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Eric Pasquier/SADLA

On the Cover

The face of treachery, old and new. International maritime piracy is alive, flourishing — and swashbuckling its way into the 21st century. See page 48.

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HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION by Peter G. Kokalis
 Technical Editor Kokalis journeys to Russia to celebrate the 80th birthday of Mikhail T. Kalashnikov, father of the AK47. **38**

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PIRACY: SAILING IN HARM'S WAY, Part II by Frank Hopkins
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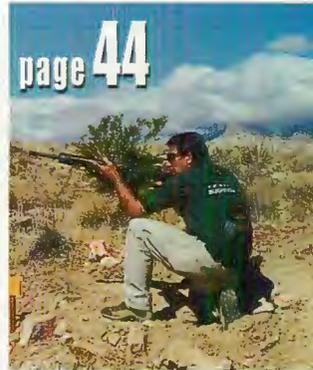
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 When it comes to Colombia's intensifying guerrilla-narco warfare analysis and strategy, our government doesn't have a clue. **54**

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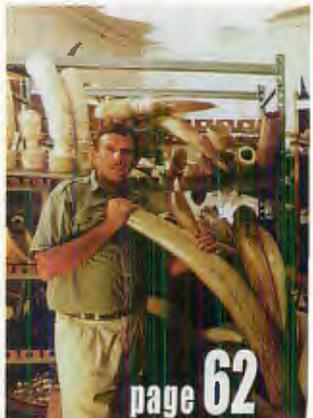
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ESPU

by Robert K. Brown

Become A Paid NRA Recruiter

I am pleased and encouraged to publish the following edited letter (reprinted with permission) from Mr. Richard Clise, a dedicated and highly successful NRA recruiter (# R013238F) in Washington state:

— Robert K. Brown

Gun owners are being legislated and litigated to death. Our hunting and shooting rights are vanishing before our eyes. Most gun owners are not NRA members but are with us in spirit — they've just never gotten around to actually joining, or they've let their memberships drop. If all of us in the shooting

community were NRA members at the same time, the anti-hunting/anti-gun crowd would be rendered powerless. Our sheer numbers would overwhelm them.

After I realized that we either increase the membership fast — or continue to lose our rights a piece at a time, I decided to see how many new NRA members I could sign-up in one year. I originally hoped for 100, which to me seemed a lot.

Well, my year is now up — and I've signed-up over 4,000 members! I was amazed how easy it was. All I did was get permission to ask the customers at two local gun stores if they were current with their NRA memberships. People signed-up like crazy — they even enrolled their wives, children, in-laws and friends. I honestly signed 85 people in one day — every one of them now a nail in the anti-gunners' coffin. What a glorious feeling that day was. No

longer was I helpless — I was fighting back, and winning! One person can't make a difference? Bull!

If you would like to know how satisfying this can feel, please consider becoming a paid volunteer NRA recruiter. It's easy. If you are good with people, know how to sell, can keep your temper, have a good appearance, have a little — or a lot — of time and desire to make a positive impact, you can do it!

Men and women — young and old — can all be successful recruiters. I've already helped 38 people get started. It's perfect for retired folks, college students, or a husband/wife team interested in a joint part-time job. A friend of mine, for example, recruits only on



I honestly signed 85 people in one day — every one of them now a nail in the anti-gunners' coffin. What a glorious feeling that day was.

Saturdays, since he has four kids and a full-time job. But he earns an average of \$200 every Saturday.

We either unite and fight — or lose our 2nd Amendment right!

If you and I don't do the work, who will?

To get started either full- or part-time, phone NRA Recruiting at (703) 267-3759. They will do the rest. ✂

Robert K. Brown

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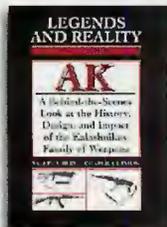
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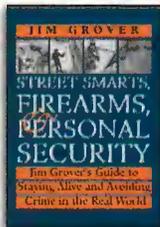
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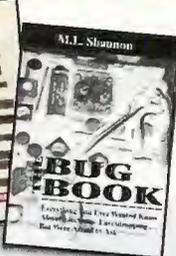
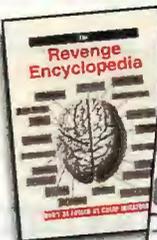
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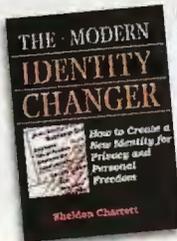
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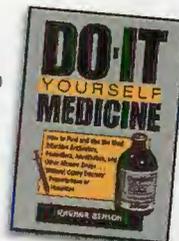


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King George Lives

Under new "anti-terrorism" laws planned by the British government, it will be illegal to "collect" or "possess" information "likely to be useful to terrorists" — unless you can prove that you weren't planning to use it for terrorism. We assume that this means the *Encyclopedia Britannica* will no longer be published?

Three-Fourths A Century In The Loop

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Firearm Deaths, Injuries Drop Dramatically

Bean counters at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta have announced the newly tabulated stats, and between



courtesy Morgan Outdoors

1993 and 1997 "the annual [gun related] death rate declined 21%, and the annual rate of non-fatal injuries treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments declined about 41%." The findings were

Continued on page 10

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Dear Friend,

Did you know it is possible right now to possess MORE real fighting knowledge than the most 'Grandmasters' in any martial art? In fact knowing these closely guarded secrets instantly allows you to defeat any opponent... regardless of your size or strength. More importantly did you also know these secrets completely eliminate any feelings of FEAR? Yeah right, you say? Who could possibly have the balls to make that bold, seemingly outrageous statement? Well, I'm about to introduce you to a man who's made his livelihood for the last twenty years proving that the biggest lie out there is that it takes years to become a deadly fighter.

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

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published in the November 19th issue of the CDC journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

According to the CDC, these dramatic decreases in gun-related injuries coincide with a 21% drop in the overall U.S. violent crime rate during the same period. Other factors behind the trend include an improving economy, an aging population, anti-violence education efforts and changes in policing and sentencing.

Oh, you mean it wasn't the guns that affect these statistics, up or down?? *Duh-uh.*

Didn't Ask, Didn't Tell

According to Kenyan Army Chief of Staff Gen. Daudi Tonje, at least two Kenyan soldiers die of AIDS each week, and frequent hospitalization of HIV-infected troops is undermining the effectiveness of the service. The Army is now implementing an anti-AIDS strategy predicated on education and counseling.

Yeltsin's Retirement Fund Glommed

Published reports have linked Boris Yeltsin to Swiss bank accounts containing some \$15 million — accounts that have been frozen by authorities investigating Russian money laundering. *Newsweek* reported that criminal investigations may have been one of several reasons Yeltsin quit as soon as he found a successor willing to guarantee him amnesty from criminal prosecution. The promise of immunity was, in fact, one of Putin's first decrees as the new Russian president. Earlier charges reportedly entailed a kickback scheme by the Swiss company, Mabetex, whose associates opened credit-card accounts in the name of Yeltsin's wife and two daughters, allowing them open-ended buying privileges: These charges caused an impeachment vote, which Yeltsin won, leading to speculation that new charges might have been of a much higher magnitude.

Leathernecks Get IFAVs

The Marine Corps has received the last batch of Interim Fast Attack Vehicles to replace the aging fleet of M151 FAVs. The IFAV is a modified Mercedes-Benz GDT 290 utility vehicle, variants of which are in service with the militaries of Germany, Greece, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway and around the world. Noted Lt. Col. Tom Manley, of USMC transportation systems, "It's probably one of the best four-wheel drives in the world."

Each IFAV can carry six fully-equipped Marines, and is armed with a Ma Deuce and a Mk 109 40mm grenade launcher. Running on diesel or JP8 fuel, two IFAVs are able to fit in a CH-53, and one can be carried by the MC-22 Osprey, when it becomes operational in 2001.

New Radar Sees Underground

California-based Bahktar Associates has developed a new Doppler radar capable of providing three-dimensional images of buried objects to a depth of more than 45 meters, and is creating a great deal of excitement among the Army, Marines and various law enforcement agencies. The Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) works equally well over water.

The GPR's ability to "see" underground makes the technology particularly useful in detecting hidden weapons caches, bunkers, tunnels — even land mines. Capable of operating on more than one frequency, it could be carried operationally by helicopters. The more slowly the radar passes the target area, the higher resolution the images produced. Aside from obvious aerial-targeting and counter-insurgency operation applications, officials noted a host of potential uses in areas such as Bosnia, where it could be used to map mine fields and identify other UXOs, or finding mass graves or illegal weapons caches. Civilian applications would include studying archaeological ruins and locating buried utilities, breached water lines and so on.

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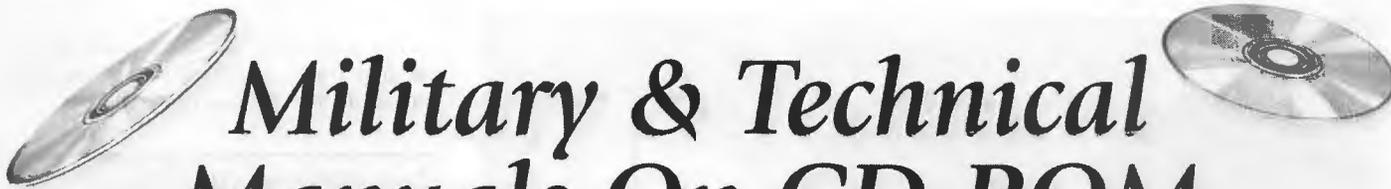
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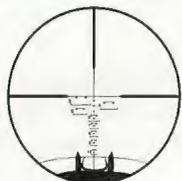
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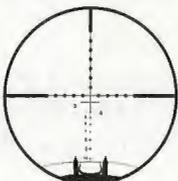
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The Army does not pay direct labor costs for inmate labor but does incur equipment, materials, supplies, transportation and program admin costs associated with using inmate labor. This labor force is used for maintenance, construction, repair, road work, demolition and recycling efforts.

U.S.-Korea 2000 Foundation

The 50th anniversaries of the Korean War will begin on 25 June 2000 and continue through 27 July 2003. In preparation for commemorative ceremonies that will be held here in the United States and abroad, Korean War veterans are being encouraged to register with the U.S.-Korea 2000 Foundation. According to VA studies, less than 20% of Korean War veterans belong to any national veteran's service organization.

The Foundation is attempting to identify and locate surviving Korean War veterans so they can inform them of, and where possible facilitate their participation in, 50th anniversary commemorative activities. Noted General Raymond G. Davis, USMC (Ret.), (MOH), "We do not seek to commemorate the war, but rather the veterans thereof and the sacrifices they made to preserve democracy on the Korean peninsula almost 50 years ago."

Korean War veterans, or family member of deceased Korean War veterans are encouraged to contact:

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FREEDOM WATCH

Editor's Note

Welcome to Freedom Watch, a new column that will appear monthly in *Soldier Of Fortune*. For most of President Clinton's two terms, *SOF* has brought you Slick Willie Watch. We did so in response to our suspicion that this president would do more than all

his predecessors combined to erode the military and constitutional principles they uphold in order to maintain the United States as the greatest experiment in freedom known to humankind.

We were right. Clinton's presidency has been disastrous for the military, the U.S. Constitution and the future security and sovereignty of our nation. But the damage is done, and it's of little value to continue expressing our outrage at this lame-duck whose conduct has jaded the American public. Clinton's crimes and misgivings, frankly, aren't news anymore.

Therefore, this column will become a relentless watchdog of the only commodity of any value to a soldier of fortune: freedom. We'll report on the actions of individuals or institutions that erode the freedoms and liberties so many of our readers have risked their lives to uphold from foreign and domestic foes. We'll watch the media, the courts, Congress, civilian and military leadership, cities, counties and states.

We can do this best with the help of our readers. Please e-mail us your best examples of affronts to the freedoms our Founding Fathers intended us to enjoy. We're most interested in those abuses inspired by so-called "politically correct" agendas. Each month, we'll select at least one submission for publication and pay the tipster \$100. More selections, at \$100 each, may be made each month at the discretion of *SOF* editors. You can e-mail your tips to: editor@sofmag.com. Or, send them via U.S. Mail to: Freedom Watch, *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303.

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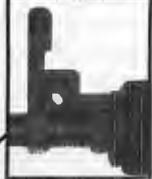
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The Politically Incorrect Murdered Child

A brutal, horrific murder was committed against a child in September 1999, but it's doubtful most *Soldier Of Fortune* readers, or anyone else for that matter, heard anything about it. That's because this murder, involving a 13-year-old child, involved circumstances that would fly in the face of the mainstream media's openly pro-homosexual agenda.

Back in October of 1998, the world learned just how newsworthy it would be if two small-town rednecks murdered an openly gay man. The media milked the

Matthew Shepard murder in Wyoming for all it was worth. And who can blame them? It was the horrific, brutal, unjust murder of a college student whose body appeared to have been crucified on triangular wooden fence posts.

This murder made the cover of *Time* magazine. It was the topic of serious political talking-head shows from Washington for months. It became the springboard for new attempts at so-called hate crime legislation and a new *cause célèbre* for the gay political lobby at the nation's capital and in each state.

Likewise, when JonBenet Ramsey was killed in her Colorado basement, the media became obsessed. To this day, some three years after the girl's murder, it's the subject

of TV movies, talk shows and headlines.

So it stood to reason that when Jesse Dirkhising was murdered at his home last summer, the media would fixate over the crime in his defense. The boy had been sodomized, bound, blindfolded and gagged until he suffocated to death. His two killers described the crime as a "sex game" gone wrong.

But the murder never became national news. Hardly anyone heard a word about it. Why? Because Dirkhising was molested and killed by two *gay* men. Telling the story would not only fail the litmus test of promoting the gay agenda, it would in fact serve to establish the fact that some gays are cold-blooded, vicious killers — just like some heterosexual rednecks in Wyoming.

AP carried a story about the murder on its national wire, but failed to inform anyone that Dirkhising was killed by two gay men who were sexually assaulting him. In fact, the sexual preference of his killers wasn't mentioned at all.

So the next time some media-type tries to explain the excessive coverage of Matthew Shepard as reflection of the media's reverence for life, don't believe it. The mainstream press has far more reverence for left-wing, extremist agendas than for the lives of children. Otherwise, Dirkhising's death would have been in the news and would still be to this day.

Look Weird? Don't Run!

You like to wear camouflage and combat boots. You sport a flat top. To some New-Age cops, you look like trouble. Why, you might just be the next Timothy McVeigh. If you're walking down the street, minding your own business, the police might shine a light on you and follow you for awhile.

Whatever you do, try not to react. By all means, *do not run*. If you do, the police will likely give chase and arrest you. And they'll be well within their rights to do so.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in January that cops can pursue and detain people who run at the sight of police. Chief Justice Rehnquist, writing for the majority, said, "Nervous, evasive behavior is a pertinent factor in determining reasonable suspicion" to justify stopping and questioning a suspect.

The case involved an episode in which William "Sam" Wardlow fled after seeing Chicago police officers patrolling an area known for heavy drug-trafficking. When officers conducted a pat-down search, they found a .38-caliber handgun and arrested the suspect. Wardlow's attorneys tried to have the handgun ruled inadmissible as evidence, claiming police had no right to detain and search their client.

The court's ruling will be an obvious advantage to the men and women of law enforcement. We hope they use it to capture bad guys, not harass law-abiding citizens in an overzealous crusade to look for guns. ☒

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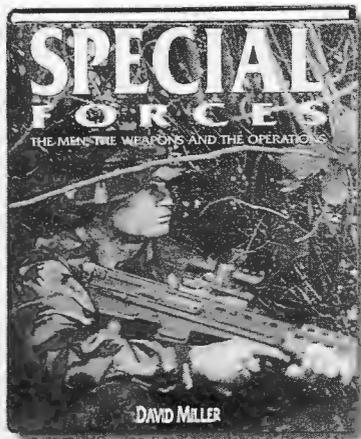
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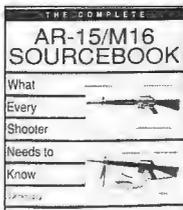
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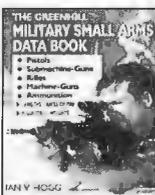
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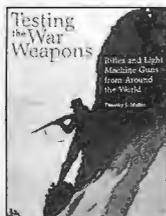
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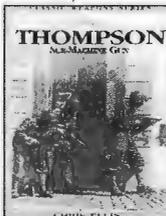
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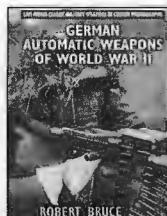
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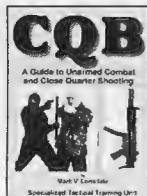
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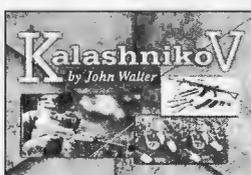
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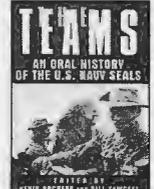
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FLAK

De-Miners

I was wondering if you could direct me to any de-mining organizations. I am a former Combat Engineer with the Canadian Military with seven years experience. I served with UNPROFOR in Croatia (Krajina) in 1994-95 and Bosnia with IFOR in 1996 and once again with SFOR in 1998-99. As you can see, I have plenty of time and experience in the Balkans and hands-on with numerous mines. I have the training and a good head on my shoulders with an excellent military background. It would be great if you could help me out.

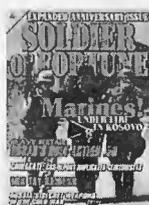
Michael D. Cantley

Good men with your MOS are hard to find, Mike; we're sure there'd be more than one outfit hiring, and in-place mines are a global problem that is murdering the inno-

cent. There are so many directions to go, we'll just give you our favorite search engine and turn you loose on the 'net: www.google.com. You should cruise all the various UN web sites for the problem of mines, and there may be mention of contractors there, or offices you can contact for that information. Then search for the various do-gooder organizations working on this problem; as I am sure they know who both the good guys (de-miners) and bad guys (mine-layers) are. Then search for de-mining companies, as it would be my bet anybody in the business is looking for qualified help. One company worth contacting would be Land Mine Detection Systems, Inc., as they are at the leading edge of the business, and if they don't need men, they might know who does: Their phone is 202-728-4318; fax: 202-293-3419.

Good luck, and watch where you put your feet, amigo!

Mistaken Identity



I was reading through the October issue when I came upon the article referring to Cosco's Kalashnikovs. Is, or do you know if, COSTCO and COSCO are different parts of the same entity?

It seems that China has fully ingrained itself in everyday American life. I can't really see them threatening the USA with nuclear bombings, when they have so much money to make just by selling their cheap goods here.

Joel Edwards
via E-mail

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Weapons of War

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In 1905, John Moses Browning developed the .45 ACP with a 230 grain "hardball" load that became the standard issue sidearm for 75 years. The United States Department of War considered it the best handgun available in 1911 and today it is still used by the Army's Delta Force and the Navy's Seals. It has been praised for its endurance, reliability, and accuracy.

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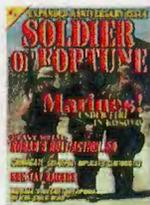
I am a former United States Marine who is very interested in a career as a combat journalist/photographer. If you can provide me with any info on how to get started, or any info at all about that career field, I would greatly appreciate it.

J. Clay
Via E-mail

The best way to get started is to get a camera and get very good at using it under the worst of conditions, then learn to write in a straightforward fashion, then go find a war. As general information, two things to keep in mind are that it generally doesn't pay very well except as an adjunct to a "real" job unless you are well established, and there are not a lot of job openings. There is always room for excellence in any field, so strive for excellence. (We does.)

Once Upon a Time in Waco

Your pix-story on Waco was rewarding to read: non-PR news reporting. I stopped reading newspapers 25 years ago because of the liberal-press domination of the news.



I had to send an important letter to HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo this week and I mentioned your magazine and the article on Waco, which I said was a must-read. Please thank and congratulate the reporters and photographers involved.

Have you thought of contacting the Secretary of the Army and asking him if he has ordered any court martial proceedings be brought against the 10 commandos who took part in the Waco madness? If I may suggest, this aspect may be worth a story.

Thomas J. Donnelly

We have relayed your best wishes to the reporters involved; we were not able to contact the photographers involved, as they were government photos that we got through the Freedom of Information Act.

Employee of the Month

I've been trying to find the issue with the latest annual World SITREP, and have been unable to ID the exact month. I use a lot of the data you folks compile in an effort to "wake up" people with whom, or around whom, I work; they seem to think if it wasn't in *USA Today*, it didn't happen. Can you help me? Or maybe you don't

publish the annual list as you used to?

Jim Boling
Via E-mail

World SitRep has always been a monthly column, although the format has evolved some over the years from "three-dot journalism" to a site map. See it every month, this month on pages 30 and 31. Thanks for reading SOF!

NVG Manual?

Several months ago I bought an old Starlight Scope (Vietnam era) and cannot find a manual on it. There are no markings on it at all. I've seen it before on Vietnam videos, etc. I think it may be like the one Carlos Hathcock used there. Any suggestions?

If you know the correct name of the manual, and it's not classified, you can get it from the Army under the Freedom of Information Act. Two good NVG dealers who may be able to help you are: Moro Vision (Dave Newbro); phone: 800-424-8222; or Excalibur Electro Optics (Rich Urich); phone: 800-797-2849.

The Sky Never Fell

Interesting article about Y2K. In an

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unscientific poll of various geeks, hackers and people with no lives apart from their computers (myself included), I found that two opinions are widely held about Y2K: The most we will see out of Y2K is a few minor nuisances. "Drive carefully and keep a good record," say the experts. If everybody will just keep their heads and not freak if the bank computer gets a glitch, the planes will fly, the stores will have food and nobody will be the worse for a lousy date change.

What sends these otherwise placid people scrambling for their shotguns is the unlikelihood of people keeping their heads in a crisis. On AOL there is a chatroom with thousands of postings on the subject. Everybody who goes on saying, "I'm a computer programmer specializing in Y2K fixes, and there really is no problem" gets run off the net by the paranoia specialists. The sad part is, even if the gloom-and-doom crowd is right, we could all come through just fine if people keep their heads. But figure the odds.

Andrea West
Via E-mail

Well, we sure hate to crow, but it looks like we both predicted this one pretty close. There were so few problems we never even got to test our theory that most people would keep their head, as Ike noted one time, "The American people

are a people of great common sense." Bear in mind, that the reason there were no problems was — they got fixed, like we predicted they would. It's time you got on the 'net and told those Profiteering Princes of Paranoia: You have no clothes; get a life and a real job!

Lejeune Water Again

What is the E-mail address for the Camp Lejeune survey for those who drank the water there between '69 and '85?

J. Ruocco
Via E-mail

Anyone living aboard Camp Lejeune from '68 to '85 is encouraged to participate in the survey. The contact number for NORC is: 800-639-4270. For more information about the study of VOCs, you may call ATSDR: 888-422-8737, or visit their website at <http://atsdr1.cdc.gov>. More general information is available from Camp Lejeune Public Affairs at: 877-261-9782; or visit their website at www.lejeune.usmc.mil under "Water Survey."

POC The Resister

Some time back, you ran an article about an underground (?) newspaper by SF

troopers named *The Resister*. Is there a website or such to get more on the paper?

Semper Fi!
Ken B.

The Resister is published at P.O. Box 35046, Fayetteville, NC 28303, quarterly, by the John P. Zenger Press, Ltd. Subscriptions are \$35 a year; sample issue \$10.

Longer Than Many Marriages



I eagerly awaited the November issue of *Soldier Of Fortune* for it will be exactly 20 years since I received my first issue by subscription. In September 1979 I bought a copy of *SOF*, read it and immediately sent my check for a subscription. Each month I can't wait for the mag to reach me. You have the best stories and news on all the world events I am interested in. The weapon reviews are always top notch and make me hungry for new toys. I look forward to another 20 years and more good reading. Thank you again for having the guts to print such a good magazine.

Yer welcome! Guts we have; brains, we don't. ☒

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I Was There

by Yves-Michel Dumond

“so you want to see a battle?”

PART 2

0700 hrs., 6 April 72: A 122mm rocket crashed in near our command bunker. We were shaken (and stirred) but, thank God, not wounded. Zippo was still on the radio chattering and yelling to Major General James Hollingsworth and Captain Bill Miller. The guy didn't stop to eat, piss, anything. I lumbered over to the dispensary where chaos reigned. The dead, wounded, and dying were inside cursing and screaming. Hysterical women, wives or girlfriends, were there too. As I left, a blood-covered, wailing woman walked toward me. Something was in her arms — her baby. But something dropped on the ground — her baby's head.

A half-buried ARVN soldier, a lieutenant with whom I went on operations, laid nearby. I knelt and he grabbed at me like some frightened child. Then he died.

I dashed back to the command bunker where Zippo was still full of rage. Then came huge, rocking blasts — as many as five rockets hit the dispensary! It burned, along with the wounded inside. Next, the ammo dump took hits. All over there was firing — now fire and more death!

At 1500, the NVA penetrated the northern part of our four-sector base area. They demanded we surrender — Zippo refused (not just “No!” but “Fuck no!”).

He called in airstrikes all over the place. Carlson and Wallingford were holed-up in a bunker near the airstrip; Zippo still was in the command bunker with Colonel Vinh; I slipped out to join Carlson by the airstrip. I didn't know anything about Lull.

0600, 7 April: Renewed enemy shelling jerked me awake, but that was joined by a differing noise — the grinding, awful churning of oncoming tanks. Some ARVN troops were tearing off their uniforms, panicked, they ran — many stumbling — for a long shot at escape. Yet most ARVNs remained in-place, fighting to the last.

A T-54 neared our position with its flanker force of NVA troops. But then it was shattered! Zippo took it out with a LAW!

A U.S. aircraft sped in and began firing — my left leg and arm began to burn. I knew I'd been wounded and then the pain set in. Lull,

Last month, French war correspondent Yves “Frenchie”/ “Mick” Dumond and the tiny force of American Advisory Team 70 (LTC Richard Schott, Major Albert B. Carlson, Captain Mark A. “Zippo” Smith, MSG Howard B. Lull, and SFC Kenneth Wallingford) were dug-in deep as the 5th NVA Division with its Russian T-54 and PT-76 tanks smashed like a tidal wave against the vastly outmanned — 200 to 1 — ARVN 9th Regiment compound at Loc Ninh.

It was 0300, 6 April 1972. The Americans and Dumond fell into a fitful sleep on the hard floor of the command bunker — perhaps their final rest on earth.



photos courtesy author



(top) After the fall. I was dazed and unhappy during this rest stop. (above) Happier days? August 1999 in front of the old French plantation house chewed-up 27 years earlier on Zippo's orders. I still guessed the communists did not like French journalists.

Carlson and Wallingford were hit, as well, and NVA soldiers began to flow into our sector's perimeter.

A jet shot by overhead and within seconds a huge blast and flash stunned me. All was confusion.

At 1700, we received word that choppers were going to attempt our rescue. Elation — then sour disappointment — as the operation was called-off. I curled up in a bunker

with four Vietnamese rangers, and awaited the inevitable.

8 April 1972: I was in a tunnel with some ARVN, Carlson and Wallingford. I didn't know where the other Americans were — or if they were alive. We could hear NVA all around us. I hid my film thinking that soon perhaps I would be able to recover it. But then I smelled petrol and knew the NVA were planning a barbecue. Rather than burn to death, we decided to run, and slipped through a small window — the one with the NVA waiting just outside.

I was knocked senseless by the butt of an AK47. I guessed the communists did not like French journalists.

The NVA made us walk, arms tied with electrical wire. As we trudged across the camp's smoldering remains and grotesquely posed bodies of its defenders and attackers, I focused on the warm sun. God, how I loved that sun.

We halted at a rubber plantation where we were given basic treatment for our wounds. We, too, ate — just dry fish and some rice. An old man seemed to be in charge. Later, I found out he was General Tran Van Tra.

But I suddenly was not feeling badly. Zippo — who had sustained 36 wounds — was brought in. He was not yet dead, so there still was hope. His interpreter had been killed, Lull and Col. Vinh had escaped solo and were either dead or on the run, and Col. Schott was dead.

The Americans were taken to a POW camp in Kratie, Cambodia. Mick [Dumond] didn't go with us and we all “teared up” when they took us away. Mick would be released in July, on Bastille Day. He

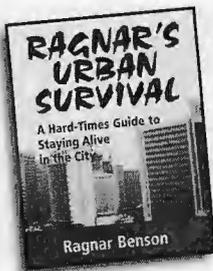
would make sure my family knew I was alive, barely. As we shook hands, for the last time, I said “So you wanted to see a battle?” He just grinned at me.

— Major Mark A. “Zippo” Smith, USA (Ret.)

The Return

The CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) expressed interest in shooting a documentary of Zippo's and my return to the scene of the battle, a scary yet somewhat nostalgic event in both our lives. Believing that Zippo's presence might open some deep

Continued on page 74

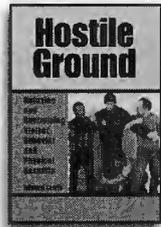


RAGNAR'S URBAN SURVIVAL

A Hard-Times Guide to Staying Alive in the City

by Ragnar Benson

The tap's run dry, the supermarkets have been ransacked, the power is off and the low rumble of tanks can be heard in the distance. The unprepared who refused to believe that such a thing could happen here will live as wretched refugees—if they live at all. But for the prepared—for the city survivors—life will go on. America's leading survival author debunks the myth that the only way to survive is to stock a retreat in the mountains. He tells urban dwellers how to find water; trap and butcher game; preserve food; position a retreat for maximum safety; avoid troops; and barter with other survivors. You'll learn which weapons are absolute necessities and which aren't worth having and confront the all-important topic of survival nursing care. Ragnar gives you the solid information you will need to make it if the worst-case scenario becomes a reality. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, photos, illus., 200 pp. #10011211 **\$20.00**

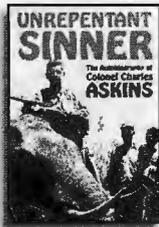


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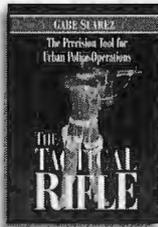
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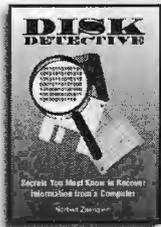
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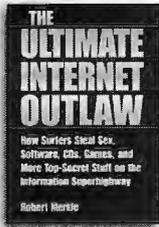


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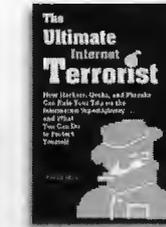


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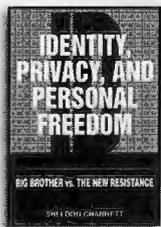


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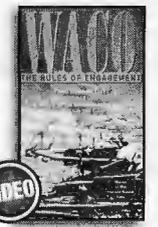


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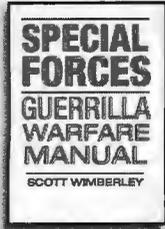
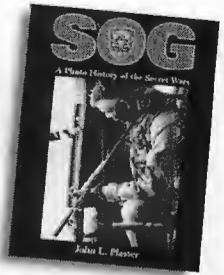
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SOG: A Photo History of the Secret Wars

by John L. Plaster

In 1972 when the top-secret Studies and Observations Group was disbanded, the U.S. military ordered its thousands of photos and documents burned so that a book like this would not be possible. But some SOG veterans had brought back with them personal copies of "official" photos of SOG in action, as well as snapshots, and kept them secret for more than three decades. While writing his history of SOG, John Plaster contacted his secret war comrades and uncovered this wealth of never-before-seen photos. More than 700 photos bring to life the stories of the SOG heroes whose names had only been whispered before, as well as all 10 SOG Medal of Honor winners. This powerful book includes first ever photos of U.S. forgeries of enemy documents as well as indisputable documentation of what these extraordinary men really did behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and even North Vietnam itself. This is the most impressive special ops photo collection ever assembled: recon teams and Hatchet Forces on the ground, Operation Tailwind, the Son Tay POW rescue raid, awesome aerial combat shots of air strikes, dramatic Bright Light rescues, HALO insertions and more. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, photos, 496 pp. #10011187 \$79.95

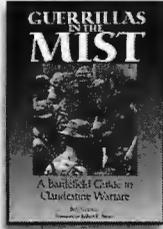


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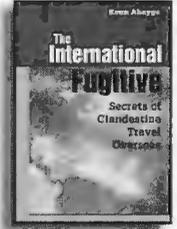
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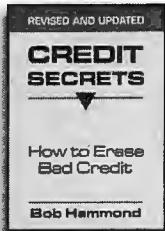
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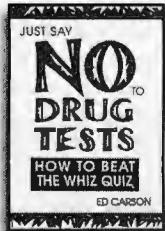
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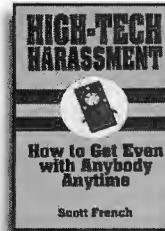
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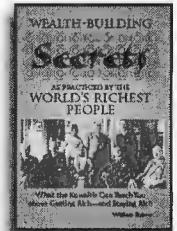
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Mother Russia's LMG and The Great Patriotic War

Vasily Alexeevich Degtyarev (1880-1949) was born in Tula into a long-established family of gunsmiths and weapon designers. He started working at Tula Arsenal at the age of 11. He was to be eventually responsible for the development of a wide and largely successful range of Russian small arms. These included the PPD submachine gun of 1940, the 12.7x108mm DK heavy machine gun of 1930, the improved Model 1938 DShK heavy machine gun, the 14.5mm PTRD anti-tank rifle, the RPD caliber 7.62x39mm squad automatic and the subject of this article, the illustrious DP (*Degtyareva Pekhotniy* — *Degtyarev Infantry*). Degtyarev commenced development of his light machine gun in 1923. It was adopted by the Red Army in 1927. At first the Soviet military treated the concept of the light machine gun (LMG) with contempt, as they felt it could never replace the sustained-fire potential of the Maxim. However, Mikhail Frunze, who was deputy People's Commissar on Military and Naval matters, understood the importance a weapon of this type would have in the newly emerging tactical concept of *fire and movement*, and quite literally forced it upon the Red Army.

During trials held in November 1926, 20,000 rounds each were fired through two preproduction prototypes. There were 60 stoppages in the 40,000 rounds, most caused by faulty extraction, misfires and failures to feed. Several components failed. Degtyarev introduced some changes in the design: The bolt was strengthened, the bolt handle and ejection-port ribs thickened and the shape of the firing pin modified. Other components were strengthened by manufacture from nickel-chrome steel. Final tests were conducted 17-21 January 1927. Twenty thousand rounds each were again fired through two guns with stoppage rates of 0.5% and 0.3% respectively. Further changes were demanded and the DP was officially adopted on 21 December 1927. By 1930 the DP's durability had been increased to 75,000 to 100,000 rounds and the parts most prone to breakage (firing pins and extractors) to 25,000 to 30,000 rounds.

Although clumsy by today's standards, the DP is a battle-proven design with the usual Soviet emphasis on simplicity and reliability. It has only 65 components with a design stressing manufacture by unskilled labor. For comparison, it took a production time of 870 hours to manufacture one Model 1910 Russian Maxim medium machine gun

with its wheeled Sokolov mount. The DP LMG, complete with its bipod, took only 144 hours to produce.

Chambered for the Russian 7.62x54R service cartridge, overall length of the DP is 50.5 inches, complete with the threaded-on, long, conical flash hider. With a barrel length of 23.875 inches, the weight of the barrel alone is 4.75 pounds. It is of the quick-change type. The four-groove bore has a right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches (254 mm). The DP weighs 26 pounds with its bipod and a magazine loaded with 47 rounds.

Most DPs were blued and/or painted with black baked enamel. The bolts and operating rods were left "in-the-white."

The DP is air-cooled, gas-operated and fires from the open-bolt position. There are 19 longitudinal cooling slots at the front of the

receiver body. The method employed for breech locking is simple and effective. During the counter-recoil stroke, as the bolt closes, a lug, located at the rear of the gas piston's slide and impinging against the rear of the massive firing pin, drives the firing pin forward, thus causing cams on the sides of the firing pin to move the locking flaps on each side of the bolt body outward into locking recesses on each of the receiver walls. The firing pin is free to move forward and strike the primer *only* if the locking flaps are completely

engaged in their recesses, thus firing out-of-battery is not possible. Ejection is downward.

This system of locking was first used by Paul Mauser on an early experimental semiautomatic rifle. It was also used on the now-obscure Swedish Kjellman-Friberg water-cooled machine gun, of which fewer than half a dozen were manufactured. Both Mauser and Friberg used recoil to unlock the breech, whereas the DP is gas-operated. Furthermore, Degtyarev reversed the principle itself. Instead of the firing pin thrusting the locking flaps out at the front of the bolt body, the DP system cams the rear of the locking flaps out into the locking recesses on the receiver walls.

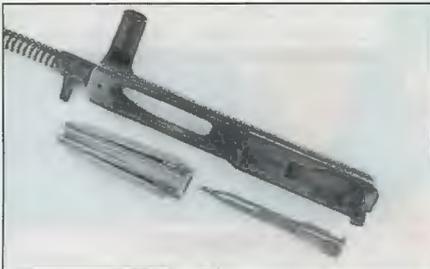
There is a grip safety immediately in back of the trigger guard. There is no other safety mechanism on this model. The recoil spring is wrapped around the operating rod and both ride in the gas cylinder, where a considerable amount of heat is generated. Seventy years ago spring technology was not highly advanced. During sus-



Russian DP LMG was the principal automatic weapon of the Red Army during the Great Patriotic War. Shown with Russian steel and Bulgarian cloth drum carriers.



There is a grip safety immediately behind the DP's trigger guard. It exhibits excellent human engineering as the hand depresses it as soon as the firing grip is assumed. (below) During the counter-recoil stroke, as the bolt closes, a lug, located at the rear of the gas piston's slide and impinging against the rear of the massive firing pin, drives the firing pin forward, thus causing cams on the sides of the firing pin to move the locking flaps on each side of the bolt body outward into locking recesses on each of the receiver walls.



tained-fire bursts the DP mainspring sometimes overheated and lost its compression strength. To overcome this problem, a major redesign effort resulted in the DPM (*Degtyareva Pekhotniy Modernizirovanniy*), which was introduced in 1944. The recoil spring was relocated to a tube at the rear of the receiver. A pistol grip was added to the buttstock and the grip safety was replaced by a manual safety on the right side of the receiver directly above the trigger guard. The bipod was changed to a non-detachable type.

There is no provision for semiautomatic fire. The cyclic rate is usually given as between 500 to 600 rpm. On all those I have tested, it has been no more than 475 rpm. There is no need for a semiautomatic selector position with a cyclic rate this low, as experienced operators can easily fire single shots when required.

The DP buttstock is made of wood. There is no buttplate. Most often there is an integral oil container on top of the buttstock with a bristle brush attached to the screw cap. The bottom rear of the buttstock is uniquely bulbous-shaped. This was presumably used to rest the support hand when firing from the prone position. There is a sling swivel on the left side of the buttstock which mates to a front sling swivel riveted to the receiver just to the rear of the bipod.

The open, square-notch rear sight is of the sliding-tangent type, adjustable for elevation only from 100 to 1,500 meters, in 100-meter increments. The sight's protective ears are part of the spring-loaded rear latch system for the drum magazine. The round, post-type front

Continued on page 72

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UNITED STATES

Star Wars setback: Antimissile interceptor fails to hit mock warhead in space over Pacific, setting back Pentagon's drive to develop cutting-edge national defense system. Officials don't know what went wrong, but pledge to find out. First test was declared a success in October, but critics have since raised doubts about it. • **U.N. reforms:** Long-time U.N. foe Sen. Jesse Helms showed unprecedented deference to the Security Council. The speech, laying out reforms he wants in return for U.S. payment of back dues, was set up by Washington's envoy, Holbrooke. • **Drug propaganda:** Drug czar working to weave antidrug propaganda into episodes of popular TV shows. ABC refuses to take part. • **Y2K no go, but blackouts promised:** Y2K, no problem. But the power grid has big problems anyway, says U.S. Energy Department. The grid's reliability has been cut substantially, officials say, due to loss of coordination capabilities brought about by utility deregulation. Study says power outages will become more common in U.S. during summer and other peak-use periods.

2

CHINA

Bad inspector: France and China join Russia in opposing U.N. chief's choice to head a revived Iraq arms-inspection agency. Talks continue at Security Council, but candidacy of Rolf Ekeus, who held the post from 1991-97, appears in deep peril. Annan, however, continues to stand by him. • **Boy Wonder:** Dalai Lama disputes China's designation of two-year-old Tibetan boy as seventh incarnation of the Reting Lama. Tibet's exiled spiritual leader says he has divined no rebirth in the Reting line.

5

CHILE

The ricochet of Pinochet: Chilean military plane flies to Britain in anticipation Pinochet will be released on health grounds. Human rights organizations try blocking release. Chile's socialist president-elect, Ricardo Lagos, says he lacks authority to try Pinochet, but won't try to stop courts from taking initiative. • **Building with Lagos:** Lagos vows to fulfill campaign promise and speed up economic recovery and curb crime.

6

INDONESIA

Burning churches: Sectarian fighting continues on resort island of Lombok, forcing hotels to evacuate guests. Muslims rampage through Lombok, burning as many as 12 Christian churches. President Wahid under criticism by army for not cracking down harder on sectarian violence. Chinese celebrate: Wahid revokes 1967 ban on ethnic Chinese holiday celebrations.

1

10

ISRAEL

Sister Act: Two U.S. nuns, including a sister of former Clinton aide George Stephanopoulos, block Palestinian police from seizing Orthodox monastery for the Moscow Patriarch. • **Pipe bomb injures 22 Israelis** in Hadera.

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COLOMBIA

Guerrilla nation: Rebels blow up 22 high-voltage electrical pylons, blacking out industrial hub of Medellin in parts of Antioquia, Choco and Cordoba provinces. Nation's second largest guerrilla group gets blamed. • **Village rampages:** Rebels attack southern mountain towns, killing at least 24. Bogota claims that air force counterattack inflicted heavy casualties on the guerrillas. • **U.S. intervention:** U.S. Secretary of State Albright visits Colombia to propose massive rise in aid to fight drugs and leftist guerrillas. Proposal includes \$1.6 billion from Washington.

13

ECUADOR

Quito march: Police break-up Quito march by oil workers as officials meet to consider President Mahuad's plan to make the dollar the official currency. About 30,000 troops have been deployed amid fears of unrest.

5

16

MALAYSIA

Aide arrested: Close aide to jailed ex-Deputy Premier Anwar is jailed, as Malaysia widens a crackdown on foes of Premier Mahathir. Aide is charged with possessing secret documents, which could result in one-year prison term.

17

VENEZUELA

Just stay out: Chavez declines U.S. military offer to help in repairing damage from floods that killed tens of thousands. Chavez says he doesn't want U.S. troops in his nation. One U.S. ship, carrying construction supplies and engineers, was already on its way when Chavez declined the help.

3

RUSSIA

Grozny war: Military officials claim Russian soldiers have driven to center of Grozny. Moscow says battle for Chechnya's capital has entered "decisive phase" that will lead to Grozny's fall. Russian airstrikes continue without pause, with troops cutting off rebel escape routes. • **Puttin' down Putin:** Uproar breaks out after party backed by acting President Putin joins with communists to divide top posts.

4

GERMANY

Funding scandal: Kohl resigns as honorary chairman of Germany's Christian Democrats after party suspends him for refusing to name donors who secretly channeled funds to him. Kohl keeps his parliament seat. Party closes ranks behind its leader, Wolfgang Schaeuble, but the scandal shows no signs of ending soon. • **Economic boom, or gloom?** Economy accelerated during fourth quarter, growing an estimated 1 percent, while gross domestic product grew 1.4 percent in 1999, down from 2.2 percent one year earlier.

7

GUATEMALA

General overhaul: President Portillo shakes up military, naming moderate colonel as defense chief and forcing retirement of 20 generals. Portillo says he wants to overhaul an institution blamed for atrocities.

8

AUSTRIA

Grand coalition: Conservatives plan to revive grand coalition with Social Democrats and form new government that excludes far-right Freedom Party. The People's Party has resisted the move since October elections.

9

SYRIA

Peace talks: Mideast talks postponed indefinitely due to Syria's Golan demands. Damascus says Israel should agree to pullout from the strategic heights before other issues are discussed. Meanwhile, Israel's Prime Minister Barak and Arafat held surprise meeting to discuss delay in drafting permanent treaty framework.

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IRAQ

Inspecting the inspector: A chief Iraqi arms inspector gets named by U.N. Secretary-General Annan, but Russia immediately opposes nomination. China and France join in Russia's outrage. Rolf Ekeus headed the agency from 1991 to 1997. Inspections have been suspended since 1998, and resumption remains unsure.

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SPAIN

Elections: Prime Minister Aznar's center-right Popular Party favored to win in spring elections. Challenger Joaquin Almunia trying to improve socialists' image after string of scandals.

15

KOSOVO

Tensions toward U.S. fueled: U.S. soldier charged with sexually assaulting and murdering 11-year-old ethnic Albanian girl, raising tensions between peacekeepers and those they are protecting. The 35-year-old sergeant is in custody of U.S. military authorities.

18

BRAZIL

Nations collide: Busload of Argentine tourists crashed into another bus carrying Brazilians in southeastern Brazil. At least 42 are dead and 40 other injured with death toll expected to rise. Argentina dispatched aircraft to carry bodies home.

World Sitrep is compiled by the SOF staff with information from various media and correspondents.

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TAC JAC 2001

Your daddy's LBE was a nightmare of flaps, straps, snaps and webbing fluttering in the wind. How much hundred-mile-an-hour tape have you used over the years to secure the various floating appendages so buckles wouldn't come undone, straps wouldn't catch in the bush and pouches wouldn't dump their precious contents?

Load-bearing vests were a step in the right direction for many purposes, but did not always work over or under a jacket that was required for climatic or tactical reasons, or for undercover work.

The TAC-JAC 2001 goes the distance toward answering the questions raised but not answered by other load-bearing and concealment systems. You can almost characterize it as a Swiss Army knife that you wear, it serves such a multitude of purposes.

A crucial caveat of any multifunction device, be it tools or togs, is that each individual function is performed as well as if it were the only function, and no feature gets in the way of, or compromises, any of the others. The TAC-JAC 2001 fills this bill to a T: There are no non-functional bells and whistles, and each feature is useful in its own right.

The TAC-JAC-2001 is a refinement of a concept by the late Al Mar, and has evolved to its present form through the input and experience of the best operators in the business, such as Dennis Chalker, Harry Humphries and Marshall Teague. The TAC-JAC 2001 is made in the U.S.A., from a rugged cotton/nylon blend, and is available in



black, khaki and olive green. Stock sizes are medium, large and extra large, with XX-large available on special order. It comes in regular, long and extra-long, and is full-cut to fit comfortably over body armor, watch, sweaters, etc.

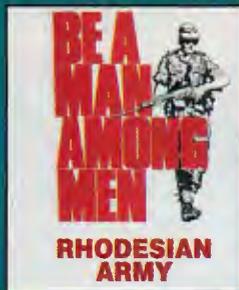
Exterior features of the TAC-JAC 2001 include convenient zip-out sleeves that turn the jacket into a lightweight vest, Velcro fasteners for right and left sides, with quick-draw release flap. Dual snaps at the bottom keep the jacket closed even when unzipped. The extra long (3") elastic cuffs eliminate sleeve interference with weapon



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#T003 Try Burning This One! Shirt	L XL	@	\$15.00	
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retrieval. The unit features two slash pockets, two Velcro-flap cargo pockets, and two general-item Velcro-flap breast pockets that have four 12-gauge rounds in each pocket; the left breast pocket also features a concealed badge/ID holder.

The TAC-JAC has a full-length, heavy-duty nylon zipper with a handy pull tab. The shoulders have functional Velcro-release epaulets, and the rear shoulder yoke has a concealed, pull-down ID flap.

Salient features continue inside the TAC-JAC 2001: There are two large, reinforced concealment carry pockets, left and right, each with Velcro "holster" strips for custom handgun positioning and retention.

There are interior gear pockets with elastic securing straps for extra magazines and accessories (commo gear, lights, aerosols, other impedimenta), and there is an interior map pocket that also serves well to carry warrants or other documents.

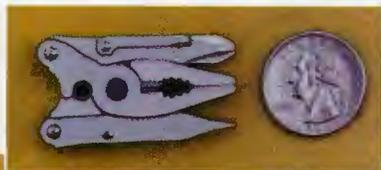
An overriding attribute of the TAC-JAC is that, depending on how you care to rig it out, it can pass for a non-official sports jacket. Put on the khaki TAC-JAC with a "Sears" patch on the back, for instance, and you can pass for Joe the repairman, while the jacket comfortably conceals the tools of your real profession.

The makers say that when the situation dictates, the TAC-JAC 2001 provides the concealment value you want without giving up the tactical necessities you need. We agree. It's as close to an invisible set of ALICE gear as it can get. Recommended.

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M4 Seber Tool

are in a tux or your dress blues.

Typical of the micro-genre are the M3 and M4 Seber Tools by SeberTech. Most can-do types

don't feel dressed these days unless they are carrying some sort of tool, and although these Seber Tools and not a toolbox on your hip, and are a handy assortment of contingency help in your watch pocket.

The M3 subcompact folding tool features fine pliers with interlocking teeth plus a serrated and radiused interior maw for gripping larger objects, nuts, etc., and a wire cutter/stripper. The butt of each handle is a large Phillips or regular (square-bar) screwdriver respectively, and folding from each handle is a fine regular and Phillips screwdriver. The folding handles feature poly washers for smooth operation, and a right-angle stop on the large screwdrivers, and the unit itself folds over a key ring. Fully open, the tool is 3-5/16" overall, and a compact 1-3/4" folded. Made of hardened tool steel and bead-blasted. Don't expect to rebuild your engine with these, but you just might be very happy to have them along some time when you have to tinker it back to life. And handy anytime to work on the various mechanical things with which modern man clutters his life. Lifetime warranty, of course.

The M4 Seber Tool is a somewhat more sophisticated contraption that features a good assortment of micro tools that lock into place — a good idea for tiny tools intended to work on tiny apparatuses. Included are a pen knife, tweezers, nail file, cap lifter, fine pliers with a radiused and serrated maw on the pliers for larger objects, wire cutters, small and large square-bar screwdrivers, and a large Phillips screwdriver. It is made from stainless steel, is available in a black oxide or bead-blasted finish. Dimensionally similar to the M3, it weighs 1.6 ounces. Also with lifetime warranty.

Available from SeberTech LLC, Dept. SOF, 2438 Cades Way, Vista, CA 92083; phone: 888-806-8225; or from dealers all over. ☞

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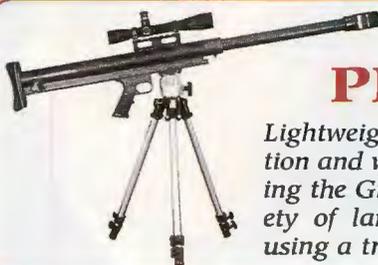
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SOF Celebrates Kalashnikov's 80th

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

There can be no doubt that Mikhail T. Kalashnikov is a Russian national treasure, held in the highest regard by both the Russian government and all its people. Russia is presently in desperate need of a genuine hero. One whose accomplishments are recognized at the international level. A man who portrays all of the personality traits we expect of those elevated to this status: humility, morality, intelligence, eloquence and the ability to lead others. Mikhail Kalashnikov is all this and much more.

I have come to know him, and his family, well. I have met with him several times in the United States and three times now in Russia. In 1994, I traveled to Izhevsk for the occasion of his 75th birthday. In 1997, I went to Izhevsk for the 50th anniversary of the AK47, the rifle that brought him the acclaim he so richly deserves. It's been estimated that 70 million Kalashnikov rifles have been manufactured. We will never know how many for sure, but no other military small arm has ever been produced in quantities even approaching the number of AKs produced. Most recently, during the second week in November 1999, I was present at the 80th birthday celebrations for a designer who must surely rank with, and possibly even above,



John C. Garand and Eugene Stoner.

I would never have believed for a moment when we were in Afghanistan in 1983 that someday the world would so change that

I would sit down to dinner with a hero of the Soviet Union who designed the rifle that symbolized everything I was fighting against with all the passion and energy within me. How incredible. On this third 18-hour train ride from Moscow to Izhevsk I once again had ample opportunity to gaze out the window at the snow-covered immenseness that is Russia and contemplate this unbelievable turn of events.

Kalashnikov's 80th birthday celebrations were sponsored by the Izhevsk Mechanical Plant (IZHMECH), which is well-known for its manufacture of the Makarov and PSM pistols and Baikal shotguns. The trip included several private dinners with General Kalashnikov, the Tula Small Arms Museum (where they sell the Russian edition of *Soldier Of Fortune*) outside of Moscow, the Tchaikovsky Museum in Votkinsk, which is not far from Izhevsk, the official 80th Jubilee ceremonies at the opera house in Izhevsk followed by a private VIP dinner party, hunting at a private lodge owned by the Electrical Mechanical Plant (they make missile-launching vehicles), and most importantly for *SOF* readers, the opportunity to examine and fire a group of new pistols manufactured by IZHMECH. ✖



(left) *SOF*'s Technical Editor, Peter G. Kokalis, presents custom-made Randall knife with a mammoth-tusk handle to General Kalashnikov on the occasion of his 80th birthday. As per Russian tradition, Kokalis holds the obligatory coin Kalashnikov gave him when presented with the gift of a knife. (right) Hunting lodge outside of Izhevsk where private events were held for the benefit of Kalashnikov's American friends.





(above, left) The Electrical Mechanical Plant, which owns and operates the hunting lodge, manufactures both wheeled missile-launching vehicles as shown and a tracked version. (above, right) The GRACH (Rook) pistol, with a military designation of 6P35, is presently undergoing trials for adoption of a new Russian service pistol. It is chambered for a 9x19mm cartridge which features the RG-057 hard steel-core bullet. The GRACH has a steel frame with a 17-round magazine. Operation is short-recoil, locked-breech with a lug on the barrel that locks into the ejection port. (left) Originally designed for covert police use and chambered initially for the unusual 5.45x18mm round, the blowback-operated PSM is now available in .22 LR with a five-round magazine.



(above) The MP-445C VARYAG (the Norman warrior who founded the Russian state) is a 9mm Parabellum pistol with a polymer frame. Short-recoil, locked-breech operation, with locking in the ejection port, this pistol features double/single-action trigger system, an exposed hammer and a 13-round magazine.



(above, inset) The new Russian Makarov with a polymer frame. Chambered for the 9mm Makarov round, it has a 12-round magazine. The only design change was the addition of a disassembly lever. (right) The MP-446 VIKING is a 9mm Parabellum pistol with a polymer frame and fully adjustable rear sights. It has an exposed hammer and is the "expert" version of the GRACH.



Surplus Grief

Investigative Travesty Thrown Out Of Court

by James L. Pate

Photos courtesy Donald Kornse

For many male Baby Boomers like Don Kornse, growing up in the decades following World War II, Korea and Vietnam, a chance to rummage through olive-drab clothing, jump boots and other canvas-smelling treasures piled in military surplus stores was almost as good as a trip to the candy store.

Surplus stores not only were good places to buy outdoor clothing and camping equipment: In those days, playing war was an accepted rite of passage for small boys, not some “disorder” for which therapy and a prescription for the latest behavior-modifying drug were recommended. Boys could be boys, and the steel helmets, web gear, canteens, ammo pouches, jungle hammocks and other martial accoutrements fired young imaginations and provided realistic props for wide-ranging outdoor play.

Now, playing war, or doing anything remotely related to guns — even hunting — is considered by many New Age parents as “unhealthy.” So their pasty-faced kids avoid fresh air and sunshine and instead hunker behind closed bedroom doors, in front of flickering computer monitors. Dressed in the patriotically colored labels of sporty high fashion, wearing the best athletic footwear that \$150 can buy, these kids gaze for hours on end at bloody cyber-visions and murderous images of mayhem flitting before their glazed eyes.

The popular perception of militaria began to change due, in large part, to homefront propaganda during the Vietnam War, when anything of a vaguely military nature — even Boy Scouts — came to be seen in a negative light.

But not for people with old-fashioned values like Don Kornse, 34.

In this atmosphere of social angst in the aftermath of Vietnam, many college ROTC training programs folded, and patriotism became unhip. Ironically, the same anti-establishment types who thought patriotism was corny embraced cast-off military clothing as cool, proto-grunge duds for long-haired, pot-smoking protesters who skipped classes for the latest *fête du jour*.

Political correctness in those days meant dressing like you shopped at Fredericks of Khe Sanh.

Be that as it may, most mom-and-pop surplus businesses remained economic, wholesome places to browse and buy. And Kornse, 34, whose boyhood affinity for military salvage would one day lead him into the surplus business, and perhaps influenced him to join the Marine Corps, never imagined that his all-American interest in militaria would land him in front of a federal judge, facing a possible 10 years in prison for the alleged theft of military property.

But Kornse, a standout Marine sergeant in a reserve unit in West Palm Beach, Fla., the 4th Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company



Donald and Robin Kornse on their wedding day, with their infant son, Donnie. When Robin became pregnant, Don said it was “a matter of honor,” so he married her, not knowing about her teen-age history of crime, substance abuse and mental health problems. She repaid him by lying about his surplus business, telling police he stole equipment from the Marine Corps. After years of agony, prolonged by hell-bent investigators and a malicious prosecution, Kornse was cleared and, finally, won custody of his son.

(ANGLICO), never imagined that the Pentagon would so completely lose control of what types of surplus were put up for auction to the public.

Neither did David B. Barrington, a one-time criminal investigator for the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), which oversees the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service (DRMS), the entity that manages — that verb is used advisedly here, as the reader will learn — the Pentagon’s 113 auction sites.

Barrington and Kornse met in a most unlikely way. Barrington was listed as a defense witness at Kornse's trial in August 1998, along with a former federal prosecutor and several other Pentagon criminal investigators.

Law Enforcement For The Defense

"It was the only time in more than 20 years in law enforcement that I sided with the defense in a criminal case," Barrington told *Soldier Of Fortune* in a telephone interview from Fort Worth, Texas, where he is now a lieutenant with the detective bureau in the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department.

The Pentagon's inventory-control problems with salvage auctions, which became the centerpiece of Kornse's defense strategy, are not new, Barrington told *SOF*. He mentioned congressional hearings held in July 1972, when the late Senator John McClellan's Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations revealed "a military disposal system which was completely out of control. Cases involving the improper sale of automatic weapons, missiles and sensitive components of every variety were cited. Military officials promised swift action to correct the problems."

But those promises were empty, and the problems only got worse, especially with the end of the Cold War and the massive reduction of military troop strength. And no wonder. When Defense Secretary William Cohen was undergoing confirmation by the Senate in January 1997, he noted that the Pentagon intended to dispose of about half of the \$103 billion in equipment inventory stored in warehouses around the globe. The target date? 2002.

As a result, Barrington said, military surplus auctions became "flooded ... with state-of-the-art military weapons systems, satellite communications systems and sensitive military electronics, such as guidance components for sophisticated guided missiles and guided bombs."

Gradually, word got around that Uncle Sam was, in effect, putting much of his best military equipment on the auction block. This attracted less-benign bargain-hunters, definitely not members of the Better Business Bureau. Surplus auctions "once frequented only by legitimate scrap dealers and surplus buyers were suddenly being targeted by foreign governments, arms dealers and shady characters eager to make a buck," Barrington said.

Don Kornse was not one of the latter. Like any good businessman, he wanted to make a profit. But he also just loved military surplus. And he didn't buy it at these Pentagon auctions. Instead, he obtained inventory through purchases and trades with other retailers, many times at gun shows.

According to Kornse, there are three things in his life that he loved most: his infant son, Donnie; the Marine Corps and his salvage business, which supplemented his income as a restaurant manager.

Who's Minding The Store? Who's Tending To Justice?

In his worst nightmare, Kornse could never have imagined that the Pentagon's carelessness with auctioned inventory would combine with the cynical, win-at-any-cost sense of "justice" of Defense Department investigators and a federal prosecutor to cost Kornse his daytime job, his salvage business, his Marine Corps career and, for a time, custody of his son.

Kornse's nightmare began with his marriage, he told *SOF*. He and a buddy, another Marine Corps reservist, were sharing a nice, four-bedroom house in south Florida. Kornse's roommate befriended a young woman who was trying to escape a life of drug addiction, crime and homelessness.

The two men decided to let her move in and help her get her life back on the right track. After a few weeks, the woman's sister, Robin, came down from New England to visit. Kornse said a relationship developed and, very soon, Robin told him she was pregnant.

Kornse, who describes himself as "a man of honor," decided to marry Robin, and they did so in October of 1995. But Kornse was unaware of Robin's history as a teen, for drug abuse, crime and months of in-patient mental health treatment. Her psychological problems soon surfaced, though, and when differences on morality and child-rearing surfaced, arguments ensued in which, Kornse said, Robin would get physically violent.

"I guess you could say I was a battered husband," Kornse said. "But I never fought back. I was taught that a man never hits a woman."



When lurid news reports appeared about Kornse allegedly stealing military property and being "the next Timothy McVeigh," Kornse's buddy, Cpl. Andre Rivera, stuck by him. Indeed, it was the refusal of Kornse's Marine unit, including officers, to abandon a man they knew was innocent, that helped sustain Kornse through a grueling travesty of justice.



Marine Corps Sgt. Ron Canilao (left) stops by at the *Soldier Of Fortune* Convention to lend moral support to Don Kornse, right, who had a booth to raise public awareness about his malicious prosecution on trumped-up charges by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Pentagon's Defense Criminal Investigative Service.



Don Kornse (left) visits with Art Alphin, a retired Army officer and West Point instructor, at the *SOF* Convention. Both men have something in common: high moral standards and a deep-seated dedication to a country whose law enforcement agents ignored exonerating evidence in an attempt at malicious prosecution.

During this time, Kornse sought the moral support of his fellow Marines.

"He is a devoted father," Lieutenant Colonel Duane Van Fleet, Jr. wrote in one letter of support. "Even as the problems with his wife increased, he remained loyal and loving to her to a fault."

Despite Kornse's long-suffering patience, the marriage deteriorated further. Just over a year after their marriage, Robin disappeared for three days. He filed a missing person report. She returned and tried to claim custody of the child, which Kornse refused. Robin tried to get a restraining order against Kornse. But when she was asked if Kornse had ever assaulted her, she said no and was told no such order could be issued.

That's when she called the local sheriff's department and made false accusations about Kornse. She told deputies that the surplus military equipment he had stored in a rental locker had been stolen from his Marine Corps unit, and that the locker contained dangerous explosives and weapons. (She would later lie under oath and make other false statements, crimes she acknowledged in testimony in divorce hearings. After months of heart-wrenching delays, Kornse would finally regain custody of his son.)

Smithers, Unleash The Hounds

The sheriff's department referred the case to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which called in the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS). Several months passed as Robin's false allegations were passed along, and in the interim, the couple got back together, but only temporarily.

A month after their reconciliation, deputies served a search warrant on the rental storage unit where Kornse kept the inventory for his surplus business. Among the items they found were fuse igniters, safety fuse, some blasting caps, gas masks, helmets, flak jackets, sleeping bags, a Chinese-made, military-style, semi-automatic rifle and a shotgun.

On 23 April 1997, Kornse was arrested by ATF and DCIS agents, who alleged that the "explosives" were illegal and had been stolen from the U.S. military, along with the other equipment.

"The ATF grossly botched this case," Kornse's attorney, Chris Mancini, of Miami, said at the time. "They are suffering from the Timothy McVeigh syndrome," referring to the convicted Oklahoma City truck bomber now under a death sentence. Mancini also told the local newspaper that the affidavit for a search warrant contained false statements, and that they had not properly investigated whether the equipment was actually stolen.

DCIS Special Agent Geoffrey Cherrington, who signed the sworn affidavit in support of a search warrant application, made some extraordinary claims. For instance, he claimed that "I have participated in ... all criminal investigative matters involving the Defense Department ... Such equipment would not normally be sold as surplus by the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office."

"Amazing," said Barrington, a colleague of Cherrington's who refuted Cherrington's claim. (Barrington was not involved in the Kornse case until he signed on as a defense witness.)

Ignore The Forest; Chop The Tree

"These [investigators] are the same people I told about a guy in Miami, with missiles stored in a warehouse that were going to Iran — a guy who had prior convictions for illegal weapons trafficking. This was referred to the same DCIS office that handled the Kornse case, and they did nothing. But then they take off on this Mickey Mouse case about blasting caps and time fuses."

In testimony before Congress in 1997, and on the CBS News magazine *60 Minutes*, Barrington detailed numerous times how the

Pentagon's property disposal system has broken down to the point that weapons and other sensitive materiel that is not supposed to go into civilian commerce is auctioned off to the highest bidder because of an emphasis on profits, poorly trained personnel and a property classification system that doesn't work.

According to Barrington, "hundreds of military items which were classified 'Secret' or 'Confidential' slip through the system and go to auction."

As examples he is personally aware of, he cited "key components of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, electronic warfare equipment, sophisticated weapons fire control equipment, entire missiles and missile launchers, automatic weapons, guided bombs, cluster bombs, coders and decoders, secure communications equipment" and much more.

Barrington said he became so frustrated by having his investigations stymied "at the political level" that he finally resigned his DCIS job in 1997. And, if the Government Accounting Office can be believed, the system has gotten worse, not better.

During FY 1998, GAO investigators making spot checks documented \$2.7 billion in DOD property that was shipped out from military units for disposal that was never recorded as received by the disposal offices.

DOD's own records indicate that, for the 12-month period ending 31 March 1998, more than 50% of the dollar-value of property that was shipped as surplus for disposal, but never showed up on inventories at Pentagon disposal sites, involved materiel that could be easily sold by a thief to terrorists, unfriendly foreign agents and other criminals who might have difficulty obtaining the items through regular commerce. These items, the GAO reported, included such sensitive items as communications gear, aircraft parts and various weapons components.

Pentagon brass defended the sloppy inventory records by saying that "in many instances" the property is actually delivered to the disposal site and sold through proper channels, but is "incorrectly reported" as not received "because the systems used to track the property are not reliable."

Unhappy Watchdog

But the Pentagon, according to the GAO, "does not know the status of property being shipped to disposal because of the questionable accuracy of data and lack of adherence to control procedures."

The disposal of military surplus comes under the control of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and the DLA. Each branch of the military decides what inventories have surplus, and identify the specific materiel. Once that determination is made, the DRMS, a DLA entity, becomes responsible for the surplus.

Before being offered to the public, property may be redistributed within DOD, or transferred to other federal agencies. Dangerous equipment, or anything vital to national security, is supposed to be demilitarized, or "demiled." But thousands of items slip through to auction in their original and potentially dangerous state.

Cherrington probably knew that when he investigated Kornse, Barrington said. More importantly, Cherrington knew that the blasting caps, time fuse and other items he said had been stolen by Kornse from the military had, in fact, been auctioned off by the Pentagon. The blasting caps, for instance, had been sold to the Colombian Air Force, which then resold them in the United States.

The ATF established this with a single phone call, defense attorney Mancini said. But the prosecution failed to disclose this to Kornse and his attorney until well after his trial had begun. It became apparent even before that trial, in a hearing on a motion to suppress evidence, that Cherrington had lied in his search warrant.



Donald Kornse Sr. (left) and his wife, Diane, right, watch proudly as Donald Jr. is promoted to sergeant by Lt. Col. Duane Van Fleet. Van Fleet would later testify that Pentagon investigator agent Geoffrey Cherrington lied in a sworn affidavit about what Van Fleet told him. When Van Fleet refused to tell Cherrington what he wanted to hear about Kornse, Cherrington threatened to ruin the careers of Van Fleet and other officers at 4th ANGLICO.

He wrote down what he wanted to hear to support the allegations — not what witnesses told him.

The two key witnesses were Lieutenant Colonel Duane Van Fleet and Major Jeffrey Winn, both of 4th ANGLICO.

Beyond Sloppy Investigation

Cherrington's affidavit misspelled Van Fleet's first and last names and misidentified the Lieutenant Colonel as "Commander, Fourth Marine Division." It also incorrectly identified Van Fleet as the commanding officer of Kornse's unit, when he was an instructor-inspector.

Cherrington's affidavit also alleged that Van Fleet told the criminal investigator that "there was no legitimate military requirement for Kornse to have this military equipment. Lieutenant Colonel Van Fleet further advised that Kornse could have access to the ammunition because Kornse is a firearms instructor. Kornse could have had access to the pyrotechnic devices because he does training with the explosive ordnance division and other active military combat units, and Kornse could have access to the other equipment because Kornse is a supply specialist ..."

Under questioning by Kornse's defense attorney, Chris Mancini, of Miami, Van Fleet said the entire statement was untrue, and that "the last statements ... are the most glaring inaccuracies."

He explained that what he actually told Cherrington was considerably more detailed, that Kornse is what is known in the Marine Corps as a preliminary firearms instructor, or PMI.

"PMIs are simply the people who go along the firing line and correct positions, firing techniques, et cetera," Van Fleet testified. "They do not draw ammunition."

Van Fleet said he also told Cherrington that 4th ANGLICO has not been on the firing range in the 16 months that Van Fleet had been with the unit — key fact that Cherrington neglected to include in his sworn affidavit.

"Did you tell him specifically that there was a linkage between his instructing and his access to ammunition ...?" Mancini asked.

180 Degrees From Truth

"No," replied Van Fleet. "I did exactly the opposite ... I explained the difference between PMIs and the supply guys that draw the ammunition ... [And] because someone's in supply ... it doesn't necessarily mean that he has complete access to everything that's in supply ... The PMI has no relationship actually drawing ammunition on a rifle range."

"Did you at any time make any statement to Mr. Cherrington to the effect that Kornse would have access to pyrotechnic devices because he does training with [the] explosive ordnance division and other active military combat units?" Mancini asked.

"No," Van Fleet responded.

"Allow me to read it again," Mancini said, repeating that portion of Cherrington's sworn affidavit. "Did you tell him what it say he attributes to you as a quote?"

"No," Van Fleet said. "We're a reserve unit. Pop-up flares, that type of thing, are kind of unusual for us to have, to be very honest with you. We use some smoke occasionally in our parachute operations, but very rarely do we use any kind of pyrotechnics. And ... training with explosive ordnance? There's nothing [like that] in our mission ..."

Van Fleet went on to testify that "Mr. Cherrington, [in] my opinion as a professional military officer, would never listen to my explanations ... He already knew the answer before I started the explanation ... My explanation was not acceptable ... to Mr. Cherrington as an explanation. There are some people, sir, that are just not willing to listen. Because as we went along, we always came back to the same thing ... I could never make Mr. Cherrington understand what I was saying ..."

When Cherrington and another DCIS agent didn't hear what they wanted to hear from Van Fleet and another 4th ANGLICO officer, the investigators began to make not-so-veiled threats, Van Fleet testified.

"I was the recipient of intimidation," Van Fleet said. "If you don't do this, this is going to happen ... He told me he was going to smear the Marine Corps ... all over the local newspapers ... because I wasn't cooperating."

The Marine officer said he was told by the DCIS agents that "we have burned a Navy captain, an Army colonel and we're certainly not worried about a Marine Corps lieutenant colonel."

Mancini also called Capt. Richard A. Hollen, Jr., another 4th ANGLICO officer who was with Van Fleet when the senior officer was interviewed by Cherrington. Hollen also testified under oath that Van Fleet did not make the statements attributed to him by Cherrington in Cherrington's affidavit.

Cherrington, according to Hollen's testimony, characterized Kornse as "the next Timothy McVeigh," who is under a death sentence in the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. Cherrington also called Kornse a "right-wing wacko," the witness testified. And Hollen said Van Fleet complained about Cherrington's misquoting him in the affidavit.

courtesy David B. Barrington



Former DLA criminal investigator David B. Barrington, in Desert Storm. In a life-long career in law-enforcement, Kornse's case was the only time Barrington was a defense witness.

Van Fleet said his conversations with Cherrington were "like talking to a brick wall," Hollen testified.

Yet another witness from 4th ANGLICO, Capt. Jeffrey Winn, testified that he heard Cherrington accuse the Marine Corps of trying to obstruct his investigation by lying to him. He said Cherrington told him that lot numbers found on some gas masks stored in Kornse's rental locker were traced back to 4th ANGLICO, an allegation that was not true.

Once Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Lanigan, who called Cherrington as his main prosecution witness, finished presenting his case, U.S. District Court Judge Norman C. Roettger dismissed the charges, saying that the government had failed to prove that anything

seized from Kornse's locker was stolen.

Worst Case In 30 Years On Bench

"This is the worst case I've seen the government bring in as long as I can remember," said the judge, who has been on the bench for more than 30 years. He severely reprimanded Lanigan for his poor performance, and said he came close to having Lanigan "thrown out of court."

Defense attorney Mancini wrote a letter of complaint to Lanigan's boss, U.S. Attorney Tom Scott, detailing the many offenses of Lanigan and Cherrington and asking for a full internal investigation. Within two weeks, he received a reply stating that his allegations had been "fully" investigated and both the prosecutor and the Pentagon agent had been cleared.

"This case has been a lie and a miscarriage of justice from the start," said Kornse, who now has pending a lawsuit against the feds for malicious prosecution. "I can't believe what they put me through."

Nor can Barrington.

"Kornse was an easy mark," Barrington told *SOF*. "They figured he'd probably try to get a plea bargain. But he decided to fight for what's right. And that's something they don't understand or appreciate. It was embarrassing for me to sit there in court and watch."

"The worst part is for the taxpayer, who must bear the brunt of billions of dollars in research and development costs that, because of this broken-down system, are sold in scrap piles for pennies a pound.

"But worst of all," said Barrington, himself a combat veteran, "is for our troops, who one day will have to face the consequences on the battlefield, and may very well pay with their lives. They'll come home in body bags because some nimrod in the Pentagon was more worried about profit. What went on when I worked at the Pentagon was revolting."

James L. Pate is a frequent contributor to Soldier Of Fortune magazine. ☒

1999 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOF 3-GUN TACTICAL MATCH

Text & Photos by Chris Mayer

Freedom, and two of the things that make it possible, skill-at-arms and the warrior tradition, are what the leftist power brokers of the world have attempted to smother in the United States and throughout the world. They have succeeded in a good portion of the world, but it has been more than an uphill battle in America. Our country was founded on the ideal of freedom and it was skill-at-arms and the warrior tradition that has enforced the continued existence of the United States of America thus far.

In the desert foothills west of Las Vegas, 240 competitors from throughout the United States and several foreign countries met to test their skill at arms during three days of shooting in the 20th Anniversary 1999 Soldier Of Fortune 3-Gun Match. Once again, with Match Director Michael Horne at the helm, their skill and determination would be put to the ultimate trial at the Desert Sportsman's Range facility during nine challenging stages of fire.

For the past 14 years, Michael Horne has been the guiding force behind the operation of the SOF Match. His involvement in practical shooting began in the early 1970s, in Southern California, with the Southwest Pistol League, and continued as an instructor at Gunsite under Jeff Cooper.

Horne and his staff designed the stages. They were intended to examine the abilities and expertise of the competitor with the pistol, rifle, and shotgun. The scenarios were varied and challenging, requiring movement, the use of cover, and marksmanship skills that tested even the most experienced shooters.

The Desert Sportsman's Range is located in the foothills nine miles west of the Las Vegas Strip. The range complex consists of 18 pistol, rifle, and shotgun ranges encompassing an area of 460 acres. The Desert Sportsman's Rifle and Pistol Club runs the privately operated facility with a membership of over 1,000.

A wide variety of weaponry was used by the competitors during the match. The Colt 1911 and its various clones were the predominate handguns, followed closely by a variety of Glock models. The shotguns of choice were generally semi-automatic, either Benelli or Remington 11-87s, with Remington 870s and one Winchester 1897 thrown in for variety. The rifle category

was dominated by the Eugene Stoner-designed AR15, be it of Colt manufacture or from one of the many other companies that produce a similar weapon.

Off And Running

Stage 1 — The LZ, Director: Richard Haddad. The Landing Zone required the competitor to run some 25 yards to the first of four shoot areas and engage an ambush group of three enemy from each area. Ranges on the targets varied from 120 to 220 yards. One target, that was to be engaged from each shooting



area, was only visible from that area. Movement through the four locations and the subsequent return to two of them, was all counted in the shooters' raw time score. The maximum time that was allowed to complete this stage was 180 seconds.

Stage 2 — Rifle Exercises, Director: David Boyd. This stage consisted of four separate strings of fire from 275, 150, 100, and 50 yards with decreasing time allowances and a total of 42 rounds fired. Targets were positioned in close proximity with a head target flanked by SOF full-upper-torso targets. With each successive string, the allowed time was compressed, the number of rounds fired was increased, and posi-



Director Richard Haddad guides competitors through Stage 1, The L.Z. 220 yards is a long shot.



(above) A custom AR15 with a free-floating barrel and Canadian ELCAN telescopic sight. (right) One of the numerous women in the match shoots from a Stage 3 barrel. (far right) The use of cover in the Rifle Enfilade was required. A Steyr AUG is used by a police competitor.





WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ...

SOF 3-GUN TACTICAL MATCH

tion firing was introduced, with the head target addressed only from the 50-yard mark.

Stage 3 — Rifle Enfilade, Director: Mike Lackey. The Rifle Enfilade was a lateral movement exercise that included the use of cover and the engagement of both moving and stationary targets at a range of 100 yards. The shooter fired from the four different shoot areas moving between each of them in order and then returning to #2 and #4, for a total of six firing positions. The moving target was to be fired on with two rounds as it appeared in each of the four windows and the stationary targets, in the bottom of three of the windows, were also to be addressed. The moving target traversed from the right to the left and then a reverse trip was made. Shooting was only allowed while the moving target was actually in motion, which was approximately 30 seconds.

Stage 4 — Pistol Enfilade, Director: Phillip Wyatt. This pistol stage duplicated the Rifle enfilade with the range reduced to 20 yards.

Stage 5 — Increasing Distance/Diminishing Time, Directors: Sam Waidelich and Bill Johnson. Divided into two separate parts, this stage challenged the competitors' speed, accuracy, and confidence.

The diminishing time portion was shot from 15 yards with a SOF target centered between two lines of seven 10-inch and 6-inch steel dropping targets to the right and left respectively. All firing was done from the holster with the competitor facing the target line. As the time decreased from five seconds, in intervals of one-half second, the shooter was to place two shots in the torso of the cardboard target and drop one of the steel targets. Additional score being earned if the 6-inch steel target was chosen over the 10-inch. This process was continued until the shooter failed to complete a string within the given time limit or he completed all seven strings with the last one having a time limit of only two seconds.

For the increasing distance phase, the competitor faced seven steel silhouette falling targets. Starting position was of his choice, either from the guard position or from the holster. Guard allowed two seconds for each string and from the holster, he was given two-and-one-half seconds. The range was marked from 5 to 50 yards in 5-yard increments. Points were earned, one for every yard of range, with each successful hit.

Starting at any range between 5 and 20 yards, the shooter would draw and fire one round within the given time limit. He would then move 5 yards farther away from the target and repeat the process seven times, with his last attempt occurring between 35 and 50 yards depending on his start position.

Stage 6 — Pistol/Shotgun Option, Director: Al Newell. Moving through a maze of trucks, trailers, and other obstacles, the competitor was faced with 16 steel targets of various sizes. Movement, the use of cover, and the ability to find targets among a myriad of obstacles were the keys to success in this stage.

Stage 7 — Fighting Pits, Director: Seth Whitmire. This was

a shotgun-only stage consisting of four strings of fire. Shooters were allowed only 20 seconds to move, engage four reactive 10-inch steel plates, take cover in a fighting pit, and reload before the next string of fire would begin. Only four rounds were to be loaded, regardless of magazine capacity, for each portion of this stage. The last two strings involved six plates necessitating the loading of two rounds during the firefight.

Stage 8 — Home Invasion, Director: Johnny Wilson. Home Invasion was a multi-weapon stage using the pistol, shotgun, and rifle. Starting in a small room, shoot area #1, the competitor began with a holstered empty pistol and a partly loaded magazine. When the start signal was given, he had to top off his magazine from loose rounds in a small tray. Five seconds later, a door directly in front of him would swing open, revealing four hostile targets that he was to engage from cover. He then obtained his pre-positioned shotgun and additional ammunition from the corner of the room at shoot area #2, opened the small window at that location, and was confronted by three more targets. Moving to areas three, four, and five progressively, the shooter was confronted by nine additional targets. The stage ended when he obtained his rifle at area #6 to engage two long-range targets. Only 150 seconds were allowed to complete the entire stage.

Team Stage, Director: Lyle Wyatt. Requiring movement and co-ordination, the team was confronted by a line of three defensive positions and 24 reactive steel targets. The members were assigned as a rifleman, two shotgun men, and a pistol shooter/ammo bearer.

The rifleman was trapped at shoot area #1 and all others were to start at shoot area #2. The exercise began with the rifleman's engagement of six targets; however, he was supplied with only five rounds of ammunition. When his rounds were expended, he would call for more ammo. Plates were downed at shoot area #2 and then the team moved laterally to resupply their rifleman.

Movement to each successive shoot area could not be made until each shooter engaged a designated group of targets. The ammo bearer would finally arrive at the rifleman's position to supply him with ammunition. The rifleman finished his first set of plates and repeated them again. The pistol man engaged his set of six targets and the rifleman completed the stage with a hit on the strike plate.

When these world-class warriors completed their three days of combat in the Nevada desert, all were winners. They had prevailed over others, or themselves, to prove their skill-at-arms.

Chris Mayer is a 30-year law enforcement officer and long-time firearms instructor who resides in Southern California.

Readers please note: The 2000 SOF 3-Gun Match will be held from 10-14 October at the Desert Sportsman's Range near Las Vegas. For Match info and applications, send a SASE to Michael Horne, Match Director, 4128 Abbott Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312; or visit our web site at <http://members.aol.com/sofscoring>.





Stage 4: Pistol Enfilade—
 Movement, use of cover, and
 moving target engagement were
 the keys to success in
 the Pistol Enfilade.



DESERT SPORTSMAN'S
 RIFLE AND PISTOL CLUB
 THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY CALL
 505-833-0011



Stage 6: Pistol/Shotgun Option.
 From the first shoot area to the
 last, the competitor fought, ran,
 and crawled his way through a
 maze of obstacles.



**Stage 7: Fighting
 Pits. Searching,
 shooting on the
 move, and loading
 were all key factors
 in the Fighting Pits.
 A Winchester Model
 1897 shotgun (far
 right) ran the
 Fighting Pits.**

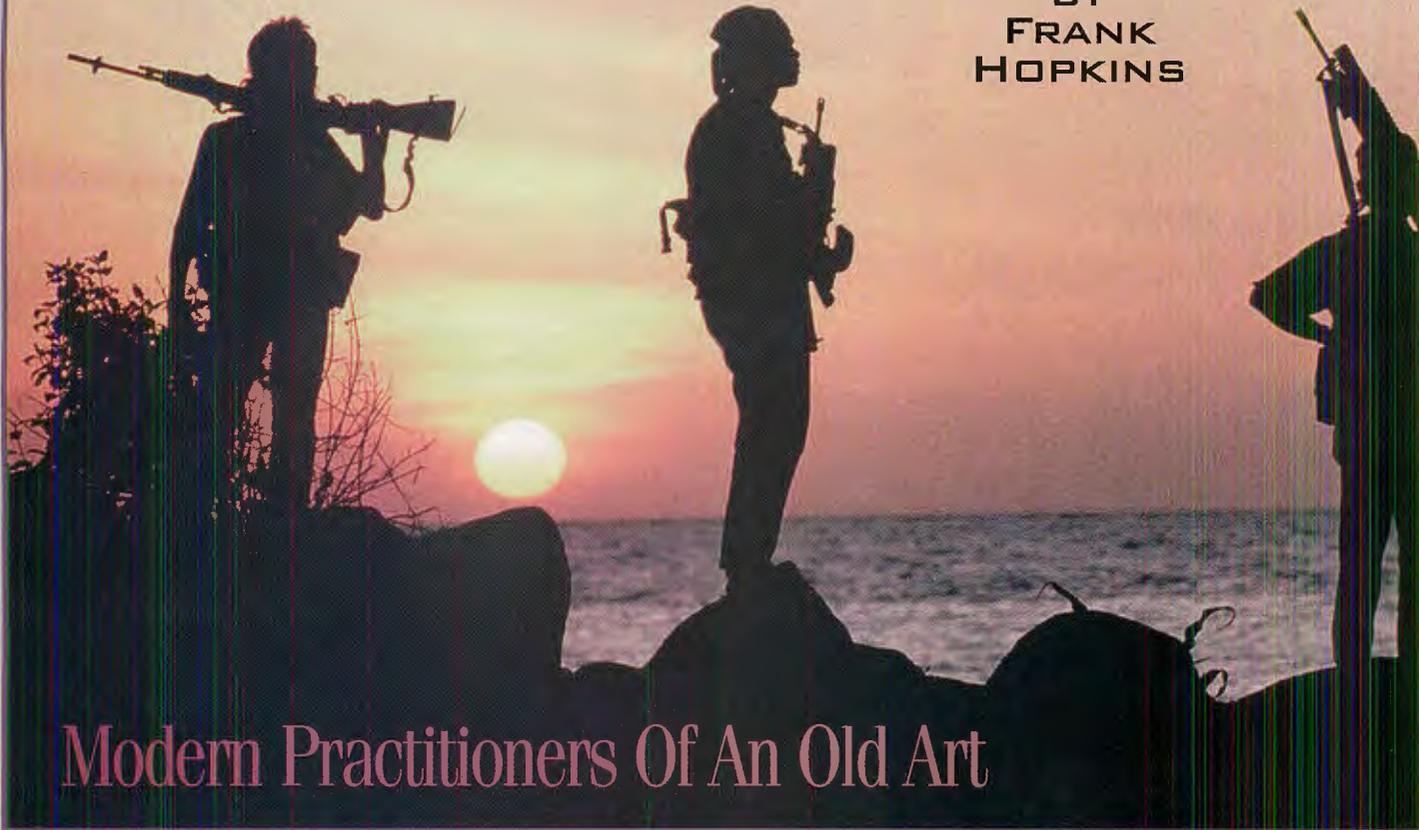


PIRACY

PART II

SAILING IN HARM'S WAY

BY
FRANK
HOPKINS



Modern Practitioners Of An Old Art

There have always been pirates. In today's world we have thought of pirates as relics of the past, not likely to be encountered on the high seas or in territorial waters. But they are back ... Today's ships, with their high-value cargoes and small crews ... are highly vulnerable to criminal predators in high-speed boats, armed with modern assault weapons, and operating in sea lanes that international carriers must traverse. Pirates are thus able to make surprise attacks on unarmed merchantmen and get away with money and loot.

Today's piracy is more than a nuisance to commercial shipping. We assess it to be a strategic threat for several reasons: It affects maritime traffic in vital shipping lanes, particularly in Southeast Asia; attacks on oil supertankers hold the potential to ignite environmental disasters;

attacks by pirate craft may invite military reprisals; and there is a continuing problem off the coast of China with what amounts to state-sponsored piracy by some official Chinese craft ...

... Nations most affected by piracy have chosen a low-key response, emphasizing police work, intelligence sharing, and some maritime patrols, leaving much of the responsibility for deterring and combating pirates to individual shippers ... However, in light of the recent increase in pirate attacks, which almost doubled from 1994 to 1995, the nations most affected by piracy may be compelled to reconsider the kinds of actions that are needed to combat this growing threat and assure the safety of vital international commercial shipping.

(From an abstract of a paper by William

M. Carpenter and David G. Wiencek, at Symposium on International Perspectives on Maritime Security, sponsored by the Maritime Security Council.)

Last month we reviewed the conditions that favored piracy during its first heyday in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries: unarmed merchantmen carrying valuable cargoes for which there was a ready black market, through waters remote from effective naval protection — and, often, permissive collusion by corrupt officials. With those same conditions existing again today, piracy has once more poisoned the high seas as quickly as a red tide, and today's pirates are not confined to the international shipping lanes. They also work the air and international overland routes with a profitable abandon that belies



E. Pasquier

Piracy Defined

Military encyclopedias of the 1880s, when the community of nations was finally waging an effective war on this centuries-old scourge, define piracy as:

Robbery on the high seas, and is an offense against the Law of Nations. It is a crime not against any particular State, but against all mankind, and may be punished in the competent tribunal of any country where the offender may be found, or into which he may be carried, although committed on board a foreign vessel on the high seas. It is of the essence of piracy that the pirate has no commission from a Foreign State, or from one belligerent State at war with another. Pirates being the common enemies of all mankind, and all Nations having an equal interest in their apprehension and punishment, they may be lawfully captured on the high seas by the armed vessels of any particular State, and brought within its territorial jurisdiction for trial by its tribunals ...

So, most simply defined, piracy is robbery upon the high seas. In more ancient times under English Law, piracy comprised anything that would have been a felony on land. In more recent times, what does and does not constitute an act of piracy has become a quibbling field for courts and lawyers pondering whether a particular act was piracy, terrorism, hijacking or rob-

(left) On the archipelago of Sulu, in the Philippines, pirates scan the horizon for defenseless victims. Spread over several hundred square miles throughout the islands and archipelagoes of the South China Sea, many small bands of pirates roam the water in speed boats, killing, raping, stealing — sometimes even eating — their victims. (below) Pirates wait like spiders for a victim to appear on the horizon. Exact numbers of pirates working the Philippine archipelagoes are unknown — but the problem is endemic, from small gangs preying on small craft, to large operations that will custom-steal a freighter and/or its cargo.

the controls and technology of 21st century governments, traders and law-enforcement agencies.

In short, borrowing on their predecessors' audacity, modern pirates are once again proving that crime does pay, at least until forces are marshaled against it to the point that the return is no longer worth the risk.

After the effective demise of piracy at the turn of the last century, it was a hazard relegated to isolated incidents in remote waters. Air piracy reared its ugly head after mid-century, but represented almost entirely political, not profit, motive. Sporadic incidents of pirates seizing a yacht or small freighter were barely of concern to marine insurance actuaries. But as the 20th century rolled toward the new millennium there was a dramatic new upsurge in a problem that the civilized world thought it had put behind itself.



E. Pasquier

PIRACY

SAILING IN HARM'S WAY

bery/armed-robbery of a vessel.

Under the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea of 1982, acts of piracy are those committed on the high seas in a place outside the jurisdiction of any specific state. Since most acts of piracy today take place within territorial waters of some sovereign state, statistical nit-pickers might assert there are thus few *true* acts of piracy, not that such hair-splitting matters a great deal to those who are under fire, being bludgeoned to death, robbed or having their valuable cargo or their entire vessel stolen. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a division of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), has adopted a more realistic definition of piracy:

Piracy is an act of boarding any vessel with the intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act.

This is more of a real-world definition that pretty well encompasses everything except unarmed pilferage or burglary. For our purposes here, we will remain with the traditional meaning and leave semantic fine-tuning to the courts.

One good manner in which to define modern piracy is through examples. So common has piracy again become, that it has developed its own contemporary argot. Although these definitions are broadly sweeping generalities, some types of piracy are named after the regions where they are most prevalent.

"Asian" Piracy

"Asian" piracy is where ships are boarded and valuables and cash are stolen from crews, passengers or the ships' safes. Seldom are these attacks on the high seas, since most of the frequently navigated waters are territorial to a particular state. Typically, pirates skillfully come alongside a ship underway, usually at night, board it and quickly take possession of any portable valuables available. Like street muggers, as often as not these pirates are not violent unless resistance is offered, although this appears to be changing. The Philip Channel between Indonesia and Singapore used to be a favorite hunting ground for such pirates, although they are now operating in Indonesian waters and are getting less "non-violent."

In 1998 there were 11 "officially reported" such attacks in the waters off Malaysia and one in the Indonesian part of the Singapore Straits, but these official numbers probably represent a fraction of the actual incidents. If you are skipper of a small freighter whose crew just lost a few thousand dollars and nobody got hurt, would you tie up a million-dollar ship, its



On "patrol" through island waters, well-armed pirate gang scrutinizes sea for potential victims. They attack anything and anybody: tourists, small freighters, fishermen. Cruel, bloodthirsty pirates do not always let victims go unharmed — but at first sign of armed resistance from potential target, attack is called off: no sense risking if outcome is uncertain.



"Jerry's" pirate gang has spotted a small boat of unarmed, penniless, terrified fishermen. Rare is the unarmed victim who resists, as massacres are common and the least lack of cooperation is met with execution. Hapless fishermen are plundered of fish, nets, even fishing line — but in this case they were let go unharmed.



Back on land after raiding a tourist vessel, pirate gang splits up the proceeds: rather meager this time; only a few handbags, bracelets and other cheap jewelry were netted.

cargo and crew (while the meter is running at about \$10,000 a day), while some petty bureaucrats pretend to investigate the incident? No. And, it's difficult for police who *do* want to investigate, when the scene of the crime is steaming seaward at 15 knots.

A commercial enterprise must work to a bottom line if it is to survive. This hard fact has also been a consideration in most companies not taking a pro-active approach to the problem of piracy there: If hiring shotgun-riders costs more than you're likely to lose, then you keep your money and takes your chances.

Typical of the majority of incidents that are never reported was the experience of Andries Kingma, then a Dutch seaman, whose ship was boarded by a gang of machete-wielding pirates off the coast of Sierra Leone. The crew was saved by friendly fire from a nearby Russian whaler. "Suddenly bullets were flying and the pirates were screaming and jumping overboard," Kingma later told an AP reporter. The Russians and the pirates both took off. Kingma and his crew couldn't afford the delay while local authorities might, or might not, investigate, so the incident was not reported.

In the fall of 1992, the IMB established a Piracy Reporting Centre, in Kuala Lumpur. This around-the-clock agency has been a clearing house for reporting incidents of piracy, and serves to warn and assist vessels against pirate attacks. It also serves to keep official attention on this ongoing problem. No doubt at least in part to this attention, and the fact that international shipping is vital to local economies, some countries of the region have made genuine efforts to clean up their waters. *Reported* figures for the Far East and Southeast Asia as a whole in 1996 were 141 attacks, and for 1998 down to 95 — figures agencies who wish the problem would go away find encouraging. Statistics are not yet complete for the year 1999, but at mid-year indicated incidents were back up.

The so-called "Asian" type of piracy, of course, although typical, may not be the rule. Heavily armed pirates indicating a willingness to be as violent as is necessary are more the norm in many waters of Southeast Asia, particularly in the Malacca Straits and Indonesian and Philippine waters. And the taking of entire cargoes, or stealing an entire ship, are becoming more common, as we will examine shortly.

"South American" Piracy

This type of piracy is more typical of the cutlass-wielding piracy of yore; it used to be called "West African" piracy. Under the 1982 U.N. definition it would not be piracy at all, as these attacks commonly are staged on ships berthed or at anchor, but they are of particular concern as they are staged by heavily armed gangs looking for an excuse



The fact that this pirate is armed with Chinese-made M14 copy may indicate he has connections to communist New People's Army. Philippine pirates are particularly well-armed. Their small-potatoes counterparts in Indonesian waters are often armed with knives and clubs, although organized-crime pirates there come equipped with seaworthy speedboats, automatic weapons and rocket launchers.

to blow somebody away.

Items targeted by these armed gangs include cash, negotiable goods, expensive ships' equipment, plus any valuable and portable cargo. Such attacks typically exhibit some suspect port officials — and the total value of goods taken in such attacks tends to be more than in the "Asian" attacks of sea-going muggers. Although usually skilled at boarding even high-sided ships, the "South American"-style pirates seldom exhibit the high degree of seamanship required of the "Asian"-style pirates who board a ship underway on the high seas.

Hand-in-hand with these raids, which

already smack of an inside job, is the fact that local law enforcement usually shows great ineptitude and little interest in investigating such crimes or providing any assistance to the victims. On 8 July 1997, while the master of the *Kapitan Betkher* and two other crewmen were being knifed and pistol-whipped by six pirates, port authorities in Aratu, Brazil, never responded to pleas for help sent by VHF radio, the only means of communicating with them. On 25 July 1997, at Salvador, Brazil, the police were called immediately after three pirates robbed a ship's master at gunpoint. They arrived the next day.

Political Piracy

Maritime attacks with a military/political/terrorist aspect are another facet of today's problem with piracy. The incident that comes to mind is the terrorist attack on the *Achille Lauro* in the fall of 1985, where heavily armed Arab extremists took over the cruise ship in the eastern Mediterranean. The international outrage caused by these self-anointed heroes throwing an elderly, wheelchair-bound man overboard merely because he was Jewish led to the Rome Convention of 1988 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a U.N. agency. Response to such outrages by international organizations and law-enforcement agencies has been much more energetic than toward attacks with a mere profit motive.

In 1993 there was a rash of incidents off China where ships manned by men in PLA uniform intercepted and fired upon passing ships. It has never been established to everyone's satisfaction whether these were genuine pirates under uniformed guise, PLA sailors doing a little freelancing, or some bizarre exhibition of nationalistic fervor on the part of the Chinese government. Suffice it to say,

the publicity given such incidents has led to a drastic decrease in such incidents, either because the PLA decided it was not a good idea, or the PLA decided to crack down on criminals who were giving them a bad eye.

In troubled countries where whichever rag-tag militia got a new shipment of ammo today is the "legally constituted authority," such groups or fragments thereof have retraced the steps of the ancient pirates who were first bandits then turned to the sea because that's where the loot was. In 1995, for instance, there were some 14 attacks on merchant vessels reported off Somalia, and there is no indication piracy in Somalia will get better any more than will their political

situation stabilize until one warlord has managed to kill off all the competition. The stats for 1999 in Somalia appear to be coming in at about the same level. When a rogue government sends rogues to sea, are they pirates or police? We will leave that for the semanticists, also.

Wholesale Piracy For Pure Profit

More closely akin to the more accomplished freebooters of an earlier age are the violent new pirates primarily plying Southeast Asian waters, who hijack large merchant vessels while underway and pick them clean, then turn the empty vessel back to its crew. As long as the vessel remains underway and no distress message is sent, odds of any authority ashore responding is remote.

One of the first warning shots fired across the bow of international commerce that piracy was back in a big way was the case of the Cypriot-flagged *Marta*. In late summer 1990, the *Marta* was steaming from Bangkok to Pusan with some \$2 million worth of tin-plate goods on board. Off the Thai-Cambodian border, she was boarded at night by heavily armed pirates, who obviously had good intelligence as to what was on board, and where the *Marta* would be.

The four pirates quickly overpowered the nine-man crew and set sail south for two days, during which time the stack was repainted and the ship renamed the "*V TAI*" with the help of pre-made stencils they had brought for that purpose. They hoisted a Honduran flag but (*duh-uh*) did not alter the original port of registry on the stern.

After sailing south for two days with the crew handcuffed and blindfolded below decks, the vessel dropped anchor and when night fell the pirates began offloading the

cargo to a barge that had come alongside. The barge came complete with its own shore labor and fork lifts to facilitate the theft. The *Marta*/cum-*V Tai* then swung on the hook for two days before sailing north for another two days. Off the northeast Malaysian coast, the pirates left in one of the ship's lifeboats, taking the skipper as hostage. The crew was released with no radio and only a ripped chart to find their way back to Bangkok. The maneuvering and subterfuge were evidently to enable the barge with its ill-gotten inventory to cleanly escape and disperse the booty — and it worked. One of the pirates bragged that this raid was the sixth such successful attack they had pulled off in the preceding year and a half. Obviously, such large thefts require the collusion of a combination of dirty officials and crooked merchants to get rid of the goods. This sort of pirate attack has become increasingly common, as we will see later.

Kill 'Em All, Take It All

Another throwback to the heyday of blue-water piracy is the increasing and alarming trend toward taking a ship, killing its crew in cold blood, stealing the cargo and keeping the ship. More temperate pirates don't want to get caught anywhere near the ship they have pillaged, representing as it does the scene of the crime and representing as it should *prima facie* evidence of the crime, and it is mind-boggling that this particularly arrogant form of piracy is on the increase. Especially troubling are the cold-blooded murders of the ships' crews, and the fact that the ship itself has no value unless it can be re-registered, which takes the passive or active collusion of corrupt officials. It has

been a difficult reality for official bodies to address, predisposed as they are to their Pollyanna assumptions about communities of nations, et cetera. And while this corrupt and rapine enterprise is growing, international bodies twitter about whether this constitutes hijacking or true piracy.

Although predicated on the ancient pirates' reality that "Dead men tell no tales," stealing a vessel for the purpose of turning it into a "Phantom Ship" does not require that it be heavily laden with valuable cargo. Valuable cargoes are merely a bonus: The ship itself is wanted for a tool to commit cargo frauds, as is becoming increasingly more common in the Far East, where existing crews are set adrift, marooned or summarily executed and thrown to the sharks.

Typical of frustrating examples is the *Anna Sierra*, a Cyprus-flagged cargo ship that left Bangkok for Manila on 12 September 1995 with \$5 million worth of sugar. She was hijacked in the Gulf of Siam by 30 masked pirates who sped alongside in powerboats, boarded, then set the 23 crewmen adrift on a makeshift raft. Rescued by Vietnamese fishermen, the crew reported the hijacking to the Piracy Center, which alerted law-enforcement officials and offered a \$50,000 reward. A few days later the *Sierra* was found in the Chinese port of Beihai, renamed the *Artic* [sic] *Sea* — but the overpainted original name (*Diagara*) was still visible welded on the stern, revealing its true identity.

Pressured by the IMB, Chinese officials boarded the ship and placed the crew under guard. Noted John Martin, head of the IMB's piracy center at the time, "Every time we proved the documents for the *Artic Sea* were false. ... The pirates would pro-

Throughout South Pacific waters, pirates show skillful seamanship and willingness to brave rough waters to pursue their prey. South American pirates are more likely to strike when vessel is stationary.



Nitin Vadukul



This Australian millionaire's yacht was robbed of half a million dollars worth of gold collector's coins right in Manila Bay when seven armed pirates boarded his vessel screaming, "The money, quick, or you're dead." He accuses Manila police of complicity. Official corruption is major problem of big-time modern piracy, without whose help it could not flourish.

duce more false documents." After three months, the Chinese acknowledged the true identity and ownership of the vessel. *Then the Chinese sent the pirates home to Indonesia.* The cargo was impounded, and Chinese officials presented the owner of the *Sierra* with a \$750,000 bill comprising various (read that bogus) charges. The owners refused to pay, and the *Sierra*, neglected and by now listing heavily and in danger of capsizing from water in her holds and engine room, was ordered beached nearby, where she sits as this is written. The insurance company picked up the tab on cargo and vessel. Investigations revealed that the *Sierra* had been custom-hijacked for its cargo of sugar, which was to have been sold at a serious discount of \$800,000 to a Chinese company in Beihai.

The same crew of pirates surfaced a year later in the hijack of the *Tenyu*, with a speaker at a Singapore Shipping Association symposium on piracy noting, "The chief officer was '100%' the same person as one of the hijackers of ... *Anna Sierra*..." Having been released by the Chinese, the Indonesian pirates this time killed the entire 15-man crew of the *Tenyu*.

Cargo fraud can take many forms, from pretending to be another ship and picking up its cargo and then disappearing, to pretending to be a ship that doesn't exist and working the same or similar scams. With a shortage of shipping, a stolen phantom ship re-papered with the help of corrupt officials usually has no problem finding a desperate shipper whose letter of credit is about to expire: They give him the bill of lading he must have to clear his letter of credit, then sail off with his goods to a different destination, unload their booty, again redocument the ship and repeat the cycle all over again. It has been reported that phantom ships get away with more than \$200 million in cargo every year from East Asian docks alone. Perhaps the most audacious cargo fraud of recent times was pulled

off by the Tamil Tigers.

On 23 May 1997, the freighter *Stillus Limassul* sailed from the Mozambican port of Beira, laden with 32,400 81mm mortar bombs. The ammo had been produced by the government-owned, Chinese-built Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI), and railed to Beira. From there it was bound for Colombo, Sri Lanka, for government forces. As it happens, the *Stillus Limassul* belonged to the maritime arm of the Liberation Tigers of Eelam (Tamil Tigers), who were the intended targets of the ammunition. After the *Limassul* cleared Madagascar, it — and the \$3 million worth of mortar rounds — was never seen again.

The IMB's Piracy Reporting Centre received 17 reports of such "hijackings" in 1998. Two cases where the entire crews were killed were the M.V. *Tenyu* with a crew of 15, and the M.V. *Cheung Son*, whose crew of 23 hands were handcuffed, bludgeoned to death, weighted and thrown overboard. As we reported last month, there have finally been arrests in the case of the *Cheung Son*, and as we go to press the Chinese government announced those responsible have been sentenced to death.

The case of the M.V. *Petro Ranger* is pertinent because it illustrates one of the most troubling aspects of modern piracy: *permissive* or *collusive* governments.

The *Petro Ranger* sailed from Singapore with a load of POL on 16 April 1998. Barely nine hours from port she was boarded by 12 armed pirates. The crew was held hostage below decks while the pirates sailed her to Hainan Island, in China. Repeatedly threatened with death, the 21 crew members were held in the mess room for 10 days. Ultimately, the Chinese authorities alleged the ship was engaged in smuggling operations. They questioned the 12 pirates, who were traveling on Indonesian documents. They also questioned and detained the crew for more than two weeks.

How was the situation resolved? In the face of irrefutable evidence that the pirates were guilty of hijacking the ship and attempting to sell the cargo, they were simply sent back to Indonesia. As the keynote speaker at an October 1999 piracy seminar sponsored by the Singapore Shipping Association succinctly noted, "Piracy cannot be resolved in this way. This incident will encourage the pirates to carry on, knowing that in some jurisdictions they can extricate themselves out of difficult situations."

No Ports In This Storm

Although below we will recite some alarming statistics, this series will attempt to paint a qualitative, not quantitative, picture of the problem. Suffice it to say, the problem exceeds the sum of its numbers, as only an indefinable portion of the crimes are reported. Thus we will examine the overall phenomenon by its characteristics. One characteristic, typical of the old-time pirates, is ruthlessness and wanton brutality. French photo journalist, Eric Pasquier, reporting on piracy in the Philippines for French TV, was invited by a pirate named Jung Jung to witness their prisoners being roasted alive — and eaten.

There are virtually no safe waters today, although the areas hardest hit by marine piracy are logically those where there are large volumes of valuable, vulnerable marine traffic or where there is little effective governmental interference to acts of piracy. It is largely in areas where both conditions prevail that piracy has seen the most dramatic resurgence.

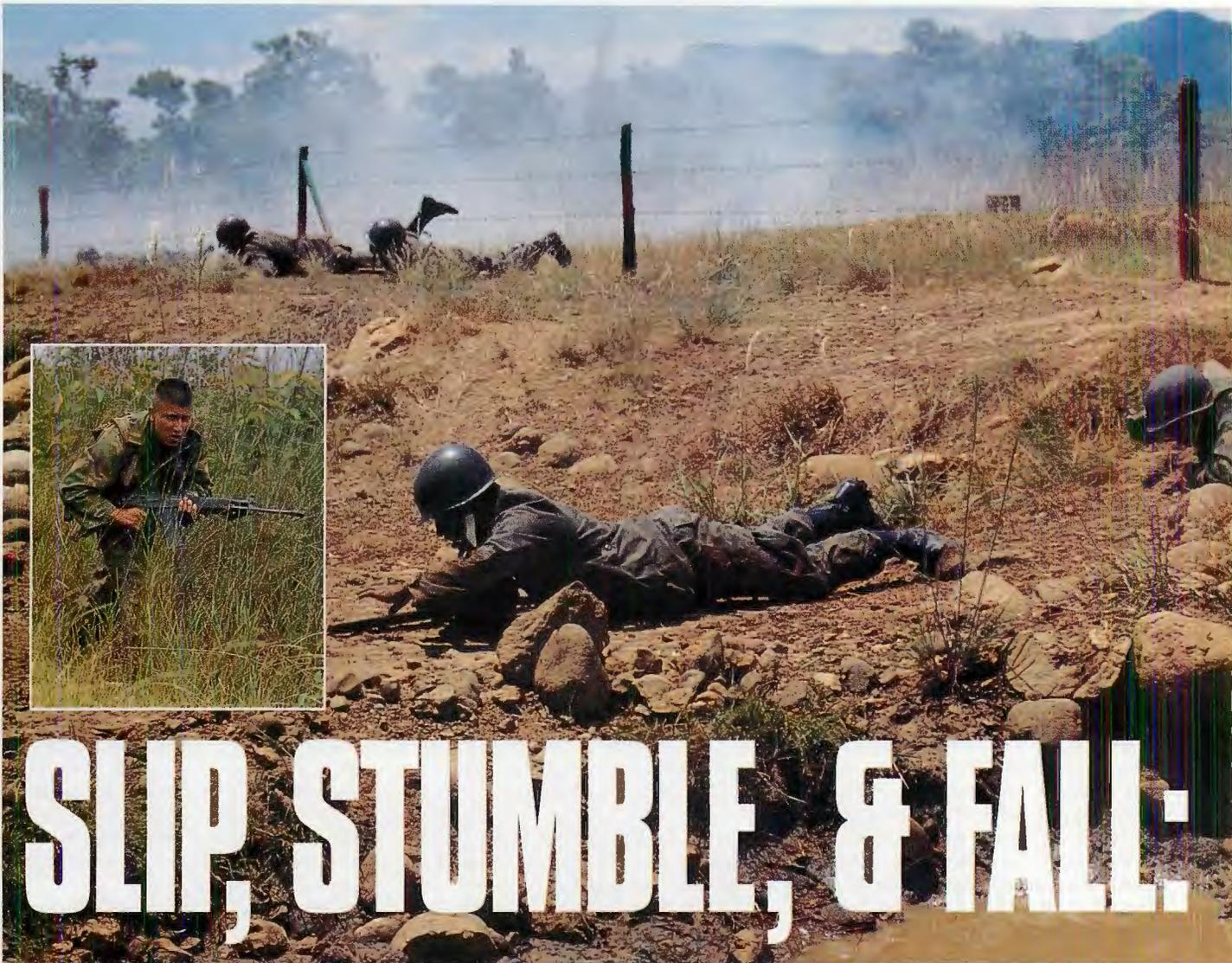
Geographically, few countries report no incidents of piracy, but the coastal waters of eight countries are the usual suspects, producing about two-thirds of the incidents in a typical year. Although the calendar year 1998 showed an encouraging (in some quarters) drop in reported incidents. Of the 247 reported attacks on commercial shipping in 1998, the following countries shared the honors as follows: Indonesia, 60; Philippines, 15; India, 12; Malaysia, 10; Brazil, 10; Ecuador, 10; Bangladesh, 9; Somalia, 9. Here are some typical incidents in a rough geographical breakdown, to illustrate the nature of the beast:

THE FAR EAST:

- 26 Feb 96: F.V. *Normina* with a crew of 10 was fishing off southern Philippines when two speedboats approached, each carrying two men who opened up with automatic weapons; nine crewmen were killed outright, one was wounded and escaped; the *Normina* was never seen again — at least under that name.

- 21 Apr 96: Ten pirates armed with knives boarded a German-registered container vessel from their speedboat and overpowered the nightwatch (which had been trained in anti-piracy); in 10 minutes they stole a large quantity of paint and

Continued on page 70



SLIP, STUMBLE, & FALL:

U.S. Gears-Up For War In Colombia

It's Rip Van Winkle time in Washington. Having once more fallen asleep at the wheel while joyriding, the administration has awakened to discover the world has come full circle yet again. Our backyard is a mess — and we're going to have to do something about it. Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador ... three hours flight from Miami ... it's all coming apart.

And there's the problem. We're not talking about Kosovo, or Timor, or places of marginal interest. We're talking about America's leading source of oil (Venezuela). We're talking about the second oldest democracy in the Western hemisphere (after us) and a battle against the last major, full-fledged, "We-hate-America and capitalism" Marxist insurgency in the world (Colombia). We're talking about the until-yesterday-development-success-story, now threat-to-the-structure-of-emerging-market investment and international debt (Ecuador). We're talking about a bigger impact than Central America ever was.

Where have we been? Trying desperately to ignore the problem with hopes that it would go away. Of course, it hasn't.

In late September (1999), President Andres Pastrana of Colombia spent a week outlining for an anxious Washington a plan — worked out with some help from us, to be sure — to turn the tide. Virtually in the next room, so to speak, the proto-fascism of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez was receiving a hearing. Down the

**Text & Photos by
Dr. Tom Marks**

block, the corridors of fiscal power were pondering what to do with Ecuador's default on its sovereign debt, default carried out with the advice and consent of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

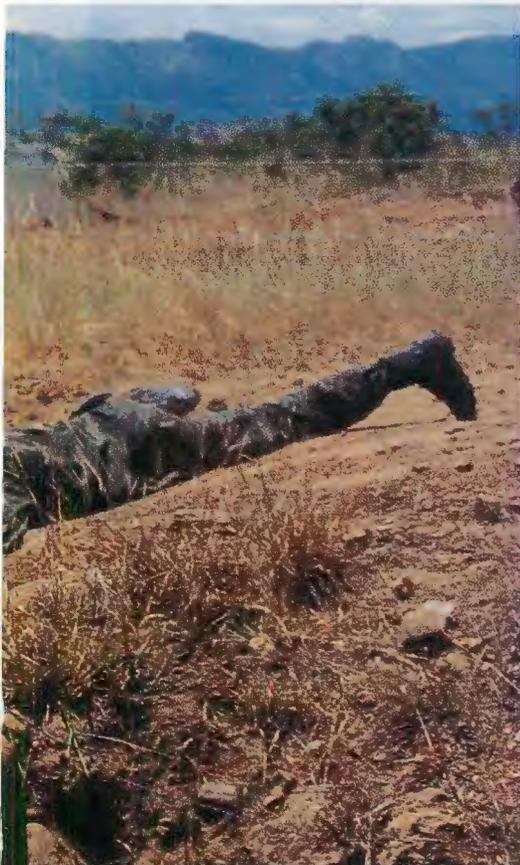
Not surprisingly, it was Pastrana and "Plan Colombia" which sparked the most interest, though no major news outlet carried even a single substantive story on it. Small wonder: how to assess a request (which accompanied the plan) for anywhere from half- to three-billion-and-a-half dollars in aid?

The ground had already been prepared weeks before by White House drug policy advisor, former General Barry R. McCaffrey, who had floated a \$1 billion figure, most of which was intended to boost the police and military. McCaffrey, by default, has been playing the role once left to Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).

Belatedly then, the U.S. is gearing-up for war in Colombia.

Situation Down Range

Yet the most salient feature of our effort down range, in Colombia itself, is lack of objective — and the consequent fragmentation of effort. We see the country as a narcotics problem, when in reality it is a "failing state" problem, of which narcotics and the attendant violence (general breakdown of law and order), together with insurgency — which is not at one with the "breakdown of law and order" — are the most visible symptoms.



Blending innovation with the old and reliable, Colombia's response to the FARC threat has gone into high gear in the past year. Tougher training (inset) has been blended with war games against aggressors trained in enemy tactics and procedures.

Attempting to deal with the problem piecemeal only leaves us with an approach which is both confusing and insulting to the Colombians — who have to live daily with the consequences. We find ourselves in a position where we are tampering with Colombia's domestic arrangements (e.g. building-up the police as part of the "solution" at the expense of the military) for short-term operational or even tactical benefit to the near-total exclusion of strategic benefit.

The result is activities by some elements of our presence which run the gamut from the illegal (e.g. the recent drug-smuggling scandal allegedly involving the wife of the MILGROUP commander and several embassy contract employees) to the questionable (e.g. witness-tampering in pursuit of human rights "kills") to the improper (e.g. perversion of intelligence reporting so that the embassy spin is what goes up the chain) — to the inane (e.g. legislative perversion, such as the Leahy Amendment, which forces



Government troops learn "Chinese Curtain" tactics (above), adopted from FMLN and NVA instructors. (below), a venerable C-130 "Puff" gunship. Equipped with multiple 50-cal. machine guns, the half-dozen or so Puffs in the inventory perform yeoman duty for Bogota.



the U.S. Embassy to apply human rights certification to *units* rather than to individuals — thus leading to entire formations being denied aid due to a single rotten apple).

Yet the heart of the problem is not drugs per se but the long-term breakdown of societal cohesion. Colombia has a history of violence which would make recent U.S. movies, for all their pyrotechnics, look like Sunday School. *Twice* as many people are murdered each year in this country of less than 40 million as in the entire U.S. with its 270-million population!

Precisely why Colombia has this profile is a subject of much debate. The answer seems to be an early history that boils down to a squabbling group of settlers in a vast land with politics a zero-sum game. The practical effect was that democracy, established only shortly after our own, remained a truly winner-take-all proposition. The losers were not just relegated to the sidelines, not just sent to the locker room, but stomped on.

Thus they had every incentive to do all they could, fair or foul, to hang onto power — and to plot to get back into power once they were out. This led to multiple civil wars over the years, including the Thousand Day War, 1899-1902, in which over 100,000 were killed.

The culmination, in a sense, was the national bloodletting called simply "The Violence" or *La Violencia* (dated as roughly 1948-58; no one fired a starting gun). An estimated 200,000 died, and hardly a region was not turned upside down.

As a simple matter of protection, local populations banded together in self-defense. The major Colombian insurgent movement, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), had its origins in one such area, a cluster of "independent republics" in the central Magdalena River Valley. The republics were led by communists and taken over again by the government in 1964-65 after order had been restored through a power-sharing arrangement, the National Front (*Frente Nacional*, 1958-74), between the two major political parties, Conservatives and Liberals. The rebel remnants moved into the eastern savannah and jungle, where they engaged in "armed colonization."

There, they festered as a marginal nuisance for decades. Other groups came and went, with only *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN) joining FARC in showing staying power. To cut through to the end of the process, the growing involvement of the insurgents, especially FARC, in narcotics, provided a resource windfall which made hitherto marginal political actors into major players.

Lack of intelligence, however, meant that U.S. policy continued to be based on dated templates and misconceptions concerning events. To cite but the most glaring case, FARC did not become a serious factor due to mobilization of an alienated mass base. It became a serious factor due to the power which came from drugs grown by marginalized groups. In terms of national



Heart of a vigorous effort by the much-maligned Colombian Army to improve its performance is enhanced training for cadre. Here, at the renowned Lancero course, handpicked officers and other ranks are put through a gruelling 11-week course of "Ranger" instruction. Most patrols are now at night. Daylight classes focus upon individual skills, from obstacle courses to rappelling to hand-to-hand combat.

percentage, these marginalized populations would not be major factors. They became so only because of their role as the base upon which drug-cultivation — and thus insurgent finances — was built.

This dynamic is crucial. U.S. policy over the past decade has focused on "drugs" but has gone to extraordinary lengths to avoid "counterinsurgency." Certainly this stems from the multiple constraints imposed by Congress, particularly in 1986 legislation.

Still, obfuscation has taken on a life of its own. It has extended to the slanting of intelligence so as to reflect a criminal direction of the drug cycle (a posture which serves the needs of actors such as the embassy and DEA) even as the insurgent groups have increasingly moved into a central role in that cycle (as is correctly if imperfectly reflected in Colombian reporting itself). It has extended to placing a nebulous conception for "human rights" before all else by the U.S. Embassy, even as military units have grappled with an insurgent threat which in many ways has superior operational resources at its disposal.

The U.S. Players

The result is a U.S. policy going in many directions save any which would get at the problem.

The Players:

- The White House and Congress are core actors in setting U.S. policy towards Colombia. The Administration is torn every which way: It knows it must do something but can figure out no way to disassemble and still navigate its way through. At \$309 million in total funds in 1999, Colombia is already the fourth-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid (behind Israel, Egypt, and Jordan) and sure to move up to number three, a status it already has *militarily*. Its aid, it should be emphasized, would still be dwarfed by the roughly \$7 billion which goes to Israel and Egypt combined.

"Drugs" are the best fig leaf to avoid a discussion about vital interests and such. The main administration goal seems to be that nothing serious will happen on its watch. It cares naught for what mess its successors are left to clean up. For its part, Congress sees a situation long ignored by the White House. Thus it is not only a problem in need of a solution but an opportunity to score political points.

Across the way, the Defense Department would rather not have anything to do with an actual conflict — such things are messy. Still, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (Whew! OASD/SOLIC) has become involved. An assessment team, staffed by Military Personnel Resources, Inc. (MPRI), of Alexandria, Va., but funded by OASD/SOLIC, was dispatched in October (1999).

- In Bogota, our embassy is not geared-

up for war or even crisis. It is dominated by the normal concerns of career and function, yet attempting to manage an increasingly unwieldy counter-narcotics campaign. It appears that much will be done to avoid the appearance of "disarray."

Key to this is making sure that all reporting which comes out of the embassy is spun to reflect the themes inherent to the view outlined above. The result has been serious disagreements among embassy members which have allowed perversion of the reporting chain. Further, the Political Section has recently involved itself in activities, under the guise of furthering human rights, which are questionable at best, violations of law (my opinion) if the same actions were carried out in a U.S. context (e.g. the already mentioned witness-tampering). The practical effect has been to consign what in any embassy should be the principal section to irrelevance as far as many key Colombians are concerned — enemy status, even.

- Defense Attaché Office (DAO) structure is compromised through its need to walk the embassy tightrope. DAO reporting to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has not always accurately reflected the situation, because of the requirement, imposed by a distrustful State Department, for all DAO reporting cables to be staffed within the embassy and then released by the ambassador. If the Political Section feels that the DAO reporting is not consistent with its own, it can then intercede with the front office to have it changed or, worse, stifled.

(This occurs despite the clear guidance from Washington that the purpose of multiple intelligence agencies is to provide alternative views.) In recent developments, the bad blood between members of the two sections (Political and DAO) has been cause for major problems (which have probably been successfully covered up). Most experienced member recently left on normal rotation, which has created further gaps in reporting.

- Military Advisory Group (MIL-GROUP) is highly thought of but hamstrung by the vacillations of U.S. policy, in particular our requirement that all members of receiving military units be vetted for human rights — a practical impossibility. This gravely limits the practical impact we can have. Our actual presence on the ground, though it averages 200 personnel in-country, is short-term, quick-fix in nature. Ironically, School of the Americas, presently under attack by the left wing and the survivor of Congressional funding wars for FY00 by a *single* vote, has been a major factor in upgrading Colombian technical skills of all sorts (e.g. maintenance, logistics, plans and operations).

- Intelligence has been a mixed bag. The Agency we don't talk much about appears to be doing what it always does: steal things (let's be clear, that's its mission) — which has produced material of decidedly mixed quality. There has been inadequate exploitation of the vast archives available which deal with insurgent activities. Other links in the chain seem to be solid (good platforms, good take) but with loose connections. Hard data does not find itself consistently (if at all) back down to be used in targeting. Further, there are serious problems with human reporting, which have been noted by all recipients in the intelligence chain.

An observation: Nobody gets out in the field to the extent even a grad student would be expected to do. Thus we don't really know what's going on — but make policy nonetheless. Serious abuses in the reporting of alleged human rights violations have allowed the insurgents to perfect use of such charges as a weapons system. They adroitly play back in the international forum our own published data dealing with human rights abuses — which we have taken from NGO (non-governmental organization) reports, which in turn have frequently taken such data from the insurgents themselves! There is the most developed orchestrated duplicity I have seen since the Philippine insurgency. Our involvement in NGO-instigated attacks on units and commanders has reached such point as to undermine our position with key Colombian sectors.

- Counter-Narcotics reminds me of the effort to win the Vietnam War by bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We are apparently up to more than 50 DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) agents in-country, with additional contract personnel performing a variety of functions. (E.g. contract people do a lot of flying and maintenance — and are involved in related tasks, such as the running of our radar sites, which, though

not DEA contracts per se, are dedicated to counter-narcotics.)

Opinions on our DEA effort are so diametrically opposed it is hard to know where to come down on this one. Some sources state emphatically that our entire in-country structure is compromised by narcotics corruption; others claim DEA is the last bulwark in a rapidly crumbling official U.S. posture. Bottom line: No one thinks what we do has any but the most marginal effect. Indeed, an “anti-counter-narcotics” position has provided the insurgents with a major recruiting platform (to the extent of being able to mobilize major popular demonstrations).

- SOUTHCOM (Southern Command), as the major theater command, would be expected to be a key player. Instead, it's just another actor. Its transformation from a regional linchpin to lord of a Miami parking lot could not have come at a more inopportune moment — just as Colombian coca production exploded (80% of the world's supply) and added poppy (thus heroin; apparently 70% of that now flooding U.S. streets) to the witches' brew. FARC, which has long drawn economic benefit from this



An officer trainee reloads his assault rifle during his basic course. Recent emphasis has been placed on upgrading leadership at all levels, especially in the combat battalions.

trade through “revolutionary taxation,” dramatically upped its direct involvement in the production and marketing. Indeed, its major units (*fronts*) can be found clustered in a protective ring around the key production zones. SOUTHCOM, still in disarray due to its move from Panama, nevertheless does lots of quick ins-and-outs.

It is overseeing, through SOCSOUTH (Special Operations Command — SOUTHCOM), the training (by Special Forces personnel) and fielding of the counter-narcotics battalion, which will be increased to a brigade with the training of two additional battalions. The 18 refurbished UH-1N Hueys (purchased from Canada) were delivered in November (1999). Concept of employment reflects the misdirection of our approach in general: security for attacks on coca fields (plant body count). Better use of Special Forces (SF) would be to deploy an entire SF battalion on six-month cycles to do exactly what they are trained to do — put an SF “A” Team per Colombian Army brigade. Congress created a Special

Operations Command (USSOCOM) and allocates money for these highly trained and capable personnel. Yet we're scared to use them for anything except “kicking in doors” counterterrorism.

- A final key “player” is the NGOs. Though not “government,” they have been allowed into our policy-making and implementation to an extent I have not previously seen. On the plus side, some do good work. On the negative side, all of the frustrations of the anti-Vietnam War Left, which has lost struggle after struggle (from Thailand to the Philippines to Nicaragua to El Salvador to Chile to wherever) have come home to roost. To look at their statements (which are too often incorporated in embassy reporting as if it comes from official sources — then cited in reports — and in turn cited by the original sources — classic disinformation process), one would not know that Colombia is a functioning democracy at a start-point so far from, say, El Salvador's situation that we should have everything going for us. Instead, we have turned a basically decent society into our new bogeyman.

The Good Guys

You've got to feel for Colombia. Here's a democratic country with a market economy, a country with a flourishing civil society, the sort of place where you can get on the internet just about anywhere — and we piss on it. We don't mean to, but our cultural arrogance is so thick you can cut it with a knife. Hell, it's even spelled “Columbia” half the time (e.g. in AP headlines).

Though it's never said outright, it's pretty clear that in Washington the Colombians are just another bunch of beaners (literally, unfortunately — coffee is the number one crop). They're the guys in *Clear and Present Danger* — slimeballs who push drugs onto our innocent youth.

And there's irony! *Clear and Present Danger* was filmed in Mexico! You know, Mexico, the place that gets certified as trying to fight drugs, even as its very army is moving the drugs to our borders.

Yet Colombia gets *decertified* as its security forces die fighting the guys who are the ground floor of the drug-production cycle. You simply have to marvel at our audacity. Still, prevarication is something which now seems to come easily to us.

There's no end to the irony here. The First Family, which in another life never met a U.S. involvement it couldn't oppose, finds itself searching for a fig leaf to conceal the fact that it has to lead us into a real war.

Lead us, in fact, into a mess which, on the surface, looks a lot like Vietnam. It isn't Vietnam, but it is a difficult situation which actually is of vital national interest, the sort which will require actual commitment — actual dead.

No virtual reality war this time. Just real pain and real body bags — all in a situation made 10 times worse by our years of neglect.

Dr. Tom Marks, a West Point grad, is a longtime correspondent for SOF. ☒

Saint Denard

The Ultimate Trial Of A Fortunate Soldier

by Dr. Martin Brass

Gilbert Bourgeaud, aka Colonel Bob Denard, had it all. The professional private soldier had his own islands. His own army. The charming Frenchman married nearly every attractive woman he met, building a harem that served him and defended his honor.

To his critics, Col. Denard is a selfish, ruthless assassin who should be jailed. To his fans, Denard symbolizes peace and freedom from tyranny on the Comoro Islands.

To anyone, he's living proof that bravery, secrecy and loyalty are keys to survival in battle and in court.

In his autobiography *Corsaire de La Republique*, (Pirate of the Republic), Denard recounts his fight against the evil communist empire during the Cold War, to free those under its bondage and rid Africa of the tyranny of dictators.

For half a century, Denard — known to some as "*L'Affreux*" (The Terrible) — had been consumed by a profession that had hurled him into the infernos of one civil war after another during the bloody decolonization process in Africa. This dog of war had fought with, and against, revolutionaries. He trained, armed and disarmed rebels. He sometimes disbanded, and other times ran with gun merchants. He pursued terrorists across the massive dark African continent from the Congo to Benin, to Kurdistan, to Libya, to Oman, to Morocco, to the Ivory Coast, and to Chad, just to name a few.

"A Slow Death"

For the past decade, disarmed and impaired, Denard has been haunted from 7,000 miles away by the ghost of Abderahmanne Ahmed Abdullah, the late president of Comoros who was shot at home. The Republic of France wanted a conviction against Denard, which would land him in prison for the rest of his life. (France, as a member of the Council of Europe, has *de facto* eliminated the death penalty).

"Would that I had thrown myself on the body of the president," Denard said, "All of my problems would be solved." The 70-year-old untamed adventurer was crumbling at the thought of withering away in some abysmal prison for the rest of his life. Already his tough-guy demeanor and look



Former French mercenary Bob Denard in a Paris courtroom. His lawyers, Jean-Marc Varaut (left) and Alexander Varaut (right), sat in front of the defendant throughout the trial that stood to land him in jail for the rest of his life.

had changed, as he awaited his fate during a trial in May of 1999. Gone was his familiar military garb. He sat unshackled, with his calloused hands twitching, in an uncharacteristic beige sports coat, sky blue shirt and stuffy tie.

"This accusation is a slow death," said Denard, spewing his pent-up frustration. "If one wanted to kill me, one should have done it swiftly. It is a relief to finally be in the place of judgment. One goes back to zero and continues to the finish line."

The silver-haired, golden-tongued soldier — struggling to hold his battered, burly physique proudly erect — had just embarked on the toughest role of his spectacular career. For two and a half weeks the flamboyant rogue would manipulate, seduce and shock his courtroom audience. It would be a performance worthy of an Oscar

in the grandiose Paris courtroom.

Greetings From *SOF*

I passed a note to Denard through his attorney: "Robert K. Brown, *Soldier Of Fortune* publisher, sends his regards," the note said. That gesture initiated a long distance exchange of some incomprehensible sign language as I sat directly across from Denard during the trial. Occasionally, during recesses, my boisterous and colorful French colleague from Associated French Press, Patrick Filleux, dragged me with him across the room. Filleux had the advantage of a long-term rapport with Denard, and routinely assured the defendant that he was bound to win his case.

Prosecutor Phillippe Bilger sat in his formidable box of judgment, propped up on a stage. Directly across from us was the box

of the accused, which was raised and enclosed by glass. Denard's co-defendant, 46-year old Dominique Malacrino (alias Commandant Marques), sat next to him. A third defendant, 49-year-old Paul Guerrier (alias Captain Siam), remained at large, considered a fugitive since December 1998.

Denard's lawyers were the famed Jean-Marc Varaut — who defended the infamous war crimes criminal Papon the previous year — and Alexander Varaut, his son.

Battle Of The Tyrants

The saga that led to this trial spins around the turbulent history of the Comoro Islands —the Grande Comoro, Moheli and Anjouan. The three tiny volcanic isles sit off the coast of East Africa, between the northern tip of Madagascar and Mozambique.

Denard claims his two expeditions in 1975 and 1978, which were manifestations of a steadfast crusade, shaped the history of the Comoros. In 1975, he and his mercenaries had fought to rid the former colony of Abdullah, the tyrant who had unilaterally declared independence for the three Comoro Islands from France. Denard won and installed Ali Soilih as president after forcing Abdullah into exile.

But Soilih eventually sold-out, making alliances with the Marxist Tanzanian and Chinese governments. In response, Denard embarked on a grand return designed to liberate the fledgling archipelago from Soilih, who he'd come to view as a communist tyrant. Denard and 50 mercenaries boarded a 75-meter ocean trawler, the *Antinea*, in the Orient. The mission, in mid-April 1978, was dubbed *Atlantide*. The colonel and his recruits sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and arrived a month later in Moroni, the Grand Comoro. They stormed the Presidential palace, overpowering President Soilih and killing many of his personal guards. Denard reinstated Abdullah, who he was convinced had repented from his former tyrannical methods while in exile.

At age 50, Denard had found his promised land. Having been appointed commander-in-chief of the *Forces Armées Comoriennes*, the regular army, Denard established the *Garde Présidentielle*. The *Garde* was an omnipotent force consisting of 500 local soldiers and 30 white mercs. He and his troops ruled the islands for 11 years, indulging in its diverse pleasures.

On the night of 27 November 1989, the mythical life-style of Denard came to a sudden halt, along with the life of President Abdullah. And now Denard faced French justice for his part in the coup.

Islanders packed the courtroom for his trial. Their faces glared with reproach and condemnation toward the French. For 50 years they had longed for a day of vindication in which the France of imperialism and exploitation — the France that had dominated much of Africa and held it in bondage—was to finally be exposed.

A Professional Soldier

"What is your profession?" The Court

demanding of Denard.

"First I was a soldier, then I was a consultant, and then I went to Africa to serve in foreign armies," Denard replied. "I have led a particular lifestyle. I have always followed my own path, which I never betrayed."

With indignation, Denard refused to assume the title of "soldier of fortune." He accepted the label "mercenary," but in only one context. During his 1968 escapades in Biafra, Denard testified, a young doctor named Bernard Kouchner had baptized him and his men the "Mercenaries of charity."

Indeed, testified a witness, Denard and his men had protected the natives and the white ex-patriots from pillaging and abuses by so-called peacekeepers, who had been deployed by the United Nation to the Congo in the '60s.

The Ladies' Man

The overpowering, uncontrollable passions that are flamed by combat had spawned a legion of lovers for Denard. His passions generated a veritable army of off-spring. Three of his eight acknowledged children attended the trial. A former mistress hovered. Marie Elise, the latest of his

seven wives, sat fixed with fear throughout the proceedings.

He'd met both wife and the on-hand mistress during his wild escapades in the Congo in the 1960s, while fighting for Moïse Tshombe in the secessionist movement of Katanga. Elise, a nurse, had saved Denard's life in 1967 after he was critically wounded in the head.

Denard — a chivalrous, dashing Casanova — begged the judge to spare his fragile and timid bride from the limelight when she was called as a witness. The judge, enjoying himself immensely at this stage, was too intrigued to bypass her testimony. Denard wept as she adoringly spoke of his virtues, vehemently denying that he was capable of cold-blooded murder. "We look into each other's eyes and we understand each other," she sobbed.

"Without her, I wouldn't be here," Denard lamented tearfully.

And without her, the playboy would not have lived to add six more to his harem.

"Are you a ladies' man?" the judge demanded.

"All of the women I ever knew I never abandoned," Casanova replied, gallantly.

The judge referred to two marriages in



A French paratrooper keeps watch around the port city of Moroni, Comoro Islands, while curious islanders look on. The paratroopers were among some 500 French military who participated in a lightning operation to flush out Denard and his men from the island.

two months. Then he quizzed Denard incredulously, with a hint of admiration. "Do you get married every time you meet some one?"

"Those who are Muslim, yes," Denard said. "One cannot know them without marriage."

Other wives — Gisele, Claudette, Christianne, Anna and Florence — wrote letters to the court, testifying to Denard's virtues. Writes Filleux, of AP France: "It is as if the letters were all written with the same hand — the qualities of the heart, the fidelity, the bravery, the seriousness, the constancy. They displayed no jealousy, no rancor, no suffering. And each underlined that he took care of them financially and educated all of his eight acknowledged children."

They said Denard, in a desperate move to hang on to his empire — his fortunes, his omnipotence, his decadent lifestyle and multiple wives—plotted the President's murder.

Not only had the benevolent knight respected his pecuniary and multi-ethnic commitments, he was also known to respect all religions. For Gisele, he converted to Judaism; for Claudette and Christianne he took Catholic vows; and for the two wives in the Comoros he became a follower of the prophet Mohammad and Islam, assuming the name of Said Mustapha Madhjub (Staff of Life).

Pirate Or Saint?

For a day, the judge read excerpts from Bob Denard's autobiography. Always, the unabashed protagonist claimed, he had acted in the best interests of France while keeping his distance from the deceptions of the political arena. Never, the French patriot emphasized, had he been hired by an enemy of the republic. The long line of character witnesses confirmed all of that.

A psychiatrist testified that Denard is a man of honor, loyalty, and honesty — a sober one at that — who displays no alarming pathological characteristics. He said Denard simply had a condition of unfaltering loyalty to his various attachments. The psychiatrist said it's fitting that Denard has characteristics of megalomania, and demands worship from his disciples. After all, the psychiatrist argued, he is a legendary figure. Not only that, the doctor said, Denard was born an Aries, the sign of the Ram.

If Denard is so great, demanded prosecutors, then explain the life of decadence he led on the islands — all at the expense of the impoverished natives. Prosecutors paraded witnesses who described Denard's life as luxurious, self-absorbed — like that of an emperor. Denard's indulgences, they claimed, left the islands in economic ruin and halted democratic processes. The \$6

million that South Africa paid annually to support the mercenaries' security service, Denard's accusers charged, had been used to build a prosperous empire.

"Blasphemy," responded agents of the SDECE (the French CIA). Michael Altabeit, former director of the hotels South Africa built in the Comoros, also challenged the opulence charge, saying the words "greed" and "Denard" could not be uttered in the same breath.

"I built more than I destroyed," testified Denard. He and his *Guarde Presidential*, Denard claimed, had created the longest period of peace for the islands, during which time they established democratic institutions, developed the islands' econom-

ic infrastructure, created companies, promoted centers of rural development, built roads, and improved humanitarian and sanitary conditions.

The courtroom went silent when Denard disclosed that he was a pensioner living modestly on social security. "I paid my dues," the proud Frenchman said.

Out Of The Shadows

"It is an honor that France was served by a man such as this," said Commander Pierre Guillaume. The commander bellowed his indignation at the hypocrisy of France, which was prosecuting a man he considered to personify the republic's best attributes. "Bob and I fought for France," the aged commander said.

The praises were echoed by other prestigious French witnesses, including former chiefs of the African foreign affairs office of the French government, retired generals and sailors, former counterintelligence officers, and several of Denard's faithful mercs.

Michel Roussin, one-time director general of the French CIA-equivalent, vindicated his long-time collaborator. In an unprecedented and shocking move, he admitted that France was informed of and had controlled Denard's activities until the '80s — when the socialists and supposed allies of Castro and Che Guevara had control in France. For eight years in the '50s and early '60s, the director general said, he had handled Denard through a secret agent acting as intermediary. Their first personal contact was made in 1962 when the government needed Denard's take on the situation in Katanga. During all of those years, claimed Roussin, Denard acted honestly, with discipline and discretion.

General Jeannou Lacaze put a final touch

on the canonization of Saint Denard. The general told how the colonel had often graciously volunteered his services to France. This was a man, Lacaze said, who had repeatedly risked his life for France. The France of "secrets and silence" had always distanced itself from the dog of war Denard. Finally, Denard was out of the shadows.

The Oscar Scene

As praises of the hero echoed in the grand hall, Denard slumped over in a groan. He was shaky and pale. The court, the prosecutor and the audience flew into panic. Some feared the ordeal had led to his death, and they dreaded the thought of him dying a condemned man. Others had waited an entire decade for his conviction, and did not wish to be cheated of the final act. Denard gasped weakly, complaining of chest pain.

The defense became irate. The Varauts, Denard's lawyers, reminded the court of five requests that their client be spared from the harsh conditions of prison during the three-week trial. Defense attorneys had argued for their client's freedom during the trial, saying Denard's recent medical history included two heart attacks and prostate surgery.

The guilt-ridden judge beckoned an emergency team that transported the patient to the judicial medical center. Denard spent the night there, but doctors determined his condition wasn't serious. He returned to court the next day, where he continued his performance as a dejected old man slumped in a chair.

The aged combatant dismissed his frailties at will. When provoked by witnesses, he dove into combat mode, leaping up in the defendant's box like an agile, well-trained guard. He shouted at witnesses like a sentry on patrol.

Coup — Faked Or Failed?

"Ahmed was my friend. I did not create a coup. I respected the constitution," Denard said.

Then came the part everyone had been waiting for: What exactly happened that fateful night of 27 November 1989?

The defendants had always maintained that the events of that night were a series of calamitous errors. The corrupt *Forces Armées Comoriennes*, the regular army, had been infiltrated by the communists. The army was trafficking in contraband, primarily arms. It was only a matter of time, Denard believed, before the festering conditions would explode. The *Guarde Presidentielle*, he decided, would fake a coup. The *Guarde* would blame the coup on the regular army, and then forcibly disarm it.

President Abdullah, Denard testified, was fully cognizant of the plan. At 0010 hours, 27 November, Abdullah signed the order to disarm the regular army. Moments later, he would die.

The sound of gunfire outside of the presidential palace was deafening. The President's personal guards, goes Denard's story, had been led to believe that the regular army would be starting a coup.

Believing that, the guards began firing indiscriminately when they heard gunfire.

Abdullah, in his pajamas, panicked at the sound of bullets ricocheting outside. He, too, feared rebel elements of the regular army had launched a coup. Abdullah, Denard said, became distraught and uncontrollable. Denard knelt in front of the president's armchair and slapped him, hoping to bring him to his senses.

Just then, the President's personal bodyguard, Jaffar, stormed in. He saw Denard striking his master. Perceiving a threat, Jaffar fired a burst from his Kalashnikov at Denard. The seasoned soldier dove instinctively to the floor, dodging the bullets, which hit the President. Captain Siam, of Denard's *Garde Presidentielle*, returned fire at the bodyguard. Both the President and his bodyguard were dead. Commandant Marques, of the *Garde*, was outside commanding his troops.

The simulated coup, the defendants claimed, had gone terribly awry.

The Prosecutor's Case

Prosecutor Bilger relentlessly maintained that the defendants were lying, and that their story was preposterous. The true story, he said, went like this:

With the South African economy devastated by United Nations sanctions against Apartheid, the South African government needed to conduct commerce through the Comoro Islands. Denard had become a stumbling block. Under pressure from South African President De Clerk, President Abdullah was deposing Denard and forcing the collapse of his empire.

They said Denard, in a desperate move to hang on to his empire — his fortunes, his omnipotence, his decadent lifestyle and multiple wives — plotted the president's murder. Denard, prosecutors argued, made sure no one was in the presidential suite that night by ordering Commandant Marques to simulate a coup outside. With the phony coup in progress, prosecutors argued, Denard forced President Abdullah to sign the disarmament decree, then assassinated him and his bodyguard in cold blood.

Prosecutors posed questions, suggesting Denard's story didn't add up. Would a president who was planning to fake a coup appear in pajamas? Would he be so distraught from hearing an anticipated ricochet of bullets that he would have to be slapped into remembering the plan? Why had he not signed the order of disarmament until a few minutes before the staged coup?

Why had the bloody rugs and the guns been destroyed? Why a hostile siege of the palace by the *Garde Presidentielle* following the assassination? Why was everyone, including the family of the president, barred from entering for two weeks?

"Self-defense?" prosecutors mused. "Outrageous!" Rather, it was bold, premeditated murder.

"Mission Impossible"

With only three surviving witnesses



Denard (in camouflage) is led away from the Kandami army barracks by French special forces during a tropical downpour near Moroni.

— two in the defendant's box and one a fugitive — the events were being reconstructed in a courtroom some 7,000 miles from the scene.

The only physical evidence consisted of three bullets and bullet holes in a pajama, an armchair, and an air conditioner. No arms or cartridges were found. There had been no x-rays, no autopsy, no inquest — only an exam of the president's body by a doctor before burial.

Four years after the crime the government's ballistics witness conducted scientific analysis at the scene. He determined the President had been killed by five projectiles, shot one at a time from different locations, in a well-planned assassination. Reconstruction of the angles of the shots, he complained — with no X-rays, no holes in the wall — was "mission impossible."

Subsequent defense testimony cast substantial doubt on the prosecution's claim that President Abdullah was killed in an orchestrated assassination involving multiple weapons. The prosecution had fallen far short of proving to anyone that the President could not have been killed by a single burst from a Kalashnikov, as Denard claimed.

Frantically, prosecutors tried to salvage their case against Denard. They engaged in character assassination. Honorable? Loyal? No way, said the prosecution. Denard is a self-serving traitor. When Soleih paid him, he turned on Abdullah. Then, at the behest of Abdullah, he turned on Soleih.

He fought with Mobutu in the Congo, then against him. He fought with Nasser of Egypt, then turned on him. He converted from one religion to the next in his lust for sex.

"The Truth"

This is not a forum for intellectual pleasure, defense attorneys argued. Rather, it's a forum for truth. The government's own key

expert witness, they argued, could no longer support his ballistics theory.

Varaut recaptured the portrayal of defense witnesses, who described Denard as a man of virtue, stability, Calvinistic work ethics, loyalty and seriousness. Not only did Denard have no personal interest in killing Abdullah, Varaut argued, but betrayal and assassination do not fit his character. Never, Varaut swore on his honor, could his warrior client have murdered a man he was hired to defend. This hero, Varaut beseeched fervently, would be incapable of betraying the republic for which he fearlessly fought and risked his life.

Brilliantly, Varaut had made Denard and the Republic of France appear as one. To condemn Denard would be to crap on the Motherland.

Denard sat in somber silence in the wake of his lawyer's speech. His loyal co-defendant looked haggard and discomfited.

Denard and Marques were acquitted on 17 May 1999. Clearly, the prosecution had failed to prove its case. Yet questions clearly remain about that fateful night in 1989, and Capt. Siam remains at large. The dark, untold secrets of that fatal night may be forever hidden in the hearts of Denard, Marques and fugitive Siam. Secrecy and bravery have always kept Denard and his trainees alive and in power.

In an invitation to merces, Denard once wrote: "Absolute secrecy, and conquered fear, are the key words to your success. To them is attached a fidelity. Without your comrades you are nothing and they are nothing without you. You must choose them well, prepare them for their missions, and always prove to them that you are their chief."

And so the soldier, and his fortune, live on.

Dr. Martin Brass is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

SAVING THE **HORN OF AFRICA**

Undercover with the ESPU

by Rob Krott

It was a pleasant Sunday afternoon, 24 December 1994, when two South African game rangers sitting in their camp along the Umfolozi River heard the shots. Running toward the sound, they stopped in the bush, panting, 4 kilometers later, and heard another burst of gunfire. Now having a better idea of the source of the shooting, they began crawling up to a creek feeding the Umfolozi. There they observed two men sawing the horn off a poached rhino. One of the rangers fired a warning shot, prompting the poachers to flee. Splitting up, the rangers began running through the bush again, but this time in pursuit of the armed rhino poachers. A third poacher was spotted and shooting broke out. The firefight continued as it began raining. With dusk approaching, the rangers broke contact. The crime scene was inspected in the morning. Amid the AK47 cases littering the ground, the rangers found one dead poacher, a .303 caliber hunting rifle, a shotgun, and the carcasses of four white rhinos.

With millions of dollars of ivory, rhino horn, and exotic animals at stake, protecting endangered species is a demanding and dangerous job for any law enforcement agency. In a country rich in endangered wildlife like South Africa, where

the illegal traffic in endangered flora and fauna seems to increase every day, this is especially true. Eager buyers for endangered species of birds, snakes, plants, as well as valuable ivory and rhino horn are found in nearly every corner of the world. Little wonder that the annual value of wildlife crime now exceeds U.S. \$8 billion. In 1989, South Africa was accused of participating in international ivory smuggling. This was especially embarrassing for South Africa because it was a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the international controlling body for endangered species which came into existence in 1982. It was feared there would be a replay of what had happened in Angola, where one of Africa's largest elephant populations, along with a once-healthy rhino population, were virtually destroyed by roving bands of soldiers and poachers armed with automatic weapons.

The law enforcement professionals who turned the tide in South Africa's war against poachers are the agents of the Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU), a special unit charged with combating illegal trafficking in wildlife. Set up in 1989 by the South African Police Service (SAPS) as an outgrowth of the stock theft unit, the initial focus for ESPU was halting the poaching and smuggling of rhino horn and elephant ivory. Officially, the ESPU was formed with the overall vision to ensure South Africa's natural heritage is preserved through professional law enforcement. The ESPU's mission is to curtail the international trade in endangered species which uses the Republic of South Africa as a conduit, by using a multinational approach and early identification of crime trends to initiate proactive operations. The ESPU investigates illegal hunting, smuggling, possession, and trade in endangered species or products, as well as the smuggling and illegal dumping of



(above) A South African game ranger recovers evidence, including valuable bullets, from a poached rhino. (right) The bloody remains of poached rhinos. With millions of dollars of ivory, rhino horn and exotic animals at stake, protecting endangered species is a demanding and dangerous job law enforcement agencies take seriously in South Africa.



A poached rhino in the northern province of Kapama.

radioactive and toxic waste. ESPU also investigates African cultural and historical artifact theft. Since 1989 ESPU has conducted more than 1,000 investigations into wildlife crime, seizing smuggled ivory, rhino horn, marine species, rare plants, and endangered birds worth tens of millions of dollars.

Would You Like A Cup Of Tea?

Through friends in the South African military, I was able to spend some time with the ESPU. Escorted by ESPU public relations officer Captain Petronel Niewoudt, a vivacious gray-eyed blonde who looked more like a runway model than a police official, and retired USAF officer and Vietnam veteran Mike McPike, accomplished African big-game hunter, conservationist and owner of Global Adventures (303-791-9959), we drove to the ESPU headquarters in Pretoria. The villa, formerly a private estate complete with tennis courts, swimming pool, pub, riding paddock and stables, was provided to the unit by the ESPU Trust.

Most of the unit's 40-odd officers were out in the field conducting investigations or participating in ongoing undercover operations. Petronel introduced me to several officers who were busy cleaning their weapons after proficiency training at the firing range. While the cops worked on their weapons, we talked hardware. They had just worked out with UZIs, .308 caliber R3s (short-barrel, folding-stock FN FAL clones), Beretta M202 12-gauge pump shotguns, and their duty pistols. Other weapons used by ESPU officers include: R1-308 caliber SLRs, R2-folding stock .308 caliber SLRs, R3s, R4-5.56mm Galil clones and R5-short barrel R4s. Many of the rifles are painted in camouflage patterns and equipped with Bushnell optical sights. The ESPU agents carry a variety of 9mm handguns, including Beretta 92s, the "Zed" or Z-88, an Armscorp Beretta clone, and the Vector SP-1 "Sport." Many of the women officers carry the 9mm Kurz (.380) Walther PPK. The CP1-9mm compact is popular with many of the undercover agents. ESPU agents are trained for dynamic entries and special operations and they carry smoke grenades and Thun-Flash flashbang grenades in their cars along with PVS-4 style night-vision optical sights for their rifles.

They're well trained in the use of this equipment, and a number of the ESPU officers are combat veterans of South Africa's elite military units. Steve S., a world-class extreme SCUBA diver, previously served with the *Koevoet*, an elite police counter-terrorist unit which carried out military combat operations in South West Africa (now known as Namibia). *Koevoet* operations were akin to a mechanized force of U.S. Army Rangers.

Definition Of "Expert"

Next stop on the tour was the evidence room. Here the evidence is logged in until the cases go to trial. The evidence room was jam-packed with racks of elephant tusks, boxes of cut ivory blocks, piles of rhino horn and curiously, several *fake* rhino horns. The fake rhino horns were made of wood, clay and

Wilderness Conservancy

Editor's note: The Wilderness Conservancy needs your help to continue its outstanding service in the fight against wildlife poaching in southern Africa. Following is an explanation of the agency and its work, as described by Dr. Robert N. Cleaves, president of the conservancy.

Wilderness Conservancy

The Wilderness Conservancy anti-poaching projects in southern Africa have been extremely effective through the use of our six light aircraft. In the areas where the few remaining viable populations of white and black rhinos were located, they were heavily targeted by poachers (KwaZulu-Natal and Kruger National Park, in South Africa, and the reserves in Zimbabwe). We have brought poaching to a near halt. Elephant poaching in these areas has also been stopped. All wildlife in our areas of patrol has benefited from our patrol operations. These results have been possible only because of donations received from the American public. In this regard, 100 percent of all donations to the Wilderness Conservancy go to our projects and none to wages, expenses, administrative costs, etc. We have no employees. All who help donate their time, skills and expenses — including me (in addition, I donate all administrative costs in addition to 100 percent of my time).

However, fundraising is not easy. In order to keep our operations going, we need many things. For example, we lost two aircraft in anti-poaching. Without insurance I could not have promptly replaced them. Maintenance and repair is a major item, as is fuel. Our aircraft are very economical — five American Champion 8GCBC Scouts and one 1972 Cessna U206F. Our annual budget for everything is only \$100,000.

There are certain urgent needs for which I do not have funding. I had to bring two of our aircraft back to the U.S. for repair and air worthiness compliance upgrades. On the Cessna, the auto-pilot system needs a new Horizontal Situation Indicator (HIS), a Sandel SN3308 (\$7,895 plus labor); new radios, GPS, transponder and audio panel (ours are more than 20 years old and fading) (\$20,000); Flint long-range tip tanks (\$9,004); new air vents (\$495); a new tachometer (\$550); an aircraft cover to protect the plastic windows and interior from heat (\$375); a reinforcement kit for the horizontal stabilizer bulkhead (\$625), a vertical stabilizer aft spar attach bulkhead (\$1,200), and an annual inspection (\$2,500).

Our 1979 Scout has cracks in its wing spars and thus needs new wings (\$23,500) and new fabric as it has been in the hot Zambezi sun for 10 years and not hangared (\$7,700).

The Cessna had been serving the South African Police Endangered Species Protection Unit and the Wildlife Breeding Resource Center. The Scout has been serving the Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management.

For Shamwari Game Reserve, we badly need three night-vision items — two binoculars and one monocular (the latter such as the ITT 190 with the 10X zoom so it can be attached to a camera with a "C" adapter).

Anything donated will provide the donor with a tax deduction. Wilderness Conservancy is an IRS 501 C (3) tax-exempt foundation.

For anyone who might not be interested in African projects, I am putting a Cessna 206 into operation in Baja, Calif., and Sonora, Mexico (with the cooperation of the Mexican government). It will be used for marine patrol along the west and east coasts of Baja and the west coast of Sonora in conjunction with the gray whale issue, sea turtle nesting sites and with locating, tagging and tracking killer whales in the Sea of Cortez. We need funding for insurance, fuel and landing, tie down and navigation facility fees. Our volunteer pilots provide their own expenses for room and board.

For more information, visit our web site at: www.instanet.com/~wildcon.

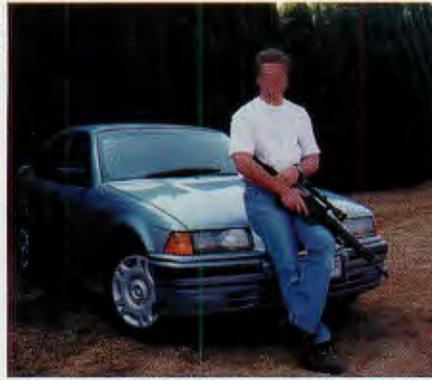
Best regards,
Dr. Robert N. Cleaves, President
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(310) 472-2593 wildcon@instanet.com



Dr. Robert N. Cleaves (right), president of the Wilderness Conservancy, confronts three suspected poachers (kneeling), who are held at gun point by game scouts. Dr. Cleaves spotted the poachers while flying the conservancy's 1978 Bellanca 8GCBC Scout aircraft over Tembe Elephant Park in South Africa.



Rob Krott



Mike McPike



ESPU

even mud and are usually passed off at night by hustlers hoping to cash in on the very lucrative illicit trade in rhino horn.

Rhino horn is prized in the Far East for its supposed aphrodisiac properties. The horn is ground into powder and used in traditional medicines in the Orient. In Korea it is rolled into balls and covered with gold leaf to make *chung sin hwan*, a remedy for high blood pressure. In China, rhino horn is known as *kwong kwok* and the ground powder is taken in capsules. In the Yemen, rhino horn is used for the handle of the *djambia*, an ornamental dagger worn by men. Previously only the very wealthy could afford genuine rhino horn daggers, but more and more Yemenis are lucratively employed in the Gulf oil fields and can now afford them. Rhino poaching is a big money business and getting bigger all the time. As one conservationist explained it to me, "The Black Rhino's front horn can weigh as much as 10 pounds, and the back horn, about six pounds. Rhino horn brings about U.S. \$50 an ounce in the Far East and in Yemen, so a single rhino is worth about U.S. \$11,000 for his horn alone."

Though heralded as a great idea by certain conservationists, drugging the rhinos and sawing off their horns to make the animals valueless to poachers hasn't proven to be the cure-all for South Africa's poaching problem. The poachers still shoot the hornless rhino so they won't waste time tracking the same animal in the future. The ESPU's response to ideas like this proposed by foreign experts is: "An expert is a bullshitter making money overseas."

Deep Cover And False Flags

While still a captain with the stock theft unit, Pieter Lategan was instructed by the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, to take charge of investigations into international organized crime syndicates that trade in endangered species. The officers of the stock theft unit, mostly born to the *veld*, were men from the farmlands of South Africa who were at home in the bush. Pieter Lategan was one of these farmboys-turned-policemen. Having grown up in the rugged semi-desert area of Karoo, he is a staunch conservationist who has relentlessly hunted poachers and smugglers. Lategan is well known internationally among conservationists and wildlife police as a no-nonsense cop. In a speech to a government committee of CITES, Lategan said, "If we fail to effectively control the illegal trade in endangered species and products of such species, an offense is committed not only against every tax-paying citizen, by way of loss of income in eco-tourism, but also by way of destruction of our natural heritage as well as the natural environment where bio-diversity is disturbed."

Lategan attended the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at Glynco, Ga., graduating from a course in wildlife enforcement operations in 1993. Colonel Lategan was impressed

Author (left) with endangered white rhino in Kruger National Park. (center) Steve S. with scoped R-3 rifle and ESPU BMW sedan. (right) Colonel Lategan with confiscated ivory in the evidence room.



author

The illicit trade in endangered reptiles has broadened the focus of the ESPU to include more than just big game.

with the U.S. facility and with its methods of investigation. He credits his friends in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the training in undercover operations ESPU agents have received for helping the ESPU to develop into the professional unit that it is today. According to Lategan, "Ten years ago, undercover ops were unknown [to us]. There was a lack of knowledge to investigate organized crime." ESPU undercover operations were initiated in 1989 with Operation Lock, which involved the arrest or "termination" of ivory and rhino horn poachers by ex-British SAS soldiers, in a mission funded by a conservation organization.

While ESPU operations are known to many in the U.S., thanks to the Discovery Channel's *Animal Planet* TV show, the unit keeps a lower profile in South Africa. The TV show has not aired in South Africa in order to protect ESPU tactics and techniques as well as the identities of the officers. Undercover operations often leave the agent without friends and cut off from his family. This is especially true of deep cover operations. ESPU runs both undercover agents and "deep cover" agents. Those

involved in deep cover might be in with a syndicate for as long as a year. All ESPU undercover agents are SAPS officers. Informants, recruited by ESPU agents, are key ingredients to success in the undercover game. "Players" in the international smuggling business are also co-opted or turned. This may be done as a false flag recruitment, where the undercover agent recruits informants as part of what is believed by the informant to be a criminal enterprise. The informants think they're just double-dealing their criminal accomplices or bosses to the competition. They are unaware that their contact is actually an ESPU agent. Colonel Lategan stressed that the ESPU is careful in its dealings with informants and its buy-bust takedowns: "There's a fine line between *enticement* and *accommodation*. Agents can be charged in court with *enticement*." ESPU agents have had no problems in this regard.

When Lategan talks about infiltrating the illegal trade in wildlife, he's not talking about the occasional neighborhood poacher — he's referring to organized syndicates who can move tons of materiel through several countries. Establishing bona fides in the international smuggling and illicit wildlife trafficking rings isn't as difficult as one might suppose. According to Lategan, "Your biggest cover story is a South African passport. They (the poachers, smugglers and dealers) naturally believe a white undercover agent is a buyer because that's what they've seen in the past — white South African buyers." Lategan speaks from experience, having participated in several undercover operations. Once, while undercover, he made an arrest armed only with a feather duster by sticking the handle in the suspect's back and waiting for assistance.

Superintendent Pierre Erasmus is Lategan's deputy and the brains behind many of the unit's undercover stings and investiga-

tions. Erasmus, while serving as a SAPS officer, first went undercover in the *Boer Mafia* (while *Boer* usually refers to white *Afrikaner*, the Boer Mafia is actually multi-racial). Pierre actually spent several stints in jail while undercover in the Boer Mafia, including doing time as the cellmate of the Mafia's "godfather." After his cover was blown at the end of the investigation, he received several death threats and is still under a protective escort. Erasmus hasn't testified in a third of the cases yet, some dating back four or five years. With as much as 500 million Rand (\$100 million U.S.) involved in some of the crimes, it's easy to see why a contract is out on Pierre. Killing Erasmus, the star witness, would destroy about 95% of the cases now pending trial. And the so-called "godfather," Pierre's old "cellie"? He's going to do about 80-90 years in the gray-bar hotel. After this long-running undercover operation, really the first of its kind for the SAPS, Erasmus was recruited by the ESPU in February 1995 to help them develop the same type of long-reaching, deep-cover operations.

Snakes For Sale

"I don't know much about reptiles," Erasmus said, pointing to two preserved specimens on his desk. "These were sent to me by a friend in New York." But reptiles are now big business and are the third most smuggled commodity in the world behind drugs and guns, though some opinions differ, saying diamonds are number three and snakes are number four. The illicit trade in illegally harvested reptiles amounts to about \$50 million U.S. a year. According to Erasmus, reptile poaching broadened the vision of the unit.

In a 1994 operation, Erasmus went undercover in the exotic snake trade, masquerading as a wealthy South African businessman looking to make a killing as a reptile smuggler. Because his involvement in the high-profile Boer Mafia case was sure to become public knowledge with the trials, Erasmus knew he had a limited amount of time to continue operating as an undercover agent. "When I went undercover I knew I was on borrowed time," he said. But he also knew that if he could complete one good long-term covert operation before publicity and court appearances blew his cover, it would be a success. Kurt Kennell, of George, South Africa, a well-known dealer in exotic reptiles, was Erasmus' mark. Kennell, befriended by Erasmus, introduced him to four of Europe's biggest reptile dealers. "These guys previously were like faceless phantoms. No one [in law enforcement] knew who they were," said Erasmus. All that changed with Erasmus' deep-cover op.

In addition to coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department during operations in Germany and the Netherlands, Erasmus came to work closely with Dutch and German police agencies. He was very impressed with the Germans' surveillance technology, and the experience was invaluable — enabling him to integrate some of what he learned from his opposite number in the *Bundespolizei* into ESPU doctrine. In the course of the operation, Erasmus visited an apartment in Amsterdam where a smuggler kept his stock of 5,000 spiders — and two Australian wallabies. He also met Peter Panhuizen, the top international smuggler and collector of exotic snakes. Panhuizen bragged how he had become a millionaire by dealing in endangered snakes. According to Lategan, Panhuizen is known to have made several smuggling trips to Madagascar. "He is a CITES Appendix I connoisseur. If you want rare snakes from Madagascar, you go to Panhuizen. He also has the cheapest prices, and like a stamp collector of the highest caliber, he's well-known within the reptile collector's community," says Lategan. CITES Appendix I animals from Madagascar have been poached heavily just because of their endangered (and therefore rare and sought after) status, which has brought some species to the point of extinction. No matter; if Panhuizen needs it, he'll go there and poach it himself.

Plants for Snobs

Even stranger than the reptile collectors are the plant collectors. Operation Jurassic, the investigation into the smuggling of cycads, was scheduled to terminate sometime in July 1998, a few weeks after my visit with the unit. Cycads of the species *Encephalartos laevifolius* (prehistoric plants) have become a status symbol. The value of cycads is determined by the rarity and size of the specific species and buyers have paid as much as R250 per centimeter at



Poached elephants, once tusks are removed, are typically left to rot in the sun.

auction. The snob value of this prehistoric plant is the main reason for cycads being sold at such high prices. They are smuggled overseas to enthusiasts and horticultural collectors; often being "laundered" through legitimate greenhouses and botanical gardens.

Because of their wide-ranging areas of concern, the unit is organized into four different components (see diagram). The *Flora and Fauna Team* is concerned with tusk, horn, plants and trees. Based upon intelligence worked up by *Information Analysis*, the *Covert Operations Team* plans and conducts long-term covert operations, recruits informants and operatives, and conducts the infiltration of smuggling syndicates. The *Special Investigation Unit* handles cases as directed by the unit commander. Separate investigations occasionally overlap as the same suspect will often deal in different commodities.

The ESPU also assists other SAPS agencies in their investigations involving wildlife crime. A recent case which received a lot of attention in South Africa and abroad was the investigation involving illegal lion hunts. Lions were lured from parks, caged, drugged and then shot by well-heeled "hunters." Estimated cost for one of these "canned lions" was \$15,000 (U.S.). Although the investigation into the canned lion scandal was not a unit mandate (lions are not an endangered species), the ESPU assisted when their involvement was requested. It was also good public relations for the unit, as ESPU receives a lot of cooperation from Safari Club International.

ESPU 2000

The overall impression of the ESPU is one of quiet, unassuming competence. Since the ESPU is an elite unit somewhat isolated from the goings-on in its parent SAPS, it hasn't experienced some of the problems now plaguing the South African Police Service. Like all traditional institutions and government agencies in South Africa, the SAPS is undergoing some difficulties with the new mandated racial integration. There have been questions raised about the competence, suitability, preparation, and even understanding of the job exhibited by some of the new appointees. As in all police forces, the SAPS is concerned with corruption. ESPU has busted dirty police officers who were actually dealing poached rhino horn while wearing their uniforms. In August 1997, the ESPU cooperated in a multi-agency investigation into allegations that members of the SAPS and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) were involved in illegal hunting expeditions. The investigation resulted in the arrest of several people, including two employees of the DEAT. In another case, a Kruger National Park ranger killed 27 rhino over the course of four years and the crimes weren't discovered until 18 months after he left the park service.

The world-famous Kruger National Park has lost some elephant and rhino, but the problem is under control. According to Lategan, "There is no great threat to rhino and elephant, but to what is coming across our borders. Ivory and rhino horn are smuggled into South Africa from Uganda because the buyers are here. We protect our borders to stop the illegal trafficking." Working on cross-border

Continued on page 73

omegaPROVINGground

by Frank W. James

SIG Pro Model 2340 in .357 Sig

An ongoing argument for years, if not decades, whenever the subject of fighting handguns and their respective calibers come up is which is better: lighter weight bullets at higher velocities or heavier bullets that move more slowly?

Factors like chamber pressure, recoil absorption and other outside influences force most heavy calibers to launch their bullets at slower speeds, yet many combat veterans tend to favor the latter side of the argument simply because of personal experience with the .45 ACP caliber 1911 pistol. The only instance many might concede for light & fast versus slow & heavy would be while shooting thin-skinned, non-threatening varmints many civilian sportsman enjoy hunting. Otherwise, many experts remain convinced a big bore in any hand-held firearm is the way to go and they interpret the introduction of yet another medium bore, high velocity handgun cartridge about as seriously as they would a peace initiative from Milosevic.

All of this is pertinent because of the recent introduction of another self-defense cartridge — the .357 Sig round. The buzz among many law-enforcement professionals is this new round surpasses the performance of the .357 Magnum revolver round, while being chambered in a high capacity (law-enforcement only) format.

Being something of a cynic, I recently tested a new handgun

design in this cartridge from Sig, the Model 2340 — the Sig Pro.

The .357 Sig round is not all that revolutionary in that it is merely the .40 S&W case necked down to a .35 caliber projectile. Sig, much to their dismay I'm sure, wasn't the first to think of this idea as others had the same thought almost as soon as the .40 S&W round was introduced a few years back. In Europe, the ammunition firm MFS, of Hungary, came out with their variation of the same basic idea at the same time, if not a little bit before Sig and Federal Cartridge Company introduced the .357 Sig round. MFS called their round the 9x22, although the sample I have from an IWA show in Nuremberg several years back is stamped "9mmMOR". If there is a difference between the two rounds, the MFS version has a slightly longer neck. Regardless of who was actually first to develop this type of medium bore cartridge, the .357 Sig is the current buzz among many in law enforcement.

At present, the Texas Department of Public Safety has adopted Sig handguns in .357 Sig caliber and while any carefully annotated and cross-referenced report has yet to be published, the rumor is that Texas Highway Patrolman are satisfied that it works like a death ray from an ultra-modern space gun. The factory ammunition now being loaded is certainly producing significant velocity if the projectile being fired weighs less than 125 grains. In our testing, we



found that jacketed hollowpoint loads from Remington, Hornady and Speer were all averaging at 1,300 fps or more with the 125 grain bullet when fired from the sample Sig Pro. Federal's was somewhat slower but still close enough to count as it averaged 1,286 fps. Whether this is true progress or just another marketing attempt to get your money remains to be seen until actual shooting reports can be scrutinized by people with a firm basis in scientific research.

The Sig Pro that was used in our testing is Sig's first attempt at a polymer pistol. It follows the format established previously with Sig pistols because it features a decocking lever on the left side of the forward portion of the grip. The gun itself is about the same size as the Sig Model 228/229 series of pistols and features a black stainless steel slide. The polymer components consist of the frame body, the non-captive recoil spring guide rod, the magazine baseplate assembly and the magazine follower. The polymer frame has been designed for the attachment of accessory products like tactical lamps and lasers by provision of attachment rails on the dust cover forward of the trigger guard.

The Sig Pro is a recoil-operated firearm and the barrel is a Browning dropping barrel design. The trigger mechanism is modular and can be changed from double action/single action to a double-action-only design by a Sig-trained armorer. However, the grips can be changed on the grip frame by the consumer. Two different grips come with the gun. One grip has stippling and the other is covered with a rubber bump pattern.

The Sig Pro has an automatic firing-pin safety and safety notch in the hammer. A cautionary note is that the hammer should be lowered only through activation of the decocking lever and not by manually lowering the hammer. Otherwise, the sear may not intercept the safety notch in the hammer and a dangerous condition may arise.

Take-down procedures with the Sig Pro are different than the

methods used on previous Sig pistols. First of all, there is no frame mounted take-down lever. The Sig Pro uses the slide stop lever and cross-pin to lock the slide and barrel to the frame. It must be removed by being pushed from the frame with a right to left movement of the crosspin. Once the crosspin has been removed the slide may be removed from the frame, followed by removal of the recoil spring and guide rod assembly and barrel from the slide.

Shooting the Sig Pro in .357 Sig caliber is very similar to shooting a "+P" 9mm pistol. There is very little felt recoil, but it does come with a significant muzzle bark. The .357 Sig cartridge appears to be an accurate cartridge and a round that demonstrates a relatively flat trajectory when compared against the .45 Auto round.

The Sig Pro is a comfortable pistol to shoot and it operates in exactly the same manner as the Sig 220, 226, 228, and 229. The move by most handgun manufacturers to polymer frames has been motivated in large part to build a pistol for less cost. Whatever the purpose behind the Sig Pro, it is a solid design that works.

As for the .357 Sig cartridge the jury is still out on this new round until it can be analyzed through a process of scientific review that will separate the facts from the myth of this new "death ray."

For further information, contact: SIG Arms Inc., Corporate Park, Exeter, NH 03833; tel: 603-772-2302; fax: 603-772-9082. ☒

Plastic For Professionals



M-Series handguns represent a serious effort on the part of Steyr Mannlicher to claim their share of the polymer pistol market.

New Polymer Steyr M-Series Pistols

Text & Photos by Peter G. Hokal

Polymer-framed pistols are by now *de rigueur* and almost every major handgun manufacturer from the United States to Russia now fields one or more. Although Glock certainly focused attention on this concept as a consequence of their eventual total dominance of the U.S. law enforcement market, they were not the first. Back in the late 1960s, H&K introduced the P9S pistol, which featured, like most of their shoulder-mounted weapons, a delayed-blowback, roller-locked system of operation. This pistol's "frame" was composed of two components: a plastic trigger-guard/front strap and a sheet-metal receiver. A one-piece plastic grip was held to the rear of the receiver by two screws positioned through the backstrap.

Furthermore, the H&K VP70 caliber 9mm Parabellum machine pistol and its semiauto equivalent, the VP70Z — both designed during the same time frame as the P9S — had frames made entirely of plastic, although they were reinforced at appropriate points with steel. Both the P9S and VP70 appeared more than a decade before Gaston Glock's pistol was ever even conceived.

In recent years a number of highly respected manufacturers, to include CZ-USA, Kel-Tec, Kimber, Ruger, SIG Arms, Smith & Wesson and Walther have hopped on the polymer bandwagon.

Latest entry is the highly innovative, locked-breech, short-recoil-operated Steyr M-Series, developed and manufactured by Steyr Mannlicher AG & Co. KG (Dept. SOF, A-4400 Steyr, P.O. Box 1000, Mannlicherstrasse 1, Steyr, Austria). Steyr products are imported and distributed by GSI, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 129, Trussville, AL 35173-0129; phone: 205-655-8299; fax: 205-655-7078).

There are two significant reasons for the prevailing impetus on the use polymer in modern handgun design and fabrication. First, and foremost, injection-molded polymers are far more cost-effective than any other material. Secondly, they furnish sufficient

strength and resilience for handgun frames, with even the most powerful semiautomatic pistol cartridges, and yet provide a lightweight package. It's not necessary to conjure up any more reasons for the present popularity of polymer-framed pistols.

Steyr calls the material used in the frames of both their new M40 (caliber .40 S&W) and M9 (9mm Parabellum) pistols, an "Advanced Ultra-Rigid Synthetic." Call it what you will, it's basically a polymer-type material. *Soldier Of Fortune* was recently presented with an opportunity to test and evaluate both of these pistols. They have some intriguing features.



Steyr M9 polymer-framed pistol is chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge. Shown is the key provided with the commercial version for the limited-access lock.

The length of the slide is 6.97 inches (176 mm). The height is 5.35 inches (136 mm), with a width of 1.18 inches (30 mm) in the grip area. Weight, without magazine, of the M40 is 23.87 ounces (682 grams). The M9 weighs 23.17 ounces (662 grams). The empty polymer magazines weigh 2.97 ounces (85 grams) each. With an overall length of 4 inches (101 mm), the six-groove barrels have a right-hand twist of the appropriate rate for each caliber.

The drop-free magazines are of the staggered-column, single-position-feed, detachable box-type. There are cutouts on each side of the frame at the bottom to assist in removing a jammed magazine. Capacity is 10 rounds for U.S. models and 12 and 14 rounds for the M40 and M9, respectively, outside the United States and for U.S. law enforcement use only.

The fixed, combat-type sights are quite unusual. Called Triangle/Trapezoid sights by Steyr, the front sight blade features a white triangle at the rear. This is aligned with two angled white lines on each side of the open trapezoidal rear sight. The contention is that this system leads the eye directly to the target for more rapid acquisition. Maybe. The sight radius is 6.22 inches (158 mm).

There are three safety systems on these pistols. First, a Reset Action Safety System, similar to that of the Glock, is deactivated only when the trigger is pressed. There is also a manual safety in front of and above the trigger. Engaged manually, it can quickly be deactivated by lifting the trigger finger. Finally, there is an integrated, limited-access lock that permits the pistol to be disabled by means of a separate key. A law enforcement model uses a handcuff key for this purpose. In addition, there are cutouts on each side of the front of the trigger guard. Their intended purpose is to lay the trigger finger on the cutout when observing "Rule 3" (Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target).

There are also accessory rails on either side of the front of the frame which have been designed to accept accessories such as flashlights and laser units. The human engineering effort applied to the Steyr M-Series handguns was considerable. The top of the frame's backstrap has a distinctive "camel's hump" configuration. This serves to bring the hand closer to the bore's axis and thus reduce muzzle jump and the recoil impulse. It also provides a more comfortable grip.

The steel slide has a tough tennifer finish. The slide's rail channels have been cut at a 45-degree angle to accommodate the four steel guide rails integrated into the unique modular slide guide in the frame, which are also set at 45 degrees. This permits the slide to set lower on the frame. In turn, the top round in the magazine then pushes upward on the slide and centers it over the frame. This modular slide guide, which can be easily removed from the frame, contains the trigger assembly, manual safety and slide-release lever.

The grip-to-frame angle (defined as the angle between the front leading edge of the grips and a line drawn normal — perpendicular — to the bore's axis) is 21 degrees, just 4 degrees greater than that of the Colt M1911A1 Government Model. This slightly greater angle enhances the pistol's natural pointing characteristics. The manual safety in the trigger guard and that portion of the frame directly above the trigger are angled downward 10 degrees to more closely match human anatomy. Horizontal serrations are found on the front and back straps. They are integral with the injection-molded frame, as are the Steyr logos on each side of the grip portion of the frame. There is a single finger swell above the serrations on the front strap.



(left) The modular slide guide, which can be easily removed from the frame, contains the trigger assembly, manual safety and slide release lever. (below) Steyr M40 pistol, fieldstripped.



exhibited very low perceived recoil.

Priced competitively, with a substantial amount of state-of-the-art high technology and human engineering, the M-Series handguns represent a serious effort on the part of Steyr Mannlicher to claim their share of the polymer pistol market.

The commercial version, of either the M40 or M9, complete with a lockable storage case, two keys for the limited-access lock, and two 10-round magazines, carries a suggested retail price of \$609.95. The law enforcement version, which comes with three high-capacity magazines and two handcuff keys, sells for \$649.95. Uncle Mike's, Galco and Safariland are all presently making holsters for the M-Series. Self-luminous night sights will be available in the near future. ☒

Steyr M40/M9 Specifications

Calibers: M40: .40 S&W; M9: 9mm Parabellum.

Method of operation: Locked-breech, short-recoil-operated. Three safety systems: Reset Action Safety System, Manual Safety and key-operated, Limited-Access Lock.

Feed Mechanism: Staggered-column, single-position-feed, detachable box-type magazines. Capacities: 10 rounds for commercial versions; law enforcement: 12 and 14 rounds for .40 S&W and 9mm Parabellum models, respectively.

Overall length, slide: 6.97 inches (176 mm).

Height: 5.35 inches (136 mm).

Width, at the grips: 1.18 inches (30 mm).

Weight, without magazine: M40: 23.87 ounces (682 grams); M9: 23.17 ounces (662 grams). Magazines: 2.97 ounces (85 grams).

Barrel length: 4 inches (101 mm).

Barrel: Six-groove with a right-hand twist of the appropriate rate for each caliber.

Finish: Tennifer finish on slide; black polymer frame.

Sights: Triangle/Trapezoid type: front sight blade features a white triangle at the rear to be aligned with two angled white lines on each side of the open trapezoidal rear sight. The sight radius is 6.22 inches (158 mm).

Suggested retail price: Commercial version: \$609.95, complete with two 10-round magazines, two limited-access lock keys and lockable storage case; law enforcement model: \$649.95, complete with three high-capacity, two handcuff keys and lockable storage case.

Manufacturer: Steyr Mannlicher AG & Co. KG, Dept. SOF, A-4400 Steyr, P.O. Box 1000, Mannlicherstrasse 1, Steyr, Austria.

Importer/Distributor: GSI, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 129, Trussville, AL 35173-0129; phone: 205-655-8299; fax: 205-655-7078.

T&E summary: Priced competitively, with a substantial amount of state-of-the-art high technology and human engineering. Reliable.

Pirates Part 2

Continued from page 53

escaped (look for the paint to show up on a phantom ship).

- 1 May 96: Pistol-packing pirates in a motorized sampan boarded a Hong Kong-registered trawler off Dan Gan Island, China. They tied up crew members and wounded the boat's owner before stealing thousands in cash, jewelry and ID cards.

- 11 Nov 96: Six masked pirates with knives boarded a Malaysian-registered tanker within 100 miles of Singapore, forc-

ing the skipper to sail her back to a lighthouse, where four more pirates come aboard; after sailing for a day all but two of the crew were marooned to life rafts; the tanker was never found.

- 1 Feb 97: Ten armed pirates seized a fishing boat in the Philippines, taking a town official and her son hostage.

- 23 Feb 97: Seven pirates hijacked a Filipino ferry and robbed the 50 passengers; suspected guerrillas, they escaped after killing three passengers.

- 17 Apr 97: Pirates from fishing boats attacked Panamanian bulk carrier *Silver Sky* at anchorage in Mingang, China, seriously

injuring the chief engineer.

- 27 Sep 98: Panamanian-flagged/Japanese-owned *Tenyu* with 3 million pounds of aluminum ingots was hijacked after it left Kuala Tanjung, North Sumatra; now under Honduran flag and renamed *Sanie I*, *Tenyu* was detained in Zhangjigang. 29 Feb 99: Korean Maritime Police Agency arrested Lee Dong Gul — behind the sale of aluminum ingots, he subsequently got a three-year prison sentence for selling stolen goods from *Tenyu*. 22 July 99: China released 16 alleged Indonesian pirates suspected of murdering the 15 crewmen.

- 17 Mar 99: Panamanian flagged *Marine Master* carrying some 6,000 tons of bagged soda ash was hijacked at 0200 hours by about 20 pirates, who tied up the crew of 21 and set them adrift at sea. The *Master* was found in a Chinese port under the name of *Nuovo Tierra*, now under Honduran flag. 6 Aug 99: Chinese police arrested 14 Myanmar nationals for hijack of the *Master*.

- Apr 99: Pirates boarded an Irish chemical tanker off Lepar Island, Indonesia, taking two crew hostage and robbing the master's safe.

- 9 Jun 99: Thai-flagged petro tanker *Siam Xanxai* with 2 million pounds of POL was hijacked after leaving Singapore for Songkhla; Thai crew was marooned on an island near Sarawak; another Thai crew detained aboard by pirates. 28 Jul 99: *Siam Xanxai* was arrested in Southern China, renamed the *Auo Me 2*. 1 Oct 99: Chinese officials promised to return ship to its owners.

SOUTH AMERICA:

- 22 Jan 97: Armed pirates in a speedboat boarded the passenger ferry *Rio Amazonas* on the Amazon River between Peru and Colombia; they terrorized the crew and passengers and stole cash, valuables, stores and equipment.

- 3 Mar 97: Armed pirates seized the crew of Bahamanian tanker *Chemical Ruby* off Rio de Janeiro and robbed them of cash and valuables.

- 9 Mar 97: Armed pirates robbed the crew of Barbadian cargo vessel *Libra Buenos Aires* off Rio de Janeiro, taking more than \$30,000 in cash and valuables.

- 9 Mar 97: Armed pirates boarded an Antigua-registered general cargo ship, stole six pallets of typewriters and robbed the crew of \$30,000 in cash and valuables, and made good their escape.

- May 99: Gunmen boarded a tourist ferry off Mexico's Caribbean coast; they robbed passengers, threw two security guards overboard and destroyed the vessel's comms before escaping in a speedboat.

- 8 Aug 99: Liberian-flagged container-ship *Nordana Advisor* was boarded by five

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armed pirates while alongside at Guanta, Venezuela.

• 24 Aug 99: Isle of Man-flagged tanker, at anchor off Brazilian port of Rio Grande, was robbed of \$23,000 in valuables and equipment by pirates.

MEDITERRANEAN AND AFRICA:

• 27 Sep 96: Luxury motor yacht *Carenia* was moored in a quiet cove off the Greek island of Corfu, with British owner and three friends asleep onboard; four men in a speedboat came alongside and attempted to cut the line to the tender, and the owner fired a shotgun to foil the attack but pirates overpowered the owner and friends and ransacked the vessel. Greek police, responding to the sound of gunfire, responded, and in the ensuing gun battle the owner was killed in a crossfire. The pirates escaped in their speedboat.

• 1 Jan 97: Armed pirates boarded and killed the captain of a Russian trawler off Somali coast, but did not take over ship. *Duh-uh*.

• 17 Apr 97: Pirates hijacked the Italian-flagged freighter *Bahari Hindi* at Bossasu, Somalia, demanding \$90,000 ransom.

• 17 Jun 97: Liberian-flagged *Stella* robbed of cash and valuables by 35 armed pirates who boarded at Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

• Summer 99: Somali gunmen-cum-pirates hijacked a German yacht en route from New Zealand to the Indian Ocean, took four hostages and demanded \$50,000 ransom.

You Do The Math

Between 1994 and 1995, reported incidents of piracy more than doubled. From a decade high of 228 reported incidents of piracy in 1996, the year 1998 was down to 202 — still almost double 1991, when statistics were first kept. As we write this, the final figures are not available for 1999, but third-quarter figures suggest there will be a slight rise. The dollar amounts that go with these figures are in the billions. But, keep in mind that all agree only a portion of the acts of piracy are reported. We would hazard a guess that almost no international shipping which has been molested but not seriously hurt reports such incidents, simply finding it more economic to lick their wounds and go about their business.

And we found that only a fraction of the locally reported statistics ever find their way into international tabulations. A case in point is the port of Colombo, Sri Lanka. They suffered some \$200 million a year in losses at this one port alone. The tabulated figures for 1996 indicate there were 13 incidents of piracy in all of Sri Lanka — but the Port of Colombo reports 53 incidents in their immediate waters alone, while acknowledging that few of the inci-

dents are reported by vessels in transit who must keep moving to make a buck. You see, figures *do* lie. They lie somewhere in a drawer, untabulated, which tends to mask the true severity of the international problem of modern piracy.

You do the math ... but the real dollar amount, and how many hundreds of lives it has cost, may never be quantitatively defined.

And so it goes. From seagoing muggers and petty burglars who value your wallet more than your life, to well-connected international crime syndicates who will contract to hijack a specified large vessel or cargo (the going rate is +/- \$300,000 U.S.), pirates have once again become the scourge of the seas.

Piracy is still hostis humani generis, the enemy of the human race. As any enemy, it must be fought if the commerce of civilized nations is to continue. In the conclusion of this series, next month we will examine the steps being taken by governmental and professional organizations to deter the pirates. We will examine what commercial organizations are doing proactively, from technology and discreet repossession of stolen vessels to highly trained and heavily armed sea-going mercs ready to fight the pirates on their own terms.

Frank Hopkins is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

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Continued from page 29

sight, attached to the front of the receiver body, has substantial protective ears and is adjustable for both elevation and windage zero.

The DP's "pancake-type" drum magazine has received more than its share of criticism. It's fairly bulky, with an overall diameter of almost 10½ inches. Its large size is a consequence of the cartridges remaining in-line, rather than the helical stacking found in the Lewis gun drum. Originally designed to hold 49 rounds, field use indicated that loading only 47 rounds significantly improved reliability. User manuals were amended accordingly, and some drums were so marked. The drum is actually similar in design and operation to that of the Vickers-Berthier aircraft machine gun used by early British SAS units in the desert campaign during World War II. It differs from the Lewis gun as its inner assembly rotates while the outer housing remains stationary, exactly the reverse of the Lewis gun drum. I have a number of Finnish-made DP drums marked "VKT" and "SA" (Finnish Army) that exhibit considerably better finish and overall quality than their Russian equivalents. The Finnish drums have a hinged ring to pull on when loading — always a tedious procedure with DP magazines. Russian DP drums usually had a small leather thong for this purpose. DP manuals show a loading tool, but I have never seen one.

The DP bipod provides a fixed command height (the distance from the bore's axis to the ground) of 13 inches. It's held in place by a clamp and wing nut. The gun can be rotated almost 70 degrees in either direction on its bipod. The bipod is located just to the rear of the gas regulator, an excellent compromise position, as it provides adequate group dispersion with the ability to lift the weapon while in the prone position to engage rapidly moving targets on the gunner's flanks. To deploy the DP off the bipod, the weapon should be thrust forward and then pulled back into the operator's shoulder.

It was first fielded in limited quantities, but with considerable success, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) by Republican (Loyalist) forces. The DP was used by Red Army troops during the Soviet-Japanese Border Incident of 1939 and also in the 105-day Russo-Finnish War (1939-1940). However, the DP really came into its own during the Great Patriotic War (World War II), where it was fielded as the principal automatic weapon of the Red Army. During the Korean War, both North Korean and Chinese troops fielded substantial quantities of the DP, DPM and DT/DTM (the tank models).

Some so-called authorities have stated that the design's many large, flat bearing surfaces increase the co-efficient of friction and collect debris which results in frequent stoppages. This is just not so and the DP ranks with the other great machine guns of its era, including the Bren, MG42, and Browning series. ✕

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Horn of Africa

Continued from page 65

ops, the ESPU has been to Botswana and Zambia. In a recent operation in Zambia along with Zambian wildlife officers, the ESPU led a series of dawn raids on smugglers, funded by the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation. Poaching and wildlife smuggling has steadily increased in Zambia since the June 1997 decision of CITES resuming international ivory trading with Japan. Elephants have been poached on the borders of Mozambique and Zimbabwe and in Western Zambia. The ESPU is attempting to be more pro-active. "To keep the rhinos alive in Zimbabwe, not just protecting rhinos in South Africa and confiscating poached horns, that's how we see our operation," says Lategan.

There's been some rocky going for the ESPU, especially during its growing pains. Because of the Byzantine politics during the war against the ANC and SWAPO, the ESPU sometimes found itself facing hostile opposition from colleagues in the military and intelligence agencies. According to Colonel Lategan, "As the ESPU embarked on this new initiative in wildlife law enforcement, we faced severe criticism, including statements that we were selling the same elephant tusks and rhino horn to different suspects and then after the arrest we would announce a new seizure to the press." Even given serious attempts by ESPU's enemies (some deeply entrenched in government and high society) to stop their fight against the smuggling networks, the unit continues to gain ground against the poachers. However, it's even odds whether they'll be able to completely stop the widespread depredations of Africa's wildlife. Because the current Republic of South Africa was previously divided into four provinces and independent states, the most serious difficulty facing ESPU is the lack of comprehensive uniform legislation. Also, given the current economic and political turmoil and burgeoning crime rate, wildlife conservation isn't the foremost worry on many politicians' or policemen's minds. But as long as the current regime in South Africa continues to support the ESPU's efforts and ignore their detractors, the undercover wildlife cops will continue taking down smugglers and poachers.

There is an old African proverb: "Every morning in Africa, an impala wakes up. She knows that she has to run faster than the lion or die. Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up. He knows that he must run faster than the impala or he will starve. In fact, no matter what, when the sun comes up in Africa, you'd better start running." It's an early dawn for wildlife conservation law enforcement in Africa and, fortunately, the ESPU is up and running.

Rob Krott is a senior SOF correspondent living in Canada. ✉



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*Master Guy Savelli has been tested at Duke University, the Mind Science Foundation, JFK University, The Psychological Research Institute and The Special Forces Laboratory at Fort Bragg.

I Was There

Continued from page 24

wounds, the other crew members and I opted to forgo initial mention of his participation in our official request to the government of Vietnam. His visit would surely generate hostility and red tape.

We touched down at Tan Son Nhut Airport in mid-August 1999 and were met with a bit of fanfare by Vietnamese officials to whom we offhandedly mentioned the participation of Mark "Zippo" Smith. To them it seemed no big deal.

We then, after going through the "grip and grin" with local officials at Loc Ninh, linked-up with my American friend from that long-ago battle. Our "guide," retired NVA Colonel Hoa, whose tanks had destroyed our camp, hailed from Hanoi but deferred to an all-business southern lady, our trip coordinator, who said she would allow Smith to appear in the video even though he wasn't on the "official" list of project participants.

After a night's rest at a local hotel, we visited the Loc Ninh airstrip early the following afternoon. It was like reliving near-death events of 27 years before. Nothing remained of the 9th Regiment's camp and the craggy, unused airstrip seemed a useless relic. Still, the memories and emotional ties to that place flooded back into my mind, and again it seemed April 1972.

But where was Zippo? I began to become anxious since I had not seen him since the previous evening. As we taped in front of the Loc Ninh War Museum (the former French house) adjacent to the strip, Jean Francois, the other journalist, slipped away from our little entourage to make some discreet inquiries. Zippo, he was informed, had been an "ugly American" the night before and was now declared *persona non grata* in Loc Ninh.

An hour later, we spotted Zippo astride a motorcycle. Apparently, he had got into a potentially nasty altercation the previous night and was jailed for his unruly conduct. Apparently, our dragon lady companion wielded more clout than we assumed. Old grudges die hard — especially against returned American warriors. Zippo's "marquee-time" in our video project was thus postponed. So off he went, sputtering out of town, now a frustrated "refugee" and thwarted lead actor en route back to Saigon.

Colonel Hoa apologized profusely for the dragon lady's conduct. "Our country is changing — and it must change — but in some provinces the change is very slow. I am very sorry."

The next day, the video cameras were again, however, rolling. Mark "Zippo" Smith and I were interviewed on the very pleasant terrace at Saigon's Rex Hotel.

But the horror, suffering and death of 1972 Loc Ninh remained very near, and clear.

Yves-Michel Dumond resides in England. ✕



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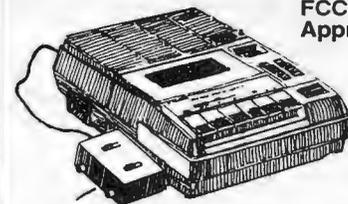
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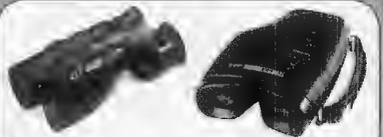
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Two-Stripers As Chiefs

Last week, Al Gore said he'd require any appointee to the U.S. armed forces Joint Chiefs of Staff to agree in advance to allow homosexuals to serve openly in our military.

When asked about Clinton's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, here's how he responded: "I would insist before appointing anybody to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the individual support my policy. And, yes, I would make that a requirement."

After enduring the next 48 hours of heavy incoming fire, the vice president stumbled out of his bunker and told millions of Americans they'd misheard. He weasel-worded that he "did not mean to imply that there should ever be any kind of inquiry into the personal political opinions of the officers."

Millions of Americans "misheard?" I don't think so.

Clearly, Gore lied. But what's new? He lied about his combat service in Vietnam when he said he'd been there and done that grunt stuff, lied about plowing the back 40 on his daddy's tobacco farm and now is lying about what our ears transmitted to our brains.

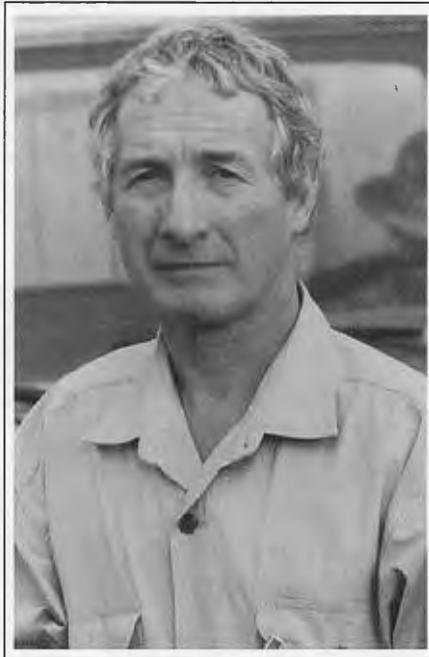
Sure, most politicians lie. But to lie so blatantly about an issue so critical to our security and then have the chutzpah to say we got it wrong is even more insulting than usual.

My take is that, like President Lyndon Johnson, Gore has issues with the brass. I reckon what we witnessed on television was the real Gore caught dead in the center of a subconscious slip. He's on record when he was a soldier in Vietnam for calling his officers "fascists" and driving his buddies nuts over how much he hated the Army.

Granted, the Army drill must've been hard for a Harvard graduate — an enlisted man who'd led a privileged life of servants and private schools. The son of a rich and powerful senator wouldn't exactly be thrilled with an outfit that made him get up at o'dark hundred, stand in line in the rain, eat out of a mess kit and shout "How high, sir?" when told to jump.

Things got better once Gore got to Vietnam. There his basic weapon was a Remington typewriter, and the headquarters snack bar was light-years away from the trenches where the daily fighting and dying occurred. He was special: the only enlisted man in Vietnam with his own bodyguard.

Gore's senator daddy also got his son's 12-month tour cut to



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

five by leaning on a political general. The unconnected, of course, served a minimum of 12 months unless they went out Purple Heart-early on a stretcher or in a body bag.

So it's easy to see why he wants generals and admirals who'll go-along-to-get-along, advisers to expedite his political agenda and help scoop up the homosexual vote — while finishing off our armed forces.

But it's critical that the service chiefs and the chairman of the JC of S be their own men, not presidential lap dogs. They must be selected because they're the best in the armed forces to win wars, not because they'll be the president's personal yes men.

The chiefs were just so politicized and manipulated by LBJ during the Vietnam War. And as a result of LBJ's anti-brass paranoia, his lies to the public and the service chiefs' dereliction of duty, we lost our first war and have a black monument in Washington D.C. inscribed with the names of 58,000 sacrificial lambs.

There's already been too much compromise and not enough standing tall by the chiefs and the rest of our brass hats. In the last seven years, not one serving senior officer has challenged the Clinton-Gore agenda — pushing political correctness and committing our

forces on wrongheaded missions — that's led to the near destruction of our military.

If Gore becomes the prez, I bet a six-pack not one serving admiral and general will sell his or her soul for a chief's job if it means going along with Gore's open-homosexuality-in-the-ranks scenario. There'll be an avalanche of resignations instead. And then a bunch of very liberal corporals will be brought in to take over the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Finally, the Clinton-Gore demolition job on the armed forces will be complete!

It just might be expedient to learn Chinese.

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

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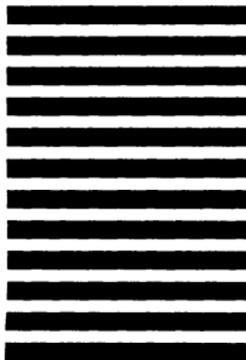
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