

GUERRILLAS & SOLDIERS FROM OTHER LANDS

ARMEE DE LIBERATION NATIONALE



ALN guerrilla, 1960.

ARMED STRUGGLE against the colonial occupation of Algeria by the French began on November 1, 1954. It was announced by a wave of guerrilla attacks.

The attacks acted as a powerful symbol of resistance and a mobilising factor. New recruits flocked to join the FLN. In mid-1956 FLN leaders, meeting in Soummam Valley in Kabylia, created a more comprehensive military framework, centralising the guerrillas under the control of the Armee de Liberation Nationale (ALN):

Colonel Houari Boumedienne was appointed Chief-of-Staff of the ALN in December 1959. He immediately set about improving the military potential of the revolution. New and heavier weapons, chiefly of Soviet origin, were received and the strategy and fighting capacity of the ALN by then comprising some 20 000 soldiers, were greatly improved. As the colonial war was becoming more costly and unwinnable for France, and the French army in Algeria suffering the trauma of the General's coup of April 1961, president de Gaulle pursued negotiations that were to lead to independence in March 1962. Ahmed Ben Bella became the first head of state.

In the early stages of the Algerian revolution, the ALN relied almost entirely on captured equipment from the French security forces. Since the French army ended World War II equipped primarily with US weapons, there was a preference for US-made arms.

This ALN guerrilla carries a 0.3 M2 carbine, although his ammunition pouches are for the earlier M1. He is wearing a US army M1943 combat jacket and French army trousers. This was a common combination to the ALN.