



KOMMANDOSTORE

While Europe and most of the west was busy playing a game of 'who has the most nukes wins', the cold war wasn't so cold in Africa.

Met with strength in numbers and mass production from the communist opposition, guerilla warfare crept closer and closer to South Africa's borders...

And so began a *war of webbed gear*.



P83 VS. CHICOM

We just so happen to have *healthy stock* of both Pattern 83 Battle Jackets & Chicom chest rigs, so it's high time we compare and contrast the two systems head-to-head.

Which side will you pick? *maybe both?*

Both were Era-defining pieces of kit for the east and west — as far as classics go, these might as well be the *Beethoven & Bach* of the surplus world.

(with just as much arguing over which is better)



To be fair, you can't really go *wrong* with either. But that's not what this email is about — let's just say we can tell you haven't *bought* either of the rigs yet 😊

Both are practically *essential* parts of your arsenal if you LARP in the great outdoors or simply collect curiosities of the surplus world...



If you've already studied up and done your homework about these two rigs, we've got stock for you to *peruse* up on the site now.

If you want a little history lesson, keep scrolling.

Let's See Those Rigs 🚚

HIGH TEMPO WARFARE

To start, there's the egg that came before the chicken: The type 56 chest rig, colloquially known as the 'Chicom' (or Chinese Communist) chest rig.

Simple as it was, the rig was undoubtedly *lightyears* ahead of other gear on the battlefield in the early 60s — and quite a few countries ended up picking a few up...



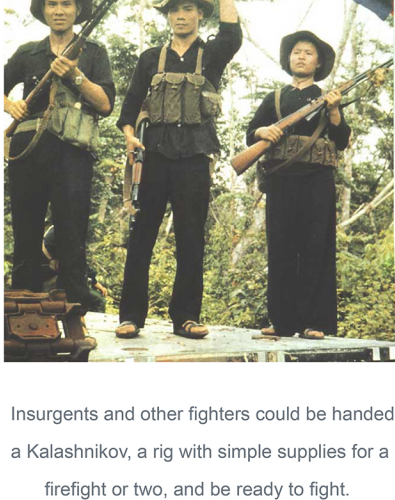
MACV SOG & ARVN units took a liking to their battlefield pickups from VCs.

Evolved from bandoleers, the formula was simple: pouches to hold mags, a grenade or two, and any other *immediately essential gear*.

That's it.

With the advancement of logistics on all sides, your troops didn't need to carry around more than they needed. Less weight meant faster moving troops.

The west could barely keep up.



Insurgents and other fighters could be handed a Kalashnikov, a rig with simple supplies for a firefight or two, and be ready to fight.

It was genius. And barely any training was needed to understand how it worked.

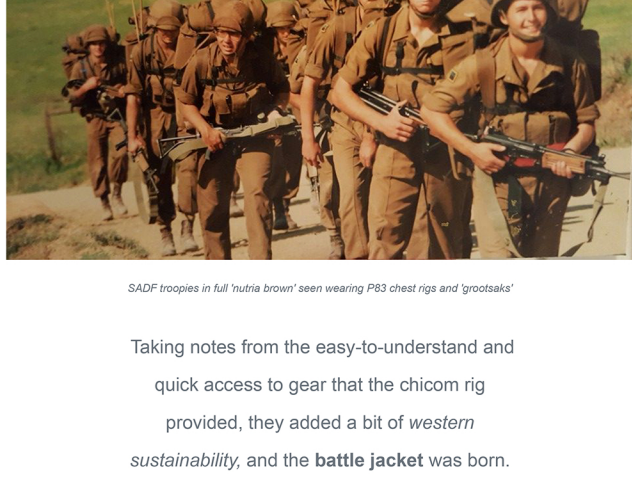
The west wasn't ready for that kind of warfare, and the Vietnam War is a trademark example — in a battle of speed, the west was *rather slow...*



Earlier SADF gear looked (and performed) like it's clunky WWII era forefathers with a mess of buckles, straps, and discomfort.

During & shortly after Vietnam, combatants in Rhodesia & South Africa learned the same lessons.

Caught flat-footed by embargoes, they decided it was time to innovate. Enter **Pattern 83**, the SADF's answer to the speed of the Communists knocking on their door.



SADF troopies in full 'nutria brown' seen wearing P83 chest rigs and 'grootsaks'

Taking notes from the easy-to-understand and quick access to gear that the chicom rig provided, they added a bit of *western sustainability*, and the **battle jacket** was born.

There was nothing quite like it — agile, comfortable, and carried basically everything the average *Troopie* needed to ruck marathons.



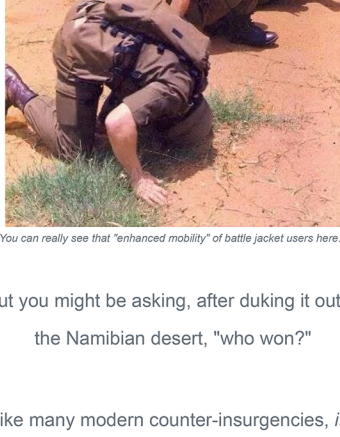
Even the battle jacket could be made to work with large packs for situations requiring a lot of extra sustainment.

Solution-dyed cordura, velcro-flap pouches, and breathable mesh was pretty *bleeding-edge* in comparison to the aging chicom rig.

Today, we use *most of the same exact stuff* to make even the highest-end tac kit.

We would know, our pattern 84 rig is made of the same general materials!

And thanks to the SAS and SADF Recces getting along quite well, the rest is history — the west made a lot of their gear look like the South Africans did.



You can really see that "enhanced mobility" of battle jacket users here...

But you might be asking, after duking it out in the Namibian desert, "who won?"

Like many modern counter-insurgencies, *it's more complicated than that.*

But what you *can* see is how both continued to be used well after their tours in the harsh African environments...

THEY JUST KEEP GOING



Africa hasn't *really* let go of P83, and *anyone* with an AK can still be seen using the chicom rig or one of its *dozens of derivatives and knock offs*.

But there's nothing like the real deal.

Pattern 83 (especially complete, not ruined battle jackets) keeps getting more difficult to find as time goes on and as South Africa's *infrastructure crumbles*.

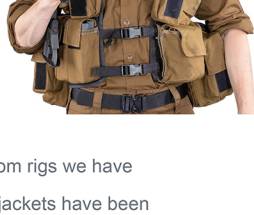


Because of their failing power grid, planned power outages are simply a fact of life for many South Africans — and they can happen several times a day for hours at a time.

And while people try to innovate on the chicom rig, it's *still* hard to find something that just *works* with AKMs the way it does.

So we turn the decision to **you, the reader of this email**: which do you think is better?

We get stuck on 'it depends'.



For collectors: the chicom rigs we have are *minty*, and our battle jackets have been *autistically sorted* for quality.



We take a close look to make sure you're getting what you pay for - all the minor details matter, and we touch on that in the 'condition guide' section of the page.

For Larpers looking for 'beater' rigs: check out the condition guide on P83 - you might be surprised how *good* the cheaper variants are.

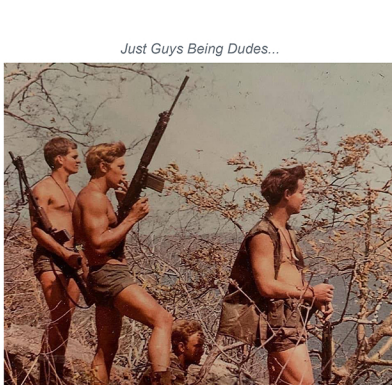
The Chicom rigs are pretty hard to beat in bang-for-buck, too...

But if your gut says one rig or the other (or *both*) they're worth getting your hands on while you still can...



Choose Your Fighter 🤔

Just Guys Being Dudes...



Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

Just hit 'reply' on this email.



Want to dump us and make Ivan sob quietly in his parking spot before work?

[Unsubscribe](#)*

*Alternatively, you can bug me directly and tell me what you don't like:

ivan@kommandostore.com

11 New York St Rapid City, SD 57701