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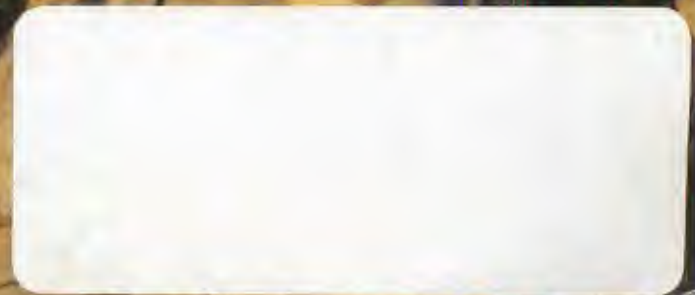
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Photo: Cpl. Tom Sloan, USMC

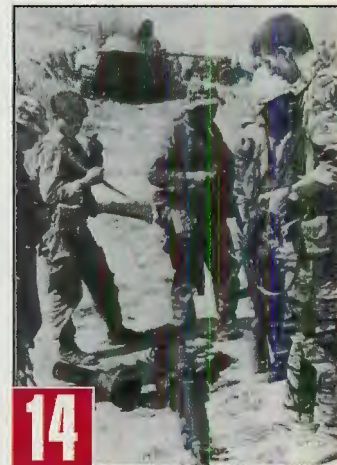


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*SSG James M. Hussey, platoon sergeant for 4th Platoon, A Co., 1st Bn, 5th Marine Regiment, leads a dismounted patrol through the streets of Ramadi. See story, Page 18*



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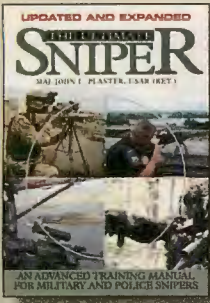
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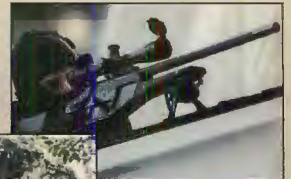
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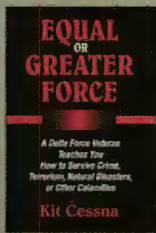
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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown, USAR (Ret.)

## Coming to SOF in June: Jim Fotis

I've gotten a lot of mail lately from readers in blue who miss SOF's top notch coverage of issues important to front line street cops. With soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines engaged in the fight against terror in Iraq and Afghanistan, there's been a lot to fill the pages of SOF each month, and perhaps the hardest job of a publisher is to decide what great articles just won't make the cut.



But starting next month I'm pleased to bring you a feature column from my good friends at the Law Enforcement Alliance of America (LEAA). Jim Fotis is the Executive Director of LEAA and a retired street cop from Lynbrook, New York. Fotis is the real deal, the kind of cop whose been there and done that. Including trading lead with a scumbag robber and would be cop killer who was firing at Officer Fotis from the hood of his patrol car. When Fotis' wheel gun ran dry and his dump bag wouldn't empty, he pulled his knife and bailed out of the car to continue the fight. It ended with the scumbag hiding in a tree and having a couple of new holes in his body courtesy of my good friend Jim.

For more than a decade Fotis has been in Washington D.C. fighting for the

rights of cops and gun owners. At the Law Enforcement Alliance of America, he promotes public safety and preserves freedom. There's a lot of good organizations out there standing up for cops, but none with the brass balls of Fotis and the LEAA. When liberal criminal coddlers invent phony charges of racial profiling, and send politicians, including the current President of the United

States in retreat, Fotis and LEAA stands their ground and tells it like it is in the media and on Capitol Hill. You may have seen Fotis or LEAA on TV, whenever cops come under fire for doing their job, and the liberals try to turn the tables and pretend that the criminal is the "victim". And I've been with them on the front lines of the fight for gun rights in too many states to count. Now each month you'll be able to hear from Jim and LEAA right here in the pages of SOF.

If ever there was a group dedicated to those who shoot straight and tell the truth, it's LEAA. I'm proud to be a Life Member and if you're not a member already, there's no excuse. Call them toll free at (800) 766-8578 or go online to join at [www.leaa.org](http://www.leaa.org)

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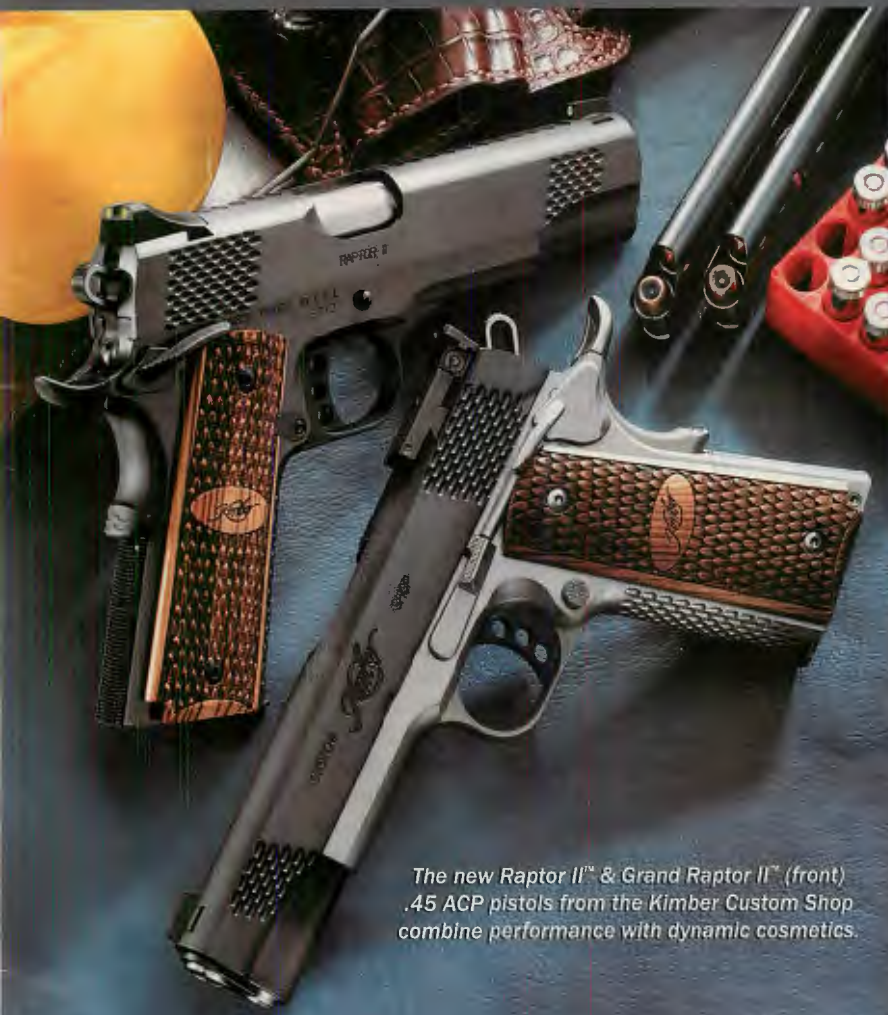
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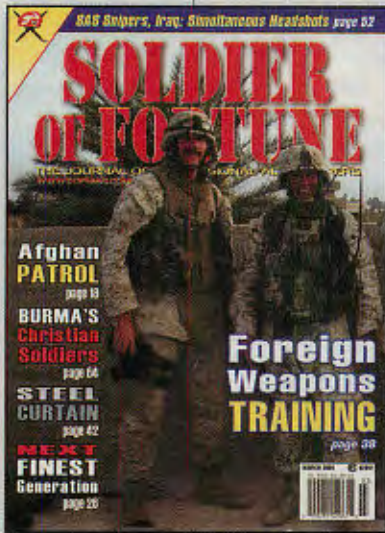
## Number One G.I. Mom

Thank you so much for your kind words, shipment of mags to my sons and the supportive article. I heard from Scott (No. 1 son) that they had received the mags and were really enjoying them. He said he was trying to send thank-yous but things have been pretty hectic lately. Plus they have had over a foot and a half of snow so far. Thanks to your article I have had some letters and emails from folks wanting to send CARE packages to different units around the world. People like you ensure that our soldiers know they are supported back home and give them the morale boost they really need.

In sincere appreciation,  
Pat Jacobs (the shoebox lady)  
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*Readers will remember Pat from the March issue, as the Blonde Dynamo of Boxes for the Troops. She personally adopted 800 troops in Afghanistan and by the time you read this she has probably sent out more than a thousand parcels. Now, there's a real "Army of One!" Send her a large self-addressed, stamped envelope and she can give you the details how to help her efforts, or how you can start a parallel project of your own. In the meantime, here's her list of asked-for comfort items for the troops. Start stocking up, and get the items on their way – either with her project or with your own. She's a storehouse of practical information on how to git 'er done!*

CARE Package Idea List – What The Troops Ask For: Toiletries: (no heavy fragrances), Shampoo, Deodorant, Soap (Bars), Hand Sanitizer liquid), Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Powder (Body, Foot), Lotion (Body, Sunscreen - 30 spf or more), Lotion/Gel – Sunburn, Razors (disposable, twin-blade), Shave Gel/Cream/Soap (no aerosols), Chapstick, Shave brushes, Q-tips, Baby wipes (pop-up canisters); Paper: Newspapers/Magazines, Memo Pads, Puzzle Books, Playing Cards, Writing Tablets, Enve-



velopes, Pens, Mechanical Pencils; Gun Cleaning: pipe cleaners, tooth/shaving brushes, gun oil (non-aerosol), cleaning kits for 223; Miscellaneous: Electrical Tape, Toilet paper/tissues, Batteries (AA, AAA, D), Sunglasses (plastic frames), Matches (books or wooden), Warmer Packets: hand, toe, foot, Plastic Forks, Spoons; Clothing: Stocking Hats (subdued colors), Knit Gloves, Ear Warmers, Socks; Meds: vitamin C & E (not soft gels), Excedrin Migraine/Tension Headache, Tylenol Extra-Strength, Tylenol Arthritis, Cold Capsules, Sinus Tabs, Allergy Tabs/Capsules, Bismuth (tablets), Eye-Drops, Artificial Tears, Nyquil/Dayquil Caps (not liquid with alcohol), Band-Aids, Ace Bandages, Neosporin, Hydrocortisone; Food and Snacks: Chips (canisters), Cookies (any kind), Snack Crackers (not saltines), Nabs, Nuts, Hard Candy (individually wrapped), Chocolate Candy (M&Ms etc.), Kool-Aid/Iced Tea Mix (canisters), Trail Mix, Pudding/Jello/Fruit Cups, Gum, Microwave Food (beef stew, etc.). Now that you know the comfort items the troops need, email Pat Jacobs ([patatlikearock@msn.com](mailto:patatlikearock@msn.com) above)

and get her time-saving suggestions on how to get it to the troops.

## Number One G.I. Son

I apologize for not sending you a Thank You earlier but I am sure you are aware of an infantryman's lot in combat. To say the least we have been busy, but that is the standard operating procedure for the Paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

I would like to thank you for the box of back issues. I do not know if it was intentional or not but many of those magazines you sent had articles about Afghanistan or about situations (such as IEDs and likely forms of enemy attacks) that we could learn from. The Army has tried to improve the speed of which us grunts get access to the lessons learned by those that have gone before but sometimes a soldier must educate himself in order to accomplish his mission. I personally distributed them among my company. My personal mission is to ensure everyone in my squad returns from this tour in one piece. Your magazine has always been informative, not only about threats but different regions of the world were American Military troops find themselves nowadays. So I offer you my thanks, not only for the magazines you sent, but for your magazine's coverage of the military in a light that is not tarnished by politics or whatever fad is currently in style for reporting. I would also like to thank you for writing about my mother's CARE package program in a recent issue. I look forward to reading it as soon as I can find a copy.

Sincerely,  
Spc Jacobs, Scott P  
173rd Airborne Brigade,  
Afghanistan  
[spjaco4@yahoo.com](mailto:spjaco4@yahoo.com)

## Low Countries' Lament

I've just read the contribution of Dr. Martin Brass in the SOF issue of

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January 2006.

That article concerning the dramatic situation of The Netherlands facing Islamic threats could also apply to Belgium. I live in the center of that country, in Brussels, and I do agree with every word used by Dr. Brass. What we see, what we live, our fears, our foes are exactly the same.

Groups of Islamic activists settled in Belgium helped by left-winged movements. We are literally outnumbered by these people.

The war decided by the U.S. against terrorism is an act of great courage! We should stand united facing the threat.

Thanks Dr. Brass, for that summary of our fears. The American people should know that there are a lot of people in Europe who are concerned about this war against terrorism!

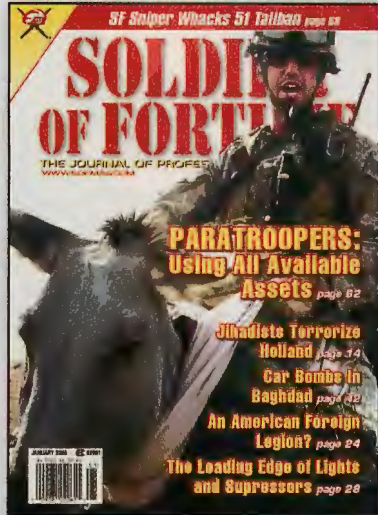
Be proud of your country, support your troops. They really deserve it because they fight not only for the U.S. but for the whole Free World and for democracy.

Régis Panisi

Belgium

adopted by the Russians about 1908, which was discussed on Page 40, in the article "Foreign Weapons Class", in this same issue.

Best regards,  
John C. Baker, LTC[R],  
CMEC, J2, MACV, 65-68



## 7.62x54R

Received the March, 2006 issue of SOF Magazine, this date. Congratulations on a fine publication! Page 79 carries a portion of the article concerning USMC sniper teams "Remembering Ramadi." The statement is made, "the slug recovered from Cpt Edge was a 7.62mm X 51mm, the round used in a Dragunov sniper rifle;" 7.62mm X 51mm is the U.S. 7.62mm NATO cartridge. The Dragunov sniper rifle fires the 7.62mm X 54mm Rimmed cartridge,

You're right of course. Sorry about the typo. And you're right about the current 7.62x54R spitzer round being adopted about 1908; the original round as adopted for the M1891 had a conical bullet. Until metrification, the bore was measured as "3 lines" (a line being 1/10th of an inch) and the sights graduated in arshins (an arshin being 1.28 yards), until the M91/30 was introduced. Both the M91 Moisan-Nagant rifle and its 7.62x54R cartridge were odd ducks that never had features worthy of anyone copying them, but they both have served satisfactorily for more than a hundred years. Variations of the Dragunov have been made in 7.62x51 NATO (for export) and 8x57 Mauser for official issue (Yugoslavia). ☒

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## Hollow Point, or Hollow Head?

An Army judge advocate general (JAG) in Baghdad temporarily banned Army and Marine Corps snipers from using 7.62x51 dedicated sniper rounds with the highly accurate rebated-tip bullet, ignorantly equating the open-tip projectile – thus configured for its aerodynamic properties – to hollow-point ammunition that is designed to expand and inflict maximum damage to the target, which is banned. The original open-tip was the Sierra MatchKing, which broke all records for accuracy in the past three decades due to the superior external ballistics this configuration can provide.

In January, the Army JAG in Iraq ordered all snipers to stop using the open-tip 175-grain M118LR bullet, claiming, ignorantly, that it was prohibited as “hollow-point” ammunition. Instead of this dedicated sniper round that had been developed for long-range accuracy, snipers were forced to break down M240 machine gun belts and use these loose M80 rounds instead. When one NCO researched the matter and presented his findings to the JAG all it netted him was an ass-chewing – and, ultimately, it cost him his job when the JAG retaliated because of this “security infraction.”

According to the *Washington Times*, the inappropriate order upset quite a few people CONUS as well as in Iraq, who said the JAG ignored the basic principle familiar to military lawyers that there is a presumption of legality for all issued weapons or ammunition that are made available at the military service level at the time they are acquired. “She forced snipers to use less accurate ammunition, thereby placing U.S. forces and Iraqi civilians at greater risk,” a Pentagon official said of the JAG, who was not identified by name. “And she incorrectly issued an order. JAGs may advise a commander, but they cannot issue orders,” the Pentagon source told the *Times*.

After Army lawyers were finally alerted to the JAG’s action, the order was lifted and the JAG was notified

## Cover Credit

Our apologies go to SGT Kim Snow of the 196th MPAD, whose fine work *SOF* used as a cover for the February 2006 issue (inset). Due to an administrative error, the photograph was not credited. One of the best combat photographers the Coalition has had in Iraq, SGT Snow became the Go-To Trooper when commanders needed photographic proof that a “protected” target was being used as a weapons platform, before such targets were serviced, and Snow has been in the thick of it in nearly every sector of the theater, recording the events for history. Here, SGT Snow photographs the Brigade Reconnaissance Troop, 3rd BCT, 1st ID during Operation Al Fajer in Fallujah, Iraq in November 2004. Photo: U.S. Army, by SSG April Johnson

## Alaska Ranger

Ranger (Major) Joe Lawendowski (left) receives his CIB, the Mongolian Distinguished Service Medal, and the Polish MNC-CS service medal. Lawendowski is an Alaska National Guards-

man on duty in al-Hillah Iraq with the Mongolian infantry company. Mongolia is in the State partnership program with Alaska NG and an outgrowth of this program is their involvement in the Iraq coalition. Despite having only 23,000 soldiers in their Army, the Mongolians keep a 150-man infantry company in Iraq. Volunteering for deployment, Lawendowski personally leads mis-



sions outside the wire... but that’s what Rangers do – lead the way.

Note: The U.S. Army Ranger Association (USARA) welcomes all Rangers from all eras, who have served honorably for at least one year in a recognized Ranger unit, and all Rangers that have earned the U.S. Army Ranger Tab. If you qualify for membership, go to the USARA website at [www.ranger.org](http://www.ranger.org) for more information and a membership application. Photo: courtesy Mike McClintock, USARA Ranger Register

that the open tip M118LR was perfectly legal for use by snipers. However, the reversal was followed by retaliation against a sniper who blew the whistle on the bogus order.

## Access Your DD-214 Online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to access their DD-214 online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov/> This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes.

NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. (Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can also be downloaded from the online web site.)

Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays

that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized.

## [www.DropShots.com](http://www.DropShots.com)

Many military families who are separated by activation or deployment are using DropShots.com to keep in touch and share photos and video. DropShots is the result of a three-year university study out of UC San Diego, and the ease of use and convenience of DropShots has helped military families support their soldiers on deployment with photos and videos of life back home. DropShots.com was engineered to be extremely simple and easy to use. To view, comment or interact, there is no registration or login required. Every process – uploading, sharing, sending, and writing comments are always done in one-click or

Less. A sample family site is at: <http://www.dropshots.com/moore-family>

DropShots is a free service for uploading up to 500 pictures and 10 videos, after which a Star User account is only \$4.95/ month for unlimited use.

DropShots has created new technology that makes it simple and convenient to share personal digital media –streamlined features, drag-n-drop functions, and automatic processes make it accommodating for people with various levels of computer expertise. DropShots hosts more than 2 million photos and 150,000 video clips, and is growing at a rate of some 35% a month. For more information visit: [www.DropShots.com](http://www.DropShots.com)

## Patrol Rifle Conference

Jeff Felts of Center Mass Inc. is hosting the National Patrol Rifle Conference 25-26 May 2006. The event promises to be a very worthwhile, and is germane to police who work in today's operational environment. For further information, go to: [www.AmericanSniper.org](http://www.AmericanSniper.org)

## VA Adds 2 Million Records to Gravesite Locator

Burial locations of more than 5 million veterans for whom the VA has provided grave markers are now available

*Continued on page 80*

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# The Battle For



*Special Forces NCO with Civilian Indigenous Defense Group (CIDG) troops examine tank heavy machinegun.*

# BEN HET

## Little-Known Engagement More Pivotal Than Khe-Sanh

Text by George Dooley, Photos Courtesy Radix Press

As they had attempted to do at the battle for Khe Sanh a year earlier, multiple regiments of NVA tried to overrun the Special Forces camp at Ben Het in 1969. But ignored as it might have been by the media at the time, Ben Het was a more spectacular, and more significant, engagement than Khe Sanh. The NVA used tanks for one of the few times in the entire conflict – and despite this major escalation, America's South Vietnamese allies were able to beat them back with the help of American armor, air power and artillery. They had passed their first major test: The South Vietnamese had proven that they could win on the ground.

Ben Het was a Special Forces camp less than 10 clicks from the Laos-Cambodia border. Originally located 15 kilometers further east at Dak To, the camp had been moved west towards the tri-border region a year earlier. This move improved the defense of Dak To by creating a forward outpost and put American artillery closer to the border.

The camp occupied three hills, called West, North, and Main, which overlooked Route 512. Route 512 was a generally East-West red clay laterite road that ran to Dak To. The NVA wanted to extend their access into the rice bowl of Binh Dinh province to the east. They also knew that cutting the central highlands was the key to winning. There had been several attempts to cut Vietnam in half by breaching Highway 14. But the first obstacle stood in their way: Ben Het Special Forces camp.

Ben Het had three Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) companies with an authorized strength of 132 men each and two combat recon platoons. An additional mission to support SOG cross-border operations (often launched from Dak To), resulted in U.S. artillery batteries

lery. This command element provided fire support planning for defense of the Ben-Het area including artillery, USAF tactical air, Air Force and Army gunships, and B-52 strikes. This artillery support would prove crucial in the coming siege.

As part of the Vietnamization of the war, the U.S. 4th Infantry Division had pulled back from Dak To on 1 February 1969. The 4th ID was to be responsible for an area just north of Kontum city, and Ben Het wasn't in this zone. Previously, the 173d Airborne Brigade had operated in the Dak To-Ben Het area and took terrible casualties at the battle of Hill 875. The area had been contested for years and the NVA weren't going away. The NVA must have suspected the American withdrawal and acted.

### The Battle Begins

On 22 February 1969 the battle of Ben Het began as part of the overall 1969 Tet offensive; unlike Tet of 1968, this campaign went after the rural obstacles to NVA victory. Rockets, artillery, and mortars began pounding the three hills of the camp. There were periodic ground probes and reinforcement of the camp commenced.

Two additional CIDG companies, along with a Mike Force company, reinforced, and Ben Het began to endure a constant rain of fire. Within days, the airstrip was closed and air-drops were needed to resupply. Water was rationed, and the NVA began digging trench lines into the defensive wire. This was to be a Vietnamese action and the 24th Special Tactical Zone in Kontum was responsible for

### THE BEN HET-DAK TO CAMPAIGN



This drawing from the 1969 MACV History shows the relationship of Ben Het to Laos and Cambodia.

being co-located: B Battery, 6th Battalion, 14th Field Artillery had three self-propelled 175mm guns and a self-propelled 8" howitzer, along with a platoon of two towed 155mm howitzers from 1st Battalion, 92 Field Artillery; A Battery, 3d Battalion, 6th Field Artillery provided six 105mm howitzers. A command element was also provided by the 6/14th Field Artil-





*This disabled PT76 was tank captured west of Ben Het.*

fighting the battle.

Throughout the weeks of battle, the artillery fired counter-battery missions against the NVA gun positions. The air force flew resupply missions almost every day of the siege, and fighter aircraft were constantly on station, along with helicopter gunships. The only way in or out of Ben Het was by helicopter and the Huey could only hover briefly as mortars targeted the landing zone. After daylight ended, a spooky aircraft (configurations varied from the old C-47 to the newer C-130 versions so the generic term spooky is used) would come on station and fly around the camp until all its ammunition was expended. Thousands of tons of bombs were dropped by B-52's during the battle, but the NVA were tenacious. Since they were close to the border, the NVA supply lines were short and troops and ammunition could be moved easily.

### **NVA Tanks!**

On Monday, 3 March 1969 the battle changed with the arrival of PT-76 tanks. Actually, the NVA tanks probably arrived a day earlier as automotive sounds and clanking noises were heard to the west of West hill, but a curve in the road around a small hill masked visual identification. Based on earlier intelligence, in anticipation of the possible entry of tanks into the Ben Het battle, the road west of the camp had earlier been mined and four M-48A3 tanks of the U.S. 1st platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor had been moved from Dak To to Ben Het.

At 0100 hours, Tuesday, March 4th ten NVA tanks along with a battalion

of NVA infantry attacked West hill. Initially, there were reports that the NVA were using Soviet T-34 tanks but those reports proved to be erroneous. During the battle, at least three PT-76 tanks were knocked out although the NVA did manage to disable one American M-48A3 tank with resulting deaths of the driver and loader.

It's not known how many HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank) rounds the American tanks had, but those rounds were rapidly used up. Accord-

ing to the operations journal of the 1st of the 69th, HEAT rounds were to be flown from Saigon to Dak To. Company A, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor and the battalion scout platoon were ordered to reinforce Company B (-) at Dak To and to move at first light. As the Ben Het battle intensified, Company A and the Scouts were ordered by the commander of the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division to immediately make a night march from LZ Oasis (southwest of Pleiku) at 0130. They were further ordered to travel with cannister in their main guns until they could obtain HEAT rounds. After obtaining HEAT rounds, the tanks were directed to set battle sights at 800 meters.

Emergency night marches were unusual in the highlands and the movement indicates how drastic the situation at Ben Het was considered. But, the reinforcement by Company A and the rest of the battalion would not be necessary.

As the NVA tanks at Ben Het were being engaged by the American armor, tactical air and U.S. artillery were also engaged against the tanks. Shortly after midnight, the Special Forces men on the West hill reported NVA infantry in the wire. Multiple volleys of final protective fires (FPF's)



*Ben Het weapons sergeant along with volunteer engineers wait for aerial resupply. The M-48 tank in the background is probably from 1/B/1/69th Armor.*



Defenders of Ben Het secure ammunition resupply.

were fired throughout the night, effectively breaking up the NVA assault. Historical records are unclear, but it's presumed that the 105mm howitzers of A/3/6th Field Artillery from North hill, about a kilometer distant fired the PPF's. By daylight on the 4th, the enemy withdrew to the west leaving the three destroyed PT-76 tanks.

The various records of the battle do not agree as to who destroyed the three tanks. Anti-tank mines, American armor, American artillery, and Air Force sorties are all credited with their destruction. It's doubtful if the defenders at Ben Het cared who received the credit. One fact is obvious, this was the first American armor engagement on enemy armor since the Korean War.

Ben Het received indirect fire on a daily basis into the month of June. As an illustration of how much the NVA B-3 front wanted to destroy Ben Het, the Tet 1969 battle was continued into what the NVA called Operation Dien Bien Phu. Giving the name of the decisive battle of the first Indochina war to a battle for a previously obscure Special Forces camp signified the importance of this battle for the NVA. But the NVA absorbed thousands of casualties and didn't achieve their goal.

### The Enemy

Prisoner interrogations and other intelligence identified the 28th NVA and 66th NVA infantry regiments, along with the 40th NVA artillery regiment. Additionally, I Field Force Vietnam (IFFV) believed that ele-

ments of the 18B NVA infantry, 101D NVA infantry, and the E16 infantry regiments participated in the battle.

During this period, there were also reports of NVA helicopter sightings in Laos and north of Pleiku. However, the NVA helicopters were a MI-6 Hook and MI-4 Hound and were probably for resupply and would have been unnecessary at Ben Het because of the proximity of border sanctuaries.

### Why Ben Het?

Why did the NVA choose the battle at Ben Het? In addition to achieving access into Binh Dinh province, they might have had a number of reasons.

Ho Chi Minh would later die on 3 September 1969, and perceiving his mortality he may have wanted to risk another large battle in hopes of winning the war. Well over half of the 16-year-old boys in North Vietnam had been drafted and manpower was limited. On the other hand, North Vietnam was winning a war of attrition by stalling the peace talks in Paris while the U.S. slowly withdrew from Vietnam.

An NVA prisoner who surrendered outside Ben Het on June 15th said that the battle was to destroy Ben Het and influence the Paris talks. This would be consistent with Ho's earlier adage: "You may kill my soldiers, but as long as I have my cadre, I'll win in the end." Service in Ho's army, had to be hard duty.

The attack preceded the initial visit to Vietnam of newly elected President Nixon's Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, by two days. Perhaps the

communists intended to greet Laird's arrival with a disaster at Ben Het, certainly an outcome they would have relished.

Regardless as to why the battle happened, the North failed to achieve their goals in 1969.

### Vietnamization

Ben Het proved to be the first test of Vietnamization and most of the friendly casualties were Vietnamese. The South Vietnamese received American air, artillery, and tank support but they fought their own battle and won. In terms of bomb tonnage, resupply expenditures, and casualties, Ben Het proved to be the last big battle of the Vietnam War during the American phasedown. Our South Vietnamese allies had won their first test. ☒

The author is indebted to Steve Sherman of Radix Press for archival information, and Griff Dodge (Colonel, USA, Retired) for artillery information and instruction.

George Dooley is a retired Special Forces officer and author of *Battle for the Central Highlands*, A Special Forces Story, Random House, 2000, NY.

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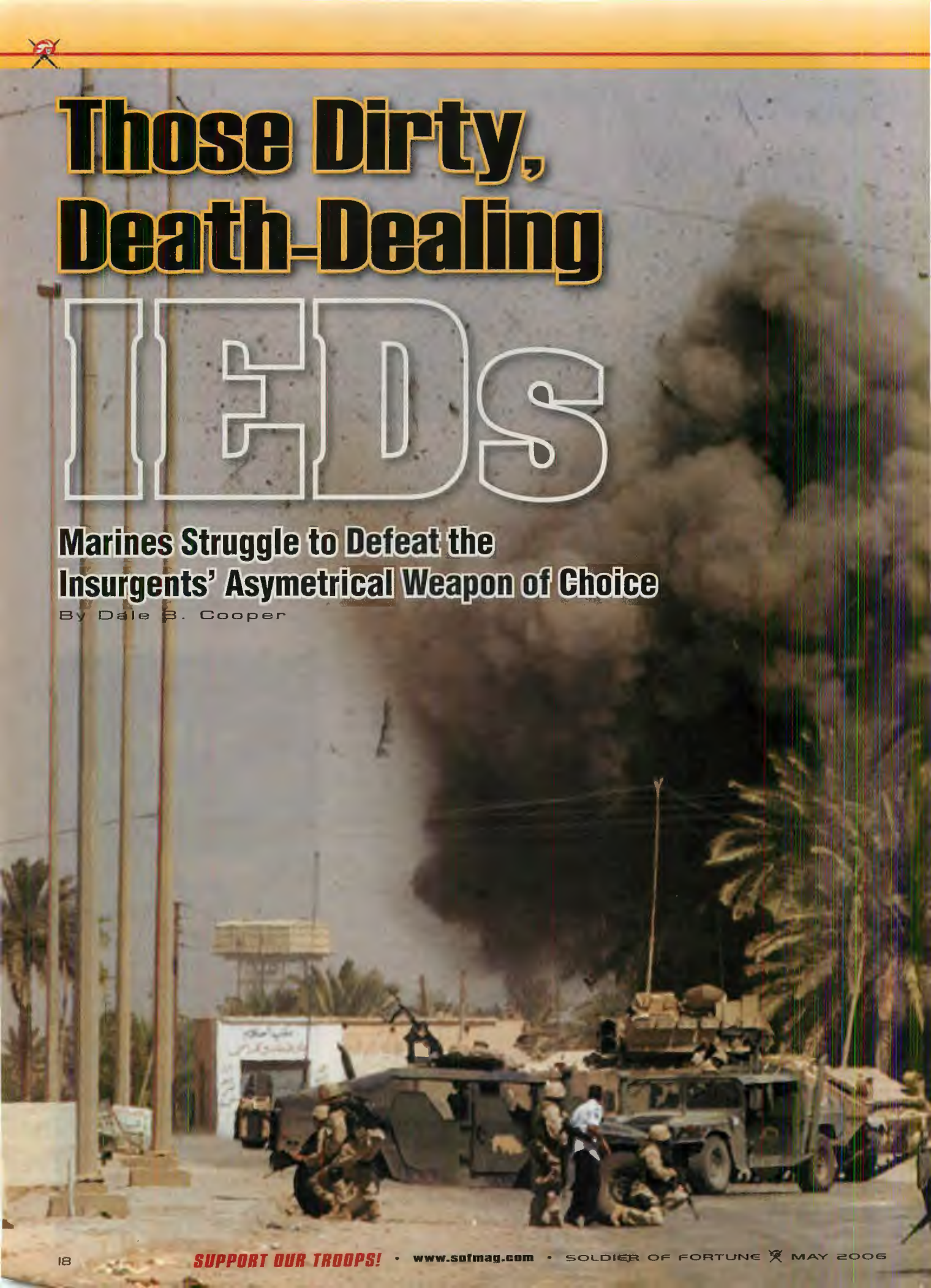


# Those Dirty, Death-Dealing

# IEDS

**Marines Struggle to Defeat the  
Insurgents' Asymmetrical Weapon of Choice**

By Dale B. Cooper



# “Everyday was a close call in Ramadi.”

— Staff Sergeant James M. Hussey, 4<sup>th</sup>  
Platoon, Alpha Company 1/5 Marines



*(above)* Marines with Security Detachment, 8th Engineer Support Battalion, stand in front of their RG-31 Cougar after an IED exploded directly under the vehicle during a routine patrol January 6. The blast was deflected by the Cougar's V-shaped undercarriage. Photo courtesy of 8th Engineer Battalion.



Since February 2004 when 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines shipped out for Ramadi, there have been more than 350 Marines killed in action and more than 4,000 wounded. Some were killed by snipers, but most of them have been killed by Improvised Explosive Devices.

“The insurgents didn’t stand and fight like they did in Fallujah,” said Lance Corporal Daniel R. Jones, a mortar man in Weapons Company, “they hit us with IEDs.” Jones recalled being hit four times while riding with Corporal Brett Springer in Ramadi.

After five Marines from Alpha Company and two from Charlie Company were killed by Improvised Explosive Devices, Springer no longer felt safe in his armored Humvee, “no longer invincible.” What’s it like to survive an IED?

“Your heart goes about 90 miles per hour. If you’re close to an IED when it blows, the blast sucks the air out of your truck,” said Springer whose Humvee hit a 155mm artillery shell

*(left)* Military police from Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, take cover as explosive ordnance technicians, also from MWSS-374, detonate an improvised explosive device near Khaldiya, Iraq. Photo: Corporal Chance W. Haworth *(inset)* Scouts and combat engineers from 2nd Platoon, 1st LAR discover a massive IED during Operation Steel Curtain in four different locations a few yards from each other. Engineer has uncovered two of four artillery shells wired together and coupled to a propane tank. Photo: Corporal Ken Melton



*An RG-31 Cougar rests on its front axle after an IED detonated under the vehicle. None of the Marines were seriously injured and the vehicle was repaired.*  
Photo courtesy of 8th Engineer Battalion.

the first time. The other three IEDs were small mortar rounds, nothing big, but they still got his attention.

"We were driving down NOVA, a stretch of highway leading to a hospital in Ramadi, when the 155 exploded about 25 meters in front of us," said Springer, "but we drove right through it." The second section of Weapons Company hit another IED, a mortar round, about 10 meters from the crater the artillery round made. It rattled a few cages, but didn't kill anybody. A video camera in second section caught the whole sequence on tape.

Springer credits upgrades in armor with saving lives in Iraq, especially from IEDs that explode in front of, beside, or in back of armored Humvees. However, "If the IED explodes beneath your Humvee," said Springer, "the chances of survival are not very good." That's why the Marine Corps is looking to replace the Humvee with a combat vehicle that can take a hit to its underbelly and survive.

### **Cougar – A New Breed of Cat**

The Cougar Hardened Engineer Vehicle, or HEV as it's called, could fill the void until a replacement Humvee is designed, although the Marine Corps has another vehicle in mind.

One Cougar was hit by four IEDs in Iraq, but survived the blasts with only superficial damage. Cougars are built to withstand 30 pounds of TNT to either the front or rear axles, as well as a 15-pound charge to the center portion of the vehicle.

Fourteen HEVs have been shipped to Iraq for use by EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) units. The user-friendly vehicles are designed to protect the driver and crew from ballistic and mine-blast threats. The four-wheel drive version can seat four passengers. The six-wheel edition can seat 10 passengers. There's also an ambulance variant being built.

Force Protection, a company in South Carolina, is currently manufacturing the Cougar HEV for U.S. and coalition partners while also manufacturing a larger HEV called the "Buffalo," for U.S. Army operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Cougar has ballistic protection for the radiator, fuel tanks and battery compartments, and is equipped with weapons ports, an M240G machine gun mount, and an NBC (Nuclear, Biological and Chemical) overpressure and air filter system.

The Cougar can trace its lineage to South Africa. In 1968, South Africa in

conjunction with Rhodesia began developing technology to counter land mines. They needed a vehicle that could lose a wheel or an axle, but protect its crew and passengers.

Unlike flat-bottomed Humvees, the v-shaped hull of the Cougar is designed to deflect the blast and heat of a land mine or IED away from the passenger compartment. The vehicle is also designed to withstand a rollover and is equipped with multi-point, NASCAR-style safety harnesses to keep passengers from bouncing around like pin balls and getting seriously injured in a 360-degree rollover.

Ballistic glass is another feature of the Cougar. Marines sit high in the vehicle and can engage insurgents in an ambush through gun ports without exposing themselves to fire.

In a Humvee, gunners are usually exposed from the waist up in the turret. Humvee passengers can't see what direction enemy fire is coming from, due to limited fields of vision through small bulletproof windows in each blast-resistant door.

On 6 January, five Marines and a Navy corpsman with the Security Detachment, 8<sup>th</sup> Engineer Support Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Logistics Group (Forward) were on routine patrol when

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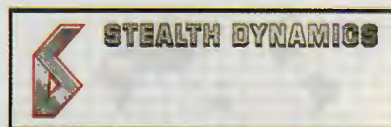
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the driver of their RG-31 Cougar told everyone to "hold on," because there was a bump in the road. The bump turned out to be an IED, which detonated when they ran over it.

The blast blew the vehicle into the air, but everyone survived, including the gunner who was standing in the turret. He suffered only minor burns to his face, thanks to personal protective gear that all Marines and Sailors are required to wear in Iraq. The gear includes Interceptor vests with protective inserts, and groin protectors. Kevlar helmets, ballistic-proof eyewear, polypropylene neck protectors and gloves also shielded the occupants from the fiery inferno that engulfed their vehicle. As a result, only two of the crew suffered concussions. The rest received minor burns.

Cougars are not Combat Tactical Vehicles: The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory is still drawing up the requirements for such a vehicle. One definite design constraint is weight. The Humvee replacement must be light enough to be airlifted by helicopter, but with enough armor to give the crew of four to six a fighting chance against mines and IEDs.

"But it will not look like the Hum-

vee we currently have on the battlefield," said James A. Lasswell, director of the warfighting lab. "Lack of power-generation is one of the things that is killing us over there right now," he said. "Even an IED jammer takes power, and alternators on Humvees don't provide enough power. We need to install other electronic countermeasures, because jammers are not proving to be effective against the changing threat," Lasswell noted.

While the Warfighting Lab debates the requirements of a new combat vehicle, a process that could take years, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force has requested 1,169 Cougar Hardened Engineer Vehicles for immediate use in Iraq. Serial production of the Cougar is now underway.

The Marine Corps plans to use the Cougars that it's ordered to patrol supply lines in Iraq looking for insurgents bent on disrupting the Coalition's flow of bullets, bandages and beans with IEDs.

### Upping the Ante

According to Major General William Catto from the Marine Corps Systems Command, 100% of wheeled vehicles involved in combat opera-

tions in Iraq, Afghanistan or the Horn of Africa are equipped with some type of armor. But Catto told the House Armed Services Committee in May 2005 that as "we've added armor, they've added greater explosives."

IED threats began with 60mm and 81mm mortar rounds. Catto says insurgents have now upped the ante to 122mm and 155mm artillery rounds. They have also started using 500-pound bombs and double-stacked land mines to the IED threat.

Army Brigadier General Joseph Votel, chief of DoD's IED Defeat Task Force says insurgents in Iraq are "very adept, and very innovative." For some time, insurgents have detonated IEDs with cell phones and garage door openers, but when U.S. forces found a way to jam the radio signals, the insurgents switched to infrared triggers.

"Detection is great," said Lieutenant General James N. Mattis, head of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, "but I want to find a way to detonate IEDs before my Marines get close enough for them to do any damage."

First Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, the unit Mattis commanded during the Gulf War, is now testing and using

*This is what an IED can do to an uparmored Humvee in Iraq, in stark contrast to the survivability of the Cougar. The NCO severely injured in this attack is still recovering from his wounds. Photo courtesy of Staff Sergeant Michael F. Barrett*





Top: L/Cpl Michael Machen. Bottom left to right, L/Cpl Daniel Jones, L/Cpl Andrew Juraska, L/Cpl Jonathan Hart, and Corporal Brett Springer. Photo courtesy of Corporal Brett Springer

thermal camera technology to local these lethal weapons. The 122 and 155mm rounds give off heat, and thermal cameras pick up that heat.

"It definitely opens up your options," said Corporal Michael Tilus, vehicle commander for Combined Anti-Armor Team White, Weapons Co., 1/7, "because everything that is new in the ground stands out in the camera viewfinder. If someone was there 24 hours before you got there, you'd see it."

But as with other fixes, the biggest drawback is cost. A thermal camera costs about \$14,000, and the Marine Corps doesn't have a blank check when it comes to cameras for every squad.

The Army is also using thermal camera technology. The 126<sup>th</sup> Armor Battalion, a National Guard unit based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has also installed a 6-foot boom on the front of their Humvees. Dangling chains and an infrared countermeasure on the boom can trigger explosives before the Humvee is directly over them.

Currently, there is no Humvee armor strong enough to protect against roadside bombs packed with thousands of pounds of explosives. Even 67-ton M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks are being destroyed by "catastrophic IEDs." The only way you can effectively defeat them is to detect the people planting those explosives and kill them. Sadly, there aren't enough soldiers, sailors or marines in Iraq to maintain surveillance on roads and highways, 24/7. So electronic detection and situational

awareness appear to be the best approaches at the moment.

With the number and lethality of IEDs increasing almost hourly in Iraq, the Marine Corps is also turning its attention to predicting and preventing attacks before they occur. From October 10 through November 11 last year, there were nearly 1,500 IED attacks in Iraq. That's an average of about 50 per day. The number of casualties also climbed from 27% in January to 75% in September.

Representatives from Marine Corps Systems Command, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, U.S. Strategic Command, and the Army's Topographic Engineering Command converged on Quantico, Virginia last 8 December, a week after 10 Marines were killed in Fallujah by artillery shells that were "coupled" in a courtyard at an abandoned flour mill they were using for a promotion ceremony. A Marine apparently stepped on a pressure plate that set off a chain reaction explosion that killed him and his mates.

The agenda at Quantico involved "Threat Mapper," a computer program developed by the Army that uses complex calculations based on past events, to forecast future IED activity.

Joseph Murgo, director for Counter Improvised Explosive Devices at Marine Corp Systems Command, says Threat Mapper could give all branches of the military a more proactive posture on the IED threat by planning

patrols and transportation routes to avoid risk areas, locate existing IEDs before they're detonated, and set up surveillance teams to thwart insurgents before devices can be planted.

Joe Langevin, a Systems Command expert on IED threat assessment and enemy tactics, says the shift toward prevention is crucial to mitigating, and eventually eliminating, the IED threat.

Langevin says the enemy in Iraq conserves manpower by using IEDs. "The minute we lessen his ability to use IEDs, we force him to come out and fight," said Langevin. Every time the fight shapes up as it did in Fallujah in 2004, the insurgents get their heads handed to them.

James A. Lasswell, technical director for the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, told *SOF* his people are looking at a holistic approach to the problem of IEDs that includes individual protection, armored vehicles, tactics, techniques and procedures, as well as new jamming systems.

"But it seems like 10 minutes after we come up with a way to deal with the IED threat, the insurgency comes up with another way to deploy them," said Lasswell who observed that the best brains on both sides are battling for supremacy in Iraq.

Detection involves developing a physics-based model of nonlinear acoustic surface waves, investigating ultra wideband and super resolution imaging, and studying the dynamic behavior of the human delivery system for IEDs – the suicide bomber. In other words, what makes him or her "tick."

An ancient Chinese proverb says "change is like a dragon; you can stand in its way, in which case it will destroy you with its power; you can run from it, in which case it will rapidly overtake you and bury you; or you can jump on its back and let it take you where it will into the future."

The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, which adopted the symbol of the dragon at its inception, has jumped on the dragon's back. The Marine Corps is committed to protecting every Leatherneck in Harm's Way. This includes improvements to Small Arms Protective Inserts, or SAPIs as they are called, improvements to extremity body armor, new helmets and ballistic goggles. By the end of the year, the Marine Corps hopes to have provided almost 29,000 sets of SAPI to Marines in Iraq.

*Continued on page 74*





# LAUER'S Urban Responder

## Proving That Beauty Is More Than Skin Deep

Text and Photos by Gary Paul Johnston

*(above) Johnston found the Urban Responder a pleasure to shoot with hits at short-range targets easily made out to 200 yards and beyond.*

Most enthusiasts of modern firearms are familiar with Steve Lauer's DuraCoat finish for firearms and other equipment. Consisting of an extremely durable synthetic material, DuraCoat is easily applied to metal and plastic in a great variety of colors and/or camouflage patterns to blend with virtually any set of surroundings. Both law enforcement and special military units have shown increasing interest in DuraCoat, especially since it can be applied by the end-user.

Many may not know, however, that Lauer is also a Class II manufacturer that offers a selection of fine firearms and sound suppressers to qualified buyers. One firearm that has generated great interest is the Lauer Urban Responder .223 Carbine.

Not being one to skimp on quality, Lauer assembles his Urban Responder using some of the best components available. For example, the gun is manufactured to Lauer's specifications by Lewis Machine & Tool – including its absolutely match-quality barrel. Unlike some cheap and second-rate aftermarket components that flood the market, LMT equals 100% Military Standard. This means not only true M1913 rails, but also fully interchangeable parts made of the proper materials including 7075/T6 aircraft alloy with MilSpec hardcoat.

Recently I had an opportunity to test and evaluate Lauer's Urban Responder. Obviously having been created



*Designed for law enforcement use, the Urban Responder was intended as a patrol carbine for those dealing with crisis incidents.*

with Law Enforcement in mind, in addition to its name, my sample Urban Responder was furnished with a host of tactical accessories, including the following:

- Pakistani Ordnance Freefloat Rail System.
- ACE Compact Fixed Stock.
- First SAMCO Pistol Grip.
- Trijicon Tri-Power Optical Sight.
- A.R.M.S. ThrowLever Mount.
- Falcon vertical foregrip.
- Insight Technology M3 Tactical Light.
- DPMS Mangoni Rear Sight.
- Lauer Custom Weaponry 3-point sling.

Topping off my sample Urban Responder was Lauer's tough DuraCoat finish in an urban computer "puzzle pattern," similar to the current camouflage recently adopted by the Marine Corps. Normally made up of random combinations of tiny squares and rectangles on two backgrounds in four colors, the finish on the Urban Responder is done in white and black with two shades of gray. The result breaks up the visible outline of the weapon and, as compared with solid black, is not nearly as apparent or threatening. The finish was applied to virtually every part of the gun, except for the rear sight and the closed-foam covering on the recoil spring tube of the ACE Stock.

The Pakistani Ordnance Rail is rigidly secured to the M1913 rail integral with the flattop upper receiver and extends forward, down and around the barrel to provide four such rails at 12-, 3-, 6- and 9 o'clock on a ventilated hous-



On the right side (9 o'clock) rail of its Pakistani Rail System, the Urban Responder has an Insight Technology M6 Tactical Light/Laser mounted. Its remote pressure switch is affixed to a vertical foregrip from Falcon Industries.

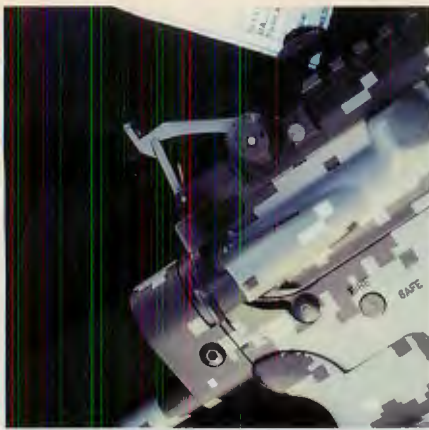


The sample Urban Responder came equipped with Trijicon's Tri-Power Reflex Sight. The entire weapon was finished in Lauer DuraCoat Urban Camouflage.

ing, which leaves the barrel free-floating. Looking from the front, an Insight Technology M6 Tactical Light/Laser is mounted on the 9 o'clock rail with a remote pressure switch. This switch leads down and is secured to a Falcon Industries Vertical Foregrip mounted on the 6 o'clock rail. With the main switch of the Insight M6 turned on, the light/laser can be activated by squeezing the pressure pad of the remote switch, with the support hand that is holding the vertical grip. On the 3 o'clock rail is a sling mount.

Mounted on the 12 o'clock rail forward of the rear sight is a Trijicon Tri-Power Optical Sight on an A.R.M.S. #17 ThrowLever Mount. Containing four power sources, the Tri-Power was originally named when it had only three such sources. However, an additional power source of a miniature calumine light stick was later added. The other power sources are tritium and battery backup in addition to the main fiber optic power source for use during daylight. In low light conditions, tritium automatically takes over and can be enhanced by battery or calumine backup power, which illuminates the fiber optic.

The Tri-Power Sight has not been released due to a product-improved program based on a number of samples sent out for evaluation. I used one of these sample sights throughout Gunsite's excellent 5-day .223 course, and



(top) The Yankee Hill Rear Sight elevates instantly, as seen, with just the flip of the finger. (above) In place of the standard AR-15 Buttstock is the excellent ACE AR Short Skeleton Buttstock designed for use with heavy clothing or body armor, having a shorter length of pull.

## Specifications

### Lauer Urban Responder

<b>Caliber:</b>	.223 Remington
<b>Muzzle Velocity:</b>	3,000 fps
<b>Operation:</b>	Direct gas
<b>Type of Fire:</b>	Semi-automatic or selective fire.
<b>Barrel Length:</b>	16" standard.
<b>Weight (gun alone):</b>	7 pounds (approx).
<b>Feed Device:</b>	Any AR-15/M16 magazine
<b>Safety:</b>	Positive thumb safety
<b>Sights:</b>	(front) M16A2 adjustable for elevation
	(rear) Peep aperture adjustable for windage
	(optics) M1913 rail system provides for mounting any optics
<b>Stocks:</b>	ACE AR Short Skeleton Buttstock and First SAMCO pistol grip
<b>Finish:</b>	DuraCoat in a variety of colors & patterns
<b>Price:</b>	\$3,475.00 as pictured fully equipped (sugg. ret.)

found its chevron reticle to be bright and sharp, providing an excellent point of aim. The A.R.M.S. MilSpec ThrowLever Mount provides exact return to zero when replaced in the same position on an M1913 rail.

In order to allow one to mount the rear sight of choice on the rail of the upper receiver, the 12 o'clock rail of the Pakistani Ordnance system does not extend all the way to the rear, and here was mounted a Yankee Hill folding rear sight. When no optical sight is mounted, this open sight is deployed by simply raising its tangent-style peep aperture. When so raised, the tangent locks in place by a spring-loaded prop. To retract the tangent, the prop is pushed forward and back down, with the tangent following it.

Made of hard plastic, the First SAMCO pistol grip has finger grooves and an integral filler portion that places the hand farther to the rear of the trigger. For many, this style of grip provides better trigger finger position and a more hand-filling hold on the grip.

A vast improvement over the standard AR-15 fixed stock is the ACE butt stock that came on the sample Urban Responder. Called the AR Short Skeleton Stock, this fine piece of gear is cataloged by ACE as the ARFX-E. Consisting of a robust main tube and a lower support rod, the ACE has a mount for a single-point sling, and will also accommodate a standard sling mounting arrangement. Fur-

nished with a non-slip rubber butt pad, this stock also has a closed cell foam cover over the forward section of the main tube for placement of the cheek. To accommodate a variety of layers of clothing and body, as well as human builds, this stock is shorter than standard and is also very strong and comfortable.

## Trigger Time

My sample Urban Responder came with a MilStd 30-round magazine, the bottom half of which was also finished in Urban Camo DuraCoat, so that was the magazine I used during all testing. Informal shooting at medium ranges provided fast hits using the Trijicon Tri-Power Reflex Sight, or the open sights that came on the carbine. However, to squeeze every bit of accuracy out of the gun, I mounted a Leupold Mid Range/Tactical (MR/T) scope on the Urban Responder using A.R.M.S. 30mm ThrowLever Rings.

As the civilian counterpart of the Special Forces' TS-30A2 Sniper Scope used on the 5.56mm Special Purpose Rifle (SPR), the Leupold MR/T is identical to that scope in every way including its illuminated reticle. The only way this optic differs from the military version is its MR/T designation, and it is also available with an elevation cam for 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition.

After sighting the Leupold-equipped Urban Responder in close enough for measurement, I fired a



To squeeze out maximum accuracy from the Urban Responder, Johnston mounted a Leupold MR/T scope on the flattop portion of the Pakistani Ordnance Rail System. With this scope, the custom carbine produced 100-yard groups hovering under 1.5 inches.

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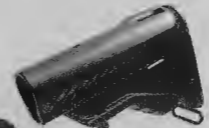
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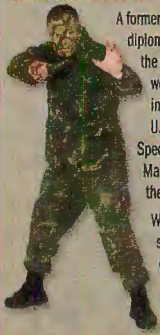
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series of 3-shot groups at 100 yards to get an idea what kind of accuracy the carbine was capable of delivering. The gun's high-grade barrel played no small part in guaranteeing that all such groups with match-grade ammunition hovered just under 1.5 MOA, with "issue" type ammo running somewhat larger. No malfunctions were experienced with any of the test lots during the shooting and the carbine was not cleaned during the testing. Even so, no accuracy deterioration was noticed.

## Druthers

Having established fairly rigid preferences in equipping a carbine such as this, I nevertheless try to remain flexible when evaluating new accessories for any firearm. As such, I found those furnished on the sample Urban Responder to function from "excellent" to "satisfactorily." Others may have different opinions, which is, as they say, what makes the world go around, but Lauer Custom Weaponry will build the Urban Responder to meet the customer's needs and preferences.

Whatever your preferences, check out Lauer Custom Weaponry. For information on all their services, contact Lauer Custom Weaponry/DuraCoat, Dept. SOF, 3601 129<sup>th</sup> St., Chippewa Falls, MI 54729; phone: 800-830-6677, or on the web at [www.lauerweaponry.com](http://www.lauerweaponry.com).

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## Accuracy Chart

Five 3-Shot 100-Yard Bench Rest Groups, Using Pro Chrony LE, Elev: 7000', Temp: 41°, Humid: 28%

.223 Cartridge:	Muzzle Vel	Small Group	Large Group	Average
Black Hills 62 gr. JHP	2796 fps	1.32"	1.46"	1.37"
Cor-Bon 55 gr. JSP	3016 fps	1.23"	1.54"	1.42"
Hornady 55 gr. TAP	3002 fps	1.38"	1.59"	1.49"
Wolf 55 gr. FMJ	2998 fps	1.67"	1.83"	1.76"
GI M855 ball	2847 fps	3.04"	3.32"	3.19"

# World-Class Handgun Champion And SWAT Trainer Reveals Little-Known Shooting Secrets That Will Save Your Life If You Ever Use Your Gun In Self-Defense!

If you own or carry a handgun for self-defense,  
this is probably going to be the most important letter you've ever read!

By: Bob Pierce, President TRS Direct

Re: Ben Cooley, SWAT Team Trainer; World Champion Competition Shooter

Dear Friend,

It's true! If there's even the slightest possibility that you'll have to use your gun some day for self-defense, then this is going to be the most important letter you've ever read. I'm not kidding.

I want you to carefully absorb and consider what I'm about to share with you. It really could save your life someday.

So let me begin. First of all...

## I Have Some Good News And Some Bad News

The good news is, you're very smart if you own AND CARRY a handgun for self-defense -- because today, the gun is the "martial arts" of the 21st Century. All the criminals and gang-bangers are carrying. If you're not...

## You're At A Serious Disadvantage!

But that's not the bad news. No. The bad news is, even if you carry, chances are you don't know how to use your gun properly in a real life-or-death confrontation!

I don't mean to offend you. I'm only saying this for your own good. Bennie Cooley knows what he's talking about. He's trained with SWAT teams, for a living. He's also a 3 time World Champion handgun shooter at the Soldier of Fortune competition and other high-level competitive events.

So please believe me when I tell you that there's a lot more to combat shooting than sight-alignment, target identification, stance, and trigger pull. A lot more!

In fact, all your training at the range shooting paper targets will do you no good if you're missing the key element I'm going to explain in this letter, and which you will learn on my new video/DVD training course, "The Fighting Mindset".

You see, what's more important in combat is what's going on in your head -- and how you convey that in your words, your physical movements, your attitude toward your adversary, and your willingness to shoot him.

## Hollywood Will Get You Killed!

Tragically, almost everyone alive today learns their so-called "fighting skills" from what they see on TV and in the movies. I say "tragically" because everything you see on TV and film is absolutely the opposite of what you should do in a real-life armed confrontation!

And yes, I know it's almost "heresy" to say it, but...

## These Hollywood Hotshots Wouldn't Survive The First 2 Seconds In Real Life

How does Bennie Cooley know? And who is he to be attacking the revered Hollywood dream factories?

As I mentioned a moment ago, Bennie has over...

- 21 Years in SWAT Operations

- 3 Time Soldier of Fortune 3-Gun World Champion
- 5 Time USPSA National 3-Gun Champion
- ...and numerous other titles that are too lengthy to list here.

When Bennie is not working with elite soldiers, he travels around the country as one of the top competitive 3-Gun shooters in America.

## And Now Bennie Cooley Can Teach It To You!

The reason I'm writing to you today is because Bennie has completed a life-long dream of his: To take everything he knows about combat shooting and teach it to the average, hard-working American guy who carries a gun for self-defense and the protection of his home and family.

And these days, let's face it...you have to carry. Crime is so out of control that you can't even take your children to the local park without being in fear of some gang-bangers coming in and shooting innocent people. It happened just recently in a small town in Central California. Two people dead, one little girl wounded because a 15-year-old gang member started squeezing off rounds at someone he didn't like!

In another incident I saw on the news, an elderly man was taking pictures of his grandchildren at a playground. Two thugs walked up to him, demanded he give them the camera, and proceeded to bear the hell out of him -- hospitalizing him with severe head injuries!

I'm sure you see plenty of this on the news wherever you live. It's everywhere -- not just in the big cities anymore.

## It's Enough To Turn A Regular Guy Into A Raging Vigilante!

No, I'm not suggesting you do that. But I am saying that your best choice is to protect yourself. The police can't protect you anymore. Just ask them!

And these days, the gun is the martial arts of the 21st Century. Don't let anybody tell you that you're "over-reacting" if you carry a gun. It's the smartest thing you could ever do.

But to be really smart, you have to know how to properly use that gun in a real-life hostile confrontation. And as I said, unless you've already received special training from someone like Bennie, chances are you're going to act the way you see "Hollywood cops" move around and shoot their guns on TV and film.

And if you do that...

## You Might As Well Call The Mortuary And Make Your Funeral Arrangements Now!!!

I'm not kidding. Unless you've already been trained, chances are you don't know how to act and react in a hostile life-or-death confrontation with an armed aggressor.

The truth is, there are some very special skills you need to know. They don't come naturally. In fact,



3-Time World Champion Shooter and SWAT Team Trainer Mr. Ben Cooley Jr. reveals advanced handgun tactics to be used with the most powerful weapon you have available... your brain!

what comes "naturally" is what will get you killed. You actually have to train yourself to overcome your natural instincts, fears, hesitancy, desire to escape, etc.

In all honesty, there's nothing "magical" about these skills. They all make perfect sense. But unless you're trained by an expert, you'll probably never figure them out on your own.

That's why I'm so eager to share Bennie's new training DVD's with you. This 2-DVD, 4.5-hour video "training course" where Bennie explains everything you need to know to survive and fight successfully in virtually any hostile confrontation you find yourself in.

Taking the skills Bennie teaches to SWAT and Hostage Rescue Teams will give you a no-holds-barred "crash course" in the physical and mental aspects of combat shooting. He calls it...

## "The Fighting Mindset"

You see, what really makes the difference in a lethal struggle is your mindset. If you don't have the emotional structure to be able to fight in a lethal confrontation, you're going to lose. That's the honest truth.

No matter how big your gun is... no matter how many rounds it holds... no matter how much money you had to pay for it or how accurate it is, you need this specialized training.

And you can't get it anywhere else that I know of, because this is the first video of its kind where someone with Bennie's background comes right out and "tells it like it is" on tape so you can know what SWAT teams across America know about combat shooting.

## What Will You Learn?

Plenty. More than you could ever imagine. More than I could even describe in this letter. But let me give you some of the more important highlights...

First, SWAT starts off with Equipment Selection. You'll be amazed that the vast majority of expensive,

"sophisticated" guns on the market today are actually bad for you in combat. They'll cost you valuable reaction time!

And you'll discover what Bennie regards as the single most effective weapon to use, bar none. It's used by the best combat shooters in the world, as well as by hostage rescue teams...you name it. Anybody who knows what they're doing uses this type of gun. So should you.

- Bennie gives you the most important rule to remember in a gunfight.
- Should you carry a revolver instead of a semi-auto? Bennie gives you the general rule on how to make this crucial decision.
- You'll learn why you should be able to function your weapon with only one hand. It shouldn't take two.
- Bennie explains what a good holster should and should not have. Officers and soldiers have gotten killed because they had the wrong equipment. Bennie gives you 7 "MUSTS" for any holster and magazine pouch you buy. This information alone is extremely valuable.
- There are no one-second "quick-draws" on the street. Bennie will show you what to do instead.
- The best, most effective kind of tactical flashlight to use -- and why it's so important to have one.
- The right way to hold your flashlight and your gun at the same time. Other ways are simply not effective. They're too hard to do, and they cause you to waste too much time getting your sights aligned on the target. But the method Bennie will teach you lets you illuminate your target and keep full control of your gun at the same time. This one little technique alone could save your life in a night fight.
- He will even show you the right kind of ear protection to use during practice and for real-life situations in your home. You might think earmuffs don't matter, but these are especially important to have when an intruder is in your home and you have to investigate the noises you hear.

As you'll see when you watch Bennie's video, he has a very important rule when it comes to equipment: Don't rely strictly on your equipment! The most important weapon you have -- and indeed, the most dangerous weapon you have -- is right between your ears. If you don't learn how to use that in a real fight, you can have every gadget in the world and you're still going to lose.

That's why, throughout the rest of the video training course, Bennie meticulously explains everything you need to know to overcome any mistakes or misconceptions you're now carrying around in your head.

Bennie will also train you in the proven techniques of gun-retention and gun take-away methods.

For instance, if someone tries to take your gun away from you, he will show you an unbeatable way to keep control of the gun. It surprises the hell out of the person attacking you. Many other methods currently taught to people are extremely dangerous and ineffective. But with this simple method, you will win every time you use it. You can even use it if someone attacks you with a knife.

Bennie also teaches you how to take their gun away -- even if they're holding it in your back or if they have you kneeling on the ground, "gangland execution" - style!

### Plus...

- Even though criminals look for victims instead of opponents, sometimes it's smarter to look like a victim! Bennie demonstrates in detail how to do this and fool your adversary so you can take his gun away from him before he even knows what hit him!
- To help you become better at shooting, he will show you how to master the details -- even the "small" stuff such as a proper grip. Bennie also shows you a "natural" way to grip the gun that automatically increases your accuracy without any effort on your part!
- He teaches you how to keep from accidentally putting the gun on "safe" when you're under

pressure in a gunfight! (It happens more often than you think -- and it has cost a lot of people their lives!)

- The tactical reload: Proper techniques that allow you to safely and reliably change magazines under pressure without skipping a beat.
  - Action vs. Reaction: It takes the human brain two-tenths of a second to process the information and react in response to someone else's action. You will be taught, in detail, how to use this "natural law" to your advantage in any hostile situation.
  - Most criminals travel in pairs. Here's how to take this fact into account when attacking the first one.
  - In any type of conflict, your mind will operate at "light speed" beyond your physical capability. Bennie breaks down this fighting and teaches you how to make sure this doesn't work against you in a real fight.
  - How to go from fear to controlled anger in your response to a hostile threat.
  - How to train your subconscious mind to act properly under the pressure of a surprise attack.
  - How to get your enemy to immediately do things for you that he doesn't even know he's doing. You'll use his human nature against him!
- This is all good stuff. But one of the most crucial things you'll learn from this video training course is...

### The Vital Importance of the Reactionary Gap!

Here's what it means: The average person can travel 14 feet in one second, and yet it takes a second and a half for you to react to their initial action. Bennie shows you how to train with this lethal "law of nature" in mind.

For instance, you might think that the guy with the knife in his hand is far enough away from you that you'll get your gun out in time to shoot him while he's running toward you. Think again! On this tape, you'll witness a dramatic demonstration of the eye-opening reality of "the reactionary gap".

And since everybody's reactionary gap is different, I tell you how to know what yours is!

From here we move into...

### The Blood-Chilling Realities Of Room-Clearing!

And yes, it is blood-chilling. As stated by Bennie, *"The hardest thing we ever have to do in a hostage-rescue operation is walk up to that front door, ready to go into action. No one wears a cape in our business. We're all human. We all want to live to see our families, or see the next day. So what we do for a living -- coming up against bad guys who want to kill us -- requires that we damn well better know what we're doing!"*

### Here Are Some Of The Key Things Bennie Teaches You

- NOISE: What to listen for before you enter a room -- and what to do when you don't hear anything. (WARNING: In this case, silence can be deadly!)
- How to "pic" a room -- the one right way, and several wrong ways that would get you killed.
- What to do once you see the intruder in your home. How to engage him properly and still protect yourself against a "surprise" threat from his partner.
- The truth about "double-tapping": Should you or shouldn't you fire two shots at each person?

In one segment, Bennie actually shoots the camera in order to demonstrate the proper technique and effectiveness of the room-clearing methods I teach you!

Now, some of these techniques are "obvious." But most are what we call "counter-intuitive." That means they're the opposite of what you think you should do.

Further along in the course, Bennie devotes a considerable amount of time to teaching you...

### The All-Important Rules Of Action Vs. Reaction!

In this fascinating section, you'll get to see a studly, 6'4", 240-lb. asskicker turn into a quivering tower of jello as he comes into the room in a simulated attack that dramatically demonstrates how you should employ the very same methods I teach you on this life-saving video.

You'll also see a 3-man test that demonstrates the proper use of my techniques: 3 "bad guys" are standing together on the street, the way gang-bangers do. One of them has a gun. How do you deal with them? It makes all the difference in the world -- whether you live or die. Watch this segment over and over again and ingrain it into your subconscious, and practice it with friends.

You'll also receive a "crash course" on the laws regarding the use of deadly force by civilians, such as...

### How To Acquire The Survival Mindset!

Basically, you're in a survival situation right now.

That's how bad crime has become in our society today. You have to think about survival virtually every hour of every day, whether you like it or not. That means you have to prepare yourself for any possibility. Unfortunately, nobody is going to come up and tap you on the shoulder and say, "Hey, two weeks from now, there's going to be a guy down at the convenience store and he's going to pull a gun on you and try to shoot you." Or "He's going to break into your car and try to rape your wife."

If you don't start preparing for these things today -- both mentally and physically -- then you're losing already. Your attitude is too passive, and it will get you killed. So on my video, I teach you...

- How to obtain "the survival mindset" that will enable you to act and react properly when the \$#@! hits the fan.
- Two lethal attitudes that destroy the survival mindset. How to keep yourself from falling victim to them.
- The number one thing you have to do to win any fight.
- How to react properly to pain and not let it defeat you.
- Once the "losing" mindset has set in during a bad situation, you cannot reverse it. Here's how to prevent it from taking hold in the first place.

He'll show you things you're doing with your gun and with your physical movements that directly sabotage your chances for survival during a hostile encounter. You're doing them and don't even know it, because it's human nature.

You must learn what these are, understand them, and then purposefully avoid them in training so you don't commit these fatal mistakes in real life.

That's what Bennie's DVD course is all about. He has put virtually everything he knows into it to make you a highly-competent individual in the area of armed self-defense.

For instance, he also trains you in...

### The Highest-Level Skills Of Tactical Survival!

- How to be alert to your environment at all times without being paranoid. Bennie explains the "color code" system which you can use in your everyday life for optimum security and self-reliance.
- The most important thing to pay attention to when observing a stranger and something doesn't "feel" right.
- How to tell if someone is packing a gun.
- The proper psychological and physical response to the threat of violence.
- Why you should ALWAYS "draw a line" for your adversary to cross.
- FACT: Criminals will normally attack you first. They have the initial surprise. But I show you 3 ways to surprise them and re-gain the tactical surprise.

Nobody's "super-human" -- not the criminals, not SWAT teams...no one! We're all subject to human nature. Most people unknowingly allow it to be used

against them. But once you watch these DVD's, you will understand where the "pitfalls" are -- and how to use human nature (yours and your enemy's) to your advantage.

### You Get To 'Attend' One Of My Rare Training Courses - Free!

Finally, for the advanced **Room-Clearing** section of the course, you'll be taken inside one of Bennie's rare Training Courses for civilians.

People just like you paid thousands of dollars to attend the Training Course that you're going to see on this video. But you get to "be there" for a fraction of what it cost them.

You'll see the students going through exactly what he teaches on the tapes. You'll learn from their mistakes. You'll see Bennie teaching them, which is the next best thing to being there yourself and going through the course.

You'll see Bennie going through the drills, showing the exact right way to do the room-clearing techniques he teaches you, including...

- The best way to secure your child's room in your house.
  - How to use cover and concealment in your house -- and how to assess your house and know the difference. What you can rely on, and what you can't.
  - The most fatal mistake people make (thanks to TV and movies) when entering a room with a gun.
  - Why SWAT teams, hostage rescue teams, and anti-terrorist soldiers wear ski masks -- and how to use this fact to your advantage.
  - What cops are required by law to say to a suspect -- but you **AREN'T!** Once again, TV and movies teach you the wrong thing. If you do it in real life, call the mortuary.
  - The right way to move when confronting someone if you've got a gun in your hand. Most people do it all wrong, and they'll get killed because of it.
- As part of the Room-Clearing session, I also give you in-depth training on...

### The Do's And Don'ts Of Doorway Entries!

Let's say you come home late at night and you think someone's inside your home who's not supposed to be there. What do you do? He'll tell you the surprising answer on Disc 2.

- He shows you how to properly open a door if you have to enter with your gun. Most people make several critical mistakes because of TV and movies. But Bennie shows you the way he trains SWAT teams and police officers to enter the room to gain the maximum advantage over anyone who's inside, and get immediate control over the situation.
- What to do if someone grabs your gun. This simple technique will enable you to keep control of the gun, fire two shots at your attacker, and then finish him off!
- The pitfalls of entering a room slowly.
- The legal aspects of who you can and cannot shoot, when, where, and why.

The bottom line is that you will be in control of the entire situation, from beginning to end. And that's what it's all about.

### Listen To What Experts Say About This Top-Level Training

How good is the training you'll get from these video tapes? Here are some comments from respected individuals whose lives depend on proper training...

*"This stuff works in the real world. I am a firearms instructor, and I try to impart Ben's techniques and philosophy to the officers I teach. I highly recommend The Fighting Mindset to civilian and professional alike."* - Gary Clark • Police Officer and Investigator • California

*"I've seen almost everything in police tactical training, and not a lot of things impressed me -- until Ben Cooley came along. I was very impressed and saw a lot of new techniques and ideas. Ben's ideas are groundbreaking, new, and unique, and he always gives the reasons behind them!"* - Jerry Lites • Police Officer and Leader of Special Response Team • Sebastopol,

### California

*"I've been a police officer for 32 years, and I have been through a lot of courses. None of these have compared with Ben Cooley's course on The Fighting Mindset. Learning these techniques could save your life in many life-threatening situations. It already has for me!"* - Steve Abbott • Police Sergeant and Rangemaster • Visalia, California

*"I found that Ben Cooley's course dealt with real-life situations in a practical manner. His teaching deals with the brutal realities of confrontation scenarios and house searches. It has given our SWAT team valuable and proven techniques that work for real and save lives. I can't recommend this course enough!"* - Daryl Smith • Police Officer and SWAT Team Leader • Fayetteville, North Carolina

*"Many instructors are knowledgeable and competent, but Ben Cooley truly knows how to communicate and inspire."* - Jim Wall • IPSC Shooter • Parma, Idaho  
*"The biggest change Ben Cooley internalizes in people is that the mind is the best and foremost weapon. A lot of courses tell you that if you have certain tools, you'll win. Ben comes around from the other side and shows you that your mindset makes all the difference. You'll learn to be in charge of the situation from the beginning. Nobody comes close to teaching what Ben Cooley teaches!"* - Mike Voight • Professional Shooter and Teacher • Mesa, Arizona

With statements like those, I hope you will give Bennie's new DVD training course, The Fighting Mindset, an honest try.

It's 2 DVD's, 4-hours+ long, and it's available normally for \$129.97 plus \$7.00 shipping and handling (total: 136.97). But for this special one-time introductory offer to *Soldier of Fortune* readers we're offering the complete set for only \$97. That's over \$30 OFF! (This offer will not be repeated).

No doubt you've spent several hundred, even thousands of dollars on your weapons and equipment. Doesn't it make sense to invest a little bit and get the training that will make those weapons pay off in real life? It's a small price to pay for saving your life.

Even so, you take no risk when you order because of...

### My 100% Money-Back Guarantee Of Satisfaction

When I send you these tapes, I want you to watch them over and over until the things I teach you become second-nature to you.

You're going to be thrilled with what you learn. But if for some reason you're not, I don't expect

you to pay for them. In fact, you can take up to 90 days to decide if what I teach you is "the real thing" or not.

Train with these techniques. Practice them and see how they feel. If you don't believe they're worth many times the price you've paid for the course, you can return the tapes within 90 days and I'll send you a complete refund of every penny you paid.

I can't be any fairer than that. I want you to be completely satisfied, or you don't pay.

So frankly, you have nothing to lose by giving this course a try. Place your order today by calling TOLL-FREE, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week...

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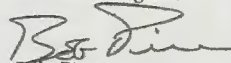
Your tapes will be shipped out to you within a few days, and I urge you to start watching them as soon as they arrive. You never know when you're going to have to use the life-saving techniques and strategies Bennie teaches you.

If you employ what you'll learn on these tapes, you won't make mistakes that can cost you your life (or the lives of your loved ones).

It's all about the tactical use of your MIND instead of just your equipment. That's why I call the video "The Fighting Mindset."

You'll call it the most valuable set of videos you've ever owned. Call now.

Sincere best regards,



Bob Pierce

P.S. Here's another testimony from one of Bennie's students on how effective this training is...

*"In the second day of Ben's course, I got called out on a search warrant with the Special Response Team unit. I was the scout lead-man and the first one into the residence. When I went in, I encountered two men, one of whom held a bottle of crack cocaine. Because of what I learned from Ben Cooley, these guys were totally helpless. They were immediately on the floor, and they knew I was serious!"*

- J. Taylor • Police Officer and Trainer • Whiteville, North Carolina

This is a once-in-a-lifetime, risk-free opportunity that might not be offered to you again. Don't pass it up.

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Enclosed is my Check or Money Order (payable to TRS) for \$97.

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# Riding With The POSSE



Text & Photos by Michael Gifford

*The LRS owned the night - looking into the darkness at FOB Buzz near Rutbah, Iraq*

During the summer of 2003 an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) took the life of Captain Joshua Byers, the company commander of Fox Troop, 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) at Ramadi, Iraq. His driver, Specialist Tim Buskell, was formerly a soldier in my Army reserve unit, the 94th Regional Readiness Command (RRC), years before. Luckily Tim only had a few small shrapnel wounds from the explosion that killed his friend and commander only a foot and a half away. It was time for payback.

Within a week, the US military would know who was responsible for it.

I belonged to the 94th Military Police Company, from the same RRC to which Buskell had once belonged. Our Second Platoon was stationed at "Junction City" in Ramadi, tasked with the 24-7 mission of keeping the main highway around Ramadi clear. I was with the one squad from first

platoon that had been posted near Hit when the call came in; Our unit had been personally requested by Killer Troop of the 3rd ACR for a joint operation with Special Forces Detachment Alpha in a mission to capture Captain Byers' killers.

The commander of the Third's "Killer Troop," Captain Andrew Watson, had called us the day before the raid and asked for our assistance. The brutally effective troop of killers was to team up with Special Forces for a raid in Ramadi to nab the eight men known to be responsible for the IED. In what would be considered one of the most successful joint operations of the preceding six months—involving the massive conventional machinery of the ACR and the quiet intensity of the "SF"—an Army Reserve MP company from New Hampshire would find itself right in the middle of it all.

The Alpha detachment of SF had been working in Ramadi for some

time developing an impressive network of informants. They were working out of a small compound just across the Euphrates from the 82nd Airborne's headquarters called "Champion Main." It was strange to drive by their post and not see a soul, yet feel the weight of their presence. They kept a low profile, but after a few weeks our common enemy knew who they were. On one occasion, a few insurgents foolishly try to approach the compound on foot, only to end up shot to pieces by men in plain clothes laying in wait and armed to the teeth. Mortars would often rain down at night near their post, but most would splash harmlessly into the warm water of the Euphrates River. They were not to be trifled with.

The men of Alpha were dangerously efficient in their work and their covert activities were the stuff of legends. On one occasion it almost proved deadly in a near miss friendly fire incident when members of our



Members of the 94th MP Co. investigate a premature explosion at the site of a suicide bomber's car.

own third platoon responsible for gate security at Champion, fired a few warning shots at Alpha's SUV late one night as it silently crept up the road with its lights off.

A few soldiers from Alpha calmly exited their vehicle with their hands up and shouted, "don't shoot, we're Special Forces!" After reaching the gate—a little relieved no doubt—they explained to our troops that they were sick of their food and wanted to hit the "midnight chow" on Champion for a tastier meal. I guess you could honestly say that at least a few people thought the Army's food was to die for.

Alpha had a good relationship with the premier "spooks" in the region—the SF long-range surveillance, or LRS team. These were the men who could infiltrate into an area undetected, gather intelligence using a unique blend of camouflage and stealth, and then slip off into the shadows of Iraq's alleyways only to disappear. After the Alpha team had a bead on who was responsible, the LRS team was dispatched to watch their every move, to track their behavior and discover identifiable patterns of the eight-man enemy force.

The LRS team was extremely effective at its task. Operational security prevents writing any more about how they managed to move into place, it is enough to say that they did. The LRS team had managed to come within 20 yards of the oblivious insurgents and

observe them for days, invisible in the community around them.

Alpha team had been tipped off to the enemy's involvement by their Iraqi informant thanks to that age-old human frailty called vanity. While the Iraqi men who were responsible for the IED were very good at concealing explosives, they were horribly bad at keeping their mouths shut. The fragile ego of the enemy would prove useful in their identification—after the IED incident that took Byer's life they couldn't help but brag about what they'd done to their friends, neighbors, and anyone else who was listening. Fortunately for us, Alpha detachment's informant was all ears.

Over a few days leading up to the raid, the LRS team observed that the "leader" would stop outside his house and fire his AK just before daybreak, the signal for his minions to gather. After a few minutes, they'd all eventually make their way to the leader's house and shuffle off to another hideout, no doubt to plan more attacks against Coalition soldiers.

After that bit of intelligence, Alpha devised the capture plans and the ACR was now officially involved. While it was formally a Special Forces mission, they'd need the hardware of the ACR to secure their target area, a fairly dangerous section of Ramadi. The ACR, having worked with us before in Hit, knew our capabilities and requested elements of both 2nd platoon and ours for the assignment. We didn't get much notice—maybe about 12 hours—but that's how war works sometimes. After hearing about how they'd pinpointed the men responsible for a soldier's death, we were more than eager to take the job.

The night before the operation began, Captain Watson, a very intelligent and inspiring man with a knack for levelheaded leadership, briefed us on the operation. He was a little concerned over the way the ACR had been gathering intelligence regarding the Ramadi neighborhood we were about to enter—so many reconnaissance "fly-bys" from their aerial counterparts, the Kiowa helicopter troop known as Pegasus, might have spooked them into either running or hiding. It was a conventional approach that the ACR



Successful prisoner snatches are dangerous and require complex, perfect coordination to succeed without casualties.



*A prisoner snatch, requires, precise timing, surprise and overwhelming force to be successful.*

had used many times before prior to their raids, and no doubt some Iraqis had caught on. But he was confident our targets would still be there—their presence would be verified only moments before the raid.

The mission was straight forward enough. The ACR and the 94th would secure the area and SF would grab the men. Around daybreak, the telltale Alpha team SUV would make its way through the dirt roads of the neighborhood with their informant in the backseat. Once the house of the main leader was identified, a small “chemical light” was to be tossed on its front lawn. When the signal was given, the operation would begin and we’d go to work.

We’d heard stories about soldiers from the Alpha detachment clearing houses by themselves, a task usually reserved for a squad of 8 to 12 men. While we wanted to detain these men alive, it was clear that Alpha would shred anyone in their way that offered up any kind of resistance.

These were the offensive missions that made us all feel like soldiers. If we were to die the next day, it wouldn’t be from a random explosion of an IED somewhere—it would be in a hail of two-sided gunfire in a raid intended to capture or kill our enemy.

After the brief, second platoon and our squad rehearsed a few times and then bedded down for the night. It was already about midnight, and we were to spring into action well before dawn. At that time, Junction City was an absolute hellhole, filled with bugs, dust and the smell of burning garbage. I spent most of the night staring into the star-filled Iraqi sky from the top of my HUMVEE, unable to sleep due to the relentless attack on my bare skin by the legions of invisible insects. After about a total of

45 minutes of rest, my watch beeped and I got up to prepare myself and my men for the daylight raid.

Most of the 3rd ACR was up and about, joking with their friends in the dark about nonsense, the way soldiers do before such a serious mission. Although we’d have tremendous support from both Bradley fighting vehicles, Abrams tanks and HUMVEES, all it took was one stray bullet to end it all. These raids were often lopsided, with American firepower easily having the upper hand. But in Iraq none of that mattered anymore. Our enemy was very cunning and had found ways to combat the conventional powers of the United States military. We milled about the darkness, focused at the task at hand, but well aware that this could be our last day on Earth.

It was time. We rolled out into position just shy of our intended neighborhood. Keeping our distance, we crept up to our avenue of approach, ready to storm in at a moments notice.

The radio was echoing every move of the Alpha team as they drove through the dark towards their target house. After a few minutes, just before daybreak, the little plastic chemical light was tossed and we were on our way.

We were taking sharp corners of the dirt and asphalt roads at lightning speed, cutting around the tanks that were moving into position. By the time we got there, it was light enough to see. SF had entered the first house. Our squad took up position just outside, rifles aimed at the house next door to take out any friends of our target men who decided to join in the fight. While scanning every window and rooftop, a few older men wandered outside. I motioned them back with a wave of my hand. A little girl, maybe about 4 or 5, was tagging along, staring in amazement at the Army men who’d taken over their neighborhood. All of us tried to use the cover around us, consisting only of a small brick wall and a fence. The road was narrow with the houses only a few yards away on either side. We had to push out our perimeter a bit to get a better hold on our security, to both avoid being “sitting ducks” and to head off anyone that popped out of a window with an AK.

Within seconds, SF had a few men. But where were the rest? Someone radioed that a few people fitting the description of our foes ran into another house at the start of the raid, a large building adjacent to a thick patch of tall weeds. After the house was cleared, our squad moved into position on the edge of the neighbor-

*Continued on page 75*



*After the mission was over it was time to relax for about a minute to have a bottle of water. But constant vigilance was the only way to stay alive.*

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**Mark Cheng, L.Ac.**

Columnist & Contributing Editor, *Black Belt Magazine*  
Director/Sifu: *Chung Hua Institute, Los Angeles, CA*

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- A gun barrel to your head, or
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**"Violence Is Rarely The Answer.  
But When It Is... It's The Only Answer."**

*Tim Larkin, creator, Target-Focus Training*

different memorized techniques. Face it, you're smart enough to know that since violence is random you can't begin to practice for everything that 'might' possibly happen to you. That's why this system is based on a handful of easily mastered **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES** that you instantly apply to any type of violent assault.

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By Dr. Martin Brass

## AMERICA AT WAR

 **1. EAST TIMOR** ONE THIRD OF POPULATION DIED during Indonesian army occupation according to UN; 18,000 killed in combat and rest from disease and other side-effects in 1976-2002 -- appalling genocide.

 **2. UNITED STATES** "WAR ON TERROR IS IN OUR BACK YARD" says U.S. Rep. John Culberson, R-Houston, after visit to Texas border, a gangster playground. **VIOLENCE AGAINST BORDER PATROL** agents doubled in 2005 as operations against drug-lord smugglers intensified. **ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES** and large caliber machine guns have replaced rifled and hand guns.

 **3. COLOMBIA** **FAKE PASSPORT RING BUSTED** al-Qa-eda and Hamas militants and citizens from Pakistan, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt bought phony IDs for entry into the United States and Europe.

 **4. VENEZUELA** **CHINESE SPECIAL FORCES** (Quantou Budui) train Venezuelan SpecOps; 350 Special Reconnaissance and Counter-Terrorism Chinese agents have been conducting joint ops at request of President Chavez, to prepare for another U.S.-backed assassination attempt.

**5. DENMARK** **FREEDOM OF WHAT SPEECH?** Danish cartoons, depicting the prophet Mohammed in one sketch as a terrorist with a bomb on his turban, ignites global Muslim rampages in Iran, Syria, Europe-wide, Lebanon, Afghanistan and world-wide.

**6. THE NETHERLANDS** **INTELLIGENCE (AIVD)** reports of corruption in department of justice; AIVD informer liquidated. "An army captain lost a memory-stick with information about our troops in Afghanistan in a rental car. Classified info on it, about security measures taken during the visit of Defense Secretary Kamp to Afghanistan, was sent to the press. How valuable would this be in the hands of major drug-criminals with ties in the weapon-smuggling world, ETA and IRA terrorist groups" asked *SOF* source. **SOF CRASH COURSE IN SECURITY MEASURES?** Meanwhile, back in Parliament, debating goes on about sending more troops to Afghanistan (1200-1400 troops to Uruzgan). "If these troops are sent, maybe *SOF* could give them a crash course in security measures," *SOF* source said.

**7. FRANCE** **WE WILL NUKE** states that carry out terrorist attacks against us, says French President Jacques Chirac (paraphrased); 300 nuclear warheads available in French arsenal.

**8. SERBIA** **KOSOVO PRESIDENT DIES** moderate Ibrahim Rugova who fought for Kosovo independence was favored by the West. **CLINTON INVASION LEAVES MESSY AFTER-EFFECTS**, as former KLA terror groups stage violent attacks with goal of chasing NATO peacekeepers out and declaring independence.

**9. RUSSIA** **FOREIGN LEGION** is being established, including 300 Russian-speaking Armenians. Authorities plan to have all-volunteer army.

**10. TURKEY** **ASSASSIN** who botched an assassination attempt against Pope John Paul in Rome's St. Peter's Square in 1981, released from the slam in Italy after 19 years. Convict extradited to Turkey to serve sentence for 1979 murder of newspaper editor. Turkish Supreme Court overturns decision to allow Mehmet Ali Ağca to go free, after world-wide protest, and gives him new home in Turkish dungeon.

**11. ISRAEL** **UNDERSEA WALL** built off northern coast of the Gaza Strip, to deter Palestinian insurgents from infiltrating the Gaza coast.

**11. LEBANON** **MILITARY ROUTE** into Syria closed after 30 years of political and military traffic, and eight months after U.S. pressured Syria to withdraw. **ASSASSINATION OF Anti-Syrian lawmaker** Gibran Tuani triggered the closure.

**12. PAKISTAN** **AL ZARQAWI DEATH** reports prove false. Mastermind bomb, explosives, and chemical-weapons expert Midhat Mursi and three other high-level operatives, believed dead in air strike targeting al Qaeda's number-two man, Zargawi.

**13. NEPAL** **MADIST TERROR REIGNS** as Maoist rebels fight for communist rule.

**14. INDIA** **JOINS COMBAT AGAINST PIRACY** and armed robbery against Ships in Asia club (RECAAP) initiated by Japan. Most offenders are common criminals who target commercial ships.

**15. CONGO** **DEADLIEST HUMANITARIAN CRISES** in 60 years declared; 1,200 people die daily and 20% of children are malnourished -- while the world watches. UN's 17,000-strong Congo peacekeeping force, the largest operation on the globe, tries to bring security.



# On Bearing Arms

## Farnam's Gunslinger Diary

By John Farnam



A friend who lives in the UK, but when he comes over once per year shoots with us here in Colorado, recently commented that he can always tell when he has arrived in the USA. He reports that Americans walk "with their heads held high, as if they owned the place! You'll see nothing like that in all of Europe, even Western Europe" he laments. "Europeans walk around slumped over, like whipped dogs. They typically look dismayed, fearful, apprehensive."

He continues by observing that even he walks confidently and upright when he is over here, carrying a pistol, and breathing American air!

Americans who bear arms, not just on shooting ranges, but throughout our day, look upon the practice not as just a banal habit, but as a way of life, a way that is uniquely American. Those who bear arms exhibit a dash, which, to the observant, is unmistakable!

America's creation was a bold experiment and one most gave scant chance of succeeding. We Americans are an historical aberration, and, when America is gone, nothing like it will ever exist again. It is truly said, "Free men bear arms."

### Comments On Readiness In-Theater

"I can attest to this. I have been deployed four times since 9/11. The first time was in Egypt, and we were told that we would receive ammunition upon arriving in-country. They lied! When we arrived, due to confused political protocol, no ammo was issued, even though we were informed by J-2 that we had been targeted by local terrorists. I suddenly got that 'cannon-fodder-feeling!' Marines down the road were a different story. Every Marine was hot and good-to-go at a moment's notice. Their commander

wasn't worried about a 'career-ending-faux-pas.' He only cared about his guys. It was refreshing indeed to see his attitude! We borrowed ammunition from them, but I promised myself that I would never deploy again without my own ammunition.

I got the chance to test my theory one year later. I was commanding a detachment in Afghanistan and procured rounds for all my guys before we left CONUS. Packed in our A&B bags, we arrived in Country with weapons AND ammunition. Once off the plane, we were all carrying hot within 10 minutes! We didn't say anything, and no one asked. I'll never be caught short again!"

### For the Troops

CWO2 Newton currently is still deployed forward in the Ar Ramadi and Fallujah Gap area. I asked him whether our Marines preferred candy, food, etc. or crucial equipment and clothing. His response was unequivocal: "Marines still need gear and clothing that is not currently provided or even in the system. It may be someday, but our guys need this stuff now:

Nomex Flight Gloves and Balacalva Hoods: Those produced by Hatch are the best value. Available from [www.diamondbacktactical.com](http://www.diamondbacktactical.com). Be sure to let them know you are ordering them for Marines deployed forward, as they will offer you a discount. Oakley gloves are great, but they are not currently flame retardant, and I thus don't recommend them. Diamondback sells Nomex flight suits as well. Medium and large are needed most. Tan is the best color.

Fire-retardant undergarments, T-shirts and underwear: Best are X-Static by Potomac Field Gear, available from [www.quanticoarms.com](http://www.quanticoarms.com).

Local weather is now cold. The 'Inferno' jacket is ideal and highly prized. It is available at [www.massif.com](http://www.massif.com).

Surefire G-2 lights, with red or IR lens caps, are indispensable: Available from [www.surefire.com](http://www.surefire.com). Again, tell them your order is for our deployed Marines and receive a 25% discount.

Leatherman Tools: Best for our purposes is the 'Charge XTLL.' And their web site is [www.leatherman.com](http://www.leatherman.com).

Knives: We like the Strider-designed Bucks, in particular the folding SBMF, and the fixed-blade FB. Available from [www.buckknives.com](http://www.buckknives.com). Cold Steel, Gerber, Al Mar, CRKT, and Emerson are also excellent quality.

My address is still:

CWO2 JR Newton (SoF)  
MWSS 372 Eng Co, HE Ops  
Unit 42020  
FPO/AP 96426-2020

I'll personally see to it that whatever is sent to us gets into the hands of the guys who need it most, without delay! We thank you for not forgetting about us in this lonely and dangerous corner of the world."

### On the Other Hand...

On preparing for the widest possible spectrum of eventualities, from one of our Instructors who works security at an upscale nightclub:

"In July of this year, the ring finger on my right hand was badly mangled as a result of a dog bite. Fractured in several places, my entire hand was in a cast for several months. I am right handed.

I continued to work the floor of our nightclub during this time, and the jealous boyfriends and assorted drunken idiots with whom we deal regularly cut me no slack because of my injury! For the first time, I realized why you emphasize being able

to handle guns and knives with either hand! I was suddenly glad that we had practiced so many support-hand-only techniques during training. I'm still not sure I'm an expert, but I didn't have to learn it all on the job!

It is falsely comforting to think that we can ever rely upon the all-inclusive availability of favorite weapons, favored hands, and favored tactics. This episode showed me that it is delusional to naively believe such things will always exist and be conveniently available when critically needed!

We never know what fate has planned for us, but we can pretty much count on it being a 'come-as-you-are war.' What we can do to prepare is to be well practiced with both hands, both eyes, all kinds of weapons (not just our 'favorite' ones), in all kinds of lighting, footing, and states of exhaustion. To spend all our training time practicing only those things at which we're already adept, is to kid ourselves, dangerously. Ask me how I know this!"

Comment: Crucial skills, such as one-handed shooting, reloading, and gun handling, that are, by their nature, awkward and clumsy, are important and need to be learned

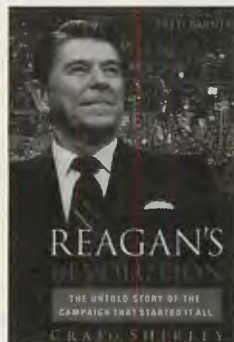
and drilled regularly. The purpose of training is not to make us look good. Indeed, when you "look good" during training, it means you're not challenging yourself adequately!

As Attila the Hun put it, "If victory is always easily gained, you are simply striving toward the insignificant." ✂

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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.

*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](http://www.reagansrevolution.com)

*"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)

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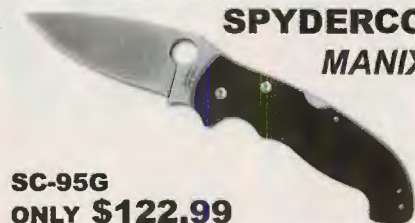
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*With its stock extended and resting on its Grip-Pod, the MFS-14 Stock provides an excellent platform for the M14 sniper rifle.*

## McMillan's Answer for the M14 of the Future

Text & Photos by  
Gary Paul Johnston

After more than a decade of development the U.S. Rifle M14 was adopted in 1957. Amounting to a product-improved M1 Garand, the M14 was chambered for a product-improved (shortened) version of the .30-06 cartridge. Initially called the T65, this more efficient round was adopted as the 7.62x51mm NATO, the commercial version of which was the .308 Winchester cartridge.

Some of the M14's improvements over the M1 included a shortened, more efficient gas system, using a 20-round detachable box magazine (DBM), an improved roller cam on the bolt, and the ability to operate with selective fire. The advantage of this last feature is highly questionable, but the others are recognized as improvements, as is an integral scope base on the left side of the M14's receiver.

On the heels of the adoption of the M14 was the Light Rifle Program, which furthered experimentation with smaller, high-velocity bullets, and with the approach of the Vietnam War the U.S. Military's interest in such cartridges accelerated. The end result was that the M14 was deemed less than suitable for combat in the jungles of Southeast Asia and for the smaller stature of our South Vietnamese allies. In addition, General Curtis LeMay wanted a lighter, high-velocity cartridge to replace the aging

# The

# MFS-14

M2 Carbine that was standard issue to his USAF Strategic Air Command (SAC) Security Forces. ArmaLite created a "kinder, gentler" and smaller version of its .308 caliber AR-10 rifle, the AR-15 in 5.56x45mm (.223 Rem.), and this rifle soon replaced the M14 in the U.S. Military. Springfield Armory, Winchester, Harrington & Richardson, and Thompson Ramo Wooldrich (TRW) ceased production of the M14 rifle and those in issue were mothballed. Thousands of M14 rifles were subsequently given to Israel and other countries, and of the hundreds of thousands "mothballed" in America. Most were destroyed during the Clinton regime.

### The Truth Catches UP

While the terrific claims made about the 5.56x45mm NATO (.223 Remington) cartridge during the Vietnam years were largely inflated, this round performed well enough to hold its own and has even been adopted by many of the free-world military organizations (note the NATO designation). However, it is interesting to say the least that while ALL ammunition companies advise against using the .223 on 200-pound fleeing deer with even the most effective bullets, the U.S. Military orders our soldiers to use it against 200 pound hominids that are trying their best to kill them. What's more, the 5.56mm's NATO M855 bullet is so ineffective that it would be banned from hunting for fear of only wounding small game. While there is a myriad of additional information on this subject, it would require a book.

Following Nine-Eleven, with America embroiled in the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT), the lack of effectiveness of the 5.56mm took on new meaning with the tenacity of the terrorists who refused to stop fighting after being hit multiple times with M855 bullets. Although they almost always died later, the terrorists were and are not usually incapacitated after being wounded by M855 5.56mm projectiles.

With the inadequacies of the 5.56mm NATO round having been recognized by some in the Military for years, a move was made to look for a more effective cartridge that would function in the M16 envelope. Beginning with the 7.62x39mm



*(above)* The full-length M14 is seen with the MFS-14 Stock's ACE butt stock extended and folded. *(below)* Made of pre-hard steel, the Ross Rail extends from the charger guide dovetail forward where it mounts to the barrel. The scope is the Leupold MR/T. *(bottom)* This close-up illustrates how the Ross Rail is attached to the barrel.





To accommodate special eye-relief problems, a MOA Solution rail locks onto the Ross Rail allowing it to extend to the rear for night vision scopes.

(M43) Russian cartridge, this search has culminated in the 6.8x43mm SPC cartridge, testing and development of which is still ongoing. In the mean time another avenue was explored.

### Uncle Sam Figures it Out

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) removed roughly 50,000 remaining M14 rifles from "moth-balled" status with the intention of putting them to good use in the GWOT. About the same time, the late Mike Barber, of McMillan Fiberglass Stocks, of Arizona, and Dan Ross, of D.D. Ross Co., of Ohio were conspiring over a new fiberglass stock and a new sniper rail system for the M14 rifle. When Mike Barber was tragically killed in a parachute accident, Dan Ross continued development of the M14 rail system, never having seen the stock Mike had been working on.

### The McMillan M- Folding Stock - 14

In the fall of 2004, Kelly McMil-

lan, of McMillan Fiberglass Stocks, notified me of a new stock for the M14 rifle. Called the M- Folding Stock -14 (MFS-14), the new stock was designed to meet the needs of Airborne Rangers on helicopter insertions. Made of laminated fiberglass, the stock has an integral pistol grip behind the trigger guard and a tri-rail system mounted at the front. On the rear of the stock is an ACE Ltd. hinge mount that is threaded to accept the ACE M4 SOCOM retractable buttstock or a standard AR-15/M16 recoil spring tube and in particular the tube used on the M4 Carbine. Mounting either of these butt stocks provides the MFS-14 stock with a butt stock that not only folds, but is also adjustable for length of pull. The spring-loaded hinge will also accept the adjustable MagPul Stock in use with elements of the USMC, as well as the stock systems made by VLTOR.

The MFS-14 stock will accept any M14 barreled action and can also be

ordered to accept the semi-automatic only Springfield M1A actions including those with lugged receivers. In as much as many of the Military's M14 rifles have been re-barreled with the Springfield 16-inch barrel system, this combination results in a particularly compact weapon, but the M-FS-14 stock is equally at home with a full-length heavy barrel M14 system.

Our sample MFS-14 stock was painted OD Green and was equipped with the tri-rail system with the optional extra-long rail on the bottom. This bottom rail accommodates a Harris Bipod and/or a SureFire M900A Tactical Weapon Light with its vertical foregrip. Other Surefire Tactical Weapon Lights or Lasers can be mounted on either of the side rails. We tested the stock with both the ACE M4 SOCOM stock and a standard M4 tube with a VLTOR ModStock in OD Green to match the stock. A Sling Systems 3-point E-Z Sling was also mounted on the stock.

It was when I told Dan Ross about the MFS-14 stock that I learned he and Mike Barber had been working on a similar project several years earlier. I don't know whether or not the MFS-14 stock resulted from Mike Barber's experiments, but I installed a rifle equipped with the Ross Rail System in the stock.

### The Ross Rail

Quite revolutionary, at least for the M14 rifle, the Ross Rail System, like some others, requires that the charger guide be removed from the receiver so that its dovetail can be used to anchor the rear of the M1913 rail. However, this is where the Ross Rail departs from nearly all of the other mounts, as it does not use the scope base that

McMillan's MFS-14 Stock is seen here on a 16-inch SOCOM-16 with an Aimpoint Comp M3 Red Dot Sight on a forward mount. The stock is equipped with the VLTOR Modstock, GripPod (foregrip/bipod) and SureFire Weapon Light. The MFS-14 can be had inletted for an M14 or M1A rifle, either standard in virtually any color desired.





Here the MFS-14 stock is seen with its VLTOR butt stock in the folded position.

is integral with the left side of the M14 receiver. In fact, Dan Ross jokes that the threaded hole there would be used to mount a saddle ring.

With the rear of the Ross Rail rigidly anchored in the charger guide dovetail, the rail extends forward barely clearing the receiver ring to 5.75 inches beyond it, resulting in an uninterrupted M1913 rail 10-inches long. At the front end of the rail are 3 hex screws that anchor the front end of the rail to the barrel exactly like many of the world's finest target rifles. For this, a standard M14 heavy match barrel is required, although Ross has also designed a system to

put the mount on a standard barrel.

Made of 4140 pre-hard steel, the Ross Rail totally precludes any warping from heat treating, but requires special high carbon tooling to machine. It is thus one of the toughest M1913 rails in the world.

Being mounted as low as possible, the Ross Rail, like others, stops in front of the M14 rear sight, and this precludes getting proper eye relief when using some night vision devices (NVD). While the ACE retractable stock may satisfactorily answer this problem, one sure way of doing it is with a clever extender rail from Mounting Solutions Plus (MSP).

Called the MOA Solution, this is a MilStd M1913 rail with dual A.R.M.S. ThrowLevers that instantly locks on top of the Ross Rail. A series of holes allows the ThrowLevers to be mounted fore, aft or in the middle of the MOA Solution, and when they are mounted at the front, the MOA Solution will extend over the rear sight to provide virtually unlimited eye relief. The system will work with any MilStd M1913 rail.

We used the rifle with the Leupold MR/T 3-9x36mm Sniper Scope, which is the civilian version of the Army's TS30-A2 Sniper Scope. The MR/T was mounted using A.R.M.S. low 30mm ThrowLever Rings.

When fully extended, the MFS-14 stock measures 35 inches and in its fully retracted position it measures 24 inches. The total length of the assembled stock and rifle depends on the length of the barrel.

We not only tested the McMillan MFS-14 stock with a full-length M14 rifle, but also a short 16-inch barrel version made by Springfield for Rock Island Arsenal for use by SOCOM, which Springfield calls the SOCOM-16 in its commercial M1A. This unit

*Continued on page 56*

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# The Last Patrol

## It Can Be Your Best – If You Survive It

Text & Photos by  
Craig Roberts


For those who have combat experience, there are certain incidents that stick in our minds forever – almost like they occurred last week. Some say these events remain with us due to traumatic stress, others because of the excitement of the situation – the “adrenalin rush.” Maybe it’s a matter of both.

For me, an event that I can replay in living color in my mind at any time occurred on 12 April 1966, south of Da Nang, near an abandoned village complex named Phong Ho.

By mid-April I had just returned to my company from a stint in the hospital recovering from a punji stake wound in my leg, to find that the battalion had moved south to the Phong Ho area, just inland from the coast, that looked like the Sahara Desert with thousands of scrubby pine trees scattered about. Giant ancient sand dikes checkered thousands of acres of parched rice paddies that had been dry for decades. This was ideal territory for two things: snipers and booby traps.

From the battalion area, our companies had been sent out in a wagon-wheel fashion about a half-kilometer away from Battalion to set up Company Patrol Bases. From there each company ran continuous platoon-sized patrols that went out for three days, set up a Platoon Patrol Base (PPB), then ran squad-size patrols in a clover leaf fashion day and night from the PPB. Our turn came on Tuesday, 12 April. Our mission was to set up a PPB near an abandoned village called Quang Ha.

We moved out mid-morning riding atop three M-48 tanks, which took us as far as they could before we had to dismount for the final single-file march another half klick to our designated PPB position. When the tanks turned back



*L/CPL Craig Roberts in normal USMC combat gear of M14, flak jacket, helmet and “782” gear of pistol belt, magazine pouches, grenades and two canteens.*

and we began to trudge through the sand, I couldn't help but feel an eerie sense of foreboding. My "jungle sense" warning light was blinking brightly in my brain group and my stomach was beginning to tighten up. There was something weird about this place, and I didn't like it.

### Short-Timer's Lament

"O'Brien," I called up to my buddy who was about five meters in front of me. "I don't like this. It's too damned open around here, and there could be a VC behind every damned bush and we wouldn't know it until it's too late."

"Yeah, I know. My hair's standin' up on the back of my neck. Roberts, we're gettin' too short for this shit!"

"Well buddy, let's keep it low and slow. We got six weeks left and we're out of here."

We arrived at our designated position and began to set up defenses. Lieutenant Rowe, our platoon commander, selected a square of dike walls about eight feet tall. These walls formed a sort of "fort" that we could defend and would provide good cover for direct fire. We had three machine gun teams and Sergeant Shireman, our "Right Guide," set them up in corners overlooking good fields of fire. The squads each took a wall, and Rowe and his radio operator set up in the middle of the square.

"Thees place looks like Fort Zinderneuf," commented Robert "Frenchy" Michaud, our squad's French Canadian. "It reminds me of when I was in the Legion..."

Michaud liked to joke that he was a French paratrooper at Dien Bien Phu, but everyone knew he was our age: 19. Still, he loved to play the part for anyone who would watch or listen.

I began digging in on my part of the wall and within minutes heard a big "kar-rump!" explosion. I jerked around and saw a back cloud rising in the air behind me on the opposite wall, followed by screams for "Corpsman! Corpsman up! Doc, get over here!"

### Hidey-Spidey

I dropped my E-tool, grabbed my rifle and ran toward the blast. I found our

platoon radioman, PFC Griswold, laying on the ground covered in blood. A few feet away I could see a gaping hole in the sand with reed matting sticking out – and a leg. We dragged the leg out and found the rest of what was half of a Vietcong in black pajamas. The other half was hamburger. Then we checked the rest of the tunnel and heard groaning. Inside was his partner, wounded but still alive.

Griswold had been chopping some limbs off of an evergreen to clear fields of fire for one of the machine guns when right next to him, in a spider trap, two VC decided to toss out a grenade. The



Roberts with ARVNs and M1 Thompson at Mieu Dong Outpost north of Phong Ho, before moving south to the Battalion Base Camp.

grenade rolled partially back into the tunnel before it exploded. It killed the first VC, but Griswold survived with multiple shrapnel wounds.

We buried the dead VC in a shallow grave and marked it on the map for higher HQ. Then Lieutenant Rowe called for evacuation for the POW and Griswold. Within 30 minutes it was over and we were back to business as usual.

"Second Squad!" yelled our squad leader, Sergeant Bob Bellot (pronounced "Below"). "Gather up! We're first out tonight!"

We gathered around and watched as Bellot drew a large map in the sand with a bayonet. "We're here. We'll move out before dark to the west and check out this ville, located here." He stabbed the blade into the sand where he had drawn some small squares next to a body of water. "Intel thinks there might be a few VC there, so we'll set up an ambush

along this trail and see who comes by. We'll go light. Soft covers and no flack jackets so we don't make any noise and we can travel fast. I want full combat loads for magazines, bandoleers and grenades. Any Questions?"

### The Patrol

There were none, as we had done this so many times that it was all automatic. "Okay, cammie up and be ready to move out in 20 minutes. Second team, you're point this time."

By 1730 hours we were on the move. Heading west, we had to cross a large open area until we came to an embankment.

From there we stayed below the top of the ridge to keep from exposing ourselves until we got within 100 meters of the ville, which turned out to be a scattering of grass hooches spread out in a linear fashion along a wide stream.

Just as we began to approach, a sniper shot cracked to our front.

I heard the round buzz past, and hit the deck. I took up a firing position and got ready to unleash a few bursts at the VC as soon as he fired again. But nothing happened. We waited and all was quiet.

"Where's he at?" asked Bellot.

"I don't know," answered L/Cpl Dave Bruce, my team leader. "Never got a chance to

see a muzzle flash."

"Okay, let's flank around to the left and see if we can spook him up."

### Sucker Bait

We began to move again, but as soon as we stood up, another shot was fired. This time I saw the muzzle flash, hit the deck and began to return fire. I squeezed off three bursts at a small dark opening in a tree line where I had spotted the flashes, kicking up puffs of dust. "He's right there! I saw him!"

Others joined in, then we saw movement at the edge of the trees, and our VC began sprinting away toward the huts to the left.

We immediately jumped up and began pursuit. Getting another prisoner would be better than producing another dead VC.

But there was something still bothering me about this place. Something

The Mike Company patrol base near Phong Ho. Temple of Seven Dragons is at right (used as Company CP), M-48 tank on top of hill, 81mm mortar pit lower left. April 1966.



sinister was beginning to squeeze my brain cells and was attempting to give me a warning. But I just could not put my finger on what was trying to surface in my memory that made me pin down the threat.

"Hold up here," ordered Bellot. "Let's start using hand and arm signals as long as it's still light. We're going to move in slow and try and corner this guy. Ekstein, you take your team to the right. Bruce and Sanchez, you come with me to the left. We'll hook up by the stream on the other side."

We moved out, this time moving slowly and not talking. Then, as soon as we cleared the next treeline, three more shots rang out to our front, and they buzzed by right next to my ears.

"Bunker!" yelled Bellot. "Twelve O'Clock!" He called up Tommy Shands, our M79 grenadier, and said "Put a round in that opening!"

Shands was good. He sighted the blooper and cranked off one 40mm grenade. It sailed perfectly but bounced off the window of the dirt bunker and exploded right outside the opening. But it was enough to let Charlie know that we had him nailed. He busted out the back – and now there were two of them – and they began running away from us.

### Chasing the "Wounded Bird"

We began the chase again. We weren't going to let these guys get away. We'd kill them if we couldn't catch them.

But the thought hit me and I relayed it to O'Brien as we raced across the next clearing. "O'B, why didn't they stay and shoot more? They were in a bunker. If they were going to take on this many guys, why did they stop?"

"I don't know, Roberts. Maybe the grenade scared 'em off."

"O'Brien, when was the last time you saw hard corps VC 'scared off'?"

It was right then that all hell broke loose. And it was right then that I re-

membered what my over-fatigued brain was trying to tell me.

### George Armstrong Custer

We had been drawn into an ambush exactly like Custer's 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry had been suckered into at the Little Big Horn by the Sioux.

What started out as a U-shaped ambush was quickly becoming an encirclement.

In the middle of the clearing was a shallow, dried-up pond. We all tumbled into it and immediately took up a 360-degree defense. I was facing northwest and could see muzzle flashes in front of me. AK-47s and SKSs were cranking out rounds as fast as the gomers could reload and shoot. The air above us buzzed and zipped with 7.62mm hornets looking for someone to sting. I laid my sights on the main area of muzzle flashes and began cranking out bursts from my M14 AR.

### Tension High; Ammo Low

I carried eight magazines on my belt, plus one in the weapon. Additionally I carried two bandoleers and four M-26 grenades. I was rapidly going through magazines and was getting down to having to reload from the bandoleer. The situation was not good, and it was beginning to get dark.

Bellot cradled his PRC-6 to his ear and tried to call for support. But as usual, the Prick Six was about as useful as a sampan in a desert. The battery was almost dead and we were probably out of range.

"Palin," I yelled to my assistant AR-man. "Give me some magazines!"

Palin crawled over and reloaded for me, but within 15 minutes we had almost gone through what was left. I decided to save two magazines and not shoot unless we got overrun. I still had my grenades, but the VC

were out of throwing range.

It was now dark, and the volume of fire had slowed down on both sides. Maybe Chuck was running out of ammo too...

Three rapid explosions erupted behind us, followed by rifle fire and yelling. It was Ekstein's team. They had managed to come up behind one of the VC elements and tossed some grenades "amongst them." They had broken through to us and within a minute we were up and running toward the gap.

After link up, Bellot decided to feint to our left and not try to head directly back to the PPB. The theory was that we would make our way to the stream and use it to cover our movement out of the ville. If we tried to go back the way we came we knew the VC might have already set up an ambush for us. We couldn't get reinforcements or mortar support with the lousy radio, and we were too low on ammo to reengage the gomers. Our options were becoming very limited, and we were compromised.

### Bush Telegraph

That's when the drums began to rumble. Slowly at first, then building in intensity in a staccato beat that would increase in speed, then quit. Then start over. First we heard them behind us, then to the right, and finally to our front – back toward the PPB. Charlie was on his telegraph and he was calling all his friends together for a party – and we were it. We had been through this before. The VC beat on huge hollow logs to signal each other. If we went the direction where there were no drums, that was where they wanted us to go. Like beating a tiger through the jungle to the waiting hunters.

"Alright, follow me," ordered Bellot. "And no talking! Arm signals only, and don't make any damned noise!"



L/Cpl Craig Roberts on watch at company CP at Temple of Seven Dragons near Phong Ho.

We snaked our way along a thick tree line, then wove between some hooches and finally came to the trail that was on the map. We could not stay on the trail, but at least we had a reference point and started to make our way toward the stream.

Then it happened. Right in front of us, coming down the trail, was a squad of VC. They had not seen us yet – nor knew we were there. They were responding to the calling of the drums, which by now had been joined by whistles.

Bellot ducked into the trees to our left. There was a gate there and we quickly followed him through.

It was a small clearing, surrounded on three sides by thick bamboo tree lines. These were used like fences and had long thin thorns, making it very hard to get through. Scattered around the clearing were small haystacks about two feet high and six feet across. It appeared that hay had been laid out to dry, then raked into small piles. Bellot immediately signaled us to get under these hay piles.

I found one near the gate and crawled into it, scattering it over me as well as I could. The only parts of my body that still showed were my boots, but there was nothing I could do but lay still and hope for the best.

It was a moon-lit night. Our only hope would be to stay hidden and see if the VC would pass by. Other than grenades and what ammo Ekstein's four men had, plus our one or two magazines each, we were not equipped for a firefight. And we were too close to throw grenades.

### Cornered

I could see a path that led from the gate across our front, then out a second gate. These were the only ways in and out of our little clearing. If Charlie came in, we'd be trapped. We'd kill a lot of them, but our odds of getting out ourselves were slim at best.

That's when we heard them. Voices. Screaming in Vietnamese, giving orders that we could not understand. But they sounded like they were everywhere. I counted over two dozen different voices giving orders from various directions. We were right in the middle of them, and they appeared to be company strength.

My main thought at this point is that we had come so far, and now, within a few weeks of going home, we were going to buy the farm in some insignificant hay patch in a village no one had ever heard of or cared about.

Then he came in. This VC with the biggest set of balls that Uncle Ho ever issued. He must have been an officer because he carried himself with a certain degree of arrogance. He was dressed in black trousers and a khaki shirt. His black hair shown dark in the moonlight, and he had a pistol on his belt.

"Marine!" he yelled as he stopped on the path right in front of me, not ten feet away. "Marine, you come!"

This guy was standing there, cupping his hands around his mouth, looking over us toward the bushes behind

us, and yelling in defiance. It was obvious that he did not know we were there. But one mistake and he and his buddies would have us nailed.

### Marine, You Die!

I put my rifle sights right on his throat. It would be such an easy shot. But if I squeezed the trigger it would bring dozens – if not a hundred – of VC down on us like jackals on a wounded calf. Still, if we were discovered, he'd be the first one to meet his ancestors. I took up the trigger slack and held my breath.

"Marine, you die! You die, Marine!" He pronounced "Marine" like "Mud-eeen."

I knew every man was holding his breath, not moving, and praying no one would cough or sneeze.

More voices joined in nearby, calling for "Mudeens" to come out. But we could tell they were clueless where we were, and probably if we were even still around.

After what seemed like forever, the VC turned and walked out the gate. He stopped on the path and began talking to several other VC who had been waiting there, unseen by us. One shot would have brought them all through the gate.

After a couple of minutes they moved off down the path. Then I felt a tug on one of my boots that almost made me jump through my soft cover.

"Roberts?" It was Al Ekstein. "Yeah?"

"Let's go. We have a hole in the fence."

I low-crawled slowly behind him to the rear, where, while we were all in "oh shit" mode, Al was quietly cutting a hole through the bamboo with his K-Bar. Cutting one twig at a time, he made



Second Platoon, Mike Company, 3/9 at the old French Fort at Marble Mountain before moving south to set up the Battalion base at Phong Ho. Roberts' squad is the second squad in middle: Roberts is leaning on rifle, half way down.



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a hole big enough to crawl through. On the other side was a dry creek bed deep enough to use as an escape route. It was bordered by bamboo on both sides, allowing us to escape unseen. I began to feel there might be hope for us yet.

After each man had crawled down into the ditch we formed up and began creeping out of the village. The drums and whistles had stopped. The VC were quiet. They were listening. Listening for us.

I was glad we didn't wear our helmets that night. I was glad we didn't wear our plated flack jackets. But now I was not happy about the fact that we had metal canteens. No matter what you did, you couldn't keep a metal canteen from making noise – especially if it was empty or near empty.

Evidently, the only noise we made was with our canteens bouncing as we picked up speed. It was enough. Soon the voices started again, talking at first, then shouting.

And here they came. Running after us, stopping intermittently to fire shots. They did not have us sighted, but knew approximately where we were.

### Now, The Pursued

We exited the ville and began making a beeline toward the PPB. Dozens of VC had taken up the chase and were firing in our general direction.

"O'Brian," I yelled, "we gotta put some rounds out there to slow them down." By now, my team was tailend Charlie.

"Gotcha. How many rounds do you have left?"

"Two magazines and four grenades."

"All I have is one magazine and my grenades."

"Okay, I'll give 'em 10 rounds, then you do it while I move. Then I'll fire 10 more, then we beat it out of here."

"Right! Toss a grenade or two! Make 'em think we have mortars."

I cranked off three bursts, pulled the pin on an M-26 and threw it as far as I could. My little show of resistance was returned by a fusillade of AK-47 and SKS fire, punctuated by a few green tracers. But it slowed them down and bought us some time.

We raced as fast as we could in the ankle deep sand back toward the PPB. Bellot was trying to call for support on the Prick Six, but no answer. The moon was now high, and in contrast to the light colored sand, we stood out like black ducks at a ski resort.

Just as we crossed a high sand dike the scene around us turned into day-

light. We were silhouetted like targets in a shooting gallery. Someone in the next grid square had called for 105mm illum, and several WP parachute flares began popping and hissing just to our east!

Charlie saw us.

The volume of fire from our pursuers picked up and we could hear – and feel – the rounds go by.

### In Friendly Cross Fire

Then, at that precise moment, we got hit from the front.

By our guys.

We had almost made our way back to the PPB and our machine gunners spotted the green tracers, heard all the shooting, and thought they were under attack. They returned fire, and you could tell they were not concerned with conserving ammo.

And we were caught in the middle.

Laying in the sand, trying to figure out what to do next, I turned to O'Brien and another buddy, Pete Yates. "Looks like we almost made it. It's gonna be a hell of a note if we get zapped by our own guys."

"No shit, Roberts," said Yates. "I thought we'd bought it at Cam Ne when we got hit by our own 105s. Now this."

We couldn't move forward. We couldn't move back. And we were in the open. What would Chesty Puller do on a case like this?

### The Leatherneck Code

"CEASE FIRE, GODDAMMIT! CEASE FIRE YOU SON OF BITCHES!"

The M60 and rifle fire trickled off.

"Who's that?" came the challenge from Fort Zinderneuf.

"IT'S BELLOT, GODDAMMIT! LET US IN!"

The gunners knew that Charlie didn't have such a way with the English language, and yelled for us to get over the wall as fast as we could, and that "we're under a major attack."

When I rolled over the top of the dike, I was roaring with laughter. "You guys should have been with us. It's a whole lot more fun out there than it is in here."

Bellot jogged to the CP and told Lieutenant Rowe what was happening. Within a couple of minutes more parachute illumination lit the landscape, showing dozens of dark figures skirting for cover. Then the 105 HE rounds began to arrive. There's nothing like being the biggest, meanest dog on the block.

"Bellot," said Rowe. "I never have

*Continued on page 76*

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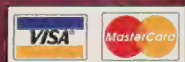
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# Freedom Is Never Free



## Leathernecks Lay Down Their Lives for Liberty

Text by Dale B. Cooper

15 June 2004 is a date that is burned into the psyche of every Marine in 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment who served in Ramadi. That's the day five U.S. Marines were killed in the capital of Anbar Province in Iraq, when a powerful IED exploded directly beneath their Humvee.

Corporal Tyler S. Trovillion, a grenadier and team leader, died alongside four comrades from 3<sup>rd</sup> Squad, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Company A – Corporal Jesse Jaime and Lance Corporals Chad B. Maynard, Dion M. Whitley and Jonathan R. Flores.

Corporal Brett J. Springer, a TOW gunner in the first section of Weapons Company, was part of the battalion's Quick Reaction Force that responded to the scene of the IED attack on June 15.

Springer, a 29-year-old Marine from Grand Island, Nebraska, quit a lucrative

job as superintendent of a construction company and joined the Marine Corps after Operation Iraqi Freedom kicked off in the spring of 2003. "I couldn't sit at home and watch men younger than me fighting in Iraq while I was making a fat paycheck," said Springer who took a \$30,000 a year pay cut to become a Marine.

"Pops," as Springer is called by fellow Marines, fought in Fallujah before making 1/5's third deployment to Ramadi. He thought he had gotten accustomed to the gore until he had to recover human remains of Corporal Trovillion and his comrades. Twenty-four hours later, Springer did the same thing when another IED killed Charlie Company's commanding officer and his gunner.

"IEDs are designed to kill, and in that sense, they are very personal," said Platoon Sergeant Hussey whose platoon

*First Sergeant Dwayne W. Farr, Weapons Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment marches slowly through the dining facility at 1/5's base camp in Iraq, playing Amazing Grace on his bagpipes for Staff Sergeant Ramon E. Gonzales Cordova, a former platoon sergeant in 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Charlie Company who was killed in Ramadi.*  
Photo by Corporal Tom Sloan.

was hit 19 times during its deployment. Only two other platoons in the battalion sustained more IED attacks, and both of those platoons were in Weapons Company, the unit this reporter was embedded with during the invasion of Iraq a year earlier.

### The Void That Weighs Heavily

Members of Hussey's platoon escaped serious injury. He attributes the lack of casualties to MAK, the Marine Armor Kit for Humvees that contains armor plating inside the doors, and bal-

listic glass windows and windshields.

Hussey, a former drill instructor, taught some of the Marines killed in Ramadi martial arts in boot camp. Hardly a day goes by that Hussey doesn't think about them, and the void their violent deaths leave, but he doesn't dwell on the past, as painful as it is. "It hurts, but I continue to march," said Hussey who along with other Ramadi veterans will soon deploy to Okinawa with the 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, "but I still feel for their families."

"IEDs were the only thing I feared," said Sergeant Erik D. Sphoon who was seriously wounded by a sniper in Ramadi. Sphoon's left arm was ripped apart by the slug that entered his wrist and exited near his elbow, turning the network of nerves into what Navy neurosurgeons said was "Cornflakes."

### The Evil Among Us

"You can't really prepare for an IED attack, because there are so many different variables. You don't know who is detonating the device, how far away they are, or what kind of detonator they're using. Anybody could be the triggerman. Even some kids detonated IEDs against our vehicles," said Sphoon, whose Hummer was riddled with shrapnel from an IED concealed in a pile of garbage along a road in Ramadi. Sphoon saw the threat and ordered his men to dismount and use the Hummer as a shield.

Sphoon was six gun trucks back in a convoy when the biggest IED he's ever seen killed two friends in Alpha Co., Corporals Marty Mortensen and Kelly Cannan, veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Fallujah.

Part of Sphoon's duties in Ramadi was to put casualties into his high-back Humvee and rush them to Charley Med. Mortensen and Cannan were facing each other on bench seats in the back of their armored high-back when it was hit by a shaped charge. They took the full blast. "They were a human buffer," said Sphoon. Three other Marines in the back along with the driver and assistant

driver survived. Only one of them was wounded. He took a piece of shrapnel in the butt. The rest were just dazed.

"I was very angry after the attack," said Sphoon who felt like he was just driving around as a mobile target waiting to be attacked in Ramadi. "Just utter frustration."

Two squad leaders in Charlie Co., Sergeants Clint J. Hurda and Michael C. Roper, who like Sphoon are getting out of the Marine Corps after three deploy-



Lieutenant Colonel Eric M. Smith, commander of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, stands in front of Corporal Jeffrey B. Starr's Warrior Monument and pays his respects during a memorial service in Ramadi. Photo by Corporal Tom Sloan.

ments to Iraq, feel they were just asking for trouble walking or riding around Ramadi with a dozen other Marines, sometimes on what they felt were "senseless patrols." Both Hurda and Roper survived multiple IED attacks in Ramadi. After 18 operations on his shattered left arm, Sgt. Sphoon, who served as a guide in 1st Squad, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon in Alpha Co., is preparing to be medically discharged from the Marine Corps.

### Lucky Shot

"I was bending over to pick up a traffic cone we had put out while conducting a raid on a house in Ramadi when the sniper fired. My hand apparently got in front of my face for an instant," said Sphoon who feels a hand for a head is a good tradeoff – considering the dirt- nap alternative.

Lieutenant Colonel Eric M. Smith, 1/5's commanding officer, who took a sniper's bullet in the knee when he was operations officer for RCT-1 (Regimental Combat Team One) in Fallujah in 2005, broke down and cried in his office at Camp Pendleton when he talked to SOF about going to the morgue tent after each casualty was brought in from the battlefield and spending some private time with each of the Marines who had just died.

Smith says he prayed for each of his fallen comrades. He often held their hands and sometimes stroked their hair. "It's the least I could do for Marines who had paid the ultimate price for freedom in Iraq," said Smith as he blinked back tears, took a sip of Dr. Pepper, and recalled the pain of kneeling before a Warrior's Memorial and touching a Kevlar helmet atop an upended M16 service rifle with a set of dog tags hanging from it.

One of the dead was a close personal friend. Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Cesar O. Baez, the corpsman in Smith's Jump Platoon, was killed by a sniper the day the five Marines in Alpha Company were killed by an IED. Smith says Baez had passed the California bar exam before they deployed and was planning to practice

law when he returned stateside and got out of the Marine Corps.

### Epitaph of a Warrior

Corporal Jeffrey Starr in 2<sup>nd</sup> Squad, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Bravo Company, a veteran of two previous campaigns in Iraq, also had plans for the future. Starr had enrolled at Everett Community College near his parent's home in Snohomish, Washington and was planning to study



After 18 operations on his shattered left arm, Sergeant Sphoon, who served as a guide in 1st Squad, 1st Platoon in Alpha Co., is preparing to be medically discharged from the Marine Corps. "IEDs were the only thing I feared," he said – but it was a sniper aiming for his head that shot him in the arm: Lucky shot for both. Photo: Dale B. Cooper

psychology after his enlistment ended in August, but Starr's plans were ended abruptly when he was hit in the head by a sniper's bullet on Memorial Day, five days after his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

Starr, who survived a shootout in Fallujah the previous year, apparently had a premonition of death. He left a message to his girlfriend on his laptop computer before he deployed to Ramadi. His father, Brian, found the message last August when he retrieved Jeff's car at his uncle's house.

"Obviously if you are reading this then I have died in Iraq. I kind of predicted this," wrote Starr of his own death. "A third time just seemed like I'm pushing my chances." But Starr willingly deployed again with the "Dirty Deuces." "I don't regret going, everybody dies, but few get to do it for something as important as freedom. It may seem confusing why we are in Iraq, it's not to me. I'm here helping these people, so that they can live the way we live. Not have to worry about tyrants or vicious dictators. To do what they want with their lives. To me that is why I died. Others have died for my freedom now this is my mark," wrote Starr as he concluded his last letter.

### Remembering the Fallen

As a result of what happened in Ramadi where a total of 15 Marines and one Navy corpsman were killed last year, the annual United States Marine Corps Ball now has special meaning for First Sergeant Dwayne A. Farr of Weap-

ons Company 1/5, who played "Amazing Grace" on his bagpipes in Ramadi for his fallen comrades.

Up until Ramadi, Farr had never lost a Marine, and for the past 16 years of his

career, he confesses that an empty table in the corner of the ballroom draped in black with a glass upside down, an empty set of dogtags and a Purple Heart on it had little meaning to him. But Farr told SOF Ramadi changed all of that for him.

The plate on the table has a dash of salt and a slice of lemon on it, symbolic of a bittersweet moment in the life of every Marine who remembers a fallen comrade. "Place someone you know at that table," said Farr, "and all of a sudden that table becomes alive."

In mid-October last year as 1/5's third deployment to Iraq was winding down, five U.S. soldiers assigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 69<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division from Fort Benning, Georgia were killed in Ramadi when another Improvised Explosive Device detonated near their vehicle.

Two days later on October 17, the death of Staff Sergeant George T. Alexander from 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning of injuries he suffered in an IED attack, pushed U.S. military deaths in Iraq past the 2,000 mark.

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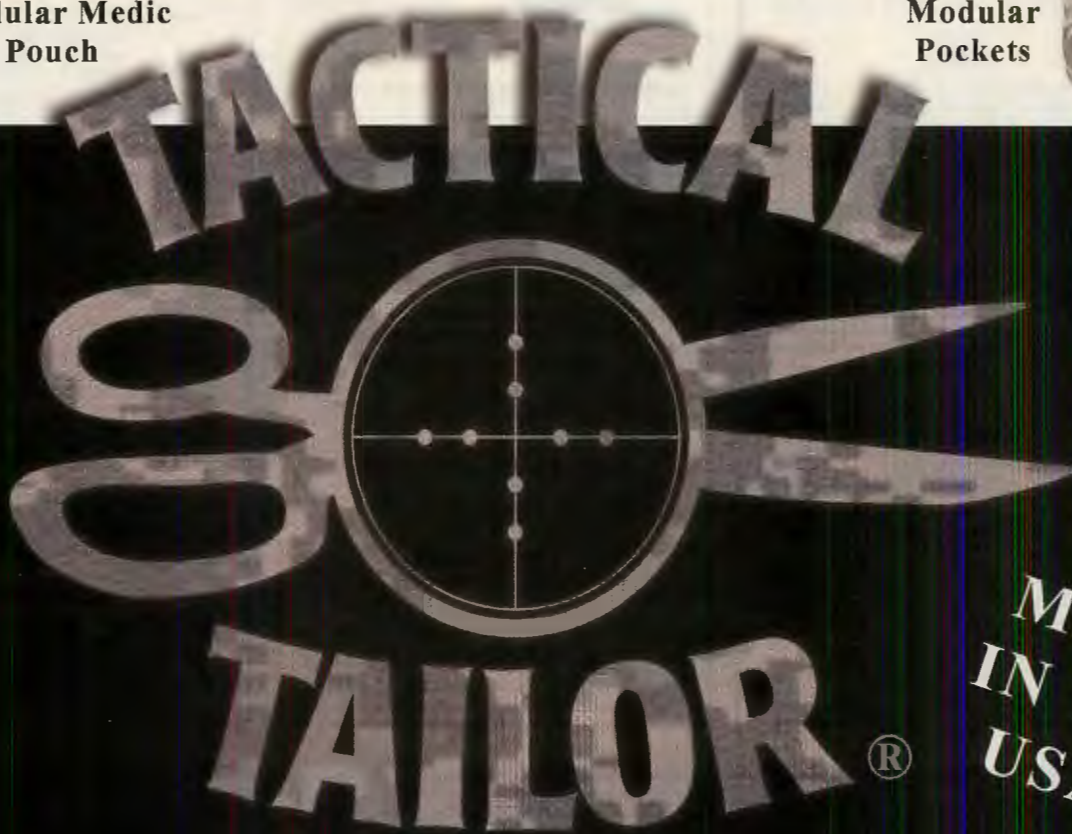
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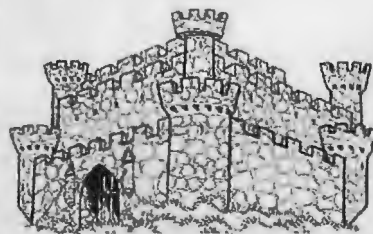
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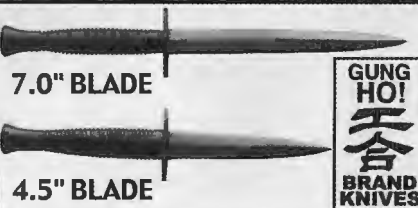
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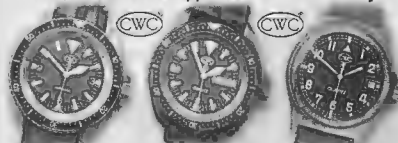
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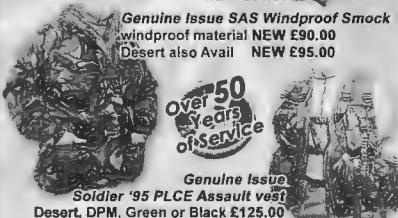
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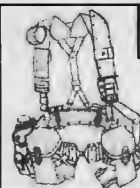
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was also equipped with Springfield's forward scope base and a forward-mounted Aimpoint Comp M3. While this is an interesting mounting system, I preferred the rifle with an A.R.M.S. #18 M14 Scope Base.

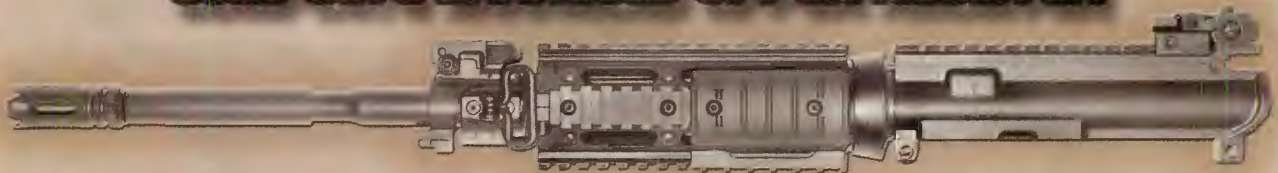
Attaching to the left side of the receiver on the standard base, the A.R.M.S. #18 has a M1913 rail, the rear of which attaches to the charger guide dovetail as above. At the front of the rail is a Belleville spring-loaded plunger, which is adjusted to contact the receiver ring to dampen movement where heavy optics are used. The Leupold MR/T was also used on this mount.

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On the A.R.M.S. #18 is mounted the Leupold MR/T 3-9x36mm Tactical Scope, the civilian version of the Army's Leupold TS-30A2 Sniper Scope.

Attaching rigidly on any MilStd 1913 rail (and others), the dual purpose GripPod is a vertical foregrip that becomes a bipod in 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a second. Picture this scenario.

An operator is on patrol holding his rifle by the pistol grip and GripPod when he is fired upon. Without having to unfold the legs of a bipod, he simply dives for the ground, depressing a release button on the rear of the GripPod. Well before he hits the ground his GripPod has deployed its bipod, instantly locking it in position, and at an optimum height to return fire. To return the bipod to its hidden mode, the legs have only to be squeezed together and shoved back up into the grip, where they lock.

With both versions of the GripPod now in wide use with the USMC and the Army, GPS, Inc. is marketing the alloy version for light machineguns and the slightly lighter polymer version for assault rifles. The polymer GripPod is also available in desert tan with OD green and others to follow. In addition to the Military, the GripPod is being equally well received by law enforcement agencies.

### Trigger Time

For accuracy tests I mounted the Leupold 3-9X36mm MR/T Scope on the full-length heavy-barrel M14 in order to produce the best accuracy, but this was pretty much a no-brainer, as the rifle produced 3-shot groups of an inch or so with Federal 168-grain .308M. With the 16-inch carbine in the MFS-14 stock using the same scope, groups opened up to about 2-

inches or so at the same distance. In all cases, including standing off-hand, the MFS-14 stock proved comfortable to shoot, except where full-automatic fire was concerned, but this should also be a no-brainer.

The M14 rifle was designed with a selective-automatic fire capability for a good reason. I just can't remember what it was. Seriously, the reason was to allow the M14 to be able to fill the role of the BAR, but I doubt that anyone involved had studied physics. The BAR fires from an open bolt at about half the rate of fire of the M14, which fires from a closed bolt, and the BAR weighs roughly 35% more than the M14.

In an emergency, the M14 can put out an impressive amount of full-automatic fire whether or not it hits anything. From the MFS-14 stock the weapon has a much better chance of

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SureFire's new lightweight Scout Light was tested with the MFS-14 Stock.

hitting something than otherwise, especially when fitted with a heavy barrel. A detachable GI M14 muzzle brake will also help to some extent, but only from a prone position. Where the 16-inch SOCOM-16 barrel is concerned, it comes with a pretty efficient muzzle brake, which also controls full-automatic fire pretty well from a prone position. However, as with all muzzle brakes, this one increases the noise that reaches the shooter's ears.

Another device that helps dampen

felt recoil and steel-to-steel banging is the M14 Buffer from Buffer Technologies. Made of tough, flexible polymer, this device is installed around the recoil spring between the rear of the operating rod and the front of the receiver to prevent the op-rod from slamming into the receiver when it stops at the rear.

The revival of the M14 with its superior range and hitting power has caused many to also take another look at the M1A. The M14 and its semi-auto counterpart, the M1A remain two of the finest rifles in the world. Valued for its simplicity and ruggedness, the M1A offers user friendly operation, ease of inspection and clearing and a positive magazine locking system, all designed around the 7.62x51mm NATO cartridge. Now McMillan's new

MFS-14 stock has added a new advantage to both.

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# One For The Corps

## Master Sergeant Joe Viera

By Craig Roberts

As we grow older in years and life's experiences, we look back and think of people who influenced who we are today. We might think of our old high school coach, or a significant teacher with the skill to communicate and motivate us. We might consider movie stars, politicians, and sports figures. But for a very few of us, those that earned the title "United States Marine," there are two or three significant role models in our lives that will stand out above all the others. These people entered our lives in a time and place that would have more influence on our lives than any other human being. These men were our Drill Instructors.

Our Drill Instructors – not "DI's" – had the difficult mission of taking 50 or more teenage kids and in eleven short weeks (which seemed like an eternity to us), mold us into "the Finest Damned Fighting Man in the World, the United States Marine."

We came from all over the country, and from all walks of life. Some from the farms, some from the cities, and from all backgrounds, fell far short of Marine Corps expectations. We were the high school jocks, the neighborhood toughs, the mama's boys, the weak kid on the block who wanted to prove himself a man, and even a few who had the choice of the Marine Corps – or prison. But what came off the bus at Receiving Barracks to scramble to a spot on the Yellow Footprints to await our first "real" haircut

and our "bucket issue," and what the Drill Instructors would pick up after a Series was formed, would be a far cry from what would evolve eleven weeks later. Who would know we'd become the hard-bellied, steely eyed, stiff backed basic Marines that would march down the Grinder on Graduation Day, strutting tall and getting shivers up our spines as the band struck up The Marine Corps Hymn as we passed in review.

The eleven weeks between Receiving Barracks and Graduation Day would be filled with every type of terror that could be imagined. The objective, of course, was to break us down into clay, put us all on the same foundation, then build us up to become a fearless team of tigers that could be landed on a hot beach, anytime, any place, and not one of us would question the mission or our orders. From Canaries, to bucket drill, to the Rifle Range, to Close Order Drill, PT, runs, obstacle courses, pugil sticks, CMCPR, and even "San Diego Beach Parties" in the Sand Pits (and in the Quonset Huts), we were molded into not only what the Marine Corps wanted us to become, but what we would become forever.

And what the Drill Instructors did for us, did much more. In the time and place where we met, it was also the time and place when we would be the first ones to go to a new war, a war like no other in our history, in a place called Vietnam. We were from

Platoons 318 and 389, 1964.

Every one of us who "went across the pond," whether as an O3 or other MOS, encountered times in which we thought our lives were about to end, or at the very least, we suffered from the heat, the wet, the mud, jungle rot, dysentery, malaria, too many C-rations and not enough water, and often lack of supplies and replacements and reinforcements. We knew we could die in an ambush kill zone, or be killed by mortar fire or rockets, or by hitting a trip wire or mine. We even thought about what would happen if we were captured. But because of the training we had – the training Drill Instructors gave us, and especially the mental conditioning – we took it all in stride. Instead of complaining, we laughed. Instead of living in fear, we lived in anticipation. Instead of wondering about our purpose, our leaders, or our mission, we had faith and trust. We were By-God United States Marines! And Drill Instructors made us such.

And it didn't stop there. Some of us went on to careers in the Corps, or other branches, and others to civilian life. But whatever we did and wherever we went, we were successful. We knew that we could always move just one more step, take a little more pain, ignore discomfort and hardships, deal with more incompetence from those around and above us, and lead our subordinates better and with more discipline and understanding — because of Drill Instructors.

And now we have kids, and grand kids, and guess what? Some of them have had the opportunity of receiving a few bits and slices of the training we received from you: discipline, endurance, courage, integrity, and above all, faithfulness. Always Faithful. *Semper Fidelis*.

I especially hated that barrel-chested, black belted, swarthy bull-necked tree stump bastard named Staff Sergeant Joe Viera who worked my ass off until I couldn't move anymore. Then, he made me move! He was the meanest, toughest, most sadistic son-of-a-bitch in the Corps. I remember one night after a particularly bad punishment tour (he called it the "Twenty Meter Green Peter"), when he said "You turds hate me, don't you!" We screamed "Sir, no Sir!"

"Yes you do, I can tell. You got up this morning with the intent to piss me off, and you have succeeded! ON YOUR FACES LADIES! SQUAT THRUSTS..." and as we did them "One for the Corps, Two for the Corps..." you said: "When you girls

get out of here and you want to get a piece of me, just go to the Anchor Inn in San Diego and wait until the bar closes. When you see me crawl out into the parking lot, commode huggin', hymn singin', pukin' drunk, you better ALL jump on me with baseball bats. It's the only time you'll have an advantage! Anything less and I'll f\*\*k\*n' KILL YOU!"

And we believed him.

And later, when we were told of what it would be like to be captured by the VC and put in a prison camp, we snickered. "So what? Hell, it'd be better than boot camp!"

Master Sergeant Viera, we will never know how many lives you influenced, or how many you saved in a time of war. But we do know that you were successful in making US successful. And for that we thank you.

My civilian peers can talk of their old coaches, their baseball and football players, and others can extol their rock stars and movie heroes. But very few have their own personal, real life, U.S. Marine hero.

We have Joe Viera, and all of the other great Drill Instructors who took that clay and molded us into what we are today.

God Bless, and *Semper Fidelis!* ✕

**Craig Roberts**  
Platoon 389, 1964, MCRD San Diego  
L/Cpl, RVN, 9th Marines, '65-'66  
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# COLOMBIAN ANTI-TERROR COMMANDOS

JUNGLAS: Anti-Narc / COPES: Anti-Terror



*COPES troops prepare for bayonet drills. Trooper in foreground has a new Ontario manufactured bayonet which has been adopted by the U.S. Marine Corps. This excellent piece of gear, far superior to its predecessor, was donated to COPES by SOF.*

**“Together We  
Are Invincible”**

**ISM**

Text & Photos by Dr. Martin Bragg

Last month we introduced the JUNGLES, the elite Colombian Police anti-drug unit. For a week the JUNGLES Commander (Commandante A) led us through the training, the missions and the triumphs and the defeats that the unit has had since it was established in the 1990s.

The gregarious, jovial, highly seasoned cop was as tough as nails. He had to be to command such noticeable respect from his unit. He was anxious to introduce us to his brother, the Commander of the elite anti-terrorism team, the Comando Operaciones Policia Especial Service (COPES) (Commandante B).

“No one wants to mess with us. Together we are invincible,” he was dead serious in spite of his playful manner.

JUNGLES Commandante A proudly introduced us to his 35 year old brother, the COPES Commandante B in Bogota.

“I had been with the COPES for 10 years after 7 years with the regular police,” Commandante B, a quieter version of his rugged brother told us.

The brothers had conducted many operations together.

This year the formidable team of brothers collaborated on seventeen anti-terrorism operations in the departments of Meta, Putumayo, Chocó, Guaviare, Cauca, Nariño, Cundimarca and throughout the jungles and countryside.

“He loves his work and I love mine,” the JUNGLES chief said. “Sure we worry when we know the other one of us is in danger when on operations together, but we are invincible,” he jested.

“I used to think, oh my God, there is my brother, what if something happens to him. But now I know I have to fight like hell because his survival is at stake.

“We complement each other. We have two other brothers, but they are normal, not crazy like us,” he laughed.

### **“We Are The Urban Action Arm”**

“The COPES,” Comandante A explained, “are the urban action arm of the rural based JUNGLES. The JUNGLES surround and secure the perimeter so the COPES take over the town. The COPES unit does not have its own intelligence so they must rely on intelligence from DIJIN, the investigative arm of the national police force or the intel the JUNGLES gather through their



wide net of informants.

"If the local police in a village are driven out, the JUNGLES assess the situation and the COPES take control. The local police fall under the jurisdiction of the operational jefe, the Comando de Operaciones Especiales (Commando of Special Operations).

"When the FARC assassinate the police chiefs, we get the order to deploy to that area to provide security and arrest of kill the terrorists.

"Our mission statement is high risk urban operations and to assess high threat operations and interventions for the police generals. We also conduct training for international and national police from all Spanish speaking countries in Latin and South America, including Mexico, Spain, el Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and all of Latin America. We invite all Spanish speaking countries.

"We train them in dynamic action and urban combat, sniper training, crises management, special security tactics and techniques and VIP protection.

"We conduct joint operations with the JUNGLAS, offer an explosives course, combat medicine, and communications and human rights courses. We train them in taking down commercial airplanes, buses and any kind of vehicle training.

The members have to go through a rigorous screening program and a unique special operations course for 16 weeks.

"We have the finest instructors from France, the Spanish National Guard (GUARDIA), the special forces police group that works against the Basque in Spain, the British SAS and the United States Special Operations of the Maritals from Batroun Rouge. One American special operators group conducts anti-terrorism training.

### **It Started With the Hunt for Drug Lord Pablo Escobar**

Our U.S. contact, a dynamic, good-humored U.S. special operator had introduced us to the COPES on our last trip to Colombia in 2003.

He warned us that access has traditionally been denied to U.S. journalists, but he somehow managed to arrange for us to meet up with him and former con-



*Well armed and well trained, COPES personnel are more than a match for urban terrorists.*

gressman Bob Barr (R-Georgia) at the COPES headquarters near Bogota.

"I got involved when the U.S. decided to form Operation Support Justice in 1992 to train Colombian law enforcement for one of the greatest manhunts in history before Osama and 9-11," the grizzled U.S. special operator said.

Chasing drug thugs and ruthless murderers got in his blood. Since then he has been on ops in Colombia numerous times and become sought after for his knowledge in countering the worldwide drug trade.

"The manhunt for that arrogant, narcissistic fiend, drug lord Pablo Escobar took nearly two years. We used every available asset, a couple hundred spec-op agents, including FBI, DEA, Delta and Marine Corp recon like myself," he recalled the wild chase.

The U.S. and Colombia were offering a \$8.7 million reward for Escobar's capture. The elusive Drug king was harbored by many poor Colombians who saw him as a knight in shining armor who established schools and fed the poor.

"We had to take out over a hundred of Escobar's lieutenants," the special operator said.

### **They Are Ready To Kill and Die and They Do Both**

"We trained the COPES, who had been created by the Colombian National Police in the late 1980s to be the rapid reaction forces of the Colombian National Police. They're like the Delta Force, ready to go at a moment's notice, prepared to do anything it takes to accomplish the mission.

"They are ready to kill and ready to die, and they do both.

"The results the COPES achieved tactically and the sponsorship of Bob Barr, helped bring the UH-60 BLACKHAWKS into the Police air wing's inventory in 1999," declared the Spec Ops veteran. "Their tactical mobility has made them much more lethal with the UH-60s," he continued.

"The JUNGLAS, like the DEA, fall under narco terrorism and the COPES falls under the minister of defense so they do ops with the Colombian military," the JUNGLAS

commander told us in Bogota.

"The JUNGLAS, who number about 600 in total, are the troops that go into the jungles and take down drug labs, intercept drug shipments and drug trafficking. They can take out a lab, find out it's a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) armory and could get caught in middle of a three way gunfight between the FARC, the paramilitary United Self-defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), and the good guys.

"The army killed eight cops last year. They called it friendly fire, but a lot of people think the army intentionally got these cops and those allegations have not been resolved.

### **"Hell, They Already Know How to Kill"**

"Those that accused us of training the Colombians how to kill are totally ignorant of what is going on down there," our SpecOps agent declared.

"Colombia is the most violent country in the Western Hemisphere, with some 4000 people killed each year since the narco-fueled conflict started in the mid-1990s," states Colombian veteran, F. Andy Messing of the Washington, D.C. based National Defense Counsel Foundation," the SpecOp vet said.

"They have been murdering each



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other down there for hundred of years. We gave them new toys, new weapons, and taught them new tricks so they did what they always do but just better," the Special operator said.

"These guys are poor villagers or they come from the jungles and mountains and have nothing to loose.

"It has taken hundreds and even thousands of bloody ferocious raids to destroy the central nervous system of the Mega-cartels.

"Don't forget, these drug lords can afford to hire the best. They say Escobar hired some of the best Mercs in the business—from Israel, Britian, Russia, France and South Africa. He had a private army of over 100 top rank assassins."

"The COPES lost at least half of their team in the Escobar chase," the Special operator said.

"Only twenty of the original COPES team that was trained for the Escobar mission are still alive," the Colombian JUNGLA commander told us in his office in Bogota.

"It was a great mission, one that any special operators would beg for" the U.S. special operator said.



*COPES volunteers go through SEAL-type selection course before being accepted into the unit. Standards are high as is the attrition rate; the course difficult.*

### The Commandos Blow Escobar Away

"Pablo Escobar's, who controlled the \$50-Billion, Medellin drug Cartel is legendary. On nearly the 500<sup>th</sup> day of the manhunt for the king of cocaine, the Colombian police were monitoring a telephone conversation Escobar was having in Medellin. The police had scaled the roof and were waiting for him to leave the safe house where he was hiding out. Escobar gave an alarm to his son on the phone in Bogota when he spotted the police van outside his window. He and his bodyguards fled up the stairs and tried to escape through the roof.

"He shot wildly at the cops that had

surrounded him. Escobar was wounded in the leg and torso by a police sniper and then Colombian Police Major Hugo Aguilar blew him away with one shot in the head with his 9mm pistol.

"What has not been recognized is that two DEA Special Agents were at the scene when it all happened. Neither has talked about it publicly and they probably never will," our Spec Ops agent source said.

### From Hell Week to the Blind Chicken Walk

"To join COPES, one must have at least two years of police experi-

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ence and must pass psychological and physical exams and clear a high scrutiny background criminal investigation. They can't be claustrophobic. They go through five days of pre selection then they go through an eight day 'hell week' grueling psychological test in a cramped room.

"On nearly starvation rations, they have to march 20 kilometers and they have to repel and engage in pistol combat. They have to pass a firearms course and show stability during training.

"Stripped naked, they are crammed

into a 3 foot by 3 foot closed room with the door shut for claustrophobic testing. They are bombarded with smoke, harassment sleep deprivation and endless loud noises.

"After 24 hours, we cover their eyes and they can only get out by hanging on to a rope. It's called the 'blind chicken'. Blindfolded, they have to feel their way across a lake through rough grounds with pot holes. The instructors try to shove the candidates off the rope. If the instructors force someone off line during the test, they have to do a series of

excruciating exercises to liberate the person that was taken off the line to learn to master teamwork. This is the key to learning how to master teamwork.

"On near starvation rations, they have to march 20 kilometers and they have to repel and engage in pistol combat. They have to pass a firearms course that is modeled on the FBI's demanding shooting course called "Hogan's Alley" in Quantico, Va," the SpecOps agent added.

"If they can survive all this, they are selected because they have to be crazy to even think of going through that torturous program," the COPES commander chuckled.

"We always have medics and ambulances available," he added to soften the harsh scene he had just portrayed.

### Myopic Human Rights Groups

"We have been repeatedly accused of human rights violations. And the FARC, who have a high profile propaganda routine, have mobilized a lot of sympathy internationally," the Comandante A said.

"The guerillas stage a tactical and political war to mask their horrendous,

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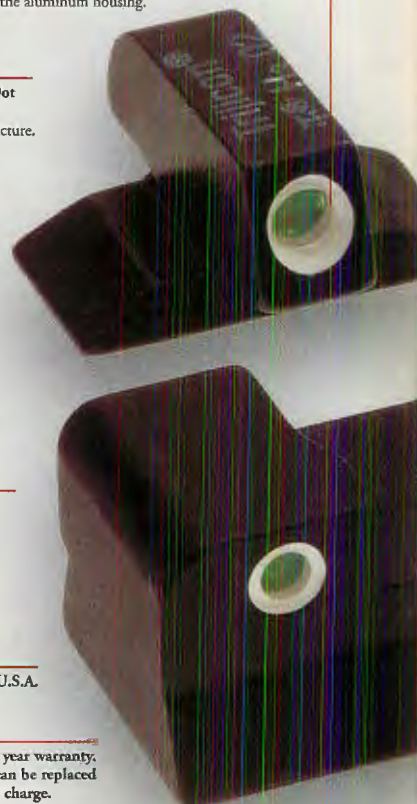
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murderous actions.

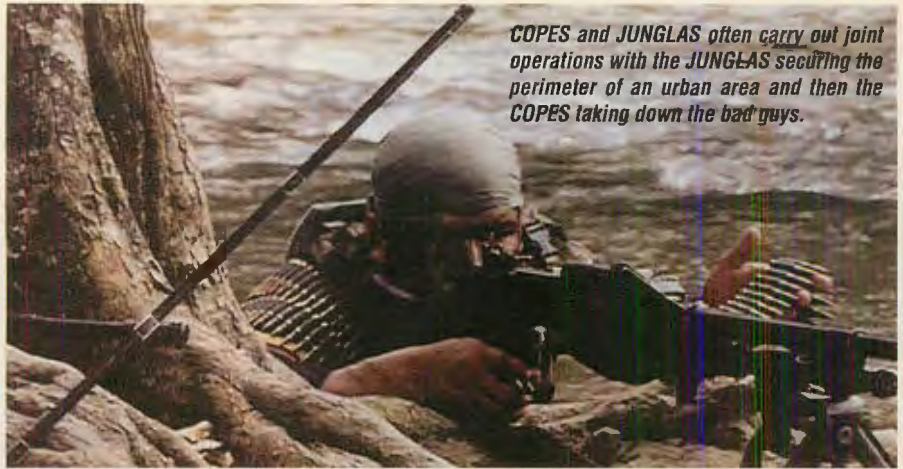
"The European human rights Non Government Organizations (NGOs) send money.

"We have been targeted in a guerilla camp when we stumbled upon them killing civilians. A month and a half ago on the FARC web, we were accused of assassinating three unarmed men and the JUNGLES were accused of killing compasinos. The activists that accuse us don't need any proof, they only have to make accusations to an eager press corps. Those accusations were proved false.

The beleaguered Commanders were always guarded, repeatedly reminding us that all of their actions were legal and they always operated within human rights laws.

"On every operation, we have a fiscal (attorney) from the prosecutors office and a human rights observer.

"Lawyers from the attorney general's office, the Fiscals get warrants and that allows the JUNGLAS and COPES conduct dynamic entries. The Fiscals are like the prosecuting attorneys and on lots of cases, they have to get info or evidence by getting into a building or taking somebody into custody," the U.S.



COPES and JUNGLAS often carry out joint operations with the JUNGLAS securing the perimeter of an urban area and then the COPES taking down the bad guys.

Special operator said.

"The COPES bust through windows, doors or come down through the roof to capture the targets, then the fiscals serve arrest warrants for hostage taking, mayhem, murder, torture or whatever thugery that is being charged.

"The FARC are most effective at propaganda because they have more people more experience of all the groups. They have the best weapons and equipment. One organization out of Europe said the FARC are Robin Hoods, but what do they know, they are in Europe they are not here to know the difference.

They don't know that the FARC are extortionists and assassins who destroy hospitals and schools, cut off electric powers, steel vehicles and kill children or kidnap them and force them to become child soldiers," the JUNGLA commander said.

"Thousands and thousands of innocent children have been forced into this conflict," the SpecOps agent said sadly.

"The NGOs believe all their lies and propaganda and ignore their involvement in drugs. People that send assistance to the FARC have tunnel vision and only believe what FARC say," the

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Example of one of the scoes of cocaine labs that that are destroyed every year by the elite anti-narco units of the Colombian police.

COPES commander interjected.

"The FARC actions in the cities are indiscriminate. They don't care whether their targets are military, government, or civilian, they just want to wreak terror and havoc. The FARC are in one third of the country in the former demilitarized zone in the south.

"FARC Informants come from all over the country. The JUNGLES with the backup of the CIA and DEA offer rewards for information. The size of the rewards is being raised.

"Three years ago President Uribe

initiated a plan for the FARC to reenter society. They pay the FARC members to leave and join up with the government. The rewards given are dictated by a list that specifies the amount for heads of FARC, for explosives or other information. They offer two million dollars for the head of the FARC, which included Manuel

Marulanda, Velez or any other of seven operating heads," Comandante A said.

### Weapons Training

"How many rounds do the new troops fire in a year," SOF Publisher RKB asked?

"2000 per JUNGLA of different calibers initially, and for them to maintain their training every year they fire 1,500 rounds," the JUNGLA chief responded.

"The DEA has been generous in providing support, such as extra ammunition for the JUNGLAS, when the US.

Embassy's diplomats threaten to cut back assistance," our SpecOps source said.

"The COPES fire 2000 in their training, but they only get to fire 500 per year. They don't have nay assistance from any other embassy or country except the United States. The JUNGLAS get support from the United States and Britain because they are labeled anti drug warriors. No one supports the COPES because they are considered an anti-terrorist unit. A lot of guys buy GPS systems from their own pockets because they need it.

"I happen to have one right here you can evaluate," RKB said as he handed a Brunton GPS system to the delighted COPES chief

"Excellent, they only have commercial GPS", a Colombia based U.S. agent said. "For years, the COPES have been asking for assistance, trying to find a patron and haven't found anyone. They have gotten a few hundred odd pistols and a few vests I could send their way because they do good work. But I couldn't find anyone to support them either," he said.

*Continued on page 78*



The watchband that was created by U.S. soldiers

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**“I Gave Up Weight Training to follow a top secret 15-minutes per day routine of bodyweight exercises and...**

# **I Got Into The Best Shape of My Life in Record Time... You Can, Too”**

By Matt Furey

Best-selling author of *Combat Conditioning*

I was the total skeptic. Not only had I lifted weights and run long distance for years, but I had major success under my belt, including a world kung fu championship and a national collegiate wrestling title.

So I just didn't want to believe what Karl, a 76-year old man TOLD me about exercising WITHOUT weights... and WITHOUT long-distance running.

Most importantly, I didn't want to hear that a good exercise program only took a few minutes. Hate to admit it, but I was addicted to the “hard work or nothing” mentality and refused to believe you could get into the best shape of your life by doing LESS... not more.

Let me tell you, when I looked at this so-called “old man's” physique and watched him demonstrate his exercises, I could not look the other way. I had to check them out for myself, even if it meant saying, “Okay, I've wasted a lot of time doing it the wrong way.”

### **What I discovered shocked me from head to toe!**

Before I met Karl I THOUGHT I was strong. I thought I was tough. But the exercises he gave me exploited every weakness that weights and running could not cover. In a matter of minutes, I knew Karl “had me.”

So I gave up the weights and began a routine of bodyweight calisthenics called *Combat Conditioning*. Afterall, when a man of 76 can do things that a 36-year old cannot do, that tells you that “Yes, there's gold in them there hills.”

The exercises I learned had such a profound and dramatic effect on me, that for six years I have been introducing men and women of all ages and of all backgrounds to this extraordinary program – and the results are shocking, awe-inspiring and PROOF that this system works, and works FAST.

### **Who is Combat Conditioning for?**

**It's for** the hard-working man or woman who often finds it difficult to squeeze in a quick workout.

**It's for** the traveling executive who sleeps in hotel rooms more than at home.

**It's for** those who have trained their whole lives on weights.

**It's for** athletes, martial artists and the military.

And... **IT'S FOR** the man or woman who hasn't done a lick of exercise in decades.

### **Even One Minute a Day Brings Results!**

Unlike other exercise program where you are told you MUST do 30 minutes of cardio per day and an hour of weights, to get results, *Combat Conditioning* is totally different. 15 minutes is all it takes to whoop the hard-core trainee. But for the total beginner, he or she can get results starting with ONLY one minute a day. And no, this is not a joke.

**Time is not the issue!**



### **Matt Furey**

won a national collegiate wrestling title in 1985 and a world shuai-chiao kung fu championship in 1997. Furey has a knack for taking the average and ordinary person and transforming him with his powerful programs. Furey was inducted into the Edinboro University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998 and spends much time each year traveling

throughout the world, searching for the very best information available to his world-wide audience. His website, [www.mattfurey.com](http://www.mattfurey.com), is one of the finest in the world, giving valuable information that changes lives.

Forget all those workouts that take all day. With *Combat Conditioning*, all that's required is your own body and a tiny “get started NOW” decision to DO a little something each day.

The key to your success is in the magical, transformative power of these exercises – not in your belief system about hard work. For many people, just one rep is all they can do at first, and they're shaking like a leaf on a windy day in Chicago. And so, that's all that person should do at first. Even if you think you're not doing enough – the exercises work their magic anyway. Your body has it's own intelligence and will work FOR YOU if you'll simply get out of the way and let it.

When you do, pretty soon you'll be the type of person who can do 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 128 repetitions and feel no fatigue. Instead of tiredness you'll feel exhilaration and ENERGY. You're building strength and endurance from the INSIDE-OUT. And believe me, once you can do more than a few reps, inches of unsightly fat and pounds of excess flab will fly off your body at break-neck speed.

### **New Results from Forgotten Exercises**

Are the exercises in *Combat Conditioning* NEW? Well, not really. They go back about 5,000 years – but for the most part, they got lost in the shuffle when weights, gadgets and gyms came around. So although they aren't NEW, they're “New to YOU!”

Before I learned these exercises, I read about the Great Gama of India, a wrestler who followed this program and was unbeaten in 5,000 matches. I also read that the legendary Bruce Lee did these exercises, too. And we all know about Lee's incredible martial arts skills. Then there was the All-Pro NFL running back, Hershell Walker, who did bodyweight exercises each day. The list goes on and on. The key is in having a proven program with a track record, and *Combat Conditioning* is just that.

### **Puts You into the Old Clothes You Dream of Wearing Again!**

The main reason why *Combat Conditioning* works is because it targets all the weak links in your body. And when all those weak links are given a little attention, your entire body gets stronger, faster, more powerful and more energetic. Spend time each day doing a few functional exercises and the payoff is HUGE.

You get functional strength, endurance and flexibility – all at the same time. Not to mention seeing the excess inches flying off your body, making it easy for you to fit into the clothes you dream of wearing again. Stop dreaming. Start DOING. And get results.

### **12 Ways Combat Conditioning Will Change Your Life!**

Follow this program and your body is going to change big time. In fact, I've made a list of 12 of the most powerful benefits that hundreds of thousands of others all over the world have gotten from the *Combat Conditioning* program. Let's take a look:

1. Cranks up your metabolism so you burn excess body fat a lot, lot faster. This means fitting into the clothes you WANT to wear.
2. Packs attractive and healthy functional muscles (not grotesque) onto your entire body
3. Simultaneously doubles your strength and flexibility – and does so without needing separate workouts for each.
4. Quadruples your endurance inside of 30 days. Never get tired again.
5. Within a couple weeks, it often eliminates chronic back and shoulder pain from years of heavy squats, deadlifts and bench pressing – or other forms of abuse.
6. Sleep like a log. Eight hours of deep sleep is no longer a goal. It's automatic. As soon as you hit the rack you're out like a light.
7. Your self-confidence will have no bounds. Especially when you got compliments from people who hardly paid attention to you before.
8. You can train anywhere. You don't need more than a few square feet of carpet or pavement and you're all set. You don't need equipment. Just your own bodyweight.
9. You get a kick-butt workout done in 15 minutes or less.
10. You'll turn back the clock. Friends may tell you that you look 5–10 years younger.
11. You'll have an explosive type of strength that weights cannot give you. Your every movement will be lively and full of vigor.
12. Your muscles will be pliable and powerful, like a tiger's.

### **Here's How to Order**

*Combat Conditioning: Functional Exercises for Fitness* has 48 super effective bodyweight exercises along with seven different programs that will get you into kick-butt shape fast. Order NOW and you'll receive 3 free Special Reports on how to eliminate knee, back and shoulder pain. Your total investment in this no-nonsense book is only \$29.95 plus \$6 S&H U.S. (foreign orders add \$12). Order online at [www.mattfurey.com](http://www.mattfurey.com).

Or pick up the phone right now and call 1 813 994 8267 to order. You can also send a money order to Matt Furey Enterprises, Inc., 10339 Birdwatch Drive, Tampa, FL, 33647.

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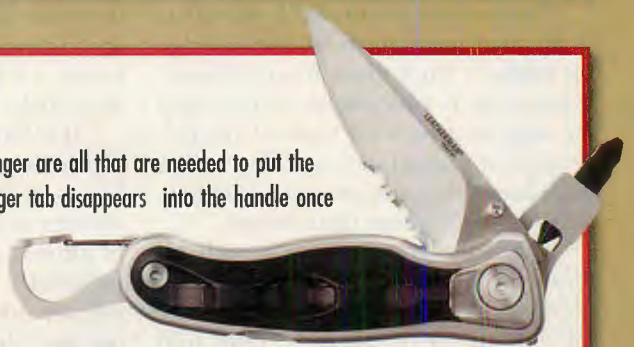


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Members of a joint Navy and Marine Ordnance Disposal team supporting a patrol from Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn, 2nd Marines, take cover behind their Humvee as they destroy an IED near Forward Operating base Hit, Iraq. Photo: Gunnery Sergeant Keith A. Milks. (inset) A thunderous blast followed by thick black smoke signals the destruction of an IED found by soldiers in Ramadi and destroyed by Marine EOD. Photo: Master Sergeant Lek Mateo, U.S. Army.

### Enough is Enough

That's what a group of U.S. scientists said after hearing about the carnage in Ramadi. On a flight from Burbank, California to Washington, D.C. where he was meeting with some of his colleagues at a secret location, Ron Fuller, who heads the consortium of scientists talked to SOF about their project.

"We have good contacts with all branches of the armed services," said Fuller, "but all of our work is done outside the government." Fuller told SOF that the secret to success in Washington is to work completely outside the box; "never take one dollar bill from Uncle Sam." Private citizens are funding Fuller's efforts to develop IED counter-measures.

"We have given ourselves one year to find solutions to the IED threat," said Fuller whose company holds the patent on equipment that can eavesdrop on communications worldwide.

Fuller's folks are layering the communications side of the issue, and developing potential solutions. "If cell phones represent 80% of the triggers

as we are told, and ring commands detonate IEDs, then we have the ability to develop a counter-measure, because cell phones talk to each other, they shake hands," noted Fuller.

"It's like an onion," Fuller said, "You start at the top and peel back the layers. If the insurgents are using cell phones to detonate IEDs, what kind of phones are they using, what is the protocol." Fuller says his group has already identified the protocol and has just about completed the peeling process.

When given of this information by SOF, General Mattis invited Fuller to meet with his chief of staff at the Warfighting Laboratory at Quantico, and is currently opening several doors for Fuller. But Mattis has seen a steady stream of scientists in the past that thought they could solve the problem, only to fall on their swords.

### Tough Nut to Crack

Scientists at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab in Baltimore, Maryland have characterized the effort to

detect and defeat IEDs as "more difficult than going to the moon." Over the last two years since insurgents in Iraq began using Improvised Explosive Devices in large numbers, a lot of very bright, accomplished scientists have told USMC Combat Development Command at Quantico, Virginia they could solve this deadly problem.

"But many of the bright folks have left the effort, beaten by its complexity," said LtGen. Mattis. "It is very technologically challenging because of the variety of detonators used and the specificity of the electro-magnetic spectrum." Mattis knows IEDs up close and personal, having survived three IED attacks in Anbar Province while he was there with the First Marine Expeditionary Force.

"If it were a straightforward problem, some of our best scientists, or the Israelis, Brits, etc. would have solved it long ago," Mattis told SOF, "But we will solve this problem, and when we do, it will change the face of urban warfare in the Middle East." ✕

hood. The second house was entered but no one was found.

Second platoon came over the radio—the men they'd seen running had jumped into the weeds.

By that time, we were all so keyed up that a few of us were thinking about setting the weeds on fire and blasting them to hell with our rifles. After a few seconds, the interpreter began shouting into the thicket that we had the place surrounded and were prepared to fire. Come out now or it was over.

Most of the people in the area knew how Alpha detachment worked, and realized this wasn't an idle threat.

A few bounded away, were chased down and tackled to the ground.

The units had collapsed back on to our designated rally point. Two of 94th's MP teams were still out chasing a few men down, but returned empty handed. The men on the run had melted away, as is often the case in this conflict.

The operation was over without a shot fired. After it was all over, we'd nabbed the punk behind the IED and captured all but three of the eight men of his team. A couple of other young



*Looking at CPT Byers' killer made me understand how easy it is to kill a man in cold blood. I don't know how I would have reacted if he had taken the life of someone I knew - but I knew it wouldn't be hard to watch him die.*

Iraqis were detained just in case, but would end up being released after interrogations proved their innocence.

We were standing at the rally point, our cuffed enemies pathetically kneeling at our feet. Although a professional soldier in the US military, I began to understand the feelings of retribution that sometimes overwhelm soldiers that have insurgent

killers in their possession. Honestly I don't know how I would have reacted if they had taken the life of someone I knew. I didn't know Captain Byers personally, and for all I knew I was staring at a man who just took away the father of two small children, the husband of a crippled wife, or the son of a proud father, only to brag about it afterwards like a little kid. Staring at a wretched member of a cowardly army, I now understood how a soldier could take a man's life without remorse.

The news is filled with stories about IEDs killing soldiers and marines in Iraq, their attackers often anonymous, invisible men who disappear into their towns, living to fight another day.

This was one time they wouldn't get away with it. ☒

Guest Contributing Editor Mike Gifford is currently an inactive reservist with the US Army in Chicago, IL. A graduate of Union College (New York) and former intelligence officer, he's currently working on a book that chronicles his experiences in Iraq with the Military Police Corps. All profits will be donated to families of those killed or injured serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Gifford can be reached at [giff94@hotmail.com](mailto:giff94@hotmail.com). Send Feedback responses to [dwfeedback@yahoo.com](mailto:dwfeedback@yahoo.com). ☒

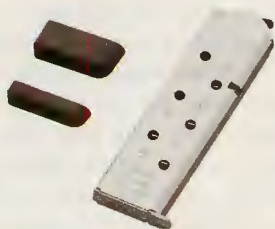
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to worry about finding the VC. I send your mob out and you bring them to me!"

Two days later, when we returned to the Company area, I sat with O'Brien, cleaning my rifle.

"O'Brien, Roberts, say 'cheese.'"

It was Frenchy Michaud. He snapped a photo of us sitting in the sand of Phong Ho. It would be the last photo taken of me in Vietnam, as within minutes Sergeant Shireman walked up and ordered me to catch a ride on the mail Otter back to Battalion. The docs at the Naval hospital wanted to see me and check on the healing of my punji stake wound.

The next morning I was informed by the doc that my physical condition had deteriorated and that I was to be immediately medevaced home. I never saw my squad again.

I had walked my last patrol. ☒

Lance Corporal Craig Roberts landed with Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines in July 1965. His platoon was transferred to Mike Company, 3rd Btn, 9th Marines in October 1965 to replace



Roland O'Brien and Roberts after the "Last Patrol" cleaning rifles at Phong Ho base camp. This is the last photo taken of Roberts in Vietnam. April 1966.

a platoon lost in an ambush. By the following April, they had been in Vietnam for 10 months. Their enemy was the local Viet Cong cells, the hardcore R20 Viet Cong "Doc Lap" Battalion, and the 18th NVA Regiment.

Craig Roberts, LTC, USAR (Ret), was a U.S. Marine infantryman and sniper in the 9th Marine Regiment in South Vietnam in 1965-66. He is coauthor of *The Walking Dead: A Marine's Story of Vietnam, One Shot - One Kill: America's Combat Snipers*, and *Crosshairs on the Kill Zone: U.S. Snipers from Vietnam to Iraqi Freedom*.

# BULLETPROOF

By THOMAS GRAVES



American expatriate executive Richard Blackstone accepts a new assignment to head up the Latin American operations of a powerful U.S. multinational headquartered in La Paz, Bolivia. He quickly finds himself at the center of a massive scheme of corruption and deception involving drugs and terror networks that threatens his career and his family, and requires him to make decisions that will test his principles.

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Author of *ON INTELLIGENCE: Spies And Secrecy In An Open World*



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## The FARC and ELN Join the U.S. Terrorist List

The COPES anti-terrorism team is begging for equipment even though the Bush administration linked the (FARC) and the (ELN), to terrorism by putting them on the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list.

9-11 sped up U.S. involvement in Colombia.

"We've put FARC, AUC on our terrorist list. We've called them for what they are. These are thugs, who use killing and intimidation to advance their political goals. By fighting narco-trafficking, we're fighting the funding sources for these political terrorists. And sometimes they're interchangeable. It is essential for Colombia to succeed in this war against terror in order for her people to realize the vast potential of a great, democratic country," President Bush announced when he declared the global war on terrorism.

U.S. special agents now could officially help the Colombians fight the insurgents who had been terrorizing the country for decades. The players in the drug rackets did not change, just the rules of the game for U.S. operators did.

Colombia could now use U.S.-donated helicopters and 800 U. S. operatives—400 military and 400 private contractors to fight terrorism, ie the drug lords ie the insurgency.

At least that is what the official explanation was.

The Bush administration was strongly berated by critics who claimed that the reason for the policy change and increase in aid was to train Colombian troops to defend the 500-mile long pipeline that makes the Occidental Petroleum of Los Angeles big bucks.

Drug interdiction flights, which were suspended in April 2001 after a U.S. missionary Veronica Bowers and baby were killed when their plane was accidentally shot down in PERU by CIA and Peruvian Air Force, were resumed.

## "The Yellow Bellied Sap Suckers"

Both the anti-terrorism and anti narco teams told us that they are still hurting for equipment in spite of the fact that the United States has spend over \$3 million dollars in the last few years.

"The COPES unit are not given support because they take out drug lords and the yellow bellied sap suckers in the state department are afraid that the human rights NGOs would start call-

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ing the COPEs AND JUNGLAS death squads like they did in el Salvador. The sapsuckers never made the connection between narcotics and terrorism," the U.S. Spec-op told us.

Our Special operators sources are just as frustrated as their Colombian cop buddies are.

"The JUNGLAS need more helicopters. They can't survive their dangerous missions unless they have super Hueys or Blackhawks to get there fast and get out of there a lot faster.

"The State department is dragging their feet, those that controls all the funding talk out of both sides of their mouth, saying they give the COPEs support, but they don't. In 2002, Bush asked for money and Congress put money in there but the State Department didn't start spending until 2003.

"The bang for the buck the Colombian government gets from COPEs and JUNGLAS is very effective.

The U.S. embassy in Bogotá is the second largest in the world, with nearly 2000 personnel from over two-dozen agencies. But that doesn't mean that it is effective.

"But the U.S. Embassy in Bogota is deceptive in how it allocates funds. It will cut off the most effective forces, which I believe are the COPEs. There are only about a 120 of them but they are a fierce force, and if they become too effective against the paramilitaries, the ELN or the FARC, the number of deaths will go up and the State Dept. bureaucrats will yell, 'oh, my God, look at the human rights abuses,' and all NGO human rights guys will be complaining.

"Yea we have been at war down there for years," the Special operator said. "And will be for many more."

"The drug war is region wide and there are lots of moving parts. Thirty captured FARC fled to Bolivia and when they returned to Colombia they got re-captured.

"HAMAS and HIZBOLLAH are active down there. I saw them myself in the Guajira peninsula between the Caribbean and the Gulf of Venezuela. I have been to the town where they live.

"Regretfully, the drug war has reached Equador Venezuela, Bolivia and other South American countries and the United States embassy says it is fully engaged." ✕

*NEXT: Venezuela, Bolivia, and neighboring democracies befriend Castro as the pendulum swings to the left.*

*Dr. Martin Brass is an international lawyer and longtime SOF contributor.*

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on the Internet, as well as the information inscribed on the markers.

Online since April 2004, the nationwide gravesite locator (<http://grav-locator.com.va.gov>) helps veterans' families, former comrades-in-arms and others find the graves of veterans.


VA recently added 1.9 million records for veterans buried primarily in private cemeteries to its database. The gravesite locator previously carried records on 3 million veterans buried in VA national cemeteries since the Civil War, and in state veterans cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery since 1999. The new records date from January 1997, the earliest time for which electronic records exist. Beyond the 5 million records now available, VA continues to add approximately 1,000 new records to the database each day.

Internet users only need to provide the last name of the deceased veteran or dependent. Typically, the information available includes name, birth and death dates, rank, branch of service and the address and phone number of the cemetery. ☒



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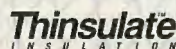
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*Oliver North is host of "War Stories" on the Fox News Channel. The opinions expressed below are his own and do not represent the views of Fox News and/or Soldier Of Fortune.*

## STATE OF DISUNION

PORT HUENEME, CALIF. – This sprawling U.S. Navy Construction Center, 60 miles north of Los Angeles, is “home port” for thousands of “Sea-Bees” who are deployed in the global war on terror. These “warriors who build” with a legendary “can-do” spirit are busy repairing schools and hospitals in Iraq, constructing roads and runways in Afghanistan and helping to forge a safer future in places most Americans can’t even pronounce.

Though most of the men and women in the Naval Mobile Construction Battalions are reservists with good private sector jobs, all I have spoken with – here in the U.S. or overseas – support the mission we have undertaken in Iraq. Many express the hope that their commander in Chief “bats one out of the park” next Tuesday when he addresses the Congress and the nation on the State of the Union. Those sentiments are fairly standard among the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen and Marines that I cover for FOX News.

Unfortunately, the courage and steadfast resolve of those who are serving is unmatched by those they serve. Whether it’s polls, pundits or politicians, it’s pretty clear that President Bush has his work cut out for him in convincing the American people that we are in a fight that we dare not lose – and that we really are winning.

The anti-Bush partisan politicians who began howling even before his first inaugural in 2001 have now become a full-blown anti-military movement – complete with a senior member of Congress advocating that young Americans spurn service in the Armed Forces and urging those in uniform to disobey orders. The potentates of the press have upped the ante as well. For more than two years, the left has made the claim, “We support the troops – but not their fight.” Now there is growing evidence that they support neither.

In Tuesday’s *Los Angeles Times*, liberal columnist Joel Stein confessed, “I don’t support the troops. I’m not for the war. And being against the war and saying you support the troops is one

of the wussiest (sic) positions the pacifists have ever taken.” He continued, “I’m not advocating that we spit on returning veterans like they did after the Vietnam War, but we shouldn’t be celebrating people for doing something we don’t think was a good idea.”

These growing sentiments – shared by many who perceive that President Bush is already a wounded lame duck – bode ill for the future, unless he can deliver a clear vision for the days ahead. This will be no mean task.



*Sergeant Dorsel B. Boyer, right, with Ollie North, during North’s latest trip to Iraq. Boyer, assigned to 2/2 Brigade Combat Team, hails from Coshocton, Ohio.*

The president’s domestic opponents have been emboldened by the administration’s paltry response to charges that the National Security Agency has been secretly “spying on American citizens.” Some in Old Europe and others in Washington are taking seriously Osama bin Laden’s recent audiotape in which the terror mastermind claims, “We don’t mind offering you along-term truce on fair conditions that we adhere to.” Ariel Sharon’s incapacitating stroke and the apparent success of Hamas – an admitted terrorist organization – in this week’s Palestinian elections have thrown the Mid East peace process into turmoil. And now, the

threat of an Iranian nuclear weapons program coupled with fear mongering over energy supplies is generating momentum among the same capitulationists who used to warn that we could never prevail against the Soviet Union.

It won’t be enough for the president on Tuesday night to remind the American people that the economy is continuing to grow (4.1 percent last quarter) or that unemployment is now down to 4.9 percent. The masters of the media have already identified the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America members they will put on the air to blame the Bush administration for 30,000 Ford Motor Company layoffs. Nor will it suffice to point out that troop levels in Iraq are already dropping – as are U.S. casualty rates – down 26 percent from a year ago.

On Tuesday evening, Bush must address all of these issues – but most importantly, he must reassure the undecided and uncertain that he has a clear plan for victory in the global war on terror. He would do well to remind the American people that it is thanks to heroes wearing uniforms and intelligence operations, like those undertaken by the NSA, that we have had no terror attacks on U.S. soil since 9-11. He must reject bin Laden’s “truce” bid for what it is – a page torn from Ho Chi Minh’s playbook on how to stave off an American military victory. And while the French, Germans and Russians dither over what to do about Tehran’s nuclear weapons ambitions, Bush should point them in the right direction by rejecting an Iranian appeal for direct commercial flights to and from the United States. Finally, he should appeal directly to the American people to demonstrate the same kind of resolve that our Armed Forces have displayed in defending this union. ✕

*To find out more about Oliver North, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).*

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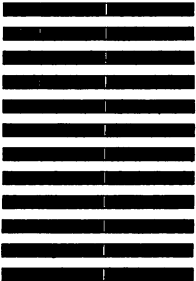
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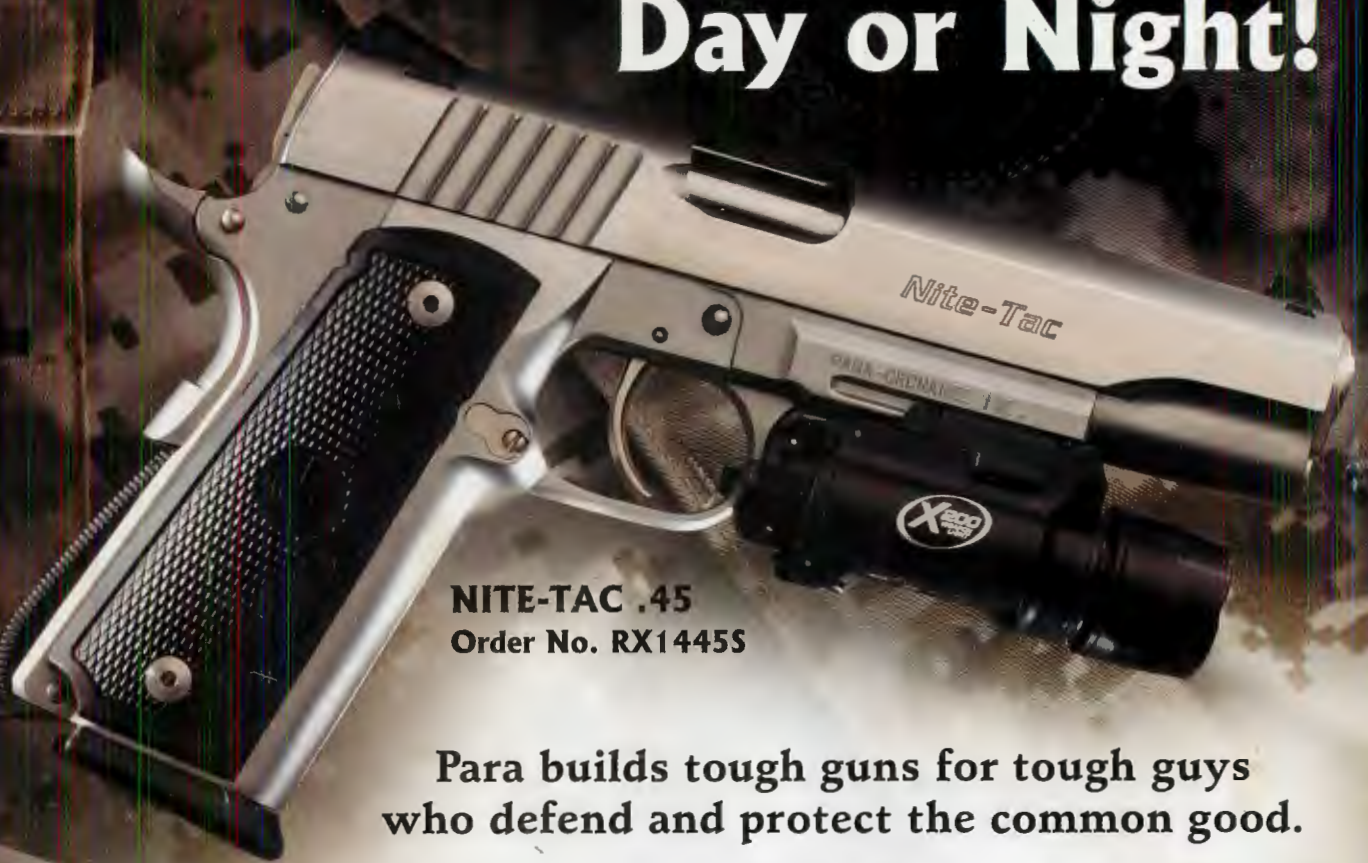
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