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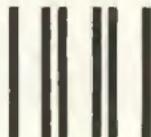
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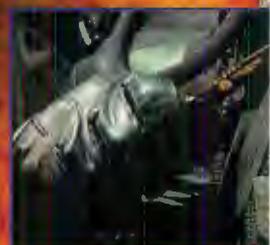
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George W. Bush, SPEAKING TO THE NATION

On Sept '11, a new war was declared on America by an army of psychotic, fanatical murderers. Today we again confront an evil not seen since Adolf Hitler. And fighting this new evil is a new class of heroes -- members of our Military, our brave law enforcement officers, our firemen, our EMS groups and more.

As we continue this war, our heroes will have available a new class of supergloves. We are proud to be equipping the hands of freedom, protecting the hands of justice, and enabling the fingers on the

triggers of the weapons that will send those bastards to hell! Beneath the rubble in New York lay our brothers, our sisters, our friends - the first victims on the tripwire of liberty. For those who did this, mistake not our patience for the silent rage that lies within. Our mission is just, our resolve absolute, our courage unlimited and our vengeance will be complete.



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Joe Raedle/Getty Images

On the Cover

Soldiers from [the] ... 101st Airborne Division check a destroyed building, Tuesday, 2 April 2002 ... while participating in Operation "Mountain Lion" [a follow-on op to Operation "Anaconda."] See story on page 22



REUTERS/Abed Omar Qusini



courtesy Al J. Venter



Agence France Presse /Krista Ziemanis

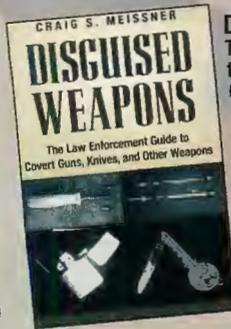
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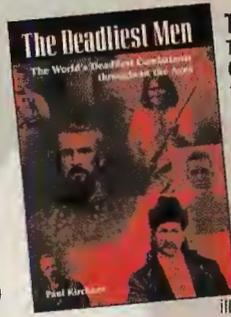
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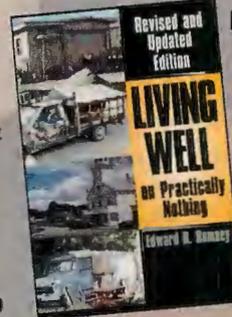
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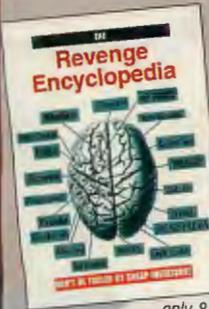
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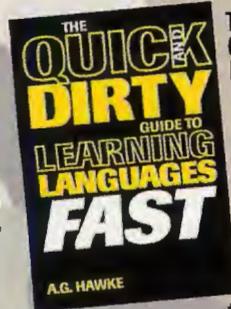
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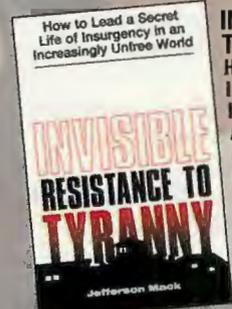
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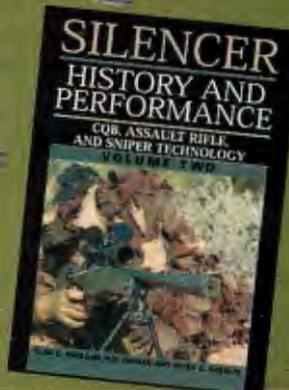
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Command Guidance

BY ROBERT K. BROWN

From An Old Friend

The following was sent to me by an old friend. It's been revised a bit, but I think you'll get the message. — RKB

To ensure we Americans never offend anyone, particularly fanatics intent on killing us, airport screeners are not allowed — by politically correct liberal halfwits — to profile passengers. So, government-approved security personnel continue to conduct strip searches of 80-year-old women, wailing kids with soggy diapers, airline pilots with proper identification, and retired Medal of Honor recipients, while swarthy perpetrators with names like Al Jihad and Kamel Rydour — with one-way tickets paid for in cash — get no special scrutiny.

Let's pause a moment and take the following test:

In 1972, 11 Israeli athletes were murdered at the Munich Olympics by:

- (a) Grandma Moses.
- (b) Exiled pacifists from the Baghdad Peace and Justice Coalition.
- (c) Illegal aliens from Planet X, a rave joint in Chihuahua.
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

In 1979, the U.S. Embassy in Iran was taken over by:

- (a) Norwegians from the Lichen Herbarium of the University of Oslo.
- (b) Elvis, looking svelte after two years beneath the sod.
- (c) A tour bus full of knife-wielding grandmas.
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

In 1983, the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut was blown up by:

- (a) An under-tipped pizza delivery boy (the one with the pepperoni face).
- (b) Crazy feminists complaining

that having to throw a grenade beyond its own burst radius in basic training was an unfair and sexist job requirement.

- (c) Geraldo Rivera.
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

In 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 was bombed by:

- (a) Luca "He sleeps with the fishes" Brazzi, for being scratched from *The Godfather, Part II*.
- (b) The Tooth Fairy.

- (c) Butch and Sundance, back from Bolivia and filled with a pound of lead.
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

In 1993, the World Trade Center was bombed by:

- (a) The entire cast of *Cats*.
- (b) Victor Borge's piano tuner.
- (c) Cheese-intoxicated tourists from Milwaukee.
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

In 1998, the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed by:

- (a) Mr. Rogers.
- (b) Hillary, to deflect attention from Bill's frequent female *faux pas*.
- (c) A screwed-over Hollywood screenwriter (representing legions of colleagues).
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

On 9/11/01, four airlines were hijacked and destroyed by:

- (a) P-P-P-P-Porky P-P-P-P-Pig.
- (b) The late Mrs. Earl Warren.
- (c) The mutt from the third litter of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
- (d) Muslim male extremists mostly between the ages of 17 and 40.

Damned if I know why security should ever even think about profiling. ☒

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (USPS 525-810, ISSN 0145-6784), July 2002, Volume 27, Number 7, is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Inc., 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340. Periodicals Postage is paid at Boulder, CO and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, POB 348, Mt Morris, IL 61054-0348 or call 1-800-877-5207. U.S. and APO-FPO subscription rate for twelve monthly issues \$29.95. Canada add \$10.00/yr. additional postage (includes GST tax registration business number: 12847 6249 RT). All other countries add \$21.00 U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single Issue Price — U.S.: \$4.99; United Kingdom: £2.60; Canada: \$5.99. PRINTED IN THE USA.

CONTRIBUTORS: Manuscripts, photographs or drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to Articles Editor, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340, and cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Any material accepted is subject to such revision as is necessary to meet the editorial requirements of SOF. All manuscripts must be typed double-spaced. All photographs must be credited and be accurately identified. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication. Editorial office phone number is 303-449-3750.

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Are You Making These 3 Life Threatening Mistakes In Fighting?

By Vladimir Smith

(Dateline: Visalia, CA) You can learn a lot in a hospital. For example... there are entire wards filled with "expert" motorcycle riders who forgot to wear their helmet on that one day they dumped their hog on an oil slick. Bounced their skull along twenty yards of asphalt and scrambled their brains.

It's the same with fighters. The most common whine coming from a guy in a hospital bed, jaw wired shut, pins holding bones together, IV dripping... is "I thought I knew how to fight."

Yeah, you "thought". Well, the dirty, nasty secret among REAL streetfighters is... most guys do NOT know how to fight to survive or win. And it's obvious.

Here are the mistakes most guys make that get them hurt (or killed):

1. You train with someone who *doesn't fight regularly*. Or, worse, a black belt who has never actually hit another person to save his own hide. (That's about 99.99% of the black belt "teachers" out there.)
2. You train for years in a style that *doesn't actually work* in the real world. Hospitals are filled with guys who confidently dropped into their fancy stance at the start of the fight... and ended up on the ground a second later getting the crap stomped out of them.
3. You never learn even the **basics of the "fighter's mindset"**... that special vicious way of thinking that actually turns you from a mild-mannered human into a *lethal beast* in the blink of an eye.

All this is a problem for most guys. Where can you go to find a REAL fighter willing to take you under his wing and teach you EVERYTHING about kicking ass? Heck, even Navy SEALs admit they get lousy "official" training in hand-to-hand combat.

But they don't sit around and whine about it. Not the ones who want to live. No. They go out and -- on their own -- find the...

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Paul is the **ONLY** active streetfighter to successfully condense all the deadly "get the fight over NOW" skills of **Bruce Lee** ("Enter The Dragon"). Paul trained for 20 years with the notorious **Dan Iansanto** (Bruce Lee's training partner)... and Paul is acknowledged worldwide as the **ONLY** man qualified to ad-

vance Jeet Kune Do to the "next level". He's the "first choice" instructor of men whose lives depend on being able to win at combat.

Why do SEALs, big-city SWAT cops, and elite "black bag" CIA/FBI operatives flock to Paul for training? The answer is simple:

- A. Paul is constantly testing and refining his skills in **real-time fighting** -- in the street, where there are no rules, and the loser may not wake up. *He's an honest-go-God streetfighter with the chops to demolish anyone, of any size, at any time.* And he's not a big man (standing about 5'9" and under 160 lbs. soaking wet). Nor was he blessed with extraordinary quickness or agility. He's a "normal" guy who learned the simple, flexible secrets that really work in hand-to-hand (and hand-against-weapon) combat. Against any opponent, against any style.
- B. **He is recognized as the BEST teacher on the planet.** After years of experimenting, Paul has perfected a startling "learn it fast" *interactive training technology* that allows him to "install" nasty, super-advanced skills directly into your muscle memory... on video! That means you can train at home, on your own schedule. Cops and soldiers love that... because they don't have time to waste. Neither do you.
- C. Finally... Paul is so sought-after because... he has an iron-clad reputation for turning ordinary people into vicious "fighting machines" *in the shortest time humanly possible*. He will change your world literally...

Overnight!

In all of Paul's teaching, there are NO complicated moves. You can master everything in a matter of *hours*. (In fact, just *watching* Paul on video will dramatically increase your ability to win any fight! You can pick this stuff up that quickly.)

Even better... you do *not* need to train constantly to become a master of Paul's system. Many professional fighters feel confident using this stuff **after ONE lesson**.

And... you do *not* need to be quick, or coordinated, or even in decent physical shape. All the deadly power comes from extensions of the way your body moves naturally.

This is not "normal" martial arts. It is a simplified (yet super-advanced) fighting system that goes beyond anything you could learn

anywhere else. These are, frankly...

The Most Elite And Dangerous Fighting Skills You Will Find Anywhere On The Planet!

Think I'm bragging? Well, don't listen to me, then. Listen to the professionals who trust their friggin' lives with what Paul teaches:

"Finally, the SEALs no longer will be doing reverse punches and flying side kicks while carrying ruc sacks and machine guns. Thanks, Paul!" -- Frank Cucci, former Navy SEAL, current SEAL Team Trainer

"I've got 6 black belts, but Paul is the man who made it all come together for me. It's so simple, it's hard to believe... but I'm here to tell you he teaches the only true art of fighting." -- Paul Iwamoto, top bodyguard to U.S. politicians and Hollywood actors

"Paul's stuff is exactly what I've been searching for all my life -- simple, easy, direct, and totally devastating." -- Bob Jones, editor of Ground Fighter Magazine

"Most effective self-defense system I've ever used. And I mean used." California Narcotics Task Force Commander -- (name withheld due to security regulations)

"Paul's system will turn the martial arts community on its ear." -- Jim Hinely, SWAT cop and hostage negotiator

"This training will give anybody who watches it immediate tools in self-defense that will make you confident. And anyone from the age of 13 to 80 can use them." -- Sgt. Carlos Hernandez, South Florida Police Tactics instructor

It goes on and on. I've got a file cabinet here stuffed with testimonials from cops, soldiers, FBI agents, CIA foreign operatives, "black bag" assassins the government will never admit exist... and a ton of civilians just like you. People who trained with Paul... quickly absorbed his simple and super-easy skills... and then *used* what they learned to blow away real-life opponents who threatened them.

Here's what we've got for you: Paul has been the most respected and best-selling "video" fighting instructor on the planet for nearly two decades. He has developed 3 separate video "packages" of mega-effective fighting skills... each one stuffed with elite, insider info and skills. **Even the super-advanced lethal stuff is simple and easy to "get"...** at least when you have Paul teaching you. These videos are so popular among pro fighters because -- as I said before -- Paul has learned how to teach everything *fast*. (And he teaches you

everything he knows.) You walk away from even a *casual viewing* with new skills that offer you devastating options.

Bought separately, all of Paul's training videos would set you back \$242.50. And, they are hard to find - Paul refuses to "dump" his teachings on the market, and only releases a few videos each year. Professionals know how to get ahold of Paul, but most civilians do not.

We have negotiated a special arrangement with this magazine that will last for exactly one month, no longer. During this short time, you will be able to own the best of Paul's secrets...

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Here's the deal: If you act right now, you can have Paul's entire video library of teaching tapes rushed to your home. You will have an entire 6 months to check this material out... and if you aren't completely blown away with what you see... simply send the tapes back for a complete refund. No questions asked. But...

Keep "Street Safe One" As Your Gift Just For Checking This Deal Out!

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quickly and effectively.

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NA NAVY REPORT NO
1650
Ser N1/255
14 MAY 1991

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To: Mr. Paul Vunak

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Bulletin Board

Correction

The sidebar to the story by Samuel M. Katz, "Hunting Suicide Bombers, Part I," that appeared on page 42 of the June 2002 issue, was based on information published in the *Boston Globe*, which was in error. The sidebar confused the identities of Egyptian Mohammad Atta, suspected mastermind of the 9-11 attacks, with Jordanian Mahmoud Atta, perpetrator of the 1986 bombing of an Israeli bus. The sidebar containing the erroneous information was written by SOF staff, and not the author, and through an administrative error was incorrectly attributed to the author. *Our apologies to Mr. Katz.*



AP/Wide World

Heavily damaged in the al-Qaeda bombing attack of October 2000, the U.S.S. Cole was returned from Yemen to Northrop Grumman's Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss., aboard the Norwegian heavy transport ship Blue Marlin for \$250 million worth of R&R. Originally built at the Pascagoula facility, the Cole was relaunched three days after the 9-11 attacks, and returned to duty 20 April 2002 as she set sail for her home port of Norfolk, Va. Seventeen sailors were killed in the attack, and 40 of the original crew are still aboard. Noted Mark Rozell, an Ingalls test engineer, "You can't destroy a destroyer, she's proof of that."

No Gun Ri = No Damn Story?

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Master Sergeant Kitty Baran, captain of the SOF skydiving team, has been called to active duty with the Resource Protection Team of the Nevada Air National Guard. Kitty, with over 400 jumps, makes custom jump suits. She can be contacted at Kitty.Hawk@att.net .

Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting for a 29 September 1999 story that painted a picture of retreating GIs in the Korean War ordered by their commanders to kill refugees under or near a bridge at No Gun Ri. Korean citizens later filing claims against the governments of the United States and South Korea claim some 300 were killed under the bridge and 100 nearby by an airstrike.

The AP reporters alleged they were told by U.S. veterans that as many as 200 were killed.

One of those reporters, Charles Hanley, now appears less than anxious to see a book published that takes the premise of their story — and the reporters — strongly to task. Major Robert Bateman, former history teacher at West Point and now a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and a former company commander in the subject 7th Cav, has a quite different take on the incident. Bateman's book, *No Gun Ri: A Military History of the Korean War Incident*, to be published by Stackpole Books, was described by Hanley as "simply a vicious attack on us [the AP reporters] personally, with fantasies about our psyches and motivations, about our mysterious evil journalistic methodologies, and about the dark secrets he imagines we're keeping — it belongs on the science fiction shelf." In

a nine-page letter to Stackpole, Hanley told Bateman's publisher it would be "a grave mistake" to publish Bateman's "diatribes and defamations."

"It seems to me to be out of bounds for one author to try to short-circuit the publication of another author's book," observed Chris Finan, President of the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression. "It's extraor-

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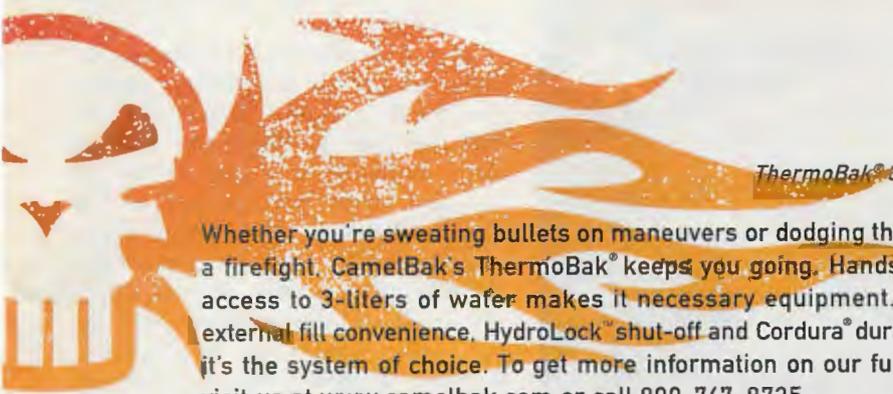
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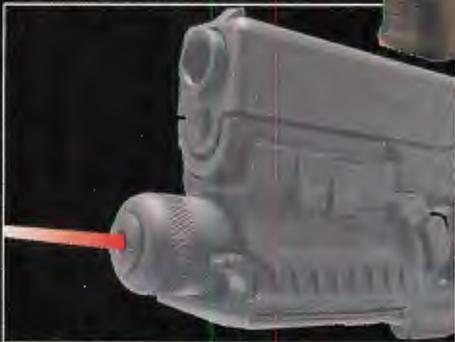


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And to us it smells like Tailwind all over again.

Star of the AP report on No Gun Ri, and subsequently star of a *Washington Post* profile and of a “Dateline” show that flew him to Korea was Edward Daily, author of two books on the 7th Cav, and former president of the 7th Cavalry Veterans Association. Daily told the AP reporters about the alleged killings, said he was there, saw it all and described the cries of the dying babies (a nice touch). Bateman smelled a rat. With help of Jug Burkett (author of *Stolen Valor*), Bateman did the digging the hotshots from AP should have, and found out that Daily had *not* been an officer, had *not* been a POW, and had *not* received the second-highest award for valor. And he had *not* even been near No Gun Ri on the dates of the alleged incident he described in such florid detail. *Heh, heh, heh.* Early this year, Daily pleaded guilty in federal court to defrauding the government out of \$412,839 in veteran’s benefits and medical care. According to U.S. Attorney James Vines, Daily admitted to federal agents that “he had not participated in the alleged massacre at No Gun Ri.”

In an earlier E-Mail exchange, AP’s Hanley had told Bateman it would be a “superhuman hoax” for Daily to have fabricated his military history. Possibly. Or more likely it was a sub-professional level of discernment among the Fourth Estate.

The Army’s official investigation in 2001 concluded that American officers never gave “oral or written orders to shoot and kill Korean civilians,” although there was an unknown number of casualties and deaths at No Gun Ri. Bateman puts the number at between eight and 35.

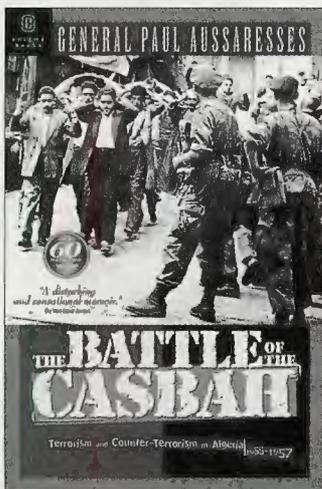
Even 50 years later, it would appear that truth can be the first casualty of war.

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S&W Back On Track

Smith and Wesson, for 150 years one of the leading arms makers in the United States and once again American-owned (by Smith & Wesson Holding Company, formerly Saf-T-Hammer Corporation), has reported dramatically increased (more than double last year) sales at the Sports, Inc. show, in Phoenix, and the Nation’s Best Sport Show, in Ft.

Worth, plus strongly improved dealer acceptance at the SHOT Show, in Las Vegas. Under foreign ownership, S&W management cut some wrong deals with the Clinton Administration that virtually isolated them from the American retail market place, cutting profitability so severely the foreign owners decided to sell out.

And Speaking Of Boycotts

On the announcement of Kmart's bankruptcy, United Press International (UPI) ran a story suggesting that a boycott of the store chain by "Pro-Second Amendment activists — because of the vocal anti-gun activity of Kmart spokesman [sic] Rosie O'Donnell" had an impact on Kmart's going into bankruptcy, noting that "outraged firearms owners have been encouraging people to shop at WalMart instead."

UPI did not take note of the fact that the shooting public was further turned off when Kmart pulled handguns and ammo off their shelves, leading gun owners and hunters to shop elsewhere.



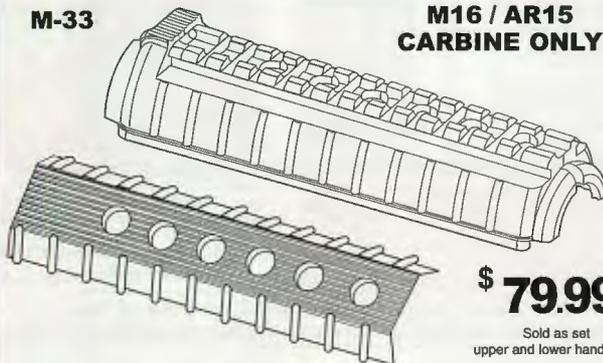
ble, the PC censors at Paramount have changed the villains in the upcoming film *The Sum of All Fears* from terrorists who bore a striking resemblance to *al-Qaeda*, to neo-Nazis. In the original Tom Clancy novel, Mid-Eastern-style terrorists get their hands on a small nuke and set it off at the Super Bowl, killing tens of thousands of Americans in the furtherance of their agenda.

Even Fiction Gets Spin-Doctored

Evidently wanting to offend the smallest group possi-

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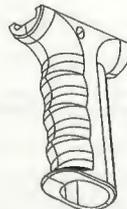
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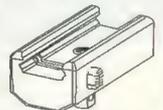
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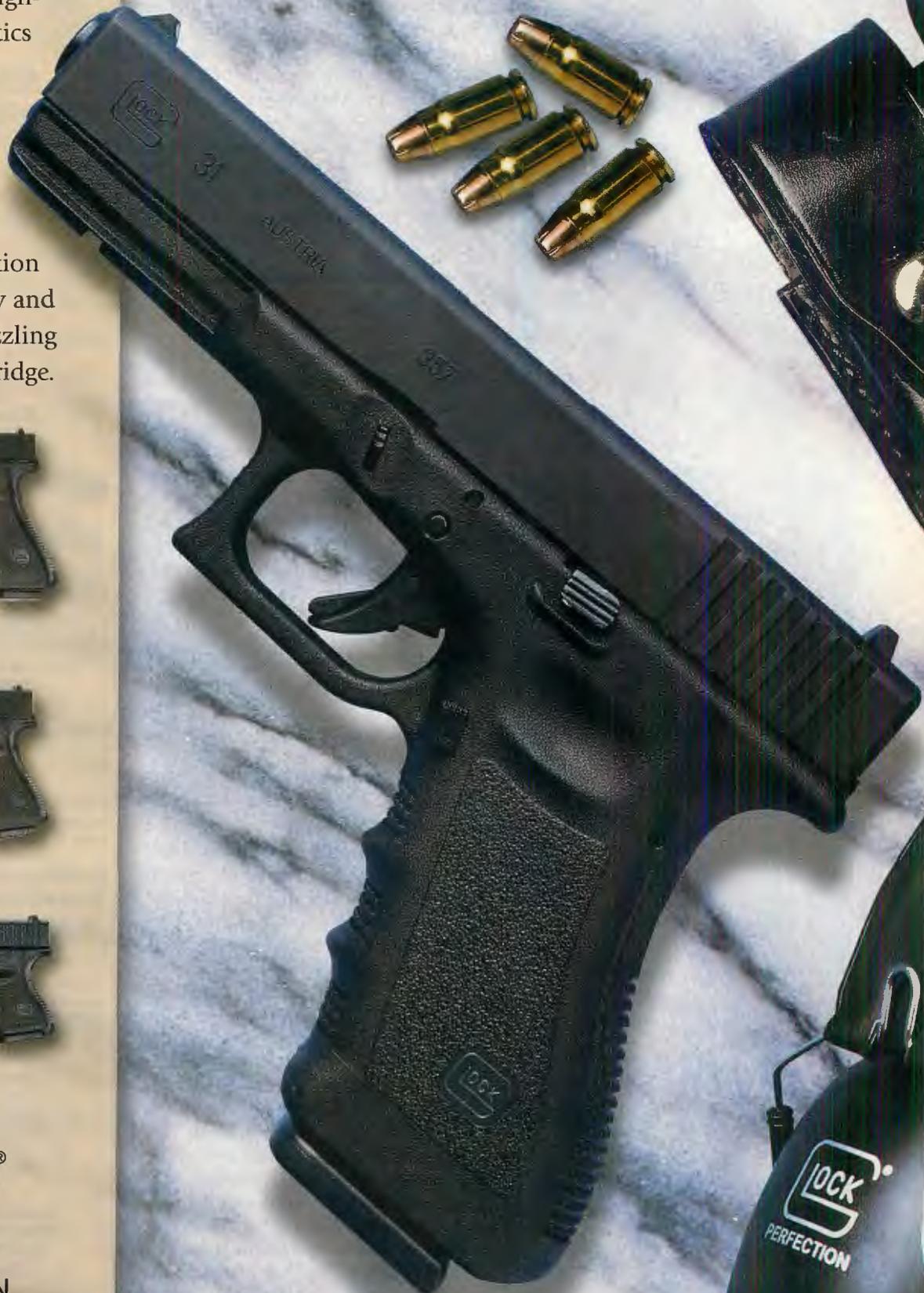
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Senate Armed Services Committee suggested the American military might want to look for a more hospitable host in the Middle East, i.e. one with a more pro-active stance against terrorism, any thoughts of leaving Saudi Arabia were quickly denied by the Bush Administration. However, an unidentified senior Saudi official told the *Washington Post* that the United States has "overstayed its welcome" and may be asked to drag up, once the military ops in Afghanistan are complete. Two current options are a move to NATO partner Turkey, or to Kuwait, both countries with a substantial U.S. military presence already. The smart money thus far is on Turkey.

Help The RATS

Last September, a joint SOF and Global Adventures project collected some \$4,000 worth of donated equipment and delivered it to the anti-poaching Rapid Action Team (RATS) in Zambia's South Luangwa Valley (see "Bulletin Board," May '01). This was a tremendous morale booster for the RATS and they would like to thank the following individuals, organizations and manufacturers for their support:

- Billy Cole, Goldsmith, Texas
- Mike D., Lakewood, Calif.
- Global Adventures, Highlands Ranch, Colo.
- West Texas Chapter, Safari Club International
- Best Made Designs, Monahans, Texas
- LRI, Blachley, Ore.

The RATS still have urgent need of: 100-ounce Camelback reservoirs/bladders, sleeping bags suitable down to 30 degrees F, ponchos, GPS units, 2-3 man tents, and large backpacks.

Before organizing any donations for the RATS, contact their U.S. support coordinator for the most current requirements: Mike McPike, 8762 S. Mourning Dove Lane, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126; phone/fax: 303-791-9959; or via E-Mail at: mikem@globaladventures.com. Non-tax-deductible contributions are accepted, with all funds going directly to support RATS (checks may be made payable to "South Luangwa Anti-Poaching Fund" and sent to the above address). ☒

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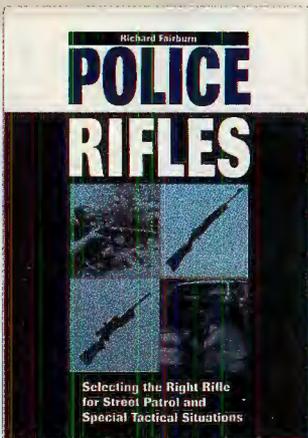
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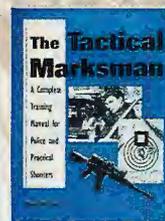
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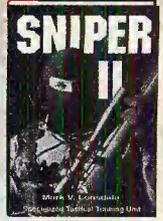
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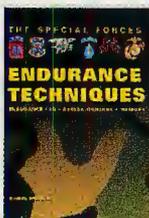
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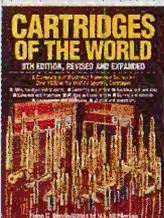
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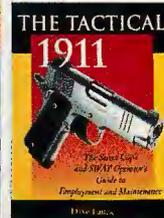
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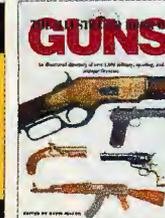
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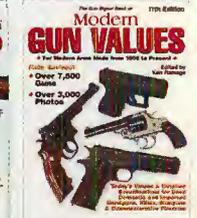
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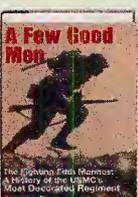
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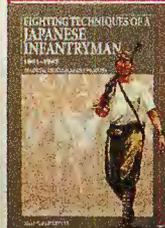
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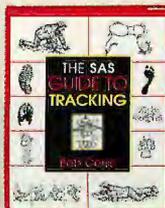
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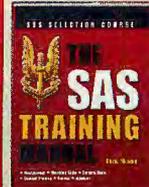
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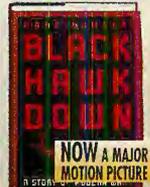
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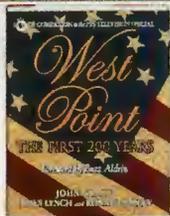
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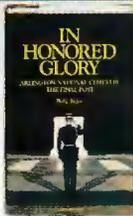
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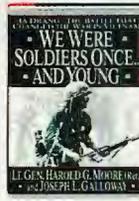
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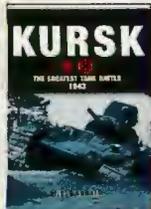
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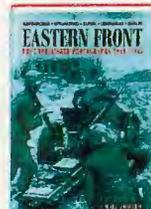
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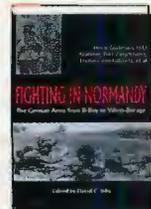
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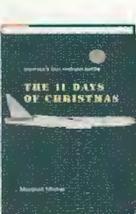
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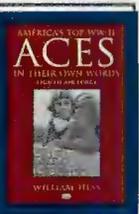
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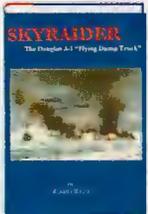
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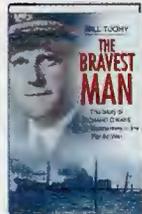
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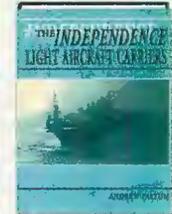
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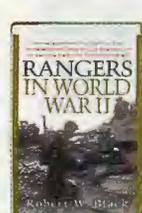
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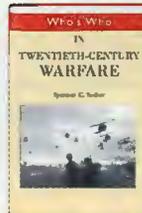
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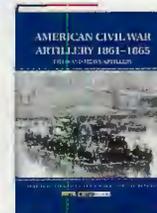
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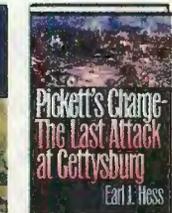
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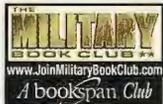
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American Sniper In Israel

BY DAVID STONE

Jerusalem Diary

1 March 2002: We awoke to the news that the IDF had surrounded and entered two West Bank refugee camp terrorist havens. We've introduced a new strategy — "You can't run and you can't hide." The IDF is going house-to-house in the camps to capture "Wanted," weapons and destroy munitions factories.

Our Unit's call-out continued amid dozens of "Hot" warnings. Yael and I had set up our sniper position in the northern half of the city as automatic small-weapons fire on Jerusalem's southernmost neighborhood, Gilo, continued for the 16th straight hour. I'd been close to motionless for several hours, slowly moving only my head while alternating between using my eyes and my *Shepherd* 12x50 Binoculars under the sniper veil that covered my Boonie hat. Suddenly, down below there materialized a female in her early 20s with a medium-size black duffel-bag over her shoulder. I paid little attention as she walked around aimlessly, but when she entered the no-man's land between our position and the neighboring Arab village a warning bell sounded. I called to Yael, who checked out our "visitor" and agreed with my analysis — potential suicide bomber. Immediately Yael called in our *MaGav* (Border Police) response team.

As the woman returned from the direction of the village, three *MaGav* with M16s shouldered, rounds chambered and safeties-off, triangulated her from a safe distance. We covered them. Their officer shouted orders to the woman, who from her demeanor, clearly understood that she was a twitch away from death. "Put your bag down and back away with your hands high in the air. If they go down, you die." The woman understood Hebrew, no need for Arabic or English. As ordered, she removed her coat and bared her midriff. Next her bag was checked. It contained only camera equipment. She was allowed to remove her I.D. from her pants pocket. It was Israeli.



REUTERS/Nuataie Blaming

An Israeli soldier looks through the scope of a rifle as he watches from the rooftop of a Palestinian home in the northern West Bank village of Baka Sharqia.

She explained she was a reporter for the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aratz* and was looking for "the Fence" the City had erected. Neither those of us above nor those below had seen "the Fence." It was suggested to the reporter that she go home, put on dry pants and write about her near-death experience — and in the future not go wandering around "on the border in the dark where stupidity is often fatal." Our shift ended uneventfully.

2 March: Attack on Gilo subsided. Gunfire, mortars from nearby PA-controlled Beit Jala had wounded seven, damaged 57 apartments and seven vehicles.

19:15: Major terror attack has occurred. Suicide bomber dressed as orthodox Jew blew himself up in an ultra-religious neighborhood. For the next few hours we watched live coverage of the attack; 10 dead, 57 wounded.

3 March: Seven IDF reservists and three civilians are shot dead,

with single shots aimed to avoid ceramic body armor. IDF said a lone sniper with a WWII .30 caliber M1 (Israeli press says "Carbine") carried out the attack. Our soldiers were picked-off one by one, as were civilians arriving in their cars. Brief TV footage showed a partial glimpse of "the rifle" which did not look like a Carbine. A fired 7.62x51 or .30/06 case was also shown. Sources confirmed that our soldiers' 7.62 caliber MAG had not fired. The sniper's rifle was later (unofficial) said to be an M1Garand, which makes some sense. Since then rumors abound that the weapon was actually a semi-auto M14 sniper rifle which Israeli gave the PA as part of the arms provided in accordance with the Oslo Accord. The IDF Spokesman vehemently denies any long guns other than AK-47s were given to the PA.

The deadly fire continued for 25 minutes and more than 25 shots were fired. The shooter's position couldn't be located because of "an echo." The *Tanzim* claim they used three shooters, all of whom got away unscathed.

5 March, 02:15: shooting attack in Tel Aviv; three dead, dozens wounded. Having run out of ammunition for his M16, the terrorist was killing people with a "Commando" knife. He was shot by a "shoe salesman" who was licensed to carry.

08:30: Reports of three earlier attacks are interrupted by the report of a suicide bombing at the central bus station in Afula; one dead, 11 wounded.

10:20: Two Israeli Arabs believed to be gathering Intel failed to halt at the Route 443 security checkpoint. Their attempted escape was stopped when they were wounded by fire from the soldiers manning the position.

10:40: TV was broadcasting live from the sight of the Tunnel (bypass) road shooting. Suddenly a terrorist opened fire. Two soldiers took cover behind the front half of their Command Car. One did nothing. The other, a graduate of the IDF's sniper school marksman course with a Trijicon scoped "Short M16," raised his weapon over his head and the hood of the vehicle with one hand and sprayed *unaimed* fire. This is how a trained marksman reacts under fire? Lord, it is even worse than I imagined.

17:30: Two Kassam-2 rockets hit the town of Sderot. An infant was wounded.

19:00: We killed three senior Tanzim and Force 17 terrorists from the Ramallah area. Their car ran into a missile from an IAF Apache helicopter.

21:45: Shots were fired at an Israeli vehicle on the Jerusalem — Dead Sea road passing the Arab village bordering French Hill.

7 March: Adopting a Red Army WWII practice, the IDF limits exposing soldiers to terrorist fire in the narrow, confined and winding alleys of the camps. The soldiers go

house-to-house and apartment-to-apartment through holes punched in the walls.

And this afternoon a waiter at a fashionable Jerusalem cafe, a veteran of an elite combat unit, prevented a suicide bombing. He pulled the "triggering wire" from the explosive charge as the bomber was trying to set-off the bomb he carried.

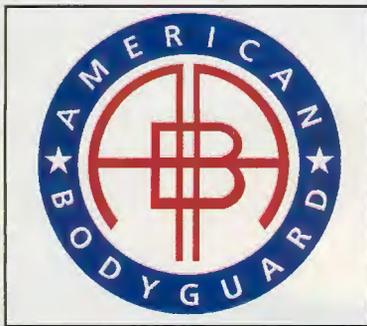
8 March: The *MaGavnic*s with whom our Unit has been working — we're their eyes and provide covering fire — caught an explosives-wearing suicide bomber one street over. Agence France Presse reported they killed him in cold blood. More biased bullshit. The terrorist was wanted alive for questioning — critical, given the extraordinary number of hot warnings of attacks planned for Jerusalem. Before the explosives around his belly could be removed the terrorist tried to detonate himself among our fellow officers. They shot him dead.

9 March, 20:30: Two terrorists fired AKs and hurled grenades into a group of Israelis standing in a hotel lobby, until MaGav caught up and killed them; three dead, 50 wounded.

22:30: DAMN!!! Another attack in Jerusalem. Terrorist walked into fashionable café and blew-up. The cost: 12 dead, 50 hospitalized.

10 March: Two terror attacks prevented in Jerusalem. Good "Intel" allowed for car bomb being driven from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to be interdicted en route with an anti-tank missile. A terrorist tried entering Jerusalem, carrying large bag with an AK-47, several mags of ammo, grenades and a flack jacket. Our alert MaGav friends shot him dead when he refused to heed their calls and warning shots.

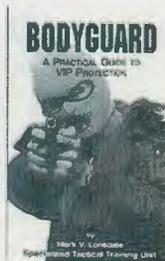
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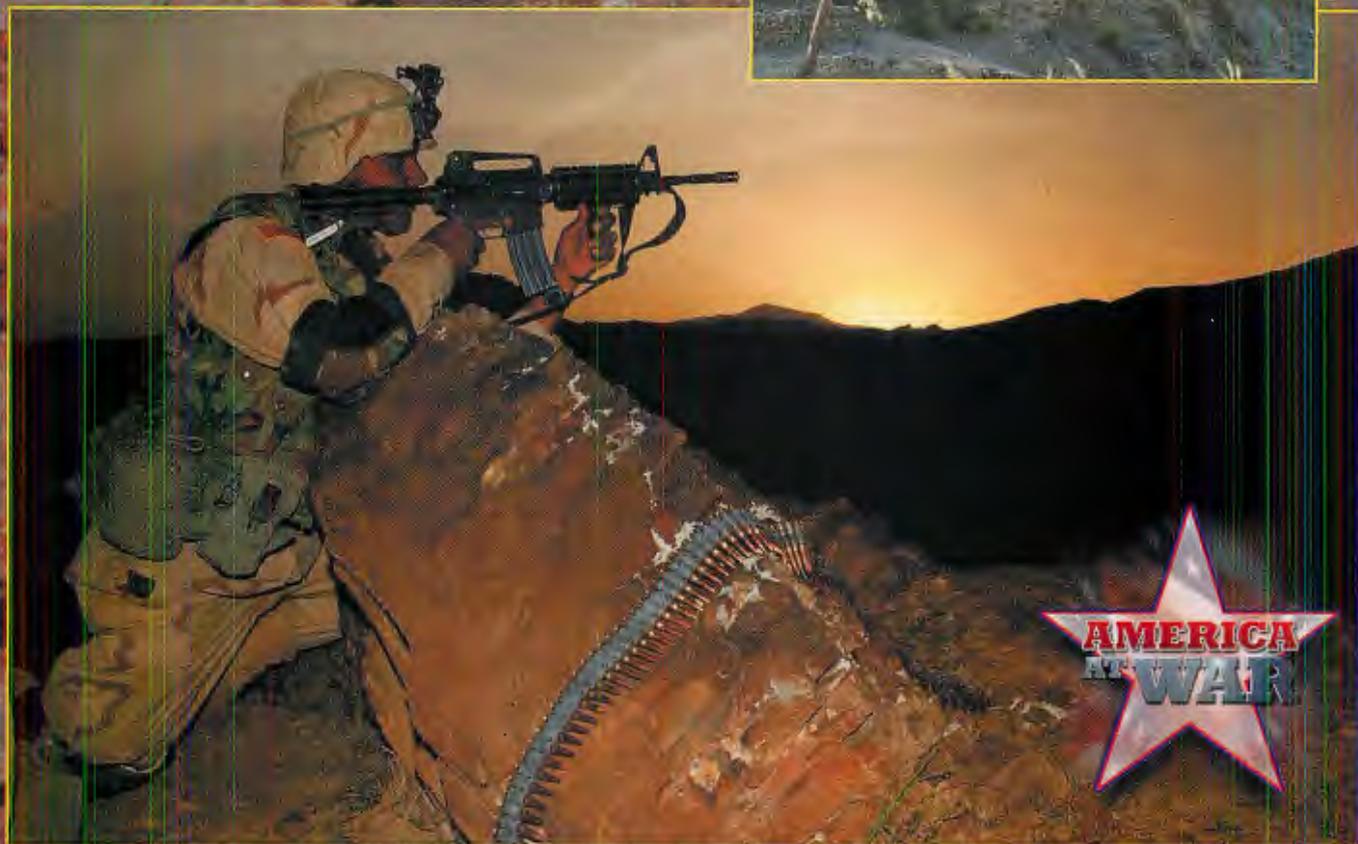
OPERATION ANANGOONDA

Success Or Failure In The Shah-i-Kot?

BY CINCINNATUS



Photo: AP Photo/Klum Beitz



AUTHOR'S NOTE: We know it's easy to criticize — and SOF certainly doesn't want to appear to be a Monday-morning quarterback. However, information from U.S. forces at Kandahar and Bagram Air Fields tells us that Operation Anaconda mission planners violated just about every rule of the tactics manuals: underestimating the enemy's strength and capabilities, over-reliance on air power for support, transport, and resupply in a high-mountain environment, lack of adequate preparatory and supporting fires, separation of forces, lack of mutual support between units ... well, the list is extensive. As you'll see in this article the entire operation seemed in danger of failure from the moment the troops loaded the helicopters. It was only the determination and professionalism of the troops on the ground and the leadership at the lower echelons that salvaged something from a flawed plan. It is disturbing to SOF that the mission planners had to re-learn fundamental tactical lessons. Company-grade and junior field-grade officers (the guys who bite the bullet down in the platoons, companies, and battalions when the colonels and generals screw-up) would have good reason to be very critical of some of their commanders and especially the mission planners at Division- and Brigade-level. Unfortunately, eight U.S. servicemen died and more than 40 were wounded executing a plan that initially just didn't work. The author, long-known by SOF, has assumed a nom de guerre to protect his sources.

The mission of OP ANACONDA was to destroy the last identified concentration of al-Qaeda and Taliban troops in Eastern Afghanistan. Intelligence indicated that "several hundred" enemy had gathered around the town of Sherkankel in the Shah-i-Kot Valley, an extremely mountainous region (Hindu Kush mountain range) immediately west of the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. The operational area contained the town of Sherkankel in the valley, with a 10,000-foot feature dubbed the Whale's Back on the west side of the valley, and the 10,000-to-12,000-foot Shah-i-Kot mountain range on the East side. Intelligence based on overhead imagery and strategic reconnaissance (Special Operations Forces) indicated that the enemy were located in the valley in and around the town of Sherkankel.

Based on this intelligence, an operations plan was issued

◀ Paratrooper from the 101st Airborne Division keeps guard as the sun sets in the Zhawar Kili mountain complex, Paktia Province, eastern Afghanistan. (inset) A cave is exploded by engineers from 101st Airborne Division during "Operation Mountain Lion."

ordering two U.S. battalions (2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division) to conduct an air assault to occupy blocking positions in the Shah-i-Kot mountain passes and seal-off the enemy's escape routes east from the valley towards Pakistan. Once the blocking positions were established, an Afghan force advised and supported by special operations forces would sweep south down the valley into Sherkankel, and drive the enemy east towards the U.S. battalions holding the high ground: a classic hammer-anvil plan of attack. Unfortunately, it fell apart almost immediately.

The U.S. intelligence estimates of the enemy's strength, capabilities and locations in the Shah-i-Kot Valley were inaccurate. Perceived rag-tag remnants numbering in the several hundreds were actually about 1,000 determined and well-equipped al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters — many of them "foreigners" (Chechens, Uzbeks, Arabs, Pakistanis) with nothing to lose. Furthermore, the main enemy positions weren't in the valley town of Sherkankel — they were dug into caves and rock bunkers (*sangars*) along the ridgelines of the Whale's Back and the Shah-i-Kot mountain range, both of which overlooked the valley from the high ground in a classic horse-shoe defense — exactly where any novice tactician would have surmised the enemy would be located (especially based on the historical precedence of basic Afghan tactics).

Looked Good On Paper

The blocking battalions had to land on the forward slopes of the Shah-i-Kot mountain range because there were no better helicopter Landing Zones (LZs). This exposed the helicopters and their cargo of infantrymen to direct observation and fire from the Whale's Back, the town of Sherkankel, and the top of the Shah-i-Kot range itself. The planners of this mission expected the troops to move uphill into their blocking positions while in full view of the enemy. Only two LZs were used — one at the north end of the Shah-i-Kot range for the 2nd Bn, 3rd Bde, 101st Airborne and the other at the south end for the 1st Bn, 2nd Bde, 10th Mountain. The two LZs were separated by about 8 kilometers of steep, rocky, mountain ridgeline. If either battalion ran into trouble on their LZ there would be little, if any, chance of link-up or mutual support. Who came up with this brilliant scheme of maneuver?

To avoid collateral damage and maintain the element of surprise, there would be no prior bombardment of the (incorrectly) identified enemy positions. Instead, the air assault would go in "cold." Not a good idea. When did they



Paratroopers from U.S. 101st Airborne Division check a cave in the Zhawar Kili mountain complex, Paktia province, Eastern Afghanistan, while participating in "Operation Mountain Lion."



start teaching this at Fort Benning or Command and General Staff College? Nor would units deploy their battalion mortars for indirect fire support. "No problem," said the head-shed, "we've got eight Apache attack helicopters and Close-Air Support (CAS) for fire support." The operations order called for complete dependence on air assets for all fire support. The helicopters, at the limit of their operational ceiling, were flying in mountains with the possibility of imminent bad weather.

These fundamental planning and tactical errors alone paint a different picture of Operation Anaconda than the Pentagon briefers and General Tommy Franks have given the public.

On Day 1 of the operation, helicopters approached the LZs in the late afternoon. *There were no preparatory fires or*



Photos by Sgt. Gerry Photo, JOPH, Combat Camera

Captain Frank Sbarra (above) leads a platoon out to start taking over the defense of the camp perimeter from Charlie Company of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division; by noon, all the bunkers and the Command Post will be under Canadian control. Capt. Sbarra is second in command of Bravo Company of the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3PPCLI) Battle Group, which is deployed in Afghanistan on Operation APOLLO, Canada's military contribution to the international campaign against terrorism. (right) Sgt. Cory Fisher, an infantryman with the 3rd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3PPCLI) Battle Group in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

airstrikes on the LZs. Upon landing on the two LZs on the exposed slope of the Shah-i-Kot ridge, they came under immediate and intense enemy fire from prepared defensive positions sited above and all around them. Incoming fire consisted of everything from small arms to mortars and heavy machine guns, firing with interlocking arcs from both the top of the Shah-i-Kot and across the valley from the Whale's Back. The Apache attack helicopters attempted to suppress the numerous enemy positions and four of the eight were immediately damaged by RPG and machine-gun fire. The damaged aircraft flew back to the Forward Operating Base (FOB) at Bagram Airfield (north of Kabul) an hour away. So much for direct-fire support from aviation in Afghanistan. This is something the Soviets learned the hard way and Major General Frank Hagenbeck should have learned the easy way — by studying the Soviet lessons learned. Didn't anyone read about the Air Cav in Vietnam?

Both battalions managed to land on their respective LZs, in the low ground, thus exposed to direct- and indirect-fire

from the surrounding enemy positions on the high ground. The 2nd Bn, 3rd Bde, 101st Airborne secured their initial objective at the north end of the Shah-i-Kot ridgeline, but continued to take enemy fire from the Whale's Back across the valley, pinning them down. They couldn't move south down the ridgeline to their assigned blocking positions. The 1st Bn, 2nd Bde, 10th Mountain on the southern LZ had a tougher time. One of their Chinook helicopters was hit and crash-landed near the 2nd Bn, 3rd Bde, 101st Airborne's LZ. Pinned down in their LZ by enemy fire, the battalion from the 10th Mountain declared its LZ "untenable" and requested extraction. They occupied the LZ in a defensive perimeter under heavy enemy fire throughout the night and were extracted the next morning back to the FOB.

Day 1 was a failure, plain and simple. Neither battalion had occupied its blocking positions. The anvil was not in position. The enemy escape routes east through the Shah-i-Kot range to Pakistan were wide open. In addition to the four damaged Apaches and a crashed Chinook, a second Chinook was shot down at the southern LZ; eight Americans were killed in action and another 40 or so wounded. The weather turned bad, negatively impacting air support for the next 24 hours. As one infantry officer involved in the operation sarcastically remarked, "Bad weather in the mountains? Who would have expected that?" The Allied Afghan movement-to-contact, south down the valley into Sherkankel, went awry when they took heavy small-arms fire from the village, suffered about 30 casualties, and immediately retreated. For approximately the next 48 hours, Operation Anaconda ceased, as Brigade and



Divisional commanders and operations officers attempted to salvage what appeared to be a complete disaster.

Grunts Save The Op, But Planners Lose The Enemy

When the weather cleared the mission planners reverted to their default solution: Airpower will save the day. For approximately the next 24 hours U.S. airpower carpet-bombed enemy positions on the Whale's Back and all along the Shah-i-Kot mountain range with everything in the U.S. arsenal short of cruise missiles. Eventually, it was decided to use the battalion position on the north end of the Shah-i-Kot range as a firm base, push south down the ridgeline to clear out the enemy positions, and try to occupy the original blocking positions. The reconstituted battalion from the 10th Mountain Division and a second battalion from 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division were flown into what was termed the firm base, and started an advance down the mountain range assisted by heavy-air and attack-helicopter support. Massive air support suppressing remaining enemy

positions on the Whale's Back across the valley, and the personal efforts of the infantrymen on the ground in those maneuver battalions, overcame poor planning and organization and got the job done. While the two infantry battalions were seizing their original objectives, the Afghan forces, rallied by their SF "advisors," took the town of Sherkankel. Of course, the hammer and anvil were too late.

Rather than sit still for a week and await certain defeat in a battle plan implemented days before, most of the enemy had withdrawn east across the Pakistani border. A small "rear guard" remained to delay. The blocking positions eventually occupied by the three U.S. infantry battalions didn't block anything — the enemy was gone.

Observers on the ground, all infantry officers, say the air assault on Day 1 by 2nd Bn, 3rd Bde, 101st Airborne, and 1st Bn, 2nd Bde, 10th Mountain did not go well. According to one field-grade officer, "To be brutally honest, the enemy gave them quite a 'spanking.'" I have to tell you, as the first reports of casualties and downed helicopters were coming back to us from the initial assault, all everyone could think about was *Black Hawk Down*. It looked that bad.

On 9 March, a week after Operation Anaconda commenced, a Canadian battle group, the 3rd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI), opconned to the 3rd Bde "Rakassans" 101st Airborne, received orders to join 2nd Brigade 10th Mountain Division for combat operations as part of OP ANACONDA. The 3 PPCLI was ordered to clear the Whale's Back mountain on the Western side of the Shah-i-Kot Valley of an estimated 60-100 enemy holdouts dug-in or hiding in caves, and then conduct "Sensitive Site Exploitation" (SSE), i.e. searches of all caves and enemy fighting positions. The SSE tasking meant a detailed sweep over a linear mountain ranging in elevation from 6,500 feet (at the base) to 10,000 feet at the spine; that is, 7 kilometers long and 2 kilometers wide. The final phase of Operation Anaconda was to sweep the Whale's Back was named Operation Harpoon.

The 3PPCLI launched a battalion-strength air assault against the Whale's Back shortly after first light (0730 hours local time) on 13 March, inserting via CH-47 Chinook helicopter into a single-ship LZ at the northern end of the mountain. USMC "Super-Cobra" attack helicopters, AC-130 "Spectre" gunships, and "Predator" unmanned surveillance aircraft provided close-air support. F-18 "Hornet" and A-10 "Warthog" jets were available on stand-by. B-52s conducted 'round-the-clock carpet-bombing of suspected enemy positions on the eastern side of the valley.

There were few enemy left on the Whale's Back, and the aggressive Canadians promptly engaged them with anti-tank rockets and small-arms fire, killing three. Moving tactically at 10,000 feet with full combat loads through mountain terrain, it was fortunate that the Canadians were veterans of cold-weather and mountain training. They spent five days clearing enemy positions and searching more than 30 caves — a dangerous business fraught with booby traps, mines, and possible ambushes — on the Whale's Back. They found large caches of ammunition and equipment, collected

intelligence documents and maps, and searched a few dead al-Qaeda killed in the airstrikes.

The Canadian infantrymen were extracted by helicopter on 17 and 18 March bringing Operation Anaconda/Operation Harpoon to a close.

In light of the self-congratulatory pronouncements made by Major General Hagenbeck, General Franks, and others, it's doubtful the full extent of the ineptitude at Division- and Brigade-levels will ever be exposed fully (unless one of the battalion commanders retires and writes his memoirs). The failure to fully disclose the operation's shortcomings and the predilection of the senior leadership to paint a rosy picture of a great success has impacted morale only slightly. The troops, NCOs, and lower-ranking officers are used to such

Cpl Lou Penney, 3 PPCLI Battle Group



Canada lost four of its finest (her first war casualties since the Korean War), and the U.S. lost four brothers-in-arms, when an American F-16 mistakenly bombed Canadian troops during live-fire exercises near their base in Kandahar. Lieutenant Colonel Pat Stogran, the CO of the base, tapped each coffin and said, "You're OK, jumper. Have a good one. Airborne!"

posturing and "cover-ups" by the upper echelons. Given the obvious tactical blunders and poor planning, Operation Anaconda was a failure. Was it a complete failure? Maybe not, but neither was it an unqualified success.

It was inevitable that some enemy would escape, but hundreds were KIA by airpower over the eight-day bombing operation, while the infantry battalions were trying to fight their way south along the eastern ridgeline of the Shah-i-Kot to secure the blocking positions. The enemy's combat power in the region and his stockpile of arms was destroyed. The enemy personnel that escaped were stragglers and small groups of disorganized survivors forced to abandon most of their heavy weapons.

As one squad leader has said, "We didn't get 'em all, but we messed 'em up good."

Cincinnatus is a former U.S. Army infantry officer with experience on battalion and brigade staffs, and experience in Afghanistan. ☒



Flak



No "My Way or Highway"



The anonymous author of the piece in "Command Guidance" makes some admirable statements in support of patriotism and our military and veterans. However, he appears to be as guilty of the same kind of religious arrogance and intolerance that is behind many of the troubles of this planet, including the religious-based terrorism that we currently are at war with today.

He states that our founding fathers adopted the motto of "In God We Trust," because "Christian men and women, on Christian principles, founded this nation; and that this is clearly documented throughout our history." It is clear that the author equates the word God with the name Christ. It is also clear that he doesn't know what he is talking about with regard to our founding fathers. In spite of his claims, many of our founding fathers were not Christians. A significantly high percentage of them were Unitarian or other religions that did not believe in the deity of Christ. This includes even Thomas

Jefferson, the author of our Declaration of Independence, and a significant contributor to our Constitution. These great men did not choose a motto that said "In Christ We Trust," specifically because they understood and supported the right of freedom for all religions.

The God in "In God We Trust" is the same God worshipped by the Moslems, Jews, the Unitarians, the Christians, and most of the other religions of the world. He may be called God, Allah, The Great Spirit, the Creator, Mother Nature, or some other name in one of the myriad languages of the world. In the United States he may be wor-

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shipped in many different ways or even ignored. That fact is one of the things that makes this country great — our freedom of religion and our social and governmental tolerance of religions of all types.

I find the arrogant attitude of the author, that if you do not like some aspects of our Christian-dominated culture you should pack up and leave, is an outright insult to all the many non-Christians who have contributed to the greatness of this country. His position of “My way or the highway” is as Un-American as the Islamic Jihad being waged against this country. I am confident that not even the Christians among our founding fathers, and certainly the non-Christians, like Thomas Jefferson, would have found his attitude as abhorrent as I do.

Chuck Karwan

Maximus Exception

As a (quite) aficionado reader of yours from Europe (Italy), I must really put my voice on the line for a mixed review:

- Congrats on the recent improvements in format.

- Not sure I agree completely with your (general) geopolitic view, but hey, that's OK.

- Am very impressed by recent articles which I thought would never fit in above mentioned views, like the recent ones on the possible unconstitutionality of military tribunals after 9-11.

But please. Please, somebody wake up Mr. Wheeler. “Maximus Bush” and “Submission of Islam” are not simply rantings, they just don't adhere to reality. Did I miss the irony? Or is it supposed to be for real?

I realize everybody has a right to his own opinion. But let it be known that none of the people I showed the above-mentioned articles to was able to stay serious to the end of them.

Patrick Mura
Via E-Mail

Worst Issue

I have read *SOF* since its inception and I can honestly say that April 2002 is the worst issue that you have pro-

duced, from “Command Guidance,” to Hackworth's crying at the end.

Can you really say that the bigotry contained in “Command Guidance” of the April issue struck a chord with you? To me it was a sour note! Maybe we can hire the Taliban or the al Qaida that we have as prisoners in Cuba to stand on street corners and beat people into accepting bigotry, they seem to have experience at doing it.

I would suggest to all the bigots in the United States that America belongs to all of us! It is not yours, mine or theirs. We have to learn tolerance and compassion for all beliefs. What evolves will be a place for all of us.

The only thing that I can think of that I will not accept in America is the destruction of the Constitution. Your article on Mel Gibson is one of the first steps, along with many others, in destroying the Constitution. Mel Gibson doesn't believe in the Second Amendment, period. This should have been mentioned in the article.

Next we come to the two articles by Wheeler. Both are pathetic. It is nothing but his speculation and opinion on how we should act or handle affairs. Tell Wheeler to stick to fact and facts

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only. *Soldier of Fortune* has been a source of truth for me. I would hate to lose that source on account of articles like Wheeler's.

George S. Harger
 Red Lodge, Montana

Unleash The Marines

Having served with 1st Bn 8th Marines in Lebanon in 1983, I feel the actions on 11 Sep 01 could and should have been avoided. I was wounded on 8 Sep 83 with four other Marines, two of whom died on Lebanese soil. Even with these and other casualties to the BLT, and the attack on the barracks, I always felt our response was not what I felt it should have been. If the United States had become as angry then as we are now, and the people responsible for those young men's deaths had been brought to Justice, much of what is facing the world today would not exist. When Desert Storm was brewing, the Marine Corps was there, waiting on the others to figure out how to get there. They knew what needed to be done, then and now. Let those young Marines do what they train to do: Their job. God Bless America. God Bless the Marine Corps.

Preston Lake
 Via E-mail

Recruit The Experienced

The CIA, FBI, and other intelligence agencies need trustworthy agents who speak Arabic and understand that culture. Why isn't there a major recruiting drive among the Middle Eastern Coptics and the Christian Maronite/Phalange militias like the South Lebanese Army who were allies to the Israelis? Who better knows what it's like to deal with Islamic zealots/terrorists than those who've battled them for two decades?

Sincerely,
 Mike Malfi
 Via E-mail

Hopefully, the battle against terrorism will be kept on a higher plane than "Christian/Jewish vs. Muslim," as in "good against evil" — remember that during the last world-shaking war, we were fighting the bad guys in control of "Christian" Nazi Germany and "Christian" Fascist Italy —

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and on our side was "Muslim" Turkey and the "Atheist" Soviet Union. Having made that point, yes, U.S. intelligence agencies are actively recruiting people — of whatever faith — with Arabic language skills, and experience in the cultures would probably be a bonus. You'll find detailed information on the web at: www.fbi.gov (click on "employment"), and at cia.gov/cia/employment/jobpostings/mid_east_lang_spec.htm.

From 'The Trenches, From The Heart



After a long day of digging through the World Trade Center in the bucket brigade, days after the hideous attack on our great country, I sat at a hotel, and saw *SOF* magazine sitting on a table. At first I was reluctant to read it, but I opened it up and read my first article, I fell instantly in love with the concept your magazine provides. I instantly left the *Rolling Stone* magazine era, and joined a more mature reading genre. I thank you for keeping me up with the world, and your fearless approach to reporting what goes on beyond our land as our nation's fight against terrorism continues. God bless our brothers fighting for us, and God Bless America.

Elmer Santiago
NYPD – USAR
Via E-mail

Terrorists' Tools

I was reading the story about the terrorist balloon bombs in 1945, that drifted all the way from Japan to the Southwest. A scary thought of what could be delivered today in this manner (chem., bio agents). I hope the terrorists don't have any helium.

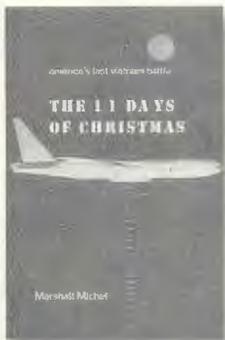
Dennis Bannister
Charleston, SC

Who would want a little balloon when they could have a Boeing 747? One of the major vulnerabilities to modern terrorists is that they are among us — one nut and a book of penny matches could have more devastating effect than the entire WWII Japanese balloon program, and as for chem/bio, our entire infrastructure has been built on trust in the social contract — and the terrorists were not signatories. ✕

The 11 Days of Christmas

America's Last Vietnam Battle

by Marshall L. Michel III



ISBN: 1-893554-24-4,
Hardcover, 320 pages, \$25.95
ISBN: 1-893554-27-9,
Paperback, 320 pages, \$16.95

"Details about the Vietnam War's last official battle prove gripping reading."
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"Michel offers a cogent and superbly researched scholarly examination that is remarkably free of bias. A first-rate contribution."
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"...Nixon had only a few weeks left...what followed was the intense aerial bombardment chronicled in gripping detail by Marshall L. Michel III."
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In December 1972, after the Paris Peace Talks to end the Vietnam War had fallen apart, Richard Nixon ordered the massive bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong for the first time by America's "big stick," the Strategic Air Command's B-52s.

For eleven days, as Marshall Michel relates in this riveting narrative, the epic air battle swung back and forth, moving from what appeared to be a certain U.S. victory, to a possible North Vietnamese triumph, to the final ambiguous outcome in which each side both won and lost.

The 11 Days of Christmas is military history at its best and most dramatic, bearing comparison to *Black Hawk Down*. Michel, who himself flew fighter cover for the B-52s, moves from the White House to the B-52 cockpits to Hanoi's missile sites and POW camps to tell a tale of heroism and incompetence in a battle whose political and military legacy is still a matter of controversy.



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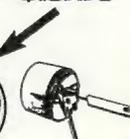
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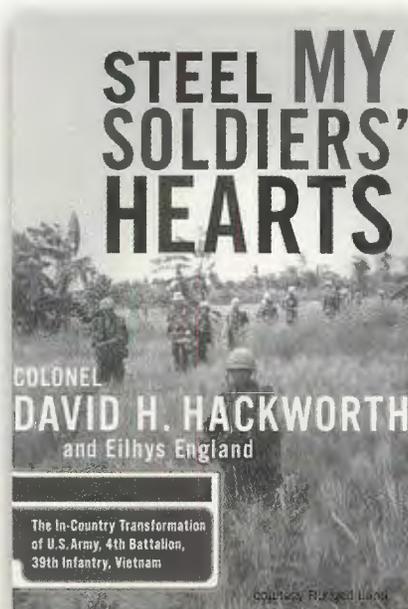
An Excerpt from *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*

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BY COL. DAVID H. HACKWORTH,
U.S. ARMY (RET.)

AND EILHYS ENGLAND

One of the textbook examples of the truism that there are no bad troops, only bad leaders, was the transformation of the 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry from hopeless to hardcore under the uncompromising leadership of Colonel David H. Hackworth. The transformation took place in the swamps of the Viet Nam lowlands, under fire and against the odds during the first months of 1969. Leading from the front, Hackworth and a small cadre of hand-picked officers and NCOs turned this unit around in short order, so rapidly and effectively that within a matter of months the enemy casualties inflicted by Hackworth's snipers alone rivaled former bodycounts by the battalion as a whole. And fewer of Hackworth's men were going home on stretchers and in black bags. The following is an excerpt from Hackworth's new book *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*, published by Rugged Land, Dept. SOF, 276 Canal Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10013. Order your copy of this book online at www.sofmag.com.



“Worst battalion I’ve seen in twenty-six years of service, Hack. You got your work cut out for you.” — Col. John P. Geraci, 1/506th Airborne

15 March 1969: Even through bad stretches like the Co Co Canal, I now had an ace up my sleeve: the Snipers. They called themselves Snoopy and Scooter, Hillbilly and Mountaineer, John Wayne and the Red Baron. Pound for pound, they were our most effective killing machine, 20 sharpshooters under the eagle eye of Larry Tahler, the young officer who’d called me an “SOB with brains” in the darkness during my first night with the 4/39th.

Tahler was a draftee who’d gone to OCS to “get out of KP and away from all the hut, two, three, four stuff.” He



had a brother who eventually retired as a Navy Rear Admiral, but his own attitude toward the military was strictly a citizen-soldier's. He was of slight build, wiry and hard as a railroad spike. His troops, who he'd hang out with over a beer or two, would do anything for him. "Tahler was there for you if you needed anything or just needed to talk," recalls Sniper Sergeant Bob Jones, a guy who could part your hair at 500 meters with an M-14 round. "But if you made a mistake, you'd know about it."

To form the Snipers, Tahler selected volunteers from throughout the Battalion. Before he'd even look at you, you had to have the Combat Infantryman's Badge and you had to shoot Expert, and even then, it didn't mean you were good to go.

"Getting volunteers was never a problem," Tahler remembers. "I always had a waiting list. It beat slogging in the mud, taking a chance on mines and booby traps. Snipers felt special and they were treated well by everyone at Battalion Headquarters because they

were Hack's pets. The living was easier even though the risks were higher. And they were motivated — here was a chance to make a visible difference in the war effort. With every one I killed, I always thought that's one who won't be able to kill one of ours. And all my Snipers felt the same."

Tahler trained his gutsy trigger-pullers at Dong Tam under a team of top Army shooters led by Major Willis L. Powell, the former marksmanship guru at Fort Benning. Hank Emerson had persuaded General Ewell to bring Powell over from the Infantry School's Marksmanship Detachment. Within a few weeks, Powell's crack instructors turned our Hardcore grunts into dead-eye killers. They taught Tahler's men techniques and tactics using specially accurized M-14 rifles (the XM-21) with silencers and smokeless ammunition.

"There were two different personalities of Snipers," recalls Sniper Ed Eaton. "Some were terrified of the infantry trip and others felt like a hero, being a doer, not a watcher. By the time you graduated you could hole a

Grunts of Hackworth's Hardcore 4th Bn, 39th Infantry slog through the nightmarish swamps of Vietnam's Mekong Delta. This was Charlie's terrain until the Hardcore took the battle to the enemy, largely with Hack's elite cadre of snipers.

target at 700 meters. I came out of that course really confident."

The Lung Rifles

When the Long Rifle boys — the name came from a Battalion Tiger Scout who said a Sniper's M-14 with an attached silencer was a "lung rifle" and eventually "lung rifle" became Long Rifles — returned from training, I told Tahler to suit them up in distinctive uniforms so they'd be recognized as a special unit. He came up with a doozer: camouflaged fatigues back when the Army was still dressed in olive drab, and a Black Beret bearing the Hardcore Recondo insignia — a black arrowhead — on a red flash, a pocket insignia and a "Sniper" shoulder tab.

"Once we got that sexy uniform," Tahler says, "even more people lined up to join. Plenty of guys wanted in, but only a small percentage passed the hard-ass Sniper School and fewer still were able to squeeze the trigger on a fellow human being." The Snipers witnessed their kills, the way an executioner does

Plenty of guys wanted in, but only a small percentage passed the hard-ass Sniper School and fewer still were able to squeeze the trigger on a fellow human being.

when he pulls the switch on a guy sitting in the electric chair, with a shocking immediacy even frontline infantrymen didn't experience very often if at all in Vietnam. I felt toward the Snipers as I did the guys in the 27th Raiders and the 1/327th LRRPs. They took huge risks that required extraordinary courage and, in the Snipers' case, they not only had their asses hanging out on independent missions with small teams, but their high-powered scopes brought the war right up-close and personal. Too close. One morning Tahler killed six VC and the man with him took out another. "I turned my scope on this one," Tahler told me later, "and it was a girl. All I could think was how lovely she was." Young and beautiful, and packing an AK-47 — not exactly a Donut Dolly. Tahler did his job and blew her away. "I still see her face," he says.

A Hard Breed

Psychologically, the gig was tough. "After the first couple kills," Tahler recalls, "several of my Snipers found they didn't have the stomach for the job and quit." Tahler was always on the alert for what he called "Combat Sniper Stress." If he found a Sniper who couldn't handle the strain, he shipped him back to his original company. "A lot of fellows got out of Sniper School and found they just couldn't watch a head blow up through the scope," says Sniper Jones.



courtesy Larry Tahler, via Rugged Land

"Night Hunter 6" Lt. Larry Tahler, leader of 20 snipers who took out the equivalent of an enemy battalion on their own turf.

Bob Jones was one hell of a warrior. Initially as a rifleman in Battle Company, and later as a Sniper, he received two Silver Stars, one Distinguished Flying Cross, five Bronze Stars for Valor and one Air Medal for Valor. By our count, he had 38 Sniper kills to his credit. In any given month, he'd kill more VC than almost any rifle company in the rest of

the 9th Division.

"Before I volunteered to become a Sniper, I worried about it some," Jones recalls. "The very next day we went out on an operation and found three gooks holed-up in a bunker. They were down in there holding the dadgum lid down. One of my buddies took a hand grenade and laid it on top of the bunker and blew them out. One was pretty bad and he shot him. One of the guys was so upset about it he cried like a baby. But I was sitting around just as calm as ever because it didn't bother me. It was then I knew I'd make a good Sniper. I'd lost all feeling for these people ... I did my job. If there was an enemy soldier out there, I'd zap him. Does this sound hard? Think about it. I'm also helping my buddies. He could kill one of them if I didn't get him first. I'm not fussing at all.

"The machine-gunners, the artillery folks or the flyboys kill VC, but it costs something like \$4,000 for them to get one. It costs Uncle Sam 27 cents, the price of an M-14 round, for me to zero one out. They don't zap more than me, they just make more noise. It takes a lot for them to do the job, but I'm trained to do it with just one shot."

Leading From The Front

Snipers operated around the clock, their sharpshooters covering the day and the darkness with Night Hunter and Pink Filter — an infrared light mounted on a jeep that sent out an invisible light, allowing the infrared scope to see anything within its beam. Normally, they set up at fixed locations such as bridges, ARVN camps and at firebases.

Tahler was trail boss — he picked the Sniper missions and sites, personally inserted the teams, closely monitored them and, at the end of the day, picked them up. He called the plays, not some distant, disconnected staff weenie, working closely with the S-3 and me to insure his operational plans went hand-in-glove with everything else the Battalion was doing.

Tahler's radio code name was "Night Hunter 6." On Night Hunter operations, he used one Huey C&C chopper and two gunships. Conducting the show from the C&C bird, he'd set up one Sniper to fire out of each side of the back of the slick. Using their night vision devices, they'd find and then mark the target with tracer rounds. Then the C&C's doorgunners, using M60 machine-gun tracer rounds, would lock on the Sniper's impact



courtesy Ken Carlton, via Rugged Land

Hardcore grunts move to their objective after a combat assault. Air-delivery of assault troops worked so well, the Hardcore snipers developed tactics and techniques based on air-insertion and began hitting Charlie in his own backyard.

area. Simultaneously, the C&C bird, rising straight up like an elevator, would pop out an Air Force flare or flick on a powerful Xenon searchlight, lighting up the target. The two gunships flying blackout just above and behind Tahler's bird would then roar in with rockets and miniguns blazing, striking wherever the C&C's door gunner's M60 tracers were marking.

"The only way we could identify the target and then put accurate fire on it was to fly low and slow," Tahler says. His C&C bird flew on the deck — from 10 to 20 feet above the ground — moving at between 60 to 90 knots. Dangerous work.

In a letter home, Jones wrote about one of the early missions: "I went up on Night Hunter last night. We shot up 21 sampans, got 13 kills and three secondary explosions. I saw one sampan that was camouflaged with leaves and stuff, so I fired a shot at it. The door-gunner opened up with his machine gun. He put a few rounds in it and it exploded. We were flying around in a chopper with a big spotlight and it lit up another sampan. I fired a burst and there was another explosion. I spotted another one and fired a shot, and the same thing happened. We circled a few times and I saw one more. I fired, the gunner opened up and it blew up all over the place! We were one 100 feet up and it shook the ship! Charley must really have had a lot of ammo in that convoy. I'm glad we got to it before it got to us."

Earning Respect

Geraci, who was still Brigade CO at



A study in vulnerability. Division base camp at Dong Tam — a sitting duck.

the time, was so pleased with the results of this mission that the following morning he assembled the aircrew and Snipers and hung a medal on each man. "Night Hunter blew up several tons of ammo that would have thumped down on my boys. Damn, I'm proud of you," he told them. After that night, Night Hunter was golden. Tahler got priority of air assets. "We all loved Night Hunter missions," Sniper Ed Eaton says. "You're up in the air. You're not down on the stinking ground, you're clean, cool and, compared to grunt work, relatively safe. It sure beat sloshing through the paddies, and we got a lot of kills."

But Tahler's on-the-ground Snipers gave the Night Hunter boys in the sky a good run for their money. They initially worked from the observation

towers at [Firebase] Danger and then started going out with rifle companies on missions — except that too often, rifle company skippers tended to use them simply as riflemen. In another battalion, a company commander threw a Sniper with over 40 kills in with the rest of the grunts for an assault on a wood line. He was killed. This was like using a Cadillac to plow the back forty. Tahler never sent his shooters with companies whose skippers didn't use them wisely.

Succeeding Like Success

Success made the Snipers bolder. "Had to stay sharp and be innovative to keep ahead of the competition," Tahler recalls. He started by hitching rides for his Snipers on aircraft that flew over the firebase. Calling the pilot of any Huey chopper in sight, he'd say he was in a bind and ask the pilot to do him a favor and pick up or drop off one of his teams. Sometimes he bribed the pilots with captured AK-47s or gave them VC flags. I found out later that Tahler's trading goods came from a factory Battalion S-4 Bob Johnson set up back at Dong Tam, where he churned out "genuine VC flags" by the jeep-load.

In short order, Brigade started dedicating a slick and a pair of gunships daily to insert and extract Tahler's teams. He placed them five to 10 clicks around Danger, always within range of its 105mm guns. The insert aircraft would fly over a large area making phony insertions to confuse the VC, then pop down near a tree line, where the Snipers would roll out and be in the woods before the bird even lifted off. "We always



War is hell — most of the time. Sniper team leader Lt. Larry Tahler poses with a round-eyed USO beauty.



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had good info where we were going and what the conditions on the ground were," says Eaton. "Tahler did his homework. You had the whole nine yards in your head. The hooch, the rice paddy, the distances, the treeline. You were prepared, but there was always a terrible loneliness. You weren't with a rifle company. You and your buddy were hanging out all by your lonesome."

Normally the choppers returned to pick up the Teams before darkness set in, always varying pickup times to avoid setting fixed patterns. On certain operations, they would spend the night with a rifle company. Sometimes they worked with Pink Filter. Frequently they made sniper kills out to 600 yards; when they spotted deeper or larger targets, they'd adjust TAC Air and/or artillery fire on the VC, driving their targets

'No reason to waste rounds on a guy who has a hole through his chest and is hanging headfirst in the water. That was one great shot, Sniper.'

closer so they could whack them with those long rifles.

"One night I fired a tracer round at a single sampan," Ed Eaton remembers.

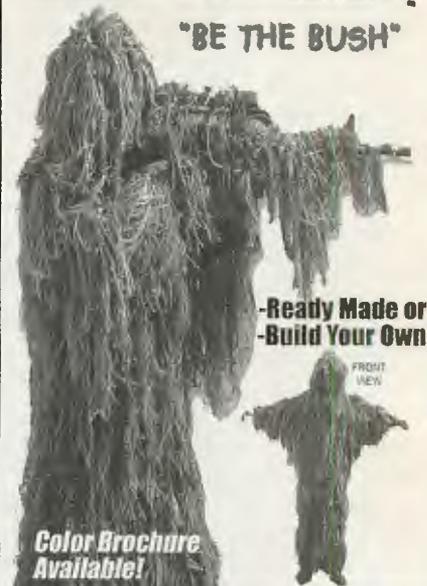
"The two Cobras stacked above us immediately followed the tracer. I informed the pilots that the round was right on and no need for any adjustment on their part. As the Cobras came to minimum altitude their Xenon lights came on, illuminating the entire river. But instead of a volley of minigun fire and rockets the Cobras immediately turned off their lights and resumed their position above my slick. Later that night while refueling, I went over to the Cobra pilots and asked why they never fired on an obvious target. The answer I got was 'No reason to waste rounds on a guy who has a hole through his chest and is hanging headfirst in the water. That was one great shot, Sniper.'"

Next month, we see the price that Hackworth's snipers paid to be the best.

Col. David H. Hackworth, U.S. Army (Ret.), is our most decorated living soldier. His column "Sound Off" appears regularly in SOF. ✕

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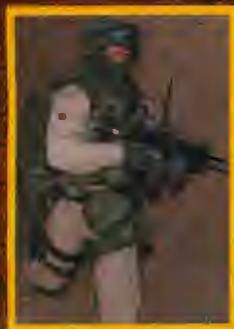
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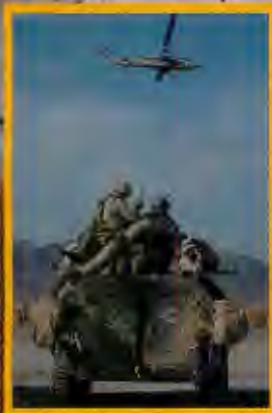
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ARMAGEDDON IN THE MIDDLE EAST

BY AL J. VENTER

The Israelis are stuck with Arafat largely on the basis that he's the devil they know. They would have killed him long ago if they didn't. Also, he is sick: His Parkinson's is apparently quite bad. Then everyone knows that he's not entirely trusted by his own people, if only because the man isn't nearly as fundamentalist as some of the *Hamas* and Islamic *Jihad* lunatics waiting in the eaves for something to happen.

There was a report in the British press that Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar smiled when he told his followers that there had been 40 Israelis killed and 200 injured "in just two suicide operations."

That old war horse Henry Kissinger — all of 80 next birthday and still looking much like he did when he served Nixon — had a comment of his own when he spoke to Charlie Rose recently.

The situation was more serious than people realized, Kissinger said to the always-engaging Rose. He compared Israel's population to that of America, and suggested that the number of dead in those two onslaughts were roughly equivalent to the United States having lost 2,500 killed. Almost as many as died on 11 September, echoed Rose. Makes you think.

In the Middle East this kind of analogy becomes repetitive. So do off-the-cuff references to Armageddon, almost as if some kind of nuclear cataclysm is inevitable. Trouble is,

Is The Ultimate Global Tragedy Inevitable?

A Palestinian gunman shoots at Israeli troops 17 March 2002 during an Israeli Army incursion inside Bethlehem. New Palestinian attacks on Israel and a move by Israeli tanks back into the West Bank city broke a two-day lull in violence and jolted a U.S. bid to broker a ceasefire.



AFP PHOTO/MUSA AL-SHAER



REUTERS/Abbed Omar Qusini

A Palestinian gunman runs for cover after Israeli soldiers opened fire toward a group of Palestinian gunmen at the entrance to the old city, where armed Palestinians had set up makeshift barricades in the West Bank city of Nablus, 4 April 2002.

if not checked, it could happen.

After maintaining a transparent charade for decades, the Israeli government no longer denies that it has the bomb, nor that it would use it if had to. That was one warning leveled at Syria by the Israelis not long ago after Damascus deployed Scuds tipped with Sarin and VX nerve gasses along its southern frontier with Israel.

A Darwinian Concept

Worse, now the Pentagon is mooting getting a 20,000-strong American "peacekeeping force" into Israel in a bid to separate the combatants. Indeed, Senator Arlen Specter — quoting former Marine Commandant Anthony Zinni — disclosed that such a plan already exists: It's a 68-page document produced by the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Fort Leavenworth.

The concept qualifies for a Darwin Award. It also gives hope to the aspirations of every Islamic extremist in the region including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Al Aqsa Suicide Brigade and Hizbollah. Every one of them would relish targeting young Americans. And what better way to do this than if our boys are placed within striking range?

Conditions in Israel today are about as bad as they have been in the half-century history of this tiny country. In a nation of just over 5M Jews and 1.1M

Arabs (there are another 1.1M in Gaza) the Jewish State has regular forces of about 170,000 with an active reserve of larger than 10 times that number. But that hasn't prevented dislocation escalating to the point where suicide attacks have sown terror and destroyed normal life just about everywhere in the country.

Like most military ventures, the violence has unlooked-for consequences, like the inability of Palestinian residents to call on the ambulance service to vacate the dead or bring wounded to hospitals while the fighting rages. To which

the Israelis retorted shortly before the Passover, that even these services were being manipulated by the terrorists. An ambulance carrying a three-year-old boy was stopped at a roadblock by soldiers who uncovered a belt of explosives strapped under the child's stretcher. It should have been command-detonated, but wasn't. The International Committee of the Red Cross later confirmed the incident.

Some Israeli actions — while applauded in the United States — are viewed as heinous turpitude in other countries. Which is why there is barely anywhere in the West that did not host pro-Palestinian demonstrations after IDF tanks had moved into the West Bank in early April. Also, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon — by his own actions, right or



REUTERS/Noel Elnas

An Israeli soldier runs between tanks after the Israeli army entered the West Bank City of Ramallah, 12 March 2002.

wrong — is perceived by many Americans as more of a tyrant than a democratically elected leader.

At least that's how one British writer in London's *Times* saw it. Succinctly, he compared the situation in modern-day Israel to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

"There is an army (the Israelis) with overwhelming superior firepower invading a largely defenseless country rounding up the male population of the towns where known resistance fighters live and sending them away to an uncertain future. There is also the bulldozing of the houses of their families and shooting anyone who raises a finger against their occupation."

This is tough talk, but then, times are tough.

At the same time there has been almost no reaction to Arafat having reneged on his promise to stop the bombings. Instead he has gone public and called for "a million martyrs" to liberate Jerusalem. As Britain's *Economist* says: "The martyrs know exactly what he means ..." adding that in launching the latest *Intifada* "Arafat has pocketed what Oslo gave him and started a liberation war." It's a supreme irony that Oslo originally accorded him the Nobel Peace Prize for his actions.

Israel No Longer Controls Its Security

For all that, it hasn't been lost on anybody in the Middle East-Arab, Christian or Jew — that after 50 years of having things their own way, Israel is no longer in control of its own security.

Jerusalem can invade the remotest corner of this tiny

country, less than a third the size of Ireland, and it cannot stop the slaughter. No matter how it tries — short of building a wall between every Palestinian settlement and Israel (which is impossible) — the Israeli government seems incapable of containing violence.

Said one choleric observer: The *Knesset* can buy a thousand more battle tanks or another six, or 60, squadrons of F-16s and none of it will affect what is going on in and around a thousand settlements and towns in the Holy Land. He added that the war seemed to have devolved into the kind of attrition that the world last experienced in the Middle Ages.

The effects are convulsive on both sides. The Israeli economy is in freefall, the tourist sector — on which a huge proportion of the Jewish and Arab population relied for survival — has vaporized. There is barely an Israeli family that is not giving some thought to possibly getting out. Most won't do so, but that doesn't stop people considering the option. A fair proportion of the Jewish community in this country originally came from Israel.

These people are also aware that the slaughters in Tel Aviv, Netanya, Jerusalem and elsewhere have given heart to those who perpetrate these crimes. As in any conflict there are those who are powerfully motivated by the "whiff of blood" and by the kind of Israeli reaction that we see each night on our television screens. Clearly, there are a lot of Palestinians who relish the outcome of such actions, as they did the events of 11 September.

Conversely, critics overlook the fact that suicide bombings — like fundamental Islam — is *first* a response to repression and extreme poverty. Small wonder then that Arafat (or his successor) has a reservoir of recruits willing to die. The majority come from the refugee camps where, let's face it, conditions are often sub-human.

Without jobs, constrained militarily (and sometimes bru-

Israeli soldiers enter the headquarters of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in the West Bank city of Ramallah 29 March 2002. Israel declared Arafat an enemy and sent troops into his presidential compound.



tally), coupled to the prospect of no hope and little prospect for peace, the people initiating these actions believe that they have absolutely nothing to lose. It wasn't me who said that as long as there are millions of Palestinian refugees, they will always have a vested interest in the destruction of Israel, but he had a point.

Tragically, all this could have been avoided. With the benefit of hindsight, we know now that any other prescient government would long ago have made upping the economic conditions of its own Arab community a priority since any first-year political student knows that *poverty breeds revolt*. As one British diplomat told this writer, the Palestinian community should never have been allowed to become isolated within the confines of its own degradation.

Jerusalem has blundered. In doing so, the Israelis have denigrated the dignity of the largest non-Jewish society within its ambit. It has also made the very same economic mistake that South Africa committed under Apartheid and now — with political polarization having peaked and looking like it'll stay that way — it's too late to do anything about it.

As the security situation in Israel deteriorates further, there is no question that the IDF will invigorate the subjugation of its Arab population. More reserves are being called up as I write. So, too, there is a real possibility that Israel's neighbors will not sit on their hands for much longer if things get worse.

Several times in the past when there has been trouble, Egypt has reacted with alarm. Cairo threatened to intervene militarily when the second Intifada was only weeks old. That was in August 2000 and President Mubarak's military commanders took the first tentative steps to move Egypt's armored 3rd Army into Sinai. Israel retaliated by making some preemptive moves of its own.

In the end, good sense — and, of course, pressure from Washington — prevailed. Also, the financial handouts that Cairo gets from the U.S. helped, though I'm not so sure it will the next time 'round.

One of the spin-offs of that little episode is that these days, Jerusalem glances over its shoulder at Cairo's reaction to just about everything it does. It's a given that in the Middle East, nobody ignores the regions biggest military power, or that — peace or not — the two countries have a history of conflict.

Complex and intractable, the situation was neatly paraphrased by Israeli writer Arie O'Sullivan.

In a recent article in the *Jerusalem Post*, he noted that "twenty years of 'cold peace' have never eliminated the deep-rooted insecurities and mutual distrust between the IDF and the Egyptian armed forces."

O'Sullivan added that while the (Camp David) peace treaty had given Israel's military leaders some breathing space in its planning, the command structure never took its eyes off its southern neighbor.



Israeli soldiers enter the city center of the West Bank city of Bethlehem 3 April 2002.

REUTERS/Magnum-Whitman

"Israeli war plans still call for a hefty reserve force to be set aside for dealing with Egypt, no matter where confrontation breaks out," he declared.

Israel's troubles with its neighbors are deep-rooted, not least because while there has been a peace of sorts, tensions have always rankled. Also, most Egyptians are morbidly suspicious of things not ethnic and this applies especially to anything Hebraic.

Add to this fractious concoction the fact that to most Egyptians foreigners are, *a priori*, infidels and routinely despised. Jews, for instance, are relegated to a category that is often sub-human. Very few foreigners who think they understand the average Cairean have discerned this nation's interior cast of mind. It shows. While Americans are tolerated, to the majority of Egyptians, Bush and his cabinet are Zionist surrogates.

This imbroglio goes further. There is a curious free-floating hostility towards Uncle Sam.

According to one Arab authority there is also a conviction "that the U.S. is somehow engaged with Israel in an attempt to diminish and hem in Egypt's power and influence." This perception persists in spite of Washington having granted Egypt "most-favored nation" status: It has been forking out \$2.1 billion a year in aid to the Cairo government since 1978.

Do the math and that amounts to an awesome \$50 billion over the years. There are many Americans who believe that this kind of money might have been better spent on resuscitating Medicare.

To Egyptian hard-liners it is of little concern that their country won't survive without aid. These ideologues base their principles on the precept that you are either for the culture, or you must be against it. In the Islamic world this sentiment has clout, even though it hardly makes sense.

There are few grays in a cloistered Muslim world where, among women, the use of the *hijab* — Islamic dress — has trebled in the past 10 years. Nor can much be achieved in trying to rationalize with someone who is prepared to strap 20 pounds of explosives to his body in order to make a point.

Meanwhile, the Intifada goes on and some of Israel's neighbors are now threatening to get involved in the war. Indeed, some Lebanese dissidents are already hurling rockets into Galilee.

Iran: Fingers In Many Pots

Also, the noises coming out of Iran lately suggest that the *mullahs* must make a public show of solidarity against the Jews. A few times lately, Iranian military action has been threatened, followed by a call in early April to deprive America of oil.

Most notably, Tehran issued a short, sharp rebuke at about the same time that Egypt considered its moves in 2000. In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al Watan*,

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Hunting

TEXT & PHOTOS BY SAMUEL M. KATZ

Suicide Bombers, Part 2

High Stress And High Stakes

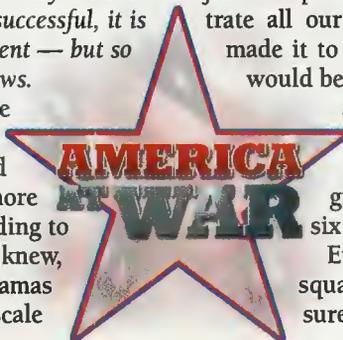
In Part I we examined the day-in and day-out efforts in Israel to combat terrorism through prevention, infiltration and preemptive action by the elite Ya'mas force. When they are successful, it is not news. When the terrorists are successful, it is news, and of late the news has been more frequent — but so are the events they prevented from becoming news.

A turning point for the unit came on 1 June 2001, when a suicide bomber detonated himself inside the entrance of the crowded "Dolphi" discotheque in Tel Aviv and killed more than 20 teenagers enjoying a night out. According to one of the Ya'mas intelligence officers, "We knew, from an operational point of view, that once Hamas and the Islamic Jihad committed a large-scale

killings, that they would attempt to assume command and control over the Intifadah. And, that we would have to readjust our priorities accordingly. We would have to concentrate all our efforts on hitting the terrorists before they made it to suicide attacks. We also knew that Jerusalem would be next." On 9 August 2001, at about 1400 hours

a young Hamas suicide bomber walked into the Sbarro restaurant on the corner of King George and Jaffa and blew himself up, in a gruesome attack that killed 16 people, including six children.

Even in "better times," life inside an undercover squad is, according to one former officer, "a pressure cooker combined with a hand grenade with its



pin removed." The unit is a microcosm of competitive souls who know their worth and talents, and who understand their responsibilities. "Since this Intifadah began," claimed "B," a section head in one of the unit's operational teams, "we have lived and operated with an enormous weight on our shoulders. Go out and grab someone who is a terrorist, and you may have helped stop a terrorist on his way to doing something horrific. If your mission

ends without an arrest, then you have that sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach that you failed and that a bomber that you should have stopped is out there on his way to a shopping mall, a café, or a school. And, after an incident, like the Sbarro restaurant, when you tour the site and step over the bodies and the blood, it haunts you that maybe had you done something differently, maybe had you been someplace else and some other time, those

people would still be alive today."

Beyond the pressure of day-to-day operations, the life of a Ya'mas operator consists of endless training — from the time they volunteer for the force to their last day on the job when they hang up their *kefiyah* and their Mini-Uzi for good. Extensive psychological profiles are compiled on all volunteers, and anyone not deemed 100% stable is prohibited from even trying out for the units. According to some published reports, the selection process alone weeds out a remarkable 90% of all volunteers. The qualities sought in an undercover unit candidate are more mental than physical, explains one Israeli special operations officer. "You can train anyone to fire a weapon, run for 20 kilometers at a stretch, or march

(opposite) ISun Tzu noted that all warfare is based on deception — and Ya'mas operators are past masters of being at home in the sea where the terrorists swim. These Jerusalem Ya'mas operators pose as Palestinian vegetable merchants: Such a ruse could cover a surveillance, be used to elicit conversation with suspected terrorists or informants — or be a staging area for an active operation. Deep cover in the open is a Ya'mas specialty. (below) A Ya'mas operator, in drag as a Palestinian female, covers the team members who have dismantled van, with his Jericho 941 9mm pistol.



up a mountain with 50 kilograms on his back. But only a small minority of men have the mental stamina to learn how to assume a foreign identity, and cultivate it into a believable act."

The "Arabization" Process

The training for an undercover soldier is lengthy, and is dedicated to intelligence work, the art of masquerading, the "Arabization" of the fighter (from learning traditional customs and culture, to intensive language instruction). Only after the operator has mastered his new identity can intensive close-quarter combat instruction commence. Soldiers are taught to burst into buildings or vehicles, and to overcome armed individuals with speed rather than firepower, surprise rather than brute force. All

undercover unit operators are expert marksman, proficient in the martial arts, and recipients of advanced medical and communications training. All undercover operators are equipped with sophisticated communications equipment in various sizes, which enables the soldiers to maintain communication links among themselves and with backup units, even at long ranges. The men of Israel's various undercover commando teams are not taught to hate the Palestinians. On the contrary, they respect their abilities and their beliefs and they learn to emulate them.

It is just after 0700 hours on a training day in a top-secret counter-terrorist facility in central Israel. The operators from the Jerusalem Ya'mas are enjoying a quick breakfast before spending the

hot August day firing their weapons on a live-fire obstacle course designed to look like a Palestinian village. The breakfast — Arabic-coffee laced with cardamom and pita bread with goat cheese — is the kind of fare being eaten in Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron and east Jerusalem. The men remove a water pipe from their vehicle and finish their meal with a collective smoke of apple-flavored tobacco. Much of the banter is in Arabic. "I have to know how to talk like them, look like them, eat like them, laugh like them and even smell like them. I must know that if an old woman passes me in street I must respectfully move to the left, and if an old man passes me, I should greet him with the words *Salaam, Aleikum* ("Peace Be Unto You"). I must think in Arabic, react in Arabic, and ensure that the masquerade remains strong until the green light is given, my weapon is produced, and my true identity is finally compromised to the locals."

The ideal undercover unit operation is one in which no shots are fired, but Murphy's Law is as much a part of special operations as is the pumping surges of adrenaline, the kick of fear, and the cold metal of a CAR-15 assault rifle. On the night of 30 August 2001, the Jerusalem Ya'mas went into action, apprehending a heavily armed Palestinian en route to the city with explosives and automatic weapons. The terrorist, found in the village of Beit Hanina, was supported by a cover team that evaded the initial dragnet and sought refuge inside a building in the neighborhood called the "Engineer's Club," a Hamas stronghold named after assassinated bomb-maker Yehiya Ayyash. He was eventually cornered by a special operations dragnet and killed in a firefight.

One of the pillars of Israeli military



Following live-fire training scenario, operators are critiqued by team leader. (inset) Terrorist graffiti in the village of as-Sawiya, eastern Jerusalem — one of the main battlegrounds for the Ya'mas.



Jerusalem Ya'mas operators are briefed before a training assignment. An all-volunteer force, some 90% of applicants never make it past the psychological screening for this low-profile, high-value — and extremely high-stress force.

doctrine has always been that small, elite commando forces, often asked to achieve the impossible against overwhelming odds, has been one of the true equalizing elements in the balance of power between the State of Israel and her Arab adversaries. From Beirut to the Red Sea, Tunis to the decaying departure terminal in Entebbe, Uganda, Israel's special operations units have displayed an uncanny ability to neutralize the most formidable of foes and obliterate the most daunting of obsta-

cles in order to execute their missions. For 12 years, Israel's undercover units have fought a bloody and unnerving war, in darkness and under the microscope, against an enemy that is often difficult to locate and sometimes impossible to distinguish. The undercover units do not possess the luxury of operating in the open where retired generals can play Monday morning quarterback and allow their victories or follies to become political fodder. The undercover units do not operate in an arena of glory. A successful mission is often one that the public never hears of. Their bloody defeats are celebrated by the terrorists and scrutinized, with unforgiving candor, at home.

It is late at night inside the heavily-fortified Border Guard compound in

Jerusalem and a team of undercover operatives are preparing for a reconnaissance sortie near the no-man's land separating Jerusalem from Palestinian Authority lines near the city's frontier with Ramallah. Although there has been talk of a ceasefire, quickly orchestrated by Arafat following the World Trade Center attacks, the fighting continues as fears that Hamas will launch a suicide attack to add fuel to the fire, race through Israeli security circles. The operators ready their costumes, their documentation, and their weaponry, making sure that their Jericho pistols are clean and that their Mini-Uzis and M16s are ready for action. The operators, though, cannot take their eyes off

Continued on page 74



(left) Carrying the staple IMI Mini-Uzi SMG, an operator moves into position on a live-fire assault course. (above) Ya'mas operators hone their snatching-and-kidnapping skills. A clean snatch-and-grab is far safer to civilians in the area than an armed assault, and usually accomplishes the same purpose.

THE AGE OF THE TERRORIST PIRACY

An Ancient Scourge Becomes A Modern Threat

TEXT & PHOTOS BY AL J. VENTER

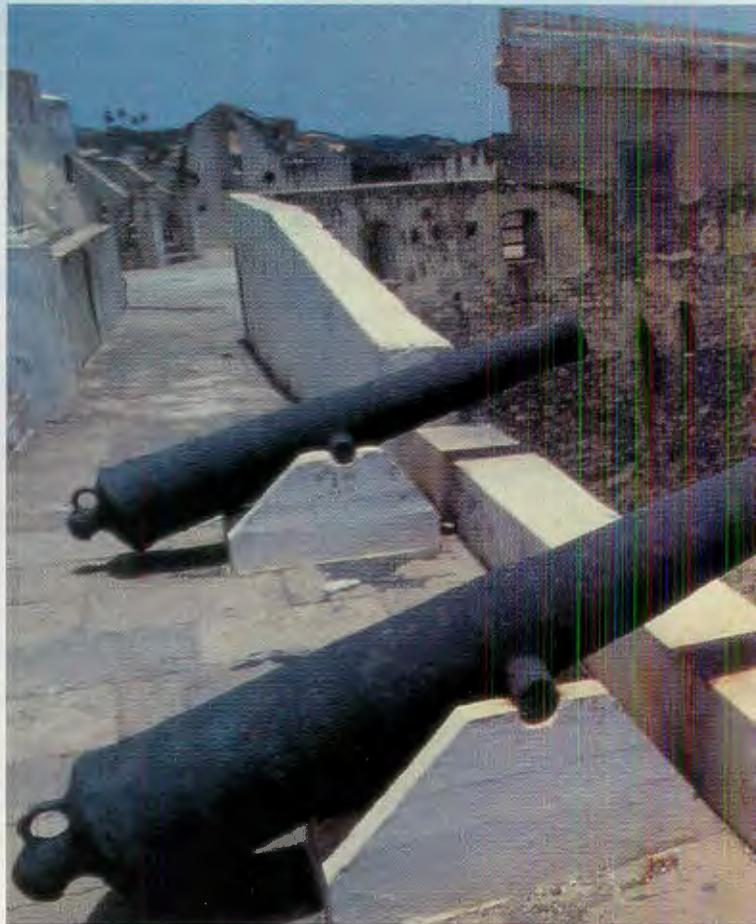
IT says a lot when the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris publishes excerpts from its annual ICC Piracy report, and this document is dubbed *Stories from the Front Line ...* Some of these incidents have caused the White House to take serious notice and act.

And for good reason: Worldwide, there were 335 pirate attacks on ships last year. The ICC report stressed that “the hijacking of a ship and the resale of its cargo requires huge resources and detailed planning.” It added that such actions usually involved a mother ship from which to launch attacks, require a ready supply of automatic weapons, false-identity documents for the ship and crew, and fake cargo manifests — together with an efficient broker network to fence the stolen goods.

Piracy has become big business. Further, there is evidence that a rogue government or two might be involved in some of the crimes — Somalia, for one. Certainly, said the ICC, it has to be so because individual pirates simply don't have the kind of resources listed: Some perhaps, but not all when one is dealing with thousands of tons of crude oil that still need refining, or 4,000 tons of sugar, or a shipment of coal.

In a BBC report last February, it was suggested that this kind of lawlessness was now so extensive that there was good evidence that organized crime on several continents was involved. Even though a ship has been repainted and given a new name, it still needs documentation, as well as some kind of government sanction to freely move about, the corporation's reporter suggested.

That, said the report, was still beyond the ability of ordinary criminal elements. The BBC also pointed out that nearly two dozen seafarers were murdered by pirates last year.





The Semi-Pros And The Big Leagues

While amateur pirates maintain powerful sway over some areas — in particular around the Philippines, Somalia, the Malacca Straits off Malaysia, West Africa, as well as in Indonesian waters — the hijackers have developed a system of terror of their own. If not checked, the long-term effects among the trading nations will almost certainly have international implications.

Osama bin Laden (prior to current hostilities in Afghanistan), for instance, had acquired a modest merchant marine fleet of his own. None of this was lost on Western intelligence agencies in the events following 11 September. (see “al-Qaida Goes Maritime,” May '02).

Asian nations too, are concerned over this unwholesome trend. The Beijing government last year arrested a dozen of its own citizens, together with an Indonesian, in Chinese territorial waters. They were charged with having grabbed the cargo ship *Cheung Son* on the high seas in November 1998. Having masqueraded as Chinese police officers to get onboard, the hijackers murdered all 23 crewmembers, threw their bodies overboard and made off with a cargo of furnace slag, which they sold for \$300,000.

China wasn't engaging in a PR/show-trial, either: A day after the trial in the southern city of Shanwei, all 13 men were

Piracy in West Africa dates to the beginning of seaborne commerce: Nigeria is one of the worst piracy nations in the Atlantic Ocean because of poor government maritime controls — and it hasn't been lost on the West that bin Laden is a favorite among Nigerian Muslims.

executed. The ship and its cargo have never been recovered.

Almost as macabre was an attack on the Indonesian flag vessel *MV Inabukwa* which, a year ago, was bound for Singapore with a cargo of tin ingots, tin concentrates and white pepper with a total value of \$2.2 million. Another group of pirates got onboard, arresting and blindfolding the 22 crewmembers, whom they dropped off on Pulkau Sayap, a deserted island. The incident only came to light a week later when the castaways were spotted by passing fishermen and rescued.

Following an alert put out by the International Maritime Board (IMB) Piracy Reporting Center, the vessel was intercepted by the Philippine Coast Guard and seven Indonesian pirates were arrested.

Full of surprises, modern pirates have added a new twist to stealing ships. In the past year a new trend has emerged in the waters around Indonesia and Malaysia, whereby pirates attack and kidnap the crew for ransom. Previously confined to Somali waters, this ploy usually does not involve exorbitant sums: Ship owners usually pay to avoid complications.

Though the number of these incidents hasn't been large, the ICC reckons that most such attacks go unreported because owners are warned that they or their families will suffer if they don't comply with the demand for secrecy.

A British security authority maintains that this kind of situation plays directly into the hands of people associated with an organization like al-Qaeda, especially since Indonesia has one of the world's largest Muslim populations. Strategists point out that conditions in South Asia are ideal for any such group to use coercion to grab a ship — and buy the time needed to set in motion a train of events that could end with British or American dead. We've already seen the beginning of this potentiality in the southern Philippines.

Aware of this potential and under considerable American pressure to do something about it, both the Jakarta and Manila governments have recently detached warships from their fleets to patrol the areas worst affected. Last February, Indonesia sent six navy ships to the Malacca Straits, which separate Indonesia from Malaysia. The busiest sea-lane in the world, some 600 ships pass through this waterway daily. Indonesian Navy spokesman Admiral Franky Kayhatu disclosed that his country now had a fleet of 26 ships and 10 aircraft conducting patrols throughout his nation's waters.



(above) Modern piracy has become big, brazen business. This oil tanker was recently hijacked by pirates, and an attempt made to give it a new name and identity — before it was arrested by the Indian Navy. (below) No pirate operation is a match for the maritime might of any industrial nation — but U.S. warships, such as the destroyer U.S.S. Peterson, seen here patrolling the Med, are spread thinly across the world's oceans and, as the world's policeman, America can only be as affective as its assets allow.

U.S. Navy



A Problem in All Waters

None of these events can be viewed in isolation. According to the International Chamber of Commerce *Weekly Piracy Report* for 25 March this year, there was at least one pirate attack or attempted hijack every day the previous week. These ranged from attempts to hijack oil tankers at the Pertamina oil terminal in Indonesia as well as at Halida, India, to an effort to gain control over a bulk carrier in Vietnamese waters. There were similar reports from Nigeria. Before that, a Honduran ship with a cargo of coal, the *TB Ocean Silver*, was seized by pirates off the coast of Central America.

The same week, the tug *Guan Seng 2*, together with a barge — lying at anchor at Tanjung Balai in the Java Sea — was hijacked by pirates. Though the crew was unhurt, both craft are still missing. The ICC reports that the names, colors and flags of both craft have probably been changed,

who have attempted to board merchant ships. It also stresses that Somali waters offer the highest risk of all for hijackings, and ships are warned to keep at least 50 miles — and if possible 100 miles — from that coast

• South and Central America

Countries listed with piracy problems by the ICC, some of them serious, are Brazil, Columbia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

In a bid to limit maritime piracy, the ICC recommends that in the light of events following 11 September, all ships maintain active anti-piracy watches. They should also report attacks and suspicious movements of craft to the IMB Piracy reporting Center, in Kuala Lumpur.

Ship owners haven't been altogether inactive, as well. In conjunction with the International Maritime Board and law-enforcement agencies around the world, CLS (a European satellite company) has established the Shiploc system where-

Portland, Oregon, is typical of known terrorist targets: As one of the biggest shipping terminals on the West Coast, its gas and fuel ships are a major terrorist target — or, if successfully hijacked, a weapon of mass destruction.

which is the standard *modus operandi* in this type of freebooting.

Before that, a gang of 15 pirates hijacked a Malaysian tanker in the South China Sea. They beat up the captain, held his crew captive and took their time about siphoning off 2,500 tons of fuel oil onto another small tanker that had been waiting nearby and was brought alongside after they had gained control. Observers said afterwards that the entire operation was extremely well managed and there were indications of contacts inside the "system." For instance, it all happened so quickly that there was no time for the crew to send out distress signals.

Piracy flash points highlighted by the ICC for the month of March include:

• Southeast Asia and the Indian Sub-Continent

Malaysia's Malacca Straits, as well as the ports from Penang and Sandakan; Bangladesh (Chittagong and Mongla at berth); India (Chennai, Cochin, Haldia, Kandla and Tuticorin anchorages); the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

• Africa and the Red Sea

Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal, Tanzania, Cameroon, Angola, Ghana. The report warns that in the Gulf of Aden there are several squadrons of between four to six fast boats crewed by men with modern automatic weapons,

by pirated ships can be tracked by satellite. The heart of the system is a small device the size of a shoebox, that is secreted onboard with its own back-up battery. Once grabbed, the ship continues to relay data about its position, course and other details to facilitate easy tracking. Such devices can be secreted in containers of high-value cargo, as well.

Several ships have been recovered in this way, including the *Tirta Niagra* which last year had left Penang's Butterworth Pier with a cargo of palm oil bound for India.

There is also a strong move — currently being urgently initiated by Washington — that all seagoing vessels of more than 500 tons be fitted with transponders, not altogether unlike the equipment provided by Shiploc.

These devices are likely to be similar to those fitted on all



Continued on page 81

DEAD OR ALIVE?

Is Lt. Cmdr. Michael Speicher A POW In Iraq?

BY DALE B. COOPER

It has been more than 11 years since Navy Lieutenant Commander Michael Speicher's F/A-18 Hornet was apparently shot down by an Iraqi MiG-25 Foxbat's air-to-air missile on Night One of the Persian Gulf War while flying a suppression-of-enemy-air-defenses [SEAD] mission about 130 miles southwest of Baghdad.

To date, the U.S. government still doesn't know "Spike's" fate. However, an Iraqi Lieutenant General, who defected from Iraq in 1986, has told *SOF* that Speicher was alive when he hit the ground in the Iraqi desert during the

night of 17 January 1991 — and has been a prisoner of war since then.

During an exclusive interview with *SOF*, Lieutenant General Fawzi al-Shamari, who commanded nine divisions during the Iraq-Iran war, said the information came from an Iraqi soldier who defected last year.

"The soldier says he saw the missing American pilot about six months ago, before Thanksgiving [2001], in a prison in Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, some 100 miles north of Baghdad," said Fawzi.

At the time the former prison guard alleges to have seen Lieutenant Commander Speicher, he was being held with some Kuwaiti POWs who Saddam has also denied holding in captivity.

"The guard told us that the American was in bad shape. He had been beaten, and was bruised, apparently from beatings he has sustained over the years," Fawzi said.

Some officials in Washington have thrown cold water on reports like this. They suggest that if Iraq had captured Speicher on the night he ejected from his crippled fighter, Saddam Hussein would have tried to exploit him long ago.

"Not so," says General Fawzi who believes the day will come when Saddam Hussein will offer to trade Speicher for something he wants.

This alleged sighting has generated a lot of interest at the highest levels of the Department of Defense. Recently, I was contacted by three special agents from the Defense Intelligence Agency who wanted to know what General Fawzi had told me.

Asked about Fawzi's credibility, one of the agents, an acknowledged expert on Iraq, told *SOF*, "Fawzi is a straight-shooter," although the agent couldn't necessarily vouch for some other general officers overseas who serve as a conduit for information coming out of Iraq.

U.S. Navy pilot Lt. Cmdr. Michael Speicher was shot down over Iraq in 1991 while flying his F/A-18 fighter during the first night of Operation Desert Storm. U.S. intelligence agencies have obtained information indicating that Speicher might be alive and in captivity in Iraq. The U.S. Navy has moved Speicher's status from "Killed in Action" to "Missing in Action."



Getty Images

March Madness

The *Washington Times* reported that in early March of this year British intelligence told American counterparts of an American pilot being held captive in Baghdad.

The newspaper reported that the British alerted U.S. investigators that an Iraqi source had told them that only two high-ranking Iraqi officials were permitted to see the American pilot.

This was not the only alleged sighting that surfaced in March. *The New York Times* reported that two Iraqi defectors who worked in Iraqi intelligence said they had worked in an underground prison where 80 Kuwaitis captured during the Gulf War were being held.

"Saddam is a sick motherfucker," said a DoD agent who has been working the Speicher case for years, and is the reputed expert when it comes to its information. He told *SOF* he has briefed everyone who has a need to know: key members of Congress, the White House, Defense Department, State Department, Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency.

"We are bound and determined to find out what happened to Speicher," said the agent, who asked not to be identified.

Last November, the *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper in Norfolk, Va., home of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, asked the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs to account for Speicher's disappearance.

Dr. Fahmi El-Qaisy, head of the ministry's legal department, said the Iraqi government doesn't have Speicher. He offered the following explanation:

"It is believed that the pilot had either perished while he was on the ground or been eaten by ravenous animals in the region or buried by a shepherd at the time and that the elapse of five years before initiating the process of fact-finding makes it difficult to find any trace of him," El-Qaisy said.

The night Speicher was was shot down, then-Secretary of

Defense Dick Cheney told a Pentagon news conference the 33-year-old naval aviator from Jacksonville, Florida was dead.

DoD Decided Speicher's Fate Early On

On 22 May 1991, the United States Navy approved the official "finding of death."

Before Speicher's status was officially changed from MIA to KIA, Republican Senators Bob Smith, of New Hampshire, and Rod Gramms, of Minnesota, say Pentagon officials told them evidence had not been found to indicate that Speicher could have survived the crash.

Smith and Gramms claim a Qatari military officer and his hunting party came upon Speicher's wreckage in December 1993.

When asked what is worth hunting in the desert of southwestern Iraq, the DoD agents who quizzed me said the hunting party was engaged in the ancient sport of falconry when they stumbled upon the wreckage of Speicher's plane. They say in early 1994 the general officer, who currently works in the Qatari Foreign Ministry, forwarded to U.S. military officials pictures of the plane's cockpit canopy, and a piece of metal with serial numbers on it. One of the agents who has been intimately involved in the Speicher case "for years" told *SOF* the Qatari officer also carried out the HUD, or heads-up display, from the cockpit.

Asked about a report that the Qatari officer also saw the ejection seat near the crash site, the agent told *SOF*, "I can't confirm that report," but the agent added, "He was a pilot, and would have certainly been familiar with ejection seats had he seen one that day."

Answering a request from the National Alliance of POW and MIA Families in July 1999, Robert Jones, then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Personnel Affairs said no radio calls [Mayday] or beepers [Emergency Locator Beacon] were heard and no signals were observed that night.

"Upon completion of the strike group's mission, Search-



(above) Canopy of Speicher's jet stands like a tombstone in the Iraqi desert. (below) Rim of cockpit found intact at crash site.



DoD Photos

Crash-site specialists did locate the canopy, evidence Speicher had begun the ejection sequence, but were unable to locate the ejection seat the Qatari officer said he saw near the impact area.

They also located a U.S. Nomex flight suit approximately 3.5 kilometers northeast of the crash site, but found no sign of human remains.

and-Rescue [SAR] forces were alerted and possible divert airfields were contacted with negative results," wrote Jones.

"Upon termination of combat operations in Iraq, the Government of Iraq returned remains purportedly associated with Lt. Cmdr. Speicher to U.S. Government control," added Jones, "However these remains were later determined not to correlate to Speicher through blood-typing and DNA analysis."

Following up on a lead obtained through from the Qatari General, Jones told the Alliance of Families the crash site was located in December 1993 by a Qatari hunting party, and confirmed in April 1994 by U-2 photo files.

In May 1994 — more than three years after Speicher's plane was downed — Pentagon officials indicated in a secret memorandum that a U.S. spy satellite had photographed a "man-made symbol" at the crash site earlier that year.

Pentagon planners devised a covert operation in 1994 to search the site for clues to Speicher's fate, but the clandestine mission was killed in December 1994 by Army General John Shalikashvili, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He decided the risk of U.S. casualties was simply too high to justify the secret mission.

In 1995, crash-site specialists from the U.S. Navy, and forensic anthropologists from the Casualty Identification Laboratory in Hawaii entered Iraq under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] with permission from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to visit the crash site.

They found the site in the desert, but noted a large back-fill present in the area where the cockpit should have been located. This led them to believe the original site had been excavated, and picked clean of critical parts.

Crash-site specialists did locate the canopy, evidence Speicher had begun the ejection sequence, but were unable to locate the ejection seat the Qatari officer said he saw near the impact area. They also located a U.S. Nomex flight suit



With afterburners blazing, a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet, like the one Speicher flew, launches from USS Enterprise (CVN65) for a night-time strike against Iraq on 17 December 1998 during Operation Desert Fox.

approximately 3.5 kilometers northeast of the crash site, but found no sign of human remains. In addition, the team also discovered life-support equipment and a 20mm shell approximately 1 kilometer east of the flight suit.

Jones says the relatively good condition of the flight suit and pilot-related materials, the method in which they were found, and the presence of a 20mm shell indicate these items may not have originated where they were recovered.

Declassified Document

On 19 March 1999, Senators Smith and Gramms wrote to then-Navy Secretary Richard Danzig asking him to reconsider and change or modify the "finding of death" determination made by the Secretary of the Navy's designee on 22 May 1991 with respect to Lt. Cmdr. Speicher.

Persistent reports that Speicher might have survived the shootdown prompted Danzig to take the rare action of changing Speicher's status on 11 January 2001 to Missing in Action.

Now, Republican Senator Pat Roberts, of Kansas, who sits on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Armed Services Committee, wants Speicher, who was born in Kansas City, Kan., to be listed as a Prisoner of War.

No parachute was seen during the night-time engagement in the skies west of Baghdad, nor was there any attempt by Speicher to signal by radio, beacon or other means, but the intel community concluded that the lack of a parachute, radio call or other signals are *not* definitive indicators of a pilot's death.

Shortly after coalition forces signed a ceasefire agreement with Iraq, that country began repatriating captured coalition personnel. Iraq released 21 U.S. military personnel to the custody of the International Committee of the Red Cross on 4 and 5 March 1991.

With the exception of Lt. Cmdr. Speicher and a Saudi Arabian pilot, all other coalition airmen downed over land during the war with Iraq were accounted for. Baghdad either released the airmen or returned their remains which were later positively identified.

Later in March 1991, Iraq returned a small amount of human remains from a pilot identified only as "Mickel." However, subsequent DNA tests performed on a soft tissue fragment and hair bearing "skin" allegedly related to Speicher determined the remains were human, but not those of Michael Scott Speicher.

Although the agent who has been working the Speicher case for a very long time refused to reply to the question, "Is Speicher dead or alive?" one gets the impression he feels he is alive. Why would he be so interested in what the Iraqi general had to say if Speicher was dead?

In December 1993, the document obtained by SOF indicates a U.S. F/A-18 crash site in southwestern Iraq was



Post-Operation Desert Storm assessment photograph of an Iraqi aircraft bunker with the remains of a MIG-25 Foxbat after being attacked with a 2,000-pound laser-guided bomb. This photograph was shown by Maj. Gen. Charles F. Wald, U.S. Air Force, during a press briefing on NATO Operation Allied Force in the Pentagon on 28 May 1999.

located and U.S. authorities were notified. The wreckage was confirmed to be that of Lt. Cmdr. Speicher's aircraft. The site was located on imagery in April 1994, using U.S. U-2 imagery taken in 1991, and officially designated, "BUNO 163470."

On 14 February 1995, the ICRC, at the request of the United States Government, contacted Iraq about the U.S. desire to excavate the crash site.

Baghdad delayed the request until late October 1995 before granting permission for the team's entry into Iraq.

The investigators passed the approximate location of the crash site to their Iraqi counterparts on the night of 9 December. The next morning, the team of about two dozen experts traveled to the site in the vicinity of Tulu ad Dulaym, Wadi Thumayl, Republic of Iraq, where it spent the next six days charting the location of wreckage and sifting through the sand for Speicher's remains. They were allowed to bring only authorized equipment. No video of the site was permitted, although team members were allowed to take still photographs, some of which SOF has obtained. The quality of the pictures is poor, because the team members who shot them were not professional photographers and were not using high-quality digital cameras.

The ICRC team found evidence that the site had been expertly searched within one month prior to its arrival in Iraq. And a U.S. Navy F/A-18 aircraft mishap investigator who participated in the site survey believes major portions of the cockpit and instrument bay section were removed years prior to the team's arrival in Iraq.

Speicher Apparently Punched-Out

Analysis of the wreckage by U.S. Navy experts concluded that Speicher initiated the ejection sequence, jettisoned the canopy, and likely ejected from his stricken aircraft prior to the crash.

U.S. Navy analysis of the wreckage showed the forward part of Speicher's aircraft suffered a "catastrophic" even in the early morning hours of 17 January 1991.

A member of the "Sunliners" of Strike Fighter Squadron Eight-One (VFA-81), Carrier Air Wing 17, he had launched off the deck of *USS Saratoga* in the Red Sea and was to have participated in an airstrike in southwestern Iraq when he was apparently jumped by an Iraqi MiG and shot down.

At the time his aircraft was hit, Speicher's jet was traveling at .92 mach, or 540 knots, at 28,000 feet. Analysis reveals the Hornet suffered a severe loss of power prior to the canopy being jettisoned. Evidence indicates the impact of the Iraqi air-to-air missile threw the aircraft laterally off its flight path at least 50 to 60 degrees, subjecting Speicher and his aircraft to a minimum 6-G load.



The wreckage of Speicher's F/A-18 in Iraq. Investigators concluded that both engines were in relatively good shape and had no "entrance or exit wounds," indicating battle damage.

According to U.S. Navy data, non-combat F/A-18 ejection statistics reveal that 90 percent of all pilots who pull the handle survive. This same data shows that of the pilots who ejected over land and survived, 70 percent were injured in some way.

U.S. Navy investigators concluded that the pilot was not incapacitated by the missile hit. Flight surgeons and aircraft life-support experts believe Speicher would have had at least 85- to 90-percent chance of surviving [with second-degree burns to exposed skin] the resultant flash-fire and aerodynamic forces that brought down his aircraft.

Several Gulf War veterans and U.S. military aircrew say Speicher was probably well-protected from the flash-fire by his Nomex flight suit. But Navy experts concluded that Speicher probably was injured during ejection. These injuries could have resulted from the fury of being hurled out of a plane going more than 500 miles per hour, or the shock of hitting the ground in darkness.

Investigators were able to examine other parts of the aircraft, including large portions of the wings and fuselage behind the cockpit, the cockpit canopy frame, the engines and wing pylons. In addition, the team recovered a data-storage unit and fragments of life-support equipment, as well as a flight suit handed over by the Iraqis.

The Big Mystery

During the six days the survey team spent at the crash site in desert of southwestern Iraq, the Iraqi escort officers directed ICRC team members to a Bedouin boy who purportedly "found" a flight suit shortly after the crash.

A subsequent examination by the Casualty Identification Laboratory Hawaii concluded it showed minimal weathering and adherent soil.

In its report to the Senate Intelligence Committee, the CIA said, "We believe the Iraqis planted the flight suit near the site where the Iraqis claimed it was discovered."

But no one, including U.S. Navy experts, has been able to explain the fact that the suit was the same type and size worn by Michael Speicher. Navy experts who examined the flight suit determined that the location and shape of the Velcro used to affix patches to the suit were correct for Speicher and his squadron. Furthermore, the condition of the flight suit indicated that the naval aviator was *not* in the aircraft when it impacted the ground.

Specialists determined that damage to the recovered flight suit indicates it was exposed to heat for only a few seconds. The suit showed only a trace of possible blood, although SOF has been told DNA testing was unable to determine if the stain was Speicher's blood.

Continued on page 76

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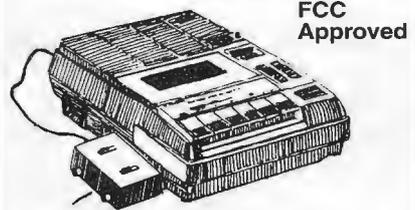
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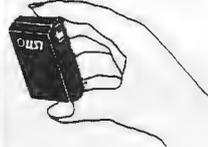
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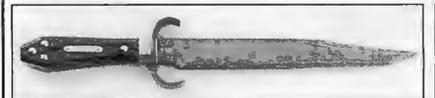
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MODEL 5100 LONG RANGE RIFLE:**

Massive machined 4140 receiver; adjustable cheekpiece, buttstock and bipod. The 31" Badger Barrels Inc. 4145 broached chrome molly barrels are 32-34 Rockwell C, 8 land and groove, RH twist 1 in 15, 0.500-0.5105 ID and are specially formulated for long life and exceptional accuracy using all bullet designs. An extremely efficient muzzle brake reduces recoil and noise, and eliminates downward blast and muzzle flash. The buttstock is removable for ease of transportation. The rifle can be broken down into compact components without the use of tools. The trigger pull is adjustable. Barrel is fluted and fully free-floating.

The model 5100 is capable of extreme accuracy at ranges in excess of 2,000 yards. The energy of the .50 caliber projectile is well above 1,000 ft-lbs. at that range. In the hands of a skilled marksman, the model 5100 will deliver _ MOA (Minute Of Angle) accuracy.

30mm rings included. Weighs 36 lbs.

**THIS IS THE BEST .50 AVAILABLE FOR USE AS A HEAVY
DUTY FIELD RIFLE!**

DISCOVER-VISA-MC **\$3295** SHIPPING/INS. PREPAID

The Beauty of Functional Design

“Goddaaam! That is one ugly rifle!” I heard as I opened the OD green Starlight hard case that was home to the English-built rifle. “What the hell kinda Remington is that with that weird fandangled stock?” a Marine asked. I responded that the rifle wasn’t a Remington and went back to gathering my gear and ammunition for the day’s shooting. “May not be a prom queen,” I muttered under my breath, “but she can sure shoot!”

The last 1st Marine Division Scout/Sniper course had been loaned an Accuracy International (AI) Arctic Warfare (AW) sniper rifle to test and evaluate, as well as to see what the up-and-coming snipers thought of it as a weapon system. Each of the students uti-

Accuracy International’s Sniper Rifles May Look Like Janet Reno, But They Shoot Like Annie Oakley.

BY ODIN CROWE

Photos by Tonya Zalenski

lized their Marine Corps issue M40A1s in all of the graded events, however once they had passed a portion of the class, the instructors allowed them to test-out the Accuracy International. The M40A1 is built by the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., using a Remington action, Unertl 10-power scope and a McMillan stock (see “Looking For a Few Good Marksmen,” June ’02).

“The students were skeptical of the AI for the first 10 rounds because they were familiar with their M40A1s. However, once they got used to it, they loved it,” Sergeant Spurling, the marksmanship instructor for the course, responded when asked what the students thought of the weapon system.

The Accuracy International AW was built from the ground up as a sniper rifle, as opposed to the M40A1, which is a highly tuned and accurized hunting rifle. The entire concept of rifle construction was re-evaluated when Accuracy International was born in Portsmouth, England in 1982. Since its inception, the AI has become one of the world’s foremost sniping systems, and as a testament to its quality and combat performance, it is in use by militaries and peacekeepers in more than 50



Sniper, outfitted in Special Operations Equipment ghillie suit, with Accuracy International AW in .308, stops to admire the view.

countries. At the time this went to print, the Accuracy International has seen action in virtually every theater of the world, to include Northern Ireland, Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Desert Storm and, most recently, with the coalition in Afghanistan. The owner's manual is printed in a number of languages including French, English, German and Dutch.

The AI AW, without scope, retails for a little under \$4,800, which compared to a Remington rifle, seems exorbitant — until one weighs what he gets for the money. The Accuracy International AW features an anodized aluminum-alloy, backboned chassis, to which the flat-bottomed receiver body is bolted and bonded at the magazine well, to provide extremely rigid barrel support. The free-floating barrel is threaded and torqued into the action. Thus, the weapon system can be employed in numerous climates, altitudes, temperatures and humidity with a minimal change of bullet impact. The weapon system can also take an uncanny amount of abuse and still remain inherently accurate. Unlike the M40A1 and A3, the AI features a double-stack, 10-round, detachable, box magazine that allows for faster follow-up shots espe-



Tools of the sniper trade: SOE Ghillie Suit, Black Hills 175-gr Moly .308 ammo, Leica 800-yard rangefinder, Leica 10x40 binos, AI AW rifle.

cially when dealing with moving targets. The rifle comes equipped with a removable Parker-Hale bipod, manufactured by Accuracy International, which is extremely stable and, more importantly, "grunt-proof."

The students preferred to shoot the AI off of their Deuce gear-and-ass packs as they had been trained to shoot their M40A1s. Left-handed shooters seemed to love the rifle and could employ it faster and more accurately than their issued M40s. "The bolt is smooth, shaving time off of our multi-target drills," commented one of the instructors. When I asked one of the Marine students what he thought of the Accuracy International after he had fired it on the known-distance course,

he commented, "The Accuracy International is superior to the M40A because of its inherent durability while still maintaining zero. I also like the fact that the weapon system doesn't require an armorer to keep her running. It is 'grunt-proof.'"

Interchangeable Components, Reliable Zero

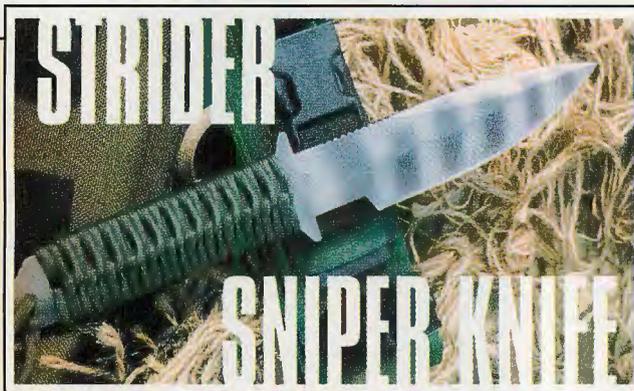
On stalking exercises, the AI was used without a dragbag, and miraculously, still held zero, which is quite an accom-

plishment. The weapon system was designed with the battlefield in mind. The engineers at AI planned the weapon to have parts that were interchangeable in the field, without need of shop facilities. What this equates to is that when your barrel life is near its end, or a mission is about to be undertaken that requires a can or suppressor, the operator can obtain another barrel, and change it in the field (a quick-detachable can is also available to law-enforcement and military units). The average time it takes to change the barrel is seven minutes. Ten minutes if it is your first time and you are not adept with Allen or torque wrenches.

When the Accuracy International staff shows up to demonstrate the

Strider Knives, of San Marcos, California, has been presenting a special "Sniper" MT Mod 10 8541 knife to the Honor Graduate of the 1st Marine Division Scout Sniper School for the past few years. The number 8541, is the Marine Corps MOS for Scout Sniper, and is stamped into the blade. Strider Knives will only sell this special hardcore knife to USMC Scout/Snipers who can prove that they are certified as 8541s. Strider will sell the same knife *not stamped* with "8541" to anyone who needs one.

The entire knife is made from ATS 34 steel, known for its strength and edge-holding ability, and is flat-ground and heat-treated by the renowned Paul Bos, of San Diego. The spear-point blade features a mean tiger-stripe look, a side effect of heat-treating process. The handle is wrapped in 550 parachute cord for a sure grip when coming in contact with



Strider "8541" knife, the perfect combination to the Accuracy International AW.

water, sweat, or blood. The 8541 knife is housed in an awesome Special Operations Equipment sheath, featuring a Kydex insert, which stands up to anything, and everything, that one can throw at it. The SOE sheath allows the operator to wear the blade in myriad configurations on his LBE.

Strider Knives definitely lives up to its motto, "Highspeed tools for Hardcore Individuals," with

the 8541-stamped MT Mod 10 knife. This must-have knife retails for \$325.00 and is well worth every penny.

Strider Knives, Dept. SOE, 120 North Pacific Street, L7, San Marcos, CA 92069; phone: 760-471-8275; on the web at www.badassknives.com.

Special Operations Equipment, Dept. SOE, 234 South Coast Highway, Oceanside, CA 92054; phone: 760-722-0004; on the web at www.soegear.com.

weapon and its capabilities, they conduct what is referred to as the "bounce test." The representative will fire a series of shots at 100 yards, usually key-holing or clover-leafing each group. The weapon is then bounced on the buttstock several times, each bounce gaining in altitude until the weapon is 2-1/2 to 3 feet off of the ground. They then take the scope off, remove and replace the barrel, reattach the scope and fire a second string of shots. The group will hit in the same place. *Every time ... same group.*

The weapon system was designed and is manufactured to be completely interchangeable. Barrels are not the only part of the weapon that can be changed in the field. A bolt from a different AW can be dropped into the weapon, and it will function flawlessly. This demonstrates the inherent accuracy of the weapon, as well as the fact that an individual can interchange parts in the field. There is no need for armorers to maintain the rifle, freeing up his time to work on other weapon systems in his arsenal that are "down." This allows the sniper to become totally in charge of his weapon and its maintenance, as well as his destiny and success on the battlefield. Accuracy International, therefore, has updated the sniping community by empowering the sniper to also be the mechanic



Schmidt & Bender 3.5-12 variable scope. Note the Black Hills 175-grain Moly .308 in chamber.

(much to the dismay of armorers).

The rifle was extremely accurate, holding groups sub-minute of angle. The AW that Accuracy International loaned me to test and evaluate had been around the block a few times, yet it still shoots sub-quarter minute of angle religiously. One of the Marine Snipers used the rifle to shoot a match using Black

Hills 175-grain Moly and achieved key-hole groups on each string of fire at both the 100- and 200-yard lines. In my findings, the Black Hills 175-grain Moly performed flawlessly in any situation that I exposed it to, holding phenomenal groups.

Before coming into contact with the Accuracy International AW, I was a die-hard Remington fan. After putting the AW through the wringer on the known- and unknown-distance courses, stalking with it, and firing it in angle shots in the snow and mountains of Colorado, I have been converted.

The AI AE

Accuracy International just began importing a new rifle for the U.S. market, specifically the law-enforcement community. The entry-level Accuracy International, known as the AE, retails for \$2,493, which allows police departments to afford this exceptional rifle. The AE is like a kid brother to the AW, the biggest difference being that as opposed to the flat-bottomed receiver on the AW, the AE features a round receiver which, Accuracy International commented, costs the manufacturer less to make, saving the end-user money. The new weapon system is said to be outstanding, and in the near future will be sure to see action both on the battlefield with the military, as well as on the street with law-enforcement SWAT teams. A representative of Accuracy

Continued on page 76

Accuracy International AW

Caliber: 7.62x51 NATO (.308 Winchester)

Weight: 7.81 kg (17.18 lb.) with magazine, scope and bipod.

Action: Manual, turn-bolt, three front locking lugs, 60-degree opening, 6mm striker fall, integral sight rail.

Trigger: Two-stage, adjustable

Barrel: Stainless match-grade, four grooves, RH 1-12 twist, fitted muzzle brake.

Safety: Blocks trigger and firing pin and locks bolt in closed position; can only be applied when rifle is cocked.

Stock: Synthetic, aluminum bedding inserts

Magazine: 10-round detachable box

Scope: Schmidt & Bender Mk II 3-12x50; environmentally sealed for extreme military conditions, large windage and elevation drums; MRAD (milliradian) reticle.

Mount and Sight: one-piece, integral part of sight/rifle, to ensure no zero-shift and robust attachment.

Bipod: Universal, quick-detach, folding; provides 10 degrees roll to either side.

Sling Points: Six sling points, fitted

Rifle price: \$4,712

Scope price: \$1,778

Accuracy International AW

THE MODERN SCOURGE OF SEX SLAVERY

The Children, The Desperate, The Helpless,
The Homeless Fall Victim To The Heartless

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

Hong Kong: loud, decadent, exotic, dazzling day and night with flashing, brilliant, multi-colored lights. Quite a contrast from Paris — the serene, romantic city of warmth, hope and dreams that I had just left. Hong Kong's streets were lined with makeshift shelters used to sell meager goods by day, and as shelters by night for some of the million Chinese who had escaped the tyranny of the Communist regime on the mainland.

The ex-pat community and the elite Hong Kong Chinese, on the other hand, had built multi-million-dollar empires that were symbolized by high-rises, skyscrapers, mansions with servants, luxury Chinese junks and decadent lifestyles. East had met West, the self-indulgent *nouveau-riche* living side-by-side with the impoverished homeless in the most exciting, free-spirited British colony on the planet.

I was studying International Law at Hong Kong University and interning with a Chinese law firm that consisted of some 20 male Chinese lawyers. On Thursday nights, my Chinese attorney hosts would invite me to their clubs, for a "man's" night out, where we would play Mahjongg until the wee hours of the morning after having been fed feasts fit for royalty. During the course of the evening, delicately beautiful Chinese girls would circulate until each of the men decided which of the "hostesses" he was to spend the night with. Dressed in elegant native Chinese evening gowns, the girls floated around naturally with all of the arrogance of fairytale princesses until they had been chosen by their prince. Not ready for this new lifestyle, I would graciously excuse myself when it was time

for the men to take their prizes to their rooms, and my hosts would provide a limo that would take me home. I didn't dwell on the routine, which I soon learned was commonplace with foreign businessmen as well, and the thought never hit me as to the youth of the girls since I was nearly their age, two decades younger than my hosts. I just figured: different culture, a different lifestyle.

I had met a most jovial, gracious and boisterous Australian journalist for the *Reader's Digest* who took me regularly to the lively Foreign Press Club on Ice House Street and introduced me to members of the ex-pat community. He was inseparable from his even more boisterous, heavy-drinking, opium-appreciating Chinese buddy, the son of a Chinese war lord who had escaped the Mao massacres. The two bragged about going to Bangkok for the weekend because the son of the war lord liked "little girls." I didn't realize until I had seen the war lord's son in Bangkok with the same U.S. Colonel friend he had partied with in Hong Kong a few years later that the "little girls" that they went to "play with" were merely adolescents.

My career subsequently carried me to the transitioning Russia, Poland, Hungary, the Middle East and the violently disintegrating Yugoslavia. In the former Eastern Bloc, especially in Budapest, the streets were swarming with scantily dressed, largely young and often breathtakingly beautiful hookers. Any Westerner could have had their choice among many who desired to escape their poor, hopeless existence. Occasionally, I would notice with some humor an old man being hustled by a young prostitute or with some embarrassment catch a glimpse of an old man pawing a young girl as he took the elevator up to his hotel room.



Agence France Presse/Krista Ziemeris

When in Bosnia, I was chatting with some MPRI (Military Professional Resources, Inc.) retired officers training the new army and integrating Croatian and Bosnian military units into a national army. One retired Colonel told me of the abuses by peacekeepers, specifically relating an incident in which he had met three peacekeepers in Cambodia who had purchased a 13-year-old Cambodian virgin to service the three of them during the one-year tour of duty.

"She told me that the oral sex was better, since it wasn't so painful," he said.

Wherever the soldiers and the peacekeepers were, the girls flocked, with their short, tight skirts and exposed chests. Whether in the war-torn Bosnia, in Kosovo, or in peaceful Panama, the soldiers had their pick of what appeared to me a lot of willing players.

As I began to recognize more and more the plight of many of the innocents in the sex trade, I began to do my share by giving an occasional lecture in my international law class or by convincing *Soldier Of Fortune* not to run any more "Mail-Order Bride" ads, as I believed that the industry was shady, to say the least.

Recently, I was at an open-house in a penthouse suite in the Mirage in Las Vegas, hosted by a manufacturer of M-4 accessories for the special operations community. A Filipino present, who worked with the peacekeepers deployed to the

Cambodian policeman escorts 11-year-old Vietnamese girl from brothel in Toul Kork red-light district of Phnom Penh: Six girls from 11-13 years of age were rescued from brothel that offered only young children. Trafficked from Vietnam, children were rescued during sting operation involving Cambodian Interpol and local police, led by End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT).

Philippines, asked me bluntly: "You write about the rights of thugs like terrorists in your military tribunal articles and write with some distaste about the treatments of terrorists who are tortured. Why have you not written about a large group of helpless victims and their rights?"

In the Philippines, as in India, Cambodia, and other impoverished countries, he told me, many families sell their daughters for \$350. That sum supports the families for one year.

"Or how about the U.S. executive who, after he had been killed in a plane wreck, had his estate sued by a group of Asian girls, [each of whom] he had gotten pregnant. During his business trip, the executive would round-up teenage virgins, get them pregnant and take off." In his warped world, the man believed he was propagating whatever his greatness was.

"The oldest profession on earth" has evolved into one that is a virtual slavery, savagely forced upon its laborers. As profits soar, and the killer AIDS reaches epidemic proportions, the forced laborers are getting younger.

200 million people are victims of contemporary forms of slavery—and many of course are women who are trafficked for sex — [this] is a current figure. It's happening now. Today.

Nothing had prepared me for even a glimpse into that unimaginable hell that the sexual slavery trade has become.

With all the trappings of a horror show — a cast of players that span from corrupt government officials, to slimy underground characters, to the most vulnerable victims, to zealous human rights workers on the other hand — the trafficking in women and children for sex has reached nightmare proportions. Add desperate, poverty-stricken family members, lecherous and greedy recruiting agents, and reckless or perverted clients in pursuit of cut-rate pleasure, and the outcome is appalling and tragic.

As the gap between the rich and poor widens, criminal mafias in Russia and Eastern Europe, Asia and throughout the world operate without constraints across transparent borders. Accelerating international trade, booming and uncontrolled Internet and media pornography and ever-increasing tourism pave a fertile path for what is becoming one of the world's most profitable traded commodities —

women and child prostitutes.

Readily available pornography, erotic phone calls, call-girls and hostesses, sexually provocative shows — strip-tease or sex-shows — mail-order brides, street prostitution, brothels, massage parlors, enclaves of displaced soldiers or migrant workers have created the demand and supply for an estimated 4 million women and children trafficked internationally yearly. Skyrocketing profits exceeding 7 billion dollars a year according to UN statistics, and a staggering 12 billion according to the International Organization for Migration estimates. And those statistics only reflect reported figures in an industry that is largely underground and invisible.

As international tourism is vital for economic growth, many governments, aware that the most marketable commodity is their subjects' bodies, promote the growth to epic proportions, of prostitution, sex tours, brothels, and massage parlors. Corrupt government officials satisfy both their physical lust as well as their greed by exploiting and expediting the sale of those whom they are self-appointed or elected to protect.

"The oldest profession on earth" has evolved into one that is a virtual slavery, savagely forced upon its laborers. As profits soar, and the killer AIDS reaches epidemic propor-

Filipino children, victims of child prostitution, wait to testify before Philippine Congressional committee on child prostitution and human rights, as 200 street children rallied, in a downpour outside, in support.

Agence France Presse by Str. Emile Villalor



tions, the forced laborers are getting younger, some only five years old.

"This is happening wherever you look now," said Michael Platzer, the Vienna, Austria-based head of operations for the U.N.'s Center for International Crime Prevention. "The Mafia is not stupid. There is less law enforcement since the Soviet Union fell apart and more freedom of movement. The earnings are incredible. The overhead is low — you don't have to buy cars and guns. Drugs you sell once and they are gone. Women can earn money for a long time."

"Also," he added, "the laws help the gangsters. Prostitution is semi-legal in many places and that makes enforcement tricky. In most cases punishment is very light.

In some countries, Israel among them, there is not even a specific law against the sale of human beings." In some countries, such as in Africa, there are actual markets where women are sold in the streets for \$400-\$800.

"Think about this," he said, "200 million people are victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Most aren't prostitutes, of course, but children in sweatshops, domestic workers, migrants. During four centuries, 12 million people were believed to be involved in the slave trade between Africa and the New World. The 200 million — and many of course are women who are trafficked for sex — is a current figure. It's happening now. Today."

Not only is sexual slavery rampant in the Western world, but westerners promote its growth abroad. Men seek thrills that might be illegal in their own countries. "If you want extremely young girls, or generally speaking, if you want something for which you could get 'hanged' in your own country, you can find it in these places without the risk of getting hanged. You can expect a nod of the head, the Asian clasp of the hands, all accompanied by a 'thank you.'" (Excerpts from *Third World Movement Against Exploitation of Women.*)

Or, even more disgusting, men are encouraged to do good deeds: As a German tourist brochure boasted: "When you screw here, you may not do it for Germany but you certainly do it for the welfare of Kenya."

In a five-year study conducted by the NGO End Child Prostitution in Asia (ECPAT), data compiled for the 160 foreign males who were arrested by the police forces of Asian countries because of sex abuse against prostitute minors revealed these countries of origin: 40 abusers from the U.S.A., 28 from Germany, 22 from Australia, 19 from the U.K., 10 from France; Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa were also on the list.

Don't Desecrate My Buddha

In Bangkok's infamous Patpong district, an Australian paid for sex with two sisters — one 12 and the other six. The pimp who had purchased the girls from their parents took them to the tourist's hotel room, where they were abused and photographed for months.

A photo-shop owner developed one of the tourist's photos that displayed a tiny gold Buddha inserted in the older girl's vagina. Outraged, the shop-owner sent the picture to Sanphasit Koompraphant, Director of the Center to Protect Children's Rights, a local children's rights group. "The owner did not anger because a child was treated so cruelly," Koompraphant says, "but because his Buddhist religion had been insulted. He probably would not notice another object used that way." Betty Rogers recounts the story in a special report "Bitter Harvest".



Agence France Presse by Arho Datta

East Indian girl holds sign condemning child prostitution, in Calcutta rally by school children and social workers to heighten awareness of problem of child prostitution, during International Anti-Child Labor day.

A Fevered Priest

Pia Agustin Corvera's aunt sold her from the age of nine in the slums of Manila for 120 pesos — \$3 — for each encounter. At the age of 12, she was sold to a visiting German pedophile. At 16, Pia was under the protection of a center run by a 57-year-old Irish priest, the Rev. Shay Cullen. The tiny Filipino girl told a journalist of her experiences: "I felt like garbage."

Pia's abuser was one of the few who was convicted. After he jumped bail in Manila and fled back to Germany, the priest and Pia went to Germany to testify, and the pedophile received a 3-1/2-year jail sentence.

Cullen's obsession to help exploited children was launched in 1982 when he met nine, 12- and 13-year-olds with venereal disease in a local health clinic run by nuns. "The kids said they had been used by American sailors, but the naval authorities told us to keep quiet so they could catch the perpetrators," Cullen told one reporter. But in dozens of cases, he charges, the Navy shipped-out suspects to avoid prosecution.

Olongapo, former home of the huge U.S. naval base at Subic Bay, and Angeles City, near the former U.S. Air Force

Continued on page 75

UNDER REVIEW

PART I

FBI Takes Cover Over Intel And OKC Bombing Probes

BY J.D. CASH

PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

How will the FBI, our nation's premier law-enforcement organization, navigate this year's spate of congressional hearings and internal investigations? Carefully, like it's tiptoeing through a cow pasture, barefoot, on a moonless rainy night.

Consider what's underfoot: The McVeigh "missing" evidence fiasco; Top Echelon: The FBI's informant program that employed contract killers; "Spies Like Us" disasters: Wen Ho Lee and

Robert Hanssen; Osama bin Laden's Flying Circus; and, of course, the missing Anthrax-man debacle. Next, reel-off the list of some of the other criminals the Bureau can't seem to locate: Eric Robert Rudolph, John Doe 2, et al., and James "Whitey" Bulger.

But it's the MIAs on the Bureau's international "wish-list" that speaks volumes about an agency in desperate need of some high-profile arrests; combinations that have left many in Congress

grumbling that the feds high-priced globe-trotting expansion during the last decade-and-a-half, has taken a toll on overall performance.

Hoping to blunt these investigations, Robert S. Mueller III, announced a top-to-bottom overhaul of the Bureau as his first order of business as new Director. But few believe that merely drawing-up a new organizational chart will affect the deeply rooted culture inside the FBI, where paranoia reigns and agents



are hostages in an us-against-the-world high-stakes bunker-drama of political intrigues.

Institutionalized from Hoover through Freeh, the result has been a hopelessly bloated bureaucracy, enforcing a style of management that crushes all dissent. The residue is a culture of mindless cronyism that often taints heavily publicized investigations — where careers are advanced at the expense of solid cases. And so deeply entrenched is the “ol’-boy network,” not even a new Republican administration dares to lay a glove on it.

Shocked by a string of virtual “Go to hells” from President George Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft, Congressman Dan Burton went ballistic in December over the administration’s outright stonewalling of evidence concerning the FBI’s sleazy 30-year hydra-headed relationship with group called the Winter Hill Gang, and similar scandals, inside the Boston FBI office.

For months the Indiana Republican’s Government Reform Committee has been trying to force the Department of Justice (DOJ) to cough-up paperwork about an informant program the FBI established under the code-name Top Echelon. But Ashcroft’s men haven’t budged. Inexplicably, the white knights that rode into town to clean up the Clinton-Reno mess, are themselves the guilty parties now: refusing to turn over evidence of drug- and gun-running — even contract murders — carried out by some cowboy informants working under shoddy supervision of the FBI.

Committee investigators have been told what they are looking for is sealed under a claim of Executive Privilege. The Bush Administration argues that federal prosecutors need flexibility and privacy in their dealings with hoodlums. But the stonewalling has led to suspicions that the FBI and Justice Department are hiding a lot more than corruption in just one FBI field office. According to a federal judge who has seen some of the evidence, Top Echelon is a real-life Pandora’s Box for the FBI.

Is OKC Linked To A Top-Echelon Man?

Graduating from the Boston FBI office at the height of the Top-Echelon abuses were two men who would later get leading, but abbreviated, assign-

ments in the OKC bombing investigation — Larry Potts and Weldon Kennedy. In the last year, Congress and the DOJ’s Inspector General have investigated how and why thousands of pages of evidence in the OKC Bombing case could just vaporize for years, then some of it reappear?

Initially, the fantastic discovery of evidence hidden away caused a red-faced freshman Attorney General John Ashcroft to order a last-minute reprieve for confessed bomber Tim McVeigh.

Had the FBI and federal prosecutors “framed” a guilty man? And if so, Why? The Internet buzzed as conspiracy hysteria swept the talk shows.

Legal experts speculated the FBI had the case so fouled-up, McVeigh might even receive a new trial. And



Just 11 days before the bombing, a surveillance camera at Lady Godiva’s records this dancer quoting one of the “weird guys” bragging to her in the club that night, “On April 19, 1995, you’re never going to forget me. You’re never going to forget me for the rest of your life.” Dancers in the strip club later picked out photos of McVeigh, Strassmeir and Brescia as the men in the popular Tulsa nightspot. This “smoking gun” effectively destroys the myth that McVeigh and Nichols acted without additional support. The FBI will “deep-six” this evidence along with thousands of pages of other eyewitnesses accounts that are at odds with the “official version” of events.

from his lawyer’s statements on the matter it was evident the condemned killer agreed with the notion of a new trial.

Only weeks earlier, McVeigh said he was weary of prison life and wanted to stop all appeals and move forward with his execution. But the drama created by the discovery of this missing evidence caught not only the nation’s attention, but his, as well. McVeigh was center-stage and relished the attention.

A 30-day reprieve was granted but

McVeigh’s appeals were quickly batted down. Nothing in the documents, judges wrote, absolved the Desert Storm vet of guilt. On 11 June, the 34-year-old enigma met his date with destiny. Timothy McVeigh exited, just as he’d come onto the American stage: silent and stoic. He chose for his death certificate, *Occupation: Soldier*.

However, convicted co-conspirator Terry Nichols is still alive, and facing first-degree murder charges in Oklahoma for 160 of the 168 killings. Lawyers for Nichols are now examining this fresh evidence with a view to incorporating some of it in his defense.

A source familiar with what the feds belatedly handed over offered this: “Admittedly there is much here that could be called “rubbish,” but mixed in are credible witness statements and motel records that fit a pattern.”

The source disclosed that some of the witness statements tie McVeigh to a group of neo-Nazis that once operated from of a Christian Identity enclave in eastern Oklahoma, called Elohim City. Other credible witness statements are said to connect a band of bank robbers, called the Aryan Republican Army (ARA), to the bomb plot (see “Company Boy” and “OKC: From Bank Robbers To Bombers?,” Sept. ’01 and Oct. ’01).

One of the most telling documents the feds withheld from the Nichols’ defense actually places McVeigh in a motel room — less than a half-hour’s drive from Elohim City — on the very day the original OKBOMB indictments alleged the bombing conspiracy was hatched.

The owner of that Vian, Okla., motel said the FBI picked up the receipt months after the bombing. She recalled an agent from Tulsa coming by,

asking her to check old records for Tim McVeigh’s name and several of his aliases.

Days later she found one and called the FBI. Tim McVeigh had been a guest.

At the heart of the intrigue is the motel’s location and the date of McVeigh’s stay. The motel is located only minutes from Elohim City and the date of McVeigh’s check-in registration: 12 September 1994.

13 September 1994 is the day a federal grand jury determined that the

plot to bomb the federal building was formed. It is also a day Terry Nichols was working as a ranch-hand, 200 miles away in Kansas.

A source who played an important role the Nichols' federal trial, said, "Had this evidence [motel receipt] been available to us, we certainly would have used it."

A central theme of the Nichols' defense team was that McVeigh was part of a group connected to Elohim City, a gang that, lawyers argued in Denver, Nichols had nothing to do with. Obviously the Vian, Okla. motel receipt would have supported that defense — had the FBI not lost it — for longer than five years.

More "Missing" Elohim City Evidence

Last spring, I received a call from a lawyer reviewing some materials related to the crime in OKC. She was incredulous about a letter of mine to an FBI agent regarding a lengthy interview I'd given. But where was that interview, she wondered?

A few days later the DOJ had to admit that my letter the lawyer called about led to the discovery of a 10-page 302 (report of investigation) that lawyers for McVeigh characterized in their appeals as *incontrovertible evidence of a cover-up by the FBI*.

Indeed, someone inside the FBI placed my interview in a file where it never belonged. A criminal investigation file that defense attorneys for McVeigh and Nichols would not see — until the eve of the execution of Tim McVeigh.

Contained in that 302 were sworn statements regarding contacts I'd made inside the neo-Nazi movement; personal dealings I'd had with Timothy McVeigh after the bombing; and high-points of my many trips to Elohim City where I posed as a right-wing journalist for an Identity publication in California.

For anyone interested in solving the crime, much of it was right there: names, dates and linkages — a solid beginning for an agent to follow-up with interviews. And for defense attorneys looking to point the finger at others: There was plenty of material available for them, too.

A day or so after the lawyer's call, I

turned on my television and there were four FBI agents corroborating this tactic — telling Dan Rather they saw important OKBOMB evidence ignored or flat disappear. One of those agents was Rick Ojeda, the agent who'd earlier sought my help and created the "smoking gun interview" as it was being referred to in the media.

Now the poor man was sitting front and center in the *60 Minutes II* interview, complaining bitterly that he'd been fired because he may have asked too many questions about what hap-



ATF informant, Carol Howe, (left) playing the acting role of her career at Elohim City. Howe reported regularly to the Tulsa ATF office about plans at the eastern Oklahoma, Christian Identity compound to attack federal facilities and start a race war. (below) Bundeswehr Lieutenant Andreas Strassmeir working the crowd of radicals and other federal informants at KKK synod, Robert Miles' farm in Michigan. Months later, Miles and over a dozen of other members of the far-right will be rounded up by authorities conducting Operation "Clean Sweep" and charged with Sedition and other crimes. Miles and most of the others will later be found innocent and released.



bookends to the OKBOMB saga. The BATF had a snitch inside the gang and the gang was financed by bank jobs. The key players operated out of Elohim City and various safe-houses in the Midwest. McVeigh was a mule. The key men were radical revolutionaries, experienced with explosives, and had been casing the OKC target for months.

I'd long ago written of the connections between Elohim City and Wayne Snell — the Identity

group's patriot icon — executed by the

State of Arkansas on 19 April '95, the same day as the bombing. So with Carol and Jennifer's information, my two-year cross-country investigation finally yielded the *motive, opportunity and means* — the basic ingredients to understanding and solving the crime. And yet none of the bad guys at Elohim City had been charged in the bombing.

At the center of this puzzle was the inexplicable character, Andreas "Andy the German" Strassmeir. From the beginning I'd suspected he was no legitimate terrorist. But I wasn't able

group's patriot icon — executed by the State of Arkansas on 19 April '95, the same day as the bombing. So with Carol and Jennifer's information, my two-year cross-country investigation finally yielded the *motive, opportunity and means* — the basic ingredients to understanding and solving the crime. And yet none of the bad guys at Elohim City had been charged in the bombing.

At the center of this puzzle was the inexplicable character, Andreas "Andy the German" Strassmeir. From the beginning I'd suspected he was no legitimate terrorist. But I wasn't able

to catch up with him before he hit the Mexican border.

Once back in Berlin, Strassmeir ducked difficult interviews — hiding behind North Carolinian friend and lawyer, Kirk Lyons, who pooh-poohed any connections his client might have to McVeigh or the bombing. But Andy the German had a history.

While in the United States, Strassmeir became a mythical figure in the neo-Nazi movement.

Andy arrived in the United States directly from Germany with some important people's help. The Strassmeir family was politically connected to the highest levels — his father was Secretary of State to Berlin and a confidante of then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The younger Strassmeir's military records reflected he was as a lieutenant, serving in the *Bundeswehr*, when his frequent trips to the states, began. Also, his English was solid and his INS file reflected that he enjoyed diplomatic immunity. In fact, on the day of the bombing, Strassmeir still maintained an account at his military credit union, *Postbank Hannover*, where deposits were regular and his VISA card was debited. In three words, Andy was "special to somebody." In my opinion, he was *Top Echelon* material.

The Untouchables

While in America, Andy the German was able to slide into the neo-Nazi movement and was rubbing elbows with the likes of Louis Beam and Robert Millar in no time. A member of the ARA with two-dozen bank jobs under his belt called Andy, "A warrior-god!"



AP Photo/Kenneth Lambert

On Capitol Hill, Rep. Dan Burton, left, R-Ind., chairman of the House Committee on Government Reform, makes pointed remarks to Carl Thorsen, right, deputy assistant attorney general for legislative affairs, about President Bush's claim of executive privilege to block release of information Burton's committee had requested for a hearing investigating the handling of confidential informants in Boston, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2001, in Washington. An irate Burton compared the blockage by fellow Republicans at the White House and Justice Department to the actions of a monarchy, and threatened to hold a series of hearings on presidential executive privilege.

While Strassmeir lived at Elohim City, he was surrounded by a growing number of skinheads who drifted to the compound for paramilitary training. The *bachelors*, as they were called, became the subject of numerous official undercover reports. It seemed every agency had a "asset" inside the camp.

In the months before the bombing, the reports noted that the skinheads

were learning how to make explosive devices and convert weapons to full-auto. Their rhetoric was becoming just as lethal.

It was all in the government reports: Mass-shootings and bombings were on the horizon. 1995: All hell would break loose! Carol's BATF file noted Strassmeir's men had conducted three surveillance operations in OKC. The second anniversary of Waco would be an important day: Wayne Snell was to be executed.

But in between beers and a few tokes on a meth-pipe, the skinheads carried on as usual. Regularly, they fanned out across the Midwest and robbed banks and unsuspecting gun dealers. The money was spread around the *Movement* to finance the overthrow of the government. And when the hard work was done, some of the gang would return to the woods around Elohim City to play with their toys and chase the healthy flock of young girls at the camp. For two years, leading up to the bombing in Oklahoma City, the bachelors seemed untouchable.

Regardless of neighbors' complaints about the machine-gun fire and

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL GLENN FINE IN THE OKBOMB MISSING EVIDENCE "SNAFU"

1. DOJ Inspector General found NO evidence of a computer problem that could have caused the widespread withholding of OKBOMB evidence.
2. Nine field offices of the FBI were found to have destroyed evidence that should have been turned over to attorneys for McVeigh and Nichols.
3. Investigators discovered "widespread confusion" by FBI agents as to what evidence to turn over to defense lawyers.
4. The OIG determined that the FBI agent who headed the OKBOMB investigation, Dallas FBI SAC Danny Defenbaugh, and one of his assistants, SA Mark White, were guilty of "significant neglect of duty," in failing to notify superiors of the discovery of the missing documents for several months. Disciplinary action was recommended for both men.
5. The OIG found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing by any agents of the FBI.
6. On 16 April 2002, Defenbaugh E-Mails colleagues and announces his decision to leave the Bureau.

—J.D.C.

Continued on page 75



An “Aye!” For An “Eye”

PART 2

Easy to Fly, Tougher To Land

BY DALE B. COOPER

Predators like the unmanned aerial vehicles [UAVs] that have been keeping tabs on *Taliban* and *al-Qaeda* fighters trying to slip back into the mountains of eastern Afghanistan where they have stashed arms and ammunition in underground bunkers and caves are easy to fly. A pilot sitting at a control panel in a van at Bagram Air Base, just north of the Afghan capital of Kabul, or in neighboring Pakistan, simply advances the throttle on a control stick, and watches on a TV monitor as the nimble-looking aircraft rolls down the runway, picks up speed and lifts its bulbous nose into the air. The tough part is landing after a 24-hour mission over enemy territory.

In addition to the 10 Predators lost in combat during Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, more than a dozen of the unmanned aerial vehicles have been lost in stateside training accidents.

Flying a Predator is not like flying a Cessna 150 where the pilot has a good field of view. The remote controls are diffi-

cult to master. Even experienced pilots can make serious mistakes. An instructor pilot accidentally wiped out a Predator's onboard computer memory during a flight near Nellis AFB, Nevada, causing it to crash.

Captain Nick Devereaux, an instructor pilot in the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron, at Indian Springs, a unit that supplied Predators for Enduring Freedom, says most of the accidents involving Predator occur during landing.

One of the four Predators lost in Afghanistan at the time this article was written was destroyed when it crashed on landing in the Central Command theater of operations.

Captain Devereaux says landing a Predator is like looking through a soda straw. The pilot sees only what the lens of the TV camera in the nose of the aircraft sees.

“You have the whole cockpit set up in the ground control station, but you don't have the feel of an airplane,” said Devereaux who can tell by the sound of an aircraft if there is something wrong with the engines. He can also feel the need

to add or pull back power.

But there is no "seat of the pants" feel when flying Predator. Wind is also a problem.

Touch and go landings are limited to 10-knot crosswinds and 5 knots of tail wind.

As an instructor pilot, Devereaux finds pilots who fly heavy aircraft, like bombers, tankers and transports have the greatest difficulty landing a lightweight Predator.

"They are used to setting a couple of power settings on approach and never having to fight the aircraft all the way down," said Devereaux. This is not trim and leave especially if you have any kind of turbulence.

"Plus you are also missing peripheral vision. All you see is what the camera sees coming in for a landing," said Devereaux. Currently, the TV camera provides only a 30-degree field of view, but the field of view is going to get wider.

A heads-up display, like the HUDs in F-16 Fighting Falcons should give Predator pilots the situational awareness they enjoyed when they flew F-15s and F-16s. The heads-up displays will also have a look-down capability.

Global Hawk Downed

One of three Global Hawks deployed to the Persian Gulf in support of Enduring Freedom crashed while returning to its base from Afghanistan in the early morning hours of 30 December 2001 when it apparently lost satellite link with its operator. The Global Hawk team, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Guidry, is looking into methods that will provide better data-link connectivity between the UAV and its ground-based operators.

SOF has learned that the air vehicle was the fifth in a line of six Global Hawks produced by Northrup Grumman Integrated Systems, the prime contractor. Raytheon E-Systems developed the advanced sensor payload. The ground-mission segment was developed by Hughes Aircraft, and the communications system was developed by Lockheed Martin Communications Systems.

Air Vehicle No. 1, equipped with only synthetic aperture radar, is at the Air Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB, Calif., for test-flight purposes only. Air Vehicle No. 2 was destroyed in 1999 when an errant signal was sent from Nellis AFB, Nev., caused the UAV to override its mission plan and crash.

That leaves Air Vehicles No. 3 and 4 to pick up the slack in Afghanistan until another UAV can be delivered to the region.

Last year, No. 5 was flown nonstop from Edwards to participate in a joint U.S./Australia military exercise in the Outback, and then flown back home again; a distance of some 7,500 miles. Number 5 came home after the six-week deployment with more than 500 flight hours on it, 200 more hours than the average F-16 accumulates during an entire year of flying.

The crash caused one insider to say, "They [meaning the Air Force] just flew the heck out of it."

General John Jumper says

most of the losses are explainable, but the new Air Force Chief of Staff is clearly not happy with the ones involving pilot error. He says the Air Force is trying to prevent controller mistakes by improving training and revising procedures. Maybe Jumper should send his Predator pilots back to General Atomics for some OJT. Tom Cassidy told SOF his controllers have a flawless record when it comes to landing Predators.

Nevertheless, some critics question whether the aircraft is worth the cost. Eric Miller of the Project on Government Oversight wonders whether the Air Force is getting what it paid for.

"There's a strong argument to be made that if a Predator goes down, you don't lose a pilot," Miller said, "But these things are getting more and more expensive, and they're not really intended to be disposable weapons." Each Predator costs about \$3.7 million.

In a report issued before Operation Enduring Freedom began on 7 October 2001, the head of the Pentagon's testing agency declared the Predator "not operationally effective or suitable."

Despite the loss of a \$45 million Global Hawk in Operation Enduring Freedom, the Air Force is eager to see how fast Northrup Grumman can produce another airframe, and how fast Raytheon can accelerate delivery of its next Electro-Optical Infrared Camera for the UAV.

Unmanned Air Vehicle Number 6 was originally scheduled to be delivered before the end of this calendar year, but construction was accelerated last year so that it could be flown to Ecuador and back as part of U.S. Southern Command's drug enforcement program this year.

For some unknown reason, No. 5 went into a flat spin on its way back to its base following a long mission over Afghanistan. The Pentagon's explanation? "Poor maintenance," said Rear Admiral John Stufflebeam, deputy director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Whenever that happens, Carl Johnson at Northrup Grumman says Global Hawk triggers what is called its "self-destruct mode."

Johnson says the vehicle has the ability to clear off all of the data from its onboard computers so that no classified data falls into the wrong hands if the vehicle can't be recovered.

That's one of the arguments that has been made to use



(opposite) Predator firing a Hellfire missile. One of three Global Hawks (above) deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom crashed on 30 December '01. (above) Global Hawk in high-altitude testing.

Global Hawk instead of EP-3's like the one that was forced to land last year on Hainan Island by a couple of Chinese MiGs. With Global Hawk, the Chinese would not have gotten their hands on any classified data.

Predator does not have a similar program to erase the memory of its computers, but if it loses link with either the pilot or the satellite, operators can tell the airplane what to do, and just like a boomerang, Predator flies back toward its base until operators can put a line of sight data link on it and land the unmanned aerial vehicle. Predator can be told to take any route home

to avoid mountains or other obstacles. The automatic-recovery system is tested on every maintenance check flight, and has yet to fail. In the very near future, Predators will be able to land automatically just like Global Hawk.

General Atomics has already integrated and tested the UAV Common Automatic Recovery System [UCARS] over 400 times in the USAF Predator. UCARS provides the Predator with the ability to take a completely automatic approach, touch down, roll out and stop on a runway. The same capability can also be used for automatic takeoff. This new system should dramatically reduce the number of landing accidents.

Real-Time Tactical Information

Despite the loss of three Predators and a Global Hawk, the unmanned air vehicles have provided real-time tactical information about the movements of some of Osama bin Laden's closest lieutenants; information that led to their deaths.

At the rate they're disappearing, the Saudi renegade is going to have to hold his first year reunion in a telephone booth, providing of course, he's still alive on 11 September 2002. Some folks think he's been dead for months.

When the B-1s and B-52s left the region in early January, the task of taking out Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders fell mostly to unmanned aircraft. Global Hawk would find the enemy, and Predator would fry them with Hellfire missiles.

In late February, the UAV's noticed a buildup of enemy forces in the mountains southeast of Kabul. Local tribesmen told Green Berets in the area that up to 1,000 Taliban and al-Qaeda soldiers had moved into fortified caves in the Shah-e-Kot Valley near the provincial capital of Gardez, the scene of



Air Force Predator pilot at the controls, and (below) what he sees through eye of TV camera in nose as the aircraft comes in for a landing.



Predator gets a Black Hawk helicopter in its crosshairs.

earlier fighting.

The Taliban that fled when their spiritual stronghold at Kandahar in southern Afghanistan fell on 7 December were finally getting back together again like a covey of quail.

Quietly and under the media radar screen, U.S. Central Command moved B-1s and B-52s back to Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and alerted other strike aircraft, AC-130 gunships, A-10s, F-15Es and F-16s in the region to be ready to roll.

U.S. planners waited and watched through the eyes of Predator and Global Hawk until hundreds of enemy soldiers holed up in caves northeast of the provincial capital of Gardez before they launched Operation Anaconda on 2 March.

Cutting off possible escape routes, soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division and the 101st Airborne Division helicoptered into the mountains to confront the enemy in a labyrinth of caves, some of which were outfitted with satellite TVs, woodstoves and beds.

Anaconda, an operation named for a snake that crushes its prey to death, marked the first time conventional ground troops were used in an offensive operation in Afghanistan.

Longest Day Of Their Lives

Operation Anaconda opened in the early morning hours of 2 March. The air was icy as three MH-47 Chinooks roared between snow-cov-

ered peaks as dawn broke. About 125 men from Company C, 1-87th Infantry Battalion, 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum, N.Y., sat silently side-by-side on canvas seats along both sides of the dimly lit helicopters.

They didn't know it at the time, but they were flying into the "Valley of Death." Moments after landing, they came under intense small arms, mortar and rocket-propelled grenade fire from al-Qaeda fighters firing from caves and fortified positions above them.

For the first few minutes, they felt like fish in a barrel. There was very little cover from deadly fire that came flying at them from three different directions.

The first mortar round took down Command Sergeant Major Frank Grippe and six of his soldiers. The next round peppered another half-dozen troopers with bits of hot metal.

It was a close-up, in-your-face kind of fight for the next 18 hours, according to Grippe who wounded in the thigh by shrapnel from enemy mortar fire.

"Within a minute after getting off the helicopters, we started getting a barrage of RPGs," said Sergeant First Class Robert Healy who became a human magnet for pieces of shrapnel. Healy, a 17-year Army veteran, was hit in a leg, shoulder and "behind the ear."

When asked about the high volume of enemy mortar and machine-gun fire that raked C Co., Healy said, "As with an LZ, we were told to expect it and react to it, but we didn't

think it would be that high a volume of fire coming at us. Luckily, they weren't accurate shots."

Looking back on what confronted his men once they landed, Grippe, the senior enlisted man on the battlefield, said the sitrep provided by intelligence briefers back at Bagram "was just a little different than the actual events happening on the ground when Charlie Co. landed "at the base of an al-Qaeda stronghold."

About 10 minutes after the Chinooks carrying Grippe's group landed, al-Qaeda fighters "came out of caves and well-fortified positions," said Grippe. "We experienced a heavy volume of fire from the mountains above us."

Grippe ordered some "hunter-killer" sniper teams into action to silence some of the opposition. They didn't



USAF photo



USAF photo. Sgt. Scott Flood

(above) Predator with two air-to-ground Hellfire missiles under each wing. (left) Personnel from the 11th Reconnaissance Sqdn pre-flighting a Predator at a forward staging area for a mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

disappoint the Command Sergeant Major. Some of the snipers took down enemy soldiers at 500 to 600 meters.

The firefight that ensued continued from 0600 until 2000, when his wounded were taken out. At midnight, he and his remaining forces were airlifted out of the valley after an 18-hour gun battle with Taliban and al-Qaeda forces.

"Our infantry fought well," said Grippe who will set off metal detectors at airports the rest of his life.

Although they got caught in a classic "Horseshoe" type ambush, Grippe said, "It wasn't a Mogadishu. It wasn't as though we were pinned down." By standing their ground and going toe-to-toe with the bad guys, C Co. fixed the enemy in place and allowed airpower to do its thing.

Captain David Mayo, a 101st Airborne Division liaison officer worked with an Air Force representative in locating enemy positions for U.S. F-16s, B-52s and helicopter gunships.

"U.S. air support against al-Qaeda positions was unbelievable," said Mayo.

First Lieutenant Bradley Maroyka, a 25-year-old platoon leader, was wounded twice on 2 March when the two platoon operation came under fire from high ground within minutes after stepping off the Chinooks. Maroyka was hit in the ankle by a piece of shrapnel from a mortar round about seven hours into the firefight. A few minutes later, another piece of shrapnel sliced open one of his fingers.

"My platoon sergeant was hit the same time I was," said

the native of Union, N.J. "But my squad leaders were absolutely fantastic. They stepped up and took over," Maroyka said.

In all, 27 buddies were wounded by mortar fire that day. Most of the wounds were in legs and arms, areas not protected by body armor and Kevlar helmets.

Specialist Eddie Rivera and two other medics crawled through heavy fire to reach the wounded. Five men in one platoon were

seriously wounded when a mortar round fell in their midst. The men screamed, "Doc, doc, help me, help me!" yelled Rivera as he ripped open clothes covering their wounds, and picked out pieces of shrapnel, before wrapping their arms and legs in gauze and bandages.

"They were in a daze, not even able to hear me," said Rivera as he recalled screaming at them.

"What's wrong with you?" yelled Rivera above the roar of RPGs and machine-gun fire. But they just stared off into space as they went into shock.

As he was finishing up with the initial batch of soldiers who were hit, Rivera noticed a larger group taking fire. Without thinking about his personal safety, Rivera sprinted a 100 yards across open ground. "I could see dirt coming up at my feet," Rivera said as he headed toward the rest of Charlie Company.

Reaching them safely, Rivera found that the other two medics left their medical bags behind when they took cover from the initial mortar attacks.

By 1400, there were 10 soldiers down with serious shrapnel wounds, including two with chest wounds. Those with less serious wounds were still returning fire.

The enemy not only owned the high ground, but also occupied two towering ridges on both sides of the Americans.

Continued on page 80

Continued from page 43

of the TV screen in the ready room and the endless reports from Ground Zero in Manhattan. A debate soon erupts over what the American response to the events of September 11 should be.

"If I Were President Bush..."

Most of the operators preparing for the night's mission can't believe that terrorists struck the United States in such an audacious and well-executed move, and even fewer can comprehend the enormous loss of life. "I've seen what these people are capable of firsthand," claims "N," a Bedouin Arab and one of the unit's most "natural" undercover operators, as he loads 30 5.56mm rounds into one of his plastic M16 magazines. "I've faced them in firefights where they battle to the death, and I've seen the way they torture and mutilate suspected informers, prostitutes or those who don't toe their line," N. adds, "but I never thought I'd live to see a day where 5,000 people would die in a single day at the hands of these bastards." "If I were President Bush I'd wipe them all off the face of the earth," offers "C," a new immigrant from the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, "and I'd start with right here in our own backyard."

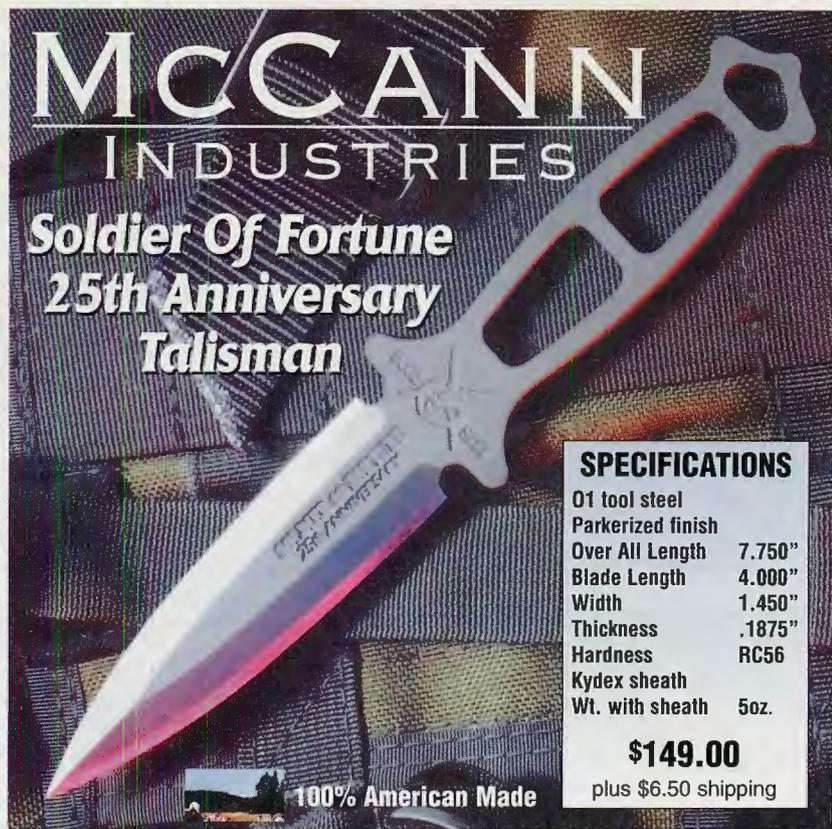
"G," the team leader, a towering figure of confidence at 5'8", realizes that this type of talk can be counterproductive before a mission. "Don't worry about what the Americans should do or what's going to happen in Afghanistan," he tells his men, "let's go over our own little war and what we have to do tonight." The operators ready their ceramic-plated body armor and their radios — essential equipment in a fire-fight — and they ready their medical kits, as body armor doesn't cover everything.

When terrorists declared war on the United States on 11 September 2001, Israel realized that a new phase in its 10-year-old war against Islamic terrorism was upon them. The undercover cops know that they'll be on the front lines of that struggle, and they know the war will be bloodier than ever before, because they live and work undercover at the other Ground Zero.

Samuel M. Katz is the author of many books and articles on the Middle East, and a frequent contributor to SOF. His current book, *Relentless Pursuit*, is on bookstands now. ✕

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base at Clark Field, accommodated U.S. service personnel's sexual demands. Cullen's problems were hardly over after the U.S. military departed in 1992, however, as Filipino pimps turned Angeles and Olongapo into two of the Pacific region's most "rancid fleshpots."

The 10-year war in Vietnam contributed to the explosion of a sex industry outside the bases. Bangkok became a major center for Rest and Recreation (R & R) leave, commonly known the by GIs as I & I (Intoxication and Intercourse). Authorities passed legislation to aid the sex business and "support the boys," such as the Entertainment Act, which included a policy called "Hired Wife Services." By the mid-70s there were 800,000 prostituted Thai women. When the war ended, the Thai government, accustomed to the high profits, promoted sex-tour travel agencies established by a group of high-ranking Thai military generals' wives. From 1965 to 1993, the number of tourists grew from 250,000 to over 5 million.

And, adds Sister Sol Perpinan of Third World Movement Against Exploitation of Women, it is estimated that by the mid-80s the sex industries around the bases in the Philippines had generated more than \$500 million. At the end of the war in Vietnam, Saigon had 500,000 prostituted women — equal to the population of Saigon before the war.

The Myth Of The Virgin

As Interpol's Agnes Fournier de Saint Maur, who tracks global child sex trends, says, the demand comes not only from pedophiles but from individuals "eager to push the envelope of carnal exploration."

Virgins are in great demand among Chinese from Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, Michael Satchell writes in an extensive article on the topic in *Preda*. Chinese men prize sexual intercourse with young girls for the rejuvenating properties they believe to be associated with the act. According to O'Grady, "there are surprisingly large numbers of aging and wealthy Chinese businessmen who believe that they must deflower a virgin at least once a year to gain the energy needed to be successful in their business enterprise and have a long life".

In India, *Devadasis*, (handmaidens of God), are dedicated to the goddess Yelamma in secret ceremonies. Most of the girls brought into the Devadasi system will become human cargo in the sex traffic in cities like Bombay, where sex can be bought for less than the price of a bottle of beer. Hunger, poverty and superstition are the root causes of a practice which sees parents or relatives sell a daughter to a pimp or brothel for \$150 to \$200. The cult also entraps a handful of boys, known as *Jogappas*, who are made to become transvestite prostitutes.

UNICEF reports that there are 200,000 child prostitutes in Thailand, 400,000 in India, between 244,000 and 325,000 in the U.S. and 100,000 in the Philippines, Taiwan and Brazil and 35,000 in West Africa.

Next: The scourge of AIDS abetted by the sex slave trade, the big business of sex tours, and sex slavery in the Central Europe, the Americas, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

A frequent contributor to SOF, Dr. Martin Brass is an international lawyer. ✕

bombs exploding in the hills around Elohim City, *no one* from the FBI or State of Oklahoma showed-up to make arrests. Overhead, their agents just circled the camp in fixed-wing aircraft, snapping pictures and making notes.

The Lady Godiva Sighting

Ojeda knew much of this from my articles and also had first-hand knowledge of a favor I did the Bureau when I tossed them a videotape of some naked girls in their dressing room at a gentleman's club in Tulsa.

Beyond the considerable "artistic worth" of 20, or so, attractive young girls changing g-strings for eight-hours straight, the tape had real crime-solving value, as well.

Captured for all the world to enjoy, the Lady Godiva security camera footage preserved an unbelievable event dancers witnessed in the club — 11 days before the bombing.

The action started when a raven-haired beauty sauntered into the dressing room with a miffed expression. Shaking her head, Tara relayed comments from one of the "weird guys" buying her drinks that night.

"And he said, 'You know, I'm a very smart man. And someday you'll find a lover that'll really hurt ya, and on April 19, 1995, you're gonna remember me — you're gonna remember me for the rest of your life.'"

After getting my hands on the tape and collecting interviews from the girls working that shift, I gave the FBI a copy so they could conduct their own interviews.

The dancers told the FBI the same thing they told me. From a photo array, they identified the men in the club bragging that night, as: Timothy McVeigh, Andy Strassmeir and another Elohim City radical and ARA member, Michael Brescia. (Brescia would later plead guilty and go to federal prison for his role in the ARA's conspiracy to overthrow the government and rob banks in seven Midwestern states)

Ojeda figured I was on a roll. Through an intermediary, he pushed hard for an interview before I left for Denver to cover the McVeigh trial. But at the time, I doubted his sincerity and begged-off.

Admittedly, I'd lost a lot of confidence in our G-men. They had to know much more than I did about this crime. The whole thing seemed like a way to learn who my sources were and then screw with them.

Unfazed by the rebuffs, Ojeda pressed harder. On 14 April 1997, I relented and sat down with the him and state man, Chris Dill, of the Oklahoma Bureau of Investigation. And today, I must admit, both men surprised me with their keen interest and honest desire to solve the crime. If there was a cover-up, they'd been left out. Hours later they folded their notebooks and shook the blood back in their fingers.

Ojeda nodded as he spoke, "Elohim City and Strassmeir are the keys ... There's no doubt." Turning to Dill, the frustration pored out, "Why in the hell is the FBI ignoring all this?"

In the next SOF: The case for a blown "counter-terrorism operation." Did the FBI's best "get bested" on that horrific day in Oklahoma City? You will learn about the most shocking evidence yet to surface.

J.D. Cash, who has investigated the Oklahoma City Bombing case from Day 1, is widely considered to be one of its true experts. ✕

International commented that "We can't keep them in stock. As soon as they arrive in the U.S., they go out the door."

Optical Options

The other fixture of the rifle that astonished me was the scope. As an American shooter, my preferred weapon system was an accurized and tuned Remington fitted with a Leupold tactical scope. The Accuracy International came to me topped-off with a Schmidt and Bender 3x12x50. At first I was skeptical of the European optics. As I stated already, I love the Oregon-manufactured Leupold scopes. To be completely honest, my intent was to take the Schmidt and Bender off the rifle and replace it with a Leupold Mark 4 M3. I decided to give the famed German manufactured scope a test, and from the initial sight in, I was pleasantly surprised. Until recently, I was a big supporter of fixed-power scopes because they are inherently stronger than their variable cousins. I now prefer the variable-power, which gives the shooter options at different ranges and circumstances such as multiple targets or movers. (Note: Leupold also makes outstanding variable scopes.)

Light transmission in the Schmidt and Bender exceeds 90%, according to AI, which equates to the shooter being able to engage targets more effectively in low-light and night-shooting which is when the enemy likes to be out and about. I recommend the Schmidt and Bender wholly and without reservations, except for the only drawback that I found — the price — \$1,778.00. However, what good does a finely tuned and accurized rifle do for you if you can't see the target, identify it as enemy, and engage it successfully?

The Marine Corps is holding to its history and traditions of turning out some of the finest snipers in the world. Snipers who have gone before them with names like Carlos Hathcock and Chuck Mawhinney are like deities to Marines across the globe. I would venture a guess that by the time that the war on terrorism ends we will have many more.

It is doubtful that the Marine Corps will adopt the Accuracy International in the near future, since they have spent the last few years developing their own weapon system to replace the M40A1. The Marine Corps' new sniper rifle, the M40A3, is an amazing weapon system that will facilitate the sniping program into the 21st Century. Other services, however, have begun to procure the Accuracy International in various calibers and configurations. Rumor has it that various Special Forces units have AIs in their inventory.

As a testament to their love of the Accuracy International AW, by choice, four out of five Marine snipers at a Southern California sniper match shot the AI instead of their M40A1s. Three of them were 1st Marine Division Sniper School instructors. When I asked one of the Marines which rifle he would prefer in a combat situation, he said the AI AW because of the accuracy, ergonomics, 10-round magazine, and the lack of the need for an armorer to maintain the weapon system when a part breaks or a barrel needs replacing — a major consideration when you and your spotter are the only friendlies around for a few clicks, surrounded by targets of opportunity.

Odin Crowe is a former Marine NCO, now in the Army Special Forces Reserve. ✕

Cuts on the flight suit still mystify investigators. Larry Greer, Public Affairs Officer for the Department of Defense POW-MIA Office, told *SOF* there are diverging opinions.

"It appears the cuts were in places where a pilot could have been strapped into an ejection seat," Greer said. Others say the cuts could have occurred when someone cut the pilot out of parachute harness.

In its report to members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, the CIA said the Iraqis could have cut off Speicher's flight suit when they were unable to undo the half-dozen quick-release fasteners that attach the chute to the harness the pilot wears. Or, the CIA concludes, the Iraqis may have been trying to intimidate the downed aviator. The spy agency says the cuts could also indicate the pilot was injured, unconscious or deceased when the flight suit was removed. Alternatively, the Iraqis may have deliberately cut the suit to deceive investigators.

"Is that clearly his flight suit?" Greer rhetorically asked. "Could be, but who in the hell really knows," said Greer who agreed to provide a series of photographs taken at the crash site in 1995, none of which showed the controversial flight suit. Greer has never seen it or any photos of it, but *SOF* has been assured that photographs of the flight suit were taken by the U.S. team of investigators in Iraq, and although none of the people *SOF* has talked to has personally seen the suit, Greer says it is in "someone's safe-keeping somewhere." Why this article is cloaked in such secrecy has yet to be determined.

CIA Conclusions

The CIA does not know if Lieutenant Commander Michael Scott Speicher is dead or alive, but the lack of evidence of his death, statistics associated with high-speed ejections, and the alleged condition of a returned flight suit suggest he probably survived the crash of his F/A-18.

The last line of the CIA report to Congress leaves the question of Speicher's fate still in doubt.

"We assess Lt. Cmdr. Speicher was either captured alive or his remains were recovered and brought to Baghdad."

Attempting recently to appear cooperative, in early April, Saddam sent the U.S. a letter through the International Committee of the Red Cross offering to allow a team of U.S. inspectors to enter Iraq again and pursue the Speicher case.

SOF has learned that a draft response to Saddam's offer has been forwarded to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, CIA Director George Tenet and the heads of about a half-dozen other agencies. Together they will formulate America's official response to Saddam, but *SOF* has been told there is no timetable for a final decision.

Officials say the draft plan suggests the U.S. insists on access to Iraqis who may have seen Speicher after he ejected from his disabled aircraft. The draft also demands the return of the missing pieces of wreckage, namely the cockpit instrumentation.

Iraq wants the delegation to include Scott Ritter, a former UN weapons inspector who has been critical of U.S. policies toward Iraq. The Iraqis also want American journalists to cover the visit.

*Dale B. Cooper is a frequent contributor to *SOF*.* ✕

Continued from page 39

Iranian Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani said that if Jerusalem persisted in persecuting the Palestinians, "Iran will retaliate in an astounding and unexpected manner." He didn't elaborate, but the undertones were clear. Iran, he implied, has something in its arsenal that will surprise everybody. Some Washington pundits believe it might be chemical or biological since — partly as insurance to counter Iraqi territorial aspirations — Iran has been engaged in some pretty advanced WMD research programs for several years.

Curiously, former Iranian President Ali Akhbar Rafsanjani echoed this threat not very long afterwards. Always a hothead — but still well-connected within Iranian corridors of power — he advocated using nuclear weapons to annihilate the Jewish State.

In his "World *al-Qods* Day" sermon before thousands at Tehran University, Rafsanjani declared that the use of atom bombs "would leave nothing on the ground in the Jewish state." It hardly seemed to matter that the action would also kill several million of the very people on whose behalf the jihad was to be launched!

Tehran has been involved in other subversive activities, which is one reason why the immediate focus of White House attention has moved eastwards from Iraq. Apart from giving the Palestinians money and succor, documents recently captured in Ramallah indicate a pattern of close cooperation between Iran and Israel's Arabs. Also:

- Iran has been supplying Yassir Arafat with weapons. That much we know following the affair of the *Karine A*, a cargo ship originally loaded with 50 tons of Iranian weapons and seized in the Red Sea by a *Shayetet 13* Israeli "SEAL" team. Who can tell what got through to the Palestinians before that minor coup?

- Documents produced by Israeli intelligence in early April show a distinct link between Palestinian suicide bombings and Iran's *Pasdaran*, Tehran's ultra-secret security and intelligence organization. This Revolutionary Guards group coordinates the activities of, among others, Hamas in Israel and Lebanon's Hizbollah. Iranian intelligence elements are also busy in Somalia, South Africa, West Africa, the Sudan and in many European and South Asian states.

- Though not directly linked to events in Israel, Tehran plays devious host to scores of al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders: It actually encourages them to seek refuge in Iran. These terrorists are crossing the border from Afghanistan every day; the reasoning behind the ploy being that by keeping Washington militarily focused on its troubled

neighbor, attention is deflected from Tehran. In fact, the converse is true.

Iraq, too, forms part of the equation. Its latest gesture was to up the payments to families of suicide bombers from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

More pertinent, because UN weapons inspection teams no longer monitor Baghdad, this conundrum presents Israel and the West with its most serious challenge yet. Saddam Hussein has used the impasse to continue with his own clandestine nuclear weapons program.

Prior to the extrication of UNSCOM squads more than three years ago, there were several reports that Baghdad had accumulated the components of at least three complete atom bombs. While Saddam lacked the fissile material with which to arm them, this seemed to have changed 18 months ago when the despot recalled his atom bomb design team. It has been suggested in Washington and London that the only reason for doing so is that the Iraqi dictator has somehow managed to acquire weapons-grade U235 or Plutonium. Not lost on anybody is that there have been dozens of Iraqi (and Iranian) attempts to acquire fissile material from former Soviet Union states.

Of all the threats to Israel, Iraq's nuclear potential presents the Jewish State with a threat that offers the most severe consequences. Such action would also be a convenient "quick-fit" rehabilitative move for Iraq. Long a rogue in the eyes of many Muslims, what easier way to gain acceptance in the Arab World than to target Israel?

Syria remains very much a part of Israel's security equation. For decades Hafez Assad — and now, his son — have been among the most virulent of Arab leaders.

Even today, any mention of the name of the Jewish State in Damascus can invoke arrest.

Almost obsessively, just about every political consideration in Syria is linked to Israel's continued occupation of the Golan Heights. The IDF has occupied this sparse plateau uninterruptedly since 1964 and, obviously, they want it back. But since the high ground dominates almost the entire Galilee, that's about as likely to happen as things now stand as the Jewish nation yielding up Temple Mount.

About all that is clear about the Israeli condition today is that the undeclared cycle of violence will continue. And for several reasons, not least, as the old homily has it, because Arab leaders have shown themselves willing to fight the Jerusalem government down to the very last Palestinian.

Issues that might have brought Jew and Arab together in the past are still on the table. They are also as intractable as ever.

The first of these is the repatriation of more than 2M Palestinian refugees from adjoining countries. In Jordan there are a million, half of them registered with the UN



REUTERS/Suhab Salem

Palestinians members of Islamic Jihad march during the funeral of Ahmed Khuzaiq, in Gaza 30 March 2002.



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Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and almost 400,000 each in Lebanon and Syria. These people — most of them living under severe conditions in improvised camps that were built half a century ago — want to go home, preferably to houses and plots that their families occupied before Israel became a state in 1947. And that's impossible.

Then there is Jerusalem, beloved to three great faiths but, in particular, to Arab and Jew. Arafat has always given notice that ultimately Jerusalem would be the capital of his people, if only because it is the third holiest site in the Islamic world. The Israelis reckon otherwise.

The third stickler is still the issue of Israeli settlements, more now than there were before the Oslo accords were signed. There is even one — heavily protected by the IDF — in Hebron, and almost a dozen more under the noses of the Palestinians in Gaza. In theory, these could be vacated, as the Israelis left their Sinai settlements after the signing a peace treaty with Egypt almost 20 years ago.

For the alternative to any peaceful solution, one has to look back to recent history when a mighty Egyptian force breached the Suez Canal in 1974. Against all odds, the Israelis took some heavy knocks in the days that followed, accentuated by a simultaneous invasion across Golan from Syria. Iraq, Jordan and several other Arab states also got into the fact.

Not as short-lived as the conflict before, the Yom Kippur War went on to demonstrate desperate Israeli resolve.

When President Carter — in one of his typically misguided gestures of conciliation toward his Arab friends — decided to cut-off arms supplies to Israel, by then faced with annihilation because it was running out of ammunition, Jerusalem took the only option left to it. It gave notice to Washington that since it was about to be overrun by a preponderant Arab army, it would arm its bombers with nuclear bombs. By then, the bombs had already been deployed to several IAF airfields.

Obviously, the nuclear holocaust that had been predicted by some pundits never happened. But it could have.

And if conditions get out of hand again, it could finally become a reality.

Al J. Venter is a frequent and long-time contributor to SOF. ✕

Attention Men!

Do you have a problem understanding the women in your life? Does your wife constantly make absurd statements? Does your girlfriend make absolutely no sense. Do the women that you work with confuse the hell out of you? Some people would have you think, that this is because men and women are from different planets. Not so! Actually we're all from planet Earth.

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Makes a great Father's Day gift!!

12 March: PLO double-teamed us with Hizbullah. This afternoon several Hizbullah dressed in IDF uniforms attacked passing vehicles in the northern Galilee. Using AK-47s and grenades, they killed six and wounded seven.

14 March: I took a busman's holiday and taught snipercraft to the students in the MaGav's current sniper course.

17 March: "I heard shots, drove towards the sound and stopped my truck when I saw the first body in the street. I identified the terrorist — he was standing with his back to me 4 yards away. I yelled, 'Hands Up!' When he didn't comply, I shot him in the head with my pistol."

The civilian gun owner described how he ended the terrorist's rampage. The terrorist used a 9mm pistol to kill one and wound 16 in an attack across the street from a high school. He fired dozens of rounds and still had ammunition when stopped.

14:25: Another bombing at the French Hill Interchange. A suicide bomber ran into the street, between two taxis and a bus. Before the MaGav could react, BOOM! Thank God the bombers don't get a chance to practice. One dead, the bomber, and 24 lightly wounded.

20 March: The cold this morning in the northern part of the country allowed a suicide bomber to hide the vest of explosives he wore under a coat. He did not look "out of the ordinary" as he boarded the intercity public bus. He blew up moments later, killing seven and wounding every passenger.

Two volunteers, members of the Uniformed Division of the Police Civil Guard, responded to a terrorist attempting to infiltrate a cooperative farm by the Israeli town of Beit Shemesh. They engaged the terrorist, armed with an AK-47, numerous mags and grenades. He was killed in the firefight that ensued; they were lightly wounded. Many similarities exist between our Civil Guard and the Minutemen of the American Revolution.

21 March: My day began with a shift at our sniper unit's position above the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City Jewish Quarter.

Suicide bomber blew himself up on King George Street, 50 yards from the sight of Sbarro Pizzeria bombing. Two months earlier, the bomber, after being found with a belt of explosives for an

attack on an Israeli city, had been taken "into custody" by the PA at Israel's request. Israel OK'd the bomber's transfer to a PA prison in Ramallah ... from which he was immediately released; one of many "general amnesties;" part of the PA's revolving-door detention of wanted terrorists. Arafat's Fatah took credit.

26 March: We've had several days of relative calm, because we intercepted the terrorists before they launched major attacks. We killed four who infiltrated from Jordan with AKs, grenades, explosives and sniper rifles. We killed two more, a suicide bomber and his driver, after they ran a temporary roadblock on their way to the Jerusalem Mall. They had a premature detonation during the car chase that ensued. A Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance undergoing a routine check at a temporary "surprise" checkpoint was discovered to be transporting a wanted terrorist and explosives including a suicide bomber's vest. The fully operational vest had 16 individual cylinders containing shrapnel and 10 kilos of high-explosive. It was hidden under the gurney on which a young boy was being transported.

27 March: A suicide bomber got into a hotel dining room crowded with 250 guests. The bomb contained nails, screws and ballbearings, especially devastating in the closed banquet hall. There were 27 killed, more than 100 seriously wounded. Not a single guest escaped uninjured. The Palestinian Authority had been asked to arrest the bomber, who was known to be planning such an attack. As usual, Chairman Arafat and his Palestinian Authority did nothing.

29 March: We woke up to *de facto* war against the PLO and PA. Twenty thousand reservists are being mobilized. Endless stream of tank transports on the roads. Soldiers are being deployed to the Capitol, added manpower to assist the police. They didn't come soon enough. Just before closing time, a 16-year-old female suicide bomber blew herself up in a Jerusalem supermarket. This time three were killed and 35 wounded.

30 March: I spent seven hours on duty in Indian Territory with our Sniper Unit. Our position was high-up and exposed to the wind. It was overcast and cold, but at least it didn't rain. Jerusalem remained quiet except for multiple HOT (meaning "they are in the wire") warnings of terrorist efforts to launch attacks. A suicide bomber hit

a café in Tel Aviv wounding 34. Hizbullah attacked our northern border with mortars and anti-tank rockets.

31 March: A suicide bomber exploded in a Haifa diner killing 20. Weapons-grade explosive, rumored to have come from Iran, was used. A few hours later another terrorist blew himself up at the Israeli Red Cross Ambulance Dispatch and Emergency Aid Center located 12 minutes south of Giló, in Efrat. He wounded six EMTs.

March has set a record for the single bloodiest month — 126 killed. Another 100 remain critically wounded. For Israel it is the proportional equivalent to almost double the number of dead suffered by America on September 11th.

On Into April

2 April: The day started at 04:30 with the sounds of tank and Apache-gunship fire as the IDF's effort to uproot the terrorist infrastructure shifted into high-gear. Intel collected revealed Arafat's complicity in terror attacks. One document is literally a cost accounting submitted to him for funding the suicide bombers of his Fatah Al-Aksa Brigade which has carried out 20 suicide attacks so far this year, 10 in March alone.

As is the case with all Jerusalem Police and Border Police, our Sniper Unit continues to be ridden hard and put away wet. We draw strength and comfort from the support we receive from friends in the States.

9 April: 12 tons of arms and munitions have been found. The best defense is a good offense. We are finally doing something concrete and effective. This is neither the end of PLO terrorism nor their terror attacks, but this is the first time in 18 months that it has been relatively quiet.

10 April: This morning, the terrorists finally conducted a successful attack. A suicide bomber got a bus near Haifa.

This month-long wave of attacks is unequaled in Israeli history. And now Powell is coming to see if he can kiss Arafat's ass and bring him to the peace table. Well, this morning's bombing is Arafat's reply.

David Stone is an American citizen who several years ago emigrated to Israel. He is a member of the Israeli Police Reserve Sniper Unit. Contributions from his monthly journal appear monthly in Soldier Of Fortune. ✕

"Every single time we called for fire from AC-130 gunships and Apache helicopters, the enemy fighters would duck into caves and wait out the barrage," Rivera said.

Ten to 15 minutes later, they came out and started dropping more mortar rounds on C Co.

At dusk, four more Americans fell. It got dark and cold as the temperature began to drop below freezing. The soldiers began to shiver and shake. Their cold-weather gear had been left behind along with the medical supplies when they raced to cover from the first mortar attack. The men only wore T-shirts under their light jackets.

But once darkness fell, the tables turned in their favor. They had night-vision goggles and that gave them the advantage. "Once the night came, it was our world," said Rivera.

At 2300 hrs., Rivera got word by radio that rescue helicopter was inbound. He and the other two medics had about 10 minutes to prepare the wounded for evacuation. As the chopper approached the troops, enemy fighters emerged from a cave and fired a Stinger anti-craft missile, causing the helicopter to take evasive action. Ten minutes later, the helicopter returned, and took out the most seriously wounded. An hour later, two CH-47 Chinooks returned for the walking wounded and the few soldiers who weren't dinged.

Bloodiest Battle Of The War

On 4 March, two days into the operation, seven American soldiers were killed trying to recover a Navy SEAL who fell from a Chinook that took enemy ground-fire at about 0330.

The Chinook in which Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts was riding on a low-level reconnaissance mission was hit in the belly by an RPG. The rocket-propelled grenade failed to explode, but the impact severed an hydraulic line, causing the pilot to land about a half-mile away and check the battle damage before lifting off again.

What happened then is a bit fuzzy. The Pentagon says Roberts apparently fell out of the aircraft when it suddenly lifted off, and veered away from a ridge-line occupied by enemy soldiers.

However, Army Major General Franklin Hagenbeck, commander of U.S. forces in the region, suggested everyone on board except Roberts piled

back into the crippled chopper as it staggered into the air again before crash-landing out of the range of enemy machine guns. It was then a headcount revealed that Roberts was missing.

Another Chinook flying with the chopper that was hit picked up the crew of the disabled chopper and deposited them further from the danger zone, before flying back into harm's way to search for the missing man and put other troops on the ground.

When the troops ran down the rear ramp of the Chinook after it landed, they came under heavy automatic-weapons fire from enemy soldiers above them. The chopper lifted-off as the GIs went to ground and engaged the enemy as the first streaks of daylight came over the mountain above them. A call for help brought two more helicopter loads of troops. As the first chopper landed a few miles away out of range of the ongoing firefight, it was hit by machine-gun fire and RPGs. It came down hard.

Running out the rear of the Chinook, the reinforcements, a combination of Rangers, Green Berets and Air Force special operations personnel ran into withering gunfire.

Six men, two Rangers, two Special Forces, an Air Force combat controller and an Air Force pararescueman were cut down.

The second chopper managed to offload without any casualties, and together, the survivors managed to eventually suppress the enemy and recover the body of Neil Roberts.

"We saw him on Predator being dragged off by three al-Qaeda men," said General Hagenbeck.

The 32-year-old SEAL from Woodland, Calif., apparently survived the fall from the helicopter, but indications are he was executed shortly afterwards. There was a single bullet wound in his body, and it was not self-inflicted.

A Green Beret from Fort Bragg, N.C. was the first to fall mortally wounded in the Shah-e-Kot Valley.

A week later, the father of Chief Warrant Officer Stanley Harriman, a retired Army major, was presented with a tri-folded American flag, a Purple Heart and a Silver Star that was awarded posthumously to his son.

Other troops from the 101st Airborne Division [Air Assault] at Fort Campbell, Ky., met similar resistance when they helicoptered into the northern end of the valley to block possible escape routes.

A month after Anaconda uncoiled, and soldiers from the 101st Airborne

Division and the 10th Mountain Division returned home to lick their wounds, Predator and Global Hawk noticed some enemy activity in the same vicinity. Without any fanfare on the day that Charlie Company was given two weeks block leave, more U.S. soldiers and British Royal Marines helicoptered into the mountains of eastern Afghanistan to hunt for the enemy that Predator spotted trying to infiltrate back into Paktia Province from neighboring Pakistan. However, this time the U.S. and its coalition partners are coming down on the enemy from above, not attacking them from below.

Major Problem

Predator has earned high marks for support of air and ground forces in Operation Enduring Freedom. The Pentagon is so impressed with its ability to detect and track enemy forces, it has budgeted \$1 billion to buy 37 more of the high-tech UAVs next year. But the Pentagon faces a critical problem: There's a shortage of communications hardware that allows people on the ground to communicate with the unmanned aerial vehicles. The number of satellites now in earth orbit can't provide the necessary bandwidth to accommodate the data that flows to battlefield commanders.

As a result, sources tell SOF that the military has only been able to keep a couple of Predators and one Global Hawk airborne 24-7 over Afghanistan.

The Pentagon is aware of the problem. In fact, it manifested itself during Operation Allied Force in Yugoslavia, but it reached the "crunch" point in Afghanistan due to the nomadic nature of the enemy the U.S.-led coalition faced. Troops in Serbia and Kosovo were more concentrated. However, in Afghanistan, they are spread out all over creation, and travel by twos and threes at a time.

The Department of Defense plans to increase the satellite bandwidth when it launches its own satellites in a couple of years, but they will be able to provide less than half of the gigabytes per second Predator and Global Hawk will require.

The military will be hard-pressed to use UAVs in Iraq and maintain the same level of commitment in Afghanistan. There just aren't enough gigabytes to go around. So the problem is bigger than the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

Dale B. Cooper is a longtime and frequent contributor to Soldier of Fortune. ✕

Continued from page 47

commercial aircraft and will give all governments the ability to track their — and anybody else's — ships in international waters. The equipment will also give constantly updated details of the ship's course, destination, its ownership, cargo, crew details, the ship's name and coloring, as well as ancillary information that might indicate if anything were amiss. As with license plates back home, if the physical details fed into a computer by a patrolling aircraft don't tally, then the vessel is likely to be checked out more thoroughly, making an unwarranted maritime entry into any of the world's ports almost impossible. These measures follow as a consequence of events that took place in New York last 11 September.

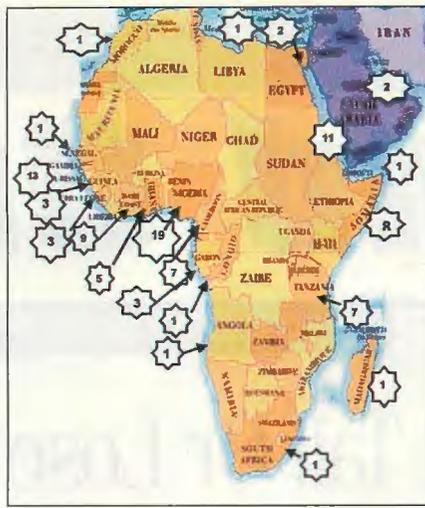
It Works: Why Wait?

Though put before the UN agency that coordinates international ship safety and security policies — the International Maritime Organization (IMO) — for implementation before 2008, Washington decided last month to move the deadline up by four years. According to Admiral Brian Peterman of the White House Office of Homeland security, President Bush was prepared to pressure world leaders personally about this, at G-8 economic meetings next June.

These issues are serious enough, says a Washington source, to warrant such action. Both Langley and British Secret Intelligence Services believe that there is threat of international terrorists targeting the world's maritime communities, using hijacked tools of the maritime trade.

A reliable London contact has told *Soldier Of Fortune* that following the routing of Taliban and al-Qaeda elements in Afghanistan, documents were recovered that show distinct al-Qaeda involvement in acquiring medium-sized ships. Specially adapted, these could be used as weapons of mass destruction. The report has both Pakistani and Philippine origins, and remains classified. The implications for those who have access to this information are apparently sobering, which is one of the reasons why the entire matter has been fast-tracked.

Admiral Thomas Collins, the U.S. Coast Guard Vice Commandant, disclosed at a recent two-day homeland and maritime security conference in Cambridge, Mass., that while U.S. sea-



(above) This map tallies incidents of piracy in Africa and the Middle East for the calendar year 2001, and it's the usual suspects. (below) Morocco was once a nest of pirates, but as long as the Rabat government remains stable, it stifles such enterprises — as could the government of Somalia, if they were not so profitable.



ports were much more vulnerable than airlines and airports, this was changing. "We can't wait for something to happen at our ports before we act. There is vulnerability there," he declared in March.

Several other warnings have been posted. A Malaysian specialist report issued at a conference that involved law-enforcement agencies and shipping countries from around the world called on governments to make greater efforts to stamp out piracy. It mooted the possibility that such activity might link terrorists with merchant shipping. Piracy was part of the equation, it stated.

An Active International Response

The group also warned that hijackings at sea last year had doubled and that total piracy attacks worldwide in 2001 numbered 335. That followed a report issued late last year at the 22nd Assembly of London's International Maritime Organization. It specifically warned that ship and port security had become a target of international terrorism. Closer to home, it has been sug-

gested that loading a cargo ship with a couple of hundred tons of high explosives and detonating it along the wharf in London or New York harbor is only one of the permutations: Another is using a ship to take a nuclear device into a Western harbor.

A group of San Francisco researchers recently compiled a database of lost, stolen and misplaced nuclear material and found that there is a huge amount of weapons-grade uranium and plutonium that nobody can account for. In the wrong hands, disclosed the Stanford program — dubbed the Database on Nuclear Smuggling — this material might be used against the United States.

U.S. Customs chief of staff David Cohen echoed this threat at Cambridge, saying that "the threat of a low-grade nuclear weapon being shipped into an American port is not far-fetched." He added that last year 7.8 million sealed containers hauling \$480 billion worth of goods arrived at U.S. ports, and that it was impossible to search them all.

Following developments in the final months of last year, there have been some important developments. Germany, since the end of Hitler's War, has never been one to get involved in security matters abroad, but has suddenly become a major player in the search for maritime terrorists, including pirates. Late last year a seven-ship German Navy squadron set sail from Hamburg for Djibouti, a pint-sized stretch of desert on the African coast of the Red Sea. Though details remained classified for months, it has since been disclosed that the German Navy will be operating anti-piracy and anti-terrorism patrols out of what was once one of the most important ports in France's overseas empire. Its main job is to operate off the Somali coast farther south, in search of fleeing al-Qaeda terrorists making their way back to Africa from Afghanistan.

German Air Force surveillance planes add to the configuration by patrolling the narrow waters off the coast of Yemen and the Sudan, both former bin Laden boltholes.

Using former Cold War-era Breguet Atlantic BR1150s, and operating as far south as Kenya, they supplement American, Spanish, British and French assets already in the region, all of whom pass whatever information comes to hand to U.S. Navy monitoring stations in Bahrain.

Al J. Venter is a frequent contributor to SOF. ✕



Sound Off

BY COL. DAVID H. HACKWORTH (RET.)

Stand Tall Or Lose It All

We've seen another [recent] week in the Middle East even bloodier than the week before where the Kamikaze Kids are finally being thumped by alternate realities they understand: cells or coffins.

Kibitzers watching while the Israeli war machine smashes through Palestine are repeating what Col. Kurtz — a.k.a. Marlon Brando — said in the motion picture *Apocalypse Now*: "The horror, the horror." Many protest that military solutions are wrongheaded; that Israel has become as bad as Nazi Germany.

"Give peace a chance," goes their mantra, and the Middle East global village will light up with balloons, lollypops and sunshine. Of course, none of these good people has been visiting morgues, viewing pieces of loved ones blown to whatever's left while at prayer, dining out or disco-dancing. Israel is a house invaded by rattlesnakes. The Israelis can either cut and run or kill the snakes.

When Super Snake Moammar Gadhafi tried his terrorist tactics on Ronald Reagan, he got hit so hard he's still digging a deeper hole. Notice that there's been nothing overt from this fruitcake since he felt the pain of 2,000-pound U.S. bombs.

Vietnam, where the U.S.A. fought a long war against terrorism, was another story. We lost there because our brass never understood the nature of that war, and our casualties kept climbing until the peace movement and the polls prevailed. Instead of fighting the terrorists to the finish, we followed the 1938 Munich peace-during-our-time pap that enabled Hitler and his barbarians to pummel Europe. Now, millions of decent Vietnamese live in a communist state where a blink of dissent gets you dead.

In Francis Ford Coppola's film, Col. Kurtz tells how after his medics inoculated a small village, the Reds chopped off every child's left arm. "My God, the genius of that. The genius," Kurtz said. "The will to do that. Perfect, genuine, complete, crystalline, pure! And then I realized they were stronger than me because they could stand it." He goes on to describe the kind of soldier it would take to beat the communists: "You have to have men who are moral and at the same time who are able to utilize their primordial instincts to kill — without feeling, without passion, without judgment. Without judgment, because It's judgment that defeats us."



This is the civilized world's dilemma. Terrorist havens such as Palestine — where the chief cop ran a bomb factory at home and kids are programmed almost from birth to be body *bangs* — can handle the murder, the destruction and the madness. But this time around, we, too, need to somehow handle the horror — because the only way to deal with terrorists is to out-terror them. That means make the kitchen so hot the snakes either run or burn. Contrary to White House demands, Israel must be allowed to act on what millions of Americans were taught before we marched

off to past wars: Kill or be killed. Reagan got it right when he said, "Never negotiate with terrorists."

Right after Sept. 11, George W. Bush followed that dictum, adding that any state supporting terrorism in any way would be our enemy. Now he seems to be back-pedaling, doing a poll-watching dance when he should be bombing Baghdad and Tehran rather than asking Israel to back-off.

None of the Palestinian terrorists would even have a fire-cracker without financial and material support from rogue states such as Iran and Iraq. Even the dumbest camel probably knows that these countries are doing unto Palestine what Red China and the Soviets did unto the North Vietnamese — who couldn't fire the stuff fast enough at American boys in Vietnam. Today, Iran's fingerprints are all over tons of Israeli-captured munitions, while Iraq's Saddam Hussein recently doubled the payoff he gives every Palestinian martyr's family to \$25,000 — blood money the Mustached One knows is fueling the mayhem, delaying his own Day of Reckoning.

The first dead American soldier I saw was killed by one of Tito's terrorists. Harry Truman's policy was to shoot back. We did, and we won. Since then I've spent a lot of time either fighting or writing about terrorists — and I know if they aren't losing, they're winning. And you can't make them lose with sweet talk or double talk — only with hot steel.

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