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Support Our Troops!

JUNE 2005 ✕ VOL. 30 NO. 6



U.S. Army / Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson

On the Cover

A sniper with the 1/505 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, sights potential enemy targets moving along the rooftop of a nearby building during a cordon and search in Al Fallujah, Iraq. See story on page 42.

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AFP PHOTO/Pornchai KITTIWONGSAKUL

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Gary Paul Johnston

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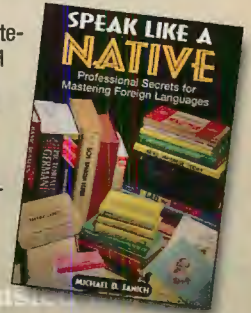
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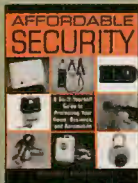
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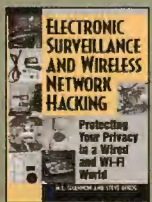
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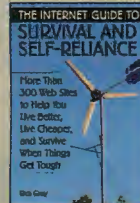
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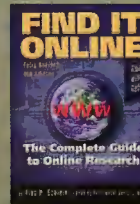
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

ROBERT K. BROWN

NRA Opens Police Pistol Combat Competition to Military Law Enforcement Officers

On a three-year test basis, the National Rifle Association is opening Police Pistol Combat competition to eligible law enforcement officers in the United States military.

Historically, NRA limited Police Pistol Combat shooting to civilian law enforcement officers, because the discipline is viewed as an extension of an officer's regular training. Through competitive shooting, officers are given an opportunity to perform under pressure, to gain confidence that they can perform "on the street," and to add to their training repertoire some of the finer aspects of shooting — which could some day save lives. NRA also felt that if military members wanted to shoot competitively, then a multitude of opportunities were available through the NRA's Competitive Shooting Division. However, over the past several years, all of the various force structures within the United States military have established law enforcement entities that train and operate in a fashion very similar to civilian police officers, adopting many of the same training and operational philosophies and performing very similar missions. Therefore, NRA will now allow, on a three-year test basis, bona fide military law enforcement officers to participate in NRA Police Pistol

Combat competitions, to establish individual PPC classifications and to become full-fledged NRA PPC competitors, as an extension of their training. If this test project is successful, the matter will be presented to the NRA Board of Directors for permanent inclusion in the NRA Police Pistol Combat program.

Eligibility requirements include the following:

- The competitor must be a member-in-good-standing of the National Rifle Association of America.
- The competitor must be currently assigned to a duly recognized military police unit of any of the armed forces of the United States and must have served continuously with that unit or a similar unit for a minimum of one year prior to entry into NRA sanctioned competition.
- The competitor must hold a valid military occupation specialty designation identifying the competitor as a military police officer, investigator, correctional officer or the like.
- The competitor may not have been assigned to a military marksmanship unit (such as the Army Marksmanship Unit), except as a short-term student, within the three (3) years immediately preceding entry into NRA sanctioned competition. ✕



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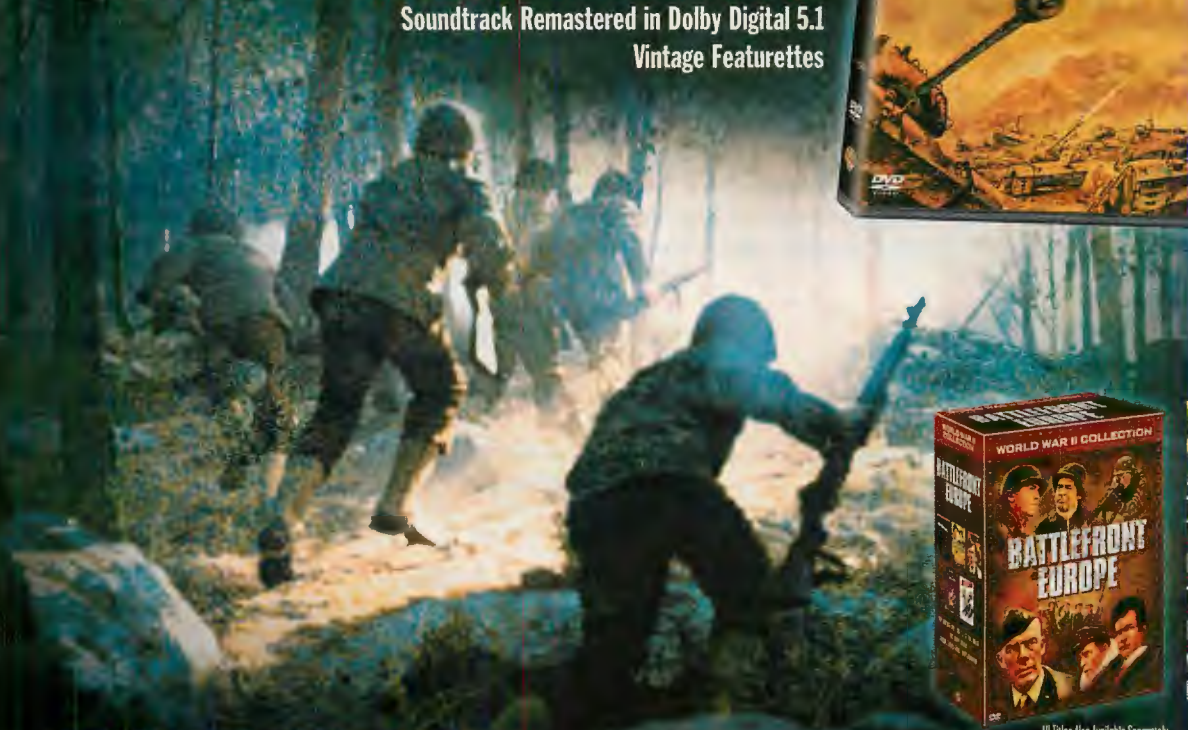
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Give the NRA Credit, Too

"CMP and Designated Marksman" (April 2005) stated that the CMP was established in 1903 to prepare civilians as marksmanship instructors for the military during a national emergency.

Actually, in 1903, Congress established the CMP's predecessor (the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice, or NBPRP) and the National Rifle and Pistol Matches, and authorized funds to transport military personnel to the matches. In 1905, NBPRP was expanded to provide surplus rifles, ammunition, and shooting supplies to civilian rifle clubs, not to prepare civilians to become instructors, but to prepare them to serve in the military themselves. Indeed, under an NBPRP resolution approved by the War Department in 1904, members of NRA clubs could compete for a qualification entitling them to "first consideration" after volunteering for active duty.

In 1918, the Army followed NBPRP's recommendation and established "The Small Arms Firing School for the Instruction of Officers and Enlisted Men," from which the school's first Commandant, Lt. Col. Morton C. Mumma (a member of NBPRP and NRA's Executive Committee) believed instructors could be derived. Today, the rifle and pistol schools are conducted during the National Matches over two-day periods, and are primarily geared toward providing basic instruction to civilians.

Over the years, the NRA has trained and certified thousands of instructors. There are 62,000 NRA Instructors today. NRA conducts the NRA and CMP matches during the National Matches, and NRA's rules govern regional, state, and local matches in which civilians and military personnel alike gain experience that enables them to train others. The NRA has also worked with Congress to assure CMP's existence and continuation. CMP has long been an important part of American marksmanship training, but let's not overlook the contribution of the NRA.

Mark Overstreet
Navy Distinguished Marksman
NRA High Power Rifle Master
NRA High Power Rifle (Long Range) Master
NRA Certified Instructor and Range Safety Officer

Cav on the Cover

You would not believe the surprise I had when I saw the cover of your March 2005 issue, especially when you stated that the soldiers on the cover were from 2-5 CAV. Just to let you know, the soldiers pictured were from 1st Platoon, A/2-7 CAV (I'm their PL). The picture was taken just seconds before my SAW gunner, SPC Richard Dollarhide, spotted an insurgent and destroyed him. The other soldier pictured was one of my team leaders, SGT Mike Bezdziecki. It was the sec-

ond day of the battle, and as you can guess we hadn't slept for over 36 hours. Thanks, and I hope you can let the world know that it was 2-7 CAV that was on your cover.

Best Regards,
1LT Dan Kilgore, A/2-7CAV

Army PAO had your guys listed as from 2-5 Cav; If I were them, I'd hotfoot it over to 2-5 and see I they have a paycheck for me....

Darwin Award

The photo in April 2005 "Bulletin Board" has some points I'd like to answer, since I am deployed to that location.

1. This is an Army-run airfield not Air Force. At the time of the incident there was no ATC at this airfield. There is now.

2. There was no Airfield Management at this airfield at time of incident and there still isn't a dedicated, by MOS for Army, or AFSC (for Air Force) airfield manager at this location.

3. The SHERPA did file a Hazard to Air Traffic Report (not a WTFO but I see your sense of humor), but somehow the word didn't get back to the rear, I assume.

4. The only Air Force people here are the Air Force weather personnel, the AF TACPs assigned to the Army and some TALCE personnel who came to the airfield over a month after the incident.

Please don't use my name, rank, or unit. I just wanted to set the record straight.

A faithful USAF reader since issue #1

Thanks for setting the record straight — the source of the photo alleged he was Air Force, but not from your location.

Obtaining A Firearm License

Re: your "Update on SA Gun Laws" Page 81, April 05, just a comment about making it difficult to obtain a license for a firearm. Wayne County, Michigan has its own "bureaucratic tyranny" to obtain a concealed pistol permit. It is the only county in Michigan that requires two character-reference letters. And they must be notarized. If you cannot find two people to write a one-sentence character letter you probably should be in



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jail. The whole process takes 6-8 months and at least 2-3 months to be fingerprinted. In my case, to be fingerprinted, it is a 60-mile round-trip. Talk about making it difficult!

Great mag. Keep it up.
J. Gompers

Thanks from Iraq

Dear Editor:

I wrote to SOF mag before, and now I do to tell all the world that for the first time in our country's history there was a democratic election, and that [was] because of America and the brave soldiers, so thanks for all of them.

Shylan Sarmed

You're welcome. We hope your candidates won.

You Rock!

Keep the great stories, also, since we might fight the Commies again in NK, bring articles of the Korean War. Did two tours. That country has hills everywhere, and its real cold in the winter. People think its like Vietnam there, but negative, it's like three crazy seasons.

Monsoon season, summer season, winter freeze season.

Regards China, they have no Democracy, they want Taiwan, and in 1989, they suppressed the student rally. If we don't deal with them on the table of negotiations we shall

fight them again in North Korea — a rematch for the entire Asian Peninsula. A stalemate: Our Western Front.

Martin Fernand

SOF Leads the Way?

I joined the Army in 1983, primarily based on an SOF article on the 75th Rangers. I had been trying to decide which branch and saw the cover of your mag with a Ranger behind an M60. That was all it took. This article had to be spring of 1983 but I have long since lost that mag. I would like to purchase a copy to go on the wall with my retirement stuff if still available but have no idea which issue it was. Any help would be appreciated.

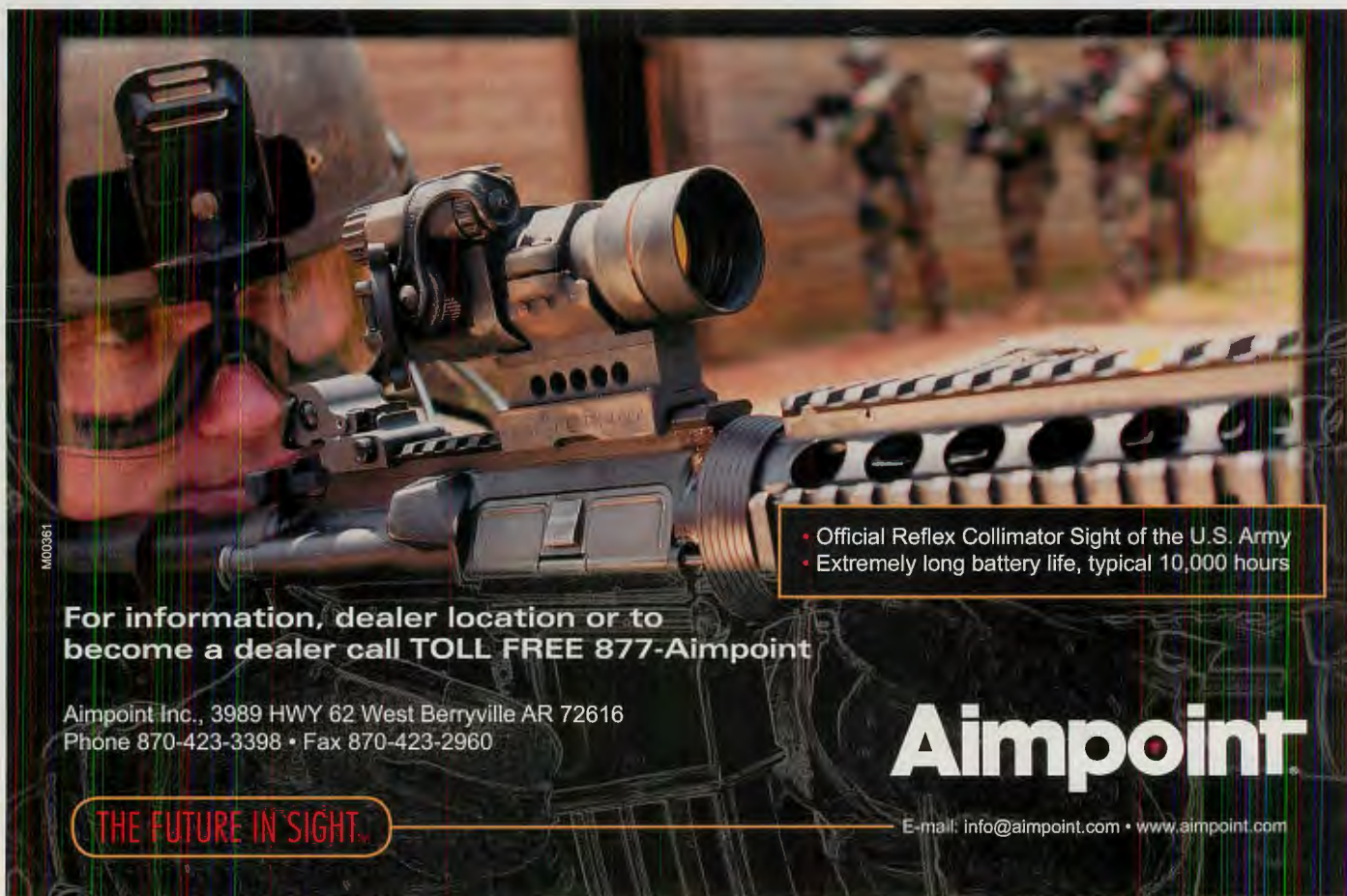
Thanks,
Bill Toy

It was the April 1982 issue, and like most back issues, it's available from us @ \$10.

Taiwan

China's proposed anti-secession law, if passed, would authorize its military forces to invade Taiwan. What, in your opinion, is the position of the United States government and the state of its armed forces, considering we are involved in

Continued on page 80



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BULLETIN BOARD

Shooting Statistics

The following mind-boggling attempt at a crime spree in Renton, Washington, apparently the robber's first due to his lack of a previous record of violence, was also his last:

His target was H&J Leather & Firearms, a gun shop specializing in handguns.

The shop was full of customers at the time — firearms customers.

To enter the shop, the robber had to step around a marked police patrol car, parked at the front door.

A uniformed officer was standing at the counter, having coffee before work. Upon seeing the officer, the would-be robber announced a hold-up and fired a few wild shots from a .22 target pistol. The officer and a clerk promptly returned fire, the police officer with a 9mm Glock 17, the clerk with a .50 Desert Eagle, assisted by several customers who also drew their guns, several of whom also fired. Paramedics pronounced the robber dead at the scene. Crime-scene investigators located 47 expended cartridge cases in the shop. The subsequent autopsy revealed 23 gunshot wounds. Ballistics identified rounds from seven different weapons.

It will be interesting to see how the fact-warping statisticians at HCI et al. report this. Will it be seven lives saved? Or one shooting? Or will it be eight shootings since there were seven shooters in addition to the gun-firing robber? Or will it be 24 shootings since there were 23 holes in the armed robber? Or will it be 47 shootings, since there were 47 rounds fired?

Here's how we score it: One point for the honest citizens and their Second Amendment.

Busch Brewery Thanks the Troops

Busch Brewery announced that once again it will open the gates to its SeaWorld, Busch Gardens and Sesame Place theme parks for free to service members and their families.

Dubbed "Here's to the Heroes," the program offers a free single-day admission to service members, including Guardsmen and reservists, and as many as three "direct dependents." The offer is good through 31 December.

Eligible service members can register for free admission online at <http://www.herosalute.com> or in the entrance plaza of participating parks: A DoD photo ID is required.

Military family members also can take advantage of the offer without their military sponsor; However, an adult must accompany minor children. The company estimates that more than 1 million service members and their families will visit its parks during the offer, and that nearly 100,000 people have registered already.

The Busch Gardens theme park in Williamsburg, Va.; SeaWorld in San Antonio; and Sesame Place in Langhorne, Pa.; are seasonal operations that open in the spring. The company's SeaWorld Orlando and Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, both in Florida, and SeaWorld San Diego, are open year-round.



Readers will note that Bob Burton, already familiar to SOF readers, has been added to our masthead as Contributing Editor for Bail Enforcement Operations. Burton is considered by many to be one of America's top bounty hunters, or bail enforcement agents. His is also one of the co-founders of the Special Operations Association and the Force Recon Association. He was our contributing Editor for SpecOps from 1978 to 1982, making many trips to El Salvador and Nicaragua to cover guerrilla wars. In the early 80s Burton wrote the first book on bounty hunting, *Bounty Hunter*, and assisted Bob DeNiro in the movie *Midnight Run*. He also formed the first training school for bounty hunters, the National Institute for Bail Enforcement, and to date the school has trained more than 4,000 agents. Police magazine called it "...the Harvard of bounty hunters." Burton's field unit for agents is the National Enforcement Agency, Inc., a 2,000-member group of investigators, which last year accounted for more than 22,000 arrests. Over the past years Burton has written extensively on the subject, as well as pursued stolen-child cases and many projects characterized as "quiet projects in the private sector," i.e. sub rosa, projects.

Anheuser-Busch has a long tradition of supporting the military. In 1921, Lilly Busch, widow of company founder Adolphus Busch, opened the Busch family garden to the public, donating admission fees to disabled veterans. Over the years the company has supported veteran's memorials in Washington, such as the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The company has also provided scholarship funds for United Service Organizations members and Desert Storm survivors.

In 2003, the company created the Intrepid/Anheuser-Busch Fallen Heroes Fund, donating \$1 million in scholarships for spouses and children of Service members and coalition personnel killed during the war in Iraq.

Yes, they've done it before and they'll probably do it again, because they're good folks.

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Cold War Museum

Since its earliest days, Washington, D.C. has been the scene of international intrigue, espionage, and intelligence activity, and the western nerve center for the Cold War. Over the past eight years the Cold War Museum has made great strides in honoring Cold War Veterans and preserving Cold War history. Earlier this year, the Cold War Museum renewed its affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution, and as a result has pledged of support for artifact loans from the Smithsonian Air and Space, American History, National Portrait, and U.S. Postal Museums. The Cold War Museum is working with the Fairfax County Park Authority to locate the physical facility at the former Nike Missile Base in Lorton, Virginia. The Fairfax County Public School System has indicated its interest in partnering with the Museum on educational programs. The Museum is working with the Historical Electronics Museum in Maryland, the International Spy Museum in Washington, DC, and the Florida International Museum to temporarily display artifacts from their collection.

For additional information, or to be added to the "Cold War Times E-mail Newsletter" distribution list, contact:

Francis Gary Powers, Jr., Founder, The Cold War Museum
P.O. Box 178
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: 703-273-2381
Fax: 703-273-4903
www.coldwar.org
gpowersjr@coldwar.org

M16, M4 and M249 Replacement Competition Slated

In a 4 March 2005 pre-solicitation notice posted on the Internet, the Army announced a forthcoming open competition among arms makers to select a replacement for current-issue M16 rifles, M4 carbines and the M249 squad automatic. In effect, this puts the XM-8 program on notice that it will have to outperform other offerings of the arms industry at large.

"We have halted testing [of the XM-8] to let the competition be completed," said Col. Michael Smith, who runs the Army office that has been developing the XM-8. Smith said the decision was made to delay operational tests slated for October, as it is unclear at this juncture if the XM-8 would win an industry-wide competition. "It may not be XM-8... [The] bottom line is, we want the best weapon for the soldier. If someone has a better weapon than the XM-8, I'm ready to support them 100 percent."

The XM-8 was a spin-off of a longer-range program to develop the XM-29 Objective Individual Combat Weapon, by Alliant Techsystems and Heckler & Koch. The XM-29 is designed to fire air-bursting projectiles and standard 5.56mm ammunition, but its over-and-under configuration brought its weight to 18 pounds — still too heavy for Army requirements. As a result its rifle component was developed separately as the XM-8, without the usual industry competi-

Continued on page 81

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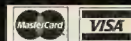
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Take A Burst In Baghdad

Re-Upping At The Crossroads



Just a quick note to say hello and thanks for everything ya'll do. My name is SSG John F. Payne and I've been reading *SOF* for about 15 years and been a subscriber for about six. I know I can count on ya'll to cover the stuff that nobody else

will, at least not as completely and quickly as you do.

I just wanted to share a few pics of my life here in wonderful Western Baghdad.

One is of my reenlistment in January at an intersection (*top photo*) of two of the worst routes we have here, Routes Force and Huskies. I figured a lot of guys have Re-upped at the palaces and monuments, but I figured **NOBODY** had done it there!

The other pic is of my truck. My platoon has been hit by 22 IEDs since we got here; They suck. 'nuff said.

Keep up the great work and thank you for supporting all of the Military, Police and other public servants. You guys **ROCK!**

SSG John F. Payne
127th MP CO
Baghdad, Iraq

Meanwhile, 1st MarDiv's Sergeant Major Wayne R. Bell, a native of Boston, Mass., renewed his enlistment at Fallujah's "Blackwater Bridge" for another two years. On the bridge, the 28-year Marine veteran received the congratulations of Maj. Gen. Richard F. Natonski, the commanding general for 1st Marine Division. Noted Bell, "In the last six months, a lot of events happened that persuaded me to stay Marine for another two years. The amazing leadership we have within the division right now convinced me to stay."

USMC / Cpl. Randy L. Bernard



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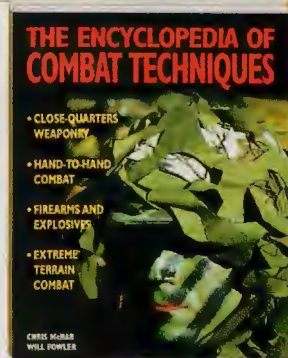
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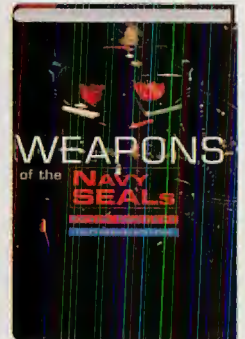
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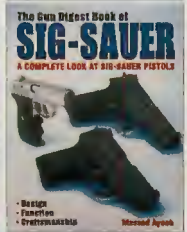
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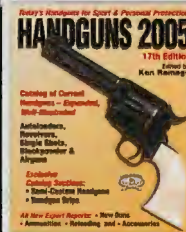
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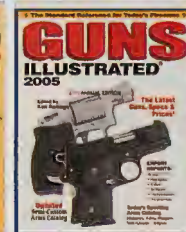
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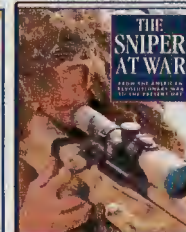
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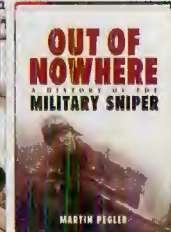
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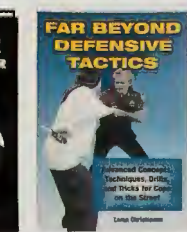
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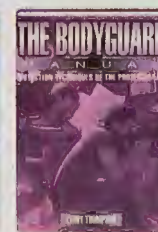
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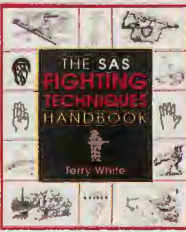
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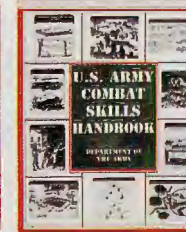
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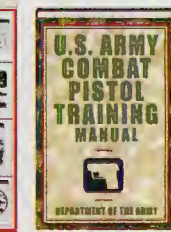
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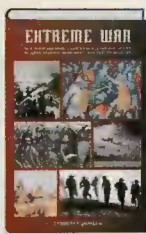
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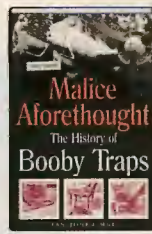
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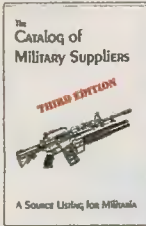
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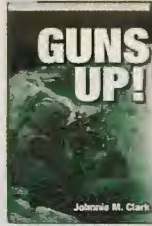
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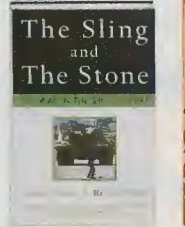
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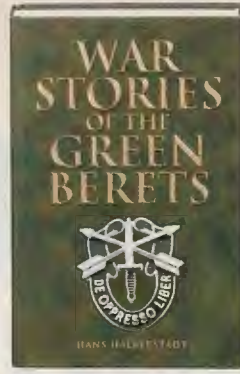
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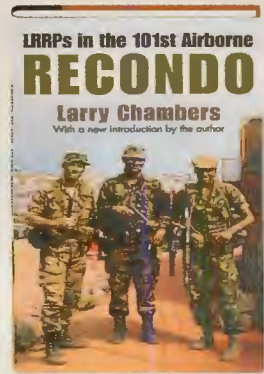
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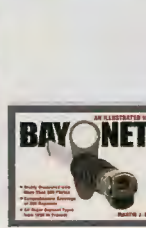
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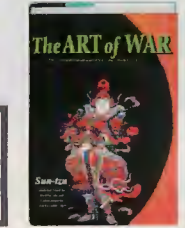
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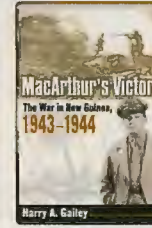
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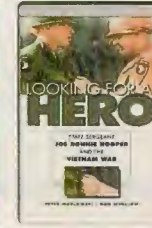
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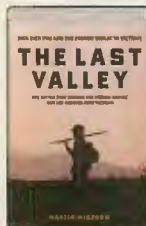
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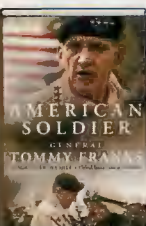
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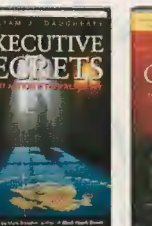
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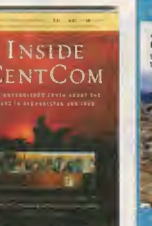
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Reflections in the Objective Lens

Marine Snipers Rotate Home

TEXT & PHOTOS BY CPL. PAUL W. LEIGHT

Ar Ramadi, Iraq Marines returning from combat deployment traditionally reflect on their experiences and often present lessons learned for the benefit of future Marines and operations.

Marine Corps scout snipers performing counter-insurgency operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom II are proving no exception. For snipers, the tangible purpose behind passing down knowledge based on experiences is to not simply further the evolution of the “art and science” of shooting at the enemy from concealed positions. The ultimate goal is to help save the lives of other Marines in future combat.

“We are getting some good feedback from sniper and recon platoons on lessons learned and enemy sniper capabilities and limitations in Iraq,” said Gunnery Sgt. Robert J. Reidsma, Marine Corps sniper school staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge at Marine Corps Base Quantico. “There are definitely unique challenges for sniper units in Iraq. Some of them are the desert and urban environments, and simply the nature of people and their animals that roam

around that could cause mission compromise. Another is the over-tasking of sniper teams, as they are limited in numbers.”

Overcoming these challenges with their specialized infantry skills, Marine scout snipers near the end of their current deployment in Iraq are finding their experiences offer a unique perspective.

“Sniping in general has come a long way, but in Iraq sniping is not your traditional mission where you have a platoon or a large enemy force and you can move around to take them out,” said Sgt. Herbert B. Hancock, chief scout sniper, Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, and a 35-year-old police officer from Bryan, Texas (see his story, April 2005 SOF). “It’s a non-threatening environment until you see a threat presenting a weapon or intent before you can actually engage them. Our job involves a lot of observing and gathering information on target areas or specific targets.”

During the past six months, Hancock and his fellow reserve Marine scout sniper, Cpl. Geoffrey Flowers, have been working as a team in the field, side by side with other



Reserve Marines with Bravo Co.

Their success and combat effectiveness in Iraq as a sniper team has been based on their strong observation skills, tactical insertion into an area and remaining undetected.

“The big thing in Iraq since [Fallujah in April 2004] has been the concern that a scout sniper team will get killed, and there are limits on how far we can advance from the Quick Reaction Force,” explained Hancock. “So what we have done is use the grunts to help advance the sniper team further out to a house or whatever. By doing this we can employ sniper teams to better support the overall mission and the unit as a whole.”

Additionally, Marine scout snipers help prepare for missions by talking with commanders to show them how snipers and regular infantry can work together.

“If we get into a bind, we have an infantry fire-team behind us that we can fall back on for support,” said Hancock. “They have more firepower and are an effective, more immediate reaction force. I think initially when the war in Iraq started out, sniper teams were being compromised

because they did not have that immediate reaction force to fall back on. I haven’t seen it done much before in the past, but we have been using this to great effect, allowing for much more freedom of movement.”

Hancock added that an area that may seem non-threatening could suddenly change with insurgents seemingly coming out of nowhere—out of a house in a dense city block or in a rural village—and potentially compromising the snipers’ mission.

“Unlike snipers during OIF I, we also learned to deal with threats by calling for fire, which is typically done at the company level, and we have done that about half a dozen times out here,” said Flowers.

(above) Marine scout snipers with Regimental Combat Team 7 test-fire their weapons on a rifle range at Al Asad, Iraq, 25 Oct. 2004. (below) Marine scout snipers Sgt. Herbert Hancock (left) and Cpl. Geoffrey Flowers conduct surveillance from a rooftop during a foot patrol through a Ramadi area village with fellow reserve Marines from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 27 Dec. 2004. Near the end of their deployment, snipers like Hancock and Flowers are passing on valuable lessons learned during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.



Sniper's Artillery

Hancock said snipers also use company mortars as a sort of versatile and far-reaching immediate suppression QRF. "If we are hiding but somehow get compromised, we rely on the 60mm mortars to suppress the threat just enough to give us a window to pull back," said Hancock.

By using all available assets, especially in a case where close air support may not be immediately overhead, snipers have been very successful at suppressing enemy targets quickly, said Flowers.

"If we need more firepower we can call up to battalion or regiment, but in the meantime we have the company mortars and the infantry fire-team covering," Flowers added.

If things get really hot, snipers can rely on support from the air. "Once you get into a bind out here and if the threat is persistent, it's not long before word gets out and then you have close air support from the air wing," said Hancock. "Situations in areas here can change at any time. It's tricky and hard to figure out."

Hancock said snipers and regular infantry also work with Marine human intelligence teams to really learn about a certain area. "We can ask friendly sources certain questions to

find out information and that's how you get to know the people, and an area to develop your targets," said Hancock. "We try to stay proactive versus reactive."

Hancock said when he and other scout snipers get back from Iraq they will continue to work with the Marine Corps Sniper School and present their overall lessons learned during the past six months.

"So far, there is no doubt that OIF I is nothing like OIF II and OIF II may be nothing like OIF III," said Flowers. "Unlike before, we now have [improvised explosive devices] and an insurgency to deal with. Our advanced sniper school teaches counter-insurgency tactics and how to operate in an insurgent environment, which is what this is. We are using all the stuff they taught us."

As for the future of Marine Corps sniping, instructors foresee more use of snipers in Stability and Security Operations.

"With their higher level of observation and surveillance—along with their equipment—snipers can reduce collateral damage, and have precision fire," said, Reidsma. "We are also adding things to the sniper curriculum, like classes on counter-snipers and SASO related topics. Bottom line is, our snipers are doing an excellent job and little change is needed in the form of additional training." ❧

Sniper Stops Insurgents From 950 Yards

TEXT & PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. MIGUEL A. CARRASCO JR.

Fallujah, Iraq, November 2004 — A U.S. Marine sniper waited patiently inside a one-story house deep within the city. Lying in the prone position for several hours, he scanned the area through his scope before he finally found the three insurgents responsible for two previous mortar attacks.

Sgt. Memo M. Sandoval, a platoon sergeant with Scout Sniper Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, needed to positively identify the insurgents before he could take his shot.

Sandoval, 26, saw that one of the men was about to place a round in a mortar tube. He knew he had to make a well-aimed shot before the insurgent gunner launched the deadly projectile. Sandoval cleared his thoughts and slowed his breathing as he gently squeezed the trigger of his M-40A3 sniper rifle. The 7.62 mm round covered the 950 yards in a flash, slam-

ming into the chest of the first insurgent.

"The battalion [executive officer] ordered me to 'make the mortars stop,'" said Sandoval, a native of El Paso, Texas. "I took it personally and went out specifically to stop the insurgents."

With two more insurgents still alive and ready to continue the mortar attack, Sandoval composed himself for the

next shot at the assistant gunner. The last two shots took out the driver of the vehicle that carried the weapon. "When I finally spotted them along a tree line, I realized how far they were, but it was surprising how easy it was," said Sandoval.

Those four shots were the longest that Sandoval has taken since he became a scout sniper.

"It was very impressive of Sandoval to shoot from so far away and be on target with all four shots," said 1st Lt. Samuel Rosales, a platoon commander with Scout Sniper Platoon, H&S Co., 3/5.

"When you are being mortared you never know where they will land, to be able to stop them from shooting anymore felt good," said Sandoval.

He joined the Marine Corps straight out of high school in 1997 and has been with 3/5 since April 2004. His leadership ability has reflected on the Marines around him and allowed Sandoval to accomplish his mission. "[Sandoval] is filling a staff noncommissioned officer's billet. He is a great Marine to work with," said Rosales, 32, a native of San Clemente, Calif.

After recently reenlisting for four more years, Sandoval, who had been in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since September, hopes to represent the United States in the Olympics in competition shooting. Sandoval says a fellow Marine, Staff Sgt. Jared M. Casanova, with 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, helped him improve his skills with the rifle, which has become a valuable commodity in Iraq.

"We have always been in competitions against each other, one day he would win and the next day I would win," said Sandoval. "Out here in Iraq it is a two-way rifle range, with insurgents shooting at you. You have to make well-aimed shots." ❧



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What's in YOUR Wallet?

A History of Challenge Coins

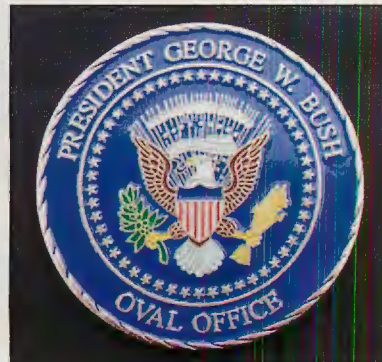
BY JOHN HIGGS

“Shake my hand,”

my friend Major Curtis Carney, U.S. Army Reserves, said to me as we left the gym one evening. Wary of some new Kamikaze martial-arts wristlock demonstration, I grasped his hand and was instead rewarded with the feel of a metal object being pressed into my palm. I looked down to see a large brass medallion, larger than a dollar coin.

“Thanks for the assistance you gave my Army unit,” Carney said. I had just been presented in the traditional way, with my very own Challenge Coin. The coin, as I examined it, had an antique brass finish. On the obverse (front) side, was printed in raised lettering the name of the unit and the words “United States Army Reserve.” On the reverse side was the inscription “Presented by the Commander in Recognition of Excellence.” I had heard references to hard-drinking SpecOps guys in Vietnam winning barroom bets with challenge coins, but knew little else about them. It turns out that there are several stories of how the Challenge Coin came into existence, but they are all awarded for the same reasons: To promote camaraderie, as a means of identifying an individual with a specific unit, and most importantly, as a thank-you outside of the more formal channels to recognize the achievements of an individual. The concept of presenting a coin to a soldier goes back centuries, and seems to have developed independently in more than one place at different times in history. It may well have begun during the Roman Empire when coins were awarded to soldiers for achievement.

During the Boer War of 1899, British soldiers who committed an act of bravery were not authorized to receive a medal, which instead was presented to the soldier's commanding officer. The senior enlisted man — usually the Regimental Sergeant Major — would later enter that officer's quarters, cut the medal from the ribbon, (which he left behind for the officer) and then present the medal informally to the soldier by shaking his hand



Presidential Coin owned by Don Bendell, this coin was a present to him from President George W. Bush, via a mutual friend. Photo: Lori Hoeck



Special Forces coin courtesy Don Bendell, a former president of the Rocky Mountain Chapter. Photo: Lori Hoeck



U.S. Army Special Forces 50th Anniversary 2002, commemorating Col. Aaron Bank, who was the first Green Beret. Courtesy Don Bendell. Photo: Lori Hoeck



Let's not forget their wives: This SF Spouses coin was purchased for him by Don Bendell's wife at the 2004 Special Forces Association Convention in Las Vegas. Courtesy Don Bendell. Photo: Lori Hoeck



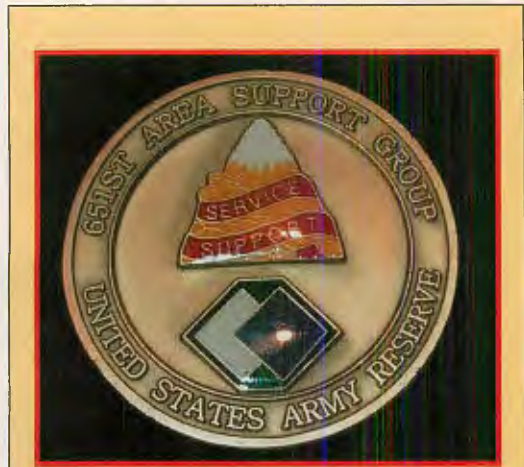
7th U.S. Cavalry, famed for their Battle of the Little Big Horn under Custer, later their victory in the Ia Drang Valley in Viet Nam, commanded by (then) Lt. Col. Hal Moore, and in OIF their record-book charge from Kuwait to Baghdad — Garry Owen, gentlemen!! Courtesy Ted McLean. Photo: Jenny Higgs



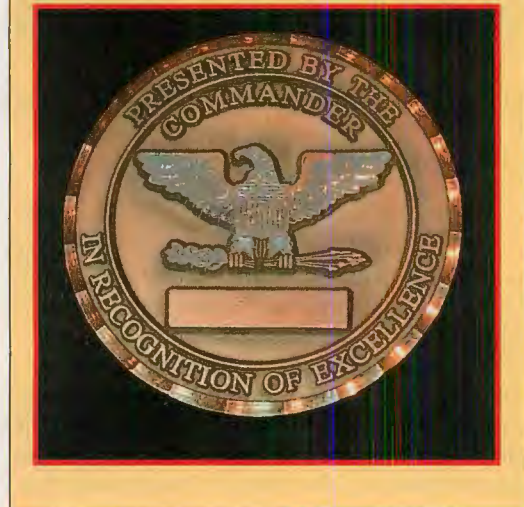
Special Operations Warrior Ball, Bull Simons Award Challenge Coin. Courtesy Robert K. Brown. Photo: Jenny Higgs



U.S. Navy SEAL coin memorializes the loss of SEAL Neil C. Roberts, who fell from a helicopter during a firefight on Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, 5 March 2002, and was subsequently executed by Al Qaeda terrorists. Sales of these coins at www.challengecoinusa.com benefit the Naval Special Warfare Foundation. Courtesy Robert K. Brown. Photo: Jenny Higgs



651st Area Support Group U.S. Army Reserves, based in Colorado. Note how the wavy diamond cut on the reverse side catches the light. Courtesy John and Jenny Higgs. Photo: Jenny Higgs



and leaving the medal in the man's palm. Later on, the British Army began awarding medals to enlisted men, but the NCOs maintained the tradition of presenting a coin to the soldier as recognition of gratitude for a job well done.

The practice spread to American Forces during WWI. One American fighter pilot serving in France provided a solid bronze medallion bearing the squadron emblem to each member of his squadron. He was later shot down behind enemy lines, but escaped his captors and made his way across No Man's Land where he was apprehended by a French army unit. They were preparing to shoot him as a saboteur, until he produced his coin as proof that he was a member of an American squadron. The tradition of carrying a coin continues to this day in some squadrons.

The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) claims to be the first SF group to establish their own coin, in 1969 under their (then) commander, Colonel Vernon E. Greene, although the practice may date back to WWII. However, according to Roxanne Merritt, Curator of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum at Ft.



Sales of this coin go towards supporting our military snipers currently deployed around the world, who are fighting the War on Terror one-shot-one-dead-terrorist at a time. Check 'em out at www.americansnipers.org.
 Courtesy Robert K. Brown



U.S. Marine Corps coin commemorating the Scout Sniper Association was given to RKB by Craig Roberts. Courtesy Robert K. Brown. Photo: Jenny Higgs



A solid silver coin commemorating the formation of the 2nd BN, 75th Infantry Airborne Rangers, stationed at Ft. Lewis, Wash., 1 October 1974. Courtesy Robert K. Brown. Photo: Jenny Higgs



Coin depicts the birth of the U.S. Marine Corps, when 100 recruits signed up at Robert Mullan's Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. Other accounts place the signing up ceremony at another Philadelphia pub, The Conestoga Wagon. Semper Paratus. Courtesy Robert K. Brown. Photo: Jenny Higgs



Special Forces Association Green Beret challenge coin, individually serial numbered. Inscription reads: "A special Breed of Men" Courtesy Robert K. Brown. Photo: Jenny Higgs

Bragg, N.C., the tradition of "coining" in the U.S. military began in the early 1960s with the 11th Special Forces Group.

The Challenge

Rules vary from one organization to the next, but generally speaking, a challenge is initiated by producing one's coin anytime, anywhere, clothed or naked, in the company of other coin owners, and yelling "Coin Check!" Then everybody must produce their own coin. Anyone who cannot do so is obliged to buy the challenger a drink. If everyone challenged produces their coin, then the challenger must buy a round for the group. In some circles it is against the rules to drill a hole in a coin in order to hang it around the neck. When challenged, if the owner is naked he is allowed one step and an arm's reach to retrieve his coin.

Over the past quarter century or more, modern minting techniques have reduced the cost of making coins. This in turn has enabled many organizations outside the military, such as police, firefighters and civic groups to commission their own unique and highly original designs. Challenge coins have become a form of art. They are now collectibles, for sale on the Internet. There are even counterfeit challenge coins. But for my money, even though collecting them may be fun, there is nothing better than receiving one in the spirit in which they were originally intended: To demonstrate camaraderie, and recognize individual achievement. And you can take that to the bank.

Thanks to Don Bendell, Ted Mclean, and Robert K. Brown for supplying coins. Thanks to Lori Hoeck and Jenny Higgs for the photography.

John Higgs is a frequent contributor to Soldier of Fortune. ✕

“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 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 relied on 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.

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“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.

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It's Knowing HOW TO BREAK ANY JOINT IN THE HUMAN BODY...

EVEN IF YOU NEVER INTEND TO ACTUALLY DO IT!

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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.

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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

FARNAM'S GUNSLINGER DIARY
BY JOHN FARNAM



Kennedy, Castro, and Khrushchev

Upon entering office in 1960, young President Kennedy discovered he had inherited a covert Cuban liberation plan from the outgoing Eisenhower Administration. In 1959, zealous Cuban ex-patriots in Florida had persuaded the CIA, and ultimately President Eisenhower himself, that they could successfully invade their former homeland, fulminate a spontaneous, popular revolution, overwhelm Castro's remaining defenses, and restore Cuba to its former state. Coming at the end of his administration, Eisenhower had allowed only tacit approval of the plan, mostly in an effort to consolidate a Republican voting base in Florida. It was only after winning the 1960 presidential election, narrowly defeating Nixon, that Kennedy was informed of "The Plan."

However, by that time "The Plan" had already sprouted legs! Under covert, American direction, a Cuban invasion force was already

training in Guatemala. The rumor circulated among Cuban ex-patriots everywhere was that their island nation would soon be liberated. They were ecstatic! Kennedy, never liking the plan, was nonetheless faced with the dilemma of poring cold water on such grand dreams.

The "spontaneous, popular revolution" aspect of the plan was based solely on a few interviews with recently arriving ex-patriots. The "invasion force" consisted of fewer than 1,500 volunteers, few of whom had any military experience. Castro's known forces were 20 times that number, and he had a viable air force. It became obvious to Kennedy and his advisors that the entire "Plan" was little more than a pipe dream that had no chance of success, unless Americans intervened militarily, literally at the outset.

Not wanting to be associated with calamity, Kennedy was faced with a hard choice: (1) Scrap the whole thing and take a chance of losing Florida in the next presidential election, or (2) Go forward full speed and insure the success of the invasion with American military intervention, and then take the

inevitable heat on the international stage. In a startling display of weakness and indecision, Kennedy decided to do neither. He decided not to decide. In so doing, he allowed the project to wobble forward to its logical conclusion, with Kennedy spending most of his time trying to shift blame and avoid personal responsibility. Thus, hundreds of Cuban ex-patriots were sentenced to a pointless death, while the dreams and aspirations of millions of others were dashed.

Like the ill-fated Dieppe Invasion 19 years earlier, as planning went forward, the Cuban Liberation Invasion began to show telltale signs of catastrophe. In order to maintain morale among ex-patriot Cubans, the CIA lied to them about American military assistance. At Kennedy's insistence, none was coming, and none was planned, but Cubans were told, and believed, that American troops and air power would follow them

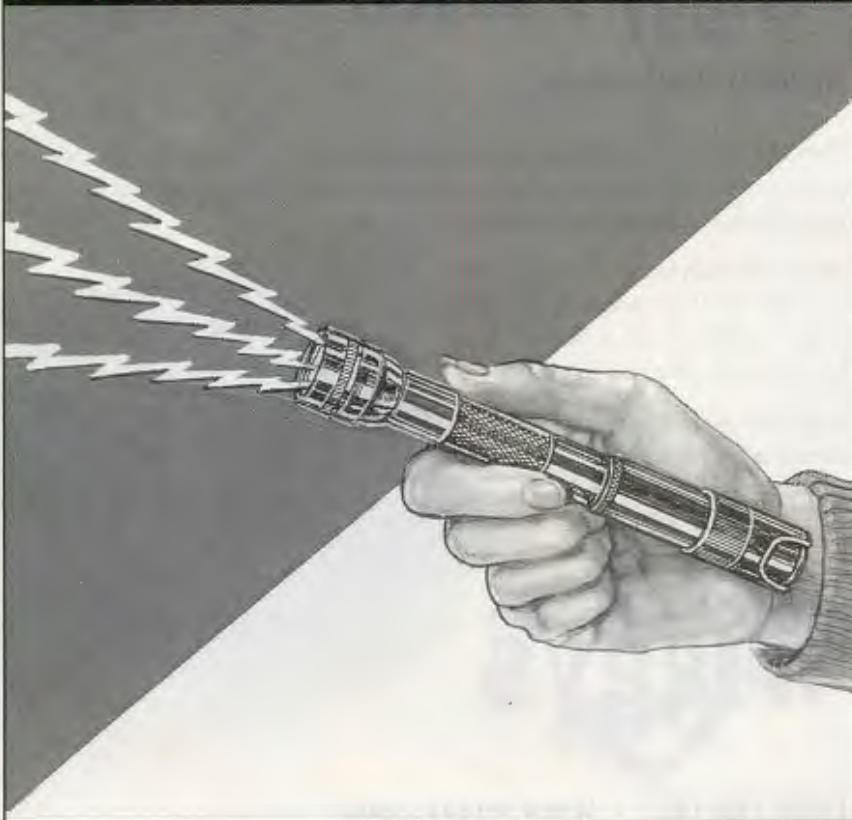
in. Meanwhile, the Kennedy Administration was scurrying about, frantically wiping its fingerprints from every part of the operation.

On 17 April 1961, the doomed invasion took place. Ageing B-26 bombers, flying from clandestine bases in Nicaragua by Cuban ex-patriot crews (with some Americans), had attempted to destroy the Cuban Air Force on the ground. They had been largely unsuccessful. However, the bombing raids had tipped off Castro that a ground invasion was imminent. His reaction was to round up all dissidents, insuring the failure of any "popular uprising." Sailing, also from Nicaragua, the invasion fleet reached the Bay of Pigs at dawn. The Cuban Air Force arrived shortly thereafter, displaying little degradation in strength, and crippled the invasion force on the beach as well as sinking a crucial supply ship. Most of the obsolete B-26s that were supporting the invasion were easily shot down by more modern Cuban military aircraft.

Not surprisingly, the invasion precipitously collapsed.

Not wanting to be associated with calamity, Kennedy was faced with a hard choice ... In a startling display of weakness and indecision, he decided not to decide.

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Surviving invaders were rounded up within three days. Castro had a publicity bonanza. Kennedy tried piteously to convince the press and a skeptical public he knew nothing about it. In a more candid moment many years later, Kennedy would say, "How could I have been so stupid as to let them go ahead?"

A direct result of the fiasco was the subsequent Cuban Missile Crisis.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, now persuaded that this young American president was a weak, indecisive bungler, was emboldened and started shipping offensive, nuclear missiles to Cuba. Kennedy would soon have an opportunity to exercise his leadership skills once more! The Bay of Pigs Invasion thus took its place, alongside of the Dieppe and Gallipoli Invasions, as an archetypical military and political debacle, born of personal vanity, weakness, and abulia.

Lesson: Don't ever become part of a military sideshow! Lukewarm support is ever a sign of crucial decisions being made based upon wishful thinking rather than hard facts. Inadequate funding, resources, planning, and commitment should always be a clue. Political leaders, in this country and most others, are typically self-centered weaklings who will predictably rank your safety at the very bottom of their list of concerns.

Who just "lets things happen," because he is afraid of making a mistake, is almost certainly making one.

Who constantly "fears to fail" will, in the end, fail without even trying,

Never do your enemy a minor injury.

Vanity is the womb of monsters. ☒

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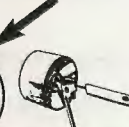
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by Frank Sherrill

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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SCF0305

Turkey Threatens Northern Iraq

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS



REUTERS/sir

*Fear of the Kurds
May Trigger Another
War in Iraq*

An Iraqi Kurd special forces soldier aims his Kalashnikov during training at the Lesger Taaibet military camp near Atrush in northern Iraq.

Turkey is on high alert as the volatile Kurdish situation in Northern Iraq escalates. In the Iraqi elections the Kurds showed unexpected strength by winning 75 of 275 seats in the Iraqi National Assembly, and are now negotiating a coalition government with the Shiites, who won 140 seats.

Turkey blames the United States for allowing the Kurds to rig the elections, artificially changing the ethnic mix of Kirkuk by importing Kurds who do not live there. Turkish officials suspect that the U.S. actions may be payback for tens of thousands of Peshmerga Kurdish troops who fought with the CIA and U.S. commandos to destroy the Iraqi government in the north in 2003.

"Some people are looking the other way while mass migration (of Kurds to Kirkuk) takes place," the Wall Street Journal quoted Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Kurds, who have created an "operations room" in Baghdad, according to the *Kurdistan Observer*, want an

"important place in government".

"We want a Kurd as president or prime minister, Nawzad Hadi Mawlood, senior member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said.

The Kurd leaders are also demanding a secular state.

Turkey may be ready to pounce into northern Iraq, as it did in 1992 and 1995, in the event the coalition comes to blows, and the Kurds decide to declare a sovereign state in Kurd-dominated Northern Iraq. Internal conflict with the Kurds in Turkey, who make up twenty percent of the population, has exploded repeatedly, with the Kurds being ruthlessly quashed.

Oil-Enriched Kurds

The Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said the situation has "reached dangerous proportions" and that Turkey's "democratic society administration...cannot remain indifferent or merely spectators," if the Iraqi Kurds take control of the oil rich cities of Kirkuk and Mosul. That area provides

forty percent of Iraqi oil. Turkey fears that the oil-enriched Kurds would militarize, and Kurds in Turkey then mobilize with the Iraqi Kurds.

Saddam Hussein ruled Kirkuk until the Iraqi invasion.

The Kurds claim that Kirkuk was traditionally theirs and that Saddam forced hundred of thousands to flee their homes during the "al-Anfal" purge, when thousands were slaughtered, in 1988 and again in 1991.

Nearly four million Kurds live in their northern safe haven in Iraq, and up to two million in the rest of Iraq, many in Baghdad. An estimated 1.5 million fled to southern Turkey during the Saddam years.

The now approximately twenty-five million Kurds have lived for centuries in the mountainous 74,000 square mile land that spans the four corners of Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. Iraq, Syria, and Iran refer to the area as "Kurdistan". Turkey forbids the use of the term.

The embattled Kurds are one of the largest ethnic groups without a state.

Impressive Gains

The Kurds have made impressive gains in improving the economy and infrastructure of Kurdistan since the United States implemented the no-fly zone over Northern Iraq in 1991. Establishing the no-fly 15,000 square mile autonomous region was in part an apology by the United States for encouraging a Kurdish insurrection against Saddam Hussein after the Gulf war, then standing by while Saddam's troops savagely murdered thousands of the insurgents.

While the Kurds gained strength and wealth with the no-fly zone advantage, the Iraqis were decimated by sanctions and Saddam's ruthlessness.

Some have predicted civil war in Iraq since the invasion. Others claim that civil war in Iraq has already begun, elections or not. Either way, the fight for Kurdistan threatens to spread civil war to the borders of Turkey, Iran and Syria.

In addition to Turkish military incursions, Iran quashed an Iranian Kurd revolt in 1979, and Syrian police clashed with rioting Syrian Kurds last year.

We decided to check out this extremely complex situation just before the Iraqi elections. We were told that the only way to get to Kurdistan was through Turkey.

American and British citizens had been warned not to travel to Istanbul, since terrorist attacks the previous year. Suicide bombers blew up two Jewish synagogues, killing two-dozen and injuring three hundred. Five days later terrorists attacked the British Consulate and the British HSBC Bank, killing 27, including British Consul General Roger Short, and wounding 500.

"The Combative Bush Administration"

Anti-Americanism was said to be high in Turkey, because of anger over the invasion in Iraq. But in England and France, we found more anti-Americanism than in Turkey. In England there was anger at Prime Minister Blair's "caving in" to "the short-sighted combative Bush Administration."

Last time in Istanbul, tourists flooded the squares, hotels, and the largest open Souk and spice market in the world. This time most foreigners were businessmen, rushing through the bustling streets of the various industrial centers, or Asians and Eastern Europeans touring the magnificent mosques and castles.

East meets West, and obscene wealth meets wretched poverty in Istanbul. Donkeys and weathered, turbaned peasants pull shabby carts with meager goods. Chauffeured

Jaguars and Mercedes carry Armani and Verucci-clad Turkish and Kurdish businessmen. Women covered from head to toe in the traditional black Islamic dress and worn sandals walk alongside bleached blondes in Prada three-inch-heels and Chanel suits.

The scent of roasting coffee and exotic spices in the nautical air is subsumed by putrid smells from Burger King, McDonalds, Pizza Hut, and garbage strewn in the streets.

The busy Bosphorus Strait splits the ancient Byzantine and Ottoman Capitol. To the south of the vibrant port city is the Marmara Sea and to the north the Black Sea. For centuries, trade has passed from the Mediterranean to the Aegean through the Bosphorus Strait.

Remnants Of Empire

Remnants of the Ottoman Empire on both sides of the strait serve as reminders of the power and grandeur that had ruled much of Europe and the Middle East. Sights of the city and the three seas conjure up Arabian Night images of warring navy fleets harbored on its coasts, or reckless warrior Emperors emboldened by the impenetrable borders of this fortress city on a hill.

The muezzins' chants penetrate the air as they call the faithful to prayer throughout the day.

Superficially, the people on the streets and in their shops appear to be careless and free.

"Mafias make fortunes from running drugs and prostitution," Isaac told us. Bars with posters of exotic dancers line the streets.

The crime rate is high. SOF publisher, Robert K. Brown and I walked through vibrant Taksim Square our first evening in Istanbul. Three young Turks were fighting each other, caroming into RKB. I grabbed the collar of one thug who was about to swing on him. Another was shoving him, but RKB fended him off with his broad shoulders.

I didn't have a clue as to what was really happening.

"These guys are pros," RKB said. They were faking a skirmish. He was fighting with his shoulders, and protecting his pockets with his hands. Hotel staff told us that muggings happen on the streets between the hotel and the square five times a day.

We were hustled non-stop by hungry merchants who had taken a big hit from the impact of the travel advisories.

But travel warnings did not reflect the mood of Turks on the streets, who had themselves been victims of the suicide bombers. Many still dream of going to America or Western Europe.

"My brother married a Swedish," one told us.

"My brother married an American in Chicago," another said.

"I wanted to go to America, but did not get a visa," another said with longing. He is not giving up.

The Kurds, who believed that Bush had given them a chance to be independent by taking down Saddam Hussein, were especially friendly.

"Baba Bush, Baba Bush, I want to go to Texas and kiss the home of Baba Bush," one Kurdish taxi cab driver chanted with a huge smile, as he held out his hand for an additional tip.

I think that was the only English sentence he knew because that is the only response we got no matter what we asked him. But he refused to take Baba Bush's U.S. dollar. The dollar had been devalued by one-third, compared to the Euro, since our attack on Iraq in 2003, and many Turks believed that the Euro would rule the money markets.

The Mongol Turks

It is impossible to understand the ethnic problems of the Kurds and Turkmen in Turkey and Iraq without at least a brief glimpse of the history of the Ottoman Empire.

"The Turks originated from Mongolia," a western-educated Turkish tycoon said. "At its height, the vast Ottoman Empire conquered much of Greece, Bosnia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, northern Africa stretching from Algeria to Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Jordan, and most of the Austrian Empire."

Our Jewish-Turkish guide, Isaac, told us, "The Sultans ruled with an iron fist, with paranoia, and some with greatness. Others were raving mad, some became obese and idle when they were confined to their harems, and others became alcoholics and drug addicts while they waited to fight other heirs for power when the sultan died. Most took control with violence."

"Selim I deposed his old father, Bayezid II in 1481.

His son, Suleyman the Great, who had modernized the Empire and brought it to its supreme height, executed his two sons, Bayezid and Mustafa, when he heard of their plot to overthrow him. His last incompetent son, "Selim the Sot", who let the Empire deteriorate, was emasculated by his domineering mother and his harem.

"I am Slave of God, master of the world, I am Suleyman, and my name is read in all the prayers in all the cities of Islam. I am the Shah of Baghdad and Iraq, Caesar of all the lands of Rome, and the Sultan of Egypt. I seized the Hungarian crown and gave it to the least of my slaves," Suleyman claimed.

Locked in Harems

Eventually the brothers of the Sultan were locked away in

harems in the palace, rather than have their heads chopped off. Later, the sons were sent from Istanbul to the countryside with their mothers and harems. When the mothers heard of the Sultan's death, they raced to Istanbul with their sons. The one who got there first got the crown.

By the end of the nineteenth century, nationalism was tearing apart the Empire. Separatists were ruthlessly suppressed, with the most brutal genocide directed against the Armenians who wanted independence from the Muslim state in the 1890's. An estimated one million Armenians were massacred, beaten to death, and slaughtered.

"That story is exaggerated," Isaac told us, "They were insurgents and treated as such."

Guides in Turkey have gone through four years of government training. They are well indoctrinated.

The allies defeated the crumbling Ottoman Empire in WWI.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, military hero of the Dardanelles in 1915, founded the Turkish Republic in 1923, and became its first president. This charismatic commander triumphed against invaders to become the liberator of his country.

"For fifteen years, Atatürk forced sweeping political, social, legal, and economic reforms that brought Turkey into the twentieth century," Isaac said.

In 1925, Atatürk ruthlessly suppressed a Kurdish revolt triggered by his suppression of Islam in his push for modernity. ✕

Next month: The Kurds fight for an independent state and the flight of the Turkmen in Northern Iraq.

Dr. Martin Brass is a longtime SOF contributor.

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BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

AMERICA AT WAR

2. NORTH KOREA IMPENDING COLLAPSE of Kim Jon Il and his police state.

3. PHILIPPINES POLICE STORM prison holding Abu Sayyaf operatives, killing 22 prisoners, including three senior Abu Sayyaf leaders.

INTERPOL FIGHTS TERRORISM GENERAL SECRETARIAT requests reports on weapons trafficking, money laundering, falsifying travel and identity documents, and possessing nuclear, chemical, or biological materials.

1. UNITED STATES CIA INFILTRATION FEARS: U.S. counterintelligence officials fear al Qaeda operatives might be getting jobs at CIA and other intel agencies. Forty Americans applying for intel jobs have been red-flagged and rejected for possible ties to terrorist groups. NATIONAL SECURITY THREATENED: Two million Private Security Guards, have "little or no training, aren't subjected to rigorous background checks for previous criminal behavior and are paid so poorly that many quickly leave for better paying jobs." HOMELAND SECURITY also reports 3,000 illegals are apprehended daily, but even with high-tech, entrants are coming in waves. HOLY WAR ON HOME FRONT: THE ISLAMIC TERROR NETWORK IN THE USA, book describes decades of secret network of al Qaeda and Hamas. The Department of Homeland Security, trying to focus antiterrorism spending better nationwide, has identified a dozen possible strikes it views as most plausible or devastating, including detonation of a nuclear device in a major city, release of sarin nerve agent in office buildings and a truck bombing of a sports arena.

4. INDONESIA JEMAAH ISLAMIAH TERRORIST BOSS Abu Bakar Bashir convicted for 2002 bombing. His sentence was less than three years because authorities feared reprisals from his supporters.

5. AUSTRALIA ACTOR RUSSELL CROWE targeted by al Qaeda plot to kidnap him. FBI WARNS Crowe months before Academy Award for *Gladiator* in 2001. FBI and private security guarded him.

6. PANAMA CANAL targeted by Osama and al Qaeda, warn authorities.

7. COLOMBIA CHILD SOLDIERS used by FARC and ELN: 11,000 children fight in Colombia's armed conflict. One of every four combatants is less than 18. CHILD WARRIORS are used in global conflicts, including more than 25,000 in Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. Colombia tops the list, according to Human Rights Watch.

8. PARAGUAY FARC INFILTRATES, expanding from Colombia to Venezuela and Ecuador. Wealthy FARC has GPS systems, digital mapping equipment, SAT-COM equipment and other high-tech tools.

9. FRANCE RECONASSANCE SHIP *VAR*, that equips 200 commandos, deployed to Mediterranean to aid Christians if civil unrest escalates.

10. GERMANY MILITARY INTEL agents are transferred to civilian police counter-terrorist agencies to camouflage their military status. Their expertise is needed to hunt hundreds of terror suspects evading capture and arrest.

11. RUSSIA SECURITY SERVICE paid \$10 million for info on Chechen leader Asian Maskhadov that led to his assassination. U.S. and Russia sign agreement to find and destroy thousands of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles in hands of terrorist groups. Up to one million are missing: 7,551 to 8,331 stingers have been sold globally since 1982, to Taiwan, Denmark Japan and Italy.

14. IRAQ AL HATTEEN munitions production plant called a "complete, potential nuclear weapons laboratory."

15. AFGHANISTAN SOF COMMANDOS from Oman, Emirates and Bahrain silently work with coalition forces. ARAB soldiers trained by U.S. and U.K. commandos. ARAB commandos work tribes and families for intel.

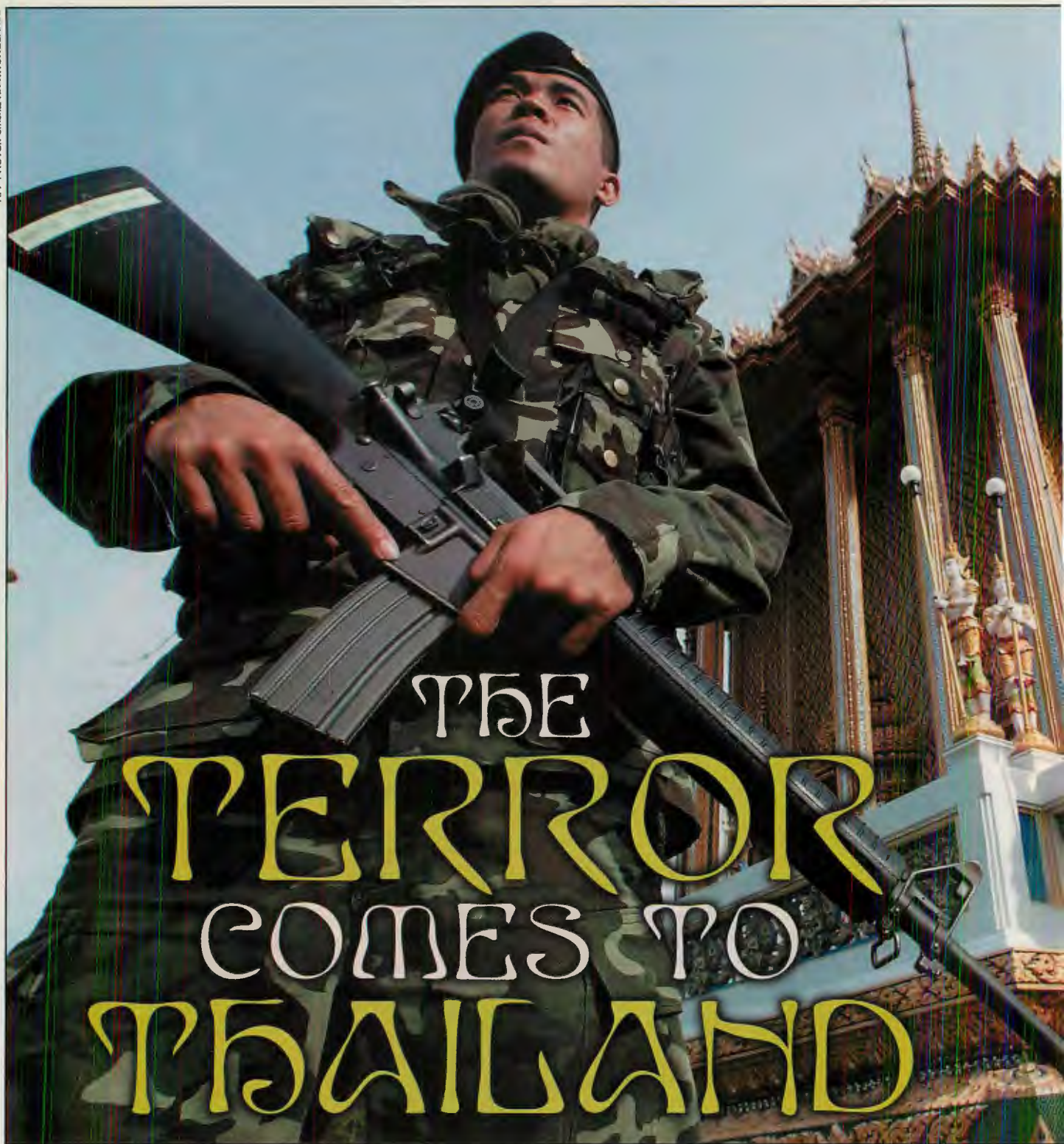
16. PAKISTAN AMERICAN BROTHERS "DISAPPEAR": Two are Islamist militant sympathizers. Both received training at a camp run by Hizbul Mujahideen (HUM) at Mansehra in Punjab. Authorities, suspected of torture, deny responsibility.

17. KUWAIT PURGE foreign mercs in military: Saudi troops earning big bucks in Kuwaiti military, forced out because of Islamic extremism. Thousands of foreigners had been enlisted when Iraq attacked in 1990.



12. EGYPT TORTURED AND IMPRISONED 2,500 to 3,000 suspects held in unknown locations since Taba Hilton bombing that killed 30 last year. Plainclothes SSI agents arbitrarily arrest suspects without warrants.

13. ALGERIA ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS who have terrorized for 15 years are targeted. Government armed local militias to defend themselves when radicals extort money and food from them to support the terrorists activities.



THE TERROR COMES TO THAILAND

BY RALPH JOHNSON

The Islamo-fascist movement has found fertile ground in Southern Thailand.

SOF's Ralph Johnson was recently in the area researching current developments and filed this report:

IT did not appear to be a threatening situation at first. Demonstrators had gathered outside the police station in Tak Bai town, located on the coast in Thailand's southern province of Narathiwat. They

had gathered from outlying areas of the province, as well as the two other bordering provinces, predominantly Muslim. They had come to demand the release of six members of the Village Volunteer Defense Force, who had been jailed on suspicion of giving their issued weapons to Islamic insurgents. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, and its citizens enjoy representative government, and freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. The demonstrators were exercising some of these freedoms. By 0700, as the demonstration kicked off,



A Thai soldier stands guard in front of a Buddhist temple prior to a visit by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in Pattani southern Thailand, 27 August 2004. (inset) Thai police go through the rubble of a noodle shop, after a bomb explosion in Yala province about 1084 km (674 miles) south of Bangkok, 16 January 2005. Violence erupted in the south a year ago, fuelling fears that a dormant separatist Islamic insurgency might be revived. About 500 people were killed last year in three southern provinces annexed by Thailand a century ago.

those gathered outside the police station numbered about 1,000.

The Thai security forces were taking no chances. There had been incidents of violence and open insurrection in previous months, and during some of these, government buildings, specifically police posts, had been attacked. Facing the demonstrators on that clear, warm morning of 25 October were members of various Thai security forces, such as the police and army, who had riot-control shields, batons, and small arms, to include automatic rifles and grenade launchers. Their numbers were roughly equal to those of the demonstrators. They felt confident.

By 0900 the ranks of the demonstrators had swollen to some 3,000. There were shouts and chants, but no incidents of violence. The police called in reinforcements, and some 1,600 new troops arrive, followed by two armored vehicles with 7.62 M60 flexible machineguns, plus two helicopters. The old standby of riot control, water under pressure, was on standby in the form of three fire trucks.

Somewhere around noon, the mood of the demonstration turned from protest to confrontation. The demonstrators, possibly emboldened by their increasing numbers, increased their volume and their shouts became threatening. A few instigators were spotted, goading the group into action.

Local imams and some of the relatives of the detained men, about whom the demonstration was said to be, tried valiantly to get the crowd to disperse, or at least calm down. Thai troops began to set up fences to contain the demonstration and set up a security

perimeter. In a more ominous move, women and children were separated from the men and led out of the area.

First Blood, Last Chance

Suddenly a barrage of bottles and rocks was launched from what had now become a mob, and under cover of the barrage, there was a rush to attempt to force entry into the police station. During this initial violence, a police officer suffered a head wound and a government vehicle was destroyed. First blood had been drawn, and the incident was spiraling out of control. Forced back into the police station, the troops opened fire with their rifles. For more than two hours, there were running battles and skirmishes. Rioters threw rocks, bottles and other missiles, and security forces have stated that some of them were armed with shotguns, pistols and rifles.

At about 1500 hours, the 4th Royal Thai Army Region Commander, LTG Pisarn, ordered the protesters to be dispersed by use of water cannon and tear gas. While violent clashes would continue for another half hour, Thai security forces gradually gained control and began to round up the demonstrators. Thai television cameramen caught security forces beating unarmed protesters and dragging them to a containment area. When government forces finally cleared the area at about 1545, six civilian bodies with gunshot and stab wounds were discovered. Some protestors had attempted to flee the scene by heading to the Tak Bai River, but were forced back on shore. The total number of detained men and teenagers was well over 1,400.



In view of the Royal Thai Army's previous excellent record of dealing with its population, what happened next is difficult to explain. It would cause Asian newspapers, politicians, and human rights organizations to use terms like "massacre" and "mass violations of human rights."

Around 1600 hours, the captured protesters were loaded into the back of open Thai military trucks, most of them the 2-1/2 ton "Duce and a Halves" with which three generations of American veterans would be familiar. The first group of captives was forced to lay face down on the bed of the trucks, another group on top of them, and then another group, until there were three or four layers, like cordwood. Truck after truck was filled with human cargo in this fashion, some covered with canvas tarps, and some left open to the sun. By this time the temperature had risen to more than 90 degrees Fahrenheit, with near 100% humidity. There was no air movement in the back of the trucks, especially with the weight of bodies pressing on the bottom layer of prisoners. With the weight of several bodies on top of them, the men on the bottom of the truck beds could not even expand their chests to breathe.

So began the transport of prisoners to Pattani military camp, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) away.

Road March = Death March

The first truck arrived in Pattani about 1900, with the last coming in at 2200. Sources say that every truck had fatalities, and camp physicians say that the last truck alone had 23 dead. A total of 78 prisoners died between their arrest at Tak Bai and their arrival in Pattani. In addition to the six bodies initially discovered at Tak Bai, three more were found in the river, and one person died in hospital, reportedly of wounds inflicted during the protest.

Of the prisoners who died in the trucks, autopsies performed by Dr. P. Rojanasunad in Pattani showed that the majority died from suffocation and convulsions, while the necks of three were broken. While there were minor cuts and bruises, none of the dead from the trucks had bullet wounds. Evidence and testimony from the survivors does not suggest that the prisoners were subject to additional violence at the hands of the troops who transported them, but that the deaths, including the neck fractures, occurred from the method of transport. In their hurry to remove the protestors from the scene, the authorities displayed utter disregard for the safety of their captives, men whose lives were now in their hands. Instead of a prisoner transport mission, the Thai Army became responsible for a caravan of death.

The Muslim protestors who were stacked into the trucks were probably more susceptible to heat stroke at the time they were captured, as they were near exhaustion from the fast during the month of Ramadan, which was concluding.

Prime Minister Thaksin flew to the south on the afternoon of the clash with the Defense Minister, the Interior Minister, and other officials, but it was too late for him to affect the outcome, even if he had chosen to do so.

The next day, 26 October, reports about the protest and the



Masukree Hali (in handcuffs) one of the three suspected militant leaders, is led by police officers from Pattani, southern Thailand, to Bangkok criminal court to face treason charges on 11 January 2005.

EPAPUNGRUJ YONGRIT

deaths in the trucks dominated the Thai media, with some graphic television coverage to substantiate charges of the wrongful death of protesters and prisoners. Human rights organizations and opposition political parties began demanding investigations and culprits. Calls for the resignation and prosecution of the senior officers involved had already begun.

Playing Out On A Historical Stage

The southern provinces of Thailand, which have a majority Muslim population, were annexed by the Kingdom of Siam in 1902, shortly after Thailand won a significant victory over the French, when French colonial and regular troops were defeated in an attempt to annex Thai territory in northeast Thailand near the Mekong River. The southernmost provinces were formerly a part of the Kingdom of Pattani, and the population adopted Islam in the 13th Century. The local language is not

Thai, but Yawi, a Malay dialect. The provinces have always been restive, with violence flaring up in the 1950s, during what the British termed "the Emergency," across the southern Thai border in what was Malaya, now Malaysia. Malay insurgents would use the sparsely populated Thai jungle as safe areas during their guerrilla war with the British, and some of their militant views took root in the local population.

Again during the Viet Nam war, when Thai troops were otherwise occupied with a Communist insurgency in the north and helping their American allies in Viet Nam, Muslim separatists in the south went on the offensive. Each time, they were defeated by the Thai military — but a cadre of insurgents, and the desire to be reunited with their Muslim brothers to the south, remained.

In January of 2004, an attack on a Thai Army depot in Narathiwat province signaled an indication of a growing insurgent movement, as 400 M16s and other weapons were stolen. In April, militants staged a series of coordinated attacks on military and police posts, but Thai intelligence had prior warning of the assaults, and the security forces cut down most of the attackers.

Since the events of late October, the Muslim separatist movement has gained momentum and has become much more daring than in the past. Resentment over the deaths and mistreatment of their fellow believers has put the spark to the insurgent gunpowder that has been waiting a long time to explode. Separatist cadres, formerly mostly unsuccessful in their efforts to proselytize the population, are now swamped with recruits, especially young unemployed males who want revenge, and who are willing recipients of militant Islamic teachings.

Weapons that had no insurgents to carry them are being dug up and oiled, jungle classrooms are packed with students learning about raids, ambushes, explosives, and terrorism. Auxiliary organizations, logistic networks and safe houses are being established or expanded. The insurgency has taken root.

Given A Cause, Gaining Momentum

The growing strength of the insurgency hasn't been lost on Thais living in the south. There have been demonstrations by

Thais asking for protection, while soldiers and police are guarding Buddhist temples and government buildings. The Thai government has attempted to maintain a Village Volunteer Defense Force in the region, but in mid-November 2004, defense volunteers in Muang district indicated that they would not fight the insurgents, by returning weapons meant for defense, mostly shotguns, to the district chief. Worse, some of the supposed defenders of their villages allied themselves with the militants and handed over their weapons to them. It was for this reason that some were jailed in Tak Bai, and the demonstration staged. Pattani district governor, C.N. Songkla, has expressed concerned that communities in his district "...will be weakened if the guns are (turned in), and the militants will cause more violence."

In some areas, insurgents aren't waiting for weapons to be turned in. In raids on the homes of Self Defense Force members by groups of young men, the guns are seized.

It has not taken long for militant Muslim organizations outside of Thailand to come to the aid of their fellow jihadists. Leaders of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), which has been fighting the Indonesian government for years, maintain ties with the Islamic Thai separatist movements. Organizers from Jemaah Islamiah, which has been linked to terrorist attacks throughout SE Asia and especially Indonesia, and which has direct links to Al Qaeda, have been seen in the area. In June of 2003, the Thai Police broke up a cell of Jemaah that was planning to blow up foreign embassies in Bangkok. Hambali, a senior Al Qaeda operative who planned the Bali bombings, was captured outside of Bangkok in 2003 due to the cooperation of U.S. and Thai intelligence agencies.

As the outside Islamic fascists have been introduced into the area, so have the insurgents' tactics changed. From the previous rare sniping at a police post or pipe bombing of a government building, the tactics have changed to assassination of government workers, be they teachers, postmen, or village chiefs. Buddhist clergy and policemen have become favorite targets, with the killers often using motorcycles to get close to their victims and then escaping after the shots are fired. Village elders have been shot while taking the air in front of their homes in the evening. Perhaps the most ominous of the signs that outside influence is being exerted and terrorism – as opposed to guerrilla warfare – employed is the recent atrocity of the beheading of low-level government officials by the militants.

True Terrorism

Another tactic, not often seen in the area prior to recent days, is the bombing of the innocent populace. A favorite Al Qaeda method of terror and mayhem, it has led Thai authorities to believe that more than local talent is in play. Motorcycle bombs are left outside of shops or entertainment sites, car or truck bombs kill and maim customers at street markets, and bombs are left at busy street corners.



Thai paramilitary officials patrol in front of a mosque in the Chanae district of Thailand's violence-torn southern Narathiwat province, 01 March 2005. Thai government said it would send envoys to brief the world's largest Muslim organization about an Islamic insurgency in southern provinces, apparently adopting a more conciliatory stance after criticism of its hardline approach.

All of the bombings are indiscriminate, with no purpose other than to terrorize.

As if to insure that the government gets the message that they are dealing with more than just local insurgents, on 4 January terrorists raided the camp of the Royal Thai Army 4th Engineer Battalion, resulting in four soldiers KIA. This is significant, as it is this battalion that Thailand has deployed to Iraq to assist in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The raiders had an easy time of it, as the battalion was mostly away at a memorial service for one of their members killed in Iraq.

There are some usual suspects, local guerrilla groups, with which the outside Islamo-fascists have allied: The PULO, Pattani United Liberation Organization, the BRN, or Barisan Revolusi Nasional, and the Gerakan Mujahadeen Islami Pattani, or GMIP. The groups are dominated by aging separatists and Islamic fundamentalists, with ideologies ranging from Communist to Islamic fundamentalist. They have in the past been active in the drug trade in southern Thailand to finance their activities, and it is often difficult to tell a guerrilla chief from a drug lord. Intelligence sources say the leadership of these organizations has been divided and ineffective, but with recent events and the infusion of heavy hitters from the outside, the groups have attracted more young foot soldiers that are eager to act. With the help of the more militant and like-minded jihadists, the outside organizers have adopted a strategy of "infiltrate, adapt and overcome" toward the existing separatist organizations. Thailand is set to become a major battleground in the global War on Terrorism.

The International Card

The Defense Minister has reported that Muslim insurgent groups have set up training and rest areas across the border in

Continued on page 73

Sniper Diary



"We fired so many times, we ran out of match-grade ammo and had to delink 7.62mm machinegun ammunition until we could be resupplied."

— Corporal Nolan J. Kowalski, Scout Sniper, 1/5 Marines, Fallujah, 6 April 2004

Kowalski has been a hunter most of his life. As a young boy in New Mexico, he hunted deer and elk in the Sandia Mountains outside Albuquerque. Later, when his family moved to Bridgeton, Missouri, about 30 miles northwest of St. Louis, he honed his skills by shoot-

ing at moving targets like rabbits and mourning dove. He didn't know it at the time, but those skills would come in handy when he was called upon to take out enemy combatants in Fallujah, a volatile town 35 miles west of Baghdad.

What follows is a detailed account of the day-to-day battle for Fallujah in April 2004, as recorded by this young combat veteran, currently on his third deployment to Iraq.

His weapon of choice is the USMC M40A3, a 7.62x51mm NATO [.308Win] sniper rifle built on a Remington 700 action, with an Unertl 10x scope. Maximum effective range of the 16.5-pound weapon is 915 meters or 1000 yards, but Kowalski is equally at home behind the butt plate of the team's 32.5-pound Barrett M82A1A, semi-automatic, air-cooled .50 caliber

U.S. Marines Stack 'em Up in Fallujah

BY DALE B. COOPER



Corporal Nolan J. Kowalski fires .50 caliber SASR (Special Application Scoped Rifle) through a hole in the wall of a building on the outskirts of Fallujah.

Special Application Scoped Rifle, "SASR" for short.

April 6: "My sniper team was attached to Bravo Company, the lead element that moved into the south side of Fallujah," wrote Kowalski in his 4x6 notebook.

"Seminole Alpha," his team's call sign, consisted of Corporal Oscar D. Reyes, the team leader, another veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom; Kowalski, the assistant team leader, Cpl. Thomas Gravel, the M249 SAW gunner, and radio operator, Cpl. Thomas K. Morgan.

Kowalski remembers Fallujah being lit up like a Christmas tree as his team crept toward the battalion's objective in the heart of town. At first, it appeared 1/5 had caught the bad guys with their britches down. But Bravo Co. had

stirred up a hornet's nest.

"My team was overlooking a long access road that ran through the center of Fallujah. You could see about a Klick left and right down the road," said Kowalski, "and deep into the city down alleyways. A great location for observation."

"We hadn't gone very far before we got into very heavy contact. Firefights broke out everywhere along the company line," said Kowalski, who noted it was pretty much a static gunfight. "They were sitting down the road about 800 meters launching everything they could at us."

The insurgents had taken over an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps compound down the road, and were using it for cover.

"We had a lot of rounds going over our heads," said Kowalski. He observed while "Sonny," his radio operator, took the team's first shots of the battle.

"There was a guy who ran across the road and stopped at a concrete barrier in the middle of the road. Range: 986 yards. Morgan's first shot hit low and skipped over his head. The man broke from cover and ran across the road where he curled up in the fetal position behind a power pole. I gave my shooter an adjustment for the second round, which hit him, but didn't kill him. The next shot hit the insurgent in the rib cage. He didn't crawl any further."

The team's next shot came when Kowalski noticed movement down an alleyway to the north of their position. He saw people talking and pointing.

"I knew something was about to happen," said Kowalski, who spotted a man walking out into the alley with an RPG in his hands about 650 yards out. He stood out like a sore thumb in his white man dress and red *khafiya* scarf wrapped around his head.

"He faced our position fearless," said Kowalski. He got both of his shooters, Morgan and Reyes, on the target. Reyes squeezed off the first round as he squinted into his AVNPS-10, an 8.5 power day-night scope on his M40A3. His ballistic-tipped, hollow point bullet clipped an unseen power line hanging across the alley as it streaked to the target, but Morgan's 175-grain boat-tail hit the man dead center in the chest. He struggled to get to his feet, but dropped about three yards from where he was hit.

"It was an endless shooting gallery of targets. We fired 35 to 40 rounds through each of our sniper rifles that day," said Kowalski, adding that snipers use hollow-point bullets to stabilize the rounds at long distances, not mutilate victims, but he couldn't deny that a hollow point round makes a mess when it hits.

Many of the "probables" probably died of their wounds before they could be carried to Fallujah General Hospital for medical treatment.



Corporal Nolan J. Kowalski behind scoped, suppressed M16 sniper rifle, engaging enemy targets from a rooftop in Fallujah.

“Seminole Alpha” also broke up three RPG ambushes that first day, recording two confirmed kills and three probables in the process.

April 7: “Taking mortar fire. Not well aimed.” But mortars soon became the main fear of Marines in Fallujah.

“At first they couldn’t hit anything,” said Kowalski, “but we were static for so long, anyone could eventually hit us, and they did.”

April 8: “I took a shot at a guy carrying an RPG and talking to another guy in a car about 730 yards away. I hit him in the shoulder he went down, but by the time I bolted another round into the chamber of my “40,” the guy in the car grabbed his friend and drove off.” Almost simultaneously, another gunman appeared in the window of an upper story building adjacent to that location.

“The only thing I saw looking through the scope was a green PG round sticking out of the window, pointed straight at us. It was high noon and the room inside that building was dark, so I couldn’t see who was holding the launcher 650 yards away. But I didn’t panic. I put the reticule on the rocket-propelled grenade and fired before he could fire. The RPG disappeared for a moment until the guy holding the launcher slumped out of the window,” said Kowalski. Cpl Reyes, his observer yelled, “You got him,” but before he could say “You got him” again, someone pulled the mortally wounded gunner back inside the dark room.

“I think I hit him in the throat, because I could see a lot of blood on the ledge of that window,” said Kowalski.

Reyes wound up with six confirmed kills and five probables. Kowalski was a step behind with five and four. Morgan got two confirmed kills and two probables. The entire platoon killed 50 enemy combatants and seriously wounded another 50.

Close Call

It isn’t often, but sometimes snipers can feel the Grim Reaper’s breath. About mid-morning, Kowalski and Reyes came under sniper fire. “We could tell the shots were coming from somewhere in the city to our front. We could hear the thump, or muzzle report,” said Kowalski.

This sniper wasn’t very accurate, but they took cover behind the two-foot lip of the building and raised a Kevlar helmet above defilade to draw fire. Kowalski could tell the sniper was missing, so he got back on the gun, only to have the insurgent fire a round through the face veil he had draped over the barrel of his M40A3 to shield his eyes from the sun.

After the close call, Kowalski’s team pulled back behind friendly lines, cleaned equipment, replaced radio batteries and reorganized. From April 6 to 8, the team had been fighting around the clock. Team members were worn and torn and needed a night’s rest.

April 9: “We saw two guys running across an alley with a 60mm mortar and a home-made tripod. We hit one of them in the shoulder, but he managed to get down behind cover.”

After the first few days of combat, enemy resistance stiffened in Fallujah. No direct fire — just mortars and rocket-propelled grenades being lobbed over the top of buildings at Marines. “In the evening down the same alleyway where I killed the guy in the window, there were mortar men firing from behind the wall of a schoolhouse. We could see blasts coming off the mortars, but we couldn’t get a shot at them, so we called a tank down the road, and the gunner hit that wall with main-gun fire. That put an end to that problem,” said Kowalski.

April 10: “At dawn we saw enemy moving east through the alley we were observing. Shortly afterwards, units to our left and right started receiving small arms and mortar fire,”

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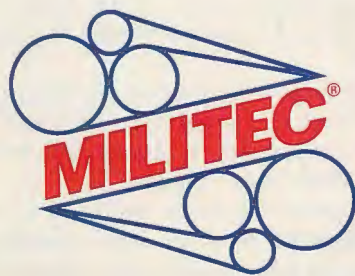
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wrote Kowalski in his journal.

"They were the best 60 team I have ever seen," said Kowalski, who adjusted counter-battery from 60mm mortars and MK 19s on two Amtracks from Bravo Company.

April 11: "Reyes and I notice a BMW dropping off weapons 800 yards down the street. We destroy it with MK 19 fire. Lots of secondary explosions. Reyes killed one guy trying to get into the car and drive it away." By this time in the campaign, the tempo started to slow down.

April 12: "We received a request to move to Lt. Blanke's position." Karl Blanke was commander of the combined anti-armor team in Weapons Company. As soon as Kowalski and Reyes arrived on the scene, they saw an insurgent lying in the street behind an RPK light machine gun, who started to light them up. "He didn't hit anybody," said Kowalski, "but drove us to cover before he was mortally wounded by Sergeant Michael W. Rhinehart, a squad leader in CMP, the Counter-Mech Platoon."

As Lt. Blanke launched an Amtrak to recover the weapon, an Iraqi ambulance pulled up, and two guys jumped out. Blanke told his snipers not to fire unless the ambulance crew tried to pick up the machine gun. "I knew these guys weren't medical personnel. They didn't check the body for vitals. They just picked him up and threw him in the back of the ambulance," said Kowalski, who watched one of them get behind the wheel, while the other guy ran back for the RPK.

That's when Reyes hit him with his M16, and everybody else opened up, causing the insurgent to do what Kowalski called the "Boogy Dance" before he died. They also riddled the ambulance, but somehow the driver escaped.

After the excitement was over, Kowalski and Reyes moved to the top of building and set up in one of their former positions.

Moments later, Kowalski spotted two guys 600 yards down an alley. Reyes hit one of them in the stomach. Right after that, Kowalski heard single shots off to his left flank. When he saw a loophole in a building, he said to himself, "That's where I'd be."

Inside that building, Kowalski saw the green lenses of a pair of binoculars. "We put a round through the window to let whoever it was know we knew he was looking at our positions," said Kowalski. He then summoned an Amtrak that set the building on fire with its .50 caliber machine gun. While waiting for the sniper to run out of the building, Kowalski saw wires leading to four anti-tank missiles on the rooftop of that building, pointed at the street below: An ambush waiting to be sprung. Kowalski requested permission to shoot the missiles, but Blanke ordered him to hold fire until his Marines found cover. Suddenly, one of the missiles went off. Receiving permission to fire, Kowalski set off a chain reaction on the rooftop. At the same time, an IED on the street blew up — all from one well-placed rifle shot.

Three hours later, Kowalski and the Marines below his rooftop position came under accurate sniper fire. Kowalski was on the gun and Reyes was observing as incoming rounds cracked around their heads. "You hear the sonic crack of the bullet first, then a real faint thump of the muzzle report out in

the city," said Kowalski, who was beginning to zero in on the enemy sniper when he heard a round crack next to his left ear.

"You can tell when it's real close," said Kowalski, who rolled off the gun and told Reyes to lay as flat as he could. The hunters had now become the hunted. It was then Reyes said, "You've got blood all over you."

"I felt my ear, and sure enough, the SOB had grazed my ear," said Kowalski, who is now missing a fingernail-sized piece of flesh out of his ear.

April 13: "Took random mortar and small arms fire. They really tried to hit the tanks." Kowalski saw three guys with RPGs run across an alley about 780 yards away. Holding a three-and-a-half-mil lead, he dropped the last guy in line. Later than night, a 60mm mortar bomb fell on the rooftop where Kowalski and Reyes were manning an observation post on a rooftop in Fallujah.

"I never even heard the mortar tube go off. I have no idea where it came from. It was just like a magical mortar round fell out of the sky," said Kowalski, who passed the whole thing off as a "just another day at work."

April 14: "It started getting pretty quiet. The Army started using psychological warfare. Trucks with huge speakers blared messages to the insurgents during the day, and blasted rock music at night." To make sure nobody slept, AC-130 Spectre gunships pounded enemy positions all night long.

April 15: "Reyes and I rotated to the battalion COC and then back to the forward operating base to pick up our packs. Not much activity when we returned to our observation post. Just one RPG fired into each flank. Enemy activity significantly reduced."

April 16: "Sergeant Gerald Hooey, sniper team leader in 'Seminole Bravo,' and his partner, Corporal Charles I. Cartwright, showed up with a Quick Reaction Force to back-clear buildings in our sector." When they joined Kowalski in his rooftop

position, someone started taking pot shots at them.

As an RPG round sailed over their heads, Cartwright asked Kowalski if he had ever seen any activity in a minaret tower about 500 yards across the street. As he answered, "No," Kowalski saw a muzzle blast from one of the slit windows in the tower and heard the crack of a round over his head.

Kowalski called Lt. Blanke, who was in the area. He ordered one of his Javelin teams to take a shot, but the missile hit the tower off-center and bounced off the thick walls of the tower, but Kowalski and Blanke were able to coordinate an M-1A1 tank shot.

"As soon as I heard the tank say it was firing its main gun, the sniper poked the barrel of his gun out the window," chuckled Kowalski. No competition: A 120mm tank round always trumps a 7.62 x 39mm AK-47 round.

Mosques are granted protected status due to their religious and cultural significance, however, when insurgents violate the sanctity of the mosque by using the structure for military purposes, the site loses its protected status.

That afternoon a pretty bad sandstorm hit as 2nd



USMC photo by Corporal Nolan J. Kowalski

Mosque in downtown Fallujah, being used by enemy snipers, was hit by a Javelin missile and an M-1A1 tank round.

Continued on page 72

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OPERATION

The Mining Of Haiphong Harbor And The Ending Of The Vietnam War

BY H. DENNY DAVIS



Actually, it was a piece of cake. The nine planes were catapulted off the aircraft carrier *Coral Sea*. They flew barely above the waves. Just before the target, they went up to 500 feet. Over the target, they dropped their payloads: 35 pieces of naval ordnance. Very close to the muddy water, 35 strange parachutes deployed. There was no explosion. No one was hurt. Nothing was damaged. The payloads disappeared silently beneath the water.

Only then did sporadic anti-aircraft fire begin. But the American pilots were now leaving at full throttle. The mission had no losses.

Nearly 85% of Communist war materiel stopped flowing into North Vietnam — and nearly 100% of its petroleum. Two weeks later, the North Vietnamese stopped shooting back at the U. S. Navy. A few weeks later, the Communists began to run out of SAMs, the dreaded surface-to-air missiles, so deadly to our planes.

Six months after this flight, peace negotiations resumed in earnest. After two more weeks, America's Vietnam War ended.

This mission was Operation Pocket Money: The mining of Haiphong Harbor, in North Vietnam, 8 May 1972. It was a day of might-have-beens. It could have been the Day America Won the War. After the peace treaty, the U. S. Navy swept the mines in Haiphong Harbor.

The North Vietnamese had no idea what to do about them.

Neither did their Russian friends.

Under-reported and under-appreciated at the time, the mission had all the elements of a great war story: Bold, untested strategy. New tactics. High-tech ordnance. Secrecy. Surprise. And an incredible foul-up in communications.

"With four big mines hanging from the wings, it was like flying with your speed brakes out," recalled one of the pilots, Capt. David Moss. "We proceeded to the target in silence. Each pilot was reviewing procedures and switches over and over again.

"You see, none of us had ever dropped a mine before." ¹ Haiphong is a small city, just upriver from the Tonkin Gulf. It was the main seaport in North Vietnam. For seven years the American Joint Chiefs of Staff had tried to persuade their civilian bosses to let them mine that harbor. U. S. Intelligence knew 85% of war material, and all oil, came through this port.

The civilian leadership was adamant: Haiphong was a no-bomb zone. Concerns were that mining might bring China into the war — or sink neutral shipping. In March 1972, the North Vietnam Army invaded South Vietnam, dropping all pretense that the Communist soldiers were South Vietnamese rebels. Less than two months after the invasion, on 4 May, President Richard Nixon, on his own, decided to mine Haiphong. He dealt directly with the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Thomas Moorer. Nixon made Moorer

POCKET MONEY



Associated Press

Three Gruman A-6 Intruders, as pictured above but carrying four mines, and six A-7E Vought Corsair IIs, which also carried mines, dropped their deadly load in Haiphong — stopping flow of war materiel into North Vietnam.

promise not to tell Melvin Laird, the Secretary of Defense. Nixon feared a leak.²

The Navy was ready with unorthodox tactics, some quite new. The mines would be laid by carrier-based aircraft. The planes would have no fighter escort. The attack aircraft, on their own, were to sneak in under enemy radar. Missile cruisers would provide the only covering fire.

The commander of Task Force 77 was Rear Admiral Damon W. Cooper. He wrote:

"I was aboard the *Enterprise*. Rear Admiral Howie Greer was aboard the *Coral Sea*, from which the mining aircraft were launched ... Wing Commander Capt. Roger Sheets led the mission. Each of the three attack squadrons on the *Coral Sea* was asked to provide its three best pilots for the mining mission. The force consisted of three A-6 Grumman Intruders, and six A-7E Vought Corsair IIs. The Intruders were led by Capt. Sheets. He chose the aircraft because it had a two-man crew, and less complex avionics than the Corsair. The Corsairs were led by Commander Len Giuliani."³

Moss told the present writer: "I was commander of VA-94 on the *Coral Sea*. My operations officer was Lt. Commander Harvey Eikel. He and I, and Air Wing Commander Sheets, were called up to meet with the skipper of the carrier, Captain (later Admiral) Bill Harris. He ordered us to come up with a plan. The majority of the technical work was done by Commander Eikel. He had one of the finest analytical minds

in the attack aviation community. We were specifically briefed to remain below 1000 feet."

Haiphong is six miles upriver. The French had dredged a ship canal through tidal mudflats to the sea. Mines had to be placed away from the docks, to avoid hitting neutral ships. Moss estimates the mines were dropped six miles downstream, in the dredged channel.

Admiral Greer was later asked, what if the pilots found ships transiting the channel?

"Had there been ships there, they would be moving," he told this writer. "The commander of the mission was empowered to make a decision. He could make a pass, then double back and drop. We think the British and the Russians got wind of our plan. They may have ordered their ships to stay away."⁴

Moss said Sheets's squadron, VMA 224, was to penetrate the furthest up the channel. "Our Corsairs were the new Model E, the only one capable of a true system drop. We were capable of outstanding accuracy."

He said the Corsairs "picked a prominent point of land on the east side of the roads, as our system update point. Harvey Eikel figured the optimum coverage and drop point for each aircraft ... The plan was to have simultaneous release from all aircraft, to prevent land observers from plotting the mine field."

Eikel recalls: "To get the desired random mine pat-

tern, each aircraft had its own offset aim point and intermine spacing."

Admiral Cooper said the mines chosen were a mixture of Mark 52s and Mark 55s. According to published Navy specs, the 52 is nine feet long. It weighs more than 1262 pounds. When it is 18 feet below the water surface, a hydrostatic switch arms the mine, the clock delay, and the sterilizer (which eventually turns the mine off). The clock delay can be set at from one hour up to 90 days. The mine can be configured to detonate from the magnetic field of a ship; or from the water pressure created by a ship passing by.

The Mark 55 is even bigger. It carries more than 1200 pounds of explosives. It has the same triggering and clock features.

"The drag count of all these weapons was the big concern, not their weight," Eikel told this writer.

"Even though they had aerodynamic fairings (configuration), the drag count was incredibly high compared to that of the low-drag bombs we normally carried."⁵

Moss said the pilots stood down from flying the day before the mission, to assure that the right aircraft would be available, and to give the ordnance crews time to check to assure system reliability.

In the Gulf was the U. S. Seventh Fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral William Paden Mack. He had a long-standing plan, ready to go. But an unexpected hitch developed.

Mack wrote later: "I knew the President had given a go to the Joint Chiefs. It appeared in message traffic 24 hours before the drop. The Joint Chiefs told CincPac. Then the message traffic stopped. We waited. Nothing happened. Two hours before mining time, I did not have order from the Pacific Fleet Commander. What had happened was that CincPac, Adm. John S. McClain, Jr., was in an aircraft somewhere. He had not received the message to act... I knew the President was going to make a speech [at the precise moment of the drop]. I knew that if I did not act, the President would want me out of there. If he changed his mind, and I had dropped the mines, I would be out of there anyway.

"Finally I queried Admiral McCain. He replied, 'Yes, go ahead.' The fleet command encoded his message to be sent to me.

"After the planes were in the air, I got authority from the fleet commander."⁶

Captain Moss recalled the day of the mission:

"By this time, everyone on the carrier was aware of the mission. As we went to the flight deck, we were actually cheered by some of the flight deck crew. Our ordnance and electronics technicians knew their planes were going to make a little history."

One mishap marred the launch, Captain Moss recalls. "As the first of the Intruders was catapulted, the parachute of one of the mines deployed. It was ripped off by the wind. Blinky Sheets took his plane far ahead of the ship to jettison that mine, on safe, in deep water. As we were catapulted off, we

made our rendezvous with him."

Then a second unsettling event occurred. "Out of the haze, five miles aft of the carrier, loomed the Russian trawler [electronic spy ship] that always shadowed our carrier. We were all very heavy, low, slow; and still on the inside of the turn. All we could do was keep on turning, toward the trawler. We flew right over her. So much for secrecy and surprise. We were sure the trawler would radio the beach, telling what they thought we were carrying. I think the trawler's name was *Gidrefon*."

This was the first time a cruiser "flew cover" for an aircraft mission. A free-fire zone was set up for surface-to-air missiles from the cruisers. There were two cruisers with Talos missiles in the Gulf, the *Chicago* and the *Long Beach*. The range of the Talos, from 20 to 40 miles off the coast, would permit engagement of an enemy fighter well before he

could engage the strike aircraft. The low, flat terrain permitted a clear radar look up the Red River Valley. There would be no attempt to identify friendly or enemy aircraft. Any plane above 1000 feet was fair game.

Captain Arthur M. Osborne wrote: "As the strike aircraft passed over the *Chicago* at very low altitude, MiGs were detected by radar. Four planes were heading southeast toward the strike force.

"The *Chicago* locked on with fire control radar and fired a salvo of Talos missiles. The lead MiG disap-

peared from the radar screen. The others retired to the northeast. Each time MiGs attempted to approach the target area, illumination by radar was sufficient to cause them to turn away. MiGs proved no threat..."⁷

The planes flew at 350 miles an hour, Moss recalled. The flight to the drop site would have taken about 20 minutes.

The navigation and mine-dropping were automated, run by computers. Surprise was complete, despite the trawler. Still, the pilots faced a daunting task, dropping 35 mines, each 10 to 12 feet long, into a channel 300 feet wide.

Moss faced a special challenge, Eikel recalled. "Dave's inertial system was down. He put his mines in the channel manually, by just flying wing on the rest of the division."

Moss recalls: "My most vivid pre-drop memory was trying to stay at a minimum of 500 feet above the water. That was to allow time for the parachute to deploy and slow down the mine. Otherwise it would break up on impact."

"There was no ground fire until the aircraft pulled up to 500 feet for the drops," Admiral Cooper recalled.

Captain Moss agreed. "As we approached Haiphong their radar came up. We were getting indications they were painting us on their scopes. Some of us got indications SAMs were in the air. At that time, Sam IIs were very ineffective below 1000 feet. Unless they actually saw you and tracked you, you were pretty safe. We spread out. Each flew his own mission. We all got good updates.

"Almost simultaneously, we turned to our pre-determined attack headings."

Admiral Cooper said, "The first mine was in the water at



Planes carrying mines were catapulted off the aircraft carrier *Coral Sea* on 8 May 1972. Civilian leadership had refused to allowing mining of Haiphong Harbor for fear of bringing China into the war.

U.S. Navy

0900 hours, exactly the same time as President Nixon went on the air ... It was a well-planned and executed mission, timed to perfection."

It was 2100 hours in Washington. President Nixon went on the air. He said he had acted solely in defense of South Vietnam against invasion, and to protect the lives of 60,000 Americans. He gave neutral ships 72 hours to get out of Haiphong Harbor. Then the mines would become armed.

The mines also were programmed to disarm, or sterilize, themselves: The Mark 52s after 100 days, the Mark 55s after 200 days. President Nixon did not reveal this. Apparently the North Vietnamese did not know this, until press accounts explained the need for reseeding, the following December.

Captain Moss recalled the getaway: "I looked ahead about one mile and saw one of my pilots, Lt. John Hayes, jinking [taking evasive action]. He was brought under fire from the beach. An East German freighter was directly in his path.

"Several members of the crew shot at Lieutenant Hayes with automatic weapons," Capt. Moss recalled. Ordinarily, the pilot would simply soar out of range. But if the lieutenant went above 1000 feet, the Chicago would fire a Talos at

him. Even if the cruiser were warned off, the plane would be a target for an enemy SAM, very effective above 1000 feet.

"I saw the pilot raise his nose slightly and fire a quick burst over the ship as he approached it, to make them put their heads down," Moss recalled.

All this happened in a very few seconds. "Later, Lt. Hayes was accused [by the Communists] of firing at a neutral ship and killing a crewman. If any fire hit that freighter, it was from the North Vietnamese shore batteries. I mention this only to illustrate attitudes at the time. We had as nearly a perfect mission as possible. (But some) people in Washington zeroed in on a lieutenant, and accused him of killing a neutral, just because some East German diplomat said so."

Admiral Mack wrote, "The 27 ships in the harbor made no effort to leave... All traffic into North Vietnam stopped, except across the Chinese border. Within 10 days there was not a missile or shell being fired at us from the beach. The North Vietnamese ran out of ammunition, just as we had said they would."

The only firestorm came in the editorials of the *New York Times*. "The entire history of interdiction of sea routes... demonstrates they are impractical... If the mining succeeds without retaliation by the Soviet Union and China, the result would not materially affect the outcome of the North Vietnam offensive... The bulk of North Vietnam's war supplies enter not from the sea but from China via road and rail. Mr. Nixon's escalation can only weaken this country internally and discredit it abroad ... Congress should cut off funds for further military operations," an editorial said.

A *Times* columnist, Tom Wicker, wrote, "Can the Soviets really acquiesce in an American order not to enter Haiphong?"⁹

The White House already knew the answer was yes. In the Map Room, within 24 hours after the bombing, Foreign Affairs Advisor Henry Kissinger met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.

"Dobrynin announced his government had instructed

him to read an official note," wrote Nixon later. "It turned out to be a relatively mild protest. The next day, they discussed gifts the two chiefs of state should exchange at the [upcoming] Summit."¹⁰

The Russians estimated Hanoi had enough supplies for two or three months.¹¹ Sure enough, three months after the mining, Nixon recalled later, private diplomatic channels became active. For the first time, the Communists seemed genuinely interested in reaching a settlement. Peace negotiations resumed 27 November, in Paris. In December, negotiations stalemated. The earlier mines had begun to sterilize themselves. Did the Communists know this? The Navy reseeded the channel with fresh live mines.

The next month, a preliminary peace agreement was signed. The North Vietnamese asked the U. S. to sweep the mines. Minesweeping began 27 February 1973. The sweeping was halted that same night. There had been a disagreement in the peace talks. Within 24 hours of the suspension of the sweep, the issues were resolved, wrote Rear Admiral Brian McCauley.¹²

Minesweeping was stopped once more, 17 April 1973, because of difficulties over Laos and Cambodia.

There was no more mine-sweeping until the final peace treaty was signed June 12.

Five months later, over Nixon's veto, Congress passed the Executive War Powers Act. It forbade the President to conduct warfare without prior Congressional approval.

A North Vietnamese colonel, Bui Tin, told the rest of the story, in an interview with an American civil rights activist years later. "When Nixon stepped down because of Watergate, we knew we could win. Pham Van Dong, prime minister of North Vietnam, said of Gerald Ford, 'He is the weakest president in U. S. history... Even if you gave him candy, he wouldn't dare intervene in Vietnam again.' We tested his resolve by attacking Phuoc Long in January of 1975. When Ford kept the B-52s in their hangers, our leadership decided on a big offensive."¹³

The Communists again invaded South Vietnam. America did nothing. The Communists took over the country.

Time has enriched our perspective. The thesis of this article is that the mining of Haiphong was a decisive factor that brought a cease-fire; that the U. S. should have done it seven years earlier; and that more of the same would have produced a happier ending in Southeast Asia. ☞

(1) Captain (Retired) David L. Moss, letter to the author, Nov. 10, 1995.

(2) Tom Wells, *The War Within*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994; p. 541

(3) Vice-Admiral (Retired) Damon W. Cooper, letter to the author, Aug. 22, 1983.

(4) Admiral (Retired) Howard Greer, phone conversation with the author, Sept. 8, 1998

(5) Commander Harvey Eikel, letter to the author, Aug. 1, 1996

(6) Vice-Admiral (Retired) William Paden Mack, "As I Recall," *Proceedings of the U. S. Naval Institute*, August 1980.

(7) Captain Arthur M. Osborne, "Air Defense of the Mining of Haiphong," *Proceedings*, September 1974.

(8) "Mr. Nixon's Brinkmanship," *New York Times*, lead editorial, May 10, 1972.

(9) "The Real Decisions," Tom Wicker, *New York Times*, May 11, 1972.

(10) Richard M. Nixon, *No More Vietnams*, Arbor House, New York, 1985, p. 147.

(11) "Moscow's Man in Street is Curious and Expectant," Theodore Shabab, *New York Times*, May 22 1972.

(12) Rear Admiral Brian McCauley, "Operation End Sweep," *Proceedings*, March 1974, p. 19.

(13) "How North Vietnam Won the War," an interview by Minnesota attorney Stephen Young, *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 3, 1995, p. A10.

Don't Go To Hell!

*"If We Want to Cut Off Your Head, or Your Balls, We'll Do It,"
Said the Muj Commander*

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

Patrick Chauvel's take on the War in Iraq should be evaluated with the following considerations:

Downside:

He's French.

He's a journalist.

Upside:

He's seen more combat than just about any man alive except Robert K. Brown.

He is not an unfriendly observer.

He's not trying to save his career by telling the boss what he wants to hear.

In short, this is just about the most unbiased, informed, evaluation of the war you're likely to read. That doesn't necessarily mean all his conclusions are correct, but it does make them worth careful consideration.

— Editor

After several weeks of trying to get into Northern Iraq from Turkey, we got tired of waiting.

"It took me twelve weeks," one U.S. photojournalist told us. Bored with the humdrum runaround, we decided to go to Paris to meet other contacts, to see if we could get in another way.

Patrick Chauvel, famed French combat photojournalist screeched up to the hotel on the Champs Elysee in leathers, on his beloved motorcycle. His wiry frame seemed agitated, on the run, on constant guard. A few whiskeys put him in the mood to give us info on how to get into Iraq.

SOF publisher Robert K. Brown and Chauvel had met in Surinam in 1997, when Chauvel helped SOF contact French authorities. He agreed this time to tell us how to get into Iraq, or as it happened, warning us to stay out.

"To drive in Iraq now is very dangerous because the Americans don't control it at all. No way," he said. "I won't go back.

"You used to be able to go into Amman and then you take that flight into Baghdad International. You have a bus that takes you from the airport to this parking lot that is under protection and then a good taxi waiting for you, because the airport road is not very good.



SFC Johancharles Van Boers, 55th Signal Company, Combat Camera, Fort Meade, Maryland.

TSgt James Monk from the 1st Combat Camera Squadron documents soldiers from 1st Platoon, Apache Troop, 2-5 Cav, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav Div as they enter and clear their objective during combat operation in Fallujah on 9 Nov. 2004, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"You'll Get Attacked"

"You could get attacked because the road is attacked twice a day. Whoever you are, you can be hit, but if you take an Iraq driver, they won't attack your car, because they won't know you're inside. If you're in a humvee or something like that, you'll get attacked.

"You used to be able to take the road from Amman to Baghdad, but now you can't. You've got Mujahudeen checkpoints along the road. You've got the Blackhawk helicopters passing over you, and you've got the guys with the RPGs making a roadblock fifty meters away."

"Why doesn't the Blackhawk wipe them out?" RKB asked

"Sometimes the Blackhawk comes and wipes the checkpoints out, and then you've got another checkpoint. They've (The Blackhawks) got to be careful because they've (The Muj) got those rockets and they're good with them."

"I covered Fallujah, Najaf, all those places, but not the north. I went with the Americans — the First Cav, but I felt safer with the Mujahideen."

"How did you connect with the Mujahideen?" RKB was intrigued.

"It's easy," Chauvel said. "Walk into Fallujah and you're surrounded with 300 of them with guns."

"But you're not an American?" RKB nodded.

"That's right."

"So they treated you alright?"

"The fighters, yeah. When they saw my passport they said it was okay. But even if you are French now, it's not safe. They are fed up. They just don't want any foreigners any more."

"These guys are really sophisticated. The ignorant call them 'ragheads'. They've got great comms, with sat phones, computers and radios. And they've built great intel."

A Test for Americans

"At the beginning, they would attack a convoy as a test for Americans' reactions. It would look like a stupid attack, with no real meaning except killing Americans, but there was more to it. If you look 150 times a day at a pattern, they would make hits on Americans in chosen places, to see the reaction of where the helicopter would come, how much time it would take, how they would evacuate the wounded."

"They watched closely how the Americans worked, and then they would compare that with different commanders on their computers. "Now they know how to plan. They have first, second, and third attack patterns. They know which base the Americans are going to come out from, and they'll attack them on the way out, and on the way in."

"I've seen them. They don't run any more. They used to hit and run. Now they wait."

"They hold their ground with more men and more guns."

The big difference is that before, they thought, 'we must hurt the Americans, whatever the result.' Now they think they are going to win. It's not even courage. They say, 'Wait a minute, this could work.'

The Unbelievable is Happening

"So, now they are getting a strategy of driving the Americans out, and even believing they could control the country. Suddenly they are realizing in their head that the unbelievable was happening; they never thought they could hurt the Americans, but now they think of winning."

RKB asked, "When do you think this change in attitude took place?"

"You can feel it since about six months. Like in Baghdad, you don't see the Americans any more. They see the Americans travel real fast in Baghdad, that they're not on foot any more like they used to be. No way. So the Iraqis can see that they have taken the city back. There are places that the Americans don't even go any more."

"I have a French photographer friend that took the picture of when they hit that plane. The Mujahideen went into his hotel at two in the morning, and said, 'Come with us.' They went to the airport with three cars, where they waited in the cars and made a film. Three Blackhawks passed right next to them. I think a airplane comes in and the guys put on their masks to hide their faces. They open the trunk. The rocket whizzes. They hit the plane, put everything back, and the three cars were gone."

"If the Americans don't put in more troops, they're going to loose this," he predicted. They need ten times more troops. There's no way they are going to win with such few troops."

"In Fallujah, the fighters were more than ten thousand. The Americans killed a thousand. So what? These guys just take off, then leave about two thousand to fight and then they come back."

Connected by Tunnels

"They need 20-30,000 men to control Fallujah, and even then they would be attacked ten-twenty times a day. All the houses are connected by tunnels. You can go all the way through Fallujah underground, all the way around the city without getting through the streets."

"So the Americans move in and get shot out. The Americans told me they can only search one house out of ten because they don't have the manpower. So if somebody shoots at them from their houses, they'll call in the Air Force and destroy it."

"They'll move forward and then they'll be attacked from behind. They'll move behind, and they'll be attacked from the other side. These guys don't care about dying. They've got lots of weapons from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, all over the place. The stuff they had here already, it's incredible. They have arms left from the U.S. during the Iraq-Iran war, and from the Soviet Union."

"In Baghdad, the Americans don't hold five boroughs. They don't even go in. One neighborhood they don't control is five hundred meters from the Green Zone, right opposite the river."

"The Americans have lost the support of



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Robert Liddy

Soldiers of the 115th Military Police Company (a National Guard unit from Rhode Island) prepare to enter a home in Fallujah, Iraq, believed to be the site of a weapons cache, 17 July 2003.

the locals. Some of the American soldiers are idiots, or their commanders are. There's a joke in Iraq, if you hear loud banging on your door in the middle of the night that sounds as if someone is going to tear the door down, run, it's the Americans. That's how they conduct their intel ops. They pull the men and women out and threaten them to give information as to where an insurgent might be. Most times it's a wild goose chase. The British do it differently. They find the local religious chief and have him go with them, and find a local woman to go with them if they need to ask the women. They knock on the door and have the elder ask questions. Of course, if one escapes and they think he is an insurgent, they shoot him as soon as he's away from other civilians in the houses.

"You often hear the American soldier yell, I got the mother f— in a loud voice, as if they had just hit a jackpot. The locals don't understand that. One of theirs has been killed.

"And the insurgents are clever. They take advantage of the Americans. They start sniping in the middle of the market, knowing the Americans will probably respond and kill some innocent. Then the Americans become the criminals in the eyes of the villagers. The British wait until the sniper is away from the civilians, then blow him away.

"Of course all Americans are not that way. One lieutenant thinks he's Daniel Boone. He helps the townspeople, he teaches, he wants to build schools and bridges.

Fedayeen Checkpoints

"You have the Fedayeen checkpoints. In full daylight



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson

Members of Company C, 1/505 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division arrive and set up security at the Fallujah Youth Center for the weekly meeting with the local sheiks and military officials discussing the changes and problems on 4 March 2004 in Al Fallujah, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

they are in the street with their RPGs stopping the cars. You can see the Americans patrolling three hundred meters away in full daylight and they can do nothing. These guys have about 150,000 armed men in Baghdad that have not even started to fight yet.

Continued on page 58

Combat is in Chauvel's Blood

"My father's unit was with General LeClerc. He was detached first to the Big Red One, then to the 82d Airborne during the Normandy offensive. He knew the area real well. He was part of those little groups of French Commandos.

"My father often tells the story of an American Colonel who said, 'Hey, Frog, get in the jeep, and let us know if there are Germans in that bush.' The next thing he remembers was waking up in London in the hospital. The Germans were there. The jeep took a hit by friendly fire in the attack. My mother worked for the OSS as a member of the Resistance, helping pilots in France and hiding them. I heard that she was decorated by the British."

Chauvel is son of the great reporter Jean-François Chauvel and grandson of ambassador Jean Chauvel.

"My great uncle, General Peshcoff, was a Russian with only one arm and spectacles," Chauvel said. "He was adopted by my grandfather in 1914, in the trenches. My grandfather was a captain in the artillery, and he became friends with this seventeen-year-old Russian Foreign Legionnaire, who was an orphan.

"In those days you could adopt your friend. He became a general and governor of Lebanon, so he was the pride of the Foreign Legion, where they say, 'you're just an orphan from Russia, and you end up Governor of Lebanon.'

"Every year the French Foreign Legion has a class promotion, like the end of the year at West point. The French Foreign Legion has a museum with the names of all who died. My great uncle, a famous commander in the Legion, got his name in the museum, where they have a display of his sword and his hand."

The Introduction to Chauvel's book, *Witness of the Dark Side of History* begins, "Chauvel, who has covered many conflicts, including the Six-Day War, Vietnam, Angola, Cambodia, Ireland, Eritrea, Lebanon and Afghanistan, the ex-Yugoslavia and Chechnya, has been to Iraq six times since the invasion in 2003.

"He was wounded in Iran and again in Cambodia, by an exploding shell; in Panama he was left for dead and lay on the ground for four hours with a bullet in his stomach. He has been taken hostage a number of times. Once he found himself facing a firing squad. He was shipwrecked with some boat people off Haiti.

"And yet he always set off again, alone, fascinated by this other side of the world's history — a side of constant violence and suffering, but also of friendship and solidarity."

"I never got a Purple Heart," he laughed in a raspy voice coarsened by years of heavy tobacco use. "I got a purple leg."

— MB

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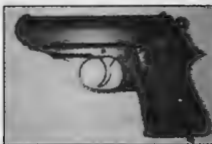
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"Most of their chiefs in Baghdad are Iraqi commanders. They are very angry because the U.S. fired them. One of the major mistakes the Americans made, and there were quite a few, was to dismantle the Iraq Army," Chauvel insisted.

"Some people said that Iraq Army dismantled itself, because everybody went home," RKB argued.

"Yes, but it was easy to call them back and pay them, 'cause they were the guys that were holding the country. You could have flushed out Saddam's generals and killed them. And the Police, you could clean it up slowly, but keep it. They were holding everything, the 800,000 military and 600,000 policemen, and you're going to replace that with 120,000 men. No way. No way. It's impossible. How many men are fighting men in the American army, sixty percent?" Chauvel asked

"No, at best fifteen percent," RKB said.

"So that makes what, 15,000 men, fighting hundreds of thousands of guys.

"Something is wrong in the U.S. command to let your men shoot an old man at a checkpoint, to shoot a man in a car with his kids. Any soldier in the world can do that if he has a bad commander.

He Didn't Know

"But a Brit commander would never let that happen. I don't think the Americans are ill-trained. When they shot and killed the cameraman on the Palestine hotel, we said, 'What the hell?' Everybody knew we had three hundred journalists in that hotel.

"Why does this tank commander shoot a man on a hotel where the press is? We talked to the commander. He didn't know the press was there. He didn't do anything wrong. He's with his men; he's responsible for his tank, he sees a man on a balcony going like this with a big thing on his shoulder. Bang!

"But why did his officers over him not tell him? This is what I want to know. This is where the press is. You have CBS, NBC. His officers knew exactly where the press was.

"When did this happen?"

"When the Americans came in Baghdad on the bridge. They hit the Marriott, they killed three press. We talked to the sniper. 'If they had told me this was a friendly building, no problem.'"

"That was definitely a breakdown in the chain of command."

"War is war. I am not surprised about Abu Ghraib. Torture happens everywhere. I am surprised there are pictures of it. That happens always. Everywhere. But pictures? What were these guys thinking? Come on. They get scared and become bad soldiers.

How Many Lives?

"They killed 2000 people in Fallujah, and then go to Najaf and do the same shit, and then go back to Fallujah. How much money is that going to cost?"

"And how many lives," RKB said.

"The weapon of mass destruction is the brain of Bush. It has made more harm to America around the Arab World, from every Arab country now, than any weapon of mass destruction.

"Why is democracy such a good example? I mean, it is impossible to have democracy in Iraq. They don't want

democracy. They need a father, a leader a strong leader. Saddam was a little too strong, but they don't want democracy. It's impossible. Hell will break loose."

"What was your personal reaction when you heard the U.S. was going to invade?" asked RKB.

"I thought they were right to get Saddam out, but the excuse was wrong. He had nothing to do with 9-11. The problem is it was based on a lie. Yes, get Sadaam out, but why not get Kim Il Sung out, and the son of Hafaz il Assad, and Arafat, and Sharon, and get everybody out? What are you going to find if you open that box? It was a very dangerous bet.

"Some of my French friends were ashamed that we didn't go along with our allies, but now they are saying 'Thank God! We'd have our boys being killed every day for nothing.'

Now They Don't Care

"The Iraqis are starting to hate every foreigner, whether an Australian photographer or an American contractor. The French and British photographers don't live in the Palestine Hotel where you have tanks and checkpoints; we live in a small hotel with no checkpoint at the entrance. But now the hostage takers are right in the lobby. They know your room number. They can pick you up any time.

"This is why I don't want to go back. They used to pick only on Americans and English, but now they don't care. They never killed a press guy but now they killed an Italian press guy, and cut this a lady aid worker in small pieces.

"You used to have 700 press people in Baghdad and you could say to yourself, I'm French, they know me.

"I asked one of the Mujahideen, 'What the fuck are you doing? You just took an Austrian?'

"The guy said 'We have a list of every hotel, of every room number. We know who and when someone is coming in. We know from Amman who's coming in. We have guys inside the Green Zone. We know what operation is happening. We know everything, Patrick. If we want to take you Patrick, we'll take you. If we want to cut your balls or your head off, we'll do it.' They know. Their cousin is in the Green Zone That's how they put this bomb in the coffee shop.

"I can't go in the Green Zone. I have to call the American PR, and then I have to come with a taxi. I have to stop half a mile to walk in the sun. I can't even take my camera outside. I have to take the battery out and leave it in a box and that's the Iraq security. I have to then walk 200 meters and I have another Iraqi security.

All The Passes

"They'll check me in; they'll phone, radio, search me completely, and half naked, I'll get to the American checkpoint. Then I'll get in. These Mujahideen got in with a car with a bomb, inside the heart of the Green Zone, where you have the American Embassy, the coffee shop and the contractors.

"The car had US army plates, and they have a badge. And Boom! They had all the passes. Infiltration. The Americans are recruiting Iraq police who infiltrate.

"How big is an Iraq family, three thousand people? It's like in Yugoslavia. Everybody knows everybody. They're from the same neighborhoods. The police officer from a poor neighborhood of the Mujahideen needs the money. He needs the job. What do you think his brother does? He's the guy firing the mortar at you. ❌

Dr. Martin Brass is a longtime SOF contributor.

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TEXT & PHOTOS BY
GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

The AA-12 and AA-12 CQB could very well have a dramatic effect on the Global War On Terrorism. (top) Bill Mitchell, of MPS, fires the AA-12 one-handed to illustrate how controllable it is.

Throughout the history of firearms, those firing multiple projectiles have always proven enormously effective at close-to-medium ranges out to 50 yards and beyond. This was especially true where cannons fired musket-size shot instead of cannon balls, although the latter was also deadly against enemy forces in formation.

Because of the advantages of the shotgun in close-quarter battles and the great fear it instilled in those who came up against it, this family of weapons continued to evolve through the centuries. Double-barrel shotguns were used with great success during the 19th Century and the slide action (or pump) repeating shotgun began its legendary career with the U.S. Military during the Philippine Insurrection against Moro terrorists. Its reputation was reinstated in the "trench warfare" of World War I, with the



12-gauge Model 97 Winchester.

Continuing its service during World War II, the Model 97 was joined by the more modern pump-action Winchester Model 12 and the semi-automatic Browning, this time in the jungles of the Pacific Theater. During the Vietnam War, a number of pump and semi-automatic shotguns were pressed into service by the U.S. military, many of which remain in inventory.

Law-enforcement agencies throughout America have adopted and issued even more shotguns than the military. Often referred to as "riot" guns, these many models have closely paralleled their military counterparts, usually having barrels 18 inches or so in length. The shotgun is equally popular with America's prison system, not to mention millions of Americans who want an utterly capable weapon for home defense.

While relatively few pump-action shotguns are issued by the military today, semi-automatic models still are, such as the Benelli Model 10-14. Like virtually all other shotguns used by the military over the years, this one was based on a civilian shotgun used for hunting and competition shooting. However, it was equipped with a retractable butt stock and a pistolgrip especially for the United States Marine Corps.

The Atchisson Assault-12

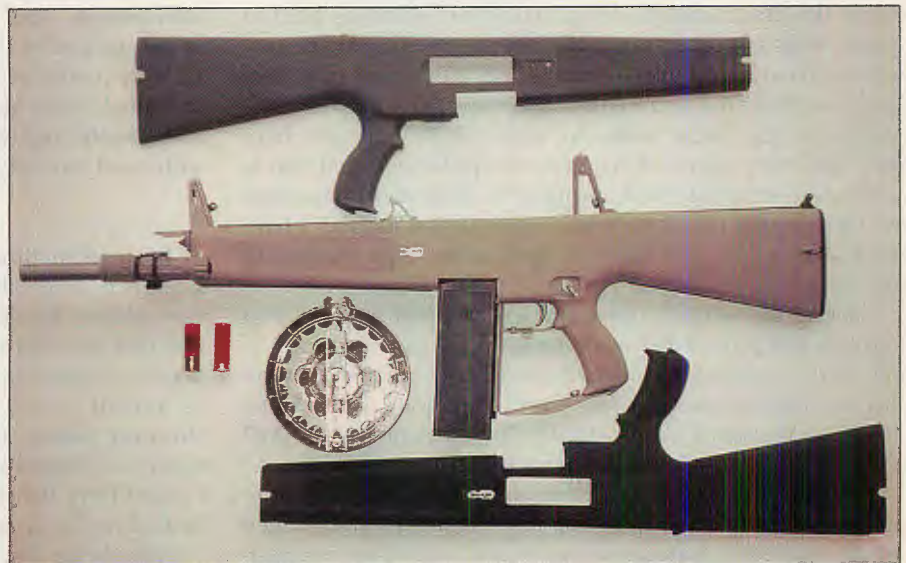
More than a quarter of a century ago the late Max Atchisson developed a unique combat shotgun called the Atchisson Assault-12 (AA-12). A selective-fire weapon, the AA-12 fired from an open bolt and used either an 8-round box magazine or a 20-round drum. Atchisson also developed a prototype 40-round drum that was housed in a box to conceal exactly what it looked like.

Using a revolutionary design, the AA-12 had a straight-line synthetic stock with an integral pistol grip consisting of right and left sides that mated together when assembled. Being gas operated, the gun used a long-stroke piston, and locked with a single vertical lug reminiscent of some sporting semi-automatic shotguns. On its exterior, the AA-12 somewhat resembled the AR-15 rifle, which obviously influenced it. The AA-12 fired at the rate of about 300 rounds per minute (RPM).

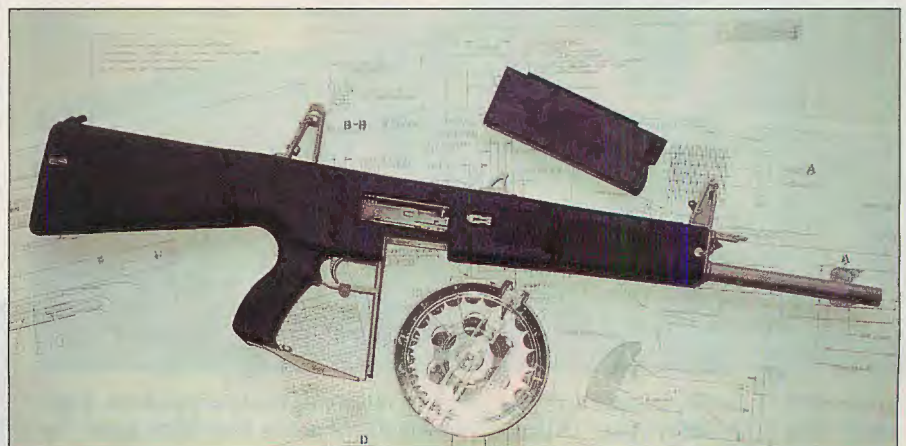
Max Atchisson demonstrated his



The original AA-12 (top) is seen with the shorter CQB version, along with both magazines. Both guns proved totally easy to control.



The AA-12 is available in a number of stock colors such as urban gray, desert tan and black, as well as OD green and various camouflage patterns.



The AA-12 lies on the originals drawings of the design furnished by Max Atchisson.

THE AUTO ASSAULT 12

AA-12 for several years, but the project didn't go anywhere, except in the hands of a con-artist who bilked several hundred people out of deposits on guns that were never produced. A few years later the AA-12 influenced the design of the Universal Sporting Automatic Shotgun-12 (USAS-12). Produced by DAEWOO, of South Korea, the USAS-12 used a 2-piece stock and fired from a closed bolt using a trigger system similar to that of the M16. When such guns were declared "destructive devices" no longer available to the public, production of them all but ceased.

Finally in 1987, Max Atchisson, broke and in danger of losing everything, sold the rights to the AA-12 to Mr. Jerry Baber, of MPS, Inc., in Tennessee. A brilliant engineer with a long history in the firearms business, Baber is also one of the world's foremost experts in high-precision cast steel parts. With the acquisition of the rights and patents came all of Atchisson's drawings of the AA-12, but not his AA-12 prototype.

Along with his partner, Boje Corneal, an equally talented German mechanical engineer, Jerry Baber began production of a small number of pre-production samples of the AA-12 for test purposes, using Atchisson's drawings. However, they soon discovered that the drawings were not to specification when the first complete AA-12 would not work, as built to print. Thus began an extensive redesign of the AA-12 that extended over an eighteen-year period with a total of no less than one hundred and eighty-eight (188) changes/improvements having been made to date. These changes have involved every aspect of the gun, except for one, and that is Atchisson's original recoil spring. One of the most important and interesting is the gas port, which is like nothing I have ever seen before. The name of the gun was also changed to the Auto Assault-12.

During the interim, Baber and Corneal had businesses to operate, and Jerry Baber made parts for 39 gun companies at his B&H Precision foundry. Among these companies were Barrett Mfg., Freedom Arms, North American Arms, Shilo, Smith & Wesson, Cobray, Atagua, Charter Arms, and RAMO Corp. Ronnie Barrett describes Jerry Baber as a "master caster."

In spite of their full schedules, Baber and Corneal continued work on the AA-12, finding more problems at each step of the way. After learning about a new state-of-the-art high-



Jerry Baber studies the slow-motion images of the AA-12 being fired. With this technology, the gun was finally perfected.

speed digital movie camera, Jerry Baber purchased it and a Savage Snail Bullet Trap to study the mechanism fired, in slow motion. This was the key to ironing out the final bugs in the gun and by the fall of 2004, 10 firing models of the AA-12 were produced. Several of these guns were demonstrated to United States Marine Corps officers with extremely favorable results, and tests are also scheduled for the Army with additional interest by the Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard.

How It's Made

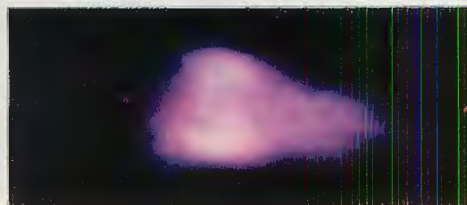
In spending three days with Jerry Baber and Boje Corneal I learned more about casting and production technology than almost anyone would want to know, and much of it required my sworn secrecy. What I can tell you is that most major components of the AA-12 are precision cast from exotic aircraft stainless steel, using the lost wax process. However, during this process is a separate and unique operation that insures a part that is about 99.9% finished. When I asked Jerry Baber who else in the world uses this method he told me he invented it and it is a closely guarded secret.

After being cast, the parts are gas forged to add integrity and strength. They then receive intermediate heat treatment before minor machining, and are then final heat-treated to an optimum Rockwell C hardness to insure optimum smoothness in operation and maximum wear. Much of the process is the same as that used in jet aircraft turbine technology.

Speaking of heat, the maximum temperature of the AA-12 has been measured at 256 F at the gas port and 150 F to the barrel. The glass-impregnated nylon stock will begin to melt at 450 F

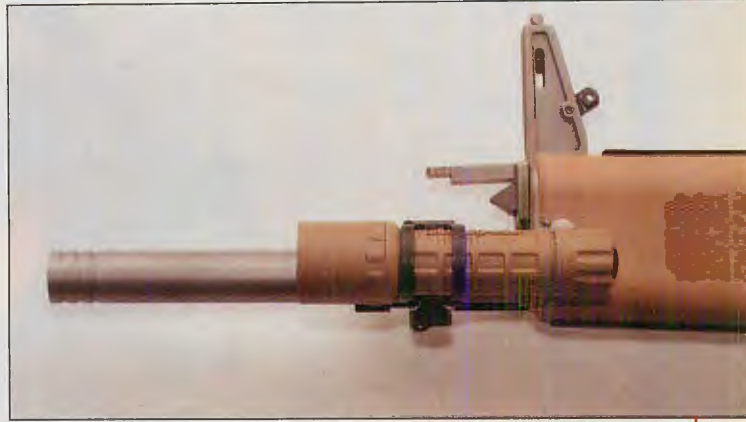


Empty hulls fly from a full-auto burst, with weapon remaining totally controlable. (right) Night-firing a 10-shot string of 12 gauge from the AA-12 in this time-lapse photo. The gun remained almost perfectly still, with 10 muzzle blasts looking like one.





Wax injections of the AA-12's sight tower and bolt result in perfect steel counterparts during the precision investment-casting process.



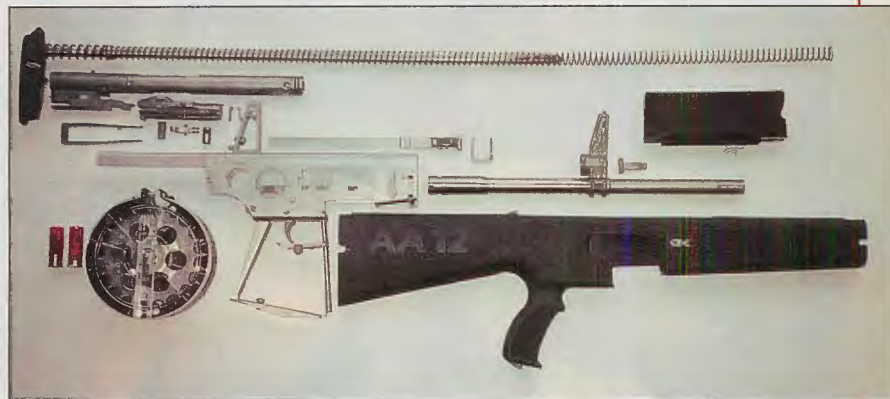
Here a SureFire Tactical Light is mounted on the AA-12, using an MSP Light Link with the ASAR 30mm ring. (below) The AA-12 is seen disassembled with both magazines. The gun rarely requires complete disassembly.

to 475 F degrees, with deformation beginning just past 375 F, so heat is not a factor with the gun.

Magazines

Like Max Atchisson's original design, the new AA-12 uses an 8-round box magazine and a 20-round drum, but are made of the same tough synthetic as the stock. While the new magazines resemble the original prototypes, many subtle improvements have been made to assure 100% reliability. In fact, Jerry Baber showed me cases of 400 AA-12 8-shot magazine bodies that were to be scrapped because of a single minor improvement that had been made. The 8-round box and 20-round drum are the only feed devices that will be offered for the gun, although a 32-round drum has been designed. A means of attaching two 8-round magazines side by side is not out of the question.

The magazines are inserted into a channel similar to that used on the Thompson SMG, and the magazine catch/release works like that of the M16 rifle. Pushing the



release with the right index finger allows the magazine or drum to fall free. Insertion of fully loaded magazines is easy even with the bolt forward.

Also like the 1928 Thompson SMG, the AA-12 uses a top-mounted cocking handle with a long extension that acts as a dust cover. At the front of the extension is a locking piece that locks it forward until pulled back with the palm of the support hand. This cocking handle does not reciprocate with the bolt and is pushed all the way back forward after cocking the bolt group to the rear. Mounted on the left side of the gun, the selector is moved to the forward position to allow the trigger to be pulled and it is moved to the rear to prevent the trigger from being pulled. An ambidextrous safety/selector is being considered.

Constant Recoil System

No, it doesn't kick — honestly. To all but eliminate felt recoil and movement of the AA-12 when fired, the gun uses what is called the "constant recoil" principal used by Mr. L. James Sullivan who also designed the AR-15 rifle for Eugene Stoner. Sullivan used the "constant recoil" system in the Ultimax LMG he designed for Chartered Industries of Singapore (CIS).

In the constant recoil system, the bolt group never bottoms out (slams into a fixed object) at the end of its rearward travel, but stops gradually against the long recoil spring.

Continued on page 75

AUTO ASSAULT 12 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	12 ga. (2-3/4").
Operation:	Long-stroke gas piston.
Type of Fire:	Open bolt, selective via trigger control.
Barrel Length:	13 inches to 18 inches.
Overall Length:	38 inches with 18 inch barrel.
Weight:	10.5 pounds with 18 inch barrel.
Feed Device:	8-round box or 20-round drum magazine.
Safety:	Thumb safety selector blocks trigger.
Sights:	(front) Protected post, adj. for elevation. (rear) Protected ring, adj. for W/E.
Stock:	Glass filled nylon available in most colors and camouflaged patterns.
Finish:	Matte stainless steel.



Hot News From Makers Of The Dead-On **Red-Dot** Sight

Aimpoint's High-Tech Help in the Global War On Terrorism!

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

Without a doubt, the most popular reflex sight issued to the U. S. Military is the Aimpoint Comp M2. Compact, light, and robust, the Comp M2 is also simple to use. In addition, this sight has a battery life of 10,000 hours and is waterproof to a depth of 75 feet. This is within normal deployment depth for U.S. Navy SEALs from a submerged submarine.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, Aimpoint's red-dot technology was conceived by Gunnar Sandberg, of Sweden, and it revolutionized optical-sight technology. Although that technology hasn't changed much in the years that have followed, it has continued to improve. I bought my first Aimpoint sight in the late 1970s and it was still working when I gave it to a friend 10 years later. Gunnar Sandberg remains an integral part of Aimpoint and has been a key player in taking the company to its present position. Today, Aimpoint makes a variety of sporting and competition red-dot sights, but it is the Aimpoint Comp Series that remains the flagship of the fleet.

Having superseded the Aimpoint Comp M, the M2 is available in two versions, the M2 and the ML2. Both models are identical in appearance and are adjustable for ON/OFF and brightness by rotating a knob, but the Aimpoint Comp M2's first two settings are for use with night vision devices (NVD) and are invisible to the naked eye. The commercial and law enforcement ML2 version is identical except for not having the NVD settings. Both have protected windage and elevation adjustments.

Neither having nor needing any focus adjustment, the Aimpoint Comp M2/ML2 also has no magnification. To use it requires only turning it on, looking through it at



(opposite) Aimpoint's new Comp M3 and 3X Extender are seen mounted on the ARES 5.56mm SHRIKE LMG. The extender is mounted on the new Quick-Flip Mount designed especially for it. (above) The 5.56mm brass and links fly as Geoff Herring fires his SHRIKE LMG from the shoulder using the Comp M3 and 3X Extender.

the target, putting the 4 minute of angle (MOA) red dot where you want the bullet to hit and pressing the trigger.

The first time I did any serious shooting with an Aimpoint Comp was from a Steyr AUG in about 1993. Not only did I own several AUGs, but my agency's SWAT unit had also adopted the selective-fire version of the weapon. I knew the AUG inside and out, but had never



This SWAT officer demonstrates how easy it is to remove the Aimpoint 3X Extender from its mount, leaving the Comp M3 in place.

been able to hit so fast with one as with the Aimpoint. Keeping both eyes open makes it even faster if one can master this simple technique.

Aimpoint 3X Extender

While the Aimpoint Comp has never had magnification, it does now. Aimpoint has just introduced a 3X Extender that uses a special mount on an M1913 rail behind the Comp M2/ML2. Called the Twist Mount, this

This close-up illustrates the relationship of the Aimpoint Comp M3 with the 3X Extender. The extender is locked in place on its Quick-Flip mount.

platform is made of the same tough 7075-T6 aircraft alloy along with steel components, and is held on the rail via a hex nut. The Twist Mount has a QD system for removal that is instant and is just as easy to replace, and works by simply depressing a lever and rotating the optic 1/4-turn counter-clockwise. The 3X Extender is then lifted off the Twist Mount and can be put in one's pocket for Close Quarter Battle (CQB) work using the Aimpoint Comp Sight. For extended ranges, the 3X is instantly put back on the Twist Mount and rotated clockwise to lock in place. The Twist Mount is also compatible with some night vision optics.

Because it is mounted to the rear of the Aimpoint



Comp, the 3X Extender has no bearing on zero. If the red dot is not centered in the viewing window, two vertical and horizontal screws move the extender into perfect alignment, also with no change of zero. Not limited to being used with the Aimpoint Comp, the 3X-tender can also be mounted behind other reflex optics that have no magnification, such as those from Eotech and Trijicon. It can also be used with Aimpoint's brand-new Comp Sight.

The Comp M3

Called the Comp M3, this new sight looks exactly like the Aimpoint Comp M2, but has a 2 MOA bright red dot for more precise shooting at extended ranges, especially when using the 3X Extender. The M3's adjustments are now 1/2 MOA and this sight is waterproof to twice the depth of the Comp M2, but even bigger news is that, because of advanced electronics, the M3 has a battery life of 50,000 hours. That's right, the M3's power source could last for an entire war. Introduced along with the Comp M3 is a new rubber "boot" that fits over the sight to offer additional protection. This boot is available in black and tan and will also work with the Comp M2 sight.

The A.R.M.S. QD ThrowLever Mount for the Aimpoint Comp is the #68. Made of 7075/T6 aircraft quality alloy, this mount was made specifically to fit the M1913 rail and guarantee return to zero when replaced in the exact position from which it was removed, all by simply rotating the patented locking ThrowLever.

The Quick-Flip

In addition to the Twist Mount that comes with Aimpoint's new 3X Extender, is a brand-new mounting system for this optic designed and manufactured by Sampson Mfg., Inc. Called the Quick-Flip, this mount attaches to an M1913 rail using an A.R.M.S. QD ThrowLever with or without a spacer. Simply depressing a pad unlocks the mount to instantly flip the 3X Extender to the side, allowing the Comp M2 or M3 to be used for CQB without magnification. Rotating the extender back up into position automatically locks it in place.

As this is written, the Quick-Flip exists only in prototype, but I was able to test one fairly extensively on the ARES Defense SHRIKE 5. 56™ NATO belt-fed LMG and it worked perfectly.



Wayne Novak uses his Aimpoint Comp ML2-equipped Bushmaster SuperLite Carbine during Gunsite's 223 Course.

Look for my in-depth report on the SHRIKE 5.56™ in SOF soon. The Quick-Flip should be available through Mounting Solutions Plus (MSP) as you read this, but it may not be for everyone.

Some operators like the ability to remove the Aimpoint 3X Extender and instantly replace it with a PVS14 NVD or other night optics using the same Twist Mount base. However one chooses to mount the 3X Extender, it amounts to a giant step forward in deploying the Comp M3. Several changes/improvements will undoubtedly be seen on the production version of the Quick Flip mount.

The bottom line is that the great Aimpoint Comp M2 has finally been outdone — by none other than Aimpoint itself! That's why Aimpoint continues to be the most prolific combat sight in the U.S. Military. If you demand the latest technology in a totally reliable, totally simple and totally effective optic, check out Aimpoint's new Comp M3 and 3X Extender. For information on all it fine optics, contact Aimpoint USA, Dept. SOF, 3989 Hwy 62 West, Ste. 1, Berryville, AR72616, phone: 877-246-7646 (www.aimpoint.com). ☒

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Lasergrips brought the speed, accuracy and security of heads-up, projected-index sighting to the world of handguns. Now the very same traits can enhance the AR15/M16, thanks to the introduction of the LG-525 by Crimson Trace.

The LG-525 is engineered to integrate cleanly into any A1 or A2 upper, following the same visual design lines as the factory grip. The unit replaces the stock grip in an installation that takes all of two minutes. The LG-525 housing is created from rugged polymer and is designed to take all the abuse an armed professional can offer. The housing is secured to the upper by a specially engineered elastomer that ensures repeatable accuracy and quick on/off capability. The laser is powered by one standard 123A, 3-volt lithium battery and is good for more than 20 hours constant on time. Just squeeze the grip to activate, relax your grip slightly to turn it off.



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BUFFER TECHNOLOGIES AR-15 HYDRAULIC BUFFER

The AR-restor from Buffer Technologies is a hydraulic recoil buffer designed to reduce felt recoil, improve accuracy and suppress bolt bounce.

The product addition (made by Enidine, a market leader in hydraulic energy absorbers) comes at a time when the popularity of the AR-15 (M4) assault rifle is growing due to increased military and law enforcement use. The AR-restor has easy, drop-in replacement installation and requires no weapons modifications. In addition to improving accuracy and performance, the buffer helps suppress bolt bounce, control fire rate and protect optics.



Buffer Technologies

P.O. Box 104903, Dept. SOF

Jefferson City, MO 65110

877-628-3337

www.buffertech.com

BLACKHAWK UNVEILS NIGHT-OPS

BlackHawk® Products Group, one of the leaders in tactical gear, has introduced "Night-Ops"™, a BlackHawk company dedicated to the development, production and marketing of new leading-edge technologies in illumination tools. The first production model for Night-Ops is the Gladius™, patent pending, a tactical 6-volt, high-intensity LED, multi-mode illumination tool for either hand-held, or weapons-mounted applications.

The Gladius is designed to meet the realities of tactical situations and close-quarter combat. A unique proprietary flex circuit allows the tail-cap switch to intelligently communicate with the power management system located in the front of the flashlight. The rotating tail cap uses a revolutionary non-mechanical enclosed switching design for one-hand operations. The switching is separated into two components; a familiar thumb-activated pushbutton tail cap and the new Gladius patented rotary dial, also thumb activated.



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The new A-5 tactical stock from McMillan Fiberglass combines all the most requested features of the entire A-series into one professional tactical rifle stock. Compared to their other A-series stocks, the A-5 uses a beavertail forearm that is wider and flat. The action and barrel sit lower for enhanced stability and the A-5 also uses the trim A-3 pistol grip. The dual-purpose butt hook is fully functional for either riding sandbags or controlling the rifle with the non-trigger hand. The A-5 can be made as light as 2.5-lbs., and different molds are available for Remington, Winchester, Sako 75, Sako A-series, Howa, Savage, Weatherby Mark V, and most custom bench-rest actions in both right-and left-hand configuration.



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SPECTER GEAR TACTICAL THIGH HOLSTER

This tactical thigh holster from Specter Gear is permanently attached to a vertically adjustable quick disconnect (QD) hanger strap to suspend the holster below the belt. The holster itself features six-layer construction, including a two-layer 1,000-denier Cordura outer shell for many years of grueling service. Two extra-wide leg straps, each imbedded with rubber stitching, comfortably secure Specter's holster to the operator for near-zero movement. An adjustable alloy thumb-break snap is standard equipment, and a quick release on the hanger strap allows you to attach and remove the holster without removing your belt. Available in black, olive drab or coyote tan. ✕

Specter Gear

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Visalia, CA 93292

559-635-1172

www.spectergear.com

SILVER CREEK'S BIONIC EAR

The Bionic Ear does for hearing what binoculars do for vision. Sound is captured in a curved dish and picked up by a microphone that feeds it through an amplifier to a pair of headphones.

The manufacturers, Silver Creek Industries, supplied SOF with two models for evaluation: The Bionic Booster, which is the smaller of the two models, and the Detect Ear, which features a three-level equalizer to filter out background noises of various frequencies. We tested both models near the SOF offices on a day when there was a mild breeze and traffic noise from the main road was light but fairly continuous. Our test required SOF publisher Robert K. Brown to walk away from me while I listened through the Bionic Booster to his footsteps on the asphalt surface of the parking lot. John Walker used a Bushnell Yardage Pro Laser Rangefinder to accurately measure the distance to RKB as he walked away.

When I could no longer hear footsteps, John noted the distance. RKB then walked perpendicular to his original path to determine the width of the arc in which his footsteps could be detected. In the weather and noise conditions that day, the Bionic Booster picked up footsteps at 75 yards, inside an arc of about 5 - 10 degrees. At a little more than 75 yards, allowing for the sounds of the breeze, I could still hear the Colonel speaking. We repeated the test with the larger Detect Ear model, which picked up footsteps at 100 yards, and voice at up to 130 yards, with about the same 5 - 10 degree arc. Results will, of course vary depending on conditions and levels of back-



John Walker

ground noise. The Detect Ear features a built-in equalizer that the cheaper Bionic Booster does not have. It helped to eliminate a lot of the background noise from the breeze and traffic, and was simple to adjust to conditions.

— John Higgs

Silver Creek Industries, Dept. SOF

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Looking for an economical rifle case? Galati International's deluxe tactical gun cases come in olive drab with a water-resistant PVC exterior and thick padding, with a soft nylon interior to protect the rifle. The two zippers can be

locked together to provide some level of security. A "D" ring is sewn to the outside of the case so that it can be hung up when not in use, or maybe for boat owners to attach a lanyard in case the case ever gets dropped over the side. On the model evaluated by SOF, the

exterior sports an adjustable carry strap, carry handles, and five magazine pouches suitable for most assault-rifle magazines. It is also deep enough to accommodate a rifle with a scope. The stitching was of good quality, reinforced at key points. Looks like a good value for the money to us.

— John Higgs

Battalion, 1st Marines was taking heavy fire on the north side of the city. It was an air show as tactical aircraft from the Air Force and Marine Corps, plus Cobra gunships, pounded enemy positions.

April 17: "No activity during the day, but about seven o'clock in the evening I shot at a young boy believed to be about 12 or 13. He was carrying a mortar tube across an alley near a schoolhouse. He went down when I hit him below the rib cage, but he wasn't there when the sun came up in the morning."

Kowalski has no qualms about killing a kid who was carrying a weapon. "People back home always ask us how many people we killed in Iraq, but I always tell them it's not how many you lives you take, it's how many lives you save, and snipers feel they save lives every time they take out an insurgent with a weapon," said Kowalski.

April 18: "The Iraqis started doing rope tricks They would throw a rope across the street, attach equipment to it, and pull it back to their position. We would shoot the bag as it was being

dragged across the street. Fun target practice. For the second time, we had to get resupplied with match ammo while we were in Fallujah, because of all the shots we are taking," wrote Kowalski who along with Reyes fired a total of 96 rounds through their sniper rifles during the campaign.

April 19: "Quiet in our sector. Rained all day. Cooled things down."

April 20: "Firefights in other parts of the city."

April 21: "Still quiet."

April 22: "Another dust storm." Citizens who fled Fallujah to escape the fighting are being allowed to return in small numbers.

April 23: "Lots of citizen complaints about no power, no water, no food."

April 24: "Taking a few harassment rounds."

April 25: "Occasional shot fired."

April 26: "Went back to the forward operating base [FOB], took a shower and got some hot food. Ran into Morgan, who severed tendons in trigger finger when he tried to put a sandbag in a broken window. Morgan was depressed. Wanted to return to the team."

April 27: "Local Imams got on loudspeakers at mosques all over Fallujah and tried to motivate the insurgents to

fight on, but by this time their numbers had been significantly reduced, and they no longer fought with the fervor they had the first few days."

April 28: "It's my 21st birthday. 21 and clueless." Kowalski celebrated by shooting at a 81mm mortar lying in the street. His first shot sent the mortar flipping into the air, and spinning like a top. But it didn't explode, even after taking four more hits. These were to be the last shots he fired in Fallujah.

April 29: 1st Battalion, 5th Marines pulled out of Fallujah.

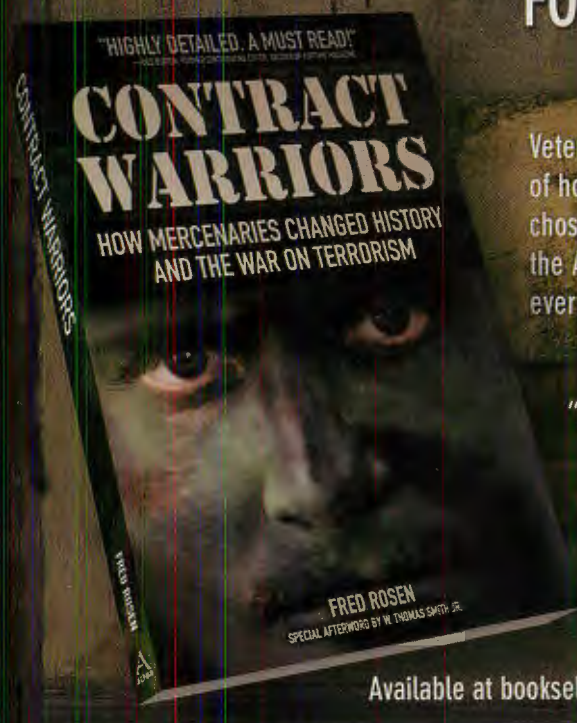
Six months later, Marines from other battalions went back to Fallujah and finished the job Iraqi politicians wouldn't let 1/5 finish. The butcher's bill was 51 Marine dead, and hundreds wounded, some scarred for life.

Now, the "Fighting Fifth" has returned to Iraq, this time to do some spring house-cleaning in Ramadi.

Next month, we'll hear from the man who is leading the Scout Sniper Platoon into battle, and some of the young men who extended to insure the mission's success.

A long-time contributor to SOF, Dale B. Cooper was with 1/5 Marines as they took Baghdad. ✕

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ALPHA

Malaysia, in a turn-about of the 1950s, when Malay insurgents used to flee to Thailand. While Malaysia angrily denies the charge, the minister claims to have photographic proof of these camps in operation. This brings an international and regional political process into play, as border tension between two members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) may destabilize the alliance and region. This is an instability that the Islamo-fascists are anxious to exploit.

The Royal Thai Army and the Defense Ministry were initially slow to respond to what is happening. The official line for years has blamed "bandit elements" for the violence in the south. While it is true that the southern provinces traditionally have had a higher level of bandit activity than the rest of the nation, and corrupt politicians and administrators historically have been exiled to the southern frontier, which has not endeared them to the local populace, the level of insurgent organization and coordination could no longer be blamed on just the "bandit" element.

The Thai Defense Ministry has recently deployed specially trained units to the south, to both combat the insurgents, and to maintain the loyalty of the population. Two thousand additional policemen have been dispatched to the southern provinces. Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala provinces, the three most restive, have been put under martial law.

While the RTA has an excellent record as fighters, they lack experience or the commitment of their commanders to the "hearts and minds" strategy necessary to win a guerrilla war. Most of their combat troops have no training on how to deal with a community, especially one of a culture different than themselves. There are units within the RTA designed to assist in community and infrastructure development, but there is no civil affairs capability at the small-unit level, with the troops that actually enter the villages. To address this need, the RTA has been working with U.S. Army Civil Affairs to develop their capability.

Hearts And Minds

In November of 2004, a joint U.S. Special Forces and Civil Affairs team worked with Royal Thai Army units in southern Thailand, conducting practice search-and-seizure operations, while at the same time training Thai cadre in civil-military operations. Such

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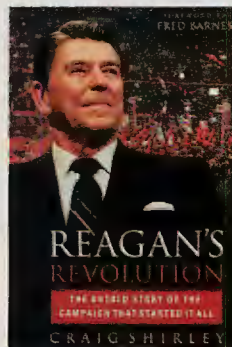
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"Reagan's Revolution" Captures Missing Chapter of Presidential History

It may be common knowledge that Ronald Reagan's presidency (1980-1988) was a key turning point in world history and in American politics. However Craig Shirley's new book *Reagan's Revolution: The Untold Story of the Campaign that Started it All* [Nelson Current, January 2005] reveals the secrets behind Reagan's first run for the presidency in 1976 — the campaign that unified and saved a dying Republican Party and launched the modern-day conservative movement. *Reagan's Revolution* is the first book to examine in detail Ronald Reagan's cam-



paign for the presidency in 1976 against incumbent president Gerald Ford; shedding light on the only undocumented chapter in the political legacy of one of the most beloved and revered presidents in American history. Historically significant and brilliantly written, *Reagan's Revolution* captures an overlooked, undocumented part of Ronald Reagan's political career. The book provides an inside look at the players, the politics, and never before published events that shaped the campaign of 1976 and beyond.

"Superbly written and meticulously researched, this is an important book that fills in some historical gaps of the election that would be the harbinger of the modern Republican Party of Ronald Reagan who would carry it to heights few could have imagined at that time."

— Senator Zell Miller (D-GA)

Craig Shirley is the president of Shirley & Banister Public Affairs, a prestigious conservative public relations agency located just outside of Washington, DC.

For more information about the book and author, please visit

www.reagansrevolution.com

Terror in Thailand

Continued from page 73

methods as medical civic action, civil affairs assessment techniques, community engineering and construction, and community entertainment and psychological operations techniques were employed. The mission went well, with Thai commanders and the U.S. Military Attaché requesting more CA training for Thai troops, and with one Thai division creating a CA unit to work with them in the field.

The Thai public has reacted to the increasing violence in their country in various ways, some of them constructive, some silly, with echoes of pacifist movements that have long since been discredited. Some academics have called for "no kill zones," theorizing that local communities can control what goes on and persuade the militants not to commit acts of terrorism. Other professors have called on Prime Minister Thaksin to issue an apology on behalf of the government for the deaths of the protesters in custody. While this might appear reasonable, it is a large step toward admitting responsibility, and can lead to serious liability

for those involved, all the way up the chain of command. Thaksin has been quoted, however, as saying that security officials on the scene in Tak Bai mis-handled the situation, and that they must take responsibility.

The impact that the increasing violence can have on the Thai economy is another consideration. Thailand has been able to slowly pull itself out of the deep recession that hit Asia in the late 90s, and depends heavily on tourism. The recent tsunami that swept away beaches and whole communities in the south deeply impacted the tourist trade there, but in the rest of the country tourism remains strong. If the bombers start targeting tourist areas in Chaing Mai or Bangkok, as the PULO has threatened to do, tourism would collapse, and the Thai economy likely would collapse with it. SOF has recently seen Thai police patrols quietly checking vehicles for explosives in the garages and driveways of major hotels in Bangkok, in an attempt to be proactive.

In a constructive and courageous move, the Royal Family has taken the initiative to gather legislators and other influential persons from the southern provinces to work together to offer sug-

gestions for addressing the violence. This move has the potential of highlighting divisions among the peoples of the south, but the Royal Family, and especially His Majesty King Bhumibol, has sufficient respect and moral authority to bring the various factions together for the common good. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, and the King's involvement signals deep concern by the government and the Thai nation as a whole.

In early December, in a touching, frivolous, and typically Thai effort at promoting peace, 100,000 origami birds, folded by ordinary Thais who had written messages of peace on them, were air dropped on the three most restive southern Thai provinces. While children scrambled to pick them up, and some adults were touched, most Muslim residents were unimpressed.

Turning over one of the paper birds in his weathered hands, and elderly Muslim farmer looked after the aircraft that dropped them and said, "Next time, maybe they will drop bombs. A political solution would be better."

Frequent and long-time SOF contributor Ralph Johnson is an Army Reserve Civil Affairs officer. ✕

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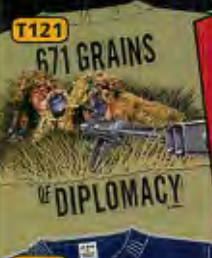
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The Auto Assault 12

Continued from page 63

While it may be hard to believe without experiencing it, this gentle operation causes the AA-12 to have almost no felt recoil. The open bolt firing also dampens recoil, resulting in 95% control of the weapon.

While the basic design of the AA-12 incorporated an 18" barrel, a 16" barrel was also perfected, but a special unit of the Military asked if a 14" barrel were possible. Jerry Baber decided to go even shorter and perfected a 13" barrel for the AA-12 using a redesigned gas port. Called the CQB, this version has overall length that is the same as the M4 Carbine, and the barrel can easily be left at 14" if desired, with plenty of dwell time left over. Baber has also designed a system where the butt stock can be shortened by 3" if desired, but this version would have slightly more felt recoil. Since the stock was out being prototyped at the time of my visit, I did not see it.

The sights of the AA-12 are mounted on towers to provide cheek weld, and are quite simple. The front sight is adjustable for elevation by turning it against friction from a nylon bushing, and the rear sight is adjustable for windage via a drum. Two types of rear ghost-ring sights have been designed, one in a figure "8" for holdover, but standard ghost-ring aperture will be used.

Disassembly

At the front of the gas block is a locking collar for the square tubular recoil spring guide, and on it is an extension to accept a standard M16 bayonet. A collar is also available without the extension. The two halves of the stock are locked together by steel tabs on both sides of the butt, in the middle and behind the gas block, as well as at the rear sight and on the bottom of the pistol grip. Except for those at the gas block, these can either slide or swivel to lock in place.

The stock halves can be removed in seconds. Then with the magazine removed and the bolt allowed to go forward, the butt is pushed forward causing the recoil spring guide to protrude out the front of the gas block. The locking collar can then be removed and the butt, recoil spring guide and spring can then be allowed to exit from the rear under pressure. Once this assembly is removed, the piston/bolt carrier and

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MPS employee Sandra O'Ferrell fires the AA-12 for the very first time. She took to the gun like a duck to water.



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bolt can be removed by pulling back on the charging handle. The handle can be removed out the front of the receiver and the bolt group can be disassembled if necessary. Using a simple pry tool, the barrel lock can be removed, allowing the barrel to be removed and replaced with a different one for special-purpose missions.

Unless damaged, the sear housing, trigger and selector need never be removed. In fact, the same thing holds true for the entire weapon. This is because the special material it is made from requires no lubrication whatever. What's more, the mechanism is self-cleaning even when contaminated by sand. In the worst-case scenario, a can-teen (or similar) can be used to flush out the ejection port and everything in it.

Shots Fired

Having traveled to Tennessee to test the AA-12, I personally fired more than 500 rounds in two AA-12's, and witnessed another 500 or so fired by seven

others including two women who work in the B&H Precision foundry. Neither of these ladies had previously fired the AA-12 and they were more than a little nervous. The guns were fired from the hip, shoulder, with one hand, and upside down.

One of the AA-12's we fired was the CQB model, and this little gun had more than 5,000 rounds fired through it and had never been cleaned, much less lubricated. One look at it and it was obvious. The entire mechanism was black with carbon and it was also totally dry. However, neither gun malfunctioned in any way during the shooting, most of which was done using low-brass target rounds, which are always a problem for self-loading shotguns, especially when dirty.

Except for the noise, shooting the target 12 ga. shells in the AA-12 was like shooting a .22 rimfire machinegun. Really! High brass buckshot and slugs produced more noise and a bigger muzzle flash from the CQB model, and also increased the cyclic rate, but the additional recoil generated was barely worth mentioning. It took the two ladies only a couple of short bursts before they were emptying 20-round drums without stopping, and they barely moved.

What was also impressive is that single and double shots could easily be obtained because of the relatively slow cyclic rate of 300 rounds per minute. If two rounds were fired, they both hit in the same place out to 25 yards. Even CTS door-breaching rounds operated the AA-12, but when using less-lethal rounds the bolt must be cocked each time by hand. Hornady Manufacturing Company is looking into the possibility of other specialized 12-gauge ammunition.

It is a well-known fact that the Islamic terrorists killing our troops in Iraq are not afraid of the M4 and its 5.56mm bullet, but they are terrified of shotguns. You can imagine how they would react to the AA-12 with 20 rounds of buckshot, but that's only half the story, as there is something far more effective.

Although there is currently no rail system on the AA-12, we mounted a SureFire X200 on the barrel using a Light Link from Mounting Solutions Plus. A hand-held SureFire light was also mounted using an E2 C G2 30mm scope mount from Abrams Small Arms Research (ASAR). Other mounting concepts are also being studied.

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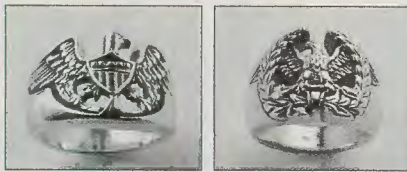
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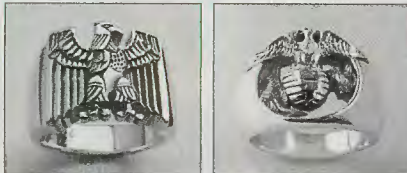
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The FRAG-12 cartridges are a family of experimental 12 gauge high explosive projectiles including a High Explosive (HE) Blast round, a HE Fragmentation round and a High Explosive Armor Piercing (HEAP) projectile, with a shaped charge penetrator. Initial testing has confirmed that the HE Blast round will produce an approximate 1 inch hole in heavy steel plate with secondary spalling effects on the downrange side of the plate.

The FRAG-12

If you already thought 12 gauge buckshot was an effective round, consider this: In October 2004 the U.S. Marine Corps began testing a new family of 12 ga. high-explosive rounds. These new rounds were developed by a private company to defeat reinforced, materiel and protected targets, and other targets requiring a high-explosive or armor-piercing warhead.

Called the FRAG-12, the program consists of a family of 12 ga. High-explosive projectiles including a High Explosive (HE) Blast round, an HE Fragmentation round and a High Explosive Armor Piercing (HEAP) projectile with a shaped-charge penetrator.

Initial testing has confirmed that the HE Blast round will produce about a 1-inch hole in 1/4 inch cold rolled steel plate with secondary spalling effects on the downrange side of the plate. The HE Fragmentation warhead is designed to have blast and fragmentation out to a 2-meter casualty radius and the HEAP round is claimed to be able to penetrate 4 inches of aluminum armor and more than 1/2-inch of steel. All three rounds have a 200m effective range.

My information is that 100 rounds of this ammunition were received at Quantico and that testing is almost complete as this is written in mid-January. Test data and any remaining cartridges will be transferred to MAR-CORSYSCOM for combat effectiveness and a potential requirement.

In plain English I can tell you that the Marine Corps wants this capability very badly, and at the general-offi-

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cer level the AA-12 is also in great demand with the possibility that three guns will go to Iraq for field testing with the next rotation. Others in high places are pushing for the AA-12 to be tested throughout the military as soon as possible.

Although he's no kid, Jerry Baber loves and respects those who are fighting what far too few understand is truly a Global War On Terrorism. He also believes that every day our troops don't have the Auto Assault-12 in their hands, more of them are dying than would otherwise be the case. Plenty of others believe it too. Beyond our military are elements of Homeland Security that have expressed great interest in the AA-12, such as for the guarding of our nuclear facilities. Foreign governments who are allies of the U.S., such as the Philippines, are also very interested, but in addition to them the AA-12 will be available *only* to the military and agencies of our Federal Government. ✕

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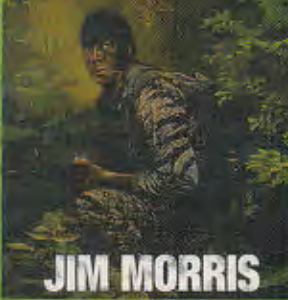
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FLAK

Continued from page 10

multiple international actions at this time? Rather than ask the politicians, I figure you guys would give me the straight scoop.

Richard T. Sakaida

Condi never calls me anymore, but my best guess is that the official hope is, the PRC will do the right thing, and the evolutionary changes they have made toward a free-market economy and a representative government will progress to the point that some day Taiwan may want to be reunited with the mainland. And in the meantime, the only safety net that exists is the fact it is historically very, very rare to go to war with a major trading partner. As far as our ability, let alone desire, to engage the PRC in a land war at this point – forget it.

Just Take That Armor?

It was upsetting, to say the least, to read in your April issue (Hillbilly Armor) about soldiers driving around in unprotected vehicles while private contractors appeared to have no shortage of factory-made armored vehicles with gun ports and smoke generators.

I think this is a case where the government would be safely within its rights to buy up some of these armored vehicles without asking whether the contractors wanted to sell them. The "Takings Clause" of the Fifth Amendment commands "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation"? But it does not say that the property can only be real estate as in the "Eminent Domain" takings. The main question in the courts is usually whether the previous owners are justly compensated and whether the use is public rather as opposed to private. I say Rumsfeld could buy up those cars with ease!

Charlie
New York City

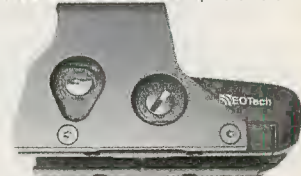
The contractors had to scrounge up armor at first like everybody else — it's just that a contractor can move faster than a bureaucracy. And as for Uncle Sam just glomming them, well, we're all on the same team, and what they could commandeer from contractors would be a drop in the bucket. ☒

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tion. The XM-8 is configured as a compact model for CQB, a standard carbine and a designated marksman/squad automatic rifle model with a longer, heavier barrel and bipods.

The pre-solicitation notice also expressed interest in replacements for the M249 SAW, which is simply wearing out, and the M9 pistol within certain active Army units (as in, units that actually need to use a pistol).

Participating vendors would be required to submit four exemplars of each variant.

Denzel, You da' Man

Actor Denzel Washington visited Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio recently, one of the facilities where GIs MedEvac'd from Germany are hospitalized, especially burn cases.

Washington, who has a son in the Marines in Iraq, was so impressed by the Fisher houses where GI families can stay while visiting patients — which are mostly full up these days — that he inquired what it would cost to build another one, and wrote a check on the spot. Proceeds from actor Paul Newman's "Newman's Own" products such as salad dressing have also built Fisher houses, worthwhile projects from any standpoint. Good on ya, guys.

French Honor U.S. Pilots

On 24 February, nearly 51 years after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the French ambassador in Washington made seven pilots *chevaliers* in the Order of the Legion of Honor. The pilots flew covert CIA re-supply missions to French forces besieged at Dien Bien Phu.

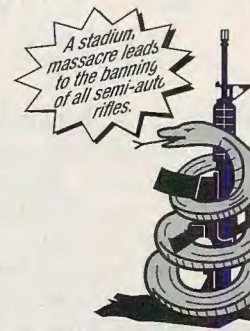
"It's a nice gesture on their part," noted Doug Price, who was 29 years old when he flew 39 airdrop missions to Dien Bien Phu in April and May 1954 as a civilian employee of Civil Air Transport, a flying service whose covert owner was the CIA.

The pilots flew unarmed C-119 Flying Boxcars, with the understanding that if captured or killed they would not be acknowledged as agents of the U.S. government. "I was a covert employee. We were expendable," says Roy Watts.

Watts tried unsuccessfully to sue the government for extended disability and retirement benefits on the basis of his 16 years flying covert missions in Asia, but the CIA argued that the men technically were not government employees, since they worked for an agency front company. ✕

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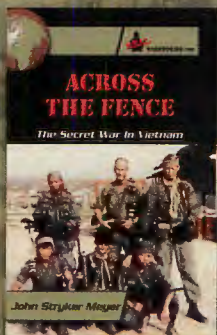
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Freedom's March Down the "Arab Street"

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

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "Explosion Kills Former Prime Minister." "Suicide Terrorist Kills Five at Nightclub." "Car Bomber Kills 125 Police Recruits." "Iraqi Judge Assassinated." These recent headlines describe bloody events in Lebanon, Israel and Iraq, where IEDs, or "body bombs," have killed and maimed hundreds. Though true, these reports have apparently distracted many in the so-called mainstream media from a discomfiting reality: Freedom is on the march down the "Arab street."

Ever since U.S. troops first went to Afghanistan in October 2001, our supposedly more experienced "betters" in Europe and the "prudent potentates of the press" have said that U.S. military action against an Islamic nation would cause the "Arab street" to rise up and crush us. This theme was widely replayed in the build-up for Operation Iraqi Freedom — and has been reiterated many times in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's capture.

Since his Inaugural Address, President Bush has been repeatedly castigated for his "naivety" on one hand and for his "aggressive arrogance" on the other — because he boldly tells those who suffer tyranny that "the United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you."

Yet, despite the carping critics — and the carnage caused by those who would rather die than see freedom flourish — any objective observer has to conclude that George W. Bush is right. "The call of freedom" does indeed come "to every mind and every soul." Freedom is indeed on the march — even down the "Arab street."

It was evident last October in Afghanistan, in the ballots cast by Palestinians in early January and again in late January on the ink-stained fingers of Iraqi men and women, raised in proud defiance against murderous thugs who would return them to brutal bondage.

Whether the America-haters and Bush-bashers want to acknowledge it or not, the "call of freedom" is now being heard in places where American "influence" has long been deemed by the "experts" to be minimal, at best:

— In December, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians peacefully protested to force a new election when a rigged vote installed Vladimir Putin's handpicked presidential candidate. Today, reformist Viktor Yushchenko governs in Kiev. The Bush administration needed to do little more than lend its voice to the calls for a free and fair election.

Though they have yet to fully comply, the Syrians have arrested and turned over the former dictator's half-brother, Sabawi Ibrahim al Hassan. And to ensure that those in Damascus who support terror don't get the idea that this is sufficient, President Bush has since told them to "get your troops and your secret services out of Lebanon, and give democracy a chance."

— In Cairo, Hosni Mubarak, never known to be a friend of liberty or democratic institutions, has announced that opposition candidates will be allowed to run for office in the upcoming Egyptian elections. Mubarak has been the only presidential "candidate" since taking power in 1981. While

questions remain about who will be "allowed" to run, a taste of liberty in a democratic election may ignite the "fire of freedom" among the "people of the Nile."

— And now, even the royal family in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, seems to be getting the message. Though the recent Saudi "municipal elections" were more show than substance — the elected councilors wield little power, the ruling House of Saud appoints as many councilors as were elected and only men could vote — the taste of democracy has intensified the call on the "Arab street" for *real* elections.

Last week, the kingdom's Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, speaking the heretofore unthinkable, said that in future elections women "may" have the right to vote. Unfortunately, he then added, "We know we want to reform, we know we want to modernize, but for God's sake leave us alone."

And therein lies the first problem: The prince doesn't get it. It's not just Bush's promise, "When you stand for your liberty we will stand with you," at work in Saudi Arabia — it really is a quest for freedom that is sweeping down his "Arab streets," right past minarets preaching repression and hatred for all things "Western."

But Saud al-Faisal isn't alone in misunderstanding what freedom really means — and from whence it springs. Last week, when President Bush confronted Vladimir Putin about Russia's freedom of the press, Putin shot back with: "We didn't criticize you when you fired those reporters at CBS."

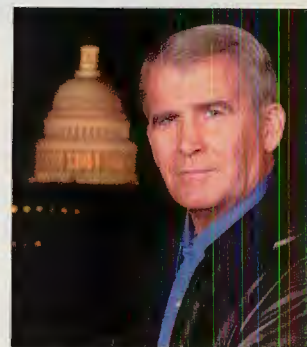
Thus the second problem: Saud al-Faisal and Putin apparently believe that holding an election is enough. It's not. As we have learned from the "election" of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, there is much more to freedom than casting a ballot. Liberty also means a free press; freedom to worship — or not; the rule of law where justice is tempered with mercy; freedom from fear — of government, criminals or outsiders — and the freedom to come and go, to speak politically, to work and create wealth.

All of this — and more — is what freedom is about. Elections are not the end of the process, just the beginning. That's what's wrong with the argument being waged by some in Congress to start withdrawing American forces from Iraq now that there has been an election. Whether it's the "Arab street," or elsewhere, liberty doesn't march to the beat of a cadence — it arrives to the sound of many drummers, and impatience is never the friend of freedom. ✕

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.

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