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TABLE OF CONTENTS

December 2007 • Vol. 32 No. 12



ON THE COVER
Painting of Lima 85 by Keith Woodcock that hangs at CIA Langley Art Gallery.

FEATURES

SOF WILD BUNCH AND THE GUERRILLA WAR IN EL SALVADOR 12

Part IV, by Dr. Martin Brass
The Right Wing Salvo Military and SOF support the Contras. SOF Chronicles Saga of Former U.S. Marine Who Helped Change Course of History

RICARDO'S REVENGE 27

by John Stryker Meyer
A U.S. SOG team extracts a devastating revenge on the NVA

WILLIAM MORGAN: MERCENARIO EXTRAORDINARIO 34

by Jay Mallin Sr.
A Yank With the Highest Rank in the Cuban Army Fights and Martyrs for the Cuban Revolution

THE SHOOT DOWN AT LIMA SITE 85 42

by Steve Stibbens
An Ultra Secret Story Since 1968, When a Civilian Pilot Becomes a 'Helicopter Ace' After His Flight Mechanic Shoots Down Two Russian Fixed Wing Aircraft, and Destroys His Flying Career

AIR COMBAT FIRST - 52

The Painting by Keith Woodcock
by Steve Stibbens
An American Heroism Unveiled at CIA Langley Art Gallery

U.S. RIFLE, CALIBER .30 M1 62

Part II by Gary Paul Johnston
The Best Battle Implement Ever Devised?

AMERICA AT WAR

A MARINE'S WAR DIARY 68

by GySgt Patrick Tracy
Nothing in my 18 Years Experience Comes Close to the Realities of No-Kidding Close Combat

TERRORISM SITREP 60

by Dr. Martin Brass
Pakistan—Bombing Plot Conspirators Train in Germany; Eritrea to be on Terror List; Saudi Arabia Exports 2000 Terrorists; Iraq—Christians Crucified; Phillipines—Amnesty to Communists; Iran—Ahmadinejad Challenges President Bush

COMMON SENSE 82

by Col. Oliver North, USMC (Ret.)
"Circus Maximus"

COLUMNS

COMMAND GUI DANCE 6

by Steve Schreiner
Texas Ranger Lasers in on Media Distortions

FLAK 8

Kudos for Harry; Bad War Gone Badder; BATF Apologist for Fed Sting

BULLETIN BOARD 10

We Goofed.; Are your Investments Terror Free? New Replacements for Ma Deuce

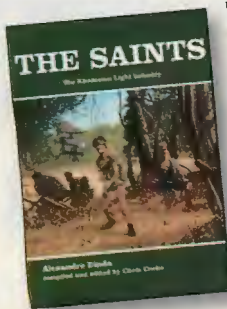
ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER 70

by Denise Convertito
War is Coming Home Video Game, World in Conflict: Laser Devices Introduces Blast 2 and LAS/TAC 2; Quantico Tactical Supply, A Leading Supplier of Apparel, Gear and Weapons to Military, Federal Agencies and Law Enforcement; Blackhawk Wears its Pants—Its Internal Tourniquet System Saves Lives.



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THE SAINTS The Rhodesian Light Infantry by Alexandre Binda; compiled and edited by Chris Cocks, author of Fireforce

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Steven Schreiner

Texas Ranger Vents

In March of 2005, H. Joaquin Jackson, member of the National Rifle Association's (NRA) national Board of Directors and retired Texas Ranger was invited to be a guest on a Public Broadcasting System's (PBS) radio station talk show, sponsored by Texas Monthly magazine. (See SOF story of Joaquin's colorful, adventure packed Texas Ranger career an.2007).

The interviewer for PBS was Evan Smith, editor of Texas Monthly

SOF (Sept 2007): Joaquin, you have had a long and storied career in law enforcement.

HJJ: Yes, I served for a total of 36 years as a State of Texas police officer. The first nine years of my career were as a State Trooper and the next 27 years as a Texas Ranger. I took an oath of office to protect and preserve the Constitution of the USA, including the Second Amendment, and I will draw my last breath doing so.

SOF: You have expressed frustration at the way the interview was conducted. Please explain?

HJJ: The interviewer (Evan Smith, editor of Texas Monthly) delivered his questions in a rapid-fire, demanding fashion. Rather than focusing on my book, One Ranger: A Memoir, as I expected, he bombarded me with questions about what are commonly referred to by the left-wing anti-gun press as "assault weapons" and the use of what he referred to as "high capacity" ammunition magazines. When I tried to give a full and complete reasoned answer to a question, he would cut me off in mid-sentence, and in a very aggressive tone of voice, demand answers to new questions that he hammered out in rapid-fire fashion. That style doesn't fit in with my way of life in Alpine Texas, my part of the world. I never got to completely finish my answer to any given question during the PBS interview. Basically, what I wanted to explain was how I view the possession and use of what are loosely referred to as "assault weapons".

SOF: Please elaborate.

HJJ: To be precise, the only true "assault weapons" in my opinion, are carbine-length shoulder fired arms, capable of selective fire and firing intermediate powered rifle cartridges.

SOF: What is meant by 'selective fire'?

HJJ: That term means that the firearm is capable of operating in two modes: semi-au-

tomatic, or one shot fired for each pull of the trigger, and full-automatic, or a continuous stream of fire when the trigger is pulled, until you let up on the trigger or you run out of ammunition. You must have both features for the firearm to be classified as an "assault weapon" in my opinion, which is what I was trying to get through to the PBS talk show host. What I wanted to say, and the way I feel, is that true "assault weapons" are capable of full automatic fire, but that there are many semi-automatic only versions of these rifles around in private hands."

SOF: What do you call these firearms?

HJJ: I refer to them as semi-auto rifles. I did not get to add that comment on when I was discussing the full-auto, selective fire definitions during the PBS interview because the talk-show host kept cutting me off.

SOF: What would you have added on the subject of these kinds of firearms?

HJJ: I think that any law-abiding citizen of this country, private citizens, police and military should be able to acquire and own semi-and fully automatic weapons of any type they want.

SOF: You mentioned that the interviewer had asked you about high capacity magazines?

HJJ: Yes. I think that anyone should be able to own any kind of magazines for their firearms that hold as many cartridges as they want.

SOF: What about hunting with these types of arms?

HJJ: For hunting, I think that the most in the way of cartridge capacity that a person would need would be five rounds, plus one in the chamber. This is the usual capacity in the hunting regulations for the taking of big game. To reiterate what I was trying to tell the PBS talk show host, I do not want to see semi-or full-auto weapons in criminal hands, but they are, anyway. I don't have any problem with any law-abiding citizen being able to own semi-automatics, and with a permit, even ownership of fully automatic weapons. They can have as many as they want, with as many high capacity magazines as they want. Many lawful citizens have semi-automatic firearms for recreation, self-protection or hunting and that is their Second Amendment right. I will always support that right.



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FLAK

Salute to Claflin from El Salvador

I was pleased to read "Portrait of a Warrior" SOF Sep 07

I had the opportunity to meet Harry Claflin here in El Salvador during the war. The first time I met him, he was giving some training to infantrymen in the Second Brigade in Santa Ana.

But Harry was surprised to find an English-speaking Salvadoran-American, a true admirer of the United States and its people, U.S. Army Vietnam veteran, a former infantryman from the recon platoon of the HHC 1/35 Inf. of the

25th Infantry Division, "The Tropic Lightning", that had volunteered for Vietnam in 1964. That made us become friends fast.

I still have the Newsweek where he appeared in the magazine cover with the title "U.S. Soldiers of Fortune in Central America". Some reporter took a picture of Harry with soldiers from a long distance, without him noticing. Because of that, he decided to leave El Salvador, but he returned afterwards. When I saw him again, I had him sign the front cover of the magazine.

I had the opportunity to participate with Special Operations Group GAMMA in several combat jumps.

I jumped from the same Huey with Harry, Capt. Michael O'Donovan and Sgt. Rene Cardenas and earned our SOG Jump wings. I will never forget that jump, we

almost landed in a mine field. Rene Cardenas had a leg open fracture which made it impossible for him to make any future jumps. He was an experienced Green Beret, veteran of three wars: Korea, Vietnam and El Salvador. He left El Salvador and now lives close to Fort Bragg. Because Cardenas was sent to the hospital, I became a translator to Harry Claflin and helped him coordinate activities with the Special Operation Group (GOE) and with the Paratrooper Battalion.

Harry saw combat action with the Paratrooper Battalion during the final offensive of November 1989 and was in heavy combat operations in the outskirts of San Salvador.

The guerrillas had many casualties and were unable to take the city, although they caused a lot of damage. It was something like the Tet Offensive, with actions in many fronts of the country.

Continued on page 80



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X-15

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BULLETIN BOARD

WE GOOFED

In the October issue, we misidentified the suppressor in a cutline for the article on the Masada assault rifle on page 79. The suppressor on the Masada was from Surefire, not Advanced Armaments.



Also, in the November Adventure Quatermaster, we put up the wrong photo with the promo for the GG&G lens covers for the EOTech Holographic sight.



Are your investments terror-free?

Debra Burlingame's brother was the pilot of American Airlines Flight 77, which was hijacked by terrorists and flown into the Pentagon on 9/11. Now, she is proposing to hit a state sponsor of terrorism where it hurts – by pulling investments from companies that do business in Iran, which has sponsored numerous terrorist attacks since 1979.

Pork from the Homeland Security Budget

Well, it was bound to happen. Just like any part of the budget, sooner or later, Homeland Security funding was going to be seen as just another source of bacon for politicians to bring home, despite warnings from the 9/11 Commission that such things should not happen. Worse, there seems to be little oversight. One audit reported that funds went for a bingo parlor, limos, and a bus.

The solution is obvious...

The XM312 had been slated as a replacement for the U.S. military's aging Browning M2 machine guns (known

Continued on page 54

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**THE
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WILD BUNCH

THE RIGHT WING SALVO MILITARY AND SOF SUPPORT THE CONTRAS.

In the first three parts of the saga of the American Merc, Harry Claflin, Harry described his exciting nine year stint as a merc working for the Salvadorans during the decade long civil war. Harry may well be the American who played the lengthiest role in helping the Salvadoran government fight the left wing opposition supported by the Soviet

Union, Cuba, and the Communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

THE CONTRA FIASCO

"Spring of 1985, I get an urgent call from SOF to get back to the United States. It was an emergency, RKB told me."

The adventure seeking Harry's

lust for intrigue and urgency were on high alert. RKB was about to implement yet another one of his schemes.

"The Salvadorians and I put some plans on hold. The other American recruits for RKB's venture, which we shortly found out was to train the Contras, flew into Denver where

from left to right: Jack Thompson, standing, is a former Marine, Viet Vet and veteran of the Rhodesian SAS. Behind him on horse, is Claflin, kneeling is "Pecos Bill," to his right is John "I.W. Harper", legendary CIA explosives expert, behind Harper, is LtCol. John Boykin, USA, (Ret.) and on far right on horse is RKB. Photo: Topaz

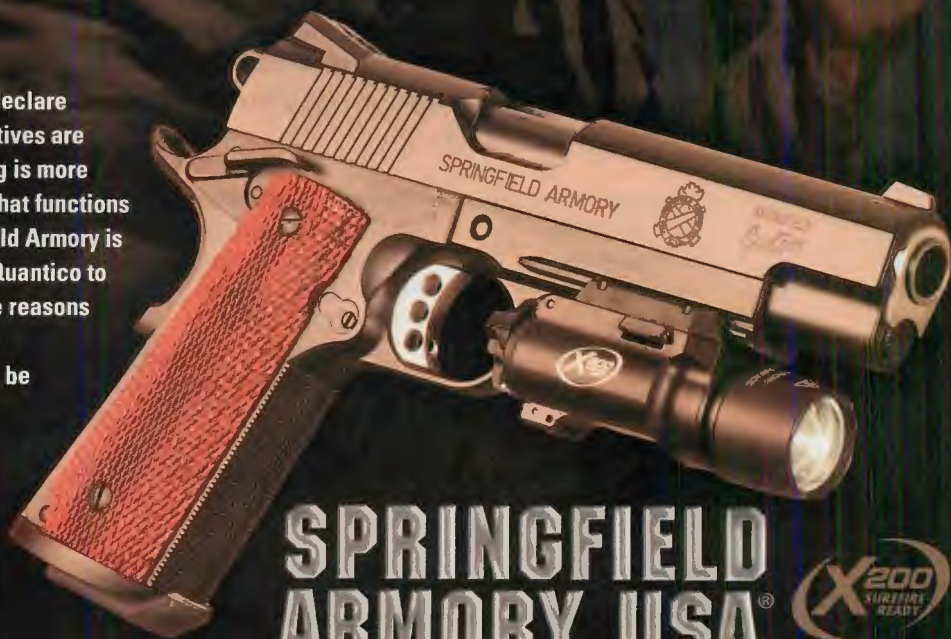
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WILD BUNCH continued

RKB immediately warned us that the whole operation was to be clandestine. RKB puts us up in a hotel-- the posh Brown Palace in Denver-- this is all top-secret stuff.

It would take a very creative mind to imagine that a bunch of tall, muscular mean looking; scruffy, bearded guys with killer eyes would have any sort of chance to blend in with the stuffy, fat cat suit types booked into the Brown Palace Hotel.

"I'm down at the bar and I'm told that Major General John Singlaub was going to interview us for a special mission in Nicaragua. Singlaub was to be the Commander.

THE FORMIDABLE MERCs

"RKB recently recruited retired Lt. Col. John Boykin, who had been the deputy commander of the El Salvador MilGroup, had been in Special Forces in Nam, and was CO in Ranger School, to serve as team leader. "Topaz", a superb SF Medic that RKB had met in Nam was to conduct medical training.

Claflin received fame but no fortune when his photo appeared on cover of 3 November 1986 issue of Newsweek. Publicity got him kicked out of El Salvador

Jack Thompson, small arms and sniper specialist, and John "IW" Harper, a legendary retired CIA demo expert, and RKB rounded out the wild bunch. I was to handle ammo and small units tactics," Harry recalled.

U.S. Major General John Singlaub, USA (Ret.) had been an OSS member during World War II. He served as Chief of Staff of the United Nations and U.S. Army Forces in South Korea in 1977. He retired that year after he publicly criticized President Jimmy Carter's attempt to withdraw U.S. troops from Korea.

"We were driven up to Fraser, Colorado where Singlaub lives. He brings us in one at a time up in his office, which was outfitted like a war room. He grilled me about Force Recon, SpecOps, how long I



had been in El Salvador. We were interviewed and accepted and then found out what the big picture was.

ORDERS FROM THE GENERAL

"Gentlemen, you will leave here and travel to Tegucigalpa with your equipment and link up with members of the Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense (FDN). You will then be taken to Camp Las Vegas, the main Contra base on the Nicaraguan border. There, you will set up and conduct training for select units for deep penetration operations into Nicaragua," Gen. Singlaub was in combat mode.

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"The length of training for the mission will be 90 days, starting from the time you get to Camp Las Vegas. Training sites have already been selected, and the Contra units will be there waiting for you. Each of you is an expert in your field, so you need not be told what to do. Thank you, and good luck", the short, scraggy, powerfully built commander said.

Little did the General know.

"We were going to train up the Contra's elite commando unit like we had trained the GOE (Grupos Operaciones Especiales) in El Salvador.

"Singlaub implied that President Reagan was behind this. Don't forget that Singlaub had worked with Casey, the Director of the CIA during WWII, so we assumed that Casey had signed off on this," Harry said.

JUST ANOTHER GUY IN A SUIT

Indeed, Singlaub was a zealot, and a prominent member of the World Anti-Communist League. He was going to fight the Leftist Sandinistas that had taken over Nicaragua, and along with William Casey, Richard Secord and Oliver North, was later charged with involvement in the conspiracy to provide arms to the Contras.

"I'd seen Ollie North down there in early 1985 when I was in the office of Col Renkin, the leading U.S. Air Force advisor in El Salvador's office. As far as I was concerned, North was just another person in a suit. Lots of people came in and out of that office, where I had my desk, but I didn't pay any attention to them since it normally had nothing to do with

me. I didn't know who North was until I saw him on television. It was two or three times I had seen him, with each visit being a few months apart."

It wasn't until much later that Harry realized the impact North would have on the Contra situation and on the next wild adventure he was about to embark on.

WHERE ARE THE CONTRAS?

"We get everything set up. We fly to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, with two

continued on page 20



Clafin proved to be a diligent, effective instructor of Contra troops. Photo: Topaz

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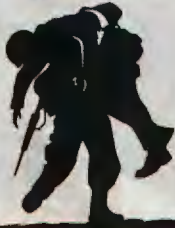
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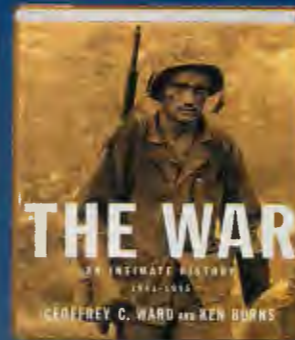
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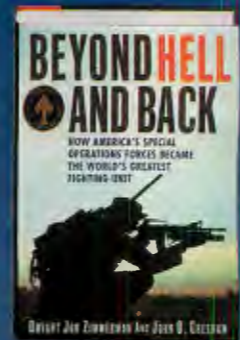
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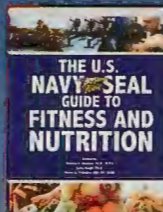


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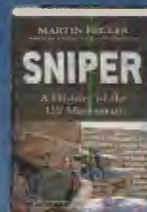
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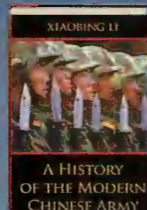
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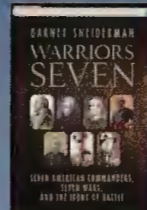
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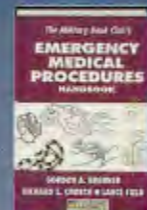
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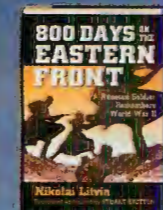
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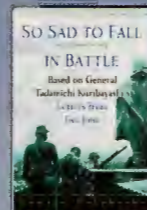
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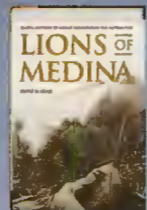
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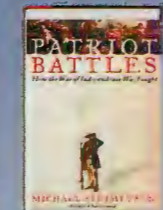
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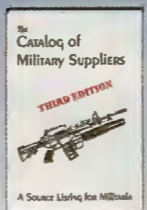
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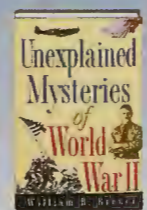
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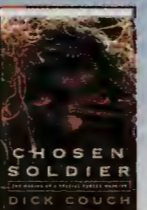
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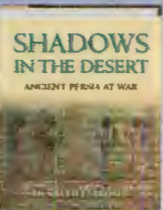
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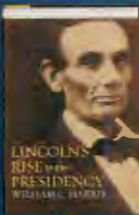
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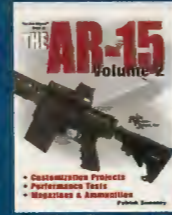
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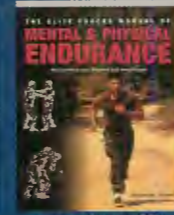
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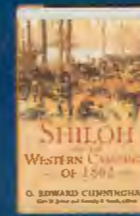
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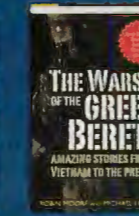
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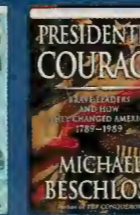
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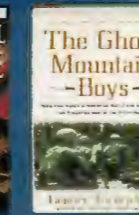
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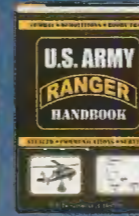
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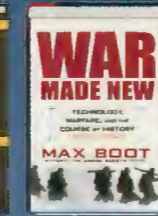
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WILD BUNCH continued

tons of gear where we were supposed to be met by a Contra delegation.

"Our SOF readers believed in the cause and donated the tons of equipment and gear," RKB interjected proudly.

"Nobody was there," Harry continued describing the debacle. "Singlaub must have thought he was still a general in the U.S. army and that everyone would jump to his command. Not so with the Contras.

"The customs people were looking at us funny. We were there with illegal military supplies and bomb making material. Boykin contacted Mike Lima, a prominent Contra combat leader, who had lost a hand in a mortar accident.

"He welcomed us, 'nice to see you. What are you doing here?'"

"We have some gear here," he said.

"We'll bring some trucks over," he said.

"He brought one little Toyota pickup, which wouldn't put a dent in the load of medical supplies, training gear, uniforms, and a mess of other equipment.

"They go back and get some more trucks and take us over to this house. We get to this house that has no furniture and they tell us that this is a safe house. IW and I bunk up together; Boykin is in the room with Topaz. We stay there for about a week twiddling our thumbs with

nothing to eat but our C rations while the Contras are trying to get their act together.

"They are contacting different people, among them the Calero brothers, Mario and Adolpho, who we had seen in Florida on our way down and were supposed to coordinate the mission in Honduras.

"Then finally RKB shows up and we move to a hotel. This is like March of 1985. RKB, enraged, calls Singlaub, who calls Mario Calero, who gets transport for us to go to Camp Vegas, the main Contra base. It had been hacked out of the jungles and the last hundred miles of road was nothing but a bulldozed trail," Harry said.

THE BELOVED CAMP VEGAS

"Camp Vegas was right on the border with Nicaragua. One hundred yards away was bad guy country, and we were always concerned about being ambushed. It took us 14 hours bumping along in Toyota pickup trucks to get to the base. It was 100 miles of nightmarish, rocky, miserable hell and endless checkpoints that took hours to clear."

RKB recalled with distasteful clarity. "We could see Sandinista bunkers on the hillsides maybe 300 meters away. Not a good feeling.

"We pull down this mud road and we see these huts in the middle of the night and it's raining like a pig. We pull up to the gate and we go in. A guy meets us. They are talking. Finally we go down a very muddy lane to another bunch of huts. We drop our gear on the muddy dirt

floor," Harry chimed in.

"Gonzales and I are sitting on our rucksacks with a poncho over us and that's where we spend the night.

"The next sound we hear is the cock a doodle do of the roosters. We ate more of C rats.

"COMMANDER 380"

"The base commander Enrique Bermudas, code named "Commander 380" comes down, 'Hey, how you doing? Good to see you. So why are you here?' he queried, without a clue as to what was going on.

"RKB explained to him we had come to train this commando unit to make raids into Nicaragua. But 380 had never been advised we were coming, and the Contra commando unit was doing dirty deeds deep inside of Nicaragua.

"The major purpose was to circumvent the U.S. Congress that had cut off aid to Contras in Nicaragua," RKB remembered his frustration at how the pea brained Congress was constantly interfering with his mission to save Western civilization.

"We wanted to conduct operations and give a morale booster to the Contras from the private sector, to make up for the U.S. government's bailing out before the job was finished," RKB said with disgust.

"We moved from the leaky bamboo huts to another area. The GOE were already in Nicaragua, and we're in Honduras," Harry continued the tale of the great muck up.

"So we get up there and we put up our tents up by ourselves on a hill. We probably had two hundred

(Left) John "I.W. Harper, CIA demo expert, found Contras concept of security to be nada. He put six civilian contras through a crash course in demo and sabotage but they were not given war names or cover stories as to why they were gone from their homes for seven weeks. They were all scarfed up by the Sandinistas within 30 days of their return home. Photo: Topaz

(Lower left) Contras cheered as the cook shack burnt to the ground; broke the monotony. Photo: Topaz

(Lower right) Commander 380 and RKB discuss merits of heavy machine gun in Contra headquarters on the Nicaraguan border. Photo: Topaz



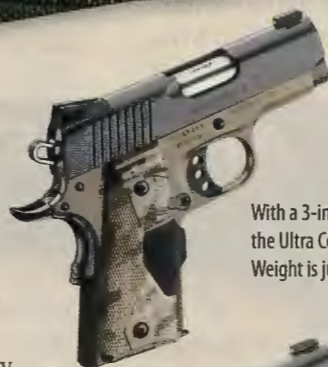


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Continuing the Legacy

WILD BUNCH continued

supply kits. We thought, 'Hell, we're here, so we'll train somebody. We'll start putting together some basic programs of instruction,' Harry said.

OH THE SACRIFICE— SOF WILD BUNCH IN A DRY LAND

"The first weekend, on a Saturday afternoon," RKB recalled, "380 came by and took us in his pickup down to a little country store five hundred yards from the Nicaraguan border. It had a dirt floor and the goods were hanging from the walls and the ceiling. Hypothetically, there was no alcohol in the camp.

"Now there's never been a camp in the world that doesn't have alcohol," RKB spoke from vast experience.

"This is where we could actually buy it. We had not known Bermudas before. We had at least a few cervezas, things started to loosen up as the alcohol made strangers into friends, as it has been known to do.

"After we became more familiar

with each other, we brought up, 'Hey, what's the plan?

PLON, PLON? We Have No Plon

"Bermudas said 'PLON PLON? We don't have no PLON. We sat there in shock.'"

"Here he is, possibly in the midst of some Sandanista spies, and he's sitting here and saying,

"The Sandinistas are always sending in spies to find out my PLONS. I have no PLONS," even RKB, not exactly known for his smooth organizational skills, was shocked

"We all get pretty well smashed, then piled back into the trucks," Harry continued the tale of the cheerful SOF Wild Bunch's misadventures.

"380 says, 'By the way, there's Nicaragua'. We have no guns. We get back to the base and these Contras had imbibed at least as much booze. They start shooting up in the air in celebration, about what, we never figured out.

"We are up in our tent. They had



"Pecos Bill" was our liaison with Contra Headquarters. Allegedly an officer in the Somoza army, the El Salvadoran Army and the U.S. Marine Corps, his stories had more holes than a soup strainer. Photo: Topaz

assigned a spy to us, Pecos Bill, who shows up on a mule, wearing a mixture of cowboy and combat gear, sunglasses. He's inebriated to the brim, too, and he steps outside the tent and rips off a 30 round magazine. Boykin does the same thing.

"We go to sleep. The training with 380 and his team the "Tigers" starts



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the next day since we are confined to the 'camp'.

HARRY AND GOLIATH

"This Boykin guy is 6'6". We were going to show them unarmed defense. I said, in a well choreographed way, 'Here is how to defend yourself from a bayonet attack'.

"Boykin makes a full tilt run at me with a bayonet on a rifle.

"I'm going, 'Son of a bitch!' I slap the bayonet to one side and catch the stock. This big SOB ain't cutting loose. I got him on the ground. He goes on with the bayonet. I had to put my boot in his sternum.

(Now, you'd have to know Harry as well as I do to know that Goliath didn't have a prayer).

"'You want to play, I'll play!' I took the rifle and stuck the bayonet in the dirt next to his neck and he knew I was serious. I told him

'don't ever do this again or you'll pay!'"

"I drove the point home--this is serious training. I could tell that the Contras were wondering, 'do we have to do this too'?"

"For the next four weeks we trained them in weapons maintenance, marksmanship, and basic small unit tactics. These people had no military training at all.

"God knows what the CIA had been doing before we got there," RKB commented.

"Basis weapons training took up a lot of time. Aimed fire was a new concept for them. It was a good thing that the Sandinistas were no better.

"Topaz spent the whole time teaching basic life saving techniques to a number of the brighter ones: Starting IV's, stopping sucking chest wounds, keeping wounds clean, setting broken bones.

"He also had another problem to take care of as it turned out that about 95

percent of these kids had some kind of VD.

WEAPONS FROM THE RUST BINS

"I was up to my neck in rusted-out MGs which consisted mainly of M60s and RPDs, the M60s having frozen gas pistons. The overall condition of the guns was rubbish. It was plain the Tigers had not a clue about how to disassemble their weapons, let alone how to maintain them. We took care of that," Harry said.

"Raggedy FN FALs, Spanish CETMEs, AKs of all types and M14s were in no better shape.

"RKB took a visit to the bushes, and returned with our personal bodyguard, not much taller than his AK-47, probably 10 or 11 years old.

"He faithfully stood guard all night.

"Things are coming along pretty good.

"Then the rocket attack hit.

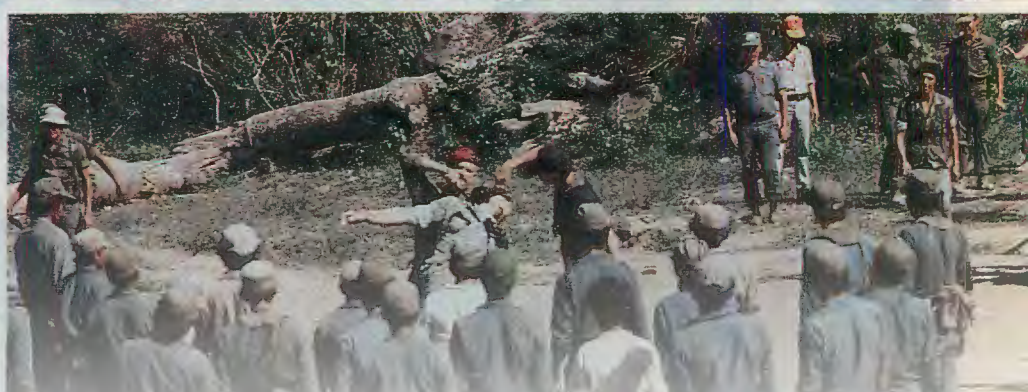
THE ROCKETS ARE COMING

"The Katushka came in on a Saturday morning, around 0900.

We had just sat down to a feast of rice and beans when suddenly the sound of Katushka



Commandante Enrique Bermudas, aka "Commander 380" had no strategic plan to defeat the Sandinistas. He ignored the warnings of RKB and Hugo Hartenstein, former 82nd Airborne trooper, not to return to Nicaragua as he would be assassinated. However, he did and was. Photo: Paul Fanshaw



rockets ripping the air apart hit about 200 yards from our tent. This got our attention.

"The next thing we knew, there were nine more missiles pounding down on us. There was a deep ditch behind our position and we dove into it during the three minutes we figured we had before the next barrage, all except RKB. Looking around I saw RKB sitting on his cot in his underwear taking pictures of the rockets coming in. I hollered at him to get his ass down here and he told me to 'get lost'.

"Oh, well. you pay your nickel and take your chance. We spent the night in the ditch. The next day 380 came by and told us we had to leave because there had been some KIAs at Camp Vegas, and it is a bit difficult to conduct training in the mist of incoming rockets, so we went to Tegucigalpa. John Boykin and I went to El Salvador to pick up some mortar sights and to get M-60 links and to pick up Thompson.

I OWE YOU A PUNCH IN THE NOSE

"We left Camp Vegas after we got rocketed," RKB joined in. "I had it out big time for a fat smart ass Cu-

ban exile, Mario Delamico who took away our brand new UZIs before we went back to Tegucigalpa. This guy was something else: coke bottle sunglasses, some type of black "Death from Above" T-shirt covering a belly that protruded over his belt, fat cigar and .45 auto in a fast draw holster, a "Mr. Combat—arrogant, pompous, and fat. 380 told him to provide security for us back to Tegucigalpa but he took off never to be seen again. I still owe you a punch in the nose you fat turd," RKB has a long memory when it comes to taking away his toys.

"In Tegucigalpa, we hunkered down in a hotel while waiting to find another training site." Harry said.

Harry went back to Camp Vegas.

"We got rocketed again and there was a rumor we were going to get attacked. 380 had moved us to a nice compound where his compound was" RKB said

"RKB, Harper, Topaz and I decided it was time to get off the bulls eye to get a view of the action," Harry recalled. "There was a tall mountain at least a half mile high to the west of us.

SPITTING SKOAL AT ROOSTERS

"The contras had a relay station up on top and anti-aircraft gunners. We thought, 'if we are going to get attacked, lets go to top of hill so we can see it coming'.

"It took us to almost dark to get on top. We could see the war going on between the Contras and the Sandinistas from our panoramic view of the river, green tracers going one way, and red tracers going another. Next morning we came back to camp. Nobody had told 380 where we had gone, and he's in a tizzy because he thought we were MIA.

"They move us from there to a hospital area, such as it was. This hospital was where all the commandos wives came to have their babies. Nothing like being put into the middle of a couple hundred pregnant women.

"We spend another week there at hospital thumb twiddling and RKB spends his time spitting his customary stream of Skoal at roosters because he hated them for waking us up every morning.

"We lumber back to Tegucigalpa and I fly back to El Salvador.

"Remember, in Honduras pos-

(Top) SOF training team and Claflin train Contra Tiger Force in small unit tactics. Photo: Robert K. Brown (Top, Inset) Claflin demonstrates how to take out a sentry. Claflin impressed the Contras with his ability to conduct multi-hour training sessions. Photo: Robert K. Brown

session of military equipment is a big no-no. I have my military gear and the little Honduran custom gal opens this bag up with military equipment. I have a beard and long hair and she asked me if I was in the military. I flash an Estado Major

military El Salvador card. She looks at me, looks at ID card and says 'OK'.

"I am back in El Salvador, I call the base and say, 'hey, I'm back'. The Salvadorans send a helio and fly me back to Ilopongo.

THE FONZE

"In 1985, after the Iran-Contra fiasco, I was working with the Airborne Battalion when Col. Renkin, the leading U.S. Air Force advisor in El Salvador had me come over to his office. This is when I met the "Fonze", Jerry Fontana, retired SF who had served in SOG, in Vietnam and in Delta later on. Col. Renkin asked me if I knew anything about putting up Quonset Huts. I told him from what I knew it was like putting up an erector set.

"Good. You have two to build and ten days to do it in", he said, as if I had a choice.

"The "Fonze" was the point man for the Contra re-supply mission in El Salvador. The "Fonze" and I hit it off and became good friends. General Bustillo gave me about ten men from base maintenance and we were in business.

"The next CIA proprietary Southern Air Transport plane delivered components for the huts and we went to work. We were about done when the General showed up late one evening and told me the door was on the wrong side. No problem. We unbolted it and moved it to the other side. I had learned that when you lived on the General's base you did what he said. When the Fonze showed up the next day he jumped my ass that the door was on the wrong side. I told him the General wanted it on this side and if he wanted it moved he needed to talk to the General. The door stayed.

"After the buildings were up, Col. Renkin asked me if I would stay and help with

continued on page 58

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Ricardo's REVENGE

Text by John Stryker Meyer

A U.S. SOG team extracts a devastating revenge on the NVA



A South Vietnamese H-34, code-named Kingbee. Photo: Author.



What You See is Not What You Get

Because he looked so young, most people thought Ricardo Gonzales Davis was a PFC. Wearing fatigues with no visible rank or insignia didn't help matters. When people saw Davis with his buddy, Jim Lamotte, they often assumed Lamotte was the One-Zero of RT Copperhead because he was so serious and intense. But it was Davis who was the team leader and not only a very well-respected recon man, but had served a tour of duty with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam before volunteering to join SF and SOG.

One afternoon a REMF came into the CCN recon bar in Da Nang

while Lamotte, Davis and team member Bill Werther were discussing targets. The REMF walked up to Davis and started berating him. "You're the one who ain't been nowhere, and ain't done nothing." Everyone in the bar could hear. Momentarily stunned by the REMF's accusation, Davis stood silent.

Don't Mess With Lamotte

Not Lamotte. A Detroit-born street fighter and an expert in the Okinawa martial arts style called Isshinryu, he stepped in front of Davis, and told the REMF, "You've got it all wrong. It's me who ain't been nowhere and ain't done nothing. You owe him an apology." When it was clear an apology wouldn't be forthcoming, Lamotte pushed the big mouth outside and once again quietly requested he apologize.

Instead of repenting, the REMF threw what turned out to be his first and last punch. The wiry Lamotte broke the fellow's jaw and knocked out a few of his teeth with a round-house kick that sent the desk jockey sprawling. The REMF was ejected from CCN the following day.

In early March 1969, Werther was given a team of his own on Davis' recommendation. A short while after Werther left RT Copperhead, Davis and Lamotte and four indigenous soldiers were inserted into a Laos target some 12 kilometers west of Kham Duc, the site of an old SF A Camp that had been overrun by the NVA in early 1968. From the moment the team hit the ground, the mission was plagued by communications trouble. Ditto during the night.

Special Forces members of RT Copperhead in early 1969, from left, Ricardo Gonzales Davis, Bill Werther and Jim Lamotte at CCN.

Ricardo's REVENGE

The NVA Take Out a Hero

In the morning, Davis realized the NVA was trying to push RT Copperhead towards a ridge line, beyond which lay open fields with no cover. He directed the team into a tangle of fallen trees, positioning them near the uphill end of the haphazardly stacked logs. Lamotte recalled years later that "Ricardo (Davis) came up to me, trying to bring a little levity to our situation, and told me, 'I'm going to take a shot at you pretty soon, just so you know what it feels like.'" Lamotte smiled, but had the distinct feeling he would not need Ricardo's help getting shot at because Lamotte could see Anh, the team's tail gunner, signaling urgently that NVA soldiers were close. Very close!

Before Lamotte could finish processing Anh's warning signal, his hand gripping his throat, AK-47 gunfire erupted on three sides of RT Copperhead. Four rounds slammed into Lamotte's ruck sack, driving him face first into the ground and destroying his main radio, a PRC-25. Lamotte said, "As I was falling to the ground I heard Davis call out, 'Jim!' I yelled back to him, 'Wait one, Dave.' I bounced right up, firing on full automatic. I fired at least three magazines before I slammed a magazine in at a bad angle, causing the CAR-15 to jam."

Then suddenly there was a complete, unearthly silence. And in that soundless instant, Lamotte knew Davis was dead.

Why Don't You Surrender

Lamotte quickly searched around for Anh, only to discover the fearless Nung lying motionless. Then, an NVA soldier said in English, "American, why don't you just surrender?"



CCN in Da Nang, facing east toward the South China Sea. Photo: Author

"I flipped out," Lamotte said, "I rolled over onto my knees, yelled, 'Fuck you, you motherfuckers!!!' and fired on full automatic, which was pretty stupid on my part, because they returned fire, a lot of gunfire."

Lamotte had been so focused on the taunting NVA that he failed to see an enemy soldier taking aim at him from his left flank. The team's M-79 grenade man, Troung Van Lac, threw his body in front of Lamotte just as the enemy fired. Although Troung caught a bullet in the side, he was nonetheless able to kill the NVA soldier. Moments later, another NVA soldier took aim at the unsuspecting Lamotte, and again Lac shielded him with his body, catching a second enemy round, this one in his arm.

The impact slammed Lac into Lamotte, who spun to his left and fired his weapon, killing the NVA troop. Unable to hold the grenade launcher because of his arm wound, Lac remained undaunted and, in a remarkable show of determination, told Lamotte where to aim the M-79 so Lac could pull the trigger and "kill beaucoup VC." It was a lesson in dedication and determination Lamotte would never forget.

We Realized We Were Going to Die

During the next lull, as the NVA maneuvered to surround RT Copperhead, Lamotte and the three remaining Nungs huddled together in the tangle of dead trees for a brief,



reflective moment. "We got together. The PRC 25 was wiped out. I thought the URC 10 (emergency radio) was dead, too. We hadn't heard from anyone since our insertion. We cried. Then we smiled at each other. We realized that we were going to die," Lamotte said.

As that gut-wrenching realization was settling in, and as each man quietly made his final accommodations, Lamotte heard a distinctly American voice faintly saying, "Roger May Day signal. Roger May Day signal." Lamotte thought he was hallucinating, but what he was hearing was a pilot's voice coming over his secondary, emergency radio, the URC-10 he thought had been destroyed during the firefight. Miraculously, it was still working. But Lamotte hesitated. "I somehow knew I was dead already and I didn't want to bother with it. I was ready to die. Right there."

But the Nungs weren't. Sang, the indigenous team leader, who recovered the radio from where Lamotte had dropped it, thrust the small hand-held radio into his hand, and depressed the "speak" key. He forced Lamotte to communicate. The calm, American pilot

on the other end broke him out of his debilitating "my-life-is-ending-now" trance. The pilot said two F-4 Phantoms were moments away and ready for action.

While Lamotte worked the radio, the NVA continued closing in from all sides. Lamotte gave the jet fighters the map coordinates of the team's location and popped a shiny at them and told them to bring the gun run right on top of it.

The NVA Get Close to the Belt

As the F-4s screamed down from above, the quartet of RT Copperhead survivors burrowed under the logs like the snakes they were named after, just as the NVA overran its position. "The NVA were doing as they always did, getting close to the belt, as they called it, our belt. However, the Vulcan cannons (of the F-4s) were screaming. We could smell the cordite, the blood, the guts ... We didn't have a second to spare. Hell, if those Phantoms had been a second or two later, the NVA would have killed all of us. All of us."

As the fast movers finished up their first run, Covey noticed another wave of NVA moving toward the fallen trees. Covey quickly got word to the F-4s, who banked a sharp turn, and came roaring back with an offering of 250-pound bombs. The bombs hit so close to the team they knocked Lamotte flat on his face. Once again Uncle Sam's Air Force had saved the day for a SOG recon team. Lamotte spent the next four hours orchestrating airstrikes around the team, as more and more air support arrived in response to his Prairie Fire Emergency - the code name for Laos in SOG was Prairie Fire and a Prairie Fire Emergency brought any US aircraft to that team's location. The situation rapidly turned into a symphony of destruction. The secondary explosions were too numerous to count.

Yet, even after four hours worth of brutal pounding, the resilient NVA amazed Lamotte when they

opened fire and heavily damaged the first two helicopters as they made their approach to extract the team. The two choppers were forced to break off and seek safety. However an audacious third Air Force HH-3 pilot, seemingly unfazed by what he had just witnessed, somehow managed to slip safely into a nearby stand of trees, and the remnants of RT Copperhead were able to reach it under a hail of covering fire. Lac had lost so much blood he couldn't walk or move, so Lamotte had taken the 6-foot strand of rope he carried for emergencies and tied Lac to his back. This left his hands free to fire his CAR-15 as he fought his way toward the waiting helicopter.

After setting his wounded grenadier into the helicopter, Lamotte turned and observed more than a dozen NVA soldiers running around some trees and heading straight toward the already revving HH-3. "As I charged off the chopper toward them, one of the Air Force Para-Rescue Airmen tackled me. They dragged me onto the chopper. I wanted to kill those bastards that got Davis and then go get his body. Again, I was flipping out as the damned helicopter lifted off. I couldn't bear to leave him and Ahn behind."

A Flawless Insertion

What was left of RT Copperhead made it back to CCN. A short while later, Werther and Lamotte teamed up to run a target in Laos to find a suspected enemy bunker complex and rest area along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The 10-man effort launched from Quang Tri. With five men on each of two 101st Airborne choppers, RT Copperhead enjoyed a flawless insertion into the target area. At first light the next day, Covey checked in with RT Copperhead and gave Werther an exact fix on the team's location. Covey then headed farther north to insert another recon team in an unrelated operation. While Covey did his thing, RT Copperhead moved

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south, parallel to the ridge line, until it found what was clearly a very heavily traveled trail, one with hundreds of NVA boot prints in evidence. All the prints were pointing south down the trail. When Covey reappeared overhead, Werther took the opportunity to get another exact position fix. The team continued moving south for another hour until it was stopped in its tracks by the sounds of clanging pots and pans and the smell of cooking fires.

When two NVA soldiers crossed the trail in front of them, Lac and Sang took them out with single shots. The two gunshots instantaneously turned the NVA breakfast bivouac into a beehive of activity. Most of the disrupted troops charged north toward RT Copperhead, which had immediately executed a fallback toward the ridge line where Werther had received his last fix from Covey. Needless to say, its return progress was made at a much quicker and noisier pace. The need for stealth had vanished in a heartbeat; now it was run for your life.

First Wave of NVA Down, Second Approaching

RT Copperhead took up a defensive position; within minutes a line of eight NVA troops was moving up



(Left) An AK-47, weapon of choice of NVA. (Below) USMC "Scarface" Cobra gun ships on mission assignment over Laos. Photo: Author

the mountain toward them. They were unaware of the team's exact location, so were probing in the hope of finding them. Werther pulled out his sawed-off grenade launcher and signaled Lamotte to use his as well. Two of the Nungs took notice and added their M-79 firepower to the first salvo fired toward the advancing NVA soldiers. The four high-explosive rounds hit the unsuspecting enemy with devastating force. All eight died instantly.

Another wave of determined NVA, still unaware of RT Copperhead's precise location, moved steadily up the mountain looking to attack as soon as they could pinpoint the team. As they advanced, Lamotte moved to the right flank, where he and a Nung team member had already killed several NVA. During a brief lull, Werther contacted Covey and reported, "We're in heavy contact, over!" Covey calmly replied that he had help standing by. This was good news, excellent news in fact, but Werther



opted to delay asking for a gun run by the air assets. "We were kicking Charlie's ass without any help and it felt good. It felt real good, actually," he said. "They kept coming, unclear as to where we were exactly and we mowed them down, mostly with single shots or M-79 fire."

Again Werther heard a torrent of heavy gunfire from the right flank. When he made his way over to that side of the team's perimeter, he was amazed, but pleased, to find Lamotte smiling at a pile of deceased NVA who died trying to reach him and his team mate. "I'll never forget that moment," Lamotte said, "when Bill came over to me and said, 'Blazes, you've been busy. Real busy.' And I didn't say it out loud, but to myself I said 'this is Ricardo's revenge.'" The monkey had scrambled off Lamotte's back, and it was business as usual.

Time For a Bomb Run

As Werther appraised the team's admittedly dicey situation, he saw a full NVA platoon massing down the hill. It was clear it was preparing to deploy against RT Copperhead. These new troops were in addition to those that were already hurling themselves against the team from three sides. RPGs screamed over their heads and exploded in the trees above them. Another barrage of RPGs was launched just as an

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NVA machine gun opened fire from the left flank. A fusillade of M-79 fire from Werther and his M-79 grenadier silenced it, but the RPGs kept right on coming.

As the NVA platoon finally began advancing up the mountain, Werther called for the first of the loitering A-1Es to make a bomb run. The old warplane instantly delivered 500-pound bombs dead center into the advancing NVA. As the RT Copperhead team members were bounced by the concussions and showered by debris, a second A-1E roared across Lamotte's right flank, nailing the enemy troops in their tracks with its deadly rain of ordnance. As the smoke and dust cleared, all the team could see was a twisted mass of trees and bodies.

As devastatingly effective as these runs were, there was no time-out in the action. Werther immediately vectored another airstrike toward what appeared to be a bunker complex farther down the mountain from his position. The fighters roared in right on target and hit another bull's eye. The bunker complex erupted in a violent explosion, followed immediately by a series of secondary detonations.

We're Kicking Their Ass

In typical understatement, Covey announced to Werther, "The

AO is too hot. We gotta get your asses outta there." Werther agreed, looked at his watch, and discovered that the team had been in heavy contact for 20 minutes. Somehow it had seemed longer. What a day we're having, he thought. We have no wounded, no dead. He crawled over to Lamotte to let him in on the latest developments and found the Detroit street fighter back at the top of his old fighting form. Lamotte gave him a giant bear hug and said with a big shit-eating grin, "We're kicking their ass!"

Werther told Lamotte to save CAR-15 ammo and start tossing hand grenades instead. Shortly after several fragmentation grenades had been thrown down the hill, Werther yelled, "Here they come!"

The enemy launched yet another wave of attacks on the team's right flank. RT Copperhead dug in more stubbornly while continuing to strike like a pit viper. Enemy dead were stacking up like cordwood all around their position. Werther counted more than 60 bodies spread out down the mountain side. Those were the bodies he could see. In addition, Lamotte and his indig had stacked up dozens more on the right flank. It was mass carnage, pure and simple.

Covey finally gave Werther a compass heading to an LZ and then

directed more airstrikes onto the hard-charging NVA. RT Copperhead moved away from the killing zone and into a small, wooded patch atop the ridge line. It was time to get out. When the first helicopter dropped extraction ropes to the team, Lamotte asked Werther if he could deploy a claymore and be the last man out. Werther nodded yes, as the first five men, including Werther, were lifted out.

Martha Raye Grieves a Hero

The chopper with Lamotte, was moving forward and dragging the remaining team members through the jungle, bouncing them off trees like puppets on strings. Lamotte was unconscious. Werther was first to land at Quang Tri, and he was instantly out of his rig and on hand when Lamotte's limp body came bouncing in along the ground. Werther quickly reached him in the cloud of dust being kicked up by the rotor wash. He anxiously cut the

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hand strap and rolled Lamotte over. Lamotte gave Werther a dizzy grin and said, "I must have passed out, Bill. My back, my legs, they really hurt."

"Davis would have been proud of us today, Jim," Werther replied.

Once they cleared the LZ and settled the indigenous team members, Lamotte and Werther made their way to the launch commander's office, where Major Bill Sheldon congratulated them on completing a very successful mission. He told



them the entire bunker complex appeared to have been destroyed. There were so many secondary explosions Covey couldn't count them all.

At CCN a few days later, the much-loved female singer, Martha Raye (who had been made an honorary Green Beret) returned to the small bar in the recon area where earlier that year she had sung a duet with Ricardo Davis. She recognized Lamotte and with her trademark enormous smile, asked him where Davis was.

"I had to tell her the bad news," Lamotte said. She went outside, where Lamotte found her crying like a baby. "I put my arms around

her and we cried our eyes out together over Ricardo."

It would be many years before Lamotte and Werther could come to terms with the death of their friend, Ricardo Gonzales Davis. But together they knew that they and the indigenous of RT Copperhead had extracted a devastating revenge on the enemy that took his life, and that helped more than a little in easing their pain. ✖

Editor's Note: The author, John 'Tilt' Stryker Meyer ran reconnaissance missions in SOG on ST/RT Idaho from 1968 through 1970 at FOB 1 in Phu Bai and CCN in Da Nang, and is the author of the book On The Ground, available from realwarstories.com (314) 291-7975.

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"6th Degree Okinawan Karate Black Belt and Former Marine Sounds Off About Matt Furey and all the Hype Surrounding his Combat Conditioning Program"



by Mike Storms

Every time I heard about Hindu Pushups and Hindu Squats I wanted to spit right in his face!

"What a liar this guy Matt Furey is." That's what I thought when I read this guy's hype-dense ads about his bodyweight exercise program called *Combat Conditioning*. Look, I'm no sucker for junk exercise programs. Not only have I lifted weights for years, but after 26 years in martial arts where I've earned a 6th-degree Black Belt in Okinawan Karate — and six years in the U.S. Marine Corps, I've seen it all. So to say I didn't believe **Matt Furey** when he said you can get kick-butt fit with his bodyweight calisthenics would be an understatement. Not only have I been in the USMC and been in martial arts for a long time, but I played football for most of my life and have served as the martial arts instructor for the **New Orleans Saints**. So there's no way I was going to fall for a rinky dink routine like Furey's.

Not only that but I trained with Jesse Kellum, who is pound-for-pound one of the strongest men in the world. At 220 lbs. he benched over 800 pounds and squatted 1000 pounds. I, myself, could bench over 400 pounds and dead lift over 600.

Pain, Pain, Go Away

Even so, despite my immense knowledge and background, I couldn't shake this nagging feeling that Furey might be right about what he was claiming, mostly because my shoulders, knees and back were in constant pain from my weight training routine. Yes, I was strong, but I was paying a heavy price. No one likes pain — I don't care how much you think you "can take it" — after awhile it's not worth it. And Furey's program promised to get me stronger and more flexible without all the joint pain I had. Not possible, I thought.

My main fear, other than being in MORE pain, was that I'd lose the strength and size I had gained from weights. Then I read about the **Great Gama** of India, a wrestler who followed Furey-style training — and he was unbeaten in 5,000 matches. In terms of size and strength, Gama was amazing. He was 5'7" and 260 pounds of streaming steel. And that was in the early 1900's — long before steroids.

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

I also recalled how **Herschel Walker**, a *Heisman Trophy* winner and *All-Pro* Running back did 500 pushups and situps each day. So that made me think even more, especially because Furey's exercises were supposed to be far better versions of these pushups and situps.

A Swift Slap in the Nuts!

But the final straw for me was when I met Furey IN PERSON in November of 2001. Both of us happened to be in the same hotel in Phoenix, Arizona. I introduced myself to him and he politely shook my hand and nodded. I could tell he was in great shape, but I had no idea HOW good until I playfully flicked a punch at him later that day when he was walking down the corridor. Without missing a beat Furey reacted faster than a cobra. He slapped me in the nuts and kept right on walking. He never even broke stride. I stood in awe. I had never had anything like that happen to me. An hour later I met Furey in a restaurant, took out my Platinum American Express card and gave him carte blanche. "Send me whatever you have that will help me," I said. A few days later I received my first package from Furey in the mail and I've been hooked ever since.

If you think what you are reading is nothing but marketing hype — then let me ask you why do you think I now train the 350+ students in my dojo in Mandeville, Louisiana (Mike Storms Karate) in *Combat Conditioning*? I train young kids as well as adults in these exercises. WHY? Because they flat-out work. They boggle the mind while getting your body into ready-for-battle condition.

In Furey's *Combat Conditioning* he challenges YOU with a test. 100 Hindu squats, followed by 50 Hindu pushups, then a one-minute back bridge.

Let me tell you, when I first got the book I figured this test would be easy, I got started. At 40 Hindu squats my thighs were blitzed. It took about 90 seconds; not long compared to my barbell squat routine at the gym.

Next, I tried the Hindu pushups. Funny thing is my legs

were still shaking. I dipped down and pushed back. At 15 my arms were throbbing. This couldn't be. No way. I could bench like there's no tomorrow and this exercise was niking me. I stopped at 27 reps. This took about 1.5 minutes, so my workout had only been 2.5 minutes long.

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

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

1. I blow-torched off my excess body fat so quickly that I could eat more than I normally did and still look better than ever.
2. I packed and chiseled functional muscle onto my legs, chest and back that I've never had before, even from weights.
3. I simultaneously doubled my strength and flexibility — and did so without needing separate workouts for each.
4. I quadrupled my endurance inside of 30 days. Just think how much this helped my sparring. No matter what, I NEVER get tired.
5. The chronic back and shoulder pain I had from years of heavy squats, deadlifts and bench pressing went away within a couple weeks. And much of that pain had been with me for nearly 10 years. It's GONE now.
6. I sleep like a log. Eight hours of deep sleep is no longer a goal. It's automatic. As soon as I hit the rack I'm out like a light.
7. My self-confidence knows no bounds. Especially when I got compliments from people who hardly paid attention to me before. I honestly believe there is nothing I cannot do. I'm on top of the world.
8. I can train anywhere. I don't need more than a few square feet of carpet or pavement and I'm all set. I have absolutely no excuses and my body is loving me for it. I don't need any equipment. Just my own bodyweight.
9. I get a kick-butt workout done in 15 minutes or less. Sure, I could do more — but I've gotten incredible results with this amount — so why ruin a good thing?
10. I've turned back the clock. My friends tell me I look 5 — 10 years younger. Awesome!!
11. I have an explosive type of strength that weights couldn't give me. My movements are super fast even when I'm just screwing around.
12. My muscles are like a pliable and powerful tiger — ready to pounce on prey in a heartbeat.

So there you have it. The 12 reasons why *Combat Conditioning* is the best fitness program on the planet. I now do these exercises everyday and they are FAR easier than when I started. I won't go a day without them. But forget about me.

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

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

Lt Colonel George Bristol — USMC

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

**Bonner Cummings
Yosemite, CA**

Dear Matt, When I got your book, I changed my whole way of thinking about how one should train for Combatives. I am now totally off the weights, and, to tell you the truth, I have never felt

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better or been more flexible in my life. I feel great and have lost no size, strength, or muscle mass... as a result I scored the maximum number of points on the Army Physical Fitness test. HOOAH! You are doing great things, and I and the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School owe you a lot. TREAT'EM ROUGH!

CPT Judd D. Mahfouz — Infantry

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

LCpl Sandor Devenyi — United States Marine Corps

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

**D "Bubba" Byng — LCPL, USMC
"Golf" Co, MCS Battalion**

Matt Furey's *Combat Conditioning: Functional Exercises for Fitness & Combat Sports* has 48 super effective bodyweight exercises along with seven different programs that will get you into kick-butt shape fast. Order now and you'll receive 3 free Special Reports on how to eliminate knee, back and shoulder pain.

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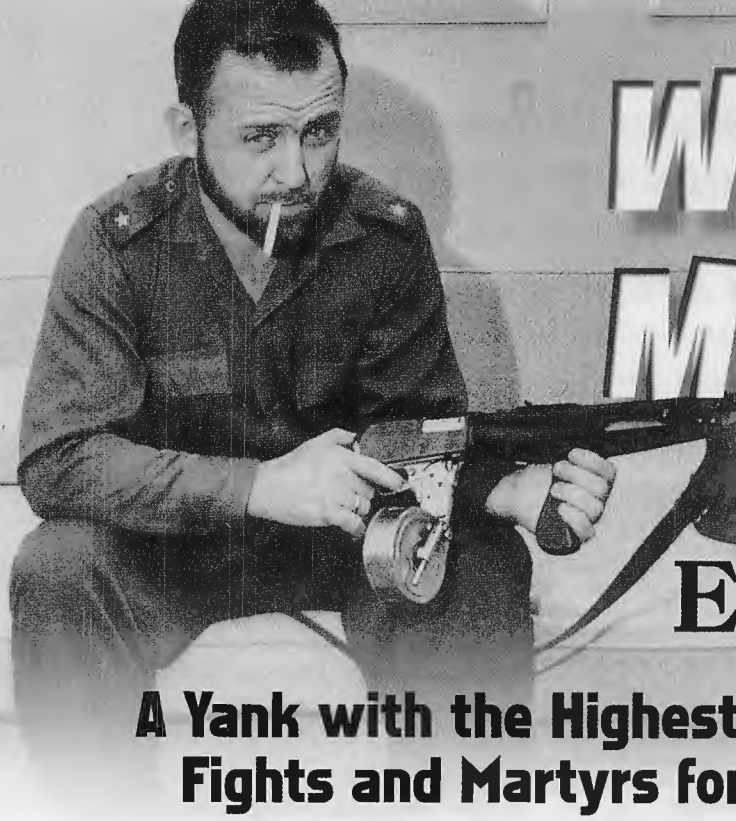
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A Rebel Among Rebels

Fidel Castro was not the only revolutionary leader that led the rebel movement to victory in the Cuban civil war of 1956-58.

The prominent American, William Alexander Morgan was one of several other militant leaders who fought against dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Morgan was born 18 April 1928 in Cleveland, Ohio. If as a baby he did not get into trouble, it was because he didn't figure out how to do so. As a teen, he hung out with a group of young baddies, ran away from school, and ran away from home.

Trouble Was His Name

In March 1946 he was picked up by the San Antonio police and a month later by the Toledo police. He was suspected of armed robbery but he was not booked. He enlisted in the Army and went to Japan, where he married a Japanese woman. (Being truly international, he would later marry an American in the States and a Cuban in Cuba.)

He went AWOL and was caught in November 1947. He was court-martialed and sentenced to three months

of hard labor and forfeiture of pay. At the stockade in Kyoto he overpowered a guard, took his pistol and uniform and escaped. Again he was captured and court-martialed. He was sentenced to pay forfeiture and to five years of hard labor.

He did his time at federal prisons in the States. Hardly a model prisoner, he fought, he attempted to escape, he tried to set a fire, and he refused to work.

After prison Morgan worked at several jobs, one probably as a merchant seaman.

In Cuba through most of the Fifties, the dictator, Fulgencio Batista ran the country. There were plots and insurrections, and in November-December 1956 civil war began with an uprising in Santiago and the landing of an expeditionary force led by Castro. One of the groups that organized to fight Batista was the Directorio Revolucionario, the military arm of the Federation of University Students. Morgan made contact with the DR, accidentally or deliberately. Adventure beckoned.

The contact was in Miami or possibly Havana, where Morgan may have jumped ship.

"I was wearing a \$250 suit, white on white shirt and \$37 shoes. I looked like a real fat-cat tourist -- but I only had four dollars in my pocket," he described his landing in Cuba.

Training for an Insurrection

The Cubans, who had recruited him for his military background, took him to a camp near the Escambray Mountains in central Cuba. Morgan -- according to former Capt. Roger Redondo, who was present at the camp -- was "all red, fat ... he had no shirt on." His body was covered with scratches because of a rash caused by a local weed. He was suspected of being a U.S. intel agent.

Leader of the rebel group was Spanish-born Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo who led his 29-man band on forced marches during which Morgan began to lose weight.

When Menoyo judged that his men were ready, they moved into the mountains. Ten days later they successfully ambushed a five-man army patrol, which was Morgan's first firefight. The army launched an offensive in an effort to destroy the guerrillas, but the rebels force-

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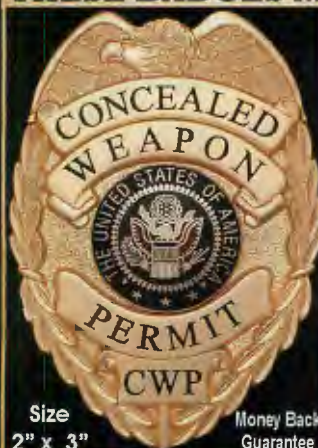
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marched hundreds of miles up and down mountains to elude their pursuers.

Blind Adventure

Morgan's struggle with learning Spanish led to at least one blind adventure. On one occasion, Menoyo ordered him in Spanish not to go down either of two roads.

In an interview with Robert Brown (yes, the SOF's RKB) after the war, Morgan said: "I remember Eloy telling me something about 'dos caminos' [two roads]. So I had my group of ten men move down one of the two roads stretching before us. A short while later we were trapped in an army ambush. We fought some 150 soldiers for two and a half hours. We killed 40 of them."

Morgan, the von Steuben of the Escambray, instructed his recruits in tactics, weaponry, discipline, unarmed combat and knife fighting. As a guerrilla leader, time after time he led his men on successful operations.

A Leader of the Second Front

Redondo recalled: "He was commander of a guerrilla [unit], which could be anywhere from five to 12 men. Later on, he was made commander of a column, and ... later on he was made commander of a zone ... Every time there was anything important to be done where all the

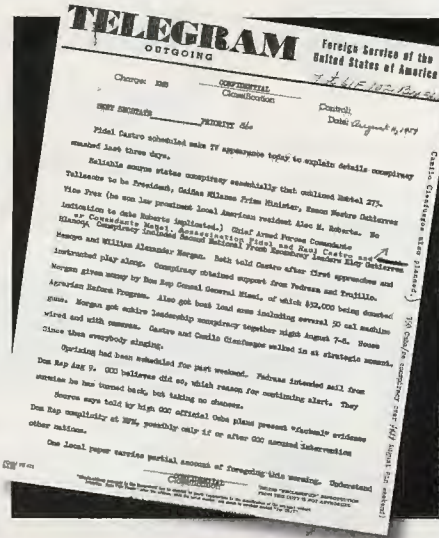
chiefs would meet, Morgan would be one of them."

"The Cuban army periodically sent out 2,000 to 3,000 troops in offensive thrusts into the mountains to hunt us down and destroy our small bands. We were always outnumbered at least 30 to one. Some 20 or 30 of us would stay on the soldiers' backs; we wouldn't let them alone. As soon as one group would break off, another would take up the attack. That was how we had to fight," Morgan told Brown.

Revolutionary Fever

Revolutionary fervor spread across the island. Recruits, some of them experienced urban fighters fleeing the police, marched up the mountains and joined the guerrillas. The guerrilla group survived army attacks and eventually went on the offensive.

By mid-1958, the guerrillas had control of the Escambray Mountains. The rebels numbered about 800, with an additional 150 or so in training. A



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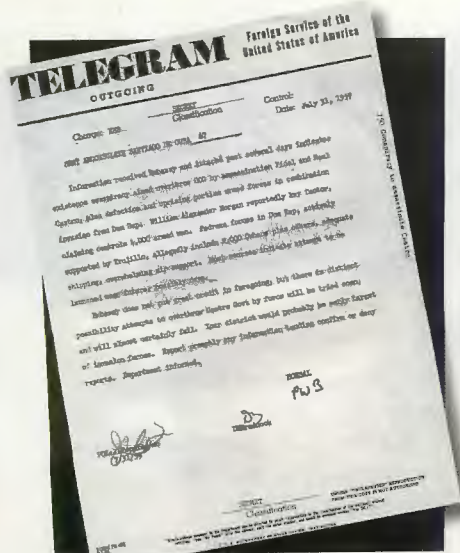


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by carrying a wounded rebel on his back to safety.

Trouble in the Rebel Camp

A split developed within the DR, and approximately 300 guerrillas led by Menoyo became the Segundo Frente Nacional del Escambray. Morgan, who was now a comandante -- equivalent of Major, which was the highest rank in the guerrilla forces -- stayed with Menoyo.

The Escambray were a lot closer to the capital at Havana than was the Sierra Maestra -- a fact not lost to Castro, operating in the Sierra Maestra. Castro dispatched two of his top aides, comandantes Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, with small groups of guerrillas to set up new fronts in central Cuba. Cienfuegos went to the north; Guevara entered the Escambray to the south.

There was friction between Guevara's and Menoyo's troops; at one point Menoyo disarmed "Che's" men. But an agreement of cooperation was negotiated.

Cienfuegos, one of Cuba's major

clandestine network in nearby urban areas provided logistical and other support to the rebels who had set up several training camps. The two most sophisticated training camps housed two small hospitals, two landing strips and 28 schools.

Morgan distinguished himself when he led a rear guard as the rebels retreated after an abortive attack on the town of Trinidad and further won the admiration of his troops

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cities, lay at the foothills of the Escambray, a tempting target for the rebels. Overlooking the city on a mountain top was Topes de Collantes, a tuberculosis sanitarium converted into a makeshift fortress that protected the city. On 22 December 1958 Morgan lay siege to Collantes. Six days later it surrendered. The war was ending.

Robin Hood and the Evil Dictator

Shortly after midnight of the last day of 1958 Batista and an entourage fled the country. Camilo Cienfuegos and Guevara raced to Havana to seize the city, preparing the capital for Castro's rule.

Meantime, the Segundo Frente occupied the city of Cienfuegos and a naval base located there. Morgan became acting "mayor." When Castro arrived in Cienfuegos -- I was with him -- on his way to Havana, Morgan hosted him graciously, allowing the flamboyant Castro to do



From left to right: Morgan, one of his staff, RKB, and *Soldier of Fortune* Jack Nordeen pose for photo on top of Capri Hotel, Havana, Cuba, early 1959. Photo: Robert K. Brown collection

all the talking and hog the spotlight. The Segundo Frente and other rebel groups were dissolved. The brilliant politician and orator Castro had emerged as far and away the best known of the rebel leaders. Starting with Herbert Matthews of the New York Times, American journalists had trekked up into the mountains to interview Castro. The Cuban press was censored, but U.S. publications smuggled into Cuba kept alive the image of the Robin Hood battling the evil dictator.

The guerrillas were given the option to join the new "Revolutionary Armed Forces." Morgan remained with the military, holding his comandante rank and drawing pay of 277 pesos monthly, could do much as he pleased. He plunged his efforts into rebuilding projects in Las Villas province, site of the Escambray. He and Menoyo set up a veterans' organization whose goal was to monitor the course of the democratic progress he had fought for during the turbulent political and social revolution underway in Cuba.

Castro: Drunk with Power

Leftists from various hemisphere countries came to Cuba for guerrilla training. Castro grandly declared, "The Caribbean is ours." He launched (unsuccessful) expeditions against Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic. Discontentment rose as his regime veered from democracy into full-blown totalitarianism.

A major conspiracy developed, involving civilians, former military men, and military men on active duty who had served under Batista. The plotters contacted Menoyo and

Morgan and asked them to join the conspiracy; they agreed to do so. The two men contacted Castro and told him of their role, either out of loyalty to him, or disillusionment with the refusal of the United States to support the plot. Whether Castro already knew of the plot and the participation of Menoyo and Morgan is not known.

Castro burst into a "secret" meeting of the plotters. He mocked them, pointing to each in turn and telling him what government post he expected to get once the conspiracy succeeded.

(Another version that later circulated was that Morgan and Menoyo were in on the plot from the beginning, possibly even in cahoots with Castro, who wanted to eliminate potential enemies.)

I obtained details of the affair and filed an exclusive account which front paged in the Miami News. The next day I ran into Castro, who asked me how I had obtained the information.

Fortunately for me, Castro prefers to talk rather than listen, and he did not wait for me to answer. I could not have revealed my source, an anti-Castro figure.

At the time the Dominican Republic was ruled by iron-fisted Rafael Leónidas Trujillo. Trujillo, who had provided aid to Batista, was enraged that Castro tried to overthrow him. Cuban exiles in the Dominican Republic who were in contact with the anti Castro conspirators asked Trujillo for support. Seeing an opportunity to get revenge against Castro, he agreed to assist the plotters. A shipload of weapons was smuggled into Cuba. Morgan went to Miami to pick up \$52,000 from the Dominican

Continued on page 55

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The SHOOT DOWN at Lima Site 85

An ultra secret story since 1968, when a civilian pilot becomes a 'helicopter ace' after his flight mechanic shoots down two Russian fixed-wing aircraft ... and destroys his flying career.

By Steve Stibbens

THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

It was two weeks before Tet-68 and North Vietnam had become very interested in northeastern Laos – especially that mile-high jagged limestone pinnacle called Phou Pha-thi, the Sacred Mountain, barely a dozen miles west of the Laos-North Vietnam border, 100 miles south of Dien Bien Phu and 160 miles west of Hanoi.

It was January 12, 1968 and another one of those lousy flying days over northern Laos. Air America Capt. Theodore (Ted)

Moore, of Reno, Nev. was flying his Bell 204B Huey between the layers of cloud and fog, trying hard to avoid contact with a rock in the clouds like Phou Pha-thi, a peak that was ugly and threatening. With flight mechanic, Glenn Woods of Columbus, Ga. as his "kicker," Moore was hauling "hard rice" – 105mm howitzer ammo – between the Hmong artillery positions that surrounded the rocky 5,800 ft. peak.

Something on the horizon caught Moore's eye. A black spec in the distance was heading southward from the North

Vietnam border just beneath a cloud layer. Moore realized he was looking at an aircraft that was closing with him. Fast.

"It's a MiG!" he yelled to Woods. Moore thought the swept-wing fighter was coming for him. At 6,000 ft., he was a sitting duck. Moore decided very quickly he would not be a slow, unarmed target.

He shoved the collective arm to the floor of his helicopter and throttled the turbojet engine up slightly. Suddenly, it was very quiet as the Huey dropped in auto-rotation. The still-turning



Antonov An-2 "Colt" similar to those that attacked Phou Pha-thi on Jan. 11, 1968

blades served as a brake to soften the fall somewhat. With artillery shells in the back, it was still a very rapid descent. Now Moore was behind the cover of the sacred mountain and the MiG streaked by overhead, barely 200 ft. above the Pha-thi ridgeline and disappeared northward to cross into North Vietnam just 15 miles distant. Not wanting to auto-rotate all the way in to the wild jungle below, Moore nosed the helicopter upward and poured on the power to brake the downward plunge.

■■■ MAKING THE DELIVERY

"Let's deliver this stuff and get the hell out of here," Moore said to Woods. He figured they'd had enough excitement for today. Moore figured the MiG was probably making photos of the box-like containers installed atop Pha-thi on November 1.

Flying blue-and-silver aircraft around the imposing rocky mountains and lush green valleys of northern Laos in 1968 could be hazardous to your health – especially so if it was an unarmed Bell 204 belonging to Air America, the "civilian airline" owned by the CIA.

Flying in the winter was particularly challenging. The wet season was not over and with the daily rain came the "smoke season." Joining the fog and layers of dense clouds, there were intense billows of smoke as the Hmong and Yao mountain tribes renewed their age-old slash-and-burn agriculture.

Without navigation aids, the old timers had memorized most of the mountains, air strips, helicopter pads, rivers and karsts – those straight-up craggy pinnacles of limestone and unbelievably wild vegetation. They called it visual terrain recognition.

Air America crews were non-combatant. Under the CIA's direction, they hauled rice and people. Sometimes, they hauled ammo around for the CIA-directed Hmong guerrilla army of Gen. Vang Pao.

To this day, no one has been able to explain why the North Vietnamese used Russian-built biplanes instead of more sophisticated aircraft to attack the

summit of Pha-thi on January 12, 1968. Perhaps they, too, wanted to avoid blatant violation of the 1962 Geneva Accord.

The day after the MiG flyby, Ted Moore and his flight mechanic, Glenn Woods were again moving 105mm artillery ammo from the top of the mountain to re-supply the Hmong guns down the mountain.

■■■ BANDITS SIGHTED

"I looked up and saw them flying from east to west coming right out of North Vietnam and heading for Pha-thi," Moore said. "A formation of four Antonov An-2 'Colts' approaching the mountain. We had a scattered cloud cover about 1,000 ft. over the top so I called the guys on the ground and told them these biplanes were coming in on them. They said 'Watch 'em.'"

"It looked like WWI all over again," he said. "I couldn't believe my eyes. The day before, it was a MiG-17. What the heck was going on?"

Two of the Colts broke from the formation and bore down on Phou Pha-thi.

"They started bombing and strafing the place with rockets and machine guns," Moore said. "There was nothing I could do but watch from an unarmed helicopter."

Moore was wishing he had the Gatling mini-guns and rockets of UH-1 gunship he flew around

Vietnam's Mekong Delta with the legendary "Cobra" platoon of the U.S. Army's 114th Assault Helicopter Co. After he took a slug in the arm from a Viet Cong gun, he left the Army after six years to join Air America.

CALLING FOR HELP

"My idea was to try and bring in some air cover, some Navy fighters, from the Gulf of Tonkin," Moore said. "But I didn't have the radio for it, or the frequency. Besides, I doubt if fighters could get low enough with all the cloud cover."

Above the cloud layer in a Pilatus Porter – a single-engine STOL (short takeoff or landing) aircraft – was Walt Darran, who had flown Navy fighters until 1967 when he switched to Continental Air Services, a company like Air America.

"I was making some rice drops in the area," Darran said. "I was heading back to LS-36 (a Royal

Capt. Ted Moore with his UH-1 Huey in the Mekong Delta as a pilot with the 114th Assault Helicopter Co. before joining Air America in Laos.

CREDIT: Photo courtesy Ted Moore

Laotian Army base) to refuel when Ted Moore screamed over the radio that two biplanes were strafing and bombing LS-85.

"We were the only ones in VHF radio contact with one another at the time and since I was higher, I transmitted a message to 'CROWN,' an orbiting C-130 with radios capable of relaying messages from Laos and Vietnam to the U.S. 7th Fleet out on Yankee Station."

Darran said fighters were scrambled, eager for some air-to-air contact with the biplanes. By the time they got there, it was all over.

"All the while, I was pissed



as hell that I was almost out of fuel," Darran said. "I was familiar with the Colt. When I was in the Navy, they'd send us out on 'Dawn Patrols,' looking for the rascals."

A DESPERATE MEASURE

Glenn Woods tapped Ted Moore on the shoulder. After yesterday's MiG encounter, Woods was ready this time.

"Captain Moore, I've got an AK-47 with armor piercing tracers in my suitcase. You want to go after 'em?"

"Sure," Moore said. "I tilted the aircraft a bit and Glenn just kicked the 105 ammo out."

Moore said he didn't stop to think about the violation of orders that no Americans carry weapons in Laos despite their everyday combat flying.

As Moore chased, the lumbering canvas-covered behemoths made three passes at the summit of Pha-thi, each bombing and strafing with rockets and machine guns. Moore estimated they dropped about 50 bombs, which were actually jury-rigged 120-mm mortar shells shoved through tubes placed in the bottom of the Colts.

The other two Colts continued to orbit in the distance, then departed the area. Moore figured

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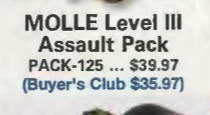
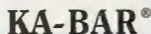
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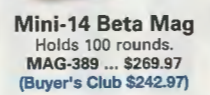
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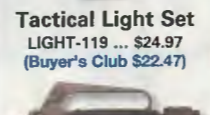
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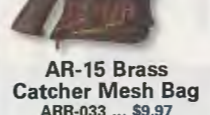
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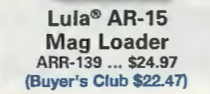
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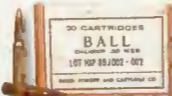
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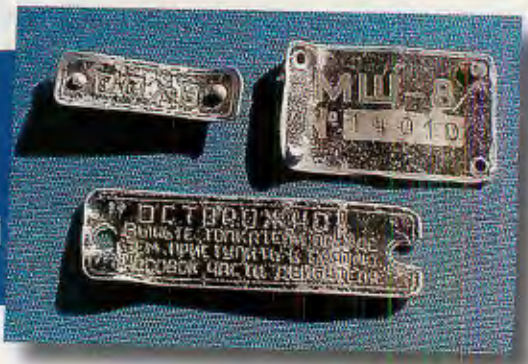
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Photo courtesy Ken Griswold, Raven Intelligence, LS-20A, 1969

These tags were taken from the engine of the crashed "LS-85 Colt" that exploded. One tag shows the Serial Number of the Russian radial engine: No. 14010. Longest tag in Russian roughly translates: ATTENTION or CAUTION Unwind before opening access/door.



they were back-up.

"The An-2s were a little faster (at 140 knots top speed against the Huey's 120) but I knew I could catch 'em and surely out-manuever 'em," Moore said.

FATAL ERROR

"Then they made a fatal mistake," he said. "They dived down into the valley which was several thousand feet below me. When they couldn't get through a low cloud cover, they had to pull up to get over the mountains ahead. That's when I closed in.

"The climb slowed them down," Moore said. "Since I was

high, I could dive on them and pick up some speed. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I knew Glenn was ready to do some shooting. So, we would close with the enemy and shoot them down."

Moore said he was reluctant to get too close to the biplanes.

"I had no idea if they saw me or not," he said. "We got within a stone's throw of the first one, about 150 to 200 yards, and it looked very big with that 11-ft. wooden prop, but we couldn't see inside the aircraft. I didn't receive any fire from them.

"I figured if, for some reason, we couldn't down them and

they decided to come after me, I needed room to maneuver if we had to get the hell out of there," Moore said. "So, I wanted to make sure Glenn got 'em pretty good."

FIRST KILL!

Moore positioned the Huey above and behind the nearest Colt.

"When he turned toward the border, he exposed himself to a hell of a kill," Moore said.

Woods pointed the AK-47 at the wing over the cockpit and



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emptied a magazine of AP tracers. The Colt pulled up abruptly, then fell off on one wing, dove into the trees and burst into a huge fireball on impact.

"I don't know if my heart was beating or not," Moore said 39 years later. "I got this big sudden adrenaline rush when I realized that this doesn't happen to helicopter pilots at all. I just knew it was a big deal and we had to give it a shot."

By the time the second Colt made another pass at the mountaintop, the Hmong and Thai guards on the ground were firing wildly into the air. Against the withering ground fire, the biplane pulled up and headed for the North Vietnam border, first diving into the valley, then pulling up.



SECOND KILL!

Moore said he was unable to get as close to the other Colt. The An-2 was headed more west-

ward, he said, and would have to veer northeast to get back into North Vietnam. It was still trying to climb out of the valley to cross the mountains when Woods emptied another magazine at the biplane.

"It was ahead of us and lower," Moore said. "The Colt abruptly pancaked into a mountainside and broke into many pieces but there was no big explosion."

Moore said there was no question that Woods shot down the other aircraft. The wreckage was quickly retrieved and hauled to Vientiane for display in the square across from the Russian Embassy. Moore said, "All the bullet holes were through the top. The plane was not hit from below."



EMERGENCY LANDING IN THE JUNGLE

After the half-hour chase, Moore was critically low on fuel.



Antonov An-2 "Colt" similar to those that attacked Phou Pha-thi on Jan. 11, 1968



Stock photo of a Russian Antonov An-2 "Colt" being used as a crop duster.
CREDIT: Steve Stibbens Collection

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SHOOT DOWN continued

"I found a little landing pad in the jungle that I didn't even know about," Moore said. "I landed and there were some barrels of JP-4. Glenn and I filled up and took off for the CIA base at Lima Site 36."

By now, every aircraft in Laos had tuned in to the frequency. They were relaying reports all over the place. The encounter quickly reached the American Embassy in Vientiane.

"The CIA called me on the radio and said, 'Do not fly that aircraft any longer. You are relieved of your duties. Stand by until further notice.' They did not sound happy."

When Moore landed at LS-36, the CIA met him with a twin-engine aircraft and bundled him off to Vientiane to face several hours of serious interrogation.

"The Embassy was unhappy because I had caused an 'international incident'," Moore said. "Never mind the North Vietnamese were attacking one of our many bases in Laos that did not exist."

The CIA in Vientiane was frantic. They wanted to know about the aircraft. Moore said they kept him in a room and came in and out. They were on telephones and radio with people in Washington, probably CIA headquarters.

HARD CORE INTERROGATION

Moore said it was a "pretty hard core" interrogation. "They were after me with some heavy duty questions coming out of Washington," Moore said. "It was back-and-forth with me. They were discussing what to do with me. I had to be handled with kid gloves."

"They asked about the gun Glenn had, but they didn't seem interested in the MiG flyby," he said. "It definitely was not a MiG-21. I'm only guessing it was a MiG-17."

"Finally, they came in with 'Jane's All The World's Airplanes' and we looked at pictures until they agreed the

aircraft were indeed Antonov An-2s, NATO code named 'Colt'," Moore said.

"Of course, I was banished from the area," Moore said.

OFF THE HOOK

"I got off the hook because (CIA director William) Colby said I was defending Americans in the fight. That's how I got sprung. In the long run, it actually finished me off as far as my career with Air America. They kind of sent me into purgatory, to southern Laos."

Moore later got a commendation letter from Ambassador Sullivan, thanking him for his part in the rescue of over 8,000 Hmong villagers fleeing ahead of Pathet Lao who burned everything in their path.

Not long after becoming a "helicopter ace," Moore resigned from Air America and returned to Reno, where he became a stockbroker.

LS-85 HISTORY

What was it all about?

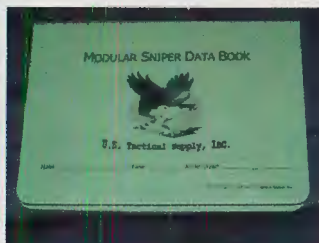
In 1966, the U.S. Air Force got the go-ahead – over the protestations of the Country Team leader, Ambassador William Sullivan – to establish a radar site on the summit of Pha-thi. Sullivan, a stiff, by-the-book career State Department bureaucrat, argued that the location was too close to Pathet Lao headquarters.

The Air Force in Saigon held that the geography of the area and the need for a site within radio and radar range of North Vietnam was more important. The Air Force won and the CIA was given responsibility for making it happen.

With its headquarters just 25 miles up the road, the communist Pathet Lao guerrilla army that wanted to overthrow the Royal Lao Government was all over the place. They had a seemingly unlimited supply of machine guns and ammo. They

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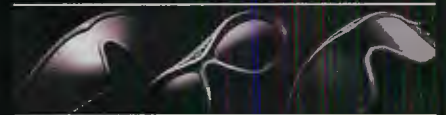
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SHOOT DOWN continued

used anything from 12.7mm to 37mm (previously given to Russia under the WWII U.S. lend lease program). Anything knocked out by U.S. aircraft or Hmong and Thai mercenaries was usually replaced by the next day.

Local superstitions – Hmong and Yao tribesmen placed great religious significance on the bleak mountaintop, believing great “phi” or spirits with supernatural control over the lives of their people inhabited the rock – were overruled.

■ ■ ■ A PRIME LOCATION

At 5,900-ft., Pha-thi Mountain was the tallest landmark in the region. At its summit was a northeast-southwest ridgeline about 2,000 ft. long and 200 ft. wide where a small but extremely important base was created. It became, in fact, one of the most secret and clandestine operations of the entire Vietnam War.

At first, only a tactical air navigation (TACAN) station had been set up on the mountain in 1966. But escalation was the theme of the day in Southeast Asia. On Nov. 1, 1967, again over Ambassador Sullivan’s objection, the Air Force installed an ultra secret TSQ-81, a portable, extremely sophisticated radar-navigational device used by U.S. bombers for all-weather precision bombing of North Vietnam targets. The TSQ-81 was the Strategic Air Command’s “Combat Skyspot” radar bomb scoring system.

Code-named “Heavy Green,” the top-secret program allowed for U.S. Air Force personnel to operation the equipment atop Pha-thi that became the centerpiece for “Operation Rolling Thunder,” the air campaign that had begun against North Vietnam.

Four U.S. Air Force officers and 44 specially selected en-

listed technicians rotated in overlapping teams from Udorn, Thailand for five-day tours. The all-volunteer group was “sheep-dipped” as civilians. They were actually discharged from the Air Force, then hired and paid by Lockheed Aircraft Service Corp. At the end of the operation, they would return to the Air Force.

■ ■ ■ SECURITY MEASURES DENIED

Requests to bring in U.S. Army Special Forces for security at the top secret post were denied by Ambassador Sullivan, called “The Field Marshal” by CIA and Air Force personnel for his strict management style and adherence to the Geneva Accords.

It was Sullivan’s embassy staff in Vientiane that vetoed arming the Lockheed “civilians” and Air America personnel. “Civilians don’t carry weapons,” they said.

Air Force Major Richard Secord (better known years later as

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a major general involved in the Iran-Contra scandal) was the senior military officer directly involved with site defense at Pha-thi. He had many bitter encounters with Sullivan. On his own authority, Secord drew 40 M-16s from USAF stock at Udorn, plus a number of CIA-issue Browning pistols, cases of hand grenades and ammo, and then delivered the lot to the CIA case officer in command of the TSQ site, for distribution to the "Heavy Green" technicians.

Security of the precious radar station was left to about 400 Hmong and 300 Thai mercenaries. Perimeter security was further enhanced, they thought, by the CIA's Technical Services Division, who laced the whole mountain with claymore mines and other explosives. Someone said at the time that with a little artillery prep fire, the site could be taken "by a troop of Boy Scouts."

DEADLY CONSEQUENCES

And, it practically was. In the wee hours of March 12, 1968, just 132 days after the most important radar site was established, it was quickly overrun by a handful of PAVN (People's Army of Vietnam) sappers. The site was destroyed and the Hmong and Thai guards were killed. Five American "Lockheed" technicians were rescued by helicopters along with two CIA case officers and a USAF forward air controller. Eight technicians were killed and 11 are still missing today.

One "Lockheed" man, Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. Etchberger, of Hamburg, Penn., was awarded the Air Force Cross for his efforts to defend the site.

Although previously wounded, he was shot while boarding an Air America rescue helicopter and died instantly.

Just 20 days after the most important secret site of the Vietnam War was overrun, President Lyndon B. Johnson called a halt to bombing and ended Operation Rolling Thunder. ✕

■■■■
(Editor's Note: Steve Stibbens is a military historian living in Dallas, Tex. He was a U.S. Marine Combat Correspondent for Pacific Stars & Stripes (1962-64) and Leatherneck Magazine (1964-66) in Vietnam and a war correspondent there for the Associated Press (1967). He is a life member of the U. S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Assn.)

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“Air Combat First” – The painting by Keith Woodcock

Air America heroism unveiled at CIA Langley art gallery –
a “singular incident” that happened 39 years ago.

Finally, the CIA’s clandestine “Shadow War” fought in Laos throughout the Vietnam War is breaking into the clear.

In July, the CIA unveiled a painting by noted artist Keith Woodcock depicting that day on January 12, 1968 when Air America Huey pilot Theodore (Ted) Moore of Reno, Nev., and his flight mechanic, Glenn Woods of Columbus, Ga., teamed up to shoot down two Russian-built AN-2 Antonov “Colt” aircraft over Laos.

The action as well as the American clandestine war fought in Laos has been cloaked in secrecy for nearly four decades.

The painting was commissioned by two former Air America employees, Marius Burke, who was a helicopter pilot, and Boyd Mesecher, both from Brevard County, Fla. The 28-inch by 38-inch canvas was hung in the CIA’s new Intelligence Art Gallery to symbolize the work and service by Air America during the Vietnam War.

Air America was a private company owned by the CIA and disguised as a commercial short haul airline. Their civilian crews flew many dangerous missions in Southeast Asia throughout the Vietnam War. Air America crews hauled thousands of Laotian and Hmong troops and refugees and rescued many downed airmen throughout Laos during the Vietnam War.

Over the years, 86 CAT and Air America people have been killed in action, from flights over China, Korea, Dien Bien Phu and the entire Vietnam War.

Ted Moore and his crewman, Woods, who was killed in a jungle crash a year later, were routinely moving ammunition at the ultra-secret radar station in the clouds, called Lima Site 85, atop Pha-thi Mountain on the border between Laos and North Vietnam. Radars there were being used to control

pinpoint bombing of targets in North Vietnam in Operation Rolling Thunder.

Just after 1 p.m. on January 12th, Moore saw a flight of four AN-2 Colt biplanes that split into pairs. While two of the biplanes orbited to the southeast, two Colts swooped in to bomb and strafe the secret radar base atop the mountain with rockets, machine guns, and what turned out to be 120-mm mortar shells shoved through holes cut in the aircrafts’ floors.

Although the two Colts made three passes to drop and fired their weapons from barely 200 feet above the mountain summit, there was little damage to the sensitive radars. It was estimated they dropped about fifty 120mm mortar shells and fired a number of 57mm rockets from pods slung under the canvas-covered wings. The only casualties were four Hmong, including two women killed and two soldiers wounded.

The two biplanes circling to the southeast stayed out of the way and then retreated back to North Vietnam.

Woods told Moore he had an AK-47 assault rifle, a sure violation of the 1962 Geneva Accord. Americans were forbidden to even be in Laos, much less Americans with weapons.

Moore gave chase to the two slightly faster attackers with his turbo-engine aircraft. The biplanes, dating back to the 1930s, dove toward the valley but had to climb to get out of the ground fog. Climbing cost them valuable airspeed and allowed Moore and Woods to catch up.

Moore maneuvered into a position above and slightly to the rear of the trailing biplane. Woods fired the automatic rifle into the top of the cockpit area and watched as the AN-2 turned on a wing then crashed and burned in the dense jungle.

Moore then got close enough to the leading attacker for Woods to empty

another magazine in the plane. It, too, crashed but did not burn. Pieces were retrieved shortly afterward revealing bullet holes in the top of the aircraft.

Around the Air America community, Moore and Woods were declared “Helicopter Aces” and basked... in the relative secrecy of the day. Moore also drew the wrath of officialdom for “causing an international incident.” He said he felt honored that the painting of his action nearly forty years ago was chosen to represent the many years of heroic service by Air America personnel.

Although the action was shrouded in secrecy for decades, it remains the first and only time a fixed wing aircraft was shot down from a helicopter.

Two months after the aerial battle, LS-85 was overrun by NVA commandos. The site was destroyed and 12 U.S. Air Force technicians, disguised as Lockheed employees, were killed.

Today, former employees of Air America, and its predecessor China Air Transport, are seeking official recognition by the U.S. government as former federal employees.

Speaking at the CIA gallery, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he will continue to reintroduce legislation to correct things.

“These are American heroes, many of whom were killed in action while flying dangerous missions for the CIA,” Reid said. “They deserve to be recognized as such and at a minimum receive the same benefits that other federal employees receive.”

CIA spokesman George Little said the painting is one of the first to be housed in the CIA Intelligence Art Gallery at Langley, Va.

By Steve Stibbens



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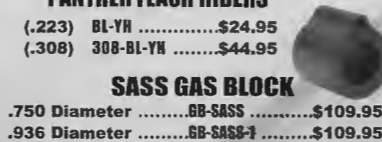
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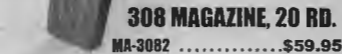
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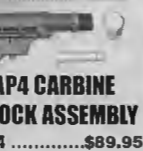
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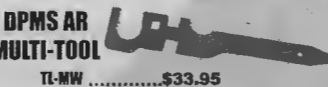
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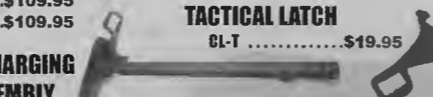
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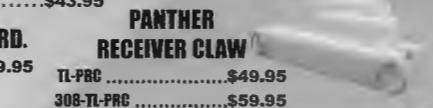
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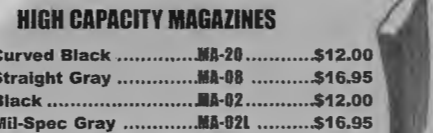
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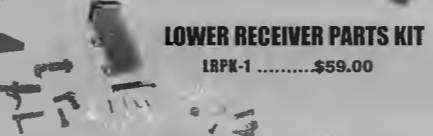
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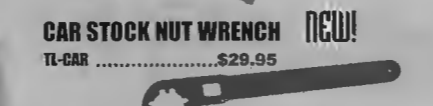
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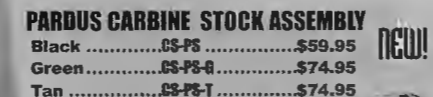
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BULLETIN BOARD continued

as "Ma Deuce"). However, according to Strategypage.com, field tests revealed that while it had its good points (being lighter and more accurate), it also had a problem – a relatively low rate of fire. Meanwhile, an upgrade to the M2, the M2E2, had a lot of improvements, and now appears to have vanquished the XM312.

Let's see – one design has a higher



The XM312... lighter and more accurate than Ma Deuce, but the rate of fire is a bit low. The M2E2, the latest iteration of Ma Deuce. The good news, its rate of fire is high. The bad news: It's heavy.

Help the FBI...

The FBI is looking to identify two individuals who have been acting unusually while on a number of Seattle-area ferries. If you have any information on these individuals, call the FBI's Seattle-area field office at (206) 622-0460.



rate of fire, the other is lighter and more accurate. There is a solution to this problem: Why can't the DOD just buy both?

injunction prohibiting the U.S. Navy from carrying out realistic ASW training with active sonar. That's the good news. The bad news is that this is only a stay – and the Navy still has to convince a judge that properly training sailors should take priority over whales.

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Beyond Glory

This past summer, Broadway ran a play based on the book "Beyond Glory", which featured the stories of men who earned the Medal of Honor – as told by those men. The play, starring Stephen Lang (who played General Pickett in Gettysburg and Stonewall Jackson in Gods and Generals), ended its off-Broadway run on August 19, but the book by Larry Smith that the play was based on is available at Amazon.com for \$11.96 plus shipping and handling.

No more gun laws...

The NRA-ILA reports that a recent Zogby poll shows a strong opposition to new gun-control laws. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents opposed the idea that any new gun laws are needed.

Sonar training saved... for now

In a 2-1 ruling, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned an

Hmong Hunger Strike in Thailand...

Over 150 Hmong refugees are on a hunger strike to protest Thailand's treatment of them. They have been locked up since January 30, despite the UN High Commission for Refugees granting them refugee status.

Don't Mess with Marines...

Two thugs in Plantation, Fla., found out the hard way that messing with a Marine can be a very bad idea. When they tried to rob a Subway, they made the mistake of also trying to rob the 71-year-old retiree, when he drew the gun he had a permit to carry and shot both of the would-be robbers. For one of the thugs, it was his last mistake. The other was wounded – and hopefully, learned his lesson.

consul.

An armed group was to fly from the Dominican Republic to support them. Even though my story reporting the arrest of the plotters had been carried by press services, Castro was able to trick Trujillo into believing the uprising was succeeding. He had Morgan report by short wave radio to the Dominican Republic that rebels had won control of southern Las Villas province.

On 12 August 1959 Trujillo sent a planeload of weapons to an airstrip near the town of Trinidad. The following evening a small expeditionary group was flown in on a C-46 -- and was promptly captured by Castro and his troops.

From Rebel to Frog Farmer

The civil war was over and the conspiracy had failed, but these were uncertain and uneasy times for Morgan. Trujillo wanted to kill him. Castro did not fully trust him. Anti-Castroites felt he had betrayed their cause. Some military men resented an American holding the highest rank in the armed forces, even though he commanded no troops. And Morgan lost his American citizenship because he was serving in a foreign army.

Morgan decided to turn his creative talents to agricultural production. He went to work for the Agriculture Ministry, managing a fish farm. Then he became interested in frog farming, and talked the ministry into giving him \$70,000 to start a frog farm. Supposedly, the exportation of frogs would be a good source of badly needed foreign exchange.

Morgan made all purchase decisions, kept the books and negotiated with canners. Asked whether he had used blueprints for the building of ditches, he replied: "Blueprints, your ass. I dug those f...ing ditches."

I interviewed him on his farm, southwest of Havana, and he told me: "There isn't anyone in Cuba who doesn't know where I stand -- Fidel, Raúl or anyone. I am anti-communist. I don't like them. They tried to hold a political meeting here and I threw them out."

"I Hate all Communists"

Morgan on some mornings lined up his 100 or so workers military style and would shout: "I hate all communists!

They work for Russia, not for Cuba. All of you who are communists and work for Russia take one step forward." No one did.

Rumors were circulating that Morgan was involved in supporting anti-Castro guerrillas again operating in the Escambray. He hired former Second Front comrades, and the farm began to resemble a military camp. Morgan wore a .45 and was surrounded by bodyguards. His farm trucks may have been used to transport weapons to the new rebels.

I asked Morgan if he felt he was in any danger. He responded, "Fidel will never let anything happen to me."

"Viva Morgan"

He was wrong. He was arrested and charged with counter-revolutionary activities. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. En route to the trial he sang, *As the Caissons Go Rolling Along*.

In the early hours of 20 March 1960 Morgan was marched from his cell at Havana's La Cabaña prison. Different versions of his final moments circulated, but the most believable one was told by a fellow prisoner:

Led in the darkness from his cell to the paredón (firing squad wall), Morgan asked that his handcuffs be removed, and his guards did so. Shouts of "Viva Morgan!" could be heard within the large, ancient fortress. A dry moat was the execution site.

At the paredón, under spotlights, Morgan startled his executioners when he embraced the sergeant in charge and the men of the squad, telling them he bore no grudge. He refused a blindfold. He hugged the priest praying beside him. Ordered to kneel, he refused to do so. Shot in the legs by two soldiers, he remained standing.

The brave bad boy of San Antonio died before a Cuban firing squad.

Morgan was always an American. Shortly after coming to Cuba he had written, "I cannot say I have always been a good citizen, but being here I can appreciate the way of life that is ours from birth."

The U.S. Government, recognizing his patriotism, restored his U. S. Citizenship in 2007. ✂

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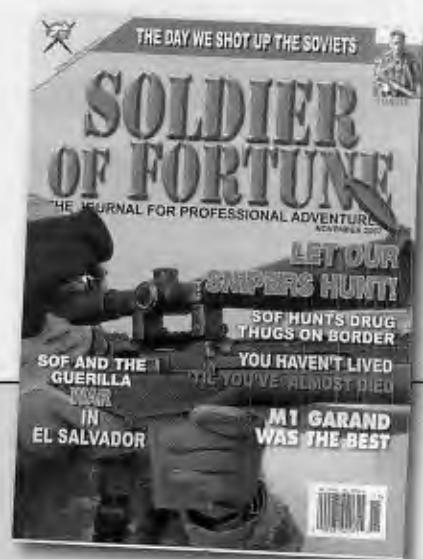
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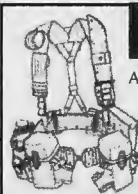
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DECEMBER 2007 • AD INDEX

1071 Knives	57	Inter City & Travel Survival.....	64	Platoon Army Surplus.....	31
5-11/LA Police Gear	63	Inter-American Security	57	Quantico Tactical Supply.....	17
5-11/LA Police Gear	65	Kestrel.....	14	Quantico Tactical Supply.....	22
Advanced Technology, Inc	81	Kifaru	16	Revision Eyewear	49
American Defense Enterprises.....	38	Kimber	21	Revision Eyewear	51
American Watch.....	3	Klein Electronics	26	Ridgeline.....	35
ARMS	50	Larsen Firearms	46	RM Equipment.....	74
Black Ink.....	78	Laser Devices	67	Sabre Defence.....	11
Blackhawk.....	Cover 3	Lemur Books	56	Southern Ordnance	54
Buffer Technologies.....	8	Lone Wolf Dist	72	SpecOps/Best Made Designs	79
Bushmaster	72	Maglula, Ltd.....	29	Specter Gear.....	15
Chase-Durer	Cover 4	Matt Furey	33	Springfield Armory.....	13
Cheaper Than Dirt.....	45	Maxsell	37	Steelcutter Publishing	51
Command Arms	66	Maxsell	57	Steiner.....	39
CounterSniper	7	Military Book Club.....	18 & 19	Surefire	41
D-Leash.....	80	Millett Sights	32	Tactical Tailor.....	23
Doublestar	76	NIC Law Enforcement	57	Tamiami.....	57
DPMS	53	Noble Learning Systems.....	77	Tapco	10
DSARMS.....	75	Norgon, LLC	30	TFT Group	59
Elite K9.....	57	Old Lincoln County	56	Treasure State Ranches	57
Extreme Outfitters.....	71	One Stop Knife Shop	55	US Academy of PI.....	57
GG&G.....	47	OPSGear.....	44	US Tactical Supply	48
Hellfighter	9	Otis	Cover 2	US Tactical Supply	39
Initial Attack.....	40	Paladin Press.....	5	Wilson Tactical.....	80
Initial Attack.....	64	Para Ordnance.....	73		

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WILD BUNCH *continued*

building the supply bins and packing parachutes. When the chutes came in they were a mess, wadded up and stuffed in trash sacks—all 500 of them. I went to see the Airborne Commander and asked him if I could borrow some riggers for a couple of days. He looked at me kind of funny and gave me five, never asking what I wanted them for. I stayed for a while until they could find someone to replace me. This turned out to be Eugene Husenus.

"By this time the Airborne Battalion Commander was getting piping hot that I wasn't working for him.

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HASENFUS--DUMB HORSE'S BEHIND

"I told Col. Renkin I had to go back to work. In October, 1986 I was up in Santa Ana with the 2nd. Brigade when the Sandinistas shot down a CIA C-123 down. Eugene Husenus, who had worked as a "kicker" in Nam for Air America, had unfortunately managed to survive, gave himself up to the first Sandanista he could find.

"What a dumb ass!

"Eugene Hasenus jumped out, pulled his rip cord and lived. The rest got killed.

"What a scandal! Hasenus was carrying a Salvadoran base pass to get on and off the base. All hell broke loose.

"Hasenus squealed that the CIA was behind the operation. He exposed Cuban-Americans that were running the operation, including Felix Rodriguez, Rafael Quintero and Luis Posada.

"General Richard V. Secord, who bought a couple of caribous from a defunct Canadian airline to run supplies to the Contras, was exposed," Harry recalled.

ITS RAINING REFRIGERATORS AND STOVES

"Secord hired Felix Rodriguez, a.k.a. Max Gomez, advisor to the Salvadoran Air Force and CIA case officer who tracked down Che Guevara to help in the Contra airlift. He loaded these planes with refrigerators, stoves and televisions.

"The Caribou's engines were quitting on them, so they threw out televisions and refrigerators so you could see TVs and other appliances bouncing on the ground. We finally got the planes fixed, took them to Illopongo, stripped them, painted them green, but we still couldn't keep them in the air.

"The Salvadorans had loaned them a C-123.

"The day before the plane got shot down on national television, Bustillo had stated that the Salvadorans were not assisting the Contras. The next day he had mud on his face,

plus it proved the El Salvador involvement in Nicaragua.

"After Hasenus went down, and the re-supply operation was compromised, operations were moved from Ilopongo to Costa Rica. Secord was overseeing this whole thing.

THE DAY HARRY BECAME FAMOUS

"After my picture came out on the cover of Newsweek in November 1986, I became a real Pariah," Harry said.

"I was there a couple weeks after the earthquake and I go back to Santa Ana to start the next training cycle. I packed my gear up and went back to San Salvador for the weekend after a training session and checked into the Sheraton Hotel.

One of the MilGroup said,

"Hey, Harry, have you seen Newsweek magazine? You're famous!"

"I said 'yea, right', and he showed me Newsweek.

"The Operational Planning and Assistance Training Team (OPATT) guys thought this was too neat. The Ambassador and the MilGroup commander did not think this was neat at all.

"Stan Pickering had replaced Ambassador White. Col Renkin informed me that Southern Air transport had a seat for me on a C-130 flying back from McGill air force base. I saw the article Sunday or Monday, and I was back on my way back to the States.

"They decided that I needed to take a vacation, as the top brass feared that some journalist would recognize me and the next cover of Newsweek would have the heading of 'American Mercenaries fighting in El Salvador'. That would compromise the Mil Group since I was involved in the thick of their training. I had to go, at least for awhile till things cooled down.

"I was the only one on the plane other than the crew.

Next: Harry and the 1989 Offensive



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By Dr. Martin Brass

AMERICA AT WAR

1 SYRIA

ISRAELI F-15s ALLEGEDLY DESTROY NUCLEAR CACHE

A Commando team directed laser beams at target for approaching jets. Other reports claim air strikes were diversion for Israeli Commando units could grab convoy transporting nuclear materials to Iran; seized items hauled to Israel.

3 INDONESIA PIRATES BUNGLE HEIST IN

Balongan anchorage after breaking the store lock and stealing ship's property. Crew raise alarm and attacked the robbers, who jumped overboard. One robber drifted away to meet his maker, the other rescued to meet authorities.

4 ERITREA YOU WILL BE ON TERRORIST LIST

says U.S. as government provides safe haven for Islamic terrorist groups.

5 PHILLIPINES AMNESTY TO COMMUNIST

National Peoples Army offered in an effort to restart peace talks.

6 AFGHANISTAN BIN LADEN TAKES

LESSONS IN COMMUNISM? In latest videotape, Al Qaida chief attempts to mobilize 'exploited' Americans to fight against capitalist laws that 'make the rich richer and poor poorer'. **AMERICAN ADAM GADAHN**, charged with treason and supporting terrorism for serving as an Al Qaeda propagandist suspected as speech writer.

7 AUSTRIA TERROR VIDEO PRODUCERS

arrested tied to Al Qaida propaganda machine.

8 SAUDI ARABIA TERRORIST EXPORTER

dispatches over 3,000 Saudi citizens globally, says NY Sun. **THIRTY PERCENT OF INSURGENTS** fighting the Lebanese army at the siege of the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, which claimed a toll of well over 300 during the past three months were Saudis. **TWENTY TO THIRTY** cross into Iraq daily. Thousands are tasked with killing Americans and Shia. Saudis train in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Syria

9 IRAQ CHRISTIANS CRUCIFIED, threatened, tortured, and killed in Iraq. Al-Qaeda in Iraq have threatened to kill anyone who converts to Christianity.


10 GUATEMALA DRUG SMUGGLERS IN SUBMARINE

seized by Coast Guard agents guided by a drug surveillance plane. Five and a half tons of coke worth \$350 million seized.

2 PAKISTAN

BOMBING PLOT CONSPIRATORS


that were busted are a small, but growing, flow of militants from Germany and other Western countries receiving training at camps in Pakistan. **BOMBS RIP** through a Pakistani army bus and a commercial district, killing 24 and wounding 66. **SPECIAL FORCES UNIT** targeted by suicide bomber, killing 15 soldiers.

11  **GERMANY** **THREE TERROR SUSPECTS** arrested in Germany after allegedly planning to bomb Frankfurt Airport, U.S. airbase, and clubs frequented by Americans.

12  **DENMARK** **EIGHT ISLAMIC MILITANTS** arrested in Copenhagen for plotting bomb attacks in the country. Explosives found in suspect's houses.


13  **VENEZUELA** **LEFT WING DICTATOR** Chavez mouths off, claiming ownership of anything within 200 nautical miles, including the Netherlands Antilles. Liberal Congressman Van Baalen asks minister of Foreign Affairs to warn Chavez not to touch "our Falklands". See July 2007 SOF for more info on the situation.


14  **COLOMBIA** **CAPTURED DUTCH GIRL**, a FARC operative's dairies captured by government troops and published in El Tiempo. Dutch sources claim that maybe up to 8 extreme-leftwing dutchmen serve with FARC.


15  **THE NETHERLANDS** **U.S. ANTI WAR PSYCHO** murders innocent Dutch civilian. Assassin allegedly cites anger against Dutch efforts in Afghanistan, mistaking the civilian for a member of the Dutch military. Other sources claim killer couldn't find a soldier, so he settled for killing a civilian.

16  **IRAN** **AMERICA HAS PLAN** to hit over 2,000 targets in Iran as diplomats fear their efforts will fail. Two strike groups, centered on USS Enterprise and USS Kearsarge, are in the region. **AHMADINEJAD CHALLENGES** President Bush to a debate. **IAEA LEADER OPPOSES WAR** with Iran despite the rogue state's defiance of the organization.




17  **CHINA** **CHICOMS PROTEST SALE OF DEFENSIVE WEAPONS** to Taiwan. Taiwan is spending \$2.2 billion for SM-2 missiles and P-3 Orion sub-hunting aircraft. **JAILED JOURNALIST** jailed on bogus charges, 28 remain in prisons.

18  **TAIWAN** **CHINA ATTACKS PUSH FOR UN MEMBERSHIP. DESPITE CHICOM THREAT**, Taiwan has slashed defense spending by a third, reports Strategypage.com.

19  **SUDAN** **DARFUR GENOCIDE PROTESTED** in over 50 countries. These protests, backed by big names like Desmond Tutu, the Black Eyed Peas and Matt Damon demand action. These protests don't stop any attacks though.

20  **UNITED STATES** **ANTI-WAR ACTIVISTS PRAISED** by terrorists from al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. **ICE RAID NETS 12** illegal immigrants working for contractor at Fort Bliss.

21  **SIERRA LEONE** **GOVERNING PARTY COMPLAINS** of rigged ballot after a self-proclaimed pro-democracy, anti-corruption leader is elected President. We'll see if he walks the walk as well as he talks the talk.

U.S. RIFLE, CALIBER .30, M1

“The best battle implement ever devised?” Part II

Text and photos
by Gary Paul Johnston



It Still Fires After Eating a Bucket of Sand

So, what did the troops think about the Garand? In talking with WW II and Korean War GIs for decades, most of the few things I've ever heard about the rifle that could be construed as negative were that there were individual preferences for other weapons. These included the BAR, Thompson SMG or M1 Carbine.

One U.S. Marine who fought in the Korean War told me, as a kid, that “you could pour a bucket of sand in the M1 and it'd still fire!” On the other hand, pistol smith Wayne Novak's father, Ted, who landed on Normandy Beach on D-Day, reports that his M1 became so filled with sand that he could not clear it, and so discarded it for a 1903A3 Springfield he found on the beach. Others swore by the M1 Garand, including my stepfather, WW II Marine John J. Mitchell, and my uncle, U.S. Army BG Richard C. Bendix, who used the M1 in competition for many years.

The Weapon Picks Off the Enemy Way Out There

James “Chief” Kimble, a full-blooded Navajo and the last living survivor of the 101st Airborne's 501st G Company, jumped twice into Europe during D-Day and the Battle of Bastogne. Chief recounted that he used every weapon the Army had and how he liked the Thompson for close range work in the hedgerows of France, but that he loved the M1 for “picking off the enemy way out there.” However, WW II U.S. Paratrooper John Cooley, of Arizona, did not like the M1 while fighting in Italy, and traded his in for an M1928-A1 Thompson SMG.

My friend, the late Leo Ireman, of Ohio, fought with the U.S. Army's 99th Infantry Division “Battle Babies” in the Battle of the Bulge. Even in the bitter cold of winter, Leo said his M1 always worked as long as he had ammo and his rifle had no lubricant to freeze.

Its Ping is Music to the Ears

Then there's the characteristic “ping” of the empty clip, as it is ejected from the M1. To most who used the Garand, this is still music to their ears, but there is the story of how the North Koreans used the sound against U.S. troops. When the enemy heard the empty steel clip hit the rocks in the hills of Korea, it was a signal that the M1 was empty and for them to advance. As the story goes, GIs would pick up empty clips, and fire one round from their fully loaded Garands as they tossed the clips up in the air. When the clips hit the rocks and the enemy heard the pings, they would stand up and advance only to be cut down by Americans.

Compared with today's military, where we shoot a varmint cartridge and worry about weight, I've heard



The unique serial number of this one-of-a-kind “D-DAY” M1 is located on the left side of its receiver.

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U.S. RIFLE continued

few complaints about the M1's almost 10 pounds, or its recoil, from those of the "Greatest Generation" who carried it around the world to preserve our freedom. This isn't meant as a put down, as I believe the American Soldier of today is even better than ever. It may merely indicate a change of values.

One seasoned Special Forces operator told me about one of his young troopers making a sarcastic remark about an "old" Garand that was captured from the Taliban. The senior operator told him never to underestimate the M1, as it would put his "d—k in the dirt faster than an AK from a lot farther away!"

In addition to Springfield, Winchester made the M1 Garand during WW II; Springfield, Harrington & Richardson, and International Harvester produced the rifle during the Korean War. During WW II, after capturing samples of the M1, the Japanese produced a copy called the Type 5 for the Japanese Navy. The Type 5 was chambered for the 7.7mm Japanese cartridge.

As with the Springfield '03 rifle, the M1 Garand was made available to qualified civilians through the Director of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM), and issue-grade M1 rifles are still available through the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP), many of them in original like-new condition. Other M1 rifles are available commercially from Springfield Armory, Inc., Fulton Armory, and others. While Springfield does not offer a National Match grade M1, Fulton Armory does, but Spring-

field's high quality M1 barrels often produce near NM accuracy right out of the box.

.308 Caliber Garands

In addition to M1s in caliber .30 M2 (.30-06) are those in 7.62x51mm NATO (.308).

The U.S. Navy and USMC have rebuilt many Garands in 7.62mm NATO for use in competition shooting. The Navy also designed a chamber-reduction spacer to convert .30-06 chambers to properly handle the NATO round, but this proved unsuccessful, as the spacers were often ejected with a fired .308 casing.

The only modification for a Garand in 7.62mm NATO is a filler block in the magazine well, to prevent a clip of .30-06 ammunition from being inserted; but this isn't necessary for function in .308. Because of the difference in velocity, the .308-caliber Garand has slightly less recoil than one in .30-06.

In addition to the match-grade M1s available from the Fulton Armory, match-grade M1 rifle barrels are also available from Barnett Rifle Barrels, Brownells, and Krieger Barrels, the latter also offering assembly and chambering. I recently shipped a commercial Springfield Armory receiver and a set of original new GI parts to Krieger and they assembled them with their GI-spec Match .308 barrel. I have never seen a finer job of creating a NM grade Garand than this one, although I elected to glass bed the rifle myself.

So, just how accurate is the Match Garand? I have fired groups

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A tell-tale feature of the National Match M1 is its "hooded-MOA" rear sight, seen here.



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U.S. RIFLE **continued**

of less than 1-inch from the bench using high-grade commercial match ammunition, in issue-DCM and USMC-built Match Garands, in both .30-06 and .308 calibers. Using Federal .308M ammunition, the above Krieger-assembled .308 M1 produces groups hovering about one inch as received from Krieger, and it is neither fully broken in nor bedded in its new Boyd M1 stock. Better weather will allow me to determine just how well this rifle will shoot before it is bedded.

A "D-Day Commemorative Garand"

The unique M1 Garand also pictured here is a one-of-a-kind presentation rifle made to commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day and the men who fought and died during WW II. It is one of only a handful of stainless-steel M1 receivers made during a trial run by a large commercial manufacturer of Garand receivers and was specially ordered, but never delivered or assembled.

After the receiver and gas cylinder were hard chrome plated by D&L Sports, the rifle was assembled with original, new GI parts, and a new M1 walnut stock from Boyd Rifle Stocks with a U.S. Mil Spec leather sling from Turner Saddlery.

"D-DAY, 6-6-44" is the actual serial number of this rare one-of-a-kind M1 rifle, and even with its GI-issue barrel, this Garand easily produces groups of 2-3 MOA at 100 yards using match .30-06 ammunition. It has since been presented to Ted Novak to commemorate his service during World War II.

Field-Stripping the M1

Skilled operators must develop a thorough technique. After the breech is opened to make sure the M1 is unloaded, the bolt is allowed to go forward by depressing the magazine follower – Care is taken to hold the cocking handle, in order to let the bolt go forward slowly. This is important in order to not allow the thumb to get caught between the bolt and the receiver ring and be

injured (the "M1 thumb").

While leaving the hammer cocked, I use a finger or a tool shaft to pull the rear of the trigger guard to the rear, away from the stock. When the guard rotates almost 90 degrees, it and the trigger group can be pulled free of the receiver and rifle. This will allow the stock to be separated from the barreled action. The operator may need to hold the rifle's handguard with the left hand with the sight toward him in order to hit the comb of the buttstock with the web of the right hand to dislodge these two components. Care is taken to grab the stock as it falls free in order to prevent it from falling and being damaged.

I then grasp the rear of the recoil spring guide and push it forward to dislodge it from the magazine follower arm; remove the guide and the long recoil spring from the rear of the operating rod, taking care since the spring is under compression.

I use an M1 tool with a cleaning rod section or a suitable large screwdriver to unscrew and remove the

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gas cylinder plug below the muzzle. Then I unscrew the gas cylinder lock from the muzzle and pull the gas cylinder off the barrel. If the gas cylinder cannot be readily removed, I stop and consult a gunsmith, as some gas cylinders are tightly fitted to the barrel for competition shooting.

Assuming the gas cylinder can be easily removed, I pull the upper hand guard forward off the barrel. Then I pull the operating rod back until its rear end can be removed from its channel in the receiver, and remove the operating rod. Once the operating rod is removed, I pull the bolt forward while rotating it counter clockwise until it is freed from the receiver. No further disassembly is necessary and reassembly is in the reverse order.

Sixty years ago, General George Patton declared the M1 to be the best battle implement ever devised. Was he right? Most would now agree that the rifle fathered by the M1 Garand—the M14—is an even better combat rifle than the Garand, and better than many other main battle rifles that have come along in the

70 years since the M1 was adopted. However, 60+ years ago, when General Patton declared the M1 to be the best battle implement ever devised, he was right on the money!

If you hanker to know more about the M1 Garand, you "should" join the Garand Collectors Association (below). If you want to keep your Garand and the rest of your guns, you "must" join the NRA... and vote! ✕

Contacts:

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A MARINE'S

"...NOTHING IN MY 18-PLUS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE COMES CLOSE TO THE REALITY OF NO-KIDDING CLOSE COMBAT."



2nd Platoon Sergeant, Staff Sergeant Mike Roy, at the Combat Outpost, Ramadi, Iraq. Fox Company's ritual was to visit PFC Shane Folmar's memorial (KIA) before each operation for luck, and to visit him after to say "thanks'.

**Text and Photos
by GySgt Patrick Tracy**

6 Sept. 2004: As the convoy went back through the marketplace, nobody was in sight. Bad! Real Bad! We know we're going to get hit hard. It made me worry about all my Marines in those vehicles. My hair stood up and I couldn't help but yell.

The Captain let out a war cry of his own and then Swartz swerved around an odd roadblock of stacked tires and I braced for the explosion...

ENEMY DOWN

12 Sept. 2004: Meanwhile, I was called to Post 3 on camp where my sentry just shot someone. When I got there, I found out this guy popped out of a trunk 200 meters from our

gate with a rifle in his hands. Either he was the enemy or the most completely stupid idiot in Iraq. Either way, he was on the wrong end of a well-aimed shot and now he's dead. I tried to get permission to take the car out, but there were too many of our own Marines in the area.

After a few minutes, I got called back to the COC because Golf called for reinforcements. That's us! They were in trouble and low on ammo.

TO GOLF'S RESCUE

We drove a bit further down Route Michigan and turned left on a side street. As Swartz turned onto the street, Golf's gun trucks fired at this building and stuff flew everywhere.


I noticed one of the enemy peek quickly over the rooftop and then he let loose a little spray and pray and a round actually hit my door. I got out and returned a few shots and once again the 50 cal. let loose and punched holes right through the building.

I thought, "This is intense. Combat re-supply at its finest!"

We holed up with Golf for a few hours and slugged it out right in the streets. We fired AT4s, SMAWs (Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon), 203s, the 50 cal, the MK-19, 240 Golf, SAWs, M-16s... bottom line, if we had it, it got fired.

I've been to many training evolutions where a lot of

WAR DIARY



Route Michigan, 16 Sept 2004, directly after Fox Company was ambushed from multiple positions.

different ammo gets fired at the same time but nothing in my 18-plus years of experience comes close to compare with the reality of no-kidding CLOSE COMBAT.

A BRAINSTORM...

14 Sept. 2004: The brown stuff truly hit the fan as I tried to get them headed in the right direction. I stood in the middle of the street when suddenly rounds impacted all around me. I quickly jumped behind a vehicle and I could see this guy shooting at us from between two buildings. Dumbfounded for a second as I could actually see this guy firing at us, I had a brainstorm of my own, "Wait a minute. I have a grenade launcher."

I sighted in and let one fly.

I watched the round fly down the road in slow motion, about 200 meters. Then BOOM! Wouldn't you know, this round landed directly between the two buildings. I couldn't have drawn a picture any

better of where I wanted this round to land. One minute, an insurgent was firing a rifle at me, and the next there were parts of him spread around.

FALLEN COMRADE

24 Sept. 2004: We lost a Marine on today's Operation. His name was PFC Folmar, one of the new guys who we got from The School of Infantry (SOI) around May. I wasn't there when it happened. We were doing two simultaneous raids. One was in a library, the other a bakery. Apparently, two honchos own and operate out of these two establishments. 1st Platoon went to take down the library and 4th Platoon hit the bakery. I asked to go with 4th Platoon because this was the first operation where they would actually operate independently of the company, and to be honest, I really thought this would be

where the heaviest action would take place.

We hit the bakery hard and it went off without a hitch. No politeness and knocking on doors, we stormed in and had everyone on their faces in the first ten seconds. Then we searched the entire place. 4th Platoon did a good job and their leadership did all the right things. I was pretty happy with their performance.

At the end of our sweep of the AO, we had Golf Company to our right, fifty feet away, and 3rd Platoon to our left, about twenty

Continued on page 72

Fox Company on vehicle patrol in Ramadi, Iraq. Gunny Tracy's vehicle, in lead, took the full force of the IED. Enemy opened fire with automatic weapons fire and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) as Company inspected damage.



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A MARINE'S WAR DIARY Continued

feet away. 1st Platoon was at our Six and the Army had the buildings to our Twelve. We could not aim our weapons in any direction without flagging our own people. Around this time, I decided to head back to my vehicle and listen to the radio traffic to see if I could figure out what was going on with the link-up and extraction plan. I heard Fox 6 say we had a routine medical evacuation (medevac) and we would talk about it later.

There are three categories of medevacs: routine, priority and urgent. Urgent is no-kidding life and death, get a helicopter now! Priority could be life and death but definitely serious enough to need attention right away. Routine is just that, routine. No big hurry but someone was injured in some way.

YOU CAN'T GET ANY MORE DEAD THAN DEAD

Earlier on, we heard a pretty serious gun fight but we assumed it was our heavy guns firing from the strongpoint positions along the road. Now I found out 1st Platoon was in the fight. Then I heard battalion call 1st Sgt and ask for info on the KIA. This knocked the wind right out of me, like a sucker-punch to the belly. KIA? How could there be a KIA? Then I remembered a KIA is also a routine medevac.

It sounds pretty cold, but the truth is, if you do die in battle, you won't get any more dead so there is no hurry to have you flown out of there or risk others by running the body back to the rear in a vehicle convoy. What made matters worse, they didn't say the name over the radio. I could only sit there and wonder who it was. I can't think of a worse situation. I love every one of these guys, especially the younger ones. They are all younger than my daughter, and I feel like they're my sons. I'm the Company Gunny, and responsible for getting them their food, water, equipment, mail, bullets, comfort items... you name it, if they have it, I got it for them. This makes me a bit of a father figure to all the Marines. I know

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A MARINE'S WAR DIARY Continued

how I felt about my Gunny. Now one of my boys is dead. No one who hasn't been there can even imagine the feelings of anger or helplessness at a time like this.

A little while later, Bruce (1st Sgt) linked up with me and without even a greeting "Who is it Bruce?" I asked.

"It's Folmar, we got ambushed from a balcony."

The first thing that came to my mind was that time back in Pendleton on a field op when Folmar didn't pack any sleeping or cold weather gear because we were hiking home. I gave him a hard time over that one. But you could tell he genuinely felt bad about screwing up and would never do it again.

"1st Platoon came out of the library, got ready to move up the road and two guys popped out on this balcony and started spraying with machineguns," Bruce said.

"Did we kill them?" I asked. It



was important to me that we did.

"I don't know, they popped back inside and we couldn't get to the

Street Fight in Iraq, by Patrick Tracy, was written while Fox Company 2/5 was deployed from August 2004 to March 2005 in Ramadi, Iraq. Publisher: leatherneckpublishing.com.

second floor. Maybe. We poured a lot of ammo through that building."

OPERATION TIGER II

08 Nov. 2004: Operation Tiger II was supposed to kick off early this morning. I guess we're running out of creative names for these Operations because every one has a part II these days. Oh well, who cares what they're called. Tiger got cancelled because Echo got into trouble and we activated a battalion sized QRF, which activated 1st, 3rd, and 4th Platoons. I traveled with 1st Platoon as we mounted up and headed out. We often don't know what we'll face until we get there and today was a real treat.

One of Whiskey's Platoons holding an intersection at our dismount point, were already in contact just before we got there, took sporadic sniper fire and just lit up and roasted a vehicle packed with explosives.

We quickly dismounted and Fox 6 called the Platoon Commanders together for a quick frag order. As soon as he finished, each platoon got

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set in their lanes and headed out. We weren't even in any houses yet when all hell broke loose. We took sniper fire before I moved two steps then rockets impacted all around us. The Platoon Commander, Platoon Sgt. and Radioman from 4th all got hit. FSgt Kasal had a bunch of shrapnel injuries and both he and the Radioman were urgent surgical medevacs. Lt S. was only routine, but he also had to be evaced. In fact, this was his first time out since getting blown up on his last operation.

This QRF was a tough one because the movement was restricted to these small, narrow alleyways, which made mutual support difficult at best. The premise is vehicles, with their heavy guns, support the movement of the troops. The troops gain overwatch positions on the rooftops and then support the movement of vehicles. Lt. J moved his boys in his area of responsibility, but we lost sight of each other. He took heavy sniper fire and we couldn't suppress any buildings for him. He moved closer,

shrunk his sector of search and we continued with our movement. Enemy snipers took potshots to slow us down as we got close to a sensitive house or area. His tactic is to put one man up to take a semi well-aimed shot.

We stopped our movement and laid down a lot of fire at the buildings it came from, but our Muj buddies slipped out the back door.

INCOMING CARS

As we progressed east, two cars came down our alley at a high rate

of speed. We didn't have trigger lines set, so SOP is for one of the front riflemen to shoot a warning shot. The vehicles should stop, back up and find another route. At least that's what we think they should do. The rear vehicle did exactly what we wanted, put his car in reverse and got out of Dodge. To our surprise, three men jumped out of the front vehicle and ran down the alley toward us while the vehicle stepped on the gas and kept right on coming. With about



(Left) Tracy's weapon 'Gunny'.

(Above) Operating in Ramadi, Iraq through small, enclosed alleys and back roads and houses built in fortresses with only one entrance point.

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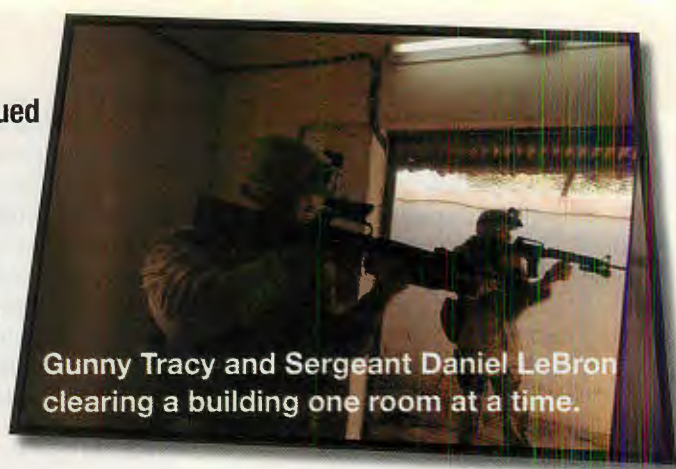
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A MARINE'S WAR DIARY Continued

200 meters between them and us, the heavy guns opened up. They stopped it within seconds; a .50 cal and MK-19 tend to have that effect.

The riflemen, me included, concentrated on the guys running toward us. These weren't typical scared Iraqis running aimlessly, they ran straight at us, moving from a piece of cover to another piece of cover. I was about 100% convinced

they had grenades or were strapped with suicide vests. Two of them went down in a hurry but one of them was smart enough to abandon his attack and run down a side alley. We couldn't pursue because we were ahead of the



Gunny Tracy and Sergeant Daniel LeBron clearing a building one room at a time.

troops and the vehicle sat there looking very ominous. Suspected VBIED's tend to do that. There was nothing we could really do about it except check it out once we got up there and even that was a very scary proposition.

THIS IS NOT BS...

...Sometimes, you are around people or things happen that go so far beyond normal they make up some of the stories most people would think were complete BS if they ever heard them outside of the Marine Corps. One such incident happened today.

When the lieutenant and SSgt went down and got evacuated, the next senior man in the platoon, Corporal Ox, took charge. In order to apprise the captain of the situation, he crossed about 100 yards of open terrain under heavy fire. The captain gave him his marching orders and he ran back and briefed the platoon. As soon as they moved out, a well-aimed sniper round hit him right inside of his helmet. The impact was hard enough to knock him on his ass and everyone thought he was killed.

He got up, laughed and dusted himself off.

"Well, I guess I'm not dead," he chuckled. Then he proceeded to lead an attack on the insurgents' house.

In a matter of a few minutes, they killed eight insurgents and continued moving with the rest of the company. This was a crazy day and the first time all platoons were engaged at the same time with different elements of the enemy. Each platoon fought hard and well and took care of its sector and the insurgents within that sector.

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A MARINE'S WAR DIARY Continued

separately, we can still bring the fight to the enemy. Perhaps the best indicator of a well-disciplined, well-trained unit and once again, I am very proud of every man in this company. No one backed down, no one stopped and no one quit.

A ROUGH NIGHT...AND THE DAY WASN'T MUCH BETTER

16 Nov. 2004: I had a rough night last night and therefore, due to lack of sleep, I was very irritated when the Capt. came in and said we had to go out on a mission to clean the

Usually, we scare all traffic off the bridge and secure the route to get us rolling into town. Because of the VBIED threat, we absolutely do not want to sit in any traffic or drive alongside any other vehicles. Our two lead vehicles turned out of the gate and headed up toward the bridge when a vehicle pulled off to the side of the road to let us all pass. As the other vehicles pushed across, this car stepped on the gas and tried to jump right in our convoy. This is exactly how Whiskey 6 was killed yesterday.

The army sentry on post at the top of the bridge opened fire



Gunny Tracy, with M-16/203 grenade launcher, uses vehicle for cover.

rest of the debris from the SVBIED off the street. Even though the street is in our sector, it just pissed me off to go out on such a BS mission. Plus, I didn't want to clean up chunks of the bombers body and parts of his car. But, orders are orders so I got my stuff together and off we went.

To get to our sector, we have to cross over a narrow bridge.

and Beeker slammed on the brakes. Sgt D and I quickly jumped out and put several rounds through the rear windshield. This was effective enough to stop him. There was an extremely intense couple of seconds as the vehicle came to a stop right at the beginning of the bridge and my heart

stopped as two of our vehicles had no choice but to push right past him. ☒

This article is excerpted from the book *Street Fight in Iraq - The Private Journal of a US Marine Warrior What it's Really Like Over There!* Available from leatherneckpublishing.com

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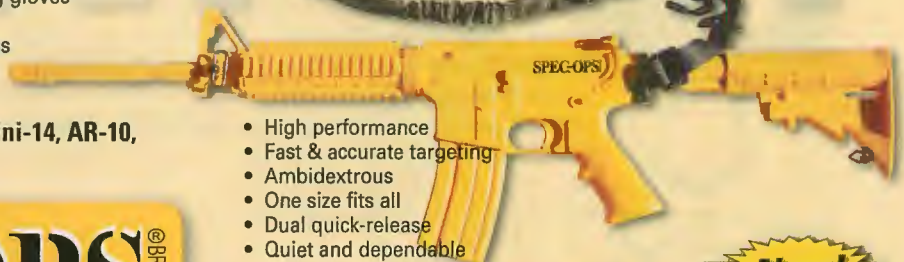


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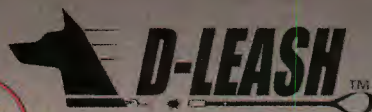
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FLAK continued

Now we got old, we became senior citizens, now we do not have the physical condition and stamina that we had before, but ...I am sure we still maintain our gung-ho attitude and the spirit of adventure in our soul.

I still remember them as good professional soldiers and persons, and I think that if we were young again and if we were together we would be volunteering for Iraq or jumping in Afghanistan or Colombia.

Saludos America!! God Bless You

*Alex E. Montenegro
"Mont"
Commander
Post# 1 El Salvador
American Legion*

Bad War Gone Badder

When people speak of "A Good War gone Bad", referring to Afghanistan, it could be argued by a Devil's advocate that it was never a "good war".



While working overseas during the time of the U.S. invasion, I read an article in a foreign publication that pointed out that attacking the entire country of Afghanistan for what a handful of perpetrators in Tora Bora were alleged to have done, would have been like attacking and destroying Italy in 1981 because the Red Brigades had kidnapped and were holding General James Dozier somewhere in the country.

It was pointed out that all the build-up publicity and chest-beating fanfare, do it our way or the highway -- which doubtless played well in Peoria -- simply gave Osama bin Laden the opportunity to leisurely pack up his tent and, not steal, but saunter away into the sunset.

The article went on to point out that a Delta Force or Special Forces operation could probably have captured Osama and his entire entourage in a surgical strike -- that is, before Washington loudly telegraphed its move by making



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internationally broadcasted rants and threats to the Taliban. Many people in the country where the article appeared (as well as the world) felt that the only crime of the Taliban was that they were not particularly nice – sort of like the dictators in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

The piece concluded that the Hunt for Red Osama was little more than a pretext for muscle flexing and a dress rehearsal for the Blitzkrieg being prepared for Iraq. I wish I had translated and saved the article, as it was quite critical and cynical. Of special note is that the country where the magazine is published is a NATO ally and has never had any axes to grind with the U.S.

On a personal note, I find it amazing that everyone shrills that there is no money for Social Security and Medicare (which I am now on in lieu of the medical benefits promised me many years ago by the military and a “grateful” government), but there are unlimited funds to pour down a rat hole in Afghanistan.

‘Bad attitude, I guess ...
Name withheld at author’s request

Just taking out Osama would have been nice, but the Taliban would still have been around to harbor the next terrorist punk who came along. The Taliban provided al-Qaeda safe havens for training and recruiting terrorists. Iran gives Hezbollah C-802 anti-ship missiles and IRGC advisors. Syria has served as a cutout for Hezbollah to get Kornet ATGMs. State sponsors of terror who support people like bin Laden are part of the problem, too. – Ed

Their side of the story...

Your Command Guidance article (“Operation Tarnished Eagle”, October 2007) seemed a little premature, seeing how the trial of Vang Pao hasn’t even started. You forget, like soldiers, law enforcement officers follow orders and cannot choose their cases.

You paint the 10-year Navy SEAL veteran as some kind of buffoon, but I personally have worked with him on several cases over the past seven years, and you can’t be more wrong about this individual. We are a society that is controlled by laws. These laws are made by the legislators we vote in, those are the laws we



as law enforcement officers are paid to enforce. I know you’ve heard this many times before, but if you don’t

like the law, get

in there and change it.

Your article reminds me of the hippies and the anti-war commies of the 60s and 70s bashing our soldiers when they came home. They couldn’t choose their war, either. Regardless of what Vang Pao did 30 years ago, he lives here now, and like you and me he cannot break the law.

Thanks for the great articles and sit reps. The story “The Iraqi Eight-Klick Kill Zone” in your July 2007 issue took one of my sons by surprise. He was in the 341 MP unit the article mentions, and he remembers those two days as some of the fiercest fighting he had during his year in Iraq. His younger brother was in the same area, too, but he was with the 3rd Btn Rangers, Bravo Company. They were both fighting in the same area but never bumped into each other. Remember, cops can’t choose their cases, just like soldiers can’t choose their wars.

Ignatius H. Chinn
California Department of Justice
Bureau of Firearms

Mr. Chinn, haven’t you ever heard of “prosecutorial discretion”? I’d like to think that cops and prosecutors can do things like set priorities, but obviously that skill is lacking in California. – Ed

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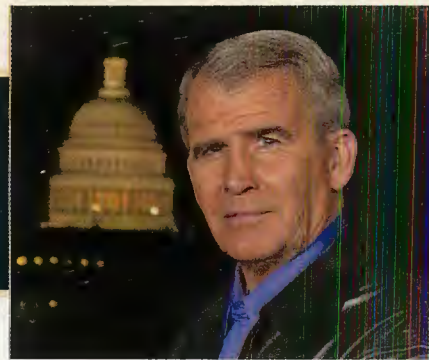
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COMMON SENSE

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



Circus Maximus

WASHINGTON — Any objective observer who watched or read this week's House and Senate testimony of Gen. David Petraeus received an informative assessment of the battlefield situation in Mesopotamia. Our top military commander in Iraq proffered a cool, level-headed report on successes and failures to date, gave a survey of the challenges ahead and provided rational recommendations for the future.

By contrast, America's Democrats gave the world a revealing look at the depths they are willing to plumb in their insatiable quest for raw political power. In what transpired before and during these hearings, Democrats made transparent their willingness to destroy anyone or anything that interferes with their design.

During a telephone conversation three days before Petraeus sat down next to Ambassador Ryan Crocker in the Caucus Room of the Cannon House Office Building, my friend, Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., told me that Democrats were conducting a "guerrilla campaign of character assassination" to impugn the general and that it would culminate with a frontal attack on his integrity. Hunter posited that, based on my personal experience in a similar atmosphere, I would understand. But not even I could gauge how low the Democrats would sink and how vicious they would become.

On Monday morning (Sept. 10) — just hours before the first day of hearings — the New York Times published a full-page ad paid for by MoveOn.org, the leftist, anti-U.S.-military organization that has become a major financial and propaganda organ for Democrats. The text below a photo of the general read: "General Petraeus or General Betray-Us? Cooking the Books for the White House." The clear implication was that a dishonest general, doing the bidding of the Bush administration, was going to dissemble before the Congress.

The hearings began with a familiar

routine: shrill diatribes from Democrat committee chairmen Ike Skelton and Tom Lantos who lectured and hectorated — denouncing the campaign in Iraq in general and Petraeus in particular. Lantos, who once stood steadfast with the Reagan administration against communism, launched a pre-emptive strike on the battlefield commander's testimony before he'd even seen or heard it with a dismissively insulting: "I don't buy it."

Then the cabal that wants to abandon the war against radical Islam demonstrated their competence. They couldn't even get the general's microphone to work. While the world waited to hear what Petraeus and Crocker had to say, more than half-a-dozen anti-U.S. military protesters entered the hearing room, jumping up to scream obscenities and denounce America before being escorted from the chamber. Some speculate that the muted microphones and the protests were orchestrated by the Democrats running the show.

When Petraeus was finally afforded the opportunity to speak, he defended his words as his own. "This is my testimony, although I have briefed my assessment and recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this testimony myself. It has not been cleared by nor shared with anyone in the Pentagon, the White House or the Congress until it was just handed out," he said. By then, the damage had already been done. Committee members such as Lantos barely glanced at the detailed charts that accompanied the Petraeus presentation. At times, the chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee appeared to be having trouble staying awake.

In the aftermath, some of my older media colleagues and even a member of Congress sympathetically opined that the treatment Petraeus received was reminiscent of another hearing 20 years ago. They are wrong.

What happened this week to Petraeus — and less directly to Crocker — was far worse than what transpired two

decades ago on Capitol Hill during the Iran-Contra hearings. When Adm. John Poindexter and I testified, we weren't in command. By the summer of 1987 the admiral and I were simply staff officers summoned to testify about past events. That's entirely different from the smear that took place this week.

Petraeus commands more than 160,000 U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen, Guardsmen and Marines who are in the field, battling a brutal enemy in a long, hard campaign. He was summoned — not sent, as Lantos alleged — to testify about current and future operations. Troops who have to face death daily, wearing flak jackets in 120-degree heat, watched and listened in barracks, bunkers and command posts as their leader was denigrated, demeaned and belittled by the majority party in Congress.

Such abusive treatment of a battlefield commander not only demoralizes our troops and disheartens our allies, it is a great encouragement to our enemies as well. Tellingly, the day after the hearings ended, Sheik Abdul Sattar Abu Risha, the Sunni leader credited by Petraeus as the leader of the revolt against al Qaeda, was assassinated by a bomb planted near his home. President Bush, who met the brave Sheik in Al Anbar two weeks ago, immediately expressed his condolences. The Democrats couldn't be bothered.

Democrats have now shown the world that they will denigrate and destroy anyone or anything to placate their far-left, deep-pocket donors. Do the American people really want this party in power?

Oliver North is the host of "War Stories" on 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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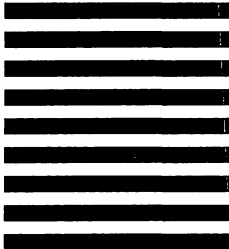
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