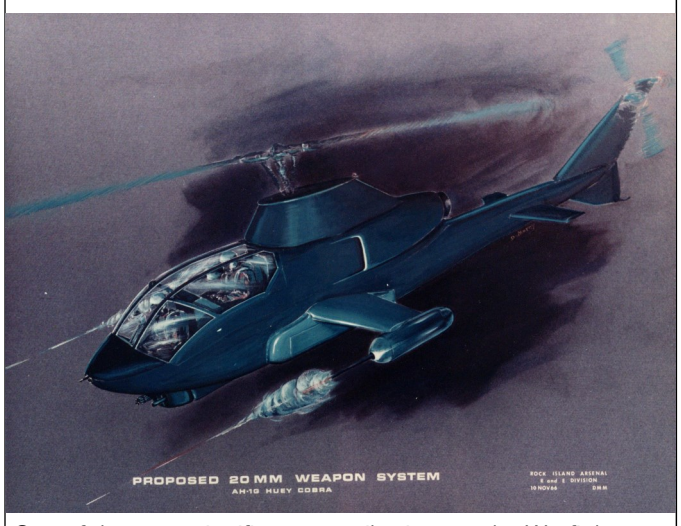
U.S. ARMY

THE ASC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Volume 14 Issue 4 January 2024

Weapon Systems Laboratories & Rodman Labs

FROM THE ARCHIVES



One of the most significant contributions to the Warfighter produced by the combined Weapons Laboratories was the AH-1 HueyCobra and modular systems deployable on the UH-1 Huey. The combined technology on these platforms made them one of the most dynamic weapons systems ever. UH-1's are still used in many applications today, while the AH-64 Apache has generally overtaken the AH-1's functions.

MONTHLY TRIVIA

1. What was the unofficial name of the 280-mm Heavy Motorized Gun, M65?
2. What weapon replaced the M16 rifle?
3. What was the alternative form of ammunition designed to be used in an environment without oxygen?

ANSWERS FOR DECEMBER 2023 QUESTIONS

1. Where was the first established base located using prepositioned stocks during the War on Terror?
   - **Karshi-Kanabad, Uzbekistan**
2. What was the name / acronym of the effort to streamline Army logistics following the Gulf War?
   - **RML—Revolution of Military Logistics**
3. How many command iterations have used the current ASC crest?
   - **3: OSC, AFSC, and ASC**

Many have heard the sad news of PS Magazine no longer publishing new articles. We at the ASC History Office are sad to see it go after many years of reminders and helpful information on maintaining your gear. As sustainers, we know how important it is to keep equipment in the best shape, and we also know that if you take care of your equipment, it'll take care of you.

Still, no one can stop us from appreciating transmogrified tanks and trucks. Googly Tank sees you, Army. Make sure you take care of him properly.

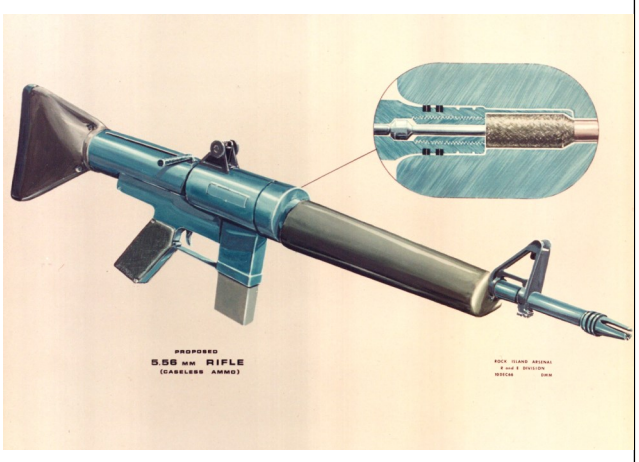
The Cold War was fraught with wonder, ingenuity, and a certain sense of mysterious danger as the two superpowers entered a stalemate of weapon development competition and stockpiling. Advancement in nuclear power, propulsion systems, and so much more led its development to the Cold War. It was within this period that wild theories were enabled, and the imagination was no limit of mortal man. However, far more worldly was the development of conventional warfare means.

In 1955, Ordnance Weapons Command (OWC) was activated with the mission of streamlining weapons research, development, and fielding along the lines of weapon commodities in the Ordnance Department. OWC owned the lifecycle of weapons in the U.S. Army from blueprints and drafting all the way to the weapon seeing action in the field. Within OWC and the subsequent Weapons Command (WECOM) (1962), were several research laboratories tasked with designing and developing everything from small arms to tanks.

There were four key laboratories operating in OWC and its subsequent incarnations from 1955 through 1973. These laboratories were the Airborne Systems Laboratory (ASL), the Small Arms Research Laboratory (SARL), the Bioengineering Laboratory (BIO), and the Artillery Systems Laboratory (ARL). From the late 1970s and into the early 1980s, these laboratories and sections were drawn down until they were totally realigned under a new command.

One of the first weapon systems fielded by ARL was the Triple Threat Weapon carriage that could cradle the 155-, 175-, and 203-mm guns and howitzers. These replaced the large T72 carriage mated to the T131 280-mm gun, known as Atomic Annie. Subsequent smaller systems included numerous modifications to the M101 105-mm howitzer and the then-new M102 105-mm howitzer in 1962.

SARL worked on design and development of the M14 rifle, the iconic weapon that accompanied many units in the Vietnam War. By the mid-1960s, SARL was also working on modifications and concepts for the replacement M16 rifle. Unilaterally, the small arms division worked on numerous other projects, including disposable magazines, combat shotguns, and new machine gun systems.



Other weapon systems and projects included airborne artillery platforms, that eventually birthed the armed variants of the Huey (AH-1 HueyCobra), AH-64 Apache, M198 155-mm Howitzer, and many others. Concepts were created for rotary towed rocket launchers, auxiliary powered artillery systems, tri-wheel carriages (co-opted with Lockheed), fire-less ammunition, rotary-borne artillery systems, and even weapon systems capable of use in outer space.

In 1973, these weapons laboratories were transferred to Rock Island Arsenal, where they were renamed the Thomas J. Rodman Weapons Laboratories. As missions transformed different sections and laboratories left Rock Island Arsenal and were allocated to other commands and installations. The transfer of this mission set was completed in 2018 when Army Materiel Command (AMC) was ordered to transfer the Research, Development, and Engineering Command (RDECOM) to Army Futures Command (AFC). Today, these functions belong to the Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM / CCDC), a major subordinate command (MSC) of AFC.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance

History is being made every day at this command.

Cover Photo: Anti-personnel system tested at the Kingsbury Hard Lot on Rock Island Arsenal.
Other Photos: Conceptual images provided by Artillery and Airborne Systems Laboratories for proposed weapon systems.

For more history content visit us on our website or scan the code to left: **https://www.aschq.army.mil/About/History**

Presented to you by your friendly ASC History Office. Feel free to call or stop by our office for any of your history needs.
Contact: usarmy.ria.asc.list.history@army.mil | Bldg. 390, 1 Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois, 61299
Kevin Braafladt : Command Historian | Mark Struve : Assistant Historian | Kaleb Bemis : Archivist