

**WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS MAN?**



# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

THE JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL ADVENTURERS

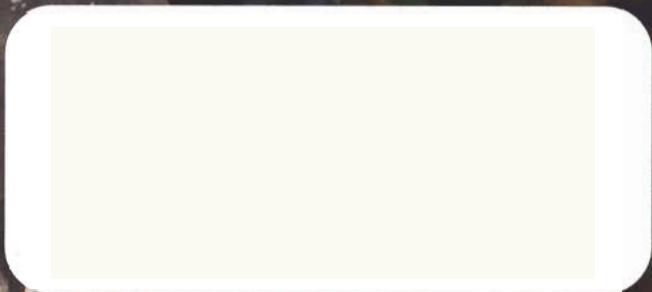
## Afghan Commandos "IN ACTION"



## Mercs in Georgia

**SPECOPS/PRIVATE  
CONTRACTORS**

**HOARE'S MERC  
OBSESSION**



**SURVIVAL  
KIT TIPS**

DECEMBER 2008

\$4.99US \$4.99CAN



12



# Merc Mike Hoare's Fiasco by Obsession

## THE SEYCHELLES AFFAIR



MIKE HOARE

## HOW A SEASONED MERC CREATED HIS BIGGEST DISASTER AND HOW SOF HELPED HIM OUT

By Columbus Smith

coup hinged on successful customs clearance at the airport! Would they clear customs on 28 November, 1981? (An earlier six-man advance reconnaissance

party HAD filtered through customs with their false-bottomed AK-hiding carry-ons.)

### OBSESSED WITH DEPOSING A MARXIST

Hoare, a proud anti-communist, concedes that during the preparatory period he had become obsessed with deposing Seychelles' illegitimate President, Marxist Albert René, much as Capt. Ahab had become obsessed with the killer whale Moby Dick. "I realized I had become completely obsessed with an ambition to help reinstate Jimmy Mancham in his rightful office, and was throwing caution to the winds," said Hoare.

His hatred of communism had been seared into his soul in the mid-1960s, when he led 1000 white mercenaries—5 Commando—to defeat a communist takeover attempt in the Congo. He and his "Wild Geese" arrived at scenes of unspeakable horror drawn by the Russian/Chinese spon-

sored "Simbas." (Hoare recounts that campaign in his just re-printed *CONGO MERCENARY*.)

### WHY IS SEYCHELLES "SPECIAL"?

The Republic of Seychelles is an island cluster (92 small islands) nation 1200 miles east of Mombasa, Kenya in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The capital Victoria is seated on the largest of the islands—Mahé, which is only slightly more than 24 miles long.

In 1976, when I joined the Rhodesian Army, Britain granted the Seychelles independence. Pro-West James Mancham was sworn in as the first President and Albert René, a Marxist, was sworn to the No. 2 position as Prime Minister.

It is a black nation and thus feels an African tug. So in the best African tradition, Prime Minister René seized power and became the new President via an armed but bloodless coup in 1977, while the country's leader was fittingly attending a Commonwealth meeting in U.K. The still legal leader—President Mancham—took up residence in exile in Britain as the Seychelles, under René, drifted deeper into Soviet waters.

At exactly the same time my African troops and I were fighting Robert Mugabe's "Communist terrorists"—CTs—in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe),

Continued on page 34

*THE SEYCHELLES AFFAIR* is Col. Mike Hoare's 200-page after action report of the most fascinating botched coup in history—a puzzling fiasco for which he shoulders responsibility without excuses.

Col. Hoare, the brilliant and heroic mercenary leader whose "Wild Geese" defeated the communists in the Congo, could well have titled his wonderful book *Fiasco by Obsession*. He took his band of four dozen mercenaries into Mahé Island's little airport undermanned, under funded, completely untrained as a unit, and devoid of a plan should they hit a snag while smuggling four dozen AK-47s in carry-on bags under the noses of Seychelles custom officials.

Once through the airport, the group would meet at safe houses to plan attacks on three targets with the help of the local resistance. Of course the



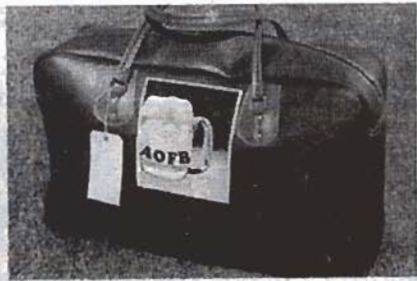
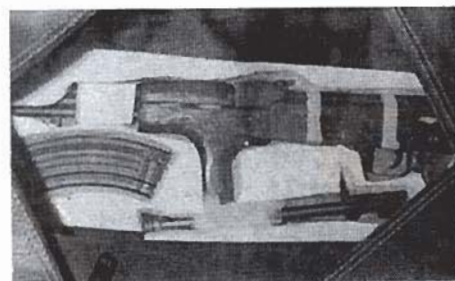
the Seychelles were darkening from pink to red and entered into treaties with Russia, Libya, Algeria, and Cuba. Its rhetoric in the United Nations became more stridently anti-West.

The Soviet Union was permitted to overstaff its embassy on Mahé and very soon nearly all industries—to include fishing and taxis—were nationalized, with the concomitant deflating effect on the economy.

## A PEOPLES LIBERATION ARMY

Always fearing a coup, President René buttressed his own "Peoples Liberation Army" with a few hundred soldiers from Tanzania's socialist leader Julius Nyerere. For coastal security France pitched in an armed vessel called the *Topaz*.

In Col. Hoare's words "...five or six Marxist theorists ...had seized power in Victoria and were determined to impose their will on the people, come what may." But what about this little black nation of 80,000 caught the eye of the Soviet Union?



*The dummy holdall and false bottom, with the AK-47 packed in polystyrene. Note the AOFB (Ancient Order of Froth Blowers) emblem.*

"Smoking gun" waiting to be discovered by a Seychelles customs official. All but three of Col. Hoare's 60 coup mercenaries had cleared customs when an official discovered this false bottom. Col. Hoare and his brother-in-law spent days carefully concealing the coup weapons in false-bottom carry-ons. It nearly worked. Note beer mug and the "ANCIENT ORDER OF FOAM BLOWERS" decal. All just "cover" for the visiting "philanthropists." Every carry-on was jammed tight with featherweight stuffed animals. To be delivered to orphans on the island of course.

Oil! Crude oil in supertankers. In an article I wrote in 1976 about Cold War petro-jousting I said: "Every day, nine colossal supertankers plow out of the Persian Gulf loaded with crude oil for the West. These sea monsters cut a trough through the Indian Ocean be-

fore hugging the African Coast en route to Europe and the Americas after rounding Cape Town, South Africa." These tankers carried 73 percent of all Middle East crude.

Moscow viewed the Seychelles as a vehicle for increasing Soviet influence over the Indian Ocean oil tanker routes. Hoare said the Soviets wanted influence over the Seychelles because it sits astride those oil tanker routes. U.S. and British naval forces were 1000 miles east of the Seychelles and too far adrift to exert the same influence the Soviets could from the Seychelles.

## A BORED CPA CUTS LOOSE

Certified accountant Mike Hoare would, of course, have had all these numbers and concepts in head long before he was approached by a Mancham-in-exile aide at a social function. Could he—Mike Hoare—stage a coup, topple René, and re-install James Mancham as President? Hoare said it was doable with \$5 million, which would cover the recruitment of 200 mercenaries and their training for a few months before the attack.

For the next two-plus years, Mancham emissaries shuttled back and forth from London and there was a lot of talk, but Hoare was becoming frustrated, more by the seeming indecision of Mancham than an inability to raise the needed money.

"Was Jimmy Mancham prepared to go back as President or was he not? To me nothing else was as important...

GET A GRIP WITH THE

# M203GRIP

THE FORWARD HANDGRIP  
FOR THE M203  
IS NOW AVAILABLE!



40mm operators now have all the advantages of the Forward HandGrip so popular on the M16 and M4 rifles.

Instantly attaches to any M203 grenade launcher. No tools or modifications required.

Fits the M203, M203PI and M203A1 launchers with long or short barrels.

Provides a rock-solid grip and detaches instantly. Optional flashlight accessory available.

Lightweight and rugged, the M203grip is available with a handle that features a waterproof battery compartment that holds (2) AA or (3) N or (2) type-123 3-volt batteries.

This product is protected by one or more patents, issued and/or pending, in the U.S. and worldwide.

MANUFACTURED BY:



Tel: 305-470-2000  
Fax: 305-470-2008  
info@m203grip.com  
www.m203grip.com



GP-5

*Richard Allen*

DD 12

SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE  
SUID-AFRIKAANSE WEERMAG

ISSUE VOUCHER  
UITGIFTEBEWYS

RECEIPT VOUCHER  
ONTVANGSBEWYS

Account Rekening

Posten/Inskrywing

Account Rekening

Station/Stanplek

Station/Stanplek

No. Date Datum

Issuing Unit  
Uitvoerendeheid

Receiving Unit  
Ontvangendeheid

No. and date of order, No. en datum van bestelling

Authority/Magting

Catalogue or part No. Katalogus of onderdeel	NAME/CLATURE/BENAMING	Condition Toestand	Quantity Moekeheid	Rate Tarief	R	F
1A390	Rifles AK 47 Romanian Jolly Bull.	S	60			
1A285	Rifles AK 47 7.62x39mm Bungama	S	15			
1A65	Rifles AK 47 7.62x39mm R.P.G. 7	S	10			
1D235	Rifles AK 47 7.62x39mm R.P.G. 7	S	60			
1D240	Rifles AK 47 7.62x39mm R.P.G. 7	S	240			
1D250	Rifles AK 47 7.62x39mm R.P.G. 7	S	60			
1A281-02	Rifles 7.62x39mm Bell Sigmund Hand R335	A	23500		17	Boxes
12200-01	Rifles 7.62x39mm Bell Sigmund Hand R335	A	20			
12203-01	Rifles 7.62x39mm Bell Sigmund Hand R335	A	20			
1810-01	Rifles 7.62x39mm Bell Sigmund Hand R335	A	102		17	Boxes
	Rifles 3 way 7.62x39mm Sigmund Hand R335	S	13			

Signature of Issuing Officer  
Handtekening van Uitvoerende

Signature of Receiving Officer  
Handtekening van Ontvangende

*M. Hoare*

The South African  
Defence Force  
delivery note—  
"far in excess of  
what I had  
requested!"

Indelible evidence that South Africa armed Col. Hoare's mercenaries for their coup attempt. The hand receipt is typical of the type used all over the world when a quartermaster hands over weapons. It's astounding that South Africa was so lax in security when their need for "deniability" would appear to be mandatory if the coup went sideways, which, of course, it did. But cleverly, South Africa charged Hoare and his men with a crime NOT related to the coup at all. (Scan taken from Mike Hoare's *The Seychelles Affair*.)

Taking a global view, Mancham's unequivocal written undertaking that he was prepared to return as President would give the coup a basis of legality. He was, after all, still the ..... President. René was a usurper. That much was incontestable."

#### IT BECAME HOARE'S COUP!

At some point, the impetus to oust René and install the lethargic Mancham shifted from the Mancham camp to Hoare himself. He became the prime mover and decided to do whatever it took to effect.

In his admitted obsession to "to help reinstate Jimmy Mancham in his rightful office," he "was throwing caution to the winds" and immediately chopped the price of the job to a few hundred thousand dollars US, from the original five million US. He also

cut the number of "mercs" needed for the job from 200 down to 60.

One chapter is entitled "The Cut-Price Coup." Hoare, who had been absorbing much of the planning costs (two reconnaissance trips to Mahé), began paying more out of pocket. He also began making the rounds to at least two governments with hat in hand, asking for money, arms, and a place to train.

Meeting with top South African officials, he was told: "The [South African] Cabinet has given it the OK and the Prime Minister himself [P.W. Botha] is right behind it!"

The South African Defense Force (SADF) almost instantly dumped a huge amount of weaponry "sufficient to sustain a small revolution" at his home address in Durban. (It was too much for the coup and much of it was

ONE STOP KNIFE SHOP  
www.onestopknifeshop.com

#### MAXPEDITION

JUMBO VERSIPACK  
CCW / BUG OUT  
SHOULDER BAG

REG. PRICE: \$88.99

ON SALE: \$80.99

UNIVERSAL HOLSTER: \$9.99

PART #: MAX-JUMBO

BLACK / KHAKI / FOLIAGE OR OD GREEN / ACU CAMO

#### BENCHMADE

3300 INFIDEL

McHENRY DESIGN

OUT-THE-FRONT AUTOMATIC

PART #: BM-3300

REG. PRICE: \$450

ON SALE: \$405.00

ALSO AVAILABLE WITH BLACK BLADE: BM-3300BT, \$425

#### CRKT

2030CW TRIUMPH N.E.C.K

CRAWFORD DESIGN

NECK KNIFE

PART #: CR-2030CW

REG. PRICE: \$49.99

ON SALE: \$33.99

#### ELITE TACTICAL

TRAUMA KIT

FEATURING QUIKLOT  
& OTHER ESSENTIAL  
LIFE SAVING GEAR

PART #: EF-FA142

REG. PRICE: \$39.99

ON SALE: \$29.99

BLACK / OD /  
ACU / COYOTE

#### SOG KNIVES

ST-02

SOG-TAC AUTOMATIC

PART #: SOG-ST-02

REG. PRICE: \$180.00

ON SALE: \$119.99

#### BENCHMADE

HK 14700

AUTOMATIC

BLACK OR SILVER  
PLAIN EDGE OR PART SERR.  
PART #: BM-14700

REG. PRICE: \$140.00

ON SALE: \$100.00

ORDER ONLINE OR CALL TOLL FREE:

1.866.BUY.1SKS

ORDER TOLL FREE (1.866.289.1757)

INFO LINE: 1.502.671.5510

MONDAY - FRIDAY 10AM EST - 6PM EST

VISA - MASTERCARD - DISCOVER - MONEY ORDER

\*\*\*\*NO PERSONAL CHECKS\*\*\*\*

SORRY, WE DON'T HAVE A PAPER CATALOG!

OneStopKnifeShop.com

MAILING ADDRESS: 340 PRODUCTION COURT

LOUISVILLE KY 40299

(INCLUDE \$12 FOR UPS GROUND SHIPPING)

ALL PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



The Independence Day Parade, 1 June 1980.

Seychellois troops during that country's Independence Day parade. These folks ran from Mike Hoare's mercenaries.



BRV armored car with 14.5mm and 7.62mm machine guns.

An armored car belonging to the Seychellois Army. During the 28 November, 1981 coup, two were sent against Mike Hoare's mercenaries. One took off running.

Seychellois troops with RPG-7 anti-tank rocket launchers. They proved no match against Hoare's mercenaries.

RPG-7 rocket launchers, the newest and most formidable weapons on parade.

call from Air India Flight 224, asking for permission to land. But there was no response because the air traffic controller was hiding a trash can with the lid pulled snugly down.

Hoare took the microphone and told the Air India pilot not to land under any circumstance. He told him three times. He was terrified this aircraft could fall prey to the mortars or to ground fire. It would be assumed that any plane landing would be bringing reinforcements for Hoare.

Hoare returned to his command post and told the men that though things looked bleak in the middle of the night, they would attack the army barracks in the morning and execute the coup. He then called the number he had for the resistance leader. The phone was answered but the leader didn't come to the phone. Hoare suspected he was hiding. Meanwhile, a panicky merc rushed to the control tower and deliberately countermanded Hoare's orders; he directed Air India 224 to land immediately, which it did.

When things were at their most chaotic, one of Hoare's most trusted lieutenants, Tullio Moneta, rushed to him and said, "Colonel, you know something? This is the only time a man really lives!"

"I knew what he meant," Hoare tells us.

## FLYING INTO A MORTAR ATTACK

Then, to his horror, Hoare learned the Air India flight had landed in the middle of the mortar attack, and he was desperate to stop the mortar barrage before civilian passengers were killed on the aircraft. Somehow he got a call through to President

René himself, explained the danger to the civilian aircraft, and implored him to stop the mortar barrage. Moments later it stopped.

The Air India pilot, Capt. Saxena, was brought to Hoare and apprised of the situation. Saxena was extremely grateful to Hoare for stopping the mortar attack and rounding up some fuel. So grateful, in fact, that he offered Hoare and his men safe passage out of the Seychelles compliments of Air India.

This was the nightmare Hoare had hoped to avoid, and half the reason he had ordered Air India to abort its landing. This large plane on the ground represented a backdoor escape when prospects looked darkest. And this was the moment Hoare rued the fact that he had never trained with these men for the coup!

## FATAL FLAW—THEY NEVER TRAINED TOGETHER

"When the chips were down and a decision had to be made as to whether we would fight or not, the total lack of cohesive thought or close understanding of one another proved fatal," said Hoare. "Had we known each other, I am confident they would have trusted my judgment."

Hoare says he is staying but is shocked to learn most of his men want to leave on the Boeing 707 including one his two top officers. They plead with him to leave and Hoare realizes the coup is impossible with the handful of men who have decided to stay behind with him. He decides all will leave but for the other six members of the advance team who are miles away and impossible to contact. They carefully wrap the fallen merc's body and load it too, on the plane.

Flight 224 was safely aloft and bound for Durban, South Africa, five hours' flying time. Sixty-one year old Col. Mike Hoare—60 hours without sleep—was faced with hard reality. "But we were safe now. Safe to face the stark reality of failure"

## HOSTILE HOMECOMING

Since the South African Defense Force armed the mission and South Africa's National Intelligence Service (NIS) had helped orchestrate the final plans, Hoare and the others harbored some hope that South Africa would quietly let them drift off into oblivion.

But hope evaporated when all were arrested shortly after landing in Durban. Hoare and a few of his staff were brought up on charges under the Civil Aviation Offences Act. (Not so curiously, the failed coup attempt was not mentioned.) Under the Civil Aviation Offences Act, it was a crime to interfere or interrupt civil aviation in any way.

After many months of silence, Hoare did mention South African participation in the Seychelles coup planning, preparation, and arms supply. But when he was sentenced, the judge seemed at pains in his closing sentencing document to divorce South Africa from the coup. And he labeled as "pure hearsay" Hoare's claim that both Prime Minister P. W. Botha and his cabinet were aware and supportive of the coup planning.

The judge further insulated South Africa from the coup by saying Hoare and his men commandeered Air India Flight 224, "...when the accused were in a perilous situation of their own creation, when their plan to take over the Seychelles by force of arms was in serious danger of collapse."

Hoare was convicted of wresting control of a civil aircraft and interfering with the duties of the airline staff on Air India 224. He was also convicted of endangering the airports both in Mahé and in Durban.

## SOF TO THE RESCUE

Hoare said his legal expenses were astronomical and actually thanked this magazine on page 110 of the new re-print for helping him defray some of the legal costs. "I sought the assistance of *SOLDIER OF FORTUNE* magazine in Boulder, Colorado, in the

Continued on page 62



United States. They placed an advertisement in their magazine, which incidentally has a readership in excess of 1.5 million, telling their readers that I was selling my 5 Commando shoulder patch for US\$5, and that the sale of this item would assist me personally in meeting the costs of our defence. With typical generosity the Americans responded speedily and during the next three years my wife maintained a brisk correspondence with over 3500 Americans, many of whom were kind enough to buy the patch."

After 1014 days in a prison, Col. Mike Hoare was released in May 1985 with others on an amnesty decree issued by then South African Prime Minister P. W. Botha. When he showed up unexpectedly at home, his wife Phyllis said, "Dear God! He's escaped."

Col. Hoare dedicates his book to his wife and other women attached to the incident-prone. "To my wife, Phyllis, and all those loyal women

who stand by their men when things go wrong."

Thus far not mentioned is that Col. Hoare explored many options for getting weapons into Mahé other than walking them through. But each option proved undoable, particularly with his coup-"lite" budget. But what is puzzling is that a veteran like Hoare didn't seem to plan for the very likely event that an AK-47 would be detected at customs. In every army, a part of the operations staff is discussing what to do if "this or that" happens on the way to the objective. Finding an AK in a carry-on bag certainly falls into the "this or that" category.

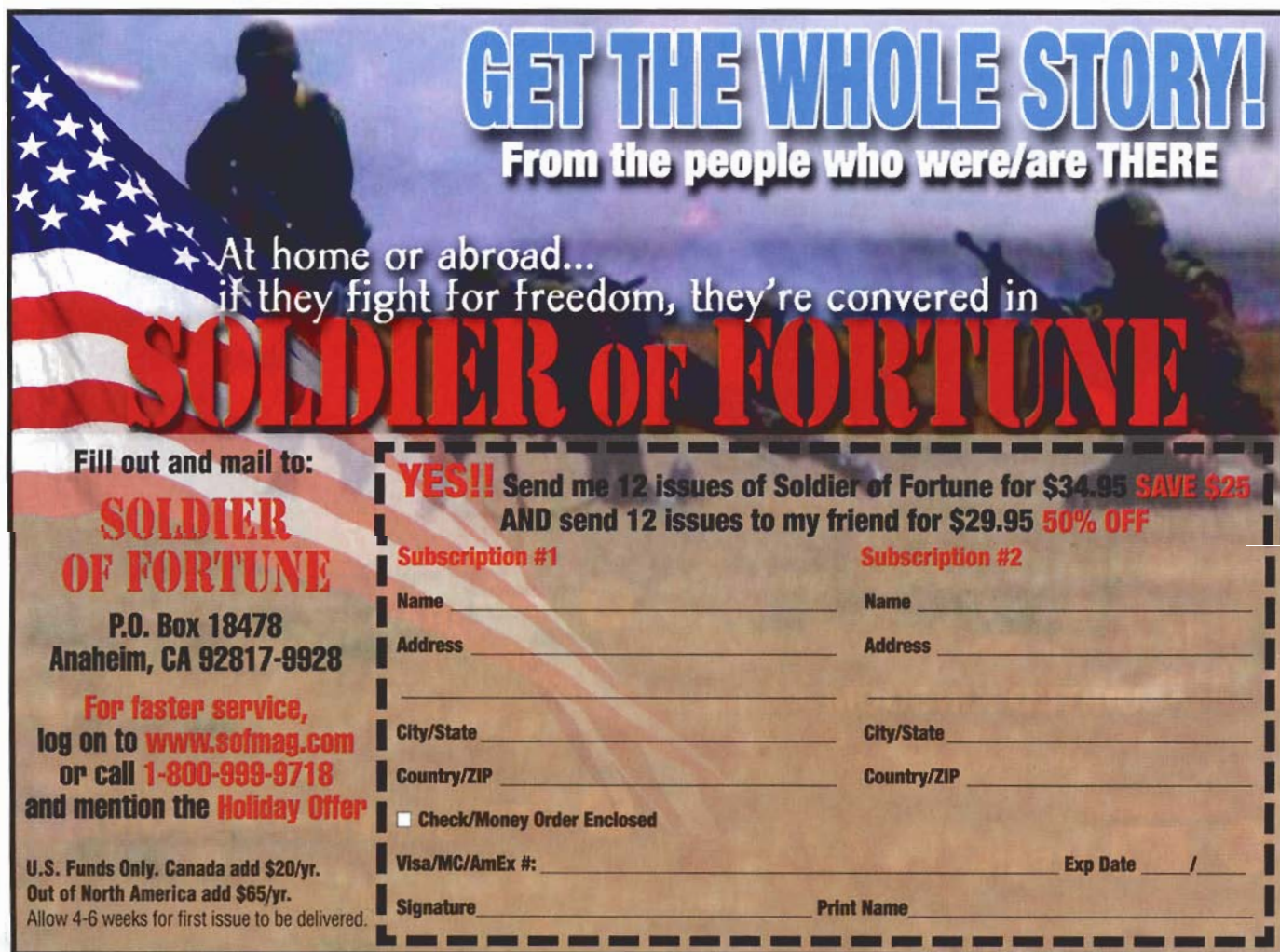
Sadly, the price of this failed coup was not the temporary professional embarrassment, and three years in prison, that Hoare suffered, but that 27 years later the same left-wing, anti-US, anti-West government he sought to topple is still in power. Seychelles continues to campaign for the re-

moval of the US from Diego Garcia.

But hats off to Col. Hoare for having the moral courage to expose all of his errors so we can avoid them if presented with a similar historic opportunity. And who can't but admire his expenditure—at 61—of the most expensive of all international currencies: STAND-ALONE COURAGE.

*"Five of the six men in Hoare's advance party were rounded up and severely beaten shortly after the botched coup. Hoare found a top London lawyer for the six and they were eventually pardoned by the Seychelles' President Albert René. They could have been shot and Hoare, ever the Old World Gentleman, sent a note of thanks to René for sparing and freeing his men."* ✕

The Seychelles Affair is available via Paladin Press, \$25.00, 232 pages.



## GET THE WHOLE STORY!

From the people who were/are THERE

At home or abroad...  
if they fight for freedom, they're covered in

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Fill out and mail to:

**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**  
P.O. Box 18478  
Anaheim, CA 92817-9928

For faster service,  
log on to [www.sofmag.com](http://www.sofmag.com)  
or call 1-800-999-9718  
and mention the Holiday Offer

**YES!!** Send me 12 issues of Soldier of Fortune for \$34.95 **SAVE \$25**  
AND send 12 issues to my friend for \$29.95 **50% OFF**

Subscription #1	Subscription #2
Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
City/State _____	City/State _____
Country/ZIP _____	Country/ZIP _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Check/Money Order Enclosed	
Visa/MC/AmEx #: _____	Exp Date ____/____/____
Signature _____	Print Name _____

U.S. Funds Only. Canada add \$20/yr.  
Out of North America add \$65/yr.  
Allow 4-6 weeks for first issue to be delivered.