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# SOF

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DECEMBER 2000 ✕ VOL. 25 NO. 12



Al J. Venter

**On the Cover**  
British Paras spearhead the anti-rebel offensive in bloodied Sierra Leone — their insertion comes none too soon. See page 54.

## FEATURES

<b>THE H'MONG STRUGGLE CONTINUES</b> by Dr. Tom Marks America's noblest and most loyal allies, the heroic H'mong, are again doing battle against communism in their native Laos. Marks combines a valuable sitrep with a wrenching historical perspective.	<b>38</b>
<b>A RACE AGAINST DEATH</b> by John J. Culbertson Lance Corporal Luther Hamilton didn't <i>lose</i> the race to save his buddy — he just came up a bit short, as God intervened.	<b>40</b>
<b>WALK SOFTLY</b> by Rob Krott Afghanistan is the most mined country in the world (where 15 million still lurk in the ground). <i>SOF</i> joins the search for these leftover death-dealers on the still-lethal road to Kabul.	<b>44</b>
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<b>LETTERS FROM ZIMBABWE</b> Edited by Don McLean, Senior Editor All President Robert Mugabe needs is a Nazi armband. His "authorized" land seizures (thefts in any civilized locale), and the resultant murders, rapes and beatings, have peaceful whites and blacks packing, and packing-up, readying to toss in the towel and head for the border.	<b>59</b>
<b>COMPACT CZECHS</b> by Peter G. Kokalis Kokalis analyzes the new CZ75D PCR Compact 9mm pistol and the CZ75B Silver Anniversary Commemorative, both notable handguns in the remarkable CZ series.	<b>61</b>
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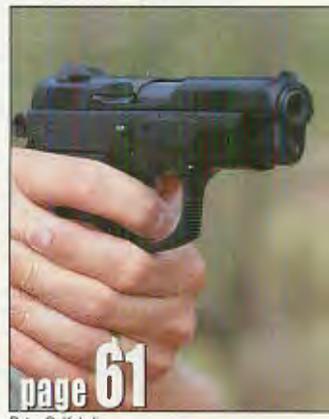
Rob Krott



Reuters/Howard Burditt

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Peter G. Kokalis

# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert L. Viden, Jr.

## The Bill Of Rights *Irrelevant* To Individuals' Rights?

If you read *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine you are probably a firearms owner and most likely believe in the individual freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

If you look throughout the world where conflict exists, it is because the governments have denied freedoms to it peoples.

This year we are faced with electing a government that can do just that — revoke freedoms at its whim, rights that we have enjoyed for the past 200 years.

We can all read the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and most of us understand what is said and intended. Our forefathers wrote this document for the average American to read and understand. However, when a law or directive is challenged as being against our Constitutional guarantees, it is up to the nine justices who make up the United States Supreme Court to decide.

The next President of the United States will most likely appoint *four* justices to the Court, in his first four years in office. These appointments will be ratified by the U.S. Senate. This makes the election this November possibly the most important election in which you will ever vote!

I have addressed many firearms organizations and I always encounter a few who say they will vote for the Conservative or



Robert Viden, Jr. is a big-game hunter and currently serves on the NRA Board of Directors.

Reform Party because they represent their views, or have the best policies about firearms ownership. This may be true. However, the fact is this November a third party candidate will not win. Look back on history: Ross Perot put Clinton in the White House, not once, but twice. Voting for a third party candidate may pacify your self-righteous principles but will allow a Gore appointee to take your guns. So, do you want to teach the Republicans a lesson — or lose your guns?

As a freedom-loving American, you cannot afford Al Gore if you're presently a gun

owner — or if you might wish to purchase one in the future — or if you just value your liberties and abhor governmental interference in your lives.

If you believe, as our forefathers did, that certain rights are given by our Creator and should not be infringed upon by government, we must unite for a victory in November!

If we lose this election, be prepared to wake up one morning to read that *Justices* Clinton and Schumer wrote the majority opinion on the Supreme Court decision on why the Bill of Rights does not refer to individual rights — but only to collective rights of states.

Join the NRA and VOTE this November — for FREEDOM! ✘

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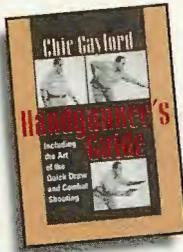
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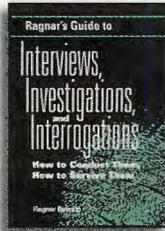
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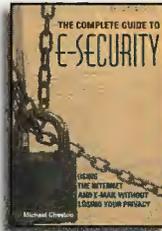
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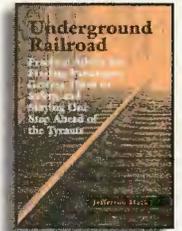
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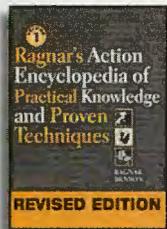
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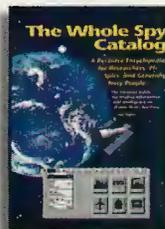
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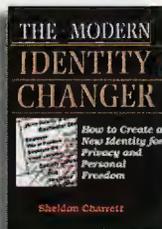
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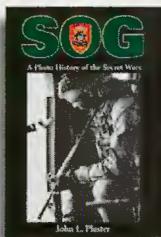
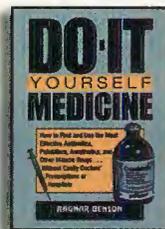
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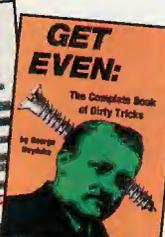
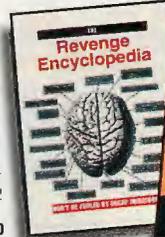


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## Urgent Update

As we go to press we have received word that armed police in riot gear have stormed the offices of the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), virtually the only opposition to the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe (see "Africa at the Crossroads," Nov. '00, and "Letters from the Heart of Africa" this issue) on Fife Avenue, in Harare, and at the Eastgate offices (an upmarket shopping mall location). According to reports from the scene, the police were not in possession of the requisite search warrant, and refused to provide details about themselves. They insisted on removing documents without allowing the MDC to record details of the materials being seized. Interested parties — that means *you* (don't expect the UN to say anything) — wishing to express their concern for these illegal actions are advised to contact:

- their nearest Zimbabwean embassy
- the Commissioner of Police, P.O.Box CY34, Causeway, Zimbabwe; phone: 011-263-4-700171
- the Speaker of Parliament; phone: 011-263-4-252936-55; fax: 011-263-4-252935; e-mail: clerk@parlzim.gov.zw; or P.O. Box CY298, Causeway, Zimbabwe

- the Minister of Home Affairs: phone: 011-263-4-703641/792774/703644; or mail to P/Bag 505D, Harare, Zimbabwe
- the President's office; phone: 011-263-4-707091-7; Munhumutapa Building, Harare, Zimbabwe.

The Mugabe regime rode in on a tide of misguided world opinion. Perhaps world opinion of their outrages — if expressed — will



Demoland über alles?

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

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

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

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

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

## The One True Ultimate Fighting System

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

## You Now Live The Fearless Life With The Offensive Mindset™

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

## Have You Ever Felt Fear?

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

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

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have a good effect. It's certainly worth a try.

## Editorial Error

We regret that the top document shown on page 82 of the November 2000 issue, although genuine, was not germane to the story as published and was inserted through editorial error.

## Cross Scotchmen?

School kids in Poland have been issued a new sex-education guide, which used a kilted Scot to depict cross-dressers. In the book, used by teachers for social and sex education, the laddie in the wee kilts illustrates a section on transvestites and cross-dressers, explaining the "some men want to wear women's clothes, or change their sex." When the publishers were alerted to the fact this might cause offense to Scots, they contacted the British Embassy in Warsaw. The Embassy consulted with Scottish members of the staff, including Ambassador John MacGregor, and concluded the Scots would more likely find it amusing than insulting.

## Points Of Contact #1

Brownells, premier supplier of parts, tools, supplies and books for gunsmiths, has a new *area code*. Reach them at 641-623-4000; you can also order on-line at [www.brownells.com](http://www.brownells.com).

## Points Of Contact #2

Ranger Rick Tscherne, long-time purveyor of the *useful* "Ranger Digest" series, now is on the web. Some of the best field-expedient



know-how ever assembled may be accessed at: [www.therangerdigest.com](http://www.therangerdigest.com). Check it out. Of course, you can still contact them by snailmail at: 11 Poppy Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

## We're Not Making This Up!

Since this is an election year and the readers already have had their gullets stretched swallowing campaign promises, we would like to announce that a Canadian company has crossed spiders and goats in an effort to produce large quantities of spider silk. Not because silk rhymes with milk, but because the "silk gland and the milk gland are almost identical" and of course even a miniature goat's udder is a quantum leap ahead of the business end of a spider

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WWII and is in the 300,000 psi tensile range. And because of its incredible strength-to-weight ratio it would be of potential use as a replacement for existing fibers in bullet-proof vests, artificial tendons and who knows what all. Not that they ever had it to experiment with, but Nexia scientists estimate that one gram, about a teaspoon, of spider silk could be stretched to almost 3 miles. The problem has been producing it in quantity. Spiders are small, tend to be reclusive (thus do not herd well), and simply do not produce anything close to commercial quantities of their silk.

Goats, on the other hand, are easy to get along with, productive, and reproduce quickly — a consideration if you want rapidly to build a producing herd of newly cloned critters.

What's next? Teaching a violin spider to grow his own strings? Crossing a spider with a chicken to get eight drumsticks? Crossing a spider with a leech to get a lawyer?

Science marches on.

(NB: those wanting to use this unlikely information for bar bets may cite the original story by Stephen Willingham in *National Defense*.)

in what it can produce.

Nexia Biotechnologies of Montreal has cloned several New Zealand miniature goats, that have a spider's silk-producing gene added to their genome. The silk-producing gene added to the goats is in a form of recombinant DNA, which means they can pass the gene on to their offspring. These cloned animals will form a herd sharing an identical genetic makeup, which the scientists at Nexia expect will produce from two to 15 grams of spider silk per liter of milk — an astronomical increase over what could be produced naturally by spiders.

In 1999, Nexia bought an existing portfolio of patented spider silk genes from the University of Wyoming in Laramie and has been proceeding with DoD funding.

Why?

Because spider dragline silk is one of the strongest materials there is. It was used for crosshairs in the exotic weapons sights of

## Big Deals

Per frequent inquiry, here are the points of contact/information of most use if you are interested in buying stuff (surplus, glommed, abandoned) from the U.S. government. There are two main agencies handling sales: the DoD which handles military surplus, and the General Services Administration which handles surplus, abandoned property, and seized property from various agencies.

DoD's Defense Reutilization and Marketing Services (DRMS) holds national sales in Battle Creek, Michigan, and local sales all over the country. Call toll-free: 888-352-9333 and ask for a DRMS kit that lists all its offices; punch up their website [www.drms.com](http://www.drms.com) and be amazed at the detailed property information.

For personal property sales, you can look up the office nearest

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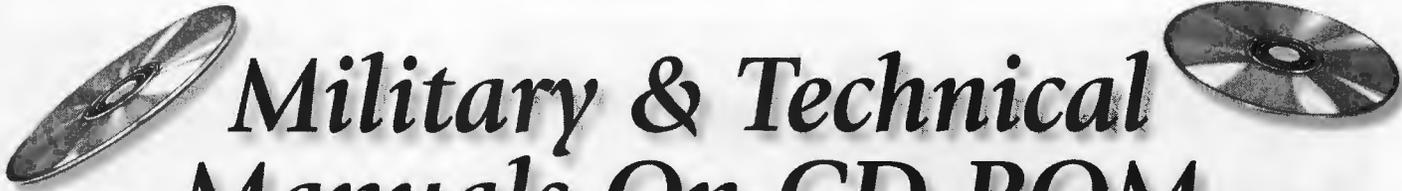
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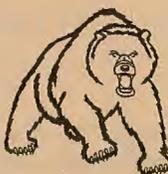
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## 30 Years Late

As we go to press the *New York Times* ran a story that Bill "Dodged the Draft and Didn't Go" Clinton plans to go to Vietnam, aboard a U.S. Navy vessel, and also to China. Time frame is speculated to be after the elections, for obvious reasons, but before the end of the year, for obvious reasons. He is also expected to visit China in the same time frame aboard a Navy vessel, and there is scuttlebutt of a pending flag flap. U.S. Navy regs state no flag will fly above the U.S. flag on a naval vessel. Chinese regulations forbid and foreign flag to fly higher than hers in their country and the two governments have made a protocol compromise where both national flags will fly at the same height.

Vietnam, however, claims a law that the Vietnamese flag must fly higher than any other national flag in their territory, and scuttlebutt has it the White House, as commander in chief, is ready to lower the U.S. flag as the U.S. ship sails into Vietnamese territory — and that the swabbies are steamed. According to *World Net Daily*, highly placed Navy sources who spoke on condition of anonymity believe this action by the president could further devastate already low Navy morale.

## International Veterans Association

When *SOF's* Bob MacKenzie visited Russian paras for a jump, early on after the shakeup over there, he noted in his story that the troops of disparate — even antagonistic — nations often have more in common with each other than they do their own hierarchy. And that's true.

Now, international veterans have an organization where they can share the camaraderie of the profession of arms, whichever flag they fought for. The International Veteran's Association has members in Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Finland, France, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malawi, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, the UK and the USA. The members are veterans of conflicts in many more countries. New members are welcome, and will be vetted. For further information e-mail: [Veterans@writeme.com](mailto:Veterans@writeme.com) ; or fax: 011-81-3-5421-3759. The organization publishes

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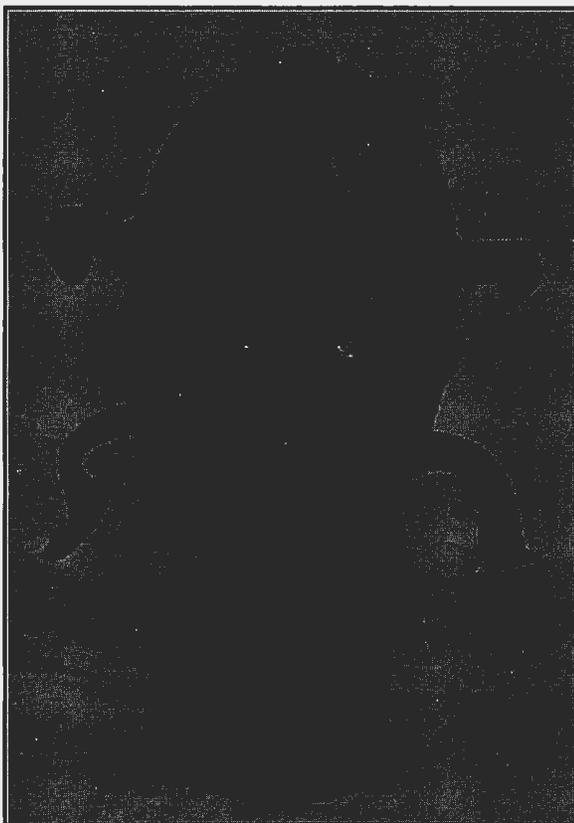
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## Boy Scouts: Enemies Of The Socialist State?

The Pink House is defending as entirely appropriate its request that all cabinet agencies dig through their files to determine the extent of the Boy Scouts' ties to the federal government. The Supreme Court decided that the Boy Scouts have the right to determine for themselves the values that qualify their members and leaders as "morally straight," but notwithstanding, if Reno's politicized Justice Department determines that the Scout's constitutional right to exclude gays violates President Clinton's executive order against discrimination, the Scouts may be run off federal property.

For instance, Nattie Silva, Department of Interior's "assistant director of diversity," has demanded information about all DoI ties to the Scouts, particularly the Scouts annual national jamboree, scheduled for next July at Ft. A.P. Hill, in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where it has been held for a number of years.

Now, *there's* a hot potato for the Democratic ticket: Both Gore and Lieberman were Boy Scouts ... and, so far, gay groups have contributed more than \$5,000,000 to the Gore campaign. But win, lose or draw this election, the lobby for those with tangential sexual urges won't rest until society as a whole acknowledges that they are really OK, and Jeffrey Dahmer was a true chef.

## Naked Gun XVI?

According to a report in *Nouvel Observateur*, France's most colorful merc, Col. Bob Denard, is at least a peripheral player in the takeover of a nudist camp in the south of France. Denard, now a robust 71, was linked by the magazine to a shadowy group of investors who funded the takeover of Montalivet. The new director, M. Filippo Vacher, is described as an expert on camouflage and long-time friend of Col. Denard. According to the magazine report, Vacher and associates spend a year infiltrating the resort and buying up shares until they had a controlling interest.

For his part, Col. Denard denies any investor involvement, saying "I haven't invested a centime ... I can't deny that I am on particularly friendly terms with the new owners but, at the same time, can you really imagine me prancing about naked?" Well, could we imagine one who has made a career out of taking over obscure islands of aboriginals, pass up an opportunity to take over a camp of naked French ladies? The prosecution rests. ☒

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# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

## Benchmade Nimravus

From the company's inception, the name of Benchmade knives has been associated with the pioneering of high-tech manufacturing methods to produce flawlessly-wrought folders of leading-edge design. Some of the knife designers well-known today for autonomous production of their *avant-garde* designs started in the business designing knives for Benchmade. Many of the best-known designers still do.

Although known primarily for innovative folders and automatic knives, Benchmade also makes a good-as-it-gets fixed blade design by Allen Elishewitz, the Nimravus — named for the prehistoric saber-toothed cat. An appropriate namesake, as the Model 140 Nimravus is very quick and nimble in the hand. We tested the Model 140SBT (stainless, BT polymer-coated, NSN-1095-01-466-8569), and it is one of the most capable easy-carry knives we have seen thus far.



"Easy carry" is what we call a knife that is lighter, thinner, perhaps a little shorter than some of its genre — but which will do the same work.

Accomplishing this is not a task for dummy designers, and the finished design here illustrates as well as any other why Elishewitz enjoys such a good reputation among the trade (designers/makers) and profession (end-users).

Available in either Hitachi's ATS-34 (a high-carbon, fine-grained stainless alloy very good for knife-making), hardened to 59-51 Rockwell C, or M2 high-speed tool steel (a favorite of us who tinker in machine shops and are familiar with its properties), hardened to RC 60-62, the Nimravus is built to do serious work. Since it is a hand tool, the ability to realize the good work the blade is capable of hinges on the ability of the designer to design blade and scales to a contour, to which the hand can repeatedly or continuously apply strong force without fatigue. And a form that telegraphs to the tactile senses exactly the position of the tool in the hand. And a form and texture that the hand can securely retain under adverse considerations of climate, environs, leverage — and fatigue.

Within the design parameters of an "easy carry" requirement, Elishewitz has succeeded so well one can envision a prototype shop littered with hundreds of trial designs in the quest to get it just right — as he surely has with the Model 140.

The Model 140 has a 4.5" blade, and that on the Model 145 Nimravus Cub is 3.65". The one you choose all depends on how

thick may be your workpiece or adversary.

Of full-tang construction, the grip scales are of G-10 synthetic, superbly machine-contoured and textured for a secure grip, without feeling uncomfortably rough during extended use. This writer has always favored full-tang construction where appropriate to a design's configuration, not only for its inherent strength but because that slab of steel running the length of the tool lends itself to other useful purpose. On the Nimravus this includes an exposed triangle at the butt drilled for a lanyard, and exposed lateral ribs on the spine just aft of the blade, and a short extension just forward of the finger groove that serves as a quasi-hilt. Although relatively thin, the carefully contoured G-10 scales have excellent tactile properties, including a groove at the front of the scales for when the blade is held horizontally, which offers a positive and confident grip.

The blade is described as a "non-geometric Tanto." You might also describe it as a modified spear point with a cuneiform cross-section. Which ever adjective you prefer, the blade is designed rugged at the top of the tip, to preclude point breakage.

The Model 140 Nimravus comes in a functional and attractive Kydex sheath. Although Kydex has become very popular as sheath material because it is eminently practical — it doesn't hold moisture to rust blades, is unaffected by oils or solvents or salt water, can be precisely form-fitted to hold a knife securely yet is springy enough to permit easy release — not often can Kydex sheathes be described as all that attractive. The "beauty of functional design," of course, but few synthetics compete with natural materials in pure comeliness. Just as the synthetic G-10 grip scales on the Nimravus have an impressive esthetic because of the form and flawless fabrication, the sheath it comes in is cleanly, functionally designed and its looks further enhanced by the addition of a basket-weave nylon fabric overlay between the inside socket and outside framework. Although esthetically very pleasing, the sheath design is practical and adaptable to your individual needs (i.e. one can undo the Torx screws and move the belt loop for right- or left-hand carry).

The Nimravus and Nimravus Cub are very well-thought-out knives, superbly wrought from top-grade materials for a lifetime of service.

Contact Benchmade Knife Company, Dept. SOF, 300 Beavercreek Rd., Oregon City, OR 97045; phone: 800-800-7427; fax: 503-655-6223; E-mail: [info@benchmade.com](mailto:info@benchmade.com); or check out their website at [www.benchmade.com](http://www.benchmade.com).

## New Winchester ComBloc Loads

Largely based on favorable price, there have been a great number of Russian/Soviet surplus and economical commercial firearms sold in this country. With proper care and feeding, they can be very serviceable arms at a poor-boy price.

Proper feeding has at times been a problem, but Winchester is offering a new value-price line of ammo that is fully reloadable, and will put and keep your ComBloc pieces back on the firing line.



Continued on page 20

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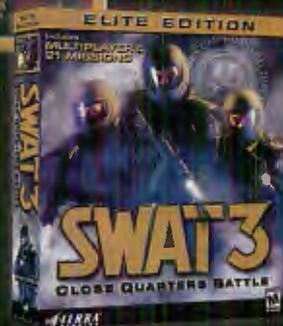
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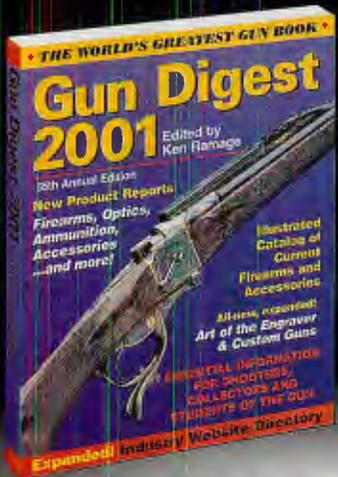


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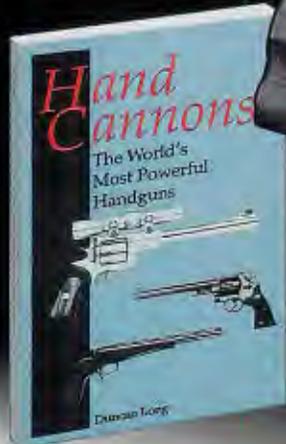
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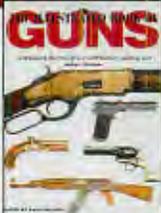
0356+ \$24.95 25c



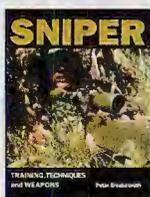
3467+ \$20.00



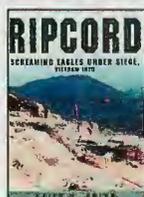
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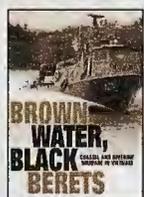
3020 \$22.95 25c



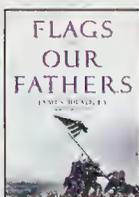
1024 \$20.95 25c



0125 \$30.95 25c



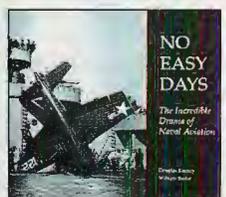
0208 \$10.95x 25c



0273 \$24.95 25c



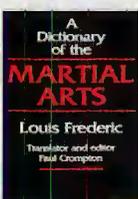
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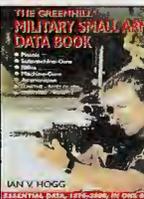
0778 \$24.95 25c



2022 \$24.95 25c



0422 \$19.95x 25c



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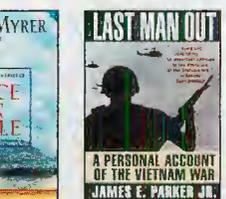
6080 \$12.95x 25c



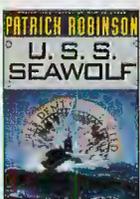
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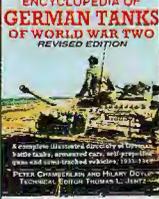
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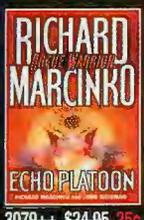


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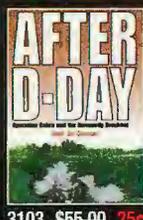


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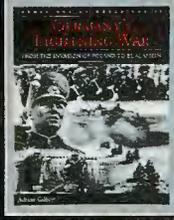
3103 \$56.00 25¢



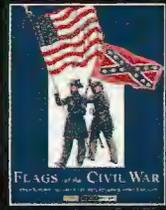
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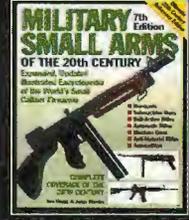
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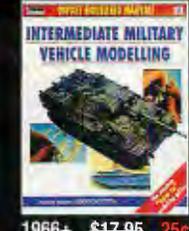
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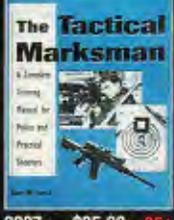
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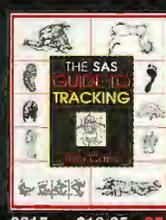
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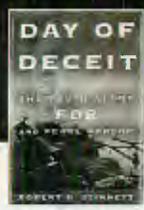
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There are two new handgun rounds, the 9x18 Makarov with a 95-grain bullet traveling at a nominal 1,017 fps, and a 7.62x25 Tokarev with a 85-grain bullet at 1,647 fps.

The old, but serviceable, 7.62x54R round fitting untold thousands of various iterations of the Mosin-Nagant rifles is also being marketed by Winchester with a 180-grain fmj bullet having a 2,579 fps muzzle velocity. I have seen Hungarian and Finnish versions of the Mosin which, properly fed, would deliver accuracy more than adequate for North American big game, and although never a favorite, the esthetically challenged Mosin rifle is very strong and reliable — and cheap — making it worthy of consideration as a beater, now that the \$35 Model 98 Mausers and \$15 Lee-Enfields are a thing of the past.

Available wherever Winchester ammo is sold. For more information on Winchester ammunition, write to Winchester, Dept. SOF, 427 N. Shamrock St., East Alton, IL 62024-1197; or check out their website at [www.winchester.com](http://www.winchester.com).

ened finish) or in high-polished stainless, the new offering has simulated ivory grip panels and fixed sights. The New Model Single-Six, of course, features Ruger's transfer-bar system to help prevent accidental discharges from inadvertent hammer blows (if you happen to have a pre-1973 "Old" model Ruger, a transfer bar conversion is available free. Call 203-259-7843).

The .32 H&R mag New Model Single-Six will, of course, digest .32 S&W and .32 S&W Long cartridges if you ever inherit an old sockfull with Uncle Harry's rickety turn of the century spur-trigger.

Good gear, as always, from Ruger. For more info or the dealer nearest you, contact Sturm, Ruger & Co., Dept. SOF, 200 Ruger Rd., Prescott, AZ 86301; phone: 520-541-8901.

### Correction

The correct phone number for 7.62 Design, purveyor of custom T-shirts, is 858-693-4130; website [www.7point62design.com](http://www.7point62design.com).

## Single-Six In .32 H&R Mag Returns

Those of us who don't shoot much that we don't intend to eat, rued the market demise of the .32-20 round, and were heartened by the introduction of the .32 H&R Mag as a good replacement meat-for-the-pot round. When Ruger brought out a Single-Six in this caliber in 1984 and had it on the market until 1997, a good many who needed a good trail and small-game handgun kept the assembly lines operating, but production was discontinued in 1997.

It took the added demand created among the cowboy-action shooters who wanted a light-caliber center-fire single-action to bring the Ruger New Model Single-Six back to dealer shelves in .32 H&R magnum, and the skillet-fillers will be glad they did.

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BALLOT

# WE HAVE ONE MORE BATTLE TO FIGHT

My fellow veterans:

You and I have one more battle to fight, one more battle we must win. This battle will be fought with ballots, not bullets, on Election Day.

With our votes we have the opportunity to regain our military readiness and renew the respect owed those who proudly wear the uniform. And, yes, we have the opportunity to re-affirm America's first freedom—the Second Amendment's right to keep and bear arms.

My fellow veterans, there is something flat-out wrong when men and women who answered the call to duty—who defended our country in time of war—are no longer trusted by anti-gun politicians at the highest levels to own firearms to defend their families in their own homes. As a free people, we can do better.

Those of us who survived represent those who didn't make it. We must see to it that they did not die in vain protecting the freedoms we enjoy today. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, our mission and our sacred duty—in their memory—is to Vote Freedom First.



Joe Foss received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in World War II. He is the former Governor of South Dakota, the past president of the National Rifle Association, and a current member of the NRA Board of Directors.

*Joe Foss*

General Joe Foss

## VFW RESOLUTION 312

### VFW SUPPORT FOR SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

WHEREAS, THE RIGHT TO SELF DEFENSE IS A NATURAL RIGHT AND A CIVIL RIGHT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE; AND

WHEREAS, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA GUARANTEES THE RIGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS IN THE SECOND AMENDMENT, WHICH STATES: "A WELL REGULATED MILITIA BEING NECESSARY TO THE SECURITY OF A FREE STATE, THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED"; AND

WHEREAS, THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED WITH THE SAFETY OF ALL CITIZENS; NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES, THAT WE RE-AFFIRM THE RIGHT OF ALL PEACEABLE AND LAW ABIDING INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS.

APPROVED BY THE 100TH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES. (1999)

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# FLAK

## General Approval



As my friend and the editor of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine over the past twenty years, I will take this opportunity to congratulate you, Bob Brown, and the *Soldier Of Fortune* staff for your accurate and timely reporting on crucial worldwide military, and U.S. national security issues in this your 25th Anniversary year.

Beginning with the premiere issue in 1975 profiling the war in Rhodesia, through the wars in Burma, Southern Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans, Chechnya, and Sierra Leone, *Soldier Of Fortune* reporters have been on the "front lines," providing a professional soldier's perspective

on these conflicts. Exposed by *Soldier Of Fortune* into the epidemic of wearing unearned U.S. military awards for valor, the Prisoner of War issue, our abandoned U.S. allies, the H'mong and Karen of South East Asia, and the magazine's support for our 2nd Amendment rights has maintained a balance in national reporting, not found in the mainstream media.

On your 25th Anniversary, all good Americans can only hope we will have 25 more years of quality journalism from *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine.

Best Wishes,  
Robert C. Kingston,  
General, U.S. Army (Ret.)

## Aussie Arms Angst

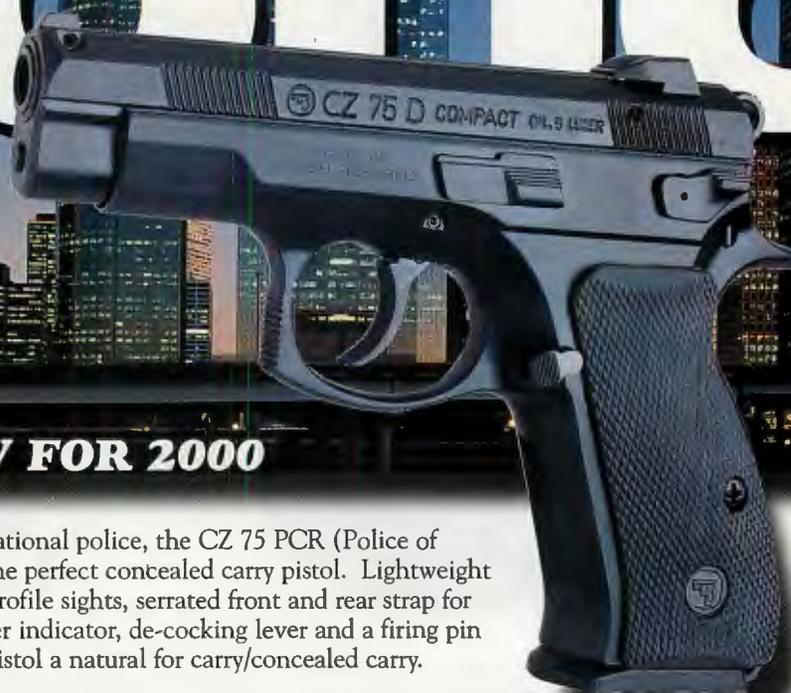
This is what's happening here and if Al Gore becomes President of the USA, you'll

see the same there. I saw a new story where Al Gore wants to do away with certain rights of Americans by challenging the Second Amendment. The American people need to know what happened here.

The government closed down mental institutions here which means the former patients were "free" on the public domain. One of these patients apparently killed 20 or more people in Tasmania a few years ago. Because of that, the Federal Government here said that by a certain date, all gun owners would be breaking the law by owning a gun if they were not in a gun club. Hundreds of thousands of guns were handed over to police but as you may have guessed, our crime figures involving guns keep climbing.

We now live in a country where only the police and Defence Department have guns, and 20,000 miles of coastline to protect. We have 10s of thousands of illegal immigrants pouring in from China, Indonesia, Afghanistan and the Middle East. When the

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"illegals" arrive, the government puts them in detention centres. The "illegals" protest and the government releases them back into the community. Not one person's background is fully checked before they are released into our communities.

Our government is quite apathetic in this regard. We let people in from the most unstable countries on earth and we have no legal weapons to protect ourselves. That's frightening! Don't let it happen there!!

(name withheld by request)

## Lost Opportunity



I would like to congratulate you on the honesty of your article and how it clarified certain key facts about the case (especially how Elian's father was divorced from the boy's mother years prior to his birth, among other things) that have cleverly been left out of mainstream media coverage.

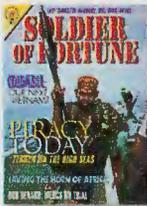
As the son of a Cuban exile, I felt particularly ashamed at how our commander in chief dealt with the situation. The overall impression that I perceived was that they wanted that boy back with Castro ASAP, without even considering any other options. I'm not angry at the fact that Elian is back

with Castro, I'm angry at the lack of a chance of a new life, like the one offered to my family 40 years ago.

Mr. Clinton and Miss Reno: You do not represent what being an American is all about ... Land of the Free ... Land of opportunity ... yeah, right, not with people like you at the head of our great nation.

2Lt Julio Sanchez USAR, MSC  
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

## FLIR And Flashes



A federal judge decided that the flashes were from sunlight? I wonder what he knows about gun fire, etc.? Do they teach gun fire flashes in law school these days? It sound as though the judge knows which side his bread is buttered on.

Wes

I almost puked when I heard that garbage. I was a certified FLIR operator for three years and I can guarantee that FLIR does *not* see sunlight, or reflections. It detects HEAT in the INFRARED spectrum!

What a bunch of lies. It didn't matter how many expert witnesses were present-

ed by the Davidian side, the judge only rubber stamped the government witnesses! All had to do was retire to his chambers and call FLIR Inc. on the telephone and ask them!

I still think I'm gonna puke!

Craig Roberts

## The Cuddawon War



I was reading "Command Guidance" (The War We could Have Won); But was it a war he had to fight? In 1969 I was a young Marine in I Corps with the 1st Marines. I knew nothing of the enemy or his country.

It was only years later that I ream some about him.

Ho Chi Minh came to the United States in the late '40s. At the time Vietnam was a French colony. He was here to talk to President Truman and Congress: Ho Chi Minh wanted the United States to use political pressure to get the French out of Vietnam. And if pressure didn't work, give him the arms and ammunition, he did not want troops, and he would throw the French out.

Not much was known about Ho Chi Minh. The OSS [Office of Strategic

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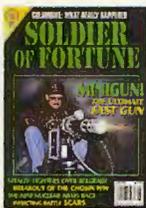


Services] which is the CIA today, told Truman that Ho Chi Minh was a nationalist, not a communist. Because we were allied with the French, Truman would not help Vietnam. As history knows, Vietnam got the aid it needed from the communists. They threw the French out, and at the request of the French we entered Vietnam [then, our SEATO ally] to fight communist expansion. Years later our allies the French would turn their back on us and leave NATO

Yes, we could have won in Vietnam, and cutting the Ho Chi Minh trail could have done it. But I sometimes ask myself, did we have to fight there?

Thank you,  
Stephen E. Heidtman  
Havelock, NC

## Fog Reading And Bog Landing



I enjoyed reading "Unleash the Fogs of War" (June '00), however, Lt. Brothenridge was not the first allied soldier killed on D-Day, he was the first killed by enemy fire. According to Pegasus Bridge/Melville

Battery (Carl Shilleto, published by Leo Cooper), BREN gunner LCPL Fred

Greenhalgh has that distinction, as he was drowned in a swampy area the gliders landed in at 0018 hours. I do recommend a trip to this battlefield, as it is an exceptionally moving and enlightening experience. The pate *samich* at the Cafe Gronde is also rather good.

On SLA Marshal, I recommend readers look at Dave Grossman's *On Killing* and Michael Doubler's *Closing With the Enemy*. After all I have read of and by SLAM, I have concluded that he was not a historian, but a journalist (no offense to your fine writers who work to a higher standard), and that he was concerned with the "story" rather than "the truth."

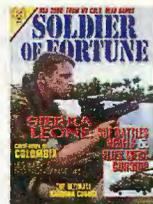
Sincerely,  
Harold Ellis

*Glad you enjoyed the "fog" story, as there are more in the pipeline; perhaps the incident with Lt. Brothenridge was not very precisely stated, as the thought was that he was the first killed by enemy action. In an operation as big as OVERLORD it would be my guess there were others killed even before LCPL Greenhalgh, just getting underway.*

*Not to diminish the courage of those who sailed in on gossamer wings, though: I have an old crony who was with the OSS seconded to the SO,E in Burma, and watched 11 Brit gliders come in to an airfield under ideal conditions — and all 11*

*stacked up, one after the other and on top of each other at the end of the runway. Your characterization of SLAM is right on the money — and to make matters worse, he often pretended not only to be a historian, but a statistician as well. The way he cooked numbers, the fraudulent old REMF belonged in the mess hall.*

## Nah, Just the Loudest

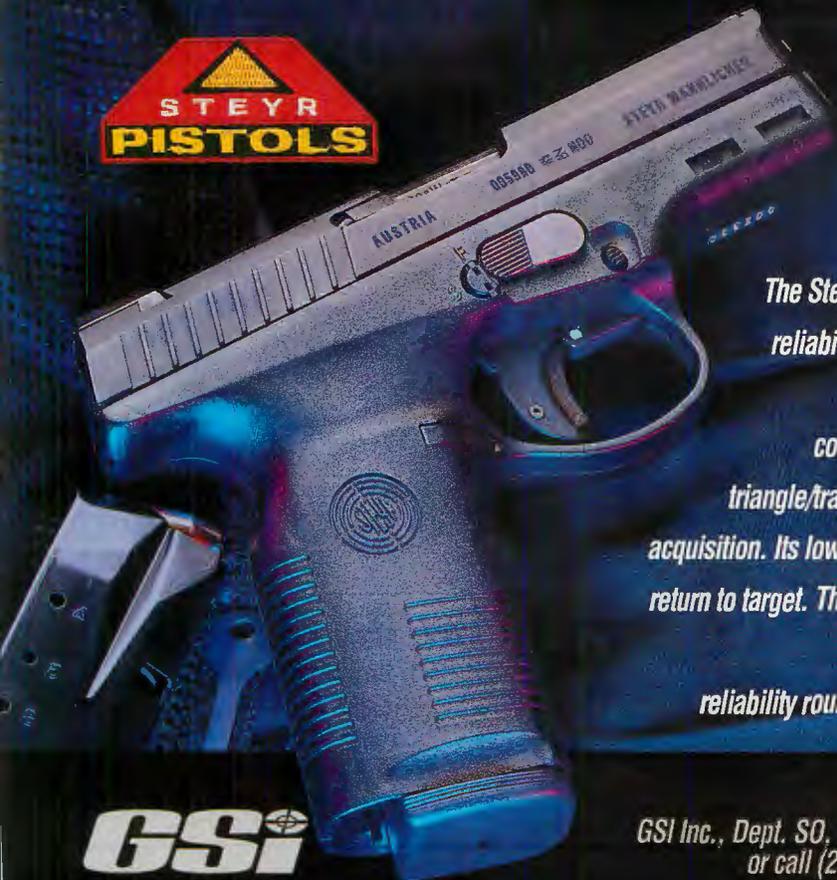


Subject: Best Magazine in the World

I first ran across your mag when I was coming home from a trip to Washington, D.C. It was the one over the war in Kosovo. It showed things that the news would never show, like the damage our bombings were doing. It took me two years to find another store near me that sold the magazine (September issue) and I bought and I gotta say it has still kept the same image that the other magazines had. So, what I am trying to say is keep up the good job.

Kyle Toelle

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## Both Good

Which is better, Delta Force or Navy SEALs?

Josiah

*Most any man would be proud to serve with either unit. When you get down to the differences between Delta and DevGroup (which started as Seal Team 6) you will find a lot of cross-training/cross-pollination and operational cooperation. Cooks and mess stewards are the ones who sit around and debate which is best.*

## Sea Bees

I have been a reader of your magazine for just a little over a year now and I would like to say I have been quite impressed. I am a U.S. Navy Seabee and I would love to see the "Bees" recognized in your magazine. We "Bees" sometimes feel like the red-headed stepchildren of the military. Without the Seabees where would have the U.S. military been during WW II? As much history as I have been told about the "Bees" and the South Pacific, I can't believe how quiet our stories are. Thank you, *Soldier Of Fortune*.

C.J. Laidlaw

## Special Forces?

As a long time reader and subscriber, I would like to say "thank you" for such a great publication. My question is, what ever happened to a publication titled "Special Forces?" I have a couple issues from late 1987 and early 1988 and when I called the subscription line to ask about the publication, I was informed that *Soldier Of Fortune* was also published by this group. Was/is there an affiliation of the publications? Also where might I be able to find back issues of this publication?

Any help would be appreciated.

Sincerely, Paul Cockerham

*As the true gentlemen we are, we always claim our bastard children, but Special Forces is not one of ours. We have done a number of spin-offs and one-shots over the past 25 years, but this was not one of them. Suggest you write to the address in the front of that magazine, or search the web under that name. If they are around, they may have back issues (we've been at it for 25+ years, and we still maintain a fairly complete stock of back issues).*

## Chering The Good Times

I attended the Sturgis bike rally 8-7/8-

13, and the Johnny Lang R&B concert at Buffalo Chips campground, Friday the 11th. Place was filled to capacity with biker people; they raffled off a HD Sportster for a disabled kids charity, and Cher (as in Sonny-and ...) was on hand to draw the winning ticket. All well and good, but then she told all she'd like to stay and party with us but she had to get on out to LA "to sing for the president"... silence.

Wrong thing to say to the capacity crowd of biker people, as lots and lots of same are veterans. She was booed and cat-called long and loud. She then pathetically tried to "defend" the Kommander-In-Thief, by pleading with the crowd that "he got caught" and that he wasn't doing anything more than our "girlfriends" do to us.

Louder catcalls and booing! It was very inspiring to me, myself trying my best to be the loudest. One guy shouted for her to get her ass out to LA and do some cigars with the prez.

She got really PO'd after several minutes of this and without another word slithered off the stage and left. With her absence we enjoyed an excellent performance by Lang.

Thank you, as usual, for your magazine.

Paul Rhodes, former AO3 ✂

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# A Father's Advice



If a sportsman true you'd be  
Listen carefully to me...

Never, never let your gun  
Pointed be at anyone.  
That it may unloaded be  
Matters not the least to me.

When a hedge or fence you cross  
Though of time it cause a loss  
From your gun the cartridge take  
For the greater safety's sake.

If twist you and neighboring gun  
Bird shall fly or beast may run  
Let this maxim ere be thine  
"Follow not across the line."

Stops and beaters oft unseen  
Lurk behind some leafy screen.  
Calm and steady always be  
"Never shoot where you can't see."

You may kill or you may miss  
But at all times think of this:  
"All the pheasants ever bred  
Won't repay for one man dead."

*Written by Mark Beaufoy of Coombe House,  
Shaftsbury, Dorset, England, in 1902, on  
presenting his eldest son, Henry Mark, with his  
first gun. Reproduction here by permission of the  
author's granddaughter, Mrs. P.M. Guild.*



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## Required Reading For Machine Gunners

The Bren Gun Saga by Thomas B. Dugelby. Revised and expanded edition. Produced and edited by R. Blake Stevens. 1999. Published by Collector Grade Publications, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1046, Ont K9A 4W5, Canada; phone: 905-342-3434; fax: 905-342-3688; e-mail: info@collectorgrade.com . 382 pages. 442 illustrations. \$69.95.

Appearing almost out of nowhere, the Bren (BRno + ENfield) LMG was adopted in 1935, first produced in 1937, and the last two were not withdrawn from British service until February 1999. It became, without doubt, the finest magazine-fed machine gun ever fielded. More than 500,000 were eventually manufactured.

I have always been personally greatly enamored with the Bren and have owned and fired a substantial number over the years. At present I own two: a .303 British caliber Mk1-Mk1M interim model made at Enfield Lock in 1940, that British military small arms authority Peter Laidler has stated is today virtually unknown and "the rarest of the rare," and a caliber 7.62x51mm NATO caliber L4A2 that was converted from its original Mk3 configuration in 1959, also at Enfield. Non-restricted-transfer Bren Guns are quite rare and few will ever own one, especially in light of the continuously escalating prices for Title II firearms in general. Thus, for those fascinated by the Bren, this vastly revised edition of the late Thomas B. Dugelby's great classic is not only must reading but unfortunately as close as most will ever come to this superb machine gun.

The first section of the book, entitled "Forerunners of the Bren," contains a detailed history of the Czech ZB LMGs, which themselves found small arms renown, especially the ZBvz26 and ZBvz30 models. Designed by Vaclav Holek and Rudolf Jelán at the Praga Zbrojovka (Prague Armory), the first Czechoslovakian machine gun, "Praga I," was gas-operated, air-cooled and used Maxim '08 cotton belts. As this prototype evolved from the Praga I-23 to the Praga M24, it began to slowly take on the distinctive envelope of the famous ZB series. Between 1926 and 1941, Brno Zbrojovka manufacture more than 145,000 LMGs. Over 100,000 of these were exported to Afghanistan, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Great Britain, Guatemala, Iran, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Peru, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Uruguay, and Venezuela. I have personally encountered them in Afghanistan, El Salvador and Bosnia Herzegovina.

The heart of this book, however, is "The Bren in World War." Incredibly enough, the first Brens produced at Enfield Lock were prone to serious fouling. Of the 30,000 Brens manufactured prior to



Dunkirk, over 27,000 were lost in that fiasco. Some even sarcastically implied that they were left behind for the Germans because of their unsatisfactory performance. However, by the end of the war, Brens in several Marks, as manufactured in Great Britain, Australia, Canada and India performed admirably and the Bren had justifiably achieved greatness as one of the most effective LMGs ever fielded in battle.

The third section of *The Bren Gun Saga*, "A New Lease on Life," provides a detailed discussion of the Enfield conversions of the Bren gun to 7.62x51mm NATO. It's interesting to note that the very first Bren conversion to 7.62x51mm NATO was by *Fabrique Nationale*, of Herstal, Belgium in 1954. All nine of the "L4" series caliber 7.62x51mm Bren guns are explicitly distinguished, as is the odd BSA belt-fed Bren.

The last section, a retrospective, covers postwar developments in Czechoslovakia, ZB and Bren guns in China, and a reprint of the Bren user handbook for all Marks and both calibers. Overall, the black and white photographs are excellent, the text fascinating, and the value of this volume far beyond its price. Highly recommended.

The U.S. M3-M3A1 "Grease Gun" by Frank Iannamico. Published by Moose Lake Publishing, Dept. SOF, 223 Sugar Hill Road, Harmony, Maine 04942. 166 pages, illustrated. \$14.95 + \$3.50 s&h.

The U.S. M3-M3A1 submachine gun series, known most commonly to grunts of World War II, and both the Korean and Vietnam Wars as the "Grease Gun" or "Cake Decorator" has been both praised and vilified for decades. Although I own both an M3 and M3A1, I cannot help but remain somewhat ambivalent about this weapon system.

Frank Iannamico's modest effort to assemble everything we could possibly want to know about the M3-M3A1 is largely successful and deserves no small amount of praise. He commences with a brief, but incisive, history of submachine guns in general and then proceeds to U.S. submachine guns of World War II.

Subsequent chapters deal with the U.S. Ordnance tests to replace the Thompson, which started in the fall of 1939 up to the trials in 1943 that resulted in development of the T-15 and T-20 prototypes and the adoption of the M3. Only seven months passed from the project's commencement in October 1942 to the beginning of production in May 1943, a really astoundingly brief time span.

We learn that the Guide Lamp Division of General Motors Corporation was an excellent choice for manufacturing the M3 because of their extensive experience in stamped sheet-metal fabrication. By June 1944, Guide Lamp was producing one thousand M3s every 24 hours. The final cost was \$18.36 each. The M3 was largely made from 0.060-inch thick sheet metal. The only major parts requiring any machining operations were the barrel and bolt. The tubular receiver was made from two die-stamped sheet-metal halves welded together.

Almost immediately the M3's bolt retracting assembly demonstrated serious design flaws and began to fail. Among other small

problems, the unprotected magazine catch/release button would dump the magazine onto the ground when it struck against the side of the body or on LBE. The M3 specimen I have, which came from Central America but carries British proof marks, has a piece of 1/4-inch drill rod welded onto the magazine-well on each side of the magazine catch/release button to prevent this from happening. This weapon was also finished with matte black paint over the usual phosphate ("Parkerizing").

These criticisms and others led to the adoption of the M3A1 on 21 December 1944. The cocking assembly was discarded, the ejection port enlarged and the bolt modified to permit cocking by manually retracting the bolt body with the operator's finger. Other changes included strengthening the rear sight, redesigning the wire stock to permit its use as a magazine-loading tool, modifying the barrel nut to allow its removal using the stock as a tool and several other small modifications.

The M3-M3A1 32-round, single-position-feed, staggered-column, detachable box-type magazine was always the fatal fly in the M3's ointment. It cannot be fully loaded without a loading tool. It is extremely debris-sensitive and one of the most unreliable submachine gun magazines ever fielded. A Tenite, translucent protective cap designed to fit tightly over the magazine's mouth sometimes literally proved fatal as under stress and in certain harsh environments it was almost impossible to remove.

Iannamico also discusses ammunition, the sound-suppressed M3, accessories and some fascinating special projects. One of the most rare M3 accessories is the 9mm conversion kit manufactured for the OSS. Consisting of a magazine well adapter for Sten magazines, a 9mm barrel and bolt, probably no more than 200 were actually produced and none were ever issued to U.S. troops. The kit I have works well, as Sten magazines are marginally superior to those of the M3-M3A1.

Guide Lamp produced a total of 622,163 M3-M3A1 submachine guns. Ithaca manufactured 33,227 M3A1s during the Korean War. Yet the M3 series is scarce among U.S. collectors. Strangely enough, Thompson submachine guns are far more common. Many M3s were given to foreign governments, such as Korea and Vietnam. The U.S. government destroyed many more after the M3-M3A1 was declared obsolete.

Iannamico has included much important and interesting information in his book on the M3-M3A1. I recommend it, but the publisher must be chided for the all too often poor quality of the photographs.

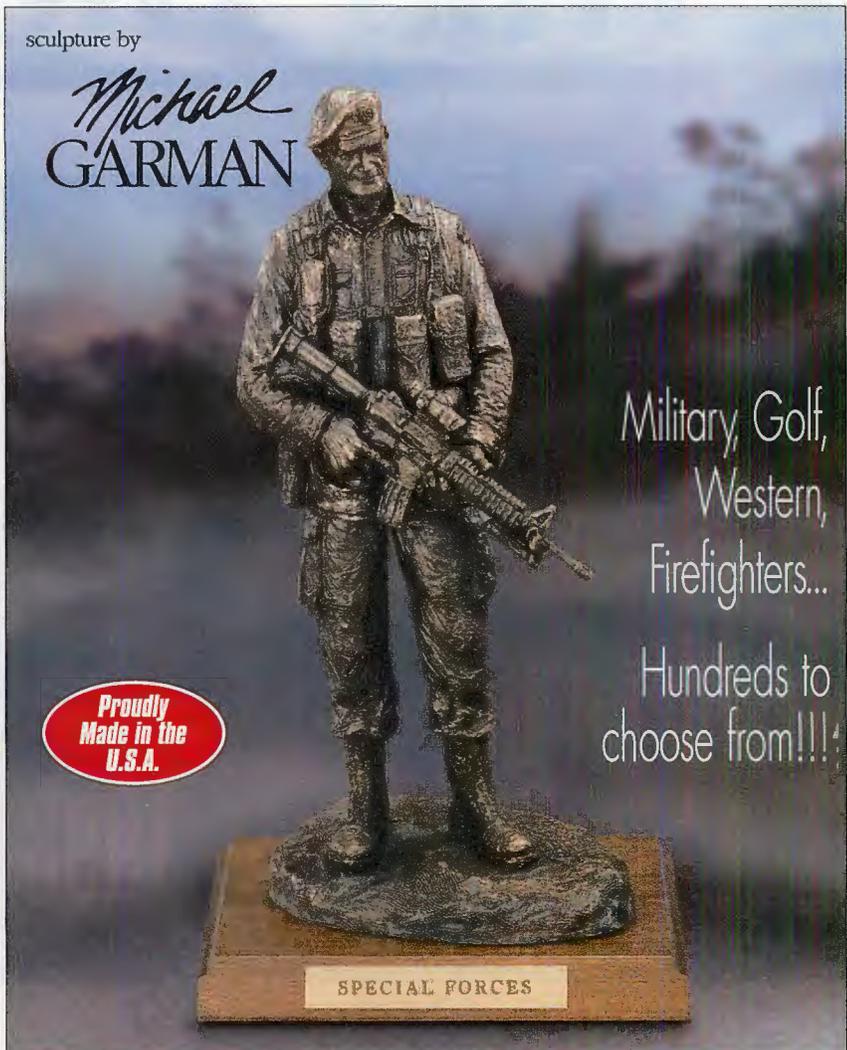
The Sten Machine Carbine by Peter Laidler. Deluxe first edition, 2000. 370 pages, 368 illustrations. \$59.95. Published by Collector Grade Publications, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1046, Ont K9A 4WS, Canada; phone: 905-342-3434; fax: 905-342-3688; e-mail: info@collectorgrade.com.

Continued on page 73

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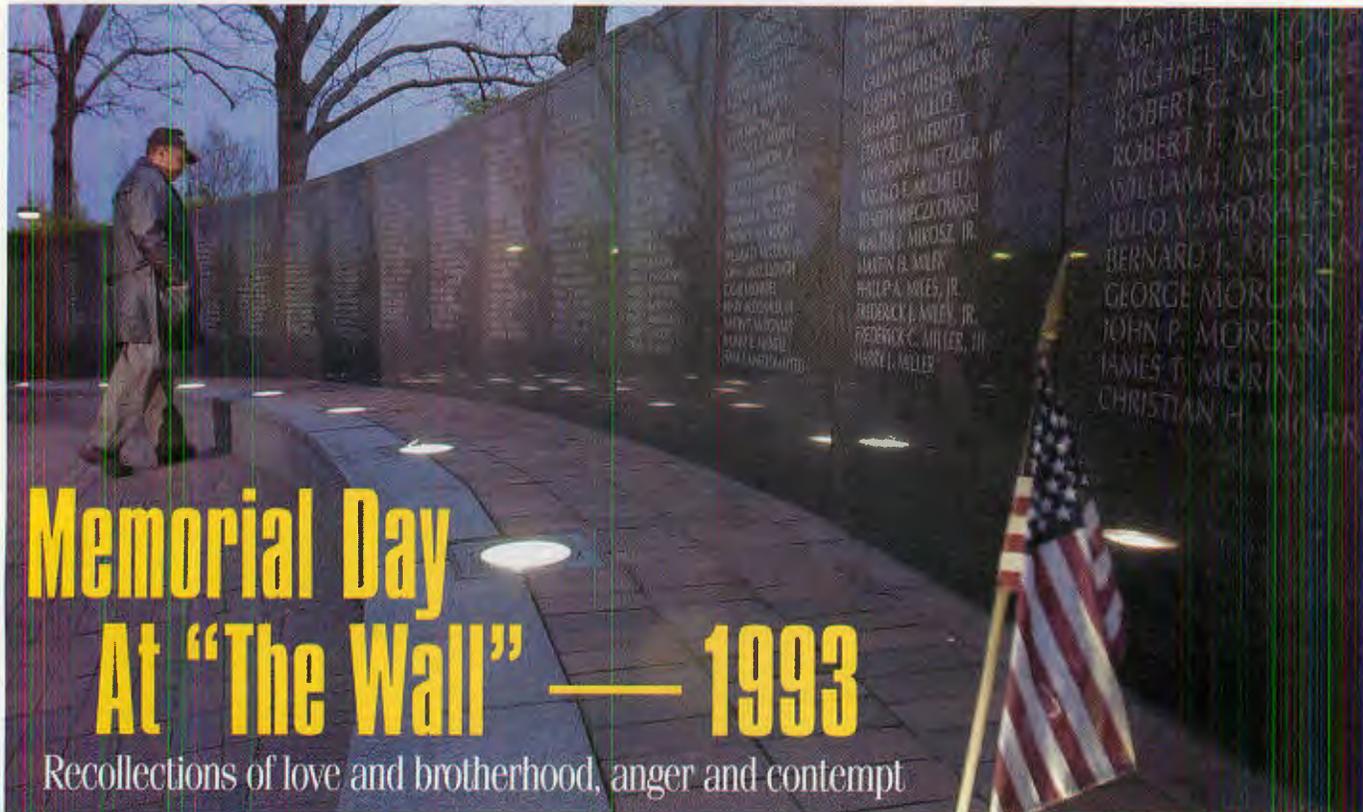
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# I Was There

by John Schalestock



Presslink

## Memorial Day At "The Wall" — 1993

Recollections of love and brotherhood, anger and contempt

**I**t was a morning of surprising beauty and an afternoon of bitter contempt. A day of tear-evoking brotherhood and sound bites of Presidential conceit. But, God, it was a beautiful day.

Coming from the east across the grassy knolls of the Mall, with the white-marbled Capitol at your back, you saw first, above the green swells of grass, the red and gold of a Marine Corps guidon snapping in the breeze. Upon it, that sacred blood oath of all Marines, *Semper Fidelis*. "Always faithful." The Marines of five generations stood fast once again.

As did their brother veterans from all services and wars. Shoulder to shoulder, grey-haired vets from Iwo Jima and the Chosin Reservoir, standing next to young veterans of Desert Storm, united in their support of their Vietnam brothers.

Long-haired bikers of "Rolling Thunder" and a blue-blazered stockbroker from Wall Street. Brother riflemen from a different time and place.

Three young Army Rangers in full uniform and wearing Combat Infantry Badges take their place in our ranks. An act of courage that did not go unnoticed. They were surely risking punishment by the lackeys of the "Commander-In-Chief."

All were united in their anger and contempt of the desecration taking place before them. Clinton was coming to The Wall.

"It's our Wall, not yours, you bastard!" rang out over and over again, like a battle cry on the wind. Farther down the line, the Stars and Stripes fly side-by-side with the black and white of the POW-MIA standard — twin visions of honor and betrayal, like bullets to your heart.

My god, I think (not for the first time) how did we abandon these comrades, our brothers, our sons, our fathers, our husbands? And

accept the lying politics of these self-serving swine who stand before us? We would never have left them bleeding in a rice paddy. And yet, we have, for now, failed them for the sake of those who march to the drums of their own selfish agendas.

Two hundred yards away, across another grassy knoll Park Police with panting dogs and Secret Service agents with Japanese radios and well-cut suits keep the Vietnam veterans from their Wall (just obeying orders, of course). Admittance is by ticket only. And we don't have any.

"We oughta just march right across and take the damn Wall back!" one angry vet yells.

"It'd be a hell of a lot easier than some places I been!" a veteran of Khe Sanh yells back.

"Naw, they probably got it mined," comes another opinion — the black humor of the grunt in the field.

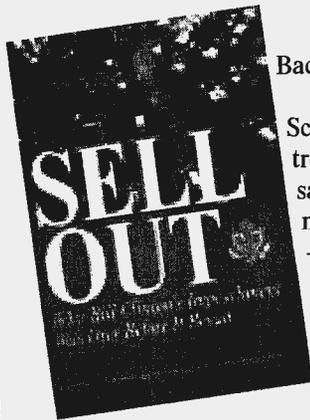
And yet there seems an unspoken anguish beneath the bitter-funny sarcasm of these veteran troops standing loosely in formation. Something is starting to crystalize — like that endless moment before you rush from cover on an assault, your mouth hot and dry, your heart pounding in your ears and the taste of bile and excitement churning your gut and numbing your legs.

The idea is starting to take a shape, like some snapping electric animal that arcs from man to man. There is restless movement in the ranks. The creature is not quite visible. The men look nervously at each other. The Mickey-Mouse SWAT team on their popsicle van behind the formation finger their weapons nervously. They feel it, too.

Two grunt bikers in the rear ranks turn and raise their middle fingers at the silly looking SWATers in black Ninja suits taking pictures of us.

# “Fighting vicious Chicago mobsters was nothing compared to dealing with certain members of Congress!”

—David P. Schippers, former Chief Counsel, House Judiciary Committee



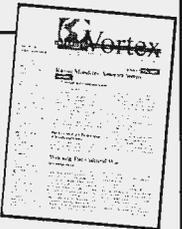
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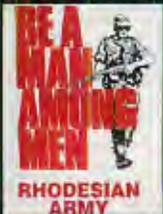


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"First round goes off and your ass is grass, motherfucker!" one yells. "Yeah, this ain't gonna be no fucking Waco, asshole!"

And, in truth, it seemed ridiculous that the stylishly outfitted SWAT team could have harbored any illusions about intimidating this group of combat vets. But such, I suppose, is the fantasy world of Clintonoid America. Yuppies with guns to my eye. But what do I know?

It is only later, too achingly much later, that I see the creature full-blown and recognize it for what it was. And it seems so clear now. It was Redemption.

Had we marched, had we gone that last 200 yards then and there, for ourselves, our fallen comrades, for all of America, through that damned silly little snow fence, through the yapping dogs and sweating horses, over and across the Secret Service ... to The Wall! And forced that damn false icon of our own cursed generation, Slick Willie, to flee like the lying hypocritical coward he is. God! What we could have meant to America — and to ourselves.

It would have been our generation's finest hour. Captured and preserved on the world's screen forever! Burned into the imagination of the American spirit like a thunderbolt! Redemption at last!

Thus the bitter-sweet fantasies that bloom later on. When it's too late. Except that it was real. It could have happened. And it was so close. Like the space between a heartbeat. So close ... and I know now, in that bitter corner of your heart where you bury lost loves, that this was likely our last chance. And we never really saw it clearly — until it was too late.

But these thoughts are in the future. Maybe they will become just other aching might-have-beens that tighten your gut and makes you put your beer glass to your cheek for comfort on those nights when you think about such things.

In the formation, tension grows and the ranks seem to tighten — gathering for a rush. Then, a former Marine captain, standing in front of us beneath the guidon, next to a former Marine gunny who is wearing his stripes on a faded khaki dress shirt, turns and rumbles to the troops, "Steady men, steady."

His silver railroad tracks are pinned on a golf shirt that is

stretched across a now-formidable looking belly and his hair is thinning and nearly white. But there is no mistaking who this man was, or where he has been. And now, once again, he is a combat leader reassuring his men before the enemy advance.

It is something we have heard before. And it has its effect. The ranks calm and tense at the same time. All eyes are on The Wall. But in the end, discipline holds. "We ain't no fucking mob," is the consensus.

Then Clinton begins to speak. And it is way too much. A roar of anger goes up like the sound of a fire opening up at close range. I flash on memories of that odd clicking sound an M14s operating rod makes on rapid fire, strangely loud over the blasting roar of outgoing rounds.

Soft is loud, loud is all around. The sun is hot on the cold sweat on my face. My eyes feel stretched out of shape, overloaded with light and color. Clinton seems a small figure at 200 yards.

The boos volley like cannon fire across the strip of no man's land. The police dogs bark and salivate. The bikers of "Rolling Thunder" rev their engines out on Constitution Avenue and the sound of Harleys rumbles through the trees like a roar of righteous anger from the American Heartland. Incoming! On the way!

The Marine captain and the Gunny call out above the roar.

"Marine Corps! Ten-hut!"

We come to attention, long unused reflexes amazingly crisp. The Army vets join us.

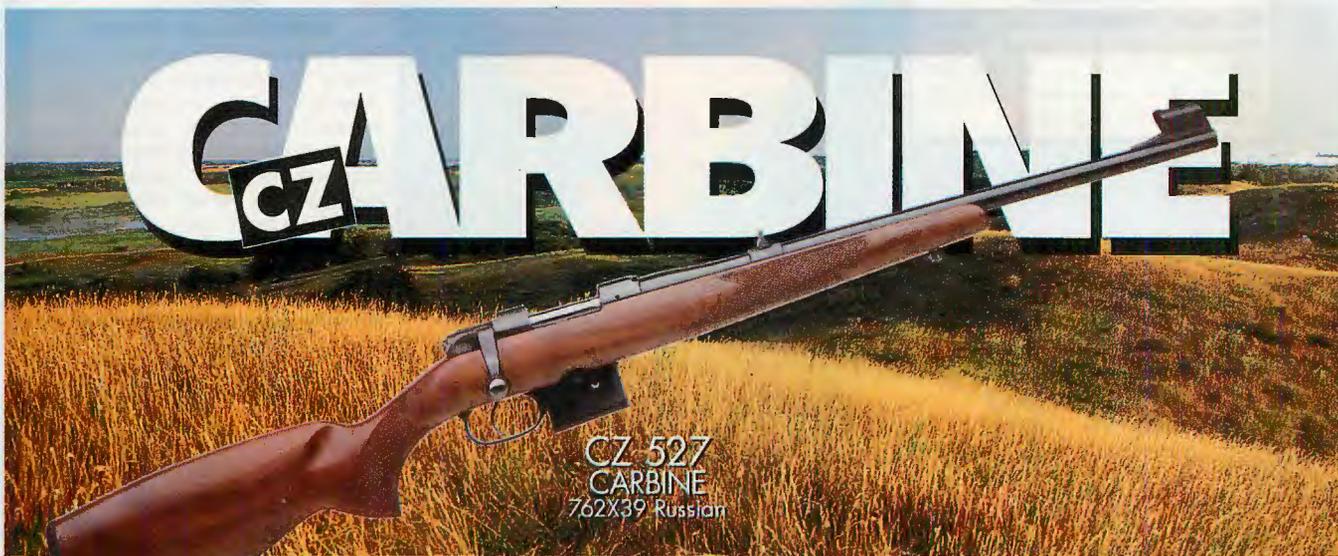
"About face!"

As one unit we turn our backs and remain at attention. We are "locked and loaded."

The newspaper cameras flash. In front of me, a long-haired biker in a tattered utility jacket with a 3rd Force Recon patch on his cut-off sleeve stands as ramrod straight as the blue-blazer stockbroker beside him.

We have all been time-warped back to the grinder at Parris Island,

*Continued on page 70*



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# WORLD SITREP

1

## UNITED STATES

**New World Treason:** UN's Millennium Summit reportedly heard Clinton appointee and State Department official Strobe Talbot whine, "Nationhood as we know it will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single, global authority ... national sovereignty wasn't such a good idea after all." • **Show And Tell:** *The Washington Times* reports "Senior Chinese military officials were shown sensitive data on how the U.S. military trains its forces for joint war fighting and other operations ... ." • **Dr. Wen Ho Lee Walks:** Los Alamos' suspected traitor avoids all charges, save for a single felony, and receives USG apologies (except for Ms. Reno's). • **Plainclothes Marines:** Circulating reports attest to number of "Radio Recon" Marine units training at Fort Hase, Hawaii, allegedly for urban warfare roles. • **Vince Foster Case Heats Up:** Sherman Skolnick, Chicago investigator, reveals on [www.skolnickreport.com](http://www.skolnickreport.com) that so-called "hard evidence" exists that Foster was offed and a heated-up look-see will proceed. • **Learjet Crash:** Tossed from the news due to 19 April 1995 OKC bombing, the 17 April Learjet downing in Alabama in which several high-ranking military officers died is being given a hard look by investigators. • **Bill "The Hawk" Enlists:** Clinton signs \$1.3 billion military aid package for Colombia to stem tide of cocaine into the U.S. • **UN Army Of The World And Global Gun Control:** New York's UN Millennium Summit hears call for global standing army, mainly from Britain's PM, Tony Blair. During 1995, Japan introduced a regulation to strategize gun control at global level. Forthcoming UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons might be held in the "Land of the Rising Sun." • **Left Coast Firearms Crackdown Avoided:** Assembly Bill 273 which contained Fingerprinting and shooting-proficiency requirements for handgun buyers is struck down. • **PNTR:** Permanent normal trade relations with China being mulled by Congress. • **Acronyms Beware:** Mohammed al Fayed FOIAs CIA, NSA, DIA, FBI and DoD, among others, for documents pertaining to surveillance on his son, Dodi, and Britain's Princess Diana. Fayed's requests were denied.

4

## INDONESIA

**American Kidnapped:** Abu Sayyaf remains active and snags Jeffrey Schilling, of Oakland, CA, two days after receiving \$2M ransom via Libya for previously abducted Westerners.

1

3

5

## PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

**Puts Troops On Alert In Sudan?** London's *Sunday Telegraph* reports that personnel, ostensibly guards for China National Petroleum Corporation facilities, have been infiltrated over past three years via cargo jets and boats. Troops might be used in ongoing civil war. • **Hanging With Fidel:** Sends large "diplomatic" delegation to consolidate friendship with Cuban communists. Cyber-war technicians rumored to have accompanied visiting throng.

9

## THAILAND

**Tensions With Laos:** Alleged rebels operating throughout Thailand get help as Lao militia take three Mekong River islands, perhaps to counter H'mong and Royalist rebels' forays in Laos.

11

## BULGARIA

**Welcome, Tenet:** CIA Director George C. Tenet gets red-carpet treatment as he discusses terrorism, crime and drug-trafficking with hosts.

12

## JAPAN

**"Come Spy With Me":** Tokyo "lauded" as world's spy capital due to scant preventive laws allowing espionage experts to operate with impunity. Cold War's end forced many newly unemployed Russian spies to scramble for new jobs in order to retain their visa statuses.

**2****VIETNAM**

**Releases POWs?** 10,693 prisoners were to be released on 2 September to mark 55th anniversary of (North) Vietnam's National Day. Group included four Americans: John Joseph Daniel, Lam Phuoc Dong, Long Tai and Le Cong Dang. No further information has been received. • **Clinton To Visit?** Rumor mill has it that Bill (convinced that Vietnam War is over) will visit during his final months in office.

**3****MEXICO**

**Down The Road Toward Globalism:** President Vicente Fox wants border-free North America. • **Oil Prices Up:** Talk of \$32/barrel cost has Mexico (U.S.'s second largest trading partner) and other nations uneasy.

**6****SIERRA LEONE**

**SAS's And Paras' Heroics:** Brits rescue seven hostages and lose one friendly KIA while killing 25 rebels in 30-minute firefight.

**7****AUSTRALIA**

**Enjoy The Olympics But Hang Onto Your Wallets:** Crime is up despite year-old gun-surrender law in which 640,000 personal firearms were turned in and destroyed by Aussie government. Homicides enjoy a 3.2 percent increase, assaults 8.4 and armed robberies 44 percent. (Yes, 44 percent.)

**8****IRAQ**

**Saddam III?** Unconfirmed reports say that Saddam Hussein may have lymphatic cancer and is being cared for by Swiss, German and French physicians at his villa *cum* hospital outside Baghdad.

**6****10****RUSSIA**

**Explosions Recorded:** UPI reports that two U.S. subs monitoring recent Russian naval maneuvers reportedly recorded on sonar tapes explosions which are believed to have sunk the *Kursk*. On the fatal morning, *Kursk* is said to have fired Chelomey Granit missile, NATO codenamed SS-N-19 Shipwreck, with its 1,600-pound conventional warhead, and then fired 100-RU Veder missile, codenamed SS-N-16A Stallion. It is suspected the latter ignited inside *Kursk's* torpedo tube.

**10****14****8****5****12****2****4****13****7****13****WEST TIMOR**

UN offices hit by thousands of rioters with at least three staffers killed. UN force forced to fly in to evacuate remaining workers.

**14****CHECHNYA**

**Russians, Heads Up!** Some 400 Arab fighters sent into breakaway republic by accused terrorist Osama bin Laden.

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



Presslink/KRT/Chuck Kennedy

# The H'mong Struggle Continues

**A** voice from the past: "We want to know why no one helps us," says Yang Ching Cheng, then 28. "Why do some countries have programs to save natural resources, trees, and plants, even animals, but not for H'mong lives?"

Yang was just 28 when he said that to me in the hills of Laos in 1991 after some fierce fighting we had been in. During the contact, I had gone down, a combination of an RPG blast that knocked me silly, compounded by heat exhaustion.

SOF had gotten a garbled message from "inside" and knew only that Marks was MIA. Tracers were going out frantically.

Yet, as we had fought our way clear, the H'mong had never faltered for a moment. Too small and too weak to carry me — we had been subsisting on rats and cucumbers — they had prodded me along.

Part of the time I stumbled blindly, my head still ringing; part of the time I crawled on all fours. Each time I had gone down for the mandatory eight-count, several would give me the pep talk about life and death, the strong would survive, Rocky had become Rambo — in a mix of H'mong and Thai, mind you, neither of which I could handle very well, even when not seeing my entire life rushing by my eyes. The others would form a rear guard and duke it out with the Lao.

They could have left me. It never even occurred to them. It wasn't in their nature.

To leave a wounded comrade was *never* in their nature. They were too decent.

## Their Resurrected War Inside Laos

by Dr. Tom Marks

So it ended up a funny story. SOF got the word that it *hadn't* lost a Chief Foreign Correspondent, which is what I was at the time. And, because a couple of tribesmen had instamatics, Chief Foreign Correspondent ended up in more than a few very unmanly photos, looking thoroughly limp and very worse for the wear.

Thus the talk with Yang, who was a little upset over the whole

business of fighting for truth, justice — and the H'mong way — in a sea of global indifference.

My answer left me feeling like a toad but was all too accurate: There is a truism which unfortunately applies to international relations — out of sight, out of mind.

What else can explain the gusto with which we embrace some causes, ignore others? It is just this which explains the loneliness of the continued H'mong struggle against communist oppression inside Laos.

### Recent Events

It is a struggle which exploded again into the headlines briefly this summer.

Then, at least half a dozen bomb blasts occurred in Vientiane, capital of Laos.

In the midst of these, a significant attack on a Lao border post by some 60 guerrillas left at least six dead. Thai officials identified the attackers as members of the United Lao Resistance for Democracy in Laos — the H'mong who follow Vang Pao, former head of the so-

called "Secret Army," the body which bore the brunt of the fighting against the communists in Laos during the Vietnam War.

Everyone, and no one, knows about the H'mong. Both are true.

On the one hand, it seems fairly well known that they were the heart and soul of the so-called "Secret Army." They took tremendous casualties in the course of their loyal, courageous devotion to their fight for a way of life — and in support of their American contacts ("control officers"). While all but a few regular government units proved themselves essentially useless, the H'mong irregulars held the line against the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao.

On the other hand, few seem to have kept tabs on the conflict since then — though it never quite ended. Thus, when events such as this summer's explode, there is the usual surprise, followed by the usual silly articles about those unwilling to give up the Vietnam War ghost.

It never seems to occur to such commentators that we would be talking about some awfully old guerrillas if we were talking about relics of the Vietnam War!

Instead, what this summer's events represent is the tip of an iceberg which has contracted and grown as the Lao have behaved in the brutal, mindless manner characteristic of dictatorships worldwide.

For in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the Lao communists, victorious despots that they were — and still controlled by their Vietnamese "advisors" — were unwilling to let bygones be bygones. They set spark to kindling by launching a campaign of forced resettlement, arrest, and murder against the former "Secret Army" personnel. H'mong society being a tight-knit community, with close clan loyalties, the Lao soon found themselves with a new struggle on their hands.

### Fragmented Resistance

H'mong communities rallied to protect itself. Yet the military situation had changed dramatically with the 1975 end of the Vietnam War.

Vang Pao and the senior "Secret Army" leaders had left Laos, most for America. Moving into the leadership vacuum was a H'mong messianic movement, *Chao Fa*, which had been active throughout the war but had come to public attention only as the H'mong diaspora became too large to ignore (a reality poignantly highlighted by the fact that the largest concentration of H'mong in Southeast Asia was a refugee camp, Ban Vinai).

Active in the camps such as Ban Vinai, Chao Fa grew rapidly. During the war it had developed a following but had never been a serious factor. Its messiah, or *Chao fa*, Yang Sheng Leu, had appeared amongst the H'mong, preaching a message of cultural integrity and bearing the ultimate cultural sign of authenticity, the "H'mong letters."

An illiterate peasant, Shang Leu created a unique alphabet for the H'mong language, which hitherto had relied upon an adapted romanized script which missionaries had provided. His message of unity, literacy, and cultural survival included an admonition that H'mong were not to fight each other.

Hence, he quickly became suspect to both sides in the Vietnam conflict.

Arrested in the early 1960s and held at the main "Secret Army" center of Long Chen, in Xieng Khouang, Shang Leu was eventually assassinated in 1971 by unknown assailants.

It is assumed by virtually all observers that the assassins came from Vang Pao's group, though they wore communist uniforms and carried AK-47s. Thus was born a split in the H'mong resistance which has not healed to this day.

### Changing Face Of Struggle

Such became doubly so, because it was Chao Fa, headed by a

**H M O N G**  
*Those H'mong who returned to Laos were routinely abused, to include being murdered.*

Yang Sheng Lue disciple, Pa Kao Her — married to Yang's sister — which took up the task of organizing the H'mong resistance in the terrible years which followed 1975.

This was the era of "yellow rain," attacks using chemical munitions, combined with communist efforts simply to massacre the tribesmen.

As befitting their heritage, the H'mong fought back fiercely, holding their own in their traditional strongholds around the *Plaine des Jarres*, especially in the area of the sacred mountain, Phu Bia, south the the plain. It was in this rugged area that "yellow rain" was most used.

The Phu Bia redoubt held, but thousands of tribesmen fled to Thailand or the Thai-Lao border areas. There, Chao Fa again organized them and struck back.

In one attack of which I have photos, more than 60 Lao soldiers were killed in a camp overrun during fierce night fighting,

All changed, however, when the Thai government, in order to curry favor with Vientiane, with whom it was opening up trade relations, forced the H'mong out of their border camps in 1990-91.

Obviously a part of a United Nations-supervised refugee resettlement effort, in reality the betrayal was nothing more than rank expediency upon the part of the Thai. Those H'mong who returned to Laos were routinely abused, to include being murdered.

On the ground, in the border areas, low- and middle-ranking Thai personnel did what they could to soften the blows, but there was little they could do as Thai official beaters drove the prey toward the Lao hunters. Short on everything from food to ammunition, their supply lines disrupted, the border area H'mong adroitly moved laterally, sidestepping Lao rushes.

Contact was lost for a time with the deep-interior resistance areas, all dominated, like their border counterparts, by Chao Fa adherents. Where once there had been 300,000 H'mong in Laos, best estimates put the figure at less than 100,000.

### The Fight Continues

Still, today, the fight goes on. Border concentrations of H'mong have been driven as far north as Burma's Shan State, where there are H'mong communities.

Deep inside Laos, though, far away from the reporting of the world press, especially the likes of CNN, they do lonely battle.

Annual Lao pushes, in each case assisted by the Vietnamese, have caused numerous casualties on both sides. The most recent heavy fighting occurred in spring of this year. Earlier pushes were January-February 1998, summer 1998, and December 1999.

Though reports of chemical weapons use have become few, Vietnamese involvement remains a constant. In June 1998, a plane carrying senior Lao and Vietnamese command personnel to the fighting in the Phu Bia area crashed. All aboard were killed.

Noted a Chao Fa communication, quaintly, at the time, "It was unclear whether the plane was shot by Chao Fa resistance or whether the crash was caused by the weather condition. The H'mong people, however, believed that for whatever reasons caused the plane to crashed, one of those reasons must be the punishment by God because they kill our innocent H'mong people."

It is this fusion of two worlds, the matter-of-fact acceptance of the known and the unknown, that informs all that the H'mong resistance does. Tribesmen clean their weapons and discuss the situation of the Kurds in Iraq, even as ceremonies are conducted to appease an evil spirit deemed to be dogging a soldier wounded in successive wildfires.

In one of these ceremonies, I was given my own communion with the guardians. Sacred threads were wound around my wrist,

*Continued on page 72*

**H M O N G**  
*To leave a wounded comrade was never in their nature. They were too decent.*

# A RACE AGAINST DEATH

## Luther Hamilton's Run To An Hoa

by John J. Culbertson

PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

(Excerpted and abridged from *Operation Tuscaloosa: 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, at An Hoa, 1967*; by John J. Culbertson; Ivy Books; 1997.)

“God above, turn him over I can’t see his face!” Luther Hamilton yelled at the group of Marines down on a knee staring into Cross’s mangled face. “Jesus, where is the fucking corpsman when you need him? Shit!”

PFC Cross took the brunt of the charge into his body and helmet. The Kevlar panels of his vest sucked in the jagged pieces of death, but did not let them penetrate into his tender flesh. The steel helmet and strong plastic liner easily defeated the “spangs” of iron that collided with the shell protecting PFC Cross’s upper head and brain. The problem was that Cross’s face was exposed to the incoming tangle of steel. A large chunk impacted into his jaw and cut away the lower side of the Marine’s face, knocking him senseless into the dirt bottom of the bunker. No corpsman was available to aid the Marines in Luther Hamilton’s position that night — just a bunch of young, scared kids learning that the furnace of battle is the birthing ground for veterans.

“Hey, Luther I got a couple of battle dressings! I can’t see his face good, man,” Price mumbled from the center of the team.

“Cross, Cross, man, can you hear me? He looks bad, Luther.”

“I’m going for help,” and that’s it! Hamilton declared. “Cross was my friend. Shit, he don’t have a week left in Nam, man! That bunch of officers back at An Hoa, drinking their hot coffee while Cross is out here all fucked-up with no damned corpsman — it ain’t right! I’m going. Jessup, give me your .45. I’ll be light that way. Don’t need no “14.” I’m running all the fuckin’



Lance Corporal Luther Hamilton at the airstrip at An Hoa Combat base, 1967. The bunkers were, of course, manned at night to secure the strip.

way to An Hoa. Won’t do no good to go to Phu Loc 6, because they can’t help Cross there — he’s too fucked-up. Keep the pressure bandages on his face and slightly elevate his head. I’m history!”

### The God Factor

Luther bolted and ran south from the bunker, and headed straight downriver from the supine body of his buddy, PFC Cross. After a hundred yards or more, Hamilton cut to the west sharply along a minor trail that lead across the southern edge of a giant rice field into the main street of a sleeping vil-

lage. Luther did not enter the hamlet proper, but jogged along the rear of the huts keeping a close eye on the hootches for any sign of movement. Nothing. Not a *mamasan* or child wandered about. Not a single plaintive cry or bark from a dog. Luther thought to himself that was understandable, because the Vietnamese loved to eat dogs, and their absence in the countryside was quite evident.

“Get that fucking dressing off the man’s face! Shit, he’ll choke to death.” Kirby was the old man of the team and dispensed a fatherly compassion.

“Jesus, Kirby, Cross has bought it, man! I





2nd Battalion, 5th Marines on the DMZ (Operation Prairie I), fall 1966. Anything to save a fellow Marine.

can't stop the fucking blood. That chunk of shrapnel is embedded inside his mouth and probably has cut into his neck. Nothin' we can do now, man." Rod Price had seen a truckload of Marines die on the operations Two-Five conducted up on the "Z," and when a man was going to die, he was going to die.

Cross sputtered and emitted a low, shallow moan and grew suddenly silent. "That's it! That's fucking it for me, man," Price growled. "No more good guys from America helping the Vietnamese out of their stinking Commie mess. No way! From now on I'm cappin' these pigmy fuckers and

Kirby can tag 'em and bag 'em. Cross was a good dude, man. He'd paid his fucking dues in this shithole. Seven days left, and a man gotta die choking on his own blood in a nowhere, sorry-assed place like this. The gooks that fired those mortars in here didn't even know where we were at, man! Those bastards got lucky, and killed Cross! He just wanted to go home and wasn't fuckin' with Charlie no ways." Price had seen too much combat and needed a rest himself. A permanent rest Stateside!

The combat cycle in Vietnam always repeated itself through changes in every

infantry pogue in the Marines. First a boy came to a line outfit in Nam all charged up to protect the Vietnamese and kill the evil communists. Then, the boy saw some action and stared to embrace the more practical considerations, like staying alive instead of the idealistic fervor for God and Country. After the now-maturing Marine had seen his buddies killed and maybe was wounded himself, he became careful, and definitely looked out after his own ass. Finally, he witnessed a situation of such unbearable sadness like Pfc. Cross's death that his only refuge from the pangs of sorrow was in

anger. Ah, anger. That could be nurtured and coaxed to a fine boil, and kept on "red alert" just under the explosion level. This anger fueled many a Marine's need to vent his hostility on Charles. In many ways, the cultivation of a high level of operational, tactical anger was necessary to forge a really deadly military machine. Genghis Khan had encouraged personal combat and duels among his Mongol hordes for exactly this reason. Marine rifle companies were mostly composed of idealistic kids who mutated into deadly, cold-blooded veteran troopers who could fight and defeat any armed force on the planet. Just maybe, the Officer Corps back at An Hoa and Da Nang did know what they were about. They knew exactly what they were doing, and more than that they reveled in it!

"They won't run a Medevac in here at night for one man, because it would spook Charlie and fuck up this fucked-up operation. Don't do Cross much damn good does it, Kirby?" Jessup was pissed and frustrated and took out his hostility on the general condition of the war. *FUBAR* they called it. "Fucked up beyond all recognition."

### Pounding For The Wire

At the end of a row of huts, another paddy matrix loomed in the inky distance. The murky waters of the rice fields gave an incandescent glow that shimmered like the light playing across the face of a black star sapphire. The quarter-moon tucked itself behind the clouds, only to momentarily reappear and cast fingers of brilliance that danced in the water. Luther knew a running man was easily observed not for his anatomy or silhouette against the landscape. No, an enemy eye picked up movement first and then calculated the configuration of man or animal that had crossed his vision. Luther instinctively sought treelines and dikes to conceal his movements. However, he always came out from his covered position into an expanse of road or paddy that was void of any concealing trees, bushes, or natural berms or rises in the trail.

Across the small paddies and expanses Luther would run, effecting a metered gait to confuse an observer. His rhythm was very smooth, and not jerky catching attention. The large fields and paddies required a more tactical assortment of movements. Luther divided these into crouched walking behind short dike walls, and crawling next to built up trails keeping low in the drainage ditches that straddled most roads. The technique that Luther employed to cross the large paddies was a combination of crouched duckwalking, crawling, and measured walking, between obscured dikes, huts, and treelines.

Another row of huts came into view, as Luther rounded a bush covered hillock. He held his breath. Just over a quarter-mile, as best he could guess, lay the outlines of row after row of Marine hootches. An Hoa at last!

He made no sound, as he reached the rear of the huts and crept into the open field behind the village. In his haste, Luther



Luther Hamilton, armed with a roll of TP, returns from the head at Nong Son Mountain. "Ah, the pleasures of home." Hamilton (below, left) and Burns on Nong Son Mountain bunkers after Operation Tuscaloosa in February '67. Hamilton, the reigning hero of Hotel Company, has just made his famous run to Phu Loc 6 to try to save Pfc. Cross.



turned several times and lurched onto the dike leading away from the village. Slivers of moonlight played off Hamilton's face and arms, as he turned into the rice fields' cloaking embrace.

Aggressive shouts came from the periphery of the last hut and Luther heard the high-pitched, clipped sing-song of Vietnamese dialect directed at his fleeing shadow: "Dong Lai, Dong Lai," came the command to halt from the pursuers. Luther picked up an adrenaline rush, and coming out of his crouch picked up speed down the dike trail.

"Marine, Marine you die tonight," came the next nasal threat from the small group of Viet Cong guerrillas who had tucked in behind Luther's wake. The road was hard and dry as Hamilton sped along, clipping for the wire at An Hoa, not 400 meters away. His heart was pounding, but that didn't mean much with a squad of bloodthirsty V.C. on your tail.

*Crack, crack, spang, spaang, crack*, the bullets from Charlie's ChiComm assault rifles whizzed over Luther's head and ricocheted off the dirt at his feet. Hamilton picked up the pace, as though the wakes of the passing bullets were pulling him along. *Blam, Blam, Blam, Clack, Clack*, Charlie was really working Luther's young ass over now, knowing full well that if the sentries on the Marine perimeter, who were now alerted, got Charlie in their sights it was all over.

Luther jinked off the trail onto the main road to the entrance to An Hoa. Only a hundred and fifty meters to go! *Blam — Blam — Blam — Blam*, screamed a burst of full-automatic fire over Luther's head. Turning while keeping his legs churning toward the Marine lines, Luther noticed red lines cutting into the night air toward Charlie. Yes, the Marines had picked up Luther's pursuers and had opened up with an M-60 firing a wide band of tracers over Hamilton's straining body. Charlie had turned around when the Marine machine-gun bullets impacted in a beaten zone across the road.

Luther didn't stop running a beat, as he turned his head and yelled, "Missed me this

time, you fucking Commie dogs." This epithet seemed to invigorate him, as he high-stepped through the wire and collapsed into the arms of a Marine sentry.

"Where the hell you come from, man? You almost got your butt blown away, but some dude yelled you was a Marine! I don't know who the hell this Marine is? Get on the horn to Company and tell Lieutenant or the Captain, we got a man come into Corporal Jones bunker at 0530 hours. He got no helmet, vest, rifle, nothing! Charlie chased his ass all the way from the far village through the paddies to here." Corporal Stan Jones gave the run down to his radio operator.

"Golf Company HQ. This is Private Morrison on lines at the main gate, sir."

"Go ahead, Morrison, this is Gunnery Pritchett, over."

"Gunny, we got this Marine with no helmet, no vest, no rifle comes running in here looking about half-dead. A squad of dinks been after him all way from the big village across the paddy. They been firing at him. We cut them off with a 60, Gunny! This guy needs medical help, sir. Please advise."

"Put the Marine on the horn, Morrison. I've got a corpsman and Sergeant Philpot headed your way. Over."

"Here he is Gunney. Private Morrison, out."

"Son, this is Golf Company Gunnery Sergeant Pritchett. Who the hell are you and why are you in my sector of lines? Over."

"Gunny, my name is Luther Hamilton from first platoon, Hotel Company. We took some mortar fire over on the river around 0200 hours. One of my squad is critically wounded. Gunney, I've run all the way back for help! We got no radio and the gooks are crossing the river a klick south of my position."

"Hamilton, stand by, we already have a radio message two hours old from your company. One of your men crawled all the way down the trail to another hole to radio into Battalion. *Your man died five minutes after you left*, but the C.O. wants to thank you personally after the Navy Corpsman has checked you out. Good effort Hamilton, we



**Marine Cuisine.** Hamilton prepares "C" Ration meal on Nong Son Mountain after NVA attack in June 1967. Sandbags to his rear were blown up by satchel charges. Hotel Company killed 50 NVA — confirmed.

can use more Marines like you, Pritchett out."

"Thank you, Gunney. Hamilton out."

After getting bandaged for lacerations to his knees and elbows from crawling over 2 miles along paddy dikes. Luther Hamilton, Private First Class, United States Marine Corps entered the Battalion Headquarters of Lieutenant Colonel W.C. Airheart, Commanding Officer, Second Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, First Marine Division. With Colonel Airheart was Hamilton's Commanding Officer, Captain James J. Doherty, Jr., Commanding Officer, Hotel Company, Two-Five.

"Well, Hamilton, I won't keep you, as I can imagine you are pretty tired. I want to thank you for showing leadership when one of your squad members was wounded. Captain Doherty will put in a requisition for the Bronze Star medal. That is a very high honor in the Marines. If we were in the Army, I imagine this act of bravery would be worth the Silver Star at least. However, we are Marines and we hold ourselves to a higher standard. That's why you joined the Marines isn't it Hamilton? To be with the best!"

"Your Commanding Officer, Captain Doherty, is in my opinion one of the most

experienced, ablest officers in the Corps. He will be taking your company and another sister company into the Arizona next week. We are going to catch Charlie in his home base and bring him to us, very close. We are going to squeeze the blood out of Charlie, Corporal Hamilton. Marines are going to die, just like they always do in a battle like this one. I want you to tell your squad to worry more about killing Charlie and his NVA advisors, and worry less about your friends who get hit. Is that clear? Son, we will have extra corpsman along and medevac choppers on standby for this match. Lance Corporal Hamilton, you did a brave thing today. I just want you to promise me next week you will stick around and kill Charlie. I will take care of the wounded. I promise you that Captain Doherty looks on everyone of you men like a son. Isn't that a fact, Captain?"

"Colonel, everyone of those Marines is a part of my family."

"See there, Hamilton, nothing to fret over! Get your men ready to go. This is the big one! That is all."

Luther Hamilton stood looking like hell warmed over and managed a textbook salute, "Aye, Aye Colonel. Sir, the men are ready to go. No problem about that, Sir."

Hamilton executed an about face and walked back to his hootch knowing Cross had been dead the whole time he had risked his life to save his friend.

When the company got back the following day, everyone in Hotel Company wanted a word with the new hero, Luther Hamilton. Rumor had it, he ran 7 miles pursued and fired upon by a whole platoon of Viet Cong and survived without a scratch. Bronze Star. Jesus, that Lance Corporal Hamilton had balls made of steel.

*John J. Culbertson served with 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines in Vietnam's I Corps in 1967. He operated as a scout-sniper and was WIA, earning three Purple Hearts. He is the author of OPERATION TUSCALOOSA and A SNIPER IN THE ARIZONA, both Military Book Club bestsellers.*



Summer 1967: Hamilton and Sergeant Guy McDonald compare the "trusty" M14 rifle to the newly issued M16. Grunts in Hotel 2/5 hated the M16, which jammed in close-combat situations.

# Danger! Mines:

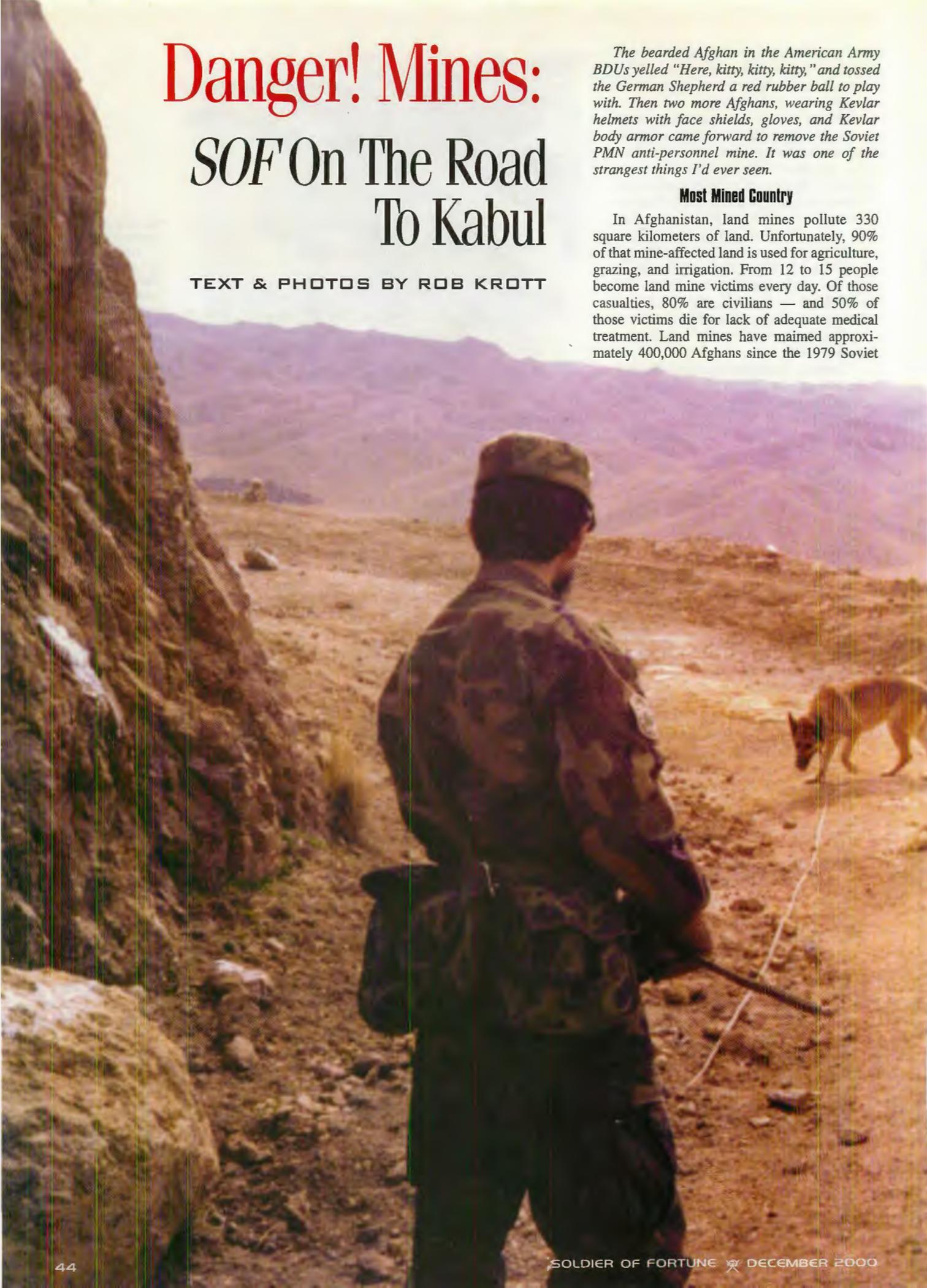
## SOF On The Road To Kabul

TEXT & PHOTOS BY ROB KROTT

*The bearded Afghan in the American Army BDUs yelled "Here, kitty, kitty, kitty," and tossed the German Shepherd a red rubber ball to play with. Then two more Afghans, wearing Kevlar helmets with face shields, gloves, and Kevlar body armor came forward to remove the Soviet PMN anti-personnel mine. It was one of the strangest things I'd ever seen.*

### Most Mined Country

In Afghanistan, land mines pollute 330 square kilometers of land. Unfortunately, 90% of that mine-affected land is used for agriculture, grazing, and irrigation. From 12 to 15 people become land mine victims every day. Of those casualties, 80% are civilians — and 50% of those victims die for lack of adequate medical treatment. Land mines have maimed approximately 400,000 Afghans since the 1979 Soviet



invasion. Afghanistan has more than 15 million mines still in the ground — qualifying it for the dubious honor of the most-mined region in the world.

The more than a decade of occupation by the Soviet Army saw more than 10 million mines sowed. When the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan they left behind additional stockpiles of mines. Since then, warring Afghan factions have seeded more mines throughout the country. They were laid in defensive belts around cities and military outposts, in defensive perimeters, and scattered willy-nilly across the countryside. The 1994-1995 winter offensive by the Taliban prompted a whole new flurry of land mine deployment. The capital, Kabul, quickly became the third most heavily mined area in Afghanistan. Besides the millions of land mines buried in Afghan soil

there are unknown tons of unexploded ordnance (UXO) — artillery shells, rockets, bombs, grenades, and explosive ammunition patiently waiting for a victim.

I wanted to see, firsthand, what the Afghans were doing about this sad state of affairs. Robert Young Pelton, author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places*, ostensibly working on a possible TV documentary on demining, had been to Afghanistan before and arranged some rather shaky visas for us, issued by the Consulate General of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, in New York. Unfortunately, we were going in through territory controlled by their enemy, the Taliban. Our first stop was the relief organizations near the Afghan border in Peshawar, Pakistan. I received a quick brief from Christophe Luedi, head of the sub-delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Peshawar, on the

training of deminers in Pakistan. From there I went to the Mine Detection and Dog Center (MDC) where dogs are trained to sniff-out the mines and unexploded ordnance that are still killing thousands of people in Afghanistan.

### Sniffing For Mines

I was greeted by Achim Bruedgam, the MDC technical advisor, there courtesy of the Federal Republic of Germany, which supports the whole operation. I next met with an Afghan, Sultan Mohammad Ruifi, the MDC's Director of Operations, a deminer since 1987. Before the war, Sultan was a radio broadcaster in Kabul. Arrangements were made to visit dogs in the field.

I walked through the kennels, clean and serviceable, while the dogs were fed Science Diet chow. Amy, Flash, Rocky, Rosa, and, yes, Rambo were some of the names on the MDC Honor roll of brave

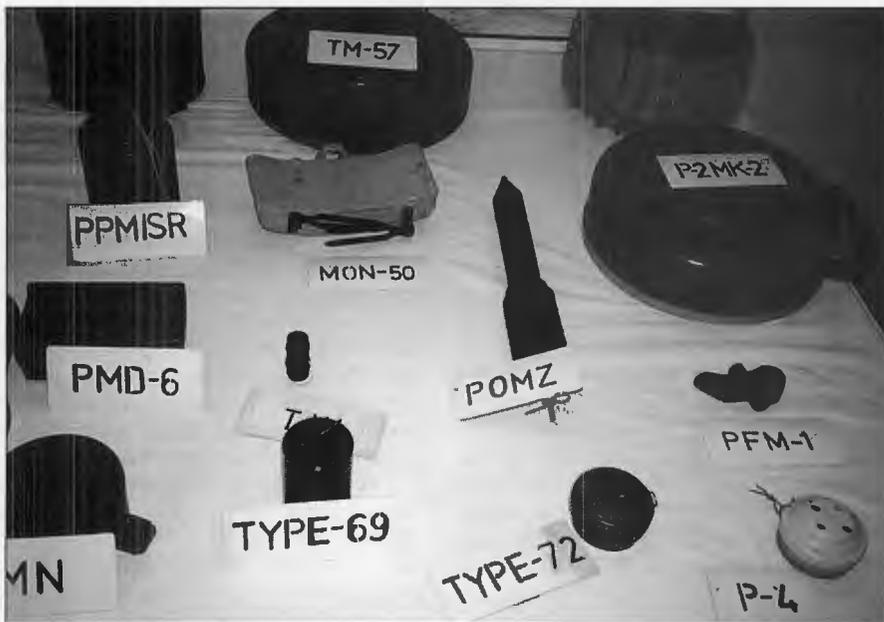


Kaleed and "Ranger" clear the Old Kabul Road. (inset) MDC detonates AT mine. Mines destroyed are mines that cannot be reused.



MDC

# Walk Softly



dogs that had have given their lives helping men save lives. All are well cared for. At the end of their working life they are advertised for adoption at the American Club, Peshawar's expatriate hangout. They don't have to wait long for a caring home.

The dogs are from Holland (initially the MDC dogs were provided by Global Training Academy of Texas) and are German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois. The Malinois is a short-haired, fawn and black colored and black-masked Shepherd. Known for their intelligence and agility, they are also very attentive and sensitive and learn quickly when positively motivated: The ideal breed for demining dogs. Since these Malinois are from kennels in Holland they take all 24 of their commands in Dutch, except for the very strange, "Here, kitty-kitty-kitty," which is how the dogs are congratulated. Some trainer must have had a weird sense of humor.

The Mine Detection and Dog Center was established in 1989 when the Thai Army donated 14 mine-detection dogs and loaned eight instructors. Shortly thereafter, the dogs proved their worth when four MDC dogs searched mail at the U.S Embassy in Islamabad during the Gulf War. Currently the MDC fields 660 personnel and 112 dogs.

The next day I was out early for a day in the field with dog handler recruits (all volunteers drawn from Afghan refugee camps) and the demining dogs. The training facility is in Risalpur, about 30 minutes from the MDC headquarters and kennels. With a Pakistani Air Force base nearby, the constant pop-pop and rattle of small-arms fire along with the occasional grenade explosion helps acclimate the dogs to battlefield sounds. In charge of instruction was a Berliner, Mario Boer. Wearing overalls marked "IHS-Special Service, Germany" Mario (who spoke no English) told me he had been a dog trainer for eight years. He was a former *Hundstrainer-Polizei*, now employed by a private *sicherheitsdienst*, the IHS — *Industrie und Handelsschutz GmbH* — and assigned to the MDC for three

(above) The enemy: Some of the former Soviet mines that make Afghanistan the most-mined country on earth. (below) Good troops: Man's best friend works for a ration of Science Diet, a red rubber ball, and the occasional friendly scratch.



months. According to Mario the best dogs for demining work are these animals, German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois.

The dog handlers are all Afghan volunteers, typical age is 20-30. Uniform is American pattern BDUs, which the dogs are accustomed to, adorned with the MDC patch. Uniforms aren't new to many of them as most have seen combat as *mujahideen*, government soldiers, or Taliban. No one talks about the past much.

According to Mario, "Working with a dog is much more difficult than working with a machine." Because of this deminers are paid \$100 USD per month under a one-

year contract with MDC funded by the Germans, while the dog handlers are paid a little more — not much for such dangerous work. Several deminers and dog handlers have been killed and dozens maimed and wounded. They all carry an insurance policy worth 500,000 rupees. That's about \$11,000.

### A Red, Rubber Ball

MDC has urban training aids for house-clearing, detecting booby traps, and tripwire, but the dogs can only detect if there is an opening such as a window, door or blown wall for a breeze: The dog hears the sound of the wind across the tripwire. Handouts for the dog handlers included Konrad Lorenz's paper on recognizing aggression in canines. This is not a lightweight course of instruction, for dog or man.

To clear or search an area a reference point is selected and measurements then taken from a start point. The deminers clear 2-meter-wide paths. The dog searches along a straight line and when it sniffs out a mine it will indicate — much like a bird dog on point. The handler will then hold up a red rubber ball, the dog's reward, and order the dog back to him. The dog moves directly back to the handler and then a deminer will mark the location of the mine. After mines are cleared either by removal or demolition (mines are destroyed so they cannot be re-laid) the area is marked with white-painted stones. Red painted stones mean "mined, not cleared." Stay away from the red stones.

The dogs begin their training as puppies still being weaned, and an in-house breeding program ensures new recruits. They play with trainers. From three to six months they are familiarized with the training area and from six to 18 months they are "object trained" with the red ball. From 18 to 20 months they receive "explosives training" and the dog learns that there is a connection between the scent of explosives and the red ball. The dogs are trained with PETN, TNT, REDX, and C-4. It takes about two months with a trainer and then a handler works the dog for two more months, much of it in actual minefields in Afghanistan for "battlefield acclimatization" before going "live." Sometimes the dog will fail to meet the standards. Sometimes the man will fail.

### On The Road To Jalalabad And Into The Khyber

As the day came to a close we firmed up our plans for the next day. I would travel with Sultan, our invitation and passport to Afghanistan. Sultan has ample documentation from the Afghan Commission and a UN ID Card, which is just like a passport in these parts. The MDC is a non-governmental organization (NGO) so he is recognized as a non-combatant. Also, as a refugee (as all deminers are as demining here is wholly an Afghan operation) he has permits through the UN and there is no problem traveling back to Afghanistan. Plus, everybody wants to help in the war against the "secret enemy." No one likes land mines. If you're in a white-colored 4x4 with demi-

ning stickers no one stops you. According to Sultan: "In Islam if a person saves the life of one person he saves the life of 10 persons." Demining is seen as virtuous in Islam. Unemployment was also cited as a motivation, but I can think of safer ways to make a living.

In the morning we picked up our travel permit and the obligatory armed guard at the Khyber Travel Agency for the trip to the Afghan border and drove into Afridi tribal territory, the Pathan tribe that has controlled the Khyber for centuries. The Khyber Pass is a region lost in time with adobe-mud fortresses that dominate the landscape, women in colorful *burqqas*, and mustachioed rifle-toting brigands wearing turbans. To fully appreciate the Khyber Pass you must imagine trying to escape from Jalalabad down this narrow valley on foot while being shot at by Pathan snipers. This is the land of Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan of Kipling's *The Man Who Would be King*. Just 8 clicks from Afghanistan is Landi Kotal, a notorious den of thieves, smugglers, bandits, and kidnappers. In other words, a nice place to have lunch.

With the smells of sizzling meats on charcoal braziers enticing us we stopped to lounge on *charpoy* (bedsteads of woven straw and nylon cord) on a balcony above the main street of Landi Kotal. I stuffed myself with *chabli kebab* (hamburger), *tikka* (spiced grilled meats), *nan* (the circular flat *roti* of the country, slapped from dough in the palms and cooked in the *tandoor*), all washed down with glasses of *chal sabaz* (green tea). As far as my stomach is concerned, I'm fluent in many languages.

### Border Shoot-Out

We passed through Landi Kotal and the Michni checkpoint before descending the last few kilometers to the border post of Torkham. Amid the hustle and bustle of people coming and going I passed through a group of light-skinned girls, their expressive almond-shaped eyes — the amber, hazel, and light gray of Alexander's legions — flashing promises at me as I made my way to the Customs Office to get my passport stamped. The whole scene was a Kodak moment but photography is prohibited. The Khyber Rifles soldiers clad in the traditional pajama-like *shalwar kameez* and commando sweaters stood at the ready with their G-3 rifles. They passed us through to Afghanistan with a nod and we were greeted by Kalashnikov-toting Taliban. After we crossed the border another MDC vehicle came through only a few minutes behind and took a bullet in its left rear door. A brief shootout commenced between the Khyber Rifles and the Taliban as someone ran the border and the Khyber Rifles opened up and the MDC vehicle caught a "to whom it may concern." We drove through the Kabul River Valley, all emerald with short wheat and spotted with the red of poppies, which soon gave way to a barren, stony landscape reminiscent of eastern Turkey or northern Iran. Adobe forts and crumbling stone-walled outposts dominated the hilltops.

The agriculture-based economy appeared to be back on track. The primitive irrigation system has been repaired and the plain is dotted with flocks of sheep, cow herds, and caravans of donkeys and camels. Stone walls stand between the rows of orchards where oranges and apples are in great abundance. Robert remarks that Kabul is the same latitude as Los Angeles.

There are also stands of eucalyptus trees along the roadside — put there through a USAID contract — like a Parisian boulevard. The whole area is verdant and lush; it's not the Afghanistan I expected. In the distance are the snowcapped peaks of the Spingahl Mountains, a long ridge of white contrasted by the stark barren brown of the plains and the deep green of the river valley. In marked contrast to the bellicosity silently expressed by the ever-present, bearded and bandoleered Taliban, turbanned old men sit impassively along the roadside as young boys wearing brightly colored *khwalai* on their heads jump up and down and shout greetings at us. Some are flying paper kites.

But preconceived notions of what Afghanistan

**The victims: Between 12 and 15 Afghans fall victim to land mines every day — most are non-combatants, and most do not survive. Those that do are usually crippled or maimed for life.**





(left) Once mined, territory is won back 1 square meter at a time. (above) "Here, kitty, kitty, kitty." MDC dog handler offers rubber ball to his dog, a reward for having found something suspect.

would look like were soon borne out. Here and there was the rusting hulk of an abandoned T-55 tank or BTR-40 APC marked by tell-tale holes and scars of RPG-7 rockets. Reminding us that this is a war zone full of mines are the amputees propped forlornly on their crutches. Guard posts were manned by motley-clothed Taliban in their distinctive black turbans with AK muzzles protruding from beneath their *shalwar kameez*. Weapons emplacements such as a ZU-23-4 anti-aircraft gun guard an airstrip. Some posts were equipped with recoilless rifles, mortars, 14.5mm AA guns, and 12.7mm HMGs. Taliban checkpoints were marked by ribbons of destroyed cassette tapes dangling from posts, like some kind of strange May pole. Vehicles are searched for these blasphemous, decadent items. Along the road is the occasional red sign marking remaining minefields.

Entering the village of Samerkhel, the detritus of war further reminds us where we are. The village is little more than rubble and a place to park the burned-out hulks of T-55 tanks and Soviet APCs which litter the landscape. The area is still mined, we can see the signs. It's not long before we arrive on the outskirts of Jalalabad, in Nangarhar Province.

Dodging the battered trucks and buses belching noxious plumes of blue-gray smoke and loaded down on their springs with human cargo and careening up and down the narrow macadam highway, we arrived in Jalalabad. It is a stinking, dirty, decrepit Third-World shithole. The bazaar

was the worse kind of squalor: There is no way to describe the meager offerings of scrap, refuse, and junk for sale. It was very similar to the roadside market we saw in Mogadishu during Operation Restore Hope. There wasn't much industry beyond roadside stalls repairing tires, Russian motorcycles, or Chinese bicycles. There were, however, two fair-sized car dealerships with a nice selection of used cars and shiny new Toyota HiLux pickup trucks. Somebody is making some money.

We passed two intersections manned by traffic police, looking decidedly uncomfortable in their western style uniforms and peaked caps, and arrived at the MDC office. We were shown to our room for the night which was luxurious by field standards: three cots with mattresses and pillows. The windows looked out to kennels and the dogs were barking frantically. Dinner was rice with beef, tea, and nan (we'd see this again). Before turning in I checked the time on my battered Seiko dive watch only to notice the date. Today, my first trip to Afghanistan, was my birthday and I didn't even know it.

### My Cousin, My Wife

In the morning I woke up shortly after five. There's a diesel station next door and the Pakistani truckers were all laying on their horns. After a quick breakfast we went out to a mine clearance site outside of town near Khairabad village, and received a safety and operations brief from the group leader of Mine Dog Group-15, Nizam Addin, 25,

and a deminer, Mohammed Omar.

The area had a variety of mines, UXO, and fragments due to heavy fighting and laying of defensive mine belts by mujahideen. There was once a large Soviet Army base here. The deminers have been working hard. The MDG-15 deminers working at Khairabad cleared 16,500 square meters, with much left to do. Cleared walkways are lined with white-painted rocks on both sides. It was encouraging to see hundreds of bootprints along the trail.

The deminers had already located a TM-57 Soviet metallic mine and Mir Haider soon unearthed two PMD-6 AP mines and a TM-57 with three other shouts of "Mine!" as deminers moved forward to take over from dog handlers. The handlers put a flag or marker behind the dog and move back a safe distance. The deminer plants a second marker 90 degrees from that position. The deminers use a digging kit of probes and trowels while they lay prone on a foam pad. We then watched the deminers in action as they blew the four mines in place.

We went back to the MDC site office for lunch and then were off to another Mine Dog Group (MDG) camp set up in an old warehouse. MDC #14 had uncovered what I was told was a set of VP-12 antennae mines. The VP-12 is a battery-powered seismic-activated sensor connected to five mines. It has a self-destruct mechanism to prevent capture — an extremely sophisticated device for this conflict.

Some of the deminers were playing vol-



The heroes: Dog handlers and deminers are recruited from refugee camps, trained, and sign a year contract to work for a few dollars a day. (right) Wounded MDC deminer fights for his life on operating table: He lost his sight, but lived.



leyball (it was their lunch hour). I remembered that the EOD guys at Fort Devens always played volleyball at lunch. Three of the deminers cornered me and asked me questions about America. "Can you give me please the letter of invitation to America?" asks "Ali." He's been married three months. To his cousin. I wonder how they'd like America. Maybe Arkansas.

That night I slept fairly well except for the barking of the dogs.

### Family Business

The next day we're back on the road, Lataband Road, that is, to Surobi District where MDG #3 is clearing Lataban Road, the old road to Kabul. It's a long arduous drive over rutted roads. We stop for breakfast at a real roadside fleabag for chicken broth, nan, and tea. The food is barely edible but the price is right: Breakfast for four is .756 US\$.

According to Sultan the surveyed and cleared area is 42,620 square meters. That's 100% cleared. The deminers destroyed AT mines which would have really ruined a truck driver's day. This is the old road to Kabul and it was being double-checked. The power pylons along this road were still mined at the time — surveyed but awaiting clearance. The dog working was called Ranger. I followed him and his handler, Keeled, along the road for several hundred meters. Ranger indicated on what proved to be an expended 7.62x54R cartridge. That's how sensitive these dogs are to the smell of ordnance.

After observing the MDG in action we went back down to the village of Sarchashma and the MDG #3 office. We had lunch and while I'm taking a photograph of a lovely blue-domed mosque in the distance I notice movement to my right. It is a forlorn war veteran, missing a leg and hobbling across the compound. It's a sight I would see far too many times in my few days in Afghanistan.

We were unable to gain permission to drive on to Kabul although it's just a few hours away. It seems that the Taliban in Kabul are hassling all relief vehicles, demanding they be registered by the government. Typical Third-World nonsense where NGOs have to pay money for the privilege of helping people. Sultan is worried about the Toyota which doesn't have the appropriate papers or sticker or whatever the hell the Taliban are demanding this week. There's no other course of action except to drive back to Jalalabad. I am not happy. After a horrible ride back over the same potholed road with the Toyota bottoming out on a regular basis and a prayer stop for evening prayers we arrive in Jalalabad to spend the night.

We stop near Surobi Dam at the ACT office to visit Sultan's brother, Mohammed Mukhtal Ruifi, also a deminer. Another brother, Ghulam Siddiq, works for MDG 14 as a dog handler. An older brother worked for OMAR before his death of lung cancer. Demining is a growth industry in



Sultan Mohammad Ruifi, DMC Director of Operations and a consummate professional.

Afghanistan. With so many mines sowed in the ground there is no end in sight.

Back in Jalalabad I repack my gear, giving away anything I don't think I'll need. The plan is to go back to Peshawar and either catch a Red Cross flight into Kabul or get another travel permit and cross the border at Torkham on foot. Sultan warns me not to wander outside the MDC compound. With my blonde hair I will probably be accosted or even attacked (he tells me I'll probably have rocks thrown at me — indeed, later in Kabul I would be seriously beamed on two separate occasions). No one wants to be my bodyguard for a stroll through Jalalabad. Dire warnings have been made of what the Taliban could do to westerners. The Taliban came to power in this region in response to widespread banditry and sodomy. Since it's probably a cultural rather than political trait, I decide to stay inside and sort my gear again.

### Bring Out Your Dead

In the morning we make the drive back to Torkham. Just as well. Pelton and I have been sick the past week and no amount of Lomotil or Cipro seems to help. As we approach the border post the scene is right out of the middle ages and the Black Death. Everyone is filthy and dressed in rags and blankets. The dirt road is ankle deep in "fecal muck." People aged long before their time by hard labor, squalor, filth and disease plod through the mud while small boys, dirt-faced, snot-nosed carbuncled urchins like under-fed pack animals, trot along with loads of scrap metal on their backs. Scrawny horses pull wagons, their wooden wheels clacking and slurping in the mud. I look at Robert and intone "Bring out your dead!" a line from *Monty Python And The Holy Grail*. What we're seeing is so reminiscent of that movie scene that Robert chuckles. He will later say: "Afghanistan is half an hour ahead of Pakistani time and five centuries behind the rest of the world." Indeed, the Afghans claim it is year 1376 as

calculated from the moon phases.

We stop and report to Afghan Emigration — a mud hut with a rickety table and two bored Taliban with moldy blankets over their shoulders. I get my passport stamped and we're through the border. We go through Pakistani Immigration and from there to another office. There's no problem with my visa even though it quite plainly states "single entry."

On the way out the frantic, chaotic coming and going of people is unbelievable. Pelton starts to film and I snap a quick shot of a Pakistani Khyber Rifles sergeant berating some peasants. He caught me but in the confusion went after Pelton's video camera. Busted for taking photos, we're dragged back to the Immigration Office for interrogation. I've already palmed a fresh roll of film and grabbing the tab make a big show of stripping out the unexposed film before going in the office. We get tea. Pelton puts on his goofy tourist act for everyone after showing how his SonyCDV works. He palms his tape and sleight of hands another to show the customs officer on playback. "Ah, yes, very good, no problem." After 30 minutes of harassment and chit-chat (Torkham is a boring place) we are released.

We walk to our vehicle where Sultan is nearly in coronary heart failure and are almost run down by five or six boys with loads perched on their backs, dodging like half-backs as they try to avoid a Pakistani Khyber Rifle trooper flailing away with his swagger stick. He's not trying to stop them or arrest them, just giving them a beating. "Oh, my, what fun, yes, very good!"

The drive back to Peshawar is uneventful except for a slight problem with our Khyber Rifles escort. The pimply faced youth in the *shalwar kameez* and beret sitting next to me is armed with a battered Kalashnikov. Because he's sitting in the middle of the back seat his rifle muzzle is approximately 4 inches below my chin. As the Toyota bounces over the Khyber Pass road lifting our butts off the seat, I look down and notice he's got the selector switch on "automatic" and there's undoubtedly a round up the spout. I reach down and switch it to "safe." Sultan says, "Not to worry, the soldiers must account for every bullet that is fired." Ah, yes, but of course.

Back in Peshawar we check into Green's Hotel. It can only be described as the fading splendor of the Raj era. It's at the bottom of the list for Western-style accommodations — the decrepit rooms boast mold on the walls and peeling paint while the restaurant's table cloths are stained with the detritus of a decade of meals — but after Afghanistan it looks like The Ritz.

[Next month, Krott returns to Afghanistan to observe the demining of Kabul.]

SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent and former U.S. Army officer Rob Krott has reported from the world's war zones since 1990. ✕

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE HITS THE TRACK WITH SOUTHERN THUNDER

Brown & Friends Experience Florida Flat-Out

*"Get me outta here! I'm on fire!"*

— Jim Fotis  
Executive Director, Law Enforcement  
Alliance of America

BY CAROLEE BOYLES

When Robert K. Brown takes up a challenge, he likes to bring along company. So in February, he and some of *SOF*'s staff and readers ventured to sunny Florida to step onto the racetrack with Southern Thunder.

Regular readers of *SOF* will recall that Southern Thunder is a race truck experience, part of a new breed of racing that's based on the short-track racing of the 1950s. The trucks are one of several classes of vehicles that racegoers can see on short tracks every weekend.

Southern Thunder offers race enthusiasts the unique experience of being able to get behind the wheel and race against other amateur drivers just like the pros do on the weekends. So when Bob Brown invited readers to participate, he got not only readers but staff members as well.

Rookie drivers showing up at the Sunshine Speedway in St. Petersburg included Brown; Jim Fotis, Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Alliance of America; James Zientara, First Vice President of Morgan, Stanley, Dean Witter, in Bradenton, Florida; Kris Thoenke, an outdoor talk radio host from Naples, Florida; Rick Sherrow, the former Director of Operations at *SOF*; Patrick O'Malley, Deputy Director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action; and Rich Convertito, Director of Newsstand Sales at *SOF*.

Together, they made up the *SOF* race team that would dance with thunder.

What made this group of readers and staff decide to race head-to-head with Brown? Zientara explained: "I always watched NASCAR and enjoyed it," he said. "I've been to a

lot of tracks and I always wanted to get behind the wheel and see what it's really like. So when I saw the ad in the magazine, I signed up."

The first thing to understand about race trucks is that these ain't your daddy's pickup trucks. They're highly-tuned precision vehicles that just happen to look like they should have a load of hunting gear on the back.

Donny Morelock is the lead driver of Southern Thunder, and the organizer of neophyte racing events for the company. Although Morelock was involved in starting the PARTS Pro Truck Series (PARTS stands for "Professional Association of Race Trucks"), he has recently moved up to the Craftsman Truck series, which puts him into the NASCAR league.

"There are 12 to 15 truck series that have popped up around the country," he said. "The only two that are shown on television and have decent purses are the PARTS Pro Truck series and the Craftsman series."

Morelock said the trucks are not street vehi-



Still in the pits. Bob Brown and friend (number 3) before saddling up at Southern Thunder.





cles that have been converted. Rather, they're built from the ground up with racing in mind, and are full-race vehicles.

"Each truck starts with a General Motors metric chassis," he said. "From about 1972 to 1984, almost all the GMs were built on that chassis, so there are a lot of them available. That gives all the race teams the same starting ground, so everyone has a level playing field."

From there, Morelock said, every part on the truck is full race, including the brakes and the roll cage, all the way through the fiberglass body and the slick tires. The race trucks are like other full-race vehicles in other ways as well.

"They have the same adjustments and characteristics as the Winston Cup cars," he said. "We can change the diagonals on the vehicle, which means we can put more or less weight on each corner. We can adjust for the radius of the corner, the banking of the corner and the length of the straightaway. This makes the truck handle better on each track and for each driver."

As with any NASCAR vehicle, it takes a full pit crew to take care of a truck during a race.

"That's why we say it's a team sport," Morelock said. "There are five or six guys in the pits that are making calculations and doing adjustments."

All these details are reflected in the price of the truck. A full-



(top) Brown screams by just a few lengths behind Jim Zientara, the eventual winner. Fotis, Thoemke, Sherrow, O'Malley and Convertito (along with Brown and Zientara) all made good showings. It ain't if you win or lose — it's that you had the guts to suit-up and hit the track. (above) Fotis "dead in the water." While attempting to pass Brown, his engine blew. As the smoke and flames subsided, he bailed. All other drivers went into a cautionary mode while waiting for Fotis' car to be towed from the track.

competitive truck runs \$18,000 to \$22,000, including a high-performance motor.

"The motor is really where you get into the differences between the trucks," Morelock said. "You can spend two thousand dollars on a motor and run in the back, or you can spend seven thousand dollars on a motor and have something capable of running you up front."

With all the similarities to NASCAR, however, the trucks' circuits do have some minor differences mainly because organizers try to keep the costs down to encourage teams to participate in truck racing. For instance, the tires used on the trucks are a little harder, than the ones NASCAR uses, so they don't

have to be replaced as often.

"That may slow the vehicles down on any particular track," Morelock said. "But keep in mind that we're all on the same tires so we're still competitive with each other."

The maintenance of the vehicles reflects the hard use that they get. Each race amounts to about a hundred laps, so teams are looking at a set of tires for each race.

"We also replace front brakes every race," Morelock said. "You can run about three races before you want to tear the engine down and look at rings and bearings and catch anything that's starting to go wrong before something happens in a race."



Jim Fotis, LEAA Executive Director, receives his trophy from Donny Morelock. If Fotis had not blown his mill ... well, life's one big "IF" factor.

The most common problem during a race, Morelock said, is the loss of the rear end gear or the transmission.

### Full Automatics

"In these series, to keep the cost down, we run an automatic transmission," he said. "That's extremely rare in any type of high-speed racing. Normally you run a high-speed sequential transmission and once you get in gear there's no pressure on it. But with the automatic transmission, it works just like a car that you drive down the street. If the truck is rolling forward, the transmission is working. So you're putting a tremendous strain on it during a hundred-lap race."

The situation is much the same with rear end gears.

"There are several high-dollar alloy rear end gears that you can get," Morelock said. "But to keep costs down, these particular series don't allow us to run those. The gear we run in the rear end is the same one you'd put in a street car. In most cases they hold up pretty well, but they weren't designed for racing, so you do have some failures in them."

In the day-long school, mechanical failures are rare, but ironically are related to the slower pace.

"The difference is that during the school, you run at a slower speed and work your way up," Morelock said. "Remember, this is a high-performance engine that was designed to go faster than novice drivers do at the beginning. So early in the day we sometimes run into problems like fouled spark plugs."

### Race Day

The *SOF* race day began with a continental breakfast at the track, and introductions.

Brown, of course, had experience with high-performance automobiles; some of the other drivers had experience with law enforcement and pursuit-driving, as well as drag-racing. Based on each driver's level of experience, Morelock matched drivers with driving instructors.

"This allows me to choose a driving instructor that suits each driver," he told the group. Our three objectives for today are safety, for everyone to learn something and be a better driver at the end of the day, and to have fun."

Then he split the group into an A team of O'Malley, Sherrow and Convertito, and a B team of Zientara, Thoenke, Brown and Fotis. The A team was fitted for uniforms while the B team waited.



Adrenaline still pumping, overall winner Jim Zientara, happily gets his due from Morelock. Said Jim, "I made up my mind that I was not going to have to pass anyone else again."

"These are full Nomex uniforms with gloves, a head garment and a helmet," Morelock said. "They include everything but shoes, and tennis shoes are fine for this."

While the A team was suiting up, Morelock took two to three drivers at a time onto the track in his pit vehicle, a Dodge Durango. With safety cones on the track, he took the drivers through the course so they could see it as it would look to them from the trucks.

"This helps you get a feeling for what it will be like out here on the track," he told the drivers.

Then the A team took to the trucks (unlike street trucks, the doors on these vehicles don't open). Each driver must step in through the driver's side window and then place the steering wheel—which must be removed so there's enough room to climb in back onto the steering column.

Then the driving instructors went through how to hook up the shoulder harnesses and put on the safety helmets, and covered other safety aspects of the track. When the A team was ready, Morelock waved the three trucks onto the track.

"This will be a yellow-flag session," he told Team B. "That means there's no passing and they'll be driving a controlled speed. The idea is to get you acclimated to the vehicle. It also gets the morning jitters out of the way so you can enjoy the rest of the day."

After each team drove a few laps under the yellow flag, the actual training began. An instructor was on the radio with each driver, talking him through each set of 25 laps.

"We help you progress through the process by using cones," Morelock told the drivers. "The cones are limited to the line of the track, so if you go outside the cones you've made a mistake. That's not where you want to be."

As the day moved on, Morelock picked up a few cones after each session. By the session after the lunch break, all the cones were off the track.

"Now there are no cones, and no control on speed," he told the drivers. In the next sessions, racers could drive as fast as they felt able.

### Too Hot For Comfort

Finally, it was time for the actual race. Once again, it would be Team A and Team B, with the best time taking first place.

Zientara was ready. "It's really dramatic out there," he said.

*Continued on page 71*

# omega PRO VIN Gground

## Barrett M107 .50 BMG Sniper System

by Mike Miller



Over the past 50 years, the U.S. Army has played with many ways of using the .50 BMG round for sniping purposes. Some were based on larger antitank rifles scaled down while others were based on completely new concepts. The first system deployed in large numbers was the Barrett Model 82 series. The Model 82s are semiauto and function well, but are far too heavy, at nearly 40 pounds as deployed, to be carried long distances by a single soldier. Over the years the weight was taken off the 82s and today the U.S. Marines have M82A3s that weigh about 30 pounds with scope. The 82A3s are a great rifle but still not the ideal weapon system for behind-the-lines-type hard-target interdiction.

Planners of the future see the .50s as hard target weapons, capable of taking out radar and communication stations before air attacks or when air assets are unavailable. Sniper teams would be dropped into hostile areas and attack from distances of up to 2,000 meters. With radar and comms sites taken care of, casualties to air resources will be diminished tremendously during the initial phases of the attack. While the enemy is trying to regain these assets, helicopters can come in and retrieve the snipers.

Recently, the Army put out a set of specifications for a new .50 BMG caliber sniper system. It was to be light, compact and capable of engaging targets up to 2,000 meters. After testing, the Barrett Model 95 was selected as the winner. Several military requested enhancements have since been added, resulting in a system that will be fielded as the M107. (Until it is fielded, it is designated XM107.) In its current form, the M107 comes complete with scope, drag-bag and cleaning equipment.

The complete M107 system weighs approximately 25 pounds. The barrel length is 29 inches and overall length, when broken

down is less than 35 inches. The 35-inch length was accomplished by changing where the weapon comes apart. The current design separates just behind the chamber area. The older design came apart near the buttstock. The design is a five-shot, bolt-action, bullpup with a detachable box magazine. The system, broken down, will fit into a large backpack.

SOF was able to obtain a sample M107 system for testing. Since it is so new, we were only able to obtain the M107 system on loan by talking to Tony White, of Barrett Manufacturing. The system arrived in one box about 3 feet long and barely big enough to hold two rifle stocks. It was hard to believe that inside was a complete .50 BMG sniper system.

The weapon breaks down into four basic assemblies: the bolt, upper receiver/barrel assembly, lower receiver, and bipod. The weapon is held together by two push/pull pins. The barrel/upper receiver and lower receiver are held together with one push/pull pin, while another holds on the bipod. Once the barrel is removed, the bolt can be removed from the weapon by holding the trigger down and sliding the bolt forward and out of the receiver.

The scope and rings are of Barrett's own design. The rings are adjustable for cant by the use of an Allen wrench. The reason for the adjustable cant rings is the U.S. Army specs called for a flat Picatinny rail mount. Normal extreme range weapons have a canted scope base that allows more scope reticle travel. Typical short- to mid-range rifle scope systems are flat, zero-cant angle, with all adjustments made with the scope's internal adjustments. All internally adjustable scopes come with a certain amount of elevation adjustments somewhere around 100 minutes of travel. Some have more, some have less. For our purposes, we will assume that a scope has 100 minutes of internal adjustment. That 100 minutes of travel only translates, on a flat, no cant base, into 50 minutes up and 50 minutes down. By adding cant, you can increase your scope adjustment travel to anything near the full adjustment range.

Barrett has handled the need for cant in a well thought out way. By adjusting the cant so that you are centered with your scopes adjustment range at the distance you plan to do most of your shooting, you also keep the reticle centered in the scope's lens system. When you consider that scope lenses are usually clearest in the center, you will understand that you will see best at the range you do most of your shooting. The rings come in several different diameters and should be considered for other types of sniper/long-range weapons. I see them being a very good accessory for other rifles.

*Continued on page 72*

Britain's decision to "take" Sierra Leone's Lungi Airport and deploy a large number of troops there and along its approaches was a bold action taken by Whitehall. It is all that more commendable since the British Labor Party is not known for decisive action, especially where it concerns the military. Thus, British Paras and the Royal Air Force were put on standby 3 May for what was termed "a potential non-combatant evacuation." As the situation continued to unravel and the rebels went on to the offensive, things changed. Very quickly a different scenario emerged:

**T**he Joint Rapid Reaction Forces (JRRF) operation launched last May to bring Sierra Leone "back from the brink" was probably the most successful limited operation launched by London in recent years.

That was the view of Lieutenant Commander Tony Cramp, Operational Liaison Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) media officer when he spoke to *Soldier Of*

*Fortune* at the British High Commission in Freetown shortly before his forces headed home.

While he was not prepared to comment whether this was likely to be a pattern that might be followed elsewhere in Africa in the future, he confirmed that it was the largest and most complex British defense deployment in Africa since the Suez debacle in 1956.

Obviously, Britain could not and would not send an aircraft carrier — together with the task force that such an exercise demanded — a quarter the way around the world each time the natives were restless. "But it's good to know that we did when the occasion demanded some pretty stiff decisions."

His people were pleased with the outcome, he declared. "Obviously what we achieved with Operation Palliser once, we can do again. But that is beyond the scope of this discussion because those decisions are made in London." This time, though, when push became shove, he added, "it was testing time for a number of British military combinations. This included the staggered dispatch of two pairs of C-47 Chinook helicopters plus 85 air crew and ground support staff from RAF Odiham 5 May.

That effort was a remarkable one that

# BRIT PARAS PLAY RUF IN SIERRA LEONE

## Her Majesty Replaces U.N.-Effective Forces

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

In the largest and most complex British deployment to Africa since the Suez crisis in 1956, the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces of Operation Palliser pulled beleaguered Sierra Leone back from the brink.



typified the rapid response from all three British services. One of the Chinooks was actually in the middle of a special exercise in Scotland when the warning order came through. The first pair took just 60 hours to make the journey and the second, an incredible 37 hours, routing via Portugal, Gibraltar, Tenerife and Senegal. Internal long-range tanks were used for the journey, with one leg being more than 800 miles over water. Both pairs arrived in time to play a vital role in the subsequent Non-combatant Evacuation (NEO) operation.

When British forces first arrived at Lungi Airport they were met by chaos. All international flights had been suspended and the only way to get in or out was by a commercial Mi-8 helicopter and intermittent flights by an Antonov 26 and some antiquated Czech Turbolets to Conakry.

### Bringing Their Own Infrastructure

Air traffic control was virtually at a standby until a UKMAMS team of air movers was brought in to supplement domestic crews. What worried everybody just then was that the RUF was known to have acquired SAM-7s from Libya: Intelligence and radio intercepts had indicated earlier that these had been brought across the border into Sierra Leone from Liberia. It was also one of the reasons why British Paras quickly set about extending their field of operations into the interior, pushing the limits as far up the road toward Port Loko and Rogberi Junction as possible.

By now there were RAF and United Nations C-130s arriving by the hour, supplemented by RAF Tristar flights out of Brize Norton bringing in more troops as

well as heavy-lift Antonov AN124-100s (bigger than a 747) chartered from Air Foyle with more hardware for the UN.

Three disassembled Indian Air Force Mi-24s arrived in one of them and work was quickly started at the far end of the airport apron in putting them together again. They have since been used in a succession of attacks on rebel positions, including the daring combined RAF and Indian Air Force rescue of the last 223 hostages held by the RUF from Kailahun. A pair of Chinooks — with guns mounted at side ports and at the rear — was deployed with the IAF Hinds, and inflicted heavy damage on the rebels. At one stage an RUF brigade HQ was captured at Pendembu, long regarded as the rebel nerve center in their war.

Meanwhile, the airport and its environs was being patrolled by Paras on three-man





(above) Having stopped the rebel offensive, Brits patrol secured area. Note scoped Ma Deuce — still soldiering on after more than 80 years of combat. (right) The jungle heals faster than the cities in Sierra Leone, scene of bitter fighting for the last several years as rebels and other interests vie for the country's rich diamond deposits.

Land Rovers fitted with the new Weapons Mount Installation Kit (WMIK) which includes GPMGs and a .50 Cal Browning on each. These versatile little fighting vehicles stayed until the end and were eventually replaced by Indian and Nigerian armored personnel carriers.

The real turnabout in the battle for Lungi Airport happened when, as the press were told, a Para Pathfinder platoon was ambushed by rebels at Lungi Lol on the approach road to the airport about 10 days after they arrived. The media was told officially that it was "a minor scrap" involving about 40 rebels of whom it was said four were killed with no Para losses. In reality, it was a very different affair and indicative of the resolute approach Britain had toward the crisis.

What happened was that a Para battle group had been dug-in along a forward position on the road north when intelligence indicated that a large rebel force was heading toward them. The real break came when a rebel defected and told the local commander that his force would be attacked that night. The trap was set.

At about three the next morning, the British soldiers were called to stand-to. By then a force of "about 200 RUF" was creep-



ing quietly — some on their stomachs — toward them. The British force initiated contact with flares, catching the main body of the enemy in open ground. Though some of those officers who were prepared to offer something on how the attack went were embarrassed about numbers killed, I was able to glean that “the body count was somewhere between ‘40 and 60,’ probably the latter.”

What was not released to the media by London was that once the rebels withdrew, squads of Paras went after them killing many more. That was the last time that the RUF came even close to any positions held by British troops.

Having received the order to deploy at 1000 hours on Commander Cramp’s 10-man Operational Liaison Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) — led by force leader Brigadier David Richards, head of Britain’s deployable Joint Force Headquarters — left Northolt RAF base in Britain at 1800 hours on 5 May. They were settled in the British High Commission in Freetown by noon the next day.

### Thwarting RUF’s Final Push

By then, said Cramp, the main force of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels were advancing on two fronts toward Freetown, the closest barely 30 miles east of

(right) Royal Navy Lynx helicopters, and Chinooks (rear) came armed and ready to take the fight to the RUF rebels. One of the world’s best natural ports, Freetown (below) provided the Brits good access to deploy quickly and efficiently — and ready to fight.

the capital. The other was south of Rogberi Junction, the same place where two international journalists were killed weeks later.

“We could see immediately that the situation had become critical: The word in Freetown was that the RUF, headed by rebel leader Foday Sankoh, was preparing for its final push on the city.” That caused ripples of panic among some of the city’s two million residents — which by now included a million refugees. “We were aware that if something wasn’t done quickly, matters could get out of hand,” he added.

He explained that the population knew very well what the rebels had done to innocents in the past: the maimings, the dismemberment of children, rapes, looting. The list was endless, all of it mindlessly barbaric. The entire city was aghast, fearful that it might happen again. But since all roads stopped at the sea in Freetown, there was nowhere else to go. Also, the UN with around 500 of its troops held captive was in disarray and were on the verge of unraveling. “They weren’t of much use to anybody,” another British officer intimated.

What eventually persuaded the British

government to give the nod to the operation was strictly a security consideration. It was also coupled to certain international implications: that if a group of rebels based in a neighboring state, fueled and fed by Qaddafi, was allowed to dictate events the effects on the rest of Africa in the long term could be cataclysmic.

### Airbridge To Stability

Looking back, another of the team confidentially told *SOF*, the gesture might ultimately have changed the pattern for the future in all of Africa.

“For a start, it showed that the West is simply not prepared to tolerate the kind of terror that was being advocated by the RUF. And the fact that the rebels invaded from Liberia, which itself had just emerged from a civil war” he stated. It has gone unsaid, but there is no doubt that Britain wouldn’t have stepped in, had she not got the nod from Washington.

Consequently, a request for the lead company of the Spearhead Land Element to deploy to West Africa was made by Brigadier Richards to the Chief of Joint Operations on





May 7th: The first of 800 members of 1 Parachute Battalion touched down at Lungi in RAF C-130s the following morning. It was the start of an air bridge to Africa.

According to Cdr. Cramp, the entire force was complete, deployed, supplied and in-theater a day later, some of them 50 klicks into the interior. Meanwhile, a Forward Mounting Base (FMB) — a Joint Task Force HQ (Rear) supported by five C-130s — had been established at Dakar. Only a day before, the authority to use Dakar as a forward staging post had been negotiated with the Senegalese government. A request was also made to Guinea to allow Conakry Airport to be used, should that be necessary. UN flights were already moving freely between Guinea and Sierra Leone, underscoring the Republic of Guinea's commitment to prevent a rebel success in the neighboring state.

Notably, groups of Liberian dissidents crossed the border from Guinea late July and initiated insurgent activity against the government of President Charles Taylor.

What is significant is that this was only the third time in modern times that an air bridge had been established to Africa. Both previous occasions involved the Soviets: Moscow rushed military aid to Angola in October 1975 to counter the advance of South African forces on Luanda. Three years later — in the successful bid to stem a Somali invasion of the Ogaden — scores of Soviet transport planes ferried tens of thousands of tons of military equipment to Ethiopia.

In Sierra Leone, meantime, the Main JTFHQ — including a Special Forces (SF) detachment was set up at the High Commission. The balance was deployed at Lungi across the bay and included two C-130s designated specifically for SF use. An Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) based around the helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, was by now also steaming south, as was the just fractionally smaller HMS *Illustrrious* which arrived with its additional air assets which included Royal Navy FA2 Sea Harriers and RAF Harrier GR7 jets on 12 May.

With self-contained mobility a key, Brits deployed with Hagglund all-terrain carriers and tracked trailers. (below) Among newer kit brought by the task force were these patrol mortars: poor-man's artillery for very small units on the move.



### A Prologue To Future Deployment?

The nature and extent of this British military operation is important for several reasons. While Whitehall is reluctant to discuss the possibility that events in Sierra Leone during May and June 2000 might point to further involvement in Third-World countries in the future, the consensus is that this could be the case should a specific situation warrant. It is necessary therefore to understand how the rapid reaction force works.

The extent and nature of the Sierra Leone military operation was directed by Britain's Permanent Joint Headquarters (established in 1996 to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency), a part of the Defense Crisis Management Organization (DCMO). These are detailed here because they provide some insight as to how Britain handles its affairs compared to a similar venture that might be launched by the Pentagon in the future.

In a briefing that *SOF* received in Freetown, it was explained that the primary

role of the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) commanded by the Chief of Joint Operations (CJO), "is to be responsible — when directed by the Chief of Defense Staff — for the planning and execution of UK-led Joint or multi-national operations." This includes directing, deploying, sustaining and recovering the military forces involved.

In contrast, at the operational level, the Joint Task Force Headquarters (in Sierra Leone's case, led by Brigadier Richards) is responsible for commanding the Joint Task Force.

The logic that initially dictated this rationale was that the nature and frequency of UK military operations since the end of the Cold War, "[had] made a revision of command structures to provide highly responsive military and political command and control in a rapidly changing world a priority," the source disclosed.

### Ready For RUF — Or Anybody

Across the UK's three military services units are held at one of five levels of readiness. The Spearhead elements and others classified Level R1 are on permanent 48-hour standby: Their members include the Joint Force HQ, a permanent standing HQ of 53 specialist officers, elements of which are on less than 24 hours readiness. In Sierra Leone's case some of the participants were in the air eight hours after being told to muster.

It was these people that came into play in the West African operation. Level R2 components are on a five-day standby, R3 on eight days and so on. Thus, explained Cramp — who was among the initial OLRT group to arrive in Sierra Leone — Operation Palliser might be regarded as the first fighting force since the end of World War II to be deployed as a consequence of the establishment of a command of expeditionary and joint operations, within the British Defense structure.

These ranged from fighting wars (as in the Balkans), peace support (Sierra Leone) or in the provision of disaster relief and humanitarian aid (such as was provided earlier this year in Mozambique and Operation Tellar in Honduras, 1998). One negative consequence of maintaining genuinely high readiness forces is that the leading forces cannot achieve full protection against malaria. However, success can rarely be achieved without some element of risk and with all personnel trained to recognize symptoms and with additional physical protection, less than 100 of the 4,500 deployed on the operation contracted the disease.

Based at Northwood, in northwest London, the PJHQ is co-located with the headquarters of Commander-in-Chief Fleet, NATO's Eastern Atlantic Command and the maritime element of 11/18 Group Royal Air Force. The United States, therefore, must have been in on it from the start.

A point made subsequently by Lt. Col. Tim Chicken of 42 Royal Marine Command

*Continued on page 74*

The Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe has run amok. As outlined in the November issue ("African Crossroads," page 46), funds (in large measure, international donations) dedicated for the resettlement of landless war veterans at the end of the war two decades ago were squandered by the Mugabe regime to buy a few premium properties for Mugabe cronies. Now the pressure from still-landless war veterans is being prostituted as a tool by the Mugabe regime to turn genuine war veterans into a combined force with "war veterans" comprising the dregs of Zimbabwean society, in a scheme of controlled anarchy to dispossess working farms into commandeered plots of "subsistence" farms. This is a scheme which cannot possibly work from an agricultural standpoint, and seems designed — if there is a plan at all — to keep the Mugabe Regime in power as the nomenclatural gentry of a peasant state.

The greatest loser is the country of Zimbabwe itself, and the farmers and workers, of both European and African backgrounds, who have actually tilled the soil and built the farms, because these working farms are being stolen by people who have no more idea how to farm than to fly. But as these letters to expatriate families show, it is a gut-wrenching experience for those farmers whose families have tilled the soil for generations, and to the families who have worked alongside them for generations, to see working farms seized by incompetent vandals, only to be destroyed for the ultimate loss of all Zimbabweans.

Richard,

If you do have some international connections please, please impress on them that this country only has two to three weeks left. This is because the farmers have to decide, those of them who are able to get a loan, if they will plant.

What would you do if you had some cash and you were a Zimbabwean commercial farmer with squatters on your farm threatening to kill you, cutting down your trees ... need I go on? Would you take the cash or put it in the soil?

If they do not plant, then Mugabe has won. He will be left with a peasant farming population, but without the kind of water or rain that a country like Malawi has. Subsistence farming will not sustain this country, the people will end up starving. We already have a bread shortage looming and many businesses going to the wall. We are not exempt. Some more pressure has to be brought to bear on this government.

Mugabe will not bend to pressure or any other kind of inducement but there must be others who see the writing on the wall ...

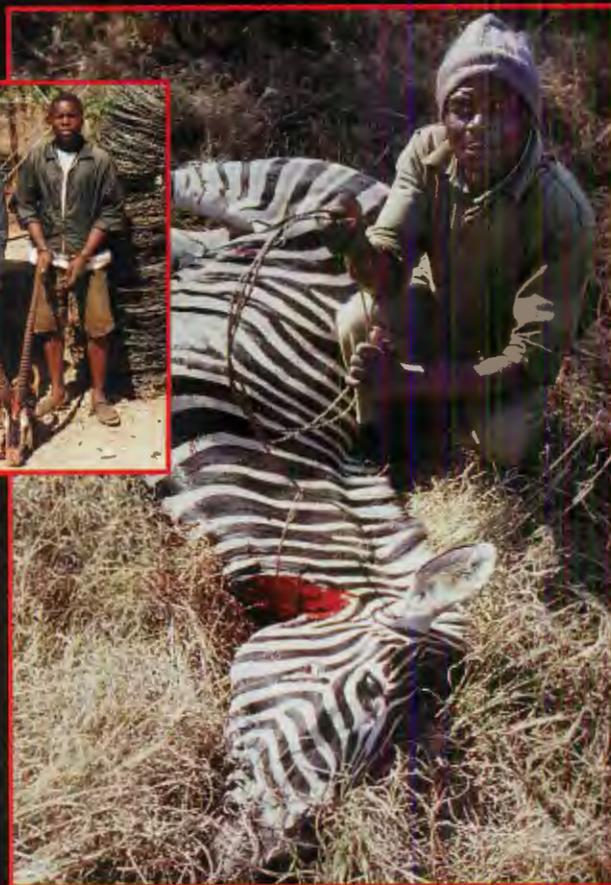
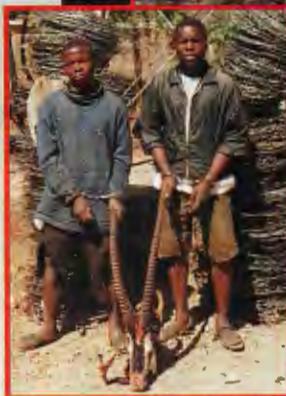
Love,  
Trish

Dear family and friends,

Where do I start this week! On a national level the situation on the farms has got even worse with yet more evictions, burnings, assaults and intimidation. One farmer was beaten to death and killed in what looks like a burglary and another, unarmed and alone, set upon by 40 men at his own gate who attacked him from behind. War veterans who can now only be called common criminals and clearly the dregs of society have destroyed tobacco seed beds, erected their huts in the middle of ripening fields of wheat, pulled up irrigation lines and have generally gone completely off the rails and on the rampage. A number of farming districts have shut up shop and gone on strike in an attempt to draw the attention of the country to the con-

# LETTERS from ZIMBABWE

Edited by Don McLean, Senior Editor



**Slash and burn agriculture:** As government-sanctioned anarchy reigns, poaching and snaring run rampant. Here, game scout Wilson Mhlanga of the Save Valley Conservancy, examines a female zebra and the snare that killed her. (inset) Two poachers stand in front of piles of snares collected by game scouts. Thousands of animals have been killed on game preserves, along with extensive cutting of indigenous trees for sale or firewood, and burning of the land for slash-and-burn planting. (right) Slash-and-burn politics: Farmers unfortunate enough to have built a successful agricultural operation are at risk, with no police protection, such as David Brand of the Gremlin Farm near Karoi, who was severely beaten by "war veterans" and ruling party supporters. He was fortunate enough to have survived the beating: Many others are not.

Reuters/Paul Cadenhead, Inset: Reuters/Graham Connear

Reuters/Howard Burditt

On 30 July, Zimbabwean state television announced the government would immediately acquire 3,000 white-owned farms for redistribution to landless war veterans. "Unsanctioned" occupations, lootings, beatings and murders have been taking place much longer, with virtually no police or government intervention. This farm NE of Harare was seized by squatters last June. Some farms, as mentioned in letter published here, have been "claimed" four times over by various layers of squatters — even "sold" by one group of squatters to another.



AFP, Old Anderson

tinuing refusal of the police to do what we pay them for. This action has gained momentum and by mid-week farmers countrywide agreed (initially without the open approval or blessing of our union who refuse to be seen as the ringleaders) and we are all shutting up completely on Monday. For three days we will not be sending any produce to markets, milk, meat, eggs, veggies, fruit, tobacco, flowers etc. Our workers, on full pay, will stay at home as will we.

The Trade Unions have called for a similar national shutdown and declared that no one will work on Wed, Thurs, Fri and the combined effect of an entire week of no business may at last have the effect of telling our government that now it is enough. That if these people are not removed from our lands and if we are not allowed to get on with business of growing food, then so be it and that will be the end of Zimbabwe. All farmers but particularly those of us with these people always on our properties, have completely had enough. We cannot carry on for another day like this; we are mentally broken, on the very edge of financial ruin and more than ready to throw in the towel and push off — undoubtedly what the veterans want and now it remains to be seen if this is what the other 12 and half million Zimbabweans also want. By the end of next week Herr Hitler will have to put some of his acclaimed strong religious beliefs to work and re-enact the loaves and fishes — because we've had enough. (I would just love to be a fly on the wall when parliament sits this week, methinks the man might be in for quite a hard time!)

On the home front Ian and I have had a dreadful week with each of us trying to pick the other up from the depths of depression — and failing dismally.

Last Sunday afternoon they gathered at our gate, hoisted the flag and formed the Watershed Road Land Acquisition committee. They elected a chair, secretary and treasurer; swore in members and each was required to pay \$2 to belong to same. All newly sworn in members were told by yet another war vet to claim this as his patch, that the shacks and huts should be made more permanent and tilling of the land should commence. There was some disagreement as to when this would happen so they disbanded and agreed to meet on another day. On Monday, Edward, not to be undermined, sent us a message telling us to open all the fences as all the people he had sold plots to would be moving in with their cows, goats, chickens, children, pots pans, blankets & belongings.

By Tuesday morning I needed tranquilizers but instead headed straight to Marondera Police Station. Unfortunately the really good MIC Rural has been sent on urgent leave (probably because he was the only one trying to do his job) and hasn't yet been replaced so we had to settle with a Sergeant. He dutifully wrote down everything including the fact that we are not designated, not on the list and have never been approached by gvt to give up our property. Then he went off to discuss it with his superiors and we waited, and waited and waited. Eventually he came back and said

all the right things, how sorry he was, how terrible it all is, how he's only human, how dreadful this was for the country — actually leant over the counter, looked into my eyes and patted my arm. BUT, "we are very sorry we have not yet had a directive from the superiors." Back to square one.

Wednesday the people gathered, about 80 of them, it was a bitterly cold day with a howling wind and I had wrapped another half-dozen layers of rusty barbed wire around our gate into the field. They sat down outside the gate, had another meeting which lasted about three hours and then drifted off.

Thursday they were back, cut the wire and plonked themselves down in the field for yet another meeting — what on earth are they finding to talk about at all these meetings?

Friday Ian and I went to town and sat in a queue for diesel. We got home to a letter from yet another bunch of war vets — not Edwards lot, not Netty's lot, not Satan's lot — another completely new bunch. Ten of them had climbed through the fence, surveyed the property, decided that the area from our little dam downwards was suitable and claimed it. The letter said: "We have decided to come and share the land with you. We are not taking almost everything. Thank you. War Veterans Henry Mugere, Francisca Muneta and G Kokwana."

Saturday an elderly man was busy doing work on "his hut" on "his plot" in the field above our dairy. Edward was in the store, absolutely roaring drunk and recruiting more people to come and secure their places on our farm tomorrow. I would have thought the whole place was fully, fully subscribed by now but said nothing, ignored him.

Ian and I have had enough and this week started looking at properties in Marondera as unless there is a miracle this coming week, we will simply throw our hands in, sell the remaining cattle and sheep and walk out. The situation is completely out of control, farming is untenable and we are financially finished.

I leave you with that totally depressing thought, until next week thanks to everyone who's kept trying to cheer us up during this awful week.

Cathy

*For real-time updates on the situation in Zimbabwe, readers may pull up the web site of the Movement for Democratic Change at <http://www.in2zw.com/mdc/index.htm>. Although there is mounting distaste to the Mugabe Regime within his own Zanu PF party, the only opposition party is the beleaguered MDC. Expatriates or sympathetic foreign individuals may send donations to the MDC at:*

*National Westminster Bank  
(MDC Trust UK, Account 7107039, Sort Code 50-00-00)  
City of London Office  
1 Princess Street  
London EC2 R8PB, England*



CZ75D PCR  
Compact  
9mm pistol.

# COMPACT

# CZECHS

## CZ75D Police Compact

**W**hen placed in series production in 1976, the CZ75 9mm Parabellum pistol was intended for export to the West only, as Czechoslovakia was committed during that time frame to both of the Eastern Bloc handgun cartridges — 7.62x25mm (originally for the TT-33 — Tula Tokarev Model 1933 pistol) and 9x18mm Makarov. When Czechoslovakia was established as an independent state at the end of World War I, there were only two major arms manufacturers in the country — Sellier & Bellot, in Prague, and the Skoda Works, in Pilsen. Yet by the 1930s Czechoslovakia was ranked among the world's most important producers and exporters of small arms and munitions. The CZ75 was designed to continue and maintain that important economic tradition. It was one of the very first large-capacity,

**Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis**

double-action 9mm Parabellum pistols. It still remains one of the very best and retains immense popularity worldwide.

Manufactured by Ceska Zbrojovka Uhersky Brod, a.s. (Dept. SOF, Svatopluka Cecha 1283, 688 27 Uhersky Brod, Czech Republic; phone: 011-420-633-65-11-11; fax: 011-420-633-63-36-65; e-mail: brazda@czub.cz; internet: <http://www.czub.cz>), all of the CZ75 series pistols, including several new variants are imported by CZ-USA (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 171073, Kansas City, KS 66117-0073; phone: 913-321-1811; fax: 913-321-2251; e-mail: czusa@gvi.net).

One of the odd footnotes associated with the fall of the Evil Empire was the decline of the 7.62x25mm and 9x18mm rounds in

former Eastern Bloc countries and the emergence of military and law enforcement interest in the venerable 9mm Parabellum cartridge. The Russian military and national police are poised to adopt one of several IZMECH pistols chambered in this caliber. And, in March 2000, after extensive trials that also included entries from Walther and SIG-Sauer, the national police force of the Czech Republic (Policie Ceske Republiky) adopted a version of the CZ75 Compact designed specifically to meet their requirements. Called the CZ75D (Double-Action) PCR (Police of Czech Republic) Compact, *Soldier Of Fortune* was recently sent a specimen for test and evaluation. Designed by Frantisek Koucky, the vz (for *vzor*, or model) 75 is a most successful blend of innovation together with the best features of several other celebrated pistol designs. Production of the first model of the CZ75



Compact commenced in 1992.

Chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge, the CZ75D PCR Compact has an overall length of 7.2 inches (183 mm) and a height of 5.4 inches (137 mm). Width at the grip panels is 1.4 inches (35 mm). The barrel, 3.9 inches (98.5 mm) in length, has six grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.84 inches. The barrel's feed ramp has been polished to accept the wide range of projectile types used by modern law enforcement agencies. Equipped with a lightweight aluminum alloy frame (a machine-finished forging), the CZ75D PCR Compact weighs only 1.7 pounds (780 g) with an empty magazine. It has a number of features not normally encountered on the CZ75 series.

The CZ75D PCR features a black polymer finish. This two-stage process employs a German polymer lacquer of Swiss design cured over the components, which are first treated with a phosphate ("Parkerized") finish. Chip-free and both wear- and corrosion-resistant, this tough-as-nails polymer finish should not be confused with the far less durable black baked-enamel applied to some CZ75s imported several years ago.

All of the CZ75 series handguns, with the exception of the blowback-operated Kadet .22 LR model, are short-recoil operated, with locking systems modified from the Browning Model 1935 (High Power) and the SIG P210. Two lugs on top of the barrel fit into corresponding recesses in the slide when the weapon is in battery. A bar-

(above) CZ75D PCR Compact 9mm pistol was designed to meet the requirements of the Czech national police and was adopted by them in March 2000. (below) Very early CZ75 (top) with spur hammer and round trigger compared to (bottom) CZ75D Compact with ringed "combat" hammer and with a vertical front surface on the trigger guard containing horizontal gripping serrations.



rel bottom-lug, which is integral with the hammer-forged barrel, is slotted and retained by the slide-stop pin.

As the slide moves rearward, the barrel is forced downward and unlocked by the slide-stop pin. This is a theoretical improvement over the swinging link and pin used on the Colt M1911A1 pistol. The multiple-strand recoil spring and its polymer guide rod seat into a hollow below the barrel, as with the High Power. The head of the guide rod is dimpled to fit a depression on the front face of the barrel nose. The pinned, pivot-type extractor has also been gleaned from the High Power.

The CZ75's hammer mechanism is a

removable subassembly — a composite of those found in the Russian Tokarev TT-33 and Swiss SIG P210 pistols. The hammer's retaining pin is exposed by a small hole in the left side of the frame. Only trained armorers should attempt disassembly of these components. As with the SIG P210, the CZ75's slide rides on rails machined inside the frame. This system reduces side play, provides a longer bearing surface and enhances the pistol's inherent accuracy potential.

Unlike the CZ75B series, the CZ75D PCR Compact cannot be carried in the "locked-and-cocked" condition. It is a double-action pistol with hammer-drop lever on the left side of the frame. The first round is

fired double-action with subsequent rounds fired with the hammer cocked in the single-action mode. Push the hammer-drop lever downward and the hammer will rotate forward to a half-cock position, from which pulling the trigger can fire the pistol.

The double-action mechanism differs from most others. A wraparound trigger bar engages an L-shaped interrupter pinned to the hammer, connecting the two components. Pulling the trigger in double-action pushes the trigger bar and interrupter to release the hammer at the end of the cycle, when the upper surface of the trigger bar is forced down by the sear housing's shoulder. All of the newer "B" and "D" models fea-

## — CZ75B Silver Anniversary Commemorative —



Left-side view of 25th Anniversary CZ75B Commemorative — the hammer, trigger, slide stop lever and axis pin, extractor, manual safety lever and axis pin, grip screws, mainspring plug, and magazine catch/release button have been gold-plated. The walnut grip panels carry floral carving and silver 25th anniversary escutcheons. (inset) Right-side view: the slide, frame and magazines feature a bright nickel finish with attractive floral engraving on the sides of the frame and slide.

Limited to a production run of only 500, the 25th Anniversary CZ75B is an impressive piece, intended for display, not shooting. This commemorative piece features a bright nickel finish on the slide, frame and the two 10-round magazines included. The sights have a standard black-oxide finish. The sides of the slide and frame are covered with attractive floral engraving. The hammer, trigger, slide stop lever and axis pin, extractor, manual safety lever and axis pin, grip screws, mainspring plug, and magazine catch/release button have been gold-plated. The walnut grip panels carry floral carving and silver 25<sup>th</sup>

anniversary escutcheons. The left side of the slide is marked "Silver Anniversary" and below that on the frame is the CZ logo and "CZ75B CAL.9 LUGER." The serial number appears on the barrel, slide and frame on the left side. It states on the frame that this "111 of 500." Included with the pistol is the usual lockable storage box, bore brush, and polymer cleaning rod and magazine loader. This pistol has all the features of the current CZ75B series and is fully functional. This is a marvelous commemorative pistol. I don't intend to ever shoot it and I can only hope my grandsons never do either. The suggested retail price is \$699.

— P.G.K.

ture a firing pin safety of the conventional type. A spring-loaded plunger in the slide must be pushed upward by a lever in the trigger mechanism, which rotates upward as the trigger is pivoted rearward, so the spring-loaded firing pin becomes free to travel forward. After the first round has been fired, the slide re-cocks the hammer and forces the disconnecter to release its engagement with the lower portion of the sear. This allows the sear to pivot rearward to re-engage the full-cock notch. A unique, yet simple, system, it provides the CZ75-series pistols with a smooth double-action trigger pull weight of just about 8.5 to 9 pounds. It was exactly 8.5 pounds on *SOF's* test specimen. The single-action pull weight

was only 3.75 pounds, but exhibited a considerable amount of creep. The trigger on this variant has vertical serrations and a black polymer finish.

Original 13-round magazines for the CZ75 Compact series (the CZ75D PCR is supplied with two 10-round post-ban magazines) have an extended floorplate, curved slightly downward at the front to serve as a stop for the firing hand. These single-position-feed, staggered-column, detachable box-type magazines are of conventional configuration and can be effortlessly disassembled. They have a steel body with a plastic follower. Thirteen-round CZ75 Compact magazines have a steel floorplate. The floorplate/block on the 10-round maga-

zines is made of plastic.

The magazine catch/release button is located where it should be, immediately to the rear of the trigger guard on the frame's left side. A steel component, it has been noticeably extended on this special police model. Magazines fall freely out of the magazine well.

The CZ75D PCR fixed sights are excellent. The blade-type front sight is 0.130-inch thick and carries a single white dot. It's retained to the slide by a roll pin. The rear sight's open square notch is 0.122-inch wide and it can be drifted in its dovetail in the slide for adjustment of lateral zero. It has a white dot on each side of the notch. The rear sight on this particular CZ75 variant is of the so-called "Novak"-type. The sight radius is 5.3 inches. The top of the slide on the entire CZ pistol series has longitudinal serrations running the full length. The Czech national police requested a loaded chamber indicator and when there is a round in the chamber a small pin projects above the top of the slide.

The checkered, black neoprene grip panels are held in place by a sturdy Phillips-head screw on each side that threads directly into the frame. Currently, the CZ75B pistols are provided with a ringed "combat hammer." The one I carried in El Salvador had a spur-type hammer.

Fit and finish of these pistols are flawless. Exterior surfaces are polished until all milling marks are removed. All radiused surfaces exhibit perfect alignment. Everything fits together with just the right amount of tightness. The barrel's rifling cuts and its chamber dimensions have been fabricated to the closest possible tolerances. Barrel, slide and frame all carry the pistol's serial number, in the European manner.

The human engineering applied to the design of these pistols is of the very highest order. The grip tang is exactly the right length to prevent the hammer from biting the web of your hand. The grip frame's distinctive hump melts into the hand as though it were a custom-fitted prosthesis. The grip-to-frame angle is perfect; target acquisition is consequently swift and positive. Most important is the incredible simplicity of the design, when compared to all too many of today's pistols. Take off the grip panels on most of them and you're faced with a maze of springs on the frame just waiting to pop off and take out one of your eyeballs.

Both the frame's front strap and back strap are equipped with vertical serrations to provide a somewhat more aggressive gripping surface. All pistols in the CZ75 series now have trigger guards with a vertical front surface containing horizontal gripping serrations. I prefer the curved M1911-style trigger guards found on the original CZ75. Design changes are not always improvements.

## CUSTOM HOLSTERING THE CZ75D PCR COMPACT

Once again I turned to El Paso Saddlery Co. (Dept. *SOF*, P.O. Box 27194, El Paso, TX 79926; phone: 915-544-2233; fax: 915-544-2535; website: [www.epsaddlery.com](http://www.epsaddlery.com); catalog: \$5) for a rig in which to stuff the CZ75D PCR Compact pistol.

The number of famous lawmen, military personages, gun writers and infamous gun fighters that have worn El Paso Saddlery Co. gunleather over the past one hundred and twenty years is almost overwhelming. The list includes John Wesley Hardin, General George S. Patton, Jr., Ed McGivern, Tom Threepersons, Bill Toney, D.A. "Jelly" Bryce, Bill Jordan and Charlie Askins.

From the almost incredible array of holster designs available from El Paso Saddlery Company's catalog, I selected the #2 "Thumbbreak Holster" (\$65) as best matching the CZ75D Compact's quality and intended application as a law enforcement concealment handgun. It was developed in the 1960s as a police duty rig and outdoor sportsmen's holster and is provided with a thumbbreak snap system that is both secure and easily released. Still a very popular item in their catalog, the body of the #2 is constructed of two pieces of leather forming a natural sight channel, which prevents the front sight from rubbing on the leather and marginally increases the speed of presentation. This holster has an open muzzle. It can be ordered with either with a muzzle rearward rake (also sometimes referred to as an "FBI forward cant"), a vertical cant, or muzzle forward rake for crossdraw at no extra charge. Pigskin lining is a standard feature on the #2 "Thumbbreak." I have mated this holster with a #1-F open single-magazine pouch (\$18) and the #200 "New Ranger Belt" with smooth lining (\$85) in a 1½-inch width.

A basketweave pattern was specified, as it was popular during the time frame when this holster was originally introduced. This is applied entirely by hand at El Paso Saddlery. Some holster makers use embossing plates for this and it inevitably produces uneven results, as natural leather is never completely homogeneous. To order this option add \$12 to the price of the holster, \$20 to the cost of the #200 "New Ranger Belt" and \$3 to the cost of the magazine pouch.

This is great custom leatherwork and a perfect mating for the CZ75D PCR Compact pistol. I can recommend anything in the El Paso Saddlery Company's catalog without reservations of any kind. No other holster maker in this country has been handcrafting leather gear for armed professionals for well over a century.

— P.G.K.



CZ75D PCR Compact pistol with El Paso Saddlery Company's #2 "Thumbbreak" holster and a #1-F open single-magazine pouch with the #200 "New Ranger Belt."



There is a lanyard attachment ring at the heel of the frame's butt on this particular model of the CZ75 series. Lanyard rings are often specified by European law enforcement agencies.

Those accustomed to Browning-designed pistols will find no enigmas in disassembling any of the CZ75 series pistols. Remove the magazine and make certain no cartridge remains in the chamber. Bring the hammer to full-cock. Pull the slide rearward about 1/4-inch until the disassembly witness marks on the left side of the frame and slide are aligned.

Press down and inward on the slide-stop's axis pin which protrudes from the right side of the frame. A non-marring hammer is useful for this purpose. Withdraw the slide-stop from the left side of the frame. Ease the hammer down completely and pull the slide forward to remove this group from the frame. Separate the recoil spring, guide rod and barrel from the slide assembly. The firing pin and its spring, together with the firing pin safety plunger and its spring are held in place by a roll pin through the slide. It is not required to remove these components for normal maintenance and I suggest only a competent gunsmith do this. Remove the grip panels. The magazines are of conventional design and should be disassembled every time the pistol is maintained.

The CZ75D PCR Compact pistol we tested held no surprises for me. The entire CZ75 series remains one of the most reliable and accurate available. We employed Black Hills ammunition (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box

Left side of CZ75B factory cut-away shows recoil spring with guide rod and the pivoting trigger system. Right side of CZ75B factory cut-away clearly shows how the barrel locks to the slide, as well as the right-side trigger bar.

3090, Rapid City, SD 57709; phone: 605-348-5150 — call for the location of your nearest dealer, if there is none, Black Hills will ship to you at retail) to run the CZ75D PCR Compact through its paces: 124-grain

FMJ and both 115-grain and 147-grain JHP rounds featuring Speer Gold Dot bullets. No stoppages of any kind, more than enough accuracy for the purposes intended, and very low perceived recoil, even with its lightweight aluminum alloy frame.

In addition to all of the above attributes, cost makes the entire CZ line exceedingly attractive. Complete with two 10-round magazines, magazine loader, a lockable storage case, trigger lock, cleaning rod and bore brush, the CZ75D PCR Compact carries a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$526. Ceska Zbrojovka also produces an incredible array of other pistols in the CZ75 series, the CZ97B .45 ACP pistol, the CZ100 DAO polymer frame 9mm/.40 S&W pistol, a selective-fire machine pistol version of the CZ75 which uses a spare magazine as a foregrip, a series of bolt-action hunting and sniping rifles (including the new CZ700 Sniper M1 rifle), superposed shotguns, the Model 61

Scorpion submachine gun and the new Lada series of 5.56x45mm and 5.45x39mm assault rifles.

I have no reservations whatever about recommending any handgun in the CZ series. Ceska Zbrojovka is an integral part of the Czech arms industry, which has been providing the world with battle-proven small arms for eight decades. ✕

## CZ75D PCR COMPACT

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** 9mm Parabellum.
- Operation:** Locked-breech, short-recoil, semiautomatic, double-action trigger system with hammer decocking lever on the left side of the frame.
- Weight:** (with an empty magazine) 1.7 pounds (780 g).
- Overall length:** 7.2 inches (183 mm).
- Height:** 5.4 inches (137 mm).
- Width:** 1.4 inches (35 mm) at the grip panels.
- Barrel:** Six grooves with a right-hand rate of twist of one turn in 9.84 inches.
- Barrel length:** 3.9 inches (98.5 mm).
- Finish:** Black polymer.
- Grip panels:** Black checkered neoprene.
- Feed mechanism:** 13- or 10-round, staggered-column, single-position-feed, detachable box-type magazines.
- Sights:** Blade-type front sight 0.130-inch in thickness with a single white dot; 0.122-inch square notch, "Novak"-type rear sight with a white dot on each side of the notch. Rear sight can be drifted in its dovetail in the slide for adjustment of lateral zero. Sight radius is approximately 5.3 inches.
- Price:** \$526, complete with two 10-round magazines, magazine loader, a lockable storage case, trigger lock, cleaning rod and bore brush.
- Manufacturer:** Ceska Zbrojovka Uhersky Brod, a.s. (Dept. SOF, Svatopluka Cecha 1283, 688 27 Uhersky Brod, Czech Republic; phone: 011-420-633-65-11-11; fax: 011-420-633-63-36-65; e-mail: brazda@czub.cz; internet: http://www.czub.cz).
- Importer:** CZ-USA (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 171073, Kansas City, KS 66117-0073; phone: 913-321-1811; fax: 913-321-2251; e-mail: czusa@gvi.net).
- T&E summary:** Superb example of human engineering. Simple design and extremely durable. High standard of reliability. Reasonably priced. Recently adopted by the Czech national police. All the attributes desired in a law enforcement concealment handgun and with a number of special features requested by the national police.

CZ75D PCR Compact pistol, fieldstripped.

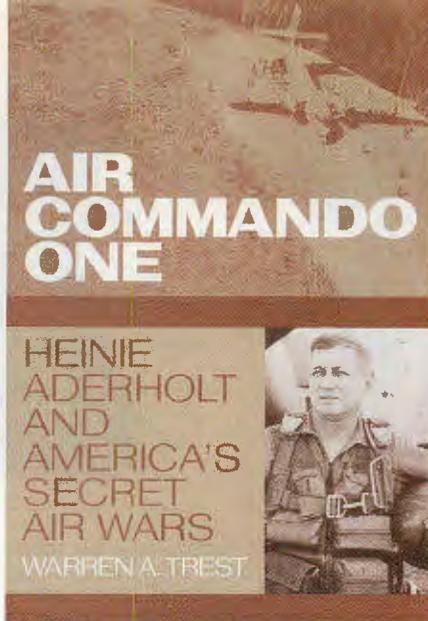


"The times, they are a-changin'"  
by Bob Dylan

This song was the anthem for the '60s generation, growing up on the Vietnam War brought home to them every night on television. As Heinie Aderholt was called back to active service a few months after he was forced to retire in 1973, times were indeed a-changin'.

The story is played out in General Heinie Aderholt's biography, *Air Commando One: Heinie Aderholt And America's Secret Wars*, by Warren A. Trest, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2000.

The Khmer Rouge Communist forces, known at the time to all in Asia for their extreme violence and torture, were sur-



ally ignoring local problems and issues.

Aderholt was right, but in the military, even being "right" can be "wrong." The commanding general of Air Force in Vietnam was convinced that jet fighter bombers designed to fly under enemy radar in Europe to deliver a single nuclear bomb in an all-out nuclear war could and should handle every role found in the guerrilla and conventional warfare in the jungles of Vietnam. He was wrong, but he survived his errors to become Chief of the Tactical Air Command in the U.S., bringing his erroneous beliefs to a new level.

The person who was right, Aderholt, was by contrast "*persona non grata*" in the post-Vietnam Air Force. Aderholt was known and virtually worshipped by those within Special Operations and by some tactical fighter pilots in a large "underground" with-

# HEINIE ADERHOLT AND THE CAMBODIAN WAR

## An American Legend Gets His Star

by Dana K. Drenkowski

Photos courtesy Brig. Gen. Harry C. Aderholt, USAF (Ret.)

rounding Phnom Penh, the capitol of Cambodia. Their forces were reaching throughout Cambodia, trying to take it all. Phnom Penh was literally under siege, with only air routes open for resupply. Death was waiting for all who worked against the vicious Khmer Communists — and for all who had any contacts with western culture, ideas, or people. Numerous foolish pro-left newspaper reporters tried to enter Khmer Rouge country, only to disappear — sometimes their tortured remains were found, sometimes not.

It was October 1973. America had just bailed out of Vietnam after 10 years of frustrating efforts to fight a conventional war with conventional forces. Aderholt had gone on record back in the early phases of that war, saying that U.S. efforts had to focus on training local forces to fight Communist insurgents. Aderholt, then a Colonel in charge of U.S. Air Force SpecOps forces in Vietnam and an officer with extensive service already in low-key wars in S.E. Asia, strongly criticized U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force efforts to solve the problem with conventional U.S. forces, shoving aside the local military while virtu-



Colonel Aderholt in the cockpit of an AT-28 at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.

ally ignoring local problems and issues.

Aderholt came to Vietnam with great experience in getting the job done in guerrilla and unconventional operations. He was a transport pilot veteran of World War II who had gone on to make a name for himself in the Korean war, dropping agents and South Korean guerrilla forces deep behind enemy lines. He was in charge of units responsible for delivering the goods to and from those hazardous operations for both the CIA and the U.S. Army.

Aderholt was then used off and on by the CIA and U.S. military forces for the next 20 years for the "black Ops" of the military and U.S. government, operating mostly in Asia throughout the 1950s and early '60s, until he became enmeshed in the Vietnam War as the Air Commando commander ("Air Commando One") for units working from Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam.

He was known as a man who could get the job done with little or no support. Among his other accomplishments, his operations flew supplies and dropped guerrillas into Tibet in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He combined civilian pilots and gov-

ernment airplanes to do the work, and went around regulations often to complete the task. There was no doubt that assigning Aderholt to the job would result in success in the air end of any operation.

Like his Army counterpart, General Jack Singlaub, Aderholt became identified with Air Force SpecOps end of the Vietnam war, where his units, flying propeller-powered WWII-era airplanes, accounted for more targets destroyed on the Ho Chi Minh Trail than all the jet units in SE Asia. His successes did not go unnoticed by his archenemy, the Air Force commander who wanted only jet forces in Vietnam and who wanted complete control of all air power in that war — Aderholt answered to the U.S. Ambassador to Laos and the CIA's country teams for Ops in Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Aderholt's unit successes were delib-

ans in the future will have in determining the successes or failures of the United States Air Force in the Vietnam war:

*The Air Force considered [General] Momyer to be its leading authority on tactical air power during the Vietnam era, and his direction of air operations in Southeast Asia went unchallenged even after we lost the war. That Momyer was chosen by the steering committee to oversee the final report for Project Corona Harvest, a self-evaluation of USAF operations in Southeast Asia, was an indication that the Air Force did not want an objective analysis of its role in the war.*

— Trest, on page 217, citing Aderholt

manding officer in the Air Force.

### Liberation Atrocities

Cambodia, in 1973, was facing increased warfare from the Khmer Rouge. Leftists in the United States, particularly in Congress, stopped American bombing operations in support of the anti-communist forces. Those bombing operations were necessary in part because of the emphasis placed by the American Air Force commander's philosophy that American tactical and strategic bombers could handle the Khmer problem without training a Khmer Air Force to handle its own support. Once the American air support was withdrawn, the

Lieutenant Colonel Aderholt in civilian clothes following the crash of helio at Lima Site 20, Sam Thong, Laos in June 1962. →



erately buried from the public in the overall "Air Force" numbers, which were used to show the effectiveness of jet fighter bombers and B-52 bombers in roles for which they were unsuited.

Aderholt returned to the U.S. in 1968, after years of working in and out of S.E. Asia, ever since the 1950s, only to find out his new commander, the new Chief of Tactical Air Command, was the archenemy who wanted to prove only jet aircraft were needed to do the job. Aderholt further antagonized that general officer by advocating the development of prop-driven planes firing guns out the side for troop support. Known first as Spooky "gunships" in their C-47 mode, they achieved wide fame and use in every Air Force theater in their C-130 guise, known as Specter gunships. Aderholt was one of the first proponents of such weapons, which fell under his control as head of the Air Commandos.

### A "Shoe-In" For General

A man of his experience, caliber, and accomplishments should have been a shoe-in for general officer. But his enemies in the Air Force included some of the most powerful men in that organization; men whose tactics and plans were being proven wrong about Vietnam and who hated having someone around who could say "I told you so."

A remarkable comment by Aderholt's biography points out the difficulties histori-

and USAF General Ryan.

It was as if Janet Reno were asked to conduct an investigation and history of her handling of Waco and the Justice Department — there would be no unbiased evaluation of the U.S. Air Force's role in that war, and none for historians to review in the future.

Aderholt returned to S.E. Asia to head up the Air Force Advisory Group in Bangkok, where he led the U.S. to provide the kind of aid to a friendly military that he advised for Vietnam years earlier. Here he was more successful. It was a minor role, working with the Thai government and officers. But he did here what he was advocating for Vietnam in the early years: Train the local military to handle its own problems and train for that problem, not for European-style warfare in the jungle. When Aderholt left Thailand after several years, that country's forces were ready. The guerrilla challenge died quickly in Thailand, unlike in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Aderholt returned to the U.S. in 1972, a veteran of more than six years in operations in the S.E. Asia war. He knew he was not to be promoted to general rank. He intended to draft a "lessons learned" after-action report and retire as a Colonel, after three wars and more experience in commanding air combat forces than just about any com-

key ingredient keeping the Khmer Rouge out of power was gone.

In the United States Congress, a leftist regime held hearings on ways to keep the United States from providing any support to what the Left saw as the worse alternative to Communism. They heard from sympathizers to the Khmer Rouge, such as Jane Fonda's husband, Tom Hayden, who traveled in Khmer Rouge areas and reported that they were decent folks. Congress heard his testimony, while deliberately downplaying or ignoring warnings from better placed and less biased Marxist French priests working in Cambodia. Those priests, shocked by the form of Communism they saw, reported that the Khmer Rouge were involved in consistent, authorized, and ongoing, utterly inexplicable atrocities in the areas they controlled. The priests tried to warn an American Leftist Congress that they were giving indirect aid (by canceling military assistance to the Cambodian government) to the most evil Communists in the world at the time. These French priests were practicing the popular "liberation theology" in which Communism was seen as what Jesus would want if he were here. No one asked Jesus, but it is clear that his philosophy of turning the other cheek was not practiced by the Khmer Rouge.

Congress, taking its lead from the

American Left, took the position that America was a fascist nation, or at best, was supporting fascist nations, and that truth and justice lay with Communist regimes. United States aid was cut back and later halted by this activist, anti-American Congress as Communist forces approached the front gates of various countries in the third world. Yet the United States earlier made commitments to countries asking to fight Communist aggression and tyranny. Those in the military and some in government did all that could be done to support our allies or to save those who were about to go under. Even the efforts to save those who worked for us were frequently blocked by the Left in Congress.

The United States had to do something with nothing. Thus, the call went to Aderholt, the man most feared and hated by the establishment of the U.S. Air Force. There was no other choice. No one else could pull the chestnuts out of the fire, even if he was an abrasive, non-traditional and—threat of all threats — an imaginative operator who wanted only to get the job done, regardless of doctrine.

Colonel Harry C. "Heinie" Aderholt was one of America's premier secret warfare operatives — a man who got things done, but who rubbed the military's established order the wrong way. Left with enemies in high places, who resented his being right on the Vietnam War, he was given no choice but to retire as a colonel rather than be promoted, as he justly deserved, to brigadier general. He was America's most experienced and successful Air Force SpecOps officer, and he was forced to retire without making general rank.

It is axiomatic that even if an officer is right and doctrine is wrong, his stand will cost him his career. Men of lesser breadth of imagination, who almost always make it to the top in any military, will resent his being right and will eliminate the threat to their own reputations.

When things were going to hell in Cambodia, the Air Force's highest-ranking officers realized only one man could handle the mess and called for Heinie to be pulled out of retirement. *Air Commando One* does not go into specifics about this, but it is reputed that Heinie held out for that general's star he was denied when on active service. "No star, no go" effectively was the reported demand from the Colonel. The Air Force, with Heinie's worst antagonist already retired himself, caved in. A proud and now vindicated Heinie Aderholt returned to service as a one-star general.

This writer knows General Aderholt from personal experience and can attest to his reputation throughout the Air Force and CIA. *Air Commando One; Heinie Aderholt and America's Secret Air Wars*, provides a unique insight into the Cambodian support operations the U.S. military engaged in during the next two years, as the cutbacks and stoppage of aid finally took effect, leaving the Cambodian government to fall to Communists who then engaged in a cam-



A-1 of the 602nd ACSq delivers ordnance in Laos, 1967.

paign to kill upwards of one-fourth the population of that little nation.

Aderholt arrived in Thailand, where he had previously spent several tours working for the CIA and Air Force, in late 1973. He immediately re-established relations with contacts within the Thai military, using personal connections to work with the Thai commanders and government.

The Congressional prohibition against U.S. Military involvement in the Cambodian war did not keep all Americans out of that country. Aderholt, in prior assignments involving Laos, was familiar with the work Air America did in that country. Air America was dissolving, so Aderholt turned to a contractor he knew did a good job in S.E. Asia in the past, Bird and Sons, headquartered in Oakland, California.

#### Bird Air Flies

Aderholt's work on Cambodia was instrumental in keeping that country afloat against the Khmer Rouge for the next two years. He arranged for the contract with Bird and Sons, which then quickly hired newly retired military aircrews, all with

recent experience in C-130 aircraft. Bird Air, as the airplane division of that company was known, took five Cambodian C-130s to begin the airlift to Phnom Penh. Other C-130s were added later. Bird Air flew under U.S. Air Force regulations for flight safety, loading data, and crew rest requirements.

But this wasn't enough. Aderholt was aware from earlier work supporting the Tibetan guerrilla war that Air Force C-130s were not used to their maximum limits. A C-130E could safely carry a 55,000-pound payload, but had been restricted for peacetime safety reasons to 30,000 pounds or less. What shocked Aderholt was his discovery that those "peacetime" safety requirements had been kept up throughout the Vietnam war.

"That made me wonder how much tonnage and how many aircraft we wasted during years of combat flying less than a wartime military load," Aderholt said.

— Trest, page 247

Phnom Penh's minimum requirement for survival was 600 tons, comprising 15 tons general cargo, 45 tons of fuel, and 540

tons of ammunition and rice. The requirement could be met using available aircraft and crews flying 25 tons per day, if the loads were increased to the real wartime limits. Until Aderholt and his team looked at the problem of "peacetime" safe loads, each sortie was carrying 16.3 tons, with 24 sorties per day (they had available up to 27 sorties). By going to 25 tons, and still staying below the wartime emergency load limits, Aderholt increased the amounts going to Phnom Penh enough to meet the 600-ton requirement. He also waived the time crews could fly, making them fly up to 160 hours per month, without affecting safety.

"Air America and Continental Air Service operated at comparable flying rates for many years without degrading aircrew effectiveness or compromising safety," [Aderholt] advised.

— Trest, *ibid.*

Commercial DC-8 cargo jets from Airlift International and World Airways were also used to supplement the airlift, freeing up some of the C-130s to provide supplies to isolated Cambodian forces elsewhere in the country.

Heinie wasn't just interested in Cambodia. He knew Vietnam was a losing proposition after the "peace agreements" left a huge North Vietnamese Army in place in portions of South Vietnam. Heinie was afraid that many U.S. aircraft would be captured in South Vietnam if that country fell. He worked out a surreptitious plan to move all damaged or non-working aircraft to Thailand for repair, keeping the repaired planes in that country unless needed in Vietnam. At least half the South Vietnamese Air Force was in need of repair at any given time, so this was a significant move. Heinie took the plan through a "back channel" to the Pentagon for approval. His immediate civilian boss in Thailand, Eric von Marbod of the Secretary of Defense's office, called Heinie in anger, telling him to stop.

"Oh, he was irate," Aderholt recalled. ... "Goddamn it, you get off the air," he stormed at Aderholt. "I gave you that star, and I will take it away from you." Aderholt stated, "That's your prerogative." Later, when "things started really going to hell," Aderholt said he got another call from Erich. He asked, "Heinie, have you got that plan? Brush it off. I'm coming back out there to implement it."

"And he did," Aderholt said.

— Trest, page 244

## A Stab In The Back?

Aderholt managed to save hundreds of aircraft from capture when the stuff hit the fan. But the story illustrates one of the anomalies of Aderholt's career. He often worked for two or more bosses: one in the State Department or CIA and one in the military. This placed him in the middle of serious "turf" battles between those organizations. But it was also a situation which Aderholt could use to his advantage. He used those "back channels" to make things happen when doctrine or incompetence got in the way of accomplishing the task. And he went outside those channels to engage civilians as well, when needed. Aderholt had a lot of respect for von Marbod, who



In April 1975, H'mong refugees are evacuated from Long Tieng secret air base in Laos in a C-130 arranged by General Aderholt.

was to him one of the unrecognized heroes in bureaucracy who fought as hard as Aderholt did to win.

At one point, in March 1976, Aderholt was ordered to send a private back-channel "eyes only" message to higher Air Force headquarters, giving his views about the situation, which sometimes differed from the views of his civilian bosses. Aderholt was normally required to report through the American Embassy, which was then under the ambassadorship of Charlie Whitehouse. The Air Force wanted his unfiltered description of events, which it had not been getting when the messages were rewritten by civilians to conform to policy (a common problem throughout the Vietnam War, with both military and civilian government employees). When Ambassador found out about the supposedly "eyes only" report, he blew up.

"You have stabbed me in the back." Aderholt tried to explain that he wore two hats and had been asked by Admiral Gayler's headquarters [in fact he was ordered to provide the report by a Lieutenant General officer at that headquarters] to summarize the situation through back channels. Clearly stated in the message was the fact that it had not

been coordinated with the embassy.

"It doesn't matter," the ambassador said. I have lost confidence. I have talked to Admiral Gayler, and we have decided to relieve you."

"Fine," Aderholt replied. "If you will let me use the telephone, I will call General Jones [Air Force Chief of Staff] now and tell him, and I should be able to get out of here in twenty-four hours."

"That's a little hasty," Whitehouse said. "We need you for the withdrawal. We have decided the first of May would be a good date."

A few days later the ambassador called and asked, "Could you play golf with me today?"

While on the links, Whitehouse said, "I have been thinking — since the withdrawal is going so well, you should stay on until August, if that is all right with you."

"Mr. Ambassador, it doesn't really make any difference to me either way," Aderholt said. "I was recalled to come over here. I can stay or I can leave. But if you have lost confidence in me, I don't see how you can have me sticking around."

"Well, maybe it is not as bad as it seems," Whitehouse said.

— Trest, pages 256-57

Clearly, all thought Aderholt was the man for the job, no matter

what.

Aderholt saw America's allies, the H'mong tribesmen in Laos, being abandoned, again by the so-called peace treaties during his tour as a general in Thailand. Without going through any channels, he called a private airline company and arranged quietly to have one of their C-130s stop off in Long Tieng, Laos, to pick up over 300 refugee H'mongs as that base was being evacuated. It was the last C-130 to leave that critical base near the *Plain des Jars*, in Laos. Little acts like this made Aderholt a miracle worker and an angel of mercy to thousands of the innocent indigenous people of the countries we were involved in. No one else cared enough for the victims and pawns of international politics and agreements to do something like that.

When the fall of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam all came at about the same time, Aderholt was a prime contributor to the salvation of over 200 aircraft from those countries, and to thousands of our allies.

Dana Drenkowski, a U.S. Air Force Academy grad, Vietnam veteran and long-time SOF contributor, now practices law in the San Francisco, CA, area. ✕

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## I Was There

Continued from page 35

our drill instructor's ghost hovering at our backs. No one fidgets and no one moves.

As Clinton speaks, the Marines bellow out the *Marine Corps Hymn* in one, thundering voice. "... we will fight our country's battles ... and to keep our honor clean ..."

We are returning fire with a vengeance. Amazingly, no one forgets the words and we all finish together. The Army Airborne contingent starts the Army song. But after a few lines it peters out. Too many have forgotten the words.

"Want us to sing your song, too?" a Marine biker snidely quips. But there is affectionate respect underneath.

And then it was finished. Clinton flees to his limousine and a stylish female TV pundit will later call us "a few disgruntled veterans." She doesn't mention we were a few thousand — if she even knew, or cared.

One journalist tells me later he wrote the true story but it was killed by the editors. Surprise, surprise. An editor tells me if we had stormed The Wall he would have covered it. Thanks.

He probably meant the casualty list.

The captain calls us to attention one last time.

"Well done, men! I'm proud of you. God bless you and have a good life.

The guideons are furled and the ranks dissolve. We embrace each other and the Brotherhood disperses. I go up to the captain and shake hands.

Then I walk alone, away from The Wall, across the green spring grass of the Mall towards the Tidal Basin where my car is parked.

For some reason, I think of that field at Gettysburg where my brothers-in-law and I walked one hot summer's afternoon with their young sons; where Pickett and his Virginians passed into legend and General Lee rode out to meet the survivors. And where fresh flowers are still placed at the monument that honors them.

I pass a disabled vet selling beer from a styrofoam cooler. I buy two and give him five bucks. "*Semper Fi*, bro."

Three vets on Harleys rumble by, tiny MIA flags fluttering on their antennas. They return my raised-fist salute.

I nod to a Park policeman. He ignores me. I drive towards home and my family. The Virginia countryside is green and fragrant on that warm afternoon and I think about what I have seen this day. And I feel grateful. It has been a beautiful day.

For in the end, we were all but humble supplicants before that damned and honored Wall, watched as we were, no doubt, with bemused love by those chisled ghosts within that granite mirror of our nation's soul.

*Semper Fi*, my brothers. And rest in peace.

— John Schalestock USMC, 1960 —  
1964 ✕

What an adrenaline rush! I'm ready to go!" "I expect to win," Convertito told the group. "I'm number one right now."

So who won?

At the end of Team A's heat, O'Malley was in first place. But when the B Team came onto the track for their final heat everything changed. Because he had the best lap time from the previous sessions with Team B, Zientara entered the track last. Part way through the heat he was running well and had passed the other drivers to take first place. But then he spun out. That put him behind both Brown and Fotis.

Even with all the maintenance the race team does on the trucks, however, things can go wrong. As the B team neared the end of their heat, Fotis tried to pass Brown on the straightaway.

He didn't make it. The truck he was driving suddenly lost power, and smoke and steam blew out of the engine. As he coasted to a stop in the straightaway, the pit crew dashed onto the track with fire extinguishers.

"Get me outta here! I'm on fire!" yelled Fotis, by then nearly somersaulting unscathed through his driver's side window. The "surviving" drivers stopped and waited while the pit crew pushed the disabled truck off the track.

Zientara had a chance to take the lead once more. "I made up my mind that I was not going to have to pass anyone else again," he said. He held onto first place, and his average lap time — 18 seconds — meant that he had a lock on the win.

At the end of the day, all the drivers agreed that it was worth the trip.

"I've been following Bob Brown around the world for quite awhile, "Patrick O'Malley said. "This is a lot of fun, and a lot less work than most of the things I've done with Bob."

Jim Fotis agreed.

"This is a lot more fun than hunting camp," he said. "I don't have to wait for a deer to come out. And it's definitely warmer!"

"My wife said she expected me to come home in a bodybag," Rich Convertito said. "But this has been a ball."

So the 2000 SOF/Southern Thunder truck race is now history, won by a stockbroker from Bradenton, Florida.

Carolee Boyles is Creative Director of The Phalanx Group, a public relations and marketing firm located in Tampa, FL.

For information on next year's race (date to be determined), please write Race, c/o SOF, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303.

For more on Southern Thunder, write The Phalanx Group, P.O. Box 320775, Tampa, FL 33679.

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## Omega Proving Ground

Continued from page 53

The scope is a fixed 10X power, with a tough, etched-glass, round-shaped Mil Dot reticle. The scope tube is 32mm in diameter and the objective lens is 42mm. The model tested was a prototype made with a bullet drop compensator for the MK211 Raufoss round (a high explosive round) with drop calculated to 2,000 meters. The optic is clear to the edges and withstood a great deal of abuse. It is a side focus adjustment type. The system was field-tested for several days. The turrets are protected by heavy aluminum caps and sealed with "O" rings. I worked with the scope/rifle combination to 1,000 meters. Additional BDC wheels are being considered for sales with the scope. I would like to see BDCs for all standard caliber combinations such as the .308 Winchester with the 175-grain round and the .300 Winchester with the 190-grain round. The system performed well in the field with no potential problems found. The U.S. Army has not made a decision as to using the new Barrett scope or the current issue Leupold MK4 M1 16X scope on the final system.

The weapon can be assembled and disassembled in less than 30 seconds. If an easier take down system exists in the .50-caliber rifle set, I do not know of it.

No matter how light and easy it is to assemble a rifle, the real thing that matters is the ability to hit targets. This sample was abused to say the least. Over 500 rounds were fired through it. Ammunition is critical in all weapons and the .50s are notorious for mediocre accuracy. This rifle killed that notion as it held many five-shot groups at ¾ minute of angle at 1,000 meters, with Arizona Ammunition Companies competition grade 750-grain AMAX loading. PMC M33 ball Lot #5 ammo held about 1½ to 2 minutes of angle at the same distance. This is exceptional shooting for any rifle, let alone a hard target weapon.

A test to see if the rifle would repeat zero was done. The weapon was taken apart and reassembled between each shot until a five-shot group was fired. Several five-shot groups were fired in this manner. With the scope, action and barrel all taken down between each shot, the system was able to hold one minute of angle at 1,000 meters.

Based on my observations the system will serve the snipers well for hard target operations.

*Mike Miller is a sergeant in a large California police agency.*

Barrett Manufacturing, Dept. SOF, PO Box 1007, Murfreesboro, TN 37144; phone: 615-896-2938.

Arizona Ammunition Company, Dept. SOF, 21421 North 14th Ave, Ste. E, Phoenix, AZ 85027; phone: 623-516-9004. ☒

## H'mong Struggle

Continued from page 39

offerings were made, and prayers were spoken for my safety. Clearly, they worked.

Prayers, though, often need some tangible assistance. It is here that the H'mong resistance has stumbled.

The precise origin of the recent summer attacks is not clear — apparently they did come from Vang Pao's adherents. Such has been a typical methodology, pin-pricks which may serve a purpose but lack staying power. In contrast, deep inside Laos, it is Chao Fa that carries on the good fight.

Rarely, if ever, do the two resistance strands intertwine.

This has weakened the H'mong effort. Weakness of another sort has come from a recent move by assimilated H'mong within the United States to call it a day and get on with the business of building "constructive ties" with the Lao government.

Such suggestions have prompted their own backlash, further dividing the H'mong. Interestingly, it again seems to be Chao Fa adherents who have traveled tirelessly seeking to hold the H'mong community together.

Their viewpoint is simple: They will work within the laws while in their adopted homeland, but the struggle must continue at home. It is all that stands between the H'mong people and annihilation.

As one Chao Fa combat veteran puts it, "When the Lao cannot wipe out the Chao Fa, they turn to destroy the innocent H'mong under their control. Now, the H'mong people clearly understand Vientiane's intention to exterminate the H'mong nationalities.

"Many H'mong citizens under their control have [therefore] escaped to join the Chao Fa resistance. This year, the struggle against the Lao has been fierce and has spread throughout the northern parts of Laos.

"From the year 2000 and beyond is the new Millennium, when human beings will awaken and explore their capacity to face new challenges. We will do the same. I believe that the situation in Laos will be worse and worse until the people of Laos can reach their goal of freedom and democracy."

Such noble sentiments are worthy of our support.

*Those wishing to donate to a fund for provision of non-lethal aid to H'mong communities should contact:*

*Brigadier General Harry C. Aderholt, USAF (Ret.)*

*Far Eastern Interiors*

*23 Miracle Strip Parkway, S.E.*

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*E-Mail: [heinieac@gnt.net](mailto:heinieac@gnt.net)*

*Dr. Tom Marks, an SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent, is a graduate of West Point. ☒*

Of the major powers involved in World War II, only Germany and the Soviet Union understood the tactical implications of the submachine gun and prepared accordingly prior to the commencement of hostilities. The professional officer corps of both the United States and Great Britain were still far too busy arguing the merits of the saber versus the lance in a cavalry charge to bother with burp guns.

The situation turned desperate for the British after the fall of Dunkirk. The English ordered substantial quantities of the Thompson submachine gun (aka the "Gangster Gun" by the typically snobby and overbearing English), but they were too expensive. Ordered to copy the German Schmeisser MP28II (eventually produced by Sterling as the Lanchester and used principally by the British navy), Harold Turpin, the Senior Draftsman in the Design Department at the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield, realized it was far too complex to manufacture in the quantities required for a reasonable cost. He sketched a simple trigger mechanism at his dining room table and the next day showed it to Major Reginald Shepard, the Inspector of Armaments in the Ministry of Supply Design Department at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich. This was the inauspicious beginning of what became known as the Sten — named after Shepard, Turpin and ENgland.

More than four million Stens were eventually manufactured in five service Marks and two sound-suppressed versions at six different locations in Great Britain and in Canada and New Zealand as well. It became the most imitated submachine gun in the world.

Captain Peter Laidler, author of *The Guns of Dagenham* and a trained armorer of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), has written what is clearly the final word on the Sten. This impressively exhaustive book covers everything anyone could ever want to know about the Sten and much more.

The topics covered include biographical sketches of Shepherd and Turpin; the birth of the Sten; prototypes and pilot models; all of the five service Marks (including the "Magnificent Mk5") in great detail; experimental models; the silenced Stens; the Canadian, Australian and "Kiwi" Stens; World War II Danish, Norwegian, and Polish resistance Stens; Nazi clones; Belgian, Nationalist Chinese, Israeli, Indonesian and Croatian postwar copies; how the Sten works; parts and part makers; modifications and repairs; Sten gun myths; training; accessories and ancillaries; and U.S. "aftermarket" Stens.

The photos and line drawings are exceptional throughout. The text covers every possible topic in incredible detail and is crisply written. This is an absolute must acquisition for every student of modern military small arms. It has my highest possible endorsement. ✕

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## Brits Play RUF

Continued from page 58

in Freetown, was that the Sierra Leone operation was not simply a collection of British military air sea and land assets that had been dispatched abroad. His Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) provided what he termed "a tactically configurational entity that is available for immediate use, anywhere we chose to send it."

There were roughly 2,500 servicemen and women on permanent standby for any eventuality, he disclosed. Their role, he said, might include force protection, air defense (anti-surface and anti-submarine) "and brought with it 30 days of sustained operational capability."

### A Self-Contained Force

In Sierra Leone, for instance, the group's immediate firepower included fixed-wing aircraft from the carrier, rotary assets (armed Lynx helicopters), indirect fire support batteries of 105mm guns as well as nine 81mm mortars, some of them mounted.

"Because we are mobile and with our own air, land and maritime elements, it was not necessary to develop a beachhead ... we can — within certain parameters — go in just about where we like," he said.

By the time that the full force had arrived in Freetown — one of the largest natural harbors in the world and a gathering point for Allied convoys during WW II and for the Falklands 40 years later — it comprised 4,500 personnel, with 1,350 ashore. A classified number of aircraft, as well as seven Royal Navy ships and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries were lying off Freetown at one stage.

What was interesting about the entire venture was the narrow timeframe in which it was executed: literally a couple of days. The British Chief of Joint Operations was aware that because of the chronic political situation in the country, the JTFHQ had a window of about 24 hours — at the outset 48 hours — to get in, grab a foothold and consolidate the situation militarily before the rebels arrived. Without Lungi Airport, overlooking the main harbor, Sierra Leone would have been lost.

Then the RUF would have had a gateway to the world. As Liberia proved a while back, the rebels would have been very difficult to dislodge one they were ensconced in a strongpoint that provided adequate air access, which is one of the reasons why the rebels have been making such a determined bid to move south from Rogberi since then. Their prime target, now, is Lungi.

### Replacing UN-effective Forces

Domestically, at the beginning, the scene was frantic. In one of his last interviews before returning to Britain, Brigadier David Richards told *SOF* what he found when he got to west Africa:

"When we got here, the UN presence

was in a state of collapse. After assessing the situation for a day, I warned the UN Force Commander, Indian Army General Jetley, that if he didn't do something positive and quickly to revitalize the situation, the population could well turn on his blue berets. I actually feared for their safety. Many of the locals felt the UN had betrayed them," Brig. Richards declared.

The situation was getting worse by the hour, he said, and went on: "Already there was some rebel units deployed at Newton, not far from the capital. Meanwhile, completely demoralized by the turnabout — coupled to the inability of the UN to react — government forces had given up just about everything except their weapons: many had gone so far as to hide their uniforms." Worse, said Richards, the government was at the point of capitulating. The President had ordered a chartered helicopter be parked at his lodge for the previous six days. It was clear that he intended getting away if he had to, though he probably was thinking like one of his predecessors, President Momoh who did just that when he was deposed by a squad of junior officers.

About all that was working by the time that Richards and his team arrived was a lone government Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunship flown by a former South African mercenary Neall Ellis. "Very effectively it kept the rebels from taking the city, he said." Five weeks later, a British military presence in Sierra Leone had stabilized the situation enough for it to withdraw.

A sidelight to recent developments is Washington's sudden involvement in West African politics, obviously at the behest of Tony Blair's government.

### The Liberian Connection

On 16 July, Thomas Pickering, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, told Liberia's President Charles Taylor, while on a visit to Monrovia, that he was to stop messing about in Sierra Leone. Either that or face the consequences, he said.

"Liberia has become the primary patron and benefactor of the Revolutionary United front rebels," noted Pickering. He warned bluntly, almost in as many words, that if immediate steps were not taken, then his government would do what has to be done. "There will be consequences very severe for our bilateral relationship," he cautioned.

A source in Washington has intimated that one of the first steps being mooted, is the suspension of the registration of American (and all allied) ships on the Liberian register. That precedent is already in place; similar restrictions were imposed on Panama when Noriega's government became a target.

"It would be a simple matter to do it again," he reckoned.

*Al J. Venter lives in Washington state, and has been SOF's contributing editor for Africa for some two decades. He has seen governments change and borders change, but the conflicts remain the same. ✕*

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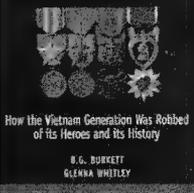
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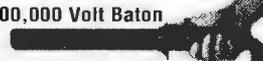
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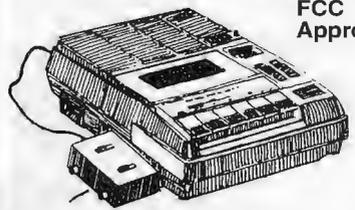
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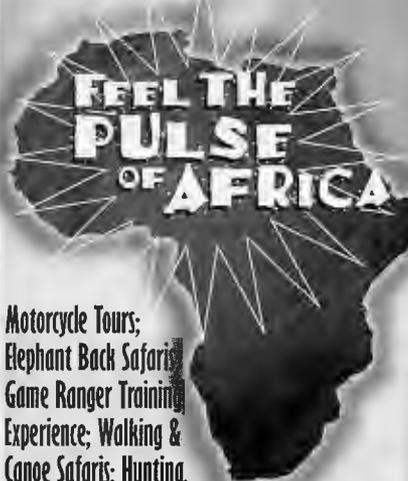
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by Col. David H. Hackworth (Ret.)

## Military Readiness Is Not A Political Game!

Justin P.D. Wilcox resigned last week over the plague that's destroying our Army. He was a future George Marshall or Dwight Eisenhower. This nation's armed forces cannot continue to lose such dedicated patriots.

Here, in his own words, is why he quit in disgust:

"Listening to the secretary of defense and top brass dispute the Bush/Cheney readiness claims has reaffirmed my decision to leave the Army as a captain this month. I served for the past five years in a declining institution which needs urgent help from its top leadership. My decision to leave the Army stems from my refusal to live the 'readiness lie' portrayed by the nation's top leaders.

"In the age of 'do more with less,' the most frequent topic of discussion for today's Army junior officer is the decision to leave the military. Accordingly, the top brass express their concern with the large numbers of captains departing the Army between four and six years of service. Their concern is so great that they surveyed majors with at least 10 years of service to discover why captains were leaving. It is hard to find out what is wrong when you really do not want to know.

"I was excited to begin my Army career after graduating from West Point in June of 1995, but over the next five years my zeal diminished. I realized that the brass and political leaders expected 110 percent capability but resourced for 50 percent. I received soldiers from Basic Training who could not pass fitness tests, qualify with their weapons, or uphold basic discipline standards.

"At Fort Bragg (N.C.), as a combat engineer in the XVIII Airborne Corps, my unit shot its weapons with live rounds only once a year for qualification and once a year for a live-fire exercise, due to ammunition constraints. Vehicles and equipment were rarely used during the months of August and September due to budgetary constraints at the end of the fiscal year. Newly fielded equipment did not meet the specifications of the equipment it replaced and only became reliable after at least two years of retrofits and recalls. (It is probably not known that from December 1998 until this summer, every new 2.5- and 5-ton vehicle on Fort Bragg, as well as the Army, could not be driven over 35 mph until retrofitted to prevent the drive shaft from dropping during movement and causing the vehicle to flip.) On a weekly basis, I saw more attention placed on landscaping and



*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.*

details in the unit area than on training soldiers in the field.

"For those who claim these statements are merely subjective, I can offer further proof of the poor unit readiness I witnessed. For two years I participated in the unit readiness report for my battalion, as the project officer for the report and the head of battalion maintenance. Throughout the past year, maintenance or personnel issues have prevented achievement of top readiness ratings.

"Excellence is no longer the standard. The pursuit of mediocrity has become the norm. When will a general officer finally lay his stars on the table and stand up to the current administration for his soldiers?

"Junior officers stand where the 'rubber meets the road.' They have the responsibilities of preparing their soldiers for battle and ultimately to prepare them in such manner as to prevent casualties due to inexperience or lack of training. When the brass decide their objectives, the lieutenants and captains bear the responsibility of taking these objectives.

"Retired Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf stated in his autobiography that a commander can delegate authority, but never responsibility. I realized that in the future I could be responsible for the deaths of too many men who could have been saved by proper training.

"I was not prepared to sacrifice good men, knowing that their deaths could have been avoided. I could not in good conscience continue to live the lie of our current readiness.

"When the next round of bloodshed by U.S. servicemen happens due to lack of preparation, the current brass and civilian/political leaders should be responsible for signing the following casualty notification letters:

"Dear Mrs. Smith, I regret to inform you of the death of your son. His death is my fault, for I did not properly train him."

Thank you for your rare courage, Captain Wilcox.

<http://www.hackworth.com> is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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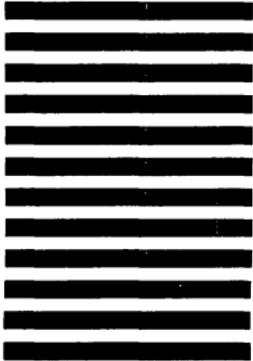
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