

Minuteman Handbook

Chapter 4 — The Minutemen of 1960

Introduction of the famous anti-communist group that made headlines coast-to-coast during the 1960's & 1970's

Between Taylor Caldwell's fictional Minutemen, who were the central theme of her book "The Devil's Advocate," written in 1952 and the Minutemen as a real "flesh and blood" organization of the 1960's, many less militant anti-Communist organizations were beginning to make their presence known. One of the most well known was the John Birch Society; in fact, it is still in existence nearly forty years later. Many groups were religiously-oriented, an example was the following of Rev. Carl McIntire. Others followed the programs of similar leaders.

The John Birch Society (JBS) made great efforts to avoid any militant flavor - one of their motto's being: "Truth Is Our Only Weapon." Through books, literature and speakers, they tried to awaken fellow Americans to the threat, not only of the Communist Conspiracy, but of the advancing tide of socialist-leaning within our own government. As to be expected, they were brutally-attacked by the liberal and socialist news media.

There developed within the JBS and similar organizations, a strata of members and listeners, who were simply not content to read and pass literature back and forth, largely between each other — preaching to the choir, if you will. Some labeled the JBS as the "Just Bitchen Society." Other groups were similarly labeled organizations that would just "Meet, Eat and Retreat." These dissatisfied members and others that had been awakened by them formed a fertile

recruiting field for more militant type activities. They were soon to be marching to the drum of groups that took a bit more physical approach to the problem.

The Counter-insurgency Council (CIC) out of Collinsville, IL was one such group. Another, also using the name "Minutemen," had surfaced in California. The CIC was the brainchild of a big, friendly, ex-Marine by the name, Rich Lauchli. Those who knew Lauchli would all agree that he was patriotic to the bone, an ordnance expert, a rabid anti-Communist and very prone to be out front and open in his relations with fellow patriots. This trusting quality would later work to his undoing. The CIC, typical of most small groups, obtained a well-used, offset printing press and proceeded to turn out patriotic literature of mediocre quality. They studied guerrilla warfare in preparation of making a last ditch stand should America ever be invaded — truth not being their only weapon!

The California "Minutemen" was the brainchild of Troy Houghton of San Diego, CA. Houghton, while favoring the militant slant to anti-Communism, was bent to Halloween type pranks against the better known socialists and leftists of his area. One such prank was the mailing of a small tape recorder complete with a tape to a selected victim, usually some left wing character. Naturally, if you were to anonymously receive such an item you would be apt to play the tape. The voice on this tape said: "...this recorder contains a

high explosive bomb set to go off in exactly ten seconds — nine — eight — seven — six —” One can only imagine the gymnastics performed by the mark in trying to dispose of the “bomb” before zero!

Houghton's ability to escalate a touchy situation rather than defuse it, a fascination for machine guns and his apparent leaning toward other questionable areas would later become his undoing.

There were probably other groups in additional parts of the country, but these were prime examples of some that “made the papers” so to speak.

While the leaders of these small groups were resourceful to a degree, they were weak when compared to the ingenuity of Robert B. DePugh. Whether he had any prior knowledge of the C.I.C. or the California Minutemen is not known for sure. DePugh was the founder of a small, veterinary, pharmaceutical manufacturing company by the name of Biolab Inc. in Norborne, Missouri; a small farming town located not far from Independence, Missouri.

DePugh launched his “Minutemen” with more apparent professionalism than anyone before him. This is best displayed by a piece of his original recruiting literature entitled “A Short History of The Minutemen” which is given here in its entirety.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MINUTEMEN

In June 1960 a group of ten sportsmen leased a small lake in Missouri and organized a duck hunting club. The next Sunday they started building duck blinds around the lake. Someone mentioned the current international crisis and another

man said jokingly, “Well, if the Russians invade us, we can come up here and fight on as a guerrilla band.”

It would have probably ended right there, but one of the members, who had special forces training, remarked that it might not hurt Americans to know a little more about defending themselves, if this war should ever degenerate to a last ditch stand. The next Sunday he brought along some of his training manuals that were read with interest by the other members. Slowly, the joke turned into a serious project.

Most books on guerrilla warfare have been written by persons with deep political convictions and we found that as we studied strategy and tactics, we, also, became increasingly-concerned with the world political situation.

To a group of average Americans it came as a shock to suddenly realize that in the seventeen previous years the communists had succeeded in taking over 17 sovereign nations. We were surprised, also, to learn that only one had been taken over by military conquest. The other sixteen were lost to communism by internal subversion or negotiation. We began to wonder why, and by what right, two presidents of the United States agreed to turn over to the communists several independent nations in Eastern Europe; and considerable territory belonging to our Chinese allies, without ever asking the people of those countries by whom they wanted to be governed.

The following was a case of ten average Americans gradually waking up. Gradually-beginning to doubt whether or not our own government had done everything that should have been done to stem the tide of communist conquest.

At first we tried to learn the answer from the printed literature of other conservative organizations and by inquiries to our Congressmen and Senators. Still, we didn't feel satisfied. Therefore, we decided to start out on a six months project. Each one of us took some particular phase of the problem as his object for special study. We really dug for the facts. Each one of us spent all of that six months reading, studying, researching the libraries and joining various other organizations to learn what their proposed answer to the problem might be.

We, also, began infiltrating various left-wing organizations to see what makes them effective and how it is that the communists can dupe so many otherwise sensible people into doing their work for them.

Later, we held a four day meeting to exchange information and during which we came to the following conclusions:

1. Our diplomatic war against communism has already been lost by bunglers or traitors within our own government. Our enemies have been strengthened through unnecessary lend lease and foreign aid arrangements. Our traditional allies have been snubbed and alienated from us. By subscribing to and translating newspapers from several foreign countries we learned that other nations of the free world do not trust the leaders of American government to protect even their fellow Americans from communism.
2. This diplomatic war has been, and continues to be, lost by appointed government officials beyond the reach of public opinion.
3. We cannot win a diplomatic war against communism abroad until we first establish a genuinely pro-American government here at home.
4. We, also, decided that a pro-American government could no longer be established by normal political means. In this one respect our conclusions differ from those of most conservative movements. There has not been one presidential election since World War II where the American public has had an opportunity to vote for a real American. There have been times when the candidates were built up by big public relations campaigns that sold them to the American people but when they were once in office they failed to act in their nation's best interest. Even the defeated candidates for president have shown by subsequent events to be little or no better than those elected. In each case the people have merely had an opportunity to vote for whoever they thought might be the lesser of two evils — usually a choice between two “internationally minded” members of the CFR.
5. The minority vote blocks, controll labor unions and corrupt political machines, so completely-monopolize the American political scene that there is no chance for the average American citizen to regain control of his own destiny at the ballot box. All the media of mass communication are effectively-controlled by the enemy so they can make the people think whatever they want them to think. Even if we could awaken enough Americans to the true facts and get out the vote for a really patriotic candidate, then, we must expect from past lessons that those votes would be stolen.
6. Having come to these conclusions we decided that any further effort, time or money spent in trying to save our country by political means would be wasted and that we would be better off spending these limited resources on something that actually had a little chance of victory.
7. We learned that the leaders of most other conservative organizations privately

agree that it is politically impossible to elect a conservative government. Many of them, however, continue to hope that they can build up 'public opinion' into such a strong force that it will prevent our elected government officials from actually selling us out to the enemy. Here again we concluded that further efforts to alert public opinion would be largely wasted. A politician cares nothing about public opinion except as it may bring him votes or lose him votes. If he has enough votes guaranteed by labor, political and minority interests, then he doesn't give a hoot about public opinion and will not be restrained by it.

8. In this short review, we cannot start to even summarize the facts, data and logic which brought us to these conclusions. In fact, we did not want to accept these conclusions, but we felt they were forced on us by the facts. We concluded that the American people are moving inexorably toward a time of total control and frustration such as must have been felt by the people of Budapest and East Germany when they finally staged their suicidal revolts.

Therefore, the objectives of the Minutemen are to abandon wasteful, useless efforts and begin immediately to prepare for the day when Americans will once again fight in the streets for their lives and their liberty. We feel there is overwhelming evidence to prove that this day must come.

Suppose even that we could somehow win by peaceful political means. Is it logical to assume that a group of people who have come this close to conquering the world will give up and withdraw simply because they lose an election? "If we do not fight them, then they will certainly fight us.

The 1960 annual report of the Committee on UnAmerican Activities states: "Events of the past year have provided convincing evidence that the American" people cannot rely completely on this country's armed forces to protect themselves from communist domination and slavery." Certainly, this statement is truer now than the day it was written.

Most people unfamiliar with the past accomplishments of underground warfare would certainly conclude that the American people would stand little chance of fighting through to ultimate victory; if our armed forces were defeated or turned over to the United Nations — perhaps, even to fight against their own country. Events indicate just the opposite.

History offers many examples of far larger and better equipped armies that were finally defeated by guerrillas. They can fight on for years, even for generations. Guerrilla bands can fight in the cities, country, forests, swamps, deserts or mountains. They are everywhere and yet nowhere. They strike without warning and vanish without a trace. They take away with them the arms, food and ammunition they will need to fight again another day.

History, also, proves another surprising fact: With each increase in the power and destructive potential of the conventional weapons of war, guerrilla warfare becomes more effective, rather than less effective. One of the reasons for this is easily seen. The more powerful an army's weapons become the further away the enemy must be before they dare to fire their weapons at him. The more a nation relies on these big weapons the more defenseless they become against infiltrators, saboteurs and double agents within their own ranks.

Another reason for the surprising strength of underground warfare is that it utilizes the people's full defensive potential; men and women, young and old, fighting in the territory they know best — fighting for their own.

The Minutemen are not interested in any activity that simply awakens a few people, while the mass of the population remains hypnotized in front of their television sets, or which elects an occasional patriotic congressman, while our enemies elect their stooges by the dozens. We believe that anyone who will study the situation carefully and who is willing to face the facts must admit that such activity is useless.

Neither are we defeatists. We have no idea of fighting a last ditch stand. We have a strategy which we believe can be effective and which can lead ultimately to victory. Only one thing is essential. You must start preparing NOW! Our future battle will be won or lost before the first shot is fired.

We do not want lukewarm members. We are an organization of people willing to make any sacrifice necessary for our country. Anyone else that really feels this way about it is welcome to join us.

— Editorial comment —

There has been much conjecture as to just how the Minutemen of the 1960's started. The story about the 10 duck hunters served the purpose and was a believable story. A more accurate account might be as follows: DePugh, a man shrewd beyond any of his contemporaries, was actually bored at the approach of the meet eat and retreat anti-Communist organizations of the time. His analogies of the political scene and the hopelessness of

ever correcting the mad rush toward socialism within the system, was on target. We can clearly see now, when looking backward several decades. The organizational name “Minutemen” could have been inspired by DePugh, having read Taylor Caldwell's “Devil's Advocate.”

Most who have been close to the core of the organization agree that the council of ten executive directors was most likely fictional and that DePugh was the sole vanguard of the Minutemen organization of the 1960's. This is excusable and understandable if one man, basically alone, undertook to form a national organization. There had to be some spin applied to create the illusion of something more formidable to ever attract a sizable membership. Being secretive in structure, who was to ever know the size?

With some well written and professionally-printed recruiting material done; classified advertisements began appearing in various newspapers and publications during 1961. A typical ad would read:

“Join the Minutemen. An organization of loyal Americans dedicated to the preservation of both national and individual freedom. Help put real strength into civilian defense. Pledge yourself and your rifle to a free America. For full details, write, 'Minutemen,'”

The advertising worked — many were tired of passing pocket books back and forth between each other and were ready for something a bit more physical. The Minutemen were new, novel and carried no stigma — Yet! All that anyone knew about them was all talk — nothing tangible had been done to be reported by the media.

Just when DePugh and Lauchli became allies is not known, but what was to take place is a matter of record. In the fall of 1961, Lauchli obtained use of the community hall in Shiloh, Illinois for the purpose of a weapon's familiarization seminar, to be followed the next day with some guerrilla type field exercises in the neighboring countryside. This was a natural happening for Lauchli, who did very little on the secret side — come one, come all. As long as what they did was for America, who could complain?

DePugh, the wiser, knew differently and realized that, at this stage of organizational growth, publicity would be the most valuable outcome of this little get together. The later consensus of several Minutemen leaders was that DePugh tipped off the media — and possibly the local police about the Shiloh meeting. The net result was a raid by the police and coverage by the media. Lauchli was arrested and several weapons were confiscated. Those in attendance “ran for the hills” and DePugh gave a press conference as to the purposes of the Minutemen!

The story was exciting — an anti-Communist group training with weapons! Needless to say, when this story hit the wires, it was repeated from one side of the country to the other. This caught more attention than any small classified ad. It, also, resulted in most publications refusing to run further advertisement. From that day on publicity would come cheap or expensive, depending on your point of view. This publicity helped to create an image of a large, powerful and well armed organization. The membership roles began to swell.

The California Minutemen, obviously inspired by the Shiloh fiasco, started gathering some attention of their own by then Governor, Edmond (Pat) Brown.

Enough to, also, get media coverage of their own. It was only natural that DePugh would show up at Los Angeles in November, 1961, meet with Troy Houghton and then appear together at a well-attended press conference. Publicity wise, everything had been going quite well for DePugh — almost too well!

The very next morning, DePugh was greeted by newspaper headlines to the effect that Houghton had been arrested for failure to register as a sex offender! We should state here that anyone familiar with the penal codes in California at that time realizes that simply urinating beside your car in a parking lot (and who hasn't?) could result in such a charge — the end result being at the mercy of the arresting officer. So charged and convicted, the offender would have to, for a period of five years, register as a “sex offender” with the local police department wherever they lived or would move to in California.

We don't pretend to know just what Houghton had done, but giving him the benefit of the doubt, it could have been insignificant. Even so, it meant that DePugh, just when the publicity was going great, hit a land mine, but, he has to be given a high score for his resourcefulness. The incident at Shiloh and now this one were blamed on the Communists and used to show just how viable an organization the Minutemen really was! These incidents, also began a roller-coaster ride (an “E” ticket ride) of many similar headline-making fiascoes which, at first, attracted members. Later, many were turned off by such unfavorable publicity.

The classified advertisement in “Shooting Times,” a gun magazine published in Peoria, IL, read something like: “Thompson machine guns only \$75.00 — no paperwork necessary.”

The Feds obviously paid close attention to this ad and a sting operation was initiated. They used an undercover man with a Cuban appearance and name to approach Lauchli and proceed to purchase about \$75,000 worth of ordnance for the alleged purpose of fighting Castro in Communist Cuba.

The trap was sprung when Lauchli attempted to deliver the merchandise to a rendezvous point in the bottom land of Illinois across the river from St. Louis, MO. The ensuing vehicle chase terminated in Lauchli's arrest without incident; although, he had the equipment and knowledge to have escalated the event into a body bag consuming affair. Apparently, Lauchli's patriotism and common sense prevailed.

The CIC either blended into DePugh's Minutemen or faded away. The California Minutemen, also, became a part of the nation wide Minutemen with Houghton serving as an area coordinator. Finally, the Minutemen organization of the 1960's was underway. Recruiting took on a more personal touch with one on one contact. One of the classic brochures given to prospective members is reproduced as follows:

TO PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE MINUTEMEN

The newspapers and television have pictured the Minutemen as a bunch of crackpots, running around shooting off their guns without any idea of why they were doing it. This is exactly the type of person we don't want in our organization. We cannot emphasize this point too strongly. The Minutemen are the most active, most completely-dedicated and most selective in their membership of all the many patriotic organizations in

America. We are willing to make any sacrifice for our country. We fully expect that we will have to fight in one way or another before victory is achieved. Our very lives depend on each other. There is no place in this organization for bunglers, playboys or lukewarm conservatives. If you join the Minutemen, there might easily come a time that your life would depend on how competently some other member had learned his job.

Unless you are especially well informed on the domestic and world political situation, then it is probable that you have a lot to learn about the present threat our nation faces. Unless you have had many years experience in actual guerilla warfare, then there is undoubtedly a lot you can learn from the experts in our organization who have developed and supervised our training program.

Our Nation is in Immediate Danger!

It is possible that within a very few years, perhaps even within months, our nation could be conquered and enslaved by the communists. To prevent this we must know as much as possible about our enemy. Unless we know who he is and how he acts, we will not succeed in our efforts to maintain a free America.

The Resistance Movement

In driving an invader from your land the resistance involved goes through three stages of development:

- (1) The Underground Network
- (2) Active Guerrilla Warfare
- (3) Open or Conventional Warfare

The conventional warfare stage uses everything in the way of weapons that the

enemy does, but must, also, have active guerrillas and underground agents behind the enemy lines. In the present state of military tactics, conventional warfare cannot succeed unless these other two ingredients are used simultaneously.

The first step is to form an underground network. An active guerrilla band must have the support of an underground network of approximately three times its own size. This underground must supply the active guerrilla fighter with supplies, concealment, information, etc. An underground network starts with departments of intelligence, security and propaganda in that order.

Sabotage, espionage, subversion, infiltration, escape and evasion, clandestine fabrication of supplies, counterfeiting enemy documents, recruiting, training, communications and propaganda are other phases of underground activity. An effective Minuteman must have a working knowledge of all these tactics, as well as the military tactics more-commonly associated with guerrilla activity.

Assignment to Bands

Many people who inquire about membership in the Minutemen seem to have an idea that they will be immediately accepted into an active band. Look at it this way. Suppose you had spent a year or more carefully-recruiting and training until you had a hard hitting team where every individual was reliable, dedicated, and had confidence in his fellow band members. Wouldn't it make you mad to have the national organization assign some rank amateur to your band that you knew little or nothing about?

Before any new member is assigned to an active band or to an important underground project he must undergo a period

of training. During this training he will be directed through the mails by an experienced member and some of his activities will be observed by other members without his knowledge. Only when a new member proves himself to be conscientious, trustworthy, self-disciplined and able to work effectively alone will he be accepted as a "secure member" and invited to participate with other band members in a teamwork operation.

Expenses

Unfortunately, most good things don't come cheap. Although we make every effort to keep down the expense of membership in the Minutemen, you must expect to pay your own way.

Dues to the Minutemen are \$2.00 per month. This money is absolutely necessary for use to maintain our central files and headquarters, for postage and printing, to finance our extensive intelligence network, to maintain training areas.

Our organization publishes a newsletter called, On Target, which is available to anyone. If a member obtains one new subscriber that will be accepted as one months dues. Anyone can do that if he really wants to.

Each member will have other expenses depending on the type of activity he is engaged in. Every member will be expected to buy his own gun, ammunition and other equipment. This can be as little as thirty dollars or as much as several hundred depending on what you can afford and how fancy you want to get. During training the new member may be expected to buy certain books or subscribe to certain magazines that his work requires.

In many cases our members must sacrifice on their personal luxuries and living

expenses to do this. The question is simple — how much is your freedom worth to you? What price do you put on the freedom of your children? For the price of one package of cigarettes a day you can help save Americans for generations to come from a life of slavery.

Individual Training

Based on the new members personal qualifications, his training may be designed to give him some specialized skill, but all must learn the rudiments of underground warfare. Basic to any kind of underground activity are intelligence, security and propaganda.

A good individual agent must be:

(1) A good observer. (The ability to gather basic intelligence data.)

(2) A good reporter. (The ability to communicate, oral or written.)

(3) A good broadcaster. (The ability to spread the organization's educational material.)

Observer: To gather general information. . . to use his own judgement and initiative as to find sources. . . to sample public opinion in his area (by assignment only) . . . to scan public documents (newspapers and magazines, for the purpose of educating him to the extent of pro-communist propaganda now appearing ~n the public mass media. He will contribute to maintaining a central file of all intelligence information. A few weeks of this and he will form a very strong conviction of the wisdom of the Minutemen program) to complete study assignments and do primary investigative work.

Reporter: To learn how to make good reports. . . to develop writing abilities. . .

to be active in a subtle “Letters to the Editor” campaign (they would never be identified as coming from Minutemen. If a person did not wish to actually send a letter to the editor, he could be active in writing letters for others to send).

Broadcaster: (Propaganda Agent) To be active in the sending part of the “Letters to the Editor” program... to spread the educational material, leaflets, stickers and etc. . .

During this time the new member will also be supplied with reading material on strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare. This home work will make it possible for him to fit in quickly to an active band and participate effectively in actual maneuvers, marksmanship training, etc.

Following this preliminary training a member may be either assigned to an existing band, assisted in organizing his own band if he has shown sufficient leadership qualities or become part of an underground unit.

Upon your acceptance into the Minutemen you will be given a definite series of projects, described in writing, so you will know exactly what will be expected of you.

We hope that you can succeed in this effort because your country desperately needs patriots at this time.

— Editorial comment —

In January 1963 the Minutemen organization introduced their newsletter entitled “On Target.” The “O” in On had crosshairs drawn in and was followed by the statement: **“We guarantee that all law suits filed against this news letter will be settled out of court”**

In the beginning, On Target listed the names, addresses, phone numbers of literally hundreds of communists, fellow travelers, and about anybody else of socialist leanings. The House Committee on UnAmerican Activities was under attack by the leftists, the civil rights movement was going full steam and anti-Vietnam activities were growing fast. On Target had little trouble finding names and addresses of leftist activities. A collection of the first two or three years of issues gave you a “who’s-who” of the left. Naturally, by giving their address and other information Minutemen groups in many cities were able to harass some of these vermin unmercifully.

In its latter years On Target served simply as a house organ full of newspaper clippings about the Minutemen — usually negative news.

The national organization continued to grow, in spite of a continual barrage of headline-making “happenings.” DePugh was involved in incidents! Houghton was involved in incidents! Groups on the East coast were involved in incidents! These news producing occurrences were to continue, in one form or another, for nearly ten years! For a few more years the organization grew in spite of the negative publicity. It was exciting! It gave meaning to otherwise dull lives. No-bodies could now be Minutemen, waiting to fight for their country. They could, also raise a little hell, play with machine guns and get arrested! An attempt to add to and redirect activities of the Minuteman organization occurred during the summer of 1966, when a political party was organized to serve as a political and philosophical base to the main paramilitary organization. Named “The Patriotic Party,” it required many of the most effective underground leadership to surface to serve in party leadership functions. A large portion of

the rank and file membership were totally opposed to this activity.

Anything this new and controversial naturally-attracted a lot of national news coverage. The national convention was held in Independence, Missouri over the July 4th weekend of that same year. Subsequent regional and state conventions were held later that summer. The attendance ran from poor to mediocre and was composed of true patriots, the opportunists and assorted, patriotically oriented, mis-fits. As a serious third party movement, the Patriotic Party was a failure from the beginning and, at the best, served as a learning experience for those involved.

By 1967 many of the top leaders broke ranks and applied their efforts elsewhere or became dormant. They believed in the premises on which the Minutemen of the 60's were founded, but felt the timing for such an activity was premature and the major thrust had become misdirected. The addition of the Patriotic Party was simply excess baggage to a vessel already struggling to stay afloat. The Patriotic Party struggled along for a couple of years, growing downward rather than upward until it finally ceased to exist.

To the casual observer the Minutemen appeared as a group of militant malcontents who were their own worst enemy. This thinking was cultivated by the media who only concerned themselves with the bizarre and were unwilling to shed any positive light to the real worth of this patriotic organization.

In the following chapters we have reproduced some of the training material that all new recruits were required to study and exhibit a basic understanding of the material covered. The reader should note that the “enemy” of the day was the

communists and their fellow travelers within our government and country. This dates the material to the time frame of 1960 through 1980. To bring everything up to date simply add Socialist, Liberal Democrat, and One Worlders for communist to bring your enemy list up to date.

These training lessons served an important purpose by eliminating potential members who lacked the mental capacity to do a little book work rather than play with guns. A necessary, basic

knowledge of resistance movements and guerrilla warfare was instilled in those who could evolve into resistance leaders at some future time.

At the end of each chapter we will add comments and suggestions on how this material can be updated to coincide with today's political scene and technological advances. Each lesson ended with a test and suggested activities. These have been reproduced for your information only.

