

# Coffee Before Going

by John Cantey Knight

The morning is chilly. The coolness seeps through my camos. Daybreak is hours away, the deer still bedded. I check the action, put on the safety. Boots glide through brush into forest, moving deliberately to get in place before light seeps between the trees and birds begin to chirp and twitter. It's hunting, nothing more or less. Except they have guns and grenades, and they are doing what we are doing, moving deliberately through the forest to where they'll stop and wait. The city boy in front is making too much noise. If they're already in place, it'll be him they pick off first. Three miles in, we hunker under the cover of a line of spruce. Men deploy along the ridge. Counting seconds, there will be a new daybreak and birds singing like crazy.