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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by **Robert K. Brown**

Welcome Guard Change at NRA

There has been a change of the guard at the National Rifle Association with the return of James J. Baker to head the Institute of Legislative Action. It is a most welcome event, given our dire times.

The Clinton Administration — especially now that the President is exhibiting all the manners of a cornered rat — can be expected to increase its abuse of power in the coming months and attempt to erode our gun rights surreptitiously through the back door.

Jim Baker — especially in the weeks preceding the election — worked closely with NRA's Executive Vice President, Wayne LaPierre, running critical interference for Senator Smith's efforts to eliminate the gun tax. They also worked together to kill the so-called "trigger lock legislation" this year which would have put the government in your home. How you safely store your guns is your own business.

LaPierre and Baker go back a long way, to the early days of the NRA institute, and were among those who developed the techniques to successfully defend firearms rights. They are friends and share an abiding trust. As any commander knows, that is of critical importance to winning.

I've known Jim since we were both a hell of a lot shorter in the tooth. I was initially (and continue to be) impressed by his knowledge, his assurance, his skill and his honesty. Baker has always understood that the hardest currency in Washington politics is a man's word.

He can look the enemy — say a Chuck Schumer — straight in the eye, and let him know the NRA's going to kick ass. I've never played poker with Jim, but he's got all the skills of a fine five-card stud player.

With our friends in the congress, Jim is among the most respected and trusted lobbyists in Washington. He is always welcome and is on a first name basis with the leadership, and more importantly, with the rank and file members of congress. He lets them know where we stand. He never discounts a vote and never takes anything for granted. And he understands the importance, and use, of political intelligence.



He knows that in politics only one thing counts — being on the side with the biggest number of votes.

Jim shares something else critical with his boss, Wayne LaPierre; he's a hell of a listener and he's close to the pulse of the membership of the Association.

His well-formulated initiatives are already underway. First, he's bringing back the young, able and dedicated ILA staffers who left over the past year. Jim remembers when his hair wasn't gray; when he first got to NRA-ILA in the early 1970s as a young prosecutor from Missouri. While aware that experience is gained over time and through hard knocks, at the same time, he understands that a lobby, like the Army, needs troops with *esprit de corps* and youth.

He'll be reorganizing the Institute to make it leaner and meaner, making sure that the real gun lobby — the members of the NRA — are more directly served by ILA's efforts.

He and Wayne are pledging the same kind of long-haul effort that brought about the Firearm Owner's Protection Act in 1986, which restored many lost rights. They are pledging to work to remove the onerous backdoor gun controls imposed by the ATF and "Friends of Bubba" in congress.

With Baker and his deputy, Pat O'Malley, we really have "a winning team" at NRA! ✕

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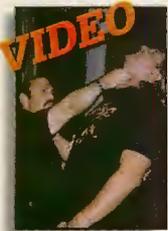
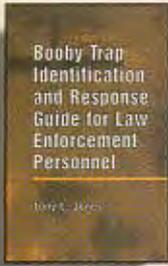
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BOOBY TRAP IDENTIFICATION AND RESPONSE GUIDE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

by Tony L. Jones

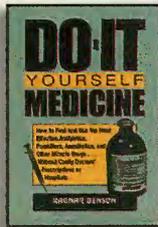
The odds are against your encountering a booby trap. But if your luck deserts you and you find yourself face-to-face with one of these deadly devices, this guide teaches you what you need to know. Find out where booby traps are most commonly employed; the 11 physical signs that often signal a booby trap (and the one indicator that practically guarantees one); what to do (and what *not* to do) if you suspect a booby trap; how to safely search a building, outdoor site or vehicle; the difference between active booby traps designed to injure or kill and passive ones designed to alarm; how various triggers work and proper training procedures to prepare you to deal with a live booby trap. **Warning:** This manual has been prepared for law enforcement personnel. Many of the devices described in it are illegal and *extremely dangerous* and should be handled only by trained EOD professionals. Therefore, it is presented *for academic study only*. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, photos, 80 pp. **\$18.00**



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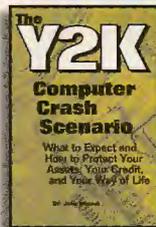


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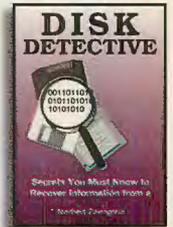


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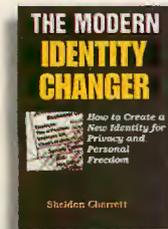


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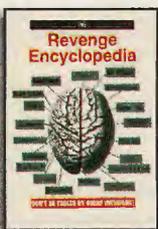


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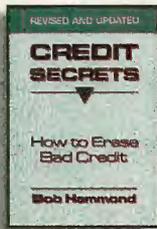
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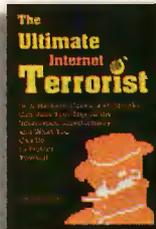
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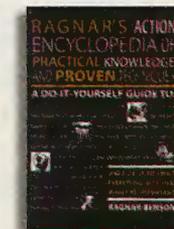


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by Robert Merkle

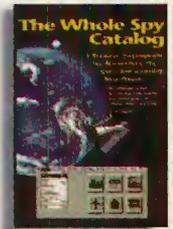
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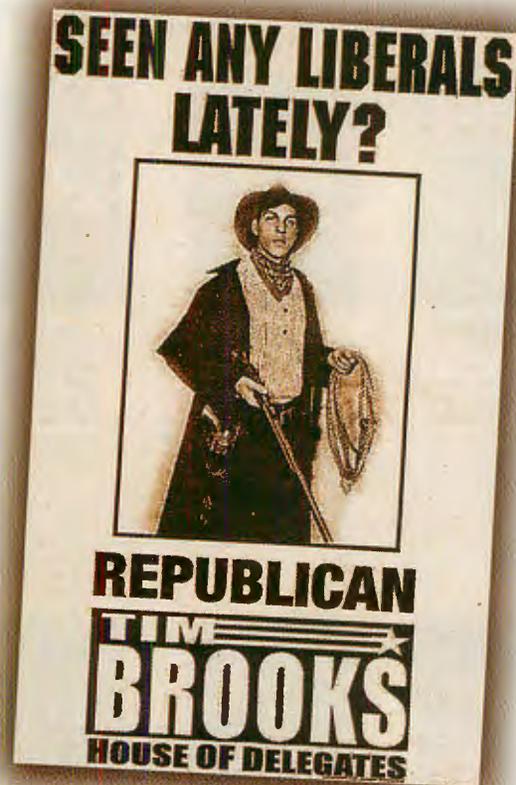
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Cowboy Action Campaigning: Republican candidate for the Maryland House of Delegates, marketing executive and former Marine Tim Brooks, got a lot of attention, but not enough votes, during the last primary with this tongue-in-cheek, politically incorrect poster. His opponents were aghast. ("Oh my, oh my.") His incumbent opponent Ms. Louise Snodgrass huffed, "How much more violence can that picture portray?" "It suggests," blubbered GOP County Chairperson William M. Castle, "that this particular person is interested in eliminating anyone he philosophically disagrees with." Although he did not make the ticket, he was elected to sit on the county's Central Republican Committee, where he may provide a healthy transfusion of new blood, as some people just have no sense of humor.

— Jim Pate

CBS' JAG HITS CNN'S TAILWIND

We understand that CNN is irked, but turnabout is fair play: CBS' *JAG* TV series is doing an episode of fiction-imitating-journalism, which is based on the bogus Tailwind reportage of CNN, wherein journalism-imitated-fiction. *JAG*'s producer Don Bellisario told *The Washington Times*, "We're not out to annoy CNN ... We've based many scripts on real headlines, and it's fair to go after topical subjects which interest the public ... Entertainment based on real events has always been around." Said CNN spokesman Steve Haworth, "... we are not enthusiastic about seeing a fictionalized account of the sarin gas story on network TV." Well, we ask, why the hell not? Afraid their fiction will be better than blockhead Peter Arnett's fiction?

FED PLEADS GUILTY IN TRAINING OF ISLAMIC TERRORISTS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife officer Kelvin E. Smith, who provided paramilitary training to Islamic radicals linked to the World Trade Center

bombing and other terrorist plots, has pled guilty to federal charges. Smith entered a conditional guilty plea to lying to the FBI and hiding evidence by dumping semiautomatic rifles in the Delaware River.

Smith has said he had no idea the people training at his camp were terrorists, but that he thought they were training as mercenaries to help Muslims in Bosnia.

Under current federal sentencing guidelines, Smith probably faces less than two years in prison after his sentencing, scheduled for 18 January.

PUH-RAA-DE ARREST!

Massachusetts solons voted in one of the nation's most draconian gun-control measures this year, and as usually happens with such ill-conceived legislation, the duh-uh factor is already beginning to show. One provision of the law is that no one shall carry in "... any public way an unloaded rifle or shotgun, unless such person is engaged in hunting and is the holder of a valid license ... or unless such rifle or shotgun is enclosed in a case." This, of course, would include marchers in a Veterans' Day parade.

The people who promoted the bill acknowledge that the law appears to ban the use of ceremonial guns, but they described it as an "oversight." "It was never the intent of this bill to stop our veterans from celebrating," said Cheryl Jacques, the leading Senate sponsor of the legislation. Ms. Jacques and House sponsor Paul Casey attempted to restore the right to carry such guns through a separate licensing bill for environmental police, but they were blocked by Rep. George Peterson, a strong opponent of the law, who said he wanted to force a public hearing on the badly flawed legislation.

Some legislators and veterans have said that, even if the provision is not changed, they do not expect authorities to enforce it at ceremonial events. Daniel Walsh, III, an organizer with a Veterans Day Parade of some 1,500 marchers, noted that many expected to carry weapons. "We might just test this thing if we had to," he was quoted.

— Richard Rongstad

NATIONAL GUARD AWAKE FOR Y2K

According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Wisconsin National Guard is prepared to mobilize on 31 December 1999 to deal with possible power failures, water supply failures and other problems that may occur as computers which control such utilities roll-over to 2000. Problems associated with the failure of embedded microchips can possibly affect everything from coffee pots to computer-controlled gas pumps and traffic lights. A representative of Madison-based Alliant Corporation's Wisconsin Power & Light said power failures are likely, as are failures of city water systems.

Colonel Kerry Denson, AG of the Wisconsin Army National Guard noted, "We're expecting Y2K problems. There are so many 'what-ifs' that there certainly will be problems, and we're putting plans together ... It's the same kind of planning we do in advance of a snowstorm or a tornado. When something happens, you always expect the Guard to respond. I never thought I'd be responding to a computer problem, but we'll be ready."

HANGMAN WANTED: NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Do you possess "strength, bravery and a classical education?" Tired of pumping gas or pimping magazine subscriptions? Wanna travel to far-away places, meet exotic people — *and string 'em*

Continued on page 12

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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 SEALs 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?

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"... for hand to hand, knife fighting, rifle combat, and much more. SCARS is also taking the Law Enforcement community by

storm. The summer Olympics Special Security team was required to take our IQS-1 Series just to qualify to get on the team and YOU can have that same knowledge and training. This is your once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to become undefeatable (with or without a weapon) with the *SCARS Professional Fighting System*. Why?

Because Your Life Is Worth Saving

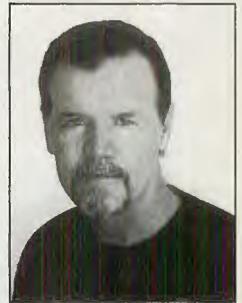
SCARS will not fail you. That's why the US Navy SEAL's, government agents and law enforcement agencies throughout the world are using this easily learned, but lethal, system to save lives. You will know it works after seeing Jerry's powerful unbelievably easy to learn video tapes. Look, you'll receive more knowledge in one hour from Jerry Peterson's videos on fighting than two decades of so-called 'Secret' Martial Arts. Thanks to Jerry's revolutionary training method of Gestalt, it won't take you years, months, weeks, or days, in just a few short hours of watching you will easily handle any bad guy that comes your way!!! I can't tell you the 'god-like' power you get from the truth of this system!

I'm Telling You SCARS Is So Easy And So Devastating, It's 'Embarrassing'.

You will resist at first. You will say bullsh-t! Then you start recalling your real fights on the street. Punches and kicks you have done. You try what-if-ing everything he says. Why? Because he is stripping you of the lies you based your manhood on, he is telling you and showing the cold logic of the fight, ripping apart the lie of defensive action and replacing it with brutal science of combat. Be prepared, it's brutal. The foundation of SCARS is solely mathematical, it follows that the results are absolute, and not emotionally motivated. To a layman it will seem to be quite brutal. However this is pure science of human movement for the purpose of protecting your life. Since it is science, every move in every lesson seamlessly adapts to all modern and ancient weapons. You never waste time learning useless punching and kicking or grappling moves that **DON'T** work with weapons. With Jerry's system you can take the weapon out and you're still a lethal fighter. SEALs using SCARS have never been beaten. Now is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get Jerry's—

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Jerry Peterson

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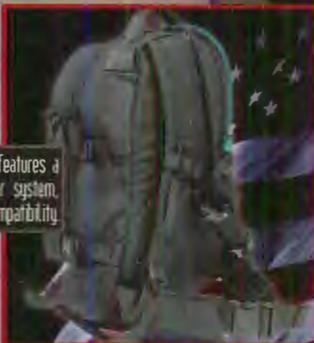
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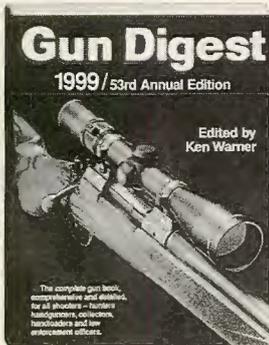


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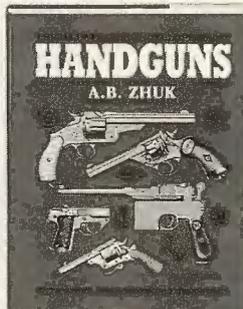
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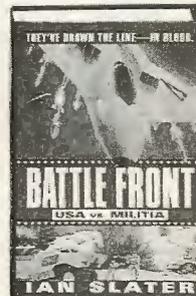
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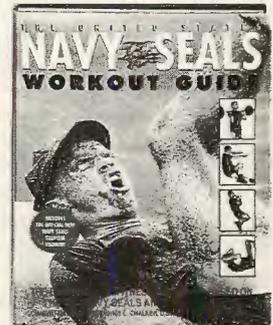
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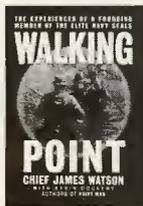
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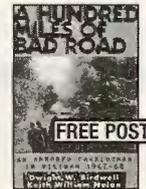
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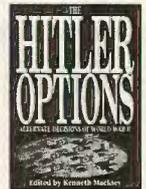
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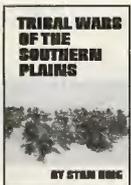
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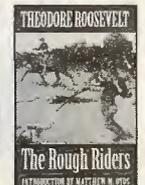
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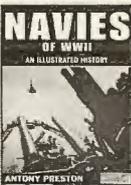
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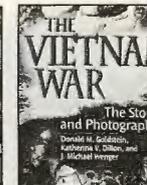
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up? Do we have a job for you!

There is a vacancy for a hangman in Swaziland, and the officials of this tiny African kingdom have opened the slot to international applicants because no locals have applied. According to Justice Minister Paul Kumalo, so far prospective hangmen have applied from Britain, Japan and Canada.

Expect to be busy, as there is a backlog due to the fact that no one has been hanged there since 1980. Rising crime rates and a recent trend among Swazi judges to mete out death sentences has forced the government to dust off the old baobab tree. At least eight prisoners are reported to be on death row, where they have languished while the government attempts to hire a new hangman.

SCUD LANDS IN CALIFORNIA

United States and British officials are investigating how a nearly-operable Czech-made SS1-C SCUD B mounted on a Russian MAZ-543 transporter ended up in Port Hueneme, Calif., after being off-loaded from a British freighter. With a range of 186 miles, the SCUD-B is the most widely distributed such missile in the world and in service with some 16 nations — but it is rare in Southern California. In fact, the only other known specimen is owned by the same enthusiastic weapons collector Treasury sources say sought to import this one.

Customs sources stated early in the investigation that the first missile imported had been properly demilitarized, but that in applying for (and receiving) BATF approval for this second importation the collector allegedly submitted photos of the first missile, showing it to have been properly cut up. John Hensley of the U.S. Customs Service stated, "The guidance was totally intact and the engine was ready to go ... All you needed to do was strap on a garbage can full of C-4 and you had a weapon."

British officials are investigating because they are curious how the missile was obtained in Europe by a British firm and

shipped on a British transport, as traffic in such items is supposedly restrained by the Missile Control Export Regime.

The missile is presently impounded at the Navy's Pacific Missile Testing Center at Point Mugu while the affair is sorted out.

BLOW 'EM UP, BUILD 'EM UP, KA-CHING, KA-CHING

The bombing of the U.S. military barracks in the Khobar Towers complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 American servicemen and wounded another 547 on 25 June 1996, has never been solved. The FBI's investigation was hindered most by a lack of cooperation by the Saudi government, supposedly an ally (see "Hell on Wheels" Oct '96).

Within the U.S. intelligence community, the terrorist attack has been widely blamed on an organization of radical Islamic fundamentalists headed by the fugitive Saudi millionaire, Osama bin Laden, the same person blamed for masterminding and financing, among others, the bloody bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on 7 August 1998.

In the two-year interim between the Khobar bombing and the attacks on the U.S. embassies in Africa, even as intelligence agencies have learned more about the terrorist network bin Laden financed with money he got from his late father's construction conglomerate, the Pentagon has worked on replacement housing for U.S. military troops in Saudi Arabia that would be less vulnerable to truck bombings and other weapons of mass destruction.

A 4,200-bed barracks complex for U.S. troops was recently completed at the Prince Sultan air base, an isolated desert site 120 miles from the capital of Riyadh. The contractor? The bin Laden family, of course.

The Saudi government financed construction of the \$150-million complex, reported *The Washington Times*, which broke the

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story. The Saudis are negotiating with the Pentagon over what part of the operating cost will be paid for with U.S. tax dollars.

The Pentagon says not to worry: U.S. military officials assured everyone that the renegade terrorist is no longer connected to the family business. Bin Laden was banished from his native country in 1991 by King Fahd, but managed to flee with about \$300 million from the family's construction fortune. He has declared war on the United States, its troops and citizens.

The U.S. Central Command planned a security sweep before airmen occupied the building in October, and the secure commo lines were to be installed by American personnel. USCENCOM spokesman, Air Force Major Joe Lamarca, promised *Times* reporter Rowan Scarborough that the new barracks "will be a safe facility for people to live in."

That's what the brass hats said about Khobar Towers.

— James L. Pate

WORTHY WEB SITES

Worldwide Military News Links: more than 160 military news links; Army, Navy, Air Force base newspapers, military news services, plus commercial and foreign military news sources <http://members.aol.com/rhrongstad/news/milnews.htm>

Megaterms: Military Terms and Acronyms, 4.1 <http://www.jcave.com/~bandorm/megaterm/megaterm.htm>

DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, from Defense Technical Information Center <http://www.dtic.mil/doc-trine/jel/doddict/>

Jane's Internet Defence Glossary

http://www.janes.com/defence/resources/defres_gloss.html

MILNET — Military Open Source Encyclopedia

<http://www.onestep.com/milnet/> — not always current, but loaded with useful information anyway.

Armed Forces of the World — War, Peace and Security Guide: Information Resource Centre, Canadian Forces College

<http://www.cfsc.dnd.ca/links/milorg/index.html>

World Air Forces — tell Lt. Col. Fuentes I sent you.

<http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/worldaf/worldaf.html>

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

<http://www.sipri.se> — highly quoted.

The World Factbook Master Alphabetical Index

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/~NAWFB/factbook/global.html>

Chemical warfare, biological warfare, nuclear warfare, NBC, NBC defense, WMD, chemical corps, from Jim Placke — best I've seen on these terrorism related hot topics — <http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/Quarters/4389/>

Small Arms — couldn't find one so I made one with links to small-arms periodicals, and links to Picatinny Arsenal. <http://members.aol.com/rhrongstad/weapons/military/smallarms.htm>

People's Republic of China (PRC) China, Chinagate, and the PLA business empire. <http://members.aol.com/rhrongstad/military/rcap/china/prcmil.htm>

Japan — <http://members.aol.com/rhrongstad/military/rcap/japan/jpmil.htm>

Veterans News & Information Service (formerly Baudo's Vet Links) <http://www.vnis.com/>

Vets.Com <http://vets.com/>

Army — official site — <http://www.army.mil/>

USAF — official site — <http://www.af.mil/>

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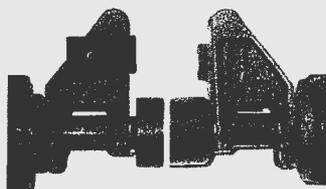
Coast Guard — official site — <http://www.uscg.mil/dotinfo/uscg/welcome.html>

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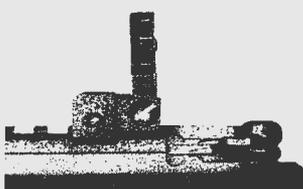
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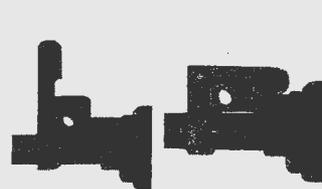
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I Was There

by Ray Pezzoli, Jr.

**"They're bombing the patrol!
RTO, call Brigade. Abort that air strike.
Those are our men!"**

I was on a sweep-and-destroy mission in Vietnam near the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh Province, due west of Saigon. My 1st Infantry Division unit had easily captured an enemy base camp with such efficiency we found hot food left on the tables.

This camp was adjacent to a cool, clean, cascading stream with established enemy defensive positions. I was a reporter for my battalion and had been accompanying Bravo Company for six days. This was our first opportunity to wash and relax.

I finished setting up my hooch in the same spot next to the stream where, earlier, a VC had rested. I rinsed my shirt and dried it over a bush while I cleaned myself and my weapons. My C-ration meal, camouflaged with onion and Tabasco Sauce, began to smell almost savory as it bubbled over the enemy's still-smoldering campfire.

"Pezzoli," called Captain Boyd, the CO. "Do you want to join these men on a night patrol? There's been enemy activity in a field nearby; they've been using it to cross over from Cambodia."

"I don't think so, sir; my shirt is still wet. Anyway, I'm not going to get any photos at night. If they find anything out there, I'll get their story in the morning."

Two 20mm Gatling cannon (a rare fitting) mounted on a jet make a unique *VROOO-MM* as they fire at the rate of 750 rounds a minute, clattering like a string of firecrackers as they explode on contact. A 500-pound conventional bomb *CRACKS* with such force upon detonation, the sound shock wave can be felt past the effects of its blast, while a 300-pound napalm bomb makes an innocuous *SPLASH* before its kerosene jelly ignites into a bright orange fireball.

We felt these sounds — from the same direction the patrol went 15 minutes earlier. They were being hit by our planes! The F-4D Phantom strikes like a bolt of lightning — you don't see or hear it.

This platoon patrol had yet to assume the character of men in combat as it set out from the camp: Some men were slurping Cs, others were involved in conversation initiated during their half-hour break at the VC base camp, and most were bunched up along the trail with their weapons "at the casual."

Sergeant Jackson cautioned some of the men to button it up. "We're out here in Charlie's backyard, so don't leave a trail with those C-ration cans."

Birds were busily chirping while a monkey screeched his approval. A recent shower cooled and consecrated the steamy jungle. The trail the patrol was following displayed signs of intensive travel. The point man stopped to examine some fresh rice along the side.

The simultaneous *VROOO-MM* of 20mm cannon and the *bang, bang, bang* clatter of explosions came upon them so quickly! The diving Phantom sat on its tail while it blasted out of sight on the red shaft of its afterburner. The second aircraft began its identical bomb run.

One squad tried to avoid the attack by darting off the trail into the deep jungle.

The platoon leader hollered to his men to rendezvous at a nearby stream with deep sides where he had popped two red smoke grenades. Both jets launched into their strafing runs as the Air Force Forward Observer, flying overhead in his light observation aircraft, spotted the smoke from these two grenades.

The squad that escaped off the trail ran into an impasse of entangled vines and razor-pointed green bamboo. Although the 20mm rounds were going off all around them, nobody got hit. The rest of the platoon made it to the ostensible protection of the stream where it nestled beneath a maze of vines and dense bushes. Strike two seemed wide, so a third grenade was released to indicate friendlies below. The radioman had been trying to make contact with brigade headquarters to abort the strike, but the high stream banks blocked the signal.

The FO spotted the third smoke — this time *yellow* — and mis-

Scene From The Other Side Of The Tracks



took it as a VC tactic to simulate American troops. He swung the jets around for a strike at the yellow mark on the dark-green canopy below.

The panicked squad tangled in the undergrowth whipped out their machetes and began to hack out of the maze.

Each plane began its pass — the first released two napalm bombs which the troops near the top of the stream could see, each rotating down in slow-motion like fat cigars. When they hit the trees, clear kerosene jelly spewed out and erupted into a boiling fireball.

Men ducked below the bank to dodge the intense heat.

The other bomb slid and erupted harmlessly through a field of elephant grass. Men were still snared in the vines — four were doffed with the blazing jelly, which clung to their bodies like fiery glue, while the fifth was completely incinerated by the primary fireball.

Sergeant Jackson scrambled up the slick shrub-lined stream bank to search for his missing squad. The men at the top thought they must be inside the blazing inferno. Jackson yelled to the platoon leader that he was going over the top and then into the blazing jungle to hunt.

The deep and damp jungle had quickly absorbed the napalm, leaving only the glob halted by the wall of dense vegetation intensely raging. While Jackson was sorting over smoldering embers, the lieutenant was calling for assisting directions from the bank.

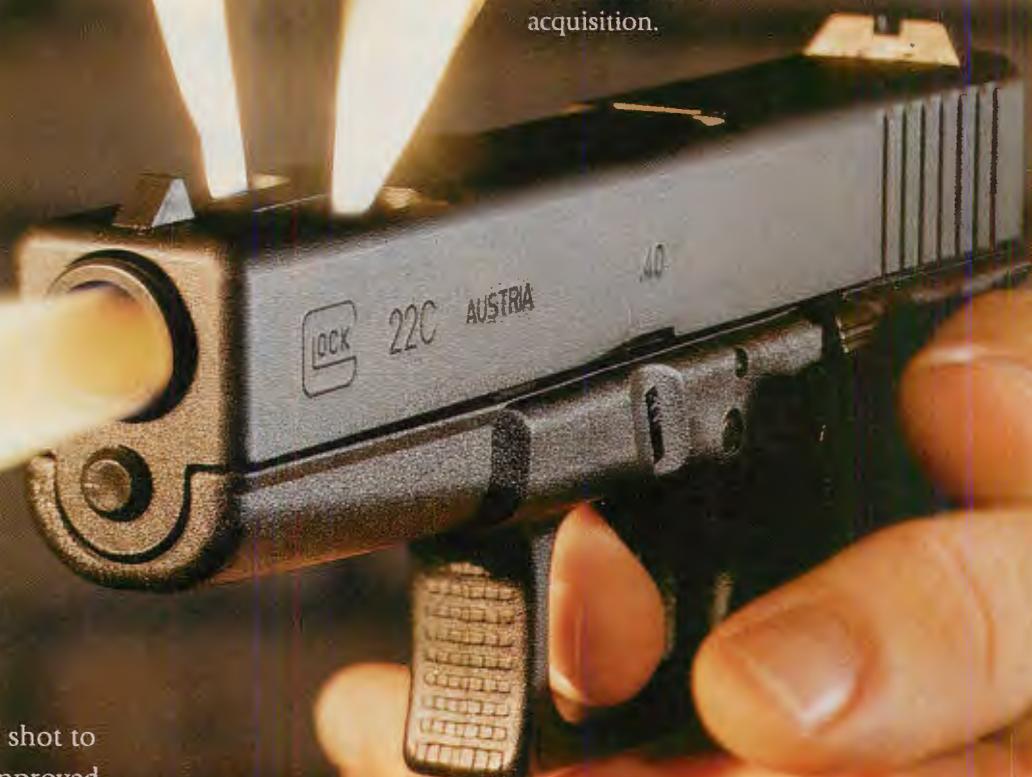
A blinding flash of white nearly surrounded Jackson, who was shielded behind one of the many immense teak trees punctuating the jungle. He was so close to one of the two 500-pounders just dropped by the second plane that he didn't hear the explosions. The teak tree had luckily absorbed much of the energy.

Unfortunately for his platoon leader, who was screaming orders, a piece of shrapnel sliced his helmet and head open like a knife through butter. The blast blew away every bit of jungle vegetation like a giant vacuum sucking up everything except the huge teaks.

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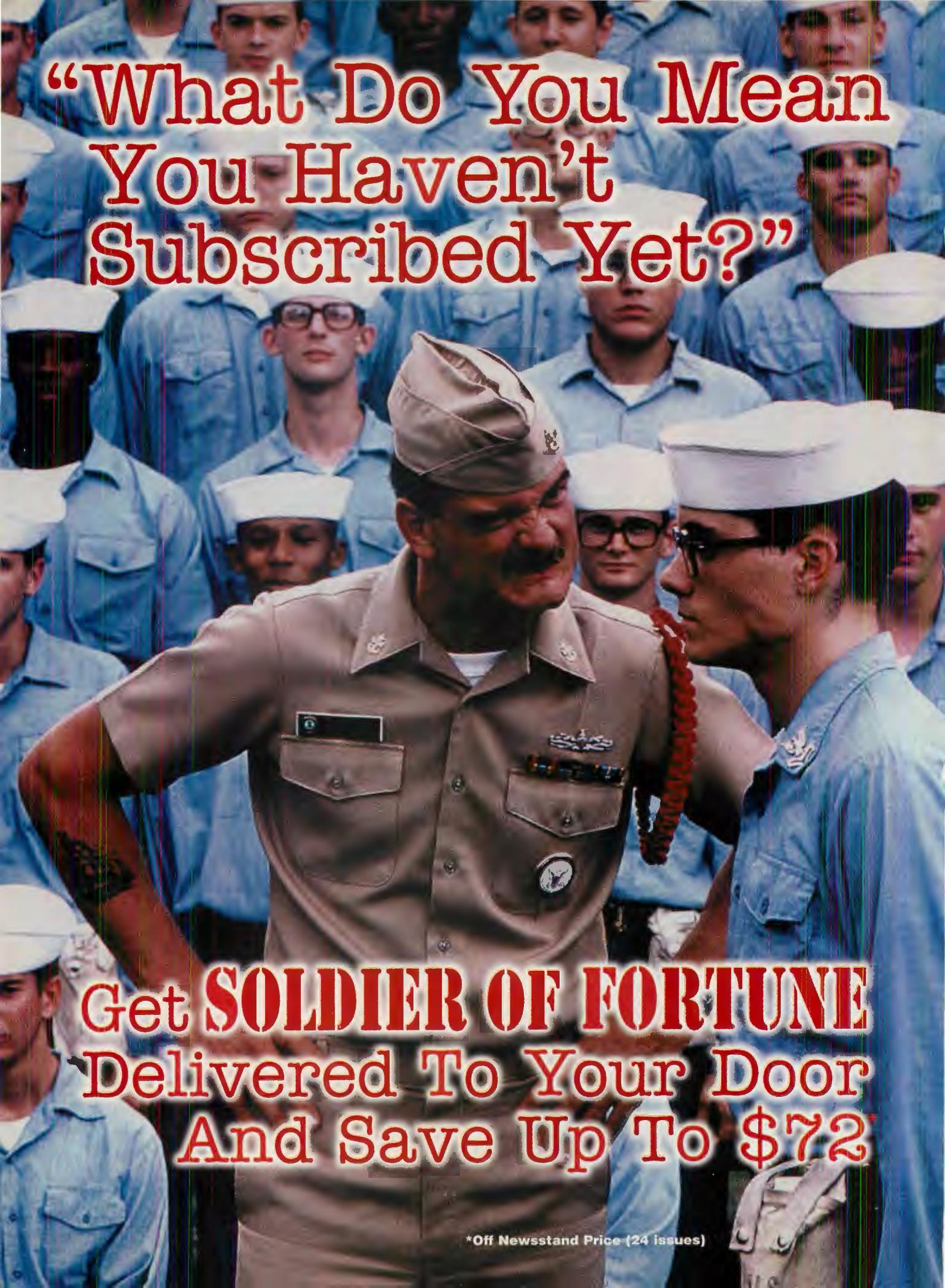
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Jackson ran into the smoldering bomb crater, positioning himself with his hands overhead, his right hand clasp- ing his left wrist — the signal to abort the next strike. "Mount up!" Captain Boyd thundered to his anxious com- pany bivouacked about the VC base camp. "RTO, you have com- mo?"

Everyone threw on their equipment and, oblivious to — or forgetting — any danger from the enemy, pounded down the trail toward the doomed patrol and screeching jets. We reached the perimeter of the air strike in five minutes, just as the RTO shouted that follow-up strikes had been aborted.

The terrain here was void of leaves, vines, and branches, most completely incinerated.

Normally, the bush has a damp sweet smell; now it smelled like a burning newspaper that had just been extinguished with water.

Everyone appeared numbed by what we were experiencing — it was like watching an offensive TV program while being unable to switch the channel.

Our column slowed to a crawl to get around some shrubbery blasted across the trail. I heard a *cracking* and stopped to see what it was coming from. A giant teak tree to my right seemed to be making the noise, so I stopped and looked at it. As I watched, the *crack- ing* became a tearing *roar*. The tree, which had been weakened by the blast, was falling — directly at me!

The bad dream continued. While I sprinted down the trail to escape being pulverized, I could feel the lethal breeze an enormous



The deep and damp jungle had quickly absorbed the napalm, leaving only the glob halted by the wall of dense vegetation intensely raging.

courtesy author

branch made as it thundered past me, pounding the ground.

A few feet ahead, a limb screeched across the top of my helmet and some scratchy thing fell down my neck inside the collar. I flattened my fatigue jacket against my neck, squashing the prickly thing. After I undid my pistol belt, I shook my collar and saw the remains of a dead scorpion.

The trail ahead had been scorched by the napalm, with three of the burned men lying on the side. They had fist-sized holes burned through their equipment and fatigues, with splotches of skin gone under-neath. Nobody cried.

They numbly pointed to a man entangled in the maze of vines and shrubbery, the victim impaled and burned black; most of his uniform and equipment had disintegrated. The only thing left was remnants of a thick pistol belt, rucksack and harness. The napalm burned only a 20-square-foot area because the thick wall of jungle.

As medics began treating the four burned survivors, I stood mes-merized by the still-smoking body of the dead man, who a scant five minutes before was alive and recognizable.

"Captain Boyd, over here, sir!"

The weak shout came from one of the two adjacent smoking bomb craters, Sgt. Jackson struggling to climb out.

"They just kept on comin', sir, they just kept comin'." I signaled

Continued on page 88

EVOLUTION

CZ

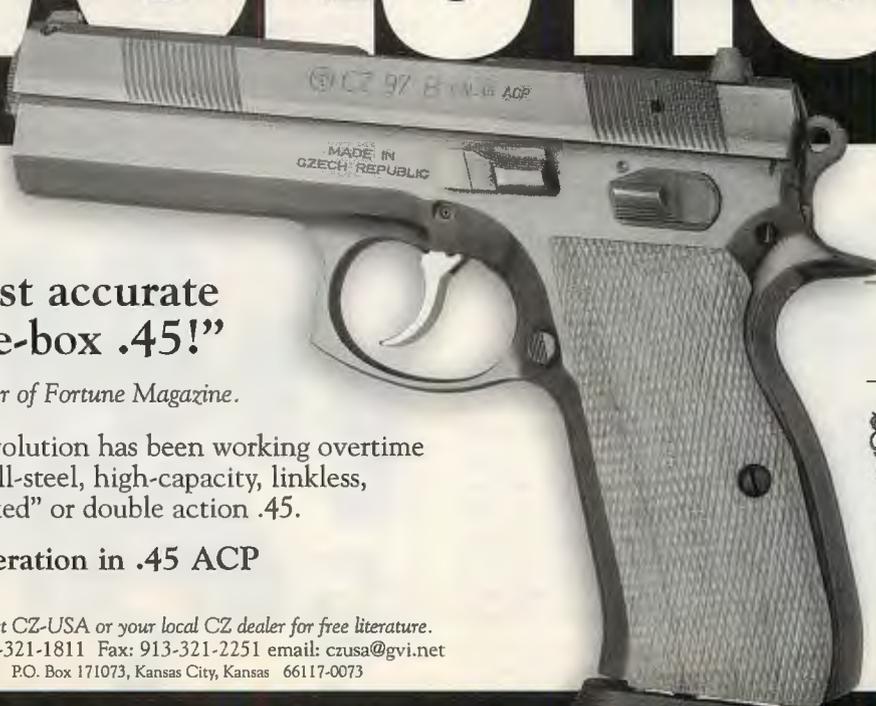
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The Super Tactical conversion comprises a competition-proven high-tech composite gunstock package. Features include a ergonomic thumbhole design, carbon composite construction for maximum rigidity, straight-line comb for comfortable recoil management and an integral bipod stud. The Urban Model (top) features reduced length and weight.

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Contact TechniCarbon Dynamics, Dept. SOF, Box 1088, Oneco, FL 34264-1088; phone: 941-751-4985.

Pro-Ears Hearing Protectors

The maker bills these as providing “superior, electronic stereo hearing protection/enhancement.” This doesn’t leave a poor editor many adjectives to work with — but that’s all right as every claim the maker asserts is absolutely true.

We’ll first note their comfort, not because that’s the only adjective



left, but because it is important: Safety gear that is not comfortable will not be worn. The Pro-Ears Hearing Protectors are some of the most comfortable units we’ve ever put on, and they stay comfortable all day, which is good, as they are uniquely effective in that they can be worn all day and protect your hearing from harmful sound levels. While they not only allow safe levels of sound, such as conversation, to reach you, they can be set to pick up and amplify subtle sounds you don’t want to

miss. In other words, every sound out there is picked up and passed on to you at a safe and adequate level.

How do they do this? We, of course, know they use magic — but we’ll give you their explanation anyway. First, the Pro-Ears do not simply block out harmful levels of sound. They “compress” the harmful sounds and pass them on to you at a safe level. Because they do not simply shut off at a predetermined point, they do not cause gaps in your hearing. And since each ear’s unit is separate, they can be tuned to the requirements of each ear — which you do with a single knob on each unit.

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Contact RidgeLine, Inc., Dept. SOF, Box 930, Dewey, AZ 86327-0930; phone: 520-632-5800; fax: 520632-5900; e-mail: ProEars@neta.com

NICO Sound and Flash Grenades

NICO Pyrotechnik’s full line of sound and flash grenades and related accessories, long the choice of elite units in Europe, Australia and Asia, are now available to qualified buyers in the United States. NICO presently maintains a full inventory of one-, two-, seven- and nine-bang grenades, as well as one of the largest selections of 40mm low-velocity munitions, available for immediate shipment on clearance by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (sales are regulated under the National Firearms Act).

The NICO family of one-, two- and nine-bang grenades also accepts a unique Plus system into a pre-drilled opening in the base of the grenade to allow the placement of training talc, CS dust, CS burning and white smoke at the end of the final event (*bang*).

An electrically initiated version of the seven-bang grenade may be vehicle-mounted, or mounted to a robot, or placed at a designated location and command/electrically initiated. The full line of NICO products are manufactured under ISO 9001 guidelines.

For further information contact Fred Pickler, Manager Law Enforcement Products North America, Dept. SOF, Box 1292, Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480; phone: 910-395-2082; fax: 910-395-6678.



Nikon High-Power Superior E Binoculars



Serious binocular users can now have a high-power 12x50 Nikon that utilizes the same mechanical and optical performance of the 8- and 10-power models, in a larger objective version particularly adaptable and suited to tripod use. This unit has a very long eye relief (17.4mm) in relation to its magnification, making it suitable for eyeglass wearers who want the 5-degree angle of view (261 ft. @ 1,000 yards).

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For more information or the dealer nearest you, contact Nikon Sport Optics, Dept. SOF, 1300 Walt Whitman Rd., Melville, NY 11747-3064; phone: 800-247-3464.

Cold Steel Para Edge Neck Knives

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All feature non-slip Kraton handles, and are available in four blade styles: spear point, double-edge point, clip point and Tanto point.

For more info, contact Cold Steel Customer Service, Dept. SOF, 2128-D Knoll Dr., Ventura, CA 93003; phone: 800-255-4716. ✂



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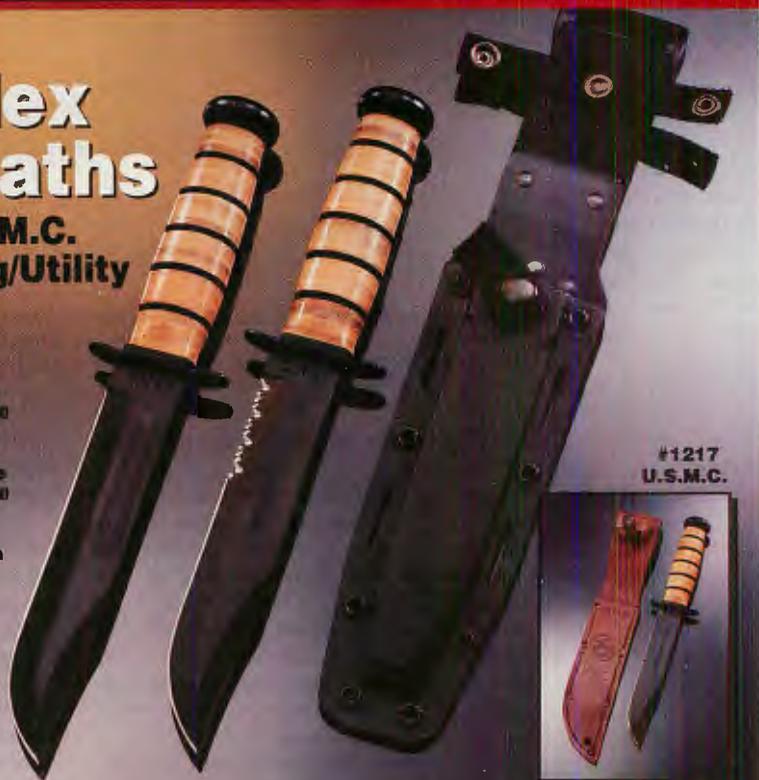
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Sidearms For Soldiers Of Fortune

I have often been amused at the “uneducated” mainstream society’s disdain of their interpretation of a soldier of fortune. With regularity I get phone calls here at Thunder Ranch: “Do you teach mercenary, soldier-of-fortune stuff?” Armed with Webster’s definition of soldier of fortune: “adventurer, a person who follows a military career for adventure or profit,” (I personally think most of these, willing — or unwilling — adventurers got more “adventure” than money.) I looked for someone who may fall into this category; someone who played a significant, but unremembered, role in history. Who was this adventurer and what kind of weapons did he use? Did his weapons work? How would our adventurer’s sidearm, for example, compare to the technology of today’s counterpart?

My selection of an adventurer? John Martin. John Martin, whose given name was Giovanni Martini, an Italian emigrant who served as drummer-boy for Garibaldi at Villafranca before coming to America. Because of civilian job shortages — or maybe in pursuit of adventure —

“John” joined the U.S. Cavalry. On the day of 25 June 1876, John Martin was a trumpeter assigned to “H” company of the 7th Cavalry, detailed as an orderly to one George Armstrong Custer. John Martin’s significance? He was probably the last white man to see Custer alive, and, more importantly, he was the trooper who carried the famous note to Benteen that read: “Benteen. Come on. Big village. Be quick. Bring packs. P.S. Bring Packs. W.W. Cooke.”

Our adventurer’s weapon? His sidearm would have been the 7½-inch barreled Colt model of 1873 Single Action Army caliber .45. The ammunition carried was a 250-grain lead conical bullet propelled by 30 grains of black powder with a muzzle velocity of about 900 feet per second. In an effort to learn more about the realities of “gunfighting” and the equipment used, both present and past, the ranch staff and I have been shooting and researching different weapon systems.

In 1995, I started using, shooting and carrying Colt Single Action revolvers. Two points of interest need to be clarified at this time. First, even though there is a strong and growing presence in the sport of cowboy action shooting, this is not what my research has been directed to. Cowboy action shooting is a sport — it is not a true representation of how and why these weapons were used. Second, my research is not advocating that a Colt Single Action as the best choice of a handgun for a gun fight, but

if I had to use a single action in a fight, what would be the best way to use it. Would the single action hold up to the rigors of daily heavy use with full power loads?

Researching these techniques and equipment led to the development of instruction at Thunder Ranch designated as the Pre-1900 course. The first class was held in December 1996 with 23 participants. With the likes of competent shooters Mike Venturino, Thad Rybka, Ray Coffman and a host of others, we put these “old” guns through a week of strenuous use. The course included all of the normal Thunder Ranch

curriculum: shooting and moving, movement to cover, cover fire while loading, low light (using oil lanterns), and applied tactics to the Terminator and Tower simulators.

Calibers used included .45 Colt (the most prolific), .44-40, and .38-40, all using full-power loads. In the five days of the program the participants fired over 20,000 rounds of ammunition without one weapon failure! Of all the weapons present, the majority were Colt’s similar to the one our adventurer, John Martin, used, with the exception of a few Rugers and one Uberti.

In December 1997, this group of “Regulators” returned for a second go around. Interestingly, remembering all the lessons learned in ’96, almost all the revolvers that the group brought back were Colts. “If it ain’t a Colt, it ain’t shit,” seemed to be the group motto. 1997 brought the weapons right back into all the rigors of the previous year to the tune of an additional 20,000 rounds, plus a



Research at Thunder Ranch on the weapons systems of pre-1900, like this Colt Single Action Army .45 similar to the one carried by John Martin at the battle of Little Big Horn, drives home the point that it is the man behind the gun that makes the difference.

couple of good cylinder-drenching rains. New challenges were addressed with the advent of the "stagecoach." This event utilized a full-size, fully moving, bouncing, jerking gun platform. The moving coach gave new meaning to shooting and attempting to load while in a moving environment. As the stagecoach traveled down a mile of rough road, the right side of the coach addressed 20 targets of different sizes and locations, while the left side responded to a similar threat on their side of the coach. At the end of the run, the coach turned around and came back. After the first run, and after figuring out how to hang on to the moving platform without falling off, the contemporary techniques of negative lead on moving targets made the targets ring with the sound of constant impacts. We found that, believe it or not, it was easier to hit with a revolver while moving in the stagecoach than with a rifle. Apparently, the longer sight plane of a rifle "picks up" the additional movement of the stagecoach and makes the acquired sight harder to hold on the target.

The additional 20,000-plus rounds fired created only one breakage, (and it wasn't a Colt) among the revolvers. Revolvers firing black powder cartridges seemed to vary in the length of time before they would start to "bind" up and foul. Some revolvers using black powder fired several hundred rounds before becoming sluggish, where others would only fire 25 or 30 rounds before slowing. The shooters using smokeless powder didn't seem to have much trouble going hundreds of rounds without binding problems. In the short-barreled guns of 4¾-inch length, there was some unburned power build up. This problem was also traced back to the ammunition maker who seemed to have changed powders or charge weights without being aware of the unburned problem.

After spending some dedicated time with this weapons system, it is my opinion that these revolvers can be shot very well and can be a viable tool in a fight. Used by competent operators who cover each other while loading, tactically loading partially depleted cylinders, loading with their head and eyes up and are motivated to fight, they can be effective handguns. The effectiveness of the 1873 .45 caliber SAA Colt over the .38 caliber DA revolver is confirmed by their recall to the Philippines (after being decommissioned) so that they could be used against the Moro tribesmen.

The 1873 Colt revolver would not be my first choice of a handgun in a fight, but then *no handgun* would be my first choice of a weapon in a fight. A handgun is properly used to fight your way to the rifle you should have not put down in the first place, whether it was a trapdoor Springfield in .45-70 or a Colt M16A2 MIV carbine.

After three years of research and the firing of thousands of rounds of ammunition, it seems then, our friend, John Martin, the soldier of fortune and adventurer, had a serviceable sidearm with him the day of his ride into history. ✘

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FLAK



Pimple, or Pimp?

I just finished reading your article in the November issue of *SOF* on Operation Tailwind. I have also read the book *SOG* ... and I am not at all surprised at the capabilities of the most outstanding soldiers in the world. Working at an infantry division HQ, I have had dealings with special operations soldiers (both Special Forces and Long-Range Surveillance) and on every occasion I witness patriotism and commitment to honor, duty, God and country that is far and above that of common civilians and other soldiers. Whether Arnett ever resigns over what he has written, he will now forever be viewed for what he is: a two-bit paperboy who markets and reports his personal liberal feelings as

legitimate news. Because of some jealousy of what he could never possibly become (an elite soldier), and his unending hatred of the military and the war in Vietnam, he feels a need to dig up and continue his attack on the military and our war in Vietnam.

Instead, he has shown himself as a person who is willing to give up the only thing a journalist really has, his honest word. After reading the accounts of what Operation Tailwind was, and hearing what Arnett has to say for himself, I have concluded that Arnett wouldn't amount to a pimple on the butt of the worst soldier in MACVSOG. He will always be viewed as an arrogant, over-rated, lying writer who portrays himself as a victim when in the presence of heroes.

Out here,
Capt. Richard L. Graham
Asst. G3 381D(M)



Fonda Correction

Let me respectfully accurize your description of Jane Fonda: Jane is not an "anti-military" activist, as you described her. Nor is she a pacifist. She proved that when she actively supported the military — of Communist North Vietnam. I have the picture of her sitting on a commie AAA installation (and wearing a communist-issue helmet) burned into my memory.

How did *Barbarella* get away with it? After all, look what happened to Tokyo Rose.

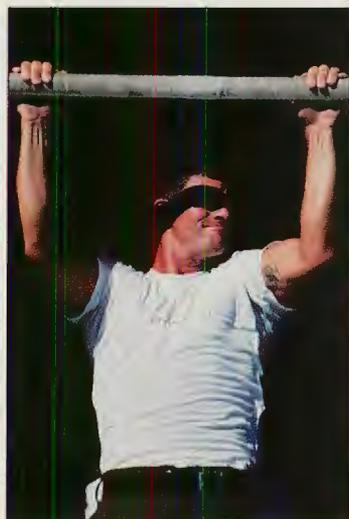
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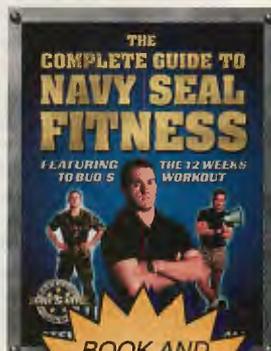
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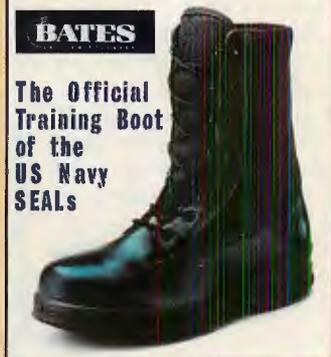
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Master Lopez shows numerous armbar and wrist lock techniques designed to control and destroy your opponent. You will learn how to easily sucker your attacker into an armbar for quick victory, regardless of his size. Tape also teaches the secret escape and counters to these armbar and wrist techniques.

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5. COMBAT SAMBO VOLUME 5 — ULTIMATE GRAPPLING - LEG LOCK AND ARM LOCK FIGHTING COMBINATIONS

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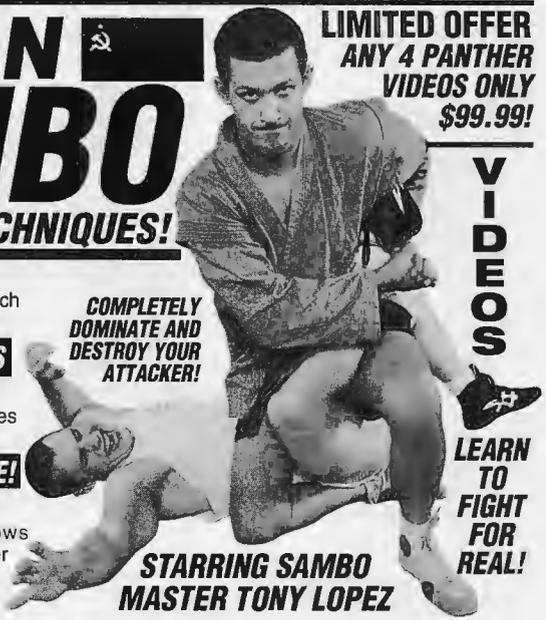
This important video shows how to dominate your opponent on the ground with superior COMBAT SAMBO grappling techniques. It's all here including; guard and mount positions, reversals, armbars, leg locks, chokes, submissions, and much more. Take full control of your opponent with this sensational ground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

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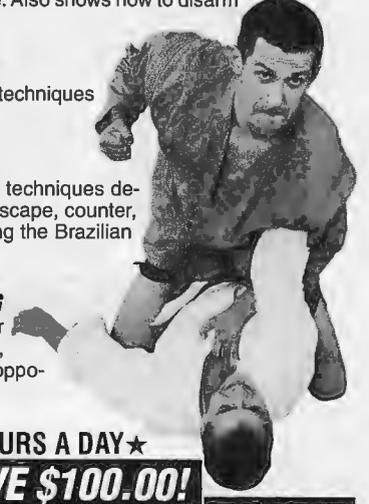
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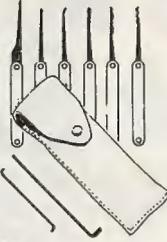
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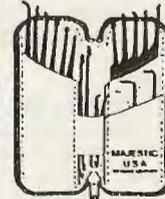


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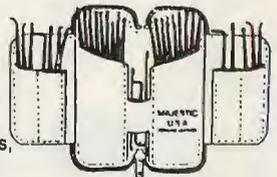
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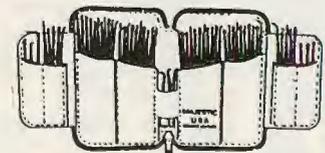


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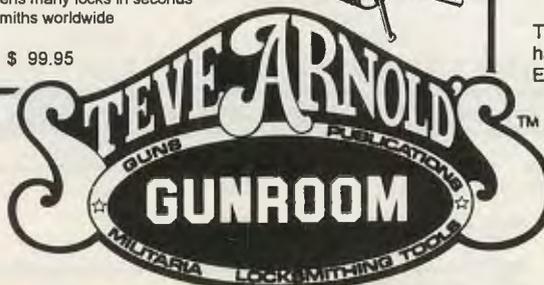


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Hmmmm

Forget about "NATO attacks Serbs," this is Yugoslavia we're talking about. A virtual pantheon of former Soviet air defense technology ... this won't be a piece of cake.

On 15 June 1389, the first battle of Kosovo was fought when 30,000 Turks slaughtered and obliterated the Serbian nation. The Battle of Kosovo is refought, commemorated, every year on the anniversary of "Vidov Dan," the day "when we shall see."

The Battle of Kosovo is as important to the Serbs as the Exodus to the Jews or the Crucifixion to the Christians. Refighting is what they know best. Prepare to battle.

AP: ... "Meanwhile, a top Russian military official said Moscow was prepared to take Yugoslavia's side in case of NATO airstrikes — and provide weapons if necessary."

Let me get this straight: Russia wants billions of dollars in financial aid, an airlift of emergency food and the option to shoot us out of the sky in Yugofuckingslavia?

Clinton is taking us riding, prepare for the worst.

Jim Coyne [a former *SOF* editor]
via e-mail

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Thanks again for the great magazine. It

is among a dwindling number of sources for the truth in print in this world. Knowing of your penchant for accurate reporting, I must point out that your spelling of the word *cojones* in the November '98 issue is incorrect. *Cajones*, the word you use, means drawers (as in chest of drawers), boxes or shipping crates.

Now, if you meant to imply that someone has a pair of *cojones* the size of *cajones*, that would be an entirely different matter!

Doug Andrews

Ain't language fun? As a gleeful collector of others' malapropisms, we're happy to contribute to the wealth ...

Outnumbered

Your serious articles are outnumbered by your choice of advertisers, apparently anybody and anything with money goes. Will not make the same mistake * twice! * (buying magazine).

Goodbye.

(unsigned from Lafayette, Ind.)

P.S. — Don't call yourselves patriots!!

Well, now, see, if you'd a just bought one more issue, you could have seen your letter in print.



Loose Cannons Sink Ships

Clowns parading around with military credentials don't just hurt veteran's images. In the case of the U.S.S. *Cabot Dedalo*, an aircraft carrier museum in New Orleans, they almost killed 60 people, squandered thousands of dollars of veterans' donations and left the museum bankrupt and \$5 million in debt.

In 1989, I was part of a group that arranged donation from Spain of the former U.S. carrier *Cabot* for a museum in New Orleans. Since we were all civilians in the project, we hired experienced Navy veterans to oversee the arrival, the board of directors, and operations of the museum. Unfortunately, the retired admiral, former Blue Angel, Annapolis graduate and Navy Cross-recipient hired as Executive Director never served in the Navy. His assistant, who claimed to be a highly decorated Navy captain, turned out to be an enlisted man who had been booted out of the service. Unfortunately, these facts were uncovered six months after they had been put in charge of an aircraft carrier.

In the first month, the carrier almost capsized at the dock when the "Captain" ordered the wrong tank pumped overboard. Only counter-flooding by a passing tugboat crew saved the ship and the 60 volunteers

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years now, and a reader of *SOF* for about 15 years. I've deployed to Operations Desert Storm/Shield, Restore/Continue Hope, and Joint Endeavor/Guard and you guys are the only ones I've found who actually let the folks at home know what's going on at the individual "Joe" level.

I'm currently stuck out in the middle of the Pacific on a rock known as Johnston Island. I'm sure you guys know a lot more about this rock than *Newsweek* or *Time*, but that's because you care about what's actually going on and not just what makes big headlines.

Thanks again for just being yourselves, and letting us read about what matters to us and not some punk politician.

Sgt. John F. Payne

Sarge, one letter like yours per month and we'd all leave work grinning. You guys in the trenches are the ones we write for, and it means a lot that you took the time to let us know you appreciate our efforts. We plan to keep on keepin' on.

Johnston Island, eh? Well, be sure you wash your hands real good before chow.



Trouble in Paradise?

I have been a reader of your fine magazine for longer than I like to remember — fact is, I find your material the intellectual bright spot in my magazine reading.

Articles on concealed carry such as "Gun Running Made Easy," by Jeff Hoffman in the November issue are of great interest but are written as if every American has the right to self-protection. Give some thought to us 2nd Class Americans who live in the "People's Paradise of Hawaii," also known as the "50th" or "Aloha State."

I don't care how many tours you did in 'Nam, or the scars you got to prove it, you cannot get a permit to carry concealed or otherwise in this state — and you are dead meat if you get caught.

I have lived here since I got discharged from the Navy in 1965 — that's 33 years. My business is here, my friends of a lifetime, my family, but how much longer can we stand to have our backs to the wall? The political process is slow, does not work, or is broken — take your choice. Many of us this year are voting with our feet, selling out with a tear in our eye, leaving for the Mainland, and a state that permits an American citizen, a vet, who knows damn well which end of the barrel the round comes out of the freedom of self-protection.

To those who are left, last one out please turn out the lights.

Aloha,
Deane Gonzales, Ex-USN 7M3

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FR 7s And 8s

In the November issue, your response to R.P. Faust's request for information on the Spanish FR8 Mauser contained incorrect data. The FR8 was the last in the series of CETME-type training rifles, and was made by arsenal conversion of the Spanish M43 (M98-type) action. The earlier version of the training rifle, dubbed the FR7, was made by conversion of pre-98-type Mauser actions, and as you mentioned, is not suitable for shooting full-power 7.62 NATO ammunition.

Several years ago I managed to acquire two of the FR8 pieces, one to shoot and one to salt away. Both of these pieces were unissued, and were in essentially new condition. Complete mechanical examination (a prerequisite before shooting any surplus piece) revealed that they both suffered from far too generous headspace. Even though unfired and in perfect condition, they both would swallow a NATO "no-go" gauge like it wasn't even in the chamber. Perhaps the Spanish CETME cartridge dimensions are longer than those of the NATO cartridge, or perhaps their chambering technique was to purposely ream their chambers too deep to accommodate full-auto ops in the CETME.

One can overcome the headspace condition on the FR8 by reloading cartridges cases which have been fireformed in the chamber in which they are to be used. When fed a diet of these, my "shooter" is quite accurate. I added a LER scope forward of the action, and turned mine into a pseudo-scout.

Hope this helps.

Jim Taylor

Thanks for the input. Sloppy chambers are so common on Spanish Mausers you almost have to wonder if it isn't done on purpose to help extraction (as was done on the Canadian Ross). I was hot-stove lounging at my favorite gun shop many years ago when a fellow brought in an as-new M43 in 8x57, with a handful of split-shouldered WWII German cases. The chamber was so "generously" long the bolt would almost close on a .30-06 case. The fellow had bought it to sporterize, anyway, so it started life anew as a pretty-as-any-FN-you-ever-saw elk rifle in 8mm-06, which is a good round and (for a good gunsmith) a straight-forward conversion.

Special Ops Force

We've had numerous letters regarding the television series Special Ops Force, known last season as Soldier Of Fortune, Inc. The show airs in a large number of markets across the U.S. Being syndicated, however, it is presented at varying times and days. Please consult your local TV Guide for current programming schedules. ✕

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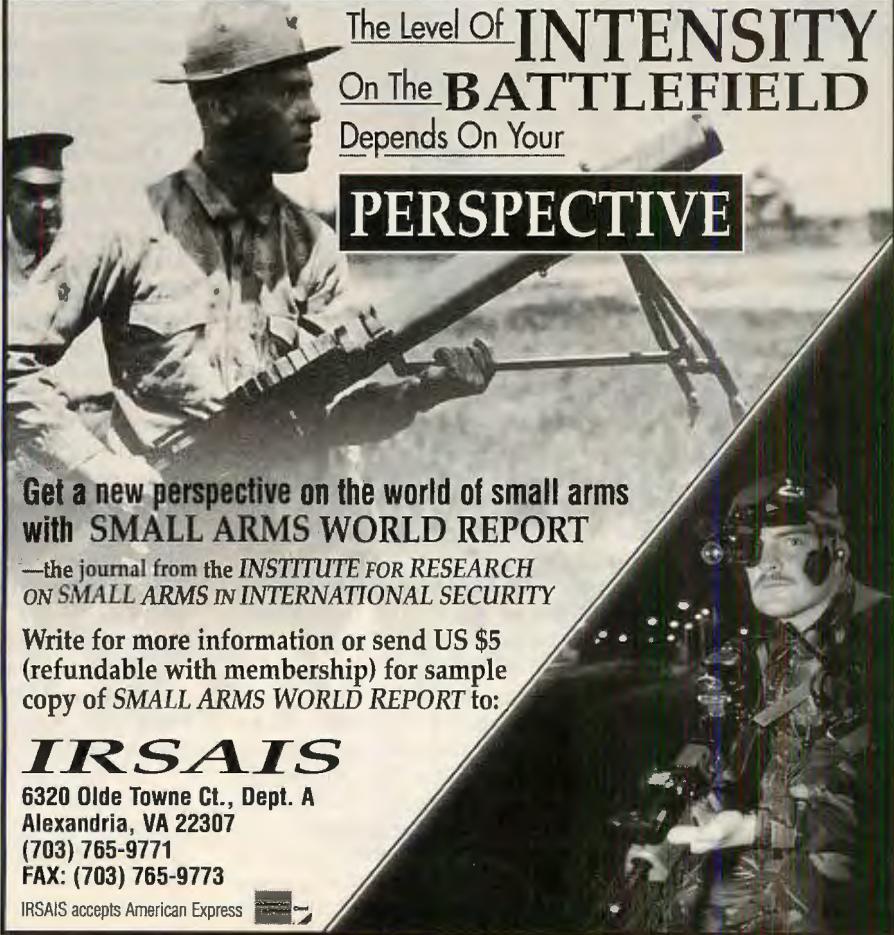
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SLICK-WILLIE-WATCH

Wanted: Moral Outrage

Marine Shane Sellers, a mustang major with 20 years in the corps, stands for truth and justice, willing to jeopardize his own career in an effort to uphold it. He should be honored and commended by military veterans.

In the 19 Oct. issue of *Navy Times*, Sellers wrote about Bill Clinton, expressing the outrage so mysteriously missing from public debate about the president's Oval Office sexual escapades. He didn't mince words, writing, in part:

"First, let's be specific. It's not about sex. It's tawdry and titillating, to be sure. But for all its soap-opera quality, what Clinton and Monica did as consenting adults boils down to adultery. And one should call an adulterous liar exactly what he is — a criminal."

Sellers criticizes those politicians who favor something less than impeachment for Clinton. He relays a scenario in which military

The warning was issued by Air Force Captain Brian Bengis in a base newspaper at F. E. Warren Air Force Base and was widely distributed on the Internet to military personnel who had been using e-mail and electronic bulletin boards to lambaste Clinton. Subsequent warnings were issued by other military brass.

As often pointed out in this column, it seems logical military personnel would hold their commander in chief in contempt. Time and time again in recent years, military personnel have been publicly reprimanded, disciplined and even dishonorably discharged for committing adultery. None of the affairs have even approached the tawdry nature of Clinton's offense, in which a woman in his employ, nearly half his age, had sex with him on federal property even while the president held phone conversations with members of congress.

Society, apparently, will excuse Clinton's crime. Meanwhile, those who work for him in all branches of military will be held to standards so high they can't even criticize their boss.

And that's O.K. The worst outcome of Clinton's crime would be an across-the-board lowering of standards among the ranks. The sovereignty and security of America rests entirely on the superior standards that make her troops the finest in the world. Those standards can't be lowered in order to make Clinton a less awkward commander in chief.

So obey military law, strange as it may seem, while answering to a criminal who makes mockery of military standards. Hopefully, the American military and the country it protects will far outlive Clinton.

Meanwhile, hold Maj. Sellers in high esteem as someone who violated one military rule to uphold another, more important element of military justice: It's called truth.

Clinton is, in fact, an adulterous liar and criminal. We'll say it again. Clinton is an adulterous liar and criminal, liar and criminal, liar and criminal.

Most of us at *Soldier Of Fortune* are military veterans, no longer subject to Article 88 of the uniform code. So, let's help out active-duty heroes, such as Maj. Sellers. Let's help our active-duty colleagues focus on their work and adhere to the letter of the Uniform Code.

Every military veteran can help by making it a personal commitment to express moral outrage about Clinton at every opportunity. Express your outrage on Internet bulletin boards, radio call-in shows and with letters to your local newspapers. Point out the hypocrisy of allowing an adulterous, lying, law-breaking commander-in-chief continue to oversee a military that demands stellar moral standards among its ranks.

Repeat the words of Shane Sellers, and other military personnel, who put their careers on the line in order to do the right thing. Express for them the moral outrage about Clinton that has been so mysteriously and frustratingly absent from public discourse. As Sellers so brilliantly stated it:

"The distinct lack of moral outrage at Bill Clinton appears to be his salvation. He'll avoid justice because we'll just yawn and let him go. Yet in the meantime, we are repulsed by the wealth of coverage given to the scandal.

"We can't have it both ways. Wrong is wrong, regardless of the identity or position of the perpetrator. The only way to push this scandal off the front pages is to assert some moral courage."

Which is what Shane Sellers did, and he might pay for it. Let's not leave him out to dry. Veterans have nothing to lose. If an active-duty Marine can speak out, risking his livelihood, it's deplorable for veterans to stand idly by. ✕



justice dealt with a Marine for lying. Keep in mind, Sellers isn't talking about someone who lied under oath and on television to the entire American public. He's talking about a Marine who made bad judgment in a jam.

"Imagine it," Sellers wrote. "An officer makes three false official statements. In effect, the officer lies. His supervisor calls him on it. By way of explanation, the officer makes these comments: 'Mistakes were made.' 'I always intended to make it right.' 'I did not want my conduct to embarrass my family or the Marine Corps.'"

"Sound familiar? Though they are the words of a Marine in trouble for lying, they are remarkably similar to Clinton's explanation for his 'inappropriate relationship' with Monica Lewinsky."

The Sellers article goes on to explain how the Marine, an otherwise stellar performer, was forced to retire early.

Sellers' article hit print one day after military officers and enlisted personnel were warned how military law prohibits "contemptuous words" about the commander in chief. Article 88 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, in fact, "expressly prohibits any commissioned officer from using 'contemptuous words' against the president."

Any officer violating Article 88 faces a maximum penalty of dismissal, confinement for one year and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. Enlisted men and women face similar restrictions under military regulations.

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WORLD SITREP

1

UNITED STATES

Cold War Secrets: Secret documents declassified in September show President Johnson authorized U.S. military commanders to use nuclear weapons without presidential approval in four scenarios during cold war. Two involved preventing nuclear attack (using nuclear weapons on submarine about to fire nuclear missiles and the use of nuclear anti-missile weapons) where the time to contact the president would be tactically suicidal. The other two involved retaliation for nuclear attacks and allowed counter-attack only if it proved impossible to contact the president. • **U.S. actively considered nuclear attack on China in 1964 to stop China's nuclear weapons program, but decided against it. The Russians were consulted and reportedly offered no objections to proposed U.S. attack.** • **Leading Edge Warfare:** Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment proposes new kind of warfare for 21st century. Plan outlines scenario in which U.S. could disrupt enemy aggressor nation by injecting phony radio and television programs that appear as real broadcasts. Another system might be "intercontinental artillery," which could throw a 1,000-pound shell up to 4,000 miles. Such weapons, firing from secure bases far from enemy, would strike targets with pinpoint accuracy, or detonate in sky to demonstrate to local population what could happen.

2

RUSSIA

Cutting Troops: Interior troops reorganizing, and will probably be cut to 120,000 (compared to 304,000 in 1994). These "armed police" were singularly ineffective in Chechnya, with poor morale, bad discipline, inadequate training, ineffective coordination, and under-maintained equipment. • **Chemical Sale:** Government maintains building blocks of its chemical and biological weapons programs, while the poorly policed facilities export the technology to highest bidder. The DIA says it strongly suspects offensive biological weapons research ongoing at some facilities in violation of 1972 treaty. • **Strategic Bomber:** Government looking for new strategic bomber (which will also serve as maritime patrol and anti-submarine aircraft) to replace the Bear, Blackjack and some Backfire bombers. Tupolev came up with Tu-202 subsonic flying wing, which was rejected. Tupolev now proposes variant of Tu-404 lifting-body airliner, which would provide internal volume for huge supplies of fuel and weapons.

5

INDIA

Unrest Continues: India-Pakistan negotiations, the Islamic insurgency in Kashmir, the uprisings in eastern India, and the ethnic combat in Karachi (Pakistan) continue as they have for years. Christian missionaries in Madhya Pradesh (India) come under frequent physical attack.

6

KOREA

Dire Consequences: U.S. warns North Korea of "dire consequences" for further tests or missile exports. • **Mad Cows?** South Korea rejects North Korean allegations that cattle donated by Hyundai founder Chung Ju-Yung had been poisoned. South Korea arrests three civilians for spying for North Korea. U.S. confirms North Korea had been holding U.S. citizen Kim Jin-Kyong as spy since mid-September. In 1998, North Korea adds 13,000 troops, 800 artillery pieces, and 171 naval vessels.

9

ANGOLA

"Armed Band" Clashes: Minor clashes around country leave dozens dead; most clashes involve "armed bands" not particularly related to either faction. Six hundred UNITA troops with 400 dependents desert Savimbi in September to join dissident "UNITA Renewal Committee." Government lifts suspension of UNITA officials on 23 September.

13

TURKEY

"Satanic" alliance: Turkish-Syrian tensions, already high due to Turkish-Israeli military cooperation, continue to increase. Turkey says it will impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on Syria due to its support for the PKK. Syria responds by denouncing Israeli-Turkish alliance as "satanic" and behind the threats. Turkey sends more troops to border and publicly claims "right to retaliate" against Syria for PKK operations in Turkey.

14

PHILIPPINES

Moslem Rebels Killed: Troops, searching for six kidnapped foreigners, kill three MNLF Moslem rebels and five Abu Sayyaf rebels in September. Government rejects church demands that military stop hunting the rebels as this might endanger hostages. Philippine Airlines closes down in September, further damaging economy.

15

RWANDA

Street Vending Ban: Grenade explodes in Kigali, killing one and leading to banning of street trading. Rwandan courts sentence four people to death for genocide, release one for time served, and sentence three more to prison terms. Former mayor of Muukingo handed over to U.N. tribunal by Benin. Officer and two enlisted men arrested for killing two Hutu women who tried to reclaim their homes, which the officer had appropriated for himself.

3

CHINA

Path to Freedom? Government forces top military leader General Zhang Wannian to retire after series of financial scandals and disciplinary problems. Chinese police round up dissidents just before visit by French Prime Minister Jospin (who said China was "on the path to freedom"). Dissidents note detentions were notably shorter (most lasting a few days) since last summer, and that police often "visited for a chat" instead of arresting them. China signs International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 5 October, but refuses to set ratification date.

4

COLOMBIA

Drug War Updates: President Andres Pastrana seeks U.S. and international financial support for peace deal with rebels. FARC names three delegates to the peace talks on 27 September, but says it will continue operations during talks. Government rejects rebel demand for a prisoner exchange as condition for starting peace talks. Government captures Jesus Gonzalez, an FARC commander.

7

LEBANON

Villages Shelled: Skirmishes between Israeli and SLA troops and *Hezbollah* and *Amal* guerrillas continued. Israeli artillery retaliate for each attack, and Israeli planes struck targets in Lebanon on 22 September. Ceasefire Commission finds Israel guilty of shelling villages and the guerrillas guilty of firing from inside villages. Syria selects Lebanese Army General Emile Lahud as next president of Lebanon.

8

ALBANIA

Attacks and Demonstrations: Unrest continues, manifested by minor gun and bomb attacks on rival party officials. Pro-Berisha demonstrations continue, forcing Prime Minister Nano out of power on 28 September. Interior Minister Teta resigns at same time. Nano loyalist Pandeli Majko (who led student protests of 1990) was named new Prime Minister. Protests by pro-Berisha factions continue.



11

UGANDA

Rebel Infiltrators: Troops arrest 200 people inside capital, saying they suspect rebel infiltrators. Former cabinet official Everisto Nyanzi and nine others were charged with treason in plot to overthrow government. Taban Imin, son of Idi Amin, was identified as leader of guerrilla unit based in Democratic Congo.

12

NIGERIA

Democratic Progress: *Junta* government of General Abubakar continues progress toward democracy, and acceptance by the international community. Abubakar's appeals for end to international sanctions blocked by human rights groups.

16

SIERRA LEONE

Clearing Villages: Rebels in north massacre scores of civilians in attack in Kamalu. ECOMOG troops from Guinea cleared the villages of Kanathortor, Kakula, Kathiteneh, and Yabaha by killing 50 rebels. ECOMOG says large numbers of rebels massing in Liberia. U.N. says 30,000 people face starvation in battle-hit northeast. U.S., Britain, and Germany send financial and logistical support to ECOMOG.

World Sitrep is compiled in part from the biweekly newsletter *For Your Eyes Only: An Open Intelligence Summary of Current Military Affairs*. Published by Tiger Publications (P.O. Box 8759, Dept. SOF, Amarillo, Texas 79114-8759); subscriptions are \$77 per year (26 issues), \$81.80 in Texas. Sample issue available for \$3. Those interested in world intel are encouraged to subscribe.

COLOMBIA

During the first week of August, just days before Colombia's Conservative President Andres Pastrana took office, leftist guerrillas launched a wave of attacks in at least half of Colombia's 32 provinces.

The results of two weeks: at least 104 military and police dead, 243 guerrillas killed, and 129 to 158 government troops taken prisoner, according to government tallies. (While the guerrillas haven't publicly released their own casualty figures, some observers believe the government's claim of guerrilla dead is too high.)

Despite a guerrilla history of coinciding attacks with national public events, this ferocious offensive caught many Colombians off-guard.

For it came just a few weeks after Pastrana, as president-elect, had secretly led a small entourage into the jungle, to discuss peace with Manuel Marulanda, the 60-something-year-old leader of the largest guerrilla faction, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Following up on Pastrana's historic move, a non-governmental commission traveled to Germany, to talk about "humanizing" Colombia's 34-year guerrilla conflict with representatives of the second-largest rebel faction, the National Liberation Army (ELN).

Bloody Murderous Hypocrisy

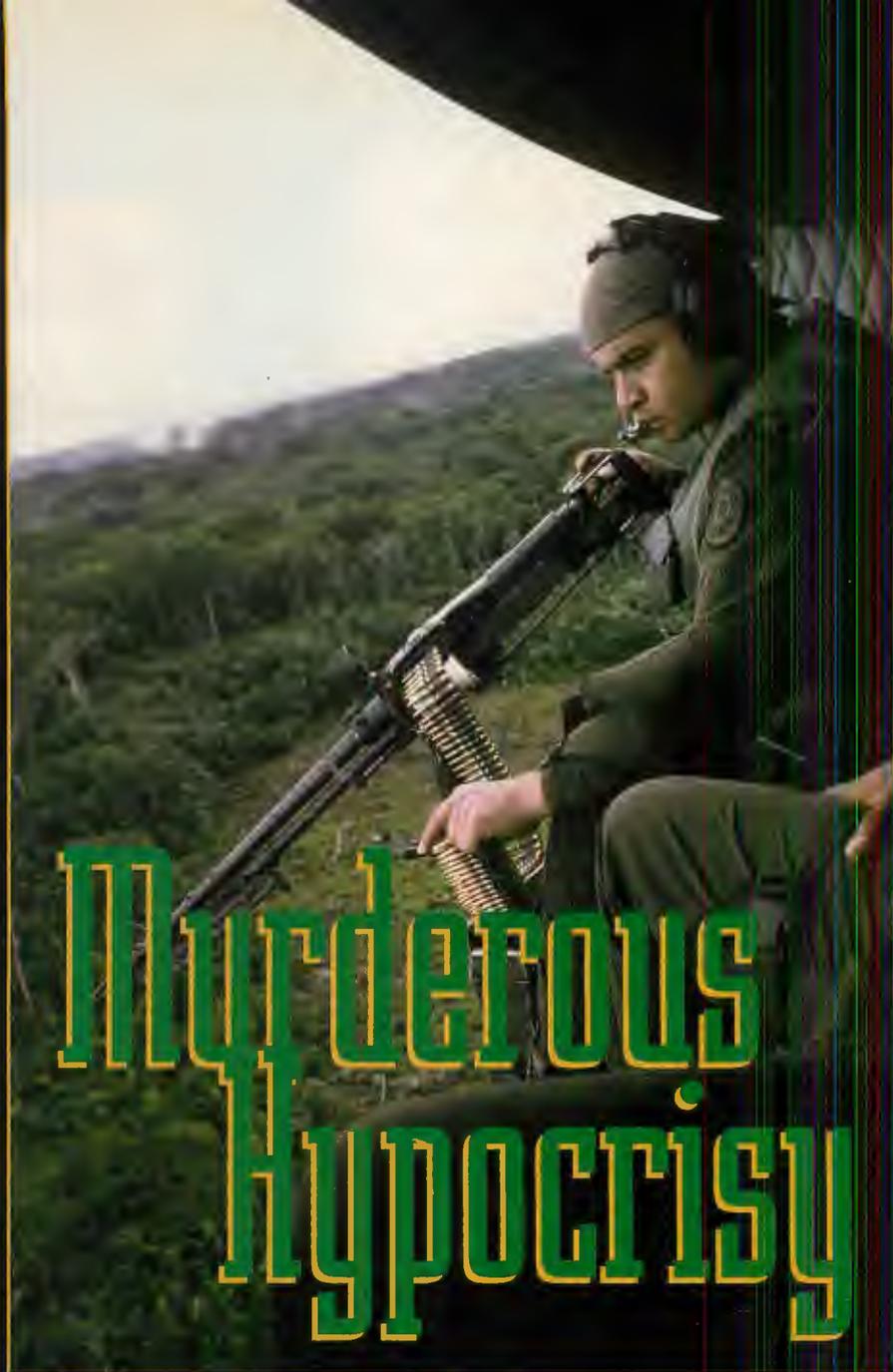
But there was nothing humane in the explosions and gunfire.

Responding to outcries that its bloody offensive was murderous hypocrisy, the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinator — an umbrella group agglutinating the some 11,000 to 15,000 insurgents of the FARC, ELN, and several smaller insurgent factions — justified the offensive as a "farewell" to outgoing Liberal President Ernesto Samper, whose government was plagued by a bitter drug-money scandal.

However, one of the biggest blows of the rebel offensive — the overrunning of the joint police/military garrison in the town of Miraflores, some 440 kilometers southeast of Bogota — only stoked suspicions of guerrilla involvement in illicit drugs.

Guerrilla leaders publicly dismiss being part of the drug trade. But testimony by law-enforcement officials, peasants, guerrilla defectors and others — as well as captured guerrilla documents — implicate the guerrillas in building up their war chest. They've built it up, by some estimates, by hundreds of millions of dollars annually by protecting and taxing drug crops, laboratories and clandestine airstrips.

That could be why guerrillas overran



Colombian Gs On The Offensive

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

Miraflores not only in August of 1998, but in 1995, too. (See side bar story.)

Epicenter de Coca

This small town, near the center of Guaviare province, is Colombia's "epicenter" of the cultivation of coca leaf — the *materia prima* for cocaine — states a Colombian intelligence report.

The anti-narcotics base and airstrip in Miraflores have played a vital role in the joint American/Colombian law-enforcement strategy of coca eradication.

About 80 kilometers south of Colombia's primary regional anti-narcotics base at San Jose de Guaviare, Miraflores adds that much more reach for Turbo Thrush and OV-10 Bronco airplanes to spray herbicide into the heart of coca country. And Miraflores can provide a stepping-stone for the further expansion of anti-narcotics outposts.

In fact, Miraflores has been called so important that U.S. Anti-Drug Czar General Barry McCaffrey and other high-ranking U.S. officials have vowed U.S. assistance

not only to reconstruct the base, but to expand and enhance it.

That's a tall order. Surrounded by jungle, reachable almost exclusively by air and river, Miraflores presents a myriad of challenges for that goal to be realized. Not the least of these is that many, if not most, of its several-thousand inhabitants, who are directly or indirectly dependent on the coca economy, are hostile to the anti-narcotics program.

Tripping To Miraflores

I am one of the few Americans to have gotten a firsthand glimpse of that hostility. One partly cloudy morning, several months before the second overrunning of Miraflores, I boarded a green UH-1H Huey helicopter, at San Jose de Guaviare. It was part of a police squadron of three Hueys and two McDonnell Douglas-500 helicopters on a mission to provide armed protection for the arrival in Miraflores of a police DC-3 re-supply plane.

The Hueys bristled with M60D machine-guns, while the MD-500s were each armed with an electrically fired 7.62mm mini-gun fitted on the left side. In each Huey rode four or five elite police Jungle Command troops. Wearing olive-green uniforms and American military Kevlar helmets, they were impressively armed with M16 rifles, M-203s (which combine an M16 with a 40mm grenade launcher), SAW and M60 machine guns, and South African-made revolver-drum-fed 40mm MGL grenade launchers.

We were supposed to depart early. But since last evening, there were radio reports from Miraflores of a guerrilla harassment attack and rumor a cop had been killed and several were wounded. Our flight was delayed a couple of hours, as officers reviewed the situation. We finally took off, with a thudding roar, at about 1100 hours.

Flying at about 2,000 feet, the lush green

landscape below was a patchwork of farmland, pastures, and jungle for about the first 20 or 30 minutes. Then it turned into solid triple canopy jungle and looked like a carpet of broccoli.

We flew in and over clouds. Some were white, some dark, and through their openings I scanned the ground, looking for coca plantations. My red-bearded Californian friend, Wayne Mulgrew, who flew anti-coca spray planes for the U.S. State Department-contracted company Dyncorp (and who later died in a crash), had warned me in San Jose de Guaviare that coca grows in the Miraflores region like wheat grows in Kansas.

It was no exaggeration. About 15 minutes from Miraflores, small and medium enclaves of scrubby, green coca started to appear in the jungle.

Soon, huge tracts of coca streaked the jungle and extended for as far as the eye could see.

Evading Gunfire

Our choppers swooped down to tree-top level, as an evasive precaution against potential gunfire, and our pilot virtually played leap frog with the other helicopters.

We flew along brown snaking rivers until the rusty, corrugated tin roofs and dilapidated wooden shacks of Miraflores came into view. For a place supposedly so important in the multi-billion-dollar cocaine industry, it had no glamour whatsoever. In fact, it looked worse than most dirty poor tropical Third World towns.

The town was a sliver several blocks wide, sandwiched between the Vaupes river and a long dirt airstrip. On the other side of the airstrip was the joint police/military base. Literally, Miraflores was a town divided — and the airstrip was both a symbol and a physical reality of that fact. On one side,

the coca-dependent town; on the other — behind walls of sandbags, metal barrels, and flimsy barbed wire — the law.

We didn't land immediately. With our doorgunners holding their M60Ds in readiness, we circled overhead, waiting first for the DC-3 to land.

It finally came into view. Its white-with-emerald-green-trim paint job blazed in the bright sunlight. It touched down, leaving a trail of billowing red dust. (Safe landings weren't something to take for granted; a few months later a guerrilla land mine almost blew up a DC-3.)

Our helicopters then landed consecutively. Clouds of rich clay dust enveloped us as we disembarked. Police troops rushed to the aircraft, to help unload and carry crates of small-arms ammunition, eggs, rice, beans, medicine, toilet paper and etc. to the base.

Its rectangular compound was only about 30 yards away, up a low embankment. Inside, to the left, was the police anti-narcotics area, manned by about 80 police. It was little more than a few crumbling one-story buildings with several rooms and peeling aquamarine paint. At the other end of the compound, a couple hundred meters away, was an army barracks made of camouflage-painted concrete blocks. It billeted about 100 soldiers. Between the police and army installations, were the concrete ruins of the old town hall, destroyed in the 1995 attack, which were now home to a platoon of Colombian marines. Beside the ruins was a simple adobe Catholic church.

However, these buildings were not what first caught my interest. In the center of the compound, near a dirt soccer field, was an army colonel questioning and lecturing a large group of civilian men — mostly young — about an attack a few hours earlier. From what I later heard, a terrorist had thrown a hand grenade at a foot patrol in town, slightly wounding two soldiers and two civilians. Rumors of any dead were rejected.

San Jose de Guaviare's anti-narcotics police commander, Major Horacio Galeano, who had flown in with us to lead the mission, made no bones about his suspicions that these men were guerrilla collaborators, if not outright guerrillas. "They are from the town," the stocky, mustachioed major sputtered to me, as we stood a few yards away. "The town supports the guerrillas. They

(opposite page) A Colombian Police doorgunner fires an M60D machine gun to "soften up" the landing zone prior to a raid on a coca-processing plant in a shack. The recent rebel offensive has stoked suspicions of guerrilla involvement in illicit drug trade. (left) Jungle Command Police patrolling the streets of Miraflores. Guerrilla leaders publicly dismiss being part of the drug trade. But testimony by law-enforcement officials, peasants, guerrilla defectors and others — as well as captured guerrilla documents — implicate the guerrillas in building up their war chest with drug money.





(above) The family of coca-growing peasant farmers stand bewildered, as Colombian Jungle Command Police burn a small lab nearby. (above, right) Colombian Jungle Command Police trooper surrounded by children. Thousands of kids work in the coca business, mostly picking coca leaves. (right) Jungle Command Police post watch after a terrorist grenade attack in Miraflores — epicenter of Colombia's coca-leaf cultivation.



give information to the guerrillas on how to attack the base and kill my men.”

Despite Maj. Galeano's suspicions, none was arrested and the men were sent back across the airstrip. Shuffling along in a gaggle, some were laughing.

However, I spotted one young woman staring out from behind a door of iron bars,

in a small blockhouse near the anti-narcotics area. A marine sat guard outside, kept company by a soldier who stood. They wouldn't allow me to photograph her. At first, the marine said she was in jail for a coca violation. Then he said she was a "friend" of someone wanted on coca charges. She was pretty; her dark deep eyes

and black wavy hair contrasted nicely with her fair skin and clean white shirt. But she looked scared, nodding an unconvincing "yes," when I asked her if what the guard said was true.

Who she really was would remain a mystery to me until later that day.

Funky Town

Wanting to explore the mystery of Miraflores itself, I crossed the wide airstrip and walked into town. My steps crunched with apprehension.

I had heard tales of Miraflores being the "Wild West" — almost suicide for gringos. I also had a feeling that if Maj. Galeano knew what I was doing, he would get angry and stop me. (He later chewed me out). But

Mariela, a pear-shaped, dark-haired woman in her early thirties, vividly remembers the terror when guerrillas first overran Miraflores in 1995. She was a cook at the 80-man anti-narcotics detachment there.

She was in the rustic "cooking house," bantering with a police lieutenant and another person when powerful explosions ripped through the evening calm and shook the kitchen with terrible force.

She fell. A bullet streaked past. Mariela, her pre-teen daughter, and another person clambered

Back in Bogota, police pilots monitored their comrades radio calls for help. "Our men were cheering when Air Force OV-10s armed with rockets appeared in the sky at 0800 hours, but were disheartened when they didn't fire," recalled Police Air Service Captain Gustavo Garzon.

"The OV-10s were afraid of hitting our troops. It wasn't until about 1000 hours when three or four police Hueys arrived. Two were armed with mini-guns. I think it was our mini-guns debut, and they tore the guerrillas to pieces."

But that assault was only a warm up for the August 1998, over-

Narco Firefights

into a ditch-like crawl space and shut themselves in under planks.

Leftist guerrillas of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) were attacking the police garrison and town hall from several positions.

The police scrambled to their battle stations as fast as they could and fought back for dear life. Gunfire and grenade and rocket explosions thundered and flashed throughout the evening and into the morning.

"We couldn't sleep," Mariela told me. "In the morning, about nine o'clock, we looked out through the cracks and saw some people. At first, I thought they were police. They wore uniforms. But, no, they were guerrillas, sitting. There were three of them. Guerrillas were all around, shooting at police headquarters. I saw one of the guerrillas get shot and fall over."

running of Miraflores, which, this time, had about 120 army and marine troops augmenting the some 80-man police force.

Colombia's *El Espectador* newspaper reporter Ingrid Reyes sneaked into Miraflores by river, as army reinforcements were en route to take reconrol of the town. "The panorama was more than Dante-esque," she wrote. "It was simply infernal. There were unexploded bombs, mortar rounds, and gas cylinders around the anti-narcotics base ... It was terrifying to confirm the accumulation of corpses around the base."

The most terrifying weapon, according to some residents, was the guerrilla "cylinder bombs" that made the ground shake. This could have been an influence from El Salvador's recent guerrilla conflict, where insurgents used homemade mortars called *tepezuintles* to fire propane-gas cylinders filled with high explosives.

The following picture emerges from local news accounts. The attack, involving an estimated 400 to 600 FARC guerrillas, com-



the gruff, square-jawed major had disappeared to deal with garrison matters, and my apprehension subsided somewhat when I saw some of the Jungle Command troops, who had flown in with me, posting watch on street corners.

Others were patrolling the hard clay streets.

Some streets were swept. Others were littered. Horses, oxen-drawn carts, and pedestrians moved along them. Vehicles were scarce. Lining the streets were cheap, dirty restaurants, vegetable stalls, meat markets, modest shops, and seedy bars. Ugly prostitutes gawked with vacant eyes from the paneless windows of some taverns.

The town stank of mud and rotten fruit. It was a fetid stench in the sweltering heat.



It was so heavy in the air it blanketed my tongue with a putrid taste when I opened my mouth. Oppressive humidity left my hair and skin pasty, and flies emanating from animal dung and shrinking puddles left by a recent shower added to my discomfort by occasionally landing on my sweaty face and arms. Men and children strolled shirtless

(above, left) Colombian Jungle Command Police (in foreground holding a South African MGL 40mm grenade launcher, an M60D machine gun, and an M16A2 carbine) are among best-armed special units fighting drug war in Colombia. (above) A Colombian Army trooper, wounded during a coca raid, is evacuated by Colombian Jungle Command Police in the Meta Province. (left) U.S. anti-drug agent (left), and Colombian Police Air Service major (right), examine herbicide spray dispersion in a coca field.

and seemed oblivious to flies; so did women wearing shorts.

I stood out like a rabbi in a *Taliban* Islamic crowd. An uncomfortable feeling of being watched, of being on the edge of trouble, percolated through my muscles. I

Continued on page 86

menced in the evening of 3 August, when a joint army-police foot patrol was ambushed along the banks of the Vaupes river. A cop was reportedly killed, with two cops and three soldiers wounded.

As rocket-propelled grenades and mortars hammered the base, government troops radioed an urgent S.O.S. for reinforcements and air support. However, electrical storms in the region and thick cloud cover prevented the immediate arrival of both.

At about 1000 hours the next morning, a few Huey and Bell 212 gunships reportedly managed to fly over Miraflores and provide a little relief, but had to fly back because of bad weather and low fuel.

Some 70 soldiers finally disembarked from three Air Force Sikorsky Black Hawks a couple of kilometers, or so, from Miraflores, but were stalled by difficult terrain and guerrillas.

Meanwhile, with their ammunition running low at the base, some soldiers and police retreated into the jungle. Scores were captured.

Ham-radio aficionados reported that wounded sought refuge in the church, on base.

Eventually, the weather allowed Air Force OV-10s (apparently outfitted with 2.75-inch rockets) and Huey gunships to apply enough firepower to start forcing a guerrilla withdrawal.

Hamstringing the military's ability to provide fire support for the base was that guerrillas had taken positions in town. Nearly continuous fighting reportedly lasted at least 24 hours. But it wasn't until 6 August that army reinforcements arrived in Miraflores, according to reporter Reyes.

There seemed to be prior warnings that such a guerrilla assault could take place. Added to "routine" occasional guerrilla sniper fire and small terrorist actions, guerrilla leaflets — attempting to incite action against Guaviare towns — had started circulating months

earlier, according to a priest.

Casualty tallies differ. But according to the Red Cross, at least 24 people were killed, in Miraflores. A confidential military informant said six cops and eight soldiers were killed, with six police and 18 soldiers wounded.

On 14 August, there was a recrudescence of combat. Another 36 soldiers and 63 guerrillas were reportedly killed during three days of vicious fighting in northwestern Antioquia and Choco provinces, where some 1,000 guerrillas were trying to reestablish a presence, reported Defense Minister Rodrigo Lloreda in an *Agence France Press* dispatch.

This round of fighting began a couple of days after President Pastrana announced, on 12 August, that he had accepted a guerrilla peace-negotiation precondition to demilitarize an area of perhaps 47,000 square kilometers in southern coca-growing regions.

American Congressman Benjamin Gilman, chairman of the foreign relations committee, called Pastrana's peace plans a "pact with the devil," according to Reuters news service, and railed against the idea of demilitarizing coca areas, saying it would give drug traffickers a free hand and cause problems between the United States and Colombia.

President Pastrana has reiterated his willingness to talk with the guerrillas. But it remains to be seen whether the guerrillas are serious about talking peace. Is this upsurge of guerrilla actions aimed to strengthen the rebel bargaining position? Is it to consolidate control over coca regions, to burgeon guerrilla war chests? Is part of a prelude to a "talk peace, make war" strategy to wear the government down and take power in the long term? Or is it all of the above? Thousands of Colombians are literally dying for answers to those questions.

—S. S.

Angola at the end of the millennium epitomizes one of the lasting tragedies of the twentieth century. Like Zaire, it seems to be endlessly wracked by conflict, regionalism and ethnicity.

The country has been at war since 1961; first against Lisbon's cohorts who hurriedly withdrew to the Metropolis in 1975, and then against the guerrillas who inherited the mess that the Portuguese left behind. Within days of the colonial flag having been hauled down for the last time, all three insurgent armies turned against each other. Their actions laid the groundwork for a succession of civil wars that continue to this day.

Paradoxically, for much of this time, Savimbi fought alongside those same South African soldiers who forced him to the negotiating table in 1994. In the old days, they weathered everything Luanda threw at them. Right or wrong, the two allies had a common vision: They were bitterly opposed to the Marxist oligarchy in Luanda that had originally forced this guerrilla leader into the bush.

The role of Executive Outcomes in the war has always been controversial. It is noteworthy that an American commentator equated those South Africans who were recruited to fight for Luanda against an old and trusted ally, as the broad equivalent of American Green Berets decamping to Hanoi after the Vietnam War, or Britain's SAS going over to Argentina after Falklands. In South Africa the issue has raised fierce passions. Many referred to those who went over to EO as traitors. When reports of South African combatants fighting for a Marxist government first filtered out of Angola, it caused revulsion among many families who had lost family in the 21-year border war.

Paradoxically, there are few today who are able to recall that Savimbi had once been a powerful Western ally. Once Lisbon had been ousted, his battle had always been against Soviet-backed subversion. Follow-



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Text & Photos
by Al J. Venter

war

ANGOLA

Ill Winds
Return To Africa



ing a succession of MPLA victories, he was all but embraced by Washington. And that, in spite of the fact that Savimbi, though a graduate of Switzerland's Lausanne University, had been schooled in unconventional warfare by the Chinese.

Notably, UNITA was the first African liberation movement to receive American Stinger SAM missiles. And a lot else besides, much of it (in the early days) cast-off, Korean War vintage. The gesture was intended to counter the \$3 billion worth of weapons the Soviets started to pour into Angola after independence in 1975.

Moscow also pressured Castro to send

(above) A South African merc and Angolan tank crew with a T54/55, near a training base outside Luanda. (right) In the old days, UNITA had to make do with improvised weapons of war, such as this dummy "tank." Note the pipe, out of the rear, that is supposed to resemble a gun barrel.



35,000 of his best soldiers to Angola to strengthen Luanda's hand. About 3,000 of them are buried there, though you would be hard-pressed to find anybody in Havana who will admit it today. Angola also became a second home to Nelson Mandela's African National Congress-in-exile, which, for a long time, explained Pretoria's pro-Angolan stance. Mandela's relations with dos Santos have — as a consequence of him joining forces with Kabila — cooled markedly of late.

Black Gold

The predominant issue in Angola — then and now — is oil. Angola has the world's fifth largest deposits of oil. First discovered by an American company in the mid-'50s, the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company (Chevron) was offered good pickings in a string of unusually rich, low-carbon offshore oil fields in which this American company has a 39 percent stake. The bulk of it is exported to the U.S.

Anywhere else in the world, Angola, like Nigeria, would have been wealthy. But graft and war costs money, and a late report tells how Luanda is unable to service the \$10 billion it owes on current short term commercial loans. Also, only about half the revenues from the daily production of 75,000 barrels actually reaches government coffers. The fat cats in Luanda continue to cream off the profits, even though they face disaster because of their inability to tackle their most serious problems at source.

For Angola, these difficulties have other implications. Historically, the country's independence from Lisbon in 1975 meant that suddenly — since nobody anticipated the Portuguese dumping their African colonies — Angola acquired a significant strategic significance. Moscow, naturally, was delighted with the vacuum created by the Lusitanian departure, especially since almost all of Angola's revolutionary leaders were radicals, many of them protégés of the Portuguese Communist Party.

The Savimbi Factor

Things changed once Savimbi had become part of the equation. Washington stepped in and was content to let UNITA keep chipping away at the MPLA's power-base. With this diversion — it was determined — correctly, by U.S. strategists — Luanda would lack the political and economic strength it needed to maneuver and possibly supplant U.S. interests in the country. Thus began the bloody, bitter civil war that, intermittently, continues to this day.

Today, Dr. Jonas Savimbi remains ensconced in rather splendid isolation in the hilly bush country of Bailundu, about a hundred miles north of Huambo. He controls several other highland towns as well, including Nharea, Mungo and Andulo.

Those who have been there say he has chosen his headquarters with care. The country is ideally suited for guerrilla war. An attacking force would have great difficulty making headway through a succession of plateaus and gorges that surround the highlands. Backed in some depth by armor, his troops are ranged along defensive lines that go out almost 100 kms. Also, every approach road is mined.

For access to the world outside, Savimbi constructed an airport at Bailundu's "twin-town" of Andulo. Until recently flights into Andulo were daily. Most came from South Africa and Namibia; all illegal and every one of them unscheduled. Flight crews penetrating the embargo managed to traverse Angolan air space with little risk of detection.

That was the situation until 21 January 1998, when Angolan Air Force MiG-21s intercepted a South African registered DC-4 headed for Andulo. It had filed a flight plan out of Johannesburg and was supposed to be headed for the Congo. At its last refueling stop in Lusaka, Zambia, its pilot, Peter Bitzke (who admits to 300 previous flights), made a sharp left to the west. His plane was forced down at Menongue.

On board were eight South Africans and a cargo which one report said was mining equipment. Another spoke of munitions. Everybody was arrested. This writer has been reliably informed by several sources that the operation was an Executive Outcomes "sting." The two pilots responsible (including Bitzke) were released immediately. Some of those onboard are still being held incommunicado in Menogué under conditions termed by one U.N. official as "shocking."

This was not the first time that Luanda had tried to halt flights to Savimbi's bailiwick. Former EO mercenaries are known to have been hired by Luanda over the past two years in a bid to stop supplies reaching the rebel leader. Armed with portable Russian-built SAM-14s, several squads were sent into the hills around Bailundu.

By all accounts, this has been an extraordinarily difficult task. A hostile force operating without back-up would have great difficulty in a region where a strange face is



(above) Angolan Air Force MiG-23, flown by South African mercs out of Saurimo in the east.
(below) South African merc pilot checks out Angolan air force Mig-23 at Saurimo.



likely to be quickly spotted by locals committed to the UNITA cause. Moreover, previous experience in clashes with FAA indicated that Savimbi rarely takes prisoners. EO personnel captured by UNITA during the battle for the Cafunfo diamond fields in 1994 — there were six or eight of them — were tortured and summarily executed.

Cashing In On Crisis

Were measures to isolate UNITA strictly enforced, such action would undoubtedly cripple UNITA within months. The fact that this guerrilla leader has been able to survive for so long in apparent isolation underscores a rather obvious lack of regional unity and the ability of some people to cash in on a crisis situation.

South Africa, for instance, continues to supply Rwanda — an otherwise bankrupt country, enfeebled by an ongoing civil war — with a range of sophisticated armored personnel carriers. And although the company denies it, I was to see the production line of a dozen RG-31 for myself at the Reumech factory outside Johannesburg in late August. Again, one must ask, who, at \$220,000 each, is carrying the cost? And for what purpose were they ordered? Looked at another way, it is not impossible the Nyalas will play a key role in destabilizing the eastern half of the Congo.

Questions stemming from all these developments now center on the future of the region and the prognosis looks bleak. "A scarlet swathe of conflict ... killing the dream of an African regeneration and renaissance that came with the euphoria that followed the fall of Mobutu," said a correspondent for a *Johannesburg Weekly*. The result, he added, was genocide.

It is unlikely that either the U.N. or any of the Western countries with mining or commercial interests in Angola or the Congo are likely to intervene. Events in Rwanda came and went and the only effect was to muster support for the starving masses and the thousands of orphans who survived orchestrated ethnic cleansing on a scale last seen this century in Nazi Germany. It is instructive, perhaps, that the same government in Kigali that has been labeled brutal by just about every NGO that has its offices there, is still very much in control.

Similarly, if the West was not prepared to rush to Mobutu Sesu Seku's side before he was ousted, there is even less chance today of anybody but Africans — with their own self-interest in mind — pulling Laurent-Desire Kabila's chestnuts out of the fire.

Angola sent its forces into the Congo solely to prevent someone who might be more accommodating towards Savimbi achieving power. Similarly, Namibia has

always crossed swords with UNITA. Conversely, nobody is certain why Mugabe took the bait.

Semi-Literate Tyrant

Kabila, a brutal, semi-literate tyrant has shown himself to be every bit as calculating as his predecessor. The only difference is that Kabila lacks Mobutu's flawed vision which always had the commercial interests of those who mattered in mind, not least, his own.

Conditions are made that much more uncertain because of the huge expanse of Africa involved; large enough to swallow a succession of peacekeeping armies (never mind the time it takes to get such things going). And, then again, one must ask, if that were to happen, who would cover the costs?

Washington says that it has no money for foreign adventures. More likely, having been burnt in Somalia, it will be a long time before Washington commits American boys to some crazy war in Africa again. In any event, these days the White House is distracted by other issues. Events such as recent bomb blasts outside American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam also tend to atrophy sentiment in an America where Third World issues simply

don't rate. As long as Angola's oilfields are intact, say some Americans, anything else that happens is irrelevant.

For this, and solid financial reasons, the Cabinda Gulf Oil has instituted a series of elaborate measures to protect its stake. These include hiring a British security company to patrol Cabinda's inshore waters and AirScan — an American firm with distinct CIA connections — to monitor insurgent on-land movement in the region with specially-modified aircraft.

Angola's SS

Also, Spain's Civil Guard has been doing an exemplary job training Angola's version of the SS, the notorious para-military "Ninja" police reaction force which is responsible for internal security. It's a homily that has surfaced fairly often recently in Luanda, but it's true; that while a white expatriate in Angola might cross these black-uniformed security people and live to talk about it afterwards, an Angolan national would never be so lucky.

For all this, there are those who believe that, possibly, Luanda might have left it too late to do anything. The country has been pushed to the brink of self-destruction largely by its own ineptitude and corruption

on a scale that even Ferdinand Marcos would have been hard-pressed to match. All these factors together, have reinforced Savimbi's conviction that the country would eventually disintegrate politically. And well it might.

Unquestionably, the effects of another war in either Angola or the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be felt throughout the region. South Africa is the largest supplier of goods to both of them and will feel the loss acutely.

Destabilization in Central Africa will also increase pressure on the South African rand which dropped by a third in the past year. It is still falling. Also, another war will heighten unemployment south of the Zambezi. In South Africa the "unofficial" unemployment rate is said to be almost double that compared to when Nelson Mandela took over four years ago, though Pretoria disputes this.

Already, a pattern of dislocation has begun. Refugees are streaming into some of the neighboring territories. Reports, mid-August, talk of groups fleeing from the Angolan south into Namibia. Stragglers from the Congo are heading east into Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and south into Zambia.

Western Handouts

Compounding issues is the fact that all these countries are dependent on Western handouts, simply to survive on a day-to-day basis. Many are unstable. With Kabila at the helm, the Congo has become ungovernable.

In the short term, there is a very real prospect the eastern half of this huge country could create a new state of its own; another Biafra in the making. Certainly, such a move will have the support Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni who would be pleased to be rid of Kinshasa's meddling influence.

Shaba Province, in Zaire's south — Moise Tshombe's Katanga of old — has been threatening secession since independence in 1960. That, too, might yet come since Shaba is Kabila's home turf. If he cannot keep the nation together, he might well head south and declare his own version of a Katangese UDI.

It is clear to anyone who understands the vagaries of African politics that it wouldn't take much for the entire region to collapse. Such a scenario has all the ingredients of another Somalia. As one commentator, recently returned from the Great Lakes region declared last month on South African television: "What happened in Rwanda might only have been the beginning of a new chapter of instability throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa."

"The winds of war blowing through Africa," the *Johannesburg Mail and Guardian* said shortly afterwards, "might precipitate a change greater even than the colonial scramble 120 years ago."

Al J. Venter is SOF's long-time contributing editor for Africa, and has covered events in the Mid-East and Africa for two decades. ✕



(above) Ongoing Executive Outcomes operations in the Eastern Angolan diamond fields. (below) The ongoing United Nations relief effort involves dozens of flights each day to almost 30 major centers to keep the population from starving. Another round of hostilities will put an end to that effort.



DRUG WARRIOR

The Congressman And The Colombian Cop

“**T**he true measure of a great man comes from his actions, not his words. His actions come from what he truly believes in,” says retired Special Forces Major Andy Messing, the executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based National Defense Council Foundation (N.D.C.F.). Messing has known General Rosso Jose Serrano for years, and he knows about the overwhelming challenges that he and Colombia have faced in the past in fighting drugs ... and are facing today.

Text & Photos by Carson A. Nightwine, Jr.

General Serrano is the only senior officer to remain as a commander in the past five years. Messing remembers the Pablo Escobar days, when more than 1,000 Colombian National Policemen were killed in just one year! That was when U.S. Ambassador Morris Busby said he would get assistance, and it arrived within days. But today, Serrano is in the middle of a brewing narco-guerrilla war in Colombia, fighting a delaying action until promised U.S. assistance arrives ... and Ambassador Busby is no longer around Bogota. “The state department has hung the drug fighters out to dry in the past five years under the Clinton administration.

“Serrano’s National Police are in a fight for their lives, every day ... there’s a brutal war going on down there and good men are dying!” continues Messing.

Congressional Recognition

Because of Serrano’s superb reputation as a dedicated drug warrior, Congressman Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House International Relations Committee, has had him testify before the U.S. Congress on two occasions.

Gilman is quick to point out “what a unique patriot this mild-mannered cop from



Gen. Rosso Jose Serrano examines captured M72 LAAW rocket launcher, made in the United States, bought by the drug cartels in Costa Rica and shipped through Panama to the F.A.R.C. in northern Colombia.

Colombia has become, not only to his own country, but to the world.” Recent proof was ample during his visit to the United Nations, in New York, where world leaders went out of their way to meet with the quiet Colombian. In Washington, D.C., Gen. Serrano is a true favorite on Capitol Hill, where congressmen and senators scurry and

crowd to get a photograph taken with him.

“General Serrano is somewhat embarrassed by all this attention, but he’s a kind man, so he goes along with the program. This type of celebrity treatment is easy to understand: Most politicians run to have a photo of themselves with a real live hero. It was the same thing with Gen. Schwarzkopf

after the Gulf War," laughs Messing. But some vintage congressmen like Ben Gilman smile and let the younger lawmakers immortalize themselves in celluloid with the world's number-one drug warrior. Gilman and Serrano have a deeper relationship that transcends photo-ops. "The two old friends go back a long way, to when General Serrano was the police attaché at the Colombian Embassy, after he led the manhunt for Pablo Escobar, where they tracked the vicious cocaine kingpin down ... and killed him," notes Messing.

Big Bad Ben

U.S. Representative Ben Gilman, a highly decorated WWII pilot, is a leader in congress' effort to stop drugs where they start. Gilman has visited the front lines of Serrano's war on drugs. He and Serrano, because of their shared devotion to stopping drugs, have become allies and friends over the years. When President Clinton cut off U.S. assistance to Colombia because of decertification in 1996, the congressman bypassed the prohibition and had six, 36-year-old UH-1H Vietnam-era, Huey helicopters delivered to replace those shot down by narco-guerrillas.

This was done over the objections of the U.S. ambassador in Bogota and the state department bureaucrats who had decertified Colombia. Serrano named the first one "Big Ben" in honor of Rep. Ben Gilman. "Today, Big Ben looks like a flying piece of Swiss cheese because of all the bullet holes," says former FBI agent John Mackey, who handles drugs-n-thugs for the House International Relations Committee. "The important thing: Big Ben is still flying anti-narcotics missions! He may have some years on him, and ventilation ... but he still goes out against the narcos without fail!" jokes Serrano. The Colombian National Police pilots think that Big Ben is a very special bird, indeed.

The aged helicopter is a source of pride and affection to these men. Lieutenant Fernando Lopez, a young HUEY pilot, points at the patch-work covering the bullet holes and says, "No one has ever been injured ... look, it's a miracle with over 40 impacts!" Lt. Lopez smiles and says: "We know who the co-pilot is ... and he doesn't draw flight pay!"

Lopez knows that too many of his fellow police pilots have become casualties to

narco-guerrilla groundfire. In his graduating class from the police academy, 21 of the 190 graduates have been killed in just seven years. In the past two years, 10 HUEYS have been lost. In July and August, three helicopters were lost during a week-long narco-guerrilla offensive. The Colombian Ministry of Defense reported that more than 300 policemen and soldiers were slain.

The Congressman And The Colombian Cop



(above) Gen. Serrano greets his long-time friend Congressman Ben Gilman, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, during his last visit to the "front lines" in Colombia last summer. (below) Former FBI Special Agent John P. Mackey (second from left) with DANTI Agents following a raid on a clandestine cocaine lab. These anti-narcotics agents have suffered 20% casualties in their high-risk direct-action missions.



"The story about the congressman and the Colombian cop should be made into a book or maybe even a movie, as they are two of a kind ... old-style patriots, steeped in their sense of what is right," declares Messing. "They both fight the scourge of drugs, one in Washington, D.C., the other in the source zone: Colombia." Over the past five years of neglect by the Clinton administration, Gilman and his cohorts have fought to get badly needed assistance in the form of new Black Hawk helicopters to

Serrano's vaunted DANTI, the anti-narcotics police. "The Madeleine Albright-led state department has strangely prevented first-class equipment from getting into the hands of first-class drug fighters. It totally amazes me," reports a Bogota-based DEA special agent, who for obvious reasons cannot be identified. The encouraging part of this story is that Congressman Ben Gilman is well-known for never losing a fight on Capitol Hill, and that's where the money for the helicopters resides.

Gilman has been a leader in the U.S. Congress along with Reps. Dan Burton (R-Ind.), Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), Bill McCollum (R-Fla.), Rob Portman (R-Oh.), Bob Barr (R-Ga.), Mark Souder (R-Ind.) and Porter Goss (R-Fla.) in pushing assistance to the DANTI in order to fight the drug war at its source. They were the core members who formed House Speaker Newt Gingrich's Task Force for a Drug-Free America. This group produced H.R.- 4300, the "Drug Free America Act." "I wouldn't bet against Ben Gilman and that gang, they mean business," says Messing with a wry smile.

The leadership of the DEA and FBI supported this measure, even when the White House felt that more money should be spent on television commercials and public service announcements warning America's youth about the perils of drug abuse. One disgusted DEA agent, who served in Bogota, wondered if "You should show these commercials to UZI-toting gunmen who 'enforce' for drug pushers ... that'll do a hell of a lot of good!"

Actions ... Louder Than Words

General Serrano is called a "hero" by FBI Director Louis Freeh and, as the "foremost hero in the war on drugs" by the DEA's Thomas Constantine. Gen. Chuck Wilhelm, USMC, of the U.S. Southern Command, echoes these words of praise. These commendations come from across the board, in the congress, in law enforcement and the U.S. military, even from the White House where the drug war has been treated as a sham. Little progress has been made by the Clinton White House in stopping drugs. The recent DEA statistics on rising teenage drug abuse in the U.S. bears that out. "It's going to be a real mess if something isn't done soon," asserts John Mackey.

Serrano attacks the source of 80% of the

cocaine and more than 75% of the pure heroin that is captured on the streets of our country. "The amounts of these drugs are at an all-time high in our neighborhoods, in our schools and around our children. The Clinton White House has raised the white flag of surrender in the Drug War," contends Kevin Long, a congressional staffer who follows the anti-drug scene.

"When Gen. Serrano took command of the National Police over four years ago, he didn't say much ... but he did a heck of a lot, in a very short period of time," says John Mackey. Taking over the disheartened 110,000-man police force in 1994, Serrano was faced with a nearly impossible task in cleaning up rampant corruption, instilling professionalism and training and outfitting a bedraggled force. In the ensuing days, weeks and years, he dismissed nearly

reduce the cocaine and heroin pouring into the United States," says a DEA agent stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota.

At the end of 1998, Serrano commands a ready and capable 120,000-man force that is considered a model for law enforcement in Latin America. They range across this Andean country the size of Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, and they hold together the rule of law in this threatened land. This miraculous turn-about was accomplished against great odds and at great cost to Serrano, both professionally and personally. More than 4,000 of his policemen have been killed in this decade alone. More than 20,000 have been wounded in action. "Today, he is the most respected and popular pub-

That assessment is quietly mentioned in the halls of the state department, in Foggy Bottom, in Washington, D.C.

Inspiration And Duty

For inspiration, there are three things that the quiet policeman reads each day: his oath of office, the Colombian constitution and the Bible. He finds great strength in all of them. General Serrano needs every bit of strength he can muster in order to continue his mission. He attends Catholic mass daily, sometimes with his DEA counterparts,



A blazing coke lab (right) located near Puerto Rico in the Guaviare region of southeastern Colombia. Protected by the FARC, it was taken down by the DANTI and DEA agents. An armory with 66 AK-47 assault rifles was discovered after the shooting stopped. No narco-guerrillas were killed — they surrendered. (below) DANTI Commander Col. Leonardo Gallego shows Gen. Serrano, Congressman Ben Gilman latest bullet hole in the nose of "Big Ben," the congressman's namesake.



10,000 policemen for corruption and incompetence and set tough, high standards for his policemen. He requested — and got — training teams from the DEA, FBI, USMC and Army Special Forces and formed competent units. When he had enough good men to count on ... he declared war on the drug cartels!

In this four-year period, he demolished the deadly Medellin Cartel of Pablo Escobar and destroyed the Cali Cartel, either locking up or killing its kingpins. "He accomplished what everyone said was impossible ... he's an amazing leader," contends a recently retired DEA special agent who served with Serrano in Bogota. "Today, the DEA agents and the DANTI work hand-in-glove with Serrano's personally picked drug-buster, Colonel Leonardo Gallego." This good news is very welcome. "If Col. Gallego stays alive, we've got a fighting chance to

lic official in all of Colombia," says an official at the Narcotics Assistance Section in the U.S. Embassy, Bogota. This unique story about an honest policeman facing the narcos is set amid a backdrop of the worst violence this country, often drenched in its own blood, has ever seen. The DEA director of international operations testified before Congress "It's difficult to even begin to appreciate what Gen. Serrano has accomplished during his term as director general of the Colombian National Police," Maj. Messing reminds congressmen. "When Colombia had a president corrupted by Cali cartel drug money, General Serrano was a virtual poster boy for Colombia ... he held it together.

"Here's a Colombian Cop, who actually served as a behind-the-scenes ambassador to the United States when his own president couldn't even get a visa into our country."

explaining that "Any day could be my last." It is a very difficult mission that has become his life ... one fraught with mortal danger. "He has faced repeated assassination attempts and his life, is always in 24-hour jeopardy. His family is forced to live outside of Colombia for safety," states Messing. In truth, it appears that this man who is protecting his fellow Colombians and fighting the scourge of drugs is actually a prisoner of his own mission. "He is constantly under guard and can do absolutely nothing in public without his legions of bodyguards. His life is one that we just cannot imagine," contends Messing.

His sense of duty appears to be almost a religion in itself. He has a strong spiritual life and he shares this with his policemen. He shares his sense of dedication with his policemen who are on-the-line, every day. "He spends much of his time going to the most dangerous, remote sites to visit forward-based police outposts" says John Mackey. Serrano explains: "I think my men need to see me ... I know ... that I need to see them! It gives me strength and makes me stronger... they are my inspiration." He appears to be tough but understanding in his leadership, and he encourages his men to always train hard ... and pray. In an organization that has suffered as many casualties and fought so hard to maintain the rule of law, help from a higher power seems to be a must.

On The Field Of Battle

According to Messing's *N.D.C.F. — Colombia Report — 1997*, there is a war raging in this endangered republic and the drug trade fuels it. Colombia is just crawling with narco-guerrillas, common criminals, paramilitaries and terrorists. It is on the verge of becoming the first narco-state in the Western Hemisphere. This assessment is based on

more than 20 fact-finding missions to the front lines of the war on drugs since 1985. On these trips he inspected front-line units of the police and military, visited with human rights groups and conferred with nongovernmental humanitarian assistance organizations.

N.D.C.F. traveled to the most remote sites possible in order to assess the situation fairly and in a balanced manner. Attacking the production of drugs is key to limiting the massive amounts of money for the guerrillas. Serrano's police have a well-earned reputation for protecting the human rights

the paramilitaries and narco-guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Army for Popular Liberation (EPL) ... all 25,000 of them! It's a real shooting war, 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, every week. This brutal conflict has caused nearly two million refugees in the past decade. The welfare of these people falls on Serrano's National Police.

In many situations, Serrano's policemen are out-gunned by the narco-terrorists. The situation is one that has been ignored by the

war to stop drugs from entering our country.

With that type of backdrop, it's no wonder that General Serrano has been fighting to enforce the rule of law and stop drugs in his embattled country. Serrano has been promised vital assistance by the state department, but little has been delivered. "He is fighting a war on drugs on the front lines ... without the help he was promised by Madeleine Albright's high-minded diplomats who have never gotten their hands dirty on the working end of things," states former U.S. Congressman Bob Dornan.

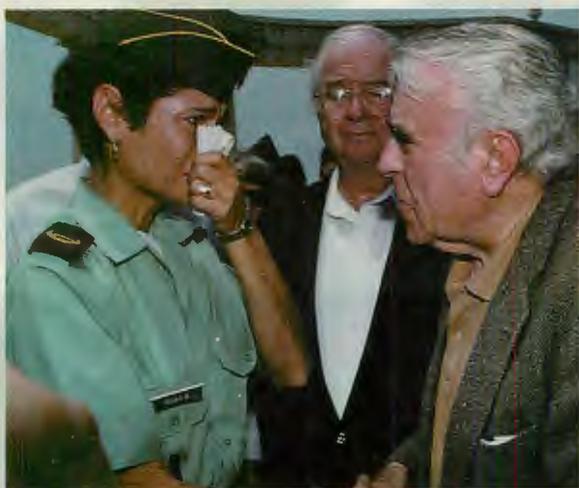
General Serrano must combat the expanding violence, amid growing political pressures, reactionary outlaw paramilitaries and the fledgling new presidency of Andres Pastrana, who has shown a willingness to engage the guerrillas in peace talks.. The reported peace negotiations with the FARC and ELN are not viewed with great optimism by anyone familiar with the current situation. "This is not a strong prescription for success," offers Congressman Gilman who recently returned from Colombia and knows the narco-guerrillas can't be trusted.

In Flesh And Blood

The ongoing narco-guerrilla war that is raging now in Colombia is predictably spreading to neighboring countries. The violence in northern Colombia and southern Panama has increased markedly in the past



A cautious DANTI agent (above) inspects a gas tank for booby traps. The tank was used in a large FARC cocaine-processing lab near Miraflores, a guerrilla stronghold. (right) Congressman Ben Gilman and his friend Gen. Rosso Jose Serrano place a wreath at the Colombian National Cemetery, honoring the more than 4,000 policemen killed in just this decade. (below) The sister of a DANTI agent killed by Pablo Escobar's gunmen, who is also a police officer, is comforted by Congressman Ben Gilman.



of Colombians across the country.

Serrano's security forces have faced a mission that few can fully appreciate. They are there to enforce the rule of law and protect Colombia's citizens from rampaging narco-guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries. These policemen die in dozens each week, in this noble effort. "They do their duty because Gen. Serrano asks them to do it, it's that simple. The police are doing more ... with less," says Messing.

On the other side of the battlefield are



Clinton Administration, but not by the DEA. There is strong evidence that it has been avoided due to Clinton's hidden belief that the drug war isn't worth fighting. U.S. law-enforcement officials bristle at this condition but are helpless to

change policy, as President Clinton has surrendered in the war on drugs, even with General Barry McCaffrey, U.S. Army (Ret.) as his so-called Drug Czar.

Congressman Gilman isn't throwing in the towel, especially when the future of our children are concerned. One can easily imagine that anyone who told the American electorate in 1992 that "I didn't inhale!" then went on MTV after he was elected and said "If I had to do it over again ... I'd inhale!" isn't likely to put much effort into a

year. The Panamanians in the southern Darien region are very fearful that the FARC will move north. "These poor, honest Panamanians are scared stiff, because their government has no capability to protect them. After the last U.S. troops depart the canal zone, the chickens will really come home to roost, just wait and see what happens," asserts Messing.

Pablo Escobar is no longer around, but the growing narco-guerrilla forces are taking a heavy toll against those who would attempt to impose the rule of law.

According to some Colombian government reports, it is estimated that more than 30,000 Colombians are killed a year in this growing conflict. Prospects of lowering the levels of violence appear very slim at this time.

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Cold War—

The Life And Times Of A Combat Artist

by *SOF* Staff



When people think of artists, many imagine paint-splattered dilettantes working in cozy studios painting fruit. They don't equate artists as soldiers of fortune risking their lives to render a painting.

That's because most artists don't sketch the pocket contents of a dead NVA soldier in Vietnam's jungles, trek through Laotian mountains with 20 Pathet Lao commandos, get in a gunfight with a Khmer Rouge battalion commander in Cambodia, traverse the width of Angola with UNITA guerrillas, track the elusive POLISARIO through the Sahara, or get detained at midnight in Beirut by gun-toting militiamen.



top: "Retaking Kuwait International Airport," 1991

above: "Marine Recon, 'Operation Just Cause,'" December 1989

right: "Jonas Savimbi of Angola," 1975

"Cold Day In Hell," 1991



27 February 1991: "Liberation Day Stars." A group of Marines draped an American flag over a captured Iraqi chopper at Kuwait International Airport. This one Marine received Beck's focus.

- Hot Canvas

Commander Chip Beck, USNR (Ret.), is an artist — and has done all those things and more.

Historically, a special breed of artist has always gone beyond studios, galleries and museums to capture life and death in the wild, wide-open spaces or close confines of a war's trenches. A few become "combat artists."

Combat Artists differ from "military illustrators" in that the former must directly witness and experience the wars and events they portray. Combat artists are to military illustrators what combat veterans are to armchair generals. It is a difference between participating and pondering.

Adventurers Illustrated

Not all of Beck's artistic heroes braved combat, but they still faced dangers and were pure adventurers.

To paint birds, John James Audubon penetrated forests and swamps infested with poisonous snakes, bears, pumas, mosquitoes, disease, and hostile humans. Chip Beck has encountered all six, and found the first five to be the most bothersome.

Winslow Homer rendered turn-of-the-century English and American society and seascapes, but he got his start on the Civil War's front lines.



Father Marty Jenco with dying CIA Station Chief Bill Buckley, 2 June 1985.



left: "Comforting The Enemy." As the ground war got underway, American casualties were remarkably light. U.S. Navy doctors and corpsmen worked extensively on Iraqi wounded who were among the thousands of prisoners being taken inside Kuwait.

right: Cuban POW "Rodriguez," Angola, 1975





"Commander John Stockdale In Captivity," circa 1968



"SCUDs Mackenzie," a Saudi mangrel adopted by USMC construction and Seabee crews near the Kuwaiti border.



Self-portrait, Laos, 1971

"Starring The American Embassy," 1991



Charlie Russell rode Montana's high plains, roped cows, and lived among Indian tribes and cow-punchers as he sculpted, sketched, and painted the Old West. The same was true with Frederic Remington, who also covered the Rough Riders' charge up San Juan Hill for Hearst Newspapers.

From the Crimean to the Korean War, from the Great War through Desert Storm, artists accompanied combat troops. Together they shared danger and pain, felt raw emotions, witnessed life, death, battles and experienced fear, relief, joy, and sadness.

"Military illustrators" avoid harm's way, relying on others for descriptions and reference material needed to paint from their imaginations.

"Combat artists" go to war to see for themselves what mud-covered uniforms look like, how death smells, and what fear tastes like. These artists draw on their experience — not their imaginations.

When the Berlin Wall came down, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, it dawned on Beck that he was one of the few people, perhaps the only one, from either side of the Iron Curtain, who could lay claim to being the "Cold War's Combat Artist."

The reason for this claim is that from the 1960s to the end of communism in the 1990s, he was involved in nearly all the overt, covert, and surrogate conflicts between the Soviet Empire and the U.S.

Ironically, it was not until the communism was falling apart and the Cold War coming to an end, that he was assigned by the Navy to be its official Combat Artist for Operation Desert Storm.

Before that assignment, his combat art was along the lines experienced by men like Charlie Russell. In other words, he lived life as a participant in the events around him, but recorded what was happening on paper and canvas on his own. Beck did this for posterity, rather than for any institution. In the end, all that time, work, and experience constituted an historical collection that is, in retrospect, quite unique.

Chronology Of A Cold War Combat Artist

In 1968, Chip Beck became a Navy frogman. When he wasn't running, soaking wet, tired to the bone, or letting off steam on liberty, he found time to sketch the body- and mind-busting Underwater Swimmer and Demolitions training he was undergoing. Earlier, he did the same at Officer's Candidate School in Newport, R.I., from 1966-67, but his artwork there was mostly in cartoon form. (Believe it or not, OCS, he states, exhausted his mind and body more than the rigors of Dive Training.)

In 1969, Beck entered the Super Power struggle and spent a combat tour with the 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam. His territory as a Forward Observer ranged all along the DMZ, from the mouth of the Cua Viet River to the Khe Sanh valley on the Lao border. The experience of war was new to him, but one he accepted with a great deal of preparation. As he got deeper into the war, he began putting scenes down on paper as a form of relaxation and to combat the enemy of all soldiers, boredom.

While in Vietnam, Chip made his first contacts with the CIA. As the



clockwise from left:

"Witness to War. A Mujahid In Afghanistan," 1985

"Ethiopian Refugees," 1979

"Comandante Zero, Nicaragua," 1985

"CMC Hershel 'Bull Frog' Davis, USN SEAL, Panama," 1990



Marines prepared to withdraw, he initiated plans that kept him involved in Indochina for the next five years, until the U.S. hastened off the sub-continent in April 1975.

After a year of advanced paramilitary, intelligence and commando-style training, in 1970, he returned to Laos as a guerrilla advisor from 1971-1973. By then, Beck was very conscious of the history taking place, and took care to record events through sketches, photographs, or notes.

The Paris Peace Accords sent the "secret advisors" home from Laos and ended the presence of American combat infantry forces in South Vietnam in 1973. A relative handful of military advisors and paramilitary experts remained in Indochina, and Beck was dispatched deep inside Cambodia to live and fight alongside Khmer under siege in Kompong Thom and Siem Reap. From January 1974 until the fall of

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Eagle One-One's mission was to fly from Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, near Rapid City, as the lead bomber in a two-ship formation, take out the troop barracks with three BDU-50 high-drag, 500-pound bombs, and get out of the target area unscathed. Flying time to the target was 1 hour and 48 minutes; most of the time was under IFR conditions. Airspeed en route was 422 knots, about 485 miles per hour.

Occasionally, I could see Eagle One-Two in the clouds off the left wing, its strobe lights flashing in the gunmetal gray sky.

En route to the target, code-named "1711-1," the pilots picked their way through thunderstorms as they approached Denver, slipped past Salt Lake City, and entered Nevada airspace.

Big - And Very Bad

Those are the adjectives I think of to describe how I felt when I hopped off the bus a short day before and just stood there in the drizzle, beak-to-beak with the "Bone," an aircrew reference to the B-1B.

The bomber looked like a hooded Cobra as I stood mesmerized by its massive size: 146 feet in length, with a wingspan of 137 feet; not as massive as its big brother, the B-52H, which boasts a wing span of 185 feet, but more lethal in terms of armament.

In fact, the B-1 has become the backbone of the Air Force bomber fleet, even though the "Buff," as the B-52 is known to those who fly it, is expected to be around until the year 2030.

When you stand in front of the B-1 and look at it head-on, you are struck by its sleek aerodynamic shape; a shape that helps reduce the bomber's radar cross-section. It's not a stealth bomber, like the B-2, but its radar signature is smaller than some fighter aircraft.

"I'm just checking it out," said Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Bush, as he made his pre-flight inspection looking for loose fittings or anything else that looked out of place.

"I'm not looking to buy it," joked Bush as he stood on his tiptoes and looked into one of the four cavernous engines. Airman 1st Class Christopher "Dante" Walton, a member of the ground crew who was fresh out of tech school at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, assured me "The bird is ready to fly."

I strapped in and pulled the pins "arming" the ejection seat.

Ready To Rumble

"Let's keep it safe. Safety is always paramount," said Bush in his pre-flight brief, "Watch your altitudes, bank angles and Gs."

Bush radioed the tower. "Two War Eagles are ready to roll."

As we turned left out of Row 90, where the 77th parks its bombers, Bush saluted his crew chief, and gave his thumbs-up. Behind us came Eagle One-Two. We taxied out to the active run-

way, where Bush toed the brakes of the big bomber, took a firm hold on the four throttles — and rammed them forward.

The big bird lunged, and the rain that had obscured our vision on the slanted windshield in front of us began to clear as if we were in a car wash with a blower going. My eyes glanced down into the cockpit, a 6x6-inch black plaque on the instrument panel just to the left of the stick caught my attention. Engraved on that plaque were the words, "In Thrust We Trust."

When a pilot plugs the afterburners in, the airspeed indicator starts rapping up rapidly. The fuel gauges also go down a couple of notches. Each engine burns three gallons of jet fuel per second in afterburners. More than 12,000-pounds of fuel is consumed just to get the bomber off the ground.

The day we took off from Ellsworth was perfect for photos. As the aircraft rotated at 157 knots and lifted off at 197 mph, you could see the rain rushing over the spoilers and across the wings.

The visual effect was like being in a wind tunnel. Photos taken by Staff Sergeant Steven Merrill, of the 28th Bomb Wing's Public Affairs Office, caught trailers off the wingtips and a halo of moisture as Eagle One-One clawed its way into an overcast sky.

Thirty seconds after plugging in the burners, we were just a dot in the sky over

South Dakota. The next thing I knew, we were beginning our tactical descent from 17,000 feet over northeastern Nevada and lining up on the target.

"We're going to enter the range from the northeast," Bush announced. Out ahead of the simulated strike package were the same players the 347th Air Expeditionary Wing utilized in Southwest Asia: F-15s for fighter cap, F-16CJs with HARM missiles for suppression of enemy air defenses, some F-16s as bomb droppers, and some F-15Es for delivery of precision-guided munitions.

From the aircraft commander's seat on the left side of the cockpit, I looked in the rear view mirror and saw Eagle One-Two slide from the fighting wing position into the wedge position about a thousand feet away at our 7 o'clock position.

At the controls of Eagle One-Two were Captain "Tiny" Touchton, the pilot, and Major Mike "McGiver" McGauvran, the aircraft commander. Behind the bulkhead were Capt. Andy Hoke, the Offensive Systems Officer, and First Lieutenant Rudy Alejandro, the Defensive Systems Officer, both of whom have unusual call signs.

Hoke is known around Ellsworth as "T-BAR," short for "That Boy Ain't Right." Alejandro is known as "GITA DOG," which stands kiddingly for "Great In The Air, But Dumb On The Ground."

In addition to Bush, One-One had another B-1 pilot seated in the Defensive Systems Officer's seat just in case a problem arose up front.



First Lieutenant Rob "Spoon" Goddard, Class of '95 at the Air Force Academy, is one of a handful of extremely bright and exceptionally talented young first lieutenants entrusted with a quarter-billion dollar warplane.

The B-1B: A Flying Black Box

The B-1 uses radar and inertial navigation equipment that enables aircrews to globally navigate, update mission profiles and target coordinates in-flight without the need for ground-based navigation aids. Pilots are also equipped with night vision goggles but, so far, there are no plans to equip the B-1 with a forward-looking infrared system like LANTIRN or Pathfinder.

Weapons officers on the B-1Bs are "switch-hitters"; they are cross-trained to fly either the OSO or DSO positions. But Hoke and Alejandro never got a chance to show us what they could do on the bomb range.

A couple of minutes out from the target, Eagle One-Two had to abort because of a compressor stall in the number three engine. Had this been war-time, Touchton, who flew a B-1 to Southwest Asia in mid-February at the height of the United Nations dispute with Saddam Hussein over access to sensitive presidential sites in Iraq, says his crew could have pressed on to the target on three engines.

"But in peacetime, regulations require us to turn back," said McGauvran. The departure of Eagle One-Two left it up to us to take out the target.

Flying solo or, for that matter, a two-ship formation, is not the preferred means of attacking a conventional target.

B-1 commanders

like Bryan

Bush say

the bomber performs *best* when it's part of a strike package, but this time we had no choice but go in alone.

I stared at a digital clock on the instrument panel in front of me as it counted down the final seconds to the attack. At 00:00:00, Lt. Col. Bush pointed the needle nose of the big bomber toward the desert floor ahead, and began a swift tactical descent into 10,000-foot mountains that lined the approach route.

With wings swept back to the full-aft position (67.5 degrees) we picked up speed rapidly like an eagle about to pounce on an unsuspecting cottontail rabbit.

When the bomber reached the desert floor, Bush demonstrated its terrain-following system by flying straight at a rocky ridge. Sweeping over the ridge, Bush disengaged the terrain following system and flew to D-11,

BAD TO THE "BONE"

SOF Flies The B-1B Lancer

Text & Photos by Dale B. Cooper



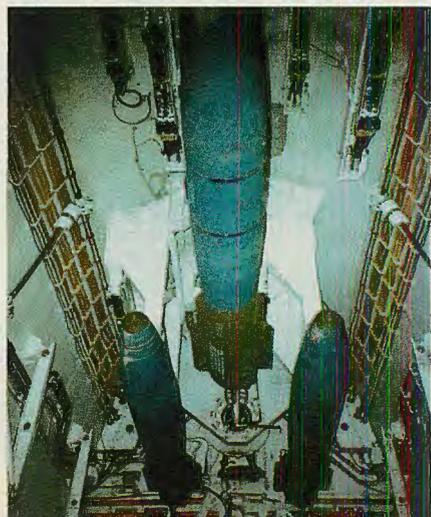
Staff Sgt. Steven Merrill



Staff Sgt. Steven Merrill



(top) Rare photo! A Nikon 300mm lens F5.6 @ 1/125th captured this exclusive shot of the B-1B with afterburners plugged in. (right) Beak-to-beak with the B-1B, emerging from Row 90, at Ellsworth AFB. "[I] just stood there in the drizzle ... mesmerized by its massive size: 146 feet in length, with a wingspan of 137 feet ... (above) War Eagle's beak, nose of B-1B. Note SMCS (Structural Mode Control System; pronounced "smucks"), the dorsal-like fins which add stability during tight turns. (below) A trio of BLU 50, high-drag 500-pound inert bombs in intermediate weapons bay of EAGLE ONE-ONE ready to crater into the Nevada desert.





"Fence-In" point on the range.

"You can't hear the B-1 till it passes," said Chester Watson, the Boeing representative at Ellsworth, "And you've been had by the time you see it."

Dry Run - Then "Release!"

The first pass we made over the enemy airfield was dry; no bombs were released. Colonel Bush wanted to make sure the range was clear of traffic.

"Okay, cleared right," said Gump as Bush banked hard right. "Watch the peak, 8300 on your right." Captain Alan Sanders, better known to his buddies as "Gump," is the Offensive Systems Officer.

"It's all yours ..." Bush said as we came around the backside of a ridge and lined up on a pile of conex containers and concrete blocks that represented the troop barracks.

"Target's in sight ... 30-seconds doors coming open ... 10-seconds ... doors open ... 5-4-3-2-1 ... Release!" said Gump. "Good release. Cleared right, 60-degrees bank off the target." The airfield bristled with AAA and SAM batteries in the form of threat simulators.

The bombs Gump dropped were inert; instead of being filled with high-explosives, they were filled with cement. But they still made a big storm of dust when they impacted the target.

"Impact 422 at 6:30 [position on the clock]," radioed the Range Officer at Fallon as the first bomb fell 422 feet short of the barracks.

"Hey, what did she say?" asked Gump as the doors of the bomber's intermediate weapons bay just ahead of the engine intakes slammed shut, and we came off the target in a 60-degree bank with the right wing pointing at the ground.

"Four hundred twenty-two feet short," said Bush, who wanted to know what was going on in the back seat.

"Got a problem with the computer," said Sanders as the turn tightened. As the swing-wing Lancer slid into a 2.5-G turn I could taste my breakfast, especially the "S.O.S.," the "same old stuff" I ate in the Air Force in 1961.

"When we fight at low altitude [1,000 to 200 feet] like we are fighting today," said Bush, "We swing the wings all the way back to 67.5 degrees. When we fight at high altitude [above 20,000 feet] we sweep them back to 55 degrees. That gives us more lift while, at the same time, allows us to go fast."

My arms felt heavy, and my head light, as the big bomber slid into a tight turn. I took a deep drag on oxygen that flowed through a hose into my face mask hoping to regain my situational awareness.

As we leveled off, my senses returned, and the rumbling in my stomach subsided.

Glancing out the aircraft commander's side of the cockpit, I



(above) Post-mission photo: (left to right) Captain Alan "Gump" Sanders, author, Lt. Col. Bryan "Sumo" Bush, 1st Lt Rob "Spoon" Goddard, and EAGLE ONE-ONE. No one needed to feel "ejected." (left) Lt. Col. Bush pre-flying the B-1B's massive engines. Shortly thereafter, Cooper was advised, "The bird is ready to fly." (left) "... Bush closed the distance in a few seconds, and hit the boom on the first try. We took on 15,000 pounds of fuel (just over 2,200 gallons) in about 5 minutes."



watched the bomber's shadow streak across the barren desert below. We were moving so fast, the only sounds you could hear up front were the SMCS, pronounced "Smucks" — the Structural Mode Control System are two shark-like fins on the nose of the bomber that give the B-1B added stability in tight turns. The "Smucks" made a flapping sound as they constantly adjusted to the wind rushing past the nose of the aircraft.

Bush used the rugged mountainous terrain to mask the radar signature of his bomber, and make it difficult for threat simulators at the mock airfield to get us in their electronic crosshairs.

By the time Bush lined up for the second bomb run, Sanders had done some calculations in his head, and added in a little "Kentucky windage" to compensate for the computer problem.

"Eighty-seven feet south," radioed the Fallon Range Officer. The third and final pass was even better; 64 feet!

"That's more like it," muttered Bush as he made another hard turn off the target, popped up to 15,000 feet and came around to simulate a medium-altitude release; a dry pass before exiting the target area and heading north to hit a tanker.

Had Gump been dumping a full-load (84 Mk 82s) the fact the first bomb fell 422 feet short wouldn't have mattered, because the barracks would have been in the weapon's stick.

A B-1 can lay down a 2,000-foot corridor of death and

Continued on page 82

Omega Proving Ground

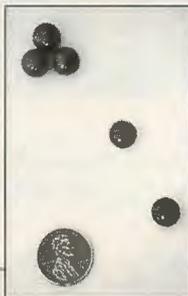
by Don McLean

Quackenbush Air Rifle

The Quackenbush company, of New York, was a turn-of-the-century American producer of quality air rifles which so popularized the .22 air gun for target and plinking that in the American eye an air rifle became only a plinker. In Europe the big-bore air rifle continued as a respected hunting arm among the landed gentry.

Although original Quackenbush products are now collectors' items, a fine fellow of the same name in Missouri, a shirttail relative of the earlier Quackenbush, is now producing big-bore air rifles that would make the old-timers hang their head in shame.

Dennis Quackenbush sent us a powerful and accurate .375 "Brigand" for T&E. He builds them in small lots, as would a custom rifle-maker. The workmanship is as good as anything that ever came out of London or Liege. The Brigand comes in three models of equal ability but varying degrees of fancy, and he has a full range of accessories to charge the rifle from CO2 bottles or SCUBA



Quackenbush Air Rifle

tanks. He also has a hand air pump for charging the rifle to about 1,400 pounds, which works fine and is not as much work as you might think. A charge will net you 6-10 powerful shots.

The rifle is simply loaded in the manner of a small-pellet rifle by opening the bolt and placing a .375 ball behind the chamber, and closing the bolt to chamber it. The striker is then cocked. An approximate 5-pound pull on the trigger releases the striker to fly forward where it impinges on the valve, momentarily opening the valve and permitting the high-pressure gas or air to move the ball out the tube.

Due to a lack of volunteer targets, our rather subjective tests were limited to blasting two raccoons out of our plumb tree and some off-hand shooting at informal targets. We did no chronograph tests, but it is typical for the 83-grain lead ball to come out of the 23-inch barrel at better than 600 f.p.s. with CO2, and when charged with air at more than 800 f.p.s. The size of the game one could harvest with this rifle is a function of your marksmanship and the range, and will fall somewhere between bigger-than-rabbits and smaller-than-bear. Fired into a masonry wall the soft-lead ball flattened out like a lead washer: Expansion and other terminal ballistics will be a function of what you shoot and where you hit it. The balls went through the raccoons and were not recovered, but I doubt if there were much deformation in small light targets.

Quackenbush reports the biggest game he is aware of having been taken with a Brigand is white-tail deer. He also builds air guns in calibers from .177 to .50 for targets from bullseyes to boars. A .50 delivering 250 foot-pounds is a serious arm.

As shown in the photo, the Brigand comes with its receiver grooved for a scope, and it is accurate enough to take advantage of optical sights. We did no formal target work (didn't want to embarrass our-



selves, you understand), but the Brigand is obviously plenty accurate enough for shooting game in brush country.

Big-bore air rifles have a reputation for being rather individual, not unlike a particular black-powder arm that has a preferred projectile and load. In fact, shooting the Brigand is not unlike shooting a muzzle loader: very pleasant — and it smells better. Once charged, repeat shots are as fast as a single-shot cartridge arm, and the weapon requires essentially no cleaning. There is no powder-fouling, and at these lower velocities and temperature there is no leading. An oiled patch through the bore is all it requires. Quackenbush supplies an illustrated no-nonsense manual with the Brigand.

The Brigand has a great deal going for it as a forager's tool, not the least of which is that the ammo is very cheap if you buy it (Speer, Hornady or Buffalo) — and free if you scrounge lead and make it. Recovered rounds can even be recycled through your own ammo factory. The ammo will store forever — and you don't have to "keep your powder dry!" The Brigand, an air pump, a ball making set up, and you're essentially set for life.

Available from Dennis Quackenbush, Dept. SOF, 2203 Hwy. AC, Urbana, MO 65767; phone: 417-993-5262.

Next month we will have good news for those striving to get independent in case of a possible Y2K glitch and who want the ability to make their own .375 balls from their brother-in-law's wheel weights and fishing sinkers: As we go to press, we have received a production prototype from Dave Corbin, preeminent maker of bullet swaging machinery, of a new .375 true-ball swaging machine. This represents breakthrough engineering, as all previously made balls either were cast, which left a mold line or sprue, or were swaged in a process that did not produce a true ball but rather a many-faceted polyhedron. See next issue for a review.

Lainhard Special Ops Jungle Machete

A machete is a chopper, and chopping underwater with any tool can be a chore. A blade that is too long or has too deep a profile is as unhandy underwater as a ten-gallon hat in a tornado. This machete was designed to government specs for Navy SEALs, so it had to be wieldable underwater, and effective on land. Custom knifemaker George Lainhard succeeded admirably in creating a design that does both with no compromise.



Lainhard Special Ops Jungle Machete

The relatively short length for a machete (9-1/2 inches) is compensated by the solid heft and weight-forward profile of the blade. For harvesting sugar cane a longer blade would be better — but for military tasks such as wending your way through the jungle, slashing trail, chopping wood, rope or even hostiles, a design such as this is not only "as good" as a longer blade, it is preferable. A well-contoured (flat) handle formed from non-slip Kraton ensures a firm wet grip and keeps the operator aware of the tool's position in the hand — important for underwater work where frequently one cannot see the workpiece. Built from ATS-34 stainless, the blade has a black Roguard coating that is resistant to corrosion and peeling. The sheath

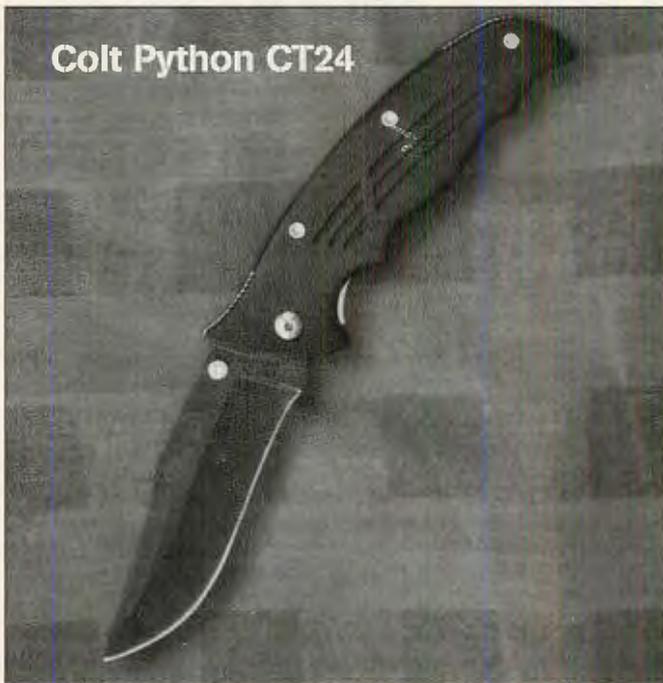
is made from heavy black latigo leather, treated with mildewcide.

The Special Ops Jungle Machete is lifetime-solid gear designed with user input, that will do exactly what it was made to do: no bells, whistles nor excuses.

United Cutlery Brands, Dept. SOF, 1425 United Blvd., Sevierville, TN 37876; phone: 423-428-2532; fax: 423-428-2267.

Colt Python CT24

A solid and worthy addition to the Colt line of knives is their Python Liner Lock folders. Form follows function and when the capable designer Ken Onion originated this design as a custom knife, his serendipitous combination of acceptable form, excellent ergonomics and robust dimensions resulted in a truly excellent folder. Colt is making the Python in your choice of black (CT24) or silver (CT25) finish, and with a pocket clip (CT024/24-CLP), or without.



The design features a 3-5/8-inch 420 J2 stainless blade, and a closed length of 4-3/4 inches. The grips are finely finished aluminum, the liner lock is stainless. The belt clip is removable and the thumb stud is reversible. The CT models without belt clip come in a nylon sheath, although the very comfortable and fluid contours make it quite pocketable. The overall esthetic is almost sensuous, highly pleasing to the eye. Ergonomic assessment of any given tool can be a very individual thing, but this knife fits my hand like an extension of the wrist. The comfortably contoured but smooth handles give a secure grip and do not work blisters.

A folder that opens with only the working hand is preferable, although some one-handed, thumb-stud designs are one-handed only if you hold your mouth just right. The Pythons, however, open readily and effortlessly and lock securely. They dismount with a Phillips screwdriver and a hex wrench for maintenance or repair. Good design, solid materials, excellent workmanship-worthy gear.

Colt knives are distributed exclusively by United Cutlery Brands, Dept. SOF, 1425 United Blvd., Sevierville, TN 37876; phone: 423-428-2532; fax: 423-428-2267.

BOOK REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW

The Amalite AR-10 - The Saga of the First Modern Combat Rifle

by Major Sam Pikula, USAR, 1998. Published by REGNUM fund, Z. Liauksmis 8/3, 2600, Vilnius, Lithuania. 172 pages, illustrated

omegaPROVINGground

including fold out mechanical drawings. Softcover. Available from GSP Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 705, Scottsdale, AZ 85252-0705. \$19.95 plus \$5.00 s&h.

Sam Pikula has written the ultimate book on what I once referred to as "The AR-10, The Battle Rifle That Never Was." In 1956, the Armalite Division of Fairchild Engine and Airplane Corporation, with former Marine Eugene Stoner as its chief engineer, introduced the 7.62x51mm NATO caliber AR-10 rifle into fierce competition then raging between the FN FAL and what was to become the M14. The AR-10 combined many advanced features into a thoroughly modern rifle fabricated largely of aluminum alloys and plastics. The few steel parts, such as the bolt and bolt carrier, were chrome-plated, rendering the entire rifle highly resistant to rust. The stock was of straight-line design to counteract muzzle climb and was constructed of a fiberglass-reinforced plastic shell filled with rigid foam to increase strength.

The final prototype, submitted to the U.S. Army for trial at the end of 1956, had an aluminum barrel with a stainless steel liner and was fitted with an odd canister-type muzzle brake and flash suppressor which reduced recoil by almost 40% and completely eliminated flash.

Unfortunately, Armalite had not subjected the rifle to enough preliminary testing to induce overheating. When the Army commenced the burst-fire portion of its trials, the perforated "tomato can" muzzle device literally disintegrated and repeated hammering of the barrel liner caused it, and the barrel itself, to split wide open. This immediately knocked the AR-10 out of contention, producing a state of undisguised glee among the U.S. Army Ordnance personnel, as they were completely committed to the T44 (adopted as the M14). Tragically, the improved AR-10 was tested some years later against the M14 and won hands down in every area of comparison. But, we had already adopted the M14, which was little more than an upgraded .30 M1 Garand.

The author's chapters on the history of the AR-10's development, titled "The Quest For Firepower," "Armalite: The Dream Factory," "Nothing Succeeds Like Success," and "Testing, Testing, One, Two, Three," respectively, provide the non-stop reading of a techno-thriller. Pikula covers the last and best of the AR-10 series, the so-called Portuguese variant, in explicit, yet fascinating, detail.

There are chapters on the end of AR-10 production and, more importantly, a complete and all-too-often appalling history of the semiautomatic-only receivers that were built for the AR-10 parts kits imported to the United States. This is absolutely essential information for potential collectors of the AR-10. A brief chapter on the Knight Armament Company SR-25 sniper rifle is followed by sections on collecting AR-10s and a comprehensive shooters guide to the AR-10. An original AR-10 user's manual is reproduced in its entirety.

Throughout, the drawings, rare historical photos and close-up photography are excellent. This superb labor of love is must reading for everyone interested in the history of modern military small arms, and a bargain, as well.

—Peter G. Kokalis

Smith & Wesson Model 49 "Bodyguard"

Anyone who grew up on a healthy diet of private investigators: Sam Spade, Phillip Marlowe, et al., *knows* exactly what weapon to carry. These guys faced danger in back alleys on rainy nights and poorly lit rooms above seedy bars with their hand thrust deep into a long overcoat gripping the butt of a snubnose .38 revolver. Although that is probably not the best choice for a primary-carry piece, you

can do far worse when picking a back up.

Bill Clinton, with the stroke of a presidential pen, re-established the stature of short-barreled wheel guns. Perhaps we should thank him, for there are many reasons to consider these weapons. Among the many variables in solving the "back-up" equation are concealability, type of carry, and caliber. In the caliber department, today's brand of .38 special and +P loads certainly outclass any .32 or .380 ACP offerings in both reliable penetration and expansion. Even in the small 2-inch barrels that help define snub-nose revolvers, there is little comparison between the .38 Special and the diminutive ACP rounds. And in a five-round envelope, there are more options for concealed-carry than you will find with the current six- and seven-round .357 Magnum revolvers.



Such weapons are available from Colt, Smith & Wesson, Ruger, and Taurus. Smith & Wesson has several models worth considering. The Model 36 Chiefs Special is a steel-framed, five-shot, .38 Special revolver with a 2-inch barrel and exposed hammer. It is also available in an alloy-framed Airweight version. The Model 442 Centennial is a five-round, Airweight version of the 2-inch barreled model but in double-action only. For our testing purposes, however, *SOF* chose the Model 49 Bodyguard featuring a 2 1/8-inch barrel, shrouded hammer, five-shot, .38 Special. Stainless and Airweight or alloy versions are also available.

This handgun utilizes a unique hammer shroud that allows only a small grooved portion of the hammer to be exposed. A smooth draw from any concealed-carry position is possible without snagging what would normally be an exposed hammer on clothing. And, if for some reason, the shooter desires a deliberate single-action shot by first cocking the hammer, the option is still available.

A notch-type rear sight is utilized in conjunction with a ramped, serrated, black front sight. This system further enhances a snag-free presentation. The rear sight, although small, aligns naturally in an easily recognizable sight picture.

The natural pointing ability of this revolver lies partially due to the J-frame Smith's round-butt configuration. We added a set of rosewood Secret Service grips from Eagle Grips (Eagle Grips, Dept. SOF, 460 Randy Road, Carol Stream, IL, 60188; phone: 708-260-0400). These grips, designed specifically for concealed-carry, are the perfect companion to a back-up weapon such as the Model 49. Grips that are too small for the shooter's hand will be uncomfortable, or worse, uncontrollable when firing; nor, do they lend themselves to a consistent firing grip if they offer the hand too little material to grab. On the other hand, grips that are too big degrade the concealability of the piece — which was an important factor in choosing the weapon in the first place. By providing a sturdy, three-finger grip without increasing the size of the weapon, the Eagle Secret Service grips are an intelligent compromise.

On the range this weapon performed flawlessly. In a limited test of Hornady's (Hornady Manufacturing Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68802; phone: 800-338-3220; fax: 308-382-5761) 158-grain XTP jacketed hollow-point factory ammunition, accuracy exceeded self-defense standards. With a little practice, balancing speed vs. group size became second nature.

This weapon certainly meets the standards for a classic back-up handgun. There is effective ammunition available, the wheel gun is reliable, and performs well in a variety of carry options. Highly recommended.

—Dwight Swift

HOW MANY MORE COPS WILL DIE...

...BEFORE CONGRESS TAKES ACTION?

We hope the answer is none.

But the chance of even one of our nation's trained law enforcement officers being denied the right of self-protection — when they need it the most — is one too many for us.

That's why the Law Enforcement Alliance of America is now mounting a major drive to enact **H.R. 218, the Community Protection Act**, into federal law.

H.R. 218 would allow qualified retired and off-duty law enforcement officers to carry concealed firearms nationwide. Simply put, LEAA believes that your life and the lives of your loved ones are worth protecting 24 hours a day — wherever you may be.

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The Law Enforcement Alliance of America is devoted to enacting H.R. 218, the Community Protection Act. Join our effort — *before it's too late.*

Call your Congressman Today! 202-225-3121

Ask for their support of H.R. 218 — The Community Protection Act

The Law Enforcement Alliance of America
7700 Leesburg Pike, Suite 421, Falls Church, VA 22043
703-847-COPS Toll Free 1-800-766-8578



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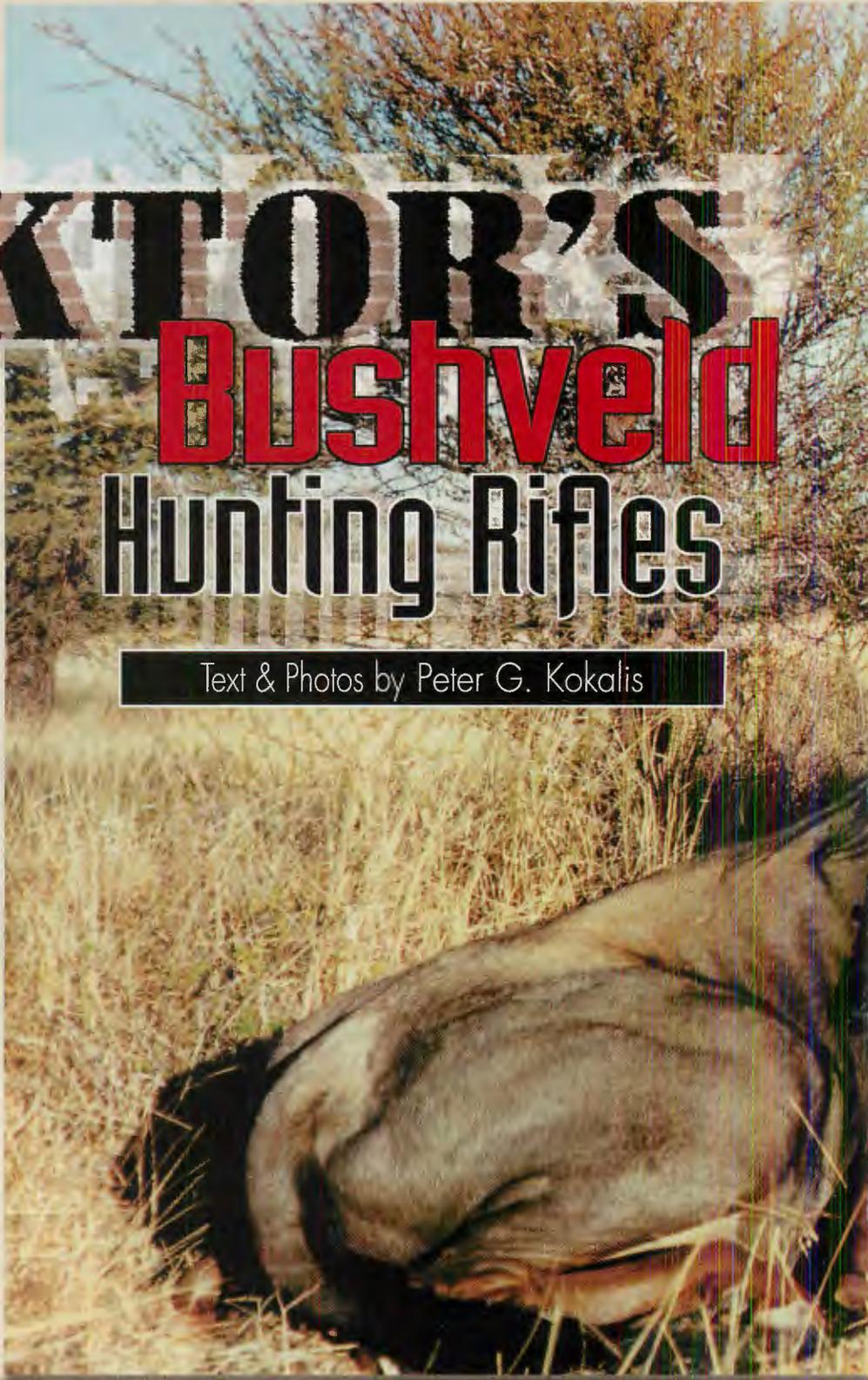
VEKTOR'S Bushveld Hunting Rifles

Premium Arms From South Africa

About 250 kilometers west of Pretoria, South Africa, near the border with Botswana, lies the 7,500-acre Orion Game Ranch. At an elevation of approximately 3,600 meters above sea level, the area can be best characterized as broken *bushveld* (a transition zone between bushveld and high veld). The ranch contains a herd of over 400 Blue Wildebeest (Gnu) and numerous Oryx, Kudu, Impala, Red Hartebeest, Eland, Blesbok, Waterbuck, Steenbok, Duiker and Warthog. I'm there to test the new Vektor Lyttelton rifles, which will soon be available in the United States. To test a hunting rifle, you must hunt with it.

The Vektor Lyttelton hunting rifle series represents, in my opinion, a highly successful effort to combine all of the best features of the greatest hunting rifle actions ever produced. Development commenced in June 1997. Vektor, a division of Denel (Pty) Ltd (Dept. SOF, 368 Selbourne Avenue, Lyttelton, Gauteng, P.O. Box 5445, Pretoria 0001, South Africa; phone: 011-27-12-620-2387; fax: 011-27-12-620-2407), first called for and received input from both hunters and technical experts. Their design staff took a critical look at both the good and bad points of the famous Mauser Model 1898 action. While the steel used in its manufacture was not very good by today's standards, the design itself made up for any deficiencies in the material. Vektor's designers also examined the pre-'64 Winchester Model 70, Remington 700, Kimber, Weatherby, Sauer, Sako and several other actions.

They decided not compromise with either the design or quality. The final Vektor Lyttelton action is similar to both the '98 Mauser and pre-'64 Winchester Model 70. The receiver is machined from EN24 (a British WWH term that stands for "Emergency Number" and indicates the alloy content of the steel) solid steel bar stock. The trigger housing and floorplate are presently machine-finished investment castings from EN19 steel. In the future, they will be



Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

machined from solid bar stock. The receiver's sidewall area has been increased dramatically over that of the Mauser '98 to enhance both rigidity and smoothness. The rear receiver screw threads into a blind hole in the receiver. As a result, the screw can never protrude to interfere with the bolt's movement.

The Mauser bolt guide rail has been deleted and replaced by a pre-'64 Model 70-type bolt guide on the left side of the bolt body. The long leaf spring Mauser extractor has been retained along with the concept of

so-called "controlled feeding" as well. This means that rounds cannot be dropped into the chamber because the extractor claw will not slip over the rim and so the bolt cannot be closed. All feeding must be from the magazine and the extractor claw rides in the case's extractor groove starting at the time the cartridge moves upward out of the magazine. Thus, the extractor "controls" the case's movement throughout the feeding cycle. While there are arguments for and against this system, by and large most hunting authorities feel this to be a positive fea-



Winchester pre-'64 Model 70, the bolt group is easy to disassemble.

Unlike the '98 Mauser, the Vektor Lyttelton action has no cut on the left (top) locking lug for the ejector. The ejector is set at a 32-degree angle and the bolt groove for this component is below the locking lug. This groove is also set at a 32-degree angle to throw empty cases up and outward so they miss the receiver's side rail and the scope. The safety locking lug (i.e., the bolt handle) cutout in the receiver is larger than that found on the Mauser '98.

The receiver's threads for the barrel are 6 mm longer than the '98 Mauser action. This provides more stability and rigidity to enhance the rifle's accuracy potential. The threads remain those of the original Mauser: 12 threads per inch with a pitch of 55 degrees Whitworth.

A pre-'64 Winchester Model 70-type 3-position safety has been incorporated. A so-called wing-type, it pivots horizontally and will not interfere with a scope. The rearward position is *safe* and locks both the firing pin and bolt (by far and way the preferred type). The center position locks the firing pin, but permits manipulation of the bolt for loading. The forward position,



ture as it provides maximum reliability, both in feeding and extraction of the empty case and tends to inhibit double feeding.

Like that of the Mauser '98, the bolt lift is 90 degrees. The bolt handle is in the standard Mauser low scope configuration. A one-piece firing pin, machined from solid stock, screws onto the cocking piece. The firing pin travels only 6.5mm after the sear is released, thus the lock time is fairly short. The cocking piece does not protrude from the cocking piece housing. As with the

Author with Rowland Ward record Blue Wildebeest taken with Vektor Lyttelton rifle chambered for the .375 H&H Magnum cartridge with a Swarovski 1.25-4x24mm variable power scope. (right) Vektor Lyttelton rifles tested by SOF, from left to right: caliber .270 Winchester with Swarovski 6x42mm scope, caliber .375 H&H Magnum with Swarovski 1.25-4x24mm variable power scope, and caliber .30-06 with Shirstone 6x42mm scope.



Trophy Red Hartebeest was taken with caliber .270 Winchester Vektor Lyttelton rifle equipped with Swarovski 6x42mm scope.



which exposes a red dot at the rear, permits the rifle to be fired. While the positions were positive and the safety exhibited no

tendency to slip from one position to another, on the specimens I fired movement of the safety lever was a bit stiff. There is a Mauser-type gas deflector on the Mauser-type cocking-piece housing. The bolt stop is smaller than that of the Mauser '98.

The Vektor Lyttelton action's magazine is similar to that of the pre-World-War-II Mauser commercial rifle, with a solid floor-

plate. The magazine floorplate release is inside the trigger guard in a style reminiscent of the early Mausers. This mechanism progressively closes the floorplate as pressure is applied, without any rattle. Floorplate latching is completely secure. This is an all-important consideration when hunting dangerous game, as having all the rounds in the magazine dump onto the ground while facing a charging Cape Buffalo is a surprise no one needs, no matter what time of day it is.

The same action is employed for .243 Winchester, .308 Winchester and .22-250 Remington. Another action with a longer cutout and bolt is used for .270 Winchester, .30-06, 7x57mm, 7x64mm Brenneke and 9.3x62mm Mauser. A third action with an even longer cutout and bolt is used for the 7mm Remington Magnum, .300 Winchester Magnum, .300 H&H Magnum, .338 Winchester Magnum, .375 H&H Magnum,

Hunting with the VEKTOR Lyttelton Rifles

We arrived at the Orion Game Ranch (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 151, Zeerust 2865, North West Province, South Africa; phone/fax: 011-18-642-3350) with three Vektor Lyttelton rifles to test and evaluate on wild game. The rifles represented an excellent range of calibers for the game available to us: a .270 Winchester with a Swarovski 6x42mm scope, a .30-06 with a Shirstone 6x42mm scope and a .375 H&H Magnum with a Swarovski 1.25-4x24mm variable power scope. The .375 H&H Magnum rifle had a Monte Carlo stock, the other two were equipped with classic stocks. The rings were too high on the .30-06 rifle and as I thus could not obtain a proper cheek weld, I did not use this rifle for hunting.



Boeta du Toit, owner of the Orion Game Ranch, with Vektor Lyttelton caliber .30-06 rifle.

Boeta du Toit, owner of the Orion Game Ranch, together with his wife, Cornet, assigned us two bushmen trackers, Johannes and George, who spoke only Afrikaans. Members of the Kgung people from Caprivi in northeast Namibia, they were persecuted by SWAPO and so most of them moved to Omega base where they became members of 31 Battalion of the South Africa Defense Force (SADF). When the SADF withdrew from South West Africa on 14 March 1990, approximately 4,500 bushmen people came to South Africa. Most are now living in Smitsdrift, near Kimberly. Our two trackers were combat veterans and still wore their SADF uniforms. Boeta du Toit, himself, is recently retired as commander of the local civil forces, so I was in a friendly, and familiar, military



(above) The receiver is milled from solid steel bar stock on CNC machinery. (above, right) Stock blanks are roughed out on automatic equipment. (far right) Highly skilled artisans hand-fit the barreled actions to the stock using smoke from a kerosene lamp that is re-applied until the fit is perfect. (right) Vektor's engraver works on a floorplate for a custom rifle. High quality engraving is available on special order.



.416 Remington Magnum, .458 Winchester Magnum, and .470 Capstick rounds. By the end of 1999, a smaller, or "mini," action will be available for the .222 Remington and .223 Remington (5.56x45mm) cartridges. At the same time, a scaled-up "ultra" magnum action will be introduced for the .404 Jeffery, .416 Rigby, .505 Gibbs and .500 Jeffery rounds.

Vektor Lyttelton rifles imported to the United States can ordered with either Warne,

Winchester Model 70 or Weaver-type scope bases. These bases will feature American spacing and thread (6x48). The action's inside collar is the same as that of the Mauser '98.

The trigger mechanism is of the Timney-type and is fully adjustable for both pull and let off. The trigger-pull weight is adjusted at the factory to between 3.0 to 3.5 pounds.

Vektor Lyttelton barrels are hammer forged. They are tapered and of medium weight. This adds stiffness and provides the

environment during my entire stay at Orion.

My first objective was a trophy Blue Wildebeest. Often referred to as the poor man's Cape Buffalo, the Blue Wildebeest is large and tough to put down. As a consequence, I selected the .375 H&H Magnum rifle with 300-grain SP ammunition. Introduced in 1912 by Holland & Holland, it is one of the first belted magnum-type cartridges. It is one of the best of the medium bores for African hunting. However, principally because of the late Peter Capstick, it has been incorrectly promoted for use against Cape Buffalo, the most dangerous animal on the face of the earth. For large antelopes, such as Eland and Blue Wildebeest, and both leopards and lion, the .375 H&H Magnum is an excellent choice. But, for hunting the wily and exceptionally dangerous *Syncerus caffer caffer*, it remains borderline at best.

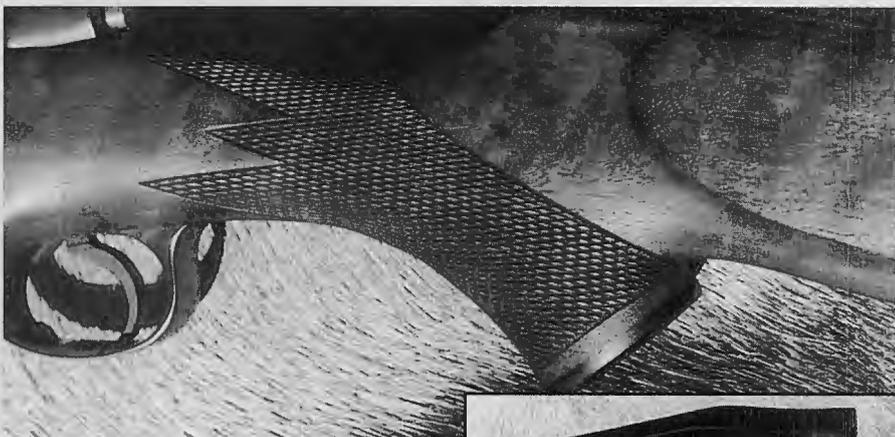
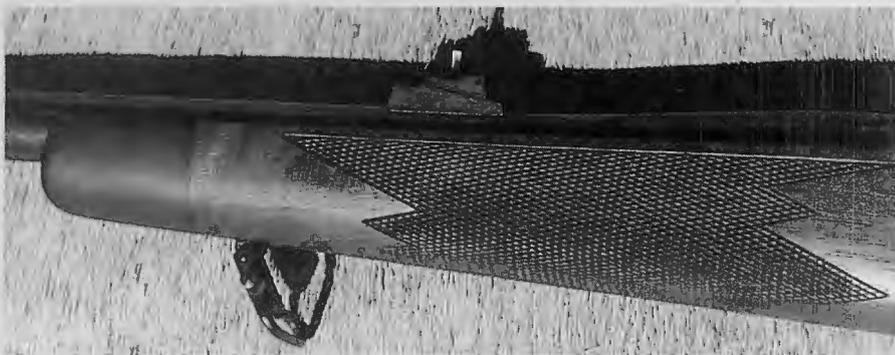
We hunted for an entire day until, at 1630, our trackers located a large herd of Blue Wildebeest. They directed me to a large bull and I waited until he presented me with a broadside shot. The heart is very low on the Blue Wildebeest and you must mentally divide the animal into four quarters. The heart will be in the bottom quarter directly in back of the front shoulder. Taken at 110 yards, my shot took away the bottom half of the heart and after running 20 paces the bull dropped dead. However, the overall performance of the PMP 300-grain SP was unacceptable, in my opinion. Almost 46%

of the projectile was lost to fragmentation and several fragments ruptured the stomach. The moral of this experience is to use nothing but high-quality bonded bullets, such as those produced by Barnes, Nosler and Woodleigh. Weighing close to 700 hundred pounds, the horn spread on this approximately 8-year-old bull was 29 3/8 inches, placing it well within the Rowland Ward's records.

The following morning I decided to hunt for a Red Hartebeest trophy. A much smaller antelope than the Blue Wildebeest, with bulls averaging about 350 pounds, I chose the caliber .270 Winchester Vektor Lyttelton rifle. Again, it was not until the end of the day that our trackers located a small herd containing a trophy bull. Shooting from about 150 yards, my bullet found the animals heart and after a few paces he dropped. The 22-inch horns were just below the Rowland Ward minimum for this species. This time I used a 150-grain PMP ProAmm premium bullet. This projectile has two lead cores: a soft core in the point to insure adequate expansion and a hard core to prevent excessive expansion and loss of mass. There is also a strengthened jacket wall to lock the second core and prevent its separation from the jacket and prevent excessive curling and tearing. It obviously works as only 7% of the original bullet weight was lost to fragmentation.

muzzle-heavy balance most shooters desire. They feature a standard rounded crown. They are all 24 inches in length. This maximizes the velocity potential generated by large propellant charges and keeps muzzle blast away from the shooter. Rate of right-hand twist varies with the caliber. Caliber .300 Winchester Magnum barrels and up have six grooves. Caliber .308 Winchester barrels and smaller have four grooves. The barrels of the three rifles provided to me for test and evaluation were all equipped with folding-leaf express-type rear sights and blade-type front sights with a protective hood. Overall length of these rifles is 48.16 inches (1,180 mm).

Two types of Turkish walnut stocks are available: a classic style or a high comb Monte Carlo style. They can be ordered with either an oil finish or so-called *french polish*. These stocks are equipped with a conventional solid rubber recoil pad. The forearm cap and grip cap are made of exotic African darkwood. The grip cap carries the Vektor escutcheon. The hand checking on the pistol grip and forearm is 20 lines per inch, and beautifully executed on all the specimens I examined in the factory. While only right-hand actions are available at this time, the stocks are available



Hand checking on both the pistol grip and forearm is 20 lines per inch, and beautifully executed. (inset) Two types of walnut stocks are available: classic style (bottom) or a high comb Monte Carlo style (top).

Mauser Magnum Reborn

Vektor, known principally in the field of military small arms, has produced a surprisingly wide array of bolt-action sporting rifles. In addition to the new Vektor Lyttelton rifle, during the 1970s, Vektor (then known as LIW) manufactured the RSA-Lyttelton target rifle in caliber .308 Winchester (7.62x51mm NATO). Today there is a totally new Lyttelton target rifle, also chambered for the .308 Winchester round. Both of these rifles are bolt-action, Palma-types with precision, target-type adjustable iron sights. Vektor also manufactures sporting rifles using original '98 Mauser surplus military actions.

Vektor has just re-introduced the famous '98 Mauser magnum action. The ammunition will be provided by Kynoch (loaded with Australian Woodleigh soft points and solids). This rifle will be available chambered for all of the famous British dangerous game calibers: .300 Holland & Holland (180-grain SP and 220-grain SP and solid), .350 Rigby (225-grain SP and solid), .375 H&H Magnum (235-grain SP, 270-grain SP and 300-grain SP and solid), .404 Jeffery (400-grain SP and solid), .416 Rigby (400-grain SP and solid) and .500 Jeffery (535-grain SP and solid). Eventually, .505 Gibbs, .470 Capstick and others will be added.

The '98 action was the epitome of Paul Mauser's bolt-action designs. The one-piece receiver was machined from a carbon steel forging that was heat-treated only in the required areas. The bolt was a solid, one-piece-steel machined forging with an integral bolt handle and dual, opposed locking lugs on the front end. The right (bottom) lug is solid, but the left (top) lug is slotted to allow the ejector to pass through. The bolt has a third, or safety, lug at the rear of the bolt just forward of the bolt handle, and in alignment with the right locking lug. There is a recess in the receiver below the bridge into which this lug locks when the bolt is closed. The receiver ring has an integral inner collar that circles the front end of the bolt just ahead of the two locking lugs. It was designed to block escaping gases in the event of a ruptured case. The wing-type safety is located in a hole in the top of the bolt sleeve. The bolt stop, at the left rear of the receiver, pivots on a pointed screw. The trigger guard and magazine were machined from a single piece of steel.

The first Magnum action was built around 1900 for John Rigby & Co. to accommodate their .400/350 rimmed cartridge. These actions had a distinctive stepped-down receiver and slanted magazine box to handle the rimmed case. Most of these Magnum actions and rifles were purchased by the British.

Vektor has made the following changes to the Mauser Magnum action. The extractor is about 4-5 mm longer to inhibit bolt wobble. The bolt diameter has been increased from 17.8 mm to 18 mm to accommodate larger calibers, such as .500 Jeffery and .505 Gibbs. The stripper clip guide has been removed.

These rifles will eventually be available in the U.S. However, they will be priced at \$5,000 and up.

— P.G.K.

with either right-hand or left-hand combs.

On heavy caliber Vektor Lyttelton rifles, an internal steel recoil lug is installed in lieu of the usual cross bolt. The BATF has stated that a cross bolt recoil lug is a feature of "military rifles!" This is a preposterous ruling. This internal steel recoil lug is the only component in the barreled action's interface with the stock that is glass bedded.

The barreled actions are all hand-fitted to the stocks using smoke from a kerosene lamp that is re-applied until the fit is perfect. The barrel is free floating except at the front, where the stock places a slight upward pressure on the barrel. Extensive testing has convincingly demonstrated that this dampens vibrations and improves accuracy.

These rifles are furnished with a medium high-gloss black-oxide finish. Actions are

VEKTOR Lyttelton Rifle

SPECIFICATIONS

Calibers: .243 Winchester, .308 Winchester, .22-250 Remington, .270 Winchester, .30-06, 7x57mm, 7x64mm Brenneke, 9.3x62mm Mauser, 7mm Remington Magnum, .300 Winchester Magnum, .300 H&H Magnum, .338 Winchester Magnum, .375 H&H Magnum, .416 Remington Magnum, .458 Winchester Magnum, and .470 Capstick.

Operation: Bolt-action. Two-lug bolt. Three-position safety on the right side of the bolt sleeve.

Weight, empty: 8.4 pounds; magnum calibers: 9 pounds.

Length, overall: 48.16 inches (1,180 mm).

Barrel: Hammer-forged, medium weight, tapered, right-hand twist varies with caliber; .300 Winchester Magnum and up: six grooves; .308 Winchester and smaller: four grooves.

Barrel length: 24 inches.

Feed mechanism: Staggered-column integral magazine with steel hinged floorplate. Capacity varies with caliber.

Sights: Folding-leaf, express-type rear sights. Blade-type front sight with protective hood. Either Warn, Winchester Model 70 or Weaver-type scope bases are available.

Furniture: Walnut stock, select grades available. Classic style or a high comb Monte Carlo-style. Oil finish or french polish.

Finish: Black oxide.

Manufacturer: Vektor, a division of Denel (Pty) Ltd., Dept. SOF, 368 Selbourne Avenue, Lyttelton, Gauteng, P.O. Box 5445, Pretoria 0001, South Africa; phone: 011-27-12-620-2387; fax: 011-27-12-620-2407.

U.S. Importer: Vektor USA, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5139 Stanart Street, Norfolk, VA 23502; phone: 1-888-740-0837 [toll free]; fax: 757-461-9155; e-mail: vektorusa@series2000.com.

T&E summary: High grade hunting rifles with mid-range pricing. Best features of '98 Mauser and pre-'64 Model Winchester with added design enhancements. Quality and design match Vektor's combat-established reputation.



Vektor Lyttelton bolt assembly. Note long Mauser '98 type extractor for controlled feed and three-position wing safety.

also available in-the-white. Custom engraving and select stocks of the very highest quality are also available on special order. The total weight for rifles chambered for calibers such as .30-06 is 8.4 pounds. Rifles chambered for magnum calibers weigh 9 pounds.

All of the Vektor Lyttelton rifles are capable of exceptional accuracy. The three that I tested (.270 Winchester, .30-06 and .375 H&H Magnum) all shot to 1 MOA at 100 meters from a sandbag rest using standard hunting-grade PMP ammunition.

No attempt has been made to compete with mass-produced rifles such as the Ruger Model 77 or the Remington Model 700 series. The Vektor Lyttelton rifle has been designed for a more discriminating market. Reflecting the best design features of the past and representing a major engineering effort to present the finest hunting rifle ever fielded, the Vektor Lyttelton still displays a significant amount of highly skilled hand-crafting. Vektor Lyttelton rifles chambered for standard calibers will most probably be priced in the \$1,000 range. This is actually

a small price to pay for the quality provided. I expect these rifles to be an outstanding success in the U.S. among those with the discernment to appreciate a high quality accurate rifle. For further information contact the U.S. importer, Vektor USA, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 5139 Stanart Street, Norfolk, VA 23502; phone: 1-888-740-0837 [toll free]; fax: 757-461-9155; e-mail: vektorusa@series2000.com). ✕

Product List

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Gauteng, P.O. Box 5445, Pretoria 0001,
South Africa; phone: 011-27-12-620-2387;
fax: 011-27-12-620-2407)

Orion Game Ranch
(Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 151, Zeerust 2865,
North West Province, South Africa;
phone/fax: 011-18-642-3350)

Vektor is also importing a line of hunting knives and locking folders that are more than several notches above the ordinary. All of these knives are made by members of the South African Knife Makers Guild. As an example, the model referred to as The Hunter is made by the

VEKTOR Hunting Knives



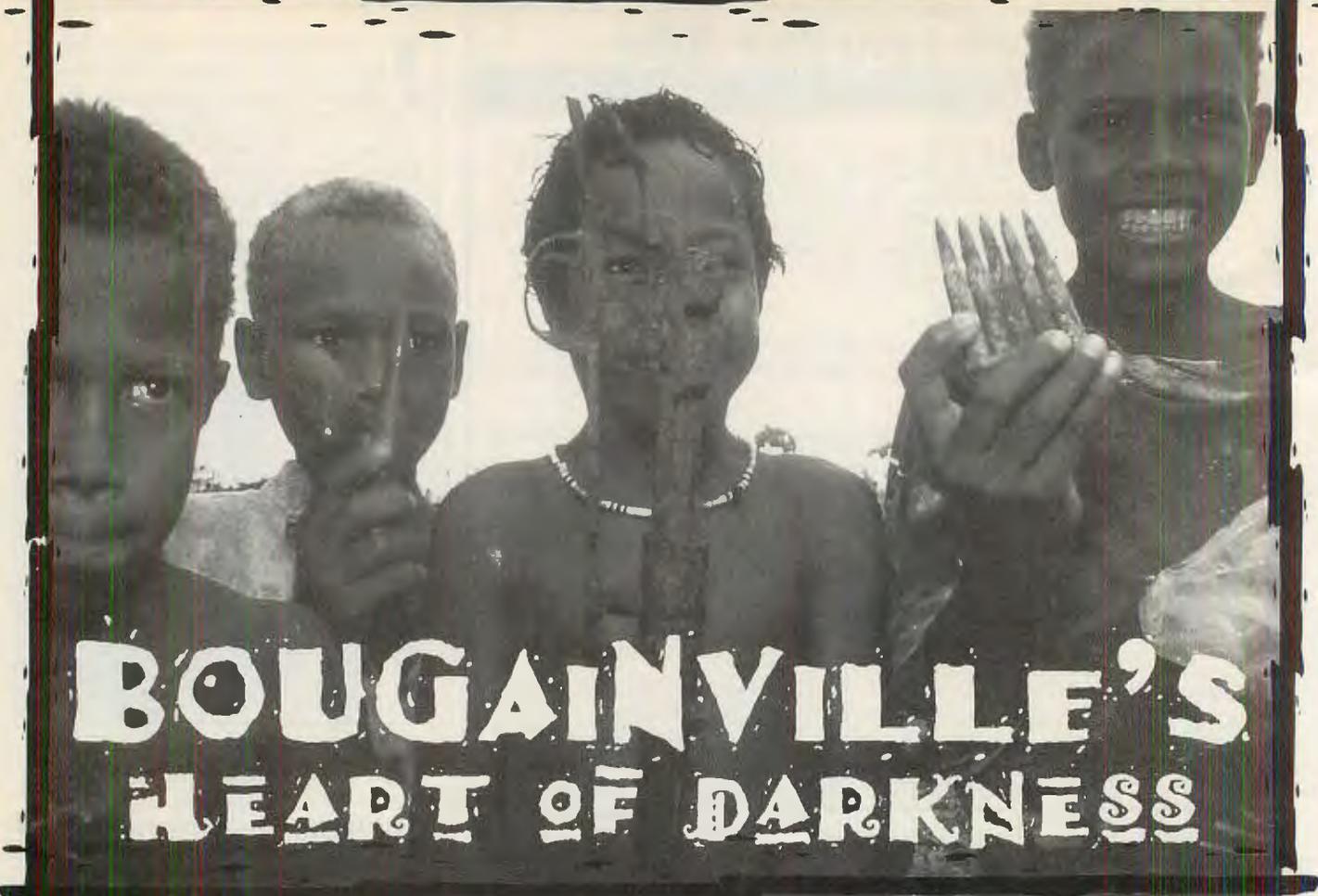
well-known South African custom knife maker, Derek Rausch. It has an approximately 3.8-inch blade that is ideal for both skinning and general camp purposes. All of these handmade knives feature 440C stainless steel hollow ground blades with a 59 HRC (Rockwell Hardness).

The Skinner model also has a 3.8-inch blade, shaped specifically for skinning game. It would be my choice for a hunting companion. In fact, we used both the Hunter and the Skinner models to dress out the Rowland Ward record Blue Wildebeest bull that I shot. It was an especially large specimen and the blades began to tire only at the end. A few seconds of honing and they were back in service. The largest knife in the Vektor line is the Challenger with a 4.6-inch general purpose blade. These knives are all very light with excellent balance, as the handles have been skeletonized under the grips.

Both the hunting knives and locking folders come with grips made of exotic African woods, including red ivory, African blackwood, wild olive, leadwood (which is harder than ebony) and tambotie. U.S. wood laminates are used on the knives destined for domestic South African consumption. All of the knives carry the Vektor escutcheon. The leather scabbards are made in South Africa and the pocket knife scabbards are designed for either horizontal or vertical carry.

More than just an ornamental complement to the Vektor Lyttelton hunting rifles, these knives, while made by custom knifemakers, were designed for heavy use in the field. I am personally well-satisfied with their performance in the bushveld.

— P.G.K.



BOUGAINVILLE'S HEART OF DARKNESS

SOF's Impossible Infiltration Mission

Text & Photos by Rob Krott

For years I've wanted to go to Bougainville, a South Pacific island 800 kilometers from Papua New Guinea (PNG) to observe its ongoing guerrilla war over environmental conservation, self-determination and a copper mine.

The native islanders, cheated out of their cut of the Panguna mine's \$1.3 billion in mineral riches, are angry about the attendant ecological destruction. Since 1975, there's been a secessionist movement. In 1987, Francis Ona, a former truck driver and mine surveyor, formed the Panguna Landowner's Association and demanded compensation of \$10 billion, increased environmental protection, and payment on past profits. The demands were ignored and in 1988 the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) began the revolt in earnest. The Papua New Guinea Defense Force responded with assassination attempts, forcible relocation, burnt villages, gunship attacks on civilian villages, and commando raids on BRA supply dumps in the neutral Solomon Islands. Reports filtered out about

rapes, mutilations, torture, and massacres. It's not a nice war.

This past spring I set off for Bougainville with Robert Young Pelton, publisher and author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places*. Along for the ride would be two TV journalists from *ABC News*, doing a story on Robert. My plan was to hook up with BRA fighters on combat operations. I was careful about operational security because Bougainville was blockaded by PNGDF and Australian helicopter gunships and patrol boats. Travel to Bougainville meant infiltrating via motorized canoe and illegally crossing the Solomon Islands/Papua New Guinea border.

Unfortunately, Pelton went on an Australian TV talk show and informed millions he was on his way to Bougainville via the Solomons. So much for operational security. Pelton was also in contact with Rosemarie Gillespie, a 50-something liberal and lawyer who was supposedly orchestrating our reception in Bougainville. Robert soon surmised she was unable to communicate directly with anyone on Bougainville

and that the BRA is extremely paranoid about assassination attempts. She also learned another ... *Dangerous Places* contributor (not me) was asked to take in a back pack, as a gift to the BRA, bugged with a transmitter intended to vector in South African Executive Outcomes mercenaries. Ona is as reclusive as Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. Pelton mentioned this, fancying himself Marlow to Francis' Kurtz. Ona is a bit paranoid about visitors, and rightly so, considering the back pack scenario. Pelton says that with my blonde hair, blue eyes, bush shorts, and general military deportment I look like everyone's idea of a stereotypical South African mercenary. Great. To get to Bougainville we've got to cross hundreds of miles of shark-infested waters (patrolled by helicopter gunships) in small motorized canoes piloted by people who may very well give us the chop and throw us over the side. Meeting Ona would be interesting. But I can pass on the whole *Heart of Darkness* allegory. (Read the book, saw the movie.) We arrive in Honiara, capital of the Solomon Islands, on the island of Guadalcanal and checked into the Honiara Hotel. In the morning the dawn broke on a gray sky pissing down rain. The scenery was limited to Chinese-owned hardware and sundry shops, battered Toyotas, mangy dogs, and people wandering listlessly about while casting curious glances our way. We caught a taxi out of town to meet with

Father Norman Arkwright, a Marist brother who runs a Bougainville refugee camp. We hoped he'd facilitate our entry to Bougainville. Father Norman has been out here for 34 years, with not even a hint of a tan. While he was polite and listened to Robert's pitch, he eyed the three of us with barely concealed distrust. We learned later that the good father promptly alerted the authorities of our plans to cross over to Bougainville. Maybe I should have told him I was an altar boy at St. John's. On the way back we stopped for dinner at the Solomon Kitano Mendana Hotel (the Japanese have now bought what they couldn't hold onto 55 years ago).

Eskies and Aircrews

Wandering around the lobby and dodging the ubiquitous Japanese camera-toting tourists, I strike up a conversation with a New Zealand air force air crew. The Aussie and New Zealand flight personnel transiting through Honiara, busy flying personnel and supplies into Bougainville, are easily recognizable: they're the guys carrying cases of Victoria Bitter or Fosters' and dragging "Eskies" full of ice to their rooms. In the course of two or three visits to the hotel I chatted with a few of them, friendly but tight-lipped. In the two local papers in the lobby was a prominent article that detailed a shifty arms deal. U.S. weapons had arrived — to defend against PNGDF incursions and billed to the Solomon Islands treasury at \$3.5 million, but the shipping invoice \$800,000. Everyone is suspicious that we're there to do a story on the dirty arms deal.

Meeting us later was Bob Woodruff. Three out of the four of us are named Robert. This will cause some strained looks



Robert Pelton

(above) SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent Rob Kroitt winning hearts and minds on Guadalcanal. The crowd in The Heron Club, (below) in bustling downtown Honiara; a beachside watering hole, surrounded by chainlink fencing, is considered the roughest bar in town. SolBrew beer is the drink of choice. It's 2100 hours and just about everyone is already staggering drunk. (bottom) Fishermen with their catch in Ghizo Lagoon. Canoes like these are used for smuggling men and supplies into Bougainville.



of disbelief from customs officers and police. Another problem is that four Americans wandering around this little South Pacific backwater attract a lot of attention. Woodruff, the "faceman" *ABC News* has sent to do a stand-up, is a former lawyer-turned-correspondent. Woodruff's claim to fame is having covered Princess Diana's funeral. What's really strange is that he is a dead-ringer for Tom Cruise — and he knows it. Pelton is mystified how the guy can pull a different daisy-fresh adventure-wear ensemble from his pack every day. At dinner that night, in full earshot of some nosy relief workers, Woodruff asks me, "So where were you a mercenary?" The dining room gets noticeably quieter. I hope they think he said "missionary." This is already an interesting trip.

Hosepiping With Badger

That night we stop at The Heron Club in bustling downtown Honiara. A beachside watering hole surrounded by chainlink fencing, I later learn that it is considered the roughest bar in town. SolBrew beer is the drink of choice. Because there is no choice ... it's SolBrew or nothing. It's 2100 hours and just about everyone is already staggering drunk. I quickly learn some local slang: *hosepiping* is putting the bite on someone for a beer or hustling them for money, anything.

Four Americans are prime candidates for *hosepiping*. We suddenly have a dozen new friends. Each. "Welkam frens!" When someone tries to wheedle a beer out of me I just tell them I work for Pelton and that he has all the money. He was probably beginning to wonder why he was so popular.

A little gray-haired derelict wearing a dirty baseball cap, exhaling stale beer fumes and claiming to be a journalist, latched onto Pelton.



Badger Patterson was about 50 years old and claimed he could arrange everything to get us to Bougainville. Badger's not only a first-class character, but a wealth of information on the islands. "Badger's most oft heard line is: "Yes, I think one more (SolBrew) would be good. Capital!" As we leave the bar around 0300 hours, "the Badger-man" makes a bargain to be Pelton's guide the next day. I was sure it would be an eventful day. Capital! Getting to Paradise

That evening at dinner we meet Clement Base, Premier of the Western Provinces. He was born on Bougainville, in a town called Paradise. When we ask him if we can go to Paradise he replies, "not everyone can go to Paradise." Premier Base says we've come at a good time to visit Bougainville — the first positive response we've heard from anybody. We'll meet Badger on Ghizo Island, our jumping off point in the Bougainville Strait. Pelton pays Badger \$50 to meet us in Ghizo. I'm skeptical we'll see Badger before he's squandered it on SolBrew.

In the morning we take a short hop and check into the Ghizo Hotel. PT-109 was sunk near here and from Ghizo's dock we can see Plum Pudding Island (aka Kennedy Island) where JFK swam ashore. In Ghizo, a sleepy little fishing village boasting one main dirt road through a cluster of corrugated tin buildings, the four of us were soon big news. The next day we go SCUBA diving while waiting for a flight on to the Shortland Islands, closer to Bougainville. Dudley Ferries and his very attractive blonde partner, Jill Young, are two Aussies who decided to screw the rat race and run a dive business on Ghizo. With Dudley, Robert, and Bob, I made two dives. On a wall known as Grand Central Station we dove to about 110 feet with some sharks. After lunch we explored the *Toa Maru 2*, a 6,372 ton Japanese freighter at a depth of 37 meters in Kololuka Bay. Inside are thousands of old sake bottles, piles of crockery, crates of ammunition, a complete motorcycle with sidecar, and a truck. As we surfaced and swam to the boat, some local boys in dugouts paddled up to us. The canoes were just big enough for the smiling 10-year-olds. Barely in sight of land, they were floating idly on a serene sea under the tropical sun. Riding the dive boat back, with the wind whipping my hair and the sun baking my face, I decide Ghizo is Paradise. And Base was right, everyone



SOF's Rob Krott off for Bougainville with Robert Young Pelton, publisher and author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places*, pictured here on his way into the Ghizo Police Station by order of a summons. He was to arrive at 0900, but showed up 15 minutes early. That meant trouble.



A little gray-haired derelict wearing a dirty baseball cap, exhaling stale beer fumes and claiming to be a journalist, Badger Patterson was about 50 years old and claimed he could arrange everything to get us to Bougainville. Badger's not only a first-class character, but a wealth of information on the islands. (below) Krott loads up at Honiara's answer to KFC ... after eating things that "taste like chicken," it was nice to have some of the real thing.



probably can't get there.

The Man With The Tooth

Back from the dive, we had dinner and more than a couple of SolBrews. Robert and I discuss the best way in to Bougainville without local contacts. Dom Rotheroe, an English journalist friend of Robert's, spent four weeks in Ghizo waiting for his boat. Once at sea, the engine broke down repeatedly and they soon found themselves adrift and lost. After landing in Chosieul they were shunted from village to village for several days before heading for Bougainville interrogation by BRA "military intelligence."

The next day we bought tickets for a hop to Choiseul. We've each got a rucksack and then there's a couple of gym bags and Jay's green duffel of camera gear we call "El Gordo Verde." onboard the DeHavilland Twin Otter.

At Chosieul Bay there was a very large Royal Solomons Islands Police constable striding toward the flight line. This didn't look good. As we got off the plane, Constable A. Markifeneu had a piece of paper listing our names. The constable, his teeth stained red by betel nut, was huge — well over 6 feet and probably close to 270 pounds. He was even bigger than Pelton's respectable 6'5". Stretched around his neck like a choker was a bead necklace with pendant. I immediately recognized its origin. Hmm, interesting. Meanwhile, Pelton was failing to charm the

constable. He had orders to put us back on the plane to Ghizo and on to Honiara's immigration office. Despite being told not to by the constable, Jay was filming surreptitiously. Pelton asked, "Is that a tooth on your necklace?" The constable, silent for a moment, replied, "It was my father's."

We got back on the plane.

Vietnamese Mercenaries Carrying Machine Guns

At Ghizo, Pelton and I jumped off while Jay and Bob — severely rattled by the encounter with the police constable and fearing arrest, a bag search, and possible indignities to their persons — left the islands. We checked into the *Koburutavia* (Baby Dolphin) Lodge above the PT-109 Bar and Restaurant. No air conditioning, no amenities; just two bunks. Sure beat the hell out of a jail cell or jungle living, though. While we're on the back porch overlooking the lagoon, who should show up but our old friend Badger. About five SolBrews later, Badger, in fine form, insists that "Peter" join us for dinner. Peter is the boat mechanic and skipper who took three of Pelton's

acquaintances to Bougainville. When we tell him we'd like to meet Francis, the soft-spoken boatman just frowns and suggests we go into Bougainville in a round-about way, landing on the center of the island. The northern end, closest to us, is crawling with PNGDF troops. It would be a bad idea to land there. We wholeheartedly agreed.

Interrogated By Kipling

At breakfast we have a phone call. A summons to the Ghizo Police post at 0900. At 0845 we walk in. Chief Superintendent Aloysius Ora snaps to attention in front of us, and looks above our heads at the wall clock. He's wearing full kit: uniform slacks instead of shorts; shoes instead of flip-flops. The insignia on his service cap is gleaming and there's a swagger stick under his arm. He's wearing sunglasses indoors. It's 0845 and we're 15 minutes early. That makes him unhappy with us.

Sputtering in heavily accented island English, he points at the wall clock and tells us we must come back at exactly 0900. No waiting permitted. We wander down the street to the government offices and bump into Premier Clement Base and chat. Back to the police station, we're on time but now must cool our heels for 10 minutes. Finally, ushered into his office, we're joined by Eddie Kipling, his male secretary and the local Immigration officer. Kipling wants to see our passports. Problem. Despite what

the numbers say he determines my visa stamp is only good until the 8th (it was already the 5th) yet my flight back to Australia doesn't leave until the 12th. We tell them we planned on leaving town tomorrow. We are asked the usual questions. Chief Superintendent Ora gave us his well-rehearsed spiel (he had since at least 0845 to prepare): "You were returned from Chosieul Bay. We received information about you. Carrying these

green bags and things on your belts, which we think are weapons. You have scared all the people in the Shortlands with your presence. We received information of these military — Vietnamese — er, or Vietnam war veterans coming here. We got this from Australia." The whole time Pelton is holding his Sony CDV between his knees and videotaping the Chief Superintendent. Ora tells us that people all over the islands have been calling in with strange tales of four large white men walking around with guns in holsters, ammunition pouches, and heavy weapons in green gear bags. Then Ora begins talking about Bougainville explaining how the colonial powers screwed up when they drew borders through the South Pacific. Pelton then asks, "So can we go to Bougainville?" No one is amused.

A Three-Hour Cruise ...

In the evening "Peter" the boat mechanic stops by. He tells us the trip takes seven hours each way and how much fuel it will take round trip, plus extra for the locals who help. It will cost \$800 just for fuel, and we have to pay off the boatman and pay a "journalist fee." It's a sure bet we'll be held up for more cash to leave the island (return trips from pestilential jungle hell-holes always cost more). If we split the cost it's going to be at least \$1,000 each. Pelton doesn't want to go. He's on a tight schedule to make it to



(above) Ghizo Lagoon is a sleepy tranquil place — but the logistical epicenter for the longest-running guerrilla war in the South Pacific. (below) Abandoned WWII aircraft litter the jungle.



(below) Bob Woodruff, a Tom Cruise lookalike (center), and Jay Aninia (in trademark Panama hat) ... the two ABC News guys were mistaken for "company men from Langley ..."



Pakistan and Afghanistan. Personally, I can't afford to lay out that kind of money for an iffy boat trip. Besides, I don't have the cash, there's no ATM, and they don't take Visa. Adding to the downside: 1) Even if we meet with Francis Ona, we'll probably be picked up by the Australians and deported to Port Moresby; 2) we'll have to pay our own way back from Port Moresby; 3) if we make it to Bougainville, and are free to return to Ghizo, we may have to wait several weeks for a boat. I'm sick and disgusted with the whole affair. Maybe *ABC News* would have bankrolled me (they wanted me to take a

video camera in if they didn't make it) but they're gone: already back in Australia. It's obvious I'm not going to Bougainville. I am not a happy camper. The next day we left for Honiara and traveled on to Australia a day later. Back in Brisbane, Pelton hears from a very upset Rosemarie. She received a phone call from someone in the BRA/BIG asking why she tried to help send mercenaries to Bougain-

ville. BIG Foreign Secretary Martin Miriori wrote a press release about us. "BIG/BRA Congrat-ulates Solomon Island Authorities For Apprehending Foreigners Attempting To Cross Into Bougainville Illegally." It says we "were spotted ... while acting on a tip-of from BIG/BRA authorities in Bougainville." It further claimed we were all forced to return to Honiara and held for questioning.

But the funniest line in the press release? "It has been alleged from reliable sources that one of these foreigners, Mr. Rod Krott (sic), was involved with foreign mercenaries on the Sandline issue last year, which the former PNG Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, had allegedly hired and wanted to use against the population of Bougainville." But why were we snatched out to the Solomon Islands police by the very people we were going in to help? Why the back-stabbing of everyone involved including the left-wing do-gooders? Miriori, and other "elements" in BIG, schemed to keep Francis Ona and his clique out of the world media loop. Miriori and his ilk cut themselves a juicy deal with the PNG government. Francis Ona is sequestered on a jungle moun-

taintop and isolated from outsiders. His only communications link is Miriori via radio and sat-phone. Ona had no clue he'd just been double dealt in the peace talks. As Pelton said, "In a hotel room in Canberra, the longest and most righteous war in the Pacific was being turned into a sell-out."

Rob Krott is an SOF senior foreign correspondent. ☒

Racism In The ATF

Just Cronies or *Jim Crow*?

by James L. Pate

No

other federal law-enforcement agency has a reputation more tarnished by persistent reports of alleged institutional bigotry and racism than the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

In January 1993, for instance, a few weeks before the bureau's singularly spectacular disaster outside Waco, Texas, the front page of the *Washington Post* documented pervasive patterns of sexual and racial bias within BATF, under a headline that blasted the bureau's "White, Male Traditions."

Then came the revelations about the Good O' Boys Roundup, an annual drunken debauch in the Smoky Mountains, organized by BATF agents in Tennessee — spiritual home of the Ku Klux Klan — the Carolinas, Alabama and Georgia. It drew federal, state and local lawmen from across the South.

Congressional hearings on the Good O' Boy Roundup began a blizzard of blistering press. BATF spinmeisters went running for cover. The hearings disclosed tasteless riverside revelry that included tee shirts and signs with racist slogans, and skits such as one called *The Birth of a Nation*, a spoof on the legendary film about the Civil War and the rise of the KKK. The BATF version played to the theme of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, featuring the emergence of a Negro baby from a watermelon. The public was outraged.

Then, in July 1996, BATF agreed to a multi-million-dollar settlement of a class-action lawsuit filed by nearly 250 agents of African heritage, who alleged a pattern of institutional bias and racism by headquarters in hiring, promotions and assignments. Bureau bosses were forced to pay out more than \$4 million in tax dollars in punitive damages, \$675,000 in back pay and \$1.3 million in legal fees.

The settlement included newly mandated procedures for promotions and assignments for African-American agents, and a separate bureaucratic path for Internal Affairs investigations of black agents. Advocates of the settlement hailed it as a model in affirmative action for other federal agencies to follow. Critics, however, said the new mandates put agents of European, Hispanic, Asian and Native American descent at an unfair disadvantage, and claimed the solution was at least as bad as the problem it was supposed to solve.

But the settlement was, at the very least, a benchmark on which the bureau could hang a claim that a new era was at hand, that things would be different, that racist good o' boys in the ranks would no longer be ignored, much less tolerated. But now a case in Detroit has cast doubt on whether the attitudes of BATF's bosses have changed that much.

A Beating In Irons

On 17 September, a civil rights probe by the Federal Bureau of Investigation into an alleged act of brutality against a black pris-



BATF Director John Magaw (left) and Treasury Undersecretary Ron Noble testify in July 1995 before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which was holding hearings on the "Good O' Boys Roundup." Organized by federal law-enforcement personnel, the debauch featured tasteless racist themes and wide attendance by law-enforcement personnel.

oner resulted in the indictment of two BATF agents on 17 September in Detroit, a city already tainted by bad publicity about law-enforcement's race relations. The most notorious such case was that of Malice Green, an unemployed black man who was pulled from his car and severely beaten by two white city police officers who said Green was concealing a rock of crack cocaine in his fist. Green later died and the two policemen were sentenced to prison.

In the September indictment, BATF Special Agent Regan J. Scott, 34, a nine-year bureau veteran, is accused of violating the constitutional rights of Arthur Bruce Norris, a black suspect and convicted armed robber who was wanted for a parole violation. The 10-page, four-count indictment alleges that Scott used "unreasonable force," and thereby violated Norris' civil rights.

Norris was handcuffed and lying on the floor during a raid by the Detroit Police Department on 7 October 1996, when Scott allegedly kicked him in the head and otherwise assaulted him, according to the indictment and law-enforcement sources familiar with the case.

Scott is also accused of lying in subsequent official statements about the incident, along with a fellow BATF agent, Joel J. Kirkpatrick, 33. Kirkpatrick, who has been with the bureau for 10 years, accompanied Scott on the city police raid. BATF Supervisory Special Agent John Carpenter told Scott he was not to participate in the raid or arrest because Norris was wanted on a state — not a federal — warrant, the indictment alleges.

Through their attorneys, Scott and Kirkpatrick declined to comment directly. But both attorneys vigorously maintained the innocence of the two BATF agents.

"When all the facts are developed at trial, he'll be vindicated and found not guilty of all charges," said Robert Forrest, who is representing Scott.

Attorney David Lawson, who is defending Kirkpatrick, said his client denies the charges that he made false statements.

"Our defense will be the truth," Lawson said. "It is irresponsible to handle this in the criminal justice system. My client found out that his supervisor misrepresented his discussion in a filed report ... There will be no plea bargains. This case is going to trial."

It may be an interesting trial. Critics of BATF, inside and outside the bureau, say bureau bosses, both in Detroit and at headquarters, were slow to act. The facts alleged in the indictment seem straightforward. Yet almost two years passed between the incident and the indictment. Why did it take so long to get a case not at all complex into court?

"That's a very good question," defense attorney Forrest said. "I won't address that until I get to court."

During the two-year interim between the alleged incident and the indictment, *SOF's* sources said, Scott was on paid administrative leave — in essence, an open-ended paid vacation. During that time, he earned a law degree from the University of Detroit.

It's further evidence, critics say, that Scott's BATF bosses did not take the allegations against him of brutality very seriously.

"I don't want to discuss his personnel status," Scott's attorney, Forrest, said when asked to confirm that his client had been on paid leave for two years.

Kirkpatrick's lawyer, Lawson, said his client has been on paid leave since the indictment in September, but stressed that Kirkpatrick had been on full-time duty during the interim, until his indictment. Both agents have been arraigned and are free on an unsecured bond, U.S. District Court records indicate.

Kirkpatrick "has received notice of suspension, pending resolution of the case," Lawson said.

Additional Allegations

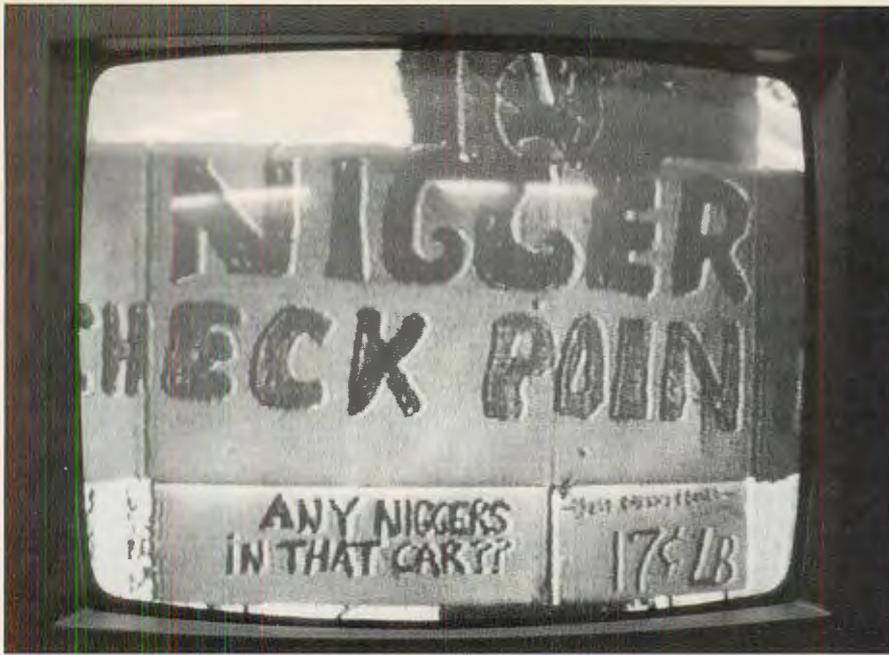
Both agents graduated from the University of Detroit's law school in May, school officials confirmed.

The prosecution may also delve into earlier allegations that Scott had physically abused another handcuffed black suspect in 1994. Critics of BATF point to the allegation as evidence that Scott's supervisors and headquarters bosses are not serious



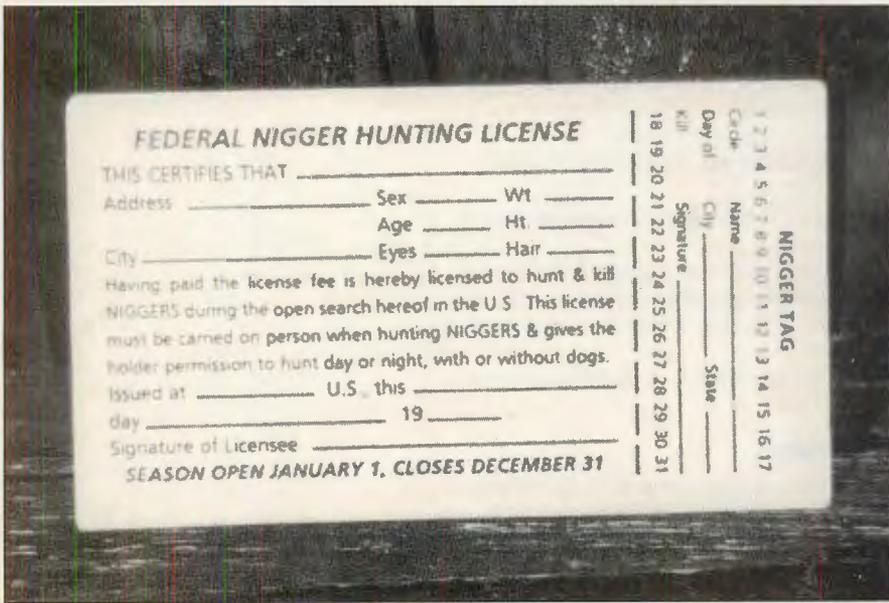
Lawrence Myers

"Good O' Boy Roundup" coffee mug features Treasury Department insignia.



ATF and FBI agents attending annual "Good O' Boy Roundup" in east Tennessee were greeted at the entrance with this home-made sign. The racist gathering was videotaped and presented to congress in 1995.

Other racist souvenirs distributed at the "Good O' Boys Roundup" in 1995 was this "hunting license," which was also seen posted on the Oklahoma City ATF office bulletin board.



about dealing with such incidents.

"It's unfortunate that ATF did not take appropriate action in the incident in 1994," said Kay Kubicki, a lawyer and former bureau agent who served in BATF's Detroit office and has represented many agents in legal disputes with BATF. "I'm not surprised that it didn't, though. I think it's just another example of the government's institutionalized racism."

Asked if Scott had been accused in an earlier case of brutality against a black suspect, his lawyer equivocated.

"I can't verify that," Forrest said.

But sources close to BATF did verify it, and it was confirmed by Steve Fishman, an attorney who represented Eric Norton, the man who allegedly was beaten.

"Norton told me that Agent Scott beat the hell out of him, and not just once," Fishman said.

This was confirmed by Norton.

"He beat me a few times," Norton told *Soldier Of Fortune* in a telephone interview. "He hit me in the car after I was

arrested. He beat me in the elevator when they took me up to his office. He smacked me around in the office. And after they came to get me at jail the next day to take me to court, he hit me some more.

Norton said Scott never made any racial remarks when he allegedly hit Norton.

"He'd say, 'tell me this, tell me that.' He was angry, very upset."

Norton said in each instance, his hands were cuffed behind his back and he was unable to fend off the blows. He said one technique Scott seemed to favor was to place a book against Norton's head, and hit the book hard with his fist.

"He's a big dude," Norton said. "He can hit hard."

Norton said bruises and welts on his face were visible in mug shots taken after his arrest.

Even In Front Of Witnesses

Norton was arrested in northwest Detroit, in April 1994, after a high-speed chase. Agents and officers allegedly found several ounces of crack cocaine and a pistol in the car Norton was driving. Norton said Scott was visibly angry when he was arrested, and cursed him as he rained blows on him in the back of a government vehicle.

The allegation that Scott viciously beat Norton is not just the word of the suspect against the word of the federal agent. At least one of the alleged beatings were witnessed by two other BATF agents, Sierra L. Donaven and Stan C. Brue, who are black. Donaven reported Scott for being needlessly brutal, sources told *SOF*.

But an Internal Affairs investigation by BATF into that alleged incident cleared Scott of any wrongdoing, the sources told the magazine. Donaven, on the other hand, began to experience the type of bureaucratic harassment and on-the-job intimidation for which BATF management has been openly criticized by street-level agents in the past. Her bosses attacked her credibility and accused her of fabricating the incident. They began to scrutinize and find fault with the most minute aspects of her job performance. She was shunned by many of her colleagues.

Donaven and Brue declined comment. BATF's spokesperson in its Detroit office, Vera A. Fedorak, would not answer any questions, such as whether Special Agent Scott was ordered to take a fitness-for-duty exam after he was accused of beating Eric Norton in 1994, and if not, why not.

"We are standing by the press release issued by the U.S. Attorney's office," she said.

A Loose Cannon?

It is significant, though, that despite the seizure of several ounces of crack cocaine and a pistol, Eric Norton was acquitted by a jury. A government's key witness was not called. Fishman, Norton's attorney, said he told the prosecutor about the alleged beating.

"That guy's going to lose your case for

you," Fishman said he told the prosecutor, referring to Special Agent Scott. Norton has no criminal convictions, Fishman said.

Others who know Scott say they are not surprised by the accusations against him.

Special Agent Scott "had a reputation as a loose cannon," said a former Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent who knows him, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Most people in the office knew the guy had a reputation for getting unnecessarily physical."

Scott's alleged assault of Eric Norton might have been forgotten in 1993, were it not for the raid by the Detroit Police Department on 7 October 1996, when Norris allegedly was foot-stomped and beaten.

By then, says another BATF agent who once worked in Detroit and knows Scott, Scott had been detached to work on a "more or less full-time basis" with Detroit's city police.

Many of BATF's "agents in Detroit thought he was unstable," Scott's former colleague told *Soldier Of Fortune*. "He would have these wild mood swings. No one in our office really liked working with the guy. You never knew what he might do next."

What Scott did next, according to count one of a federal indictment handed down 17 September, almost two years after the alleged incident, was engage in "criminal, infamous ... notoriously disgraceful conduct ... under color of law" by "willfully kick[ing] and assault[ing] Arthur Bruce Norris."

Norris was the subject of a State of Michigan arrest warrant issued to the Detroit Police Department in October 1996. Scott, who'd been working with the Detroit police on an open-ended assignment, apparently assisted in locating the wanted man.

But Scott's first-line boss with the BATF, in Detroit, Supervisory Special Agent John Carpenter, told Scott "at least twice ... not to participate in the apprehension or arrest of" Norris. Scott "was to ... allow members of the Detroit Police Department to apprehend and arrest ... Norris once [he] was located," count two of the indictment states.

Scott was specifically instructed not to arrest Norris "without an official Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms arrest authorization because there was no current federal warrant" for the suspect's arrest.

According to the indictment, however, agents Scott and Kirkpatrick accompanied an entry team from the Detroit Police Department that raided the house and subdued Norris. Once under arrest, Norris was placed face down on the floor, his hands cuffed behind his back. It was then, according to the indictment, that Scott stomped Norris in the back of the head.

When questioned the next day about the raid by their immediate BATF supervisor, the indictment states that Scott and Kirkpatrick told Carpenter they did not make the initial entry into the residence with Detroit police, but waited in a government car parked around the corner for 15 or 20 minutes after the initial entry before going inside.

"He denies that" alleged statement, said Lawson, Kirkpatrick's lawyer. "My client made a statement to a Detroit police supervisor. He was upstairs when (Norris') arrest was made, looking for another suspect. He never told anybody he was out in the car. He told the same story" to federal investigators.

Official Charges

Scott denied assaulting Norris, according to the indictment, but told Carpenter that he



Lawrence Myers

The now-infamous photo of ATF undercover operators displaying Confederate flags at "Good O' Boys Roundup." Note Federal Law Enforcement Training Center tee-shirt on agent on Harley (at left).

If overall tasteless displays of racism were not enough, the debauched tone of the "Good O' Boys Roundup" (here drunken BATF agent shows off his tattoo to bar patrons in Ocoee, Tenn.) made attending agents the butt of congressional criticism.



Lawrence Myers

saw Carpenter taking a swing at a Detroit police office.

"In truth and fact," the indictment states, Scott and Kirkpatrick were with the initial entry team and did not wait outside until 15 or 20 minutes after the arrest, as they said, but participated in the arrest. According to the indictment, Norris "did not swing" at an arresting Detroit police officer, but "Scott did, in fact, hit ... Norris by a kick to the back of ... Norris' head."

Scott was indicted for violating Norris' civil rights and for making statements to his supervisor and other agents investigating the assault that Scott knew were false.

Kirkpatrick was indicted for aiding and abetting Scott by also making false statements, and for lying to a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent who was looking into the civil rights violation.

Scott and Kirkpatrick, who voluntarily surrendered after their indictment, face a possible maximum prison sentence of five years and a fine up to \$250,000 on each count of willfully making a false statement. Scott also could receive a prison term of up to 10 years, and a maximum fine of \$250,000, for "deprivation of rights under color of law."

The September indictment of Scott and Kirkpatrick is not the first time BATF's Detroit office has been accused of racially biased conduct toward African-Americans. A story published in the *Detroit Free Press*, in June, reported the complaints of criminal defense lawyers who said a sting operation run by BATF "that solicits ex-convicts for drugs and guns is aimed only at black parolees."

Special Agent Joseph S. Secrete, one of BATF's top case producers in the Detroit region, was accused of entrapment for offering rides, trips, jobs and drinks to convicted criminals leaving their parole office, and using the favors as leverage to solicit them to sell him drugs and guns.

"For the federal government to be using taxpayer money to actively encourage parolees to return to crime, rather than to train or educate these individuals, is shocking," Jonathan Epstein, a lawyer with the federal defender's office in Detroit, was quoted by the newspaper.

According to court documents, Secrete would befriend the parolees by offering them rides, free drinks and other favors. One parolee said he thought that the agent was a businessman and he might get a job offer. Another said an informant working with Secrete offered him \$100 for each gun he could get. Still another, Reginald Coleman, succumbed to such inducements and sold crack cocaine to Secrete five times between December 1994 and August 1995.

Defense lawyers later complained that all 13 parolees busted by Secrete in the task force program that apparently targeted parolees, were black.

Epstein, who defended Coleman and said he was singled out because of his race, accused Secrete and the BATF "preying on people who are generally unemployed, unemployable, uneducated, indigent and vulnerable to involvement in" crime.

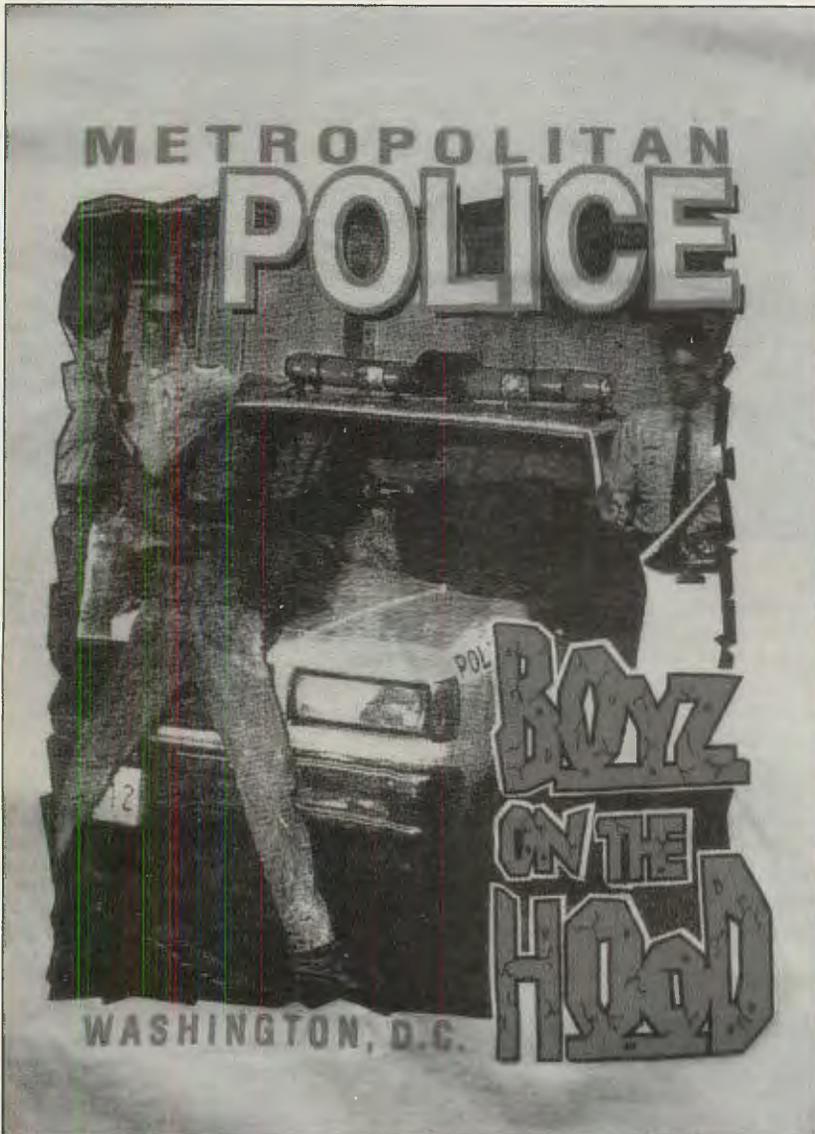
Another defense attorney, Thomas Wilhelm, condemned the program, charging that Secrete was "not going out and investigating crimes that have occurred. He's going out and getting susceptible people to commit crimes for him."

But a federal appeals case upheld Secrete's tactics, and the U.S. Attorney for Detroit, Saul Green, who is black, denied that the program unfairly targeted any race. The federal parolee project has taken dangerous criminals off the street, and the techniques used by Secrete and other agents were upheld in the courts, Green said.

Fighting Crime, Or Creating Crime?

To bolster his defense of the program, statistics were released showing that of about 100 parolees charged under the program, more than 90 pleaded guilty and all of the rest who went to trial were convicted. Of these cases, about 66 defendants were black, 10 percent were Hispanic and 20 percent were white. The parolees had already been convicted on a wide array of crimes, including armed robbery, burglary, manslaughter and sexual assault. One parolee violator had seven prior felony convictions.

Amidst this array of criticism, how has headquarters responded toward management of



Motif showing white cops holding two black suspects face down on hood of patrol car, from Washington, D.C., won the ATF competition at the '95 "Good O' Boys Roundup."

BATF's Detroit office? Director John Magaw must think his Detroit managers are doing a fine job. Bernard LaForest, who was special agent in charge (SAC) of the Detroit region in the time span between the two alleged beating incidents in which Scott is accused, was given pay bonuses totaling \$9,434 in 1997. LaForest's replacement as Detroit SAC, Stanley E. Zimmerman, got a \$2,000 bonus last year. And Special Agent Secrete? On 3 August 1997, he was awarded a bonus of \$1,500.

This has prompted questions about whether BATF's bosses continue to turn a blind eye to allegedly racially motivated infractions by white agents. And charges of racial bias by BATF's Detroit office have not just come from criminal defense attorneys and other outside critics. And not all are accusations of racism by whites against blacks. Some have come from within the office itself, and include allegations, in at least one case proven in court, that black agents have acted in a biased fashion toward non-black agents.

In December 1996, a federal court jury ordered BATF to pay \$50,000 in damages to Rhonda Vega, an Hispanic woman who was fired from the bureau after three years as an agent. Vega's suit claimed she was treated unfairly by black supervisory agents, who then retaliated against her because she filed an administrative complaint with the bureau's Equal Employment Opportunity office (see "Separate But Equal? BATF's Double Standard for Race Relations," April '97). She said some of the black supervisors who discriminated against her, were themselves plaintiffs in the class-action lawsuit that was settled about three months before Special Agent Scott, who was in the same agent training class as Vega, allegedly beat Norris.

Institutional Racism, Or Entrenched Cronyism?

Kubicki, who won Vega's case, said the racism within BATF is institutional, and that settlement of the class-action lawsuit by black agents has not changed practices that much, that unfair discrepancies persist, not just within the gun bureau, but throughout the Department of Treasury. She cited as an example the case of Francille Reaves.

Reaves was a black female who was a special agent with the Internal Revenue Service, who was married to a white male who was a member of the Detroit Police Department. Three of her husband's friends in law enforcement asked Reaves to obtain for them some of their own personal income tax information. When Reaves and her husband got divorced, and the divorce became contentious, he filed a complaint with her bosses, charging that she had released personal income tax information, a violation of federal law.

"You have Regan Scott, a white male, accused of beating a black prisoner," said Kubicki, making a comparison to the Reaves case. "What happens to him? He gets two years of leave with full pay, so he can finish law school. Then you have Francille Reaves, a black female, who has committed a technical violation by releasing someone's own tax information to that person. What does she get? She gets suspended with no pay."

Reaves, who was 36, died of an extended illness in August, in the midst of appealing her case with the Treasury Department. Two of the three persons to whom she had provided their own tax information had written statements in her behalf. But the government, which knew she had terminal illness, bided its time, and literally litigated her to death, Kubicki said.

Yet another former BATF agent in Detroit, Jim Jorgensen, who is now retired and is acting director of the National Association of Treasury Agents, disputes his friend Kubicki's claim that these apparent discrepancies and inequities are caused by any institutional racism. There are certainly problems, he acknowledged, but he attributes them, instead, to institutional cronyism.

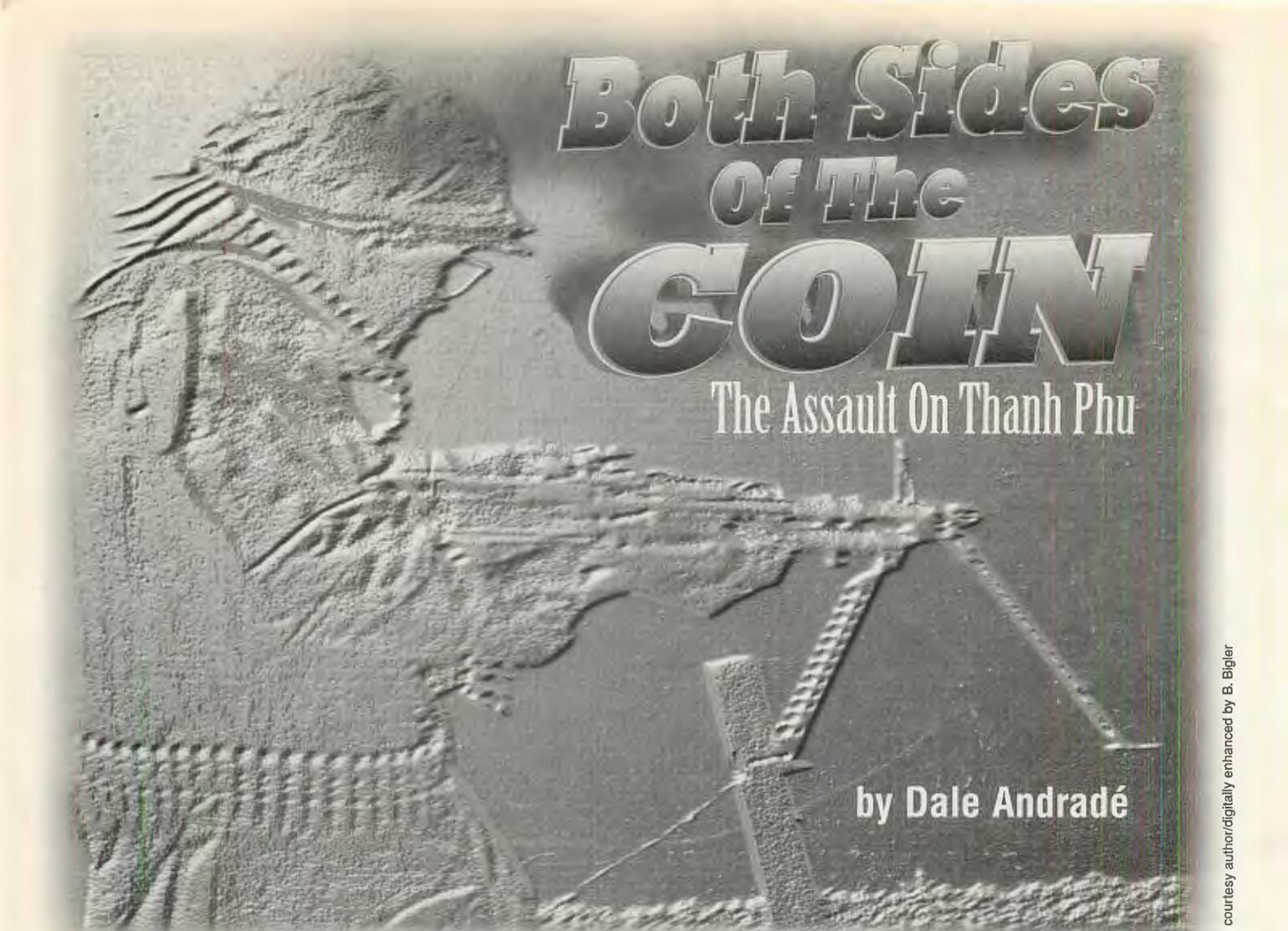
"The bureaucracy retaliates, whether it's a black female or a white male, against anyone who bucks the system," Jorgensen said. "I don't believe there is any institutional bias because of race or gender within the system. That is not to say that there haven't been individual acts of bias. But they are aberrations.

"Have there been egregious acts of racism? Certainly," he said. "Should they be punished? Absolutely. But, in fact, the reverse is true. The Treasury Department in general, and the ATF in particular, go to extraordinary lengths to hire and promote minorities and women. They go to extraordinary lengths to train, and in many cases retrain, women and minorities, even in the cases of individuals whose job performance is questionable.

"If these two agents in Detroit, in fact, did what they are accused of doing then, yes, they should be punished," Jorgensen said. "But we can't look at this in a vacuum. And BATF has to apply the same standards across the board, for all agents, regardless of race or gender, whether they are street agents or management.

"What I find amazing is that they are charging these guys with lying. Maybe they did. Maybe they didn't. But why have none of the Waco bosses been charged with lying?" Jorgensen pondered. "Lying not just in official statements, but under oath, in front of Congress. That's the crux of the problem at BATF. Cronyism. If you're part of that inner circle of lockstep loyalists, you can lie, cheat and steal and they'll try to protect you, no matter what your sex or race. And that may be the worst crime of all." ❧

"It's unfortunate that ATF did not take appropriate action in the incident in 1994 ... I'm not surprised that it didn't, though. I think it's just another example of the government's institutionalized racism."



Both Sides Of The GOIN

The Assault On Thanh Phu

by Dale Andradé

courtesy author/digitally enhanced by B. Bigler

Phan Xuan Quy heard the helicopter and froze. As it swept overhead, he dashed for cover, waiting in dread for bullets to tear into his back as he ran. Instead, the deadly machine circled around and poured machine-gun fire and rockets into a nearby ditch. Other helicopters arrived and dropped "crying gas" and smoke grenades, which lit the tinder-dry grass into several raging brushfires. Back in his bunker, Quy and his comrades lay low, holding urine-soaked towels over their faces to absorb the gas.

Everyone knew the enemy would soon attack in force.

It was March 1969, barely one year after the Tet Offensive, and the Viet Cong had still not fully recovered from losses sustained when they abandoned their guerrilla hit-and-run strategy in favor of mass attacks on South Vietnam's cities. Quy's corner of the war was called the Plain of Reeds, a section of the Mekong Delta strategically sitting some 60 miles southwest of Saigon.

A flat reed- and brush-covered lowlands of more than 2 million acres, it was too wet during the monsoon and too arid during the dry season for sustained agriculture — but perfect cover for guerrillas. From this relatively secure base, the Viet Cong sallied forth to exert control over the surrounding villages and hamlets, in a daily struggle for the loyalty of peasants leery of both sides in this long war.

Saigon also fought hard for the Mekong Delta's hearts and minds, and it considered the Plain of Reeds to be a big thorn in its side. The South Vietnamese army was backed up by the U.S. 9th Infantry Division, which in early 1969 was aggressively pursuing the Viet Cong throughout the Delta.

Phan Xuan Quy cared about none of this. All he knew was that the Viet Cong promised something different from the long history of

"foreign exploitation." His life read like a testimonial from a communist recruitment poster: Born in Saigon in 1949, he spent his early childhood without his mother, who was imprisoned by the French-supported Emperor Bao Dai. Released in 1954, she lived only a few days, imploring her young son with her last words to avenge her death. Quy stored his mother's hatred in his heart. In February 1966, as the American ground war gathered steam, Quy joined the Viet Cong to "fight for the country he loved so much." After five months of training in the Viet Cong's Cambodian base areas, he was assigned to a Viet Cong unit as a squad leader, and, in August 1967, was transferred to the 261B Battalion as a platoon leader. Only days before U.S. troops closed in on his position, Quy was promoted to Battalion Headquarters Secretary, a position reflecting the trust placed in him by both the Viet Cong military and political cadre.

The American Assault

The Americans had seen Quy run for his bunker. Earlier that day, scout helicopters had also spotted more enemy soldiers just south of the border between Kien Tuong and Dinh Tuong Provinces, along a waterway called the Tong Doc Loc Canal.

Word was relayed to the 9th Infantry Division, which, in turn, ordered the 1st Brigade's 2d Battalion, 39th Infantry, to prepare for an assault. Backing up the grunts would be Alpha Troop, 7th Squadron of the 1st Cavalry Regiment with its gunships, and the 191st Assault Helicopter Company to insert the troops.

Just before noon on 11 March, part of the battalion's Charlie Company boarded five helicopters and headed for Tong Doc Loc Canal, backed by Cobra gunships armed with rockets and miniguns. Leading the way were helicopters carrying CS tear gas to harass the Viet Cong. Slashing down like raptors homing in on their prey, the

Cobras fired rockets and tracers, igniting the tinder-dry grass. In his helicopter circling above the battlefield, Colonel Ira A. Hunt, commander of the 1st Brigade, watched the scene unfold.

Behind the swirling clouds of smoke came 2d Platoon, Charlie Company, led by Lieutenant Richard A. Fisher. His men moved north toward the canal, three squads abreast. In the distance the Americans could see the Viet Cong bunkers, but the enemy held its fire.

Suddenly a mine exploded, slightly injuring a soldier. Fisher halted the advance and peppered the treeline with grenades from several stubby M79 launchers. Thunderous explosions shook the forest.

"Prepare for combat," came the order from the battalion commander, Le Ha, a veteran communist leader.

Phan Xuan Quy did not need to be told. In the distance he saw more helicopters darting in from the south. Five put down about 300 meters from his bunker and disgorged their cargo, the 2d Platoon. Dozens of forms jumped from open doors, hunched over from the weight of their combat loads, and dashed for cover. The soldiers "were tall and had huge bodies," Quy remembered. "They started to move in our direction."

Viet Cong defenses around Thanh Phu were set up in a line paralleling the canal. In front of the bunkers was a field sowed with mines. "Suddenly I heard some booby traps explode," Quy said. He watched as the platoon took cover.

Machine-gun fire crackled from the Americans hunkered down on the Viet Cong right flank, provoking return fire from Quy's men. He thought he saw three American soldiers go down, dead or wounded.

Fire Fight

Sergeant Jantzen E. Childers hit the ground as enemy machine-gun fire opened up on his squad. Peering up over a low dirt berm he saw the muzzle flash of several rifles, firing from a mere 15 meters away, backed up by a machine gun in a banana grove just to the east.

Seeing that the squad was pinned down, Lt. Fisher called for gunship support, then lay low as the Cobras raced in for the kill, flattening a grove of banana trees with rocket fire.

The platoon moved forward, but they went barely 5 yards before they were again pinned down under a hail of bullets. Suddenly, Lt. Fisher went down with a bullet in his thigh. His men pulled back, dragging Lt. Fisher as gently as they could. But they moved too quickly: Booby traps killed Specialist Michael G. Allendorf and wounded another soldier. The survivors dragged the wounded man with them, making their way along a shallow ditch. Yet another soldier, Specialist Gerald L. Tharp, detonated a booby trap. He died of his wounds.

Fisher's men finally emerged from the smoke to find the 3d Platoon still unbloodied by the Viet Cong. Setting up a perimeter, the Americans called for extraction, and within minutes two helicopters were on the way. The "slicks" descended through the smoke, apparitions in the swirling grey, and whisked them away to safety.

Colonel Hunt was not pleased with 2d Platoon's performance, or with that of its parent unit, Charlie Company. "They didn't have flank security and as a result walked right into a trap," he reported. Back at battalion headquarters the decision was made to pull Charlie Company out and replace it with Bravo Company.

The Viet Cong watched the helicopters coming in with more Americans. Fifteen of them landed about 350 meters east of Quy's position. Hoping to pin this new force down before it could disperse to cover, the battalion heavy-weapons section opened fire with two 82mm mortars. "I heard many mortar rounds hit that U.S. element," recalled Quy, "but they were still advancing."

A half-hour later, Quy's radio crackled with the voice of one of his reconnaissance team leaders. They had spotted some 20 helicopters, half of them rotoring in to a position about 800 meters east of the original American insertion, and the rest coming in from an entirely

new quarter — about 400 meters to the west of the Viet Cong battalion command post.

At Firebase Schroeder, the battalion headquarters, Bravo Company loaded on helicopters and flew into battle. As they jumped from the Hueys and took cover, Air Force planes roared overhead and dropped their bombs just to the north. In the smoke and confusion, the Americans skirted the blast area and headed toward the northern edge of the Viet Cong perimeter.

Encircling Charlie

Just to the southwest, the battalion's last element, Alpha Company, was flown in, but intense enemy fire kept the helicopters from landing, forcing them to hopscotch ever farther south looking for a secure LZ. They finally found one almost 1,000 meters from the battlefield, too far away to be of much help to Bravo Company. Instead, the soldiers were ordered to rush north toward the canal to cut off the Viet Cong's escape route to the west. At first, opposition was light. Then tracers filled the air, ricocheting off trees and rocks near the Americans and slowing their movement north. Still, by 1500 hours, the Americans were in place south of the canal, cutting off escape to the east or west. But the brigade headquarters was still concerned about the situation. Colonel Hunt noted that "the central portion of the battle area, where [Charlie Company] had made its initial contact, was open. I decided to put the next available unit into this slot."

The next available unit actually had to be brought in from outside the area of operations. Hunt ordered Charlie Company, 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry, picked up from its defensive position at Firebase Moore more than a dozen miles away and airlifted to the same spot where Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 39th Infantry, had been mauled and then evacuated several hours earlier.

Just before 1700 hours, the soldiers went in. Captain George Maudlin, the company commander, was ordered to link up with Bravo Company. Maudlin reported slow going because "there were booby traps everywhere." Machine guns and mortars opened up from the tree line south of the canal as the company approached, and



Seeing that the squad was pinned down, Lt. Fisher called for gunship support, then lay low as the Cobras raced in for the kill, flattening a grove of banana trees with rocket fire.

courtesy author/digitally enhanced by B. Bigler

just as it looked like they would also be stopped dead, help again came from above.

"No sooner had the VC fired than an air strike with napalm came right in on the VC," reported Captain Maudlin. "The company [radioman] saw the enemy engulfed in flames." They had just witnessed the destruction of the heart of the Viet Cong defense. In the confusion, Charlie Company finished its maneuver toward the canal and spread out to link up with the companies to the east and west. It was the beginning of the end for the enemy.

In the face of the aerial attack, Quy hugged the earth for whatever mote of concealment it could provide. He heard a flight of fighter planes streak overhead, then watched as they dumped their deadly bombs 700 meters to the northeast where the "Thanh Phu Guerrillas" — the battalion's core infantry fighting force — was located. "Suddenly there was a terrific flash," he said.

As light faded from the evening sky, the grass fires also died down, leaving powdery ash and charred stalks blanketing the ground. To the south Quy saw the forms of American soldiers looming in the smoke which still billowed around the battlefield. Just before nightfall, more air strikes came, destroying the battalion's mortar emplacements and setting the stage for the final phase for the American assault. Unable to use their favorite tactic — hit-and-run assaults — the Viet Cong were being forced to stand and fight toe-to-toe against an enemy that was growing stronger by the hour.

Infantry was 20 clicks away when it was ordered into battle. Lieutenant Seth W. Collins, the company commander, prepared them for a quick helicopter assault. They landed well south of the canal and moved several hundred meters towards the water.

The pointman saw movement in a tree line and opened fire, killing two Viet Cong. Machine guns chattered in reply, hitting three GIs before they could dive for cover. Lieutenant Collins recalled that the "fire was fantastic, the best VC fire he had encountered." In the end, Alpha Company retreated and regrouped, and the entire American line south of the canal was forced to set up a perimeter further from the river than they would have liked.

But by 2200 hours the Viet Cong were surrounded.

"At this time I just knew that U.S. troops had completely surrounded our position," Quy recalled. Then the battalion commander sent word to his men that an escape route had been found. Just before midnight, all units were to gather as many weapons as they could carry and move north to the canal and await further word. Quy's unit gathered up AKs and grenade launchers, mortars and machine guns and silently slipped out of the bunker. In ones and twos they crept along the blackened ground, mindful of flares, and headed for the canal.

The Viet Cong waited by the water, its dark surface sparkling with the reflection of nearby fires and the occasional flare streaking skyward. All along the bank, the battalion's reconnaissance unit probed the American positions, looking for the weakest spot to slip through. Not once were they discovered. Just after midnight they found the best way out.

But the battalion could not keep as silent as the scouts. Weapons clinked and twigs cracked, and the Americans opened fire. Unsure of where the noise was coming from, they fired long bursts from machine guns and lobbed grenades all along the canal bank. A bullet slammed into the machine-gun tripod Quy carried under his arm, knocking him into the water. Tracers crisscrossed the sky and planes roared in from the east, forcing the Viet Cong to lie still.

... as the American ground-war gathered steam, Quy joined the Viet Cong to "fight for the country he loved so much." After five months of training in the Viet Cong's Cambodian base areas, he was assigned to a Viet Cong unit as a squad leader, and, in August 1967, was transferred to the 261B Battalion as a platoon leader. Only days before U.S. troops closed in on his position, Quy was promoted to Battalion Headquarters Secretary, a position reflecting the trust placed in him by both the Viet Cong military and political cadre.



F.C. Brown Collection/digitally enhanced by B. Bigler

Even when darkness closed over the battlefield there was no relief for the Viet Cong. Flares from American artillery and helicopters streaked skyward, throwing ghostly shadows across the ground. Quy heard helicopter rotor blades flailing the air all around him: Occasionally, they were painted against the dark sky by the flares.

Tightening The Holed Net

During the few hours that remained in the day, two more units, Alpha and Charlie Companies of the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry, were inserted north of the canal. Lieutenant Colonel David H. Hackworth, the battalion commander, was placed in charge of all troops in that area. Since the Viet Cong were confined south of the river, Hackworth encountered little opposition. In fact, the biggest danger came from the Cobras overhead. As they prowled up and down the canal banks looking for Viet Cong trying to escape into the water, they mistakenly hosed down their own troops, wounding at least four men. Hackworth was disgusted by the confusion. "Gunships at the best of times were lousy for close-in support," he later wrote, "to even contemplate using them that way in the dark ... was insane."

At the same time, Col. Hunt brought in another unit to reinforce his troops south of the canal. Alpha Company, 3d Battalion, 39th



F.C. Brown Collection/digitally enhanced by B. Bigler

destruction on a single pass, or can drop iron bombs in any combination from three weapons bays; forward, intermediate and aft.

An F-16 On "Roids"

The B-1, with its swing wings and powerful engines, can perform violent maneuvers associated with smaller combat aircraft.

General Michael Ryan, USAF Chief of Staff, recently described the B-1 as being "like a very large fighter."

"The B-1 is an F-16 on steroids," said

Staff Sgt. Robert Cortez, who instructs Air Force bomb loaders at Ellsworth on the fine art of outfitting the 77th "War Eagles" and the 37th "Tigers" with the latest armaments available.

Cortez may have unknowingly coined a phrase that will become legend someday in the B-1 community.

"When the designers [Rockwell International] put a stick instead of a control column between the pilot's legs, they turned the bomber pilot into a fighter pilot," said Chester Watson.

"Pilots would love it if designers would put guns on the aircraft, and make it a big fighter, "but there's no reason for guns," said Watson, a former Air Force officer who arranged the arrival of the first B-1 at Dyess

Air Force Base, Texas, in 1987.

Watson says the B-1B is designed to get in and get out without engaging in air to air combat."

Speed is a primary reason Lancer pilots like Bryan Bush feel the B-1 bomber is one of the most survivable delivery platforms in the Air Force today.

Officially, the Air Force says the B-1 has a speed of Mach 1.2. (That's 900-plus miles per hour.) But it can use supersonic dash speed to keep up with faster F-15s and F-16s at high-altitude.

At low-altitude, B-1s have to slow down for F-16s to catch up. The B-1's swing-wing design and turbofan engines not only provide greater range (5,460 nm [nautical miles] at high-altitude; 4,715 nm at low-

The Flight Surgeon, Captain Randy Guliuzza, stuck a wooden tongue depressor in my mouth and then tapped my extremities with a rubber mallet to check my reflexes before pronouncing me "fit for flight."

Next stop was Aircrew Life Support where I was outfitted with a helmet, oxygen mask, flight suit, Matterhorn boots, Nomex gloves, and survival vest.

After suiting up, I was given an overview of the 147-pound ACES II ejection seat. I made certain that all five buckles — two on my shoulders, two on my hips and one across my chest — were securely snapped into place and both leg restraints were fastened so that I and my ejection seat "become one." Otherwise, ejection could be nasty — even lethal.

Later, in the Entrican Center, a \$28-million maintenance facility where 1,600 Air Force maintenance personnel may spend 6 to 200 hours a year learning correct maintenance procedures to fix problems on a B-1 bomber, Technical Sergeant Bill Greenlee walked me through the ejection process, second by second.

"Everything happens so fast up there," cautioned Greenlee, "You won't have time to blink before you're hanging in your chute.

"Any member of the four-person crew can eject themselves. But only the Aircraft Commander or Pilot can initiate the firing sequence that ejects all members of the crew," said

The seats do work as advertised. Just ask four crewmen who successfully ejected from their disabled B-1B over Marion, Kentucky, on 18 February 1998, when all four engines shut down and the cockpit filled with smoke.

As the Aircraft Commander, I would be the last to go in case something went wrong. So, naturally, I wanted to know the procedure if the seat *didn't* fire.

"Simply reach over in front of the stick and pull the hatch jettison handle," said Greenlee.

Normally, if the ejection seat doesn't fire, there is a malfunction in the hatch jettison. Pulling the hatch jettison handle should do the trick, because the ejection seat is sequenced to occur after the hatch goes.

Later I found out that a spare parachute is stowed behind the pilot's position across the passageway from a porta-potty. But it would be extremely difficult to get into the parachute and bail out through the jettisoned entry hatch before the bomber crashed — and *impossible* if the bomber was spinning out of control.

Since I'd probably be dazed by a sudden ejection, the parachute attached to the top of my ejection seat deploys automatically.

Hoisting me up to the ceiling of the Aircrew Life Support Training Center in a harness, Senior Airman Sean Ritchie explained how to untangle a fouled

Premature Ejection

Greenlee as he showed me around a mockup of the B-1B cockpit.

Once the Aircraft Commander orders "Eject! Eject! Eject!" and pulls the ejection handles on his seat, it takes only 2.0 seconds for "all souls on board" to clear the aircraft. Pointing to flexible linear-shaped explosive charges around the side windows next to each pilot and hatches over the heads of the weapons officers, Greenlee said the "det cord" is designed to activate the ELSC which blows outward away from the crew, opening the hatches a milli-second after a pair of yellow handles are pulled on the ejection seat.

Three-tenths of a second after the hatches blow, the Offensive Systems Officer who sits in the right rear seat behind the pilot is up, up and away from the aircraft propelled by a fiery rocket motor under his seatpan.

Five-tenths of a second later, the Defensive Systems Officer is ballistically on his way out of the disabled aircraft.

The pilot is number 3 in the ejection sequence, following the DSO 0.5 of a second later, and, finally, the Aircraft Commander follows in 0.7 of a second. Total elapsed time: 2.0 seconds.



1st Lt. Rob Goddard

The author (aka "Black Hills Bandit") in B-1B Lancer's aircraft commander seat en route to Nevada target. His flight definitely was *not* the S.O.S.

chute, and steer clear of obstacles — like powerlines — and other hazards that could hurt, maim or kill a downed flier.

By the time Ritchie lowered me back to the floor, my voice had altered from deep baritone to high soprano. But he explained that the "crotch straps" have to be tight to ensure a snug fit in the ejection seat.

"You don't want anything dangling when you come out of the cockpit under 10 or more Gs," laughed Ritchie.

Before Col. Bush briefed the upcoming mission, Capt. Touchton took me into the Weapons Systems Trainer, and let me get some hands-on experience flying the B-1B. It handled every bit as smoothly as the F-16D I flew for an hour with the Air Force Thunderbirds. The multi-million dollar trainer features a fully functional B-1 cockpit and a moving, wrap-around, video display complete with runway markers and natural sound. Millions of dollars are saved every year in fuel alone by using the trainer. Touchton states it's cheaper to make mistakes in the trainer than in a quarter-billion dollar bomber.

—D.B.C.

Quy feared the end was near: "Continuous air strikes were dropping all along the canal and surrounding area. When they came close to our position, we would lie down. While moving along the withdrawal route, we tried to run quickly to wherever the air and artillery strikes already hit. This is how we got through them."

Live To Fight Another Day ...

The reconnaissance unit pointed out a 50-meter gap, through which the surviving guerrillas slipped in single file, leaving behind a small force to cover the rear. As they moved silently, Quy could hear American soldiers talking loudly on both sides. It was frightening to know the enemy could discover them at any time, but exhilarating to realize that safety lay just ahead.

The Viet Cong came to another canal, stripped off their clothes, and made floats of nylon and cloth. These would carry their weapons as the guerrillas slipped silently through the water. In the background, from the area they had just left, Quy heard the snarl of helicopter gunships and the roar of jets uselessly pounding the banks of the canal.

"It had been a hard battle," concluded Col. Ira Hunt, who was clearly pleased with the outcome. Despite the many problems experienced by the Americans, in the end they suffered only three dead and 20 wounded, 12 of their casualties in the early part of the battle. During the course of the fighting, the 1st Brigade committed more than 600 soldiers to the battle and flew in more than 100 helicopter sorties — an overwhelming force against a single Viet Cong battalion. In support, U.S. artillery fired 688 rounds, in addition to several dozen air strikes and gunship attacks. According to brigade headquarters, all this firepower had killed at least 72 Viet Cong, though only 40 bodies were actually found. As usual, the body count would become a bone of contention.

Whatever the actual count, the Viet Cong had been badly bloodied. They had held their own for a time against the powerful Americans, but they were no match in a standing battle. True to communist form, however, reality took a back seat to ideology, and the battalion commander reported to his regimental headquarters that 1,500 American soldiers had been sent against the Viet Cong. "We were courageous and killed 150 U.S. troops and shot down one jet aircraft and two helicopters," he bragged. The survivors of the 261B Viet Cong Battalion knew better.

Two days later, Phan Xuan Quy and 20 of his men returned to the battlefield under cover of darkness. "The truth of the area was exposed under my eyes," he recalled sadly. "I could not believe any view more terrible and lonely than this. All of the trees were burned down all around the area and I could not see any grass left on the ground. Our bunkers were all destroyed, and out on the ground I saw dried blood all around, [I was] still smelling the odor of dead bodies in the air."

Lose The Battle, Win The War

But the battle was just a small part of a very long war for the Viet Cong. Unlike the Americans, there could be no rest after a long operation, just the expectation of more fighting. "We were tired and our morale was very low," said Quy, "but the battalion commander gave the word that our unit would return to Kien Phong Province to get reinforcements and recruit new men to fight again."

Quy could not know that his war was about to end. As his battered battalion headed back to Kien Phong, Quy tripped a booby trap and was sent to a small field hospital. By chance, an operation by the

South Vietnamese 7th Infantry Division swept through the next morning, capturing Quy and six other Viet Cong and destroying the hospital.

The U.S. 9th Division soon learned that the prisoners were members of the 261B Viet Cong Battalion and requested an opportunity to interrogate Quy, the highest ranking of them. His story gave a rare glimpse into the often mysterious ways of the Viet Cong guerrillas and provided the 9th Division with the enemy's side of a recent and hard-fought battle.

Not everyone was impressed, however. Lieutenant Colonel Hackworth, the battalion commander in charge north of the canal, believed that the battle "had actually started out as a screwup" and that the body count had been exaggerated. Like others in the 9th Division, Hackworth felt that there was too much emphasis on statistics, so much so that it led to fabrication on a massive scale. And he hated Col. Hunt. Hackworth thought of his commander as "tactically inept" and believed that when the chips were down Hunt "didn't know how the killing game was played." They had crossed swords before the battle at Thanh Phu and would do so again. For now, however, Hackworth was accusing Hunt of fabricating his after-action report to show the battle as a "flawless description of a perfect SEAL operation that bore little resemblance to what actually happened on the ground. ... " To Hackworth, the report was "the quintessential false report" and "the ultimate snow job."

author's collection/digitally enhanced by B. Bigler

They landed well south of the canal and moved several hundred meters towards the water ...



But it wasn't. Most after-action reports play up success and gloss over problems, and this one was no different.

Despite Hackworth's allegations, the report did not give an excessive body count — certainly not by 9th Division standards — and it did describe the early problems with the operation. The Army's investigation of Hackworth's complaint concluded that the body count was "not improbable" and, that while all of Hunt's claims about the battle were "perhaps not entirely accurate," it could not be "considered a false report." In other words, it was like most other after-action reports.

The disagreement highlighted some of the problems facing American soldiers fighting an unpopular war: Conventional soldiers fighting guerrillas, progress measured in bodies rather than territory, a lack of clear objectives — these all took their toll on fighting spirit.

Although the United States would soon begin withdrawing from Vietnam, the war would not get any easier for Quy's former comrades in the Viet Cong. Pacification of the countryside by the Saigon government and increased efficiency on the part of the South Vietnamese army whittled away at the Viet Cong, and within a year, many of the main force units had to be replaced by regular troops from North Vietnam. By 1971, many of the main force units in the Mekong Delta were North Vietnamese, and, by 1975, when Hanoi finally defeated South Vietnam, the Viet Cong played only a minor role in the final victory.

But they had done their part. As the battle at Thanh Phu and the controversy it generated clearly illustrated, overwhelming numbers and firepower were rarely enough to defeat the guerrillas. They put up a brave fight, then faded away — even when supposedly surrounded. The Americans could claim victory in almost every battle, but in the end the Viet Cong proved Mao Zedong's maxim that if the government is not clearly winning a guerrilla war, it's losing.

Former SOF editor Dale Andradé is a military historian and frequent contributor. ✕

altitude without refueling) and high speed at low levels, but also enhance the bomber's survivability.

Wing sweep at the full-forward position allows a short takeoff roll (6,500 feet the day we took off from Ellsworth) and a fast escape for airfields under attack.

First Lt. Rudy Alejandro, the DSO in Eagle One-Two that had to abort the bombing mission in Nevada, says installation of the ALE-50 towed decoy system will provide even great survivability against defensive threats during combat missions.

The towed decoy system is slated to be installed on B-1s by 2003.

The aircraft's AN/ALO 161A defensive avionics is a comprehensive electronic counter-measures package that detects and counters enemy radar threats.

WSO's like "GITA DOG" defend their aircraft by applying the appropriate counter-measures, such as electronic jamming or dispensing expendable chaff and flares. Similar to T-BAR's offensive avionics, the defensive suite has a re-programmable design that allows in-flight changes to be made to counter new or changing threats.

Bad To The Bone

The B-1 is every bit as *Baaaad* as George Thoroughgood sings about in his hit song, *Bad To The Bone*, which has become the official anthem of the Lancer community.

The aircraft's sleek swing-wing design, its maneuverability and powerful turbofan engines provide high speed cruise capability, or low-level high-subsonic penetration of enemy airspace.

Flying with other bombers (B-52Hs and B-2s) or fighters like F-15E Strike Eagles or F-16 Fighting Falcons, the B-1 adds mass to composite strike packages, and gives regional commanders the ability to attack the bulk of time-critical targets early in an air campaign.

The arrival in Southwest Asia of an additional B-1 from Ellsworth in February 1998, at the height of the Iraqi standoff, and six additional F-117A Nighthawks (Stealth Aircraft) in Kuwait sent Saddam a clear message; "Uncle Sam was serious, and was carrying a *huge* stick." Shortly thereafter, the Iraqi president retreated and agreed to open so-called "Presidential Sites," to U.N. weapons inspectors.

The B-1's impressive speed, intercontinental range, superior payload and leading-edge technology have made the B-1 the backbone of America's bomber force.

In February and March 1992, crews of the 319th Bomb Wing from Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, established 12 time-to-climb records.

In April 1994, the 319th BW successfully captured 11 more world speed records that bring the total to 23 records set by B-1 crews from Grand Forks AFB.

A B-1 bomber shaved 2 minutes and 48 seconds off a time-to-climb altitude of 40,000 feet when it accomplished this feat in 5 minutes and 1 second.

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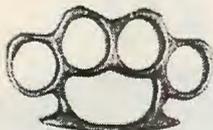
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Members of the B-1 community were confident the aircraft was ready for battle, but they had to prove it.

Their chance came in late 1997 when two B-1s from the 77th Bomb Squadron deployed to Southwest Asia as part of an Air Expeditionary Wing sent to underscore U.S. resolve in the U.N. dispute with Iraq over the search for alleged weapons of mass destruction.

"The B-1 gets an 'A' for performance," said General Richard Hawley, chief of the Air Combat Command, "It did everything we expected of it."

The B-1 is configured to carry 84 MK and 82 500-pound iron bombs, or MK 62 harbor mines in three weapons bays. By comparison, the B-52H can carry 51 dumb bombs, 27 internally and 24 externally. Older B-52Ds could carry 104 MK 81/82 bombs internally and externally configured.

The radar signature of the B-1 is also much smaller than the B-52H.

"The B-1's signature is like a marble compared to a basketball," said Captain



A high-cover shot of the B-1B — long to be a fixture in USAF lore, and a "down 'n' dirty" warrior in America's high-tech weapons inventory.

Jeffrey Decker, maintenance officer of the 77th Bomb Squadron.

The B-1 is also able to carry some of the world's most modern munitions like the "sensor-fused weapon," which is a very effective, anti-armor weapon.

When the "sensor-fused weapon," or CBU-97 cluster munition which was developed two years after the Gulf War, is dropped from a B-1, the cannister opens at a pre-set altitude, scattering small submunitions which spin, and spit out infra-red-seeking "skeet" warheads that seek out sources of heat such as engines in tanks and armored personnel carriers, and zero-in on those targets.

"Were Saddam Hussein stupid enough to send armored units toward Kuwait again," Gen. Hawley says, "a two-ship formation of B-1s could wipe out an entire Iraqi armored brigade with one pass over

or near the battlefield."

In addition to having access to Global Positioning Satellites, B-1s are also being equipped with a Joint Tactical Data Link that will give regional commanders the ability to communicate with bombers en route to targets on long global power missions of 30 hours or more duration.

The assistance, thanks to Joint STARS [Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System] provides constant real-time moving target information from an E-BC airborne platform.

Recently, the Air Force shed its Cold War-era style of warfare and molded itself into 10 combat-ready units that will rotate responsibility for responding to crises around the globe.

Instead of focusing on a "Big War Scenario" by sending large numbers of U.S. warplanes to well-stocked allied bases overseas, the new plans call for Air Expeditionary Forces (AEFS) to respond to crises like the one that occurred in Southwest Asia this year.

Each AEF will contain 175 combat aircraft, including 18 F-15C air-to-air fighters; 10 F-15E Strike Eagle ground-attack jets; eight F-16CJ jets to suppress enemy anti-aircraft missiles; 12 A-10s for armor attack missions, as well as other surveillance, refueling and transport aircraft.

The AEFs will also have F-117A Stealth fighters, B-1, B-2 and B-52 bombers on call, but those will remain at U.S. bases until needed.

It's A Wrap

After leaving the Fallon Range in Nevada, Eagle One-One climbed to 18,000 feet, egressed to the east over the Great Salt Lake, in Utah, and winged toward a rendezvous over Wyoming with the Kansas Coyotes, a KC-135 Air National Guard tanker out of Forbes Field, in Topeka, Kansas.

We wound up chasing the tanker across the state on AR-14 East, a tanker track.

The weather was lousy. Thunderheads boiled up to more than 20,000 feet as Bryan Bush played cat and mouse with the tanker. The weather reminded him of his trip home from Bahrain.

"Coming across the Atlantic, we experienced similar conditions," said Bush, who deliberately stayed low and to the right of the "boom" at a half-mile, waiting until the tanker broke into a clear hole in the clouds, and then, with the dash of speed that the B-1 is famous for, Bush closed the distance in a few seconds, and hit the boom on the first try.

We took on 15,000 pounds of fuel (just over 2,200 gallons) in about 5 minutes.

No sooner had we finished tanking than bad weather moved in again, and it was IFR back to Ellsworth — finally breaking through the cloud cover a few hundred feet above the runway.

What a ride!

Dale B. Cooper, a frequent contributor to SOF, is quickly piling up "frequent-flyer" miles via his military aircraft joyrides. ✖

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Drug Warrior

Continued from page 49

Five years after the death of the world's most wanted man, Pablo Escobar, the killing continues in Colombia and the spread of the drug trade grows in the United States. Unfortunately, these harsh facts will not go away, no matter how the Clinton Administration paints this issue. What was once viewed as an optimistic end to the slaughter in Colombia and a reduction of the flow of drugs into the United States has unfortunately been a lost hope. This happened because the military in Colombia, the U.S. State Department, the U.S. ambassador in Bogota and the desk-bound bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., didn't pay attention to Serrano's warnings. "They stupidly ignored the transformation of an indigenous insurgency into a trans-national narcotics cartel. Future generations will pay for this 'oversight' and they will pay a very heavy price in blood and treasure: Just wait until we leave Panama. The northern tip of South America could become a battleground," predicts Messing.

Colonel Robert W. Johnson, USMC, of the Coalition and Special Warfare Division at Quantico, predicts the very same situation. Johnson has been responsible for deploying special USMC training teams down into Colombia to train riverine and special operations forces. He has known Serrano for many years and believes the threat is growing.

"If we don't support men like Gen. Serrano, we'll be paying for it later on ... at a much higher price. That'll be when the conflict spreads to Panama, Venezuela and western Brazil."

**Amateur Hour At The U.S.
Embassy, Bogota**

With the departure of Ambassador Myles Frechette last year and the dismissal of his director of the Office of Narcotics Assistance in Bogota, it has been very interesting to see what has taken place with the new envoy, Ambassador Curtis Kamman, as he faces this growing challenge. "The mess that was left at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota required a major clean-up crew," asserts Messing. "Ambassador Frechette's key anti-drug personnel were not qualified to deal with the situation in Colombia. They had no real training in what they were supposed to do. The reports they sent to the State Department were colored with their own clueless perspectives," contends a former DEA agent assigned to the embassy who suffered through the period known as "Frechette's Follies." Ambassador Kamman has been tasked with repairing bridges that were destroyed during Ambassador Frechette's tenure in Bogota. The new Country Team gives many long-time Colombia watchers some reason to be optimistic. DEA and members of the U.S. Military group in Bogota have guarded opti-

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mism that the condition will improve. Reportedly, Gen. Serrano sees a brighter future for U.S.-Colombian cooperation.

During congressional hearings, held on 9 July 1997, the state department's arrogance and sanctimony became obvious. The state department sent two experienced bureaucrats, Ambassador Jeffrey Davidow, the Director of Latin American affairs, and the acting director of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, Jane E. Becker. Additionally, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, Myles Frechette, was summoned by the subcommittee on National Security, International Relations and Law Enforcement of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee to testify. Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) convened the hearing, where there would be plenty of fireworks.

The lawmakers were amazed at the obvious lack of concern for General Serrano's high-risk efforts by the state department officials. Congressman Hastert asked Ambassador Frechette why promised support had been withheld. Ambassador Frechette answered that he held up the assistance "In order to leverage an end-use agreement for other assistance to the Colombian Army." He arrogantly admitted that "assistance was denied for political purposes ..." — *while good men were dying!* "The pomposity and arrogance of Ambassador Frechette was overwhelming," said one key congressional staffer who attended the hearing. The congressmen were angry enough that Rep. Bob Barr wrote a letter to President Clinton, demanding the recall of Ambassador Frechette from Bogota. Frechette was out of the U.S. Embassy in Bogota within 90 days.

The Future

Representative Barr spoke to a DANTI agent posted to the Colombian embassy in Washington, D.C. and told him: "I will not forget you or your men ... I'll get what you need!" In a press conference with the Colombian media, Rep. Dan Burton said "We must help our allies in the drug war ... or some day, we won't have any." Rep. Denny Hastert told Gen. Barry McCaffrey: "There's no way we can turn our back on Gen. Serrano just because of White House pressure." Today, there is a mammoth assistance package hanging in the balance for Gen. Serrano. The future will be resting on the actions — not just the words — of leaders such as Congressmen Ben Gilman, Dan Burton, Dennis Hastert and Bob Barr.

Carson A. Nightwine, Jr. is the former Research Director of the National Defense Council Foundation, of Alexandria, Va. He has led six fact-finding missions to Colombia in the past two years, and helped author their Colombia Report — 1997 with Major F. Andy Messing, U.S. Army-SF (Ret.).

For further information write: National Defense Council Foundation, 1220 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. ✕

Murderous Hypocrisy

Continued from page 41

turned around and found a sad, swollen, mustachioed, prune-like face approaching me. The dark-skinned old man was holding up an improperly bandaged hand that oozed blood profusely onto his tattered white shirt. "Pardon me," he said, and I stepped aside, allowing him to pass. Police said he was a victim of the morning grenade attack, just released from the base's infirmary.

I gravitated to a few troops standing beside a restaurant's rustic veranda. An old man and woman, and a middle-aged man and woman were sitting there around plastic round tables. They were reluctant to talk. But after I identified myself as a journalist, the old man briefly smiled and answered, but guardedly, first looking to each side.

He complained that commercial air travel had been suspended. He wanted to leave Miraflores.

One couldn't blame him, given what a dump it is. But Miraflores has been an on-and-off magnate, like the boomtowns of the California Gold Rush, for many impoverished peasants and the unemployed looking for a new start.

Working in Miraflores's nearby coca plantations is one of the few ways in Colombia in which peasants can hope to double or triple the wages — as low as \$6 a day — they earn for tending legal crops like coffee and yucca.

Thinking the residents were reluctant to speak in the presence of police, I walked across the street alone, to a hole-in-the-wall eatery, where grating ranchero music blasted. Two fat black ladies, sitting atop a table inside, eyed me curiously, with a hint of lasciviousness. Around them sat rough, bare-chested young men, wolfing down greasy food and swilling beer from bottles.

Again, I identified myself as a journalist and asked them how it feels to live in Miraflores. No one answered, though the ladies giggled and smiled, revealing missing front teeth. The men and boys glared at me. Their bloodshot eyes burned with hatred, like they literally wanted to cut my throat. Talk about creepy! It set me aback and filled me with an eerie mixture of unease, hesitation, hurt and anger.

I wandered a few blocks, asking people about coca flat out. But no one was talking. "They could fear guerrilla reprisals if they are seen talking to you," said a baby-faced trooper. "Or maybe they think you are with the DEA. Or maybe they just hate gringos. Remember, they blame your government for messing with their livelihood. But don't feel bad, they don't talk to us either."

Headless Bodies

The town continued down a slope. But the police warned me not to drift away too far. Without knowing it, I was near the site of the morning ambush. "It's dangerous," said a cop. "They will take you to the

river." He mentioned that headless bodies had been found in the river, and mine could be the next. I was later told that last year guerrillas had strung a cable underwater, snared a naval speed boat, and exploded mines in tree branches overhead, killing nine marines.

The next thing I knew, helicopter engines were revving up, and the Jungle Command troops were reboarding the choppers on the airstrip. I shifted into high gear after them. Also running to a helicopter was the young lady whom I had seen locked up in the blockhouse. Escorted by a police trooper, she now sported makeup and gold jewelry and carried a sports bag. Major Galeano later said she was a guerrilla defector. He also said she had secret information about a new guerrilla anti-aircraft tactic: that guerrilla M60 machine-gun fire would try to force aircraft to fly to a predetermined point where insurgents fire a wall of bullets.

We had no problem taking off. But the worst was yet to come when we flew into a flash tropical rainstorm. They happen often in Colombia and, along with mechanical failure, account for many, if not most, of police and military air fatalities.

The horizon had suddenly grown purple, as if ready to throw a tantrum. While our pilot pumped his foot pedals and moved his joystick, trying to circumvent the approaching fury, dark enraged clouds engulfed us. Curtains of rain poured and gale winds swatted our choppers up and down. Our helicopter tails swerved from side to side. My stomach shot up to my throat and back down. Terrible anxiety flooded my body.

All we could do was clench our teeth and sit tight. This was hair-raising for the Jungle Command troops and me, as we sat strapped into flimsy, collapsible pipe-and-canvas benches poorly riveted to the metal floor. Parallel to the open side doorways, we teetered just inches from the edge. We leaned back, trying not to get wet. It was like being in a car wash during an earthquake. I bet everyone was making silent prayers; I sure was.

We plowed on, like a boat bouncing over waves. Taking a long roundabout way, we finally broke into the clear, and I marveled at a gorgeous ancient escarpment dropping off a massive plateau. But my awe turned into horror as we approached it. We couldn't gain altitude to clear it. No matter how hard our pilot tried, we couldn't get sufficient lift. Downdrafts were working against us. Finally, the wind shifted, and we sailed over the cliff by a couple of hundred feet. We survived.

However, in mid-July the luck of Maj. Galeano and other police — at least several whom I knew — ran out. They died in a helicopter crash. At least they were spared the heartbreak of seeing Miraflores overrun a second time.

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

Cold War – Hot Canvas

Continued from page 53

Phnom Penh and Saigon, both of which he experienced, Beck saw the most intense combat of his career (to that point) — and came closest to dying. Alone as he was up-country, his sketching, photography, and diaries filled many hollow hours.

Three months after the fall of Indochina, and the onset of what would be called “The Vietnam Syndrome,” he was deep inside war-torn Angola, a thousand miles from any safe haven. Amid the swirl of Angolan factions, Cuban Expeditionary Forces, French mercenaries, and South African commandos, was Chip Beck (the lone CIA contingent). He carried his pencils and camera along with his weapon and commo link to the outside world. That assignment lasted until spring 1976 and took him to four continents before it was over.

After Angola, he experienced another African War, a more mysterious affair in the sands of the Western Sahara. From 1976 to 1979, he roamed the dunes and wastelands of Morocco, the old Spanish Sahara, Mauritania, and Algeria from his base in Nouakchott. Side trips into Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea Bissau brought him into contact with additional revolutionary turmoil on the African continent, as well as with spies and agents from all over the communist world. By then, his art work was more habitual, to the point where he donated dozens of pieces to indigenous charities to raise money for various local causes. After the jungle warfare of the former Indochina, it was an incredible experience to learn the nuances of how desert guerrillas could fight — then, literally, hide — in the vast open spaces. (That knowledge helped plan the defeat of Colonel Khaddafi's surrogate forces elsewhere in North Africa several years later.) Artistically, the backgrounds of lush Vietnamese undergrowth gave way in his paintings to the stark, barren Saharan landscapes..

In the second half of 1979, his reward for spending three years in the Western Sahara was to be sent to the Eastern Sahara — Khartoum to be exact. Sudan was as desolate as could be, but rich in history. It had remote valleys sprinkled with 3000-year old pyramids. There were graveyards of antique paddlewheelers that plied the Blue and White Nile Rivers, and turn-of-the-century battlefields where the Mahdi, Lord Kitchener, and “Chinese” Gordon lived, fought, and died. Beck sipped a lemonade on Kitchener's gunboat, then designated as the “Khartoum Yacht Club,” and stood at the gunwale where correspondent Winston Churchill once watched the Nile waters slide by on his way to war.

Leaving Africa in 1980, after five years and 16 countries, he returned to the States but was soon dispatched on a series of missions to Central America's tiny wars encompassing El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Panama. In addition to the



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battlefields, Chip had a chance to literally explore the countryside, villages, caves, ancient Mayan ruins hidden in the jungle, mountains, desolate beaches, tropical rivers, volcanoes, islands, forgotten relics of WWII, and the culture of the myriad peoples in the region.

His forays into Latin America, continued until 1994 and included "Operation Just Cause" against Manuel Noriega, and stretched south to Argentina's distant coasts chilled with the waters flowing out of Antarctica.

During those times, he encountered the communist bloc's propaganda, intelligence, and war machines in this hemisphere — an extension of the Cold War in its final days of spent glory.

As the Cold War began to reach its climatic end, so did the nature of his encounters. In one mission of a thousand miles, through the Caribbean and along the coast of Cuba aboard a 53-foot sailboat, the team he led encountered modern-day pirates, drug-runner strongholds, gale-force winds that came within inches of smashing them on rocky reefs, blue holes so deep and dark one could not reach their bottoms, sharks that lurked about as he swam, and, on a bright note, a beautiful woman or two.

They were challenged by both USCG and Cuban patrol boats, both of whom wondered what they were up to. To round out the perfect spy mission, it turned out that a double agent was aboard — a Vietnam veteran and decorated narcotics officer who was paid in excess of \$5 million for his treachery. Beck's mission, which was successful but cannot be detailed here, had to do with the Cold War, and was completed before it could be compromised. The adventure was one of the most picturesque of his career and the exotic settings provided excellent backgrounds for sketches and paintings.

One interlude during his Latin American trips was an assignment to Beirut, in 1984, at the height of the crisis in which U.S. Multinational Forces were embroiled. CIA Station Chief Bill Buckley, with whom Beck served in Indochina, Africa, and Central America, lobbied for his presence to help him during that dangerous period. While there, Beck was shot at by snipers; detained at midnight on a deserted street by armed thugs; subjected to intense artillery bombardments; and was sent alone into the streets of West Beirut in the dark of night "to test how safe it was."

It was during that time that Americans began to be assassinated and kidnapped. He thwarted what was probably the first kidnapping attempt against Buckley, but 10 days after he left Beirut, Bill — then alone — was kidnapped in the very same place.

His art and photography of the Beirut expedition, the hostage crisis, and the ensuing Iran-Contra affair led to several published articles and art exhibits, including two in congress and the Washington Cathedral.

It was also in the 1980s that the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Although Beck was not permitted to enter Afghanistan, he closely

monitored the *mujahideen's* struggle against Moscow. Twice he loaned his personal cameras to a brave young Afghan friend, Aman Meerzaman. He had nothing to do with his intelligence activities, but in terms of his art, he became Chip's eyes and ears inside that war-torn country. It is one of the few wars where he relied on someone else to collect his visual material, but he was involved close enough to gain personal insights. In the end, some of Beck's art was purchased in the Arab world to help the Afghans publicize their plight in venues around the globe.

By 1990, he had enough paintings to mount a solo exhibit at CIA's exhibition hall in Langley, Va., called "Faces and Places," which included samples of combat art and history-in-the-making from the various wars, revolutions, coups, and conflicts he had experienced. The Navy and Marine Corps Combat Art Directors saw his exhibit, and invited Beck to "crawl around in the desert with my crayons" during the upcoming Gulf War. He was recalled to active duty for a year, and spent Desert Storm's 47 combat days dashing from front to front and ship to shore. It was one wild ride.

Chip Beck retired from the CIA's Clandestine Service in 1993, with the intention of returning to art full-time. As it turned out, there was one more call from Uncle Sam. He went back on active Navy duty for three years, until late 1996, his final assignment having been as special investigator for the Pentagon's POW/MIA office, where he came to realize that the real fate of America's unrepatriated POWs in this century has not been told to the public.

In his search for facts and truth, he came across visual material from enemy archives that he converted into paintings to portray the ordeals our men faced. Since retiring from the Navy, he continues to travel abroad to collect information on the POWs, and has found some inspiring material that will form the basis for yet another series of paintings.

The Future

Later in life, the old cowboy artists hung up their spurs and retired to their studio camps to recreate scenes of the past and expand their collection of paintings. Through their eyes and hands, new generations can see and feel what the Old West, the Gay Nineties, and the dawn of the 20th Century were like.

Now it is Beck's turn to retire to his studio, without retiring from the craft — or the occasional adventure. Over 25 years, without initial goals or specific plans, he has built a visual account spanning a quarter-century of history. What differentiates his work from "ordinary" artists are not his technical skills (which he's still refining), but the remote locales, unusual subjects, and emotional urgency of the situations he artistically encountered. Even his still-lives are artifacts of war, and the landscapes are regions of turmoil — but nonetheless beautiful.

He has a wealth of sketches, notes, and photographs from which he evolves his hectic sketches and periodic paintings into

more orderly renditions of the world he's seen and experienced.

That remains to be done, but if he were to die tomorrow, leaving unfinished what he wants to accomplish, his existing body of work is exceptional by any stretch of the imagination.

Homer sketched the American Civil War. Beck sketched civil wars on three continents. Remington painted covered wagons traversing the Great American Desert. Beck painted camel caravans, the last of an era, crossing the Sahara. Russell sketched a Sioux squaw carrying a papoose, as she paused on a sidewalk in 1910 to look at a white woman holding her baby on a wicker lawn chair. Beck sketched tribal women and their children among the H'mong in Laos, the Ovimbundu in Angola, and the Cuna Indians of Panama.

Combat artist Howard Brodie, still strong at age 90, sketched World War II, the Korean War, a bit of the Vietnam War and its protesters. Chip Beck has covered 16 conflicts and many political events of the Cold War.

Each of his studio paintings has a story. In the years ahead — God and editors willing — he will show *SOF* readers more paintings and recount the sometimes painful stories behind them.

"As long as my legs can carry me to distant lands, and my family doesn't protest too much, I'll still sketch new places, faces, and conflicts, demonstrating that artists, too, can be adventurers." ✕

I Was There

Continued from page 19

the second group from this crater but they just kept on comin' at me!" shrieked the man with saucer-sized eyes who had just eluded certain death. Jackson had stood his ground, hands clasped over his head, signaling to abort. This exceptional soldier didn't flinch while both jets approached with their Gatlings firing, even while the twin 500-pounders cratered in.

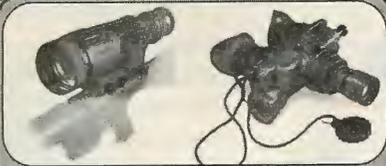
Captain Boyd put his arm around the frantic sergeant.

You might say God was looking after that platoon because only one man was killed. And I know He was watching me, since I had decided not to join the patrol that day.

The men who survived the napalm had million-dollar wounds, which allowed them to return to the U.S. The platoon leader's scalp had been peeled open like a banana; fortunately, his cranium was merely scratched. When his hair grew back, the large scar would be completely shrouded.

The Air Force FO required a medical discharge. He became mentally despondent after he returned to base, where he was able to fully comprehend what his target had been — Americans. Who ever said war was fun?

Ray Pezzoli, Jr.'s book *This Is My Story* will soon be released. ✕



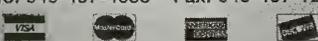
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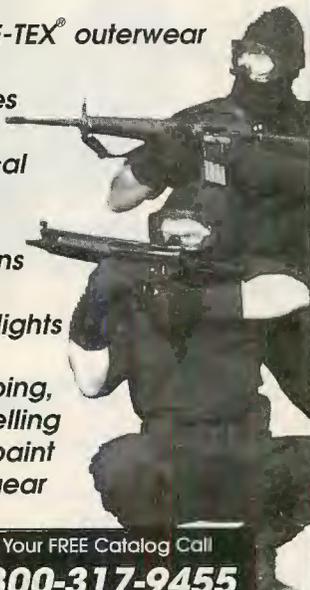


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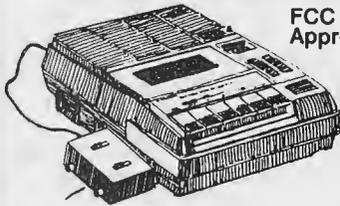
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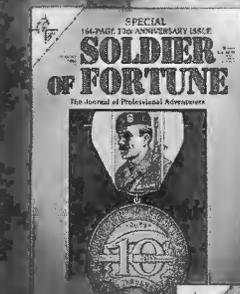
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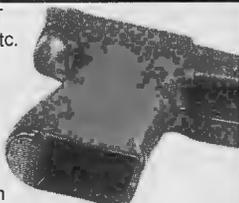
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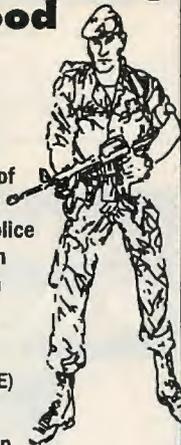
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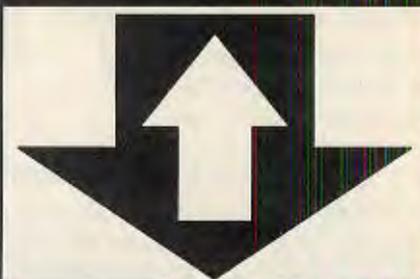


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Another Con Song From The Joint Chief's Choir

Hurry, hurry, read all about it! Our once mighty military machine is sputtering like a 1940 Ford that's trying to climb a steep hill while hitting on only one cylinder.

This must be true because just last week five four-star generals and admirals laid this message on the Senate Armed Services hearings on military readiness. The brass hats breathlessly delivered the word to the astonished senators as though they'd awakened and realized in a blinding flash that our \$300-billion-a-year armed forces were suddenly broken.

Our grunts — those that do the dying and the hands-on work from the rank of recruit to Lt. Colonel/Navy Commander — have been telling me and their skip-pers since 1993 that they're grossly short people and spare parts; that they are spread all over the world trying to do too much with too little and that their combat "cutting-edge" has been turned to butter because of Salvation Army-type duty in places like Haiti, Bosnia and Africa.

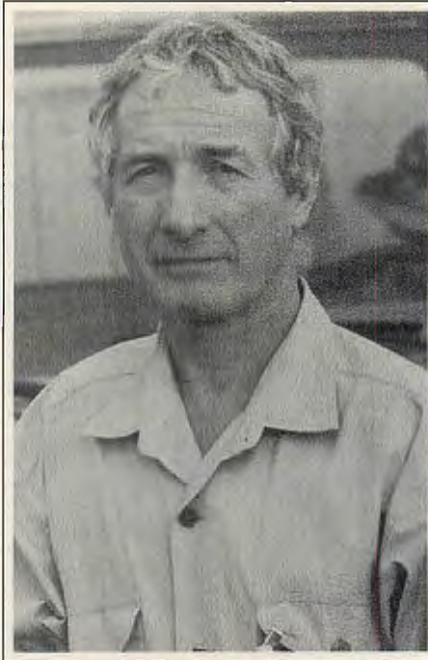
I get about 3,000 e-mail messages a week from warriors, their wives and their moms and dads. Then I pass this skinny on to you and anyone else who'll listen.

A Marine sergeant observed the senators and brass hats in action. "The Joint Chiefs were ducking and weaving while the senators were tearing them new buttonholes for not sounding off earlier."

If the brass didn't see this crash coming, they're deaf, blind, brain dead or into deep denial — and they should immediately be held responsible. Naval and air fleets and ground combat units don't just fall out for reveille one morning and discover they can't turn on their engines or crew their war machines. Only last year, a bunch of grunts in Germany gave me information that our elite multi-billion-dollar Army corps there couldn't fight its way into a Quaker convention.

The same senate committee that toasted, roasted and chewed out the brass last week not only heard my warnings, they ordered the three-star in charge to come to Washington and asked him point-blank if I'd gotten it right. No, no, he said, "Hackworth is wrong." He insisted we're good to go, fightin' fit and lean 'n mean. The senators got and bought the party line.

Now suddenly that man's corps is as sick as the rest of our forces committed in over 150 countries around the globe. Why?



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.

Because he and a battalion of other admirals and generals didn't tell it the way it was. And that's why the senators lit them up with flame throwers.

The senators, especially military academy-types like John McCain, wanted to know what happened to the military code: don't lie, don't cheat, don't steal. For the last three years while our military readiness was melting, our uniformed people up at the top have known it. But they clearly did not do their duty and sound off. Apparently, they got their stars because they were more diplomat than warrior, more deceiver than defender of the United States of America.

Early this year, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Hugh Shelton, assured the same senators that our military was in good shape when he should have blown the whistle on his commander in chief's frivolous Robo-Globo Cop Salvation Army missions. And also told how Clinton's feckless social experiments such as trying to put women in every squad, ship and airplane are destroying the finest military in the world, the one that enabled Stormin' Norman to knock out Iraq almost before Saddam got in the ring. Nor, did Shelton and his chiefs earlier tell the senators that their own pork addiction was part of the problem — forcing the purchase of unneeded subs, ships, planes and other hardware along with keeping hundreds of

bases that should have been closed when the Soviet Union kicked off.

America's military chiefs are guilty of dereliction of duty. Just as another bunch of four stars were a generation ago when they sunk our nation in the swamps of Vietnam and then provided the chorus for Westmoreland's con song about light at the end of the tunnel, humming along for eight bloody years while our young men died.

Kosovo is blinking. Is history repeating itself?

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

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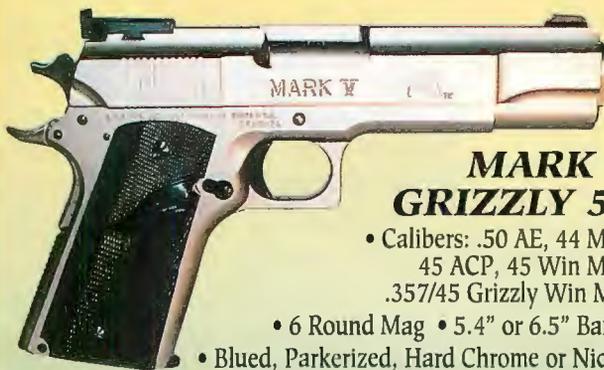
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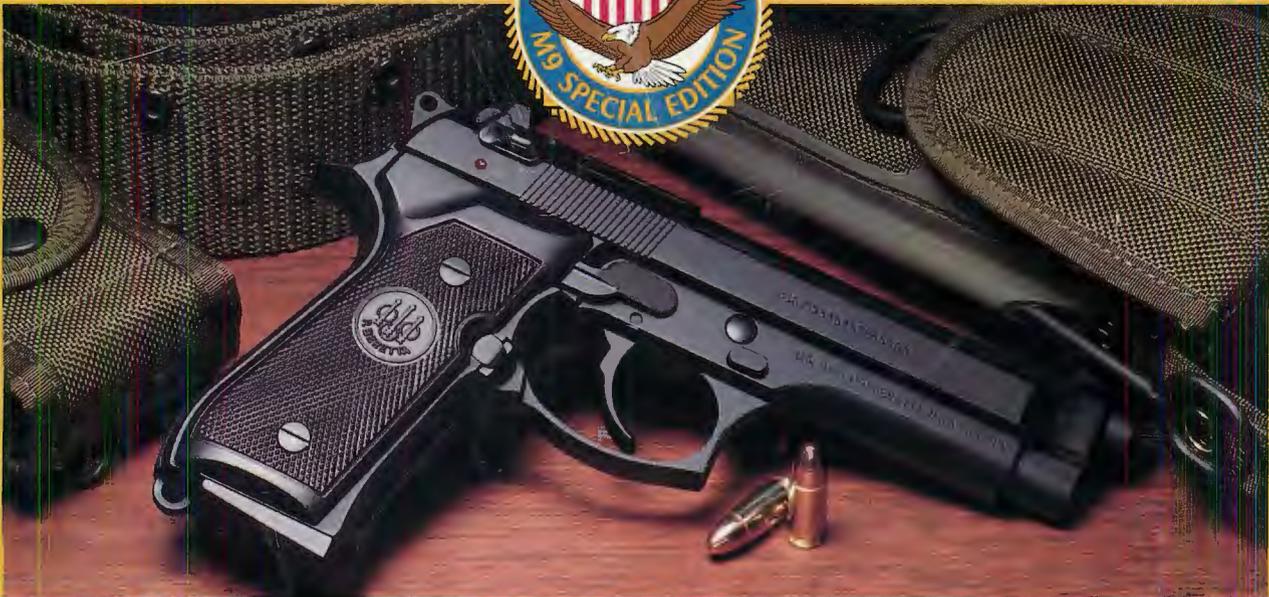
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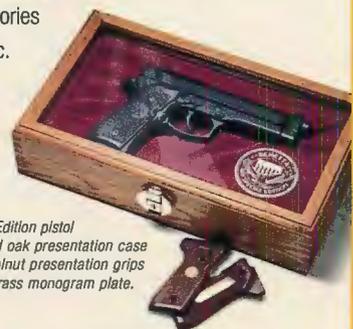
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