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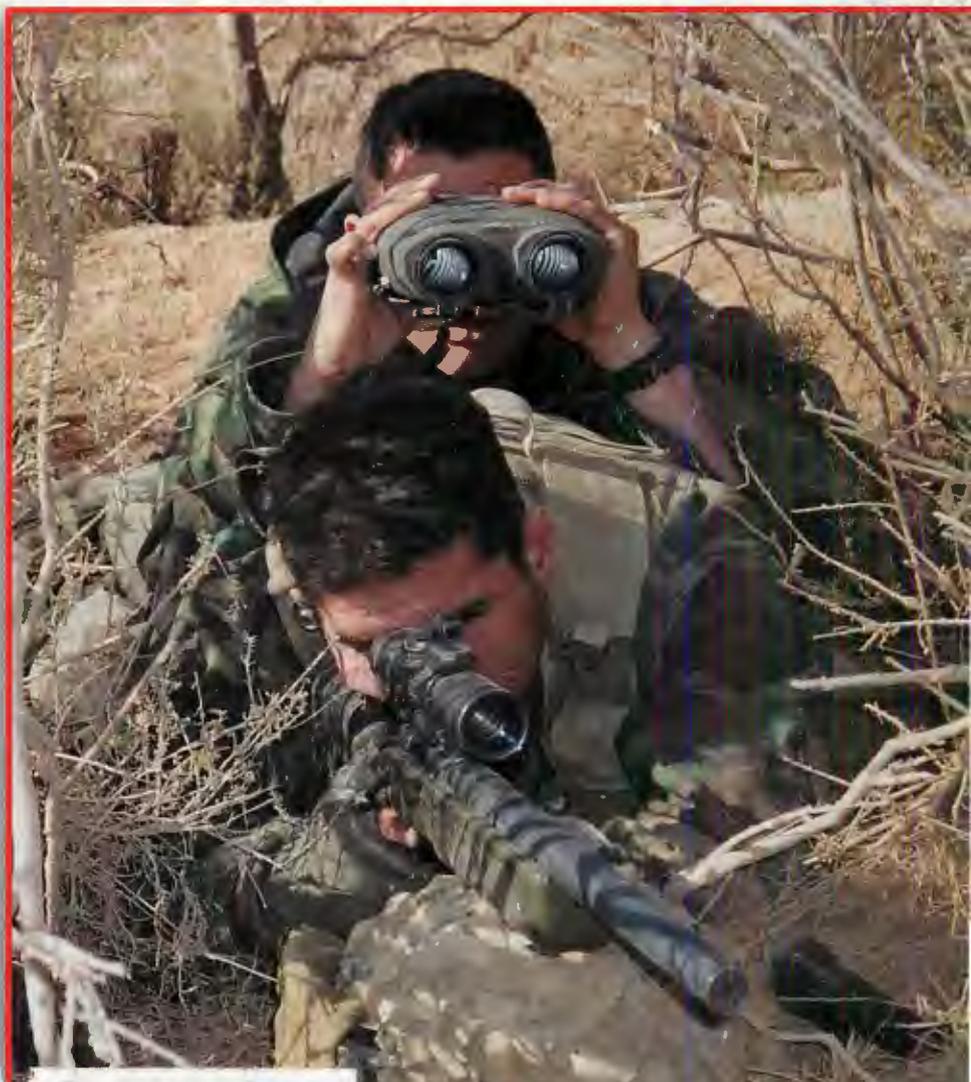
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AMERICA AT WAR

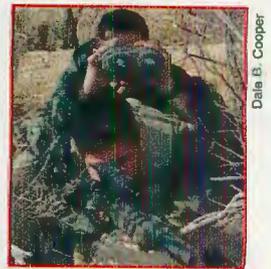
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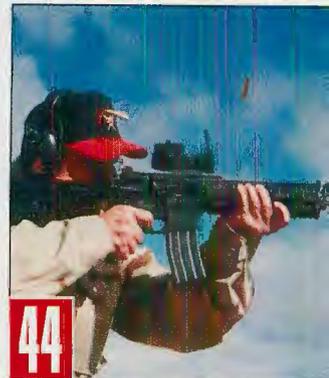
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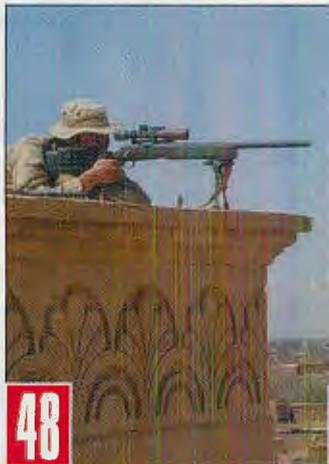
Dale B. Cooper

On the Cover

In Iraq, Sergeant Dagan Vanoosten aims his M40A3 Sniper Rifle, with special 10-power Unertl scope, while Corporal Michael Gary spots with Leica Vector binos. Both Marines are with the 1/5. See story, page 48.



Gary Paul Johnston



USMC photo by Sgt. Kevin Reed



Paul Avallone

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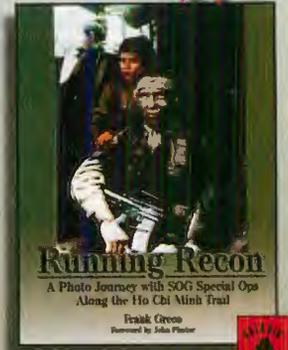
Running Recon

A Photo Journey with SOG Special Ops Along the Ho Chi Minh Trail

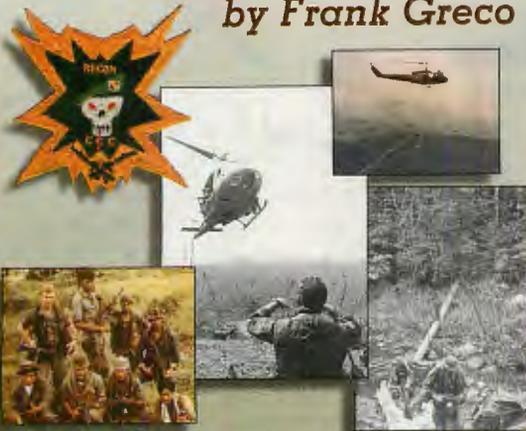
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by Frank Greco

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Foreword by John Plaster

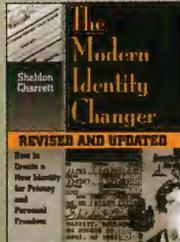


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by A.G. Hawke

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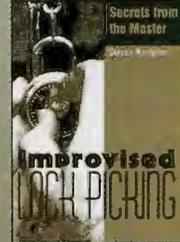
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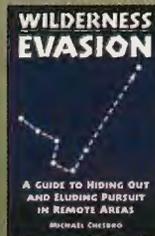
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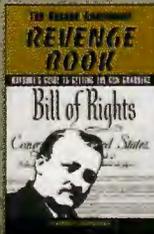


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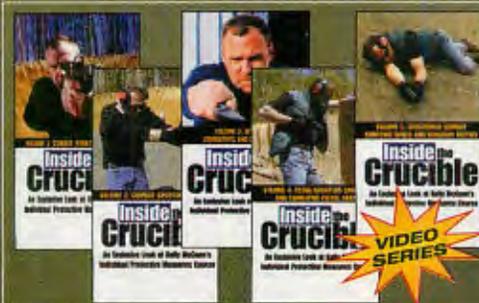
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

BY PAUL AVALLONE

Wasting Money In Afghanistan?

"What good is America doing here?" I'd often ask myself during my Special Forces A-Team's recent extended deployment in Afghanistan. My team's mission was uncomplicated: to prevent the Taliban and al-Qaeda from re-establishing themselves in the country. It was America's overall goals and



the possibility of achieving them that I questioned. Just how willing should we American taxpayers be to spend countless billions of our dollars on a changeless, hopeless country that we never gave much of a hoot about before 9-11?

There is no question that we had the right and imperative to attack Afghanistan in October 2001 when the Taliban leadership refused to turn over Osama and his buddies. Lickety-split, we occupied the country, with remnants of the defeated terrorists finding safe haven in Pakistan.

The thrashing was two years ago, and we still have 8,000-plus troops in Afghanistan (and 2,000 more in support in Uzbekistan) at an occupation cost of nearly a billion dollars a month. Nation-building, we are told, is the justification, thus creating a stable, free society in which terrorists would not be welcomed or sponsored.

First, it might be just a bit presumptuous

of us to believe that we can build a nation where, instead of there being a tight weave of a united populace, there has always been a loose scattering of feudal warlord-ruled tribes whom we clump together as a country more for geography and culture than for nationalism.

Second, it might be even more presumptuous of us to assume that we can make democratic freedom flower where for two thousand years the people have never shown an inclination themselves to plow that ground and sow those seeds.

It makes me wonder if the academic and bureaucratic hacks who sold our political and military leaders on this pipe-dream concept of nation-building and freedom-farming weren't packing their pipes with hallucinogenic Afghan hashish. What they've left out of the equation is the concept's fatal flaw: the Afghan culture itself.

I cannot imagine how we can build a nation in a culture of disparate tribes who disdain one another and unite only to expel pesky invaders, like the British and Russians. American troops and money (millions in bribes to the war-

Continued on page 81

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (USPS 525-810, ISSN 0145-6784), March 2004, Volume 29, Number 3, is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Inc., 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340. Periodicals Postage is paid at Boulder, CO and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, POB 348, Mt Morris, IL 61054-0348 or call 1-800-877-5207. U.S. and APO-FPO subscription rate for twelve monthly issues \$29.95. Canada add \$15.00/yr. additional postage (includes GST tax registration business number: 12847 6249 RT). All other countries add \$40.00 U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single Issue Price — U.S.: \$4.99; United Kingdom: £2.60; Canada: \$6.99. PRINTED IN THE USA.

CONTRIBUTORS: Manuscripts, photographs or drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to Articles Editor, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, 5735 Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340, and cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Any material accepted is subject to such revision as is necessary to meet the editorial requirements of SOF. All digital manuscripts must be submitted in Microsoft Word. All photographs must be credited and be accurately identified. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication. Editorial office phone number is 303-449-3750 ext. 309.

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Hmmmm ...

It is time to take a serious look at our involvement there. Every day there are news reports about more deaths. Every night on the TV are photos of death and destruction. I found this post on the TXN message board and had to pass it on.

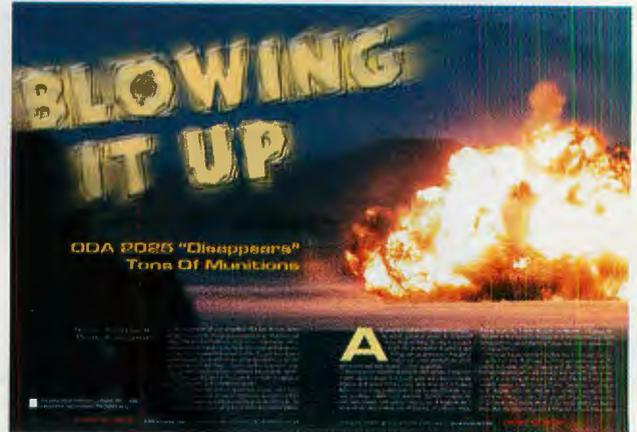
The land is too large to secure all of it. The enemy can roam anywhere, and we can't possibly police the whole place. We had to take it by force, but it causes us nothing but trouble. Their government is unstable, and in the process of changing. Refugees are fleeing by the thousands, driven from their homes. It will cost billions to rebuild, which we can't afford. We can't even secure the borders. Why are we still there? And to repeat. Every day we hear of more Americans killed in this dangerous land. Why in the hell are we still there? It is clear! We must abandon California.

Wayne Anthony Ross

Batman? Not Even Super Man?

The style of writing is a concern. Sometimes an article seems like a Batman comic. In the December SOF in the article about the SF in Iraq being surrounded, it stated that they put a CD in the CD-player and were listening to music when they were retreating. (POW. ZAP. Holy Humvee, Batman.) Is that true? The article seemed to degenerate into a comic book. I will try to finish reading the article. The pictures are great.

Hell yes, it was true. But first of all, it was not a retreat — it was a fighting withdrawal. Since they fought their way into this dead-end ambush and had to go back through the kill zone now virtually shoulder-to-shoulder with enemy combatants, there sure was no OpSec reason for stealth. Although, personally, I'd have preferred Wagner or some good Scottish pipes ... Finish the story, you'll be glad you did.



EOD

It was great to see an article that featured the work of EOD with the SF ("Blowing it up," January 2004), thanks! One small point though, EOD stands for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (as in EOD technician), not Explosive Ordnance Detachments. Army EOD units were reorganized into companies (of around 20 personnel) during the mid-90s. Some folks still remember the old detachment days, hence the confusion. Keep up the great work, and I'd love to see an article focusing on EOD techs in Iraq handling the massive amount of IED's and UXO being encountered.

Sincerely,
SGT C. Curtis
221st ORD CO (EOD)
FLARNG

Since I did not edit that story, I get to respond. I wrote a book many years back that had the term "Explosive Ordnance Disposal" in the introduction, and a bimbo editor "corrected" that to "explosive ordinance demolition." Damn, I hate editors, and I are one.

A Thousand [And One] Times, NO!

I was curious about a promotional offer I heard about. Was there ever a bounty offered for a piece of the N. Korean flag visible from Camp Bonifus, South Korea? I heard this from a friend and was hoping you could shed some light on the subject. Other than that keep putting out the quality mag. Thanks for reading this,

Sincerely,
Spc. Kevin Martin.

We have to write this every few months, but NO: There never has been, never will be. We're crazy, not stupid.

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Yup, They're Out There ...

Subject: Email from SOFMAG.com
From: haywoodjablowmee@yahoo.com
Date: Tue, December 9, 2003 12:00 am

you guys are f**king wannabies. You cater to all the f**king wannabe, white-trash, militia hillbillies who give the military a bad name. this is bullshit.

More Than One Way To Serve

My brother is serving in the 3/327 Infantry of the 101st ABN DIV. and he was the fifty cal. gunner that took out Uday and Qusay in Mosul, Iraq. What is funny is that at the time he was connected to 2nd Brigade, which was my old unit. I served in 2/502 Infantry from 95-97. Anyway I now have a degree in theology and am planning to move over to the middle east with my wife in the next couple of years to do humanitarian work and my little brother just reenlisted while in Iraq. He is wanting to help my wife and I out in helping the war-torn people of the middle east and I thought that this may be a story idea you might want. I love the work you all are doing.

Sincerely,
Parrish McDaris

Go for it: We usually win the war, winning the Peace will take a whole new cadre of men like yourself.

Remember, It's Their Soapbox, too ...

For the most part, you guys are doin' a good job! I was in a coffee shop in Illinois few days ago and overheard what I presumed to be a quite "Liberal" conversation about how "bad" guns are and how *Soldier of Fortune* is for a bunch of loonies! Please watch your backs! The Bleeding Hearts and anti-Americans are after us and you! Take care and God Bless!

US Army Nat'l Guard Sergeant

Sarge, if everybody loved us, we probably wouldn't be doing our job.

SOF: The Seminal Source

I'm a former USAF Security Forces troop & upon my graduation from UNC-Wilmington, I'll be enlisting in the Army with the intention of earning a place in SE. I look to your magazine for the most current intel on world events affecting our troops, and soon, myself. I'm a Criminal Justice/ Psychology Major and frequently use SOF as a source of information for papers on world events that relate to topics we study. Love the up-to-date coverage (SOF has the most in-depth and up-to-date coverage of all media resources) on Op Iraqi Freedom. Always great to hear from the "boots on the ground." Love the articles on SpecOps forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Terrorism SitRep is outstanding and remarkably informative. I'd love to see even more info in the SitRep. Col. Hackworth is always great as are Col. Brown's

comments. Keep up the good work and thank you all for your service and diligence.

Sincerely,
M. Jordan Phillips

Pirates, Provocation and Privateering

I am interested to know what the law surrounding piracy is in relation to reactions against it. Specifically in the waters around the Far East. Do any of the Asian governments authorize private individuals to take pro-active action against the pirates in the area? Any information or direction would be of help.

Yours faithfully
Mark Anderson

As a sweeping generality, in international waters, a vessel has the right of self-defense. In territorial waters, the laws of the nation apply, and they vary quite a bit. Also, the flag of the vessel can also claim jurisdiction, as can often the last port from which the vessel sailed. Maritime law can get quite complicated, but if you're referring to pirate-baiting for fun or profit you'd better consult a good lawyer before you take any plans from the tavern to the open sea.

Ghost Of Liberations Past

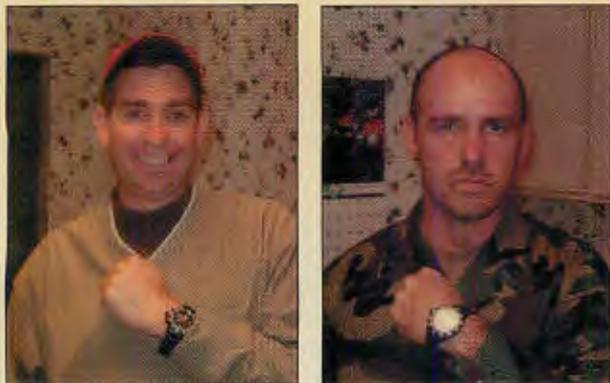
I read Ralph Johnson's article, "The Ghost That Refuses To Die" and agree that trying to enlist the loyalty of the Iraqi people to the concept of fighting for a Democracy, is the number one barrier we face. I clearly see the parallels between Vietnam and our current situation, not from the standpoint of an intelligence officer, but quite simply as a Vietnam Vet, that on more than one occasion was the recipient of the treachery my guerrilla was capable of. During the Vietnamization Program we had Viet Cong deeply imbedded within our field units, when we did missions that required us to take South Vietnam troops and "Kit Carson Scouts" with us, in order to teach them to take on a more aggressive roll in fighting their damned war. Our first indication of an ambush, was the VC wind sprinting to safety just before the mortar shell fins whipped the air. How to determine friendlies from "dinks" became more difficult as time went on, until we didn't trust any of them and would 'hose' 'em at the first sign of the trap they had led us into. If and when this question has an answer in Iraq, is the time we can see the path to progress. Until then it's kick, punch and shoot!

Jim

You are right: "Middle-Eastern Democracy" is the great oxymoron of our time, and the theocratic dictatorships of the area have a vested interest in seeing that the idea of democracy does not take root (lip service to democracy, when it helps business, notwithstanding).

SOF solicits your letters by e-mail: editor@somag.com ; snail-mail: 5735 E. Arapahoe, Unit 5A, Boulder, CO 80303; or Fax: 303-444-5617. Lashes, laurels, comments, helpful information, questions are welcome. We may edit for space or clarity, and if two letters cover the same subject, the most concise one has the edge for publication. Visit our web site: www.somag.com . ✉

BULLETIN BOARD



Why is First Sergeant Anthony Broadhead (left) smiling? When an Iraqi mortar fragment smashed into his wrist as he was scrambling to close the hatch on his Abrams near Objective Floyd (see "Chariots of Firepower," page 38), the tough-as-nails stainless-steel case of the Chase-Durer saved his hand, but gave up its life in the process. Although Chase-Durer doesn't market its fine watches as "bulletproof," they were pleased to replace the one that saved Broadhead's hand, as a token of thanks for his job well done. And Staff Sgt. Dillard Johnson? They sent him one as well, because as you will read in his continuing story, the way he enjoys getting shot at, he needs one to wear over his heart. Attaboy: Broadhead, Johnson ... and Chase-Durer.

Anti-Terror Conference

First International Anti-Terror Conference: *Dimensions of International Terrorism Now Confronting America*, 9-11; March 2004, Sheraton Denver West Hotel & Conference Center, Lakewood, Colorado. Archangel Corp., a non-profit NGO specializing in anti-terrorism consulting and government and law enforcement training, is sponsoring this conference in an effort at both sharing information with, and learning from the experiences of, those countries that have fought the war on terrorism for decades. This conference will provide unprecedented access to information from officials and officers from such nations as Israel, the United Kingdom, and Russia, as well as top-level speakers from the U.S. Military, federal government agencies, and federal law enforcement. Speakers include individuals from the following agencies and expertise areas: Department of Homeland Security; Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Army and U.S. Army Special Forces; Russian Special Forces; British SAS; senior Israeli officials; and many others. Topics will include the psychology of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and responses in Israel, Russia, and Great Britain, chemical/biological terrorism, cyber-terrorism, maritime counterterrorism, Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, domestic terrorism, premises-and-event security,

homeland security, and more. This conference is exclusively for government, military, and law-enforcement personnel. Private security professionals may be considered on a case-by-case basis with appropriate references. For information call 1-877-ANTI-TER or visit www.anti-terror-consultants.com.

Hepatitis C: Presumed Service Connection

The newly created specialty rating team in Cleveland, Ohio, known as the "Tiger Team" has awarded a Vietnam veteran a service-connected disability for Hepatitis C. The decision was as a result of the "jet injectors" used for inoculations of most service members during the Vietnam Era and after. Vietnam-Era vets have been the fastest-growing number of Hepatitis C patients — the mystery has always been why, as most of these veterans belong to no "high risk" group such as homosexuals or IV drug users. A research project headed by Lawrence Deyton, MSPH, MD, the Director of Aids/Hepatitis at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, in Washington, D.C., said in part, "Anyone who had inoculations with the jet-injector is at risk of having Hepatitis C and should be tested." The jet injector system has long been suspected of transmitting blood-borne pathogens. One problem is that the incubation period for Hepatitis C can be decades-long and symptoms may be nonexistent up until the time that the veteran becomes very ill. Spread the word and get tested. You can be tested at any VA facility.



There's more Good-Lookin' Gal and Good Music in the one album pictured here than you would find in a deuce-and-a-half full of discarded Dixie Clucker CDs, so since everybody forgot you at Christmas, go out and get yerself one. Good songs, and good singing — you've never heard *The Ballad of the Green Beret* sung like she does it. Every time I look at her picture, it's made me proud to be an American — now I know why.

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Dear Friend,

My name is Jason Marks. I don't want to offend anybody, but **this is the cold hard truth:**

When "Self-Defense" becomes "Do or Die," you need to know **How to Kill** instantly, without breaking a sweat. Would you like to have those skills, so ingrained, that they switch on automatically when you need them most?

If so, **this is going to be the most important thing you ever read.** Here's why:

About 2 years ago, some young punks shoved me against a wall and put a knife to my throat. I thought I was prepared for it but I wasn't. I always imagined I'd be able to handle myself in this situation, but in fact...I **Completely Froze!**

Luckily for me a cop car pulled up and the punks ran away, because I'm convinced that a **Couple of Seconds Later and I would've been Choking to Death on My Own Blood!**

You see, when the Grim Reaper appears, he doesn't give a damn about your rank or how good your form is. He's there for one reason only: **to kill you!**

At that point, you'll be operating entirely on the Lizard Brain, the most primitive "Fight or Flight" part of your brain.

You won't have time to "think about it," or do fancy movements that look great in tournaments and movies. You'll automatically do one of two things:

1. **Unleash a rapid-fire barrage of nerve exploding, heart-stopping strikes, or...**
2. **Get carried off on a stretcher...or worse, in a Body Bag!**

I hope you never have to feel your veins turn to ice and your stomach sink as you know, *right then and there*, that you're about to be beaten bloody, raped or killed. But let's face it: in today's world - *it could happen at any time!*

Listen. There are lots of great guys selling videos in the magazines that have some really good stuff to offer, but this is the **only** video that gets to the bottom line and shows you **How!**

The Karate schools aren't teaching this - they have rules, formalities and safety procedures they must observe to keep the soccer moms happy.

The scumbags and criminals on the street have **never** stepped into a dojo - but they **BRUTALIZE, RAPE and KILL every day!**

One Violent Crime every 5 Seconds
- Bureau of Justice Statistics

How do you deal with someone who can do that - and has lots of experience doing it? **HERE'S HOW: you learn what they know - How to Brutally Destroy, Maim or Kill without Hesitation or Doubt. It's that simple.**

When some prison hardcase chooses you as his next piece of meat, if you can't do what he can do - you're dead! Here's the good news...

Andrew Scott teaches Law Enforcement, Military and Corporate personnel these techniques and charges thousands of bucks for it.

It can't be learned from a book, **you must see it in action**, so I *talked him into letting me put it all on a video - that you can watch in a single evening!*

RIGHT NOW is your chance to get these Deadly Techniques and **Make Them Your Own** for only \$47 bucks!

After you absorb this new video, I'm sure you'll

agree with me - **it'll be the most valuable training video you'll ever own! Period! And I can Prove it to you!** Why would I say such a thing? Because you'll learn:

1. **How to fire death blows before he knows what hit him.**
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6. **What your Dojo isn't teaching, could get you killed!**

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- Mark Underwood, Dallas, TX

And the most important thing is: **It doesn't matter how old, slow, skinny or clumsy you are, or even how much you weigh! Even a skinny nerd can drop a bloodthirsty thug like a sack of potatoes with these techniques!**

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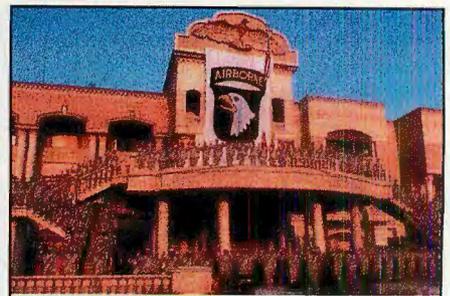
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U.S. Army, courtesy Rob Krott

Our Eagle screams louder than your eagle, Saddam: Troops of the 101st Airborne's Screaming Eagles re-enlist on the steps of one of the Palaces in Baghdad last Fourth of July.

For The Troops At Walter Reed

The American Red Cross at Walter Reed is looking for incidentals/comfort items for sick and wounded troops now recuperating at the hospital. When someone stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere is wounded or falls ill, they're immediately evacuated and eventually end up stateside. It takes weeks for their personal effects to catch up with them.

Things that the Red Cross is asking for are: telephone cards of at least 30 minutes rolling luggage (small), totes, carry-ons, individually wrapped snacks, magazines, notepads, pens, playing cards and games, sweat pants and shirts (all sizes).

All items should be addressed to:

ATTN: Barbara Green,
Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20307-5001

Checks should be made out to the American Red Cross.

For more information, call (202) 782-2080 or e-mail: Barbara.Green.1@AMEDD.army.mil

National World War II Reunion

Sponsored by the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and the Battle Monuments Commission, a four-day mass reunion of WW II Vets will take place on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to coincide with the dedication of the National World War II Memorial. The free four-day event will take place from Thursday 27 May through Sunday 30 May. If you are from the WW II generation, this could be a landmark event. There will be a lot going on. For further

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Smuggling Coal To Newcastle

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at El Paso have seized 81 rolls (756 pounds) of Mexican bologna at the Paso Del Norte bridge, from a pickup driven by a Mexican national entering the United States.

Children were sitting on top of the illegal load before it was discovered, and the rear seat had been removed from the extended-cab pickup and the bologna put in its place.

Customs officials said the bologna goes for about \$1 a roll in Juarez, but when sold to a customer in the United States, it can go for between \$5 and \$10 a roll. *But even so, smuggling bologna into Texas??*

A Pox Upon You

Claimed by the United Nations (WHO) as eradicated in 1980, smallpox historically has killed about a third of its victims and is readily transmitted from person to person, unlike other biological weapons, such as anthrax. Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda have expressed a clear interest in smallpox as a weapon.

In the summer of 2000, eight children were hospitalized with a mild

form of smallpox in Vladivostok, Russia, after playing with discarded vaccine vials they found in a Vladivostok garbage bin. If this makes you think the Russians are sloppy, consider that they also have stockpiles of the live smallpox virus.

There is a belief in Japan and elsewhere that Russia gave Iraq and North Korea weaponized smallpox. Besides the U.S. and Russia, France has some live smallpox virus, probably defensive in purpose.

According to *Japan Today*, Police and the Tokyo metropolitan government have developed a special kit to diagnose smallpox cases in the shortest possible time, on the assumption that Japan may face bioterrorism. Members of the al Qaeda international terrorist network warned recently they will attack Tokyo if Japan sends troops to Iraq. Two Japanese diplomats were killed there on 29 November, in an apparent terrorist attack. ✕



Crew members participate in a flag-unfurling rehearsal with the help of family and friends on U.S.S. Nimitz flight deck during a Tiger Cruise, 3 Nov 2003.

courtesy New Zealand Herald
EMMERSON
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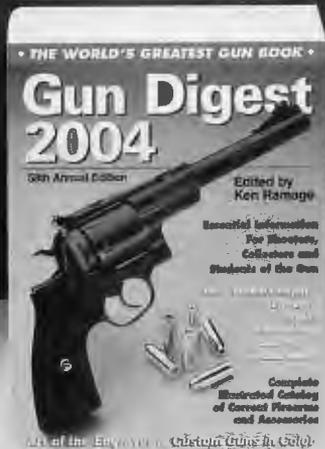
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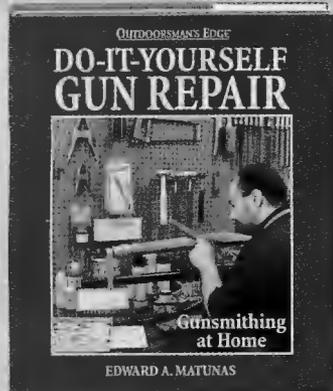
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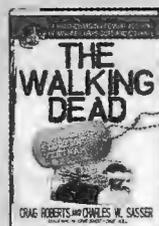
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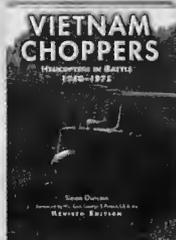
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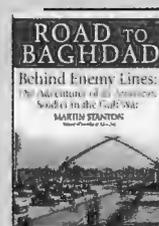
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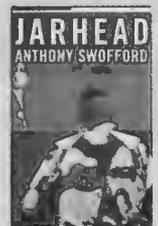
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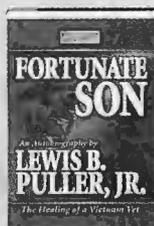
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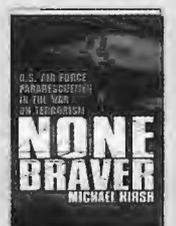
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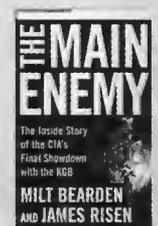
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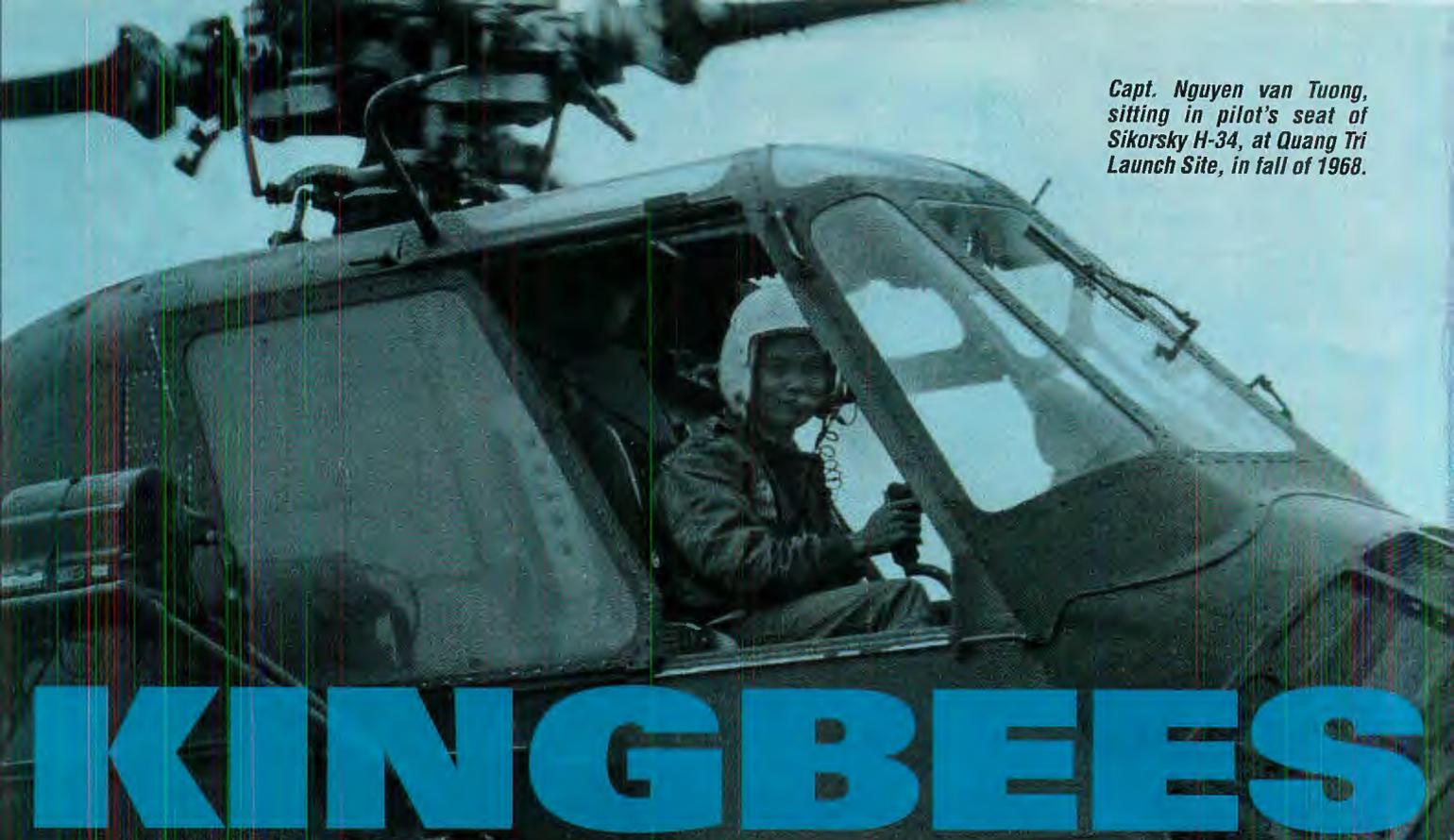
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Capt. Nguyen van Tuong,
sitting in pilot's seat of
Sikorsky H-34, at Quang Tri
Launch Site, in fall of 1968.

KINGBEEES

Honored In Las Vegas

*Vietnamese Heroes Saluted By
Former American SpecOps Veterans*

BY JOHN STRYKER MEYER

ON a clear fall afternoon in Fargo, N.D., an executive jet landed to pick up three passengers: Retired Vietnamese Col. Thinh Dinh, his wife, Le, and his eldest son, James Q. Dinh. The jet whisked Col. Thinh and his family to Las Vegas for the 27th reunion of the Special Operations Association — a group formed by ex-Green Berets who fought in America's secret war during the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1972.

In addition to the Green Berets, the Special Operations Association today includes Navy SEALs, Force Reconnaissance Marines, and the many air units which provided critical air support to the men running missions across the fence during that deadly war fought in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam under the aegis of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam — Studies and Observation Group, or SOG. Among the many combat air support units were helicopters from the Air Force's 20th Special Operations Squadron, the Marine's Scarface and Eagle Claw, the 101st Airborne Division, the Americal Division, Air Force forward air-controllers, Air Force A1-E

Skyraiders and the South Vietnamese Air Force's 219th Special Operations Squadron — code named "Kingbees."

During the Association's formal dinner in the Plaza Hotel on 27 Sept., Col. Thinh and eight former Kingbee pilots were saluted by more than 500 Special Operations Association members, and their relatives and friends, for their courage and flying skills during the secret war which was fought under a tight veil of secrecy, hidden from the public and most military personnel stationed in South Vietnam during that period of time.

Special Forces personnel who fought in the secret war suffered more than 100% combat casualties. The operations consisted mostly of six-to-eight-man reconnaissance teams led by Green Berets working with indigenous personnel running top-secret missions in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam without any conventional ground support or artillery.

For the men who ran the missions *across the fence* [see "One Day In The A Shau Valley," Feb 04; SOF] there was no element more critical to their survival than the helicopters

that inserted the teams deep into enemy territory to conduct missions which ran the gauntlet from wiretaps to general reconnaissance missions.

From the beginning of SOG in 1964, Kingbee pilots flew the older, one-door Sikorsky H-34s, which were powered by a nine-cylinder Wright Aeronautical Corporation "Cyclone" R-1820 engine used in the legendary B-17s of WW II fame.

Unknown to the Green Berets at that time, the Kingbee pilots were drawn from the cream of South Vietnamese men. Most were college-educated, in good physical condition and fearless pilots. Similar to American helicopter pilots, the South Vietnamese were trained at U.S. military flight schools. The best of those pilots were selected for the elite, top-secret 219th Special Operations Squadron. As the secret war grew in size, the 219th spread its wings along with the expanded operations. By January 1968, there were six Forward Operating Bases in South Vietnam, all supported by Kingbees. All piloted the H-34. Although they were slower than the "Huey" choppers, the SOG teams preferred extraction by the old war bird because it could take more hits from enemy ground-fire. Once the recon-team members entered the helicopter, they ran to the nearest window to lay down as much fire power against the North Vietnamese Army troops as possible during those crucial, adrenalin-pumping moments of extraction from a hot target.



Col. Think Q. Dinh, a true hero to whom many Americans owe their lives.

Meet The "Kingbees" — And Their Legacy Of Heroism

My first operational introduction to the Kingbees was in the summer of 1968. I was the radio operator on a recon team, code named Spike Team Idaho, out of FOB 1, in Phu Bai. I was on the lead chopper with our Team Leader, Robert J. "Spider" Parks, when it suddenly cut the power and began to autorotate into the landing zone, spiraling downward toward the LZ at a dizzying rate of descent. At the last moment, the pilot flared the chopper and gently touched down on the ground, not far from the A Shau Valley. It was a perfect, albeit terrifying, infiltration into the target. What I didn't realize at the time was that most Kingbee pilots had been flying secret missions "across the fence" for longer than four years.

"The men of the 219th and their venerable old Sikorsky H 34s were perfect for the top-secret missions," said Lt. Col. Bill Shelton (Ret.), the last commanding officer of FOB 1 who worked with the various air crews who supported SOG missions for several years. "Most of the pilots had more hours flying in these aircraft than many young USAF pilots had total flying time. The aircraft had long since lost much of their avionics. And replacement parts were hard to come by. So, the pilots did what pilots have done for many years. They flew visual and by terrain recognition, or by dead-reckoning and the seat of their pants. Most of the time it worked ... At FOB 1, we relied on them heavily."



(from left) Kingbee pilot Lt. Trong Q. Tran, an unidentified crew chief member, Capt. Nguyen van Tuong, John Stryker Meyer, then the team leader, or One-Zero, of Spike Team Idaho, at Quang Tri Launch Site, fall, 1968. Note the camouflage paint on the side with white paint on bottom of H-34 Kingbee.



Capt. Nguyen van Tuong, (standing, center) with other Kingbee pilots and crew chiefs for H-34s which were a part of the Vietnamese Air Force's Special Operations Squadron that flew top-secret missions into Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. This photo was taken in Quang Tri during the fall of 1968.



Kingbee pilots honored at the Special Operations Association 27th Annual Reunion at the Plaza Hotel. (standing, from left) Capt. Trong Q. Tran, Major Thu X. Huynh, Capt. Tuat Nguyen, Maj. Sam N. Pham, Maj. Khiet M. Phan, Capt. Khai V. Duong, Capt. Hoan. H. Nguyen, Maj. An Q. Nguven, and Col. Think Q. Dinh. Standing on the dais in front of the Special Operations Association banner is SOA President James Hetrick, speaking into the microphone. To the far left, background, is Nguyen Cong Hiep, interpreter for ST Idaho. Maj. Nguyen van Tuong could not attend the reunion because of job requirements.

On 7 Oct 1968, ST Idaho had been engaged in a fire-fight with NVA troops for several hours. When the sun set we were all low on ammo and hand grenades, when then-Capt. Think Q. Dinh entered into a hover a short distance from our team in elephant grass that was 6-to-12-feet tall. It took our team 10 minutes to reach the hovering chopper and to get the men aboard it. As Think lifted the H-34 away from the LZ the dark jungle sparkled with muzzle flashes from enemy weapons firing at us. When we landed at FOB 1, I invited Think into our club so I could buy him a drink to celebrate surviving the NVA hell in Laos. But he declined, saying he had to return home to his wife and children. Later, we learned his H-34 had 48 holes in it from enemy rounds.

Two months earlier, Think pulled ST Louisiana out of an A Shau Valley target after it had been overrun by NVA soldiers. The team leader had called in an airstrike on his team from an A1-E Skyraider to break the NVA attack. The gun-run broke the attack, but it killed one indigenous team member,

peppered the team leader with shrapnel while severing radio operator Tom Cunningham's right leg. The medic, John Walton, led the team to an LZ, where Think pulled out the team while under extremely heavy gunfire. (Again, see last month's "One Day In The A Shau Valley.")

Further Heroics

On Christmas Day, 1968, our team was on a small hilltop, surrounded by NVA troops who torched the vegetation around the hill and were attempting to burn us off the hilltop. At the last moment, as our entire team was choking on smoke and ashes, then-Capt. Nguyen van Tuong piloted his H-34 down a steep mountainside to our LZ. His rotorwash pushed back the flames until our team boarded the chopper. As he lifted-off, flames consumed the area we had vacated.

In June 1968, then-Staff Sgt. Pat Watkins was the team leader of Team Lion, a recon team based at FOB 3 in Khe Sanh. It was in a target named O-8 — one of the worst tar-

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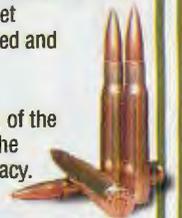
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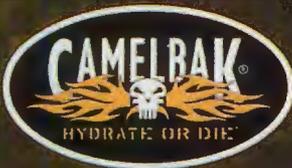
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gets in SOG history because two major highways intersected in the area west of Khe Sahn and north of the A Shau Valley. Watkins' team was in O-8 because it was the base of operations for the NVA's 559th Transport Group which oversaw security on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and it was a major supply depot on the trail. Watkins team had been engaged with the NVA for several hours, when light began to fade as the sun set. With his team running low on ammo, two Marine gun-ships from Scarface and Eagleclaw roared over the team, hammering the NVA on its perimeter with 2.75 mm rockets and mini-guns.

Watkins team was in a bomb crater. He detonated the claymores around the bomb crater just as the Kingbee piloted by Maj. Nguyen quy An swooped down and hovered in the bomb crater.

"I'll never forget it," Watkins said in a recent interview with SOF. That Kingbee "was the best sight in the world." As it hovered, "I could see it was taking small-arms hits. But it just hovered over us. I looked up to see Capt. An, one of the best of the best, was flying the copter with no co-pilot and just a door-gunner who was shooting-up the place with his old 1919 A-6 machine gun."

Watkins' team returned to FOB 3 with no major casualties. "It was a miracle that we got out of there ... It was just another day in the life of a Kingbee pilot. You ask any SOG



Capt. Nguyen van Tuong, piloting an H-34 Kingbee from secret FOB 1 base in Phu Bai, South Vietnam to Quang Tri Launch Site.

recon man and they'll tell you that they loved the Kingbees.

"Hell, when I was on the ground, I had American units refuse to pull us out. But, the Kingbees *always* came for us."

Bill Shelton said, "There are so many stories of daring-do on the part of the Kingbees. There are legends among their pilots, "Mustachio," "Cowboy," Captain Tuong, Major An, Colonel Think, to name only a few. I can tell you that when a team [was] on the ground, the sweetest sound they heard on the radio was when a Kingbee pilot would say, 'Kingbee go down now,' as the pilot spiraled-down to the team under a hail of fire. Some Kingbees didn't make it back."

Today, there are former SOG Green Berets and indigenous team members who are alive only through the heroics and flying skills of Kingbee pilots. I'm one of those fortunate men. Others include Pat Watkins, John Walton,

Tom Cunningham, and John Plaster, to name only several. But, few of us realized at the time that while our tours of duty in SOG were generally for one year — the Kingbee pilots flew the deadly missions across the fence for *eight years* — if they survived.

Additionally, because we were participants in a secret war, few took notes, fewer took photographs of those days

Continued on page 72

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Best part: You can see it all for FREE.

By Bob Pierce, President, TRS Advanced Systems

Dear Friend,

I have something here for you... that no-holds-barred fighters worldwide have been begging to see for years.

This is the **FIRST** time this stuff has ever been shown to civilians like this. Until we convinced this feared ex-con to reveal everything, the *only* way fighters could get ahold of the details... *was to be invited to learn them.*

Well, this is *your* special invitation. It is good for exactly 11 days from today, so you can't screw around and wait. Still, I've arranged it so that you can see everything...

For Free, If You Choose.

I'll explain in a second.

First, let me tell you WHY you desperately need to listen to this brutal ex-con.

Here's the story: No-holds-barred fighters all agree on *one thing* — there's only one "real" cage on this planet where "real" no-holds-barred fighting occurs.

And that cage is *prison.*

In every joint in the country, there are rooms where the guards never go... where there are no cameras... and where the convicts sneak into... to establish who lives, and who dies behind bars.

Just being a convict *doesn't* give you any special fighting powers. A lot of guys come out so battered and beaten, they're ghosts. Empty, hollow victims.

But then there are the few guys who take the opportunity... and hone their fighting skills to such lethal levels... that, on the "outside", soldiers and cops and streetfighters BEG to learn their secrets.

James Painter doesn't look like one of the most feared fighters in the world. No. He's overweight and let's just say he's NOT in great shape.

So, when he tells you that you do NOT need strength... or special agility... or even lots of sweaty practice to "get" this system down... you can believe him. He doesn't practice. And few of the guys he's taught practice.

They just kick serious ass. No holds barred.

James did 37 months in the federal prison system for possession of a sawed-off shotgun. He's not a rapist, not a burglar, not a very nasty guy at all. He just lived in a bad part of town... and owning a "shunt gun" seemed like a good

idea. Until he got caught.

James knew a little bit about fighting when he arrived at his cell block. Had a couple of black belts and even some streetfighting credibility.

Which, he quickly discovered, did him absolutely NO GOOD AT ALL inside those cramped prison walls. This shocked and dismayed him — and because he was "targeted" early by some lifers (who had nothing to lose by killing him), he had just one choice: *Find a way to fight that worked in tight spaces, against multiple attackers.*

Prison ain't funny. Guys on the outside joke about "dancing with your cell mate", or "some guy making you his bitch"... but on the *inside*, that kind of humiliation and degradation is REAL.

And you do NOT want to be anybody's bitch.

Which means... *you better know how to earn respect fast.* AND...even more important... *you better learn how to take out the psychopaths who don't give a rat's ass about respect.* There are guys inside who just want to fight, and kill, and humiliate. They don't figure out the "odds" of taking you on... they just get into it with you.

They're sick. They're ugly. And they're the most vicious, uncaring, hard-to-put-down opponent you will ever meet, anywhere.

And none of your black belt nonsense will do a thing to stop them. Break their arm, their nose, their cheek bone... tie them up in knots on the ground... choke them within a breath of dying... *and they will STILL get right back up and come back after you.*

These assholes are strong, too. Crazy-strong. They don't register pain like you do, either. And, worse... they're in prison for LIFE... *so they have nothing to lose.* Ever. They will eat you alive and take a nap as if nothing happened.

Very scary place for anyone who doesn't know how to fight the RIGHT way in closed places.

James hit the jackpot, however. He met an inmate -- half Native American -- named "Skip" who had long ago perfected a fighting system he called "Rock and Roll". It was designed specifically for no-holds-barred fighting in tight spaces... against the worst opponents imaginable. It was designed... and perfected... inside prison walls.

But Skip didn't teach it to James right away. James had to beg, and watch his ass, and bribe Skip for months before he earned the "right" to learn this amazing fighting system. Took him *two years* of sweating bullets to convince Skip to teach him the secrets.

And it saved his life.

What you are about to see... are the secrets to:

- Instantly dropping ANYONE who picks a fight with you...
- With a split-second move that will leave him completely wasted on the ground, unable to fight back...
- PLUS... you'll learn two more moves that will devastate anyone who has surprised you...
- Or come at you with friends, from all sides...
- Or got you on the ground.

It doesn't matter where you are, or who you're fighting against. The super-painful, special "soft" targets you'll learn about are on EVERYBODY... and, when you know how to "access" them, *you'll be the most FEARED person in the room*

No matter what.

The ONLY reason James is now offering to teach a small number of guys like you... is that Skip has urged him to do so.

He doesn't want the secrets to die out. There are only 5 people on the planet who know the secrets... *and 4 of them are lifers in prison.* James is the ONLY one who got out. Skip has decided it's time to let more people in on the skills... so "Rock and Roll" can earn its rightful place among top fighters.

Let me tell you: If you EVER get in a fight, whether it's in a parking lot, or in the hallway of your own house... or in a place as tight as a prison cell...

You Do NOT Want To Be The Guy Who Hasn't Seen These Secrets!

This is the most raw, vicious, and pure-gore system I've ever witnessed. It scares the hell out me — which makes me GLAD I've seen it.

That's all you need to do, too: Just SEE it. Just watch the video we've prepared, one time. It's that simple and easy.

Also, as I already said...

- You don't have to be strong...

- Or loose and limber...
 - Or have any previous fighting experience.
- Nope. This system is so scaled-down basic that...

There Are Only 3 Moves!

That's all you need.

Doesn't matter if you're fighting toe-to-toe against a boxer or martial artist... or you're on the ground, underneath an experienced grappler... or shoved into a corner with a guy twice your size on your back.

None of that matters.

These astonishing 3 simple moves work in EVERY situation. Every time. Against every opponent (or multiple opponents).

This "Rock and Roll" system has been "field tested" against gang enforcers... nothing-to-lose psycho lifers... and the worst sort of human garbage that ends up in the joint. *It works like magic.*

It's the ONE simple system you can rely on, no matter where you need it.

The no-holds-barred professionals are *thrilled* about this. Martial artists are saying "goodbye" to their old training... and relying on "Rock and Roll" *instead* when it counts. And, though this system is still almost UNKNOWN in the general fighting world... it's set to change *everything* anyone believes about true "fight to the death" skills.

Best of all... I've arranged it so you can see everything...

For Free, If You Choose!

Here's the deal: It's as simple and straightforward as I can arrange it. I have here in my office a package with your name on it. Inside are 3 video tapes we just completed with James. In these videos, he reveals EVERYTHING you need to know about "Rock and Roll".

One of the tapes is yours to keep, **free**, no matter what. It's James' gift to you, just for checking the package out.

The other two tapes cover, in detail, the basics of the "Rock and Roll" fighting system. Remember, there are only 3 moves to learn.

That means, you can just WATCH these videos... and "get" the system. **You don't even need to practice.**

You just need to SEE this stuff in action. One time.

You do not risk a penny by checking these videos out. The way I've arranged it, all you need to do is order them... and take a full year to check them out for yourself. Watch them, treat them like yours... and, if at the end of the year... you aren't convinced they are the BEST fighting skills you could ever possess... then simply return them. I will refund your entire "trial" purchase price, no questions asked.

No hassles, either.

Your word is all I need.

That means you get a...

100% Money-Back No Risk Guarantee For One Entire Year!

Why am I being so generous? Because this is *prison stuff*. That makes some people a little nervous... and I want you to feel completely **confident** about checking this system out yourself.

My gamble is simple: I am *so sure* you'll be delighted and amazed by what you find... that you won't want to return anything. You'll want to keep it... because it really is the biggest bargain in fight training today.

You won't find this material anywhere else, for any price. It just doesn't exist outside the small circle of fighters that James has personally trained.

Here's what you need to do now: Just call my office at **1-800-899-8153** and tell whoever answers you want "the Rock and Roll tapes". You can use your credit card. You'll be charged \$69 (plus \$7 for shipping and handling)... but you can have your purchase price refunded at any time in the next year, just on

your say-so. Simply return the tapes. (But keep the third tape, which is yours free.)

If you prefer to pay by check or money order (payable to TRS), just fill out the enclosed yellow Priority Order Form, and mail it in the postage-paid envelope with your payment. That's all there is to it.

There's just one "catch": *You must order within immediately.*

The reason for this is simple: James *insisted* on severely limited distribution of these hot tapes. He is willing to share — for the first time ever — the secrets of this amazing system... but he does NOT want to share it with anyone who cannot instantly see the value in it.

He originally wanted to limit this release to just 33 tapes... but I convinced him to extend the initial release to 181 videos, to give you a better shot at checking it out yourself.

Still, those 181 videos will be snatched up quick. *So you cannot wait or delay on this.*

Just watching these tapes will change you, instantly. You will experience the kind of confidence that comes with knowing how to obliterate ANYONE, of any size or skill or strength, who comes after you.

This is vicious stuff — NOT what you'd want to use to quiet down your uncle who got drunk and obnoxious at a party.

But it is EXACTLY what you want to know... when the chips are down, and your life is at stake.

Make no mistake — what you are about to see is **over-the-top vicious**. It will shock and alarm you.

But at least you'll *know* it. And you'll *never* be the guy who doesn't expect it in the clutch. You just *never* want to be that guy.

Call right now, while you're thinking about it. You don't risk a penny... and you get to see the most sought-after fight training in the world.

Man, I am seriously glad I know these moves are out there.

Sincerely



Bob

P.S. Almost forgot — when you get the video package, **you'll also get a FREE video on "Improvised Weapons" that will blow your mind.** It's yours to *keep*, too, no matter what — a gift, just for checking this stuff out.

You have NEVER seen improvised weapons like this before. This ain't using keys, or snapped-off car attenuas, or cell phones... because, in the joint, these "normal" improvised weapons just do not exist.

Nope. You'll know how to make weapons from almost NOTHING. Deadly stuff, too, that will give you an edge no matter where you end up, or what you have to fight against.

This is priceless info you won't find anywhere outside the small, cramped world of guys who have survived prison with their dignity and health intact.

Amazing stuff.

But you gotta hurry. **After this limited distribution is exhausted, this offer vanishes like a cell door slamming shut.**



James Painter's Prison "Rock N Roll" Fighting System

For fastest service use your credit card and Call Toll-FREE

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YES! Rush me this amazing tape package, including the free tape I get to keep no matter what. I don't want to be that guy who hasn't seen this vicious stuff — and I also understand that simply watching these tapes will instantly "install" every skill I need to know. And thanks for guaranteeing my satisfaction for an entire year — that means, if I'm not happy for any reason, I can get a fast refund with no questions asked. And I'll have seen these secrets for FREE. That's too good an offer to pass up. Here's my ordering info: **Here's how I want to pay:**

Enclosed is my check/money order (payable to TRS) for \$76 (plus \$69 plus \$7 S&H)

I want to pay by credit card: Visa MasterCard Discover AmEx

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Should Journalists



Carry Weapons?

BY BOB POOS

The Pen And The Sword In Combat

Civilian war correspondents in the U.S. military's "embed" program for Operation Iraqi Freedom were forbidden to carry defensive sidearms, a dramatic change of policy in place since at least World War II.

It was a decision not made lightly, said a general officer who participated in talks with correspondents and bureau chiefs immediately prior to the outbreak of hostilities between the U.S. and Iraq. "Some of them wanted to be

armed," he said, "and it was difficult to deny them that. But we told them, "look, *al-Jazeera* and other Arab world news outlets are going to be embedded as well as Americans and British. And the first time one of them sees an armed American news reporter, he'll be able to tell his readers or viewers there is no such thing as objectivity in the U.S. media."

The new Pentagon effort to accommodate war correspon-



(left to right) Bob Poos, then a correspondent with AP and subsequently an SOF managing editor, Rick Morrow, of AP, and R.W. Apple, Jr., New York Times bureau chief carry the tools of their trade in Vietnam, in 1966: Two have cameras, one a typewriter — but all have personal firearms.

courtesy Bob Poos



As with other war-zone professionals in WW II and Korea, the .30 Carbine was frequently the personal arm of choice for those whose primary job was not to fight, but to lead, heal, communicate — or in this case of reporter Bob Poos on patrol with a Special Forces unit in Vietnam, record the events for history.

time thought this was most unfair because censorship forbade identifying regiments by number but there were only two Marine regiments in the entire AEF, yet there was no rule against calling them Marines.)

Davis continued, “then we embedded Joe Rosenthal at Iwo Jima and the rest is history.”

Previously, the military’s policy on armed correspondents was simply to have no declared policy. It left the decision whether to carry weapons for self-defense up to the individual

dents provides for embedding correspondents (including photographers and electronic media technicians) with specific units ranging from infantry companies to aircraft carriers. About 700 of them participated in the “Second Gulf War.”

Besides being forbidden to carry self-defense weapons, the correspondents had little or no freedom of lateral movement — like, for example, catching a helicopter ride from a unit in the First Marine Division to one in the Third Infantry Division. Such skipping around to find the action was common in Vietnam, where there were virtually no restrictions on reporters’ movements. But it was nonexistent in the last Gulf War, where press coverage was perhaps more restricted than any other war in U.S. history.

Military brass felt they’d gotten a bum rap from super-critical Vietnam correspondents, many of whom never left the safety and comfort of Saigon. The Pentagon apparently figured they didn’t appreciate the freedom they were granted. Some Vietnam correspondents, again mostly those who stayed in Saigon, complained in turn that the military lied to or misled them. It was all much more complicated than those two extremes, but the Pentagon apparently decided in the first Gulf War that little or no access would result in less critical coverage. That proved true to a certain extent, but howls about the policy itself dictated change of some sort.

Hence the embed experiment. This began with sort of a one-week boot camp in which correspondents who hoped to be future “embeds” got some classroom schooling on military history and practices, and in-the-field training as well. The first of these was at the Marine Corps base, Quantico, just south of Washington, D.C., where many of the potential war correspondents were located. Since then, others have been held at Army bases and aboard Navy ships.

Marines First

The Marines invented the concept of embedding correspondents with infantry units 86 years ago and although it never before had that name, it has been hugely successful.

Brigadier General Andrew Davis, Marine Corps Director of Public Affairs, explained:

“Back in World War I, we embedded Floyd Gibbons, possibly the most famous war correspondent of his era, with a Marine regiment at Belleau Wood. He got an eye shot out but survived and made the Marines famous.” (The Army at the

correspondent.

Norm Hatch, a retired Marine Corps major who spent most of his career as a combat photographer/reporter and PIO, explained WW II practices: “They [correspondents] were given a distinctive shoulder patch worn on an officer’s uniform which was supposed to protect them as a noncombatant in case of capture. In addition, all correspondents were given the status of field grade [major] to ease their life [if they became] a prisoner. If they had a weapon on them, it might not bode well.”

However, Hatch added, “this isn’t to say that there undoubtedly were some individuals that carried a personal .38 revolver.”

Another Marine combat correspondent, Sam Stavisky, commented, “I met up with six or eight civilian correspondents in Guadalcanal and the Solomons and never knew one to carry a weapon, except for a bottle of booze.”

Thus in WW II and Korea, most correspondents did not carry weapons. But in those conflicts very few war correspondents got close to the actual fighting. Other than photographers, whose job required them to be at the scene of action, most correspondents covered the conflicts from regimental or division headquarters or even further removed from the nastiness of close-up combat.

There were some who did live with the troops, of course. Men like Ernie Pyle of Scripps-Howard News Service, perhaps the best-known war correspondent of all time, and his friend and competitor, Hal Boyle of the Associated Press. (Boyle used to wryly refer to himself as ‘the poor man’s Pyle.’) Pyle was killed covering an Army landing in the Pacific near war’s end. Boyle survived to cover the early stages of Vietnam. Neither carried weapons.

But there was at least one notable exception to the unarmed writer in the European Theater. Novelist Ernest Hemingway, accredited to *Colliers Magazine*, was always armed to the teeth and even recruited his own little combat command, a group of Frenchmen who claimed to have been resistance fighters during the German occupation. Witnesses reported, however, that Hemingway and his horde killed many more bottles of *vin rouge* than they did Germans.

Vietnam was another matter. It was at the same time a war of conventional military formations fighting one another on a defined battlefield (North Vietnamese vs. the U.S.

It puts the ultimate survival tool directly into YOUR hands...

"If You Were Forced To Spend One Day As An Inmate Inside The Worst Prison In America And Were Allowed Just ONE Thing To Guarantee Your Survival... This Would Be It!"

Now, a Totally Different Program reveals the one constant that allows YOU to not just level the playing field but actually tilt it in your favor... regardless of the odds against you.

by Paul Thomas

You round a corner... and suddenly a huge hand grabs your shoulder. The grip is so intense all you feel are daggers of pain down your back ... and that knife resting against your throat.

Say 'hi' to Jake... twice in prison for armed robbery, life for this sociopathic scumbag has gone to hell and you're about to become the reason he's headed back...

"Oh shit, what do I do now?"

If that's your reaction... don't feel bad. It's almost everyone's response... regardless of background or training!

It isn't your fault. It's just that nothing has prepared you to handle worst-case, over-the-edge violence... the kind you expect to see only in PRISON. But what's frightening is this: crime stats show 83.7%... nearly everyone... will face this nightmare at least once in our life... and it won't be in prison!

Wouldn't it be nice to never worry about Jake? To have that voice inside confidently say, "Hey, if something happens, I've got it covered! Doesn't matter. He's got a pipe? So what. A gun? Not to worry."

A fantasy? Not any more. Tim Larkin, creator of *Target-Focus™ Training*, the #1 rated self-protection system in the world today, gives you just that.

In a daring move with potentially serious ramifications, he's released a WEAPONS-focused version of his *TFT* system that shows you how to defeat a violent criminal in a **WORSE-than-worst-case scenario** -- in prison! After seeing his program... a life-or-death confrontation in a dark alley is a piece of cake.

Not only does this new series take you inside the criminal mind, it goes way beyond... showing you how and why you must first learn to USE a weapon... if you ever hope to defeat a criminal using it against you! Highly unconventional and extremely controversial it teaches you how to get your focus off the weapon... and onto defeating the REAL threat.

Packed into a tight video series, it's cold, calculated and very straightforward. There's no hype or bullshit. Just a total focus on dealing with violence.

You'll be shocked at it's focus on action and simplification. A criminal is all about simplicity -- "Just stab him." Complicate how you deal with him and his simplicity wins... every time. That's part of why this system is unlike anything you've seen before!

But the program isn't about posturing, then getting into say, a knife fight. You may be good at knife fighting. Who cares. The real issue is: if you're involved in a violent crime and you need to bash someone's head in to save your life... can you do it?

Jim, a highly ranked spec op guy who saw parts of the videos noted, "If I ever walked through the gates of prison this is exactly what I'd need to know." And before you snicker about "never being in prison", remember this: run into Jake... and you ARE there!

During filming a woman holding the boom mic commented, "You can't show that. It's illegal!"

WRONG! That's why Larkin released his new

material in this format. Virtually everyone puts rules or restrictions into their self-protection system -- often without knowing it. Face a predator without morals or rules like yours and you're screwed. When it becomes life-or-death, you need to be able to go whole-hog... and this new program shows you whole-hog -- plus!

These videos will instantly change your mindset on how you picture yourself in a violent confrontation ... regardless of your training or whose videotapes you've watched. Even the military ones.

That's the world Larkin comes from so he knows it intimately. Yet he spends little time talking about his years as a spec op Naval officer because that just focuses on what he's done... and not **what YOU get** from his system!

He's quick to note that military systems notoriously are outdated and inefficient when dealing with on-the-street criminal violence. Sophisticated weapons and proficient operators mean hand-to-weapon training takes a back seat. Fine for them... bad for you.

It's why even though he trains military, government and law enforcement he's focused his efforts on worst-case civilian violent confrontations with dramatic success. He's trained individuals around the globe (in 2003 in Europe, Mexico and Australia, and even on a private cruise ship in the Baltic Sea); next year it's the Middle East and Asia. Real violence in the US often pales compared to the everyday international violence he's called in to prep for.

But terrorism and escalating violence in the US has compelled him to release his material in a dramatic new format. **There's nobody that's ever shown it like this.** Not even the military. Everyone is terrified of public reaction.

Larkin's take: you must know what gives you the greatest chance for surviving a lethal confrontation. "If it saves one life... it'll be worth the hassle I know I'm setting myself up for. To competently fight someone with a weapon you need to know how to fight with one... intimately. Now you're gonna see it."

Where others show you how to avoid a knife, he shows you how to work with and against it. They wind up **empowering the knife. He puts you in command!**

Some foolishly feel this stuff is too violent, ignoring the fact you don't need to push it to levels shown on these tapes. You can always ramp it down. It's just that **you can't ramp it up and kill someone if you've never done that before.**

Still he's taking a huge risk and will catch a lot of flack. Violence is ugly, vicious and upsetting and you'll see lots of disclaimers running across the screens of these videos. Some will be shocked, dismayed, offended and **outraged that anyone would dare show this stuff.** They'll raise a huge stink... and do everything possible to get this yanked. But better you see this on video than have Jake show you in real life!

Everything you'll see here is vintage *TFT*. You learn to hurt someone very quickly (every sequence shows killing movements right from the start). There's no size, speed or quickness required. Anyone can learn

this because it's based on principles not one person's skills.

Guys that have been in the trenches for years, those who have seen everything, are blown away by the simple brutality and effectiveness of this system, by its total focus on YOU and the competence of Larkin's instructors, including their knowledge of anatomy and how to inflict trauma on the human body. Each instructor averages 10 years of training, and Larkin himself has taught over 5,000 individuals worldwide.

Surprisingly most of his instructors aren't 'jocks'. Many have advanced degrees; five hold PhD's! When he says *TFT* is **built on science**... he isn't bullshitting. His advisory board includes two medical doctors who assure Larkin and his instructors offer accurate, scientific based, up-do-date information about inflicting trauma on the human body (that's why his system is so devastating: you learn not only the HOW... but the WHY).

Unfortunately a program this controversial isn't for everyone. If you think seeing what it takes to survive in prison is overkill, that it's "too lethal" or "too violent"; if you're uncomfortable using a knife or dealing with how people try to kill you; if you think this program's about some predetermined movements or that you're gonna see lots of cool setup techniques -- you can stop reading here.

This stuff WILL set your hair on edge... but realize a criminal on the street (or locked up in the pen) already knows this... he lives it every day. He doesn't need some video to learn from. That's why Larkin doesn't worry about this getting into the wrong hands. It's already there. You're the one who needs to see it. And now... for the very first time... you can.

Listen. I understand you may find all this hard to believe. Before I saw these videos that's how I felt too. Unfortunately there's not room here to adequately describe the **shocking reality of what Larkin has created for you.** That's why he's not asking for a penny of your money now. Instead he'll spend his own cash to put a detailed Special Report into your hands that will prove everything you've just read and explaining more about why this program is so TOTALLY DIFFERENT from anything you've ever seen before.

All you need to do to get his **FREE** report is to pick up the phone and call **888-811-9347**. There's a short recorded message and then you can leave your name and address so the report can be mailed to you. Since it's voicemail you can call **24-hours a day, 7 days a week** and no one will hassel you.

Don't fool around and miss this opportunity. It doesn't cost you a thing. So go on-line or call right now.



Tim Larkin, creator of *Target-Focus Training*

and its allies, notably South Korea and Australia) and a guerrilla war of surprise, ambush, hit-and-run and concomitant pursuit, of assassination in the night, reprisal and counter-reprisal — an atmosphere in which no one was safe. Actually, you couldn't be sure of the North Vietnamese regulars, either, as we shall see.

Military Assistance Command (MAC-V) certainly had no firm policy against a correspondent being armed if he so chose.

"Bao Chi" This

Colonel J.D. Coleman, USA (Ret.), former Chief Public Information Officer for the First Airmobile Cavalry Division, recalls: "At the Cav, we thought nothing about it. But I think I recall a JUSPAO or MAC-V directive to correspondents when they checked in-country, warning them that carrying a weapon would lose the so-called security of the 'Bao Chi' (Press) tag that some folks would wear on their field gear."

Coleman continued, "Charlie Black, of course, carried. He started out with a Schmeisser (German WW II 9mm sub-machine gun) but he also had a .38 revolver when he wanted to carry light."

Charlie Black was one of the real characters of the Vietnam War — military or civilian. A former Marine Raider of WW II, he was the military editor of the Columbus, Ga., *Ledger-Enquirer*, sort of the First Cav's hometown newspaper. The paper wouldn't spend the money to send Black to

"Take The Rifle!"

Joe Galloway, author of *We Were Soldiers Once, And Young*, as a war correspondent in Vietnam, said "Shoot you with which ever seems the right weapon. I also carried a Colt .38-special belt gun. [Col. Charlie] Beckwith, when I was leaving Plei Me, noticed I had no weapon and ordered a SGM to fetch me an M16 and a sack full of magazines. I told him that in spite of what he had had me doing for the last 3-4 days and nights — manning a machine gun — I was still, technically speaking, a non-combatant. 'Ain't no such thing in these mountains, boy. Take the rifle!' I took the rifle and was carrying it and 20 full magazines plus about a thousand rounds of boxed ammo in my pack when I got off the bird in LZ X-Ray. I had learned the first law of combat: Carry all the water and ammo you can hump. You can't eat if you are fuckin' dead ..."

Vietnam as a correspondent, but let him hitchhike a ride with the Cavalry Division. He lived with the troops, ate their chow, wore the same uniforms and for all intents and purposes was one of them.

When Charlie went out on an operation with an infantry company, they knew that he had been in a tough outfit and seen more combat than any of them. And when he wrote about them, he wrote with the authority of having done the same things they had — down to and including eating the ham and lima bean edition of C rations, detested by one and all and known as "Ham and 'Mammies.'" Of course, Charlie was armed and a few times he fought as hard as any of the troops he was covering at the time. And if Charlie Black was with the Army in the Middle East, he'd be armed and I'd pity anybody who'd try to stop him.

No Restrictions

I don't recall getting any sort of warning against carrying a weapon when I went through my MAC-V brief-

ing as a brand new Associated Press correspondent. I do recall my thoughts on the subject: That anyone who went to a war and didn't have a firearm on his shoulder or at his side was nuts.

I modified that somewhat after I met AP photographer Henri Huett and observed him at work in firefights. I think, and lots of people agree with me, that Henri Huett was the best and bravest news photographer in Vietnam. In a sense, Henri didn't just cover Vietnam, he *was* Vietnam; his mother was Vietnamese and his father a Frenchman, planter and big-game hunting guide out of Pleiku. He learned photography while doing his time in the French Army in the first Vietnam War — and spent much of his service with the French Foreign Legion.

Henri never carried a weapon. Not even when the situation seemed desperate. Once we were with a First Cav company that got surrounded by a couple of battalions of North Vietnamese. I picked up a rifle and used it, but Henri just kept on doing his job — taking pictures for the AP. In so doing, he was exposed to hostile fire more than any soldier in the unit. He paid absolutely no attention to incoming rounds, even though they were missing him by inches.

Still, troops usually indicated that they liked to see an armed newsman because it indicated they would not have to worry about taking care of him. But perhaps because of his indifference to danger or maybe because of his unfailing good humor and cheerful nature, no one ever questioned Henri's ability to take care of himself. Henri was killed along with photographers Larry Burrows, Kent Potter (UPI), and K.



courtesy Steve Stibbens

Former Marine — but in this picture a war correspondent — Steve Stibbens accompanies an American SF unit on patrol in Vietnam in 1963 — with a camera around his neck, and a .30 carbine slung from his shoulder.

Soldier Of Fortune correspondents have usually gone armed into hostile AOs from Afghanistan, to Cambodia, Nicaragua and beyond. Here, SOF Editor/Publisher Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown, USAR (Ret.) is shown prior to a military op with Lt. Col. Jorge Cruz, then-Morazon Department Commander, at San Francisco Gotera, El Salvador. Brown carries a Winchester .338 Magnum sniping rifle, while Cruz has an M16A1.



Phil Gonzales

Shimamoto (*Pan-Asia/Newsweek*) when their helicopter was shot down along the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the Lam Son 719 incursion of Laos late in the war.

Personal weapons were not difficult to acquire in Vietnam. My first one was a 6-inch-barrel Colt .38 Special. An Air Force pilot sold it to me for \$25. But shortly thereafter, a CIA pal took me to the agency's armory in Pleiku and let me have my choice of what they had on hand. And what a choice it was: virtually every submachine gun and semi-automatic pistol available on the international arms market — and none traceable. I settled on a Browning Hi-Power 9mm, which I have to this day.

And I put some rounds downrange in a few cases when it seemed that was the best way to help ensure witnessing the next sunrise. Joining in the “mad minute,” first thing at daybreak when everyone in the unit emptied a magazine or two into the treetops and surrounding brush, seemed not only appropriate but a great way to release some pent-up emotions.

And I was not the only Vietnam newsman who was armed. Rick Merron, AP photographer and former 82nd Airborne paratrooper, always carried a snub-nose S&W .38 Special, and AP Pulitzer Prize winner Peter Arnett, a New Zealand native, carried a variety of handguns. Arnett's ego problem and a penchant to embellish the truth later got him fired from CNN and most notably from WNBC and *National Geographic* magazine for making what amounted to propaganda broadcasts on Iraq's state-owned TV network.

UPI's Joe Galloway, author of the fine book *We Were Soldiers Once — and Young*, an account of the Seventh Cavalry's battle at LZ X-Ray, manned a corner M1919A6 machine gun for three days at the siege of Plei Me Special Forces Camp, picked up an M16 during X-Ray and was photographed carrying a Carl Gustav model 9mm submachine gun.

Steve Stibbens had the unusual status of having been both a military writer/photographer covering the Vietnam war and later doing the same as a civilian — for the AP. Stibbens said, “In my five years in 'Nam, I carried a weapon once. In 1963 on a 10-day mountain patrol with three Special Forces sergeants, 85 Ko Ho Montagnards and AP photographer Horst Faas (another AP Pulitzer Prize winner, and a German national who as child had served in the Hitler Youth and manned an anti-aircraft gun in the final stages of WWII). We were working ambushes out of Dam Pao, a little post just west of Da Lat. Since I was a Marine combat correspondent at the time, the SF insisted that I carry an M2 carbine with a banana magazine. Six days out we were ambushed — a couple of bullets impacted between my feet. Even then I chose to hit the deck on my back behind a stump and shoot pictures until things settled down.

Opinions Change

“When I went back to 'Nam in '67 as a civilian war corre-

spondent for the AP, I was truly a noncombatant.”

Stibbens explained why he didn't carry a defensive weapon: “Extra weight in that awful heat and humidity was the main factor.” But he added, “next time I think I'd carry a weapon, perhaps a Beretta 9mm or an M16.”

The theory that being an unarmed “non-combatant” will be a plus if taken into captivity is not always a sound one.

John Cantwell is one example. John worked for me when I was AP Chief Correspondent in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and he manned the subordinate AP office in Singapore. John was bored with the job, which was largely economics reporting, and unhappy with his pay, so he applied for a job with *Time Magazine* in Hong Kong. The *Time* Bureau Chief in Hong Kong was a personal friend from when we both covered Vietnam, and he sent me a note asking about John's qualifications. I recommended him as a solid writer and accurate reporter but added the caveat, “for God's sake, don't send him to Vietnam because he's just the kind of a guy who gets himself killed in a war.”

So *Time* hired John and immediately sent him to Vietnam, just before the Tet Offensive of 1968. John and three other relatively inexperienced correspondents boarded their open Landrover and made the mistake of driving to the wrong end of a refugee column — where the bad guys were North Vietnamese regulars, who were causing the refugee flood. One of the correspondents rolled out of the vehicle and, bent over, mingled with the fleeing Vietnamese civilians.

The other three, including John, threw up their hands and yelled “Bao Chi, Bao Chi!” (Press, Press!). The surviving correspondent and some South Vietnamese in the crowd who spoke English, later said they heard a North

Continued on page 73

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

FARNAM'S GUNSLINGER DIARY ♦ BY JOHN FARNAM

The Mossberg M590A1



I have new Mossberg 590A1 pump shotgun (12ga.) that I have been using for the last several weeks. It makes a nice package!

It came with an 18-in. barrel, speed-feed stock (four extra rounds in the stock itself), and large, rugged, ghost-ring sights. The rear sight is well-protected, and the front sight is beefy and easy to see. The magazine tube holds five rounds. I surely like the Remington 870 also, but Remington doesn't offer such a complete package from the factory.

There is a slight learning curve with the speed-feed stock, but it is plenty fast and extremely convenient. It doesn't modify the gun's outline or create a snag as does a sidesaddle.

In some states and jurisdictions, military rifles are aggressively regulated. In most of those same areas, shotguns are essentially unregulated. Indeed, the demand for Urban-Rifle training in those areas is low (outside the law-enforcement community), but the demand for defensive shotgun training remains high, and probably will for the foreseeable future.

As a patrol shotgun, it is hard to beat. Also makes a nice "bedroom gun." Highly recommended!

We have received these comments on the Mossberg 590A1 from users:

"We have several Mossberg 590s here at the police range with over 100,000 rounds through them, mostly slugs. They have all had minimal maintenance and are still perfectly serviceable.

Some important notes on the Mossberg:

"For some reason, the guns are shipped from the factory with a coating of grease on the internal fire-control mechanism. This sometimes causes sluggish operation. A detailed disassembly of new guns is recommended to remove the grease and restore full reliability. This degree of disassembly should only be performed by an armorer. It's standard procedure with new 590s here.

"The red insert on the front sight is sometimes loose. We've had a number of them fall out. When it gets loose, it needs to be re-staked and epoxied back in place. Of course, without it, the gun is still functional. I don't consider colored sight inserts particularly important ...

"The springs in speed-feed stocks will sometimes take a

set, causing the second shell to fail to come all the way forward. One can still get it out. It's just sluggish. I usually just stretch the spring, and that lasts six months or so.

"The 590's manual safety lever is plastic and breaks now and then. Brownell's makes a metal replacement, and I recommend it.

"By the way, the Mossberg is the only shotgun that has a military-specification manual safety. With the manual safety "on," the gun is genuinely drop-safe.

Not so with most other shotguns."

A friend on active duty commented on the Mossberg 590:

"We used 590s in Panama and they proved themselves both reliable and durable. We put 10,000 rounds per year through each of them with minimal armorer maintenance. Concur with your advice on replacing the plastic manual safety lever: It doesn't last long under field conditions.

"When I arrived in Panama and took command of a security platoon, two of our site posts used 590s, modified with after-market pistol grips and no shoulder stock (about as useless a contraption as can be imagined!). Upon touring the posts the first day I asked the Marines if they had ever trained with the shotgun in that configuration. To my surprise, they had not.

"I insisted that the pistol-grip-equipped shotguns be brought to the range for our weekly 'port and starboard' firearms training. Sure enough, the Marines had little problem handling the shotguns when shooting light (birdshot) training rounds. However, when 00 Buck and slugs were fired, the guns were utterly uncontrollable and completely inaccurate, no matter how they were held. The pistol grips all promptly cracked as well.

"My Marines quietly approached me afterward and asked that the pistol grips be discarded and that factory stocks be reinstalled. That very day, they were!"

Lesson: Emergency equipment should never be fielded without adequate testing. What looks sexy and shiny in the showroom often disappoints in the field. How many times we've seen it!

John Farnam may be reached at JSFarnam@aol.com . ✉

Puts functional strength into every fiber of your being...

"The #1 Total Body Fitness Program on the Planet - Turns You Into An Unstoppable Butt-Kicking Machine... Damn Near Instantly"

Follow the Legendary Routine That Simultaneously Catapults Your Strength, Endurance and Flexibility to record levels. Feel the results that tens of thousands are raving about worldwide...

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 bodyweight 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 Cunnings

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 bodyweight 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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“JUG” BURKETT

Outter Of Phony “Heroes” Receives Army Award

BY LARRY BAILEY, USN (RET.)

After a dozen years of conducting mind-bending research and enduring personal attacks from those he “outed,” Dallas businessman B. G. “Jug” Burkett has been officially recognized for his efforts in exposing phony war heroes. On 1 December 2003, he was presented with the U.S. Army’s Distinguished Civilian Service Award by former President George H. W. Bush in a ceremony at the Bush Library on the campus of Texas A & M University.

Burkett, whose accomplishments were recognized in the November 1998 *SOF*, is, along with journalist Glenna Whitley, the author of *Stolen Valor*, the monumental exposé of phony veterans he self-published in 1998. That book (available at www.stolenvalor.com) has, more than any other factor, sensitized the American public (and especially its veterans) to the fact that uncounted thousands of “wannabes” foist their war-hero fraud on any who will listen. Many have listened, often with tragic results. Burkett, however, has been personally responsible for the comeuppance suffered by over 1,200 of these thieves of other folks’ honor.

What began as an exercise in frustration has become, thanks to Burkett, a nation-wide and multi-faceted crusade to expose phony veterans of all sorts. One such organization maintains a “Hall of Shame,” operated at www.veriseal.org, which lists several hundred phony SEALs (along with their claims). Special Forces pretenders are vetted by the efforts of retired Special Forces Staff Sergeant Bob Jack and his comrades at <http://teamhouse.tni.net>.

Others are more specialized, such as Chuck and Mary Schantag’s phony POW site at www.pownetwork.org, which has exposed hundreds of men (and women) falsely claiming to have been POWs. All of these men and women testify to the influence of Jug Burkett in their efforts to keep America honest.

He is, to the men and women who maintain these and other websites, nothing short of a hero. Typically, however, he pooh-poohs the attention he receives. “I’m a little overwhelmed, because I was just doing what I thought was my duty,” he modestly stated after the award ceremony. Regarding receipt of the Army’s honor, the highest civilian award that Service can offer, he observes that it helps bring the public’s attention to the fact that many of those claiming to be heroes are, in fact, impostors. *Stolen Valor* is replete with wild stories told by men who went into Cambodia or North Vietnam or who single-handedly saved their SEAL platoon or their Special Forces camp from screaming hordes of Viet Cong attackers.



courtesy Jug Burkett

How did Burkett get started on what might seem to be a quixotic endeavor? Once again, former President Bush was involved. Back in 1986, Burkett was Co-Chairman of the committee tasked to raise the funds to create the Texas Viet Nam Memorial. (Bush served as Honorary Chairman.) As Burkett attended various fund-raising and publicity events around the state, he was annoyed to see that the media crowd focused its attention on the unkempt, foul-smelling, camouflage-wearing “veterans” who invariably showed up for those occasions. Acting on a hunch, he obtained

the military records of a half-dozen of those heroes and learned (not necessarily to his surprise) that only a couple of them had even *been* to Vietnam — and they were not in combat units. Some had not even been in the military.

The more he dug, the more Burkett realized that he was onto a fraud of gargantuan proportions. Recipients of the Medal of Honor, of the Distinguished Service Cross, of the Silver Star, and even of awards that do not exist, were found to be liars and impostors. Several of them have been brought to justice, including one Dave Goff, who was presented with the Distinguished Service Cross for Vietnam heroism (along with six or seven other medals) in a Syracuse, NY, ceremony in 1989. Every single one of the awards was fraudulent, and Goff was stripped of them (and fined) once Burkett proved that he had never even been in Vietnam!

Burkett’s current “crusade” is to highlight the rip-off being perpetrated on the American taxpayer by those falsely claiming veterans’ benefits from the VA system. He estimates that this type of fraud costs the government hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The credulity (or worse) of VA counselors boggles Burkett’s mind. “I can’t believe trained counselors can accept the wild stories of those parasites,” he says. He thinks it is because some VA hospitals are running out of patients and are encouraging the undeserving to enroll in the system. He is in contact with several VA counselors and managers who agree with him and who covertly provide him with specific information about VA fraud. If I were asked to advise someone who was thinking about trying to obtain some undeserved freebies from the Department of Veterans Affairs, I would encourage them to cease and desist, because (I would say) “Jug Burkett has you in his sights.”

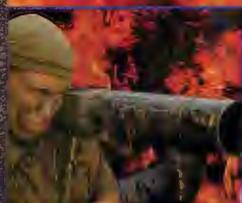
And that wouldn’t be far off the mark.

Larry Bailey is a retired U.S. Navy Captain and former Navy SEAL. ✕

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BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

AMERICA AT WAR

UNSUNG AMERICAN HERO SPECIALIST JAMES ROSS of Kentucky fires 100 rounds at car accelerating toward his guard tower at Talaafar military base near Mosul, Iraq; **VEHICLE EXPLODED** from force of 1,000-pound bomb, just outside of compound housing 300 soldiers; leaving 9-foot crater, 15 yards from tower and base entrance. Fifty-four injured, no fatalities. Ten-ton concrete block slammed into school across from base.

HIGH-SEAS WARFARE U.S. and allies use "robust techniques" to interdict "illicit goods" on high seas or in air.

1. UNITED STATES "CAPTURED SADDAM" ACTION-FIGURE DOLL joins Uday Hussein DOA dolls: For debut, see www.herobuilders.com. **DIRTY BOMB ATTACK THWARTED;** EXPERT SUSPECTED in scheme to detonate "dirty bomb" targeting Washington government buildings, hotels and gas stations. Suspect squeals after arrest. **CYANIDE PRODUCTION PUMP** developed by al Qaeda terrorists, designed to generate and pump cyanide gas through ventilation systems of subways, buildings, rail terminals, dams or indoor facilities, according to Homeland Security.

2. GUANTANAMO BAY BRITON MOAZZAM BEGG CHARGED with plot to use unmanned aircraft over London and drop anthrax over House of Commons, in an attempt to kill Tony Blair.

3. COLOMBIA AMERICANS TARGETED BY FARC in bombing of expatriate-frequented nightclub; one killed, 75 injured, including four Americans.

4. RUSSIA 42 murdered, 150 injured by suicide bombing of commuter train by Chechen separatists. Saudis suspected of supporting Chechen rebels.

5. GERMANY SAUDI DIPLOMAT met member of Hamburg sleeper-cell after 9-11, according to police report. **FIRST TERRORIST CONVICTED:** Same Operator, Mounir El Motassadeq, convicted of accessory to murder in 3,066 cases.

6. GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND ALGERIAN in Ireland possessed documents relating to vials of anthrax and botulism that disappeared from Prague two years ago — among most lethal substances in Soviet bio arsenal. Officials fear vials may have been smuggled into Britain on board Eurostar. **OPERATIVE** arrested for plan to attack President Bush in London.

7. ISRAEL 1992 ASSASSINATION PLOT EXPOSED (Operation Bramble Bush) — plan to assassinate Saddam Hussein at uncle/father-in-law's funeral, scrapped when five Israeli soldiers killed in training simulation of helicopter drop of elite military unit in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit.

8. LIBYA Khadaffi (to avoid Saddam's humiliating fate?) promises to disarm nuclear arsenal.

10. SAUDI ARABIA PRINCE KHALID of Saudi Arabia told Author Mike Evans, "No more than 10% of Muslim population are fundamentalists." "Well, call me a taxi!" responded Evans, "That means there are only 100 million Islamics who want to kill Americans ... instead of 1 billion. I don't find that very comforting."

11. YEMEN PEGLEG CAPTURED: Security forces capture one of top al Qaeda chiefs, Mohammad Hamdi al-Ahdal, suspected mastermind of 2002 U.S.S. *Cole* attack that killed 17 U.S. Sailors, and French oil-funker bombings.

12. IRAQ "SUICIDE" VICTIM — WITH FOUR BULLETS IN HEAD, Abu Nidal, who trained Mohamed Atta, 9-11 mastermind in Baghdad, silenced by Saddam's thugs, according to memo to Saddam from secret police chief, dated July 2001. **GRENADE-THROWER** suicide bomber shot, after killing 34, wounding 224; the Syrian is suspected of attack on three police stations and Red Cross headquarters. Oil smuggling groups suspected of attacks on oil facilities.

13. IRAN INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY charges Iran with violating nuclear agreement. Iran, supporter of insurgent Shi'ites in Iraq, possesses uranium-mining conversion-and-enrichment equipment capable of creating weapons-grade uranium.

14. PAKISTAN STRONGMAN PERVEZ MUSHARRAF escapes assassination bombing attempt, by utilizing electronic jammer that delayed explosion of bomb.

15. BANGLADESH TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS used by ISI of Pakistan to infiltrate agents and saboteurs into India.

CHARIOTS OF FIREPOWER

PART 3

Ambush This!

BY STAFF SGT. (P) DILLARD J. JOHNSON

When we left the intrepid crew of the Carnivore last issue, they had come under yet another withering mortar barrage. Exposed on the back deck of the Bradley, Sullivan had taken a load of shell fragments in his back, and Sergeant First Class Broadhead in the Abrams had radioed them to get in and button up their vehicle. Vehicle commander Staff Sergeant Johnson continues ...

I dropped down inside the turret, opened the turret shield-door and grabbed Sully by the leg and pulled him down into the safety of our Bradley. Machine-gun fire hit the side of my vehicle and raked back and forth. Sully was yelling "Were getting hit!" All I could do was yell "No shit!"

Then Broadhead's calm voice came over the net, "Red Two, you're clear." Broadhead had hosed-down my Bradley with machine-gun fire, killing three Iraqi soldiers trying to climb aboard. Dismounts were swarming everywhere. We were in the middle of an ambush, and a huge firefight involving the whole troop was going on in every direction.

Sergeant First Class Christner was firing on the Iraqi mortar position off to my left front. With my ready box almost loaded, I could again refocus on the battle. I had never seen anything like what was happening in front of me then. My entire troop was all firing at the same time. It was massive — 120mm, 25mm, .50 cal. and 7.62mm tore into the enemy. These Iraqi soldiers were putting up one hell of a fight while they had us in their kill zone, but there was no way in hell they could prevail. Our training and weapons are the best in the world. We were just too well equipped.

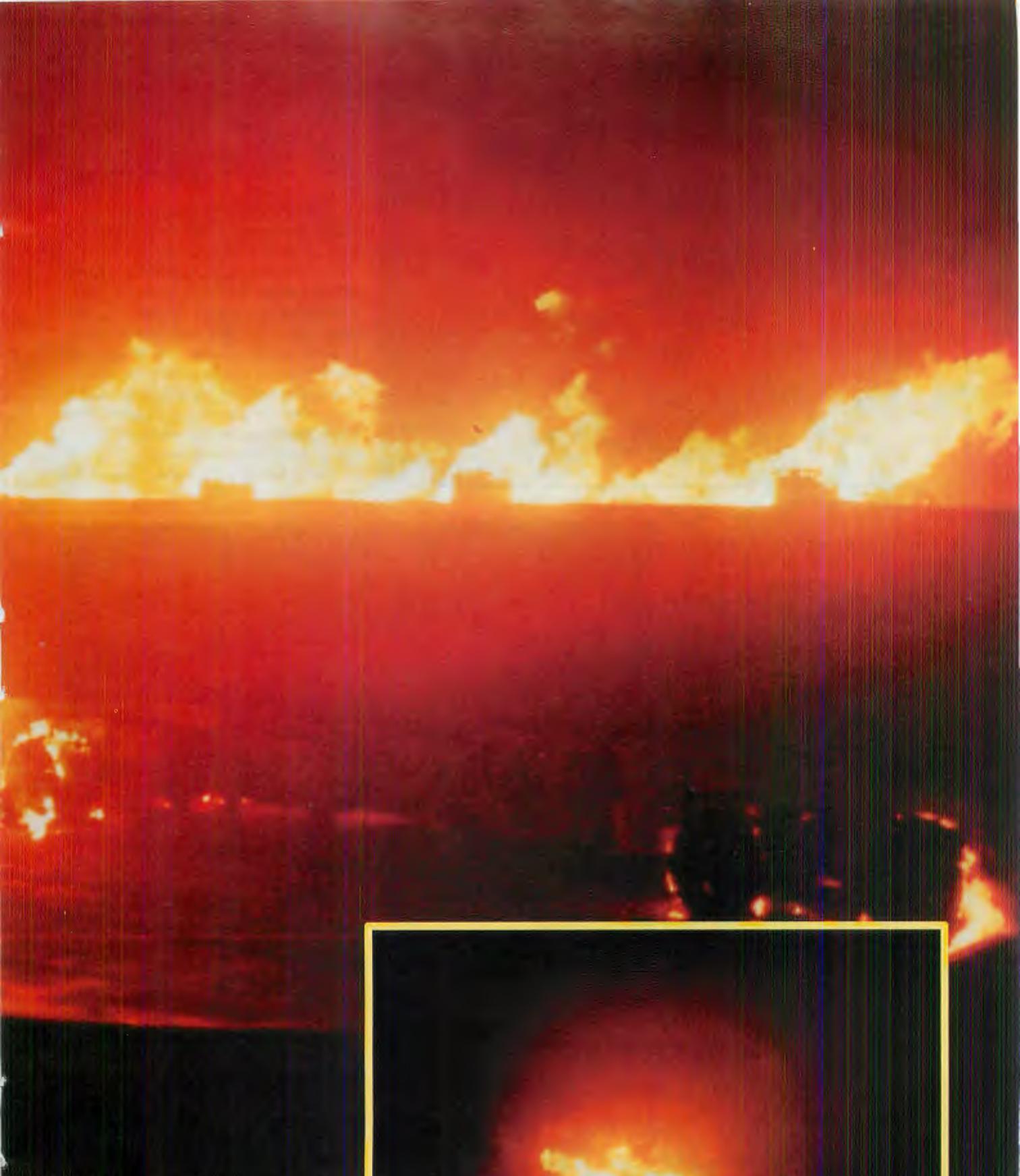
The cross-talk over the radio was great, from Staff Sgt.

Harris our Maintenance Platoon Sergeant, to First Sergeant Griggs. Everyone was working the net, laying-on fire into the Iraqis who had ambushed the troop, and they were catching royal hell.

A Pair Of Deuces

I heard Harris talking to Sergeant Willey, and with their .50s they were killing Iraqi troops that had moved to within feet of the road: They were holding NVGs with one hand and firing Ma Deuce with the other and man, did they have those .50s rocking. The 3rd Platoon and 4th Platoon were firing-up some 200 dismounts in the woodline. Sergeant First Class Lessane, 4th platoon sergeant, and Staff Sgt. Hamilton were firing-up dismounts that had been trying to work their way up to all the support vehicles. With their .50 cal. and coaxes melting the Iraqis away, those troops didn't even make it close. Staff Sergeant John J. Williams, a former national archery champion, was towing a Fubar Bradley, but that didn't keep him out of the fight.

The towed machine was to his rear, his 25mm was to the front, and he was steadily tearing them up. The woodlines on both sides of the road were now on fire. Broadhead was only firing his loaders' coax at this time, as he was watching my



It was a dark and stormy night: suicide-bomber bus (inset) crashed into the lieutenant's Bradley, so they pushed it back up the road and fired it up with .50. As it was burning, a 10,000-gallon tanker attempting same run crashed into it and Crazy Horse's Broadhead fired-it-up with his Abrams. It burned for three days.



Bradley and keeping the Iraqis away from me till I was uploaded and could fight. Christner was firing at the mortar position and I could see the Iraqis running around like chickens with their heads cut off. He was putting a huge amount of fire into them and they were giving it right back at him.

Enemy mortar rounds were landing all the way around him — his crew was very lucky this time. Staff Sergeant May, Christner's wingman, was firing 120mm HEAT rounds into the mortar position. Staff Sergeant Geary's Bradley was running a lot better now and he was getting in some payback — his 25mm was barking like a mad dog in a cat farm. He only stopped firing long enough to reload his coax machine gun. Every weapon in the troop was firing now, at massed ambushers on both sides of the road.

As the firefight intensified, I heard the

(above) Dawn's early light on 26 March showed the road north littered with trucks, busses and soldiers who had met the immovable object called Crazy Horse.

(right) Red 2 (the Carnivore) moves back to the bus, fuel trucks and troop trucks, passing remains of car (at right) they ran over in the dark. Three Iraqi soldiers inside did not survive. (Photo taken from Sgt. 1st Class Broadhead's Abrams, White 4.)

(below) Large troop-transport bus shot-up by Bradley's 25mm HE at objective Floyd. Few, if any, passengers survive such target servicing.



strangest thing over the radio net: A voice with an accent thick with grits, gravy and country sunrises pleaded, "Some one stop them, they is shooting womens and sheeps! Them sheeps wasn't hurting no ones, just eating some grass." It was as if time had stopped. I looked at my gunner, Sergeant Soprano, and he at me and at the same time we said "Did he say sheeps?"

Everywhere that Saddam's troops ran, death was waiting. There was no way of stopping the inevitable. They were going to die tonight. There was no hole deep enough, no wall thick enough. If they stood to fight, they were going to die. It was breaking day now, and I could see who the unit was to my front. It was my old outfit — Apache troop.

They were taking heavy fire and had called in an air strike — two A10s with 2,000-pounders — and they were working on the woodline next to A troop. The A10s dropped their ordnance right next to some of A-troop's tanks — way too close for me. I thought one of the M1s had been hit, until the smoke cleared. Two more A10 runs and the Iraqis were done; they had no fight left in them. We moved our Bradleys closer to where the enemy had been firing to see what we had done to them. We did not find any "womens" — only two dead sheep that had been too close to the enemy mortar position, but the fighters were wearing traditional clothing that made them look like women at a distance.

We had fought hard, but you can't engage that many enemy forces without losses. The Squadron had lost one M577 APC, two Hummers, one 5-ton truck and one ambulance. My vehicle had been rocked by the mortars again but had come through it intact. Broadhead had gotten hit in the wrist with shrapnel from the mortar rounds as he was closing the hatch on his Abrams — but his \$700 Chase-Durer watch gave up its life for Broadhead's wrist. The shell fragment was stopped cold by the tough stainless-steel case. Were we good or just lucky? I think this time we were lucky. But that's just as good.

missed Broadhead's M1. I called up a contact report to the Commander as my gunner returned fire. The commander told us to pull back — that the whole troop was under fire. The two Bradleys behind Broadhead's tank were trying to turn around. This left Broadhead and me in the kill zone for what seemed like forever.

Christner was firing into the 50 dismounts, and they soon were running for a place to hide. I looked over the top of the turret into the back of my Bradley and saw that Sully had his bleeding self as flat as he could get on the floor of the Brad. But as soon as I said "Come on, Sully, I need you up here firing your 240!" he hopped up and started mowing the bastards down. We started moving back until the road was wide enough for two vehicles to get side by side, and that was where we were going to make our stand.

Then, just like in the movie *The Mummy*, the sandstorm rolled in like a big orange wall. Visibility of 900 meters dropped down to 50, then 10. The sand got into everything. The only pair of goggles that worked were my ESS (Eyeshield System). I still couldn't see very far, but I didn't get sand in my eyes. Everyone was firing in every direction. Sully was firing the 240, Soprano the 25mm and me my M203. Wild Wally was firing like a mad man — 25mm then coax and then

25mm again. He must have killed 25 guys in less than 30 seconds. The whole time this was going on my lieutenant was



T-72 taken out by airstrike called in by Staff Sgt. Williams at Objective Floyd. (inset) This T-72 was holed by a 25mm silver bullet — in case the reader wonders why a Bradley would stand and fight heavy armor.

We'd Call, They'd Haul

In less than one hour, fuel trucks made it up and down the line, topping off our fuel tanks. There are no words to tell how much our support platoon did for us every time we needed fuel. We got it every time. We needed ammo — we got it. The young men driving those support trucks were my heroes of the war.

We now would push thru B troop and move north and east at Objective Floyd. Bravo section with Sgt. 1st Class Christner, First Lieutenant Tucker, Staff Sergeants Geary, Crawford and May would move north, and the Carnivore plus Sgt. 1st Class Broadhead, First Lieutenant McAdams and Staff Sgt. Wallace ("Wild Wally") would move east and set up in an over-watch position.

Less than 900 meters up the road, I was crossing over a one-lane canal bridge. Just as I got to the other side, as my luck goes, I was hit by an anti-armor ambush. At least 50 dismounts were firing RPGs at the Carnivore and Broadhead's M1. Two RPGs hit the bridge and blew up, another three went over my head, and another three just

hanging out of his hatch firing his 9mm pistol into five Iraqis that were moving in a ditch on his left. The commander stopped 3rd and 4th platoon to block our rear. At this time 3rd was down to five Bradleys and 4th only had one tank up.

It was then that Staff Sgt. Wasson took an RPG in the back that had bounced off his turret. The RPG made him black-out for a minute, but he still stayed in the fight.

Staff Sergeant Williams discovered the bridge we had crossed over the Euphrates River was set to be blown up. Williams grabbed his Cold Steel tomahawk to chop and pry away the detonators and charges. He was now firing his coax into anyone that got close to the bridge, then the sandstorm got so bad we lost communications with squadron. So there we sat, in the middle. We had Iraqi soldiers on at least three sides of us, and they were fighting hard and the sand was helping them out.

The Line In The Sandstorm

The commander told us to stop any vehicles from coming into our perimeter. With our Bradley not really set up for

traffic control, I did this by standing up on top of my turret, waving my arms for everyone to see my signals to turn around. It soon became apparent that most of the cars had soldiers in them. I watched one car drive into the front of the lieutenant's Bradley. The driver jumped out with an AK-47 and Broadhead shot him three times with his pistol. The Iraqi dropped his AK and ran into a ditch. He later crawled out of the ditch bleeding from three very visible gunshot wounds and walked off into the woods. Broadhead came on the radio to say that the Iraqi was done fighting, to let him walk off, so we did. It didn't take long for me to realize that I would get killed if I stayed up on top of my turret.

The new plan would be to fire coax tracers in front of the oncoming vehicles so they would see them and turn away. This was working really well. However, there was one truck that would repeatedly come up to where we were, stop and examine us. We all thought he was a bad guy, but we were going to wait until we knew for sure before we fired. Then he made his move: He came roaring down the road at about 80 mph. He made it by me. But the lieutenant's Bradley was on the road right behind me. When he saw the Brad the driver locked-up his brakes, launching the six guys in the back over the cab of the truck. There were 15 Iraqi soldiers in the truck

him out the other side of the bus. The bus rammed the lieutenant's Bradley with such force it knocked him down. It was then I saw what looked like explosives in the front of the bus. I had the lieutenant push the bus away from us so I could get Broadhead to shoot it with his .50 cal. Once the .50 cal. hit the front of the bus it disappeared in a fireball.

Traffic Jam Of Suicide Vehicles

At this point we were taking fire from everywhere. The sandstorm was too bad for our air support to help, and we had no comms with squadron. We needed to get indirect-fire, but for now we were on our own. Wally, the only one who could see around the burning bus, came over the net yelling about a fuel truck coming our way. His gunner, Sgt. Strahm, took out the driver with 25mm HE, but the truck still moved forward until it hit the bus.

Now Broadhead and I were going over options what to do, with the fuel truck so close to us. We would have to take it out. If not, they could use it against us later in the night. Broadhead fired his main gun into the fuel tanker. The whole night was lit up from the fire, and it burned for the next three days. We fought off three more small attacks on us, then we moved back up to the bridge to put more stand off from the troop. HQ gave us room to fall back, if we needed it.

On the way back up to the bridge, a car with his lights off hit the left-front of my Bradley. It didn't even slow us down — we went right over the top of it. The next morning we would find three enemy soldiers that had been crushed to death. I called my Commander and told him we had the bridge.

Christner's section was in the same boat as my section, but we had a bridge. If the Iraqi forces wanted to get at us from the east they needed it, and I was on it. Christner, on the other hand, had fields all the way around his section, so they could not pinpoint where the enemy would be coming from. We had made it thru the night and the sandstorm was slacking quite a bit: At this point, we could see about 800 meters. It was time to get fuel and ammo. We called up, and support platoon hauled right on time again.

I saw my commander, Captain Jeff McCoy, and we talked about what had happened last night. He told me his .50 cal. was tits-up, so I gave him the AK-47 I had picked up in As Samawah, and the ammo we had been collecting all night.

With Broadhead's M1 in the over watch, I moved to where we destroyed most of the vehicles that night, so I could call up the BDA. The Iraqis had come came at us in everything that had wheels: two busses, four cars, four Toyota trucks, one fuel tanker and three Iraqi Army trucks. I checked all the vehicles. Every one had soldiers in them with a shitload of weapons. There were a lot of dead men, more than I could count in the short time I had for my recon. It was well over 100, that I knew. There was no contact from my section the rest of the day. Then darkness, and it would be a whole new game.

Keep On Truckin' — Not

The first truck that came down the road had about 30 Iraqi soldiers in the back of it. My first shot was a 25mm



If it moved with hostile intent at Floyd, it was dead. Iraqi troops swarmed to the fray in everything that had wheels — and in the next episode several dozen track-layers as well.

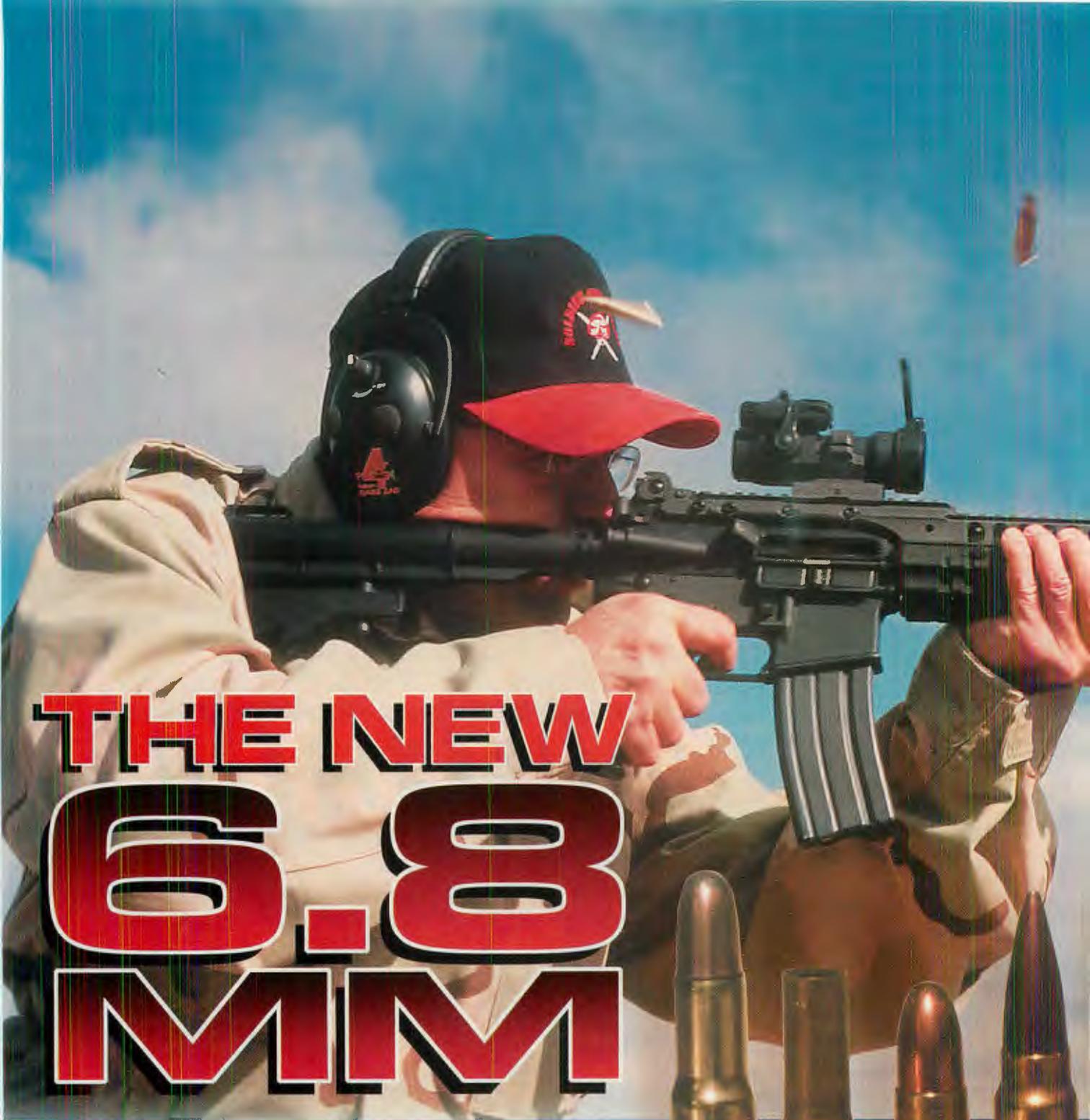
— all with weapons. They were right next to my Bradley. Sully got off the first shot with the 240B machine gun. Sully put 200 rounds of 7.62mm in them. I took out the truck with 25mm HE.

Broadhead, McAdams and Wild Wally were putting down a devastating base of fire into the Iraqis. The Iraqis had to know that we were there now — we had two burning vehicles on the road in front of us. We had not even finished firing-up the truck, when two more cars came down the road — wide open.

Lieutenant McAdams and I were firing coax into it, but it still rammed the lieutenant's Bradley. No one made it out of this car. They all died inside. McAdams pushed this car back up the road to block any more traffic.

Just as the lieutenant got back in his position, Soprano saw a bus coming down the road at a high rate of speed. I put a wall of tracers in front of it, but it did not stop. At the very last second, Soprano took out the driver with 25mm, blowing

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THE NEW 6.8 MM

Finally, The Story
Can Be Told!

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
GARY PAUL JOHNSTON





Any student of firearms sooner or later begins to study cartridges. One of the most interesting facets of cartridges is the intermediate, or “assault rifle” cartridge.

An intermediate-length rifle cartridge has a case length shorter than that of a traditional full-size cartridge such as the 63mm-long .30-06 case. Although various intermediate-length cartridges date from the end of the 19th Century, the concept was born in a 1934 German requirement, and the cartridge was in production by 1941. Contemporaneously, German development proceeded on weapons to fire this round, culminating in the successful StG44 (Sturm Gewehr), the first widely issued “assault rifle” designed for use at ranges from 0 to 300 yards or so, to fill the role of both assaulting enemy positions and repelling such assaults.

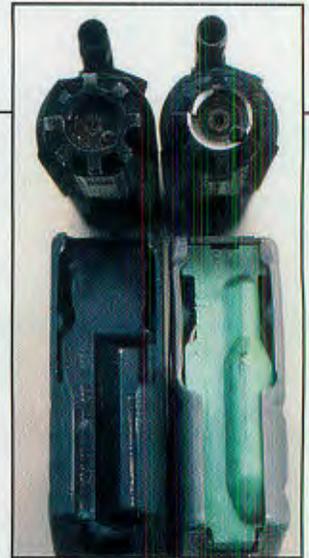
The early German weapons produced for this round were not widely issued, but the bulk of those produced were sent to the Russian front, and during WW II the Soviets mass-produced the 7.62x39mm (M43) cartridge for the SKS, and later developed the wildly successful the AK-47 to fire it.

The need for close-range firepower had been addressed in the Russian “Avtomat” of the WW I era that fired the relatively-weak 6.5 Japanese round from a large box magazine, and the American Pederson device that converted a Springfield rifle to fire a unique pistol-type round from a large box magazine, and early in WW II by the U.S. .30 Carbine, which was as close as anyone had come to getting the right balance between firepower and lethality, in a weapon designed to replace the pistol in the hands of troops whose primary function was not as infantry. But the Germans got it right the first time, with the Russians improving on the round and subsequently designing the benchmark Avtomat Kalashnikov rifle.

Although other promising designs came and went during this period, the U.S. didn’t develop an assault-rifle cartridge until the late 1950s, with the .223 Remington (5.56x45mm) designed by Robert Fremont and L. James Sullivan of Armalite. The Soviets

6.8mm REM SPC brass flies as Gil Angelotti runs some close-quarter drills with the 6.8mm Mk-12 Variant “Recce” Rifle. The gun proved quite controllable. (below) This lineup represents just part of the development that went into the 6.8 REM Special Purpose Cartridge. The two rounds at right are the 115-gr. Sierra and the 115-gr. Hornady 6.8mm REM SPC rounds.





(above) The 6.8mm Mk-12 Variant "Recce" Rifle seen from the right side with Aimpoint Comp M2 sight mounted and SOPMOD Mk-12 suppressor removed. The upper receiver was made by Lewis Machine & Tool Co., Inc. (inset) As compared with their 5.56x45mm counterparts, the 6.8mm REM SPC modified bolt is seen on the right while its magazine is seen on the left. As with the upper receivers, the bolt groups were made by Lewis Machine & Tool.

later countered with their 5.45x39mm round. All in all, there have been nearly one hundred —100— intermediate-length rifle cartridges developed during the last 65 years.

The intermediate-length assault-rifle cartridge is here to stay, but intermediate-length cartridges have generally been intermediate performers. Although rounds like the 5.56x45mm NATO and 5.45x39mm are accurate to much greater ranges than typical intermediate-length rounds, they fall into the category of cartridges used in varmint hunting, losing much of their energy beyond 300m. Now the Chinese have adopted a 5.8x42mm assault-rifle cartridge. What improvement this .23-caliber round will offer is unknown, but it is doubtful that it will greatly improve upon the performance of the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge.

However, what if there were an intermediate-length cartridge whose range and effectiveness were far superior to all others, and that was size-compatible with the 5.56x45mm M16 envelope?

The Global War On Terrorism

For more than a year, rumors have circulated of a new military cartridge. Although I am privileged to have kept abreast of the development of this new round from almost the beginning, I refrained from reporting on it until now. This was necessary to protect the project, to assure its getting into the hands of our front-line operators in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

Shortly after U.S. Special Forces deployed to remote areas

of Afghanistan following the atrocities of 9-11-2001, soldiers expressed an operational need for a weapon that fired the 7.62x39mm (M43) ammunition abundant with enemy forces there. Using captured ammunition would offset logistics problems in re-supplying 5.56x45mm NATO ammunition to these operators for their M4 Carbines. There was also a more anecdotal need for an improved incapacitation capability over what was being experienced with the 5.56mm M855 round used against determined al Qaeda.

Special Operations soldiers may not be small-arms technicians with engineering degrees, but they know and understand how their equipment works against the enemy and how his equipment works against them. Since Vietnam, the deadly combination of the AK-47 and its 7.62x39mm round has been well known and respected by those who have gone up against it.

Special Forces operators in Afghanistan reported shortcomings of the 5.56mm cartridge, especially at the close to medium ranges as used against a very determined adversary, the Taliban. Although most of their field reports were labeled "anecdotal," and not "empirical" data in Small Arms and Ammunition bureaucratese, these operators expressed the need for something more effective, just as their comrades had in Mogadishu, Somalia. This need prompted a few determined, dedicated senior soldiers of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) to quickly put their heads together to think outside of the .223/5.56mm "box." It was the beginning of a new Special Purpose Cartridge (SPC) Project Team.

An Interim Solution

Members of this user team were the ones assigned by

6.8mm REM SPC	
SPECIFICATIONS	
Parent Case:	.30 Remington
Bullet:	Hornady .277 (.270) 115-gr. Open Point Boattail Match
Ballistic Coefficient:	.350
	b 2.25"
Case Length:	43mm (1.69")
	b .422"
Primer:	Large Rifle
Propellant:	Classified
Charge:	Classified
Operating Pressure:	51,000 + - psi.
Muzzle Velocity:	2,625 + - fps. (16.5 bbl.)

USASOC and SOCOM to assist with the development of the Special Purpose Rifle (SPR) type-classified SOCOM Mk-12 rifle and the Mk-262 5.56x45mm 77-gr. ammunition. As reported by frontline soldiers, this combination has extended the hit/kill ratio in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), but the Mk-262 cartridge remains essentially an enhancement over the M855 63 gr. FMJ, with less than 100% effectiveness at the extended ranges typical in that theater. This round was intended as a quick interim capability, and not the true-capability cartridge that the users wanted for the long term, in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

Using combat, competition experience and lessons learned in the Mk-12 project, the team came up with a potential Soldier grassroots solution to the incapacitation shortfall occurring with 5.56mm ammunition. With Command approval, the Soldiers and technicians put together what may prove to be one of the better grassroots initiatives in military ammunition Combat and Force Protection in four decades.

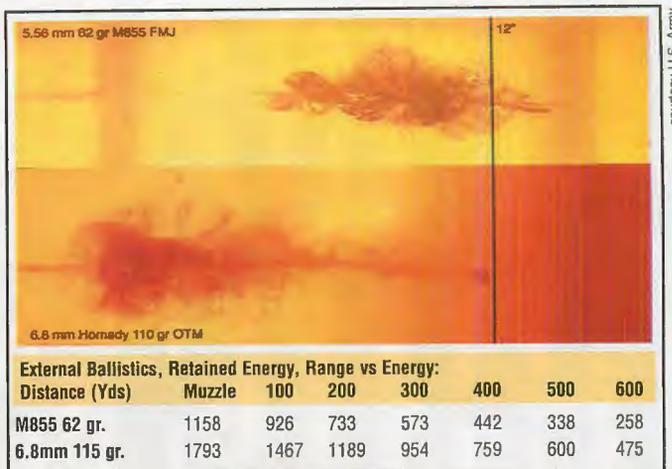
After evaluating the potential and performance of this capability, I hope that politics and the “not invented here” (NIH) syndrome of the lab infrastructures will not hamper what these Soldiers and technicians have accomplished, and that their goal of getting it to the young GIs who are in harm’s way will go unimpeded by those who seek recognition and other gains, such as career-enhancement.

Trying to put together the history of how the Project Team worked out the SPC has been difficult. These Special Forces guys are tough nuts to crack and they really know how to play the tap-dance game when it comes to answering questions. Running into some of the project team members on several occasions, I got a very professional and courteous, “Sorry, Sir, I don’t know what you are referring to,” or, “Sorry, Sir, no insult intended, but that info is not releasable at this time.” As a result, through other industry sources, I have pieced it together. Here’s the gist of it.

The Search Begins

Convinced that the problem could be overcome, the Project Team began a quest for a Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) parent cartridge case, from which to provide a proof-of-concept improved cartridge, to generate support. This cartridge format needed to work in the M4/M16’s envelope. After many discussions and extensive research on past and present intermediate cartridges, Mr. Cris Murray, Master M16 Gunsmith, U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU), recommended that the Project Team Leader consider the .30 Remington case, a rimless version of the .30-30 Winchester round that was more or less obsolete.

After reviewing the .30 Remington drawing specifications in the book *Cartridges of the World*, the SPC Project Team Leader did initial draft prototype drawings and sent them to Cris Murray for translation onto an Auto CAD 14 computer program. Next he located a quantity of old .30 Remington cases at a sporting goods store and bought them at his own expense to see what could be done literally with a hammer



This photo illustrates the difference in performance between the M855, 5.56x45 NATO round (top) and the 6.8mm REM SPC using the Hornady bullet.



Three early experimental 6.8 upper-receiver groups show a conceptual SPR Mk-12, a 16.5-inch barrel SPR-D, and a 12-inch barrel CQB (Close-Quarter-Battle) version. The middle component is one of the first mid-length gas systems to be tested and was the basis for the “Recce” rifle. The CQB version was designed to function with the OPS, Inc. SOPMOD suppressor.

and a hacksaw.

To this veteran soldier, drawings were a two-dimensional accoutrement of engineers, but tangible “see-it-feel-it-shape-it” would provide the basis for Good Idea or Worthwhile Endeavor, a quest for the Grail, so to speak. He found that the .30 Remington case’s overall length (OAL) of 52mm took it out the class of intermediate-length assault rifle cartridges, so he hand-formed a sample cartridge down to fit into the M16 magazine envelope by cutting off a .25 Remington full-length sizing die, and used this prototype round to brief his commander to seek approval for moving ahead with the concept. Thus, the first prototype was a

.257 SPC. Approval was granted, and a Mission Need Statement (MNS) was approved and submitted by the Commander, 5th SFG (A), and sent forward for further approval and support by Higher Headquarters Special Forces Command (Abn).

Although the original .30 Remington case was too long, it has a head diameter of only .422 in. as compared with .445 in. for the 7.62x39mm. This is closer to the .378 in. head diameter of the 5.56x45mm case and it meant that the round would stack better in the M16 magazine’s external dimensions, and that the M16 bolt face and extractor would not have to be altered as much as required with the 7.62x39mm round.

After establishing an OAL of 43mm for the modified case, the Project Team began an initial dummy cartridge review to determine the best caliber size for improved Combat and Force Protection performance, along with close quarter battle (CQB) and vehicle ambush distances, and still get the performance to accurately engage enemy ambushes by rocket propelled grenades (RPG’s) and such, out to 500m.

The dynamics of the prototype cartridge case remained the same throughout the review of projectile dimensions of various calibers tested. These included the 5.56mm (with a

Continued on page 74

IN THE CROSSHAIRS

“Nothing Personal” For USMC Scout-Snipers

TEXT & PHOTOS BY DALE B. COOPER



THE military doesn't like to talk publicly about them. There's just something "uncivilized" about snuffing-out lives like cigarette butts, but snipers are a fact of life in warfare.

The late, great Marine Corps sniper, Carlos Hathcock, told this reporter, "There was nothing personal about my 98 confirmed kills in Vietnam. It was just business." And nobody is any better at the business of firing from concealed positions than Scout-Snipers [8541s] in the United States Marine Corps.

This is a tale of a sniper and a scout in the Surveillance Target Acquisition, or STA Platoon, attached to 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, both of whom felt like proverbial Maytag repairmen waiting for a call that never came until they reached Baghdad, three weeks after they and other Marines in 1/5 invaded Iraq.

Marine Sergeant Dagan R. Vanoosten, chief sniper and scout for 1/5, was attached to Charlie Company on the opening night of the war, 20 March 2003. Corporal Damon A. Wolfe, a scout in the STA Platoon, was attached to Alpha Company, 2nd Platoon, in the "Fighting Fifth," the most decorated battalion in the United States Marine Corps.

Vanoosten, a 23-year-old Marine, didn't take a shot on the opening night of the war. Charlie 1/5 was tasked to set a ring of security around GOSP-4, a Gas and Oil Separation Plant, in the Rumalya oilfields just inside the border in southern Iraq.

"My spotter and I didn't see anything to shoot at as British Army engineers checked the plant to make sure the Iraqis hadn't wired it for remote demolition," said Vanoosten, who learned the tricks of his trade at the "Schoolhouse For Snipers" at Quantico Marine Base, in Virginia.

Wolfe, at 25, who was not trained at the Schoolhouse, but went through a sniper-indoctrination course on Okinawa three years ago, also failed to fire his M40A1 sniper rifle the first night of the war. However, he did rip-off a few rounds on the morning after the invasion.

2nd Platoon had right flank security for Alpha Co. at PST-2, an Iraqi pumping station along the southern terminus of a long oil pipeline that stretched more than 400 miles from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf. Wolfe and his spotter had dug in atop a small knoll on the otherwise flat desert floor facing the rising sun to the east of the pumping station.

Bloody Encounter

Just after daylight on 21 March, the first of two truckloads of Iraqi soldiers in pickups came barreling down a dirt road in front of Alpha Company's position.

"I has just gotten to my feet and was headed back to our track when my spotter who was covering my back opened fire with his, Squad Automatic Weapon [M249 SAW] as the first truck approached our "pos," said Wolfe. By the time he got turned around and into a firing position, the first truck had made it safely by his position. But Wolfe and his spotter stopped a second truck 100 yards before it got to their position.

"It was coming down the road about 50 miles per hour," said Wolfe who got three shots off with his bolt-action sniper rifle at about 300 meters out, before the truck closed in. Needing more firepower, he picked up his M16, and fired a mag-and-a-half, about 45 rounds, into the truck, slowing it, but failing to stop it.

Second Lieutenant Therrel "Shane" Childers, 2nd Platoon's leader, was mortally wounded by the Iraqis who were "spraying and praying" where he was standing. Childers was always out front of his platoon, and this time he was near the road as the truck sped by.

"I heard on the radio that we had a man down, but I didn't know what had happened until we stopped the truck," said Wolfe who was trying to alert "Two Actual," Childers' call sign, to what had happened. But Wolfe got no response on the intersquad radio.

Childers, a former enlisted Marine, was hit in the abdomen just below his body armor. Some Marines in his platoon think Kevlar plates in his vest were hiked-up an inch or two when he raised his M16 to engage the enemy, but he never fired a shot. Before he could pull the trigger, an AK-47 round entered his body just below the armor vest he wore, and shattered his liver.

This reporter was a couple of hundred yards away at the command Humvee of Counter Mech platoon, an anti-armor

team that was screening Alpha Co., when the first of several calls came over the battalion radio net for help.

The first call was for a rare type of blood, A-Negative. The next "urgent" call was for a medevac out of Kuwait. Then came the call for Childers' "Social." Nobody needed to say more. When someone calls for your social security number, it means only one thing: That individual is no longer among the living.

Childers was also the first Marine to die in combat.

In his journal, Lieutenant Colonel Fred Padilla, 1/5's commander, writes that Childers bled to death before he could be Cas-Evaced.

"The Marines and Sailors [corpsmen] of A Co. and the rest of the battalion were saddened by this terrible loss," wrote Padilla, who added, "It underscores that this is not a game." The two Navy corpsmen assigned to Alpha Company tried desperately to save Lt. Childer's life. Padilla remembers they had blood up to their elbows and tears streaming down their cheeks.

Both Captain Blair Sokol, the 6-foot-7-inch company commander who played defensive tackle at the United States

Naval Academy and was Alpha's Forward Air Controller who called-in the medevac, also blinked back tears.

"Hondo," as the battalion commander was known on the radio, explained to everyone looking down at Childer's lifeless body as it lay on the rear ramp of the ambulance amtrac that 1/5 couldn't remember, mourn or pay tribute to Shane the way they'd like to.

"There is more fighting ahead," said Hondo, "and that is where our focus must be now."

After Childer's was hit, his platoon attacked the Iraqis who shot him and killed or wounded all seven of them. In all, 1/5 was responsible for 24 enemy KIA by direct fire, 10 wounded and countless KIAs

by artillery and CAS or close-air support missions during the first few hours of the war in southern Iraq.

Wolfe also entered a brief comment in the notebook he carried. "Four dead, two wounded, and seven EPWs." Wolfe told me he killed one of the Iraqis as he crawled out of a roll of carpet in the bed of the second pickup.

In addition to making his men sad, the sudden death of Lt. Childers also made his men angry. Some wanted to kill the Iraqi prisoners, but cooler heads prevailed.

On Sunday morning, just before dawn on 13 December, this reporter called Judy and Joe Childers, in Wyoming, to inform them that Saddam Hussein had been captured. They expressed gratitude that the Iraqi dictator had been captured and no longer would terrorize his people.

Dry Spell Ends

On 1 April, Sgt. Vanoosten finally got to fire his M40. He was riding with First Lieutenant Jeremy Stalnecker, Counter Mech's platoon commander, when the anti-armor team rolled up to the Saddam Hussein Canal behind Bravo Company tracs. From atop the Hummer, Vanoosten apparently fired the



USMC photo by Sgt. Kevin Reed

Sgt. Dagan Vanoosten (right) on Barrett .50-caliber special-application scoped rifle with one of his scouts, Corporal Richard Mapes, on roof of Al Azimiyah Palace, along the Tigris River in Baghdad. (opposite) Close-up of Vanoosten on palace roof with his hand-crafted (at the USMC Marksmanship Training Unit, at Quantico) M40A3, 7.62mm, heavy-barrel sniper rifle, with special 10-power Unertl scope. The rifle is a modified Remington Model 700 with a McMillan fiberglass stock, modified Winchester Model 70 floorplate and trigger guard, and modified and lightened trigger with Harris bipod.



Sgt. Vanoosten with M40A3 sniper rifle along Highway One. (right) Cpl. Damon Wolfe, Cpl. James Bowman, Cpl. Mathias Hansen, Sgt. Jeffrey Schecter.



USMC photo

first shot of the battle that lasted fewer than 45-minutes.

Vanoosten fired his heavy-barrel Remington model 700 at a ZSU-23/Tac 4, a 23mm, four-barrelled anti-aircraft gun dug into a bunker on the other side of the canal.

Although outgunned, Vanoosten kept the Iraqi gunners off-balance by bouncing Match Grade 7.62mm rounds off the steel plates in front of them, making it difficult for them to bring their gun to bear on his buddies.

"I think I shot at it out of fear," laughed Vanoosten as he reconstructed what he witnessed on April Fool's Day.

Vanoosten's buddy, Sergeant Chad Vanbuskirk, in TOW-1 was too close to fire a missile at the gun emplacement, but was able to engage the enemy position with his M240G medium machine gun.

While Vanoosten ducked behind the CMP's command Hummer and reloaded his sniper rifle, Sergeant Steve Oldham up in the turret behind his MK19 heavy machine gun and other gunners in the platoon, including Lance Corporal Dominique Chevalier on the M2 .50 cal. in my Hummer, lit up

the "Zeus" like a Christmas tree, touching-off an ammo cache at the rear of the bunker that shredded the crew like confetti.

The battle was brief, but chaotic. Enemy artillery and mortar rounds were falling all around us. A 120mm mortar round hit the ground and exploded in my face, about 30 yards from where I was filming the battle. CMP's first section leader, Staff Sergeant Brian Jackway, was standing about 15 feet behind me directing his section's heavy machine guns, .50 cal. and MK19s during the firefight when the mortar round hit. The explosion blew him off his feet, but he quickly recovered, oriented his section's fire and systematically destroyed the ZSU 23-4, a 120mm position and a D-30 artillery-battery position. For his zealous initiative, courageous actions, and exceptional dedication to duty, Jackway, who was promoted to Gunnery Sergeant after the war, was awarded the Bronze Star with combat "V."

Lieutenant Stalneck, who was nominated for a Bronze Star with combat "V," was also bracketed by enemy rounds as his Humvee maneuvered along the canal bank. He and his driver, Corporal Ryan Guillard, were shaken like rag dolls by several rounds impacting nearby. Miraculously, everyone in Counter Mech, including this reporter, dodged the bullet that day.

Second Lieutenant David Denial of Bravo Company, who



USMC photo by Cpl. Travis Brozowski

Iraqi soldiers who killed 2nd Lt. Shane Childers and were in turn killed by gunners in his platoon in Rumalyah oil fields on first day of the war.

was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V," told me he counted at least 20 enemy rounds falling in among his tracs and Counter Mech platoon.

One round killed a flock of sheep. "One minute they were grazing, the next minute they were gone," said Denial, "Only a few patches of blood-stained wool on the ground."

Once across the canal, Vanoosten fired at two Iraqis in another bunker before Corporal Jeremy Mahon, my vehicle commander, destroyed the bunker with an AT-4 rocket. But it would be another nine days before Vanoosten and Wolfe would take another shot with their sniper rifles.

Battle Of Baghdad

Sergeant Vanoosten rode into the north side of Baghdad in the early morning hours of 10 April atop First Lieutenant Pat Henry's armored assault vehicle. Henry was in command of the 81mm mortar platoon in Weapons Company, 1/5. Once small-arms fire began ricocheting off the AAV, Vanoosten climbed inside the armored hull of the assault vehicle.

Corporal Wolfe drove a high-back Humvee into the Iraqi capital with five other members of the STA platoon in the back. Wolfe fired his weapon at muzzle flashes as he drove down darkened streets and boulevards crawling with Republican Guard troops and Fedeyeen guerrillas loyal to Saddam Hussein.

"It was pretty hectic," said Wolfe, who just kept driving and firing.

Because of heavy enemy fire in Baghdad, Vanoosten rotated his four-man team, one at a time, to the firing platform in Henry's AAV, but he advised them to conserve ammunition. Vanoosten told team members the real fight would come later at the objective, the Al Azimiyah Palace on the Tigris River, one of Saddam's favorite hangouts.

It was during one of those overhead watches that Corporal Michael Gary, Vanoosten's SAW gunner, was blown back into the crew compartment by an RPG that hit the side of the assault vehicle and exploded.

"I thought Gary was dead," said Vanoosten as he saw his friend fall onto the floor of the trac. But he had only been knocked unconscious. His Squad Automatic Weapon was hanging by its bipod. Vanoosten cleaned debris out of the barrel, handed the weapon back to Gary and told him sit tight until they reached the palace.

The STA platoon rolled into the grounds of the 17-acre compound at about 0600, and provided security for Army Special Forces who swept the palace to make sure there were no Iraqis lurking in the shadows of the bombed-out building.

Once SF said "All clear," Wolfe and his spotter ran up stairways to the roof, a move not as tactically sound as they would have preferred.

"Everytime we stuck our heads above the facade that ringed the south wing of the palace, someone would take a shot at us," said Wolfe, who retreated downstairs to a room facing a busy neighborhood. There he set up an "urban hide site" up against the wall of a room, about 20 feet from windows that had been blown-out by satellite-guided bombs the night before.

"We piled up some pieces of concrete and other rubble," said Wolfe as he described making a place where he spent the next 10 to 12 hours.

From the shadows, Wolfe could see his targets, but they couldn't see him.

Lying in among chunks of concrete wasn't very comfortable, Wolfe had just gotten to his feet, and was about ready to seek a better hide site when his spotter saw an Iraqi soldier in an alley about 350 yards away. By the time, Wolfe got back down into position, the enemy soldier disappeared.

But a few minutes later, he reappeared, darting in and out of some civilian houses, trying to get up high where he could snipe at Marines in the palace.

"I got him when he stepped to a window," said Wolfe. One shot? "Yeah, one shot," replied Wolfe. With a 10-power Unertl sniper scope, Wolfe says everything in Baghdad was "up close and personal." He looked into the man's face before he pulled the trigger and saw him go down hard. Wolfe's partner with a 50-power spotting scope could see the man's facial expression at the moment of impact.

"The guy I shot had an AK-47," said Wolfe, "but I don't know what he thought he was going to do with an assault rifle at that range."

There was another guy in the room with an RPG.

But he bailed out of there when his buddy got blown-away. Wolfe got him about an hour later as he tried to hide behind a concrete wall outside the house. Wolfe ended the war with seven confirmed kills. Most of them in the 300-yard range, but he did masterfully nail an Iraqi at 650 yards.

From his hide site in the palace, Wolfe dropped that enemy soldier as he ran up a set of steps in a building several blocks away clutching a couple of AK-47s in his hands. It was a difficult shot, because the intended target was on the move.

"If they had a weapon, we could shoot them," said Wolfe, "Those were the rules of engagement."

Although Wolfe recorded some long-distance shots, his team leader owns the bragging rights in STA platoon. That kill occurred 30 to 40 miles south of Baghdad. It involved an Iraqi spotter who had been directing mortars at Marine artillery from a tall concrete silo complex along Highway One. The cannon-cockers couldn't see him, but Corporal James Bowman could through his 10-power scope.

"Bowman hit him in the head at 840 yards," said Wolfe who was impressed.

When Sgt. Vanoosten arrived at the palace in Baghdad, he and his spotter got on the roof of the north wing. Before setting-up his weapon, Vanoosten checked out the platoon's fields of fire for the "Big Gun," a .50-caliber Barrett Sniper Rifle. Corporal Richard Mapes, one of the scouts, took Vanoosten from index point to index point in their sector. Satisfied the Barrett could reach the far limits of their sector, Vanoosten found himself a firing position on the wall that surrounded the top of the palace.

"A few minutes after we set-up," said Vanoosten, "We also came under enemy fire from neighborhoods near the palace. That situation changed when Alpha and Charlie Companies fanned out, going house-to-house in an affluent neighborhood, searching for Saddam Hussein who had been seen in the ritzy Mansour District of northeast Baghdad.

"They drew away a lot of the fire, and allowed us to scope

Continued on page 78



POLICE/MILITARY EQUIPMENT

- BATONS
- BODY ARMOR
- HANDCUFFS
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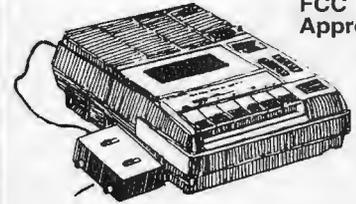
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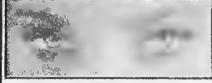
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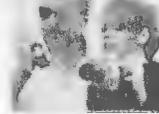
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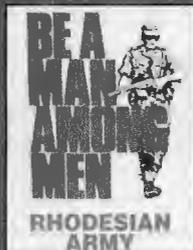


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VETERAN HUNTERS

SOF's 2003 Elk Hunt

BY COL. MIKE PECK, USA (RET.)

PHOTOS BY PAUL AVALLONE

At this point, probably the only people who recognize why Veterans Day is celebrated on 11 November are historians and readers of this magazine. The reason for selecting that particular day, of course, is that the armistice of World War I took place on 11 November 1918, when the fighting ceased. Originally it was known as Armistice Day; but since the "war to end all wars" fell somewhat short of the mark, 11 November has now evolved into "Veterans Day".

"Armistice" literally means a "coming to a stop" or laying down of arms, but in a small corner of northwestern Colorado this year, Armistice/Veterans Day meant a taking-up of arms. In this case, however, a group of veterans went forth, not in defense of the United States, but to participate in an elk hunt, which merely provided the pretext for a gathering of soldiers — not only to be back in the field with rifles in hand, but to reminisce, to relive old battles, and to learn about the current situations in Afghanistan and Iraq from a new generation of warriors. As in former years, Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Brown, USAR (Ret.), Editor and Publisher of *SOF*, was the organizer and host of this outing, inviting his usual eclectic mix of interesting and colorful people.

Although it had not been planned, the hunters that showed up this year spanned three generations of U.S. soldiers. This trans-generational mix prompted many discussions and swapping of stories and experiences, resulting in a sort of intellectual cross-pollination of ideas and attitudes towards past and present conflicts.

To add additional interest to the outing, a Norwegian film crew consisting of John Sullivan, the cameraman, and Mads Olsen, who handles the sound, joined the group to film an American hunting party in action. They have been all over the world making documentaries of interesting activities and events, and traveled to Afghanistan to do a film on U.S. Special Forces where they met up with Paul Avallone, who was there with the 20th SFGA. Paul mentioned the hunt in an e-mail, which prompted John and Mads to grab their sound and video equipment and jump on a plane at the last minute to fly from Oslo to Denver. And there they were — both great guys.

For this year's adventure, Bob worked with Jim Wright, who runs a hunters' bunkhouse and meal service near Maybelle, located on Route 40 about 100 miles west of Steamboat Springs. Although tempted by Jim's cuisine, which we all tried at one point or another, and the possibility of a hot shower when needed, Bob opted to set up his own fire-base, as we have done in the past. Living in tents out in the wilderness and telling war stories around a blazing campfire is generally more conducive to the unique sense of cama-

raderie which always characterizes an *SOF* Hunting Camp.

Let The Season Begin

Elk season started on 7 November, and, although everyone was out in full force early in the morning, there were no sightings within range. When everyone got back to camp, we instituted the pattern that we followed for the rest of the hunt: establishing or reinforcing that ancient bond that inevitably occurs when a group of guys band together to form a primeval hunting party — or when they go to war.

That afternoon I went out with Bob to scout the ridge to the west of camp. As most people already know, Brown is a Vietnam vet, having served an from July 1968 to September 1969. He was the commander of Special Forces Team A-334 operating out of Tong Le Chon, where he picked up a Purple Heart, not through his choosing. For this trip he was not carrying an M16, but a Stainless Weatherby Mark V Fluted in .300 Weatherby Magnum, with a Bausch & Lomb Elite 3200 3 x 9 variable scope. My own Vietnam experiences spanned the entire conflict: an extended tour from 1965 to 1966 in II Corps as an A-Team XO and C-Team assistant S3 with the 5th SFGA, another extended tour in 1968-69 as a company commander and brigade assistant S-3 with the 9th Division in the Delta, and finally in I Corps in 1970-71 as the S3 of the 1-327 of the 101st ABN (AMBL). Slow learner. We spent several hours walking or standing, with me swinging wide from time to time to spook any errant elk across Bob's field of fire. It was a no-go, however, and we went back to camp where everyone reported the same lack of activity.

Well known gun-writer Chuck Karwan fixed spaghetti with a meat sauce made of bits and pieces of everything that walketh and creepeth upon the earth. Chuck went to Indochina in 1970 after graduating from West Point and attending Airborne, Ranger (Honor Grad), and Jungle Warfare Schools. He served as a platoon leader and company commander with the 1st Cavalry Division, which at that time was Westmoreland's fire brigade and was always in the thick of the fight. His interest in firearms and weapons was whetted when he was a cadet because of all the great artifacts in the West Point museum, and he is now one of the foremost experts in the world on the subject.

Paul Avallone had appointed himself fire marshal and cut wood for the evening bonfire, the first of many, and, as the shadows lengthened, we all shuffled up around the blaze to stare into the fire and remember the ghosts from battles fought in far away and often unpronounceable places. As the conversation meandered, everyone shared their experiences in the self-effacing, rough-and-tumble manner of the professional soldiers that we were — or had been.



That night was typical of our stay, the temperature dropping to just below freezing under a cloudless sky, chimerically illuminated by a full moon elusively assisted by an infinite panoply of stars extending to the very end of the visible galaxy.

The next morning both Scott Blaney and Scott Chiasson were up and away early. Scott Blaney is a retired Lt. Col. and Scott Chiasson is an active duty major, both working at the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. They drove up together and generally hunted together. Meanwhile, the rest of us remained in our sleeping bags to check our eyelids for holes when it got light, just in case. At about 0715, when everyone was getting up and about, John Sullivan yelled, "Elk!", and there ensued a mad scramble for boots, rifles, and ammunition. Steve Schreiner, who had set up his own tent, was way ahead of everyone else. While John acted as an informal spotter, Steve took up a kneeling position with his Springfield National Match M1A, sighted through a 3x9 ARTS, and coolly dropped a cow elk with one shot to the neck at 227 measured yards. The animal was moving to the left and uphill at an ambling gait, but one Remington 150-grain Core-Lokt bullet did the job. By the time the other hunters were ready and in position, the herd was racing flat-out away from the camp, and no one wanted to risk a running shot at that distance. Of course, everyone ragged Steve for not shooting it without unzipping his sleeping bag, but we all knew it was a remarkable shot. It was not surprising, though, since not only is he a Vietnam vet, but a dedicated rifleman.

He got to Vietnam in 1968 as an Airborne/Ranger 1st Lieutenant assigned to the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, where he served as a platoon leader and company commander during the intense fighting that took place in Long Khan Province in III Corps, before transferring to MACV as an RF/PF advisor. In addition to the Bronze Star with "V," Steve was awarded the Silver Star for holding off an entire NVA

Veterans all — or almost all. (left to right) Col. Mike Peck, Capt. Chuck Karwan, Lt. Col. Scott Blaney, Major Scott Chiasson, Lt. Col. Robert Brown, Sgt. Devin Benson, and the only non-vet, but all-around good guy, John Higgs, originally from England. And who says "assault rifles" are not "hunting rifles?" Karwan carries a Springfield M1A in the Scout Rifle configuration; Higgs a DSA FAL.

Regiment one night with a force of only 9 guys. Throughout his tour, he used an M16 with a Lyman 4-power scope that he attached to his rifle with a homemade mount fashioned in-country with a hammer and file. A serious guy.

While he was cleaning and skinning his prize, with the Norwegian film crew getting it all on tape, Bob, John Higgs, and I quickly consulted the map then set off into what we hoped might be a good ambush position for the elk herd. We figured it was probably circling around the hill mass to the north and would emerge near where we were waiting.

John was using a DSA, Inc. FAL clone in the carbine version. His choice of scope was the Leupold Vari-X II (1 x 4 power) on the DSA dust cover mount. For his pre-hunt sighting-in, he had been using 180-grain bullets, but was not satisfied with the groups he was getting. After discussions with Chuck, who had arrived early from Oregon, he switched to Winchester Ballistic Silvertips weighing 168-grains, which gave significantly better groups. John is a computer consultant who writes business applications for corporate enterprises. Although a Londoner by birth, John has become an American citizen, and, ironically, is now an NRA Certified Training Counselor and Firearms Instructor, in addition to having graduated from Gunsite and completed a number of courses in combat marksmanship.

We hunted the area for several hours, but the herd had apparently continued north without hugging the hills as we had hoped.

We arrived back in camp just as Scott, Sr. and Scott, Jr.



(above) SOF hunters return to base camp after digging out a stuck jeep. (right) Publisher Robert K. Brown recharges cell phone with Brunton's Solarroll 14. "Works like a charm," Brown said. Produces 14 watts; charged phone in 45 minutes.

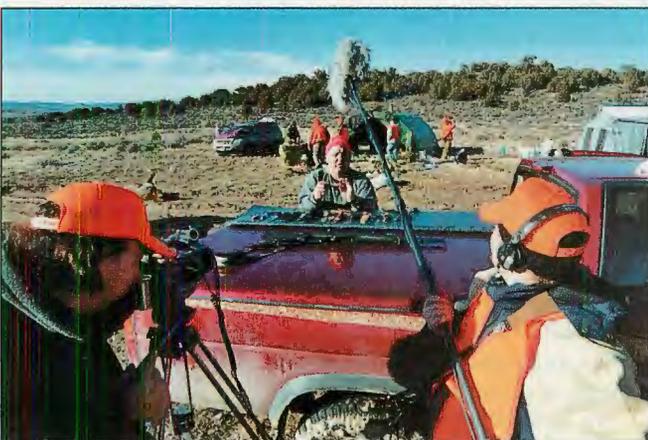


returned from a fruitless stalk several miles to the southwest. They had unkind things to say when we smirkingly told them that Steve's elk herd had come through minutes after their early departure from camp.

After a series of anecdotes that went on for most of the early afternoon about great shots that we had seen, both in and out of combat, we all set off again at about 1530, everyone's appetite whetted by Steve's success. Although we had the ground around the camp fairly well covered, our elk herd was either layin' low or in the next county. John and Chuck conspired to make chili from the leftover spaghetti sauce, which turned out to be surprisingly good, after which we once again bellied up to Paul's campfire to talk elk tactics, guns and equipment, reflect upon the state of the world in general, or, as Scott Chiasson called it, "just watchin' Ranger television."

At about 0730 the next day, the two Scotts spotted a small herd to the northeast of camp, but they had just been fired upon and were moving too rapidly and at too great a distance to venture a decent shot. That was the only sighting close to camp all day, but later on the Scott2 Team saw several herds

on what they felt was a migration route located to the south of our location. Scott Blaney's military and civilian service was of particular interest to this group because it spanned all the recent wars. He went to Vietnam in 1971 as a helicopter pilot, spending an eventful year in I Corps flying a variety of combat missions out of *Phu Bai*, west into the *A Shau Valley*, and north along the DMZ. (We discovered that we had both been in the same area at about the same time.) He got out, but in 1978 came back in, spending most of his inter-war time flying in Germany. In December 1990 he went off to the



Norwegian TV crew, which filmed Special Forces operations in Afghanistan, get Safari Magazine's Cutlery Editor Karwan's opinions on hunting knives.



Brown (far right) carries .300 Weatherby Magnum with B&L's Elite 3200 scope. Brown thought Norwegians were crazy for filming such a non-event, but as he said, "It's their time and money."

Persian Gulf War as the commander of A Co, 7th Bn, 159th Aviation Regiment, working for both the 2nd ACR and the 11th Aviation Brigade. After retiring, he went to work at the CALL at Ft. Leavenworth and has subsequently been to both Afghanistan and Iraq, collecting lessons learned data and compiling the results as input for future training programs. Needless to say, all conversations with him were both interesting and informative.

Everyone got up early on Tuesday to stake out the elk free-way scouted out by Scott & Scott the previous day. Paul volunteered to watch the camp. He was one of the second-generation warriors who had joined Special Forces in 1978, serving in Panama with the 7th SFGA before getting out to pursue a career as a photographer and a Hollywood screenwriter. He remained in the National Guard, however, and was in Afghanistan with ODA 2025, 20th SF, along the Pakistani Border from September 2002 until April 2003. His adventures in that unhappy place have been chronicled in *SOF* (Dec 03 to present) and he has several more articles in the works.

The rest of us drove out to the selected site where we were deployed by Scott Chiasson along a broad front with about 200 meters between elements. Scott Jr. was one of our more interesting characters, a New Orleans Cajun who went from wrestling alligators and rough-necking on oil rigs to flying AH-64A Apache Attack Helicopters. While waiting to attend the Command and General Staff College, he was assigned to the CALL, which sent him to Afghanistan where he headed-up a team that worked with the 3d Brigade of the 82nd ABN to collect data from all the major combat areas. Soon after returning to Kansas to write up his findings, he was sent to Kuwait and assigned to the G-3 section of the 3d Infantry Division and went into Iraq with them. He returned to Leavenworth in late May, only to lead another lessons-learned team back to Iraq in September to collect more information for the CALL.

Although we were surrounded by all these hard-core characters, Bob Brown, Chuck, and I sort of cheated and remained in a huddle, each of us watching a different sector; while John Higgs anchored the right flank at the proper interval. Everyone was primed and ready. After about an hour with no action, Scott Blaney went up on top of the hill mass to our front, in an attempt to drive any migrating elk, or those that might be holed-up in one of the ravines, into our positions. At about this point Bob, Chuck, and I became worried that the on-board equipment in the Cherokee might have gotten broken, so we quietly sneaked aboard to check it out. To our relief, we discovered that all was in order, although we ran the heater full out for a long time — just to be sure it was OK.

Refusal To Play

Unfortunately, as so often happens with the best laid plans of mice and men, our efforts were in vain, and the truculent elk refused to play. The Norwegians, however, got some great footage of an off-limits spike elk that came within 75 yards of Scott Chiasson, who tracked it through a Bushnell Sharpshooter 3 x 9 on a see-through mount atop his 7 mm Magnum Remington 700. He was using Winchester 150-grain Soft Points, but, to everyone's disappointment, couldn't touch one off. At least John and Mads got some decent camera shots.

Both are truly interesting guys. John Sullivan studied filmmaking at NYU, and since graduating has done documentaries, short films, music videos, commercials, and now a feature — an American elk hunt. Both are seasoned adventurers, and took the mud, the tents, and the rigors of camp (Chuck's cooking) in stride.

Finally, at about 0900, we called ENDEX, although everyone agreed that it had been a good plan and well-executed.

Everyone else went back out early, but Bob, Chuck, Paul, and I remained in camp for a little down time. At about 1400, when everyone was in the tent working on their notes or inspecting the equipment that Bob Brown had brought for us to test, Paul Avallone raised the hue and cry, "Elk!"

There was a repeat of Monday's galvanizing rush for rifles and ammunition. We had all been in the tent and it was only the fact that Paul had gone outside that he saw a herd of 40-odd elk moving right to left at a rapid lope about 150 meters to the north of camp. Chuck was out first, carrying a Springfield M1A in the Scout Rifle configuration, with an 18 inch barrel *cum* muzzle brake. He had it loaded up with



Firearms Coalition of Colorado Vice President, and Vietnam vet, Steve Schreiner, dropped this cow elk at 227 yards with his Springfield National Match M1A with 3 x 9 ARTS with one shot to the neck with a Remington 150-grain Core-Lokt.

Winchester .308 cartridges with the 168-grain Ballistic Tip bullets. In keeping with the Scout Rifle set-up, he employed the long eye relief Leupold Scout Scope of 3-power magnification mounted forward of the receiver. Interestingly, he advocates rifles in the .308/.30-06 category for elk, since he does not believe in long shots. His contention is that the heavier calibers with their greater range often tempt guys to try for the long ones, which often end up only wounding the animals, when over-eager hunters try to shoot beyond their capability. He also likes the lower power scopes for hunting, since, "if the animal looks too far away, it usually is". These were not, but, as an out-of-state hunter, he only had a bull tag, and, since those guys were all up front leading the herd, most had already gone by, to disappear into the pine forest to the northwest. Bummer! Bob had both bull and cow licenses, and was able to get a shot off, just as the last of the herd was moving into the stand of pine. One of the cows had strayed slightly to the right away from the main body, about 150 meters away and moving at a steady trot. Just as Bob fired, however, she

Continued on page 79

STRIKING AT THE

HEROIN TRADE

With SF In Afghanistan **PART 2**

A National-Guard Special Forces A-Team from Alabama-based 20th Group, ODA 2025 recently spent seven months deployed to eastern Afghanistan. The story of the team's missions against the Taliban-run opium/heroin trade continues now, as the team, on the road with some of its MRF (Mobile-Reaction Force — the Afghan militia the team formed, equipped, trained and led) hours before dawn, was now, in the gray light just before sunrise, about to hit a pair of suspected processing labs in the foothills of the Toro Bora Mountains, a fiercely pro-Taliban area.

We were looking for action, and this was going to be it. Laval and our Senior Weapons Sergeant, Jason, had been out there the day before on a recon. Dressed in "hajjillage," riding with the source in a nondescript Toyota that looked like a taxi, they'd managed to safely get a few clicks away on a ridge without raising suspicions. They did not stay long, for fear of being compromised, but it was from their observations and sketches that we drew up our plan.

The dirt road we'd be traveling went through a village set amidst terraced poppy fields that at that time of year were barren. The road then swept back around at an incline along a ridgeline and ran about a klick to the two walled compounds in question, both on the left. The two compounds themselves were about two hundred meters apart, and the road, according the Laval and Jason, ended at the second. Behind both compounds was a ravine of terraced fields, eliminating that direction as an approach for us.

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
PAUL AVALLONE

Thousands of gallons of acetic acid anhydrate burn.

We would be hitting both compounds simultaneously. That meant splitting the team — half the ODA hitting the second compound, half the first. We'd be in eight trucks, all Toyotas. We in our three four-door 4WD gas Tacomas brought from the States, and our four squads of MRF in their 4-door diesel Hi-Luxes.

The lead truck would be Buba Jon's, since he knew the complicated route through the rural landscape to get there. Next would be Captain Jim and his half of the split team. The first two trucks, along with the next two MRF trucks, would drive past the first compound and hit the second. The rest of us, including Terry and his team in his Tacoma, me and our TPT (Tactical Psyops Team), Rob and Fuchs, in mine, and two MRF trucks bringing up the rear, would hit the first compound.

A squad of MRF would go to the flanks and rear of each compound for security, while the remaining squads would enter each compound behind our assault elements: Jim's team for the far compound, Terry's for the near, with Jason and "demo" Chuck, respectively, assigned the task of blowing each compound's steel entry doors if necessary.

TPT Rob and Fuchs, having joined us just a couple of weeks earlier, didn't have their own vehicle yet and weren't quite incorporated into the techniques of the ODA, but they were extra guns as backup remaining at the trucks.

Element Of Surprise Lost By The "Infidel Invaders?"

Likewise, I would remain outside because I had not gone through the SFAUCC (Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat Course) with the ODA while Stateside. I would man the M-240 machinegun mounted on Terry's Tacoma ahead of mine and offer possible covering fire for Terry's assault team. The ODA had gone through weeks of building- and room-clearing drills during SFAUCC, learning to secure interiors as a full team and as split teams, and it would be reckless to have the TPT or me enter



Through one of our "terps" (right), John questions one of the detainees during the mop-up of the drug labs. This young man, eventually taken into custody, proved to be the nephew of Hajji Watan, the Taliban owner of the drug labs who the ODA had hoped to capture. Hajji Watan was there, taken with the others, but his nephew and the others remained loyal and tight-lipped about his identity.

with them and risk shooting someone in the back or getting shot ourselves because we weren't familiar with the teams' clearing procedures.

Drawn up on the dry-erase board the night before back at the safehouse, the plan was as good as we were going to get, provided the circumstances, including the inability to actually have eyes-on watching the target continuously a minimum of twenty-four hours prior to assault. That was simply impossible in our neck of Afghanistan. First, there is no concealment there, and one isn't going to be able to dig a hide site in the rock-hard dirt. Second, getting to the hide site by vehicle is a dead giveaway. Even wearing hajjiflage, an American is disguised only from a distance or for a limited amount of time. In the same sense, Afghan strangers (our own MRE, for example, as recon) in a rural area are very soon suspect and investigated by the locals. We had risked compromise by sending Laval and Jason to recon the site, and we hoped that their presence had not been detected and suspicions raised, taking away our element of surprise.

Either way, whether we would arrive in complete surprise or not, we expected resistance. No one — not the Brits nor the American teams before us — had pulled a drug raid in Shin War, which had been a strong Taliban area before the war and was still, afterwards, pro-Taliban and leery and hostile to outsiders, in particular, the American forces whom the Taliban propoganda machine was still calling "infidel invaders." Our intel said that this man Hajji Watan owned the two labs, but we knew nothing more about him — not even what he looked liked — and we knew nothing about the strength of his own forces. That they would protect their drug turf wasn't even a

question. Obviously, we were counting on arriving just at dawn, out of nowhere, so to speak, in total surprise. If they already knew we were coming, we'd either find two empty compounds, (with no traces of processed drugs or equipment), or we'd be hammered like hell by shooters behind the compounds' walls as we drove up.

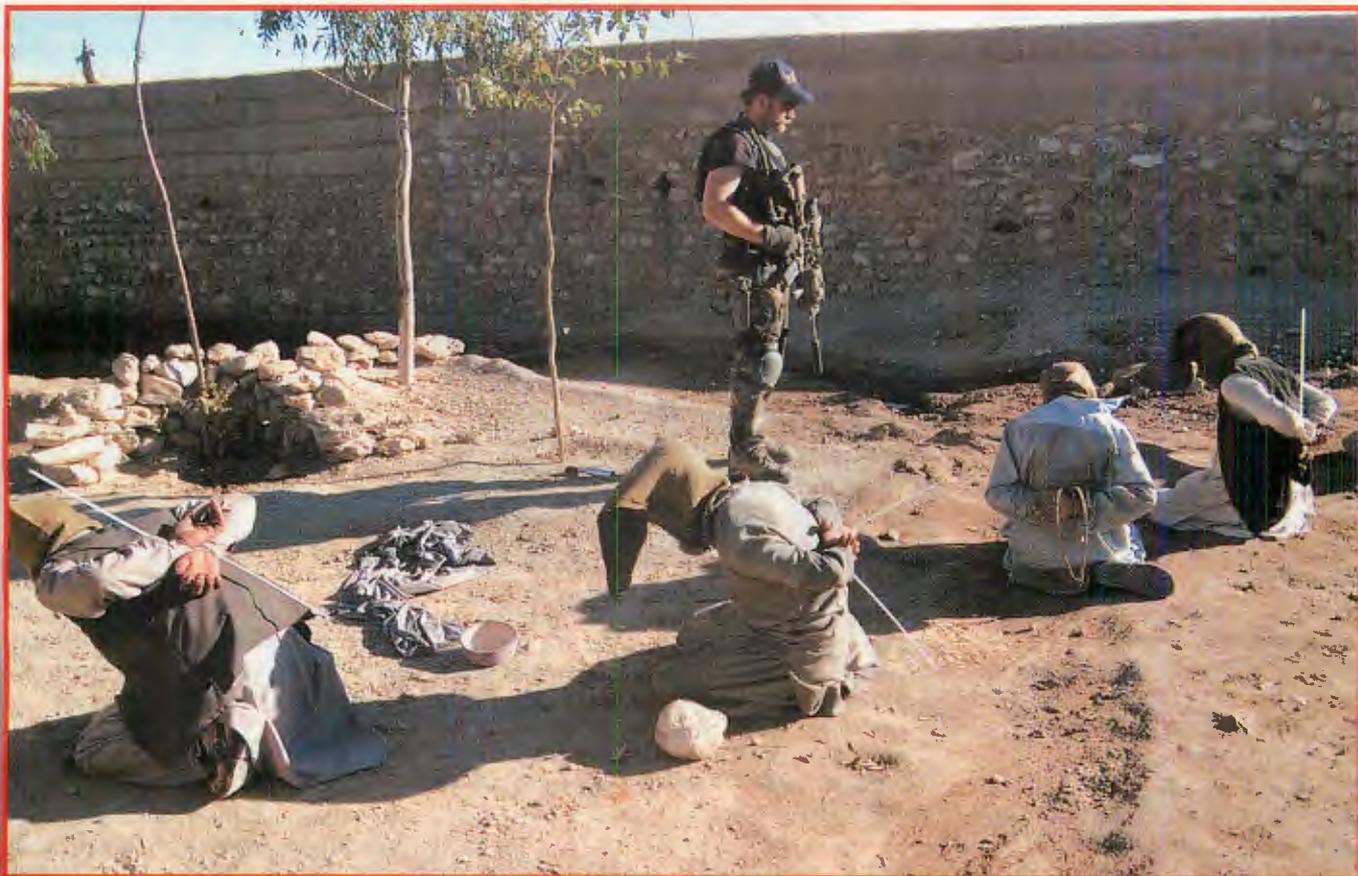
For backup, we had our Air Force TAC-P (Tactical Air Control Party) at the time, Tech Sergeant Frank Lofton, pulled some strings with his counterparts in Bagram to have fighter air-cover. How Frank did it I don't know, because asking for air cover prior to an operation would throw red flags up all over the CJSOTF and risk having the mission disapproved because it would thereby be deemed to dangerous. But Frank got us air cover prior to, during the raid, and subsequent destruction of the labs and also for the return trip back to the safehouse — sometimes considered the most dangerous part of any operation, since often, as it was that day, a large portion of the way in was the only way back out — an engraved invitation for ambushes or IEDs.

Everything was set, we were a little late, but we were almost there. Up ahead was the village, at least it looked like the same setting Laval and Jason had described. Then Frank passed the word along the internal coms that we had a Harrier as air cover and, further, that the pilot had relayed that he was getting from his thermal sights excessive heat signatures from the two compounds as he did high-altitude flyovers. Excessive heat signatures, like those from drug-processing labs. As for detecting unusual movement or not, no word on that.

We were through the village and starting up the slight

Laval (second on right) and Terry (rear left, DCU hat and uniform), direct the MRF to storm a rural village compound suspected as being an opium/heroin-processing lab.





John stands guard over detainees captured during a raid on rural opium-processing labs. Poppies, from which opium and subsequently heroin are derived, is the major cash crop of Afghanistan,

and the two labs raided this day by the Special Forces ODA were owned by a Taliban operative, with money from them funneled to exiled Taliban in Pakistan.



incline, and suddenly, Terry's Tacoma right in front of me stopped, and I slammed on the brakes. Chuck, riding the mounted M-240 on that Tacoma, jumped off, then I saw what was wrong: The barrel of the 240 lay on the ground where Chuck now retrieved it. All the jarring and bouncing had snapped the barrel from the receiver in the gun mount. Chuck jumped back up into the truck bed; the other trucks were out of sight over the crest. Terry's Tacoma shot forward, and I followed, watching Chuck attempting to reattach the barrel while trying to hold on, being bounced around the back. That was the gun I was supposed to man when we hit the target, which, as we crested the incline, was right ahead, the first walled compound.

Then, suddenly, came the *rat-tat-tat-tats* of AKs firing! The lead trucks had skidded to stops, and some of the MRF were dispersing, a few now firing also, *tat-tat-tat, tat-tat-tat-tat*, going around the corner of the compound.

As Jim described it later, "We were driving toward the first compound, and I saw three barrels flashing. The MRF jumped out and took-off in their direction."

It was wrong — Bubba Jon had pulled-up and stopped at the first compound, and the three trucks behind him, including Jim's, had followed. I saw it and thought, "Too late now. Murphy's Law, go with the flow." I didn't hear bullets hitting my truck and couldn't tell who exactly was firing, and at



The man in the center is Hajji Watan, the Taliban owner of the raided drug labs. The ODA did not realize that Watan was among the 20-some detainees until showing the photograph of which this is a close-up detail to the source, who hadn't been present during the raid. Credit for loyalty must be given the other detainees for not revealing Watan's identity during questioning before their release.

since manning the busted 240 was out of the question, I determined not to miss the action inside and jumped off the truck. I unslung my M-4 and ordered the nearby handful of MRF, in gestures as much as words, to "Stay put and protect out here."

Since we'd hit only the first compound, we had plenty of MRF around, our backside would be secure. I grabbed my cameras and headed inside behind the rest of the ODA and a squad of MRF.

whom, and I pulled my truck up beside Terry's. The gunfire was tapering to single shots back around the side of the compound, which I assumed was our MRF taking care of the shooters.

I hopped out, and I saw Captain Jim, Frankie and a MRF at the compound's closed steel doors. Up on the truck, I grabbed the mounted M-240, with its barrel hanging half-loose, and I thought, "I'm not risking it, who knows what's missing? This thing'll blow-up in my face!"

At that time, Jim and Frankie were pushing in the steel front doors, and as Jim told it later, "There was a guy in there with an AK and he opened-up on us. So I fired my M-4, as did Frank, and the MRF with us fired their PKs, then when we looked again, the guy was gone. And I don't know how we missed him. Or where he went."

"Stay Put And Protect Out Here."

Silence followed; no more gunfire. Jim and the rest of the ODA quickly organized to enter, and,

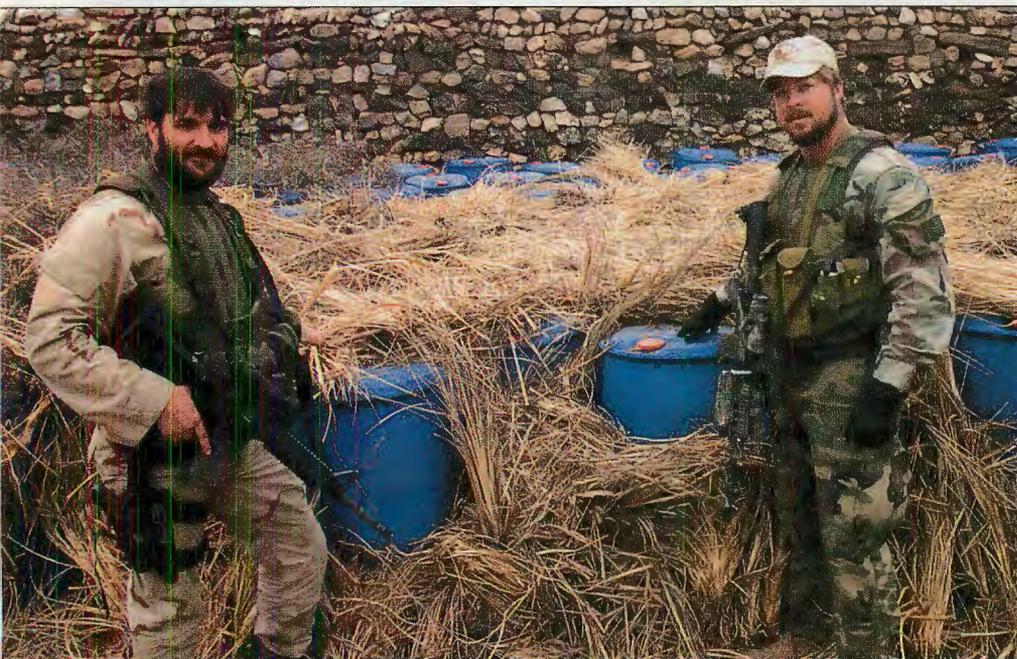
since manning the busted 240 was out of the question, I determined not to miss the action inside and jumped off the truck. I unslung my M-4 and ordered the nearby handful of MRF, in gestures as much as words, to "Stay put and protect out here."

Since we'd hit only the first compound, we had plenty of MRF around, our backside would be secure. I grabbed my cameras and headed inside behind the rest of the ODA and a squad of MRF.

It didn't take long for the team to secure the compound and the 20-odd men caught inside. Whoever had been firing from inside was gone; same with whomever it was initially firing at us outside. Out back, Junior Medic John saw a man with an AK across the ravine setting up to snipe from behind a rock wall, and John took cover and fired. The man disappeared, and John moved forward, with Terry now spotting for him with bins. The man did not reappear. Later, we would search the terraced barren fields across the ravine for a body or blood trails and would find neither.

The case was the same for our MRF who had pursued whomever had been shooting at us when we arrived: no body, no blood trails.

But when we were leaving the area two hours later, driving on the other side of the village, we saw villagers in the distance carrying a dead body we suspected might have been a shooter. We'd already



Sergeants First Class Randy (left) and Deke uncover a stash of over 300 55-gallon barrels of acidic acid anhydrate in a compound used as a supply depot in a rural mountain village. The acid, used to process poppies into opium and heroin, would be transferred into smaller, 5-gallon containers and donkey- or camel-humped to individual, even more remote, drug-processing labs.

stayed in the area too long, body-count was not a priority, and there was no real value in investigating, so we let them be.

Meanwhile, once we'd secured the first compound, we quickly did the same with the second, finding it empty of people. Whoever had been there (kerosene burners used as heaters were still hot in the rooms) had already left, melting into the landscape. It was our mistake: We might have had them had Bubba Jon not goofed in the excitement of the moment and adhered with the plan, driving by the first compound to attack the second with Jim's team.

Both compounds proved to be active drug-processing labs, with huge steel presses — that we tried but couldn't even dent with thermite grenades — and dozens of drums of liquids, vats for cooking, and sacks of both powdered and rock chemicals. We turned the compounds upside-down, dumping the liquids and powders and destroying by gunfire all the barrels and vats. We confiscated the two Toyota cars there for our own future use and, against our MRFs' protestations, Jim ordered the one Toyota HiLux pickup destroyed, and it was put ablaze with a thermite to the engine.

"A Toyota pickup is a most valued possession to them in Afghanistan," Jim explained later. "By burning it, we were showing them we weren't there just to take from them."

Attacking to pillage has been a way of life for a thousand years in Afghanistan, and Jim's intention by destroying the pickup instead of taking it was to emphasize that our purpose was to root-out Taliban, not secure booty. Our MRF didn't see it that way; they figured we could do both, and we had to control them from stripping places we raided of everything down to the dirt. Needless to say, it hurt them watching the truck burn.

Six days later we did a simultaneous raid on three drug labs just over the ridgeline, about 2 miles away from these two this day. They also were owned by Hajji Watan. Two proved active, one was a dry hole, and we destroyed the supplies and equipment in the two, accidentally setting afire one entire compound in the process.

Afterward, that same day, out of curiosity we paid a visit



Captain Brian stands above the barrels of acid burning in the ditch, set ablaze by the ODA. The team uncovered a stash of over 300 55-gallon barrels of acidic acid anhydrate in a compound used as a supply depot in a rural mountain village.

to these two compounds, and both were cleaned up, as if we'd never been there less than a week earlier. Walking through these spotless compounds gave one the eerie feeling that drug production would begin again the moment the local bosses felt secure that we wouldn't ever be coming back. We'd surprised them that morning, and we continued that way, randomly roaming the valley so that the Taliban drug operatives could not gain that security.

Neither the two-compound raid that first day nor the three-compound raid six days later netted any Taliban, as we had hoped, and that didn't set well high-up the chain. That first day, of the 20-some men we'd detained, after intense on-the-spot questioning, we concluded that Hajji Watan was not among them but wound up taking into custody one who would

FRANK LOFTON, TAC-P



An active-duty U.S. Air Force TAC-P based in Germany, TecSgt Frank Lofton was attached to ODA 2025 from September through mid-January. At 26 and single, he's the ideal candidate for a TAC-P, who, with the op tempo of today's Special Forces units, is deployed far more than he is at home.

There may be TAC-Ps as good as Frank, but I can't imagine one better. To begin with, he loves his job. There is nothing he liked better than to arrange air for us, then play hopscotch on the radio, orchestrating the pilots' actions while coordinating with our different ground elements and his own controllers in Bagram.

After leaving us, Frank returned to his base in Germany. The next thing we knew, one of us learned through e-mail that Frankie was in Iraq in the middle of the desert there, in the war, attached to an SF team, calling-in airstrikes; doing what he loves to do.

—P.A.

prove to be Watan's nephew, though a very minor player.

As it turned out, Watan had been there and was among our detainees — the ones we turned loose — but we did not know it until later that evening when our source pointed him out in the photographs I had taken of the detainees. We had not brought the source along with us on the raid because we did not want him to be compromised, but in hindsight we should have. We could have kept him hidden in one of the Tacomas, behind the tinted glass, to identify the person we wanted. It was a lesson learned the hard way — losing our potential prize catch.

Cease All Such Missions

Coming away with no High-Value Taliban Target in either that day's raid or the one six days later had the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), according to Jim, coming down hard on him. We figured that the colonel there was himself getting clobbered from above with the "SF isn't in the counterdrug business in Afghanistan" mantra, because very shortly after the second drug op we were directed to cease all such missions.

Opium/heroin is Afghanistan's only real export, and it's a money-maker, and we knew that in the Shin War Valley there were drug-processors, like Hajji Watan, who were funneling their profits to the Taliban. Our command would no longer allow us to go after labs, but that did not prevent us from submitting, and getting approved, operational plans that described suspected

"weapons caches" that just happened to wind up being — "Oh, my Lord, who would have believed it?" — drug labs.

Two of these "weapons caches" turned out to be remote foothill storage depots for a chemical used in the poppy-processing — acetic acid anhydride. In those two raids we netted over five hundred 55-gallon drums of the chemical. That was nearly 30,000 gallons of acid that had been trucked all the way across the country from Iran and high into different mountain villages to the depots, to eventually be donkey- or camel-humped to the individual processing labs. No one could convince us that our burning all those drums of acid didn't put a dent in some Taliban's pocketbook.

We met resistance, however small and inconsequential, that very first raid that day. We had even taken some sniper-fire during our two-hour occupation and noticed armed villagers gathering across the ravine, but Frankie had our fighter jet come down from altitude and drop flares as an effective warning, in a display of the air power we had as immediate backup. But, thereafter, in the Shin War Valley, we roamed freely, raiding or just patrolling, without resistance.

"What we were doing on that first drug raid," Captain Jim explained months later, "was sending a message. Sure, we wanted to capture a Taliban drug-money man, and we didn't, but we were really saying, 'Hey, we know you're here with your labs. We're Americans. We're not afraid of you. And we'll come in the front door if we want to.'"

That's what we did during that first drug-lab raid — went right through their front door in total surprise. The resistance, we figured, having no idea the Americans were now targeting the valley's drug labs, probably thought we were simply a rival Afghan gang coming to take their drugs. That raid was a message: The Americans were there. And it worked: No one messed with us after that. Not in Shin War.

Hajji Watan E & Es To Pakistan

As for Hajji Watan, Laval's source network reported that he had fled for the safety of Pakistan. Months later, Laval learned that Watan was back and was being blackmailed by a number of the sub-commanders of the U.S.-backed Eastern Corps Commander, General Hazarat Ali, whose command was located in our city, Jalalabad. These sub-commanders, we were informed, were extorting money from Watan with threats to turn him in to us.

That is Afghanistan: commanders allied with us using that allegiance for their own profit, not for the cause of bettering the country.

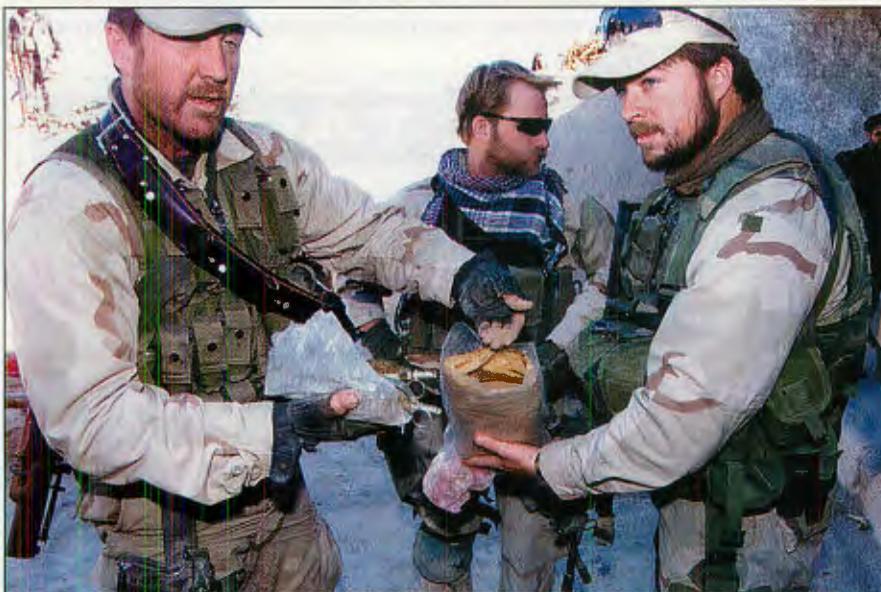
Word was passed to Laval that Watan was sick and tired of paying-off the corrupt subcommanders and wanted to make a deal with us. His proposal, passed through an intermediary, was to meet with us and reveal all he knew in exchange for us not taking him prisoner and his winding up in Guantanamo Bay. But our deployment ended and his offer was not explored. Hajji Watan today remains free.

We had turned everything over to our replacements, an active-duty 3rd Special Forces Group ODA which, one could assume, had also been directed not to engage in counter-drug ops, and, therefore, showed little enthusiasm to pursue this avenue.

By the time we were to leave Afghanistan in mid-April, the terraced fields of the Shin War Valley that had been dirt just months before, were then a beautiful carpet of waist-high flowering poppy plants. White, red and purple flowers as far as the eye could see. Were the labs up and running, cranking-out heroin for the European market? No doubt about it.

But for a while there, short-lived though it was, ODA 2025 showed that if the U.S. wanted to, by using one Special Forces ODA, it could own the Shin War Valley.

Since 1978, Paul Avallone has served with the 7th, 12th and 20th SFGA. ✕



Staff Sergeant Dean (left) and Sergeant First Class Deke (right) show some of the many pounds of brown powder heroin taken as evidence during a raid on an opium-processing lab in rural Afghanistan. Staff Sgt. John is in the middle.

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Chariots Of Firepower

Continued from page 42

round into the cab at 1,100 meters. The truck rolled another 300 meters before it stopped on the right side of the road in a small pond. The Iraqi soldiers jumped out of the truck and were running around like ants. Lieutenant McAdams was in the position to engage the enemy, so he opened up with coax, then moved up to 25mm. In my over-watch position, I could see the Iraqi soldiers dying. There was not much hope for them. Round after round was landing right on top of them. The 25mm high-explosive rounds were blowing large holes in the ground and the soldiers on it. As the first truck was burning, another troop truck drove around it, headed for me, this time. Soprano fired a 10-round burst into the truck. The Iraqis never knew what had hit them; it was over for them that quick. You had to have been there to believe it. Truck after truck kept coming down the road. There was no way of not knowing that a battle was taking place.

The sandstorm was bad, but you could still see the burning trucks from more than 1,000 meters. The Iraqis knew we were there and they were trying to get at us no matter what it took. Six Iraqi troop trucks later, we got the word that their T72 tanks were on the move. The commander called for Broadhead to move and help 3rd and 4th platoons — JSTAR had reported 40 T72s coming down on them. Not more than 10 minutes after Broadhead left, the commander called and told me that I had 1,000 trucks moving on my position.

If each truck carried up to 20 soldiers, I would be facing nearly 20,000 soldiers coming to take my bridge. The first thing I asked for was indirect fire, and we were too far away to get any. I asked for air support, and was told to wait — they were working on it. Ten minutes later, the CO called and told me 20 BMPs were moving up to my position from the southeast.

With that last call, I knew I was screwed for sure.

In the next episode, Johnson's worst fears are realized, but Crazy Horse Troop slugs it out toe-to-toe and continues to survive by setting records for disproportionate combat victories, and features the only tank commander in history to have direct control of a B1B bomber. ✕

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Kingbees In Las Vegas

Continued from page 24

and, the pilots and team members weren't provided with opportunities for fraternal functions. This was a fierce war, and there was little time for socializing.

At FOB 1, the Kingbee pilots would spend limited amounts of time in the Green Beret Lounge between resupply flights and operations.

A Tragic Postscript

There's one more tragic element to the Kingbee story: After 30 April 1975 — the day Saigon fell to communist forces invading the city — many of the Kingbee pilots were incarcerated and sent to "re-education camps."

Kingbee Maj. Thu X. Huynh, who is senior among Kingbee pilots for time served flying special operations because his service in that unique arena of top-secret missions continued after SOG was closed in 1972, was fortunate on that fateful day: "I told the other pilots that we had to fly out to the ships, or we'd go to jail. No one listened to me. On that day, I flew my Huey out to the U.S.S. *Midway* with my family and some friends. We had 22 people on that helicopter."

Thu and his family eventually arrived in Vista, California, where he is now a financial consultant who also operates a dry-cleaning service with his wife and family.

Others, were less fortunate. Captain Tuong was incarcerated for eight years, before he escaped. Today, he lives in Santa Ana, California. "When I was in jail, I never told them anything. If they knew who I was and what I did, I would have been in much longer."

Colonel Think was incarcerated for 13 years. It was Col. Think who led the nine Kingbee pilots to stand at attention before the dais in Las Vegas at the Special Operations Association banquet, where they were saluted and given numerous standing ovations.

SOA President James Hetrick presented each pilot with an SOA salutation and coin commemorating the occasion. SOA is sending those commemoratives to the 58 remaining known Kingbee pilots.

After the reunion, Col. Think and his family were flown back to Fargo, N.D., by John Walton, 35 years after the Kingbee pilot had heroically pulled him and his recon team from the jaws of death in the A Shau Valley. ✕

Should Journalists Carry?

Continued from page 31

Vietnamese, an officer by his uniform, snarl, "Bao Chi. Shit!" — in English. He and the others in his unit opened up with automatic weapons and killed all three.

The one time that being armed unquestionably saved my life occurred in Saigon; just outside of it, actually, and no firefight was going on at the time.

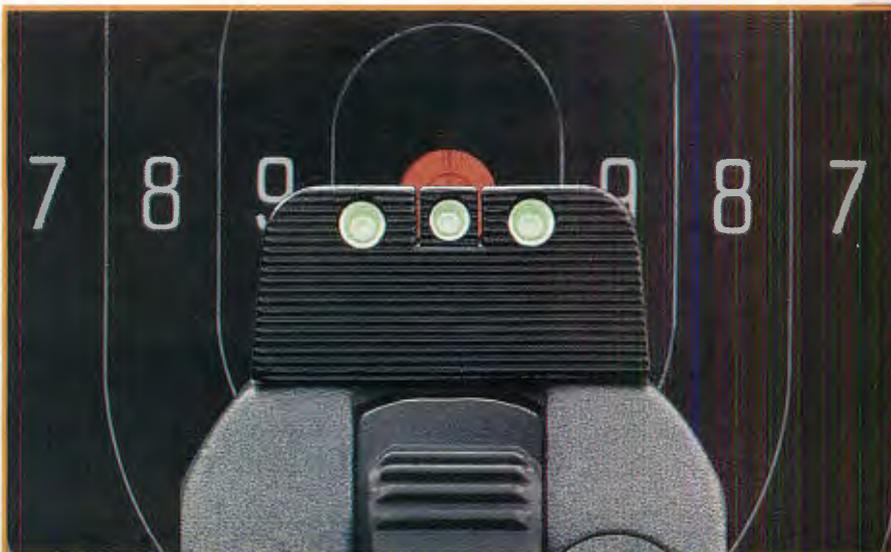
I'd attended a party somewhere, had a little, or a lot, too much to drink, which I was occasionally prone to do in those days, got a cab to get me home before curfew and promptly fell asleep in the back seat. The vehicle's jolting over a rough surface woke me up and glancing out the window at jungle on either side of a dirt road, I became instantly sober. It was clear that this cab driver figured his passenger was someone from the American embassy, perhaps even a CIA operative, and the VC would pay well if he delivered one up to them.

I produced a snub-nose .38 special, a S&W Model 60 stainless to be specific, placed it against the driver's temple and cocked it. This was probably the loudest noise he had ever heard. "Turn this fucking thing around and get me back to Saigon," I said, "or I'll blow your fucking brains out." I'd have done it, too, because I figured all I had to do was turn the car around to get back to civilization.

I don't know how much of this the driver understood, but he got the message because he made a U-turn and drove me back to the building I'd earlier specified. He even had the nerve to demand his fare, which brought from me a lot more bad language.

So I guess my advice to "embedded" correspondents would be: If the stuff has really hit the fan, pick up a weapon from someone who doesn't need it any longer and become a participant. Don't get captured — and get hold of and carry a short-barreled revolver when you're in town.

Bob Poos is a former managing editor at SOF. He marched out of Chosin with the First Marine Division in Korea, and was an AP correspondent in Vietnam for almost two years, returning while an AP correspondent in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Tokyo. He covered conflicts in Africa and guerrilla wars in Central and South America for SOF, and now lives in Virginia. ✕



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The New 6.8mm

Continued from page 47

rebated rimless case), the 6mm, .25 caliber, 6.5mm, 7mm, and .30 caliber, necking the case up or down, and testing many bullet designs. It was thought that a 6.5mm bullet would prove optimum, and indeed it was extremely impressive.

The Door Opens

At the 2002 SHOT Show, in Las Vegas, Nevada, an informal meeting was held with Mr. Sean Dwyer, now Vice President of the Ammunition Business for the Remington Arms Company, the USAMU Ballistics Technician, Mr. Troy Lawton, and the Special Forces Project Leader regarding the 6.8x43mm project. Out of patriotism, and while Americans were still reeling from the 9-11 atrocities, Mr. Dwyer wanted to help with the project and he told the team members that he would consider their request for shell-case prototypes and forward it to Remington's Corporate Board.

By early May, a variety of cases in 5.56mm, 6.5mm, 7mm and 7.62mm calibers were produced under the direction of Mr. Greg Dennison, Remington's R&D Project Engineer. All calibers but the 7mm were prototyped with large and small rifle primer pockets. The shells with small rifle primer pockets provided the room necessary for a 5.56mm rebated rim. In addition to the prototype shell cases, load development confirmation of the Project Team's results to date was completed, and regular-production ballistic measurement capability was established — no small task in itself, especially when cartridge caliber was still a variable. After evaluation of the samples was completed, the shells with the large primer pockets were chosen to move forward, based on their more uniform load consistency, and performance in extreme cold environmental tests.

An Ideal Bullet

As far as caliber was concerned, the ARC team was testing the remainder of available off-the-shelf (OTS) bullets. Too many times, soldiers' ammunition has been influenced by long-range competition shooters, and the Project Team Leader wanted to concentrate on the operational need of putting the bad guys' lights out, first at close-quarters-battle distance, then work toward improved medium-range capability of

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300-500 meters. Finally, a bullet of 6.8mm was selected with the assistance of Dr. Gary K. Roberts, based on several proven performance requirements for intermediate assault-rifle cartridges. The 6.8mm translates to caliber .277, identical to the famous .270 Winchester. Remington supplied a 6.8mm version of the shell case in late June. As with the .30 Remington, it uses a large rifle primer.

In developing a 6.8x43mm SPC, the Project Team sought technical assistance from Pat Daly and Kevin Thomas, of Sierra Bullets, David Emary, Chief Ballistician for Hornady Ammunition, and Pete Forbes, formerly of Ramshot Powders. After much experimentation, the soldier/industry team designed two 115-grain bullets by Hornady and Sierra, specifically to provide reliability, incapacitation, and accuracy for the 6.8mm Rem SPC case. Although the 6.8mm Sierra Match King projectile proved to have the edge on accuracy, the terminal ballistics of the Hornady bullet were dramatically superior in 10% ballistic gelatin. It proved to be the bullet the team had been looking for.

Although I have always thought of the 6.5mm bullet as being almost perfect, I believed the true "magic" rifle bullet to lie somewhere close to this diameter with even better sectional density, ballistic coefficient, and overall long-range performance. If 6.8mm is not that magic bullet caliber, and the SPC isn't the best intermediate cartridge case design in nearly a half-century, it is certainly proving to be the outstanding performer envisioned by the soldiers who need it. What's more, it didn't take 10 years and untold millions of taxpayer dollars to accomplish. Initial cost to retrofit an M4/M16, Mk12, or XM8 would be less than \$1,000 per unit including magazines and ammunition. Is not each one of our Soldier sons and daughters worth such a small investment?

The Handshake

At the 2003 SHOT Show, a meeting was held in Orlando, Florida, to discuss the evolution of the project. At this meeting, in addition the SPC Team and other U.S. Special Operations personnel, representatives from the Department of Justice, Hornady, and Remington were in attendance. All expressed much interest in the cartridge, including certain Federal Law Enforcement agencies. Since the parent case for the 6.8x43mm was a

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Remington product, Remington agreed to assist with the project and commercialize the 6.8mm Remington SPC as part of the rapid Cost Off The Shelf (COTS) initiative, at no cost to the Government. A manufacturing capability of 7,000,000 6.8mm Rem SPC 115-grain BTHP cartridges was projected by both Hornady and Remington for 2003.

Additional agencies have urged Remington to produce a bolt-action precision rifle similar to the Remington Light Tactical Rifle (LTR) in the new caliber. Whether this rifle will be built on the Remington Model 700 Short Action, or the preferred Model 7 action is uncertain.

A New Propellant

After an extensive review of propellants, the SPC Project Team found one that proved to be optimum. While the propellant must remain close-hold, I can report that it is new and will not be available to the public until the project gets over several hurdles. However, this new powder allows loading to 100% of the 6.8mm Rem SPC case capacity, to produce only 51,000 psi chamber pressure (as compared with the 5.56mm's 55,000 psi), and provides a muzzle velocity of about 2625 fps from the 16.5 inch M16/AR-15-type barrel. This barrel length is under consideration as a Mk-12 Variant for operational assessment by our forces, but a new 12" barrel model is just as popular. Called the Mk-12 CQB, this gun uses the short gas system and an OPS SOPMOD suppressor, and has been nicknamed the "Master Blaster" by the troops.

Next month, Johnston covers in detail the weapons, modifications, sights, accessories, suppressors and components for this ground-breaking new round. Don't miss it! ✕

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Continued from page 51

the streets," said Vanoosten. But it was his radio operator who spotted the first enemy soldier.

"Sergeant V., Sergeant V., RPG!" yelled Lance Corporal Oscar Reyes as he ran across the roof dragging his radio by its cord.

"We saw two individuals, one had an AK-47 with a chest rig full of magazines, the other with a loaded RPG launcher and a rucksack full of rocket-propelled grenades. Both men were running down a street about 200 yards away from us," said Vanoosten who shot the Iraqi with the RPG and his assistant team leader, Corporal Christopher Livermore shot the one with the assault rifle.

"My first shot hit in the lower back, causing him to stumble and fall," said Vanoosten. "My second shot hit him in the upper shoulders, and that one put him down for good."

Livermore took two shots. But the Iraqi was still crawling when both Vanoosten and Livermore shot him in the head. After that, "it was like a whitetail buck deer coming to a salt lick, or some crushed apples on the ground," said Vanoosten who remembered what his mentor, a sniper in Somalia, told him in school about leaving the scene of a shooting too soon.

"Everybody wanted to get their hands on those weapons," said Vanoosten, who along with Livermore, took turns leaving the street littered with dead bodies. Vanoosten ended the war with four confirmed kills and three probables. Livermore had three confirmed kills and two probables.

By the time the STA Platoon posed for its class picture at Al Azimiyah Palace and heading back to Kuwait for the trip home to Camp Pendleton, California in mid-May, the platoon had been credited with 38 confirmed kills in Iraq; almost all of them in Baghdad.

After the war, Sgt. Vanoosten returned to his alma mater at Quantico to pass along what he learned to Marines following in his footsteps. Corporal Wolfe left the Marine Corps, and is now attending San Diego State University on the GI Bill.

Corporal Michael returned to Iraq with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines in early 2004.

Dale B. Cooper has filed numerous articles from Iraq. ✕



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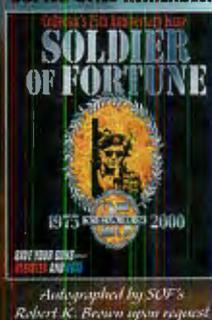


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Veteran Hunters

Continued from page 61

slowed abruptly and veered to jump a small gully, which must have spoiled his lead. By the way she shied away from the crack of the bullet, we all thought he may have hit her after all, and took off in hot pursuit to see if we could locate a blood trail. After thoroughly searching the area, we finally determined that it was a clean miss, and his elk had escaped unscathed with the rest of them. It was one of those bad breaks that happen so often during hunts, but we all consoled ourselves that at least we did not have to listen to RKB brag forever more about how he had hit an elk that could have been a contender for the Kentucky Derby at a range of a mile-and-a-half, etc., etc.

Meanwhile, Scott Blaney and John Higgs continued to comb the area to the northeast with determined dedication. Scott hunted extensively during his time in Germany, but this was his first time in Colorado for elk, so he brought one rifle for brush and another for the open country. His brush gun was a Sako Finnbear in .375 H & H Magnum, with a Princess 3 x 9 variable telescope (manufactured in East Germany) in a Sako quick-detachable mount. His .375 ammunition consisted of the 270-grain Remington Core-Lokt variety, a heavy brush-busting round for close-in. For the relatively open area in which he was hunting that afternoon, he had a Sako Sporter in .300 Winchester Magnum, with a West German 3 x 9 Seeadler scope, again with a Sako mount. For this he used Remington 150-grain Core-Lokt bullets. While moving down the slope, they came across a still-warm spike elk that someone had shot illegally. Using a cell phone, they reported it to the game warden, who advised them to clean it out and take it back to camp. Rich Antonio, the game warden, arrived soon after and began his investigation, while the whole gang clustered around advising him in loud stage whispers not to fall for Scott's "some-other-dude-shot-it" story. Rich turned out to be a great guy and, not only took the joking well, but finally told Scott to tag the elk and keep it. Because of Scott's intervention, the hunter who had killed and left it was apprehended the next day.

To round out our generational coverage, we had been joined by the youngest member of the group, who was the last to arrive, who was an

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active-duty trooper right out of Jump School. He had been introduced to the group by a former SOF Senior Field Editor, and was immediately integrated into the pack, even though he was years younger than the rest of us.

By 0900, the following day, it was apparent that all the elk had gone elsewhere, and we began striking camp. There was a certain amount of disappointment that no one had bagged a bull or broken a world record of some sort, but, I suspect that most of the old — and new — warriors were more than content just to be out in the field with their own kind, living under the stars, rejoicing in the pristine setting of the mountains, and being close to our hunter/gatherer roots. We may have also rediscovered among the ontological cobwebs in some dusty, forgotten corner of our minds ephemeral flashes of atavistic or pagan wisdom flaring out of the hypnotic and kaleidoscopic ballet of the firelight.

In this day of political correctness, urbanization, and incipient gun control, it is comforting to know that it is still possible to walk the same paths as our forebears did thousands of years ago — progressively gaining skills over the millennia that eventually elevated us to the top of the food chain. Let's hope we never lose our hunting instincts or allow social engineers to deny us this unique heritage that stretches back to the dawn of humanity.

In the latest issue of Dillon's *Blue Press*, Lee Arten makes the observation that "Hunters pose an enormous problem for anti-gun politicians. Men and women who know firearms and the woods don't make good serfs." Right on! The reason is, because they usually make good soldiers. It was generally agreed during our many discussions in camp, that our best soldiers in Vietnam, as well as all the subsequent conflicts in which the U.S. has been involved, were men (and now, women) who had an interest in firearms or who had grown up as hunters and shooters.

For this reason, we all felt it entirely appropriate that we celebrated Veterans Day — as hunters.

In our next issue, SOF will carry a round-up of the various outdoor products we field-tested.

Col. Mike Peck, USA (Ret.), a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, was previously director of DIA's POW/MIA office in Washington, D.C. Presently, he is an international security consultant. ✘

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Command Guidance

Continued from page 6

lords) may get the tribes to sit down together today and share *chy* (tea), but don't bet on the warlords holding hands and singing "We Are The World." Rest assured, when the troops leave and the money dries up, the tribes will be sharing hot lead and exploding RPGs, not *chy*.

As for our peddling freedom, that's going to be a tough sell in a culture in which the male adheres strictly to his perceived Koran-dictated two-females-equals-one-male subjugation of women. Women in Afghanistan share none of the physical or social liberties of men. They participate in daily life as family members only, and then only as the bearers. They bear the children, bear the firewood, bear the water and bear the entire physical burden of the household. They are but blue-burka-clad forms who cast no shadows while passing. One does not talk to them. One does not even acknowledge their existence with a glance. Forget the hyped-up media tales of the rare Kabul women allowed to speak in public and wear Western clothes; the majority of Afghan

women have less freedom and less dignity today than a black slave in 1800s' America. A teammate of mine summed it up perfectly when he noted that he "would rather be a dog in America than a woman in Afghanistan."

As ugly as that sounds, it is something we should not ignore, as our leaders, having established a hands-off policy toward all things religious in Afghanistan, do not demand cultural change of the Afghans. Do we really want to continue pouring billions of dollars into a culture that sanctions and promotes such an abhorrent treatment of women?

Perhaps none of it matters, not the nation-building nor the freedom-farming. Some of my teammates used to speculate that America is in Afghanistan only to secure the territory for an eventual pipeline from oil-rich Kazakhstan to the Indian Ocean. That hardly seems cost-effective.

More likely, our prolonged occupation and extravagant spending is nothing more than was my team's mission: to prevent the terrorists from returning.

In that case, there's even more reason we should pull out. Right now, the Taliban and al-Qaeda, covertly protected by our supposed allies in Pakistan,

are effectively out of our reach there. Let them mistakenly return to an American-free Afghanistan, and we can cruise-missile them to smithereens, backed up with quick-insertion, lethal Special Forces teams. A day, two days, a week, and we're done. Every year or so, as needed, repeat the instant cleansing.

That may not be the feel-good, nice-guy way of international relations, but it sure would be a lot cheaper. Why dump billions of dollars attempting to create a free nation in a culture that is neither inclined nor open to one? Should we do the same for the dozens of other countries which could rightfully demand equal attention? At what cost?

Better that we should judge the Afghans for who they are and relinquish the nice-guy posturing, fold up our tents and give the Afghans the freedom to make of their country what they will, with the warning: We'll pop in with force as we see fit.

After all, no matter how naïve, forgiving and generous we Americans are, by nature and practice, few around the world think we're nice guys anyway.

Paul Avallone's SF ODA articles began in SOF's December 2003 issue. ✕

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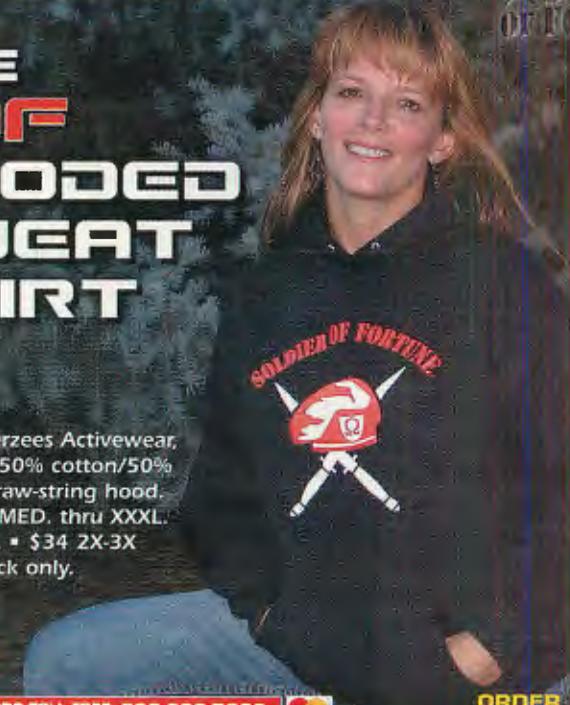
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SOUND OFF

by Col. David H. Hackworth, USA (Ret.)

The Few, The Proud – And The Under-Rewarded

“For heroic achievement ... Lance Corporal (Billy W.) Peixotto exhibited exceptional bravery after intense small-arms fire from an enemy ambush resulted in his tank catching fire. He immediately dismounted his tank while still under enemy fire, activated the fire extinguishers, and assisted in the removal of leaking fuel bladders.

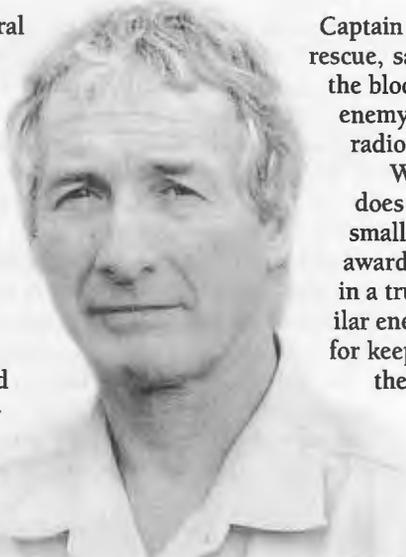
While actively saving his tank from flames, he saw that his company commander had been struck by enemy fire. Showing little regard for his own safety, he retrieved his fallen company commander. Pulling his wounded commander to safety, he quickly rendered life-saving medical assistance and provided security with his M9 9mm pistol until his company commander had been safely evacuated . . . ”

The above boilerplate is from a proposed citation for a Bronze Star for Valor currently being processed by the Marine Corps. What really happened is that after Billy Peixotto's tank was ambushed by Iraqi Special Republican Guard and Jihad mercenaries, he had the guts to climb out of the burning vehicle — while heavy automatic-weapons- and rocket-propelled-grenade-fire was thumping against its armored hull — in order to activate the tank's exterior fire extinguishers and put out the blaze that was endangering both tank and crew.

Then he, other crewmembers and company commander, Capt. Jeffrey Houston, freed the tank's leaking exterior fuel bladder, removing the source of potential future fires — while almost every bad guy in town was taking potshots at them.

Once the fuel bladder was tossed, Peixotto zig-zagged like a broken-field runner — again while dodging enemy fire — back to his tank, where he attempted to restart that 70-ton awesome monster of destruction. The shot-up sucker failed to cooperate, so he again dismounted the tank, with slugs and rockets still *smacking* all around him, and when he hit the deck, he saw that Capt. Houston was down, badly wounded. Without hesitating, the young Marine immediately rushed to his CO's side, pulled him to the shelter of the tank and provided battlefield first-aid to stop the bleeding and prevent shock from loss of blood.

Throughout this nightmare, Peixotto protected Houston by engaging the enemy with scores of rounds of pistol fire. And while he held his attackers at bay, he simultaneously applied pressure to his fallen CO's head wound — providing lifesaving medical assistance until the [corpsmen] arrived.



Captain Dave Bardorf, who led the docs to the rescue, said: “It was incredible. He was slowing the blood flow with one hand, laying fire on the enemy with the other and directing fire from a radio another Marine held for him.”

Where do we find such good men? And does a \$5 scrap of metal embellished with a small red ribbon — the exact same medal awarded Jessica Lynch for being knocked-out in a truck crash while attempting to flee a similar enemy ambush, and to an Air Force colonel for keeping good records — adequately express the nation's gratitude for this hero laying his life on the line?

And here's another highly pertinent question many Marines familiar with this particular action are asking: Is the Bronze Star really an appropriate award for such an

extraordinary act of gallantry?

I went to my handy-dandy reference book that lists Medal of Honor recipients from our Civil War to the Vietnam War. There's no question that Peixotto's heroic actions would have rated him right up there with the best of the Blue Max crowd from any of these wars.

Based on my investigation (and had I been his commander), Peixotto would definitely have gone in for the Medal of Honor, or at least the Navy Cross — the Marine equivalent to the Army's Distinguished Service Cross.

As I said in my [recent] column, “Medalgate,” the awards system desperately needs vetting and overhauling. Meanwhile, great warriors such as Peixotto — and there have been a good number of such unsung grunt heroes in Iraq — seem to be getting shortchanged, even by the U.S. Marine Corps, the only service that hasn't lost the warrior ethic and still takes care of its Marines in the style of Ray Davis and “Chesty” Puller.

But, obviously, there's room for improvement: At the very least, the top Marine brass need to have a hard look at what their personnel weenies are doing in the awards department and give them a good shake-up.

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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