

MILITARY TRAINING

# American Forces Make Rescue of UN Hostages in Karabakh...Sort of



Hostage rescue team storming the building

succeeded in educating many Americans who knew little or nothing about Armenia and it's people."

All of the snipers involved in Operation Noah's Ark had to learn how to speak several Armenian phrases that they needed to negotiate with the partisans, thus the necessity for the audio cassettes, which Anna Avakian and Haikan Sirounian prepared.

The tapes also contained information directly pertaining to the mission, as well as some Armenian music and news programs.

Armine Avakian, who played the role of an Azeri terrorist disguised as a female hostage, felt reservations about her role in the operation before the exercise began, but felt much better once the action got underway.

"In the car ride to the site, I didn't think I could do it, and I was worried I wouldn't

Nagorno-Karabakh training exercise anytime soon. In fact, in light of the recent cease-fire agreement and negotiations, he doesn't believe a similar operation will ever take place again.

However, Wagner and the staff at Hike/Stalk/Shoot will continue to invite their Armenian friends and family members to future operations to play different roles.

"They were all great, and they were motivated," said Wagner. "We had a good time, and I'd like to see them all again."

What made the entire mission even more realistic was the vast amount of literature that was put out regarding the exercise.

First, a two-page green pamphlet was distributed to all participants containing Armenian phrases and sayings that everyone involved had to memorize, thus creating an even more authentic feel to the exercise.

Second, a thick mission summary was also distributed to the individuals taking part in the training exercise, describing the entire rescue procedure, step by step.

The literature was similar to authentic orders given out at the highest levels of the United States government, even down to stamps on the documents classifying the mission as being top secret.

"We wanted the exercise to be as real as possible, even down to the look of the entire operation," said Wagner. "We wanted to make everyone involved feel as if the orders were coming down from

Earlier this year, a daring group of American forces made a heroic rescue of three United Nations workers held hostage by Azeri troops in Nagorno-Karabakh, extracting the trio from heavily-guarded barracks in Martakert and maneuvering past raining gunfire to freedom.

