

PROTECTING AMERICA'S PROTECTORS

U.S. Troops Safer—In Surprising Ways

(NAPSA)—One reason many of America's defenders may have lighter hearts these days is that they have lighter equipment.

Thanks to today's technology, some of the most sophisticated gear U.S. troops have is also easy to carry. For example, the new M4 carbine has a retractable plastic butt stock and a shorter barrel with plastic hand grips—making it more lightweight and maneuverable for added mobility in close quarters. A carbine, or short-barreled rifle, the M-4 fires the same small, high-velocity ammunition as the old M-16. It can also be easily reconfigured into a grenade launcher, a laser or an illuminator to help guide bombs.

Today's soldier has a helmet made of a lightweight plastic composite that can be stronger than older helmets to protect the temples, ears and neck.

Lightweight night vision equipment can be individual binoculars or goggles and the more heavy-duty-thermal imaging equipment. These devices convert light particles called photons into electrons. The photons strike a special plate in the lenses and an electrical pattern is established. This signal is amplified and sent to a video screen.



More than ever, American troops are protected by high-strength, lightweight plastics.

Our military has chemical defense equipment that consists of a vinyl protective suit and a gas mask with an airtight seal. To make it easy to carry when it's not being worn, the suit folds compactly into a backpack when not in use. The backpack is modular with removable components and pockets so troops can tailor their packs to shorter or longer missions.

In addition, a soldier's flak jacket and interceptor body armor are both made of plastic to protect against shrapnel and gun fire.

Lightweight, durable materials such as plastics give troops added mobility and added survivability on the battlefield.