS to every type of Special Ops Unit: Green Berets, Air Force Para-Rescue, USMC Force RECON, even members of the ultra-elite DELTA and SEAL Team 6 counterterrorist units, the best of the best. These operators have seen every system imaginable and yet SCARS is the only system ever given credentials from the Dept. of Defense and issued course numbers. And lately, even some SEAL's, have hodgepogded some techniques together and tried to say their garbage is official training for the SEALs. Just ask any other system or instructor in this magazine if they have an official course number from CNET (The US Navy's

Credential Authority). You know what their answer is? NO!

So you're saying 'that's great for the SEALs but how is that going to help me?' Since 1993, over 30,000 fighters like you, have switched to SCARS. They like you, were dissatisfied with the effectiveness of what they learned in martial arts and sport-fighting. They like you, were uneasy on the violent streets of today's world and were searching for what was missing in their training. They wanted the secrets revealed to them about real fighting and SCARS delivered. And they learned....

Why You Must Know How To Kill With Your Hands

Most martial arts and sportfighters dance around the issue of lethal force. They try to explain you must be a 'defensive' fighter in this day and age with all the legal issues. They are horrified by anyone who would dare to open the curtain to expose the glaring lie they try to sell you that it is not important to train for a lethal (kill or be killed) situation. Yet, if you look at any 'art' or 'style' a knowledgeable person will see MANY potential LETHAL strikes, chokes, leverages, throws or kicks, yet it is never pointed out to the student.

Ask any lawyer whether you could say you didn't know that strike would kill the drunk who was hassling you in the bar? Wouldn't it be great to have the training and confidence to....

Be Able To Handle Any Violent Situation: "Lethal And Non-Lethal"

SCARS gives you the supreme ability to simply brush aside that annoying drunk at the bar yet be able to instantly take out that seemingly 'harmless' drunk when he suddenly pulls a knife. Guys, you never know when it is going to happen but the odds are you are going to face a life threatening conflict in your lifetime. Be prepared easily and quickly for your most nightmarish situation. I mean hopefully you'll never have to use this special information but think of the quiet confidence you'll possess having the SCARS arsenal at your disposal. That's why you must call and get your...

Free Special Report Which Reveals The Lethal Side Of Hand-To-Hand And Modern Weapons They Don't Want You To Have

Hey, we can't tell you everything in one page. Call for our free special report and get the NEW details from US Navy SEAL, SWAT Officers and other pro's about SCARS and more importantly from the over 30,000 guys just like you who made the switch to SCARS and can finally have the training and confidence to handle any violent situation. What do you have to lose? It's free, plus you can call **24 hours a day** and hear our FREE recorded message. You owe it to yourself to get this free Special Report and decide for yourself if SCARS is really as good as the US Navy SEALs, Law Enforcement Professionals and over 30,000 former martial artists say it is? Can you really afford not to make this call right now and start becoming one of the few people on earth who possess this essential information.

Call Now **1-800-827-1239**
24-hours for a Free recorded message to get your Free Special Report. International, call 602-437-3143.

the Mai Lai massacre which happened long before they were in that unit?

Free men worldwide were aware of the demeanor and acts of OMON and similar units in the Baltic States ca. 1991 — if you were a consistent reader of SOF you'd remember the stories we ran on that, as it was happening. But that was then, involving different men under different command and political leadership. You'd be hard-pressed to find members on the Moscow SWAT/OMON team who were even in uniform at that time, let alone involved with the Baltic States. The use of force by OMON in their law-enforcement role is certainly not appropriate for this country, and we'll leave the Russians to debate whether or not it is appropriate for their country and time. But to say the men of whom Milstein wrote were the brigands of the Baltic States seven years earlier is just plain ignorant — as was pointed out in the dated magazine article you sent, many of those (including their CO) were not even of Russian origin.

And timid? You must not have been reading SOF on a regular basis. Were he timid, Milstein would have taken up another line of work after he was wounded by a mortar round launched by a dying Yugoslav communism, as Milstein was, getting a story first-hand. Some people might see as "timid," one who takes potshots from the comfort of home via letters to the editor.

Feel free to disagree — but don't bother to correct errors that are not errors.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Hello SOF:

I would like to congratulate SOF and Dr. Tom Marks for your article titled "Against All Odds." The Colombian Army is really trying to win this war but I think that we are going to have guerrilla war for many years to come. I am sure that you will have a lot of material for your magazine in Colombia, that beautiful but crazy and violent country. Keep [up] the good job. Thanks and see you in the next issue.

Albarra 363, Colombia
Via E-mail

You're right: See page 60.

REAL DAKOTA, PLEASE STAND UP

Ref. April '98 issue, Bulletin Board, page 11: You showed a pic of Col. Brown, a warthog, and a .330 Dakota mag.



I recognized the Dakota right off; but please advise which of the other two is Col. Brown.

Joe Wilbert Johnson
Carneys Point, New Jersey

Joe, we double-checked: What probably confused you was that the good Colonel had loaned his shooter's vest to the warthog.



PROPHET OF DOOM

The "Doom Buggy" article in the May 1998 issue was excellent! The SEALs still have DPVs here in Kuwait. I don't know which model they are, but armament has

improved. The vehicles operate in pairs, with the navigator equipped with a Mk 19 until recently. The gun blocked his vision, so it is being replaced with an M240G. The rear gun is the M2 .50 on one while the other carries a Mk 19. An M60E3 is carried in both vehicles as a "bailout weapon."

The SEAL have developed a technique for delivering indirect fire with their Mk 19s. The M2-equipped DPV runs forward so the crew can act as spotters. The Mk 19-equipped DPV fires a short burst, then adjusts fire.

You might want to look into doing an article on Camp Doha and ITT. For an "imminent danger" zone, the Army certainly regards this place as "NTC Middle East."

Jerry Dimes
Kuwait

Clear, concise and well-reasoned FLAK letters have the best chance of appearing in print and can be mailed to FLAK Editor, c/o SOF, 5735 Arapahoe, Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303, or e-mailed to editor@somag.com ✉

Ghillie Suit

Originally designed by gamewardeners to assist in observing and approaching wildlife poachers, undetected. An important item for your tactical gear or hunting outfit. A cammo suit of garnish and natural material to aid in remaining undetected when still, moving slowly and using available shadows.

A ghillie suit can be very hot when lying in a sniper position for hours. We made ours from a tough mesh material and camelback compatible. The same mesh material as our modular tactical vest, to last and hold up under the harshest conditions. Military green garnish is sewn on the 3/4 length parka and hood. Canvas material on the front for protection from the ground and tough tec. with padding on the elbows. There are two interior pockets and a double pull zipper front. Elastic strips have been added on the back and arms for the addition of natural vegetation. Your ghillie suit will need to be fringed when you receive it. This allows you some opportunity to adjust your suit to a more natural look; along with the addition of natural vegetation from your area of deployment.

S. P. I. K. E.

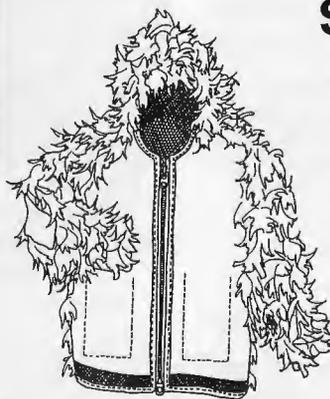


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WORLD SITREP

1

UNITED STATES

Hacker Czar: Increasing attacks on military computers have U.S. Defense Department officials scrambling to establish office of hacker czar, to coordinate Pentagon-wide action against widespread attacks on military networks. Czar would work with other agencies, such as FBI, CIA and Department of Justice. • **New APCs:** Army considers next APC, reopens debates about Bradley. Critics charge Bradley has two weapon systems (chain gun and infantry) that don't function together well. With five or six dismounts, critics say Bradley carries too few infantry for an APC and too many for good local security for what is basically a tank destroyer. Solution may involve buying two vehicles — an APC with light weapons and about 10 infantry; and a tank destroyer with 30mm cannon, two or three dismounts, and TOW or Hellfire missiles. Common chassis could be used for mortar, command, ambulance, chemical, logistics and other specialized tanks. • **Air Force Troubles:** General Richard Hawley, head of Air Combat Command, warns Air Force cannot sustain deployments in Gulf, Turkey and Bosnia at present manpower and budget levels. Pilot exodus continues, and Air Force will train fewer pilots than leave service in 1988. Hawley wants \$5 billion budget increase. • Military loses 54 aircraft in 1997 mishaps, the lowest number in decades.

2

RUSSIA

Smallpox terrorists? Scientists concerned samples of smallpox stored in Russia may fall into hands of terrorist groups. Disease could be far more devastating than anthrax, scientists say, because there is no vaccine in storage to fight it. Security at Russian Vector base where biological samples are stored is effectively non-existent, based on Reuter's report. • **Submarine launches:** Government protests that U.S., British and French submarines were in Barents Sea monitoring series of test-launches by Russian missile submarines. The launches fall under START-1 treaty as way to destroy surplus missiles after nuclear warheads removed. Monitoring subs record noises Russian subs make just before missile launch. • New automatic pistol, GURZA, fires high-powered 9x21 mm ammunition. Unlike western 9x21 round (which is no more powerful than standard 9x19 Parabellum round), Russian 9x21 round is designed to equal power of .357.

8

MEXICO

Drug war: President Zedillo rejects Zapatista demand for new charter on human rights and indigenous culture, drafting his own charter instead. Mexico ejects three foreign human-rights workers. U.S. agrees drug problems could best be fought by cutting demand, not arresting drug lords. Congressional investigators complain 73 UH-1H helicopters provided to Mexico to fight drugs were unable to fly at the high altitudes of the poppy fields and were often grounded with maintenance problems. • **Marines run for border:** U.S. Marines send troops back to Mexican border for first time since shooting of Mexican man by Marine in early 1997. Unarmed Marines to build a road to help the border patrol and to help local residents with home repairs as good-will gesture.

7

INDONESIA

Clinton's "Contragate": Activists denounce U.S. Army for circumventing ban on military aid to Indonesia and training the Indonesian Special Forces in marksmanship, urban warfare and psychological operations. Pentagon admits to such training, and White House calls it cooperative program that did not "enhance" Indonesia's military capabilities. Some in congress charge this amounts to exploiting loophole, compare to Reagan's aid to Contras, note "unusual" political links between Clinton and Indonesia.

10

CONGO

Ethnic tensions continue around Bukavu. Troops block local human-rights group from issuing report critical of Kabila government. Angry mobs drive U.N. massacre probe out of Mbandaka.

11

COLOMBIA

Rebels, drug traffickers: Scattered fighting continues at low level. 53rd Front of the FARC rebels take four Americans and one Italian hostage in March. Army scales back operations in area while negotiations continue. ELN rebels back out of secret deal to hold peace talks in June. U.S. General Charles Wilhelm, head of Southern Command, says Colombian military incapable of defeating rebels and drug traffickers.

12

CUBA

Cuban-American exiles protest Pentagon report that shows Cuba as no threat to U.S. Clinton delays release of report, which had already leaked. • Polls show most Americans support continued economic embargo on Cuba. • Russia and Ukraine resume work on Juragua nuclear reactor. • U.S. gives Vatican list of political prisoners still in Cuban jails, asking for pressure on Castro to release them.

13

SOUTH AFRICA

No coup, for now: Military chief General Georg Meiring presents intelligence report to President Mandela showing senior ANC officials plotting coup. Probe ordered by Mandela determines report is false, leading to Gen. Meiring's resignation in April.

3

CHINA

Targeting U.S.: Government builds new multiple-warhead ballistic missiles capable of hitting all of United States except southern Florida. New missiles are being deployed now, although multi-warhead versions will not follow along for another year or two, says report in *For Your Eyes Only*. • China doubles defense budget over last five years. U.S. nuclear companies hope to sign first contracts with China in June. • **Obsolete frigates:** Navy completes last two of six frigates of the Jiangwei class. Although it's China's latest domestic frigate design, experts say it's nearly obsolete and has very little anti-submarine capability. The last two ships do not carry the non-reloadable six-shot HQ61 air-defense missile system of the first four.

4

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban lose control over national currency, the afghani. Bank notes printed in former USSR on press controlled by opposition Alliance government. Taliban attempt to stop more currency from being printed with ceiling on serial numbers; Alliance thwarts effort by starting serial numbers over. Alliance continues to import money by truckload. • Warlord Dostam tries to seize part of Mazar-i-Sharif from the *Hezbi-Wahdat*, touching off two-day firefight between nominal allies.

5

VIETNAM

Missing plutonium update: IAEA determines 80 grams of plutonium accidentally left behind when U.S. evacuated Dalat nuclear research station, after Vietnam War, has been located and stored safely under international supervision.

6

SUDAN

Rebel attacks cited as sole reason for delays in aid deliveries. Fundamentalist leaders backing government demand control over who could run for political office and that no new political parties be allowed. Armed SAF wing of the northern opposition says it controls Gezirat, Al Fazra and Karima districts.

9

INDIA

Thermonuclear status: Indian Scientists, blocked from access to U.S. Tritium-extraction technology, invent new way to extract the material at fraction of cost U.S. and Russia paid. Tritium, a radioactive heavy hydrogen, is used to boost nuclear bombs to thermonuclear status, greatly increasing power of bomb. India, known to have several disassembled nuclear bombs, is stockpiling tritium at frantic pace, intelligence sources say. The Indian extraction process, says *Jane's Intelligence Review*, extracts tritium from heavy water from Russian-style nuclear power plants.

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RWANDA

Nuns released; teachers taken: Hutu rebels continue attacks, killing 41 civilians; 20 rebels killed by army troops. Rebels release seven nuns taken hostage, but take three teachers hostage.

14

ETHIOPIA

"Red Terror" trials: Trials begin for 81 charged with taking part in "Red Terror" under former communist regime. Former police and military officials accused of murdering 114 people who were in their custody. North Korea denies it offered exile to former Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile, whose been in Zimbabwe since 1991.

15

THAILAND

Government protests cross-border raids by Burmese Buddhist Karens on Karen refugee camps, ordering its army to protect border. United Nations asks Thailand to move refugees farther from border. Refugees complain Thai soldiers beat them and force repatriation of some.

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

BULLETIN BOARD



courtesy Jim Pate

An' Da' Winners Is ...

A celebration was in order on 14 March, when the Washington County, Maryland, Friends of the NRA met for their annual fund-raising dinner at the South Mountain Rod and Gun Club in Smithsburg. NRA Associate Counsel Jim Warner, wearing a necktie in the above photo, was observing the 25th anniversary of his release as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. Warner, who was keynote speaker for the event, is familiar to SOF conventioners as a banquet speaker. His silver tongue did the trick for the Washington County Friends of the NRA. The mostly rural county in western Maryland set a new state record for NRA fund-raising. Although funds were still being tallied from a shooting match two weeks after the dinner, NRA Field Representative Phil Roath said more than \$21,000 had already been collected, putting the county in 10th place nationally in fund-raising so far for 1998, up from 42nd place out of 525 fundraisers nationally last year. Standing with Warner at the table sponsored by *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine are, from left, Glenn "Bud" Kline, SOF National Affairs Editor Jim Pate, Warner, and World War II vet Dick Kuhn. Seated, from left, are Dave Kline, Randy Gouker, Johnny Keller and Boyd Frushour.

The six Maryland winners of complimentary subscriptions to SOF raffled off at the Friends of the NRA dinner were: Diane Clifford (Hagerstown), John Hammond (Sharpsburg), David Hartman (Hagerstown), Rodney Moore (Funkstown), Ronald Schlotterbeck (Hagerstown), David M. Secor (Cascade). Enjoy, folks! And thanks for your support of the NRA.

SOF To Be At NRA Convention In Philly

If you're planning to be at the NRA convention in Philadelphia on the 5-9 of June, be sure to drop by the SOF booth (#1258) and say hello. Using the SOF booth as a headquarters in addition to our own Robert K. Brown, will be a bevy of living legends, to include Colonels Rex Applegate, Jeff Cooper and Art Alphin, and General Joe Foss.

Art Alphin To Give Seminars At NRA Convention

Colonel Art Alphin, USA (Ret.), the victimized custom gunmaker featured in the June SOF article "Outrage — Jack-Booted Terminators Take No Prisoners and Have No Case," is scheduled to give two seminars at the upcoming NRA Convention in Philadelphia, to be held on 7 June at 0930 and 1330 in Room 201C. Alphin is an innocent and honorable man whose home was vandalized, his wife terrorized, and his totally legitimate business effectively shut down by the unfettered miscreants of the BATF, although he has not committed — and has not been charged with — any crime. Art spent many years instructing West Pointers and he gives a good talk. Don't miss what he has to say!

In the meantime, an escrow-style legal defense fund has been established. If you would like to directly help, make your check out

to "Defense Fund" and send it to:

Dolt, Furkin & Thompson, Attn: Tyler Thompson
310 Starks Building
455 South 4th Avenue
Louisville, KY 40202

Contributions are not tax-deductible, and, for that reason, are even more appreciated. But, then, freedom has never been free — to win or protect.

Brits Test For Gulf War Syndrome

According to *Jane's Defense Weekly*, the United Kingdom is going to conduct a two-year medical study at London's King's College School of Medicine, of a randomly selected group of 1990-1991 Gulf War veterans. The study is expected to cost some \$334,000 to \$418,000.

Cross-Border Rolling Thunder

Friday, 17 July, and Saturday, 18 July, will see Cross Border Run 3 and Rolling Thunder Quebec 2. Canadian and Yank Viet Vets welcome. Points of contact: Rolling Thunder Quebec; Serge St. Onge; Phone: 514-640-7511; Gamet Roberts; Phone: 514-676-9743. Canadian Vietnam Veterans Quebec; Gilles Sauve; Phone: 514-429-5418; Jacques Gendron; Phone: 514-444-4473. Be there to celebrate a brotherhood in arms (but due to current Canadian laws, leave any arms at home).

What's In A Name

The four-nation industrial consortium that has produced the Eurofighter — that is to be bought by Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain — cooperated well in the development of the plane — but may be faltering over choosing its name.

Continued on page 17



courtesy Jim Fotis

SOF publisher Robert K. Brown (left) was honored recently by the Law Enforcement Alliance of America when LEAA honcho Jim Fotis (right) presented him with this plaque in appreciation of Brown's "outstanding leadership and contributions in promoting reform of the criminal justice system, to protect the rights and freedoms of the individual."

"And, of course, the most amazing thing is how fast you can learn it!"

Top Secret Hand-To-Hand Fighting System Finally Released To Limited Number Of Civilians!

Now, with the sudden release of this incredible elite military fighting system, you can easily "take down" trained boxers, Karate black belt masters and street thugs twice your size... even if you've never been in a real fight before in your life!

— by Dr. R. L. Horine —

Dear Friend,

A year ago I would have *never* written you this letter. You see, I've gotten on the "inside" with some of the most dangerous soldiers and law enforcement people on the planet (including members of the Navy SEALs and combat instructors for the DEA, Army Rangers, major police department SWAT teams and others.)...

We all shared the same arrogant attitude: This new "simplified" hand-to-hand fighting system created for combat and intense criminal warfare should *not* be released to the general public. Because...

It's Just Too Dangerous To Be Allowed To Fall Into The Wrong Hands!

I initially felt the same. But I've recently changed my mind in a big way... all because of a beautiful woman named Julie. I'm ashamed that I withheld these important street-fighting skills from people like her — good people (like you, too), who are *unnecessarily* walking the streets as living targets for the criminal scum who prey on innocent victims and just love to humiliate and ruin people's lives.

Here's what happened: Julie was assaulted and badly beaten, by a man she could have easily knocked unconscious and escaped from — if only I had taken **15 minutes** to teach her what to do! It doesn't matter that she's a petite and gentle woman. The few simple skills of this new fighting system can be taught to *anyone* in an almost unbelievable short time, because it requires no strength, no agility, no special talents, no speed, *no nothing!* Forget what you see on T.V. — the most effective fighters in the world never use spinning head kicks or elaborate punches... in fact, they never "punch" at all. It's all so much more **simple** than that — I've seen 60-year-old grandfathers and 13-year-old teenagers *master* this stuff almost overnight. For people like *you*, well, it's even easier.

Julie knows how to defeat 99% of all street thugs **now**... but she was taught just a little too late to avoid those emotional scars she'll have to live with for the rest of her life. And now, in all honesty, I'm doing my damned best to make sure every "good guy" I can

reach *never* has to go through what this lovely lady did...

And I Don't Care What The Military, Or Anyone Else, Says!

Here's the bottom line: How safe do you feel in today's jungle-world? Are you even remotely interested in learning how (in a matter of mere hours) to turn any attacker or bully into a pile of bleeding beef at your feet — and so *automatically* — that you (or your loved ones) can always *terminate a dangerous physical assault situation before it even begins?* Would you like to have the confidence to walk nearly any street in the world, any time of day or night... knowing without question you can "neutralize" the threat of physical assault by criminal scum as easily and thoughtlessly as you would shoo away an alley cat?

I guarantee that if you are like every other man I've talked with in the last year, just *reading* this short message you have in your hands will start amazing changes to happen in your life! Changes that will turn you into a true modern-day warrior...

With So Much New Confidence Leaking From Your Pores People Will Take Notice From Across The Room!

I don't care if you're in the worst physical shape of your life, or even if you've never hit another person before, or don't have the coordination to walk and chew gum.

Julie learned it... *and* a thousand guys smaller and weaker than you have learned it, too. Almost *overnight*. A Navy SEAL combat instructor told us that this fighting system can turn *anyone* into a potent hand-to-hand fighter. He said it's amazingly easy to learn, easy to remember, and best of all, easy to *use* when needed!

Are you skeptical? Good. That means you're not gullible, not easily fooled. But then almost everyone I've met in the last year has been just as skeptical as you. And listen to what happened:

— A pint-sized writer I know from Los Angeles was nursing a broken rib when he was bear-hugged from behind by a construction worker bully who outweighed

him by at least thirty pounds. Now, this writer had never been in a real fight before in his life... in fact, his only training came from just *watching* the 8 basic moves of this fighting system on video tape... one time! Yet he automatically used one of those "moves" the second he felt his rib begin to give...

And Was Astonished To Turn Around And See His Attacker Down And Whimpering On The Sidewalk!

—A fairly well-known West Coast body-builder and ex-college middle linebacker named **Bob Pierce** (6 foot 4, 240 pounds of raw muscle), who also had studied Judo for 4 years, absolutely did *not* believe that a little guy like me (5' 6", *maybe* 170 lbs. soaking wet) could "put him down" *if he surprised me from behind!* Well, I did... and he's still tender where I "controlled" him with the simplest little move — and damn lucky I decided not to teach him a *real* lesson about going after smaller guys!

—A working mother named **Cindy Bowes** from Ohio... after *glancing* at this stuff (on a video), could only remember **one** move when she was assaulted by a man on her front lawn — but that one move put her assailant into such a boggled state that she was able to leisurely call the police and have him hauled off.

Here's how this amazing fighting system "leaked" from the most elite military circles into your hands: You've never heard about **Paul Vunak**, but the SEALs, FBI, CIA and a dozen police department SWAT teams have. He is without question one of the most respected — and *dangerous* — men in the world at hand-to-hand combat — teaching it, and using it. For over 20 years he's been mixing it up with every sort of fighting "expert" you can imagine... on the street, "in the clutch", and in thousands of situations where his life was absolutely on the line.

The U.S. Navy SEALs brought Paul in to teach them his unique system after an exhaustive worldwide search for the *best* hand-to-hand combat system in existence. Paul didn't ask them, mind you... **they** asked **him**. That's how serious Paul's reputation is in the world of real-life warfare. The

SEALS, you probably know, are flat-out the most deadly-efficient soldiers on the planet. They won't even *consider* a fighting system — especially a hand-to-hand one — unless it can be taught quickly and used with **100% effectiveness, 100% of the time.**

These Professional Soldiers Know If Their Training Fails, They Will Die In Combat!

That's why the SEALS *love* Paul's system. It incorporates real-life fighting tools no other system has; yet it can be mastered in an astonishingly short time. These soldiers have to spend most of their training time getting in shape, learning complex weapons, and studying top secret military operations. They simply do not have the time to bang around in dojos learning complicated martial arts like karate or Tae Kwan do.

In fact, if you talk to a SEAL about martial arts, he'll *laugh* at you. They know it can take *10 years* to become a black belt in any given discipline... and even then, your average YMCA-trained boxer will still dismantle your ass in about 10 seconds!

Most of these super-elite soldiers have black belts in a martial art (sometimes three or four)... but they don't even *consider* using any of it. All that fancy kicking and hacking may look scary, or it doesn't work on the battle field... or in the street.

It simply doesn't work.

Imagine this: You're a SEAL out in the action; you've just crawled through miles of dense jungle, you haven't eaten for three days, you're dehydrated, sick from dysentery, wounded in two places, out of ammo, and carrying a sixty-pound pack.

You *ain't* gonna rely on a Hollywood spinning round-house kick when the enemy ambushes you. That's not the way real fighting happens. And that's why Paul Vunak's "simplified" hand-to-hand system is so treasured by the soldiers and police and federal agents who need to *rely* on it.

* **There are no complicated moves!** In fact, in Paul's "basic" system, there are *only 8 moves total!* And all of them are unbelievably effective, and all can be learned and *mastered* in only a matter of hours.

* **You don't have to be quick, or coordinated, or even in decent physical shape!** All the deadly power comes from extensions of the way your body *naturally* moves. This is called your "gross motor skills" — the same simple movements you use to walk across the room, to scratch your ear, or to step into a car. (I've seen 5-year-old kids who still run funny take down bullies twice their size and age... and little old ladies with limps cancel out young violent men!)

* **You don't need to train constantly to become a master of this system!** The SEALS, the cops, the agents... *none* of them have time to waste in training. Yet they feel confident using Paul's system even after a *single lesson!* (As you will, too!)

* **Plus, just as importantly, there is no formality, no religious nonsense or bowing or wearing odd uniforms in this system!** It is *not* martial arts — it is a simplified

fighting system that goes *beyond* the street-smarts any martial art could ever offer you!

So how did Paul come up with this amazing fighting system? First of all, he's very well-known in the martial art field. He studied with the legendary Dan Ionsanto — original partner of martial art film star Bruce Lee ("Enter The Dragon") in the art of Jeet Kune Do. You probably haven't heard of this strange fighting art, but nearly every karate magazine devotes dozens of pages to it. It isn't really an ancient art in itself, like Kenpo or Kung Fu — instead, this Jeet Kune Do is sort of a "greatest hits" method of all the best parts of *all* the martial arts. Bruce and Dan and Paul have been copied (mostly unsuccessfully) by thousands of "wannabe" martial art experts. Yet only Paul "walks the walk" of a true seasoned street-fighter, and is absolutely *idolized* by the "karate crowd" for his warrior life-style.

Paul — who is the internationally-acknowledged master of Jeet Kune Do, and considered the man who went on where the more famous Bruce Lee left off — had *only one rule* when choosing the moves he would incorporate into his "simplified" hand-to-hand system:

It Had To Work 100% Of The Time In Actual Street Fights... Where There Are No Rules!

Paul has proved, over and over again with his own blood (and life) on the line, that his basic system can help anyone defeat even the most brutal, huge and insane street fighter in hand-to-hand combat.

It's not a game to Paul. It's not a game for the soldiers and cops who have to use his system to save their lives. And it won't be a game for you, once you've seen for yourself how easily you can incorporate this amazing system into your own life.

Listen: In spite of his efficiency at fighting, Paul Vunak is one of the most compassionate men I've ever met. And he absolutely agrees with me that it's a crime so many good people are walking around afraid in their own neighborhoods — afraid of being attacked, afraid that their girlfriends or wives and kids will be assaulted, or kidnapped, or worse. Paul has a lot of people close to him; he knows what it's like to fear for the safety of loved ones.

That's why he has volunteered to bring his basic fighting system to the public. You should know that he is taking an *enormous risk* in doing this — his job with the Navy SEALS is important to him...

But Paul doesn't care. He knows his simplified system will absolutely mean the difference between life and death for a lot of people who need it — people, like you...

Who Still Remember When A Civilized Man Was Responsible For His Own Safety!

Paul has just one serious request. He wants every precaution taken to keep this important fighting system out of the hands of felons and "suspicious" types. And that's my job — that's why I'm being almost overly-paranoid about who I let see this stuff. As much as is humanly possible, I intend to keep this away

from the criminals out there... while at the same time giving the advantages this system offers to as many of the "good" people as I can reach. But, honestly, I don't know how long I will be allowed to offer Paul's system.

I Don't Want Any More "Good Guys" Hurt Because They Didn't Have Any Of These Simple Street Fighting Skills!

At first we were planning to go from city to city doing seminars, spreading a slow wake of confidence among people as we traveled. But that would take too long, and in the end we still wouldn't reach everyone who needs this crucial survival information. No — we had to find a way to get this stuff into the hands of every deserving person *as quickly as we could.*

What we did was, I think, brilliant. We decided to *video-tape* an entire "teaching course" with Paul, and get it to a pre-selected number of people through the mail, all at once. Believe me, this is no ordinary video — instead, it's a genuine **breakthrough** in training technique... even better than what many of the cops and soldiers got during their own initial training!

Here's what you get: Paul Vunak went into a San Diego film studio for a week and allowed us to produce the most incredible video package you've ever seen. We were able to take that week's worth of shooting and "distill" it down to just *one* video — that's how simple Paul's system is. This single video is all you'll need to be able to learn (and master) his entire basic "simplified" hand-to-hand street fighting system!

This is the most intense and enlightening hour you'll spend in front of a T.V.! We spent months of preparation for the shoot, and spent about ten times more money in production than we'd planned on — but we're not complaining. This video surpasses all of our wildest dreams. You see, we've all seen about a thousand of the *other* videos out there — you can pick up any martial art magazine and see twenty ads a month for the latest fad among karate "experts". But they're all a huge waste of time, shot with "Uncle Ernie's" hand-held camcorder and without a second thought given to **teaching** you anything. All you get is a long, boring home video of a guy showing off his air punches and spinning kicks, or of some weird seminar where you had to *be there* to get anything of value.

We went the *other* way — using **3 cameras** on Paul and the action at all times. So you get the *best* shot to see what's happening, then get it again from a different angle... and then get it *again* in slow motion, with everything described and broken down into its simplest and most easily-learned form.

The way we shot this video...

You Might As Well Be In The Same Room With Paul, Getting "Inside" Advice And A Dissection Of Moves Most Soldiers Never See During Training!

Paul has absolutely dedicated himself to teaching you *everything* you need to know... and to do it so you can come away from your **first viewing** with enough powerful know-how and new skills to increase your naturally fighting ability by 200%...

instantly! This is the equivalent of having 8 personal, super-intense lessons all recorded just for you... by the most *respected* hand-to-hand fighter on the planet!

Even better, Paul took the time to show you clear (and exciting) **real-life examples** of how to handle situations in a crowded bar, in a recreation room, and in the street. These "extra" situational learning tools remove any doubt you may have as to how to use your new skill in the real world.

→ **You'll learn** how to handle two attackers at once — with a one-two natural him-to-him-back-to-him-and-out of danger move

* When to use the most *simple* strike you'll ever learn... an unstoppable natural move so effective in ending fights that it's not allowed in full-contact karate tournaments! (Instant disqualification — it's also a move that 99% of the most brutal street fighters you'll ever encounter have **never seen before... and don't know how to defend against!**)

* **How to use the "hip-swinging secret" soldiers use to drop opponents instantly — no speed or strength required, yet it's like driving a 160 lb. bar of lead into the bad guy's belly! (It's so effective, you don't even have to come close to hitting your**

"Thanks for a video that the ordinary person who works for a living can actually learn from! I am passing these simple and effective tools along to my wife and children." — **Rick Manente**, Los Angeles

"Street Safe is the most effective self defense system I have ever come across." — **CA Narcotics Task Force Commander**, (Name withheld due to security regulations.)

"This (Street Safe) will probably turn the Martial Arts community on its ear... BRAVO Paul." — **Jim Hinesly**, SWAT Team Member, Hostage Negotiator, and member of Sheriff's Tactical Team.

"...the SEALS love Paul's system. It incorporates real-life fighting tools no other system has; yet it can be mastered in an astonishingly short time."

that allows your body to act the way it *naturally* wants to.

→ **You'll learn** the difference between easily-applied "shock" moves, which set up an attacker for you to finish off when you choose to, and even-simpler "clincher" moves — the ones that will *instantly* end any fight the second you deliver them.

→ **You'll learn** exactly why the "joint manipulation" and difficult kicks of most martial arts don't work in real life situations — and why, once you know the simple moves of instantly ending a fight anyway, you don't even *need* to know anything else! (A veteran cop once told me how sad it always is to see the rookies fresh out of the academy try to use their fancy karate moves on a drug-crazed maniac or a drunk bully — only to get their heads cracked open while the criminal gets away, laughing. That's why the veteran is so happy he learned the **real** way to end any fight from Paul.)

And, of course, you'll also learn the main secret of this system's popularity with professional soldiers: it's easily learned, easily remembered, and most importantly, easily *used*.

Here's what else you'll discover in this amazing video:

* The single most important move you can make in any altercation — it's what your body *wants* to do, but what *most* people panic about and refuse to allow themselves to do! (Yet it will save your life!)

* **How to use a simple "cat-like" move to instantly position yourself to deliver the easiest knock-out blow imaginable — a strike so natural your grandmother could pull it off against Mike Tyson!**

* How to instantly "shut down" an attacker's testosterone levels, using your body's own built-in "brick". (Even a 90 lb. woman possesses this amazing rock-hard weapon!)

* **Why hitting anyone with your fist is silly (even trained boxers bust knuckles that way)... and how to use the 8 "natural weapons" of your body to deliver 5 times the power of a fist with *half* the risk of injuring yourself!**

"target" area... even the sloppiest attempt by you will bring him to his knees!)

* How to effortlessly "parlay" the same natural force that has ended more professional football players careers than any other... it's a human's weakest point during a fight (or before a fight begins), and once you know about it you've just increased your ability to defeat a larger man by **200%**!

* **How to use a super-effective, completely unexpected technique straight out of the "Three Stooges" to cause any attacker to automatically (1) back up, (2) raise his hands in defense, and (3) blink rapidly... all of which instantaneously reverses the tables and makes your attacker suddenly vulnerable to a fight-ending blow you can deliver in your own sweet time.**

* Why all elite soldiers are given "permission" to use the one street fighter's Secret Weapon we are all taught from kindergarten *not* to use... and how you can use it to quickly remove yourself from any situation where you have been surprised from behind!

* **How to use the *other* "dirty" street-fighting tool not allowed in any civilized boxing or karate match... because of it's immediate ability to disorientate and topple your opponent! (It also works when you do it incorrectly!)**

And more! Don't let the idea that a system with "only" 8 basic moves must be too simple to work, either — this isn't theory, this is the result of a lifetime of experimentation in blood! Everything Paul teaches you was perfected either in the street, or on the battlefield... where it had to work, or good men would die.

Listen to what these experts have to say:

"There's no flare, no garbage, no ceremonial nonsense, no magic. Paul can spend 15 minutes with anyone and make you twice the fighter you were before!" — **Shane Brott**, Black Belt Martial Arts Instructor

"Finally, after 23 years of karate and other martial art styles (including military training), I found a system that works in the real world! Paul, where were you 20 years ago?" — **Paul Iwamoto**, Chicago

Actual SEAL team members are not allowed (by strict Navy regulations) to comment, but in private conversations with me they have said that Paul Vunak's training system has provided them with the most realistic training they've ever had, going back 20 years!

"Paul has one advantage nobody else has — actual experience in street fighting. Having been in it, he can teach you how to not only survive, but win, even if you aren't experienced in the street." — **Rich Chen**, Hawaiian ex-street-fighter

"Listen: Any citizen who leaves the safety of themselves or their family in the hands of any organization, including your local police department, is in for trouble! We all need to take responsibility for our own well being. I feel this video tape will give anybody who watches it immediate tools in self-defense principles that will make you confident. And anyone from the age of 13 to 80 can use these tools!"

— **Sgt. Carlos Hernandez**, South Florida Police Tactics Instructor

That last quote sure puts things in perspective, doesn't it? That's a *police officer* talking — telling you the days of relying on your local cops for protection are long gone!

Let me tell you something you already know in your heart...

As A Man, It's More Important Than Ever Before To Know How To Defend Yourself!

And, when your family and loved ones are at risk, you need to know how to take out aggressors with **absolute certainty**. Watching Sly Stallone and John Wayne deliver movie-magic roundhouse punches doesn't cut it.

You have a **duty**, as a man, to protect yourself and loved ones *like* a man. And no amount of philosophical nonsense is ever going to change that fact.

You've seen the headlines — rape is up, assault and murder doesn't even make the front page anymore, and robbers are shooting people even **after** they give up their watches and money (it's a trend the police call "Thrill Killing"). Heck, there are jerks hurting people without *any reason at all!* The rules are gone. You could be attacked inside your home, in the back aisles of a supermarket or theater, waiting in your car at a light, anywhere, anytime, by a growing mob of remorseless scum who *enjoy* demolishing innocent people's health and lives.

But they aren't going to enjoy coming up on you, friend. Not anymore.

It's Time To Stop Being A Victim, And Learn To Walk Your Streets With Confidence!

Look, I know you don't want to turn into some hardened, mean-eyed killer. That's not what Paul's video is about. But do not doubt that the newfound confidence this information gives you will "leak" into every area of your life. I've seen it happen a thousand times...

- ◆ You'll "carry" yourself in a new way that just says "Don't mess with this guy."
- ◆ People will be extremely pleased to see you smile and be nice to them... and will go far out of their way to be extra nice to you, automatically.
- ◆ Have you ever seen how people treat a man like Sean Connery or Joe Montana when they enter a room? It's not just that they're good-looking... more, it's that these men *reek* of confidence and the lack of fear. You can have that, too.
- ◆ Plus, it has to be mentioned: There's an undeniable *sexual attractiveness* to any man who knows how to look the world in the eye and not flinch. You can't fake it — it's a primal, animal part of us, and when it's there it shines like a searchlight in your eyes.

Now, let's be straight about something here: This is not a magic potion you take to become invulnerable. Use this system only at your own risk, and take responsibility all the way down the line for your actions. You can understand why I have to tell you this — we've gone to an enormous amount of trouble and risk to bring this material to you. We're not talking about playing games here; this is real life. Used correctly, Paul's basic system is without doubt your best first-line defense in a tight spot. You'll be able to "parlay" your learning into a few simple moves that will take down a man twice your size, even as he's assaulting you — and even if he has 10 years of martial arts experience, or a lifetime of street-fighting under his belt! This stuff is that effective.

But it's not fool-proof. Don't be a fool, and for God's sake don't go looking for trouble. That's not what this video is about.

That said, you should know that you will take **absolutely no financial risk** in ordering this video! It could not be simpler for you to get this video, watch it at your leisure, and decide in your own sweet time whether it's everything we have told you it is. In fact, you get an almost ridiculously-generous...

100% No-Questions-Asked Money-Back Guarantee!

If you aren't convinced, after owning this video for **3 entire months**, that it's the real thing, just send it back to us for a complete refund of your purchase price. You'll get no hassle from me or anyone else... in fact, I will *personally* make sure you are sent your refund by return mail. Heck, you don't even need a reason to send it back — I trust your judgment. Like I said, I'm just trying to get this info into the hands of as many "good guys" as I can... *while I can*.

Here's how to order: We've set up a special phone line for you — all you need to do is call **1-800-899-8153** and tell the person who answers you want the "Street Safe Code ST-05" video package, and use your credit card. That's a toll-free call, and won't cost you a cent. Or, you can fill out the special Order Form below and mail it with your check to:

**Threat Response Solutions
606 E. Acequia • Dept. ST-05
Visalia, CA 93292**

That's all there is to it — and when you use your special "code", your video will be *shipped out by return mail!* The price for this video is dirt-cheap, too — in fact, at just \$69 plus \$5 shipping and handling (total: \$74), it's **less** than you'd pay for *one* lousy personal lesson in most karate schools... where at *most* you'd learn how to bow and assume some silly stance that will fool no one!

This really *is* a great offer — because it's the real thing, because your life will change immediately for the better... and because you risk *nothing* by giving the video a "test run" on your own T.V. set.

Don't put this off — remember, *there's a very real and very serious chance this information won't be allowed out to the public for very long!* And if you don't order right away, you may never see this offer again, ever. Don't let that happen — you stand to lose *nothing*, and yet what you can **gain** is more important to living well in this world than any other skill you'll ever learn!

Sincerely,



R. L. Horine
President, T.R.S.

P.S. One thing — It's *very* important. I have a few copies here of a hot new special report, and I want to send it to you, absolutely **FREE**. It's called *Close Quarters Gun Disarmament*, and it's written by Randy Wanner, chief instructor at a national institute that *exclusively* teaches FBI, DEA, SWAT and other specialized units... but never civilians! In fact, **this report was never intended for civilian eyes** — Randy has only agreed to let me give this to carefully selected people who have been cleared to receive our *Street Safe* video.

The information in this hot report has **already saved the lives of officers on duty** — it's a revolutionary technique that allows you a 91% chance of disarming an assailant without getting shot... and with the increase in armed robbery in the U.S., *where people are shot even when they cooperate*, this report could absolutely save your life.

It's yours **FREE** when you get the video... and you can **KEEP** it even if you decide later to return the video package!

P.P.S. *Hold on — we're not through yet!* I've just been informed that Paul Vunak finally agreed to let us film several sessions of his special **Invitation-Only Advanced Class...** and offer the **video tape** of this "insider's look" **FREE** when you order **STREET SAFE** within the next 11 days. (This is incredible stuff!) Paul gives these "closed door" classes to select students, always late at night, and they are always filled with SEALS, Marines, SWAT team leaders and other agents who insist on remaining anonymous — the room is almost a "Who's Who" of dangerous soldiers and famous fighters. This video tape is over an hour long, and will take you above and beyond the knowledge you get from **STREET SAFE**... it's a "**master's graduate course**" for experienced fighters! The tape is live, *raw* (a little bloody, too), but absolutely "must-see" material for anyone who wants to learn how the "big boys" hone their skills to perfection. It will **never** be offered to the public for any price... but this exciting video-taped look into the **real world of training soldiers** is yours **FREE** when you order **STREET SAFE** now. (And make sure you watch this new tape *closely* — you won't believe some of the "tricks" you'll pick up as these guys tear into each other!) This **extra bonus** is *also* yours to *keep*, as our gift, even if you decide to return the main package!

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→ _____ By initialing this line, I am stating that I am over 18 years of age and that I have never been convicted of a felony. I also state that I will use the information contained in Street Safe in a defensive situation only. I accept sole responsibility for my actions as an adult.

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Bulletin Board

Continued from page 12

British representatives had suggested the name Spitfire, in honor of the famous WW II defender of England's skies. This name was rejected because of Luftwaffe sensitivities, and the Germans, in turn, suggested the name Typhoon, which was, in turn, rejected by the British for similar reasons.

According to *Defense News*, a diplomatic attempt at combining the two names — Spitoon — was equally unacceptable to all parties.

New 800 Number For Solons

The 800 number provided — by private donations, not tax dollars — for the convenience of constituents to call their elected representatives in Washington, has been changed. The new number toll-free number for the Capitol Switchboard is: 800-504-0031. Remember to be brief and be polite — they'll remember your call for that if nothing else.

Numbers Wrong

Recently released figures in the United Kingdom estimate that the United Nations has grossly overstated the actual number of land mines that have been planted without regard for existing conventions for placement, marking, etc. The estimate is that the real figure is roughly half that generally bandied about by the U.N. or quoted in the press.

South African Merc Ban Passes

The South African Parliament has passed the bill banning South African nationals or companies from "mercenary activities." "Legitimate military assistance" is to be allowed under the new law, subject to a National Conventional Arms Control Committee permit and approval from the South African minister of defense. "Legitimate military assistance" is not closely defined under the new law, but is thought to be essentially any officially sanctioned activity that has passed muster of the National Conventional Arms Control Committee. Persons convicted of violating this new law are subject to a fine of up to \$200,000, or up to 10 years' imprisonment.

Russian Device Kills Engines, Electronics

Dr. Ira Merritt, a military analyst at the advanced technology directorate at the U.S. Army Missile Defense and Space Technology Center, recently told the Congressional Joint Economic Committee (JEC) that a new Russian-developed device, called RADAN, can potentially stop car engines and destroy the electronic

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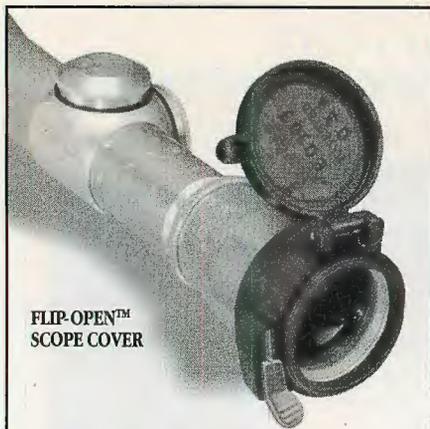
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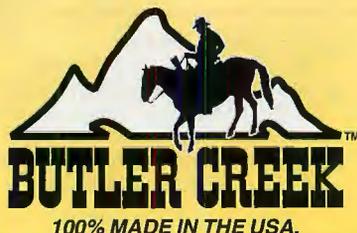
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War Tracking

After you peruse the *SOF* web page (www.sofmag.com) to get the inside dope on what's going on in the Gulf and elsewhere, we recommend you punch up www.janes.com (defense section) for an update on what's happening now, and an overview of what's happened there since WWI to help bring it all into perspective.

U.S. To Owe Iran \$20 Billion?

If the nine-member International Court of Justice rules in favor of Iran, Washington could be held liable for more than \$10 billion in claims — plus interest accumulated since 1979 — for disputes arising from the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program that was ongoing when the Shah was ousted from power in Iran.

At that time, Tehran was second only to Saudi Arabia as the U.S. Government's biggest arms sales client, with \$20 billion and nearly 1,700 active contracts on the books. The International Court of Justice, in the Hague, is slated to meet later this year and begin deciding just what remained on the FMS books at the time of the Islamic revolution that toppled the Shah, which items had been delivered, and who held title to the weapons. After nearly 20 years of claims, counter-claims and briefs, state department lawyers fear the case could go either way, and if it turns sour for the United States, the financial penalties could be devastating.

Germans Bust Xenophobes

Times are hard in the former communist-controlled portion of Germany, and



SOF Staff

Greg Dahlgren, left, of the Western Fish and Wildlife Federation presents an award to Pierce County, Wash., Deputy Bill Burris and his wife, Jan. The plaque and Model 92 Beretta pistol were provided by *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine and the Western Fish and Wildlife Federation to recognize Burris for his leadership in the fight against ballot proposition I-676 in Washington state. As president of the Washington State Law Enforcement Firearms Association, Burris was the central figure who organized law-enforcement opposition to the gun-control measure masquerading as a "child-safety" initiative.

hard times tend to harden heads: Officials estimate there are some 45,000 "right-wing" [sic] extremists in the former East Germany. The number of attacks by them rose more than 10% last year, and half of those took place in the former DDR. In response to such attacks, the state of Brandenburg, which contains Berlin, has established a 45-man police "commando" unit of specially trained and equipped officers called *Mega* (Mobile Units Against Violence and Xenophobia).

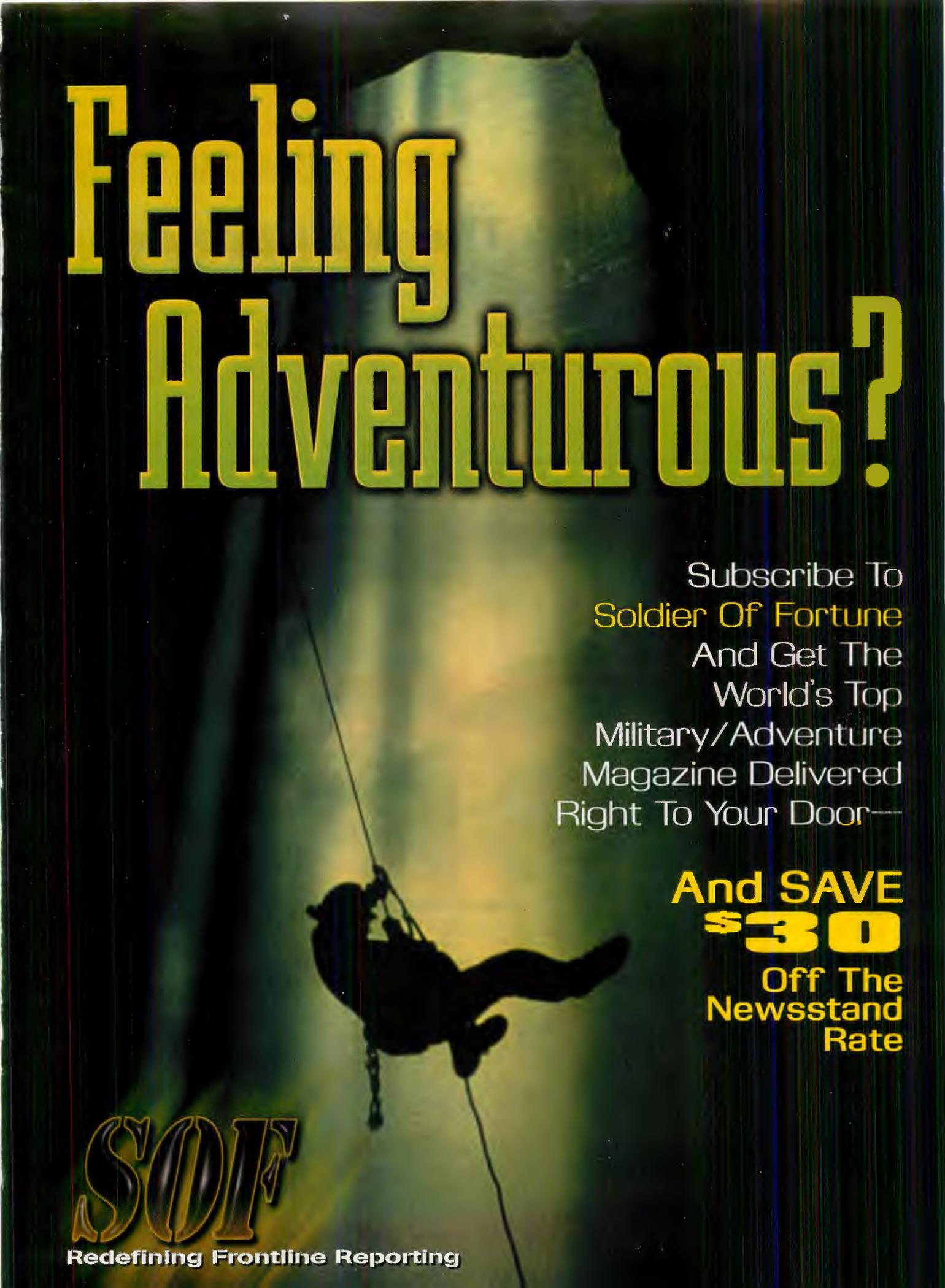
Equipped with dogs and helicopters, the unit has enjoyed considerable success in Brandenburg state, which is thought to have the highest concentration of neo-Nazis in Germany, and which has been plagued with attacks on *Auslanders* [foreigners], and secret rallies to honor Adolph Hitler. Possession of Nazi paraphernalia is a crime in Germany, as is any neo-Nazi activity including the possession of neo-Nazi literature.

The unit made 23 arrests their first week on the job, and recently arrested 11 youths in a survival training camp, seizing weapons and Nazi regalia.

GIs In Africa

Working under the aegis of the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), the United States is using SF to train the forces of African states by way of doctrine and joint exercises to be better able to coordinate and develop peacekeeping abilities. Navy SEALs have also been involved in these exercises. ☒

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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Chuck Karwan

Don't Overlook The M1 Carbine

There is a strong trend for police agencies and armed citizens to procure semiautomatic pistol-caliber carbines or submachine guns for use as tactical weapons offering superior performance to their handguns. There are a number of such carbines available, or soon to become available, on the market including: the Marlin Camp Carbines, in 9mm and .45 ACP; the Ruger carbines in 9mm and .40 S&W; the Colt Light Weight Carbine, in 9mm; and several others. The submachine gun field for police is dominated by the H&K MP5, in 9mm, and .40 S&W distantly followed by the Colt AR15 9mm, the UZI 9mm, and others by Steyr and Beretta.

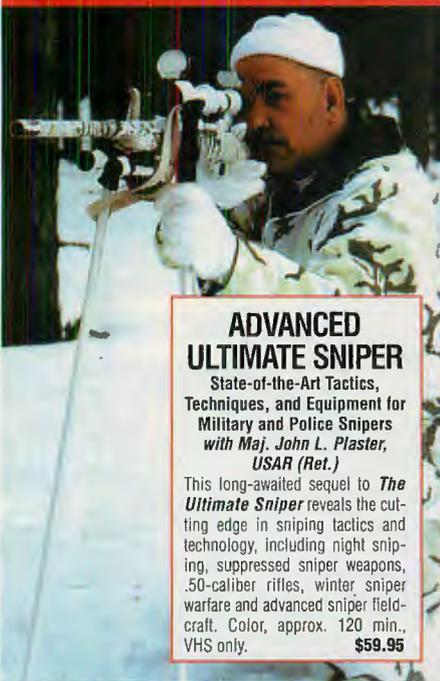
While all of these guns offer some improved performance with regard to energy delivered and practical accuracy over a handgun in the same or similar calibers, none are nearly as effective as the old and often maligned .30 M1 Carbine with proper ammunition. The M1 Carbine weighs only 5.5 pounds, making it as light as the lightest such guns on the market and considerably lighter than many like the Ruger carbine or the UZI submachine gun. It has superb reliability under the worse field conditions. Its accuracy level meets or exceeds that of virtually all the pistol-caliber carbines and submachine guns. High capacity 15- and 30-round magazines are readily available in quantity at very modest prices.

Ballistically, the little .30 Carbine cartridge packs about 2.5 times the energy of a standard .45 ACP or 9mm parabellum load fired from a pistol. This is solidly in the energy territory of the .44 Magnum cartridge fired from a handgun. Indeed its velocity is only 90 fps less than the Russian 5.45x39mm AK74 assault rifle cartridge at the muzzle, though the latter retains its energy down range much better. As you can see the M1 Carbine is no slouch in the energy department when compared to its competition, though it has only one-third the muzzle energy of a .30-06.

I fully realize that a cartridge's muzzle energy is not the sole criteria for measuring its effectiveness, however, it is a good indication of the cartridge's potential if loaded with suitable expanding bullets. With its military full-metal jacketed bullets, the .30 Carbine will drill right through most helmets, body armor, car bodies, and such. Unfortunately, the trauma delivered to flesh is not high unless it strikes bone as it would with most upper-chest hits on a human. Then the trauma is greatly increased due to the presence of secondary missiles in the form of bone fragments. Interestingly, much the same is true of much more powerful cartridges like the .30-06 and 7.62mm NATO in their full-metal jacket form.

When the .30 Carbine cartridge is loaded with bullets of the

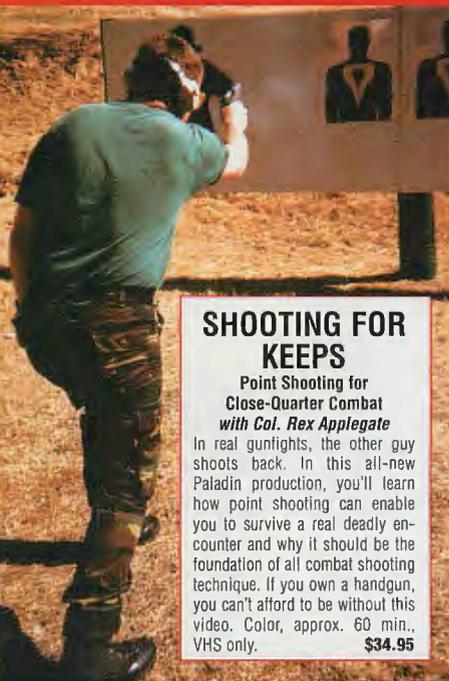
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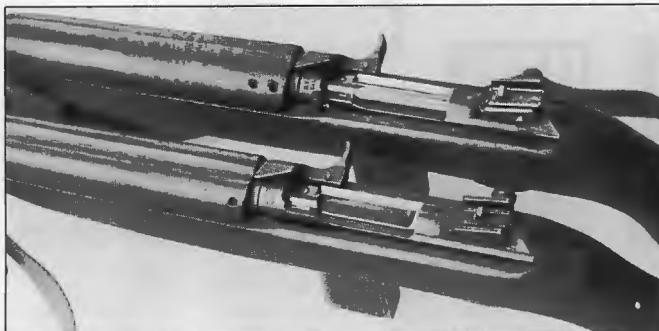
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The selector switch next to the receiver above the magazine marks this carbine as an M2. In all other ways the M2 was an exact functional equivalent of the M1 Carbine. Note the 15-round magazine. (below) An M1 Carbine (near) and an M2 Carbine side by side. Only the selector switch and round bolt give away the M2.



expanding variety its effectiveness as a man stopper increases exponentially. One police unit I am familiar with has experienced quite a few shootings using M1 Carbines loaded with jacketed soft-points. They found it to be extremely effective even against large and determined antagonists. Quoting one of their more experienced officers, "We never had to shoot anyone twice."

I have shot many animals with the .30 Carbine cartridge using expanding bullets. In my experience out to at least 150 yards it makes a far more serious wound than does the .223, .308, or .30-06, when the latter are used with full-metal jacketed bullets. It is also greatly superior to any of the common defensive pistol rounds (with the exception of the full-pressure 10mm auto) fired from a carbine even when the latter are using hollow-point ammunition.

We have all heard the war stories about the pip-squeak M1 Carbine not stopping charging enemy soldiers even though they were hit 15 or 30 times. Since military M1 Carbine magazines came in two sizes, 15- and 30-round, the latter actually developed for the selective-fire M2 Carbine, it is clear that the stalwart tellers of such stories conveniently *never* missed.

After interviewing many veteran M1 Carbine users from WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, I find that the vast majority of these folks found the M1 Carbine to be quite effective. One former Marine, who saw extensive combat with the M1 Carbine in the Pacific during WWII, was quite emphatic that the little gun and its cartridge were very effective in the close-range combat that he experienced. He also stated that he greatly preferred the M1 Carbine to the Garand for that type fighting.

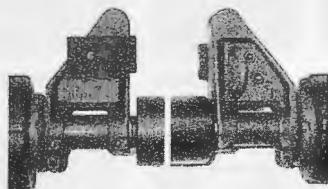
Another highly experienced veteran M1 Carbine user interviewed was a Special Forces adviser in the early days of the Vietnam War. He had advised indigenous units armed almost completely with M1 Carbines and used the gun extensively himself in combat. He stated the carbines were very effective in the close-range jungle combat that they experienced. More to the point, he said that when the M1 Carbines were replaced by M16s he found that the latter did not offer any significant advantage in effectiveness over the older M1 Carbines.

Probably the most authoritative account of the effectiveness of the M1 Carbine in real combat comes from the superb book *Shots Fired In Anger*, by Lieutenant Colonel John George. George served as a

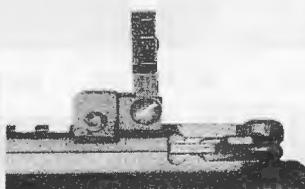
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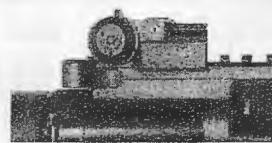
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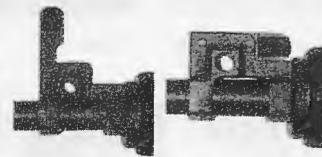
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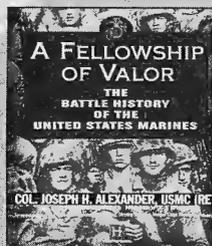
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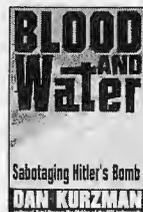
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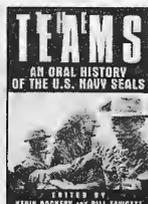
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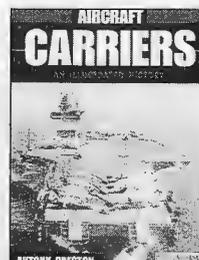
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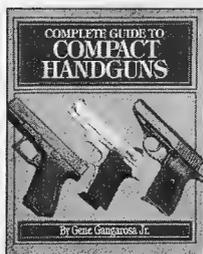
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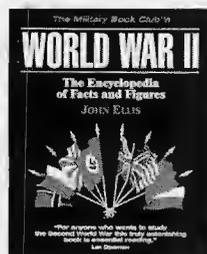
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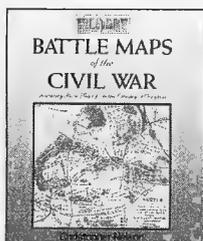
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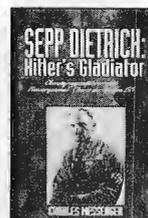
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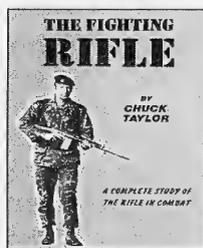
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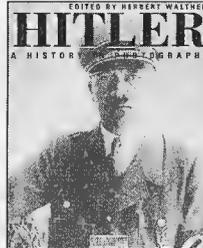
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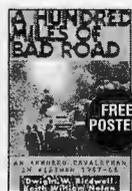
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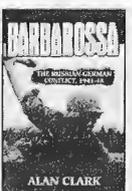
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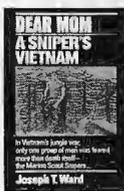
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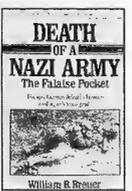
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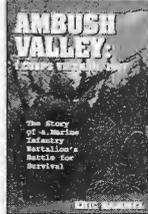


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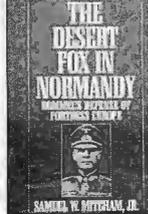
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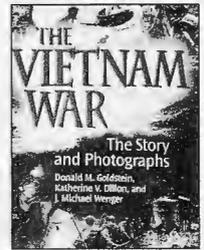
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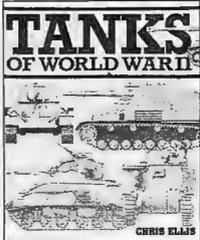
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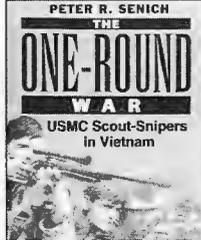
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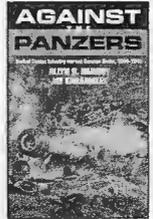
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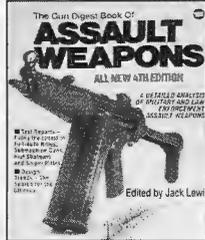
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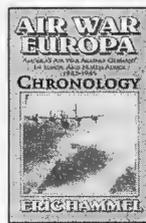
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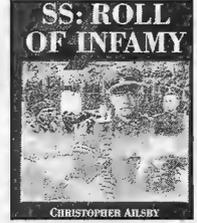
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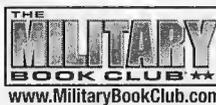


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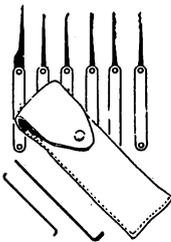
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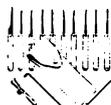
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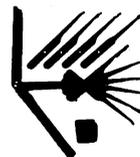
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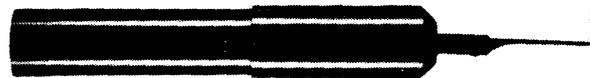


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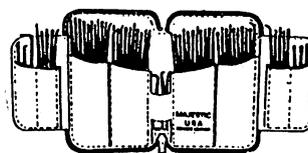
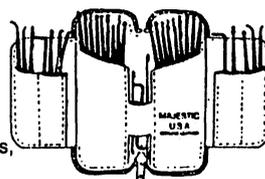


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I Was There

by Steven L. Waterman

Shooting The *U.S.S. California*

In 1971, I was attached to Combat Camera Group's Underwater Photo Team in Norfolk, Va. We received a call that a team was needed at AUTEK (Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center) on the Bahamian Island of Andros. This was sweet news as we always used any excuse we could to go down there on a job. There was no problem getting volunteers: The water there was warm, clear — and the beer was cold and cheap. There weren't any available women, but what the hell.

Chief Dick Johnson picked the team. We had Mac McCraw, yours truly, and another guy. In addition, we'd have some young dumb Frogmen from UDT 21 to back us up as our swim buddies. The CO of Team 21 sent a new lieutenant junior grade as OIC of the Frogs and told him he'd be working for us. The entire job was under Lieutenant Commander Chuck LeMoyne, of Naval Ships Systems Engineering Command, or something. I hadn't worked with Chuck before, but I had heard he was one of the good guys. Chuck was a UDT/SEAL officer and was doing his time on shore duty to get his ticket punched up his ladder to Admiral.

We arrived at the Fresh Creek International Airport (a dirt strip with remnants of aircraft that didn't quite make it laying about the perimeter) where a van came out to pick us up. A platoon of civilian engineers was already there from another of the Naval Engineering Commands. Chuck was with them.

During the initial get-together (which we photographers didn't

I could spot the screws churning through the water. I shot them from 30 feet as the hull blasted by overhead ...

attend) the Frog officer told Chuck that we were *just* photographers and, therefore, *they* were the guys who were trained to do scary shit — like shooting the film — and we should just be there to support them. Chuck derailed that train of thought and things went on as planned. At a subsequent gathering, amid the cheery — but ladyless — ambience of the Thousand Fathom Club, we established rapport and proceeded to get decisively smashed.

Early the next morning we faced our problem: Above 18 knots



Cmdr. Chuck LeMoyne (center) prepares for a 1973 test dive with the experimental General Electric Mark 1500 Closed Circuit Scuba. Joining him are Lt.j.g. Brian Barbata (left), from UDT-21, and Cmdr. Shaoul Ziv, CO of the Israeli Navy Commandos.

our "target's" sonar had such an ambient noise level that they could not hear anything. It was believed the problem was being caused by cavitation along the sonar dome (when uneven pressures in the water, caused by irregular surfaces, pull air bubbles from the water which collapse and emit noise which, in turn, screws up the sonar).

They had a boom-buoy system set up that would give the helmsman of the *U.S.S. California* (a 600-foot nuclear-powered frigate) a target. This system was nothing more than a couple floats on ropes leading down to weights at the end. A boom made of neutrally buoyant aluminum tubing kept the sides at a specific distance. The ship would go between the buoys in the same direction each time.

Photographers would be stationed at various positions along the boom system. I would be halfway from the waterline to the keel on the starboard side shooting with a DBM-9 movie camera set at 200 frames per second. We would wait on the surface, hanging off a large inner tube, until the ship started its run. At a certain point, the ship would blow its whistle and the team would submerge and take up stations. When we reached ours, on Chuck's hand signal, I would start shooting film of him firing a .357 magnum bangstick into a five-gallon can we had tied off on the buoy line. This gave the ship an acoustic marker for reference. From that point on I had to keep the trigger down on the camera to keep continuity. The ship glided by at

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Contact Jack Pryor, DPI & Associates, Dept. SOF, 3860 Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90008; Phone: 213-296-1040; Fax: 213-298-7891.

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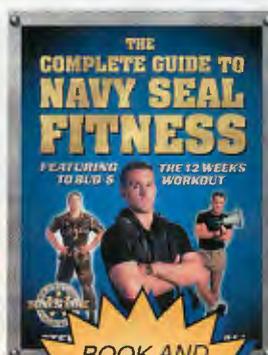
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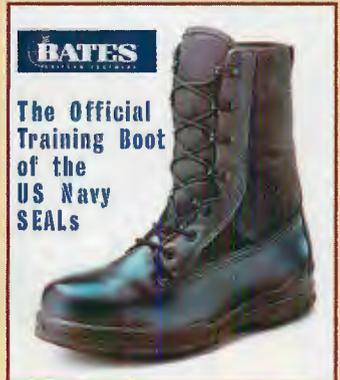
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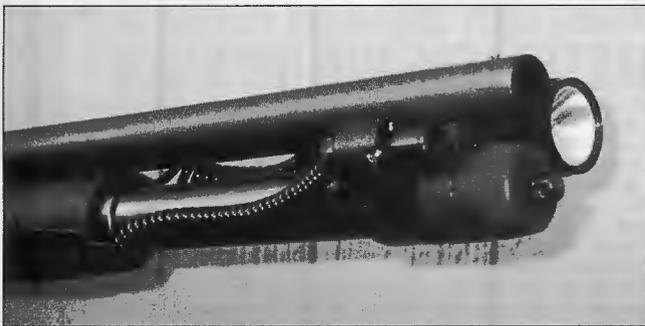
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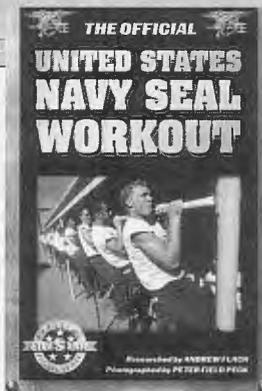
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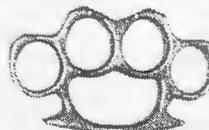
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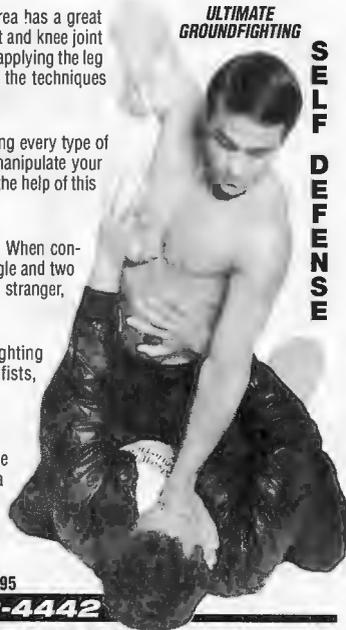
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Arming The Commies

In Clinton's perfect world, all American civilians would be disarmed. Meanwhile, communist governments would have all the firepower they want.

Just weeks before Bill Clinton banned the import of more foreign-made "assault weapons" by executive order, he quietly allowed defense contractors to export nuclear-missile technology to communist China.

According to a recent *New York Times* story, the Justice Department was looking to prosecute two defense contractors — Loral and Hughes Electric — for illegally providing China with space technology that "significantly advanced Beijing's ballistic-missile program." The *Times* reports Clinton, in February, "quietly approved the export to China of similar technology by one of the companies under investigation" — namely Loral.

Why on earth would he do such a thing? Fundraising interests, perhaps? The *Times* found that Bernard Schwartz, chairman of Loral, was the largest single contributor to the Democratic National Committee in 1997.

Downsize This, Bill

By "reinventing government," a.k.a. downsizing the military, Clinton hopes to sell Americans on new programs that would involve government in every aspect of life. In his most recent state of the union address, Clinton spoke of reviving Social Security; funding more teachers for smaller classroom sizes; ending child labor; federal child-care subsidies; federal money to build a better Internet; more border patrol; and on and on and on.

Baby boomers are investing, finally, to fund their retirements. That has grown the economy, and Clinton can't wait to spend the money.

After all, Clinton said, America has the "smallest government in 35 years," and the "typical middle-class family will now have the lowest tax rates in 20 years."

Neither statement could be further from the truth. According to the Department of Commerce, federal taxes are consuming an all-time high 20.8% of every dollar produced. Also, at an all-time high, is the number of days an American must work to pay their *share* of taxes. This year, each American worked until May 9 just to pay their share of federal, local and state taxes, which took up 35.2% of their income.

The only thing Clinton has downsized is the number of federal employees — and mainly at the expense of the military and its civilian-support staff.

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Closet Homophobe

Clinton hypocrisy is normally sad. Sometimes it's maddening. Occasionally, it's just downright *Hillary-ous*.

Clinton's first endeavor as president was an attempt to instantly dismantle 200 years of history and open the military to lesbians and gays. He's positioned himself as a friend of homosexuals throughout his career as governor and president. He's the first president ever to invite a delegation of gays to the White House.

So he's open minded.

Knowing this, Clinton friend Dick Morris came to his defense by publicly raising a hypothetical scenario that would explain why the president — a happily married man — might take sexual interest in Monica Lewinsky. Morris called a Los Angeles radio station and raised the idea of Hillary being a closet lesbian who deprives her husband of sex.

Clinton reacted like he'd been slimed in front of a crowd. He vowed to never speak to Morris again. Mike McCurry, Clinton's press secretary, said "the president had exactly the reaction that you'd expect."

Not quite. For all Clinton's efforts to assimilate lesbians and gays, one would expect a calm reaction of "Don't ask, and we won't tell." But that's O.K. Folks of all ranks have come to accept a far lower standard for the commander-in-chief.

Clinton's Half-Assed Salutes

It's customary for at least one enlisted Marine to be posted to the right of Clinton as he exits his chopper at the White House. Protocol demands the Marine salute the commander-in-chief, and that the president return the salute.

"What we have been treated to since Clinton took office has been a sloppy, half-assed salute from the CIC that plainly conveys the message 'You're not even a pimple on my ass, private!'"

writes Col. Harry S. Bachstein, whose Web site is <http://members.aol.com/bach11/adventurer.htm>.

On a recent occasion, Bachstein observed, Clinton stepped out of his chopper in a WWII bombardier's jacket and didn't return the salute at all.

"What's going through the mind of that Marine when he salutes the pres?" Bachstein asks.

He Fits Right In

Before a recent visit of Clinton and his lovely wife, Hillary, folks in the west African nation of Senegal had quite the story.

A joke-turned-rumor-turned-news had it that Clinton was visiting so he could find another wife — perhaps a newer model. Senegalese men can legally have up to four wives, and politicians can have even more. Rumor had it Hillary was coming along to help choose the new wife, as first wives in Senegal traditionally approve subsequent partners for their men.

Newsweek quoted one politician in Senegal poking fun at America for being so prudish and scandalized by sex.

"In Africa, we can take care of our desires without having to lie," the official said. "We have lots of problems here, but sex scandals are not one of them."

So move there, Bill, and become the commander-in-chief for some African country. Then you can exchange the burden of "sex scandals" for the types of trouble Africans face.

Those problems, says a recent issue of *African Armed Forces*, include: one African defense force in which 100% of tank commanders and fighter pilots are infected with HIV; a 50% HIV-infection ratio throughout the southern African armed forces; AIDS as cause of 34% of military deaths in the Congo; and a 22.4% HIV rate among military personnel in the Central African Republic.

"The cost of ongoing treatment in many military forces is way beyond any defense budget," *African Armed Forces* states. ✖

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Clinton's End-Run GUN BAN

Sacrificing Personal Liberty For "State Security"

by James L. Pate

Persistently chiseling away at the keystone of our Bill of Rights, President Bill Clinton's latest hammering of the Second Amendment was less like nocturnal vandalism than a brazen daylight assault with a pick ax. Flanked by a flock of Fellow Travelers, a covey of antigun cops and other useful idiots, the Big Bubba smiled in a sunny Rose Garden ceremony while, on an altar of political correctness, he once more sacrificed personal liberty for *ersatz* state security.

With the stroke of a pen, Clinton imperiously usurped power that, critics say, should be the exclusive legislative prerogative of congress. On 6 April, Clinton decreed that 58 different types of foreign-made rifles shall no longer be imported into the United States for sale to private, law-abiding citizens.

It all began with a series of stories last fall in the *Los Angeles Times*, which explained to an ignorant public what astute gun owners already knew: that the assault-weapons ban passed during Clinton's first

term was, for the most part, based on such purely cosmetic factors as *bayonet lugs and flash suppressors*.

Her knickers in a knot, California's liberal U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein began badgering the White House, claiming foreign gun manufacturers were exploiting "loopholes" to circumvent the law. Thus, manufacturers who changed their gun designs trying to comply with the law, were cast as nefarious merchants of death.

Reacting to Feinstein's hysterics, Clinton sent a memo on 14 November to Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin, directing that all import permits for 59 types of semi-automatic rifles be suspended immediately, pending a 120-day review "to determine whether modified semi-automatic assault-type rifles are properly importable under the statutory sporting purposes test."

Cast In Stone — By Fiat

Clinton made the temporary suspension a permanent ban on 6 April, with only a single vote cast: Clinton's. Based on the review, 58 of the 59 semi-automatic variants of the UZI, the Galil, the FN-FAL and the AK-47 were summarily excluded from the list of legally importable firearms.

Even Clinton's own John Magaw, director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, admitted in a follow-up story published in the *Los Angeles Times* on 22 December, that the 1989 standard [the most recent modification of the original 1968 'sporting purposes' standard] is even stricter than the 1994 assault weapons ban.

This paradox did not escape notice on Capitol Hill. "While every firearm sold in the United States

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meets or exceeds the exact standard set forth in Clinton's semiauto gun ban, the administration is now attempting to justify further restrictions," said U.S. Sen. Larry Craig, chairman of the Senate's Republican Policy Committee. "Only now, [Clinton] is ignoring the role of congress."

Worse yet, Clinton scored a major victory in furthering the notion that "sporting purpose" is the only real issue in public policy debate on citizens' constitutional right to keep and bear arms. This latest import ban is a big step in establishing at least a regulatory, if not a legal precedent that, yes, the Second Amendment is about duck hunting. It also helps advance the practice of banning the sale of firearms for purely cosmetic reasons.

The ban affected the import of 600,000 rifles for which permits had already been issued, and another million rifles for which import permit applications were pending.

Lone Exception

Of all the firearms importers affected by the ban, probably the luckiest — if "luck" is the right word — is ZDF Import-Export, Inc., in Salt Lake City, Utah. ZDF has exclusive rights to the importation of the VEPR rifle, an AK-variant manufactured by Vyatskie Polany Machine Building of Russia.

The VEPR was developed specifically as a hunting rifle, and is legal for civilian ownership even in Russia. The VEPR was internally redesigned to not accept AK parts for its trigger components, nor will it accept high-capacity magazines. There is no full-auto version.

The VEPR was the only one of the 59 rifles subject to the temporary suspension that was not affected by the permanent import ban. Even after ZDF had communicated repeatedly with BATF to make sure the VEPR would not be affected — and after being told numerous times that it would not — several hundred VEPRs were seized on 14 November. Held until April, it cost ZDF thousands of dollars in storage and legal fees, lost business and additional interest payments on borrowed money.

ZDF, headed by attorney Alex Robinson, had been "very careful to follow all the laws and regulations regarding this importation," Robinson told *Soldier Of Fortune*. "This unilateral ban seems to me to exist in a political and legal netherworld. It's not a law, because congress played no role. It's not exactly a regulation. What is it? I'm not sure.

"What I am sure of is that, if Clinton will stop the importation of a gun that has a purely sporting purpose, such as the VEPR, just based on its appearance, then none of our firearms, whether they are produced abroad or domestically, are safe from such

Clinton "Will take this as far as he can," possibly including an attempt to ban the import of certain types of semi-automatic handguns, using the same "sporting purpose" criteria cited in the most recent import ban.

arbitrary and capricious actions."

Ever the skillful politician, Clinton not only shifted blame for the imports to people who didn't deserve it — manufacturers who complied with the law — but he also cited a phony excuse — crime — as the reason. And ever eager to assist the enemies of liberty in gradually eliminating the private ownership of firearms in the United States, the newsies jumped on Clinton's bandwagon.

The Washington Post, in an editorial published in April, hailed the import ban, condemning the affected weapons as "... toys for militia groups ... [and] more effective weapons for cop killers." The editorial even quoted Comrade Feinstein, who said the affected rifles "are the tools of gang members, grievance killers and those who go up against the police. They do not belong on our streets."

Even if the *Post's* editorial writers do not read crime statistics, which indicate that these types of semi-automatic weapons are used by criminals in only a minuscule number of cases, they should at least read their own editorials.

"Assault weapons play a part in only a small percentage of crimes," said a *Post* editorial published 15 September 1994, after passage of the semiautomatic rifle ban. The new law, the editorial acknowledged in an unusual bit of candor, "is mainly symbolic; it's virtue will be if it turns out to be, as hoped, a stepping stone to broader gun control."



courtesy ZDF



courtesy Inter-Ordnance

(above) ZDF VEPR — specifically redesigned by Russian factory as hunting rifle, and not having parts interchangeable with other rifles, was sole exception to "temporary" ban made permanently by presidential fiat. (left) Inter-Ordnance of America had paid for 1,500 Romanian-manufactured, AK-type semiautomatic rifles, in ocean transit when import permits were suspended. Now, the guns can't be sold in U.S.; company must absorb not only the purchase price, but shipping cost to them — and more shipping costs if they are exported.

New England Journal of Medicine
conducted a study of drive-by shootings
over 12 months in Los Angeles ... of 1,548 drive-by
shootings in Los Angeles in 1991, *the use of an assault-*
type, semiautomatic rifle was documented in
only one single case.

Showing Their Colors

The admission — that there is “virtue” in any action that is “a stepping stone to broader gun control” — confirms that Clinton, Feinstein, Sarah Brady, and others of their ilk, are using a lie — crime prevention — to leverage their real goal: the abolition of private gun ownership.

Feinstein as much as admitted she is a liar in a story published in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* on 30 January 1994. Confronted with FBI data showing that rifles of any type are used in only 3 percent of homicides, Feinstein was nonplused: “I don’t doubt that at all ... It’s probably less than 3 percent.”

Even the *Los Angeles Times*, which published the series that became a catalyst for the latest usurpation of Second Amendment rights, has acknowledged in the past that these types of weapons seldom play a part in crime.

“Assault Rifles Are Not Used Heavily in Crimes,” said a headline over a *Times* story published in May 1992. And there are plenty of statistics — data conveniently ignored by gun-control advocates — to back up the headline.

For instance, the *New England Journal of Medicine* conducted a study of drive-by shootings over 12 months in Los Angeles, arguably the capital of drive-by shootings. Of 1,548 drive-by shootings in Los Angeles in 1991, *the use of an assault-type, semiautomatic rifle was documented in only one single case.*

There are plenty of other statistics from reputable sources to show that banning these types of rifles will have almost no effect on crime:

- In Washington, D.C., a city with stringent gun control and rampant gun crimes, none of the 3,600 homicides in the decade of 1985-94 involved any kind of rifle. Rifles of any type were used in 0.15 percent of robberies and assaults.

- In Florida, a legislative commission determined in 1989 that, during the previous four years, assault weapons were used in 2.5% of firearms homicides, 0.2% of firearms assaults and 0.02 % of firearms robberies.

Thus, the enemies of personal liberty
have, by isolating the issue, furthered the idea that,
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or something done for entertainment,
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- In Massachusetts, between 1985-94, only 0.3% of homicides were committed with “assault” rifles, state-police data indicates. In the same period, according to the FBI, approximately one out of every four murders in the Bay State bastion of Kennedy liberalism were committed *with knives.*

- In New Jersey, these type firearms were used only about one-fourth of 1% of gun-related crimes. “This means that my officers are more likely to confront an escaped tiger from the local zoo than to confront an assault rifle ... on the streets,” said Trenton’s deputy police chief Joseph Constance.

Advocates of these weapons bans, unable to cite crime statistics to bolster their arguments, instead, rely on BATF trace data. But “firearms selected for tracing do not constitute a random sample and cannot be considered representative of the larger universe of all firearms used by criminals, or of any suspect of that universe. As a result, data from the tracing system may not be appropriate for drawing inferences such as which makes or models of firearms are used for” crimes,” said a Congressional Research Service report to congress in May 1992.

No Respect For The Law

Titled “Assault Weapons: Military-Style Semi-Automatic Firearms, Facts and Issues,” the report to congress further noted that “a law enforcement officer may initiate a trace request for any reason. No crime need be involved ... Trace requests are not accurate indicators of specified crimes ... That ATF tracing system is an operational system designed to help law enforcement agencies identify the ownership path of individual firearms. It was not designed to collect statistics.”

Lest any gun owner still not grasp the ultimate intent of President Clinton’s anti-gun agenda, he or she should ponder the implications of a remarkably candid statement by White House domestic policy adviser Jose Cerda, who was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* series that ran about three weeks prior to Clinton’s temporary suspension of import permits.

“We are taking the law and bending it as far as we can to capture a whole new class of guns,” Cerda said in the *Los Angeles Times* on 22 October. Cerda was explaining the Clinton Administration’s strategy for narrowing even further the types of imported guns U.S. citizens may buy.

“That statement pretty well sums up what we can expect in the future,” said Charles E. Steen, III, president of the Firearms and Ammunition Importers Roundtable, or FAIR, an importers trade group. Clinton “Will take this as far as he can,” possibly including an attempt to ban the import of certain types of semi-automatic handguns, using the same “sporting purpose” criteria cited in the most recent import ban.

The concept of “sporting use” first appears in law in the 1968 Gun Control Act (GCA). A last-minute amendment was inserted in specific reference to imports, banning the import of military-surplus weapons, by setting a “sporting purposes” standard. Specifically, the GCA mandates that any imported firearm must “be generally recognized as particularly suitable for, or readily adaptable to, sporting purposes, excluding surplus military firearms ...”

One longtime industry insider noted that the sporting-use issue “is a creation of our domestic firearms industry. Being very protection-minded, they were seeking a way to thwart competition. The sporting purpose criterion is a yardstick of protectionism.”

It was ironic, he said, because domestic gun manufacturers unwittingly provided gun-control advocates an issue which they have used to subvert public debate on the Second Amendment. The issue of self-defense with the personal firearm of one's choice has been subtly isolated from discourse — at least where the issue of imported firearms are concerned — into some sort of Sierra Club equipment seminar on shooting as a recreational sport.

Thus, the enemies of personal liberty have, by isolating the issue, furthered the idea that, yes, the Second Amendment is about duck hunting after all.

"If a so-called right is based on a sport or something done for entertainment, it isn't much of a right," said the firearms industry attorney, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity. "And when we allow the enemies of Second Amendment to restrict public debate to a conflict between the safety of children at school versus a citizen's ability to engage in some sporting activity, the outcome of such an argument is a foregone conclusion."

Out of Luck

In the meantime, all of the affected importers except ZDF are out of luck — and out of a lot of money. For example, Inter-Ordinance of America, based in North Carolina, had already paid for 1,500 Romanian-manufactured, AK-type semi-automatic rifles that were in ocean transit when the import permits were suspended in November. Now, the guns can't be sold in the United States, and the company must absorb not only the purchase price of the rifles, but the shipping cost to import them, and more shipping costs if they are exported.

Another company, the Dominion Import Group, of Virginia Beach, Va., used air freight in an effort to reduce the time it had money tied up in merchandise that was in-transit. Trans-oceanic surface shipping can take 35-50 days. Dominion was importing AK-type semi-auto variants made in Romania and Bulgaria that were affected by the latest ban, although the import permits for those specific weapons had been approved only three months earlier by the ATF.

"Fortunately for us, we were able to stop the Bulgarian shipments," Bob Roskovich, Dominion's president, told *SOF*. But his imports from Romania, the Romak I and Romak II, were another story, one that well illustrates the whimsical nature of government regulators and their total disregard for private property or investment capital.

Dominion had paid for 1,900 Romanian rifles, but due to heavy demands at the time on the air freight company, a smaller portion of the shipment was delayed for five days. In the interim, Clinton ordered the suspension of the import permits.

Although the larger portion of the shipment arrived at JFK airport in New York prior to the suspension of Dominion's permits, the Customs inspectors arbitrarily decreed that it was all part of

the same shipment. Instead of giving Dominion the benefit of the doubt and counting the arrival date of the bulk of the shipment, which arrived prior to the suspension, customs inspectors used the later date — and seized the entire shipment.

The only hope for importers like Dominion, who had followed the letter of the law in good faith and now have nothing to show for it except financial hardship, is for congress to pass a law providing "in-transit relief," which means they would be able to sell the rifles shipped prior to the suspension and subsequent ban. Even then, the companies will lose substantial amounts of money for legal and storage fees.

"After the last ban, Congress did provide for in-transit relief," noted Steen, FAIR's president. "Right



Dominion Import Group used air freight to reduce time and money tied up in transit. Air-freight traffic resulted in a split shipment — a smaller portion of the shipment being delayed for five days. In interim, Clinton ordered suspension of permits. Although larger portion arrived at JFK prior to suspension of Dominion's permits, Customs inspectors arbitrarily decreed it all same shipment — and seized the entire lot.

now, we're taking to our lawyers and formulating a plan of action."

Even if such relief is provided, it bodes ill, not only for importers, but potentially or domestic manufacturers and especially for gun owners.

"Clinton will take this as far as he can," Steen said. I'm convinced, they will grab whatever they can, any place they can grab it."

The firearms industry lawyer agreed.

"This administration is using any discretionary power it's got to formulate anti-gun measures," he said. "They are combing federal law, looking for ways to tighten up. And any place they can find even an inkling of discretionary leeway, they were taking it, and going at it in a ham-fisted fashion ... thumbing their nose at law-abiding businessmen and gun owners and saying, 'Go ahead. Sue us.'"

"Clinton has recognized the sporting purpose criteria as essential to his anti-gun agenda. And he's grabbed it and he's turning it and twisting it and stretching it to the limit and beyond, to ban the imports. And once he's finished there, these people are going after domestic firearms production. And they won't stop until the private ownership of firearms in this country is a crime and the Second Amendment is a quaint footnote in obscure histories." ❧

courtesy Dominion Import Group

It's the operator's call to arms — a hijacked airliner sitting on a runway with a terrorist deadline to start massacring hostages soon approaching. On the tarmac, at a remote stretch of Amman's Queen Alia International Airport, a Royal Jordanian airliner sits surrounded by emergency vehicles and ambulances. At another remote stretch of the airport, a small group of men, wearing black Nomex coveralls, and faces concealed by *balaclavas* have gathered for a field briefing. The tone is brisk and to the point.

The commander reviews a blueprint sketch of the aircraft, the assault tactics with the operators, and synchronizes the moment of attack — first light. Under cover of darkness, the operators slink into position carrying ladders, MP-5s and SIG-Sauers. From the control tower, two teams of snipers and observers peer through the sights of their weapons as the unit commander watches the ongoing movement with an anxious eye — one eye on his watch, the other on his snipers and both ears finely tuned to the coded radio transmis-



Israel, or they could be deployed along the frontier with Iraq, battling heavily armed drug smugglers supported by artillery batteries.

They could find themselves in the desert, along with a group of operators from Britain's famed 22 Special Air Service Regiment on a survival exercise, or they can find themselves in the waters off the coast of Aqaba assaulting a freighter crammed with terrorists and explosives. These operators are the vanguard of the Royal Jordanian Special Forces, a military equation that has been a veil of armor in safeguarding Jordanian security in a very unstable part of the world, and they are among the best soldiers in the world.

For nearly 50 years, the Jordanian military has possessed the reputation as being the most professional in the Middle East. British-trained, American-supplied, the Jordanian military traces its origin to the Great Arab Revolt of 1916 under the command of Sharif Hussein Ibu Ali; the nucleus of the legendary Arab Legion, a dedicated force of irregular desert warriors who accompanied Amir

Swords, Sand and SpecOps

Text & Photos by Samuel M. Hatz

sions indicating that his men are in place. For the operators on the ground, the only sounds they hear are the pounding rhythm of their accelerated heartbeats, and the slicing rotor blades of a UH-1 approaching from the east. To the terrorists, the UH-1 is a sign of victory, proof that their comrades have been released. To the men on the ground, the Huey is a diversion. The time to assault the aircraft has arrived.

Ladders are hoisted up to two doors on the hijacked aircraft — the heaviest man in each assault team hoists his body weight at the base of the rungs while the operators climb gingerly to the base of the cabin door. The point man in each entry team grabs the handle, holds his breath and clutches his SIG-Sauer ever so tightly. Over a secure radio channel the unit commander orders his men in. The forward team races about the two forward aisles to the cockpit, firing at the terrorists and yelling at the hostages to stay down in both Arabic and English; the rear team does the same from their entry point to the lavatories in the rear. A sniper removes the terrorist holding the flight crew at gunpoint. The entire assault, as the commander's stopwatch indicates, has lasted 100 seconds.

Commandos On Call

This hijack scenario was an exercise, part of the intensive training regimen that all counterterrorist forces perform to hone their rescue and assault skills. Today's aircraft assault exercise was a success, though tomorrow these commandos can find themselves in action against terrorists attempting to cross the Jordan River into

Royal Jordanian Special Forces

Abdullah when he arrived in Jordan in 1920. Under its first commander, Colonel E.G. Peake, the Arab Legion consisted of one cavalry company, one infantry company, a machine-gun platoon, and a signals corps; its order of battle did not reach 1,000 men. It was an ad-hoc force and a national melting pot whose officers were trained by the Ottoman Turks and encompassed a variety of ethnic groups and tribal affiliations.

During the 1930s, the Arab Legion expanded to include the now-famous Desert Patrol. Commanded by the legendary Captain John Bagot Glubb, the force was Jordan's first mechanized military entity and recruited mainly from the Bedouia themselves. With the outbreak of the Second World War, "General" Glubb, now known as "Glubb Pasha," commanded a legion whose force exceeded 1,600 well-trained, superbly equipped soldiers. Although the Arab Legion fought against fascist elements in both Syria and Iraq, Glubb used the conflict as an excuse to expand and enhance the legion's strengths.

Jordan's Dreaded Soldiers

The Arab Legion was the one Arab force against whom the fledgling Israeli military scored few successes. At Latrun, at Jerusalem, and throughout the West Bank of the Jordan River, the soldiers of the IDF came to respect their Jordanian counterparts and fear them on the battlefield. From 1949 until 1956, the Arab Legion increased in size and capabilities, absorbing weapons systems from the United States and Great Britain and maintaining its

mantle as the most professional fighting force in the Middle East. In 1956, King Hussein, the commander-in-chief of the Jordanian military, decided to free his military from foreign command and control. Renamed the Jordan Arab Army, the military quickly grew in size and scope: a fourth infantry brigade was formed, as was a heavy artillery regiment. An armored corps, centering on the elite 40th Armored Brigade, was formed in 1961.

Like most Arab militaries at the time, the Jordanian army did not invest heavily in special-operations units during its formative years of development — commando units, after all, were a luxury when faced with the daunting challenge of fielding a well-equipped and highly-trained conventional army and air force. By the early 1960s, however, the term “special forces” had entered the international military vernacular and the Jordan Arab Army was determined to maintain an elite entity of its own. A pioneering airborne training course, carried out with the assistance of the U.S. military, commenced in early 1962 and, by 22 April 1963, the first jump-qualified paratroopers in the Jordanian military received their wings.

These first jumpers were the cornerstone of what would become known as the Jordanian Airborne Unit, a parachutist-qualified company-sized force that would rapidly expand in size and ability, though would not participate in the 1967 War. In 1969, the first Special Forces Battalion was raised and the unit saw extensive fighting against Palestinian guerrilla forces in the Black September civil war of 1970. In 1971, mainly as a result of their stellar performance in 1970, the Special Forces Battalion expanded into a brigade, the 101st, complete with standard combat and support elements to meet the rapidly precarious “conventional/unconventional” aspect of maintaining a strategic edge with Israel (as well as with Syria and Iraq) but also combating terrorism and guerrilla forces. In March 1975, King Hussein dispatched a battalion of special-forces operators to Oman to assist the sultan’s armed forces against a communist-inspired insurrection at the hands of the Popular Front for the Liberation of South Yemen.

The Middle East is a very different place than it was at the time of the Intercontinental Hotel attack, and the Royal Jordanian Special Forces today is a very different unit than it was 21 years ago. Commanded by his Royal Highness Brigadier Abdullah Bin al-Hussein, a Sandhurst graduate and an energetic officer of boundless energy and vision, the Royal Jordanian Special Forces have grown in their abilities and mandate. Over the course of his command of the unit, Brigadier Abdullah Bin al-Hussein has seen to it that the special forces are a breeding ground of innovative military thought he has instilled in its ranks an operational doctrine

of absolute professionalism. In fact, in late 1996, the importance of the special forces to overall national security of the country was reinforced with the creation of the Royal Jordanian Special Operations Command (RJSOC) — combining the Special Forces and Royal Guard under one joint-command umbrella.

The Heart Of It All

The very heart of the RJSOC is the Special Forces Brigade, which is divided into a Special Forces Group, an Airborne Battalion, a Ranger Battalion, Airborne Artillery Battalion, and the Special Forces School; supporting these battalion-size units are an anti-aircraft company (armed primarily with hand-launched weapons such as the Stinger surface-to-air missile); an air operations company; and, an antitank company, armed primarily with high-speed Land Rovers, ideal vehicles for the desert, armed with TOW missiles.

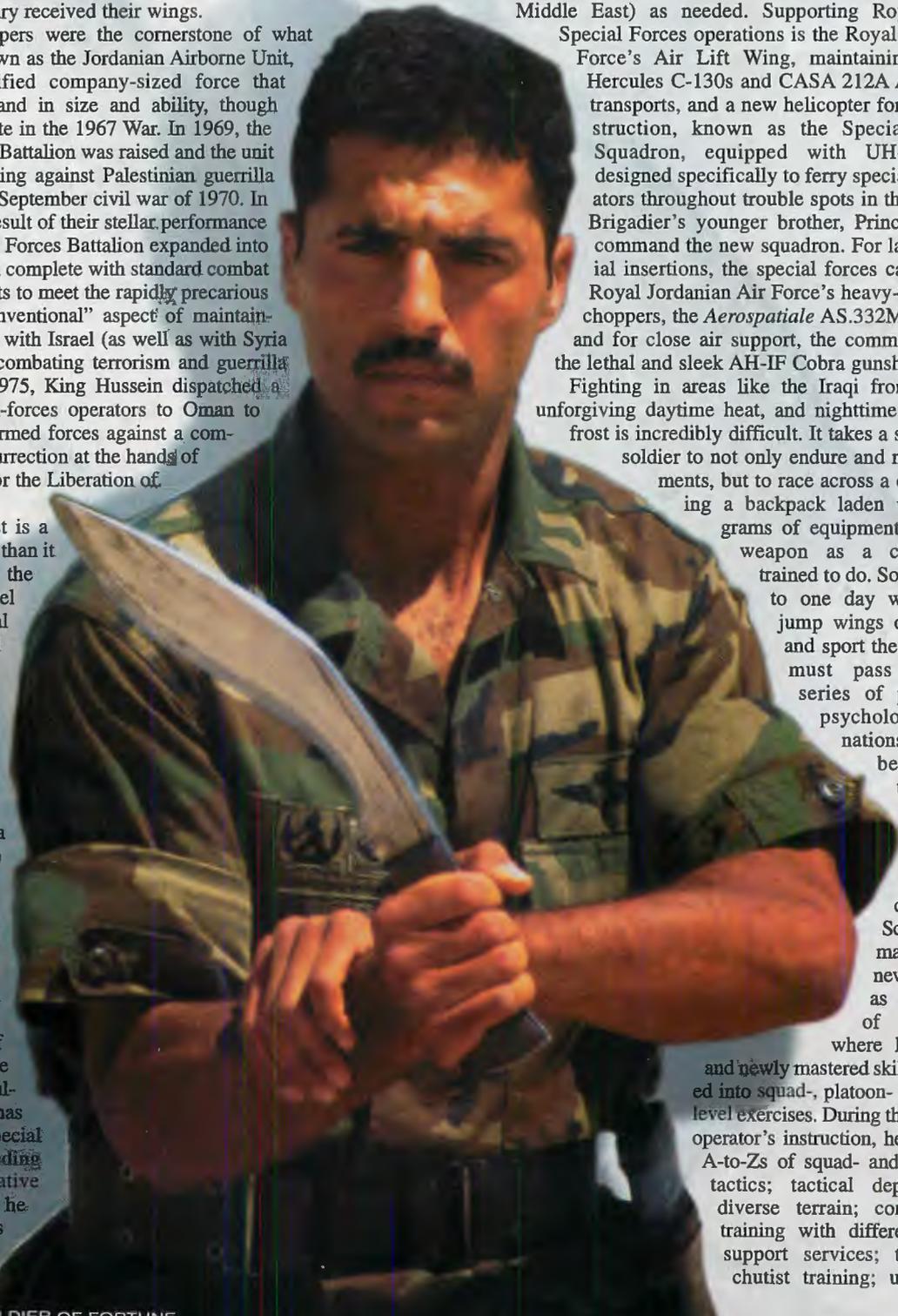
The primary attribute of the Royal Jordanian Special Forces is its ability to deploy anywhere in the country (or around the Middle East) as needed. Supporting Royal Jordanian

Special Forces operations is the Royal Jordanian Air Force’s Air Lift Wing, maintaining a fleet of Hercules C-130s and CASA 212A Aviocar utility transports, and a new helicopter force under construction, known as the Special Operations Squadron, equipped with UH-1 choppers, designed specifically to ferry special forces operators throughout trouble spots in the country; the Brigadier’s younger brother, Prince Faisal, will command the new squadron. For large-scale aerial insertions, the special forces can rely on the Royal Jordanian Air Force’s heavy-duty transport choppers, the *Aerospatiale* AS.332M Super Puma, and for close air support, the commandos rely on the lethal and sleek AH-IF Cobra gunships.

Fighting in areas like the Iraqi frontier, with its unforgiving daytime heat, and nighttime bone-chilling frost is incredibly difficult. It takes a special type of

soldier to not only endure and master the elements, but to race across a clearing wearing a backpack laden with 40 kilograms of equipment, and fire his weapon as a commando is trained to do. Soldiers wishing to one day wear the gold jump wings on their chest and sport the maroon beret must pass a grueling series of physical and psychological examinations before even being allowed to formally volunteer.

Upon graduation from the Special Forces School, the commando enters a new and equally as lengthy phase of instruction where his individual and newly mastered skills are translated into squad-, platoon- and company-level exercises. During this phase of the operator’s instruction, he is taught the A-to-Zs of squad- and platoon-level tactics; tactical deployments in diverse terrain; combined arms training with different units and support services; tactical parachutist training; urban warfare





Jordanian special forces personnel display their taekwon-do prowess for their commander, Special Forces School commander Brigadier-General Majid.



After spending much of the morning jumping from a UH-1 chopper over Amman, a special forces free-faller hones his aerodynamic skills at the special forces simulator in Amman. (below) Crawling gingerly through the unforgiving sands, a Jordanian commando gets into firing position for his RPG-7, a weapon seized from terrorists and put to better use.



skills; airborne operations deploying from both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft; patrolling, ambush and infiltration techniques; deception operations; advanced NBC instruction; anti-airborne operations; and field-support operations. Graduates of the basic commando course, operators who have mastered more than year's worth of special forces curriculum are full-fledged members of the Airborne Battalion. The best soldiers within the battalion are, following several years of service with an exemplary record, afforded the opportunity to volunteer into the Special Forces Battalion.

Snapping Of The Neck

A basic catchword around the special forces is "challenge" — the challenge to excel on the training ground, a challenge to excel in battle, and the challenge to remain the nation's cutting-edge military force. In fact, a Jordanian-brand of martial arts, an offensive means of cold-killing and sentry-removal is called *Sijal* — the Arabic-word for "challenge." On a parade ground in Zarqa, Brigadier General Majid, the jovial commander of the Special Forces School who speaks Hebrew and Serbo-Croatian, stands by a reviewing stand as a small squad of troopers armed with razor sharp kukris and bone-breaking sticks of bamboo go through the motions of a *Sijal* demonstrations. The crushing blows and wind-snapping swings are very real as are the bruises and gashes on the bodies of many of the operators. *Sijal* training is not meant to be a choreographed exercise of martial arts movement — it is to prepare the operators for what it's like to kill an enemy soldier.

"After all" says one commander, "nothing says 'stay alert' like knowing what it's like to have your neck snapped in two!" Just to get the operators "warmed up," most *Sijal* training is preceded by a one-hour taekwon-do clinic.

At Zarqa, the unit's primary training base, a unique live-fire training field has been established that personifies this investment in special forces training. On a brutally hot summer's day, where the temperature in the shade has reached 120 degrees, a squad of rangers, wearing camouflage uniforms and their faces painted in a tri-color scheme, walk with weapons at the ready on a pink-clay field of fire. As the squad proceeds, marksmen armed with AK-47 assault rifles begin to fire at the troops. The gunfire is real and bullets land within inches of the advancing rangers, who are now flat on their stomachs and firing their M16s at a series of paper targets 50 meters ahead.

The Royal Jordanian Special Forces routinely train with American Green Berets and Marines (such as the recent "Operation Early Victory 97" exercises), British special-operations forces, and commando forces from the friendly Arab nations in the regions. The international contacts are

important. "Seeing how other people operate in the desert, assault a fortified position, and deploy from a helicopter armada, is important for us," claims a special-operations officer, "knowledge is as important a weapon in commando-type warfare, as is an assault rifle and a razor-sharp dagger."

Special forces officers and NCOs, alike, are encouraged to study the tactics, equipment and deployment of other similar units around the world and, where applicable, to adopt them to the unit's tasks and assignments.

Hostage Rescue

One of the RJSOC's most important duties is counterterrorism and hostage-rescue and the special forces element tasked with this mission, Special Operations Unit 71, is among the world's finest. Formed in the aftermath of "Skyjack Sunday" and the brutal fighting of "Black September 1970" and subsequently in 1971, the first hint that Jordan would be the target of Palestinian terrorist attacks came in November 1971, when Jordanian Prime Minister Wasfi Tal was gunned down as he left a reception at a Cairo Hotel; the perpetrators, were all from Black September, the covert special-operations unit of Arafat's *Fatah* faction.

Following the Munich Olympic Massacre, also perpetrated by Black September, most nations realized they were negligently lacking in possessing a force of operators capable of entering a hostage-taking situation with any serious hope of retrieving any innocents alive from a forced entry and inevitable fire-fight. The Jordanian Special Forces created a small, though highly cohesive force of operators who would train specifically for the fight against terrorism and hostage-rescue. These were the best fighters in the special forces — the smartest and toughest soldiers, those with the strongest elements of command and those with the natural skills of innovation and improvisation that are a must in the world of special-forces operators. When the PFLP took over the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman, it was the special forces' counterterrorist operators that went into action. Two special-forces operators were killed, as were seven civilians. Three terrorists were also killed.

In technical terms, the termination of the terrorist squad was a victory, but in realistic terms, the death of two of their own and the seven civilians was proof that the unit was not yet ready for full-scale hostage-rescue work. The Jordanian General Staff ordered the Special Forces Brigade to create a counterterrorist team, that while being an integral element of the parent unit, would be assigned specific counterterrorist operations with the security services, as well as all hostage-rescue work.

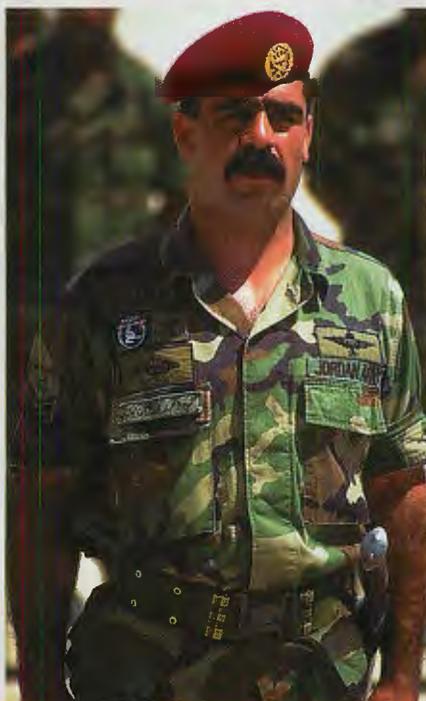
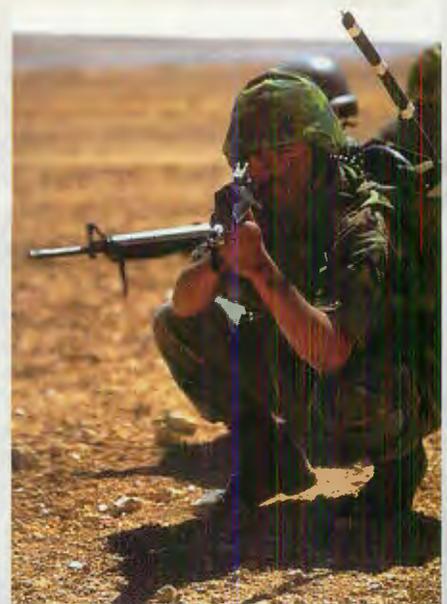
Counterterrorist Team

SOU 71 is believed to consist of between 100-200 operators and made up solely of volunteers — mainly Bedouins,

Continued on page 68



(above) A Royal Jordanian Air Force Super Puma prepares to land at a landing zone at Al Jafr, in southern Jordan, during training with Green Berets from the U.S. Army's 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). On the desert training grounds at Zarqa, (right) a Jordanian ranger peers through the sights of his M16A2. (below) At Kin Abdullah Air Force Base, in Amman, a Royal Jordanian Air Force Special Operations Squadron UH-1 lifts off prior to assault exercises with a company of rangers in the desert near Zarqa.



(above) A Royal Jordanian Special Forces martial arts instructor stands at attention during a display for his commanding officer. A Jordanian ranger grenadier (right) displays



his M16A2 rifle with 40mm grenade launcher. For nearly 50 years, the Jordanian military has possessed the reputation as being the most professional in the Middle East.

"Twenty years of war." The statement seems to stun even the Afghans themselves, as if astounded that they have been fighting for that long. But 20 years is more or less what Afghanistan has had — and it is plain to see. The country is shattered. Electricity is rare, poverty is commonplace and roads are potholed obstacle courses.

For two days we bump our way across northern Afghanistan, through massive deserted Soviet army camps, until we reach the towering majesty of the Panjshir Valley. I have two reasons to be here. The first is to visit prisoners; there are apparently a number of Pakistani military POWs whom I hope to interview to shed a bit more clarity on the role of Pakistan in the war. The second is to visit the Kabul front line in my quest to locate Stinger missiles.

My driver was keen to explain the situation to me from an Afghan perspective. We set off

on the two-day drive from the northern town of Taloqan en route to the Panjshir Valley: headquarters of Ahmed Shah Massoud, the leader of *Jamiat-i-Islami*, one of the many Afghan factions fighting the *Taliban*, the extremist Islamic militia controlling two-thirds of the country, including its capital, Kabul.

America The Culpable

"You know," explained my driver, "the war is all the fault of foreigners. If there was no foreign intervention then there would be no war in Afghanistan." It is, of course, something of an exaggeration. Of all the people in the world, the Afghans seem to have a unique capacity to fight each other. No government has ever controlled the whole of the country by force of arms.

It is easy to see why. A drive across Afghanistan is to drive across vast mountain peaks, almost impassable, and occasionally non-existent roads. It is without a doubt the most incredibly stunning and often-hostile terrain I have ever seen. I don't know whether to admire the Soviets for even trying to tame the country or regard them as bungling and incompetent amateurs for even contemplating it. After all, not so many years earlier it had been British airplanes and soldiers who had fought three wars against my traveling companions.

And when neither the British nor the Russians were around, the Afghans had conducted numerable and often undocumented tribal wars against each other.

These wars, often little more than village raids and banditry, tended to revolve around the harvest season. Before or after the harvest was the time to fight, but not *during*. The men were needed for labor in the fields.

And so little has changed in Afghanistan in the last 200 years. Now it is just the Afghans fighting each other. The foreign armies have long-since packed up and given up in their futile attempts to rule the unruly, to conquer the unconquerable.

The war, broadly speaking, has become an ethnic one. The dominant military faction, the *Taliban*, are mainly Pashtun and from the south of the country. Allied against them are the *Tadjiks*, from the northeast, the *Shia Hazara's*, from the center, and the *Uzbeks*, from the north; all of whom sit under the umbrella of the Northern Alliance, as the anti-*Taliban* coalition is called.

For all of the impetus that emanates from within,

Text & Photos by
Roddy Scott

TALIBAN-TAG

PART II

The Front Lines At Kabul

though, it is also fair to say that much of the cash and weaponry which keeps the war going comes from abroad. As one observer wryly put it to me over a whisky at the American club, in Peshawar, before I ventured into Afghanistan, "You've got to see Afghanistan as a fire, basically, that's constantly burning. Then every now and then someone comes along and chucks a whole load of petrol on ..."

I was somewhat amused as I endured my driver's marathonesque tirade against nefarious foreign influences, America being well to the fore in his broadsides of criticism. "America" he announced, "is supporting the Taliban with money and guns." Well, I'm sure that there is the devious mind at the State Department, but the idea that the U.S. is supporting one of the most unpleasant Islamic movements of recent times did seem a trifle far-fetched. So as our Russian-built jeep bounced through the mountain passes I ventured

that perhaps it was Pakistan backing the Taliban. It is, of course, an open secret that Pakistan has given the Taliban massive military and financial aid. "Ah," said my driver, "but it is America who tells Pakistan to help the Taliban."

Afghan Standard Time

It's dark as we pull into the village of Bazarak, a couple of miles from the home of Ahmed Shah Massoud. We pull up outside the Jamiat political office. I am looking for Engineer Aref, the second in command in Panjshir and, as such, an extremely powerful individual. I had met him weeks previously, before I had choppered north to the Taloqan front line with a letter of introduction from Ahmed Wali Massoud, the *de facto* Afghan ambassador in London. Then he had promised his help for any project I had in mind.

But it is two days later before I manage to track him down and arrange a meeting. He brings with him the director of the prison. "No problem," he says as I stipulate my requests and, in addition, he



(left) A pair of muj watch calmly as one of their rounds impacts a Taliban position a few hundred meters distant. The civil war promises to continue well into the 21st century. (below) EOD Afghan-style. Discovered live ordnance is detonated by EOD disposal unit. As in other nations, land mines have taken a heavy toll, leaving thousands of amputees — and fatalities. Demining operation by determined muj who fate rests in the hands of Allah. (bottom) "Talibs below!" Machinegunner sighting in with his 7.62 PK GPMG. Bursts to come.



writes a letter to the commander of the Kabul front line, Bismillah Khan, asking him to take me around the scene of the action. I refrain, though, from asking any awkward questions about Stinger missiles. The U.S. is still keen to buy them back, fearing they might fall into the *wrong* hands, and the Afghans are cagey about saying how many they have cached — or where they are. But, they assure me, I'll see them.

It is cold and cloudy the next day as I set out to interview the prisoners. With me is Fareed, a Jamiat official. Glancing round at the towering peaks surrounding us I ask if any prisoners have ever tried to escape. "Yes, a couple of months ago a few of the Taliban prisoners escaped for a while," he says with a smile. "They spent three days and nights wandering around the mountains before they came to a village where they thought they were outside Panjshir ... they demanded the villagers to drive them to the nearest Taliban commander. Instead, the villagers drove them straight to the our police

... in all the three days they had moved about 2 kilometers as the crow flies ... they had simply become lost. No one else has tried to escape since then," he added with a laugh.

I wait a half-mile from a series of concrete buildings, nestled at the bottom of the mountain. And after 30 minutes a long column of men file down to where I am waiting. For them it is time to pray. For me, it is time to ask questions. Of the 90-odd Pakistani prisoners the first person I talk to is 21-year-old Abdul Jabber, from the Punjab, a western province of Pakistan. In a high-pitched sing-song account he describes how two men came to his *madrassa* (religious school) and told the students that there were still Russians in Afghanistan and that as Muslims it was their duty to fight in the *jihād* (holy war) to force the infidels from Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan School Of Higher Learning?

Since the rise of the Taliban, with its strict and mystic interpretation of Islam, there have been many rumours, and some confirmation, that the world's Islamic terrorists are dispatched for on-the-job, live-fire "graduate" training Afghanistan and its Taliban safe-haven offer.

Slave nations such as Sudan, currently on the State Department's list of "sponsors of terrorism," have encouraged, in the name of pan-Islamic unity, their young holy warriors to head off to Afghanistan to assimilate more about military tactics and the universal *jihād*. That, at least, was the story of young Alim Mohammed whom, at 23, had been recruited in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum and sent into combat with the Taliban. After five months, though, he had found himself captured by the war-hardened Panjshiris, and for the foreseeable future will be a guest in the towering vastness of the Panjshir Valley.

The key to this "international *jihād*" is the vast network of *madrassas*, or religious schools, that are spread through the Islamic world. It is here that the future religious leaders are trained and often spend 10 years or more of their lives studying the Muslim holy book, or *Koran*. Apart from Major Baluch, all of those questioned by *SOF* in Panjshir had come from *madrassas*. For many of the Pakistanis the issue had simply been whether they should travel to Kashmir, where a violent war of succession is being waged by Muslim rebels against the Indian state, or to Afghanistan to assist the Taliban.

For me, it was time to move on. I needed to get to the Kabul front line and then leave the country before the snows set in. As it was, the first flakes were falling and the cold



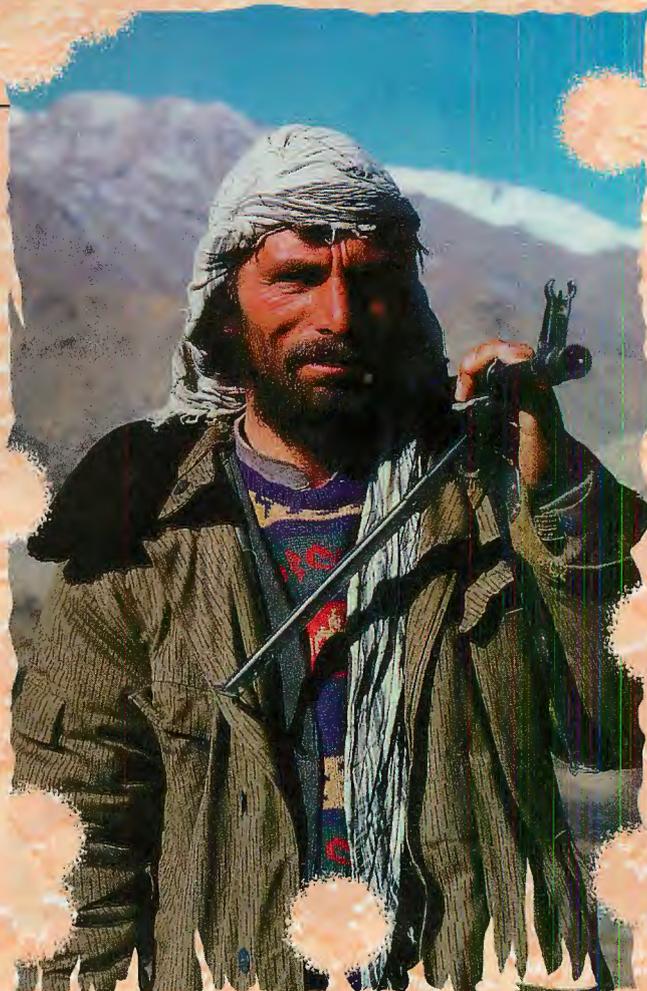
Warrior checks out Talib positions, (above) his RPG-7 avec HE round ready to ruin someone's day. (right) A seasoned mujahideen veteran at the Kabul front line. After 20 years, his country has still not known peace.

"Yes, I can see it was a mistake now," he says with a sigh, "but it is too late." No such excuse, though, was echoed by Major Khalid Baluch, still an active-duty officer in the 24 Sind Regiment of the Pakistani army. "My orders came from the highest level," he says. "I was to coordinate with *Mullah Abdul Rezak*, (then the Taliban minister of Defence), and help compile military maps of the region for the Taliban ... but I was captured after only two weeks."

One captured soldier may not conjure up conspiracy chatter of a secret war, but the blithe and easy way Major Baluch admitted he, a soldier from another country, had been sent to help one faction in the war was suspicious. Pakistan had also been the first country to recognize the Taliban as *the* government of Afghanistan, and remains one of four nations that continues to do so. So, digging further, what of the stories of the numerous activities of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), as Pakistan's military intelligence is known? There are, indeed, many such stories of ISI agents slinking around on the side of the Taliban, organizing weapons' shipments and financial aid for the Islamic militia.

On these, Major Baluch could not — or would not — shed any light, maintaining that he had been sent in with two captains to complete his mission.

Pakistan, though, is by no means the sole supporter with an intense national interest in the war in Afghanistan. In the 1980s, Afghanistan served as a training ground for thousands of Muslims from the world over, who came to join the *jihād* against the Soviet Union. The problems, of course, started when all these men went home. Much of the carnage, for example, in Algeria is ascribed to the presence of "Afghans," or those returned veterans now slaughtering fellow Algerians in the name of Islam.



was beginning to settle its frozen hand over the battle zone.

Bumping my way out of Panjshir I head towards the town of Charikar, where I will seek out Bismillah Khan, the overall commander of the Kabul front. It is primarily a courtesy call though I'm armed with the letter of introduction from Engineer Aref. It is a number of days before I am able to meet him and gain his attention. By then, I have installed myself in a small fort near the front.

For three days the combat has been constant. The night sky has been illuminated by tracers and the turf has fallen victim to the unnerving incessant rumble of incoming and outgoing rounds.

Bismillah Khan, stocky and bearded, listens carefully as I outline my request then reads the letter. "No problem," he says, "there are

pose machine guns and RPG-7s quite common, too. As is polite we make the rounds shaking everyone's hand before sitting down. Tea is offered, as are cigarettes, after which we get down to business.

The commanders with whom I arrived say that they are set to do an inventory of the kit, and numbers and placements of the front-line troops. It will be a big job, and probably take a week or so alone on this section of the front.

Taking out a log the questions begin: Who is the commander? How many men? What type of weapons and where?

Austere Cuisine, Gunfire ... And Hash

Food here is basic and supper consists only of rice and tea; the water is too bad to drink. It's a tasteless and boring meal, but it's the standard fare on the front line. The meal is uninterrupted by the clatter of gunfire or the frequent *crash* of shells in the near-vicinity of the village.

It is bitterly cold and I tug the blankets over my head to try and keep warm; but the freezing temperature and the continuous *brrrrrrrrr* of the machine guns contrive to make it a sleepless night. At dawn we set off for a tour of the front-line positions. It's a hard and often grueling trek as we pace through the villages and across the mountains meeting and debriefing local commanders as to their troops' capabilities.



(above) Gunner prepares to unload on the enemy with his DShK 12.7mm atop an anti-aircraft mount. (below) Youthful muj inventorying 105mm cannon rounds, making certain they're ready for immediate use against the Talibs. (right) ZSU 23mm manually-operated cannon – old, but still functioning, and deadly as hell.



There is momentary excitement on one hilltop position. My chat with some of the soldiers is interrupted by a shout: "Car! There's a car on the road!"

From a makeshift bunker on the top of the hill the commander is looking through binoculars, pointing. In seconds, the PK gunner wrenches back the cocking lever on his weapon and sends off a burst at the car about a kilometer away. But is not the PK that has the last word: After much shouting into the walkie-talkie I watch as follow-up shells start exploding near the car, the tanks behind us wanting their slice of the action. The car skids and grinds to a halt, but no one gets out, its occupants simply wait, for reprieve or death.

War, after all, is heavy tension often giving way to serious boredom; hours, days, weeks even, of doing nothing, but waiting for orders hunkered down in grotty conditions. To combat this deadtime, the mujahideen resort to one of their oldest amusements: drugs.

Afghanistan is likely the largest exporter of marijuana in the world. And *chars* (as the Afghans call it) is prevalent in many areas of the front. Arriving in one village on the front a group of mujahideen, from *Itihad* — one of the smallest political parties — offers round large lumps of hash. Others, obviously stoned to the gills, giggle while their commander stares at the soil in sheepish embarrassment. But these commanders I am accompanying are from *Jamiat-i-Islami*, and there is little they can realistically do in terms of discipline for purely diplomatic reasons.

some officers who will be touring the different sections of the front, you can go with them."

In the early evening we pile into a Russian-made jeep. It's dark but the headlights remain firmly off, driving by only the light of the moon. There is a degree of surrealism about the scene as we cruise through deserted villages and along rutted tracks while around us tracers streak through the black sky from mountain top to mountain top.

We pull up in a small and trashed village and are greeted by the local commander. We will be staying here tonight. Young mujahideen jostle to grab my bags and escort me up a dimly lit stairway and into a large sparsely furnished room with a smoke-belching wooden stove in one corner which gives vital heat to a space which would otherwise be an icebox. There are a dozen or so mujahideen in the room knocking around with an assortment of weaponry, mainly various different models of AKs, but with PK general-pur-

Continued on page 69

Mossberg's Dominant Scattergun

Text & Photos by
Peter G. Kokalis



The fighting shotgun's appearance may intimidate, but its combat effectiveness is a consequence of the wide variety of multiple-projectile shotshells and slug loads available for it that bring it dominance from close ranges out to 100 yards.

Fighting shotguns prevail, or should. The late Elmer Keith once referred to the shotgun as, "the best alley cleaner of all." Those who anticipate that they may eventually face a deadly confrontation have an almost bewildering array of weaponry to select from prior to sending projectiles down range. Handguns, rifles or carbines, submachine guns or shotguns can all deliver deadly messages to your opponent. Handguns are an emphatic *last* choice, predicated only by their ability to be concealed when the more effective alternatives would be socially unacceptable. When employed in non-military, urban environments, rifle cartridges will often penetrate block and sheet rock to endanger family members and other innocents. While they have reached public acceptance when fielded by Ninja-clad SWAT teams, submachine

guns remain politically incorrect for street cops and civilians defending their domiciles. The fact is that shotguns, although they can produce incredibly devastating wounds, remain politically correct in the public's mind and often even in the eye of the generally antigun mainstream media. Furthermore, when employed within the framework of their limitations and maximizing their salient characteristics, the combat shotgun provides short-range lethality matched by no other firearm. They are especially effective when employed as entry weapons by law-enforcement Special Response Teams operating in urban environments.

And, fighting shotguns have always been an important ingredient in the military's small-arms mix. In the U.S., use of a shotgun for fighting purposes was a common practice even in colonial America. By the middle of the 17th century, the multiple-projectile

blunderbuss came into widespread use in Europe. In 1781, British General Sir John Burgoyne formed a Light Dragoon Regiment armed with the blunderbuss. By the 19th century, the double-barrel shotgun had gained a substantial reputation as a fighting weapon. It was employed with success during the Indian wars from 1866 to 1891. The greatest impetus to modern fighting shotgun design was the British small-arms studies conducted during the 1950s' Malayan guerrilla insurgencies. These studies demonstrated that the shotgun was superior to all other types of small arms as a jungle weapon.

However, don't feel you're invincible just because you're toting a 12-gauge scattergun. In his book, *Gunshot Wounds* (copyright 1985, Elsevier Science Publishing Co. Inc., New York, NY 10017), Dr. Vincent J.M. DiMaio reports an incident in which a man, whose heart was literally shredded by



Mossberg's new M9200A1 "Jungle Gun" is the most reliable, least ammunition-sensitive and softest-recoiling semiautomatic shotgun ever tested by SOF. (left) All too often ignored by law-enforcement personnel, the "rice paddy prone," or squatting position, provides almost as much stability as the sitting position with the advantage of being able to assume quickly and then, after firing, move forward.

Slide the manual tang safety fully rearward to the *safe* position. To load the M9200A1, first retract the operating handle until the bolt assembly is locked rearward. Drop a shell through the ejection port into the chamber. Close the action by press-

Loading and Unloading

ing on the bolt release (located on the right side of the receiver). To load the tubular magazine, press the bolt release again and hold down on it. At the same time, push a shotshell into the loading port under the receiver, depressing the elevator. With the elevator depressed, let go of the bolt release button and push the shotshell into the magazine tube until its rim is past the shell stop. Keep the

elevator depressed and continue loading until the magazine is loaded to capacity.

To perform a "slug-select" maneuver, first depress both the bolt release and the elevator and then insert the slug shell into the magazine through the loading port (assuming there is room for one more shell in the magazine).

After that, retract the bolt group. The buckshot shell in the chamber will fly out the ejection port onto the ground (don't stoop over to pick it up — either during training or in a gunfight!) and the slug round will pop out onto the elevator and automatically be loaded into the chamber.

To unload the M9200A1, first slide the tang safety rearward to the *safe* position. Then, retract the bolt group until the bolt

face is even with the rear of the ejection port. Remove the shell by hand. Do not retract the bolt fully rearward into its locked position as this releases a shell from the magazine tube and onto the elevator. Allow the bolt to move slowly forward and close it on an empty chamber.

To remove shells from the magazine tube, first depress the bolt release and elevator. While holding down on the elevator, depress the front of the shell stop located on the left side of the receiver. This will release one shell from the magazine. To release any other shells remaining in the magazine, first depress the right-hand shell stop, then the left-hand shell stop. Repeat this procedure until the magazine is empty. —P.G.K.

No. 7 1/2 pellets fired from a 12-gauge shotgun at a distance of only 3 to 4 feet, was able to run 65 feet before collapsing.

Very few armed professionals will dispute the combat shotgun's superiority at ranges under 35 yards with buckshot. The argument has always been between proponents of the slide-action or "pump" shotgun and those who advocate semiautomatic shotguns. The U.S. Armed Forces and many law-enforcement agencies have clung to the slide-action shotgun, although in a high-anxiety environment, operator-induced error can produce a disastrous stoppage. If slide-action shotguns are not jacked smartly and completely to the rear and then all the way forward with the same degree of force, they will short-cycle. If this occurs the operator has no alternative but to immediately transition to his sidearm.

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. Navy used some Remington Model 7180 semiautomatic fighting shotguns (derived from the Model 1100) aboard "swift boats" operating on the Mekong River, while a handful of Model 7188 selective-fire versions went to the SEALs. They did not exhibit acceptable reliability and most were turned in for Remington or Ithaca slide-action types.

The world's first autoloading shotgun was gas-operated and a total failure. Introduced in 1895 by the Clair brothers, of France, their shotgun was a spin-off of a gas-operated, semiauto pistol they had invented. Gas operation and black powder don't mix, and only a handful were ever sold.

Semiautomatic shotguns first appeared

in quantity when *Fabrique Nationale* introduced John Browning's design in 1903. Browning's shotgun functioned using the principle of "long recoil." When the gun was fired, the barrel recoiled rearward a distance slightly greater than the length of the shotshell. During this movement, barrel and bolt remained locked together. At the end of the rearward travel, the bolt unlocked and was held back while the barrel returned to battery. Extraction and ejection occurred during this time frame. The bolt then moved forward to chamber a new round.

Other scatter guns of this type have uti-

lized "short recoil," both with fixed and movable barrels. Supposedly "ammunition-sensitive," but fairly reliable, recoil-operated shotguns are usually noted for fairly severe perceived recoil. As a consequence, they gradually gave way to gas-operated shotguns.

Semiautomatic shotguns, whether recoil- or gas-operated, in the past simply did not demonstrate the RAM-D (Reliability, Availability, Maintainability and Durability) qualities at the level required by the military and law-enforcement agencies. That was then, this is now. Mossberg's (O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.,

Clear the weapon. Start with the tang safety in the rearward *safe* position and the bolt in battery. Unscrew the end cap and remove the forearm and its black anodized spacer. If you do not have a magazine extension, the magazine follower spring is contained by a sheet-metal cap threaded to the inside of the magazine tube. For normal maintenance there is no need to remove the spring. However, if

Disassembly Procedures

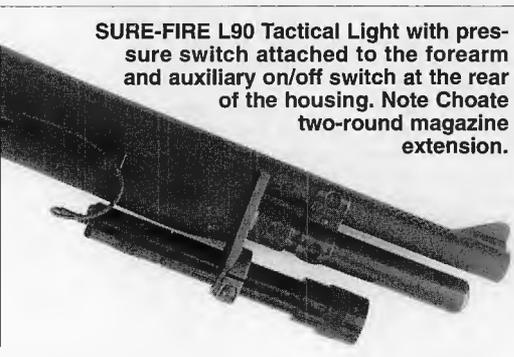
you have added the Choate magazine extension kit, be very careful to keep the follower spring under control when you unscrew the extension tube or it may fly into your eye or the sunset. Grasp the barrel and pull it forward and away from the receiver and magazine tube.

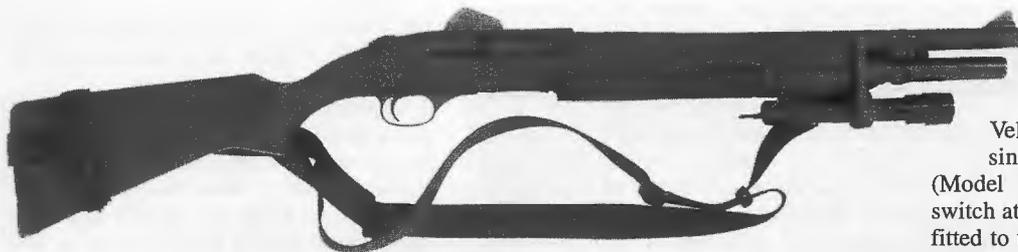
After the barrel has been removed, the recoil spring will normally drive the reciprocating parts toward the front of the receiver. This will leave the operating handle resting against the front edge of the ejection port. Push the action bars slightly rearward and while doing so, pull the operating handle out and away from the bolt. Remove the inertia weight (piston), action bars, slide block and bolt assembly. Lift the bolt assembly off the action bars/slide block. It's not necessary to remove the action bars from the piston. Remove the recoil spring and buffer (a black synthetic injection molding) from the magazine tube by grasping the buffer and sliding it forward. Using a pin punch, drive out the two trigger housing retaining pins. Withdraw the trigger assembly from the receiver. Do not attempt to disassemble the trigger mechanism.

Clean and lubricate. Use a brass bristle brush to remove deposits from the gas system. Avoid excessive lubrication on the interior of the piston and the outside surface of the magazine tube, over which it rides.

Reassemble in the reverse order. Note the following. Place the inertia weight buffer on the magazine tube with the flat side facing the muzzle (flared end to the rear). Take the double-wound end of the recoil spring and place it over the magazine tube. Rotate the spring in a counter-clockwise direction while sliding it down the magazine tube until it rests inside the corresponding cut in the end of the buffer. Slide the action bars/slide block and piston assembly onto the magazine tube until the front of the piston is even with the end of the tube. Place the bolt assembly over the slide block. Align the action bars with their corresponding cuts in the front end of the receiver. Push the entire group into the receiver against the pressure of the recoil spring until the front of the bolt is visible in the ejection port. While maintaining pressure against the recoil spring, insert the operating handle, snapping it into position. Then install the trigger housing group, barrel, forearm spacer, forearm and end cap. —P.G.K.

SURE-FIRE L90 Tactical Light with pressure switch attached to the forearm and auxiliary on/off switch at the rear of the housing. Note Choate two-round magazine extension.





The Mossberg M9200A1 with all the refinements that bring it to the highest level as a fighting shotgun: Giles sling, MMC ghost ring sights, extended magazine tube, Vang Comp System and SURE-FIRE Tactical Light.

Dept. SOF, 7 Grasso Avenue, P.O. Box 497, North Haven, CT 06473-9844; phone: 203-230-5300; fax: 203-230-5359) new M9200A1 "Jungle Gun" autoloader is the most reliable, least ammunition-sensitive and softest-recoiling semiautomatic shotgun I have ever tested, bar none.

Soldier Of Fortune was recently sent a specimen of the new M9200A1 semiautomatic fighting shotgun for test and evaluation. It is the first semiautomatic shotgun developed expressly for the U.S. Military and it was designed to survive the same brutal 3,000-round milspec test used for slide-action shotguns. While still undergoing tests with the U.S. Army, the M9200A1 was adopted by the DEA in 1996 and is currently participating in antinarcotics maneuvers in the jungles of Colombia.

The M9200A1 is equipped with a milspec heavy-wall 18.5-inch barrel, choked cylinder bore. Overall length is 39 inches, with either a black synthetic buttstock or a folding stock with a pistol grip. The latter can be employed by law-enforcement or military units only. It folds to the left so that the ejection port is not blocked. Designed by the Choate Machine & Tool Co., it reduces the overall length to only 28.5 inches when folded. With either buttstock, length-of-pull, as measured from the center of the trigger to the end of the recoil pad, is about 14 inches. To facilitate speed mounts and inhibit snagging on clothing, we had the sharp edges on the recoil pad of the rigid stock rounded. The injection-molded, black synthetic forearm has a slightly stippled texture in the gripping areas. The weight of this shotgun is 7.8 pounds, empty.

The thumb safety is mounted on the top of the receiver at the rear and it blocks the trigger. This feature first appeared on a Mossberg shotgun on 21 August, 1961 with the introduction of the Model 500 12-gauge slide-action shotgun. From the perspective of human engineering, this is a far superior location for a manual safety to the cross-bolt type found on the trigger guards of the Remington, Ithaca and Winchester shotguns.

Additional safety features include interlocks to prevent the trigger from being pulled until the bolt is completely in battery. There is a trigger disconnect as well, and it requires the complete release of the trigger between shots before the hammer can be released to rotate forward and strike the spring-loaded firing pin once more. Trigger-pull weight of our test specimen

was exactly 4.0 pounds. The trigger housing itself is made of high-strength aluminum alloy with a matte black anodized finish. All of the shotgun's steel parts carry a "parkerized" (phosphate) finish.

The Mossberg M9200A1 comes equipped with a four-round tubular magazine. This is, in my opinion, not enough for a fighting shotgun. We added a two-shell magazine extension kit manufactured by Choate Machine & Tool Co. The extension tube itself replaces the shotgun's magazine end cap. Included also is a replacement follower spring and a fluorescent orange, combat-style follower that projects slightly beyond the rear end of the magazine tube to indicate by sight, or by touch, whether the magazine is empty. This magazine extension kit is available from Brownells, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 200 South Front Street, Montezuma, IA 50171-1000; phone: 515-623-5401; fax: 515-623-3896).

We attached a pressure switch for a Laser Products (Dept. SOF, 18300 Mt. Baldy Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708;

phone: 800-828-8809; fax: 714-545-9537) SURE-FIRE Tactical Light to the right side of the forearm by means of a Velcro-type strip. The Laser Products single-switch universal housing (Model UxxT) with an auxiliary on/off switch at the rear and L90 lamp module are fitted to the gun's magazine tube with their M19 mount. This is a 9-volt system with a high-pressure xenon lamp that throws out about 105 lumens. Lumens, as measured by an instrument called an "integrating sphere," are a measure of the total amount of light a flashlight produces, which includes both the focused and wide angle portions of the beam. This unit is powered by lithium batteries, which are expensive, but have an almost indefinite shelf-life.

There is no more important accessory you can hang on a fighting shotgun. Lights of this type are used to illuminate the target and permit proper target discrimination to prevent popping a family member or fellow officer. They backlight the weapon's sights and permit their proper use. If powerful enough — and the Laser Products 9-volt SURE-FIRE Tactical Light certainly is — they can also be used to momentarily blind your opponent.

To paraphrase Clint Smith, a sling is to a shoulder-mounted weapon as a holster is to a handgun. In my opinion, the best combat sling ever devised is the so-called Giles Sling. Designed by Giles Stock, a retired sergeant and SWAT team armorer for the Phoenix, Ariz., Police Department, it is manufactured by, and available from, The Wilderness (Dept. SOF, 5130 North 19th Avenue, Suite 7, Phoenix, AZ 85015; phone

Mossberg's first gas-operated, semiautomatic shotgun, the M5500 was introduced in 1983. The method of gas operation was designed by Carl Liedke. A regulated amount of gas is diverted through the barrel's port into a gas cylinder surrounding the magazine tube. The gas was sealed by two stainless-steel piston rings — one pushing outward against the gas cylinder walls and the other pushing inward to seal with the magazine tube.

Method of Operation

Gas pressure drives an inertia weight assembly (or piston) to which are connected the two action bars, rearward to compress the recoil spring to drive the bolt out of battery and eject the spent shell casing. The next shell from the magazine tube trips the elevator latch and permits the elevator to lift the shell into alignment for chambering during the counter-recoil stroke of the reciprocating parts.

This system was modified by designer William Grehl who introduced a two-piece inertia weight assembly that allowed the independent parts of the mechanism to impact at sequentially different times during the operating cycle. This supposedly divided the impact into stages and reduced the recoil impulse, as well as lessening stress on the entire mechanism. When the M9200 was introduced in 1996, the two-piece inertia weight assembly was deleted. An inertia weight buffer surrounding the rear end of the magazine tube produces the same effect.

Breech locking is similar to that of the Mossberg M590 slide-action shotguns. As the bolt moves to its final forward position, the slide block (a steel investment casting, as are some of the trigger mechanism's components), which is attached to the twin action arms, continues forward just enough to pivot a locking block through a slot in the top of the bolt body so that it can engage a recess in the top of the barrel extension and lock the bolt into battery. The slide block has a spring-loaded steel plunger protruding from its rear end that serves as a buffer. As the bolt and barrel, when locked together, absorb most of the recoil impulse generated by firing, this permits the mill-finished, forged receiver to be fabricated from a matte black, hard-coat-anodized, high-strength aluminum alloy. — P.G.K.



The Vang Comp Shotgun Barrel

Whether you are a law-enforcement officer or a civilian defending his home and family, you must account for every projectile you send down range. Any that miss the target may impact into an innocent bystander or a member of your family. Shotguns usually spew out multiple projectiles. As the distance to the target increases, the pattern these pellets make on the target increases in size until some of them miss completely. That is one of the shotgun's idiosyncrasies and it must be recognized by those selecting a scattergun for a gunfight.

The pattern a shotgun barrel produces is first of all dependent upon its choke, which is the amount of constriction inside the barrel toward the muzzle end. There are different degrees of choke. Most fighting shotguns are choked cylinder bore. Theoretically, this means no choke at all. However, most manufacturers supposedly add 0.002-inch or 0.003-inch of constriction at the muzzle to even out the spread of shot and prevent donut-shaped patterns. The pattern produced by various chokes is usually given as a percentage based upon the number of pellets falling within a 30-inch circle around the densest part of the pattern, when fired from a distance of 40 yards. In theory, a cylinder bore choke should place 35-45% of the pellets within the 30-inch circle. Cylinder bore chokes have been traditionally selected for combat shotguns to avoid distortion of slug rounds.

Any number of devices and procedures have been used to tighten the spread of pellets fired through the barrels of combat shotguns. Most were gimmicks that did little or had unacceptable trade-offs. Hans Vang (Vang Comp Systems, Dept. SOF, 234 Orange Avenue, Goleta, CA 93117; phone: 805-964-7956; fax: 805-964-6467) has developed a system that dramatically decreases the pattern without any undesirable side effects.

A series of ports installed with the Vang Comp System reduce muzzle jump and provide faster recovery and target reacquisition.

The heart of the Vang Comp System consists of "extending" the forcing cone. That is the forward part of a shotgun barrel's chamber, where the chamber is reduced to bore diameter. The designed intention of the forcing cone is to assist the passage of shot into the barrel.

However, on factory barrels the angle between the forcing cone and bore usually remains too sharp. This batters the pellets, distorting their sphericity and enlarging the pattern. When Vang is finished altering a barrel, there is in essence no forcing cone, just a smooth, tapered transition from the chamber to the bore. This permits the crimped shotshell to open smoothly and inhibits deformation of the pellets.

The second part of the Vang Comp System consists of "back boring." This procedure involves reaming the bore from the chamber end to enlarge the bore all the way up to approximately 1.5 inches in back of the muzzle. This produces a 0.017-inch to 0.020-inch constriction at the muzzle. I have also found that it also requires the use of a 10-gauge bore brush for cleaning.

Finally, the complete Vang Comp System includes a series of ports near the muzzle: 28 holes in three rows of nine, ten and nine on each side of the barrel and three holes aft of these on each side in the shape of a "V." This purpose of these ports is to reduce muzzle jump and provide faster recovery and target reacquisition. As the force vector prescribed by gas escaping from these ports is normal (perpendicular) to the bore's axis, they have little, if any, effect on perceived recoil. A second, undesigned benefit is a noticeable reduction in the flash signature with most loads.

The results of all this will obviously vary, from barrel to barrel. With the Vang Comp System installed on the Mossberg M9200A1 "Jungle Gun" sent to SOF for test and evaluation, Federal 00 Buck Tactical Loads will place all nine pellets into a 2.5-inch-diameter group at 7 yards. At 15 yards, all nine pellets will impact within a 6.5-inch-diameter circle. At 25 yards, the pattern opens up to only a 7.5-inch-diameter circle containing all nine pellets. That is a demonstrably significant improvement, as a Mossberg M590 with a cylinder bore barrel fired for control produced an 18-inch-diameter pattern at 25 yards. It has been my observation with other shotguns that Federal's 00 Buck Tactical Loads seem to benefit most from the Vang Comp System. All of my many fighting shotguns have now been modified with the Vang Comp System.

Fighting with a scattergun can be divided into three zones. In the "A" zone, due to the proximity of the target, the shot act as a single projectile and you must aim carefully. The so-called "B" zone is the range of distances in which the shotgun is most effective with buckshot. Here we get the full benefit of the shot pattern, although the pattern should still be centered using the sights. The "C" zone represents the distance at which the pattern can no longer be expected to provide acceptable stopping power. At this distance a slug should be selected. The Vang Comp System will extend zones "A" and "B" by at least 10 yards, respectively.

— P.G.K.

602-242-4945 or 800-775-5650; fax: 602-242-3999), which also makes the Safe Packer holster.

Fabricated from heavy, 1.25-inch, black nylon webbing with 1.25-inch Delrin buckles, the sling is stitched with heavy polyester thread, which is more sun-resistant than nylon thread. Made for virtually any shoulder-mounted combat firearm, it can be used as a carry, shooting or hands-free sling. More importantly, when deployed correctly — with the outer of the two sling loops placed around the head and the support arm — it permits the weapon to be safely and instantly dropped to the side without interfering with a smooth transition to a holstered sidearm.

We fired a variety of buckshot and slug ammunition during our test and evaluation of the Mossberg M9200A1 as these types are obviously the workhorse loads for the fighting shotgun. The M9200A1 was designed to function only with 2 3/4-inch 00 buckshot and heavy slug loads. Federal (Federal Cartridge Co., Dept. SOF, 900 Ehlen Drive, Anoka, MN 55303; phone: 612-323-2300) is my choice for 00 buckshot (pellets of .33 caliber). Federal's Tactical Load (catalog #H132 00) is the most popular 00 buckshot load in the country. The gas-operated Mossberg M9200A1 functioned perfectly with the low-recoil-impulse Federal Tactical Load.

Federal and Remington (Remington Arms Co., 1011 Centre Road, Delle Donne Corporate Center, Wilmington, DE, 19805-1270; phone: 302-993-8547, fax: 302-993-8606) provide rifled slug loads of comparable quality. Both Federal's so-called Hi-Shok/Hollow Point Slug (product No. F127-RS) and Remington's Slugger (product No. SP12SMag.-RS-5PK) are "one-ounce" (but actually 435 grains, nominal), hollow-base, rifled lead slugs with no more than incipient dimples at their tips. The Federal slug measures 0.70-inch in overall length while the Remington projectile is slightly longer at 0.80-inch. These almost-.70-caliber projectiles will penetrate up to 14 inches of soft tissue while expanding to about 1.1 inches in diameter. The temporary cavity produced is significant with a missile this size and will add to tissue disruption.

Both the Remington Slugger and Federal rifled slug shot with approximately equivalent accuracy in the Mossberg M9200A1. At 50 yards, both will print consistent 2 to 2.5-inch groups. Muzzle velocity of these slug loads is about 1,550 fps in an 18.5-inch barrel. At 50 yards, I zero the rear sight for an impact of about 2 inches above the point of aim. This will put you about 4 inches high at 25 yards, but dead on at 75 yards and only 5 inches low at 100 yards. These latter distances are the area at which slugs dominate in a gunfight. The recoil impulse of rifled slugs — usually unpleasant at least — in the Mossberg M9200A1 is quite moderate.

I have seen the Mossberg M9200A1 fired with one hand and without a shoulder mount exhibiting no reduction in functional reliability. As I said initially, this remains

Mossberg M9200A1 "Jungle Gun"

SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: 12 gauge.

Operation: Locked breech; bolt locks to barrel by means of a locking block within the bolt body, which engages a recess in the barrel extension. Semiautomatic; gas-operated — gas cylinder and piston surround the magazine tube. Thumb safety mounted on top of the receiver.

Feed mechanism: 4-round magazine tube under the barrel.

Weight, empty: 7.8 pounds.

Length, overall: 39 inches, with either a black synthetic buttstock or a folding stock. 28.5 inches with stock folded.

Length-of-pull: Approximately 14 inches.

Barrel: Cylinder bore.

Barrel length: 18.5 inches.

Finish: "Parkerized" (phosphate) steel components; matte black hardcoat anodizing on receiver and trigger guard.

Furniture: Black synthetic buttstock and forearm. Folding stock available for law-enforcement or military use only.

Manufacturer: O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc., Dept. SOF, 7 Grasso Avenue, P.O. Box 497, North Haven, CT 06473-9844; phone: 203-230-5300; fax: 203-230-5359.

Price: \$627.

Accessory suppliers:

- Vang Comp Systems, Dept. SOF, 234 Orange Avenue, Goleta, CA 93117; phone: 805-964-7956; fax: 805-964-6467.
- SURE-FIRE Tactical Lights: Laser Products, Dept. SOF, 18300 Mt. Baldy Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708; phone: 800-828-8809; fax: 714-545-9537.
- MMC ghost ring sights: Miniature Machine Corp., Dept. SOF, 2513 East Loop 820 North, Fort Worth, TX 76118; phone: 817-595-0404; fax: 817-595-3074.
- IWI tritium night sights: Innovative Weaponry Incorporated, Dept. SOF, 2513 East Loop 820 North, Fort Worth, TX 76118; phone: 817-284-0099; fax: 817-284-7528.
- Giles sling: The Wilderness, Dept. SOF, 5130 North 19th Avenue, Suite 7, Phoenix, AZ 85015; phone 602-242-4945 or 800-775-5650; fax: 602-242-3999.

T&E summary: First semiautomatic shotgun developed expressly for the U.S. Military. Most reliable, least ammunition-sensitive and softest-recoiling semiautomatic shotgun ever tested by SOF.



A folding stock and pistol grip, available only to law-enforcement agencies and military organizations, is an available option. Designed by Choate, the stock folds to the left and in that position permits operation of the weapon.



the softest recoiling, most reliable and least ammunition-sensitive semiautomatic shotgun I have ever fired. It stands poised to dominate the fighting shotgun arena. Suggested retail price of the M9200A1 is \$627 with the rigid black synthetic stock. When equipped with the folding stock (available to law-enforcement and military organizations only), the price is \$679. There is a limited lifetime warranty. These prices include the Mossberg Cablelock, which no one in my circle will use. Please note that the barrel and other components will not interchange with those of the sporting M9200 shotguns. ✕

MMC's Shotgun Ghost Ring

As furnished to SOF, the Mossberg M9200A1 "Jungle Gun" was equipped with a bead front sight and a flat serrated area on top of the receiver. This is the traditional shotgun sight system, but as slugs are now commonly used at distances beyond 40 to 50 yards, it just won't do. Mossberg is developing a ghost-ring sight system for the M9200A1.

Popularized by Jeff Cooper, a large-aperture ghost ring provides a shadow-like effect around the front sight blade, with extremely fast sight alignment at close-range buckshot distances, without compromising the requirement for precision sighting with solid projectiles at longer ranges.

There are a number of alternatives, but at this time the very best shotgun ghost ring system is that made by the Miniature Machine Corporation (MMC, Dept. SOF, 2513 East Loop 820 North, Ft. Worth, TX 76118; phone: 817-595-0404, fax: 817-595-3074).

They have now set the standards with regard to ghost ring systems by which all others must be judged. This is the most rugged, fully adjustable shotgun ghost ring sight in the world. It will withstand the rigors of all tactical law enforcement applications.

The rear sight assembly is exceptionally robust. The contoured base is held to the receiver by two oversized No. 8 allen-head screws. It is fully machined from 4140 steel. There are large, integral protective ears on each side of the base. Elevation zero is adjusted by a large slot-head screw on the right side of



the sight base. Rotating the slot head clockwise will raise the 0.187-inch diameter peep aperture assembly. Turning it counter-clockwise will lower the rear sight aperture. The elevation mechanism operates on an eccentric that cannot be over-tightened or unscrewed. The rear peep aperture, held in a channel by spring-loaded, ball-bearing detents can be moved to the right or left to adjust windage zero by a coin or the rim of a shotshell. The aperture is capable of 30 MOA of adjustment in both windage and elevation in positive 3 MOA clicks.

The front sight blade, which is 0.125-inch thick, has a serrated top and rear ramp. It is installed by silver soldering, not "space age glue" like some others. A slip-on banded front sight is also available. We had Innovative Weaponry Incorporated (IWI, Dept. SOF, 2513 East Loop 820 North, Fort Worth, TX 76118; phone: 817-284-0099; fax: 817-284-7528) install a self-luminous green tritium dot in the front sight blade. All of my handguns, rifles and shotguns that have tritium night sights were installed by IWI. Tritium is a radioactive isotope of hydrogen with atoms three times

the mass of ordinary light hydrogen atoms. The half-life of tritium is 12.5 years, which gives a tritium micro-sphere a usable life of more than 15 years. IWI's tritium control tube not only encapsulates the tritium vile, but acts as a shock absorbing device and a light intensifier. The simple epoxy lens has excellent light transmission qualities and offers unparalleled resistance to breakage. Tritium night sights are an excellent choice when low-light-level scenarios are anticipated. Remember, most urban gunfights occur in subdued light or in total darkness

— P.G.K.

Manufacturers in Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Hungary and Finland have offered sporterized versions of the Kalashnikov rifle. Russian arms makers, however, are the only developers of autoloading shotguns based on the well-tested Kalashnikov design.

American shooters may recall the "Saiga-410" semiauto shotgun in .410 gauge as manufactured by Izhmash and exported to the United States in the mid-'90s. The latest development of this well-known Russian design bureau is a novel series of semiautomatic 12-gauge shotguns. Unfortunately, they are not importable to the U.S. because a semiauto shotgun with a folding stock, pistol grip, and magazine capacity in excess of five rounds is regarded as an "assault" [sic] weapon.

The "Saiga-12" was designed primarily for the Russian law-enforcement and private-security market. It comes in three main configurations: "Standard" (22.8-inch barrel and non-folding buttstock); "Standard Folding" (22.8-inch barrel and folding stock); and "Short" (16.9-inch barrel and folding buttstock derived from the AK-74M).

On special order, these weapons can be fitted with barrels of 13.0 and 26.8 inches.

As seen from the photos, there is a cosmetic resemblance between the Saiga-12 shotgun and AK rifles. The bolt cover, selector lever, buttstock and pistol grip are essentially the same. Although the receiver *looks* very much the same, it has been considerably redesigned: There are fewer rivets on the sides, giving it a more "civil-

AK Scattergun

Text & Photos by
Valery N. Shilin

Russia's Saiga-12 Police Weapon



The Saiga-12C shotgun with a 580mm choked barrel, folding buttstock extended, and experimental 10-round magazine; (inset) detachable pistol grip is available option. (left) Saiga-12K shotgun, with buttstock extended, cylinder-bore 430mm barrel and a choke muzzle attachment, equipped with PO 3.5X optical sight.

ian” esthetic, and certain dimensions of the receiver are enlarged to accommodate a larger bolt and barrel extension.

Led by project engineer Gennadiy Nikonov, the design team spent a great deal of effort to retain the original dimensions of the receiver and came up with a very original solution: The internal guide rail for the bolt carrier was moved from the top to the bottom of the receiver. The space gained was enough to accommodate a more substantial barrel extension, plus the huge bolt necessitated by the base of a 12-gauge round.

There are several important alterations to the bolt carrier and trigger mechanism, also. First, a portion of the right side of the bolt-carrier/piston connecting rod is milled

Pump-action shotguns with tube magazines are sensitive to cartridges of different lengths, as different-length shells in a horizontal magazine “head-to-tail” means a varying feed stroke, which can lead to jamming. The Saiga-12 vertical single-column magazine allows the use of ammunition of different lengths in a random combination.

zine, the greater number of shock loads each receives before the last round is fired — each time the weapon is fired, the ammunition receives a shock that varies from 600 to 650 Gs (or more). Strong or repeated shock loads may have a significantly damaging effect on the shells, or even lead to disintegration of the charge.



(above) Left side of Saiga-12K shotgun: knob on rear of receiver serves to deactivate the weapon when buttstock is folded. (inset) shows buttstock folded. (below) Saiga-12K semi-automatic shotgun, fieldstripped. Simple, robust Kalashnikov design adapted well. Note enlarged bolt head and strengthened bolt carrier.

out to ensure trouble-free operation of the extractor on a larger shell. To accommodate the ejection of the larger shells, the ejection port is also enlarged, and a sliding, sheet-steel ejection-port cover rides on the return-spring guide rod to exclude debris from entering the action from behind the bolt when in battery.

Due to the use of heavy-duty types of cartridges and for the purpose of enhancing proper retention of the top (receiver) cover, the protruding base lug of the return spring guide rod, which also functions as a retainer of the bolt cover, has been provided with an additional lug. Thus, to remove the top cover you depress the knob and, holding it in such a position, push the extending locking lug inside the cover, and the cover easily comes from its recess.

In contrast to the original AK rifle, the Saiga-12 has a gas regulator that is placed in position “1” for standard 2½-inch rounds, or position “2” for 3-inch magnum shells. The additional bolt-cover locking knob and the gas regulator have been added in consideration of the greater bolt recoil speed with 12-gauge rounds. The gas system of the Saiga-12 functions interchangeably with 2½-inch and 3-inch shells.

More alterations were made in the trigger mechanism of the Saiga-12 by eliminating the auto sear. Hence, the selector functions only in two modes: The upper position marked “S” is safety and the lower position marked “F” is fire.

Detachable Box Magazines

One advantage of the interchangeable box magazines of the Saiga-12 is their versatility in regard to different-length shells.



Capacity of the Saiga-12’s black, fiber-reinforced polyamide magazines is five rounds “standard” or seven rounds on special order. Experimentally, the factory had made welded sheet-metal 10-round magazines, but Izhmash has carried out numerous tests to determine the optimal size for such a magazine. The best compromise between the desire to increase capacity (only natural from a tactical point of view) and practical experience, is five to seven rounds.

The more rounds there are in a maga-

The sheet-metal, welded 10-round experimental magazine, at left, lost out in production to black fiberglass-reinforced polyamide magazine at right, made in five- or seven-round models.





Business end of the Saiga-12K shotgun is *all* business: Note choke muzzle attachment, gas regulator, sling swivel, black synthetic handguard, front-sight brass bead on the serrated rib. By turning wheel, sight is adjustable for elevation.

Principles Of Operation

Operating principles and procedures are the same for all models of the Saiga-12. The operator puts the selector in the lowest "F" position to bring the weapon into firing mode. By pulling the extending side handle of the bolt carrier all the way back, the hammer is cocked and retained by the sear. Driven forward by the operating spring, the bolt strips the first round from the magazine and chambers it. Turning on its axis, the bolt's two lugs lock into recesses in the barrel extension and the weapon is ready to fire.

To fire, pull the trigger: The trigger extension moves the sear to release the hammer. Driven by the multiple-strand steel-wire trigger spring, the hammer pivots on its axis and hits the striker. After a shot is fired, a portion of combustion gas escapes from the barrel into the gas cylinder through the small port in the barrel. The piston receives an impulse from this gas, pushing the bolt carrier towards the rear while pressure drops to a safe level. The cam slot on the inner side of receiver turns the bolt to the right, the bolt releasing its two locking lugs from recesses in the barrel extension. The bolt carrier travels on, the empty shell is extracted and then ejected from the receiver. The operating spring is compressed, storing energy for a return impulse.

The hammer is pushed down to engage the sear. As soon as the carrier contacts the rear wall of the receiver, driven by the return spring, the bolt carrier commences its forward motion and the cycle is repeated. With the usual AK auto sear removed, the weapon is capable of only single shots, while reloading is done automatically.

One of the significant benefits of semiauto shotguns in comparison to pump-action weapons is the operational rate of fire. As an average shooter, firing the Saiga-12, I can

"touch" a series of five targets in a bit more than three seconds — a difficult task with any pump-action. Once during demonstration firing at the Izhmash shooting range, a group of participants fired about 150 rounds rapid fire from the same weapon without the slightest malfunction. Still, one of the visitors said he had doubts whether the Saiga-12 was as reliable as the original AK. Vladimir Tsypko, a test engineer there, took this as a personal challenge. He tossed a handful of sand into the receiver, shook it well and said, "Watch this!" Five shots rang out and five targets dropped. Impressed, someone remarked, "A Kalashnikov is always a Kalashnikov!"

For firing slugs, cylinder bores with an assortment of muzzle attachments are best. A choked barrel, however, has proved better for cartridges loaded with ball-type and sub-caliber slugs. Cylindrical slugs with or without obturating rings, including the Foster and Brenneke, show very acceptable results if fired from cylinder bores equipped with the "Paradox" muzzle device.

SOF Field Tests

It was -93.2 degrees F during a January snow in the western Urals when *SOF* T&Ed a Saiga-12K service autoloading shotgun with a 13-inch cylinder bore, equipped with a choke muzzle device. This specific configuration was selected because the longer the barrel, the more dependable the weapon is in terms of autoloading reliability and its accuracy of fire. The season was selected

SAIGA-12 SHOTGUNS SPECIFICATIONS			
	Saiga-12	Saiga-12C	Saiga-12K
Weight, empty without magazine, pounds:	8.4	7.9	7.7
Overall length, inches:	45.0	41.7	35.8
Length, buttstock folded, inches:	N/A	32.3	26.4
Length of barrel, in:	22.9 & 26.8	22.9 & 26.8	16.9 & 13.0
Magazine capacity:	5 & 7	5 & 7	5 & 7
Weight of magazine, empty, pounds:	5-round, .39, 7-round, .52		
Length of magazine, inches:	5-round, 6.5 inches; 7-round, 9.0 inches		
Sights:	The brass bead front (adjustable elevation), open U-notch rear sight (adjustable windage)		
Finish:	Black phosphate, with lacquer coating		
Furniture:	Black fiberglass-reinforced polyamide handguard, pistol grip and buttstock.		
Accessories:	Sling, carrying pouch, cleaning kit included. Optical sights and night-vision devices optional.		
T & E summary:	A well built, reliable, very effective and comfortable weapon.		
Status:	Currently in production.		
Manufacturer:	IZHMASH Joint Stock Company, Dept. SOF, 3 Derjabin Str., 426006 Izhevsk, Russia; Fax & voice: 011-7-3412-784016 or 011-7-3412-785373		



Intrepid, winter-proof author T&Es Saiga-12K performance in bitter cold of -93.2 F in Russia's Western Urals.

19.7 x 0.08 inches and (B-3) 19.7 x 19.7 x 0.06 inches, all attached to a wooden shield.

Brass and lead 511.5-grain slugs in 2½-inch shells were fired at a wooden cube at the distance of 55 yards. The brass slug made a clear-cut entrance and penetrated 10.6 inches. The lead 511.5-grain "Polev" slug made an entrance 0.16-inch wider than the diameter of projectile and penetrated 7.9 inches.

The lead 511.5-grain Polev slug fired at a 0.1-inch steel plate at a distance 55 yards made a crater about 1.4 inches deep and 4 inches in diameter, but did not pierce the plate. Translating this to the real world, any such a shot fired at (for example) a terrorist in a ballistic vest, would crush bones and knock the target out, throwing him far back. Fired at a plate of 0.08-inch thick, a similar slug made a complete perforation. The remaining portion of the slug went into the wooden shield and came to a rest at the mark of 2.0 inches.

Firing buckshot at the distance of 40 yards, 50% of projectiles pierced a 0.06-inch steel plate and penetrated the wooden shield by 0.8 inch.

Construction of sights makes aiming easy and accurate. The front sight consisting of a brass bead and the rear sight of an open U-notch type are attached to a grooved rib that extends from the receiver cover to the gas regulator. The front sight is adjustable for elevation; the rear sight adjustable for windage. An optic scope can attach to a standard AK mount on the left side of receiver.



Five rounds of the Russian "Polev" sub-caliber 511.5-grain lead slug grouped inside 8.7 inches at 50 meters.



Polev sub-caliber 511.5-grain lead slug fired at a distance of 55 yards blew through 0.08-inch steel plate.



Fired at a 0.06-inch steel plate at 40 yards with Buck Shot, the Saiga-12K gave 50% penetration.

because in such weather oils and greases become thicker and create additional friction for the gun mechanisms. Plus, the energy of loads at very low temperatures is always inferior, due to greater heat loss. What is more, cold air is measurably denser.

It has been my experience that very cold air gives an impression of being almost solid. Thus, by exposing the weapon and ammunition to extremely cold temperatures, on the one hand, and by shortening the barrel, on the other hand, we created the most adverse operational conditions. Our firing was done both inside (68 degrees F) and in the open air.

The Saiga-12K fired five rounds of the Russian "Polev" sub-caliber lead slug. The operator was in a seated position at a bench rest. Firing groups of five shots at the range of 55 yards, the average shot group was 8.6 inches.

Firing in a standing position from the shoulder, without additional support, at a distance of 40 yards, excellent groups were made with buck shot (100%) and shot size AAA (71%).

To determine penetration capability of this barrel and various loads, the following types of targets were used: (A) a wooden cube of 19.7 x 19.7 x 11.8 inches; and (B-1) steel plates 19.7 x 19.7 x 0.1 inches; (B-2) 19.7 x

In accordance with Russian governmental regulations, folding the stock on the Saiga-12K inerts the weapon until the stock is again unfolded.

Generally speaking, I found the Saiga-12 shotguns to be well built, very effective and comfortable weapons. I have fired hundreds of rounds of various brands of ammunition under various ambient conditions, and performance of the weapon was flawless.

Valery N. Shilin, 44, is a Senior Marketing Officer with Izhmash Joint Stock Company, of Izhevsk, Russia. Izhmash is the largest Russian arms manufacturer.

Prekaz, Kosovo — The Yugoslav republic of Kosovo special police tactical squad has a lot to be proud of.

Not only are they perhaps the only SWAT team in the world to boast its own artillery and anti-aircraft battery, but their cops can also claim high marks for rarely missing their targets.

Case in point was a recent live-fire exercise for the men manning the squad's old, but well-oiled Yugo-built four-barrel anti-aircraft gun.

After eye-balling their target from less than 150 yards away, the battery leveled its four guns horizontally down range, and then opened up with a near non-stop stream of fire, effectively blasting a hole through the targets and helping to eliminate the threat to the other two companies of tactical police: a light mortar team and members of a Yugoslavian National Army (JNA) T-84 tank unit that were on hand to provide auxiliary firepower.

Unfortunately, the target wasn't enemy aircraft or hostile land forces, but instead turned out to be a single ethnic Albanian family, mostly women, children and old men, suspected of being linked to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). When questioned about the excessive force used to bring suspects in for questioning, one Serb police commander told the press that his men were faced with a "superior, well-trained force that was a threat to the security of the province and its people."

When SOF was finally able to sift through the ruins of the two now totally destroyed compounds a few days later, the only evidence of a suspected Albanian arms cache that we could find was some shell casings from small-bore hunting rifles, and a few rusted pick-axes and shovels piled up around the fresh graves of the victims.

Déjà Waco

Visions of Ruby Ridge and Waco floated before our eyes as we looked around trying to find more evidence that the 46 members of the Jashari family were "really" terrorists like the Serbs claimed, and not just a large, well-to-do farming family with strong, nationalist political feelings ambushed by a Balkan's version of the ATF.

The tank and the ack-ack gun were gone, but behind us at the treeline, still manning their positions, were about eight or 10 "tactical cops" eyeing us through the scopes of their Yugo-made Dragunov-style sniper rifles.

It wasn't difficult to see why the Serbs chose the Jashari-family compound to "get the word out."

"The Jasharis were a powerful family," said Aleks Seratlic, a Montenegrin reporter covering Kosovo, "and they were singled out to send a message to the KLA and anyone thinking of supporting them. It's possible that the Jasharis gave money or support to the KLA, but I doubt they were actually soldiers. They were just convenient targets."

KRISIS IN KOSOVO

SOF At Albania's Ruby Ridge

Text & Photos by
Mark H. Milstein



Indeed, just behind the sandbags and tactical-squad snipers stood an out-of-use munitions factory turned Yugoslav national police barracks. The Jasharis were sitting ducks.

It would be easy to draw comparisons between the current situation in Kosovo and the war in Bosnia. Serbian guns are again shooting down Muslim women and children. Muslim men are again being taken away at gunpoint by Serb police and army troops, never to be seen again. Serbs are

again using excessive force against Muslim factions seeking independence from Belgrade.

The Claims Of Conflict

Both the Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians claim sovereignty over Kosovo's territory. The Serbs claim theirs is based on legal, historic and religious arguments. They consider Kosovo to be the "cradle" of their nation.

It is the birthplace of the Serbian



But Kosovo isn't Bosnia. In fact, the situation in Kosovo more mirrors pre-Mandela South Africa than post-Tito Bosnia or Croatia.

With a repressive Serbian police state keeping Albanians out of power and well under their jackboots, Kosovar Albanians — under the leadership of poet-turned-politician Ibrahim Rugova and his *Liberal Democratic Party of Kosovo* (LDK) — built parallel administrative structures, including a government, parliament, limited health care, education, and social services, as well as taxation.

Like pre-Mandela South Africa, the current state of relations between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians is based on a system of apartheid grounded in ethnic hatred and growing fear. Black South Africans had the African National Congress (ANC). Kosovo's Albanians have the LDK. Kosovo Albanians also have the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a shadowy, to-date untested rag-tag group of "minutemen" armed with assorted weapons and funded, as *SOF* soon found out, by an unlikely source.

It was the possibility of making contact and assessing the KLA that spurred *SOF* to leave the comforts of Budapest, and drive 10 hours through checkpoint after checkpoint to Kosovo's Kalashnikov-choked capital, Pristina.

We quickly set-up shop with 200 other members of the world's media at the Hotel Grand, where for five-star prices we received no hot water, no television or radio, one telephone line which worked only sporadically, and a wanted war criminal as one of our hosts. The Grand was, however, conveniently located for anyone wanting a bird's-eye view of Albanian protesters being beaten or stomped to death by Serb riot police during Pristina's every-other-day city-paralyzing protest marches.

Tracking The KLA

After getting a heads up on the situation from a number of well-connected ethnic Albanians we drove out to Drenica, the region known to be a hotbed of KLA activity.

Serb special police had set up an ever-tighter ring of checkpoints on all roads leading into the region, which lies west of Pristina and extends all the way to the Albanian border.

All checkpoints were equipped with Yugo-made APCs. Most were tracked vehicles resembling M113As. Others were wheeled vehicles with heavy machine guns.

By local standards, the Jashari family were successful farmers. Serb police attacked the family compound with depressed AA guns, laid it asunder in minutes — claiming the family were members of the KLA. (inset) KLA members survey the valley from a mountain vantage point near Prekaz, Kosovo. Largely armed with aging SKS rifles supplied by expats in Germany or Switzerland and self-trained, existence of fledgling KLA resistance army was rationale given for wanton destruction of Jashari family compound near Prekaz.

Orthodox Church and Kosovo Polje, just outside Pristina, was the site of the famous battle of 1389, where the Ottomans slaughtered the Serbs during their advance to the gates of Vienna. Further, the Serbs fear that the growing Albanian population will erode their control and jeopardize the rights of the Serb minority in Kosovo.

The Albanians, on the other hand, base their claim on the right to self-determination, and eagerly point out that they now make up approximately 90% of Kosovo's

population. Furthermore, the Albanians assert that Kosovo, like all former constituent units of Yugoslavia, has the right to independence.

Fact is, the estimated 1.5 to 2 million Albanians in Kosovo easily outnumber the 150,000 to 200,000 Serbs, many of whom are refugees cleansed from Western Croatia and Bosnia. The Albanian birthrate is also considerably higher, giving additional angst to Serbian nationalists who foresee a future Yugoslavia where Serbs are in the minority.



Chickens pick through rubble next to beef animals killed at another Jashari house, laid waste by Serb "SWAT" assault that wiped out an



entire extended family. (right) Beeves lay bloating inside loafing shed on Jashari farm stead, where they were killed by Serb police AA fire.

All were painted blue, the color of the national police force.

The police officers at the checkpoints seemed intelligent and methodical in their vehicle checks and relied upon a system of logging the entry of any vehicle into the region and counter-checking the direction of that vehicle with other checkpoints. It was a rare occasion when they got sloppy. All were equipped with modern weaponry — assault rifles and pistols (all Yugo-made). All had body armor and wore riot gear.

The Serbs sent upwards of 10,000 tactical squad (SWAT) police to Kosovo to bolster the already large regular police pres-

ence. The JNA (Yugoslavian National Army) also entered the picture in a logistical mode, providing transportation, communications, supplies, heavy weapons, manpower, etc.

Helicopter patrols could occasionally be heard overhead, and road traffic in and out of the region was light as we made our way through village after village, emptied of their inhabitants. Word was that upwards of 10,000 civilians had fled to neighboring regions and to Pristina in the wake of the Jashari killings, and the continued light clashes between the KLA and the Serb police.

"Right now the JNA is keeping its troops out of the situation," said Adem, an ethnic Albanian working for an European aid agency. "There was rumor that some JNA from the city of Nis were here, but I haven't seen anything. I think most of the army troops from Pristina are not involved with the police. They gave them a tank, some trucks and lots of supplies. That's all I heard."

After scooting through the two checkpoints separating the villages of Ujmir and Sivece, we turned off the road and began our slow drive into the hills. *SOF's* new jeep, a moss-green Diahatsu Rocky, handled the goat trail with no trouble. We pushed through a scrub forest and soon found ourselves on a well-used dirt path leading to a number of farm houses.

Nice Jeep

Suddenly a white, late model Audi sedan without license plates came from the right and stopped about 10 yards in front of us. Two men, sporting what appeared to be newly issued German *Bundeswehr* uniforms, complete with *feldwebel* caps with roughly sewn on Albanian flags approached us.

They weren't nervous, and neither pointed their brand new Kalashnikovs at us — instead they kept their rifles pointing skywards. Both men had their extra magazines stored in webbing, and each had a Motorola radio. These were soldiers who clearly felt in control of their environment.

The two men in the car seemed to be wear-



Waco in the Balkans: What happens to uppity Albanians in Kosovo, Yugoslavia: 51 graves for 51 members of the Jashari Family — mostly women, children and old men — all slaughtered in a Serb SWAT assault on the family farm.

ing either Belgian or Swiss army uniforms.

We were asked for our passports, and after realizing we weren't Serb spies or a threat to their security, things relaxed a bit. Asking the senior of the four men whether they were KLA elicited a nervous laughter from everyone, but after a second or two the answer came back a clear, sober "Yes."

"I worked in Germany for six years," the leader said in his best German. "I returned to Kosovo three years ago to build my home. The Serbs would like to kill all of us. This is genocide against the Albanian people."

We commented on how professional all four of them looked, and asked where they received their equipment and training. "Our equipment comes from friends in Europe," came the response, "and we train ourselves. No one is helping the Albanian people. Where are the Americans? Why NATO does not help us?"

When we asked if we could join them on patrol, we were told it was too dangerous and that we couldn't come with them because of security concerns.

Five minutes after the Audi first crossed our paths, our KLA "friends" vanished in a cloud of dust. We were stunned. Until this first contact, we had suspected that the KLA were nothing more than a mythical, possibly non-existent excuse for the Serbs to continue to bash the Albanians. Very few people had ever had contact with these elusive fighters, and most accounts gave little detail into their professionalism, training or level of equipment. Even the senior ethnic Albanian leadership in Pristina refuse to acknowledge the existence of the KLA, instead focusing on fighting Serb control with non-violent protests and the aid of Western political pressure.

Some analysts, however, had begun to say that if the ethnic Albanian leadership in Pristina couldn't deliver a quick political solution, the tides would turn and the KLA would fill the breach, sparking a full-scale guerrilla war.

Mainstream press reports had previously said that the KLA received the bulk of their arms and training from allied paramilitary groups in northern Albania. Those groups in northern Albania, now led by former Albanian president Sali Barisha, accumulated their arsenal during the two months of anarchy that gripped the country in March and April of 1997.

CARE Ordnance Packages

While a good portion of the KLA's arms and training had certainly come from Albania, *SOF* learned that there was now a growing, perhaps more important, life-line under construction — the estimated half-million Albanian guest workers in

Switzerland and Germany.

Yugoslavian border police have on a number of occasions intercepted weapons shipments from Switzerland and Germany that have come through Macedonia, intended for the KLA. Serb military officials also claim that the KLA has received training from the Bosnian army.

In an article published in a Bosnian-Serb newspaper earlier this year, Serb military intelligence sources are quoted as saying that "KLA members in Kosovo-Metohija



(top) Ethnic Albanian President Ibrahim Rugova, center, in his office in Pristina, Kosovo. Albanian shadow government he heads wields considerable influence, as it is honored by most Albanians — who comprise some 90% of the population. (above) Anti Serb-government demonstrators in Kosovo carry placards protesting Serbian terror, genocide and rule. (inset) Some protesters carried Albanian flags, pictures of ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova.

are also being trained by the former members of the special units known as *Crni Labudovi* (Black Swans) and *Zivinicke Ose* (Zivinica Wasps) of the Muslim army in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

"There are indications that recent events in Skadar [Shkoder, in northern Albania, where there was unrest in late February] were actually a dress rehearsal for the KLA terrorists," the source continued. "The terrorists were to demonstrate in practice if they were capable of taking full control over a town that in size corresponds to several towns in Kosovo-Metohija."

It was time to drive over to the village of Pec, as the BBC was reporting that two Albanian men had been gunned down by Serb police snipers and that additional Serb

special police were being brought to the town to quash any potential trouble expected after the funerals.

The air was thick with fear and tension when we finally arrived in Pec. An additional platoon of Serb special police and a second APC had been brought into the one-street village to remind the Albanians who was in control. No women or young children were on the street, and only a few men milled around the front of a shop.

"These killings will be avenged," a middle-aged man speaking near-perfect English told us. "Those men were farmers. They weren't terrorists. They were in their fields and saw a group of men approaching. They thought they were Albanians, but they weren't. They were Serbs who shot them."

When we asked whether the KLA operated out of Pec, we were met with paranoid stares and shuffling of feet. No one would admit to knowing of any KLA activity in the area.

It was time to return to Pristina. More trouble was brewing in advance of a planned mass protest march that was sup-

posed to bring Pristina to a standstill. Student leaders and LDK officials had called on every able-bodied Albanian to join them on a hillside near the American Cultural Center for a rally. Serb officials had warned that if the protest went on as planned, there might be trouble.

Peaceful Protest

After donning body armor, we walked over to the protest site. About 150,000 people were already there, screaming for Serbs police to leave Kosovo and to stop the violence. Two days earlier, at a similar rally, Serb riot police had waded into the crowd with water cannons, tear gas and wooden

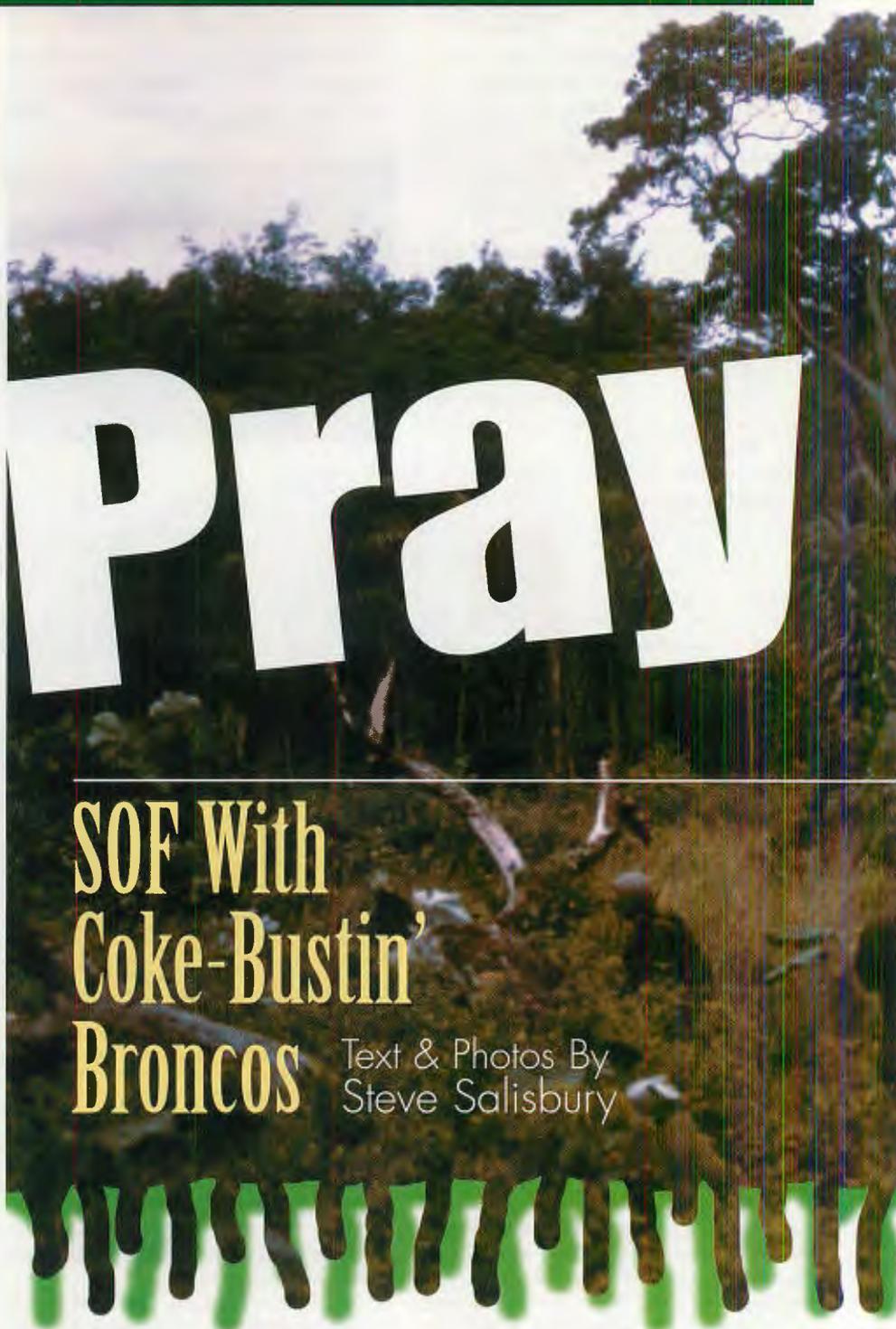
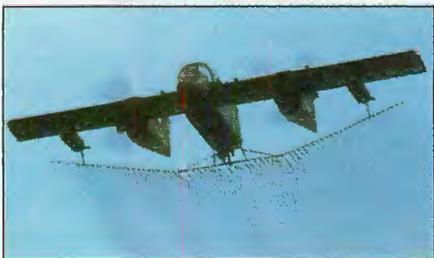
Continued on page 70

Major Horacio Galeano Salcedo stared out from one of the open side doors and scanned the jungle and clearings 2,000 feet below as we sat in an old green UH-1H Huey, part of an armed five-helicopter escort for three twin-engine OV-10 Bronco airplanes. The doorunner on the right side cocked his mounted M60D general purpose machine gun, and faces turned serious. Dressed in olive-green fatigues and equipped as light infantry, the major and his two other men could have been mistaken for an army unit. Instead, they were Colombian National Police. And the OV-10s weren't flying reconnaissance. This was an aerial eradication mission in the heart of coca country in the south-central Colombian province of Guaviare.

There is a new experiment taking place in the war on drugs in Colombia: Five OV-10 Bronco airplanes have been introduced in the role of spraying coca crops. They were delivered to Colombia last year as part of the U.S. company Dyncorp's contract with the U.S. State Department's National Anti-Narcotics Section (NAS) to support the Colombian national police. This Vietnam-era aircraft — originally designed for reconnaissance and light-attack support for ground troops — joins a small fleet of 11 Dyncorp U.S.-built Turbo Thrushes, which have been the mainstay of Colombia's aerial eradication efforts of coca, amapola and marijuana. Colombian and American law-enforcement officials say the introduction of the OV-10s is not intended to replace the Thrushes, but is a test to see whether the OV-10s can be an effective addition for spraying in lowlands, where coca and marijuana are illegally cultivated. The bulk of coca plantations are in southern and eastern Colombia, mostly in Guaviare province, according to police maps. On the maps, in fact, a green splotch representing coca fields covered almost the entire province.

Danger: Narco-Guerrillas Ahead

"Go there and see for yourselves," Colombian National Police Chief General Rosso Jose Serrano said. He was speaking to



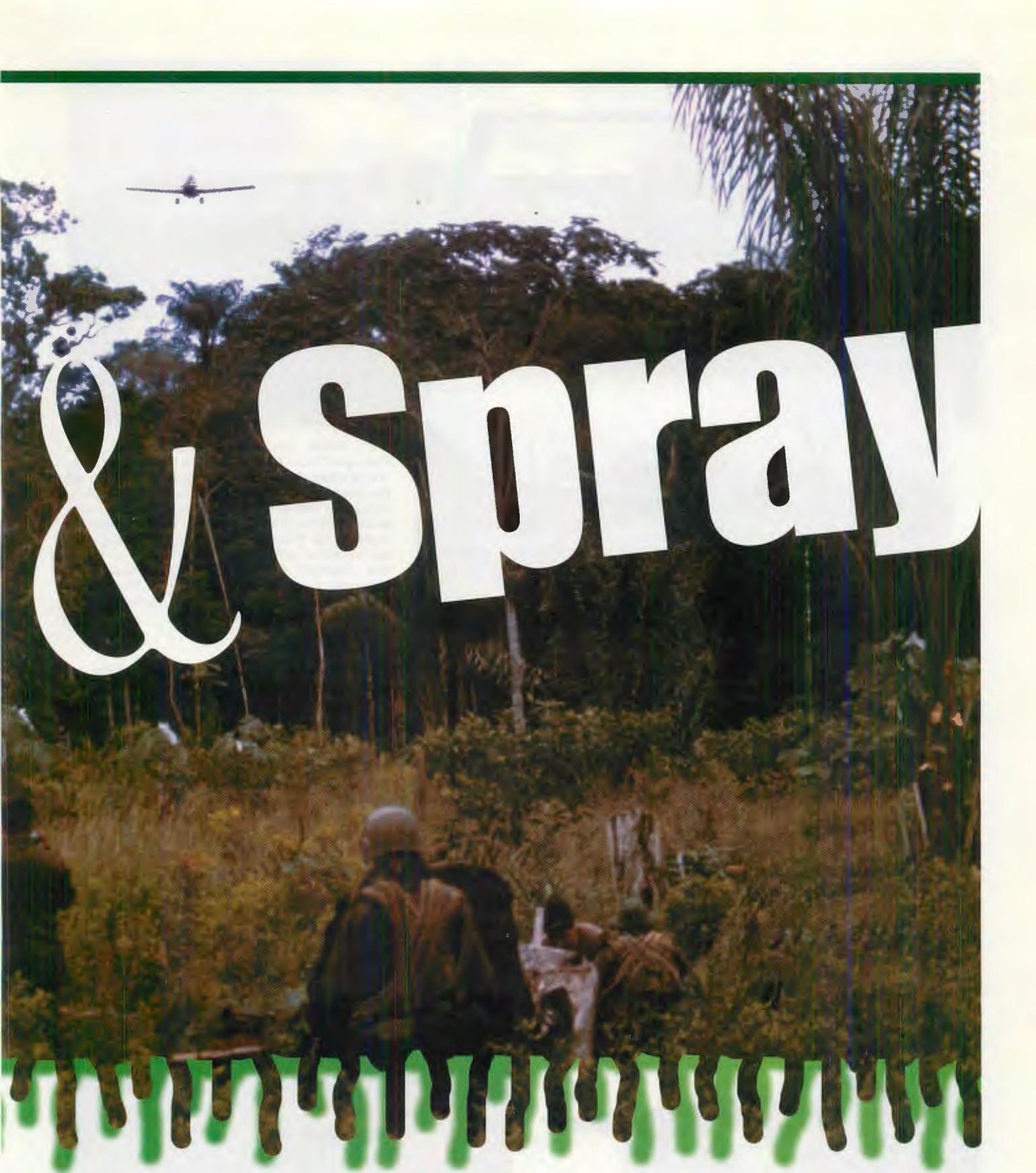
SOF With Coke-Bustin' Broncos

Text & Photos By
Steve Salisbury

Colombian Jungle Command police standby in coca field as a Dyncorp Turbo Thrush swoops down to spray herbicide. A fleet of 11 Turbo Thrushes are the mainstay of Colombia's aerial eradication efforts of coca, amapola and marijuana. (left) An OV-10 Bronco sprays Glyphosate herbicide on coca field in Guaviare Province. The OV-10, originally designed for recon, has been adapted as a spray plane for anti-drug efforts.

me and Andy Messing, Jr., executive director of the National Defense Council Foundation during a private meeting with his senior officers and a former U.S. embassy anti-narcotics official who is now a private consultant. "But it's very dangerous. There are lots of narco-guerrillas there."

Of the some 11,000 to 15,000 guerrillas operating in Colombia, a police anti-narcotics report estimates some 3,155 guerril-



& Spray

las are involved in protecting drug crops, laboratories and airstrips, as well as collecting "war taxes" from those associated with the drug business. The largest guerrilla faction, the *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia*, known as FARC by its Spanish acronym, protects the majority of these narco-properties (almost all of the coca plantations). A smaller ally of the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator Coalition, the

National Liberation Army (ELN), protects amapola fields in the western highlands.

General Serano wasn't exaggerating the danger. From early January 1994, to 18 November 1997, three police light airplanes and five helicopters had been shot down, while planes had been hit by gunfire on 67 separate occasions and helicopters on 74, according to police statistics.

During that same period, at least five

pilots were among the 44 anti-narcotics personnel killed and 72 wounded. Considering the modest size of the Colombian Police Air Service, even a few casualties can affect operations. The Police Air Service has some 132 uniformed and 29 civilian contract pilots (about 40 to 60 of whom fly fixed-wing) for an inventory that consists of some 70 helicopters (49 UH-1H Hueys, 12 Bell 206s, seven Bell



(left) Major Galeano stands in front of a Dyncorp Turbo Thrush. During Colombian drug eradication missions, the planes are flown by Dyncorp pilots, most of whom are Americans. American law-enforcement officials say introduction of the OV-10s (above) is not intended to replace the Thrushes in Colombia's drug war, but to test whether the OV-10s can be an effective addition in the spraying of lowlands. Colombian police pilots say the OV-10 may not fly slow enough for accurate spraying, but American tests show otherwise.

212s, and at least two McDonnell-Douglas 500s) and at least eight planes along with the Thrushes and OV-10s (two DC-3s, two Twin-Otters, two Cessna Caravan 208s, one single-engine C-99 Beechcraft, and one single-engine King-300).

On 14 October, the day after we talked with Gen. Serrano, Andy and I were joined by Jamie Dettmer, of *Insight* magazine, and took off from the police anti-narcotics area of El Dorado Airport, outside Bogota, in a Cessna Caravan 208. The plane was loaded with 14 wooden crates of small-arms ammo. Our destination: the police's most important front-line air base, at San Jose de Guaviare, the capital of Guaviare province. Just minutes after leaving Bogota and flying over the

Eastern Cordillera mountain offshoot of the Andes mountains, Lt. Oscar Rodriguez, the copilot, turned around and shouted above the plane noise, "Many guerrillas are down there." He fluttered his index finger as if pulling a trigger and pointed down, out the window, at a rolling landscape of different shades of green. Between swaths of forest and fields, brown dirt roads twisted with no or little traffic. "People are afraid of being stopped by the guerrillas." And we were still far from the heart of guerrilla country.

Cherries On Whipped Cream

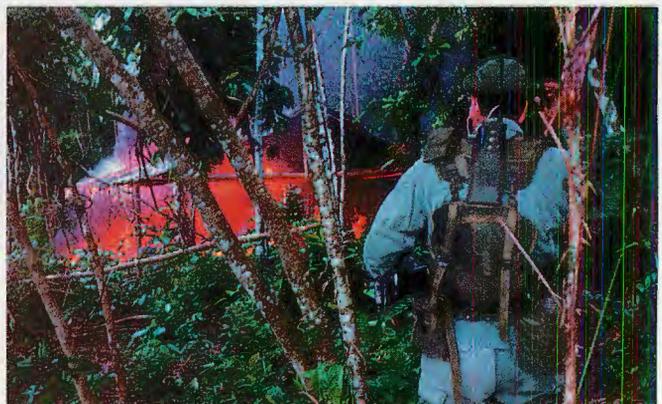
An hour and 15 minutes later, San Jose de Guaviare came into view among the vast plains of bush and fields known as Los

Llanos. It was a sleepy, small town of shacks with tin roofs alongside the Guaviare river. On its outskirts was the air base. Lieutenant Rodriguez turned around again and shouted for us to buckle up and hold on. "This is where we are most vulnerable to gunfire." Captain Guilliano Marin wheeled the controls and swerved our white-and-emerald-green Caravan into a sharp turn and landed onto the asphalt airstrip. We taxied past a few Hueys toward a parking lot where a handful of gray Thrushes and OV-10s — one deep-Corsair blue, the others black — were receiving maintenance.

For such a key air base, we were astonished to observe that, except for a few sentries, guard towers, bunkers, several dozen



A Colombian Police doorgunner, armed with an M60D machine gun, keeps alert flying over coca fields in Guaviare Province. Clearings of scrubby, green, leafy vegetation pocked the landscape like acne studded Manuel Noriega's face. An estimated 325 acres of coca were sprayed during the mission, as part of a new experiment in Colombia's war on drugs.



A Colombian Jungle Command anti-narcotics police captain watches his troops torch a small, mom-and-pop coca leaf processing shack, known as a *chagra*, in Colombia's Guaviare Province. Thousands of subsistent peasants eke out a living by cultivating small plots of coca plants and processing leaves in *chagras*.

yards of trench-line and a chain-link fence, not much base security was visible. Nor was there a fire truck, to handle emergencies such as plane crashes.

But American mechanics and pilots working for Dyncorp, who are high-priority targets for the *narcotraficantes* and guerrillas, stuck out like cherries on whipped cream. According to the police, between 50 and 80 Americans are on contract to Dyncorp in Colombia, about a third to half of them pilots. The rest are mechanics and technicians. Many of them have shifts of roughly 15 days on, 13 days off in San Jose de Guaviare, where there are up to 30 Dyncorp personnel.

Police Lt. Carlos Currea, who met us at the plane, dressed in a military-style olive-drab uniform, as were most police on base, was happy to talk with us. A smile seeped over the angular face of this well-built, medium-height officer, as he told us that he used to be a Colombian Marine. He said that in the Marines he had experienced three fire fights against guerrillas, but said he had never seen as many fire fights until after he began his police duty in San Jose de Guaviare. The Miraflores detachment, part of San Jose's area of operations, some 80 kilometers southeast, had been overrun in 1995 and has been a frequent target of guerrilla harassment ever since.

Lonely Narco Agents

Major Horacio Galeano Salcedo, then the base commander, entered the spacious living room where we sat with Lt. Currea in patio-style chairs, and underscored what Currea said. "Last night, they [the guerrillas] wounded one of my men. Twenty days ago, they shot down a helicopter — completely destroyed. We spent two days fighting there."

But the work for Maj. Galeano and his men never ends. In fact, they are swamped. The maps and projections that Galeano put on the wall gave context to the enormity of the coca problem. The San Jose de Guaviare base is responsible for south-central and eastern Colombia — an area about the size of France and the European lowland countries combined. According to Maj. Galeano's statistics the population in this vastly undeveloped region is a little more than a million people. Yet, there are 5,417 police stationed in this area, and only 178 anti-narcotics agents.

Nevertheless, on a monthly operating budget of \$9,400, the region's anti-narcotics police have had their share of victories. Colombian anti-narcotics police broke all prior eradication records in 1997, spraying more than 41,000 hectares of coca plants and more than 6,900 hectares of ampola, based on police statistics. At current rates, 1998 will be another record year. What size of dent this is making in the drug business is unclear, and police statistics can provide only a glimpse of the situation. For instance, the 41,000 sprayed hectares of coca fields are about two-thirds of the total 67,000 coca hectares identified by police. However, how many more unidentified hectares of coca



Colombian Jungle Command anti-narcotics police, armed with (front) South African MGL 40mm grenade launcher and (back) M16A2 rifle with an M203 grenade-launcher, await orders to raid a cocaine lab complex. Colombia's largest guerrilla faction, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), protects the majority of narco-properties, while the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) protects amapola fields in the western highlands. (below) General Barry McCaffrey (right), the U.S. Anti-drug Czar, stands with Colombian National Police Chief Rosso J. Serrano in San Jose de Guaviare.



fields exist is anybody's guess. Also, there's a catch: Sometimes the herbicide is washed off by flash tropical rains. Even if the herbicide dries on the coca — a sturdy plant which can yield two or three crops a year — peasant farmers can recultivate it on the same land. The 358,201 kilos of coca leaf and 10,141 kilos of pure cocaine destroyed or confiscated from January to October 1997, represent only about 1% and 3% of the 53,760 tons of coca leaf and 322.56 tons of pure cocaine Colombia's anti-narcotics intelligence branch estimates have been produced in Colombia during the same period. Narrowing the gap is made all the more difficult by mechanical problems and bad weather sometimes grounding aircraft.

But Maj. Galeano wasn't trying to break down the statistics as three UH-1H Hueys and two Bell 212s revved their engines along the airstrip. Four were armed with M60D GPMGs and the remaining chopper, flown by base air-wing XO, Capt. Gustavo Garzon, bristled with electrically fired

7.62mm mini-guns in each door. Toting an M16A2 rifle with an M203 grenade-launcher, Maj. Galeano led me, Andy, and Jamie into a green Huey, where a door gunner sat in the corner of the right side. A couple of police troops were on the other side, sitting opposite each other on benches made of green canvass stretched over pipe frames. One had a belt of 7.62x54mm ammo draped around his shoulders for his M60, which he cradled in his lap. The other, with his back to the pilots, carried an M79 grenade launcher. Galeano crossed himself, we buckled up, and within minutes the Huey lifted off, leaving the hot humidity and smell of grass and grease behind.

Like Noriega's Acne

Our chopper shuddered and flapped in the sunny azure of a partly cloudy sky, and the landscape below looked like an endless carpet of all shades of green, as tracts of jungle and fields intertwined. Here and there, spots of gray and black looked like enormous cigarette burns. Some of these seemed to have been fields burned by *campesinos* for soil replenishment after harvesting legal crops, such as corn, beans or yucca. But there were also plenty of brown, parched clearings, where dead yellow trees reached toward us like fingers stripped to the bone. "Coca used to be there," shouted the major over the rotor din. They had been sprayed.

It wasn't long before we started spotting clearings of a scrubby, green, leafy vegetation.

"Coca!" the major shouted. These clearings pocked the landscape like acne studded Manuel Noriega's face. "In about a minute, the spraying will begin," shouted the major, about a half-hour after take-off. As the other helicopters — some military green, others in white-and-emerald-green — circled in and out of our view, three dark OV-10s with red trimming their twin-tails appeared below. Curving into tail formation, one plane after another swooped from about 1,000 feet down to just over tree-top level, and let loose streaks of Glysophate from nozzles under their wings.

The herbicide (found in the commercial weed-killer Roundup) streaked in swaths of about 75 to 100 meters, until the OV-10s abruptly soared upwards, as a technique against potential gun fire, leaving puffs of engine smoke and Glysophate. The chemical mist changed hues from white to gray to blue, as it descended in twisting fashion, and often was still lingering as the planes made another pass. After several passes in column, the planes would break off to spray targets individually. In layered security, the helicopters took turns flying at different altitudes, sometimes alongside the OV-10s, sometimes above, just in case ground fire erupted. But today there was no gun fire. After an hour or so, we headed back to base.

An estimated 325 acres of coca were sprayed during the mission. About average for a day's work, according to police. It was

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HOLD or DIE



It reminded most of the reporters who covered the event of a victory celebration, though it certainly wasn't one. To the lively sound of the "Colonel Bogey March," more than 800 men of the 9th Infantry Division marched smartly onto the tarmac of Tan Son Nhut Airport. All around them young Vietnamese girls in colorful *ao dais* waved banners and flags with exuberance. A number of the girls held signs with messages in bold letters like "Thank You For Your Sacrifice." Two girls near the front held a sign that read "Farewell To The Old Reliables," which was the division's proud nickname.

In the spirit of the division's long proud history, the men formed up in ranks and stood stiffly at attention. A short time later, the President of South Vietnam, General Nguyen Van Thieu, arrived and the men were told to stand at ease. A smiling ebullient Thieu told the men that "their departure bears testimony to the success of the role of U.S. forces in Vietnam. We fully realize that the primary struggle in Vietnam should be ours."

His speech finished, Thieu moved through the ranks of the men, shaking hands, passing out souvenirs, and thanking the men for the service they had given to his country.

The highlight of the ceremony was the speech given by the gruff no-nonsense U.S. commander in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams. He praised the men "for having fought well under some of the most arduous combat conditions ever experienced by American soldiers." He told them finally that they were participating in an "historic moment." Abrams was not exaggerating; it was, indeed, an historic moment. After years of war in Vietnam, the United States

The 80-Day Siege Of An Loc

by Samuel Zaffiri

AP/Wide World Photos

had finally taken the first step — albeit a small one — toward withdrawal and disengagement from Vietnam. President Nixon had first formulated his plan for "Vietnamizing" the war in the spring of 1969. Now here on Tan Son Nhut's tarmac, less than two months later, he was putting it into action.

Many critics of Nixon felt the withdrawal of more than 800 men was only a token gesture and that he was not serious about pulling U.S. troops out of Vietnam. They were wrong. Nixon was indeed serious, and during the next two months he pulled out more than 25,000 additional troops. He pulled another 40,000 from September through December 1969. By 1972, three years later, only 27,000 U.S. troops would remain in Vietnam.

Soon, festive withdrawal ceremonies were commonplace at Tan Son Nhut and the sight of hundreds of smiling, waving sol-

diers boarding planes for a last flight home filled American TV.

Faces Of Death

The only ones not smiling, it seemed, were U.S. military commanders. They believed that for the South Vietnamese to survive, the U.S. had to have some type of permanent ground and air commitment similar to the one in South Korea. General William C. Westmoreland, the Army Chief of Staff, believed, in fact, that it would take an additional eight years to pacify South Vietnam. But President Nixon didn't have years. Increasing numbers in congress wanted the war over and all U.S. troops out of Vietnam. To go against these politicians, Nixon realized, might damage both his presidency and the Republican Party.

Withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam, however, was not the linchpin of Nixon's Vietnamization policy. Getting the South Vietnamese army ready to take over the fight in Vietnam alone was. Although the U.S. military did not believe the South Vietnamese army could deal with the North Vietnamese army toe-to-toe without direct U.S. ground and air support, they gritted their teeth and moved forward to carry out Nixon's plans to modernize and upgrade South Vietnam's military machine. To upgrade their military capability, the U.S. gave them nearly 900,000 individual and crew-served weapons, 1,880 tanks and artillery pieces, 44,000 radio sets, and over 1000 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.

(above) South Vietnamese troops eight miles west of Dong Ha watch smoke billow skywards after B52s hit a North Vietnamese tank column that was attacking their position 11 April 1972, as part of the Easter Offensive. The Easter Offensive was arguably among the more important battles of the war, marking North Vietnam's military transition from guerrilla force to conventional army.

By late 1971, the Republic of Vietnam's armed forces had grown to over one million men. Its army now consisted of over 415,000 troops, organized into 13 divisions, supported by 58 artillery battalions and 19 battalion-size armored units.

To make sure all these weapons and equipment were properly used, the U.S. committed millions of dollars to upgrade the training of the South Vietnamese soldiers, sailors and marines. Since the North Vietnamese army had the option of massing its forces wherever and whenever it wanted, the South's forces had to be taught to be mobile, to move quickly and decisively to any point of attack. Americans had always flown the helicopters that provided this mobility. Now the South Vietnamese would have to fly them themselves.

Teaching Them To Fight

On the ground, the South Vietnamese had to learn a new way of fighting. In the past, it had been common for South Vietnamese units to sit back while American firepower pulverized enemy units. Afterwards, they had little to do but move forward and count the enemy dead.

With the realization that American firepower might someday be gone, the South Vietnamese had to be taught traditional infantry skills like marching, marksmanship, and night-fighting.

The most pressing problem the South Vietnamese faced, however, was one of leadership. When properly led, the average South Vietnamese soldier could — and would — fight. Finding that leadership, unfortunately, was very difficult. Many of the senior commanders in the South Vietnamese military owed their commands not to combat prowess, but to political connections. In the lower ranks was the problem of class consciousness. Many of the junior officers were highly educated Catholics who had contempt for the enlisted men under them, most of whom were poorly educated



South Vietnamese paratroopers are pinned down during one of the constant Vietnamese ambushes by North Vietnamese units trying to make their way up Route 13 toward An Loc during the Easter Offensive. The North struck on 31 March 1972, with a three-pronged assault in the Northern Provinces, the Central Highlands and in the South.

Buddhists from rural areas. Such class distinctions between officers and enlisted men impeded unit cohesion and hurt the ability of units to develop *esprit de corps*.

To alleviate both problems, the U.S. pressured President Thieu to appoint men to senior ranks who were proven fighters, and to make officers of veteran NCOs with proven ability, regardless of their backgrounds or educational levels.

With these changes implemented, the question now became: Would the South Vietnamese military fight? They had the weapons and they had the training, and their leadership was improving, but could they stand toe-to-toe with the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong and win. For Nixon, especially, it was a question that had to be answered.

Invading Cambodia

If the South Vietnamese military needed

a test, Nixon found it in Cambodia. For years, the communists had used Cambodia as a giant supply depot and staging area for attacks against South Vietnam. This fact had long frustrated the U.S. commanders in Vietnam, and for years they had pleaded with President Johnson to be allowed to attack these sanctuaries and clean them out. Johnson had refused, fearing that by violating Cambodia's neutrality we would push Prince Sihanouk, Cambodia's president, into the communist camp. President Nixon had no such worries. He was determined to not only clean out the sanctuaries but to prove to the communists that he was a much more determined and dangerous foe than Johnson. He was also determined to give Vietnamization its first real test. When he told General Abrams to work up a plan for the invasion of Cambodia it was with the proviso that the South Vietnamese had to play a major role in the attack.

Abrams gave them that role, and the job of cleaning out an area of Cambodia called the Parrot's Beak, an area that has long been a communist base. On 29 April 1969, in conjunction with U.S. forces, 8,700 South Vietnamese assault troops from some of South Vietnam's finest infantry and armored units, launched an armored assault against the Parrot's Beak. A number of enemy units decided to stand and fight, and were crushed by the armored assault. The majority of the 10,000 enemy troops known to be in the area abandoned their positions and fled deeper into Cambodia. It was the same story in the Fishhook, another communist base area invaded by South Vietnamese forces. Here a 5,000-man South Vietnamese force, led by tanks and armored personnel carriers, launched a *blitzkrieg*-like attack. Again it was the same story. The few enemy units that stood and fought were crushed. The majority fled the area.

In the invasion of Cambodia, the amount of weapons and materiel captured was staggering. It included 23,000 individual



A South Vietnamese airborne artillery unit fires in support of a unit attacked by a North Vietnamese column moving toward An Loc on Route 13, 36 miles north of Saigon. All that stood between the North Vietnamese and Saigon, South Vietnam's capital, were the rubber towns of An Loc and Lai Khe.



Two South Vietnamese airborne troops man foxholes along Route 13, watching a South Vietnamese ammunition convoy being ambushed and partly destroyed by North Vietnamese during bloody fighting to reopen the road to An Loc.

weapons, enough to equip 80 enemy battalions; 25,000 crew-served weapons; 16,700 rounds of small-arms ammunition; and enough food to feed every communist soldier in South Vietnam for six months.

President Nixon was ecstatic over the amount of enemy weapons and supplies captured. It, alone, justified the invasion. What made him even happier was the fact the South Vietnamese forces had fought well in Cambodia, and, at times, with great professionalism and bravery. To many in his administration this seemed to indicate that Vietnamization was working. How well it was working could only be discovered by putting the South Vietnamese to an even sterner test.

For Nixon, that test was Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail that ran through it. Cutting that trail, Nixon felt, and destroying the massive supply depots along it, would not only strike the communist logistics system another massive blow, but buy Vietnamization some much-needed time. Nixon reasoned that with their huge supply depots destroyed, it would be at least another year before the North Vietnamese could launch another major offensive against the South. During that year, it was Nixon's hope the South Vietnamese would have the breathing spell necessary to further strengthen their military.

Nixon quickly discovered that it was one thing to invade Cambodian border areas, and quite another to launch an attack deep into Laos. But that is exactly what Operation Lam Son 719 was tasked to do — to attack deep into Laos and smash a number of enemy base areas.

Bloody Massacre

That invasion kicked off when three elite South Vietnamese divisions, led by armor, roared down Highway 9 and into the heart of Laos. Because Congress had recently passed a bill that forbade U.S. ground troops from entering either Laos or Cambodia, the South Vietnamese went in

without their U.S. advisers. Forewarned of the coming attack by spies, the North Vietnamese met the three attacking divisions with six of their own. They also moved up 200 anti-aircraft guns, dozens of long-range artillery pieces, and more than 100 tanks. What followed was a gigantic World War II-like land battle that ebbed and flowed along a 20-mile by 5-miles swath of jungle from the border to the town of Tchepone. Hundreds of American and South Vietnamese fighter bombs swarmed over the battlefield, blasting the North Vietnamese forces with hundreds of tons of bombs and rockets.

As always, the North Vietnamese commanders were not afraid to take casualties. They threw their troops against the South Vietnamese armored units in frenzied human-wave assaults. They lost thousands of men in these assaults, but also badly hurt the South Vietnamese forces. Though the South

Vietnamese fought well, they were too outnumbered to hold against the North Vietnamese assaults. Compounding their problems were a number of severe disagreements that had developed between their senior commanders and President Thieu. Both had different ideas as to how the attack should proceed, and that difference created confusion all down the chain of command. After 40 days of constant fighting, and with no clear idea what their goals were, South Vietnamese forces finally began giving way. About the same time President Thieu ordered his forces to begin withdrawing from Laos.

In some places that withdrawal turned into a panicked retreat. The sight of South Vietnamese soldiers escaping the fighting by hanging from the skids of helicopters filled TV screens across America and gave Americans the impression that Lam Son 719 had been a complete disaster and that all South Vietnamese soldiers were cowards.

The truth was that while Lam Son 719 could hardly be called a victory, it was likewise not the total debacle portrayed in the media. While the South Vietnamese lost more than 1,764 killed and 6,000 wounded, the North Vietnamese suffered nearly 20,000 dead, *half* their attacking force.

To counter the image of the South Vietnamese soldier as a coward, Nixon appeared on TV a few days after the end of Lam Son 719 and proclaimed, "Tonight I can report that Vietnamization has succeeded." Nixon, of course, was not telling the complete truth. Vietnamization had made incredible progress, but South Vietnam was still incapable of going it alone. And that, in fact, is what General Abrams told Nixon in a cable on 15 April 1970. The South Vietnamese simply could not launch large-scale raids into Cambodia and Laos, he said, without U.S. advisers, U.S. airpower, and some U.S. troops.

Unfortunately for the South Vietnamese,



South Vietnamese soldiers watch as smoke rises from an air strike against a North Vietnamese unit on Route 13, about 60 miles north of Saigon. The North Vietnamese unit was part of an attack on the 20,000-man relief column of South Vietnamese heading toward the besieged town of An Loc.

U.S. advisers, U.S. fire support, and U.S. troops were slowly becoming a thing of the past. Although Nixon was forced to agree with Abrams, he continued pulling out U.S. troops from Vietnam and cutting the number of U.S. advisers available to South Vietnamese units. To stop the withdrawal now risked political retaliation from antiwar Democrats in congress led by Senator George McGovern. They were calling not only for increased U.S. withdrawals, but for the termination of all U.S. military involvement in Indochina.

The Communist Plot

In Hanoi, the hard-core communist revolutionaries who made up the Politburo watched Nixon's troop withdrawal and his Vietnamization program with great interest. All, of course, were still committed to winning the war militarily, in spite of the fact that they had recently begun peace talks with the U.S. in Paris. They were divided, however, on how to go about striking the decisive blow to end the war. Many in the Politburo believed, because of congressional pressure, in two years the U.S. would be completely out of Vietnam and once out would not likely return. Why not wait then until the U.S. was completely out of Vietnam before launching the final war-winning assault against the South. A second group in the Politburo accepted the fact of the U.S.'s eventual complete withdrawal, but worried that two years was too long to wait. Many things could happen in two years. During the proceeding two years, the South Vietnamese had made enormous strides improving its military. They would likely make similar strides during the next two years. They could only guess as to how strong the South Vietnamese military would be in 1973 or 1974, but it would certainly be stronger by many degrees than it was now, possibly even strong enough to face their best main-force divisions and win. They shuddered at that possibility. After laying out their argument, they convinced the first faction that the time to strike the knock-out blow against the South was now. The North simply could not afford to wait.

Easter Offensive

General Vo Nguyen Giap, the Minister of Defense, was put in full command of what would come to be known as the Easter Offensive. To spearhead this invasion, Giap assembled 20 main-force infantry divisions — 20,000 men in all — and to give them maximum striking power put in their support 10,000 tanks, 400 anti-aircraft guns, and hundreds of long-range artillery pieces. It was a force larger than Patton had commanded in World War II.

The North Vietnamese struck on 31 March 1972, with a three-pronged assault. In the northern provinces, spearheaded by a large tank formation, a North Vietnamese armored force quickly overran Quang Tri City and began rolling south toward Hue.



South Vietnamese soldier throws a grenade at nearby enemy positions during fighting along Route 13.

In the Central Highlands, again behind tanks, another armored force seized part of Kontum City. In the South, yet again behind tanks, the NVA/VC Fifth Division moved out of their base areas in Cambodia and attacked the rubber town of Loc Ninh. Though defended by a seasoned infantry regiment and a Ranger battalion, Loc Ninh fell in less than 24 hours, opening a direct route to Saigon. The only thing that now stood between the 9th Division and Saigon, South Vietnam's capital, were the rubber towns of An Loc and Lai Khe.

On 7 April 1972, President Thieu held a meeting in Saigon with his National Security Council. There, General Duong Van Minh, the III Corps Commander, told the assembled men that the equivalent of four enemy divisions and three independent regiments were operating in his area. He then argued that the attacks in Military Regions I and II were diversionary and that Saigon was the real target. To counter the massive forces moving against him, Minh said he needed reinforcements and he needed them immediately. Although not everyone at the meeting believed Minh, Thieu decided to support him. He told him that he could have the 21st ARVN Division, the major government force in the Mekong Delta, along with the elite 1st Airborne Brigade, the highly touted palace guard.

Minh now began shifting his forces

around to prepare for the attack. He moved both the 21st Division and the 1st Airborne Brigade in Lai Khe and told them to form a second line of defense. He then moved the 5th ARVN Division from Lai Khe to An Loc. There they joined with the 3rd Ranger Group, some regional forces troops, and two battalions of the 52nd and 48th Regiment in preparing a defense for the town.

The next day enemy activity began picking up. On 8 April, a VC/NVA force assaulted the principal radio relay station for III Corps on nearby Nui Ba Den Mountain. The ARVN company defending the station put up a stiff defense but were finally pushed off after two days and nights of fighting.

On the same evening Nui Ba Den fell, two battalions from the elite 9th Division attacked the Quan Loi airstrip, which sat on the high ground just three miles from An Loc. After repeated human-wave assaults, the enemy controlled the high ground east of An Loc. From Quan Loi's heights, they could clearly see the streets of An Loc and would have no trouble directing rocket and artillery fire against the town and its South Vietnamese defenders.

The South Fights Back



South Vietnamese troops move up behind heavy air strikes along Route 13, 19 May 1972, as government forces continued to clear the road to besieged An Loc.

Fearing that the North Vietnamese were trying to encircle An Loc, Gen. Minh, the III Corps commander, ordered the elite 1st Airborne Brigade to attack north to secure Highway 13, An Loc's lifeline to Lai Khet. Minh was a day late in ordering the move. The 7th NVA Division had already dug in along Highway 13. The 1st Airborne Brigade ran into a blizzard of machine-gun fire, rocket grenades and mortar fire.

While the 7th was entrenching themselves south of An Loc, the 5th VC Division moved into positions northwest of An Loc. The 9th VC Division meanwhile moved into position north and northeast of An Loc. They then began shelling the city and preparing assault positions. The commander of the 9th, in a moment of bravado that he would live to regret, said he would take An Loc in three days.

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Swords, Sand and SpecOps

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Circassians and Chechens. Before a commando can volunteer into the unit, he is, of course, special-forces qualified having undergone basic training and more likely than not training at the hands of U.S. Special Forces or British Special Air Service instructors. The volunteer must also first pass a special unit medical examination, IQ test, physical training test, endurance test, and psychological test.



courtesy Royal Jordanian Special Forces

Operators from Special Operations Unit 71 prepare to deploy a ladder before assaulting a terrorist safe house during assault exercises near Amman.

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As the vanguard of the Royal Jordanian Special Forces, SOU 71 faces a daunting challenge realizing that one minor terrorist incident has the potential to endanger a promising start to true regional peace, the unit faces an incredible responsibility in its task of not allowing a terrorist attack to succeed on Jordanian soil. Shrouded in secrecy, the unit trains for possible deployment against virtually any possible target inside the country — from a hotel banquet hall seized by terrorists, to a hijacked airliner diverted to Aqaba's airport, to a freighter seized in the Red Sea while sailing for Aqaba.

International contacts are fostered and nurtured energetically. SOU 71 has had quite a lucrative cooperative history with many of the world's antiterrorist units, and has trained with the U.S. Army's 1st Special Forces Operations Detachment-Delta (as well as the FBI's HRT) and other U.S. military special forces. SOU 71 also maintains very close ties to Britain's 22nd Special Air Service Regiment, France's GIGN, and Oman's Special Forces. Many in the Royal Jordanian Special Operations Command look forward to the day when SOU 71 could train openly with both the *Ya'ma'm*, the Israeli National Police counterterrorist team and *Sayeret Matkal*, the IDF's General Staff Reconnaissance Unit. Such cooperation is not far fetched. In fact, in the spring of 1997, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai visited Amman, and was an honored guest of Brigadier Abdullah Bin al-Hussein and the

Royal Jordanian Special Forces. Defense Minister Mordechai, a former paratrooper and major general, witnessed a live-fire demonstration by Jordanian special forces, and a heliborne exercise involving a squadron of Super Pumas and UH-1s under the command of Prince Faisal.

When King Hussein ordered the creation of the special-forces battalion in 1969, he did so in order to establish a higher level of readiness, awareness and training in the ranks of the Jordanian military, as well as to create a military elite that would serve as a role model in both professional skill and military proficiency that other units would emulate. Under the command off Brigadier Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein, the Special Operations Command has expanded the scope, equipment, and mission of the special forces to the vanguard of the nation's defenses.

Ferocious And Cruel

At a secret military base north of Amman, as the sun sets over the desert hills creating an eerie orange glow, several dozen soldiers, all wearing red berets and American woodland-pattern camouflage uniforms of the Special Forces Brigade, prepare for yet another live-fire exercise. The target of the training mission is the capture of a row of fortified pillboxes, and the exercise will be carried out with live ammunition and conducted with dire seriousness. The commandos, carrying American M16A2 and Beretta SC70/90 5.56x45mm assault rifles, realize in order to maintain the peace, it is essential to prepare for war.

If the bombings that have plagued Tel Aviv and Jerusalem prove anything, it is that the enemies of the peace accord are geared for a full-scale terrorist offensive whose ferocity and cruelty will know no bound. At perhaps no time in the region's history will the services of these operators, men trained to achieve the impossible and perform the inconceivable, be needed more. In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan it will be the Royal Jordanian Special Forces in the vanguard to not only ensure the prospects of peace, but defeat its enemies, as well.

Sam Katz's recent books include *The Illustrated Guide to the World's Counter-Terrorist Forces (Concord)*. ✕

Taliban-Tag Part II

Continued from page 45

"You've got to understand," said one commander, "they are mujahideen, not soldiers."

It is a typical comment from experienced Soviet-honed commanders who defected to the mujahideen in the aftermath of the Soviet pullout.

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this moment vastly more interested in hash than in firepower.

If Stinger missiles are reportedly common in Afghanistan they are also, for the most part, well-hidden. The flood of Stingers that the U.S. sent into Afghanistan in the 1980s, which effectively turned the war against the Soviets, have long-since been squirreled away by Afghans who regard the missile as an investment — and, as black-market prices for Stingers rise, such investment is worth a fortune in a country where the average government salary is \$15 a month. The U.S. has offered in the range of \$200,000 for the return of just *one* missile, but well-funded terrorist groups are probably offering more — perhaps a lot more.

Finding Stingers is an exercise in unparalleled patience and luck, and as I traveled through Afghanistan to the various front lines, "Where are the Stingers?" was the question I continually asked.

Luck, though, was not my ally. "Yes," a helicopter pilot informed me in Mazar-i-Sharif, "about 9 Stingers were recently taken from Panjshir to the Kunduz front line ... " — the very place from where I had just come. A similar story was heard in Panjshir itself: My guide and interpreter, a local, had talked of vast stockpiles of weaponry stored in the caves in the valley's gullies. These, though, were areas that I was kept well away from — if, indeed, they even existed.

The front lines, themselves, appeared to overflow with weapons, often in states of neglect, such as heaps of RPG warheads piled atop others.

Search as I did, the much-ballyhooed Stingers, like mythical treasures, eluded my grasp.

Roddy Scott is currently developing video-documentary projects from global war zones. ☒

Krisis In Kosovo

Continued from page 59

batons, sending dozens of protesters and journalists to the hospital. One photographer, who was seen filming the protest from the upper floor of the Albanian newspaper, was thrown out the window by Serb police who didn't like their pictures taken. Still another photographer had his eye nearly gouged out by the barrel of a police Kalashnikov.

Things could get rough, we thought. They didn't. Without warning, and without any reason, the protest suddenly dispersed. No Serb riot police had shown up, and when we asked student leaders what had happened we were told that the protest was a success and that it was time to go home. We were stunned and disappointed. Where was the blood?

Perhaps it was back in Prekaz, site of the Jashari family massacre.

The Serb special police were still there when we slowly drove through the ruins of the Jashari compound, and headed up the opposite side of the valley to

the village of "Upper Prekaz."

The single street was empty, but we knew that we were being watched. As we neared the end of the village and prepared to turn around, two men came out from behind a wooden gate and approached the *SOF* jeep. Neither was armed, but one man, the elder of the two, had a pair of binoculars hanging from his neck.

After identifying ourselves and breaking the ice in our broken Albanian, we noticed that our jeep had been surrounded by more men that had come out from nowhere.

All the women and babies in the village had been sent to relatives in neighboring towns, the elder man with the binoculars told us in German. "We're here to make sure the Serbs don't attack our village."

This Is Albania?

When asked whether the KLA operated out of the area, the old man refused to answer but asked us if we wanted to see what damage the Serbs had done to a home down the streets.

"Look at this," the man said, pointing at a large gash in the roof and walls of the house. "This came from their guns. They injured my cousin and his children. I am a man, I will not leave my home. They will have to kill me."

We then walked behind the home, and below and in front of us about a half mile away were the Serb special police still guarding the remains of the Jashari compound.

Three men then appeared wearing cammo poncho liners with what looked like old-model SKS rifles.

The men told us that they had no direct contact with other KLA groups, but that they knew one guy in another village who did. The rifles, they said, came from a wealthy friend in Switzerland.

"The Serbs can try to come up here," the old man said, "but we will fight. We have nowhere else to go. This is Albania." ✕



On assignment in Prekaz, Kosovo, *SOF's* intrepid Chief Foreign Correspondent Mark H. Milstein tests conventional wisdom that Serb gunners can't hit the same spot twice.



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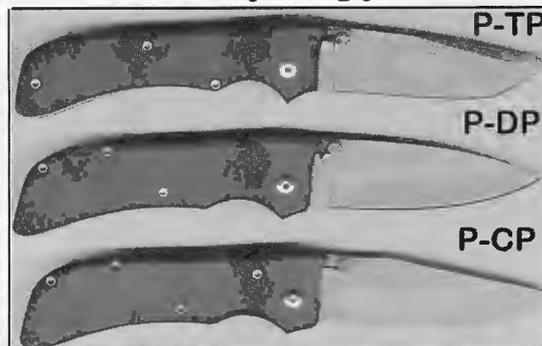
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Pray & Spray

Continued from page 63

time for the OV-10 pilots — all Dyncorp-contracted Americans, except for one Colombian — to go over the day's work. A U.S. government official involved in the anti-drug war, says "One advantage of the OV-10 is that it has two engines, and if one is shot out, it can still fly — if it's flying fast enough. The Thrush, having only a single engine, would have no chance with its engine gone."

But, according to another American, who is part of the Colombian anti-narcotics operation, the Thrush's engine is protected by reinforced armor, and is virtually impervious to 7.62x54mm gunfire. The only time a Thrush was shot down by a bullet penetrating its engine, he says, was when one entered through the plane's nose cone.

OV-10 Too Fast?

Colombian police pilots, who haven't flown the plane, don't hide their doubts about the OV-10s in a spraying role. With the OV-10 unable to match the slow-down speed of the Thrush, one pilot says, "The OV-10s fly so fast that the air turbulence doesn't allow the herbicide to fulfill its purpose. The herbicide is blown into a scatter and vanishes. The OV-10 may be good for reconnaissance and being armed. But it isn't as accurate as the Thrush for spraying."

Americans who have flown both the Thrush and OV-10 dispute this notion, saying they have done tests that showed the air turbulence left by the OV-10 is actually less than by the Thrush. They mention that the OV-10 sprays more evenly than the Thrush, and that one doesn't have to fight the steering controls in an OV-10, as is often the case in a Thrush. However, Americans and Colombians agree the Thrush is normally much cheaper than the OV-10 (about a million dollars for a new Thrush compared to some 10 million for an OV-10, according to some estimates), that it requires less maintenance, and that there are more pilots who already know how to fly the Thrush than the OV-10.

Why, then, were the OV-10s sent to the Colombian police? A congressional staffer visiting Colombia thought it might have been because there were no Thrushes immediately available and the OV-10s were. But says a high-ranking Colombian police aviator, "You'll have to ask Dyncorp."

According to a couple of knowledgeable sources familiar with Dyncorp, who prefer to remain anonymous, the company obtained the OV-10s cheap from a surplus collecting dust in the bone yards of U.S. federal agencies in Maryland and Virginia.

One thing is for sure, no matter what planes are based at San Jose de Guaviare: If the air base is not provided with resources to beef up security, one day it may be surprised by guerrilla sappers and have no aircraft to fly.

SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent Steve Salisbury is based in Guatemala City. ☒

Combat Weaponcraft

Continued from page 21

company-grade officer in WWII in the famous Merrill's Marauders that operated behind Japanese lines for an extended period with devastating effect. He was a gun crank, hunter, and highly successful service-rifle competitor before the war, so all of his writing is from the perspective of someone highly knowledgeable about guns. Prior to joining the Marauders he had seen considerable action at Guadalcanal where he had personally helped more than a few Japanese soldiers die for their country.

In his words, "The M1 Carbine turned out to be the ace weapon of the war, as far as I am concerned. It was light and handy, powerful, and reasonably accurate. ... The cartridge was powerful enough to penetrate several thicknesses of helmet, and to perforate the plates of the Japanese bullet-proof vest, which would only be dented by .45-auto slugs. It was flat shooting enough to have practical accuracy at more than 200 yards. ... For many types of offensive fighting, such as sneak raids and infiltration tactics, it was often superior even to the M1 [Garand], penetration being the only point of difference."

Late in WWII, a selective-fire version of the M1 Carbine was introduced as the M2 Carbine. These saw little use in WWII but were extensively used in Korea. In my opinion, most of the accounts about the ineffectiveness of the .30 Carbine round come from misuse of the M2 Carbine on full auto. Most of the accounts I have encountered where the .30-Carbine cartridge is criticized stem from soldiers or marines that dumped a full magazine on full auto at a charging enemy and simply missed him. It has been my experience firing the M2 that if the first shot does not hit, none of the following shots will either because the weapon will climb off target, particularly with a long burst. The idea that anyone could absorb a magazine full of .30 Carbine bullets through the chest and keep coming is a myth born of bad shooting.

When this weapon is used using modern expanding bullets its effectiveness against soft targets is increased considerably. The single best .30-Carbine load that I have used is the Winchester Hollow Soft Point. It is very accurate and expands superbly and reliably.

The M1 Carbine is too good a gun to be overlooked. Several hundred thousand of them are in circulation and many can be purchased at very reasonable prices. Many more are standing offshore waiting to be imported into the United States, something unlikely to happen under the current administration. I have to admit that for fighting purposes I prefer the AR15 or M16 to the M1 Carbine, but out where the rubber meets the road I would prefer the M1 Carbine to any submachine gun or semiautomatic pistol-caliber carbine on the market except where noise suppression was an issue.

It's that good! ☒

Continued from page 67

Inside An Loc, the 3,000 ARVN defenders and their American advisers sat in their bunkers and awaited the coming assault. They were outnumbered 6 to 1, and knew it.

To bolster the morale of the meager force holding An Loc, President Thieu visited Binh Long Province on 12 April and told his commanders that the whole country was watching them and that the city must be defended to the death. Unlike the commander of the 9th VC Division, Thieu was not engaging in bravado. An Loc had to hold or Saigon and the entire South Vietnamese government was in grave trouble.

Major General James F. Hollingsworth, the senior U.S. military adviser in III Corps, shared Thieu's view as to the importance of An Loc. The gruff former paratrooper, like his boss General Abrams, had served under Patton in World War II and had adopted Patton's hard-nosed attitude toward the enemy. He was determined to do everything in his power to guarantee that An Loc did not fall. As a first step, Hollingsworth told the 50 U.S. advisers to South Vietnamese units in and around An Loc that they would have to share the fate of the units they advised. In Military Region I, some U.S. advisers had been pulled out when the enemy offensive started there, a move that had a disastrous effect on ARVN morale.

"I'll Kill Them ..."

Hollingsworth next ordered his advisory teams to carefully plot on their maps possible enemy assembly areas and assault positions around An Loc then forward the information onto him. "Hold them and I'll kill them with airpower" he told the advisers, "Give me something to bomb and I'll win."

Maps in hand, Hollingsworth then went to see his boss, Gen. Abrams. He asked Abrams to give him first priority on B-52 strikes. If he had the B-52s, he told him, he would destroy the three enemy divisions surrounding An Loc. Abrams agreed to give him the bombers.

On the afternoon of 12 April, the enemy artillery now ringing An Loc opened up. The fire was heavy all day and reached a crescendo. A number of rounds hit the ammunition dump and the oil storage area and the center of An Loc was engulfed in huge rippling explosions and roaring fires. Against the backdrop of this inferno, the 271st, and 272nd NVA Regiments, led by T-54s and PT-76s, assaulted An Loc from the north and northwest. After beating back three or four human-wave assaults, the ARVN troops in both sectors began slowly giving way. By noon, North Vietnamese infantry controlled the airstrip on the northeast and the northern portion of An Loc itself. When six enemy tanks, accompanied by a company of infantry, tried to push the advance deeper into the heart of An Loc, the ARVN response stiffened. With an M-72



A column of South Vietnamese troops, backed by armored vehicles, moves up Route 13 toward besieged An Loc. Attacks on An Loc were so intense that one U.S. adviser radioed Gen. Hollingsworth and asked to evacuate all U.S. advisers, lest they be killed or taken prisoner. Hollingsworth wouldn't hear of it. For the sake of morale, U.S. advisers had to suffer the same fate as the units they advised.

Light Antitank Weapon, an ARVN soldier disabled one tank. Moments later three Cobra gunships were overhead to take on the rest. Firing 2.75-inch heat rockets, the Cobras began destroying the tanks one after another. In 10 minutes all were on fire, abandoned by their crews.

While these Cobras had been destroying the tanks, the enemy launched a second assault from the northwest. Leading this assault were 20 more Russian tanks. Following behind the tanks was the 272nd Regiment. At the same moment the enemy also renewed their attacks from the north and northwest.

The attacks were so intense that the senior U.S. adviser to the 5th ARVN Division was soon convinced that all of An Loc might soon be overrun. He radioed Gen. Hollingsworth and asked if he thought it best for all U.S. advisers to be evacuated from An Loc, lest they be killed or taken prisoner by the enemy.

Dying For Friends

Hollingsworth would hear none of it. He repeated the policy he had established before the battle: For the sake of morale, U.S. advisers had to suffer the same fate as the units they advised.

Thus began America's commitment to a battle that would arguably go down as the most important battle of the war. Effectively, the battle would mark North Vietnam's military transition from guerrilla force to conventional army, giving glimpse of the rising communist military machine that would affect regional relations far beyond Vietnam for future decades. The battle will continue in the next issue of *Soldier Of Fortune*.

Samuel Zaffiri served in Vietnam as a mortarman in the 1st Infantry Division. He authored Hamburger Hill, a non-fiction account of the controversial Vietnam battle, and the biography Westmoreland. ❧



South Vietnamese marines moved against North Vietnamese who slipped into Dong Ha. Dong Ha, 10 miles south of the DMZ, was part of the new line of defense for the South shortly after the North Vietnamese launched its Easter Offensive.

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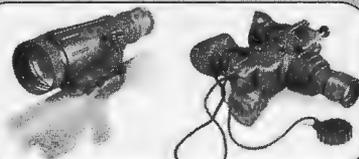
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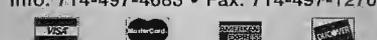
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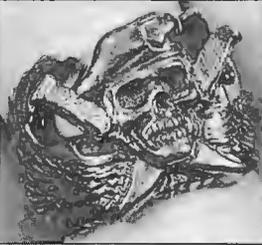
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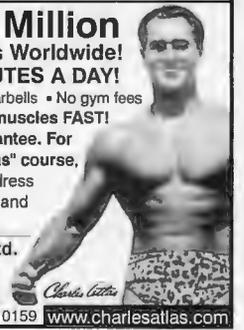
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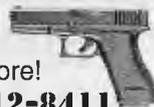
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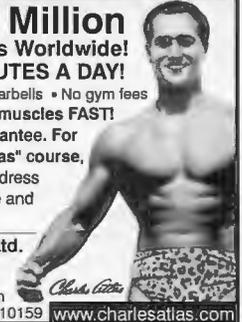
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Quick, Get A Mechanic

The U.S. military machine is sputtering along like a WWII tank that's made too many invasions. This isn't exactly hot news: Navy chiefs, Army and Air Force sergeants and junior officers have been shouting "We're nearly broken!" for years.

But, up to now, the top brass have been saying they're full of it. Now big dogs like Navy Secretary John Dalton are finally admitting that the grunts are right: Our military's combat-readiness edge is marshmallow dull.

No doubt, the Army and Air Force secretaries would second Dalton's concerns, but things are so bad under Bill Clinton's military mismanagement that these two top positions — along with thousands of infantry slots — have been unfilled for months.

What's troublesome is how our security apparatus can be in such bad shape when we spend \$32 million *an hour* on defense and intelligence — almost \$300 billion a year.

Since Stormin' Norman whacked Saddam, our forces have been cut by about 40%. This means that we now have less ships and airplanes and almost a million fewer warriors, although the defense dollars have not been proportionately cut.

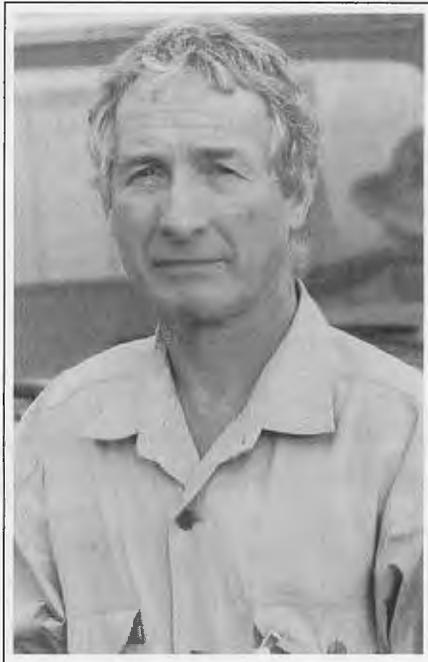
So, on a dollar-per-sailor/soldier/airman basis, we're spending more per head on our warriors today than we have at any time in our history. And this is without a serious conventional opponent in sight.

Here's why our well-financed military machine is sputtering:

It's over-committed. Clinton and his national-security clowns cut the force, but they *increased* the missions by 300%. Since the military didn't budget ahead for harebrained missions, the dough for these save-the-world operations has come out of the services' hide.

Over-commitment has gobbled up dough that would have bought spare parts. So mechanics are back to scrounging — stealing from vehicle/aircraft A to get vehicle/aircraft B up and running. Cannibalization wears out parts and frustrates mechanics. Things are so bad that some first-hitch grease monkeys believe spare parts come from equipment rather than from the parts room. Cannibalization also puts the operators at high risk — especially pilots — because tired maintenance crews make mistakes. Maybe that's why so many military aircraft have been falling out of the sky.

A shortage of money has cut training. Poorly trained soldiers die faster than seasoned warriors who continually practice their trade with live-fire exercises and spend plenty of time in the boonies scooting and shooting.



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.

Buying the wrong stuff. Even though there's not enough money for spares or training, the Pentagon continues to buy more unneeded wonder weapons: Sea Wolf subs, B-2 bombers and fleets of new fighters, and the way pilots are quitting — almost 3,000 in the past two years — there will be no one left but the admirals and generals to fly these wildly expensive toys.

The Pentagon is now shaking its tin cup at congress, begging for \$2.5 billion in supplemental funds. Because of the balanced-budget agreement, congress can no longer write in the needed money with the stroke of their lard pen. So congressmen are looking at which domestic programs can be raided. Will it be school lunches for missile launchers? Or welfare programs for wonder weapons?

If congress were composed of courageous visionaries, it would:

1. Streamline our military and get rid of the bloated, redundant structure that has not had a major tune-up in 50 years.

2. Close down dozens of obsolete forts and bases that were needed when Ike was doing Normandy, but now are a total waste of defense dollars.

3. Freeze buying more cold-war wonder weapons. For openers, kill the planned trillion-dollar fleet of fighter aircraft and concentrate on getting what we have up to snuff.

4. Insure that our military is ready for the new face of war: Irregular combat in

cities around the world and terrorism in the U.S.A., including attacks with weapons of mass-destruction.

Nothing focuses a politician's mind like an election. If you're concerned about the quality of our fighting forces, let them know before November.

Defending America — with the right warriors and equipment, the right organization and the right missions — is serious business. Our forces have been hung out to die too many times since 1775. It's about time we got it right before we fight.

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

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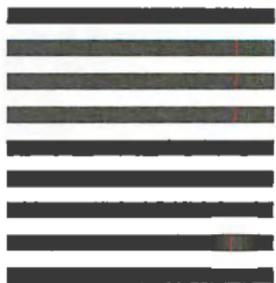
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