# INFANTRY NEWS

THE FIRST M24 SNIPER rifles were released late last year to the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg. Thirty-six of the new weapon systems were in the first package.

The M24 is the first system developed specifically to fill the sniper role. It is to be employed as a force multiplier in low and high intensity conflicts where U.S. forces are outnumbered on the battlefield. It will be used to engage with precision fire specific targets that are beyond the effective range of standard issue rifles.

Unlike its predecessor, the M21, it can be maintained by the operator, it has a backup sighting system, and it incorporates many other characteristics that significantly increase its reliability as a combat weapon.

The M21, a modified M14 semi-automatic rifle, cannot be maintained under field conditions, and its inflexible design makes it highly susceptible to malfunction. For example, the M21's scope cannot be removed by the operator. If anything happens to it, it has to be sent to Anniston Army Depot for repairs. In addition, its barrel-receiver group is bedded in a fiberglass epoxy material that only an armorer or a gunsmith can rebed. By contrast, the M24's free-floating barrel rests on an aluminum bedding system that is an integral part of the stock.

The scope on the M21 was often damaged in parachute jumps, while the M24's detachable scope can be packed in a jumper's rucksack for protection.

The bolt-action rifle, similar to the Remington Model 700 sold in the private sector, has an 800-meter range and has an adjustable stock and trigger pull. The scope has a mil dot reticle pattern and comes equipped with a sunshade. When reattached to the rifle, the sight can be repositioned (zeroed) within one-half minute of angle. In addition, the new system has backup metallic front and rear sights that can be used if the scope is damaged. These iron sights have their own case.

Like the M21, the M24 fires the standard 7.62mm M118 military cartridge. Because of its long action, though, the M24 can easily be modified to accommodate a round size up to .300 magnum.

M24 SNIPER WEAPON SYSTEM (SWS)

The rifle also comes with a detachable bipod, a five-round internal magazine, and a standard issue leather sling. The rifle itself weighs about 11.6 pounds and is 43 inches long when the stock is in its shortest position. With its various repair and carrying equipment, its overall weight is about 14.2 pounds.

Special operations, Ranger, and other light infantry units will receive most of these first systems.

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A FOG-M CONTRACT has been awarded for the full-scale development of the missile system. The FOG-M (fiber optic guided missile) is the non-line-of-sight portion of the Army's Forward Area Air Defense System (FAADS), a five-part program to improve battlefield air defense for the Army's divisions.

FOG-M gets its name from the spool of optical fiber that pays out behind when the missile is fired. Launched vertically, the missile pitches over into level flight. Images from a tiny video camera in the nose are transmitted back to the gunner's station where a soldier, looking at a TV-like screen, can guide the missile and hit targets hidden behind hills, lines of trees, and the like.

When fielded in the early 1990s, the FOG-M will enable Army gunners to attack and destroy, for the first time, enemy helicopters and armored vehicles that are masked by the terrain or hidden from their line of sight.

FOG-M will be deployed with the Army's light and heavy divisions.

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A SOLAR PANEL, a hand- or foot-cranked generator, and a thermoelectric generator are being considered as alternative electrical power sources for the Special Operations forces. These power sources are strictly for communications systems.

The candidate sources are designed for use with future high-energy density, battery types such as rechargeable lithium, and with nickel cadmium rechargeable batteries such as the BB-542. Each source has certain advantages in different scenarios.

The 60-watt solar panel can fully charge a BB-542 battery in less than two hours under bright sun. It can be connected in parallel to other solar panels and compactly folded up for transport.

The man-operated generator can recharge the BB-542 in less than 75 minutes. The user can sit on an attachment and crank the generator with both hands, or attach a foldable component to a tree trunk for foot or hand cranking.

The thermoelectric generator converts heat into electrical energy. Thus, these modules can use heat from a camp stove to charge the BB-542 battery in less than five hours while the stove also keeps the troops warm, cooks their meals, and melts snow.

Each of these power sources is silent, weighs less than five pounds, and can operate in average worldwide temperature and sunlight conditions. Two of the three are non-developmental items.

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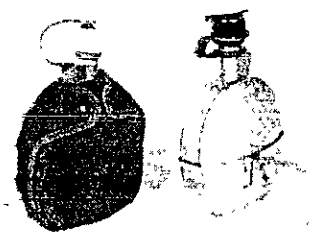
AN ADAPTER KIT has been devel-

oped for the insulated canteen that will make it compatible with "through the mask drinking" in a chemical/biological toxic environment.



**Canteens are shown before (left) and after (right) modifications.**

The kit contains a new cap, strap, mouthpiece adapter, epoxy adhesive, razor blade, emery cloth, an alcohol wipe packet, and an instruction sheet. Soldiers will use these components to make on-the-spot modifications.

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THE NATIONAL INFANTRY Museum is now restructuring a section covering the U.S. infantry in the 19th Century. Part of the new look will be large, colorful illustrations depicting uniforms and equipment as regulations changed during that period.

One of the artifacts included is the Pennsylvania 1797 contract musket, caliber .69, Charleville pattern. The state of Pennsylvania became alarmed over worsening relations with Britain and France in the latter part of the 1790s, and on 28 March 1797 authorized the purchase of 20,000 of the muskets at a cost of $10.25 each with which to arm its militia, the first state ever to do so. The barrels were 44 inches long, to which bayonets with 15-inch blades could be fitted. The stocks were made of well-seasoned walnut.

A noncommissioned officer's sword of 1790-1800 is shown. The NCO swords for the years after the Revolution were not rigidly specified. The blade was for cutting, and it was to be at least one inch in width and about 30 inches in length. The blade on the one shown is slightly curved, and the grip is made of bone, but some grips were made of horn. An NCO sword, model of 1840, is also on display. Although the war with Mexico saw the bayonet replacing the sword as a weapon for use by the infantry, NCOs were issued the model of 1840 for use both as a weapon and as a symbol of rank. This model remained in use for 70 years.

A sword for general officers and their staffs that was adopted in 1832 is part of the exhibit, too. It was the standard weapon until 1850, after which the newer models of 1850 and 1860 became more popular. Another infantry officer's sword in the collection is a straight bladed one that conforms to the uniform regulation of 1821. The grip is carved from bone with a brass eagle head on top.

war broke out with Mexico. He was soon commissioned in the 9th Regiment and only months later was promoted to brigadier general. He marched with General Winfield Scott to Mexico City.

A number of uniform pieces and equipment from the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico are on display, as is a large collection of Civil War artifacts that was described in an earlier issue of INFANTRY (July-August 1988).

A U.S. .54 caliber Model 1836 flintlock pistol made by A.H. Waters and Company and used in the Mexican War is included in this section. These were the last U.S. martial pistols to be made

**Noncommissioned officer's sword**

An interesting leather headdress is on display. The bell crown cap was first authorized for infantrymen in April 1820. All company officers were required to wear this new cap, a style already in use by European armies, when on duty with their companies. All enlisted men were required to wear it also. Tall caps gave the appearance of greater height to soldiers on the battlefield and were the military fashion of the 1820-1830 period.

Also on display is a duffel bag that was carried by General Franklin Pierce in the War with Mexico. Pierce, who later became the 14th president of the United States, enlisted as a private in 1846 when

with the flintlock ignition system. Many were later converted to the percussion system and used in the Civil War.

The National Infantry Museum Society, formed at Fort Benning a number of years ago to assist the museum with financial and volunteer support, is open to anyone who is interested in joining. The cost is $2.00 for a one-year membership or $10.00 for a lifetime membership.

Additional information about the museum and the society is available from the Director, National Infantry Museum, Fort Benning, GA 31905-5273; AUTOVON 835-2958 or commercial (404) 545-2958.