

Land of Unknown



Figure 1: University of Mogadishu

Memoirs from the Basement of Hell By Greg Alderete



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This book was written in hopes the tragedy of Somali is neither forgotten nor repeated. It is dedicated to the brave men and women who went there as humanitarians and peacekeepers, but returned veterans of a brutal urban war. Most importantly to the Somali veterans, those soldiers who will never grow old and to their surviving families who painfully will.

All characters in this book are real, several names have been changed to honor privacy and for legal reasons. All incidents are to the best of the author's knowledge, true, and represent his and others experiences of the events. Nothing is intended or should be interpreted as expressing or representing the views of the U.S. Army or any other department or agency of any government body.

God bless all who have worn and continue to proudly wear the uniforms of our Armed Forces.

To Katherine, Hannah, and Mariah

"If tomorrow we go to war, today is our last day to train"

Colonel Wade H. McManus, Jr.

In Memory of America's Finest

Lawrence L. Freeman	PFC Domingo Arroyo
CPL Anthony D. Botello	SFC Robert H. Deeks
SPC Mark E. Gutting	SGT Christopher K. Hilgert
SGT Ronald N. Richerson	SPC Keith D. Pearson
PFC Matthew K. Anderson	SGT Ferdinand C. Richardson
SGT Eugene Williams	CWO Donovan L. Briley
SSG Daniel D. Busch	CPL James M. Cavaco
SFC Earl R. Fillmore Jr.	CWO Raymond A. Frank
MSG Gary I. Gordon	SGT James C. Joyce
PFC Richard W. Kowalewski Jr.	PFC James H. Martin Jr.
MSG Timothy Martin	SPC Dominick M. Pilla
SGT Lorenzo M. Ruiz	SFC Randall D. Shughart
SPC James E. Smith	CWO Clifton P. Wolcott
SSG William D. Cleveland Jr.	SGT Thomas J. Field
SFC Matthew L. Rierson	SGT Cornell Houston
PVT Don D. Robertson	PVT David J. Conner
LCPL William A. Rose	PVT Daniel L. Harris
SPC Edward J. Nicholson	LCPL Jesus Perez
SSG Brian P. Barnes	TSGT Robert L. Daniel
MSG Roy S. Duncan	SSG William C. Eyler
CPT David J. Mehlhop	SSG Mike E. Moser
CPT Mark A. Quam	CPT Anthony R. Stefanik Jr.



¹ Map from World Atlas IBM For Multimedia

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PROLOGUE

America began another televised lesson of world geography with the appalling scenes of emaciated children and random acts of violence by heavily armed street gangs. This time the location, Somalia.

The Somali Democratic Republic is located on the Horn of Africa, the easternmost extension of the African continent. It is bordered by Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean. Once under both Italian and British colonial rule, Somalia became independent in 1960. When Mohammed Siyad Barre fled in January 1991 after ruling the country for 22 years, Somalia descended into anarchy. As many as half a million Somalis starved to death as warring clans struggled for power.



Figure 2: One of hundreds of Protest cards sent to Siyad Barre found on the floor of Presidential Palace, this one from Sweden

In December 1992, a UN-sponsored, U.S. led military peacemaking operation was launched to restore order and to guarantee the delivery of relief supplies. It was the first time the United Nations had ever intervened without permission in the affairs of an independent nation. On Mar. 25, 1994, the last of the U. S. troops left Somalia. Nearly all Somalis are devout Sunni Muslims. Britain and Italy occupied different parts of the territory in the 1880s, and until World War II, Somalia remained under colonial control. By 1950 the United Nations had voted to grant independence to Somalia, and in 1960 the two former colonies were united to form the Somali Republic. Somalia was ruled by a civilian government until 1969, when President Mohammed Siad Barre came to power in a military coup. His Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, created in 1976, formed the executive branch of government. Areas inhabited primarily by Somalis, including Djibouti, the Ogaden, and northeast Kenya, had long been considered lost Somali territories. Somalia invaded the Ogaden in 1977, but Ethiopia regained control of the area, and Soviet forces were expelled from Somalia in 1977 for their support of Ethiopia. The country then received aid (mostly food for its refugee population) from the United States and other Western nations. Sporadic conflict with Ethiopia continued until 1988. Armed domestic opposition to Siad Barre began in the north in 1988 with the Isaaq-based Somali National Movement (SNM) and was brutally suppressed. Other clan-backed groups, most notably the Hawiye United Somali Congress (USC) and the Ogadeni Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), joined the anti-government struggle, and Siad Barre fled on 27 Jan 1991. Fighting between various

rebel groups, including those of transitional president Ali Mahdi Mohammed (USC) and USC rival Mohammed Farah Aideed, soon erupted. The SNM declared northern Somalia's independence as the Somaliland Republic in May. By August 1992, up to one-third of all Somalis faced death by starvation due to drought and the fighting, which kept farmers from planting crops. Another 1 million had fled to Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Yemen. The violence continued despite UN efforts to negotiate a peace accord and protect relief shipments. In December 1992, a UN-sanctioned, U.S.-led deployment of more than 30,000 troops began, to ensure delivery of food aid. These troops were gradually reduced and in large part replaced early in 1993 by a UN peacekeeping operation in which U.S. troops played a smaller role. United Nations mediators attempted to bring together the various Somali faction leaders to restore peace to the country. Early in June 1993, however, UN peacekeeping forces (mostly Pakistani) were attacked by Mohammed Farah Aidid's troops in Mogadishu, and dozens of UN soldiers were killed. In retaliation, the United Nations Security Council authorized the U.S. and multinational forces to launch ground and air attacks on Aidid's headquarters and strongholds in Mogadishu. The UN's special envoy in Somalia called for Aidid's arrest, but UN forces were unable to accomplish this. After the death of 18 U.S. soldiers in a firefight with forces loyal to Aidid in October 1993, the United States increased the size of its force in Somalia but said it would withdraw by Mar. 31, 1994.¹

¹ The 1995 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia Version 7.0

The U.S. Ambassador to Kenya warned at the onset of US operations in December 1992 that the US will take casualties and we should stay out. Sally Struthers pleaded with the world to send food and feed the children. Pressure began to mount for the Bush administration to intervene and take action. We had beaten Iraq, owner of the fourth largest army in the world certainly containment of the situation in this city should be virtually uncontested. Operation Restore Hope was declared a success in May 1993 and President Clinton celebrated on the White House lawn with Marine Corps Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston and other Somalia veterans. Operation Continue Hope began that same month with the continued theater service of 4000 servicemen and women. A far cry from the show of force with 30,000 combat reinforced combat troops.

The country was a manifestation of vermin and disease, with eight species of poisonous snakes. There were three types of malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, giardiasis, diarrhea, sand fly fever, schistosomiasis, meningitis, and tuberculosis. The abject filth made failure to perform personal hygiene a fatal mistake. By June most Americans were unaware that combat in Somalia had become a daily occurrence. The cacophony of urban war rebounded often without notice, it had become so common. Major General Thomas Montgomery, the Commander of U.S. Forces in

Somali said, "There are plenty of people who still don't know this is a war."

In March 1995 US Marines evacuated the remaining UN forces leaving behind the unknown future of American peacekeeping missions. It is often stated within military circles our soldiers died in vain, while others believe Mogadishu will preempt any future involvement in peacekeeping where there is not a clear mission and US chain-of-command. It is also appallingly clear that history does repeat itself.

INTRODUCTION

The 43d Corps Support Group (CSG), Fort Carson, Colorado was alerted for Somalia in December 1992. Our deployment possibility seemed remote; it appeared the Marines had the situation under control. None-the-less the threshold of excitement within the Brigade was turned up several notches. Several officers who had deployed to Saudi during Operation Desert Storm put in their resignations believing another deployment inevitable. A few other soldiers began to experience deployment induced ailments. Officers who began the resignation process were considered second class soldiers, persona non grata. Those deploying disavowed their existence as humans, refusing even cursory eye contact in passing.

The S-2 Officer, a six foot two inch weight lifter of 200 plus pounds, decided he absolutely needed to have jaw surgery to fix his Temporo-Mandibular Joint (TMJ) problem. This is a problem that affects the jaw joint and the muscles that are used to chew. TMJ problems are not doubt painful, though the pain does necessarily indicate an immediate serious problem. So concerned this decision would have an adverse impact on his career he requested his father, a retired Army Colonel, visited the Brigade Commander. We collectively agreed he would be more of a pain in the ass if he was forced to deploy. He would be

replaced days before airlift by a brassy, temperamental, barely five foot short farm girl named CPT Sheri Rhodus.

The chaff began to separate from the wheat. The executive officer, a sole parent, claimed the Army had greater priorities for him as an Inspector General in the bowels of The Pentagon. General officer influence pulled him from the deployment manifest. Amazingly he was still at Fort Carson on our return four months later deeply in need of a haircut and a new uniform. He fervently attempted to explain his unexplainable presence, and again no one listened. He claimed to have wanted to go but... not a soul believed him. Lieutenant Colonel Steve Strobel would assume the duties of brigade executive officer a week before departure with only two officers from the original staff still remaining. He too was suffering from recent back surgery but forged ahead silent to the tremendous pain he experienced moment by moment. He would later refuse medical evacuation from the combat zone out of intestinal fortitude and unadulterated loyalty to his commander and staff. He would prove to be a pivotal officer of great principle, capable of making his staff work as a tireless team. Of all the lieutenant colonels in the theater he stoically personified the best.

We all had our problems and we knew an extended overseas deployment would not make them go away. We also knew our allegiance lay with the Brigade Commander and our fellow

soldiers. The other world focus at the time was the insidious Cuban exodus and recurring military operations at Guantanamo Bay. We were informed Cuba would be our primary destination and oh-by-the-way prepare correspondingly for Somalia. The brigade and battalion staffs worked feverously trying to juggle personnel and equipment to enable simultaneous deployment. In the process of preparing for concurrent operations the situation changed dramatically. In March we dropped Guantanamo when officially notified for deployment to Mogadishu, Somalia. Our Group would form the nucleus of the United Nations Logistics Support Command (UNLSC).

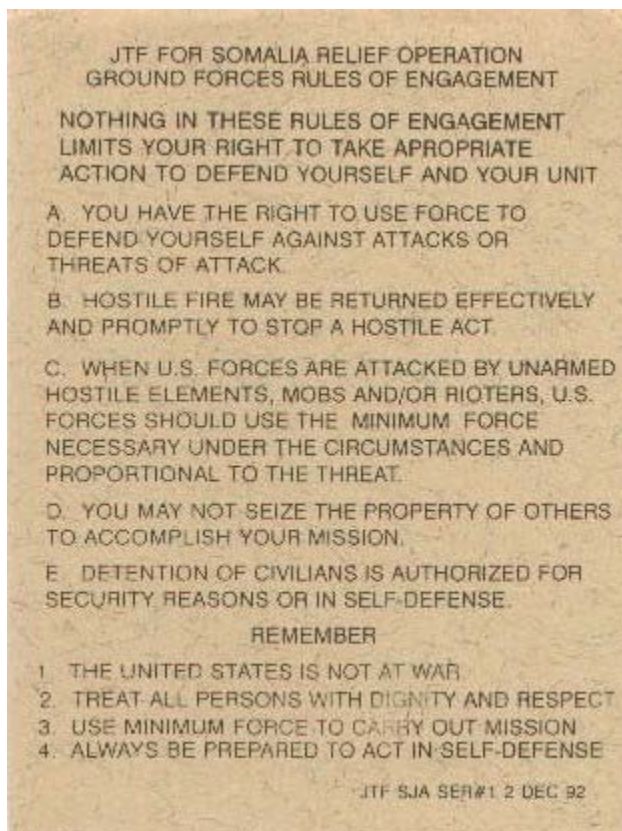
Equipment had to be prepared, loaded, and shipped. Soldiers had to qualify with their weapons. Once again we had to dust off and reinforce the family support group plan. We were told Somalia was stable, our mission humanitarian. Previous experience in the fragile third world led me to believe stability, in the best of circumstances, was only tenuous.

Intelligence reports and the news routinely confirmed Somalia was far from stable and may in fact be deteriorating. As the operations officer for the logistics task force my advice to the commander was to prepare for the worst. We communicated with the in-country forces we would replace, on a regular basis; their focus at this time was purely humanitarian.

On 10 May 1993 the main body departed the simplistic comforts Colorado Springs, Colorado on a chartered Boeing 747 from Peterson Airbase, Colorado. Ironically, the in-flight movie was Jack Nicholson and Tom Cruise starring in "A Few Good Men." Jack Nicholson, playing a Marine Colonel, was basking in the comfort of the Guantanamo Naval Base Officer's Club. I looked at COL McManus and said, "Sir, it could've been us."

After layovers in Ireland and Egypt we began our final approach to the only operating runway at Mogadishu's "*International Airport*". I peered from the aircraft window in utter disbelief as we banked over the near deserted remains of a once flourishing city. I had witnessed the abject poverty and destruction representative of the third world, but absolutely nothing compared. The aftermath of years of civil war and starvation was obvious. Few buildings had roofs, none had windows. All were pockmarked with the scars of war. Anything of value had been sold to the scavengers of neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Crude, filthy refugee camps dotted the city, filled with a tide of fragile and diseased humanity. The sides of the runway were littered with the wasted remains of Soviet MIG aircraft and armored war machinery. A few well worn vehicles cruised the streets a testimony for Toyota if nothing else. We abandoned the air conditioned comfort of our aircraft onto the basting, humid, 120 degree heat of the tarmac; the

Indian Ocean within walking distance. The hillside slums of Mogadishu bordered the Northern airport perimeter. Wearing our flak vests, winter cotton fatigues, Kevlar helmet, weapons, and personal equipment we began our undefined journey. The tepid bottled water we received quickly began to disappear. After a hasty, unsettling brief on the combat rules of engagement we were issued two magazines of ammunition, fully aware that the last two soldiers to wound or kill Somalis were court-martialed.



We naively loaded into open bay cargo vehicles to begin our six mile journey through the empty, ominous, and foul streets of south Mogadishu. A few curious Somalis dawdled under hibiscus trees while others loitered in the shaded, garbage filled, fetid alleyways. Where were all the people I thought? The intense torrid temperature would simply not allow any

productive human activity; individual survival was a full time endeavor for the Somali people. Our soldiers, many combat veterans, traveled in virtual silence emotionally overwhelmed. Bullet holes inside of bullet holes adorned every remaining structure. You simply could not gaze anywhere without

witnessing devastation and deplorable conditions. Clearly no one was in charge, the city was dysfunctional and out of control, a comedy of the absurd.

Upon turning onto the *infamous* Jaale Siaad Street the stench of death engulfed us. Unbeknownst to us then as we passed over the very spot where four of our soldiers would be killed by a command detonated land mine. Shallow graves filled the air with the stench of human decomposition. A smell permanently etched in my memory palette. We arrived at our new home, the once beautiful, now abandoned and thoroughly gutted University of Mogadishu. The remains of the two year old 30 million dollar U.S. Embassy and golf course, now the U.N. command post and field hospital respectively, bordered our northern perimeter. The put-put miniature golf course was smashed and overgrown. Sun bleached bones of a now exposed mass grave were scattered everywhere.

In the 40 minutes traveling from the airport to the University I concluded there was little we could ever do to change the unparalleled situation of this non-nation. We came as humanitarians with a vision of hope and change, I now know hope for Mogadishu was an unachievable fantasy. On departure and today my convictions remain unchanged. Convictions that I believe are shared by most that were there.

We immediately began our transition with the outgoing unit. They were voluntarily immersed in the humanitarian side of Operation Provide Hope. Eighty-eight non governmental organizations were fully in control of the distribution of food and feeding of the Somalis. "Mr. Graft and Mr. Corruption" were the general managers of all civilian support operations. Starvation was over; the problems were disease and anarchy.

Petty mission involvement, family separation, and the boredom from too much free time apparently had taken its toll on the outgoing soldiers. Morale was low and absenteeism high with 20% of those that had already returned stateside. There were few words of encouragement or advice exchanged; they were ready to return home. The outgoing operations officers' only concern was who would sign for the radio equipment. After the audit trail was closed he vanished without so much as a mission out brief. They had their way of doing business, we had ours.

For us it was very clear our mission was ill defined and we ran the imminent risk of soldiers being wounded or killed under the circumstances. The outgoing unit commander had hoped we would continue their philanthropic efforts working in the feeding centers and teaching English to the locals. Colonel McManus assessed the situation of placing small groups of unprotected soldiers outside our areas of *control as too risky*. Future involvement was terminated immediately and without

fanfare. This was wise decision in retrospect. It was clear that some U.S. personnel had "gone native" *overly sympathetic to the situation*; it was also clear we would not.

The intelligence and operations staffs were assembled to provide the commander with an assessment of the base security and the provincial threat. Most had little to no sleep in the last 48 hours but this information was critical. The perimeter was weak, military vehicles were not hardened, there was no fire support plan, which as particularly troublesome to me, Somali workers were given, in essence, unimpeded access to the compound. There was a cursory check at the gate which did nothing more than validate they were employed by Brown and Root Government Contractors. Somali American translators employed by the U.S. Government were allowed to visit the "families" at anytime. There would be no replay of Beirut on our watch. Our corrective actions began immediately with a sense of unparalleled urgency. In spite of the political sensitivity we decide to implement the changes even before our predecessors had departed. Unfortunately we were touted as apocalyptic alarmists. There were only a few hostilities at the time directed at the US Forces. Most incidents were crossfire's from warring clans. US Forces moved with impunity through the streets of Mogadishu. Never-the-less, our soldiers were instructed defensive positions would continue to be improved until the day of our departure.

Fighting positions and bunkers were built in tactical locations. A photo pass system and data base was developed for the Somali workers. Vehicles were hardened with steel plates. Buildings were sandbagged. Metal detectors and more night vision goggles were ordered. Most important, the perimeter was extended and cleared of rubble and vegetation for 1000 meters (RPG range). Tangle foot obstacles were constructed to channel potential attackers into kill zones. Unnecessary roads with access to our compound were gouged and shredded to prevent gate crashing and car bombing. Refugees were relocated. Buildings outside the wire were blown and a defense plan for the 1400 soldiers on the compound was established and rehearsed, to name a few.

One month later on 4 June the new Deputy Commanding General



requested an early morning orientation of the city. We raced through the congested streets to key areas of the Mogadishu: The Green Line, K-4 Circle, Old Port, The Presidential Palace, and The Stadium. Apart from five uniformed, grossly decomposed uniformed Somali corpses in the Palace it was uneventful.

Figure 3: Presidential Palace decomposed soldier

At the Stadium I expressed my concerns about security to the laconic, disinterested, and soon to retire outgoing Chief of Staff. We needed to move on, the area was just too dangerous, and we were too conspicuous and overly exposed. As soon as we stopped the Somali curiosity seekers began to form in small crowds, growing into larger crazed formations. I requested we not dismount the vehicles where our heavy weapons were mounted. Avoiding eye contact he whimsically disagreed. We split into two smaller groups as we separated from most of our MP escorts who stayed to guard the vehicles. I kept my 9 MM out of the holster and at the ready. The colonel barked "Major you better not have a round in that chamber," I responded sarcastically "not yet, *Sir*." He continued in an effort to insult my intelligence, "Nobody is going to attack highly armed U.S. soldiers." The sad part was he truly believed that. We made it safely back to the compound after two close encounters with crowds of Somalis attempting to swarm our vehicles in the crowded streets. A tactic they later refined to effectively overwhelm their unsuspecting victims. They could have easily tipped over the vehicles or ambushed us in the frenzy. At the K-4 circle we were literally surrounded by several thousand Somalis who showed new signs of a temperament change. Something was rotten in Mogadishu.

At 10 o'clock on 5 June, I was conducting my daily inspection of the wire and fighting positions. Without warning the entire perimeter erupted in explosions, heavy machine gun fire, and chaos. Soldiers and vehicles moved in all directions for cover. It was difficult to distinguish out-going from incoming fire. This was clearly a simultaneous, well executed, citywide attack. I moved to the exit gate to see what was going on. The Afgooye Road was filled with burning debris and armed attackers. I ran 200 meters to our newly completed roof top bunker on the southwest perimeter and remained there with my 9MM pistol and all of 30 rounds of ammunition. At the time of the attack, CPT Jody Hehr, our red headed irascible JAG officer was holding small claims court under a shady tree to a group of 10 Somalis. The translator was explaining to Jody how the Army trucks purposely ran over the Somali farmer's chickens hoping for the rumored large death gratuity. Machine-gun bursts continued from the surrounding buildings sending tracers into the sandy soil of the compound. She looked up at me and said, "Sir, should I tell these people to come back tomorrow?"

We locked down the compound and stayed hunkered down for several hours trying to assess what the hell was going on. Armed militia men in the refugee camp needed little reason to shoot. Within minutes the shooting intensified with rounds impacting everywhere. Indiscriminate panic shooting began as Turkish and

Tunisians positions searched for targets in the surrounding concrete jungle. The Pakistani unit's perimeter fired countless rounds of .50 caliber machine-gun everywhere including the sky. The Moroccan Unit, a poor excuse for an Army, continued to meander about its compound with amazing indifference to the hostilities on their perimeter. Unshaved with little concern, a Moroccan Officer urinated on the wall while continuing to smoke as if he had expected this all along. The Somalis left them alone because the Moroccans provided them basic health care on demand, a service we declined to provide. During quieter times, Somali women were escorted into the Moroccan compound during all hours of the day and night. Somali taxis for lack of a better definition hung around the Moroccan access point like vultures. The taxi cabs were nothing more than intelligence couriers for the clan chiefs. They only drove where it was allow and generally safe.

Hundreds of Somalis began flowing into the streets, surprisingly moving towards the heavy action at the K-4 Circle. I would later learn in the absence of any entertainment, a good fire fight is the best show in town. Ambushed vehicles burned along the Afgooye and 21 October Roads spewing clouds of black smoke. The smell of burning rubber and cordite permeated the air. A seriously wounded Somali approached our defensive position screaming and begging for medical aid; while pushing

his protruding intestines back with a American PX plastic shopping bag.

SGT Richerson, MP Company, guarding our access point reported a Somali male had attacked a Pakistani soldier with his cane 30 feet from his position. Word of the early morning ambush was out by now. The Somalia was cut down by point blank bursts from the soldiers FAL machine gun and left in the middle of the street in a pool of blood. The patrol continued without remorse or even a simple stare as his corpse, his leg twitching for a moment. In an unusual sign of sympathy, a Somali women took off her gossamer colorful shawl and covered his body. She stood alone, her hand over her mouth as others continued to move toward the Embassy.

I was more amazed than scared at this point. I really did not realize the danger of the immediate surrounding situation. It was surrealistic, loud and nondirectional. Bullets whizzed through the air like zipping electrical bursts. Several impacted the sandbags with a spontaneous thud. Ironically there was an eerie excitement about that permeated the salty humid air. Assailants paraded among the noncombatants indiscriminately firing bursts of AK-47 automatic fire then fading into the massive crowds in front of our position. At that point we were outgunned but marginally protected by the 15 foot walls of the university compound. I had no idea where this would lead or

how long it would last, however adrenaline kept my mind focused. I could feel my heart pounding inside my flak jacket, sweat irritably slid my glasses towards the end of my nose. I knew one thing for sure I had to pee, an empty Arabic water bottle was the "combat enabler" for this. The TA-312 (1950's era Army field telephone) in the bunker connected me to CPT Steve Tinkle the assistant S3 screamed into the phone updating me with what little information he had on the situation. He confirmed what I already knew; the UN and American forces were under a citywide attack. No other officer received more comic references to his name than Steven. This coupled by the fact that he turned beet red at the slightest bit of excitement.

I learned at that moment never assume your enemy is incapable because he is poor and with limited resources. As quickly as the fighting started it ended at 1400 hours. US Forces stayed locked down until the next afternoon unsure about the next move the Somalis would make. Peacekeeping changed that morning to offensive combat operations with the brutal ambush of a Pakistani infantry company killing 24 and wounding over 70. At that time it could have happened to anyone. The first briefing disclosed Somali women and children swarmed the unsuspecting soldiers in their convoy, hiding weapons and hand grenades under their garments, then carefully distributing them

to the male attackers, and finally participating themselves. The Pakistanis never knew what hit them.

Soldiers of the 300th MP Company, from Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, were also ambushed while on patrol; numerous rounds penetrated their six unarmored HMMWVs in the attack. They were able to suppress the enemy fire and charge through the kill zone miraculously suffering only one minor combat casualty. Several were later awarded the Bronze Star for Valor. The company commander, Captain Dave Farlow, was debriefed by his lieutenant at the weapons clearing pit on the University Compound. After he walked around the bullet riddled vehicles both proud and amazed. He looked at me and said, "Can you believe it only one injury." Dave and I had several prior conversations, we both had concerns the status quo would not be maintained for much longer. We exchanged a somber glance that life as we knew it in Mogadishu had dramatically changed.

Later that evening while enroute to brief the Brigade commander on the Pakistani death toll and MP ambush, I passed the chief as he smoked in the Headquarters hallway, he could offer little more than a pathetic cold stare of indifference. He was leaving in several days depending on the Air Forces flight schedule. I disdainfully glared at him in passing and said "lucky it wasn't us Colonel." Mogadishu returned to its normal lesser state of chaos as if nothing had happened. Two Marine

Corps Harrier jets flying at an altitude of several hundred feet sent me and LTC Strobel scurrying for cover. Their wake up call to Aidid no doubt transcended all international barriers including the sound barrier. We nervously laughed at ourselves as we dusted off our uniforms.

From that day on no one ever accused us of being alarmists. In fact, most remaining units followed our lead, requesting bunker designs, defense plans, and operational guides. This was the beginning of 90 straight days under fire for our unit. For the most part we hunkered down and improved our defenses. Many, many, more attacks would ensue, I honestly lost track of the count.

Night time fire fights throughout the city became a spectacular source of entertainment for Chaplain Duncan Baugh (CPT, USAR) and I from our roof top observation bunker. Duncan had been around the block several times long before Mogadishu. As decorated combat medic with the 1st Cavalry Division in Viet Nam, he still carried his combat life savers aid bag but this time with his Bible. Spectacular iridescent tracers and rockets transversed the skyline. Tracer ricochets changed the fluorescent tempo adding a nonlinear element to the light show as they spun off into the darkness. However, I will never forget the relentless, often nightly, mortar and rocket attacks that continually haunted us. Mortar men could position themselves so

close to the perimeter the tube firing could be heard providing



Figure 4 Major Greg Alderete Brigade S-3 43rd CSG with Refugee Relocation Mission, Mogadishu

us several seconds warning. Even today years after, the sound of

a backfiring car, a popping balloon, or a slamming still causes an adrenaline rush and a racing heart beat.

Every venture outside the concrete structures we inhabited was a calculated risk. I prayed the inevitable mortar attack would not happen while ingloriously using the crapper. It was truly the only domain that offered any semblance of privacy. If we had to die, God forbid that it happened in the crapper. Dying with dignity would not be possible in the vile Porta Potties.

The most dangerous job in Mogadishu quickly became any occupation that placed you in a vehicle. I have the utmost respect for the brave truck drivers, military police, and combat engineers who were constantly exposed to ambushes, mines, and small arms fire. They continued their mission without ever a complaint, heroes all.

The commander and I crafted a carefully worded request through channels for armors support, specifically Bradley Fighting Vehicles. The lieutenant colonel from Army Central Command (ARCENT) wanted specific reasons why we need these assets since there was no armored threat. Two things became painfully obvious; one the word just wasn't getting back and two we weren't going to get them. Secretary Les Aspin had placed a 4000 man cap on the theater of operations and General Colin Powell apparently agreed. This arbitrary figure was micromanaged and briefed to MG Montgomery daily. The premise to exceed 4000 would communicate a build up and an occupation.

COL McManus called MG Laboa (4 ID CDR) to update him on the events of 5 June. After all they were Laboa's soldiers too. He described an incident of that morning when soldiers from 568th Engineer Company, were returning from a clearing mission with their thin skinned trucks, dozers, and graders. Non tactical equipment normally found deep in allied territory. They came upon a road block of debris and burning tires making

passage impossible. The scraper operator observed five Somalis hiding armed with AK 47's and RPGs. They began firing on the convoy, wounding several soldiers. The baby faced second lieutenant team leader emptied the clip of his pistol into the chest of one attacker killing him instantly. The scraper operator charged the ambushers with the lowered, deadly, blade inches from the ground. As a result of this act of gallantry, the trail vehicles were able to drive through the breach and returned safely to their logistics base. The wounded were air MEDEVACed to the 42 Field Hospital and were in surgery within minutes. MG Laboa stated the described event clearly qualified as a valorous act worthy of recognition. MG Laboa asked for the name of the heroic scraper operator, COL McManus responded "Sir, *Her* name is Kelly Farwell."

There were many more acts of heroism by both men and women sadly most passed without recognition. I must say I am deeply proud of the soldiers of the 43d CSG who performed their missions selflessly and with the utmost professionalism. I never saw a single soldier cower when the bullets were flying or the mortars falling, not one.

By the end of our tour we had suffered 37 purple hearts. On 8 August, we agonized over the tragic loss of four soldiers when their HMMWV was disintegrated by an anti-tank command detonated land mine. SGT Richerson (300th MP CO) was on his

last trip through downtown Mogadishu orienting the other three (977th MP CO) who had less than two days in country. Their remains and body parts were heinously paraded among the Somali crowds.



Figure 5. Memorial service for SGT Ronald N. Richerson Age 24, SGT Christopher K. Hilgert Age 27, SPC Mark E. Gutting Age 25, SPC Keith D Pierson AG 25 Killed in Action on 8 August 1993, Mogadishu, Somalia

We estimated approximately 80-90 Somalis were killed attacking our compound in those last 90 days. Many innocent Somalia men, women, and children were killed and wounded in the horrific cross fire, *they too suffered*. Our soldiers will bare the emotional scars of Somalia, a silent plague they will have to resolve themselves. The only sympathetic eye they'll find is

another Somali Veteran. Their recognition may be a long slow train coming.

We departed the end of August 1993 after a night of mortar and heavy machine gun attacks. We waited until dark in two fully fueled Air Force C-141s waiting for darkness. We prayed the Somali mortar men who had now refined their skills would take the night off. The thud of an occasional mortar rumbled as we sat in quiet anticipation proved otherwise. Intelligence had reported SA-7 shoulder fired, heat seeking rockets in the hands of Aidid supporters. The first aircraft raced down the mile runway and quickly banked over the Indian Ocean. I watched from the aircraft window as it uneventfully disappeared into the night sky. Several minutes later our jet engines began their whining and we speed down the tarmac. I was concerned the first aircraft may have alerted those holding the SA-7. We figured we had about 20 seconds to clear the heat seeking range. The wheels sprang from the runway beginning the count down. I began an internal count 1,2,3....we all stared at each other then slowly the smiles broke and the cheering began, we made it. A soldier in the front of the aircraft pulled out an American flag and waved it above his head.

A day and a half later we landed in Colorado Springs with a warm emotional welcome from our families and friends. This highly anticipated event was so important to us, I could barely

remain composed as I looked into the bleachers and saw the angelic faces of my two little girls. They sat patiently clutching their tearful mother as the band played Lee Greenwood's "God Bless The U.S.A." Each subsequent playing brings that rueful lump to my throat. We immediately took two weeks off to decompress and reflect and then return to work as if our experience had been nothing more than a series of recurring nightmares or bad one act plays.

Two weeks later I attended the brigade operations officer monthly coordination meeting. The major next to me said, "where ya been these past couple months?" I said, "A place called Mogadishu." He responded, "Damn sure a good thing you left before it got too bad over there." That single statement would fester in my soul for several years and was the impetus to assemble these memoirs.

There were no national parades, half-time events; just a collective, quiet assurance we had survived a tour of duty in the Basement Of Hell, Mogadishu, Somalia. A part of our souls hangs on the Horn of Africa and part of Africa remains in our soul. In a recent conversation, Chaplain Baugh asked if I could summarize my Somalia experience. I said Somalia was an incommunicable experience that only those who were there will fully understand, it is one I would not want to repeat, and ironically one I would not trade either.

NIGHTFALL IN A PLACE CALLED MOGADISHU

STARS AND STRIPES, Letters to the Editor.

The broken skyline of an extinct city, controlled by no one, slips into silence. The only sound audible is the ever-present roar of the life-supporting generator systems behind strands of concertina wire.

Most soldiers have returned to the limited solace of their logistics bases, surviving yet another day's most dangerous profession: any job that puts you in a vehicle in Mogadishu.



A Marine helicopter gunship sweeps over war-torn Mogadishu, Somalia. AP

Nightfall in a place called Mogadishu

The broken skyline of an extinct city, controlled by no one, slips into silence. The only sound now audible is the ever-present roar of the life-supporting generator systems behind strands of concertina wire.

Most soldiers have returned to the limited solace of their logistics bases, surviving yet another day's most dangerous profession: any job that puts you in a vehicle. The coffinlike bunkers remind us that this is a dangerous place. The darkness here heightens one's senses. The routine yet ominous sound of gunfire and explosions alert some to their battle positions, while others hunker down. Heavily fortified guard posi-

tions on the perimeter report 10 to 15 men armed with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades. Most now recognize the nuances between incoming and outgoing fire.

A temporary reprieve is reached with an eerie silence as dancing shadows of the last flare's light fade. Invisible to the darkness, Cobra helicopters escorted by their scouts make a final assessment. The historic thousand-mile stare is exchanged amid soldiers in the basement of hell — a place called Mogadishu. Humanitarian peacekeeping service is anything but that.

—Spec. Richard Cabeza
Mogadishu, Somalia

The coffin-like bunkers remind us this is a dangerous place. The darkness heightens one's senses. The routine haunting sound of gunfire and explosions alert some to their battle positions, while others hunker down. Heavily fortified guard positions on the perimeter report 10 to 15 armed

Figure 6. Stars and Stripes

gunman carrying AKs and RPGs. Most intuitively recognize the nuances between incoming and outgoing fire.

A temporary reprieve is reached with an eerie silence as dancing shadows of the nights last flare fade. Invisible to the darkness, Cobra helicopters make a final assessment. The historical thousand-mile stare is exchanged amid soldiers in a place called Mogadishu. Humanitarian peacekeeping is anything but that.

HUMOR, THE DRUG OF CHOICE

In the command directed absence of liquor in the combat zone, humor becomes the drug of choice. As the shooting intensified, off duty buffoonery increased as did the dehumanizing process of the Somalia people.

Q. What do Yoko Ono and the Somali people have in common?

A. Both are feeding off dead beetles.

One soldier's solution to the Somali dilemma: Place all the women and children in a boat, then nuke Mogadishu...*then sink the boat.*

Acronyms were used to expedite, communicate, and often amuse. Some seem callus now but served a cathartic purpose then.

Somalican Translations

ASOMICH	Abandoned Somali Child
BUFUS	Bus Full Of Somalis
DESOMITR	Dead Somali In The Road
FUDESOM	Future Dead Somali
GOWINOTDODO	General Officer With Nothing To Do
GTFOOMWA	Get The Fuck Out Of My Way
NESUNWO	Non English Speaking U N Watch Officer

ODISBETNO	O'Douls Is Better Than Nothing
NOGEBBA	Not Green Beans Again
SOMILARF	Somali Illuminated And Running Fast
SOMTUFEP	Somali Tube Fired Explosive Projectile
USOMINSO	Unreliable Somali Intelligence Source
DESOMITWE	Dead Somali in the Wire
UREPACO	Urban Renewal Planning Committee (Explosive Ordnance Detachment)

I remember seeing a cartoon that a soldier had drawn defining interservice rivalry and the living conditions in Mogadishu. It illustrated an Army soldier in a fox hole saying "This place really SUCKS," the next frame showed a Marine saying, "I wish this place sucked more," then a sailor looking through a port hole at Mogadishu saying "I bet it really sucks over there," and finally an airman in a recliner watching TV saying "what... No cable."

CPT Keith Putman a combat veteran of Panama and Desert Storm was an adventurous surfer dude and a magnet for the bizarre. Where others bitched about the sun and heat Keith was to be found on the barracks roof soaking it up. A Colorado ski bum with an insatiable appetite and constant hint of coconut tanning oil following in his path. He was a collector of

trivia and was innocently nicknamed Cliff Clavon (Cheers Postman) for his endless psycho-babble of useless rhetoric. The S3 officer had only two battle captains, to give them a break we ran a staff duty officer roster for the evening. Keith's first venture that day was to remove a jammed 12 gauge buck shot round from one of the TOC riot guns. After several failed attempts to dislodge the round Keith fired the round down range sending local Somalis scrambling on the perimeter into the dirt. The Tunisian guards watched in amazement, Keith had visions of his career going down range with the buck shot.

I stopped in later that evening to check the staff duty log, "2215 Hours, dead man delivered to the front gate." Keith spent the better part of one hour explaining to the locals that even Americans had not figured out how to raise the dead. "2330 Hours, one legged boy in the guard tower." Apparently this kid routinely went to the Swedish Field Hospital for medication and treatment and waited until it was dark and unsafe to try and leave. The guards sympathetically let him sleep on the floor of the exit gate bunker, compassion still existed. Only Keith would have found this kid. "0120 Hours, man comes to the access point and says armed men in a taxi kidnapped his wife." We often thought of ourselves as the 911 Combat Service Support Brigade, but regretfully there was no one who could do anything for this distraught man, not even Keith.

100 meters from our southwest perimeter stood a 75 foot inoperable concrete water tower. It bothered me for many obvious reasons but mostly because from the top Somalis could see the entire compound. After consulting with the ordnance expert, CPT Steve Toller, we decided the best thing to do would be blow the steel ladder affixed to the concrete pillars ascending to the top. This was to be the preeminent C-4 explosive event, one of many more to follow. The production began early in the afternoon with a patrol clearing the area, MPs blocking the roads, and several warnings to the flight operations center, and a prepared message to AFN. Unfortunately no one thought to contact the United Nations watch officer. NESUNWO, half the time they didn't do anything with the information you provided them anyway. Steve assured me the explosion would be nothing more than a soft boom! The EOD team expertly placed the charges to insure the ladder would fall and mangle itself on impact making reuse impossible. The hour approached, the EOD team chief radioed in the two minute warning. The sky looked ominous with a low gray cloud cover ascending on Mogadishu One minute warning. The crowds from the compound were present with cameras and enthusiasm. "FIRE IN THE HOLE". In an instant the ladder vaporized followed a by deafening roar, which reverberated through the city. General Montgomery called our TOC moments later for a situation update. We decided it prudent to inform his aid of all future spectacles

bypassing the UN Watch Officer. I looked over at CPT Steve Toller, "Boom!!!" Steve responded "low cloud cover I guess, sir?"

A LETTER HOME

Dear Mom and Dad, The weather has been terrible, I hate it when it mortars! We celebrated the Fourth of July with all the trimmings, The Stars Spangled Banner, and "the rockets red glare." Really just another day in Mogadishuville where the abnormal has now become normal.

Yesterday we were relocating some 400 refugees who were camped too close to our perimeter. Combat collateral damage to the civilian population is a constant problem. The city is 21 square miles with God knows how many people. They are simply everywhere. Death, disease, and destruction are commonplace, but the abandoned six month old baby we found in a cardboard box was hard to take, even here. Bullet holes seem to be the motif of the third world, Mogadishu is struggling for survival.

Watching CNN through our satellite dish it would seem America has forgotten us. Tell the neighbors *WE'RE STILL HERE*. Thirty of our soldiers have been wounded; it's only a matter of time before death slithers into this fine unit.

These people shoot at us at night and want us to heal them by day. They bring their wounded and dead to our gates expecting great miracles from the all great and powerful Americans. We turn their wounded over to the Tunisians, Swedes, Moroccans, and the International Red Cross. A pregnant Somali

was experiencing problems and was suffering from something serious obvious from her profuse vaginal bleeding. She screamed in agony. We called for the Swedes who were involved with another emergency. She delivered a still born fetus there on the ground, walked away leaving the lifeless form there covered with placenta, blood, and tissue. One less mouth to feed I guess. Sad, so sad, God I hate this place.



... and GOING Army Maj. Greg Alderete gets a kiss and a dandelion from his 2½-year-old daughter, Mariah, during a departure ceremony for Fort Carson soldiers who are headed for Somalia. The event was held Wednesday because the troops may be called to leave at any time in the next two weeks. The more than 600 troops will be part of the 4,000-strong U.S. force in support roles in Somalia.

Figure 7: Colorado Springs Gazette

Peacekeeping rules of engagement are very ambiguous, restrictive and confusing. The lawyers are constantly attempting to clarify when we can and cannot return fire. Several soldiers have refused to fire back for fear of being court-martialed. I never thought my sworn service to this great nation would come to this. Apparently

there is a fine line between war and humanitarian assistance. The United Nations is nothing more than an oxymoronic conundrum. There is a great deal of autonomy and over zealousness between

nations. Little is accomplished without general officer or ambassadorial influence. So the U.S. does everything that everyone else refuses or is incapable of doing. I have come to conclude if English is not your native tongue you are presumed guilty in a United Nations community. Most of these UN representative nations are poor excuses of an organized military. The Italians have gone so far as to bribe the Somalis to preclude them from firing on Italian convoys and escorts.

At the conclusion of this tour-of-duty I will have spent over a year away from the girls in the last three years. Thank God they are too young to know the horror of this, my chosen profession. Hannah wrote last week she is looking forward to Halloween, torn between being Belle from "Beauty and the Beast" or Cinderella. Mariah wants to go to Dairy Queen for her birthday. They don't understand, sometimes neither do I. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

WADE H. MCMANUS, JR., COLONEL COMMANDING

A colossus of a South Carolina gentleman, a self disciplined military man, standing six foot four and a powerful 220 pounds, few soldiers could meet him eye to eye. The personification of integrity, moral courage, selflessness, and military bearing all with a pleasant southern demeanor.



He epitomized the soldier's soldier. A compassionate officer who loved and disciplined his soldiers. On more than one occasion he assisted those who would not soldier with their involuntary transition back to the civilian world. PVT Harrison before

Figure 8: Wade H. McManus Jr. MG US Army Retired

receiving nonjudicial punishment from McManus said, "given the opportunity he would die for his fellow soldiers". COL McManus responded his concern "that might in fact happen but not by an act of the enemy." Apparently several soldiers where not on Harrison's Christmas card list.

As if his own children were harmed, Colonel McManus would risk his own life and bolt to the 42D Field Hospital to comfort a soldier of his, wounded-in-action. This deed would sadly be rendered some thirty times. I could see the scars of each agonizing visit to the triage ward deep in his eyes days later.

He painfully and privately grieved for his four killed on that hot August morning. He refused to accept the loss of any soldier as the price of doing business.

Never have me or my fellow soldiers willingly served under a more charismatic leader whose simple presence stabilized the worst of situations. He could make "chicken salad out of chicken shit." This attitude built confidence and gratitude in his immediate subordinates. We never took him for granted. Push the wrong button and Big Mac would "rip your face off" and quickly move into his rarely seen but eminently feared "*Behavior Pattern B.*"

He was an officer who exuded contagious enthusiasm and motivation. He was a humble officer who constantly educated, trained and praised his subordinates, never seeking the lime light for himself. If you had an idea he'd listen much to my chagrin he would often spend too much of his valuable time listening. He was drawn to his soldiers and often would spend a great deal of time in general conversation asking about their families and their future. He had some of his own quixotic personal practices, I almost fell out of my office chair that early morning he came to my office to sing me Happy Birthday. A treat each of his primary staff officers experienced at least once during our brief assignment under him. If he couldn't get

you in your office you'd receive a happy birthday call. We served him with undivided, steadfast, and absolute loyalty.

On 27 June an engineer team was guarding one of our vital deep water wells. As evening approached increased local sparring between the factions warranted their immediate evacuation. Major Christopher's infamous reply to organize the rescue was "that dawg don't hunt." Words he lived to regret. Major Mark Bellini, Executive Officer for the 68th Support Battalion immediately seized this time sensitive operation and safely extracted the engineer team. Less than 100 meters from the well site warring Somali factions exchanged small arms fire for the remainder of the night. This type of exchange was often more deadly than the deliberate attack.

Immediately upon return from Somalia, Colonel McManus petitioned Major General Guy Laboa to overturn the court-martial conviction of one of our enlisted MPs. Without question McManus was outraged that a stateside group of officers had the audacity to convict this soldier without experiencing the abject chaos in the streets of Mogadishu. The court-martial should have been handled in Somalia, if at all. The immense persuasive powers of McManus no doubt quickly convinced the 4th Infantry Division Commander to over turn the conviction. Many disliked the hard cloak of leadership Major General Laboa wore, but I always perceived him a wise man who had a soft spot in his heart for

the soldier, especially the combat veteran. He himself was the winner of multiple silver stars. With the signing of his name to the pardon, the record was cleansed without a trace of his conviction.

On 7 June 1994 Colonel McManus changed command. He struggled emotionally, acknowledging during his farewell speech the importance of God and family with a special thanks to those who served in combat with him. Feelings, he shared with his primary staff in private. As he bid his final farewell from command many of his soldiers reached for their sunglasses, mine were already on.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

One of the greatest diversions we brought to the Somali people of Mogadishu was radio of the Armed Forces Network (AFN). The 230 Somali laborers we hired confirmed they and others had transistor radios and listened regularly to the news and music. We were keenly aware that those who enjoyed the only legitimate employment in Mogadishu were also providing daily intelligence updates to the very forces out to destroy us.

Initially attacks on the University Compound, where over 1400 U.S. and United Nations forces lived, were somewhat predictable, none-the-less terrifying. Assaults occurred usually after 1800 hours, rarely on the Muslim weekend (Thursday or Friday), and never when it rained. Communication for Somalis, in a country without telephones or radio, was difficult. However, the power of the public assembly was critical, enabling people like Mohammed Farrah Aidid, leader of the Hawiye clan, to command and control thousands of people with relative ease. He was considered the most powerful man in the country. This empowered him and others to coordinate attacks on a city-wide scale with amazing precision. Small unit assaults during hours of darkness were coordinated with the use of flashlights encoded signals, simple but effective. It became painfully obvious that this was their technique after several night time surprise attacks. The pattern of attacks suddenly

shifted to a higher level of sophistication. The first attack was never the main effort. Always on the hour or the half-hour, each attack became more and more predictable and synchronized. Chaplain Baugh who held Bible study during Aidids prime time decided to change the hours after several interruptions. We referred to 1900 hrs as the beginning of the *witching hour*, [a higher probability of attack until 0200 hrs the next morning].

Twenty-five mile-an-hour winds over the Indian Ocean created a rather unusually cool evening. Expecting a long night, I decided to return to my rack and insect infested dwelling and retrieve my poncho liner (light nylon blanket). I quickly explained the current situation to my roommate. Intelligence had reported 2000 plus Somali militia men would attack us that night and attempt to overrun the compound. We were on full alert. Helicopter pilots flying "Eyes Over Mogadishu" (24 hour-a-day flight program) observed about forty to fifty empty buses and trucks parked less than a kilometer from our position. Jokingly the pilot said, "Does the name Custer mean anything to you." It was the first time I really feared the possibility of being overrun and killed. Given the right coordination and leadership they could have inflicted severe damage on us. They were great in the spontaneous fight but rarely organized anything above several squad size elements.

Intelligence was always questionable under the best of circumstances.

Darkness had set in and we were well into the witching hour. Our defense was tight and lethal, any attack of that magnitude would be considered suicidal. The rooftop Tunisian M-60 machine-gun sent out a burst of rounds and a pop and whoosh as two parachute flares sent flickering shadows dancing along the perimeter. No return fire, perhaps a nervous gunner. CPT Chebbi the Tunisian commander called them into the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) as warning shots (Nervous Gunner).

Vehicles large and small roamed the city with impunity; the fear of a car bombing was considered a viable reality. Explosives were available virtually by the ton. CPT Toller's ordnance disposal team had already reduced the availability by 30 Tons, blowing a huge soviet ammo dump several days earlier. The night returned to its eerie darkness. I moved through the silent darkness of the headquarters circular hallway to the sandbags protecting the entrance. *I felt an indefinable presence keeping me from moving beyond the protection of the bunker.* I glanced at my watch, 2130 hours. An instant later I saw nothing but a flash of white light, followed by a deafening explosion and concussion, I fell to the ground. A wave of searing heat and dirt rolled over the bags. Somali mortar men had zeroed in on us after several days of trying. Dust, the

smell of cordite, and screams of "incoming" filled the air. I always wondered why people screamed that when the initial blast was clearly self defining.

The two luckiest officers in Mogadishu, Majors Bill Holstun and MAJ Donna Thomas, sat outside the scorching barracks enjoying a peaceful evening cigarette when the first projectile cut through the humid air. It landed just 15 short feet from



their position, sunk six inches into the blacktop, and remained there unexploded. Perhaps a new

Figure 9: 1950s US Made 60mm Mortar

reason for quitting the habit or becoming very religious. The Explosive Ordnance Detachment disarmed the round by blowing it in place. The fuses were identified as U.S. made, Korean War vintage, and dated 1952. At forty one years old these mortars were older than most of us.

It proved to be an active night but well below the predicted 2000 seasoned warriors. An intense firefight broke

out on the southern perimeter and raged until 0200 the next morning. Fortunately the only casualties were theirs.

Later that morning I returned to my earlier position where the first mortar round impacted. There in front of me was the small crater born of a 60 mm mortar. The leftovers of a US Foreign Military Sales Program dedicated to reducing stockpiles and surplus selling to third world nations at bargain basement prices. Killing Americans with their own toys is no longer as unfathomable as it would have been just forty years ago when these mortars were manufactured.

I cautiously paced, step-by-step to the crater. I concluded, by the grace of God, had I not stopped at the sandbags, the Somali mortar men would have scored a direct hit, *on me*. I now knew why I stopped and what that Presence was. Several of my friends and colleagues have expressed how lucky we were. I respond it wasn't luck, but the power of prayer.

WITNESS STATEMENT

The first line defense of the compound was the responsibility of a Tunisian Special Forces Infantry Company. Secondary roving defense was the responsibility of the "shit hot" 300th MP company, with crew served M-60s manned by soldiers standing in the cupola of a HMMWV. They had the dexterity and finesse of desert rats but could quickly dismount and give chase if needed. They were critical if there was a breach in the wire. During initial assessment of compound defense CPT Toller, volunteered the use of his sniper team with their 50 caliber

Barrett
Sniper
Rifles,
equipped
with
night
vision
scopes.



Figure 10: SGT Murphy (right) and SPC Banks both received the Bronze Star Medal for Valor

During several day light operations SGT Murphy and his spotter SPC Banks were used to cover American Forces operating near the perimeter. The M-60 crew served weapons were too risky

to use for fear of collateral damage to the dense civilian population.

On several occasions the sniper team practiced during night rehearsals. On the evening of 22 June 93 the rehearsal paid off. The University compound came under mortar fire followed by a heavy machine gun attack from our Western perimeter. The Tunisian M-60 machine-gunner was heavily engaged with a Somali squad size element. The MP grenadier on the Headquarters roof position fired several High Explosive 40 MM M203 rounds but the enemy fire continued unabated. The Somali forces were firing and retreating behind concrete walls that fenced a nearby orange grove. CPT Toller moved the sniper team to the roof top guard post.

The fire fight continued for approximately two more hours. The Somalis continued to use their hit and run tactics returning to the refugee occupied buildings and crowded camps. At approximately 0100 hours on 23 June a second assault began on the southern perimeter with approximately 30-50 heavily armed Somalis. The southern assault began with several RPG-7 rounds and smoke grenades fired at the Tunisian machine-gun position. All fell short. The fire fight was so intense CPT Farlow, the MP commander, prepared his secondary defenses. The first sergeant from the 300th MP company maneuvered under fire to the isolated Tunisian bunker to provide an assessment. He reported

the fire fight as "extremely intense". The 10th Mountain S-3 officer provided a Cobra aircraft to fly over the compound. At the time the restrictive rules of engagement prohibited aircraft from firing without visual contact of the enemy. Pilots routinely received a legal assessment from a lawyer located in the 10th Mountain TOC to determine if the rules of engagement applied. The pilot requested a halt of all friendly fires to assess the situation. All illumination was stopped as we anticipated the Cobra's arrival on station. The Somali snipers had dug fox holes inside the buildings making observance and engagement virtually impossible. The bird hovered over the perimeter scanning the target area. The pilot had no infrared and was depending on night vision goggles. After several minutes the Cobra returned to station without a target. Seconds after its departure the firefight continued. At this point U.S. and Tunisian forces had fired over 8000 M-60 rounds, 10 AT-4's and over 25 40 MM HE grenades with little damage to the dug-in Somalis. The MP grenadier and several Tunisian gunners fired as Somalis ran between the alleyways, walls, and buildings.

General Civik Bir, the Turkish, United Nations Forces Commander, made a strategic error by accusing the Tunisian forces of "shooting at ghosts." Colonel McManus' swift interaction prevented an international incident and the untimely departure of our protectors directed by their senior country

representative LTC Cherif. The next day Major General Montgomery with an MP escort toured the multiple well dug in and hidden Somali fighting positions. There was never any love lost between the Turks and Tunisians. The Turks later felt the wrath of a Tunisians gunner by entering the Tunisian sector during night operations without coordination. Fortunately no one was hurt.

CPT Toller returned to the roof top sniper position. Clearly the main attack had moved. He directed SGT Murphy and SPC Banks to move under fire to the southern fighting position and link-up with the Tunisian unit. This was extremely dangerous with continuous in-coming small arms, heavy machine-gun, and RPG fire. The Somali gunmen brought in a "Technical Vehicle" a Toyota pick-up with a heavy machine gun mounted in the flat bed. They fired a burst and returned to cover.

The sniper team, once positioned, fired several 50 caliber rounds at the enemy force. Instantly killing one of the attackers. The technical vehicle was disabled with one round that destroyed the battery and pierced the engine block. Once disabled, small arms fire flattened the front tires. The Somalis abandoned the vehicle removing the heavy machine-gun. The sniper team effectively ended the firefight with their ability for incredibly accurate night vision fire support.

At approximately 0730 hours the next morning the 300th MP company began a cordon and search of the buildings on the southern perimeter. Two MP teams provided crew served cover with their M-60 machine guns as dismounted soldiers moved in harmony through the cavernous buildings. The radio traffic enunciated the fear in the voices of the dismounted teams as they each called "clear" as they exited a building. Their breathing was short and potent. Two Somalis were captured, one armed with an early 1900 British 303 rifle. These buildings we describes as a sewage processing plant that was never completed. The walls were made of reinforced concrete and rebar. These buildings were considered by the 43 CSG Engineer to be the most impenetrable structure in the city of Mogadishu. Almost immediately a body of one of the attackers was found. He was obviously killed by a large caliber round to the chest. Numerous blood stains, human entrails and muscle tissue were found in other parts of the building and the fighting positions.

SGT Murphy and SPC Banks' heroic efforts were directly involved in the deterrence of a significant enemy force who were trying to kill American and allied personnel. Their ability to effectively move, fire, and kill the enemy under a heavy barrage of machine-gun and grenade fire during hours of darkness was truly a valorous act above what was expected from these ordnance disposal experts. They shouldered this heavy responsibility

with a sense of urgency and intense dedication. Their courageous acts under fire contributed greatly to the defeat of a heavily armed force. Eight years later both were awarded the Bronze Star for valor after their citations were resubmitted after having been lost in the system.

ALI THE LAUNDRY BOY

Ali's size belied his adolescent thirteen years of age. Civil war, fear, and years of hunger had left him fragile and grossly underweight. He wore the same tattered shorts, jersey, and well worn size 12, deflated Nike Airs donated by a befriended GI. His kiltered gate made him easily recognizable at a distance anywhere on the compound. The scars of two 7.62 caliber rounds that pierced his cheek and calf were a statement of untold hardship and survival. These were his badge of courage and a constant reminder he was the sole family member to survive a brutal attack by clan members of Mohammed Farah Aidid. He was a child with depths of courage and resilience few of us will ever know.

For fifty cents a week Ali would pick-up your laundry and escort it to the wash point. Ali was the only true insurance that you would get returned what you sent in. The alternative was a chaotic massive load out once a week organized by the unit supply sergeant. The wash point was an assembly of Somali and Ethiopian women who worked under a GP Medium Tent smashing uniforms against concrete slabs. At least the water was purified from our Reverse Osmosis Purification Unit (ROPU).

Ali was a constant source of comic relief as he quickly began to master the English language of the GI. He seemed to

innocently and unknowingly punctuate each broken sentence with "Fuck" the most multifaceted word in the English language. We humorously continued to threaten him with telling the "big boss" if he ever failed to return our laundry. In his mind resulting in deportation from our compound and unemployment. God knows what in his mind the great American "big boss" meant. Ali knew everyone, including the guards. He made his way to a refugee camp each night often hauling as much as he could schmooze past the soldiers at the dismount point. A known violation of camp policy. The night he was caught, again, he was armed with an eight inch homemade knife and \$300 cash. A fortune he had earned hustling GIs who had nothing else to spend their money on. He also had a case of several thousand Taster Choice coffee packets worth a fortune in Mogadishu.

The wash point was decommissioned with the importation of Brown and Roots portable generator powered laundry service. Nothing more than a large covered trailer with twenty washing machines and dryers. This worried me that we were getting too comfortable settling in for the long haul, déjà vu Viet Nam. Ali, being the survivor he was, managed to solicit full time employment as the Deputy CGs house boy. A practice until then which was prohibited. He walked the compound like a barn yard rooster finally working directly for the "Big Boss." He became the camp's pet Somali quickly gaining weight, vocabulary, and

adolescence during the remainder of our deployment. Through it all punctuating every sentence with "Fuck". God only knows what happened to him.

MOST EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

Bill Holstun, was a slow talking, common sensed officer, from New Mexico, who loved deer hunting, two stepping, and women. In spite of his bulging waistline and balding scalp, he was a magnet for the later. Forever loyal to Deb his wife of twenty years, with her pictures adorning every public and private place as a warning to potential gate-crasher or perhaps a personal reminder. Bill arrived several days before me, with a promise to find me reasonable quarters given the circumstances. Since I didn't mind his incessant smoking and he tolerated my humor we agreed to share a rat infested hovel we'd call "The Room." I often thought Bill's unmatched resounding and vexatious snoring was a security violation. Bill was the eternal optimist, committed to quitting his life long smoking habit. But just in case things didn't work out, brought 15 cartons of generic smokes to hold him through. I'd awake every morning to the smell of the first day's cigarette and the barking geckos competing for mosquitoes trapped in the poor excuse for window screening. Professionally our styles differed, but personally we were good friends, a most acceptable coexistence.

As the Support Operations Officer for the United Nations Logistic Support Command, Bill was responsible for managing the Army's most complex logistical operation. He and his team of

fifty officers and NCOs did this decisively and with precision. It included controlling all classes of supplies, supporting 4000 U.S. forces with food, water, and fuel and another 20,000 United Nations' soldiers with the same supplies. This was an awesome task providing unceasing support to a multinational force. This required exacting knowledge of the daily combat situation to insure convoys were transporting through areas considered reasonably secure. Timing, route reconnaissance, and current intelligence were critical for safe passage and the protection of U.S. personnel and their cargo. Bill managed this considerable responsibility throughout the entire combat theater including the distant cities of Biadoa, Bardera, and Bellet Duen. During the 120 day deployment over 2,400 missions were successfully accomplished; delivering over 50 million gallons of fuel, 80 million gallons of water, and 64,000 tons of dry cargo.

One balmy May evening Bill decided to accompany me on my nightly inspection of the nine fighting positions on our perimeter, all manned by Tunisian Special Forces Infantry. They were a distinguished unit hand selected by senior Tunisian officers and blessed by their president. They were spirited romantic like soldiers with a zest for fighting and an understanding and total disregard for the Somalis. Most spoke some English, all were fluent in French. This enabled me to communicate at an eighth grade level with my broken, near

forgotten remembrance of sophomore French taught over twenty years ago. I introduced myself subsequent to entering guard post. The Tunisians soldiers were surprised by the presence of not one but two field grade officers, not a common practice in their county I'm sure. The sun had long since set and my fatigue was obvious as I attempted to introduce my compatriot, (In broken French) permit me to introduce Major...Major! I could not remember Bill's last name, "Major...AAAh Brain Dump!" I said. Before I could correct myself both soldiers were shaking Bill's hand and much to his chagrin repeating "Good evening Major Brain Dump". In spite of my repeated efforts to enlighten them of Bill real last name, the name remained.

THE CROSS

Searching civilians was a routine action carried out daily wherever American soldiers and Somalis interacted. I never liked the fact that we had some 200 Somali day laborers entering the compound everyday. As they lined up at the gate to leave you could read the eyes of those who were hiding something. There was a daily trail of contraband they jettisoned once they realized they could be searched and summarily fired. They moved through our check point like sheep to slaughter, anxious and fearful. Rarely were smiles exchanged between us, we didn't want to be here and they wanted us out. It was a hateful harmony we both had to tolerate. Anyone caught violating the established work policies was fired on the spot their photo ID cropped and hung as a scarecrow warning to others. They failed to understand stealing was unacceptable when it was so much an accepted part of their survival. This prevented others from using military supplies as barter material, since they couldn't get it out the gate.

With exaggerated fear in his eyes, he approached the two Army soldiers who were frisking departing workers for contraband. His hand slowly moved to his pants pocket when I grabbed him by the wrist. I was immediately surprised by the strength of this 110 pound emaciated person as he tried to wrestle free of my grip. I could see in his eyes he felt he was

fighting for his life. In a single movement I jammed my 9MM into his bony ribs, locked my arm around his neck and spun him from the work line. The others continued through the check point fearfully oblivious to the commotion, afraid that any acknowledgment would result in their immediate and nonnegotiable forfeiture of employment. I holstered my pistol. His fragile hand was tightly clenched in a fist; his 110 pounds eventually lost to my 190 as I pried open his skeletal like fingers. In the most sincere act of desperation I believe I have ever witnessed he said, "don't let them see." There in his frail hand was a small silver crucifix. He fearfully whispered, "I'm a



believer,
they will
kill me". I
watched as
he moved
through the
security
point.

*Figure 11.
Somalia*

Prisoner at Port Of Mogadishu. "Never spit on a man with a gun!"



Figure 12. Engineer Base



Figure 13: Sword Base

ABDELWAHEB CHEBBI, CAPTAIN, INFANTRY, TUNISIA

As much as I revered Chebbi for his courage and professionalism I also found he had all the stubborn qualities of other Arabic cultures. He spoke the Kings English in an impetuous soft staccato like voice. He began most sentences with "You will." This was more of a statement than a request. He was a stellar infantryman with a quiet unspoken admiration for the Americans. Tunisian participation in the UN effort was conditional upon their working exclusively for a US chain-of-command. Under fire he was fearless and as cold as the U.S. Colt .45 he wore proudly in his well worn leather holster. During an engagement he would scamper along the perimeter oblivious to incoming rockets, mortars, and tracer rounds. Communication between us was often critical, fortunately CPT Joe Howell our rear battle MP officer, our so called "Tunican" (Tunisan/Americian) knew what buttons to push on Chebbi. Joe had just returned from eight months unaccompanied tour of duty in Kuwait. When given the option to remain at Fort Carson, Joe declined.

They truly were comrades in arms, soul mates, separated only by geographic and cultural boundaries. Joe was quickly dispatched to Chebbi's TOC as a US forward observer during all firefights. This virtually eliminated confusion from language barriers and enhanced command and control of the situation.

Chebby's occasional demands for logistical support were



Figure 14: Tunisian Special Forces, M-60 Machine Gun Nest "Peach Factory in background"

Photo copy support for him. The threat level often prevented supply runs through the dangerous streets to our depot at the port of Mogadishu. Chebby rarely concerned himself with that which he didn't care to understand. So the Operations NCO SFC Tompkins and an escort of Humvess with M-60 machine guns would make the trip.

Chebby was truly a selfless, professional officer, a warrior who also loved traditional Tunisian barbecue. A select few from our unit were personally requested by Chebby to attend these feasts. Absence was unacceptable and considered an insult as was failure to consume all what was served. I had few

complaints, meals were tasty, hot, and the only fresh food we consumed.

I was amazed the Army was only able to serve canned or dehydrated rations being so close to the shipping lanes of the middle east with a fully functional secure port. We kept Chebbi confidently in our inner circle at all costs. His men were putting their lives on the line for us.

I enjoyed checking the Tunisian fighting positions for a chance to hone up on my French and visit with the soldiers. I climbed to the roof top guard position Number 9 and found the Tunisian soldier sound asleep. I knew this would be a serious incident; I let the soldier sleep and returned below to the TOC. I called Chebbi to inform him, his reaction was suspicious and doubtful. Moments later he called to



Figure 15; Greg Alderete Left, Captain Chebbi Right examine security breach in wire where Somali was shot

inform me "I am calling my soldier, he is answering the phone, it is not possible my soldier is sleeping at guard post?" Case closed!

One of my worst fears was Chebbi calling or visiting without warning, especially if Joe was unavailable. Unfortunately this particular weekend Joe had gone to Nairobi, Kenya for several days of well-deserved rest and relaxation.

Darkness had arrived as several shots echoed through the University Compound. The pitch darkness of nightfall in Mogadishu was terrifying. Armed Somalis moved with impunity beyond the range of engagement. Our TA-312 hot line to Chebbi's operation centered clacked abruptly from an electric current generated at the other end by a hand crank. Chebbi uncharacteristically shouted through the receiver in his intermittent English, "HE IS IN...THE WIRE." "DAMN", I screamed to the battle captains Tinkle and Howell, "SOMEONE'S IN". We put our rehearsed compound defense plan into effect. "Chebbi, is he on the wire or in the wire?" Chebbi," OK", "Chebbi in the wire or on the wire." Chebbi, "yes." I might as well have asked "who's on first." I dispatched SFC Tompkins to get an assessment. He reported back on the land line confirming the first report. Tompkins said, "The Somali was inside the wire and is now in the wire." He had taken two 5.56 rounds, one in the arm from the guard tower, one in the leg, and a .45 Caliber point blank to the chest or back. He was shot twice trying to get in and once on the wire trying to get out. We evacuated him to the Swedish hospital on our compound less three and a half

liters of blood. Chebbi insisted we go to the field hospital to interview him. He lay unconscious after undergoing several hours of surgery, his Italian made camouflage uniform lay in a bundle tattered and soaked with blood. The Swedish nurses normally very hospitable requested our departure after a very brief encounter. Unmoved Chebbi said, "Tonight we will kill goat for barbecue you will come."

Our Tunisian friends used flares effectively to scare off potential attackers (SOMILARF) illuminating areas beyond the flood lights, sometimes it worked. This night was not unusual with flares fired every fifteen to thirty minutes throughout the night. The sudden whoosh of the hand held parachute white flares never ceased to startle us. Its strident assent into the blackness was if nothing else a subtle warning to find cover until it burned out. The parachute flare would turn the ebony shadows into dancing animations capable of confusing the mind, playing on fears of the unknown. I remembered having the same feeling as a young child when passing car lights would transpose my closet into a den of blood thirsty monsters and gargoyles. Then without warning two silent red star clusters flares cracked above, an omen that someone was inside the wire. Not again. Soldiers began executing barracks and work area defensive procedures. A ubiquitous sense of panic again swept the command. I immediately called Chebbi on the TA-312 for the grid

coordinates of the penetration. He calmly responded, "there are no Somali in the wire," astonished I exclaimed, "why the hell then the red flares?" He responded, "Major, we have no more the white one! (sic)"

He was already there five months when we arrived and had four more to go on the day of our departure. There tour like many other nations was for one year. You could see the glistening sadness in his stoic eyes as we egressed that hot August day. A year later after an arduous administrative process he was justly awarded the U.S. Army Commendation for courageous action in outstanding service to U.S. Forces, Somalia.

PORTA POTTIES AND THE SHIT SUCKING TRUCK**SFC Roman Morales (transcribed by Greg Alderete)**

God damn, Somalia stunk. Two tours as a marine infantryman in Viet Nam and one in Iraq with the Army and I never smelled anything that stunk more than this stink hole with it's cesspool of humanity. There was no privacy; we shared our space with everyone. We ate, showered, and sleep together. There was only one bastion of privacy but damn if it didn't stink more than this fucking country. As much as I hated the porta johns, which were nothing more than a chicken choken, fiberglass poorly maintained, shitter. Regardless, I enjoyed those few moments of bliss every morning, depending on dinner, every evening. The Somali workers were not allowed to use them, not that they could get any fouler, it just that they would stand and squat where Americans liked to sit. Once every couple of days if the shooting wasn't too bad Brown and Root would dispatch one of the SST's, "Shit Sucking Trucks". Those smiling skinnies would grab that crusty brown hose jam it in a foot or two, and hit the vacuum. It was never a mystery when these dudes were doing their job, son-of-bitch it stunk. Our civil affairs reserve Army major donned his protective mask once thinking we were under a chemical attack. Anyway those puppies would fill up in a heart beat if the SSTs missed a day. Every one of us had our favorite one of the eight or so around our area. Because of the

amount of water we drank we were frequent visitors at all hours of the day and night. Twenty-six years, three months, eighteen days I thought I'd seen it all, until my late evening visit to my favorite crapper. I thought I was hearing things, then seeing things; I was half asleep and had the shits so bad I wasn't sure at first if I was hallucinating. I approached my favorite shitter to the moaning sounds of two soldiers doing the hocky poky, in my favorite, private sanctum. I thought *hijo de puta* you've got to be kidding, in there, man, give me a break. I had to see who in their right mind could rise to such an occasion. After thirty minutes sphincter filled anticipation I couldn't wait any longer. I walked up the street to the next shitter, I never did find out who the hell they were. Just another day in "The Dish", land of the bad haircut.

FOOD IN GENERAL

You couldn't blame the cooks they were doing the best they could with what they had under unimaginable miserable conditions of a sweltering field kitchen. It was hot no matter where you went but lord have mercy it was unbearable in their domain. Our food did get better the longer we were there but not much. Tabasco made the most miserable concoction edible. The Army had simply done little to advanced combat rations and food preparation in the field in spite years of research at Natick Labs.

We had this GOWINOTODO, no one could figure out what he did or why the hell he was there, a token general. He had a small staff because of his rank but virtually no responsibility. When he wasn't in Mombassa, Kenya decompressing his superficial stress level, or sprawled on his aluminum lawn chair sunning his bleached staff officers body, he'd be making a big deal about the what, when, and how, of our field kitchen. He lacked the much needed eye of the tiger, a pudgy officer who resembled the Pillsbury Dough Boy. He had difficulty wearing the Load Bearing Equipment (LBE) a manner to be detested by the soldiers. His female aide-de-camp would assist him as he performed a little pirouette to get in and out of his LBE during each meal. This was a daily spectacle enjoyed by the soldiers each time he entered and left the chow hall. He obviously was uncomfortable

about having chosen a female aide and took every opportunity to explain his choice to whatever field grade officer would listen. Even going so far as to say his wife approved the choice before the decision was made. She was a hard working lieutenant who I admired for putting up with his petty nuances. Reliable rumor had it that GOWINOTODO had a secret cache of cognac, for official functions, I'm sure.

He pompously proclaimed to have fresh eggs and ice cream for us for the Fourth of July. "For us!" This appeared to be really nothing more than his personal quest to challenge the logistics system and to verify he was in fact a general officer. Most would have settled for cold beer and a hamburger, screw the eggs. After several failed attempts he managed to get the Air Force to fly in the promised chow. The accommodating Air Force complied with the pressure to get the subsistence delivered for Germany. We still did not have the needed razor wire and additional body armor; priorities were not being addressed. I'd rather have put the nasty frozen shit in my boot to cool my feet than eat it. We couldn't get critical sand bags or body armor but we had frozen yogurt. We figured it cost the tax payer about \$200 per four ounces of frozen bland yogurt. Ironically many have asked what was your worst experience in Somalia, after the twin chiefs of staff, I'll be damned if Army food doesn't come to mind.

THE CHAIRMAN

Still illuminating from the triumphant glow of Desert Storm, General Powell was gliding into the twilight of his illustrious career. Ironically soldiers once again deployed towards the unknown not far from the previous desert excursion and another bombastic mad man. For the most part the force of 4000 service men and women received little fanfare or public scrutiny, until the body bags and wounded began returning home. Chuck Asay, political cartoonist for the Colorado Springs gazette Telegraph summarized the situation. He drew a picture of the Viet Nam Memorial; "The Wall" in the background bull dozers were digging for a similar subterranean monument. In front of the construction a sign read, "Coming soon, Somalia Veterans

Memorial."

CHUCK ASAY

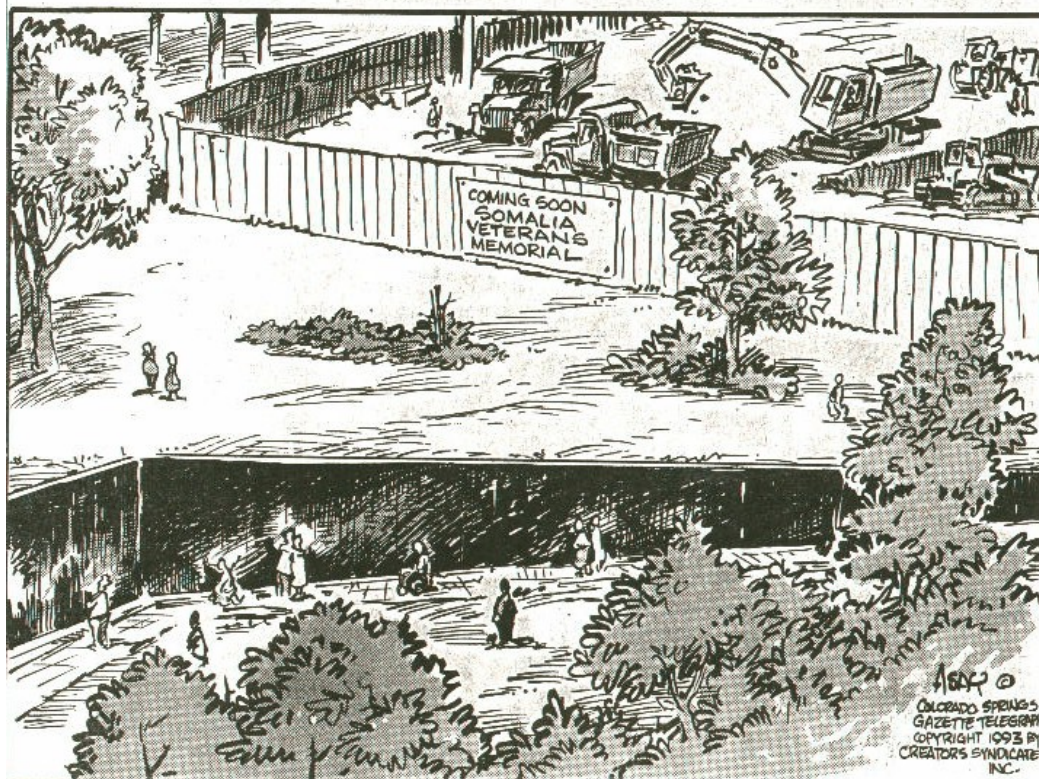


Figure 16. "By permission of Chuck Asay and Creators Syndicate, Inc."

I'm sure General Powell would have wished it different. He petitioned Secretary of Defense Aspin several times to send additional combat forces capable of protecting dismounted soldiers. In our arsenals we had the technology and the know how called a Bradley Fighting Vehicles and an Abrams M-1 Tank. Several military pundits have debated the limited affect Bradley's or Abrams would have had in the extrication of the Rangers from the Bakar Market firefight. Anyone who has been to a live fire display of these awesome weapons systems would have

not doubt there fire power would have had a positive and decisive effect. No doubt he wished for his previous Secretary of Defense; Dick Cheney. No military officer under any circumstances accepts the unnecessary loss of life. However, now the potential existed to blemish an otherwise spotless, inviolable career. Understandably his loyalty lay with the President notwithstanding his soul with his soldiers on the Horn of Africa. We joked about following Les Aspin's (a.k.a. Ass Lespin) not out of respect but curiosity. I personally would have enjoyed to have been a fly on the wall in the oval office during the daily situation briefs. In the farthest corners of his mind did he portend that Somalia would ultimately end in tragedy? Was there was no safe way out without jeopardizing the feeble incompetent UN coalition? Why did General Powell not *fall on his sword* when Les Aspin denied the first June request for Bradley Fighting Vehicles to protect US Forces? Soldiers were dying while The President, The Congress, and The Chairmen debated the merits and shortfalls of homosexuals serving in the military. We listened to the Armed Forces Radio Network in complete astonishment of the ensuring debate wondering where our government's priorities were. We sat there day and night saying to ourselves and each other, "don't worry General Powell won't stand for this, he's a soldier, a husband, a father, a Viet Nam veteran, don't worry he'll fix it." Could this have been the ultimate test of his mettle?

There are a myriad of questions that currently have no answers and speculation is pointless. Mr. Aspin will never have to answer those question.

INTERPRETERS

There were very few Somali speaking Americans even fewer in the Armed Forces. The Department of Defense (DOD) has an ace in the hole, taxi cab drivers in New York and Washington DC. There were more than enough Somali immigrants on work visas who were somewhat bilingual. The DOD pay was good, the hours great, and the working conditions the same, your life in jeopardy every day. It gave many the opportunity to pave the way towards citizenship and to see "relatives" not seen in many years. The



Figure 17. Female Military Police Officer motivating prisoners. Pakistani soldier sitting.

majority of them were not trustworthy. Our unit was very guarded on what they had access to and what they heard. Of the

15 or so we had, only two were reliable. They routinely departed the compound to see their "relatives". Often their "families" would come to the compound. It was a dangerous proposition to believe they could coexist as expatriates without feeding the enemy information. After all they were considered traitors by both warring factions. They attempted to publicly elevate their status by selectively choosing influential Somalis from our perpetual crowd, for medical treatment.

We discontinued their visitation privileges causing a petition by the faculty at large wanting reinstatement of the privilege. COL McManus declined. Many continued to visit their "relatives" outside our gates. For obvious reasons they were required to have an ID card with them at all times. On my last day as the security officer one of the male interpreters decided he would leave wearing an Army physical fitness uniform he had appropriated, leaving his ID card behind. I was at the dismount point when he tried to reenter. Damn if that Italian Berretta didn't come in handy again in convincing him without his DOD ID card I couldn't let him in. Of all the things he threatened to sue me, tell the General and even write the President. Once his identification was verified he went straight to the presiding chief of staff.

Clearly assholes had not yet been placed on the endangered species list in the military. Less than a week from my

departure, the new chief of staff, an augmentee from the Pentagon, attempted to conduct a 15-6 formal investigation into my "reprehensible" behavior. This man was clearly a fish out of water, a food service specialist who volunteered to enable him and his family to remain in the DC area. A common tactic to enable officers to apply their housing allowance to their mortgage and keep their kids in the same high school for four years. The ultimate goal of positioning one's self in the beltway bandit circle for follow-on employment in the DC area. Above all, hopefully make him eligible for the coveted Legion of Merit Medal. In 1993 an augmentee with few exceptions meant you were the lowest form of life on the feeding chain from the post where you came. In other words the most expendable personnel were sent to fill the innocuous staff positions. He continued to hopelessly flounder in the position until his departure. Inevitably wars bring out the desperate wannabees hoping for gratuitous recognition and self promotion.

Colonel McManus in a much appreciated act of reciprocal loyalty informed this senior officer that a frivolously indictment of his Brigade S-3 Officer would be considered an act of aiding and abetting the enemy. He in turn would launch a counter investigation to determine if this officer had in fact not gone native and was a security risk himself. The issue was quickly dropped.

TIMOTHY D. HOCKENBERRY, STAFF SERGEANT

I had just arrived to Fort Drum, NY, two weeks earlier from Fort Bliss, TX, for a permanent change of station before being deployed to Somalia. I arrived in Somalia during the first phase of Operation Restore Hope on 3 January 1993 and was there four and a half months. My unit was Bravo Battery 3/62, the only Air Defense unit to set foot in Somalia during the United States involvement.

We had no idea what to expect, there really wasn't an air threat. It happened really fast for all of us. We had very little training on the things that were in store for us in the months to come. The first thing we faced was the drastic weather change. When we left Griffis Air Force Base at 0500 that morning there was about eighteen inches of fresh snow and it was still falling. The temperature was about eight degrees and the wind chill dropped to down to fifteen below. The DC-10 touched down at the Mogadishu Airport the temperature was a scorching ninety degrees with one hundred percent humidity. Talk about going to hell.

Once we got off the plane we linked up with our advanced party element from that moment on I knew things would not be the same. Lieutenant Dolan told us that the airfield was locked down because they had received mortar and sniper fire. I saw

some scared faces at that moment. The soldiers were definitely getting the look that maybe this was real. After sitting on the airfield for about three hours they decided to release us. We packed all the soldiers on sixteen Hummers and headed inland for the town of Bali-Dogle. I remember we were tired but none of us slept on that three and a half hour ride. Everyone was locked and loaded and staring at ever Somali in uncertain anticipation. We were well into the drive when one of the Hummers broke down, it was so dark, there was no moon or any light around. Like clockwork the soldiers that were not involved got off the vehicles and provided ground security while the rest hooked-up a tow bar to pull the disabled vehicle. Once we got to Bali-Dogle we set-up mobile flex tents, portable saunas.

The next day our platoon started pulling missions. We were working with the anti-tank company from 2/87 Infantry. We pulled all of our missions at night. We would leave the compound at dusk and patrol the main supply route (MSR) and the little towns around Bali-Dogle for bandit activities. There was this town called Waliwhean we nick named Wally World. This town was the only one that had electricity or lights. As we approached the town the Somali's would start playing Metallica or Michael Jackson over a PA system. It later turned out to be their signal U.S. forces were moving in. It was pretty funny after a while. The unit that patrolled during the daylight hours

caught a group of Somalis in a warehouse stocked full of stolen food. We never did catch anyone doing anything wrong.

We did this every night for about a month. Every night the same old thing, driving with night vision goggles (NVGs) in blacked out drive.

One night we were driving about eight kilometers north of Bali-Dogle and we came across a road block made out of some logs and bricks. The patrol immediately dismounted and started to break it up and search for bandits; we didn't find any and continued the patrol. On the way back we came up on a vehicle at the same place of the roadblock. The lead vehicle radioed to turn on our spot lights. There were two bandits with AK-47s, our interpreter told them to drop their weapons but instead one of them turned and fired at the lead Hummer. The gunner immediately returned fire with the M-60 machine-gun. The situation lasted about 30 seconds but seemed to last forever. The lead Hummer took two rounds in the engine block and killed the motor. All of the patrol members were OK, no one was hurt. Both bandits were killed and four of the people that were being held up were also caught in the crossfire and killed. I remember looking at the damage the M-60 did. It was something I will never forget. A week after this incident we got the word we were moving south to Merca.

First we did a recon of the area and the route to Merca. While driving for Major Marty Stanton, the Battalion Operations Officer (S3), we saw a Cessna flying at about three hundred feet and getting lower. The major gets on the net and said we were going to surround the aircraft and searched it for weapons. So we get close to the aircraft once it landed on this makeshift air strip called Abu Airfield. It looked like a dirt road. We rushed the aircraft and started to search it. We found hundred pound bags of chat (pronounced cot), a light narcotic drug the Somali's chew daily. A total of fourteen aircraft landed there with the same cargo, there wasn't anything we could do. We weren't there to stop their drug problem and chat wasn't illegal. These safari pilots, most who were American, would fly into Kenya, then while on break or on a lay over, fly plane loads into Somali. They said that they were paid well for it but would not say how much.

We moved to Merca on the 10th of February, once there we started pulling convoy support for the food relief trucks. These convoys would range in size from three trucks to over thirty. The maintenance of these trucks was really bad. It would take them six hours to go eighty kilometers. At least one truck from every convoy wouldn't make it to its final destination. It was funny because we would place bets on how many trucks would make it and where they would break down. At

least half of the convoy would have to change tires on the way contributing to another wasted hour. None of the trucks that got flats had jacks or a spare so the drivers would have to try and flag someone down for help. None of the other drivers ever stopped to help because they wanted to be paid and didn't want to lose the armed escort that we were providing. The drivers were paid one hundred fifty dollar for every delivery which was excellent money just as long as they had us to get them there. If there wasn't a military vehicle around the trucks they would almost definitely, would be robbed or stolen. The farther we went into the country the friendlier and gracious the people were to us. I wasn't there to kill or be killed. I felt good every day knowing I helped a child get some food.

One time we had to pick-up some doctors in Mogadishu, This is the first time that I had been back since arriving in country. It had changed a lot. We picked them up at the University compound which was also the Headquarters for the Forces Command. They had all the creature comforts that we hadn't had for some two months now. The big thing was the PX. We hadn't seen a PX since leaving Fort Drum. It was great, cold soda, junk food, and magazines. While escorting the doctors we drove past the Abu Airstrip, some civilian vehicles were passing us in the opposite directing pointing and saying "Guns, BANG, BANG." We finally stopped one of the vehicles, one Somali spoke

some English and said 50 bandits were stopping vehicles, taking what they wanted and roughing people up. We drove off taking in consideration what this guy had told us. As we drove past this little village I saw about twenty people with weapons. I radioed up to the LT who was leading this two vehicle convoy. He continued to drive for a mile then stopped. We left an armed guard with the doctors and headed back to the village. We drove back to the village. I drove to the west side and the LT to the east. I remember seeing his Hummer chasing two Somalis across the field. My driver stopped in front of a small elongated building. Five Somalis came out all with weapons. I remember looking through the sight of my M-16 at this man who was doing the same to me. My driver, PFC Nalley dismounted and squeezed off a few rounds. The Somali dropped his weapon. A Marine UH-1 and AH-1 were hovering around the area of operations watching the whole event. The Cobra was directly over my head and the pilot was pointing to about one hundred meters to my front. I then watched the gunner turn the mini gun towards the direction. I could imagine was what kind of destruction that 20 MM canon would do to a human. A UH-1 cut across the front of the Cobra, the door slides open, and the crew chief opened fire with a .50 Caliber machine-gun firing about twenty rounds. The UH-1 landed and told me he would be on station for about 30 more minutes and gave us his FM radio frequency. WE confiscated eight weapons and took two bandits back to Merca for questioning and jail.

The next day we were alerted to help 3/14 INF and the Belgian forces located at Kismiyou. Apparently the two major clans were in a serious fight down there. Needless to say the whole battalion deployed there by ground convoy and UH-60 Helicopters. The only presence left on Condor Fire Base was our platoon and some engineers from Fort Benning GA. They were there making life better for us and I never got a chance to thank them. Now it is the first week in March and most the platoon hasn't seen a PX or any of the other stuff that keeps you sane. So my lieutenant and I decide that we are going to Mogadishu to stock up and square away the rest of the platoon. We took a Hummer and four soldiers; me included, and headed for "The Dish." It was about an hour and a half drive from Merca. As we started getting closer to the city limits we noticed that there wasn't any of the normal military traffic on the roads. I saw something that looked like burnt tires in the road, still smoldering. As we got closer, there were more tires in the road. It told Lieutenant O'Savage that these were not here yesterday, we decided to drive on. We were trying to get to the Embassy compound to raid the PX. Just then something caught my attention. The streets around the area were normally packed with hundreds of Somalis, today no one was around. We made it to the Embassy. All along the street were burning overturned cars and trucks. I looked at my LT. and before he even said anything I was already turning the Hummer around. At that moment we heard

automatic gun fire. We really thought we were in trouble then, but made it back to the university compound safely. Once there they closed the gates for an expected riot heading this way. While there we heard machine-gun and RPGs going off about eight hundred meters away. The MPs said no one could leave for the rest of the day. We knew we were in a lot of trouble now. First of all we should not have left Merca, second we had no real reason for being there. About three hours later the MP let us leave. There was not any threat the way we were going and all the activities had ceased. It turned out to be a fire fight between Somalis and a Nigerian Infantry unit. Well, we were on our way back and nobody got hurt. Nobody knew anything so we weren't going to say anything either.

On our way back, a military convoy had just passed us going in the opposite directions. About three miles down the road we could see three soldiers in the road flagging us down. So we stopped and the soldiers told us that they were part of the convoy that just passed. Two Somalis were pointing weapons at the convoy so they stopped and tried to disarm them but they continued to point the weapons at them, so two soldiers fired and killed them. The convoy left them there to guard to bodies while they went for help. When we came by the soldiers were getting nervous because some Somalis had gathered around the bodies. We waited until the convoy had come back with some MPs

who took a report of the situation. Come to find out that the soldiers who had fired were in 2/87. When the battalion commander came back from Kismiyou he found out what had happened and wanted to know why we were returning from Mogadishu. LT O'Savage got a butt chewing; I think the convoy commander that left the soldiers on the ground got one also.

DON'T DRINK THE BLUE WATER BY ANONYMOUS

SSG Ortiz used the shitter every morning at 0730 hours with a proud sense of regularity. A proclamation of perfection and in his eyes a physical specimen of manhood. He would valiantly announce the morning train was right on time with a robust "TOOT TOOT" while enroute to the plastic palace of the blue water (Porta Pottie). After several months we all knew what that meant. He would saunter down the hall with his flip flops rhythmically sliding and popping along as if he were playing the maracas and bongos. He had already doused himself with his signature over dose of Aramis cologne and baby powder. Puerto Rican music echoed through the cavernous structure, "Oye como va..., and Vamos a la playa!" He regretted leaving his bongos in San Juan but never let that stop him from banging away with the drum sticks his wife had sent him. In the portable shower unit (Sealand Container) he sang and danced oblivious to his surroundings. At dinner his head rocked rhythmically, for *him* the music never stopped. He never let the "Dish" get him down. No one kept themselves in better condition emotionally or physically than SSG Ortiz. When he wasn't singing or dancing he was doing pushups, cleaning his area, ironing his clothes, or reading Army manuals. Most people had their gear everywhere, not Ortiz. Dress right dress, T-shirt rolled, shoes in line, and nick knacks in true desktop formation. He had little tolerance

for those not approaching perfection. Ortiz carried a shaker of Goya in his LBE cartridge pouch to season his MREs and everything else. Everyone bitched about their MREs² (pronounced Mr. E or mystery) except Ortiz. His head bobbed intermittently with snippets of Spanish ejected between bites as he relished the his favorite "Meatballs and Rice" loaded with Tabasco Sauce and of course Goya.

It was no secret that breaking up an MRE heating unit and mixing it in a sealed plastic water bottle, wrapped with duct tape produced a hell of a bang. It was standing routine. Slip a bottle into someone's rucksack, under their cot, anywhere to give a jolt and a quick shower of hot water. The practical joke for our platoon at least. I heard the first echo of Ortiz's morning train as it "pulled into the station." I don't know who he pissed off nor had his predictability made him a random target of opportunity.

TOOT TOOT echoed down the hall. "Como una promesa eres tu, eres tu, como una manyana de verano..." Ortiz with his toilet paper, baby whips, and Avon Skin So Soft, headed for the porta pottie, shuffling to the beat of an unseen band. At least fifteen government cheap portable radios echoed AFN "at the sound of the tone it will 0730 time for the latest news, weather, and sports..." At approximately 0735 I learned there

² Meals Ready to Eat

was a new hiding place for the water bomb, in the scented blue water of the plastic palace (porta pottie). I heard the muffled sound of KAWHOMP!!! followed by chuckles down the hallway and Ortiz screaming hysterically Hispanic profanities "Hijo de puta, me voy a matar les, gringos todos!" Ortiz, less his cadenced flip flops ran to shower. The sweet mixture of perfumed water, Aramis, and feces lingered until the invariable breeze of the Ocean cleared the air. I never felt comfortable in the shitter again.

BRETT ALAN REID, SPC

I'm Specialist Brett Alan Reid a soldier in the 183rd Maintenance Company, 68th Transportation Battalion, 43d Corps Support Group, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson Colorado. I served there from May to August 1993. While there I was placed on a detail to escort civilian contractor from the Texas based company Brown and Root. We were called "shooters" since we rode stagecoach to protect these guys. The work wasn't tough just dangerous and since we ate with them the food was great, better than Army chow. I guess there were some benefits to the deal. I deployed as a mechanic but pulled missions as a body guard. On 4 August at approximately 1000 hours I was pulling escort duty enroute to the airport along "Dead Cow Road" (a road leading to the market place) when we ran over a land mine. The blast virtually blew away the whole front end of the CUCV we were driving (Photo). The noise was awesome dust was everywhere. I thought I was dead. I wasn't sure what was going on, I think they were hoping for the first vehicle to hit the mine but they made it over. I still think it was an ambush that went wrong. I crawled out of the vehicle bleeding on my face, arms, and legs. We quickly loaded up in the lead vehicle to move out before we started receiving fire. Before we could take off the Brown and Root guy decided to quickly return to the vehicle to get some personal belongings and about \$15,000 in cash, they were paid

well. I was recommend for the Purple Heart Medal (PHM) and denied it because they felt my wounds occurred when I left the vehicle. I couldn't believe it, paratroopers who broke their legs during the airborne drop in Panama received PHMs. I was so disappointed that I wrote the Sergeant Major of the Army. He wrote me back and told me what I had to do to appeal the decision. I guess the award is once again working its way through the system.

THE OXYMORONIC UNITED NATIONS

Few elements of this organization worked effectively. This multifaceted complex organization with a dysfunctional chain-of-command radiated incompetence and disunion. The United Nations Task Force was headed by LT GEN Civik Bir, who was paid \$10,000 per month by contract. He had every reason to insure his tenure would be extended as long possible. Aidid must have known this pathetic ensemble of third world nations was little more than a speed bump in the way of his objective. The United Nations Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) directed all subordinate nations contact the UN command post headquarters for all significant activities reports, like mortar attacks. We tested this procedure several times making first contact with a Nigerian captain who spoke no English. Fortunately our savior was a marine captain who when available would process our SITREPs. American battle captains in the TOC would warn their shift change as to whether the UN had a NESUNWO at the helm. My first experience with a Pakistani NEWSUNWO was CPT Jarre.

The first mortar round impacted the street between the barracks and the TOC sending shrapnel into the mess halls outside refrigerator van, destroying 23 cases of Shasta. The second round hit the signal company's cabana moments after the movie seven soldiers were watching had ended. I quickly radio the UN, "This is Major Alderete, UNLSC, we are under mortar

attack, we are under mortar attack." NESUNWO "Good evening major, could you please spell your name, "No God damn it, we are being mortared", Yes major, thank you very much, again please your name, "SON-OF-BITCH, Alderete, God damn it, Major Alderete." NESUNWO, "Hello major, could you please spell your name" "Jesus H. Fucking Christ, A-L-D-E-R-E-T-E, Alderete" NESUNWO "Alpha, yes, Lima, yes, Delta, OK, Echo, very well, Romeo....! Unfucking believable I thought. The next round hit the bunker at the Swedish Field Hospital, BOOM, BOOM, another hit the barracks concrete roof! NESUNWO, "Very good Major Al Dret(sic), how many Somalis are in the attack?" "Stand-by, Tinkle, get the 10th Mountain S3 on the horn this isn't working." We soon realized the watch officer was simply following an intelligence SALUTE (Size, Activity, Location, Unit, Time, Enemy) format in his log book. We would report following the SALUTE format and painstakingly paint-by-the-numbers to the NESUNO for each report.

Each country had their own attributes. They represented the thermostat of the profession of arms. Frankly if English was your second language you were presumed guilty until proven innocent. There were several Americans that were exceptions to the rule. One was a Marine Corps female major who had her own ideas of how the Somali Theater of Operations should be run. Unfortunately it did not correspond to the greater order. She

was informed any further political excursions into areas beyond her expertise would result in a ticket home.

The first to past the test with flying colors where the fearless Tunisian soldiers on our compound. Several others received figuratively our FY (Fuck You) Cards for their performance. The Turks refused to venture one meter beyond their safe area of the Afgooye road. Their primary mission was to protect the perimeter of the US Embassy which included armored patrols down the connected Afgooye Road. They were supposed to keep the squatters away from our secure areas. The Somalis like to homestead near the perimeter for the residual security they received by proximity. We could not accept that risk within our area and did what the Turks were unable to do. It was only after our vehement demands did they patrol during hours of darkness near our southern perimeter. On one occasion we asked the Turks to provide US convoy protection with their armored assets. They agreed but never made the rendezvous. The Italians on the other hand agreed to provide convoy security but failed to return fire when US vehicles came under attack in North Mogadishu. The Italian commander of troops claimed he did not know they were under fire. It is difficult to make that observation when you are buttoned up in your armored vehicle. The Italians had their own agenda of pursuing their own interests unbeknownst to the UN chain-of-command. This resulted in several Italian casualties

when they were ambushed near the Cigarette Factory. I made this very clear to the Italian Lieutenant Colonel and was accused of attempting to foment an international incident by a Lieutenant Colonel augmentee we perceived as just another strap hanger looking for a job. His suggestion was to develop an SOP to insure drivers knew exactly what to do when under fire. His suggestion died an undignified death instantly. Our drivers already knew what to do, what an asshole.

OLIN ROSSMAN, STAFF SERGEANT, INFANTRY

The day started out like another day on Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in the MOG, I heard it was often referred to as groundhog day. Wake up was at 0530 and by 0600 the vehicles would be loaded. By 0900 we were finished with chow and any crew drills that I or Willie (SGT Boulton) thought were needed. After that it was pretty much sit back and wait to be called out. Like all the other days as soon as we were done the bones or cards would come out. I could never get the hang of the bones so I would settle on my cot with a good book and listen to the Mad Man of the MOG on AFN. Then the men would one-by-one settle in for a mid afternoon siesta. Couldn't do anything else and the chain-of-command encouraged the naps while on QRF. I soon did the same.

Our mission on QRF was to usually pull rear security for the five ton cargo vehicles that were in C Company 2/14 Infantry. They had a TOW platoon that support them and we were attached. We were called the mobile weapons platoon because of our weapons: two .50 caliber M-2 machine guns, ten 7.62 M-60 machine guns, four MK-19 40 MM grenade launchers and of course our individual M-16s. Each squad had two desert camouflage fast back Hummers with MP sprayed over and "C CO 1/87 INFANTRY" written on the side.

At 1700 we would begin our down load of the vehicles removing only weapons and grenades. When the platoon was on QRF duty we slept in our DCUs and boots so we could get a good jump on the start time. When we did our crew drills we could go from a stand still and have the vehicles at the staging area well within the ten minute recall time, every second counted.

That night I crapped out at 2200 hours. Around 0200 1SG Tucker came into wake me up saying the QRF was being called out, all he knew was a UH 60 Blackhawk was missing. I went in to wake up Will and Arch and told them to have the vehicles in the Doughnut staging area ASAP!. When I arrive at the Doughnut³ people were everywhere. I received a five minute briefing, assembled my squad to pass on the information. We were informed a Blackhawk had been shot down and the pilots were alive and fleeing the wreckage. The plan was simple as I recall, we would travel to the airport via the K-4 circle instead of the 13 mile secure route. My squad would of course have rear guard. Once at the airport we would leave through the back gate and an aircraft would lead us to the crash site allowing us to make good time. Everything was going as planned as much as possible. Word came down we missed the street by only a hundred meters or so, turning the convoy around would be too time consuming. Now the plan was to have the dismount unload the five tons and walk the

³ HQ Logistic Task Force

block or two to the crash site. The rear guard would now be the front guard. My squad had the firepower, comms, and night vision power they would be needed in the back streets of the MOG, but most of all we had mobility.

Night Optical Devices (NODs) can pick-up firelight from a long way off. As soon as we turned the corner I could see the light from what I thought would be the site. Distance is very hard to judge with Night Vision Goggles (NVGs). We had about 500 meters to travel. The word came over the radio the pilots were found and safe inside friendly lines but we still had to be sure there were no more friendly troops in the area. I knew if we were engaged my gunner could hit any enemy target without a problem, hell I had one of the best M-60 gunners in the Army, SPC Brett Archibald who placed third in all Army competition. At 200 meters I and another soldier dismounted the vehicle to walk the rest of the way in looking for mines and trip wires, in general just being careful. At 75 meters from the site I finally could tell there was a bird in the road and saw another object lying nearby. It was about the size of a human head but it was smoking. It didn't take long to figure out it was a helmet from the crew chief. I had just got off the radio when the first shots started to ring out. The squad was arranged to cover the dismounted soldiers not part of the QRF, coming from the rear. SPC Archibald said he had identified where the shots

were coming from and started to return fire. My squad was divided into two fire teams, team 2 and 2A. Team 2 consisted of me, SPC Gerry Hannerhoff, PFC Billy Morgan and PFC Luke Carr. Team 2A was SGT Willie Boulton, SPC Brett Archibald, SPC Rolando Carrizeles (Poncho), PFC Greg Long, and PVT Thomas Peterson. I moved team 2 down the road about 50 meters to cover the intersection and asked Willie to cover down on team 2. I went where I could control the fight and right now that was with team 2A. Arch had a good fire control and was giving the position hell as soon as he started to return fire all hell broke loose, we returned fire with every weapon we had. After 10 minutes it stopped as quickly as it started. All my guys were safe, Somalis had fired high. I called team 2 and asked for a SITREP, Willie gave me an all up. I told him to stand by I was enroute to his position. As I moved toward their position I heard the 60 gunner open fire, I dropped to the ground for several minutes until it was quiet again. Apparently a Somali walked across the street and opened up with an AK-47, again shots were high. PFC Carr opened fire on the building where the Somalia ran into, without warning the 60 jammed, a sound you hope you never hear in combat. I helped Carr with my pliers and mini-mag light unjam the bolt. Carr again returned fire, this time silencing the sniper. Although I couldn't tell you how long we were engaged we had consumed 50% of our M-60 basic load, we were green on all other rounds. I lost all sense of time during the fire fight,

basically your only concern is the guy to your left and right is alive and doing his job. I sent our ammo SITREP to higher and noticed the sun would be up soon. I was told, secure the intersection, I positioned both fire teams. We stayed away from the wreckage suspicious that it might be booby trapped or something like that. The sun began to peak over the buildings at that point I could see the main rotor hub about 100 meters from the bird, it looked like it was surgically removed. Inside our perimeter was a mosque, civilians began to muster trying to enter for their morning prayers. At first our orders were to stop all traffic at the intersection until the recovery was completed. The orders were quickly changed to just check for weapons and let them move on to the temple. All was quiet for about an hour, we could hear them praying inside. I went over to check on Team 2A. When I got there Arch reminded me he had his M203 grenade launcher if I needed more firepower. I decided to swap weapons. I redistributed ammo to insure we had an equal balance in the squad. I grabbed the M203 vest full of high explosive rounds, Flares, and another bandoleer with about another 15-20 rounds. I moved back to our vehicles when I received a call over the radio for someone to bring a poncho to the crash site. Team 2A reported only kids playing in front of their position. I made my way to the crash site, SFC Ricard asked for my pliers, he reached into the bird and pulled out and ID Dog Tag, he read it out loud, SGT Ferdinan C. Richardson. He

had found the first morally wounded soldier. He quickly instructed me on body recovery procedures and said, above all treat him with respect. The body was about two feet from my position, the recovery took about 10 minutes or so. I was finally struck by the first taste of battle. SFC Ricard words 'treat him with respect' painfully echoed through my mind over and over again.

Again rounds started hitting the wall just about the crash site, the sun was up now. I moved to Team 2A for an assessment, they were covered. About that time Willie started screaming RPG RPG while firing at a partially opened door across the road. I looked up and there was a ten or twelve year old boy aiming the RPG at us. I quickly fired a burst in his direction. He fired the round but aimed short. The round exploded close to where he fired from, the kid disappeared, his status remains unknown. The RPG round apparently signaled others to start firing, our small perimeter erupted with incoming. The three story building to our front had weapons fire coming from each window on each floor. We engaged with the 40 mm grenade launcher firing in tandem. Arch was yelling he needed more 203 round and was getting low on M-60 ammo, with only 150 rounds left. I asked 1SG Doody if we could get a resupply on 60 ammo, he said "sure, let just run back to the compound and get you some." Front-line humor I guess. I was able to secure another 200 rounds which was good enough for now.

After dropping off the ammo I went to the side of vehicle and sat next to Poncho. Moments later someone yelled INCOMING and there was a large loud explosion followed by automatic fire. Poncho slumped over, I thought the concussion stunned him. He stayed down, I yelled at him and he didn't move. I then saw the a one inch hole in the side of his neck, but no blood. I turned an yelled for a medic, as the blood began pulsating like a small geyser. I reached for his first aid dressing and applied it to his neck, it was on only a second before the blood began to seep out. I was holding him in my lap telling him he was going to be okay and would put my dressing on him. I couldn't take my hand off his neck without the blood gushing out. SFC Ricard arrived and took over first aid procedures, which saved Ponchos life. I got up and moved to the back of the vehicle when Arch started screaming he was hit. Willie jumped into the vehicle and help Arch out of the turret. I realized the M-60 was unmanned and climbed up over the back once Arch was out. I noticed the bullet hole in the front windshield about waste high and thought Arch was gut shot. In fact the round hit him in the leg. There was sticky fresh blood all over the inside of the vehicle, my hands were slick with it making operation of the M-60 difficult. I took out my canteen and quickly washed my hands. I noticed a muzzle flash from a building about 300 meters away on the top floor. I started raking the top floor, again we began to run short on ammo. PVT Petersen's Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) was

out of ammo. I made another ammo run and secured 500 more rounds. I returned to Team 2 to update them on the situation, I was soaked from the waist down with Poncho's blood. I grabbed some smoke grenades and returned to Team 2A still engaged. I noticed two Army Cobra attack birds working over two building with their 20 MM canon but fire continued to come from the three story building. They had to have that structure reinforced somehow. I could hear someone on the Aviation radio network yelling "The fucking site is secure now get the fucker up here NOW." The Cobra fired a TOW missile at the building. It hit the building with a the loudest noise I have ever heard, it echoed in my ears for a week later. The evacuation bird quickly landed recovering the dead and wounded. We waited for the order to withdraw. The damn sniper continued to harass us with constant fire. 1SG Doody directed we fire several CS (tear gas) and high explosive grenades into the building. We even fired several flares into the building hoping to keep the sniper occupied and not shooting. The Cobras returned and continued to rake the building once they pulled back, our sniper reappeared once again firing.

Finally the order came to withdraw. My section would move forward and cover the intersection. Moments later SGT Reid was wounded so we immediately began MEDEVAC procedures. SFC Ricard asked me if I could give his interpreter a ride back to the

airport. I said I could, I gave her some water and an extra flak vest I had in the cargo area of the Hummer. We moved out enroute again to the airport, with the sounds of gun fire slowly fading. As soon as we entered the secure gates of the airport back gate everything sort of drained from everyone you could see it on each soldiers face.

We finally got on the road to the University, this time using the secure MSR route. I could see the rest of our platoon covering the MSR in their Hummers. I couldn't look at them, I felt like such a failure. My first firefight and my squad suffered 30% casualties. The only thing harder than self pity is facing your wounded soldiers in the hospital. Arch was in the recovery room and feeling no pain but said something that made me feel human again. I can remember the words he said, "I would still follow you through the gates of hell." Poncho was still in the operating room when I asked to see him. They told me I would have to wait about an hour. I finally saw him he was still under the anesthesia with a 50% chance of living. The bullet shot to the neck severed his spinal chord. I did not see Arch again until our return to Fort Drum in December and the beer was plentiful. Poncho survived, paralyzed from the neck down, I still haven't worked up the balls to see him yet.(Photos)

COMBINED TASK FORCE KISMAAYO

"A Non-Standard Mission for Division Artillery Headquarters"

Combined Task Force Kismaayo became operational on 22 December 1992 with the mission to establish and maintain security in the Kismaayo area of operations to support humanitarian relief organizations. The operational area, designated Humanitarian Relief Sector (HRS) Kismaayo, included the southern part of Somalia, primarily west of the Jubba River to the Kenyan border. Somalis commonly refer to this particular area as Jubba Land. Kismaayo, located on the coast approximately 400 kilometers south of Mogadishu, was the headquarters for Combined Task Force (CTF). The following information provides a brief synopsis of the events that transpired in HRS Kismaayo during the period 22 December 1992 - 11 March 1993.

CTF Kismaayo was commanded by BG Lawson W. Magruder, the 10th Mountain Division (Light) Assistant Division Commander (Operations). The CTF staff was created from the 10th Division Artillery staff with COL Evan R. Gaddis, 10th DIVARTY Commander, as the Chief of Staff. The primary maneuver units of the task force consisted of TF 3-14 Inf, 3-17 Cav (-) (both U.S.) and 1st Para Bn (Belgium).

In 1991, after President Siad Barre was toppled, several political factions emerged turning Somalia into a collection of armed camps. Present in Kismaayo was GEN Aden Abdillahi Noor, known as "Gabyow," the leader of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM). GEN Morgan (CGSC graduate '82-83) and COL Omar Jess were also in Kismaayo, both aligned with the SPM and loyal to Gabyow. Differences of opinion on equitable representation in the local Kismaayo government became a major obstacle toward the establishment of a legitimate political and legal authority. Because of the disagreements, COL Omar Jess, while remaining with SPM, split from GEN Morgan and Gabyow and aligned with GEN Aideed of the United Somali Congress (USC). GEN Aideed provided COL Jess with the weapons and "technicals" necessary to drive GEN Morgan and his forces out of Kismaayo, to the Kenyan border. GEN Morgan and his militia, many being former residents of Kismaayo, prepared for a counteroffensive to return to Kismaayo. GEN Morgan organized his forces into several light infantry brigades of approximately 400 men each. The bush country of southwestern Somali proved excellent for a well-trained light infantry force. Once resupplied, GEN Morgan infiltrated his forces among nomadic camel herders, toward Kismaayo. Early in December GEN Morgan's forces occupied positions around Kismaayo, approximately 30 Kms from the city. GEN Morgan later stated he ordered his men to halt short of Kismaayo. He had hoped for a peaceful return of his men and their families, once coalition

forces controlled the city. Just before coalition forces arrived in Kismaayo, COL Omar Jess allegedly directed the mass execution of several hundred Kismaayo citizens loyal to GEN Morgan's SPM faction. On 20 December 1992 coalition forces entered the city. At the time, COL Omar Jess claimed to represent the single "authority" within the city and desired close coordination with coalition forces as the Non-Governmental Organization security mission began. What the coalition forces found was an armed city without any government or police force, occupied by COL Jess' armed SPM faction loyal to GEN Aideed.

The SPM, combined with other less militarily powerful sub-factions (USC, SDM, and SSNM) made up the SNA faction. Several armed roadblocks, for collecting "taxes" (primarily a means for personal extortion), were at all entrance points to the city. Every adult male carried an automatic rifle, those that did not were subject to being robbed, "taxed," and/or killed. Gunfights took place every night, tracers being observed in all directions. Each night twenty-five killings were common. NGOs hired personal body guards and compound security guards as a means to operate and survive. Unknown percentages of humanitarian relief supplies were diverted to buy off guards who otherwise would "protect" supplies, then steal them when they were off duty. Every NGO became a victim of extortion to get a small portion of relief supplies to the

needy. Escalating prices for "protection" became unavoidable; freezing pay or firing guards guaranteed personal threats to NGO expatriates. The assassination of Sean Devereux, UNICEF Director in Kismaayo, on 2 January 1993, was soon after he announced that UNICEF could no longer justify the high security guard wages.

Upon occupation, coalition forces conducted cordon and search operations for weapons and munitions. Jess complied with a directive to move his "technicals" out of the city to a cantonment site. The policy of no roadblocks, no weapons, no technicals, and no extortion was established. Without any basis for identifying legitimate elders, an interim Security Committee was created. Eventually, genuine elders would be empowered for membership on a permanent Security Committee. The former police force was eager and ready to return to work, even without pay. On the surface, security was restored to the city; a necessary first step to establish a peaceful and secure environment for the NGOs. Political power struggles, however, continued between the sub-factions of the SNA.

The first commercial vessel in months entered the port to, surprisingly, export fifteen hundred cattle to Yemen. World Food Program and ICRC ships also arrived, again the first in several months. Both relief ships were unloaded without incident; food supplies were secured in a newly organized

consolidated NGO warehouse. Convoys, secured by coalition forces, transported the food for distribution throughout the Jubba Valley. Aerial food drops to areas unreachable by trucks and food distribution by U.S. Army boats to the islands off the coast were also successful. NGO assessment teams were dispatched to outlying areas with coalition security to find out the extent of medical, agricultural, and food needs. A 250-foot U.S. Army Bailey Bridge was erected near Buur Koy where the Jubba River had washed out the road separating Jilib from Kismaayo. A major route north of Jilib to Bardera and west of Jilib to Mogadishu was constructed by the 36th Engineer Group. As part of the effort, the engineers cleared several kilometers of existing mined roads.

During a routine aerial and ground reconnaissance by coalition forces, vicinity the town of Belesc Cogani, an armed camp of GEN Morgan's forces was located. Using their radio, LTC Spiece contacted GEN Morgan and scheduled a meeting for the following day. From that point on several meetings with GEN Morgan and displaced Kismaayo elders took place. Talks with GEN Morgan and the displaced elders determined that Morgan's forces had been outside Kismaayo since December waiting for the opportunity to return peacefully with families to their homes. The front lines of Morgan's forces were confirmed during a clash with Jess' forces at Beer Xaani, 30 kilometers northwest of the

city, on 25 January 1993. A combined operation involving U.S. aerial scout weapons teams and Belgium ground reconnaissance vehicles was deployed to separate the two forces.

COL Mark Hamilton, Special Assistant to MG Arnold, ARFOR Commander, was temporarily assigned to assist in the peace process. COL Hamilton and COL Gaddis, the Chief of Staff, arranged for meetings between "Morgan" and "Jess" elders in hopes that differences could be resolved and the city would be secure for all NGOs and Somalis. With much frustration, however, the "Jess" elders would not agree to a meeting with "Morgan" elders. With time passing, GEN Morgan could not convince his forces to remain outside of Kismaayo; some began to infiltrate into the city, many without weapons.

Moving at night and hiding during the day, GEN Morgan's forces infiltrated into the city small groups of men, approximately ten at a time. By 22 February approximately 125 men had entered the city and at approximately 0330 hours an organized demonstration began. Morgan forces began firing their weapons in the air creating the deception of a much larger force attacking the city. Panic began in the city; many people loyal to COL Omar Jess fled to the north, including most of the NGO security guards. Some "guards" entered the NGO compounds for protection. GEN Morgan's forces and their families had returned to reclaim their property and houses. Coalition forces could

not tolerate this attack on Kismaayo since it was contrary to a preferred peaceful solution. GEN Morgan was ordered to move his forces out of the city to the village of Dhoobley, over 100km northwest of Kismaayo.

Coalition forces quickly quelled disturbances in the city and positioned soldiers to guard the NGO facilities. "Jess" elders now agreed to meet "Morgan" elders to discuss issues; topics initially included a new Security Committee, property ownership, and representation on the police force. Although the weapon control policy was still enforced, civil disturbances began between those loyal to GEN Morgan and COL Jess. Grenades, knives, and stones became the weapons of choice and sporadic gunfights again took place. Coalition forces were forced to intervene and reestablish security. The UNITAF quick reaction force, TF 2-87 Inf, was deployed from Merka, a coastal village between Mogadishu and Kismaayo, to assist in a second city-wide cordon and search for weapons.

Meanwhile, COL Hamilton and COL Gaddis began to achieve tremendous successes toward bringing peace back to the Jubba Valley. GEN Morgan complied with the ultimatum to move his forces to Dhoobley and, as a show of cooperation, turned in all of his technical weapons. Additionally, over 200 of his men were willing to turn over their individual weapons. Following this important step, COL Jess also agreed to turn over his

technicals. GEN Morgan and COL Jess were then persuaded to turn over part of their forces' individual weapons. Thereafter, any person with an individual weapon would be declared a bandit. During COL Hamilton's and COL Gaddis' efforts working with the Somali clan leaders, elders, and "war-lords", some observations became evident that are worth mentioning.

The elders were considered as the only legitimate authority since no government existed. During discussions with the elders on security and nation building issues, it was determined that much of their traditional power and influence had eroded. Actions to revitalize the ancestral elder system would help them regain legitimacy and authority.

Many conflicts among factions and clans relating to security had been ongoing for generations. Foreigners could not expect to resolve major clan and factional differences quickly. Within fixed time parameters, defining end states for these type of missions becomes extremely difficult.

The mass population often panicked, not because of a specific action or event, but due to fear and hatred instilled in them over the years. Because of this assimilated fear and hatred, people's actions could not always be anticipated. For example, it was difficult to foresee causes for sudden evacuations of the town. Similarly, after several peaceful days, it was difficult to understand what would provoke rock

throwing, road blocks, tire burning and other civil disturbances.

In summary, conditions have developed for a peaceful solution to the factional fighting in the Jubba Valley. The people of the Jubba Valley must make the effort to carry on this new opportunity for peace. 1st Para (BE), as part of UNITAF and UNISOM II forces, remains in Kismaayo to continue the mission and encourage the Somali people to peacefully resolve their political and clan differences.

These events described highlight only a few that took place in HRS Kismaayo during the period 22 December 1992 until 11 March 1993. The "non-standard mission" for the DIVARTY headquarters displayed the command and control versatility of the artillery; all of us at 10th Mountain Division Artillery are proud of our achievement. The tremendous accomplishments of all the men and women of the Combined Task Force have made a positive impact on the future of Jubba Land. Although there is a considerable amount of work ahead for the people of this region, it can be said confidently that hope has been restored.

ORPHANS, CPT PAUL OLSEN

The most touching part of my days in Somalia was seeing the orphans. Wherever you looked, wherever you drove, whatever mission you executed, you saw kids - hundreds of them at any

given time. Sometimes an older villager would be watching over them, but mostly they roamed within walking distance from any number of orphanages. My engineer battalion, the 43rd Engineer Combat Battalion, was located on the outskirts of Baidoa, in the interior of Somalia. All the fighting had subsided, and this region could truly be called a success zone in Somalia. I was the executive officer of a headquarters company and most of my duties kept me in the base camp. Days were long, hot, and often boring as the routine of road repairs set in with the company. During a day in late February, I had a visit by an Irish

gentleman
from the
relief
organization
Concern.
After some
coffee, we
became
friends.



Figure 18 1LT Paul Olsen, Somalia 1993

Taking with him was a much needed break from the routine a deployed soldier suffers through. The true purpose of his visit came out quickly. His orphanage was in dire need of water and he wanted me to inspect his water distribution system for problems. Quickly, I gathered together a security team from

what I had left in the base camp and we drove to the South side of Baidoa. The route had improved dramatically, compared to our initial entry into the city a month before. The corpses were off the streets, the children were lively and small shops had reopened. These small signs were enough to tell me that our mission here was right. As the vehicle slowed for the orphanage, we were immediately swarmed by children. Although, skinny and visibly malnourished, the sight of soldiers seemed to always bolster their spirits. As we made our way through the crowd, we entered the courtyard of the decaying collection of buildings Concern took over for its orphanage. The children inside were the true products of war. Our happy children on the outside were soon replaced by children torn by landmines, bullets or sickness that comes through neglect. Concern was doing it's best to keep these orphans alive. The children were somewhat organized by their health condition. They each wore a plastic identification bracelet, like the ones a discotheque or concert hall will give you after you pay your cover charge. The three colors I saw were green, blue and yellow. Green indicated two solid meals a day, blue indicated one solid meal, and yellow marked the children that could only be capable of taking liquid nourishment. I walked over to look at their water distribution system and noted the green, filmy, two inches of water left in the cistern. The problem was not with the system; the problem was that they didn't have any clean, fresh water. I radioed to

the Battalion S4, who told me 1000 gallons of water would not be a problem. As I continued my tour of the orphanage, I walked towards the rear of the compound and noted a squat building with one door. I started walking towards the building, and my friend lightly touched my arm. His eyes, hardened by his months in country, portrayed warning. As I opened the door, a bright fan of light flooded across the floor. The room was filled with infants, six rows, sitting front to back, against each other. All of the children wore red bracelets, indicating no food was to be given to these children. I think, as these children's eyes refocused to the light, they must have been shocked by the 6 foot 3 inch soldier in full combat gear standing in the doorway. The sight of this room was horrific. Perhaps these children were hidden as to not ruin the spirit of the more healthy ones in the court yard. Perhaps these children were put here so we wouldn't see them. Perhaps these children were simply put here to die. Whatever the reason, I knew I was looking into the saddest future imaginable. My silent shock was soon broken by weak singing. To my astonishment, some of the children starting singing a slow, haunting version of "jingle bells." I was later told that as the Marines first arrived in Baidoa, it was around Christmas time. The children were healthy enough to welcome the first units to Baidoa, but not healthy enough to last through the relief transition. Healthy enough to learn their first words in English, only to sing to me before

their own death. On returning to the base camp, everything had changed. I saw our mess kitchen throwing out the hundreds of individual jelly packages that come with each "T Ration" box. I saw soldiers enjoying care packages sent from home, while throwing out the major portion of their picked over MRE's. It was a regulation that we could not give food to the Somalis directly, but nothing mentioned the relief organizations. Drop boxes appeared around the compound for unwanted food. Condiment packages were collected, care package items were given up. All of this was collected weekly and turned over to Concern to go to our orphanage. Our battalion's help totaled up to a pick-up truck full of excess food per week. With all the sadness in Somalia, it was important to find hope, and goodness in things. Our efforts, although trivial, helped us cope with death and dying. In an age where the press is as far forward as the soldiers, ready to capture only the high payoff pictures to shock the public, it is sad to know that they are doing more harm than good. As the public sees the footage, they only gain a partial picture of the situation. It's not just the sights of human suffering that justify the experience, but the sounds, the smell and the feel that give you the strongest memories of an experience like Somalia.

SGT JOEL MCCOY

It was 0600 hours when I crawled from under my Army issue bug net into what could be called nothing less than a steam bath. The same morning routine: brush teeth, take bird bath with a five gallon water bucket, check boots for scorpions, get dressed and wait. Today would start like all other days but end like no other.

Sitting at one of my favorite spots in camp and watching the sunset over a vast peacefulness called the Indian Ocean, I realized this is one of Somalia's last remaining assets forever intact. I've been told by some of the locals that there was a paradise here once, before warlords, civil war, before carnage. Everything is gone, stripped by a few power hungry clans. They cry when they reminisce, I would too, but I guess I can't, I'm an infantry soldier and really don't care either way. I'll be heading home soon. These fuckers will survive, they have so far.

1300 hours, finally something to do, a mission. I was tasked to pull security on a two truck convoy going to Mogadishu to pick up a platoon of soldiers from the airport. I was told we would depart in an hour giving me an hour to get my gear ready and give my M-16 a once over. I was instructed to meet with four other soldiers and go over what position each would be

taking. When I met up with my buddies I thought to myself today was unusually hot and maybe I should bring some additional water. I decided against the extra weight given it was only about a two hour mission.

At 1400 we pulled out the front gate of the camp ready to embark on a long bumpy road that offered little more than stinging grains of sandy ready to pelt your face. I've been down this road 10 or 15 times before and knew what to expect along the way. I knew when we passed the first two villages we would see the same pathetic men, women, and their bloated little children run to the road looking for a handout. I didn't care, I would carry pork meals and throw them to the bastards because I knew they were Muslim and wouldn't eat the shit. I wasn't there to care, I was there looking to fulfill every infantryman's dream: to fight and to kill, quickly. Little did I know that I had a one way first class ticket on a runaway train headed in the direction of a killing field just outside Mogadishu.

1430 hours my legs are starting to hurt from bouncing from one pothole to the next. I look down the road and see the third village. The village was notorious for the children throwing rocks at our convoys. Before entering the village we stopped to check our vehicles. The sergeant and another soldier hopped off while I was covering them. Suddenly without warning someone

begins yelling, "Gun, there's a gun". I aimed at the approaching driver, perfectly in my sites, right through the chest. I was begging the a supreme being to let me be the one to fire first, please, I need it. I wanted to be the one to put a softball size hole through his body. A calmness came over me, I started playing the part I had rehearsed for the previous two years. Click off safe to semi, stop breathing, now ready to squeeze the trigger. Starting to sweat now, slowly squeezing harder, sweating more, stinging my eyes, harder but gently, wait, wait, steady. "It's registered!" What? The scream shatter the stillness, no luck today. The damn weapon had been registered to the luckiest man in the world yesterday, that fucker. Everyone boarded and we were off again, no fear.

The two soldiers got back on the truck and we were off again, this is the greatest day. Trucking along watching the herders and some people walking, nothing threatening. It's a good time to get a snack. Suddenly I feel the brakes slamming and I roll forward. When we finally stop I hear "HALT" and I knew trouble had arrived. "Guns, get down!" was screamed next and I hear a hissing sound and I see the pings of bullets rattle the truck. I can't believe someone is firing actual bullets at me, these people don't know who they are fucking with. The fateful command was issued: "Return fire!, my cue. I rise up and fire blindly, wanting to kill all the stupidity shooting at

me. I see one to the left go down and throw his weapon, then a second directly to my front. One more to go and he is running to my right. God damn is it hot today.

The film is moving in slow motion now, I've got a bead on the bandit, he's mine. One shot fired, too short, re-aim, fire again, too short again, adjust fire up and to the left. POW! I see the barrel of his weapon and then his feet go up in the air and as he lands in a ball of dust. Yeah!. Got one boys! Oh yeah!.

1445 starting to see things at normal speed again. I see two people screaming at my front and three others running. The sergeant yells to us "go get 'em!" Three soldiers pursue and apprehend the three fleeing. The sergeant barks yet another command, "McCoy, check the man who's down to your right." My man, my kill. I hopped off with a smile on my face ready to look at my reward. I approached the body with caution, not wanting to take any chances, maybe I'd get to shoot him again.

I'm standing over the body. It's face down with a hole in the back of its head the size of a crayon. I reach down and grab his weapon and throw it to the side. I then proceeded to turn the dead over and what I saw was not a person with their eyeballs blown out of their sockets, not someone with the left front of his face shredded to bits, but what I saw was a human

begin, someone who was young like me and until just a moment ago was alive.

I stood there starrng, wondering, asking myself question, is this real? Why do I feel like this? This is what I'm supposed to do? All the other soldiers gathered around like lions after a fresh kill. They started laughing and joking, they kicked him over and over again. Again the pictures started to slow and I felt myself being separated from everyone around me. I was starting to see the body being covered in a darkness, just as the earth would be when the sun is eclipsed, a very still darkness. I wasn't laughing or joking or even taking claim to my kill. Just standing, wondering, getting dizzy. My head was spinning in all directions, out of control.

The dust was just now beginning to settle slowly around us and the dead, too slowly. Then out of nowhere a flash, a camera flash. One of the soldiers was taking a picture for his scrapbook. I raised my head up and just looked at the photographer, he turned to me and said "look at that shit, look at his fucking brains man." By this time the sergeant was with us and directed me and two others to stay and guard the body. All I say was "yes, sergeant," and began to grasp what little composure I had left.

1530 now and the blistering heat was starting to get to me. I was lying in a bush hiding, waiting for the bandits to return

for their dead. My peers on the other hand decided to sit on the road and take off their gear. It was as if they were on a picnic back home, they didn't care that there was a loss of life today. I cared, and I knew if someone was coming back to get the body they would more than likely be armed and I wanted to be ready. An hour or two went by and looking through the waves of heat rising from the desert floor toward the road I could see vehicles drive by with weapons. I knew what they were looking for. At this moment, when watching these vehicles, I had an overwhelming feeling. A feeling or more of a sense that I'll never see my family again or my high school friends, or go on a date, never pet my dogs, never do anything I missed so much. I was almost in tears, anxiety took over my body. Today I have killed and now I am going to die. There's no where to run. I'm as helpless as a baby. I couldn't control my emotions anymore.

Being at the end of my emotional rope and ready to just go ahead and give myself up, I feel a kick on the leg. I flip around and aim, I'm staring at a herder who just about lost his life. He jumped back and looks at me and makes a hand signal like a gun and points as if to shoot me. Then he points at the body. He then points towards a group of people walking towards us. They are moving slowly and pushing what seemed to be a cart or wheel barrel. I took a breath, sweat seeping from every pore, I was shaking so violently I couldn't focus on any one

individual. As they moved closer I could see they were not armed, it was the family of the dead man lying in front of me.

I tore myself from the floor and walked to the body and waited. I'm responsible, I'm sorry. they stopped at the head of the corpse and looked down at what used to be their son, their brother, their cousin, and went hysterical. The only one with any air of calmness was an elderly man, I assume it was the father. He looked at me with the deepest, darkest, emptiest eyes I have ever see, looking for an answer maybe, wanting to ask me why, I could feel it. I didn't know what to say, I just kept repeating over and over, "I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to do it, it just happened, I'm sorry." The mother collapsed in grief and was crying uncontrollably. I stood there and watch with my weapon at my side. They threw the body or what was left of their little boy into the cart. They looked at me for what seemed a lifetime and a then turned and walked away. I watched until I couldn't see the lifeless arm hang from the cart anymore and lay back down.

1730 finally picked up and taken back to where my normal routine started almost 12 hours earlier. I told my superiors what happened and was told to clean up and get some sleep. Sitting off by myself that night I couldn't help but think that the guy I killed will never see his family again, never laugh, never do the thing he enjoyed to do, ever again. The feelings I

had that night made me wish it was me lying there in his place. I wanted to be the one dead because I never want a family to look at me like that again. I would rather die than have that elderly man look at me the way he did with those eyes. I could tell I killed a part of him along with his son, without saying a word.

All the other guys who were with me today were telling stories of their heroics. I, on the other hand was alone, knowing something had happened to me today, something that changed my life forever. In a time span of two minutes I went from begin a young ungrateful punk to a man. I crossed the threshold from boyhood to manhood in minutes. It happened by taking a life on 20 March 1993. It happened by shooting a man in the back of the head.

I still sometimes wonder what my family or my friends would have done if it was me who had been shot like that. I wonder what their faces would have looked like and if they would've understood why it happened. I wonder the most about if they would have been proud of the way or the reason why I got shot. Did I do the right thing? Did I make the right decision? I repeat these thought everyday and walk off by myself to try and find the answers.

I'm still an infantry soldier with a dream, a dream not of fighting and killing but one of living. My dream turned into a

nightmare, one that came true. I can't help but think that I'm an infantry soldier no combat commander would want, a soldier with an unselfish heart and soul. I'm sorry.

REFUGEES, SNIPERS AND ROE (RULES OF ENGAGEMENT)

Somali snipers learned if they fired from defined sanctuaries, they increased their chances of success and escape and evasion while the Americans mulled over the restrictive rules of engagement. International humanitarian law prohibits the use of a hospital for the conduct of hostilities yet ground radar routinely tracked incoming mortar rounds coming from the rooftop of Banadir, the main hospital. We estimated over 600 refugees with their blue United Nations issued tarps were encamped near our main egress point. This severely complicated our basic defense plan with risk of collateral damage if we engaged the enemy hiding among this displaced human tide of suffering. The toll of misery was clearly visible from the windowless vantage point of our tactical operations center. During daylight Somali warlord Mohammad Farrah Aideed's populated the crowd with his legendary Motorola equipped spies, able to observe our internal movements with impunity. In the evening the same transparent disciples fired randomly under the veil of total darkness. The only solution was to remove the

refugees, take out the orange grove, and blow the building. A process that seemed to take on a life of its own. Finding a place to relocate was the easy part, moving them required every cargo vehicle from the 68th Transportation Battalion over a two day period. Their suffering had become nothing more than another day in Mogadishu.

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