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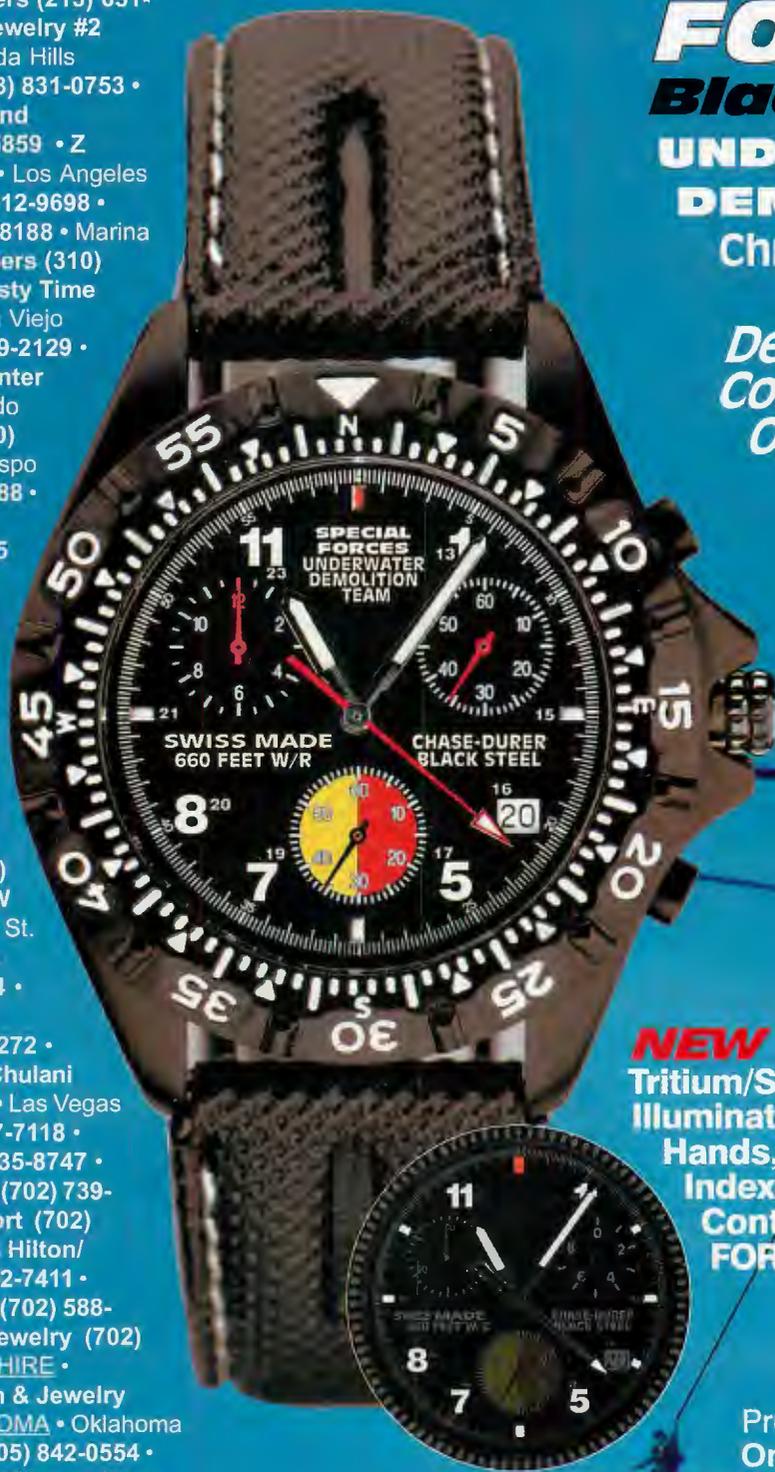
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Conventional Wisdom

Dear Reader:

You are cordially invited to this year's Soldier Of Fortune Convention, Exposition and Trade Show at the Sands Expo Center, in Las Vegas, Nev. This year's event builds on the successful way we did things during the 1996 and earlier conventions.

Conventioneer registration begins on Wednesday, 23 September. The seminars, participatory events and other activities will continue through Sunday, 27 September. Exhibitor registration and set-up will be Thursday, 24 September. The Expo will be open to the public from Friday through Sunday, 25-27 September.

For just \$150, conventioneers can pre-register and enjoy full access to all activities and contests. The *Soldier Of Fortune* World Championship 3-Gun Tactical Response Match, begins Wednesday, 23 September (with shooter registration on Tuesday, 22 September) and runs through Friday, 25 September, with the team shoot-offs. Our world-famous Firepower and Manufacturers' Demonstration will be Saturday, 26 September. The awards Banquet will be Saturday evening. Except for range firing, all events will be at the Sands Expo Center, on Sands Avenue at Koval Lane, in Las Vegas.

We will be mailing out a Convention packet, including an application form, to all previous conventioneers detailing all special events, and hotel information. Conventioneer registration goes up to \$175 at the Convention, so be sure to register in advance. If you have moved recently, or did not receive your packet,

call our offices at (303) 449-3750.

Among the hundreds of exhibits and seminars this year will be featured guest speakers, including Randy Weaver — whose family was attacked by federal authorities at Ruby Ridge, Idaho — and WWII General Paul Tibbetts, who dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. Seminars will include a knife-fighting class presented by Cold Steel. Harry Humphries and other Navy SEALs will present a complete series of seminars on SEAL tactics and training, and gun-rights activists will keep us informed and updated on the war against our Second Amendment. I expect other exciting speakers and guests to be announced between now and the



Convention.

Exhibitors this year will be a virtual who's who of weapons manufacturers, and other companies essential to professional adventurers, including: Beretta, U.S.A.; Glock, Inc.; Smith & Wesson; Sturm, Ruger & Co.; Gerber Legendary Blades; Ka-Bar Knives; and Barrett Firearms, just to mention a few.

Throughout the event, at the hotel and the expo center, you are encouraged to visit with, and debrief, the staff of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine and our special guests who will be attending nightly social activities.

This is an opportunity to improve your adventure skills, get updates on the latest tactical and weapons advancements, and strengthen our country's gun rights in one enormously fun event. This will be the *best* Convention ever, so we hope to see you in Las Vegas. ✕

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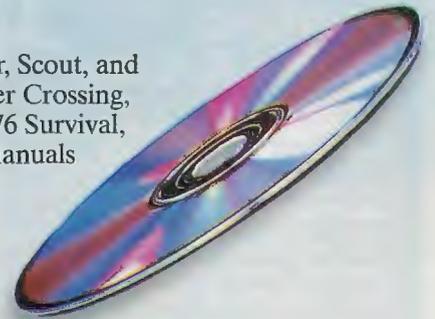
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Sanders Appointed To Federal Commission

Robert E. Sanders, a retired head of criminal enforcement for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and a consulting federal gun-law expert for *Soldier Of Fortune*, has been named by House Speaker Newt Gingrich to a special congressional commission on law enforcement.

Officially designated the Commission on the Advancement of Federal Law Enforcement, or CAFLE, it was authorized under the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, passed in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing. Like the bombing itself, the commission is partially a result of the federal law-enforcement fiasco at Waco, Texas, in 1993.

Champions of individual rights and civil liberties widely criticized the proposed anti-terrorism law. One of the compromises that made its passage possible was the creation of a commission to delve into what changes need to be made to assure effective law enforcement without the abuse of power and reckless use of deadly force in such infamous cases as Waco and that of the Randy Weaver family, in Idaho, in 1992.

The purpose of the commission, according to the speaker's press office, "is to provide direction to the president and congress on how to create a federal law-enforcement program that protects the physical security of Americans while preserving individual rights ..."

"The most difficult part of law enforcement is balancing individual rights with providing security," Gingrich said. "While all

Americans want to be able to feel secure in their homes ... they don't want this to occur at the expense of their rights as individuals ... I am confident that Bob Sanders' wisdom and experience will help this commission fulfill its mission."

The commission will hold a series of public hearings over the next several months. Testimony will be solicited from, among others, the National Rifle Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Black Police Officers Association, as well as state and local agencies and private individuals. Hearing dates have been set for 22-23 June, 9-10 July, 24-25 August, 14-15 September, and 5-6 October. Additional dates will be scheduled and, afterward, the commission will compile a report to congress.

Congratulations, Bob. Good Luck.

—James L. Pate

Alamo City Nixes Delta's Urban Training

San Antonio — Officials in this patriotic South Texas city, home to the Alamo, five military bases and a national cemetery, recently shot down a plan by the Army's Delta Force to conduct live-fire training raids at several vacant civilian buildings.

Officials reportedly cited concerns for residents' safety and the need to close streets around the seven proposed take-down targets. These abandoned structures included a downtown building, a meat-packing plant near the stockyards, a grocery store and a school.

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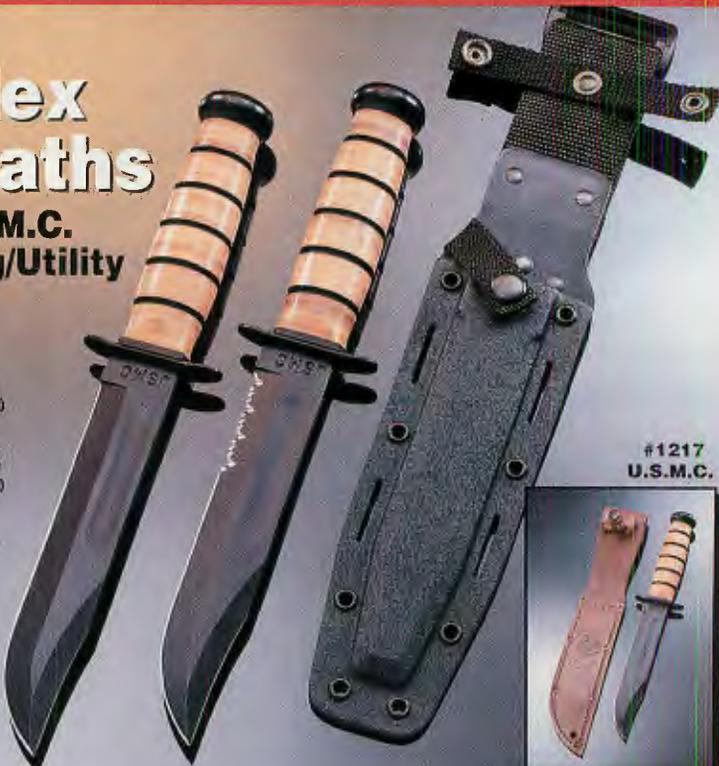
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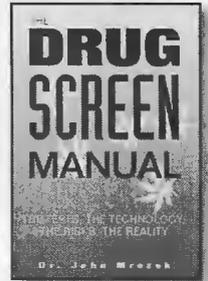
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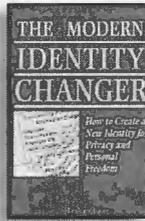
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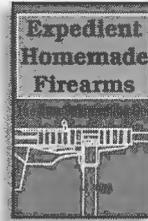
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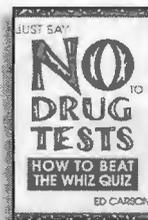
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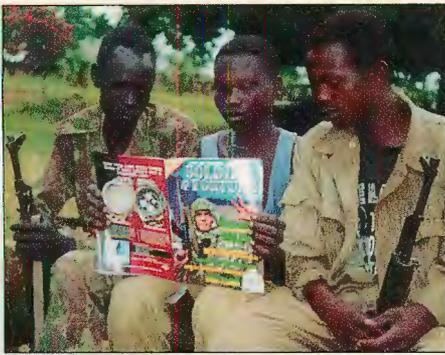
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Rob Krott



SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent Rob Krott recently returned from the front lines near Yei, "New Sudan" where the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) continues to fight for political and religious freedom as its troops prepare for the final push against Sudan Government forces defending nearby Juba. Juba, the regional capitol, is all but cut off from Khartoum. Morale items from SOF for the troops included recent magazines, and (right) some SOF Convention T-shirts for the poorly uniformed troops. SOF interviewed command- ers on the southern front. Watch for Krott's upcoming story in SOF.



Rob Krott

"There are all kinds of horror stories about these kinds of operations," Mayor Howard Peak said in a 5 May front-page story in the *San Antonio Express-News*. "There are too many opportunities for this to go wrong."

A 14 April memorandum, signed by Police Chief Al Philippus and City Attorney Frank Garza, recounted a meeting with Delta representatives. According to the newspaper's follow-up story on 6 May, "The City of San Antonio memorandum ... [cited] a lengthy story in the February 1997 edition of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine ... " (In that feature article, "Sneaking and Piquing," National Affairs Editor Jim Pate described firsthand Delta's heliborne training op in Houston, and recounted some residents' scares from unannounced exercises in New Orleans, Miami, Des Plaines, Ill., and Pittsburgh.)

The San Antonio exercise reportedly called for a nighttime insertion, via SpecOps helicopters, of about 100 Delta operators onto the buildings. Explosives would open entryways, and targets inside would be engaged with small arms. (Delta's SOP for counterterrorism/hostage-rescue training requires an advance team to fortify buildings to contain gunfire.) A hasty exfil by helicopters and/or vehicles presumably would have followed.

But in laying the groundwork for this Texas op, the secretive

Delta apparently stepped on a few cowboy boots. The police chief complained that Delta representatives contacted "various community leaders" and asked them to pressure him. According to the *Express-News*, "The chief also said Delta Force complicated matters by trying to make lease agreements and other deals for use of private property without first checking with the Police Department to determine impacts on public safety."

Mayor Peak was quoted as saying: "These folks [Delta] evidently operate outside of the normal process. We have heard stories that when damage is done they show up with a suitcase full of cash."

— Marty Kufus

Alaska Voters Take Note:

The present governor of Alaska is an anti-gun Democrat. Recently, his veto of a "shall-issue" permit-to-carry-concealed bill was overridden by a wide majority. He can be defeated. Colonel Wayne Anthony Ross, an Anchorage attorney, is seeking the Republican nomination for this race. A former NRA vice-presi-

Continued on page 12

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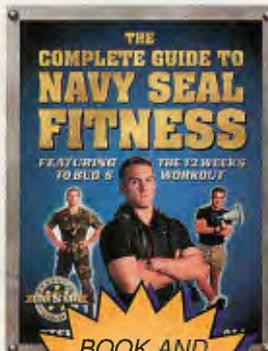
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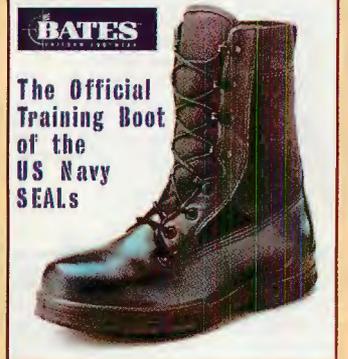
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4. SEAL TEAM KNIFE FIGHTING COMBAT TECHNIQUES

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5. SEAL TEAM STICK FIGHTING COMBAT TECHNIQUES

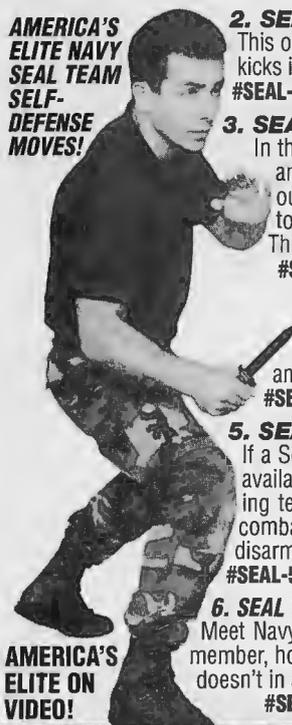
If a Seal Team member loses his weapon in combat he is taught to fight viciously with whatever is available, such as a tree branch (stick). This outstanding tape teaches the deadly Filipino Stick fighting techniques as applied to military as-well-as street combat. Frank Cucci teaches all aspects of combat stickfighting including angles of attack, ranges of combat, fighting combinations, chokes, disarms and more!

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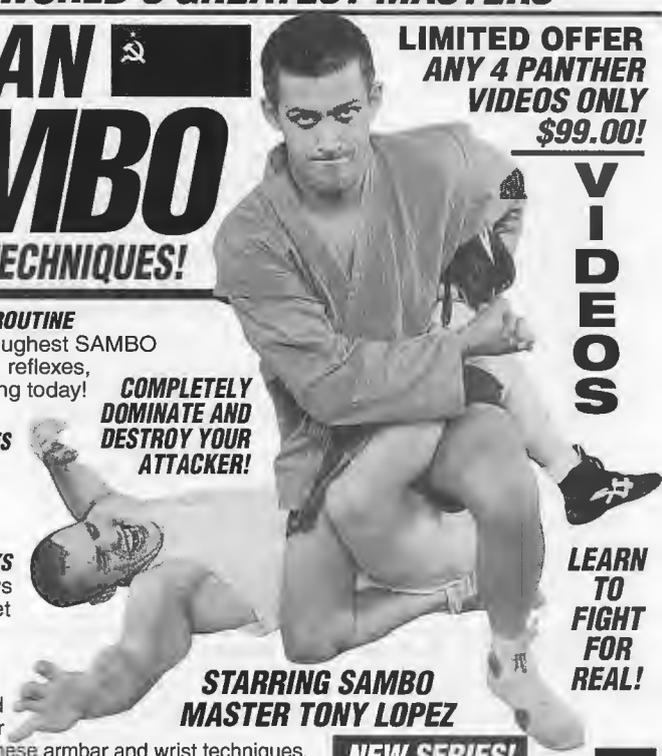
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Master Lopez shows numerous armbar and wrist lock techniques designed to control and destroy your opponent. You will learn how to easily sucker your attacker into an armbar for quick victory, regardless of his size. Tape also teaches the secret escape and counters to these armbar and wrist techniques.
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This is it! In this outstanding video, Master Tony Lopez shows how to combine the leg lock techniques on Tape 3 with the arm locks on Tape 4 to create the most destructive grappling combinations ever witnessed. Learn how to completely dominate and control your opponent as you learn to move from leg locks to arm locks and arm locks to leg locks with blinding speed. Video also features many advanced techniques not shown on Tapes 3 & 4. A must for all Martial Artists who seek the winning edge in a street fight or competition!
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6. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 6 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - CHOKES, HEADLOCKS, AND NECK CRANKS

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7. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 7 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - THROWS, SWEEPS, AND TAKEDOWNS

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8. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 8 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - STREET SELF-DEFENSE

This dynamic tape shows how combat SAMBO is used to defend and counter against the most common street attacks including; punches, kicks, label holds, collar and wrist grabs, bear hugs, head locks, full nelson, ground fighting, and more. Also shows how to disarm a gun, knife, or club wielding attacker. This video is a must for all Martial Artists!
 #SAMBO-8 ONLY \$39.95

9. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 9 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - STREET FIGHTING DIRTY TRICKS

A nasty tape that shows how to win a life or death street fight. The secret COMBAT SAMBO techniques shown in this video are the deadliest of the deadly when it comes to street survival.
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10. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 10 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - DEFENSIVE GROUND FIGHTING

This exceptional grappling tape shows how to own the ground. Includes never before seen techniques designed to defeat the best wrestlers, JUDO, and Brazilian fighters! Teaches how to defend, escape, counter, and apply reversals against your opponents attacks. Includes techniques for quickly defeating the Brazilian Guard and much more. #SAMBO-10 ONLY \$39.95

11. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 11 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - OFFENSIVE GROUND FIGHTING

This important video shows how to dominate your opponent on the ground with superior COMBAT SAMBO grappling techniques. It's all here including; guard and mount positions, reversals, armbars, leg locks, chokes, submissions, and much more. Take full control of your opponent with this sensational ground fighting tape! #SAMBO-11 ONLY \$39.95



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Bulletin Board

Continued from page 8

dent, Ross is a strong supporter of gun- and hunting-rights and is strongly opposed to excessive and discriminatory taxation and regulation of non-Alaskans hunting and fishing in Alaska. Guided hunting and fishing is a major industry in Alaska, and a matter of serious concern to large numbers of non-Alaskan big-game hunters and fishermen.

If anti-gunners prevail in a major hunting state such as Alaska, our Second Amendment rights are safe nowhere. The Western Fish and Wildlife Federation, the same PAC that mobilized to defeat Initiative 676 in Washington state last November, is getting involved to support Ross, independent of the official Ross campaign committee. WFWF got a lot of bang for the buck in Washington State, but they obviously need the bucks to work with — radio air time is not free.

You can help with your non-deductible contribution to:
Western Fish and Wildlife Federation,
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Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303

California Voters Take Note:

Former Representative "B-1" Bob Dornan is running in the Republican primary to regain his seat in the 45th Congressional District, which he lost by a hair-breadth to liberal Democrat Loretta Sanchez in a widely criticized election. A strong proponent of individual liberties such as gun-ownership and conservative causes such as national defense, Dornan deserves — and needs — your support. Voters in the 45th Congressional District should contact their local Republican headquarters.

Moses: *Funny Girl* is "Hanoi Jane" of Second Amendment

Upon viewing the made-for-TV movie *The Long Island Incident*, produced by Barbara Streisand, veteran actor and NRA Vice-President Charlton Heston characterized Streisand as the "Hanoi Jane" of the Second Amendment." Apparently missing the allegory, the film's producer, Joe Sargent, replied that "to do a comparison with Jane Fonda is solely meant to inflame an issue that has nothing whatsoever to do with Jane Fonda or the Vietnam War." Heston said the film misrepresented the NRA and the Second Amendment.

"One Less Gun, One More Life"

Is the theme of a typically bogus, feel-good anti-gun effort afoot in the San Francisco Bay area, pushed in large part by local sawbones. The premise is that by destroying one gun, one life is saved. The abysmal illogic of this is illustrated by the fact that there are 230,000,000 guns in this country. If one gun costs one life — just where the hell is that mouldering pile of 230,000,000 bodies?

"We need to inspire a cultural shift," said Kaiser Permanente physician Pat Salber, founder of "Physicians for a Violence Free Society." Noted Bill Scheeler, San Francisco General's Chief of Surgery, "Firearm injuries are like any epidemic and we have to trace the cause — which in this case is the lead bullet — and address it."

Well, let us go on record as abhorring unnecessary violence, and deaths from any cause. But address this, Doc: In 1995, more people died from deadly infections that they received while under medical care, than from "guns," maybe we should legislate that doctors spend their time washing their hands instead of dabbling in social engineering. In 1995, almost twice as many people died of medical misadventures than did by firearms accidents, maybe we should start a "one less doctor, two more lives" campaign. Or, since more people were killed in some years by falling in the bathtub than died of firearms, maybe we should ... oh well, you get the idea ...

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You feel that naked, when after 20 years of street-fighting plus Judo, Karate and Kung-Fu have failed to show you the truth. Let me tell you buddy, when you have a little age on your butt and there are four Gang-Bangers shoving you around and making rude gestures at your wife, you want to act. Look, I didn't care about getting pushed but if they touched my wife I was in the game. Only this is no game. There's four scumbags with weapons moving all around me. I can take one out with a kick. But by the time my foot comes down, two of them will stab me in the back. If I body-tackle the biggest and grapple him down to choke him out, the other 3 will just kick my head off. Or the guy with the gun will shoot my knee-cap off and I will be helpless as they rape my wife.

Wake Up! Street-Fighting Skills Aren't Enough!!!

You better wake up out there, this is the real world. Not even my street-fighting told me how to handle this. I was lucky they weren't out for blood. They just wanted to intimidate me. I was damn angry. Not at what happened. Hell, my ego wasn't the deal. Staying alive was! I just realized that I spent \$5,000-7,000 hard-earned dollars (not to mention the years) to learn what only works in a ring or a cage with referees and men that think they can street-fight. Yeah, they pick up a chair or use a broken bottle or knife but they never really know what they're doing. Look, let's just stop here, if you've read this far you're probably one **Tough SOB** like me, if you're not, **stop** reading this information. It's not for the weak-willed who have to get drunk to get up the guts to have a slap fight. It's for **you** real men that want to know the TRUTH about **lethal fighting skills**. I knew that after 5 minutes of watching Jerry Peterson's lethal SCARS® system he was nothing short of revolutionary. He'll change your mind about power and fear. I don't know if you believe in a God but Jerry must be talking to him. There's just no other answer to how he solves complex fighting problems. Jerry says, "It's in the math but it doesn't hurt to have **God** on your side." Don't make the mistake I did in '93, the first time I read about this system, "Thinking how could it be true?"

This Guy Is "Nothing But Hype"

Wrong, the documentation is there. The government backs it up. He's taught, developed and standardized combat schools for the SEALs and other Special Operations Forces not just in the US but also with NATO groups.

Ask Yourself, "Can I Handle The Truth?" If You Can, Then Here Is Real Credibility.

Jerry Peterson's SCARS was demonstrated on a secure military base, in true combat fashion, to no less than the *US Secretary of Defense*, the leading *4 Star General*, plus the *Secretary of the Navy* and powerful *Congressional Leaders*. They all watched in total amazement as the SEAL's executed fighting skills never before seen, absolutely flawless on every combat action they took using guns, knives, full gear, single and multi-fighting and most impressively their bare hands. **SCARS**

never failed them and it will never fail YOU!!!

If That Doesn't Blow Your Mind This Will

You can bet your life on this man's credibility, 30,000 other professional men have. You can't waste one more day learning a sport system that has counters to every move. **With SCARS you're undefeatable!** Look, do you think Jerry could have achieved his renown credibility if the secret SCARS science of lethal combat could be countered. Absolutely not! The fact is, Jerry Peterson is the one civilian in the history of the USA to have accomplished such professional credibility. I challenge you to find one individual that has ever gotten their fighting system to be reviewed by such powerful leaders at the same time. Of course, to make it more unfair, also get the official stamp of approval for implementing their system as required training for the US military. Want to check this out? Here is just one of the official course numbers K-431-0096, check it out with the Navy. I did, boy was I impressed when they gave me the list of what this guy has done. It only took me six months. Damned bureaucratic red tape!

Want More Credibility?

Jerry Peterson's SCARS project is the only system ever to pass all the combat requirements of the United States Defense Department. Then to go one better he raised that standard and personally trained the elite Navy SEALs, some made it, some didn't. But those that did today hold the coveted SCARS/CFC qualification of subject matter experts in the field of hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon combat. By the way, this qualification becomes part of their official military records. In fact, there would be no experts if Jerry Peterson did not license the SCARS-**Combat Fighting Course** to the Navy. Are you getting the picture? Don't wait as I did. Don't be fooled by the follower's...

You Know The 'Little Men'

Ever since 1993, self-proclaimed military 'gurus' and some street-fighters have been **following Jerry** making clever claims, *if you read between the lines there's nothing but ambiguous claims and self-given titles*. Have you noticed nobody produces any official paperwork? Hey, just ask those 'little men' that talk big about what they've actually done. Yep, he can talk the talk. Hell, he should, he's listened to **real** combat soldiers stories for years, but he just never quite got there himself. Hey Lew? **Truth is a bitch!** Frank how was that war in Panama, waiting at the air strip is really scary. Oh! Glad to see TRS is back with the fighter-of-the-month club. Hey, what happened to the other 5 or so "one-of-a-kind" "never can be beaten" fighters who all had similar stories? OOPS!

Jerry Peterson Is Absolutely For Real

This is what you'll find out. Don't wait. Let go of the past and learn the science of Lethal Combat. This is the first and only original Navy SEAL System. **YOUR LIFE WILL DEPEND ON IT!** Sorry, I'm jumping ahead let me explain why the martial arts can't and won't get the official documentation. First the system has to be universal to all men. This means that 100 men go in. One-hundred men come out 100% efficient in all aspects of CQB (close quarters battle). To prove that the government must

test, and test SCARS they did, for over five years in real field conditions, on all terrains, including water with real weapons and in real conflicts. I'm not going to get into all the government testing, that will take forever. Plus there are some we can't talk about. But in all those years SCARS never failed EVER!! And that's why it's still the standard.

In Fact SCARS Set "New Standards"...

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Knives From, and For, the Trenches

Modern knives vary from *objets d'art* to pure tools. Proper hard-use knives are found toward the tool end of the spectrum, as they are meant to seriously alter the form of a workpiece. Some of the strongest and most practical such hard-use knives come from the Eight Dollar Mountain Foundry, in Selma, OR, where bladesmith Dale Sandberg turns out a line of husky aluminum-handled blades as serviceable as you're likely to find anywhere. The blades are made from 3/16" sawblade steel and blued; the handles are cast over



the tang and wrapped with paracord, and have a steel endcap for pounding. They come with a heavy leather scabbard.

Sandberg offers 10 blade styles from 7-1/2" to 12" long, and several variations in grip style and dimension. The "trenchknife" D-handles really come into their own on the large choppers, particularly when chopping among the sharp ends of already-cut brush.

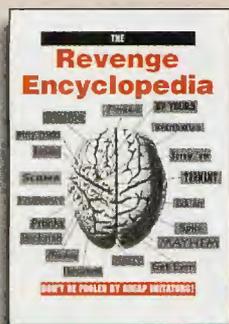
If you *work* with hard-use knives, check these out: They're good tools made by some fine folks at Eight Dollar Mountain Foundry, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 325, Selma, OR 97230; phone: 541-597-4821.

KCB 77 M9 Bayonet

A. Eickhorn GmbH of Solingen, Germany, has been in the quality cutlery business for more than 130 years. I bought my first Eickhorn knife as a GI in Germany 35 years ago, and it proved the classic saying that "you never regret having bought top quality." One of their current specialties is a complete line of replacement/after-market bayonets for modern military arms, and military/police knives.

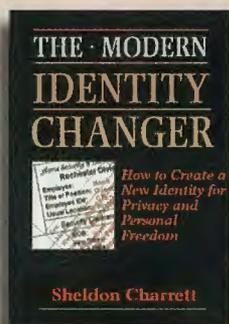
Flagship of this inventory is the new KCB 77 M9 Bayonet made for the M16 family of rifles, and others that share the M16 bayonet mounting scheme. Eickhorn's is a thoroughly well-thought-out design, exhibiting the very best in modern materials and manufacturing technique. Their M9 strikes a very good compromise between what might-be/can-be incorporated in such a tool, and which fea-

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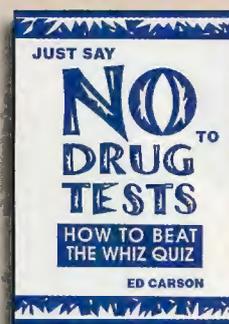
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the NCOIC would say, "Wiedemann: Before the wire you cut, the wire test with the voltage-potential indicator on the KCB 77 M9 bayonet."

An insulated (and adjustable for optimal cutting force) wire-cutter plus a 70-400V voltage-potential indicator light, of course, are not the only functional features on Eickhorn's M9. The back of the rugged

blade has a unique saw pattern (cutting on the push stroke) that cuts wood and even structural aluminum very well, and a bottle-cap lifter is built into the hilt. It comes with a plastic keeper plug to protect the mounting slot when not on a rifle, and there is a pressure lubrication point for the catch itself.

The scabbard is equipped with a square-bar screwdriver, a black synthetic protective cap for the wire-cutter assembly, a blade-retaining tension adjustment, a thong, and a standard wire web-belt attachment for the frog. The scabbard has a quick-release to remove it from the frog. There is even a sapphire sharpening strip on the back of the scabbard, and the bayonet and scabbard are NBC- and fungus-resistant to MilSpec. The scabbard and bayonet handles are of an olive-colored synthetic. Machining is precise, and steel parts are finished flat black, in what appears to be oxide-over-phosphate.

The KCB 77 M9 Bayonet is gear that's good to go as a bayonet or fighting knife: The other sophisticated features represent a bonus of useful tools that do not compromise the primary functions in any way.

The M9 bayonet is available from United Cutlery Brands, Attn: David Hall, Dept. SOF, 1425 United Blvd., Sevierville, TN 37876; phone: 423-428-2532; fax: 423-428-2267. Or, from Eickhorn-Solingen, Attn: Jorg Eickhorn, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 12 02 49, 42677 Solingen, Germany; phone: 011-49-212-66050; fax: 011-49-212-67437; e-mail: EICKSOL@AOL.COM



tures *should* be incorporated, because they will prove useful.

Eickhorn may not be the first, for instance, to include a wire-cutting feature in the bayonet/scabbard combination, but in a blinding flash of Teutonic thoroughness they have done it best: In the 'Merican Army, the NCOIC would say, "Smith, touch that wire with a blade of grass to see if its hot, before you cut it." In the *Bundeswehr*

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Reaching through the mangled cab of his pickup, you have one hand fumbling for a carotid pressure point while the other hand alternately gropes with his seat belt and holds the knife you are trying to open with your teeth. As your dentures skitter across the freeway, you mentally design the tough, smooth, one-hand-opening, serrated blade knife that would have by now had the fellow free, in a neck collar and on the gurney.

Good News: That knife is here, and tough and smooth are not mutually exclusive terms when describing GT Knives' new folder. We have not seen a better carry folder for an EMT, firefighter or cop. Or a smoother or more positive automatic opener. The 3-5/8" ATS-34 stainless blade comes part serrated and razor sharp to make quick work of belts, webbing, rope, leather or other impediments to a rescuer. The blade is hollow ground and has a slightly dropped point. It is a full 1/8" thick, and mounts solidly into body scales machined from 6061 T6 aircraft aluminum. The scales are

precisely checked for a secure wet grip, and have a Type III hard-anodize finished. They are held together firmly by inleted socket-head cap screws, and feature a discreetly hidden lanyard hole. The button lock (or blade release on the police version) is brass and the thumbstuds are stainless.

The fact that this tool is entirely fabricated from metal is advantageous when it comes to sterilizing it between uses. The belt clip can be mounted on either end of the knife, as dictated by your work patterns. The ergonomics and overall design are superb. The craftsmanship is as good as it gets: This is the sort of implement you'd be tempted to put in a time capsule to show future generations what good work some of us did back in the 20th Century.

Made by GT Knives, Dept. SOF, 7734 Arjons Drive, San Diego, CA 92126; phone 619-530-8766; fax: 619-530-8798; or, check out their web site: www.gtknives.com



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Titanium Tripods And Full-Auto Accessories

Machine-gun tripods. To me, they are every bit as interesting as the guns they were designed to support. While some manually operated machine guns, such as the Gatling could be mounted on tripods, most of these types were attached to carriages, similar to those used for light artillery pieces. However, the first fully automatic machine guns, both those of Hiram Maxim and John M. Browning, were designed to be mounted on tripods. These early tripods were oriented with two legs to the front and a single leg to the rear with a seat for the gunner. Comfortable as they may have been to shoot from, these seats were eventually abandoned when it was determined that those perched upon them were very high-profile targets indeed. Even without the seat, tripods continued to be oriented with the single leg to the rear until World War II. By that time it became obvious that if the orientation was reversed, the gunner could lie down in the prone position

between the two rear legs and thus minimize his exposure from behind even meager cover and concealment. Subsequent to World War II almost all machine-gun tripods were designed to be oriented in this latter manner.

For the last several decades the tripod has lost ground, as many modern general-purpose machine guns (GPMGs) are fired mostly from the bipod to accommodate the concept of fire and maneuver.

Tripods have most often been relegated to fixed firing positions in the defensive role. In recent years there have been several serious attempts to lighten tripods to the extent required by today's fast-moving assault troops.

There are basically two types of



Israeli FN MAG 58 tripod, constructed mostly of titanium and aluminum. Note telescoping front leg. Tripod would never be deployed in combat with the legs in this position.

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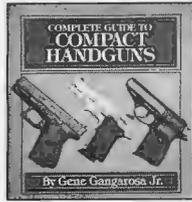
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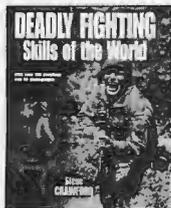


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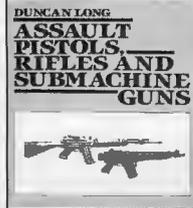


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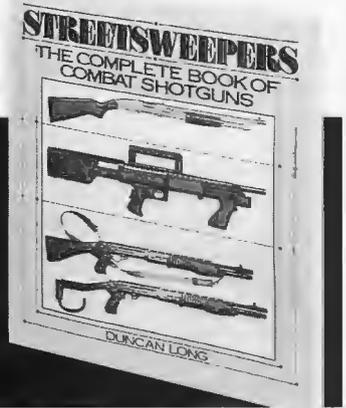


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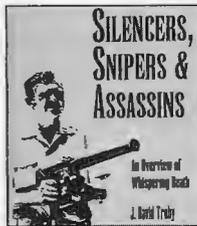


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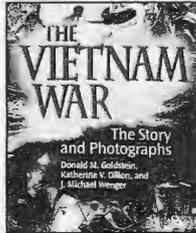
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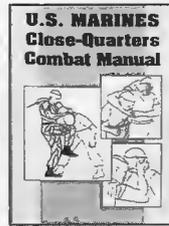
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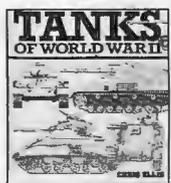
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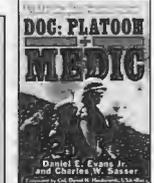
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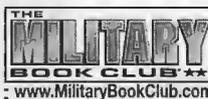
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tripod mounts traditionally used by the infantry. So-called "hard" mounts usually consist of the tripod and a cradle which fits into the tripod's pintle and permits both coarse and fine elevation and traverse adjustments without any other attributes. The very first Browning and Maxim machine guns mentioned above were fired off mounts of this type.

So-called "soft" (or "flex") cradle systems were first used in substantial quantities by the Germans in World War II on the tripods designed for the MG34 and subsequently the MG42 GPMGs. Most often incorporating a spring and/or hydraulic buffer system, soft mounts are designed to absorb a substantial amount of the recoil impulse generated during burst fire. If the tripod is properly sand-bagged, this will reduce the size of the group of trajectories formed by a single burst, and called the cone of fire by machine gunners. In turn, this will diminish the size of the beaten zone, which is the elliptical pattern formed by the cone of fire as it strikes the ground. By this means, the accuracy potential and hit probability at longer ranges are enhanced. The gun's components are also subject to less mechanical stress. To a considerable degree, soft mounts overcome the lightweight GPMG's disadvantages as a long-range, sustained-fire support weapon.

The USMC deploys the M240G (their version of the FN MAG 58) almost exclusively from a tripod. To that end they developed a new lightweight version of the M122 tripod (nothing more or less than the M2 tripod used with .30 caliber Browning air-cooled machine guns during World War II and the Korean War — the nomenclature was changed to M122 when a new pintle system was adopted for the M60 GPMG). Onto this is placed the LTM-M122



Kent Lomont's bracket permits use of the now more common .30-caliber ammo cans without the latching mechanism on the M1917A1 tripod.

flex mount — a lightened version of the FN soft mount used with the M240E1 machine gun mounted on the Marine Corps' LAV.

However, an even more fascinating attempt at a really lightweight tripod is the Israeli FN MAG 58 tripod. This tripod has an interesting evolution. It's first development was in the form of an all-steel hard mount designed by *Fabrique Nationale* in the 1950s for the .30 caliber air-cooled Browning machine guns used by the Belgian infantry during this time frame. The next stage in its development was in the form of FN's first tripod (a spring-loaded soft mount) for the FN MAG

58 GPMG, both of which were used by the Israeli armed forces.

The end result was the Israeli-made version of this tripod. With the exception of the traversing bar with its scale and the traversing-bar frontpiece, the traversing-bar lock, the rear gun retaining pin and chain, the two buffer springs, and some cotter pins, the entire tripod, including the curved and toothed elevation bars, is made of titanium and aluminum alloys. The weight of this tripod, complete with the soft mount and traversing and elevation (T&E) systems is only 25 pounds. This is only 1 pound more than the gun itself (23.9 pounds) and 2 pounds more than the FN version, as the Israeli model features a very desirable telescoping front leg. For the sake of comparison, the US M1917A1 tripod, complete with cradle, weighs 53.2 pounds and the all-steel version of the US M2/M122 weighs 19 pounds, complete with pintle and T&E mechanism. Both of these are hard mounts. The FN/Israeli FN MAG 58 GPMG tripod is, of course, a soft mount, far more versatile and provides the gun with a more stable firing platform than the M2/M122 tripod series.

As I spent a great deal of time in graduate school studying the

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physics of wind-blown sand, I must question the use of titanium and aluminum, especially in the elevation mechanism of this tripod, in desert environments. However, it's a truly unique piece of equipment and specimens in very good condition are available from SARCO, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 323 Union Street, P.O. Box 98, Stirling, NJ 07980; phone: 908-647-3800) for \$365 including an adaptor to accommodate .30 caliber Browning machine guns. With slight modification of the adaptor block, you can also mount a Vickers on this tripod.

Ammo Can Brackets

Ammunition boxes for the original water-cooled M1917 caliber .30-06 Browning machine gun (BMG) were merely set on the ground on the left side of the gun. After World War I a number of important changes were made to this machine gun. The receiver was reinforced, the water jacket end cap was strengthened, and most important of all, the method of fastening the water jacket to the trunnion block was improved. The designation was changed at that time to M1917A1 and in this form, one of the world's classic machine guns fought on through World War II and The Korean War.

The tripod was also modified at this time. Among other changes, a bracket was attached to the left side of the cradle to accept ammunition boxes. The first box developed for this purpose was made of wood with tongue-and-groove construction, a leather handle and steel hardware. The rear of this early box is beveled at the bottom. A steel tongue at the bottom of the bracket rests on the top of a groove in the bottom and rear of the box. Slots, cut into each side of the box at the rear, slide over the protruding edges of the cradle's bracket on each side. These early boxes were made of oak and painted olive drab.

This wood box was subsequently simplified. The leather handle was changed to canvas and the bottom bevel was deleted to result in a completely rectangular box. The material remains oak-painted olive drab. Unfortunately, wooden caliber .30-06 ammunition boxes in either form are, by now, quite rare. They were replaced with steel sheet-metal chests sometime during World War II. Furthermore, it remains a stated maxim of ground pounders that anything that can be burned to keep them warm, will be.

Most of the steel ammo chests were manufactured by United and embossed with their logo, a flaming ordnance bomb and "CAL .30 M1 BOX" with "A1" ink-stamped to the right of "M1". The center of the tripod's ammo-box bracket is cut out and these steel chests were designed to lock into this cutout. At the rear end of the chest, an L-shaped protrusion hooks behind the top edge of the cutout. A spring-loaded, L-shaped lever toward the bottom of the rear end of the chest latches behind the bottom

Continued on page 72



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**[TRANSLATION: MADE RIGHT HERE UNDER OUR NOSES
SO IF ANYBODY SCREWS UP BY EVEN .0005 INCHES,
WE'RE DAMN WELL GONNA KNOW ABOUT IT.]**

Presenting the new Benchmade 350. Like all our knives, it's entirely made in the U.S.A.

And while we're certainly proud of that fact, it's more about precision than patriotism. Quite simply, we've learned that nobody crafts with the same accuracy or cares quite as much as we do. Contract for parts, and you live with compromises. Contrast the sleek, compact 350 design. We laser-cut the blade because we can do it more precisely than

anyone else. We heat treat the ATS-34 steel blade because no one else

can achieve the same hardness and edge toughness. Even

screws we once bought, we now machine our-

selves to meet our obsessive stan-

dards. Control freaks? Maybe.

But just enjoy your

new knife.



WE'VE ADAPTED MEL PARDUE'S
LEGENDARY LAW ENFORCEMENT KNIFE FOR
GENERAL USE WITH AN EASY ONE-HAND OPENING
THUMB STUD. THE 350 IS A SMALL, PRECISE MARVEL THAT
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WORLD SITREP

1

UNITED STATES

New OIC Weapon: Army selects Alliant Techsystems design for new Objective Individual Combat Weapon. Weapon combines 5.56mm rifle and 20mm grenade launcher; one trigger fires either. Weapon replaces M-203 grenade launcher (and M16 it's bolted to), as well as some other M16s and M4 carbines. • **Two-war Strategy:** Pentagon insists "two-war strategy" is viable, assuming second war starts 45 days after first. Pentagon says countries that want to take advantage of U.S. being busy elsewhere would need 45 days to put its own forces on war footing. Critics argue two nations could conspire to launch simultaneous attacks. • **Air Trouble:** Air Force had only 75% of F-16s flyable in 1997, compared to 90% in 1982. Disrepair results from diversion of funds and spare parts to support air operations in Persian Gulf and Bosnia. • **Poor Skills:** Troops in Bosnia and Macedonia suffer skills deficit upon return to normal duty, due to lack of opportunity to keep up with basic warfighting skills. Infantry unit in Macedonia returned and failed basic Bradley proficiency test. • **Land Mines:** UNICEF and OAU announce plan to eliminate land mines from Africa.

2

RUSSIA

Nuke Threat High: Report from leftist American group Physicians for Social Responsibility states nuclear-war threat greater than during Cold War. Report warns of problems inside Russian military, growing complexity of computer controls and their tendency to fail, ability of terrorists to obtain weapons, and growing number of countries with nuclear arms. Report cites scenario in which Russian submarine captain ignores chain of command, firing 24 nuclear weapons into eight U.S. cities, killing 7 million immediately, and 12 million more during following month. • **KGB Comeback:** KGB, broken up into six agencies in 1991, slowly being rebuilt, says *Jane's Intelligence Review*. The 2nd Chief Directorate (counter-intelligence) absorbed the political security division (5th Chief Directorate) in 1992, becoming Security Ministry (renamed Federal Counter-Intelligence Service in 1994 and Federal Security Service in 1995). In 1998, Federal Security Service absorbed Border Guards, and plans to absorb signals intelligence branch (8th Chief Directorate) in 1999.

6

SOMALIA

U.N. suspends aid operations due to security problems. Rahanwein Resistance Army threatens attack on Baidoa if other factions hold peace conference. • Three top warlords hold talks in Nairobi about unifying city administration of Mogadishu, reaching agreement to reopen seaport and airport.

7

UGANDA

Government kills 32 LRA rebels. LRA ready for peace talks, but insists on open venue with media attention.

11

COLOMBIA

Bird Watching: FARC rebels release three American birdwatchers after radio stations broadcast political statement. Samper authorizes peace talks with rebels, who control more than half the country. Marine General Charles Wilhelm, commander-in-chief of Southern Command, calls Colombia most serious threat to U.S. Military in Latin America. Colombia rejects statements by Wilhelm that military incapable of defeating rebels.

13

CUBA

Intelligence Oversight: *Miami Herald* reports Russians had 100 tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba to defeat any U.S. invasion, which U.S. intelligence never discovered. Weapons were removed in 1962. • Government forces only American Catholic priest in Cuba to leave. • Coast Guard sends seven Cuban boat people back to Cuba. • Twelve Cuban political prisoners released to Canada; Exile groups in U.S. welcome release of prisoners, condemn corresponding relaxation of some U.S. sanctions by Clinton.

8

KENYA

Civil War? Country on verge of civil war, say human-rights groups, because it has taken no action to stop waves of politically motivated violence in Rift Valley. Government clearly condones attack on Kikuyu tribe, which has traditionally opposed government.

14

IRAN

Soviet Nukes: Iran obtains four nuclear weapons from Soviet republic in early 1990s, reports *Jerusalem Post*. Newspaper reports Iran paid \$25 million for two of the weapons. *Post* cites Iranian documents and conversations obtained by Israeli intelligence in which the acquisition and maintenance of weapons have been discussed. • **Missiles:** Israel reports Iran, with Russian help, nearly finished with engine for Shihab-3 missile and could test-fire next year. Russia claims to have blocked attempts by Iranian companies to obtain missile components and technology from Russian state companies.

1

CHINA

Government sentences democracy activist Wang Tingjin to labor camp as punishment for meeting with exiled dissident Wang Bingzhang • Government to transfer 50,000 military officers to civilian work this year. • Christian bishops forbidden travel to Vatican for conference.

4

SOUTH AFRICA

New Command: Guerrilla commander Lieutenant General Sipiwe Nyanda, trained by East Germans and Soviets, becomes new head of South African Armed Forces. • France and U.K. agree to provide South Africa with anti-submarine training. • Work continues on anti-mercenary laws, including provision to arrest former Zairean generals plotting to overthrow Kabila's Democratic Congo regime • ANC votes to fight efforts to rescind blanket amnesty given leaders by Truth Commission.

5

ZIMBABWE

Students riot after government privatizes campus services. Labor unions launch strikes and demonstrations to protest low standard of living and general incompetence of Mugabe government.

9

SIERRA LEONE

Thousands Starve: Fighting continues in east. U.N. reports thousands starving from disruption of road network, while hospitals in Freetown report hundreds of victims of mutilation and atrocity. President Kabbah places all troops, including local self-defense militias, under command of Nigerian peacekeepers. Scandal erupts over charges British diplomat Peter Penfold, while ambassador to Sierra Leone, had sold weapons to anti-junta troops and actively stage-managed the counter-coup.

10

ISRAEL

Water War: Water underlies Middle East political and military conflict. Israel cannot survive without ground water from West Bank and Golan. Palestinians complaint they cannot revive economy under water restrictions. Forty percent of West Bank villages have running water. Israelis get 70 gallons a day; Palestinians get 13. Netanyahu insists water must remain under Israeli control.

2

12

MEXICO

U.S. Trains Mexico: Four peasants killed by black-clad militiamen in Chiapas. Human-rights groups accuse U.S. of supporting Mexican government against insurgencies. U.S. admits providing training to Mexican military well before insurgencies began and would continue on an ongoing basis.

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PAKISTAN

Nuke Missiles: North Korea, not China, underwriting Pakistan missile testing, states report in *Jane's Missiles and Rockets*. Large-scale monitoring of North Korean military flights, *Jane's* reports, reveal three-fold increase in flights outside Korea since January 1998. Flights consist mostly of transport aircraft carrying North Korean technical experts. Sources suspect new Pakistani missile capable to carry nuclear, chemical or high-explosive warheads.

15

BOSNIA

Building An Army: U.S. and other Western states help Bosnian Federation build modern army, with organization based on needs of Federation as a whole. • U.S. Army selects 1st Cavalry Division as next to go to Bosnia. Division headquarters and one brigade to be sent. Equipment will not be shipped to Bosnia; 1st Cavalry to take over vehicles and heavy gear of 1st Armored Division troops.

16

CAMBODIA

Hill 200: Government forces, aided by mass defections from the Khmer Rouge, advanced into Anlong Veng, ultimately taking last heavily fortified position, Hill 200. Ta Mok believed to have 2,000 fighters still with him, and 1,600 other fighters have joined the Royalists at O'Smach.

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I Was There

by Captain George W. Kittredge,
USN (Ret.)
with Mary J. Ware

The Kuttabul Tragedy



courtesy: Naval Institute Press

The ANZAC (Australia New Zealand Allied Command) Squadron steamed for Sydney, Australia for “Rest and Recreation,” and where I hoped to get paid back for all those watches I’d stood for “married Johns” back in Pearl.

But in Sydney, both the “married Johns” and Captain Bode, our CO, had other ideas. As soon as the *U.S.S. Chicago* was moored to a buoy in the main channel of Sydney Harbor, near Garden Island, Capt. Bode set a modified Condition Three. We expected it would be liberty for all hands except for a token force on board to keep a boiler on the line and the quarterdeck manned. Instead, we were ordered to keep half the anti-aircraft battery manned and only allowed shore liberty by watch sections.

We didn’t understand it. We were 1,500 miles from any known Japanese forces. All the other ANZAC Squadron ships had gone “cold iron” and everybody went ashore.

Lieutenant Junior Grade Jim Phelan, an Annapolis classmate, and I were sitting in the wardroom of the *Chicago* having a cup of coffee when the general quarters sounded. I dashed for the ladder to the bridge with Jim right behind me. I got as far as the communication deck when the code room door burst open and Lieutenant Commander Mechlenburg, the head duty officer, flew out.

All three of us, Phelan, Mechlenburg and I, saw it at the same time when one of our searchlights pierced the ink-black night.

The water in the harbor was dead calm, like a pool of oil, when the loom of the light caught the conning tower of a Japanese midget submarine not more than 100 yards away. The sub’s hatch was open and a Japanese officer was peering through a pair of binoculars.

On the wing of the communication deck was one of the 1.1-inch guns that had been installed back in Pearl Harbor. I jumped into the trainer’s seat and Mechlenburg hurled himself into the pointer’s seat.

“Where’s the trigger on this thing?” he yelled. I wanted to shout, “Let Phelan take over!” but Mechlenburg was very senior to me so I instead yelled “Let’s switch!” which we did.

The “missing” trigger of the 1.1-incher was in the pointer’s foot pedal so as soon as Mechlenburg trained the gun on the small sub’s

The *U.S.S. Chicago, CA-29*, 1942. Due to a Japanese miscalculation in assuming the American cruiser was underway, the *H.M.S. Kuttabul* became their target.

conning tower and I had the cross hairs half-way between the open hatch and the water, I depressed the foot pedal. Almost as soon as Mechlenburg and I began firing, the two 5-inch guns aft of the *Chicago*’s well deck opened up but the range was so close that the 5-incher couldn’t depress enough and the rounds overshot and ricocheted across the harbor.

I thought that several of our 1.1-inch rounds had hit the target — before all four barrels had ceased firing due to the gun’s total malfunction. When the smoke cleared, the submarine had dived. I don’t know who was the aft AA director that threw the searchlight on the sub but whoever it was probably saved at least two heavy cruisers and maybe a destroyer or two, because there were *four* midget submarines in Sydney Harbor that night, each carrying two full-size torpedoes. *Chicago*’s firing had alerted the harbor defenses.

Captain Bode returned to the ship much-exercised over the fact that his ship had opened fire while moored in the center of Sydney Harbor. He had been ashore having dinner with Admiral Muirhead-Gould, RN, the Sydney Naval District’s Commander. When back aboard the first thing Capt. Bode did to form up all the watch officers on the bridge and deliver a stern lecture inundated with hints of courts-martial for opening fire in a friendly port.

His back toward the bow, Captain Bode failed to take note of broad white wake on our starboard side, just yards from us. While we pointed and shouted the unimpressed Bode snorted, “Probably a motor-launch wake.” His back was still towards the bow as a massive explosion rocked a vessel some distance away. “Now see what you have done. You’ve gotten the shore batteries to open up!” But with doubt seeping in he said, “Mechlenburg. Take my gig. Go ashore. Present my compliments to Admiral Muirhead-Gould and

Continued on page 72

It's just hands-down the most brutally-effective (yet simple to master) system ever revealed to civilians!

Vicious Russian "Top Secret" Spec Op Military Fighting System *Finally* Revealed By Defiant "Underdog" U.S. Businessman!

This exciting news is going to blow the lid off the "self-defense" industry. Due to some unbelievably complex (international) breakthroughs...

I Now Have Videotape Of Russian Spec Op Unarmed Combat Secrets The U.S. Military Spent Millions Trying To Steal!

And the U.S. military *still* doesn't have these amazing fighting secrets! You *cannot* find a qualified teacher of these vicious hand-to-hand fighting secrets *ANYWHERE* in the United States... not in the military Special Forces, not in the FBI or CIA Virginia compounds, not in *any* of the high-tech "foreign experiment" dojos around "Area 51" in Nevada (the most *secret* military installation in the world). This stuff is hands-down *the* best-kept secret among "insiders" in the world of *serious* combat.

But I found him — the ONLY former-Russian Special Forces "super-soldier" willing to reveal the fighting techniques that made Soviet elite soldiers the most *feared* fighters on the planet. Navy SEALs, DELTA soldiers, Rangers... they're tough guys, but even *they* admit they *NEVER* want to have to face anyone trained in the brutal killing arts of SPETSNAZ. (SPETSNAZ is Russian for "Special Forces", but the organization is actually *more* elite than even our SEALs — only *one* out of 3,000 Soviet spec op soldiers ever reaches this level... and *NO ONE* but these "elite-of-the-elite" soldiers in Russia ever gets *this* advanced training! Ninety-six percent of the *Soviet* military doesn't even know these secret killing arts exist — due to *intensive* government coverups! Even the more-famous KGB agents — Russia's version of the Nazi Gestapo — are *terrified* of SPETSNAZ operatives and their skills.)

The guy I found is named Vladimir Vasiliev, and I had to travel to Toronto, Canada to see him — he won't come see me here in the States. (Let's just say he's a little "cautious", due to his reputation and escape from Soviet Russia.) Finding this former Russian "super-soldier" meant risking my ass with some *serious* international intrigue. Fortunately, I still have several "deep contacts" in the U.S. military special forces... and when Vladimir finally decided to "go public" in a big way, he sent word to me through a Ranger veteran in northern Idaho.

And let me tell you, this is the most *important* "find" in all my years of working with world-class fighting arts. (I've been *swamped* with calls from cops, U.S. special forces soldiers, federal agents and street fighters about this tape... *even though it's not for sale yet* — word has slipped out among the insiders *already*.) You see, Vladimir wasn't just a Spec Op soldier... no... Vladimir was so "high up" he taught this astonishing Russian fighting system to other SPETSNAZ agents (and was, in fact, one of their "specialized" trainers)... and then *led* them in the most chilling and dangerous missions I've *ever* been briefed on (all *still* classified **Top Secret** by the Soviet Army!) (My Ranger contact, who did *two* frontline tours in Vietnam, was *equally* blown away listening to these bloody tales.)

Vladimir is so tight-lipped about his past it took me *6 months* to get this deal together... but I *did* it. And now... because of these jerk-off "black baggers" harassing me at home...

I Have To Move Fast To Make Sure These Amazing Combat Secrets Are Available (And Stay Available) To Civilians Like You!

What I'm doing is *not* illegal... but you know my little company has been stopped *before* by "high up" interference despite being in the *right*. (These "higher ups" want to keep this information *only* for cops and soldiers, and *out* of the hands of civilians like you and me. Last year we held 3 exciting "hands on" gun-and-fighting workshops hosted by veteran Navy SEALs and former DELTA officers... and these workshops were *stopped* by mysterious, *powerful* interference!) Now, dammit, I love this country... but sometimes a man is forced to just stand up and say "ENOUGH!" I don't care what *anyone* says — the Cold War is over, and if these "top secret" Russian hand-to-hand techniques are now "fair game" to be shared with you... well, that's what I'm gonna do. And if I'm putting my *life* in danger doing something that is *guaranteed* by the First Amendment... well... sometimes you gotta show a little courage to do the right thing.

But... with *your* help... I see an *EASY* way out of this... if you act *fast*.

Up to today, *very few* people have seen these tapes (or even know they exist). And, as *soon* as I can, I want to get these tapes

into the hands of as many "civilians" as possible. I've ordered a limited number of "special" sets of these tapes prepared, and by next weekend, I want them *all* in the hands of people like you. Once this happens...

The Cat Will Be Out Of The Bag!

There's *no* law against *owning* these tapes... *or* selling them. The only way anyone can stop this deal is to stop *me* from getting them out. Once the tapes are in the hands of the "public" (meaning non-military people like you), the game is *over*. That's why I am selling these special packages at *less than half* what they're worth!

And you don't get the "edited" version of the tapes, either — no, what I'm sending you is the same *un*-edited version that I have in my *own* home for training. *Plus*, I'm throwing in an *extra bonus video* — this extra footage really "*pushes the line*" — it contains Russian military "dirty tricks" about fighting with improvised weapons. This made sure that SPETSNAZ soldiers were never farther away than their belt, jacket, wallet or even a simple magazine from possessing an amazing weapon that can *defeat and disarm* even a skilled attacker holding a gun or knife on them. (This is incredible information I've never seen before from all my years in this business. Even professional soldiers and cops are astounded at the Russians' ability to create weapons out of virtually nothing during a streetfight.)

Plus, you get the most wild-ass guarantee I've ever offered *anyone* at any time — you can order these tapes, watch them, train with them... for an entire *4 months*... and, if you're not satisfied, for *any* reason, just send 'em back for a complete refund of your entire "insider" price. *AND*... you get to *keep* that special Russian "*improvised weapons*" *bonus video footage*, no matter what.

What's more... I'm even paying (out of my *own* pocket) for *all* your shipping and handling costs — about *\$16 worth* of postage-plus. That means you get *the most outrageous discount price available*... without *any* risk at all... *plus* the chance to see the "unedited" insider tapes... of the *HOTTEST* fighting secrets videos now in existence!

This will cost me dearly — *no way* am I going to make up my initial expense of flying a crew into Canada to shoot these tapes... not selling this huge package of stuff at *50% off*... but it's *worth* it... because... I have dedicated my life to providing this kind of

important information to civilians.

Now... I realize all this sounds like some weird "spy" drama you'd see on television. But this *is* how the "real world" works. Most men in my position would just close up shop, and not try to ruffle anyone's feathers. I'm not like that. I love being an American, and it feels *good* to do the right thing... even if I'm taking an *enormous risk*.

You, of course, risk absolutely nothing.

But, man, are you ever going to be blown away by these tapes Vladimir made! If you value your self-defense (and the *protection* of your family and loved ones)... you have just discovered the *easiest... yet most effective* way to beat *any* attacker (of *any* size), anywhere, *anytime*... even if you are surprised, outnumbered, or *bare-handed* against a weapon!

Here's why *everyone* who's seen it is so excited about this new fighting system:

- There are *NO* moves to memorize or practice — the *entire* system works by using your *natural movements* (and just "lethalizing" them with a few "twists"). This is the *only* system I've ever seen where you look like you're having relaxed FUN kicking serious ass!
- No one has a *clue* how defend or *attack* this system — even the handful of U.S. fighting experts who have seen it *can't* find a way to beat it! There are no "stances", so you're *never* unprepared... *and cannot be taken by surprise!*
- It's so ingeniously *simple*, you can MASTER it in the *shortest time humanly possible!* (Russian spec op soldiers spent *minimum* time in training — a *fraction* of what SEALS do — and yet the Russians *quickly* attained *better* hand-to-hand fighting skills!) There is *NO* other fighting art you can learn in a shorter time *anywhere* on the planet!
- You *don't* need to be in shape, or have fast reflexes, or *any* previous training at all — in fact, being buffed-out and having athletic reactions won't help you master this any faster at all! (Vladimir loves training women, first-time fighters, and people you might be tempted to call "weak" or "small".) In fact... this style is so *fluid and natural* that it easily adapts to *your* particular strengths and...

Instantly Eliminates Your Weaknesses!

You learn it fast, it's *easy* to use, and yet even *casual* training in it will allow you to rub the noses of bigger, meaner, and more skilled black belt/streetfighting thugs into the

dirt. It's so *deceptively dangerous*, people will think you're using *magic* to knock opponents out! Sounds like a Hollywood bullshit movie, doesn't it. Well, it's not. I checked it out — by hiring two expensive "investigative reporters" to see if all this was the truth. **Here's what they found:**

First, Vladimir is the "real thing." He was a champion boxer and karate competitor in his home town of Tver (2 hours east of Moscow). When he reached the Army, his special talents as a fighter got him placed in official training with SPETSNAZ. He spent *10 years* with that elite operation, running multiple special missions... including *eleven* deep reconnaissance and POW recoveries *behind enemy lines* (this was during the brutal Afghanistan War — Russia's nightmare version of our Vietnam).

On top of seeing *more* bloody face-to-face combat than any American soldier I've met, Vladimir was so skilled at these special hand-to-hand combat arts that he trained *other* SPETSNAZ operatives, KGB hit-men, Kremlin bodyguards, elite paratroopers and Russian big-city SWAT teams.

But it's *WHAT* he taught that's so interesting. This Russian fighting system is like *NOTHING* you've ever seen or heard about before. There are very good reasons why the U.S. military spent mega-millions of dollars (and *wasted* the lives of good agents) trying to *steal* this amazing system.

First, it's just hands-down the most devastating fighting system anyone's ever seen. (This is *freely admitted* by martial art experts in every discipline.) Second, it's *simple* to master, and *not based on strength or conditioning* — the equivalent of handing you a *loaded revolver* to face an unarmed attacker:

No contest!

Third, there's the amazing "*short cut*" learning process. Russian scientists discovered long ago how to *quickly* "download" even the most vicious training *directly* into your nervous system — so it's *part of who you are*, not just something you've *memorized*. That means, in a fight, while the *other* guy is *thinking* about his next move, you've *already made yours*... and *ended* the fight. (This Russian secret of "training the nervous system directly" has *never* been fully understood by the U.S. military — in fact, Vladimir can't even explain what he does... he only has the *massive evidence of success* to show that what he does works. This *enrages* American scientists — *especially* the ones connected with the Pentagon.)

Fourth, this new system prepares you with physical, psychological and *PSYCHIC* training... stuff our boys haven't even *begun* to understand. Vladimir trained with knives held to his back, fighting live prisoners using *live ammo*, suffering mind-game torture (like being stuffed in a small sewer pipe so tight he could barely *breathe*, and *left* there for long hours)... and — coupled with the devastating

hand-to-hand skills you're also about to learn — it was this training that got these soldiers so tough, so *dangerous*, and so *skilled* that they got through bloody fights victorious and safe.

What's more... it was **GUARANTEED** these elite Russian soldiers would *never* meet a better hand-to-hand fighter...

Anywhere On The Planet!

This system evolved because of Russia's long history of warfare. *Everybody* took a shot at them over the last few thousand years... which meant Russian soldiers had to learn (fast) how to beat black belt Japanese Samurai... razor-swallowing Mongols under Attila the Hun... French savate experts... British boxers... Korean swordsmen... Turkish terrorists... German storm-troopers... and on and on. So they needed a system that would *instantly* adapt to *any* fighting style you faced... and *instantly beat* it.

Russia didn't have a "standing" army of professional soldiers until recently, either — so this fighting system also had to be *learned quickly* by farmers and factory workers... and *mastered* by them... so they could go into battle (often the *next day*) and *win* against superior numbers and better-armed *professional* warriors. What's more, once learned, this system had to be *so simple to remember*, and so *natural* (using *only* those moves you do naturally, *everyday*, to walk, wash, eat, breathe, etc.) that these "farmer-soldiers" wouldn't forget it, *even if it was 20 years until the next battle!*

The amazing thing is, my researchers discovered that *civilians* who learned (even *casually*) this system seemed to absorb *all* the attributes of the "super soldiers". Here are just a few stories we learned:

- One young Canadian who Vladimir trained for a short time is so *small*, and so "fragile" looking (5'6", 140 pounds soaking wet) you might mistake him for a *girl* from across the street. Yet... he's now **banned** from competition fighting because he *hurt* all his opponents too seriously! (Black belts don't *like* to get their noses broken by a "boy" who doesn't seem to actually *have* any fighting skills they can identify!)
- Another Canadian guy named Mike Sapiz (5'9", *maybe* 160 pounds) ran afoul of *7 beefy bouncers* in a European nightclub — the biggest one was a bodybuilder with 17 inch arms and a *serious* attitude problem... but the "fight" took about 8 seconds — Mike took the big jerk down and held him there, helpless, for the other bouncers to see, and they backed off, all their macho attitude suddenly *gone*. Mike's *life* had been threatened, and his training with Vladimir literally *forced* him to react in the most brutally effective way.
- Another Canadian (James Pomerants) was vacationing in the Caribbean, minding his own business, when the guy at the next table pulled out a **knife** and

waved it in a woman's face. No one else in the bar moved... but James *took the knife away* and "convinced" the wildman to calm down with a nerve-shattering move *no one saw*. His brief Russian System training just "leapt" out of him, *automatically and savagely*.

- A 32-year-old cop arrived at a scene just like the Rodney King incident — this crack-crazed thug wasn't fazed by pepper spray or nightsticks, and was terrorizing *3 armed policemen*. He stepped in and put the mad-dog on the ground *without hesitation*... using a *simple move* he had only *recently* learned from Vladimir. (Needless to say, those other cops are now among those hounding me for these new training videos.)
- A Russian soldier (name withheld) had been parachuted *behind enemy lines* in Afghanistan, and hadn't seen food or water for days. He was *exhausted*, and struggling with a 130-pound pack of explosives — a *stiff breeze* would have taken him down. Afghani mountain warriors attacked with Khyber swords (long, curved blades as sharp as razors)... no contest. The Afghani's are feared the world over for their *viciousness* and courage and *delight in killing*... but *this* time they had picked the wrong "easy target". This soldier was trained in the Russian System, and even dead-tired, hampered by 130 pounds of metal and leather, starved and surprised... he disposed of the attacker in *seconds*.

It's amazing, too, what happens when "ordinary" people train with Vladimir. **Businessmen** suddenly find themselves *influencing* people with their confidence and intuition... smaller guys who would never otherwise consider a bodyguard job suddenly *excel* at it... and... without a word said... suddenly *no one* wants to get in your way in the street. It's like "loading up" your body and your confidence with...

Mysterious Power That Others Can Sense In You!

What Vladimir does is teach your *body* to "think"... this training goes *straight* to your nervous system, and operates *automatically* whenever you're in danger! This ain't JKD by any measure... yet what Vladimir teaches is *more* "in tune" with Bruce Lee's philosophy than *any* other art now practiced anywhere! (Stay fluid... no memorized moves... only use what *works*, regardless of tradition... *everything* Bruce Lee promised has shown up in this amazing new system.)

Here are some *details* of what you're about to learn:

- Where to find the "handles" on your opponent so you can lead him into your elbows and knees and *inflict more immediate damage* than any karate kick or ju jitsu take-down known!

- How to deliver a "punch" (without *ever* forming a classic "fist") that will do more devastation than hitting your opponent with a *hammer!* (You'll look like a blur of motion, but in reality you're only making very simple, *natural* movements — *easily learned* — which you can use *regardless* of your fitness level or body type!)
- The most *unique* knee work you've ever seen... allowing you to *dominate* attackers *without putting your drink down!* Devastating, effective... *perfect* for tight places, or when your arms have been trapped (or, as the Russians learn, *wounded!*)
- How to unleash the natural "whips" in your body to *take out* even attackers who have advanced, high-end athletic quick reactions! (They can be *twice* as fast as you and *still* not be able to defend themselves from the brain-numbing blows you deliver!)
- How to use your belly to deflect formal and street-level strikes — even if you've got a *large* gut! (You've *never* seen a fighting art that allows you to be *so out of shape, and still deadly!*)
- Special "one-strike" fight-enders especially developed by the Russians to be used when you are exhausted, drained of energy, even wounded! (You *only* want to know *this* vicious stuff for when your *life is in danger!* The games are over...)
- New target areas you *never knew existed* that will *instantly* leave your attacker numb and useless! (A simple "tap"... and he's *limp!*)
- How to multiply the power behind your blows — a simple technique that can turn a mild *slap* into the *most savage strike you've ever delivered!*
- How to use your *elbow* to take out bulky, *larger* opponents... especially street-fighting boxers! (Not like *any* karate elbow work you've ever seen!)
- How to take out multiple opponents with the Russian version of the "bitch slap" — an *unbelievably deadly strike* that "multiplies" itself... *perfect* for taking out 2 attackers at once!
- The "rotating fist" that causes extreme pain with every "touch"! (Let your opponent know right *NOW* who he's dealing with, and what he has to look forward to if he doesn't run away *immediately!*)
- How Russians have learned to "parlay" the energy of *getting hit* (in a surprise attack), so your "reply" strike *absorbs* all the power and *returns* it — just like an electric current making a loop and burning a hole in the original plug! (Pro fighters have been searching for this secret for *years!*)
- Special strikes that will let a 12-year-old kid *shred* a bodybuilder's gridiron stomach like *melted cheese!*
- An ingenious way to use your *teeth* (that could *only* come from the Russians) on hidden "pressure points" that will leave your opponent *helpless!*

- How to use special "psi" training techniques to quickly "recondition" your nervous system *so you don't feel pain during a fight!*
- How to turn the fact you're shorter, smaller, fatter or *weaker* than your opponent into an *advantage!*
- Where to look with your eyes during a confrontation — the Russians discovered it's *NOT* a direct stare that gives you an advantage... almost *all* professional fighters eventually do this intuitively, and now *you'll* have the secret!
- The incredible Russian "Trinity Shot" — a rapid-fire *explosion* of hands and feet that no one can defend against! (And yet it's *simple* to learn, completely adaptable to your body type and level of fitness!)
- How to use ingenious "test kicks" to find out *how scared* your opponent is! (He may look confident and tough, but you'll know the *truth* in seconds.)
- How to become "mugger-proof" by learning how to easily turn *unexpected attacks* (even from behind your back) into instant *wins!*
- How to knock someone *completely off balance*... by *spitting* at them! (Yes, there's a trick to it, but you only need to see it *once* to understand how to use it effectively!)
- Why the "breathing secrets" of all Oriental martial arts *don't work* in a real fight... and how to use your *natural breathing* to add *400% more power* to your every move in a dangerous situation! (This secret explains why Russian fighters *laugh* so much when they fight!)
- How to stay relaxed (literally, loose as a goose) during the most dangerous attacks... allowing any fear to simply *dissipate* into thin air! (Quickly, you'll learn how to *never* "feel" fear again!)
- How to make fancy black belt kickers look *silly* by simply "*tripping*" them up!
- How to take down a trained fighter with a *5-inch hip move* (used by elite soldiers who have been captured and *tied up!*)
- The most devastating "finishing moves" you've ever seen — easy to learn, *utterly final for ending a fight fast!*
- The famous "Tregubetz" takedown move that scares the *crap* out of ju jitsu ground fighters!
- How to open his fist and *remove* the knife as if from a child!
- The 3 "mind-game" secrets that even *tiny* Russians use to become the *best bodyguards in the world!*
- Everything the Russians know about body language during a fight — secrets that will give you a 100% advantage over *anyone* who's never been told these critical facts! (Find out who's more scared, who's more skilled, who's going down *first!*)
- Totally *unknown* (in the U.S.) knee strikes that will give you an *instant advantage* over better-skilled fighters! (*Especially* in tight places, like a crowded bar or a narrow alley

or between parked cars.)

- *Filthy Russian "dirty tricks"* that will turn cocky black belt fighters into *unconscious lumps of meat at your feet!* (You won't believe these "one-second discussion enders" until you see them for yourself!)

And lots more. In fact, I've made sure your "special" set of tapes includes a Bonus section on "Improvised Weapons"... where you'll learn: **How to make an instant set of "brass knuckles" with a magazine and four quarters!** (*Better* than a brick or baseball bat for inflicting pain and damage against multiple attackers — includes specific "best targets" map for strikes...) **How to use your wallet to take out a knife-wielding attacker!** (Perfect "dirty trick" for turning tables on a mugger)... **How to use a credit card as a knife!** (Inflict wounds as savage as an *Afghani Khyber sword!*)... **How to use your jacket to take away a knife, to strangle multiple opponents** (astonishing technique, easy to master!), **and to literally tie-up a conscious attacker** so he can't get free!... **11 ways to use your belt more effectively than a knife or bat!** (Plus, the Russian Army "official" way to use a belt to truss up an opponent so he can't move, can't get away... and will go anywhere you want him to go! Perfect info for taking care of attackers *after* you've subdued them!)... **How to make a "noose" out of almost anything... to make sure your opponent stays down after you've put him on the ground!** (Answers the question, finally, of *what to do until the cops arrive!*)

Look... I could go on for another 20 pages... but if you aren't convinced by now, *you never will be.* I wouldn't be trusting you with all this hot information if I didn't have a pretty good idea you'd be very interested. I've done all I can to bring these amazing video tapes to you. It cost a small fortune to fly a professional crew up there, do the 3-camera shoot (on top equipment), *clear Customs with unlabeled bags*, and get the

master-copies made. I've slashed the price to 50% of what everyone else will pay (plus arranged for you to get a *longer* guarantee than anyone gets), thrown in every "goodie" available... *and I have your special set of tapes and manual right here in my office.*

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Here's what you need to do now: Call my office at **1-800-899-8153** (Dept. RC-37) and tell whoever answers you're giving "clearance" for us to ship the special set of "**Unedited Russian System**" videos we've put aside for you. The price is \$99 (that's half of what everyone expected to have to pay)... but, if you call right away (within 11 days), I'll even pay for your shipping and handling — *another \$16 savings.* (And you'll *still* get *rush delivery.*)

Nevertheless, you get the **SAME** "unedited" version I have *myself* to train with at home. Later, when we go to the "general" public, we'll have to sanitize the tapes quite a bit. (The camera crew and the sound guys all insisted on *this* version for themselves, too... the **FIRST** time I've ever had a request like that from a crew. These guys are jaded... but Vladimir impressed them like *no one else they've ever seen!*) **PLUS**... you get the Bonus section on "**Improvised Weapons**"... (the same "insider" knowledge the SPETSNAZ "super soldiers" got) -- and you can **KEEP** the bonus video *no matter what you decide to do later!* (And, you have 4 months to decide! I'll *personally* make sure you get an immediate refund.)

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people waiting for your call (use the special toll-free line: **1-800-899-8153.**)

Sincerely,



Bob Pierce

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James Pomerants, 37,
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Tunnel Rats and Silent Rounds

It isn't easy to catch *SOF* asleep at the switch, but you goofed — twice, I think — in your comments on depleted uranium rounds in the May issue. Somebody didn't check the comment that "DU shot was at one time used in silenced revolver rounds ..."

Nobody ever made a silenced revolver round. A silencer checks the gas emerging from the muzzle of a piece: It won't do anything for a revolver, where the gas escaping from the joint between the barrel and cylinder makes a lot of noise. (Remember laughing at that scene in *The Guns of Navarone* when the Commando leader



screwed a silencer onto the muzzle of his .380 Webley?) I was down in the Delta, so don't know about tunnel clearing, but suspect that the DU slugs were for a reduced-charge round. That would be slow and short-range — but with a DU slug instead of lead, who'd care? And although it certainly wouldn't be silent, it would have less of a concussion effect than a standard cartridge.

Oh yes ... and weren't the "tunnel rats" our guys? Short, wiry people who could fit in a tunnel designed for Viet Cong?

Dick Eney
Via e-mail

I wish you had strolled into the office with this letter, so I could have suckered you into a bet on who buys lunch. First, the DU used in the silenced revolver rounds was as we stated, shot, not a slug. Second, it was a silenced revolver round,

*not a round for a silenced revolver — the round itself was silent. The gas was contained in an accordion-folded mylar bag that followed the shot out the barrel like a plastic hernia, and had to be pulled free to fire the next round. The bag took up space in the cartridge case, leaving less room for the projectile which would carry energy to the target: The solution was a much denser, therefore dimensionally smaller projectile — e.g. DU shot. The revolver, a modified S&W, was written about in the '70s. Other silenced rounds of captive-piston type are patented here, and produced in the former USSR, and have been covered in *SOF* (see, missing an issue could have cost you lunch).*

Regarding silenced revolvers per se, there have been many. The best is Knight's Armament modified Ruger, cover story for September 1992. Using in combination a synthetic sealing piston following the projectile, and O-rings, the Knight's delivers

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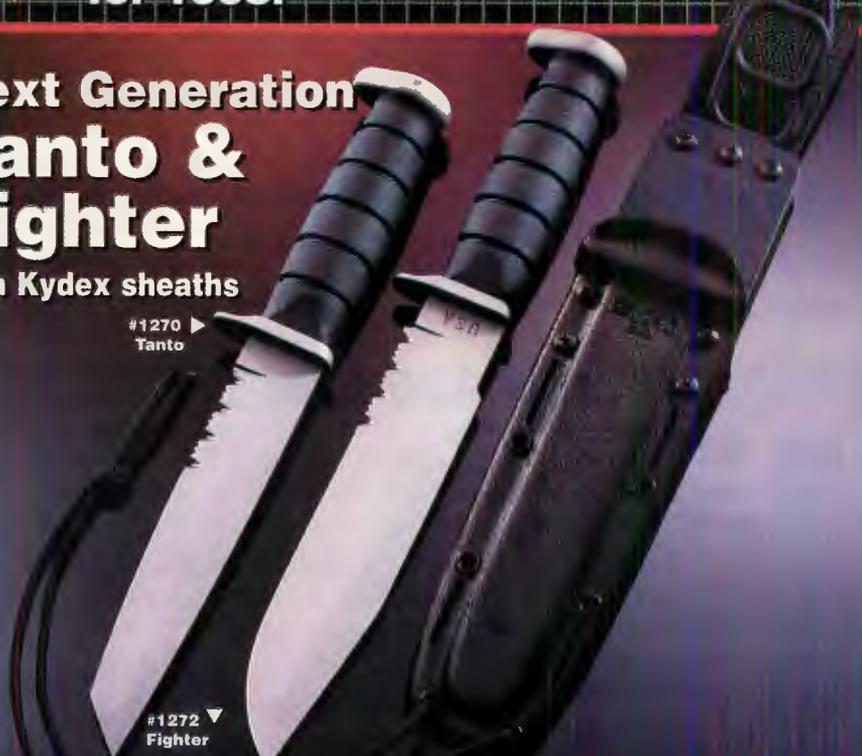
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ed it on the 'net contacted us to tell us it had been told to him by a friend. Now we know whose funny story it is.



Japan's Atom Bomb

I would like to shed some light on Japan's A-Bomb project. In the interview, General Tibbets refers to an atomic reactor in North Korea. In fact, it was a cyclotron! Located just north of Pyongyang, it was part of a complex which included a uranium-processing factory using ore from Manchuria. The complex was designed by Hideki Yukawa who discovered the Meson in 1938 (he got his Nobel Prize in Physics after the war!). Yakawa worked for Yoshio Nishina, who was one of the world's foremost nuclear physicists. Nishina got authorization to work on Japan's A-Bomb from Tojo in early 1944.

Unfortunately for Nishina, his complex in North Korea was overrun by Marshal Kirill Meretshov's Soviet 1st Far Eastern Front represented by a special spetsnaz detachment which took over the complex. All workers at the site were transported lock, stock and barrel to Siberia where the equipment and people helped produce the first Soviet Atomic Bomb.

As for Japan's plan to use the bomb, dropping it on a U.S. Navy fleet was discussed in some detail before the end of the war.

Many Regards,
Robert A. Clark, Military Historian
Kirkland, Washington

Meals, Ready To Embargo?

I have enjoyed your mag for a very long time. I'm an X-Navy vet. I love my country but I fear my government. My question is: why has our government stopped all future sales of MEALS READY TO EAT to the private sector? Are they afraid of us? So, in closing all I can say about the future is, I hope the military sides with the people and not the government. Thank you for your time.

Dayne A Irwin
via e-mail

If DoD is no longer surplussing MREs, I'd guess it's from fear of somebody getting a bad batch (they did not routinely sell fresh MREs), then suing the government for being poisoned. It may also be a humane gesture, but I doubt that. At any rate, brand-new MREs are available to the public from the same people who make them on government contract, so it's not a plot to keep people from laying by a store of food for uncertain times. For my money, though, regular "survival" food such as from NitroPack tastes better and lasts longer — and is a better buy for the money. Bon appétit. ☒

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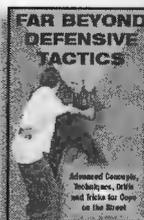
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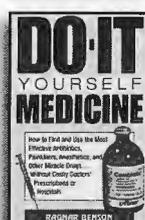
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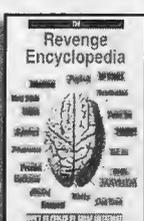
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SLICK-WILLIE-WATCH

Clinton: "No Mo' Micro Soft"

Clinton gets up, so to speak, no matter what scandals knock him down. Lesser-man Bill Gates needed advice. He begged Clinton to do something about Janet Reno and others at the Justice Department who keep him down.

"The problem, Mr. President, is no matter what I do people think I'm Microsoft," Gates said.

"Try this!" Clinton replied, handing Gates some Viagra.

He's A Girl!

Feminists love Clinton for his socialist agenda, not his concern for women. This fact is well-established in the wake of Lewinsky, Jones, Willey, etc., etc.

Clinton, in fact, may be the most sexist president in American history. As commander-in-chief, he should know something about American war heroes.

As sexist-in-charge, however, it's no wonder he thought the legendary "Candy Bomber" was a girl.

Clinton recently introduced Gail Halvorsen, the famous "Rosinenbomber," during a ceremony in Berlin marking the allied airlift's 50th anniversary. Halvorsen became famous for dropping tiny parachutes of candy to Berlin's children.

Halvorsen made three candy runs over Berlin before he was caught by his commanding officer.

"Basically, my boss's boss thought it was a good idea, so we were allowed to continue the candy drops," Halvorsen told reporters recently.

Halvorsen eventually dropped about 23 tons of candy to children living behind barbed wire fences, becoming an American icon of wartime compassion.

"She is here with us today," Clinton said at the ceremony. "I'd like her to stand."

On that cue Mr. Halvorsen, a 77-year-old grandfather from Utah, stood to thundering applause. Clinton turned red.

The same women who won't let go of "potatoe" should be seriously put off by Clinton's blunder. It's more than a spelling mistake. It reflects a negative stereotype by the head of all the American military. His thinking: Boy pilots drop bombs, girl pilots drop candy.

How can women compete in the hostile environment promoted by such thinking? Someone call NOW, stat.

Clinton's A Boar

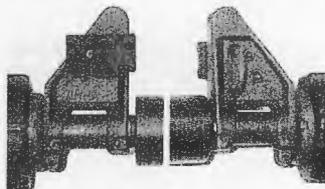
Now that the Clinton Administration is highlighting the lingering problem of racism in America, there's no better time to destroy "gun control" by exposing its racist roots, says Aaron Zelman, Executive Director of Jews for Preservation of Firearms Ownership (JPFO).

"The people who most owe an apology to Black Americans are the 'gun control' advocates," Zelman writes.

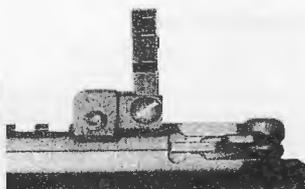
In a new book titled *Gun Control Is Racist*, JPFO boldly exposes how the black slavery culture created American "gun control."

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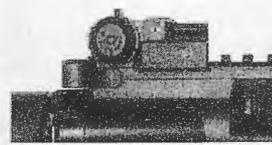
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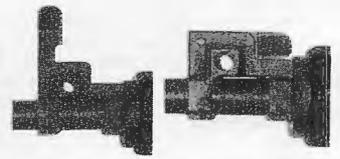
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The book argues gun-control laws arose for one purpose in America: to keep Black people defenseless, so they could be enslaved and oppressed.

"If a gun prohibitionist refuses to address the issue, then you can 'tar and feather' him or her in newspapers, magazines, talk shows, flyers, town meetings, and the Internet," Zelman writes of his book. "You have the truth — you have the sledgehammer — have the courage to use it now."

"For years the gun prohibitionists ridiculed us peaceful, non-violent gun owners. Remember? They called us racists, cultists, Neanderthals, macho wannabes, stupid hicks, extremists, gun nuts, fascists, etc. They smeared us just to discredit our views and disarm us. But the opposite is true — yesterday's draft-dodgers, college protesters and hippies have become today's racist pigs!"

And Clinton's the boar.

To neuter him, get the book. Write to JPFO at: 2874 S. Wentworth Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207; Tel.: (414) 769-0760; Fax: (414) 483-8435; E-mail: Against-Genocide@JPFO.org; or visit their Web site at: www.JPFO.org

Tasty Tara

When Clinton arrived at Birmingham, England, for the annual Group of Eight economic summit, he didn't leave behind the sex scandals we're told are of interest only to under-sexed, prudish, unsophisticated, ignorant Americans.

Only in America, Clinton allies have assured us, does anyone care about the president's sex life.

But in England, Clinton was barraged by bad press that overshadowed any issues on the table.

One British newspaper cartoon featured a young woman in a miniskirt heading out to a party. Her father stopped her and said, "You're not leaving this house, young lady, as long as that Bill Clinton is in town."

Another cartoon purports to show a diagram of the president's



floor at the Swallow Hotel, where he stayed during the three-day summit. It showed rooms assigned to "First Lady," "Second Lady," "Third Lady," etc. Simon Jenkins of the *Times* of London called the president "a serial lecher."

"The world now thinks of Bill Clinton," wrote Andrew Marr of London's *Independent*, "as a serious sexual incontinent, a big man of uncontrolled urges who paws and unzips and says 'C'mon, darling' whenever he can."

Birmingham selected eight citizens to serve as official greeters for the eight summit leaders at a reception Friday evening.

Ironically, one of them was a Birmingham college student named Tara O'Connor — otherwise known as "Tasty Tara" in her part-time job as a topless model.

When O'Connor's status as a greeter was confirmed, most newspapers responded along the lines of a comment in London's *Guardian*: "Well, it should make Bill Clinton feel welcome." ❧

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Had this heist been contrived by Hollywood, it would be dismissed as ludicrously improbable. But there are times when the real world can leave Hollywood in the dust. Not least when the Liberation Tigers of *Tamil Eelam* (LTTE) — arguably the world's most sophisticated and dangerous guerrillas — are involved.

Unanswered questions still surround the Tigers' latest coup — questions several red-faced governments wish to leave unanswered — but the essentials are embarrassingly clear: On 23 May 1997, the freighter *Stillus Limassul* slipped out of the Mozambican port of Beira, laden with 32,400 81mm mortar bombs. Filling 12 containers, the ammo had been produced by the government-owned, Chinese-built Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI), and shipped by train to Mozambique's port of Beira. From there it was bound for Colombo, Sri Lanka. It was to feed the hungry mortar tubes of a two-division government task force fighting its way north up Highway A9, to open up a Main Route of Supply (MRS) for government forces on the Jaffna Peninsula.

A LTTE-controlled mini-state, the peninsula had been recaptured by the government after bitter fighting in late 1995, but it remains cut off by Tiger-held territory to the south. All resupply is thus conducted by an immensely expensive air and sea-bridge.

The \$3-million ammunition deal had been put together in February 1997, between ZDI's Colonel Tshinga Dube and officials of the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry. Also involved in the production of the ammunition was an Israeli company to which ZDI had sub-contracted components and fuses. What is not clear is who was responsible for chartering the *Stillus Limassul* to carry the ammunition across the Indian Ocean. But probability points to ZDI and Col. Dube ... who may now be looking for a new job, because the *Stillus Limassul* never reached the port of Colombo.

It left the island of Madagascar on 2 July — and then simply disappeared. First indication something was very wrong came in a 14 July fax message from the Tigers, claiming that "We the Tamil Tigers inform you by the present that on 11 July 1997 we have hijacked a vessel carrying arms sailing under the Liberian flag." But significantly, the fax was sent not to the Sri Lankan government but to the U.S. embassy in Colombo. It concluded, "We make known and warn that we will take action against all persons participating in the supply of military equipment used against the legitimate rights of the Tamil people and we will severely punish those concerned."

The embassy contacted the Ministry of Defence, which confirmed there had been a large mortar ammunition deal with ZDI. Only then did the truth begin to sink in. The *Stillus Limassul* was not in Lloyds' international shipping registry, leading to the suspicion, later proved, that the vessel actually belonged to the Tigers' shadowy civil mar-



Ship of

by Mike Winchester

itime arm. *Astonishing as it may seem, the Tigers had arranged for one of their own vessels to deliver the government ammunition!*

On 18 July, an alert went out to Sri Lankan naval vessels, warning them to step up patrols particularly off the island's northwestern Mullaitivu coast, a LTTE stronghold. Too late: By July, military intelligence reports confirmed the *Stillus Limassul* had already crossed the Indian Ocean and made landfall at or near the southern Thai resort island of Phuket. There the cargo had been transhipped via smaller vessels to the Mullaitivu coast. By late September, an estimated 60% of army casualties in the meat grinder battle for Highway A9 were being

inflicted by mortar fire. Between the opening of Operation "Sure Victory" in mid-May and year's end, the army lost more than 1,000 troops KIA and nearly 4,000 wounded. As we write this, the bloody battle for A9 continues.

Heavy LTTE Weapons

This stunningly audacious ammunition heist was the most daring and brilliantly successful covert op by LTTE's intelligence and procurement wing in years — but it was far from the first. Over the years, the Tigers have built up and refined a highly sophisticated global organization to sustain a 10,000-strong military force. They battle



(above) LTTE forces listen to peptalk in the calm before the storm of an attack on government troops. (right, inset) LTTE sniper lies in wait before the battle of Kilinochchi. (far right) "LTTE Special Forces on the march pause for a while" read the caption supplied with this photo — but note their spiffy demeanor. Some might suggest that rather than taking a break — in the open — they were posing for their PAO. Nonetheless, compared to other insurgents, LTTE fighters are well-equipped, well-armed and well-trained.

Fools

Tamil Tiger's Heist Of The Century

tional corporation with resources all over the world. Prabhakaran's acumen is as much that of a CEO as of a military commander."

The transnational, and often secretive presence, of LTTE and its front organizations is increasingly unsettling to governments in Asia and the West. Goaded by Colombo, countries such as Switzerland, Canada, Australia, the United States, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines have expressed concern over LTTE activities, and in some cases have moved against them. The United States finally added the Tigers to its list of international terrorist organizations, a decision LTTE said it "regretted" and is attempting to fight in U.S. courts.

LTTE International functions on three distinct levels: publicity and propaganda; fundraising; and arms procurement. Occasionally these networks may overlap, but as far as possible they are maintained as separate, self-contained operations. Propaganda and fund-raising are both vital for LTTE as a means to drum up political and financial support, among the Tamil diaspora that lives mainly in North America, Western Europe and Australia. They are run by a quasi-diplomatic, overt organization with 38 offices in different countries. Through this network, LTTE has been able to pull in an estimated U.S. \$2 million per month in donations from sympathetic Tamils.

LTTE PAO



the Colombo government for a separate Tamil state in the island's north and east.

A complex, shadowy network 15 years in the making, this organization — call it LTTE International, Inc. — reflects the sophisticated quasi-governmental structure built by the Tigers in Sri Lanka itself. Drawing on the loyalties and resources of members of a worldwide Tamil diaspora of some 500,000, the network links commercial companies and small businesses, informal banking channels, a fleet of ocean-going ships, political offices, aid and human rights organizations, arms dealers and foreign mercenaries.

Led by their 42-year old *supremo*, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tigers have become far more than a jungle army in an isolated war. As one former Tamil militant put it: "... LTTE functions like a multina-



LTTE PAO

LTTE PAO



LTTE PAO

LTTE PAO



LTTE PAO

(top, left and right) LTTE fighters inspect BMP-1 captured from government forces near Puliyanakulam. Included in arms and ammo captured by LTTE from the government at Karapukuthi were these mortars. In what will become a classic insurgents' coup, LTTE also usurped an entire shipload of mortar ammo — and mortars now account for a large portion of government casualties. (above) Although, as any insurgents, LTTE will accept any eclectic mix of weapons, they are most often seen as former ComBloc pieces as this PKM, at Puliyanakulam.

(above, left and right) Che observed that insurgents travel on their stomachs. More recent insurgencies travel on their funding, which, in turn, comes from expats and sympathizers kept involved by a well-oiled propaganda machine. In these shots, kindly supplied to SOF by LTTE, their video teams or photographers appeared in many of their own photos. Here LTTE fighters and cameraman inspect knocked-out government armor.

By contrast, the Tigers' arms-procurement wing has always been shrouded in secrecy. No less global in its reach than the propaganda wing, it has been painstakingly built up since the Tigers first went to war in 1983 and has a war chest of tens of millions of dollars. At its foundation is Velvettiturai, a sun-bleached fishing port on the north coast of the Jaffna peninsula, colloquially known as VVT. Birthplace of Prabhakaran, it has long been hub of LTTE's Asia-wide commercial, maritime and smuggling contacts. For centuries the traders of VVT, from a distinct Tamil sailing caste, criss-crossed the Bay of Bengal, as far as the South China

Sea and Java. After independence from the Britain in 1948, some became smugglers, ferrying contraband across the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. "Even before the days of armed struggle, VVT had a problem with the army, the police and the state," one Tamil militant-turned-politician, explained. "There was an antagonism, an attitude of resistance that was inbred in anyone who grew up there."

In the early years of the Tamil militancy, VVT provided LTTE and its forerunner, the Tamil New Tigers, with both leaders and

a strong logistical edge over other militants. Even before the bloody anti-Tamil riots, in July 1983, that pushed the island into open insurgency, LTTE had strong links in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Between 1983 and 1987 these expanded dramatically as India provided semi-covert sanctuary, training and weapons for a clutch of Sri Lankan militant factions, from which LTTE would finally emerge supreme.

Seeds Of Insurrection

But Prabhakaran remained suspicious of Indian motives and the extent of New Delhi's commitment to his own vision of an inde-



Although they have procured main battle tanks and other track-layers from the former Warsaw Pact nations, the Sri Lankan government finds wheeled AFVs well-suited for counterinsurgency

ops. Current issue includes (left to right) British-made Ferret scout car, South African-made Buffel (buffalo) and Brit Alvis Saladin mounting 76mm gun. Photos: Dr. Tom Marks

pendent Eelam. Never a favorite of India's external intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Prabhakaran began to develop his own contacts with local politicians and businessmen. This led to the establishment of the first independent arms-manufacturing plants both in Tamil Nadu and on the Jaffna Peninsula.

Prabhakaran also looked abroad for equipment, turning first to VVT commercial contacts in Singapore to buy radios. "He thought like any good VVT capitalist," recalled one militant. "He registered a company in Singapore, invested in Malaysia, started a shipping company in Cyprus, played the share-market in London."

The Tigers' quiet leap onto the global stage was largely the work of one man — Kumaran Padmanathan, today an inconspicuous 42-year-old who carries several passports, changes names frequently and has access to bank accounts on every continent. Using the alias "T.S. Kumaran," but generally known to associates and several concerned intelligence services simply as "KP," Padmanathan serves today as LTTE's chief procurement officer. At the head of a transnational team, he works in a high-pressure job that demands the skills of a businessman, banker, smuggler and intelligence officer.

A Jaffna Tamil like Prabhakaran, KP began his covert career by establishing a department specializing in document forgery, and expanding the international network. In 1984 he orchestrated one of LTTE's early weapons purchases, with an Australian arms dealer who was to remain a trusted business partner. Early shipments were run to India and from there in speed boats across the Palk Straits to Jaffna or the northeast coast.

Between 1985 and 1986, LTTE stopped hiring vessels and with the help of a Bombay shipping magnate began to buy its own ocean-going fleet, which today numbers some 10 freighters. They are under Panamanian, Honduran or Liberian flags, often manned by VVT Tamils and owned by various front companies. "Ninety percent of the time they were transporting legitimate commercial goods: timber, paddy or fertilizer," says one analyst. "The ships are just one of LTTE's commercial ventures."

Insurgent Infrastructure On A Global Scale

Singapore, conveniently situated on key shipping lanes with a developed banking infrastructure, was, and remains, a vital component in the Tigers' weapons-purchasing network. The Burmese capital of Rangoon, where Prabhakaran's father had owned property, was an early port of call for LTTE freighters. Parallel with the ships came Tiger trading companies established by Padmanathan and associates in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Rangoon, Dhaka, Chittagong and elsewhere. In the mid-'80s with Indian assistance still flowing, the network developed slowly but in the late-'80s, events accelerated exponentially.

That change was triggered by permuta-

Of What Stripe, These Tigers?

Ever since Sri Lanka gained its independence after World War II, American interest has remained consistent. It is a strategically placed piece of real estate that is both a democracy and a market economy; it is favorably disposed towards us and has established itself as a voice of reason and moderation in international circles.

Sri Lanka has made some serious errors over the years in dealing with its Tamil minority, yet fledgling democracies earn a certain right to be stupid. Colombo has attempted, in its own shortsighted bumbling way, to correct its errors. But if early-on it had taken some of the steps lately adopted or discussed, there never would have been the tragic conflict we now see.

Still, that's water under the bridge. The opponents, the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), routinely engage in behavior worse than anything the government can even conceive of doing.

The bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lankan Buddhism's holiest shrine, in January, illustrates the LTTE mind set. There was no intent except to incite communal violence. LTTE desires to do this to relieve the pressure they are under in the Wannu (essentially, the southern portion of the Northern Province), where they have been cornered by massive government conventional operations.

LTTE is in serious shape, when all's said and done, because the insurgents can't win a slugging contest against the nation-state of Sri Lanka. It's Westmoreland's dream come true: The insurgents will run out of bodies before the government will.

Still, Colombo can only pursue this strategy as long as its finances hold. Central Bank figures report a debt/service ratio of over 40%, if interest and amortization of loans are lumped together. More dramatically for the man on the street, this has meant a rupee which has gone from approximately 25 to the U.S. dollar a decade ago to its present approximate of 62 per dollar. That's serious slippage.

The ultimate cause is the heavy borrowing to finance the war. The only bright side to this picture is that government statistics demonstrate that most of the borrowing (about 85%) has been internal (thus the debasement of the currency — but hence not a mountain of external debt needing to be paid with the declining Sri Lankan currency).

Traditionally, the United States has maintained a hands-off policy towards the struggle. Beginning in summer 1994, however, American SpecOps units began to work with counterparts in Sri Lanka as part of the normal American training cycle. They did this as part of the policy of "cooperative engagement" whereby Washington assists friendly nations to develop capabilities (and to get things done).

Presently, U.S. personnel go in and out of Sri Lanka regularly, not only on training missions but also for quick in-and-out operational fixes. For instance, when the insurgents began to use the SA-7, several U.S. Air Force personnel were sent to brief on countermeasures. (Subsequently, Israel apparently sold "black box" packages of countermeasures. Israel had become involved early on in the conflict, which "began" for real in July 1983 with the nationwide riots. The Sri Lankan government invited the Israelis in because of their vaunted counterterrorist expertise — unfortunately, although the government called it such, the war wasn't against terrorists but against insurgents — thus, Israeli assistance, beyond technical matters, was of limited value).

The special-operations personnel who visit have represented virtually all services. A U.S. Special Forces team was present in Sri Lanka in October 1997 when the LTTE again bombed the port area of Colombo (the downtown of the downtown, if you will). The hotel where SF personnel normally stay was among the buildings hit, though this apparently was happenstance.

Most SF personnel were not present, being at work in the east. Four were present, however, and played an important role in treating casualties (all have been recommended for the Soldiers Medal, given for saving lives at risk to oneself).

The special-operations posture, it should be highlighted, is normal, as special-operations personnel are active in more than a hundred countries worldwide. Their missions, though not generally classified, are nonetheless not publicized due to concern for the safety of U.S. personnel. In Sri Lanka, instruction had run the gamut from NCO courses to long-range patrolling to intelligence-preparation-of-the-battlefield. It has not included an operational component.

The war itself has reached the inevitable state of stalemate. LTTE insurgents have lost both the strategic and operational initiative: They can respond only tactically. (Which means the government holds the cards, but the guerrillas can still inflict significant casualties and remain a nasty threat.) The continued split within the Sri Lankan political players prevents a non-military solution from being implemented.

The present SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) government sees devolution of some sort as necessary to defuse separatism. The opposition UNP (United National Party), which was in power for the entire war until losing the election of August 1994 — and previously backed devolution — has lately opposed this. Neither party can really move for fear the

Continued on page 73

tions in Indian policy towards Sri Lanka. While eager for a federalist solution to the conflict, New Delhi had no desire to see an independent Tamil state on the island, which would have a dangerous spillover onto India's Tamil Nadu state politics. Thus, in July 1987, an Indo-Sri Lankan accord was signed and an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) arrived in northern Sri Lanka. By October it was bogged down in a war with LTTE that was to last until their humiliating withdrawal in early 1990. Within months of the IPKF departure, an Indian-backed proxy force, the Tamil National Army, collapsed in the face of Tiger attacks. Prabhakaran's domination over the Tamil movement was complete.

The LTTE-IPKF war left a deep scar not only on the institutional psyche of the proud Indian Army but also of the intelligence service, RAW. For RAW had run the covert training program for the Tamil militants, and made the fatal error of believing it could control LTTE. And there were practical reasons for RAW's antagonism: Despite the war in Sri Lanka, LTTE still ran an extensive network of businesses in Tamil Nadu, aided by then state chief-minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi (subsequently sacked by the central government in 1991). In 1990, moreover, the Tigers opened links with two Indian insurgent forces, one in Assam, in the northeast, the other in southern Andhra Pradesh.

But ties to Indian rebels paled beside the gravity of what many argue was Prabhakaran's greatest politician blunder: On 21 May 1991, Dhanu, an LTTE human bomb, destroyed herself and Rajiv Gandhi, scion of India's foremost political dynasty. Apparently angered over Gandhi's role in IPKF's intervention, and fear that he might return to power in Delhi, the assassination propelled Tiger terrorism onto international radar and finally hardened the resolve of India's security and intel establishment against the machine it had done so much to create.

This was a sea-change. Prior to 1991, LTTE's activities were of only passing interest in Asia or the West. That indifference was reinforced by the appalling human-rights record of Sri Lanka's ethnic Sinhalese military and a Western perception of the Tigers as underdogs. But Gandhi's murder resulted in a sweeping crackdown on LTTE networks in Tamil Nadu, pushing the Tigers into an unwanted covert war with RAW. India's official line has always been non-interference in Sri Lankan affairs, but RAW's covert agenda was to monitor and thwart the Tigers at every turn. RAW even considered a surgical special-forces raid into the Mullaitivu jungles to take Prabhakaran in his lair. The high-risk plan was, probably fortunately for the reputation of India's Para Commandos, vetoed at an early stage.

My Enemy's Enemy Is My Friend

By the early '90s, Padmanathan had substantially diversified LTTE's arms network.

Sources that in the early days relied on West Asian and European dealers, with end user certificates often obtained through pliable Nigerian officials, extended their reach to cover Southeast Asia and Pakistan's booming arms bazaar. LTTE operatives apparently had no problem operating in Pakistan. To the extent that Islamabad's security services were aware of their presence, any enemy of India was a friend of Pakistan.

KP, himself, was spending a lot of time in Bangkok where a large South Asian community and easy-going Thai ways made for an ideal operating environment. An important LTTE cell was established on the Andaman Sea coast in the Thai town of Trang before it was moved north to a front company in Phuket. Global arms deals were put together in Hong Kong, while Singapore became the favored market for the purchase of dual-use items such as computers, electronics, outboard motors and diving gear.

But it was in Burma (now Myanmar) where the Tigers found their coziest home-away-from-home. LTTE vessels are believed to have begun shipping timber from Burma to Thailand in the late 1980s,

which soon brought them into contact with the Burmese military. These contacts resulted in an LTTE base at Twantay, in the Irrawady Delta south of Rangoon. The base is believed to have consisted of a communications and transshipment facility, which operated until 1995 when a European intelligence service blew the whistle.

Twantay was not the only door to close after the Tigers had departed. For months, LTTE made use of an island in the Andaman Sea to train their Sea Tiger naval wing. According to intelligence sources, Norwegian mercenaries assisted in training Tiger frogmen in UDT techniques. The trainees returned to Sri Lanka as cadre and their skills were recently displayed in the sinking of a string of Sri Lankan naval vessels.

Gaining an effective anti-aircraft capability — specifically man-portable SAMs — has long been a critical LTTE objective. Tiger guerrillas were trained in SAM use by covert RAW instructors in 1985 — but RAW had been careful never to give them missiles. Initial efforts to acquire Stingers from the Afghan war theater proved abortive and it was not until 1994 that KP

LTTE PAO

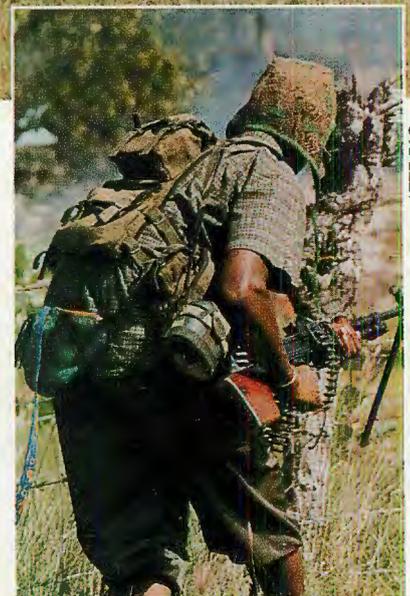


LTTE fighter (inset) advances on government position in the battle for Jeyasikuro, as front line burns. (below) LTTE fighter armed with Chinese Type 56 Chinese AK checks fallen comrade.

LTTE PAO



LTTE PAO



was able to acquire Soviet-made SAM-7s. Not surprisingly, war-ravaged Cambodia, where both government and insurgent forces were ready to sell weapons, was the source. Sold by corrupt Phnom Penh generals, the missiles went across the Thai border in late 1994 and reached the coast of Sri Lanka during a brief 1994-1995 ceasefire. On 28 and 29 April 1995, days after the Tigers returned to war, SA-7s were used to down two aging Avro transports. On 10 November 1997, the air force lost its first attack chopper to a missile when an Mi-24 Hind was downed while flying escort to two Mi-8 Hip transports. That attack raised fears the Tigers had finally acquired Stingers.

Explosives for local munitions production have also headed KP's wish list. In the early days, these had been shipped across the straits from India. But even before the anti-LTTE crackdown in Tamil Nadu, demand for more sophisticated materiel was pushing the Tigers further afield. The largest single consignment came even as LTTE was talking peace with the government in mid-1994. It came from another increasingly favored Tiger supply source — Eastern Europe.



One government advantage: choppers. Bell 212 remains the workhorse of the military, though Mi-17 has begun to appear in increasing numbers. (inset) Doorgunner on ops in the north seeks target for his MAG-58.

Sophisticated Networking

In August that year, an LTTE vessel, later identified as *M.V. Swanee*, left the Ukrainian Black Sea port of Nikolayev. It carried 50 tons of TNT and 10 tons of RDX from the Ribizone Chemicals plant. The consignment had been arranged by a Dhaka front company, Carlton Trading, and the paperwork was up to KP's usual high standard: An end-user certificated purportedly signed by Bangladesh's Secretary for Defense identified the Bangladeshi military as the approved recipient.

The *Swanee* arrived off the northeastern coast of Sri Lanka in September, having called at Twantay en route. By then the ship had a different name. Protected by Sea Tiger speed boats, its deadly cargo was off-loaded and transferred to several jungle bases. Some of the Ukrainian RDX was put to horrific use on 31 January 1996 when a Tiger



One man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist: In February 1966, LTTE killed 75 people and injured 1,400 with a bomb at the Central Bank in Colombo. Such atrocities began with the May 1991 bomb assassination of Indian politician Rajiv Gandhi (foreground), and have cost LTTE what little international support they might have had as an underdog.

truck-bomb exploded outside Colombo's Central Bank, killing 91 and injuring more than 1,400 — one of the most devastating terror attacks in history. Last year Tiger bombers were back in Colombo again with another deadly truck bomb outside the new World Trade Center. According to sources close to the Tigers, the target may have been a U.S. Special Forces team staying at the nearby Galadari Hotel, on a mission to train Sri Lankan SF units.

But the Tigers haven't had it all their own way. Improved intel work and increased Indian and Sri Lankan naval patrols have complicated KP's work and cost LTTE several vessels. One was the *M.V. Yahata*, which left

Phuket, Thailand, in January 1993. By then, the Thai port and nearby waters were focus of growing Indian interest: One submarine, understood to have been Indian, was sighted from the air in shallow water near the harbor, apparently spying on shipping activity.

Aboard the *Yahata* along with a shipment of arms and explosives was Krishnakumar Sathasivam. Better known as "Kittu," he was the former LTTE Jaffna commander and a close Prabhakaran associate. In the Bay of Bengal, the *M.V. Yahata* became *M.V. Ahat* by the simple expedient of painting over the first and last letters in the ship's name. But on 13 January, the vessel was intercepted by the Indian Navy and at a point in Indian waters southeast of Madras the final act was played out in typical Tiger style: Kittu and other fighters on board permitted the crew to swim to safety and then



detonated the explosives and went down with the ship.

Busted

A bigger maritime disaster occurred in 1996, when a shipment of ammunition and explosives probably purchased on the Cambodian market (where the Tigers are still active) and worth several million dollars left the port of Phuket in early February aboard the freighter *Comex-Joux 3*. In line with Tiger SOP, the ship's name was changed at sea to *Horizon*. But the game had already been blown by snitches in Thailand: On its voyage across the Bay of Bengal the vessel was tracked by the Indian Navy and spy planes of India's Aviation Research Center, a RAW sister organization. It was intercepted off the east coast of Sri Lanka and, on 14 February, as the Indians stood guard, Sri Lankan Puccara attack fighters and patrol boats moved in for the kill.

After heavy fighting in late '95, when the Sri Lankan army wrested the Tigers' mini-state on the Jaffna Peninsula back from the guerrillas, the loss of the *Comex Joux 3* and its cargo came at a bad time. By July, Sri Lanka army chief Lieutenant General Rohan Daluwatte was claiming the Tigers were a spent force, incapable of much more than small-scale guerrilla attacks. He could hardly have been more wrong.

On the night of 18 July, waves of LTTE fighters swept out of the jungles to assault an isolated government brigade HQ at Mullaitivu. The attack marked the costliest debacle suffered by the Sri Lankan army in 13 years of war: In two days of fighting the Mullaitivu garrison of more than 1,200 men was wiped out almost to a man. Heliborne relief forces were also badly

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Former U.S. Navy SEALs and GSGI instructors, (left) recently retired Command Master Chief Dennis Chalker and (right) Harry Humphries, head of GSGI, demonstrate the use of the Alternative Force Block.

Revolvers have been used to wham people and inanimate objects for a long time. Cowboys used the butts of their Colt Single Action Army Revolvers to hammer nails and other objects (with no regard for future collectors). "Pistol whipping" (also known to lawmen of Wyatt Earp's era as "buffaloeing") was just that, usually with the barrel (another reason, I presume, that the 7 1/2-inch barreled Colt was so popular). Police commonly interrogated suspects with their Smith & Wesson Model 10 revolvers, until that, unfortunately, became politically incorrect.

With the advent, and then eventual dominance, of the semiautomatic pistol, all of the above changed. Hammer a nail with the butt of a semiauto pistol and you will surely destroy its sheet-metal magazine. If you come into contact distance with an opponent and try to use your M1911, SIG P226 or whatever to whack him on the head or slam him in the chest, he will more than likely push the front of your pistol's slide rearward, which will take it out of battery and completely deactivate the weapon.

The Alternative Force Block (AFB), developed by former U.S. Navy SEAL, Chris Caracci (a member of the U.S. Navy's first Anti-terrorist Team under the command of Richard Marcinko), with considerable input from, and manufactured by DVC Armaments, a subsidiary of G.G.&G. (3602 East 42nd Stravenue, Tucson, AZ 85713; phone: 520-748-7167; fax: 520-748-7583;

The Gun Club

Hand-to-Hand With a Handgun

by Peter G. Kokalis
Photos by Chris Mayer

website: <http://www.gggaz.com>), was designed to prevent your opponent from driving the slide of your pistol rearward and also to provide an alternative to deadly force in Close Quarters Battle (CQB) environments without relinquishing the potential for lethality. However, for anyone contemplating the installation of an Alternative Force Block, it must be emphasized that the safe deployment of this device is contingent upon the operator's ability to overcome the problem of "sympathetic reaction." This requires programming through intensive

training by instructors qualified to do so. A better short-term option, in my opinion, is an extension of Jeff Cooper's famous Rule 3: "Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to fire." Remember, however, that while only 300 to 400 repetitions are required for short-term memory, permanent programming usually requires a minimum of 3,000 repetitions. Furthermore, to erase and then replace bad habits may require more than 10,000 repetitions.

We chose to install an Alternative Force Block for test and evaluation on one of my favorite pistols, the Kimber Custom Classic .45 ACP. Consisting of two principal components manufactured from 4140 steel, the reinforced front shield is checkered with a sharp 15-teeth-per-inch pattern. Resting directly in front of the barrel, bushing and slide, and with a .60-caliber hole in front of the bore itself, this piece both prevents the slide from being pushed out of battery and provides the operator with a considerable amount of non-lethal impact force to apply if needed. This front shield is attached to a retaining plate, which is mounted to the front, underside of the frame with three allen-head screws. The front shield is secured to the retaining plate by three TORX T10 pan-head screws. A TORX T10 screwdriver is supplied, as the front shield must be removed for disassembly of the pistol. The retaining plate stays in place at all times. The Alternative Force Block adds 3.5 ounces

Bruce Nelson's Combat Leather Reborn

He was the very best at what he did and he left us far too soon. During the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, Bruce Nelson remained a shadowy underground figure among professional gunslingers. Eagerly sought after by professionals, Nelson's holsters were, to most, an unobtainable legend. His career in law enforcement left little time for making holsters. However, in the mid-1980s, Bruce hung up his duty belt in order to devote full energy to hand-crafting combat leather in his Tucson, Ariz., workshop.

Nelson's designs were based upon his many years in law enforcement and competitive practical shooting. He served at every level from uniformed patrol officer to detective and undercover agent. He spent a number of years in narcotics investigations with the California Department of Justice's Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement. Much of his law-enforcement career centered around firearms training for special agents in his department and for police departments throughout California. Bruce was one of IPSC's founding members in 1976. He was also a participant in the famous Bear Valley Gunslinger matches conducted by Jeff Cooper, which served as a research laboratory to develop Cooper's widely copied techniques. When Cooper opened his American Pistol Institute facility in 1976, Nelson was his first staff instructor. Tragically and unexpectedly, Bruce passed away several years ago at the very pinnacle of his career as a custom-holster maker.

Bruce believed that a well-designed combat holster must place your handgun at the ready position at all times without restricting your normal daily activities. When worn by plainclothes personnel, it must also maximize whatever concealment potential the pistol possesses. A proper rig must also permit a full and final firing grip upon initial contact with the weapon. Weapon-retention qualities were equally important to Bruce, and most often addressed by others through means of retaining devices such as dot snaps or Velcro-type fasteners. Except where required to enhance safety (ankle or shoulder holsters), Bruce believed they should be avoided since they impede the draw and usually interfere with the proper firing grip. Holsters should be

hand-fitted to the pistol they are intended to carry and, at first, must fit like a new pair of shoes or their retention abilities will fade in a short time. Nelson combined these concepts with his years of street-wise experience to create some pretty slick leather.

I have specimens, and, in some instances more than a few, of every holster, pouch and sling in Bruce's catalog and a number of

one-of-a-kind pieces that Bruce made for my articles in *Soldier Of Fortune*. Sad to say, I use only a *very* few, as Bruce's custom leather has become far too valuable to wear. All of this is about to change. With the blessings of Sandy Froman, Bruce's widow and a member of the NRA Board of Directors, Matt Stoner, a member of a law-enforcement agency in southern Arizona, has recreated Bruce's most famous holster and several single-magazine pouches.

Thirty years ago most competition and combat strong-side belt holsters had a muzzle rearward rake. This fetish finally reached 45 degrees. As the angle increased, it became more difficult to bury the web of

the hand into the pistol's upper backstrap and a consistent firing grip became impossible. In 1967, Bruce designed his famous #1 Professional holster for semiauto pistols that reversed this grotesque fad. His holster was configured for a straight-drop angle and allowed the forearm/wrist to remain constant throughout the draw. A double belt loop pulled the grip area of the frame into the body and enhanced concealment. These double belt loops also permitted the #1 Professional to be attached to the belt in the cross-draw position, which I have always preferred. Matt Stoner made me his version of the #1 Professional holster for the Kimber Custom Classic .45 ACP with the Alternative Force Block attached. It looks very much like one of Bruce's holsters except that it was hand-stitched with nylon thread, while Bruce used a stitching machine which, of course, carries Stoner's logo. Made from 7- to 8-ounce Herman Oak leather, the holster costs \$75 and the single-magazine pouch is \$20 (when purchased with the holster). It is available in natural, tan, black or mahogany. Matt Stoner's holsters can be purchased directly from DVC Armaments. Matt makes single-magazine pouches for pistols, the MP5 SMG and the M16/AR-15. I'm glad to see someone pick up Bruce's torch, as I know he would be.



Matt Stoner's version of Bruce Nelson's #1 Professional holster and single-magazine pouch.

to the weight of the pistol.

Although the Kimber Custom Classic .45 ACP pistol is ready to stuff into your holster right out of the factory box, I decided to have DVC Armaments display a few

of their custom gunsmithing talents. The barrel was throated and the feed ramps polished to a mirror sheen, the likes of which I have never seen in 30 years of firing customized M1911-type pistols. They also refit



(above) The Alternative Force Block installed on Kimber Custom Classic .45 ACP pistol. (above, right) Kimber Custom Classic .45 ACP pistol with Alternative Force Block and TORX T10 screwdriver used to remove the front shield when the pistol is disassembled.



the thumb safety, which, after many thousands of rounds, was sometimes dropping the hammer. The front strap was checkered to 20 LPI and hex-head grip screws were installed for cosmetic reasons. A pair of Kim Ahrends cocobolo tactical grips were also installed.

Finally, the entire pistol was given a two-tone (NATO green and black) Teflon-S finish. After complete disassembly, all the parts are bead-blasted. Steel components are then magnesium-phosphated and,

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Bundeswehr

Battle Rifle

G36 – Truly A Soldier's Rifle

Text & Photos by Charlie Cutshaw

The Heckler & Koch (H&K) G36 has been in development for several years, but details of the rifle have been closely held until recently. We were granted unrestricted access to Heckler & Koch's new rifle and recently spent several hours evaluating it at Heckler & Koch's U.S. facility. Prior to our evaluation, however, we should define a few terms and the viewpoint from which we examined this latest addition to the Heckler & Koch product line.

The rifle is the infantryman's basic weapon. Regardless of the complexity of the battlefield and the advent of the "electronic battlefield," it is still the *grunt* who has to go forward and occupy ground. His basic tool is his rifle. This begs the question of what attributes should, therefore, charac-

terize the infantryman's basic weapon. The subject of the ideal combat rifle has been debated for as long as infantrymen have been armed with rifles, and will continue to be debated for the foreseeable future, but from the standpoint of a former infantry officer, there are, in no particular order of importance, several characteristics which are highly desirable in an infantry rifle.

First, the rifle must be reliable. If his rifle quits working in combat, the man who is using it will probably be killed. Second, the rifle should be as light as possible. The infantryman must carry most of his kit on his back and every ounce makes a difference. The rifle should not be sensitive to the type of ammunition it is fed as long as it is the correct caliber. A rifle that is unreliable for any reason degrades the rifleman's confidence. Third, related to reliability, the rifle must be robust. Robustness is the ability of the rifle to be subjected to the elements, such as dust and mud, and keep working without the operator's having to take extraordinary measures to ensure that it will function.

Fourth, the rifle must be maintainable. It should not be an onerous time-consuming chore to clean, nor should it require overly frequent cleaning. Fifth, the rifle should be suitably accurate out to its effective range. And, finally, the rifle must be simple and "user-friendly." This characteristic encompasses a host of factors, including ergonomics, accessories, disassembly /assembly, sights, and a myriad of small details that together make up a rifle. But before we evaluate the G36 in light of the aforementioned attributes, we should first explore the background of H&K's latest product.

The G36 originated in 1990 as "Project 50" for the German *Bundeswehr*, which desired a common receiver that could be used as the basis for a weapons family ranging from a 9x19mm submachine gun (SMG) to a 7.62x51mm belt-fed general-purpose machine gun (GPMG). Although options to convert the G36 to other configurations have not yet developed, the potential to do so exists. Other *Bundeswehr* requirements included light weight, affordability

(above) Heckler & Koch's evolutionary new G36, shown here with Hensoldt NSA80 night-vision scope, was first developed to meet a *Bundeswehr* requirement.

and a conventional design. An evolutionary, not revolutionary, design was the goal and in that Heckler & Koch has succeeded, while at the same time producing a rifle that makes optimal use of current technology. For a time, the G36 was designated the HK50, but that designation has now been dropped by Heckler & Koch in favor of G36, the Bundeswehr abbreviation for the official nomenclature Gewehr 36.

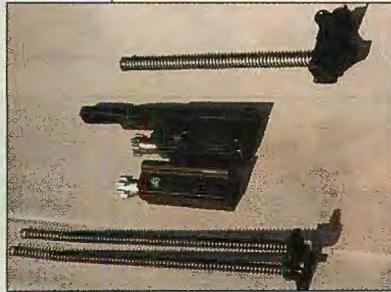
American Ancestors

Although there is no official acknowledgment by Heckler & Koch, it is clear that the G36 has roots in the ArmaLite AR-18. The AR-18 operating system is superior to that of the M16 (AR-15) because it eliminates gas and powder fouling being blown back into the receiver, a problem which has plagued the M16 since its introduction. The G36 bolt carrier, bolt and gas system are very similar to those of the AR-18, but have been modified and refined. After firing nearly a thousand rounds through several versions of the G36 at Heckler & Koch's U.S. range facilities, we found the interior of the rifle's receiver to be essentially clean and free of fouling. Cleaning encompassed no more than using a bore brush and solvent on the bore and wiping down the receiver and bolt group with a solvent-moistened rag and then applying light lubricant per specification.

The G36 rifle is the basic component of the G36 weapons system. It is a gas-operated rifle and locks via a Stoner-type rotating bolt and carrier. This is a complete departure for Heckler & Koch, which has heretofore used roller locking and delayed-blowback operation for all its long guns in every caliber. Virtually all of the rifle, save for the barrel, the reciprocating parts (bolt and bolt carrier), springs and small components, is made of carbon-fiber-reinforced polymer. This results in very light weight, ease of maintenance and high reliability. The reciprocating parts move on steel rails molded into the receiver. There is no ejection port cover nor is one required, as the bolt closes the ejection port to foreign matter when it is forward. The barrel is optimized for the 5.56x45mm SS109 (M855) round with a twist rate of one turn in 178mm (1:7 inch-



Cutaway view of G36 hints at the AR-18 ancestry of the bolt and gas system; (inset) G36 bolt, carrier and operating spring (top) compared to those of the original AR-18.



The G36 was designed as a multi-caliber, multi-role system in a concept similar to the early H&K developments. Top is the MG36 Light Support Weapon with Bundeswehr-issue dual-sighting system with 3X optical sight and 1X electronic reflex sight, also mounting a folding bipod and the 100-round Beta dual-drum magazine. Below is the G36K carbine.



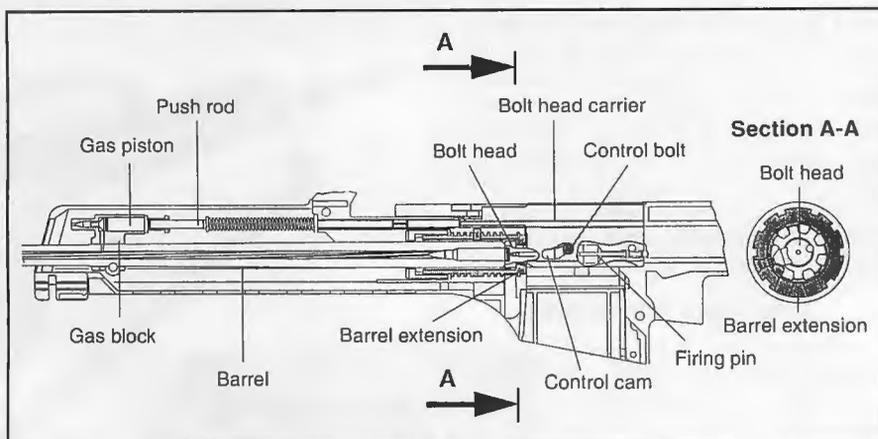
(above, inset) Various components of various systems are changeable by a unit armorer with no more than the mandrel and barrel wrench. (right) The G36 rifle (top) is complemented by the G36K carbine (bottom).

es). The G36K is the carbine version of the G36. The sole difference between it and the rifle is the shorter handguard and barrel. The MG36 Light Support Weapon is also identical to the G36 rifle, save for a heavier barrel, standard 100-round Beta drum magazine and a standard bipod. The Beta magazine can be used in any version of the G36, and while there have been criticisms of Beta magazines, those used by this writer during the evaluation of the G36 functioned flawlessly through several reloads to full capacity.

Sights

Export versions of the G36 are designated G36E, G36KE and MG36E. The difference between Bundeswehr and export versions of the G36 is the sighting system. The Bundeswehr version of the G36 has a dual 3.5X magnification optical sight and an electronic red-dot reflex sight. The red-dot sight is activated by ambient light. Batteries are required for use in darkness rather than tritium, as this radioactive material is illegal in Germany. The export version has only a 1.5X optic with backup front blade and rear notch in the detachable carrying handle.

The optical sight of the G36 is provided with range marks from 200 to 800 meters. The outer edge of the circular reticle provides a lead for targets moving at 15km/hr from either left or right at a range of 200 meters, the rifle's battle-sight zero. The intersection of the vertical and horizontal cross hairs is used as point of aim from zero to 200 meters. The diameter of the circular reticle also corresponds to the height of a 1.75-meter man at a range of 400 meters. The intersection of the vertical cross hair and the bottom of the circular reticle is the 400 meter point of aim. The two small cross hairs below the circular reticle are 600 and 800 meter points of aim, respectively. The extended horizontal cross hair gives the rifleman an indication of canting, which degrades accuracy. We found the optical



Drawing shows design influence of AR-18 bolt and gas system, an improvement over the earlier AR-15/M16 design. (left) Hensoldt (Zeiss Group) light-intensifier night sight also can be used, with adapters, on older G3 rifles.



without the need to rezero once the sight has been mounted.

Controls

All controls of the G36 are completely ambidextrous. The cocking handle is particularly noteworthy. It normally extends forward in line with the barrel of the rifle, requiring only that the operator grasp it and pull it to the rear. It automatically rotates left or right, depending on whether the user is right or left-handed. To use the handle as a forward assist, or to kick it to the rear to extract a stuck cartridge case, the operator simply pulls the handle back and presses it inwards, thus locking it into position. This also allows the bolt carrier to be "eased" home when silent bolt closing is necessary. The positioning of the controls allow the user to maintain a firing grip on the rifle while changing magazines and operating the charging handle. The G36 bolt catch is conveniently located at the forward end of the trigger guard.

The bolt is automatically locked to the rear when the last round is expended, but the bolt catch can be deactivated without tools in seconds for those who wish to do so.

The G36 feeds from translucent polymer 30-round magazines of proprietary design. The magazines can be quickly and easily clipped together using built in studs. Use of a proprietary magazine was due to a feeling by Heckler & Koch engineers that their magazine design was superior to that of the M16 magazines commonly used by other NATO countries. For those who prefer the M16 magazine, however, a magazine well to accept them may be an option, thanks to the flexible design of the G36. The 100-round Beta Company magazine for the G36 light support weapon can be used in any version of the G36. As noted, the Beta Company drum magazines functioned flawlessly during our test firing.

A Modular System

The modular design of the G36 is one aspect of the rifle that makes it unique.

sight easy to use, with quick target acquisition at all ranges at which we fired the G36, from close-quarters battle (CQB) distances of 15-25 meters out to 100 meters.

Optical accessories for the G36 include a Hensoldt manufactured third-generation 1X night sight. Although we did not use this sight, we did install and remove it. The sight clamps into the G36 carrying handle adapter with no difficulty and will retain zero when removed and reattached, according to Heckler & Koch representatives. The design is such that a small prism mates with the rifle's standard optical sight. The rifleman can thus continue to aim through his standard sight with the night vision optic in place using the same head position and

H&K G36

TECHNICAL DATA:

	H&K G36E Assault Rifle	G36EK Carbine
Caliber:	5.56x45mm	5.56x45mm
Rifling:	6 Grooves & Lands; 1:178mm twist rate	6 Grooves & Lands; 1:178mm twist rate
Muzzle Velocity, nominal:	920m/s	850m/s
Muzzle Energy, nominal:	1,730 Joules	1,470 Joules
Cyclic Rate:	750 rd/min	750 rd/min
Length, O/A, stock extended:	990mm	860mm
Length, O/A, stock folded:	760mm	615mm
Barrel Length:	480mm	320mm
Weight, empty:	3.3kg	3.0kg
Sights:	Optical, 1.5X; Open backup	Optical, 1.5X; Open backup

Unlike many other Heckler & Koch weapons, the G36 can be reconfigured into any of its variants at the unit level with only two special tools. These are a mandrel, one end of which is inserted into the breech of the rifle, and the other clamped in a vise. The other special tool is a barrel wrench to remove and tighten the barrel retaining nut. When the barrel is replaced, a standard torque wrench is used to tighten the barrel nut. When the barrel nut is torqued to specification, headspace is automatically set. The few other tools required for organizational maintenance of the G36 are common hand tools available in any well-stocked hardware store.

No tools whatsoever are required for complete disassembly of the G36 into its major groups. This allows the rifle to be easily converted at the unit level into any of its configurations. For example, the trigger group can be changed from fully automatic into two-round-burst configuration by the operator. Trigger options include select-fire versions in semiauto, 2-round burst and full-auto; semi-auto and 2-round burst; and semi- and full-auto. For law-enforcement users, a semiautomatic-only trigger group is under development. All G36 retaining pins are of identical size and small holes are provided in the buttstock for them to be placed in when the rifle is disassembled, thereby reducing the possibility of their being lost. The carrying handle is removable with a cross-tip screwdriver. (At the Heckler & Koch range, this was accomplished with the Phillips head screwdriver tip on a Leatherman Tool, which is probably as good an armorer's tool kit for field use as any.)

From the foregoing it is apparent that while the G36 is not the G11 of the 1990s, it takes advantage of state-of-the-art technology and incorporates superb ergonomics and engineering in its basic design. But while the former infantryman in this writer appreciates the overall "user-friendly" design, the proof of any rifle is in the shooting. To this end, we were afforded unlimited access to all three versions of the G36 at H&K's facility in Sterling, Va. We requested permission to provide some of our own 5.56x45mm ammunition for test purposes. This ammunition was Black Hills 68-grain Moly-Kote Match, Longbow 40-grain Nontoxic Frangible, Olin M193 55-grain ball and South African M1A2 55-grain ball. When we arrived at the range, we found that Heckler & Koch had also brought a variety of ammunition, including Olin M855 (SS109), Federal 68-grain Match and Green Shield 36-grain Frangible. This provided a sample of almost every common type of ammunition that might be encountered by worldwide users of the G36.

Reliable And Robust

Functioning of the G36 was flawless. We fired every available type of ammuni-



(above) Author found 100-round Beta dual-drum magazine 100% reliable in tests. The G36 was eminently controllable on full-auto fire (left), and its overall ergonomics outstanding: Note three empty cases in the air and no muzzle climb.

tion through all three versions of the rifle without a single malfunction or stoppage of any kind. We mixed frangible, ball and match in a single magazine and ran it through the rifle on full automatic. The G36 is eminently controllable on full auto; maintaining center of mass hits at CQB ranges was absolutely no problem from the first burst, although we were given only a brief orientation before shooting the rifle. Full-auto control of the G36 is the best I have ever experienced in a rifle of this class.

The 750-round-per-minute cyclic rate made three- and four-round bursts easy to achieve and the design of the rifle made it easy to hold each burst in the center of mass of the target. There was only the slightest, very easily controllable, tendency of the rifle to climb to the right in fully automatic firing. A small female shooter with us on the range likewise had little difficulty controlling the G36 in fully automatic mode. The reasons for this controllability in a rifle weighing less than seven pounds are

twofold: First, the barrel's long axis actually lies below the point where the shooter places the rifle to his shoulder. This in itself helps to reduce muzzle rise. Second, the small mass of the reciprocating components of the rifle help keep it on target under full-automatic fire.

After testing the G36 on full automatic at 15- to 25-meter CQB distances, we moved back to 100 meters to briefly check the G36 for accuracy at longer ranges. We were not able to test beyond 100 meters, but under rapid fire from the prone unsupported position, we consistently achieved 2 to 2.5 inch groups. This is not match accuracy, but is acceptable in a combat rifle and could have been improved if we had used a sling, rest or bipod.

Moreover, accuracy would improve with more practice. One of the few possibly negative comments regarding the G36 is its trigger pull. The rifle is intentionally manufactured with a trigger that will pass a two-meter drop test cocked and with safety "off!" The result is a relatively heavy trigger squeeze.

It must be noted the G36 is not intended to be a long-range precision rifle. Most infantry engagements are at ranges of less than 500 meters, with the vast majority at ranges of 200 meters or less. The comment on the G36 trigger pull is thus not so much a complaint as an observation. The sole complaint regarding the G36 is the fact that the forearm heats up very rapidly under rapid and sustained fire and soon becomes too hot to grasp. This situation is caused by the lack of a heat shield inside the forearm. A thin aluminum heat shield to solve this problem is under development.

Continued on page 71

To the uninitiated, the idea might sound a trifle odd: a charity benefit *sniper match*. But for 30 men with a passion for long-range precision shooting and immeasurable esteem for Carlos Hathcock, it was the rare chance to help a legendary marksman, meet fellow enthusiasts, break the brush with some professionals and have fun.

From Tampa to Cleveland to Michigan and the shores of the mighty Mississippi, the 30 shooters gathered last Mother's-Day weekend at the Storm Mountain Training Center in Mineral County, West Virginia. Their mission: Raise money for Hathcock, the retired Marine Corps master gunnery sergeant, a Vietnam sniper with the world's longest confirmed kill: 2,500 yards.

A soft spoken man, Hathcock recently was awarded the Silver Star for his quiet bravery and determined professionalism in Vietnam. Better late than never. He was unable to attend this match because of his struggle with multiple sclerosis. Confined for the last few years to a wheelchair, "White Feather," the nickname Hathcock won for the trademark feather he wore in his boonie hat, now seldom leaves his home in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he retired to civilian life and became an avid rose gardener.

Hathcock's shooting excellence was on the minds of the 30 shooters, who paid \$150 each to compete in a complex two-day event that tested the shooting ability, fieldcraft and stamina

required of a tactical scout-sniper.

Two Marines, Sergeants Benjamin Voss and David Hunter, took top honors. Both are scout-sniper instructors at Quantico, host of the Corps' most prestigious scout-sniper program. "It's poetic justice that we won," said Voss, referring to Hathcock's status as an icon at Quantico, where he once taught.

The idea for the charity benefit match hatched late last year in e-mail exchanges between friends who share a passion for long-range precision shooting. The two key organizers, Scott Powers, of Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and Russell E. Taylor, of Rock Island, Illinois, had set up a web site for those interested in sniping.

"A lot of people think snipers are people like Lee Harvey Oswald," said Taylor, a computer programmer and Army reserve captain who was an enlisted armorer and competed nationally in all-Army rifle competition in 1991-92. "But we're not whackos. It involves science; there's an art to the fieldcraft. It's a profession. There's a lot of work involved. Their primary mission is intelligence gathering. We get a lot of interest in our web site" (www.snipercountry.com).

"I've talked to [Hathcock] on the phone," said Taylor, who maintains the website. "I talk to his son, Carlos III, on e-mail. But I've never gotten to meet him personally ... We wanted to show our deep respect and admiration for him."

Nor has Powers ever met the shooting legend.

**Text & Photos by
James L. Pate**

Reach Out And Help Someone

Carlos Hathcock Sniper Match



(left) Competitor Rusty Rossi of Autauga Arms Inc., of Prattville, Ala., prepares to move out. (below) Happiness is a confirmed kill: Marine scout snipers Sergeants Anthony Gimmellie and James Dills hold up their targets after an excellent showing in the head-shot exercise.



"I'd read about him in a couple of different books," said Powers. "... we wanted to do something to help, to show our appreciation and respect. ... We had gotten a lot of hits on our web site and it dawned on me that we might have enough exposure to pull this off."

A Host

The first problem was finding a facility capable of safely accommodating a tactical sniper match, with owners willing to play host.

Powers, a computer graphic artist for a major defense contractor who began shooting rifles as a youngster and was a TOW missile gunner in the Army, thought of Storm Mountain Training Center, where he had taken courses in sniping and counter-sniping. That's how Powers had met Rodney D. Ryan, president of Ryden, Inc., which owns the facility (www.stormmountain.com).

"Ryan was not only willing, but he came back within a day with a complete course of fire," Powers said.

More than \$5,500 in cash was raised for Hathcock.

Required equipment for competitors included a ghillie suit, a scoped rifle, 100 rounds of match-grade ammunition, two blank rounds, binoculars, spotting scope, camouflage face paint, pen and a small notebook. Competition began with a KIMS test, a memory exercise used to enhance the quality of intelligence. A number of objects in a certain arrangement are viewed for a limited time, memorized and recalled later in the competition.

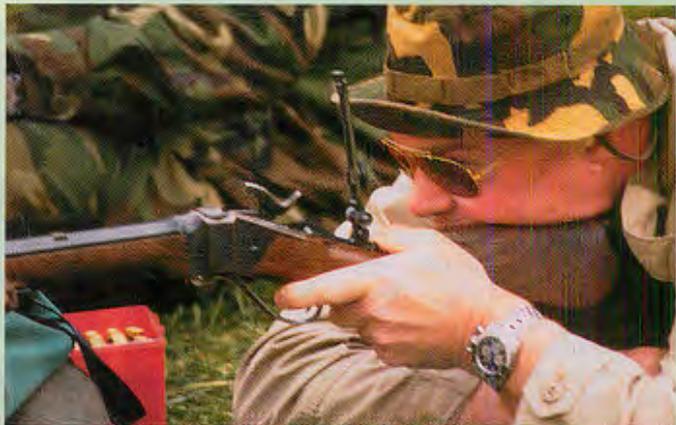
A "confirm zero" exercise, in which a maximum of six rounds was allowed, was followed by a stalking competition. Wearing ghillie suits, each team had to approach a specified observation post without being seen, get inside a delineated perimeter and get off rounds without being spotted.

This was followed by a range-estimation exercise, with targets ranging from 100 to 1,000 yards. The rolling mountain terrain made this especially tricky for someone accustomed to estimating distance on a typically flat range. Each two-man team was allowed 10 minutes for a naked-eye estimate, 10 minutes for a binocular estimate and 10 minutes for a rifle scope estimate.

The next event was also a team exercise, one in which each pair of competitors was given 15 minutes to observe and sketch a specified area, correctly identifying and locating certain targets. This was followed by fairly standard 100-yard shoot for group, with each sniper given five minutes to fire three rounds. Then the shooters had to fire two rounds each at a walking-speed, man-sized target, then a man-sized target at running speed.

The second day of events began with a stress test: Given only 10 minutes, the contestants moved over a long tactical course, stopping at nine different stations and obstacles to shoot targets at varying ranges. The course required concealed movement through wooded and open terrain, and shooting from various stances.

The field-fire exercise provided each two-man team with 30 minutes for both men to identify 10 targets, make range and windage estimates and shoot. Finally, each team was timed in



A wide variety of rifles and scopes were in evidence (left), but Remingtons and Leupolds ruled. (above) Sportsmanship award went to Maryland engineer Fred Fischer, the only man with iron sights, who used this Shiloh Sharps in .30-40 Krag.

the head-shot event, which used polystyrene mannequin heads. The pair had to run up a respectably sized hill, locate and identify the head at a range of between 100 and 350 yards, conduct range and windage estimates, compute "slope dope" for the elevated firing position and deliver one hit each on the target.

Real-World Conditions

Field conditions were lifelike, as it rained almost the entire weekend, the showers punctuated by hot sun that forced people to shed ponchos and jackets, only to grab them again for the next downpour.

"Had it rained more," said Powell, "I would have been happier. My great disappointment for the match was that there was not enough wind. That's what separates the shooters — the wind. Anybody can hit a target with no wind."

Many types of rifles were in evidence, the most popular being the Remington-type bolt-action, and the most popular scope being Leupold. A few semi-autos were used, but the rifle that attracted the most attention — a few chuckles and some grudging respect, it turned out — was a Shiloh Sharps .30-40 Krag with iron sights, brought by Fred Fischer, an aerospace engineer from the Baltimore area.

Competitors included a good mix of active-duty military and a few law enforcement officers, including a local deputy, David Paul Rolls of the Mineral County Sheriff's Department. Another Marine Corps scout-sniper team also participated, and one competitor, Thomas Blahnik, of Georgia, had just that week been discharged from the Army, where he had served as a battalion and a brigade sniper.

"Nobody complained about the scoring," said James LeMay, a professional photographer from Lansing, Michigan. "I learned a lot."

"I think it went very well," Ryan said. "I got a lot of calls and e-mails afterward. There have been no negative comments so far. Everybody seemed very happy ... just to be involved. Whether you won or lost, it was a chance to personally come out and support Carlos Hathcock. That made us all winners."

The camaraderie that such an event engenders was evident at the awards ceremony when Fred Fischer, the civilian with the Sharps rifle, probably said it best. He acknowledged he was "a little emotional ... but I've just got to say something to you guys. It's an honor to be allowed to shoot with you, especially in such a worthy cause for such a great man. Competing with these Marines and soldiers meant a lot to me."

Semper Fi. ☒

Storm Mountain Training Center

Storm Mountain Training Center was founded by Rodney D. Ryan and David C. Whidden. It is located in a remote area near Elk Garden, West Virginia.

Ryan and Whidden have combined the best elements of the U.S. and Israeli techniques for high-risk, highly fluid tactical scenarios. Their core instructors also have extensive experience in SpecOps and specialized firearms training. Storm Mountain's curriculum includes basic tactical handgun, non-lethal combatives, various rifle courses, sniping and counter-sniping (basic and advanced), CQB, as well as submachine gun and shotgun courses.

Some training is restricted to military and law-enforcement, but civilian students may delve into such arcane course work as hostage negotiations and terrorism awareness.

Contact Storm Mountain Training Center, Route 1, Box 60, Elk Garden, WV 26717; Phone: 304-446-5526; or, contact their web site at www.stormmountain.com

Thrill Of The Kill

"The son of a bitch deserted, ran away from his command. Charley, you're to execute him. The General doesn't want a court-martial, the whole Army has suffered a black eye at Kasserine Pass. ... But this bastard needs shooting."

Prior to launching out on his storied — and controversial — lifelong careers as U.S. Army officer, bordertown Texas peace officer, and big-game hunter, my father, Colonel Charles Askins, first saw military combat in North Africa. But the story of how he came to be assigned as "executioner" begins in his own words from his autobiography *Unrepentant Sinner*.

Battlefield recovery was rich good fun. I did nearly all our reconnaissance after a battle to establish what had been lost, where it was located, and what it would require to be evacuated. I had a Finn for a driver and this toughie was a real find! We'd drop out of the jeep and work our way forward because either our people or the Krauts, would still be in position to survey the site. You did not simply bull out onto the ground and direct your wreckers and tank transporters to move in. If you did the chances were that the 88s would cut loose at you.

The Arabs had no such compunction. They would swarm onto the battlefield as soon as the last shot was fired and while the aid people were gathering up the casualties. I heard that these same bastards would occasionally stick a knife into a wounded man's throat. I never found any casualties that had been stabbed in the throat but it could have happened. The Arabs were certainly no friends of ours. It was our opinion that they favored the Krauts and with this in mind I always shot all of them I found on the battlefield.

These ghouls would swarm over the disabled tanks, half-tracks, and soft-skinned vehicles if there were any at the site of the fight, and they stripped the vehicles of everything movable. One day my Finnish driver and I came upon three of the Bedouins who were quite occupied with pulling a .30-cal. AA machine gun out of a light tank. I shot one of these plunderers and the Finn got his lead into the other two.

Traveling down the Gafsa road one day, a hard-surfaced trailway, we looked up ahead and saw four Arabs very busily engaged along the shoulder of the thoroughfare. They had not seen us and I motioned for my Finnish compatriot to pull over and stop. He did and wheeled the jeep off the road and into a *waddi*. We advanced on foot, not down the road, but parallel to

it and back at least 50 yards from the strip of macadam. When within about 75 yards it was plain what the Muslims were up to, they were quite busily intent on setting a half-dozen German Teller mines in the shoulders of the road.

Now just why these bastards would do that was a puzzle to me. When the Arab came to town he usually rode a camel or

Common Law Court-Martial At Kasserine

jackass and invariably elected to the shoulder and not down the road proper. He would put one wife in front by 30 yards and if there were any antipersonnel mines she walked on them first. The other women trailed along behind.

Now just why these scoundrels would mine the shoulder and not the macadam itself was a mystery. We were accustomed to our roads being mined but usually these were the dirt tracks. When the Krauts mined the concrete

by Bill Askins

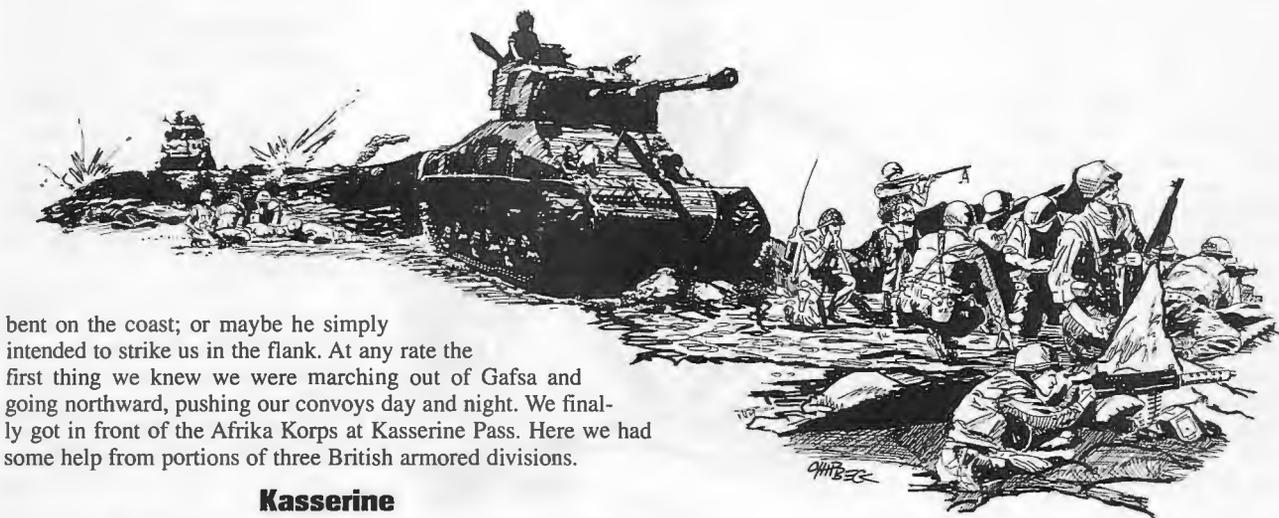
Illustrations by Commander Chip Beck,
USNA (Ret.) U.S. Navy Combat Artist

road it was obvious from 50 yards away because they had to use an airhammer to get through the hard surfacing. We'd simply stop and either lift the mines or go around them. This proved so unprofitable, the *Afrika Korps* largely gave it up.

But here were these goddamned Arabs very preoccupied with mining the sides of the main stem. I took up a good comfortable and secure position and motioned my Finn to do the same. I whispered to him, "I'll take the two on the left." He nodded. I got off the first shot and he was right behind me. These four mine-layers lasted about 3 seconds. We went forward and gathered up the Teller mines and defused them, threw the lot into the back of the jeep and hauled the collection back to our bivouac. It had been a good afternoon.

Rommel, an exceedingly slippery character, side stepped us and was hell





bent on the coast; or maybe he simply intended to strike us in the flank. At any rate the first thing we knew we were marching out of Gafsa and going northward, pushing our convoys day and night. We finally got in front of the Afrika Korps at Kasserine Pass. Here we had some help from portions of three British armored divisions.

Kasserine

I stood on the hill above Kasserine and watched the tank battle. I had no idea while I watched through a long day that it would assume so much importance. There was a good deal of dust and wheeling about and some little firing. Mostly by the British who were, like ourselves, no match for the German Tiger tanks. Our dinky little M-3 with its 75mm gun was hopelessly outclassed by the 60-ton German vehicle with its 88mm cannon. Time after time I'd see one of our tanks hit and invariably caught fire. Why, I often wondered, did a tank, a vehicle of metal, burn so furiously?

Chaos at Kasserine Pass. "We retreated for a solid week."

and certainly they were competent to pick up and remove their armament but when they did this I never did know.

We were in bivouac above the Kasserine and it was a pleasant spot. There were pine trees and a considerable stand of brush. Low stuff which grew about 5 feet in height. The boys by this time had gotten in the habit of throwing up their pup tents at considerable distance from each other. This was because of Stuka bombing runs and then, too, there is a desire on the part of many people to live a bit apart from their fellows.

My First Sergeant came to me and said, "Captain, the men are complaining because someone is stealing their barracks bags."

"These bags," he went on, "are snaked out of the tents. We can see where the bag is dragged on the ground." We both knew, of course, who the culprit was. The goddamned Arabs were taking advantage of the heavy cover and were working their way into the bivouac and there they'd latch on a barracks poke and crawl away with it.

"Let me handle this, Sergeant," I told my topkick. "I think I've got a cure." I made a traverse of the bivouac searching every square foot of the perimeter for footprints. These would either be barefoot or with a section of worn-out auto tire for a sandal. I soon found the side from which the forays were being made into our encampment.



"The son of a bitch deserted, ran away from his command. Charley, you're to execute him. The General doesn't want a court-martial, the whole Army has suffered a black eye at Kasserine Pass. ... But this bastard needs shooting."

Evidently the round always got into the fuel and this was scattered over considerable portions of the tank and sparked all the terrible blaze. At any rate the Krauts were having a field day.

When I got back to our bivouac, which was only a mile or so above the Kasserine debouchment we'd been given orders to evacuate. "Post Haste!" was the order. We were going to run away. Retreat. Stick our tail between our legs and simply decamp. I didn't like it.

We retreated for a solid week. You'd have thought we'd have been back at Marrakesh by that time, but after a couple of days we commenced to execute a turning movement and after a few days came to a halt not too far from where we had started. It was all illogical and silly. The Afrika Korps, after routing our tank elements in the Kasserine, had no ready transport which they could mount up and pursue the Americans. So they actually fell back and consolidated all their gains.

Once reestablished, I walked back into Kasserine Pass, taking along my sturdy Finn, and we surveyed the damage. The Arabs had been there before us and had stripped the vehicles of everything movable. I counted the M-3 tanks that I considered salvageable and we commenced the major chore of getting them out of the Pass and into an ordnance shop.

The German tanks we did not touch. I suspect these are in the Pass to this day. The British had lost more tanks than ourselves but I saw no indication they intended to recover those that had salvage possibilities. We had gotten our tank transporters from the Limeys



Towards dusk, Askins spotted the two vehicles winding slowly up the track, and he intently studied the lead jeep, noting the aide in the rear seat, the driver, and the target.

I took up a well-concealed position where I could overlook the flank from which the marauders were coming. The first evening nothing happened. The second evening was equally disappointing. The third, at dusk, I was considerably startled to see two Arabs not entering the bivouac but coming out of it! When I first saw them in the gathering gloom the duo were on hands and knees, each with a barracks bag caught in the crook of an elbow. As I watched, the pair got to their feet and, gathering up the barracks bags, prepared to scurry off. The distance was very short and the two shots took each scoundrel under his responsive ear. The Pachmayr .45 was getting its notches.

I did not bother to go into camp and alert Top. I knew the shots would alarm the guard and the Sergeant, who was a very responsible soldier, and would turn out a squad to immediately investigate the shooting. As it turned out he did.

Before we quit that particular bivouac I caught a pair of thieves coming out of our camp site. These worthies were off at least 90 yards but as it just so happened I had been anticipating them I had the M1 rifle in my hands. I never approached this pair either but the boys did. This most probably would have put a stop to the thievery had we remained in the area. The Arab grapevine worked pretty swiftly. No one ever bothered to bury an Arab. There were no hyenas in this part of Africa but there were jackals by the thousands. These playful little fellows did not disdain a Muslim if he was left until well ripened.

The Rest Of The Story ...

In the late 1960s I was on leave from the Marines, home in San Antonio, and having a drink with an old family friend, Brigadier General Neal C. Johnson. Johnson was a cavalry man, from the old Army, commissioned in 1917, served with Pershing in Mexico, and was a long-time friend of many of the top armor generals of WWII. My Dad was away and Johnson asked me, "Where's Charley? Off shooting something? Or somebody?"

"He's in Botswana, hunting lion," I replied.

"Your Dad's a great hunter, but I've always figured he's still shooting people for the CIA, or the Army, 'cause of all the hunts he



Askins carefully laid the cross hairs on the center of his chest and fired. For a few seconds, Askins regarded him through the scope, debating whether to throw in a follow-up shot.

cavalry officers at Fort Bliss of always outshooting their pistol teams, and was notorious for gunfights in El Paso. The aide was as rough a character as ever was commissioned, and was completely devoted to the old man."

Given the situation after the Kasserine Pass, it made perfect sense to make an example to encourage the rest! And the players were perfectly suited for the drama.

I listened with rapt attention as the story unfolded ...

The Firing Squad

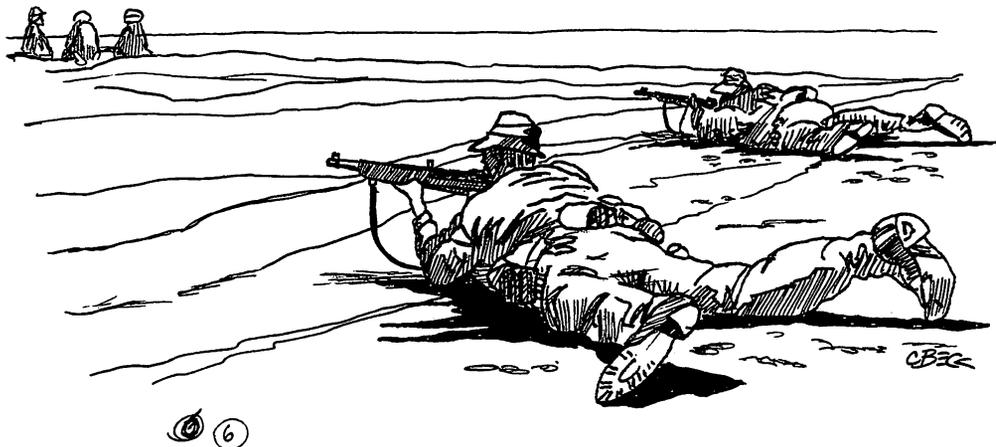
"The son of a bitch deserted, ran away from his command," the General's aide looked across the bleak desert sand. As soon as the first German rounds hit, he hightailed it, and the unit pretty well collapsed.

"The Old Man called him in as soon as he took over, pushed a pistol and one round across the desk to him, and told him that he'd either shoot himself or he'd do for him. The little chickenshit just peed in his pants — again — and did nothing."

The lanky captain, a cowboy that Askins had known on the border before the war, turned a cold eye on him and said, "Charley, you're to execute him. The General doesn't want a court-martial, the whole Army has suffered a black eye at Kasserine Pass, and the less we hear about it from now on, the better. But this bastard needs shooting, and it'll encourage the rest to stick to their guns!"

Askins had been thoroughly dispirited by the retreat from Kasserine, and had heard the stories of cowardice that seeped from the battle. He also admired the Old Man, and knew his aide to be a real toughie, and was happy to shoot the son of a bitch for them.

"Where's he quartered?" Askins asked. "How does the



I took up a good comfortable and secure position and motioned my Finn to do the same. I whispered to him, "I'll take the two on the left." He nodded.



Using a derelict tank as an OP looking for marauders.

general want this done?"

"The Old Man says we're to do it with a minimum of fuss or blow-back," he replied. "Probably ought to make it look like an accident or enemy action."

"Give me a day, and I'll come up with a solution," Askins told him as they parted.

The next day Askins scouted possible ambush sites, having decided that it would be most foolproof, and risk fewer repercussions, if it appeared that a sniper had shot the culprit. The situation was fluid enough in those days that sniping, ambushes, chance encounters, minings, and other lethal happenings were common.

He was looking for a place where he could get off a lethal first round, and manage to slip away without being spotted — or shot.

He searched along one of the principal tracks leading towards the Corps headquarters since the aide had agreed he would bring the miscreant in for an interview with the Chief of Staff whenever Askins was ready.

"I've found the place," Askins told the aide on the morning of the second day when they rendezvoused in the scrub.



The distance was very short and the two shots took each scoundrel under his responsive ear. The Pachmayr .45 was getting its notches.

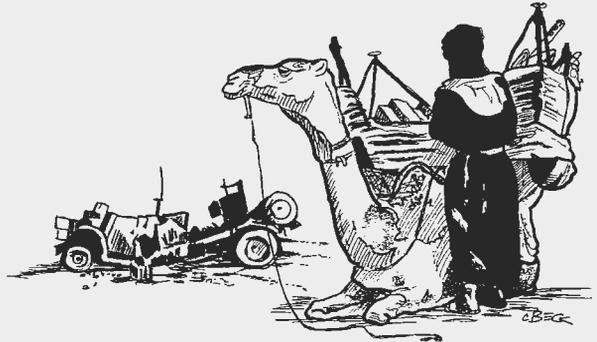
They drove out to the site for an inspection where the track passed within easy shooting distance of a steep little hill. "I'll be up the hill, in a fissure between the two rock outcroppings. You stop the jeep for a piss call," Askins explained as they sat on the hillside looking down. "In any case, stop, dismount, and I'll wax the bastard when he gets out of the jeep."

"Okay, he'll be in the right front seat of the jeep," the aide told him. "Be sure and shoot the right guy!"

Askins slipped into his hide in the mid-afternoon of the next day, armed with a Mauser model 98 that he had carefully sighted in that morning at exactly the 120 steps he expected the execution to take place. The first two 7.92mm rounds, one "serious," the second a "reserve," were filed down so they would expand on impact.

He was dressed in fatigues but brought a *djebellah*, the local long, hooded cloak, to wear on the dash away from the site. He also had a pair of fine German binoculars and intended to study the target as the vehicles approached, to make doubly sure that he was shooting the right man!

Towards dusk, Askins spotted the two vehicles winding slowly up the track, and he intently studied the lead jeep, noting the aide in the rear seat, the driver, and the target. The physical description matched: middle-aged, portly, mustached. Askins laid aside the field glasses. He picked up the Mauser, carefully positioned it on the improvised rest of rocks and the folded, and waited for the vehicles to stop. The aide leaned forward to the driver, spoke, and the vehicles ground to



I caught a pair of thieves coming out of our camp site. These worthies were off at least 90 yards but as it just so happened I had been anticipating them I had the M1 rifle in my hands.

a halt. The aide, driver, and a pair of troopers from the following weapons carrier dismounted. They sauntered off into the brush to relieve themselves as Askins waited for his target to dismount, literally intending to catch him with his pants down.

The ponderous poltroon eventually heaved himself out of the jeep, dug a cigarette from his pocket, and started to light up. Askins carefully laid the cross hairs on the center of his chest and fired. The condemned keeled over backwards against the jeep as all hell broke loose on the road. For a few seconds, Askins regarded him through the scope, debating whether to throw in a follow-up shot. Opting that his shot was lethal, Askins donned the *djebellah*, shouldered the Mauser after deliberately ejecting the case in the sand, and stole up the boulder-strewn slope.

Firing continued on the road. The .50-cal. machinegunner in the weapons carrier raked the hillside, and the other troops randomly shot up the surrounding hilltops. The aide took a single hard look at the wound, satisfied himself it was lethal, and then encouraged his men to keep firing, intending to report a serious ambush when they reached headquarters.

Askins was well over the crest of the hill within a few seconds. He reached his jeep parked in a waddi, a mile distant, and heard the firing die down.

With the sun disappearing, and the Mauser, field glasses and *djebellah* tossed out individually along the road, Askins motored leisurely back to his bivouac.

Bill Askins is a former Marine officer, aviator, parachutist and veteran of clandestine operations in Vietnam and elsewhere. ✕

Today's Dogs Of War

No Hiatus For Hired Guns

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

The "Guns for Hire" merc industry is thriving. There was even a "merc convention" in Washington last year, called together by the U.S. government. The question now being asked is whether wars in undeveloped countries are likely to be privatized. In some places it has already happened.

The most persuasive argument for the use of mercenaries or "private armies" in international peace-enforcement might be found in Angola.

Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African organization, spent about 30 months fighting for the government of Angola's President dos Santos. It suffered 20 fatalities while doing so. In that time, the organization succeeded in achieving what the Russians, East Germans, Cubans and, subsequently, the United Nations failed to do over a period of more than 20 years — forcing the rebel leader Dr. Jonas Savimbi to the negotiating table.

By its own admission, EO fulfilled its Angolan contract for \$60 million, with 500 men, and made a tidy profit.

The United Nations, in contrast — whose Angolan operation seems to have

been a shambles from the start — never achieved any permanent accord between the *MPLA* and *UNITA*. On the contrary, the only ceasefire brokered by them in the early '90s ended with a massacre of large numbers of *UNITA* troops by government forces.

Nor did the presence of "peacekeepers" have any effect on the next phase of the war. According to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (July 1997), the U.N. Angolan operation had, by the middle of last year, cost the world community \$678 million. By early 1988, it was running at about \$1 million a day.

Similarly, I was told by Lafras Luittingh, formerly a senior EO executive, that a small force deployed rapidly could have stopped the slaughter in Rwanda within days, with adequate air cover and half a dozen Russian BMP-2s. It was his view the U.N. is over-bureaucratized, inefficient and totally ill-equipped to do so.

In the light of recent developments, particularly in Africa and possibly in places like Sri Lanka and some South and Central American countries, it has become apparent the private military option needs to be reassessed. Perhaps Kofi Annan — with Washington's help — is the man to do it.

Echoing sentiments that were widespread in the old South Africa, Luittingh suggested the only way to stop this kind of brutality was a succession of quick, "surgical" strikes, very much as EO had dictated in Sierra Leone where the company never deployed more than 250 men at any time.

"The business-end of a barrel was the only real language these largely primitive people understood," he added.

South Africa is able to contribute vastly to unrest on its own doorstep. These Pumas have seen lots of action over the years in Angola and elsewhere. (right) A South African merc pilot at the controls of a Russian-supplied Mi-24 helicopter gunship in Sierra Leone before the recent unrest.



Killing For Cash

Money remains the prime motivating factor within any mercenary organization and EO pays well. Mi-24 and Mi-17 pilots in Angola and Sierra Leone were getting about \$6,000 a month (less to start) while senior field commanders could count on about double that. Contract military instructors in Angola expected to earn about \$3,000, depending on experience. African members of the force earned less.

According to an EO spokesman, the organization's revenue for the past four years was \$55 million, though a *Daily Telegraph* report put this at between \$25 and \$40 million a year. Some say real earnings are closer to \$100 million a year.

Clearly, the security business is burgeoning. It is also worldwide. More than 1,000 companies offer protection services in the former Soviet Union.

In Colombia, British Petroleum has hired a battalion of soldiers to protect its interests. So have the Colombian drug lords. Similarly, in Liberia, industrial gangs are employed by foreign corporations to work in Firestone's rubber plantations.

The most striking example, possibly, was the appointment of a private American firm run by retired generals and admirals — Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) — to prepare the Croatian army for a counteroffensive against the Serbs in the summer of 1995. The gesture neatly sidestepped the

need for the U.S. defense establishment to notify congress that it was indirectly getting involved in a (potential) combat situation.

An African Game

It's Africa where the potential for this kind of work is most abundant. In Angola, at least 80 companies are in business. With few exceptions, most are former soldiers. Their ranks include erstwhile mercenaries, legionnaires, British special forces, as well as American military veterans attached to Florida company, AirScan. The company provides aerial surveillance for the Angolan Army in Cabinda to stop *FLEC* insurgent penetration into an extremely sensitive area. It's also active in the Colombian hinterland.

One of several British companies, Defense Systems Limited (DSL) employs former SBS and SAS commandos to patrol Angola's offshore oil fields. Working in 30 countries and with 5,000 on its payroll, DSL is emphatic that its staff does not carry weapons.

In the publication *Ending Civil Wars*, London's International Institute for Strategic Studies lists 43 countries known for "ongoing civil wars, unresolved internal disputes or major internal unrest." Many are suspected of having the involvement of foreign soldiers or

advisers, almost all on contract.

Mobutu, for all his billions, was finally ousted because his fingers were too tight around the purse strings to pay his *Forces Armées Zairoises* (FAZ) to protect him. The monthly remittance to those who did get any money was usually about two dollars, which arrived intermittently. And when he did source mercenaries, he chose people who had no knowledge of conditions in Africa, its people or the equatorial tropical regions.

He hired former Yugoslavian combatants with little military experience. The Serbs and Coats were prepared to accept a fraction of what freelance professional soldiers were being offered elsewhere.

Mobutu did employ some South African airmen, but these were too few and were recruited at the end when it was too late.

Some, like "Juba" Jubert and Neill Ellis, had worked for EO. Ellis had first flown Mi-17s in the Balkans and it was his con-



(below) Executive Outcomes' mortarmen prepare for action against rebels with 82mm bombs. (right) The South African merc command structure in Sierra Leon's eastern diamond fields. The locals prayed for their safety.



Leash Laws

South Africa's Parliament last February banned all forms of mercenary activity taking place on or from South African soil. It was called The Anti-Mercenary Bill.

That effectively grounds the hundreds of weekly shuttles involving Executive Outcomes' two Boeing 727s. These aircraft, which were bought for \$500,000 each from American Airlines (they exceeded noise limitation restrictions and went cheap) operated for several years between their home base near Pretoria and Angola, Sierra Leone, the Congo, Uganda and who knows where else? Mexico, Colombia, and Papua New Guinea are also known to have featured on some itineraries.

The Boeings were registered in Angola, so their owners won't have had much hardship establishing a new headquarters somewhere else, probably still in Africa.

Yet, at this moment, there are South African pilots flying operational sorties in West Africa with Mi-24 (Hind) helicopter gunships and their own Mi-27 (Hip) transport choppers fitted with Russian-built 12.7mm heavy machine guns.

Based in Freetown, the Sierra Leonean capital, the crews are all Executive Outcomes veterans. Officially that company is supposed to be redundant so, they story has it, they were hired in South Africa by the British parent company Sandline, which maintains a London headquarters.

What kind of work are these mercs involved in? Support for the West African 'peacekeeping' force Ecomog, which is composed largely of Nigerians, I was told by one of them. He confirmed they were providing top cover for ongoing military ground operations which, at times, "were quite active."

One of the mercs said that the area around Freetown in the far west of the country "crawls" with dissidents.

"Most of them," he said, were old RUF rebels "very primitive, barely trained and about as brutal towards the local people as these bastards can get because they are always high on dope or *ganga* (a potent local gin which others call Jungle Juice)."

The source spoke on condition of anonymity. While he and his mates were involved in a perfectly legal pacification and reconstruction program in Sierra Leone — which had been wracked by civil war for years — their legal status *vis-à-vis* South Africa, from where they all hailed, had not yet been spelled out.

Had they seen any action? "Plenty."

What were they paid? "None of your business."

Previously, Executive Outcomes chopper jocks were receiving anything from about \$6,000 upwards. Certainly they wouldn't be earning less on this assignment. He did make it clear that they were not operating as a fighting force.

"Our role is strictly training and consultative," he said.

— Al J. Venter

tacts — in conjunction with Bob Denard and a former Belgian mercenary, Christian Tavernier — that originally brought Bosnian Serbs and Croats to Central Africa.

Ellis's company, Stablico, provides insight to how these people went to work. A fellow South African intermediary, Maritz Le Roux — also a former EO field commander — had offered to supply Mobutu's prime minister, General Likunia, with combat pilots and soldiers.



(top) In the thriving "guns for hire" merc industry, Africa holds the most potential. African armies tend to emulate those who provide the "goods." There is little improvisation in tactics or approach to problems; an APC driver in Sierra Leone. (below) The Turkish Army played a role in Mogadishu during Operation Just Hope. The next time such a conflict might be fought by mercs.

Mobutu's forces should have done better than they did since the Zaireans were not totally unprepared. Likunia and the chief of the Zairean air force, Gen. Baruti had acquired a sizable air force from eastern Europe, including five MiG-21s.

There were also four Mi-24 gunships and a couple of Jastreb ground-attack jets which, together, would have been more than enough to stall Kabilla's advance since the rebel leader had no air support. Had these mercenaries been deployed, they would have bought time and the ability to bring in mercenary ground forces waiting in South Africa.

All Mobutu's remaining aircraft were based at Gbadolite in the north of the country where he had his largest regional headquarters. The MiG-21s were in kit form and were being assembled by a team of Russians brought out by Baruti. But while some items arrived intact, others — like oils and greases that should have been part of the original order from Moscow — didn't. That made the planes inoperable.

Ellis's group eventually had to flee in dug-out canoes, but only after they had all their money taken at gun point and stripped to their underpants by mutinying troops.

While Stablico was never operational, the activities of the larger force of Serbs and

Coatians hired by Mobutu several months before provide a graphic example of how not to use a private army in any backwoods war.

Most Serbs and Croats attached to the "White Legion," as they called themselves while active in the Congo, lacked experience. Most had little understanding of basic military procedures or tactics in that primitive environment.

Nobody had told them that Africa was tough. Or that they needed to work as a cohesive, integrated force. EO's philosophy on the subject is simple: Nothing in the undeveloped world can be achieved if the organization does not have its own means of back-up and support. In Angola and Sierra Leone, EO was successful because it used its own aircraft for re-supply.

Similarly, EO's white-officered black units had been operating together for years. With time, they became familiar with one another's foibles very well, indeed. Unlike the Serbs in Zaire, there was abundant mutual respect. Observers noted that this relationship — and the trust that it engendered — made for good teamwork.

EO's single inviolable demand is that it never goes into a combat situation without providing its ground troops adequate top cover.

While the Slavs in Zaire had air cover of sorts, their performance was dismal. For good reason. They would take advice from nobody. Most were racist bullies. Within a week of their arrival — there was never more than a few hundred of them — their



officers had alienated just about every Zairean officer with whom they had contact. It was a no-win situation from the start.

Several sources — including NGO aid personnel active with Hutu refugees — believed these "hired guns" were little more than amateurs. Some were killed when their officers abandoned them while fleeing Kabilla's revolutionary army. Those trapped later by UNITA forces were shot on sight.

Their pilots were no better. Few would attack approaching forces from anything but great height — usually 20,000 feet. Obviously, in the shadowy, triple-tiered rain forest where hostilities were taking place, it had little effect.

Puking Pilots

Liquor was another problem. They flew drunk. Ellis tells of one of the Serbs — still

hung over from the night before — almost completing a stupid ultra-low pass over the military base at Gbadolite and clipping a lamp post with his wing. His Jastreb — one of three still flying — crashed into a column of soldiers on parade. He was killed along with dozens of Zaireans in his path.

AirScan, Inc., the American company providing internal security services to the Angolan Government, is in an altogether different category. It prefers personnel with above-average military service skills. Its role in oil-rich Cabinda, however, is steeped in controversy. So are a succession of pay disputes among former AirScan employees who are still waiting for their money.

Most of the oil fields that AirScan are protecting are American. They belong to Chevron as part of Cabinda Gulf Oil Company whose wells pump about \$1.5 billion worth of crude oil a year from a succession of offshore concessions of which more than half goes to the United States. The first oil was shipped from Cabinda in 1955. In return, says the Organization of African Unity, the Americans have plowed back barely \$3 million a year into Cabinda — a situation they maintain is unconscionable.

This has angered much of the continent. Cabinda's indigenous population is among the poorest in Africa. In the rain forest — beyond the main towns of Malongo and Cabinda City — some people barely survive under the most primitive conditions.

There is little the Cabindan people can do about it. Luanda maintains a powerful military presence in the enclave because Cabinda's oil revenues pay Angola's bills and keep the ruling hierarchy living in style.

Occasionally FLEC tries to make some sort of impact. One of its guerrilla units attacked a column of six Angolan Army T54 tanks last July with nothing more than RPG-7s and commercial explosives stolen from the oil companies. It was a rout (SOF, March '98).

AirScan has made a number of proposals to the Angolan Government. The one in which it's engaged at present involves deploying modified Cessna 337 push-pull "Sensor" aircraft with five tactical radios and GPS in round-the-clock searches for insurgents in the vicinity of the oil fields.

Work handled elsewhere by AirScan includes day/night airborne surveillance and security missions over semi-tropical and mountainous areas protecting U.S. military space launch sites and classified U.S. government assets. Typical support missions in this mode consist of 14-hour surveillance operations involving two or three missions a night.

Crew conditions in Angola can be rough. Accommodations are poor and the food, according to one recent returnee, is barely acceptable.

The rewards, however, are good. The lowest pay for U.S. nationals is \$225 a day

(but *not* tax-free, unless eight consecutive months are served). Tours of duty are six weeks on, six off. Travel to and from Africa is business class. Nothing is earned by lower ranks while on furlough. Health and medical insurance are negotiable.

Conditions within Cabinda — an enclave about half the size of Northern Ireland — can be demanding. The outlying jungle is almost impenetrable and that means no off-road travel. No AirScan member can go into town without an armed escort and movement into the interior is out because of FLEC ambushes. There is little fraternizing with locals or with members of the Portuguese expatriate community. Until 1975, Cabinda belonged to Lisbon.

For Diamonds & Oil

Sandline International (which originally shared the interests of Executive Outcomes) was previously known as Plaza 107, Limited and formalized its name in 1996. Today, to confuse matters, Sandline is a client of Plaza 107, a company owned by Michael Grunburg. Another is Heritage Oil and Gas.

All are names that have been linked to Executive Outcomes in the past and the sig-

nificant common denominator has always been diamonds, oil and mineral resources. Sandline's CEO, Tony Spicer, is a former British army colonel who spent time with U.N. forces in Bosnia. It is hardly to his credit that Spicer was involved (with \$3 million and a Makarov pistol in his briefcase) in the abortive Papua New Guinea (PNG) debacle.

This was Sandline's most notorious operation to date. The idea was to try to quell a nine-year insurrection. Conflict developed within PNG when the first South African mercenary element arrived, all of them familiar faces from EO's operations in Angola and Sierra Leone. The PNG National Security Council had authorized a \$36 million contract with the company.

Eventually it all came to nothing. With shrewd Australian connivance, a dispute developed between the PNG prime minister, Sir Julius Chang, and the head of the PNG Defense Force, Brigadier General Jerry Singirok, who, in the first place, opposed the hiring of foreign soldiers in exchange for mineral concessions on Bougainville. A

Continued on page 66



Chad saw the introduction of more sophisticated weapons against government forces. Libya's Qaddafi introduced ground-to-air SAM-7s, as seen here alongside one of the rebels in the north.

PART II HOLD or DIE

The 80-Day Siege Of An Loc

by Samuel Zaffiri

Photos: AP/Wide World

Editor's Note: This is the conclusion of a two-part series about the battle of An Loc, arguably among the most important battles of the Vietnam War.

While the battle raged inside An Loc, Major General James F. Hollingsworth turned the entire weight of the air power at his disposal against three enemy salients. Wave after wave of F-4 Phantom and A-37 fighter bombers went at the attacking NVA infantry with bombs, napalm and cannon fire.

At the same time B-52s began hitting enemy reinforcements as they moved toward An Loc. Each of the heavy bombers could carry up to 108 500-pound conventional bombs. Since they bombed in cells of three, they could put more than 300 bombs on an enemy target in a matter of seconds. One B-52 strike hit an entire NVA battalion moving up to reinforce the attack from the northwest, killing more than 100 of the attackers, wounding another 200, and destroying three tanks. This strike, in particular, broke up the attack from the northwest and sent many of the enemy infantry in shock streaming back into the surrounding jungle.

Inside the city, Cobra gunships again went to work on the tanks. Working methodically, they hovered over the city streets and sent rocket after rocket into the enemy tanks, prowling up and down the streets of An Loc. One enemy tank commander seeing a Cobra in the distance began waving a white flag and surrendered.

To counter the Cobras, the enemy moved a number of .51-caliber and 37mm anti-aircraft guns up with their attacking units. These guns then massed their fire at the Cobras. When a number took hits, they were forced to withdraw from the fight. Spectre gunships, howev-

er, stayed on station. Armed with a 105mm howitzer, a 40mm cannon, and four 20mm miniguns, the Spectre was an awesome weapons platform. Using its miniguns and 40mm cannon, it poured fire down on the enemy infantry huddling in the rubble of An Loc. With its 105mm howitzer, it destroyed tank after tank, oftentimes with shots through the top of their hulls or turrets.

Battle-Worn Enemy

Because of the work of the gunships, B-52s and fighter bombers, the enemy attack finally had ran its course at about 1800 hours. Tired of the incessant pounding, many enemy units began pulling back.

They were hardly finished, however.

In the early hours of the morning on 14 April, the enemy renewed its attack. Behind thousands of rounds of artillery fire, an enemy battalion attacked from the north, led by nine tanks. One of the tanks outdistanced the trailing enemy infantry and was soon in the center of An Loc. It was about to fire at an ARVN bunker when a Spectre hit it first with a 105mm round. A fire quickly started and a secondary explosion blew up the tank. The eight other tanks were quickly destroyed by fighter bombers, and their accompanying infantry were hit hard with cluster bombs.

Undaunted, apparently, the enemy pulled back its dead and wounded and attacked again. They had countered the Cobra gunships with massed anti-aircraft fire and now they introduced a weapon to the An Loc battle which they felt could counter Spectre. The Spectre might be

able to avoid much of the anti-aircraft fire by flying above 3,000 feet. But it could not fly high enough and still be effective and avoid a Strella heat-seeking missile that honed in on the heat of an aircraft's exhaust and accelerated to Mach 1.3. The Strella did its greatest damage against slow propeller-driven aircraft, and the Spectre was the slowest aircraft over An Loc.

During the enemy assault on the 14th, one Spectre had five Strellas fired at him. Four misses — but the fifth hit the ship! Though damaged extensively, the gunship managed to make it back to Saigon. A few minutes after this Spectre was hit, a U.S. Air Force O-2 on a forward air-control mission over An Loc was also hit with a Strella. It was not so lucky and

exploded, killing the pilot.

The introduction of the Stella missile forced the U.S. to make adjustments or face wholesale destruction of its aircraft. Spectre gunships now had to fly above 6,000 feet and forward air control planes above 7,000. Ten thousand was established as a safe altitude for C-130 aerial re-supply missions. As an added precaution against the Stella, the Spectre began dropping flares with a high infrared signal to decoy them. Spectre pilots also had to learn to make hard turns toward the missile in order to shield the heat pouring from his exhaust pipes.

All these precautions did eventually nullify the impact of the Stella on the battle. They could not, unfortunately, win the battle. That was going to have to happen on the ground.

With that thought in mind, General Minh, the III Corps Commander, decided it was time to attempt to break the stranglehold the enemy had on An Loc. As a first step, on the morning of 15 April, he ordered the elite 1st Airborne Brigade to break off its attack against the enemy blocking position around Tao O and make a combat assault onto Windy Hill and Hill 169, both on high ground 3 kilometers to the southeast of An Loc. Here, the 1st Brigade placed six howitzers to lend direct support for An Loc, then formed a perimeter and dug in. Minh also ordered his 21st Division, which was holding the second line of defense outside of Lai Khe to move to Tau O and attempt to do what the 1st Brigade had been unable to do: Punch through the enemy blocking position there and reopen the road to An Loc.

B-52 Pummeling

There was lull in the ground fighting on the 16th, but not in the air war. Fighter bombers and B-52s continued to pummel the enemy positions around the clock. An enemy radio intercept told just how deadly the bombing was. The intercept was of a battalion commander calling his division commander with the news that his battalion had been decimated by a B-52 strike and he wanted permission to withdraw from the area.

On the morning of the 17th, the defenders of An Loc braced for yet another wave of ground attacks, but they did not come. Instead of the ground assault, enemy gunners in the surrounding jungle fired more than

5,000 artillery rounds at the town. The fire was so heavy that to step outside of a bunker for just a few seconds meant death or wounding. Those buildings not already blown up by preceding artillery bombardments were flattened by this one. During it all, the 10,000 civilians in An Loc — all haggard, exhausted, dirty and hungry — could do little but huddle in bunkers and



Inside An Loc, Cobra gunships (left) went to work on tanks. Working methodically, they hovered over the city streets and sent rocket after rocket into enemy tanks. One enemy tank commander, seeing a Cobra in the distance, began waving a white flag and surrendered to the ARVN. For two hours, swarms of F-4 Phantoms (above) and A-37 fighter bombers flew more than 300 sorties, pummeling the enemy salients with cluster bombs and napalm. (right) One B-52 strike hit an entire NVA battalion moving up to reinforce the attack from the northwest, killing more than 100 of the attackers, wounding another 200, and destroying three tanks.

holes and endure the shelling.

The enemy continued the shelling for the next two days. Then on 19 April, they struck again on the ground. Irritated by the fire they were getting from the 1st Airborne Brigade on Windy Hill and Hill 169, they decided to eliminate both positions. Led by six tanks, more than 3,000 troops from the 275th and 141st regiments launched assaults, first against Windy Hill then against Hill 169. The attacks were so relentless that both positions had to be abandoned. Two companies of infantry defending the hills managed to make it inside An Loc lines. Two others had to fight their way south until finally extracted by helicopter. Both groups suffered terrible casualties in the process.

At about 1000 hours, troops from the 9th VC Division launched a second ground attack against An Loc from the north. The ARVN defenders stopped the attack cold with rifle and machine-gun fire, leaving the streets of An Loc littered with enemy dead.

Unable to break through from the north, the commander of the 9th Division ordered one of his regiments to make a forced march southwest and attack An Loc from the south. When the regiment got to its staging area, however, they found two

battalions of the ARVN 1st Airborne Brigade already entrenched there. After a sharp firefight, the enemy regiment was forced to retreat back north. This retreat marked the failure of the enemy's second attempt to take An Loc.

In spite of this failure, the situation in An Loc was still precarious. The northern half of the city was still in enemy hands, and his defenses there were particularly strong and unbreachable. The city's southern half, meanwhile, was under increasingly heavy enemy attacks by fire around the clock. On 25 April, the city's hospital was completely destroyed by artillery fire, killing most of its 300 patients. With no hospital facilities avail-



able and medicine in short supply, wounded could no longer receive adequate care. Unable to be evacuated because of the intense anti-aircraft fire, many wounded watched their untreated wounds fester, then turn gangrenous. To sustain a serious head, chest or stomach wound was almost a certain death sentence. Because of the cramped filthy conditions in the bunkers, numerous diseases, including cholera, quickly spread among soldiers and civilians alike. The untreated wounds, disease and artillery fire led to so many dead that it became necessary to resort to mass burials in shallow graves using lime dropped from airplanes. Even worse, many dead were not buried, and the streets of An Loc were covered with rotting corpses and body parts.

On 20 April, Colonel William Miller, the senior adviser to the 5th ARVN Division cabled General Abrams with this grim report: "The division is tired and worn out; supplies minimal, casualties continue to mount. Wounded a major problem; mass burials for military and civilians; morale at a low ebb. In spite of incurring heavy losses from U.S. Air Strikes, the enemy continues to persist."

The situation in An Loc was just what

the enemy wanted. Intelligence reports indicated they were counting on the rapidly accumulating morale problem in the city to demoralize the South Vietnamese defenders and force them to either surrender or desert.

Colonel Miller, like all the allied commanders, realized what the enemy's plan was, and was determined to foil it. Still, he realized unless the city could be re-supplied and the wounded rescued, An Loc would soon be lost.

Snacks For Charlie

Unwilling to risk more C-130s in unsuccessful, low-level paratroops, the Air Force had no choice but to switch to night supply missions. While infinitely safer, they proved much more inefficient. On the night of 27 April, only six of 116 bundles were recovered. The rest drifted into enemy territory, providing him with munitions, medical supplies and food. One enemy soldier captured after the battle told his interrogators that so many bundles had fallen into enemy lines that he'd grown fond of eating fruit cocktail.

While the enemy troops in the trenches and bunkers around An Loc were gorging themselves on American food, the 4,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and 10,000 civilians inside the city were slowly starving. There was so little food in An Loc that South Vietnamese troops and civilians began fighting over the few bundles that did land inside the town. The initial high morale shown by the ARVN defenders had eroded to the point where some units were in a complete state of demoralization. In others, some men were beginning to talk about surrendering. The ineffective aerial re-supply led even senior South Vietnamese commanders in An Loc to believe that despite Thieu's pledge to hold An Loc, they were, in fact, being abandoned.

Against this grim backdrop, the Air Force ordered dozens of paratroop experts from U.S. bases around the world to fly immediately to Tan Son Nhut Airport and figure out a way to make night airdrops work. These experts were the allies' last straw. If they failed to make night drops work, An Loc was finished.

Fortunately for An Loc, they didn't fail. In short order they discovered that the ARVN parachute packers did not have the technical background or experience to handle the more sophisticated packing techniques required for the complicated drops over An



Troops from the 9th VC Division (above) launched a second ground attack against An Loc from the north. The ARVN defenders stopped the attack cold with rifle and machine-gun fire, leaving the streets of An Loc littered with enemy dead. (left) South Vietnamese troops, transferred from the Mekong Delta, move up Route 13, north from Saigon. The troopers were brought in as reinforcements for intense fighting in and near An Loc.



Loc. When the Americans began packing the chutes, results changed dramatically. Of the first 88 tons dropped, 68 were recovered, and 19 lost to malfunctions. Only one bundle fell into enemy lines.

As increasing supplies began falling into the city, the enemy realized they were being forced to make a critical decision. The literally thousands of air sorties flown against their positions had disrupted their supply lines and decimated their front line troops. Now that An Loc defenders were being supplied adequately, only one hope remained for their besieging forces. They had to launch a smashing attack against the city before its defenses became too strong, and their own forces too weak. To guarantee that this last attack was decisive the enemy high command decided to commit its entire combat force in the area.

In preparation for the attack, the 5th VC Division headquarters relocated south to Hill 169. The following day two regiments also moved south and took up positions with its sister regiment. Next, two Regiments of the 7th NVA Division left their blocking positions in the Tao O area and moved into assault positions south and southwest of An Loc.

The 9th VC Division maintained its positions to the north and northeast of An Loc. In all, the enemy now had nearly 25,000 men poised and ready to attack. Tasked to stop them were less than 4,000 ARVN troops and a handful of American advisers. At least a quarter of the 4,000 were wounded.

At his headquarters, Gen. Hollingsworth had watched the movements of the three enemy divisions around An Loc and concluded the obvious: They were going for the knockout blow. He was determined, however, that it should be the allies that delivered that blow, not the enemy. If the enemy was willing to commit everything he had to this final attack, then the allies should also. He flew to Saigon and went directly to Gen. Abrams' office. He told Abrams that he could smash this enemy attack, but only if he had unlimited access to B-52s. Chomping on a cigar, Abrams said bluntly, "You can have them all."

The enemy opened his attack on 11 May, just after midnight, with the most intense artillery bombardment of the battle. In less than an hour, 7,000 rounds hit the city. Major Ingram, an ARVN adviser, said that the shelling was so intense that to leave your bunker for just a second or two meant "certain death."

With artillery still falling, the enemy forces, led by dozens of tanks, attacked the city from all sides. The hardest attacks came

from the northeast and western sectors.

There the enemy units quickly established a salient in the ARVN lines and were pushing to link up in order to divide the ARVN defenders into two enclaves, which the enemy could then defeat separately.

To stop this linkup, Gen. Hung, the 5th ARVN Division commander, shifted his 5th Airborne Brigade between the two salients. While the 5th held the enemy in place, fighter bombers moved to eliminate the salient. For the next two hours, swarms of Phantom and A-37 fighter bombers flew more than



Cuts in aid from the United States eroded the will of the average South Vietnamese soldier, demoralizing him at this most critical point of the war. He knew congress could have easily doubled and tripled aid to South Vietnam, but chose not to; and it chose not to, the South Vietnamese knew, because many in congress no longer cared whether South Vietnam survived.

300 sorties, pummeling the enemy with hundreds of cluster bombs and napalm. When a battalion of more than 500 enemy troops tried to overrun the 36th Ranger Battalion, they were stopped cold by Phantoms dropping "Daisy Cutters" — 1,000-pound bombs ordinarily used to clear helicopter landing zones. The resulting blasts killed half the attacking enemy troops and threw the rest into shock and confusion.

Tenacious Enemy Tank

In spite of the bombing the enemy attackers were tenacious and continued

pushing their attack. One enemy tank, followed by a platoon of infantry, even managed to make it to the center of An Loc. There the tanks began firing HE rounds at the 5th ARVN Division command post. One round killed three of the division's staff officers and wounded five or six more. The tank was moving forward to crush the bunker under its treads when Lt. Col. Gordo Weed, flying an A-37, spotted it. Weed went into a steep dive and scored a direct hit on the tank with a 250-pound bomb. The bomb killed the tank's crew and a number of the supporting infantrymen.

It seemed an easy kill, but pilots like Weed had to endure murderous enemy anti-aircraft fire. To protect their guns better, enemy commanders had put them in cluster. At one location, the enemy had placed four 37mm and five 23mm machine guns. They were surrounded, in turn, by five or six .51-caliber machine guns. Before the morning was over, one A-37, one Cobra gunship and two O-2 FAC planes fell to this concentrated enemy fire.

All around An Loc, the enemy kept the pressure on with tank thrusts, ground attacks, and relentless barrages of artillery and mortar fire. It was estimated that enemy forces had already suffered nearly 2,000

dead — and twice that number of wounded. He was, however, quickly replacing his casualties from a steady stream of replacements. With these replacements he continued the attack through the night.

None of these night attacks managed to move the ARVN defenders. In spite of hundreds of their own casualties, they were holding their ground.

On the morning of 12 May, the allies moved to completely reduce the two enemy salients. Propeller-driven A-1E Skyraiders with 250-pound bombs and Spectre gunships began systematically blasting the enemy infantry out of An Loc's rubble. In the process, one Spectre was hit with a Strella missile. It received extensive damage but managed to limp back to Saigon. Another Spectre quickly took its place and the fight went on.

The Skyraiders and gunships eventually managed to push back both enemy salients. The night of 12 May was overcast, grounding both tactical air and gunships. The enemy used this opportunity to launch yet another big ground attack, this one spearheaded by more than 200 Russian tanks. The ARVN defenders found themselves under direct fire from tanks from the north and northeast and threatened by infantry assaults from the west and south.

Continued on page 70

Pilot Down!

Nightriders Fly "That Others May Live"

Text & Photos by Dale B. Cooper

Lieutenant Colonel Doug Tracy feels like the Maytag washer repairman, waiting for a call that never comes.

But Tracy, commander of the 48th Rescue Squadron, knows the call to rescue a downed pilot in Iraq will eventually come, and when it does, his Combat Search and Rescue teams are ready to fly into "Indian Country" and pick up an American pilot before the Iraqis can capture him.

"We've been sitting on OSAR alerts in Kuwait for about four years, and over those years, we have not had to go into Iraq and rescue anyone," said Tracy. "We've been very fortunate that people have been able to get out of the so-called 'Box' without us having to go in and pull anyone out."

Since Tracy took command of the 48th Rescue Squadron at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., in September 1996, the "Nightriders" have spent 277 days of the past 19 months on alert in Kuwait.

The Nightriders sit and wait at Camp Doha, the U.S. Army base where almost 7,000 soldiers are manning a "speed bump" of pre-positioned M1A1 battle tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

Normal rotation for rescue squadrons like the "Nightriders" is 90 days in the sand box, stateside for 180 days, and then back to Kuwait for another 90 days in the desert. These long deployments are doing a number on the Nightriders. "Saddam Hussein is the reason we're separated from our families for long stretches of time," explained Tracy as he watched his men get ready for a training mission.

"It tears at their families," Tracy said as he recalled the unusually high divorce rate

in his squadron. "There's always somebody getting divorced, and I believe these deployments are responsible."

"A family can go through two or three of these rotations, but when you do it for two or three years, it starts tearing at the fabric of your family, and makes it very difficult for everyone involved."



Two rescue choppers making pickup on a practice mission in the Kuwaiti desert about 15 kilometers from the Iraqi border.

If something isn't done soon about Saddam, Tracy feels many highly trained flight crews are going to "vote with their feet" when their commitments to Uncle Sam are up. "There are ill feelings toward Saddam Hussein, because he's the reason we're here. If Saddam weren't in office we wouldn't be here." When asked about a potential solution, Tracy said the answer is simple.

"Saddam Hussein has to leave office; somehow he has to be forced out of office," he said. But senior military officers can't advocate assassination of world leaders, such as Saddam Hussein, no matter how despicable they might be.

Now that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has agreed to a U.N.-brokered deal to open eight of his so-called "Presidential Sites" to weapons inspectors from the world body, the likelihood of an American pilot being shot down by ground fire or a surface-to-air missile over Iraq is greatly diminished. But Tracy says the number of "No Fly Zone" missions being flown by U.S. warplanes as part of Operation Southern Watch sets up another scenario:

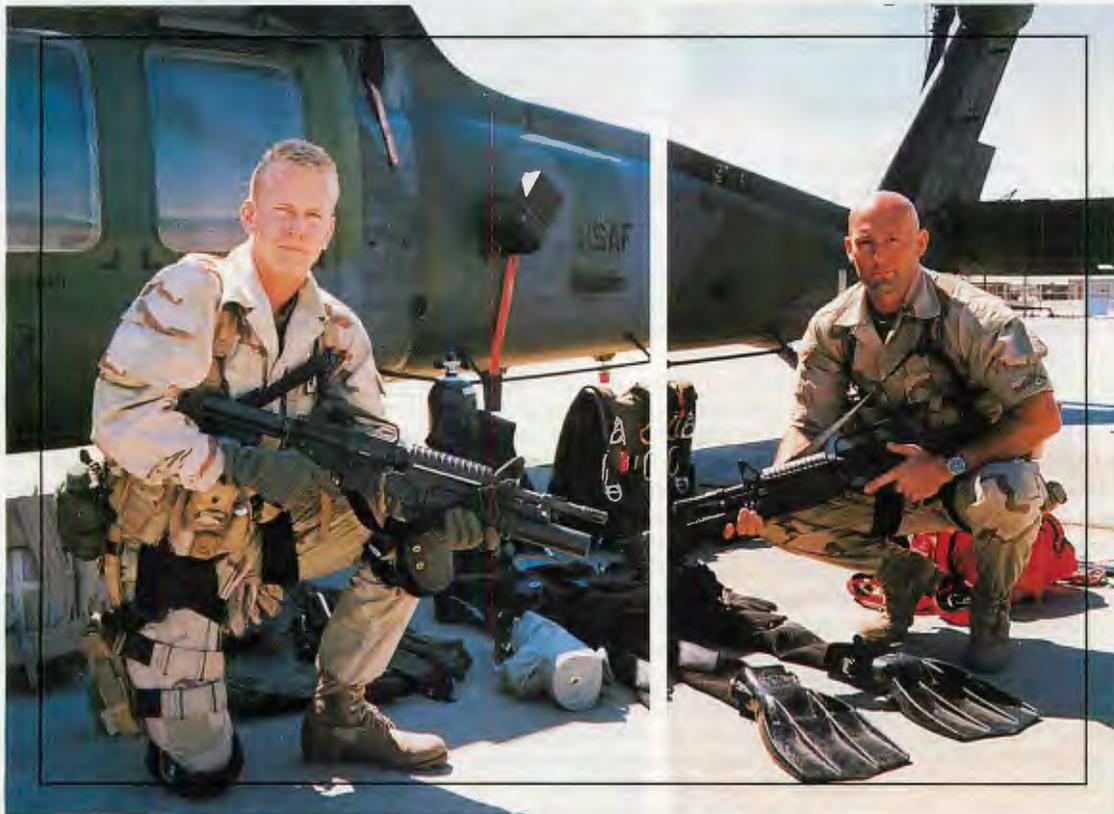
Accident Waiting To Happen

"We are waiting for a plane to go down for mechanical reasons. A major hydraulics problem that makes the aircraft unstable and no longer able to stay airborne," said Tracy. "The most likely scenario would involve the pilot getting out a 'Mayday,' or maybe a wing man would report an aircraft was down, a report that could be heard by AWACS, an early warning reconnaissance aircraft orbiting outside the box."

The "Mayday," or emergency call, would then be relayed down to the Air Operations Center who in turn would contact the joint Search and Rescue Command, and JSRC would notify Tracy and company at Camp Doha, about 15 minutes flying time from the border of southern Iraq.

"When we get the launch notification, my guys scramble to get airborne and pick this person up," said Tracy as he put two CSAR teams to the test for *SOF*.

From the moment Tracy yelled, "A pilot's down," until the time the first helicopter was ready to take off, less than 10 minutes had elapsed. Just like their ancestors in Vietnam, the new "Jolly Greens" as



(above) Master Sergeant Robert Bartee mans an M-240 machine gun while aboard an HH-60G. The HH-60Gs are not as heavily armored as their predecessors during the Vietnam War, but they carry plenty of firepower. (left) "Squirrel" and "Taco Bob," with M4 carbines with M203 40mm grenade launchers and rescue gear. Para-rescuers bring enough gear with them on a mission to survive and evade should they be left behind. In addition to medical kits, they carry seven magazines, several grenades for their 40mm grenade launchers, and four magazines for their 9mm pistols.

the CSAR teams are still called today, don't go into "Indian Country" alone.

OSARs are preceded by Sandys, the tactical call sign for the first fixed wing aircraft to arrive on the scene. But instead of single-engine Skyraiders of yesteryear, twin-engine A-10 Thunderbolts are currently the aircraft of choice when it comes to locating a downed pilot.

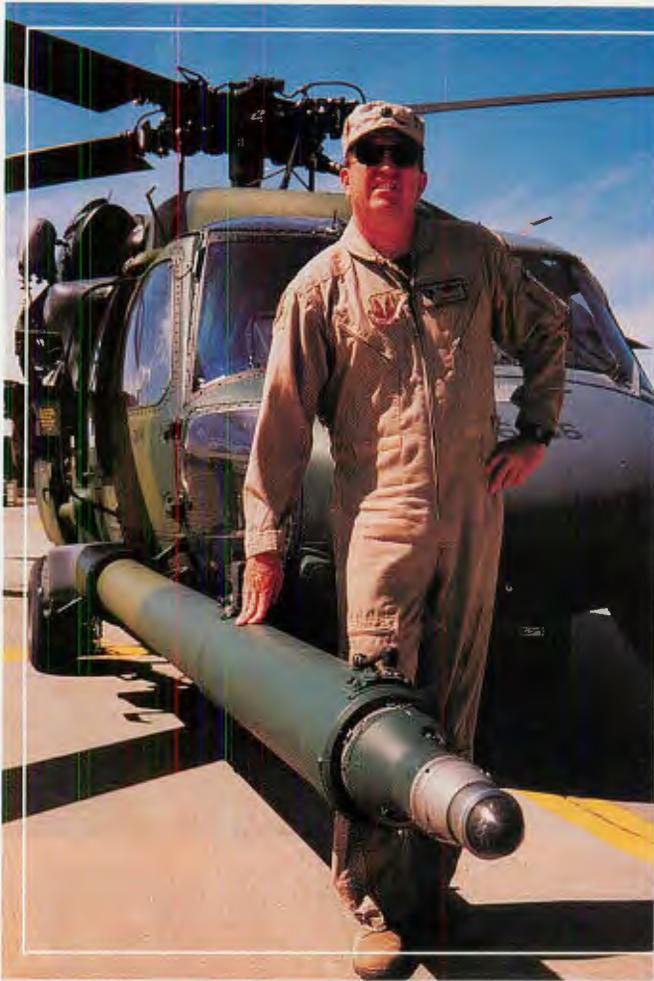
"Once we locate the survivor, we sanitize the target area," said Captain Stephan Otto, a member of the 74th Fighter Squadron at Al Jaber, a desert airfield about 50 miles south-southwest of Kuwait City.

"If there are bad guys there, we make sure they're not there anymore by persuading them to leave, or killing them."

Asked about the chances of friendly fire

incidents and mistaken identity, Capt. Otto and his wing man, Capt. Marty McDonough, said there is always the chance of accidentally killing non-combatants. However, their aircraft have been upgraded with new electronics since the last armed conflict in the Persian Gulf.

"Since the Gulf War, we have gotten LASTE, a system that gives us a computer



gun sight which no longer requires us to have the right dive angle, and the right air speed before dropping bombs or putting the piper on a target. LASTE, an acronym for Low Altitude Safety and Target Enhancement, does all of this for us," said Otto.

LASTE began as an altitude warning device, but engineers added CCIP, Constantly Computed Impact Point. The A-10 became a much more reliable delivery system, especially from higher altitudes than they flew during the Gulf War.

"We can now look through our HUD [heads up display] and see exactly where that bomb is going to go," said McDonough. LASTE also enables Thunderbolt pilots to see where their Maverick missiles are looking and thereby reduce somewhat the danger of "friendly-fire" accidents. "It gives us what we call the Grapefruit, symbology in the Heads Up Display, that tells you exactly where the missile is looking," Otto said. "Previously, before we got LASTE, all you knew was where the missile was looking when you uncaged it, but as soon as you started slewing the missile, you lost your ground reference."

24-Hour Protection

A pair of "Warthogs," as the A-10s are affectionately known by the men who fly them, stand on "ready alert" around the clock at the end of the runway at Al Jaber. A squadron of F-117 Nighthawks, America's premier attack aircraft, are also based there

along with Air National Guard F-16s and Kuwaiti air force F/A-18 Hornets.

In addition to A-10s, and an assortment of fighter aircraft, Navy F-14s and F/A-18s along with Marine Corps F/A-18s from two aircraft carriers about 100 miles away in the Persian Gulf also provide air cover for CSAR missions.

"When Sandy-1 locates the survivor, his wing man will come out and escort us in," said Tracy. Still called Jolly Greens or Pave Hawks, the HH-60Gs are not as heavily armored as their predecessors during the Vietnam War, but they carry plenty of firepower. Behind the cockpits, two flight engineers man a GAL-2 mini-gun and a Belgian-made M-240 general-purpose machine gun. Both fire 7.62mm ammunition. Master Sergeant Robert Bartee mans one of the guns on the right side of the helicopter. Bartee, the flight engineer, also monitors the aircraft's performance and fuel consumption. Bartee feels he's flying in one of the best helicopters in the world.

"It's made to be ballistically tolerant to small arms and we've got defensive systems to protect us from manned portable missiles," Bartee said, as he swung into the starboard seat and grabbed the gun handles of his M-240. Like many of his squadron mates, Bartee feels it's a "mixed blessing" by not having anything to do except sit in the desert sun and bake like a chocolate chip cookie.

"You hope that nobody has to have your services, but if the opportunity comes up,

Lieutenant Colonel Doug Tracy (left) took command of the 48th Rescue Squadron at Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., in September 1996. The Nightriders recently finished a tour of 277 days on alert in Kuwait. (above) Captain Jamie Wilson (in cockpit), an A-10 pilot and member of the 74th Fighter Squadron, the Flying Tigers, completes a mission at Al Jaber.

you want to be able to go in and do what you've been trained to do," Bartee said.

"I don't want anybody shot down or crashing because of mechanical malfunctions, but I'm ready to do my job if that does happen."

Captain Mitch Graves, one of the pilots of Bartee's bird, feels the same frustration. "Crash," as Graves is called by fellow fliers because "my takeoff and landing ratio is not exactly equal," admits it is frustrating to dress for games and never get to play. Captain Kevin Haff shares the frustration.

"I'd like to tell you what it's really like, but they haven't used us on any actual missions around here," Haff says. "It's good for the fighter guys, but it's kind of tough on us," Graves said, "Because it's like being in the on-deck circle, but never getting up to the plate."

Some Nightriders are still bitter about not being called to rescue to two Marine Hornet pilots when their F/A-18 fighters collided 80 miles off the coast of Kuwait during a night refueling mission in early February.

A decorated pilot, Lt. Col. Henry G. Van Winkle, was killed during the mid-air colli-

sion. Van Winkle was executive officer of VMFA 251, the Tornados, a Marine Corps fighter squadron that traces its lineage back to Guadalcanal during World II.

The squadron's operations officer, Major Cary D. Venden, also ejected from his crippled aircraft and survived. A British helicopter crew from *H.M.S. Invincible* got the call of "pilots down" in the North Arabian Sea, not the Nightriders, and there are still some bitter feelings about being cut out of the action.

The Nightriders felt the task should have fallen to an American rescue team, not a British team.

Tough Cookie

Haff agrees with Bartee about the survivability of the Pave Hawk. "This bird is really survivable," said Haff. "Yeah, you're still here," laughed Graves.

"It can take 10 Gs of impact coming straight down," Haff remarked.

Graves says critical control points have been hardened so it can take small hits and keep flying.

"But it can't take anything big like 12.7mm fire, and the people inside can't take too many hits," Graves said, pointing to ballistically resistant seats his crew members occupy.

They also wear protective vests, "for whatever they're worth," added Graves, "But we can't do too well against the big stuff."

Tracy is willing to fly on the edge to rescue a downed pilot, but only to a point.

"I'm not going to fly into a situation where I know my guys aren't going to come back."

The HH-60Gs are equipped with air to air refueling probes, but going deep to rescue a pilot is threat-dependent.

"If you ask any of us if we'd fly to Baghdad to pick up a pilot," said Graves, "We'd probably say we'd go that far, but is it realistic? Probably not." But pilots in the 48th ROS will go as deep as they have to.

Tracy says his squadron's motto is: "That Others Might Live," and that includes him and the members of his Combat Search and Rescue Teams.

"We don't want to lose a rescue crew at the same time, but we will take amazing amounts of risk to pick someone up, but it has to be a calculated risk."

Australian Commandos

A 110-strong unit of the elite Special Air Service (SAS) has been sent to the Persian Gulf. The commandos would be used in high-risk search and rescue missions for downed allied pilots. The Australian SAS is also trained for reconnaissance missions and anti-terrorist operations.

Between Air Force PJs and Army

Special Forces folks, Capt. Haff says there aren't many places in Iraq CSAR teams can't go to get someone.

Given his druthers, Doug Tracy would rather fly a rescue mission at night in his FLIR [Forward Looking Infrared Radar] equipped aircraft, but he says the situation will dictate whether it's a nighttime or daytime operation.

"Taco Bob" And "Squirrel"

Staff Sergeant Robert Simmons from



Senior Airman Jason "Squirrel" Baird (left), and Senior Sergeant Robert "Taco Bob" Simmons (right), stand with M4 carbines with M203 40mm grenade launchers at the rear of their HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter at Camp Doha, Kuwait. They're part of the 48th Rescue Squadron, which stands by to rescue pilots in trouble in the Persian Gulf.

San Diego, California and Senior Airman Jason Baird from Simi Valley, Calif., are a couple of PJs, pararescuemen in Doug Tracy's squadron.

Simmons' call sign is "Taco Bob," because of his love of tacos and inability to get them at Camp Doha. He's trained to rescue personnel in any type of terrain; on land or sea. "It doesn't matter," said "Taco Bob," as he pointed to some of the gear he carries in the helicopter, "We're ready." Simmons and Baird, whose call sign is "Squirrel," get excited even on training missions. But "Taco Bob" admits it would be nice to have some real business.

"No one likes to see anyone go down, but we're ready in case that happens," said Squirrel. "We spend a lot of time over here in the desert, and it gets kind of boring at times," said Simmons, "But when the call comes, we'll get fired up." When they hop

off their bird, PJs like "Taco Bob" and "Squirrel" go loaded for bear.

They bring enough gear with them so if they get left on the ground, they can survive and evade until rescue. PJs not only carry more survival gear than a normal air crew, but also more weapons and ammunition. In addition to their medical kit, PJs carry seven magazines for their M4 carbines. They also carry a few grenades for their 40mm grenade launchers, and four magazines for their 9mm pistols.

"We arm up as much as we can," said Baird, as he adjusted the web sling on his weapon, "but one of our big concerns is to also stay light, 'cause when we go in, we want to make it quick. The helicopter is pretty vulnerable out there and we just want to run out there and grab the guy and get him back safely."

PJs the likes of Simmons and Baird are not only accomplished snipers, skydivers, scuba divers and mountain climbers, but also emergency medical technicians who can do everything except open heart and brain surgery. But Baird confesses he and his buddy do only what's necessary to stabilize an injured pilot. Medical personnel back at Camp Doha can put the pilot back together again if major surgery is needed.

Simmons and Baird also carry enough communications gear to talk to anyone overhead, including AWACS.

When asked why he chose pararescue as a profession, "Taco Bob," age 29, said he loves being outdoors. "Squirrel," who's only 21, says the medical training they receive far exceeds anything available in civilian life, and both admit they like living on the edge.

To the average person on the street, going deep into enemy territory to rescue a downed pilot would be one of the most frightening experiences he could think of. But "Taco Bob" is not average.

"If you really knew who went with us, you'd have a much safer feeling about it," said Sgt. Simmons, "We have other aircraft along that protect us, and clear obstacles out of our way."

"But if we have trouble, it's going to be big trouble," said "Taco Bob," referring to layers of attack aircraft that stand ready to swoop down and scorch the earth below in the event Iraqi forces ever try to capture a downed American pilot before PJs get to him.

Dangerous Field

Being a pararescueman is one of the military's most physically and mentally demanding professions. The non-commissioned offi-

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Today's Dogs Of War

Continued from page 57

revolt by senior PNGDF officers ultimately brought down the government.

The eminence grise in all these dealings is a former SBS commando Tony Buckingham, who acquired oil stakes in Angola. In my own discussions with Lafras Luittingh, he was identified as the "moving force" in the establishment of EO.

Buckingham is chairman of Heritage Oil, the company that owns Sandline. Curiously, both companies today claim they do not have (nor ever had) any association

with EO. This is unsupported since the paths of all three — and many other subsidiaries besides — have not only crossed on numerous occasions over the past five or six years, but, as in the case of PNG, were sometimes thoroughly enmeshed.

One of the most interesting organizations offering professional military services is Military Professional Resources, Inc., of Alexandria, Va., run by retired U.S. generals and admirals.

MPRI is quoted by *Time* as "the greatest corporate assemblage of military expertise in the world." It's that and more. Following the Dayton Accord, James Pardew, the Pentagon's point man in the negotiations, flew to Sarajevo to urge the Bosnian gov-

ernment to hire MPRI to train its army — a contract worth many millions.

The company has enough insider connections to persuade the Pentagon to hand over \$100 million worth of weaponry and supplies as part of the Bosnian deal.

The corporation is stated to have more than 350 employees and a "resource pool" of about 2,000 military officers. President and CEO is retired Major General Vernon Lewis, who says that MPRI works only in areas "approved by the Department of State."

Confusion abounds as to whether MPRI is in Angola. Company spokesman Lieutenant General Ed Soyster said they "would dearly love to have an Angolan contract" but had not yet been fortunate to get one. Yet, numerous reports out of Luanda indicate MPRI has been active in this West African state, possibly under another name. American freelance journalist Rob Krott, while working for AirScan in Cabinda, told me he met MPRI staff on visits to the enclave.

In May 1996, MPRI landed its highest-profile assignment to date. The firm was granted a three-year Bosnian "Train and Equip" contract in Bosnia.

Certainly the most successful British company in this field is DSL: Defence Systems, Limited. No newcomer to the business, it was formed in 1981 by former SAS officer Alastair Morrison, OBE, MC. He was awarded his Military Cross in 1973 for counterinsurgency operations in the Dhofar, in Oman. The company's CEO is another SAS veteran, the Honorable Richard Bethell, MBE.

DSL prides itself in having developed into one of the world's largest suppliers of specialist security services. Its core business is devising and implementing solutions to complex security problems in high-risk areas, including Algeria, Colombia and Angola (BP in all three countries).

There are also defense/police force contracts in Saudi Arabia, Botswana, Brunei and Singapore. At least seven U.N. bodies use DSL in security roles in places as diverse as the Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Afghanistan. DSL has offices in 10 countries. The group is owned by Armor Holdings, Inc., of Jacksonville, Fla.

Possibly the most startling revelation is that while DSL is active in some of the most dangerous places anywhere, including Colombia and Algeria, staff employed there are not armed. "Was this wise?" I asked. We read the same newspapers.

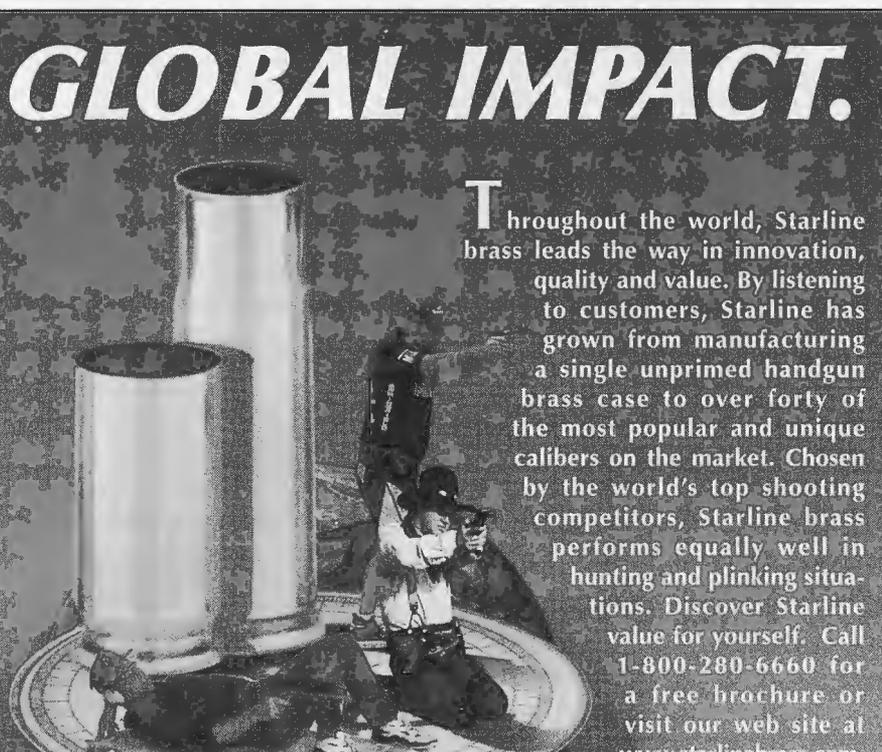
"We work closely with the security forces of the countries where we are active," said Richard Bethell. "Government forces must provide whatever protection we need, military or otherwise. They secure the areas where we are active, beforehand. It is our job to indicate what, where and how that is done, which is part of the contract."

"DSL never gets involved in other people's wars. It's simply not an aspect of our business, and business is good."

Al J. Venter is SOF's contributing editor for Africa and resides in Washington state.

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357 MAG	\$ 38.00	\$ 70.00
44 MAG	\$ 48.00	\$ 90.00
44 SPECIAL	\$ 48.00	\$ 91.00
41 MAGNUM	\$ 48.00	\$ 91.00
45 AUTO	\$ 46.00	\$ 86.00
45 AUTO+P	\$ 56.00	\$104.00
45 SUPER	\$ 60.00	\$111.00
45 COLT	\$ 50.00	\$ 93.00
45 WIN MAG	\$ 66.00	\$119.00
10MM	\$ 49.00	\$ 92.00
40 S&W	\$ 48.00	\$ 91.00
10MM MAGNUM	\$ 63.00	\$117.00
44S SUPER MAG	\$130.00	\$228.00
45 S&W SCHOFIELD	\$ 56.00	\$ 96.00
44 RUSSIAN	\$ 56.00	\$ 96.00
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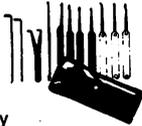
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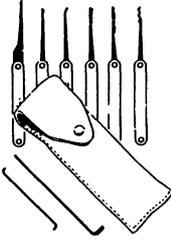
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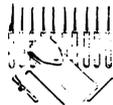
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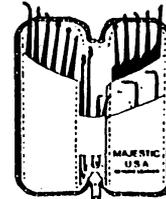


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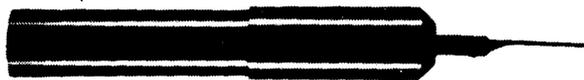


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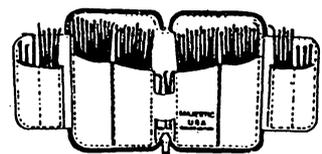
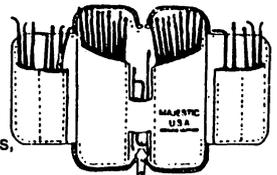
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The Gun Club

Continued from page 43

when possible, the aluminum alloy parts are hard-coat-anodized. Everything is then painted with Teflon-S polymer and baked. In addition to the colors mentioned, tan and brown are also available. The attributes of this finish are numerous. It produces a low-friction coating, free of so-called "stick-slip" (smear) characteristics, combined with excellent resistance to corrosion. In addition, very little, if any, lubrication is required and cleaning merely entails disassembly and wiping the components with a clean, soft rag. Handguns with this type of finish should be placed into leather holsters only.

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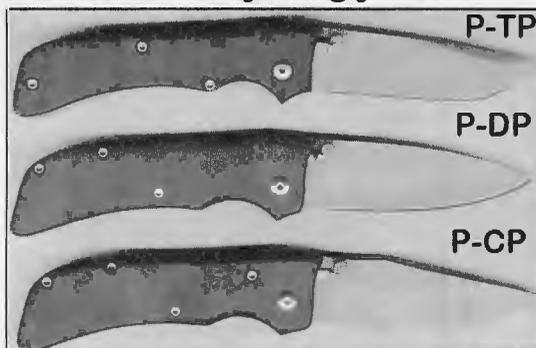
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Pilot Down!

Continued from page 65

cer-in-charge of the PJs in the 48th Rescue Squadron says the job is also one of the most dangerous in the Air Force.

"We make it as safe as it can be," said Technical Sergeant John Kingsley. "But just about everything we do is deadly if we do it wrong."

Kingsley gave up a "poster boy" career as a recruiter in the United States Marine Corps for a tougher way of life in the Air Force. His people, Kingsley insists, are the best trained people in the world.

"We're always in the gym working out," said Baird, "Keeping our bodies in good shape. And we're constantly training in different rescue scenarios and retraining in medical scenarios to keep our minds sharp."

Running five to 10 miles a day and full-body workouts enable PJs to carry an injured pilot and their equipment without tiring. Pararescuemen train as if their own lives depend on it, as well as the lives of those being rescued.

"We have to have strength and endurance," said "Taco Bob." The man can bench press about 285 pounds. He can run through the hot desert with a 185-pound pilot slung over his shoulder.

On the way to the pickup zone, PJs drink enough water to float a boat.

"If you're well-hydrated, you're ahead of the game," said Baird. "You're thinking sharp, you're not going to get exhausted as quickly as someone who hasn't had enough water to drink."

"We always top off," said "Taco Bob." "And if things really get hairy on the ground, we can hydrate quickly by infusing some IV solutions we carry in our medical kit."

Asked if Arnold Schwarzenegger could hack it as a PJ, Sgt. Simmons said, "I think he's a little too slow. He's a big guy. Most PJs aren't big and bulky like Arnold. You need to be in the medium range to do all of the things we do."

PJs are also equipped with night-vision goggles and sniper rifles. But "Taco Bob" and "Squirrel" don't plan to do any long-range shooting in the event the "Nightriders" have to answer a "911" call from a downed flier in Iraq.

Rescue personnel are going to make tracks like the little "Green Feet" that are embroidered on their name tags — a sign they are following in the footsteps of the "Jolly Green Giant" that rescued hundreds of downed fliers during the Vietnam War.

A senior SOF Foreign Correspondent, Dale B. Cooper has provided numerous first-hand accounts of the American military in action.

Editor's Note: The 48th Rescue Squadron is back home now. "Taco Bob" is no doubt wolfing down some of his favorite namesake food. ✕

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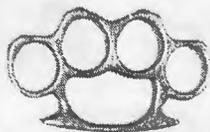
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Hold or Die, Part II

Continued from page 61

Eighteen B-52s came to the rescue. Bombing target boxes, some of which were only 600 meters from the ARVN perimeter, the 18 ships dropped nearly 2,000 500- and 750-pound bombs on the attacking forces. One bomb run destroyed five tanks and a forward ammunition dump. The explosion rocked the entire area and could be seen for miles around. Around 0200 hours the attack stopped.

This failed attack bolstered ARVN morale, but brought no relief from the steady rain of artillery and mortar fire on the city. Many in An Loc estimated that a round hit the city every five seconds, around the clock. Although the fire could not break the ARVN resolve to hold, it continued killing and wounding countless soldiers and civilians, few of whom could get even the most basic medical attention.

While the artillery rained down on An Loc, the enemy 5th and 9th divisions started withdrawing from the battlefield and heading to a safe haven in Cambodia. According to captured enemy soldiers, both divisions had little choice but to withdraw. The constant allied bombing, coupled with a lack of food and medical care, was causing major breakdowns in enemy morale and fighting spirit. Some troops, it was reported, were no longer responding to orders from their superior officers.

It was not surprising. Of the more than 40,000 enemy soldiers who laid siege to An Loc in early April, 10,000 were now dead and 15,000 wounded. Captured prisoners from the 9th VC Division reported that there were only 30 to 40 men left in each of the 9th's battalions. Prisoners from the 7th NVA Division told a similar tale of woe. One reported that two regiments from the division were almost completely destroyed.

South Vietnamese casualties were not as bad, but grievous nonetheless. Approximately 2,300 ARVN soldiers were killed in the battle and another 3,000 wounded. Another 1,000 civilians died in An Loc from wounds and diseases. The fate of thousands of civilians who attempted to flee An Loc is unknown. Hundreds were forced to be porters and laborers for the besieging enemy forces. How many died from bombs and shells is a mystery, but the figure was surely high.

Americans suffered the least in the battle, with six dead and 17 missing. Most of the missing were from air crews. In addition to the dead, the U.S. lost three fighter bombers, three C-130 cargo planes, a Spectre gunship, three FAC planes and a reconnaissance aircraft.

History would show it to have been a futile sacrifice.

A week after the close of the battle, the Nixon administration officially declared that An Loc proved the president's

Vietnamization policy was a success. Privately he had his doubts that South Vietnam could go it alone. In Paris, his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, was holding peace talks with the North Vietnamese. They, to Nixon's frustration, would not agree to a ceasefire agreement and to return all U.S. POWs until the U.S. withdrew all its artillery forces from South Vietnam, including advisers, and ceased all U.S. military action in support of South Vietnam.

In January 1973, an agreement ending the war in Vietnam was signed in Paris by the United States, the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. The settlement called for the U.S. to withdraw all its troops and advisers and to dismantle all its military bases in Vietnam. The communists, in turn, agreed to release all their POWs, both U.S. and foreign.

The North Vietnamese began their final offensive in January of 1975. With South Vietnam's forces concentrated in the northern provinces, the communists attacked and seized the poorly defended province of Phuoc Long, northwest of Saigon.

With Nixon now having resigned the presidency because of Watergate, things began to transpire just as Giap said they would. President Gerald Ford did not use the B-52s against the attacking enemy forces in Phuoc Long. This fact motivated the North Vietnamese to launch an even bigger offensive in the Central Highlands. In early March, with no B-52s to hinder them, communist forces captured the town of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. Realizing that he was facing a much stronger force in the Highlands than he could contend with, President Thieu ordered his forces there to abandon the area and pull back into an enclave around Saigon. Because of confused orders the withdrawal from the Highlands turned into a panicked retreat. Rumors of the Highlands debacle triggered another frantic retreat in the northern provinces, where in a matter of days Quang Tri, Hue and Danang fell. Giap had figured that it would take until 1976 to conquer the South. To his surprise, communist tanks were in Saigon on 30 April 1975.

Communist Celebration

Although the town of An Loc was bypassed during this final offensive, communist forces eventually occupied the town. One of the first things they did was to destroy the memorial the townspeople had erected to the ARVN Rangers who had so bravely and tenaciously defended the town. With sledgehammers, communist soldiers beat it into hundreds of small pieces, then scattered them as their own memorial to the war.

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.

Good By Any Measure

In conclusion, then, let us return to our original criteria for an infantry rifle and compare the G36 to them. The G36 certainly meets our weight criterion. The assault-rifle version weighs only 3.3kg and the carbine 3kg. As to reliability, we experienced absolutely no failures of any sort in our test firing of the G36, although our test was admittedly insufficient for more than a general impression of the rifle's reliability. It should be noted, however, that during testing of the G36 at the U.S. Army's desert test facility at Yuma, Ariz., there was not a single stoppage in more than 24,000 rounds fired under incredibly harsh conditions. The test protocol consisted of firing 240 rounds on uninterrupted (except to change magazines) full automatic, submerging the G36 into a barrel of water until it quit boiling, removing the rifle, shaking it free of water, then repeating the process. The test rifle was cleaned at the end of each day after firing 6,000 to 8,000 rounds. This performance confirms the impression gained during our limited firing of the G36 with several types of ammunition.

Is the G36 maintainable? According to the manufacturer, cleaning is really necessary only about every 5,000 rounds. While the author cannot in good conscience recommend this procedure, it does show confidence by H&K. Also, the polymer components can be cleaned using either solvent, water-based solvent, plain water, or compressed air. As noted previously, after firing hundreds of rounds, there was no noticeable fouling or residue buildup in the G36 receiver that the author examined. We have already noted the ease of both user and organizational maintenance. And, finally, the G36's simplicity is remarkable. The operating system is, to this writer at least, "as good as it gets." The control placement made the learning curve on the G36 extremely short. The sights are excellent. Disassembly and assembly of the G36 are simple and almost intuitive with minimal instruction. In sum, then, we feel that the G36 fits our definition of the ideal infantry rifle in virtually every respect. We have only two minor reservations. We prefer a lighter trigger, but this is a subjective judgment that can, as stated previously, be overcome with training and use. The only real, albeit minor, complaint about the G36 is the forearm that overheats too quickly, but H&K is in the process of designing a forearm heat shield. Our final assessment, then, is that Heckler & Koch have definitely hit the mark with their new G36.

It is truly a soldier's rifle.

A former Marine intelligence officer, Charlie Cutshaw is now an editor for Jane's. ✕

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edge of the tripod bracket to retain the chest in a secure manner. These chests were used until the M1917A1 was phased out, which was actually well before all of the other U.S. Browning machine guns were replaced by the dreadful M60 GPMG. That was more than four decades ago and by now these chests have become very difficult to locate. The most commonly available .30 caliber steel chest at this time, designed for belts of 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition, but retaining the old dimensions, is devoid of the latching mechanism just described.

This is unfortunate as the M1917A1 tripod, which is readily available, remains the mount of choice for all those who shoot .30 caliber BMGs, as it will accept the M1919A4/A6 guns, as well. Although heavy, it's the most stable firing platform available for these machine guns. My close friend, Kent A. Lomont (Dept. SOF, Lomont Precision Bullets, RR 1, Box 34, Salmon, Idaho 83467; phone: 208-756-6819; fax: 208-756-6824; e-mail: klomont@ix.net-com.com), who is without doubt the largest Class-3 dealer in the United States, has designed an adaptor for the M1917A1 tripod that will hold the current .30 caliber ammunition boxes. Of all-steel construction and painted olive drab, this adaptor is every bit as sturdy as the M1917A1 tripod itself. The cost is only \$75, postpaid. A lip on the adaptor slides down the rear of the tripod's bracket and is held in place by a steel rod and hitch pin at the bottom. With their lids open or off, the ammo cans are retained by a rolled bar on top of the adaptor. This is a really slick piece of equipment.

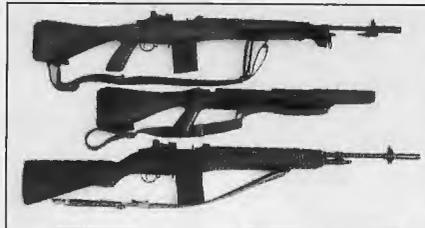
M1A/M14 Stocks

There can be no more than 40 to 50 original military-contract M14s registered to individuals. They sell for \$5,750 up to \$6,500. Springfield Armory in Geneseo, Ill. made a significant quantity of selective-fire M14s (worth now about \$3,000 each) and no doubt a substantial number of individuals converted M1As to M14 configuration prior to 19 May 1986. These latter conversions sell for no more than \$2,500 each. I own two M14s and am completely aware that selective-fire capability in light rifles such as this and the FN FAL and H&K G3 is in almost all scenarios a useless feature. But, that doesn't stop them from being highly desirable pieces of U.S. militaria. There are also many thousands of semiautomatic-only M1A-type rifles out there, the best of which have been made by Springfield Armory and a small body of custom assemblers.

All of them use stocks and some of them are badly in need of replacement stocks. My TRW M14 was equipped with a synthetic stock that would have gagged a maggot. The world's largest inventory of M14 stocks and ancillary equipment is available from

Fred's (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 629, Ramseur, NC 27316; phone: orders — 800-979-2144, info: 336-879-2144; fax: 336-879-2143).

Fred focuses exclusively on the M14/M1A and his assortment of stocks and associated items is truly astounding. In addition to stocks Fred sells M14 handguards, both slotted and solid — including the extremely rare and mysterious black handguards (always use solid handguards, as the slotted variety permit heat risers to come up between the front and rear sights); M14 slings (web and nylon); M14 cleaning kits and original hinged buttplates.



(above) Springfield Armory M14 with more common M14E2 birch stock; below — extremely rare walnut M14E2 stock; and bottom — M1A with "Big Red" birch stock. (right) TRW M14 with Rhodesian desert camouflage pattern on synthetic stock. One of many camouflage patterns available from Fred's.



Fred has stocks in walnut, birch and synthetic. Birch is tougher than walnut, but the G.I. brown synthetic stock is the strongest of all. These stocks are available in conditions ranging from used to new. Synthetic stocks are also available in a number of camouflage patterns, including LRRP (9th Inf Div pattern), green Woodland, Ambush (German World War II pattern), Lizard and SWAT Black. I have one in a desert Rhodesian pattern. Be sure to specify whether it's for an M14 or M1A, as the camouflaged M1A stocks have the selector cutouts filled in.

Most interesting is the excellent M14E2 stock with its pistol grip, front vertical grip and rubber butt recoil pad. Together with a muzzle stabilizer and sturdy bipod it was supposed to tame the M14 in full-auto fire. It did not do so, but the E2 stock is a superb firing platform. Most of these E2 stocks were made of birch. Only about 10,000 were made, most of them at Long Branch, Canada, by Canadian Arsenals, Ltd. Even more rare are the very few E2 stocks made of walnut at Springfield (the government arsenal), Rock Island and Anniston. Fred has both types, but the walnut E2 stock is expensive. A special sling is required for the E2 stock. With any purchase from Fred's you will receive information about the DCM program, which all of us must support to the fullest extent possible. ☒

say that there has been an explosion ashore reported to me. I request the nature of that explosion." Mechlenburg's report was not long in coming: "There have been at least two penetrations of the magnetic coils at Sydney Head. A torpedo has hit a receiving ship and exploded. A second torpedo has run up on the beach and has not exploded. The Admiral recommends that you put to sea immediately."

And so the *U.S.S. Chicago* weighed anchor and made for the open sea. On the way out, as we passed through the harbor entrance, Captain Bode turned to Lt. Cmdr. Mechlenburg and asked, "Commander, have you ever seen a periscope? Do you know what one looks like?" Mechlenburg who was looking out over the side raised his arm and said, "Yes, sir. It looks just like that." His outstretched arm pointed to the periscope of the third Japanese midget submarine that penetrated Sydney Harbor the night of 31 May - 1 June 1942.

What was the *HMAS Kuttabul*, the nearby depot ship that was destroyed, with the loss of life of 21 Australian sailors? The *Kuttabul* was a converted ferry boat which had been commissioned by the Australian Navy and used as a barracks vessel. The torpedo that destroyed her was meant for the *Chicago*. But why didn't it hit the *Chicago*?

My theory is that when we went to general quarters, the M Division (commanded by Lieutenant George Chipley, Annapolis, '37) started to light off boilers. The skipper of the Japanese submarine, spotting black smoke coming from the stacks of the *Chicago*, assumed our heavy cruiser was underway, our clipper bow contributing to the illusion. So he fired his two torpedoes with a lead angle. Both torpedoes missed the *Chicago* — the first hit the *Kuttabul*, and the second, net cutter around its war head, skidded up on the beach but failed to detonate.

The net cutter consisted of four blades, one for each quadrant, each in the form of a wavy *kris*. The Australian Navy, in appreciation of *Chicago's* efforts, removed the net cutter, mounted it on a fine piece of polished wood and presented it to the ship's company with appropriate ceremony. The hitch, though, was that if the ship rolled and someone had the misfortune to lose his balance in the passageway where the net cutter was mounted, it would have drawn and quartered him.

So it's just as well that the trophy went down with the *Chicago* when she was sunk by Japanese torpedo planes about a year later.

In fairness to Capt. Bode, if he had not kept his ship in battle readiness, even though his ship was 1,500 miles from known Japanese forces, the *Kuttabul* Tragedy could have been known as the Sydney Disaster. ☒

Ship Of Fools

Continued from page 41

bloodied and forced to evacuate by sea, leaving the area and huge supplies of munitions and hardware — including 122mm artillery pieces — to the triumphant Tigers.

Understanding the critical importance of the Tigers' international network appears to have been pushing Sri Lanka to adopt Mid-Eastern-style tactics (i.e. carry the war to the streets of the West). On 26 October 1996, Kandiah Perimbanathan, deputy head of LTTE's international network, was gunned down on a Paris street along with another Paris-based Tiger official, heading their Cultural section. The assassin was a former LTTE fighter suspected to have been hired by Sri Lankan intelligence.

The death of a man who'd been a key link in the procurement chain, operating in Bulgaria, Ukraine and Western Europe and with access to many of LTTE's bank accounts, was undoubtedly a serious setback to the movement. But despite a bounty of U.S. \$500,000 put on his head by Sri Lankan Sinhalese expatriates in the United States, KP himself remains at large. And, as the *Stillus Limasul* affair underscored, he is still very much in business.

Seasoned photojournalist Mike Winchester has contributed many articles on SE and SW Asia to SOF during the past decade. ☒

Of What Stripe ...?

Continued from page 39

opponent will reap political benefit from the inevitable opposition to compromise.

Opposition to compromise comes from the feeling that the LTTE wants to split that which cannot be split — the land of the Buddha. Since this is precisely what the LTTE desires to do, to form an independent, socialist Tamil state ("Tamil Eelam"), stalemate has resulted. Legal Tamil political par-

ties, in the main former insurgent bodies which have now agreed to pursue their aims peacefully, continue to campaign for autonomy of some sort.

Local elections held recently — the first in 15 years — in the former Tamil-liberated "headquarters," Jaffna peninsula, were largely sabotaged by LTTE attacks, with turnout as low as 25% of eligible voters. Attacks were also launched in the east, in addition to the bombing in Kandy, to draw attention away from Sri Lanka's celebration of 50 years of independence.

The most noteworthy fallout of the Kandy attack was resignation of the Deputy Defense Minister, Anurudha Ratawatte. Since the president, herself, is the defense minister only on paper, Ratawatte effectively calls the shots in the counterinsurgency. Predictably, his resignation was declined, because his support is solid within the SLFP higher echelons. Many of his approaches, such as abandoning low-intensity pacification in favor of conventional confrontation, have been controversial. Yet they have hammered the LTTE.

Hampering the movement further has been its recent inclusion on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. This makes fundraising illegal in the lucrative American "market." This is not disastrous, as the take is far richer in Canada and Britain. Nevertheless, it rankles, and LTTE has reportedly moved to challenge in court its "terrorist" status.

Ironically, even as expatriate Tamils donate, or are coerced to provide funds to LTTE, at no time during the entire struggle has more than a fraction of the Tamil population lived under insurgent control. Indeed, when the war started, half of all Tamils were residents of Sinhalese majority areas. There remains a hard core of LTTE supporters within the country (Jaffna remains the heartland of LTTE support), as well as abroad, but war weariness has long since disabused many that "liberation" is at hand.

"Liberation" itself is a nebulous term where the LTTE is concerned. Early on, the insurgents consistently linked two struggles: that of their people and of their social formation; that is, "to be free, we must get rid of the Sinhalese and capitalism." Their dogma was Marxist.

In recent years they have toned this down considerably and now emphasize only the "liberation" aspect of their fight. Terror remains a principal weapon, both in their actions against the Sinhalese and against any within their own people who challenge their writ. When areas are temporarily seized by the government, refugees pour through the lines, heading for safety inside government areas.

On the Sinhalese side, though, war-weariness is also evident. Desertion, for instance, is rampant within the security forces. Yet there simply is no comparison between the manpower and resources which can be brought to bear by the two sides. Ultimately, the insurgents will run out of time and space — and bodies.

For the moment, despite the increasing youthfulness of many of their foot soldiers, LTTE has ample arms and provisions to fight on. Money comes principally through funds gained from Tamil expatriate communities. The insurgents have also been implicated by police (e.g. Interpol) data as using narcotics-trafficking as a funding source. The most ardent supporters of the struggle are those Tamil expatriates who left early on and have minimal knowledge of the extent to which the LTTE has become radicalized and ever more brutal. The expatriates see Robin Hood, but what you have is Pol Pot.

The level of struggle spans the gamut, from guerrilla warfare and political action in some areas to full-fledged conventional slugging matches in others. LTTE has demonstrated the capability to overrun brigade-sized camps and to field the full array of modern weaponry, from homemade tanks to underwater demolitions. Likewise, the government has the same capabilities, though its weapons, being obtained on the open market, are more sophisticated and numerous.

This is important, because without a political solution in place — behind which support can be lined up from both communities, Tamil and Sinhalese — the contest will remain a military fight to the death. This does not need to be the case. The conditions are present for cutting the human ground out from under the insurgents.

— Dr. Tom Marks

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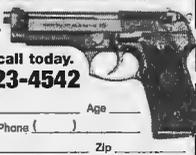
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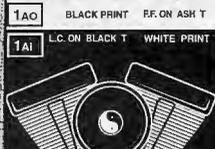
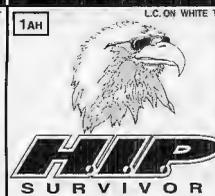


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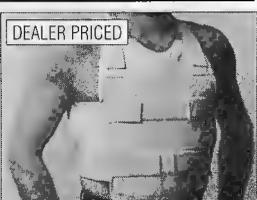
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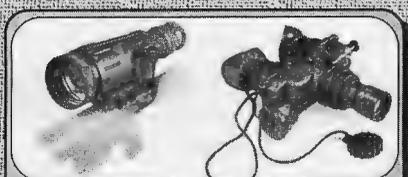


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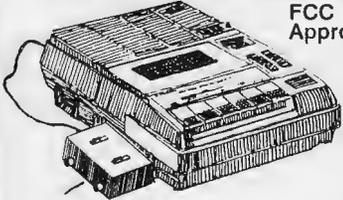
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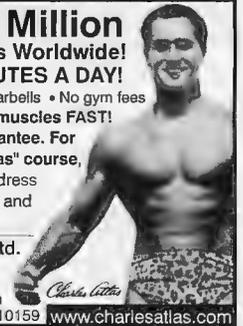
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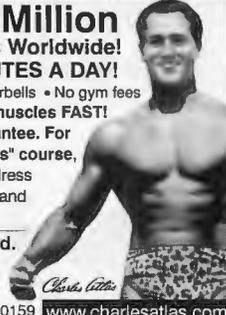
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Bring The Fire Department Home

While our press groans on and on about the departure of Jerry Seinfeld, 36,000 American warriors are sweating it out in the Gulf.

And I mean sweating it out.

"It's 120 degrees," says an Army sergeant. "There's no shelter, except for tents, which provide shade but are worse than saunas inside."

Our warriors were rushed out there last February to do a job on Saddam Hussein. They've been standing tall ever since. Besides being hot and sticky, they're bored to death — and sick of being cooped up.

Their morale has plummeted from "good to go" to "wanna go home." They feel like a fire department that was rushed to a fire only to find a false alarm, but then are told to "hang around, a fire might start sometime this year."

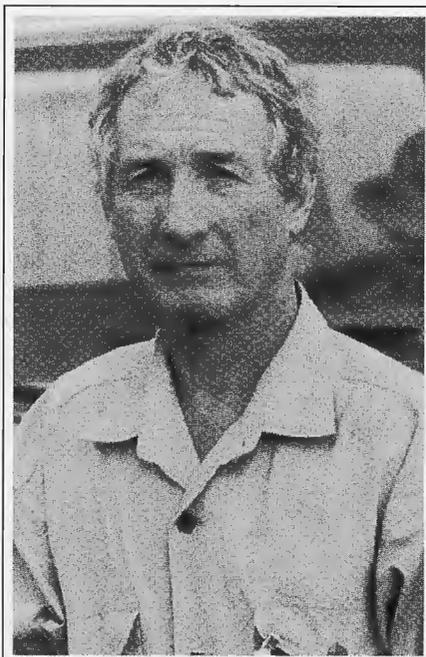
Meanwhile, their commander in chief is too preoccupied with Monica, African Safaris and playing JFK in Berlin to figure out a coherent strategy to deal with Saddam. So he treats his troops as if they're the Foreign Legion.

But should we expect anything else? This is the president who brought about the disaster in the streets of Mogadishu and, when 18 warriors died there, called them "unfortunate casualties;" the same commander in chief who invaded Haiti to support a tyrant, whose gang of monsters has turned that poor island back into a killing field; and the same master of military miscalculation who sent our warriors to Bosnia in 1995 for one year — and *three* years later they're still marking time on Mission Impossible.

After six years of wall to wall disasters, congress should wake up and realize that Clinton and his national-security gang will never get it right. You'd think they'd take the keys to our military machine away from "Crash" Clinton just the way the keys to the family car are pulled away from a kid who goes from fender bender to road kill.

Meanwhile, our country's badly thought-out military misadventures are destroying America's armed forces. A lot of the best and the brightest are walking. In one battalion alone in the Kuwaiti desert four captains have resigned. Equipment is being worn out and the budget is well-below the red line.

To keep a carrier on-station in the Gulf costs a million bucks a day, and we have two carriers out there, and hundreds of \$3,000-an-hour aircraft drilling holes in the skies. I'm told that



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.

the Gulf meter is running at \$200 million a month.

This money is not dough spent on training or new equipment or to repair the shacks that our warriors' families live in. Nor, does it help the thousands who are so terribly underpaid they need food stamps to make it through the month.

We wouldn't be in this terrible fix if we had a president who had worn a uniform or who was advised by a staff of military-experienced advisers. Nor, would we be in such a mess if we had a congress that had a fair number of veterans able to understand the frustrations warriors feel as they're sweating it out on hard duty on a nonsense mission.

Few American politicians have soldiered. Thus, few understand these dumb and repeated missions are driving the members of our armed forces nuts.

It's the press's job to alert the citizens about such harebrained maneuvers, so they, in turn, can have at the politicians. But like congressmen, few editors and reporters have ever worn boots and walked the walk. They've done *Seinfeld* — not the Gulf.

As a result, our uninformed citizens allow our warriors to be so badly misused and abused and only occasionally become briefly outraged when our dead are dragged through foreign

streets. Then, after the commercial, it's back to the hottest media story.

It's time to bring our over-stretched forces in the Gulf home. Saddam won't cause a problem while they're staring him down, but they aren't NATO keeping the Sovs in line. They can't hang out in the desert for another 50 years.

Clinton should follow the advise of a naval aviator "to get us out of here and tell Saddam if he sprays one bug to plan to park his car on a glazed parking lot, because Iraq will be history."

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

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Hackworth's best-selling book, *Hazardous Duty*, has topped 90,000 copies in worldwide sales. ✕

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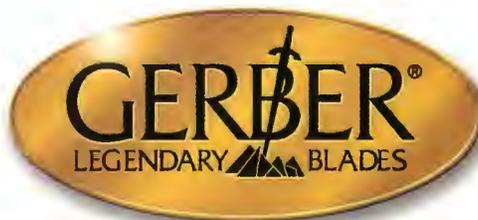
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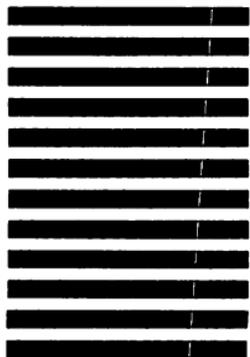
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