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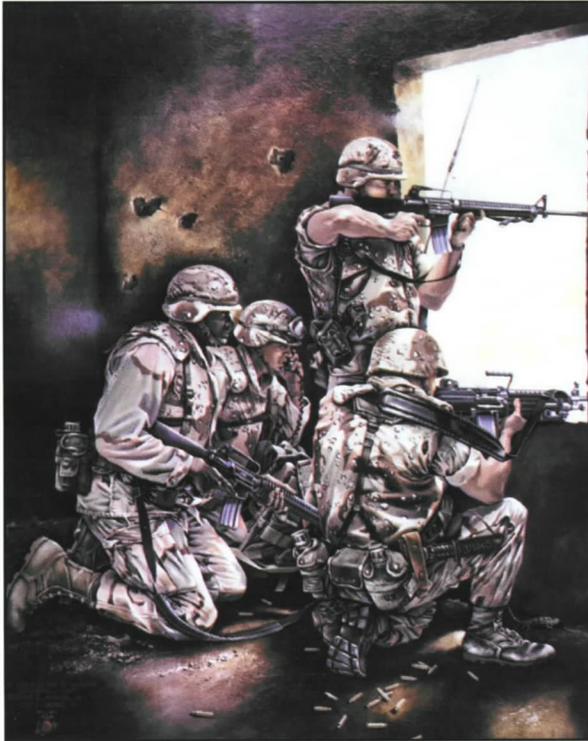
*A Marine prepares to load a box of weapons parts onto a truck filled with munitions confiscated during a patrol.*

A good indication of progress occurred on 24 March, the end of the holy month of Ramadan. For the first time since the civil war the city was able to spend two days in celebration of this special holiday. Five days later, Somalis in the city peacefully held a rally in support of the recent Addis Ababa meetings.<sup>207</sup>

MarFor performed other important work in Mogadishu, not all of it related to patrolling or manning checkpoints. When UNITAF forces first arrived in the city the roads were choked with all types of rubbish and the debris of war. Often only a single narrow lane existed for the passage of traffic, and that would be thronged with pedestrians. This was unacceptable to the military forces, which needed to be able to move quickly throughout the city and between the important facilities at the port, airport, embassy, and elsewhere. Operation Clean Street started on 28 December with the aim of clearing the main roads and opening them for the fast-moving traffic of the coalition. Marine combat engineers and members of the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion, the Seabees, performed the work. The operation continued until 6 January 1993 and was the first of

several Clean Street operations that benefited UNITAF as well as the citizens of the city. As soon as the roadways were opened to traffic, the roadside markets began to come back to life, and soon merchants, barbers, and tailors were operating from small stalls.<sup>208</sup>

Another innovation used in Mogadishu was the idea of mass distribution sites. The large numbers of refugees, often scattered in settlements throughout the city, made it difficult for humanitarian relief organizations to effectively distribute food to those in need. By consolidating the distribution specified areas throughout the city, more people could be reached more efficiently. Also, by flooding the city with grain, the price of food would be lowered and the black market for stolen food would be undermined. MarFor had the responsibility of establishing the program with the relief organizations.<sup>209</sup> The program was launched in February in conjunction with the establishment of the Somali auxiliary security force. On 6 February, the first mass food distribution was held. Eventually, there were 25 distribution sites located throughout the city with Somali auxiliary security forces providing control. Security for



Marine Corps Combat Art Collection 306-4-21

Combat artist Maj Burton E. Moore, a former member of a Marine Corps scout/sniper team, joined Jump Team 1, Recon Company, 5th Marines, atop the old U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu as the team returned hostile fire in 1993. Portrayed in his painting of the experience is (left) Sgt Charles A. Johnson, LtCol Edward J. Lesnowicz, Cpl Patrick B. Ward and Cpl Tim Richards.

each site was the responsibility of MarFor units and coalition forces guarded 18 of the 25 sites.<sup>210</sup>

The work of the coalition in Mogadishu was reflected, on a lesser scale, in most of the other relief sectors. But each sector was unique, and people traveling outside Mogadishu saw a far different side of Somalia than was apparent in the capital city. This was largely because each humanitarian sector generally had one dominant clan, which meant factional rivalry and fighting were not as prevalent as it was in the capital. Also, the cities and towns were not nearly so large or crowded as Mogadishu. Still, each sector had its own challenges. Some quickly became very quiet, and others continued to have troubles with factional fighting and bandits. The establishment of the first three humanitarian relief sectors outside Mogadishu provided experiences and lessons that were used elsewhere. Bale Dogle, the important airbase; Baidoa, the "City of Death;" and

Bardera all benefited from the early attention they received as centers of UNITAF activities.

### *Bale Dogle*

The control of the first sector, Bale Dogle, passed quickly from the Marines to the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division. As these soldiers flew directly into the airbase, they soon had responsibility for its security and the Marines were able to move on to other cities. The responsibility for this sector did not remain long with the American soldiers, however. By early January 1993, the soldiers of the Royal Moroccan Army began to arrive, and by the 12th of that month they were placed under the operational control of Army Forces Somalia.<sup>211</sup> The Moroccan forces were composed of two infantry companies, a cavalry company, a medical section, and other support detachments of the 3d Motorized Infantry Regiment, under the overall command of Colonel Major Omar Ess-Akalli.\* This force formed a mobile intervention group of more than 1,000 men with 200 light vehicles equipped with crew-served weapons, as well as light tanks, artillery, and antitank missiles.<sup>212</sup>

Their initial task was to ensure the security of the airbase. Then, as more troops arrived throughout Mogadishu, control was extended. By 28 January, the Moroccans were responsible for most of the sector. On 1 March, they were placed directly under UNITAF control and given responsibility for the security of all of sector Bale Dogle.<sup>213</sup>

Their light vehicles provided the Moroccans with flexibility and tactical mobility, which they used to patrol the sector and escort convoys. The heart of their tactical mission, however, remained the security of the important airbase.<sup>214</sup> In addition to being a major aerial port for the operation, Army Forces Somalia established a firing range for its AH-1 helicopters within the sector. The range was a key factor in maintaining the accuracy of the weapons systems of the aircraft.<sup>215</sup>

The Moroccans had yet another mission, one given to them by the King of Morocco himself. The king wished to help the sick and distressed people of Somalia, and he extended the Moroccan

\* This was a highly experienced regiment, which at that time had just come from spending several years fighting insurgents in the Western Sahara.

humanitarian mission to include a large hospital operating in support of the Somali people. The hospital staff had many specialties, to include nutritionists, obstetricians-gynecologists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, oral surgeons, and specialists in digestive disorders and bone diseases. There was also an engineering specialist for water purification. Somali medical specialists and social workers were hired to assist the Moroccan staff. The hospital quickly gained an excellent reputation among the Somali people and was seeing 400 to 500 people of all ages and tribes every day. There were five to six major surgical procedures performed daily.<sup>216</sup>

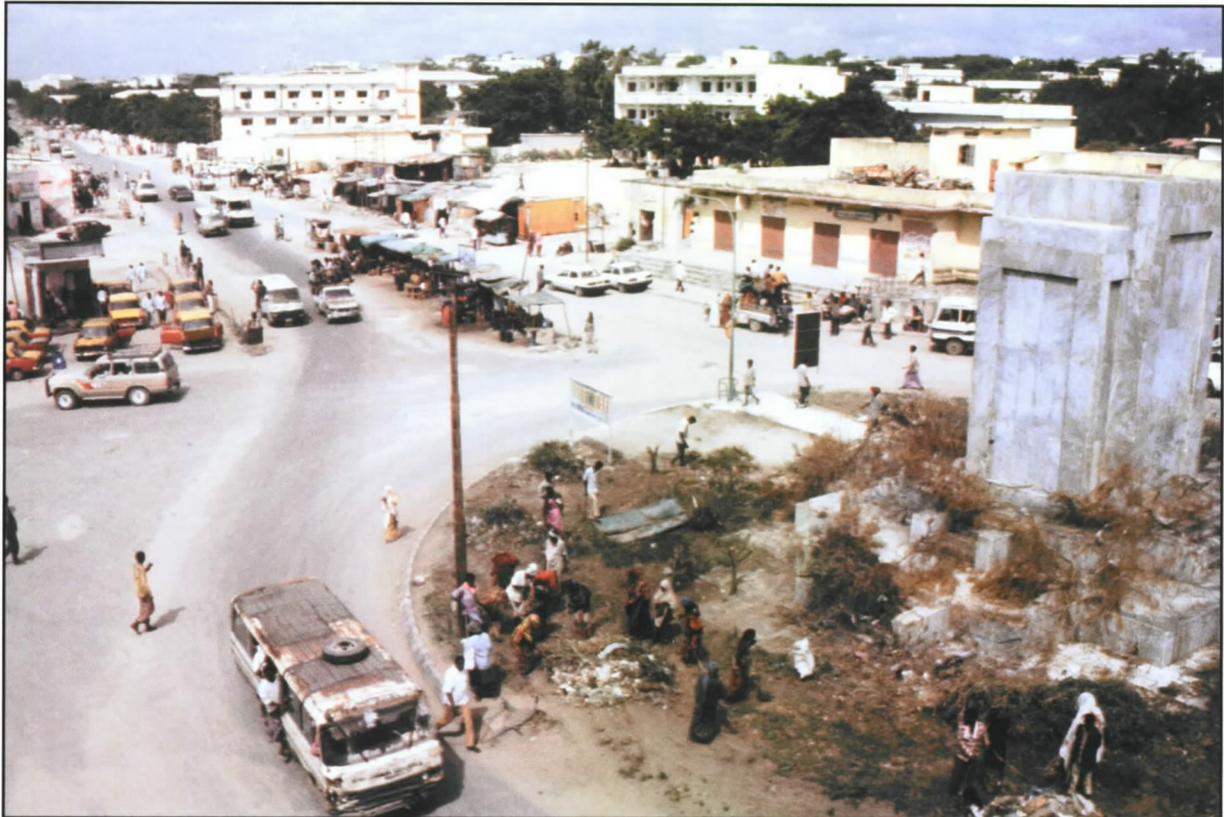
The Moroccan contingent was intended to be self-sufficient, which they were with food, water, and fuel. In fact, the king ensured his men in Somalia received fresh food every day; they carried no prepackaged rations and cooked their meals daily. But the light vehicles, which provided the force with its flexibility, also caused its largest logistics problem. All maintenance and repair on these vehicles had to be performed in Morocco.<sup>217</sup>

The Moroccan unit was one of the largest non-U.S. contingents in the coalition. With this strong and mobile force patrolling the sector, Bale Dogle soon became one of the quietest in the area of operations, with few incidents reported.

### *Baidoa*

The next sector occupied, Baidoa, presented a very different aspect to the soldiers of the coalition, and elicited different responses. There were more lawless elements present in this sector and, accordingly, more violent incidents. Also, the political situation was more complicated. The Marines who first occupied the sector were very aggressive patrolling, conducting raids, and making searches where threats were assessed. At night, helicopters were used to extend the presence of the coalition forces into outlying areas and to frighten off bandits.<sup>218</sup>

Even at this early period, Colonel Gregory S. Newbold, as the commander of the 15th MEU, the Marines who initially occupied the town, recognized the difficulty, if not impossibility, of creat-



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*The centrally located K-4 traffic circle in Mogadishu was the site of several confrontations between local Somali factions and coalition forces.*

ing a secure environment in the relief sector if the bandits were allowed to carry their arms openly. He, therefore, told the local leaders his forces would seize any weapons seen on the streets of Baidoa. While the aggressive actions of the Marines quickly decreased hostile acts against the coalition, the policy of no weapons openly carried had equally good results. As the power of the bandits declined, the local elders could reassert their authority. They did so within the first few days of the Marines' arrival. Several Somalis approached the Marines and requested assistance in establishing a security council.<sup>219</sup>

Under the direction of Colonel Werner Hellmer, the local civil-military operations team provided the secure and neutral venue needed to establish such a council. Relying heavily on humanitarian relief organizations, the team sought out the legitimate local leaders and elders. At the same time, Colonel Hellmer and his small staff recognized the importance of including representatives of all major groups and clans. It was vital to the Marine mission and its image of neutrality that no one who should be a member would inadvertently be left out. Representatives from the State Department and United Nations Operation Somalia (UNOSOM) were also in attendance at the beginning of this new security council. As throughout the area of operations, the idea was that the Somalis would take care of their own internal governance. Under the protection of the Marine policies of "no openly carried weapons, no crew-served weapons, and no technicals with gun mounts," the weakening of the bandits, and the strengthening of the elders, conditions in Baidoa soon began to improve.<sup>220</sup>

On 27 December, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, relieved the 15th MEU of responsibility for Baidoa. They continued their predecessors' routine activities; protection of food convoys, patrolling in the sector, and mine clearing. The civil-military operations team remained in place working with the relief organizations and the local security council. By early January, Colonel Hellmer believed they had made good progress. People were out on the streets again, the markets in town were open, and the local buses were running. Fear no longer existed and people could sleep safely, some getting a full night's rest for the first time in years. The lingering problem that Colonel Hellmer saw was what to do with those who previously had made their living by banditry and stealing relief supplies.<sup>221</sup>

Another organization making life better in Baidoa was *Action Internationale Contre de Faim* (International Action Against Hunger). This relief agency set up two camps, one for the most critical refugee cases and the other for those who were less serious. In the first, there were four servings per day of what was described as a very rich mixture of food. This was intended to get these people back up to strength and out of danger. Those who were in better health were placed in the other camp, where they were fed one meal of a regular mixture per day. In addition, there was a hospital ward treating various illnesses, such as malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and other respiratory diseases.<sup>222</sup> \* Such work was typical of what the relief organizations were doing in all the sectors. The civil-military teams provided coordination with the military to ensure they received their relief supplies safely and answered other legitimate needs.

By the middle of January 1993, the Marines were ready to hand over responsibility for the sector. At 2359 on the 16th, Baidoa was transferred to Army Forces Somalia, with the remaining Marines placed under its control.<sup>223</sup> However, this situation was only intended to be temporary.

During this same period, the Australian contingent arrived by ship and airplane. By 8 January, a portion of the advance party had already come to Baidoa to assess the quality of the water and determine if it could be purified. Company A, which had left on the Royal Australian Navy's HMAS *Jervis Bay* (GT 203) on 24 December, made port at Mogadishu on 12 January. By the 17th, the main body, composed of Company B, half of Company C, and most of the battalion headquarters, flew straight to Baidoa on board a Qantas Airlines 747 passenger aircraft. The remainder of the Australian forces arrived the next day. Company A, mounted in trucks off the ship, motor marched to the town.<sup>224</sup>

The Australian force would soon be one of the largest national contingents. It included Companies A, B, C, and D of the 1st Battalion, 1st Royal Australian Regiment, with their normal battalion headquarters, plus support and administration companies. Attached to this battalion group were Squadron B, 3d Battalion, 4th Cavalry

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\* Such diseases were rampant in the refugee camps throughout the area of operations and were the result of poor sanitation, crowded conditions, and unclean water.



Photo courtesy of the Australian Department of Defense

*Australian soldiers move by convoy from the port of Mogadishu to Baidoa where they would relieve elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit.*

Regiment, mounted in armored personnel carriers; the battery commander's party, Headquarters, 6th Field Battery, 4th Field Regiment; and 17th Troop, 18th Field Squadron, 3d Combat Engineer Regiment. All were supported by a detachment of the 103d Signals Squadron and the 1st Battalion Support Group.<sup>225</sup>

The Australian force was intended to be as self-sufficient as possible. Therefore, when they deployed, they tasked their support group for 30 days of supply and ammunition. The greatest concern was for water. The advance party found that the local water could be purified. Also, HMAS *Tobruk*, which was also supporting the operation, could pump water into tankers that could then make the overland journey to the relief sector. The support group was a very capable organization, which contained fuel tankers and 8-ton cargo trucks. It also had a medical section capable of forming a regimental aid post. The maintenance detachment included a field workshop for electrical and general engineering maintenance, as well as for vehicle and communications repair.<sup>226</sup>

For requirements above the capabilities of the support group, the Australian forces could use UNITAF's logistics assets for water, fuel, rations,

and other common consumables. These arrangements were set under cross servicing agreements signed between the United States and Australian governments. Anything required that was not available from UNITAF was either purchased in Kenya, or flown in from Australia by the Royal Australian Air Force on regularly scheduled C-130 Hercules flights.<sup>227</sup>

The handoff of responsibility for the sector was completed on 19 January. At a simple ceremony, the flags of both nations were lowered and raised in reversed positions on the flagpole. At the same time, appropriate music was played on a harmonica. "Waltzing Matilda," the Australian battalion's quick march and the national song, is also the division march of the 1st Marine Division, so it was chosen and matched with "The Star Spangled Banner."\* For the previous two days, Company A of the Royal Australian Regiment had been under

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\* In the author's interview with Major John Caligari, Royal Australian Army, "Waltzing Matilda" was identified as the regimental march of the 9th Marines, and it is so identified in the notes of the interview. Calls to the division actually identified it as the division's own march, adopted during World War II.

the tactical control of 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. Now the situation reversed itself as Company L, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, was placed under the tactical control of the Australian forces. The Marines would retain this command relationship until they departed Baidoa.<sup>228</sup>

By 23 January, all of the Australian force was present in Baidoa; 888 soldiers armed with 36 M113 armored personnel carriers and eight 81mm mortars. The Australians quickly settled into their mission, which, as elsewhere in the area of operations, was to control the sector and provide security for the relief operations and the supply convoys. The work was divided into three parts and rotated among the companies. One company guarded the airfield, while another patrolled in town. The third company patrolled in depth, throughout the sector, to establish presence, collect intelligence, and respond to any incidents.<sup>229</sup>

About 80 kilometers from Baidoa on the main road to Mogadishu was the town of Buurhakaba, the second largest in the sector. A huge rock mas-

sif that rose from the plain to a height of a few hundred feet dominated the town. This area had been the site of much bandit activity and was noted for the presence of several technicals. To end these depredations, the Australians established a permanent outpost at the town. This was occupied in company strength, with patrols extending out to other towns in the sector. The other companies could be called for support if there were a need.<sup>230</sup>

There were two intelligence gathering organizations operating in the Baidoa sector. One was a three-man combat intelligence detachment of the Australian force. These soldiers were responsible for collecting human intelligence, checking the populace, finding out who was in the area, and the identification of the local clans and subgroups.<sup>231</sup> There also was a team of American Special Forces in the sector. This team was "used to conduct area assessments throughout the [humanitarian relief sector], especially in those areas where conventional forces or relief agencies had not yet



Photo courtesy of the Australian Department of Defense

*LtGen Robert B. Johnston talks with an Australian soldier while visiting the Australian headquarters in Baidoa. Behind LtGen Johnston is Col William J. Mellor, commander of the Australian army contingent.*



Marine Corps Combat Art Collection 119-9-51

*During a 1993 deployment to Somalia, combat artist Col Donna J. Neary depicted this familiar scene of the international relief effort. In this piece, an Australian soldier is shown escorting a refugee convoy. After relieving the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, in Baidoa, "Diggers," the nickname adopted by Australian soldiers, took over relief escort duties in that area.*

arrived." The local commander used these assessments to plan operations in support of the humanitarian relief organizations that were providing relief to these outlying areas. In addition, the Special Forces team also provided intelligence about criminal activities and sources of banditry.<sup>232</sup> With one of the companies always operating in the sector in a random pattern of patrolling, the Australians were able to respond whenever and wherever intelligence indicated that something was afoot. The company could quickly move into the target area and remain for a few days.<sup>233</sup>

Baidoa was not terribly plagued by the presence of warring factions during this period." There

were some instances of armed troops passing through the sector, but these were generally small groups that were monitored closely as they moved along. Lawlessness was another matter. By the end of January, the Australians had established the pattern by which they would operate for the next few months. Finding the towns that were the centers of criminal activity, they used a series of cordon and search or airmobile operations to find and confiscate weapons and make their presence felt. The Australian forces soon were stamping out the banditry that had been so rife in the sector. When they discovered that the bandits had adopted the tactic of attacking civilian traffic along the roads at night, the Australians became equally resourceful. After dark, Australian vehicles with their lights off would follow the civilian trucks and buses. The drivers would use night vision goggles to operate, and the troops would also use night vision devices to scan the roadsides ahead to spot any ambushes. These ambush-busting operations were a very successful deterrent to the bandit activity.<sup>234</sup>

\* There was some factional activity in the sector, but it was relatively minor. For instance, during the visit of the author to the Baidoa humanitarian relief sector in late January, a representative of the Somali Liberation Army had just appeared in town to recruit. The Australian's quick reaction force planned to "pay him a visit" at his quarters to search for arms and explain the weapons policy. He was not very successful in his recruiting efforts.

The Australians were constantly busy during their four months as a part of UNITAF. The pace of operations was described as grueling. While the work was hard, harsh, and unrelenting, it did help to keep the sector more quiet and secure than some others. The success of the Australians' operations can be measured by the fact that bandits only engaged them on four occasions. They sustained no casualties while confiscating and destroying almost 1,000 weapons and a vast quantity of ammunition and explosives.<sup>235</sup>

### *Bardera*

The Bardera relief sector differed from Baidoa in several critical ways. First, it was a smaller sector. While the town of Bardera had been ravaged during the civil war, one clan, whose faction, the United Somali Party, was led by General Abdi Dahir Warsame, inhabited it. Therefore, there was little of the factional fighting that had been so troublesome elsewhere, and it was far simpler to stabilize the sector once UNITAF troops arrived. Ironically, the presence of a single faction in the town actually increased the effects of the famine. Most of the starving people in the sector had come from its outlying areas, and the inhabitants of the town felt no obligation to assist those to whom they were not related. Those living in the town were relatively well-off in comparison to the

refugees, who were crowded into an area called the "Italian Village" to the south of the town. Here they were subject to starvation from the lack of relief supplies, from disease due to crowded and unsanitary conditions, and from the depredations of armed bandits. When the Marines arrived, as many as 300 refugees were dying each day. With the safe delivery of food and medicines to the relief organizations and the presence of the Marines, the death toll soon dropped to less than 10 percent of what it had been.<sup>236</sup>

After the success in Baidoa, Colonel Hellmer moved quickly to Bardera, arriving in late December. With Colonel Emil R. Bedard, the commanding officer of the 7th Marines, he set up another civil-military operations center. Colonel Hellmer's team soon was assisting the legitimate elders of Bardera to establish a security council and reassert their own authority. Again, the Marines were there to provide security, not to govern. The elders took advantage of the opportunity to reestablish an effective local government, enforcing laws, trying criminals, and meting out justice to those convicted of crimes. By 7 February, an auxiliary police force was brought back into existence, and the police were soon joining the Marines at checkpoints. As a result of these efforts, the influence of local bandits waned. Bardera was noted for being a quiet sector for the next four months.<sup>237</sup>

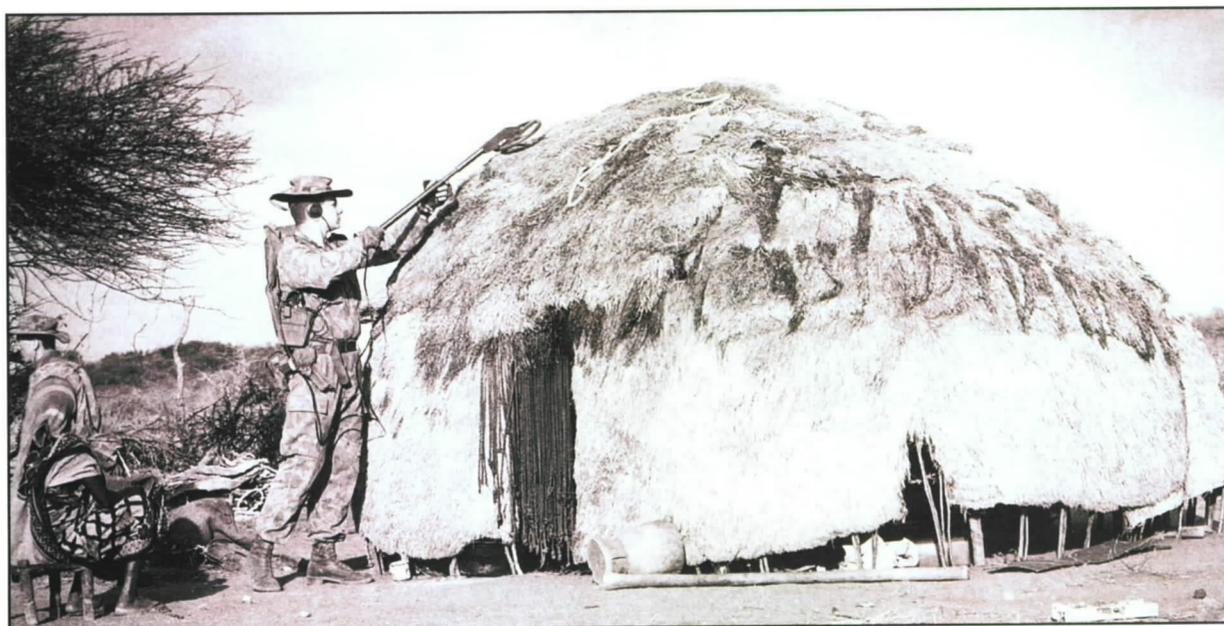


Photo courtesy of the Australian Department of Defense

*An Australian soldier uses a mine detector to search for hidden arms in the effort to stamp out banditry in the Baidoa humanitarian relief sector.*

Still, there were some problems that beset the relief efforts. The most notable of these was the presence of mines along the main roads. Nearly every road in the sector was mined, making it difficult to open the main supply routes into the interior.\* Even though few mines were encountered, the clearance operations had to progress slowly and thoroughly along every mile before they were safe for the passage of convoys. Even then, the roads needed repair. As engineers worked on the roads, the helicopters of Marine Aircraft Group 16 lifted food and relief supplies to the humanitarian relief organizations in outlying villages that otherwise could not have been reached.<sup>238</sup>

Toward the end of January, the restructuring of forces in the theater allowed Major General Wilhelm to rearrange the Marine forces in a manner he considered more in keeping with local conditions. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, which had originally occupied the Bardera sector, was recalled to Mogadishu, where its riflemen were advantageously used in the urban environment. Its place was taken by a new organization, Task Force Bardera, formed around the 3d Amphibious Assault Battalion. This unit, with its greater mobility, was better suited to the open terrain in the sector. On 24 January, the task force officially began its duties in Bardera.<sup>239</sup>

While the sector was fairly quiet, there was still the need for vigilance. This was especially true in late February when serious fighting erupted among the factions in Kismayo, the humanitarian sector bordering Bardera to the south. To ensure that Bardera was not affected by the fighting, and especially to ensure that Colonel Jess' Somali Patriotic Movement forces did not enter the Bardera sector, Task Force Bardera maintained reconnaissance elements north and south of the town. At the beginning of March, squad-sized patrols were sent along the Jubba River valley as far south as the town of Saacow. These patrols and screens had the desired effect, and no disturbances or significant presence of Jess' forces were noted in the sector.<sup>240</sup>

By the end of April, the Marines were able to turn over responsibility for a sector that was returning to peace and normalcy. As UNITAF prepared to hand off operations to the United Nations, Task Force Bardera was brought back to

Mogadishu to prepare for redeployment. On 18 April, the Botswana Defense Force contingent relieved the Marines of responsibility for Bardera.<sup>241</sup>

### *Oddur*

As the French soldiers moved into the towns from which they would operate in Oddur, they brought with them great experience in operating in this part of the world. Many of these French soldiers and Marines had served in the neighboring state of Djibouti, formerly known as French Somaliland. They came, therefore, with knowledge of the importance of clan and tribal allegiance in Somalia, and they tried to work within that context in this sector.<sup>242</sup> In addition, the French forces in Djibouti had witnessed the civil war that began there in 1991 between the Somali Issas and the Ethiopian Afars.

By 28 December, the last elements of the French forces arrived from France and Djibouti, and moved to Oddur through Mogadishu. By this time, the French forces consisted of a command element, which included a special operations company, a logistics support battalion, a military intelligence detachment, and detachments of security forces, military police, and communications. The ground forces were composed of one battalion from the 5th Combined Arms Overseas Regiment, one battalion from the 13th Foreign Legion Demi-Brigade, and the 3d Company of the 2d Foreign Legion Parachute Regiment. The 3d and 4th companies of the 2d Marine Infantry Regiment strengthened the other battalions with organic armored personnel carriers. These forces were supported by an aviation detachment from the 5th Attack Helicopter Regiment, and the 3d Company of the 6th Foreign Legion Engineer Regiment. All told, there were about 2,200 French soldiers, Marines, and Legionnaires in the Oddur sector.<sup>243</sup>

As in Bardera, the natives of Oddur were mainly from one dominant clan, the Rahanweyne. However, that does not mean there was unity throughout the sector. The Rahanweyne clan was described as "divided into a multitude of sub-clans opposed to each other and characterized by opportunism and fragile alliances." Also, the people living in the north and near the critical Ethiopian border were members of the rival Ogaden clan. As in Bardera, the townspeople felt little sympathy toward the refugees from the out-

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\* Lawrence N. Freedman was killed when his vehicle struck a mine in this sector.



Photo courtesy of the author

*French Foreign Legionnaires made their headquarters in an old Italian fort at El Berde, from which platoons and squads were sent to villages and hamlets throughout the Oddur sector.*

lying districts who were not related to them. The local leaders looked out for their own clan, but not the others. The French would thus have to draw on all their experience and skills in dealing with the native Somalis throughout this sector.<sup>244</sup>

The French forces were deployed in their traditional “oil spot” manner. The sector was first broken down into three sub-sectors centered on major cities or towns, which in this case were Oddur and the Ethiopian border, Wajid, and Tiyegloo. One battalion occupied each of these sub-sectors. From these, 10 towns or hamlets were occupied by company-sized forces, which then sent platoons to other locations, for a total of 20 occupied sites. The French then were able to operate from these strongpoints, spread throughout the sector, show their presence, maintain a strong posture, and conduct reconnaissance. In Oddur itself, a mobile reaction force supported by helicopters was kept ready to intervene in any situation.<sup>245</sup>

In the city of Oddur, the work of these coalition forces was very similar to what was going on in the other sectors. The Somalis soon established

local committees for security, food distribution, school operations, and so forth. As was the case elsewhere, the French recognized they had to get the Somalis to take responsibility for their own welfare and governance. The French also established their own team to work with the relief organizations in town, notably *Medecines Sans Frontieres* (Doctors Without Borders) and Concern. These organizations ran a hospital and feeding stations. The effectiveness of the organizations’ work was significantly increased by the arrival of the French Army, which controlled the safe shipment and distribution of food and supplies while leaving the humanitarian agencies to carry on with their own duties.<sup>246</sup>

By 30 December, just days after their arrival in the sector, the French special operations forces pushed out along the axis Oddur-Ted-El Berde. The purpose of this initial operation was three fold: first, it provided a surveillance line toward the Ethiopian border; next, it opened the sector to these areas for the local humanitarian organizations; and finally, the French presence there would

help to stop the heavy flow of refugees coming into Oddur and other cities from the northern towns which were hit hard by war and drought.<sup>247</sup>

This area was very important to the entire operation because its northern limit stretched along the Somali-Ethiopian border. The flow of refugees across the ill-defined frontier brought with it the possibility of armed forces from either nation crossing into the other's territory. This, in turn, might cause an incident that could be difficult to contain. As early as 31 December, during a helicopter reconnaissance in the vicinity of the town of Yet, French troops came across four armed men in civilian clothing who were acting suspiciously. The men were picked up, interrogated, and found to be members of the Ethiopian Army. They were quickly turned over to their own authorities.<sup>248</sup>

The presence of the Ogaden clan also served to increase the volatility of this section of the border. The town of El Berde, located just a few kilometers south of the border, was a case in point. Prior to the civil war, a *modus vivendi* was in place here, as elsewhere in Somalia where a smaller clan or sub-clan had to coexist in an area dominated by a larger, stronger one. An effective police force was active in the area and there were regional and district committees, on which the local chiefs served. In this way, good relations were maintained with the various national ministries and the governor at Oddur. With the coming of the war, however, clan was pitted against clan. The populace of the region around El Berde, about 8,000 people, crossed into Ethiopia.\* By early 1993, they were returning to find their homes and villages destroyed or damaged. They needed food, medicine, and humanitarian assistance. To compound the situation here, the returning chief of El Berde did not recognize the legitimacy of the new governor of Oddur. Despite the internal strife, the French were respected and were working with both sides to effect reconciliation and an agreement to bring back normal relations.<sup>249</sup>

The French tactic of spreading across the sector into hamlets and villages in platoon and squad formations allowed them to cover maximum territory. With so many soldiers in the sector, they also relied upon the mobility of their armored personnel carriers and helicopters to move rapidly and

establish control of the zone. By late January, their presence had created a reassuring effect on the relief organizations, which were able to move about with greater security. The people also began to respond by gaining confidence, providing intelligence, and returning to their villages.<sup>250</sup>

The first contacts between the French and the native Somalis were described as excellent, and the local elders and chiefs were satisfied with the French presence. By the beginning of February, mine clearing operations had effectively been completed throughout the sector. A police force, armed only with batons, was established, and a weapons registration program was in place. This program allowed the French to confiscate unregistered firearms and to arrest any armed individuals.<sup>251</sup> The French soldiers, Marines, and Legionnaires settled into a daily routine of patrols, reconnaissance, ambushes, checkpoints, searching for arms caches, and seizing unauthorized weapons.

During February, the French already realized they could decrease and realign their forces without losing control of the sector, and the first French units began to rotate out of theater. The battalion of the 5th Combined Arms Overseas Regiment left, along with the engineers and one company of Marine armored personnel carriers. Helicopter support also was decreased. To accommodate fewer troops, the number of towns and hamlets occupied was reduced to 12, but the amount of patrols was increased. By March, the French government decided that 1,100 men would take part in UNOSOM II. During the remainder of March and April, the French forces continued to realign themselves, rotating out some of the original units while bringing in new ones to support the United Nations mission.<sup>252</sup>

### *Gialalassi*

As the Italian forces settled in around Gialalassi, their responsibilities were soon extended beyond that sector. Having reclaimed their embassy in Mogadishu early in the operation, the Italians kept a strong force in the neighborhood for its protection. It also made sense to the Italian commanders that they should be given responsibility for some part of the city that included the area where they were located. Of course, political and practical considerations were involved in determining how the Italian forces would be employed in the city.

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\* The French estimated about 113 villages and hamlets in the sector had been abandoned and roughly 40 percent of the local population (118,000 people) had become refugees.



Photo courtesy of the Italian Armed Forces

*Italian soldiers on patrol in the Gialalassi humanitarian relief sector, which as later expanded to include the northern half of Mogadishu.*

First, there was the question of how the Somalis would accept the Italians, with their history as a colonial power. The issue was a delicate one, for the Italians were a strong presence who brought distinct benefits to the coalition. Yet, General Johnston did not want them to be placed in a situation or position in which they would be counterproductive if Somali anti-Italian reaction was strong. He saw the older Somalis, who had lived in the period of Italian presence, would be amenable to their return as a part of UNITAF. He was more worried about the younger Somalis, who might make an issue of colonialism. General Johnston therefore followed a policy of gradualism by which the Italian forces were slowly placed in the city and countryside and the reac-

tions of the Somalis were assessed. After the successes of the Merka and Gialalassi operations, he decided the problem might have been overstated. Johnston soon decided to give the Italians responsibility for a portion of the city.<sup>253</sup>

Other political considerations had to be taken into account. MarFor and other coalition forces had occupied areas that were mostly in the southwestern portion of the city, which was territory of General Aideed. The Italian Embassy was in the northeast part of the city, in an area claimed by the forces of Ali Mahdi. While this could be a counterbalance, it was recognized that it was imperative no favoritism be shown to either faction leader by the coalition forces in the area. Since the Italian Embassy was nearly adjacent to the head-

quarters of Ali Mahdi, General Johnston determined the Italian forces headquarters should not be established in that area. Instead, the Italians were given responsibility for the northeast portion of Mogadishu, with their sector extending into Gialalassi. Their headquarters was then established in the town of Balcad, several kilometers out of Mogadishu along the main route heading north. The gradual manner in which this was accomplished, along with the professionalism of the Italian soldiers, allayed any suspicions by the Somalis of either neocolonialism or favoritism.<sup>254</sup>

The Italian soldiers were soon conducting patrols, arms sweeps, and other civil actions within the city of Mogadishu. The situation there required close cooperation between all parties. "As activity in Mogadishu picked up, MarFor and Italian units began running into each other on patrols and during operations, creating confusion and potentially dangerous situations."<sup>255</sup> Although the creation of distinct areas of responsibility was a major step toward solving the problem, direct liaison between the coalition members was a necessity. For example, early in January, Italian soldiers had been fired at by a sniper along a route in a section of the city called the Villagio Scibis. To show their resolve, the Italian command planned a major sweep through this area using about 540 men. The operation was to start at 0430 on 12 January. But when the liaison officer brought this to the attention of the UNITAF staff, it was noted the MarFor also was planning to conduct an operation in a neighboring area at the same time. UNITAF postponed the Italian operation for 24 hours, when it was successfully completed without incident.<sup>256</sup> Major General Wilhelm, the commanding general of MarFor, and Major General Gianpietro Rossi, the Italian commander, also agreed on the conduct of joint operations in the city, beginning on 19 January. The cooperation between the two coalition partners resulted in the creation of Task Force Columbus, composed of forces from the San Marco Battalion, and the 571st Military Police Company, a United States Army unit under the operational control of MarFor. The task force conducted patrols and provided security for humanitarian relief warehouses in the area of the Karaan Market.<sup>257</sup>

With such a wide and diffuse area of responsibility, the Italians had to align their units somewhat differently than those in other sectors. They maintained a large force in their sector of

Mogadishu, around the Italian Embassy. They also placed garrisons in the towns of Balcad, Jawhar, and Gialalassi. These four strongpoints controlled the main population centers in the sector and provided security along the main supply route that ran from Mogadishu to Bullo Burti. Three task forces (Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie) were assigned to cover these bases. Alpha, the smallest force with 413 soldiers, was responsible for Mogadishu. Charlie, the next largest task force, split its deployment between Jawhar, with 180 soldiers, and Gialalassi, with 550 soldiers. Task Force Bravo, the largest with 1,116 soldiers, was at the so-called transitory base in Balcad, from which it could deploy north or south as the situation required.

The threat to coalition forces differed in each of these places. As might be expected, Mogadishu, with the presence of armed members of the two main Somali factions, had the highest number of incidents. Members of Ali Mahdi's Abgal clan frequently clashed with those of the rival Habr Gedr clan of General Aideed on the streets of the capital. These fighters also fired occasionally at the Italian soldiers, or boldly threatened the local populace, just as they did with American servicemen and Somali civilians elsewhere in the city. Bandits presented the main problem in outlying towns.

The Italians quickly demonstrated their presence and strength throughout the sector with routine patrolling and checkpoints. From their strongpoints, reconnaissance patrols protected the main supply route, weapons caches and markets were raided, arms were confiscated, and mines were cleared. More importantly, the Italians devised a series of operations that would take place throughout the sector. The size of the force used for each of these operations depended on the objective. Those at the highest levels were named "canguro" (kangaroo). They were planned and directed by the Folgore Brigade headquarters and executed by its subordinate units. The next level, named "mangusto" (mongoose) comprised operations undertaken by the 186th and 187th Parachute Regiments of the brigade.\* The lowest

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\* As with regiments in many other modern armies, these units were not formed in the manner familiar to Americans. Each was composed basically of one battalion, with a separate company-sized headquarters element through which the regimental commander provided command and control, administration, and logistics support.



DVIC DD-SD-00-00861

*U.S. Marines in a light armored vehicle from the 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion join Italian soldiers in a Fiat OTO Melara 6614 armored vehicle at an intersection along the Green Line in Mogadishu.*

level operations, meant for rapid reaction to events or intelligence, were named “hilaac” (Somali for lightning). These were executed by the brigade’s special forces and were generally conducted in Mogadishu.<sup>258</sup>

A fourth type of operation was named “tamburo” (drum) and took advantage of the Italian force’s large component of armored personnel carriers and helicopters. The mobility and rapid movement provided by these vehicles made them especially valuable in emergency situations, the primary goal of tamburo operations. These operations also enabled the Italians to react to situations far from the city strongpoints, effectively controlling the entire relief sector.<sup>259</sup>

The Italian soldiers were busy with civil activities as well. In the Gialalassi sector, as elsewhere in the coalition’s area of operations, the overall success of the mission depended on the perception by the population that the coalition was there to assist the Somali recovery and to provide general security. The brigade engineer company cleared mines from roads and villages, and detachments of soldiers provided security for relief convoys moving throughout the sector. Relief organization warehouses and distribution points were kept under surveillance to prevent attack or theft. The

Italians also provided direct medical aid to the Somali people. An ambulance service carried wounded or seriously ill civilians to the Italian medical facilities.\* There they were treated in cooperation with Somali health and medical personnel. By the end of January alone, these medical visits numbered more than 4,000.<sup>260</sup>

The Italian command worked with Somali elders and leaders to establish local committees so order could be maintained and local governance begun. They also were very actively involved in the establishment of the auxiliary security force in Mogadishu and throughout the Gialalassi sector. These forces worked in the main population centers of Mogadishu, Gialalassi, Balcad, and Jawhar. The auxiliaries were soon accompanying the Italian soldiers on patrols and at checkpoints. Weapons control within the sector was accomplished through a series of actions. First, the carrying of arms in the sector was prohibited; citizens were requested to voluntarily turn in weapons. Next, arms were confiscated during

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\* The Italian forces established one military hospital and one surgical ward. Six infirmaries in the four strongpoint cities backed these up. They were staffed by 39 medical officers, 12 hospital corpsmen, and 170 troops.



DVIC DD-SD-00-00864

*An Italian soldier holding a 9mm Beretta 12S sub-machine gun patrols a heavily pockmarked section of the Green Line, which separated the warring factions in Mogadishu.*

sweep operations in areas known or suspected to contain weapons caches or havens for armed persons. These actions had results similar to those taken throughout UNITAF's area of operations. Thousands of weapons and several tons of ammunition were confiscated and destroyed.<sup>261</sup>

In addition to the work of the medical staff, the Italians assisted the local population in several direct ways. Wells damaged during the civil war were cleared and repaired. Main roads were put back into good order. Schools were reopened, and local businesses were encouraged and given support to help restart the local economy. A postal service between Somalia and Italy was established.<sup>262</sup>

The supply of this large force (about 3,200 soldiers) was an important issue for the Italian command. This was the Italian armed forces' first major deployment since World War II. The Folgore Brigade had a related unit, the 46th Aviation Brigade, which supported the operation

with three Aeritalia G222 utility transport aircraft.<sup>263</sup> These airplanes, along with 12 helicopters assigned to a composite helicopter regiment, provided ample intra-theater transportation for personnel and supplies. The Italian forces were also fortunate in Somalia's location within easy air resupply distance of Italy itself. The Italian officers' mess at Balcad was soon renowned for the quality of its fare; fresh pastas, meats and fish, fruits and vegetables, and wine were all prepared and served daily.\* Potable water for drinking and washing was a problem, as it was everywhere else. This burden was relieved in large part by digging two wells, one in Mogadishu and the other in Gialalassi. The combined capacity of the wells

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\* General Order Number 1 prohibited the consumption of alcohol. However, this applied only to American forces. Americans traveling in the theater were offered wine in Oddur and Gialalassi and beer in Belet Weyne, which they had to respectfully, and usually reluctantly, decline.



DVIC DD-SD-00-00849

*A sampling of the small arms and crew-served weapons confiscated by the 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry, at checkpoint Condor south of Merka.*

was 14,000 liters of water per day, which could be used for washing.<sup>264</sup> This represented a tremendous boon because more of the water that was hauled into the relief sector every day could be used just for drinking and cooking.

Through March and April, the Italians continued to suppress bandits and assist the local populace. By the end of the latter month, as some of the UNITAF coalition partners prepared to depart, the Italians were tasked to remain as a part of UNOSOM II. Their new area of responsibility would continue to include Gialalassi, with an expansion to the north to incorporate the neighboring relief sector of Belet Weyne.

### *Merka*

The Italian forces also had been instrumental in establishing the Merka relief sector, but once the port and airfield had been secured and roads opened into the interior, Army Forces Somalia was given responsibility for that sector. The unit that was left for this mission, 2d Battalion, 87th Infantry, was a part of the 2d (Commando)

Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.<sup>265</sup> Although a smaller sector than most of the others, Merka had its share of challenges for the American soldiers.

Patrols uncovered some large arms caches during January. The first of these discoveries came on 14 January when elements of Task Force 2-87 seized 500,000 rounds of small arms ammunition hidden at an airfield near the town of Afgooye. Ten days later, Task Force 3-17, the 10th Mountain Division cavalry squadron, uncovered a large arms cache kept in eight half-buried conex boxes. In both instances, the arms and ammunition were quickly destroyed. Task Force 2-87 continued cordon and search operations throughout the sector, especially near large towns such as Kurtunwaarey, Baraawe, and Qoryooley.<sup>266</sup> On 29 January, these operations uncovered two more caches.<sup>267</sup>

Although it was originally outside the Merka relief sector, the town of Afgooye was a concern for the soldiers in this sector. Afgooye was located within the Bale Dogle sector, which also was under the control of the Army Forces Somalia during January and February, and American sol-



Photo courtesy of the Italian Armed Forces  
*Italian soldiers exhibit some of the arms confiscated during sweep operations in areas known to harbor armed insurgents and contain weapons caches.*

diers could therefore be transferred between sectors as needed. The problems in Afgooye centered on banditry. The town was at a key location on a main road to Mogadishu, and was therefore a magnet for bandits and lawless elements wanting to extort payments from travelers going to or from the capital city.

On 31 January, Commando Brigade conducted a large cordon and search operation at Afgooye. Task Force 2-87 conducted an air assault, while Task Force 3-17 and the 984th Military Police Company held sectors in and around the town. The operation continued for several days. At its conclusion, the 984th Military Police Company was left in the town to provide a presence and conduct stabilization operations. The operation successfully curtailed violence and banditry in this area, which allowed the people to reclaim their town.<sup>268</sup> These operations continued in the Merka sector, which had become relatively quiet through February. A 60-man police force was reestablished in the town and worked closely with Army Forces Somalia by the end of January.<sup>269</sup> On 1 March, as the Moroccans assumed control of the Bale Dogle relief sector, Afgooye was removed from that sector and incorporated into the Merka

sector. The 984th Military Police Company remained in place. On 9 April, the 1st (Warrior) Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, relieved the 2d Brigade at Merka. On 28 April, the Merka relief sector was turned over to the Pakistani 6th Punjab Regiment, which had arrived as part of UNOSOM II forces.<sup>270</sup>

### *Belet Weyne*

The Canadian presence grew quickly in the Belet Weyne sector after it was secured on 28 December. The entire Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group had flown in by the first days of January 1993. Commanded by Colonel Serge Labbe, the battle group strength was 1,359 soldiers at its height. The group was composed of three commandos, with a service commando and a reconnaissance platoon in support. The Royal Canadian Dragoons' A Squadron also was assigned for the mission, as were an engineer troop and a signal troop.<sup>271</sup> \*

The Canadian forces were supported by Grizzly, Cougar, and Bison armored vehicles, which arrived by ship and were then driven overland. \*\* Such vehicles were not normally part of the regimental equipment. Due to the long distances and the need for convoy protection, however, they were borrowed from other units specifically for this operation.<sup>272</sup> The Canadians conducted dismounted patrols until these vehicles began arriving in the sector on 15 January. By early March, the Canadian 93 Rotary Wing Aircraft Flight had provided six CH-135 helicopters, which increased the force's mobility and operational reach.<sup>273</sup> \*\*\*

\* In the Canadian forces, the term battle group is analogous to task force. In this instance, it represents the formation of a battalion-sized unit specifically reinforced and formed for this particular mission. The commandos that make up the battle group are company-sized airborne infantry formations. The term does not imply special operations capabilities.

\*\* These are Canadian-made all-wheeled armored personnel carriers. The Grizzly has eight wheels and mounted a 12.7mm machine gun and a 7.62mm machine gun. The Cougar is a six-wheeled fire support vehicle armed with a 76mm gun and a 7.62mm machine gun mounted coaxially with the main gun. The Bison is an eight-wheeled armored personnel carrier mounting a 7.62mm machine gun.

\*\*\* Until this time, traffic moving between Belet Weyne and the port of Mogadishu took five days for a round trip; two days each way and one day with overnight at the port.

The Canadians divided their sector into four security zones, each of which was assigned to a sub-unit of the battle group. They quickly began aggressive patrolling throughout the sector, both dismounted and in the armored vehicles. Toward the end of January, the Canadian command had already assessed most of the humanitarian sectors as generally quiet, making the patrolling of the large security zones safer for the soldiers. It was only to the north and east that friction was causing concern.<sup>274</sup>

There, close to the Ethiopian border and the town of Matabaan, the political situation was complicated. Most of the population within the sector was of the Hawadle clan, and the United Somali Congress faction had a strong presence there. Some of these faction members were supporters of General Aideed. Colonel "John" Hussein was one of Aideed's division commanders. Aideed's first cousin, Colonel Omar Jaua, was the chief of staff of Aideed's 1st Division, which operated in the vicinity of Galcaio (outside of UNITAF's area of operations). A local governor named Harlane, in the town of Dharsamenbo, reported directly to General Aideed. However, there also was a United Somali Congress faction that declared itself independent of both Aideed and Ali Mahdi. The Somali National Front and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front also had strong factions in the area, and a faction of the Somali National Movement was situated along the Ethiopian border.<sup>275</sup>

From the start Canadian forces and U.S. Special Operations Forces in the area began to make contact with these groups. From these initial talks, the coalition soldiers received information about camps and the locations of cantonment areas, of which there were a large number in the sector, each guarded by 60 to 70 men. The coalition troops inspected and inventoried these camps and cantonments. Just as important, this aggressive activity showed a strong coalition presence throughout the sector and acted as a buffer between the factions.

Of equal importance was the need to keep the factions from causing trouble across the international boundary with Ethiopia or beyond the limits of UNITAF's area of operations in Somalia. The Belet Weyne sector adjoined both of these critical areas. Coalition patrols along these areas was enhanced by the personal contacts of Canadian and American soldiers with Ethiopian and Somali leaders. In late December and early

January, the most volatile area was at the town of Fer Fer, which lay directly astride the Ethiopian-Somali border. The Somali National Movement had a strong presence there, and the Ethiopian Army had moved more than 500 men to the area. The Ethiopians disarmed any Somali who crossed the border, but were refraining from attacking the Somalis.<sup>276</sup> UNITAF Special Operations Forces had made contact with the Ethiopian commander at Fer Fer by 5 January, and kept regular contact with him.

The Special Operations Forces performed other important functions in the sector as well. They traveled to all the major villages to assess the attitudes of the local populations. They also noted which clans people belonged to, the extent of bandit activities, sources of water, main crops grown, and other information about daily life and politics. This information was passed to the coalition commander in Belet Weyne, Colonel Labbe. It was then passed to UNITAF, where, combined with similar information from the other sectors, it was processed as intelligence about the entire area of operations.<sup>277</sup>

The Canadian forces soon established good relations with the local populace and conducted aggressive patrolling throughout the sector. They also provided security for the convoys of relief supplies coming into the sector, notably those of the Red Cross and Save the Children. These relief organizations took care of up to 45,000 people a day just in the main city of Belet Weyne. From that center, additional supplies were distributed to outlying areas. Dependable stocks of food and regular feeding at the refugee centers brought the famine under control. Toward the end of January, starving refugees were so far removed from danger they only required one feeding per day. Yet, even with food stocks available elsewhere, large numbers of refugees stayed in the city because of the lack of water. Many wells had been destroyed or contaminated during the civil war. With the security provided by the Canadian soldiers, two humanitarian relief organizations, Save the Children and Oxfam Quebec, worked on restoring wells and provided veterinary assistance.<sup>278</sup> Such measures allowed the people to return to their villages.

The Canadian command encouraged Somali self-reliance through a series of councils. There were separate ones established for local security, relief, reconstruction, and political concerns. Colonel Labbe, as the commander, met only with



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*A soldier from the 10th Mountain Division points an M16 rifle into an enclosure while checking for weapons during a sweep of the small village of Afgooye. The village was a haven for weapons and bandits.*

the councils, not with individuals. This discouraged any charges of Canadian favoritism. All factions and clans needed representation on these councils and at major meetings to ensure their respective interests were heard and protected.<sup>279</sup>

The Canadians also reached out to the Somali people in more direct ways. As was happening in other sectors, they helped reestablish a police force. These local policemen did not carry weapons, but they were soon accompanying the Canadian soldiers on patrols. The Canadians trained these officers in first aid and riot control procedures and even procured uniforms for them. The education of Somali children also received attention. In the population centers of Belet Weyne and Matabaan, several schools were repaired and reopened with the help of the Canadian soldiers. School supplies were procured through the United Nations Children's Fund and distributed to these institutions. Teachers were recruited, tested, and given vocational training and returned to their duties. The Canadians also established a fund totaling \$75,000 to pay for local laborers working on repair projects, such as roads. These workers were employed and man-

aged through the local rehabilitation committee, but the funds were controlled and disbursed by the Canadians.<sup>280</sup> As elsewhere in Somalia, military engineers undertook the hazardous duty of clearing mines from roads and other areas.

Aside from the threat posed by potentially volatile confrontations of the numerous armed factions, the major problem in the sector was simple banditry. This usually took the forms of looting, sniping, and setting up roadblocks for the purpose of robbery and extortion. The Canadians sought to control these activities through the presence of their patrols. They also issued a strict weapons control policy. All weapons in the sector had to be registered, and none could be carried openly.\* Non-registered weapons were seized. In this manner, small arms in the sector became less of a problem. Then, by working closely with the various factions, the Canadians got the Somalis to agree to place their heavy weapons in cantonments. By 27 March 1993, the entire sector was rated secure.<sup>281</sup>

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\* This allowed humanitarian relief organizations that had legitimate security needs to maintain their protection.

In April, the Canadians prepared for the arrival of UNOSOM II forces. Under the transition plan, the Belet Weyne sector was to be handed over to the control of soldiers from India. But the Indians would not arrive on time, and the Italians had to temporarily extend their control into this sector.

Lieutenant Colonel Carol J. Mathieu, commanding officer of the battle group, recognized the sensitive position of his sector, which bordered on both Ethiopia and the portion of Somalia that was not within the UNITAF area of responsibility. He foresaw that difficulties could arise from the presence of factional forces around Galcaio and he recommended the extension of his sector, something that was eventually done under UNOSOM II.<sup>282</sup> Fortunately, the Canadians brought Belet Weyne quickly and skillfully under control, and the possibility for violence never became reality. The humanitarian sector on the other flank of the coalition's area of operations, however, would pose serious problems for UNITAF.

### *Kismayo*

After Mogadishu, Kismayo was the relief sector that had the greatest number of incidents. That city also caused the greatest concern because of the potential for inter-faction fighting. As in the capital, these armed factions were ultimately tied by alliance to either Aideed or Ali Mahdi. Both groups wanted to control this important city, which had been the scene of heavy fighting until the arrival of UNITAF. To further exacerbate the problem, the leader of the group loyal to Aideed, Colonel Ahmed Omar Jess, was suspected of having perpetrated a massacre among the followers of General Said Hirsi "Morgan" just before coalition forces landed. Tensions were high in the city and its environs, and the need to keep the two factions apart was critical. Morgan's Somali National Alliance faction of the Somali Patriotic Movement numbered only about 1,000 men, but many of them were well-disciplined veterans of the old national army.\* Jess' Somali Patriotic Movement faction was about four or five times larger, but was not nearly as well organized. Prior to the arrival of UNITAF troops, Morgan had moved his followers far up the Jubba River valley,

near the Kenyan border. He began to move south again in January.

Just as MarFor had responsibility for stabilizing the capital, so Kismayo was the responsibility of the Army Forces Somalia. Major General Steven L. Arnold decided on 17 December to deploy his 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division artillery tactical operations center staff to the city, under the command of Colonel Evan R. Gaddis, USA. The advance party of six officers and enlisted soldiers arrived at Mogadishu on 12 December and were quickly informed about the situation, given their mission, and told what was expected of them. They traveled to Kismayo by humvee and linked up with the Belgian and U.S. Marine units that had just secured the port and airfield.<sup>283</sup> Task Force Kismayo was created from the U.S. Army's 3d Battalion, 14th Infantry, and the Belgian 1st Parachute Battalion. The task force headquarters was formed from the 10th Mountain Division artillery staff, reinforced by other division assets including an aviation detachment, a boat company, a communications platoon, a psychological operations team, a civil affairs team, and a support element.<sup>284</sup> Brigadier General W. Lawson Magruder III, USA, the assistant division commander for operations, was selected to be the task force commanding general.

General Magruder moved quickly to impress upon the faction leaders in the sector the power and determination of UNITAF. He also wanted to ensure they understood the coalition was neutral and was there only to assist the Somali people. The task force began its security operations on 28 December. The very next day, General Magruder hosted a meeting with Colonel Jess, local elders, clan members, and former police officers to form an interim security council for the sector. Shortly after this first meeting took place, two other important steps were taken. First, the local Somali police began to form as an auxiliary security force. Soon they manned roadblocks with coalition forces. The second step was to issue a "no weapons policy" on 1 January.<sup>285</sup> This was a comprehensive policy that stated: "no one may carry a pistol, rifle, automatic weapon or transport a crew-served weapon within the city limits of Kismayo." It also banned pedestal mounts for weapons on vehicles. The only exceptions were for legitimate bodyguards, and even they had to be in possession of an authorized permit, and in the presence of their employer. Their weapons had to be carried openly (in a holster or slung over the

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\* This is a conservative estimate of Morgan's strength. Various sources put his numbers at two or three times this.



Photo courtesy of the author

*Canadian soldiers mounted in a Bison light armored vehicle patrol the Belet Weyne sector to create and maintain a secure environment in which to carry out their humanitarian work.*

shoulder with the muzzle pointed down.) This policy took effect on 9 January, and was enforced through a system of routine patrols, searches of vehicles and individuals, roadblocks, and mobile checkpoints. Coalition forces and auxiliary security forces worked together to enforce the ban.<sup>286</sup>

The coalition forces in Kismayo would soon be at the forefront of one of UNITAF's major challenges. The ceasefire agreement on 15 January required all factional forces to remain where they were on that date. Barely a week after the signing of the initial Addis Ababa accords, General Morgan began moving his forces south from the Kenyan border toward Kismayo. There was no doubt that General Morgan wanted a confrontation with his rival Colonel Jess for control of the city. General Magruder moved quickly and directly to end the possibility of fighting between the factions and to warn General Morgan of the consequences of his actions. On 23 January, General Magruder met personally with General Morgan at the town of QoQaani. General Magruder explained UNITAF's position on the cantonment

of large weapons and technicals and told Morgan that any such weapons found outside the cantonment areas could be destroyed. General Morgan disclosed the locations of his forces at four towns in the sector. General Magruder replied that four sites were too many. Morgan stated he had already told his forces not to engage coalition forces, and that he would avoid having his men on roads used for relief convoys if he was forewarned about them. He also agreed, "not to initiate attacks against other factions." Finally, he stated he could be contacted on 26 January to arrange another meeting.<sup>287</sup> In the end, however, this proposed meeting was overtaken by other events.

General Morgan was one of the more interesting characters in the Somali political landscape. A former Minister of Defense, he was a son-in-law of Siad Barre. He also had attended the United States Army Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. As U.S. Ambassador Robert B. Oakley said, this meant Morgan understood how we think, "but we don't have the foggiest idea of how he thinks." Ambassador Oakley

did describe him as “very cunning and totally untrustworthy.”<sup>288</sup> As if to prove the ambassador’s assessment, General Morgan’s agreement not to attack his rivals did not last 24 hours.

Some of Colonel Jess’ soldiers were in a cantonment at the town of Bir Xaani, located about 35 kilometers from Kismayo. Security was lax, perhaps in part because these men thought UNITAF would protect them from attack.<sup>289</sup> On 24 January, General Morgan’s fighters attacked the outpost as part of an attempt to move against the port city. In response, Colonel Maulin, one of Jess’ subordinates, made an unauthorized move against Morgan’s forces.\* UNITAF responded quickly with two radioed warnings to General Morgan to desist in his aggression and to pull back. When he paid no attention and continued with his intentions of reducing the Jess cantonment, Task Force Kismayo was ordered to stop him by force.

The task force planned a combined operation, with the 3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, providing air assault elements and attack helicopters and the Belgian 1st Parachute Battalion forming the ground assault element. An aerial reconnaissance of Bir Xaani located General Morgan’s forces and warning shots were fired. After these were ignored, Cobra attack helicopters fired cannons and antitank rockets at the Somali technicals and military equipment. The fire was described as “accurate and deadly.” Belgian soldiers, soon on the scene, captured several technicals, artillery, and armored vehicles.<sup>290</sup> This preventive operation was successful; although Morgan’s soldiers did return fire, they also pulled back quickly. The small, sharp engagement was important for two reasons. It was the first time preemptive force had been used against one of the Somali factions to enforce the Addis Ababa accords, signed only 10 days before. Second, as Ambassador Oakley said in an interview, the attack was necessary to “teach Morgan a lesson. ... Cobra gunships went in and took care of Morgan for not respecting the ceasefire, continuing to move south after we told him to stop, and for general misbehavior.”<sup>291</sup> General Morgan had to withdraw his remaining vehicles 35 kilometers from Bir Xaani, and his troops seven kilometers from the town.

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\* Colonel Jess had gone to attend the talks in Addis Ababa and had not returned. In fact, with the notoriety of the December massacre in Kismayo, there was speculation he might never return.

The forceful reaction of UNITAF forces produced an immediate effect. Fighting ceased, and the opposing factions pulled away from each other. The Kismayo relief sector entered a period of uneasy peace. Over the next few days, the Belgian paratroopers aggressively sought out and confiscated weapons, and American attack helicopters destroyed technicals found outside the compounds.<sup>292</sup> General Morgan and his men, some of whom claimed a right to return to homes in Kismayo, remained a threat in the area. Colonel Jess’ followers also caused troubles in the town and lower Jubba valley. There were several incidents of sniping and of grenade attacks against coalition soldiers, particularly the Belgians. These increased in intensity through the middle of February. By that time, General Morgan and Colonel Maulin were probing each other. In the midst of this turmoil, Colonel Jess returned to Kismayo. UNITAF had placed a lid on the situation on the southern flank, but it continued to simmer.

In late February, General Morgan was prepared to move against Colonel Jess’ forces in Kismayo once again. Taking advantage of the better discipline of his men, he infiltrated small groups into the city on 22 February. Again, Jess’ men were caught napping. In a short but intense action, several of Jess’ fighters, as well as some civilians, were killed and Jess and his followers fled the city. This clash was to have serious consequences for UNITAF.

Such a daring challenge could not go unanswered. Both General Johnston and Ambassador Oakley immediately issued a strongly worded ultimatum to General Morgan. “There can be no excuse or pardon for the deliberate, well-planned actions of your forces and senior commanders in attacking Kismayo on 22 February 1993. UNITAF condemns and holds you responsible for killing innocent civilians and terrorizing the entire population, threatening to destroy all the progress toward [prosperity] and peace which has been made in the region.” UNITAF commanders then told General Morgan, “as a result of these inexcusable, criminal actions and the breaking of the ceasefire, all your forces and weapons must be moved out [of] the lower Jubba valley to locations north of [Dhoble] no later than midnight 25 February. You must designate these locations to UNITAF by 25 February. If any of your forces are found outside of these locations on 26 February or

thereafter, they will be engaged. Any weapons located will be destroyed.”<sup>293</sup>

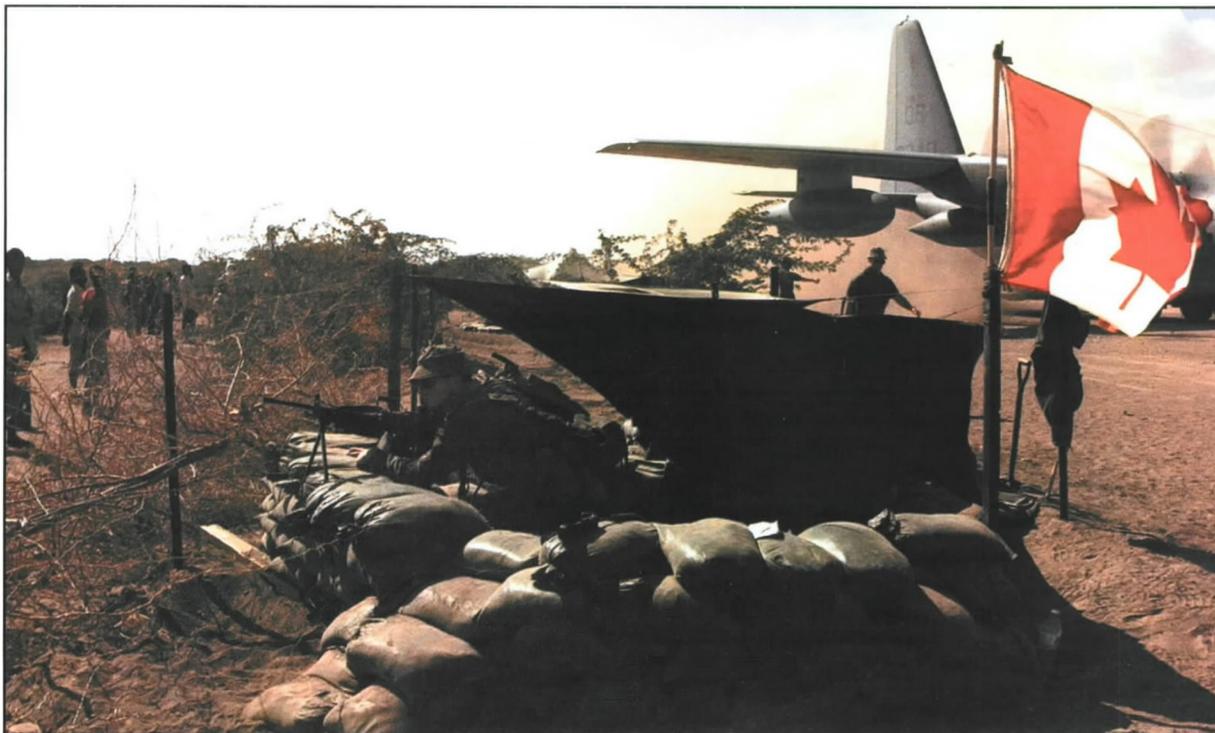
To give teeth to the ultimatum, Army Forces Somalia’s quick reaction force was ordered to Kismayo. Other Army units were shuffled in the theater to keep all humanitarian sectors secured. Even as Morgan withdrew to the Dhoble area, Colonel Jess’ forces were ordered to move out of the city, to the area of Jilib. These measures were timely, effective, and balanced, but the damage had been done.

In Mogadishu, General Aideed claimed that Morgan could not have succeeded at entering Kismayo unless he had the cooperation of UNITAF. He also told his followers that all of UNITAF’s actions were directed against his ally, Colonel Jess, conveniently ignoring what the coalition was doing to chastise General Morgan.<sup>294</sup> Aideed’s efforts at disseminating propaganda succeeded in bringing his followers out onto the streets of Mogadishu for three days of disturbances.

In Kismayo, as the situation quieted down again, the Army handed over responsibility for the sector to the Belgians on 5 March. About 150 Americans remained out of the original 1,000-

man contingent. Their main mission was to work with the humanitarian agencies.

But General Morgan was not done making trouble. With the start of the next round of peace talks scheduled to begin shortly in Addis Ababa, there was concern violence might again erupt. On 9 March, Colonel Frederick C. Peck, the public affairs officer, expressed UNITAF’s views in a press statement: “We’re going on intuition and track record. We are concerned that someone might try to derail things or make a point or get a little bit better situation.”<sup>295</sup> After only two weeks of relative quiet, Morgan’s forces again attacked Jess’ followers on 16 March and tried to take over the city. Jess’ supporters fled to the north, and UNITAF recalled its quick reaction force to the city. This 500-man unit, under Brigadier General Greg L. Gile, USA, was backed with 13 attack helicopters. The belligerents were quickly pushed out of the city. To further emphasize UNITAF resolve to keep the factions from confronting each other, the amphibious assault ship USS *Wasp* (LHD 1) and three other ships carrying the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit were stationed off the city’s coast on 25 March. The MEU landed the next day and conducted patrols to the west of the



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*A Canadian soldier manning a machine gun in a bunker guards the entrance of Belet Weyne airfield as a U.S. Marine KC-130 lands on the dirt airstrip.*

port city. At the same time, 200 American soldiers and the Belgians pushed to the north, placing a strong cordon between the forces of Morgan and Jess.

The Addis Ababa talks, which had begun on 15 March, continued through this period. With news of General Morgan's latest actions, Aideed threatened to leave the talks, again charging UNITAF with complicity. Colonel Peter A. Dotto, UNITAF's future plans officer, was also the coalition representative to the conference. He warned Aideed that leaving the conference would only "play into the hands of his enemies."<sup>296</sup> Aideed refused to listen and left. But this time he had overextended himself. His people in Mogadishu did not come into the streets as they had before. Also, several of his lieutenants disagreed with his stubbornness and formed their own contingent to continue representation at the conference. Faced with this unacceptable loss of support and prestige from his own faction, Aideed decided his interests were best served by returning to the negotiating table. While Aideed's resentment undoubtedly continued, Kismayo settled into a period of quiet for the remainder of UNITAF's time in Somalia.\*

Even as the city and the area of operations began to calm down near the end of March the events in Kismayo and their spillover in Mogadishu had two serious consequences. For General Aideed, loss of credibility would cause him to seek some method to regain his stature with his followers. For UNITAF, the Kismayo troubles caused a reevaluation of the transition to UNOSOM II and a rearrangement of the redeployment schedule.<sup>297</sup>

### *Morale and Restraint*

During the third phase of the operation, the work in Somalia could be rewarding for the soldiers and Marines of the coalition. They could see the results of their efforts, whether they were engineers building a bridge, infantrymen on patrol, officers assigned to the civil-military operations teams, or air traffic controllers bringing in aircraft filled with supplies or troops. Each person

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\* Kismayo continued to be a source of tension and conflict. On 6 and 7 May 1993, just two days after the departure of UNITAF and the turn over of the operation to the United Nations, Colonel Jess attacked General Morgan's forces in a bid to retake the city. Belgian forces, then under the command of UNOSOM II, repelled the attack.

contributed to a situation that was noticeably improving for the vast majority of Somalis. There was a tedious sameness to the daily round of work, however, and shifts were long and often monotonous with no days off. There also was an edge to life in the area of operations from the occasional attacks or sniping incidents. Within a month of the start of the operation, tension was mounting for those who patrolled the streets of the cities or the roads of the countryside, or who were riding in convoys. An official document stated the case clearly: "the strain of operating in an environment where a Marine on patrol might be met by a waving, smiling crowd on one corner and gunfire on the next began to tell on the individuals in MarFor. Many Marines began to grow increasingly impatient with the naturally curious Somalis, particularly when Somalis crowded them."<sup>298</sup>

This attitude was not peculiar to Americans or Marines. In Baidoa, the Australians also noted:

The soldiers observed acts of corruption and exploitation among Somalis and Somali Non-Government Organization staff. They became disillusioned. In many cases their morale plummeted as they asked themselves why they were risking their lives in a remote, hot and dangerous country, hell bent on its own destruction. It was an immense challenge for the commanders within the 1 RAR Group to maintain morale, and prevent soldiers from allowing their disillusionment and anger to lead to overly-aggressive practices. All of those who served in Baidoa had to dig deep to remain in touch with values and attitudes developed at home in Australia, while working under pressure in a brutalized society, stricken with corruption and violence.<sup>299</sup>

Such frustration was familiar to those senior commanders and noncommissioned officers who had served in Vietnam. There the enemy often hid within, and was supported by, the civilian population. In Somalia, there was no enemy in the traditional sense, but it was just as difficult to discern the intentions of a mob of people, or to spot within a crowd the person who might pose a real threat. Strong leadership at all levels was required to keep soldiers and Marines focused on their mission.

Major General Wilhelm recognized the creeping tiredness and frustration of his Marines by mid-January, and he issued MarFor a "Thirty-Day



Photo courtesy of the author

*Belgian paratroopers stand guard at the port of Kismayo.*

Attitude Adjustment Message.” In addition to calling for a brief stand down of operations to allow his Marines to gain some respite, he reminded them that they needed to maintain good relations “with the 90 [percent] of the population who welcomed the American presence.” As he noted, no matter how frustrating the situation might become, the Marines “had to avoid alienating the citizens of Mogadishu.”<sup>300</sup> In Baidoa, Lieutenant Colonel David W. Hurley adopted the motto of “firm, fair, and friendly” as the guide for the Australian soldiers. He also made it clear that unnecessary violence would not be tolerated, and that all actions must be within the rules of engagement.<sup>301</sup>

The professionalism and discipline of coalition soldiers were essential in keeping down the number of unfortunate incidents. Occasionally, some soldier or Marine would be confronted with a situation that called for a quick decision to use deadly force, although these were rare. At such times, the rules of engagement provided both a basis for action and protection for the soldiers involved if

there was an obvious threat. An investigation was held for any incident in which a member of the coalition shot a Somali. The individuals involved would either be upheld in their decision or recommended for a court-martial. On 4 February, a young Somali was shot and killed by a Marine sergeant as he rushed toward the back of an open vehicle while carrying a closed box. The box turned out to hold nothing dangerous. This was a very sorrowful event, causing grief to the boy’s family and deep remorse to the Marine involved. But since the contents of the box were not known, and since the boy’s actions were deemed to pose a possible threat, the sergeant was determined to have acted in accordance with the rules of engagement and did not face a court-martial.

But there were also some who did let their frustration and anger get out of hand, with drastic results. On 2 February, Gunnery Sergeant Harry Conde, shot and wounded a Somali youth who had approached his vehicle and stolen his sunglasses.\* Gunnery Sergeant Conde shot the boy as he was fleeing from the vehicle. The gunfire also wounded another Somali. Since the boy did not present any threat to the gunnery sergeant, he was deemed to have used excessive force and was tried by court-martial. He was found guilty of two counts of assault with a firearm with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, was fined, and was reduced in grade to staff sergeant.

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\* Riding in a convoy in the city of Mogadishu or in Kismayo was always a tense time. Roads between major points were kept clear by the Clean Street operations to allow for fast movement, and routes were occasionally varied, but there was always the chance of random sniping or a grenade attack. Also, Somali pedestrians frequently stepped in front of vehicles to purposely separate them from their convoy and slow them down or stop them. Then the vehicle could be mobbed as crowds of young men and boys rushed in to grab whatever they could get. Passengers in the vehicles were literally sitting targets if anyone wished to take advantage of the situation. There was a need for constant vigilance in such situations, and coalition soldiers had to be able to protect themselves and their property. On leaving a compound, a magazine was inserted into one’s personal weapon and a round chambered with the safety on. Many also carried sticks or the end poles from cots to rap the knuckles of those who might attempt to steal. At one point it was noted that some soldiers, such as the Tunisians, were traveling with bayonets fixed to deter thieves, but this practice was stopped. It was determined the very act of fixing bayonets provided a clear message of the intent of the soldiers involved and could act as a deterrent that would not be possible if the bayonets were already on the rifles.



DVIC DD-SD-00-00788

*BGen Lawson W. Magruder III, USA, the 10th Mountain Division's assistance division commander and Task Force Kismayo's commander, meets with Col Ahmed Omar Jess, the Somali faction leader in Kismayo.*

The most serious set of incidents occurred in Belet Weyne. The Canadians had problems with Somali men and youths sneaking into their lines at night and stealing whatever they could. The thefts were bad enough, but no one could determine the intentions of these intruders, and for that reason they posed a threat to the soldiers and a danger to themselves. Frustration and resentment mounted against these thieves. Unfortunately, some junior leaders took matters into their own hands in a manner that was unjustifiable and deadly. On 4 March, soldiers of the Reconnaissance Platoon were ordered to augment security at the engineers' camp at Belet Weyne. That evening the platoon's commander, Captain Michael Rainville, set in motion a plan to capture infiltrators by placing rations and equipment in a position that could be seen by Somalis coming close to the compound. Eventually, two unarmed Somali men were observed entering the compound. They were challenged by members of the platoon and attempted to flee. Warning shots were fired, but they continued to run. One of the Somalis was shot and captured. The other continued to run inside the com-

pound until he, too, was struck by rifle fire, knocking him to the ground. As he tried to get up, he was shot twice again at close range and killed.

Just a few days later, Major Anthony Seward, the commanding officer of 2 Commando, passed on to his platoon commanders that any intruders captured in Canadian lines were to be abused. The intention of this poorly worded direction was that any Somali thieves should be taught a lesson that would deter them, or others who might be contemplating such actions, from stealing from the Canadians. Some officers passed this word on to their men. Unfortunately, some soldiers took it as a license to do what they could to anyone unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. On the night of 16 March, a Somali teenager, Shidane Arone, was caught in the Canadian base at Belet Weyne. He was bound and taken to a bunker that had been used to hold such prisoners until they could be turned over to proper authorities. There he was tortured and beaten to death by at least two soldiers, Master Corporal Clayton Matchee and Private Kyle Brown. Several noncommissioned officers had knowledge of the beating, although



DVIC DD-SD-00-00946

*Two Belgian military police officers go through the possessions of a Somali taxi driver at a checkpoint at the entrance into the compound at the port of Kismayo.*

they may not have known of its severity until too late.<sup>302</sup>

Canadian authorities investigated both incidents. The result tarnished the reputation of a fine military establishment, which had received praise from General Johnston for “the humanitarian focus of the Canadian troops. It has earned them enormous good will and they have properly portrayed themselves as having come to Somalia for [a] noble purpose.”<sup>303</sup> The careers of many soldiers in the Airborne Regiment and in the Canadian Ministry of National Defense were ruined.

The initial investigations began with a commanding officer’s investigation immediately after the 4 March shooting, but this was not received at National Defense headquarters until 23 March. However, an investigation by Canadian military police began in late April, just days before the redeployment of the UNITAF headquarters. The Canadian forces began redeploying in May and continued to arrive back in Canada through June.

As word of the incidents began to emerge, along with allegations of withheld or altered information, they developed into a national scandal, reaching into the highest levels of the Canadian Ministry of National Defense. A special Commission of Inquiry was established in Canada, which worked on questioning all officers and soldiers connected in any way with either incident. As a result of the investigation and the scandal, the Canadian Airborne Regiment was disbanded. Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu was court martialed; although acquitted he retired from the service. Several other officers and noncommissioned officers were also court martialed. Among the most significant was Major Seward, who was found guilty of negligent performance of duty and received a severe reprimand, three months in prison, and dismissal. Captain Rainville was court martialed and found not guilty. Master Corporal Matchee attempted to commit suicide while in custody in Somalia, resulting in permanent brain damage that rendered him incompetent to stand trial. Private Brown was court martialed, found

guilty of manslaughter and torture, and sentenced to five years imprisonment and dismissal with disgrace.

Among the 30,000 members of UNITAF, such incidents of unwarranted violence and abuse were rare. Generally, the soldiers and Marines of all the coalition partners were concerned with maintaining their personal honor in a difficult situation, and with assisting the great majority of Somalis who needed and welcomed their efforts. The work

was not always easy, and it often required patience and forbearance. But as MarFor's command chronology for this period stated: "The discipline of the Marines ensured that potentially explosive situations, instead of deteriorating, were defused. Many a young Somali who could have been legitimately shot under the rules of engagement owes his life to the restraint of MarFor personnel."<sup>304</sup> The great majority of the coalition's soldiers displayed the same discipline.