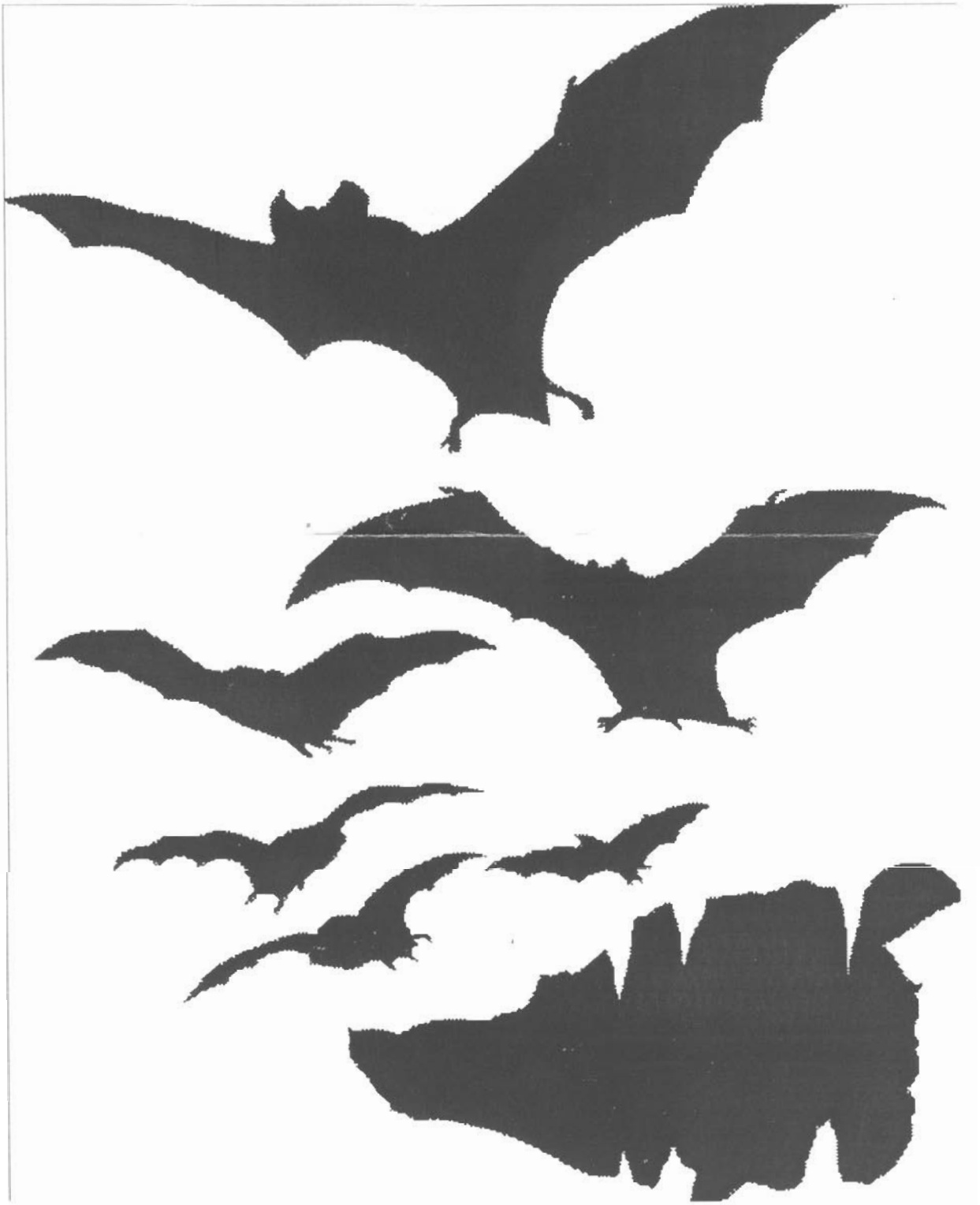


THE MAVERICK BULL

The Monthly Newsletter Of The Ft. Worth Maverick Grotto

Volume 14, Issue 11

November 2001



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The Maverick Bull is the monthly newsletter of The Maverick Grotto, an internal organization of The National Speleological Society (NSS G-322). The editor invites all individuals and other grottos to submit articles, news, maps, cartoons, art and photographs. If the material is to be returned, a self-addressed stamped envelope should accompany it.

Reprinting Articles: Internal organizations of The National Speleological Society may reprint any item (unless copyrights belong to the author as stated in the byline) first appearing in *The Maverick Bull* if proper credit is given and a complete copy of the publication is delivered to the editor at the time of publication. Other organizations should contact the editor of *The Maverick Bull* at the address herein.

Exchanges: The Maverick Grotto will exchange newsletters with other grottos. Contact the editor.

Complementary Newsletters: The Maverick Grotto will provide complementary newsletters to persons or organizations that provide cave access (i.e. landowners) or otherwise provide assistance to cavers. The Maverick Grotto will provide one free issue to persons interested in becoming members.

Subscription Rates: Subscription rates are \$15.00 per year for non-members and free for members.

Membership Policy: Any individual with interests, beliefs and actions consistent with the purposes of The Maverick Grotto and The National Speleological Society is eligible for membership. Acceptance of new members is based on payment of dues and a mandatory three trip requirement with at least three different grotto members. These three members shall act as sponsors. At least one sponsor must attend the meeting at which the membership vote is taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present will be required for acceptance.

Meetings: Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth. It is located less than one mile west of Loop 820 and next to K-Mart. The time is 7 p.m., and the food is good.

Carbide: Grotto carbide is available at the meeting if prior arrangements are made. Carbide is free for the asking. Contact Russell Hill at 220-7108 or Butch Fralia at 346-2039 for more information.

Library: Support your Grotto Library. Russell Hill will be accepting books and

magazines on cave-related topics, copies of homemade cave videos, etc. for our library. We wish to thank Russell for his efforts each month to bring and set up the Grotto Library.

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Photo Credits

This month's cover is from the t-shirt design, originally painted by Wayne Peplinski

Other Credits

Editor for another issue: Chad Fenner

Editor-in-charge-of-English: Lisa Fenner

Visit Our Web Site

Visit the grotto Web site at:
<http://maverickgrotto.batcave.net>

Minutes for the October Meeting

Minutes to the October 9 2001, Grotto Meeting

The business portion of the October meeting was called to order just after 7:00 by Grotto Chairman Chad Fenner.

Visitors:

Greg Gates

Another couple came in late, but I forgot to write their names down.

Announcements:

TCR is October 18 and 19.

Officers Reports

Treasurer: We have money.

Co-Chairman - Next month's meeting is the auction.

Old Business:

T-Shirts still being worked.

The grotto voted to hold a December meeting this year.

New Business:

Bumper stickers and patches — RD motioned that the grotto look into new grotto bumper stickers and pos-

sibly new grotto patches.

Trip Reports:

A bunch of trips were reported on, but I forgot to write them down.

Program

This month's program was a slide show by world caver Troy Shelton on some Missouri caves.

The meeting closed at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Editor's Ramblings

Happy November!

Haven't gotten to say that in a while.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Karen asked if I could do the newsletter this month and I excitedly said yes. It's been a while. In fact, I didn't even have my publishing software loaded on my computer. But, I was able to install it, find an old copy on an archives CD to use as a template, and I'm off and running.

I had forgotten how much I enjoyed this, and how much work it really is.

But considering that I've put out more *Maverick Bull's* than any other single editor, I'll stick to doing an annual guest editorship.

I heard from Shanon and Angela Seals. Shanon's job took him (and he took Angela) to TAG country. They've made a few meetings, but haven't actually gone caving there much yet, but they did take a vacation to Florida where they did some cavern diving. Even provided me a trip report. No pics though. Oh well.

Well I have good news and bad news about the T-shirts.

The good news is that they still have our screen and are raring to go on another run.

The bad news is that I put the sign-up list of people who wanted another shirt in a special place so I wouldn't

lose it. And if I don't remember where that special place is by the next meeting I'll just start another list.

Sorry about that.

In case you missed it, the grotto voted to have a December meeting this year. That's a first since I've been in the grotto. That doesn't mean we won't be participating in the annual D/FW Christmas Party, but we're just not the party grotto we used to be. We'd rather go caving and set up trips than party I guess.

Good Caving.

CF

November Meeting

This month's meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 13 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m. In lieu of a program this month we will be hav-

ing a fundraiser auction by master auctioneer James Savage.

As usual, many upcoming trips will be planned and discussed, so come

on out and enjoy the food, program, and caver fellowship.

December Meeting

That's right, you read it correctly, an announcement for the December meeting. This year, the grotto voted to hold a December meeting. It will

be held on Tuesday, Dec. 11 at Smokey's Ribs, 5300 E. Lancaster, at 7 p.m. As of this advanced notice, a program has not yet been

selected, but I'm sure Ed will find something good.

Not Caving, but Cavern Diving

by Shanon and Angela Seals — gone but not forgotten Fort Worth Cavers — told in first-person story style. The best kind!

Well, we're deep in the heart of TAG, and still haven't been caving, but we did hop in the car Friday evening and drove/flew down to Florida. Man, this traffic moves much quicker around here than Texas traffic. We got there at about 2 am, and the dive operation that we had called had let our cabin in their "resort" go, even though they said they'd leave it open with a key in it. Luckily we noticed a car parked in front of it, or else I might have tried harder to get in and probably scared the heck out of whoever was in there.

So, finally, about 2:45, we located a hotel room at the beautiful Days Inn of Crystal River. Got up at 6 and headed to the American Pro Dive shop. At about 7:45, we jumped in the water for our first encounter with a manatee. Very interesting and friendly creatures. They'll pretty much hang out with you as long as you're petting them, unless hunger hits them. They don't even appear to mind being flocked by 10-12 snorkels at once.

From there we hopped back on the pontoon boat and took a short ride over to King's Spring Cavern. It's actually in the Crystal River. We were the only ones in the group that were diving; the rest were just there to snorkel with the manatees. We did a short dive into the cavern. It's not a very large cavern, but does have a few small rooms. There wasn't much life on this daytime trip,

but there were a couple of good-sized catfish down in a little hole off one of the rooms. There were also a couple of boreholes that go off one of the rooms and vent to the river bottom. The cavern "rooms" are mostly made up from cracks in the giant breakdown that fills most of the cavern. You could see direct sunlight through various openings to the surface in most of the areas we went. The dive master made sure and kept us both in sight and well-controlled. He did tell us before we went in that we could pair up and do some looking around before we left the cavern.

When the time came, I started going off into one of the smaller rooms to check out a lead, only to be tapped on the ankle by the dive master to let me know that it got somewhat constricted in that direction. There was plenty of room at that point for both Angela and me to maneuver around quite easily. I guess that made the dive master decide it wasn't a good idea to let us look around, because he signaled for us to head out.

So our first cavern dive was a whopping 28 minutes, 10 seconds, with a max depth of 49'. Angela wasn't very thrilled with our first cavern dive, and probably won't opt to do too many more, even though she loved Punta Sur. I, however, checked with the dive shop about taking a cavern course, even though I don't even have my advanced yet.

That afternoon, we went to Rainbow River, which is actually a huge spring system. That was just a very long, shallow drift dive. The river flows a constant 1 knot. There are spring vents all along the bottom, from large, strong

flows to barely boiling sand. The greatest depth was about 22'. There was quite a bit of fish life, and the river bed is littered with snails and clams. We burned up all of our air on this lazy drift, using up the last of it to collect a few fossils at the largest spring vent on the river.

That night it was back to the shop for a night dive into King's Spring. This was with a different dive master and the shop owner along with someone working on their advanced. They first tied a float to the top of the cavern entrance so everyone would have a set starting point and line to descend and ascend. The first thing we did was go into one of the larger rooms and settle down and turn off our lights. The dive master took a couple of light sticks and cut them open and shook the liquid out. I had heard of doing this, but it was pretty cool being down in the cavern out of the current and spring flow. The stuff just hung in the water, it was like being in the middle of a starfield.

The new dive master also pointed out a few fossils on the cavern ceiling. The other big difference from the day dive was the amount of life out at night. The spring itself actually has quite a large "bowl" away from the enclosed cavern portion. We spent the next 20-25 minutes swimming around the bowl. There were literally hundreds of blue crabs, and smaller crabs all over the walls of the bowl and on the rock breakdown. Several times I would look up and see one or two crabs that I had almost bumped into. They were somewhat aggressive, if you got close, they would stick their claws in the air and try to pinch you. I heard a clicking at one point and looked down to see a crab trying to

attack a fish twice it's size that had wandered too close. There were also a large number of fish and several good-sized schools that you could see just at the edge of your light. The dive master showed me how to catch a blue crab by holding it down with your light and catching it by the rear legs.

Anyway, all in all a fun trip for a one-day dive adventure. Thought some of you caving and diving types might be interested.

{Ed's note: I talked to Shanon after he sent me this, and he stressed the importance of doing this type of activity only if you have had the proper qualifications or are on an organized trip with properly trained dive masters. —CF}

Grotto Auction

November is the month for the big grotto auction. Master Auctioneer James Savage has agreed to run the auction just like he ran the Peplinski paining auction. On top of that, he is donating the headline item, a set of collector plates from Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Other items include a rechargeable headlamp donated by Ed Goff.

If you have any other items you would like to donate to a good cause, bring them on, and James will auction them off.

Officer Elections

As is the custom, not to mention required by grotto constitution, nominations for grotto officers were held at the October meeting. For the first time in recent memory, possibly for the first time ever, all offices have more than one nomination, though, admittedly, one of the nominees won't know his nomination status until he reads it below. The officer nominations

are as follows:

Chairman —
Chad Fenner (incumbent)
Phil Sanders

Vice Chairman —
Ed Goff (incumbent)
Phil Sanders

Secretary
Karen Perry (incumbent)
Wayne Peplinski
Phil Sanders

As you may or may not have guessed, Phil, who may end up having a very busy year next year, was not at the October meeting.

Good luck all.

Proposed Constitutional Changes

In each of the last couple of years, the issue of the "officership" of the newsletter editor has come under question. In each case, we referred to the constitution which states that the newsletter editorship is a task of the grotto secretary. In each case, we questioned whether or not that was in the grotto's best interest. This year, RD Milhollin took it upon himself to propose changes to this effect.

Well, RD couldn't leave well enough alone, and once he got into it, he discovered several areas where the grotto constitution needed updating. These areas included simple corrections of typographical errors to refining what it means to go on a "grotto trip."

After some discussion among the current set of officers, the conclusion was that the level of changes needed were more

than what you would expect from a simple hand vote on a newsletter published re-wording.

So, they decided to propose the following: Appoint a Constitutional Committee to address all these issues and present, at a future meeting, a newly revamped grotto constitution.

In support of this, you will find the grotto constitution in it's current form on the last two pages of this months newsletter. Please review, and be prepared to discuss the following issues at the next grotto meeting:

Newsletter Editor — Issue: Should it be an office or an appointed position. The sides: The grotto newsletter editor is probably the hardest working grotto officer. The quality of the newsletter sets the tone for the meetings, and ultimately the grotto itself. To reduce that thankless task to an appointed position would be demeaning to the task. On the other hand, it is not a task that just anyone can do. If a grotto member is willing to do it, but for whatever reason he has, chooses not to desire to be an officer, then why should that person be excluded from the task?

Executive Committee or Advisory Counsel — Issue: Our grotto prides itself in the fact that the Chair and Vice Chair have term limits and that "dynasties" of one individual running the grotto for years can never happen. However, that means that we have a lot of expertise available to us in the form of former officers. The proposal is to formally take advantage of that by forming an Executive Committee or Advisory Counsel made up of former officers. The sides: We have a number of former grotto officers still active in the grotto. These members can provide valuable insight into the history of the grotto, why certain

policies are in place, and help give continuity from one set of officers to the next. On the other hand, it is possible that we voted them out for a reason and don't want their help.

Dues: The constitution, in it's current form, specifically calls out as part of the by-laws that dues are \$10/month. A few years ago, we changed it such that the grotto voted on the dues each November for the following year; however, that never seemed to make it into the "official version" of the constitution. (Who was the Grotto Secretary at the time? We'll have to get on to that boy!)

Multiple Grotto Officer rule: The bylaws state that no officer may hold office in another grotto. Since the constitution was written, the NSS has instituted what they call a Primary Grotto Affiliation, for just this purpose. The wording should probably be changed to reflect this new policy, i.e. all grotto officers must have the Maverick Grotto listed as their Primary Grotto Affiliation.

Purpose: While the intent of the grotto's "Purpose" as listed in the constitution is correct, over the past few years, there has been as much grotto caving in Arkansas as there has been in Oklahoma. For that matter, we've had grotto members traveling to TAG for trips almost as regularly as Oklahoma. Not to put down Oklahoma, but do we even need specific localities mentioned? We go caving where the caves are (which is everywhere except North Texas!).

Trip requirement: While the idea of requiring three trips seems like a good idea, what constitutes a trip? One could argue that one trip where three caves are visited could constitute three trips. For that matter,

does a grotto party count as a trip?

Misc: Have we ever had any of the following: Honorary members, Associate members, or Special meeting? Do we need them called out in the constitution?

U.S. Forces Set To Battle 'Myth' Of Cave Dwellers

{Editors opinion: This article saddened me, not so much as to the "justice" being brought to the Afghan terrorists, but to the possible (and probable) destruction of non-renewable cave resources. I'm not against the US action in Afghanistan, I'm just depressed about the loss of these caves and their hidden treasures.}

By Esther Schrader, Times Staff Writer Los Angeles Times October 26, 2001

WASHINGTON -- When the Soviet Union took on Afghanistan, its troops found themselves crawling, terrified, through a vast network of mountain caves studded with knives and booby traps, pursuing mujahedeen fighters who seemed to melt into mountainsides like the night itself.

Although Taliban leaders claim that they will use the same tactic to thwart the United States, their ability to do so when confronted with sophisticated weaponry and highly trained forces may be more myth than reality, former and current defense officials and military analysts say.

Defense officials acknowl-

edge that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of caves, tunnels, aqueducts and bunkers in the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan, the legacy of centuries of warfare and of an ancient farming technique that relies on underground water supplies.

But if fighters loyal to the ruling Taliban and Osama bin Laden hole up inside mountains to escape U.S. forces and the bitter Afghan winter, reconnaissance planes equipped with thermal-guided cameras will be able to spot those who are sitting around fires. Laser-guided missiles on Talon gunships can be trained on them.

And paratroops can swoop down from Black Hawk helicopters and toss hand grenades into tunnels.

The meticulous preparations by U.S. military planners to weaken the defenses of the Taliban and Bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist network suggest that they have learned from Soviet mistakes. And with the vastly more sophisticated technology at their disposal, finding the enemy in the highlands of Afghanistan will be difficult but far from impossible, analysts believe.

The experts also caution that despite the advances, special operations forces are unlikely to nab all the militants they are looking for.

"On a purely technological level, the U.S. military is prepared to find and destroy these caves," said John Pike, director of Global Security.org, a defense policy research firm in Alexandria, Va. "But the notion that we can find Bin Laden's 'fortress of solitude' and that all 5,000 of his henchmen are going to be down there among the stalactites, you know, it's just ridiculous. The caves are going

to be just one of many, many places these people could be."

U.S. Convinced That Caves Are a Valid Target

Pentagon planners are aware of such limitations. Senior defense officials have cautioned publicly in recent days that the Taliban and Al Qaeda may be hiding fighters and weaponry not in caves, but in homes, markets and mosques in the middle of villages and cities.

But they remain convinced of the need to eventually strike at mountain and desert hideaways.

"Caves are clearly in target sets, because that's where Al Qaeda has traditionally hidden," said Rear Adm. John D. Stufflebeem, a senior official with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Found primarily in eastern and southern Afghanistan, notably in Paktia province near the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar, the hide-outs include natural limestone caverns and tunnels and man-made passageways, said geologist Jack Shroder of the University of Nebraska. Shroder has extensive experience working as a scientist in Afghanistan.

Some of the narrow passageways stretch for miles and lie deep under the rock, Shroder said. Others are little more than bunkers just under the surface, 10 to 30 feet deep. Afghan fighters also are believed to use ancient underground aqueducts to hide from foes and store ammunition and supplies.

Still, for all the complexity of this system, most experts on Afghanistan and military weapons don't believe that it is formidable enough to deter the U.S. Special Forces preparing to launch a series of ground raids this winter.

Much of the image of the caves as impenetrable was forged during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. But the ill-equipped and ill-trained

Soviet conscript army made mistakes that U.S. military planners are unlikely to repeat, said Mark Kramer, a professor of Russian studies at Harvard University.

"The Soviet military and the U.S. Special Forces are just simply not analogous forces. The elite American teams are a modern, professional fighting force," Kramer said. "That's not to say that this is not going to be tough, but let's be careful where we draw our analogies from, or we can draw the wrong lessons from history.

"I want to warn against the notion that somehow Afghan fighters are invincible and magically capable of repelling any foreign invader. That's a myth."

Soviet leaders moved armored units into the Afghan capital, Kabul, without infantry cover. They left their logistics and communications lines vulnerable. And when they did begin to refine their counterinsurgency tactics, they used soldiers who were poorly outfitted for winter weather and nighttime battle and untrained for special operations, Kramer said.

Still, the Soviets made impressive gains in locating the mountain hideaways, said Sarah Mendelson, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and the author of a book on the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

Mendelson and Kramer said they believe that outside developments--most obviously the strains within the Soviet Union that led to its collapse--were key to stymieing the Soviets in Afghanistan.

"It is conventional wisdom that the Afghans beat the Soviets, and the reality is just much more complex," Mendelson

said.

The U.S. is in a far better position than the Soviets were to neutralize the cave threat, military analysts say. For more than 10 days, for instance, U.S. warplanes have been dropping 5,000-pound precision-guided "bunker buster" bombs developed for the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

High-Accuracy Radar Can Detect Hot Spots

To detect the caves, the CIA's Gnat and the Air Force's Predator 2 unmanned reconnaissance aircraft, as well as manned U-2 spy planes, have been equipped with high-accuracy ASARS-2 radar for use in Afghanistan, a defense industry official said.

With cold weather descending on the mountains, the Pentagon plans to outfit low-flying helicopters with thermal-guided cameras designed to detect and photograph underground hot spots, the defense official said. Then, AGM-130 missiles designed for horizontal flight can be directed into tunnel mouths.

"You can basically imagine the gunships just going out at night looking for warm spots on mountainsides," Pike said. "They can detect a group sitting around a fire, just by the body heat and the heat of the fire. Anybody who's betting that they can't do that might be surprised."

As for Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters caught in the open, helicopter gunships outfitted with computer-guided weapons would allow U.S. forces to train their guns easily on targets.

"The idea is to get [them] on the move, to terrorize them out of their caves and get them on the move, where they are susceptible to a wide array of American radar and intelligence assets," Pike said.

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Constitution
of the
Maverick Grotto
of the
National Speleological Society

- I. The name of this organization shall be the MAVERICK GROTTTO of the National Speleological Society.
- II. The purpose of the MAVERICK GROTTTO shall be a non-profit organization to further the discovery, exploration, survey, scientific study, conservation, and human relations of speleology, especially in New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Additionally; safety, techniques and land/owner relations will be promoted.
- III. Any caver who's interest, beliefs, and actions are consistent with the purposes of the MAVERICK GROTTTO and the National Speleological Society is eligible for membership. Membership in the National Speleological Society is encouraged, but is not required except to hold grotto office. Acceptance of new regular, family, or associate members shall be by payment of dues and by two-thirds vote of the grotto membership present at a regular monthly meeting, after a three trip requirement with at least three different grotto members has been met. These three members shall act as sponsors and one must be present at the time of voting.
- IV. Honorary membership can be bestowed upon individuals as an honor by a three-fourths majority vote by grotto members present at a regular monthly meeting.
- V. Associate members may not vote or hold elected or appointed office. Otherwise the requirements and privileges are identical to the regular membership. Family members shall be those members residing with a regular member.
- VI. Revocation of membership for valid reasons may occur by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a regular monthly meeting, provided such member is advised in writing by the secretary at least twenty days in advance of the meeting that such action has been included upon the agenda, along with the reason for the proposed revocation. Membership will automatically lapse in cases where the member has not attended any regular monthly meetings during a calendar year, or where (sic) dues are more than four months delinquent.
- VII. Maverick Grotto Officers
- A. The officers of the grotto shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. They shall be elected in that order at the regular monthly meeting in November, and take office on 01 January of the following year. The chair and vice chair shall serve a maximum of three consecutive years in either or both offices.
- B. The executive committee shall consist of all elected officers of the MAVERICK GROTTTO."
- C. The Chairperson will delegate authority and appoint committee chairpersons.
- D. The Vice-Chairperson will also be a program manager, in addition to presiding at events in the absence of the Chairperson.
- E. The Editor/Secretary shall record minutes of the events, maintain all non-financial records, and publish a monthly newsletter.
- F. The Treasurer shall keep accurate dues/subscription/expense records and maintain an up to date member/subscriber list. This list shall be mailed to all members each March.

G. All elected officers must be current members of the National Speleological Society.

H. Elected or appointed officers may be removed by two-thirds vote of members present at any regular monthly meeting.

VIII. Official Meetings Regular grotto meetings shall be held monthly at a consistent date advertised in the grotto newsletter. The December meeting may occur as a grotto Christmas party. The regular meetings (sic) will occur in the Tarrant County, Texas area, except where an outlying member(s) wish (sic) to sponsor a meeting. Such outlying meetings will be subject to the majority vote of the Executive Committee and shall be advertised in the previous grotto newsletter.

IX. Amendments may be approved to the Constitution and/or Bylaws by a vote of two-thirds of a quorum of members present at an official meeting, provided the proposed amendment is presented in writing and read to the membership in a previous meeting, and has been published in full in the previous month's newsletter.

BYLAWS:

1. A Quorum for a meeting shall include one elected officer; and five voting members or one fourth of the regular membership, whichever is the larger number.

2. For any and all voting situations, a quorum must be present.

3. All members including Honorary Members, family members age 14 and over have one vote. Unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or Bylaws, any motion approved by a majority of a quorum shall be passed.

4. Associate members shall include family members under the age of 14.

5. Officers of another grotto or grotto level speleological group may not hold office in the MAVERICK GROTTTO.

6. Dues shall be \$10.00 per year, payable before the last day of April for a calendar year to the grotto treasurer. Only new member dues may be prorated for the balance of the year. Family members do not pay dues unless they receive a separate newsletter.

7. Subscribers to the grotto newsletter shall pay a minimum of \$10.00 yearly. Subscription to the newsletter will be credited to that year's membership fee, should that subscriber be voted in as a member. Subscription shall not imply or constitute membership in any form.

8. The Executive Committee shall offer recommendations and place items of business on an agenda, but may not take final actions not specifically provided in the Constitution or Bylaws; or delegated by the voting membership. Other committees with similar rights and limitations may be appointed by the Chairperson.

9. The Grotto newsletter will be a membership communication instrument with monthly circulation designed to also provide timely meeting notice. It will maintain a neutral, non-political atmosphere and publish in the following priorities: meeting notice and agenda, calendar of events with emphasis on the next sixty days, meeting minutes, important legal/environmental/conservation items of area interest, trip reports, general items of interest, and "fillers."

10. In the event of dissolution, any property of the grotto shall be sold at auction, with monies going to the National Speleological Society. Any property of the National Speleological Society shall be returned at that time.