

Post 3/6/67
**Rifles Needed
By GIs Sold
To Singapore**

By Charles Nicodemus
© 1967, Field Enterprises, Inc.
Chicago Daily News Service

The U.S. Government has authorized the sale of 23,000 hard-to-get M-16-type rifles, which are in strong demand in Vietnam, to the neutralist government of Singapore.

The State Department, which agreed to the export, refused to discuss the sale. So did producers of the rifles, Colt Industries, referring all questions to Singapore.

A Department of Defense spokesman said the Department had cleared the transaction because the 25,000 M-16s a-month the military is now receiving—virtually Colt's total production—are all that the U.S. and its fighting allies "can effectively utilize."

That explanation appeared to contrast sharply with the facts that:

- The Army is now secretly negotiating with Colt for at least a doubling of production, to meet burgeoning de-

See RIFLES, A8, Col. 3

U.S. changes information policy, will give daily war casualties by number.

Page A14.

y, mands for the light, fast-firing
ig weapon.

r
s, • Gen. William C. Westmoreland, U.S. commander in Vietnam, has told Congress he wants every fighting man under him equipped with the smaller-caliber, high-velocity M-16, instead of the older, heavier M-14, which is outgunned by the increasing flow of Communist-made automatic rifles.

n
d
e
e
ls
g
1-
s
s, • The South Vietnamese, as well as two other allies with troops in Vietnam—South Korea and the Philippines—have publicly complained, sometimes bitterly, about their inability to get the weapon.

- The Air Force, whose

pioneer testing of the privately developed M-16 played a key role in its eventual belated adoption by the Army, has now ordered 65,000 more of the guns. The Navy wants an added 10,000. But neither can begin to get the weapons until 1968, because of the short supply and the Army's soaring requirements.

The unusual Singapore deal, the first major foreign M-16 sale of its size, originated last fall, the Chicago Daily News Service learned amidst reports of behind-the-scenes diplomatic maneuvering."

Coloring the situation was the Army's long-time, little-publicized foot-dragging on

acceptance of the M-16, which is now proving costly to the war effort, and the Pentagon's continuing disagreement with Colt over how, when and at what price production on the gun can be expanded.

On the diplomatic front, the sale appears certain to provoke curiosity and perhaps resentment among U.S. allies who have been vying for the gun, since U.S.-Singapore relations have not always been ideal.

The island-state's brilliant Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, is anti-Communist but leftist, prone to blunt comments such as his prediction that China, not the United

States, will win the Asian cold war.

In 1965, he embarrassed the United States by revealing that the Central Intelligence Agency had offered him a \$3 million bribe to hush up the 1960 arrest of a U.S. spy in Singapore.

[Lee also has won high

praise in private from many officials, including President Johnson, for describing United States actions in Vietnam as a checkmate to Communist expansion in Southeast Asia. [The strategically located former British colony of Singapore is regarded by the United States as a determined-

ly independent outpost that warrants favorable treatment.]

The impression that the United States has been quietly courting favor with Singapore was reinforced when several firms competing with Colt reportedly were told by Singapore defense officials that the U.S. State Department had guaranteed in writing that Colt would be permitted to deliver the rifles, starting with a 6000-gun shipment in March—despite U.S. military needs.

The State Department refused to comment on reports of the letter or the delivery schedule, as did Colt and Singapore officials.

Air Crash Victims Paid Silent Tribute

Reuters

TOKYO, March 5—Mourners paid one minute's silent tribute to the 124 victims of a British Overseas Airways Corp. Boeing 707 jetliner crash on the lower slopes of Mount Fuji a year ago today. A group including local dignitaries, B.O.A.C. officials and relatives of the Japanese dead offered incense at Buddhist temples,