



IRAN'S NUCLEAR THREAT page 52

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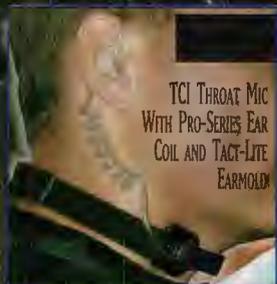
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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE

Support Our Troops!

MAY 2005 ✂ VOL. 30 NO. 5



Lucian Fland/WorldPictureNews

On the Cover

Bloodied but not beaten, First Sergeant Brad Kasal is helped from Fallujah house after being shot several times and shielding one of his wounded men from a grenade blast. See story on page 16.

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courtesy Colombian National Police



USMC photo by Lt/Cpl Miguel A. Carrasco Jr.



Richard Lucas

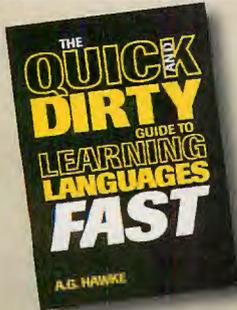
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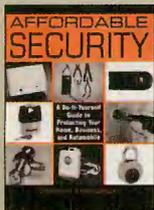
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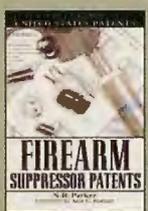


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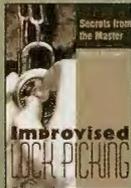
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foreword by Al Paulson

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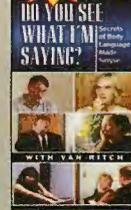
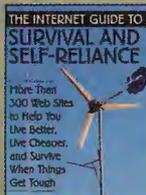
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

ROBERT K. BROWN

NRA Will Join Large Numbers Of Former OWAA Members Leaving To Support Stronger Pro-Hunting Groups

The following is reprinted courtesy of NRA.org.

The National Rifle Association has been forced to withdraw its support for the Outdoor Writers Association of America, due to OWAA leadership's continuing loyalty to the Sierra Club, a longtime foe of the rights of hunters. NRA will join the growing number of OWAA Sustaining and Individual members who are transferring their memberships to groups more favorable to hunters and free expression.

"The NRA has long worked with others in support of game and habitat preservation," said NRA President Kayne Robinson. "We are the primary organization that works to defend the rights of hunters and protect access to hunting lands. The NRA will continue its fights for the rights of all hunters in America."

Robinson noted NRA's efforts to curb government harassment of hunters, including bureaucratic red tape, civil rights invasions, unreasonable fees and restricted access to public lands. "Many of our most vulnerable hunters are being driven away by hostile government actions and the NRA will never stand idly by while our

rights are being eroded."

The Sierra Club, an OWAA member organization, embarked last year on a political campaign to defeat pro-gun and pro-hunting candidates by endorsing a slate of candidates in the 2004 elections that were opposed to hunting and firearms ownership. NRA opposition to the Sierra Club campaign was met with criticism by OWAA leaders.

"If the Sierra Club's endorsed candidates had their way, private ownership of firearms would be banned," said NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre. "We were right to oppose their campaign and their candidates, and NRA's four million members turned out on election day and voted for their rights and their freedom."

Robinson pointed out the irony of OWAA criticism of the NRA in opposing the Sierra Club campaign. "This is an organization of journalists," Robinson noted. "Yet, as soon as we criticized the Sierra Club, we were attacked by the OWAA board in a clear exhibition of bias against free speech for its own members." ❖

Save your guns. Join the NRA.

— Robert K. Brown

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Quirky Bird

I have a possible correction about some pictures in "Bulletin Board" in the January 2005 issue of SOF Magazine. The pictures of the Mi-24D painted in the Eagle artwork is impressive, but I wondered about the authenticity of the pics



being taken in Afghanistan. I have copies of the same three pictures a friend in the Oregon National Guard forwarded to me over two years ago. Granted, these might just be "file" photos, but if you look closely

near the tail rotor, the triangular emblem there isn't a warning for the tail rotor, it is the marking for the Hungarian Air Force. If they are supporting the peacekeeping operations, then they might have taken it over to Afghanistan to show their pride of their "bird." But I just wanted to drop a line and clarify the nationality of the aircraft and let you know these pics have been around for a while.

Name Withheld
Eugene, Oregon

Pick, Pick, Pick: Every 30 Years, It's Pick, Pick, Pick!

After nearly 30 years reading your magazine, I finally decided it was time to be a little "picky."

In the January 2005 issue, page 42, the 'MTLB' pictured has main armament that looks suspiciously like a T-72 main gun. Hmmmmm.

On page 14, the Hind MI-24 is (sort of) an urban myth, as it is in neither Afghanistan nor Iraq and doesn't belong to the Russians or the Americans. (Note the Mediterranean style buildings in the background) I love the pictures and have for well over eight years, when I first received them in an e-mail. Snopes.com has the low down at:

<http://www.snopes.com/photos/military/eaglecopter.asp>

Keep up the good work, and remember, nitpickers pick nits but we don't produce magazines!

Dennis Morehouse

Hey, thanks for keeping us honest. The only ones we answer to are our readers, and if they don't keep us straight, who will? And thanks for giving us a chance to again mention www.snopes.com. They're one of the greatest public service sources for those who enjoy accuracy, that was ever put on line.

Safer in Iraq?

According to www.casualties.org there have been 88 hostile-fire deaths caused by firearms since the beginning of hostilities in Iraq. The remainder of coalition deaths have been due to explosives or accidents.

Considering that there have been on average 160,000 troops in theater during the last 22 months, there has been a firearm death rate of 60 per 100,000.

The rate in DC is 80.6 per 100,000. In other words, you are more likely to be shot and killed in our Nation's Capital, which has some of the strictest gun control laws in the nation, than in Iraq.

Would not a reasonable man suggest that the U.S. should immediately pull out of Washington D.C.?

Craig Roberts

Yep, a reasonable man might. And an unreasonable man might suggest, that if it was worthwhile to attack Saddam and the Baathists, how about an invasion of Washington as well. Nobody has tried that since the Bonus Army of long ago.

C.A.R.E. Packages

I am a recent subscriber to your magazine, was impressed by the monthly praise for the United States Marine Corps. I would like to send a C.A.R.E. package to a Marine in Iraq, and I noticed that in the Jan. 2005 issue there is an address for MSGT Mitchell, who could see that donated packages get to a GI who needs it. I was just wondering if MSGT Mitchell was still active in this program and could forward some packages for me. Thanks.

MSGT Mitchell is now home, with thanks for your generosity. The torch has passed to:

Captain Ryan "SOFMAG" Anderson, USMC
MWSS 371 Engineer Operations Company
Unit 43041
FPO AP 96426-3041

who will see items get in the right hands. Or go to your American Legion or VFW post, and see which local GIs they have address for.

Gerber Multi-tools to Iraq

Great magazine, I am a long-time subscriber. I have purchased 30 Gerber multi tools (through my connections as a former tool salesman) and was wondering if the best place to send them is still to MSGT Earl Mitchell as listed in Bulletin Board in the Jan 05 issue. Let me know, and keep up the good work.

Bill Hoover, Delano, Minn. (continues on page 10)

This is the Tip of America's Military Spear. You're on Point.

You are the First to Fight – a US Marine on the front lines of urban combat in Beirut. Lead a 4-man fire team that executes authentic Marine tactics. Move aggressively, knowing your team gives you 360-degree security, and devastate your enemies with precise air and mortar attacks. Experience a first-person shooter so realistic, the Marines use it as a training tool.



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Bill, that's a great idea! As noted, the above torch passed to Capt. Anderson. Talk it up with your old buds in the tool trade: as long as nobody runs afoul of fair trade laws or distributor agreements, we'd bet there are patriotic suppliers with all nature of things our troops need, with a long discount for supporters buying in bulk for the troops.

Needed: Cold Steel, Emerson knives (fixed and folding), white socks, Militec Dry lube, 9mm/223 boresnakes, Beretta 92F OEM magazines, crimping multi-tools, Surefire flashlights, LED "soft" lights.

Let Those Wear the Laurels, Who Deserve Them

I am in the US Army, serving on Active Duty in Afghanistan. My battalion is currently working on paperwork for our quota of Bronze Star Medals. That's right, a quota, with an expected yield of 50 to 75 awards.

The first three awards came through already, approved. For the Battalion Commander, the Battalion Executive Officer, and the Battalion S3. One of these men, in the seven months we've been here, has NEVER been outside the wire of either our base camp or that of our higher headquarters, other than to board an aircraft and travel between them. Yet he has received an award for combat performance. I see individuals, here and elsewhere, who honestly deserve recognition for actions above and beyond their expected duties. But some, like the vast majority of these awards, are simply getting them as a ticket-punch.

My first platoon sergeant once gave me some advice: He suggested that I never do anything that I wouldn't be willing

to do in front of the platoon, without having the opportunity to explain it. In other words, if it even looked hinky, it might be worth rethinking.

These three awards were supposed to be presented a few days ago, but the commander and the others decided not to do it in a ceremony. These men, these officers and much of their staff and HQ, know their actions were wrong, and they took efforts to change the appearances. Shame on them, and shame on every man whose signature is on those awards.

Some days I am ashamed to share the uniform with people of this character.

Name and rank withheld,
U.S. Army, Afghanistan

The fine print on the regs for the Bronze Star state it is for meritorious service, not just combat service, so such self-congratulation is "legal." But when this old hand was in the Army, the award we got for "meritorious service" was doled out at a ceremony called the Pay Line. The present lax policies cheapen the awards actually earned and deserved by those who go "above and beyond." It's not that way in the Marine Corps, and awards there still deserve respect.

Marines in Fallujah

Hi, my name is CPL Jacob Palafox of the 1st Bn, 5th Marines. The reason for this short note is to inform you, you

Continued on page 79

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Free Iraqis Fight Back

Iraqi police have investigated a case in the village of al-Mudhariya, just south of Baghdad. Before the recent elections, insurgents came and warned the folks that if they voted, they would pay.

The people of this mixed village of Sunni and Shia Muslims ignored the threat and turned out to vote.

The insurgents came back to punish the people of al-Mudhariya, but instead of dishing out their usual to unarmed civilians, the insurgents found themselves facing determined, armed, free men: The villagers killed five insurgents and wounded eight. Then they torched the insurgent's car.

"It would appear that people are getting sick of the insurgency," noted Australian reporter Mark Willacy. "I understand, though, that this is the first report of Iraqis confronting insurgents and actually fighting back in such a way."

Democracy Spreading?

As we go to press, Saudi Arabia is in the throes of an election, news in a monarchy where even talking about elections used to be considered taboo.

Although the country's first nationwide elections were only for local councils, with voters electing half of the councils' members and women banned from running and even voting, the ballot is seen as a concrete step in a reform process no one had expected.

The elections are part of the kingdom's measured response to calls for long-sought reforms. Political parties are banned in Saudi, and press freedoms are limited.

SOF recommends the Gunny Bob Show on Newsradio 850 KOA in Denver, the # 1 station in Colorado. Gunnery Sergeant Bob Newman retired from the Marine Corps in 1997 after 20 years as a grunt, specops and recon type. He is an SOF contributor and is a ground combat veteran, parachute and scuba qualified (a "dual fool" in the Corps).

The Gunny Bob Show is a hard-hitting conservative talk show that airs Monday through Friday from 1900-2200 Mountain Time.

Because Newsradio 850 KOA operates a 50,000-watt "blow torch," the Gunny's show can be heard on radios in 38 states and three countries. Out of range for you? Go to www.850koa.com and click on "Listen Live" to get the show via streaming audio.

The Gunny, who is also the director of international security & counter-terrorism services for The GeoScope Group, won a 2002 National Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative reporting on homeland security. His show is always live with call-ins at 303-713-8585. You can reach him at bobnewman@clearchannel.com.



Attached is a picture of the Vietnam Recon Team Iowa. I have labeled the people in the picture and on the front row is my late husband Vernon T. Mock. This picture was taken late half of 1966. Later, Vernon was on the Recon Team Maine. Vernon left Vietnam in 2/68. I am looking for men that were in RT Iowa and RT Maine during this time frame in order to obtain more information concerning my late husband. If you know anyone that can help, would you have them call or email me please. If you have any information that could help, could you call or email me please.

**Chris Gardner Mock
Phone: 317-298-0180
humifish@ispwest.com**

New Benning Pistol Tests

The Directorate of Combat Developments and Soldier Battle Lab began an experiment Jan. 24 analyzing the current-issue M-9 handgun and possible alternative weapons.

"I want to make it clear, this is not a selection of a new pistol," said Charley Pavlick, project officer with DCD's Small Arms Division. "We are responding to concerns we have from (Soldiers deployed for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom) that report a lack of confidence in the M-9 for several reasons. This is an analysis of different features and characteristics that are available with other weapons platforms."

Some of the concerns with the M-9 include many stoppages, uncomfortable function control and the low lethality of the 9mm ball round, Pavlick said.

The Army hasn't made an official decision to make a move from the M-9 to a new sidearm, Pavlick said. DCD will rewrite the draft requirements documents after the experiment is complete, and then officials will make a decision.

Army officials decided to switch from a .45-caliber sidearm to the 9mm in 1954, but that change wasn't fully implemented until 1984, Pavlick said. It was only when the supply of rebuilt .45s began running out that the Army finally started the 9mm Personal Defense Weapon program.

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"The decision to switch was strictly logistical," he said. "The United States was trying to move toward NATO joint operability, and we were fighting the Cold War. Target effect wasn't a factor in that decision. Now it is."

The performance of better sights, larger calibers and double-action-only firing mechanisms are what DCD analysts will be taking a look at. The test firers for the experiment are representative of the force, Pavlick said. Soldiers of varying rank, military-occupation specialty and gender are included.

Staff Sgt. Michael Morten was one of the test firers. He fired the .45-caliber version of the Smith and Wesson 99. "You can really feel the difference," he said of the Smith and Wesson. "It fits better in my hand. The sights are easier. I thought it would have more kick being a .45, but the recoil is the same as the 9mm. I thought it was excellent."

Castro: Protector of Human Rights

The *Washington Times* notes that Cuba's ascension to the "action panel" of the U.N. Human Rights Commission does not besmirch the U.N. body much, as the panel has long been discredited by the serial human-rights violators that stand among its 53 members. Cuba's appointment does reflect poorly, though, on Latin American leadership and U.S. diplomacy.

Eleven Latin American countries on the U.N. Human

Rights Commission (Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru) chose Cuba as their regional representative — even though six of those countries — Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru — voted last year to condemn Cuba for its human-rights abuses.

Cuba is certainly in noteworthy company. Also appointed to the panel were Zimbabwe, representing Africa, and China, representing Asia. Serving on the action panel will allow those countries to help evaluate and decide which human-rights abuse complaints the U.N. commission will investigate at this year's session, which begins in March.

Cuba's appointment to the action panel has been strongly criticized by the executive director of Americas division of Human Rights Watch, Jose Miguel Vivanco. "It's shameful that anyone would support Cuba to play any relevant role in the human rights machinery," he said. The group has long advocated that the U.N. Human Rights Commission must be reformed, saying that only members that meet certain standards should be allowed to serve on the body.

Just two years ago, Castro threw 75 democratic activists in jail, with sentences of up to 28 years, for "crimes" that included publishing articles abroad and loaning out banned books. Cuba has been condemned by the U.N. Human Rights Commission 11 times in the past 12 years and has never allowed a U.N. monitor on the island.

Continued on page 80



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FROM AN IOWA TOWN TO MARINE CORPS LEGEND

U.S. Marine Corps First Sergeant Brad Kasal is an American hero. His story is a remarkable tale of bravery, sacrifice and savagery that adds another page to the great book of American military lore.

BY NATHANIEL R. HELMS

*Still holding his 9mm Beretta, a seriously injured First Sgt. Brad Kasal is helped from a Fallujah house on 13 Nov. 2004, after killing several Iraqi insurgents and with his own body shielding a fellow Marine from a grenade blast.
Photo by Lucian Read/WorldPictureNews*

First Sgt. Brad Kasal may never join the pantheon of Marine Corps legends with colorful names like “Manila John” Basilone, or “Ol’ Gimlet Eye” Smedley Darlington Butler, who won two Medals of Honor, or Master Gunnery Sergeant Leland “Lou” Diamond, who sported a non-regulation goatee and once raised chickens behind his barracks. But he is every bit in their league.

During his three tours of duty in Iraq and Kuwait, Kasal has been wounded multiple times, including being shot seven times, peppered with grenade fragments on several occasions, and wounded by shrapnel during the Iraq invasion in 2003 and again last August during the Marines’ deadly street fights against Iraqi insurgents in the Sunni Triangle.

According to highly placed Marine Corps sources, Kasal and another Marine who was killed in action at Fallujah, may become the first Marine Corps recipients of the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. Kasal declined any comment on the report and Capt. Daniel J. McSweeney, a spokesman at Marine Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., said the Corps’ policy is to not comment on such matters before they happen. The other potential recipient is the late Sgt. Rafael Peralta, who was killed after using his wounded body to shield his comrades from an exploding hand grenade thrown by an insurgent.

“I appreciate your interest in this issue and that the story and photo speak volumes about the courage and commitment of our deployed Marines,” McSweeney said Thursday. “I’m sorry to reinforce that CMC (Commandant, Marine Corps) and other members of HQMC do not offer comments of any kind on awards that are working their way through the system.”

Kasal joined the Marine Corps in 1984 from rural Afton, Iowa — population 941 — when he was fresh out of East Union High School and fresh off the family farm. Nineteen years later, he was a Marine first sergeant leading a hard-pressed company of infantrymen in a desperate fight for an Iraqi city named Fallujah, a place as foreign to most Americans as Iwo Jima was 60 years ago.

“I always wanted to be a Marine, to see the world and make a difference,” Kasal said in an interview this week.

Linda Haner, the deputy city clerk of Afton and someone who watched Kasal and his family grow up, remembers him as a nice boy who did well on the high school wrestling team. “He was quite athletic,” she said.

Haner said the whole town is proud of Kasal and all his brothers who served in the armed forces. Brother Jeff is a retired Army paratrooper who fought in Desert Storm with the 82nd Airborne and now works in Iraq for Halliburton; Kelly, who was in the Army four years and Kevin, who served four years as a Marine, are all known and respected around the Iowa town.

“If you could see all the yellow ribbons and all the red, white and blue ribbons you would understand about this place. People around here are proud of the boys in the service and what they are doing,” Haner added.

Currently Kasal isn’t doing too much except recovering. The 38-year-old bachelor is confined to a wheelchair while he endures a painful medical procedure to put his right leg back together. His lower leg is connected to a metal device called a halo brace that is full of pins and screws that doctors manipulate each day to stretch his battered lower leg a millimeter at a time, trying to extend it to the length it used to be before an insurgent blew it in half with a Kalashnikov assault rifle.

“They turn the screws so many notches a day,” he explained matter-of-factly from his home in Oceanside, Calif. “It would be easier if I had someone to take care of me, but I

have lots of friends and they help.”

Despite his terrible wounds, Kasal has no regrets. He has seen plenty of the world and made a world of difference to a lot of young Marines placed in his charge during three combat tours in the Middle East as First Sergeant of Kilo Company, and then Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. If he has his way he will be doing it again as soon as he heals.

“I believe in leading from the front,” Kasal explained. “It eases their [young Marines] minds and concerns to see me up there with them. That is where I belong.”

His father, Gerald, a retired farmer and six-year veteran of the Iowa Army National Guard in the 1950s and early 1960s, said Brad was a great kid who never posed any problems except his propensity for fighting the boys from an adjacent town who seemed to take a pleasure in beating up the boys from Afton — a practice that came to an abrupt end when Brad and his brothers beat the hell out of some of them.

“After Brad and his brothers showed up a few times, they quit thinking they could beat up the boys from Afton,” Gerald Kasal remembered. “Brad’s oldest brother used to be a bully and pick on his younger brothers and I guess Brad just decided nobody was going to pick on him anymore.”

Whatever the reason for his bravery and resolve, Kasal displayed it in the proudest tradition of the Marine Corps on

Kasal said his first instinct was to protect the young Marine lying bloody beside him. He covered the young man with his body and took the full brunt of shrapnel to his back when the grenade exploded.

13 Nov. 2004 during Operation Phantom Fury, the American attack on Fallujah that began five days earlier with the mission of destroying the insurgents’ stronghold in what was considered the center of their territory in Iraq.

“We were moving down the street, clearing buildings,” Kasal recounted. “A Marine came out wounded from a building and said there were three more wounded Marines trapped in there with a bunch of bad guys [insurgents]. As we entered, we noticed several dead Iraqis on the floor and one of our wounded.”

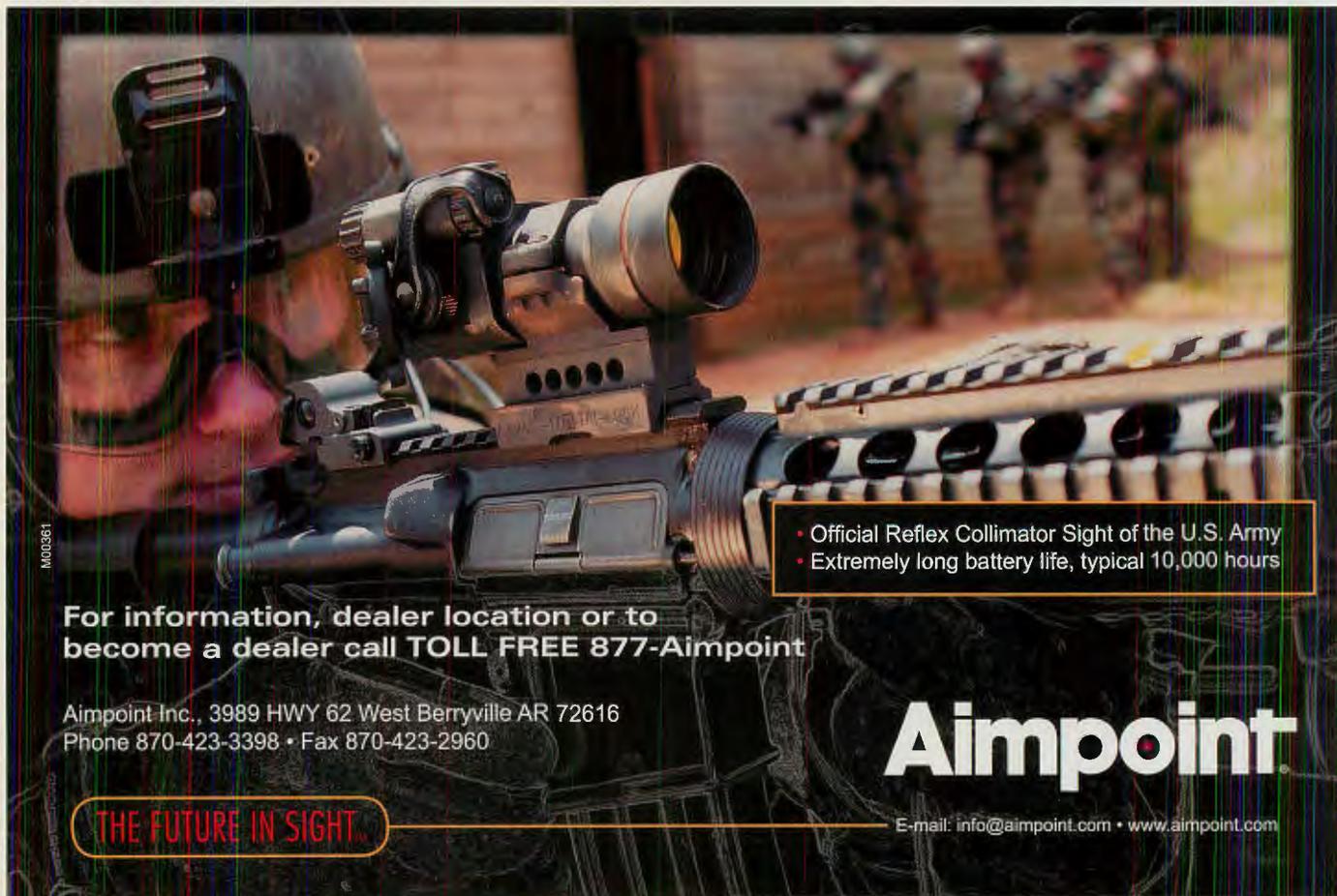
Kasal said there was no question of what to do. “If I was a general I would still think my job was to get the wounded Marines out of there,” he said. “So we went in to get them.”

As soon as he entered the two-story stucco and brick building, Kasal found himself in mortal combat. It was fighting to the death, and there was no quarter expected or given, Kasal said.

“An Iraqi pointed an AK-47 at me and I moved back. He fired and missed. I shot and killed him. I put my barrel up against his chest and pulled the trigger over and over until he went down. Then I looked around the wall and put two into his forehead to make sure he was dead.”

While Kasal and a young Pfc. Alexander Nicoll were tak-

Continued on page 77



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Heart Of Darkness

Merces Feel the Full Horror of "African Justice"

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

Last month, we left off with the arrest of ninety suspected mercenaries who were being accused of attempting a coup to overthrow the corrupt, brutal regime of President Obiang of Equatorial Guinea. Fifteen merces, led by white South African Nick du Toit, accused of staging an advance mission for the coup, were captured in the middle of the night in their hotels in Equatorial Guinea. Three, including British merc Simon Mann, apparently exposed as a result of a multinational sting, were arrested at the airport in Harare, Zimbabwe, and sixty-seven others were arrested as their Boeing 727 landed in Harare.

The government of Equatorial Guinea accused the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain of plotting its overthrow. President Obiang threatened to recall his ambassador to Spain, the previous colonial master.

Officials claimed that a white South African, "Nick" (Du Toit), had confessed on television to the plot to kill the president.

Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge of Zimbabwe threatened "the severest punishment in our statutes, including capital punishment."

Families of the apprehended merces, who had mainly been recruited in South Africa, became understandably distraught.

"Eduardo told us he was going off to do a job; he didn't tell us where," one merc's daughter told the *Telegraph*. "Later I saw on TV that some men had been arrested in Zimbabwe, but it was only when we read a list of names in a newspaper that we knew Eduardo was there. It was a terrible shock."

"The Equatorial Guinea fiasco has put dozens of men in Zimbabwean jails, a death sentence in itself. The men in jail in Equatorial Guinea are unlikely to survive either. They will not be freed... they also do not have a hope in hell of a fair trial," a former South African intelligence officer told SOE.

American embassy officials in Malabo, the Equatorial Guinea capital, claimed that du Toit and other members of his group are being held in good conditions in the notorious-



Mark Thatcher, son of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, leaves court in Cape Town, February 18, 2005. Thatcher appeared to answer questions from Equatorial Guinea prosecutors regarding his involvement in a botched coup attempt in the central African country.

REUTERS/Ruwan Boshoff

ly brutal Black Beach prison.

The Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe officials claimed that any trial in Malabo would meet international standards.

I spoke with the U.S. attorney who had defended U.S. merc Daniel Gearhart, charged with treason for an attempted coup in Angola in 1976. The attorney noted that SOF had paid his airfare to Angola and back to try to help the men get a fair trial.

Joke Trial

"The trial was a joke," he said. "It was a Cuban show, a trial of colonialism and imperialism. In the country where Portuguese is the native tongue, Spanish was the language spoken. The prisoners did not get proper translations.

"The inmates had a lot of neglect. They don't mess around over there. My client, Gearhart, was tried, sentenced, and executed within 24 or 48 hours."

The prediction of the SOF sources proved to be right on.

The German mercenary who died in Black Beach within weeks after his arrest did not die of cerebral malaria as officials claimed. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that the victim's corpse looked like he was tortured to death.

Du Toit's wife, Belinda insisted that he had been tortured into confessing. By the time he made a public appearance at trial, he had lost 60 pounds, his face was gaunt, his hair and beard shaggy and his clothes were hanging on his gaunt frame, *New Zimbabwe* reports.

"Without corroborating evidence, like contracts or bank transfers, confessions extracted in this way are surely not worth the paper they are written on," one Africa expert said; he agreed that Du Toit had been tortured into confessing.

The accused were kept chained 24 hours a day in Malabo's Black Beach prison.

"The buckets that double as latrines aren't emptied for weeks; the cells lack light or ventilation and are freezing in winter and boil in summer; lice and mosquitoes thrive, feasting on the bodies of prisoners who sleep on concrete floors without blankets or mattresses.

Gruel and Vegetables

Inmates normally receive just one meal a day, usually gruel and vegetables, while the most basic human comforts such as toothpaste, soap and toilet paper are only available to those who can bribe prison guards. Beatings are frequent," the *Telegraph* writes.

Observers at the trial were stunned at the condition of the inmates.

The prisoners, "wrists and feet shackled ... half-crawled, half-fell out of the high four-wheel-drives that had delivered them to a garish conference center-turned courtroom in Equatorial Guinea's capital. The flashing lights, blaring sirens and escort of camouflage-clad troops merely made the gaunt, grey men, shuffling silently through the rain in their T-shirts, shorts and rubber sandals, seem more pathetic," wrote the *Independent*

"I was informed by Simon Mann that when the existing President was deposed, Mr. Severo Moto would be in the new government. Simon Mann and Greg (Wales) said that he was coming from Spain and knew all about the intended coup." Had the coup been successful, du Toit testified, the rewards would have been great. "I was promised one million dollars,

to be deposited in my Malabo account at CCEI Bank, and a guarantee that my business would continue as usual," the *Independent* reports.

Du Toit told how he helped to recruit mercenaries from South Africa, Angola and Mozambique in the next few weeks. Du Toit, who had contacts in Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe, flew with Mann to Harare to arrange the purchase of weapons from the Zimbabwe Defense Industry. With over a dozen of his recruits, he planned to seize the control tower of Malabo airport and provide guides for Mann and his team as they came in from Harare.

Du Toit admitted having been introduced to former Prime Minister's rogue son, Sir Mark Thatcher by Mann. Du Toit told how he had met Thatcher through Mann to discuss the sale of some helicopters, which du Toit owned in Zambia. Thatcher said he wanted to use the helicopters for mining operations in Sudan, U.N. agency IRIN reports.

Severo Moto

Equatorial Guinea officials poo-hooed those claims. South African Intelligence and "other" intelligence services had supposedly informed them that Sir Mark, through his involvement in Triple A Aviation ambulance service, offered to finance a helicopter to take the exiled opposition leader Severo Moto into Equatorial Guinea to assume command. Triple A had signed a contract to supply aircraft and aviation services to Logo Logistics, Mann's company.

Unexpectedly, the court postponed sentencing. Rumors flew that Sir Mark had been arrested in South Africa.

The case had acquired an "international dimension", and was put on hold until investigations elsewhere had been completed, the *UK Times* reports.

Nick du Toit's hopes were raised when officials said that he could receive mercy in exchange for his co-operation. Equatorial Guinea asked for international arrest warrants to be issued for Sir Mark.

A reporter, who caught a glimpse of their holding room as they were told the news, described the looks of defeat as they shuffled back out to the prison in waiting vehicles. A soldier snapped and clapped his hands to speed them up.

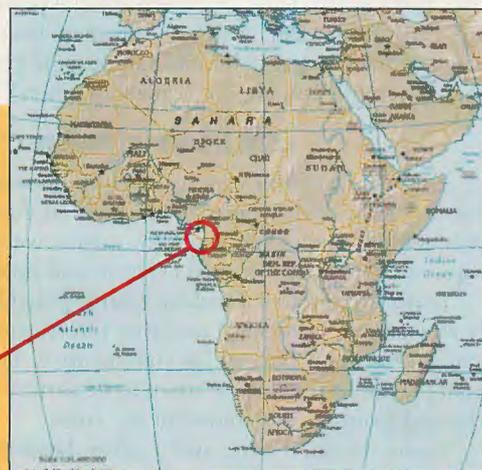
The inmates in the dreaded Chikurubi prison in Zimbabwe fared no better.

Ngave Jarukemo Muharuka, 35, died after being "taken ill" in Chikurubi. Cause of death was uncertain.

Harry Carlse and Lourens Horn, the two who had been freed from Chikurubi after being acquitted on a charge of



courtesy CIA



attempting to purchase dangerous weapons, said they were stripped, beaten and forced to sleep in leg-irons during six months of detention, wrote the *UK Times*. Horn, 30, said that police had beaten the 70 prisoners for three weeks before they were allowed to see their lawyers.

Physical Torture

"There was physical torture as well as mental torture," he said. "They said if we refused to make a statement they would give us electric shocks."

"I was stripped naked and beaten with a stick. I slept in leg-irons for a week and a half," Mr. Carlse, 40, said.

The prisoners survived on a diet of porridge and cabbage; overcrowding and disease were rife. "You could go without (running) water for two weeks, so you couldn't flush the toilet," Mr. Horn said.

"Chikurubi Prison is in the middle of nowhere, hidden behind a curtain of blue-gum trees and mealie fields.... It took more than 30 minutes to get a security clearance from the first security checkpoint to the fifth before one could see the shabby looking and dilapidated building serving as a court.

"One passes through thick bush before reaching the first checkpoint. Then the buildings emerge from behind a security fence, guarded by watchtowers. But the entrance to the maximum security prison is colorful, with flowers and a green garden pruned by woman prisoners."

As the magistrate left the court, the prisoners looked confused and desperate,

The sweltering warehouse had benches lined up for the prisoners, members of the public and the media.

Defense attorney Jonathan Samkange told the court that some of the accused had been assaulted, refused food, water and telephone access for four days.

The 60 black and ten white men, clad in khaki prison shorts and shirts, leg-shackled and handcuffed in a two-by-two formation, made their first public appearance.

Mann, wearing white sneakers and gray socks rather than the sandals the others wore, chewed on something, fiddled with his fingers and constantly tapped. "

"Horn and an unidentified accused were not shackled, as they had swollen legs. One court official joked that they were suffering from gout. Most of the men have grown beards. They were escorted by more than 40 policemen, with half of them standing outside the makeshift court."

High Treason in Zimbabwe

The men faced five charges, including contravention of the Public Order and Security Act (high treason in Zimbabwe, with a life sentence), trying to buy arms without legal certificates, and violations of civil aviation and immigration laws.

South African Jose Cardoso testified that he was physically abused and "shocked" and that interrogators invented his confession. "Is it normal for statements to be taken as you're being taken to the torture room to be tortured, as I was?" the chained Cordoso demanded of the court.

Simon Mann, Horn, and Carlos Jacob Hermanus, who were arrested as an alleged advance team in Zimbabwe, were charged with trying to buy firearms. Chief prosecutor Mary

Zimba-Dube said the three tried to buy the weapons from ZDI and had contracted and paid \$180,000 in the name of du Toit. When ZDI realized that Mann was a notorious mercenary, Zimba-Dube said, they contacted the authorities.

Evidence included a videotape of Mann contracting to buy "dangerous weapons" from ZDI during an earlier trip to Zimbabwe. "Any reasonable man, hearing what they did, would conclude that they were terrorists and mercenaries," state Prosecutor Phiri said, according to *SABC News*.

"There is an existing contract, and we have that contract, to show that Simon Mann and his men were going to be paid a certain amount, with the highest being \$15 million for Simon Mann and three million for the generality," Phiri said.

Terrified of Execution

"The fact that they were lying on the floor, that they were in darkness, means they were complying with instructions to avoid detection," Phiri told the court. "The manner in which the accused were recruited in South Africa was suspect because they were recruited over the phone by a man they did not know ... That can only be consistent with mercenary recruitment or military recruitment," he said. Reuters

Sixty-seven of the accused pleaded guilty to lesser charges of contravening immigration and aviation laws.

Friends and family members of the men, terrified that they would be executed, pled with South Africa to intervene.

Belinda du Toit, wife of du Toit, told *BBC News*, "I hope someone in the South African government will listen to our pleas. If our men must be tried, let it happen here, where there is a fair legal system. If they stay where they are now, I'm sure they won't get a fair trial"

Mann split with his co-accused in their case against South Africa and

hired new lawyers to negotiate his release from a maximum-security jail in Harare.

A fellow inmate accused the wealthy Mann of selling out for a private deal with Zimbabwe authorities, to transfer him to Britain.

Fearing violence by his angered recruits, who attacked him numerous times when he was let out of his solitary confinement in a fetid cell measuring 13 feet by 4.5 feet, Mann requested isolation.

"Simon Mann is the linchpin of the whole operation," said Marge Pain, whose 60-year-old husband, Ken, was the flight engineer on the seized plane. "He got my husband and all the other guys into this mess, and now he seems to be cutting and running. It's not right."

Zimbabwe's officials told *Reuters* that extradition was impossible. "We don't have that arrangement with Equatorial Guinea ... and also it would be against international law to do so," Mohadi said.

Emergency Basis

Families of the accused sued the South African government, demanding that it extradite the men from Zimbabwe so they can stand trial in their home country, reports the *Telegraph*. The constitutional court in Pretoria took the application on an emergency basis, but denied the request. They appealed.

The German mercenary did not die of cerebral malaria.

Eyewitnesses said it looked like he had been tortured to death.

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The Constitutional Court dismissed the appeal, leaving the men to fry.

At the sentencing the prosecutor condemned Mann, "The accused was the author of the whole transaction. He was caught while trying to take the firearms out of the country."

September 10, 2004, Mann was sentenced to four years for attempting to purchase dangerous weapons and three more for trying to buy them without a license.

Two flight crewmembers were jailed for 16 months and the 66 alleged mercenaries were jailed for 12 months on minor immigration and aviation charges, the *Guardian* reported.

"I think it was excessive and it induces a sense of shock," defense council Samkange protested.

Mann, gaunt, disheveled, handcuffed with leg irons visible under his khaki shorts sat motionless when the sentence was pronounced. Sunday Telegraph (UK)

Mann's friends, "taking as deadly serious the threats

against his life that some of the other defendants have been making," launched a plan assumed to include payoffs to the corrupt Mugabe regime, the *UK Telegraph* was told.

"Mr. Mugabe's regime has already benefited materially from the arrest of Mann with the seizure of his Boeing 727, worth about £1.5 million, and \$180,000 (£100,000) in cash found on board," the *Telegraph* writes.

Mann, refused to appeal at first, doubting that his friends could "buy" him out of jail; he changed his mind after the birth of his seventh child, an eight pound, four ounce boy named Arthur.

"Simon was thrilled to hear about Arthur," a family friend said, "but he fears the boy will be at school by the time he gets out — if he even survives."

Mann's sentence was cut to four years. Independent (UK).

He's expected to be released within one year's time. But in Malabo du Toit was sentenced to 34 years, and his prospects for survival seem slim to none.

Exploits of a Privileged Rogue

"He's a scoundrel whose mummy (former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) is always bailing him out," the former French Foreign Legionnaire told me.

He has been involved in numerous "shady" deals, a British private investigator," told me in London. He is rumored to have used his mother's position and clout to make fortunes, including arms sales to Saudi Arabia, a plan to build a school in Oman, and deals with the Sultan of Brunei, he said.

My source supplied me with investigations by the sensational *Private Eye* British magazine. Sir Mark associated with Lebanese and other Arab arms dealers. Harrod's owner and father of Lady Di's lover, killed with her in a car accident in France, is also an "important friend". A rumor Sir Mark vehemently denied was his association with Carlos Cardoen, the Chilean "cluster bomb king" who was chief arms supplier to Saddam Hussein.

"As for Mark Thatcher, all I can tell you is that the Scorpions elite investigation unit this end DOES NOT pounce on anyone until they have damning evidence. They pounced on Thatcher, who, by the way, is badly viewed by Cape Town's high society because he has a very dodgy past, involving financial deals and dishonored commitments. Mark Thatcher's palatial mansion in Cape Town is for sale and both his children have been placed in Texan schools. His wife - a Dallas heiress - has returned to South Africa. For how long nobody knows. All current information points to high-level involvement by Mark Thatcher in the funding of the EQ venture," a former South African intel officer told SOF.

"Well, Mark is someone who is desperate to please his mother, Margaret Thatcher; desperate to show that he could succeed. The problem was that he either did not have the aptitude, or the ability, or the work ethic to get into business, and he thought that by making as much money as he could, he could be seen as a success," Mark Hollingsworth, author of biographies of Thatcher Junior

told *Carte Blanche*.

"He associates himself with people who certainly have criminal records. His business judgment is poor," he said.

"I did know that he was a close friend of Simon Mann, the ringleader of the mercenaries. It's also the type of world he loves—the kind of secret boy zone; mercenary, private security world—where old soldiers sit around swapping war stories, their exploits and this kind of slightly sinister, shadowy world."

Obsession With Security

"Security for him is a very big deal. He's always been obsessed by it, always had bodyguards, always had the most expensive, intricate private security equipment inside his homes," Hollingsworth said.

An elite Scorpion unit stormed Sir Mark Thatcher mansion and arrested him in his well-protected house the middle of the night in his silk pyjamas. He was charged under South Africa's Foreign Military Assistance Act for his alleged part in the botched Equatorial Guinea coup.

"We believe that the person that we have raided this morning is allegedly a financier to the coup, or the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea, Siphon Ngwenya, Scorpions spokesman told *Carte Blanche*

"Thatcher definitely knew the money was for a coup. There was \$275,000 in two payments. There were specific instructions and specific meetings which led to the purchase of logistical material they needed for the coup," Siphon said.

"We started noticing that there was a suggestion that he might be intending to relocate because his properties were on sale, his vehicles were on sale, and his kids and wife had been booked on a flight to Texas in the US," Siphon testified.

"We have information under oath, and we have been talking to a number of people in Guinea who are connected to the attempted coup in one way or the other, who have

Continued on page 26

SUREFIRE QUALITY, PICATINNY ENGINEERING. THE BEST RAIL FORENDS HAVE ARRIVED.



SureFire Picatinny rails are available in three lengths to fit AR15/M16/M4 variants. Models are also available for the HK MP5, Remington 370 and Mossberg 590 shotgun.

The historic Picatinny Arsenal dates back to 1880, serving the U.S. Army as a warfighting research and development center for weapons systems and munitions. Picatinny's Armament Technology Facility defined the dimensions for a standard mount for all weapons in the U.S. Army. Better known by its namesake as a "Picatinny rail," the mount's specifications are technically referred to as the Picatinny M1913 Military Standard Rail.

SureFire recognized a need for a better attachment interface for a Picatinny rail forend to fit on the AR15/M16 family of weapons, and designed the SureFire Picatinny rail forend accordingly. The new forends lock up with rigid tension, allowing the operator to mount an optic or other targeting device—without any zero shift.

Based on tests by the DEA, no other brand of Picatinny rail forend is solid enough to allow the mounting of optical sights on the rail. The DEA promptly ordered a large quantity of SureFire Picatinny forends for their new carbines.

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Scorpion Police

When I was in London shortly after the trial in Zimbabwe, a private investigator told me that Scotland Yard, in cooperation with South Africa's Scorpion police unit was investigating the money behind the coup.

Sir Mark, Lord Jeffrey Archer, and Greg Wales, who had met with officials in Washington repeatedly before the coup, were named as key players.

Du Toit, who claimed that Wales arranged much of the finance for the coup, had his personal mobile number in his notebook.

Equatorial Guinea officials stated "the appropriate authorities are anxious to interview Mr. Wales, in view of his apparent involvement in the attempted coup d'état." Scotland Yard's Anti-Terrorist Branch to investigate Mr. Wales's role. "We believe attempting a coup against an elected government by the use of force is an act of international terrorism and should be investigated as such," one lawyer said, according to the *Independent*.

"I was not involved in a coup. I do not even believe that there was a coup plot. This is all a deal between [Robert] Mugabe [President of Zimbabwe] and Obiang. If the government of Equatorial Guinea is saying I was involved then it is a joke."

Nuts in Zimbabwe

Wales said he met Severo Moto, but had no personal knowledge of the coup, "I think he (Mann) was nuts to be in Zimbabwe frankly, because it's a dreadful place. I can't imagine that you could persuade me to go there myself, not as things are now."

Wales said he had an interest in Equatorial Guinea because he was going to bid for a US State Department contract to conduct anti-poaching and illegal fishing surveillance.

Equatorial Guinea filed a civil suit against Simon Mann, Ely Calil, Wales and Severo Moto in July in the High Court in London. President Obiang sued for millions of pounds on the legal grounds of civil conspiracy.

What is going on here is the attempt by President Obiang to hang on to power." Mr. Moto told the *Telegraph*.

Calil has hired Margaret Thatcher's favorite PR guru Lord Bell to rebut the alleged claims against him, which he says are an elaborate set-up.

Fancy that.

So, the bottom line is that the evil plot is foiled, and the evil mercenaries are punished. And a monster remains in power in a poor and hapless African "republic." ❧

Dr. Martin Brass is a longtime SOF contributor.

Exploits of a Privileged Rogue

assisted us. And the reason for the investigation is because of the information that we got from those witnesses." "Some of the material we picked up in the raid has assisted us in this. There are invoices from various transactions to him and receipts. It's clear that there is a direct link. We took his computer and are downloading it now. There is also written material above and beyond the receipts. "There is no doubt about his connection with Simon Mann. He is not a passive investor, he was an active participant and he was in constant contact with what was happening. He was a direct investor in a short-term project. His correspondence was with the coup organizers," Siphon testified.

The court sentenced him to house arrest and ordered him to stay in Cape Town. Baroness Thatcher put up the \$275,000 dollar bail.

The Equatorial Guinea Attorney-General Jose Olo Obono had been hot on his tail and demanded that South Africa have him extradited to face charges with Nick du Toit in Equatorial Guinea.

"South Africa would simply try them in connection with illegal arms trading. We accuse them of crimes against the life of our head of state, of compromising the peace and independence of our country. We have a better claim. If we give an undertaking to the British Government that they will not be executed, then Britain should be willing to extradite them here," he told the *Independent*.

Obono vehemently denied torture charges, "At this stage they will say anything to get sympathy. Their defense counsel are free to say what they want, but they have not raised the matter," AP reports.

"Obono has lied," Thatcher's attorney, Peter Hodes told the court in extradition hearings. "Du Toit and his cohorts had no legal representation."

"What we are dealing with in Equatorial Guinea is a military tribunal, or there is a good possibility that it is,"

Hodes said. "In many instances, judges are not qualified." He criticized the South African government for not acknowledging this

"The minister of justice may well be assisting in putting Du Toit to death," he told the judge.

The meeting to question Sir Mark was scrapped, "It was cancelled from the South African side. There are certain procedural issues we have to go through," South African Press Agency was told.

Thatcher had been investigated in 1998 in South Africa in connection with a loan shark operation. He supposedly made small loans to police, military, and government personnel, then charged them 20% interest, rated upon default.

UK *Times* sources confirmed that Sir Mark earned up to £six million a year in profit by selling South African diesel fuel across the border in Zimbabwe. A Zimbabwean police investigation was been launched into alleged gold smuggling at Redwork Mill, which he co-owned. A co-owner, who denied that Sir Mark was still a partner in the two million dollar a year project, said it would be unwise for Thatcher to return to Zimbabwe.

Supposedly, Sir Mark's chief patron in the United States is Ross Perot.

That's funny, because Sir Mark pled guilty to his role in the coup attempt, cut a deal with the Scorpions, and is expected to return to Texas. The deal included becoming an informer for the investigators in the trial in London against Wales, Calil and Mann. He received a four year suspended sentence and a five and a half million dollar fine.

His house in Cape Town sold for the highest price ever in that suburb.

Those with big bucks are hiding behind their expensive attorneys and sitting comfortably in London and the United States, probably planning their next gig. The operators on the ground are paying the brutal consequences.

Mercenaries reportedly have a contract out on Sir Mark's life. But they have to get through his army of armed guards to execute it. — MB ❧

“Picture Two People, Locked In Mortal Combat, One Strangling The Other. Now, Imagine Yourself In This Scene And Tell Me... What Would You Do?”

(Hint: Whatever Your Answer, The Odds Are... It's Wrong!)

Kick him in the groin.” “Strike the arms or punch the solar plexus.” “Grab the hands.” “Stomp on his instep.”

The list is always the same. Unfortunately... each answer puts YOUR life at risk in the face of a life-or-death assault.

Why? Because invariably when Tim Larkin asks students this question at his *Target-Focus™ Training* bootcamps...

No One—Not Even Trained Martial Artists—Sees THEMSELVES As The One Doing The Choking!! They're always the one BEING choked.

But think about it... couldn't this be the scenario?

You're surprised by two attackers. You've left the first on the ground writhing in pain, and now have control of the second one and are about to make him wish he'd never targeted you today...

Possible? Sure. It's just that no one sees it this way.

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

What went wrong? Just this. You ASSUMED he only wanted the wallet. After all, why would anyone stab someone over a few measly bucks? YOU certainly wouldn't do that if you were robbing someone.

And that IS the problem. See, think like that and...

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

See, nothing bothers him. He's not bound by your morals or rules. He has no regret at all in cramming a blade into your gut... if that's what it takes to get what he wants.

Yet you stroll around thinking 15 years of martial arts training or that 6-week self-defense course or some reality fighting guru's video gives you the edge against someone like this. **Wake up!**

You are hopelessly training techniques (then praying they work) against some thug who isn't 'training' for you at all. How many criminals in federal pens spent years sweating through JKD workouts before committing their crime? How many are Jujitsu experts?

Not a one! They excel at just one thing: doin' it. No training, no practice, no techniques. And certainly no 'rules'. So why squander years fooling yourself with something that only works "if everyone plays by the rules"?

These are the facts: 98.1% of us, caught in an unavoidable violent attack (even those with years of training), would never consider doing "whatever it takes" to survive—like gouging our attacker's eyes—even if they were the only means of saving our own life.

That's why TFT teaches both mind and body to act in unison, training you for the real threat in your life... criminal violence. It shows you how to deal with the ultra violence of a life-or-death confrontation (it's very easy to ramp this down to fit a lesser situation but impossible to ramp up to a "killing-set" if you've never trained for it. By the way, is this you?).

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

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

Look... others try to impress you with how 'bad' they are, with their accomplishments in some "secret military or government world" you and I aren't privy to, or with

their athletically-gifted 'guru' status. Larkin isn't like that.

His record IS impressive. He trains units from all the top echelons of federal law enforcement and military special operations groups. It's not surprising since he comes from that world and is well known there. But everyone now claims they teach this type of training so even though he's often treated like a guru there, you'll rarely hear him talk about it.

He is an awesome communicator and trainer, and is amazingly approachable for someone with his abilities and credentials. He's trained 1,000's of CEOs and others in high-risk positions around the world—all very real people. But why is this so important?

Why is TFT being sought out in all these other arenas?

Because it works! Because you "get it" immediately. There's no waiting. It's usable instantly... and it stays with you forever, even without practice.

Take fear. Others say they will make you 'fearless'. It's a total lie! **Fear is hardwired into our brains.** TFT instead quickly and easily reprograms your muscle 'software' enabling you to take deliberate action... despite your fear.

Here's what TFT is about: the key to this system lies in the fact this is the only system based totally on PRINCIPLES (not techniques) that determine the outcome of any physical confrontation. Combine these with three supporting methodologies that form the foundation of every fighting system on the planet and you have a complete system for handling any violent confrontation.

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

Last year Larkin trained over 600 CEO's in Europe. These folks ate his stuff up because **TFT** principles are as effective in business 'combat' as they are in a truly lethal fight, and for the exact same reason... **RESULTS.**

Think about this: If these people can get this much from his material, **imagine how much more you can learn...** a dedicated reader of Soldier of Fortune magazine who is really into finding and applying a personal protection system that is **quickly learned and deadly effective.** If all these folks are **seeking him out**, shouldn't you be too?

Larkin is swamped and realizes he can't begin to reach everyone. He'd love to have you as a member of his organization and take part in his live training but realizes few will be able to do this. Training camps run \$1,500.00, international events start at \$9,500.00, and personal training for small 2- to 4-person sessions is \$10,000.00 and more.

That's why, in a daring move with potentially serious ramifications, he's released a new WEAPONS-focused version of his TFT system that shows you how to defeat a violent criminal in a **WORSE-than-worst-case scenario.**

Listen. I understand you may find this hard to believe. That's how I felt too until I saw the DVDs. 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 17-page Special Report into your hands that will **prove everything you've just read** and explain why this program is so **radically DIFFERENT** from anything you've seen before.

All you need to do to get his **FREE** report is pick up the phone and call **888-811-9347.** There's a short 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 hassle you.

Call now. There's no obligation.

“How To Instantly Hobble, Cripple Or Destroy Your Adversary Using Leverage Principles Not Even Whispered About In Public Before”

Everyone knows the quickest way to end a violent life-or-death confrontation is by crushing your assailant's joints... **blowing** a knee, **snapping** an ankle, **ripping** a shoulder.

But even if you only intend to use joint manipulation to end a bar fight, win a MA sporting competition or control a suspect, what you may not realize is that...

In Each Case, The Surprising Secret To Your Success Is Exactly The Same...

It's Knowing HOW To BREAK Any Joint In The Human Body...

EVEN IF YOU NEVER INTEND TO ACTUALLY DO IT!

That's because you've got to know what's required to actually break a joint... if you ever hope to execute that same leverage WITHOUT causing physical harm!

Yet even though it's critical to understand the secrets behind joint breaking, right now you likely haven't a prayer of executing this stuff in a real-world confrontation, regardless of your experience!

Here's why:

1. Everything you've been taught about this subject is so friggin' complex, Einstein himself couldn't figure it out!

For example, you're fed a steady line about there being "hundreds of ways to break a joint." But it's just BULL!

There **aren't** hundreds of ways -- there is **only ONE!**

And within this one, there are just 6 things you can do to make it happen. That's it!

What this means is you're spending years memorizing useless TECHNIQUES when in fact it's really all about... **PRINCIPLES. Learn the simple principles behind this stuff... and you can generate any technique... whenever you need it... right on the fly!**

2. There IS a SECRET to making any leverage work. Unfortunately, no one's ever explained this to you before. And without understanding it... you will almost never make a joint break... or joint manipulation... work.

Well, finally someone IS teaching it... in an easy-to-understand format that anyone can quickly learn.

This is all clearly described in a new report that explains exactly why no one has shown this to you before. And while material like this usually applies only to life-threatening situations, this one is VERY DIFFERENT... because... it works equally well in any situation... even sporting applications.

Get this **FREE** 14-page Report and check it out for yourself. Just call **877-355-1464.** Leave your name and address and we'll mail it to you immediately. You can call **24-hours a day, 7 days a week.** Or access this information on-line at **www.sofleverage.com**

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

FARNAM'S GUNSLINGER DIARY
BY JOHN FARNAM



The Thirty Years War

Protestant King Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, the "Lion of the North," the "Snow King," led a lean, efficient, and highly-mobile army that was able to move faster and hit harder than any thrown against it. He was ahead of his time and nearly unbeatable. His greatest fear was territorial encroachment from a Catholic Europe. Gustavus was always out front. He led his men personally, and, like most generals who do, he was fatally wounded at the Battle of Lutzen in 1632 (in present-day Germany).

Czech-born Count Albrecht Wallenstein (born into a Lutheran family) was the one ultimately selected to oppose Gustavus with a Catholic, and mostly mercenary, army. He led from the front too. At the same battle, Wallenstein watched as most of his staff fell around him. In the process, several musket balls passed through his coat. Wallenstein was defeated at Lutzen, but engineered an impressive victory over the Swedes the following spring. Gustavus' successor, the incompetent Count Thurn, was easily routed. As a reward for his brilliance, Wallenstein was murdered by a nervous Archduke Ferdinand von Hapsburg of the Holy Roman Empire (Germany), who was fearful of Wallenstein's growing popularity.

The dreadful "Thirty Years' War," from 1618 to 1648, eventually engulfed all nations on the western edge of Eurasia, collectively called "Western Europe." It was ostensibly a battle between Catholics and Protestants, but, in reality, it (like all wars) was a struggle for real estate, political power, and posture on the World Stage. It would end with Western Europe's center, where major battles took place, depopulated and burnt to the ground. Recovery would take decades. The power of the Holy Roman Empire and the feudal system that supported it, founded centuries earlier by Caesar Augustus, would be broken forever (even Napoleon, a century and a half later, would be unable to resurrect it). However, Western Europe's festering instability was, by no means, tempered.

The War mostly fizzled out in 1648 with the "Peace of Westphalia," as widespread destruction had left all sides exhausted and unable to continue fighting, at least on a large scale. However, what was left of mercenary armies still

milled about restlessly.

Many thus saw the necessity of Western Civilization permanently diverging into several strong, independent, Christian, nation/states, united by nationalism, rather than religion. The "Great Powers" were on their way, and world history would take yet another turn.

Comment: "I profess that a people must never value anything higher than individual dignity and freedom; that it must defend these with the last drop of its blood; that it has no duty more sacred and can obey no higher law, that the shame of a cowardly submission can never be wiped out; that the poison of submission in the bloodstream of a people will be transmitted to its children, paralyzing later generations; that honor can be lost only once; that a people is unconquerable when it fights a spirited struggle; that an honorable fight assures rebirth, even if freedom were lost; and that such a struggle is the seed from which a new tree will inevitably blossom." — von Clausewitz, 1820

"Metus improbos compescit, non clementina" ("Fear, not kindness, restrains the wicked") — Syrus Maxims

The 30-Year Hiatus: M14s are back!

The U.S. Army's Long Range Surveillance Detachment (42nd Infantry Division) is deploying to Iraq with "newly (re)issued" M14 rifles, and the apologies, along with pseudo-denials, are rampant. They obviously hope no one notices, lest everyone will all want to switch over. Beating us to it, British Special Ops folks in that part of the world have already "rediscovered" the .303 Enfield cartridge.

"It's a tremendous force multiplier. It's a tremendous asset on the battlefield," we are told. Isn't EVERY battle rifle supposed to fit that description? What does that make the M16 and M4? A non-force-multiplier and a non-asset on the battlefield?

What no one will say (in public) is that, in a battle rifle, the .223 round is a joke, critically lacking in both range and penetration, yet another sad leftover from the lamentable Johnson administration. It is embarrassing that it has taken so long for

this 40-year-old procurement mistake finally to be addressed.

I am personally disappointed that the Marine Corps has not set the agenda on this issue, but has instead conceded leadership to the Army. Marine management did take a single, hesitant step by equipping selected individuals with M14s last year, but has done nothing since. The 6.8mm round and rifle showed great promise, but that project has also been allowed to wither on the vine.

The M14 is surely a suburb battle rifle, and the .308 round is nearly ideal for serious fighting. Maybe now individual soldiers and Marines can again think of themselves as fighters of the enemy, not just "finders" of the enemy. Let's hope the trend continues and that the Marine Corps (belatedly) steps up to the plate and once again takes the lead in battle rifle development.

M14 Comments From A Friend:

"Ron Smith of Smith Enterprises (maker of muzzle breaks and flash hiders) is busy these days, making designated marksmen rifles on the

M14 platform for, of all clients, the U.S. Army! Other small manufacturers are too. They're called 'Crazy Horse' rifles. He literally can't make them fast enough.

"A major provider of M14 military 'surplus' magazines is now (re)supplying the Army. Long ago, the Army had them manufactured, stored them for years, then surplused them out (at pennies on the dollar) as scrap metal. Now, the Army is buying them all back, at a price higher than they paid originally. Gotta love Uncle Sam!"

Comment: It's obvious that the M14 is making a comeback. Let's hope it is in a big way. It can't happen too soon!

Other rifles, particularly the FAL, probably constitute a better system, even than the M14. In addition, promising new contenders are now being produced by Robinson Arms, DSA, Krebs, FN, H&K, et al. However, the rifle itself is not as much an issue as is the caliber. A new rifle, in .223 caliber, takes us right back where we started.

We need to break away from the .223 round, and, right now, the M14 platform

is apparently providing the best vehicle to that end.

John Farnam is the author of The Farnam Method of Defensive Handgunning and one of the country's preeminent independent firearms instructors. ✕

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Marine Sniper Credited With Longest Confirmed Kill In Iraq

BY CPL. PAUL W. LEIGHT, USMC

AR RAMADI, Iraq (Jan. 02, 2005) — Seen through a twenty-power spot scope, terrorists scrambled to deliver another mortar round into the tube. Across the Euphrates River from a concealed rooftop, the Marine sniper breathed gently and then squeezed a few pounds of pressure to the delicate trigger of the M40A3 sniper rifle in his grasp.

The rifle's crack froze the booming Fallujah battle like a photograph. As he moved the bolt back to load another round of 7.62mm ammunition, the sniper's spotter confirmed the terrorist went down from the shot mere seconds before the next crack of the rifle dropped another.

It wasn't the sniper's first kill in Iraq, but it was one for the history books.

On Nov. 11, 2004, while coalition forces fought to wrest control of Fallujah from a terrorist insurgency, Marine scout snipers with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, applied their basic infantry skills and took them to a higher level.

"From the information we have, our chief scout sniper has the longest confirmed kill in Iraq so far," said Capt. Shayne McGinty, weapons platoon commander for "Bravo" Co. "In Fallujah there were some bad guys firing mortars at us and he took them out from more than 1,000 yards."

During the battle for the war-torn city, 1/23 Marine scout snipers demonstrated with patience, fearless initiative and wits that well-trained Marines could be some of the deadliest weapons in the world.

"You really don't have a threat here until it presents itself," said Sgt. Herbert B. Hancock, chief scout sniper, 1/23, and a 35-year-old police officer from Bryan, Texas, whose specialized training and skill helped save the lives of his fellow Marines during the battle. "In Fallujah we really didn't have that problem because it seemed like everybody was shooting at us. If they fired at us we just dropped them."

Stepping off on day one of the offensive from the northern edge of the Fallujah peninsula, the Marine reservists of 1/23, with their scout snipers, moved to secure a little island, but intense enemy fire near the bridgeheads limited their advance. Insurgents littered the city, filtering in behind their positions with indirect mortar and sniper fire.

"The insurgents started figuring out what was going on and started hitting us from behind, hitting our supply lines," said Hancock in his syrupy Texas drawl. "Originally we set up near a bridge and the next day we got a call on our radio that our company command post was receiving sniper fire. We worked our way back down the peninsula trying to find the sniper, but on the way down we encountered machinegun fire and what sounded like grenade launchers or mortars

from across the river."

With a fire team of grunts pinned down nearby, Hancock and his spotter, Cpl. Geoffrey L. Flowers, a May 2004 graduate of Scout Sniper School, helped them out by locating the source of the enemy fire.

"After locating the gun position we called in indirect fire to immediate suppress that position and reduced it enough so we could also punch forward and get into a house," explained Hancock. "We got in the house and started to observe the area from which the insurgents were firing at us. They hit us good for about twenty minutes and were really hammering us. Our indirect fire (landed on) them and must have been effective because they didn't shoot anymore after that."

Continuing south down the peninsula to link up with the Bravo Co. command post, Hancock and Flowers next set up on a big building, taking a couple shots across the river at some suspected enemy spotters in vehicles.

"The insurgents in the vehicles were spotting for the mortar rounds coming from across the river so we were trying to locate their positions to reduce them as well as engage the vehicles," said Hancock. "There were certain vehicles in areas where the mortars would hit. They would show up and then stop and then the mortars would start hitting us and then the vehicles would leave so we figured out that they were spotters. We took out seven of those guys in one day."

Later, back at the company command post, enemy mortar rounds once again began to impact.

"There were several incoming rockets and mortars to our compound that day and there was no way the enemy could have seen it directly, so they probably had some spotters out there," said 22-year-old Flowers who is a college student from Pearland, Texas.

"Our (company commander) told us to go find where the mortars were coming from and take them out so we went back out," remembered Hancock. "We moved south some more and linked up with the rear elements of our first platoon. Then we got up on a building and scanned across the river. We looked out of the spot scope and saw about three to five insurgents manning a 120mm mortar tube. We got the coordinates for their position and set up a fire mission. We decided that when the rounds came in that I would engage them with the sniper rifle. We got the splash and there were two standing up looking right at us. One had a black (outfit) on. I shot and he dropped. Right in front of him another got up on his knees looking to try and find out where we were so I dropped him too. After that our mortars just hammered the position, so we moved around in on them."

The subsequent fire for effect landed right on the insurgent mortar position.

"We adjusted right about fifty yards where there were two other insurgents in a small house on the other side of the position," said Flowers. "There was some brush between them and the next nearest building about 400 yards south of where they were at and we were about 1,000 yards from them so I guess they thought we could not spot them. Some grunts were nearby with binoculars but they could not see them, plus they are not trained in detailed observation the way we are. We know what to look for such as target indicators and things that are not easy to see."

Hancock and Flowers then scanned several areas that they expected fire from, but the enemy mortars had silenced.

"After we had called in indirect fire and after all the adjustments from our mortars, I got the final 8-digit grid coordinates for the enemy mortar position, looked at our own position using GPS and figured out the distance to the targets we dropped to be 1,050 yards," said Flowers with a grin. "This time we were killing terrorism from more than 1,000 yards." ✕

Sgt. Herbert B. Hancock, chief scout sniper, sniper platoon, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, is credited with the longest confirmed kill in Iraq, hitting enemy terrorists from 1,050 yards in Fallujah Nov. 11, 2004. Hancock, a 35-year-old activated reservist and police officer from Bryan, Texas, has been a Marine Corps sniper since 1992.

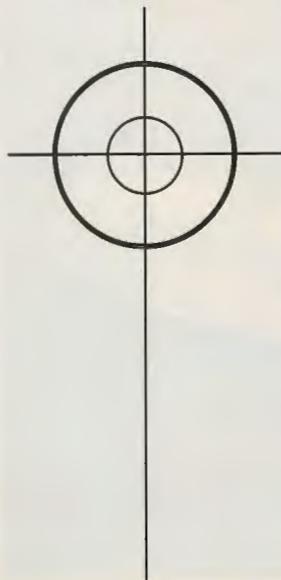


Photo by Cpl. Paul W. Leicht



No Relief in Sight for the Lincoln

BY ED STANTON

It has been three weeks since my ship, the *USS Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), arrived off the Sumatran coast to aid the hundreds of thousands of victims of the 26 Dec. tsunami that ravaged their coastline. I'd like to say that this has been a rewarding experience for us, but it has not: Instead, it has been a frustrating and needlessly dangerous exercise made even more difficult by the Indonesian government and a traveling circus of so-called aid workers who have invaded our spaces.

What really irritated me was a scene I witnessed in the *Lincoln's* wardroom a few days ago. I went in for breakfast as I usually do, expecting to see the usual crowd of ship's company officers in khakis and air wing aviators in flight suits, drinking coffee and exchanging rumors about when our ongoing humanitarian mission in Sumatra is going to end.

What I saw instead was a mob of civilians sitting around like they owned the place. They wore various colored vests with logos on the back including Save The Children, World Health Organization and the dreaded baby blue vest of the United Nations. Mixed in with this crowd were a bunch of reporters, cameramen and Indonesian military officers in uniform. They all carried cameras, sunglasses and fanny packs like tourists on their way to Disneyland.

My warship had been transformed into a floating hotel for

a bunch of trifling do-gooders overnight.

As I went through the breakfast line, I overheard one of the U.N. strap-hangers, a longhaired guy with a beard, make a sarcastic comment to one of our food servers. He said something along the lines of "Nice china, really makes me feel special," in reference to the fact that we were eating off of paper plates that day. It was all I could do to keep from jerking him off his feet and choking him, because I knew that the reason we were eating off paper plates was to save dish-washing water so that we would have more water to send ashore and save lives. That plus the fact that he had no business being there in the first place.

My attitude towards these unwanted no-loads grew steadily worse that day as I learned more from one of our junior officers who was assigned to escort a group of them. It turns out that they had come to Indonesia to "assess the

The Military Sealift Command (MSC) hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) navigates alongside USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) after arriving on station near Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group has been operating in the Indian Ocean off the waters of Indonesia in support of Operation Unified Assistance the humanitarian relief effort to aid the victims of the tsunami that struck Southeast Asia.



U.S. Navy / Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Gabriel R. Piper

“Five Second Abs... and the Magnificent Seven”

How Seven Old-Time Exercises Burn Fat From Your Waistline in Record Time

By Frank Sherrill

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. The idea was preposterous. Matt Furey, a world champion martial artist and world-renowned fitness guru was telling me that I could “reduce inches from my waistline with a few deep breathing exercises” that he calls *The Magnificent Seven*.

And get this, one repetition of the deep breathing exercise he recommends most takes only 2 to 5 seconds. Five second abs??? Was this a lark, or what?

In all my years of doing cardio, pumping iron and generally depriving myself, no one ever told me that deep breathing exercises alone could greatly ramp up my metabolism, turning me into a fat-burning machine.

No one ever told me that one of the main reasons behind cardiovascular exercise was simply to get you breathing harder so that the increased oxygen in your system cranks up your metabolism.

Don't know about you, but due to my skepticism about these claims, I decided to do some research on deep breathing. And to my utter amazement I found that more oxygen in your body equals:

- a revved-up metabolism
- greater strength and endurance
- improved health and...
- faster weight loss.

In addition to the above, when you do deep breathing exercises the way Matt Furey teaches in his best-selling *Combat Abs* program, you have better circulation, better digestion and an increased ability to handle stress. You have a feeling of calmness and well-being. You look younger, feel better, have a sharper mind... and greater energy.

Now that's a lot of benefits, don't you think?

Those reasons alone were enough for me to get Furey's program and learn – but there's more.

Learn What to Eat and What NOT to Eat

In addition to the deep breathing benefits – Furey's *Combat Abs* course was unique because it gave me details about his amazing *Furey Fat Loss Program* – a program that helps you lose weight without losing strength or depriving yourself. Matt created it in 1997, on the road to winning his world title in Beijing.



Matt Furey won a national collegiate wrestling title in 1985 and a world shuai-chiao kung fu championship in 1997. Furey has a knack for taking the average and ordinary person and transforming him with his powerful programs. Furey was inducted into the Edinboro University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998 and spends much time each year traveling throughout the world, searching for the very best information available to his worldwide audience. His website, www.mattfurey.com, is one of the finest in the world, giving valuable information that changes lives.



Strong Man Otto Arco trained his abs with his entire body as one unit.

And it works!

In *Combat Abs* I also learned a series of abdominal exercises I could do, get this, while standing on my feet. I was told that old-time boxers, wrestlers and martial artists had better abs than the athletes of today and they did so without crunches and other lie-down abdominal exercises that most people find boring.

Upon hearing this I began to do some research. I wanted to find these so-called “great abs” legends of yesteryear. To my surprise, I DID find them. You can see what I mean from the photos in this article. Were these guys amazing or what? Furey has really done his research.

Fitness pioneer Maxick developed powerful abs WITHOUT crunches.



So I bought *Combat Abs*. A few days later, when it arrived in the mail, I ripped open the package and starting rifling through the course. To say I was amazed with what I read would be an understatement.

One Man Took 20” off His Waist

After doing the exercises for a couple days I quickly noticed a change in my waistline. My abs were definitely tighter and harder and my clothes were fitting better. At that point I readily understood why Furey gets so many testimonials for his programs, including the following:

Using your Combat Abs system I have taken

20 full inches off my waist. I look so much better I think that it saved my marriage!

*Sincerely,
Rick Hackworth, Ph.D.*

Combat Abs is packed with one ab sculpting and strengthening exercise after another – all systematically taught, so that you can progress from the raw beginner stage to the level of mastery – and quickly, too.

In *Combat Abs* you will learn...

- 7 exercises that will strengthen and tighten your abs like nothing else in the world!
- A deep breathing isometric exercise that tightens and tones your abdominals within days!
- Abdominal exercises that massage your internal organs – and how this aids in losing excess flab!
- The abdominal exercises you MUST do to ensure a healthy pain-free lower back!
- The exercises that make your abs so rock-solid tough that you'll laugh when punched in the midsection!
- The secret to setting, and most importantly, achieving, all your health and fitness goals!
- and much more...

If you've come this far with me, one thing is for certain, you probably want a set of rock-hard abs and a powerful yet lean waistline. So you're now faced with one of two choices:

1. Stop reading this article, watch some tee-vee, do nothing for your body and remain unsatisfied with your appearance.

2. Order your copy of *Combat Abs* today and change your life for the better.

I certainly hope you go for option #2 because doing so will give you the waistline you want and deserve.

“Just nodding your head won't row the boat.”

Irish proverb

Call (813) 994 8267 to place your order for *Combat Abs*. Only \$29.95 plus \$6 S&H U.S. – (\$12 S&H foreign). Or visit us online at www.mattfurey.com/combatabs.html

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damage" from the 26 Dec. tsunami.

Well, they could have turned on any TV in the world and seen that the damage was total devastation. When they got to Sumatra with no plan, no logistics support and no five-star hotels to stay in, they threw themselves on the mercy of the U.S. Navy, which, unfortunately, took them in. I guess our senior brass was hoping for some good PR since this was about the time that the U.N. was calling the United States "stingy" with our relief donations.

As a result of having to host these people, our severely over-tasked SH-60 Seahawk helos, which were carrying tons of food and water every day to the most inaccessible places in and around Banda Aceh, are now used in great part to ferry these "relief workers" from place to place every day and bring them back to their guest bedrooms on the *Lincoln* at night. Despite their avowed dedication to helping the victims, these relief workers will not spend the night in-country, and have made us their guardians by default.

When our wardroom treasurer approached the leader of the relief group and asked him who was paying the mess bill for all the meals they ate, the fellow replied, "We aren't paying, you can try to bill the U.N. if you want to."

In addition to the relief workers, we routinely get tasked with hauling around reporters and various low-level "VIPs," which further wastes valuable helo lift that could be used to carry supplies. We had to dedicate two helos and a C-2 cargo plane for Dan Rather and his entourage of door holders and briefcase carriers from CBS News. Another camera crew was from MTV. I doubt if we'll get any good PR from them, since the cable channel is banned in Muslim countries. We also had to dedicate a helo and crew to fly around the vice mayor of Phoenix, Ariz., one day. Everyone wants in on the action.

As for the Indonesian officers, while their job is apparently to encourage our leaving as soon as possible, all they seem to do in the meantime is smoke cigarettes. They want our money and our help but they don't want their population to see that Americans are doing far more for them in two weeks than their own government has ever done or will ever do for them.

To add a kick in the face to the USA and the *Lincoln*, the Indonesian government announced it would not allow us to use their airspace for routine training and flight proficiency operations

while we are saving the lives of their people, some of whom are wearing Osama bin Ladin T-shirts as they grab at our food and water. The ship has to steam out into international waters to launch and recover jets, which makes our helos have to fly longer distances and burn more fuel.

What is even worse than trying to help people who totally reject everything we stand for is that our combat readiness has suffered for it.

An aircraft carrier is an instrument of national policy and the big stick she carries is her air wing. An air wing has a set of very demanding skills and they are highly perishable. We train hard every day at sea to conduct actual air strikes, air defense, maritime surveillance, close air support and many other missions — not to mention taking off and landing on a ship at sea.

Our safety regulations state that if a pilot does not get a night carrier landing every seven days, he has to be re-qualified to land on the ship. Today we have pilots who have now been over 25 days without a trap due to being unable to use Indonesian airspace to train. Normally it is when we are at sea that our readiness is at its very peak. Thanks to the Indonesian government, we have to waive our own safety rules just to get our pilots off the deck.

In other words, the longer we stay here helping these people, the more dangerous it gets for us to operate. We have already lost one helicopter, which crashed in Banda Aceh while taking sailors ashore to unload supplies from the C-130s. There were no relief workers on that one.

I'm all for helping the less fortunate, but it is time to give this mission to somebody other than the U.S. Navy. Our ship was supposed to be home on Feb. 3 and now we have no idea how long we will be here. American taxpayers are spending millions per day to keep this ship at sea and getting no training value out of it. As a result, we will come home in a lower state of readiness than when we left due to the lack of flying while supporting the tsunami relief effort.

I hope we get some good PR in the Muslim world out of it. After all, this is Americans saving the lives of Muslims. I have my doubts. ✕

Ed Stanton is the pen name of a career U.S. Navy officer currently serving with the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group. Send Feedback responses to dwfeedback@yahoo.com.

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BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

AMERICA AT WAR

2. NORTH KOREA NUKES ARE HERE, the government says. SOUTH KOREA fears North is mobilizing for war.

3. PHILIPPINES REBEL MILF bought 10,000 rifles from North Korea in 1999 and 2000. Multi-million DOLLAR gun purchases funded by drug trade and al Qaeda. JOLO ISLAND combat rages, with MORE THAN 100 dead; 17,000 flee. NPA rebels threaten foreign mining companies in blackmail attempts.

4. THAILAND MOST WANTED Islamic terrorist, Dorame Kuteh, captured. Kuteh was mastermind of 2004 raid on army base.

5. COLOMBIA Daughter of former Paraguayan president Cubas kidnapped and killed. FARC believed responsible. AUC REBELS to demobilize this year, supposedly.

6. BRAZIL U.S. SISTER DOROTHY STANG shot point blank three times in the face. Sister Stang had recently received recognition for 30 years of human rights efforts in Brazil.

PIRATE ATTACKS on merchant ships down from 445 in 2003 to 325 in 2004, but sailors killed up to 30 from 21; 86 crew-members kidnapped for ransom. **AGGRESSIVE PATROLS** IN waters of the Philippines, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malacca Strait between Malaysia and Indonesia, leading to Singapore, most dangerous. Strait transmits one fourth of maritime trade, including most of China and Japan's oil imports. **OIL RICH NIGERIA** is African prime target. **SOUTH AMERICAN** waters of Brazil, Haiti, Jamaica, and Peru are at high risk.

7. UNITED KINGDOM "SPECTACULAR" BIO-WARFARE attack predicted by CIA and Mossad. SCIENTISTS recruited by bin Laden to manufacture biowarfare weapons for spectacular attack on U. K. "Biological agents could spread disease on an unparalleled scale," the book *The Future of Bioweapons* co-authored by Mossad Chief warns. *Globe-Intel*

8. GERMANY INTERNET TERRORIST activities increase; 2,000 web-sites available to foreign students; official fears of their becoming terrorists because of the education that enables them to operate better in complex situations.

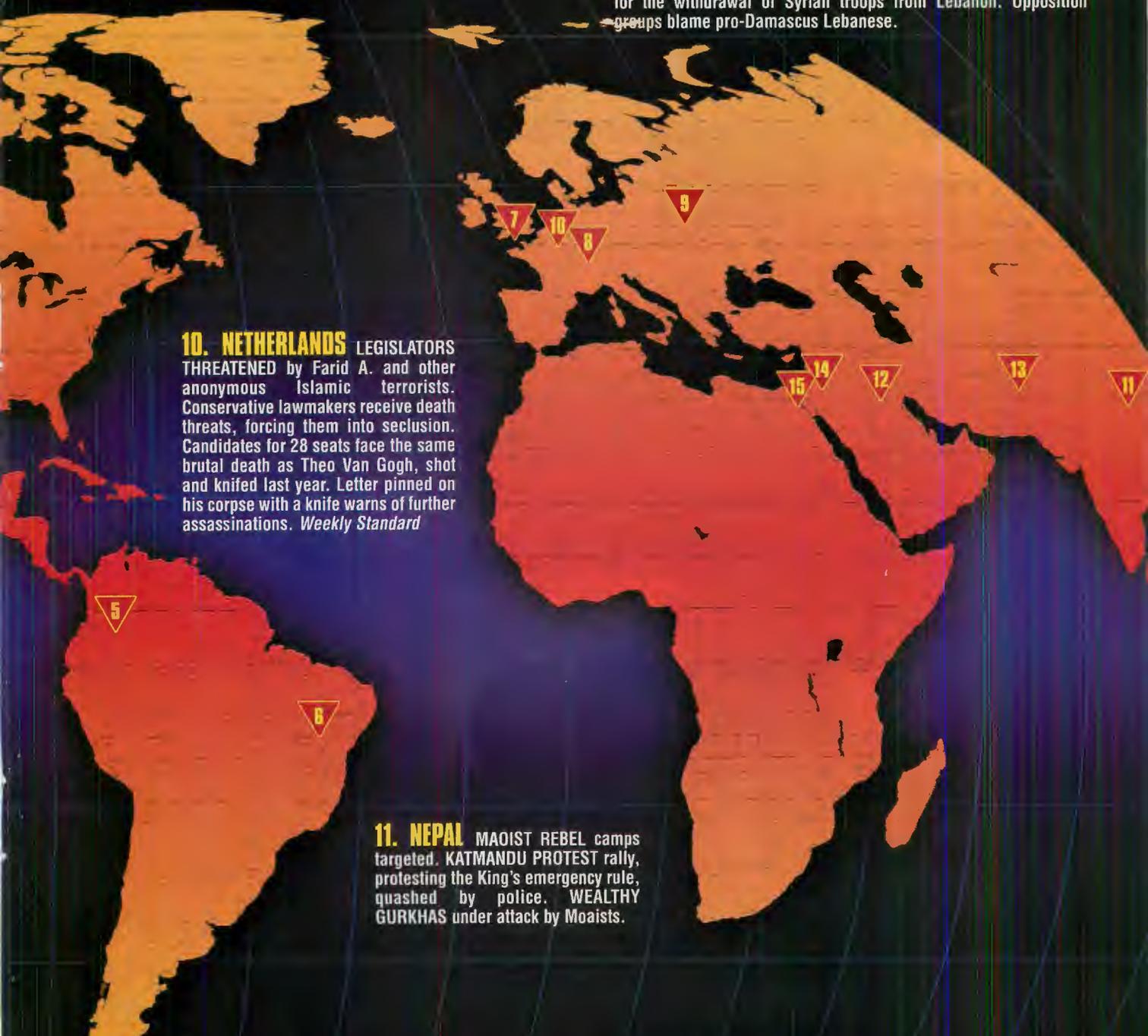
9. RUSSIA SPETSNAZ COMMANDOS and CHECHEN police tear rebel leaders down from 200 to 10 and foreign Islamic radicals down from 2,500 to 60. CHECHEN SEPARATIST leader Aslan Maskhadov declares ceasefire. UKRAINE admits previous government illegally sold cruise missiles to Iran and China.

12. IRAQ GANG WAR tactics similar to ethic gang wars in United States and Europe targeted by police tactics, including tracking cell phones and genealogy software used to track family gang members. U.S. RESERVISTS suffer high casualties.

13. AFGHANISTAN MALARIA takes down one of 20 troopers in one battalion of Army rangers. Failure to take meds and use insect repellent by half of troops blamed; Malaria kills millions globally every year. TALIBAN HOLDOUTS dwindling as Afghan army strengthens.

14. SYRIA PROFOUNDLY OUTRAGED U.S. WITHDRAWS AMBASADOR as pressure tactic to force Syria to withdraw 15,000 occupation troops from Lebanon, after assassination of former prime minister Rafiq Al-Hariri.

15. LEBANON FORMER PRIME MINISTER ASSASINATED in massive bombing that killed 12, injured 100. Rafiq Al-Hariri, initially supported by Syria and credited for rebuilding his country, called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. Opposition groups blame pro-Damascus Lebanese.



10. NETHERLANDS LEGISLATORS THREATENED by Farid A. and other anonymous Islamic terrorists. Conservative lawmakers receive death threats, forcing them into seclusion. Candidates for 28 seats face the same brutal death as Theo Van Gogh, shot and knifed last year. Letter pinned on his corpse with a knife warns of further assassinations. *Weekly Standard*

11. NEPAL MAOIST REBEL camps targeted. KATMANDU PROTEST rally, protesting the King's emergency rule, quashed by police. WEALTHY GURKHAS under attack by Maoists.

This Jungla guards the LZ as others drop to the ground. As in most air-
mobile operations the enemy is where you want him, all around. At the morn-
ing briefing means are heard from the older comandos when they first see
photos of the target, hidden in the high Colombian mountains.



After a commute that usually starts long before daybreak a large LZ with no
obstacles is a blessing to the CNF pilots and Jungla comandos. After sit-
ting in the helos for hours in full equipment the Junglas can't wait to dis-
embark and begin their tactical movement to the target. Deep in enemy ter-
ritory, the Junglas keep the Blackhawks overhead for air cover.



THE JOHNNY

Colombian National Police Antinarcoticos: Part III

40 OPERATION

BY JIM MORRIS
PHOTOS COURTESY CNP

In Colombia I had a great time, met some super people, and managed to go to a couple of places where I might have gotten shot at, but didn't. My dream of going on my first heliborne operation since El Salvador didn't happen. It finally occurred to me that I could do what the other journalists do, and interview somebody. So I interviewed my friend Carlos. Here is his story of his favorite operation with the Junglas. —JM

IN January, 2003, the Colombian Army pulled off a successful commando raid at 0300 on a finca (ranch). The second-in-command of the 14th FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) Front, "Sonia" had three minutes to escape, from the time the COLAR choppers became audible until they arrived. She and her staff had been up partying the night before. Groggy and hung over, they didn't make it.

The troopers entered the house as she was leaving, and took her prisoner.

Only two shots were fired during the operation, at a bodyguard who refused to throw down his weapon. The first bullet creased the right side of his skull and the second just missed the left side. After that, he gave it up.

There was a lot of pressure on the Colombian National Police to replicate, or better this operation.

General Luis Gomez-Heredia, the Police Antinarcoticos commander, was embarrassed by that operation. But the CNP had not been the action agency solely because his men had been tasked to the fullest.

The army had been able to pull it off because, with thirty Blackhawks, they had time to train with night vision goggles. The CNP only had seven Blackhawks, and they were in service all the time, for raids, for transport, for VIP tours. Their much-needed NVG training kept getting pushed back and pushed back until it evaporated.

That meant the CNP could only conduct

*Jungla Commandos
Tear Up Top FARC
Commander's Playhouse*

daylight raids. The targets would already be up and moving, with three minutes to get away.

In April General Gomez initiated a special task force to follow up leads on FARC and AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia — right-wing paramilitaries, who also finance their operations with cocaine trafficking) commanders.

The Task Force worked straight through, sixteen-hour days, weekends and holidays. They didn't have much choice. The general was always in his office, just down the hall, or out on an operation himself, sixteen-hour days, seven-day weeks, for months.

In the three months following its conception the task force ran two operations, both near misses. On the first two the human targets barely escaped into the jungle. This was to be the third.

General Gomez also went to the Colombian Air Force (COLAF), to ask their help.

The Colombian military likes to view the CNP as second-class citizens. This is a hard stance to maintain: they are always surprised by the expertise of the Junglas, who lead the country in operations, and usually provide the honor graduate of any military school they attend.

General Gomez, along with members of his investigative staff and the DEA and Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) of the US State Department, met with Colombian Air Force Col. Gonzalez to explain the operation.

Tropical Downpour

The skepticism of the Air Force was quickly disarmed, by the thoroughness of the briefing, and the professionalism of the Jungla ground commander, Major Harold Santamaria, a slender, intense, unassuming, thoroughly professional officer. Col. Gonzalez agreed to provide whatever was needed to complete the operation.

A planned May operation was canceled because of rain. For three days the police commandos, pilots, and commanders stood in a tropical downpour, waiting for the sun to come out, before it was finally scrubbed.

Planning for that operation, though, had identified the target, and assembled the basic information that made putting the next one together, relatively speaking, a piece of cake.

It is now July 2 and we are assured that the target, General Garcia-Molina aka "Johnny 40", FARC commander of the 43rd Front, will be where we want him to be. Johnny 40 is one of those commanders who feels that to the victor (him) belong the spoils. The spoils, in this case, were a carload of expensive hookers from Bogota, brought into the countryside for his amusement and edification, and that of his most trusted colleagues.

There are a number of stories as to how Johnny 40 got his nickname, number of personal kills, penis length in centimeters. Maybe it's his IQ. He had violated the first rule of guerrilla warfare: never set a pattern.

Garcia-Molina, 45, had joined the FARC at eighteen. He made his bones in the 16th FARC Front, and was selected to start the 43rd Front in 1996.



A small boat shows the route taken by escaping narco terrorists. Before giving hot pursuit, security must be put in place to guard the crossing. A well-planned FARC-AUC ambush could be waiting for the Colombian Police. Training by U.S. Army Special Forces has saved many CNP lives. These police actions resemble military-style operations.

His front was made up of 350 plus combatants, and roughly one thousand militia. It is a major cocaine producer, and one of the richest fronts.

He started his operations in the Department of Meta, attacking small police outposts with vastly superior forces, maintaining a siege until the police ran out of ammo. He would then kill the police, or take them prisoner.

In those days the CNP were forbidden to use U.S. provided helos for anything but anti-narcotics, meaning the calls for help for the besieged outposts never brought cavalry to the rescue.

Johnny 40 targeted families of police officers. He bombed the house of one officer, killing his wife and infant child. His men also killed a Colombian Army general, on route to

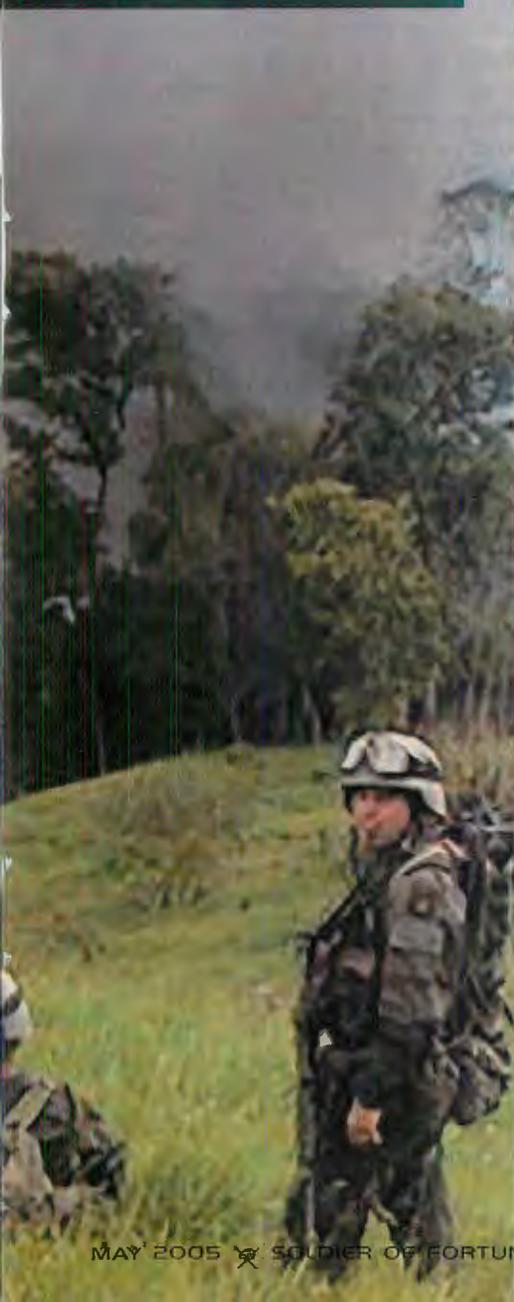


Junglas moving to reload their Huey. Cool nerves and a steady hand are required of pilots flying in Colombia. This is no place for flatlander pilots. Junglas quickly





scramble aboard U.S. State Department leased Huey II. Sometimes, in steep mountains, they have to crawl aboard with inches to spare.



his base outside Villivencincio, Meta.

To say that the CNP wanted this guy badly is a gross understatement.

The plan is for 48 Junglas to land on top of the ranch and arrest Johnny 40. If they meet resistance, well...

Guns, Lots Of Guns

Most Americans think of a police SWAT team as being armed with M-16s and pistols. This is not you average SWAT team. Each Jungla has attended a six-month ranger-type course before being selected, and going into a specialized part of the team (medic, sapper, sniper, etc). Each man carries 600-800 rounds plus for his weapon, and rounds for the M-60 or SAW. They carry LAWs and grenades.

The Junglas make heliborne drug raids on a weekly basis, deep in enemy territory, on cocaine HCL Laboratories, and high-level human targets. Each team is armed with several M-60s, SAWs, and M-16s with 203s.

The CNP Blackhawk (UH-60s) helos are armed with one multi-barreled General Electric GAL-19 (50 cal.) and one GAL-17 (7.62) miniguns.

The rest of the strike package is made of one CNP C-26 (known as a Metroliner in the States, the C-26 is a twin-engined aircraft designed for small airports. It carries 12 to 18 passengers) command and control aircraft, one COLAF UH-60 Transport, one COLAF UH60 Arpia gunship, armed with two Gal-19s, and 2.75 rockets, and one AC-47 gunship armed with two GAL-19 s.

But the aircraft that made this operation work was a small single-engine craft that flies at night, which can't be heard from very far away, and is armed only with Forward-Looking-Infrared-Radar, the Switzer. This aircraft became the hero of this operation, and many in the future.

July 5th, 0330: the rain has kept us from starting the operation for two days. Each day we rose at 0300, dressed, and went to the airfield, only to be canceled.

At 0500 the Switzer calls, and tells us the weather has again stalled: there is rain over the area. We stand around in the dark rain as drop dead time approaches. By 0530 the Gods of War have seen fit to give us good weather.

It's a go. Suddenly the troops' mood changes.

Junglas quickly move in groups to their assigned helos, the dull whine of A.P.U.s from the Blackhawks tells us it's going to happen. The crew of the AC-47 "Ghost" runs from the pilot's lounge and scrambles up the short ladder to the side door. The crew chief pulls the wheel chocks.

Retired U.S. Army Special Forces Col. Tony Holm walks toward his helo with his CNP team. Tony's with the NAS force protection project. But he likes to hang his ass out on operations when they let him.

We load on a COLAF Blackhawk armed with M-60s on each side. It seems unarmed compared to the CNP choppers with their GALs. I'm next to the door.

Our helos stack on the runway and take off. We climb out over the wet plains and head south. I think to myself, "Johnny, you son of a bitch, we are coming for you. Make your peace." We have a score to settle, for all the good people he has killed, for the wife and child of the police officer.

Looking to my front I can see the two lead CNP choppers and the COLAF Arpia gunship to our left. It is an impressive warbird, and I am glad to have it with us. The ancient AC-47 flies high over us.

We fly a dogleg to confuse the enemy. At ten minutes out we change direction and drop to treetops. Now begins the E-ticket ride and you can feel the troops' mood change. Only moments before they could have been on the bus to an office; we are now pale horse riders, inbound to hell.

I strain to make out the river, and any points that will tell me where I am. The five-minute hand flash comes, and again the energy level goes up a notch. Men catch each other's eyes, and nod.



Jungla watches spray plane. Beauty belies the danger of the Colombian countryside. This Antinarcotico Jungla wears their distinctive sombrero while guarding a spray aircraft provided by the U.S. State Department, as it sprays a poppy field. Heroin has become the second cash crop in Colombia, after cocaine, pushing out marijuana.

Continued on page 74

DOGS OF WAR

Leatherneck's Best Friend in Fallujah

BY DALE B. COOPER

Cpl. Darin L. Cleveringa with his working dog, "Rek," in front of a light armored recon vehicle, outside Fallujah.



courtesy Cpl. Cleveringa

IT has been almost 40 years since K-9 dogs were involved in Marine combat operations, but more than a dozen dogs with names like "Santo" and "Rek" deployed to Iraq a year ago — the first time since Vietnam that "War Dogs" worked side by side with "Devil Dogs" from the First Marine Division.

Corporal Donald R. Paldino from the Security Battalion at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia, and Corporal Darin L. Cleveringa from the K-9 section at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow in California, were among 14 dog handlers from all over the country who answered the call for help in Iraq.

When the enemy went underground after major hostilities ended in May 2003, they hid their weapons and explosives in buildings and beneath the surface of the ground. Marines found some of the caches, but only scratched the surface.

It didn't take the Marine Corps long to determine that dogs with highly-skilled handlers were needed to locate the hidden caches of weapons and explosives being used with deadly effect against coalition forces.

Paldino, a 23-year-old military policeman from Oxford, Massachusetts, entered the Marine Corps four years ago, hoping to qualify as a dog handler.

"When I talked to the recruiter, he told me he could get me into the Military Police, but I'd have to meet a board to be selected for K-9," said Paldino, now a Sergeant, as he sat in the "Doghouse," the K-9 quarters at Quantico, and talked about his experiences in Iraq.

Cleveringa, a 23-year-old military policeman from Rock Valley, Iowa, also had to compete for one of the coveted slots. Paldino and his Czechoslovakian Shepherd, "Santo," flew commercial air from Quantico to Camp Pendleton where they teamed up Cleveringa and his German Shepherd, "Rek."

Traveling in portable kennels was no problem for the dogs. They're used to it. Their handlers were the ones who suffered. Paldino, Cleveringa and the other dog handlers were aching when they got off a USAF C-17 military transport plane that took them from California to Iraq, with a brief stopover in Germany for fuel. The flight from March Air Force Base in California to Al Asad, a former Iraqi air base, took almost 24 hours.

Once on the ground, Paldino and Cleveringa were attached to Headquarters and Services Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in An Bar Province. Their forward operating base was Camp Baharia about two miles outside of Fallujah, a powder keg of anti-American sentiment 40 miles west of Baghdad.

Tightening the Noose

Together with its sister battalions (1/5 and 2/2), 2/1 surrounded the town of Fallujah in March 2004. Fallujah was the fulcrum for anti-coalition activity in the so-called "Sunni Muslim Triangle," a former base of support for former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Paldino says he and the other dog handlers had a "general idea" of what they were getting into before they deployed to Iraq, but they didn't know exactly what to expect until they came under fire for the first time. A few days after arriving in Iraq, Paldino and Cleveringa, who always worked in tandem, came under fire after searching some apartment buildings on the western side of Fallujah.

They never were able to enter the center of the city. It was just too dangerous for them and their dogs. "There was total mayhem in the streets of Fallujah," said Paldino. But the dog handlers did play a supportive role in Operation Vigilant Resolve, which was later renamed Operation Al Fajr, Arabic for "New Dawn."

Whenever the battalion commander wanted to move his Command Operations Center deeper into enemy territory, Paldino and Cleveringa were sent ahead of the main body of Marines to sweep the site. "It was kind of scary," said Paldino, "because everybody else was stepping back and we were stepping forward."

The dog handlers always checked the perimeter of a building first to make sure the insurgents hadn't buried any explosives in the ground or hidden them in trash. Covered by a security team, they entered the building and went room to room looking for trip wires.

Paldino and Cleveringa were lucky. Their dogs didn't find any booby traps or improvised explosive devices, or for that matter, any snipers in the buildings they searched. But it was the "unknown" that caused the hair on their bodies to tingle at times.

The closest they came to getting hurt was at an auto dealership on the outskirts of Fallujah. They had been tipped off it might contain weapons. When Santo and Rek "alerted" on a blue van, Marine security approached the vehicle and detained two suspects. That's when they came under heavy automatic-weapons fire.

"A lot of lead was flying down range," said Paldino, and he and Santo sought cover.

"Under no circumstances does a handler unleash his dog," said Paldino. "It's too dangerous during a firefight. Too much lead flying around. My dog could be killed by friendly fire just

as easily as he could be killed by enemy fire," added Paldino.

During the firefight, the guys got into the van and drove off. Neither they nor their van was ever seen again.

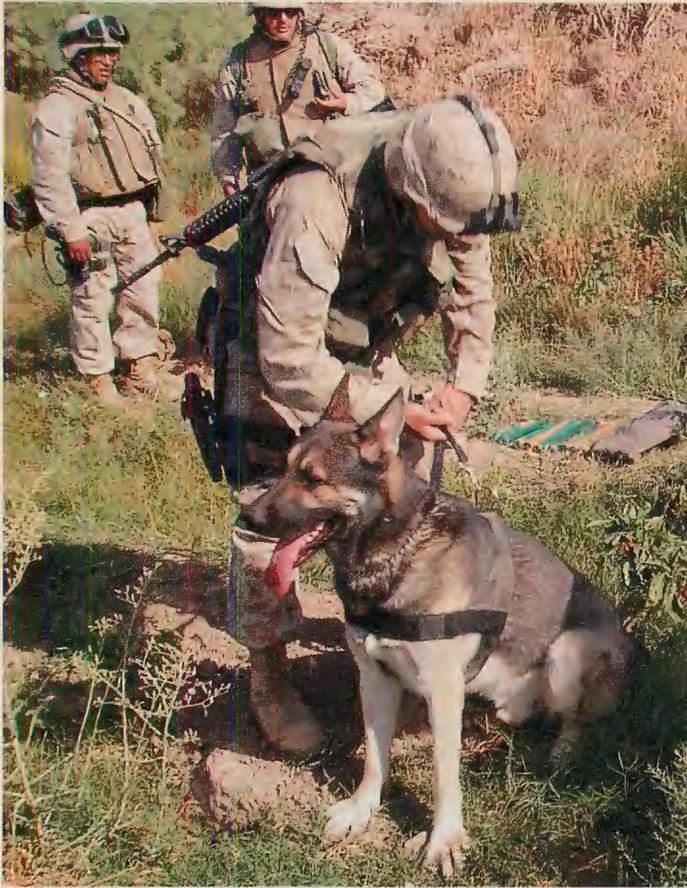
When major operations were underway in Fallujah, no one got much sleep, dogs included. "We were lucky if we got three hours a night, and our sleep was always interrupted by mortar or rocket fire," said Paldino who slept in his rack with Santo. They were like Siamese twins. Inseparable. From the roof of an abandoned building where they stayed, Paldino and Cleveringa could see Marine artillery and Marine aircraft pounding insurgent positions in Fallujah.

For the first couple of months, Santo and Rek would spring to their feet and bark when something went "BANG" during the night, but as time wore on, they'd just



Cpl. Donald R. Paldino, a military police dog handler with the Quantico Security Battalion, back home from Iraq with Santo, a five-year-old male Czechoslovakian Shepherd, who has a bad taste in his mouth from the experience.

USMC photo by Lawrence Giberson



Some of the weapons and ammunition Santo found buried outside Fallujah. The ordnance was found in a box wrapped in burlap, about a foot underground. (inset) Sgt. Robert C. Barham, a military police dog handler assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, with his dog in front of a bullet-pocked building in Fallujah he had just cleared of improvised explosive devices, in November 2004 when the city fell to U.S. forces.

open their eyes and go back to sleep next to their handlers.

Heat Takes Toll

When the K-9 section of Regimental Combat Team 1 arrived outside Fallujah in late March of last year, the temperature was still tolerable. Daytime temperatures were about 90 degrees. But by early August, temperatures had risen to 147 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat took its toll on both man and his best friend.

"If a dog starts panting and breathing really fast, they're in trouble," said Cleveringa, who accompanied his dog to Baghdad on a medevac helicopter after Rek's temperature spiked to 104 degrees. Just like humans, dogs need to be frequently hydrated during hot weather. Paldino often poured water over Santo's head and belly to cool him down. On several occasions, Navy corpsmen attached to 2/1 hooked up IV drips to fully hydrate the dogs.

"We also had cool vests for the dogs to wear," said Cleveringa, "and everytime we stopped, we would refill the pockets with ice packs from a cooler we carried in the Hummer."

During their deployment, Paldino, Cleveringa and the other dog handlers rewrote the book on how to care for dogs during desert warfare. They even built a mobile kennel in the back of a "soft" high-back Humvee, complete with a gas-powered generator that sucked water from big rubber containers like players dump on coaches in the NFL and sprayed it in



USMC photo by LCpl. Miguel A. Carrasco Jr.

front of two fans. The mist kept the dogs cool.

If the Marine Corps plans to continue using dogs in Iraq, Paldino would like to see an air conditioning unit installed in a "hard" high-back Humvee, like the kind used for ambulances. That way the canines could be kept cool when they



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USMC photo by Sgt. Jose E. Guillen

(above) Cpl. Donald R. Paldino, a military policeman assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, pets his partner, Santo, a five-year-old Czechoslovakian Shepherd, outside Fallujah. (above, right) Cpl. Donald R. Paldino, a military dog handler assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, relaxes with his dog Santo outside Fallujah. (right) Santo and Rek, two military police dogs, trying to keep cool in their portable kennels in the back of a high-back Humvee.



USMC photo by Cpl. Darin L. Cleveringa

weren't being used. Hot weather greatly reduces a dog's effectiveness.

"There was no way we could accompany Marines on 12-hour patrols," said Cleveringa, "because the dogs couldn't take the heat for that long." Paldino and Cleveringa spent some of their six and a half month deployment in Iraq calling units back in the states with suggestions on what worked and what didn't. They also came up with lists of what to bring and what not to bring.

"We suggested dog handlers exchange their M16 rifles for M4s with collapsible stocks" said Cleveringa, "because the long-barreled rifles often got tangled up in the dog's leash."

The handlers also discovered that what worked for them didn't always work for their dogs. For example, Kevlar helmets and body armor can mean the difference between life and death for a Marine in combat. But Paldino decided Santo's effectiveness would be greatly diminished if he put a 15-pound Kevlar vest on his four-legged friend. "It would be like wearing a fur coat in the heat of summer," said Paldino. Santo also didn't like special booties to protect his feet from the burning sand.

"He liked to go au natural," laughed Paldino as he talked about their experiences Iraq.

The Nose Knows

Dogs like Santo and Rek are trained at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. They are taught how to sniff out C-4 explosives, smokeless powder in cases of AK-47 ammunition, dynamite, TNT, detonator fuses, an household chemicals used for home-made bombs.

Once their training ends at Lackland, the dogs are dispersed to different branches of the armed services.

The dogs have super-sensitive noses. Santo was able to detect a cache of weapons on the outskirts of Fallujah. The case of rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47 ammo and detonation cord was wrapped in burlap and buried one foot below ground in a wooden crate. More than 250 of the AK rounds were armor-piercing, the kind that can slice through Kevlar like a hot knife through butter.



USMC photo by Cpl. Darin L. Cleveringa

When a dog detects explosives, it sits. That passive response alerts the handler that something is "dangerously close." "The last thing you want is a dog lunging on the leash, leaping around and barking," said Paldino.

Later in the year, another dog being handled by Corporal Bruce L. St. John, who was attached to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, was able to detect 20mm ammunition stored in a steel safe.

On March 31 of last year when four civilian contractors were ambushed in Fallujah, and two of their badly burned bodies were hung from the girders of a bridge over the Euphrates River in the heart of town. Dogs and their handlers from 3/5 were among the first U.S. forces to step across that notorious bridge on November 14 and make sure it wasn't booby-trapped with IEDs, improvised explosive devices.

When the sweep was completed, other Marines rushed across the bridge and secured Fallujah General hospital that had been used to treat wounded insurgents.

A week and a half later after some of the most vicious street fighting since the invasion, Fallujah fell to U.S. and Iraqi forces.

Up Close and Personal

In an e-mail obtained by this reporter from a Marine who fought block-by-block, house-by-house in Fallujah, the young warrior described what urban warfare is really like: "Action was close, violent and fast to include some bayonet work. They did not expect us to conduct house-to-house clearing in conjunction with the tanks. So when we went into the houses ... and worked the river bank, it was gun fighting at 15 to

Continued on page 76



ONE

of the most (if not the most) prolific rifles in the world, the AK-47 is used officially and unofficially by more of the world's countries than I care to try to count. Designed by Mikhail Timofeevich Kalashnikov at the end of World War II, the *Avtomat Kalashnikova* – Model 1947 was destined to be one of the world's great rifles.

Chambered for the 7.62x39mm (M43) Soviet cartridge, a .30 caliber round of suspicious origin, the AK-47 made its debut four years later, at least in limited numbers. However, it didn't take long for this utterly simple and dependable rifle to become a household name, even though 90% of those who knew its name didn't really know what it was.

Using a variety of simple, proven princi-

On the muzzle of the VEPR is an AK-74-style muzzle brake. This reduced recoil significantly.



An AK Fit for a King, but Affordable to You!

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

ples, the AK-47 incorporated some ideas of its own, which have not only proven advanced, but also have influenced other spin-off designs around the world. Still, it's difficult to improve on perfection and, even though that may be the ultimate elusive term, the AK comes knocking on its doorstep.

First appearing with a stamped, or pressed sheet-metal receiver, the AK was soon redesigned to be produced with a receiver made from a milled forging. Long considered preferable, this design was later deemed not only unnecessary, but also unnecessarily heavy and expensive to produce. The result was a simplified version of the original design called the AKM (Automat Kalashnikova Modernizirovannyi) or Modern AK. While the AKM was at first considered merely a less expensive version of the original AK-47, it was a bad rap, because the AKM was and is exactly what it was purported to be, a more modern and efficient version of the original weapon.

However, as good as the standard infantry style AKM receiver is, the receiver produced for use with the *Ruchnoi Pulemet Kalashnikova* (RPK) light machinegun (LMG) has an additional .5mm thickness in the sheet-steel used to produce it. This additional thickness equates to at least 1/3 more

strength (more like 75%), not to mention rigidity, to stand up to the punishment of many thousands of rounds fired in this squad automatic weapon (SAW) version of the AK.

Whether or not such extra strength is of value in the standard rifle is a matter of opinion, as the 1mm thick sheet metal of the standard AKM holds up just fine, but the extra heavy receiver thickness used in the RPK appeals to many end users. Enter the VEPR.

The VEPR gets its name from the Russian words for Wild Boar and is made by a company that was established to manufacture the RPK LMG version of the AKM. However, with the end of the Cold War, this and other companies branched out as Russia entered a new era of capitalism, and the VEPR is now a standard production AKM infantry rifle as well as being offered in semi-automatic-only versions.

Not only is the VEPR an AKM rifle of extremely high quality, but its receiver is also made of pressed steel that is 1.5mm in thickness rather than the standard 1mm found in most AKMs. Although this results in a slightly heavier rifle, it is also one that is more rigid than standard. Not long ago I got a chance to test a VEPR semi-automatic sporting rifle

THE GEAR





(above) Here the VEPR is seen with its safety/dust cover in the up, or ON position. Note the well-proportioned "beaver tail" style handguard. (right) Although it appears to be separate, the well-proportioned pistol grip of the VEPR is part of the butt stock.



in 7.62x39mm (M43) caliber.

Retaining nearly all features of the standard AKM semi-automatic rifles we have seen over the past several decades, the VEPR uses the standard AK front and rear sights, magazine, controls, and also has the standard optical base permanently installed on the left side of the receiver. On the muzzle is an AK-74-type muzzle brake. However, the VEPR has some things unique unto itself.

Instead of having a separate pistol grip such as is found in the original design, the matte black synthetic grip of the VEPR extends up behind the receiver where it houses the hinge for the folding stock used on the military version of the rifle. On the civilian version and that made for export to the United States, a synthetic butt stock is integral with this pistol grip arrangement. This stock is of straight-line design and it and the grip are well proportioned and very comfortable. Equally modern is the beavertail-style forend that is made of the same material. Offered in 7.62x39mm, 5.45x39mm and 5.56x45mm, a larger version of the VEPR is available in .308 Winchester caliber.

Trigger Time

Shooting the VEPR with several commercial and military brands of ammunition brought few surprises. Performing just like all other high quality AKM rifles, this one had a good trigger and flawless function. Perhaps because of its well-designed pistol grip and stock, the VEPR did not seem any heavier than standard AKM rifles, and its AK-74-style muzzle brake greatly reduced recoil. Best of all was its accuracy, which proved to be above average. Shooting 7.62x39mm ammunition from Black

Hills, COR-BON and Wolf, produced accuracy averaging just less than 3 MOA with open sights. Mounting optics on the VEPR using its factory base, one of the current forward mounting systems, or the new top cover by Krebs Custom Guns, would probably reduce this by about 30%.

Red Sales in the Sunset

Just after I had completed testing the VEPR, the 1994 Assault Rifle Ban was (thankfully) allowed to "sunset." With this, the VEPR can now be legally imported with its factory folding stock, and an M4 style retractable stock can also be installed by Krebs, and a similar model may soon be available from ACE, Ltd.

If you are a fan of the AKM system, I predict you'll love the high quality VEPR. Many feel this is the best of the AKM's, and I can see why. For information on it and all their fine firearms, contact Robinson Armament Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 16776, Salt Lake City, UT 84116; phone: 801-355-0401 (www.robarm.com). ☒

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courtesy Robinson Armament Company



Post-ban, the VEPR is available with factory folding stock.

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About The New Work by Al J. Venter

BY STEPHEN TANNER

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There's an irony in the fact that among the military challenges the United States faces today, none poses greater peril than the prospect of atomic weapons in the hands of our enemies. This may seem like an odd situation for the nation that won the Cold War, a conflict in which both sides bristled with so many thermonuclear warheads that the fate of humanity itself was believed to be at stake. But the post-Cold War era, which began in 1991 with the promise of a peace dividend, greater global prosperity, and the very real prospect of a *Pax Americana*, expired after a tragically short life. It was abruptly replaced by the post-9/11

era, an age that unveiled new threats to our security, more unpredictable, and perhaps more dangerous, than those that had come before.

This new conflict, termed the "War on Terror" by the White House, and perhaps more accurately a "clash of civilizations" by Harvard's Samuel Huntington, has required the United States to toss into the dustbin decades worth of carefully cultivated strategic thinking. Obsolete are such guiding principles as a "balance of power," "deterrence," and "mutual assured destruction," the latter a bedrock of Cold-War thinking that also possessed its most fitting acronym, MAD. Given the new opponents we face in the post-9/11 era—driven by religious fanaticism more than geopolitical pragmatism, embracing mass death rather than seeking to avoid it—the rulebook has been thrown out the window.

In this book, Al J. Venter looks through the door opened by 9/11 to inform us of even more devastating potential arising from the world of Islam: the development of a nuclear weapons capability by Iran. An experienced war correspondent who has spent years covering conflicts from Angola, Somalia and Sierra Leone in Africa, through the Middle East to the Balkans, Central America and elsewhere, Venter calmly analyzes the nature of Iran's theocratic regime, its history of fomenting Islamic revolution through terrorism, and most importantly, its inexorable progress toward creating and deploying nuclear arms.



The author's perspective is all the more valuable for the insights he provides into the weapons program of his native South Africa. Whereas to most Americans the concept of nuclear proliferation tends to appear abstract, forever rumored and over the horizon in its practical affect, Venter has witnessed the successful development of atom bombs in his own country. He has also interviewed key participants and is able to warn us of the new *Diaspora* of nuclear scientists who today crisscross national borders, motivated by money, politics, or simply by resentment at the demise of their previous regimes. While the U.S. government correctly eyes former Soviet scientists, and more recently the covert spread of Pakistani expertise, Venter informs us of the equally dangerous fount of knowledge that springs from Africa.

Clear and Present Danger

While reading this book it is impossible not to view Iran's nuclear program as the foremost gathering threat to the United States and its closest allies. North Korea, where a similar program has apparently reached fruition, is in the end a small fortress state, surrounded by larger, more prosperous powers that are active in providing an ameliorating influence. Pakistan's rogue program has been grudgingly accepted by the West due to the surety that its missiles need to be aimed east to offset its huge traditional antagonist, India. Iran is the most dangerous case of all, because it is larger than its neighbors and capable of dominating its region. It also possesses the heritage of a great civilization and former empires, and its current revolutionary regime is the world's most aggressive proponent of the manifest destiny of Shi'ite Islam.

There should also be no mistaking the fact that the possession of nuclear weapons by Iran would have a destabilizing effect far beyond its borders, rippling not only through the Middle East but causing shock waves throughout the world.

The country in most immediate danger would be Israel. After decades of vowing to destroy the Jewish state—albeit failing to do so with both conventional war and guerrilla tactics—the Islamic world would have the means to create a new Holocaust simply by pressing a few buttons. Israel, with five million people crammed into a slice of land the size of New Jersey, would be hard-pressed to withstand a first strike by Iran, which possesses more than 12 times its population and 30 times its geographic area. Whereas during the Cold War the United States had a natural equivalency with its Communist opponents, Israel would be at a severe disadvantage the moment Iran went nuclear. It would be as if, during the Cold War, Britain alone had been forced to confront the Soviet Union.

Israel would feel an urgent need to wrest this Damocles Sword from the Iranian ayatollah's hands with every means at its disposal. On the model of its pre-emptive strike against Iraqi nuclear facilities at Osiraq in 1981, the IDF would come under pressure to destroy Iranian nuclear weapons resources before they became operational. But Iran is harder to reach than Iraq, and Tehran, too, learned a lesson from Osiraq, taking care to disperse and conceal its nuclear facilities in the years since. What if this time an Israeli pre-emptive strike failed, instead initiating the full-scale exchange of destructive power it had meant to forestall? How would the United States and the rest of the world respond if Iran did not initiate a war but only reacted to an Israeli first strike?

As for the U.S. "nuclear umbrella," which has traditional-



DigitalGlobe image of the Iranian gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant at Natanz in its earlier stages. This entire facility has now been covered over by desert sands making it invisible to normal detection devices.

ly been thought to cover Israel, the dilemma in Tel Aviv would be whether, if 300,000 Israelis were killed by an Iranian strike, a U.S. President would be willing to order the destruction of untold numbers of Iranian citizens in response, though they posed no threat to the U.S. homeland? In a country that still debates dropping the bomb on Hiroshima, America's capability of such ruthlessness is open to question. In Tel Aviv the verdict would be that the Israelis had better rely on their own resources, or initiative.

At the minimum, the result of a nuclear-armed Iran would be a revival of the *Strangelovian* scenarios that dominated strategic thinking on a larger scale during the Cold War. Premised by the fact that whoever struck first would have the advantage in an exchange, paranoia would reign foremost. Even if the Iranians intended their nuclear capability to serve a purely defensive purpose, the West, and most urgently Israel, could never be so sure. The slightest rustle in Iran—say the implementation of air-raid drills in Tehran—would rouse suspicion that the mullahs were about to initiate the dreaded conflict. The responding rustle on the Western side could cause the Iranians to believe they were about to suffer a pre-emptive attack. If Tel Aviv sensed that Tehran sensed a strike was on the way, it may indeed have to launch a strike to counter the misguided Iranian reaction. It would be like a showdown with both sides using a mirror to look into a mirror, with neither side able to risk being the second party to act.

Kryptonite in Irresponsible Hands

The second danger posed by a Persian bomb would affect the United States directly. Though, unlike Israel, its very existence would not be at stake, its ability to project power at the center of the world's energy supply would be severely curtailed. Consider 2003's Operation Iraqi Freedom, which was justified by Bush administration officials with the phrase, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." If Iraq had already possessed a nuclear weapon, the United States would not have dared to forcibly overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime; neither, in 1991, would the U.S. and its allies have been able to roll back the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. If the Islamic Republic of Iran were able to develop an atomic bomb, it would serve as a form of kryptonite against the superpower, providing a shield behind which Tehran could develop even more weapons and thence become a significant strategic threat.

The United States, of course, would always have the option to retire from the region, just as the British did after the Suez crisis of 1956. But while America draws far less a percentage of its oil imports from the Persian Gulf than does Europe and the Far East, it has long been the guarantor of the world's primary source of oil. To abdicate this responsibility would create a vacuum of power that other great nations would fill, causing America's status as the world's sole remaining superpower to evaporate. Though still possessing the world's greatest long-range destructive power, its ability to influence hearts and minds, encourage the spread of democracy, and guarantee the free flow of commerce would be lost.

The U.S. is better situated than other major powers to

wean itself from Middle Eastern oil, but to allow those other powers to become stronger as a result would only create larger dilemmas in the future. It is not certain that an Iranian bomb would cancel U.S. conventional power in a confrontation, but the prospect that the sprawling U.S. airbase at Doha, for example, or a U.S. carrier task force in the Persian Gulf could go up in a blinding flash if the mullahs had their backs to the wall, would at least severely restrict our military options.

Aside from the dire danger to Israel and the curtailment of U.S. conventional flexibility, a nuclear-armed Iran would

On Feb 15, 2005 the Israeli foreign minister told Reuters in London that Iran was 6 months away from producing the atom bomb.

comprise an additional problem, the most unpredictable of them all: the possibility that the theocratic regime in Tehran would pass weapons to fanatic terrorists, who have no state of their own but possess an abiding determination to kill as many Americans as possible.

One should have no illusions about how such an event would transpire. The bomb would not come stamped with a return address in Tehran, accompanied by a proud message from the ayatollah. Picture instead the port of San Diego suddenly obliterated by an atomic blast with no prior warning. After a lengthy investigation, the delivery vehicle would be pinpointed as a Malaysian freighter under Panamanian registry, which had previously stopped off in half a dozen ports from Dubai to Hong Kong. After a year of false leads indicating North Korea or Pakistan, Iranian fingerprints would be found, while by then the world would have been embroiled in a new war. Another confusing factor would be the inevitable presence of millions of Westerners in the streets arguing for peace rather than for the retaliatory execution of millions of Islamic citizens.

Several factors mitigate against the usefulness of deterrence, or MAD, in any nuclear stand-off with Iran. In the case of Israel, even though it may possess a larger arsenal, it may simply be too small to survive an Iranian strike. The nation of Iran would be able to withstand an Israeli one, but its nuclear program, assuming the Israelis have correct targeting intelligence, would not. Thus the pressure on Israel to launch a pre-emptive attack, either through a massive use of conventional airpower or through tactical nuclear strikes, would become immense. Such a pre-emption would guarantee the survival of both states, while the Jewish state would find its very existence in jeopardy—in fact, hanging by a thread subject to the will of the Iranian ayatollah—if it failed to act first.

Issuing the Keys to Heaven

Second, as Al Venter describes in this book, radicals in the Islamic world have embraced martyrdom tactics, beginning most notably with the Shi'ite assaults on the U.S. Embassy and Marines in Lebanon. Since those 1983 attacks we have seen the martyrdom principle spread through the populations of Islam, culminating with the collective suicide of the 9/11 hijackers. During the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s,

Continued on page 58



DigitalGlobe image of the Iranian town of Arak, This heavy water plant linked to the development of plutonium, is likely to play a crucial role in Tehran's development of the atom bomb. Heavy water, which is ordinary water enriched in the hydrogen isotope deuterium, is used as a moderator in one type of nuclear reactor.

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Ayatollah Khomeini enlisted thousands of pubescent boys to lead human-wave assaults against Iraqi positions. He armed them primarily with little trinkets to hang around their necks, called "keys to heaven."

If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons it is unclear how the concept of martyrdom — now glorified in the

the German chain of command ignored his orders. But what if Hitler had possessed nuclear weapons, with controls exclusively held in the hands of his most fanatic followers in the Nazi SS?

In Iran, the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) have risen as an ideological alternative to the regular armed forces, not unlike the SS or the Soviet NKVD during World War II. Both more fanatic and fully funded than the regular forces, their command structure remains unclear to the West and the

with Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the U.S. occupation of Iraq has done little to convince Tehran to cease efforts to increase its own strategic capability. On the other hand, an ironic result of Operation Iraqi Freedom may become the empowerment of the Shi'ites of Iraq for the first time in history, thus providing Iran a large natural ally, and a Shi'ite swath in southern Asia of great power proportions. Along with standing behind the concept of increasing Iran's immersion in the global economy, and providing security assurances that will preclude the mullahs' desire to gain atomic weapons, the U.S. must solve its current position in Iraq, which may be inadvertently increasing Iranian power and influence.

So far in this new millennium, American Intelligence has not covered itself in glory. From its failure to interdict Al Qaeda's operations on 9/11 and subsequent failure to capture its leadership, to the false assumptions that existed on either side of our military initiative in Iraq, we have not been well served by our essential front line in the conflict in which we are now engaged. In response to these failures, during the summer of 2004 the CIA saw a revolving door of three directors within three months, while the bi-partisan 9/11 Commission has recommended overhauling our entire system.

It is not pleasant but nevertheless essential to realize that the slow march of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward acquiring a nuclear weapons capability comprises an even larger danger than the ones we have seen so far in this decade. For this reason we owe thanks to Al J. Venter, and the numerous experts, operatives and scientists who have provided him assistance, for the ability to assess this new threat and deal with it prior to its reaching culmination. With his wealth of facts, analysis, and invaluable international perspective, Venter has given us a vital, insightful work. Most important, its publication means that when and if the next crisis occurs, the United States need no longer be surprised. ✕

Military historian Stephen Tanner has written numerous books, most recently The Wars of the Bushes: A Father and Son as Military Leaders, Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban, and (with Samuel A. Southworth) U.S. Special Forces: A Guide to America's Special Operations Units.

If Iran continues developing the atom bomb, a nuclear preemptive strike in the Middle East is inevitable.

Islamic world — would come into play. According to Cold War logic, the fact that America could react to a hundred thousand of its own dead by inflicting ten million on the enemy served as a sufficient deterrent to the other side not to attack. But against a culture that glorifies death in "Holy War," the principle of deterrence dissolves. If millions of martyrs are created in order to eradicate the state of Israel, or severely damage the United States, they might be honored for having made the supreme sacrifice.

A tenuous aspect of any nuclear confrontation with Iran would be the value that each side places on human life. For the West, the object would be not to lose any at all. On the other side, death on behalf of Allah is often considered desirable. Add to this the factor that a U.S. president would naturally feel constrained from ordering mass revenge killings of civilians, and a lack of logical balance can be perceived. A nuclear stand-off between a theocratic regime influenced by unknown depths of fanaticism and a stable democratic government would be inherently lopsided toward the less predictable party.

It's a grim paradox that were an Iranian leader to develop and use an atomic weapon, the vast majority of victims of the subsequent conflict would be innocent Iranians. But we have already seen one case in modern history where an absolute ruler decreed the destruction of his own people. In the Spring of 1945 Adolf Hitler decided that the German Volk had failed him, and he ordered a scorched earth policy in his own country to deny the Allies the fruits of victory. Calmer heads in

possibility exists that, as opposed to the series of structural safeguards that allowed the superpowers to navigate the Cold War, an Iranian nuclear capability could be controlled by a small group or even a single fanatic. There are some who still take comfort in the fact that even if the Islamic Republic of Iran developed an atom bomb, the threat to the United States, which possesses thousands of easily deliverable, state-of-the-art thermonuclear warheads, would be negligible. But then one must consider which is more dangerous to one's life and limb: a full division of heavily armed but well disciplined troops under firm command and control, or a single homicidal maniac with a loaded pistol?

Considering the Options

Since at this writing Iran has not yet developed a nuclear weapon, now is the time for responsible nations, in concert with the UN, to bring full effort to bear against its gaining the ability to do so. Ideally this can be achieved through diplomacy, supported by a broader effort to gain peace and stability throughout the region. The object should be to convince Tehran that not only shouldn't they destabilize the world by developing nuclear weapons, they won't need to in a world that proceeds under firm, humanitarian principles. If peaceful persuasion fails to work, all that can be suggested is that the West consider other options while it can.

To acknowledge the elephant in the room, America's 2003 invasion of Iran's neighbor, Iraq, has introduced new variables into the equation. Together

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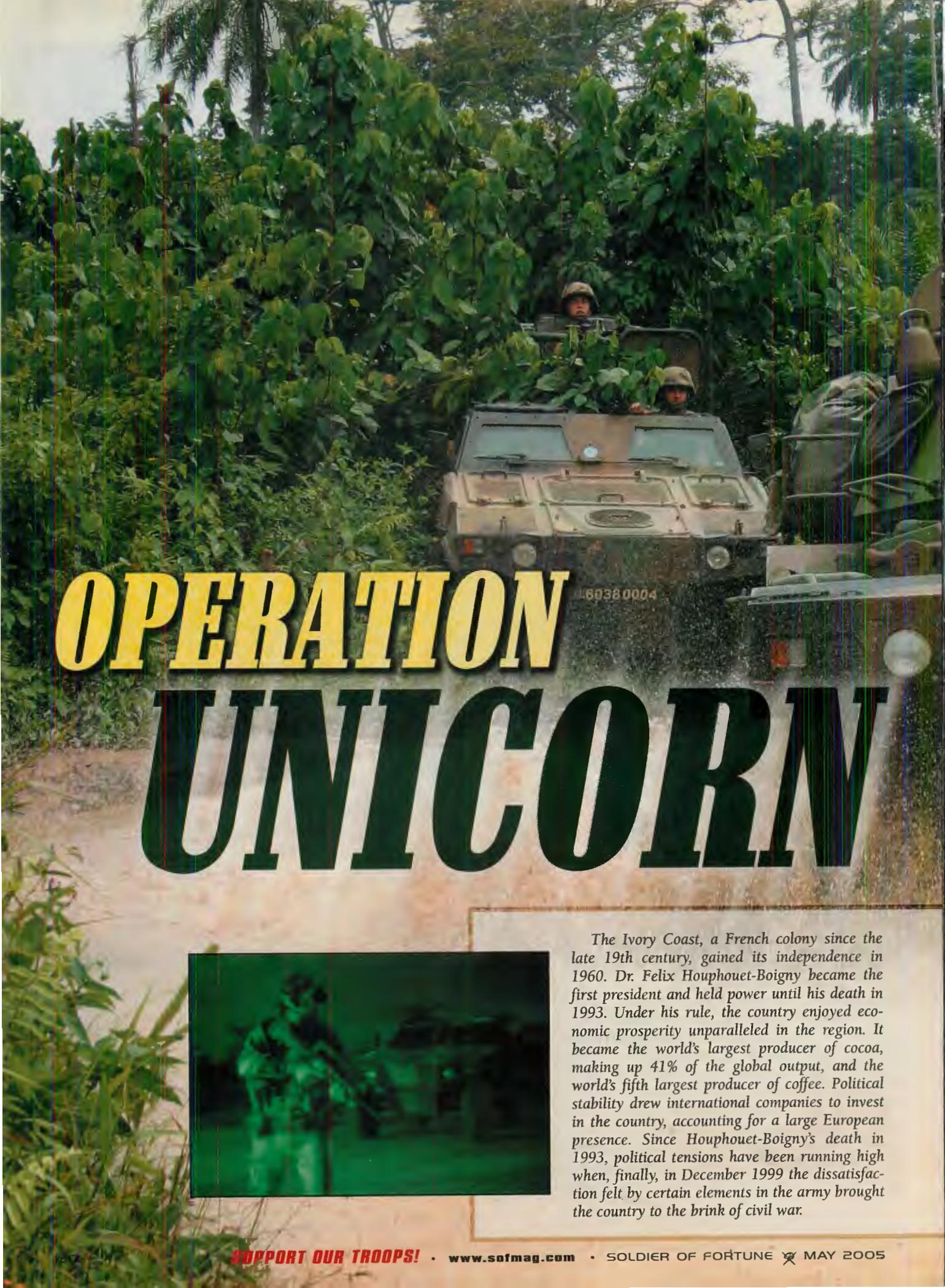
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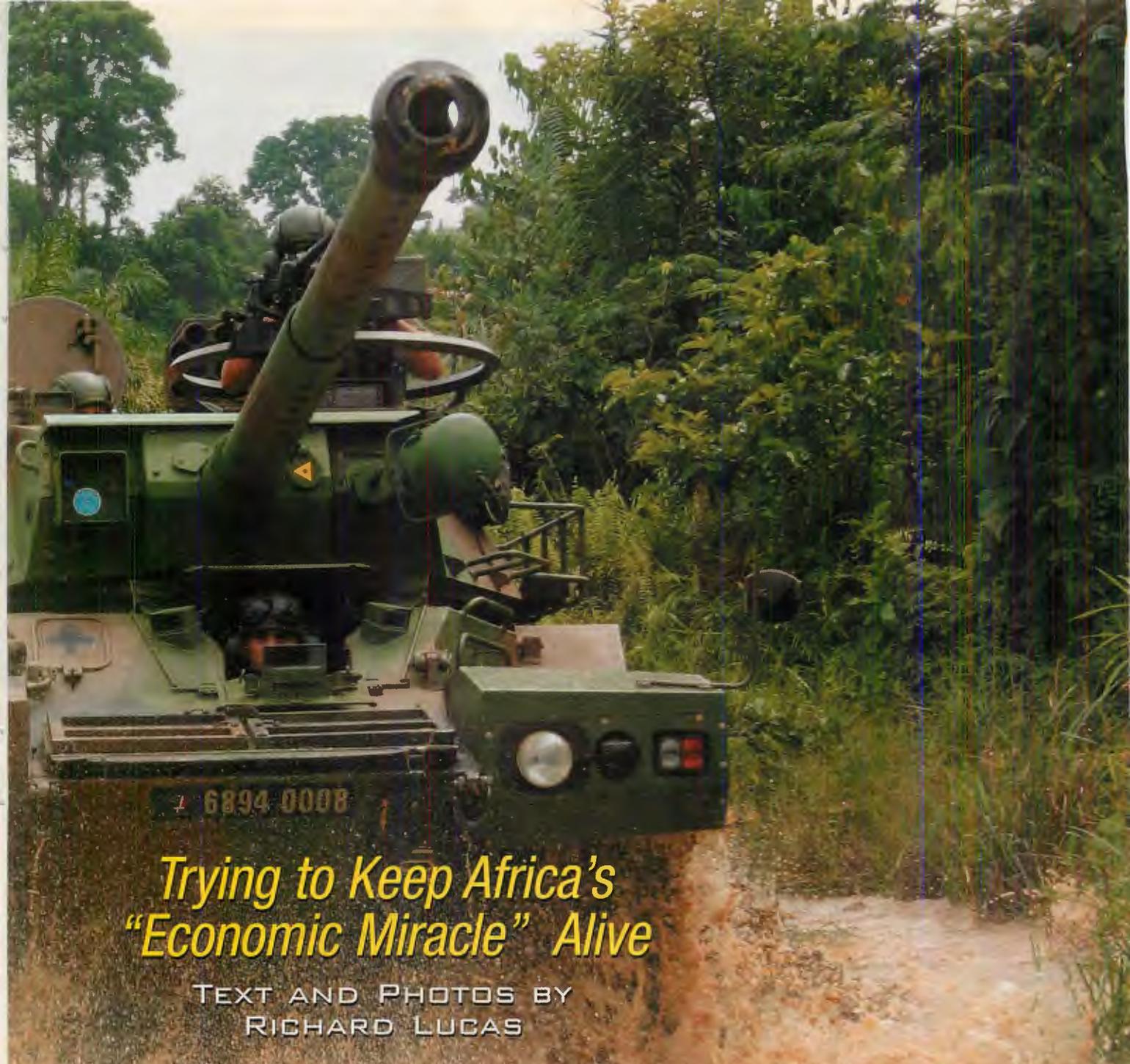
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The Ivory Coast, a French colony since the late 19th century, gained its independence in 1960. Dr. Felix Houphouet-Boigny became the first president and held power until his death in 1993. Under his rule, the country enjoyed economic prosperity unparalleled in the region. It became the world's largest producer of cocoa, making up 41% of the global output, and the world's fifth largest producer of coffee. Political stability drew international companies to invest in the country, accounting for a large European presence. Since Houphouet-Boigny's death in 1993, political tensions have been running high when, finally, in December 1999 the dissatisfaction felt by certain elements in the army brought the country to the brink of civil war.



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TEXT AND PHOTOS BY
RICHARD LUCAS

Today, the Ivory Coast is a nation divided: Divided by economic and political interests, divided by ethnic and tribal affiliations. But, above all, the Ivory Coast is divided geographically — the north against the south. In the north, a mutiny led by certain military units turned into to general rebellion when a majority of the population rallied to their cause. Their goal was not to seek autonomy for the north, but the overthrow of the central government, in a "coup d'état." Their dream, spurred on by revolutionary fervor, was to march upon the administrative centers and de facto capital at Abidjian and dethrone Laurent Gbagbo, the President who they consider corrupt and illegitimate. Grouped under the banner of the FAFN (*Forces Armées Forces Nouvelle*) they consist of an amalgam of Ivorian military elements and groups of tribal and local militias. Facing them in the south

are the FANCI (*Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire*), loyalist regular troops supported by diverse militias formed during the crisis. The loyalists regard crushing the rebellion and re-establishing control over the north as essential for the survival of the country.

Separating the two antagonists, a zone of security was set up under the auspices of "Operation Unicorn." This buffer zone, an attempt to avoid further hostilities and promote a peaceful solution to the crisis was called the *zone of confidence*.

Cutting across the country from east to west, the 30-mile-wide zone of confidence was established to halt all movements of troops and arms between the two sectors and to avoid further confrontations between the opposing forces. The difficult task of controlling and maintaining order in the sensitive western sector of the zone, which



Roadblocks established on each side of the "zone of confidence" help keep warring factions apart, and stem the infiltration of hostile men and materiel. The Sagai RC-90 light tank, which mounts a 90mm gun, has proved heavy enough to get the job done on such peace-keeping missions, yet light enough to get to where the job is. (inset) French trooper with FAS rifle stands watch on the small air strip near the city of Man.



borders the unstable country of Liberia, was assigned to the French armored parachute regiment the 1st RHP (*Régiment Hussards Parachutistes*).

Eyes and Ears

Based in Tarbes in the south-west of France, the 1st RHP, created in 1720, is one of the oldest units of the French army and holds the unique distinction of being the only armored airborne unit of the 11th *Division Parachutiste*. Nearly all paratroop forces in the French Army come under the direct

command of the 11th DP, which is in charge of the planning and logistics of all French airborne operations. The 1st RHP is the eyes and ears of the Division, specializing in reconnaissance and path-finding missions, and with providing rapid fire support. As such, the regiment is well adapted to deal with the situation in the Ivory Coast.

Captain Benoit Michel commands the 3rd Squadron of the 1st RHP. Deployed in the extreme western sector of the zone of confidence, his squadron is responsible for surveillance of the Liberian border and the rebel-held cities to the north. "Our main job is to secure the arterial roadways crossing our sector of the zone. At each end of the zone of confidence, we have set up checkpoints to control passage through the zone. We check each vehicle for arms and possible combatants trying to infiltrate the zone. At each checkpoint we've deployed one of our Sagai RC-90s to cover the road and provide support fire if needed. [The Sagai RC-90 is a six-wheeled light tank mounting a 90mm canon and 7.62 medium machine gun.] Otherwise we send daily patrols into the bush using the jungle trails. They maintain a regular contact with the villages and keep us informed as to any activity in the region."

One afternoon I climbed into a VBL and went out on a reconnaissance patrol lead by Lt. Christophe de Ligneville. The VBL, "*Véhicule Blindé Léger*," is a small, three-man armored vehicle



A vital link for supplies and any needed reinforcements, the airstrip near Man is protected by a Saiga light tank and adequate French troops when flights are expected.

which, because of its size and maneuverability, is ideal for reconnaissance and rapid deployment. After a couple of miles, our three VBLs turned off the paved road onto a dusty jungle road leading into the back bush. Under the oppressive African sun, the dirt track took us past fields cut out of the surrounding jungle and past the thatched-roofed mud huts of a few scattered villages.

A few miles more and the road was no more than a trail plunging into the tropical forest. At times the vegetation was so thick it was like driving through a tunnel, the heavy foliage above blotting out the sun. Our passage become more and more difficult, the trail sometimes no more than a pile of jagged rock cutting through pools of mud and water. It took more than half an hour to cover the last mile or so that would lead us to our destination, the Cavally — the river that forms the border between the Ivory Coast and Liberia.

Daily Life Continues

On the riverbank, a group of farmers were waiting to take their sacks of produce to the other side. The crossing would be made aboard a makeshift raft of wood and metal drums,

pulled from one side to the other by a rope stretched across the river and attached to trees on opposite banks. Despite the war, a sort of “grass roots” commerce continues between the two countries. Under the relative coolness beneath the trees near the river, the soldiers talked with men who pulled out a bottle of “King Juice,” the local hooch made from sugar cane, and offered us a drink.

How's it going? What do you have in the sacks? Any problems? Seen any strangers around? After 20 minutes of discussion we headed back to the VBLs. Everything seemed normal. The situation was calm.

Winning Hearts, Minds, and Information

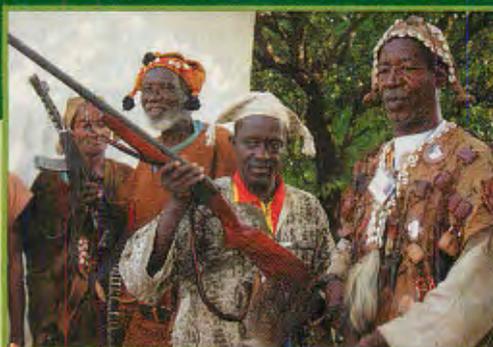
On our way back we stopped at a small village to meet the headman. The same sort of discussion began. Lt. de Ligneville has been here for a couple of months and has established fairly good relations with the local people. “We stop to talk to the people here on a regular basis. The region here was hit hard during the conflict by troops from both sides, not to mention renegade groups coming over here from Liberia, taking advantage of the situation to loot the villages

THE DOZO

One more element added to the confusion of this already chaotic war, is the presence of the Dozo hunters among the FAFN troops. Traditionally, the Dozo are a sect of mystic hunters and faith healers who roam the tropical forests of Mali, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast. Their roots go deep, back to the pre-historic beliefs of the West-African peoples. They trace their origin back to the beginning of time, to the creation of the world when the first men were Dozo. Today these enigmatic warriors, wearing the traditional three-cornered hat and dressed in tunics made from bogolan (a thick, light-brown canvas-like material), covered with protective amulets (the *gris-gris*) and magic symbols, have rallied to the rebel cause. In the north-west of the Ivory Coast, an estimated 5,000 can be found fighting along side the rebels, bringing to the revolutionary forces their guns and their magic.

Major Koné Bakari, commanding the Dozo “Special Forces” at Danané, a small city near the Liberian border, explains: “We Dozo have always been ready to come to the aid of our brothers in the villages, either as healers, when the western medicine fails to help them, when with our potions and magic we can cure them, or as hunters, when their cattle are attacked by lions or panthers and they call on us to hunt down the predator and kill it.”

How does someone become a Dozo? “He places himself in the service of a Dozo master. He becomes his apprentice. He cooks and cleans for the Dozo master, fetches water and helps him in his fields. In return the master teaches him the secrets of the forest. The apprentice has to learn the names of all the animals in the forest. He learns their habits and how to track them and imitate the sounds they make. He learns the names of the plants and trees and how to find the seeds, roots, and flowers we use to eat or to



WARRIORS

make medicines. From these he learns to make magic potions and the *gris-gris* for protection. After a certain time there is an initiation ceremony deep in the heart of the sacred forest when he himself becomes a Dozo master. But he continues to learn the knowledge

of the Dozo from other masters. For example, how to become invisible or how to transform himself into an animal or a bird in order to attack or escape. These are powers of the Dozo.”

“Here in Danané we fight with our brothers in the FAFN. The Dozo are above all warriors, we are the first in combat with our Kalashnikovs and rocket launchers. But we also use our powers as healers to aid the wounded and help the civilian population. We make amulets for protection against bullets and other ones which give protection from knives and machetes for our fellow soldiers. They become invincible, immune to fire and steel. Right now we are working on a magic which will warn us of the approach of helicopters and make them fall out of the sky like birds. But I can't say anymore about that — it is secret.”

Next to him an old Dozo master adds, with a bit of humor, “I was in France. I saw the potions they sell in little bottles to woman in order to attract men. I wanted to know how they made them but they wouldn't tell me. So you see you Europeans have your magic secrets and we, the Dozo, have ours.”

We westerners may think what we will, as to the role of magic in modern warfare, but one thing is certain: In this Christian and moslem country where a large percentage of the population still retains deep animist beliefs, the presence of these warrior magicians on the battlefield has a strong psychological impact both on their comrades-in-arms of the FAFN, as well as on those who face them. — R.L.



Small units and small armor work well for small wars and peace-keeping missions.



The colorful military mystics known as Dozo have sided with the rebels in the present Ivory Coast conflict.

and steal cattle. For the people here, we represent the only security force in the region. If we can help them out in some way, we do. Our medical officer comes here every so often to assess the situation. Other problems we report to the proper NGO [Non Governmental Organization] which can handle them. At the same time we can gather a lot of valuable information. They're pretty much up on everything that goes on out here in the bush."

When you leave the zone of confidence you are immediately confronted by roadblocks set up by the opposing forces of both sides. Made of tree trunks and sand bags, the passage blocked by nail-studded planks, they are strategically placed to control entry into the zone, at main intersections and at the entries to the towns and villages. Normally the French security force vehicles pass through these checkpoints without any problem but, from time to time, passage is refused.

This happened to us in the FANCI-controlled sector just south of Danané. The reason we were stopped wasn't clear. It could have been related to an incident of rape involving a couple of the soldiers at this post who were consequently arrested by French troops the day before, or maybe because of the presence of a journalist in the convoy, or simply because the leader of the group wanted to show off his authority. Whatever the reason, after two hours of negotiations between Colonel Antoine Connac, chief of operations of the 1st RHP, and the district head of the FANCI, the problem seemed to have been resolved. Nevertheless, Capt. Michel, the French officer in charge of this part of the sector decided not to risk another confrontation. In this country were the slightest rumor can set off hostilities, where a situation of no consequence can suddenly degenerate into a bloody confrontation, its best to operate with extreme cau-

THE VBL

The VBL (*Vehicule Blinde Leger*) is a small, fast, four-wheeled armored vehicle designed for several battlefield missions: reconnaissance and observation, fire support and anti-tank search and destroy. Constructed by the French manufacturer Panhard, the VBL is easily modified to fit different combat requirements. Usually equipped with a 7.62 or .50 caliber machine gun, the VBL is an excellent scout vehicle, which can provide fire support for infantry units. When fitted with a MILAN missile launcher the VBL is an effective anti-tank weapon. The MILAN is a wire-guided anti-tank missile with a range up to 1.9 km (1.2 miles) and is effective against most known armor. The VBL can also be fitted to launch MISTRAL ground-air missiles to provide anti-aircraft protection.

The steel armor of the VBL protects the three-man crew against shrapnel and small arms fire and the angled body shape is designed to deflect RPG fire and heavier weapons — although in most cases the VBL relies on speed (up to 60 mph) and maneuverability for battlefield survival. The entire vehicle can be completely sealed to protect the crew



from nuclear and bio-chemical weapons attack. An interesting feature of the VBL is that it can float and, using a propeller built into the rear of the chassis, the vehicle can navigate across bodies of water at a speed of 5 knots.

The VBL has been in use by the French army for more than 15 years and has proven itself a reliable and highly suitable vehicle for urban, jungle and woodland warfare. Its on the road capabilities and unimposing look make it an ideal vehicle for peacekeeping missions. — R.L.

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USMC photo by Cpl. Mike Vrabel

tion. We turned back.

These types of problems encountered on the roads, and the fact that the troops stationed here are hundreds of miles from the main French base in the Ivory Coast at Abidjan, underscores the importance of the small airstrip near the rebel-controlled city of Man. The paved runway is about 20 miles from the city, at the end of a small dirt road, completely surrounded by dense jungle.

Airport Security Ivorian Style

When I arrived at the airport, a couple dozen FAFN fighters, all carrying automatic weapons, were posted at the end of the runway. Lt. Bichet, head of the French security group posted at the airport, was talking to the leader of the rebel group. Later he filled me in.

“My combat group (4th Squadron, 1st RHP) is stationed, day and night, to guard the airport. When a plane arrives we secure the area, post VBLs at the ends of the airstrip, and put the Sagai in firing position. The FAFN come here a lot. They got people posted here all the time because they’re afraid of a FANCI airborne operation coming in here. But we haven’t had too many problems. Our relations with them are pretty good, but we stay on our toes. A couple of times they’ve tried to test our security — tried to infiltrate the perimeter at night. Thanks to our night-vision equipment, we’ve been able to get the jump on them. Caught them in the act so to speak, completely by surprise, before they knew what was happening. Since then, they’ve calmed down quite a bit.”

I spent the night at the airport and when night fell, suddenly, as it does in the tropics, I was able to test the night-vision equipment myself. The french use the “LUCIE” DIPT-18C (*Dispositif individuel portatif terrestre*) made in France by Agenieux. Worn individually by each soldier during night ops, the small, lightweight “LUCIE” night-vision goggles flip down for use, flip up for normal vision, can be worn with glasses and provide a sharp greenish-yellow image in extreme low light conditions. The “SOPHIE” DIPT-19B (*Dispositif infra-rouge portatif terrestre*) are large, powerful binoculars equipped with an infrared thermal-sensing device. These night-vision binoculars, capable of picking up heat from vehicles or people at fairly long distances even through dense vegetation, are ideal for working here in the jungle. Soldiers furnished with this type of equipment have a considerable advantage in these countries where the more advanced military technologies are virtually unknown.

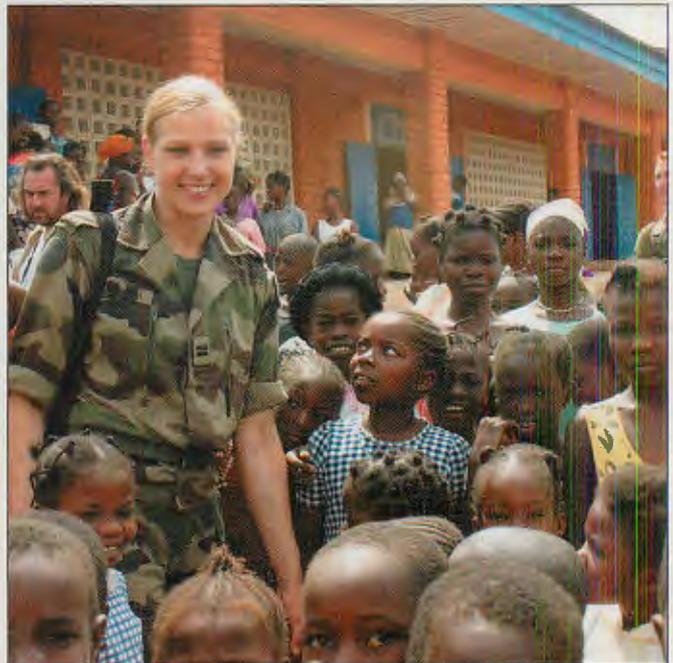
Hearts and Minors

Capt. Laurantie is the commanding officer of the 4th Squadron. With his help, I visited the barracks of the FAFN troops in Man. We met with Cpl. Unok Pinouh, a former regular army soldier who has been with the rebel troops from the beginning of the conflict, and is in charge of the barracks. At his signal, a hundred or so FAFN combatants, for the most part dressed in civilian clothes, fell into formation. The Corporal told us about the lack of equipment and the inadequate military structure, which only worsened already-existing problems with discipline among the young recruits. I had already run across these adolescent soldiers at the checkpoints held by the FAFN. Finger on the trigger of an AK-47, the inevitable dark gasses and a Rambo headband, pumped up by their new-found authority, they apparently made little distinction between legitimate acts of war and petty banditism.

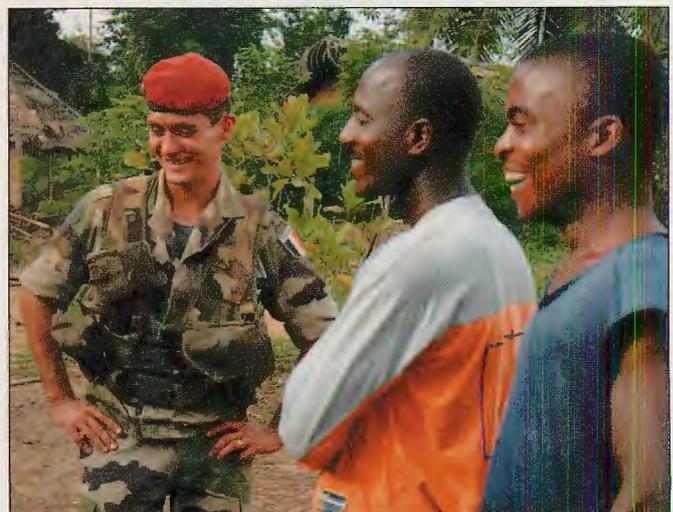
For Capt. Laurantie and the security forces, these young soldiers pose a real problem. “At this moment the FAFN doesn’t want to demobilize these young ‘volunteers.’ They feel that



Cordial relations with locals build trust — and net intelligence.



French medical officer routinely checks on local conditions, refers useful situations to the proper NGO.



Constantly in the field, patrols routinely take the time to reassure locals, and visit long enough to take the local pulse.

the conflict will continue and they'll need them. We try to insist that they stay in their barracks, that the weapons are kept locked up, and that they start learning a little discipline and military regulations. But it's not easy. They're here for the adventure more than anything else, living out what they see in the movies and swept up by the easily acquired power they get by carrying a gun. They've become an element that's difficult to control, for us as well as for the leaders in the FAFN."

Regimental headquarters of the 1st RHP is in Doékoué, a city in the center of the western sector just south of the zone of confidence. Having nearly completed four months working in the zone of confidence, the regiment was to leave the Ivory Coast. Their replacements, 1st REC (*Régiment Etranger de Cavalerie*) of the French Foreign Legion and the 601st RCR (*Régiment de Circulation Routière*) had already begun to arrive. But here again, only a few weeks before departure date, the regiment was on orange alert.

Standing in front of a wall map of the zone, Col. Delort-Laval, regimental commander, explained the reasons for the alert: Units of the FAFN attacked a police station and FANCI army barracks and stole a quantity of arms. French units intervened and were forced to open fire on the rebels to stop the raid. Now it's feared that the FANCI will mount an attack in reprisal. Elsewhere, a commando group of the RHP was sent in to contain a demonstration that threatened to break into violence.

"You see the situation is far from being calm. We have a very large zone to cover and our troops are spread out throughout it, which has made for quite a bit of autonomy of action. I've had to rely on my men to make the right decisions, then and there, in the field. We've had to rely on personal initiative and good common sense. The regiment has had a lot of experience in this type of peacekeeping mission and I think it's paid off. That experience and *savoir faire* has helped them to complete their mission successfully. But military intervention is not going to heal the wounds of the country and bring it back together. It's up to the Ivorians to resolve their own problems. An all-out civil war has been avoided. Now it's time for them to find the solutions."

Blue Helmets

In the following months the French troops were to be replaced by a multinational United Nations peacekeeping



FAFN forces include many pubescent loose cannons, which without training or proper discipline can be a problem for both the FAFN and the peace effort.

force. The country is to be divided into seven sectors under control of blue-helmeted troops coming from Morocco, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Niger, Senegal and Bangladesh. The remaining French troops are to be used as a rapid intervention force if and when necessary. It's possible that the presence of an international force will have a positive effect of the situation. At this moment neither side is happy with the French intervention. The FAFN feel that the intervention halted their advance on the capital. The government accuses France of not giving them the support they needed to crush the rebellion. Both sides seem sure that they would have won the war.

At a French checkpoint just south of the zone of confidence I ran across a convoy of three Mercedes limosines. The armed bodyguards were checking in their weapons before entering the demilitarized zone. It was the Minister of Reconciliation coming from Abidjan for talks with FAFN leaders. We can only hope that in this country, that once was the beacon of economic development and stability in equatorial Africa, where one spoke of the economic "miracle" of the Ivory Coast, political common sense will overcome the warlike aspirations of both sides.

As we go to press, photojournalist Richard Lucas is in Afghanistan covering the French Foreign Legion deployment there. ☒

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TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

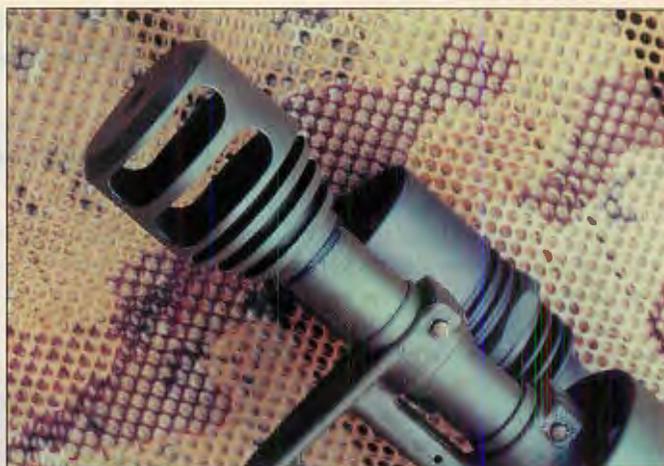
Well known for his custom work on model 1911 pistols, Deputy Dave Lauck, of D&L Sports, in Gillette, Wyoming, built the special 1911 .45 ACP pistol presented to General Tommy Franks, USA (ret.), that was featured in a recent issue of *Soldier of Fortune*. Dave also builds high-precision long-range rifles, and owns and operates the Small Arms Training Academy (SATA) in Wyoming.

Although D&L Sports has also been turning out precision AR-15 rifles and carbines for years, his work with these guns has taken a new direction recently: Dave Lauck now designs and builds most of the new features found on his AR's. The reason for this is that Dave has special preferences, and many available accessories don't meet them. Recently, Dave sent me one of his custom Colt Government Model .45 ACP pistols to





Adjustable for windage and elevation, D&L's heavy-duty rear sight can be mounted anyplace along the top of the alloy handguard.



As efficient as it is unusual, D&L's muzzle brake is the company's own design. (below) Also of D&L's own design, the all-metal butt stock is a fixed position stock with storage compartments in the two lower sections.

test, this one fitted with a Dawson Rail. Soon after, he sent me one of his new Custom AR-15 CQB Carbine to report on for SOF. Let's take a look at the unique attributes of this special carbine.

Beginning at the muzzle of the cut-down 16-inch barrel, we found a highly specialized muzzle brake. Having two chambers and two large ports on each side that push the carbine forward, there was also a port on top to help keep the muzzle level. Just behind the front sight base was the beginning of a free-floating tubular alloy hand guard. In addition to having vent holes from end to end, this handguard was drilled and tapped its full-length at 12-, 3-, 6-, and 9 o'clock in order to mount MilStd 1913 rails at the operators preference. On these rails could be mounted vertical foregrips, lasers, lights and anything else desired by the operator.

SureFire Light

In the screw holes can also be mounted sling studs, and one was present near the front of the handguard at 6 o'clock. At the front of the handguard in the 9 o'clock (left side) position was a short M1913 rail on which was mounted a SureFire Tactical Weapon Light similar to that used by the U.S. Special Forces on its M4 Carbines. Producing 125 lumens of blinding white light, this light is one of the best in the world, and is activated on the D&L CQB Carbine by using the thumb of the left hand.

(opposite) D&L Sports' Custom CQB Carbine is a highly modified AR-15 with features few have yet seen, here with its Eotech Reflex Sight. (below) The CQB Carbine as seen from the left side with its backup, open sights deployed. Dave Lauck believes in the forward-mounted open rear sight and a number of operators agree.



On top of the CQB Carbine's handguard about mid-way was an M1913 rail on which was mounted a fully adjustable rear sight of Dave Lauck's own conception. Consisting of a conventional "U" notch protected by ears, the sight can be locked in position once zeroed. Its purpose is for extremely fast target acquisition and for those who do not like a ghost ring rear sight. At the rear of the handguard were several robust hex-head machine screws that rigidly attached the tube to a special barrel nut, also of Lauck's design.

As with virtually all D&L Custom AR-15s, the CQB Carbine had a flattop upper receiver, and affixed to its integral rail was a forward-extending sleeve of unknown manufacture. On top of this rail was an Eotech Reflex Sight. The rail would also accept most other reflex sights.

The pistol grip of our sample D&L CQB Carbine was the ERGO Grip from Falcon Industries, but Dave Lauck is in the



process of designing and building a pistol grip of his own. However, the butt stock is a different story.

Consisting of a stock of Dave Lauck's own design, this fixed stock is made of lightweight aircraft alloy and is of the highest quality. Comprising a main tube and a secondary accessory tube beneath it, the stock has yet another shorter tube extending forward from the toe, where a spare bolt or other item can be carried. While this shorter tube has a forward screw-on cap, the long middle tube can be accessed via a large flush, screw plug in the butt, which can be turned with a coin.

All major parts of the D&L CQB Carbine and most minor ones are finished in an OD green, baked-on finish that is extremely tough. The only remaining component of D&L design is a device to hold two AR-15 magazines together. Like so many other aspects of D&L's carbine, this part is made of aircraft alloy.

Trigger Time

No special trigger work had been done to our sample D&L Custom CQB Carbine so the trigger was stock. Informal firing of the carbine proved that D&L's muzzle brake was indeed

ACCURACY CHART/.223 CARTRIDGE

	Muzzle Vel.	Small Group	Large Group	Average
Black Hills 69 gr. Match	2784 fps	0.87"	1.12"	0.98"
Hornady 75 gr. Match	2621 fps	1.04"	1.26"	1.15"
Wolf 55 gr. FMJ	2992 fps	1.49"	1.73"	1.61"

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Johnston found the D&L CQB Carbine to handle very well. No malfunctions were encountered.

very effective. Not only was the Eotech Reflex Sight quick to use, but with it removed, D&L's forward-mounted open sight also proved very fast, and reminded me of my Model 94 Winchester 30-30 carbine. The alloy free-float handguard, robust rear sight and rails, steel muzzle brake, and the all-metal butt stock did add a little extra weight to the CQB Carbine, but the gun balanced well.

In order to squeeze out all possible accuracy from the D&L CQB Carbine, I removed the Eotech and mounted Leupold's new Mid Range Tactical (MRT) scope using A.R.M.S. 30mm ThrowLever Rings. Using match quality ammunition, the carbine produced 5-shot groups of less than one minute of angle and no malfunctions were experienced during the testing.

There are a number of things I would opt to do differently, especially

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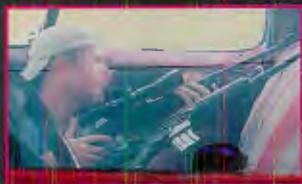
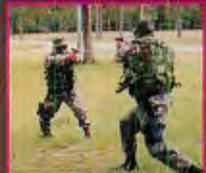
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in light of the gun-ban sunset. These include an A.R.M.S. SIR System, a retractable butt stock, such as that from VLTOR or MagPul, and a MagCinch from Buffer Technologies. I'd also opt for a tactical sling, such as the Giles Sling from Wilderness Tactical, one of the many from Boonie Packer Products, or the new Snap Sling from GRSC. Then again, that's was makes a custom gun, and D&L can handle your specific needs. Dave also tells me that a U.S. Military contract is in the works for the carbine shown.

It's safe to say that there are a number of AR-15 style carbines available from many makers that will suit one fine just as they come from their factories. However, if you're interested in an AR-15 Carbine with lots of custom options, check out what's available from D&L Sports, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 651, Gillette, WY 82716; phone: 307-686-4008 (www.dlsports.com).

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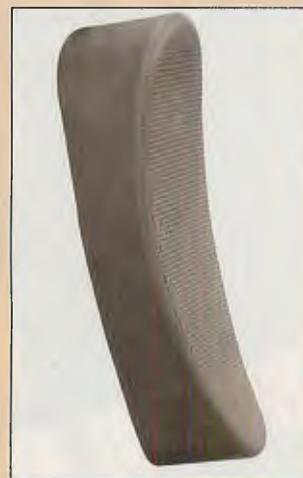
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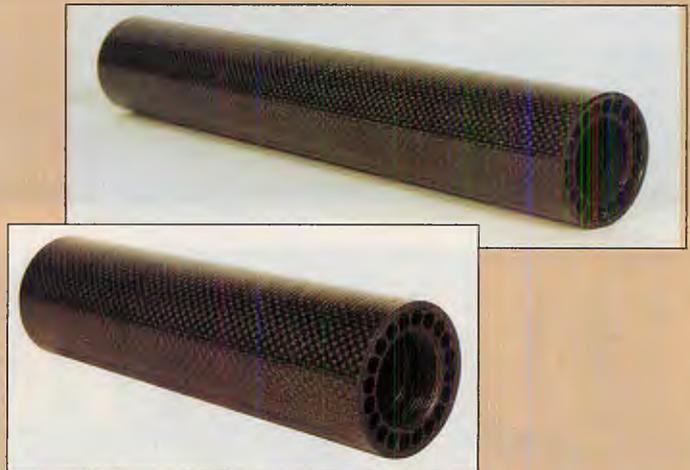
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Johnny 40 Operation

Continued from page 41

Trees blur by below, and the small town of Mata Bambu comes into view. I wonder why we have not stayed clear of the town.

Machinegun Bullets

Flying over the thatch and sheet-tin roofs, I see a red and white jeep in the distance, driving rapidly into town. Seconds later I hear the snaps of machinegun bullets passing near our helo.

The gun that nicked us shot up a trailing Huey II, with the four COLAF airmen SAR Team, forcing it to return to base with the other aircraft. They work as teams and never leave their wingman behind.

At two minutes out, as agreed, the COLAF gunship fires two rockets one hundred yards short of the objective, for shock and awe. The C-26 picks up eight to ten men setting up an ambush in front of the house. The explosion has its effect. The ambushers decide they have to be somewhere else ... NOW! They run down the road, but forget to drop their weapons, which marks them as combatants to the AC-47 and the Arpia.

The house fronts on a swamp, and the river runs on the other side. We're dropping troops on the two open sides, near the road. In theory his escape route is closed. The main assault bird sets down in front of the target house, where the ten men had been setting up the ambush. Major Santamaria bails, followed by the 18 Junglas on that ship.

Johnny 40's security opens up from inside the house. There is no cover. The Junglas just form on line and open fire. That's it. No more fire from the house. They move in.

As the team closes on the house several figures run from it, to the river. They don't know it at the time, but one is Johnny 40. There are no cops on the river, and no aircraft specifically targeted on it. We later learn that he had a small boat there, and that tree branches overhang the river, giving him overhead cover.

The team is not going to give chase until the house is cleared. They can't just shoot it up; it's full of women. But there might also be guerrillas in it. They do not want to leave any armed enemy to their rear.

One trooper spots a lone figure, standing behind some bushes, wearing



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only jeans. As the Jungla raises his M-16 the figure throws his pistol away, and raises his hands. This guy was later identified as "Chepe", Johnny 40's brother, executive officer, and treasurer of the front.

As Santamaria's assault bird sets down another CNP Blackhawk, also with 18 Junglas, lands 400 yards west of the target house to, cut off any escape. They form as skirmishers, and move toward the house. The third COLAF Blackhawk carrying 16 junglas, and me, lands 400 yards east of the target. We spread out and move toward the target house as the choppers lift away.

Six Guerrilla Kills

We take great care that each team is in comms with the others, and with the C&C ship overhead. The AC-47 gives ground support as directed by Major Santamaria, through the C-26 above. The Ghost spots a large group of men running to the west and sends a hail of 50 cal. ammo (made in 1953) their way. After we left the FARC took six bodies with huge holes in them into Mata Bambu.

My team, the eastern team rounded up six FARC in civvies, who quickly threw their weapons into river.

The west team made it to the target without incident, but in record time, to link up with the assault team. Not an easy thing to do carrying fifty pounds plus of gear.

One guerrilla was shot in the feet by fire, and was given aid by the Jungla medic.

The Junglas rounded up eight guerrillas in fifteen minutes, and lost no one.

While waiting for the Blackhawks to pick them up, the Junglas lined the captured guerrillas up on the road. The two shot-up Huey IIs that had to turn back were to have been our prisoner transport.

Maj. Santamaria decided not to risk overloading his helos and that only the most important guerrillas, and the wounded, would be stuffed on board.

The first helos landed, and picked up the east and west teams, and the wounded prisoners. Six scared guerrillas were left bound, face down on the road, as the final Blackhawk carrying the assault team, and Chepe, lifted off. The terrified FARC figured the cops would strafe them on the way out. But they didn't. Time on target, 18 minutes.

We flew twenty minutes to an army base to refuel. The army commander

met us. He was glum. You couldn't really blame him. We were sorry to have missed the main guy, but even so we had bettered their best operation. Chepe was the same rank as Sonia, and the rest of our score blew the army's right out of the tub.

We counted bullet holes and decided all airframes were air worthy. Our spirits soared, and it was impossible to wipe the smiles off our faces on the return flight.

We missed Johnny 40, and we still want him, but this is what that raid did. He hid out for three weeks after that, and then ordered nineteen people killed, people he *thought* might have informed the police. He got the infor-

mant, but he also made an awful lot of enemies. He lost his brother, who was also his second-in-command, and treasurer. He lost a lot of people, and he lost a lot of face. He rules his domain purely by fear, but some people are less fearful than others. His days are numbered, but he is already less effective than any replacement could have been, had he been captured.

Jim Morris is a former Special Forces officer and longtime SOF correspondent. His non-fiction books, War Story, Fighting Men, and The Devil's Secret name are available in paperback from St. Martin's. His novel, Above and Beyond is available from realwarstories.com. ✕



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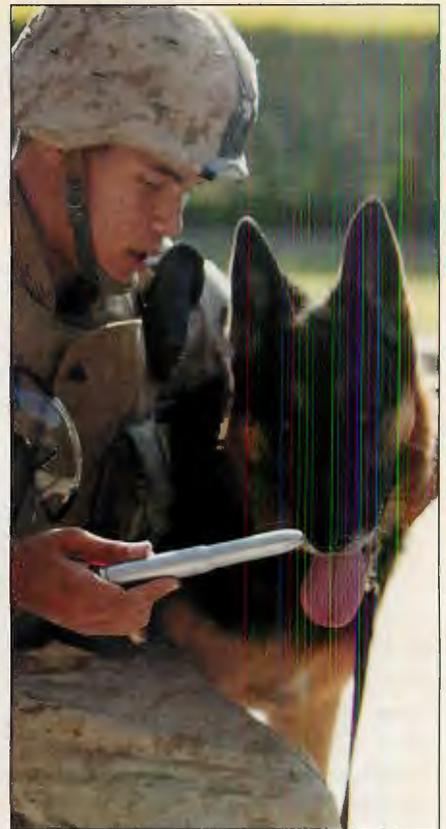
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Continued from page 46

25 yards. We gunned them down every time. The first one I shot was at 12 yards. The Black Hills .223 ammo we used had devastating effect. The city is a cesspool of criminals, thugs and arms dealers. The citizens knew what was going on. The caches we are finding are stunning. Tons, yes, flippin tons of it. I hope we get our hands on the scum who let the rats in the bread box. We ran into some hard core Muj who had

taken control of the city. They went down fighting. We uncovered torture chambers with men who had been executed in gruesome Shura court methods ... piles of murdered Iraqis. They were nasty bastards that needed killing We tore into them with supporting arms and combined arms tactics. The Corporals, Sergeants, Lts and Cpts out-thought them on the run and left them dying in the street or piled up like rats in the nooks and crannies of the house they chose to die in. There are parts of the city that resemble Berlin circa 1945. I had to take up smoking



USMC photo by LCpl Miguel A. Carrasco Jr.

Cpl. Bruce L. St. John, a military police dog handler with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, shows his dog a 20mm round: He was able to pick up the scent through a safe box while conducting detailed searches in Fallujah.

cigars to deal with the stench of rotting corpses. We have counted hundreds in our zone alone. But Fallujah needed to be cleaned up.”

Just like cockroaches, insurgents who survived 18 days of urban combat in Fallujah have now moved on to other cities in Iraq like Ramadi, Mosul and Tikrit. But their days are numbered. Coalition forces are hunting them down, and destroying them like they did in Fallujah.

First Battalion, 5th Marines, the unit this reporter was embedded with when they invaded Iraq two years ago, is headed to Ramadi. This will be 1/5's third deployment to Iraq.

Asked if they would go back to Iraq, Paladino and Cleveringa said they would if they had to, but both Marines feel it is time to let someone else step up to the plate.

Given what's going on over there now, Cleveringa said he doesn't want his daughter, who was born after he returned from Iraq, to grow up without a daddy.

Dale B. Cooper is a long-time and frequent contributor to SOF. ✕

From acclaimed *Army Times* correspondent Sean Naylor comes the greatest story of military heroism since *Black Hawk Down*. Here is the gripping tale of how 13 men from Delta Force, SEAL Team 6 and other “black” special ops units braved a frozen hell to penetrate an Al Qaida stronghold and save the largest operation in Afghanistan from certain disaster.



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Marine Corps Legend

Continued from page 18

ing out the insurgent behind the wall, another one with an AK hiding on the stairs to the second floor began firing at the Marines on full automatic. "That's when I went down, along with one of my Marines (Nicoll). Then I noticed the hand grenade."

It was a green pineapple grenade, Kasal said. It flew into the room out of nowhere and landed near the two downed men. Kasal now believes that other Marines who were watching their back left the room for reasons he still doesn't know and an insurgent was able to somehow get behind him.

Kasal said his first instinct was to protect the young Marine lying bloody beside him. He covered the young man with his body and took the full brunt of shrapnel to his back when the grenade exploded. Kasal's body armor and helmet protected his vital organs but the shrapnel penetrated the exposed portions of his shoulders, back, and legs, causing him to bleed profusely.

"I took my pressure bandage and put it on his leg," Kasal remembered. "Then I tried to put Nicoll's pressure bandage on a wound on his chest but it is very hard to get a flak jacket off a wounded man and I was bleeding and fading in and out."

Nicoll survived the grenade blast and his previous bullet wounds but lost his right leg. "An artery was cut and they had to amputate his leg," Kasal said. "I have seen him and talked to him several times since we got back to the States. He is doing OK."

The grenade blast stunned Kasal. He floated in and out of consciousness. But in the back of his mind a voice kept telling him he had to stay alert or the Iraqis were going to come back and finish him and Nicoll off. "They weren't going to let us live if they knew we were alive. It was kill or be killed," he said.

Kasal wrestled his 9mm automatic out of its holster and lay on the floor waiting for help. It was 30 or 40 minutes before other Marines arrived.

"That's when I got shot in the butt," Kasal recalled. "It was the shootout at the OK Corral — point-blank range. I was lying there shooting and somebody shot me through both cheeks. It smarted a bit."

Kasal did not know the exact extent of his wounds until much later; all he knew was that he was badly hurt. He

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was floating in and out of consciousness, ultimately losing 60 percent of his blood before he was rescued. After first aid, Kasal and Nicoll were transported to a field hospital in Iraq, then flown to Landstuhl, Germany, where Kasal was hospitalized for a week before arriving at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

"I took seven rounds; five in my right leg, one in my foot and one to the buttocks area. When the grenade went off I got 30 to 40 pieces of shrapnel in my back," Kasal said he later discovered.

Doctors are still fighting to save his leg, Kasal said. By the time this story appears, he will be back at Bethesda for more treatment, but the doctors won't know for six months whether the Marine will every be 100 percent again. "I know I will walk again, but I don't know if I will fully recover."

Meanwhile Kasal experiences almost constant pain.

"I'm missing four and a half inches of the fibula and tibia bones," he said. "They put that halo brace on my leg to try and make the bone grow together. But there's no guarantee that will work."

Despite everything that has happened to him, Kasal still believes America's mission in Iraq is both important and terribly misconstrued. He harbors special venom for the so-called "mainstream" media reporters who portray the war as a failure and American policy as a gross mistake. He says he has heard reporters say their job is to make President George W. Bush and his policies seem a failure.

"The insurgents are oppressing normal people," Kasal said. "The press never reports the good things. When we open a school or fix a sewer, the things that make normal Iraqis happy, they never report it. There are plenty of Iraqis, thousands of them, who want to live normal lives. If we can help them it will be all right. The people just want peace and freedom." ❧

Nathaniel R. "Nat" Helms is a Vietnam veteran, former police officer, long-time journalist and war correspondent living in Missouri. He is the author of two books, Numba One — Numba Ten and Journey Into Madness: A Hitchhiker's Account of the Bosnian Civil War, both available at www.ebooks-online.com. He can be reached at natshouse1@charter.net. Send Feedback responses to: dwfeedback@yahoo.com.

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FLAK

Continued from page 10

have my first name in the February issue wrong: it's not Jason, it's Jacob. Another thing is that the whole story is written through the eyes of only a couple Marines. I think you should have gotten a couple more interviews about us first to have the big picture, but for the most part it was pretty accurate. Last is that you added a Marine by the name of LCPL Ricardo Nava who was not there that day, and had nothing to do with that battle.

Thank you for your recognition. It's good that many Americans know what their young marines go through.

CPL Jacob Palafox 1/5 Marines

Hope the paymaster has your name right! "Jason" was the name the adjutant of the regiment gave the author. As for the guy in the picture who wasn't there, the XO of Bravo Co. who sent the author the picture, gave him the IDs of guys from 2nd Sq. 2nd Pltn, but didn't mention the guy in question wasn't there that day.

Cooper interviewed six grunts from your outfit for the story, which is a pretty good catch for Marines with other things to do. Glad you thought it was accurate overall, as you Leathernecks are making history, and there are not many of us writing it down.

Irrelevant Relevance...

While I agree with the contents of Col. North's article on page 82 of your January, 2005 issue, I would suggest that he should have titled the article RELEVANT ARROGANCE. Annan's actions seem to bespeak the dusty motto, "I have the right." Internationally, his tactic of arrogance has provided for him a neutralizing effect for his illegal practices. In some international quarters there has resulted even a positive reflection for the U.N. Secretary-general's defying and telling off the U.S. The result is that Annan's actions are having an impact on our government's policy-making machine and [because of this] his arrogance is certainly relevant.

No name given ✕

SOF solicits your letters by e-mail: editor@sof-mag.com ; snail-mail: 5735 E. Arapahoe, Unit 5A, Boulder, CO 80303; or Fax: 303-444-5617. Lashes, laurels, comments, helpful information, questions are welcome.

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Bulletin Board

Continued from page 14

Veteran-Like Status Sought for WW II Merchant Mariners

"My bill is a belated thank you," says Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., of his proposed legislation to pay \$1,000 monthly to the aging former civilian sailors went in harm's way to deliver the Allies fighting in WW II. Similar measures have failed, and supporters say time is running out because the mariners are now in their 70s and 80s. A bill to give mariners or their widows \$1,000 a month died last year before being reintroduced. Estimates on who might benefit vary widely, with some saying 60,000 are surviving and others saying only 1,000 need the money and would apply for it, but records of those who served in the merchant marine are not kept the same as for those who served in the military.

Although technically civilians, thousands were lost or injured in rough seas, to Japanese kamikaze pilots and torpedo attacks, or to German submarines that sank ships in their convoys.

George Duffy of Seabrook, N.H., recalls the disparate treatment he received compared with a friend in the Coast Guard: Captured by the Germans at 20 and delivered to the Japanese, Duffy spent 37 months — exactly 1,119 days, he said — in Jap POW camps. He endured short rations and medicine and his prisoner work detail was forced to build the Japanese a railroad across Sumatra. "I came home after this experience and had no benefits, no [paid college tuition under the] GI Bill, no nothing," Duffy told AP. His friend, however, after spending the war as a clerk in a Coast Guard office, received full military benefits.

The mariners received veteran status — and therefore some limited benefits — after they sued the government in 1988, by which time many postwar programs had run out. In 2000, Canada approved \$34 million for one-time payments of up to \$16,400 to its World War II merchant seaman, who also were granted a belated veteran status.

Further information is available on the web at: <http://www.usmm.org> or to read the bill, H.R. 23 go to <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

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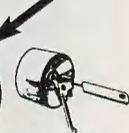
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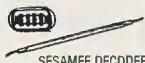
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Metal Storm to Fly Electronic Gun on UAV

Metal Storm Limited plans to fly its electronically fired ballistic weapon system on a Dragonfly DP-4X Vertical Take Off and Landing (VTOL) Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV) in August or September. The lightweight weapons technology has been demonstrated in tethered UAV firing trials in May at Warren, Grove, New Jersey. Dragonfly Pictures Inc. in Essington, Pennsylvania, is developing the DP-4X as a candidate Class II UAV for the U.S. Army's Future Combat System.

Metal Storm technology loads successive munitions in tandem and fires them inductively, with no moving parts or mechanical linkages. Company chief executive officer Chuck Vehlow notes, "One of the real advantages of our system offers is the weight of the system is primarily the weight of the ammunition." The DP-4X has a 50 lb payload, and the tethered demonstration used two four-tube launchers to disperse munitions over a 100 to 200 yard pattern. Each tube contained four 40 mm rounds. The flying demonstration is expected to use a four-cartridge reloadable configuration.

In a UAV application, Metal Storm tubes could be arranged to fire horizontally like conventional weapons or vertically to defeat Improvised Explosive Devices buried in roadways. Metal Storm plans to introduce a high-explosive round shortly, and the launch system can mix rounds in the same tube or multiple tubes in any arrangement. Metal Storm has found high-level interest in the concept with the U.S. Defense Advanced Projects Agency and is working under a Small Business Innovative Research contract, on using the technology on an airship for missile defense.

WW II Awards Website

A new website, www.ww2awards.com is now on line, in Dutch and English, with information about all the international WWII awards and their recipients.

More information is needed for their data base, and photos or images. The website has been in several international publications, and veterans, or their children, have responded widely. For more information, go to www.ww2awards.com/about.asp.

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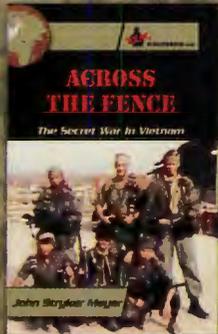
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Lies, Damned Lies And Network "News"

BY LT. COL. OLIVER NORTH, USMC (RET.)

The following are excerpts from Oliver North's weekly column that was featured on Creators Syndicate. He asks scorching questions of the status of our media.

"... at least 10 journalists have been killed by the U.S. military, and according to reports I believe to be true, journalists have been arrested and tortured by U.S. forces."

— Eason Jordan, CNN executive vice president

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Eason Jordan is described by CNN as the network's "chief news executive" and the person who provides "strategic advice to CNN's senior management team." In November, he offered the above murderous assessment of America's military to a group of Portuguese journalists and got away with it. On Jan. 27, he apparently made a nearly identical outrageous, unfounded accusation at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. This time he got caught — not by his colleagues in the so-called mainstream media, but by "bloggers" who were in attendance.

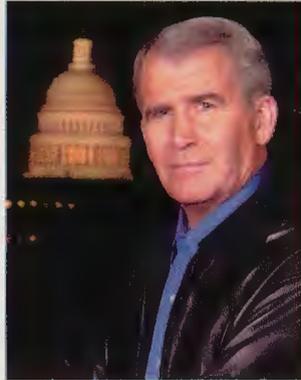
And therein lies the problem — not just with Jordan's calumny about our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen and Marines, but with his colleagues in the so-called mainstream media.

The CNN executive's statements went unreported — and apparently unchallenged — by other potentates of the press who heard him accuse America's military of killing journalists in Iraq. Worse still, other "leaders" in the Fourth Estate are now rushing to Jordan's defense. David Gergen, editor-at-large for U.S. News & World Report and moderator of the discussion in Davos, now says Jordan had recently been to Iraq, and was "caught up in the tension of the moment" and "deserves the benefit of the doubt."

Why? Aren't news reporters supposed to have a thirst for truth? Isn't there some standard of proof or corroboration required before someone in the "news business" makes such a horrific accusation? Furthermore, why should any member of the media in attendance be let off the hook for failing to immediately jump up and demand: "Prove it!" when Jordan made his unsubstantiated charges?

Such damning allegations, if true, would make Abu Ghraib look like petty larceny.

Thankfully, not everyone in the Davos audience was as favorably disposed toward Jordan's reckless claims as his media colleagues. Left-of-center U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., released a statement saying he was "outraged" by Jordan's comments and is "tremendously proud of the sacrifice and service of American military personnel." Liberal Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank claims he contacted Jordan and demanded "specifics." Frank said he would pursue the issue if there were credible evidence. At this



writing, Jordan has yet to take the congressman up on his offer.

What Jordan has done is claim that his comments in Davos were taken out of context. CNN's Howard Kurtz quotes Jordan — ostensibly his boss — as saying, "I wasn't as clear as I should have been on that panel."

That should be easy to prove. Though the panel discussion was "off-the-record," the event was apparently videotaped — another fact we would not know but for the "bloggers" in attendance. Jordan, Gergen, Kurtz, et al. should call for the release of the videotape — that way we can see who challenges Jordan's

assertions against our military, and who applauds them. But it's not likely that CNN will join the bloggers in calling for release of the videotape.

According to Rony Abovitz, the Forum-sponsored blogger who first broke this story to the world, Jordan "repeated the assertion a few times, which seemed to win favor in parts of the audience and cause great strain on others." According to Abovitz, Jordan's charges met with approval among Arab attendees "who applauded and called him 'a very brave man' for speaking up against the U.S. in a public way amongst a crowd ready to hear anti-U.S. sentiments."

There is a lesson in all of this, and not just for CNN, but for all the media. Jordan's disparaging duplicity wasn't exposed by the barons of broadcasting or the potentates of print, but by "amateurs" — bloggers — the same "unwashed masses" who brought down Dan Rather. These e-mailing, Web-surfing, call-'em as you see-'em bloggers are the electronic equivalent of the pamphleteers who brought about our revolution. Today, they "pass the word" faster than an official spokesman can draft a denial. They are the small "d" democrats of the new "news business" — and more believable to many than what is presented on the tube or in the paper.

Next year, the World Economic Forum will again assemble its elite, self-anointed "business, political and intellectual leaders" at the posh Swiss Alpine resort to sip champagne and discuss Orwellian ideas for making "the world a better place." They should ask Jordan to return and answer a somewhat different question: "Will CNN 'News' Survive Democracy?" ✕

Oliver North is host of "War Stories" on the Fox News Channel. The opinions expressed above are his own and do not represent the views of Fox News and/or Soldier Of Fortune.

To find out more about Oliver North, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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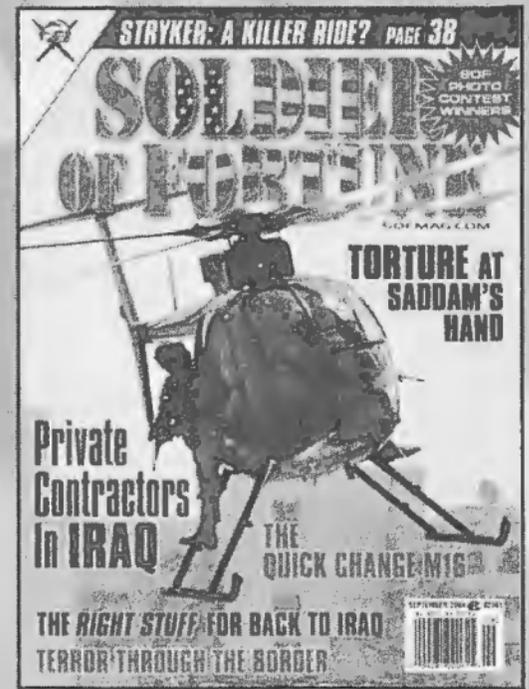


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