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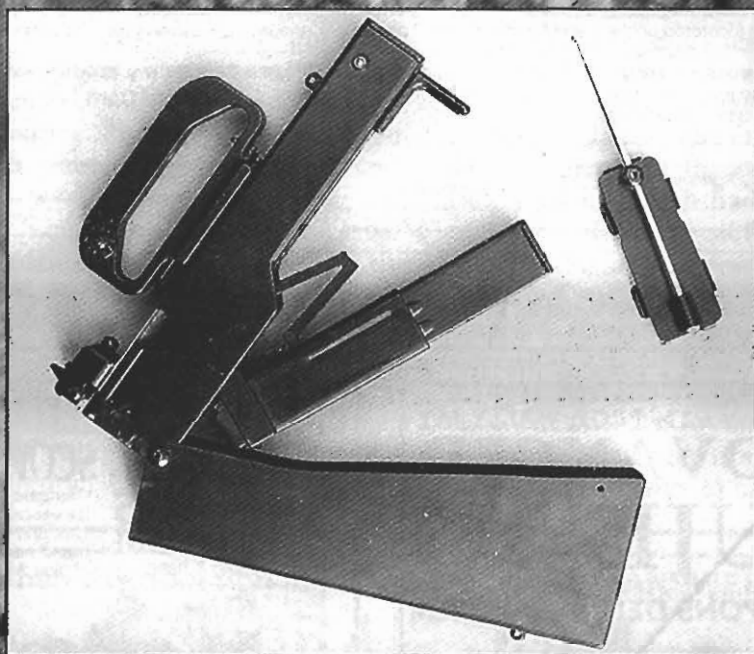
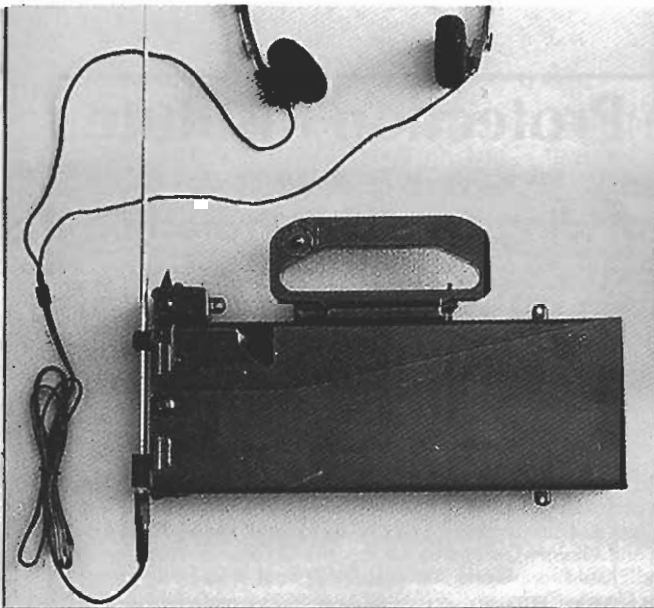
**FOR THE PREPARED AMERICAN**

**JUNE 1993**



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### Specifications of the M21 Submachine Gun

**Caliber:** 9x19 NATO (9mm parabellum)

**Velocity:** 1,250 fps

**Operation:** Blowback, full-automatic

**Cyclic Rate of Fire:** 950 rpm

**Barrel Length:** 8.38"

**Overall Length:**

(folded) 10.38"

(extended) 20.5"

**Weight:** 7.75 pounds

**Feed Device:** 32-round box magazine

**Sights:**

(front) Post adjustable for elevation;

(rear) Peep aperture, adjustable for windage and elevation

**Finish:** Epoxy over parkerizing

**Price:** \$5,000 to qualified individuals (only four available).



# The Amazing Folding Machine GUN PART 2

by Gary Paul  
Johnston

then with Pearl Manufacturing of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Conner was not connected with Ares in any way. He had never met Francis Warin, nor heard of the Warin Folding Machine Gun when Conner designed his gun. However, Conner's design, the Model 21, went even further in being designed to look like a portable radio. While more refined, it was very similar to the Ares gun.

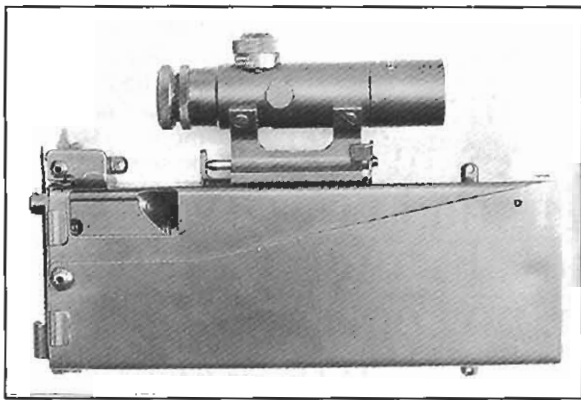
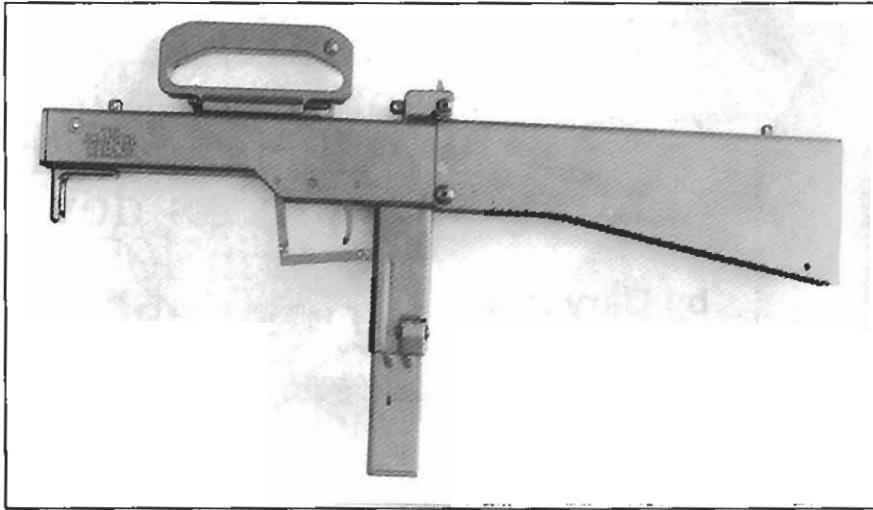
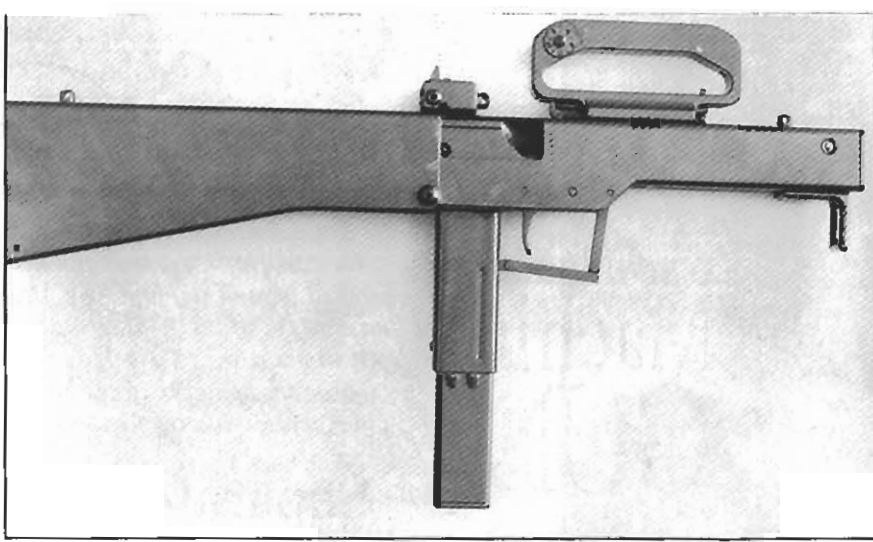
*Editor's note: Part I of "Folding Machine Gun" (S.W.A.T.<sup>®</sup>, May 1993), examined the development of the 9mm Ares gun by arms-designer Francis Warin. While that gun never reached beyond the prototype stage, the concept of the folding machine gun did not die. Part II looks at another development in the realization of this fascinating weapon.*

Separately and independently from the Ares project, another folding machine gun was developed in 1981 by arms-designer Utah Conner,

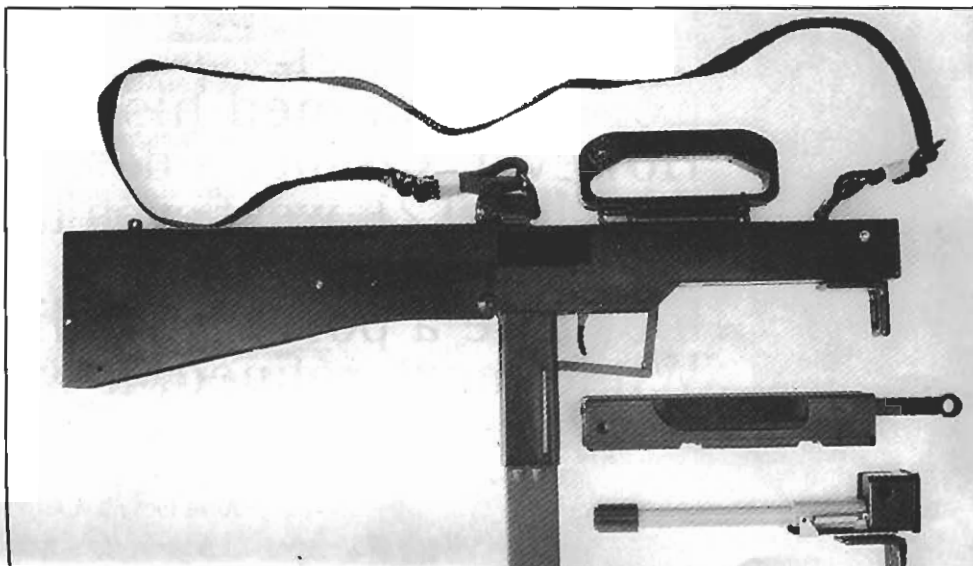
*Opposite page, insets, top to bottom: The M21 Folding Machine Gun in its collapsed "radio" mode. Note the ear phones and antenna. The modified Uzi bolt can be seen at the upper left of the folded M21. Also note the AR-15 type carrying handle.*

*As the M21 is unfolded, the antenna plate unsnaps and falls free as depicted here.*





When both men finally met in the mid-1980s, they were fascinated by the independent development each had done. Both were influenced by the French 9mm Hotchkiss folding machine gun, the French CR39 carbine, and the MAT49 folding machine gun. Each had



reached similar conclusions.

In the mid-1980s, Utah Conner joined forces with Tim Bixler, of S.C.R.C., in Katy, Texas. Bixler—who has been previously featured in the pages of *S.W.A.T.*<sup>®</sup>—is not only a noted gun designer, but is a builder of some of the world's finest sound suppressors. He and Conner worked to further develop and put into production Conner's prototype. The resulting version was named the Model 21.

The Model 21 guns that were produced were manufactured by former Green Beret Captain (and Class III manufacturer) Dave Boatman. Capt. Boatman has since died from the effects of Agent Orange, which he was exposed to in Vietnam. A total of nine Model 21's were completed prior to the May 19, 1989 ban on future production of machine guns. These guns were finished in a tough epoxy coating in various colors to demonstrate how much they could be made to look like portable radios.

The Model 21 is much simpler internally than the Ares FMG. One reason for this is that it uses a modified Uzi bolt. Bixler modified this bolt to make it operate in the compact space by putting the main spring up front where it pulls the bolt forward, rather than pushing it from behind. A hole in the front of the spring guide is used to secure the bolt group to the main assembly pin at the front of the receiver. An Uzi-type bolt-cocking ratchet is also used to prevent the bolt from being short-stroked. The bolt actuator is located up front and underneath, and like the Ares FMG, also provides a handguard.

Around the rear of the barrel is a collar, and at the front of it, an O-ring buffer. By varying the length of the collar, the cyclic rate of the gun can be changed, because it will change the distance which the bolt travels. Like the Ares FMG, the Model 21 fires from an open bolt.

Also similar to the Ares FMG, the Model 21's grip, magazine and trigger

**Opposite, top to bottom: The M21 as viewed from the right side in the extended mode with magazine inserted and the bolt in the forward position.**

**The M21 as viewed from the left side in the extended mode. Note the Uzi magazine latch in the pistol grip and the cocking handle under muzzle.**

**The M21 accepts the AR-18 scope to replace the carrying handle/sight if desired. It is mounted instantly and retains its zero.**

**The M21 with its bolt and barrel group removed, and carrying strap attached. The gun is remarkably simple, with few moving parts.**

group fold completely into the bottom of the buttstock when the gun is collapsed. In this mode, the gun cannot fire since the magazine and ammunition is completely away from the bolt. Even when the stock is extended, the grip and magazine do not come into firing position unless given a separate pull to lock them into place.

#### Sights

While neither of the Ares FMG prototypes had any sights, the Model 21 offers choices in this area. Standard is a carrying handle/sight, which has features of the AR-15 with a front sight added in the forward section. This sight is attached to the M21 in exactly the same way as the scope attaches to the Aramalite AR-18.

Naturally, the gun will also accept the AR-18 scope in place of the carrying handle/sight. Both will automatically return to zero. The M21 also takes a carrying strap, which lets it hang like a radio. It even has a break-away false antenna!

#### From "Radio" To Gun

The conversion from the "radio" mode to a defensive posture is almost instant: The user stands with the M21 slung from the strong-side shoulder with the antenna to the rear. Then, with the support hand holding the carrying handle or front sling mount, the strong hand grasps the bottom front part of the package (the folded buttstock) and jerks it

down and to the rear. This action overrides the spring-loaded detent holding the unit in the folded mode and cams off the antenna plate at the back of the gun, causing it to fall on the ground out of the way.

As the stock continues its swing back and up, it locks into its extended position with a catch incorporated into the base of the rear sling swivel. A short amount of practice will allow this to be accomplished in about two seconds. In the process, the loaded grip/magazine well and trigger guard will swing partially into position.

Once the M21 is extended, the user needs to only grasp the grip and lock it into firing position by pulling it back. The cocking handle must then be pulled to the rear and released, making the gun ready to fire. This operation takes another 1.5 seconds, which brings the time thus far to about 3.5 seconds. Figuring another 1.5 seconds to shoulder the weapon and sight it at close range, the M21 can be deployed from a radio to a defensive instrument in *five* seconds!

#### A Giant Step That Missed

The Conner/Bixler/Boatman M21 represents a giant step forward in high-security defensive technology, but it could have been

developed even further by the addition of such things as radio-like controls, or even a *real* mini-radio mounted somewhere. As such, it could have provided state-of-the-art security to units such as the U.S. Secret Service. Instead, the people who guard the President continue to use a submachine gun, which they were issued for purely political reasons, and which were obsolete before they adopted them.

What is even worse is that the leftist check-bouncers who dominate Congress then saw to it that developments such as the M21 were crippled by passing a law that killed future such ventures in the private sector.

#### Still Ticking

In spite of everything, the M21 refuses to die. You may have seen one of the guns in the movie *Robocop 2*, where it was used—not on the side of law and order, as Conner and Bixler originally conceived—but by a drug dealer. What's more, a few of the original nine guns are still available—four of them to be exact—in various colors. They are transferable only to government-approved individuals. Unfortunately, they will always be relegated to ultra-rare collectors' items. ●



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