

**SPECIAL WEAPONS:**

# Best-Kept Secret

## THE ISRAELI GALIL

This new assault rifle takes the best from the M-16 and the AK-47—only now has Israel decided to share this unbeatable weapon.

By Ken Hackathorn

Introduction of a new assault rifle often results in various reactions from students of weaponcraft. The latest offering to these shores is the Israeli produced Galil. After testing and evaluating a sample Galil ARM rifle in .223, my reaction is very positive.

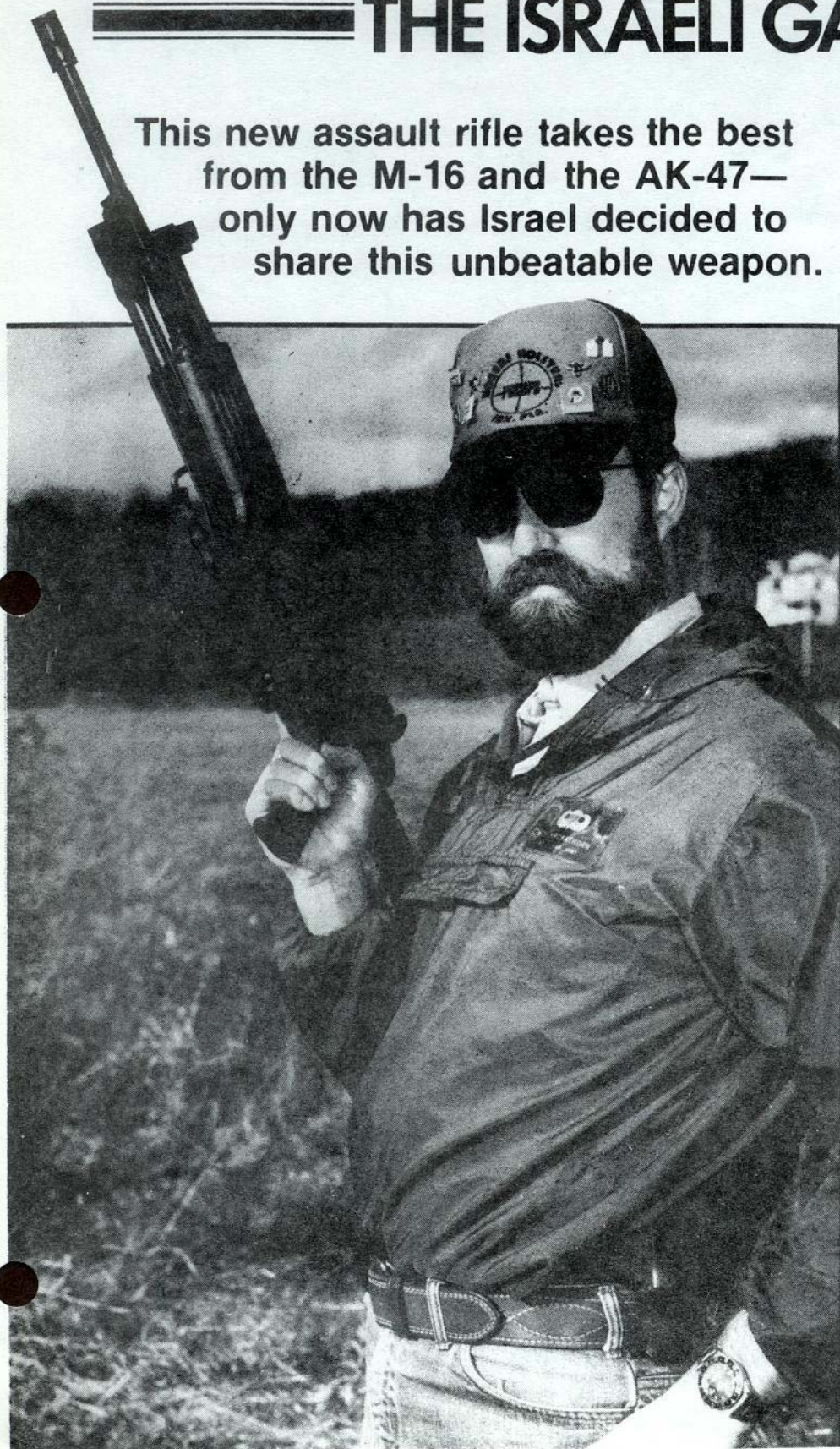
The Galil rifles offered to the U.S. marketplace are semi-auto versions of the famous Galil assault rifle used by the Israeli Defense Forces since late 1973. The Galil is now the issue battle rifle of the South African military forces and has been adopted by them as the R-4. The Galil is also popular in many parts of Central America. Somosa's palace guards were issued Galils, and currently Guatemala issues the Galil to its army. This Israeli Military Industries (IMI) produced assault rifle is very popular and for good reason. Most small arms specialists agree that the Galil is the finest military rifle in the world today.

Rugged, reliable, and made to the highest quality standards, the Galil is simply a highly modified AK-47 chambered for 5.56Nato (.223 Rem.). Unlike the current Soviet Kalashnikov rifles that utilize stamped and pressed parts for the main construction of the weapon, the Galil still follows the pattern of the original AK-47 rifle with solid forged and milled steel receiver. With the basic AK-47 action design, the Galil is engineered to provide extras ideal for the infantry soldier. Standard items on the Galil include ambidextrous safety, night sights, folding butt stock, and flash hider/grenade launcher. Note that many standard features on the Galil are those often costing extra on the other popular assault rifles.

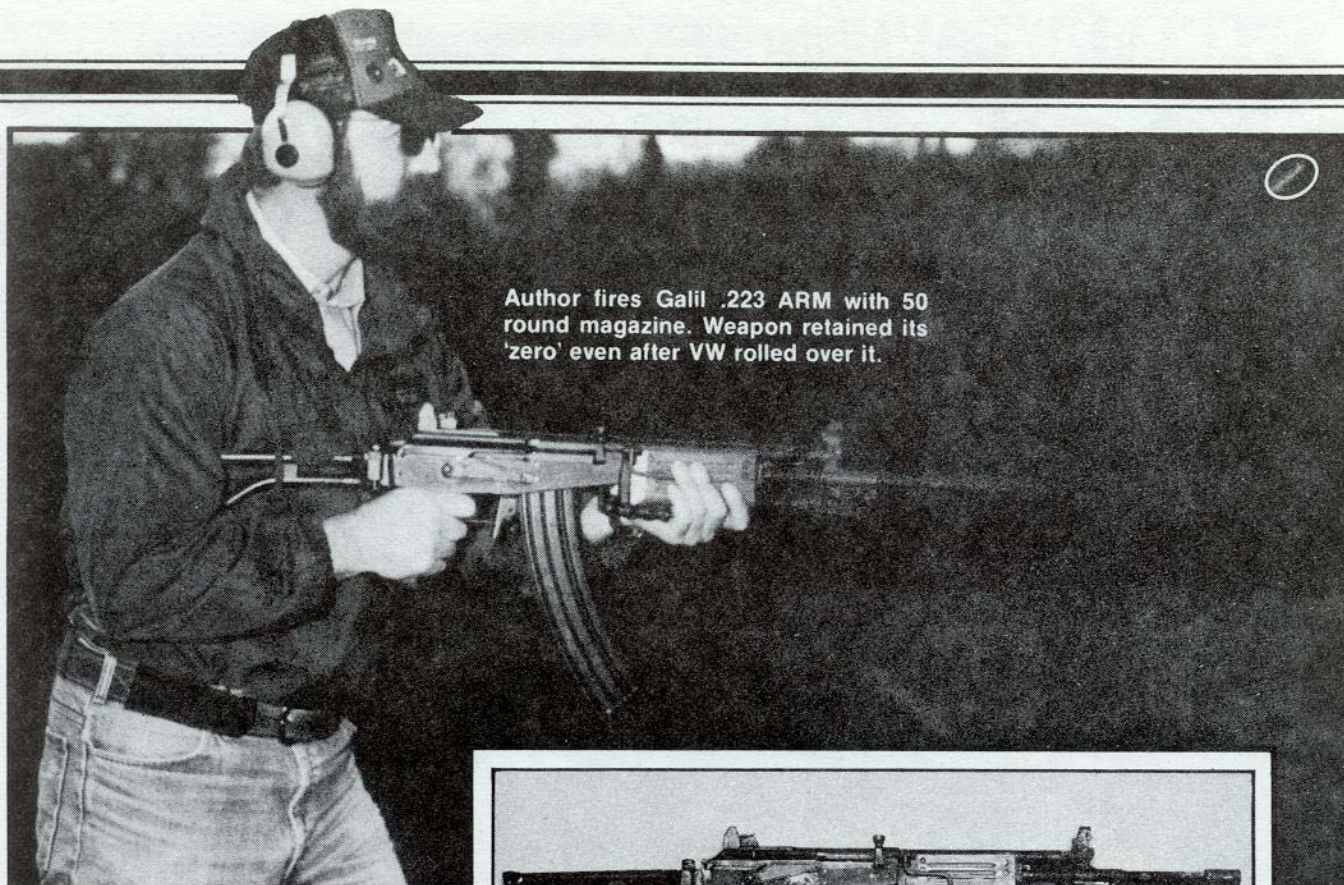
### .223 or .308 Caliber

Most interesting is the fact that regardless of your choice or preference in

Redi-Mag spare magazine carrier mounted on Galil rifle. 50 round magazine in weapon with issue 35 round mag in carrier. Note: M-16 magazines do fit the Galil.







Author fires Galil .223 ARM with 50 round magazine. Weapon retained its 'zero' even after VW rolled over it.

caliber, the Galil rifle is available in either .223 or .308. Two models of the Galil are offered in each caliber. First is the basic AR rifle which comes with standard length infantry barrel and folding stock. Front handguards are made of a plastic resin. The second version is the ARM, a rifle identical to the AR, except the ARM comes equipped with bipod, wood handguard, and carrying handle. The ARM is the version most popular with Israeli and South African forces.

Lately, IMI has produced a shortened version of the Galil with plastic handguard and shortened gas system and short barrel. This Short Auto Rifle (SAR) is a favorite of many Israeli troops and ideal for use in close quarters situations such as in jungle and urban combat. The Semi-auto only Galil rifles sold in the U.S. will only be available in the AR and ARM models at present.

For a realistic range firing test, a selection of both commercial and ball .223 ammo was used. Most of the test ammo was PMC, about 300 rounds IMI Eagle brand M193 ball, and the balance made up of Remington SP and issue M193 ball. A total of 975 cartridges were used in the Galil test. During the course of the test the Galil ARM was not cleaned. After every 300 rounds or so, a light application of Break-Free CPL was given the test weapon.

A number of accessories were provided by **Magnum Research, Inc., 2825 Anthony Lane South, Dept. CH, Minneapolis, MN. 55418**, the importer and distributor of Galil rifles and Eagle ammu-



After 800 rounds of ammo, no cleaning, and with test gun still showing signs of dried mud on exterior, the Galil shot excellent 10 shot groups at 100 yards.

nition in the U.S.A. One of the most interesting items was an adapter that permits use of AR-15, M-16 magazines in the Galil 5.56 rifle. Firing tests proved that the adapter fitted Galil functioned perfectly with the M-16 magazines.

Removal of spent magazines from the adapter did require extra effort since the M-16 magazines were quite snug in the adapter. While the accessory is most desirable in the land of M-16 magazines, the price is not...\$81.95. Considering the low price of M-16 magazines, the cost may balance out. Spare magazines for the Galil rifles sell for \$47.95 each in either the 35 round .223 type or 20 round .308 model. I found that Valmet .223 magazines work fine in the .223 Galil. However, Galil mags do not work in the Valmet. Other extras such as blank adapters, blank magazines, special grenade cartridge magazines, and cleaning accessories are sold by Magnum Research, Inc. A spare scope mounted top cover for the Galil was sent along for part of the test.

A prototype spare magazine carrier that mounts on the left side of the receiver was tested. This add-on housing is marketed as the "Redi-Mag" and is produced by **J.F.S., Inc. of P.O. BOX 12204, Dept. CH, Salem, Oregon 97309**. It allows the Galil to carry a spare magazine beside the one already in the weapon. Simple operation of the magazine catch allows the old magazine to fall free and the new one can be inserted into the mag well in seconds. While very fast to use, I find the Redi-Mag attachment makes the Galil both heavier and more clumsy to use. IMI makes and markets a 50 round magazine for the .223 Galil. One of these 50 round box mags was included with the test rifle. While quite long and cumbersome for everyday use, the large magazine capacity would be handy if trouble was expected. Actually the only needed accessories for the Galil consists of spare magazines and the issue 35 round versions will do fine.

All initial range sessions were geared to checking accuracy with different types of





**Try this with your favorite assault rifle. Author at 204 pounds stands on Galil ARM while John Miller fires weapon from bipod position. That's rugged!**

ammo. The test Galil ARM shot very well. I borrowed a friend's new Galil .223 AR, and found that it also proved to be accurate. I next fired the Galil for comparison with my AR-15 and a loaned H&K 93. Again the Galil performed ideally. The ARM shot as well as the AR-15 and almost equaled the groups of the H&K 93. For test purposes ten shot groups were normally used and no effort was made to allow the barrel to cool between shots. Even after firing a full magazine through the Galil in rapid concession, the groups did not show any unusual problems with stringing of wide dispersion. All accuracy tests were fired at 100 and 200 yards. I am confident that the Galil is as accurate as any iron sighted .223 assault rifle I now own. My best ten shot group at 100 yards was 3"x3-1/2" using IMI ball ammo. A friend fired a five shot group at 200 yards from the prone bipod position with the test Galil ARM and turned out a nice centered 5"x5" group. After nearly 800 rounds of ammo, it was time to get serious with the evaluation of the Galil.

### Most Reliable

It should be remembered that the Galil is advertised as the most reliable battle rifle in the world. For such a high retail price,

one expects to get something besides gadgets. First, I gave the Galil a complete wet environment test. Next came the snow and ice treatment. Finally, the mud bath and drop test. It was most interesting, though leaving a \$1500.00 assault rifle outside in the snow for a couple of nights is worrying. Luckily, the Galil was still there in the mornings. While the wet environment and cold test were no problem to the Galil, I knew that the good old red clay mud would give the Galil a real run for the money. After selecting a nice sloppy spot, the Galil was dropped from shoulder height on its sides, bottom, and finally top. The drop into the mud with the Galil landing on its top was a problem since the sights were completely clogged. Using my fingers to wipe away enough mud to give me a vague idea of where the sights were, I fired a full magazine of ammo without a bobble.

The Galil was so mud encrusted that the safety was hard to operate, and the magazine catch was nearly impossible to use. Next, I took the Galil to a nearby creek and gave it a 'field bath'. Most of the excessive mud was washed off, at least allowing operation of the controls without actually clearing the weapon of the grime left on most of the exterior of the weapon. Cycling of the action gave proof that some of the mud and grit was now inside the



**Author fires the Galil into the same mud that the weapon was dropped into repeatedly. Even after complete mud bath the weapon functioned flawlessly.**

action of the Galil. Loading another magazine, I fired 35 more rounds without a miss. This rifle definitely had guts, but for such a high price tag, there had to be more to offer. I allowed the gun to dry and gave the mud a chance to set before going off to the range again. The only problem was that the red clay set up hard as concrete on the latch of the folding butt stock. As a result, I could not fold the butt stock... No big deal. Firing the Galil at 200 yards proved that everything worked and still placed the shots right on target. Everyone present was impressed that the Galil was still running and worked like a champ. Still, this rugged rifle had another lap to go... the race was not over yet.

### The Volks Test

Making sure that the chamber was empty, I placed a partly loaded magazine in the weapon. Next I placed the Galil on the ground. I got in my trusty VW and fired it up. With everyone on the firing line watching, I drove my car over the Galil. The observers were in shock... and the look on their faces made it worthwhile. I gave the Galil another pass. By this time I had been declared insane by those watching. I backed up and parked my car with the wheel on the action of the Galil ARM. Great for a photo. Most of the assistants helping me in the shooting test were convinced that the Galil was ruined. Two of those present are full time MTU armorers, and these guys know what a gun can and can't take. They both were concerned that the barrel would be distorted and both agreed that the gun would not have the same zero.

I backed the car off the rifle, then took it to the firing line. As I pulled the bipod down and prepared to shoot, most everyone was amazed that I actually was going to shoot the Galil, let alone try and hit anything with it. 200 yards downrange was a steel impact plate 10"x10". As I got into position, a comment was heard from the peanut gallery to the effect "If he hits the damn plate, I'll buy one of those Galil's even if it does cost \$1500.00!"

Not only did I hit the plate, but every time until the magazine was empty!

This kind of abuse is not recommend-





Magnum Research, Inc. .223 AR (bottom) and ARM (top) with accessories. Note scoped top cover, M-16 magazine adapter as well as various magazines. Center magazine is for blanks, and blank adapter is atop.



Author drove his car over test model Galil to try ruggedness of the design. The weapon was left unscratched. Care to try that with your M-16?

ed for any firearm. My desire was to find out what is so special about the Galil to merit all the claims made about this weapon. Regardless of environment, wet, snow, ice, or mud, abuse and lack of maintenance, my test Galil ARM never did quit. If you want to know what you are paying for when you lay out \$1371.00 for the AR .223 or \$1574.00 for the ARM .223, it is the price for the finest 5.56 assault rifle in the world.

A few points about the Galil that

could be considered negative: First, for better or worse, most perspective buyers will find the cost a limiting factor. The .308 AR Galil is \$1493.00 and the .308 ARM is \$1721.00. For this reason both the .223 and .308 Galil rifles will not be big sellers in these times of tight money. I am trying to figure out how to come up with the money to get a Galil of my own. It is simply much too fine of a rifle not to own. Second, the Galil is not light. In fact, the Galil is rather a heavy rifle. My test ARM .223 weighed 10.3 pounds empty, and 11.4 loaded. Compared to an AR-15/M-16 rifle, the Galil is a real hand full. This is, of course, the trade off for having such a rugged rifle. In order to survive even most hostile abuse and service, the solid steel components add up in weight.

Like most Kalashnikovs, the Galil does not have a magazine hold-open device. This may disturb some, but overall it is not such a problem. The Galil also has the classic Kalashnikov trigger. Most are long and creepy at the early stages, but final sear engagement is usually marked with a smooth roll-off. I find that with a little practice the roll-off trigger is very good. With even the most novice shooters a surprise break is easily achieved.

Yes, I plan to own a Galil. It is the rifle that you would feel confident with. And the final word on the Galil is "confidence." The Galil literally exudes confidence. It looks like a fighting tool, functions like one, and performs exactly as you want a battle rifle to perform. With a Galil rifle in your hands you sense the possession of something of substance in this world of often inferior products. Hail the Galil.

Reprinted by permission from the author, Ken Hackathorn, from the June, 1983 issue of:

## COMBAT HANDGUNS

All rights reserved.

Copyright 1983 by Harris Publications Inc.

### GALIL RIFLE SYSTEM

All models are now available from stock and now at prices somewhat lower than mentioned in the article.

AR — Folding stock

ARM — Folding stock, bipod, carrying handle and wood forearm

SAR — Short barrel, folding stock

#### Caliber/Type

##### SEMI-AUTOMATIC

- MRI 361 .223 Semi-Automatic AR
- MRI 372 .223 Semi-Automatic ARM
- MRI 331 .308 Semi-Automatic AR
- MRI 332 .308 Semi-Automatic ARM

##### SELECT FIRE

- MRI 352 .223 Select Fire AR
- MRI 354 .223 Select Fire ARM
- MRI 365 .223 Select Fire SAR
- MRI 337 .308 Select Fire AR
- MRI 336 .308 Select Fire ARM
- MRI 338 .308 Select Fire SAR

Manufactured by



**ISRAEL MILITARY INDUSTRIES**

Available exclusively from

**MAGNUM RESEARCH**

2825 Anthony Lane South  
Minneapolis, MN 55418 USA  
Tel. (612) 781-3446