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James Hunter

James Hunter is an underwater archaeologist by profession. He received his M.A. in History/Historical Archaeology from the University of West Florida in Pensacola in 2001 and was a member of the archaeological staff investigating the American Civil War submarine *H.L. Hunley* in Charleston, South Carolina from 2002 to early this year. Employed as an archaeologist for over a decade, James has participated in the survey and excavation of a variety of shipwrecks from the sixteenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He has also assisted archaeological investigation of a number of land sites, including prehistoric Native American habitations over 5,000 years old.

James has considerable experience in archaeological site survey, remote-sensing, underwater site recording and analysis, scale mapping, artifact analysis, field conservation, and boat operation. He has also developed a reputation within the archaeological community as an accomplished archaeological illustrator, despite having no formal art training beyond junior high school. During his first year as a graduate student at the University of West Florida, James adapted his lifelong penchant for pen-and-ink doodling and sketching to produce detailed illustrations of artifacts then being recovered from the wreck of a sixteenth-century Spanish galleon in Pensacola Bay. Initially, his illustrations mimicked those he observed in various archaeological reports and books; however, over time he developed his own style and methods of production.

Over the course of his career, James has produced nearly 100 individual illustrations. Several of these have been included in historical and archaeological publications, including three books. Recently, he authored the article "The Art of Archaeology: Archaeological Illustration and *H.L. Hunley's* Artifact Assemblage,"

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which was featured in the Summer 2006 issue of the Hunley Project's official newsletter *The Blue Light*.

When not suffering the slings and arrows of writing his Ph.D. dissertation, or jetting off to remote parts of the globe to pursue his love of archaeology, James likes to go walkabout in his current home of Adelaide, South Australia, grow green n' leafy things, do his damndest *not* to fall off his skateboard and break something essential, and annoy his wife Emily no end.

Kalashnikov

James Hunter

Pen-and-Ink on Mylar

A veritable symbol of modern revolution, the Kalashnikov assault rifle—or AK-47 as it is more commonly known—was developed shortly after the close of the Second World War. Since its introduction to the army of the former Soviet Union in 1947, the Kalashnikov has become one of the most prolific weapons in world history. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union, China and the United States supplied arms and technical knowledge to numerous client-state countries and rebel forces to promote their interests. This period saw the proliferation, sometimes free of charge, of AK-47s by the Soviet Union and China to pro-communist countries and groups such as the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and Viet Cong. The AK-47 design was spread to a total of 55 national armies; as a result, more AK-47 rifles and variants have been produced than any other assault rifle and are still being produced today. It is a device so cheap and simple that it can be bought in many countries for less than the cost of a live chicken.

The Kalashnikov's proliferation is reflected in more than just numbers. The AK-47 is included in the flag of Mozambique, as well as its coat of arms. It is also

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displayed prominently in the revolution-era coat of arms of Burkina Faso, the flag of Hezbollah, and logo of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. “Kalash,” a shortened form of “Kalashnikov,” is used as a name for boys in some African countries. In the United States, filmmakers often arm criminals, gang members and terrorist characters with AK-47s. The weapon has also been featured in numerous video games and rap songs.

A much more sobering fact is reflected by the approximately quarter-million people killed by the Kalashnikov during a given year. Ironically, the weapon that helped end World War II, the atomic bomb, paved the way for the rise of the lower-tech but deadlier AK-47. The A-bomb’s guarantee of mass destruction compelled the two Cold War superpowers to wage proxy wars in poor countries, with ill-trained combatants exchanging fire—usually with cheap, lightweight and durable Kalashnikovs. Indeed, for all of the billions of dollars Washington has spent on space-age weapons and military technology, the AK-47 still remains the most devastating weapon on the planet, transforming conflicts from Vietnam to Afghanistan to Iraq.

As an archaeologist, I am often called upon to reconstruct and illustrate an object from the past with what amounts to little more than piecemeal data from the archaeological record. For this piece, I decided to do the opposite: essentially deconstruct a complete Kalashnikov and depict it as it might appear after spending several years corroding on the ocean floor. Perhaps a little too idealistically, I view my representation of this weapon as one beheld by a future archaeologist, responsible for objectively documenting a mute artifact from a bygone era when differences were settled through violence rather than dialogue and reason.