



George Harms (NJ) took this Marco Polo in Tajikistan, March 2005. See his story here.

In the Spring 2005 issue of *OVIS* we reported on **George Harms's** (NJ) Ovis World Slam. In the same issue we mentioned that George had had some very interesting circumstances when he hunted in Tajikistan for Marco Polo argali in March 2005. We now have a photo of George's Marco Polo, so I feel we should re-run the story along with the photo:

George made it to the Hot Springs camp just fine and began his hunt. He booked with **Vladimir Melnikov** and **Profi-Hunt**, and was accompanied by Profi-Hunt's **Maxim Vorobiev**. **John Lewton** (MT) was also along with George to do some videoing and guiding and helping with trophy judging. If memory serves me correctly, on about the third day George shot a good ram. On this particular day, Maxim had stayed back at camp because of a lack of room in the vehicle...thus, there was no real interpreter since the main guides there knew very little English. The ram went down in a canyon chute and try as they may, it was impossible to get to him without ropes. The plan was made to go back to camp and for all of them to return early the next morning with ropes and recover the ram... no

problem.

About the time they made the decision to return to camp, it began snowing as a literal whiteout. They got lost and in a whiteout there was no way to make it back, so you guessed it, they stayed in the jeep that night.

Not so terribly bad, but uncomfortable and cold. Problem is, it snowed all day the next day too. John Lewton had a

GPS and had marked camp on it (he thought). They convinced the guides to set out on foot with them, following the GPS to camp. However, when they reached the coordinates, there was no camp there. John somehow erased the camp mark and had replaced it with a mark from who knows where!

There was nothing left to do but go back to the jeep, and at least they did have a good mark to find it. When they arrived, John was completely lathered up and began severe hypothermia symptoms. Fortunately, the Tajiks had a space blanket and this pretty well saved John. Another night was spent in the jeep.

To make a long story short and cut out several incidents, late the next day they were able to hook up with Maxim and people from the camp. George and John finally made it back to camp no worse for wear, other than having had a real scare realizing they could have died in that situation.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: You will notice above that everything is printed in italics. That of course is because we are quoting what I said in a past issue of *OVIS*. I got most of the story straight, but did miss out on the photo session part. Obviously there is a photo, which you see below. I spoke with George just before we went to press to get the story on the photo. Ah, the magic of

computer technology! A photo of the ram after it was recovered was made, and George was inserted digitally. George was a little hesitant for me to run this photo, but I told him under the circumstances and as long as we stated the facts here, we were okay. I think it is better this way, where at least we can all see the ram to illustrate this amazing story. Speaking of the story, now we get back to it:

They left the next morning. Upon arrival in Osh, they were informed that there had been big political problems in Kyrgyzstan. When they got to Bishkek (by luckily getting on a government helicopter along with government officials), things had heated up badly. Again, to shorten the story, they were evacuated from their hotel, went to the U.S. embassy, were turned away, ended up at another hotel, could not get a flight out as everything was shut down, and bottom line it was a big mess. Somehow, Vladimir Melnikov back in Moscow had pulled some strings to get them to where they were, and let them know an Aeroflot jet was going to land in Bishkek. George managed to get some cash with his credit card, and got himself and John on that flight.

Things were really touch and go, and there was lots of looting and gunfire and danger while they were in Bishkek. When you add that to the danger they had experienced in Tajikistan, one can see that George got his share of Asian hunting problems all in one trip. George said he was depending on me to put out a warning to those who would venture there for spring hunts. Weather is extremely unpredictable that time of year, and it is not the best time to go.