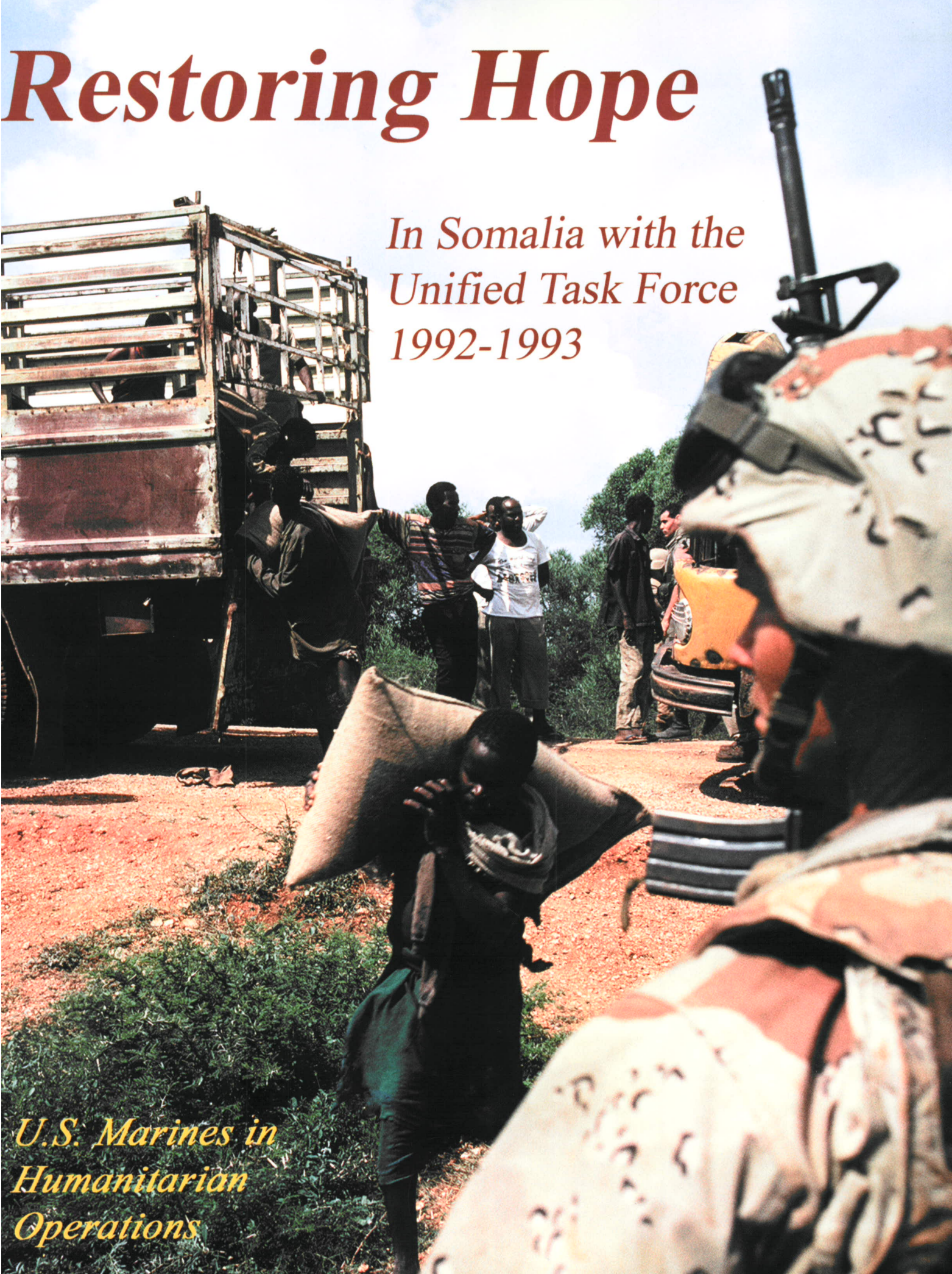


Restoring Hope

*In Somalia with the
Unified Task Force
1992-1993*

*U.S. Marines in
Humanitarian
Operations*



COVER: *Civilian relief workers unload food supplies at a village near Baidoa as a Marine escort stands by.*

DVIC DN-ST-93-01389

Restoring Hope:
In Somalia with the
Unified Task Force, 1992 - 1993

U.S. Marines in Humanitarian Operations



by
Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (Retired)

History Division
United States Marine Corps
Washington, D.C.
2005

Other Publications in the Series

U.S. Marines in Humanitarian Operations

Humanitarian Operations in Northern Iraq, 1991: With Marines in Operation Provide Comfort. (1995)

Angels From the Sea: Relief Operations in Bangladesh, 1991. (1995)

A Skillful Show of Strength: U.S. Marines in the Caribbean, 1991 - 1996. (2003)

On Mamba Station: U.S. Marines in West Africa, 1990 - 2003. (2004)

Foreword

This story of Operation Restore Hope relates how many issues unique to operations other than war were addressed and resolved by the commanding general of the Unified Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) and his staff. Because it is written specifically from the perspective of the command element and drawn from interviews, notes, and after action reports made at the time or shortly thereafter, this is a study of command, limited to that discrete portion of American involvement in Somalia that was the United States-led coalition under the command of Marine Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston. It does not follow the actions of the individual components or members of the units that made up the coalition force beyond how they may have affected the work and mission of UNITAF.

Modern military operations other than war are, in many ways, similar to pacification operations conducted in Latin America and the Far East a century ago. In fact, the lessons learned sections of many modern after action reports are familiar to anyone who has read the Marine Corps' 1940 *Small Wars Manual*, a treatise of the Corps' experience in the Banana Wars, which was written before World War II. Sections of that manual emphasized that civic actions often affected mission accomplishment more than military actions, and stressed that Marines must both become attuned to local culture and remain aloof from domestic political squabbles to be successful.

The last decade of the 20th century brought great changes to the world, many of which affected the United States military. If the years 1980 to 1989 were a time of reformulating military doctrine and integrating new technologies, the years from 1990 to 1999 were a time for testing those thoughts and instruments.

The final defeat of communism in Europe, the fall of the Warsaw Pact, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union were great ends in themselves. But they were the heralds of the new world order proclaimed shortly after by President George H. W. Bush. On the one hand, these occurrences allowed the United States and its allies to act decisively in the Persian Gulf against Iraq in 1990 and 1991; but the loss of the Cold War counterbalance of the Soviet Union and its strategic aims meant the United States would find it easier to become involved in regional conflicts and localized civil strife. For the remainder of the decade, United States military personnel bore a burden of increasing operational tempo rarely known in eras of peace.

Following the Persian Gulf War and its related Kurdish relief operation, the next major military commitment was to Somalia. The crisis in that country was such that the humanitarian mission of the United States and its coalition allies could only be met by military means. The response to the crisis was named Operation Restore Hope and was significant for its size and international support. It also provided useful lessons for succeeding humanitarian operations. Brigadier General Anthony C. Zinni, one of America's foremost experts on operations other than

war, saw the need for the Marine Corps to train a new generation of Marines able to think in new directions to solve the problems of humanitarian operations conducted in support of sometimes obscure and limited national goals. Many of the issues faced in Somalia by planners and executors (the Marines and soldiers on the ground) have resurfaced in Haiti, Bosnia, Rwanda, and other hotspots.

The author, Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski, retired from the United States Marine Corps Reserve on 1 March 1999, with nearly 31 years of service. During that time, he served in Vietnam as an artillery forward observer with two rifle companies, as an observer and advisor with the 37th Vietnamese Ranger Battalion, and the officer in charge of an integrated observation device (laser range finder) team on an outpost in the Que Son mountains. As a reservist, he later served in a variety of positions at the battery level with Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines. While on the staff of the Fleet Marine Force Atlantic Reserve Augmentation Unit, he served as a liaison officer with the British Army on six NATO exercises. He was the G-3 plans officer with the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade from 1988 to 1990. During the early days of the Persian Gulf War, he was recalled to active duty as a senior watch team commander in the crisis action center of the II Marine Expeditionary Force. He later received orders to proceed to Saudi Arabia as a field historian with the 2d Marine Division. He served with that unit throughout Operation Desert Storm. He was again recalled to active duty in December 1992 to serve as a field historian with the headquarters of the UNITAF in Somalia. In October 1994, he was recalled to active duty to serve in Haiti as the joint task force historian with the multinational force during Operation Restore Democracy. On 1 January 1996, he returned to active duty as the historian assigned to United States European Command to document Operation Joint Endeavor, during which he served in Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bosnia, and Croatia. For the last years of his military career he was the officer in charge of the Field Operations Branch of the Marine Corps History and Museums Division. During this time, he served with members of the general staff of the Polish Armed Forces on three occasions in Poland and the United States in the Partners For Peace program. He was recalled from retirement during the Global War on Terror in March 2003 and served as a historian for the Special Operations Command. He served overseas with a special operations air detachment and two battalions of U.S. Army Special Forces in Kuwait and Iraq.

Colonel Mroczkowski is the author of *U. S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: With the 2d Marine Division in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm*, and co-author of *Fort Monroe: The Key To The South*. He also has written several articles on military subjects. In civil life, he is the director of the U. S. Army's museum at Fort Monroe, Virginia, a position he has held since January 1986.



C.D. Melson
Acting Director of Marine Corps History

Preface

Operation Restore Hope was a complicated and unusual operation. From the initial commitment of United States Armed Forces on 9 December 1992 until the turnover to the United Nations in May 1993, there was little need for direct military action by large units, although the Unified Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) command was not loath to use force when necessary. Rather, the need to keep a neutral and balanced approach to the situation in Somalia was more important to the success of the mission. Small unit actions, patrolling, manning key points, convoy security, and crowd control were the order of the day. For a military historian, it has been an important task to identify the critical issues, often political in nature, which were of importance to the command and its conduct of the operation, and to follow these issues as events unfolded. This is far easier in a classic military operation with well-defined missions and objectives, and in which the effects of enemy actions or capabilities are readily discernible. The history of this operation is more about the evolution of ideas and command structures than it is about the engagement of enemy forces.

I have no reservations in claiming that the operation was successful; Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston and his coalition staff skillfully accomplished the mission of the Unified Task Force, which was to create a secure environment for the shipment of relief supplies and the establishment of the second United Nations force in Somalia, UNOSOM II. The Unified Task Force was able to turn over to the United Nations a country that, though still beset by problems, was beginning to recover and in which the famine had been broken. What occurred after 4 May 1993 is another story, of which Operation Restore Hope was the prologue.

The narrative is drawn from interviews, notes, and after action reports created at the time or shortly thereafter. As the historian assigned to UNITAF headquarters, I was in a notable position to have access to what was discussed and planned, but was also able to directly observe the resulting operations. I attended meetings and daily briefings and was able to travel throughout the theater, eventually reaching each of the humanitarian relief sectors. This gave me the opportunity to conduct interviews in the field with commanders, staff officers, and individual soldiers, Marines, airmen, and sailors. It also gave me the opportunity to see the diversity of action in each sector and to appreciate the complex nature and vast scope of operations: Somalia was not just Mogadishu, and Operation Restore Hope was more than the daily round of patrols and spot reports. The greatest difficulty I faced was in the very size of the area of responsibility (which was itself but a small part of the entire country of Somalia.) Travel was both time consuming and physically demanding; it could easily take at least three days to reach some of the farther cities, conduct a few interviews, and then return. Whether going by motorized convoy or aircraft, a day would be spent in travel each way, and a full day or two would be spent on the ground. All had to be timed to transportation schedules that could change with little or no advance notice. Failure to connect left one stranded until the next convoy or aircraft departed. Also, since I could not presume to impose on the hospitality of others, I had to be prepared to bring everything that I might require for food, water, or accommodation. "Humping" through the dust from a dirt airfield along a desert track with a full combat load, several liters of bottled water, a full Alice pack and a cot was not

something to look forward to. But the camaraderie shown in each sector certainly was, and the information gathered was worth the effort.

I also was fortunate to have met several persons with whom I got to work closely, or who helped me accomplish my mission. The first of these was Colonel Billy C. Steed, the UNITAF chief of staff, who gave me the latitude to go where I needed, provided me with access to meetings, and ensured that I reviewed important documents. Next was Captain David A. "Scotty" Dawson, who was the historian for the Marine Forces, and who had been overseeing the UNITAF headquarters portion as well until I arrived. He very quickly showed me around, and he was indefatigable and always full of enthusiasm. Much of my working time was spent in the operations center under the watchful eye of Colonel James B. "Irish" Egan, whose colorful manner made more bearable a daily grind in uncomfortable circumstances. He also demonstrated that the more important, but less noted, part of military professionalism often lies in the attention to routine duty and detail. I was fortunate to share a cramped, hot and airless working space in UNITAF headquarters with a distinguished civilian, Dr. Katherine A. W. McGrady, an employee of the Center for Naval Analyses. She provided insight in what was going on and kept me apprised on what happened while I was out traveling. More importantly, we shared the documents and information we collected, making the effort more complete than it would otherwise have been. I had the opportunity to visit on a few occasions with the 10th Mountain Division's historian, Captain Drew R. Meyerowich, USA. In addition to discussing the collection of documents and information, he spoke of his desire to get away from his desk and be more actively involved in the operation. He got his wish a few months later as the commanding officer of Company A, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, which, as part of the quick reaction force for the raid on General Mohamed Farah Hassan Aideed's headquarters on 3 October, fought its way through the streets of Mogadishu. Captain Meyerowich was awarded the Silver Star for his valor and leadership. Several outstanding Marine Corps combat artists also documented Operation Restore Hope. The first of these was Colonel Peter "Mike" Gish, who had an ability to see the essence of a scene and capture it in his sketchpad in just a few strokes. His good humor and endurance belied the age of a man whose service extended back to his time as an aviation cadet in the latter days of World War II, and who had seen active service during the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, and in the Kurdish relief operation. He and I shared many travels and many a dinner of meals, ready to eat, atop the chancery building in Mogadishu. He was an excellent mentor who taught me how to properly use the authority of a full colonel to accomplish one's mission. The lessons came in handy in later years in Haiti, Europe, and eventually back in Iraq. Lieutenant Colonel Donna J. Neary also deployed to Somalia, and I had the opportunity to watch her talent in the field. A gifted artist, she also had a knack for photography that was used to create a portfolio of coalition uniforms and arms. Captain Burton Moore brought his experience as an infantry officer during Vietnam, and worked as an artist with the Marine Forces. He created some remarkable works of Marines in action. Two of these artists are represented in this volume. I was very fortunate in meeting Major Daniel M. Lizzul, who was working as a liaison officer with the Italian forces. He not only assisted in interpreting interviews, but also ensured I got to accompany the Italians on some of their operations. I count him as a good friend and a highly professional officer. Warrant Officer Charles G. Grow, who I had known during Desert Storm, continued his excellent performance as both a combat photographer and artist. He was an invaluable liaison with the Joint Combat Camera Team. Sergeant B. W. Beard, a writer with the Joint Information Bureau, accompanied me on a memorable journey to Gialalassi in late December. His articles,

written for the local coalition forces' newspaper and service magazines, captured the spirit of what was happening for the Marines and soldiers who were out on the streets. Finally, there were all of the officers and soldiers of the various services of the coalition forces who responded to my requests for interviews and information. These men and women were often busy with their own duties, but they managed to find time to speak with me and help me to gather a full impression of their work.

Of course, not everyone who contributed to my work in the field or to this history was with me in Somalia. As I left Somalia, my good friend and comrade, Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, took my place. He was leading the first Joint History Team to deploy in support of an active operation, composed of five men besides himself: Commander Roger T. Zeimet, USNR; Major Robert K. Wright, Jr., USAR; Major Robert L. Furu, USAR; Major Jimmy Miller, USAFR; and Sergeant Michael Eberle, USA. Lieutenant Colonel Cureton led a highly organized and thorough field history program. These officers were able to conduct scores of interviews and collect thousands of documents. Their prodigious collection effort has been compiled into a volume entitled *Resource Guide: Unified Task Force Somalia December 1992-May 1993 Operation Restore Hope*, published by the U.S Army Center of Military History. This book has been of tremendous value in researching and writing this monograph.

Back in the United States, I owed my position to Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, Director of Marine Corps History and Museums. When the call came for a historian to go to Somalia with UNITAF, he selected me from a field of very qualified candidates. His deputy, Colonel Marshall B. Darling, kept me informed of what was happening back home and forwarded anything that I requested. The director of the Joint History Office, Brigadier General David A. Armstrong, USA (Retired), also provided me with briefings, information, and encouragement, and helped me to secure the opportunity to deploy to Somalia as a historian. I certainly wish to thank those who reviewed the draft of this history, most especially Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, and Lieutenant Colonel Ronald J. Brown. Both of these officers have been friends and comrades in the service of the history of our Corps. Lieutenant Colonel Brown, a Basic School classmate, made several recommendations that helped with the clarity of some of the more technical aspects of this history. Brigadier General Gregory Gile, USA (Retired), also reviewed the chapter that details the work of the coalition forces in the relief sectors. Brigadier William J. A. Mellor DSC, AM, Royal Australian Army, did the same for those portions that involved Australia's participation.

I also wish to thank Mr. Charles D. Melson, chief historian, Mr. Charles R. Smith, senior historian, and Mr. Scott N. Summerill, senior editor, for their thorough review of the final draft. My gratitude also goes to Mr. W. Stephen Hill, who designed the maps, and to Mrs. Catherine A. Kerns, who prepared the manuscript for publication, and again to Mr. Charles R. Smith for illustrating the history and preparing the index.

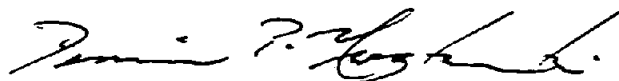
Not everything in the field worked as planned. A rare, sudden thunderstorm caught me in an open vehicle shortly after I arrived. The water caused havoc with my tape recorder. Thereafter, I was forced to use a notebook to record conversations with members of UNITAF while in the field. This is referred to as my field notebook in the pages that follow to distinguish it from my journal. In that latter volume, I recorded the information from briefings and meetings, as well as personal observations about the operation. Whenever I was working in the UNITAF headquarters compound, I could use the services of the Joint Combat Camera Team to record my interviews with commanders and staff officers. Unfortunately,

most of these were unavailable to me while I was writing this history. Fortunately, I kept notes of these interviews and have used these.

I chose to allow the materials used to guide the writing of the history and to follow the development of issues. I have endeavored to use sources collected by myself or by others at the time of the operation, or shortly thereafter. The views and comments presented most nearly coincide with those perceptions held by the participants at the time. Where I have used secondary sources, I have tried to use ones that gave insight into the more non-military aspects of the operation, such as Somali culture, politics, United Nations participation, etc. Here again, I have used studies that were prepared just a few years after the operation.

There are now several excellent studies of the operations in Somalia, but which were not used for the preparation of this work. Many of these deal with the more dramatic events of October 1993, which is outside the scope of this monograph. Interested scholars are directed to *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope* by John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, and *Policing The New World Disorder: Peace Operations and Public Security*, edited by Robert B. Oakley, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Eliot M. Goldberg. Of importance for an understanding of the United Nations' perspective and the relationships of UNITAF with UNOSOM I and II is volume VIII of the United Nations blue book series, *The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996*. Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* is a moving account based on interviews with participants of the raid of 3 October 1993. It is by far the best of several that have been published in recent years. In addition, there have been many excellent articles in military journals and the military forces of several of the coalition nations have written after-action reports or official histories of their contributions to the operation.

In the middle of January 1993, shortly after the death in action of Private First Class Domingo Arroyo, I was traveling by helicopter to an interview with Captain John W. Peterson, USN. While waiting at the helipad near the airport, a small group of Marines joined the party. They were members of Task Force Mogadishu. As we waited, a first lieutenant and I struck up a conversation, as Marines often will when thrown together for a short time. After explaining what we each did, he asked me, referring to Private First Class Arroyo's death, "Sir, was it worth it?" I could not answer his question then, knowing how keenly this loss had been felt. Most certainly to Arroyo's family, friends, and comrades, the price was too great. But there were also the scores of thousands of Somalis, many of them innocent children, who had been saved by the efforts of Marines, soldiers, and sailors like Private First Class Arroyo. For these and their families there could be no greater gift. If, in the end, America and her coalition partners were repaid with callous evil by some men, that does not mean the attempt ought not to have been made. Someday, perhaps, one of those children, grown-up and grateful for what had been done, will lead his country out of the fear, evil, and despair that have engulfed it.



D. P. Mroczkowski
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (Retired)

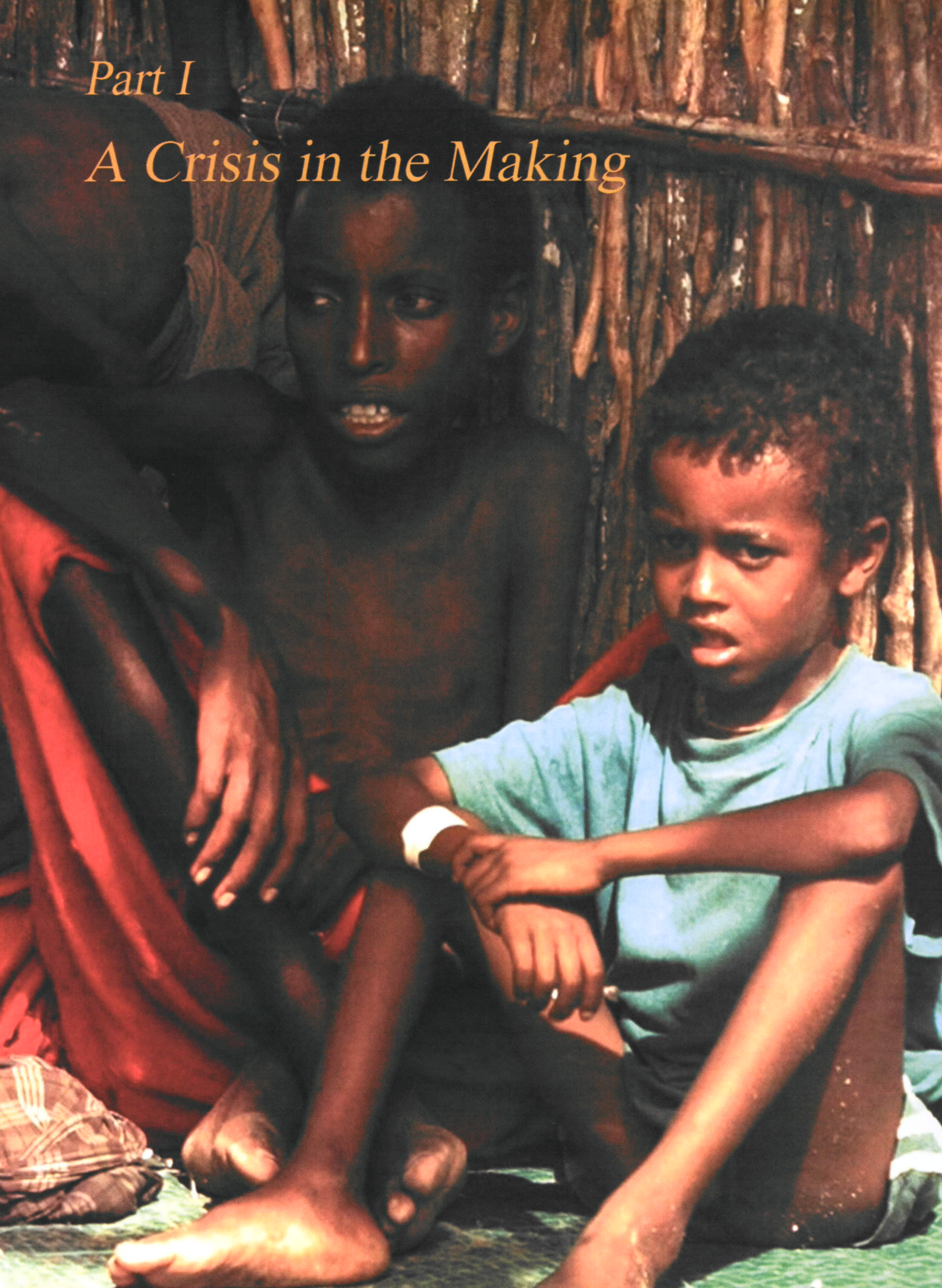
Table of Contents

Foreword	iii
Preface	v
Table of Contents	ix
 Part I - A Crisis in the Making	
Chapter 1 Descent Into Despair	1
The Beginning	1
Clans and Colonization	2
A Trust Territory.....	4
Unification and Independence.....	4
A Failed State	5
Operation Eastern Exit.....	6
Civil War and Anarchy.....	7
 Part II - Operation Restore Hope	
Chapter 2 The Widening Mission	11
Historic Decision to Intervene	11
Initial Planning	12
First Steps.....	13
Organizing Tasks.....	15
Support Command.....	18
Coalition Partners.....	19
Chapter 3 Plans and Preparations	21
Working with Central Command	21
Somali Opposition.....	22
Somali Terrain	24
Specified Tasks.....	25
Psychological Operations.....	27
Phases of the Operation.....	27
The Flow of the Force.....	29
Chapter 4 Coming Ashore	31
Initial Landings	31
Logistical Buildup.....	35
Force Buildup.....	36
Into the Interior	42
Securing the Relief Sectors	43
Chapter 5 Politics, Peace Talks, and Police	51
Military-Political Cooperation	51
Weapons Control and the use of Force	52
Reconciliation Conferences.....	55
Somali Police Forces.....	58
Chapter 6 Moving to the Third Phase	63
Settling In and Daily Work	63

Mogadishu.....	66
Bale Dogle.....	76
Baidoa.....	77
Bardera	82
Oddur.....	83
Gialalassi	85
Merka.....	90
Belet Weyne	91
Kismayo.....	94
Morale and Restraint.....	98
Chapter 7 Drawing Down the Forces	103
Naval Operations.....	103
Air Operations	104
End Game	110
Restructuring and Redeployment.....	112
UNITAF Redeployment	113
Coalition Shifts.....	117
Chapter 8 Normality Begins to Return.....	119
Logistics	119
Medical Care and Health Issues.....	124
Engineering	130
Communications.....	134
Psychological Operations.....	137
Civil-Military Operations.....	140
Part III - Getting Out	
Chapter 9 Transition and Return.....	147
United Nations Relationship	147
Slow Transition to U.N. Control	150
Epilogue.....	155
Notes.....	159
Appendices	
Appendix A: Unified Task Force Somalia Organization	169
Appendix B: Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations and Somali Spelling	179
Appendix C: Chronology of Events and Operations	183
Appendix D: Citation	187
Index.....	189

Part I

A Crisis in the Making



Chapter 1

Descent Into Despair

The Beginning

By the summer of 1992, almost every American was familiar with the problems of Somalia. Images of sick, weak, and starving people had been forced into the consciousness of even the most casual observer of the news of the day. Television specials, photographs in magazines, newspaper articles, and even radio programs all served to focus the attention of our nation to this devastated land on the Horn of Africa. That people were suffering and dying in the thousands was obvious; that something needed to be done was unquestionable. But even the best intentions are of no consequence without identifiable goals and the means to implement a relevant plan. In August 1992, the United States, responding to a great human tragedy, was ready to act. The plan, originally quite simple, was the start of what would develop into one of the largest humanitarian relief efforts in the history of the world, Operation Restore Hope.

On 18 August 1992, President George H. W. Bush ordered the airlift of 145,000 tons of emer-

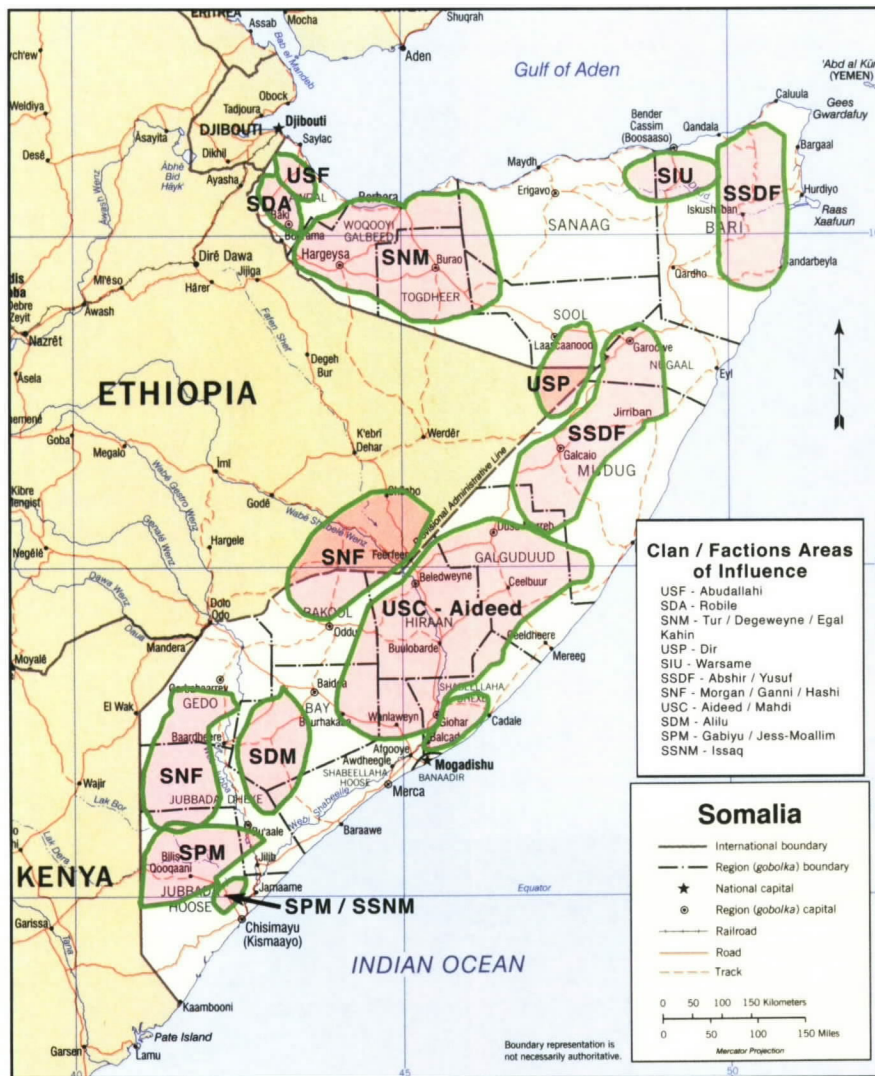
gency food supplies to Somalia. This initial effort, named Operation Provide Relief, was based in Mombasa, Kenya, and was commanded by Marine Brigadier General Frank Libutti. Military and civilian aircraft were used to fly shipments of food to towns inside Somalia.¹ From there, the food was to be distributed to needy refugees by humanitarian relief organizations and nongovernmental organizations such as the International Red Cross and the World Food Program. Unfortunately, the accomplishment of this humane task was often frustrated by the conditions on the ground in Somalia.

As is so often the case with crises that seemingly flash across the nation's television screens and magazine covers, the situation that led to a united intervention in Somalia had a long and complex history that was not immediately apparent. Of all of the world's areas, the Horn of Africa always has been one of the most overlooked and least understood. Yet, an appreciation of the history and culture of this region is necessary to understand what the United States-led coalition did, and what its accomplishments were.



DVIC DF-ST-98-04803

A Somali herds his flock of goats near the village of Belet Weyne. Unlike much of postcolonial Africa, Somalia's borders enclosed a single ethnic group, the Samaal, which has occupied the region since biblical times.



Clans and Colonization

One of the most important aspects of Somali society, and perhaps the most difficult for Western observers to understand or appreciate, are the concepts of lineage and clan affiliation. For many Americans, the word “clan” conjures up images of Scottish or Irish ancestry. To a Somali, however, clan relationships define individual identity and relationships to every person that he comes into contact with. It is no exaggeration that Somali children are taught their lineages for several generations back so that on meeting another person, each can recite his ancestry and thus understand his obligations and responsibilities to the other.

Traditionally, all Somalis trace their ancestry back to one man, Abu Taalib, an uncle of the Prophet Mohamed. His son, Aqiil, in turn had two sons, Sab and Samaal. It is from these two the six

clan-families descend and through which all ethnic Somalis trace their ancestry. On the Sab branch, these clan-families are the Digil and Rahanweyne; from Samaal are descended the Darod, Dir, Issaq and Hawiye. Over generations, each of these clan-families was further subdivided into clans, subclans and families.² This fracturing of the people by lines of descent produced a dichotomy not unusual in clan societies in which there is strength against an external foe, but internal national weakness. For example, while a threat to the overall structure could bring about a unified effort to combat it, the various entities could still be fiercely antagonistic to one another. In an area in which resources are scarce and competition for those resources is very great, such hereditary divisiveness can assume tremendous importance. In Somalia, the scarcity of water and arable land for both nomadic

herdsmen and for farmers has led to a tradition of competition among the various families and clans.³

A unified Somali nation did not exist until the 20th century. In earlier times, the country was under the control of various emirates, generally centered along the coast. Cities carried on a trade between the peoples of the hinterland and the Arabian Peninsula. By the late 19th century, however, several other countries were colonizing or occupying parts of the Horn of Africa that would become Somalia. The French occupied the northernmost sector, French Somaliland, today known as Djibouti. The Italians, seeking an empire in Africa, colonized the southern portion and called Italian Somaliland. The British, with an eye to the protection of the Suez Canal and their trade through the Red Sea, occupied an area on the Gulf of Aden known as British Somaliland. Even the

Egyptians and Ethiopians claimed portions of the territory inhabited by the Somalis.⁴ A legacy of bitterness, particularly against the Egyptians, the Coptic Christian Ethiopians, and the Italians, was formed at this time and was still apparent during Operation Restore Hope.

Life was not always tranquil for the occupying powers, and they often fought among themselves. In 1896, the Italians invaded Ethiopia from Eritria, their colony on the Red Sea. The army of the Ethiopian emperor, Menelik II, stunningly defeated them at the Battle of Adowa. Imam Mohamed Ibn Abdullah Hassan raised an insurrection in British Somaliland in 1899 in response to perceived threats to the Islamic religion from foreign influences. Known to history as the “Mad Mullah,” Mohamed Abdullah waged an intermittent 22-year jihad against both the British and the Ethiopians. This was a period in Somalia’s history marked by chaos, destruction, and famine and during which it is estimated that one-third of all males in British Somaliland died, often at the hands of the Mullah and his followers. It is diffi-

cult not to see a reflection of these earlier events in those that would occur 80 years later.⁵

While Great Britain, Italy, and France were allies during World War I, the rise of the Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini was to cause a division among the colonial powers. The Italian invasion and conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 placed Italy squarely in confrontation with Great Britain. British opposition to this aggression moved Mussolini to join Adolf Hitler, whose policies of expansion in Europe Mussolini had formerly opposed.⁶ Thus, when World War II began, the Horn of Africa was occupied by belligerents and was soon to become a battleground.

The Italian Fascist government recognized it had the “chance of five thousand years” to increase its African colonial holdings at the expense of Great Britain.⁷ But Italy did not declare war on the British Empire until the fall of France was imminent, in June 1940. Before the year ended, however, the British were already planning to attack the Italian forces in Somalia, as part of an overall strategy to clear the African con-

Somalia Clan Affiliations

The influence of clans and sub-clans was seen in the numerous factions and political organizations, which had been struggling for power since the overthrow of Muhammad Siad Barre. Virtually all derived their influence from their affiliation with one of the clans or clan-families. The important clans to the work of Operation Restore Hope were:

The United Somali Congress (USC). This was the largest of the factions operating in southern Somalia, and it was one of the first to fight against the Barre regime. Composed principally of the Hawiye clan-family, it was further subdivided into two factions, which were in violent competition with each other. The first of these was the faction led by General Mohamed Farah Hassan Aideed. Usually referred to as USC Aideed, it was drawn from the Habr Gedr clan. The force under Ali Mahdi Mohamed, the USC Ali Mahdi, drew its support from the Abgal clan and opposed the USC Aideed faction. Both were strong in the Mogadishu area, and each had supporters in other factions in the port city of Kismayo.

The Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM). Active mainly in the south around Kismayo, this faction was drawn from the Ogadeni clan of the Darod clan-family. It also was divided into two rival groups. One, led by Colonel Ahmed Omar Jess, was allied with General Aideed. The other was led by Colonel Aden Gabiyu and was allied with the forces of Mohamed Said Hirsi, known as “General Morgan.” Morgan’s forces were an independent faction of the Ogadeni sub-clan and were active in the Kismayo area, extending to the towns of Bardera and Baidoa. Morgan was allied with Ali Mahdi and therefore was opposed to Colonel Jess.

Several other factions were operating in Somalia at this time. Each had an armed militia. While these had less impact on the coalition’s work, they had to be considered.

In the north was the Somali National Movement (SNM), dominated by the Issaq clan-family. Under the leadership of Abdulrahman Ali Tur, this faction declared the independence of the northwestern portion of the country as the “Somaliland Republic.”

Also in the north was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), composed of members of the Majertain clan of the Darod clan-family. The SSDF opposed the USC.

The Somali Democratic Movement (SDM) was affiliated with the Rahanweyne clan-family and operated to the west of Mogadishu, centered on the town of Bardera and also strong in Baidoa.

The Somali National Front (SNF) was drawn from the Marehan clan of the Darod clan-family and was active along the border of Ethiopia near the town of Luuq.

The Southern Somali National Movement (SSNM) had its center in the town of Kismayo, and was representative of the Biyemal clan of the Dir clan-family.

There also were several religious-based organizations, particularly in the north. These groups included al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (Islamic Unity), which had fought against the SSDF in the north, and Akhwaan al-Muslimiin (Muslim Brotherhood), which had adherents throughout the country.

continent of the enemy. Accordingly, in February 1941, British Empire forces were on the offensive to places that would become familiar to American servicemen 52 years later. On 14 February, the port city of Kismayo was captured, followed by the town of Jilib on the Jubba River on 22 February. The city of Mogadishu was attacked next. Although it is more than 200 miles from Kismayo and Jilib, British Empire troops entered Mogadishu only three days later, on 25 February. With the Italian forces retreating into the interior, British forces advanced quickly beyond the borders of Italian Somaliland and into Ethiopia.⁸

As the war moved away from Somalia, the British assumed responsibility for the administration of the entire area. During this period, the Somali people began to develop their first modern political organizations. The Somalia Youth Club was formed in 1943, including in its membership native civil servants and police officers. In 1947, the organization changed its name to the Somali Youth League (SYL), with the announced aims of the unification of all Somali territory, a standardized written form of the language, and protection of Somali interests. With branches in all Somali-occupied territories, including areas of Ethiopia and Kenya, and with a membership from nearly all clan-families, this party represented a true national political organization. Other parties also came into being at this time, but these were invariably representative individual clan-families.⁹

A Trust Territory

British administration continued until the end of the war, when the Allies decided the Italian colonies seized during the war would not be returned. A commission composed of representatives of Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States was formed to study the disposition of these former colonies, including Somalia. The SYL proposed that all Somali territories be unified and requested a trusteeship by an international commission for 10 years to be followed by complete independence. While such a proposal was agreeable to the commission, the Allied Council of Foreign Ministers could not decide on the proper method for preparing the country for independence. Finally, in 1949, the General Assembly of the United Nations assigned Italy the trusteeship with the stipulation that Somalia must be entirely independent before the end of 1960. Although there were many Somalis, particularly

in the SYL, who did not want Italy to control any of the country, they did acquiesce to the proposal. For the next 11 years, the country was prepared for independence as a Trust Territory. Although there was some antagonism toward the Italians in the early years of this period, it began to wane as the country's economy and political structures developed. The time was one of optimism as enthusiasm for the new democracy raised a national spirit without the traditional connections to the clan-families.¹⁰

During the 1950s, the SYL continued to be the most important and strongest of the political parties. By 1956, the SYL had received the majority of the seats in the national assembly. It followed a program that was nationalist in outlook and sought to weaken the influence of the clans. When drafting the constitution for the new nation as it approached independence, the SYL sought a unitary form of government. A federal form was believed to be too susceptible to the divisiveness of clan interests, and even in the SYL itself there were individuals who were more interested in the furtherance of their particular clan than in a purely national program.¹¹

Unification and Independence

In 1956, Britain agreed to the eventual independence of British Somaliland and its incorporation in the new nation. Accordingly, British Somaliland was granted independence on 26 June 1960, and on 1 July it joined with the Trust Territory to form the Somali Republic. During this early period of independence, the new national government had to address the differences between the two sections' political, economic, and social development. While clan allegiances remained important, the development of a position with an appeal to the interests of both the northern and southern sections helped to bring the nation closer together.¹²

The major issues facing the new country during the 1960s were the improvement of social conditions and the nation's physical infrastructure. At the same time, many of the nation's political leaders espoused the idea of "Pan-Somalism," a concept that called for the unification of all the Somali peoples into one nation. Whether this unity was to be achieved by peaceful or aggressive means was an issue of some debate among the leaders, but the idea had a great appeal with the people. Since many Somalis lived in the bor-

der areas of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, this goal placed Somalia in confrontation with those nations. There were several border clashes with Ethiopia during this period, as well as guerilla raids into Kenya. While this expansionist program may have alienated Somalia at times from its neighbors, the general policy did provide a broad basis for agreement among nearly all of the political leaders.¹³

The 1960s also saw the increasing dominance of the SYL in the government. Curiously, the party's great success was becoming a weakness. As candidates in national elections began to recognize the SYL was the winning ticket, the party drew persons of all political views and beliefs into its ranks. More importantly, the party became the means through which nepotism and clan allegiances were once again served. Ironically, the SYL thus came to represent the very factionalism it had originally opposed. In addition, the party and government became corrupt as favors and personal gain took the place of public service. By the end of the decade, the nation was ripe for a *coup d'etat*.¹⁴

A Failed State

An assassin, apparently motivated by a clan grievance, killed President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke on 15 October 1969. Although the act was an isolated incident of violence, it served as the catalyst for events that quickly followed. The assassination was used as an excuse for the overthrow of the democratic government. On 21 October, when Prime Minister Ibrahim Egal tried to arrange the selection of a new president, the military moved to take over the country. Major General Mohammed Siad Barre quickly assumed leadership of the new Supreme Revolutionary Council. Members of the old government were arrested, political parties were outlawed, the National Assembly was abolished, and the constitution was suspended. Under the new name of the Somali Democratic Republic, the country embarked upon its own social experiment of scientific socialism. Specifically, the new regime wanted to end the influence of allegiance to clans and the corruption that had become endemic in the government. Society was to be transformed in accordance with a political philosophy based on both the *Quran* and Marxism.¹⁵

Among other projects begun by the new government was an attempt to raise the literacy rate of

the nation. In this they were fairly successful, employing a program of sending those who were already educated throughout the country to teach others. Not as successful was the attempt of the government to improve the economy of the country. One of the poorest of all nations, Somalia's economy was defined by the pastoral nomadic lifestyle of the majority of its people. Foreign exports were limited mainly to cattle or other foodstuffs produced in the fertile river valleys. Most farming, however, was of a subsistence level. Such a fragile economy was susceptible to the droughts that would regularly strike the region, which left the country very dependent upon foreign assistance, particularly from the Soviet Union.¹⁶

In this period of the Cold War, there was some strategic significance to the position of Somalia based upon the approaches to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. With many of its Army officers educated in the Soviet Union, and with its commitment to a socialist form of government, Somalia



Photo courtesy of the author
 MajGen Mohammed Siad Barre took power in late 1969 in a bloodless coup following the assassination of country's prime minister, Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke. Barre's goal of removing the clan as the primary Somali allegiance ultimately would lead to the destruction of the Somali state.

eagerly accepted Soviet military and economic aid. In return, the Soviets were allowed to build airfield and port facilities at Berbera, on the north coast. While the ties to the Soviet Union were never truly strong, they were to be severed permanently by the pursuit of Somali foreign policy.¹⁷

The concept of Pan-Somalism had continued into the Barre regime. In the early years of his rule, this policy was pursued through peaceful negotiations with neighboring countries. Especially in regard to the Ogaden region, controlled by Ethiopia, the Somali government distanced itself from the insurgent movements that had previously been supported there. This changed after the 1974 overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie and the establishment of a Marxist government in Addis Ababa. When attempts failed at negotiating a settlement of the Ogaden question, the Somali government recognized the Western Somali Liberation Front, which was fighting to break the Ogaden from Ethiopia. Aid was given to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Army, which was fighting a guerilla war against the new Ethiopian government. Finally, in July 1977, the Somali Army invaded Ethiopian territory in an attempt to gain the Ogaden. In this contest between two of its client states, the Soviet Union came to the aid of Ethiopia. With large amounts of modern Soviet equipment and a reinforcement of Cuban troops, the Ethiopians turned the tide of battle and drove the Somalis from their territory. In retaliation, Siad Barre ejected Soviet personnel from Somalia and turned to the West for support. In 1980, an agreement was reached with the United States whereby use was given of the port and airfield facilities at Berbera in exchange for military and economic aid.¹⁸ Somalia stayed close to the United States throughout the remainder of the 1980s.

This decade was not to be an easy one for the Barre regime, however. In spite of its attempts to rid the country of the influence of "tribalism," the government was increasingly identified with the Marehan, Barre's own clan.¹⁹ In addition, corruption in the government created even more dissatisfaction. By 1988, armed opposition to the Barre regime had begun with a rebellion in the north of the country.²⁰ There were three main opposition groups forming in late 1990 around geographical and clan affiliations: the Somali National Movement (SNM), which had begun in Northern Somalia; the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM),

which was mainly recruited from the Ogaden and was active in the southern region; and the United Somali Congress (USC), composed mainly from the Hawiye clan and active in the central part of the country. By December these forces had pushed the Somali Army back the outskirts of the capital, Mogadishu. Violence and unrest began to grow within the city itself, creating a dangerous atmosphere for the foreign personnel and diplomats living there. Open fighting had begun in the city by late in the month as the predominantly Marehan-based army attempted to destroy USC elements in the Hawiye enclaves. The resulting breakdown of all order unleashed even greater lawlessness.²¹

Operation Eastern Exit

On 5 December 1990, due to escalating violence and chaos, American Ambassador James K. Bishop ordered the departure of non-essential embassy personnel and dependents. By mid-month, several foreign countries had joined the United States in advising their citizens to leave. On 30 December, Ambassador Bishop brought all remaining official Americans into the embassy compound, where he initially thought they could wait out the fighting in safety. By 1 January 1991, attacks on foreigners, including Americans, had increased and the embassy itself had been hit by small arms fire. Ambassador Bishop decided the situation was too dangerous to permit embassy personnel to remain any longer, and on New Year's Day he requested permission from the U.S. State Department to evacuate the embassy. Permission was granted on 2 January.²²

In a fine example of forward thinking, on 31 December 1990, Vice Admiral Stanley R. Arthur, USN, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, had already alerted his staff to be prepared to conduct a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) in Mogadishu. Even though heavily involved in Operation Desert Shield and the final preparations for Operation Desert Storm, Central Command in Saudi Arabia began planning rapidly for the evacuation. After reviewing the Central Command plan, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued an execute order for the evacuation operation late on 2 January. By that time, forces for the operation were already being assembled from those available in the Persian Gulf.²³

The operation was named Eastern Exit. Planners had created a variety of potential scenar-

ios, each tailored for a specific situation. In a preparatory move, U.S. Air Force AC-130 Specter gunships and ground security elements deployed to Nairobi, Kenya, in case the preferred option, a peaceful evacuation through the Mogadishu airport, could be accomplished. This plan was not pursued once Ambassador Bishop decided it was too dangerous for embassy personnel to make the nearly two-mile journey to the airport. Conditions at the airport also had deteriorated to such an extent that an air operation would be too risky. These circumstances left an amphibious option.²⁴

Admiral Arthur chose to create an amphibious force composed of only two ships, the amphibious transport dock *USS Trenton* (APD 14) and the helicopter assault ship *USS Guam* (LPD 9).^{*} The commanding general of 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (4th MEB), Major General Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., designated Colonel James J. Doyle, Jr., as the commander of the landing force. His counterpart, the commander of the amphibious task force, was Captain Alan B. Moser, USN. These two officers embarked their staffs and the task force got under way from Masirah Island, off the tip of Oman, by 2330 on 2 January. Colonel Doyle and Captain Moser had been informed the use of the airport was not an option, nor was an across-the-beach landing because of the distance inland of the embassy from any potential landing sites. The plan with the greatest chance of success was, therefore, to use shipborne Marine helicopters that could land directly in the embassy compound.²⁵

By 3 and 4 January, the threat to the embassy and its personnel increased. The embassy guards engaged in a firefight with looters, and small arms fire and even a rocket propelled grenade impacted inside the embassy grounds. At that point it was decided that a pair of Sikorsky CH-53 Super Stallion assault helicopters could be launched when within 500 miles of Mogadishu. The time of departure would be calculated to provide an early morning arrival at the Somali coast. This long-distance journey would require at least one aerial refueling and cause crew fatigue, but it would get the aircraft and security forces to the embassy much sooner.²⁶

^{*}Planning for the imminent start of Operation Desert Storm was paramount in the minds of planners at this time, and the choice was to have as many ships available as possible in the Persian Gulf area. It was not possible to forecast either how long Eastern Exit would take, or when ships committed to it would be able to return.

The 60-man evacuation force was composed 51 Marines and corpsmen from the 4th MEB, and nine U.S. Navy special warfare personnel from Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) Team 8F. The security elements boarded the helicopters at 0330 on 5 January. At 0345 they lifted off, with an expected arrival time of 0620. With the in-flight refueling successfully completed, the helicopters crossed the coast just at dawn. There was some initial difficulty in identifying the embassy, but it was clearly distinguished on the second attempt. As the helicopters came in for their landings, numerous armed looters were seen positioning ladders against one side of the compound wall. Upon landing, the SEALs immediately established the security of the chancery building while the Marines provided a perimeter defense for the compound. Both helicopters were quickly filled with evacuees and they returned to the *Guam* by 1040.²⁷

Back at Mogadishu, the evacuation force and the embassy security force assisted in bringing in several citizens from other foreign countries. By evening, the first of four waves of Boeing-Vertol CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters from the *Guam* arrived at the embassy landing zone. These five helicopters remained on the ground only 20 minutes, departing with an additional 75 evacuees. As the first wave of helicopters returned to the *Guam*, the second wave set down at the embassy. This wave, also of five helicopters, departed after just 18 minutes on the ground, leaving only the ambassador, his staff, and the Marine Security Guard to be evacuated. The third wave departed at 2210, and the fourth wave carried the ambassador and the perimeter defense force. This final wave took off even as looters clambered over the walls and entered the compound. The last helicopter landed back on the *Guam* at 2323, and 20 minutes later the ambassador declared the operation completed.²⁸

Civil War and Anarchy

With the completion of this highly successful operation, the American presence in Somalia ended for nearly two years. Few in the United States noticed what was happening there because the attention of Americans and most of the world was focused on the events in Southwest Asia. By the end of January 1991, Siad Barre was forced to flee Mogadishu, and the country fell deeper into anarchy and chaos as the various armed factions

continued to battle the forces of the old national government. Finally, by May 1992, Barre's forces were defeated and he was forced to flee the country altogether. This did not mean the end of fighting, however. Instead, the various factions and clans that had formerly opposed Barre now sought to achieve dominance in the new government. When Barre was driven from Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi Mohamed of the USC was selected as the new president. The USC was an instrument of the Hawiye clan, however, and Ali Mahdi never received enough support to coalesce the rest of the country behind him. The fighting, which now pitted the clans against one another, also led to the creation of new alliances and divisions. For instance, the USC itself split into two factions, one led by Ali Mahdi and the other by General Mohammed Farah Hassan Aideed.²⁹ No single group was strong enough to overcome the others in this unending fight for power. Without a central government, anarchy, violence, and lawlessness reigned.

To add to the suffering of the Somali people, a severe drought had devastated the region for about three years. As farmers were unable to raise crops, food itself became a weapon. To have it made one's own group strong; to deprive one's rivals of it weakened them as it strengthened one-

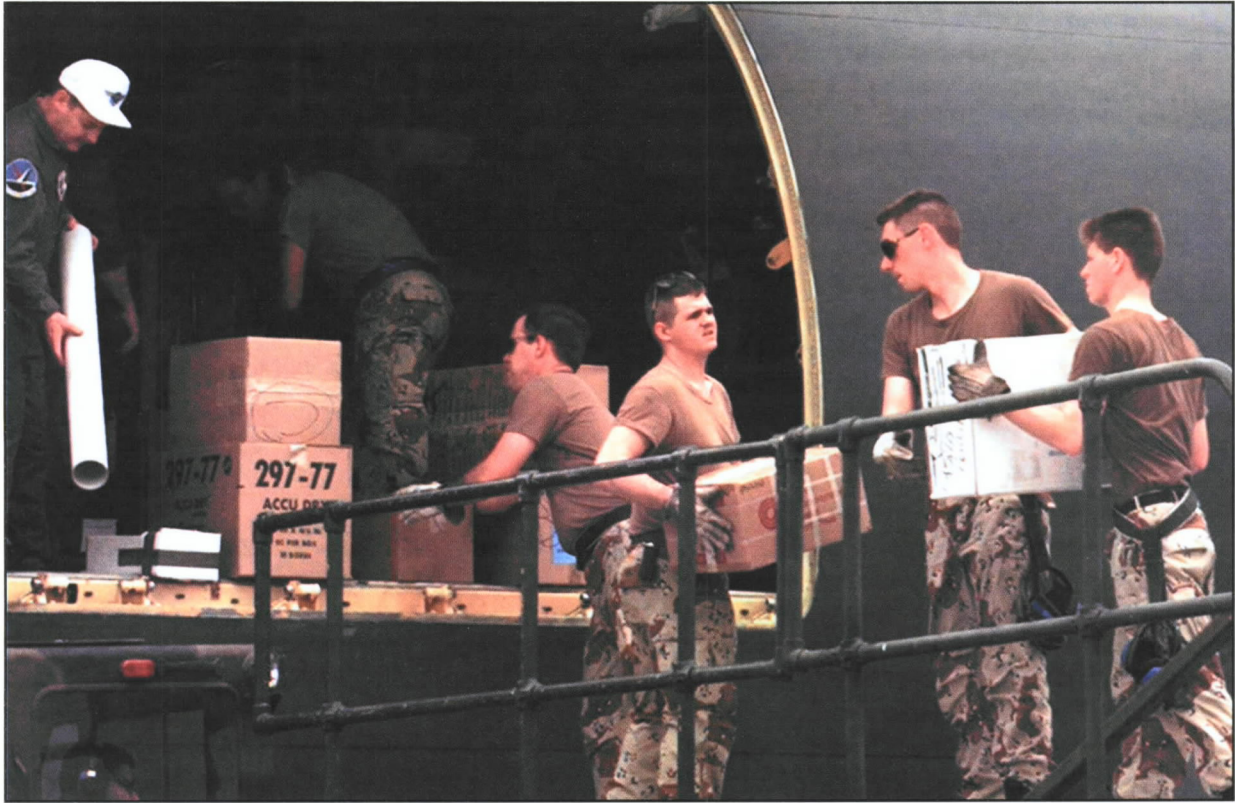
self. The threat of losing subsistence to armed bands of factional militias was now added to the threat of being robbed by the increasing gangs of bandits. With violence a reality of everyday life, everyone had to protect himself. Individuals armed themselves, formed local militias, or hired others for protection. Even private relief organizations became the targets of threats and extortion and had to resort to the hiring of armed bodyguards. It truly became a case of "every man against every man."

By the early 1990s, the history of Somalia disclosed certain disturbing patterns. First, it showed that tribalism or clan loyalty was still a dominant factor in society, despite earlier efforts to remove it. It was a force to be understood and reckoned with. The passage of time made no change in this central fact of life. What had changed was the general lifestyle of the people. The reforms of the Barre regime had removed many of the old structures by which Somali society had been able to keep clan rivalries and violence in check, or at least within acceptable limits. In fact, it could be argued that the Barre years actually made each clan more jealous of the others and desirous of achieving dominance, destroying the balance that had existed before.³⁰ In addition, the years during which Somalia was a client state of the Soviet



DVIC DN-ST-93-03436

Village women gather near refugee huts outside Baidoa. The descending spiral of rape, murder, destruction of crops and water supplies, and wholesale slaughter had led to mass starvation and forced thousands of Somalis to flee their former homes.



DVIC DD-SD-00-01008

Members of the Aerial Port Squadron from Dyess Air Force Base, Abilene, Texas, and Dover Air Force Base, Dover, Delaware, unload medical supplies from the left side of a Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker's cargo bay. Off loaded at Moi International Airport, Mombasa, Kenya, the supplies were transferred to U.S. Air Force C-130s for delivery to Somalia as part of Operation Provide Relief.

Union and the United States saw the accumulation of a large amount of weapons, ranging from rifles to tanks and artillery. Somalia thus had an abundant supply of weapons for its factional armies and bandits.

Operation Provide Relief, begun so hopefully in August 1992, soon was confronted with the reality of the chaos and strife into which Somalia had descended. The breaking of the famine could only be achieved by the safe delivery and distribution of the food.

In November, with deaths by starvation and related diseases numbering 350,000 and expected to increase rapidly, the United States decided to take action. Acting on a United Nations mandate, President Bush announced the United States would ensure the secure environment needed for the safe and effective delivery of relief supplies. However, there was no assurance the food would ultimately be given to those for whom it was intended, the thousands of refugees who were driven from their homes by the drought and fight-

ing and who now faced death by starvation. Aircraft deliveries of relief supplies could be sent into the country, but there was no guarantee the aircraft would be allowed to land safely, or that their cargoes would not be subject to extortionate payments.* In the autumn of 1992, it had become obvious that merely providing the necessities of life to these victims of anarchy would not suffice.

Operation Restore Hope was about to begin.

* An example of the amounts which the relief organizations had to pay simply to accomplish their humanitarian goals was told to the author by Lieutenant Colonel Carol J. Mathieu, commanding officer of the Canadian Airborne Regiment forces in Belet Weyne. The relief committee of the International Commission of the Red Cross was required to provide each security guard at the airport with 85 kilograms (187 pounds) of food per month. The cost for each airplane landing at the airport was 50,000 Somali shillings. Also, they were forced to rent cars and trucks at the rate of \$1,600 per month.