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On the Cover

Personnel of the Dayton, Ohio Police Department during SWAT (Special Weapons & Tactics Training). See story, page 48.

FEATURES

FBI CRIME LAB CATASTROPHE by J.D. Cash with Roger Charles **32**
It's indeed difficult to imagine that the 1987 major explosion and resulting fires inside the Hoover Building was not national news. Thanks to *SOF*, now it is.

SECRET SOVIET SNIPER AMMO by David M. Fortier **36**
Russian sniper rifles are no mystery, but their loads were — until the author began his personal analyses.

EXPATS AT WAR by Don North **40**
Far from being a boozy prohibition turf-war scenario, there's more to bombing attacks on Westerners in Saudi Arabia than indig. investigators are telling.

MUGABE'S MADNESS TAKES HOLD IN ZIMBABWE by Al J. Venter **44**
Hitler had nothing on the current Zimbabwean ruler and his coterie of murderous thugs. And critics branded Ian Smith repressive.

POLICE, RACE AND THE FOURTH ESTATE by Fred Reed **48**
A lot of very brave cops are going on strike. Why? Because they're quicksanded by media propaganda cuffs which prohibit their color-blind dispensing of justice.

KERREY UNDER FIRE by James Webb **52**
What Bob Kerrey was involved in was not an atrocity — but an extremely tragic consequence of war for which he's paying dearly.

OMEGA PROVING GROUND by Mike Miller **54**
Valtro 1998 A1: No cheap parts in this baby. Ever heard the saying "best before profit?" Valtro did.

ENEMY AT THE GATES by Frank Hopkins **56**
As the new movie *Pearl Harbor* hits the screens, *SOF* looks at another Japanese attack on American soil: the shelling of — the Santa Barbara coastline!

PRACTICAL COMPETITION by Frank W. James **62**
A complete rundown on the IDPA National Championships from hot, sultry and friendly Mississippi.



Emily K. Nickerson



AP Photo/John Moore



courtesy Al J. Venter

COLUMNS

Command Guidance	4	Adventure Quartermaster	26
An Open Letter to President Stipe Mesic of Croatia		Effortless Mauser Scope Mount	
Bulletin Board	6	I Was There	28
Hill Tribe Refugees Taking A Beating		Out Of Control	
Get Your Gear	12	World Sitrep	30
Adventure Medical Kits		Supply Depot	75
Flak	14	Classifieds	78
Militarized Law Enforcement?		Advertisers' Index	82
Battle Blades	19	Product Index	81
Becker Magnum Camp Knife		Sound Off	81
Keep 'Em Shooting	22	Here We Go Again	
Model 1898 Mauser, Standard for the World			
Fighting Holsters	24		
Classic M1916			

COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

An Open Letter to President Stipe Mesic of Croatia

The following letter has been widely circulated in Europe and among Croatian expats in North America and Australia. It was written by Nick Dodich, the catalyst responsible for SOF sending training teams, life-saving equipment and other support to those fighting for democracy in the Balkans during the past decade.

Since your election to the Presidency of Croatia your actions have shown your true colors, and those colors are red.

In actions and words you have revealed your undying love for Communism, Tito and the Yugo Partisans. It escapes the civilized mind how you as a Croatian can adore Communism, a system that for 70 years cut a swath of social and economic destruction and was responsible for 60 million deaths — including hundreds of thousands of your innocent fellow Croatians.

Your recent speech to the Communist Yugo Partisan Veterans, delivered beneath a large picture of Tito, was an open act of betrayal to our beloved homeland. In your speech you stated, "Without you, there would not be a Croatia." Hundreds of years before there was a Tito, before there were Yugo Communist Partisans, there was a Croatia. And in spite of those of your ilk, there will always be a Croatia, long after Communism is but a broken relic at the bottom of the dustbin of history.

The Communist Yugo Partisans, embraced by you in such a brotherly fashion, conquered Croatia, took away her freedom, stole her sovereignty and enslaved her freedom-loving people. How insulting, how arrogant, how despicable, what a betrayal those deeds were. And your embrace of them is worse.

It appears that your loyalties lie somewhere other than a democratic Croatia. At a time when enlightened countries are abandoning Communism, you appear to be prolonging

its tyranny and expounding its supposed virtues, even though it has been thoroughly discredited and judged by history to have been an evil force that robbed many nations of several generations. You appear to be set in opposition to the progressive, democratic new course of Croatia. You appear to fear liberty and democracy, as only a tyrant can.

Why do you coddle the Communists, the same people who killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Croatians, most of whom were killed after World War II? The Partisan Tito has been credited with killing a total of 1.5 million people of all types. There is no statute of limitations for war crimes — why has no Communist Partisan been tried for war crimes against Croatians? Instead, you have been most energetic and enthusiastic to send many possibly innocent Croatian soldiers to The Hague. Why don't you do the same to the criminal Partisan Communists?

If you abuse one innocent Croatian soldier-veteran, you abuse all innocent Croatian soldiers-veterans. If need be, we will go to the streets again, as we have already done. We were not afraid during the war, and we certainly are not afraid now. Your actions have convinced us that you are more interested in power than in principle, but in principle lies the ultimate power.

In a time when formerly Communist countries are striving for democracy and freedom, you are still practicing and implementing the Communists' principles. In Bulgaria today, former Communists are distrusted to the extent there is a law precluding them from government. They have had such a negative influence on life there that they are considered a criminal organization. But you, Sir, fail to acknowledge the mas-

Continued on page 71

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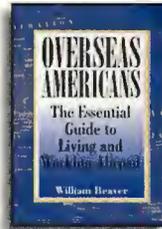
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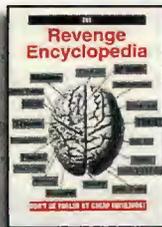


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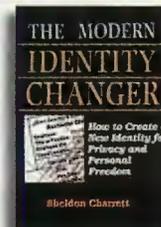
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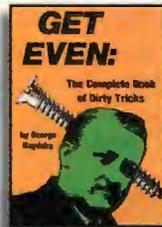
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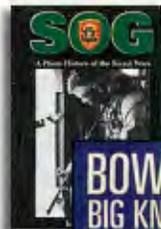
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Hill Tribe Refugees Taking A Beating

Atrocities by the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam against hill tribe refugees fleeing to Cambodia continue. Published and first-person reports from Cambodia and inside Vietnam paint a grisly picture of the treatment received by Mngong and Jarai Montagnards attempting to flee to Cambodia in the wake of clashes last March over religious and land issues. In April, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen set-off the Vietnamese by forwarding some 30 refugees on to the United States for resettlement in North Carolina. They were accepted by the United States after the UN office of the High Commissioner for Refugees granted them refugee status. Others were not so fortunate: refugees interviewed state some 1,100 refugees are attempting to flee, and those who are captured and repatriated and killed. Reports indicate that Mondolkiri police, working hand in glove with Vietnamese security forces in Mondolkiri, have been posing as UNHCR workers to get information on refugee hiding places. It is known that one family of seven — family includes women and children — were executed in early May,

and that 31 other refugee families captured in Cambodia and repatriated to Vietnam met a similar fate. Further details and updates are available on the web at: www.montagnards.org.

Long Wall: China To Pearl Harbor

According to Bill Gertz in the *Washington Times*, China is going through a new series of tests of its DF-31 nuclear-capable ICBM, at the Wuzhai Space and Missile Center. Road-portable, the DF-31 has a range of 6,000 miles and is believed to be the first Chinese missile developed to incorporate stolen U.S. weapons technology. Gertz also reports that China is preparing for an underground nuke test at its Lop Ngor nuclear test facility for a developmental small warhead based on the design — obtained through espionage — of the American W-88 nuclear warhead.

Meanwhile, in an article "The Aircraft Carrier Formation is Not an Unbreakable Barrier" in the Beijing *Gunagming Ribao*, Maj. Gen. Guo Zilin, director of the PLA Air Force Radar Academy, outlines how China could defeat a U.S. Navy carrier battle group using nukes.

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Army Retires Cobra

Introduced during the Vietnam War, the Huey Cobra was the Army's first attack helicopter, and the mainstay of air cav units until the AH-64 Apache was introduced into service in 1990, but it is being officially retired from Army service. In a recent ceremony at Ft. Eustis, Va., group of National Guardsmen was the last class to graduate from the Cobra armament technician course conducted by the regular Army.

Federal Suit Challenges DoD Anthrax Immunization Program

A federal lawsuit filed in early May challenges the DoD anthrax vaccination immunization program, in an action against the Pentagon, FDA and vaccine manufacturer that seeks to have the vaccine experimental and therefore illegal by its current use.

Former USAF Major Sonnie Bates — the highest-ranking military officer — and Captain John Buck — the first G.I. physician to refuse the controversial anthrax vaccine — filed the suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, claiming that the vaccine as it is being utilized by the DoD is an experimental drug, and as such cannot legally be administered to troops without their informed consent.

An Investigational New Drug (IND) application was filed in 1996 by the DoD and the vaccine manufacturer, requesting FDA approval for the vaccine: This IND application remains pending, even though more than half a million troops have received the inoculations.

While assigned to Dover AFB Maj. Bates refused the anthrax vaccination in November, 1999, and received a general discharge under honorable conditions; Capt. Buck is facing formal court-martial proceedings for his refusal last January.

The anthrax inoculation program has a nearly 10-year history of controversy based on health violations and scientific concerns over the drug's efficacy against aerosol anthrax and the conditions under which it has been produced, procured, and dispensed. In December of 1997 DoD ordered the inoculation of 2.5 million active-duty personnel, regardless of duty station of MOS. The regimen consists of six injections over a period of 18 months, plus annual booster shots. The vaccinations began in March 1998, but Phase II and III of the program was delayed in December, 1999 for at least a year due to continuing FDA violations at the sole plant which produced the vaccine.

A report issued by the House Committee on Government Reform in February 2000 recommended termination of the AVIP. Nearly 500 active-duty service members have refused the vaccine, and of them 60 have been court-martialed.

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Approximately 600-800 pilots and flight crew from Air Guard or reserve units have quit or resigned rather than take the controversial vaccine.

Hanoi Jane Hoax

It sometimes used to take a decade or more to get a new urban legend firmly established, but through the wonders of the Internet, bad information can now be forwarded (or embellished and forwarded) to dozens of contacts with the click of a mouse and the speed of an electron. The base of believers in a given bogus story, report, or idea can grow in geometric proportion long before the first recipient takes the time to check it out. And if it's a story that's so appropriate that even if it's not true it should have been, even normally responsible parties can fall victim to the "forward first, check it out later" syndrome.

A typical case may well be this Hanoi Jane report hoax, which surfaced in 1999, even made some usually reliable internet news services — and is still making the rounds.

Sometimes the context will vary as it morphs from hand to hand, but this is the gist of it:

The first part of this is from an F-4E pilot. The pilot's name is Jerry Driscoll, a River Rat. The former Commandant of the USAF Survival School was a POW in Ho Lo Prison — the "Hanoi Hilton." Dragged from a stinking cesspit of a cell, cleaned, fed and dressed in clean PJs, he was ordered to describe for a visiting American "Peace Activist" the "lenient and humane treatment" he'd received. He spat at Ms. Fonda, was clubbed, and dragged away.

During the subsequent beating, he fell forward upon the

camp commander's feet, which sent the officer berserk. In 1978, the AF Col. Still suffered from double vision (which permanently ended his flying days) from the Vietnamese Col.'s frenzied application of a wooden baton.

From 1963-75 Col. Larry Carrigan was in the 47FW/DO (F4Es). He spent 6 years in the "Hilton" — the first three of which he was "missing in action." His wife lived on faith that he was still alive. His group, too, got the cleaned/fed/clothed routine in preparation for a "peace delegation" visit.

They, however, had time and devised a plan to get word to the world that they still survived. Each man secreted a tiny piece of paper, with his SSN on it, in the palm of his hand. When paraded before Ms. Fonda and a cameraman, she walked the line, shaking each man's hand and asking little encouraging snippets like: "Aren't you sorry you bombed babies?" and "Are you grateful for the humane treatment from your benevolent captors."

Believing this HAD to be an act, they each palmed her their slivers of paper. She took them all without missing a beat. At the end of the line and once the camera stopped rolling, to the shocked disbelief of the POWs, she turned to the officer in charge and handed him the little pile of papers.

Three men died from the subsequent beatings. Col. Carrigan was almost number four but he survived, which is the only reason we know about her actions that day.

I was a civilian economic development advisor in Vietnam, was captured by the North Vietnamese communists in South Vietnam in 1968, and held for over five years. I spent 27 months in solitary confinement, one year in a cage in Cambodia, and one year in a Black Box in Hanoi. When Jane Fonda was in Hanoi, I was asked by the camp communist political officer if I would like to meet with Jane Fonda.

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I said yes, for I would like to tell her about the real treatment we POWs were receiving. Because of this I spent three days on a rocky floor on my knees with outstretched arms with a large amount of steel placed on my hands, and beaten with a bamboo cane till my arms dipped.

I had the opportunity to meet with Jane Fonda for a couple of hours after I was released. I asked her if she would be willing to debate me on TV. She did not answer me. This does not exemplify someone who should be honored as part of "100 years of great women." Lest we forget: "100 Years of Great Women" should never include a traitor whose hands are covered with the blood of so many patriots.

And of course it closes with a plea to "take the time to forward this to as many people as you possibly can."

The signature at the bottom of the message varies, but usually has a legitimate name and address (those contacted have disavowed the hoax).

Now, if there's one person whose disgusting record vis-à-vis American POWs does not need any embellishment, it's Ms. Fonda. Worse, demonstrably false stories, when proven to be false, work to discredit the truth.

More detailed information is available on <http://vikingphoenix.com/CelebrityFiles/TurnerandFonda/JaneFonda.htm>.

— Richard Rongstad

Aderholt Receives Order Of The Sword

As any ticket puncher can tell you, there are lots of military awards: some for just being there, some for just not screwing up too badly, some for really extraordinary service, some for genuine heroism and self-sacrifice. Some really mean something, and some just poke holes in your Class-As. One award that really means a lot is the USAF Order of the Sword, one of the highest honors an officer can receive as it is presented by the NCOs of a command on their own behalf and of their own initiative. In this instance, it was the NCOs of the USAF Special Operations Command who, for only the third time in their history, awarded the Order of the Sword to Brigadier General Harry ("Heinie") Aderholt. This award to honor "a leader among leaders" entails a ceremony founded in Sweden in 1522. The formal ceremony took place at Hurlburt Field. ✕

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The Results Read Like Ripley's Believe It Or Not!

Here's what was found. Not one of these modern systems could effectively maximize the human potential in either strength or advanced coordination skills necessary for fighting. In fact, we found while the body did develop, it only achieved 50 percent in strength, leaving 50% untapped.

We also found that when they got stronger they lost speed, flexibility and their higher coordination skills were simply nonexistent. Any real world fighting soldier cannot tolerate this breakdown in the body's system. Think of it this way; if you're a serious body builder that is into operating in the field, or just a civilian wondering why your strength is just not there but you train every day, well frankly, you're most likely using only 50 percent of your total abilities because of incorrect weight training. What could you do at 100 percent? Mind blowing isn't it?

Weight training with our SCARS® Stage 1 Weight Training Program will open up your full potential. Look, if you're into training with weights why settle for 50 percent of your strength and a loss in speed and flexibility, and most of all a total drop in advanced coordination skills? As a soldier or Law Enforcement Officer, that could get you killed!

With The SCARS® Stage 1 Weight Training Program...

You can have 100 percent of your total body's potential in just 45 minutes, a few times a week.

No this is no miracle fairy tale 5- or 10-minute bull-shit workout. It will bust your butt, get you into shape for whatever you do in life. OK, so you're not a warrior anymore, you just want to get in shape because it will:

- Give you confidence
- Increase your sex drive and appeal
- Increase your chances in the business world
- Decrease your chances of heart problems
- Decrease your chances of fat-related diseases, like diabetes.

Hell people that's just what happens when you're in shape with any program.

So Why Start With This Revolutionary Training Program?

Because with the Stage 1 Weight Training Program you can immediately increase your total body's ability to perform like it never has before.

We guarantee you will increase your power, balance, flexibility and endurance. You see by starting the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training program you will:

• Stop Destroying Your Muscle Memory

With our system you will immediately open up the cellular level of function, unknown to the rest of the power building world. Allowing you to develop maximum muscle function for the complex reactions of highly skilled combat or law enforcement officer that must use hand-to-hand or hand-to-weapon combat to survive! Having trouble shooting on the run? It's your muscle memory.

• Stop Developing Muscles That Are Slowing You Down

Using simple techniques you can get as big and powerful as you like with absolutely NO loss in speed. And you can forget the process of bursting lifts, that destroys both muscle memory and micro muscle response, the two most necessary processes in body performance. Incorrectly alter these two cellular structures

and you will never reach your maximum potential in mastering your fighting or shooting skills.

• Stop Hours Of Painful Stretching Just To Get Your Flexibility

With our unique proven system you will learn the secrets of **RESETS**; we guarantee you'll never spend one more minute wasting your valuable time stretching, taking hours off perfecting your fighting and shooting skills. Just think of it, with the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program you will have maximum range-of-motion without hours of painful stretching, giving you more time to perfect skills that will save your ass in combat or on the streets.

• Stop Training Bad Micro Muscle Movements That Destroy Your Combat or Martial Arts Skills. A mistake that could get you killed in real conflict.

Micro muscle movement in layman terms is how your mind and muscle memory work together under unknown variable conditions that are demanding the body's speed and agility to perform at the maximum. (i.e. Responding to any threat will put this action to test. Even a basic reaction that is needed to avoid a potential accident will enact this process.)

For you martial artist bad boys, have you ever tried your martial arts in a real conflict and found that you just could not think of all of those moves until after the conflict? The major problem is your condition in strength building. You see weight training is just not getting big or strong. Traditional body building or sports training really affects the micro muscle movement process 100-fold the wrong way.

• Stop Spending Time And Money Going To The Chiropractor

Using the secret of the SCARS Stage 1 **RESETS** will not only produce flexibility but also align your joints and correct your spinal alignment. Giving you: **Less joint pain!**
—Better posture! **—Less muscle tearing!**
—Longer lifting cycles!

It will allow you the ability to maintain maximum potential for your full life cycle. That means you'll still be in condition at age 70.

Start now with the amazing new Stage 1 Weight Training Program so you'll keep those costly doctor visits down. Need I say more?

One thing you must not forget. This system is made specifically for men that will kill and have killed in hand-to-hand combat. Not some triathlete or sports doctor or three-time world body builder. It comes from men of combat.

SCARS® Stage 1 Weight Training Program's Sole Purpose Is To Enhance The Real World Combat Soldier...

The SCARS Institute of Combat Sciences (SICS) believes that anyone willing to go through the pain and dedication of learning survival skills must not go one more day without trying this system. It is a must for the professional soldier, police officer, martial artist or individual who is serious about his or her conditioning training.

Give your chosen profession or sport the respect it deserves by conditioning your body to perfection.

The SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program allows you to fine tune your body's untapped power. If you're up to the challenge, then start today by using the **FIRST** and **ONLY** system that is specifically designed for the human body to perform the complicated task of combat fighting.

Men and women both will excel after just a few weeks. In fact strength building is a must for the female Law Enforcement professional or sports enthusiast, so **START the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program TODAY.**

Here's What You Get In The SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program...

- First, the moment you start the video, you will see real military footage of SCARS in action, then you will hear from the founder of SCARS on the reason this program had to come out to the public. Then the number 1 conditioning expert of the SCARS Institute immediately starts giving out valuable information on body conditioning. This is no "love me, hug me, see me move my butt video."
- It is knowledge that will **make you an expert** and give you the tools to train for life.
- It is not an aerobic feel-good tape, **in fact you'll learn why aerobics is absolutely not the way to go.**
- You'll get two full volumes of instructional videos that carefully and completely cover the step-by-step instruction of proper lifting form, speed and correct bio-mechanical techniques that **will build your body to three times your current strength!**
- Plus you'll get a personal workout manual to keep track of your improvement at the gym. Every exercise is illustrated so you don't get confused when you get to the gym.

This information is worth thousands of dollars because it would easily take a personal trainer 30 hours of training to correctly assess your personal needs. That doesn't come cheap;

it's anywhere between \$100 to \$500 a session for this type of information.

Of course, these aren't your typical gym workout trainers. Like your friends that give their advice for free, you get what you pay for — **right?**

Absolutely no one can come close to the professional experience and testing that Blake Peterson has. *Here's just a short run-down on his background.*

At age 24, Blake is the youngest SCARS Certified Master Instructor. He is also the youngest man ever to officially train with the U.S. Navy SEALs in the SCARS/CFC Level 1 and 2 Combat Fighting Schools.

Just think, if you were 16 years old and had to spend 30 days and nights learning the deadly skills of war with some of the best men in the world, all on a restricted Navy island just off the coast of California. Man, what would your ego be like? Not Blake, although he is a bit more intense than most young men his age.

Blake has also instructed official SCARS Combat Fighting Courses at the U.S. Army Special Operations Forces JFK Center and instructed the U.S. Air Force Combat Control Teams.

He has worked with private clients of the SCARS Institute in the area of drug interdiction and he trains VIP Protection to Law Enforcement.

Also he was a major contributor in developing official POST programs for Law Enforcement Agencies.

Blake has spearheaded the efforts to bring to the public the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program. All this before he was 24.

The point is Blake Peterson is an expert in high-risk training that requires extreme coordination skills that are extremely demanding on the strength and flexibility of the body.

This Master Instructor has specifically concentrated on the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program for over three straight years. He researched all of the SCARS military data, then consulted with what the SCARS Institute feels is the best in the field of Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine to make sure you get the absolute best program in order to develop your fighting and shooting skills.

All things have been considered from the most modern weight training to the most advanced human skills under stress. We feel confident that your total body growth and advance coordination skills will go through the roof once you start the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program.

Are We Saying We Are The Only Ones That Know?

DAMN Right! As far as combat body usage and skill conditioning! **NO** as far as the sports rehabilitation experts and modern sports medicine; they know all about the human body for sports and medicine. **But not about interfacing multi-variables of high-stress application, as we explained earlier.**

That is why we had to make the SCARS Stage 1 Weight Training Program for YOU. **TO REACH YOUR TRUE FIGHTING POTENTIAL ACT NOW!**

Look at it this way, if you go to a trainer, he or she doesn't offer you a full refund if you don't like what they show you, **do they? We DO!**

You Must Act NOW To SAVE BIG On The Stage 1 Weight Training Program!

That's **Volume 1** and **Volume 2** of easy-to-follow video, shot with two cameras so you can see every move, in our private SCARS gym.

Plus a complete 6 week training manual! (We have even include blank pages so you don't have to keep buying new manuals.)

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That's right! We'll give you back a gift certificate valued at **\$69.96**, which will be valid for one full year toward a SCARS live training camp for civilians only. (Details on certificate.)

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GET YOUR GEAR

by Tom Chambers

Adventure Medical Kits

As I mentioned in last month's column, I learned a lot of lessons in the Army the hard way because I either didn't know how to use my equipment properly, didn't maintain it, or didn't have the proper equipment with me when I needed it the most. That's basically what this column is about. I'm going to present some basics about how to select the outdoor gear you might need and how to properly maintain and use it, and might even give a specific recommendation on a product that I've successfully used in the past.

As a light weapons infantryman in the United States Army, I was so very fortunate never to have been shot at. However, there are a few things I witnessed that made a true believer out of me to always be prepared, as the Boy Scouts say.

Those of you who were in the Army probably remember that from the first day you walked in the door, the sergeants preached "Don't

pick up a dud," (meaning ordnance that you might find that looked like it had been lost or discarded). My infantry company was in the field in West Germany (in those days it was West) on a live-fire exercise, when all of a sudden an explosion stopped us all in our tracks. It wasn't like a grenade going off, it was more like

a dull boom. You guessed it. One of the troops found an old grenade simulator and picked it up.

By the time I got there, a medic was already working on him. His arm was spaghetti and he was bleeding badly. Later the field surgeon was overheard telling my company commander that if the medic hadn't been there, the guy would have been history. So here

we have a case of a medic who knew his equipment and was well-trained in how to use it. Those little belt-carried first-aid kits all infantrymen carry would not have been enough to save the guy's life. That little light bulb that sometimes flicks on in your head, started to flicker right then in mine about trying to be prepared. The old "ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure" sure rings true.

Most of us usually have a first-aid kit around the house and maybe one in our vehicle, which is good for treating cuts and splinters and applying bandages on minor injuries. While they are better than nothing at all, they really won't cut the mustard when you're in the boonies and a long way from medical help. It's a pretty well-known fact that different sports or activities produce different injuries. For example, a backpacker is probably more prone to knee and ankle injuries, while a fisherman may be more likely to get hooked or poked in the eye. It's a very perplexing situation we are faced with trying to piece together all the right stuff for emergency use. That is until Eric A. Weiss, M.D. entered the picture.

Dr. Weiss is considered one of the leading authorities on



Continued on page 68

WATER BREAK

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09:37:16

09:37:14

09:37:13



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Militarized Law Enforcement?



I am in receipt of the June 2001 issue of *SOF* magazine. In this issue there is a letter to the editor from Timothy McVeigh. Ordinarily I am not in the habit of having urinating contests with skunks but his specific mention of Thunder Ranch, Inc. causes me to do so.

For the record, Thunder Ranch's clients demographically break down to be 80% law abiding private sector civilians, 17% law-enforcement and 3% military. Many of the law enforcement officers who attend the school do so with personal funds and personal time. Being a former police officer and coming from a family lineage of police officers I take exception with his generalization. Being in this "business" for 28 years I have never segregated classes (law-enforcement vs. civilians) unless for a specifically contracted course. Is everything perfect in American law-enforcement? No, not hardly, but then it is always progress not perfection.

As far as "needing" to teach the police to be soldiers —Thunder Ranch is over 90% booked for the 2001 school year, I don't think I "need" any help from *SOF* Magazine to conduct my programs.

I believe whatever Thunder Ranch and my personal contributions have been, they far outweigh Tim McVeigh's.

At least I haven't spinelessly butchered women and children.

Clint Smith, Director
Thunder Ranch, Inc.

Equal Terms, Or Equal Time?

I noted with some dismay that you printed a letter from that great self-proclaimed patriot, "Killing Kiddies Is Collateral Damage" McVeigh in the

June issue. Have you stooped to debating current events with terrorists and madmen?

Name withheld

There was no debate to it: Madman or not, what he had to say was of editorial interest. Patriot? If putting in your little earplugs and blowing nearly 200 innocent people to eternity makes you a patriot, well, our only regret is that he has but one life to give for his country!

Apples Better 'n' Oranges?

What is the difference between the Special Forces and Navy SEALs, and is one unit better than the other? Also, which unit has a better rounded training as far as special operations goes? And last but not least, why isn't there more standardization between all U.S. Special Ops units?

Sincerely,
V. Morales

- 1: SEALs are wetter
- 2: Both train hard and well, but for different missions
- 3: See No. 2

PC?



In regards to T.W. Lewis' letter in *Flak* on getting back to being politically incorrect like the sign at Thunder Ranch, I can't help but wonder if he missed the point. He comments on getting back to calling things and people by their right names. I don't necessarily disagree. I hate all of this PC crap myself, but I hope that we realize that racial slurs (if this is indeed what he meant) obtain nothing more than sounding ignorant. As to the sign at Thunder Ranch, I want one too,

because as long as there is a bullet going down the range (or any other proper target) we are going to be politically incorrect.

This is why I refuse to join SASS (Single Action Shooting Society) as they refuse to shoot at silhouette targets, and recently the local cowboy shoots are going this route. It not only enrages me but saddens me as well. Thank God we know IDPA will never go this way.

Also thanks to Cmdr. Beck on "Kayak's Journey." I await anxiously the third article. And thank you for such a fine mag.

Sincerely,
M. E. Allen
St. Louis, MO

Being politically incorrect is about telling it like it is even in the face of disapproval by self-appointed arbiters of taste, social engineers or government control freaks acting under color of law. Racial slurs are usually about telling it like it isn't. "Calling things and people by their right names" is calling BS, "BS," and a moron, "a moron" and has nothing to do with race. But then, you already knew that. The SASS boys' mothers dress them funny, but they're a likeable lot and if they don't want to shoot silhouettes, it's their call. In Massachusetts, nobody can shoot at human-looking targets.

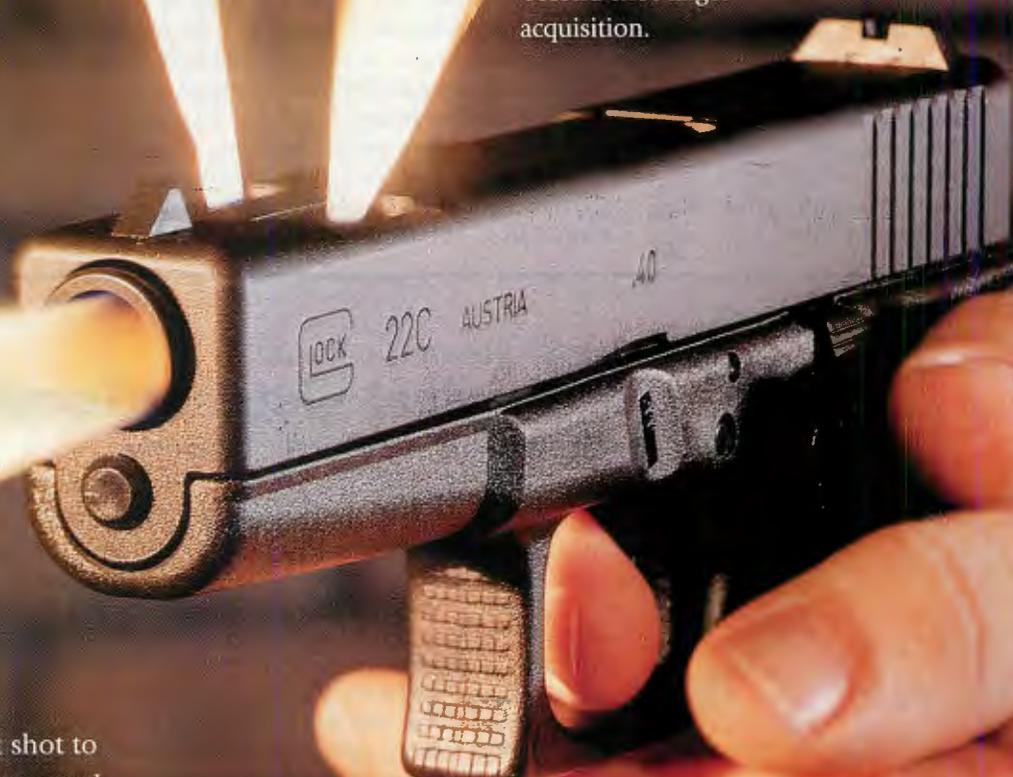
The Unsung Are Missed, Too

Last February, while racing for fame and fortune, Dale Earnhardt died in the last lap of the Daytona 500. It was surely a tragedy for his family, friends and fans. He was 49 years old with grown children, one of whom was also in the race. He was a winner and earned everything he had, which included more than "\$41 million in winnings and ten times that from endorsements and souvenir sales." He had a beautiful home and a private jet. He drove the most sophisticated cars allowed and

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shot speed and minimum
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every part was inspected and replaced as soon as there was any evidence of wear, normally funded by the car and team sponsors. Nothing should be taken away from this man, he was a professional and the best in his profession. He was in a very dangerous business, but the rewards were great.

A few weeks later, seven U.S. Army soldiers died in a training accident when two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters collided during night maneuvers in Hawaii. The soldiers were all in their twenties, pilots, crewchiefs, and infantrymen. If you tally their actual duty hours (in the field, deployed) they probably earn something close to minimum wage. They were involved in the extremely dangerous business of flying in the Kauhuku Mountains at night. It only gets worse when the weather moves in as it did that night. Most times no one is there with a yellow or red flag to slow things down when it gets critical.

Their children were mostly toddlers who will lose all memory of who "Daddy" was as they grow up. They died training to defend our freedom.

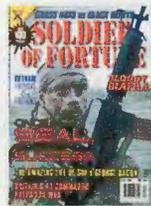
Without taking anything away from Dale Earnhardt I ask you to perform this simple test: Ask any of your friends who was the NASCAR driver killed on

18 February 2001. Then ask them if they can name one of the seven soldiers who died in Hawaii a few weeks later — or for that matter if they can even recall a Black Hawk incident (and yes, it did get five minutes on CNN).

Dale Earnhardt died driving for fame and glory at the Daytona 500. The nation mourns. Seven soldiers died training to protect our freedom. No one can remember their names and most don't even remember the incident ... something to think about.

Eric L. Jackson CPT, OD
Commanding
B Co, 782d MSB
82d Airborne Division

Reading SOF Pays



I have been an avid reader of SOF for over 20 years, yet I have never subscribed. Many issues have kept me from being a subscriber: Threats of being labeled a subversive person by the F.B.I., being thought of as a right wing extremist etc. Mind you, these were not my ideas, but those of my

friends and family. I have even been WARNED not to subscribe by a former employer. Today I am subscribing.

Why, you may ask? For my family and the good you have brought them.

In the April 2001 "Bulletin Board," there was an article about the Veteran's Administration giving benefits to Vietnam Veterans for diabetes related to Agent Orange. I read the article and thought of my father. I e-mailed the information to my parents, and the following day they went to the Martinsburg, WV VA hospital. The VA told my father that he was indeed eligible for benefits and issued an ID card on the spot. Not only that, my parents were able to get 90 days worth of medication for the price of what they were paying for a 30-day supply.

When my Dad returned from Vietnam, he got a job, a wife and family, and put the war behind him. He had no idea he was eligible for any benefits until he read your magazine.

So today, I join the ranks of subscribers world wide. Because of your magazine, I was finally able to do for my parents what they have done for me my whole life. For once, I was able to make their life a little more comfortable and secure. All because of you folks and your magazine.



After 30 years it's back! The Original Vietnam Tomahawk as Designed by Peter LaGana

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Thank you so very much and keep up the good work!

Scott "Tiny" Thompson
Lynn, Mass.

Hmmmmm

The Roger Charles investigative report in the June issue was outstanding. As I read it, the cable news networks were abuzz with live coverage that McVeigh's execution is being postponed for 30 days in order for misplaced FBI files to be reviewed. As a retired street cop, let me pose a question that has been bugging me from the day McVeigh was named as a suspect in the bombing.

Hundreds of times each day all over this country, people are stopped by police for no registration tag displayed on their vehicle or some other minor traffic offense. It is not uncommon that some of those drivers have a handgun in their possession without a permit, but the news media does not show up to photograph or video the driver's car being towed away or being loaded onto a rollback, as well video the car from several differing angles as it sat on the roadside in the middle of NOWHERE, open farm country TWO days before he was named as a suspect in the bombing. The film does not appear to be from a dash-mounted police camera. Who was the person who filmed that car in downtown nowhere on a mundane traffic stop two days before anyone supposedly knew who Tim McVeigh was; I'd like to talk to whoever took those pictures and ask what the importance of taking them was. CNN stopped showing the film a day or so later but it is still shown from time to time on special reports.

Officer Wayne Bradley, Ret'd

Iraqi Prisoners Went Home

What ever happened to the tens of thousands of Iraqi prisoners of war? If they were returned to Iraq what was their fate?

Brian Dunne
Vie e-mail

Except for a few who were accepted as political refugees, they were all repatriated to Iraq. As far as we know, due to the sheer number of them, they were not particularly mistreated. ☒

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*Yes, and it's over 50 years old!

As seen on



A Mauser 98K, Model M48, the strongest and safest of bolt action rifles, made on German tooling set up by the Germans in occupied Yugoslavia during WWII.

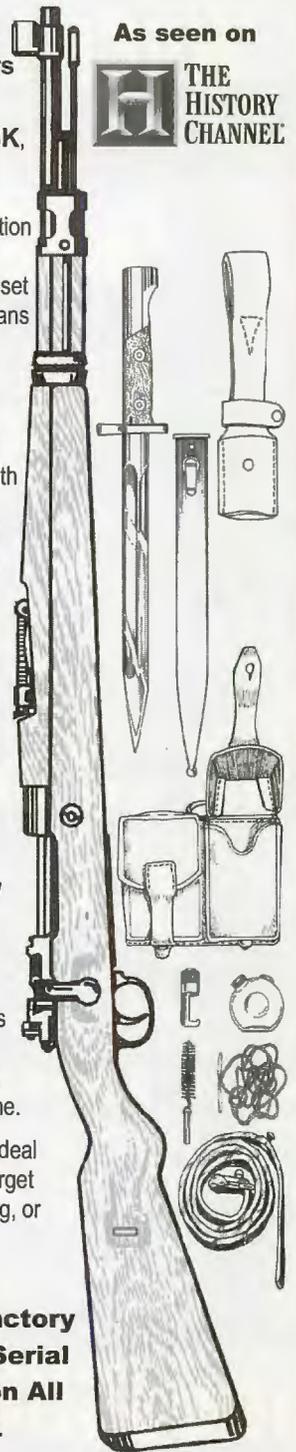
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by Bill Bagwell

Becker Magnum Camp Knife

Becker Knife and Tool, headed by Ethan Becker, offers a series of five tactical and survival knives to the outdoor and military market. Manufactured by Camillus Cutlery, the Becker knives are a good example of today's trend of design input coming to the cutlery manufacturers from outside sources. The knife that is the subject of this test and evaluation is the BK5 Magnum Camp, a knife that is of particular interest because the blade is designed for Becker by ABS Master Bladesmith Jerry Fisk.

The BK5 is actually an evolved form of the *Jambiya*, an Arab knife which in one form or another is found in every country in which the Arabs have lived. While the original specimens are double-edged, the Fisk design is not sharpened on the back side, and the swedge on the BK5 simply hints at an edge that is not there. This is not a criticism, merely an observation that this is not a double-edged knife, despite its historical origins. The *Jambiya* enjoys widespread distribution in the Arab world, and there are differences in the design details of the knives from geographic region to region. The Fisk design is more evocative of those knives from Turkey and the Balkans with its straighter, wider blade.

The blade on the BK5 is 8.5 inches in length and .188-in. thick. It is flat ground from the spine to a distance of .070 inches from the edge where the bevel is taken rather abruptly to a keen, hair shaving edge. This grinding technique lends itself to quantity production and results in a sharp edge with good support that resists damage and chipping. The blade is made of 0170-6C, a high-carbon steel selected for edge holding and toughness. Our cutting tests on seasoned hardwood revealed that the BK5 has an aggressive edge that cuts really well for an extended period of time. When dull, the edge is easy to restore with less

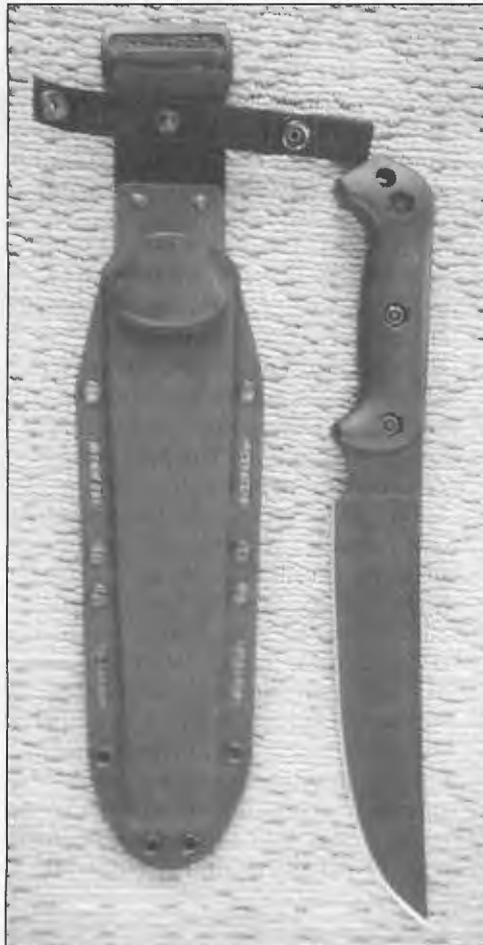
than a half-dozen strokes on an India bench stone. Any knife will eventually lose its edge and become dull with use. The goal is to make a knife that holds its edge and is then capable of being resharpened with a minimum of effort. The BK5 meets these criteria with ease. If there is a disadvantage to using carbon steel, it is that it will tarnish or rust quicker than will the stainless steels. The BK5 counters this problem by having a blade that is coated with a rugged black epoxy finish.

There is additional evidence that Camillus did their homework on the heat treatment of the BK5. When clamped in the padded jaws of a bench vice, the blade of the BK5 was repeatedly flexed to approximately 45 degrees and each time it

returned true without damage. The straight carbon steels offer this kind of practical, real-world blade performance, a performance that is often lacking in more exotic and fashionable stainless steels seen in much of today's production cutlery. Down and dirty working and combat knives need to be tough and serviceable above all else, and practical, thoughtful choices in design and materials are the hallmarks of frontline equipment.

It is a fact that some knives have design features that make them easy to break. Things such as sharp 90-degree corners where guards and blades match up, thin, skinny points that look racy, and false edges that terminate in sharp beveled shoulders on opposite sides of the blade come immediately to mind. ABS Master Bladesmith Jerry Fisk understands these things, and during our discussion of the design criteria of the BK5, he pointed out to me that all shoulders and transition areas on the knife were either radiused or beveled to ensure that stress risers would not develop. This is one knife that was not designed to break.

The handle of the BK5 is an ergonomic trademark handle of Becker Knife and Tool. It is employed on each





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Author applies lateral bending test to the BKS in his shop. Knife was repeatedly flexed and returned to true without damage. This is the result of good steel properly heat-treated.



of the five Becker models and is intended to reduce hand fatigue during extended use. While we found the handle to be a little short and somewhat thick for our particular tastes, it does provide a secure grip and its rounded contours keep the hand reasonably comfortable during heavy use. The handle is molded from GV6H, a Swiss developed, 60% glass filled thermoplastic polymer alloy. GV6H is an extremely tough material that is virtually impervious to damage, both environmental and man made. You will be hard-pressed to break the handle on this one. The bird's head style handle is equipped with a generous lanyard hole at the rear.

The BK5 comes with a first-rate Kydex sheath. Well-designed and -executed, the sheath provides both a solid mechanical lock on the handle of the knife, and a nylon retaining strap that has a snap closure. The sheath allows for totally ambidextrous deployment, and has a conventional belt loop that will accommodate a 3.5 inch-wide belt. It is also equipped with an array of slots and grommets that will let you devise a carry for any situation or any mode of transportation be it a bicycle

Continued on page 74

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YES, IT'S TRUE.

The SOF Three Gun Match and Convention has been renamed the "SOF/Whittington Center World Championship Three Gun Tactical Response Benefit Match, Shoot Fest and Gun Show." All profits will be donated to the NRA Whittington Center. Entry fees for the Match will be \$200. Shooters will be limited to 200. Shooters will be required to assist as range officers. Match will be held 6-9 September 2001.

Registration begins at 1600 hours, 5 September.

The Awards Barbeque will be held Sunday, 9 September.

In addition to shooting in the Match, shooters will receive the same items and access as the Shoot Fest participants. Shoot Fest participants' registration fee is \$100, for which you will receive the following:

- One year subscription to Soldier of Fortune Magazine.
- Shoot Fest T-Shirt.
- Access to the match.
- Outdoor Awards Barbeque.
- Participation in the "hands-on" manufacturers' demonstrations. Free ammo.
- Access to the gun show.
- Access to seminars sponsored by exhibitors.
- Access to a range where you can fire your personal weapons or weapons provided by SOF.
- The \$15 informal daily range fee is included.
- Sporting clays, trap and skeet shooting available for an additional fee.
- Socializing in the evenings at the headquarters hotel, the Holiday Classic, in Raton, NM, which has a large domed area and pool. Live country & western music will liven up the festivities.

EXHIBITORS

Commercial vendors. Each 10x10 space will cost \$200. If vendor has a mobile, wheeled exhibit, the Center has space to accommodate it.

Gun Show vendors. Each "table" will cost \$60.

Set up on 5 September, tear down 9 September.

LOGISTICS

Headquarters Hotel is the Holiday Classic in Raton. It has 59 rooms and the courtyard rooms face a domed area 135x80 feet, which includes a pool for socializing, getting hammered, or whatever. Phone: 1-800-255-8879. Cost: King or double, \$45.95 per room plus tax. Only 59 rooms — first come, first served!

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Travel: If you do not drive, you will have to fly into Albuquerque, NM or Colorado Springs, CO. SOF recommends you use our travel agency, Pathways Travel, for booking your flight schedules. Phone: 1-800-336-7588. Ask for Lavina Vohlken or Gaynelle Tuck, or e-mail: Lavinav@uswest.net. We will have a recommendation for car rental by the time you read this.

For further information and application blanks, write: Match/Shoot Fest/Gun Show, c/o SOF, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO, 80303, or go to the SOF website, www.sofmag.com, or call Steve Schreiner at 303-449-3750 ext. 306.

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— Robert K. Brown
Editor/Publisher

KEEP 'EM SHOOTING

Text & Photos by Steve Comus

Model 1898 Mauser, Standard for the World



'98s in Germany after that were made as S bore, or .323-inch groove propositions.

The situation gets even more obtuse, since the actual bore diameter really never did change. It was .311. The groove dimensions, however, did change, and were increased to .323 or .324, depending upon who is talking. It is not uncommon to find that large a variation in a single production-run of barrels, so the nominal number remains constant.

The '98 Mauser has a number of salient features: Positive function, ease of operation and rugged design are among them. The '98 continued using the stagger-round magazine

The Model 1898 Mauser needs no introduction to most shooters and firearms enthusiasts. It is arguably the finest bolt-action design ever made, and until the advent of the Kalashnikov designs was the most widely distributed. Were we to count the M98 derivatives — the Springfields, P-14/M17 Enfields, Arisakas and Mexican Mausers — it still would be.

Since the '98 Mauser was made for so many countries in so many variations for more than half a century — literally by the millions in military configuration and still more in sporting off-shoots — there is no effort here even to try to list the sub-models or even all of the cartridges for which this model has been chambered.

As the name would indicate, this rifle made its debut in Germany in 1898. From then until about 1905, the Model '98s were chambered and barreled for what has become known as the 8x57mm Mauser cartridge (some say 7.92x57, etc.).

The cartridge itself began life in the Model 1888 Commission rifle of Germany. It fired a bullet of .318-inch diameter. In 1905, the cartridge was changed slightly, but enough to cause a cloud to hover over it to this day.

In 1905, the diameter of the bullet was increased to .323-inch. Many of the original (J- or I-bore, depending upon how one wants to play) were changed to S-bore rifles, and all new

from the pre-'98s, as well as the non-rotating claw extractor that assured what has come to be known as “controlled round feeding,” meaning the cartridge is under control during the entire cycling of the action.

(above) Although a suitable field rifle as issued, where iron sights are adequate, the Mauser '98 rifle is one of the best for upscale sporting conversions. (below) The Mauser '98 design is simple, rugged and easy to disassemble for cleaning and maintenance.



Several other features changed during the evolution from the pre-'98s to later '98s. The '98 cocks on opening, and the pre-'98s cocked on closing. The '98s have an added "safety" lug on the bolt; the pre-'98s lacked this feature.

Early Gewehr '98s featured barrels 29.23 inches long, with rifling of four grooves in a right-hand twist of one turn in 9.4 inches. During its long military production the '98 was made in various barrel lengths, all shorter than the original.

The military sighting systems on most '98s featured an inverted "V" front post-type sight with an open rear barrel sight. Some of the rear sights were adjustable for elevation via a tangent and/or ladder mechanism. Rear sights typically are numbered to indicate hundreds of meters.

The '98 Mauser is loaded from the top while the bolt is open, or rearward. Rounds can be loaded into the magazine singly, or via stripper clip. The magazine on most '98s features bottom metal with hinged floorplate that can be opened to empty to contents of the magazine instantly and without cycling the bolt.

The bolt of the '98 features two opposed and massive locking lugs at the front of the bolt. The left lug is slotted to allow that part of the bolt to pass the ejector, which is located along the left rear of the action body. The '98 bolt also has an integral anti-bind bolt guide on the body of the bolt, but that was not new to the '98 as some suggest. It existed on the pre-'98 Mausers used by Sweden, for example.

The manual safety is a rotating wing affair, located atop the bolt shroud at the rear of the bolt. It has three positions: When all the way to the left, the rifle is in the "fire" mode. When the wing is all the way to the right, it is in the "safe" mode, and the manual device actually blocks the striker itself. When the wing is straight up, or in the middle, the



Most military models load through an open bolt with five-round stripper clips.

bolt can be disassembled.

To disassemble the bolt for normal cleaning, close the bolt and leave it cocked. Move the safety wing to the middle, or up, position. Then pull the bolt release lever away from the left rear of the action body, and withdraw the bolt to the rear. When the bolt is out, depress the spring-loaded interrupter on the front left side of the shroud and unscrew the shroud and firing mechanism (firing pin, spring and firing pin retainer nut).

This is as far as the bolt normally needs to be disassembled. It can be totally disassembled, however. In fact, the grommeted hole in the buttstock of some military rifles is handy for

Continued on page 70

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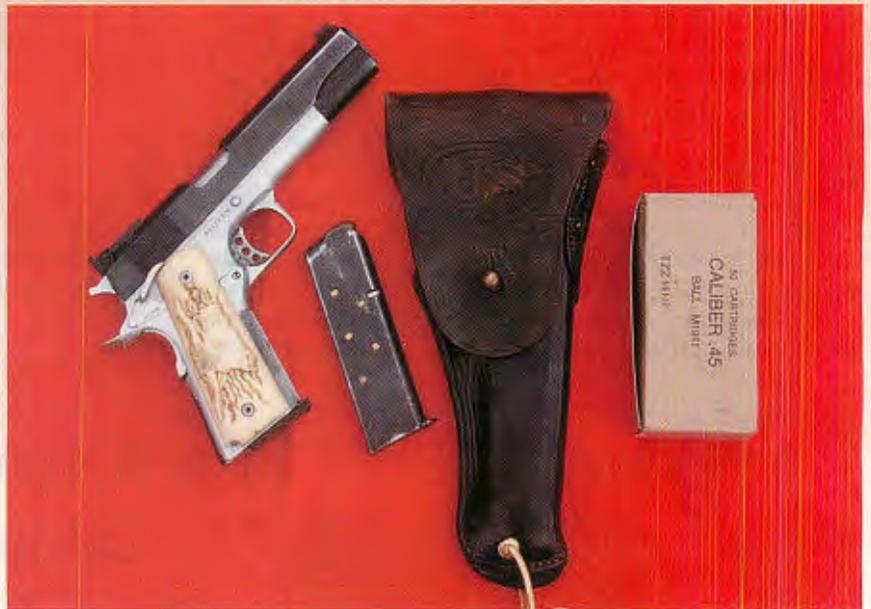
FIGHTING HOLSTERS

by Bob Arganbright

Classic M1916

Unquestionably, one of the classic fighting holsters is the U.S. Government issue Model 1916 (M1916) hip holster adopted for the Colt 1911 Government Model .45 auto pistol. Adopted in 1916, this holster as a marvel of engineering and was used by U.S. troops all over the world for 69 years. Continuing in the tradition of previous U.S. issue holsters, the M1916 had a flap to provide maximum protection for the auto pistol, as well as to secure the big Colt in the holster. The flap fastens closed simply with a tear-drop shaped hole which secures over a brass stud on the face of the holster. This opens and closes easily with one hand, and for tactical purposes it is silent.

The M1916 reflects the departure of the sword from combat, as for the first time the holster did not require the awkward twist draw of its predecessors. Previous G.I. holsters were actually left-hand, cross-draw holsters. This was due



The author's Wilson Combat-tuned Colt Series 70 .45 auto is right at home in this 1918 dated G.I.-issue flap holster. (below) The Anderson Pig Hunter is comfortable after many hours in the field carrying this Ruger Super Blackhawk.



to the military thinking that the sword, the primary close combat weapon, would be in the right (strong) hand, and the handgun would be drawn and used by the off-side hand.

An unusual feature of the M1916 was the wire hanger by which it attached to the standard web pistol belt. This placed the holster relatively low on the hip, so a "tie-down" thong was included to anchor the toe of the holster to the user's leg. In addition to this wire hanger, a standard 1.75-inch wide tunnel belt loop allowed one the option of wearing the M1916 high on the hip on the garrison belt. Constructed from the usual top-grade cowhide, the M1916 incorporated a muzzle plug combined with a muzzle welt placed below the plug and closing the pouch. This welt would "wick" moisture

out of the body of the holster if or when it became wet.

Improper holster design has caused the magazine release button on the Colt 1911 pistol to be accidentally depressed while holstered. This is very embarrassing, as well as potentially fatal, as it causes the loaded magazine to drop free of the gun from the recoil of the first shot. The designers of the M1916 assured this would not happen by incorporating a leather plug at the top inside of the pouch which twists the gun butt outward and prevents the magazine release button from coming into contact with the holster. This also provides a bit of extra clearance between the gun butt and one's body, making it easier to quickly grab the pistol.

Edward H. Bohlin, Hollywood holster and Rose Bowl Parade saddle maker, and legendary lawman Bill Jordan incorporated this plug in their respective fast draw revolver holsters. It was not until 1985 that the U.S. Government replaced the M1916 with the Bianchi Gunleather M12 synthetic flap holster. My personal M1916 holster is dated 1918 and was manufactured by the Warren Leather Goods Company. Even though it is 83 years old, it is still a sound and serviceable holster, truly a classic.

The influence of the M1916 is seen in the Andy Anderson "Trooper Hook" field rig, my favorite for handgun hunting. Though cataloged as the "Trooper Hook," Anderson referred to the rig as his Pig Hunter, his personal choice on his annual *javelina* hunt in Arizona. The Pig Hunter was made as a complete rig, consisting of both holster and gunbelt. The gunbelt was of leather and incorporated the multiple mounting holes of the G.I. web pistol belt. Constructed with the unfinished side to the outside, commonly called rough out, the bottom edge only was double thickness with the mounting holes punched the length of the belt in the lined edge. This allowed one to place the holster on its belt hook wherever one wished around the belt, as well as carry surplus military components such as canteen, first aid kit and G.I. knife suspended from the belt. Cartridge loops over each hip carried an additional 18 rounds of ammunition. At one time I had a custom Bowie knife sheath by Anderson which included a wire hanger for mounting on my Pig Hunter rig.

My sample Anderson Pig Hunter is

Continued on page 69

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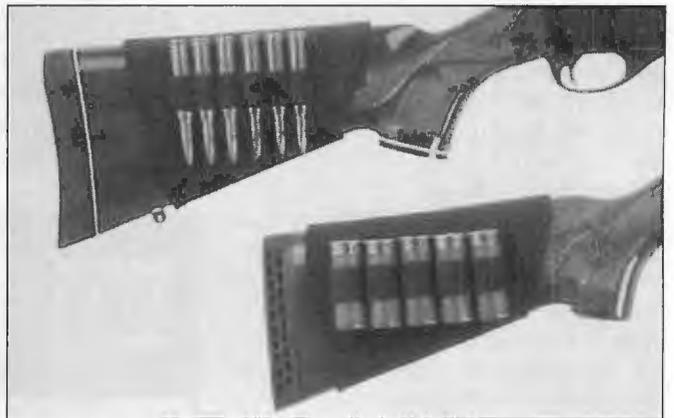
The measure of the success for a gun design would include: its longevity, the number of spin-offs that may or may not be improvements, and the number of useful accessories made for it in response to popular demand. The classic and ubiquitous Mauser 98 scores all three points. In the 100 years the Mauser 98 has been the game to beat in bolt-action rifles, its popularity as a military and sporting arm has never been equaled, and its wide issue as a military arm has ensured a supply of surplus bargains for those of us who might want a fancy-smancy factory job but have to settle for a shoots-just-as-good ordnance special. You could fill a catalog with goodies designed and marketed to fill the gap between G.I. and "sporting" Mausers. Some of the most common Mauser 98 goodies are fancy stocks and rifle scope adaptations (nearly a requirement for long-range shooting).

For those who have, for example, a nice WWII Kar98k and want to scope it without modifying the bolt, Advanced Technology, Inc. has a Mauser 98 scope mount that requires no gunsmithing, and will clear a standard Kar 98-type bent bolt. The only modification required is a discreet relief cut in the stock: If yours is a museum-quality piece, you can get a cheap field stock and modify that. With all hardware included it will set you back \$52.99. If, however, you have a straight-handled Gew 98 or similar, the bolt handle will have to be bent. You can have a gunsmith reforge it and hope he doesn't soften the bolt with his torch, or you can do it yourself for only \$15.49 with Advanced's Mauser Conversion Bolt Handle. This clever accessory will be useful on other rifle bolts (the Arisaka comes to mind right off), as well. To install it you cut off the original bolt then drill and tap the stub for the bent replacement, which is made from stainless steel and comes with all necessary drills and taps and hardware. If your Gew 98 is a museum piece too, then get an extra bolt body and have it head-spaced to the rifle and modify that handle. Advanced

Technology also has a line of drop-in synthetic stocks worth considering if you want your rifle to be a civilian in the hunt and a G.I. in the rack.

If you want to put that G.I. rifle to work hunting without hurting its historical authenticity, you will find these clever new accessories helpful. Likewise, if your Mauser 98 is a shoots-good beater you'd like to economically upgrade, check these out! Available from Advanced Technology, Inc., Dept SOF, 102 Fieldview Dr., Versailles, KY 40383; phone: 859-873-9877; fax: 859-873-6229; check out their website at: www.atigunstocks.com.

Neoprene Butt Stock Shell Holders

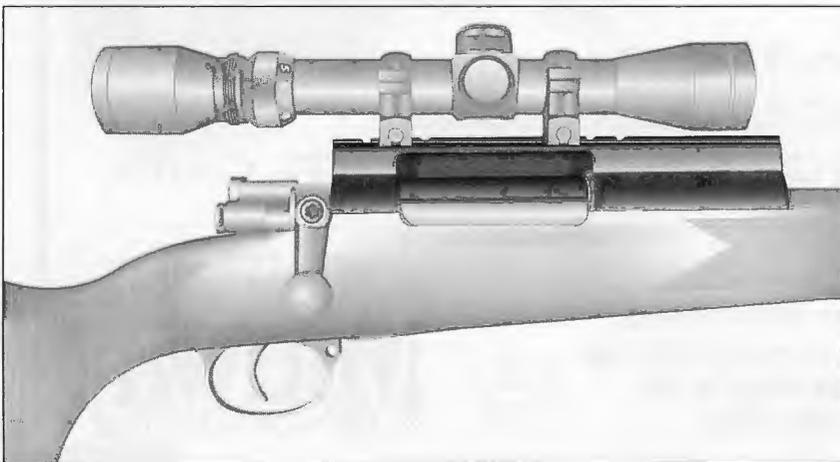


Longarms for close-in law-enforcement work such as shotguns or tactical rifles may need to be reloaded on the run, and one good place to carry ready ammo may be on the butt of the weapon itself, especially in a scenario where the officer has to bail out of a vehicle with no time to son tactical gear with an ammo vest.

Hunters, too, have found the butt a handy place for replacement ammo, and over the years a number of leather and web ammo caddies have been offered. They were better than a coat pocket, but being of natural material they were subject to changing shape, i.e. how tightly they held the rounds when wet. Uncle Mike's has solved this problem with innovative new butt stock shell holders made from neoprene. The heavy-duty neoprene sleeve stretched over the rifle or shotgun stock, giving a non-slip surface for improved handling, and the sewn-on elastic loops securely hold the ammo for quick, easy and uniform access.

The shotgun model holds five rounds, the rifle model holds six. They retail for an eco-

Continued on page 71



I Was There

Text & Photos by Loren Christensen

Out Of Control

Dispatch said to see the sergeant at the Saigon jail about picking up a guy to transport to the prison in Long Binh. Since Long Binh was about 35 miles from Saigon, Brett and I were pleased to get the call because it would eat up the entire day. We always enjoyed the drive to Long Binh and back because the country air was fresh and we found the rice paddies and rich green of the countryside to be a nice break from the sweltering concrete and stench of Saigon.

We needed the break, too. Ten months of military police duty in the busiest, most polluted, crowded and violent city in the world had pushed us to the breaking point. We didn't know a thing about stress in those days, but looking back on it now I can see that I was near the end of a rapidly burning fuse. Even the occasional good night's sleep didn't help my aching physical fatigue; my brains as well as my spirit were toasted from working 12- to 16-hour shifts. In 10 months, we had enjoyed a grand total of two days off.

Although happy to get the radio call to transport the prisoner, I was in a cranky and miserable mood. I had jungle rot on my toes, ringworm on my butt, an old sprained finger that

wouldn't heal, and I was nauseous and wilted from the day's 100-degree-plus temperature. During the past two days I had been in four fights, been puked on by a drunken sailor, spit on by a doped-up Marine, chewed out by my sergeant for knocking the spitter on his rear, and a Vietnamese policeman had pulled his gun on me because I had tried to get an American soldier's money back from a prostitute who had rolled him.

The desk sergeant was waiting for us in the compound area, one of his beefy hands gripping the arm of a skinny, pimply-faced kid. We climbed out of the jeep and walked up to the sergeant, who greeted us with a nod; the kid sneered his lip and looked at Brett and I as though we were mess hall garbage cans. His shirt was without shoulder patches and his brown hair was as long as a hippy's, which indicated he had been hiding in the back alleys of Saigon for a few months. The sergeant said that he had refused to give his name or what unit he was AWOL from. I instantly disliked him, especially

The author (left) and another MP pose beside their jeep.



courtesy author

the way he was looking me up and down with contempt.

We replaced the sergeant's handcuffs with ours and helped the prisoner into the back seat of our jeep, all the while he continued with the smirking. I told him to knock it off, but he didn't and even added a few snorts to underscore his disdain. Brett slid in behind the wheel and I sat in the front passenger seat, turned partially so I could keep an eye on the prisoner. We threw the sergeant a mock salute and headed out of the compound.

Thirty minutes later, we had progressed no farther than a mile from the jail compound. Saigon's exhaust-choked traffic was especially bad and for the umpteenth time that day, we were caught in an immovable jam of bicycles, motorcycles, military vehicles, taxis and a cacophony of horns, engines and curses. Everyone had a ride but no one was going anywhere.

A monster-sized, Vietnamese Army truck inched alongside of us. Every few seconds the impatient driver leaned his forearm on the horn, sending out a 20-second eardrum-shattering blast, which didn't help the jam but did make Brett and me angry. We yelled at the driver to knock it off or we would rip his horn out and stick it where it would make him walk funny. The driver yelled something back in Vietnamese and, though we didn't understand, it was clear that it wasn't nice. As I started to say something back, our jeep rocked slightly.

My gut instantly told me what had caused the movement even before I even twisted around and looked dumbly at the empty backseat. "He's escaped!" I yelled.

"There!" Brett said, pointing at the jam of traffic behind us. "He's running around that bus!"

That was all it took to bring my rage, stress and fatigue together like a thunderclap. I leapt from the jeep with a loud

curse. Losing a prisoner was at the top of the list of embarrassing things that could happen to a military policeman.

I zig-zagged through traffic, trying not to lose sight of the fleeing prisoner. I executed a perfect two-handed vault over the hood of a taxi but rammed into a motorcycle, knocking it, the old man straddling it, and all his baskets to the pavement. I wheezed "Sorry," and sprinted off.

The distance between us began to increase when the prisoner ran into an open alley. We had cuffed his hands behind his back but somehow he had maneuvered them to his front. He was at least half a block away now and just as I thought he might elude us, one of his laceless boots flew off, causing him to stumble. He regained his balance quickly, though, and sped up in spite of his hobble.

I drew my .45, thinking that the whine of a bullet over his head would scare him into giving up. Aimed the best I could while running, I squeezed the trigger. The Colt jammed.

Bam! A shot came from behind me.

I instinctively ducked and twisted around, worrying for a moment that the prisoner had an ally. It was Brett, running right on my heels, holding his .45 in the air; he squeezed off a couple more rounds. *Bam! Bam!*

When I turned back, the prisoner stumbled and fell hard onto his belly, a swirl of dust puffing into the air around him, his other boot dangling from his foot. Lots of Vietnamese, who had been walking, riding their bicycles or just socializing in the alley, fled in every direction, no doubt convinced they were in the middle of a firefight — not with the Viet Cong, but between crazy American servicemen.

Continued on page 68

SOFT-SHIRTS

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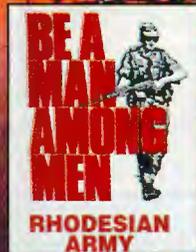
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#T004 Go Ahead And Jump Shirt	L XL	@	\$15.00	
#T004 Go Ahead And Jump Shirt	XXL XXXL	@	\$17.00	
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WORLD SITREP



1

UNITED STATES

Meanwhile, On His Way To The "Gallows": 16 May execution date for Timothy McVeigh delayed until at least mid-June. Some 3,100 pages of lost, concealed or misplaced evidentiary materials found by FBI. Some deal with sightings of John Does 2, 3, 4 and 5. Terry Nichols' attorneys want a new trial. McVeigh apparently wants to exit this world as a martyr. • **Shreds Of Truth?** A month before documents' "discovery," it was learned that former Clinton Administration archivists green-lighted FBI to shred records related to the case. • **No Tome:** Danny B. Stillman, 67, who worked at Los Alamos for 28 years, made nine trips to China where he met with top Chinese scientists and dispensed a ton of information to U.S. intelligence representatives is being blocked from publishing his memoirs. Sure to lead a landmark First Amendment decision. • **1999's DEA Hall Of Shame:** Nations that export illegal drugs to the U.S.: Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, China, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. • **Bon Voyage:** Prior to his resignation, FBI Director Louis Freeh gives President Bush list of names, perhaps including Iranians officials, who he believes should be indicted for the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing which killed 19 Americans. • **Still Awaiting Ascent:** The American spy plane still cools its props on the ground in China. No word yet from Bush Administration when the craft will be released for return to CONUS. (See China.)

4

RUSSIA

Russian mobsters are heavy into cocaine-trafficking and have joined forces with Mexican drug lords and Colombia's FARC. USCG investigators snagged largest coke seizure in U. S. history when it took 26,397 pounds from *Svesda Maru*, a Belize-flagged vessel. • **Sea Cruise:** Plans afoot to send ship-borne *Yakhont* cruise missiles to Iran as part of estimated \$7 billion arms deal. • **China-Bound:** Since 1992, China has purchased Su-27 fighter aircraft, 40 advanced all-purpose Su-30MKK aircraft and have their eyes locked-on the new Su-32, which is reported to have the capability to launch 620-mile-range cruise missiles. • **Putin's Clamp-Down:** President Putin continues to lower boom on various factions of Russian mob as violence and corruption increase nearly unabated.

5

COLOMBIA

Mob Rule? Violence promises to escalate in Colombia now that Russian mob is partnered-up with FARC and Mexican drug lords. Lethal spillovers into Mexico also expected.

10

TAIWAN

Wish List: Gets most items of its military wants from U. S. except for four Aegis radar-equipped destroyers.

9

BRAZIL

Not In Our Backyard: Fearing spillover of violence from Colombia's drug war, Brazil's military contracts with some major non-U.S. firms to bolster its police and military capabilities.

13

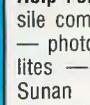
INDONESIA

Joining Forces: High-ranking military officers healing internal rifts and forming united front. Whether they can stay away from political agendas is an unanswered question.

14

NORTH KOREA

Help For Iran: Shipment of missile components and technology — photographed by U. S. satellites — shipped to Iran from Sunan International Airport aboard Iranian Il-76 transport jet.



2**VIETNAM**

Adios, Good-bye, Good Riddance: Estimated 150 Montagnards have crossed into Cambodia following protracted crackdowns by Vietnam's military. Casualties are unknown but are thought to be heavy. Central Highlands are cordoned-off with no unofficial visitors being allowed in.

3**CAMBODIA**

In Perilous Straits: Rumors surface that 150 Montagnards who crossed into Mondulkiri Province might join some 300 others who previously fled Vietnam. Their fate is unknown but it's thought they might be forcibly repatriated.

6**CHINA**

Hey, Wait-a-minute: All not hunky-dory ref. EP-3E spy plane's technology. *Washington Times* reports that Chinese government learned U. S. eavesdroppers can ID Chinese military officers by sounds of their voices. • **Leveraging in Latin America:** President Jiang Zemin visits Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela and Uruguay in hopes of building military and trade bridges. However, unless China ponies-up significant cash and materiel assistance, state visits likely won't do the trick.

7**GERMANY**

He Won't Go Away: *Verfassungsschutz*, Germany's domestic intel service, warns of imminent attacks by a "bin Laden" group at Western European targets. Homes of several militants inside Germany are raided.

8**IRAQ**

Bountying-Up: Saddam Hussein offers U.S. \$3k for any Iraqi defense missile crewman who shoots down American or British warplane. U.S. \$10k and a European vacation is offered to a foreign missile tech who does the job.

4**7****8****11****11****SAUDI ARABIA**

He's Everywhere: Usama bin Laden reportedly set to join Yasser Arafat's fizzling and ill-begotten uprising against Israel.

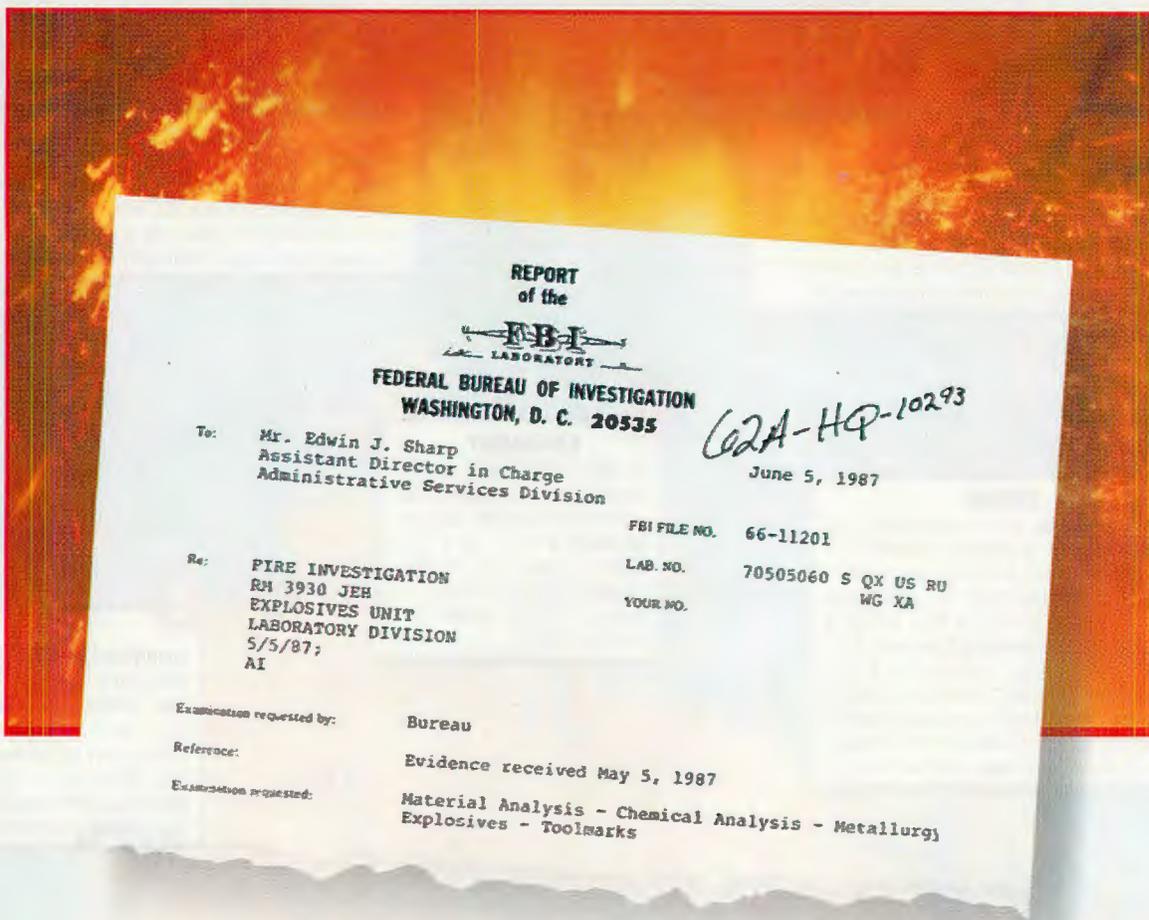
6**14****10****3****2****13****12****ARGENTINA**

In A Financial Crunch: Internal fiscal woes might hamper Bush's recent call at Canadian hemispheric summit for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

15**PERU**

Uncertain Future: In political turmoil, country doesn't know whom to look to for effective leadership in post-Fujimori era. Colombia's ongoing drug war is of constant concern. **Missionaries' Shootdown:** President Bush asserts that sole role of U. S. surveillance aircraft is to report locations of suspected drug-laden planes. It's reported that CIA personnel attempted to stop Peruvian pilot from firing at missionaries.

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



FBI Crime Lab Catastrophe

A Tale From the Dark Side

BY J.D. CASH WITH ROGER CHARLES

PHOTOS: COURTESY FBI

I

It all began with a tip. "You might find it interesting that the FBI Building in Washington, D.C. was seriously damaged when some explosives they had in there went off. ... Blew the living shit out of a good part of the crime lab... ." The source went on to add, "They've kept it under wraps for years. Passed it off as a chemical fire in a closet. Those "cowboys" had all kinds of high-performance stuff in there ... Soviet rocket fuses, C-4, blasting caps ... Damned near got some D.C. firemen killed when a Soviet RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) ripped through a wall and went streaking down a hallway. ... Real bad deal!"

It was a stunning admission from a seemingly reliable source claiming to be part of the team of investigators that played a central role in trying to determine what had actual-

ly happened at the sprawling federal complex in the early morning hours of 5 May 1987.

It was extremely puzzling that all we discovered in our research was a short mention in the 6 May 1987 edition of the *Washington Post* which announced that "Fire broke out near an explosives laboratory at FBI headquarters early yesterday, forcing the evacuation of dozens of night-shift workers, authorities said. No injuries were reported. ..."

Our interest was piqued, as similar assertions had been made concerning the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995, including the possibility that federal law enforcement housed in the OKC federal complex might have been storing explosives in their evidence lockers the morning Timothy McVeigh, and likely other terrorists, struck.

The lingering debate concerning the Oklahoma City

Bombing revolves around possible additional perpetrators and the extensive damage to the victims and building. Skeptics question how such devastation could have resulted from an ammonium nitrate/nitro-methane truck bomb. Seismologists working at the University of Oklahoma produced readings from two seismic stations in the Oklahoma City area that supported the possibility of *multiple blasts*, as did the report from the highly respected explosives authority and retired USAF General Ben Partin, who believes, as well, that some columns of the Murrah Building were sheared by attached explosives.

One hypothesis is that explosives confiscated during raids, which were stored by federal law enforcement in one of the four evidence lockers located in the Oklahoma City structure, might have been sympathetically detonated by the truck bomb.

A serious study was launched by the authors to see if there was any evidence where federal law enforcement personnel had indeed stored prohibited explosives in federal buildings in the past.

Jousting With Wolves

Our hunt began with a call to the Public Information Officer at the FBI. Not surprisingly, no one at the Bureau seemed to



The J. Edgar Hoover Building, headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in Washington, D.C., 20 February 2001.

recall anything about explosions at the Hoover Building. How about a fire at the Explosive Unit? "No ... no one here knows anything about that." Could an interview be conducted with anyone who was working in the unit in May of 1987? "No ... all those people have been transferred or retired."

Our next step was a formal request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. After this request languished for weeks, the FBI denied that there had ever been a report issued about any such "incident" at the Hoover Building.

Those experienced at jousting with vast government bureaucracies in the FOIA arena know that stonewalling information about government misdeeds is typical. Requests under this federal statute, normally, are "sloughed-off" with a variety of excuses. The guiding rule for FOIA filers: Never be in a hurry. One will have to file appeals, often for years, to get to the truth. In this case the truth was four years down the road.

After our appeal in the tedious appellate process was scheduled for a hearing in front of a federal judge, the FBI was notified to prepare for their day in court. Suddenly, a 2-inch file appeared in the mailbox.

Finally, 197 pages detailing one of the FBI's darkest secrets: the mysterious conflagration of the Crime Lab at the Hoover Building. In addition, the extraordinary FBI report was accompanied by a BATF cause-and-origin report which determined whether there had been arson, as well as a report from the D.C. Fire Department which extinguished the fires.

Our source had been right. A quick perusal of the bulky file made it clear that a series of explosions had rocked the federal complex in Washington, D.C. in the early morning hours of 5 May 1987. Most of the damage had occurred in room 3930, evidence storage room of the Explosives Unit, Laboratory Division, which stored evidence in high-profile "major cases."

Several photographs, of which first-generation glossies were not made available to the authors despite their requests, attached to the report told the story of the devastation resulting from the explosions. Numerous interviews with FBI personnel who admitted they had been storing a large amount of foreign-made high-explosives were included in the shocking record.

How could the nation's top experts in explosives have been so reckless? In our estimation, the report established a gross disregard for the safety and security of employees who worked at the Hoover Building. A high-ranking former ATF official contacted by SOF said that undoubtedly the storage of the high-explosives violated FBI operating procedures, at the risk of safety of personnel as well as the safe-guarding of evidence in high-profile cases.

Shades Of Watergate

Zero-Dark-Thirty, 5 May 1987

A member of the Security Unit had told investigators that she had been making her regularly scheduled rounds when she thought she heard someone. As she passed through the 3900 Corridor of the massive Hoover structure, she heard a noise. At this hour, no one was assigned to this area other than her.

Curiosity piqued, the security agent made her way down the long corridors. Moments later, she heard a door close — then another. There was someone else on the floor but she caught sight of no one. Checking the doors along the way, nothing seemed out of the usual. All doors were locked.

She told investigators that in room 3930, the evidence storage room of the Explosives Unit, Laboratory Division, she found the Medico locks intact, that the temperature of the knob was normal, and that she had not smelled any smoke.

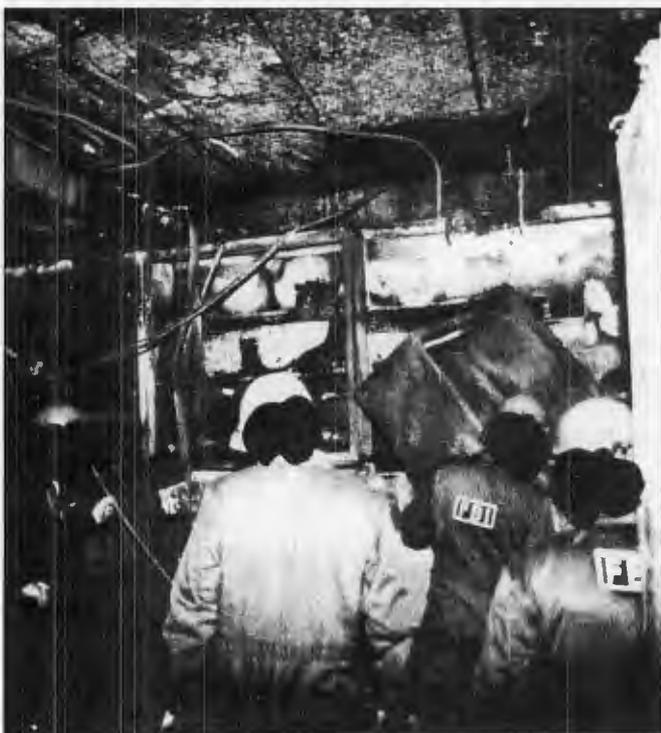
Moments later, as she entered an elevator, the guard heard



D.C. fireman inspects charred remains of world-famous crime lab.



According to investigators, cabinets containing evidence in other cases were breached by shrapnel and contaminated. (below) Investigators perform initial damage assessment.



a “muffled *bang* noise.” “It sounded like someone was dropping furniture or cabinets on the floor.”

She heard two more *bangs* as she stepped out of the elevator. Then another. Then two more. Glancing up, she saw the ceiling tiles shaking. Then a thundering explosion shook the concrete floors.

A number of other personnel working the nightshift were interviewed. Most recalled a series of small explosions, followed by at least one very substantial blast that shook the floors of the structure.

One particular interview recorded a management clerk’s recollections, “Sometime after 0330 he began hearing what sounded like some muffled *pops*, which sounded to him like someone banging on the building ... [followed by] a series of *pops* followed by one large explosion.”

In short order the entire rank-and-file of the night shift (probably several dozen people) at the building was ordered evacuated. An FBI 302 stated that, as personnel poured out onto the streets outside the headquarters, a reporter for the AP called the switchboard for information about something going on there. He said that his scanner was reporting that several fire trucks had been dispatched to the scene. The switchboard operator put the reporter on hold.

FBI security personnel quickly briefed the firefighters, informing them that dense smoke had engulfed a substantial portion of the third floor of the structure and that explosions were occurring in the crime lab. When asked what the source of the explosions were, FBI officials told firemen that the Explosives Unit of the lab contained, among other items, “bomb debris, explosives, ordnance, RPGs and a “LAW” [light anti-tank weapon] rocket.”

A more complete inventory would later establish far more explosives than these. Not surprising, members of the Security Unit successfully deflected the initial press inquiries with a simplistic line. The “story” put out described the unfolding disaster as a chemical fire in a closet that was being taken care of by the D.C. Fire Department.

“Nothing really is going on here,” the operator calmly assured reporters as the streets filled with fleeing FBI personnel.

It worked. The night owls at the local news bureaus went back to their crossword puzzles.

Dangerous Duty

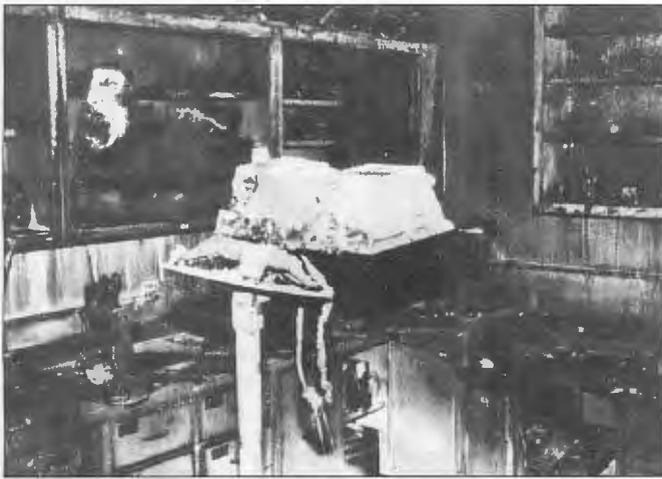
Another FBI 302 said that D.C. firemen were moving cautiously toward the door to room 3930 when a series of explosions shook the walls and ceiling around them. With smoke so thick — one later said he could barely make out the numbers on the doors — they waited in the hall for the explosions to stop.

Finally, a member of Engine Company 2 was able to enter the 600-square-foot Evidence Room with the assistance of special agents from the FBI. Next, employing water from an inch-and-one-half line, and fog spray, firemen began the 10-minute process of putting out the fires that were burning in various locations.

Eventually, the last of the fires were extinguished due to prompt and professional action by the Washington, D.C. Fire Department.

After the smoke cleared, the scene was one of devastation. The entire Explosive Unit was nothing but a charred and pitted shell. Evidence cabinets had been blown over and some had been penetrated by shrapnel. A pair of large holes in the walls provided chilling proof that one Soviet-made RPG had ignited. Miraculously, only one person required hospitalization due to an asthma attack brought on by the heavy smoke.

With the fires put down, bleary-eyed senior FBI personnel



Explosive Unit hopelessly contaminated by series of explosions and fire.



Technician's work area evidences destructive effects of blasts and fire.

began arriving inside the Hoover Building to assess the situation. Also at the scene was a senior official from D.C. Fire Department. Quick discussions took place and then the rank-and-file firemen were ushered away. A subsequent report by the fire department simply noted there were "hazardous materials" at the scene.

The proper procedure for crime labs require personnel to have on-hand only small amounts of residue from explosive devices they are examining. The remainder of the device is to be stored in bunkers, rendered inert, or photographed and then completely destroyed. The FBI maintains bunkers for the safe storage of explosives at their training facility, located in Quantico, Virginia, for just this purpose.

One FBI report lists the following explosives in boxes on the floor, next to evidence cabinets in room 3930 before the disaster.

Partial listing and conclusions from the FBI report:

One, perhaps two, cardboard boxes of foreign explosives which also included:

- 10 kilograms (approximately 22 pounds) of PBX (plastic explosive)
- 2.5 kilograms (approximately 5.5 pounds) of TNT
- 4 pounds PETN
- several 6" strips of detonating chord
- 10 to 15 rounds of 30mm anti-aircraft ammunition
- Three rocket-propelled grenades
- 45 detonating fuses

Also noted in their 5 June 1987 report:

• The floor area between rows of evidence cabinets exhibit numerous small craters which are characteristic as having been produced from the explosion of 122mm rocket fuses.

• The large holes through the evidence cabinets are characteristic as having been produced from the explosion of 122mm rocket fuses.

• The hole through the wall is characteristic of having been produced by the explosion of a rocket-propelled grenade without the initiation of the base detonating fuse element. In essence, (the report concludes) when the rocket hit the wall, the explosive in the warhead exploded from the force of impact and not from the base fuse. The blast and fragment damage to the surrounding area and the wall were produced from this exploding rocket.

• Evidence of high-speed missile damage is evident in some areas in the evidence room, from the ceiling to floors and the surrounding walls.

• This damage is characteristic of having been produced by metal fragments from the exploding military ordnance.

The former head of the Explosive Unit in a recorded interview admitted that before he left the unit — some five months prior to the incident — he had deposited a substantial amount of explosives with the new chief. Referring to the box of foreign explosives that played a role in the 5 May explosion, the report notes:

"At that time the box contained two five-kilo packages and two two-and-one-half-kilo packages of a foreign plastic high-explosive and foreign TNT. The box also contained several six-inch strips of detonating cord and three or four cartridges of PETN totaling approximately three pounds. There was also a separate box of approximately 15 foreign blasting caps."

According to the reports, this box was placed on the floor of the EU where it sat for months. In reference to the presence of the Soviet 122mm rocket fuses and RPGs which adorned the office, the head of the unit at the time of the incident told investigators that "He did not believe the storage of these devices presented a safety hazard."

SOF interviewed an explosives expert and former military EOD authority for his opinions regarding the slipshod storage practices of the FBI. He stated it was fortunate that an event of "horrendous devastation" did not occur and that the storage procedures involved "gross negligence." Furthermore, he emphatically stated that "anyone outside of the government would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of federal law if they operated in this manner." He continued, "It is illegal by law to keep detonators and explosives together. You never have them in the same room. The FBI was in violation of all ATF rules and regulations concerning storage of explosives."

Image Before Justice

The FBI's image of invincibility was largely developed over the years because of a reputation for having the finest crime lab in the world. At one time that may have been true. Prosecutors and defense attorneys know how testimony from the FBI's Forensic Lab personnel mystifies and impresses jurors. Their testimony may make the difference between conviction and acquittal.

The importance of full information is highlighted in the OKBOMB case. Stephen Jones, Timothy McVeigh's court-appointed lawyer, followed through on allegations of problems at the FBI Crime Lab. Jones learned that a whistle-blower at the lab, Dr. Frederic Whitehurst, had repeatedly complained about the shoddy work there. Jones lit the fire under

Continued on page 74

SECRET

SOVIET

SNIPER

AMMO



SOF Tests SVD Dragunov's Sniper Loads

BY DAVID M. FORTIER

PHOTOS BY EMILY K. NICKERSON

Want to make a U.S. Army or Marine sniper laugh? Tell them that you think the Russian SVD (*Snayperskaya Vintovka Dragunova* — Dragunov Sniper Rifle) is fairly accurate. When they stop rolling around on the floor and clear the tears from their eyes they may attempt to educate you about the truth of the matter. I've interviewed a number of active-duty and retired sniper/observers that tested and trained with the SVD. None of them were very impressed by it. They all felt it to be inaccurate, with an effective range of only about 500 yards. When pressed on what type of ammunition they used there was invariably a long pause followed by, "ball, the Russians never produced sniper or match loads." I always shook my head at this answer. Did they honestly think that the country that developed the world's first dedicated sniper rifle would issue *ball* for it? To be sure, when tested with standard Russian 148-grain LPS ball ammunition the weapon's accuracy is unimpressive for a sniper rifle. The question then arises, is



The question has always been, what were Russian snipers issued for ammunition? Developed in conjunction with the rifle was a 152-grain FMJBT load designed to increase both the accuracy and lethality of the SVD.

the SVD merely a poorly conceived and executed attempt at a self-loading sniper rifle by designers who could do no better? Or perhaps there is a piece of the puzzle that is missing, such as a dedicated sniper load designed to enhance accuracy.

Russia's use of snipers dates all the way back to the 18th Century. Later, during the Crimean War, Russia fielded small units of selected marksman, which proved unexpectedly effective at demoralizing the enemy. However, it was the effect of German *Scharfschutzen* (sharpshooters) during the Great War that had the most significant impact on Russian sniping. Being dominated by well-trained and skillfully deployed snipers, who killed seemingly at will, taught the Russians a lesson they have never forgotten.

After the end of hostilities connected to the Revolution the Soviet Union began a rearmament program. Beginning in 1932 they adapted their Mosin-Nagant M91/30 rifle for sniping. Rifles that grouped four test rounds into less than 30mm (1 3/16-inch) at 100 meters were selected and then modified with the addition of bent bolt

handles and optics. As the Soviets switched to self-loading rifles in the late 1930s they began developing versions for use by snipers. However, these did not prove successful. While impressed with their ability to give a quick follow-up shot if required, both their accuracy and durability left something to be desired. Due to these shortcomings they returned to the proven M91/30 magazine rifle in 1942. This would remain the standard Soviet sniper rifle until it was replaced by the SVD some 21 years later.

As the Soviet Union rearmed with assault rifles in the 1950s the desire for a self-loading sniper rifle resurfaced. In 1958 the GRAU (*Glavnoye Raketno Artilleriyskoye Upravleniye* — the Chief Missile and Artillery Department of the Soviet Ministry of Defense) commissioned four teams to design a new self-loading sniper rifle. Individual design teams were led by Evgeniy Dragunov, Mikhail Kalashnikov, Alexander Konstantinov, and Fedor Barinov. The requirements called for a weapon that would be completely reliable under the worst possible conditions, with a high accuracy of fire and substantial range. The fly in the ointment was that they also required it to be lightweight, compact, and semiautomatic.

At this time Evgeniy Dragunov was known more for his sport and competition rifles; his Biathlon rifles taking several Gold Medals in the Olympics. His first sniper rifle prototype, designated the SSV (*Snayperskaya Samozariadnaya Vintovka* — sniper autoloading rifle) was completed in 1958. Utilizing gas-operation with a short-stroke piston and a rotating bolt the SSV evolved into the rifle we know today as the SVD (*Snayperskaya Vintovka Dragunova* — Dragunov Sniper Rifle) or simply as the Dragunov.

The SVD was adopted on 3 July 1963 after successfully competing against the other design team's rifles. It was the world's first rifle designed from the ground up solely for the purpose of sniping. It chambered the venerable 7.62x54R cartridge. Featuring a tapered case with a rim, this cartridge dates from the end of the 19th Century. In Russian service it is still used in GPMGs as well as for sniping and would be their equivalent of our 7.62x51mm cartridge. The standard ball loading consists of a 148-



The only way to identify Russian sniper ammunition is by its packaging. The wooden shipping crates are plainly marked "SNIPER" in Cyrillic.

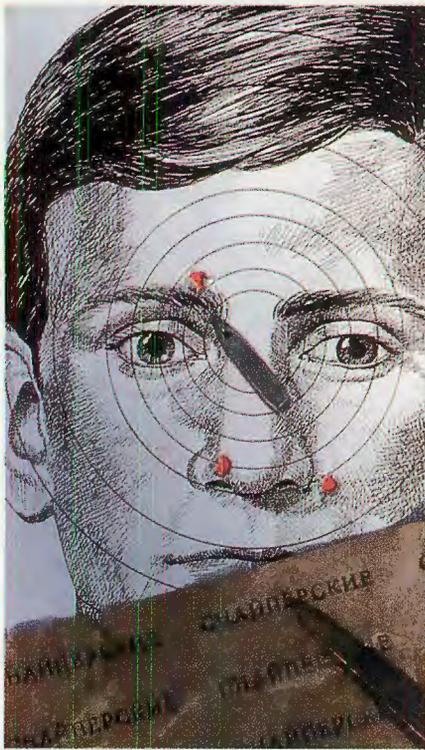
grain FMJBT projectile with a mild steel core and is designated LPS (Light Steel Core).

What most people don't realize though is that the Soviets did not simply design a firearm. Instead, they would design what they call a "Weapon Complex." This entailed designing a cartridge in conjunction with the firearm. In the case of the SVD, a specialized 7.62x54R sniper load.

Victor Sabelnikov headed a design team tasked with producing a cartridge that would increase both the accuracy and lethality of the SVD. The result of their work was the 7N1 Sniper load. This loading is claimed to give an increase in accuracy 2.5 times over standard ball ammunition. It consists of a copper-washed, annealed steel cartridge case, corrosive primer, IMR-type powder, and a 152-grain steel jacketed projectile. Externally, the 7N1 load looks identical to standard LPS ball ammunition. There is no color coding on the tip or primer annulus, and no specialized head stamp to differentiate it. The headstamp simply consists of factory and year of manufacture.

The only way to identify this load is by its packaging. It's packed in standard Soviet practice with a wooden shipping crate containing 880 rounds. Breaking a crate open reveals two hermetically sealed metal "spam" cans, each containing 440 rounds. Opening one of the tins reveals 22 bundles of paper-wrapped ammunition. Each packet contains 20 rounds. The wooden shipping





crates, metal "spam" cans, and individual paper packets are all distinctly marked "SNIPER" in Cyrillic.

Pulling a projectile and comparing it to a standard 148-grain LPS ball round though quickly raises an eyebrow. While both projectiles feature a copper-washed steel jacket the similarities end there. The 7N1 projectile is slightly longer and features a more pronounced boattail with a noticeable hollow base. Cutting the two projectiles in half quickly reveals the 7N1 to be a highly developed specialized load. An enormous amount of research and development went into this cartridge. The projectile has an air pocket in the nose, similar to the 5.45x39mm 7N6 round. Below the airpocket is a 37.5-grain cone shaped mild steel core of .269 inches in diameter and .520 inches in length. This sits on top of a 72.6-grain lead "knocker." These are pressed into the jacket leaving a hollow base with a depth of .100. Overall projectile length is 1.275

inches and the diameter is .311.

To get an idea on the thought process that went into developing this projectile I sent samples out to Carl Starke, the president of C&R Ammo. Carl spent two tours flying over North Vietnam and then worked on a NASA re-entry vehicle project before getting into the ammunition business. Currently, his company produces the First Shot line of frangible ammunition.

Carl carefully dissected the projectiles to ascertain how they functioned. After he did this I received an excited phone call from him. He was quite impressed with the design and when asked of his thoughts of its effectiveness on target said, "Nasty, real nasty, this would ruin your whole day." He deduced that upon impact the lead knocker pushed the steel core forward into the airpocket and changed the weight distribution of the projectile. Thus destabilized, the projectile will yaw instead of simply punching a .30-



A comparison of sectioned projectiles (left to right): 148 gr. LPS, 152 gr. 7N1, 60 gr. 5.45x39 commercial load. Notice the steel core of the LPS round is surrounded by lead. With the 7N1 the steel core sits on top of a lead knocker. The air cavity in the nose is similar to that used with the 5.45x39 to increase lethality.

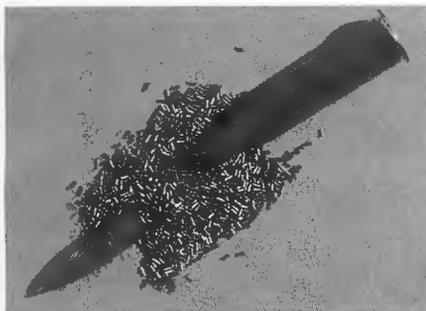


From left to right: 7.92x57, .308 Match, 7.62x54R 7N1, LPS ball, older LPS ball with Silver Tip color code, B-32 A.P.I., 7.62x39, 5.45x39, 5.56x45. Notice that the 7N1 sniper load appears identical outwardly to standard ball ammunition.



Projectile comparison (left to right): 7.62x51 147 gr. M-80 ball, Sierra .308 168 gr HPBT, Sierra 175 gr. HPBT, Soviet 152 gr. 7N1, Soviet 148 gr. LPS, Soviet 200 gr. Extra Match, Soviet 181 gr. Type D Heavy ball, 123 gr. 7.62x39, 52 gr. 5.45x39.

caliber hole in someone. This is how the 5.45x39mm 7N6 load functions, and in combat it quickly earned a reputation for grisly wounds. It is probable that the 7N6 5.45 load was developed from the 7N1 sniper load. He felt the hollow base was intended to pinpoint the gases to aid in centering the projectile in the bore and possibly even gain a few extra fps. He felt the very pronounced boattail design would be very stable in flight and would aid stability when the projectile approached transonic speeds. All in all he felt that it was a very clever design intended to dump as much of the projectile's energy



Outwardly this round of 7N1 simply looks like an ordinary ball round manufactured at Factory 188 in 1981. However, pulling it apart reveals a longer projectile with a hollow base.



U.S. military loads for use by snipers has steadily evolved from the old M-72 .30-06 Match to the latest M118LR loading with a Sierra 175 gr. HPBT. Likewise the Russians continue to develop and refine their sniper loads.

as possible into the target.

Muzzle velocity of the 7N1 from the SVD is 2,723 fps, with the trajectory matching that of standard LPS ball. As the SVD's optical sight, the PSO-1 (Pritsel Snaypersky Optichesky), has a BDC this allows LPS ball ammunition to be easily substituted for 7N1 without having to do a math problem. This is the only reason that I can see for the light 152-grain projectile weight of the 7N1. Allowing the use of standard LPS ball must have been a very high priority as the 152-grain weight is a serious handicap, in my opinion, at long range. This weight projectile will lose its velocity and energy faster, have a more curved trajectory, and be affected by the wind more than a projectile weighing 170-180 grains. This is the downside of the light projectile weight.

Yet the question remains, how does it perform in combat? How did it perform in the hands of Soviet snipers whose motto was "While invisible, I see and destroy?" These are the hard questions to answer as you won't find the information with a set of calipers or on the range. I was able find a rough (and I did not improve it) English translation of a Russian work entitled *The Bullet*, written by Afghan War veteran Pavel Andreev. On the effectiveness of the load issued to snipers he writes, "A bul-

SVD DRAGUNOV	
SPECIFICATIONS	
Caliber:	7.62x54R
Operation:	Gas Operated, Self-Loading
Overall Length:	48.2 inches
Barrel Length:	24.4 inches, 4 groove 1-9.4 inches R-hand twist
Weight:	9.5 pounds
Feed:	10-round Detachable Box
Iron Sights:	Post Front, Tangent Rear graduated to 1,200 meters
Optics:	PSO-1 with 4x magnification
Muzzle Velocity:	2,723 fps
7N1 CARTRIDGE SPECIFICATIONS	
Case Material:	Copper-Washed, Annealed Steel
Primer:	Berdan, Corrosive
Powder:	IMR-type
Projectile Type:	Hollow Base FMJBT
Projectile Weight:	152 grains
Projectile OAL:	1.275
Projectile Diameter:	.311
Jacket Material:	Copper-Washed Steel
Core Design:	Air pocket, Mild Steel Core, Lead Knocker
Steel Core Specs:	.269 Diameter, .520 OAL, 37.5 grains
Hollow Base Specs:	.230 Diameter, .100 Deep
Purpose:	Dedicated Sniper Load for the SVD Dragunov Designed to Increase Accuracy and Lethality
Manufacturer:	Russian Factory 188, Believed to be Novosibirsk

let of your rifle weighs a little more than nine grams. It is covered by steel 'jacket' with a copper surface. When piercing into a 'dukh' [a slang term for Mujahideen] it turns 90 degrees, then, in a thousandth of a second, 180 degrees and goes on back forward, breaking flash a little bit. But on the depth of 15-20 cm it loses its power, transferring it to a body of already dead, towards that time, 'dukh.' Meanwhile his entrails are bursting. Besides, a bullet, having run through his lungs or heart, destroys them completely. Did you read it? So your only task is not to miss. The rest is not your business." This account verifies Carl's feelings on the performance of the 7N1 load.

I also interviewed a former sniper who had deployed with the SVD in

combat. A Soviet veteran of the War in Afghanistan, he served there for 16 months starting in 1986. A member of a Recon/Scout battalion of the Chirchik Brigade, he spent his first six months in country serving as a sniper. He remarked very favorably on the SVD and the load he was issued for it, the 7N1. During his service one man per platoon was equipped with an SVD, and they performed a fire-support mission. When setting up an ambush site he would be with the PKM machine gun and grenade launcher, approximately 200 meters behind the main party. As the ambush was executed he would usually be engaging targets at a range of 600-800 meters. Using the SVD he had successfully engaged out to slightly past 1,000 meters in the fire-support role. However for a "one shot, one kill" scenario he felt the SVD/7N1 combination was capable out to 600-800 meters, depending upon conditions.

He liked its semi-auto operation, especially as he was often engaging multiple targets who were running and firing back. When firing at a lone individual and a miss occurred he said that the crack of the bullet going by (an unmistakable sound) would usually cause a man to freeze for a few seconds. This was

Continued on page 66

CONTACT SHEET
Sellier & Bellot USA (913) 664-5933 (7.62x54R Match, FMJBT, SP Ammunition)
J&G Sales, LTD (520) 445-9650 (New Production and Quality Surplus Ammunition)
C&R Ammo (877) 549-AMMO (Frangible Practice and Self-Defense Ammunition)

Expats at War

SAUDI'S COVER-UP MUSLIM FUNDAMENTALIST TERROR ATTACKS

BY DON NORTH

The veil has been lifted in Saudi Arabia on a bizarre world of illegal booze and profits so enormous that British, American and Canadian expatriates living there are at war. The favored weapon of elimination is that old Middle East favorite, the car bomb. At least 15 foreigners are in jail and three have confessed to murder on a Saudi television program that sets a new standard for "reality" TV. CBS's "Survivor" pales by comparison. On this Saudi talk show there may be no survivors, as an appointment with the executioners sword at "Chop Square" in downtown Riyadh is now a strong possibility.

It is also making it harder for Saudi and international police authorities to protect foreign expats from Islamic hardline terrorists, who apparently are increasingly targeting Westerners living in Saudi Arabia, following the first two bomb explosions that authorities traced to the booze wars of expats.

After 19 American Air Force men were killed and 500 injured in the truck bomb explosion at El Khobar Towers, a military residence in Dhahran five years ago, the U.S. military has been moving their people to remote bases where maximum protection can be provided. When the terrorists found it difficult to target foreign troops they appear to have shifted sights to the foreign civilians.

Ever since the Prophet Muhammad and his followers fought fourteen hundred years ago to rid the area that is now Saudi Arabia from non-Muslim forces, there has been a movement to cleanse the area of outside influence. It's a movement often at odds with modern Saudis who depend on business with the outside world and the import of foreign workers. Particularly nettlesome to many Saudis are the estimated 10,000 American and British Air Force personnel who fly shotgun over southern Iraq, mostly from Saudi bases. Islamic militants such as Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden have made the U.S. presence a rallying cry.

Now in a weird twist, six bomb explosions in six months have confused police and government authorities and brought new uncertainty for the safety of foreigners in Saudi Arabia.

The third, fourth and fifth explosions of various devices were minor compared to the first two car bombs and inflicted no serious injuries on

Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdel Aziz speaks with Saudi citizens at the Saudi National Guard headquarters in Riyadh, 26 February 1997. In the background is a member of the National Guard, the loyalist force, headed by Prince Abdullah, that defends the monarchy against internal unrest. In a quiet, low-profile operation, hundreds of former U.S. servicemen working for Vinnell Corp. have been filling key roles at the National Guard.



AP Photo/Jahn Moore

the foreign victims. On 2 May, however, a sophisticated package bomb severely wounded American chiropractor, Dr. Gary Hatch, in his clinic in Khobar, an east coast city. A Khobar resident who knows Dr. Hatch says the bomb was a "significant device." It was delivered by a local commercial courier service and appeared to be a VHS video tape. When he opened the package addressed to him, the explosion caused Dr. Hatch to lose most of one thigh, one hand and an eye.

"It has all the earmarks and the *modus operandi* of Soviet/KGB wet-heads," says my Khobar source. "Take a look at how extensively ex-Soviet bloc criminals have recently infested Arab Gulf countries, mostly Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates."

Like Chicago In The Twenties

Whatever the source, the United States Embassy in Riyadh sounded alarm bells and urged a degree of caution for Americans not seen here since the Gulf War a decade ago. In an advisory sent out to 35,000 American residents the embassy said: "Americans should maintain a low profile, vary routes and times for all required travel and treat mail and packages from unfamiliar sources with suspicion."

The Saudi desert often creates mirages that look like pristine lakes in the sand, and veteran foreign observers have learned to trust less than half of what they see and almost none of what they hear in this complex desert Kingdom. There is little in the way of tough investigation by local news agencies. Saudi government pronouncements, like so many governments tend to be self-serving. Foreign Diplomats and the foreign community in general have been reluctant to talk about the bombing or do so under deep cover. So mystery surrounds the new spate of bombings, particularly those traced to expats in the booze business. Why would anyone running a profitable booze-smuggling business risk losing their head by murdering partners in the messy carnage of a car bomb? An American veteran in Saudi Arabia says, "It reminds me of Chicago in the twenties when Al Capone and gangs of bootleggers murdered each other during the prohibition."

It began 17 November 2000 when Christopher Rodway, a Briton, walked out of his comfortable home in "Five Villa Complex," in Riyadh, and turned on the ignition of his parked car. The explosion killed him instantly and



AP Photo/John Moore

Vinnell Corp. trainer and former U.S. serviceman Michael Caldwell checks the site of a 25 mm gun on a light armored vehicle at a Saudi Arabian National Guard base, Kashim Al-An, near Riyadh on 22 February 1997. Presence of ex-soldiers, who act as military specialists and trainers of Saudi National Guard, illustrates critical role Americans play in supporting and protecting the oil kingdom's House of Saud.

severely wounded his wife. The plastic explosive C4 was found in the first two bombings. A week later a second device exploding under another car, injured four more Britons and an Irish woman. Another Irishman escaped death a few days later when a bomb under his car failed to explode. The attacks were first believed to be connected to anti-western terrorism that seemed to be on the rise again since the bombing of the U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen. Scotland Yard's elite antiterrorist unit SO13 was flown

to Saudi Arabia to investigate whether any terrorist group was targeting Britons. However, the trail led to the door of a shadowy American named Michael Sedlak, or so the Saudi's claim.

In early December, Michael Sedlak, an employee of Vinnell Corporation, was the first Westerner arrested by Saudi authorities in connection with the bombings. Vinnell is staffed by former U.S. military and intelligence officers employed to train the Saudi National Guard. In 1995, Vinnell was itself a terrorist target when a bomb planted at the National Guard Headquarters in Riyadh, killed five Americans.

Michael Sedlak is believed to have started naming a long list of Western expats involved in the Saudi bootlegging operations, a move that may be saving him from murder charges. After Sedlak's arrest, 14 other expats were quickly rounded up by Saudi authorities. All either ran illegal bars, knew each other or were in some way connected with Sedlak and the others



AP Photo/U.S. Navy

A 35-foot-deep and 85-foot-wide crater made by a truck bomb is shown Wednesday, 26 June 1996 at Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Crater is result of huge truck bomb that killed at least 19 Americans and wounded hundreds — the deadliest terrorism strike ever against a U.S. target in the Persian Gulf. Parked fuel truck blew up just outside U.S. military housing complex and made the crater, which is four times as deep and three times as wide as the Federal Building bomb detonated in Oklahoma City.



Man who identified himself as a Belgian Raaf Skivens (or Scheffer) (above), confesses on Saudi Arabian state television 4 February 2001 that he and a Canadian, named William Sampson (center) and a Briton named Alexander Mitchell (right), carried out bombings in the Kingdom which killed one

Briton and injured several others in November last year. The three men, who were shown separately sitting behind a desk, appeared nervous as they told of their roles in the car bombings, one of which killed Christopher Rodway and injured his wife on 17 November 2000.

behind bars. Another bomb went off, seriously wounding a Scot who worked for Coca-Cola in Dharan. Relatives of the accused say the continued bombings prove the expats were not involved.

Saudi Arabia's economy has long depended on a large expatriate community to make the magic Kingdom run smoothly. The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, in Washington D.C., confirms that in the most recent census a year ago, the population of Saudi Arabia is

20 million, of which a quarter, or 5 million, are the expatriate work force. You will encounter Filipinos running Safeways and MacDonalds, Pakistanis and Indians driving taxis and working construction jobs, Eritreans as household help and Egyptians doing almost everything. Islam and English is usually required of so called "TCNs" (Third Country Nationals). With the discovery of oil in the 1920s, highly trained British and American technicians were required and over the years this combi-

nation of foreign labor transformed Saudi Arabia from a backward desert into a modern nation.

There are currently 35,000 Americans there, of which 5,000 are military. The British expat community is about 10,000. The pay is good, tax-free and comes with generous home leave.

Discouraged from mixing with the Saudis, foreigners live in compounds where Saudis are not allowed. Life goes on behind compound walls much as it did back home for the expats. Women can walk in the compound without wearing a black *Abaya* covering her body and hair and even drive a car — which is not allowed on public streets. But life here is boring for the foreign workers and boredom often leads to making home-brewed wine, beer and whiskey and heavy drinking. For the more affluent, bootlegged booze smuggled into the Kingdom in square bottles to accommodate packing crates, is readily available. A bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label goes for around U.S. \$100 in Riyadh. Although liquor is strictly prohibited in Muslim Saudi Arabia, the Saudi authorities tolerate boozing in private expat homes, as long as Saudis are not invited.

Recently, as the ranks of expats increased, home-brewing and -distilling could not keep up with the demand for alcohol and smuggling became big business. What began as private drinking parties on compounds developed into underground pubs off the compounds called *Shebeens*. There are an estimated 47 *Shebeens* in Riyadh alone. It seems the foreigners who ran them and sold memberships at U.S. \$15 a month got greedy, fell-out and started attacking each other. Or some-

SECRET Saudi Vigilantes

At approximately 0830, on 2 May 2001, an envelope delivered by "special courier" (company unknown at press time) exploded, taking with it an eye, a knee and a hand of American chiropractor, Dr. Gary Hatch. Other blasts and incidents include Coca Cola employee David Brown's discovery of a booby trap under his car's windshield wiper after he parked his car in an unfamiliar location within his housing compound; explosions at Euromarche, in Riyadh, and another at the Jarir Bookstore, also in Riyadh, killed one Briton and injured four others; a blast at Khobar which injured a Scottish man; an additional bombing in Riyadh which injured a Briton and an Egyptian; and at least one incident of a bomb which failed to detonate after being delivered to a U. S. firm.

It is, of course, of major concern whether the so-called "Expat Booze Battle" is serving as a convenient smokescreen for anti-Western movements, whether of the free-lance hyper-Muslim, vigilante variety, or a well-funded orchestrated campaign of violence and death by a treacherous benefactor.

While SOF has discovered no evidence that Usama bin Laden is involved in the targeting of Westerners, it doesn't take a great deal of imagination that he, or some other equally vicious puppeteer, is responsible for the injuries and deaths of several Americans and Europeans — a toll which may increase in the months ahead.

To add fuel to speculation, Reuters reports on 10 May 01 that "Saudi Arabia has obtained information on who was behind a series of bombings aimed at foreigners in the kingdom, the deputy interior minister said. Prince Ahmed made his comments on Wednesday night, the official Saudi Press Agency reported. Asked about the bombings, which started late last year, Prince Ahmed said: '... It is now known to us who is behind these bombings.' He did not elaborate."

— T.R.

thing like that say residents.

The man alleged to be the kingpin in running Shebeens took off for neighboring Dubai shortly after the first bombing and landed in jail for illegally crossing the border. Briton Gary Dixon, alias Gary Lyons or Gary Onions, ran the "Empire Pub" in Riyadh and was arrested numerous times by the *Mutawa*, volunteer religious police of the "Committee for Propagation of Virtue and Forbidding of Evil." Former members of his Pub say Dixon led a charmed life by sharing profits with the *Mutawa*, Police and Saudi sponsors and avoiding jail or flogging. The Saudis had him extradited in mid-May and he is back to face charges with his business buddies.

A Chill In The Air

How did bootlegging get violent enough here to risk a public beheading? An American expat in Saudi interviewed for this story says the word on the street has it that a money deal unrelated to the booze business led former drinking partners to get bombed. Michael Sedlak was well-known around Riyadh as a heavy drinker and a regular at the "Celtic Corner" run by Alexander Mitchell, the Briton now charged with murder. Sedlak lived on Five Villa Compound in the suburbs of Riyadh and became the "interface" between the dozen or so residents and the Saudi landlord. Sedlak took care of problems and collected the rent.

Several months prior to the first bomb Sedlak apparently collected the monthly rent, but instead of handing it over to the landlord kept it himself. Outraged, the British compound resi-

dents reported Sedlak's double-dealing to his employer Vinnell and he lost his job. Friends of Sedlak described him as "flipping out, getting drunk and looking for revenge." One of the Five Villa Residents who informed on Sedlak was Christopher Rodway, the first car-bomb victim. At least one of the Britons injured in the second car bomb was also a resident of Five Villa Compound.

In the evening of 5 February, three of the arrested foreigners appeared on Saudi television and "confessed" to murder through the series of car bombings. Alexander Mitchell is a former British soldier with a soft voice and Scottish accent, known as "Sandy" to his friends. He looked pale and scared as he haltingly told of how he planted a bomb under the car of Christopher Rodway after being "ordered" to do so. Mitchell's sister who watched the program said he appeared to be "drugged" while reading his confession "under duress." William Sampson, born in Scotland but now a Canadian and resident of Vancouver, B.C., was also placed at a table before the cameras where he too confessed to the bombing. Sampson worked as an economist in Saudi. A third man, Belgian Raaf Skivens, admitted he planted a device 22 November that injured six Britons. The Saudi authorities say the bombings are a result of a quarrel between foreigners involved in the illegal drinks business. The chilling talk show got a huge audience amid the usual boredom of Saudi TV fare and shocked both Saudi and foreign viewers. But the chill was particularly felt in the expat community. "The sewers

of Riyadh were fragrant that night as people got rid of their alcohol," said one Western diplomat.

Arab and Asian expats, as well as Saudis, are beheaded regularly in Saudi Arabia; recently about 100 a year. They are executed, not only for murder, but for drug-dealing and smuggling. Diplomatic intercession and negotiations usually save Western expats from the executioner's sword and the beheading of Westerners is rare. Residents say they only recall three Germans who went on a robbing and killing spree in Jeddah in the early 1970s being quietly and privately beheaded. Five years ago two British nurses convicted of murdering an Australian nursing colleague were pardoned by King Fahd, the Saudi Monarch, after diplomatic negotiations and the payment of U.S. \$1.5 million to the murdered woman's family. The money was raised by British business interests fearful that a beheading of the British nurses would effect economic interests between the two countries. The condemned can escape the death penalty if the victims family accepts a payment of "blood money."

Interior Minister Prince Mohamed Nayef in a recent statement said those involved in the bombings would be tried under *Sharia* Law, the judicial code of Islam that mandates execution by beheading for murder and drug-trafficking. Prince Nayef said the Saudi government may overrule any plea for leniency in this case because of the shocking and public nature of the crime. The father of Michael Rodway, the first car-bomb victim, has already called for his son's killers to be executed.

Foreign Embassy officials and lawyers have had little access to the accused, even three months after their televised confessions. For expats and diplomats in Saudi there are still many unanswered questions, although rumors and speculation abound. Some observers suspect a Saudi vigilante group attacking alcohol smugglers. Although the Saudis are presenting the case as a feud among foreigners with no Saudis involved, some expat residents suspect the bombings are not feuds among foreign smugglers, but between Saudi managers. A Western diplomat said, "The people accused are just small fry, when it's a multi-million dollar business it is inconceivable that Saudi's are not behind it."

Don North is a longtime contributor to SOE. ✕



Saudi Air Force chopper crew observes prayer time.



Mugabe's Madness Takes Hold In Zimbabwe

Hitler's Ghost Stalks the Dark Continent

AN *SOF* SPECIAL REPORT FROM HARARE
BY AL J. VENTER
PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

Zimbabwe is in political free-fall. It celebrated its 21st year of independence in April, but as London's *Economist* succinctly commented, "Something eerily like an African version of fascism is taking shape." With Mugabe branded a tyrant, his judiciary receiving death threats,

hit squads assassinating opposition leaders and gangs of stormtroopers pilaging without the authorities doing anything about it, the parallels with other lunatic leaders who have been absolutely corrupted by power are sobering. Africa, it seems, has a surfeit of such monsters.

There are sinister developments in Central Africa. They involve a racist of extraordinary fervor who goes by the name of Robert Mugabe. As president of Zimbabwe, he was recently labeled "Africa's Own Mussolini" by Britain's *Economist*.

It says something, that the man per-

sonifying the country's *casus belli*, by taking up the cudgels against the country's farmers, calls himself Hitler. Chenjerai "Hitler" Hunzvi is the self-elected leader of an organization dedicated to driving Zimbabwe's whites out of the country. He is also a close confidant of Mugabe. "Hitler's" latest actions threaten the embassies of those countries who support the Zimbabwe opposition, among them the United States, Britain, Germany and Australia.

Since Mugabe's diplomats all over the world have labeled the reports emanating out of Zimbabwe as "lies, all lies," *Soldier Of Fortune* went and had a look why there are today only about 50,000 of the original quarter-million white settlers left in the country. It was a risky initiative: The last two journalists who exposed conditions from inside the country — including the local correspondent of the BBC, whose home was attacked by armed men — fled for their lives.

The King's X

SOF's week-long experience inside the embattled state was chilling. We found a nation of 11 million people that was ruled by a madman. Yet Zimbabwe has the same vote at the UN as the United States.

Also, it didn't take long to discover that very little of what is going on in that once lovely country would never have taken place had its leaders not been black. In contrast, were any Arab, Asian or South American nation to use its secret police to kill or bludgeon its oppo-



Zimbabwean Army parade (above) in Harare reminds the populace who is in charge: The continued loyalty of his military will ultimately decide the tyrant's future (as the nation runs out of fuel, the military recently received a raise). (left) Cheap political signs litter Zimbabwean landscape in wake of illegal farm invasions.

nents with impunity, they would have had sanctions slapped on them in short order. Issues are further exacerbated by the police, supine when attacks are made on those who oppose Mugabe's rule, yet clinically efficient when taking action against the opposition.

These actions have included random arrests of critics and the murder of many of those people who oppose the authority of this demagogue. Each night — as I write — the President's security goons go into Harare's townships and abduct young people. Ostensibly they are taken in, as the daily briefing puts it, "for questioning." Truth is, the majority are never seen again.

And once all this comes to an end, as it most certainly will, the international community is likely to be faced with a succession of macabre reports and photos of mass graves of those who have been liquidated. That, as usual, will be followed by the usual commissions of inquiry into killings that are becoming as commonplace in Zimbabwe in 2001 as petty crime.

The sad thing is that it's a bit like Rwanda all over again. And who is it that proclaimed that such a horrible debacle would never be allowed to happen again on African soil? None other than another African leader, Kofi Annan, General Secretary of the United Nations.



The military and police may be Mugabe's ultimate line of defense, but his Brownshirts are the legion "war veterans" and ZANU PF supporters, seen chanting here for European farmers to get off their lands, many of which have been in their families for generations. European nations donated millions for purchase of farms, which Mugabe used to buy choice plots for his close friends. The "veterans" — legitimate or fake — got nothing.

One needs to carefully examine the situation in Zimbabwe to understand the machinations of this madman's mind, for this is no ordinary leader obsessed with power. For a start, Mugabe's excesses have all the hallmarks of many of the tyrants who strode tall in Africa before him: Uganda's Idi Amin Dada, a tyrant who was caricatured by the international media as an amusing, albeit lethal, buffoon. That perception persisted until we discovered that he had murdered several hundred thousand of his people. Another of his ilk was "Emperor" Bokassa of the Central African Republic, an idiosyncratic psychopath. This lunatic liked to use a razor to lop the ears off children for real or imagined "crimes" of disobedience.

There have been others, including another Ugandan, Milton Obote, as



Just as in early Nazi Germany, no opposition is tolerated: Five Russian TM-57 mines were used by Mugabe's security thugs to destroy presses at only independent newspaper, The Daily News.

Then It Was Called Rhodesia

There was a time when *SOF* staffers would make annual trips to what was then known as Rhodesia. How different it was.

The first time we went in, in the mid-'70s, the guerrilla war was in full-swing and there were four of us in a car that crossed the border at Beit Bridge from South Africa. With me driving, the party included "Big John" Donovan, Fat Ralph and our implacable leader Bob Brown.



Though we moved about in convoy and times were difficult — ambushes were commonplace along many of the remote stretches of road — there was none of the political security apparatus in place that one sees today on the country's frontiers. While hostilities raged against renegade groups operating out of rebel bases in Zambia and Mozambique, we were able to enter Rhodesia carrying automatic weapons.

We even had a few grenades secreted in the trunk and, once or twice, a couple of claymores: "Just in case," as Bob would say. In those days it was simply accepted that we needed to protect ourselves.

Rhodesia's government spooks at that time were more preoccupied with gooks than recalcitrants stirring the pot in the townships, though to be fair, Ian Smith wasn't always easy on journalists who opposed white rule. Still, despite problems, it was a relatively open country. We could go where we pleased, even though people sometimes shot at us. How different today.

Even with the war on, the country then was a land of opportunity. The army openly recruited mercenaries and quite a few Americans added notches to their grips while fighting in one of the four Rhodesian Light Infantry commandos (including John Coleman, a former *SOF* editor).

Another *SOF* staffer, Vietnam vet Bob MacKenzie, served for several years in the Rhodesian Special Air Services Regiment, the only American to do so. After having been wounded and invalided out of the U.S. Army, MacKenzie, as a grunt, joined the Rhodesian Army. In a distinguished career that took him on operations throughout the sub-continent, he ended his service as an officer.

— A.J.V.

well as Haile Mengistu of Ethiopia, who enjoys useful patronage in his adopted home. "The Butcher" as his Ethiopian's opponents call him — resides today in exiled isolation in Zimbabwe. Like, it seems, really does attract like.

Though he began well, Robert Mugabe, like the rest, has become a virulent paranoiac. Had any other leader sanctioned the kind of anti-white activity that we have seen recently in Zimbabwe, the instigator would long ago have been arrested for race crimes. On the 21st anniversary of his accession to power last April, he attacked whites as "snakes" and warned: "We have degrees in violence." The worst, he implied was still to come.

With all this, Mugabe is impervious to criticism; utterly so. But that's perhaps a trait shared by all leaders who have been corrupted by power, it's also to be expected on a continent where half of sub-Saharan Africa's 600 million people survive on just 65 cents a day.

He surrounds himself with a phalanx of guards, all of his own Shona tribe. His security measures are formidable, the likes of which we haven't seen since the death of North Korea's Kim Il Sung. For example, access to the road leading to State House is so sensitive that there have been 18 people shot dead in the vicinity for no other reason than they ventured too close. It matters little that the majority had taken a wrong turn in the approach road to the most heavily fortified structures in Africa. Among those killed was the son of one of the governors of the Bank of England who was headed home after a party. Instead

of making a left, he veered right.

The Veneer Of A Nation

Zimbabwe's problems aren't something that the casual visitor can put a finger on straight away.

The economy has collapsed, a million jobs have been lost in the past 18 months, there is a projected fall of 60% in the corn crop and the country staggers from one gas crisis to another (because there are no foreign reserves left to buy oil). All this is coupled to a rate of inflation fast approaching 60%. As one of Mugabe's ministers was heard to say when we were there, "otherwise things are normal." What the man didn't mention was that while Mugabe continually rails against the ghosts of "white colonialism" and "European imperialism" that's especially incongruous since, in order to win his fifth term in office, the tyrant took it upon himself to import to Africa a jackbooted



Unidentified opponent of Mugabe's brutal rule is beaten up by police before being arrested.



Farmer John Melrose, an aging stalwart, nearly beaten to death by "veterans" who tried to drive him off his land. (inset): Guy French, another farmer almost murdered by "veteran" invaders.



fascism reminiscent of 1930s' Europe!

It's a situation made worse by conditions in Zimbabwe today being bad enough to eventually become a life-and-death situation with melt-down implications for the entire Southern Africa. The classic domino effect on surrounding countries is immediate enough for even the most sanguine observer to accept that the ongoing saga could become explosive. And if Zimbabwe crashes, the same could happen to some of its neighbors, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia included. The long-term projections are grim.

Superficially, though, we found during our swing through the country that life in Zimbabwe's cities and towns goes on. Fridays after work is still boys' night out and most of the town goes shopping on Saturdays. Zimbabwe's cricket team recently beat Bangladesh in a cricket test series. Generally, while talk centers on immi-

nent disaster and the youth is leaving in droves, most of them as soon as they can get the air fare together, old traditions prevail.

The delightful old Meikles (it's had a multi-million dollar face-lift) is as it always was: quietly efficient with an understated elegance that makes it still one of the best hotels on the continent. Zimbabwe's game parks thrive, though poaching is rampant. Also, while in-country, we could — because of the collapsed Zimbabwe dollar — eat at some of the country's best restaurants. Costs were a fraction of anything like it Stateside.

On a practical level, there have been changes and here the threat factor is suddenly manifest.

While most state-sponsored violence is muffled by the kind of innuendo and double-talk that might have

Continued on page 72

POLICE, RACE AND THE FOURTH ESTATE

Have Cops Gone On Strike?

BY FRED REED



Ken Lambert/Washington Times



Fred Reed has spent countless hours riding with cops and reporting on law enforcement issues. He currently writes a column on police matters for the Washington Times.

America has a problem: A lot of cops, in a lot of places, are quietly going on strike. Few know it. Their buddies know, yes. Maybe their supervisors know. Maybe their supervisors actually suggested it. But the public doesn't know.

Cops, more and more of them, have decided not to do their jobs.

The reason? Race.

It goes like this. A cop sees a car swerving all over the road. (I know these incidents well; I've been riding with the cops for going on a decade as a police reporter in Washington.) Maybe it's at night. The cop has no way of knowing what color the driver is. Even in the daytime it's hard to tell. Try it for yourself sometime when you are on the road. With headrests you often can't even tell the driver's sex. All the cop knows is that the car is being driven dangerously.

He pulls it over. If the driver is white, he (or maybe it's a she; there are some wild female drunks out there) gets a ticket. DWI. Nobody protests.

If the driver is black, he says, "You only stopped me because I'm black." This happens. I've heard it many times.

Eventually a black politician checks the record. It turns out that 77% of the particular cop's DWIs were black. The population in the neighborhood, whatever that may mean, is 22% black. The cop gets charged with racism, has to go to sensitivity school, gets a letter in his folder, and never gets promoted.

If the politician is really ambitious, he checks the records for the whole department. Sure enough, a disproportionate number of blacks have been arrested for practically everything. The whole department gets reamed in the press. Blacks call for the chief's resignation.

Now, imagine that you are a cop. You have 15 years on the force, meaning too much time invested in the retirement system to bail out and start over. You have a wife, two kids, a mortgage, a small savings account that you hope might turn into a college fund if the stock market goes up, and a scuba habit. If you get fired, everything you've worked for will go down the tubes. What do you do?

Easy. You stop arresting blacks. And that's what is happening. Cops are deciding it isn't worth it.

"... In The Blink Of An Eye."

Recently I published a letter from a cop in Prince George's County, a largely black county in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Here it is, with only identifying information removed:

Fred,

After having read your article on 11/20/00 I have to state that YES!! We on the P.G.P.D for the most part are now looking the other way. After almost [deleted] years on the job I find this disheartening but a necessary fact to survive in today's, what appears to most officers, an ANTI-POLICE environment. We are even being told by some supervisors to keep a low profile so

"you're not next on the front page"! I became a police officer to help people [deleted] years ago in P.G. County ... but I now share the attitude of most officers, just let them eat each other, we have to survive.

It's a tough thing to ask a man or woman who has spent any time on the job to risk throwing it all away for someone you don't even know. Try to imagine having [a substantial number] of years on the job and doing something you think is right to protect society. In an instant your whole life's work can be gone, ruined after a grand jury, a justice dept. inquiry, or just Jack Johnson [an ambitious prosecutor] prosecuting you in the court of public opinion. They take months to reach a decision we may make in the blink of an eye!

★ Police officers are not robots, we are people, but we are people who can literally lose it all for trying to protect society. Society thinks we have no feelings, make no errors, and that if we do, we are improperly programmed and must be destroyed.

My personal feeling is that society wishes to destroy itself by letting criminals have free reign, and perhaps the sooner society does implode the sooner we can rebuild it the right way!! But until then I will survive at my job, DOING NOTHING !!! Just as the fine people of P.G. County have requested.

This is happening all over the country.

Now, are cops really racists? If by this you mean, are they out to arrest blacks because they don't like blacks? No. Why are blacks disproportionately arrested? Because they commit a wildly disproportionate amount of crime. The numbers are well-known in law enforcement, are not in dispute, are everywhere accepted in the trade. Most are based on the Uniform Crime Reports of the FBI, which is available on the web.

Now, you can blame crime by blacks on whites, blacks, Hillary, slavery, the family dog, or the Boy Scouts, according to your politics. But it's a fact, and you don't need statistics to know it. Ride with the cops, and black crime quickly becomes routine. I don't ride in white neighborhoods because almost nothing happens. You get an occasional domestic, or my-cat's-up-a-tree. Maybe somebody's kid breaks into the neighbor's house and steals the change jar to use at the video arcade, or there's a burglary by someone from outside the neighborhood.

The black regions rock and roll: Rapes, robberies, fights, theft from auto, gang brawls, shootings, drug deals. For that matter, when I go into the security rooms at big department stores, as, for example, at Pentagon City, in Virginia, across the Potomac from Washington, the photos of arrested shoplifters are at least 90% black. The region is white, but the subway runs from Washington to Pentagon City.

Cops know this. It's what they do all day. Reality is reality, whether you like it or not. But we pretend it isn't.

The Wringer Awaits Racist Killers

Now, in fact, blacks commit most of the crime, cops will tend to watch those who appear to be likely to be criminals. These will usually be black. For example, a group of scruffy black males, hanging on a corner known to be a drug market, and going up to cars that pull in next to them, are very likely to be drug dealers. The customers are usually white. I've

spent days on end with cops in Chicago, catching white customers of black dealers. Catching white buyers isn't discrimination. Catching black dealers is.

But the real danger for a cop comes when things go bad. Shoot a black guy, no matter what he's doing, and you go through the wringer. Never mind that you showed up at the scene shaking from adrenaline and, yes, fear, because the call was an armed robbery in-progress. You run down an alley after the robber, and some guy comes around the corner and points something at you. You've got 0.2 seconds to make a decision. It turns out to be not the robber but a wino holding a piece of pipe.

You're now a racist killer.

★ You will automatically be assumed guilty of excessive force. The press will be after you, as well as every ambitious black prosecutor. And the black population will really, truly believe you killed the guy because you didn't like blacks. I know. I get email from blacks about this stuff. Over half genuinely believe that AIDS was invented by whites to kill blacks, and believe — really believe — that the drug epidemic is a white conspiracy against them.

★ The police can't win. They can, however, avoid losing. The answer is simply not to enforce the law against blacks, at least in black neighborhoods. If a drunk comes swerving back and forth at 30-over the speed limit, you just look the other way. You don't live in the neighborhood, so a drunk is no danger to your family or friends.

Or, if you respond to a burglary-in-progress, turn the siren



A shoeless Kofi Orleans-Lindsay, center, of Silver Spring, Md., is escorted out of Federal Plaza in New York by officers Monday, Nov. 13, 2000. Orleans-Lindsay is charged with the murder of Cpl. Edward Toatley, a 16-year veteran of the Maryland State Police. Toatley was killed while taking part in an anti-drug task force operation in Washington, D.C. (below) Capital Police Officer Kim Ewings talks with Donsha Turner and Miyonna Bennett sixth graders from Birney Elementary school as the students got a first hand view of being a Capital Police Officer.

on four blocks away to make sure he hears you and gets away before you get there. Make sure drug dealers see you coming. That way there will be nothing suspicious for you to see. It's easy enough: Instead of sneaking down the alley with your lights off, just drive slowly down the main street past the

lookout. Take an extra 60 seconds in responding to a robbery-in-progress, and the gunman will be gone when you arrive. Nothing to it.

And it's foolproof. You get nailed for racism if you show up and have to shoot the robber. But it's hard to prove you could have gotten there quicker.

This is what cops are doing. In response to the above letter, I got mail from cops in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Nebraska, Pittsburgh, Indiana, and all over the Washington, D.C. area. In sum what they said was, "if that's what people want, that's what they'll get. Nothing."

Or, as one guy put it, people get the policing they deserve.

Another Letter

Fred — Holy shit! I think I'm reading columns by somebody who actually gets it.



courtesy Rollcall/News.com

I've been an officer for [several] years, am [in my thirties], have a wife, a baby. I'm an officer in a city of [several hundred thousand] people, dept. of [several hundred] officers. I wanted to anonymously throw in my two cents regarding why cops opt out.

It's happening here. Our mayor pretty much came out and said the dept is full of racists and we profile all the time. He didn't use those words. He didn't have to. So, many of us are opting out, myself included. I can easily identify [about a third] of [a couple of dozen] officers I know for sure that are doing this. On our dept we can't win at all. No support from even our own supervisors, nor the brass. So, what to do? Protect your ass and do as little as possible.

Now, the effect will of course be that black neighborhoods will get less law enforcement. Criminals won't know why life is suddenly easier, but they will notice that it is easier. They will become bolder. The quality of life in the neighborhood will go down. The papers will note that after a lull, crime is going up again, and speculate that the economy has something to do with it. There will be demands to hire more cops, who also won't do anything if they're smart.

Is there a solution? Probably not. The black population is absolutely, adamantly, unchangeably convinced that cops discriminate against blacks. This means that Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton and Johnny Cochran have a guaranteed public to play to. The press, I promise, won't change.

The only idea that makes any sense is to have only black police in all-black neighborhoods, and only white police in all-white neighborhoods. (In mixed regions, white cops still would be well advised not to arrest blacks.)

We could keep the same cops we have today, on the same departments, with the same pay and training and everything else, but just give them different beats. This would eliminate charges of racism and keep white cops from getting fried for trying to do their jobs. If blacks are right that white cops are racists, then keeping them out of black neighborhoods would obviously be a good idea.

Or we can continue faking it, which if fact is what we will do.

Play Not To Lose

A cop doesn't have to stop a car obviously driven by a drunk. He can just not see it. He doesn't have to get to robbery calls before the robber has escaped. He doesn't have to take chances chasing down a fleeing murderer. He can just be outrun. Cops have options. And white cops don't live in black neighborhoods. They don't have to care what goes on.

This sort of undeclared strike is absolutely racially driven. Cops in white regions still do their jobs. A white cop who stops a white drunk doesn't get sued by Jesse Jackson.

Note that, as the author of the foregoing letter points out, it is blacks who pay the price. Crime increases. In all-black regions, the victims are black. Yet cops get paid whether they do anything or not.

The effects are insidious. There is nothing to link the increase in crime to non-participation by police. Blacks will simply, quietly, lose protection. If a cop shoots a robber at Seven-Eleven, Al Sharpton can say it was brutality, and get on television. But it is very hard to prove that Officer Smith might have caught the guy if he'd tried a little harder.

If we make it dangerous to enforce the law, cops will stop doing it. Savor the phrase: "Let them eat each other." I hope this is what we want, because it is what we're getting.

The response I get by email on this is about what I expected, but worth reporting anyway. White cops said essentially,

"Yep. You got it right. I'm not going to be made into a sacrificial goat enforcing laws for people who don't want them enforced."

I got two letters from black cops, who said that when they enforced the law in black neighborhoods, they were accused of selling out, of being Uncle Toms. Black cops don't face having their careers ruined — how do you charge a black cop with racism for giving tickets to blacks? — but they seem to get guff.

But the angriest mail came from blacks who weren't cops. The thrust was that cops single out blacks, pick on them, harass them, and refuse to enforce the law evenhandedly.

Rationally this might be debated on any number of grounds. It doesn't matter. Blacks believe, believe deeply, that they are victims of the police. For them, this isn't debatable, can barely be discussed. The sense of grievance is so nearly universal as to approach the predictability of gravitation. They are very angry about it.

Not all of these letters are angry, though. Some are almost pleading. "Why can't the police be fair? That's all we ask." I'm never sure what to think. The sense of being victimized is powerful among blacks, and doesn't always involve the police.

According to newspaper stories, many blacks believe that whites put something in various soft drinks to make blacks impotent. I get email saying the same things, especially about drugs being targeted at blacks. To whites these charges are nonsense. To a lot of blacks, they aren't.

My guess is that the unbridgeable chasm (which is exactly what it is) between the views of the races is in part, but only in part, the fault of the press. Any racially motivated mistreatment of blacks is national news.

But racially motivated atrocities committed by blacks are not played up. They occur. Blacks aren't saints any more than whites. The recent Wichita massacre of whites by blacks is an example. It was all over the internet, but not much in the press.

If I were black, and saw unending news stories about brutality by white cops, and never saw anything about misbehavior by black cops, or blacks at all, I would not unreasonably conclude that blacks were being singled out.

The practical point, it seems to me, is that the resentment of cops among blacks is both potent and, in the foreseeable future, irremediable. It's too deep-seated, too vigorously reinforced by the press, too much a part of the worldview of blacks.

So what to do?

As I've said before, a lot of tension might be eliminated by having neighborhoods predominately of one race policed by cops of that race. Same departments, same training, same pay, same equipment, but different beats. Blacks didn't burn Los Angeles because cops were acquitted of beating Rodney King, but because white cops beat him, and were acquitted. The potential for explosion is still there, in many cities, and interracial encounters with cops are the likely spark.

Which is better — to keep pushing interracial policing that doesn't work very well, because we think it ought to work, or go to same-race policing that people seem to want, but think they shouldn't want?

I'd like to know what people, certainly including blacks, think about the idea.

Fred Reed is a longtime contributor and SOF's Scuba Editor. ✕

The Vietnamese government is happy to trot out witnesses from the supposed atrocity conducted by Bob Kerrey's Navy SEALs at Thanh Phong. It is doubtful that they would be so cooperative if questions were asked about Communist killings in places such as My Loc.

In April 1969, the Marine rifle company to which I was assigned was operating in the An Hoa Basin of Vietnam, west and south of Danang. In addition to our routine of long-range combat patrols and defensive positions along a vital and heavily contested road, it was decided that we would provide security for a "town meeting" hosted by the South Vietnamese government's district chief, who had been criticized for living in the distant and more secure confines of Danang. Over the space of a few days, visits were made to nearby hamlets, where 30 delegates were chosen to attend the meeting. After that, the district chief and his senior aide were brought in on the morning convoy.

A thatch-covered "hooch" at the bottom of our perimeter, about the size of a typical American living room, was chosen as the meeting place. Shortly after the meeting began, a Viet Cong assassination team raced through the thick foliage, hit

washed at a nearby well, and went back to our war. By the next day this incident was over, a little piece of history in the long and ugly journey of a combat tour. But in the coming months as I reflected on them, the killings at My Loc raised an important distinction, which has become even more relevant with the media firestorm over Bob Kerrey's ill-fated SEAL patrol in the Mekong Delta.

Civilians have a terrible time in any war zone — fully one-third of the population of Okinawa was killed in 12 weeks of fighting on that island in 1945. But in a guerrilla war, the support or control of the local population, rather than the conquest of territory, is the ultimate objective. Civilians become enmeshed in the actual fighting, inseparable from it.

They fight among themselves for political dominance of a local area. They form an infrastructure and quietly support one side or the other when it moves through their village. They suffer greatly when battles are fought on top of them, and when emotions overcome logic and troops snap, as at My Lai. But the villagers of My Loc and others like them, clearly noncombatants, were killed purely as a matter of political control, for having met with a South Vietnamese government

Kerrey *Under Fire*

The Consequence of War

BY JAMES WEBB

the hooch, and fled. My rifle platoon was returning from a combat patrol as explosions rang out to our front. In seconds a Viet Cong soldier sprinting down the trail collided with my point man. I can still see his young face, adrenalized and madly grinning, as he was captured. And I remember the sight of the others as we reached the hooch.

The floor inside was covered with an ankle-deep mix of blood, innards, limbs and bodies. I and several others waded into the human mire, emptying bodies from the hooch and finding medical care for those who had survived. Nineteen people were dead, including the district chief and his aide. The aide's right arm was blown off near the elbow, its tendons like slim white feathers, as if he had been reaching to catch a grenade.

Nearby an older woman sat motionless against a wall, her face stunned and her dark eyes piercing, untouched except for a small, square hole in her forehead. I thought she was alive until I grabbed her arm. The wounded squirmed on the floor, reaching past dead bodies as they crawled in the muck, covered thickly with blood and twisting among each other like giant fishing worms.

We cleaned out the hooch, evacuated the wounded,

official and given some legitimacy to his authority.

Any American who directed a similar slaughter, or participated in it, would have been court-martialed. This distinction was basic to our policy in Vietnam, and it seems to have been lost by many over the past week. The body language and word choices of many media commentators indicates clearly that a larger issue — how history will judge our involvement in Vietnam — is still very much in play, and a big part of that issue is to continue to demean the American sacrifices in that war.

Words like "atrocious" and "massacre" are routinely being thrown about, with some even calling for Nuremberg-like trials for American war crimes in Vietnam. Aggressive reporters have played "gotcha" with every Kerrey statement. How could he say it was a moonless night when the charts say it was a half-moon? (Try clouds. Or canopy. Or vegetation.) Did he take one shot or many shots at the first outpost? Did he kneel on a guy when his throat was getting cut?

For many who went through extensive combat in Vietnam, such parsing brings back an anger caused by memories not of the war but of the condescending arrogance directed at them upon their return, principally by people in their own age

group who had risked nothing and yet microscopically judged every action of those who had risked everything and often lost a great deal. Combat in a guerrilla war requires constant moral judgments, in an environment with unending pressure, little sleep, and no second chances for yourself or the people you are leading when you guess wrong. Were we perfect? No. Were we worse than Americans in other wars, or our enemy in this one? Hardly

Which brings us to the recent attention given the Kerrey

Newsweek magazine when the story was considered there. CBS's "60 Minutes," which co-sponsored the investigation, seems to have an affinity for stories about Americans committing atrocities, having rehashed My Lai as the best way to remember the 30th anniversary of 1968, the year that brought the worst fighting, and highest American casualties, of the war.

Most important, to one practiced in both combat and journalism, a key and possibly determinative piece of information seems vastly underplayed. According to the *Times Magazine* story, archive records of Army radio transmissions indicate that two days after the incident, "an old man from Thanh Phong presented himself to the district chief's headquarters with claims for retribution for alleged atrocities committed the night of 25 and 26 February 69. Thus far it appears 24 people were killed. 13 were women and children and one old man. 11 were unidentified and assumed to be VC."

Given the tone of the story, this radio transmission was probably included because it refers to the Kerrey patrol as having committed an atrocity. But a closer reading would appear to confirm the position of Mr. Kerrey and the five others on the patrol that they took fire and returned it, with the loss of civilian lives an unfortunate consequence.

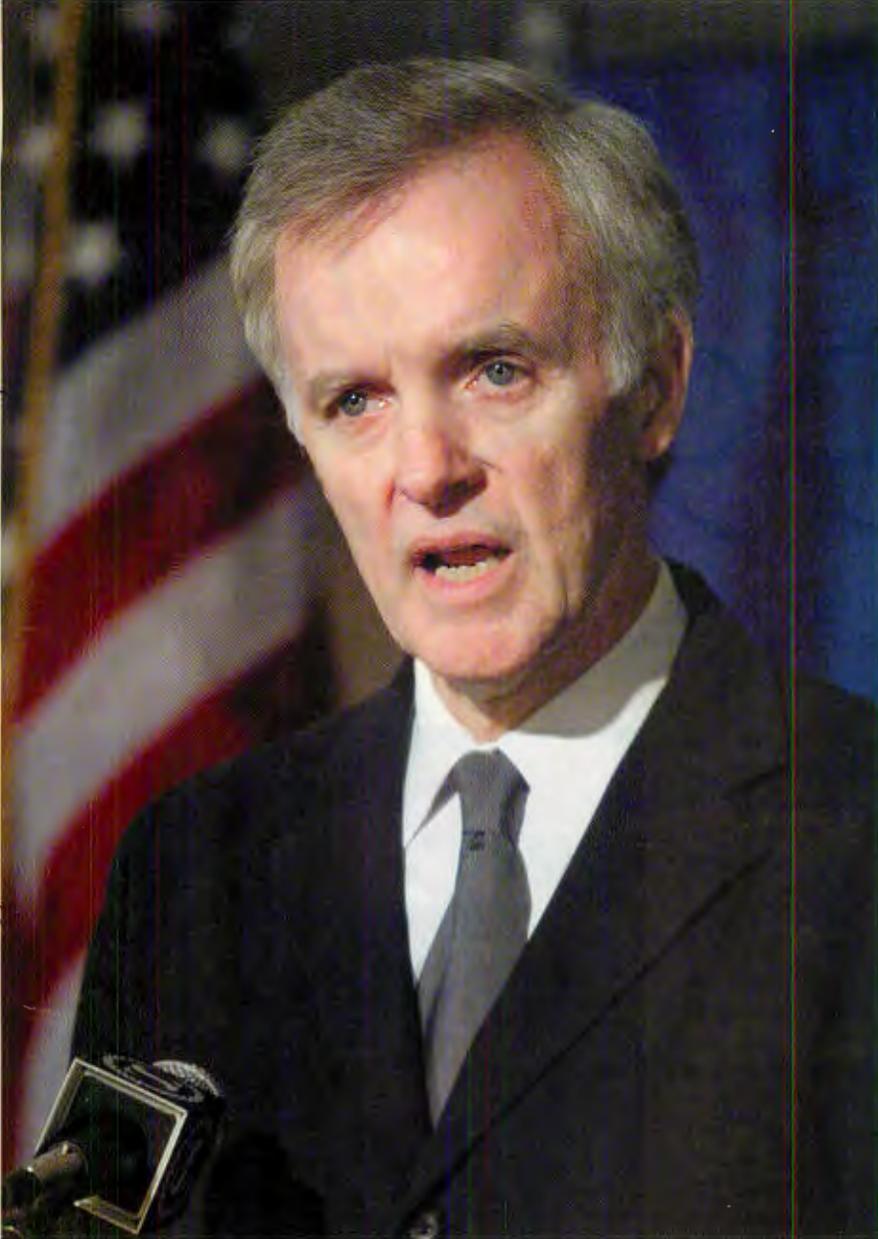
This piece of evidence is perhaps the most objective account available of the results of the Kerrey patrol, coming as it does from a time near the incident, from a man who was asking for retribution and thus was hardly trying to cover things up. It also coincides with Mr. Kerrey's recollection of 13 or 14 dead civilians in the village before the team left the scene, as any Viet Cong soldiers would most likely have been on the other side of the villagers who were killed, perhaps even using them as a screen while attempting to escape.

As has often been said over the past week, we will never know the exact details of what occurred. But if a seven-man patrol operating independently at night far inside enemy territory killed 11 Viet Cong soldiers after coming

under fire, it would seem they hit their assigned target. And the loss of civilian life that accompanied this brief but brutal firefight adds up not to an atrocity or a massacre, but to a tragic consequence of a war fought in the middle of a civilian population.

Mr. Webb was a combat Marine in Vietnam and later Secretary of the Navy. His next book, Lost Soldiers, will be published by Bantam in September.

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Reuters

patrol. There is much in the *New York Times Magazine* story to make one uneasy. The key "witness" from the village where the incident took place is the wife of a former Viet Cong soldier, who now has told *Time* magazine that she did not actually see the killings. She and the other Vietnamese witness, who was 12 at the time of the incident, live in a communist state where propaganda regarding America's "evil" war effort is one of the mainsprings of political legitimacy – not the best conditions to produce honesty in cases with international implications.

The one member of Mr. Kerrey's SEAL team to allege extreme conduct did not pass the credibility test with

omegaPROVINGground

VALTRO 1998 A1

BY MIKE MILLER
PHOTOS BY JAMES WHITLOCK

It is rare to find someone that puts making the best before profit in any industry. If you are like me you will see something and say, "That pistol would be perfect if they hadn't cheapened it with that low-quality part." With that said the "Cheap Part" syndrome is rampant in the firearms industry, especially in the 1911 pistol field. I have just about cried while holding pistols that felt great when I noticed a plastic mainspring housing, magazine release or other part was made of cheap materials. The manufactures will call the parts "composites" and make up all kinds of reasons for the part being plastic.

Well the truth is the only reason is profits. For example, if they save five dollars on a mainspring housing, per weapon, and sell 10,000 weapons, that translates into \$50,000 more in profits, just from the change in the mainspring housing. Add up all the savings and you can see why it is done. The problem is if you depend on a pistol to protect your life, you want the best materials to make Mr. Murphy's chances of spoiling an outing less and less.

If you look over the recent history of manufacturers in the 1911 field you will see that the quality has come way up from what it was 10 years ago. It has been a great thing but no one has thrown out all the stops to make a perfect production pistol. That is until now.

Recently, a friend asked me if I would be interested in testing a new 1911 pistol design. I said sure and asked who made it. The reply was Valtro and my head sank. You see I have seen the Valtro shotguns and have been less than impressed. The friend, whom I trust, said, "No, this is not like the shotguns. This is the best 1911 I have seen. It was



designed by John Jardine."

Hearing the John Jardine name got my interest. He is known for making outstanding custom 1911s. Actually, that is not a good enough description of John. John is Armand Swensen's nephew. Only John Browning himself knew more about the 1911 design than Swensen, so John comes from a good line. John, a pistolsmith for 35 years, with many of the years working with the Forty Five Master, has been working on improvements over his career and eventually had complete

drawings and specifications for the perfect production 1911.

I met with John Jardine. John told me how he had worked on the new pistol for many years. Every time he found a new and improved way or part, he made the change to his "Perfect Pistol." Eventually he had the final design and needed someone to build the pistol. John had been recently brought into the Valtro Company, as a consultant, to improve the quality of the weapons they make, so he turned to them for production of his new pistol.

This was a time consuming process as John wanted complete control of everything from manufacturing process, materials used, to quality control, and all checks along the way. If it was going to be his design; it was going to be his quality. The pistol took four years to get into production and the first pistols recently arrived in America from Italy.

John asked if I would give the pistol a run. We took a random sample out of the batch of 50 pistols. I opened the sealed new box and looked inside. My first impression was this was a custom pistol so the question was asked, "What is the difference between this and the production model?" John started laughing and said "It is the production model."

We went to a local shooting range, with about 2,000 rounds of mixed ammunition and 20 different magazines of various manufacturers. I brought along another manufacturer's pistol that has a retail price of \$1,400 for comparison. Another pistol I have great confidence in and has proven to be completely reliable.

We loaded all the magazines and I started shooting; first, slow enough to get groups sizes. The Valtro would hold all shots out of a magazine in one hole when I did my part, at 25 yards. This was from the standing position. In short, it was more accurate than I could ever shoot. It shot like a multi-thousand dollar custom, hand-fit pistol. It outshot the other manufacturer's pistol, easily.



The Valtro had only two rounds that would not feed. I tried these two rounds in the other pistol and it would not chamber them either. A quick check revealed the rounds were oversized and poorly made. They were thrown away and the Valtro did not miss another beat. Now, before you say "Two thousand rounds is good, but no big deal," let me explain we did this in four hours, as fast as I could shoot and John could load. At one point the weapon was so hot I could only touch the back of the slide and grips. This did not seem

to hurt performance as it kept on working perfectly.

Now that we all know the Valtro will shoot and run like a sewing machine lets talk about what it is made of. Many weapons start out well, but down the road poor materials will give way and the whole thing will become an anchor. Not the Valtro. It is made of the finest materials available. John would not allow anything but the best in this. His name is in the balance. Valtro makes or designs and inspects every part of the weapon so they can keep quality control high. The pistol is of an updated Series 70-type design with solid match bushing, one-piece guide-rod. Series 70 type or not, this pistol is designed not to fire from firing pin strike if dropped. John has tested it

The frame is made of 4340 Nickle Chrome Molly steel. The front strap is checked 30 lpi. It has a higher than normal handcut. The dust cover is 15-thousandths thicker on the bottom and 10-thousandths thicker on the side. The extra weight and higher hand-cut add up to faster follow-up shots. Much of the frame is EDM machined for extremely smooth finish cuts and ultra-precision. It has a beveled magwell.

The slide is also made of 4340 Nickle Chrome Molly. It is 30-thousandths thicker and has a thicker breach face. This extra weight and thicker breach face add up to faster shot recovery and increased durability. The front is serrated and has "French Borders" for increased hand-hold area. The slide is cut for a beefed-up target sight of Valtro's own manufacture. The sight looks like an improved Bomar to me. Night sights are an option. The front sight is dovetailed and pinned — it will not move on the slide without tools.

The barrel is also of Valtro's manufacture. It is of the eight lands and grooves type. It is button rifled and held to within 2/10ths of a thousand straight over a 36-inch length. Made of 4150 Steel, it is extremely smooth and cleaned-up after 2,000 rounds quickly.

The hammer and sear pins are made of tool steel. The magazine spring housing and slide stop are made of Barstock and checkered at 30 lpi. The firing pin is made of PH17 SS HighShock Steel. It is made in the 38 Super diameter and has a heavier spring it will not allow primer flow or an accidental discharge if dropped.

Cost: \$1,199.00 retail. They are dealer-direct so no additional middle man mark up should be added.

When I first heard of the Valtro, I thought it would be another cheap 1911 design. I could not have been more wrong. Since that first day, I have shot an additional two thousand rounds through the Valtro. It has not malfunctioned. I can shoot it faster than any other factory 1911 I have ever used. It is extremely accurate

and it has replaced the other pistol for my duty and off-duty use. This was not a step taken lightly as I started with a 1911 in my holster 20 years ago and have not been too quick to change pistols ever since. This is as fine a pistol, as anyone would ever need.

For further information contact Valtro USA, Dept SOF, 1281 Anderson Drive, San Rafael, CA 94901; phone: 415-256-2575. ☒

ENEMY AT THE GATES

Kate Bell's Cactus Patch And The Battle Of Elwood Canyon

BY FRANK HOPKINS

AP/Wide World



First Sergeant Walter Newman, driving, and Captain Barney Hagen, CO of local artillery battery, take the measure of shell hole from Jap 5.5-inch naval round, one of dozens that littered the Elwood Oil Field after attack on Washington's Birthday, 1942.

Americans hunkered around their radios, anxiously listening to President Roosevelt's fireside chat, hoping for good news of the war, still less than three months old. It was the evening of Washington's Birthday, 23 February 1942. Folks along the West Coast in particular earnestly hoped the President would indicate what plans had been made in the event of the anticipated Japanese attack on the American mainland.

My friends ... Washington's birthday is a most appropriate time for us to talk with each other about things as they are today and things as we know they shall be ...

While Americans broke bread to the fatherly voice of the President, a 348-foot I-15 class Japanese submarine silently broke the surface of the Santa Barbara Channel, off the coast of Goleta, California. She was the I-17, who only 12 weeks earlier had joined in the extensive submarine patrols off Hawaii during the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Displacing 3,654 tons submerged, she had a surface cruising range of 16,000 miles at 16 knots and carried a crew of 85 to 94 officers and ratings, with enough fuel, ordnance and food aboard to cover 90 days of maritime marauding.

Like all I-15 class subs, the I-17 mounted a 5.5-inch (14cm) gun, the standard naval gun on Japanese destroyers. Launched in 1939, the I-17 was a Type B-1, but differed from other I-15 class Type B-1 submarines in that she mounted her watertight hangar compartment aft of the conning tower. This seaplane hangar carried a GLEN amphibian bomber, which could carry two 170-pound bombs or alternate ordnance, and was the type that would later bomb southern Oregon. The I-17 had six forward torpedo tubes, and carried a basic load of 17 torpedoes. She had already torpedoed two freighters off the Oregon coast, and attacked the S.S. *Emido* off Cape Mendocino several weeks earlier.

Less than a mile off shore, she drew a bead on the Elwood Oil Field with its large, vulnerable complex of derricks and refineries and the co-op tank farm at the crest of the hill. At 1907 hours she commenced firing from her deck gun. Sirens wailed an alarm but, unchallenged, the I-17 continued her barrage for nearly half an hour before she turned tail and retired to the west, on the surface and at high speed.

Later that night, U.S. Navy short-



G.I. takes a break from the press (lower left) after Japanese naval attack on Elwood. He sits in shell crater — a near-miss of the 800,000-gallon of high-octane gasoline tank. Keystone Cops bombardment could have been catastrophic had this one round been 40 feet to the right.

wave listeners at Pt. Arguello intercepted a message to Emperor Hirohito from the I-17's captain that the I-17 had "left Santa Barbara a seething mass of flames, with wild panic on shore." Two days later, UPI monitors heard Radio Tokyo advise the Japanese people that one of Japan's "daring underwater raiders had destroyed an important oil installation 20 miles [sic] west of Santa Barbara, which American radio and press agencies were keeping secret so as not to panic the public."

Some time later, Domei, the official Japanese Government news agency, came out with the following account, purportedly based on an interview with a lieutenant who had been aboard the I-17:

The initial eyewitness account of the sensational shelling of the Santa Barbara coastline by a Japanese submarine — a story that was carried by newspapers throughout the world for its significance as the first shelling of the American mainland by an Axis submarine — is reported by a *Nichi Nichi* correspondent who interviewed an officer who participated in the raid.

Describing the thrilling surprise assault in which military objectives along the Santa Barbara coastline were damaged by gunfire, a lieutenant who preferred to keep his name secret said that when the Japanese U-boat bobbed up off the California coastline there were no signs whatsoever of enemy patrol activity.

With the raid being timed at night, he said, the illumination of the town of

Santa Barbara and the twinkling of beacon lights of oil storage tanks and derricks were clearly visible. Along the highway speeding cars threw a glare of headlights into the night and the entire coastal area presented a peaceful and wholly unwarlike scene.

When the first shots were fired from the submarine, the lieutenant continued, there were immediate signs of consternation and those on the U-boat heard the distant sound of shrieking sirens.

Everyone on board completely forgot the hardships they had encountered in making the crossing from Japan when the first shell shattered the night and when the second and third shots set targets on fire all the crew danced with joy and threw their arms around each other.

Prior to this "scoop" from Domei, Japanese papers reported Santa Barbara to have been wiped off the map, a story that gave American headline writers a much-needed opportunity for comic relief in a new war that thus far had not been going our way.

Commander Kozo Returns

At the helm of the I-17 during this sneak attack on Elwood was Commander Kozo Nishino. That he was in command, and that he had selected the Elwood complex as his target, held a certain bitter irony, as Nishino was no stranger there. The unlikely chain of events that brought him back to bombard Elwood started in 1920, when Mrs. Kate Den Bell —

patriarch of the Den family who were grantees of the Dos Pueblos Rancho in 1842 — staged a family reunion on the beach at the mouth of Elwood Canyon. She had planted a prickly pear cactus and she told her clan, “drill a well near that cactus and you will strike an oil gusher!” Her prophecy came true in 1926, when the wildcat well Lutton-Bell No. 1 came in at 12,000 barrels a day, opening the fabulous Elwood oil field that which would produce more than 100,000,000 barrels.

Charles S. Jones, later president of Richfield, related in 1956 how it had been company policy in the 1930s to extend local hospitality to the captain of foreign tankers that came to Elwood. Jones told how several years after the Elwood oil field came in, a Japanese tanker was there taking on crude. Its commanding officer was Captain Kozo Nishino, who was greeted with ceremony and welcomed ashore by Jones. Research by some authors indicates that Nishino was in the Japanese submarine service from his enlistment in 1917 until his retirement after World War II. Assuming the first-person account of Mr. Jones and the archival research are both correct, and bearing in mind that even in this time frame the Japanese were preparing for war with the United States, it is plausible that Capt. Nishino in his role as a submariner was skipping this tanker to foreign ports in an intelligence capacity.

At any rate, Jones related how Capt. Nishino walked over to investigate Kate Bell's cactus patch. In this time frame both the Americans and the Japanese were of the opinion that they were a superior race to the other. One strength the Yanks had, however, and perhaps a corresponding weakness in Oriental cultures, was an American's ability to laugh at himself. Save politicians, preachers and prostitutes, Americans seldom worried much about saving face. No so the Japanese: A grave loss of face could be a serious matter.

So as this officer in His Imperial Majesty's Navy leaned over the protective iron fence to examine the cactus, destiny tipped the scales and over he went, headlong into the spiny jungle. Such would have been indignity enough in private, but fate added salt to the wound by having a roguish gallery of roughnecks on a nearby derrick witness — with profound relish and general merriment — the unfortunate incident. “It was one of the most excruciating moments I can remember,” Jones said. “It cost our Japanese skipper an



courtesy Col. Bernard Hagen, USA (Ret)

Capt. Hagen examines splintered hole made by Japanese 5.5-inch round that came down through derrick dock at Elwood. Attack made many holes, but inaccurate fire and defective ordnance caused little damage. (inset) In this 1948 photo, Colonel Hagen wears Purple Heart, only one awarded for WWII service CONUS, result of exploding dud fuse.

unbearable loss of face. He left us in a polite but grim mood, but 10 years later he returned as captain of the enemy submarine which shelled the very scene of his humiliation ...” As Japan had been considering war with the United States a possibility since the Nipponese warlords drew up the secret Tanaka Memorial in 1927, it is possible that at this moment the seeds of the attack on Elwood were planted.

That this installation, although strategic, was targeted by the Imperial Navy in February of 1942 was more a reactionary than a strategic move. American shipping had fallen victim to Japanese submarine attacks within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, when I-17 sank the S.S. *Cynthia Olson* midway between Honolulu and San Jose. For the next few days the Japanese sub fleet played hide-and-seek with U.S. warships, and planes from the U.S.S. *Enterprise* spotted and sank the I-70. The I-17 and eight sister ships were designated a submarine task force detachment and spread east across the Pacific. While looking for U.S. warships, they engaged targets of opportunity — unarmed American merchant vessels under way to the West Coast.

The Japanese task force detachment sank the S.S. *Lahaina* northwest of Hawaii on 11 December, the S.S. *Manini*

near Honolulu on 17 December, and the U.S. *Prusa* south of Hawaii on 18 December. The I-23 patrolled off San Francisco, and attacked the tanker *Agriworld* near Santa Cruz. The I-17 attacked the tanker S.S. *Emido* off Cape Mendocino on 20 December. In addition, the *Samoa*, *Montebello*, *Absaroka* and *Larry Doheny* were all attacked off the California coast before Christmas. The *Larry Doheny* survived that attack, but was later to fall prey to the I-25, the Japanese marauder who shelled the Oregon coast and launched her GLEN to bomb southern Oregon during the following months. The I-17 was off the central Oregon coast on 21 December 1941, where she sank a merchant tanker.

“Melly Clistmas,” Yankee Dogs

A large-scale, orchestrated attack was planned on American coastal cities, or their nearest lighthouse, for Christmas Eve, 1941. Nine Japanese subs, seven of which carried GLEN light amphibian bombers, were positioned as follows: I-26 off Cape Flattery in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, I-25 off Cape Disappointment at the mouth of the Columbia River, I-9 off Cape Blanco, I-17 off Cape Mendocino, I-15 off San Francisco, I-23 off Monterey Bay, I-21 off Estero Bay, I-19 off Los Angeles, and

I-10 off San Diego. Tokyo hoped that large-scale shelling would create fear and confusion among the American people and cause the United States to hold back crucial naval, air and land forces for the defense of the American mainland, which then could not be used against the Japanese in the Pacific.

But this Christmas surprise was not to be, as the week before Christmas the Japanese Submarine Force Department ordered the sub fleet back to the safety of Kwajalein. Americans had mobilized virtually everything that could fly or float to patrol the West Coast after the Japanese sub attacks on American shipping in Hawaiian waters, and the Japanese did not want to risk their daring undersea raiders to these "very severe" counter-measures. In other words, if you're going to fight back, then we don't want to play anymore.

As a result of calling the sub fleet back to Kwaj, when the U.S.S. *Dolphin* surfaced off Kwajalein on a 17 January 1942 recon mission, she was able to report the atoll was lightly defended and its lagoon contained a large concentration of Japanese ships — including a flotilla of submarines. So the carrier *Enterprise* and other vessels comprising a section of Task Force 8 launched an attack from 150 miles out with nine torpedo bombers and 37 dive bombers. They sank a transport and a sub-chaser, severely damaged half a dozen other ships including one laden

with explosives and ammo, destroyed 18 aircraft and killed some 90 men — including the area commander, Admiral Yashiro.

This successful Yankee tit required a tat, and the I-17 with Commander Nishino as captain immediately left Kwajalein in search of the carrier responsible for the attack. They searched for a week with no contact, edging ever eastward past the tip of Hawaii, and about 20 February they made landfall off the coast of San Diego, looking for *something*, even a large merchantman, to shoot at. Nishino received a message to shoot up a shore-side factory or other likely installation to entice American warships — presumed to be up north — to come within range of his torpedoes, while the I-17 lay in ambush. Captain Nishino had just such a target in mind.

Oddly enough, after the attack the I-17 did *not* linger in wait for a target but returned to Yokosuka for refueling and repairs — possibly because, as we shall see, no flotilla of warships and very little else came to the rescue of Goleta, or perhaps simply to repair its ailing starboard engine. Japanese records reflect that "en route [leaving] she met an enemy destroyer hurrying to the scene of the action, but slipped by unnoticed" — an apparent contradiction to her stated mission, but perhaps the colorful reports radioed to Tokyo from the I-17 after the attack caused them to recall her in the belief proper satisfaction had been

achieved for our attack on Kwajalein.

At any rate, by 23 February Nishino had maneuvered through the Santa Barbara Channel and lay off the Elwood oil field. Now on the surface to repair the starboard engine, he probed close to shore, then lay back to see if there was to be any reaction. Of course not. The I-17 then crept in close at periscope depth, backed off to 8 miles and surfaced as Gunnery Officer Lt. j.g. Shimada and five gunners prepared the 5.5-inch gun for action. Engineering officer Lt. Yamazaki continued to work on the starboard engine as the Bankline Oil Company installations hove into view.

Thus it came to pass that at sunset some years after Captain Nishino tumbled into Kate Bell's cactus patch, he was again at the mouth of Elwood canyon, and just before sunset, Dr. William M. Moffatt, a volunteer submarine spotter at Hope Ranch on the coast west of Santa Barbara, observed three large submarines surface; one off Elwood Canyon, one off Moore Mesa, and one further out in the channel near San Miguel Island. He watched as they commenced firing — the first naval attack on the United States mainland since the war of 1812.

Varying Accounts

Eyewitness reports and official records vary as to how many rounds were actually fired. A quasi-official history written by Mochitsura Hashimoto, a former submarine commander, stated that only submarine I-17 was involved and she fired 10 rounds and retired.

AP/Wide World



Only round to cause more than souvenir damage was one that came down through house on No. 17 and cracked pump gearbox, but did not put it off-line. Here Deputy Fire Chief Albert Brotherton inspects holes from shell fragments. (right) Capt. Hagen shows reporters tin roofing damaged by shell fragments. In background is splintered catwalk. After war, "Timbers" restaurant was built, featuring such damaged lumber as historical décor.



AP/Wide World

Captain Nobukiyo Nambu, then executive officer on the I-17, stated in 1963 that his gunners had fired 20 rounds in some three minutes. Witnesses in Goleta generally agreed that 30 or more rounds had been fired. An employee of the *Santa Barbara News-Press* who was delivering papers at the Trout Club counted 29 muzzle flashes.

He called his newspaper and the somnambulant night editor told him "You're loco!" and hung up. A local café owner called the night editor at the *News-Press* a second time and told him shells were whizzing over her restaurant at about one round per minute, whereupon he realized the scoop of the century was happening in his back yard and dispatched their sports editor and a photographer.

Early newspaper reports estimated a dozen or 15 rounds fired, counting craters by early light of the following dawn. Japanese plans had called for firing 20 rounds, unless they met with an active defense, in which case they were to retire early.

The exact number of rounds fired may be moot, but that the fire was wildly ineffective is not. Of the rounds fired — enthusiastic Japanese reports to home notwithstanding — of those that did explode, only one caused notable damage. This round came down through a shed and catwalk at Lutton-Bell No. 17, exploded, and sent a shell fragment into the cast-iron gear housing on the pump. Although an estimated \$500 worth of damage was done, the pump was not out of action.

One round ricocheted off a pipeline but failed to explode. Kate Bell's cactus patch was spared. No fires were started. Some off-duty G.I.s made an extra buck by policing up fragments and selling them to the tourists who lined Highway 101. Although there were several dozen men working in the oil field, no one was injured at the time of the shelling. Local livestock, it seems, was more panicked by the shelling than most residents.

Reports of how many subs were actually involved also vary. Volunteer spotter Mrs. Fredericka Moffatt filed a sworn affidavit at war's end stating that Lt. George Gorman, officer in charge of Naval Intelligence at Santa Barbara, had called her the morning after the attack and "asked if we minded very much not mentioning the fact that there had been three submarines involved until it was officially released by the Navy ... by July 1941 it was common gossip around town that there had been

three submarines involved ... it is now September 1945 and ... neither the Army nor the Navy have released for publication the true story ... "

In fact, during the week of 16 February, fishermen and shore patrols reported seeing surfaced submarines off the Barnsdall pier, with men around their deck guns. Lt. Gorman duly reported this intelligence to 11th Naval District HQ in San Diego. By the time two patrol planes came, the sub was gone. Later in the week Gorman came to Elwood in time to watch for himself as a sub submerged. On reporting this also to San Diego, the brass advised him, "stop sending us these submarine-sighting stories — the coast is full of California gray whales. That is what you're seeing, not subs." Knowing better, Gorman responded, "a whale is 20 feet long, this sub is 300 feet long" (plus common varieties of whale do not mount deck guns). But, convinced of no lingering threat, higher headquarters withdrew the Coast Guard patrol cutter on 22 February.

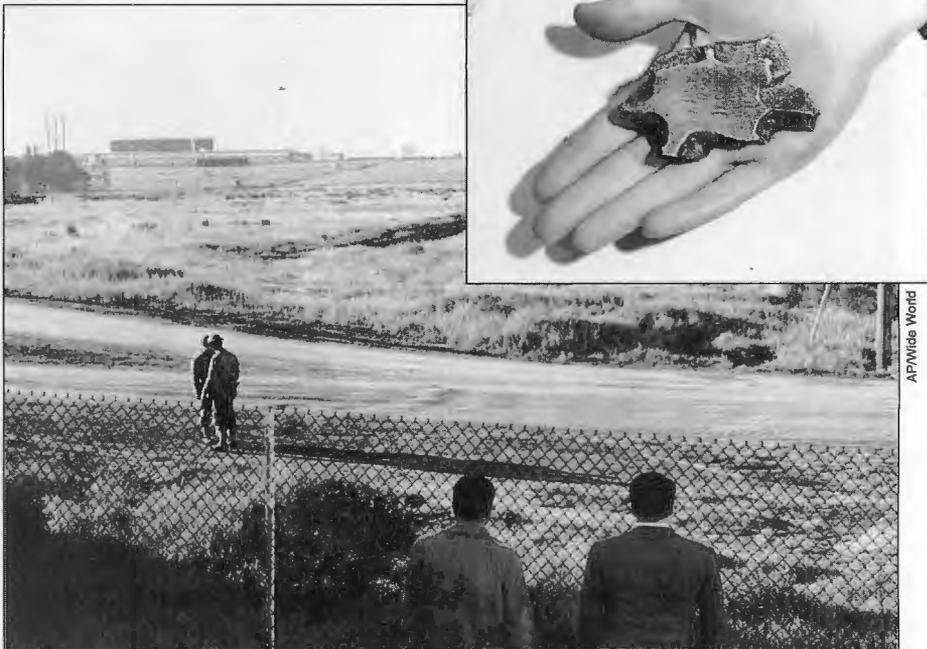
There is no doubt that Elwood Canyon and environs were an important, and vulnerable, target. This was one of the most important and strategically located oil fields in the United States. Several oil companies held leases, including Bankline, Barnsdall, Rio Grande and Signal, and their refineries and tank farms were a landmark that could be seen for miles out to sea. The Barnsdall absorption plant and two 80,000-gallon gasoline storage tanks,

plus many huge crude oil storage tanks at the cooperative tank farm, and the railway overpasses and bridges on Highway 101, comprised a massed target worthy of defense, and seemingly hard to miss.

Anybody Home?

Unfortunately, there was very little defending accomplished. The only counter-battery came from a sergeant and two privates stationed at Coal Oil Point, who fired their M1 rifles in the direction of at submarine I-17. The county Civil Defense chief was among patrons listening to FDR at a roadside diner and heard the noise, but dismissed it as coastal defense practice and went home. Just after he left, the news circulation man rushed in with word he had seen "an enemy submarine shooting at us, plain as day," and the Civil Defense chief had to learn about the attack from the next day's papers. Lower level CD volunteers, however, were more on the ball.

Air-raid sirens sounded almost immediately. The Home Guards mustered and manned defenses at strategic points in and around the county. One of the rifle-packing civilians deployed along the beach was former State Senator Alvin C. Weingand. In an interview in the '60s, Weingand noted "that shows you how thin our front line of defense was that night if the Japanese



Vulnerable Elwood complex as viewed from Highway 101 the day after attack. Aggregate damage was estimated at less than \$500 — enterprising G.I.s sold shell fragments (inset) to tourists for more than that.

had followed up with a full-scale invasion attempt.”

An immediate blackout was put into effect from Ventura to Gaviota, then expanded to Santa Maria until the “all clear” sounded shortly after midnight. Gutsy waitresses at Wheeler’s Inn on Highway 101 stopped traffic and told drivers to douse their lights. The airport at Goleta was immediately blacked-out — except for a bright red beacon that had been installed earlier in the day. Engineers could not find the new switch, nor the power lines that fed it. It shone brightly for several hours after the attack, until someone shot it out in disgust.

A volunteer aircraft spotter at a lookout point on Tecolote ranch phoned Army Flash No. 82261 to the West Los Angeles Filter Center several minutes after the bombardment began, then relaxed safe in the knowledge that within minutes planes from Bakersfield would swoop in and blast the dastardly Japanese out of the water. However, it was not until around 2200 that the American planes came to the defense of their coastline, and by then there was naught to do but drop flares along the Santa Barbara channel in case the I-17 or its cohorts were still be lurking. The few military personnel remaining at Elwood were unable to contact higher headquarters as the telephone lines were jammed with calls to police and operators, from people wanting to know what was going on.

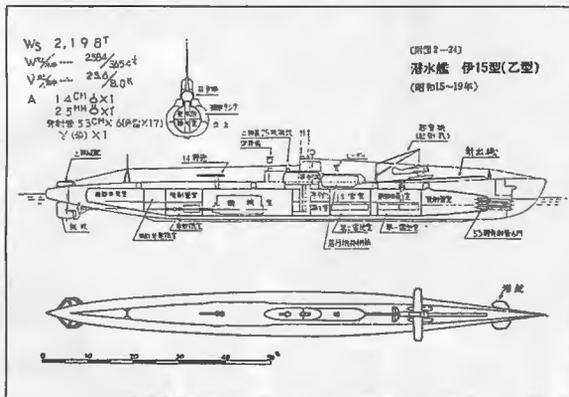
The next day’s local press assured the folks with headlines such as “Military Takes Charge At Site.” The handful of Army personnel in the area were put on immediate guard duty, and within hours Battery A of the 143rd Field Artillery returned to Goleta and took care of keeping sightseers away from the area. CO was Capt. Barnard E. Hagen, who took charge of policing up duds, of which there appeared to be a preponderance (some estimates ranged as high as four out of five), scattered up to 4 miles away from the assumed targets at the Elwood complex.

Lonely Purple Hearts Club

The only casualty to enemy action (and the only Purple Heart of World War II to be awarded for service CONUS) was Hagen. He and Sergeant Walter Newman had defused one particular dud, which Naval Ordnance men took away, leaving the damaged and sensitive fuse assembly. When Hagen detonated the fuse assembly a large chunk of it found its way out of the bar-



U.S. Navy, courtesy PHC John Highfill



courtesy C. Nakao

The only I-15 class sub to survive the war, the I-36 swings on the hook (bottom center) at Kure in December 1945. She had been converted to carry four suicide subs. Sister ship I-17, which attacked Goleta, was sunk in 1943. (inset) I-15 class subs featured a watertight hangar and could launch GLEN bombers for missions inland; were lifted from water for stowage after mission.

ricade and buried itself in Hagen’s thigh. Hagen spent six weeks in the hospital, but due to its location doctors decided to leave the metal where it was. When interviewed by this writer, Col. Hagen noted that it still bothers him some ... when he tries to go through an airport metal detector. In 1955, during the Refugio fire, explosions in the burning brush were thought to be undiscovered duds that had been rusting in the undergrowth all those years.

One of the obvious, and lingering, questions history asks of the Battle of Elwood Canyon is, why no effective military response? G.I.s fired their Garands at an impossible target a mile away and frustrated civilians shook their fists into a darkening sky, but other than that, the Japanese’s leisurely bombardment went totally unchallenged. Virtually unacknowledged at the time, except for sirens and civilian volunteers, leaving room for later conspiracy revisionists to conclude the American government was in on it. American defenses on the coast were spread mighty thin, but Naval

Intelligence had been warned a week earlier of submarine sightings off the oil pier, and I-17 had already sunk two freighters off the Oregon coast and attacked the *Emido* et al.

“One question never satisfactorily answered,” George Edmonds of the *News-Press* is quoted, “was why the Marine combat pilots at Goleta — stationed on what is now the campus of the Santa Barbara branch of UC — were not given the order (or authority) to ‘seek out and destroy’ the invading sub.” Perhaps there is a natural law of history which decrees that if Boffin No. 1 takes the trouble of a submarine crossing the Pacific to attack a large and juicy target point blank and not only misses practically every target, but half the rounds that do come close don’t even go off, then it is arranged that Boffin No. 2 is not permitted to mount an effective defense, since the attack was merely counting coup and not damaging, and the Grand Scheme of

Continued on page 66



Practical Competition

IDPA National Championships

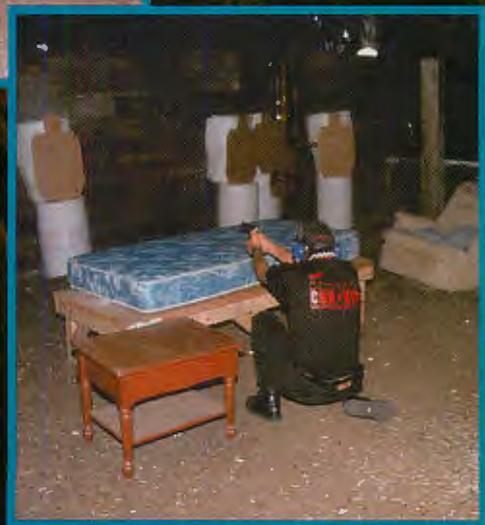


TEXT & PHOTOS
BY FRANK W. JAMES

The International Defensive Pistol Association is enjoying unforeseen growth and popularity and nothing better illustrates its rapid acceptance than the national championships held in the Fall of 2000 near Lake Cormorant, Mississippi. The range was John Shaw's Mid South Institute of Self-Defense Shooting (MISS) and the competitors totaled 319 in number.

Unlike other handgun shooting venues that foster the development of specialized "good only for this sport" hardware, IDPA emphasizes common everyday defensive handguns and holsters. To the competitor, whether they are a Master-grade shooter or a neophyte, this means the guns don't cost in figures resembling the last four digits of your phone number and the holsters are the same ones you would use on duty or while carrying concealed. It is a sport designed to develop skill, marksmanship and reflexes, but it is still a sport and as such it injects more than its fair share of fun and enjoyment into the exercise.

IDPA is an action-oriented sport with a demand on reality based scenarios. It is geared toward the armed defensive scenarios and by the organization's own rules tribute is to paid to the current law of land with regard to magazine capacity as well



THE 2000 IOPA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

(standings for first 3 places in division and class)

Place	DIV/CLASS	Full Name	Time
CHAMPION	CDP/MA	Rob Leatham	179.92
1.	CDP/MA	John Shaw	186.79
2.	CDP/MA	Bill Wilson	194.35
3.	CDP/MA	Gregory Martin	201.76
1.	CDP/EX	Ryan Wilson	216.73
2.	CDP/EX	Tony Rook	217.48
3.	CDP/EX	Johnny Van Etta	224.38
1.	CDP/SS	Jason Reinke	254.46
2.	CDP/SS	Lance Gilbertason	272.17
3.	CDP/SS	John May	272.65
1.	CDP/MM	Garth Peterson	286.22
2.	CDP/MM	Paul Ertsgaard	287.00
3.	CDP/MM	Dana Lake	291.18
CHAMPION	ESP/MA	D.R. Middlebrooks	178.96
1.	ESP/MA	Scott Warren	182.66
2.	ESP/MA	Larry Vickers	198.24
3.	ESP/MA	David Ederton	203.96
1.	ESP/EX	Curt Nichols	222.71
2.	ESP/EX	Richard Bodle	223.69
3.	ESP/EX	Bobby Spradlin	232.25
1.	ESP/SS	Clark Biema	224.33
2.	ESP/SS	Richard Heinie	243.11
3.	ESP/SS	F.L. Hamilton	253.78
1.	ESP/MM	Brent McDade	274.73
2.	ESP/MM	Kirk Blair	280.10
3.	ESP/MM	Stoy Long	296.40
CHAMPION	SSP/MA	Ernest Langdon	176.41
1.	SSP/MA	David Sevigny	177.17
2.	SSP/MA	Tom Yost	194.23
3.	SSP/MA	Richard Clary	195.87
1.	SSP/EX	Tony Phan	212.52
2.	SSP/EX	Jerry Biggs	221.69
3.	SSP/EX	Jeff Dommeyer	225.77
1.	SSP/SS	Monico Meneses	235.77
2.	SSP/SS	Travis Inouye	243.87
3.	SSP/SS	Jim Cowan	247.17
1.	SSP/MM	Daniel Mercer	263.59
2.	SSP/MM	John Bertetich	286.17
3.	SSP/MM	Roy Mercer	293.49
CHAMPION	SSR/MA	Alex Zimmerman	206.26
1.	SSR/MA	William Rudder	210.99
2.	SSR/MA	James Stout	233.49
3.	SSR/MA	Morgan Dague	245.47
1.	SSR/EX	Lee Jason	249.10
2.	SSR/EX	David Jackson	255.52
3.	SSR/EX	George Bagley	375.86
1.	SSR/SS	Chester Terry	278.98
2.	SSR/SS	Ted Murphy	279.30
3.	SSR/SS	Charles Roper	290.03
1.	SSR/MM	Craig Bishop	308.47
2.	SSR/MM	Jeff McDonald	336.23
3.	SSR/MM	Jason JenHins	340.35

ADDITIONAL AWARDS...

HIGH INTERNATIONAL	RajHo Roseto	279.39	ESP
HIGH LADY	Joyce Fowler	259.22	ESP
HIGH GUN PRESS	Bruce Gray	236.27	ESP
HIGH SENIOR	John Sayle	215.98	ESP
HIGH GUN INDUSTRY	Ernest Langdon	176.41	SSP
HIGH LAW ENFORCEMENT	Scott Warren	182.66	ESP

Practical Competition

as keeping an eye on the cost to the competitor; Standard Service Pistol competitors, the largest division in terms of participation, are only allowed 10 rounds in their magazines. Those using .45 caliber or 10mm Auto 1911 pistols are limited to eight rounds in their magazines and the wheelgun competitors are allowed to only load six rounds in their cylinders. The organization also prohibits the use of muzzle vents or compensators or electronic red-dot sights. Most often, competitors have to conceal the handgun beneath an outer garment and large extraneous electronic sights more or less defeat the purpose of the concealing garment.

There are four divisions in IDPA competition: Standard Service Pistol (SSP) which encompasses most all the current 9mm and .40 caliber double-action service handguns, Standard Service Revolver (SSR) is comprised solely of revolver shooters, Custom Defensive Pistol (CDP) is a 1911 format division for those shooting 1911-style pistols in calibers .45 ACP and 10mm Auto, and the last division is another single-action auto division for those using the fabled Browning High Power or a 1911 pistol in .38 Super or 9mm. This last division is allowed to

use a 10-round magazine capacity.

An interesting and perhaps ironic aspect to all this is the development of a pistol that was formerly criticized by many — the double-action, medium bore, semi-automatic, service pistol. In the past two years, shooters using these pistols have started to dominate, in terms of match scores much to the surprise of everyone.

No one wins the overall championship in the IDPA Nationals, but Ernie Langdon repeated his mastery of the SSP division shooting a Beretta Model 92. Langdon, formerly an employee of Beretta USA, but now working for the Triton Cartridge Company was closely pursued by his Triton Cartridge teammate David Sevigny who was shooting a Glock Model 34 with MMC sights.

In IDPA competition, like golf, the lowest score wins. The score is simply a compilation of the time it takes the competitor to complete the stage or course of fire, plus penalties added in as additional seconds.

Langdon won with a total time of 176.41 seconds for the entire match. Sevigny was right behind him and until he experienced a boo-boo toward the end he was running ahead of Langdon with a real chance of beating him, but

his total time for the match wound up being 177.17 seconds. The next quickest time came from the winner of the Enhanced Service Pistol division, D.R. Middlebrooks, who was shooting an EAA Witness, with a total time of 178.96 seconds. The legendary Rob Leatham was next with a total time of 179.92 and he was the highest-placed shooter using the traditional .45 caliber 1911 pistol, which in his case was a pistol from Springfield Armory.

These four individuals were at the top of the nutrient pyramid, but those in the middle and toward the bottom were not ignored because IDPA is actually geared toward the average shooter more than anything else. Shooters are ranked according to their individual skill levels, with Masters like those just mentioned being the best, next down are the Experts, then the Sharpshooters and finally those with the Marksman rating who are generally shooters new to pistol competition.

The 2000 Nationals consisted of 16 stages and, unfortunately, I was forced to shoot the match in one single day. It was a tiring and taxing experience. IDPA shies away from big round count stages simply because the shooter is limited to two reloads, whatever they may be. That



means no course of fire will require more than 18 rounds and seldom does the competitor engage a target more than 20 yards away. Most of the targets in the stages at the 2000 IDPA Nationals were close. This prompted Rob Leatham to exclaim half in jest, "If you have to aim, you're too slow."

There will always be a conflict between the need to run an efficient match and dictate real-world tactics. No where was this more evident than in the indoor stages. I don't know about you, but I really question the wisdom of running down a hallway in a house at full-speed while searching for bad guys. The scoring system demands you run, scan and engage hostile targets as quickly as possible when in real life you would probably use a 'leettle bet' more caution. Nonetheless, it was a fun and exhilarating experience.

In terms of equipment, the most popular SSP pistol appeared to be a Glock pistol of some sort, but that is a subjective evaluation because the organizers don't release a tabulation of the equipment used by the competitors. The Beretta Model 92 service pistol was frequently seen and there was the occa-

sional Smith & Wesson 9mm semi-auto as well as the rare Sig-Sauer to be found on the hips of the competitors.

Naturally, in the Custom Defensive class the name brands were Colt, Kimber, Springfield Armory and Les Baer. The Enhanced Service class provided the widest diversity of equipment because there were Browning High Powers competing against .38 Super and 9mm 1911 pistols and a number of CZ-75 pistols and their Tanfoglio clones being used to good effect. The lone HK pistol I saw was a full-size USP used by pistolsmith/gun writer Bruce Gray to win the High Gun Press award.

In terms of holsters, quite simply kydex in one form or another dominates the scene. No one single manufacturer of kydex holsters and gear seems to be more popular than any other for no other explanation than the fact there are multiple manufacturers of this stuff. The defensive handgun scene has witnessed not only the era of the plastic gun, but the plastic holster as well.

The overall atmosphere of the match was decidedly low-key and the range officers at Stage 10 added their own bit of mirth when they forced each com-

petitor to undergo an equipment check prior to the squad shooting their stage. The idea was to check and make sure the holsters were of the approved type and in the proper location before competition at each stage. (IDPA has an official holster Nazi in Ken Hackathorn and if the holster is not on the approved list, then it is illegal equipment. Period.) The check consisted merely of the competitor holding his outer, concealing garment open in a kind of "I'll show you mine, if you'll show me yours" mode. The Stage 10 range officers, however, donned surgical gloves and stated their equipment check was going to be *very thorough* much to the shock and amusement of everyone present at each briefing.

The match went smoothly as far as administration of the event went, but toward the end a rhubarb materialized involving a member of the board of directors and three range officers running a short, indoor event. I, myself, had trouble with this stage and in my case it was simply the result of exhaustion brought on by a long, hot, tiring

Continued on page 74

Continued from page 39

usually enough time to make a quick correction and get another round off. On target he felt the 7N1 was very effective, even at the extreme ranges encountered in Afghanistan. Interestingly, while he is quite familiar with current Western bolt-action sniper rifles, he said if had to go back into combat he would choose the SVD over a bolt gun.

When all is said and done though the value of a sniper rifle is measured by one thing: how well it shoots. So to test it ourselves we packed up an SVD and headed to the range. Shooting various ball loads through my test SVD yielded poor results. Group size ran 2+ inches for 5 shot groups at 100 yards, big enough to make a sniper puke. However, in reality this is not so different than shooting M-80 ball through an M-24.

More than a case of original Soviet 7N1 ammunition that had been captured by the Israelis was provided by Matthew Renz. Manufactured at Factory 188 in 1981, it came in its original wooden shipping crate, with two hermetically sealed cans containing 440 rounds each. An additional 100 rounds dated 1990 were also provided. This load was specifically designed to improve the accuracy of the SVD, and it does.

Shooting prone off a pack group size went from 2 inches-plus at 100 yards with ball to sub-MOA at 300 yards with 7N1. Recoil, muzzle blast, and ejection pattern however were identical to ball. No functioning problems were experienced; the SVD running flawlessly throughout testing. Recoil was light with good shot to shot recovery. While not as accurate as my Remington 700P, it is interesting to note the change in personality of the SVD by simply switching ammunition. Limited testing at 600 yards on a KD range gave five-shot groups in the 1 MOA range. However at this distance the 4x PSO-1 is admittedly becoming a serious handicap for shooting tight groups. Still this is much better performance than this rifle is credited with being capable of.

The story doesn't end there though. In a recent interview I had with Nikolai Bezborodov the Chief Designer at IZH-MASH OJSC in Izhevsk, Russia I asked him about the latest load developed expressly for the SVD. He seemed surprised that I knew of it, and while close-mouthed due to it being a brand new military development we did find out

the basics. Designated 7N14 it consists of a 151-grain FMJBT projectile with a lead core. He stated that the newer 7N14 was more accurate than the 7N1. Muzzle velocity is the same at 2,723 fps.

Little is known about this newer load, although Leroy Thompson has commented on its accuracy. Additionally, the Russians have also developed a sniper load featuring a 200 grain FMJBT Match projectile. Developed expressly for use in the new SV-98 sniper rifle, it seems intended to give superior velocity and energy retention, wind bucking, and accuracy at long range. Muzzle velocity is listed as 2,460 fps. This is a brand new load, the SV-98 design is still being refined, but it appears to be quite similar to a 200-grain "Extra" Match load that has been around for quite some time. Nikolai Bezborodov commented that only one ammunition factory produced sniper cartridges. All the Extra, as well as all the sniper cartridges that I have examined and fired, were produced by Factory 188. This factory is believed to be located in Novosibirsk.

While admittedly long in the tooth, the rimmed 7.62x54R cartridge is nonetheless still capable of superb accuracy. Using the 7.62x54R Extra in conjunction with Record-CISM rifles the national select of the Armed Forces of Russia won the International Military Games in 1995 and the World Championship in 1996. For more serious work, the 7.62x54R sniper loads do perform their intended function. They increase not only the accuracy of the SVD, but its lethality as well. A so equipped skilled marksman should be considered a viable threat at 800+ meters. Continually refined and "modernized" by the Russians the SVD will soldier-on for the foreseeable future. We now know that the same holds true for the 7.62x54R sniper loads that were a mystery for so long.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Matthew Renz for his help acquiring the Soviet 7N1 ammunition used for testing. Paul J. Martin for the research he shared; Carl Starke for his projectile evaluation; Marc Krebs for the loan of the SVDs and technical info; Alan Halla for his technical advice; and Donald Heald IV for the countless days spent on the range with me. Special thanks to Mark Vorobiev for sharing his experiences in the service of his country.

David M. Fortier, a long time SOF reader, is a freelance writer/photographer and student of foreign small arms. ☞

Continued from page 61

History does not require a yang where there really was no solid yin.

Murphy At Work

Speculative predestination aside, during the week before the attack several significant but apparently legitimate events converged to assure there would be no effective defense available at Elwood Canyon on 23 February. Battery A, 143rd Field Artillery, 65th Brigade, 40th Infantry Division, which had been sited at Coal Oil Point near the Barnsdall plant, had retired from their base camp at Goleta to Griffith Park, in Los Angeles, with their guns, leaving the site ready for immediate re-occupation. When word reached them at Griffith Park, they were underway within minutes, and made the 123-mile run back to Goleta with a police escort — over 40 miles of it in black-out — in about two-and-a-half hours. Although in place by 2205, by then the I-17 was safely at sea. The Coast Guard cutter had been withdrawn the day before.

The second question is, how in the world — unless they really were working on behalf of a Buy U.S. War Bonds drive (a favorite theory of the conspiracy revisionists) — could the Japanese have missed such a turkey shoot of prime and vulnerable targets at essentially point-blank range? Witnesses noted that the sea was glass-smooth, and the gunners took plenty of time, remaining on the surface in view of shore observers for half an hour.

The Japanese shells, those that exploded and those which did not, sprayed the landscape from water's edge to Tecolote Embarcadero Ranch and the Wade homestead up Winchester Canyon, 4 miles away as the crow flies. Shells screaming over Elwood Canyon stampeded Russel Doty's dairy herd — and his Okie milking crews — and neither ever returned.

While the morning after the raid found the Army policing up duds and trying to locate some damage, the Navy launched a vengeful and ever-widening search of the Pacific to locate the marauder who had "with diabolical cunning and boldness ... struck as the whole nation was listening to the President's report to the nation on the war." But the I-17 escaped unharmed.

In his book *Sunk* Capt. Hashimoto noted in regards to the Japanese submarine attacks along the U.S. coastline,

Hawaii and elsewhere that "the position of the fall of shot of the first round was somewhat problematical in view of the inevitable errors involved. Therefore it was quite useless to aim for a small target, and the usual practice was to plaster a particular area with the idea of frightening the populace." You know, sort of like the Doolittle Raids. But practically *point blank* at a target the size of the Elwood complex? It must have taken superior gunnery to *not* hit anything worthwhile.

When 30 years ago Captain Nambu gave the "Japanese side to the 'Battle of Elwood'" in Tokyo, he not only stated they fired 20 rounds in three minutes — now *there's* an Olympic gunnery crew — but that he submerged because he heard the roar of American planes approaching. Witnesses, and records, reflect that the I-17 retired on the surface, and of course the bombers didn't arrive from Bakersfield until three hours later. This did not prevent Capt. Nambu from remembering, however, that the I-17 also towed a fake bamboo periscope (a common ploy) and successfully decoyed the depth charges dropped from the vengeful U.S. planes [sic].

Perhaps this bit of history lite should simply note that it is difficult to lay artillery when the fire base is bobbing and weaving in the water, calm seas or not. And if the reliability of the Japanese propellant charges were akin to the reliability of the explosive charges that refused to go off on impact, then *any* gunnery crew would have its work cut out for it.

Having shot up Elwood and made good its escape, Japanese logs record that the I-17 returned to Yokosuka for permanent starboard engine repairs, then refueled and cruised the Aleutians to harass Allied shipping in Alaskan waters. Her final tour of duty was off New Caledonia, where on 19 August 1943, she became engaged in a surface battle with a New Zealand minesweeper and two shore-based U.S. Navy planes, and was sunk. Only six crewmen were rescued. Captain Nishino is believed to have died peacefully in Japan, in 1956.

Almost all the players in this drama have passed on, and the oil field has petered out. Brush and erosion have covered the scars that dotted the hills above Elwood beach. But Kate Bell's cactus patch, having long since escaped the confines of the iron fence, thrives to this day.

Frank Hopkins is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

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Get Your Gear

Continued from page 12

modern wilderness and outdoor medicine. He has revolutionized the first-aid kit industry by adapting the latest emergency medicine practices to outdoor environments. His innovations in wilderness medical kits have continually raised the industry standards for outdoor first-aid kits and founder of Adventure Medical Kits, first-aid kits which are designed for specific outdoor activities such as cycling, climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking, mountain rescue, ski patrols, paddling or kayaking, boating or sailing, and the list keeps going on.

My favorite is the Mountain Medicine which is suggested for Paramedics & EMTs, mountaineering expeditions and professional rescue squads. It measures 17" x 11" x 5" and weighs 5 pounds. I won't get into everything the kit includes, but its component systems are: oral and nasal airway kits, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, flashlight, oral rehydration salts, glucose paste, deluxe wound management, advanced blister materials, deluxe burn materials with Water Gel® burn dressing, deluxe trauma materials with Bloodstopper® dressing, deluxe infectious control with Laerdal® pocketmask, and deluxe medical instruments with scalpel and digital thermometers. I'm not really doing justice to the kit contents as space considerations won't allow it.

But perhaps the best part of the kit might just be the two books which come as part of the kit. The first, which is written by Eric A. Weiss, M.D., is *A Comprehensive Guide to Wilderness & Travel Medicine* with the most up-to-date information on wilderness and travel medicine, improvised techniques, when to worry, recommended prescription medications and guide for using the kit's contents. Also included is the *Life-Threatening Emergency Guide*. Read the books in between your outdoor adventures because, like the army medic, you'll be better prepared for an emergency. As I said, it's not enough to just have the equipment in-hand you've also got to know how to use it.

For more information on their full line of first-aid kits, contact Adventure Medical Kits, P.O. Box 43309, Dept. SOF, Oakland, CA 94624; phone: (800) 324-3517; fax: (510) 261-7419; e-mail: questions@adventuremedicalkits.com, or visit their website at www.adventuremedicalkits.com. ☒

I Was There

Continued from page 29

I reached the kid first just as he was trying to climb to his feet. A hard kick sent him head over heels into the dirt, and follow-up kicks kept him from getting up. When Brett caught up a few seconds later, we both leaped on the guy and rained wild punches and kicks on him. The prisoner fought back desperately with his cuffed hands and bare feet, not in an attempt to escape, but to survive our terrible onslaught. And the more he fought to defend himself, the more we attacked as if possessed. We yelled and cursed and punched and kicked. As the prisoner's fight began to weaken, ours grew stronger, but only for a moment before Brett and I grew so weak we could beat him no more. Spent, we collapsed across the prisoners bleeding semiconscious body.

The three of us laid together for several seconds, chests heaving, coughing and pouring sweat through our fatigues. Beneath us, the prisoner whimpered and moaned as blood streamed from his nose and mouth. After two minutes passed — or maybe 20 — Brett sat up and removed a plastic handcuff strip from his pants pocket. I feebly restrained the man's legs while he wrapped the cuff around the kid's ankles, an unnecessary precaution since he was too injured to run anyway. After he was bound, Brett and I sat in the dirt for a moment, letting our breathing return to normal and looking at our prisoner.

"How we going to get him back to the jeep?" I wheezed.

"I've already thought of that," Brett said, struggling to his feet. He staggered over to an old *mamasan* who had been watching us from a short distance away as she balanced a long pole across her shoulders, a bucket of water hanging from each end. Brett talked to her for a moment, pointing once toward the prisoner and once toward me. She nodded, lowered the pole from her shoulders to set the buckets on the ground, and then slid the pole away from their handles. She handed it to Brett as he handed her a coin.

"I've rented us a prisoner transport system," he said proudly on his return.

I didn't immediately understand until he ran one end under the prisoner's plastic ankle cuff and the other through his wrist cuff, slinging him like a slain deer. We lifted the pole, placing

an end on each of our shoulders, and began walking down the alley, the prisoner's sagging rear bumping the ground with our every step. The old woman trailed behind us, calling for everyone to look, so that by the time we got back to the street, we had an entourage of 20 chattering Vietnamese.

We carried our prized catch through the traffic jam, which had just unclogged and was moving at a snail's pace. Our jeep, left in the middle of the street, was now causing most of the problems as a myriad of vehicles struggled to maneuver around it, including a large, blue American military bus with a sign over its front window that read "Bien Hoa Airport."

The bus was crowded with freshly arrived G.I.s from the United States. Their virgin faces pressed against every window, eyes wide as they watched Brett and I carrying the beaten bleeding prisoner slung from the wooden pole. At first glance, they probably thought he was a Viet Cong, but when it was clear that he was an American G.I. their eyes widened even more.

Brett smiled at the gawking faces and nodded toward the prisoner with a bob of his eyebrows. "Welcome to the 'Nam, boys," he said. "Don't break the law during your visit."

At the jail, a booking sergeant, who looked with mild curiosity at our whimpering injured prisoner, met us outside. I told the sergeant that the kid had gotten hurt when he fell I out of the jeep on an especially sharp curve. The sergeant nodded that he understood, and said, "Yes, that happens quite often. Actually, it happens a lot." He winked.

Besides being a Vietnam veteran, Loren Christensen is a retired police officer and martial arts instructor. Since retiring from police work, he writes and teaches full-time. Check-out his site at *LWC BOOKS* <http://www.aracnet.com/~lwc123/>.

Note to Readers: SOF welcomes submissions of "I Was There" articles. Please submit 1,500 — 2,000 words in MS Word and include at least two related photographs/slides with captions. Please do not send originals. Payment is \$150 per published article, payable upon publication. Send to: Thomas D. Reisinger, Assistant Editor, *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine, 5735 Arapahoe Avenue, Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303. We look forward to hearing from you! ☒

Fighting Holsters

Continued from page 25

molded for a Ruger Super Blackhawk .44 Magnum revolver and is dated 1976. It is a traditional slim Jim-style pouch which fully encloses the revolver. The full flap, included for maximum protection and security of the handgun in the field, fastens securely closed with a heavy-duty snap fastener. Anderson had found that while moving through heavy brush, the usual flap often came unfastened and did not provide the desired protection for an expensive hunting handgun. He added a spring steel lined tab that extended forward from the bottom edge of the flap and wrapped around the front of the pouch, which solved the problem.

Meant to be used with relatively large handguns for long hours while handgun hunting, the Pig Hunter holster included a swivel attachment between the holster pouch and the belt hanger. When combined with a leg tie-down thong, this let the holstered handgun move freely with the wearer's leg, while maximizing wearer comfort. Being a custom holster maker, Anderson was able to make the Pig Hunter for any handgun. He had an aluminum mold for forming the holster for the Automag pistol, and he made at least one Pig Hunter rig for the huge Remington XP-100 single shot handgun. And the Pig Hunter for the Colt 1911 auto pistol proved popular with G.I.s during the Vietnamese War. The Anderson Pig Hunter is still an excellent way to carry a large handgun in the field, and it is available once again from Vic Perez of Victor's Leather. Vic apprenticed with Anderson and currently produces the entire line of Anderson "Gunfighter" rigs. They are among the best. ✕

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Keep 'Em Shooting

Continued from page 23

holding the tip of the firing pin when you apply pressure against the shroud to compress the spring so you can remove the firing-pin retainer nut. Reassembly is the reverse procedure, and there should be no negative surprises.

Keeping The Mausers Shooting

The 8x57mm Cartridge

For this writing, focus is on the 8x57mm Mauser cartridge. Later articles can focus on the other cartridges for which the '98 has been chambered. For purposes of this discussion, it will be assumed that the rifle to be used has an S-bore, which means groove diameter of .323 to .324. This data does not apply to rifles with .318 groove diameter barrels, as that will be covered in a subsequent discussion of the Model 1888 Commission rifle.

There still exist supplies of military surplus 8x57mm ammunition. Most recently, Midway marketed two differ-



Surplus and commercial rounds are readily available — and 8x57 brass is easily formed from any of the ubiquitous .30-06 family.

ent flavors: One kind came in bandoleers with five-round stripper clips, and the other came boxed 15 per carton (loose in the carton). The bandoleered loads were from Turkey and featured a 154-grain FMJ bullet and, of course, corrosive Berdan priming. The car-

toned loads came from Ecuador and featured 170-grain FMJ bullet, as well as corrosive Berdan priming.

Both kinds of ammo were beautifully clean and shiny, and both had the typical cupri-nickel jackets. The Ecuadorian headstamps indicated manufacture in 1954. This ammo was shot through a Gewehr 98 with 29.23-inch barrel and delivered the 170-grain bullets at a muzzle velocity of 2,547 feet per second, as measured with an Oehler 43 chronograph.

Through the same rifle, the Turkish loads sent their 154-grain bullets downrange at 2,828 fps. It might be noted that the nominal muzzle velocity for the 8x57 with the 154-grain bullet from that length of barrel is 2,880 fps, so the Turkish ammo is right about where it should be, even though the headstamps indicated these rounds were made in 1945.

Interestingly, both loads shot essentially to the same point of impact at 100 yards — slightly above point of aim. In other words, they worked well. I have used surplus military ammo for the 8x57mm since the 1950s, and generally speaking if it has been stored well, it shoots well. And this includes even some of the pre-WWII stuff.

In addition to remaining supplies of military surplus ammo (destined to dry up before too long), most major commercial manufacturers also load for this cartridge. However, there are differences, depending upon what part of the world the ammo comes from. For example, the commercial loads from Europe and Scandinavia tend to be loaded to the latest military equivalents. This cartridge, when loaded by U.S. makers, is loaded down significantly — due to the .318/.323 situation mentioned above.

Thus, shooters who also reload

125/130-grain bullets

42.0 grains of Hodgdon H4198. Muzzle velocity 3,000 fps.

51.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,800 fps.

49.0 grains of IMR 3031. Muzzle velocity 3,000 fps.

150-grain bullets

50.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,880 fps.

50.0 grains of IMR 4895. Muzzle velocity 2,280 fps.

51.0 grains of Alliant Reloder 15. Muzzle velocity 2,700 fps.

46.0 grains of Hodgdon H322. Muzzle velocity 2,700 fps.

50.0 grains of Winchester 748. Muzzle velocity 2,800 fps.

170-grain bullets

49.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,700 fps.

46.0 grains of IMR 4895. Muzzle velocity 2,650 fps.

49.0 grains of Alliant Reloder 15. Muzzle velocity 2,650 fps.

46.0 grains of Hodgdon H4895. Muzzle velocity 2,500 fps.

50.0 grains of Winchester 748. Muzzle velocity 2,700 fps.

200-grain bullets

46.0 grains of IMR 4064. Muzzle velocity 2,400 fps.

53.0 grains of IMR 4350. Muzzle velocity 2,400 fps.

44.0 grains of Alliant Reloder 15. Muzzle velocity 2,250 fps.

220-grain bullets

57.0 grains of Hodgdon H4831. Muzzle velocity 2,300 fps.

46.0 grains of Hodgdon H4350. Muzzle velocity 2,200 fps.

46.0 grains of Winchester 760. Muzzle velocity 2,200 fps.

46.0 grains of IMR 4350. Muzzle velocity 2,200 fps.

never should run out of good brass. In fact, if one finds it difficult to find 7.92x57mm brass, it is simple and easy to make cases from any of the full-length .30-06 family of cases. All it takes is a form/trim die, hacksaw, file and a regular set of reloading dies. Form/trim dies are available from several makers, including RCBS and Redding.

When loaded to full strength, the 8x57mm offers virtually the same performance as the .30-06 Springfield.

To achieve the latest German military loading equivalent, merely use any standard large rifle primer, insert 50.0 grains of 4895 powder (IMR or Hodgdon) and top it with a 150-grain bullet. If using Hornady bullets, merely seat it to where the mouth of the case is even with the cannelure. For bullets without cannelure, seat to an overall cartridge length of 2.898 inches.

For those who want to be prepared, no matter what, making 8x57mm brass, as mentioned above, is simple and straight-forward, working from a full-length .30-06 family of case (06 is used for this discussion, although .25-06, .270 or .280 would work just fine).

Here are some loads that have worked well for the author. When shooting military surplus rifles with battle sights, it is sometimes necessary to tweak recipes so the rifle will "shoot where it is looking." Powder charges listed should be considered maximum for rifles in good condition with S-bores (.323 to .324-inch groove diameter bores). Starting loads should be five percent under maximum, and look for signs of any problems while working loads. Consult reloading manuals from the major bullet or powder manufacturers regarding signs of problems and exact reloading techniques.

Supplies of military surplus Mauser '98s wax and wane, and prices vary widely by model, manufacture and condition. They will never be rare, but the market fluctuates with supply. One good source for military-new '98 Mausers at a fair price is Mitchell's Mausers, address below. ☒

CONTACT SHEET

Mitchell's Mausers

Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 9295
Fountain Valley, CA 92728-9295
phone: 714-899-3660
fax: 714-899-8611

Adventure Quartermaster

Continued from page 26

nomical \$13.95. For the dealer nearest you, contact Uncle Mike's, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1690, Oregon City, OR 97045; phone: 503-655-7964; check them out on the web at www.uncle-mikes.com.

Altama Military Boots

An army travels on its boots, and Altama has manufactured military footwear for the DoD for 30 consecutive years, and was a leading supplier of combat boots to the Army and Marines for both Vietnam and the Gulf — plus military, police and private security in more than 45 countries. In 1991, Altama developed a commercial line of high-performance combat boots for civilian use, combining their expertise with top-quality material to produce high performance commercial models at affordable prices.

A good example is the Altama Ripple Sole 10" Jungle Combat Boot with ridges that squash down for traction and incredible cushioned comfort. Altama combined the Ripple Sole and the triple layer innersole to make the most incredibly comfortable military boots available today. The soles won't hold on to mud, yet offer good traction on most surfaces. The extra height holds bloused cuffs better than the standard 8-inch boot. They have cotton duck sides with nylon web reinforcement straps, 4.5-5.0 oz. black corrected cowhide leather toe and heel. The collar is nylon webbing, the outsole ripple design rubber, the midsole is full-length polyurethane, stitched. The innersole is a triple-layer Superflex/foam sandwich. The removeable innersole is Cambrelle®-covered molded polyurethane.

The lacing system features black nylon-coated brass speedlace (5 sets), and eyelets (4 sets), with the Comfort-flex notch-in-lace system. The shank is fiberglass, and there are brass drain vents in the instep. Weighing 3 lb/1.3 kg, the Altama Ripple Sole 10 comes in choice of OD fabric panels or and All-Black boots.

One tough boot at only \$99.99, available from the good folks at Brigade Quartermasters, Dept. SOF, 1025 Cobb International Dr., P.O. Box 100001, Kennesaw, GA 30144-9217; phone: 1-800-338-4327; or you can order online at www.actiongear.com. ☒

Command Guidance

Continued from page 4

sive destruction, deprivation and abuse of human rights that the Communists have caused. Other countries have chosen to abandon totalitarian Communist principles, but you glorify them in a cavalier manner, if not worship them.

Also, ex-Yugoslav National Army officers are being placed in control of the Croatian Army. Why are you doing this? Why are you betraying the good soldiers of Croatia? These great young men have spilled their blood on our soil. They have been wounded, and they have died that the rest of us may live in peace and freedom. Why do you go against the laws of God, man and nature, advocating Communism?

Former East German Army officers have been purged from the German Army. They were decommissioned and not allowed to rejoin. Of all the Communist soldiers there, fewer than 8,000 were allowed to join the *Bundeswehr* — and they were below the rank of lieutenant. Tainted by Communist ideology, senior officers were let go. While all these former Communist countries are making significant progress, you and your ilk are trying to implement changes that will bring back the Dark Ages of Communism. This is not progress. This is regression. Croatian patriots fought and died that our Motherland might experience better. Croatia deserves better.

Croatia is our mother. Has she not been abused enough through history? How much more agonizing pain must she endure? Must there now be more pain at the hand of one of her own sons? Why do you contribute to this immoral abuse and pain? Your behavior forces us to suspect your motives. We wrote and fought for Croatia's freedom and we love our country, but now we must fear our government. In the act of glorifying the Communist Partisans, you have subverted Democracy in Croatia. You enjoyed the easy good life with its luxuries while our soldiers were in harm's way, spilling their blood and dying for freedom in Croatia. Now you have destabilized the government, demoralized the military and betrayed the Veterans and the people of Croatia.

In a Judas-like manner you have betrayed the very soul of Croatia, her people, her Church and her God. If you have any morality or common decency left in your body, you will resign the presidency immediately, call for general elections, and let a true Croatian patriot lead Croatia and guide her to her rightful destiny among the family of civilized, democratic nations.

Nick Dodich, et al.,
Veterans

In consultation with Croatian-American/Australian/Canadian and European professionals, military and civilians, we grant permission for the reprint of this letter in any language, any publication, anywhere. ☒

done justice to something penned by Orwell, it doesn't do to go about asking too many questions. Agents of Mugabe's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) haunt all the big hotels and since there are almost no tourists, strangers are regarded by his goons with great suspicion.

You know who you are talking when someone walks up and asks what you are doing there. The next question, invariably, is "How long have you been in Zimbabwe?"

Then there are mobs of gangsters that call themselves "war veterans" who suddenly appear from nowhere. In the past they occupied white farms and killed or beat their owners into submission. Having got away with acts to which the international community has yet to react (Mugabe was even received in grand circumstance during a state visit to France and Belgium earlier this year) he has now turned his attention to more immediate gains such as sending his rabble to invade private homes. What the media doesn't report is that the government is funding a form of ethnic cleansing that would long ago have been condemned anywhere else in the world.

A Visit With Ian Smith

To discuss these and other problems, we visited former Premier Ian Smith at his Harare home. It's a spacious two-story building at 3 Phillips Avenue in the city's leafy Belgravia suburb and I'd called because I wanted to offer my respects. A brave man, he left the gates open to welcome us.

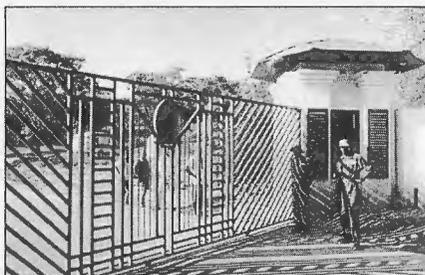
Into his eighties now, Ian Smith — sprightly but frail — is politically as active as ever. He still works hours each day mustering support for the opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change. He is also embarrassingly dismissive of the man who has caused this disaster.

During the elections last year, this former Battle of Britain Spitfire pilot gave more than 80 media interviews, which were seen around the world. And while he is reticent to be drawn on some of the more dire predictions that he made about the young country's

future two decades ago, he did have this to say:

"From the start I warned Britain and America that they were making a mistake by backing the radical Mugabe in preference to some of the more moderate black political leaders that the old Rhodesia fielded. But they wouldn't listen," he told *Soldier Of Fortune*. "And what do they do about today? Nothing." What does he think is likely to happen now?

"Obviously things can't go on as they are. If I were in the position in which so many millions of this country's people now find themselves, I expect that I'd also steal to survive. But I certainly wouldn't go about systematically destroying all those fine things that



One of few European farms not invaded belongs to former Rhodesian arms dealer and close Mugabe associate John Bredenkamp. (below) The faces of this Zimbabwean farm couple tell the tragic story.



made this country what it was." It's culpable for the government to destroy the economy, the agricultural sector, the judiciary, the civil service and so on, he declared. Getting involved in the Congo was the ultimate lunacy, he reckoned.

Mr. Smith referred specifically to the invasion of Zimbabwe's Supreme Court late last year by 300 of Mugabe's militant "vets" and the resignation of its Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay after receiving death threats. There was also concern about the number of military men that hold powerful positions in Mugabe's cabinet, the same people, incidentally, that had a hand in arranging Zimbabwe's disastrously expensive

involvement in the Congo war.

Things had become so bad, he added, that many qualified people — black and white — were leaving the country.

"The majority of them are educated, thinking people. I suppose they justify their actions by refusing to work for that man. I would do exactly the same," he said with the kind of vigor that had been his hallmark over years of negotiations with Britain.

"War Vets" *cum* Brownshirts

Zimbabwe's violence — orchestrated, xenophobic and inordinately well-planned — has become the single dominating factor in the country in the past year or two. Instructions to set things in motion came directly from State House. Thus, the "War vets" responsible for invading farms were each promised \$Zim 5,000 at the start of it all.

And though most haven't got a cent for their efforts, "Hitler" Hunzvi has told them repeatedly that they will be paid. Also, the transport needed to move them about the country was, in many instances provided by the army. Elsewhere, bus companies were coerced to fill the need. Since most of the weapons used by these insurgent groups were AKs, these, too, came from the security sources.

With a pattern for dislocation established, the level of brutality has escalated. So far about 30 farmers have been wounded or killed. Latest news talks of gangs of roving militants invading businesses and factories, kidnapping their executives and holding them hostage until absurd ransoms are paid. Last heard, a family member of an officer of the Red Cross was so badly bludgeoned by the "vets" that he had to be flown to Geneva for emergency treatment. Many embassies, including Washington's have ordered non-essential personnel out of the country. One might well ask why so very little of all this has appeared in the American press?

This ongoing mayhem is not restricted to political entities. Several international aid organizations have been victimized. In the case of some European donor nations, their representatives have been withdrawn.

Meanwhile, with farmers being prevented from planting crops, it won't be long before Zimbabwe starts handing out the begging bowl and calling for aid for its starving millions. Most observers fear that it could happen before the end of the year.

An interesting insight was provided by Chris Thorne and his wife Ro on

their Chirobi Farm near Glendale, an area that in the past produced a fifth of Zimbabwe's grain and soya needs. Crops there had been so prolific in the past that the country was even able to export food.

Overnight, their farm was invaded by a bunch of zombies who called themselves "war veterans."

Talking to Daniel McGrory of London's *Times* last March, the Thorns disclosed that immediately the armed gang arrived, they were lectured about how much "the people need the rich red soil to grow food." A year has passed and the vets have still to plant a seed. Nor will they let the Thorne family grow anything either.

The consequences of these actions are tragic. Moreover, they are being repeated on more than 2,500 other farms owned by whites that have been seized (out of a possible 4,000).

And the result? Farm machinery stands rusting, the original farm workers have nothing to do (and now there is no money to pay them), their children cannot be educated on farm schools because their teachers have been driven out or abducted. Sadly, all 3,750 acres on Chirobi have become waste.

"I could understand if they were doing something with the property for themselves," said Chris Thorne, "but the gunmen just sit watching us caged up all day and seem to delight in everything going to ruin."

And though Mugabe gets crazier by the month, Whitehall does little of significance to rock his boat. More ominously, the Zimbabwean leader has received tacit support for his racially motivated policies from an unexpected source. This has come from the new South African leader Thabo Mbeki. Notably, that grand old combatant of African politics, Nelson Mandela, stays aloof. He regards Mugabe as a thug and doesn't mind saying so, which tells you why I voted for him in 1994.

Back-Door Journalism

Because I had been warned by friends not to fly into Zimbabwe (there are computer terminals at Harare International Airport and the name Al Venter would have jumped off the screen like a lily in the desert), I decided instead to come in from the north from Zambia.

Also, because Mugabe's thugs use rather unconventional means to deal with their opposition — they blew-up the only independent newspaper in the country (five Russian TM-57 mines



Now in his 80s, former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith is still active in trying to counter the excesses of Robert Mugabe. SOF visited Smith at his home in Harare.

were detonated on the presses of Harare's *Daily News* earlier this year), I remained low-profile throughout. In any event, I had the additional responsibility of having my son Johan with me. We drove in overland, though even that is taking a chance these days because of armed robbers targeting cars with foreign number plates.

Our arrival in the capital was anti-climactic. While the media had been reporting unrest in the streets of Zimbabwe's cities for months, there was little overt evidence of it in anywhere once we had crossed the Zambezi Valley at Chirundu. We found a country that is still as incredibly beautiful as it ever was. There were elephant near Mana Pools and at one stop we watched a leopard stalking a pack of baboons.

Also, Harare — Salisbury when the country was Rhodesia — wasn't anything like we'd imagined we'd find it. The place was clean and the streets swept. There was some garbage lying but it was nothing like Lusaka, from where we had just come. And if the roads were more pot-holed than before, that was probably to be expected in a country heading for the trash heap.

But Money For Another's War

At the heart of Zimbabwe's problems at the start of the new millennium is that intractable war in which Zimbabwe has become involved more than a thousand miles north. Ignore the rhetoric and it soon becomes clear why more than 14,000 Zimbabwe Army troops have been deployed in a conflict that every security analyst alive in Africa and abroad has said is unwinnable: greed!

The war is costing the country about \$1 million a day, a million dollars more than Zimbabwe has in its coffers.

Worse, Mugabe doesn't have the financial reserves to buy a single week's fuel supplies. As one critic told SOF, "even if he were to pull the army out of the Congo tomorrow, it would take the nation years to recover." Zimbabwe has never been in such a critical mess, he added, which was one of the reasons why Mugabe called in the "vets" to take the focus of attention off the war.

The effect of these shortfalls on everyday life is disastrous. By the time that the SOF team left Harare, the country had about two days gas left in its pumps. The result is that everybody is affected. Teachers aren't been able to get to work because they've no petrol left for their cars. As a consequence, the educational system suffers. "And when tanks run dry, they go dry everywhere," somebody else complained.

Even busses stop running. It has gotten so bad in recent months that the police often don't have enough fuel to answer emergency calls.

The view of Harare military analyst Michael Quintana was that the country was nowhere near its nadir. Fuel shortages, he declared, could go on indefinitely. He believed that this kind of dislocation plays directly into Mugabe's hands because the majority of the population believe his propaganda machine when it says that the whites and evil communities like the Americans are at the root of it all.

As is to be expected, Mugabe is a strong proponent of rogue states like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba and others. Now he wants to bring 10,000 Cuban teachers to Zimbabwe, a nation that still needs to master basic English.

Quintana: "As long as the fundamentals of his power apparatus remains in place, he can continue for a very long time. Also, no matter how unpopular things become, he will use coercion and violence to stay on top. Remember, only the party — Mugabe's ZANU-PF — and nobody else, has the guns."

Add to this little imbroglio, Quintana reckoned, the reality that he keeps his security apparatus well-heeled. The military are better paid than the rest, which means that Mugabe maintains has the where he needs it. It was lost on nobody that the army got a pay raise last December.

"It's the African way," he reckoned.

Meanwhile one of the beautiful countries of Africa is dying.

Al J. Venter is SOF's Contributing Editor for Africa. ✕

Practical Competition

Continued from page 65

day. I fussed out and made multiple mistakes that up to that point in time, I had not made. It was an indoor stage in that it represented the interior of a building, but in reality it was an uncovered, open-shoot house scenario that with the bright Mississippi sun became an oven in terms of heat and lack of ventilation — a perfect breeding ground for mental mistakes by tired old men.

In any event, the scene surrounding the controversy quickly deteriorated into a “he said, she said” circumstance with the range officers on one side and the board member on the other. Right or wrong, the powers that be backed up the board member with a decision that ended the matter and the end of the match hangover was a taint of lingering bitterness among many who had literally busted their butts to make the match succeed and run smoothly. The bad part of the whole affair was the way it was handled and the fact that some of the leaders of this organization were competing against the troops they were supposed to be leading in a new direction.

Next year, it would be better for everyone if a new rule was invoked that allowed board members to shoot the match if they wanted, but their score would not be counted for match results or placing. Officers lead and troops follow for reasons pertaining more to high moral authority and good leadership than just simple authority. Leaders must always be held to a higher standard than the troops below, the leadership of our country for the past eight years being a case in point. It may not be fair, but it is the price of leadership.

There is little question that IDPA is an organization whose main theme has struck a cord among a core group of defensive pistol shooters. The surprising thing for many is that core group is larger than anyone believed. Its popularity is continuing to demonstrate there is a need for this sport and the benefit for all is a more reality-oriented sport even with all the warts and blemishes that accompany any human endeavor.

Next year's IDPA Nationals will again be held at John Shaw's range in the latter portion of the month of September 2001. For further information, contact:

IDPA, Dept SOF, P.O. Box 639, Berryville, AR 72616; email: info@idpa.com; website: www.idpa.com; phone: 870-545-3886; fax: 870-545-3894. ☒

Battle Blades

Continued from page 20

or Abrams tank. The sheath is well-made and thought-out, and like the better Kydex carry rigs we have examined, this one is also equipped with a drain hole for water on the reverse side near the tip. The only negative about the sheath is the same criticism that has been voiced about every other Kydex rig that we have seen. Kydex is noisy, and this one is no exception. You simply cannot withdraw the knife from the sheath without making a raspy, rattling noise that can easily be heard from 20 feet if you have average hearing. A tactical tool or weapon, edged or otherwise, should be capable of silent deployment. Perhaps at some point the problem of noise that is associated with Kydex sheaths in general can be solved.

As far as cutting performance is concerned, the BK5 does and it doesn't. What it does do extremely well is slice and dice. It will whittle and carve, and it will hold an edge extremely well and is easy to sharpen. On the other hand, the BK5 does not hack and chop with a great deal of authority. This is not the knife of choice to use to build a shelter. If you intend to cut limbs with the Magnum Camp Knife, they need to be small ones. The BK5 simply doesn't have enough swing-weight and length or the appropriate blade geometry to make heavy chopping cuts.

It is my belief that the BK5 meets its design criteria. It is not a true fighting knife or a focused battle blade. My conversations with designer Jerry Fisk and with Ethan Becker concerning the BK5 revealed that they were interested in bringing to market a high-quality broad-spectrum application knife to be used primarily in a campsite environment. Chores such as food preparation and skinning large game and cleaning fish were of primary concern. In that vein, this knife is an absolute whiz at cleaning large catfish and cutting them into steaks. We don't have salmon in this part of the country, but the knife would be an ideal accessory for those who fish in the Northwest. It would also be the ideal tool for breaking down an elk carcass.

The BK5 is a knife that was designed to function best in a camp environment after camp is set up. It was not designed to be the tool to use to clear the campsite or to cut the firewood. It is tough, well-made and functional. Used for its intended purpose, it will give years of outstanding service. ☒

FBI Crime Lab

Continued from page 35

the press. A firestorm of stories in the media erupted. Lawyers for Terry Nichols followed suit in demanding prosecutors turn over any evidence concerning problems at the lab that might prove important in the bombing trials which took place in Denver, Colorado.

Judge Matsch ordered a report by the Office of Inspector General to be made available to both defense teams. The IG report confirmed much of Dr. Whitehurst's allegations. The report assailed FBI Crime Lab employees for consistently failing to follow procedures set by peer-review panels who establish protocols for crime labs nationwide. *Investigators found that a pattern of abuses was institutionalized in the department.*

Hoover's demands for image for his FBI over all else, reigned supreme. Protection of that image appears to have masked other facts when the books were closed on the 5 May Hoover Building explosions and fires.

The FBI's final report concerning the explosions and fire at the Hoover Building concluded that the most likely cause of destruction was a soldering iron that may have been left on. The BATF made a different conclusion — that cleaning chemicals stored in a closet with a mop had possibly burst into flames. There had been no arson.

The FBI did make an effort to study the locks at the EU office, to preclude tampering by an outsider. Nothing was found. The investigation failed to turn-up any authorized or unauthorized personnel inside the EU when the incident occurred.

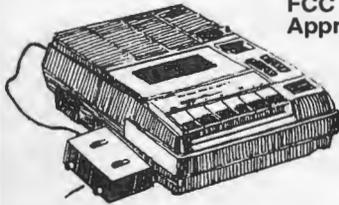
What about the explosives left laying about the floor of the unit? The report recommended smaller quantities be kept on-hand. The rest, the report stated, belonged in a bunker, somewhere else. No disciplinary action was recommended.

The report also noted that the world's foremost crime lab that handles explosives did not have smoke alarms nor did it have a fire-suppression system. (e.g. a sprinkler system.)

J.D. Cash, a longtime investigative journalist from Oklahoma, has broken several major stories on the OKC Bombing. Roger Charles, a U.S. Naval Academy grad and former consultant on ABC's 20/20, is, likewise, an authority on the tragedy and a frequent contributor to SOF. ☒

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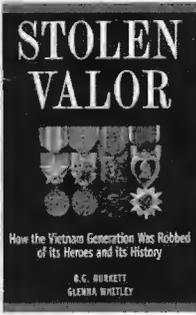


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ADVERTISERS INDEX

Automatic Knife

Resource Guide67

Barrett Firearms

Manufacturing Co.6

Brigade Quartermasters

.....16

Burris OpticsCover 2

Bushrag.com20

Camelbak13

Chase-DurerCover 4

Detective Training Institute .75

Direct Action Video10-11

Eden Press76

Excalibur Electro

Optics Inc.23

Global School

of Investigation77

Glock15

Greene Military75

Harrison K-977

Inter-American

Security Products75

JRH20

Jungle Toy77

L.A. Law Enforcers77

Matthews Police Supply ..77

Maxsell7

Midway USA25

Milspec Group17

Mitchell's Mausers17

NABEA75

NIC Law

Enforcement Supply ...75

Northwest Territorial

MintCover 3

Paladin Press5

7.62 Design75

S&K Labs75, 76

Safety Technology76

Silver Creek Industries ...76

Silverman's76

SOF Logo Items .27, 29, 69, 76

SOF Subscriptions18

SOF Three-Gun Match21

Southern Ordnance69

Sovietski Collection9

Spec Ops Brand8

Steiner9

Steve Arnold's

Gunroom67

Thunder Ranch69

T.J. Collectibles25

USI Corp.75

Verity Press77

Wiggy's20

PRODUCT INDEX

Advanced Technology, Inc. ...26

Adventure Medical Kits68

Bantam Books53

Brigade Quartermasters71

C&R Ammo39

El Paso Saddlery69

J&G Sales, Ltd.39

Mitchell's Mausers71

Sellier & Bellot USA39

Uncle Mike's71

Valtro USA54

Victor Leather69

Wilson Combat69

Here We Go Again

Playing cat-and-mouse off the coast of China is bad news. These high-risk missions aren't about gaining intelligence; they're about twisting a tiger's tail — and it's doubtful if anything of military value will come from our high-profile snooping. But for sure the missions will ratchet-up our new Cold War, not to mention the profits of the weapon peddlers.

At least this time around our Air Force RC-135 recon planes won't be 50 years old like our now-stripped-and-searched Navy surveillance bird. And for Round Two, our aircraft will be protected by F-15 fighters — backed up by even more sharp teeth.

Expect the Chinese to react. They said stay away, and if history is any indicator, they mean what they say.

On 1 October 1950, during the early months of the Korean War, Mao Tse-tung said, "The Chinese people will not tolerate foreign aggression and will not stand aside if the imperialists [read USA] wantonly invade the territory of their neighbor."

Mao also said that if our forces continued to roar up the North Korean Peninsula while chewing up what was left of Kim Il Sung's mob, he'd have a "severe shock" for Douglas MacArthur's Army.

An arrogant MacArthur and an out-of-touch Washington wrote off Mao's warnings, concluding, "The Chinese would not dare to intervene." Except that's exactly what they dared to do when hundreds of thousands of tennis-shoe-clad soldiers padded across the Yalu River in 20-degrees-below weather and kicked our frozen superpower butt.

The assessment of General Walton Walker, MacArthur's Army commander when China entered the fray, says it all: "We should not assume the Chinese are committed in force; after all, a lot of Mexicans live in Texas." The primitive Red Army clobbered our modern forces in spite of seas full of our ships, skies full of our aircraft, our mass artillery and more than 1,000 tanks. The score in January 1951, six weeks after they put muscle to their threat: Chinese 100, Yanks 0.

We were whipped because our top leaders didn't understand the enemy; much of our military team was poorly trained; and our soldiers were badly prepared and disciplined.

Today, we're in the same boat, only chances are it'll sink faster than it did in 1950 without the combat-savvy vets of World War II who saved us yet again.



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.

Perhaps there's little we can do to make our Washington leaders learn from the past [except] break out Sun Tzu and figure out where the folks from Beijing are coming from. But we can demand of Congress that all of our uniformed sons and daughters be as well-trained as Shane Osborn and crew.

Every crew member of his downed recon plane said their training was what got them through — from crash to grilling to yellow-ribbon extravaganza. They were so rigorously ready for their dangerous mission that they could run through every drill blindfolded. Most of our other elite troops today, such as Rangers, SEALs, Marine Recon and Special Forces, achieve that same razor's edge.

But, sadly, the training of our regular forces has been allowed to shrivel and marshallow since Desert Storm.

Defense dollars are going to wonder gear rather than sharpening the combat edge, while a Gen-X-and-Y-oriented military mindset — motivated by preventing the newbies from quitting — hasn't helped.

Self-improvement, self-indulgence and sensitivity have become the standard rather than kill-the-enemy-and-stay-alive drills.

Other reasons for deterioration are an officer corps that's been conditioned to fear that their careers could go down the chute if a Jane or Joe gets hurt during hard training; and too many peacekeeping missions in places such as Kuwait, Bosnia and Kosovo — where our warriors direct traffic in the mud and drill holes in the sky instead of preparing for war; not to mention the near-disappearance of the vital warrior ethic.

As a result, our soldiers and sailors are far from combat-ready in terms of toughness, battlefield skills, discipline and fire in their bellies — exactly the same deficiencies we suffered in 1950 when we went to war with Mao's China.

Read T. R. Fehrenbach's *This Kind of War* to see the horrible price paid by young men back then. Will we ever learn?

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

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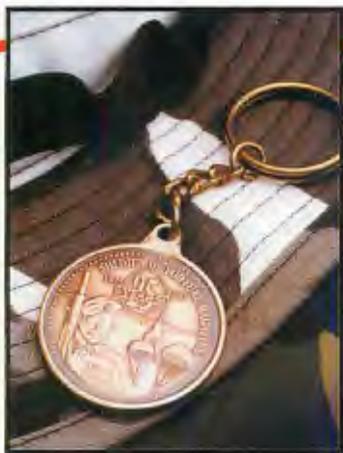
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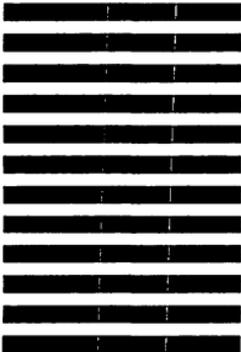
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