

AUSTRIAN DEMONSTRATION

DECEMBER 12, 1969

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To: Mr. R. D. Fremont
Date: December 19, 1969

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Subject TRIP REPORT - AUSTRIAN DEMONSTRATION

Through the efforts of Mr. Kurt Perwolf, of Vienna, arrangements were made for a demonstration of Colt's military weapons to the Austrian Army. As a result, Ed Roxbury and the writer were sent to Vienna to meet with Austrian Military Personnel and conduct the demonstration.

We arrived in Vienna on Monday, December 8, 1969, and were met at the airport by Mr. Perwolf. He was a relatively unknown quantity, since we had not had any previous dealings with him. He soon proved to have good connections, however, since in rapid succession he took care of getting the rifles through customs, introduced us to General Hanisch, who is the chief of the Austrian Muntions Command, and Col. Stol, chief of Small Arms.

Mr. Perwolf is also on very friendly terms with Col. Kaiser, U.S.A. attache to Austria, and Col. O'Connor, U.S.A.F. attache. He is Sales Manager of Armeturen G.M.B.H., a company located in Rustorf, Austria, which manufactures steel helmets, hand grenades, and other military equipment.

The formal demonstration was held on Friday, December 12, 1969, at Felixdorf. The range was part of an Austrian Army Test and training area approximately 25 miles from Vienna. We had previously seen the range, tested the weapons, and made arrangements with the personnel on Tuesday, December 9, 1969. We had also made arrangements for Col. Stol to do the narration, since very few of the officers attending the demonstration were fluent in English.

The demonstration went very smoothly, with all weapons functioning perfectly. Included in the demonstration was a sand test, where the rifle was completely buried in a mixture of gravel and pumice. The same rifle was also submerged completely in water and then fired. They were quite impressed by this performance, after reading about the M16 problems in Vietnam. Col. Stol is a very enthusiastic booster of the M16 and did an excellent job of introducing the various weapons. I'm sure he left no doubt in the minds of the officers present as to how he felt about the rifle.

The 9mm Military Pistol was also displayed, the features explained, and the ease of field stripping described. We didn't fire the pistol at the demonstration, because a portion of the trigger bar which had been soldered in place came loose, and we were afraid it would cause a malfunction. This did not have an adverse effect, however, since they all realized that the pistol on display represented the only model. They were very much impressed with the simplicity of construction and the ease of assembly and dis-assembly.

More interest was shown in the Commando than in the M16 Rifle. This is due to the fact that the Austrians are interested in a light carbine-type weapon as a supplement to their FN 7.62 Nato Rifles which are now standard. Conversations with Col. Stol and several other officers confirmed that what they are really looking for is a compromise between the Commando and the standard M16.

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The compromise would ideally be a 14" barrel carbine, using the Commando forearm, and the standard M16 Buttstock. This would give them bayonet and grenade launching capability, which does not exist on the Commando.

While it is not likely that they will standardize on the M16 unless other European Countries, and especially West Germany adopt the 5.56 cartridge, they may purchase a quantity of M16 carbines, to supplement their 7.62 Rifles. This will depend on politics, and also on how well they feel the 5.56 cartridge would serve in total capacity in the event it was fully standardized. They would like to have only one military small arms cartridge in the Austrian Army, but are concerned about .223's adequacy in the machine gun, and longer range rifle role. The heavy bullet load (68 grain) in the 5.56 certainly improves the penetration and long range ballistics of the cartridge, and after reading the external ballistics tables they were very much impressed. It is possible that they will want 9" twist barrels on all rifles or carbines that they order.

They expressed considerable interest in the fact that we are developing a belt fed Light Machine Gun in 5.56, and also have a heavy barrel "BAR" type weapon available. The fact that we have these weapons available will have a considerable bearing on their decision concerning ultimate standardization on the 5.56 cartridge.

After the demonstration, a buffet was served in the officers' lounge. This gave us a chance to meet the attending officers in a more comfortable atmosphere and answer various questions they had concerning the M16 weapons system.

I met with Kurt Perwolf on Monday, December 15, 1969, shortly before leaving Austria. He mentioned that General Feisler had been at his house the night before. General Feisler had received a highly favorable report from Col. Fahringer, his representative at the demonstration and was quite favorably disposed toward the M16. Kurt felt that we had made good progress, and that we should consider returning again in the spring. This time with a belt fed machine gun and a heavy barrel automatic rifle in addition to the weapons we had with us this trip.

We visited the Hirtenberg Ammunition Plant, which is located about 25 miles outside of Vienna, on Thursday, December 11, 1969. The purpose of the trip was to assure Hirtenberg that they had nothing to fear from Colt's, and that in fact, we would be happy to work with them wherever possible. Hirtenberg is a family owned company, about 100 years old, and the only ammunition facility in Austria. There is no doubt that they have influence in high places within the Austrian Government. They, along with Steyr Daimler Puch are the only two companies concerned with arms and ammunition within the country.

We had a short, but friendly meeting with Fritz Mandl, Jr., the export manager and son of the owner. They are presently making 5.56 ammunition, in fact a good portion of the ammunition used in our demonstration was made by them. Mr. Mandl was aware that Steyr had gotten an R&D contract from the Austrian Government in order to design a 5.56 military rifle. He felt that Steyr lacked the technical design skill to come up with a satisfactory product, however. In the event that Colt's sold a sufficient quantity of M16 rifles to warrant assembly or manufacture in Austria, he felt that Steyr would be awarded the contract.

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Conclusions:

1. It appears that the Austrian Army is interested in a carbine of 5.56 caliber, to supplement their present FN 7.62 Nato Rifles. The M16 Rifle is a little too large, and the Commando a little too small.
2. They would be very interested in seeing a 14" barrel version of the Commando, with the Standard M16 stock. This would give them bayonet and grenade launching capability while still having a relatively short, handy, weapon.
3. The 68 grain bullet in the 5.56 would be much preferred over the M193 round.
4. Providing there are no political problems, it appears that the Austrian Army may buy a small quantity of M16 carbines. There is very little likelihood of standardization, however, unless some Nato nations, and especially Germany, adopts the 5.56 cartridge. If this happens, we may be in a good position, especially if they have a quantity of M16 carbines in service at that time.
5. The bulk of Austrian Army pistols are old Walther P-38's. Most are not in the best of shape, and they're not too highly thought of. There was interest in the military pistol, especially among the technical people. They were impressed with the combination of double action and large magazine capacity. A possibility exists that they would buy the military pistol if it were in production.

Recommendations:

1. Send samples of the 14" barrel carbine to Col. Stol for evaluation. We have several in the R&D Arms Room.
2. Send a rifle with a 9" twist, and a quantity of ammunition for test. Make it a carbine model if possible.
3. Keep a close relationship with our agent and with the Austrian Small Arms Technical Branch as well.
4. Keep the Austrians appraised of our progress regarding the Military Pistol, and include any firing demonstrations which may be conducted next year.

R. E. Roy

RER:jsr

cc: Messrs Goldbach
Hall
Roxbury

ATTENDEES AT AUSTRIAN M16 DEMONSTRATION
December 12, 1969 Felixdorf, Austria

General Prof. Franz Hanisch, Leiter d.Abteilung Wehrtechnik Waffen u.Munition
(Head of Austrian AWC)

Oberst Dipl. Ing. Stoll, Referent f.leichte Waffen
(Director Small Arms)

Herr Pankarter, (Assistant von Oberst Stoll)

Hauptmann Jedlitzka, Schiebleiter f.leichte Waffen bei
der PVWM (Pruf - und Versuchsstelle f.Waffen u.Munition (Chief - Small Arms
Test Area)

OBSTL. Fahringer gruppe operation Fuhrungsabteilung
(Assistant to Gen. Fiesler)

OBSTL. Zeller Kommandant Der PVWM (Felix Dorf)

MJR. Angerer(Ausbildungsabteilung)

MJR. Felberbauer (ABTLC. W.-Plan)

HPT. Ahrental (Generalstab Plan A)

MJR²=Szemliker (ABTLG Klein Kaliber Waffen)

Col. Kaiser (USA Attache)



1. The Felixdorf Range, looking toward target area.
On left are silhouette targets at 100 and 200 meters.



2 L. to R. - Kurt Perwolf (in leather coat),
Gen. Hamisch, Col. Stol



3 Precision Firing at 100 meters. R. Roy firing.
Capt. Jedlitzka observing thru scope. Col. Kaiser,
USA Attache standing with Kurt Perwolf. In first
row - Mr. Pamkarter (Asst. to Col. Stol),
Gen. Hamisch, Col. Stol. Background - Mr. Perwolf's
driver, Lt.Col. Fahringer. Capt. Anenthal



4- Austrian Commando firing after the demonstration.
Ed Roxbury is explaining the M16 to another commando
in the background.



5-Launching a rifle grenade during the demonstration. The Austrians feel all their rifles should have the capability of launching both H.E. and tear gas grenades.



#6-Capt. Jedlitzka and Ed Roxbury examining various items on display.



#7-This picture shows the effect when a 5.56 bullet is fired into heavy clay. The cavity was approx 5" dia X 6" deep.



#8-Kurt Perwolf firing the Commando SMG.