

Chapter 1 of: **An Intrepid Mountie**

Adventures of the First Woman Mountie

Book 8

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LAURIE SCHRAMM

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CHAPTER 1. FIRST PRELUDE: THE MAJOR

January 2, 1964

Buon Enao,

A small village in South Vietnam's Central Highlands.

Although it was the day after New Year's Day, it was still hot at 90°F. At least it was the dry season. As the sun settled into dusk, the relative silence of the jungle was broken by the sound of an approaching helicopter. The sound became louder and louder as it appeared over the top of the surrounding jungle. Visible now, it was an older model 'Huey.'

The first Hueys were properly named Bell UH-1 Iroquois, and had been used extensively by the American military in Vietnam since 1960. The nickname "Huey" came from the original designation as HU-1. Despite its redesignation (in 1962) to UH-1, the nickname had stuck. This particular Huey was fitted out as a 'Cobra,' that is, a gunship. Both of the large sliding doors were latched open and onto each side had been bolted a swivel-mount (called a pintle) bearing an M60 7.62mm machine gun. The U.S. Army had deployed thousands of Hueys during the Vietnam War, so they were a common sight.

This particular Huey bore the common U.S. Army olive drab, except for the nose, which was covered with a flat-black antiglare paint. The paint on this particular Huey was well faded, and it carried no identifying markings. It was, however, expected.

Close to the village of Buon Enao was a fortified camp of the U.S. Army Special Forces. It was laid out in the shape of a square, with a defensive berm around the entire circumference and twin .30 calibre machine guns placed at each corner and halfway along each side. Inside the camp were barracks and other buildings, most of them occupied by members of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group¹ (CIDG). Although the camp was commanded by a Vietnamese Special Forces Commander, it was a U.S. Special Forces Captain - the local military 'advisor' - that was waiting at a clearing just outside the fortified berm.

Having circled the camp and seen nothing of concern, the helicopter descended diagonally towards the clearing and landed. As the rotor blades slowed, the waiting captain could see



CIDG Strike Force Patch

¹ The Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) was a covert CIA program that established and supported paramilitary South Vietnamese units for which training and advice were supplied by U.S. Army Special Forces personnel. The main purpose of the CIDGs (at least initially) was to counter insurgency into South Vietnam by the Viet Cong. Buon Enao was the first of many CIDG villages. See E.C. Piasecki, "Civilian Irregular Defense Group: The First Years: 1961-1967," *Veritas - Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 5 (4) 2009, pp. 1-10.

that the machine gun positions at each door were unmanned, and that the Cobra carried only a single pilot. As the main rotor slowed to a lazy crawl, the pilot climbed down from the left-hand pilot's door and walked across the clearing. The pilot wore a green beret and was dressed in a U.S. Army Special Forces uniform that bore a major's golden oak leaves but no unit patches. "Captain?" he said, extending a hand when he was close enough.

"Yes. Major Jones, I presume." The two men shook hands. It was clear that Jones was not the pilot's real name.

"You have the Deer Guns?" asked the pilot.

"Right here," said the captain, pointing to three medium-size wooden crates. When they'd walked over, he lifted the lid from one of the crates. Inside were packed styrofoam boxes, each containing a small, clumsy-looking pistol, three cartridges, and a cartoon-picture sheet of instructions on how to load and fire the gun.

As both men knew, the Deer Guns were disposable CIA assassination pistols², designed to be provided to South Vietnamese guerrillas - such as the CIDG - for use against North Vietnamese soldiers. The idea was that they would kill the enemy soldiers, dispose of the pistol, and arm themselves with the victim's more powerful (and expensive) arms and other equipment.

"This is all of them?" asked the pilot.

"Yes, 150 of them were shipped here last year for field testing but by the time they arrived we were already providing the Yards³ with much better weapons, so these were never used. This is all of them. Seems like a shame to destroy them all, but the directive from MACV⁴ was very clear...." He paused, then said "You know I'm going to need some kind of receipt, right?"

"No problem," said the pilot, taking a folded piece of paper from his pocket. The paper was actually a three-sheet form with carbon paper between each form. It had already been filled in for materiel disposal, specifying the type and quantity of pistols. Taking out a ballpoint pen, the pilot signed the form as Major Davy Jones, U.S. Army Special Forces.



CIA Deer Gun (1962-64)

²The CIA Deer gun was made of cast aluminum and carried no identifying markings. It is five inches long and just over four inches tall. The barrel unscrewed for loading of a single 9mm round. After reattaching the barrel, a striker would be cocked to prepare it for firing. A simple, insertable plastic clip served as a safety. The pistol grip was hollow, and could store three rounds plus a metal rod that was used to clear the barrel of a spent case. They were designed to be delivered by airdrop, and were packaged in polystyrene boxes together with three cartridges and pictorial instructions. Although 1,000 Deer Guns were manufactured (in 1964), only about 150 were sent to South Vietnam "for field testing." All 1,000 of them were supposed to have been destroyed but some examples have survived. The name 'Deer Gun' is thought to have been a codename.

³ "Yards" was a U.S. Army Special Forces nickname for the Montagnard Tribes that formed the first CIDGs. It was meant affectionately. See the reference in endnote #1.

⁴ U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), which by this time had taken over command of the Special Forces-led paramilitary activities from the CIA.

"Davy Jones?" said the captain with a smirk.

"It's as good a name as any, and this form will cover your ass."

"Sounds good to me. Do you want one of the copies?"

The pilot snorted. "Not likely, I'd just have to burn it. If you'll give me a hand with these crates, I'll give you your reward."

It only took a few minutes to carry the three 60-pound crates to the helicopter and stow them at the rear of the cabin. Then the pilot opened the right-hand door and extracted three large bottles of French Brandy.

"Here you are. One bottle for each crate, as agreed."

"Thank you major," said the captain, cradling the bottles under one arm. "I assume you're not really going to destroy the guns?"

The pilot just looked at him for a moment; long enough for the captain to decide that he wasn't going to get an answer. But he did.

"I'll tell you this much. These guns will never be seen in Vietnam again."

May 3, 1970
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio, U.S.A.

A shadowy figure joined the hundreds of students and other protesters as they gathered for a second day of protests against the escalation of the Vietnam War.

Although the President had promised to end the war, in seeming contradiction, just two days earlier he had sent U.S. troops to invade Cambodia, from which North Vietnamese troops had been launching attacks on the South. The very next day, hundreds of students had gathered on the university's Commons to speak out against the war. With the onset of night, peaceful assembly and speeches had been marred by incidents of violence between protesters and police. The mayor's decision to close the city's bars infuriated additional people, and the size and spread of the crowd increased. Eventually, the police resorted to using tear gas to break up the crowds.

Now, on day two, a state of emergency had been declared and the Ohio National Guard was reportedly on its way. Nevertheless, hundreds of students and other protesters had once again descended on the university campus. As evening approached, tempers again frayed and skirmishes began to erupt. The shadowy figure had thick, long hair, wore aviator-style sunglasses, and was dressed to fit in with the crowd, with a tie-dyed t-shirt sporting a carved wooden peace symbol, faded jeans and dirty sneakers. As such, he bore little resemblance to the U.S. Special Forces persona that he had adopted while working in South Vietnam.

As he wove his way through the crowd his senses were alert to the emotions around him. He was searching for a cluster of people that might be angry enough to cause some real trouble.

Like all major U.S. campuses, Kent State had a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) building, and it was there that he found what he was looking for. A large cluster of protesters near the building were yelling, screaming, and throwing rocks and beer bottles at the police. As he skirted around this cluster, he could see that the police, for their part, were preparing to respond with tear gas. The time is just about right, he thought.

Moving even further to one side, he was able to make his way around the crowd and around the building. Although the back doors were locked, he had no trouble using a knife to force open one of the large, multipaned ground-floor windows and enter the building. Being a Saturday evening, the interior of the building was deserted and he was able to quickly roam the hallways peering into each room until he found what he was looking for. One of the large rooms had clearly been dedicated to assembling and storing promotional pamphlets for the ROTC Program. Various pamphlets were piled on large work tables, along with portfolio covers into which they would be inserted, and in two corners of the room were piled boxes of heavyweight paper waiting to be printed. As luck would have it, this room had windows that faced out of the front of the building. Perfect, he thought.

Moving to one of the piles of boxes, he cut one open and began removing handfuls of paper, which he tore into strips and used to make a large pile. Then, striding to the nearest table he picked up one of the wooden chairs, raised it high over his head and brought it down with a crash onto the edge of the table. The table was strong, having been made of thick oak, whereas the chair was old enough that the dowels holding it together had long lost most of their integrity. The chair splintered into pieces. Gathering up the pieces, he used them to make a teepee-shape over his pile of shredded paper. From his back pocket he took a hip flask of the kind that was popularly used to carry bourbon. It was full, but not with bourbon. The flask contained 'white gas' camp fuel.

Emptying the entire flask onto the pile of shredded paper, he took out a box of wooden matches, lighted one and gently tossed it to the edge of the pile, then quickly stepped back. Almost instantaneously there was a loud "whoosh" sound and a blaze of intense flame. Without waiting for the wood to ignite, which would happen momentarily, he walked calmly back down the hallways, pausing only to step into the men's restroom, where he used soap, water, and paper towel to remove any fingerprints from the hip flask and then threw everything into the trash.

By the time he had exited the building and made his way around the edge of the crowd, which was still protesting in front of the building, he could see through two of the front windows a reddish glow that evidenced a growing fire.

He waited a few moments, for the glow to increase, then yelled out: "Look, someone's burning down the ROTC. Let's help them."

Almost immediately, the crowd surged and he could hear the crashing sounds of bottles and rocks being thrown through the ROTC Building's windows. This, of course, caused an inrush of fresh air that fanned the flames, which almost immediately engulfed much of the ground floor room in which the fire had been originally been set.

By the time the National Guard arrived, later that evening, the university's ROTC Building was fully ablaze, the police were again using tear gas in an attempt to break up the crowds but, undeterred, the cheering from hundreds of protesters drowned out even the sounds of the sirens from the approaching fire trucks.



By this time, the silent figure was long gone. As he calmly strode across the campus, he removed his peace sign and dropped it into a trash can, disposed of his sunglasses at another trash can, and then removed and discarded his wig just before leaving the campus altogether, for the moment.

Despite the presence of the National Guard and officers from several police forces, and notwithstanding the efforts of the university to ban further mass gatherings, several thousand people turned up at the Commons the next morning. As the crowd gathered, the same shadowy figure from the previous day joined in. Had anyone looked closely, it would have been difficult to identify him as such, as he now wore a differently coloured and styled wig, John Lennon-style sunglasses, an open-neck Hawaiian-style shirt, and a necklace bearing a peace medallion.

As various people took turns making brief speeches through a megaphone, the Ohio National Guard attempted to halt the speeches. This was met with derision, anger, and rock throwing. After a brief interlude, the national guard attempted to disperse the crowd. This time, rock throwing was met with tear gas, which was ineffective due to wind. The guards next tried fixing bayonets on the rifles and advancing towards the crowd. This was somewhat effective in moving the crowd back, but as the crowd retreated the advancing guards, for some reason, took a slightly different route and found themselves blocked by a large fence. As the protesters kept moving around, the guards decide they had achieved their purpose in clearing the Commons and began to make their way back. As they did so, large groups of the protesters followed them, still throwing rocks and tear gas canisters.

With the protesters now advancing, and the guardsmen looking nervous, the figure in the Hawaiian shirt moved near the front of the crowd, took out a small pistol that had been tucked into his waistband, and fired at a sergeant, grazing the side of one leg⁵. In response, the sergeant began firing his pistol into the crowd, followed by nearly thirty other guardsmen who immediately shouldered and fired their rifles at the students.

By this time, the figure in the Hawaiian shirt had already faded to the back. Just before leaving the crowd, he used his shirt to wipe any fingerprints off of the gun, then simply

⁵ Much of this account is fictional, of course, but in real life the Ohio National Guard later claimed that a sniper had fired on them. Whether or not this was true remains a topic of debate.

dropped it on the ground and walked out of the crowd and away. When he passed Taylor Hall, he turned left, walking between it and Prentice Hall. Between the two buildings, largely screened from most people's sight, he removed his wig, peace-medallion necklace, and sunglasses. Next, he did the same with his Hawaiian Shirt, revealing a simple but differently coloured t-shirt. The Hawaiian Shirt he carried crumpled up in one hand.

Emerging from between the two buildings and calmly striding across the campus, he dropped the necklace and sunglasses into a trash can, then the wig into another trash can. The Hawaiian Shirt, he discarded at yet another trash as he continued to walk back towards the Commons.

The man was satisfied with his performance. He had judged the timing perfectly and baited the national guard into firing indiscriminately into the crowd. There were bound to have been at least a few casualties. The point was to create an event that would horrify America and catalyze angry, possibly violent protests across the country.

He succeeded. The guards' bullets had struck 13 students, three of whom were shot in the back, and four of whom died. The shootings at Kent State led to protests and strikes at universities across the United States, not to mention a protest demonstration by a hundred thousand people in Washington, D.C., itself - fuelled by chants like "Four Dead in Ohio"⁶ and "They Can't Kill Us All."

His masters' hopes of bringing an early end to the war, however, failed. Notwithstanding the massive and wide-ranging protests that were precipitated by the Kent State events, the war continued for several more years⁷.

In the aftermath of the four days of demonstrations, the FBI discovered a small, single-shot pistol lying on the university grounds where the students had made their last stand. A few members of the FBI had heard rumours of such guns being made for the CIA, this was the first physical example they'd actually encountered.

It would not be the last...

⁶ The famous refrain "Four Dead in Ohio" appears in the protest song "Ohio" written by Neil Young and recorded by the group Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young on May 21, 1970 – just 17 days after the shootings at Kent State.

⁷ The United States eventually withdraw their forces in 1973, but the war continued on and was won by North Vietnam in 1975, thus consolidating the North and the South into the present-day country of Vietnam.

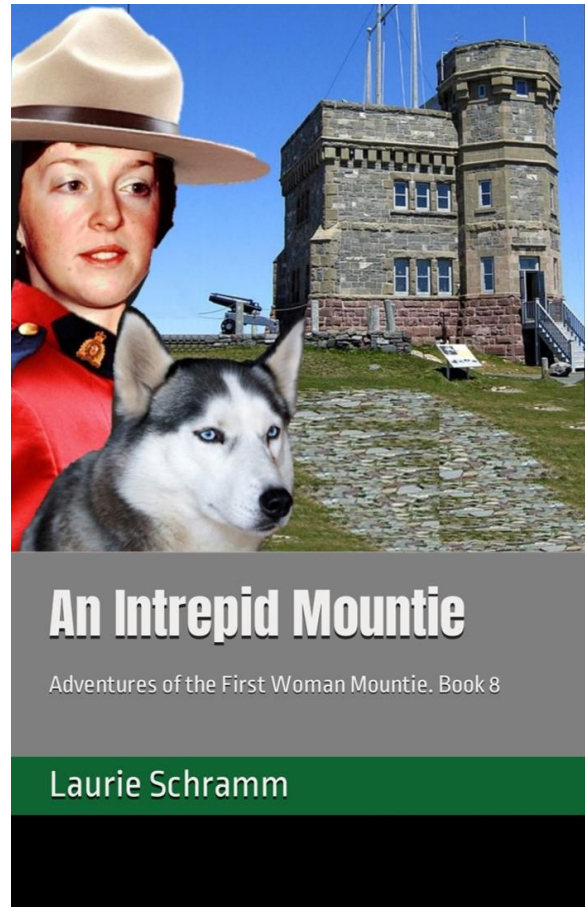
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