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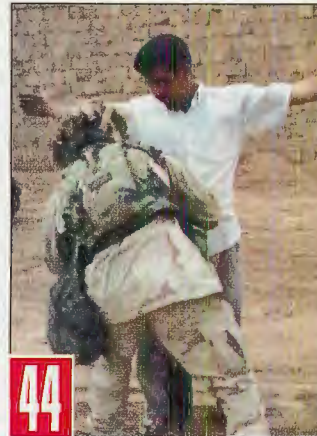
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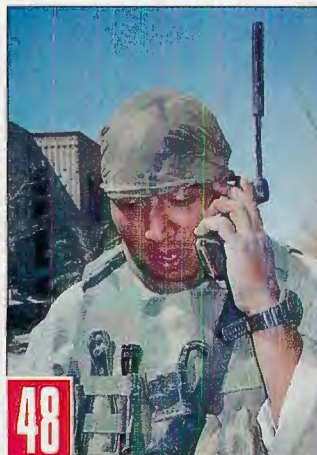
CentCom.mil, by Sgt. 1st Class David R. Dismukes

On the Cover

As controversial when introduced, as the Stryker is today, the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle has earned its spurs in the Gulf Wars, and “Fighting” is truly its middle name ...
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J.S. Mosby



Dale B. Cooper



Gary Paul Johnston

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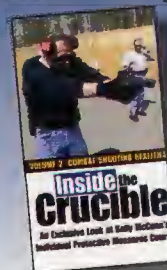
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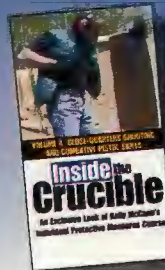
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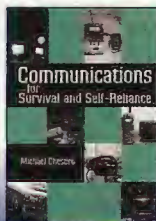
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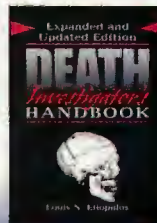
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Command Guidance

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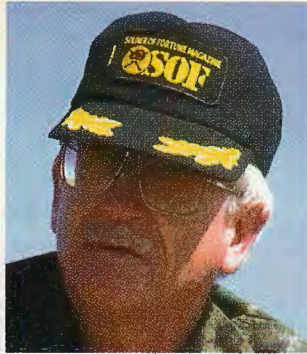
UDT/SEAL **Larry Bailey • Unconventional Operations**

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Senior Army COs Mired In Dangerous Conventional Mindset

I pulled the below from an e-mail sent to me by Colonel Bob Young, USMC (Ret.), a long-time friend, who I greatly admire, and currently Director of Operations for Gunsite. As we go to press, I have been unable to identify the website on which it initially appeared. Credit will be given in the next issue. I felt this info would be of more interest than any of my mundane musings.

— Robert K. Brown, Editor/Publisher



locked up. Marines are incredulous when they encounter this.

Since Marines and Army troops control adjacent sectors, there is ample opportunities for troops from the two services to run into each other and compare

8 July 2003: Marine and Army troops in Iraq are upset over Rules of Engagement (ROEs) being implemented by Army commanders. While Marines are allowed to carry their weapons, both rifles and machine-guns, ready to use, Army units, especially non-combat ones (including Military Police) are being increasingly restrictive rules regarding the use and handling of weapons. Unlike the Marines, Army convoys do not display any weapons, making it appear as if the convoy is unarmed.

For the Marines, this is madness. Marine convoys bristle with weapons, making it clear what will happen if anyone should be so foolish as to attack them. Army MPs are under orders not to handle their machine guns while on roadblock-duty unless they received orders from their headquarters. Army troops are allowed to carry only two M16 magazines, the rest being kept

notes. It has not gone unnoticed by American troops, or the Iraqis that are attacking them, that nearly all the Americans attacked are Army troops. The Army ROEs tell the Iraqis that Army troops are an easier targets, equipped with an ROE that also serves as a virtual placard saying "Shoot me, I have a hard time shooting back."

7 July 2003: The U.S. Army Special Forces are having morale and recruiting problems, and they are largely self-inflicted. Special Forces units are already some 20 percent *understrength* and the situation is getting worse. The first visi-

Continued on page 73



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Sorely Missed, By All Hands

As I am busily packing my gear for a long deployment to Afghanistan, I was thrilled to see the tribute article to my husband, John Coleman, in your August issue. I was so afraid that I would miss the magazine before my departure date. In a very odd twist of life, John told me more than once that despite all of his time soldiering and covering things military, he found it much more difficult being the spouse waiting back home. With his permission, I carry his Ranger tab in my pocket as my honorary guardian.

John will be sorely missed by me, by his son Dan, and by the many friends he made in his 51 years. I received notes and e-mails from people all over the world with references to his "charming irreverence." In the last few years John was teaching history at the college level. He was respected and adored by his students for the color and experience he brought to the classroom. And they didn't even know the half of it!

Captain Debbie Golden, Flight Nurse
146th Aerovac Squadron,
Channel Islands Air National Guard

Please Don't

I have a straightforward question to ask. Located in Korea's DMZ there is a small outpost, inside of it there is a North Korean Flag of preposterous size. Would SOF be interested in purchasing both the story of how it was obtained and a sizable chunk of the flag? Make no mistake I do not have this Trophy as of yet, but have devised a fairly ingenious plan to retrieve it. But first I need to know if this is worth my and my team's time. We are Canadian ex-military and have no reservations about the task at hand. Your reply would be appreciated along with an approximate figure of this task's value.

Sincerely,
Derek Taylor

It's been like shoveling shit against the tide, trying to drive a stake through the heart of the urban legend that SOF has an interest in the preposterous flag the North Koreans fly where North meets South. Even official Army visitor briefings have mentioned this non-fact. But it is not true now, it never was true, and it never will be true. Who in their right mind, or even close to it, would risk an international incident with the paranoid, nuclear, nut cases who are in control of the North, over a mere trophy?

Maybe all those who think they have a plan should submit their ideas to us, and we'll glean them for the most ingenious and write a "B"-comedy script for submission to Hollywood.

No Apology Needed

I'm 16 years old, and allow me to give regrets for my generation. Not all of us are starting peace groups, rallying for anti-war ideas, and BS like that. Many others and I are extremely pro-military, pro-war, and pro-America kicking ass and taking names, no matter what are peers are doing.

I'm personally getting tired of coward politicians and washed up celebrities trying to make a name for themselves by nay-saying Bush. I was proud of Bush when he said to hell with the rest of the world and went after Iraq. If Europe did this in the 1930s to Nazi Germany, millions would have been spared.

As for me, I plan on joining the Army after high school and hope getting into the Army's elite Ranger units.

So please do not lose faith in my screwed up generation. Most of us aren't cowards and support America.

C. Parker

We go to war, and to the ballot box, to ensure knotheads like those you mention have a venue to freely express their ideas. Unfortunately, there is no way to guarantee their ideas are worthy of expression. But the hope of those who penned the First amendment is that in a free marketplace of ideas, the good ideas — if unfettered — will float to the top. And so far, they generally have, but only because all ideas are free to float with them.

Try the NGOs

Comments: Is there a way for U.S. citizens to support unofficial U.S. activities in Iraq? Is that a stupid question? I'd like to support a better way to get the job done.

Noah
Via e-mail

Don't know exactly what job you'd like to support in a better way, but if you mean nation-building, there are any number of Non-Governmental Organizations involved in putting Iraq back together and helping them build for a better future. Call the U.S. State Department for any information they may have, and do a web search for worthwhile organizations whose efforts you would be comfortable with.

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Antonio Zanata

er, and you saw this magazine, you would think: Oh My ***** God, America is one guncrazy shithole. But either way, most foreigners already have that opinion, so it is quite to late. If you think this mail was somehow written badly, then know that i am a twelve yaer old danish school boy, who is making an assignment on the politics of America, and i can tell you; You are a bunch of guncrazy morons! When i read your braindead magazine, i indeed got curious, so i checked the global murder ratings, and they were as following: Each year in Australia 68 men have been killed, in Canada 128, in Germany 40, England 86, USA 11.857!!! You might want to think a little on this, and dont encourage the peoples of the United States of BlahBlah to carry guns and kill each other when having so many articles about guns and wars, and giving them war schemes probably wont help it either. I think it is so stupid, and my clan does too. About the 11. septembe, you are completely wrong, it wasnt Osama Bin Laden who did it, and you know that. So that makes two of us who knows who smashed those buildings. hopefully i wont: See you guys Around.

Dearest twelve-year-old schoolboy!

Well, Kid, sooner or later you'll grow up, and along the way it is my sincere hope that you can hone your skills at research, and discernment. (And diplomacy.) Since you have accepted whole-cloth what were either numbers lifted out of context or bogus to begin with, I won't bother to tell you better: I'll just let you know that someone has fed you a carp, and leave it up to you to re-do your research, and figure out who lead you astray and why they did so.

But we will leave you with a question you can research on your own: When Hitler was planning his conquest of Europe,

why did he choose Denmark instead of invading the similar-sized nation of Switzerland, which had much more he could use? And after he had rolled through Denmark without having to shift gears, who was the nation of Riflemen that liberated the Danes?

Foreign Legion

How does an American Citizen join the French Foreign Legion?

I thought serving in the armed forces of another country was enough to revoke your citizenship. Is that true?

ChrisCooper

You need to consult an attorney on these points of law, the Neutrality Act and so on, but in general, we are aware of no problems regarding their U.S. citizenship for American veterans of the French Foreign Legion. It is swearing loyalty to a foreign power, not serving in a foreign military, that endangers one's U.S. citizenship, and knowing this many such foreign militaries do not require "auslanders" to take such an oath. For current and correct information, you should contact a French embassy, such as in Ottawa, as foreign countries are not permitted to recruit on U.S. soil.

Mickey, Pluto and Donald Wouldn't Approve, Either

I am writing to let y'all know that I really enjoy your magazine, also I would like to pass on some info. I am a member

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Thank you,

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of the NRA and I recently read an article about that jerk Michael Moore, it seems that Walt Disney is set to fund one of Moore's new films. As we all know how Moore disgraced our nation and our troops during the award show, I would like to see if SOF would assist in asking all of the great Americans who read your magazine to boycott all of Walt Disney if they proceed to back Moore's movie. And to see if your readers would write to; Michael D. Eisner chairman and CEO the Walt Disney Company, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521-9722 [818]560-1000.

Like a lot of your readers I am a prior military member, I shed blood for this great country, and I do not feel that this Moore character deserves to benefit from our money or our support.

Denny Swain
Via e-mail

Action Guys Get Ripped Off!

Just wanted to let you guys know the deal with that "great job" I was supposed to get a few months ago. Not giving you a sob story, just don't want you to fall into the same trap. A guy by the name of Yancy Buck from the San Diego area offered me a job as the Director of Operations for Inherent Risk International, Inc. He said that he was funded by overseas investors, trading groups, etc. He was planning on having the largest security company in the U.S./world. I was given a letter of employment and a contract stating I would receive 6 figures many times over with a butt-load of bennies. He told me to go to Reno for the ini-

tial corporate meeting, which I did. After receiving repeated phone calls and emails promising I would receive pay due and expenses compensated for, I was stood up. The guy never showed and I got stuck with the travel expenses. Lost about \$2K, give or take.

Now this guy is preying on other SF, CAG guys, and cops. Also hunting down Marines. I did some checking. First of all we checked with the bank that produced letters of credit showing Mr. Buck was worth \$2.7 billion. They were fraudulent. He had written a check to a Realtor in Reno for property we were going to purchase for a training complex. The check was for \$50K (earnest money) ... NSF!

His MBA from Berkley was a hoax; Inherent Risk International was not incorporated (although he produced contracts in the company's name) ... The list goes on and on. Currently, he is being investigated by the Secret Service, EEOC, SEC, and the Attorney's General of California and Nevada.

Stay clear of this jackass and pass the word. I don't want to see guys retire on false pretenses ... like I did. Things turned out well. I'm working in DC and enjoying life. Just wanted to give you guys the down and dirty so you wouldn't get caught up by this guy's BS. Like I said, he's on the prowl. Keep an eye out for his name and RI ... then run the other way!

Joe Crane ✕

SOF Welcomes Letters To The Editor.

Letters may be edited for space considerations. Please address correspondence to: Editor, SOF Magazine, 5735 Arapahoe, Ste. A5, Boulder, CO 80303; or E-Mail to: editorsof@aol.com.

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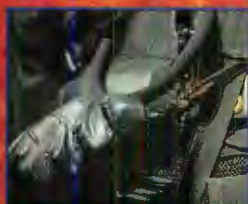
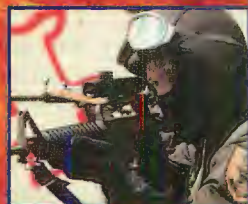
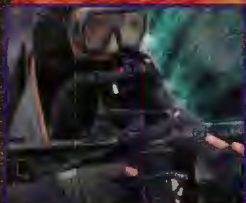


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Bulletin Board

LA PD To Get Glocks

The Los Angeles Police Commission is about to approve the Glock pistol for the LAPD: A forgone conclusion. The chief wants them, as well. Officers will have a choice of 9mm, .40S&W, and .45 ACP. Department firearms instructors have already gone through a Glock transition course.

The official round will be Winchester/Ranger.

Officers will have the option of retaining their Beretta 92Fs, but the majority are expected to make the switch.

Noted John Farnam, "It will be interesting to see how many make the switch, and how fast."

(Logical Extreme #1)

Italian Immigration: Shoot To Kill Illegals

Italian navy and coastguard vessels are to be ordered to open fire with live rounds on boats carrying illegal immigrants.

The radical approach to Italy's asylum-seeker problem was outlined by a senior minister in Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's coalition government. In the wake of a recent surge in illegal immigration from north and central Africa (more than 1,000 people landed in southern Italy in three days, and nearly 3,000 in the first half of June), Reforms Minister Umberto Bossi said he was sick of illegal immigrants and wanted to hear "the blast of cannons."

"After the second or third warning, bang ... we fire the cannon," Bossi told *Corriere della Sera* newspaper. "Without too much talking. A cannon to knock out whoever may be there. Otherwise, we're never going to put an end to this problem."



Courtesy Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office

More than 88,000 warriors from conflicts past still remain unaccounted for, and their families still wait. September 19th is the 2003 National POW/MIA Recognition Day. We have not forgotten. We will never forget.

Troops: You Are Her Hero

When some in Hollywood treat with disdain our folks in uniform who are in harm's way in defense of liberty, it's refreshing to see one multi-talented and Drop-Dead-Gorgeous entertainer give them her whole-hearted support.

The international singer/songwriter Constantina is absolutely committed to supporting the troops. With her recently released CD titled *You Are My Hero*, she has also launched a new web site <http://www.MyHero.cc> to honor our troops, and will be performing on tour in the near future.

"No matter what our personal feelings are about war, the fact is, our men and women in uniform are doing their best to protect our freedom," says Constantina. "It's unbelievable that since May 1st, when major combat ended in



via constantina.com

Iraq, over 60 American soldiers have died. They must not be forgotten as the days and months go on."

Constantina has been communicating with many soldiers since the war began, sending care packages containing her music and autographed posters. *You Are My Hero* was "inspired by the amazing efforts of our Soldiers' dedication and bravery," she says, "and I am truly honored to be a part of their lives, especially now. They are America's true Heroes and I am forever grateful!"

Response from the troops has been overwhelming. Constantina's song aired on the radio July 4th and she invites everyone to assist her in her efforts to support our men and women. Just log on to <http://www.MyHero.cc> to hear *You Are My Hero* and log on to <http://www.Constantina.com> to see more of Constantina.

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Job Ops, Iraq #1 [Military Trainers]

Asked whether it would be right to fire on immigrants who are generally unarmed women and children, Bossi stated, "Whether they're good or bad, one way or the other illegal immigrants have got to be chased away," he said. "The navy and coastguard should defend our shores and use their cannons to do it ... That's the best way to enforce the law. No deferring or turning back."

In line with international procedures, the Italian navy has only been permitted to board boats at sea and escort them to port.

Bossi, who heads the right-wing Northern League party, threatened that if the government didn't start taking a harder line, he would pull his support for the coalition. "Whether the government's allies agree or not, I want to hear the sound of the cannons by the end of the week or I'm off," he said.

(Logical Extreme #2)

Life for a Lungger?

Oklahoman John C. Marquez has been given a life sentence by State Judge April Sellers White for spitting on a cop — "placing bodily fluid upon a government employee" — which is a felony that can carry a life sentence, in Oklahoma.

Originally arrested on suspicion of beating his wife, which could have cost him a year in prison and a \$3,000 fine, Marquez upped the ante when he spit in the arresting officer's face. Marquez was also convicted of assaulting a police officer, and a jury recommended the maximum sentence due to his previous convictions, although Marquez and the arresting officer both tested negative for any communicable disease.

His lawyers said they plan to appeal.

On 1 Jul 03 DoD awarded a \$48 million contract to Vinnell Corporation to train a 12,000-man nucleus for a new Iraqi Army. A subsidiary of Northrup Grumman, the Fairfax, Va.-based Vinnell also trains elements of the Saudi National Guard. Vinnell is seeking qualified former U.S. Army and Marine officers and senior NCOs to train light-infantry battalions and combat-service support units.

An excellent compensation and benefits package will be provided. Selected individuals will be contacted for additional information.

Interested candidates should send a detailed chronological resume, a copy of their DD-214, copy of your DA Form 2-1 or ORB for Army, or a copy of your SRB, DD Form 2586, or Training Record for Marines, to: David.Hellums@ngc.com ; or Fax to 703-218-5230. No Phone Calls Please. EEO.

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Infantry 0369
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Drill Instructor 8511

Job Ops, Iraq #2 (Law Enforcement)

The U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, is seeking up to 1,000 qualified police or corrections professionals to participate in an international effort to re-establish police, justice and prison functions in post-conflict Iraq. Applicants must be active duty or recently retired or recently separated sworn police officers, correctional officers or judicial experts. U.S. citizenship, unblemished record required. If interested, call toll-free 866-258-8770; or e-mail cops.recruiting@dyncorp.com; or visit www.policemission.com. Pay starts at \$75,000 to \$153,600 per annum, tax-free. Applicants may also fax their resume to 817-732-5835; or mail them to: International Police Program Recruiting, 7th Floor, 6500 West Freeway, Suite 600, Ft. Worth, TX 76116.

The 18 April 2003 awarding of an estimated \$50-million first-year contract budget to Computer Sciences Corporation's company, DynCorp International, will enable that entity to provide up to 1,000 civilian advisors to assist the government of Iraq "organize effective civilian law-enforcement, judicial and correctional agencies."

Applicants must have at least "10 years' of domestic law-enforcement, corrections and judicial experience, including two years in specialized areas such as police training, crime-scene investigation, border security, traffic-accident investigation, [and/or] corrections and customs. Advisors will work with Iraqi criminal justice organizations at the national, provincial and municipal levels to assess threats to public order and mentor personnel at all levels of the Iraqi legal apparatus."

Other employment opportunities involve "... the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs [which] recruits U.S. police officers from all over the country to participate in international civilian police activities and local police development in Bosnia, Kosovo, and elsewhere. ..."

"The U.S. participated in its first CIVPOL mission in 1994 in Haiti. Today, more than 700 U.S. police officers are contributing to public safety in areas recovering from conflict.

"Recruitment information for International Police Programs and the OSCE Rapid Expert and Assistance Cooperation Teams can be found at <http://www.policemission.com>.

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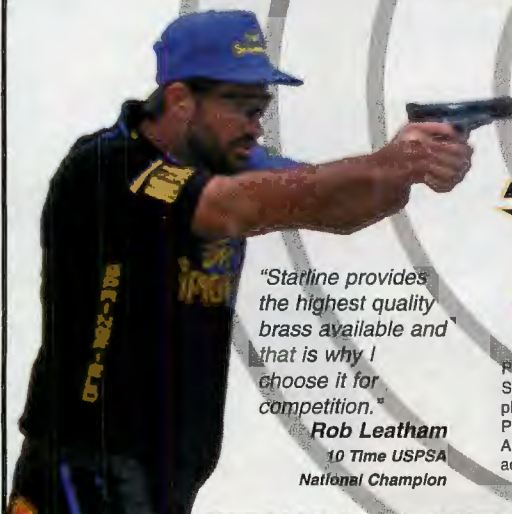
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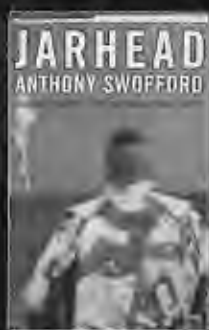
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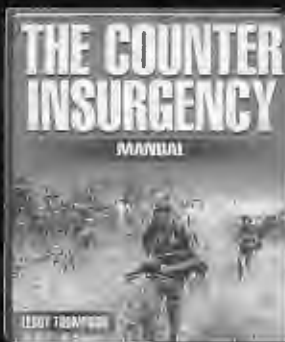
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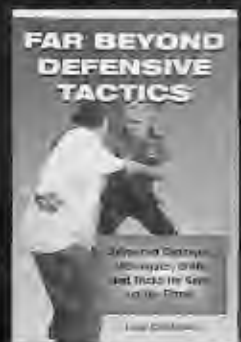
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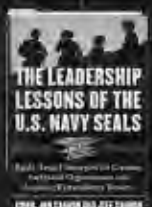
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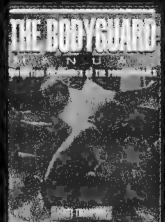
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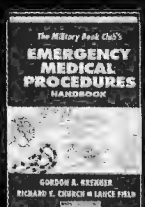


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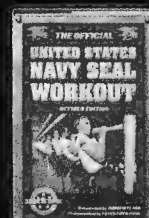


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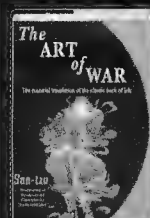
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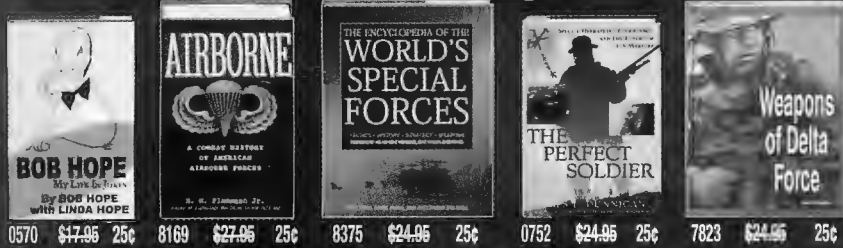
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A Brigade Commander's View From Baghdad

What You Don't See In The News Reports

The following letter was received from Iraq by the Director of the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute.

Greetings from central Baghdad. I took command of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division on 1 July [03]; since then I have had two soldiers killed in firefights. The Special Opns folks call my sector east of the Tigris River "The Hot Box," due to the number of engagements in it on a daily basis. I move around the city escorted by a Personal Security Detachment in two HMMWVs with machine guns mounted. They have fits when I dismount (kinda like the Secret Service around the President, except the chances of getting shot at here at much, much higher). I travel with a loaded 9mm pistol on my lap. This place reminds me of "Max" and the "Road Warrior" movies. As predicted, I am living in interesting times, and am using every bit of the strategy education earned in ASAP and at the War College. We are fighting former regime-backed paramilitary groups, Iranian-based opposition, organized criminals, and street thugs. We have stood up governing councils from neighborhood to district to city level. We have conducted humanitarian action in numerous areas to include repair of electricity, water, sewer, hospitals, and schools; created refuse collection systems; and built numerous recreational facilities (particularly soccer fields). We have cleared hundreds of tons of UXOs and weapons caches. I have already hosted Fox News, ABC, FTN, UP, Reuters, The New Yorker, and an Indian news service.

On any given day I deal with the political realm of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the humanitarian realm of the NGOs, and the military realm of firefights/improved explosive devices/snipers/mortar attacks. My BCT contains active duty, reservists, and National Guardsmen. The BCT has lost 4 soldiers since taking over the sector. The soldiers are staying focused and disciplined, and are getting more effective with each passing day. Our snipers have had some success of late — enough said. Even though we are still being shot at daily, the vast majority of the population supports our objectives and just want to get on with their lives. We are doing some excellent humanitarian work, but it doesn't make the news because all the press wants to talk about is the attacks. The infrastructure is up and running and the shortfalls in electricity, water, sewage, etc., are being addressed. We have local advisory councils of Iraqi citizens set up in Baghdad and a functioning city council. The people we kicked out of power can't stand our success, however, and will do everything they can to try to make us fail.

Thus the ongoing gun battles in the streets. There is also a lot of organized crime here. I have flashbacks to "The Godfather" all the time. As the military commander of eastern Baghdad, I feel like Don Corleone ... or maybe a ward boss on the south side of Chicago. The brigade was trained in high-intensity conflict back in Germany, but quickly transitioned into urban combat operations once in Baghdad.

We had a visit from a team from the British Army experienced in operations in Northern Ireland, and we were already doing everything they talked to us about. In some cases, such as use of helicopters in conjunction with ground forces, we are ahead of them. Special skills such as military police, civil affairs, psychological operations, EOD, and engineers are needed more in this type of operation. I have a reserve MP company out of New York working for me, and they are doing a fantastic job. The company commander is a New York City prosecutor in his other life.

It's 116 degrees here today, and I don't even get a cold beer — GO #1 strikes again. So yet another go-round with the extended Betty Ford Clinic. At least I'm drawing combat pay. I have a spare cot for you if you make it to Baghdad. My HQ is east of the Tigris River. Alcohol not allowed, but bring cigars.

Otherwise, enjoy the summer and drink a cold one for me.

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BY JOHN FARNAM

FARNAM'S GUNSLINGER DIARY

Training Your Lizard Brain

IN a recent conversation with a good friend, Dave Grossman, Dave mentioned that he had recently talked with a gaggle of bearded, bespectacled psychiatrists (all with heavy, German accents). Dave was getting their advice on the differences between the human "front brain" and the "mid-brain." They had a number of terms for the "mid-brain," all with a minimum of six syllables and all difficult to pronounce. When Dave suggested to them the term, "mid-brain," they all nodded in wavering agreement that the term was probably adequately descriptive and that longer and more difficult terms would never see general use anyway.

What Dave, Gary Klugiewicz, and I all concur on is that lifesaving, psychomotor skills, intended to be used in an emergency must eventually filter from the frontal lobes (front brain), where they are first learned, into the mid-brain (primitive, or "lizard" brain) if they are ever going to be accessible when one is in a hyper-stressful, crisis environment.

The frontal lobes are where our intellect dwells. Its precocious and elevated development separates us from lower forms of life. In one's frontal lobes lives discernment, understanding, and our ethical skeleton. However, the frontal lobes are also the residence of confusion, indecision, hesitation, and panic. The frontal lobes are never really quite sure of anything! The front brain is the "legislative branch" of our intelligence. The mid-brain is the "executive branch." The front brain works just fine when we are, at a leisurely pace, contemplating our navels, but, in a life-threatening emergency, a shrewd front brain wisely hands off operations to the mid-brain.

The mid-brain has no philosophy, no hesi-

tation, and no regret. It knows only death, and life, and nothing in between! The mid-brain is never confused and never dithers. Its job is to get us out of this mess alive! It is poor at multitasking. It acts decisively and only does one thing at a time. It never apologizes, never looks back, and sheds no tears.

Unfortunately, the mid-brain is ignored in the training philosophy of many institutions. We do too much training "in the abstract." "In the abstract" is where all training must begin, because the front brain is the entry point for all information. Unhappily, that is where much of what passes for training also ends.

As the student is gradually immersed in the training environment, stress levels must be increased so that important psychomotor skills begin to filter into the mid-brain. The mid-brain will only "know what to do" if the student has been stress-inoculated.

The hand-off from front brain to mid-brain must be seamless and immediate. The mid-brain has to "hit the ground running" if there is to be any chance that it can act in time to save your life. You need to "have a plan," and it must reside in the mid-brain. Unhelpful thoughts, swimming around in your front brain, must be jettisoned before they contaminate your mid-brain. This will mean endless repetitions under physical stress and anxiety.

Ultimately, your front brain will be of limited use during a crisis. In fact, it (and you, if you don't permit a hand-off to the mid-brain) will be little more than a blithering, dithering buffoon! If the hand-off to your mid-brain is smooth, authoritative, and timely, and your mid-brain has been well trained, it will know what to do and will act decisively to save your life. Treat it well. Train it well! ✕

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JACK

A Legend Passes

BY JIM COYNE

Jack Shirley (left) and lifelong pal, Bob Moberg, a legendary helicopter driver who could fly anything, anywhere, anytime, at Shaky Pete's, Pattaya, Thailand, 2002.

The e-mail from Bob Moberg, in Bangkok, was terse: John E. (Jack) Shirley, passed away approximately 1500 hrs., Monday, 14 April 2003, in Pattaya, Thailand. He was 76, and far from the rural 1927 Maine town where he was born. But he was home when he died. In Thailand, near Bangkok, among life-long friends.

The years that I lived in Bangkok I saw Jack every day, and Jack was the first person I would look for whenever I returned. Jack held court in the Madrid Bar on Patpong Road, and sipped Singha beer on the same barstool every day. And from that strategic perch, Jack knew everything that was going on — who was doing what to whom, and why. It didn't matter if you were a General or an Ambassador, or a local Thai cop on the beat; if you wanted to find something out, you knew who to ask. It doesn't seem right for me, now, to be writing Jack's obituary. Instead, I'm just gonna tell you a couple of stories.

In North Korea, in the winter of 1950 when Jack joined the Central Intelligence Agency, 8,000 American troops, most of them United States Marines, were fighting a "strategic withdrawal" while surrounded by 120,000 Chinese soldiers during the coldest winter in 100 years at a place forever known as "Frozen Chosin."

Jack told the CIA that he just wanted to go someplace warm. So, on a Friday afternoon, the final day of his basic tradecraft course at "The Farm," in Virginia, Jack was told to report Monday morning to SEA Supply, a private company in Miami, Florida, and apply for a job. He was told SEA Supply would take it from there.

Jack thought he might have been fired already, so he asked, "How do you know they'll hire me?"

SEA Supply, like Civil Air Transport, Air America, Evergreen International Airways, and later Southern Air Transport, was a "proprietary" company wholly owned by the CIA.

"You already got a job, Jack," the guy from Langley said, and shook his head.

And in the spring of 1951, the Central Intelligence Agency sent Jack Shirley to a warm unspoiled isthmus on the Gulf of Thailand, to a sleepy little beach town named Hua Hin, with a small rural airfield.

The airstrip was important, Jack said, because they were told that the three of them, "Jay W. 'Bill' Elle," another guy with a nom de guerre, "Captain Jeb Collins," and Captain Jack Shirley, were going to start a war. A very secret war. Not even the American Embassy was supposed to know they were there, Jack said. Very low key, very hush-hush.

Which is why things didn't quite work out for "Jeb," who had taken to wearing khaki safari jackets with bloused cowboy boots and a ten-gallon hat. "He wanted us all to wear some sorta Afrika-Korps uniform," Jack recalled.

"One morning we got a telephone call from the control tower over at the air field," Jack laughed. "Said 'one of our guys' was racing up and down the runway in a red Porsche as fast as he could go, and the flight from Bangkok was coming in. 'Jeb' didn't last long." Jack said.

Jack called Thailand home for the next 52 years. Jack loved Thailand, and the feeling was reciprocated in those early years, when the dashing American "Police Captain" briefly married into the Thai Royal Family.

In effect, "Bill' Elle" and Jack Shirley created a new, elite unit of the Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP) similar to but pre-dating American Special Forces, which exists to this day. They dubbed it "PARU" for Police Airborne Resupply Unit, and initiated an intensive curriculum of survival, civil affairs and airborne-counterinsurgency training so they might deploy the new unit in Thai border-security and cross-border guerrilla operations inside Laos, as quickly and as quietly as possible.

Asia was a dangerous neighborhood in the 1950s; a communist revolution had swept China in 1949, Korea was a full-bore military nightmare, and the French were engaged in an ultimately futile colonial war against communist insurgencies throughout Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam, which threatened America's only regional ally — Thailand.

Soon, Jack Shirley was in the middle of a very secret, very hot war. And few people knew. Even now, most folks forget that Laos seemed the most likely flashpoint in the early '60s. "We were using left-over WWII ammunition," Jack said. "Stuff so corroded I had to chip it off with a hammer; half of the mortar rounds just went *thunk* down the tube and stayed there — we'd have to turn the damn things upside down and shake 'em out."

Eventually, as the war in Viet Nam turned white-hot, and American troops poured into the region, Jack found himself in the company of men who would become legends. Men like Anthony Poshepny, aka "Tony Po," a man of fearsome courage, who, as this goes to press, has just passed away in San Francisco.

I am struck by one extraordinary realization, though, as I talk to those who knew Jack: I have never, ever, heard one bad word spoken of him. For a man who managed to live his life in that rarefied atmosphere of intrigue, war, death and deception, he emerged without any enemies. That, alone, may be Jack Shirley's finest epitaph.

Jim Coyne was for years SOF's Southeast Asia Correspondent. He served with distinction in Viet Nam from April 1966 until December 1967 as an expert airborne infantry machine-gunner aboard "Shark" UH-1C helicopter gunships of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, 1st Aviation Brigade, in Viet Nam and Laos, I and II Corps. ☒

THE GREENBACK BOMB:



The Smartest
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Of All

General Ulysses S. Grant's Excellent Contribution To The War In Iraq

BY DON MCLEAN
SOF SENIOR EDITOR

One need not destroy one's enemy. One need only destroy his willingness to engage — Sun Tzu

The total devastation of modern war and the loss or mutilation of innocents has caused military planners, in their sober moments, to ponder the possibilities of limiting the effects of war. You know — leading-edge thoughts, like, make a neutron bomb that only kills every living thing but doesn't screw up the real estate. Or, among those more compassionate conquistadors (who worry less about spoiling the spoils and more about the unnecessary deaths of non-combatants and fighters alike), there has been a great deal of money spent developing non-lethal weaponry, the technical and tactical aspects of which are still being worked out.

The idea of less-than-lethal weapons has a lot to recommend it: usually minimal effect on the environs, and no collateral damage to humanity, whether combatants or bystanders. The current drawback to these weapons and tactics, however, is that "non-lethal" methods sometimes prove to be not so non-lethal, as in the recent Moscow theater incident, or, in other cases, did prove to be satisfactorily non-lethal — but were equally non-effective.

What if you could come up with a new methodology that would ensure no collateral damage to local infrastructure, or to innocent bystanders ... or even to your own, or the enemy's, fighting forces?

Fortunately, such "technology" was already on the shelf when the war-planning partnership of Franks & Rumsfeld set about to plan the fall of Saddam Hussein and his minions in the Ba'ath Party and "elite" Republican Guard. The strategy and tactics were formally known as "10-03 Victor," the creative, innovative, flexible and very successful war plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom. One can assume this element of the plan has been employed in an individual context for as long as there have been wars, but Franks & Rumsfeld were the first to successfully bring it to the battlefield on a wholesale basis. Various tactics to be employed, including the specific one we will address here, had been conceived by the CIA and given a recent and successful test drive on selected Afghani warlords in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Cruise missiles that fly through the pre-selected window of the target to bring a message of the launcher's choosing may seem pricey at a million or two a pop, but due to the results they bring for the dollar, they are very cost effective, and collateral damage is kept to historical lows. Likewise effi-

cient and cost-effective, are the retrofit kits that convert iron bombs into smart bombs that destroy their target and little else in the area, because blowing empty sand into the air does not win wars.

But what if, for often less than the cost of one precision Tomahawk to fly into a division command and control center, for far less cost, you could take out the whole division and have no collateral damage at all?

Mission Statement: Iraqi Freedom

As Operation Iraqi Freedom was not a war on Iraq, but a war on a regime, the year-long planning that went into 10-03 Victor was oriented toward the rapid collapse of Saddam's brutal dictatorship, with minimal collateral damage and — hopefully — without wanton destruction of the Iraqi military.

"In some ways, if the Iraqi military elects not to fight, and we are confronted with dealing with prisoners or war and capitulating units, then that might be better all the way around than having to destroy the Iraqi military," noted Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, commander of the land invasion forces. He and officials in Washington and London held that a viable post-Saddam Iraqi military would be necessary to ensure the security and territorial integrity of the country, and it behooved the Coalition, therefore, not to needlessly destroy the good parts of it.

Modern historical wars had been oriented toward totally vanquishing the enemy, including his country if need be, such as the devastation of Atlanta, Cologne and Hiroshima. But this is a new era, where victory is not merely defined by military success.

In an interview with Gen. McKiernan, Michael Gordon of *The New York Times* observed, "this time around how you win is as important as the fact that you win. In a sense, victory where the U.S. laid waste to Iraq, killed thousands and thousands of Iraqis, including soldiers who didn't really want to be there, that would be a Pyrrhic victory for the United States." True enough, and one of the goals kept constantly in mind by war planners.

The 10-03 Victor planners were willing to think outside the box — or dip into it — anxious to ensure a swift, clean victory that would leave Iraq liberated, but as intact as possible.

Zero Collateral Damage

"What is the effect you want?" *The Independent*, quoted a senior Pentagon official. "How much does a cruise missile cost? Between \$1 million and \$2.5 million. Well, a bribe is a PGM [precision guided missile]. It achieves the aim but it's bloodless and there's zero collateral damage. This part of the operation was as important as the shooting part; maybe more important. We knew that some units would fight out of a sense of duty and patriotism, and they did. But it didn't change the outcome because we knew how many of these [Iraqi generals] were going to call in sick," he added.

Armed with superior technology and with the promise that some Iraqi leaders would not engage, Coalition war

USAF by Staff Sgt. Daniel C. Perez



In addition to massive leaflet drops (some 30,000,000 this time around), *Commando Solo* — a fleet of converted C-130s bristling with radio gear — blanketed the country with airborne radio transmissions, including "black" transmissions spoofing listeners into thinking they were official Iraqi radio.

planners were able to dramatically scale back the number of troops deployed to the theater — which led to out-of-the-loop criticism from brass hats-turned-TV-talking-heads, wringing their soft hands over the few troops deployed.

Early Pentagon projections on the numbers of Iraqis who would pack it in at the first opportunity were as high as 270,000. When, in the early stages of the war, less than two thousand a day were surrendering, reporters and nay-sayers seized on this as proof the Master Plan had gone awry. It is a military truism, which one would have to explain only to newsies, that no war plan ever survives initial contact with the enemy, and one of the truly brilliant aspects of 10-03 Victor was its built-in flexibility and the excellent consideration given to myriad contingencies. In the final analysis, those who cried everything from "monstrous screw-up" to "imminent defeat" look truly silly in the light of what happened during the next couple weeks after the weather cleared — just as Franks and Rumsfeld knew it would, as they had done their homework ... and invested wisely.

Air Assets, Ground Assets, Liquid Assets

Against an opposition force that came to the battlefield already demoralized, it was assumed, Coalition PsyOps would be an effective tool. In Desert Storm, thousands of Iraqi soldiers surrendered, waving the propaganda/surrender/safe-pass leaflets Coalition forces had dropped on their positions. But they waved them as tickets to safety, not because they had been persuaded by them to quit. Saddam's mistreatment had persuaded them to quit already, although this observation in no way denigrates the value of conventional PsyOps in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was thorough, well-orchestrated, and effective. And some of its unusual and most dramatically effective facets were crass indeed: *bald-faced bribery*.

In addition to massive leaflet drops, *Commando Solo* — a fleet of converted C-130s bristling with radio gear — blanketed the country with airborne radio transmissions, includ-



Those who cried everything from “monstrous screw-up” to “imminent defeat” look truly silly in the light of what happened after the weather cleared — just as Franks and Rumsfeld knew it would, as they had done their homework ... and invested wisely. Here, Marines from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, escort EPWs to holding area on 21 March.

ing “black” transmissions spoofing listeners into thinking they were official Iraqi radio. Some 30 million leaflets were showered upon Iraqi forces this time around, but when it came to the brass, more came in out of the cold waving a fistful of dollars than did waving a surrender leaflet.

Our SpecOps troops, who fanned out across Iraq long before hostilities began, repeated a technique that had worked so well in enlisting the “allegiance” of warlords in Afghanistan — they carried with them tangible, liquid assets that would be as integral to their mission as were the sophisticated comms gear and leading-edge ordnance used to target, destroy — or safeguard — crucial infrastructure. And as with any good sales effort, the follow-up was unrelenting, high-tech and apparently quite effective. Using the CIA’s Most Excellent Rolodex, senior Iraqi officials were inundated with e-mails and calls to their mobile phones. The messages were personal, usually tailored to the individual, and urged the individual to surrender, to disable or refrain from using weapons of mass destruction — and/or take a dive for the benefit of themselves and their families and their troops.

USA Today reported that Major General Abdul Qassab had been the object of intense wooing from the U.S. for months, every day receiving an anonymous phone call urging him to “give yourself up. You cannot win. You will be saved if you defect.” Messages were sent through people he knew in London and Jordan, and hand-delivered messages dropped off at his house. Reuters, as well, reported on the text of e-mails urging Iraqi brass not to use WMD: “If you provide information on weapons of mass destruction or you take steps to hamper their use we will do all necessary to protect you and protect your families. Failing to do that will lead to personal consequences.”

Although only “trusted” senior officials would have Internet access and cell phones, it was a given that even those would be monitored, and recipients might be wary of opening emails or accepting calls. Thus, low-tech means were used as well.

Phone trees were activated between Iraqi commanders and their relatives living outside regime-controlled areas of the country, and used as conduits for U.S. information. In addition to the Internet, short-wave radio was used to thwart

Saddam’s monitors, as were hand-delivered messages smuggled into Baghdad by people who frequently visited the capital on routine business. Did the messages get through? After three months of saturation coverage, U.S. intelligence began intercepting phone conversations between senior military officials that indicated the base core of military support for Saddam was eroding in favor of better offers. There apparently was a great deal of dialog, but proportionally more messages were received than were transmitted back, as to get caught doing so would be worth an Iraqi general’s life. When asked by a newsie how Saddam’s inner circle would go about surrendering, SecDef Rumsfeld replied cryptically, “They know precisely what to do.”

Negotiations continued, often intensifying, during the battle as a general’s true options came into sharper focus. As a result, some changed teams for financial incentive as D-day approached, and others accepted an 11th-hour offer to boogie and benefit.

Their demeanor in considering the Coalition courtship gave American and British officials a chance to weigh which Iraqi officers were worth building a relationship with, for when the post-Saddam military structure would be rebuilt.

When asked at a press briefing if there were any country-to-country dialog in progress, SecDef Rumsfeld replied, “The



“In some ways, if the Iraqi military elects not to fight, and we are confronted with dealing with prisoners or war and capitulating units, then that might be better all the way around than having to destroy the Iraqi military,” noted Lt. Gen. David McKiernan, commander of the land invasion forces. Here McKiernan (left) and Gen. Tommy Franks, CENTCOM Combatant Commander, sit at the edge of Kuwait runway on 7 April and discuss progress of the war.

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Possible? Of course. It's just that no one sees it this way. It's human nature. We shy from victory, from domination. It's the way most of us are built... unless you're a criminal...

Here's the problem: A thug comes up, places a knife to your throat and demands your wallet. Taking him at his word you give him the wallet. He then proceeds to stab you repeatedly leaving you in a pool of your own blood, astonished you've been stabbed.

What went wrong? Just this. You ASSUMED he only wanted the wallet. After all, why would anyone stab someone over a few measly bucks? YOU certainly wouldn't do that if you were robbing someone (by the way... when WAS the last time you robbed someone and put a knife to their throat?)

You see, that IS the problem...

You've Just Transferred Your Own Moral Code To A Sociopathic Killer... And With It, Quite Possibly, Your Life.

See, nothing bothers him. He's certainly not bound by your morals. With a total disregard for society and it's rules, he has no regret whatsoever in cramming a blade into your gut... if that's what it takes to get what he wants.

You stroll around thinking 12 years of martial arts training or that 6-week self-defense course or the latest flavor-of-the-month fighting video gives you the edge you need against someone like this.

Wake up!

You are hopelessly training techniques (then praying they work) against someone who never "trained" for you. How many criminals in federal pens spent years sweating through JKD workouts before committing their crime? How many are Jujitsu experts?

None. They excel at just one thing: doin' it. No training, no practice, no techniques. And these criminals certainly follow no 'rules'. So why squander years fooling yourself with something that only works "if everyone plays by the rules"?

These are the facts: 98% of us, caught in an unavoidable violent attack (even those with years of training), would never consider doing "whatever it takes" to survive — like gouging our attacker's eyes — even if they were the only targets available, and... even if it was the only means of saving our own life.

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Make no mistake... Larkin doesn't advocate violence. TFT just de-mystifies it. He's often quoted...

"Violence Is Rarely The Answer. But When It Is... It's The Only Answer."

Look... others in Soldier of Fortune try to impress you with how bad they are, their accomplishments in the "hidden world" you aren't privy to, their guru status.

TFT isn't about that. **It's not about an individual, a personality... or a guru.**

It's about a system... one focused totally on you!

Make no bones about it: Larkin's track record is impressive. He's currently training units from the top echelons of federal law enforcement and military special operations groups. It's not surprising since he comes from that world and is well known there. But since everyone in Soldier of Fortune tries to claim this you'll rarely hear him talking about it.

He's an awesome communicator, fabulous trainer, and amazingly approachable for someone with his abilities and credentials. And he's trained 100's of CEOs and others in high-risk positions around the world — all very real people.

But why is this so important?

Why Is TFT Being Sought Out In All These Other Arenas?

Because it works! Because you "get it" immediately... as soon as you experience it. There's no waiting. It's usable instantly... and it stays with you forever, even if you never practice it again.

Take fear. Others say they will make you 'fearless'. But it's a total lie! **Fear is hardwired into our brains.** TFT instead quickly and easily reprograms your muscle 'software' enabling you to take deliberate action... despite your fear (by the way it's not magic, you've got the ability inside you right now).

Here's what TFT is about: the key to the system lies in the fact there are two... and only two... overriding principles that determine the outcome of any physical confrontation. Combine these with three supporting methodologies that form the foundation of every fighting system on the planet and you have a complete system for handling any violent confrontation. With this information you can look at anything that's out there... including your own training... and know immediately if it's worth keeping.

"It was the most effective five days of training in hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon that I and everyone else had ever experienced." Brian (last name withheld), US Border Patrol

Larkin just got back from talking to over 600 CEO's in Europe. These folks are eating his stuff up because **TFT** principles and methodology are as effective in the 'combative' world of business as they are in a truly lethal fight, and for the exact same reason... **RESULTS.**

What really excites Larkin is the fact that if these people can get this much from his material, imagine how much more someone like you can learn... a dedicated reader of Soldier of Fortune magazine who is really into finding and applying a system that is

quickly learned and deadly effective. If all these other folks are seeking him out, shouldn't you be too?

Look, Larkin is swamped and realizes he can't begin to reach everyone. While he'd love to have you as a member of his organization and to take part in his live training, he realistically understands few will be able to do this. Workshops run \$1,997.00, while international events start at \$10,000.00. And personal training for small 2- to 4-person sessions is \$5,000.00 per person.

That's why he videotaped a complete live training bootcamp, then distilled it down to just 13 hours of tightly-packed instruction.

There's absolutely no fluff. Blink while watching and you miss something important. Everything except actual instructional information... was cut.

This is the first look ever inside one of Larkin's full 2½-day, multi-instructor events and much of the discussion (especially of the trauma caused to the human body) had never been recorded before.



Now Preview The Most Effective Personal Protection System In The World

13 videos from a \$1,497 workshop are a significant investment... \$397 for the video-only version, \$597 for the complete set including 5 teleconference calls directly with Larkin, a huge reference manual, Olympic coach Charles Staley's video *Conditioning for the Combat Athlete* (his custom training notes for TFT participants), and discounts off live training events.

That's why Larkin is offering a preview video that describes many of the TFT system principles and methodologies along with the first practice techniques used to demonstrate the application of those principles.

Obviously you won't become proficient in TFT from this video alone (the entire 13-tape set builds upon itself) but you will understand first-hand why this program is so devastatingly effective.

There's more: If you're one of the first 50 people to order, Larkin will throw in **2 free bonuses:** 1) 20 key pages pulled from the 121-page system reference manual and, 2) a special report describing the foundational elements of the TFT system, titled *The Two Key Principles Used To Win Every War, Battle And Streetfight... And How You Can Exploit Their Devastating Power Today.*

Order the complete tape set after watching the preview and Larkin will not only rush you the remaining videos plus the reference manual and other materials described above, **he'll also credit your entire purchase price of the preview tape towards the purchase of the full set.** It's a "can't lose" proposition.

Here's How To Get Your Preview Video

Total investment for the preview video and bonuses is \$29 plus \$5 shipping in the US or Canada (\$17 to international locations). You can order online at www.tftgroup.com/products/29order. Or pick up the phone right now and call **888-234-2192**. Ask for LV29.

You may also send a money order to TFT Group, 325 E Washington St. PMB207, Sequim, WA, 98382. There are just 250 preview tapes available so order yours today.

answer is no ... Is there contact between Coalition forces and Iraqi forces? The answer is, most certainly. There has been over the past period of weeks, and those discussions have intensified." Earlier he had noted, "there are communications in every conceivable mode and method, public and private" in efforts to back-channel Iraqi leaders to the other side. The "full force and fury" of a military campaign could be avoided, he observed, if enough Iraqi troops surrendered.

Field commanders were instructed by leaflet and other means to form their vehicles in large squares, armor with guns pointing north, artillery and air-defense systems were to be parked in travel formation, and no shoulder-fired AA missiles could be displayed. They were to have their men leave their arms with the vehicles, and march to a pickup point at least 1 km away and get in an organized formation. Officers were instructed to keep their side arms, in order that they could continue to control their troops. The Pentagon showed reporters aerial shots of just such formations of surrendering Iraqis, early in the war.

In areas where there were more than one unit, and in urban areas, things got confusing to both sides exactly what the protocol was. British soldiers reported that Iraqi soldiers



DoD by Helene C. Sitkoff

One can assume this "new" element of the creative, innovative, flexible and very successful war plan for Operation Iraqi Freedom known as "10-03 Victor" has been employed in an individual context for as long as there have been wars, but Franks & Rumsfeld were the first to successfully bring it to the battlefield on a wholesale basis. Indications are the technique was widespread and wonderfully cost-effective — and well in place long before the first shots were fired. General Franks, told Defense News that, "I had letters from Iraqi generals saying, 'I now work for you.'"

were shelled by their own forces when they tried to surrender under white flags in southern Iraq. Many units whose men obviously had little reason to fight had "imbeds" of gung-ho units such as Republican Guards or Saddam's Brownshirts, the *Fedayeen Saddam*, whose function was to ensure that the others did not throw in the towel. Tariq Ali, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and mayor of Kirkuk, noted that mass defections had been hampered by the presence of Iraqi "death squads," whose function was to stop desertions and keep Iraqi front lines intact. As it turned out, however, these were ineffective.

What was left of the Ba'ath Party and Iraqi military commanders in Mosul offered to surrender to the Kurdish forces of Gen. Zebari, and a list of those seeking amnesty was forwarded to

CentCom to determine who they were and if they were in a position to strike a deal. A senior defense official told Vago Muradian of *Defense News* that the latchstring — and feedback — was not necessarily hung out for all comers. "The really bad guys in a global sense were dealt with in other ways," he noted succinctly. "We're still trying to round up those left behind and bring them to justice."

Among other regime efforts to stem the tide of its troops rolling over, were the fake "surrenders" where suicide bombers in uniform would blow up the Coalition troops accepting them — in an attempt to get Coalition troops into the idea of shooting those who wanted to surrender, hoping word would get back to others who were considering surrender. The same ruse was used with "civilians" in an attempt to create civilian deaths and the ensuing problems.

As It Turns Out, A Capital Idea

The leading-edge weapons that showed their worth so strongly in the Iraq War — the almighty Abrams, the almighty Spectre, the almighty B1/B2/F-119, the almighty Tomahawks and smart bombs — it turns out, cannot compete in sheer effectiveness with the Almighty Dollar.

Fielding a fighting division is expensive — cost numbers for Iraqi Freedom usually run in the \$200-billion range — but it can be far less expensive if, rather than fielding another division of your own, you simply *buy one of theirs*. Although, with the circumspect tight-lippedness of bribe-givers-and-takers everywhere, the Pentagon is not discussing exactly who got what and precisely what was the *quid pro quo*. All indications are that the technique was widespread and wonderfully cost-effective — and well in place long before the first shots were fired in anger. CentCom chief, General Tommy Franks, told *Defense News* that, "I had letters from Iraqi generals saying, 'I now work for you.'"

Next month: Guess who's coming to dinar: the triumphal march through Baghdad as cost-effective theater ... and when Saddam tried to surrender and the cell phone that botched the deal. ☒

YOUR CHOICE: GREENBACKS OR GREEN CARDS

Under the "Iraqi Scientists Immigration Act of 2002," sponsored by Sen. Joseph Biden II, up to 500 Iraqi scientists could have been given green cards if they revealed crucial information on Iraqi programs for weapons of mass destruction. The rationale for the act was twofold: Firstly it was hoped it would provide details on Saddam's WMD program that Washington sought, and secondly it would drain Iraq of key experts that would be vital to any such weapons program that might be underway.

To be eligible for the scheme, arms specialists must have worked in a program to deliver WMD since 16 December 1998.

The bill stated, "The emigration from Iraq of key scientists, engineers and technicians could substantially disable Hussein's programs to produce weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them." Under the bill, the Secretary of State and Attorney General would administer the resettlement program.

The Achilles heel of the program, however, was not unlike the \$1 million SOF once offered for any Nicaraguan pilot who would defect with an Mi-24 Hind: It just isn't that simple to get out of a dictatorship if you have something to offer the other side.

— D. M.

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by Frank Sherrill

I was the total skeptic. Not only had I lifted weights for years, but after 21 years in the martial arts and several more in the military, I thought I'd seen it all. So I just didn't believe **Matt Furey** when he said you can get kick-butt fit with body-weight calisthenics, that I figured I went through in bootcamp. Besides, I could bench 400 and squat 625. So there's no way I was going to fall for a routine that I figured I already knew. Been there, done that!

But I couldn't shake this feeling that Furey might be right. I had read about the **Great Gama** of India, a wrestler who followed this program and was unbeaten in 5,000 matches. In terms of size and strength, he was amazing. He was 5'7" and 260 pounds of streaming steel. And that was in the early 1900's - long before steroids.

I had heard that **Bruce Lee** did the exercises Furey teaches, too. And we all know about Lee's incredible ripped, lean, muscular look. Not to mention how lightning fast and fluid he was.

I had heard that **Herschel Walker**, a Heisman Trophy winner and All-Pro Running back did 500 pushups and situps each day. So that made me think even more.

And then the final straw was when I started to read all the testimonials that Furey had collected from fellow military (I have included several of them in this article).

And then, of course, there is Furey, the author of *Combat Conditioning* and the man GRAPPLING magazine dubbed "The King of Catch Wrestling." Furey has been featured in major martial arts magazines around the world, has been on the cover of several - and is certainly no slouch when it comes to having and using functional strength. He was a world champion in Shuai-chiao kung fu and a national collegiate champion wrestler. Something told me he had to be telling the truth.

I figured the only way I would ever know for sure would be to get the program and use it. I told myself that if what I was reading was nothing but marketing hype - I would not only be angry - but I would let everyone in the world know about it.

So I bought Furey's *Combat Conditioning* book and read it. In the book he challenges the readers with a test. 100 Hindu squats, followed by 50 Hindu pushups, then a one-minute back bridge.

Figuring this would be easy, I got started. At 40 Hindu squats my thighs were blitzed. It took about 90 seconds; not long compared to my squat routine at the gym.

Next, I tried the Hindu pushups. Funny thing is my legs were still shaking. I dipped down and pushed back. At 15 my arms were throbbing. This couldn't be. No way. **I could bench like there's no tomorrow and this exercise was nuking me.** I gave up at 27 reps. This took about 1.5 minutes, so my workout had only been 2.5 minutes long.

Then the bridge. After three unsuccessful attempts of ten seconds, I gave up. The next day my legs, chest and arms were sore, but in a good way. I thought my legs got 10 times more work with weights, but I was wrong.

Over the course of three months my body changed big time. In fact, I've made a list of 12 of the most amazing benefits that I and thousands of others all over the world have gotten from the *Combat Conditioning* program. I'm betting these are important to you, too:

1. I blow-torched off my excess body fat so quickly that I could eat more than I normally did and still look better than ever.
2. I packed and chiseled functional muscle onto my legs, chest and back that I've never had before, even from weights.
3. I simultaneously doubled my strength and flexibility - and did so without needing separate workouts for each.
4. I quadrupled my endurance inside of 30 days. Just think how much this helped my sparring. No matter what, I NEVER get tired.
5. The chronic back and shoulder pain I had from years of heavy squats, deadlifts and bench pressing went away within a couple weeks. And much of that pain had been with me for nearly 10 years. It's GONE now.

6. I sleep like a log. Eight hours of deep sleep is no longer a goal. It's automatic. As soon as I hit the rack I'm out like a light.
7. My self-confidence knows no bounds. Especially when I got compliments from people who hardly paid attention to me before. I honestly believe there is nothing I cannot do. I'm on top of the world.
8. I can train anywhere. I don't need more than a few square feet of carpet or pavement and I'm all set. I have absolutely no excuses and my body is loving me for it. I don't need any equipment. Just my own bodyweight.
9. I get a kick-butt workout done in 15 minutes or less. Sure, I could do more - but I've gotten incredible results with this amount - so why ruin a good thing?
10. I've turned back the clock. My friends tell me I look 5 - 10 years younger. Awesome!!
11. I have an explosive type of strength that weights couldn't give me. My movements are super fast even when I'm just screwing around.
12. My muscles are like a pliable and powerful tiger - ready to pounce on prey in a heartbeat.

So there you have it. The 12 reasons why *Combat Conditioning* is the best fitness program on the planet. But forget about me.

Take a look at what some others in the military have to say about this program:

Matt, I am a US Marine stationed overseas. I am also a wrestler/judoka and the Marine who developed the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program. I use your courses regularly. I like your no-nonsense approach. Particularly as I get older, bodyweight exercises are quick, flexible, all-encompassing and convenient. Keep up the good work!

Lt Colonel George Bristol - USMC

Mr. Furey,

We have been applying the principle of 'mastering your own body weight' to our football program and have been pleased. A 12 - 1 championship season last year was our reward. Thank you sir.

*Bonner Cummings
Yosemite, CA*

Dear Matt,

When I got your book, I changed my whole way of thinking about how one should train for Combatives. I am now totally off the weights, and, to tell you the truth, I have never felt better or been more flexible in my life. I feel great and have lost no size, strength, or muscle mass... as a result I scored the maximum number of points on the Army Physical Fitness test. HOOAH! You are doing great things, and I and the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School owe you a lot.

TREAT'EM ROUGH!

*CPT Judd D. Mahfouz -
Infantry*

*Dear Mr. Furey,
Let me say I have benefited a lot from both your *Combat Conditioning* and *Combat Abs* book. I am a Marine stationed on Okinawa, Japan and I do a lot of kickboxing and NHB fighting on the side. Your exercises have given me a tremendous advantage and combined with my other routines (shadowboxing, sparring, bagwork, wind sprints, and grappling drills) have gotten me into the best shape of my life.*

*LCpl Sandor Devenyi -
United States Marine Corps*



Matt Furey, author of the best-selling *Combat Conditioning*.

Dear Matt,

*Being a U.S. Marine in a field unit, I spend much of my time in Physical Training, and I'll admit, I thought that I was in peak physical condition. 2 months ago I began your *Combat Conditioning* program and quickly realized that I had been missing something. While platoon PT consists of mostly running and incorporates some bodyweight exercises (i.e. pushups, pull-ups, crunches) I had been spending the bulk of my personal training time in the weight room, lifting heavy. It embarrassed me the first time I tried to do a reverse pushup and couldn't. I haven't set foot in the weight room in the last 2 months. My 3 mile run time has dropped to below 18 minutes, I've lost a good 10 lbs and my body fat has dropped 4%. You can see the difference and God knows, I can feel the difference. I've introduced the rest of my squad to your program.*

Thanks for helping us kick ass and take names in a hellish and unforgiving manner.

*D "Bubba" Byng - LCPL, USMC
"Golf" Co, MCS Battalion*

Matt Furey's *Combat Conditioning: Functional Exercises for Fitness & Combat Sports* has 48 super effective body-weight exercises along with seven different programs that will get you into kick-butt shape fast. Be one of the first 25 people to order and you'll receive 3 free **Special Reports** on how to eliminate knee, back and shoulder pain.

Your total investment in this no nonsense book is only \$29.95 plus \$6 S&H U.S. (foreign orders add \$12). Order online at www.mattfurey.com. Or pick up the phone right now and call 1 813 994 8267 to order.

You can also send a money order to Matt Furey Enterprises, Inc., 10339 Birdwatch Drive, Tampa, FL, 33647.

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SCF 09/03

All The News That's Fit To Twist

One GI's Answer To Distorted News Coverage

The decision to embed reporters with Coalition troops as they advanced through Iraq in pursuit of an evil regime was a good decision, but it was predicated on the idea that the members of the Fourth Estate are as professional as the military units they would accompany. In light of some of the jaded, inaccurate or unabashedly "spun" reports we have seen of late, this may have been a flawed assumption. Some journalists simply displayed ignorance that lead to inaccurate reporting, and others seemed to be pursuing an agenda more fervently than they sought the objective truth. For this reason we take the liberty of presenting here a ration of truth that was not originally addressed to us, but has been forwarded to us through the kind offices of the Special Forces Association, because it gives a much-needed counterpoint.

It was originally written as an informal, candid sitrep to friends in uniform — by a man who was there and knows what he saw, sometimes in stark contrast to what was subsequently presented in the media.

It Ain't Necessarily So

01 Jul 2003; 11:09:09

Hey Guys, sorry it's been so long since I've sent anything but a quick note to you individually. However things have been pretty hectic since the end of hostilities and the start of the real war. Despite what the assholes in the press like to say over and over:

- 1) We did expect some armed resistance from the Ba'ath Party and Feydaheen;
- 2) It isn't any worse than expected;
- 3) Things are getting better each day, and
- 4) The morale of the troops is A-1, except for the normal bitching and griping.

My brief love affair with the press, especially the guys who had the *cajones* to be embedded with the troops during the fighting, is probably over, especially since we are back being criticized by the same Roland Headly-types that used to hang around the Palestine Hotel drinking Baghdad Bob's whiskey and parroting his ridiculous B.S.

I'm in Baghdad now, since [his unit came] here from Qatar. It looks, sounds and smells about the same but at least you can get Maker's Mark at the local OC. We came up in mid-June to help set up operation Scorpion and Sidewinder. It represents a major (and long overdue) shift in tactics. Instead of being sitting ducks for the bad guys, we now are going after them.

I'm no longer baby-sitting the pukers from CNN and the canned hams from the networks, but have a combat mission coordinating a bunch of A-teams, seeking, finding and rooting out the mostly non-Iraqis that are well-armed, well-paid (in U.S. dollars) and always waiting to wail for the press and



U.S. Army by Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

GI from A Co., 1/320 101st Airborne Div (Air Assault), plays with Mosul schoolkids after passing out school supplies Alpha Company bought on local economy with company funds. Don't look for this on the evening news.

then shoot some GI in the back in the midst of a crowd.

The only reason the GIs are pissed (not demoralized) is that they cannot touch, must less waste, those taunting bags of gas that scream in their faces and riot on cue when they spot a cameraman from ABC, BBC, CBS, CNN or NBC. If they did, then they know the next nightly news will be about how chaotic things are and how much the Iraqi people hate us.

Some do. But the vast majority do not, and more and more see that the GIs don't start anything, are by-and-large friendly, and very compassionate, especially to kids and old people. I saw a bunch of 19-year-olds from the 82nd Airborne not return fire coming from a mosque until they got a group of elderly civilians out of harm's way. So did the Iraqis.

Big and Bad — Against Women And Kids

A bunch of bad guys used a group of women and children as human shields. The GIs surrounded them and negotiated their surrender 15 hours later and when they discovered a three-year-old girl had been injured by the big tough guys throwing her down a flight of stairs, the GIs called in a Medevac helicopter to take her and her mother to the nearest field hospital. The Iraqis watched it all, and there hasn't been a problem in that neighborhood since. How many such stories, and there are hundreds of them, ever get reported in the

fair and balanced press? You know, nada.

The civilians who have figured it out faster than anyone are the local teenagers. They watch the GIs and try to talk to them and ask questions about America and now wear wrap-around sunglasses, GAP T-shirts, Dockers (or even better, Levis with the red tags) and Nikes (or Egyptian knock-offs, but with the "swoosh") and love to listen to AFN when the GIs play it on their radios.

They participate less and less in the demonstrations and help keep us informed when a wannabe bad-ass shows up in the neighborhood. The younger kids are going back to school again, don't have to listen to some mullah rant about the *Koran* ten hours a day, and they get a hot meal.

They see the same GIs who man the corner checkpoint, helping clear the playground, install new swing sets and create soccer fields. I watched a bunch of kids playing baseball in one playground, under the supervision of a couple of GIs from Oklahoma. They weren't very good but were having fun, probably more than most Little Leaguers. The place is still a mess but most of it has been, for years. But the hospitals are open and are in the process of being brought into the 21st Century. The MOs and visiting surgeons from home are teaching their docs new techniques and one American pharmaceutical company (you know, the kind that all the hippies like to scream about as greedy) donated enough medicine to stock 45 hospital pharmacies for a year.

Safe water is more available. Electricity has been restored to pre-war levels but saboteurs keep cutting the lines. And the old Ba'ath big-shots are upset because they can't get fuel for their private generators. One actually complained to General McKeirnan, who told him it was a rough world.

The MPs are screening the 80,000-man Iraqi police force and

rehabbing the ones that weren't goons, shake-down artists or torturers like they did in East Berlin, Kosovo and Afghanistan.

There are dual patrols of Iraqi cops and U.S./U.K./Polish MPs now in most of the larger cities. Basra has 3.5 million inhabitants. Mosul is a city of 2 million. Kirkuk has 1 million. How many and hundreds of other small towns have not had riots or shootings? The vast majority.

The six U.K. cops were killed in a small Shi'ite town by the ex-cops they were rehabbing. According to a Royal Marine colonel I talked to, the town now has about 20 permanent vacancies in its police force. [Friend's name], he's a big potato-eater from Belfast named Huggins and knows how to handle terrorists after 20 years fighting with the IRA. He sends his regards and says he'd love to have you here. Thinks you'd make a great police chief, even thought the cops would be more frightened of you than the local hoods (then he laughed).

The Real Numbers, In Context

I heard one doofus on MSNBC the other night talk about how "nearly 60" GIs have been killed since 01 May. The truth is that 21 GIs have been killed in combat, mostly from ambush, from 01 May through 30 June. Another 29 have been killed by accidents or other causes (two drowned while swimming in the Tigris).

The MSNBC idiot is the same jerk who reported on the air that "dozens of GIs" were badly burned when two RPGs hit a truck belonging to an Engineer Battalion that was parked by a construction site. The truck was hit and burned, three GIs received minor injuries (including the driver who burnt his hand) and three warriors of Allah were promptly sent to enjoy their 72 slave girls in Paradise. Hell of a way to get laid.

A mosque in that shithole Fallujah blew-up this morning

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while the local imam, a creep named Fahlil (who was one of the biggest local loudmouths that frequently appeared on CNN) was helping a Syrian Hamas member teach eight teenagers how to make belt bombs. Right away the local Feyhadeen propaganda group started wailing that the Americans hit it with a TOW missile (If they had there wouldn't have been any mosque left!) and the usual suspects took to the streets for CNN and BBC. One fool was dragging around a piece of tin with blood on it, claiming it was part of the missile.

The cameras rolled and the idiot started repeating his story, then one of

my guys asked him in Arabic where he had left the rag he usually wore around his face that made him look like a girl. He was a local leader of the Feyhadeen. We took the clown in custody and were asked rather indignantly by the twit from BBC if we were trying to shut-up "the poor man who had seen his mosque and friends blown up." I told the airy-fairy who the raghead was and if he knew Arabic (which he obviously didn't) he'd know he was a Palestinian. I suggested we take him down to the local jail and we'd lock him and his cameraman in a cell with the "poor man" and they could interview him

until we took him to headquarters. They declined the invitation. Guess what played on the Bullshit Broadcasting System that evening? Did the Americans blow-up a mosque? See the poor man who is still in a state of shock over losing his mosque and relatives? Yep. Our friend, the Palestinian.

Our search-and-destroy missions are largely at night, free of reporters and generally terrifying to those brave warriors of Allah.

The only thing that frightens them more is hearing the word "Gitmo."

The word is out that a trip to Guantanamo Bay is not a Caribbean vacation and they usually start squealing like the little mice they are, when an interrogator mentions "Gitmo."

No wonder the International Red Cross, the National Council of Churches and the French keep protesting about the place. They know it has proven to be very effective in keeping several hundred real fanatical psychopaths in check and very frankly would rather see them cut loose to go kill some more GIs or innocent Americans, just to make W. look bad.

We have about 200 really bad guys in custody now and probably will park them in the desert behind a triple roll of razor wire, backed up by a couple of Bradleys pointed their way, if they decide to riot. Maybe a few will get to "Gitmo" but most are human garbage that wouldn't take on your five-year-old grandson face-to-face. The more we go after them, and not vice-versa, I think we will see the sniper attacks go down. Yeah, they'll get lucky now and then, but it's show-time, fellows.

Garbage Service

Our first objective is to get the die-hards off the street (or make them too scared to come out in them) and destroy their caches of weapons (we have collected more than 227,000 AK-47s and that is only the tip of the iceberg; Curly bought nearly a million of them from our pal, Vladimir), then cut-off their money supply, mostly from Syria and Lebanon.

We must continue to get public services up and running, so the local families can get water, sewage and garbage service; electricity, public transportation; oil fields and refineries working and a dinar that won't halve in value every month.

It's going to be a long haul (remember it took 10-15 years in Japan and West Germany) but if we don't stick with it, nobody else will, and we'll have some

Continued on page 74

**"COMPELLING ...
A BOOK THAT YOU WON'T
WANT TO PUT DOWN."** —PLAYBOY

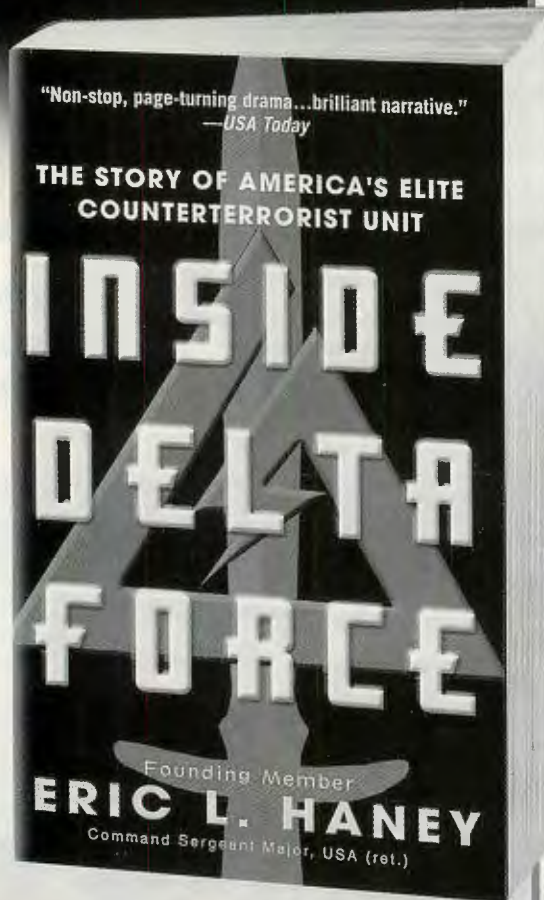
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BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

AMERICA AT WAR

THAILAND TEACHER CAPTURED selling "dirty bomb" parts. **BALI BOMBERS** of Jemaah Islamiyah arrested with maps of U.S., Australian, U.K., and Israeli embassies and resorts (*Economist*). **MILITARY BASE** to be used by U.S. to launch anti-terrorist attacks (Stratfor.com).

UNITED STATES SPY-CATCHER Paul Redmond abruptly quits. Speculation: to hush embarrassing details of U.S. computer software that enabled Saddam and bin Laden to avoid capture by pin-pointing every move in global manhunt. **BRITISH** *International Currency Review* alleges software provided to Saddam by former Bush Administration when Iraq-Washington alliance thrived in Iraq-Iran war (Globe-intel). **INDIA** gives severe blow, refuses to send 17,000 troops to Iraq. "VIOLENT JIHAD" charges leveled at nine U.S. Lashkar-e-Taiba ("Army of Righteous") members is "stark reminder terrorist organization of various allegiances are active in U.S.," said U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty (WND.com).

NORTH KOREA processes 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods, tests atomic devices. CIA suspects launchable warhead development imminent.

PHILIPPINES CEASEFIRE between government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels. Government halts military attacks; suspends arrests of rebels accused of terrorism. **ESCAPED:** suspect plotting to blow-up U.S. Embassy.

INDONESIA THWARTED PLOT: 400 rebel al-Qaeda sympathizers, 45 officers dead in two-month counterinsurgency operation; Christian church targeted. **CONFISCATED:** massive cache of explosives from Jemaah Islamiyah operators (Strategyworld). **BRUTAL CRACKDOWN** in West Papua by military; 16 civilians killed, dozens brutalized; clinics, churches and schools burned (AFP).

CUBA U.S.-BASED satellite broadcasts to Iran being jammed by Iran-oil-dependent Castro. **CHINA**, with electronic espionage network in Cuba, suspected of helping Castro's "electronic war against Yankee imperialism."

COLOMBIA RURAL SELF-DEFENSE force trained to guard home villages. FARC and ELN retaliating by killing families. **PARAMILITARIES:** 13,000 members to demobilize by 2005. FARC demanding another DMZ "liberated zone" and prisoner exchange. 2.5 TONS of cocaine worth \$300m seized. **U.S. TROOPS** train Colombians in first direct involvement in civil war.

NEPAL ARMED REBELS blackmail elite for rebel cause. **SECOND TRUCE** in two years fails.

PERU SHINING PATH Maoist guerrillas ambush 30 Marines patrolling jungle: seven dead, 10 wounded.

RUSSIA RECRUITER OF CHECHEN WOMEN suicide bombers, and three bodyguards, suicide bombers, assassinated after two women kill selves and 13 civilians.

FRANCE ARRESTED: Ganczardki, tied to al-Qaeda mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, after Germany refused to make arrest. Suspected of planning Bali-like attack on French island of Reunion (*Newsweek*).

MOROCCO CHAOS since Casablanca bomb attacks. ARMY to be enlarged from 130,000 to 200,000. TERRORIST TRIAL of three planning to attack U.S. and U.K. warships in straits of Gibraltar. FOILED PLAN to use rubber or fishing boats for attack like that on U.S.S. *Cole* in Yemen. SPAIN, FRANCE, PORTUGAL suspect al-Qaeda and local militants use Moroccan waters to infiltrate Europe (WND).

IRAQ CIA SAYS SADDAM ALIVE. Task Force 20 with CIA, NSA and SpecOps equipped with DNA, head search. His two maverick sons killed in attack by U.S. Army. UNMANNED PREDATOR DRONE fires Hellfire missile on civilian convoy; third attack on suspected Saddam sightings. U.S. TROOPS under-fire; 25 "serious incidents" daily by Ba'ath sympathizers. 25-MEMBER MAJORITY SHIA "provisional governing council" established.

AFGHANISTAN FUMBLING TALIBAN's new tactics (from RPG- or AK-47-attacks to land mines and bombs) backfire. Taliban self-destructs. U.S. forces escaping. PUSHTUNS demand autonomy — 40% of population. Government officials need copters, armed escorts to enter "Pushtunstan."

SAUDI ARABIA ARRESTED: 16 suspected terrorists. SEIZED: cache of explosives, fake IDs, rifles, RPGs after foiled plot to attack "vital installations." FUNDS SMUGGLED to al-Qaeda total \$500 million in decade, said UN. KILLED: Two al-Qaeda kingpins of May attack.

LEBANON STRAPPED FOR CASH, Yasser Arafat's FATAH group controlling Ein Hilwe camp since Saddam Hussein's moneybags dried up. SYRIAN ARMY withdraws to Syrian border.

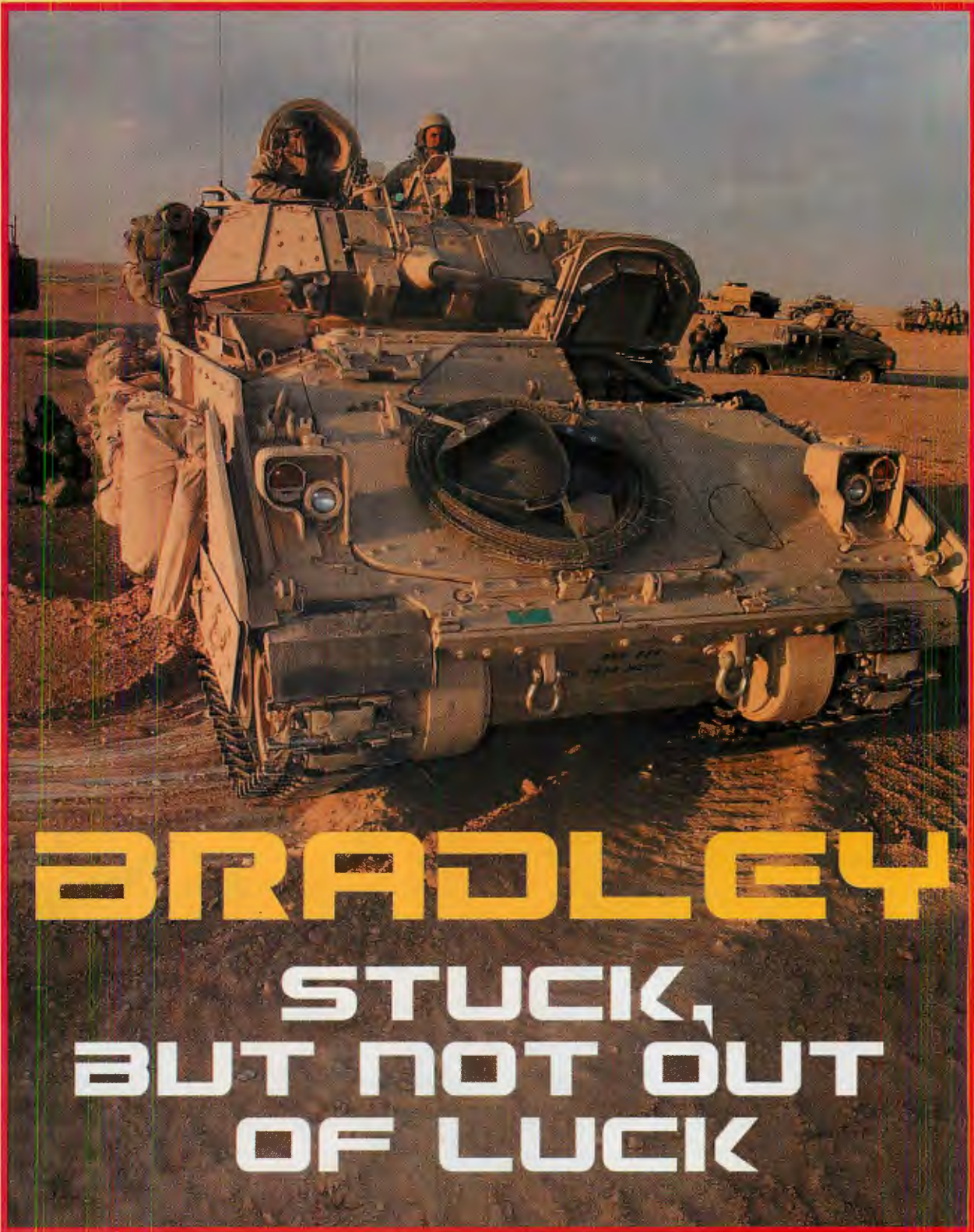
EGYPT FATWA by Egyptian Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi gives green light for women to become suicide bombers. MUSLIM JURISTS unanimously concur for an "act of martyrdom for cause of Allah, and entitles them, *inshallah*, to same reward earned by male counterparts." DOZENS OF JAMAA TERRORIST sleeper cells uncovered.

ETHIOPIA COMBINED JOINT TASK FORCE-Horn of Africa begins three-month training with Ethiopian defense forces. U.S. 10th MOUNTAIN DIVISION training three anti-terrorism battalions.

LIBERIA 750 NIGERIAN, 250 Ghanaian, U.S. may send peacekeepers to bloody civil war. PRESIDENT Taylor targeted by Bush. TAYLOR offers to leave if U.S. peacekeepers arrive.

CONGO SOUTH AFRICAN peacekeepers arrive. FRENCH to pull out. Uganda accused of arming rebels. INDIAN AIR FORCE dispatches 243 personnel and 90 soldiers to operate Mi17 helos and four Mi-24 gunships.

SRI LANKA TAMIL PEACE GURU assassinated: Fourth in two weeks, 20th since February 2002.



BRADLEY STUCK, BUT NOT OUT OF LUCK

IT is a boilerplate truism that to be a good writer, one first must have something to say. (J-students, take note.) This is why the best war stories are usually told in the first-person. And probably more often than not, they are not written as “literature,” but as formal after-action reports, or informal missives to record an important event for the benefit of friends, family or associates. Such is the piece that follows, which passed through so any hands before it reached us, we have been yet unable to identify its author other than by name and rank as given. With the action recorded as taking place at Al

Samawah, one might attempt to make assumptions regarding which American unit was involved, but we do not know for certain. In fact, we have been yet unable to further document this fragment of combat history other than by its own face. So we must leave the reader with a caveat: If this story is not true in every regard, it should be. If any reader has a POC for Staff Sergeant Johnson, we would appreciate it.

Staff Sergeant Dilliard J. Johnson, 19D.
Incident of 23 March 2003.

The ground was extremely wet during this period, as it had been raining for several days. We had conducted a non-stop movement of 300 kilometers to Objective Pistol (Al Samawah). We were closing from the West in a HK formation (Hunter-Killer Team), which consists of three BFVs and 2 M1 Tanks.

I identified a large number of enemy dismounts near the bridge, which was our objective. Due to ROE (there had been no engagements during the war to this point) we could not fire on them. We signaled them to surrender and they immediately opened fire on us.

I was told to move up to the bridge with one of the M1 tanks. While we were moving up the M1 engaged the dismounts with coax and .50 cal. which had no affect. So I opened up with 25mm HE, which literally "laid them out." *Note: The next day our CO counted 65 KIA there.*

We then moved up to the bridge and secured it. I counted the bodies and got between 60 and 70. I placed the M1 on the road and I pulled flank security in the field. An Iraqi military truck then came down the road from the military compound. It saw us and immediately turned around and fled back into the compound. A POV then got between us so I could not engage him. So we chased the truck into the compound and the M1 remained at the gate. The guys in the truck then opened-up on me with small arms and RPGs. One of the RPGs' back-blast set one of the Iraqis on fire and he fell out of the truck onto the road. It was one of the funniest things you ever saw! A guy then ran into a bunker by the tank with an RPG and the tank fired a 120mm HEAT round into the bunker and killed him. I then fired four rounds of 25mm HE into the truck. This caused the truck to break in half and burst into flames. *Note: The next day the CO counted 23-30 KIA around and in the truck.*

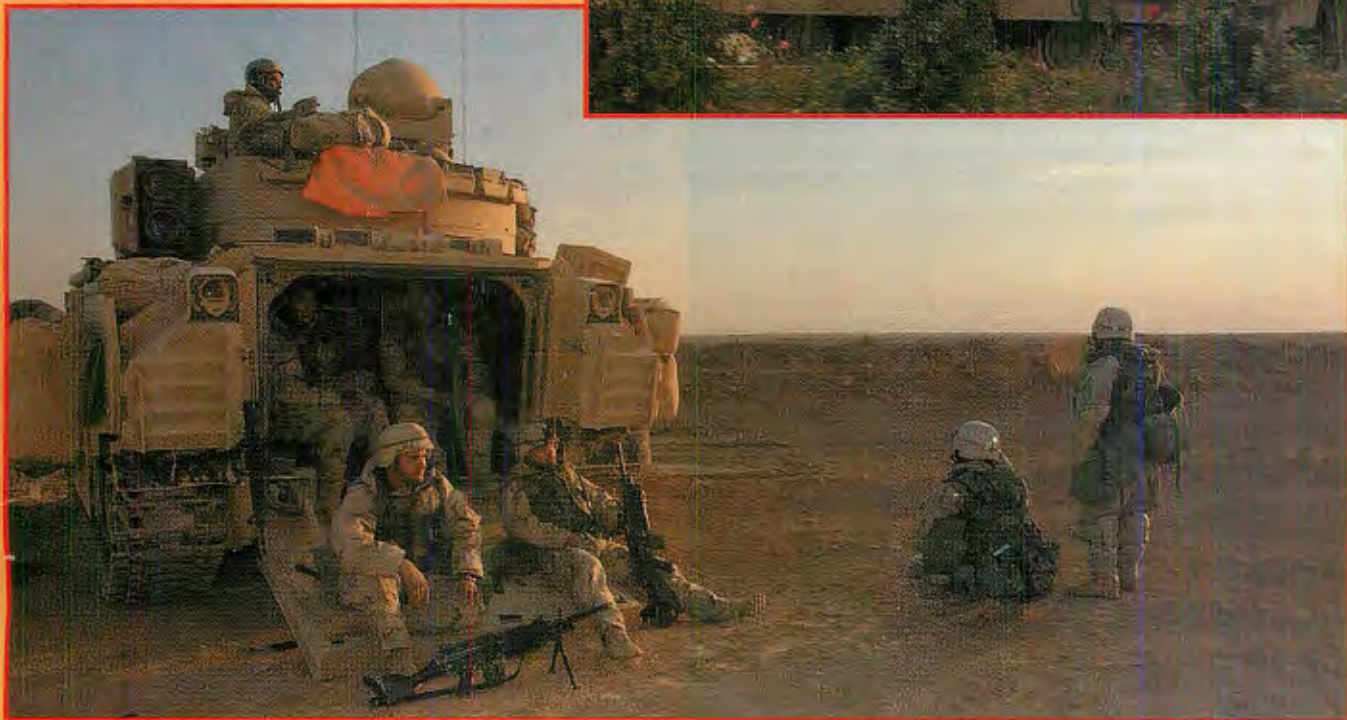
(right) A Bradley Fighting Vehicle with the 3rd Infantry Division patrols around the presidential palace in Baghdad, near Baghdad International Airport, 15 April. (below) A Bradley crew with the 24th Infantry Division from Ft. Riley, Kansas, takes a break. The crew is part of a land force that advanced in 32 hours, what it did in 96 hours 12 years ago.

This is when total mayhem broke out! We now began to receive a huge volume of fire from the right side and the M1 withdrew outside the gate. Between 150-200 guys then began to pour out of the buildings. They engaged us with small arms and a few RPGs. They were so close that my M240 coax was destroyed by small-arms fire. Also, literally dozens of RPGs were bouncing off the vehicle, because the Iraqis were too close — the RPGs did not have enough range to arm so were just non-explosive projectiles. I had rigged an M240 on the cargo hatch and my observer began to engage the dismounts. I engaged them with my M9 and M4 while the gunner used the 25mm. I killed three or four with the 9mm and began to shoot the others with the M4. This went on for 25 minutes or so. When the shooting stopped there were 13 EPWs, and the rest were dead. *Note: 167 KIA were counted the next day on this spot.*

A Round To The Chest

I then took an AK round to the chest, which knocked me down into the vehicle. I thought that I was dead and was surprised that I was not, mainly because we did not have the armor plates. *Only the command group had these!*

I then dismounted with the observer and began to provide first aid to the wounded EPWs. I was really sore from where the AK round had hit me. That is when eight trucks of *Fedayeen* came down the road outside the compound and stopped. They did not see me and began to fire on the rest of the platoon. We were less than 30 meters away. My gunner



CentCom by Sgt. 1st Class David K. Diarmikea/CFLCC Public Affairs

then began to engage the trucks with 25mm and placed 13-15 rounds in each. I hit one with my M203, which burst into flames. My observer also began to engage the trucks with his M240. We also were engaging the dismounts that had dismounted from the trucks.

Two guys then tried to shoot the Bradley with an RPG and I killed them with my rifle. Then 70 guys came running out of another building and engaged the M1 with small arms. They did not see us, either, for some unknown reason. The M1 engaged them with his .50 cal. I grabbed the two Iraqis with the

best-looking uniforms and dragged them to the BFV. That's when a mortar round landed among the rest of the prisoners. The mortar round killed 13 of the EPWs and I told the other two to run away. I used hand signals, which they must have understood because they ran away into a building.

We mounted-up on the vehicle and took-off. At this moment a mortar round hit the palm tree we were under and exploded. It knocked me down into the turret and the observer down into the cargo compartment. I had shrapnel wounds in both legs, both arms and my right eardrum burst. The observer had shrapnel wounds in both of his hands. Besides our personal injuries the shrapnel destroyed our duffle bags, water cans, matching units, cut my NODS in half, cut the observers M240 in half and just destroyed everything on the upper decks of the Bradley. We kept going while the gunner kept engaging the *Fedayeen* and the guys from the building with the 25mm. We then were hit by another mortar round which destroyed the observer's M240 for good. The mortar barrage now increased and, unbelievably, more *Fedayeen* came out of the buildings and charged us.

I kept trying to contact higher and could not (did not know



A Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle from the 3rd Infantry Division, patrols a road near a presidential palace of former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein. The Fort Stewart-based division has played a major role in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sgt. The Green David K. Dismukes/DFCC Public Affairs

that radio antennas had been destroyed by the mortar hits.) We moved up to block the rear of the M1 so an RPG round in the rear engine doors could not knock it out. The volume of fire actually began to increase at this time. We hauled ass out of there and the M1 crossed the bridge. I got in a hull down position on our side of the river and kept returning fire. We carry an extra antenna on our vehicle and I replaced the damaged one: Called higher and reported the BDA and assessment of the situation. I then had the driver load more ammunition into the 25mm

boxes, the gunner working on ammo and the observer and I did first aid on each other. That is when the missile flew out of the town. I am not sure if it was a SAM or a SSM. I think that it was a SAM missile. We now began to take heavy mortar fire and spotted the mortar crews in the tree line. I radioed the PSG and he called our internal mortars on them, which killed all of them.

The PSG then told me to sit tight while the platoon came to us. This forced the Iraqis to withdraw temporarily. We then all moved back to the original start position. Unfortunately, the last Bradley hit one of the mortar craters, spun around and fell into the ravine. This caused it to hang by its tracks on the edge of the ravine. Now all the Iraqis came running back and began to engage the stuck Bradley. He could not fire at them because of the angle the vehicle was stuck in. They really began to pour small arms into him and started mortaring him, too.

Fighting "Medics"

We raced up, dropped the ramp, and the crew ran inside my Bradley. I then saw an ambulance with a Red Crescent pull up into the compound. About 10 soldiers in uniform jumped out and ran into the building. They immediately began shooting at my vehicle, so we engaged the houses with 25mm HE and killed all of them also. *Note: 10 KIA's were counted there the next day.*

I then recrossed the bridge and provided over-watch on the stuck Bradley. A van then pulled up full of armed *Fedayeen*. I engaged the van and killed all of them also. We then left to go see the medics, who treated the observer and I. Later that night we returned and continued to over-watch with the rest of the platoon.

Note: The next day, the CO counted 221 bodies around the bridge, just from Staff Sgt. Johnson protecting the stuck Bradley. Everyone I spoke with in the entire ground troops estimate that Staff Sgt. Johnson and his crew killed at least 1,000 Iraqis on 23 March. Absolutely incredible story. Officially, this is a total of 488 KIA's! Sadly enough, Staff Sgt. Johnson is under a "cloud" and will probably never receiving an award for his valor, along with his crew.

Subsequently, at al Janef, Staff Sgt. Johnson engaged and destroyed 20 trucks with his BFV. The next day, his CO counted 314 KIA's in and around those 20 trucks!

On Objective Floyd, Staff Sgt. Johnson with the platoon engaged approximately 1,000 trucks. They shot all night, firing 2,800 rounds of 25mm HE, 7,200 coax, 305 25mm DU. The next day, the CO counted more than 1,000 KIA. ✕

THIS AIN'T NO BULL

We were in an over-watch position after the battle of Al Samawah. I was watching through the thermals (it was night) and I see this Iraqi attempting to sneak up on us. He gets about 75 meters away, when all of a sudden this bull comes out of nowhere and demolishes the guy. Really lays him out and thrashes him. The whole platoon is watching and is in absolute hysterics.

Then somehow, the guy manages to stab the bull and it bellows and runs away. Using his rifle as a crutch, he then starts back towards my vehicle! He then falls down and begins to crawl towards us. When he is about 35 meters away he aims the rifle at us so we killed him with the coax. It was a really nice .303 British, so I kept it for a while. Later in the war I was shooting RPG guys from 200-plus meters away. When that .303 hit them they stayed down for good.

Anyway, later that night the bull came back and stomped on this guy for hours. He would gore him, throw him up in the air and then stomp on him some more. The next day the guy was about 3 inches thick! We later protected the bull the whole time he was there. We conducted first-aid for his wound and gave him all the water and vegetables we could find. We also protected him from other Iraqis and other soldiers.

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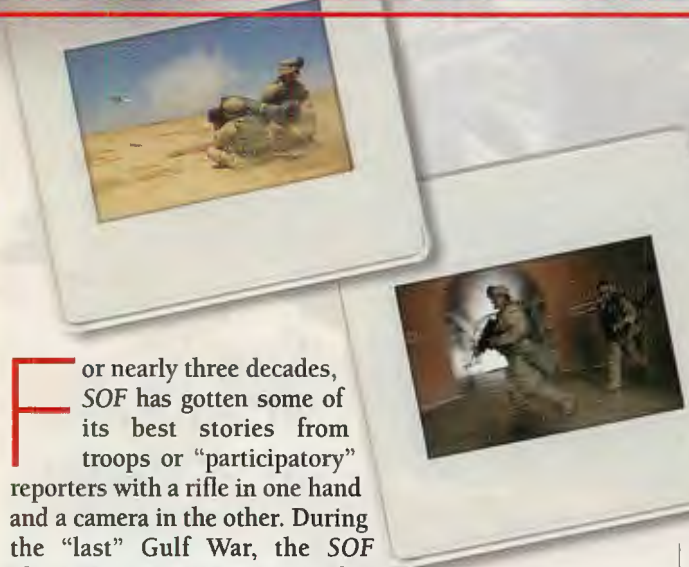


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PHOTO
CONTEST

FLASH! TOURS EXTENDED — PHOTO CONTEST EXTENDED ALSO!



For nearly three decades, SOF has gotten some of its best stories from troops or “participatory” reporters with a rifle in one hand and a camera in the other. During the “last” Gulf War, the SOF Photo Contest was a resounding success, and once again we invite those deployed to the various sandboxes and mountain lairs of the Middle East and the jungles of the Philippines fighting tyrants and terrorists, to take their best shot — and send it to SOF.

Many thousands of dollars worth of premier guns, optics, knives and gear await the top winners — but to win, you have to enter. (NOTE: Photos can also be submitted on behalf of deployed personnel (with their permission), by their at-home families and friends.)

Entries can be on any subject, and will be judged for action, artistic properties, human interest, technical merit or a combination thereof. Decisions of the judges are final.

Each submission needs to be accompanied by

the basic who/what/when/where of what's in the photo. All submissions must have the name and address of photographer (preferably on the item) to be returned, and all winning photos, except as noted below, become the property of SOF magazine. We can accept prints, slides or digital images on CD (please do not write on the back of prints with ball-point pens).

SPECIAL CLASSIFICATION: Special awards will be given to combat photos taken by GI Combat Photographers. (NOTE: As photos taken at government expense by personnel whose MOS is “photographer” or “historian” are in public domain, SOF will lay no claim to ownership of such winning photos. All photographs submitted by GI photographic personnel, must have been cleared for publication.)

Because the necessities of ongoing campaigns have caused various tour extensions for troops, we decided the fairest thing for all entrants is that the SOF Photo Contest be extended as well. The contest will now close and judging of entries will commence on 1 January 2004. If you have entered the contest and subsequently have a PCS, please forward your new address to us. If you have a permanent point of contact Stateside, it might be a good idea to include that with your submission. (NOTE: If we loose track of you due to a PCS, and your award notification is returned to us as undeliverable at the address you gave us, we will have no choice but to make the award to the next-best entrant.)

The decisions of the contest judges are final on all matters. Submissions should be sent to SOF Photo Contest, 5735 E. Arapahoe Avenue, Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303, and must be received by Christmas Eve, 2003.

Keep your heads down and your cameras rolling.



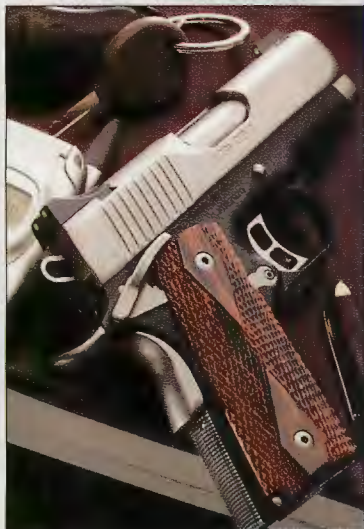
1st Through 12th-PLACE winners will divvy up thousands of dollars worth of top-quality rifles, pistols, wrist-watches, scopes, bins, leading-edge combat gear, fine cutlery, ammunition, top-flight firearms training, books and *SOF* subscriptions and T-shirts.

13th Through 30th-PLACE honorable mentions will receive one-year subscriptions to *Soldier Of Fortune Magazine*.

Special Cannon-Cocker's Award for the best of any of the above awards that show art (including AA and MRLS) will be, in addition to the other prizes, a red-white-and-blue miniature firecracker safety cannon by Loose Cannon Company. Other special-class awards to be announced.

See below for a partial catalog of the cornucopia of prizes, and watch subsequent issue of *SOF* for two-page spreads showing all prizes and listing all the awards.

SOF would sincerely like to thank the sponsors who have given their generous and patriotic support to our men and women in uniform by donating prizes of "The Right Stuff" for this contest. This good-as-it-gets gear is a suitable "Thank You" to our troops who have given the very best of themselves.



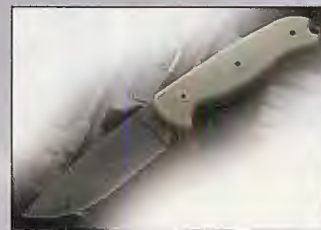
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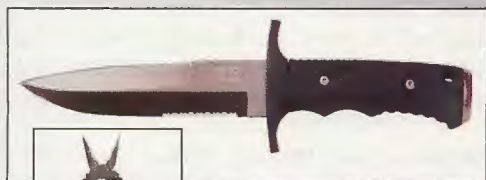
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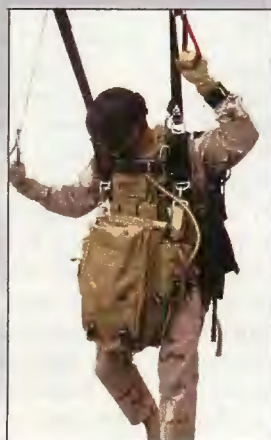
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Shifting Gears With The 101st

TEXT & PHOTOS BY J. S. MOSBY

Introduction

Following their final, conventional battle to reduce Saddam Hussein's Secretariat for Defense near Baghdad's International Airport (See "Pentagon Payback," July 2003), 3/187th Rakkasans, of the 101st Airborne, were ordered to enter Baghdad city itself and establish zones of occupation. This would involve shifting gears from a full-blown, conventional war-fighting stance to a civil-occupation posture. Nation-building, in essence. In the aftermath of Iraq's implosion, this would be an intricate and delicate mission. Fortunately for the United States, the men and officers of the 3/187th, under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Fetterman, were well-prepared for this type of operation. They had already served a tour in Afghanistan, doing precisely the kind of work they would do in Iraq, and generally speaking, they are a group of intelligent, down to earth, roll-up-the-sleeves and get-busy soldiers. Hailing from Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, most of the troops have that down-home touch. This makes it easy for them to get personal with the man on the street and get things moving in the right direction with a minimum of direction from above. It was an honor and a privilege to accompany them as they led the way into America's newest foray of bringing stability and prosperity to this troubled region.

Going Downtown

"Are we gonna have any support going in?" I asked Lt. Col. Fetterman. Without so much as a blink, he replied, "Nope." After a short silence, I asked, "No arty on-call?" "Nope." "No little birds?" "Nope." "No nothing," my voice sinking a bit.

"Nope, not enough assets," he said with a note of finality. A long pause.

"Perfect," I said, grinning at the craziness of it, the realization of here we go again. "Yup," he replied. "See you on the ground."

I said, "Yes, Sir," shook his hand and trotted off to hitch a ride over to Charlie Company.

We were getting ready to move into Baghdad proper, take-down several prominent Ba'ath Party facilities and establish our zone of occupation. The night before, our point element had been RPG'd.

Elsewhere, elements of 3rd Infantry Division were running into ambush pockets. All the intel we were getting pointed to opposition of some kind, in urban terrain. Even if we ran into just a few die-hards or foreign Islamics they could make things messy, fast. The Rakkasans had been lucky so far. Everyone started giving their M-4s a quick cleaning. The TOC was unusually quiet.

Sergeant First Class Richard Clinton, of Madison, Wisc., was pretty sure we'd hit something. Clinton is a strapping fellow, a great guy. He also happens to be *the* guy you want

around when it's time to kick-in doors and, if required, shoot people. We're talking Ranger-battalion time, sniper school, SpecOps Tactics School (Honor Grad, no less) etc. His usual smile was replaced by the seriousness you see in men who are getting ready to go into a place where people might try to kill you.

Move To Contact

Iraqis stood by the dozens on the roadside, watching as the troops of Charlie Company detrucked at their assembly point. There was the usual rushing about as a hasty perimeter was set up on all sides. A skirmish line snaked out along the roadway, facing towards the buildings immediately to their front, a couple of fire teams and M240s kept watch on the rear while the company mortar men set up their 60mms. Knots of NCOs and platoon leaders gathered and consulted their maps one last time before giving the order to fan-out and move in. At a briefing the night before, Lt. Col. Fetterman had warned his company officers and NCOs that they might encounter resistance, but that if they did, heavy suppressive fire was *not* an option.

"There are families out there and we don't want to hit anyone we don't have to. Aimed shots only," he told them.

A short distance away, Iraqis gathered to watch the unfolding spectacle — peaceful but apprehensive. The only real contact most of them had had with soldiers had been their own, and many times that was a less than civil relationship. Fear was etched across the faces of many as the platoons spread out and moved onto the side streets. The troops were wary, keeping their distance and demeanor, but returning the odd, tentative wave and smiling. The kids started to warm-up first, fearless as children are. A wave, looking out from behind dad's legs, a flash of a smile when a troop waves back.

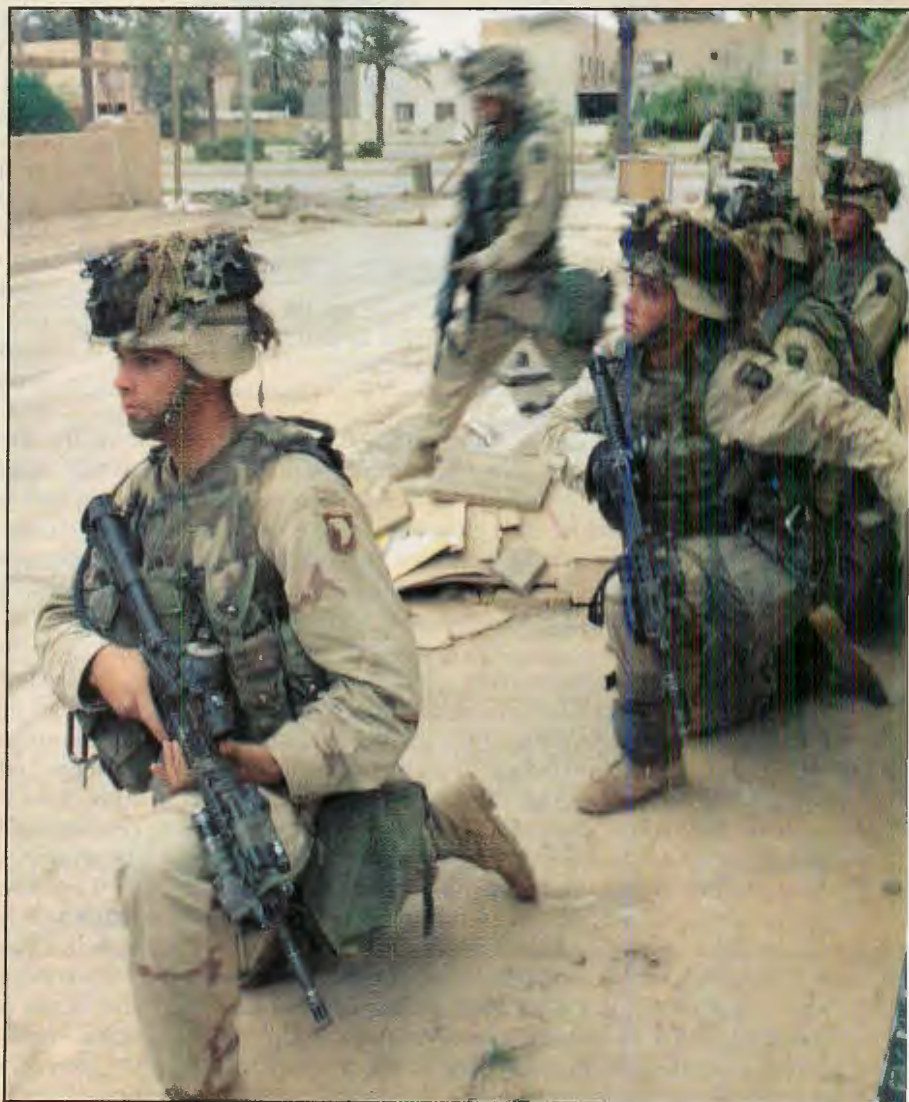
But one, a cocky little runt, strode out, bold as brass, into the middle of the formation and shouted, "Hello, Mista!" Almost instantly, the first GI to pass him paused, reached into his pocket and produced a Tootsie Roll. The boy turned, eyes wide and with a joyous shout screamed something at his friends in Arabic. The rest of his pack needed no further coaxing. In a country racked by 10 years of sanctions, real candy must have been hard to come by and onto the street they rushed, their squeals of joy echoing off every wall as the troops unloaded everything they had stashed. God bless the forgotten genius who thought to put candy in a soldier's ration pack.

The trust and goodwill that was earned in that short time would serve the battalion well in the weeks to come. Without one word having to be said, the message was delivered, "We are Americans, we will not hurt you or your children." Soon, educated Iraqis speaking English had taken-up positions as unofficial guides and interpreters, giving directions, answering questions and generally making themselves useful. Smiles, handshakes, many thanks and goodwill accompanied the battalion to its objectives.

Clear And Sweep

The troops, however, kept their spacing and patrol formations and, while friendly, paid close attention to rooftops, second-story windows and approaching automobiles. Once on the objectives it became strictly business again and they set about clearing the buildings room by room using the dynamic entry techniques they had practiced for urban warfare.

The first position to be cleared was the local Ba'ath Party headquarters. Ransacked by looters over the last week, the buildings were a jumble of broken glass, scattered Ba'ath Party documents and piles of 82mm-mortar ammunition. Included in the debris were stacks of certificates bearing a photo of Saddam Hussein and thanking the undersigned for their service in the "War against Israel." Not one of the certificates was filled out. Soldiers stuffed numbers of them into their packs for gag souvenirs, but the presence of so much



(opposite) Troops from B Company roust looters from a metal yard on Baghdad's south side. When the reign of terror came down, it was open season for anything the locals could get their hands on. (right) Troops from C Company, 3/187th "Rakkasans" during a raid in southern Baghdad to capture Ba'ath Party hardliners. Many times acting on tips from local informers, the raids kept up pressure on the Ba'ath Party underground and prevented any real regrouping of Saddam Hussein's supporters in the early days of the occupation.

ordnance made the site unusable for billeting until EOD personnel could be called in to dispose of it.

At the school objective, 2nd Platoon, under the command of First Lieutenant David Preston, of Marietta, Ga., took up security positions prior to entering the grounds. At that point, an English-speaking Iraqi from the neighborhood approached and offered his assistance. When questioned about whether the building contained weapons, he confirmed and stated that the area was unoccupied, even showing the troops which entrance could be used to access the building. Then, after making one last trip inside for a wall mirror, he stood back and watched the soldiers make their entry.

Occupied or not, the troops from 2nd Platoon executed their clearing operation in textbook fashion, leaving nothing to chance as darkness was coming on fast.

"I got a padlock here, get me up the skeleton key," a squad



Troops from 2nd Platoon, Charlie Company search the grounds of a local school. Saddam's henchmen made a point of turning all sorts of sensitive targets into weapons caches and fighting positions.

leader shouted, referring to a massive pick-axe they carried with them. For a simple schoolhouse, some of the doors were heavily barred and double-locked and it took many solid hits with boot and pick before they gave way. In one room, the soldiers uncovered a cache of uniforms and other military gear. In the darkness an NCO growled, "You see that? They're puttin' stuff in schools, knowing we won't bomb them! It's their SOP!"

And so it went, room by room. One Trooper taking the door, the entry "stack" flowing in as quickly as possible, sweeping every corner with their weapons. Even as darkness enveloped the scene, the troops continued, illuminating the rooms with Sure Fire tactical lights attached to their weapons. Adrenaline, anger. Smashing at locked doors with the mattock. Hard kicks. Lieutenant Preston's voice ringing above the din, pulling one man off pick-detail, sending in someone fresh, calling for a stack on a doorway, pushing his security detail forward one hallway at a time.

Within an hour, the troops had cleared every room including two that were piled high with military-communications equipment, much of it manufactured in Jordan. Afterwards, the troops stopped by to marvel at a massive Lego structure the children had made in one of the classrooms.

"I'll take a picture of that tomorrow," said Sgt. 1st Class Hugh Harmon, of Riverdale, Ga. "My boy loves Legos. He'll get a kick out of this."

Nearby, 1st Platoon and HHC were enjoying similar success. Tasked with securing a large bomb shelter that was located adjacent to a Mosque, the troops moved into position and posted security before cutting the padlocked gate and entering the site. In this area, the people proved to be especially friendly, offering cold drinks and cigarettes to the soldiers as they passed. Being without mail-delivery or PX facilities in some time, the tobacco was especially welcome. The shelter, however, proved to be buttoned-up tight, with massive steel doors that resisted all attempts to open them. Locals living adjacent to the structure informed troops that the shelter only contained survival supplies. Feeling that demolition charges would not be appropriate to use in the area, C Company commander, Captain Christian Teutsch, choose to forego entering the bunker itself and set up his platoon on the grounds around it. Adjacent to the building, local youths played soccer and waved to the soldiers.

As darkness fell, a local Iraqi named Issad, age 41, came over from the mosque and informed the commander that they wanted to host the soldiers in their rectory buildings to keep them from sleeping on the ground. Their only stipulation was that the soldiers not drink alcohol while on the premises, which the Captain informed him they were not allowed to do in any case.

"You are our guests now. We will protect and provide for you," he said. That evening, members of the congregation posted guard alongside the soldiers, assuring the local people that the Americans were on the grounds of the mosque by invitation.

"We lived in fear here," he said later, after the platoon had bedded-down for the night. "Now we can move without fear. Always we were afraid, afraid, afraid. Even just moving around, going from one place to another, sometimes you didn't even know why, you were just afraid." The mosque, it turned out, was part of the Altekia Al Kasnazahnia sect, a branch of Islam who draws its head cleric

from the direct descendents of the Prophet Mohammad's brother. Inside their canteen hung a series of aging photos, dating back over decades, the oldest appearing to have been taken during the Victorian period. "Because of our faith, we were persecuted," he said. "Now that the Americans have come, we can be ourselves, with our faith and in peace."

Hearts And Minds, Rakkasan-Style

"No matter where we go, he just draws people to him. He's just great, one of the best public affairs assets I have," Lt. Preston remarked, looking over at Sgt. 1st Class Hugh Harmon. 2nd Platoon was checking-out a local tip about an arms cache in another school. Harmon had an entourage of kids around him, the youngest sitting on his knee exploring the mysteries of his walkie-talkie.

"I was a recruiter, so I'm real good at networking and interacting with people," he told me later. "I've got a kid of my own as well, so it's easy for me to get with them on their level."

In a short few days, as American units settled into place and begun patrolling, the city started to comeback to life again. The water supply had not yet been fully restored and the power was still out, but the main roads near 3/187th positions was bustling with traffic. Downtown, patrols found

crowds of people on the street, almost jubilant as their vehicles passed. Flashing thumbs-up, shouting thanks and crowding around with everything from cigarettes to cans of soda. The more enterprising youths have raised the cost of a Pepsi from fifty cents to a dollar, the lowest denomination most soldiers carry, and a brisk trade went on for wads of Iraqi Dinars, sold as souvenirs.

Medics with U.S. troops on the troop-level also took the initiative and, despite orders that injuries they treat must be a threat to life, limb or eyesight, helped almost any Iraqi who applied.

"I help them because I can," Specialist Michael Tompson, a medic with B Company, said as he cleaned an abscess from the cheek of a six-year-old girl while her anxious father looked on. "It's hard for them to believe that I don't need to be paid or bribed." The same approach applies to Iraqis injured on unexploded ordnance, a daily occurrence across Baghdad.

Following one incident, where a little girl tried to hand over dud cluster munition to a patrol from B Company and ended up severely injuring herself, four GIs and killing her two friends, Iraqi doctors sent her home to die with tubes still sticking out of her and half her intestine hanging out. Despite his fury at the Americans, whom he blamed for the incident, the father arrived at B Company's front gate the next day with the girl, by now near death. Thompson and fellow medics hustled the both of them into their ambulance and tore-out for the Army surgical hospital at the airport at breakneck speed. The girl coded and had to be revived four times on the way. She was in such bad shape that when they rushed into the surgical ward, the nurses burst into tears as they went to work on her as the distraught father collapsed nearby. She survived. It is this kind of pick-up ball, in the game of Hearts and Minds, that comes naturally to the guys in the 101st.

For all the smiles and goodwill, however, the NCOs and troop leaders keep the men on their toes. Sergeant Sean Faucher, of Lake Placid, N.Y., is on his second deployment in two years, the first being Afghanistan.

"I'm amazed at the reception, but I don't want my guys getting complacent," he said, surveying the children crowded around his troops. "It's not like this everywhere here and right now we're new. We'll see how long it lasts." His words proved prophetic, but despite the upheaval that started northwest of Baghdad after the unit moved north to Mosul, their former area in South Central Baghdad's poorest, predominantly Shi'ite, neighborhood remains remarkably free from incidents. First impressions must last, and the 3/187th certainly set a good one.

Knock-Knock — Rakkasan Raids

In the midst of spreading the goodwill to those Iraqis happy to see them, the Rakkasans also engaged in their other mission; apprehend those who were not so glad to see them. Almost as soon as the battalion established itself in its zone of responsibility, Iraqis eager to flush out the remains of the regime that had enslaved them for so long, also started coming in with intelligence. Everything from the location of arms caches to local troublemakers was reported to battalion personnel and the intelligence staff. The Rakkasans immediately pitched-in with another move in their playbook; apprehending bad guys.

In one instance, early in the first day, locals reported the location of several Lebanese "Freedom Fighters" that had come to Iraq for Jihad and had been placed in their neighborhood. They told the Americans not to worry about them, however, as the problem had been taken care of. Apparently they had dragged the outsiders into the street, beaten two of them to death and the other was expected to die any day. "Scratch two Muj," a Rakkasan officer commented. More hands-on work would follow, however.

One key bit of information that would require the battalion's attention came in after only two days in the city; the home address of Samir Abd Al-Aziz Al-Najim, Ba'ath Party Regional Commander for East Baghdad. A nice catch if they could nab him. Lieutenant Colonel Fetterman pulled in 2nd platoon from Charlie company for his strike element. We trucked over to the new TOC at dusk and racked-out for the



An injured trooper from B Company is helped by comrades to the evacuation point. Four American soldiers and three Iraqi children were seriously injured when a cluster bomb submunition was detonated accidentally by one of the children. One of the soldiers subsequently died as did two of the children.

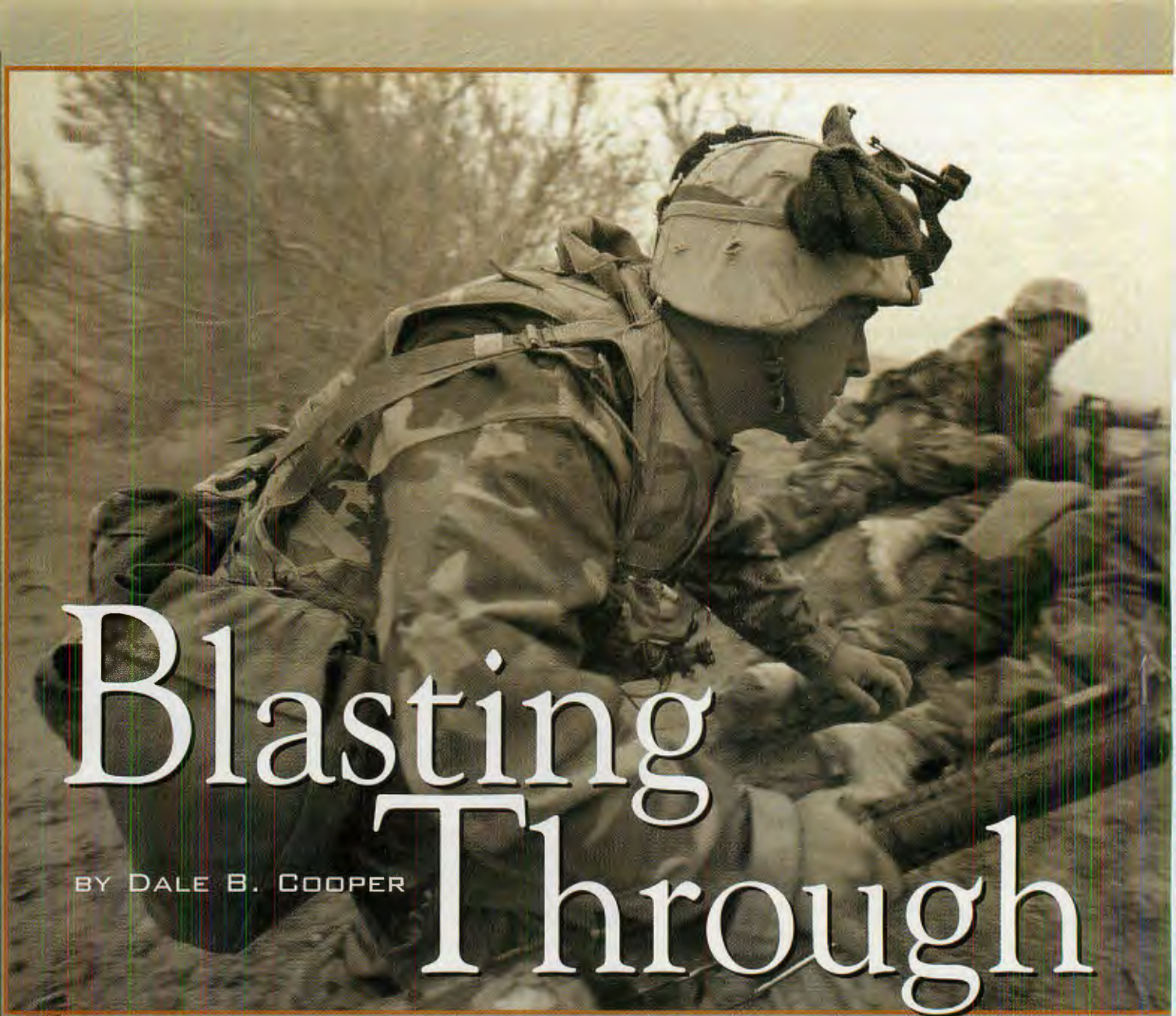
night in the traffic circle.

Shortly before first light, the men loaded-up and we trucked over to the area we were to hit, pulling-up a block short. Escorted by the armored Humvees of Delta Company, 2nd Platoon dismounted from their trucks. They assumed an assault formation, moving forward to their objective just as the sun was peeking over the horizon. A short time later an opulent house, surrounded by a high wall, came into view and the lead element of the force moved into position with a scaling ladder. Rapidly the team cleared the wall and assumed security positions in the yard and along the building.

Sergeant First Class Richard Clinton knocked loudly as he prepared to cut the padlock barring the front door. That done, he announced that U.S. troops were outside and everyone should come out. In the street, a loudspeaker truck from a PsyOps detachment announced in Arabic that U.S. forces were conducting operations and people should remain in their homes.

After trying the door and discovering it solidly locked Clinton called out, "Locked door, shotgun, stack left!" He

Continued on page 72



Blasting Through

BY DALE B. COOPER

The Rear Door

Saddam's Presence In Baghdad Means Early Kick-Off

Members of the media embedded with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines were told on the afternoon of 20 March 2003 that 1/5 was going to invade southern Iraq *nine hours ahead* of any other coalition force, including 3ID, the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division.

The reason given to this reporter and three colleagues was the torching of at least three oil wells in southern Iraq.

A copy of a briefing paper presented to 1 MarDiv, (the First Marine Division) tells a differing story.

"War commenced prematurely due to information received from CIA regarding the presence of Saddam in Baghdad," reads the opening paragraph.

Major General James N. Mattis, commanding officer of 1 MarDiv, told this reporter and members of Weapons Company, 1/5, that intelligence indicated the Iraqis were beefing-up their armor in our sector. There were reports of up to 90 Iraqi T-72 tanks advancing towards the border pre-D Day, intel that forced the division to change its battle plan that had been in place for six months. However, it appears the CIA liaison at 1 MarDiv Headquarters was way off-base.

The tanks turned out to be the same six tanks that had been present since D-20. When the war began, invading Marines found none of the T-72s or T-62s across the border was occupied. What the Marines did find were tanks lined-up neatly in tactical formation with Iraqis standing next to

them holding out wads of cash to advancing Marines. None of this information was ever shared with this reporter or my colleagues. Here is what I observed and reported the night 1/5 crossed into southern Iraq.

Breaking Through The Berms

Parallel sand berms with an electrified fence between them have separated Kuwait from Iraq since the first Gulf War. They extend along their 124-mile common border.

On the night of 20 March, First Battalion, Fifth Marines broke through the berms and became the first U.S. force in history to invade Iraq.

1/5, as the most decorated battalion in the Marine Corps is known, crossed into southern Iraq from a dispersal area in northern Kuwait nine hours ahead of schedule.

"We can't wait any longer," said Lieutenant Colonel Fred Padilla, the battalion commander, as junior officers gathered under the ammo netting at the amphibious assault vehicles that served as his command post.

"Hondo," as he was known on the battalion radio net, had just received word from intel that Iraqi troops across the border had begun torching oil wells. It was mid-afternoon on 20 March.

At least three wells were ablaze by the time 1/5

began to uncoil in the desert like a steel snake and slither through sand berms on the border. A natural-gas separation plant and above-ground pipelines at a pumping station had also been set afire.

Hondo told me and three other correspondents embedded with his battalion that we could make an "administrative call" to our offices back in Washington, but we couldn't tell them we were about to invade Iraq. Once we crossed into Iraq, Padilla said we could "fire-up" our satellite phones and tell the folks back home that U.S. Marines had just "kicked-in the back door to Saddam's house and were coming for him."

Lance Corporal Allan Chitty from Sacramento, California, and Corporal Russ Barajas of Clinton, Wyoming, outside Cheyenne, were the first Marines to cross the border. They operated ACEs, armored combat earthmovers, from 1st Combat Engineer Battalion. But they didn't have to punch holes in the Kuwaiti berm. That was done by plow-equipped tanks of the 7th Kuwaiti Tank Battalion before they retreated through Marine lines.

Unlike amphibious assault vehicles and tanks that have 3- and 4-man crews, respectively, the earthmovers have only a single cupola for the driver.

"It's lonely in there," said Barajas who remembers falling asleep at the wheel a couple of times



(above) A U.S. Marine from a tank infantry battalion takes cover as a convoy of more than 300 vehicles comes under attack on the road some 150 km north of the town of Nassiriya, 26 March 2003.



U.S. Marines keep watch during street fighting in Nassiriya. A large convoy of U.S. Marines forced their way through the city, a key crossing point over the Euphrates River, where stubborn Iraqi resistance had been holding-up Western forces for two days.

and drifting onto the shoulders of six-lane super highways in south-central Iraq.

"Other than that, it was cool," laughed Barajas whose dozer broke down in Saddam City just before 1/5 moved through the streets of Baghdad and seized Al Azimiyah, one of Saddam Hussein's favorite palaces on the Tigris River.

Only "Annabelle," Chitty's ACE, survived the 400-mile cross-country trip from Camp Coyote to the banks of the Tigris.

Barajas didn't give his earthmover a name like Chitty did, but he painted some little ducks beneath the bullet-proof glass in the armored cupola where he sat.

"Just like little ducks at the carnival that go CHING — CHING — CHING when you hit 'em," said Barajas who felt like a duck in a shooting gallery as enemy bullets bounced off his turret.

"Annabelle" had a bullet hole right beside her name.

Private First Class Thomas Dowler, an engineer from Farmville, Virginia, was one of the first Marines to physically set foot in Iraq. Dowler rode into Iraq in an amphibious assault vehicle, before dismounting to help guide the rest of the battalion into enemy territory.

"It was pretty cool knowing we were ahead of everybody," said Dowler who says he and fellow engineers stood in the open hatch of the AAVs and watched artillery shells burst in the air ahead of them in the darkness, and scatter thousands of deadly anti-personnel bomblets over the battlefield.

"We had to wait for the dozers to knock holes in the north berm before we could mark the lanes with green-colored chem lights," said Corporal Dylan Richardson, another combat engineer from Ontario, California, who

also found himself playing traffic cop inside the border.

Just like Richardson, Corporal Jonathan Montalvo, from San Antonio, Texas, was excited to be doing something besides bouncing-off the walls of an Amtrak. Montalvo didn't know it at the time, but his wife was giving birth to twins, a boy and a girl, back home in San Antonio while he was crossing the border.

Montalvo didn't learn about the twins until two days later when he received a message from the American Red Cross. Three weeks later he used this reporter's satellite phone to call his wife from a driveway in front of Saddam's palace he and members of 1st CEB had cleared of debris from a three-hour running gun-battle in Baghdad to seize the palace just after daylight on 10 April.

Call An Audible

1st Bn, 5th Regt wasn't supposed to invade Iraq until 0600 on 21 March, but fires in the Rumeila oil fields forced the operation's officer in 1/5 to call an audible at the line of scrimmage like an NFL quarterback.

"'Warpath' ... 'Warpath' ... 'Warpath,' this is Geronimo. Bravo Command prepare to move," blared a voice on the battalion radio being monitored by First Lieutenant Jeremy Stalneck, commander of the combined anti-armor team commonly known as "Counter Mech Platoon."

"Geronimo" was the tactical call sign for H&S, Headquarters and Service Company. "Geronimo-3," the call sign of Major Steve Armes, the battalion's S-3, or operations officer, laid out the battalion's order of battle.

Other units in the battalion had similar call signs. Alpha Company was "Apache." Bravo Company was "Black Hawk." Charlie Company's call sign was "Cherokee." Second Tank Battalion was "Ironhorse." The 81mm Mortar Platoon in Weapons Company answered to "Mohawk." while Counter Mech Platoon, the other half of Wpns Co., went by the handle, "Tomahawk."

Coalition airstrikes that Maj. Gen. Mattis had promised would occur were scheduled to begin at 2030 hours local time on 20 March. Artillery prep-fire would begin at 2100.

Almost 1,200 men and a few female truck drivers in the log train would begin crossing the border at 2100 hours Kuwait time.

The plan called for combat engineers to cut through an electric fence the Kuwaitis had built after the Gulf War. The fence was located in "No-Man's Land," a strip of sand about 3 miles between the north and south berms. Engineers were to cut through the fence no earlier than 1600 local time.

In the military, even the best laid plans are subject to change, and this one changed dramatically, later drawing a lot of flak from Army brass who claimed that the Marine Corps had jumped the gun.

Lance Corporal Christopher Brumloe of Spartanburg, South Carolina, stands next to his M1A1 Abrams tank. Brumloe was the gunner on "Beligerant" who pulled the trigger and destroyed an Iraqi T-55 tank just inside the border on the night of the invasion of Iraq.

Dale B. Cooper



Weather Again Goes South

The weather turned sour on the day before the invasion. Visibility was poor as high winds drove dust and sand into our eyes and into every crevice known to man. Marines spent the day hunkered down in their Humvees and armored vehicles. That night, we spent a miserably cold night huddled in poncho liners and bivvy sacks as we tried to sleep sitting upright in our seats. If you think it's difficult to fall asleep on a bus, train or plane — try falling asleep in the backseat of a Humvee in full combat gear. It was like being in a torture chamber. Sandbags piled on the floor as protection from land mines caused the ligaments in my knees to be stretched tight as guitar strings. My legs ached so badly, I thought I had polio. After sitting hunched over for several hours, I could no longer stand the pain. I had to get out of the vehicle and do some stretches in order to restore the flood of blood to my feet and get some feeling back into my legs. I tried to lie down on the rock-strewn desert and get some sleep, but after fighting a losing battle with the wind and eating more than my share of sand, I climbed back into the Hummer and began monitoring the radio net while LT and his driver got out a few winks.

Iraqi soldiers a couple of miles across the windswept border must have been as miserable as I was, because at 0230 hours, I heard Hondo on the radio announcing that 30 of 35 top Iraqis had surrendered to Marines in front of us. But it wasn't until 0620 that we learned the war with Iraq was just getting underway.

Word of the war beginning came from the BBC on a Grundig shortwave radio that I brought with me.

As was customary every day I spent with Weapons Company, reveille sounded at 0430. Between reveille and 0600, Marines in the battalion were ordered to "Stand To." In other words, they sat in their vehicles, motors running, fully dressed in combat gear, waiting for "Oscar Mike" orders to move.

Sergeant Steve Oldham, from Portland, Oregon, the Mark 19 gunner in Lt. Stalneck's command vehicle, held the shortwave radio next to his chest mike and keyed in the battalion frequency so everyone in 1/5 could hear live reports from the BBC.

A few minutes later, everyone in the battalion listened intently as their Commander-In-Chief addressed the nation from the Oval office, officially announcing that U.S. and Coalition armed forces were attacking Iraqi targets.

We couldn't hear the bombs that were falling on military targets in Baghdad. Nor could we hear an estimated 1,000 Tomahawk missiles that were fired from U.S. Navy warships operating in the northern Arabian Sea and surrounding area. But one of the Tomahawks took-out a 155mm GH N-435 towed howitzer across the border that had been capable of hurling high-explosives 20 miles into our herringbone formation in northern Kuwait.

No Non-Combatants

As President Bush concluded his remarks, my driver, Corporal Ryan Gillard, from Tri-Cities, Washington, one of three other Marines in Counter Mech who were also born on 18 October, 40 years after I entered the world in Detroit, Michigan, touched his good luck charm on the dash of his Hummer and asked if we were ready to go. LT said he was, and Oldham up in the turret replied, "Always. Let's rock 'n' roll," as he worked the bolt back and forth in his 40mm grenade launcher.



Dale B. Cooper

Corporal Johnathan Montalvo uses author's Iridium satellite phone to call his wife who gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. The babies were born in San Antonio, Texas at about the same time Montalvo and other Marine engineers were crossing into Southern Iraq.

One E-4 took me aside before we left the dispersal area. "I know you guys in the media are non-combatants, but there are no such things as non-combatants on the battlefield," he said as he pulled his 9mm Beretta from his leg holster, removed the magazine and handed it to me.

"Do you know how to use one of these weapons?" he asked. "Yeah," I replied. "How about an M-16?" he asked as he reached back of the turret and handed me his rifle. "Keep the selector switch on semi-auto," he instructed, "and pick your targets just like you did in basic training." The Specialist also instructed me on how to load the 40mm grenade launcher.

"I know you guys aren't supposed to carry weapons out here," he stated, "But if this crew were to be killed in battle, you're gonna have to decide whether to surrender and run the risk of being tortured or pick up a gun and defend yourself." The choice was mine. I have covered military campaigns since the Invasion of Panama in 1989 with stops in such scenic spots as Somalia, but I have never written that so-called, "Last Letter" until this campaign. I wasn't the only one writing a last letter. In fact, each of us told the other where to find the notes on our bodies in case we were

Continued on page 58

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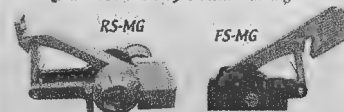
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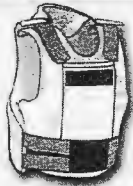
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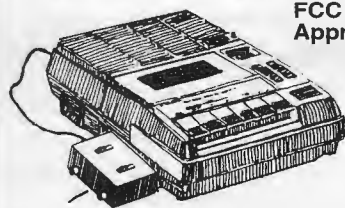
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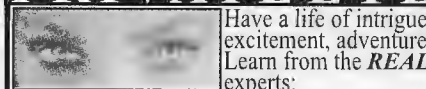
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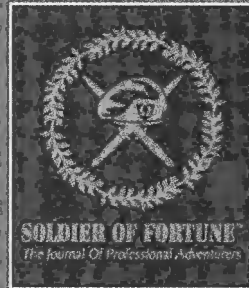


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killed and where we kept our valuables, like cash etc. Morbid as it may seem to you, just knowing we had "taken care of business" was comforting. Whispering a final prayer, I adjusted my chin strap, and gave my gear once last glance.

"It's showtime, kiddies," I remember saying as Gillard pointed "Pale Rider," into the wind. Gillard wanted to name the vehicle "Widow Maker," but that didn't go over very well with the other two married men in the vehicle.

Being a big Clint Eastwood fan, Oldham suggested they name the vehicle, "Pale Rider." After all, Oldham was the gunslinger and Stalnecker was the preacher. Stalnecker, the son of a Baptist minister, was just a few months away from getting out the Marine Corps and entering the ministry in Oceanside, California, where his wife and two children were awaiting his return.

Crossing The Line Of Departure

As the battalion bounced across the barren desert toward the south berm, Marine artillery batteries from 3rd Battalion, 11th Regiment on the far right flank of 1/5 opened-up. I could see bright reddish-orange flashes of light and hear the deep throaty boom of "one-niner-eights" as they belched-out 155mm rounds in the direction of the burning oil wells on the horizon.

Visibility was becoming very limited. Huge clouds of talcum-like dust were being kicked-up by tracks in front of Counter Mech. By the time we reached the south berm, we were covered with dust. First section of Counter Mech platoon, commanded by Stalnecker, was in direct support of Alpha Company, one of three infantry companies in 1/5. Staff Sergeant Bryan Jackway, Section One's leader, was put in command of section two supporting Charlie Company.

By the time 1/5 moved toward the border, a "Blood Moon" hung over the battlefield.

"Good fighting weather," commented Staff Sergeant Pat Keister, the platoon sergeant in Counter Mech. Keister rode into battle in a high-back Hummer. In the back under the canvas covering, Keister carried several days of MREs and 5-gallon plastic jerry cans of water. Keister also carried a pigeon in a cage. "Sally" was supposed to warn the platoon if Saddam's troops used chemi-

A section of the above ground pipeline sabotaged by Iraqi troops in the Rumeila Oil Fields, just inside the Iraq border with Kuwait.

Author in MOPP-4 condition, biochem suit, rubber boots, rubber gloves and gas mask in backseat of the HUMVEE he was about to ride into southern Iraq. 1st Battalion, 5th Marines went to MOPP-4 when SCUD missiles were fired into Kuwait.



Corporal John Staples

cal or biological weapons. It was the responsibility of Lance Corporal John Staples, the driver, to keep the pigeon well-fed and -watered.

In keeping with the battalion's "Cowboy and Indian" theme, Keister's call sign was "Stagecoach," but fellas could easily ruffle his feathers if they called him "Chuckwagon" or referred to his vehicle as the "Bread Truck."

Keister took their ribbing, but was deadly serious when he told his young Marines to keep their heads on a swivel when they crossed into Iraq.

"All I want to see and hear are rounds going down-range and enemy vehicles lighting-up," said Keister whose career began as a light machine-gunner in Bravo Company. Keister had seen the intel reports and knew what was waiting across the border.

A brigade of about 800 Iraqi soldiers was reported to be lurking in fighting holes and bunkers in the oil fields.

In order to keep an accurate account of the assault into Iraq, I dictated notes into my tape recorder the night 1/5 entered southern Iraq.

0745 hours local time — Tracks from Charlie Co. are working their way around some barbed-wire barriers on the Kuwait side of the border.

2045 hours — Vehicles ahead of us and beside us are getting stuck trying to climb over sand dunes. We fell face-first as our Hummer climbed over a sand dune and plunged nose-first into a deep ditch. An AAV next to us is stuck. So is a British "breadbox," a large canvas-covered truck that is traveling in our column."

2100 hours — I can see green chem sticks on poles as combat engineers mark lanes to the south berm. Quite a pounding of targets across the border. No rest for the Iraqi Army.

2102 hours — We have just crossed the Kuwaiti side of the border, and head out across "No-man's land."

Stalnecker, Gillard and Oldham were wearing night-vision goggles, but the dust was so thick, they couldn't see very far. Neither could other Marines going through the breach. Lance Corporal Thomas Wells, Jr., from Sacramento, California, saw a truck in front of him stop, but when Wells slammed on his brakes, a truck behind him and destroyed the "Water Bull" he was pulling. Four hundred gallons of good water were lost. None of the extra NBC [Nuclear, Biological, Chemical]

Continued on page 75

Last month, Air Force Technical Sergeant Calvin Markham and Special Forces A-team 555 on 19 Oct 2001 had become the first American servicemen in Afghanistan. In one day of precision airstrikes the team ripped Bagram Air Base from enemy hands. The "Triple Nickel" then punished Taliban forces for the following weeks using everything from sniper rifles to B-52 bombers. Now, they were setting up to liberate the capital city of Kabul, which had been an enemy stronghold for half a decade.

"Braveheart" Of The Modern Era

As the Triple Nickel pounded Taliban and al-Qaeda positions in the Panjshir Valley, intelligence and military leaders sent word that the team had six months to eradicate the enemy forces inside the capital city of Kabul, which lay 28 miles south.

The difficulty of that mission was not lost on Air Force General Charles F. Wald, who headed U.S. Central Command Air Forces at the onset of the war. The air commander had visited Pakistan one week before the 11 Sept 2001 terrorist attacks. On a visit Wald took to the Khyber Pass, a guide proudly described how Alexander the Great had been defeated there. So had the Roman Army, the British and the Russians.

"I thought to myself, 'Boy, what a terrible place to fight,'" the general recalled, acknowledging the irony of that statement. Many great armies and commanders had failed to defeat Afghanistan on its home turf. "But these 13 men did — that tells you how important they were."

The Northern Alliance dismissed the American estimates that it would take six months to liberate Kabul. The Afghani leadership was confident that the capital city would fall in as little two weeks of battle. The indigenous soldiers were growing more confident with every airstrike — while the Taliban grew weaker. On 11 Nov, the Northern Alliance told A-team 555 of its intent to press forward the following morning. The Triple Nickel spent much of the night conducting reconnaissance missions and speaking with higher command. The team's request for air support went out: "Send everything!" The team would not know for many hours whether that request would be met.

But on a British-owned atoll in the Indian Ocean, 2,500 miles from Bagram Air Base, a B-52 crew was already working hard to meet that need. Major Briscoe and four fellow aviators at 2230 hrs. entered four hours of pre-flight briefings, followed by an hour of intense mission-study. It was the fifth of 20 combat missions Briscoe would fly over Afghanistan, but the radar navigator knew this one was different.

Absent were the pre-planned targets common to mission briefs — the terrorist training camps, surface-to-air missile sites, strategic airfields, enemy equipment and barracks that had bore the brunt of a month's worth of bombing. The omission led the 11-year veteran to believe a close-air-support mission was in his near future. The bomb package that was



loaded onto the B-52 soon confirmed his suspicion.

Geared-up and ready to go, the crew walked toward their heavy bomber through the thick Pacific air. It tasted of salt and stunk of jet fuel.

Maintenance crews popped from spot to spot as they conducted final checks of the massive bomber and its payload. The loud hum of eight Pratt & Whitney TF33-P-3/103 turbofan engines drowned-out all sound as Briscoe stared at the nine 500-pound bombs that hung beneath the left wing. His B-52 was topped-off with a full load of 45 500-pound bombs — 27 in the bay and nine under each wing. It was the first time the squadron had loaded this configuration for Afghanistan. Every other bomb run had found six Joint Direct Attack Munitions — the 2,000-pound satellite-guided "smart" bomb — under each wing. "Survival gear" was loaded into the B-52: several 5-gallon water jugs and a box of Meals Ready to Eat, the military's version of field cuisine. Then at 0300 on 12 Nov, 244 tons of American might lifted-off on its seven-hour flight to Afghanistan. A few hours later, just as the sun was emerging from behind the Hindu Kush skyline, a smiling Northern Alliance general named Shariff greeted the American ground-pounders with one simple sentence: "Today, we take Kabul."

Markham returned the greeting, but the smile masked his true reaction.

A Northern Alliance fighter points at Taliban positions bombed by U.S. Air Force B-52 in Moshin-Ab some 35 km north of the Afghan capital, Kabul, 2 November 2001. B-52s heavily bombed front-line Taliban positions pounding the hardline Islamic movement in some of the heaviest strikes of the campaign. (inset) Smoke billows from a B-52 strike on 31 October 2001 near Bagram Air Base.

SPECIAL FORCES

ODA

ALPHA-555

(aka "Triple Nickel")

PART 2

BY LANCE M. BACON

The Impossible Shot

"I giggled about it and was like, 'Yeah, right. You're going to get annihilated.'"

Taking the city so soon didn't seem realistic for two reasons. First was the steadfast strategy of ground warfare that requires numeric superiority before any attack is launched. The preferred ratio is three good guys for every bad. On the battlefield just southwest of Bagram, the numbers stacked up quite the opposite. A few thousand Northern Alliance soldiers showed for battle that day, which did offer some comfort. But Markham was more concerned that his ace in the hole might not have enough trumping power.

"I was starting to doubt the amount of close-air support we were going to get," he admits. "It almost became comical that we would show up there, but somebody sitting thousands of miles away was deciding whether or not I needed air support. It was falling out of the special ops mindset and into a conventional mindset. More and more people had their thumb on what was going on. More and more people who were sitting in the rear, not knowing anything of what was going on at the front lines, but were deciding our fate."

The team kept its concerns and animosity to itself, never indicating to the Northern Alliance that even the slightest problem had surfaced.

"We had the perfect picture painted for them. [The general] never knew the politics of any of our shortcomings,"

Markham said.

The Americans dutifully grabbed their gear and headed out. The team traded glances into the crystal blue sky, each hoping that their fellow airmen and soldiers were fighting the good fight at the command-and-control level.

They were. B-1s and B-52s from Diego Garcia already were hammering Taliban positions in and around Kabul.

Looking at the troops that were filing into the vast expanse of valley that lay before them, it was obvious to ODA-555 that the Taliban knew a big fight was headed their way. It was hard not to see it coming. Mazar-e-Sharif had fallen three days earlier. Northern Alliance Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, aided by Special Forces A-teams 534 and 595, claimed that first key victory. The Taliban lost control of many northern provinces in the days that followed. Taloqan fell on 11 Nov. The western city of Herat was on the verge of collapse. General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, later stated that the Northern Alliance's control of Afghanistan increased from less than 15 to 50 percent in only four days of fighting.

But the prized capital city Kabul would not go down without a fight.

The Taliban and al-Qaeda mounted an offensive of their own, and marched forward for one final battle. The result was a climactic clash Markham describes as "Braveheart" of the modern era."

"They were looking each other in the eyes. Two massive forces sitting 500 meters apart and lobbing everything they have back and forth at each other."

The Triple Nickel tossed aside the local garb it had been wearing and donned military gear. They gathered for one final weapons check. Locked and loaded, ODA-555 was ready to go.

Markham and other team members took position atop a two-story building, from where they could get a bird's-eye view of the battlefield. Diaz, meanwhile, established a sniper position to protect team members in the event of hand-to-hand combat. Soon after that soldier settled into his nest at 0800, the Taliban opened fire. A wall of steel constructed by heavy machine guns, artillery, mortars and rockets hurtled toward the Northern Alliance for two straight hours.

"The exchange of fire was tremendous," Markham said. "It was the heaviest amount of fire I've seen for that amount of time."

Markham was providing his own contribution to the battle: bombs of the 500-pound variety. Diaz, Shariff and A-team



Northern Alliance forces muster and head out for the climactic battle for Kabul that would take place in fewer than two hours. (below) Northern Alliance soldiers change their position during front-line battle with Taliban forces near the town of Bagram, 15 miles north of Kabul on 8 November 2001.

members identified targets. The Special Forces soldiers would hurriedly get coordinates and laser-designate targets. Target-selection was easy: The biggest, closest direct threats were systematically eliminated. Orchestrating the airstrikes? Well, that was entirely another matter.

Markham's air-traffic-control skills were put to the test as fighters and bombers were stacked three-, four-, sometimes five-, aircraft-high. Amid the barrage of gunfire and explosions, the controller wrote call signs, locations and altitudes on a piece of cardboard to ensure safety of flight for the air support circling overhead.

"I was putting aircraft in holding patterns. I was putting B-52s in timed strike patterns. When they rolled-in, my fighters were out and they could drop their bombs from 30,000 feet. Once those bombs hit, my fighters were rolling-in and putting bombs right on. It was like the B-52 was marking the

target for them."

Despite repeated successful airstrikes, the Taliban and al-Qaeda continued to reinforce their front line with troops and armor. Tanks rolled to within spitting distance and effectively began to chop away at the Northern Alliance formations. And just when it seemed things couldn't get worse, the multiple barrels of ZSU-23s anti-aircraft guns were turned on their sides and fired horizontally.

"It was like flaming footballs coming at you," Markham said. "The buttons on our shirts were getting in the way of us getting any lower to the ground."

As rounds roared past them, the A-team watched in awe as Gen. Shariff and his troops dove — not for cover, but to shield the Americans. In describing this moment, it is the only time in a two-hour interview that words became caught in Markham's throat.

"The one and only mission some Northern Alliance soldiers had was to protect us from dying and, unfortunately, some of those soldiers gave their lives to do that," he said. The comments were stalled by a long pause and a hard swallow. "I take my hat off to the soldiers that were assigned to us. They maybe were not the best technically or the most knowledgeable and skilled soldiers, but for their cause, probably some of the bravest."

Brave or not, the Northern Alliance was starting to crumble as this violent volley neared its third hour.

Hundreds, if not thousands, already were dead. Airstrikes had significantly affected the Taliban's ability to wage war, but the Northern Alliance remained heavily outmanned and outgunned on the ground.

As if that was not challenging enough, the A-team had identified a "media spectacular" caught on a rooftop right in front of them. The Westerners did not realize the Special Forces A-team was among them.

But a far worse sight loomed beyond the reporters. The enemy brought a massive force to the front line — tanks, personnel carriers and roughly 1,500 foot-soldiers. Just behind that force, at first visible only through breaks in the dust



cloud caused by the advancing force, stood a second group of vehicles in reserve, ready to provide the knockout blow.

The Taliban was positioning for a final attack.

Triple Nickel team members gathered to assess their options.

"We knew that if we didn't get something on the ground quick, we were probably going to be overrun," Markham said. "We knew the Taliban would rape and pillage all the way back to Uzbekistan."

U.S. military leaders were aware of the danger, as well.

"The ODA teams relied largely on their own creativity and courage in some very scary territory," said Gen. Wald, who now is deputy commander of U.S. European Command. "We knew that if they were caught, there would be no POW exchange. They were dead."

It was time to pull out the big guns — specifically, the 45 500-pound bombs that were now circling 40,000 feet above this carnage.

The bomber's appearance, however, was bittersweet.

The Impossible Shot

The B-52 had contacted an E-3 Sentry when it arrived over northwestern Afghanistan. The Sentry, commonly called an "AWACS," is an airborne warning and control system that serves as an air battle's on-scene commander. The modified Boeing 707 has a rotating radar dome that permits 250-mile surveillance from the Earth's surface into the stratosphere, over land or water. The \$125-million airframe is packed full of high-tech and classified gear, and is manned by a crew of up to 24 airmen. It sees all, it knows all.

But all Briscoe wanted to know was the call sign of the guys on the ground and the radio frequency where he could find them.

The call sign was given: "Contact Tiger 0-1." The ground-controller was using line-of-sight communications, which meant the B-52 had to move closer to the battlefield so transmissions would be clear.

The B-52 raised Markham on the radio and authenticated his transmission. Markham was next given the Stratofortress' weapons load: 45 Mk-82 bombs.

The A-team needed at least that amount of ordnance to silence the approaching Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. The problem was that the blast unleashed by such tonnage is "not your ideal situation for close-air support that close to the situation," Markham later explained. The enemy was only 500 yards away from his position at best.

Adding salt to the wound, the B-52's bombs were not precision-guided. They were the good, old-fashioned "dumb" bombs that fall where you drop them.

Briscoe and many radar navigators who drop those bombs refer to them instead as "gravity" bombs.

"Dumb" isn't a very flattering title for them," he explained.

Dumb, gravity or otherwise, the bombs would fail to stop much of the Taliban force if the attack was off by as little as 100 yards after falling more than 7 miles to Earth. Worse yet, an errant bomb could destroy the Triple Nickel and its Afghan allies.

With bullets zipping past and dirt showering down from mortar and artillery fire, there seemed to be no other choice. But Markham knew the shot he would order from the B-52 would be tough and dangerous. Perhaps even impossible.

Markham put the aircraft in holding pattern long enough to confer with his teammates.

"My teammates had to have full confidence in me," he

explained. "I looked at them, they looked at me, and we sat there for what seemed like hours, but it was a couple of seconds. We asked: 'Is this what we want to do? Is this good with everybody? Does everybody agree?'"

The B-52 was holding 4 miles to the north. The enemy was 500 yards to the south.

Everyone agreed on the airstrike.

Markham quickly verified all friendly positions. He turned on radar beacon so the Stratofortress would know the Americans' exact location. He then established a "kill box," which essentially is four coordinates that encompass the enemy. The trick was to get all of the bombs in that box, and that is no small feat. The "gravity" bombs would free-fall 40,000 feet, and their paths were subject to wind, weather, even the earth's curvature and rotation. The bomber could not be brought closer to the battle — decreasing elevation not only would put the massive aircraft in direct threat of surface-to-air missiles, it also would put the Stratofortress in air space designated to fighter aircraft.



Markham is awarded the Silver Star by Air Force Secretary Dr. James G. Roche (left) and Lt. Gen. Paul V. Hester, Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command.

The B-52's aircraft commander at first was hesitant and asked Markham if he was sure he wanted to go through with this.

"I told him that if we didn't, we were going to be dead anyways," Markham says matter-of-factly. "We needed every bomb they had, and we needed them in that box."

Markham read his target information — specifically, the A-team's location and where the target was in relation to the team's position, and how he wanted the B-52 to hit that massive ground force. He requested a 6,000-foot "string" of bombs be laid across the advancing enemy troops.

A bombing run typically takes two minutes to prepare and another two-and-a-half minutes for the B-52 to fly to the target area. In an immediate CAS mission such as this, however, time is of the essence and both aspects are simultaneously done.

As the aircraft commander read the target information back to Markham, verifying every digit in the various coordinates, Briscoe and other crewmembers were manually building the bomb run — calculating and plotting, adding and subtracting to get the perfect equation. When dropping "gravity" bombs, the B-52 has to fly into a specific spot in space — and do so at a specific time and a specific speed. The pilot has to

maintain that exact ground speed and heading to ensure an accurate release. Auto-pilot is no good here; while it holds altitude well, the bomber's heading will fluctuate. And if bomber drifts left or right as little as 5 degrees, many bombs will miss the target area.

The B-52 crew quickly determined that the mile-long string Markham had requested was just a little too long to achieve maximum effect. Briscoe, who as the radar navigator is responsible for weapon management, shortened the string to 5,000 feet — a considerable task in its own right, considering bomb strings usually run 300 to 1,500 feet. The new plan allowed roughly 120 feet of spacing between each bomb, with a little to spare. Each bomb's blast radius would overlap that of the next bomb in the train, producing what Briscoe describes as a "solid line of destruction."

The crew plugged the data into avionics computers to verify that the numbers were accurate and doable. The equipment predicted the wind that would hit each bomb, and quickly spit out a bomb-release line.

The Taliban force was formed along the new highway that leads from Bagram Air Base to Kabul. Briscoe marked Bagram as the bomb run's initial point, or "IP," and laid the bomb string along the road.

The B-52's pilot then rolled-in on a heading of 2-2-0 to start the bomb run.

The aircraft commander keyed his radio and began his report: "Bird is inbound. Forty-five Mk-82s bombs released in three-and-a-half minutes. One minute from bomb-release to impact."

All five B-52 crewmembers hurriedly verified their data one last time. The mission matched all parameters, and the pilot and co-pilot, navigator, radar navigator and electronic-warfare officer all gave a "thumbs-up"

Confidence was strong in the B-52.

Confidence was fading on the ground.

Markham looked over his left shoulder to see four white contrails that trailed the bomber's 185-foot wingspan. The A-team was not directly underneath the B-52, but it was approaching the battlefield on a tight diagonal heading. That was cause for great concern. Because bombs sometimes fall short, or long, but rarely left or right of target, ground controllers typically order an aircraft to approach the target parallel to their own position, not over their shoulder.

"As we approached, the target was at 12 o'clock and Tiger 0-1 was at 1 o'clock," Briscoe said. "But when you're on the ground looking up to 40,000 feet, that looks mighty close."

Especially when that flight path will soon be filled with 45 bombs racing to return to Earth.

Markham keyed his radio 30 seconds before those bombs were released.

"Have you dropped yet?" he asked. Briscoe said he could tell by the tone in Markham's voice that the airman was unsure about something.

"We've not dropped, Tiger 0-1. Why, what's going on?"

"I'm not used to seeing you over my shoulder," he explained. Markham then called "a safety of flight." He waved-off the bomber. Despite the intense ground-fire the team was receiving, the airman knew it paled in comparison

to what would soon be on the way.

The B-52 crew terminated the attack with only 20 seconds to spare, and banked hard-right.

The pilot acknowledged Markham's cause for concern and assured him that it was necessary for them to fly over his shoulder to get the string on the new highway. Necessary ... and safe.

"We reverified everything again," Markham said. "These dumb bombs have no guidance on them. The aircraft has to calculate the exact spot to put that bomb on a target. If he's off a couple hundred meters — and remember, he's flying at 40,000 feet — it could be devastating to us."

The pilot's confident assurance, and the ever-approaching enemy forces, convinced Markham to give the green light. The B-52 resumed its attack run, and everything was checked and rechecked inside the bomber one last time.

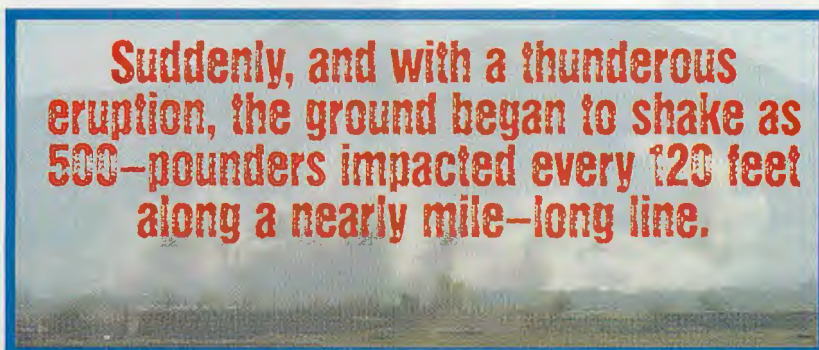
"IP inbound," the voice said over the radio.

Markham looked one last time into the expanse of clear blue sky that lay above Bagram.

"It was one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen.

That B-52 at 40,000 feet, leaving four big contrails," he said.

Reality pulled the combat-controller from his momentary serenity. Though not visible, he knew that 45 500-pound bombs would be screaming toward him and his team — in only



four-and-a-half minutes.

Life or death waited at the conclusion.

"I thought about family. The lives of my teammates. The lives of the Northern Alliance soldiers," Markham said as he stared at the red beret he held in his hands, recalling the eternity that rested within those four-and-a-half minutes.

"When everything goes right, it's awesome, but it just takes one second — half a second — for something to go bad, and it will change your life. And it will change the lives of many people around you."

There was no more time to think about that one bad second.

"Get down! Get Down!" The Americans barely had time to send word down the line.

An A-team member then rushed to the pinned-down reporters and broke the good news: "We are American soldiers and we're going to take care of everything." Then came the bad news: "You better get down because a world of fury is about to come in on us!"

What defense the Northern Alliance had mustered slowed to a trickle. The reporters, soldiers and Afghans, alike, sought refuge in the slightest rock or wall or gear that could provide protection.

Three-plus minutes had passed.

Markham drew a deep breath.

Seven-and-a-half miles above him — and 7 miles behind him — the B-52's radar navigator released 45 bombs.

The call went out over the radio: "Off hot! Get down!"

A metal clink marked the release of each 500-pound bomb, which then tilted slightly and plummeted nose-first toward the battlefield below. The internal bay's 27 bombs fell first. As the last one released, the first of 18 external bombs

dropped. Within seconds, the entire line of 45 bombs were falling — in perfect sequence.

"It's a long minute every time you drop bombs," Briscoe said. "You're always confident when you release. If you're not, then you won't drop. It's not worth the cataclysmic tragedy you might have otherwise.

"But thoughts go through your mind — has the enemy moved? Have the friendlies moved?"

Markham buried his face and covered his head with his arms as the seconds slowly slipped away. He heard the B-52's alert: "Twenty seconds to impact." He never heard the bombs fly past his position on their way to the Taliban front line.

Suddenly, and with a thunderous eruption, the ground began to shake as 500-pounders impacted every 120 feet along a nearly mile-long line.

The deep explosions were "the most horrific feeling I ever felt in my gut," Markham said. "It seemed like it went on for hours."

Dirt, rocks and shrapnel engulfed the skies above and around them. Northern Alliance soldiers began screaming in fear, though they barely could be heard between the monstrous roar made by each impact. The building beneath the A-team started to buckle amid the concussions.

Then there was silence.

Deafening silence.

The Taliban radio chatter had ceased. There was no more gunfire, no more explosions.

The American soldiers who had been pinned-down by intense enemy fire were finally able to raise their heads and look down-range.

The Taliban front line was gone. Completely decimated. Hulks of tanks and vehicles lay smoldering. Pieces of rifles and boots were strewn among massive craters. An occasional secondary explosion of ordnance erupted from within the rubble.

The team made a quick check of one another. Everyone was OK. Markham then felt a sharp pain in his stomach when he noticed the reporters laying motionless in front of him. For a moment, he was sure that they had not been as fortunate as him. But one by one they arose — every one of them — and began to shake the dirt and debris from their bodies. He watched as the fearful expressions once frozen on their faces slowly succumbed to smiles, tears and laughter.

"These British reporters looked back at us, and said 'Man, you guys kicked ass. Thanks a lot!'" Markham recalled with a wide smile.

The A-team's medic was the only one who could muster a response, which was accompanied by a smile and a wave.

"Yeah, no problem!"

Not one Northern Alliance soldier, American or Western reporter was wounded in the airstrike.

Markham grabbed his radio to share the news with the B-52 crew that eagerly awaited word. The report is one that Briscoe says he can still hear with clarity.

"Great hits! Great hits! Absolutely great hits, guys!" he told us. "I'll never forget him saying that. Never want to."

Official battle-damage assessments scored more than two dozen tanks and 1,000 Taliban and al-Qaeda troops killed in that airstrike alone. Another 3,000 enemy troops were killed in other airstrikes and ground combat that day. When added to the efforts of the three previous weeks, Markham estimates he destroyed roughly 500 targets during his tour.

"Just by the grace of God and I guess I was having a good couple of weeks. I was destroying a lot of targets."

And the fight wasn't over yet.

The Taliban vehicles that had sat in reserve and were out of blast range now turned, and were making a mad dash south.

Sealing The Deal

"Devastating doesn't begin to describe not only the physical but the psychological impact of 45 500-pound bombs landing within seconds of each other," Briscoe explained.

The enemy's gas pedals were floored in full-retreat, but they couldn't outrun four Navy F-18 Hornets that had arrived just in time to seal the deal. Markham gave the front-line coordinates: Everything to the north was good guys. Everything to the south was open-season.

"They started hitting those targets of opportunity — tanks, trucks, everything moving south was being hit. It was like the second highway of death," he said, referring to the stretch of road north of Kafji, Saudi Arabia, on which American airpower destroyed hundreds of Iraqi vehicles in 1991's Persian Gulf War.

Yet more targets still lay ahead, even beyond the retreating troops. Pockets of resistance remained situated between the Northern Alliance and the capital city it longed to liberate. Absorbing this moment, the greatest victory of his military career, Gen. Shariff turned his weathered brown face to the south and ordered the offensive into Kabul to begin.

Freedom At Last

Northern Alliance Tanks started down the dusty road within an hour of ODA-555's battle-ending airstrike. Smiling foot-soldiers walked behind the rustic Russian armor. Deeper in the column, the A-team worked radios from within trucks.

A world away, in Washington, D.C., people were scrambling. The Taliban's swift defeat and subsequent retreat even took Pentagon leadership off-guard.

"Nobody has a clue what to do now," a Pentagon official who asked not to be identified said on 13 Nov. "Nobody expected Kabul to fall this fast. They've got no clue as to the government, no clue as to what to do with humanitarian [relief], no clue as to what to do in terms of controlling potential abuses to the population. It's just surreal."

On its way to Kabul, the Triple Nickel received word over satellite communication from Central Command: The Northern Alliance force wasn't supposed to go into Kabul.

"Everybody was so afraid about us going into Kabul, but there was nothing we could do," Markham said, shrugging his shoulders. "We were in their trucks!"

White House and State Department leadership had requested that the Northern Alliance not enter the town. But after six years of exile, nothing could keep the Afghans out of Kabul.

And after weeks of eating goat and rice, "everybody was ready right then," Markham admits.

The march south across the 15-mile Shomali plain continued through the day and into the night. Squads of a dozen men slowly made their way from one entrenched position to the next. The Northern Alliance passed many fighting positions on its push to Kabul. Some positions were manned by dedicated soldiers. Most were manned by corpses.

Armored tanks provided quick support when soldiers walking the point met opposition. If the Taliban force proved too defiant, word was sent back to ODA-555. The team would call in an airstrike to destroy the position, and everyone would press on. And so continued the nearly 24-hour march into Kabul: Find the enemy, kill the enemy, advance. Find the

Continued on page 78

SOFT PROVING ground

THE ACUFLEX AF-1

New Stock Proves Muzzle Brake Isn't Only Way To Control Climb!

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON



A close-up of the conversion for the Ruger AC556 carbine.

Throughout the history of firearms, there have been numerous attempts to tame or control recoil. Where these firearms have been of the semi-automatic or full-automatic type, the problems of recoil and particularly muzzle climb have been much more obvious.

In the vast majority of cases, the means of controlling the effect of the opposite reaction of the projectile moving down the barrel have concentrated at the muzzle, where the gases escaping behind the bullet have been diverted in one or more directions through ports in the barrel, or in a device clamped

or screwed onto the barrel. Commonly referred to as muzzle brakes, the more effective of these devices are also designed to push the weapon forward to counter recoil.

Although muzzle brakes work quite well in dampening felt recoil, they have downsides such as increasing muzzle blast and muzzle flash, and can also cause a dust or debris signature when the weapon is fired near the ground or foliage.

While the muzzle brake has remained the most popular device in controlling recoil, there have been a number of other systems that work internally. These include the "con-

stant recoil" principle defined by arms designer, L. James Sullivan, and used in the Ultimex LMG, the floating mechanisms used in the German G11 rifle and Russian AN-94, and devices such as the Harrts Recoil Reducer inserted into the buttstocks of some firearms. While these systems work well, some are relatively complex.

Now another recoil-controlling system is available, and although it is not new, it has never before been mass-produced. Invented by Mr. John Kimball, this concept was first demonstrated on the M14 rifle at Springfield Armory in the mid-1960s. Although it proved very efficient, the Military didn't see a need for it, in spite of the fact that it was trying to make the M14 fill the role of a squad automatic rifle.

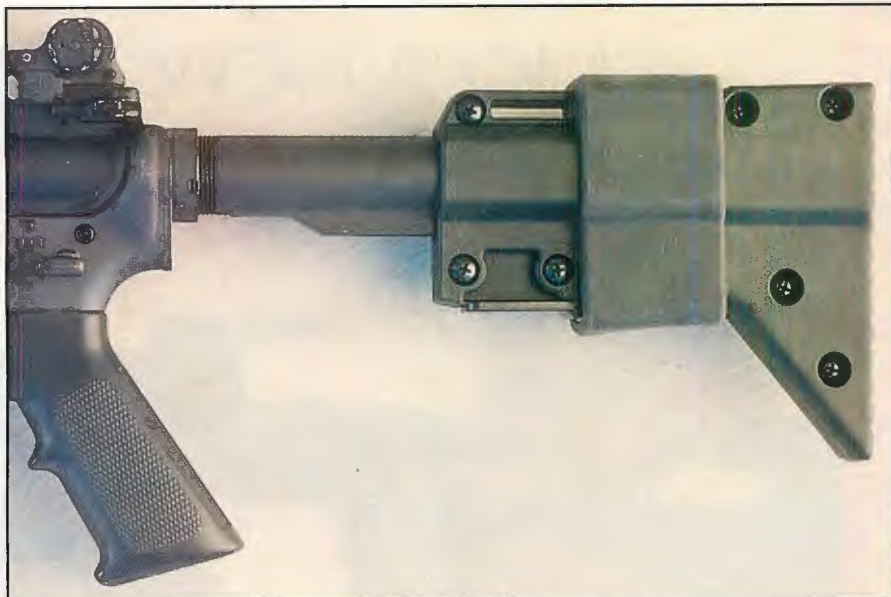
When I met John Kimball 20 years later, I tested his same original design on an M14 rifle as well as an M16 and even a G3. During a demonstration at Knob Creek, Kentucky, I fired an entire 20-round magazine from a G3 equipped with Kimball's system from the shoulder at a silhouette target at 25 yards. I was able to keep all 20 hits on the target.

Consisting of a special buttstock, John Kimball's solution for controlling recoil is in allowing the stock to pivot with its rear portion toggling downward about 1/2 inch during recoil. Thus, as the weapon moves backward with its muzzle tending to rise, the stock pivots downward, causing the rear of the weapon to rise an equal amount. This action counters the rise of the muzzle enough to diminish muzzle rise by up to 60%.

In my experience, the increase in control seems at least that much, and perhaps more. All I know is that I can keep all my hits on the target, or close to it, at any distance even out to 100 yards or so — this when firing long bursts for demonstration. However, the system works just as well for short bursts, and also for single shots fired semi-automatically in rapid succession. Regaining target acquisition is much faster because of the action of this stock.

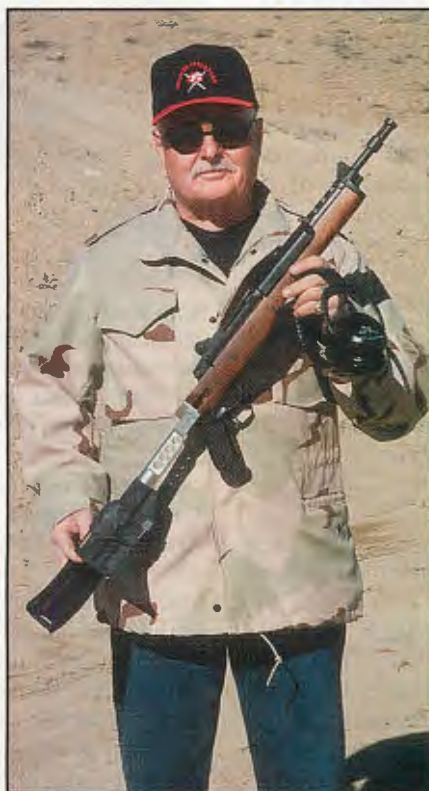
In an improvement over his original fixed stock, Kimball has now licensed Inland Enterprises, Inc., of Montana, to make a variation in the form of a retractable buttstock for the M16 Carbine and pre-ban AR-15 Carbine-style guns. Called the AcuFlex AF-1, the stock uses a combination coil spring and neoprene spacer. It pivots downward at the rear under recoil, and returns instantly to its original position.

Recently John Kimball visited



Here the standard AF-1 is seen on the Colt M4 Carbine tested. The system will fit virtually any AR-15-style rifle or carbine.

Soldier Of Fortune and brought several of the new stocks for a number of weapons, along with an original for the G3. Although the new retractable stock can be used in any of its four positions, it pivots only when fully extended. Inland sells the stock as a kit complete with recoil-spring tube of either early Colt or more recent Bushmaster-type patterns. However, we merely replaced



Johnston poses with the Ruger AC556 carbine adapted for John Kimball's stock system. It increased control by about 100%.

both types on existing Colt or Bushmaster guns with no problem.

In testing the stock on both the selective-fire Colt M4 Carbine with an 11.5-inch barrel and a Bushmaster M4-style carbine, I found the AcuFlex AF-1 to work very efficiently in controlling muzzle rise on both full- and semi-automatic-fire. I also tested the stock on the Colt 9mm SMG where it worked as efficiently as on the 5.56mm guns, and an earlier prototype version worked just as well on a selective fire Ruger AC556. The AF-1 kit can also be installed on full-length AR-15/M16 style rifles.

Additional good news is that the stock is not uncomfortable and its movement was hardly noticeable at all to the shooter. Although a selective-fire H&K G3 was not available, we did mount one of Kimball's original stocks on an HK91 where it proved effective in fast follow-up shots on semi-automatic.

The new Inland retractable AcuFlex AF-1 stock comes with a sling mount, although it is farther forward than the standard military retractable stock. In addition, while the AF-1 has an adjustment latch, it is more difficult to remove the stock from the carbine by hand. For most operators, however, this is not necessarily a shortcoming.

If you're looking for a retractable buttstock for your pre-ban or law-enforcement AR-15, Bushmaster, ArmaLite, or other AR-style carbine that really increases control, check out the AF-1 from Inland Enterprises, Inc., Dept SOE, 9565 Bull Lake Rd., Troy, MT 59935; phone: 406-295-5162; or e-mail inlandusa.com . ☒

USMC'S NEW SPECOPS SILENCER!



TEXT & PHOTOS BY
GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

ArmaLite's M16A4 Mid-Length Carbine's Improved Gas System May Be Ideal Compromise.

In an earlier article entitled "The Rigid Frame," we looked at some of the problems associated with the group of M16-type carbines that use short carbine-type handguards. These problems include a higher operating gas pressure, excess heat, increased bolt velocity, erosion, extraction problems, and a short open-sight radius.

Although some of these problems have been dealt with well enough to increase reliability of these short weapons, most of the problems persist and take their toll in the longevity of major parts in the weapon. Such parts include the bolt group, upper receiver, barrel, and gas tube.

The Mid-Length Carbine

For some years, ArmaLite Corporation (formerly Eagle Arms) has had what seems to be a viable solution to these problems in the M16-type carbine. It is called the Mid-Length Carbine. In this clever design, Mark Westrom, President of ArmaLite, moved the front sight base/gas block 2 inches forward from its position on the standard "shorty," or carbine family of these weapons. Consequently, the gas port is mid-length between that of the "shorty" carbine and the standard M16 rifle.

The gas port of the standard 20-in. barrel AR-15/M16 rifle is located some 12-1/2 in. forward of the chamber and 7-1/2 in. from the muzzle, while the port of the standard "shorty"



With seven pieces of .223 brass in the air and another going into the chamber, the Mid-Length Carbine remains perfectly level, and no one present needed ear-protection with the M4FA Suppressor mounted. (inset) Being well-versed in transitioning, the officer corners right with the carbine left-shouldered.

carbine is 7-1/2 in. forward of the chamber and 8-1/2 in. from the muzzle using a 16-in. barrel. However, the gas port of the ArmaLite Mid-Length Carbine is 9-1/2 in. inches forward of the chamber and 6-1/2 in. from the muzzle of a 16-in. barrel. Since the front sight is mounted on the gas block the distances of the sight on all three versions are equally proportionate.

The result of moving the gas port and front sight forward impact directly on all of the problems outlined above. Because the gas port is closer to that in the rifle's original design it is closer to the optimum curve in the operating pressure range of the original 20-in. barrel. The result is less heat, bolt velocity, erosion, better extraction and improved sight radius — qualities similar to those of the standard 20-inch-barrel rifle.

However, obtaining optimum pressure curves and reliability in a direct-gas system is not merely a matter of moving the gas port/front-sight base back and forth, but is also affected by the length of the barrel forward of the gas port, where dwell time becomes an issue. Dwell time is the length of remaining bore past the port through which the bullet must travel while gas continues to flow through the port to operate the weapon. The longer this distance is, the more dwell time before bore and port pressure ceases. Of course, reliability is also affected by the amount of use the weapon has had, along with lubrication, debris, temperature, ammunition quality, and etc.

ArmaLite's SOF Carbine

Recently ArmaLite announced a new variation of its semi-automatic only .223 Mid-Length Carbine. Called the Special Operation Forces (SOF) Carbine, this post-ban model comes with a fixed-position retractable-style stock, M4-style 16-in. barrel with a muzzle brake, and the mid-length gas system. The gun is available in both A2- and A4-configurations and companion AR-10 versions are also offered in .308 caliber. Both should prove extremely popular.

The Mid-Length S.I.R. System

Having been interested in ArmaLite's Mid-Length gas system for some time, I recently decided to have a look at it for myself. However, my heightened interest was fueled by the design of a brand new A.R.M.S. Selective Integrated Rail (S.I.R.) System designed especially for the Mid-Length direct-gas system. The catch? This new A.R.M.S. Mid-Length SIR System is produced only in the "military" version of the S.I.R. that requires the total omission of the delta-ring hand guard-retaining assembly (take a few minutes to read between the lines).

After receiving one of the first production samples of the new A.R.M.S. Mid-Length S.I.R. Systems, I immediately ordered a new 2003 MilSpec upper-receiver group from ArmaLite with a flattop receiver and barrel assembly, but *without* the delta-ring assembly. I had to verify my unusual order with ArmaLite three times.

100% MilSpec!

A word about ArmaLite's new 2003 MilSpec M16-style flattop receiver is in order here. It meets U.S. Military specifications 100%, and particularly those of the new M4A1. With regard to an important aspect you can see and appreciate, the feed ramps of the barrel extension are extended

down into the magazine well for optimum feeding reliability under the worst conditions (no nose-dives). Just as important is that, since the S.I.R. System was designed to precisely fit only flattop upper receivers made to exact MilSpec, the new ArmaLite upper receiver accepts the S.I.R. as if the two were made as one unit.

When my ArmaLite MilSpec Mid-Length upper receiver component arrived, I didn't even bother to measure the critical dimensions, but went right to mounting my Mid-Length S.I.R. System on it. I've never seen a better mating of these two components, and I've put together more than a few.

After LocTighting the fasteners of the S.I.R. System in place, I mounted an Eotech Milspec Red-Reticle Tactical Reflex Sight on it and installed a SOCOM retractable buttstock onto the recoil spring tube of one of my pre-ban semi-auto lower receiver groups in order to run some elementary drills. While not yet available to the public, this stock houses two spare battery tubes that can hold a variety of batteries, including those used to power SureFire Tactical Weapon Lights, but more on that later. With the S.I.R. System mounted, the carbine balanced as well as I'd expected. This particular unit was fitted with the improved REDI-MAG System from Boonie Packer Products that houses a spare M16 magazine alongside



Dust and brass fly as the Mid-Length Carbine is fired at a small target on the dirt bank using the Eotech Sight.

the gun and keeps it clean.

With my REDI-MAG, I use MagPul magazine protectors, as on all my M16 magazines, and they work perfectly to provide optimum purchase of your magazines, and also equal protection to the bases in case they're dropped. All my AR-15/M16 rifles and carbines are also equipped with the new improved ERGO Grip from Falcon Industries. Having used a good number of these over the years, I find the latest ambidextrous ERGO the best tactical grip I've ever used.

First Look! SureFire M4FA Suppressor

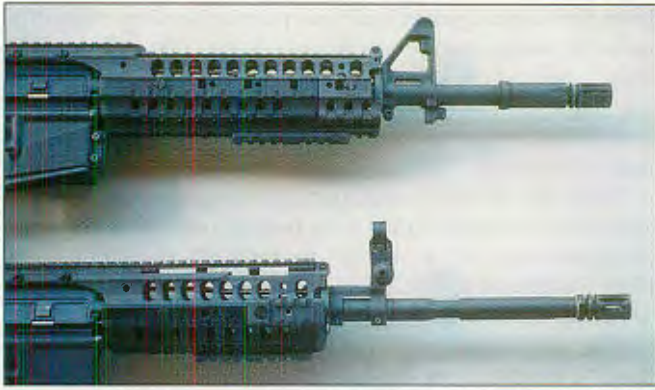
Yes, you read it right. SureFire, LLC, has developed a sound suppressor for the M4 Carbine. Called the M4FA, the new suppressor was designed by Barry Dueck, of SureFire. Made of the most sophisticated materials, this suppressor is also on the cutting edge of sound-suppression technology, not to mention application. Requiring only a special M4 interface unit to be mounted on the barrel, the new suppressor is able to be instantly attached and removed by a simple hand-tightened nut that automatically secures by a device similar to a liner lock in a folding knife. What's more, the M4FA suppressor mounts with almost no loss of zero,

and there are no adjustments to be made other than an initial sighting in. Whether suppressed, or not suppressed, point of impact (POI) changes by only about 1/2 MOA.

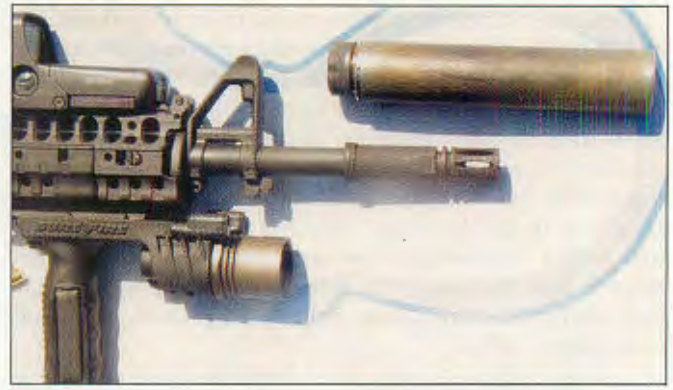
However, as important as POI changes are (and they are important), hit probability is not the only important aspect of SureFire's new suppressor. A close second behind accuracy is



Brand-new from ArmaLite is its SOF Carbine, a post-ban Mid-Length .223-caliber carbine with Special Operation Forces features.



The new A.R.M.S. Mid-Length S.I.R. System (top) is compared with the standard M4A1 Carbine S.I.R. The S.I.R. System does not touch the barrel and does not transmit heat to the hand.



Here the new SureFire M4FA Suppressor is seen removed, showing the special combination-mount/A2 flash hider. The special mounting nut automatically locks via a steel tab.

what a suppressor is all about, and that's doing the job of a muffler. This is why these devices are traditionally called "silencers" and, while they've never fully lived up to this job, the best come close. Although such devices were originally marketed to provide comfort for recreational shooting, they became associated with crime and were tightly controlled by the Government in 1934, but enough about that.

Being invited to test ArmaLite's Mid-Length Carbine system with SureFire's new Suppressor, I took the component to SureFire and turned it over to Barry Dueck, Brooke Smith, and Travis Hall. My Mid-Length's 16-inch barrel was fitted with a SureFire M4FA Suppressor mount, and I was handed one of the company's test suppressors, this one having already undergone extensive demonstration and testing by both the Army and the Marine Corps. It's heat discoloration was obvious, but Barry knew I was pressed for time, and said that this torture-tested sample would give me a good idea of

how much abuse the unit was capable of taking. Incidentally, because of the special alloys used in its construction, the M4FA suppressor is stronger at 1,200 F degrees than a stainless-steel suppressor is when cold, and it is *guaranteed* for 30,000 rounds.

SureFire's Paul Kim and Travis Hall accompanied me to the Prado Olympic Shooting Range, in Chino, California, the site of the 1984 Olympic Shooting Competition. A full-service range, this facility is used for practice by many Southern California law-enforcement SWAT teams, one of which met us there. In addition to basic test-firing the new SureFire/ArmaLite Mid-Length combination, we briefly demonstrated the system to the SWAT team in question. After assembling the Mid-Length upper receiver group onto a legal M4 Carbine lower along with a SureFire M900A Millennium Tactical Weapon Light with foregrip, we proceeded to fire it on full-automatic using Black Hills 55-gr. .223 FMJ ammunition with the SureFire M4FA Suppressor mounted.

After initial firing for familiarization, one of my objectives was to get some photos of live-fire with empty brass being ejected into the air. During a number of these attempts I stood within 3 feet of the side of the muzzle of the SureFire Suppressor, with no ear protection as the gun was being fired. During all this firing I suffered no pain, or ill effects, as the report seemed to produce less noise than a cap pistol. Because of stringent California law, this new suppressor can currently be sold only directly to law-enforcement agencies or the military.

USMC Adoption

Here's the scoop! Just before we went to print, I was notified that, after extensive testing, the new United States Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment-1 (MARSOC DET-1) has adopted the SureFire M4FA Suppressor for its M4A1 Carbines. Operators for this new Marine SpecOps group were hand-picked from Force Recon personnel by Colonel Coats and are being integrated into the SpecOps family.

Throughout testing the ArmaLite Mid-Length with its corresponding S.I.R. System, M900A Millennium Light, and both the Eotech and Aimpoint Comp ML red dot sights, we found it to have excellent handling characteristics, especially in conjunction with SureFire's M4FA Suppressor. With regard to accuracy, the Mid-Length's Match Grade ArmaLite carbine barrel easily produces 3-shot 100-yard groups hovering about 2-to-3 inches with the reflex optics already mentioned.

Although ArmaLite's Mid-Length Carbine is nothing new,

ARMALITE MID-LENGTH CARBINE

SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	.223 Remington.
Muzzle Velocity:	2,900 fps
Operation:	Long-stroke piston & gas cylinder via direct gas.
Type of Fire:	Semi-automatic, or selective-fire to military and law-enforcement agencies
Barrel Length:	16 inches
Overall Length:	37.25 inches (with A2 fixed stock)
Weight:	7.5 lbs
Feed Device:	Any M16 magazine
Safety:	Thumb safety selector
Sights:	Adjustable for W/E
Stock Furniture:	Matte black synthetic
Finish:	MilSpec matte black

SUREFIRE M4FA SUPPRESSOR

Material:	High-Temperature alloys and stainless steel
Length:	7.5 in. (increases M4 OAL by only 3.75 in.)
Diameter:	1.5 in.
Weight:	17 oz.
Sound Reduction:	28-32 DB
Point of Impact Change:	1/2 - 1 MOA
Operational Life:	30,000 rounds
Finish:	MilSpec

it has truly come of age with ArmaLite's new SOF model, not to mention one of the most revolutionary accessories to come down the pike in years, a new Mid-Length S.I.R. System.

However, again, as this is written, the Mid-Length S.I.R. is only made in the military version, so you may have to special-order the upper receiver group from ArmaLite like I did. Who knows, maybe things will soon be simplified. In the meantime, you can order the ArmaLite Mid-Length with standard round handguards. Either way, stay tuned for more important news on this issue. ✂

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Baby-Sitting Baghdad

Continued from page 47

then leveled a 12-gauge Mossberg at the deadbolt. The report echoed off the compound walls like a thunderclap. Clinton kicked the door, hard — three times — before it sprang open and the entry team flowed in, Tac Lights on and M-4s leveled. They repeated the procedure seven more times once inside, the shotgun booming even louder in the confined space of the home. Each time, a fire team of troops flowed quickly through the breach, but the previous occupants had apparently fled.

But just as the troops had cleared the last room, a sharp, short burst of fire rang out from the street. Leaving behind a security element, the entry teams departed back over the compound wall as calls for a medic went up from the adjoining house. As Lt. Col. Fetterman moved forward, a woman emerged from the house and in perfect English calmly said, "My husband and son have been shot, will you please help us?" Lt. Col. Fetterman replied, "Yes, we will. My medics are on the way." Specialist Josh Atkins, of Harts, W. Va., 2nd Platoon's medic, hustled past immediately after and brought the first shooting victim out of the house; a middle-aged man with gunshot wounds to the left arm and buttocks. Inside, a boy of 16 lay wounded in the side. An Army field ambulance that had been standing by moved up.

As the medics went to work, Lt. Col. Fetterman assessed what had happened from his platoon commander. Despite the PsyOps broadcasts telling people to stay in their homes, the two individuals, apparently employees of Najim's, had burst out onto the street and directly into the perimeter security element. When the troops saw that they were armed with AK-47s and a handgun, they fired a warning shot into the ground, but when the two failed to stop or retreat, they shot them. As they had their wounds bound, the older man asked why had they shot him. A nearby soldier said, "Because you had a gun. We told you to stay in your homes." He seemed to understand, shaking his head as Atkins injected him with morphine for the pain. The injuries were bloody, but not life-threatening. The scathing dress-down his wife delivered him as the medics went to work was more than likely the more serious threat.

As this was taking place, the man's wife pulled Lt. Col. Fetterman aside and

pointed-out a house immediately across the street from Najif's. She told him that the owner of the house was a Major in Saddam Hussein's notorious Secret Intelligence Service. Fetterman immediately relayed this information to the PsyOps detachment and maneuvered his troops into blocking positions around the home. Heeding the PsyOps call for the occupants to emerge unarmed, two men came out and spoke to the detachment translator, claiming that they had only one firearm in the house.

After receiving the owner's permission to enter and search, a small team of troops quietly entered the home and began removing weapons as the man's



A SAW gunner from the 101st keeps a close eye on one of Baghdad's mean streets during a "Presence Patrol" through south side. Despite mainstream media hysteria about the "security situation" the 3/187th put their boot down quickly and had order restored in two weeks.

family sat on couches in the living room. When each room had been searched, the total number of arms far exceeded the one he had claimed earlier. All told, the troops removed four AK-47s, a West German G-3, a Mauser rifle, two shotguns, including an expensive double-barrel, and two handguns, one a .44 AutoMag.

The man then tried to explain that he was a gun dealer as a Special Forces investigation team was called in. Fetterman's troops had the men pack an overnight bag and informed them that would be taken in for further interviews. During initial questioning, it was learned that the neighborhood where they and Najim lived was reserved for higher-ranking officers in the Hussein regime. Not the big fish we had been looking for, but Division would be happy.

This pattern continued for the remaining weeks the Rakkasans were in Baghdad. Sort through mountains of leads, identify people or situations that needed armed attention and move on

them. The 3/187th was a very, very busy battalion, especially the troops of Delta Company who were equipped with hard-shell Humvees and found themselves in the unenviable position of fire brigade cum reaction force. Not a day went by when everything from high-ranking Ba'ath Party members, dipshits trying their hand at gun-running to goons sent by disgruntled landlords filled up the "Dog pound" that was set up to accommodate detainees. For troops who were not issued any manner of non-lethal munitions for such civil-operations duties, the raids and detainments remained casualty-free for all concerned.

Nation-Building: Civil Ops Vs. Military

Despite making solid inroads on the Hearts and Minds front and nabbing numerous bad guys, the officers and men of the Rakkasans also found themselves tasked full-time in the field of full-blown nation-building. Iraq was almost a basket case when the United States took over and a complete, unexpected regime collapse that left the looted shell of civil government in its wake. With so few troops on the ground, infantry units found themselves in the midst of a full rebuilding mission. Everything from re-establishing basic utilities to rounding-up looted trash trucks was sent down to the battalions on the ground.

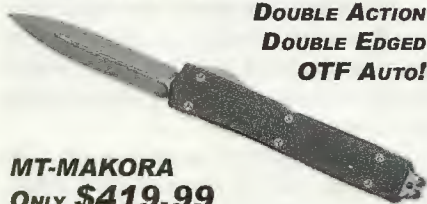
"For the foreseeable future, the U.S. Army will be running Iraq," said Major David Beachman, Battalion Operations Officer. With only a handful of Civil Affairs-types around to guide what quickly became a massive undertaking, the troops quickly took up the positions of local mediators, police, civil engineers, humanitarian assessors, watchdogs and a myriad of other tasks that, while not trained to perform, they pulled-off admirably.

In the next installment, "Bringing-Up Baghdad; Nation-Building with the 101st," we will see how with a little common sense and the can-do attitude of this remarkable unit, the 3/187th Rakkasans, brought their sector back from the brink of anarchy; and established local security, civil government and essential services. It is a mission they have continued to perform in their new station in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul and one of the great, unsung achievements in postwar-Iraq.

J. S. Mosby is a freelance war correspondent who has been a witness and participant to conflict and rebuilding from the Balkans to Baghdad.

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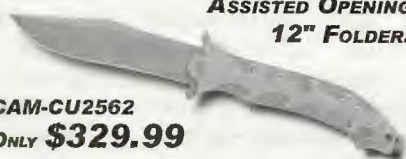
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Command Guidance

Continued from page 6

ble signs were seen in Afghanistan when the brass "cracked down" on the Special Forces use of local dress and appearance (beards.) They were ordered to shave and wear their uniforms. Aside from the fact that this went against practical experience (going back to World War II), and put Special Forces troops lives at risk, it demonstrated a callous disregard for the expertise and professionalism of the Special Forces. The tradition continued in Iraq where Special Forces troops were threatened with punishment for having a beer or possessing "pornography" (a copy of Playboy magazine.) Again, the Special Forces troops, professional as ever, stood to attention, saluted and followed orders.

But the number of senior men who choose to get out is increasing. Being expected to perform extraordinary mental and physical feats on the battlefield, and then being treated like a wayward child has not gone down well with the troops.

The troops see the "Mickey Mouse" (mindless attention to useless regulations) as symptomatic of larger leadership problems. The troops have noted that as Special Forces officers rise in rank, and leave the A-Teams, they become more career-minded. That, unfortunately, means responding to the demands of the system that puts great emphasis on "zero defects" and not doing anything that would embarrass a commander. This makes the battalion and group commanders tend to be looking over their shoulders rather than paying attention to what is happening out front and what their troops need. These problems were played down in peace time, but have become major sources of tensions because of problems in Afghanistan and Iraq.

There are still problems with senior commanders in understanding what Special Forces do, how they do it and how important it is. Especially in Iraq, Special Forces would often uncover choice targets and soon find that the brass were not interested, or didn't understand the importance of what the Special Forces had in their sights.

This goes back to the situations in Afghanistan where the Special Forces literally had Osama bin Laden in their sights, but had to get clearance, which sometimes was withheld, to pull the trigger. Similar situations were encountered in Iraq. ✂

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All The News Fit To Twist

Continued from page 34

other looney running the place again.

This place has greater potential than Saudi Arabia (bunch of goat-herders who struck black gold) or Iran (weird dudes who can't run a rug bazaar much less a major country).

I keep telling myself even the Democrats can't be that self-destructive.

But then I look at the current line-up. The cream of the crap. If that lying bitch ever gets elected we're really in trouble. By we, I mean the whole world.

She'll slide just plain Bill in as the Secretary-General of the U.N. and then the whole world will be trying to take our great country ... the greatest ever (and that's coming from an immigrant) ... down and civilization with it.

Armageddon, here we come. Remember, it's located on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

Enough of that cheery speculation. The good news is that General Schoonmaker is going to be appointed Chief Army and the old man is coming to Tampa to run the SpecOps desk at CentCom. He's tops and will be getting his second star.

To me it means that SpecOps will be more predominant in future operations.

As the movie quoted old General Patton, "God help me, I love it." I do.

Nothing more satisfying than working with the BEST damn soldiers in the world, flushing real human poop down the drain and giving some folks a chance at trying freedom for a change.

They may learn to like it and then my great-great-grandson won't have to worry about some maniac trying to destroy the planet.

I hope to see most of you and ask for some advice, not support. I know I've had that all along. Thanks.

Now about that Maker's Mark.

God Bless America

[At press time, we have learned that "Curly's" two sons have been smoked in a lengthy northern Iraq firefight.]

PS. A couple of you asked me about Curly and his two sons, Dumb and Dumber. I still think we got him and one son, but the slugs may have gotten away. If they are alive, I can't believe they are hanging around here.

Even Curly isn't that stupid ... then again. He might be in Syria or Lebanon. If he is, he's too moronic to keep quiet, then we'll get him. I promise. ☒

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Blasting Through

Continued from page 58

suits Wells was carrying were damaged.

Wells says the dust was so thick he got lost in the convoy. "You could barely see the hood of the truck with NVGs," he said.

Urgent Call For Assistance

Moments after Lt. Stalnecker's Hummer crossed through one of the lanes cut into the north berm, I listened to a radio conversation between Hondo and Geronimo.

"I hear small-arms fire about a klick or two away from my current location at Relief Point Bravo and see tracers in the vicinity of Apache's position," said Hondo.

"They are developing a situation and will call back when they have more information," replied Geronimo.

"Break, break. Ironhorse, Ironhorse. Black Hawk," radioed the commander of Bravo Company.

"Ironhorse should be able to address that," said Stalnecker as the first section of nine Humvees in Counter Mech platoon passed an Iraqi border post just beyond the electric fence.

Although Alpha Company appeared to be in trouble, Stalnecker wasn't too worried. Second Tank Battalion was in the lead. There were wagers between the crews as to who could score the longest-range tank kill. The longest recorded was 4,100 meters.

"They have tanks out there," Stalnecker told his crew. A moment later, "Apache-6," the commander of Alpha Co., came up on the radio to say that his tracks were heavily engaged with at least three T-54/55 tanks and dismantled Iraqi infantry. The CO called for 2nd Tank Battalion and Javelin teams to move up quickly.

If the Iraqi tankers had managed to get within 1,000 yards of the aluminum-skinned AAVs, they could have turned the "Tuna Boats" into flaming coffins for 18 to 20 Marine riflemen packed into each amphibious assault vehicle like sardines.

Corporal Ramen Spears, from Brentwood, California, answered the call for help. Spears, who normally rode in TOW-6 in Counter Mech's second section, was temporarily assigned to Alpha Co. for the invasion.

"As my assistant gunner [Pfc. Wilkinson] and I ran down the rear ramp of our track, the sky was all lit up with

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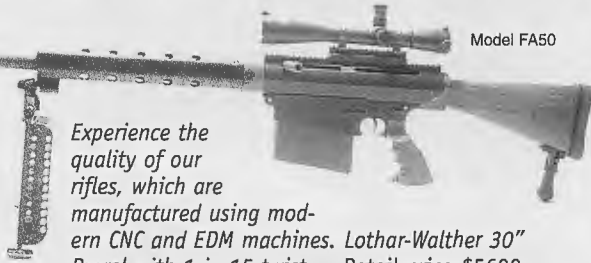
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.50-caliber tracers and 40mm grenade-fire. Kneeling well beyond the range of the enemy's 100-mm main gun, Spears lifted the weapon to his shoulder and took aim at his target. When it's ready to fire, the Javelin makes a sound like a toilet flushing. But Spears said this one did something it wasn't supposed to do.

Take The Shot!

"It started taking off without me even pressing the fire triggers," said Spears.

Fearing the \$75,000 missile might blow-up and kill him and his A-gunner, Spears let go of the triggers when a light on his \$200,000 CLU, the Launch Unit, indicated he had a problem.

"Pfc. Wilkinson was as white as a ghost when I put the missile down, and yelled to the platoon commander that there was no way I could take the shot and told him he needed to get my other team out of another track. The two-man team was seated in the front of the troop compartment, and had to be passed over the heads of Marines. The scene resembled a "mosh pit" at a rock concert.

"Human Yogurt"

Monitoring radio transmissions, you could sense the urgency of the situation as Apache-6 implored the Javelin team to "Take the shot! Take the shot!" But the gunner said he ignored the order. Corporal Jason Lee said he took the shot when was certain he could knock-out the tank.

When Apache-6 radioed, "One Javelin AWAY," the gunners were able to reach the safety of their track before the missile blew the half-egg-shaped turret off of the Iraqi tank and killed its four-man crew.

Spears was told the next morning that there wasn't much left of the tank or the crew.

"Human yogurt as we like to say," smiled Spears as he told how the 14-pound dual warhead drilled a hole into the turret and then exploded inside the crew compartment.

"I hope they are having happy thoughts, because they didn't know what hit them," said Spears as he recalled the historic moment for the Marine Corps; the first Javelin kill in the history of the new weapon.

The tank that Corporal Lee knocked-out was farther than 3,000 meters away, too far for MIAs from Alpha Company, 2nd Tank Battalion that were in the area. But the Abrams Main Battle Tanks were able to close the distance and destroy the other two T-54/55s.

First Lieutenant Keith Montgomery's tank was the lead element for 1/5 as the battalion came across the border. When "Titan" couldn't identify what was to its front, Montgomery ordered his crew to recon by fire.

"We fired an MPAT [Multi-Purpose Anti-Tank] round and destroyed an Iraqi T-54/55," said Montgomery

Gunnery Sergeant Michael Woods, who was interviewed by this reporter in the spring of 1998 on the Udari Range in northern Kuwait, when it looked like then President Clinton was going to war against Iraq, killed the other T-54/55.

Alpha Company, 2nd Tank Bn. was broken down into two sections. Montgomery, the platoon leader, commanded the first section. Woods commanded second section. Together, they provided an iron wedge for 1st Bn, 5th Regt.

Woods gave the order for "Beligerent" to fire when his tank crew came across the breach and acquired a positive silhouette on a T-54/55 at about 1,000 meters.

"We observed secondary explosions after we hit the target," said the slow-talking Marine, from Kansas City, Missouri. But his gunner, Lance Corporal Christopher Brumloe, from Spartanburg, South Carolina, isn't sure the Iraqi tank was manned at the time.

"We thought the tank was traversing on us, but we didn't want to take any chances in the dark, so Gunny Woods gave us the fire command," said Brumloe.

Some people in Alpha Company claim the Iraqis staged tanks there like decoys to get U.S. forces to deploy early, but Brumloe says he would rather take a shot at an abandoned tank and live another day to fight, rather than not take that shot and take a chance of that tank engaging his crew and killing him and his three buddies.

Counter Mech was still trying to move forward to provide suppressing fire for Alpha Company when the Javelin fired by Cpl. Lee hit the T-54/55 at 2127 hours.

Eight minutes later, CMP's lead vehicle crossed through the north berm into Iraqi territory.

Two weeks later, Counter Mech Platoon and 2nd Tank Battalion would lead a bloody assault across the Saddam Hussein Canal in south-central Iraq, one of several speedbumps on the "Road to Baghdad."

Another battlefield report from Dale B. Cooper will appear in next month's SOF.

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Continued from page 65

enemy, kill the enemy, advance.

During this bloody push into the city stands a poignant moment Markham remembers well: The time in which Gen. Shariff unexpectedly addressed the reason he ordered the human shields to protect the A-team.

If something happened to the General, his next in command could take over, Shariff explained. If something happened to one of his soldiers, the next soldier would step in. But if something happened to one of the Americans, "the aircraft would go away."

It was a sound strategy, and the Americans knew it. But that didn't make it any easier to bear.

"Whoever you fight with, you build a camaraderie with them," Markham said.

Shariff's strategy was evident on the advance into Kabul. Many soldiers lost limbs, and lives, as they stepped on landmines that littered the way. Yet the Northern Alliance kept their soldiers well ahead of the Americans to afford them as much safety as possible.

The massive group arrived around 0800 on the morning of 13 Nov. It was the 38th day of American combat operations. It was the A-team's 26th day in-country. It was the city's first day of freedom in five years.

The Northern Alliance met little resistance as it poured into Kabul. The vast majority of Taliban and al-Qaeda positions had been destroyed in relentless airstrikes that had pounded the enemy for much of the prior month. The city was hit hard from 20-25 Oct by airstrikes that destroyed a number of key Taliban and al-Qaeda targets, to include the Kabul military complex. In the first 15 days of November, 230 tons of bombs were dropped on the Afghani capital in more than 40 Air Force sorties flown by four types of aircraft.

Most Taliban and al-Qaeda soldiers who survived those strikes had fled in darkness the night before the Northern Alliance showed up at the door. Some were not fast enough. Mohammed Atef, a key deputy of Osama bin Laden who reportedly was second in command, was killed in a 16 Nov airstrike south of Kabul.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld justified the attacks against retreating troops in a 13 Nov Pentagon press brief. "They have been obviously offered an opportunity to surrender. And in the history of warfare, when

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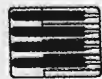


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things are not going well for an organization, that is often an opportune time to make progress," he said. "And I think that it is an important time, because they are not attacking, they are retreating. And they are not surrendering, they're not throwing down their weapons, they're moving their vehicles, and it is a perfectly legitimate and attractive target, and we intend to take every opportunity to do that."

Things were going from bad to worse for the Taliban. The A-team, on the other hand, drove to center of city and set-up shop about one-half mile from the abandoned U.S Embassy. There, they watched as the strict laws imposed by the Taliban were shed.

Within days, even hours, many Taliban-prohibited practices returned to the liberated city streets. Women and children danced among the rubble. "The Taliban is gone!" women yelled as they tossed once-required burqas behind them. Music played, and children laughed as once-banned kites took flight.

While watching these joyous celebrations, Markham found peace amid the pain of war. Not the peace that marks the end of conflict, but an inward peace stirred by the visible expressions of freedom.

"Kids were walking up to us, and in perfect English were thanking us for their freedom," he said. "It was overwhelming.

"You hear the stories of the old-timers going through France after D-Day in World War II ..." After a long pause, he resumed. "You know, not everybody in Afghanistan is bad — there was just a bad seed in there and we had to get rid of it. We gave them back their freedom. Hopefully, they can keep it, because it is the innocent people that suffer when it's lost."

Western media who entered Kabul watched as handfuls of Taliban soldiers who had stood their ground were led into the city streets — where the Geneva Convention does not apply — and executed by Northern Alliance soldiers. These new rulers of Kabul continued to engage in sporadic firefights, but the mission soon deteriorated into a police action to stop looting.

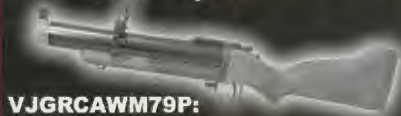
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Kabul had literally undergone a world of change in a matter of days.

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the sensual aroma of sweets rolling-out of the bakeries — another pleasure the Taliban had forbidden. The A-team was all-too-happy to set aside its diet of goat and rice, and enjoy the sweet tastes of victory and freedom.

In the two months that followed, as team members packed on the pounds they had shed, the Triple Nickel established the first gateway into Afghanistan. Bagram Air Base, the former Soviet site that had housed Taliban troops for years, was the first order of business. Markham put his air-traffic-control skills to use and opened the air base to U.S. aircraft. Within 48 hours, 1,000 American servicemen and women stood where there had been only 13.

The A-team on 30 Nov received permission to clear the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. It had closed in January 1989 during the instability that resulted from more than a decade of Soviet-Afghan fighting. Securing that building for future diplomatic use in a democratic Afghanistan was an "honor" Markham still holds dear.

The Taliban had vandalized the Embassy, but had only occupied the facility for about three days. ODA-555 was accompanied by other Special Forces teams, as well as explosives and chemical experts, when it cleared the building. As the team carefully cleared the structure room by room, it came upon two American flags.

"It looked like the Taliban had tried to set fire to them — in a marble bathroom with no vents. And they closed the door. So they apparently have not mastered fire," Markham said, shaking his head.

Air Force team members secured one flag and sent it back to Air Force Special Operations Command headquarters at Hurlburt Field, Fla. The airmen sent a note along, which Markham humbly summarized as saying: "Hey, good guys came here, we did some good things."

Special Forces soldiers took the other flag and handed it to State Department officials upon their arrival. Their message was a little different.

"You're here because of us. Don't ever forget that, and don't ever forget what [Special Operation Forces] can do."

The State Department officially reopened the U.S. Embassy in early December 2001.

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Nickel. Large numbers of Army and Marine Corps forces were filling the countryside. Operation Enduring Freedom would soon make the sometimes clumsy transition from unconventional to conventional warfare.

In second week of January, the Triple Nickel flew back to Uzbekistan — the place where this wild ride had started — and conducted a week of debriefs. The soldiers were then sent back to Fort Campbell, while Markham headed back to the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field.

Or as Markham put it, "They put us in mothballs. Packed us up and sent us home."

Markham has received a Silver Star that acknowledge his efforts, but that comes as somewhat of a surprise to many in the Special Operations community. People who join these elite teams quickly learn: If you're in it for the glory, you're in the wrong place.

In his 17 Dec 2002 remarks to the graduates of Combat Controller School Class 02-04, Air Force Secretary James Roche paid tribute to Markham's accomplishments.

"When Tech. Sgt. Calvin Markham joined the 'Triple Nickel' in Afghanistan, his years of committed professional development immediately delivered credibility and confidence," Roche told the crowd assembled at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. "And when circumstances on the ground became grave, his training enabled him and his team to overcome seemingly impossible obstacles — whether engineering car batteries to power communication equipment or putting iron on the enemy. Your continued success in these hostile and demanding environments are the true measuring stick of how we develop airmen."

Perhaps, then, it is appropriate that Markham is now a senior instructor at AFSOC's Special Tactics Advanced Skills Training school, where he is helping to build tomorrow's combat controllers.

Many of Markham's Triple Nickel teammates are now in undisclosed locations in and around Iraq, where they continue to fight on the front lines of the war on terrorism. Markham sends them care packages and keeps in contact.

"They're like my brothers now; my best friends. People I'll never forget," he said. "We just made good things happen, and we had the grace of God."

Lance M. Bacon, a former Marine with service during Desert Storm, is now Editor of Air Force Times. ✕

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Sound Off

BY COL. DAVID H. HACKWORTH, USA (RET.)

Trained To Die

Military staffers are busier than BX cashiers on payday, evaluating the lessons learned from the recent fire-works in Iraq. And that process is important. The stakes are too high not to get this long-term fight with terrorists dead right.

A case will soon be made for smart hardware and weapons to at least partially replace the current level of active-duty soldiers. While the right smart stuff is, of course, the way to go, if Cold War submarines and fighters such as the F-22 aren't culled from the weapons cache, it might well be "good-bye ground troopers" and the continuation of contracts for too many obsolete, gold-plated war toys. And it will be happy days for the war merchants, their always-available-at-the-right-price porker pals and the bean-counters, who are more into systems than warriors.

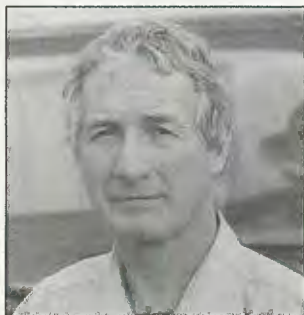
Hopefully, our system of checks and balances will kick-in, and Congress will ask if the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are correct models to use for drastic changes to our force structure before SecDef Donald Rumsfeld and his civilian slashers seriously weaken the time-tested force that defends our country.

Let's face it: Not only were both ragtag enemy armies incapable of really fighting back, vast money transfers also convinced many Afghani and Iraqi senior commanders to cut and run. And with Iraq, it wasn't just a 30-day bombing campaign that prepared the field. So many missions — more than half a million — were flown over that country in the decade before we pre-empted Saddam Hussein from doing whatever he planned to do with his infamous inventory of yet-to-be-found doomsday weapons, it was a surprise to some that there were any targets left to "Shock and Awe."

But, as always after major operations, there are scores of basic lessons that must not be ignored, no matter what surgery the Pentagon bureaucrats and dilettante reformers ultimately perform.

And one critically important lesson that has nagged at me for years is the inability of our Joes and Jills who bring up the rear to fight as infantry.

Since George Washington, all U.S. Army soldiers have always been trained first as riflemen. That skill has kept a lot of people in the rear with the gear alive and won a lot of fights, from our War of Independence to Korea — where then-Lt. Lloyd "Scooter" Burke led his unit's cooks in a counterattack that saved his company — to Vietnam — where



then-Lt. Col. Hank "The Gunfighter" Emerson dispatched his battalion's clerks and mechanics to save a company of besieged paratroopers.

In Iraq this time around, there were no neat front lines. The guerrilla enemy was everywhere — ambushing convoys and striking hard at our Army's soft underbelly. And many of these attacks proved the fallacy of one of the U.S. Army's frequently touted maxims: "We fight as we train."

Too large a number of Army rear-echelon folks failed the course when put to the test because they weren't trained to fight as grunts in Initial Training or when they joined their regular units. In many non-combat units today, this kind of live-or-die training gets brushed-off by leaders who say: Who needs this grunt stuff — we're ordnance, maintenance or transportation? Even during large training exercises, these vital survival skills are too often given only lip service.

No question the 507th Maintenance Company could've used the "more sweat on the training field, less blood on the battlefield" infantry training on that shameful day when its nine-vehicle convoy of ordnance troops took a wrong turn and bumped into a small enemy force in two pick-up trucks. Gun for gun, the 507th outnumbered the Fedayeen but still got clobbered to the tune of nine dead and five prisoners of war. Few 507th soldiers fired back because their weapons were clogged with dust. Hello? A soldier's weapon on a battlefield clogged with dust?! And those who weren't killed or captured straightaway ran like scared jack rabbits — led, sadly, by their fleet-footed captain.

Congress is presently investigating this sorry display of cowardice and incompetence. Let's hope it has the smarts to conclude that the Army must return to the standard where every soldier truly is a rifleman first.

The Marines still follow this rule, and when their support units in Iraq bumped into stay-behind fanatics, they did what Marines have been doing well since 1775: killed the suckers and moved on.

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

Sign in for the free weekly *Defending America* column at his Web site. Send mail to P.O. Box 11179, Greenwich, CT 06831. His newest book is *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*.

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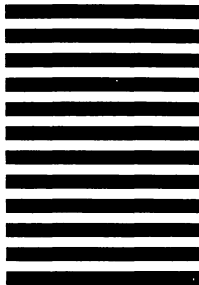
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