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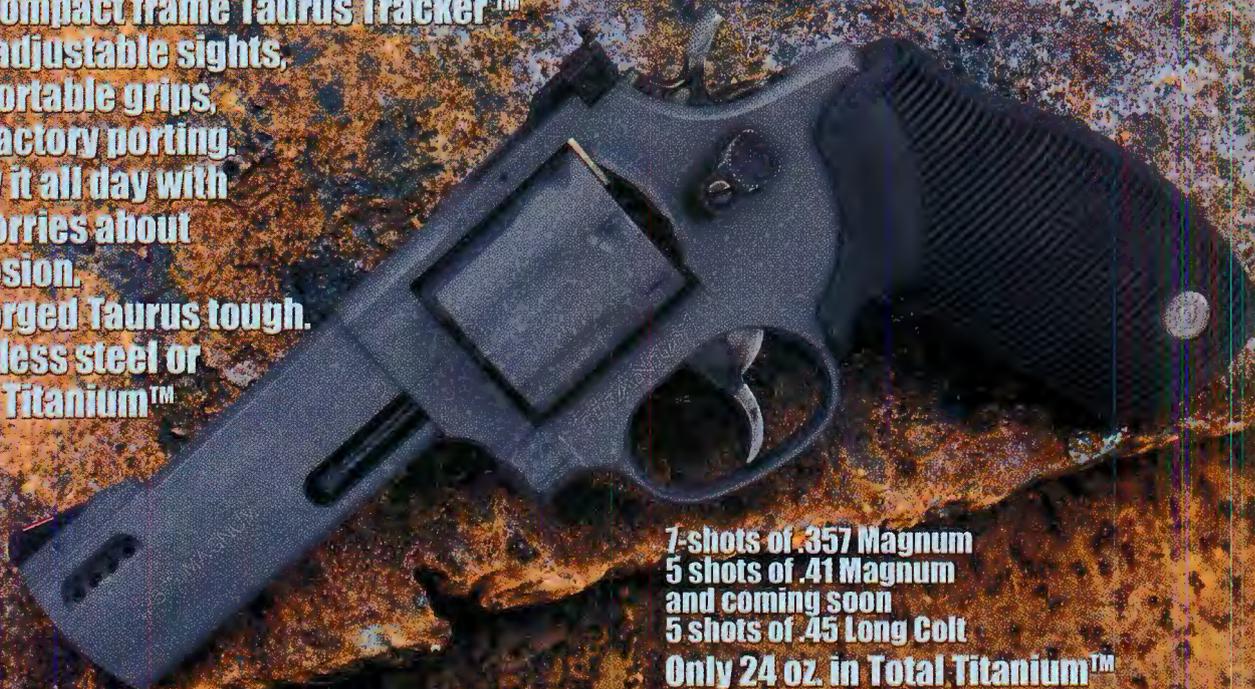
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SOF

MARCH 2000 • VOL. 25 NO. 3



Bernie Steenberg

On the Cover

Special law enforcement units worldwide are gearing up for increased Millennial mayhem. What makes cops tick — and sometimes go off? See story, page 36

FEATURES

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE by Fred Reed **36**
 Wonder why many cops wear hard-assed attitudes? Hop in with *SOF* for ride-alongs into some of the worst environs America can serve up.

COWBOY SHOOTING WITH THE TOP-BREAKS by Peter G. Kokalis **40**
 Imported by Navy Arms, three versions of the single-action Smith & Wesson top-breaks, including the Russian model (chambered for the original .44 Russian round), get an Old West T & E.

RUSSIAN ROULETTE by Mark H. Milstein **44**
 Chechen "bandits" continue to give Russia's military fits — evoking nightmarish carnage-filled flashbacks of Afghanistan.

GUNFIGHTING TODAY WITH YESTERDAY'S HARDWARE by Peter G. Kokalis **48**
 Thunder Ranch's Pre-1900 course is more than a Cowboy Action Shooting prep course. You train to efficiently utilize century-old weaponry, in modern armed-confrontation scenarios.

PIRACY: THE NEW GROWTH INDUSTRY by Frank Hopkins **54**
 Piracy has not faded to black. Modern buccaneers continue the age-old treachery — to the tune of *billions* a year.

PASS IN REVIEW **60**
 Two winning books, *The Price of Honor*, by Col. David Hackworth, and *The Mitzvah*, by Aaron Zelman, are reviewed by Carl Bernard and Peter G. Kokalis.

ERITREA AT WAR by Norbert Schiller **62**
 Considered by most a minor flashpoint on the world's war omniplex, the vicious bloodshed in Eritrea still claims many KIAs, including courageous women fighters.

OMEGA PROVING GROUND by John Hogan & Don McLean **66**
 Armalite AR10; Ontario's SP2 Air Force Survival Knife; Supreme Products' Pocket ChainSaw.



Chris Mayer

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courtesy Dave Kellerman, Special Ops Associates

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 What's In A Name?



Norbert Schiller

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

NRA 2000 Board of Directors Election — Not a Casual Affair

It is time, once again, for me to recommend individuals who are running for the National Rifle Association's Board of Directors. This is an election that should not be taken lightly as the NRA is the largest and most effective gun-rights organization in the nation, and is measurably among the Top 10 most powerful political lobbying groups in the country. Consequently, the election of NRA Board members is NOT a casual affair. We need informed gun-rights activists who are responsible and dedicated.

And, by the way, if you don't belong to the NRA, you cheap son-of-a-bitch, you deserve to lose your guns!

This year you can vote for up to 25 individuals, but no more. I am recommending only 19, as I do not know the other individuals recommended by the nominating committee. I would like to put a word in for two individuals, running for the Board for the first time, whom I highly respect.

The first is Don Causey, who publishes the *Hunting Report*, and the second is Grover Norquist, who is Executive Director of Americans for Tax Reform. Grover raised the eyebrows of the effete elite in D.C. when a photo of him at my hunting camp appeared in the *Washington Post*.

Irv Benzion
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Manuel Fernandez
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D. Cynthia Julien
Grover Norquist
Scott O'Grady
Edie P. Reynolds
Wayne Anthony Ross
Ronald L. Schmeits
Bruce E. Stern
Robert L. Viden, Jr.

Meanwhile, Neal Knox and his myrmidons continue to stridently attack NRA leadership under the guise of self-righteousness. As far as I'm concerned, Knox, et al., are simply whining in frustration because they got their butts kicked a couple of years ago when they tried to take over the NRA in their failed power play. Yet the ongoing arrogance of some of his supporters is incomprehensible. For instance, Sally Drews Brodbeck and her husband recently sued the NRA, thus demonstrating their contempt for the NRA and all we stand for. And now she wants your vote to be re-elected to the Board!

Equally disgusting is another one of Knox's cronies, Weldon Clark, who on 24 November 1998, filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission, demanding an "... independent investigation into the business affairs of the National Rifle Association with emphasis on federal elections ..." With turkeys like these, we don't need to worry about the Charlie Schumers and Hillarys of the world.

Don't vote for these boobs! ☒

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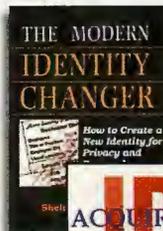


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Foreword by Robert K. Brown

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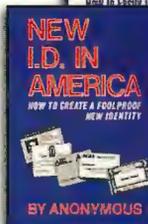
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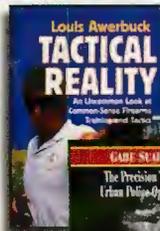
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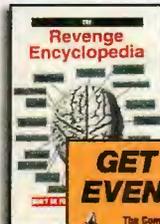
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Chinese Arithmetic

U.S. negotiators have agreed to pay China \$28 million in compensation for damage to the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, which was bombed by U.S./NATO warplanes last May, David Andrews, the lead American negotiator announced from Beijing. China, in turn, has agreed to pay the U.S. \$2.87 million for damage to the U.S. Embassy and other parts of the U.S. diplomatic compound in Beijing, caused during the week of anti-American demonstrations that came in the wake of the bombing. The compensation agreements were announced the day that Joseph Prueher, the new American ambassador, was to present his credentials to Beijing. The \$28 million from the United States is in addition to \$4.5 Uncle Sam agreed last August to pay victims of the bombing and/or their families.

Congressional Arithmetic

Nearly all of America's war veterans have a national memorial except those from the biggest and most costly war of all — WWII. In 1993, Congress finally recognized this travesty and authorized the construction of a National WWII Memorial on the National Mall, in Washington, D.C. Oddly enough, although there seems to be taxpayer money enough for unspeakable projects, they left the funding of the National WW II Memorial up to interested individuals!

We lose a *thousand* WWII vets every day — that's a faster rate than we lost during the war itself! The official campaign sponsored by the American Battle Monuments Commission has struggled to barely raise half the required amount — and they need to start con-

struction on Veterans Day, 2000.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has initiated a matching gift program, whereby the organization will add 50 cents to every dollar donated — in other words, your \$20 donation will be upped to \$30 by the VFW. To have your donation to this worthwhile project upped by 50%, send your donations to VFW WWII Memorial Fund, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 119039, Kansas City, MO 64171-9039.

SOF's Laugesen Receives Award

Wayne Laugesen, assistant editor at *Soldier Of Fortune* and writer of *SOF* columns "Slick Willie Watch" and "World Sitrep" was recently recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists as the Colorado columnist of the year. In addition to his work at *SOF*, Laugesen is also a regular columnist for the *National Catholic Register* and *Boulder Weekly*.

Five Acquitted In Plot To Kill Fidel

A federal jury in San Juan, Puerto Rico has acquitted five Cuban exiles of an alleged plot to kill Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. Prosecutors charged that the defendants conspired to kill Castro during a 1997 summit on Venezuela's Isla Margarita. Cleared of conspiracy charges were Jose Antonio Llamas, Angel Manuel Alfonso, Angel Hernandez Rojo, Francisco Secundino Cordova and Jose Rodriguez Sosa. All five men had fled Cuba after Castro's communist takeover in 1959, and are now businessmen in Florida and New Jersey. Three of the accused men were on a yacht stopped in Puerto Rican waters by the Coast Guard on 27 October 1997. A Coast Guard search of the vessel found rifles, ammo, NVG, radios and GPS gear on board.

Defense lawyers maintained that the men only wanted to help members of Castro's entourage defect from the summit being held on the small Venezuelan island; the defendants claimed they needed the hardware to protect themselves from possible aggression by Cuban agents.

True Blue Cabela's

Some companies will put their money where their mouth is, and some will not if it might hurt profits. One that will is the Nebraska mail-order sporting goods firm Cabela's. Purveyors of a full line of outdoor and hunting products, Cabela's used to sell a lot of "PetSafe" "invisible" electronic pet fences (like the sort that zaps the pooch with a shock collar when he crosses a buried wire). When PetSafe solicited a licensing agreement with the Humane Society of the United States, the largest anti-hunting/anti-trapping organization in the United States, and put HSUS' paid-for endorsements and information on all their literature and packaging, Cabela's balked. PetSafe initially told Cabela's they would remove the HSUS propaganda from their packaging, then waffled and said they would remove it from the merchandise sent to Cabela's. Noted Cabela's Mike Callahan, "That wasn't good enough for us, so we're dropping the product from our inventory."

If you would like to trade with an outdoor company that features good deals on good gear — and stands for something — contact Cabela's, Inc., Dept. SOF, 812 13th Ave., Sidney, NE 69160.



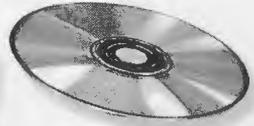
courtesy Peter G. Kokalis

Recently found attending the prestigious Leupold Tactical Conference in Beaverton, Oregon, were (left to right) C. Reed Knight, Jr., of Knight's Armament Company; *SOF*'s Technical Editor, Peter G. Kokalis; Mark A. Keefe, IV, Managing Editor of *The American Rifleman*; Chuck Taylor, representing *Combat Handguns*; and Jacob Gottfredson, from *Tactical Shooter*.

Continued on page 10



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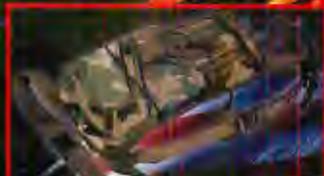
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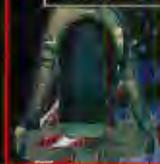
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THRU THE VALLEY OF I WILL FEAR NO EVIL...

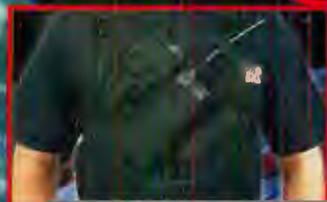
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No Guns In Your Levis?

According to Craig Palmer, Director of the Kentucky Coalition to Carry Concealed (KC3), the pro-carry organization has listed Levi Strauss on their "Hall of Shame" web page for the company's prohibition of employees who are licensed concealed carry holders from possession of even "open carry" on company property, such as firearms in privately owned vehicles. For details see the KC3 web site at <http://kc3.com>.

Chicago Schools Drop Marksmanship

With a grotesque twist of logic, Chicago Public Schools chief Paul Vallas has stated that he will put an end to all riflery programs in Chicago's schools (i.e. the 33 schools that were offering JROTC programs that trained students how to safely, responsibly and effectively handle rifles). Vallas was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* as saying, "We don't want to send a contradictory message in the school by on the one hand discouraging the use of firearms and being tough on violence and then on the other having a marksmanship curriculum." (Yep, those assault pellet guns are a worry, all right.)

Other Illinois school officials, outside Chicago, have stated they plan to continue with their riflery programs. Noted Ron Yelk, coach of the Mattoon High School rifle team in Mattoon, Ill., "Our emphasis is on dedication, discipline, leadership, responsibility, all these things." In an editorial, *Chicago Tribune* said, "There's no evidence that anyone participating in marksmanship practice or competitions has ever posed a threat. In fact, one might assume that JROTC cadets schooled in firearms safety would be more responsible with guns than other kids. Allowing riflery training while decrying gun violence doesn't send a mixed message any more than does supporting a wrestling team while opposing schoolyard brawls."

Pistol-Packin' Professors?

Arizona state legislator Barbara Blewster (R.-Dewey), has ruffled a lot of feathers (a specialty of hers) with her solution for the problem of school violence: let every teacher carry a gun. Gordon Maddux, president of the Prescott Unified School District, did not receive the suggestion with favor: "It sounds just like her. What a fruitcake. She's a clown. Arizona politics is interesting enough without her," he said. Some gun-rights advocates did not dismiss the suggestion out of hand, however. NRA Second Vice President Sandy Froman noted that in countries where teachers are armed, such as Israel, school shootings are rare.

White Feather Gear

SOF has gotten many inquiries regarding the availability of White Feather gear. One good place to trade that carries White Feather caps, drag bags (PakMats) and scope covers with the White Feather (Carlos Hathcock) logo is Fearless Freddy's in Las Vegas. You can call them toll-free at 888-689-1626; or check out their web site at www.fearlessfreddys.com.

Col. Jimmy Vogeeler

Well-known Belgian Congo veteran Col. Jimmy Vogeeler died 17 August 1999, and was cremated in Thailand 24 August. "Colonel Jimmy" was owner of the Airborne Legion Bar in Pattaya, Thailand, and a well-liked member of the "military adviser family." Jimmy fought in the Belgian Congo campaign, and others passing through Thailand to assignments in hotspots around the world should stop at

Continued on page 14

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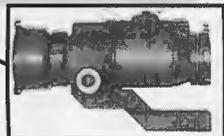
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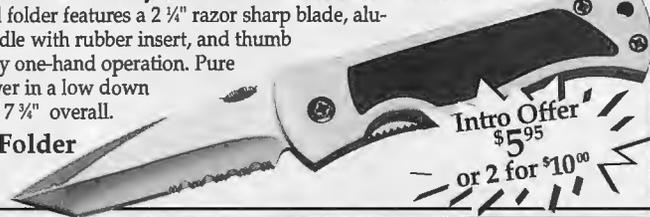


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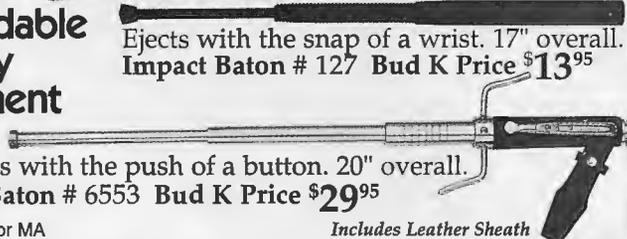


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Jimmy's bar to say hello and catch up on the latest intell. He will be missed. (Notice courtesy John "Claymore" Kamens)

LEAA Blasts Clinton Praise of Brady Law

Law Enforcement Alliance of America Executive Director Jim Fotis has questioned the sincerity of President Clinton in hailing the six-year anniversary of the passage of the Brady Bill. "We simply don't see the reasoning behind his numbers," said Mr. Fotis. "President Clinton claims that 470,000 felons have been stopped from purchasing a firearm, however, he does not say what happened to them. According to statistics of the BATF, only seven people have been prosecuted for attempting to illegally obtain a firearm. Once again, Clinton is using his smoke-and-mirrors trick to con people into believing that his inflated figures are correct. Did this man ever learn to add when he was in school? These numbers are as tricky as

figure out as his 100,000-cops scheme.

"Instead of encouraging the Department of Justice to enforce the federal laws that currently exist to prohibit the sale of firearms to felons, Mr. Clinton decided to attack another branch of the firearms division. Mr. Clinton should not criticize honest firearms dealers who are using the National Instant Check System (NICS), he should realize that these honest, law-abiding business people are trying to follow the tangled web of federal legislation the Clinton Administration helped to create," said Mr. Fotis.

"If Mr. Clinton is serious about prosecuting felons who attempt to illegally purchase firearms, he should encourage the federal government and states throughout America to adopt laws like the one in the Commonwealth of Virginia that mandates on-the-spot arrest for felons caught trying to purchase a firearm," said Mr. Fotis. "This law wouldn't give a felon a second chance to attempt to make their purchase, it would put him behind bars where he belongs."

"Mr. Clinton should stop giving lip service on public safety until he has a substantial record to back up what he's saying," concluded Fotis.

(With more than 65,000 members and supporters, the Law Enforcement Alliance of America is the nation's largest coalition of law enforcement officers, crime victims, and concerned citizens dedicated to making America safer.)

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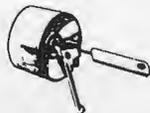
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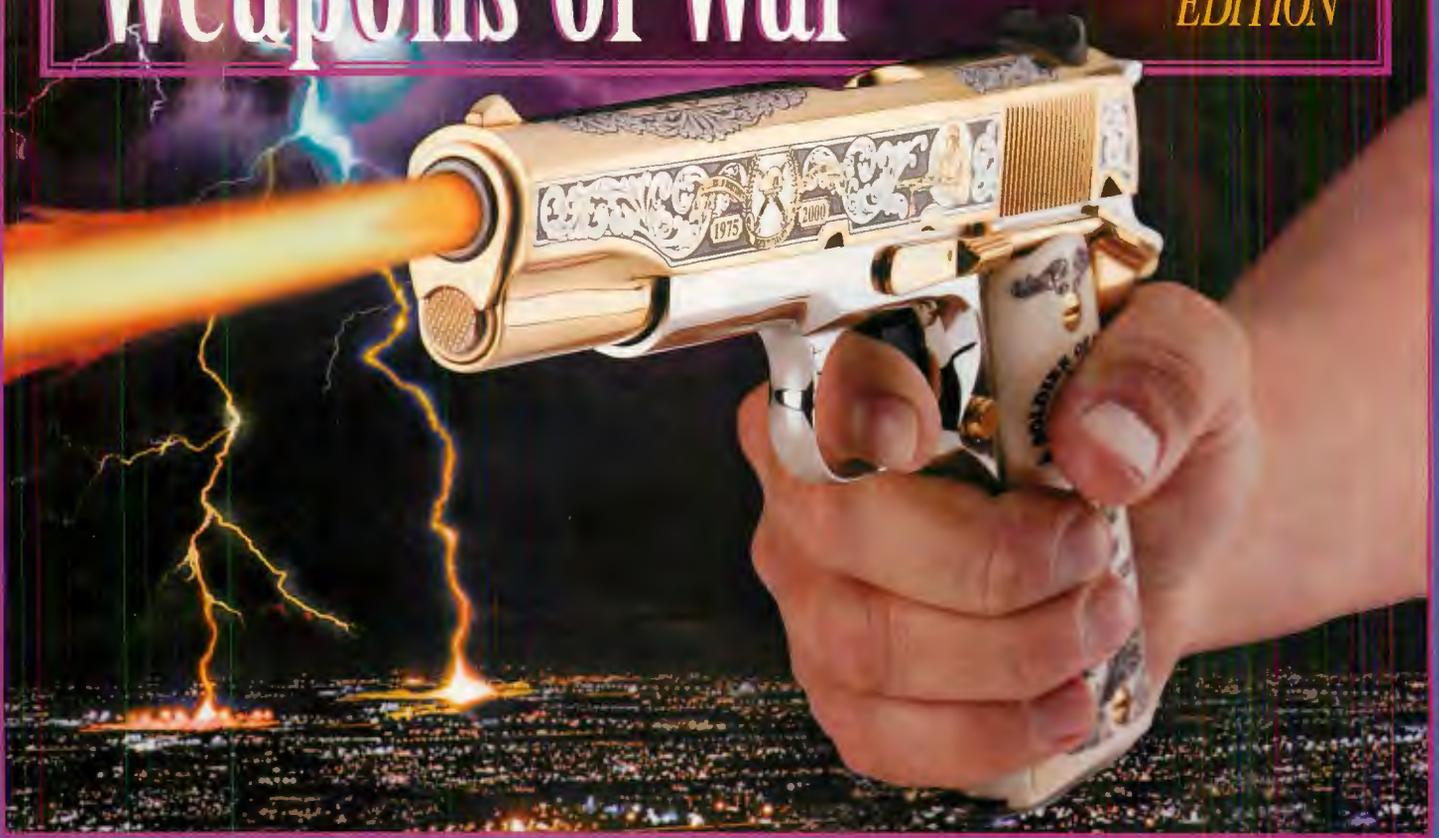
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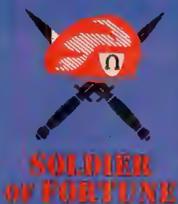
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Heinie Leather's Illusion

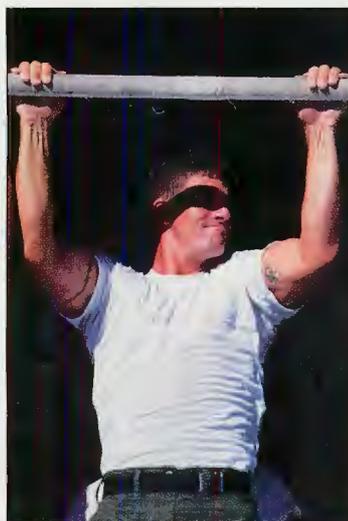
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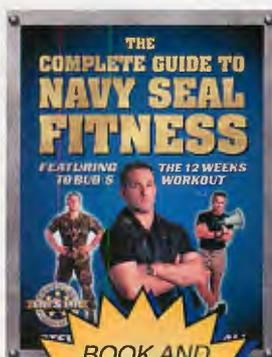


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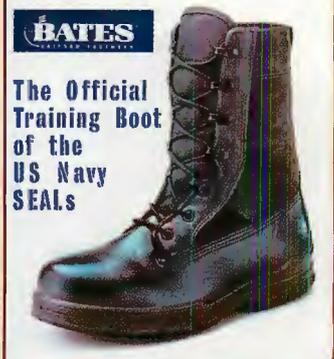
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Also, complete information describing the fantastic opportunities now open to trained Counter-Surveillance technicians and how a number of individuals are reaping a Bonanza in this booming business! You'll learn exactly how the ever increasing use of Electronic Listening Devices by investigative agencies, government agencies, jealous suitors and unscrupulous business competitors, etc. has created huge demand for this service.

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A detailed analysis of a variety of extremely fascinating hi-tech devices and procedures used for ultra-sophisticated audio and video eavesdropping including micro-wave and laser device monitoring; new methods for listening thru walls; all about scramblers, voice changers and exactly how neighbors eavesdrop. How missing persons are found, confidential data banks are broken into, lie detectors deceived and much more!



A comprehensive information package JAM-PACKED FULL of some of the most exciting and fascinating reading imaginable. Reads like a James Bond novel, with one important exception...IT'S NOT FICTION!

THE ONE "BUG" TO FEAR MOST!

While most individuals are now somewhat guarded in their telephone conversations, they still rather naively feel secure in the "privacy" of their own home or office. However, the most common type of "tap" presently used by eavesdroppers now picks up ALL SOUNDS AND CONVERSATION WITHIN A ROOM ... WITH THE TELEPHONE STILL ON THE HOOK!

Due to this devastating capability, this "Infinity" tap (variously referred to as Infinity Transmitter, Hookswitch Bypass, 3rd Wire, Harmonica Bug, etc.) has become the "bug of choice".

In flagrant violation of federal law prohibiting their use and sale, these devices in various forms are openly advertised in many technical publications for as little as \$30. Literally thousands of these devices are now in the hands of unscrupulous individuals all over the country!

In response to this ever-growing threat, a uniquely engineered feature of the CSD-18 now also detects Infinity type devices anywhere "down the line".

In other words, if ANYONE ... ANYWHERE ... is utilizing the telephone tip and/or ring wires to monitor your private room conversations while your telephone is on the hook, you'll immediately be made aware of it via a flashing LED!

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Nearly 180 pages of immediate-action drills for when everything goes to hell in a handbasket (SOF editors all keep a copy on their desk at all times). Succinct overviews and pithy, practical courses of action from legion experts-in-their-fields, to fight Murphy at least to a draw: how to fend off a shark, how to jump from a moving car, how to deliver a baby in a taxi, how to escape killer bees, how to wrestle a gator, how to get out of quicksand, how to land a plane, how to hot-wire a car, how to ram a car, how to jump from a building into a dumpster, how to leap from a Harley onto a car, what to do when your chute fails to open, how to jump from a bridge or cliff into the water, how to maneuver atop a moving train and get inside — even how to perform a tracheotomy or win a swordfight and survive dozens of other potential tragedies from avalanches to earthquakes. Aficionados in some fields might quibble over certain techniques, but for the amount of ground this compact volume covers in dealing with dozens and dozens of worst-case scenarios in common-sense fashion, it's well worth having. Odds are good you'll meet more than one of the situations during your life, and the time spent studying this volume may turn out to be some of the best time you ever invest. If nothing else, it makes you think out your options beforehand, so you have a plan. Manual bound, \$14.95 — and well worth it.

Chronicle Books, Dept. SOF, 85 Second Street, Sixth Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105; phone: 415-537-4257; fax 415-537-4470; or on the web at www.chronbooks.com.

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LKL Innovations, Dept. SOF, 8613 East Ave., Mentor, OH 44060; phone: 888-794-7732; fax: 440-974-7655; check out the Swiss Tech website: www.swisstechtools.com.



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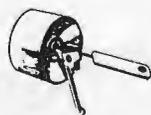
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WORLD SITREP



1

UNITED STATES

China nuke fiasco: Wen Ho Lee pleads not guilty to charges he improperly handled national nuclear weapons secrets at the Los Alamos National Labs in New Mexico. A federal magistrate ordered Wen Ho Lee to remain in custody until his trial. • **Military gays:** Democratic presidential contender Al Gore calls for end to military's confusing "Don't ask, don't tell" policy toward homosexuals. Clinton criticizes the policy, which he inspired, as ineffectual. Defense Secretary Cohen orders 90-day review of policy. Critics continue to claim the policy doesn't work, and has given false hope to gays wishing to serve in military. Congressional hurdles expected to delay any change of policy. • **End of *Catch-22*:** Author of classic World War II novel *Catch-22*, Joseph Heller, dies at home in East Hampton, N.Y., of apparent heart attack. He was 76.

2

RUSSIA

Chechen war: War continues in Chechnya, with Russian forces claiming advance into Chechen capital, Grozny. Chechen forces vow to keep fighting, and claim success in pushing Russians back. Russian army officials claim anti-Western sentiments flourish, and may be surpassing hostilities held during cold war. Some Russian officers believe brief bombing ceasefire against Grozny in December would give rebels time to dig in or escape Russian encirclement. Chechen president says from Grozny that only outside mediation could force Russia into peace deal. Moscow continues to reject all such outside pressure.

5

COLOMBIA

Panamanian turmoil? Stay tuned: Colombian rebels attack navy base on border with Panama, killing more than 25. U.S. warns guerrillas may strike inside Panama sometime after U.S. surrenders Canal.

6

ROMANIA

Leadership coup: Romanian president dismisses Prime Minister Vasile after the Christian Democratic party withdrew its support and most ministers resigned. Constantinescu named Labor Minister Athanasiu interim premier.

1

IRELAND

More "lasting peace": Prime Minister Ahern leads cabinet into Northern Ireland to hold landmark talks with ministers from the province's new coalition of Protestants and Catholics in bid to seal lasting peace.

10

FRANCE

Slick move: Oil tanker breaks up in storm, leaking 8 million gallons of crude 60 miles south of Brest. Crew of 26 successfully rescued. Spill is slightly smaller than *Exxon Valdez*, which carried 11 million gallons of oil. • **"What does this mean?":** French government requests that U.N. resolution to revive arms inspections in Iraq be made clearer. Paris moved after U.S. officials persuaded Russia to abstain.

5

14

IRAQ

Lift handle, begin pumping: Government resumes oil pumping after U.N. extends limited sales for six months. A U.S.-backed bid to resume arms inspections and ease permanent sanctions is expected to founder.

14

VENEZUELA

Constitution is popular, but all wet: Citizens overwhelmingly endorse constitution that will vastly increase powers of President Chavez and allow him to rule for years into the future. Businessmen and economists, by contrast, dislike the charter. Voting took place amid heavy rains that killed at least 37 people.

15

KOSOVO

Power-share: U.N. officials sign power-sharing deal with ethnic Albanians, though no Serb representatives attended ceremony. Serb officials denounce deal, saying it serves only to loosen Belgrade's rule of the province.

3

CHINA

Those intelligent Chinese: U.S. officials worry about what China might know, as more is discovered about the type and extent of information Wen Ho Lee downloaded. Much of the information, officials have learned, was outside of the suspected spy's area of responsibility, meaning the damage to U.S./Chinese relations, and U.S. security, may be far worse than was initially feared. • **"One country, two systems":** Falun Dafa followers hold symposium in Hong Kong, testing China's "One country, two systems" policy. Joseph Prueher, new U.S. ambassador to China, arrives in Beijing. • **Flag burning is not a commie value:** Hong Kong's highest court rules that desecrating Chinese flag is a crime, bowing to Beijing in another sensitive case. In another bow to communists, Hong Kong also began rounding up migrants from the mainland. • **Let's make a deal:** U.S. and China reach accord on compensation for 8 May NATO bombing of Beijing's embassy in Serbia. China will get \$28 million. U.S. will receive \$2.9 million for subsequent attack on its embassy in Beijing.

4

ISRAEL

Painful price for peace: Barak wins backing from Israeli parliament for opening talks with Syria. Vote of 47-31 in the Knesset, with 24 abstentions, highlights deep divisions over what prime minister calls "painful" price of peace with Syria, understood to mean the return of the Golan Heights. Opponents accuse Barak of setting precedent by trading land for promises of security. Barak visits Washington for high-level, unprecedented talks with Syria's foreign minister. Thousands of Golan Heights settlers and supporters protest this, demonstrating routinely outside parliament, promising to not leave their homes without bitter fight. Israel says a Golan Heights pullout would affect some 17,000 settlers.

8

POLAND

Tariff tiff: EU threatens to retaliate if Poland goes forward with tariff increases on agricultural products. Move by Warsaw could hurt country's hopes of joining the EU as early as 2003.

9

TURKEY

Joining EU: EU accepts Turkey as candidate member during summit, and Ankara pledges to clean up its human rights record, work to abolish death penalty and reduce tensions with Greece and Cyprus. Official membership is years away, so promises are expected to be kept.

12

SUDAN

Parliament dissolves: Sudan's president dissolves parliament and declares state of emergency amid increasing friction with legislature's chief. Omar el-Bashir cited unspecified internal and foreign threats.

13

SERBIA

Authoritarian rule: President Slobodan Milosevic and wife Mira Markovic continue crack down on opponents, tightening control over Yugoslavia's political scene in moves that critics call a march toward unbridled authoritarian rule. Milosevic is aided by \$100 million from China and gas deals with Russia, Iraq and Libya. Milosevic has ousted judges he doesn't like, charged disgruntled army reservists with war crimes, and slapped crippling fines on media with Draconian press laws.

16

CROATIA

President dies: President Franjo Tudjman, who rose to power amid wave of nationalism that accompanied fall of communism and breakup of Yugoslavia, dies at age 77 of stomach cancer.

17

JORDAN

Terrorizing Americans: Government arrests 13 suspected terrorists in what U.S. officials describe as part of larger plot by Osama bin Laden to attack Americans traveling abroad.

World Sitrep is compiled in part from the biweekly newsletter *For Your Eyes Only: An Open Intelligence Summary of Current Military Affairs*. Published by Strategy World, Inc., 15 West Sunset Drive, Alpine, UT 84004; Email: support@strategyworld.com

SLICK-WILLIE-WATCH

A Limp-Wristed Lie

When it gets right down to it, Clinton's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy was always based in his fundamental value system of lie, deceive, hide, disguise and "Don't tell," meaning "Don't tell the truth." Yet somehow, most Americans were willing to accept this policy as an acceptable means of dealing with the dilemma that some gay Americans really do want to serve their country in the military, despite the obvious and legitimate practical and tactical issues involved with it.

Nobody with any background or expertise pertaining to the military believed such a policy of deception would work. Gays are discriminated against in the military not because people know they are gay, but because they are gay and their lifestyles eventually lead to irreconcilable conflicts with their heterosexual peers. It's reality, and that's something Clinton has never been quite fond of.

As result of his "Don't ask, don't tell the truth" policy, many unsuspecting gays were deceived during the '90s into thinking the military was welcoming them on board. When confronted with truth, they were often left hurt, angry and disappointed. That's what happens to most people who are lied to, and told to lie.

Now that Clinton is politically out of the woods, facing no reelection and a short enough stint that nothing could remove him from office, he's decided to tell the truth about "Don't ask, don't

tell." Gee, I guess it really doesn't work, was the underlying message in a radio interview with CBS News. Clinton told the network he agrees with Hillary Rodham Clinton's comments that the policy did not work as intended.

It's nice that Clinton is willing to face reality, now that it's too late to help those who were harmed by his policy. But saying it did not work "as intended" is also a deception. Clinton isn't stupid, and he was told it wouldn't work by all leading military experts including General Colin Powell. He knew the policy would backfire on gays, but he didn't care. After all, that wouldn't be discovered until late in his second term, at which point the big lie would become a big "oops" that had helped him for most of eight years.

Today, Clinton re-examines the policy only because of the case of the U.S. Army soldier convicted of the baseball-bat murder of Barry Winchell, a gay infantryman. It's time for Clinton to apologize to Winchell's family. Clinton probably expected his deceptive policy of the lie would get someone killed. He obviously didn't care.

Popularity, At A Cost To The Poor

Clinton plans to launch a nationwide class-action suit against gunmakers in the wake of the recent rash of school shootings. He plans to file suit through the Department of Housing and Urban

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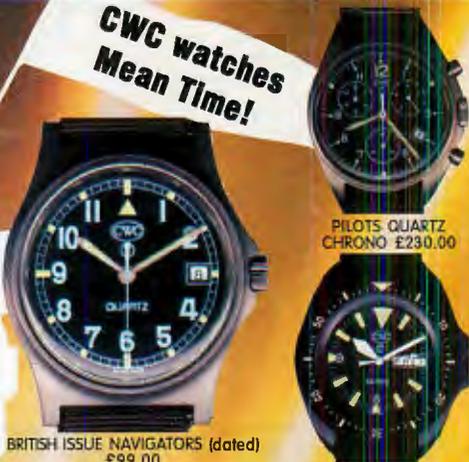


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In Mere Hours My Men Were Destroying 'Gurus' With 20 Years In The Martial Arts

I'm a former Navy SEAL (the US Navy's Elite Commandos) and in 1987 we were introduced to one Jerry Lee Peterson. This guy came to us from some, let's just say, 'highly credible' sources within our government. At the time the SEAL's were searching to standardize the way they taught hand-to-hand fighting to the hard charging SEAL combat platoons. We faced the same problems you face today; we didn't have twenty years to become effective fighters. Our guys needed a program, which got them to fight with or without weapons and guaranteed they could not be defeated, no matter what the attacker knew about fighting. It needed to be quickly learned and easily retained, based on natural body movement and had to work regardless of size or strength.

Needless to say EVERY martial art and fighting system we tested (and we tested them all: Karate, Kung Fu, JKD, Jui Jitsu, Sambo...) all failed the test. They either took way to long to learn, could not handle modern weapons, failed against multiple attackers or required excessive athletic coordination. More importantly these 'arts' or 'sports' were all DEFENSIVE in nature, a term we didn't know was a problem... until we met Jerry.

This guy comes in and takes 14 SEALs with very little hand-to-hand experience and announces after a few hours of training them we could put his guys up against the most highly experienced fighting gurus of the SEAL Teams. I mean some of these 'gurus' had been trained practically from birth in the martial arts. These dudes were feared within the tight community of the SEALs and anyone who has spent anytime around the "Teams" knows SEAL's fear next to nothing. But Peterson insisted and the demo went on; to the amazement of all in attendance the Peterson-trained SEAL operator DESTROYED each and every of the 'gurus' quickly and effectively. Not only that, these guys easily adapted whether the attackers used fists, kicks, grapples, chokes or weapons... it just didn't matter. Jerry's fighters seemed to just focus on taking out

the attacker (more about this in the FREE report). And you too can be just like the Peterson-trained SEAL commandos, when your armed with the knowledge of his AMAZINGLY effective yet simple to learn fighting system (more on that later).

The One True Ultimate Fighting System

So who is this Jerry Peterson dude and what can his revolutionary fighting system do for YOU? *Only give you the confidence to never waste another day of your life fearing another man*. Ya see this system of his wasn't developed by some ancient 'grandmaster' with some mystical (or should I say questionable) background. Nor was it something that was watered down into some 'ultimate competition' that pretends to be real yet has rules and a ref. No this system was developed in the harsh jungle combat of the Vietnam War. That's where a 19-year-old soldier was literally dropped into a horrific fire-fight after only his 3rd day 'in country' (as they say) and what did he do? He felt the paralyzing fear of imminent death taking hold of him...why? Because the 'combat training' he had received failed him... he was waiting for someone, anyone to tell him what to do, to lead him, yet no one did. So if he was going to survive this, it was up to him and guess what he did? He got mad, I mean hellfire and brimstone MAD, and right then and there promised himself he would never wait for another man to tell him what to do. He then looked and found the enemy who pinned them down, CHARGED and took them out in one smooth action. That was the dawn of Special Combat Reactionary Systems (SCARS®).

You Now Live The Fearless Life With The Offensive Mindset™

That 19-year-old kid was Jerry Lee Peterson. He went on to serve 2 tours as a 'pointman' with 173rd Airborne Charlie Company. That unit is credited by historians as seeing some of the MOST fierce combat of that war and Peterson arguably held the most dangerous job at 'point'. It was in those jungles that he saw what a defensive mindset did to men, how it caused them to freeze and die. He survived numerous overrun situations (where the enemy outnumbered and actually overruns you) requiring hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon killing. This was due to the revelation of what he was later to call the Offensive Mindset. *The ability not to worry or fear what your enemy may do to you and only focus on what you are going to do to him.*

Have You Ever Felt Fear?

If you have ever felt even a TWINGE of fear in any potentially violent confrontation, if you have been training in a 'sport-fighting' or a competition-based system, PLEASE don't risk freezing in a real life and death struggle. You need to see this FREE special report. You need to get the full story on SCARS and the *Offensive Mindset*. Because what

you learn in martial arts or 'sportfighting' may get you killed. And for those of you who don't think they have time to learn to live a fearless life I'm here to tell you can, IN A FEW SHORT HOURS, completely change the way you view the world and never fear any man from that day on.

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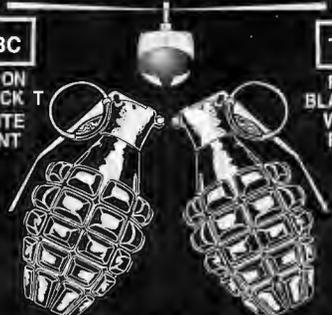
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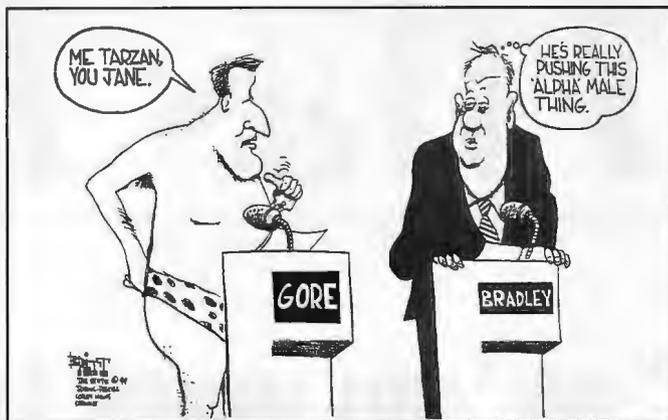
Development, on behalf of federally financed housing projects, where he says gun violence is out of control.

Survey after survey, study after study, show that more guns in crime-blighted areas result in *less* crime. It's simple: Murderous criminals pay no attention to gun laws, but their victims do.

Again, Clinton isn't stupid. He knows gun control will only make for more victims in the ghetto. If his real objective were to protect the innocent, he'd stop trying to regulate guns out of their hands.

But that's not his objective. Rather, his objective is to be popular among the masses of voters not privy to what he knows. He, and other knee-jerk politicians like him, have promised that a few more government controls on guns will stop the violence.

Clinton knows better. He knows gun control only increases violence. It's a fact proven time and time again in this culture. Clinton doesn't care. He only cares about himself. His lawsuit, if successful, will make it difficult for innocent inner-city residents to obtain weapons of self defense. As a result, they will be more likely to die at the hands of thieves. Clinton knows this, and he doesn't care.



As for when to celebrate: "Maybe I can do it twice, and I'll be president of two millennial changes," Clinton said.

We can hear it now. "My term's over, and I'm out of office. But I'm really still the president, you know. It kind of depends on how you interpret the phrases 'two terms,' and 'eight years.'"

The Clinton Calendar

Ask Bill Clinton what day it is, and you might get two different answers. He might say Monday, and then realize you really wish it were Friday. So he'll tell you it is, in a way, Friday. Then, hopefully, you will love him for saying what you wanted to hear.

That's what Clinton has done with the calendar. Clinton hosted a blowout White House party to celebrate the new millennium. Strangely, however, he doesn't believe a new millennium started with the year 2000.

According to the Gregorian calendar, which begins the Christian era at the year 1 A.D., the Third Millennium begins on 2001. In an interview last December, Clinton said he sided with the Gregorian calendar.

Now They're A Threat

President Clinton has voiced concern over the growing Chinese missile threat to Taiwan, including construction of two short-range bases near the island. He called the buildup of tension on both sides "unnecessary and counterproductive."

No, Mr. President, it's far worse than that. The Chinese missile threat is an ominous threat to world peace.

Clinton's mere acknowledgment of this, though minimized, reflects the fact he has no future campaign to worry about. If this were his first term, Clinton would be silent — while building a campaign with Chinese cash. ☒

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I Was There

by Yves-Michel Dumond

“So you want to see a battle?”

PART I

Editor's note: It's funny how lives converge. I had the privilege of being an SF medic at Loc Ninh (A-331), during 1968-69. Yves-Michel ("Mick") Dumond, this article's author, and SF Major Mark Smith (Ret.), aka Zippo, a principal player in this piece, also spent time there — but in situations infinitely more harrowing than mine. I was lucky. I departed my A-camp via FAC en route to my DEROS. Mick and Mark departed in a bloody and desperate E & E, and were soon captured by the invading NVA. In late 1999, both men returned to Loc Ninh — where they found that old animosities die hard. — Tom Reisinger

“SAIGON (UPI) — We heard the North Vietnamese soldiers making their way down the underground tunnel that led to our bunker. We scrambled out through the sand-bagged embrasures and came face to face with an 18-year-old North Vietnamese soldier training his AK-47 on us. Our hands went up. My camera was still in my right hand and I started snapping pictures one-handed. They would have been rare pictures — two Americans with their hands up. But the first thing my captors did was to take away all my cameras and film.”

—Yves-Michel Dumond

Loc Ninh, Republic of South Vietnam
7 April 1972

His name is “Mick” Dumond and he had been a world-class skier for France. Mick was one of that special breed of war correspondent — a true adventurer. He did not care to hang out at the Caravelle Hotel and get his stories from the “five o'clock follies” at MACV. He had a sense of justice coupled with his desire for adventure. You couldn't bullshit Mick and he didn't try to b.s. you. His job and mine were different, but he was a friend. We did the bars of Cholon and Tu Do Street together — and we did war together. ...

— Maj. Mark Smith, USA (Ret.)

3-4 April 1972: At 0600, just when the curfew ended, I readied myself to leave my flat in Saigon. I drove my convertible through Saigon's outskirts on my way to Lai Khe, ARVN 5th Division headquarters.

I went to the O-Club to meet “Zippo,” my old friend, American Captain Mark Smith. He knew my desire to go to Loc Ninh where the ARVN 9th Regiment was based. Trouble was expected, likely major trouble. My request for authorization to travel to Loc Ninh was denied by Captain Kuy — but Zippo was optimistic.

“Don't worry, ‘Frenchie,’ you'll go with me. I'm going to ask Colonel Schott, but it'll be OK.”

The road between Lai Khe and Loc Ninh was dangerous and en route we met a French

plantation owner who warned that “There is a big concentration of VC around Loc Ninh. You should not go there, guys.” But we drove on.

Colonel Schott, chief U.S. advisor to the 9th, was there to welcome us. Colonel Vinh, CO of the 9th Regiment, was there too but was incensed that I had arrived and ordered that I depart at once. Major

Ed Carlson, another American advisor, was to have his going-away blast that night and would be out of there in the morning for a reunion with his wife in Bangkok. Sergeant Lull, another American, was half-way through his Vietnam tour.

I didn't want to leave. My job as a journalist was to face danger. If Loc Ninh were to come under attack, so be it.

Thirty-five T-54 tanks from the 203rd NVA Tank Regiment were spotted near Alpha Base, just north of Loc Ninh and elements of the 5th VC Division and 9th NVA Division were filtering into the AO.

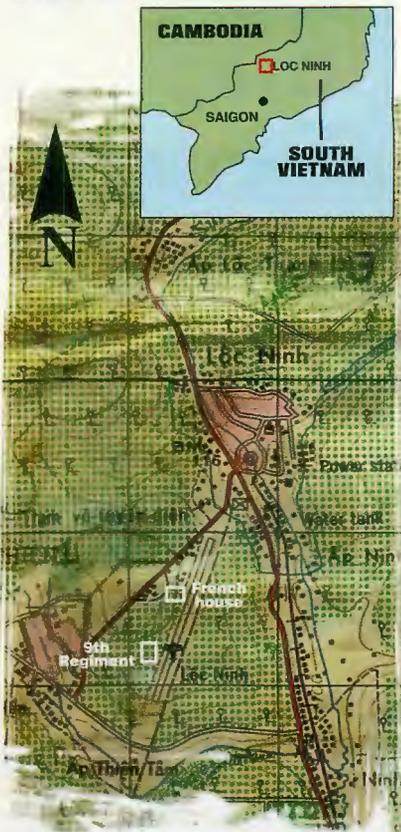
Something big and ominous was in the wind.

That night cognac was poured and Carlson's party went well and broke up about midnight. Carlson's mind was already in Thailand,



VC troop inside the wire at Loc Ninh, the camp's 105 now in enemy hands.

Detail map showing Loc Ninh in proximity to Saigon and Cambodia.



and Zippo was in great shape, very upbeat. Colonel Vinh still glared at me. Defense plans had been formulated so all we could do was wait and see how the enemy's hand would play out.

Before retiring, I went outside for some fresh air. In the soft moonlight, I could see the rubber trees. The night, for now, was still.

5 April 1972, 0530: "VC shoot! VC shoot!" The shocks of explosions rocked our small base — and Major Carlson wore a look of worry and frustration. Red dust shot through an air vent as a 122mm rocket slammed in very near to our position.

"Frenchie, you're gonna have a great scoop!" crowed Zippo, who then was off to the command bunker and on the radio giving non-stop sitreps to General Hollingsworth, chief U.S. advisor in III Corps, and requesting immediate air support. Only 100 troops were with us to defend the base, but recon patrols had been recalled and were dashing to make it inside our perimeter. Even if they arrived, however, we were badly outnumbered — by about 200 to 1.

After joining Zippo, Lull, Col. Vinh, Carlson and Schott in the command bunker, I bolted outside to shoot some quick photos and then sprinted back in. The mortars and rockets were raining down on us in non-stop torrents. I dashed out again, this time to our firebase where the 105- and 155mm howitzers were

Continued on page 73



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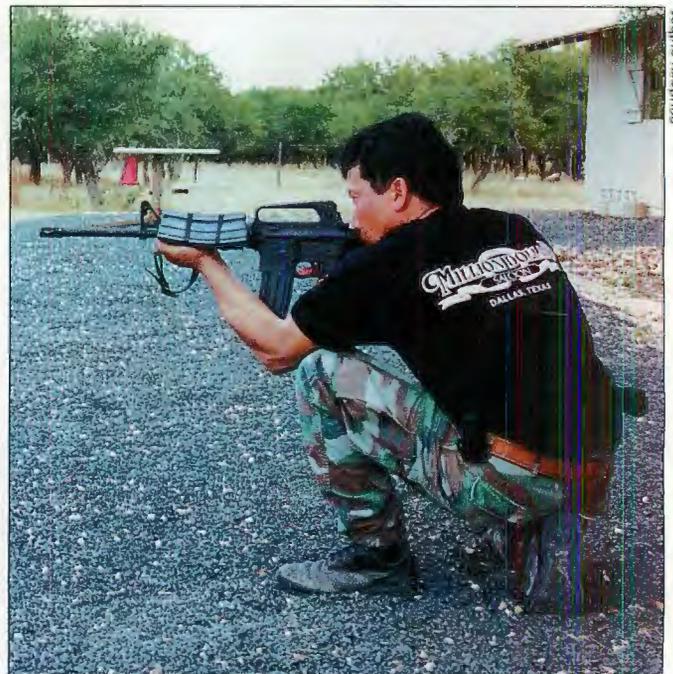
On Your Knees

When discussing marksmanship and tactics, most people consider position firing a rifle “thing.” In reality, using any weapon in modified positions can offer a more stable platform while taking advantage of available cover in potential hostile environments. If we specifically address rifles, I consider basic rifle firing positions to be off-hand, kneeling and prone.

Kneeling, being one of these three basic positions offers a wide degree of latitude in range or tactical applications. There are three variations of kneeling, each with a positive slant on stabilizing the operator firing platform to a certain degree, while offering a reduced target to opponents. In order of stability, braced kneeling would come first.

Braced kneeling is the premeditated version of the kneeling positions and can be very stable. Because of contact points between knees and elbows it requires some setup time. Braced kneeling is acquired by placing the opposite foot forward and slightly across the line of march. The body is then lowered with the bent right knee directed to the right at about a 90-degree angle. The opposite foot is placed under the rifle so that the left hand, forearm, elbow, knee, lower leg and foot are aligned under the rifle. This alignment forms a line of bone support and structure under the forearm of the rifle. If the bent elbow bone and the bent knee cap are in contact it can cause a “movement” problem. The movement is cured by placing the elbow slightly forward of the knee so that the small meaty pad on the backside of your arm and above the elbow can serve as a pad between the two bones. The right or strong elbow should be kept up with the elbow parallel to the ground to keep a proper rifle butt to shoulder or “pocket” contact. The right or strong foot can be placed under the right buttock with the toes of the right foot curled under. The back of the right heel and the right buttock should be touching.

On occasion people will allow the right cheek of their buttock to



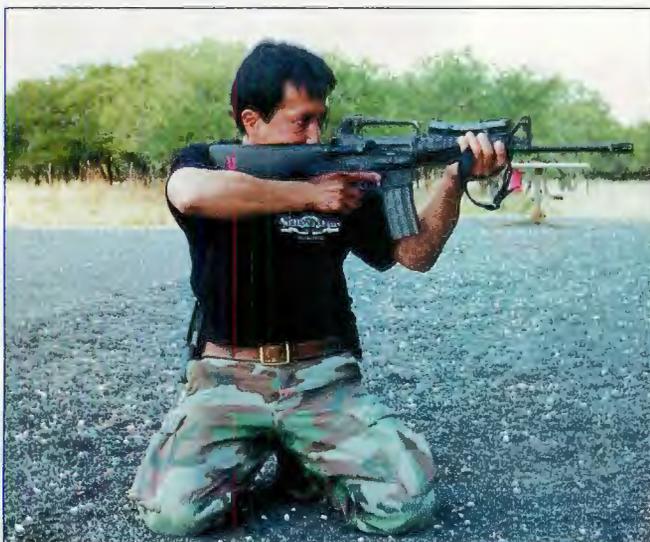
courtesy author

Braced kneeling showing proper knee/elbow and strong-side foot placement. Strong arm is parallel to the ground creating a proper pocket in the shoulder. (left) California, or double-kneeling, actually allows for four points of contact: both knees and both feet.

slide off the heel or go inside the leg, this can hyperextend the knee, and I recommend against it. With the toe curled under, the operator can move or push off the toes and foot to recover to a standing position. Keep the opposite elbow and knee under the rifle and the strong elbow up to form a pocket for the rifle butt. The strong hand should pull rearward on the rifle to keep a rearward steady pressure to assist the rifle butt in staying in the pocket. As a side note, be careful not to close the fingers of the support hand on the forearm and cause unneeded pressure or “preignition push” on the front of the rifle.

Speed, or quick, kneeling is a rapid assumption position that can be used as a counter to short range or unexpected attacks. It is also helpful in lowering a target profile to opponents by using available cover or dynamically changing the angle of the operator shot by kneeling and placing shots in the upper half, or higher, of the inbound threat. The dynamic angle change could be helpful in engaging threats where potential horizontal plane backstops were questionable.

Speed-kneeling assumption is acquired by simply moving from standing to kneeling, stepping forward with the opposite foot and dropping down on the strong knee. The upper body is straight as well as the upper right leg which is kept in a correct vertical plane from the shoulder to the knee. At the knee the strong leg is the parallel to the ground. As with the other positions keeping the strong



courtesy author

elbow parallel to the ground is helpful in keeping the butt of the rifle and shoulder pocket in correct contact.

The opposite foot is kept flat on the ground and there is no contact between the opposite knee and opposite elbow. Remember to keep the opposite elbow under the forearm of the rifle, and not to apply too much opposite hand pressure to the forearm causing negative "push."

Double-kneeling is the third type of kneeling offering a great range of motion. A point of double kneeling missed by most is that there is in fact four contact points, both knees and the two feet. This can, if applied properly, be the basis for a very stable platform. This range of motion is very helpful in rolling out from protective cover or concealment either from right to left or in a muzzle up-and-down range of motion. As in the other kneeling positions the lower profile reduces operator exposure to potential incoming fire.

Position assumption is acquired by simply dropping down on both knees behind whatever protection is available. There is no contact between the knees and elbows. In firing down from an elevated platform the double-kneeling greatly reduces operator upper body exposure to incoming gunfire, especially compared to standing, for example. In firing upward towards elevated threats the operator can simply roll back on the heels of their feet and take advantage of any or all protective cover and rests available. Rolling out from behind cover is strong suit of double-kneeling as it is stable, reduces operator body signature and can keep the head of the operator below cover as compared to shooting over any available protection.

It is important to note that there is direct relationship between the height of operators' heads from the ground and the size of the groups that they fire down-range. The higher the head the larger the group. The lower the head the smaller the group. This makes sense because the lower profile the more stable the firing platform. Since it is a good idea to lower your profile in an environment where high-velocity projectiles are buzzing around anyway, it makes good sense to lower the profile and get a more stable platform to return fire.

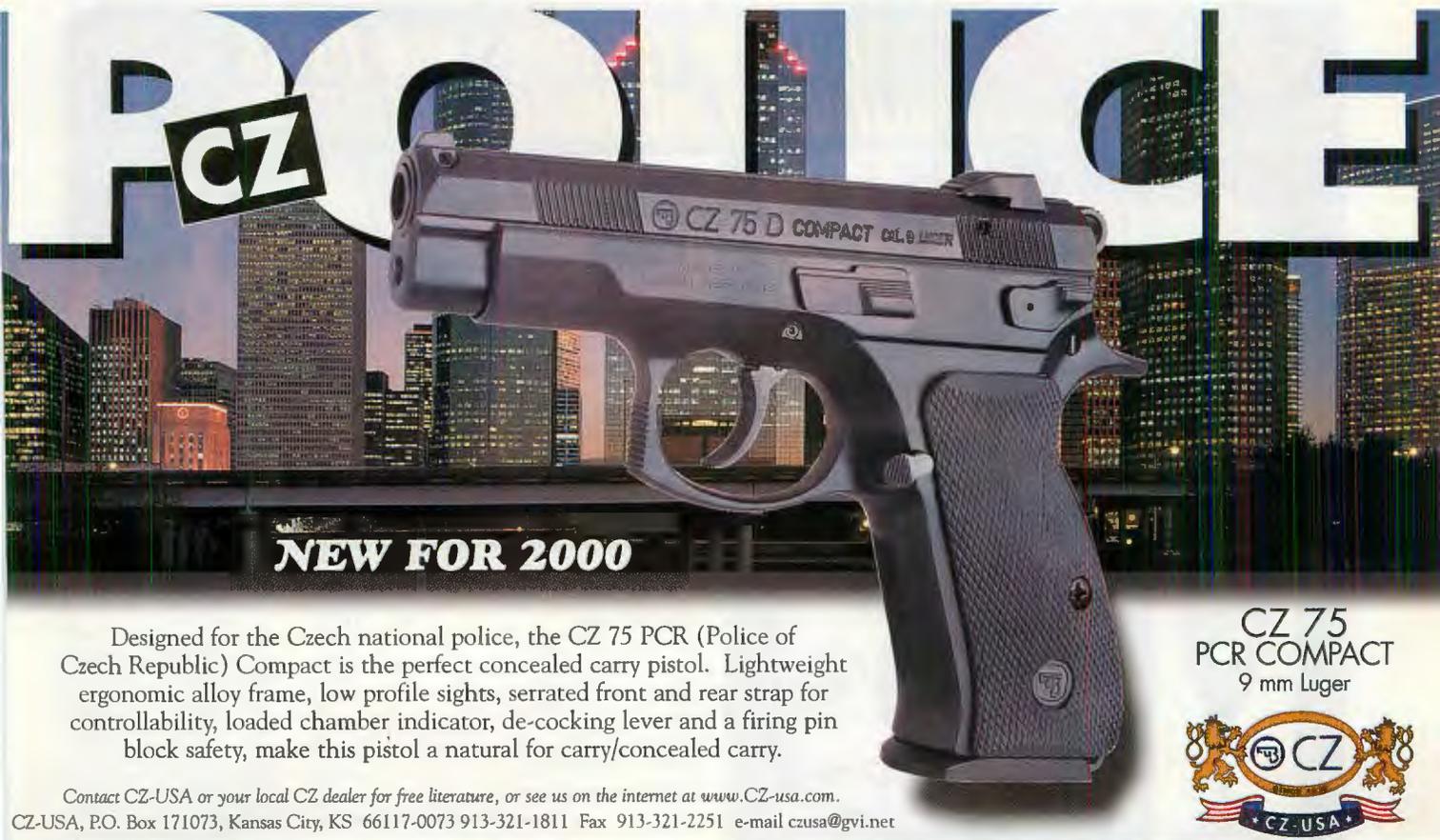
As in all rifle articles I write, I submit that a major concern of mine from an instructional standpoint is that most lay persons do not grasp the relationship of the height of their sights to the true line of bore. I mention lay persons but, even in my exposure to "trained" personnel, they are very inclined to forget about this sight/muzzle relationship. We very strongly stress this relationship here at Thunder Ranch, yet, we continually have a significant problem in this regard. As an example, we just completed a rifle course in which even after specific instruction the students fired 14 holes through the representative cover barricades/rests/supports. Our range commands pivot on "Clear the muzzle, clear the sight."

In another area, we stress the relationship of the line of sight to the exposure required to properly deploy the sights for marksmanship purposes. I am not the brightest guy in the world but, if you compare the line of sight to the line of bore off-set measurement of the M14 rifle to the current M4/M16 rifle there is reasonable difference. Who cares you say? Well, if the purpose of shooting is to hit, and to hit the operator is required to align the sights, and since the head is a relatively important body organ on most of us, the extra 2 to 2½ inches caused by the difference could contribute to critical exposure to incoming rounds. Now, if we go to the current trend of adding optics on top of the existing sight plane, maybe we shouldn't go there. Are we having fun now?

In a Crown-published book on the Vietnam War circa 1979, with a forward by General William C. Westmoreland, there are charts showing that 53% of all injuries, fatal and non-fatal, during the Vietnam War occurred in the areas of the head and neck. The book states that these wounds were attributed to the fact that the troops engaged in violent activities were reluctant to wear helmets.

I wonder if the high line of sights of our weapons systems contributed to any of those deaths?

Use of the kneeling positions to lower operator profiles, understanding the sight line/bore line, as well as continued practice in the proper use of cover and concealment may be helpful in getting the job done with the minimum of injuries to our side. ☒



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Jump With Krott

I was wondering if you had any information on a business called "Military Parachuting Tours" located in New York state. It is mentioned in Fielding's *The World's Most Dangerous Places* and it mentions that the owner, Rob Krott, is a contributor to *SOF*. The book only lists a P.O. Box

and I was wondering if you knew of a website or had a phone number where I could get more information on their services. Thank you for any help you can give me.

MrZ101@aol.com
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Krott has had jump teams in such places as the Baltic States, Holland, South Africa and was on a jump in Cuba, to name a few. The best point of contact is P.O. Box 1573, Olean, NY 14760, or via e-mail to: para6@hotmail.com .

Back To Waco

Recently the *Washington Post* had an editorial entitled "Back to Waco." It discussed that terrible tragedy and wrote that the newly admitted evidence warranted

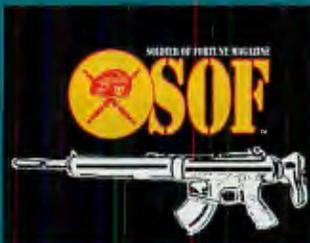
another investigation. However, *Soldier Of Fortune* does not have to go back to Waco, because it never left. In spite of the resistance and even negative name-calling that you encountered, you persisted with your own investigation. You kept the issue current in the minds of your readers, and kept searching for the truth. Now that your doubts and questions have been vindicated, those in the media who cast aspersions owe you an apology. However, don't expect one because that would be admitting that they were derelict in their responsibility to ferret out and report the truth to the American public. The American public owes you its thanks, and you certainly have mine. Keep up the good work.

Dr. M. Richard Sussman
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

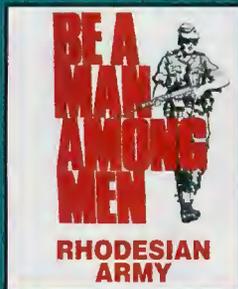
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Dropped Type



In the January 2000 issue on page 47, the rifle in the middle is identified as a Portuguese-made G3 assault rifle in 7.62x51 NATO. It looks like a German 98k in 8mm though. Am I right? Otherwise excellent articles

once again. I have been a subscriber for about 6 years now and enjoy every issue with its unbiased news coverage. From front to back this mag is worth the few shekels it costs.

Sincerely,
Kenneth C. Bloom
Springrun, Pennsylvania

Good catch, Ken. You're right, it's a 98 Mauser in Kar98k configuration — although the stock suggests it is more than likely a Spanish-made weapon, large quantities of which hit the surplus market a few years back. What happened was the photo caption for the shot on the lower left got repeated — in the old days this commonly happened when somebody dropped a stick of lead type and it got put back together wrong, so it's usually called dropped type.

“... Helluva Ride ...”

Congratulations on 25 years! You have remained on the front lines with cold rations, no sleep, pen and paper in hand, shooting the scenes all across the world while the “hardcore foreign correspondents” were fast asleep at the plush four-star, with a paid guard at the door. You went where “no correspondent has gone before” and brought us the truthful coverage on dictatorships, firefights, insurgencies, coups, and internecine warfare around the globe. You risked your lives, absence of family (your wife and kids) and possibly better pay by logging it out in the swamps and streams of Southeast Asia, the barren sandy wastes of the Middle East and the still-burning embers of Waco. You weathered judicial entanglements from an establishment that is both anti-freedom and sincerely pro-Marxist as well as court judgments, filed simply to close you down. And yet, you still remained.

You did what no other (news) organization has ever done before (or since). You brought us the truth. And in doing so, some of your correspondence have paid the ultimate price. I never knew the men who died working for SOF, but I know what they did was vitally important to not only the readership, but more important to the nation or insurgents they were covering.

You have done so much in the past 25

years to give us the truth, that it feels wrong to just say “thanks.”

We salute you for the job you have done. It may have been “One Helluva Ride” for you, but it was one helluva job holding on!

Sincerely,
Michael W. Stewart

Nifty Fifties



I read the article about the Robar RC50 in your October 1999 issue with considerable interest. Back in 1954, when I was a youngster, I went with my father to some Army base whose name escapes me now, but while we

were there I met Capt. William Brophy, who had made a .50 caliber sniper's rifle for the recently ended Korean war and had used it over there. He did this by taking the stock, action, and pistol grip of a Soviet bolt-action, anti-tank rifle and attaching a .50 machine gun barrel to it. He also had a bipod on the barrel plus an adjustable monopod near the breech to change elevation. He had fitted it with a 20-power Unertl target scope.

I also remember the butt of the weapon was heavily wrapped with black electrician's tape, for reasons that became apparent to us as soon as he fired it. It let off a thundering

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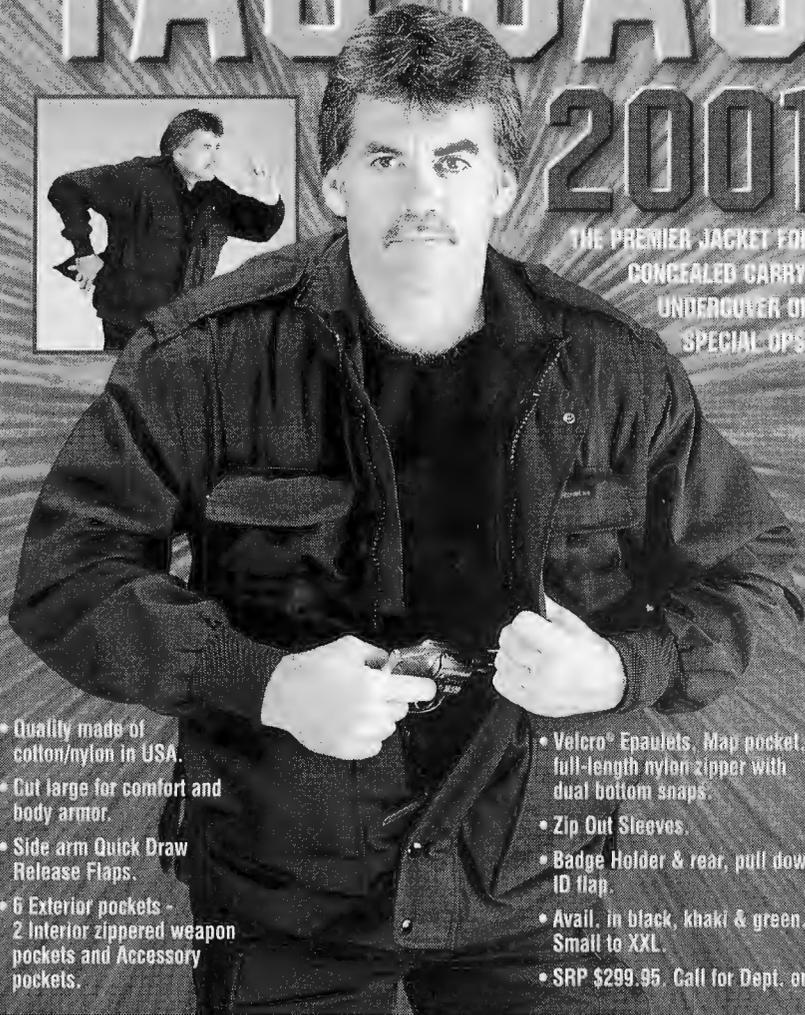
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— Soldier of Fortune Adventure
Quartermaster, December, 1999

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roar and raised a cloud of dust in front of his firing position, and the recoil skidded him back, and Capt. Brophy was a big, powerful man. He told us later he never felt the kick on his shoulder, but his head felt like Rocky Marciano had landed a solid punch on it. He said he fired 48 shots from that thing in one day and didn't feel right for a week.

This, plus the fact that the weapon simply wasn't all that accurate, was one of several reasons it was not adopted by the Army. But there is no doubt that it did good work in Capt. Brophy's hands. He told us that he used incendiary ammunition, which produced a bright flash on impact, to sight his weapon, firing well to one side so as not to alarm his target. When his scope was zeroed to his satisfaction, he put the crosshairs on the enemy and fired "for record." He killed Chinese and North Korean soldiers at ranges out to 1,400 yards, which is just over three-quarters of a mile.

D.W. Reiley
New Orleans, Louisiana

The Soviet PTRD rifle Brophy used was particularly suited to such field adaptations, as the barrel and breech each screwed into a receiver ring, requiring a Browning .50 barrel only to be properly threaded and then headspaced. The bad news was, the Dragunov was probably the lightest rifle of the type ever made, which made it a killer to shoot. As a machine-gun round, the .50 Browning was not loaded for accuracy, but the round is capable of some astonishing accuracy when loaded for that purpose. Those interested in .50 shooting should liase with the 1,700 members of the .50 Caliber Shooters Association: <http://www.fcса.org>, or contact their secretary by snail mail: Terri Burt, Box 5109, Riverside, CA 92517; phone: 909-653-5447. Also, a definitive and technically excellent volume on .50 shooting from the military and police viewpoints is soon to be published by Paladin Press, and they already have one in print on building your own .50 rifle (Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306).

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Good Question

I was at the post office the other day and I saw a display for the Selective Service. If a male did not register he could not get a government loan or a government job. Why then is this draft dodger president?

Tony Ruocco
via e-mail

There were draft dodgers and draft evaders during the Vietnam war. Evaders didn't register, or if drafted ran off to Canada; dodgers, like the present commander in chief, registered and then used legal chicanery and/or outright deceit — for which he still shows an extraordinary talent — to avoid getting called up. He's in the White House sim-

ply because the body politic elected him. Twice. Doesn't say much for us, does it?

Pro-Police? Damn Straight!

I can respect *SOF*, however when you say you are pro-police, that gets to me. Police are the ones who are going to enforce the New World Order. You're a free enterprise entrepreneur! You pay taxes.

I can see the need for taxes to run the country, but 90% of the money and 90% of government workers are a waste. Once the country employs over 50% of its populace into civil service, we become a communist nation. None of those 50% would ever elect someone to downsize government, it would mean their jobs.

Therefore, the right to bear arms must be upheld at any cost! And I can respect a man like the real life "Croc Dundee." When you take away the means for people to defend themselves, that's when government comes down on people hard! More taxes and all.

(no name), via e-mail

We think you have observed some real phenomena, but have made some wrong observations. Sure there are bad cops, and there are good cops who sometimes have to enforce bad laws — but that doesn't make all cops or all laws bad. And sure there are lazy civil servants and crooked politicians. But when you are blessed with a system as good as ours, when it's broke you fix it — you don't throw it away. The first to be disarmed by the Russians in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, when attempts were made during the 50s and 60s to throw off the communist yoke were police. Why? Because the police would have taken sides with the people, and the police were armed. So at least we agree on one thing: An armed people have a better chance of staying a free people.

Eye On Military Future

I wish to join the military, however when I went to the recruiter's office I was denied the opportunity because I had laser eye surgery to correct -7 vision in both eyes. Something to do with night vision impairment, which I have never experienced.

Therefore, I would like to know if there is anything that I can do to have the military experience? I am in excellent health, athletic and physically strong. I have a BS degree and an EMT-B certification (plus other credentials that may not bear relevance to what I want to do).

Michael Farr

Physical standards between services may not be the same. You did not say which recruiter you went to, but I'd try them all before I gave it up. And, there may be openings in friendly foreign armies that could use you (call the French embassy in Canada and ask for information on the Foreign Legion, for example). ✕

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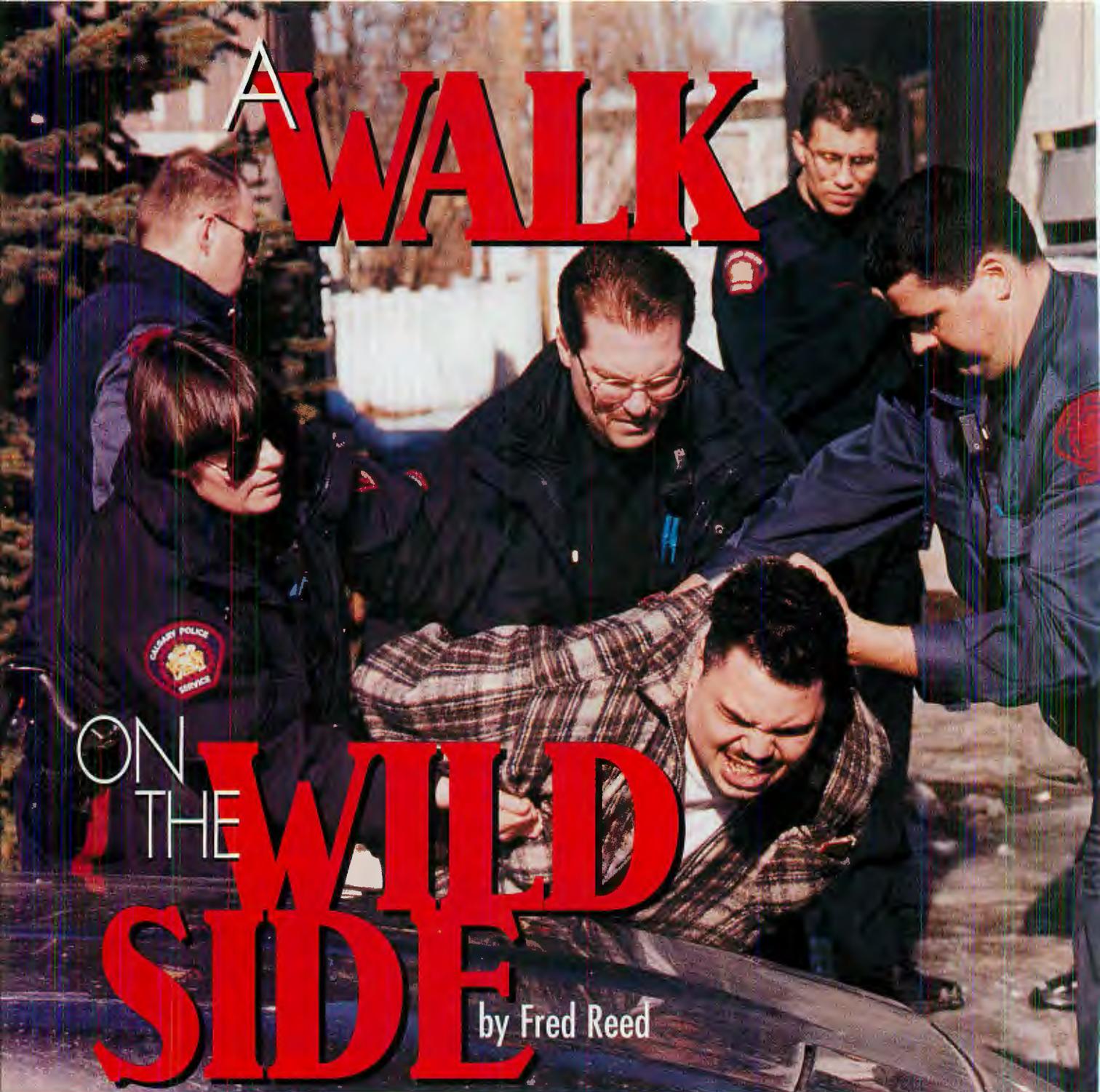
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A WALK

ON THE WILD SIDE

by Fred Reed

Bernie Steenbergen

Cops aren't like other people. Not after they've been on the job for awhile. They see things you can't see and stay the same. They see these things, the grotesque and sordid and depressing, the bloody and the just plain God-awfully hopeless, all the time. It's their job. To understand who they are, and how they got that way, and maybe even to have a little sympathy for them, you have to spend a lot of time in a squad car, or talk to someone who has.

Let me tell you about it.

A Rotting Corpse

On a hot night in August, when I was riding with the cops of Arlington, Va., just

Patrolling With Cops On The Beat

outside of Washington, D.C., we found a guy in the bushes near National Airport. A couple of weeks earlier he had lost his girlfriend and put a bullet through his head. August, in the swampy heat along the Potomac, is a bad time for corpses. The stench was a rancid sick reek that hit you like a rubber hose. The guy's face was black and goey and sliding off his skull. His spine was a white rod visible through his chest. The whole mess was crawling with maggots. I was standing with a half-dozen

cops in the flickering red-blue of barlights. Some of them were breathing through their mouths to avoid gagging.

Cops have a warped sense of humor. One of them asked brightly, "Gee, think CPR would help?" Months later I ran into one of them during a gang stop on I-95. He told me, "The only way I kept from puking was, no way was I going to do it in front of a reporter." That's the world cops live in.

Wonder why the police get hard and cynical, why they burn out? Why they

have problems with blood pressure and heart attacks? Day in and day out, cops see the world at its worst. A woman doesn't call 911 to say that her husband hasn't had a drink in five years, the kids aced their SATs, and she passed her mammogram. She calls when she and hubby are glaring at each other in hatred while the kids cry in the corner because mommy and daddy are fighting. Cops see scum. They see dopers lying in the streets with needles still in their arms. They see four-year-old kids trying desperately to shepherd their younger brothers to the corner store, because that's where food is, and mommy is zoned-out on drugs. They see even good people at their worst: the banker, stopped for speeding, huffing and puffing about how important he is; the woman hiking her skirt and flirting; others just lying, lying, lying. Cops never go where good things are happening. Don't lie to a cop. He's an expert on lying. You aren't. And he's heard it all, many, many times.

Sure, things happen sometimes that are good for a laugh. Once I rode with the Rockford Police, an hour from Chicago, during a crack house raid. It was a two-story wooden house with the dealers on the second floor. We drove up fast in a plain white jump-out van. The ram team knocked the door open in nothing flat and we poured in. On the second floor there was a room with the door chained shut and the doorknob removed. The idea was that a customer shoved a \$20 through the hole, and the rock came back the same way. This kept other gangs from robbing the dealers.

Stupid Criminals

We got in, lined the bad guys up against the wall, and realized ... nobody saw us come in. The customers thought the store was still open. A cop would look cautiously out the window and say, "OK, here comes one." Steps would come up the stairs and a twenty would come through the doorknob hole. A cop would take it, open the door, grab the guy, and say, "Hi! Welcome to the party!" So help me, we got 12 of them before someone figured out what was going on.

We answered a check-on-welfare call once and found an old woman unconscious on the floor in the kitchen. Her husband was wandering around, literally bouncing off walls, with a dazed shuffle-bump-startle-turn-and-shuffle-till-he-hit-another-wall routine. Maybe it was dementia, maybe Alzheimer's. Maybe he knew he was losing his wife of 50 years, and just turned his head off.

Fire-department med-techs arrived. The woman's blood pressure was 310/180. You could rupture a truck tire with that. They carried her out. "Pressure's rising," said the paramedic in the ambulance. "DOA in progress," I call these cases. She wasn't going to last. The radio said a gang fight was developing, so off we went. It wasn't unusual. It's what cops do.

You've heard of police brutality. It isn't a good thing. It's usually grounds for



Bernie Steenberg

Cops see good people at their worst: the banker, stopped for speeding, huffing and puffing about how important he is; the woman hiking her skirt and flirting; others just lying, lying, lying. (below) Police brutality is usually grounds for firing, and ought to be. But it isn't easy dealing with scum who do things they ought to be shot for, and get away with it time and again.



Raymond J. Malace

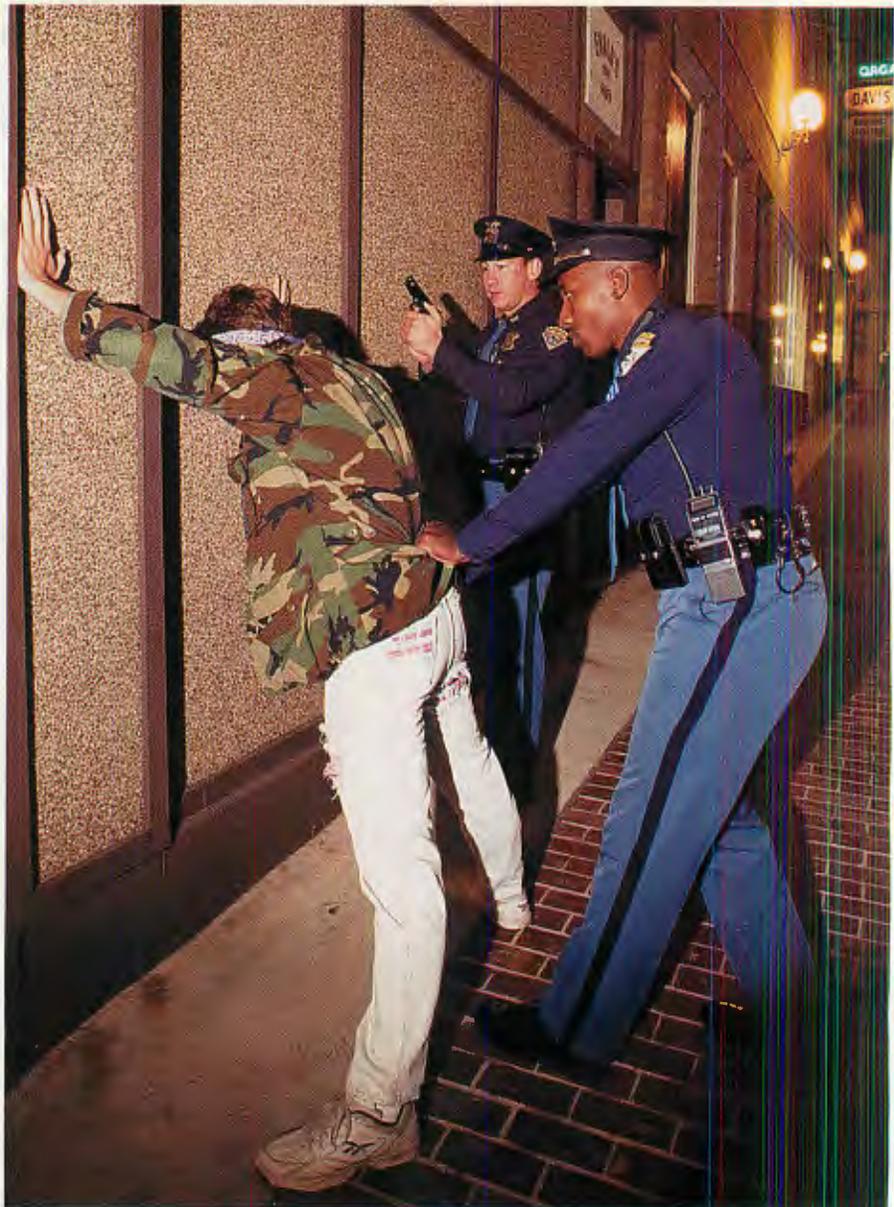
firing, and ought to be. But it isn't easy dealing with scum who do things they ought to be shot for, and get away with it time and again.

We went one night to a hospital in D.C. to interview a rape victim, age 15, because we needed a description. She was sobbing hysterically in an intake ward, half out of her mind. They were sedating her. The dirtball had really knocked her around, causing bad facial bruises and a split lip. Nice kid. Could have been your daughter, your sister, your mom, your girlfriend. Every man in the room wanted to find the guy and beat him until he didn't have an intact bone. Brutality has its appeal, believe me. Good cops turn off, and don't get emotionally involved. But they pay — with their arteries.

Cops see a lot of death. Most Americans are insulated from death. The people in the street trades — cops, shock-trauma surgeons, ambulance crews, fire departments, ER nurses — aren't insulated like most of us are. The death they see isn't pretty, movie-style death. It's the grandmother who stroked out in the bathtub three days ago, whose rotting corpse was quickly discovered by flies. It's the teenage Cambodian gang-banger, shot in the head, still breathing, with brain tissue swelling out of the hole. We found part of his brains sprayed across the asphalt, like strawberry chiffon. DOA in-progress. No point in trying to keep him alive, but they try.

You turn off. You have to. I remember a wreck at a brightly lit intersection in suburban Maryland. Some idiot had been speeding and flipped his pickup. The truck had gone airborne and landed on its top. The driver came out the windshield.

There were a dozen squad cars and several ambulances. The street was blocked off with police tape. The barlights on the squads flashed the red-blue. The med-techs, two guys and a gal, were working on what was left of the driver. DOA in-progress. Red mush was coming out of his mouth and they were trying to intubate him and pump his



Bernie Steenbergen

Any cop will tell you, "Thank God these guys are basically dumber than lampposts. If they were smart, we'd never catch them." (below) A lot of departments make the mistake of thinking that six part-time guys with SWAT jackets are a SWAT team. Not in this jurisdiction. The target was a drug dealer's house in the suburbs. These ops are planned like military operations.



Raymond J. Malace

chest at the same time. Waste of time. They knew it. You gotta try. It's one of the rules. Another med-tech, a woman, knew the cop I was with. She smiled and called to him. I remember the question: "Bob! How's your wife?" They chatted. Ten feet behind her the rest of her team were losing this guy. *Pump, pump, pump.* The woman in the group dived into a medical bag for something that wouldn't work either with the tight, controlled speed they get when everything is on the line. And we were laughing and telling stories. Self-preservation. Do the job, but don't get involved.

The Trouble With Kids

The kids are the worst. Old people are going to die anyway. Adults, well, they're all grown up. But the ones that really get to cops are the deliberately hurt kids. Lots of cops refuse to work in kid-abuse units because, they say, "I'm afraid I'd kill somebody."

A cop learns things he doesn't want to

know. He learns, for example, that if you splash boiling water on a three-year-old girl, you get pink swollen splotches. If you hold her hands under boiling water, you get puffy pink lines of demarcation between burned and unburned flesh. These are called "immersion cuffs."

It happens. Usually the mother does it. Men commit more crime, and the violent crime, but women do more of the child abuse. Their dirtball boyfriends do a lot of it, too.

Day in and day out, you see every kind of scum that ever walked on two legs. For example, the derelicts who urinate on the sidewalk in plain sight of children, or break into an unoccupied house and live there, using one room as a toilet. The child-molesters. Worse. The couple (a real example, right here in the nation's capital) who kept their small daughter tied up for months, causing rope-burn on unhealed rope-burns, tortured her, fed her so little that she was 39 pounds underweight, and then stuffed her in a closet, tied in a jacket with the hood turned around backward. She suffocated. Scum. I covered the trial. They didn't show the slightest remorse. They're a cop's world.

The Race Issue

Crime in cities is concentrated in the sprawling black regions and, nowadays, in Hispanic barrios. Race is the bedrock of law-enforcement. You can't say it, but every cop knows it. White neighborhoods are boring because nothing happens except "My cat's in a tree." The killers are almost always black, and so are the bodies. I remember a cop in the Georgetown area of Washington who said, "They say we're racists for watching these guys. If 99% of the armed robberies I've seen involved young black males, who am I supposed to watch? Asian females?"

You can blame this on whatever you like — blacks, whites, God, society, the family dog. But it's a fact. Bedford-Stuyvesant, Anacostia, South Chicago, South-Central LA, ghetto after ghetto, on and on. Some regions are a different country. The language is different, barely English. The United States is many nations. It's Kenya distributed through Europe. In eight hours in a squad car, you won't see a white face. Boarded-up buildings are everywhere in Washington. You see whole housing projects with plywood over the windows. By day, men sit on stoops, doing nothing. There is nothing for them to do. Clusters of guys appear on corners sometimes, just milling around. They are waiting for a drug drop. Lean young males in ghetto-bag clothes and what the cops call felony shoes — aka upscale Nikes — lounge on corners, gazing at police with blank eyes.

They are the dealers, the gang-bangers who rule the streets. The gangs vary. In LA it's the Crips and Bloods with their many subsets: the Rolling Eighties Crips, the Deuce-Tres Crips. In Chicago it's the Vice



Joel B. Pascauskas, II

Wonder why cops need big guns? Go to the locked room where they keep the weapons confiscated from criminals. You'll find bins of 9mms, the occasional Thompson with drum mag, all the Tech-9s in the world, a Remington 700 sniping rifle and a Chinese Type 56 AK.

Lords, Four Corner Hustlers, Black Gangster Disciples, El Rukyns. The latter are the old Blackstone Rangers, founded in 1963 as the Blackstone Raiders. In D.C. you get wannabe gangs, the P Street Crew, the Lower Southwest Crew. They're less organized, have less of the colors and tradition and *hooha* of the gangs in real cities, but they'll kill you in a heartbeat.

Gang Arsenals

Whites never see these places, don't realize how huge and unchanging they are. Go to the high-rise projects on South State Street in Chicago, for example, Robert Taylor Homes. They have their own schools and police stations built in. Go to the locked room where the cops keep confiscated weapons. You'll find bins of 9mms, the occasional Thompson with drum mag, all the Tech-9s in the world, a



Raymond J. Malace

Some citizens put their worst behavior on stage for all to see, such as these members of the Ku Klux Klan. Even those who spew hate for a living have rights, and cops often find themselves in the unpopular position of defending them from angry crowds. Both sides of a conflict generally agree on one thing: Cops are in the way.

Remington 700 sniping rifle, a Chinese Type 56 AK, things that you might recognize but I didn't. Where the hell did they get a Galil? And hunting crossbows, so help me. Quiet, and lethal. The cops go in force here — in ballistic vests — and aren't comfortable in the parking lots. Gang-bangers will take over one high-rise and use it to shoot across the intervening space at gangs in other buildings. A cop is an easy target. Why don't they kill cops? Fear. Kill a cop and bangers will be bouncing off walls and spitting teeth for months. The cops will hurt them. The Constitution is nice in theory, but the cities don't work that way. If a police department is coldly furious over the death of a brother officer, they get rough. Real rough.

Show-And-Tell

Funny things happen sometimes. In D.C., we got a call: drive-by. We got to the scene and found a black guy bleeding from the crotch. Yeah, the guy said, he didn't know who but somebody went by and fired. The cop thought it sounded fishy. It was. The guy had been carrying a Glock in his waistband and wanted to show it to someone. He pulled it out by the trigger, oops, and removed himself from the gene pool.

Any cop will tell you, "Thank God these guys are basically dumber than lampposts. If they were smart, we'd never catch them." You've heard of the war on drugs? There isn't one. Ask any cop. Ask DEA guys — not the flacks, but any street guy who trusts you. "Maybe there was a war," a buddy of mine from DEA says. "We lost it." He estimates that the cops get 5% of the drugs coming into the country. Savvy cops measure their success against drugs by the street price. If drugs are cheap, must be a lot of them coming in.

I've walked with a plainclothes cop in bad sections of Chicago. "Plainclothes" doesn't mean squat. The druggies recognize a new unmarked car about a day after it comes onto the street, and this guy was white. In those parts a white face is either a cop or a miracle, and the locals don't believe in miracles. The houses weren't bad. They almost never are. Down the street we could see a couple of "shorties" — kids — on bicycles. They stayed exactly two blocks ahead of us as we walked toward them. Drug lookouts. We must have gotten close to the dealing because one of them shot into an alley. He was warning his big brother. The other shorty kept an eye on us until everyone had dispersed. We couldn't see this, but that's what was happening. Then he rode off.

War On Cops

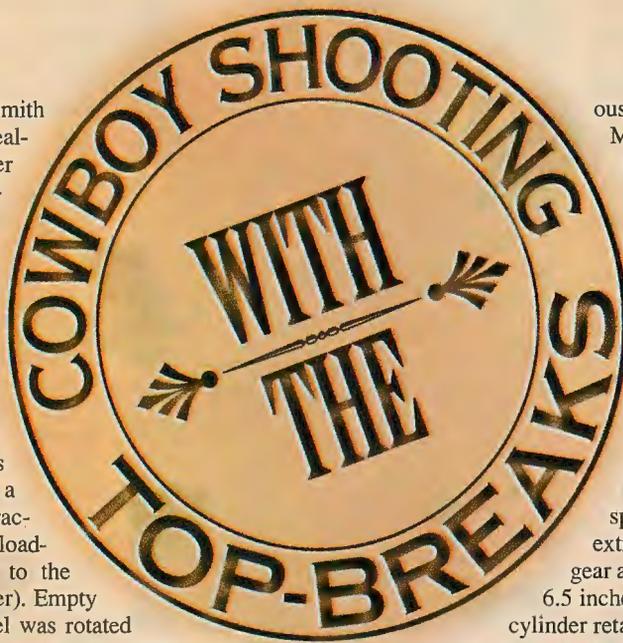
The kids got probably five bucks a day for being lookouts. Maybe more important, they got a kick out of helping the big kids against the cops. With this attitude, drugs

Continued on page 71

BY the late 1860s Horace Smith and Daniel B. Wesson realized their tip-up type revolver design, while imminently successful in small calibers such as .22 and .32 rimfire, was not substantial enough for large handgun calibers. The design finally selected was a top-break type, with the barrel hinged to the bottom of the frame and a locking latch on the frame's top strap, just in front of the hammer. The most salient feature of this design was, when combined with a rack-and-gear-operated star extractor, extremely fast loading and unloading (especially when compared to the Colt Single Action Army Revolver). Empty cases were extracted as the barrel was rotated downward. When fully down, the gear's spring catch moved back into the frame and the spring-loaded extractor snapped back to its original position, ready for loading.

The first Smith & Wesson revolver to use this principle was the Model 3 American First Model (all large-frame S&W top-break revolvers were designated as Model 3 types). A production series specimen of this revolver was sent to General Alexander Gorloff, the Russian military attaché to the United States, in 1871. In addition to a new cartridge, which abandoned the heel-type bullet, the Russians demanded a number of changes to the revolver's design. These included a larger trigger pin, larger cylinder retainer, limiting tooth in the extractor gear, steel front sight, firing pin bolster and a hammer that locked the barrel closed when it was in the down position. All of these revolvers contained Cyrillic barrel markings. This became the S&W Model 3 Russian First Model revolver.

With the barrel shortened to 7 inches, the grip portion of the frame re-designed, a finger rest added to trigger guard and numer-



SOF Rides The Range With Revived Russian Revolvers

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
PETER G. KOKALIS

ous other small modifications, the S&W Model 3 Russian Second Model came into being. The Russians referred to this revolver as the Infantry Model.

The final S&W Russian revolver — the Model 3 Russian Third Model (or New Model Russian) — was substantially different in design from the Second Model. It was manufactured until 1878. Ordered also by the Turkish and Japanese governments, the Russian Third Model became popular in the Old West and was carried such a notable as Pat Garrett. The frame was altered to accept a new spring-loaded extractor catch and the extractor system was redesigned and a new gear added. The barrel length was shortened to 6.5 inches and the front sight made integral. The cylinder retainer system was changed to permit easier removal of the cylinder. Patented on 19 January 1875, and sometimes called either the Cavalry Model or Model of 1874, this is the version chosen for reproduction by A. Uberti & Co. of Ponte Zanano (Brescia), Italy, and imported by Navy Arms Company (Dept. SOF, 689 Bergen Boulevard, Ridgefield, NJ 07657; phone: 201-945-2500; fax: 201-945-6859; website: www.navyarms.com).

Navy Arms Imports

Soldier Of Fortune recently obtained three different specimens of the top-break, single-action revolvers imported by Navy Arms, one of which was their New Model Russian Revolver, which is chambered for the original .44 Russian round. It's a handsome piece. Weighing 2 pounds 8 ounces, the overall length is 12 inches. The barrel latch, spur-type trigger guard, ejector pawl and hammer are attractively color case hardened. Classic color case hardening is a one step process using animal bone. The metal is heated to 800 to 900 degrees Centigrade by means of animal charcoal and then plunged into cold water. The rest of the revolver has a deep, lustrous, black oxide finish (salt bluing).

HISTORY OF THE .44 RUSSIAN CARTRIDGE

Principally as a consequence of the continuing growth of Cowboy Action Shooting competition, the .44 Russian cartridge is undergoing a modest renaissance of popularity. It's a fine handgun cartridge with a fascinating history.

At its inception, the Smith & Wesson Model 3 American First Model break-top revolver was chambered for the .44 Henry rimfire cartridge. At the behest of the U.S. Army Ordnance Board, the caliber was changed to centerfire. It was called the .44/100, or more commonly the .44 Smith & Wesson American. Although it was still manufactured up to 1939, only one other revolver, the .44 Merwin Hulbert, was ever chambered for it. Most of the bullets were solid lead, round nose and heel type (that portion of the

bullet projecting beyond the case is the same diameter as the outer diameter of the case).

The .44 Smith & Wesson Russian cartridge and the revolver for which it was designed were both a consequence of modifications to the .44 Smith & Wesson American cartridge and its revolver. In 1870, the Czar of Russia instructed Smith & Wesson to commence production of 200,000 revolvers similar to the "American" type, but with exterior changes and alterations in the bore and chamber specifications. As Russian ordnance personnel could see no advantage to it, the heel-type bullet was replaced with a projectile having the same diameter as the inside of the case. This required counter-boring the rear of the cylinder. The front of the chambers

remained approximately the same diameter as that of both the .44 Smith & Wesson American bullet and the grooves in the original barrel.

Bullet weight was increased to 246 grains. Velocity increased by 100 fps and the accuracy was greatly improved. Muzzle velocity was 770 fps. The new .44 Russian round soon left the .44 Smith & Wesson American cartridge far behind in popularity and it eventually became the one of the most dominant handgun cartridges of its time.

In 1893 the .44 Russian bullet became inside-lubricated. Following the suggestions of A. C. Gould, Editor of *Shooting & Fishing Magazine*, the Union Metallic Cartridge Company placed lubrication in the cannellures covered by the case wall.

The fixed sights are those of the original Model 3 Russian series, a half-moon, blade-type front sight blade and an open U-notch rear sight in the front of the barrel/cylinder latch. There is a military-style lanyard ring attached to the frame's butt. The grip panels are smooth, unchecked walnut. A line of Cyrillic lettering on the barrel's rib translates to "3rd Russian Ordnance (Model), Factory (of) A. Uberti, Italy." The suggested retail price is \$745.

I recently examined two specimens of the original New Model Russian revolver, including a rare factory cutaway, at the Tula Arms Museum in Russia. It appears that the Navy Arms import is generally a close copy of the original Model 3 Russian Third Model revolver with only a few exceptions. The cylinder is slightly longer than the original. To maximize cost-effectiveness in production, the barrel extension (which interfaces with the frame hinge) is that of the Navy Arms Schofield models. This has the added attribute that most holsters made for the 7-inch Schofield will also accommodate the New Model Russian revolver.

Equally fascinating are the revolvers in Navy Arms' Schofield series. This variant of the Smith & Wesson Model 3 series was designed by George W. Schofield, a major in the 10th Cavalry. While Major Schofield was favorably impressed with the S&W Model 3, he felt modifications were required to meet the needs of cavalry troops. To ease the opening of the revolver for reloading while on horseback, Schofield designed and patented a latch mechanism relocated onto the frame rather than the barrel. Pulling the latch rearward toward the hammer with only the thumb is all that is required to break open the revolver (remember, however, that the hammer must first be rotated to the half-cock position on both the Schofield and Russian



Chris Mayer

It was manufactured with a wide range of bullet types, ranging from the incredibly odd Devillers Mock Duel round featuring an 11-grain round wax ball, through solid lead bullets weighing 110, 115, 118, 125, 145, 166, 200, 231, 235, 246, 250, and 255 grains in round nose, wad cutter and round ball types. There were gallery loads, mid-range loads, heavy full metal jacket projectiles, blanks and even shot loads in wooden cases.

The .44 Russian cartridge was adapted to the Colt New Service and New Service Target Revolvers, the Colt Single Action Army and Bisley Model Revolvers, Remington Model 44 Double Action Revolver, the Belgian Warnant Revolver, and the Smith & Wesson Model 44 Double Action, Military Model 1908, "New Century," and No. 3 Russian Model Single Action Revolvers. All of these are long gone now and with them went the venerable

.44 Russian cartridge.

Navy Arms introduction of the New Model Russian Revolver and several reproductions of Colt cartridge conversions have revived interest in the .44 Russian. Equally important is the availability once again of factory .44 Russian ammunition.

Black Hills Ammunition (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone: 605-348-5150 — call for the location of your nearest dealer, if there is none, Black Hills will ship to you at retail) has once again become the clearly recognized leader in this highly specialized arena. Their .44 Russian load features a 210-grain Flat Point Lead (FPL) bullet that leaves the muzzle of a Navy Arms New Model Russian Revolver's 6.5-inch barrel at approximately 650 fps. That's both fast enough for shooting steel plates and splitting some heads open, should that be required as well. The

.44 Russian bullet diameter is 0.429-inch and it can be fired in any revolver chambered for either the .44 Special or .44 Magnum rounds.

Black Hills also offers cowboy action shooting ammunition in .45 Colt (250-grain RNFP), .45 Schofield, .44 Special, .44 Colt (for the Richards cartridge conversion of the Colt Model 1860 Army revolver), .44-40, .38 Long Colt (for the Richards/Mason cartridge conversion of the Colt Model 1851 Navy revolver), .38-40, .38 Special, .357 Magnum and .32-20. All of Black Hills cowboy ammunition is packaged in authentic-looking, pre-1900-type boxes. Most of the brass is manufactured for Black Hills by Starline, and Double A, Ltd. provides bullets for several of the calibers. The quality is superb and I use Black Hills ammunition exclusively in cowboy action shooting competition. — P.G.K.



COWBOY GUNLEATHER

In our passionate fantasy to recreate the Old West, the one item of equipment that I would with certainty leave back in the 19th century would be the holsters of that era, which were all too often crude and insubstantial. By the early 20th century, Western gun leather really came into its own with leathermakers such as Herman H. Heiser leading the way. Subsequently, The George Lawrence Co., Edward H. Bohlin, S.D. Myres and Arvo Ojala produced excellent gunleather for many of Hollywood's most famous cowboy stars.

Currently, there are a number of leather-makers turning out truly excellent cowboy gunleather. About a decade ago during the war in El Salvador I started using custom holsters made by Sam Andrews (Andrews Custom Leather, Dept. SOF, 22610 NW 102nd Avenue, Alachua, FL 32615; phone: 904-462-0576 — send \$2 for catalog).

Sam has been crafting custom combat holsters for 21 years. Located in north central Florida, near Gainesville, and just one hour south of the Georgia border, his customer base now circles the globe, with a significant percentage of law enforcement personnel and now an even larger clientele of civilians, as a consequence of the spate of concealed carry legislation passed throughout the United States in the last several years.

Sam uses only number one grades of oak-tanned cowhide. All of his holsters are hand-molded and stitched with heavy bonded nylon thread, which is sealed to protect against the environment. Many of his holsters and belts feature a suede lining.

Not so well-known is the fact that Andrews hand crafts an extensive line of cowboy leather goods well-suited for cowboy action shooting competition. The holster and belt combinations include the Gunfighter, Great Plains, Vaquero, Arizona and Big Jake rigs. Sam also makes a competition fast-draw rig and a belt and two-holster cowboy action setup. Most of the holsters are of the banded type and plain oval, initial, buckle or concho bands are available. For those who prefer shoulder holsters, the Wes Hardin faithfully reproduces a type commonly used in the Old West, although it is far more substantial. Shoulder rigs and crossdraw holster were far more prevalent in those days than they are now. Andrews' belts are available in the so-called ranger style or with a taper end. He also makes deluxe rifle scabbards, saddlebags, cartridge bandoleers and a fanning palm for slapshooters.

I use the Big Jake rig for cowboy action shooting competition. The strong side holster (in which I carry a Schofield Cavalry Model revolver with a 7-inch barrel) is designed for carry just behind the hip. This is complemented by a Big Jake crossdraw holster with a medium cant (severe muzzle forward cants do not qualify for cowboy action shooting combination) in which I tote a Schofield Wells Fargo Model with a 5-inch barrel. I prefer initialized holster bands and the belt and both holsters are suedelined with fancy stitching and a border stamp. The Big Jake rig costs \$180 for a 7-inch barreled revolver. Add \$95 for a Big Jake crossdraw holster to accommodate a revolver with a 5-inch tube.

— P.G.K.

(left) Navy Arms import is generally a close copy of the original Model 3 Russian Third Model revolver with only a few exceptions. Shown with an original Russian military-issue Cossack's sword. (above) To ease the opening of the revolver for reloading while on horseback, Schofield designed and patented a latch mechanism relocated onto the frame rather than the barrel (top). Note that the latch mechanism on S&W Model 3 revolvers was located on the barrel (bottom).

variant before the latch can be opened).

Schofield also redesigned the extractor system and completely removed the rack and gear system that had been used on all S&W previous top-break revolvers, replacing this with a cam mechanism. He also modified the cylinder retainer so to permit removal of the cylinder by merely rotating the front cylinder retainer screws one-half turn only. To improve target acquisition, the barrel rib was provided with a V-shaped full-length channel.

All .45s Are Not Equal

For all its improvements, the Schofield revolver was doomed by its cartridge. The Colt Single Action Army revolver was chambered for a cartridge (.45 Colt) with a longer case than that of the Schofield. It could, therefore, fire both rounds. The Schofield, however, could not accommodate the longer .45 Colt case. This placed two different rounds in the logistic pipeline and several times troops armed with Schofield revolvers received .45 Colt cartridges in a battlefield environment.

As a consequence, the S&W Model 3 Schofield revolver was abandoned and sold as government surplus in 1880. Some were used by National Guard units and others purchased by dealers, such as Schuyler, Hartley & Graham and Francis Bannerman. They each in turn sold a number to the Wells Fargo Express Company, with the barrels cut to 5 inches. The Schofield became a popular item in the Old West among cowboys, peace officers and a wide assortment of roughnecks and outlaws.

Wisely, the Navy Arms Schofield revolvers have lengthened frames and cylinders designed to accept both the original .45

Schofield cartridge and the far more ubiquitous .45 Colt round. Our Schofield Cavalry Model revolver is equipped with a 7-inch barrel, while the Wells Fargo Model has the correct 5-inch tube. The fixed sights consist of a half-moon, blade-type front sight blade and an open V-notch rear sight in the barrel/cylinder latch. Both have salt blued (black oxide) frames, barrels and cylinders. The trigger, latch mechanism, ejector pawl and hammer are color case-hardened. The smooth walnut grip panels each carry a replica of the original cartouche with the initials "CW" and with "1877" above the cartouche on the left grip panel. The heel of the butt is roll marked with a "US" and the serial number. The right side of the barrel is roll marked "SCHOFIELD'S PATS JUNE 20TH 71. APR 22ND 73" and the left side with ".45LC."

Overall length of the Schofield Cavalry Model is 12.75 inches with a weight of 2 pounds and 5 ounces. The Wells Fargo Model has an overall length of 10.75 inches with a weight of 2 pounds 3 ounces. Either model carries a suggested retail price of \$695. They can also be obtained chambered for the .44-40 cartridge. Engraved models are available as well as a "Hideout" model with a 3.5-inch barrel.

Both the Uberti Schofield and New Model Russian revolvers have six-groove barrels with a left-hand twist of one turn in 20 inches, regardless of caliber. Bore diameter is 0.451-inch on the .45 caliber Schofield and 0.430-inch on the New Model Russian.

To load these revolvers, first place the hammer on half-cock, then open the latch and swing the barrel open to its fullest extent. During this movement the extractor will come up and then move back down. Place rounds in only five cylinders so that the revolver can be carried with the hammer on an empty chamber. If you break open the revolver while simultaneously depressing the rear of the ejector pawl, this will disengage the ejector and it will not move upward.

To remove the cylinder and ejector assembly from the Schofield revolvers, remove the rear cylinder-catch screw from the cylinder catch, which is located at the rear of the barrel's top strap. Open the revolver and press upward on the cylinder-catch until it clears the cylinder and this assembly can be withdrawn from the barrel group. To remove the ejector from the cylinder, turn the ejector stem at the face of the cylinder counter-clockwise and separate the ejector stem and retractor spring from the cylinder. The ejector can then be withdrawn from the rear of the cylinder. Reassemble in the reverse order.

The fit of the grip panels to the frame varies from good to fair on these reproductions. You can also be certain that, at the very least, they require some tuning before you slap leather with them in Cowboy Action Shooting competition. Bob James (Dept. SOF, 5130 North 19th Avenue, Suite

Continued on page 69

1875 SCHOFIELD REVOLVER SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .45 Colt .45 Schofield

Operation: Six-shot, single-action, top-break revolver with automatic ejector system; locking latch mounted to frame.

Weight, empty: Cavalry Model: 2 pounds and 5 ounces; Wells Fargo Model: 2 pounds and 3 ounces.

Length, overall: Cavalry Model: 12.75 inches; Wells Fargo Model: 10.75 inches.

Barrel length: Cavalry Model: 7 inches; Wells Fargo Model: 5 inches.

Grips: Smooth walnut carrying a replica of the original cartouche with the initials "CW" and "1877" above the cartouche on the left grip panel.

Sights: Fixed — with a half-moon, blade-type front sight blade and an open V-notch rear sight in the barrel/cylinder latch.

Finish: Salt-blued (black oxide) frame, barrel and cylinder; color case-hardened trigger, latch mechanism, ejector pawl and hammer.

Suggested retail price: \$695.

Manufacturer: A. Uberti & Co., Ponte Zanano (Brescia), Italy.

Importer: Navy Arms Company, Dept. SOF, 689 Bergen Boulevard, Ridgefield, NJ 07657; phone: 201-945-2500; fax: 201-945-6859; website: www.navyarms.com .

T&E summary: Faithful reproduction of an important and rare U.S. martial arm that few will ever own, and even less shoot. A significant improvement over the original S&W Model 3 locking-latch system. Fast to load and unload, an important attribute in Cowboy Action Shooting competition.

NEW MODEL RUSSIAN REVOLVER SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .44 Russian

Operation: Six-shot, single-action, top-break revolver with automatic ejector system; locking latch mounted to barrel.

Weight, empty: 2 pounds and 8 ounces.

Length, overall: 12 inches.

Barrel length: 6.5 inches.

Grips: Smooth walnut with military-style lanyard ring in heel of the frame's butt.

Sights: Fixed, half-moon, blade-type front sight blade and an open U-notch rear sight in the front of the barrel/cylinder latch.

Finish: Salt-blued (black oxide) frame, barrel and cylinder; color case hardened trigger, latch mechanism ejector pawl and hammer.

Suggested retail price: \$745.

Manufacturer: A. Uberti & Co., Ponte Zanano (Brescia), Italy.

Importer: Navy Arms Company, Dept. SOF, 689 Bergen Boulevard, Ridgefield, NJ 07657; phone: 201-945-2500; fax: 201-945-6859; website: www.navyarms.com .

T&E summary: Accurate reproduction of the famous S&W Model 3 Russian Third Model Revolver, including Cyrillic barrel marking. Finger rest on trigger guard takes some getting used to. Chambered for an excellent, historic cartridge.

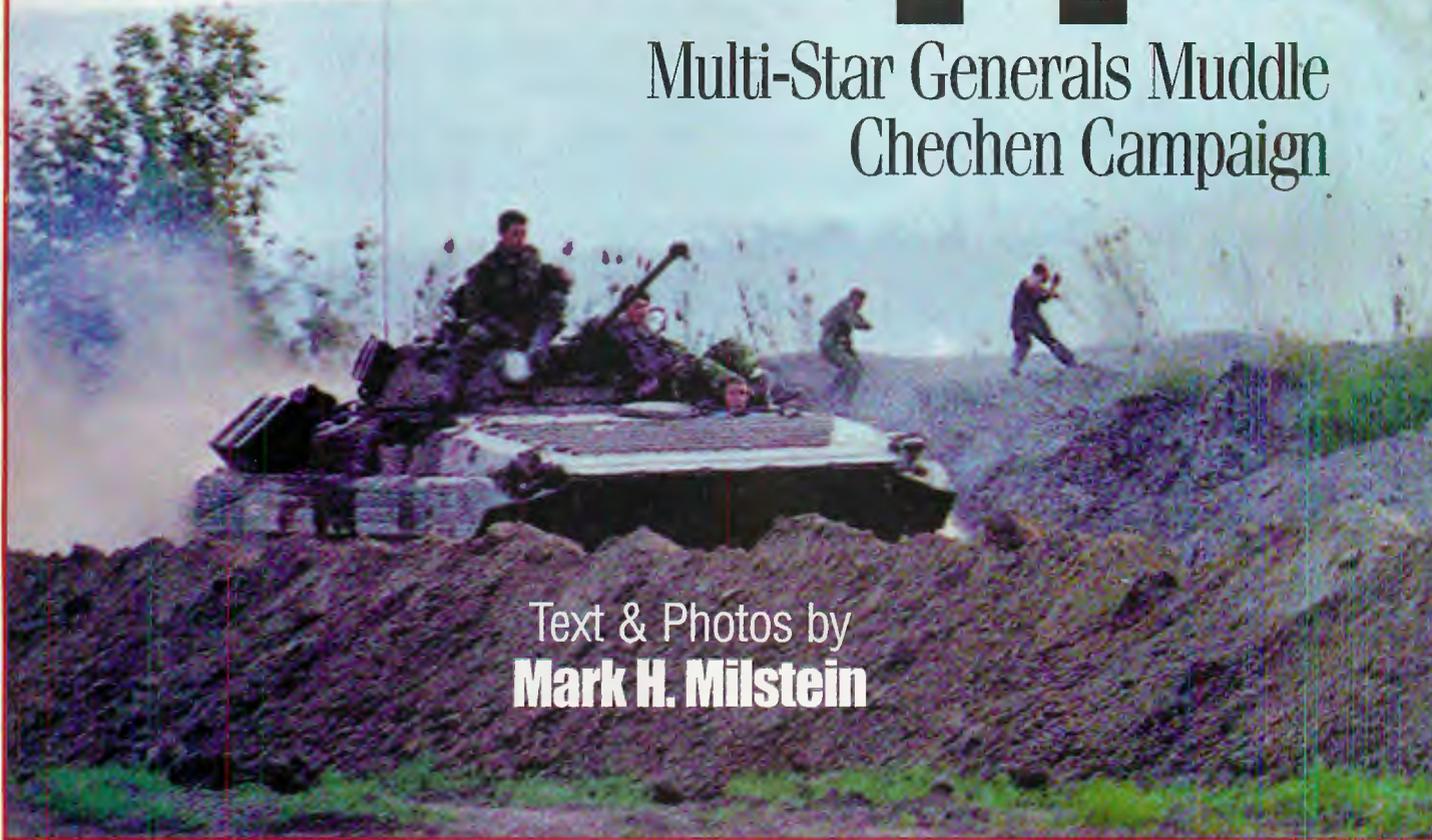
5-я русская оружейная фабрика А.Уберти Италия

(below) Navy Arms Cavalry Model Schofield (top) and Wells Fargo Model. The Cavalry Model was designed by George W. Schofield, a major in the 10th Cavalry. While Major Schofield was favorably impressed with the S&W Model 3, he felt modifications were required to meet the needs of cavalry troops.



RUSSIAN ROULETTE

Multi-Star Generals Muddle Chechen Campaign



Text & Photos by
Mark H. Milstein

A LONG THE TEREK RIVER, CHECHNYA — Everyone said that the road to Chechnya would be paved with bodies — maybe even our own.

What we didn't expect, however, was how soon those bodies would begin appearing as we waited in the departure area at Vnukovo Airport, south of Moscow. It was mid-November, and we were planning to board a YAK-22 flight to the Caucasus.

Soldier Of Fortune, along with 10 other Western media organizations, had been invited by the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) on a "dog and pony show" to visit the troops and see for ourselves what was really going on in the breakaway republic.

After an hour's delay, our ministry handlers began calling us for our flight and

some of us decided to make a last dash to the bathroom before the 2 1/2-hour trip to Mozdok Air Base, six miles north of the Chechen border.

Too Stiff To Fight

There, appearing rather stiff in stall number four, was a middle-aged Russian militiaman who had committed suicide that morning using his belt. It was an omen any sane man would have heeded, and a vividly etched memory that wouldn't leave us until we were safe and sound back at *SOF*'s European base in Budapest, nearly two weeks later.

The dead Russian was the topic of discussion during the entire flight, but after touching down at Mozdok and completing our "on the ground briefing" by a joint Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and

Russian MoD team, the distant thumping of artillery and aerial bombardment made everyone refocus on what was taking place only a short distance down the road.

Five huge Russian Army supply convoys were being assembled in a muddy parking lot bordering the tarmac, where at least seven giant Antonov cargo airplanes sat off-loading pallets of ammo, food and medicines. Another convoy of at least 50 Russian Army BMPs, followed by 10 or more communication wagons and a handful of Russian deuce-and-a-halfes was snaking its way out the main gate when we were brought to the chow hall for our first hot meal.

We'd Rather Eat Puke

Like *SOF*'s previous gastronomic experiences with the Russian military, the food that day at Mozdok's officer's mess wouldn't



mation that will aid us in our final assault on Grozny [the Chechen capital].”

Four of the POWs were lined up against a wall, while two were forced to crouch in the mud as TV cameramen filmed them being prodded by the MPs with their Kalashnikovs.

Our MoD handlers promised us that anyone who wished to could accompany them the next morning to a forward fire-base in northern Chechnya to watch offensive operations. *SOF* signed up, and then we cooled our heels for the rest of the day by watching other journalists attempt to get a good story out of a highly orchestrated public relations show.

The MoD continued to roll out soldier after soldier for interviews, each one telling the Western press how proud he was to be a part of this war, “blah, blah, blah.”

“Would it be possible to speak with soldiers just returning from the front,” we asked? “Would it also be possible to watch helicopters unloading wounded or killed soldiers?”

“I will look into it,” our MoD handler told *SOF*. “But I would imagine they will be too tired to speak with you, and security prevents anyone from photographing our wounded or dead. Why don’t you talk instead with these soldiers here in the barracks about their experiences?”



pass muster in even the sleaziest American county jail. Greasy beef broth served in dented canteen cups, hard black bread, a cup of fruit juice and a plate full of sticky, limp noodles was what was going to have to get us through the rest of this day and probably most of the next if we couldn’t stomach what awaited us on the breakfast menu.

After lunch everyone was brought to a small parade ground to watch a cadre of military police march a handful of blindfolded and near-hog-tied Chechen POWs before us.

“As you all know, we have been very successful in destroying the bandits in all of the territory north of the Terek River,” the unidentified Russian Ministry of Interior army lieutenant told our group. “We have also taken quite a large number of prisoners, and we are questioning them to gain infor-

(left) An artillery shell fired by Chechen fighters explodes as a Russian army APC and soldiers advance in the Naurski region of Chechnya, about 37 miles northwest of Grozny. A Russian soldier (above) awaits his orders during fighting for the Chechen city of Bamut, southwest of the capital, Grozny. Russia’s army has been accused of bombing mainly civilian targets while not allowing refugees to flee the fighting into neighboring countries such as Ingushetia.



Russian army soldiers prepare a pilotless drone aircraft at a secret base near the Chechen capital, Grozny. The drone will be used to search for Chechen rebel positions.



Russian Ministry of Interior special forces (OMON) troops prepare their weapons before heading off to battle with Chechen rebels at an unknown locations north of the strategic Chechen city.

We thought about it for about half a second, and answered in the negative, telling ourselves that as soon as we could break from the crowd we'd have a better chance of assessing what was really going on in the field.

Russian commanders holding a press conference later that day said that new Ministry of Interior units and tanks were arriving in the neighboring region of Dagestan. The reinforcements, we were told, were to be sent to Gudermes, Chechnya's second-largest city, which encircling Russian forces had been shelling for weeks.

They also said that Russian forces now held the northern third of Chechnya, and that its ground forces have been slow pushing toward the republic's capital, Grozny, because they wanted to limit casualties. It was not, they told us, because the army's strategy was flawed, as many of the Western press had been reporting.

With the "truth" now firmly planted in our brains, we shuffled off to our temporary quarters in an under-heated concrete barracks with its own round-the-clock guards who made sure that we didn't sleepwalk on to the base and see anything that wasn't part of the script.

A New Day

The morning brought freedom, of sorts, and our convoy left on time and without any last-minute changes. We slowly made our way through village after destroyed village down the same roads *SOF* had followed during the first Chechen conflict in 1994 and 1995. We passed a number of rear-guard Russian units setting up camp alongside the sole railroad line linking Russia with the embattled province. Swarms of attack- and troops-transport helicopters swooped over our lightly guarded convoy of two minibuses, three jeeps and a single BMP.

Three hours passed before we reached a rather large, undefended farm field manned

by a platoon of highly disciplined army soldiers prepping a drone aircraft.

Their commander, a slight, blond-haired officer from the Samara region of Russia, told us that his platoon was among the first in the army to receive the drones and use them in combat.



Russian soldiers rush a fellow soldier to a medical aid station after he was shot during a patrol west of Chechnya's second largest city, Gudermes.

"We are able to see the enemy's positions and direct our air force and artillery without sending in conventional ground reconnaissance troops," the lieutenant told us. "For example, the bandits [as every Russian called the Chechen fighters] had built a large array of fortified bunkers and berms around Gudermes, some 5 meters deep and four meters across. Using the drone we knew this and could then organize the correct forces to overtake it without endangering a single man."

"What is the range of the drone?" an Associated Press correspondent asked?

"That's classified," came the not-too-surprising response.

"How many drones does the Russian Army have in Chechnya?" a French corre-

spondent asked?

"That's classified, too," the lieutenant answered.

"Can you tell us anything about your mission?" the French correspondent asked.

"No," came the response. "It's against security to discuss our mission."

More PR-opaganda

Another half-hour of PR followed the initial briefing, and *SOF* used the opportunity to waltz back to the road to speak with a few of the OMON (Ministry of Interior SpecOps) troops packed in the back of the BMP.

According to everyone we spoke with, Russia's military had once again proved unlucky with Chechnya.

The soldiers claimed that once more they were in a war they didn't want to fight, and the sooner they got out of there the better.

"I didn't ask to come here," a burly OMON soldier from Novgorod told *SOF*. "I was happy being a policeman in my city. But I'm here now, and what can I do if I don't like my commanders? Nothing. I am stuck here, and all I can hope for is that I come home alive."

The other OMON agreed, and said that the extra \$50 per month in combat pay on top of their \$200 per month salaries was perhaps the only good thing to come out of their deployment.

Our MoD-sponsored trip was scheduled to return to Moscow the next morning, and rather than file a story after just two, tightly controlled days on the ground we thought it best to throw all of the warnings we had received about kidnappings to the wind and arrange for a local taxi to drive us to Nazran, the capital of neighboring Ingushetia.

Beheaded, In A Ditch

Kidnapping of foreign journalists, aid workers and Russians is a booming business in Chechnya. Dozens of people have been snatched out of their hotels, from the backseats of their taxis and off of the streets over

the past five years. Most have been repatriated after ransoms as high as \$2 million had been received, but others less lucky have found themselves tortured to near-death by faceless kidnapers before being beheaded or mutilated beyond recognition and tossed into a roadside ditch.

No one in their right minds entered Chechnya, or Ingushetia, without bodyguards. That Sunday, however, we didn't count ourselves among the enlightened and stupidly decided to tempt fate and drive to Nazran with just our taxi driver and our body armor. Three terror-filled hours later we were safely seated at the bar in the lobby of the Hotel Assa in Nazran, knocking back juice glasses of rotgut vodka.

Behind us, in a rather large fish tank that acts as the lobby's centerpiece, four goldfish float belly-up on a blanket of thick algae and uneaten fish food.

"Did you guys hear about the *Itar-Tass* correspondent that was kidnapped on the Mosdok-Nazran road yesterday afternoon?" a rather charming and attractive French radio correspondent, named Manon Loizean, asked us.

"No one knows what happened to him, and it's sure that the Chechens have got him and will probably kill him," she told us. "I don't think he had any security. *Tass* has no money, and they won't pay the Chechens for this guy. Too bad. No?"

"Yes, that's too bad," we said, trying hard to imagine the reaction of *SOF* publisher Robert K. Brown if he learned he'd have to part with \$1 million or so to get us out of this black hole.

Thankfully the Ingush government of strongman Ruslan Aushev was also in the protection racket, and through the offices of his English-speaking "personal assistant" *SOF* was provided with a crack security team headed up by a rather likeable guy named Matur, Ingushetia's no-rules, full-contact, street-fighting champion.

Cheap Bodyguards

Together with Ahmed, our driver, and our second bodyguard, Wahid, we were set. Price: \$40 per day, per bodyguard, and only \$30 for Ahmed and his trusty, Russian-made black Volga sedan.

It was time to head for the border and into Russian-controlled Chechnya. Throngs of refugees and Ingush ministry of interior BMPs choked the rutted road leading to the border. We made slow progress, and after Matur promised something to one of the border guards we picked up speed and made our way towards Urus-Martan, a heavily-defended Chechen city surrounded by nearly a brigade of Russian armor.

Matur said that it was a miracle that the Russians had gotten as far as they had this time without suffering many casualties.

We were surprised as well. After three consecutive days of skirting Russian lines and speaking with interior ministry troops and regular army either on their way to the front lines or on their way back to Mozdok we concluded that Russia's army and police force commanders have learned



Russian soldiers prepare captured Chechen rebels (above) for questioning at a Russian army base north of Chechnya. The rebels were captured during recent fighting along the strategic Terek River. (right) Russian army troops pass through a border checkpoint on their way to front-line positions in Chechnya. Russia continues its offensive against Islamic terrorists in Chechnya despite international pressure.

nothing from the fiascoes of Afghanistan and Chechnya.

Once more former Soviet commanders, who spent decades training for large-scale war in Europe, found themselves up against a couple thousand so-called terrorists entrenched in a handful of small cities and some highland villages.

Stupid Intelligence

The old mistakes were all there. First of all, the Russian military persists, according to what *SOF* was able to glean, in ignoring its own intelligence data.

When earlier last summer Chechen rebels occupied positions in neighboring Dagestan no one in the Kremlin took the moves seriously. When the rebels eventually took over a provincial capital, they faced

little if any opposition from lightly armed, poorly trained Russian Interior Ministry troops Moscow had based there.

This lack of opposition gave both a tactical and psychological advantage to the rebels' leaders, Chechen field commander, Shamil Basayev, and Jordanian Islamic fundamentalist, Hattab.

Another mistake, which *SOF* learned about from disgruntled ministry of interior troops, was the Russian military's inertia in the first weeks of the intrusion. All it managed to pull into the fighting area was an interior forces battalion, an infantry battalion (part of the 136th Mechanized Infantry Brigade based in Buinak, Dagestan) and a mobile commando team from Russia that had to make a 100-mile march to reach its deployment zone.

All of this, the



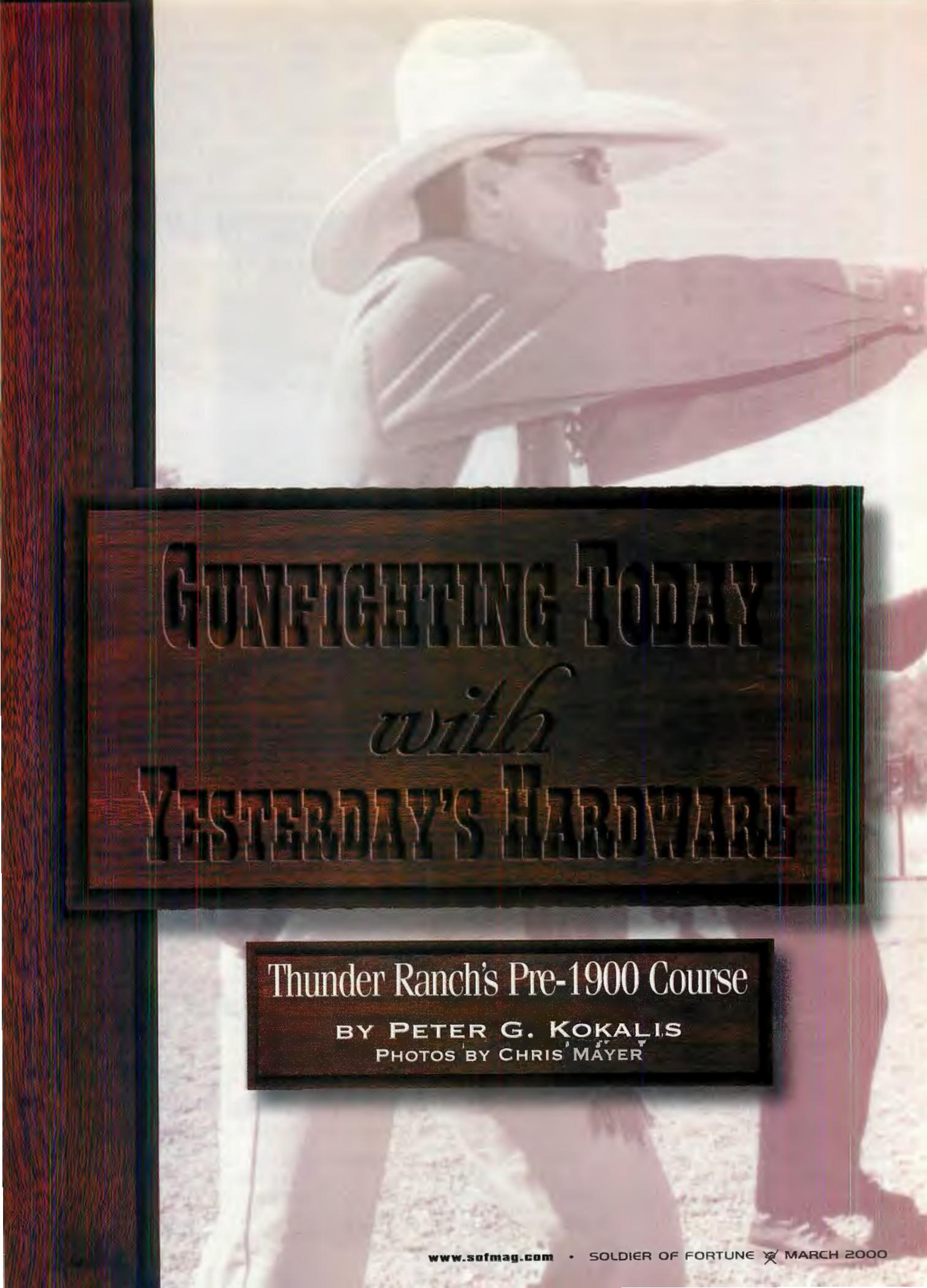
Russian troops *SOF* was able to personally speak with told us, led to Moscow finding itself in Chechnya.

Although two of the three "permanent readiness" divisions stationed in European Russia, plus two interior forces divisions, were deployed in the North-Caucases district when *SOF* was on the ground, it was clear that Russia's top brass had never learned how to use its troops properly.

Muddling Multi-Star Generals

Russian newspaper editorials wrote that "The country had once again become witness to multi-star generals muddling about as if there had been no Chechen experience. The army claimed it was up to the interior

Continued on page 73



GUNFIGHTING TODAY
with
YESTERDAY'S HARDWARE

Thunder Ranch's Pre-1900 Course

BY PETER G. KOKALIS
PHOTOS BY CHRIS MAYER



Many may assume that Thunder Ranch's Pre-1900 course is designed exclusively to prepare students for SASS (Single Action Shooting Society) competition. Not so. While Cowboy Action Shooting competitors will learn many useful skills in this most enjoyable, yet typically high speed, low drag Thunder Ranch course, Clint Smith's objective is to provide the skills required to actually employ 19th century weaponry for self defense in a modern environment.

To quote Clint, "This is the gun I have, what's the best, most efficient way to use it." The single-action revolvers, lever-action rifles and both double-barrel and slide-action shotguns of the late 1800s are still very effective, very viable fighting tools. Everyone in the Pre-1900 course dresses in period clothing and Clint makes clear that the clothing worn in the 19th century often presented its own peculiar problems to the gunfighter. The infamous John Wesley Hardin, the "Dark Angel of Texas," who may have killed as many as 50, once caught his revolver in his suspenders during the drawstroke in a gunfight.

Thunder Ranch's highly respected and well-known honcho, Clint Smith, is a Marine Corps veteran with two infantry tours in Vietnam. His experience includes seven years in law enforcement, during which time he served as head of his department's FTU (Firearms Training Unit), as well as the senior counter-sniper on the SWAT

unit. He was Operations Officer for Jeff Cooper's API and both started and served as director of Heckler & Koch's training services



Everyone participating in Thunder Ranch's Pre-1900 course dresses in period clothing, both students and instructors, and Clint makes clear that the clothing worn in the 19th century often presented its own peculiar problems to the gunfighter. (below) Rolling Thunder drill with shotguns.

division. Together with his wife, Heidi, he runs the Thunder Ranch Training Facility with its busy 34-course schedule and still finds time for off-site training through International Training Consultants, Inc., a highly regarded mobile training program.

Thunder Ranch has a guest staff of about three dozen instructors. The four, including Clint, who taught the Pre-1900 course that *Soldier Of Fortune* staff photographer, Chris Mayer, and I recently attended brought an impressive array of experience to the table. Bill McLennan retired from the San Antonio Police Department after more than 30 years of service, the last six-and-a-half of which were spent as OIC of firearms training. McLennan's unflappable demeanor, dry Texas wit and encyclopedic knowledge of gunfighting tactics are tremendous assets in any course he instructs.

Thad Rybka is a U.S. Navy veteran (1964-1968) with two tours in Vietnam as a gunfire control technician. He has 40 years experience in the design and handcrafting of leather weapons carrying systems. His holsters are worn by armed professionals around the world and have been featured in numerous books and magazine

articles. His expertise in leatherwork and gunfighting are well-known in the industry.



Clint Smith (below) demonstrates the second count of the five-count drawstroke.



articles. "TR" can be reached at 134 Havilah Hill Street, Odenville, AL 35120.

Rob Rathburn is a 20-year veteran of the Denver Police Department and is currently assigned as an instructor at the Denver Police Academy's Firearms Training Section. Prior to this assignment, Rob worked for eight years in vice/narcotics and four years in the homicide unit. While assigned as an academy firearms instructor, Rob was responsible for the development and implementation of the Denver Police Department's Urban Rifle Program. Rob was also responsible for revamping the department's Basic and In-service Handgun Training Programs. He shoots under the alias "Turkey Creek Jack Johnson." All of these men are eminently qualified to teach the Pre-1900 course as they are members of Thunder Ranch's Regulators, Company A, an elite group of men and women who shoot the weapons of the past.

Cowboy Calibers

Clint does not advocate the use of wimp loads and calibers, such as often encountered among the "game masters" of Cowboy Action Shooting. All courses at Thunder Ranch are predicated on the principle that you will fight the way you train (and play, I might add). Most of the students in our class shot single-action revolvers and lever-action rifles chambered for the .45 Colt round using full-power loads. There were also guns present in .44-40, .44 Special, and .357 Magnum. Throughout the course it was assumed that all guns were loaded at all times.

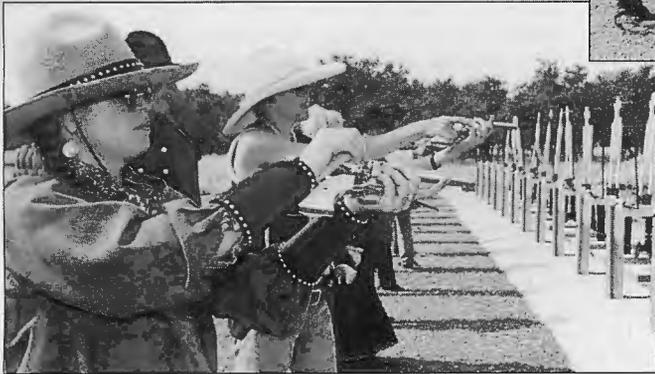
The inventory of firearms brought to this course was quite revealing. There were 16 students in the class, each with two single-action revolvers. Fourteen of the revolvers were Colt Single Action Army types in various barrel lengths (4 $\frac{1}{4}$, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches). Thirteen were chambered for the .45 Colt round and one for .44-40.



(left) Loading by feel: With the trigger finger firmly up against the base of the cartridge, press rearward on the ejector rod. If it goes only a short distance, as shown, you have encountered a live round. Rotate the cylinder to the next chamber. (right) Again, with the trigger finger firmly up against the base of the cartridge, press rearward once more on the ejector rod. If it goes fully rearward, as shown, you have encountered an empty case. Eject the case and load a live round.



Properly trained and with the correct equipment, women can be every bit as deadly as men, maybe moreso. The female students in Thunder Ranch's Pre-1900 course were enthusiastic and shot well.



There were 15 Rugers, of which two were Bisleys and 13 Vaqueros. The instructors carried either Colts or Rugers. There were four Italian-made Colt SAA clones to start, but one went down for good on the first day, leaving only three. Clint does not have a high regard for the Italian-made Colt clones, as in his considerable experience in the Pre-1900 courses, they will frequently fail before the course ends.

I went through the course with two Colt Peacemakers, a third generation with a 7½-inch barrel and a well-used, late second generation with a 5½-inch barrel. Many prefer Colt SAAs for both historical as well as reliability reasons, but the Ruger Vaqueros are coming on strong as they represent solid reliability at an attractive price.

Monday morning at Thunder Ranch always commences with a lecture by Clint in which he discusses the ground rules for the course at hand, the training schedule, and important information

about the weapons that will be used in the course. One of the first considerations that must be dealt with concerning Colt-type single-action action revolvers is the importance of loading only "five beans in the wheel" as it is extremely dangerous to carry these revolvers with the hammer down on a loaded chamber. However, if you can anticipate a fight, by all means slide a round in the empty chamber.

Clint reminded us that cowboys generally carried only one pistol and left the rifle in a chuck wagon. However, professional gunslingers usually carried two, or more, revolvers. Clint says that "Most fights are won by the last shot fired," and "You'll only be in the fight as long as your ammo lasts."

A cardinal principle in all of Thunder Ranch's self-defense courses is that "Proximity deletes skill." The tactical consequence of this is to "get out of the hole" as quickly and withdraw while fighting. "While fighting" is the imperative phrase in this concept as "True killing in a fight doesn't begin until one side turns to run." Remember most pistol fights take place at very close ranges —



Thunder Ranch: A World Class Facility

The Thunder Ranch Training Facility (Dept. SOF, HCR 1, Box 53, Mountain Home, TX 78058; phone: 830-640-3138; fax: 830-640-3183; website: www.thunderranchinc.com), which opened in 1993, is located 96 miles west of San Antonio, Texas and 46 miles to the east of Kerrville in the rolling-hills karst topography of southern Texas on a total of 2,400 acres. This region, once known principally for Texas Longhorn cattle, is now a center for exotic game ranches.

Thunder Ranch's physical plant is world class throughout. There are four ranges. Both the Red Range and Orange Range are 50x50-yard square ranges. Red Range is the base range for all handgun-related classes. This 20-position range has turning, stationary, wobbler and interface target potential with "cover" structures when required. While the Orange Range also has stationary and wobbler target potential, its most prominent facets include a unique "charger" system that represents threats closing quickly on the student. In addition, it also has a two- or four-target setup for high-speed lateral running targets with an 80-foot range of operation. The Yellow Range measures 50x100 yards and has IPSC body-style armored and disc-type resetting targets. The target options include steel, paper, hostage, stationary, wobbler and movers. This 20-position range is the base range for preliminary work in shotgun and some pistol courses. Also holding 20 positions, the 50 x 100-yard White Range has stationary, wobbler and high-speed turning targets available. Its numerous barricades represent protective cover and/or concealment. The two-section Black Range has a 20-position conventional rifle range in 100-yard increments out to 300 yards. The other portion is a field range for target

engagements from 400 to 1,200 yards for both known and unknown distance applications.

The most visually impressive facilities at Thunder Ranch are the Tower, Thunderville and the infamous Terminator. The Tower is a monolithic four-story structure with its own tactical simulator that permits live fire in all rooms and stairwells. Problems of both internal and external entry can be addressed. The stairwells vary in dimensions and geometry. All of the window ports can be plugged. Students in the Countersniper classes fire from the Tower. Thunderville is an elaborate, day or night, in-depth facade over 200-feet in length representing a two-sided street setting. It's used in all of the rifle programs that present dynamic scenarios. With over 60 target options, as well as movers, hostages, runners and wobblers, Thunderville features computer-controlled lighting, doors, movement, timing and hit documentation. This simulator has been designed to test decision-making and target identification under maximum stress. The Terminator, used in handgun, shotgun and rifle courses, can simulate home, motel or office environments with over 400 floor plan options and targets that emphasize identification and selection prior to engagement. This building is covered by a free-span roof for training under all lighting or weather conditions.

There are few facilities that can even come close to the quality provided by Thunder Ranch. The instruction is superb and students are pushed to the very limits of their physical and mental capabilities. A training certificate from Thunder Ranch indicates achievement respected by law enforcement and military small arms authorities throughout the world.

— P.G.K.

"shoot 'em and set 'em on fire too."

After the lecture we assembled at the Red Range, as the first two days of this course were spent on revolver work. Dry-fire at stationary targets came first, followed by live-fire drills that concentrated on the loading drills that are so important when fighting with a Colt SAA revolver. The standard procedure is to load one, skip one, load four, then pull the hammer to full-cock and then lower it. It will be on an empty chamber. That's great for Cowboy Action Shooting competition, but that alone won't do in a real gunfight.

Throughout the week, we would fire one, two or three rounds and then top off the cylinder. The procedure we learned during the first few days in the daylight was designed to program us for fighting under subdued light or in the dark as well.

With your eyes on the target area and the revolver out in front in the ready position and pointing at the potential target, this all-important procedure is as follows: Open the loading gate and draw the hammer to half-cock. Always keep your fingers away from the front of the cylinder or you may someday get them burned off, if the hammer falls on a loaded round. Put the trigger finger of the firing hand against the base of the first cartridge and hold it there firmly. Slide the ejector rod to the rear with the support hand. If it only goes rearward a very short distance, you are butting it up against a loaded round. If so, rotate the cylinder to the next chamber. Repeat this procedure. When the ejector rod can be pushed almost all the way rearward, you have encountered an empty case. Eject it and load a live round.

When you have ejected all of the empty cases and replaced them with live rounds, rotate the cylinder until the thumb or finger of your support hand is on the empty chamber. Rotate the cylinder again, always by feel or audibly listening for each click of rotation, but never visually, four rounds past the empty chamber. Bring the hammer to full-cock, then lower it carefully and it will be resting on the

Points Of Contact

Black Hills Ammunition Dept. SOF
P.O. Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone: 605-348-5150
Call for the location of your nearest dealer; if there is none, Black Hills will ship to you at retail.

Dillon Precision Products, Inc., Dept. SOF
8009 East Dillon's Way, Scottsdale, AZ 85260
phone: 800-223-4570

Thad Rybka, Dept. SOF
134 Havilah Hill Street, Odenville, AL 35120

Thunder Ranch Training Facility, Dept. SOF
HCR 1, Box 53, Mountain Home, TX 78058
phone: 830-640-3138; fax: 830-640-3183
website: www.thunderranchinc.com

empty chamber.

This must be practiced over and over again, as use of the Colt SAA revolver involves considerably more motor dexterity than any modern handgun. You will, of course, never be able to employ this technique in Cowboy Action Shooting competition. However, a significant portion of SASS competition is more than a little unrealistic. For example, in the so-called "Gunfighter" classification you shoot both revolvers until they are empty! This is, of course, completely contrary to correct tactical procedures.

This loading technique was practiced with movement to the right, left, forward and rear. The second day we began shooting at moving targets, both turning and wobbler types. Distances varied from contact to approximately 20 yards. There are no distance markers on the ranges at Thunder Ranch, as there are no chalk lines on the street until the fight's over and the coroner arrives. Shooting was almost always on the move, at both the center of mass and the head.

Both the strong-side and crossdraw presentations were practiced as a five-count drawstroke, with both two-hand shooting and then drawing and shooting with one hand only. Using both handguns, we practiced moving rearward, firing and reloading with our partners.

Yesterday's Assault Weapons

On the third day we assembled on the Yellow Range to work with lever-action rifles. At Thunder Ranch you "use a pistol to shoot your way to a rifle." The rifle calibers matched those of the revolvers: .45 Colt, .44-40 and .357 Magnum. Marlins predominated as there were 11 of them. There was one Uberti-made Henry rifle and the remaining were Winchesters or Winchester clones (Uberti and Rossi) in Models 1873, 1892 and 1894. You will need approximately 1,200 rounds of combined revolver/rifle ammunition for the Pre-1900 class. A substantial number of students, including myself,

"It ain't like it used to be ... but, it'll do."

Beyond the Wild Bunch — The Fast Growing Sport of Cowboy Action Shooting. By Gary Kieft. Photos By Nyle Leatham. Published by Dillon Precision Products, Inc., 8009 East Dillon's Way, Scottsdale, AZ 85260; phone 800-223-4570. 160 pages. Color photographs. \$29.95 plus postage and handling.

When I first met Mike Dillon some three decades ago, he was shooting machine guns and having Winchester lever-action Model 94s rechambered to modern cartridges such as the .357 Magnum. If I remember correctly, the Winchesters never worked right and his machine guns were always dirty. Be that as it may, the two of us and our respective families have pumped a lot of lead downrange together over the intervening years.

Mike's interest in cowboy guns and cowboys never left him. And now he has published the best darn book ever assembled on the topic of Cowboy Action Shooting. Whether you're "just startin' out" in Cowboy Action Shooting, or this is your "opening for a new territory," this is absolutely required reading.

Author Gary Kieft, aka Mogollon Munk, covers in great detail every important topic related to this fastest growing of all the shooting sports. Starting with the first ever Cowboy Action Shooting Match, held in December 1979, Kieft takes us through the development of SASS (the Single Action Shooting Society)

with its current membership of over 20,000. The author discusses the alias which every cowboy shooter must have, as well as the all-important topic of safety and both cowboy etiquette, shooting techniques and the ubiquitous gun carts we use to tote our gear.

Three chapters cover the firearms used in Cowboy Action Shooting. With sixguns, the argument remains Ruger vs. Colt. Myself, I shoot Colts. Sometimes I stuff Uberti-made Schofields in my leather and Kieft discusses those as well. The advantages and disadvantages of different barrel lengths is also covered. With the pistol-caliber lever-action rifles/carbines you have two alternatives to begin with: the toggle action of the M1866 Henry and M1873 Winchester or the vertical locking block of the M1892 and M1894 Winchesters and M1894 Marlin. The vertical locking block system is smoother, faster and in most other regards superior and most top competitors use lever-actions of this type. While you will encounter a few exposed-hammer doubles, the most prevalent scatterguns are "hammerless" doubles or exposed-hammer slide-action (almost always the Winchester Model 1897) types. Personally, I have little faith in the Model '97's action, but the split on the firing line seems to be about fifty-fifty. Most are 12-gauge, but some wimps use 20-gauge smoothbores.

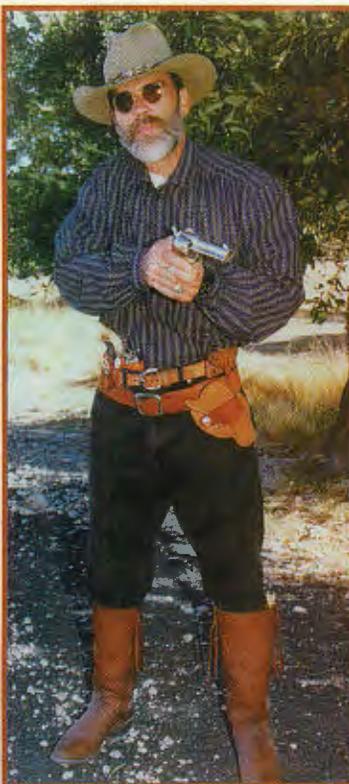
The chapter on gunsmithing is followed by an all important discussion of the various cartridges used in Cowboy Action

used Black Hills Ammunition (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 3090, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone: 605-348-5150 — call for the location of your nearest dealer, if there is none, Black Hills will ship to you at retail) and they have clearly become the leader in this highly specialized field. In an attempt to save some of my Black Hills ammunition for Cowboy Action Shooting competition, I slipped in some reloads. The result was more than a dozen squib loads without a propellant charge, which locked up my revolvers and rifle each and every time. There's a lesson there and it doesn't need to be belabored.

Clint says, "If I could get steadier, I'd get steadier." So, although we shot also from off-hand, sitting and kneeling, if possible you should go to prone. A corollary of this is Clint's belief that with regard to the rifle, "If I could get closer, I'd get closer." We shot first at a stationary paper target with a white dot at approximately 25 and 50 yards from the sitting and kneeling positions; 75 yards from sitting and prone and 100 yards prone only. This was followed by multiple-shot sequences on steel plates. We ended with a drill referred to as "Rolling Thunder:" five steel plates and five shooters with five loaded rounds. They fire in sequence, first a one plate only, then two and finally all five. It's each shooter's responsibility to top off his magazine as others are shooting. This is excellent practice in reloading under the simulated stress of a gunfight.

In the afternoon we assembled at the Terminator, where we learned that "tactics is architecture and billiards." We ran the Terminator with both revolvers and the lever-action rifle.

We also cycled over to Thunderville where we deployed with lever-action rifles. On the second run, we started with any rounds left in the magazine from the first run. Shooting until empty, we were forced to load while moving (with the rifle at half-cock). The targets were falling steel plates that would drop only if hit squarely



Instructor and well-known holstermaker Thad Rybka (left) illustrates the third count of the five-count drawstroke.

by substantial loads.

On the morning of the fifth day we assembled at Yellow Range for work with the scatterguns. There were three Winchester Model 1897s and 13 double-barrel shotguns. Of the later, one was a Stevens, one a Lefever, one a Russian Baikal imported by EAA and 13 were Brazilian IGA shotguns imported by Stoeger Industries. I have been using an IGA and am not satisfied with the quality. The buttstock-to-receiver interface is poor and all-too-frequently the buttstocks will crack after no more than several hundred rounds. The Baikal coach gun appears to be of substantially better quality and features an interesting modular trigger mechanism. Manufactured by IZHMECH in Izhevsk, Russia, SOF will be submitting the Baikal coach gun to test and evaluation in the very near future. Shotgun practice was on steel plates from about 20 yards with movement, firing one or two and then reloading. We also fired a Rolling Thunder exercise with the shotgun. Several of the ladies used 20-gauge smoothbores, but 12-gauge predominated. Throughout the course I fired the popular Winchester AA Low Recoil, Low Noise 12-gauge shotshells. You will need up to 400 shotshells to finish the Pre-1900 course. The morning ended with transition drills from the rifle to the handgun.

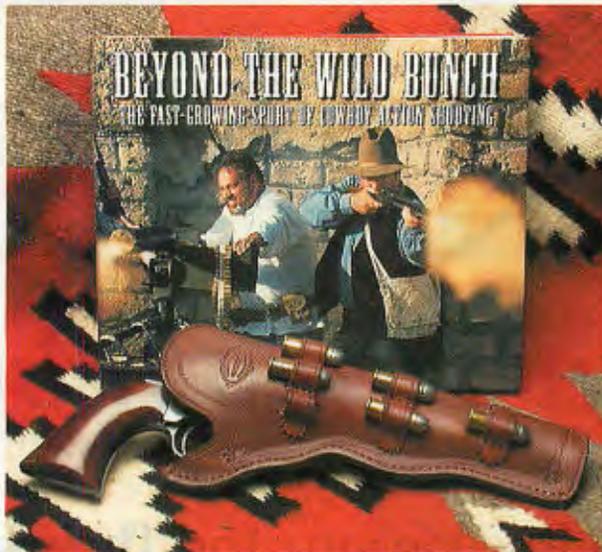
Broken up into groups of four, we spent the afternoon riding on the stagecoach and running stages through "Villa Tormenta." The Thunder Ranch stagecoach was built on top of a trailer and is towed by a pickup truck with steel armor plate in the bed to protect the driver. Each student made two runs with the shotgun

Continued on page 72

Shooting to include: for revolvers the 25-20 Winchester, .32-20 Winchester, .38 Special/.357 Magnum, .38-40 Winchester, .44-40 Winchester, .44 Special, .44 Magnum (reduced loads), and of course the .45 Colt. Long-range rifle, side-match cartridges profiled include the .30-30 Winchester, .30-40 Krag, .38-55 Winchester and the .45-70 Government. There is also a section on reloading for cowboy competition which, not surprisingly, features Dillon's superb equipment.

There are also chapters on gun-leather, the long-range, derringer, pocket pistol, "original double-action revolver" and plainsman side events, as well as horseback competition. A section on clothing is followed by fascinating sketches of the top and/or most colorful shooters in the game. The book ends with appendices containing the SASS *Shooters Handbook*, the CMSA (*Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association*) guidelines and a resource list for cowboy action shooters. Throughout the book, thumbnail biographical sketches of famous Hollywood cowboys (such as John Wayne,

Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, Roy Rogers — to whom the book is dedicated — Wild Bill Elliot and others) and early rodeo stars are illustrated with four-color reproductions of their respective movie and show posters.



this book as the overall impact of his photos is simply overpowering. Don't miss this spectacular gun book.

—P.G.K.

Presently Huck said:

"What does pirates have to do?"

Tom said: "Oh, they have just a bully time — take ships and burn them, and get the money and bury it in awful places in their island where there's ghosts and things to watch it, and kill everybody in the ships — make 'm walk a plank."

"And they carry the women to the island," said Joe; "they don't kill the women."

"No," assented Tom, "they don't kill the women — they're too noble. And the women's always beautiful, too."

"And don't they wear the bulliest clothes! Oh no! All gold and silver and di'monds," said Joe, with enthusiasm.

"Who?" said Huck.

"Why, the pirates."

(from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*,
by Mark Twain)

Piracy, sanitized by distance from the ghastly atrocities that victimized water-borne commerce and persons, became grist for many a landlocked pulp writer of the 19th century. And when filtered through the imagination of Samuel Clemens and the character of Tom Sawyer, it was a plausible option for a swashbuckling career by adventurous adolescents.

There is no public-relations effort as effective as time, and the parade of years since the first heyday of piracy has also helped romanticize the bloodthirsty persona of pirates to that of colorful and eccentric cartoon characters who love parrots and monkeys and address everyone as "Matey."

Walt Disney and other insufferable romantics notwithstanding, however, the reality of piracy was such a grotesque scourge on the planet that it led to the world's first broad-based, cooperative law-enforcement agreement, promoted by seafaring states such as England, France and the



PIRACY:

The New Growth Industry

PART I

The Buccaneers And Their Reign Of Terror

by Frank Hopkins



Nitin Vadukul

Photojournalist Nitin Vadukul went to sea with these pirates in the South China Sea — current hotbed of marine piracy. The fact that one carries a Chinese-made M14 copy, made for the New People's Army in the Philippines, implies there may be a connection.

It is, however, enjoying a global resurgence as modern pirates find enticing and abundant new targets to plunder, and new technologies help them continue an old profession. Tabulated statistics by the United Nations, the International Marine Bureau, the international press and various marine security organizations all agree: Piracy on the high seas may well be one of the growth industries of the new millennium — it increased by more than 150% in the three years of 1994-1997, and will have doubled overall during the last decade.

As in times past, when vessels ply ocean waters heavily laden with precious cargo for which there is a ready illicit market, and there is no effective counter-force, piracy blooms. Typical of hundreds of recent incidents was the general cargoship *Cheung Son*, attacked in December 1998 by a Chinese gang thought to be headed by Weng Siliang and Zhu Youwang. All 23 hands aboard the *Cheung Son* were brutally massacred and thrown overboard. After a year-long search through 12 provinces and municipalities, and under a great deal of international pressure, Chinese authorities had arrested Weng and Zhu as we went to press. From the largest seagoing freighters with loads of aluminum ingots, sugar and oil, to pitifully unseaworthy craft carrying defenseless refugees, to the fiberglass yachts of the wealthy, all seagoing traffic worldwide is once again vulnerable.

The Semi-Noble Tradition of Marine Theft and Vandalism

But we digress: "What is past is prologue," and we need to know from whence came these pirates, who so long lay in hibernation.

United States, which declared pirates would have no safe haven anywhere and would be fair game for any armed authorities, anywhere, any time. A contemporary historian of Sam Clemens recorded a more typical pirate deed in *The Buccaneers and Their Reign of Terror* when recounting the taking of an English man o' war:

"... he beheaded the ship's captain with a mighty stroke of his cutlass, and chopped open his chest to remove his heart, gnawing on the still palpitating member to the cheers of his crew of brigands ..."

The reality of piracy was, and is, quite remote indeed from the urchin with a plastic cutlass bumming Halloween treats on your front porch. You may think of them then, and now, as Charlie Manson with a boat. As a rule they gave no quarter: The lives aboard the hapless merchanteer they captured had less meaning to them than a bottle of grog. And the grog of the time was not that good.

As Old As History

Marine piracy developed concurrently with the first seagoing enterprises, as those who used to rob caravans took to the sea after the same prey. Marine piracy flourished for centuries until the advent of international agreements such as The Law of Nations, an increase in the size of merchant vessels, and the vastly upgraded naval patrolling of common shipping lanes relegated it to the backwaters of the planet, and largely to the dustbin of history.



Courtesy Dave Kelleman, Special Ops Associates

Small boats are especially vulnerable to pirate attack, even moreso if they have a handy transom door or low gunwales — but large vessels underway with million-dollar cargoes are just as vulnerable to today's high-tech pirates.



Pirates? Oh, yes, everybody knows they used to roam the seas robbing and pillaging: Mention "pirate" today and thoughts run to salvaging treasures and relics from sunken pirate ships. (left) Encrusted cannon retrieved from wreck of Blackbeard's *Queen*



Anne's Revenge is lowered to deck of *RV Dan Moore*. (below) Additional 7' cannon is recovered from *Revenge* off Beaufort, N.C. Interesting salvage, sometimes profitable — but few realize that today modern piracy is a *billion-dollar* business.

In the early days of seafaring, there was often a melding of national marine interests and piracy as ancient Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans vied with one another for control of seaborne commerce: Attacking the competition at sea held the additional benefit — if you prevailed — of realizing his cargo. Rugged Vikings and Norsemen traveled south from Scandinavia via the Hebrides and Shetland Islands, raiding the shipping of the then-collapsing Roman empire, and raiding — sometime settling in — poorly defended coastal villages along the west European coast. The Moors held sway along the coasts of North Africa, venturing into the Mediterranean as Roman control waned, although piracy was a problem even at the heyday of the Roman empire — Julius Caesar was once held captive by pirates.

Piracy really came into its own after the wars of the Renaissance

Julep Gillman-Bryan, N.C. Division of Archives and History



Time has encrusted the anchor of Blackbeard's flagship, and time has erased the popular memory of pirates as wanton killers, vandals and thieves.

period, when highly capable naval crews were disbanded and seaworthy warships were sold. Many were sold for legitimate commerce and carried cargo — and many, already well-prepared for war, were used by privateers who sailed under letters of marque for various powers. Some subsequently decided to stay in the business even without letters of marque, to become some of the most colorful pirates in history.

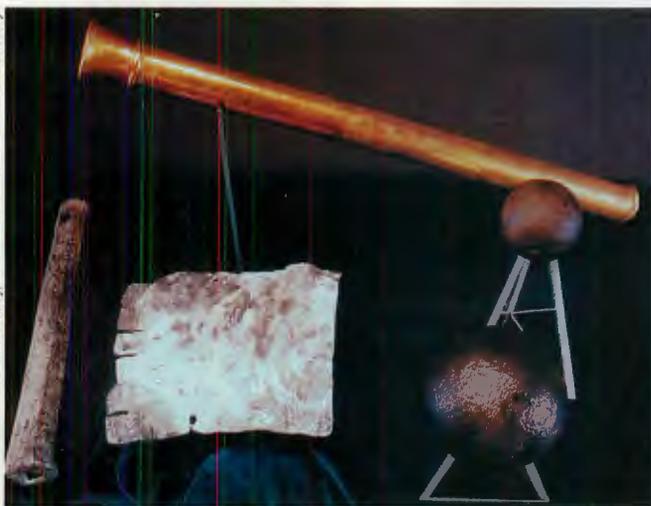
A letter of marque was authority given to private persons to fit out an armed ship and use it to attack, capture, and plunder enemy merchant vessels in time of war — think of them as sea-going mercs. This was a win-win

situation which allowed attacks on the enemy's trade at no cost to the sponsoring government, and these privateers were rewarded by what they could capture — very much like the recent Serbian sponsorship of "Arkan" and his band of rapine pillagers who were unleashed to plunder Bosnia and Kosovo.

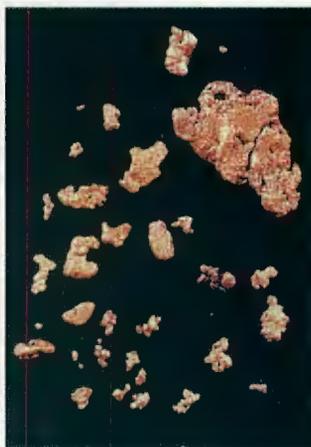
The officers and crew of a privateer could keep a large part or all of the money captured, but when a privateer was less successful there was a great temptation to become a pirate and plunder whatever ship came along. As throughout history, those who win often rewrote the rules, and having been commissioned by a letter of marque was no guarantee to a privateer of amnesty from prosecution if things did not go in their favor on the high seas. A privateer captured by hostile forces was often tried for piracy and summarily executed. And it often happened that warring countries would make peace and a privateer would not get the word until he returned to his home port from a foray, only to be subsequently prosecuted for attacks on ships of a now-friendly nation. Perhaps this element was a consideration

with privateers who decided to continue their careers as freebooters under their own flag — the Jolly Roger.

During the 16th Century, Spain was at war with England (Elizabethan Wars) and the Dutch Republic, which was trying to secure its independence. Spanish galleons that carried the treasure plundered from Central and South America through the Caribbean to Spain were favored targets of the privateers (and the pirates, which were often hard to distinguish in that place and time). The remoteness of the



(above) Weapons and trivia from Blackbeard's ship included brass blunderbuss barrel, 4- and 24-pound cannon balls, sounding weight and touch-hole cover from cannon. Marine archeologist in the year 2300 studying a sunken pirate vessel from 2000 will find: AK47 receivers, RPG-7 rocket launchers and PG7 rounds, radar and NVG gear. Times and tools change — pirates do not. (right) Placer gold recovered incidentally at wreck of *Queen Anne's Revenge* assayed as high as 95% — suggesting it came from what is now the American Southwest, or central America, and was pirated when running the Caribbean gauntlet from the New World to Spain. Placer found in Georgia and the Carolinas was typically lower in gold. Today's pirates steal mostly the hardgoods of international commerce.



Caribbean from Europe worked an advantage for England, who at the time had considerable colonial interests in North America.

Letters of marque were discontinued by the many countries who signed the Declaration of Paris in 1856. The United States, as well as several other countries, however, only signed the international treaty much later: The United States was in no rush to bind ourselves to this agreement, as we were more dependent on the use of privateers to increase our maritime power, as we then lacked a world-class navy.

Jean Laffite

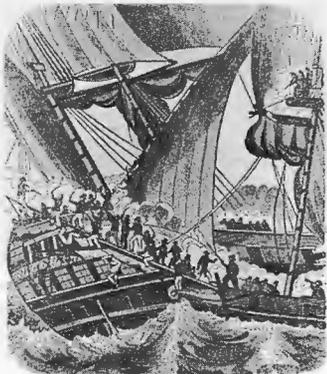
The diary of a particular time can often best be revealed through the life and times of the players on that historical stage. Who better to illustrate the dichotomy of governments who found privateers-cum-pirates tools of convenience than Jean Laffite, pirate, pardoned American patriot — and once again pirate.

Little authentic is known about the early life of Laffite, except that he was born in France 1780, running away to sea at 15. He became famous as the leader of a colony of pirates and smugglers located on the Baratarian coast south of New Orleans from 1810 to 1814. Laffite was a genuine buccaneer — one who was commissioned by a letter of marque to prey specifically on Spanish shipping. He was a privateer with a letter of marque issued by Cartagena (a breakaway Spanish possession that eventually became part of Colombia). This is analogous to a trading vessel today flying under a Liberian flag: The legitimacy is shaky at best, but it does satisfy the international paperwork requirements. Laffite illegally disposed of his plunder through merchant connections and luxury shops owned by him and his brother Pierre, on fashionable Royal Street in New Orleans, doing quite well. He also dealt in black ivory — slaves captured from Spanish ships, which he sold at \$1 a pound — bargain prices after the 1808 U.S. law forbade the importation or more slaves.

Although his privateer commission and letter of marque were “legitimate,” Laffite did represent competition to other powers who also did well for themselves preying on the Spaniards as they ran the Caribbean gauntlet with treasures they had in turn pillaged from native cultures in Central and South America. All attempts to run him off, however, were in vain. Even an 1814-foray by U.S. Commodore Patterson with a naval flotilla which captured Laffite’s ships, did not destroy Laffite’s business nor influence in the area.

Strange Bedfellows

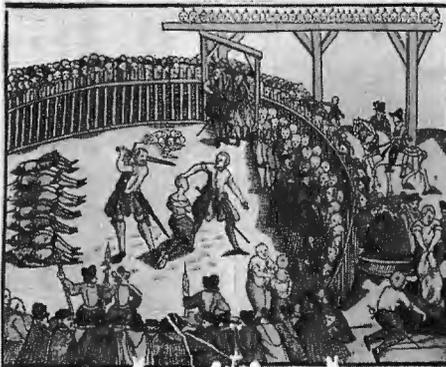
As the Baratarian gulf was an important approach to New Orleans, the British, as part of their operations against the city in 1814, offered Laffite 30,000 pounds and a commission in the Royal Navy for his help. Laffite, however, forwarded the papers on to the American authorities, offering to aid the Americans in exchange for a pardon of him and his men. His reply came in the form of the fleet of American gunboats that dashed into Laffite’s home port and captured the prizes anchored there, seized much of his goods, set fire to his



courtesy The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia



A pact with the devil: the British Royal commission of Captain Kidd, patriot privateer who ended up hanged as a pirate. (below) In the Middle Ages, pirates along the coast of Germany were dealt with perfunctorily. Here they are lined up and beheaded like poultry.



courtesy Brian Hall

best: harvesting Spanish galleons hauling New World booty back to Spain. Laffite gradually lost control of his men and in 1821 several of his lieutenants attacked American ships, and American pressure was brought to bear. Laffite thereupon hand-picked a crew of his best men to outfit his favorite vessel the *Pride*, and sailed into the realm of misty legends from whence he had come.

Blackbeard

Blackbeard was the professional monicker of English pirate Edward Teach (possibly Thatch), born at an unknown date in Bristol. Blackbeard turned to piracy after a successful career as a British privateer during the war of Spanish Succession (1701-13). He was first heard of as a pirate in 1716, and the following year he converted a captured French merchantman into a 40-gun warship *Queen Anne's Revenge*.

He soon became notorious for his outrages, attacking ships in the



The legendary Jean Laffite was merely a pirate until needed at Battle of New Orleans, where he became a patriot. Although short on detail, these woodcuts accurately illustrate boarding tactics and ruthlessness of pirates.



Sir Henry Morgan sacked Spanish Panama as a privateer, but on his return found peace had been declared with Spain — making him a pirate. He was tried as a pirate — but later released and knighted when peace with Spain fell apart.

Caribbean and the Atlantic Coast of North America from 1716 to 1718. Blackbeard operated from a base in North Carolina, with whose British Governor Charles Eden he split the proceeds. After a relatively short but profitable career terrorizing coastal settlements and shipping in Virginia and the Carolinas, he was finally killed on 22 November 1718 during an engagement with a British force sent from Virginia.

Blackbeard had established his base in a North Carolina inlet, forcibly collecting shipping tolls in Pamlico Sound, under his prize-sharing agreement with Governor Eden. At the request of a committee of Carolina planters, Alexander Spotswood, lieutenant governor of Virginia, sent a British naval force under Lieutenant Robert Maynard, who after a hard fight, succeeded in killing Teach; Blackbeard's body was decapitated and his head stuck on the bowsprit of his ship. The most famous aspect of Blackbeard, aside from the heavy black beard that earned him his nickname, was that his great buried treasure has never been found — if it did indeed exist.

Captain William Kidd

No other pirate so well illustrates that pirates were the stuff of legends, as does Captain Kidd. That this tragio-comic character would be the most highly romanticized of all pirate characters points to the delusion of attempting to learn from legends. That this initially high-minded man would end up sentenced to hang in public view until his body rotted away points to

the folly of attempting to deal with crooked politicians and kings. His story is that of a man with initially honorable, if vain, intentions who was forced to swim with sharks and ended up used, abused, and scapgoated at the end of a rope.

Kidd was born about 1645 at Greenock, Renfrew, Scotland and his early career is obscure. By 1689 Kidd was sailing as a legitimate privateer for Great Britain against the French in the West Indies and off the coast of North America. In 1690 he was an established sea captain and ship owner in New York City, where he also owned property. At various times he was commissioned by both New York and Massachusetts colonies as a privateer, to rid their coasts of enemy privateers.

In London, in 1695, Kidd received a royal commission to apprehend pirates molesting the ships of the East India company in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It was this final voyage that led to his downfall, and the aftermath of that voyage that put him so in the public spotlight that his true history became lost in the swirling mists of legend. An excellent short history by Bruce Heydt in *British Heritage* magazine recounted how the genuine Captain William Kidd, as contrasted the figure of legend, fell victim to hubris.

Royal Screwing

Kidd went to England in hopes of serving his king as captain of a Royal Navy warship. While he waited for a royal vessel to command, the Whig-dominated Board of Trade was considering a related problem — the pirates who were wreaking havoc with the trade between England and her Indian colonies. What the Crown needed, they decided, was an aggressive privateer who could accost the pirates on their own turf and terms — and perhaps prey on the occasional French merchantman when the opportunity presented itself. As luck would have it, Kidd had come hat-in-hand asking for a command as the Board came to that conclusion.

Kidd balked at accepting merely another commission as a privateer, but the officials pointedly questioned the loyalty of any British subject who would refuse to serve the king in any useful capacity and hinted suggestively that if Kidd should choose to return to America, then his ship might not clear customs. In the end, however, it was the withering carrot of hope for a Royal Navy commission that convinced Kidd he might as well, reluctantly, lead a privateer against the Red Sea pirates.

Since they had essentially shanghaied Kidd, the Board of Trade felt no great pressure to offer him any wage. And since they well understood how tempting it might be for even a true patriot with an armed ship to engage in a little lucrative side activity, to guarantee that Kidd would leave British or allied shipping alone, they demanded that he post a staggering 20,000-pound bond, which forced him to sell his own ship and find a private investor in order to meet his



Ann Bonny (left) and Mary Read were female pirates and part of Calico Jack Rackham's (inset) crew when captured; each was sentenced to death by admiralty court in Jamaica in 1720 (both pregnant at the time). They both cheated the hangman: One died in prison, one disappeared, thought to have escaped.



The infamous Blackbeard ravaged shipping and settlements along colonial Carolina coast, splitting with corrupt British governor. British task force finally got him and (inset), took his head home with them on the bowsprit (silver-plated "authentic" Blackbeard skulls are often seen on display from Carolinas to Virginia).

obligation to outfit a privateer. But Kidd's bloodletting by the Board of Trade, politicians and Royalty was not yet complete.

Kidd and his crew were to be paid only from their increasingly meager share of the proceeds of any booty they might capture: No booty — no pay. In addition, in any case they had to assume the whole cost of the entire voyage. If this does not convince the reader that Kidd was the victim of lowly pirates in high places, consider that the members of the board each skimmed an immodest percentage of the proceeds for themselves — so immodest indeed that they all signed the agreement with an alias — and King William himself grabbed 10% right off the top (he also signed with an alias).

Kidd spent several months preparing the newly built 34-gun ship the *Adventure Galley* and set sail the end of February 1696 — but the Crown was not through with him yet: He was barely underway when a Royal Navy warship stopped the privateer and press-ganged Kidd's best crewmen, leaving him only a skeleton crew, barely enough to sail the vessel, let alone wage war on experienced and well-armed pirates. Once again under sail, Kidd cut a course not for the Indian Ocean, but back to New York, where he recruited 85 new hands to replace those press-ganged by the Royal Navy.

From this point on, accounts vary. Kidd's version was that he simply attempted to fulfill his mission, ignoring the deadline but otherwise sticking to his end of the (bad) bargain. According to those who accused him, when he did not come up with the spoils (that they did not have the guts to steal themselves), he turned to piracy.

Good Kidd Gone Bad?

At his trial, Kidd portrayed himself as acting in good faith, torn between the need for placating a riotous crew demanding some

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A Law Unto Themselves

"Honor amongst thieves" is probably the original oxymoron, but not even a criminal enterprise can succeed without some sort of agreed-upon and enforced rules. Piracy was no exception. The typical pirate was not someone you would bring home to dinner, but they all realized they must work together. Disputes and treachery among pirates was not uncommon, but it would have been unproductive chaos for all concerned had they not worked within a framework of protocols. The various "articles" signed by pirates as they entered service on a pirate ship varied, but as all were based on pragmatism, they each contain similar elements.

These articles used by Bartholomew Roberts (Black Barty) were recorded in 1724 by Captain Charles Johnson:

- 1 — Every man has a vote in Affairs of Moment; has equal title to the fresh provisions, or strong liquors, at any time seized and use of them at pleasure, unless a scarcity make it necessary, for the good of all, to vote a retrenchment.
- 2 — Every man to be called fairly in turn, by list, on board of prizes, because, they were on these occasions allowed a shift of clothes: but, if they defrauded the company to the value of a dollar, in plate, jewels, or money, marooning was their punishment.
- 3 — No person to game at cards or dice, for money.
- 4 — The lights and candles to be put out at eight o'clock at night: If any of the crew, after that hour, still remained inclined for drinking, they were to do it on the open deck.
- 5 — To keep their piece, pistols, and cutlass clean, and fit for service.
- 6 — No boy or woman to be allowed amongst them. If any man were found seducing any of the latter sex, and carried her to sea, disguised, he was to suffer death.
- 7 — To desert the ship, or their quarters in battle, was punished with death, or marooning.
- 8 — No striking one another on board, but every man's quarrels to be ended on shore, at sword and pistol.
- 9 — No man to talk of breaking up their way of living, till each had shared a 1000. If in order to do this, any man should lose a limb, or become a cripple in their service, he was to have 800 dollars, out of the public stock, and for lesser hurts, proportionally.
- 10 — The captain and quartermaster to receive two shares of a prize, the master, boatswain and gunner, one share and a half, and other officers, one and a quarter.

Another example of pirate's articles are these by pirate John Phillips, as recorded by Philip Gosse in 1924:

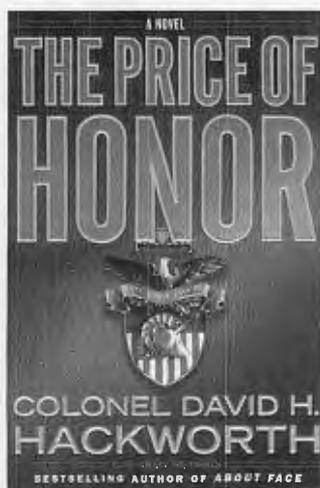
- 1 — Every man shall obey every civil command; the Captain shall have one full share and a half in all prizes, the master, carpenter, boatswain and gunner shall have one share and a quarter.
- 2 — If any man shall offer to run away, or keep any secret from the company, he shall be marooned with one bottle of powder, one bottle of water, one small arm and shot.
- 3 — If any man shall steal any thing in the company, or game, to the value of a piece of eight, he shall be marooned or shot.
- 4 — If at any time we should meet another marooner (that is, pirate), that man shall sign his articles without the consent of our company, shall suffer such punishment as the captain and the company shall think fit.
- 5 — That man that shall strike another while these articles are in force, shall receive Moses's law (that is, 40 stripes lacking one) on the bare back.
- 6 — That man that shall snap his arms, or smoke tobacco in the hold, without a cap to his pipe, or carry a candle lighted without a lantern, shall suffer the same punishment as in the former article.
- 7 — That man that shall not keep his arms clean, fit for engagement, or neglect his business, shall be cut off from his share, and suffer such other punishment as the Captain and the company shall think fit.
- 8 — If any man shall lose a joint in time of engagement, shall have 400 pieces of eight; if a limb, 800.
- 9 — If at any time you meet with a prudent woman, that man that offers to meddle with her, without her consent, shall suffer present death.

— F.T.

Pass In Review

The Price of Honor

By David Hackworth. 1999. Published by Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc., 1540 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. 489 pages. \$25.95. Reviewed by Carl Bernard.



David Hackworth's choice of genre, the novel, to honor the men with whom he fought in the nation's recent wars is particularly apt. The fighting done by a low-level infantry unit ties its men together in a special kind of bond outsiders can seldom understand well enough to share. Most readers of Hack's powerful description of the battle in which the besieged unit is destroyed will become submerged in a world that their ages, location, choices or just plain chance allowed most of them to escape. "Paying the blood tax" is a concept readily

understood by anyone who has had men he knows and loves killed with him. Yes, love is the only possible description for the regard that men whose brief time with one another often leads to some of them dying to keep their fellows living. But regardless of their individual backgrounds, all of Hackworth's readers will be gripped by grim circumstances that forever tempers the souls of those who fight at this level.

Pragmatically, the human costs described by the author are revealed in a fascinating set of circumstances drawn from those our newspapers describe nearly every day. The unconscionable promotion of irrelevant products by military industrialists who opportunistically keep their factories running (and their bonuses coming in) sets a stage. The book's "F-44" aircraft — whose imposition motivates this novel's villains — bears an uncanny resemblance to the acquisition of the F-22 dividing our Congress today. Pasting the real name of an American general on this villain is an unsubtle vengeance by the author that will not be lost on other veterans. Journalists who described this man as "The Butcher of the Delta" will not be surprised by the choice of names.

That soldiers in danger focus on thoughts of sex to maintain their sanity surprises no one. The role of women in the book and their relations to its active males goes well beyond this natural romantic focus. Making two of its heroines journalists combines persuasively the power of exotic sex and the more important power their profession acquires from exposure of real happenings in the decision centers of Washington. Blatant "cover-ups" of failures and faults is far more difficult now than it was in the past.

Jean Larteguy, the French author of novels about their "Revolutionary Wars" in Indochina and North Africa, was a worthy trailblazer for Hackworth. Both combine the qualities of real men and their actual circumstances to make fascinating, credible stories very real. The CG of the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg would not

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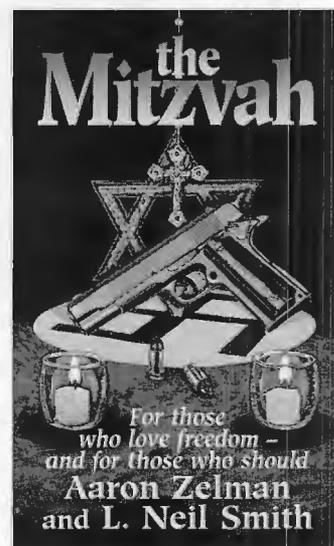
The Mitzvah

By Aaron Zelman and L. Neil Smith. 1999. Published by Mazel Freedom Press. Distributed by Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, Inc., P.O. Box 270143, Hartford, WI 53027; phone: 414-673-9745; fax: 414-673-9746; website: www.jpfo.org . 245 pages. \$10.95 postpaid. Reviewed by Peter G. Kokalis.

The *Talmud* explicitly states, "If someone comes to kill you, arise quickly and kill him." How many American Jews know this or would ever think to put this admonition into practice? Tragically, very few. The fact is that the vast majority of ethnic Jews in the United States are politically left-liberal, and also militantly opposed to the Second Amendment. I have always found this to be a strange aberration, as almost every Jew in Israel is walking around packing an UZI, M16 or, at the very least, a handgun — and, justifiably so. Several years ago, I asked two friends of mine, who were officers in the elite Golani Brigade, what they thought of the

American Jews' almost paranoiac aversion to both firearms and the concept of self-defense. Their response was, "They're sheep, but they send us money." My good friend, Aaron Zelman, and co-author of this fascinating novel, has referred to these anti-gun *landsleit* (countrymen) of his as possessed with a "railroad box car mentality." While this statement would surely infuriate these *hoplophobes* (a term Jeff Cooper coined long ago for those with a hysterical aversion to guns) no end, it doesn't come close to the dynamite packed into *The Mitzvah*.

The Hebrew word "mitzvah" can be taken to mean either a command or a good deed. Surprisingly, the central character of the novel is a 55-year-old Catholic priest. He is met unexpectedly at the story's opening in a cab at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago by an old man, totally unknown to him — a diamond broker from Antwerp, Belgium. Albert Mendelsohn not only packs a Dan Wesson .357 Magnum revolver (revolvers don't leave empty cases for the FBI to identify using its "Star-Fire" system), but he is, in fact, Monsignor John Greenwood's uncle. The totally anti-gun Greenwood was shoved into the doorway of a printshop of a Roman Catholic German couple at the age of two as his parents fled Frankfurt in the 1940s. What happens to John Greenwood, actually Abram Rosen, as he gradually accepts this revelation and slowly evolves into a pistol-packing priest, is the grist of this riveting novel's mill. Along the way we meet Jews who fought against the Holocaust with '98 Mausers, not just their mouths, a pro-gun *bar mitzvah* speech that enrages a congregation of knee-jerk liberals, and some frightening and sinister allegations about the anti-gun puke occupying the White House.



Continued on page 68

Southern Thunder Presents



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THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE/PARTS PRO TRUCKS CHAMPIONSHIP

Come to sunny St. Petersburg, Florida on 28 February 2000 for a day of heart-pounding, high-speed racing against SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, Contributing Editor John Donovan, and SOF TV star Tim Abell.



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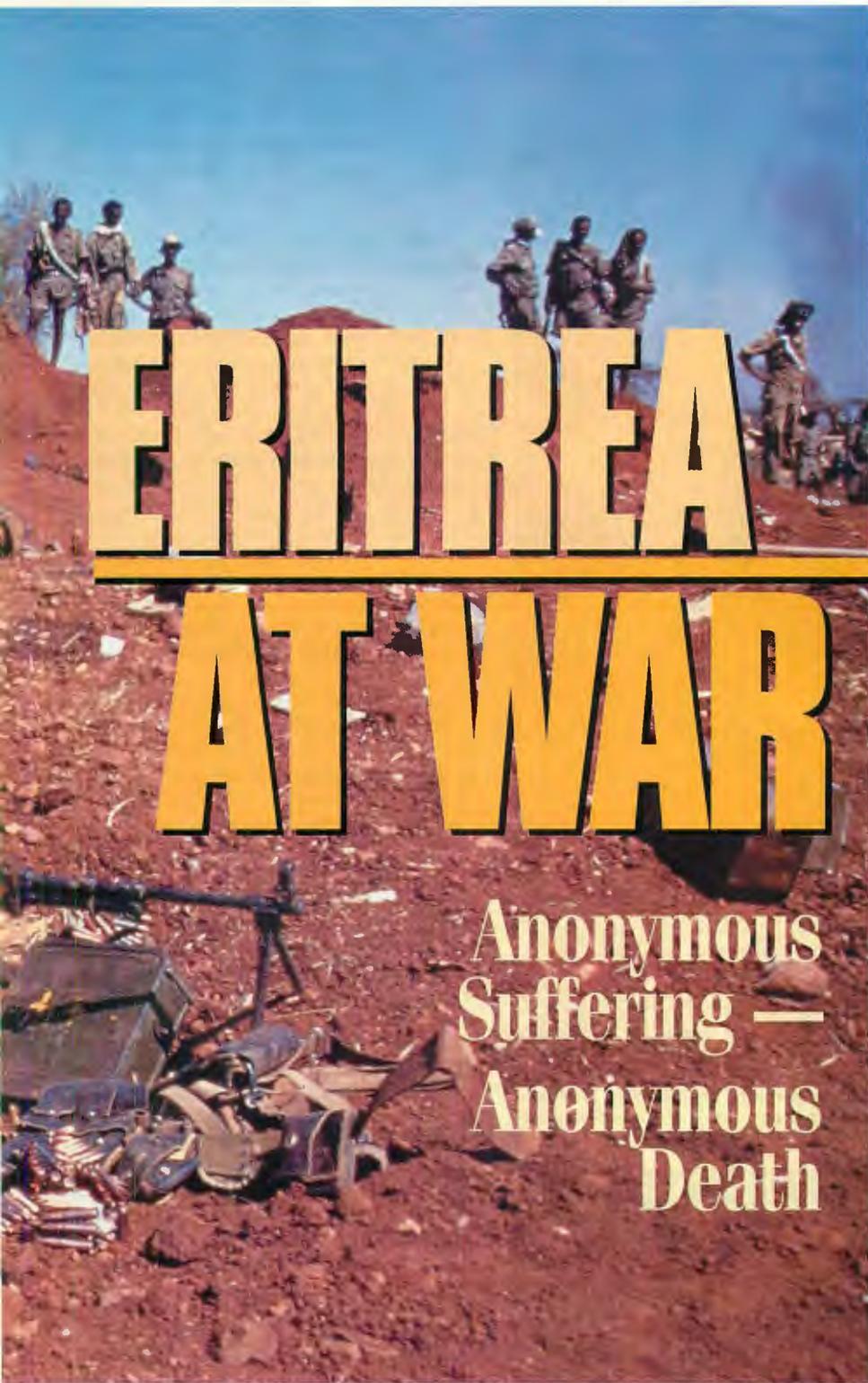
(clockwise from above) KIA Ethiopian soldiers who failed in attempt to rush Eritrean positions. Most were gunned down or taken out in hand-to-hand fighting near (and in) the Eritrean trenches.

Fin assembly of (perhaps) a 1,000-pound bomb looks on as Eritrean unit passes nearby.

Russian T54/5s live on as stationary artillery.

Elements of an Eritrean army unit near the Tzorona battle front. Most are ragtag-looking but extremely capable fighters. Uniforms don't make the soldier.





ERITREA

AT WAR

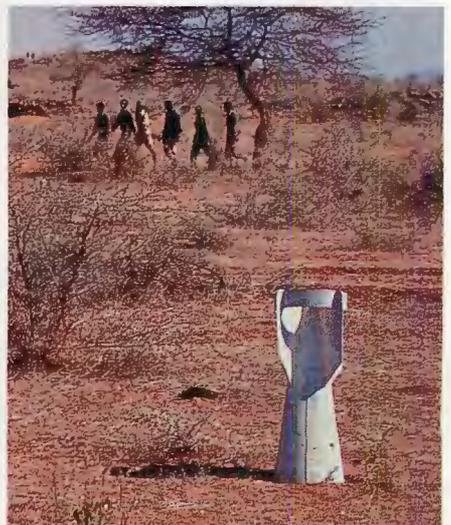
Anonymous
Suffering —
Anonymous
Death

Eritrea's Capital, Asmara, is like no other in Africa. There are no sounds of traffic, or smell of exhaust fumes. There are no beggars and no garbage. The mornings are crystal clear and the air is as fresh. From the hotel balcony, Asmara looks more like a provincial town somewhere in Italy than the capital of one of Africa's poorest countries. Italian-style architecture can be seen everywhere, from the gas station to office and government buildings that grace the palm-lined boulevards. On the streets, there is no sense of rush. People walk leisurely and ride bicycles, take time to chat with friends and enjoy cups of espresso at outdoor cafes. The day starts early with employees of the public and private sectors already at work by 8:00 a.m.

At nine o'clock in the morning my phone rings. A man from the Information

Text & Photos by
Norbert Schiller

Ministry asks if I want to join a group of journalists going to the battle front at Tzorona. Eritrea and neighboring Ethiopia have been at war over a border dispute since May 1998. Eritrea also claims that Ethiopia wants to topple its head of state, President Isayas Afworke. I accept to join the ministry's tour and rush to get ready. The planned time for departure is in a half-hour. Having already been in Asmara for two days, I have a hard time believing that there is a border war raging only a few hours away from the capital. Evening local newscasts and daily newsbreaks bring home the fighting. However, Asmara still seems like a peaceful sleepy town. No police, no sounds of fighter jets overhead and no air raid sirens. Most notably, there is no military presence. Life is so normal that the war seems to be fabricated in some Hollywood studio and put on TV for everyone's enjoyment.





Women soldiers can be seen alongside their male counterparts. Their bravery is second to none and many have exhibited extreme valor under enemy fire — since bullets aren't gender-sensitive.



I go down to the lobby and meet a small group of locally based journalists. We are about 15 in all, representing a patchwork of different media and nationalities. The ministry has arranged transport in four Toyota Land Cruisers. Outside, the temperature is cool, about 10 degrees Celsius. Asmara is 2,400 meters high so cooler temperatures this time of year are normal.

It doesn't take long for the Italian influence and the cool air to all but disappear. Outside the capital, the road slowly degenerates to a single lane full of potholes. We continue to wind our way down from the 'highlands' blasting the horn at every turn in hopes of alerting oncoming traffic. All of a sudden we stop. The drivers get out and cover the Land Cruisers with mud, from the roofs to the wheel hubs. In the end, all that is left are two holes on the front windshield allowing the driver to see. This tactic is used to prevent the 'enemy' from spotting a sunglare from the vehicles. From there on, the trip becomes unbearable. We turn off the main road and continue along a dirt track. Inside the vehicles there is nothing to see except for the mud-covered windows. We drop more than 1,000 meters and the heat inside is stifling. Opening the windows is not a security risk, but rather a health hazard. The dust kicked-up by the 4x4s in front makes it impossible to breathe. I close the window and hope that our driver will maneuver his way to the front of the pack. That doesn't happen, so we remain blindfolded in an oven racing over the African savanna.

Free Admission To A Theater Of War

The war zone is officially marked by two soldiers standing at the side of the road, Kalashnikovs in-hand. The first two vehicles race through paying no attention to the guards, which only infuriates them. We attempt to pass and the guards stop us at gunpoint and then tell us to turn around and go back to some village to get official permission. This permission comes in the form of a soldier who needs a ride to the front.

We catch up with the rest of the group having tea at a small roadside cafe. It turns out to be the last inhabited place. From there on, the villages we pass are all deserted.

As we near the flat plains that border Eritrea with Ethiopia, our drivers take separate paths for security reasons. For the first time since turning off the main road, we are able to roll down the windows and look out over the scenery. In the distance, columns of smoke can be seen rising into the sky, marking the spots where tanks or other military vehicles have been destroyed. A small mushroom cloud rises close by, but the sound from the explosion is drowned out by the roar of our engine. The battle theater is laid out before us. After making a few quick turns which put us back at the foot hills, we are now looking for the first time at units of the Eritrean armed forces. The Eritreans took like a ragtag army dressed in everything from Michael Jackson T-shirts to Rambo-style Fatigues. There are no uniforms here. But from my previous visits in 1981 and 1991 I remember them being highly efficient. I was impressed with the mobility and discipline these small units possessed. The Eritrean Army

is one of the few outfits where women fight alongside men. This haphazard way of dressing goes back to their pre-independence guerrilla days when blending in was more important than looking good.

We stop, get out and start walking up the side of a hill. Surrounding us on all the hills are members of the Eritrean Army. Shells continue to be heard as we make our way up. The sounds of explosions don't bother the soldiers who seem quite relaxed resting under bushes. Temperatures are now soaring to higher than 40 degrees Celsius. At the top of the hill we see our first prisoners of war. Actually, they tell us that they deserted the Ethiopian Army and made their way here to seek refuge from this "pointless war." More shells rain down and an officer instructs us to stay low and make our way down the other side of the hill. So down the other side we scramble, more fearful of tripping and breaking an ankle than being hit by a mortar. At the bottom there is a military camp where soldiers are seen washing themselves in giant drums filled with water. The surrounding landscape is dry and harsh. Water being scarce the soldiers use it frugally.

"Basking" In The Noonday Sun

Not knowing what to do or see next I seat myself under a bush to get out of the noontime heat. Suddenly an officer comes up and says that they are taking us to the front. We pile back into the Land Cruisers with a bunch of soldiers and race off over the barren landscape. We stop at the site where a fallen comrade is being buried. From there we are told that we must continue on foot. The commander divides us into small groups of five and we walk in a single file keeping well below the brush cover. Now, the sounds of war can be heard from all directions. We walk quickly and quietly behind the group in front. Some of the journalists who came previously told me that last time they got caught in crossfire and were lucky to have survived. One of those veterans even brought along a bulletproof vest, but because of the heat decided against wearing it.

We walk for over a kilometer in the direction of the smoke. As we near the battle front the sounds of crackling gunfire become more intense. In the distance we can see the Eritrean front lines with tanks behind an earth barrier extending as far as the eye can see. From where we are the earthen berm seems to be covered with soldiers sunning themselves. However, as we get closer I quickly realized my mistake.

The soldiers are dead. Hundreds of them are strewn over the hillside. Many of the bodies still have fresh blood oozing from their wounds.

The Ethiopians underestimated the strength of the Eritrean lines and stunned them with one massive offensive, only to be beaten back. All the Ethiopian casualties died at close-range. Dozens lay in the Eritrean trenches. According to the Eritreans this most recent battle lasted three days.

During the course of 45 minutes our hosts hustle us along the front lines to view the car-

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(above) Remains of the fierce three-day battle as Ethiopian troops await burial — likely in a common grave — as a BTR keeps silent vigil. (below) Ethiopian (left) who hid for eight hours beneath a torched tank stumbles in shock toward an Eritrean interrogator, who offered water to his enemy.



Omega PROVING ground

Armalite AR10

General George S. Patton had an eye for a rifle. He said the M1 .30-06 Garand was the finest battlefield instrument ever developed. If old "Blood and Guts" were around today he would probably recognize the Armalite AR10 .308 as the logical successor to that title.

The AR10 series of rifles as produced by Armalite, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 299, Geneseo, IL 61254; phone: 309-944-6939) is on the extreme forefront of practical rifle design. Mark Westrom, president of Armalite, donated to the Navajo Police an AR10A4S flat top, Special Purpose Rifle with a stainless match barrel and MILSTD 1913 base. It is complemented by a rigid Armalite one-piece mount and rings holding the very fine optic: Bausch and Lomb Elite 4000 2.5-10X scope supplied by Bushnell Sports Optics Worldwide (Dept. SOF, 9200 Cody St., Overland Park, KS 66214; phone: 800-423-3537).

The AR10 combines the best M16 technology and handling characteristics with the longer-range capability and terminal ballistics of the M14. Of course, battle rifles with two-piece stocks may be less useful in close-quarters than an M1 or M14 with a bayonet attached. But the impact of improved indirect fire weapons and high-tech air-to-ground systems has all but eliminated the need for the bayonet and the buttstroke in modern warfare. When it comes to accurately launching bullets, the basic M16 design, particularly in .308 caliber, is difficult to beat.

The terrain and conditions in which the Navajo Police operate more resemble military operational circumstances than those of urban police forces. The terrain is open and most of the population lives in remote areas on higher terrain. They can see cops coming from far away. In addition, it is the rifle, not the handgun, which is the favorite weapon on the reservation. And the incidence of violent crime, particularly murder, is considerably higher on the reservation than it is elsewhere.

It is at ranges far beyond the buttstroke and bayonet that the AR10 begins to show its capabilities both as a battlefield instrument and as

a law enforcement tool of rapid incapacitation. According to a study by Dr. Gary Roberts, the M16/AR15 firing the best .223 loads has significantly reduced wounding capacity beyond 150-200 yards. However, mechanics of semiauto recoil absorption, rapid self-loading and larger magazine capacity allow the AR shooter to recover faster and engage more targets or more easily re-engage the same one.

At ranges much beyond 500 yards, the longer intervals required for target identification and selection make recovery from the shot far less important. What is important at those ranges is precise accuracy.

Westrom says that his AR10A4 rifles are guaranteed to shoot 1.5 minute of angle. That is fairly modest. The USMC accuracy spec for its very well-built bolt-action sniper rifles is 1 MOA. Their reasoning is that a man is about 36 inches from nose to crotch and shooters have found that with the right ammunition, like Black Hills' 168-grain match, the AR10A4 can meet the very best law enforcement bolt-action, countersniper rifle specification of .5 MOA.

One of the reasons the Armalite shoots so well is because Westrom has spent a great deal of time with his chest in the gravel shooting in competition. He is not merely someone who decided to try to turn a profit in the gun business, he is a distinguished rifleman and a career Army officer who spent much of his career working on building better M16s at the Rock Island Arsenal. The accuracy of all Armalite rifles is testament to his approach to quality control. Armalite advertises "unparalleled quality" and backs that claim by guaranteeing their rifles for the life of the purchaser.

Some of the most die-hard M16-haters have come to admire the AR10. Among those is Major Dick Culver, USMC (Ret.), the "daddy" (as he describes it) of the Marine Corps Scout Sniper School. Culver says that even after the problems with the M16 were fixed, the result "... left us saddled with a service rifle that shoots a cartridge not powerful enough to be used on anything larger than ground hogs according to most state hunting laws. The lat-



est version is almost as heavy as the M14 without any of the M14's redeeming features."

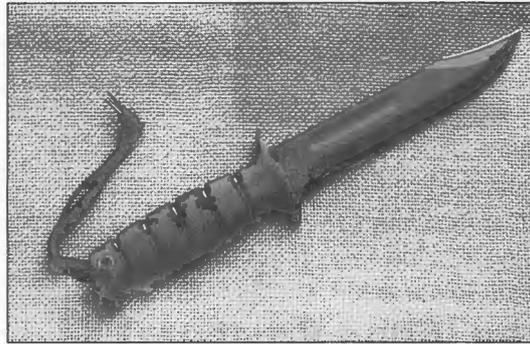
What does Culver say about the AR10? "I'm fascinated with the concept! It shoots better out of the box than the M14, takes less armorer maintenance and delivers far better terminal ballistics than any available .223 or 5.56 round. Since the M14 is now a footnote in history, the AR10A2 would be the logical successor. It would certainly be my choice of all the currently available service-type rifles."

Culver, who spends a great deal of his retired time teaching countersniper techniques to law enforcement officers, says that the AR10 "in the flat-top design with the stainless steel barrel is an excellent law enforcement countersniper rifle and requires much less maintenance to guarantee success of the mission. It is a most excellent rifle in my opinion. If I were going to form a sniper school today, I would seriously consider the Armalite AR10A4S as one of the top choices. Personally? A flat-topped AR10 is a 'gotta have.'"

— John Hogan

Ontario's SP2 Air Force Survival Knife

A worthwhile addition to Ontario's new Spec Plus line is their *Air Force Survival* knife. The issue USAF survival knife has long been one of the first ones I'd throw in a field kit, as it was about the right spec for the common cutting and light sawing jobs encountered on the average non-specific-mission field junket. Although a practical design, the old GI model with its leather-washer handle was subject to rot, and slippery when wet, and when using the saw on the back of the blade, the steel cross guard would work blisters in no time.



Ontario has gone one-up on the original design, retaining the good blade configuration but upgrading the handle with molded Kraton of superior form and ergonomics, and coating the blade with black 1095 powder epoxy. This coating is more than corrosion resistance: Your hands are much less likely to freeze to it, and it makes the knife quieter in use, and easier to clean than the GI phosphate finish.

The metal cross guard on the original model has been replaced by a molded feature that is part of the grip. This is far more comfortable on a hard thrust or when sawing, and although it could be cut, it will never let your hand on the blade as it is genuinely tough stuff. The full-tang feature has been retained, and over-molded in

Kraton that has a grooved, more flat shape with a pronounced belly that helps the tool stay oriented in the hand. The butt now features a brass-lined lanyard hole, handy for environs or states of sobriety conducive to dropping things.

The blade is of 3/16" carbon steel, and the saw teeth on the back are of a straight-chisel pattern that cut on the forward stroke, suitable for worrying one's way out of aircraft or sawing small poles for shelter, etc. The powder epoxy coating is abrasion resistant, and

the only places it wore off on our tests were the points of the saw portion, and the old GI coating would have worn there as well. On the test model we received, the top edge of the clip-point blade was sharpened as well as the blade itself, a worthwhile feature when you have to pound the point in to start a cut. The SP2 comes in a tough leather and Cordura sheath.

The SP2 Air Force is a definite one-up on the original GI, and the originals we've owned always did what we asked. As the rest of the Spec Plus line, The Air Force is good gear at a good price.

Ontario Knife Company, Dept. SOF, 26 Empire St., Franklinville, NY 14737; phone: 716-676-5527; fax: 716-676-5535.

— Don McLean

Pocket ChainSaw

There is something inherently *American* about cutting down a tree (an observation we make with clear conscience, having spent several seasons in the foggy woods of the Northwest with a hoe-dad and canvas bag of seedlings, planting tens of thousands of trees for the next generation). There is also something seminally 'Merican about a love of tools, too, so we were predisposed to like a handy tool that is made to cut trees, like the Supreme Products' Pocket ChainSaw.

We say handy in the sense it comes in a screw-top, round tin about the size of a can of snuice, to ride discreetly in your pack, pocket or glove box until needed to get a windfall out of the road or fall some poles for shelter or firewood. The maker bills this handy item as the "world's fastest-cutting pocket saw" and it may well be. We used to carry a Canadian Forces surplus item of similar concept that came in a heavy leather belt pouch and weighed a couple pounds — but the Pocket ChainSaw weighs a fraction and does more work for less effort. This is not an industrial item you'd choose to work with for an eight-hour shift, but for occasional or emergency use it can be worth its weight in gold.

When we stumbled across its maker at the SHOT Show, he was busily sawing up — with little apparent effort — some bone-dry 4x4 timbers. The ability to cut dry wood is important, because that's what you want for a fire, and if all you have is a Bowie or a small



hand-axe to cut firewood you'll tend to cut only small stuff — and spend all night feeding your twigs into the fire every few minutes. Far better to cut a few logs of decent dimension so you can bank the fire and get some sleep.

Unlike some competing designs that are adapted from a chainsaw chain, the Pocket ChainSaw cuts with little effort, and much faster. Since it cuts in both directions, no time (or work) is spent returning the blade without getting any work done. It also cuts around corners, and since the tooth design and thin kerf require relatively little effort, if you loop the blade around the log

being cut, you are actually cutting on three sides at once.

With an overall length of 28 inches and 124 bidirectional teeth, one could in theory cut a 24-inch log if he had the patience and somebody to pull on the other end; it will cut a green 3-inch log in 10 seconds or less. Intended capacity is somewhere in between. The heat-treated steel teeth are resharpenable. Gloves help a lot for extended use, as does running a short stick through the end loops for a T-handle. With a length of 550 cord on each end, the unit can be thrown over a limb for high cutting. It is the handiest business we ever tried for cutting off a buried tree root (dig a tunnel for it, and cut from the bottom up).

And, it's Y2K compliant.

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— Don McLean

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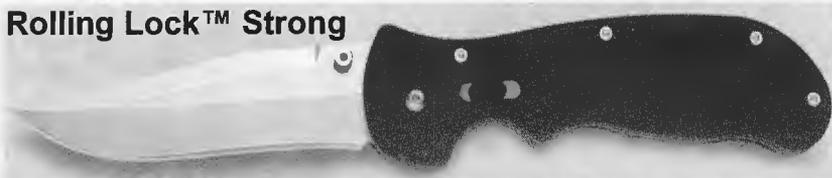
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The Price Of Honor

Continued from page 60

allow his instructors to make the novels of Larteguy (*The Centurions; The Praetorions*) required reading for his students. There was "too much sex" in them. Explaining this fault to our students got these very valuable guides to a new kind of war sold out each month at the local bookstore. Sadly, our decision makers of that day were generally immune to new concepts, and we went into an unwinnable war with a particularly 'inappropriate force.

The political and operational dimensions of the Operations Other Than War Hackworth is describing so realistically will be much less mystifying to the readers of his work than to those not exposed to it. Example: The page "missing" from a central document in this book is much like the missing page from the FBI's report on Waco, which has just become a public matter. His description of the impotence of air power in close combat — the "aimed fire war" described by General Ridgway — and the continued dedication of our chiefs to its use in Kosovo, speak to a potent possibility of providing readers of his novel a more realistic perception of the world in which we live. Hackworth believes each soldier has a limited reservoir of courage that can be used up. This happens to one of his central figures, misidentified by the villain flying a mile high over a critical combat action. The villain is as mistaken here about what actually happened below them as our pilots flying two miles higher than this were in Kosovo.

"Page-turner" is an overworked term used to promote books. It is appropriate, however, for this one. Most readers will not have the combat experience to properly appreciate what is being said. Almost all of them, however, have enough experience with sex that the well placed military and political lessons mixed with it will get somewhere into their consciousness.

The Mitzvah

Continued from page 60

Is *The Mitzvah* a pro-gun polemic? Of course it is. But anti-gun polemics are printed on an almost daily basis on the front pages of the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and countless other newspapers, as well as being broadcast on the major television networks. Are only liberals allowed to shower us with their vicious, demonizing anti-gun doctrine? They'd like that, wouldn't they? I'm so convinced that *The Mitzvah* will enrage the left into an apoplectic frenzy that I personally purchased ten copies to distribute. So far, I've given six super libs major chest pains. Highly recommended for both those of us who really know what freedom means and those who lost track of it somewhere along the way to their socialist utopias. ✘

Cowboy Shooting

Continued from page 43

9, Phoenix, AZ 85015; phone: 602-547-1942) is both a well-known professional fast-draw artist and a highly regarded single-action-revolver pistolsmith who smoothes up these kinds of wheel guns for some of the top Cowboy Action Shooting stars.

Our Cavalry Model required some work on the latch mechanism, but the Wells Fargo Model and New Model Russian Revolver needed only action work and tuning. All three now feature trigger pull weights of 2.5 to 2.75 pounds — maybe too light for gunfighting, but just right for competition shooting.

The New Model Russian revolver has a raised area at the top of the back strap to inhibit rotation of the revolver during recoil and a rounded butt. These changes were stipulated by General Gorloff's assistant, Captain Ordinetz, together with the distinctive finger rest at the bottom of the trigger guard. While I have trouble getting used to the finger rest, the New Model Russian revolver's grip frame is, for me, more comfortable than that of the Schofield, which is a bit too small for my hand.

Overall, however, both the Schofield and New Model Russian revolvers are both accurate and exhibit a low recoil impulse due primarily to their substantial weight. For rapid target acquisition, I prefer the U-notch rear sight on the New Model Russian to the Schofield's V-notch.

There were no problems of any kind during *SOF's* test and evaluation of these revolvers. They can be highly recommended as authentic reproductions of historic small arms. It remains to be seen how well the latch mechanisms on these wheel guns will hold up under the rigors of Cowboy Action Shooting competition. The solid frame-and-barrel design of the Colt Single Action Army revolver is in comparison an already proven performer in that arena. ☒

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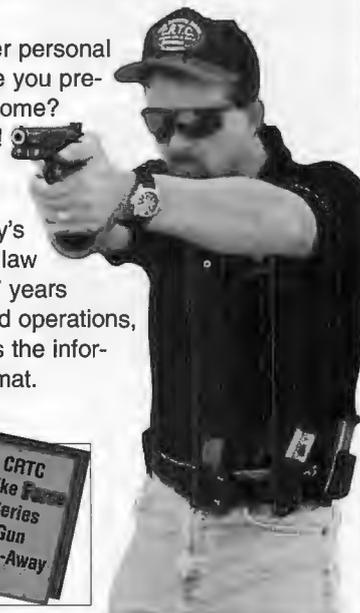
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Eritrea At War

Continued from page 65

nage that they had bestowed on the Ethiopian attackers. Beyond the Eritrean defense line lay a blackened ground covered with burning tanks and more charred bodies. We are warned not to venture out there as the area had been sowed with anti-tank mines. Surprisingly there is no smell of death that usually surrounds battle areas. I take time to take as many photos as possible. Suddenly I catch someone in my lens staggering towards me from the minefield. The soldier appears in a state of shock; he's covered in grease, dirt and blood. He wanders toward our group and collapses. An Eritrean officer walks over to him, picks him up with the help of a few soldiers, asks him a few questions and then instructs the soldiers to give him water. It turns out that he is an Ethiopian soldier and had been hiding under a torched tank for eight hours. He must have seen our group of foreigners and felt it safe to come out of hiding.

The carnage I saw during my short stay at the front was indescribable. The dead far outnumbered the living. It reminded me of my experiences during the Iran-Iraq war where an estimated million people died in the course of eight years. Like the Persian Gulf war, this conflict had no regard for the dead. It didn't make a difference whether the soldier had identification or not. The names of the deceased were rarely recorded. When the bodies began to smell they were covered with disinfectant and dumped into a common grave, no names attached. Back home, if the families were lucky they might receive a form letter from the government announcing that their son died a brave soldier defending his homeland.

Our time at the front was coming to an end. Fearful of an imminent counterattack, the Eritreans decide to scurry us out of the area. They gathered us and we leave in the same small groups, walking single file and using the treeline as concealment.

Back in the Land Cruisers we raced over the same ground that we had covered only hours before, past deserted villages, military patrols and back to civilization. We finally stop at the first inhabited village. There at the same roadside cafe in the middle of nowhere with no running water or electricity a waiter comes up and asks me what I want to drink. Still dazed from the sites and sounds of battle, I look up and mumbled, "Beer." Then, realizing how ridiculous my order is, I ask instead for tea. A few moments later, the waiter returns with a cup of tea in one hand and a bottle of beer in the other. In disbelief I grab for the beer and am surprised to feel the chill that meets my hand.

Norbert Schiller has long worked as a photographer for Der Spiegel, AP, Time and Newsweek, among others, mainly in the Middle East. ☒



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aren't going to go away. Drugs aren't particularly a black problem. Go to the bleak fourth-generation welfare towns on the south side of Chicago — Markham, Robbins, Ford Heights — and watch the open-air drug markets. The dealers are all black. The customers are almost entirely white, mostly downscale. The rich white lawyers in the pricey suburbs do lots of drugs, but it's white powdered cocaine, not crack, and they don't buy from dime-rockers in Robbins. Hispanics grow the stuff and import it. Talk to cops in pure white suburbs about what drugs are available in the high schools. Answer: all of them. Ask your 16-year-old daughter. She knows as much about drugs as the hippies in the Haight did in 1972. It's not blacks. It's all of us.

How dangerous is police work? Not as much as cops like to think. Anybody who has been in a real firefight — maybe outside of Danang with mortars coming in like rain and a lot of full-auto — has seen more incoming in 10 minutes than the NYPD will see in a decade. But you can get killed, and it only takes once if it's you. And you never know when it's going to come. A cop I met in Arlington, Va., recently went with his partner into an alley to check on some guy who was painting his car there. It was really a nuisance call. Turns out the guy was a two-time loser painting a stolen car. Strike three for him. Life without parole. They get hard to deal with when that happens.

Very friendly, the cop walked to the car to get the registration. The bad guy didn't have it, so he turned and shot one of the officers with a nine. Completely unexpected. The cop's vest saved him. The other cop, a rookie, drew fast so the bad guy didn't get off a lot more shots. I'm not sure where the funeral was held. It can happen any time, which is why this reporter wears a level-three vest with a trauma plate.

Hidden Danger

Two of the most dangerous situations for cops don't seem especially dicey. One is the traffic stop. The cop thinks he's stopping some guy for a missing taillight. The guy is in fact a drug mule with a big load or he's wanted on a murder warrant and looking at serious time. He isn't going to get caught, and he doesn't know why he's being stopped. Think how long it doesn't take to open a car door with your left hand, turn to lean out, and fire with your right hand. That's why at night the cop will carefully point his spotlight at the side-view mirror of the stopped car. He wants to blind the driver. It's also why cops hate tinted glass; they can't see what the occupants are doing. It's not a fun feeling to walk up on a dirtball van with dark glass in a bad section of town.

Domestic disputes are the worst. Husbands and wives get really emotional

and crazy. All sorts of powerful instincts are involved. What happens is that the woman calls the cops to come get her husband. The cops show up. She wants him arrested, she says. "Are you sure?" ask the cops. "Yes, I hate the sonofabitch, take him." "You sure, lady?" "Yes, yes, take him, I'll file charges." So they hook him up, and the wife comes screaming at them with a knife, yelling, "Get your goddam hands off my man!" No, it doesn't make sense. It just happens.

Warrant Service

High-risk warrant service is another chancy undertaking. Recently, I did one with the Cook County Sheriff's Police near Chicago. The SWAT team there is full-time, well-trained, and good. A lot of departments make the mistake of thinking that six part-time guys with SWAT jackets are a SWAT team. Not in this jurisdiction. The target was a drug dealers' house in the suburbs. These ops are planned like military operations. As often happens, the cops had a confidential informant who had told them the layout of the house and where guns might be and so on. If department of public works has blueprints for a building, they'll get them.

So at the station a dozen guys in Ninja gear and a lady cop with a dope dog spent an hour going over diagrams of the house, where to put the blocking teams in case the bad guys leaked out the windows (on the corners, so they could see two walls at once), the approach (hedges gave cover), whether the door was locked, whether the frame was soft enough for a Hydro-Ram to spread it if the battering ram didn't work, whether kids were around (bad news), and who would shoot the dog that lived there if it proved hostile. (It's hard to work with 90 pounds of Rottweiler hanging from your carotids.)

The idea is to achieve complete surprise, paralyze the bad guys with the explosive suddenness of the entry — they're watching TV when "crash," black-suited guys with subguns erupt into the room. The flashbang — an explosive pyrotechnic device that makes a tremendous bang and violent flash — is used sometimes to stun the targets. We got in the vehicles and set out. It's funny. You'd think there'd be drama and excitement in a tactical forced entry. Not exactly. The cars rolled quietly up, the teams were out in two seconds, the ram hit the door — *Blam!* "Getdowngetdowngetdown NOW! Downdowngetdown!" Then, "Clear! Clear! Clear! Clear!" It was over in 30 seconds. Done right, they all are. Three Hispanic guys were in cuffs on the floor and the dog came in to find the dope. Which he did. Then the cop I was staying with, a buddy from way back, and I went to his place in the nice suburbs, where he has a swell wife and a nice pooch and people don't kill each other. It was like leaving a horror movie and walking into the sunlight.

Fred Reed is a longtime SOF correspondent. ✖



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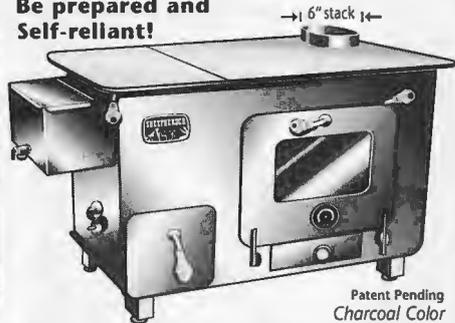
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Gunfighting Today...

Continued from page 53

and two with the rifle. To achieve any success whatever on the steel plate targets you must apply the concept of "negative lead" together with the same type of follow-through required with sporting clays. There are three firing positions on the stagecoach: the "Hondo" position on top of the coach (the least stable), shotgun (next to the "driver") and from inside the coach.

Villa Tormenta

A sign on the gate leading to "Villa Tormenta" states "Por Estas Puertas Pasan Los Mejores Vaqueros" ("Through these gates pass the best cowboys."). There are six stages in the "Villa Tormenta:" Alpine Restaurant, Flagler Grain Merchants, The Bridge, OK Corral, Open Range and Bucket of Blood. The stages are similar to those found in Cowboy Action Shooting, with the exception that you are not allowed to miss. If you do, you continue shooting at the plate until you strike it, which, of course, simulates the reality of a real gunfight. Furthermore, you usually must reload as you work your way through the stage. In every course I have ever taken at Thunder Ranch Clint has always stressed, "Don't shoot fast, shoot good."

Thursday evening we fired revolvers on the Red Range with movement, using both ambient light and kerosene lanterns to illuminate the targets as best as possible. Throughout the evening we continually ejected empty cases and loaded fresh rounds using tactile procedures only with the revolver always facing downrange and with visible focus on the potential threat. With no flashlights or tritium self-luminous sights, hit potential slides downward drastically in the dark.

On Friday, between running stages in "Villa Tormenta," everyone made two revolver runs on the stagecoach in the morning and two runs with the weapon of choice in the afternoon. At first thought it might seem that the shotgun would be ideal for this type of shooting, however, most did better with either the revolver or rifle. Go figure.

This is one of Thunder Ranch's most fascinating courses. It was my seventh time at TR and I certainly know better than most the type of dedication you need to bring there. If you will only try to match the kind of intense effort Clint Smith himself focuses on Thunder Ranch's classes, the rewards can be very high for you. In addition, Pre-1900 is so much fun, you might just fall over laughing several times a day. You can't ask for anything more.

Remember, partners, "If you're not shootin', you should be loadin'. If you're not loadin', you should be movin'. If you're not movin', someone's gonna cut your head off and put it on a stick." ☒

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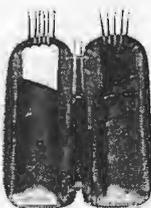
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I Was There

Continued from page 29

pounding out round after round. But they seemed to have zero effect as the Chinese 122s continued to impact.

"Keep your head down, Frenchie!" Zippo screamed as ran back to the bunker. "These bastards will kill ya!"

"I still have many things to do before I die," I yelled back, trying to keep up my bravado.

Zippo considered having some ammo and artillery rounds airdropped but nixed the idea. Our camp was small and the enemy didn't need any charity resupplies.

All day I darted about the camp snapping as many photos as I could. The pounding dragged on, and on. Carlson was understandably down — he kept thinking of his wife awaiting in him Bangkok — but he accompanied me as we scurried around snagging food and water to take back to the command bunker.

Zippo was on the radio ordering harsh action: He was calling in air and artillery to destroy the French house and swimming pool, which just two days before had been so tranquil.

"Don't do it, Zippo! If you destroy the house of Monsieur Godell, you are going to destroy the wine cellar!"

Smiling, he repeated, "Destroy it."

Later I learned he had made the correct decision. The house and pool area were swarming with VC mortar teams.

American jets zoomed by above us while FACs and choppers circled and maneuvered on the periphery of the battle zone.

All the while, the relentless shelling wore on. We were told that VC and NVA were all around us, in the rubber trees, along the airstrip. I still didn't understand why the Americans were not bombing the rubber plantation!

At dusk, I decided to venture out again. The dispensary was packed with the dead and dying. Our base was more than half-destroyed. The ground constantly shook, as if some persistent earthquake were occurring.

Zippo then got word that tanks were en route.

"You're gonna see another Dien Bien Phu, Frenchie."

"No," I said, "a second Pearl Harbor."

At 0300, on 6 April, the shelling stuttered to a halt. Worn out, we fell into a fitful sleep on the hard floor of our command bunker — perhaps our last night on earth.

Next month, the battle continues with horrific cost. Then we fast forward to 1999, when Frenchie and Zippo revisit the battle zone.

Yves-Michel Dumond resides in England. ✕

Russian Roulette

Continued from page 47

ministry to direct the operation — so passing on the responsibility — while interior ministry officers insisted the southern sector was the army's responsibility."

We spent our last few days in Chechnya attempting to hitch a ride along with the first OMON troops to enter Gudermes. Every day we'd drive up to the formations of armor, artillery and infantry that surrounded the city to find a friendly platoon commander willing to risk his commission by allowing us to go TDY with him.

We were nearing the end of our possibilities when luck found us, and it was announced that Chechen forces holding Gudermes agreed to quit the city and allow the Russians to occupy it without having to fight door-to-door.

This was the chance we had waited for, and after presenting a small gift of \$200 and a Leatherman Tool, we were crushed into the rear of a Russian Army mini-van between three very drunk interior ministry officers and a petty Kremlin official who refused to speak with us all the way.

Our final stop was a partially destroyed schoolhouse on Gudermes' outskirts, which was to act as division headquarters once everyone arrived.

We were told that if we drove down a road toward a small village near Gudermes there would be a contingent of Russian Army tankers who would gladly make us at home.

We arranged for a ride, and 5 miles down the road we were nearly killed by the fastest-wheeled BMP we'd ever seen in our lives as it came within inches of our car.

Ambushing Us

What greeted us around the corner nearly made our blood freeze over. The BMP was now across the road with five very mean-looking Russian Army commandos blocking our way. A bullet-riddled Russian Army staff car stood smashed into a barbed-wire fence alongside the road and two white-smocked Russian soldiers were dragging along a very stunned and bloody Russian militiaman who looked to have just been shot. Another uniformed body was slumped half out of the car's open door. A huge red puddle was staining the half-inch of snow that had fallen the evening before.

A single bullet crack came over our heads, causing everyone to snap to attention.

"Get out of the way!" screamed one of the commandos. "Leave. Now!"

"It's an ambush," our driver told us, as we quickly scrambled back into the car and ordered him to drive back towards the Ingushetian border. There would be plenty more fighting to cover in Chechnya, we told ourselves. Sooner or later, we'd be back.

Mark H. Milstein is SOF's longtime Senior Foreign Correspondent. ✕



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booty, and honoring his commission. He testified that by the time he reached the coast of Africa his men were close to mutiny and, starved for a rich victim, forced him to attack a fleet of 15 Indian merchantmen. He steered toward the fleet but broke off engagement and fled upon finding them escorted by two armed Dutch ships and a Royal Navy vessel. A month later he stopped a Moorish ship, only to find her commanded by an English captain, and thus not a legitimate prize, although he detained the captain and his Portuguese mate to serve as pilots.

Continuing on in a vein that would please any Hollywood comedy director, Kidd pursued still another possible prize, some accounts say it was under a Dutch flag, only to find a fellow New Yorker in command. He allowed the ship to go on unmolested, he would later testify, because he had "no commission to take any but the King's enemies and pirates." Prosecution for the Crown would later counter that he let the ship go free because its captain proved to be a fellow pirate. Historical accounts other than his own, if true, would cast doubt on the demeanor he tried to portray, as when he arrived off the Comorros in February 1697, and still had not found a quarry in August, he made an unsuccessful attack on a small flotilla of ships carrying Mocha coffee from Yemen. He later finally succeeded in capturing several similar small ones.

At any rate, when the Dutch merchantman sailed away unharmed a violent argument broke out on the *Adventure Galley* over whether this potential prize should have been allowed to go free. Conflicting accounts obscure the details, but all agreed that in a bruhaha with his gunner William Moore, Kidd crowned him with a wooden bucket and he subsequently died — providing the British prosecution with a basis for a charge of murder.

How To Apprise A Prize?

Nearly a full year after he had been expected to return to New York, Kidd finally came upon what seemed like his bonanza, but it proved to be a mixed blessing, which gives a good illustration of how flexible and perplexing were the legal guidelines that applied to privateers. This merchantman was a real tar-baby: It was owned by Indians, carrying Persian cargo, with a Moorish crew and an English captain. All sailed together, Kidd claimed, under a French pass. Ahah! The pass was crucial to the matter. If it existed, it provided undeniable proof that the *Quedah Merchant* was a legitimate prize. At trial, Kidd insisted the pass had been among the papers that had been taken from him following his arrest, but the court denied his pleas to be given

access to them. Kidd produced witnesses who claimed to have seen the pass, but the Crown's court, at full steam on a railroad job, simply ignored the testimony.

If taken lawfully, the *Queddah Merchant's* cargo of silk, gold, jewels, sugar and guns could have compensated Kidd's sponsors for his over-extended voyage, and it could have pulled Kidd's chestnuts out of the fire. But rather than head for New York with the prize, Kidd set sail for St. Mary's, Madagascar, an infamous pirate

Antonio and sailed to New York City, where he tried to persuade the Earl of Bellomont, then colonial governor, of his innocence.

Get A Rope

Since English law did not allow pirates to be tried in the colonies, Kidd was taken back to England. Unfortunately, the fallout from his ill-fated trip preceded him to London. The identity of his crooked Whig sponsors became public in 1698, and the revelation led to an uproar over the government's habit of making personal profits from the commissioning of privateers. The Tory opposition in Parliament wanted to censure and/or impeach leading Whig lords, but the Whigs closed ranks and voted them down.

In Kidd, the Tories saw a potential ally who could provide the impetus necessary to bring down the Whig ministry, if he would but reveal all details of his commission and repudiate the Board of Trade. Whigs, on the other hand, had no interest in allowing the matter to be researched too deeply, and rather than let a useful scapegoat go free, they impeded Kidd's defense by confiscating all his papers, and insisting all his actions had been un-sanctioned.

Kidd was denied counsel — even a clear statement of the charges against him. When the trial began, he learned to his surprise that in addition to five counts of piracy, he stood accused of the murder of William Moore, whom he had dispatched with the bucket. Quickly railroaded, Kidd was sentenced at Execution Dock, his sentence calling for his body to remain swinging in public view until it rotted away.

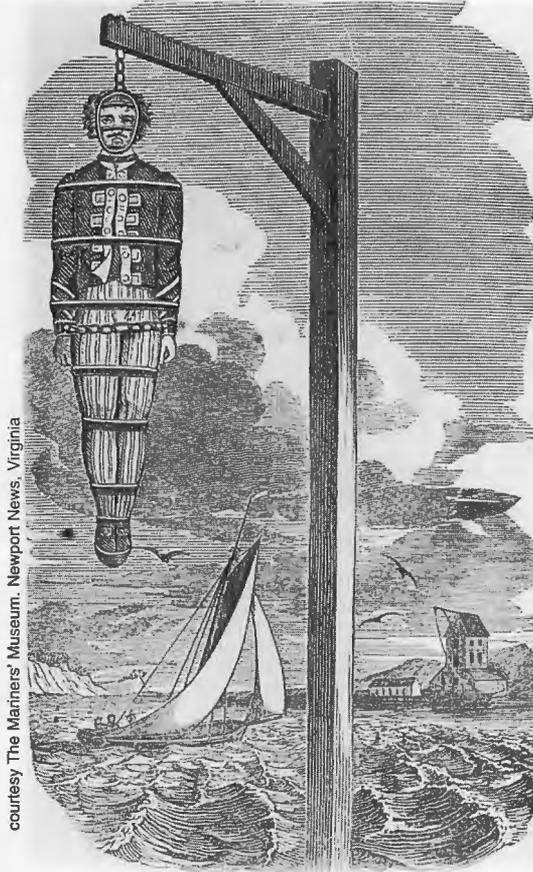
Perhaps the most accurate judging of Kidd's life was made by writer Harold Thompson in 1940, when he described Kidd as "a man neither very good nor very bad, the fool of fortune and the tool of politicians, a pirate in spite of himself."

Thus died Captain Kidd, in a manner not unlike piracy itself, when he had become neither profitable nor politically expedient for the movers and shakers of commerce and politicians at large.

The lives and times of these most notorious pirates serve to illustrate in microcosm the macrocosm of the early pirate phenomenon. Of the thousands who plied this illegitimate craft upon the high seas, nearly all squandered their ill-gotten gains and died in ignominy. Like the slave trade, piracy was overrun by history when it exceeded the tolerance of the world at large.

But piracy upon the high seas, in the air and on land-trade routes, is realizing a dramatic comeback. Next month we will examine these new pirates, their victims and prizes, and where they work — then the who-and-how of modern antipiracy and counterpiracy enterprises.

Frank Hopkins is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕



courtesy The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia

Captain Kidd, disappointing — and even worse, embarrassing — his powdered-wig British sponsors, was sentenced as a pirate to hang in chains until his corpse rotted away.

haven. When he arrived, a single undermanned pirate ship, which should have been easy prey for his 34-gun vessel, lay at anchor in the harbor. But instead of finding himself at an advantage, Kidd found himself at the pirate ship's mercy when most of his own crew deserted to the enemy ship.

After negotiating his release, Kidd made his way safely back to the west Indies aboard the *Queddah Merchant* he had captured. He later scuttled the *Adventure Galley* at St. Mary's, he said, because she had become unseaworthy — an unlikely story since she was a nearly new vessel. Kidd next sailed to Anguilla, reportedly because he had taken on paying passengers to the West Indies in order to pay for the trip. There he learned he was a hunted man, and he made the fatal decision to deliver himself to the hands of Colonial authorities in New York. He left the *Queddah Merchant* at the island of Hispanola, bought a new ship, the

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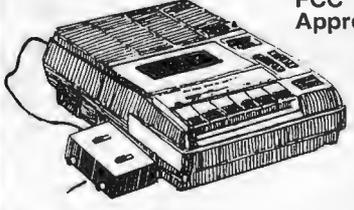
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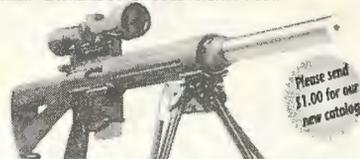
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PARTING SHOT

by Robert K. Brown

What's In A Name? A Growing Epidemic of "White House-Speak" Hits A Once Well-Respected Soldier

What's in a name? In the Bill Clinton White House, words are everything. How can we ever forget the President's sworn testimony last year when he was confronted with the facts of his sexual relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky? Our "Liar-in-Chief" looked straight into the camera and stated, "It depends upon what your definition of the word 'is' is." Huh?

This, of course, was after he denied on national television that he had a sexual relationship with the Reuben-esque intern. Who could ever forget when he uttered those famous

When questioned by a congressman about the strength and capabilities of the Colombian "narcoguerrillas," the FARC, the general stepped back and said, "We've had this long, sterile debate over whether to call them 'NARCO-guerrillas.'" He went on to tell the congressmen, "I don't know

"This guy was a four-star general, who once headed U.S. Southern Command in Panama? And now ... he can't figure out what to call the FARC? Where in the hell has he been?"

what to call them, but without question, the FARC income depends upon drug production."

OK, let's go back to the general's testimony to the same committee at the House Government Reform and Oversight hearing on 1 October 1996, where he called the same FARC organization "narco-guerrillas." Why were they "narco-guerrillas" then and open to question now, General? I guess it just depends on your definition of the word "is." Right, General?

Congressmen Dan Burton (R.-Ind.), Ben Gilman (R.-N.Y.), John Mica (R.-Fla.), Asa Hutchinson (R.-Ark.), Bob Barr (R.-Ga.) and Mark Souder (R.-Ind.) could only shake their heads in amazement. One Capitol Hill staffer with a strong background in military and law enforcement operations in war-torn Colombia stated: "This guy was a four-star general, who once headed U.S. Southern Command in Panama? And now ... he can't figure out what to call the FARC? Where in the hell has he been?"

No wonder the so-called "War On Drugs" is being lost. If a four-star general can't make up his mind as to what to call an international terrorist organization ... how in the hell can we be expected to help the Colombian government fight them? Washington insiders agree that it's time for a new Drug Czar! ☒

DoD



General Barry McCaffrey. A Clinton clone?

words: "I did not have a sexual relationship with that woman, Miss Lewinsky!" We all know he lied. Don't 'cha just love it?

I guess that particular ailment is catching. Seems that retired U.S. Army General Barry McCaffrey (Clinton's Drug Czar) got a dose of it as well.

General McCaffrey has been very particular in taking the word "war" out of the "War on Drugs" terminology.

During a Congressional Hearing this past August up on Capitol Hill, the retired four-star flak for Slick Willie exhibited the gutless symptoms of his Commander-in-Chief.

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