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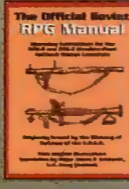
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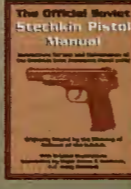


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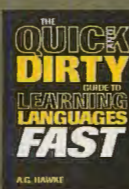


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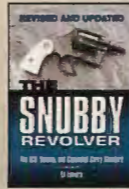
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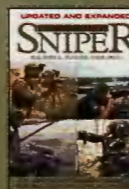


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COMMAND GUIDANCE

By Mike Bengé

Abandoned U.S. Allies

In a recent Letter to the Editor of *The Washington Times*, Seymour Kleiman claimed, "The big mistake the administration made came afterward in acting on Vice President Dick Cheney's assumption that the Iraqis would greet us as 'Liberators' ('Bush, Democrats and Iraq,' *Letters*, 5 Feb. 2007).

In fact, the Kurds did welcome us as liberators in Northern Iraq, because we had enforced the no-fly zone in the North. However, the Shias welcomed the U.S. as betrayers not as liberators because after we armed and encouraged them to rebel against Saddam's regime, the U.S. betrayed our potential allies by *not* strictly enforcing the no-fly zone in the South. This allowed the Iraqi military to murder tens of thousands of Shia men, women and children with helicopter gunships and devastating artillery fire.

The media have tried, ad nauseam, to draw comparisons between the Vietnam War and Iraq. The United States is gaining a bad reputation and losing respect for betraying and abandoning our former allies.

That is the only similarity.

The Montagnards were our loyal allies during the Vietnam War, and as a result, more than half of their adult male population was killed. Without them, the names of many more Americans would be on that somber black wall – the Vietnam Memorial.

Recently, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Ellen Sauerbrey told a Hanoi media briefing she had spoken with seven Montagnard returnees she had chosen at random in a Central Highlands village and "I have to report that with no exceptions the people who were returned from Cambodia that we spoke with all indicated that there has been no punishment." (*AFP*, Feb. 5).

It's hard to believe Mrs. Sauerbrey can be so naive as to believe any Montagnard living under a repressive communist regime would dare speak out in opposition. The Montagnards are in-

timately aware of the consequences of their actions, for they would be tortured and face 17 years imprisonment – the fate of more than 600 other Montagnard political prisoners who dared speak out against the communist regime.

I am certain Mrs. Sauerbrey is not fluent in any Montagnard dialect. Therefore, she had to rely on either an interpreter provided by the communists, or a U.S. Embassy employee who speaks Vietnamese – a language many Montagnards do not speak fluently. Further, as part of a misinformation program, the communist regime has paid a number of Montagnards "ringers" to go to Cambodia and pose as refugees and tell the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) that they (and the other legitimate refugees) were there not because of religious repression and human rights abuses, but because of a land dispute. UNHCR believed them and evidently Mrs. Sauerbrey does too.

Mrs. Sauerbrey said, "The U.S. and Vietnam shared agreement that those Montagnards who feared persecution in Vietnam should stay in the communist country and take their concerns directly to U.S. missions." The problem is, the Vietnamese communists won't let them out of prison to go to the U.S. missions.

Instead of 30 pieces of silver, it seems as if the U.S. has sold loyalty to allies, religious freedom and human rights for cheap labor, globalization and a \$5.7 billion trade deficit with Vietnam. Based on the U.S. track record with the Montagnards and other allies, the Kurds and Iraqis can expect to be next in line if the U.S. cuts and runs. ✂

Mr. Bengé spent 11 years in Vietnam as a Foreign Service Officer (five years as a prisoner of war from 1968-73), and worked closely with the Montagnards before and after his captivity. He is very active in advocating for human rights and religious freedom for the peoples of South East Asia. He resides in Falls Church, Virginia.

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (USPS 525-810, ISSN 0145-6784), MAY 2007, Volume 32, Number 5, is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Inc., 5735 E. Arapahoe Ave., Suite A-5, Boulder, CO 80303-1340. Periodicals Postage is paid at Boulder, CO and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MAGAZINE, P.O. Box 18478, Anaheim, CA 92817-9928, U.S. and APO-FPO subscription rate for twelve monthly issues \$34.95. Canada add \$20.00/yr. additional postage (includes GST tax registration business number: 12847 6249 RT). All other countries add \$65.00 U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single Issue Price — U.S.: \$4.99; United Kingdom: £2.60; Canada: \$6.99. PRINTED IN THE USA.

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

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You never hear the round that gets you: SGT Jeff Hickman sits on an unfilled aircraft bomb in Mosul, Iraq where many bunkers with leftover Iraqi army materiel were consolidated at a dump. After escorting some civilians who wanted to get a closer look at the BMPs, Hickman sat for a "don't try this at home" photo, noting "if this thing is live, it's gonna take a lot of Preparation H." Photo: Courtesy Jeff Hickman

Designated Marksmen, Not Snipers

I just read the March 2007 edition and all I can say is, Thanks to Brian Sain for his letter telling us what is happening with the designated marksmanship program! First off, so all of you out there who don't know what this program is about or have not heard of it, the Army recognized that many of its targets are very often beyond the 300 meter range but under the 600 meter range which creates a "no man's land" gap between that of the average combat soldier and the sniper. So their answer to this problem was the creation of the "designated marksman" program. The majority of the instructors are prior-service, most all being distinguished shooters, as well as trainers. We were sent to Camp Perry, Ohio and schooled to become an instructor for the Squad Designated Marksman program by the U.S. Army Marksmanship unit.

Now let me tell you what paragraph two in our instructor manual reads;

"The primary mission of the SDM is to deploy as a member of the rifle squad. The SDM is a vital member of his individual squad and NOT, (I repeat NOT) a squad sniper. He fires and maneuvers with his squad and performs all the duties of the standard rifleman. The SDM has neither the equipment nor training to operate individually or in a small team to engage targets at extended ranges with precision rifles. The secondary mission of the SDM is to engage key targets from 300 to 500 meters with effective, well-aimed fire using the standard weapon system and standard ammunition. He may or may not be equipped with an optic. The SDM must, therefore, possess a thorough understanding and master the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship as well as ballistics, elevation and windage hold-off, sight manipulation, and range estimation."

These men are NOT snipers, have

no training as snipers and should under no circumstances be placed in that position without proper training. It is time to get officers in all branches of the military trained so that they know the correct way to deploy their snipers as well as the difference between a designated marksman and a sniper. Military snipers have months of training and testing and our designated marksman have a week. Now don't get me wrong I am not taking away from the designated marksman at all I support this program 100% otherwise I would not be trainer but, why are you going to take this man and throw him out there expecting him to be a sniper and likely get him killed.

It seems as though it takes an entire war before officers, commanders and the like see what the military sniper is all about and what his capabilities are. And just as this occurs the war ends and they are thrown back on the shelf or set behind glass with a sign reading "In case of war break glass," and the cycle begins all over again.

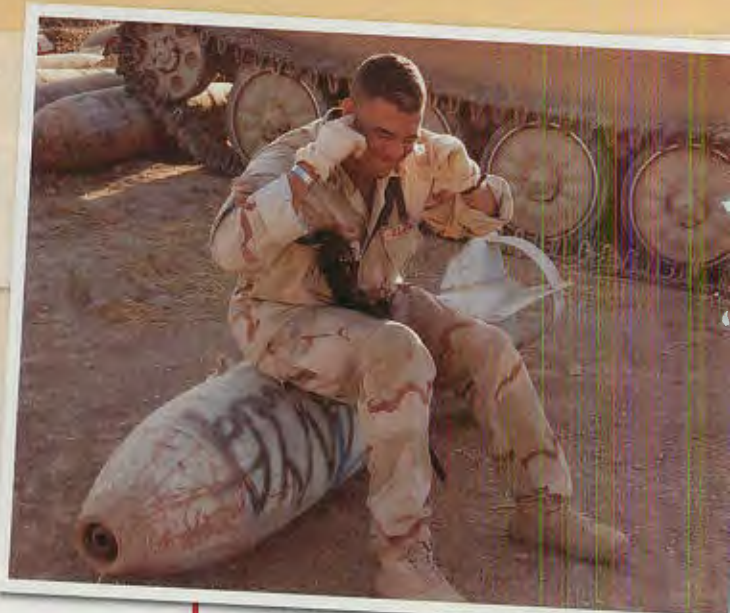
Gentlemen, take the time to listen to these highly trained warriors: They can help you and your troops in so many ways and please, please don't put designated marksmen in a position that they are not trained for.

God Bless all of our troops and SOF for continuing to bring the truth to light.

1/Lt. LeRoy W. Busse Jr.
Anchorage, Alaska

Our Inconstant Congress

The present inconstant Congress, with the incomprehensible shifting sands of its fluctuating policy, is both appalling and laughable.



First it authorized military action, then complained about it, then unanimously confirmed General Petraeus to take charge and fight it, then pushed a resolution deploring it, and tries to micromanage tactics from 5,000 miles away by blocking troop reinforcement. Having fiddled with the tactics, Congress now wants to amend the troops' mission, altering the strategy, and is even talking about denying funding for the war.

Ancient Rome learned at Cannae the dangers of having two generals in command of an army. Congress, with more than a hundred senators and hundreds of representatives, wants several hundred generals to run the Iraq war! Their comedy of errors would be amusing were it not so dangerous to our troops' security and so encouraging to their enemies.

Fielding Greaves
Lt. Col., USA (Ret.)

Battle Wagons: Save The Good Stuff

It would seem to me the two main points of the to-save-or-not-to-save debate regarding the U.S. Navy's remaining Iowa-class ships revolves around two key points;

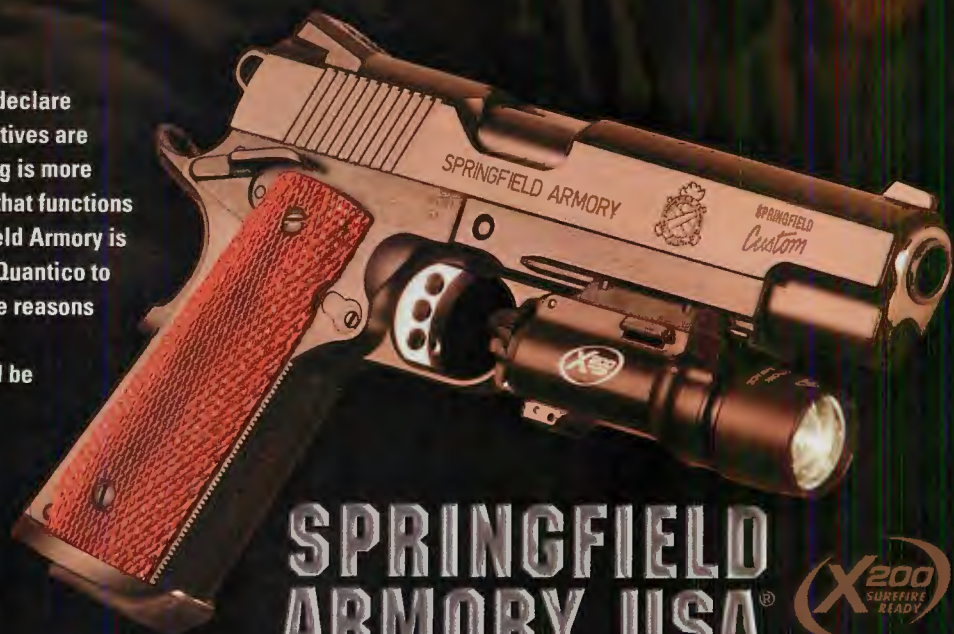
- 1) We want the heavy shore-bombardment capability that the MKVII 16inch/50cal guns provide, and
- 2) The cost of operation, maintenance and crew requirements of these

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U.S.S. Iowa fires her 16-inch, 50-caliber guns at a North Korean Target, 1952. Photo: U.S. Navy

ships is highly prohibitive.

I propose a compromise:

Turn the ships into museums. Remove the turrets and replace with some kind of cool mock-ups. Take the six turrets and mount one each, on small, well-protected light-cruiser-sized hulls. Add CIWS and close-in weapons. Avoid expensive electronics and C3 systems where possible. A good targeting system would be nice, some triple-A, etc. -Navy types know what makes a ship better than I do.

And viola! Six new (insert appropriately patriotic class name here)-class monitors, to be named in the British

fashion (*Invincible, Courageous, etc.*).

dragonfire1968tet@hotmail.com

port, one individual had been to Libya. All items were tagged in accordance with military SOP. On the same day, I found and tagged a Soviet training manual on how to fight the American wedge formation. Also was the entire weapons list, with serial numbers, from the fort on top of the hill.

Supposedly, President Reagan wanted all arms sent to the airport, so the press could see what was going on.

No one ever contacted me, nor had I ever heard about the above being acknowledged. With all the trouble with Libya at the time and two Americans being there at those times, it made me wonder. How did those two get off the island

without passports? The medical students in Grenada lived near the school, not in the boonies.

Larry Miller ☒

Remembering Grenada

While serving as a sergeant, (11b2p, at the time) with B Co, 1/508 Abn Inf, 3rd Bde, 82nd Abn. Div.) I was in Grenada. While on a mission to collect arms, I found two American passports, one man and one woman. They were in a shack in the boonies, with an SOF poster of weapons on the wall. I remember from one pass-



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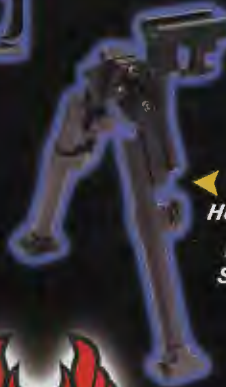
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Bearing the name-sake and call sign of legendary Navy SEAL Basal, this knife is the new choice of operational warrior throughout the globe. Designed by Basal with the Dark Ops design chief, it features all the critical items for a Modern Spec-Ops knife. The Shadow offers an extended blade length for penetrating Comm-bloc frag vests with an accelerated spearpoint tip and sharpened foretip for maximum penetration. The top edge features a bone breaker and a radical, self-cleaning BlastRip™ saw for carving survival notches in spears and anchoring notches for detonation cord. A pat pend. BarbSnap™ cutter allows for rapid notching and snapping of interdiction wires in entry ops. An abbreviated top-hilt/bottle opener works with a new serrated palmstop, allowing for a reverse grip with an astonishing six linear inches of surface area! The Shadow features a corrosion resistant finish designed to take the saltwater immersion often involved in SEAL operations. The handle is made of a low-durometer, high tensileramid composite that is impervious to everything from aviation fuel to Al Qaeda body fluids. The handle is thinner and wider for greater mechanical advantage with deep finger grooves orienting the blade axis of the knife in the hand and dramatically increasing effective grip surface. A prominent WhipLok™ finger notch provides an axis point for hacking as well as 200 degrees of grip area, ideal with wet hands or when using gloves. The handles are field

replaceable to blend with woodland, desert or black camo schemes. Quartz impregnated inserts provide extreme circumstances grip enhancement and are replaceable should decontamination be required. The Basal Shadow utilizes the same CTV2 Blade Steel and CryoHardening techniques as the StratoFighter Folders! The hilts do not protrude forward effectively reducing the length of the blade. Hollow grinding lends to greater cutting and slashing effectiveness. Deep blood grooves keep the weight of the full .250 inch thick blade properly balanced in the hand. The black Titanium CarboNitride (TiCN) vacuum deposited finish is designed to shed the micro-fine airborne sand of Middle-Eastern deserts.

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BULLETIN BOARD



◀ *Nukes in Iraq? No, just some IEDs that never were, as a large cache of UXO is detonated by Coalition troops of the Slovakian contingent. Photo: DoD*

▼ *Navy patrol boats from Inshore Boat Units Five One and Five Two (Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron Five) conduct ops near Coronado Bay Bridge in San Diego. Homeland defense? Count on these guys! Photo U.S. Navy by MC1 B.W. Watkins*



◀ *USAF T/Sgt Harvey Holt, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Sq. and his working dog (same unit, different uniform) patrol Kahn Bani Sahd, Iraq with a joint force of GIs from the 1st Cav's 12th Infantry Regiment, and Iraqi 3rd Bn, 2nd Brigade, 5th Division. Photo: DoD by SSG Stacy L. Pearsall, 1st Combat Camera Squadron*

The SOF Papers

SOF's 30-year collection of papers, documents and photos needs a home – a proper repository/archive where this collection can be preserved for historical or academic study.

Anyone representing such a facility, or with information or suggestions regarding such an appropriate repository, is encouraged to call: 303-443-0300, FAX 303-444-5617, or email editorsof@aol.com.

SOF Seeks El Salvador Veterans

SOF is seeking contact with, or news about, the following Special Forces veterans who served in El Salvador: **Mike Kim, Tony Paneagua**. Anyone with information or a point of contact please call: 303-443-0300, FAX 303-444-5617, or email editorsof@aol.com.



◀ *GIs with B Company, 3rd Bn, 8th Cav wait by their Brad for orders to conduct a house search for weapons caches near COB Speicher, Iraq. Photo: DoD by T/Sgt. Molly Dzitko, USAF*

Jeff Cooper Memorial Celebration

In the spirit of his legacy, and because he always expressed a desire for a festive gathering after his passing, the plans for a Memorial Celebration of the life and times of Chairman Jeff are proceeding apace and they promise a stimulating event. It is scheduled for 10 May 2007, in the Coors Range Building at the NRA Whittington Center near Raton, NM. Time is 1300 hrs.

For full information, or to get on the list for updates, go to Tom Russell's website: www.coloneljeffcooper.com.

Bad News for Brit Paras

There will be a four-year moratorium on jump training in the British Army, as part of a one-billion-pound cost-cutting program by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Members of the Parachute Regiment will not receive jump training, which means that Britain will be without a parachute-trained force for the first time since the Second World War, when the Parachute Regiment was created on the orders of Winston Churchill.

Documents leaked to *The Sunday*

Telegraph reveal that no new recruits or even serving members of the Parachute Regiment or airborne forces will be trained in military parachuting until 2011: It will then take a year to get the Army's 2,500 paratroopers up to speed.

The planned cuts to be imposed on 16 Air Assault Brigade, which threaten to be a public-relations disaster, were revealed just days after 77 members of the unit received awards, including a Victoria Cross and a George Cross, for their actions in Afghanistan.

As the Parachute Regiment provides more than half of the recruits for various British special forces units, this measure will also have implications for special forces recruiting and selection in Britain.

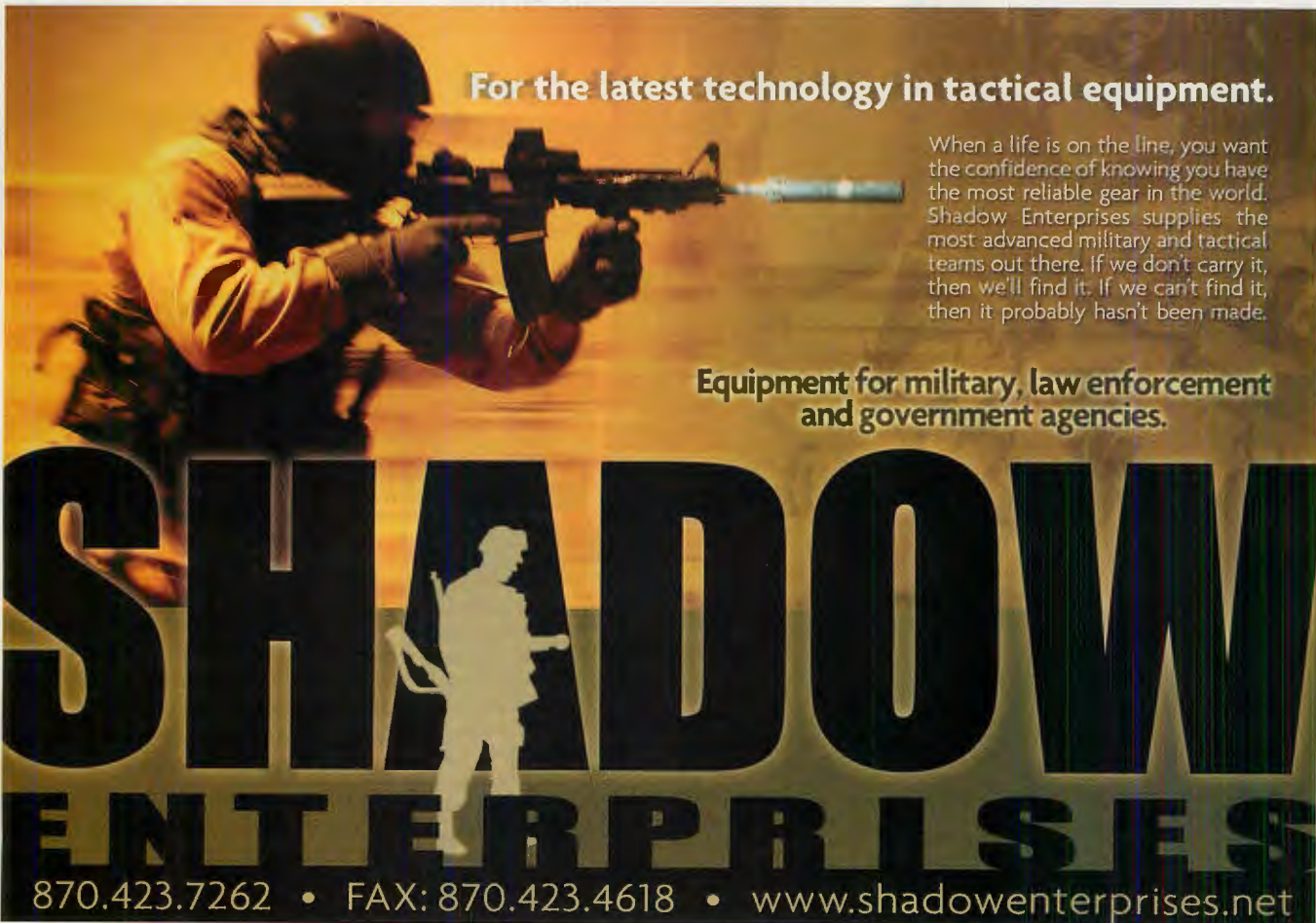
Dirt Bags Take Note: Leave Military Funerals Alone

Disruption of funerals at cemeteries under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration is already prohibited. Now Chapter 67 of title 18, United States Code, has been amended to prohibit disruptions of funerals of members or former members of the Armed Forces, wherever they may be held. Any ass who violates this new law

can be fined, imprisoned for not more than 1 year, or both.

The nut of this new law provides that it, "shall be unlawful for any person to engage in an activity during the period beginning 60 minutes before and ending 60 minutes after such funeral, any part of which activity... takes place within the boundaries of the location of such funeral or takes place within 150 feet of the point of the intersection between... the boundary of the location of such funeral; and... a road, pathway, or other route of ingress to or egress from the location of such funeral; and... includes any individual willfully making or assisting in the making of any noise or diversion that is not part of such funeral and that disturbs or tends to disturb the peace or good order of such funeral with the intent of disturbing the peace or good order of that funeral... or... is within 300 feet of the boundary of the location of such funeral; and... includes any individual willfully and without proper authorization impeding the access to or egress from such location with the intent to impede the access to or egress from such location."

Definitions are also spelled out for when the service is held at a mortuary, church, or other location. ☒



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MORE SNIP

Compiled by *SOF Staff*

Editor's Note: None of the troops in the photos accompanying this article were authors of any of the letters that comprise this article. Photos were selected for topical interest, came mostly from DoD sources, and are individually credited. The following letters were very lightly edited for clarity and space.

Sniper Issues, (Or Should I Say Former Sniper Issues)

I'm part of a RSTA squadron, with an MTOE of seven snipers. We stood up our section last December. When we started, we had no B4s in our section. Prior to deploying we all went to school and had 100% pass rate. We are now in Iraq operating in the farmland for the most part. We have a long list of issues.

We don't have an SEO. The Big XO and SCO assume that they know how to employ us. I assumed the duties of the SEO in order to save our butts on the battlefield and still do the job of the senior sniper. When I first got in-country, the first thing I did was attempted to pattern the AIF. In some locations, I could tell you the day of the week and the time of day that they were going to emplace IEDs. This was great, but the troops were not con-

Snipers In Iraq: My Son WAS One

Dear Colonel Brown:

I'm the father of an Army NCO on his second tour in Iraq. He is a trained sniper deployed with an infantry division near a metropolitan area. He returned to his unit after a Christmas leave to find that his six-man sniper team had been disbanded by the commanding colonel (no offense to colonels). All the snipers have been thrown to different assignments within the unit, none of which involves the sniping specialty they were trained for.

My son is now in charge of three privates in a patrolling Humvee. To say that he is PO'd is an understatement. To say I'm PO'd is a real understatement. The first thing my son told me is to read your recent article on the misuse of snipers. Well as the Prophet Brown speaketh, you were right on!

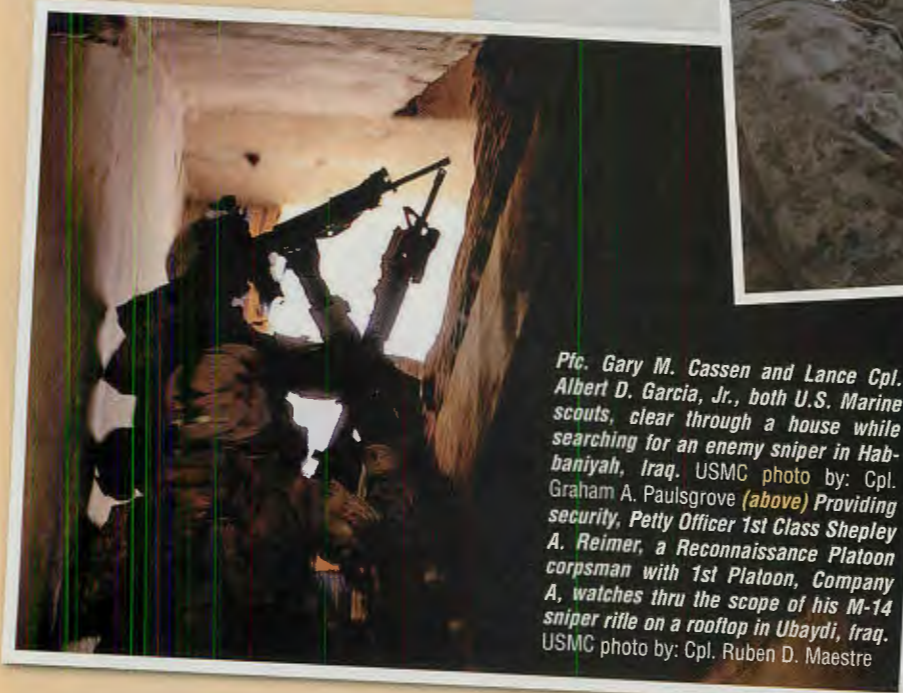
The unit patrols a rural area outside the city. The only thing they do is road hunt and get hit with IEDs: five brave soldiers died just over the Holidays from IEDs.

Instead of the snipers, LURS teams and Air Cav units owning the countryside, his unit just patrols the roads in Hummers and gets killed or wounded. If my son is one of these in the next eight months I'm going to raise holy hell right to the Commanding General and beyond, as they should be doing what they were trained to do - over-watching and taking out the insurgents emplacing IEDs.

I've raised three kids to adulthood and never interfered with coaches over their sport teams, but dammit when young soldiers' lives are at stake it's a whole different manner altogether.

I appreciate your time and effort.

Sincerely,
Don Ellsinore
San Diego, CA



Pfc. Gary M. Cassen and Lance Cpl. Albert D. Garcia, Jr., both U.S. Marine scouts, clear through a house while searching for an enemy sniper in Habaniyah, Iraq. USMC photo by: Cpl. Graham A. Paulsgrove (above) Providing security, Petty Officer 1st Class Shepley A. Reimer, a Reconnaissance Platoon corpsman with 1st Platoon, Company A, watches thru the scope of his M-14 sniper rifle on a rooftop in Ubaydi, Iraq. USMC photo by: Cpl. Ruben D. Maestre

ducting 24-hour operations in our AO. Due to MND-B Policy, we had to operate in five-man teams when dismounted and had to have a convoy within 1000M. As anyone in our AO knows, it's not hard to see 1k. We did get that resolved to the point that as long as we had an automatic weapon with us, and QRF within 15 minutes, we were good.

The down side was, we only have five trained snipers in our unit. We tried to pull soldiers from other platoons, but that was shot down. We

ER LETTERS

tried using dismounts from the platoons that we were supporting: That worked except we always got the soldiers they didn't want – so they got us compromised 98% of the time. Of course that got blamed on the snipers themselves because they had to work with untrained soldiers. We have had nothing but issues trying to get a range. I talked to aviation, and would take us anywhere to zero our weapons. Needless to say, that was shot down.

We tried to get the OK to shoot out in sector, but the C2 shot it down. They wouldn't task a platoon to

provide security while we shot. We tried to fly back to Kuwait for three days to zero our rifles because they do have a sniper range and there was no security needed. That was shot down too because they didn't want to work the logistic to get us there. We were allowed to down-

Sgt. Chris Walsh, from the Wyoming Army National Guard Police Training Team, provides overwatch security for fellow troops in Sekeik, Iraq. Photo: U.S. Army, by SPC Billy Brothers (inset) PFC Heath Stachar, from Military Integrated Transitional Team, 101st Airborne, pulls security for a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Dagger, Tikrit, Iraq. Photo: U.S. Army, by SSG Russell Lee Klika

Snipers: The Unknown Asset

Just a quick note about the sniper story in the January issue: I was an instructor at the Army Sniper School and they had an SEO course at Ft. Benning in the late 90's, but only a few officers came over from IOBC to take it, as well as all the instructors at the school house. I could send you the POI for the course.

At the time, the CG and the staff would not send any officers to it, as they felt it was a waste of time: The only officers we had do the course were some from the 3rd ID because the Battalion CO was pro-sniper and would send his troops thru the sniper course, every class till he left. Then the new CO stopped, and he would not listen to us about what a force multiplier and source of intel snipers can be, plus being used in the counter-sniper role.

Thanks,
Kelmore – Long-Time Reader
(over 20 years, keep it up)



grade our uniform to boonie hat, and plate carriers (that we had to buy ourselves). We went through our supply and our S-4 to order window screen for drops, and additional material that we needed to construct subsurface hides. Well, needless to say, we couldn't get that because the unit felt that they needed to build a coffee shop that since opening day, has been closed. Nobody goes there, nobody uses it. This was a C2 request to build. Hell, we couldn't even get copper remover or cleaning kit replacement parts because of this.

Then it was dictated which buildings we could and couldn't use during missions. We could only use unoccupied houses in our AO, which were few and far between. Then the chain of command would insist on inserting us during the daytime. I personally find it hard to melt away five snipers in a field that is boot-top high, with enough gear to sustain yourself for three days, and at the time the field is currently being farmed. It got to the point where the snipers didn't want to do the job anymore because we were being misused and taking unnecessary risks during the C2 "well-planned" missions.

The C2 was disappointed with the snipers' performance because we weren't producing the kills they expected. When we Lance Cpl. Anthony J. Kondziella prepares to fire a .50 caliber sniper rifle during a familiarization firing exercise in Al Asad, Iraq. Kondziella is a part of Marine Wing Support Squadron 271's Immediate Reaction Team, a unit of Marines and sailors that provide security for explosive ordnance disposal. USMC photo by: Cpl. Rocco DeFilippis

AmericanSnipers.Org

I read with great interest, the letters from snipers in the January issue. I receive similar letters daily via **American Snipers.org**.

The latest just caused me to shake my head: It was from an Army designated marksman who was issued an open-sighted M14 with a cracked stock and no optics whatsoever but assigned area denial for insurgents placing IEDs. The hapless soldier was assigned this mission with no riflescope, no spotting scope, no binoculars and no formal sniper training whatsoever. He advised that he and his spotter have to pop up from behind cover with their digital camera, take a digital photo of their possible target, get back behind cover, re-size the photo so they can determine if the bad guy is in fact, armed with an AK or RPG or placing an IED... to meet their rules of engagement. Then, they must ask for clearance for the shot, wait for a reply from command and then pop back up to see if the enemy is still there so they can take a shot if necessary.

This is the word from the man in the arena and not some officer who is either ignorant or indifferent to his shooter's needs and one who would not dare suggest to his superiors that his men are under supplied.

Make no mistake, our troops are getting it done despite the obstacles presented them... just like they have always done. The primary obstacles in this case are inadequate support from above and the absolutely broken government procurement process which immediately binds and hampers even the most dedicated and driven of defense logistics personnel.

The value of marksmanship training – for grunts, dedicated marksmen or snipers – has been proven in every war we have ever fought and Carlos N. Hathcock II fought this same fight over 35 years ago.

It is now 2007 and at this stage of the game, the American war-fighter should have no peer in shooting ability. He should also have everything needed to do the job. So why do we have to keep learning these same lessons war to war?

Kudos to SOF for pleading their case.

We will continue to support them however we can.

Respectfully,
Brian K. Sain

AmericanSnipers.org



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Lance Cpl. Josh M. Nalley, assistant machine gunner serving with Marine Wing Support Squadron 271's Immediate Reaction Team and native of Easley, S.C., sights in behind a M107 .50-caliber sniper rifle during a familiarization firing exercise. USMC photo by: Cpl. Rocco DeFilippis

did insert at night, they insisted that we were exfilled a few hours later because no one was in our vicinity. Then they even had the balls to ask what we are doing wrong. (Insert wry smile!) I tried to explain it to them like hunting deer: Sometimes you do your homework and you shoot a big buck, sometimes you do your homework and you only see does. But, very rarely do you ever walk into the wood during broad daylight, set down, and see a deer at all in an hour or two.

The sniper section has since been disbanded due to lack of meeting their expectations. In my eyes and in my snipers eyes, we were disbanded because they don't understand the asset we are and the capabilities we possess, or even know how to use us (even though they have been told how to, time and time again). They have issued M14s to the designated marksmen (not to take away from that asset) but the lack of ballistics knowledge leaves them unable to hit a 100-meter target without difficulties.

We did have one good story, which turned into a joke later. The U.S Army Sniper School came into country and

conducted an SEO MTT course. It was good for the time restraints they were given. The C2 sent a lieutenant and me. Things were looking up, I finally got through to them. After the course, the lieutenant and I were asked to do a report explaining what they covered and how to best work the snipers. The lieutenant looked at me at the end of the course and said, "the only thing that I understood was that dust is the biggest target identifier."

I agreed to help him getting up to par. Well, the report was sent up and I guess thrown in the trash without review. That lieutenant went back to working in the S-2 section. As for us, we went back to being misused and wasting our time. I guess this is long enough, thanks for letting me vent, if you made it to the bottom of this email, thanks for reading it. Feel free to print or use any of this email in your articles. Thank you for publishing the sniper article in the January 07 issue. I'll be sure to copy these letters and place them on their desk to point out the problems, in hopes of saving someone's life.

Concurs:

This from one of the groups I belong to – by a former sniper with Stryker, now sniping for Blackwater. He concurs:

"Sadly, it's true. The sniper and even the Recon teams in my battalion were largely used as PSDs for the commanders, XOs and senior enlisted. When we did have missions, our input was largely disregarded by the company commanders, or we were just put out somewhere to give us something to do. Most of our interdiction missions were called off at the last minute in favor of capturing our target. I can't count how many times I had an HVT in my crosshairs, and some officer wanting to make a name for himself, put me on hold, and swooped in to snatch him up using his line grunts. One of the main problems is that the Sniper Employment Officer Course is neither mandatory for combat arms officers nor is it as informative as it needs to be. Many of these young lieutenants and captains think they know enough about snipers to form a good op, and their elitist mentality prevents them

Continued on page 62



From left, the Ultra CDP II™ .45 ACP, Aegis II™ 9mm and Ultra RCP II™ .45 ACP along with the new Kimber LifeAct™ Guardian Angel™ non-lethal self defense device.

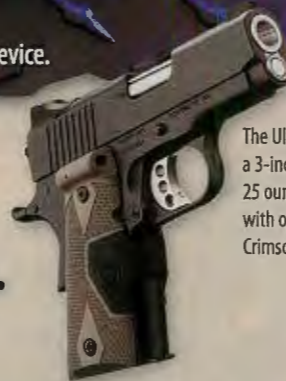
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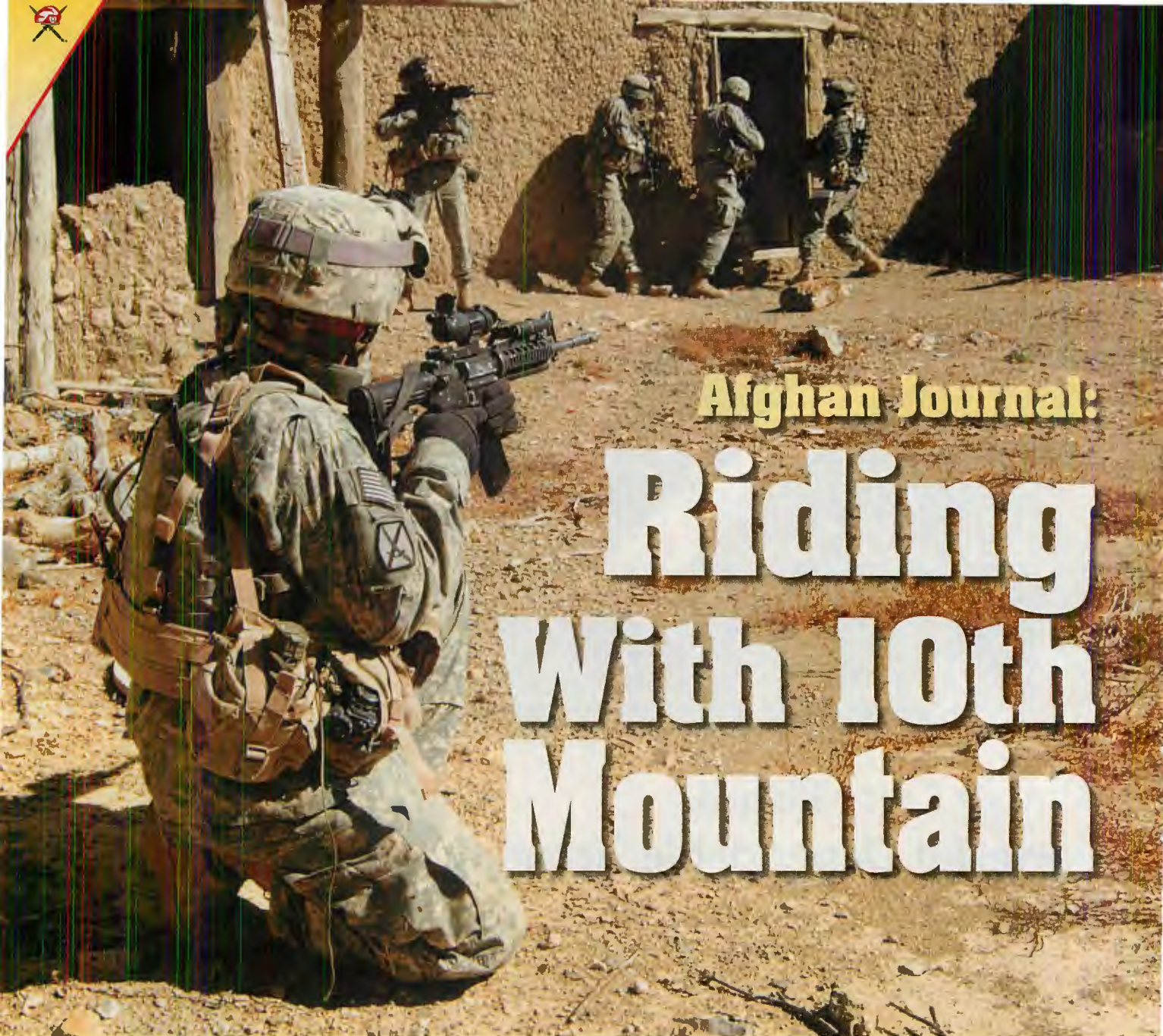
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Afghan Journal:

Riding With 10th Mountain

Text & Photos by Paul Avallone

It's very early morning, autumn in the mountains

— cold and overcast, with a wet mist left over from yesterday afternoon's drizzle and hail. We are standing over the body we've just found on this trail. It's been passed over by the metal detector to check for booby traps, but the only buzzing from the detector is over the gold watch on the body's bare wrist. Sgt. First Class Lassally uses the end of his M4 rifle barrel to pull the scarf off, fully revealing the body's face — the lines, the color, the scraggy beard of a Talib poster boy. "You got your story now I'll bet, don't you?" Lassally says. I hesitate, then give him a slight smile, to mumble,

"Yeah, now I do."

I've lost track of the number of times in the past few days Lassally or one of his guys has said something similar. "You don't have a story, do you?" They know that I'm ex-Army Special Forces and here freelancing; that makes me to them an "action guy" looking for action stories. We've spent four days and four nights up here in the deep draws and passes of the mountains on the Pakistan border, patrolling mounted in uparmored humvees and dismounted when the terrain is impassable, and until yesterday afternoon, we'd gotten nothing. Zilch. No combat. No action. No caches. No story.

We're Charlie Company, 2-87 In-

fantry, of the 10th Mountain Division. We're in Paktika province, in eastern Afghanistan. Alpha Company and Bravo Company are on similar recon patrols, flanking us, in valleys, draws and passes close by, but we don't hear them, we don't see them, and they could be a million miles away as far as we're concerned. It's an operation the command has labeled "Frozen Turkey," and no one I've asked can really tell me why, except perhaps because it's winter-around-the-bend cold up here and Thanksgiving's just a couple of weeks away. Up until yesterday afternoon, for us, Charlie Company, in terms of mission success, it's been a turkey: zilch, nothing. We have two platoons of ANA (Afghan National

Inside a compound, the soldiers search room-by-room. This compound, like nearly all at these sparsely populated higher altitudes, is abandoned, with no signs of recent occupation.



Sgt. First Class Dave Bowman stands guard with the ANA soldiers of his company outside a compound of a suspected Taliban. Bowman, of the Oregon National Guard, is one of the six embedded trainers assigned to the Afghan National Army company attached to C Co, 2-87 Inf during Operation Frozen Turkey.

Army) with us, and we've hit all the spots that the MI (military intelligence) guys in the rear had said were likely Taliban sites — hilltops, hidden draws, ridges, abandoned compounds — and, again, nothing.

A Small Op

In terms of big-picture Afghanistan, Frozen Turkey is miniscule. The Taliban haven't massed in this corner of the country as they have in Helmand and Kandahar provinces to

take on the British and Canadians, respectively. The reasoning is, the Taliban know they aren't going to be able to run President Bush out and instead have put all their marbles in getting NATO to pack it in and leave. The British and Canadians stood and fought, though, and the guys I'm with, Charlie Company, joined them, helping out first in Helmand for Operation Mountain Thrust, then in Kandahar for Operation Medusa. Big ops. Lots of fighting. Loads of war stories. An-



Sgt. First Class Gonzalo Lassally in a temporary covering position as his platoon searches compounds suspected as Taliban bases. A native-born El Salvadoran, Lassally went to military schools in the States and joined the army after 12th grade. Airborne and a Ranger, Lassally loves leading men and is contemplating going to OCS.



An ANA soldier scans the ridges ahead from the back of a pickup truck in a joint U.S./Afghan weeklong patrol in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan.

other refrain from the guys these past turkey days has been, "You shoulda been with us in Panjawai," which was the major battle of Medusa.

Unlike Medusa, Frozen Turkey isn't meant to take on and kill hordes of Taliban; it's cells we're after. Guys who have been shooting rockets at the forward operating bases here. FOBs for short. For the most part, the guys' aim is lousy, with their rockets

landing close but outside the bases. A week ago, a rocket landed within feet of the front gate of the nearest FOB, Bermel, and that's too close. If one were to land, no matter the luck in the aim, in the mess hut at dinner-time, suddenly this semi-quiet corner would be big-picture Afghanistan. At least, big-headline Afghanistan. Headlines that generals, sec defs and presidents don't like the public to be

opening their morning papers to.

The U.S. Army has the technology to track the direction of these rocket launches and calculate the approximate area of the launches, and that's what Frozen Turkey is all about. "We hope to find the actual launch sites," Charlie Company Commander Captain Steven Helm told me before our pre-dawn movement to here five days ago. "Or at least chase the Taliban back over into Pakistan for the winter." A boots-on-the-ground practical man, he shrugged and added, "Then, after the snow melts, in the spring, we'll have to do it again."

For nearly four days, we'd found nothing and chased nobody. Then, yesterday afternoon, by sheer chance, patrolling mounted, we were heading to another suspected launch site, when midway, one of the turret gunners spotted something suspicious sticking out of some trees off the trail. It turned out to be a 122-millimeter rocket launch tube. And five rockets hidden under nearby shrubs. A compass and map reading showed the launch tube to be aimed on an exact azimuth at FOB Bermel just a dozen kilometers straight-line distance away. It was a 122 that landed just outside the gate a week ago. We would soon learn that this 122 launcher we found has been the first captured intact in the entire conflict. Not a bad little discovery for Charlie Company.

Attaboy... Later

But there was no time to gloat and enjoy the kudos cascading quickly down from commands. Over the radio the battalion commander ordered the company to continue with the previous site recons. The first proved to be a bust, nothing. Evening was settling in quickly in the steady, near freezing drizzle. Second Platoon, the mortar section, the ANA and the company command staff established a temporary firebase, and First Platoon headed mounted for the second, and last, site to recon. This is SFC Gonzalo Lassally's platoon, the guys who I — the "fifth wheel" in his crowded humvee — have been with then entire patrol.

Lassally is El Salvadoran by birth, spending most of his early childhood there, before attending military school in the States. At 32, he's made rank really quickly. Then again, he's Airborne, he's a Ranger, and he loves soldiering. He's an American citizen now, and the army is his career. He's

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extremely competent, he's confident and fair, and his guys follow him without argument or hesitation, which is what we were doing last night, driving at a crawl up that narrow, boulder-strewn draw as dark was falling fast, until none of us could see our hand in front of our face without nods (night observation devices). I was blind; I don't have nods.

When the draw narrowed so that we could go no further, Lassally checked his GPS and determined our destination was a hundred, hundred-fifty meters ahead. Walking distance. "You coming?" he asked me. I declined, "It's too dark for photos." Besides, without nods I could see myself tripping and slipping on the wet boulders, all for nothing, just another bust, not to mention, probably busting my cameras in the fall. Better to stay in the warm dry vehicle. Lassally and a handful of guys from the vehicles behind headed up on foot. This particular recon was not for a rocket launch site but for BDA — battle damage assessment. The night before, aerial spy imagery had shown armed men moving around the area, and an AC-130 gunship had raked the hillsides with its 20-millimeter gun. Lassally would be looking for evidence, any evidence, of the success of the hit. Sure, that might be a questionable mission in the pitch dark, but orders are orders.

Contact!

It wasn't long before Lassally came over the radio. They'd found something: some documents, some photos, some money. "We need white lights up here," he said, meaning flashlights with clear, rather than red, lenses. "And some illum rounds." Meaning, fired from our mortars, to light up the entire area. Before he could get either, we heard the firing — the distinctive clack of AKs, followed by our own M4s. Then Lassally's shout over the radio, "We're in contact, we're in contact! Pulling back, pulling back!" That was followed in moments by his own orders back to the firebase to "Fire the grid!" Meaning, have our own mortars here in the mountains and the long-range artillery back at FOB Bermel fire the exact location, the exact grid coordinates, that had been plotted earlier as the BDA re-

Continued on page 54

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Sniper Missions



The Successes and Trials of an American Grunt, Part I

By Tim Buskell

One of the many GI responses SOF received to the series we ran on the current state of sniper deployment and use in the U.S. Military, was this extended missive from an Army sniper, who had recently returned from Iraq. Written straight from the gut, it is straightforward GI and essentially unedited.

First I want to say thanks for doing the article on sniper employment in Iraq. I can't even measure the amount of frustration that we combat soldiers go through. Most of the problems you write about stem from command for

sure. I actually got a memorandum for instruction about the role of Sniper Employment Officer. I gave it to my commander, XO and lieutenants. It was a waste of time. Well, the XO did read it.

One of our first "Sniper Missions" was in Tal Afar during OIF III. We were supposed to over watch the MSR, which had constant Coalition traffic due to our coming in and the previous units going home. So we planned and did our leader's recon. The plan was a good plan with false drops and such. Had a sniper location staked out, and

it would have worked. Would have... because things changed. Literally one hour before the mission began, our Commander said, "You have to come from the north and set up somewhere by the road." His words. We said, "We can't come from the north and get to our primary hide." He says, "Just find some building and use it." Still being tactful we say, "We can't do that in the North. Everything is occupied, we already checked it out!"

He says, "Just find something and bring your Barrett!" So to make this long story short, we dismount from

on in

Tal Afar

the back of a Brad the convoy opens up with everything they had, for no apparent reason, lighting up the hills, the buildings, the Brads and the Tanks. Two of us had to press against the back of the Brad to avoid getting hit, didn't even have time to get in.

Wonderful. So, yes that command was a problem and I'm sure it will never end for anyone on any deployment.

I first came in the Army as a 95B Military Policeman. While an MP I attended Special Reaction Team Training at Fort Leonard Wood's new facility and later deployed to Bosnia for SFOR8. September 10th 2001 I reclassified to be a Cav Scout. After seven weeks of training as an insert I received orders for Fort Carson. I was assigned to Fox Troop, 2/3 ACR. I deployed with Fox for OIF I. At one point during the deployment I was a command driver for CPT Joshua T. Byers. CPT Byers was killed when our 998 soft-skin HMMWV was hit by an IED near Ar Ramadi: That was a time when IED's were just starting to be a problem. We received orders to deploy again. I attended sniper school right before we deployed for OIF III. I was excited.

We newly trained Snipers were told that our new mission in life would be to stop insurgents from setting up

IED's. We would set up somewhere, overwatch something and take out the enemy before he could get an IED in the ground. The idea that I now had a mission and the ability to stop the IED's was something words cannot describe. It all didn't turn out the way it was planned, though.

Mission: Hearts, Minds, Intel

May 31, 2005 I got a warno to get my team ready and to get a security element, as we had a mission. We had two hours to get ready and it was going to be something different. We all got ready and were told we would be briefed en route to the mission. I was told that we would be briefed by a civilian, call sign Rover 2. Huh? We arrived at a place we called Gary Owen. It's four buildings grouped together west of a granary. We are met by a bearded, blue jean wearing, American, civilian contractor. This civilian starts giving us the mission, telling us what he has been doing, the situation in the city, the situation with a possibly friendly tribe in Tal Afar, and what he wants us to do.

The whole time I'm thinking to myself who is this guy, and is this a lawful order? My commander said this civilian would brief us, to do what he says and follow his guidance. I had two lieutenants standing there when I

Getting In some range time, Beau Babbitt, rear, shoots an SPR they borrowed from SF. (inset) SSG Varner firing the M107: This picture illustrates how the M107 can give away the position by the amount of dust it can kick up. Photos: SGT Buskell.



Bradleys just North of the MSR. We have about 30 minutes to "find" a hide, oh and there are six of us. We have a big, heavy M107. All the buildings were occupied. Here comes the convoy. There is another element in over watch northwest of us, and they don't know we are conducting this mission. The whole time we are walking around like keystone cops, I'm on the radio saying we can't setup here and they reply, "just find something."

Finally I say screw this and we move back to the Bradleys about 500 meters north. As we are loading in



Picture of weapons cache found in a small tent village near the Syrian border. Not shown in the picture are two satellite phones and one cell phone. Note the two cameras. They were able to surprise these people by using Blackhawks to get to the objective. Target was unaware of the troopers until about four minutes out and they caught them off guard by using the helicopters. Photo: SGT Buskell



Picture of a SSG holding a Special Purpose Rifle, borrowed from a Special Forces Group at FOB Sykes. Photo: SGT Buskell.

was briefed and their reply was something like, "well there ya go."

Rover said bluntly that he didn't want us to do shit. He doesn't want us to set up a sniper OP. He just wants us to hang out. He says there is a friendly tribe in the city, and they are willing to work with coalition forces to rid Tal Afar of terrorists. The Sheikh two days prior had made a radio announcement, with the help of Rover, that his tribe denounces the insurgency, denounces terrorism and sees Iraq's future in the cooperation with Coalition Forces. The Sheikh openly

and publicly said screw you thugs, we are not with you. The friendly tribe's name is pronounced something like *Jolock* or *Cholock*. Their rivals and enemies were openly working with the insurgency.

So Rover explained again. He doesn't want us to do shit, just hang out, stay by the radio, bring your sniper rifle, bring a machine gun for show, and make friends. He tells us this mission is to show the willingness of the Coalition to work with this tribe – that we're a peace offering there to help protect the tribe. The very idea of it would show that we are ready to help this tribe and have the tribe help us. He says to do whatever it takes to win these people over. He says he's offering our heads on a platter to see if this peace process will work. He says do whatever it takes to win them over: Eat their food, drink their drink. Do your best not to offend them. Build rapport.

Can you imagine what is going through my mind at this point? This blue-jean-wearing civilian is telling me he is going to send my team into the city to live with Iraqis, to make friends with them, to win them over, to eat their food and drink their drink

and build rapport. Well, so that's what we will do.

So we loaded up in Bradleys and Rover led us into what would later be called the Jolock Compound. We had three days of MRE's and water. He told us a man named Faisal would meet us, that he spoke English and he would help place us. Our supplies were dropped off along with us. The Bradleys drove away, leaving us standing in what could be called an open dirt parking lot, surrounded by two-and three-story buildings. A VBIED had made it into this compound, exploding and completely destroyed one of the buildings. The man who lived there lost his entire family. Everyone. He was a grandfather with who knows how many children and grandchildren, who were all dead. It was a very lonely feeling standing there. Six of us on the ground, no Armor, no platoon of warriors, just us.

The Man

Faisal came walking down an alley and we began to talk. Faisal is a very interesting man and his info is covered in our debrief. Using our satellite photos of the city we picked a location close to a major road and

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close to the Jolock Compound. Came to find out it was a good spot to hang out, because the Jolocks were also using it as an OP/ Fire Base. Six to twelve men would be here at a time, men with AK's, men who were not American, and we were going to live with them.

We had the impression that Faisal would be staying with us for the entire mission, but he had to go and then the six of us were left in the care of these men. These men didn't look at us as help: We were guests and they were now responsible for protecting us. Faisal explained to the men what we were doing and we would stay in this building with them. Faisal told us these men will die before they allow you to be harmed, it would shame their family if something were to happen to you. Sure.

So that first day and night was very, very awkward. What I learned from OIF I was, that if you show any interest in the Iraqi culture or Islam, the Iraqi will open up almost immediately. My shooter and myself spoke enough Arabic to make small talk. The most important things I ever learned how to say in Arabic are, "what is this?" and "where are the terrorists?"

So our mission was to just sit by the radio and report in hourly. We decided why just sit here and do nothing. These people have lived here all their lives. Some were former Iraqi police and former military, under Saddam. We wanted to know what they knew about the city. So against the rules, I pulled out my map, a satellite photo marked with building numbers. I showed them the map and asked where are the terrorists? And they told us.

We stayed there for three days. On the morning of the 3rd day we returned to FOB Sykes with our information. My XO helped me with the debrief format and we gave it to the commander. I guess the info was so good they wanted more, so they sent us back that afternoon.

Over a six-day period we gathered a lot of information using our limited Arabic and their limited English. It really sucked not having an interpreter. We got 66 names of possible terrorists, with descriptions like one man has a crippled hand and one man is a midget. No joke. We got locations of where the IEDs might be made, what house it goes to next, where they fire mortars from. So-and-so lives here

and he puts IEDs in the ground. This guy lives here, he and his brothers give money to terrorists, etc.

At night other Jolock men would stop by while they conducted patrols in the neighborhood and we would ask these men about the names on our growing list. Or we might ask them for names of "bad guys" in the city, seeing if they would say the same names and we could get a match. After a while we had the Jolocks working for us. Men would come by, they would sit them down and have them write the names of men and woman who were criminals, helping the insurgency or were terrorists. Everyone on the lists and all the information they gave us was about their enemies so we had to remain enthusiastic, but skeptical. These men were even willing to ride along with coalition forces and point out the terrorists on the street. This was a jackpot.

Bonding in the Bunkers

After six days with these men we had actually made friends, we had won them over. I think I ate one MRE when I was there. We ate their food, drank their Chi, slept in their house and had many conversations about

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photo: courtesy of militarymorons.com

many things, from politics to religion to the question of life in space. Yeah, an Iraqi actually talked to me about the possibility of other life on other planets. This was an incredibly different and unusual mission. The most important thing is that we had this information and we had won them over. We got picked up right outside of our hide and we headed back to the FOB.

We turned in our information, showered, ate and racked out. A couple of days later the Squadron Commander ordered 2/3 ACR, his squadron, to attack key areas in the city. In a two-day period we captured 33 insurgents, most were at the locations we were given. A few Jolocks actually rode with us and positively identified the bad guys. A system was now in place where we had a criminal and a witness who would testify against him. The enemies of my enemies...

So our information helped to capture some bad guys. After the two-day mission things went back to normal. Screwed up, but normal operations. They split my shooter and I up for missions. They said we could work apart and still do our job: No "I" in team right? We would rotate out of the hospital, trading our M14 when we switched. The M14 was embarrassing. We had trained with the M24 SWS and we were issued an M14 my Dad probably used in the 60's. ☒

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One of author's new Sniper buddies. In his old troop in 3rd ACR they had a platoon of Iraqi soldiers embedded in the Troop. This Jundi was with them as an interpreter and for security. This OP was overwatching Qasr Sari. Photo: SGT Buskell.



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Quartermaster To The Free World's GI's and Cops

Text & Photos by
Gary Paul Johnston

With myriad companies making accessories for professional operators, few have made it their mission to supply *everything* for one's kit. Of those that do, BlackHawk Products Group leads the pack.

Headed up by C.E.O. Mike Noell, former U.S. Navy SEAL, BlackHawk's base philosophy is to provide the military and law enforcement operator with THE best equipment available – PERIOD! How'd they do that? They looked for and found some of the best people in various industries to build up a full-service product line.

For example, let's say a company has a highly popular line of a particular product, like cookies (no, BlackHawk doesn't make cookies), and it makes very good cookies. Now, within the company is a bright young employee who has some ideas of his own on how to make an even better cookie, but the attitude is, "hey, we're doing fine, so don't rock the boat." The employee becomes frustrated and leaves to pursue his or her dream. *Voila*, BlackHawk!

I was invited to a BlackHawk product seminar recently. This was the first one of these that my schedule has allowed me to attend and the fact that it was held in my backyard made it all the more easy. The location BlackHawk chose was the Valhalla training facility at the Elk Mountain Resort, which, if I were a raven, lies just five miles away. While I was invited to stay at the EMR, I elected to make the 45-minute drive to and from the facility,



BlackHawk's Chuck Buis highlights the fine points of their new Tactical SERPA holster such as its multiple mounting features.

which is located 20 miles southwest of Montrose, Colorado, and just 10 miles south of the San Juan Range.

Although I have tested a number of BlackHawk's products during the past several years, I had never been exposed to, shall we say, the totality of its products. This changed at Valhalla with two days packed full of classroom and hands-on instruction and lots of bottled water in between. This was due to the arid conditions at the 8,000 feet elevation. However, since I live at 7,000 feet, this was no surprise to me.

After a brief classroom introduction, our group of writers and others was divided, with one half going to the Valhalla Shoot House and the other half remaining in the main classroom at the EMR. Hoofing it back and forth the 200 yards up to Valhalla and back down to the EMR gave everyone the chance to catch up on his or her physical fitness.

The presentations included BlackHawk's HydraStorm Hydration system, Holsters, Illumination Tools, Tactical Entry Tools, Bags and Cases, Boots and Gloves, Knives and much



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more. Each BlackHawk presentation was followed by hands-on training and/or demonstration.

Hydration

You – YOU – may know a lot about hydration, but most people don't. Let's face it, the importance of hydration is a relatively new concept. An outdoor-nut friend of mine once told me he was training himself to go without water! What the hell did that mean? Was he packing beer? Anyway, the best way to go without water is to take plenty with you.

BlackHawk's water guy gave a heck of a talk on what happens when you deprive your body of the wet stuff. I was so impressed that I was sucking on the mouthpiece of the HydraStorm System I was issued the entire time. He said the water in this handy backpack would stay cool through the two-day course, and it did. Just like the desert, the mountains require a lot of water, and our HydraStorm Systems were a constant hands-on experience.

Holsters

While BlackHawk makes a number of outstanding (and I really mean *outstanding*) leather and synthetic holsters, after a classroom presentation it was the synthetic rigs we were put through the "course" with. This was because Valhalla's Chief Firearms Instructor, Rob Pincus, wanted to learn the level of ability of all involved and get us on the same page ASAP. On Valhalla's indoor square range, we fired Glock, Springfield XD and S&W 9mm and .40 S&W caliber M&P pistols in BlackHawk holsters for familiarization before using the holster/gun combination in several of Valhalla's indoor scenarios.

The scenario drill was a rotational thing with all of us using different holsters with different pistols in different parts of Valhalla's extensive two-story simulator. While I had fired all of the above pistols extensively, I had never fired the S&W M&P in the

9mm version. I really like the .40 M&P, but the 9mm may just be the supreme nine of them all!

Speaking of supreme, I found BlackHawk's Tactical SERPA holster to be a candidate for



definition of "love at first draw." A "level two" holster, the Tactical SERPA goes well beyond the standard SERPA, which is excellent for concealed carry, but not, in my opinion, for uniformed duty.

Offered for a wide variety of popular pistols, the Tactical SERPA holster has a retention system that, all things considered, I would rate at a B+...OK, maybe an A-. OK, so I'm a conservative! Now let me explain.

My definition of the perfect duty-type security holster is one that allows you to get the gun out in less than one second, but that an assailant would have to knock you out and then use the "jaws of life" to get your gun. "Huh?"

OK, here's the deal. Where is the best weapon retention system in the world? *Between your ears!* That being said, you need to get your pistol as fast as you can when you need it, but how about when you need to re-holster the gun? Is it ever as important to get it back into its holster and secure it there? You bet! This is the beauty of BlackHawk's SERPA Tactical Holster.

For a variety of autopistols, the



SERPA Tactical offers instant access and re-holstering that also instantly and automatically secures the pistol. For one who is not wearing this rig, it is much more difficult to disarm the user just as with any level 2 holster, but that's where the "between the ears" thing comes in. The great advantage is that the release is not as easily accessible and that the holster automatically re-secures the pistol when it is replaced. No straps, snaps or other devices.

At Valhalla, we were also allowed to see and test a prototype of BlackHawk's new Level III SERPA holster with its additional thumb release. This rig has an additional rotating top piece that covers the back of the slide. Look for more information

on the production version of this holster in the near future. BlackHawk also has a new line of duty gear for



BlackHawk's lovely representative, Laura Burgess, displays the company's new Tactical SERPA holster for the SIG P220 pistol.



"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*. After all, 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, 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 its 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 get 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.

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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law enforcement, to with the SERPA Tactical.

Blinded by the Light

BlackHawk's Illumination Tools consist of three hand-held tactical lights, the Gladius, producing 90 lumens with a 90 minute run time, and the Falcata, which comes in 6- and 9-

volt versions. The 6-volt Falcata produces 95 lumens with a 60-minute run time while the 9-volt version offers 125 lumens for the same amount of time.

The big difference in the Gladius and the Falcata lights is that the Gladius offers three operational modes plus a lockout position on its rotating end cap. The three op modes include a momentary light, strobe and a constant on position, which is infinitely adjustable from bright to dim. However, it is the strobe position that is the attention

getter on the Gladius. Pulsating five times a second, the Gladius is not only useful in searching techniques, but also provides a level of disorientation to an assailant far greater than a constant-on beam. We found this out first hand in a darkened classroom and also in clearing Valhalla's shoot-house with blue training guns. The Gladius also comes in OD green and coyote tan, in addition to black.

"Avon Calling"

Almost as impressive in Valhalla's inner sanctum were BlackHawk's Tactical Entry Tools. Consisting of an array of fire rescue tools along with several door breachers and a window removal tool, it was the latter that were the showstoppers. Made with non-electrical conducting materials, BlackHawk's door rams have flexible insulated handles for greater thrusting power. Another simple solution is "Thor's Hammer," a one-operator



BlackHawk's "Break - n - Rake" entry tool is the best window opener going.



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“For me, a veteran of the martial arts and a medical professional Target-Focus Training was just as spectacular. I heard explanations that would befit a trauma specialist and learned principles that most martial arts masters save for their advanced black belts. Without cloaking techniques in mysticism, without diluting the realities of combat in a sporting format and without sacrificing safety for realism, Larkin and his men delivered an uncompromising course on the intelligent and responsible use of violence.”

Mark Cheng, L.Ac.

Columnist & Contributing Editor, Black Belt Magazine

Imagine yourself face to face with:

- 3 hoodlums circling your car,
- A 6-inch blade of steel pressed against your throat,
- A gun barrel to your head, or
- 2 guys who've just broken into your home...

If you can't handle any of these situations...

- Without freezing,
- Without needing to “get ready,”
- Without mentally sorting through your prior training toolbox to pick the one thing you must do in each specific situation,

...and do it all within 5 seconds, then...

You Could Easily Wind Up As... Toast!

That's because 5 seconds is about all you've got. It's how long a 'real' fight lasts. If you haven't taken out some thug by then, the odds go dramatically against you.

Right now, I'm betting you've got a pretty good gut feel as to whether your current training would instantly kick in and bail you out of a violent confrontation... or leave you hesitating and unsure. Understand... there's no margin for error.

If you're confident... turn the page. If not, you now have a unique opportunity to gain a

Target-Focus Training Master Instructors demonstrate to a live training class simple yet devastatingly effective movements which you can learn and immediately use -- regardless of your size, speed, strength or athletic ability.



rare inside look at a live **Target-Focus Training** workshop and see exactly how the the #1 self-defense system in the world gives you the tools to handle this type of violence... **regardless** of your size, speed, strength, athletic ability or conditioning.

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lets you **prove to yourself** why everything you've just read is true.

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Look, I'm not asking you to believe anything at this time. All I'm asking you to do right now is withhold judgment until you get your hands on this new video.

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

Tim Larkin, creator, Target-Focus Training

The Only System Ever Modeled On Asocial Criminal Behavior...

...the kind of violence you **MUST** know how to handle if you're ever face-to-face with it!

With **TFT**, there aren't 100's of 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. Instead, this system is based on a handful of easily mastered **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES** that you instantly apply to any type of violent assault.

If all this seems surprisingly simple... it is. That's the secret to why **TFT** has worked for everyone from an 80-year-old grandmother to a Spec Op operative. And it's why it can work for you too... **regardless** of your background or ability.

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door destructor that would ring the bell at any circus. The class got to get hands-on practice with these devices on Valhalla's specially built breaching door, along with a few that needed to be replaced anyway.

BlackHawk's Dynamic Entry Break-n-Rake is the best I've seen and we made a few of these in the old days. Although these tools have always been called "rake-n-break," I always thought it was backwards, and BlackHawk obviously did too, and they named theirs in the proper order. This tool does it all, screens, glass, frames, shades, curtains – the works – and allows a secondary breaching to be made for security, evac or a secondary entry (red team/blue team) operation if necessary.

Bags, Cases, Vests and More

This was as complicated as it gets for me. I just didn't have enough space on my score card to tell you about the seemingly endless varieties of utility bags, back packs, load-bearing vests and gun cases in all popular colors and camo patterns. I can tell you that, as with all their other products, BlackHawk uses the best materials, stitching, zippers, and snaps that can be had, and that every piece of equipment is either designed by, or tested and approved by, real operators instead of "couch commandos." I couldn't decide on the ideal BlackHawk backpack to fit my needs, but I'm working on it.

However, a few such items I have been using are BlackHawk's large Mobile Operation Bag. Offered in three sizes, this bag comes in black, coyote tan and foliage green. I have the latter and it's by far the finest general-purpose bag I've ever used. Since my mobile operations now consist of traveling, that's what I use this bag for and it's about perfect.

The BlackHawk case I've been enjoying is their large Padded Weapons Case. When I was on the job, we were always on the short end of the stick for cases that would accommodate virtually any size shoulder arm. This was so an officer wouldn't have to look through a pile of cases to safely carry the desired special weapon in the trunk of his patrol car. The 44"x14"x3.5" Padded Weapons case does it all and holds not one, but two long guns. It is now my main "GO-case" when I'm in a hurry. The one drawback is that it's currently offered

only in black.

Last, but not least only in size, is BlackHawk's Omega Elite Dump Pouch. I don't know about the Omega, but this dump pouch is pretty elite alright. If you've ever frantically searched for a place to put your empty magazines, brother, this is it along with anything else you want to stuff now and retrieve later. If there's a better dump pouch out there, I haven't seen it, and this one comes in black, coyote and OD green.

Tactical Edges

Sad to say, I consider myself only sort of a knife guy by today's standards. I've been carrying a knife since I was about seven years old (no, it wasn't made of flint) and was making knives at the age of about twelve...No, they weren't good and even my later ones weren't prizewinners, but it was great fun. I currently own at least a hundred knives and use at least a dozen of them on a regular basis. I believe a big knife can do "almost" anything a small knife can do and can do it better, but that's just my opinion.

Whatever kind of knife you prefer, BlackHawk's knife division can probably make your mouth water. If you're "just" a collector, it's the same drill. BlackHawk has knives like Carter has pills and they're all of top quality and design. That's because, again, BlackHawk has gone to some of the best designers/end users in the world and asked, "What do you think professional operators need in the way of knives?" They then gave them to go-ahead to produce state-of-the-art samples and eval, and what you see will truly open your eyes. The BlackHawk (left) BlackHawk's one-man ram can defeat any conventional wood or metal door and is insulated against electrical shock. (right) "Thor's Hammer" gave no trouble opening a variety of doors from different angles.



Hawk knife that blew me away is the BESHARA XSF-1. Offered in either A-2 carbon steel or 6AL/4Vtitanium, this is one of the finest general-purpose tactical knives in the world, in my opinion.

Boots and Gloves

Don't put it down now, pardner, 'cause this is one of the best parts. When I was a brunette I could walk a beat and chase a puke in the shoes I was issued, and hunt all week in a pair of WW II surplus combat boots. I can only envy treating young feet to today's BlackHawk Warrior Wear Boot solution. Now, I'm not going to bore you with all the details of BlackHawk's Warrior boot line. I mean, you put a pair of boots on and forget 'em, right? Well, sure, if they let you forget them.

At Valhalla BlackHawk issued each one of us a pair of boots from their Warrior Wear line. Buddy, the best way I can describe them is "tactical bedroom slippers." Shortly after the Valhalla thing I was invited on a U.S. Navy guided missile cruiser for a tour of the Atlantic and was told to wear suitable footwear. I didn't think twice about what that would be.

These particular shoes are BlackHawk's Light Assault Boots. They are ultra lightweight, but are not waterproof and were especially designed for waterborne ops with swim fins. Equipped with Quick-close laces with lace lock, these boots are quick dry and keep my feet warm even when wet. BlackHawk's Black Ops, Desert Ops and Tactical Response Boots are waterproof, but include all the other features of the Light Assault Boots.

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BlackHawk's Warrior Wear Boots are so new, they aren't even in their latest catalog.

As for BlackHawk's HellStorm Glove line, they have again collected some of the best talent in the country to produce gloves that will simply knock your socks off with design, materials and construction, as you've

never seen before.

BlackHawk intends to be the source for all your equipment needs whether you're in the military or law enforcement. What have I missed? PLENTY! With more than 200 color pages, BlackHawk's catalog would take two issues of SOF to cover, but you can get all the intel you need with your

own copy. For information, contact BlackHawk Products Group, 4850 Brookside Ct., Dept. SOF, Norfolk, VA 23502; phone: 800-694-5263, on the web at: www.BlackHawk.com.

BlackHawk classes and demos weren't the only instruction we were given at Elk Mountain Resort. The resort's owner and founder, Mr. Tom Forman, an accomplished martial arts instructor, provided the class with an insight into cane fighting, along with a demonstration. Cane fighting is just one of the subjects taught at Valhalla and special canes designed by Mr. Forman for this defense are sold there. ✕



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Brazil's Urban It's Civil War

Urban Combat: All Out War Between Cops and Narco-Terrorist Mafiosos

Text & Photos by Dr. Martin Brass

In last month's article, "Brazil: It's War", we joined the Brazilian BOPE SWAT unit of the Military police in Rio who are engaged in an ongoing battle against powerful drug gangs.

New Year festivities were being planned on the spectacular Copacabana and Ipanema beaches in Rio. Traditionally, hundreds of thousands of partiers bring in the New Year in raucous, drunken beach bashes.

As we were preparing to leave Rio to go to Sao Paulo to meet with the anti-narco terrorism units there, we asked the BOPE commanders whether they were concerned about reports of violence planned to break up the New Year's fes-

tivities. Rumor had it that waves of attacks against police were to equal those that had shut down Sao Paulo, the largest city in Brazil, for several days the previous May.

"Here in Rio, our intelligence police intercept communications that preempt or intervene on gang activities planned by the drug bosses in prison, so what happened in Sao Paulo doesn't happen here," the brawny, seasoned 16 year veteran cop, now Captain of the BOPE team, reassured us with his characteristic self confidence. Little did he know what was to come.

The Brazilian cops are among the toughest or they would not survive the brutal, relentless urban combat.

Heavily armed Brazilian SWAT units frequently engage drug gangs in full-fledged firefights. Here the Third Choque Battalion musters in their headquarters, which is modeled after the French Foreign Legion Headquarters in Morocco. No one could explain why.



Combat:

...That was 26 December.

The next day all hell broke loose.

Gangsters torched two busses on the Washington Luiz highway that links Petropolis to Rio. Narco-terrorists set four more busses ablaze in the city. Eight charred bodies were hauled out from the burning wrecks, and nearly two dozen were injured.

Heavily armed Mobsters with machine guns, grenades and handguns stormed over a dozen police stations, slaughtering two police officers. Police returned fire, killing seven suspects who had shot up police stations, massacring several bystanders.

The next night, police killed five drug gang members with assault rifles and grenades. The death toll climbed to nineteen, with many civilians injured in the crossfire. The fire-fights continued

throughout the next week.

It's Terrorism!!

"It's terrorism," cried President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who a lot of Brazilians told us was a crook who had bamboozled his fellow peasants into voting him in for a second term in spite of widespread corruption in his regime.

Lula ordered the Brazilian army to help restore order.

"It's intolerable," wailed Rio's nervous governor-elect Sergio Cabral, who like all politicians in Brazil, had sworn to be tough on crime. He had promised to clean up the escalating crime that is destroying public security.

Cabral begged for military inter-

vention.

No one was sure whether the drug barons were retaliating against the police who were cracking down on their activities, against the off-duty police militias that were cleaning up the ghettos on their private time for huge private fees, or against the tough



The police mounted cavalry regiment passes in review; is used extensively for crowd control.

The second battalion of Shock Police, specialize in riot control. All of the Shock Battalions are well trained and equipped.



talking incoming governor.

The confidence that the military police in Rio had expressed was vindicated. The Rio police reacted with impressive force against their attackers, obviously well prepared for the attacks that were brought under control much quicker than those that had devastated Sao Paulo.

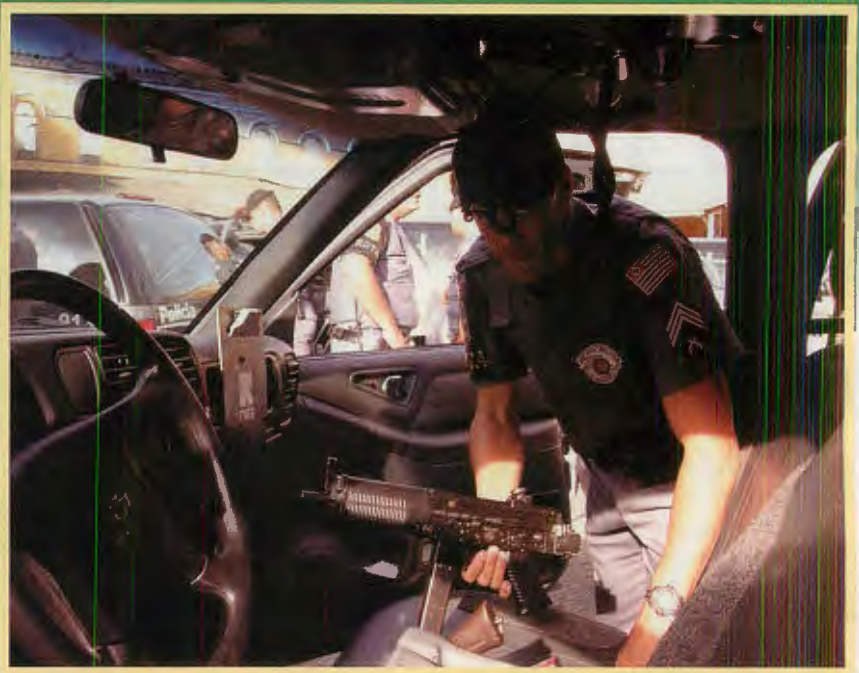
The Week Sao Paulo Stood Still

We headed to Sao Paulo to meet with the special military police SWAT units who were still reeling from the waves of violent attacks.

The previous May, they had fought off a long series of well-orchestrated attacks against law enforcement officers and police stations.

Simultaneous attacks on police facilities paralyzed the city of Sao Paulo for four days and left nearly two hundred people dead.

Synchronized uprisings in 70 prisons forced authorities to deploy all law enforcement officers available. Eighty busses were torched. Gangs used Molotov cocktails, machine guns, and home-made bombs in attacks against police and created chaos in the streets.



Each Shock Police squad car carries four police officers, armed with subguns and shotguns.

CHOQUE Military Police Spec Ops

Members of the Special Operations unit of Sao Paulo, CHOQUE, a rapid reaction contra-guerilla urban force, drove us to their headquarters, a historic structure built in 1892. The rambling mustard colored building is

a replica of the French Foreign Legion headquarters in Morocco. Much of the historic architectural structure in Brazil is reminiscent of its European past, primarily its Portuguese colonial history.

Col. Joviano Cocco Lima (Comandante do Policiamento de Choque) briefed us in his office before the night shift police officers were deployed to the gang infested streets of Sao Paulo.

The CHOQUE unit consists of four battalions and various companies, including a motorized tactical command force, foot patrols, K9 Units, hostage rescue teams, and horse mounted units. Twelve helicopters and three airplanes support the CHOQUE units. The Fire Brigade is attached to the military police.

Waiting to See if the Rio Riots Would Spread

The Sao Paulo military police were closely monitoring the ongoing attacks in Rio, which were the talk of Sao Paulo.

We asked the commander his take on the New Year violence. "The big shootout in Rio is very similar to what happened in May here in Sao Paulo," Col. Lima said.

"The drug bosses in the Bangu prison in Rio ordered the attacks to terrorize the people before the new Rio State government took over," he said.

As we spoke, Rio military police were rounding up twelve drug lords

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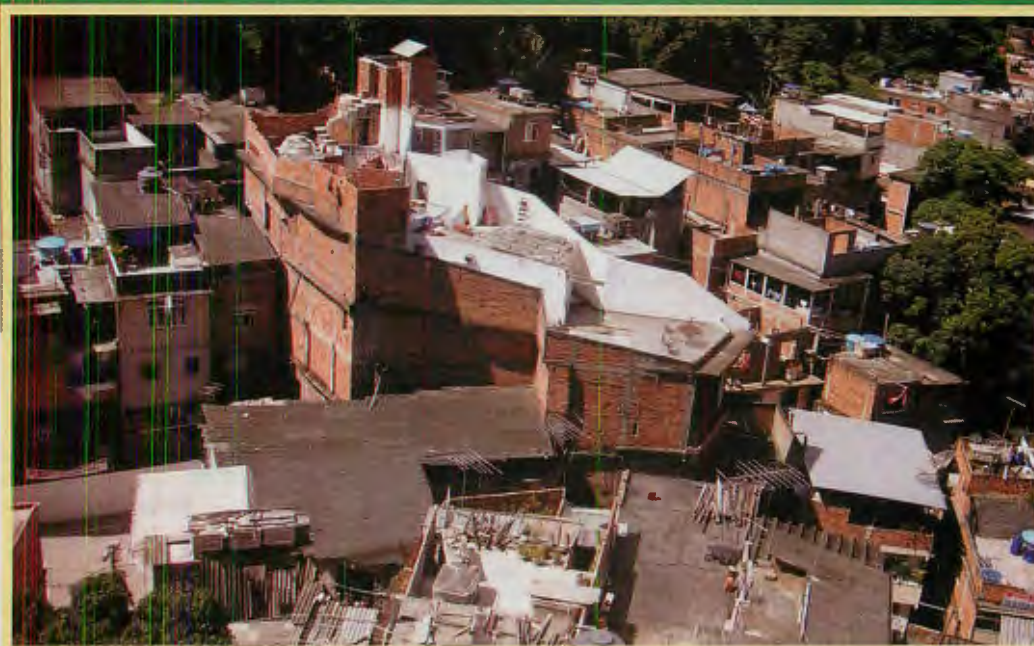
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THE FUTURE IN SIGHT.



High-density slums, like these that we visited, provide excellent bases for the heavily armed gangs. They control the inhabitants by brutal intimidation.

suspected of orchestrating the New Year attacks, from Bangu Prison to Catanduas prison, a high security federal prison 500 miles away.

One of the prisoners was the notorious, brutal murderer Elias Maluco, who was convicted for the torture and brutal slaying of investigative reporter Tim Lopes in 2002.

Maluco had personally shot Lopes, who had exposed his vicious gangs, in the feet and chopped him up. (see April 2007 SOF)

The Narco Gangster Twins

"There are two major violent organized crime groups," Col Paes, for-

mer Police Commander in the state of Brazilia, told us.

The Sao-Paulo-based Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), or First Capital Command of Sao Paulo and the Red Command of Rio control the drug trade in the two largest cities in Brazil.

The PCC was founded in Taubate prison in Sao Paulo after the Carandiru prison massacre when 111 inmates were killed.

The Red Command was established in the late 1960's to fight the authoritarian military dictatorship.

"Both in Sao Paulo and Rio, most of the leaders are in jail, but they can

order riots in prisons. They send young criminals to go and blow up or shoot up a police station or to burn public buses. The mission is accomplished, or the penalty is death. They are charged dues of \$25 on the inside and over \$200 on the outside. If the members can't afford the fees, they are ordered to pay up by killing or attacking police, and blowing up police stations," Col Paes continued.

"The Rio shootout between the gangs and police was well-planned. It was a criminal tactic against the state to terrorize the population to

put the police against the fence," Col. Lima said. "They communicate internally and to the outside with mobile phones."

Prison Mobsters and the Electronic Age

We asked Col. Lima how the prisoners had such free access to cell phones.

"Gang leaders get phones smuggled with the help of corrupt guards who accept bribes," he said.

"I think these actions will go on for the next days until the police eliminate the criminals.

"The objective is to terrorize the population," Col Lima said.

"The state can't take care of them, the police officers can't take care of them' is the message they want to send to the population. They want to undermine the confidence of the population in the state and police, that they are incapable of controlling the trafficking of arms and drugs and kidnappings.

"There is much pressure against organized crime as the police try to flush the dealers out, and the bosses are retaliating. In certain areas of Rio, organized crime managed to establish the parallel shadow governments in the favelas (slums)," Col. Paes said.

"Drug kings control the streets and businesses in the favelas. They mutilate the individuals who don't cooperate with them," remarked Col Lima, who is a long time veteran of the police force.



Second Lieutenant Madio (right), our escort/interpreter joins up with a K-9 unit before launching an operation in a Sao Paulo suburb.



Publisher Brown was impressed with the Brazilian police's high level of training, aggressiveness and dedication. From left to right: Major Jose Luiz Martins, XO of the 1st Bn. Of Shock Police, RKB, Lt. Col. Julio Cesar Dias Vieira, CO of the 1st Bn of Shock Police and Col. Joviano Conceicao Lima, CO of the Shock Police Regiment.

The Carandiru Massacre

The history of the PCC goes back to the early nineties when the drug lords in the prisons decided they were going to revolutionize the prisons and demand human rights.

In 1992, 111 inmates were slaughtered in Sao Paulo's Carandiru prison after they began a massive riot. The military police Commander at the time, Colonel Ubiratan Guimaraes ordered riot police to quell the uprising.

"It was self defense," Guimaraes pleaded at trial in defense of his orders against the armed rioting prisoners who were shooting at the police.

The prisoners claimed they had surrendered and were summarily executed.

Guimaraes was convicted and sentenced to 632 years in prison in 2001 after a lengthy trial. In the meantime he was free. He began to serve his sentence in 1993 and was released in 2005 after a successful appeal. He was subsequently reelected to a third term as state deputy.

In September 2006, he was found bleeding to death in his home from a

gunshot wound in his chest.

The PCC had a long memory and meted out their form of justice.

The PCC's pledge to defend prisoners rights after the prison massacre brought them fame and lots of supporters from the outside. They relentlessly fought the establishment and promised to revolutionize the prisons and demand human rights.

Simultaneous riots were launched in two dozen Sao Paulo prisons in February, 2001. The PCC mobilized prisoners in 28 prisons in Sao Paulo to riot for 27 hours. Nineteen inmates, three police officers and two suspected gang members were killed before riot squads could take back control of the prisons, AP reports attacks in 2001 and 2003.

PCC gangsters armed with machine guns, bombs and other weapons attacked police stations in Sao Paulo city for ten days stretch in November 2003.

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sense of style and flair for fashion, has commanded the PCC since 1992. He is the spokesman and the strongman.

An estimated 140,000 prison members, and 500,000 some foot soldiers on the outside are terrorized by him.

The foot soldiers enforce 100 cases of extortion a day and are responsible for 70 percent of kidnapping cases in Brazil.

The Brazilian authorities recognize Marcos' prowess.

Marcos told Radio Record that they negotiated with him to end the May riots, the Council on Foreign Relations reports.

The coalition of the Prison Mafiosos lead by Marcos and Rio's Red Command leader, Fernandinho Beira-Mar, wield formidable power, controlling the drug trade in Rio and Sao Paulo, Brazil's two largest cities.

Attorney Client Privilege— Smuggling Guns and Cell Phones

A team of eighteen lawyers in cahoots with the PCC oversees the Command's legal cases. Because of lawyer client relationship, they bring in cell phones, two-way radios, and laptops so the Mafiosos can issue their orders to their foot soldiers on the outside, according to the Sao Paulo department of Investigation of Organized Crime.

On May 12, prison authorities tapping in on the prisoners' messages, decided to move PCC kingpin troublemakers to high security prisons to preempt widespread prison rioting on May 14.



Brown couldn't resist posing with this "politically incorrect" poster in Police Hq. How many police stations in the U.S. could get away with this?

But the cops were outsmarted by the PCC, with their sophisticated intelligence networks. The mafiosos preempted the prison transfers, launching the riots at the time 700 prisoners were being prepared to be transferred.

Two-dozen police were killed, along with hundreds of gang members and civilians before the prisoners were transferred.

Just a Matter of Time Until the Next Riots

"The main reason the violence against police is out of control is the corruption within the penitentiary system, with its overcrowding of the prisons and understaffing of guards, many of whom are corrupt.

"We have mass visits in prisons on Saturdays and Sundays. In certain cases, you have inmate population of maybe 800, and the visitors exceed 1000 people. So in the prison, you have women, men, and children in the prison in direct contact with the inmates because they say that is human rights. During this general congregation there, or the so-called intimate visits for sex between inmates and the visitor. Children of one, two, three, to eight or nine years old watch this intimate visit," Col Paes, who introduced us to the military police in Rio and Sao Paulo, said.

"We don't see that in the United States, in the United Kingdom and other countries who are parties to the same international conventions, and no one says this is not 'human rights'. It's all of the human rights organizations, treaties, conventions, international agreements to which Brazil is a member that Brazilian authorities carry to the extreme," Paes said.

"I was a commander of the third strike battalion and my officers and my troopers had to control a riot in the state penitentiary in Sorocaba in 1997.

"When we broke into the prison we had 700 inmates, 20 hostages that were penitentiary agents in the hands of the rioters and more than

Weapons and Equipment In Each Patrol Vehicle of 1st Battalion of CHOQUE Police, "Tobias de Aguiar":

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Caliber: 12 gauge
3. Pistols (per policeman)
Model: PT-100
Caliber: .40 S&W
4. Ballistic Helmet N II
5. Ballistic Shield N II
6. Pepper Spray (per policeman)
7. Police Grenades for Riot Control (Flash Bang, CS, etc)
8. Rubber bullets for Riot Control
9. And only for special operations RIFLE:
9.1 Model Colt M-16 A2
9.2 Model FAI
IMBEL (Indústria de Material Bélico - Brazilian Industry)
10. Ballistic protection (colete balístico) for each policeman.

1000 visitors, including little children. With one wrong move, a child could be killed.

"It's impossible to manage a prison system in this way, impossible," Col Paes said emphatically.

"If the penitentiary politics in Brazil doesn't change the problem will become more and more serious.

"The Colombian Narco Guerillas, the FARC's team up with Brazilian drug gangs to traffic drugs and arms. They teach the narcos here kidnap-

Continued on page 64

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Raul Castro in Seven Scenes

Prognosticating the Heir Apparent

By Jay Mallin Sr.

For more than 100 years, the island of Cuba, because of its proximity to the United States, has been of particular interest to this country. Now attention again is focusing on Cuba because the man who has led it for 48 years is ill, possibly deathly ill.

For many years Washington has seen events on the island through the distorted prism of what are now the more extreme Miami exiles. Raúl Castro Ruz, who has taken over leadership from his sick brother, is viewed as a drunken, ruthless individual who has ridden on the coat tails of Fidel. Raúl, however, is far too complex a figure to be seen simply as a comic-strip ogre.

Raúl was born 3 June 1931, on his family's sugar plantation in Cuba's eastern Oriente Province, the fourth of seven children. Fidel was an older brother. Raúl was baptized a Catholic and studied at Catholic schools in Oriente and Havana. He went on to the University of Havana where he listened to Fidel's radical ideas and those of Fidel's left-leaning friends.

Raúl may have joined the Partido So-



Raul Castro (left) and Che Guevara at the University of Santiago de Cuba. 1960. Photo: Courtesy www.newscom.com



SOF has long been interested in the fate of Cuba, as the genesis of SOF can be tracked to RKB's initial involvement in revolutionary warfare, when he first supported, then opposed, Fidel Castro. In this photo Brown, third from left with M1928A1 Thompson, strikes a post-revolutionary pose on the rooftop of the Riviera hotel in Havana in February 1959, shortly after Castro had seized power in January. William Morgan, far left with Sterling, was former 82nd Airborne and the only gringo to become a commandante. Second from left is unidentified barbudo with M1 Thompson. At far right is Jack Nordeen, with Mk II Sten, a former soldier of fortune and adventurer who overcame polio and fought alongside Castro in the Sierra Maestras. Nordeen drifted off the radar screen, but Morgan was subsequently put up against the wall and shot. Photo: SOF files

cialista Popular, Cuba's communist party. In 1953 he traveled to Vienna to attend the communist-sponsored "International Conference for the

Rights of Youth." He then went to another communist conference in Bucharest. Upon his return to Havana on a steamship he was temporarily detained and communist literature he was carrying was confiscated.

On the other hand, a story that has

persisted but has not been verifiable is that during the Korean War Raúl went to the U.S. embassy in Havana and volunteered to fight with the United Nations forces.

A former dictator, Fulgencio Batista, staged a successful coup in March 1952. Fidel was soon conspiring to lead an anti-Batista uprising. Raúl joined the conspiracy. On 26 July 1953 the rebels attacked Moncada Fortress

in Santiago de Cuba and other strategic points. The Batista troops repelled the assault. Many of the rebels were killed. Others, including the Castro brothers, were captured and brought to trial. The Castros were given 15-year prison sentences.

In May 1955 Batista granted amnesties to a number of political prisoners. The Castros were freed. With-

Continued on page 74

Rifle Military Effectiveness



Farnam's Gunslinger Diary

By John Farnam

In an article in the current issue of *Infantry Magazine*, authors were assigned the task of articulating the current party line with regard to continued lack of confidence in the military's M855 "62gr green-tip" 5.56 round, still being issued.

We are assured that extensive re-testing had been done in response to chronic complaints from the field. However, most such complaints are quickly dismissed as resulting from "inexperience" and "hazy recollections."

We are then told that all resultant testing only addressed close-range, exposed human targets (50 meters maximum) that are unprotected by cover, ignoring the 5.56's (1) lack of acceptable terminal effect beyond 150m and (2) chronic lack of ability to penetrate commonly-used objects (like car doors) that the enemy uses for cover – the twin issues that are at the heart of complaints about this caliber, and have been for the past 40 years. Government "studies" are all alike!

The authors went on to admonish us all that we need to be accurate shooters. No problem with that, but they then advocated "controlled-pairs" for engaging enemy soldiers. Funny, no one ever suggested the necessity of any such multiple-shot technique when we were using M14s, did they? Routinely firing "controlled-pairs" reduces a 28-round magazine to a 14-round one and effectively halves one's ammunition supply.

In conclusion, we are assured that inveterate complaints about the 5.56 round's dismal failure as a main, battle caliber are merely "myth and superstition." The Stoner rifle in 5.56 caliber is the "best... available" we are told. Then, almost as an aside, it is sheepishly admitted that ineffectiveness at long range and second-rate penetration really are problems with this combination and that "something even better" may come along soon.

Well, it can hardly come too soon!

The replacement 40 years ago of heavy-caliber, main-battle-rifles, like the M14 and FAL, with light rifles in varmint calibers was, among other things, an attempt by "just-tech" types to degrade the importance and potency of the individual soldier and Marine, when it has been the heroism and gritty determination of the individual soldier and Marine that has consistently turned the tide of battle since this nation began! It is a forty-year-old procurement mistake, and all the trumped-up "studies" in the world will fail to convince soldiers and Marines in the field who are obliged to believe their own eyes!

The 5.56 round may be adequate for domestic, personal defense and domestic policing. A convincing argument could even be made for its military suitability in rear-area defense. But, as a main-battle-caliber, its glaring inadequacy is obvious to all but a few, party lines and party-liners notwithstanding!

Confirming Pistol/Caliber Selection

(from a friend in the Philippines)

"Your South African friend's predicament is mirrored over here. For most of us, pistols are the only fire arm available. Multiple assailants are common here too, with most being armed with superior weaponry, but not necessarily superior skills. Still, the power of rifles is enough cause for one to dwell on the value of real cover!

High-capacity pistols have always been preferred here for that reason. Single-stack pistol are carried only by those who carry more than one pistol, and/or routinely travel with a crew, all of whom are similarly armed. For those of us who have to go it alone, a high-capacity 9mm is the ticket, reflected in the popularity of the Browning HP in the 70s, Beretta 92S in the 80s, and Glock 17s from the 90s to the present.

Few of us carry only one spare magazine. Two is the general minimum, with more in the car. In fact, Glock's

33-round stick is standard kit here.

The most comforting enhancement was developed by your good friend Peter Pi. No one is under-gunned over here when their pistols are stoked with 115 Cor-Bon HPs. We use this round a lot, and it works just fine! We'll all be switching over to DPX when it becomes available."

Comment: This world is a tough place. Some places are undisputedly harsher than others, but, when a bad neighborhood comes to a place near you, you better be ready. There'll be no time to change your mind!

NY Troopers Upgrade to .45 GAP

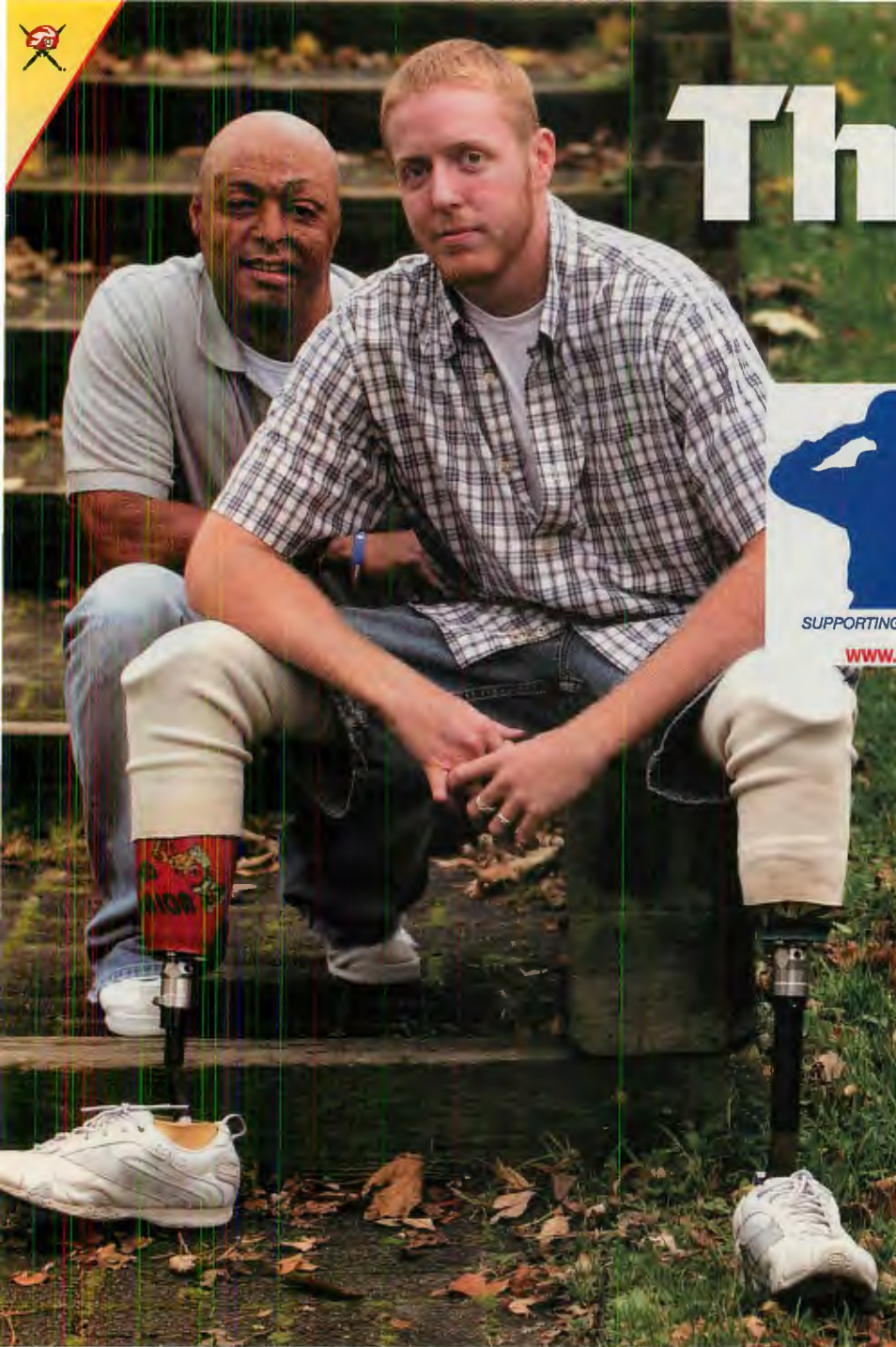
As I indicated earlier, NY state troopers are upgrading to the G37 in .45GAP Caliber. Change will be complete by the end of the year.

Interestingly, the superintendent said that the change was not due to any inadequacy associated with the 9mm round (admitting that would, of course, raise question as to why the 9mm was selected in the first place!).

Instead, he made this curious statement:

"... research from the FBI (yes, let's blame them!) shows that in most police shootings, regardless of how many rounds an officer may fire, only one or two shots actually hit the target in the torso. By increasing the size of the rounds troopers use, we're hoping to increase the likelihood of incapacitating the intended target." ❌

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The Hea

J.R. Martinez, left, and B.J. Jackson, both wounded in OIF, now are spokesmen for the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes and involved in service to other wounded veterans.



than 3,080 of our troops have been killed in Iraq, 347 in Afghanistan: More than 23,114 had been injured as of the end of January.

Distaining the loud objections to the Iraqi war and the often self-serving political hype surrounding the pockets of discontent, an increasing cadre of Americans is acting in the true American spirit by quietly working out of the spotlight to help the wounded troops as they return home. A particularly touching aspect is the spirit with which wounded vets themselves are reaching out to "our brothers and sisters who made the same sacrifices."

The Coalition to Salute American Heroes met just before Christmas in Orlando, to do what it is they do so well. After the meeting they noted, "Nearly 100 wounded service members plus their families are coming home this week with a renewed sense of family, inspiration and hope. The Third Annual Road to Recovery Conference and Tribute wrapped up on December 17 at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. The annual, all-expenses paid event was put on by the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes (CSAH), a non-profit, non-partisan organization created to provide a meaningful way for individuals, corporations and others to help our severely wounded and disabled Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans and their families rebuild their lives.

"As a result of a service member's injuries, often times the spouse or loved ones must leave their jobs to become a caretaker. This loss in income is a blow to an already modest family income, in addition to the added expenses of medication and hospital bills. The conference offered job training and access to some of the nation's top organizations looking to

Soldier of Fortune Salutes Our Wounded Vets

By Dr. Martin Brass, Photos Courtesy of Salute America's Heroes

Webster's says a hero is "...a man noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, esp. one who has risked or sacrificed his life." The service of those who voluntarily put on the uniform of the American armed forces during time of war is truly heroic and should be acknowledged, and justly compensated.

Most American service personnel serve for one hitch. Some serve for a 20 or even 30-year career. But those who are wounded or disabled in the service of our country will serve their

entire life, and are by definition true heroes. They deserve our greatest respect, our heartfelt thanks, the very best rehabilitative efforts known to man – and our unending support.

SOF Honors the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes

A sterling example among the many grassroots, American-spirited organizations that have answered the need for extra-official support of our wounded veterans is the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. More

ling of Heroes

(background) Wounded veterans have a harder road. They know that. That's why fellow travelers on the same road can sometimes be the most help.

hire. Veterans... As a result of this training and two-day job fair, nearly a dozen troops and family members got job offers."

True Grit

We asked Ray Clifford, executive director for the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, how many injured troops have returned from the wars, and about the nature of their injuries: "We estimate that there are 4,000 severely injured [which means they have a 30% or greater disability rating from the DoD]. We do not have statistics on the specific injuries because that kind of information is just not released from the DoD. However, the primary, severe injuries we are seeing from this war are burns, loss of limbs, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder." Clifford works tirelessly with CSAH to help our wounded vets and bring America's attention to their sacrifices.

Each one of the injured statistics is an American with a story of struggle and survival, a family who shares their pain, and a heroic spirit. We would like to briefly introduce you to two of them, so the numbers and names can take on a face.

Last March, SOF published an article detailing a tragic IED explosion that nearly took the lives of several marines. We hope to continue to remind our readers of the valor of our returning heroes.

We spoke to several of the wounded, including B.J. Jackson who was hit in the Green Zone in Baghdad in August of 2003. B.J. was married for a full two days before he was deployed to Iraq in 2003. "I was hit on my first day off in over a month, by a landmine in the Green Zone," B.J. told SOF. "I had arrived in Baghdad in April 2003."

"After being stabilized, B.J. was sent to the U.S. to begin treatment for severe burns and the loss of both legs below the knees. While now he jokes that he'll probably never have a career in roofing, he believes there are 'no limits' to what he and other injured service members can do," Clifford said.

The Wounded Help Each Other

"I am a spokesperson for the coalition. The founder contacted me and J.R. Martinez and we helped them raise awareness from the start," B.J. said.

We asked if he felt that he had received proper treatment. "I was sent to the Brooke Army Medical Center. Both civilians as well as military staff are on the treatment teams, so you get the best of both worlds. Civilians are more emotional, but I got great care at the center."

We asked him how the hospitalized troops felt if visitors came to see them in the hospital rooms, whether it was uncomfortable for them to be seen before they were discharged.

"When you're laying in a hospital bed, you don't know how the general public is going to treat you," B.J. said. "A lot of anxiety is how you will be treated when you leave. Some of this anxiety can be alleviated if the public or media visit. It helped me to get my story out and share how I recovered, and I got feedback from other service members. It's a way for them to heal themselves and get it off their chest without bottling it all up," he said.

J.R. also has been a spokesman for the organization "since day one." "Mainly what B.J. and I do is learn more about it and direct anyone who wants to be involved to the website. I joined the military in September 2002 out of high school and I joined as I Bravo, infantry. I deployed to Iraq in March of 2003, where I was assigned to patrol the southern cities of Iraq.

"It was 5th of April 2003, I was driving through Karbala, and when we came to the city, we were asked to reroute. When we rerouted, I was the driver of the Humvee, we drove around the city to come back to our original route. My front wheel tire struck a landmine. They are everywhere, you don't know where they are at.

"When we hit the land mine, it threw the three guys out of the vehicle. They all walked away with minor injuries. I was trapped inside. I couldn't get out on my own, they got

everyone else to a safe distance before they could come back to my aid. I still don't know to this day whether they knew I was alive or not. I was screaming at the top of my lungs for someone to get me out of the vehicle. I was conscious the whole time. My platoon sergeant pulled me out after about 10 minutes. Once they pulled me out, I was evacuated by helo to a local medic station in Iraq. From there they took me to Landstuhl Germany. I was there for three days and they brought me down to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas.

"I underwent 32 surgeries surgical procedures including skin grafts and cosmetic surgery. I was in the hospital for three months at first, then off and on as in-patient, out-patient for two and a half years." Forty per cent of J.R.'s body was burned.

The Past Is Only Prologue

"We have helped over 1,500 service members," J.R. speaks on behalf of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes. While a life-changing experience, amazingly J.R. claims this is a change for the better. "He's discovered it is what's inside that matters most, and wants to reach out to other service members with his message of hope and comfort," Ray Clifford said. J.R. is going out on his own, to give motivational speeches. "It is one of my own personal things," he told SOF. "This injury taught me that I was kept in this world for a reason - to help my brothers and sisters in the Army, but [also] others who have scars on the outside. I'm currently in the process of becoming a part of national speaking bureaus. I just want to help." J.R. currently resides in Texas. To date, the CSAH has helped over 3000 vets.

J.R. can be reached at jr@saluteheroes.org and B.J. can be reached at bj@saluteheroes.org. For full information on their programs and how you can help, go to www.saluteheroes.org.

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

con site. Lassally and the others made it back to the vehicles before the barrage began, and we were driving back down the gully with the flashes and explosions of the mortar and artillery rounds behind us.

None of our guys had been hit or was hurt from the contact. Three AKs had opened up on them from the blackness, they'd returned fire — all emptying at least one magazine, and Lassally even managing to throw a grenade — and they beaten a hasty retreat, wisely leaving the battle to the big guns. That's what the artillery is for.

Now it's morning. Cold and damp, and we've come back. It's light enough to photograph, you bet I haven't begged off and stayed in the vehicle this time. Who knows what we'd meet up there, and there's not a reporter in a war zone who would turn down the possibility of getting first-hand photos and the live drama of a tic (troops in contact, the new phrase for "firefight").

We head up. The ANA are walking the ridgelines on both sides of this



Barely visible is a 122mm rocket launch tube, camouflaged with tree limbs. About twenty meters off the trail, the tube was spotted by one of 1st Platoon's turret gunners during the platoon's movement to a suspected Taliban base. Hidden under nearby bushes were five 122 rockets, and the tube was pointed in an exact azimuth toward FOB Bermel, twelve kilometers straight-line-distance away.

draw; they're flank security. It's still and deathly quiet down here. Not even a slight breeze. Just the wet mist.

It's further up the trail from where Lassally met contact last night, a couple hundred meters maybe, where we find the first body. It's half wrapped in a white blanket — a makeshift

stretcher — and the small amount of blood stained on the blanket indicates the body had bled out earlier and was being carried off dead.

The second body we find a couple hundred meters still further up the trail is also wrapped in a white blan-

Continued on page 58

An advertisement for TAPCO. The top half features a soldier in camouflage gear aiming a rifle in a wooded setting. The bottom half features a close-up of a rifle with a scope and a flashlight. The text "ENGAGE. SECURE. DEFEND." is prominently displayed at the top. Below the rifle, it says "WEAPONS ACCESSORIES FOR ANY MISSION". The TAPCO logo is in the center, with "ENGAGE. SECURE. DEFEND." written below it. At the bottom, contact information is provided: "CAGE: 3E2Q7 800-554-1445 - WWW.TAPCO.COM". A "DOD SMALL SUPPLIER" logo is also present.

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ket for carrying. Again, there is very little blood on the blanket, though the man's head is half-missing and so is one complete hand. The big 20-millimeter bullets from the AC-130 will do that. Like the first, this man was being carried off dead, back toward Pakistan just up the draw, when something — our mortars and artillery last night or our arrival this morning — frightened off his bearers.

A third body we find back in the wood line down at the site of last night's contact. Our own gunfire or mortars got him. And no one's made it back to carry him out. That's it, though, there are no weapons found. That much has been cleaned up, so at least one guy here last night made it out. Or some returned since and got what they could out. Out meaning back, of course, the only safe way from here, the one direction that does not lead to us, the American and Afghan forces: east, up into Pakistan.

A Story — But What Story?

The guys of Charlie Company, and 1st Platoon in particular, are proud

and happy that, sure enough, I've got my story. We've spent five days up here in the mountains together and nearly as many earlier back in the FOBs, and soldiers seem to want their embed reporters to come out with a story. If only, perhaps, because it shows that they, the soldiers, have accomplished something.

The story. I think about it as we're driving down out of the mountains. What is it, really? Is it a combat action piece spiced with details of the personalities of these grunts, America's fighting men? Lassally and the guys of his platoon itching for something for four days then getting it when they least expected it? That tic in the dark.

But it slowly dawns on me that this isn't the actual story here. What I've stumbled upon is far more subtle. After all, this has been a near-inconsequential five-day recon patrol that will hardly register a blip on any big or little picture. Except for the handful on the receiving end of those AK bursts from the blackness, the tic was nothing. The story is something else.

The story is in the white blankets beneath the bodies. The story is in

Pakistan just up the draw.

There are those who argue that the Coalition Forces here are making up body counts and deceiving us when they say the Taliban carry their dead away. For them there are the white blankets. They can ignore them in their ignorant bliss.

And for our own leaders who send our Charlie Companies off to war to secure this place called Afghanistan, there is Pakistan just up the draw. Pakistan, from which the Taliban come. They can ignore it at our peril, to our eventual regret. ✕

Paul Avallone was a Green Beret with 7th, 12th and 20th SFG who served a tour in Afghanistan.

As we went to press, agency news wires said 2-87 Infantry troops in Barmel were part of an air-ground op that whacked seven enemy personnel who were observed setting up rockets: They engaged the bad guys with indirect fire, Coalition aircraft dropped two munitions, then the grunts moved in to mop up and do BDA. ✕

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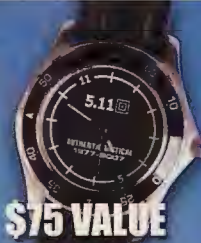
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By Dr. Martin Brass

AMERICA AT WAR

1. NORTH KOREA MAJOR PRISON BREAK has authorities chasing fugitives, some who might have fled to China. Getaway cars, night vision gear and fence cutters were provided by unknown patrons to political prisoner escapees.

Stratpage.com

2. CHINA ILLEGAL ORGAN TRAFFICKING brings big bucks from rich foreigners. Military implicated in providing organs of executed prisoners.

3. INDONESIA MOST WANTED ISLAMIC militant, Basri captured after shootout with police.

4. UNITED STATES AMERICAN HIROSHIMA AND DEATH OF SOVIET SPY Litvinenko in U.K. connected, claim authors Paul Williams and Jeffrey Epstein. Litvinenko, Muslim convert gone radical, masterminded the smuggling of radioactive material to Zurich in 2000. **POLONIUM-210 POISONING** of former spy may have occurred by accidental release of the rare (4 ounces produced per year in Russia) radiological substance. **LETHAL RADIOACTIVE PLONIUM-210** is purchased by U.S. yearly to keep the substance from leaking onto the black market. **IRAN AND NORTH KOREA** clandestinely manufacture the poison. **IMPRISONED TERROR HOSTAGES** warn that suitcase bombs have been forward-deployed to the United States in preparation for al Qaeda's next attack on American soil. **MUSLIM SENSITIVITY TRAINING** for 45,000 U.S. airport workers warned them "to be aware that they may also be praying." *Worldnetdaily.com* **CUSTOMS AGENTS OUTRAGED** when Department of Homeland Security official guided CAIR (Council On American-Islamic Relations, "America's largest Islamic civil liberties group") officials on a behind-the-scenes tour of Customs screening operations at O'Hare International Airport. CAIR is a spin-off of the Islamic Association for Palestine, identified by two former FBI counter-terrorism chiefs as a "front group" for the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. Some CAIR leaders have been convicted on terror-related charges.

5. MEXICO ELEVEN IRAQIS WITH FALSE PASSPORTS heading to Mexico arrested. This batch may be persecuted Iraqi Christians, but others with phony documents could be terrorists.

6. VENEZUELA CHAVEZ LAUNCHES NAVAL BUILDUP for Caribbean. "This naval buildup will be noticed later, when they start following oil tankers," *SOF* source predicts.

7. COLOMBIA COCAINE AND HEROIN DRUG RING shut down after 117 members arrested with 55 kilos heroin, 173 kilos of cocaine, \$265,000 cash, 12 vehicles and nine weapons, said DEA. **FARC PLAN TO ANNIHILATE RIVAL ELN** if peace talks with government continue. **UN OFFICIAL KILLED** in attack on his car in Antioquia.

8. UNITED KINGDOM **BEHEADING PLOT** preempted when police arrest eight planning to kidnap British muslim soldier who served in Iraq.

9. FRANCE **BIGWIGS ARE NEVER "OFF THE RECORD"**: President Jacques Chirac said that if Iran were to launch a nuclear weapon against Israel, Tehran would disappear in nuclear dust. When statement was published, Chirac called the *NY Times*, *1H Tribune* and *Le Nouvel Observateur* to the Elysee Palace to retract many of the remarks. Too late.

10. GERMANY **SIX TORNADO RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT** headed to Afghanistan, stalled by leftist opposition. **"WE FIGHT SO YOU CAN DRINK BEER IN SAFETY"** NATO warriors taunt 3,000 German, French, Italian and Spanish troops assigned to NATO in Afghanistan, but not allowed on combat missions.

11. EGYPT **WEAPONS SEIZED** crossing border to Hamas in Gaza.

12. ISRAEL **PREEMPTIVE NUCLEAR STRIKE PLANS** on Iran denied after report of strike appeared in U.K.'s *Daily Telegraph*. Could a conventional strike against Iran's key nuclear facilities be on the horizon?

13. IRAQ **IMPOSTERS KILL FIVE AMERICANS** with grenades and gunfire after security breach. Militant insurgents, wearing U.S. military uniforms and driving black sport utility vehicles used by official U.S. and foreign dignitaries, stormed provisional government building and killed U.S. troops. Unsuspecting guards at checkpoints had waved the imposters into secured areas. Three imposters killed.

14. IRAN **BOMB WITHIN A YEAR?** Consider 3,000 atomic centrifuges and achieving industrial-scale production of nuclear fuel, which the West fears is part of a program to make bombs. Centrifuge installation in the cavernous underground section of the Natanz enrichment complex, said to be some months away.

15. AFGHANISTAN **TALIBAN'S BLOODY SPRING II OFFENSIVE** planned for April. The renewed offensive enabled by Pakistan allowing training camps inside its border.

16. ZIMBABWE **400 WHITE FARMERS THREATENED WITH JAIL** if they don't give up their farms. The former African breadbasket now has to import its staple, corn. Population in jeopardy of starvation as currency, gasoline and medical supplies dwindle. Economy implodes.

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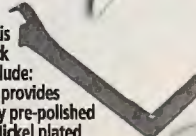
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SNIPERS • Continued from page 18

from listening to valuable input from experienced NCOs and subject matter experts. I have gotten into countless pissing contests with my chain of command over these very issues, and even cost me my job on a sniper team for a short time. It's a problem deeply rooted in the Army mentality and will be extremely difficult to change. The Marines are slightly better off, but they, too, experience difficulties at times."

Jim Bartlett
Fredericksburg, VA

Two-Service Agreement

I read your article in this month's SOF on snipers not being used correctly. I have to agree, even though my own team and platoon wasn't totally misused, but having officers or senior enlisted who would have been to a sniper employment course would have helped.

As a former recon marine sniper, my officers there knew exactly how to use us. But while in the Army my officers had no idea and they sure

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wouldn't take advice from an enlisted man even if I had more knowledge than they did on the issue. The Army and the Army Guard definitely needs some sort of course that battalion commanders or platoon sergeants or platoon commanders should have to attend. I can definitely say this for the Guard, as they evidence a need for much information on how to employ snipers.

Frank McCann

Unchanged Melody

Some things never change, do they? I can relate to the snipers' gripes. I served four years in the Navy, got out and 10 years later I enlisted in the Army National Guard and stayed for 22 years. I got ADA qualified and soon became a Red-eye Section sergeant and ultimately a Stinger PSG. We got so misused along the way, that I know the Snipers are telling the truth.

First truth: Officers are trained in IOBC in generic infantry concepts: 11B might be close to what they learn, then they are sent to their unit.

There they do expand their knowledge, but it depends on their First Sergeant, company commander and themselves. Their duties vary a lot.

Second truth: The only way to get their attention is to sell yourself: Every sniper in your own unit has to be a "Sniper Poster Child." You have to have the ultimate knowledge of your MOS and be able to brief everyone up through the BC on the best way for you to do the job. Be passionate about it. The NCOIC needs to spend as much time with your PL and company commander as he can. You have to educate them in your abilities.

A Sniper Deployment Course would be nice to see in the IOBC. Fruits from that will come, but not 'til after you have gone. What you need most is to be used properly and the equipment you need now. The second truth worked for my Stingers, but it did take time. Give 'em hell and don't back down.

Hats off to you all and all the other military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Morris J. McLees, SFC (Ret/)
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BRAZIL • Continued from page 46

ping techniques. Hostage taking is increased, and the PCC is held responsible for most of the kidnappings.

The Riots Will Continue

"Like Sao Paulo most of the leaders are in jail but they can order riots in prisons. They have the capacity to send young criminals to blow up or shoot up a police station or to burn buses. The mission is accomplished, or the penalty is death. They are very close, they exchange criminal know how among themselves and they are a threat to society. Most of the money they get to buy arms through international arms smuggling comes from the drug trade. Marijuana is grown here. But cocaine is imported, it is Bolivian, Colombian or Peruvian that comes through Brazil destined not only for the United States and Europe, but also for addicts in Brazil," Col Paes said.

"It is necessary to break the spine of the organized crime and this can only happen by means of effective police intelligence operations.

"We need to infiltrate police of-

ficers to get information from criminals in the organization. When a criminal understands he is finished with the criminal organization and that he will be the next target, he may decide to cooperate. It is difficult but possible to be found out when a gang member wants to defect.

"In Sao Paulo, during the May riots, for the first time in my life I saw this huge city stop at 4 o'clock on a Friday. People were going home, leaving their jobs, the shops and industries were closed, the banks were shut and the cinemas were not open.

"In this big city, I saw this, and it was the effect of the threat of criminal terrorism. Imagine a city like New York being paralyzed with fear and ceasing its activities.

"During the riots last May, the narcos took the state Gendarmie by surprise and killed dozens of police officers. They chased off-duty police officers, killing them in front of their homes, in front of their families. Police, municipal guards, penitentiary agents; 24 in May. But this was the

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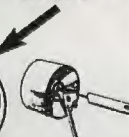
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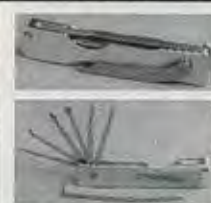


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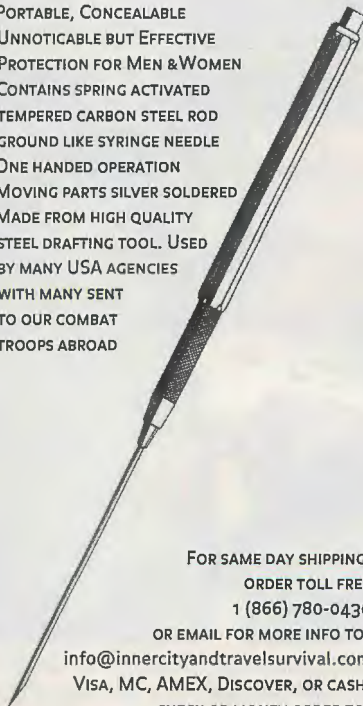
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first strike against police basis then the second strike and then there was the reaction. We started to count the deaths—1, 2, 3, 10, 12, 15 criminals. They tasted the fear and even those young criminals who received the orders to carry out those orders were afraid. They started to pressure the leaders, 'they are killing us. They are killing us.

The Riots Will Come in Waves

"The police fight back in legitimate self defense. The second phase is happening now in Rio, because the perpetrators have information about 8, 9 or more killed.

"When I was a metropolitan commander in 2003 around the first of November it started several attacks occurred in the capital and one attack in my area. We reacted immediately. They killed three police officer in Sao Paulo city, but none were killed in my district.

"The common criminals in the past learned organization and tactics from the FARC.

"They do kidnap but not to the extent of FARC. They kidnap rich people and now kidnapping people of middle class.

It's Civil War—Mafiosos vs. Cops

It's an urban guerilla war, warns former Brazilian President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

"It is unrecognized civil war—only there are not political groups involved. It is the poor person versus anybody who has something, and that something need not even be very much," said Carlos Amorim author of Brotherhood of Crime and PCC expert is quoted by the Guardian.

"People are being terrorized by the violence," Amorim says.

The murder rate in Brazil is 27 per 100,000 vs U.S. 5.5 per 100,000, making the homicide rate nearly five times higher than in the United States.

"Three hundred police officers are killed yearly," Col. Paes told us. ☒

Next: Latin and South America swing to the left and arms control in Brazil.

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

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Shot Show 2007

Part I

More Great Guns and Gear for Military and Cops Than Ever Before!

By Gary Paul Johnston

Held in Orlando, this year's SHOT was reportedly bigger than ever, and so was the Military/Law Enforcement section. Covering everything of interest would take every issue of SOF until the next SHOT show, but we'll cram what we can here, and for those of you who don't like to read, these pix are surely worth a thousand words each.

(top right) U.S. Navy Captain C.A. "Chip" Zwicker, of the U.S.S. Vicksburg Missile Cruiser, can't help smile, as he holds an ARES Shrike LMG. Look for "The Guns of the Vicksburg" soon in SOF.



(above) Doesn't everyone need an Eotech Model 553 Sight for his M2 .50 cal. BMG, or is it visa versa? What ever kind of carbine or MG you have, if it's got a M1913 rail, the Eotech Model 553 will enhance your hitting ability. That's why it's been adopted by so many US Military units. For info, call (734) 741-8868 (eotech-inc.com).

(left) Mike Mayberry (L) and Rich Fitzpatrick shocked the industry with the introduction of the revolutionary new Magpul 5.56mm battle rifle. Combining a number of well-proven designs in one rifle, this one also has a REAL quick-change barrel requiring no tools. Look for our in-depth coverage of it soon. For info, call (303) 652-8301 (magpul.com).





*(left) Showing off a variety of its world-class rifle stocks, **McMillan Fiberglass Stocks** was a popular spot in the military/law enforcement section of the show. For info, call (623) 582-9635 (mcmfamily.com).*



*(right) Retired cop **Chuck Buis** never got tired of explaining all of **Blackhawk's** hundreds of pieces of fine tactical gear for military and law enforcement. For info, call (800) 694-5263 (blackhawk.com).*

*(below) Well known for their M203 40mm launchers for a variety of weapons, **RM Equipment** now has a new light. For info, call (305) 477-9312 (40mm.com).*



*(right) **Blue Force Gear** brought its line of special purpose slings for everyone to put their hands on. You need to check these out! For info, call (877) 430-2583 (blueforcegear.com).*

STAG ARMS



(left) With 31 years of manufacturing experience, Stag Arms is proud to have produced the world's first "True Left-Handed" AR type rifle configurations for civilians and law-enforcement professionals. South-paws call (860) 229-9994 (www.stagarms.com).

(below) In addition to an excellent selection of military tactical products, US Tactical is a distributor for the GripPod, seen here with its brand new light rail. For info, call (541) 928-8645 (ustactical.com).



(left) The stunning Kdra Pattison and somewhat less stunning Dick Williams brightened up the display of SureFire's grand parade of tactical lights. For info call (800) 828-8809 (surefire.com).

(below) Manning the American COP magazine booth were Dave Douglas, Mark Hanten and Clint Smith. If you haven't seen this magazine, call (858) 605-0253 (americanhandgunner.com).

SUREFIRE



Continued on page 70



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(left) Springfield came to SHOT with its entire family of new M1A rifles and much more. For info on its rifles and pistols, call (800) 680-6866 (springfield-armory.com).

(right) Johnston and Wayne Novak mixed it up with Para Ordnance's Thanos Polyzos. For info on Para Ordnance's new pistols, call (416) 297-7855 (paraord.com).



(right) Laser Devices brought a variety of laser devices including their new military models. For info, call (800) 235-2162 (laserdevices.com).

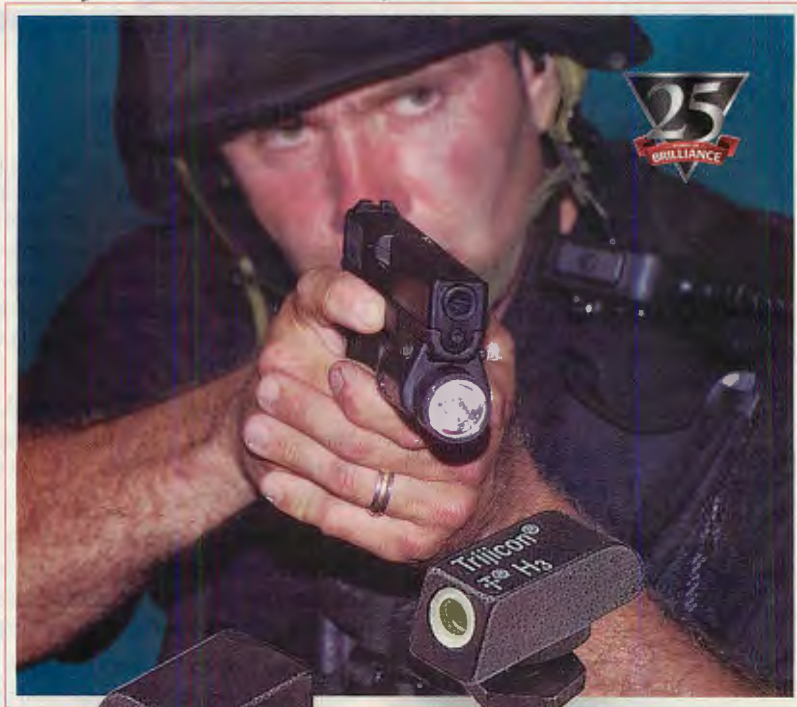


(left) Famous for their high quality web gear, Eagle Industries always surprises us with new products. For info on their entire line, call (888) 343-7547 (eagleindustries.com).

...Continued next month! ✂

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Conventional night vision relies on fragile vacuum "tubes" of glass that intensify low levels of infrared light. These systems are subject to blooming-out when exposed to bright lights, such as a street lamp or a car headlight, because the "tube" cannot discriminate between light sources. SuperVision's digital processor instantly assesses the full spectrum of light sources reaching the sensor and selectively adjusts the image for optimum viewing. Dark shadows are drawn out while bright lights are subdued.

SuperVision is a division of Xenonics Holdings, a leader in low-light solutions for military, law enforcement, private security and outdoor sporting applications. The California-based corporation has been in business since 1999.

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in a few months they went to Mexico. There they put together an expedition, which returned to Cuba late in 1956. A two-year guerrilla campaign ensued, with other guerrilla groups also participating. The civil war finally resulted in Batista fleeing and the establishment of a revolutionary government.

On 21 January 1959, Fidel, addressing a mass rally, declared Raúl to be his heir apparent. This has not changed since then. Raúl was also named assistant chief of the armed forces under *comandante en jefe* Fidel. Later, when Fidel became prime minister, Raúl assumed command of the military establishment and has held that post ever since.

Raúl is a family man. He regularly hosts his relatives at his Havana home. When his sister Juanita broke with Fidel, Raúl enabled her to leave the island safely – with some 40 pieces of luggage. Raúl himself is divorced from his wife, Vilma Espín, daughter of a Bacardi Company executive and a leader in the Santiago rebel underground.

Raúl can be cruel and ruthless.

During the years of guerrilla operations he was probably responsible for more than 100 executions, more than were carried out by all the other rebel commanders combined. On one occasion three prisoners were lined up and blindfolded, ready for the firing squad. The squad fired over their heads. Someone shouted: "You missed one! He's still alive!" Each of the prisoners thought he was the one and would be killed in a new volley. The mock execution was meant as a warning, and no one – this time – died. Upon the rebel victory, Raúl was placed in charge of Oriente Province. After little or no trial some 70 Batista followers were executed and their bodies buried in a mass grave. There were, however, kangaroo courts and executions across the island.

And yet, when a top general, Arnaldo Ochoa, who had commanded Cuban forces in Angola, and other officers were tried on drug trafficking charges and sentenced to be executed, Raúl stated in a speech: "Deprived of sleep, I circled my desk and went to the bathroom behind my office to brush my teeth. Looking in the mir-



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ror I realized that tears were flowing down my cheeks.”

A number of occurrences over the years provide clues to the multi-faceted Raúl:

Scene 1: In March 1958 Raúl and a group of guerrillas leave the Sierra Maestra, where rebels led by Fidel Castro have been operating. Raúl opens a new and larger front in the

Sierra del Cristal in easternmost Cuba. He builds roads for the locals, sets up administrative offices. He also establishes a rural intelligence service and the first rebel indoctrination schools.

Raúl demonstrates that he is a competent administrator, unlike his erratic and disorganized older brother, who eventually departs from the Sierra Maestra but leaves behind no trace of his presence.

Scene 2: Raúl, in firm control of the Sierra del Cristal, on 22 June 1958 orders the seizure of Americans living in his zone. The purpose is to prevent bombing of his area by Batista aircraft, as well as to protest the supposed providing of weapons by the United States to Batista – which actually had ceased three months earlier. Raúl's guerrillas kidnap 20 employees of U.S.-owned sugar and mining companies, as well as 30 sailors and marines from the Guantánamo Naval Base (and one Cuban bus driver). The captives are well treated; they even celebrate the Fourth of July. Two U.S. consular officials from Santiago wend their way into the mountains and negotiate with Raúl. He releases the captives slowly, saying he is freeing the military so they can fight in Lebanon, where the United States has intervened militarily.

Scene 3: It is the height of the anti-American campaign in Cuba. The year is 1960 and the American embassy is holding what will be its last Fourth of July celebration. In through the front door strides Raúl Castro, followed by a single aide. He walks over to Ambassador Philip Bonsal and embraces him, much to the surprise of onlookers. They chat for a while in a most friendly manner.

Scene 4: It is early 1962 and the Soviet Union is fed up with the antics of its new ally/friend, Fidel Castro. Moscow quietly moves to have the old-line Cuban communists take control of the country. Castro is aware of this; he is despondent, drinking heavily in public.

At his command post at the other

end of the island Raúl engages in a heated argument with a local communist labor leader, Juan Taquechel. He shoots Taquechel. Raúl flies to Havana, puts steel into Fidel's backbone. Castro goes on TV – his favorite medium – and excoriates the Cuban communists. He lashes at the “fearful sectarianism” of “old Marxist militancy.”

One of the oldliners, Anibal Escalante, is sent packing to Prague and major alterations are made in the “socialist” ruling power structure.

Scene 5: With Soviet assistance, Raúl in the early '60s builds the largest military force in Latin America, with some half a million regular, reserve and militia troops. It is a modern, professional military in which promotion comes on the basis of merit and not family or party affiliation. Cuba fields armies for wars in Angola and Ethiopia and maintains military missions in much of Africa as well as in Grenada in the Caribbean and with the Sandinistas fighting dictator Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua. (Today, with foreign adventures ended, a U.S. invasion no longer feared and a national economy in need, the military have been down-sized, probably by as much as a half.)

Scene 6: The Soviet Union collapses in 1989; aid to Cuba is severely cut. The very existence of the Castro regime is threatened. Raúl urges his brother to permit free markets on the island and to take other economic measures, much as the Chinese communists had adopted in their country. The brothers argue bitterly, almost coming to blows. Fidel is adamant: no traces of capitalism will be permitted.

Scene 7: Shortages of food, fuel and other staples are dire; the Cuban populace is desperate. Years later an official related to this writer how he gave his bread ration to his daughter so she would have enough food at school. Public disturbances occur. In August 1994 there is a major riot in Havana. Raúl again goes to his brother, warns him that the Cuban army will not fire on Cubans. He points out that in similar situations in Eastern Europe the military sided with the people. Fidel reluctantly relents, allows the opening of markets in which farmers can sell their crops freely and keep the money. Other measures follow: craft markets, encouragement of foreign investments, permission for citizens to open restaurants in their homes, ac-

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ceptance of U.S. dollars as currency. The Castro regime survives.

The army itself is already, or now becomes, heavily involved in the development of tourism. It also sells produce from its own farms on the open market. The military role in the economy is further strengthened as officers, upon retiring, are given managerial positions in industry and commerce.

During the '60s and '70s the Cold War was in full swing. Cuba served as a Soviet military base. It meddled in the affairs of nations throughout Africa and Latin America. The United States felt justified in maintaining an economic embargo on trade and travel with the island. But today neither of these factors exists. There appears to be little sense in ineffectively trying to maintain the island in isolation. Few countries have had closer historical, cultural and economic ties with the United States than has Cuba, ever since we helped the Cubans win their independence more than a century ago.

Raúl says he is willing to talk with us. What do we have to lose? Not only might this lead to opening of the country, it could also stall the efforts of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to develop a Havana-Caracas axis as

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a base for an anti-American bloc of Latin American nations.

Raúl lacks his older brother's charisma but he makes up for this in his managerial and leadership abilities. He is not a publicity seeker trying to stay in the limelight. Having unchallenged authority and being backed by the military establishment he built, Raúl today nevertheless appears to be acting more as a company CEO than as a dictator. The new generation of leaders in Cuba have a say in the development of governmental policies.

Confident of his power and the stability of his regime, Raúl has even indicated he may allow voices of dissent to be heard on the island.

Official Washington is still in the '60s as far as the Miami Cubans are concerned. In that era the Cubans were refugees, bitterly opposed to Castro, who had forced them to flee their homeland. Today these oldtimers are a rapidly dwindling number. An entire new generation has grown up in Miami too, many of whom were born in the States and all educated in this country. They respect the feelings of their elders but their own interest in Cuba is more of curiosity and perhaps a desire to visit the island.

Washington, however, continues to listen to the shrillest voices.

When Fidel Castro dies – if he ever dies – what happens? Nothing much. Raúl and the second generation of leaders – economists and other technocrats – have been running the country for some time. This writer visited Cuba a few years ago and interviewed more than half a dozen officials. Not one mentioned socialismo. And after Raúl? The top party/governmental structure is probably strong enough and sufficiently institutionalized to guarantee a continuation in power. In all likelihood it will be less authoritarian and more market-oriented. Look to China as the probable model. And whatever happens, the military will play a major role, as they have throughout most of Cuban history. ✕

As a journalist, Jay Mallin Sr. has covered Cuba for more than 60 years. He was a correspondent for Time and other publications and was one of the original contributors to SOF. Mallin co-directed a study of the Cuban military for the Pentagon. He has written more than a dozen books, including Fortress Cuba, Covering Castro and History of the Cuban Military.

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U.S. Army Pfc. Kieth Collins, a gunner from 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Teddy Wade)

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COMMON SENSE

by Lt. Col. Oliver North, USMC (Ret.)

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.

Diddling While Americans Die

SPOTSYLVANIA, Va. -- He was an American hero. On his second tour of duty in Iraq, he had already served in the Western Pacific and a prior combat tour in Afghanistan. On Friday afternoon, Feb. 16, when Sgt. Joshua Frazier, USMC, was laid to rest in the soil of his native Virginia, his comrades in arms from the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines were fighting terrorists on the mean streets of Ramadi, in Iraq's bloody Al Anbar Province. As Sgt. Frazier's grieving mother was being presented with a carefully folded American flag, the Congress of the United States was debating a meaningless "non-binding resolution" attacking the commander in chief.

Heroes aren't athletes who set new sports records or Hollywood actors who make "daring" films or politicians who make bold promises. Heroes are people who place themselves at risk for the benefit of others. Joshua Frazier was certainly such a man. Unfortunately, there are far too few members of Congress who fit the definition.

At Joshua's funeral, I gave his parents photographs of their son that had been taken a few weeks ago while I was embedded with his unit in Iraq. We had just returned from a patrol to a newly re-opened school where little Iraqi girls were being taught arithmetic. Standing around us in the photo are the Sunni police officers and Shia soldiers who had accompanied us on the mission. Sweat stains from his 40-pound flak jacket are still evident on his uniform and he is smiling through exhaustion into the lens. He and his squad of Marines had been up for more than 24 hours chasing down an enemy sniper. His is one of more than two dozen Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard units whose tours will be extended in Iraq in order to increase U.S. troop levels by 21,500. These are the young Americans who will bear the brunt of what Congress is doing.

Sgt. Frazier is one of more than 2,500 U.S. military personnel killed in action in Iraq. Speaker Nancy Pelosi claims the resolution being debated by the House of Representatives is a measure that "will continue to sup-

port and protect" U.S. military personnel. Yet, she also says it shows "Congress disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush announced on Jan. 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq." How this does anything but damage U.S. and Iraqi morale and embolden America's adversaries is beyond comprehension.

"The American people have lost faith in President Bush's course of action in Iraq," Pelosi said Tuesday as the resolution was introduced. She said the president's plan "is based on the judgment that the way out of Iraq lies in sending more troops in," adding, "our experience has proven just the opposite."

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, "our experience," in Pelosi's words, has proven that pulling U.S. forces out before the war is won is a formula for disaster. In Korea, the decision to withdraw U.N. troops to the 38th parallel resulted in stalemate and today's despotic, nuclear-armed regime in Pyongyang. In Vietnam, the congressional cut-off of funds in December 1974 precipitated the North Vietnamese communist takeover of the entire country less than five months later. The combined losses in both wars -- more than 108,000 Americans killed in action -- should be an object lesson for this Congress. Pulling out, holding back, withdrawing support, "de-funding" the war -- whatever it's called -- is tantamount to squandering lives.

Is that where this Congress is heading? Are the lives of courageous young American volunteers like Joshua Frazier worth so little to our Congress that they would ignore our peril for perverse personal political profit?

If the morale of America's soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen and Marines doesn't have meaning to our legislators, then perhaps they should look at what America's enemies are doing. While Congress debates hollow, but ultimately damaging legislation, there is new assertiveness in Iran -- on everything from acquiring

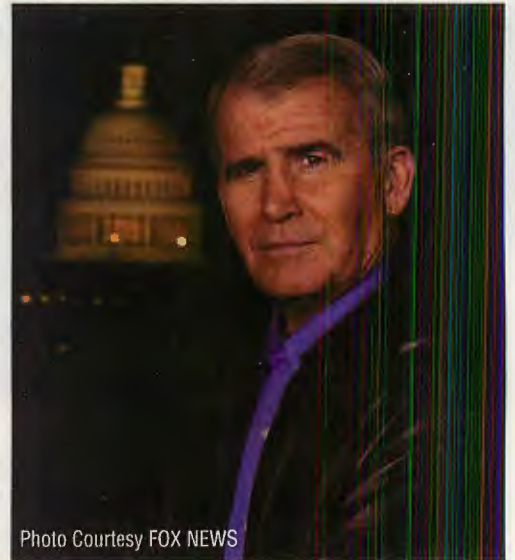


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nuclear arms to supplying terror cells in Iraq with advanced weaponry. Tehran's radical Islamic theocracy headed by Grand Ayatollah Khamenei doesn't have to worry about "resolutions of non-support," but they are very adept at measuring American ambivalence and uncertainty.

This week's "show and tell" of captured Iranian sniper rifles, surface-to-air missiles, mortar rounds, sophisticated "explosively formed penetrators" and evidence of Iranian complicity in killing more than 170 Americans elicited nary a peep from the new Congressional leadership. They were more concerned with their pet resolution -- and getting Pelosi a bigger military airplane for her commute between Washington and San Francisco. That's a telling signal to Tehran that our Congress is backing away from protecting our vital interests and our troops.

Nero fiddled as Rome burned. Today, Congress diddles as Americans die. Tomorrow, we may all pay the price. ☒

Oliver North is the host of "War Stories" on the FOX News Channel. To find out more about Oliver North, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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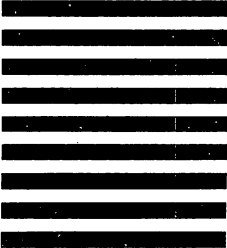
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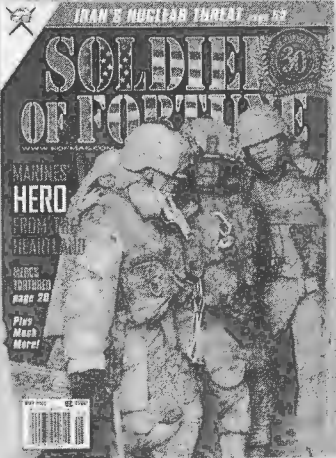
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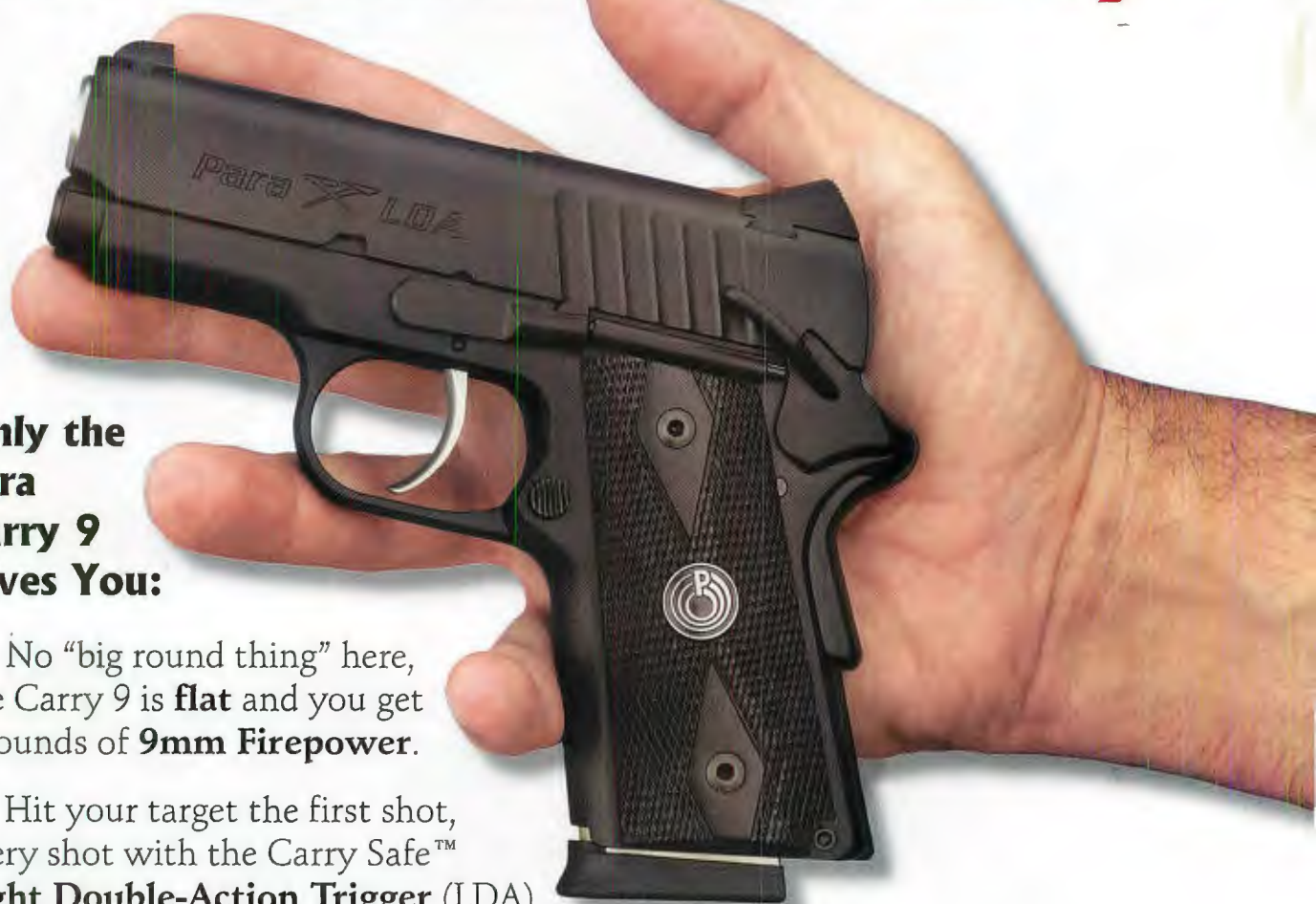
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